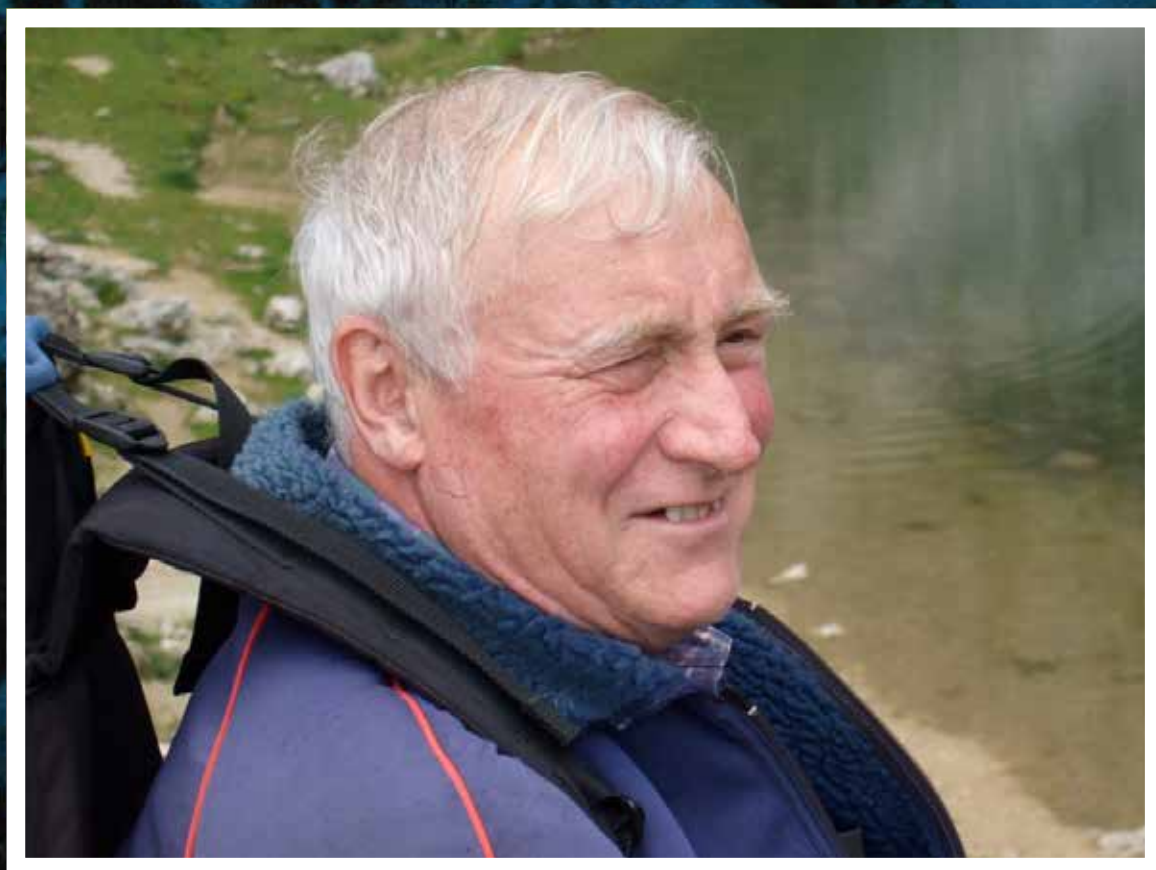


Gorphwysfa Club Journal

Vol. 47 No 1 November 2023

MEMORIES AND MORE



Gorphwysfa Club Journal

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Editorial

Turning the clock back a little, in February nearing the end of a five-mile walk that Brian had organised, he had a rather dramatic episode of stumbling and needed to be supported to return to his car. He was then assessed at the John Radcliffe, and despite his age he had a serious operation for spinal stenosis and came out singing the praises of the NHS. The operation was a total success and Brian, as he told me, was a new person. Regina also had hospital treatment in December, but was now feeling improved, and able to look after Brian at this nasty time. The year 2023 was looking good. April brought the spring and potentially a happy future, a new world. Sometime later I called around at Apple Tree House and Brian was so pleased and proud that he had at last finished the book that he had been working on for some time, *Memories and More*, a close but brief look at his life, written for his family. Not only was it finished but it was due to be published at any time; I was pleased for him too – I have been playing about with my history story for at least 40 years!

In May, just before the Scottish Meet, Brian & Regina had their friends, Mr & Mrs Cradler, from San Matio, California staying with them, so I called around to say hello and have a natter, and to commiserate with Brian as he was not able to make the Meet. Brian was not 100% but the blame was put on a meal that they had had the night before at a local pub. When we arrived in Scotland all was stable and the sun shinning. What worse news could we have possible received on the 17th? Suddenly things fell apart.

Far from home we heard about the disaster of Brian's sudden death and the massive loss of a great friend and companion to his family and friends, to the Gorphwysfa Club, and of course especially to Regina and all of their extended families. In some ways it was too difficult to understand, so totally unexpected, a massive shock to all who knew him – especially those who were close to him.

Through Brian's enthusiasm and love for the mountains he has contributed in many ways to our own family lives, from our involvement in running, mountaineering and rock climbing, and other outdoor activities, a wonderful collective social companionship over many years. I first met him in Easter 1972 at Pen y Pass, and I have been fortunate to have been a close friend for over 50 years - members who were his students or researchers will have known him earlier. As I pass a school near home in Oxford, a sign outside appeals to those that read it to 'Shine Brighter'. Brian did not need any encouragement, and certainly not academically. He was someone who radiated, and passed on the good things of life, support, friendship and kindness came naturally to him. There seemed no limit to both his academic and social talents. There seemed that there was no limit to his kindness, support and his friendship will be a loss to many.

Yes, we met when our family were passing through a fairy tale, the real fairy tale that came along in February 1972, when with Rosie and I were appointed as joint Wardens / managers of Pen y Pass Youth Hostel, at that time the top of the range of youth hostels in the UK. Interestingly when Rosie and I met his mother and aunty in Oxford in the mid 1970s, they both knew of my grandfather who was born and lived in Mold – the family home of the Smiths, and did suggest that there was some ancestor link between the two families, although this does not show up in the family tree that Brian has researched.

The mountains attracted Brian to Snowdonia in Easter 1949, on a school geography bike ride when he stayed at Idwal Cottage youth hostel, at that time a big centre for rock climbing where many early mountaineers and rock climbers stayed. This was the hostel, that 'opened its doors' to Rosie and me applying for and being appointed to Pen y Pass, just over 20 years later.

Through Brian's enthusiasm and love for the mountains, he has contributed in many ways to our involvement in mountaineering and rock climbing, added to which there has been wonderful collective social companionship over many years. When I first met him in Easter 1972 at Pen y Pass, he was already organising a trip over the Snowdonia 14 X 3000-foot peaks with some of his undergraduate students, to get fit for a proposed trip to the Skye ridge in the summer.

Outside Snowdonia mountaineering, rock climbing and caving were available - the world was Brian's oyster, Scotland and Skye, the Lake District were open the doors – the Alps and the Himalayas were not so accessible, but access was never a problem! He sought and led the way for himself and others to visit the Himalayas in 1981, 1989, 1991 with a special visit to the Annapurna Sanctuary with Regina. Regina and Brian's trip to India and Darjeeling too was very exciting.

He was a Welshman, politically left wing, aware, unconventional, and a gentleman. A resolver of problems, whatever they were, and his achievements were immense. His loss has meant that our lives have become smaller – Brian is unreplaceable. He will be missed but not be forgotten.

It is proposed that we hold a meet in Snowdonia over the weekend on the 16 / 16th March 2024 in remembrance of Brian. This will be a grand and friendly gathering, with the theme being memories of Brian and his love for the mountains and Snowdonia. We can use Hafod y Gwynt as a base, and there is plenty of other accommodation available. The bonuses will include a dinner on the Saturday evening and perhaps a good trip in the hills, even with some rock climbing for those that are keen thrown in, if the weather allows. We may also create a permanent memorial to Brian. Contact Harvey for more details and to book, accommodation available at HyG and other venues, I am sure that Jesse will have some accommodation.

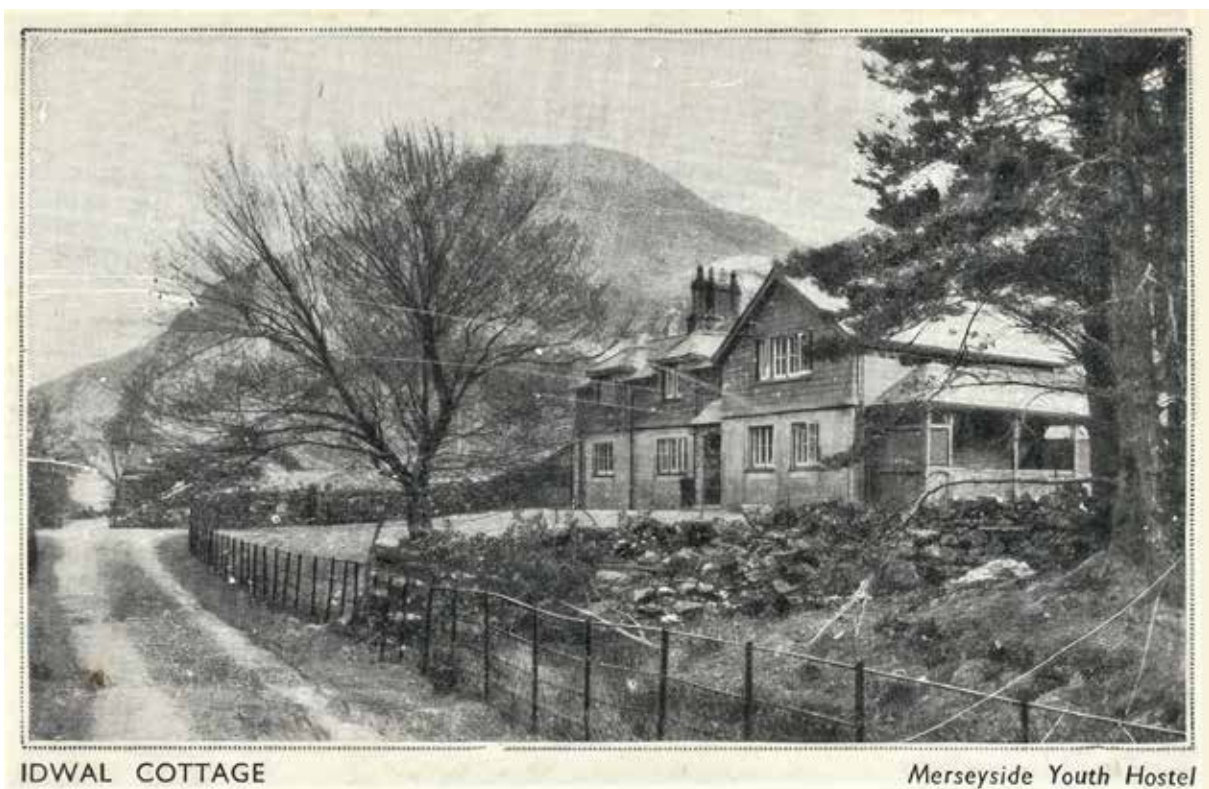
A commemorative service will also be held in Oxford at *St Mary the Virgin University Church* on the High Street at 2 p.m. on Saturday 8th June, refreshment will be served after this, be followed by a memorial reception at St Catherine's College from 3:00 to 5:00. Full details to follow.

We have lived through some fantastic years, and I would suggest that this Journal does a fine example of the 50 or so years that we shared with Brian. I thank all that have contributed to this appreciation, his friends both within and outside the Gorphwysfa Club.

We have not yet paid a full tribute to the sad loss that the club have felt in both Andrew Shorter and Len Forman passing away, their loss has been felt very deeply. Our next Journal will be dedicated to them and the service they devoted to the club.

Finally very many thanks to all who have contributed to this Journal, a very fine effort.

Harvey, November 2023



Brian's first over-night stop in Snowdonia, Easter 1949

Gorphwysfa MEETS DIARY 2024

Read this list, it is full of exciting events!!

New Year Meet

29/30/31st December 2023

This is very much happening this year! Although it could be said that we need more members to join it! Why not spend New Year in this great venue. There is still time to join us at Pen y Pass.

Contact Harvey.

The Steve Ogden Memorial Meet LAKES

26th – 28th January 2024

Sarah & Andy are looking after arrangements again this year. The venue for the meet will be the Patterdale hotel, and most people have now reserved accommodation – although, if rooms are still available, later bookings could be taken. We know the food is very good. All arrangements now in place, bookings sorted, and deposits paid. The balance will be due soon.

Please contact Sarah for further details. later in November, she needs to know type of room needed.

Bring on the good weather!

Provisional – Early Spring gathering to remember Brian.

15th /16th /17th March

In the past we have based a meet at about this weekend - another grand and friendly gathering is suggested for 2024, with the theme being memories of Brian and his love for Snowdonia. We can use HyG as a base, and there is plenty of other accommodation available. The bonuses include a dinner out on the Saturday evening and perhaps a good trip in the hills, even with some rock climbing for those that are keen, thrown in, if the weather allows. Put the date in your diary.

Contact Harvey to book, accommodation available at HyG.

Easter 29th March

Provisional – A Snowdonia Weekend

1/2/3/4th June

Also the Welsh 1000 metres Race 1st June. No longer our baby, although it appears that Warren Renkel (wgrenkel@googlemail.com) will be withdrawing after this year, but this does not stop us having a meet over this weekend. Let Harvey know. Accommodation at Hafod y Gwynt, from 1st June, Tyn y Coed or other B & Bs could book now. If I can help in anyway, please contact me, book Pen y Pass, or Plas y Brenin if needed. Extend to Tuesday / Wednesday for some more time to at the hills, or the corpse, or even socialising?

A Memorial Service for Brian

Saturday, 8 June 2024, at 2:00 pm

St Mary the Virgin University Church on the High Street in Oxford. It will be followed by a memorial reception at St Catherine's College from 3:00 to 5:00.

Oxfordshire Meet

Provisional date. Around about Saturday 1st or 8th July

Hopefully ...another grand weekend on the Cotswolds or Chilton Hills, we certainly had an enjoyable break in 2023. Hosts and venue are needed– Any volunteers? There presumably will be room for a walk with a picnic lunch on the Saturday with a meal/buffet on Saturday evening.

Please get in touch if you can fill the gap, more details shortly.

Summer Alpine Meet

Provisional date About July 9th to 23rd

Any chance of this happening? Sadly this event has faded off the calendar - It would be great to revive it in 2023. Certainly, the Dolomites will be there whichever year we choose! Perhaps Austria would make a change? No one showed any interest in 2022 – perhaps this is the way forward? In 2022 I suggested as an alternative could be a ramble along Offa's Dike?

Contact Harvey if you have any ideas.

The AUTUMN Meet 2024

Provisional date 22/23rd/24th September

Rodney did well in 2023 – but problems here and there reduced the gathering. Something similar would be great, it is hoped that again someone will adopt this meet and leap at the opportunity of organising another September meet, if so a Info sheet and booking form to follow.

Contact Harvey if you have any ideas

Dinner Meet

November 2nd/3rd

A very good response in 2023 can we keep the number up? The venue to be decided, The Royal Oak, Betws in 2022, perhaps PyB will be just as good. Or change again. Keep the date free! As democracy rules in the Gorphwysfa, we are going to have again the official AGM of the club at 5:45pm on the night of the dinner at Hafod y Gwynt. The meeting will close at 6pm or earlier. Items for the agenda can be submitted now; the executive committee will consider their suitability for acceptance.

More info nearer the date but put it in your diary!

New Year Meet

29/30/31st December?

Hopefully will it happen. The Executive committee or the club members need to review this event/ both venue and date. Let Harvey know if you are interested – for this meet to continue we do need club support.

The Steve Ogden Memorial MEET LAKES 2025

Date TBD

Bring on the good weather, and more of the virus fading into the distance.

Scotland in the Spring 2025

Date TBD

Scotland in the Spring 2025 seems a long way off but remember how time flies!! The agency that produced the venue for 2024 has other similar venues, including a castle for over 50 persons, a good venue to celebrate the clubs 50th anniversary. Organiser, date, and venue required!

No Nepal / the Himalaya meet in 2023, I am sorry I faded, perhaps because of the lack of interest! I am still playing with the idea – perhaps ...2024 – we had a great Meet in 2019 – and I am sure we could match it. Himalaya mountains are for the more fit – but there is plenty to do for the age-ed wimps of the club as well, and again two trips can be run alongside each other. Contact me if you want more details.

If you are interested in getting out on the hills with the Gorphwysfa then you need to note the above dates in your diaries now and get in touch with the appropriate organiser! Remember that friends are really welcomed to come along to our meets, and so become involved in the club, but the Dinner meet is closed to non-members: this includes partners! We do consider applications for new members once a year. On all other meets please feel free to ask if there is room.

Note our web site:

www.gorphwysfaclub.org.uk

Get involved, contribute your ideas, and add the dates in your Diary.

Keep Safe and have happy days in the countryside and in the mountains!

HARVEY 30/10/2023

37 Stockleys Rd., Headington, Oxford OX3 9RH

Phone: 01865 750067

Email: harveyrichlloyd@gmail.com

Also at Hafod y Gwynt, LL55 4NS; 01286 872456

Gorphwysfa Speech 2022

Welcome to the Gorphwysfa dinner. At this time of the year when the trees turn to red and gold and the last fruits and berries are harvested most people turn to enjoy the season of mellow fruitfulness. Unhappily, that is not my lot. For each year at this time I must start thinking about that ever-increasing challenge: a speech at the Gorphwysfa dinner. The problem is that I have been doing it for too long. This is our 47th dinner and it seems that everything I could say I have said already. Anyway, it's an awful lot of dinners and a distressing number of chairman's speeches. To put it into perspective, our present Prime Minister was born five years **after** my first Gorphwysfa dinner speech. His predecessor, Liz Truss, was born the very same year as our first dinner. And at that same time an 11 year old Boris was revelling in Latin and ancient Greek in his prep school. Since then we've had 11 prime ministers (that is only four fewer than served during the Queen's 70 year reign).

And now I'm running out of material. I have recycled again and again the 141 jokes I've told over the years. There seems to be a genuine lack of the jokes and anecdotes that had circulated freely before Covid. Usually, Terry could be relied upon for half a dozen. He tells me that this year, for the first time, he has heard of no suitable jokes. Could it be the usual excuses; supply-chain issues, people working from home, Brexit, or perhaps overly cautious political correctness.

I turned to the Internet and this is what I found.

A mountaineer told a fellow climber that his mountain guide fell into a crevasse. Did that not worry you the friend asked. No, it had many pages missing!

Or: A mountain man standing in Leicester Square was banging two pans together. A policeman asked him what he was doing. Keeping bears away he said. But we don't have bears in Leicester Square said the policeman. No! I'm doing such a wonderful job.

Very bad, you will agree. After this, you might be relieved to know Mark Twain has said "In heaven there is no humour".

Another solution I considered was a to reach for those books that advise the inadequate how to make appropriate after dinner speeches. The book I turned to was called *Toasts and Speeches* by Charles Cecil. It gives potted speeches appropriate to every, or almost every, occasion. Sadly however, it seems deficient on outdoor activities and the nearest to the Gorphwysfa's activities was a speech "to the Cycling Club". There are cyclists among us so let me give you a few choice words from the book: *Can I commend to you the joys of the open-air which we all enjoy together with the poor man's ever-ready horse. And can I wish you all a long run without punctures* – and so on. I'm not sure you would want me to employ the speeches he recommends.

This has been a year of recovery from the privations of Covid. The meets have started again in the Lake District, Scotland, and mid Wales where the towering peak of Plynlimon was conquered by many participants. I hope we can hear some of the stories from those meets this evening.

There has been much sadness in the year which we recognised in the moments before this dinner. Although we are a club whose average age is increasing relentlessly we look forward to the coming year offering a full range of challenges.

It is our great pleasure to welcome Nicolette as our guest this year. She was a founder member and was an enthusiastic climber. As a dancer she was able to exhibit very elegant rockclimbing technique to more clumsy members of the club. I have a dramatic, if very blurred, photograph of her leading her son Matty up a climb on Tryfan. She and I had an epic climb together on the face of the Scafell. When nearing the top we were caught in a violent rainstorm. I always remember how cool Nicolette was as we extracted ourselves from that rather unpleasant situation. As she is the club's senior member, it seems very appropriate that tonight we should elect her to life membership - the club's highest honour.

Next year will see my 90th birthday and I think I might be approaching a sensible time to retire (as I've said on this occasion for many years). Of course, there are lots of different ways of doing that. Some retirees are dragged protesting from office like Boris Johnson, and now his successor has travelled the same path. However, Boris left with a veiled threat. He quoted the Roman leader Cincinnatus who resigned to "return to his plough". He did not add that Cincinnatus was invited to return to Rome as dictator some years later. I can promise that I will make no such threat!

Last year we made no awards because our activities were so restricted by Covid. However, this year I believe we can start again to give at least some of our traditional awards.

Distant White Domes: for triumphs in the greater ranges. This year the Gorphwysfa member who has travelled furthest to the greater ranges is Terry Jones. He took an adventurous trail through the mountains of Peru. Terry is a deserving recipient of the Distant White Domes award.

Glory and Gloom: for climbs done in traditionally miserable Welsh conditions -especially on Lliwedd. It is with sadness that the awards committee has to announce that this year no deserving candidate was identified for this award

Kracked Karabiner: for the most heroic activity by a club member. This year the crack carabiner is awarded to Len. He traversed the challenging Via Ferrata in the Lake District while he was far from well. He is now suffering from a very serious illness. Our thoughts are with him.

Llydaw Race Award: for the New Year's race round Llyn Llydaw. Only one member of the Gorphwysfa entered the Llydaw race this year. Tanya Richardson completed the race in the respectable time of 1 hour and 28 minutes to earn this award.

Jesse James Award: for outstanding service to the club. This year a number of members of the club have made major contributions to its activities and their commitment and hard work is greatly appreciated. We have awarded the Jesse James Award to Kate for her unceasing activities on our behalf over the years.

This year we have decided, as an experiment, to toast the club with virtual Mummery's blood. This when drunk virtually with firmly closed eyes it is said to perfectly replicate the material version. Can I ask you to rise to toast the club in our *virtual Mummery's blood* which, as we always say, when taken in the mountains shortens distances, lowers angles and improves the weather.

Ascendentis respicere iuvat - mountaineers like to look back.

Brian Smith



Professor Sir Brian Smith (1933-2023)

St Catherine's College is saddened to share the news that Professor Sir Brian Smith, former Master of St Catherine's College, has died aged 89.

Sir Brian was founding Fellow in Chemistry 1960-93, Master 1988-93, and Honorary Fellow of St Catherine's College from 1993 until his death. He also served as Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University from 1993-2001. In 1999, he was awarded a knighthood in recognition of his efforts in building university links with industry and commerce.

Throughout his career, Sir Brian deepened the College's strength in and reputation for both the sciences and the arts. After completing post-doctoral research at UC Berkeley, he joined the College as Physical Chemistry Fellow in 1960 with research focused on intermolecular forces. Alongside his fellow chemists at St Catherine's, he worked to establish the College as the first to give science parity with the humanities.

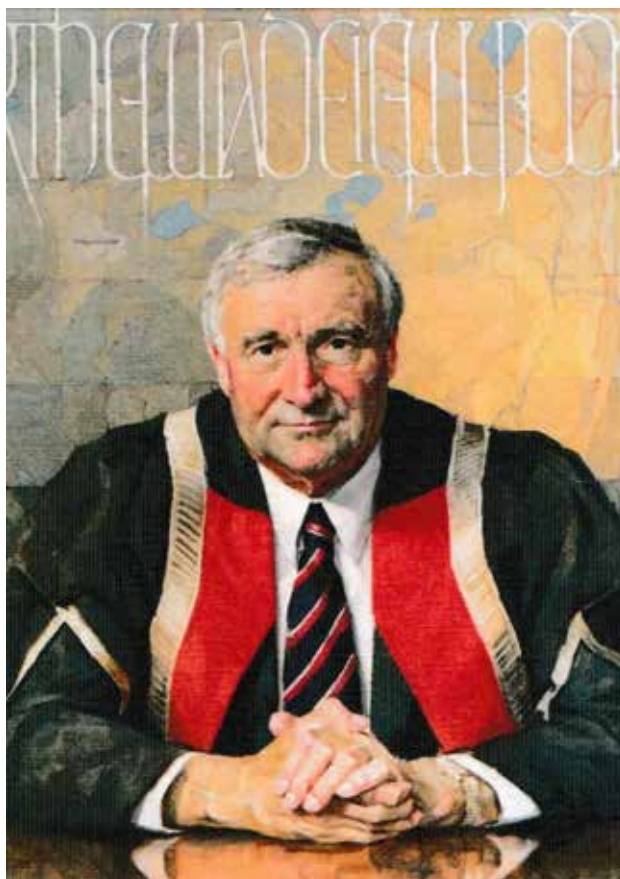
Always interested in innovation, he was one of Oxford's first computer users, using an old valve-operated Mercury computer.

In 1990, during his tenure as Master of St Catherine's, Sir Brian oversaw the establishment of the Cameron Mackintosh Chair of Contemporary Theatre, solidifying the College's central role in the arts for the whole university.

Sir Brian is remembered by those he met for his humour, uplifting spirit, and welcoming manner. His appetite for learning and innovation continued well into retirement, with keen interests in walking, climbing, and a constant engagement with the students of St Catherine's.

The College's flag is flying at half-mast in his honour, and the thoughts of members of the College are with his family at this time.

www.stcatz.ox.ac.uk/sir-brian-smith-1933-2023



A few sincere words

From my first meeting with Brian his undoubted charisma was something that I felt and always did thereafter. The times on the hill and rock in Wales and in the Dolomites with him gave me the feeling of a great presence, a solid calm and totally dependable man, who could overcome his own physical pains and go steadily at his pace regardless, to a welcoming finishing line. To me he gave re-assurance and quiet confidence in everything we did together.

His hospitality was all embracing and generous, to both Maggie and myself, and the loss of the photographs on my stolen iPad of both Brian and Regina at home and abroad will not erase the many happy memories. Being with Brian on Plynlimon last year, two old-timers together, is one of my most lasting memories. I can see him now, walking into the mist on the summit, trying to see way beyond the limiting white horizon.

And to me, Brian was always a beckoning horizon. In the vague indefinable mix of my spiritual thoughts he'll always be a pillar to struggle towards, a solid rock of achievement.

It was a privilege to have known him.

Jesse James

Brian Smith: A Celebration of a Life in Science

On Saturday 30th September a large gathering of scientists assembled at St Catherine's college, Oxford to remember Brian and his outstanding contribution to science and education. This included folk from America and represented many decades of Brian's scientific life. It was wonderful that Regina and Brian's three children Caroline, Mark and Nick and their partners were able to be there too.

It was a particularly poignant occasion because the weekend had been organised to celebrate Brian's 90th birthday in October. It was to be a joyous occasion. Sadly this was not to be. But following Brian's sudden death it was decided that the event should still go on and become a celebration of his scientific life.

Keeping the event on track became a major headache for the chief organiser, David Gough, a contemporary of mine in Brian's research group. Just a few weeks before the event St Catherine's announced that unstable reinforced aerated autoclaved concrete (the dreaded RAAC) had been found in major areas of the college including the Senior Common Room, the planned location for the dinner. Thanks to herculean efforts by David, external caterers were arranged and the dinner was able to go ahead in another part of the college.

The event began with a set of presentations chaired by Graham Richards, an eminent Oxford Chemist and given by key members of Brian's research Group: Keith Miller, Geoff Maitland and Steve Daniels. Also contributing was Sir Brian Fender, former vice chancellor of Keele University and close colleague of Brian's at the Physical Chemistry Laboratory. These contributions focussed on different aspects of Brian's research in the fundamental properties of gases which unusually for a Physical Chemist were focussed on very practical applications in human biology. Brian's work led to a crucial understanding of how to safely increase the depths that deep-sea divers could reach. Another area of research led to an understanding of the mechanism of general anaesthetics and subsequently to the development of better and safer compounds in this crucial class of drugs. Peppered throughout the presentations were many fond memories of working with Brian in particular his appetite for ensuring that all serious research work had to interspersed with the equally important work of having fun, be that playing tennis, running miles or planning the next rock-climbing trip.

Following this session we walked to a quiet and photogenic area of the college where a professional photographer captured the attached picture for posterity. He was a very enthusiastic young man and as you can see he was able to marshal this ageing group into a beautifully balanced tableau.

After a short interlude the throng gathered for a formal evening dinner in a RAAC-free meeting room of the college. I say "formal" which indeed it was though it became a little less so as the wine flowed. There were further impromptu personal anecdotes about Brian and some lovely words from Regina and Caroline.

Running through the entire day was a common thread relating to Brian's personality that members of the Gorphwysfa, whether scientists or not, will recognise. This was, of course, Brian's enthusiasm for new challenges which did not diminish as he got older. We all know he learned to ski in his later life and he succeeded in becoming a member of the Magic Circle at the age of 80. Brian was an inspirational educator always ensuring that the complexity of the material he was presenting was matched to his audience. He wrote two books for undergraduates on Chemical Thermodynamics and Physical Chemistry which became bestsellers. He always had the knack of explaining very complex ideas with elegant simplicity. Brian had a strong urge to succeed in all that he did and his achievements are testament to that. But what made him special was an equally strong desire that everyone around him should succeed as well: the quintessential quality of a great leader. This wonderful trait was, I believe, the key to his remarkable success as Vice Chancellor of Cardiff when under his tenure the university moved from 45th to 5th in the UK research league tables.

One of my own special memories concerns orienteering which Brian enjoyed well into his declining years. You may be aware that orienteers typically dress in brightly coloured, sometimes loose-fitting clothing giving rise to the impression that the sport is enjoyed by people who run round woods in their pyjamas! Brian fought many years to dispel this idea with his chosen garb...old shirt and baggy gardening trousers! I think this made him unique amongst the orienteering community.

We all have our own recollections of Brian and of our times together. Rock climbing, Himalayan expeditions, caving, that "long boring speech", and who can ever forget his enthusiasm for the placing of a bottle high on the face of Lliwedd. Above all he will be remembered as someone who maintained his positivity and sense of fun and adventure right to the end. It is a privilege to have known Brian and we will all miss him.

Andrew Middleton



Brian and a few Adventures

Brian caught the climbing bug in his early teens. From that point on, he would climb anything that didn't move, from Himalayan peaks to the local railway bridge.

Having enjoyed rock climbing for a few years, he started winter climbing, with axe and crampons, firstly in the UK and later in the Alps which he visited for the first time in 1953. By this time, mountaineering was a serious part of his makeup. Indeed, when he first met Regina, he explained to her that mountaineering was not just a pastime to him, it was more like a religion!

Fortunately, she also loved the mountains! Brian continued to have adventures in the mountains in the following years, while he was establishing his academic career and enjoying his family growing up. But things became more serious in 1971 when endurance mountaineering raised its head. It started with the Welsh 3000s, a classic challenge visiting the 14 peaks in Wales over 3000 ft in a day, ending on top of Snowdon.

Next, he tackled the Skye Ridge, which involves literally miles of continuous rock scrambling and technical rock pitches. It was on this trip that Brian encountered The Ghost of Corie Lagan. He had a conversation with an old mountaineer dressed in tweeds who offered advice on the best time to tackle the route – but nobody else ever saw this character! And so the myth of the ghost was born.



Approaching Coire Lagan

Between 1975 and 1980, Brian had several trips to the Alps. In 1980, a party including Brian attempted the Matterhorn. After a successful and enjoyable ascent, the descent started well and the party had a leisurely pause at the Solvay Hut. However, the sun had softened the snow on the Lower East face, making it desperately challenging and dangerous. Safely down, they vowed never to loiter in huts again. Just one of Brian's many epic mountaineering adventures.

The next step was the Himalayas. A major six-week expedition to the Garhwal Himalayas was planned by Brian and Mike Leask, to take place in 1981. It was to be the largest expedition anyone had made in this region for many years. So epic was the proposed adventure, some of the team members were even interviewed by the BBC.

Brian made further visits to the Himalayas, including to the Annapurna Sanctuary with Regina, to Langtang and finally to the Everest region, which I was fortunate enough to take part in. During this period of great mountaineering adventure, Brian and a group of friends formed the Gorphwysfa Club for climbers and mountaineers, which is still going strong today. The club has regular meets, an annual journal and dinner, where Brian, as Chairman, presented each year what he called his "long and boring speech". Of course it was anything but!

Brian had a truly indomitable spirit. Aged 60, he learned to ski. Despite various illnesses and setbacks, he continued to walk, climb and orienteer until very recently. Throughout his life he relished adventure, its risks and its rewards. He was always encouraging to those of us less adventurous, supportive of us when failing, generous in praise when successful. He was always positive and utterly dependable.

Kate Williams 2023

The Gorphwysfa

A few historical notes

The origins of the Gorphwysfa go back as far as 1972. In February of that year Harvey and Rosie Lloyd, with their children Christopher and Timothy moved to be wardens of the newly established Pen y Pass Youth Hostel. In Easter of the same year the Smith family started to youth hostel again and met up with the Lloyds at Pen y Pass. The mountaineering connection began only a few months later. Previous to this in 1971 Andrew Middleton, John Middleton, Steve Ogden and Brian Smith had climbed all the Welsh 3000-foot mountains in one day. That expedition was a great success and they decided in the following year to do the Cuillin ridge in Skye, again in just one day. So it was at Easter 1972 that Andrew and Brian decided to use the Pen y Pass as a base for their rock-climbing practice for the Skye Ridge. (The Ridge was traversed successfully in May by Andrew Middleton, John Middleton, John Darling and Brian.)

From this small beginning the group began to grow. Increasing numbers went camping in the Lake District and particularly in Skye. The weather in Skye was particularly unwelcoming and in 1973 the campsite in Glen Brittle was flooded after almost unceasing rain. In early September the Smiths introduced the Bergel's to a weekend at Pen y Pass. Nicolette did her first rock climb on Ivy Chimney. The idea of a formal club was probably debated at this time. Brian felt that it was in August 1975, sitting in a tent on Skye again in torrential rain, that it was decided to form a "proper" club. There was discussion long and hard over possible names and Brian thought it was Helen Middleton who suggested that we took the name of the old Pen y Pass hotel, Gorphwysfa. A month later at Pen y Pass the group had the inaugural meeting of the club. Officers were elected, a constitution agreed and arrangements for the first club dinner in the November were decided on. At the dinner it was Brian's inspired idea to drink a toast to the club in Mummery's Blood, however it is thought that it was Harvey who suggested having a long and boring speech... (Those present at the meeting were Andy and Chris Middleton, John and Helen Middleton, Derek and Nicolette Bergel, Harvey and Rosie Lloyd, Brian and Peggy Smith. Though they were unable to be present Steve and Ruth Ogden, Geoff Pocock and Ann Davis were also declared to be founding members.) At that time it was thought that the gathering would be the first and last time the club carried out any formal business however the growth of the club has brought about the need to formalise various aspects of the club's organisation. In the same year the first club journal appeared. Since that time the club has held a dinner every year, usually with a well-known mountaineer as guest, and a journal has been produced at least once a year.

Initially the club was very much focused on rock-climbing and the history of mountaineering in North Wales and one of its aims was to introduce people to the mountains. It adopted as its "late Patron" Geoffrey Winthrop Young who, almost a century ago, organised mountaineering parties to the then Gorphwysfa Hotel. The club was very honoured that his wife Eleanor (Len) was able to attend two of its dinners and was appointed an Honorary Member. The club adopted the motto "Ascendentes respicere iuvat" which was a Latin rendering of a phrase from Dante, "Mountaineers like to look back". It also adopted a Latin tag introduced by Nancy Rowlinson "Haec olim meminisse iuvabit" ---- "One day we will remember these things with pleasure!" It is the tradition to toast the club at the conclusion of the dinner with Mummery's blood, a drink made of Rum and Bovril which is said, when drunk, to "shorten distances, lower angles and improve the weather!" Over the years the focus on rock-climbing has diminished and many other outdoor sports, fell-running, orienteering, hang gliding, and caving, to mention just some, have broadened the activities.

The first New Year Meet at Pen y Pass was over 1975/76 with the Llydaw Race taking place on the 1st January, with only the club members involved.



At a New year Meet, Pen y Pass

The club has organised many trips to the Alps usually led by John Rowlinson. In 1981 an expedition led by John A Jackson was organised to climb an unclimbed mountain, Devistan South (21,810 ft.), near Nanda Devi. The expedition was, so it was thought the largest expedition to the Indian Himalayas for ten years. It was not possible to attempt Devistan South due to confusion over permits, but an attempt was made on Mrigthuni (22,490 ft). It was not successful, but John Rowlinson and Stephen Simpson climbed another mountain, Bethartoli Himal South Peak (20,700 ft), which provided some consolation for the expedition members. Since that time a number of visits to the Himalayas have been organised first of all by Brian and Mike Leask, but then mostly led by Harvey Lloyd.

A special feature of the early years of the club was the very active lady's programme. The Ladies' or Women's (as they came to be called) Meets took place at least once a year and usually involved going to a very remote cottage. Only those who participated know the balance between mountaineering and riotous living.

The club since its earliest days has supported the Welsh Thousand Metres Peak race and in 1990 ago took over the entire organisation of the race. It remains a very successful fell race attracting a large number of army and civilian competitors. The club also organises a race round Llyn Llydaw each New Year's day. Although originally entirely a domestic event it now attracts many runners who are not members of the club.

The club has had no serious mountaineering accidents but two of its members Leo Wood and Martin Norton died some years ago and then Gillian and her husband Jeremy Naish passed away. Mike Leask died of serious illnesses and later Liz his wife also died. Sadly Nancy and John Rowlinson too. The founding members are now in a minority and many new members have joined the club and are active in its affairs.

The club raised funds for the covering of expenses and also became affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council. Despite Harvey no longer being warden of Pen y Pass the club still holds strong links to the hostel, but with its activities becoming more widespread Hafod y Gwynt has added to and supplemented its place as a base for activities. The club now holds at least six meets each year as well as the traditional Pen y Pass New Year get together.

On October 26th, 1975, a bottle containing several important icons relating to the early years of the club was buried on the Gorphwysfa ledge high on the crags of Lliwedd. This was replaced in 2003 and it is hope that 50 years following this date the site will be revisited, and up-to-date information on the club's activities added.

***Originally published in a Journal by E. B. Smith
Updating by H Lloyd***

Anniversaries

1975 October 25th, 1st Dinner

1975 Production of the first Journal.

1975 October 26th Bottle deposited on Lliwedd ledge.

1975/76 1st New Year House Party Pen y Pass

1975 1st Llydaw Race

1981 The First Himalayan Expedition.

1990 took over full responsibility for 1000 metres race.
Became Affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council

Eds Note: We would very much like to expand on Brian's words. Would any member like to add any points to the history?

Brian Smith – an inspiration to us all

I didn't know Brian during his climbing pomp, when he and other members of the Gorphwysfa tackled numerous classic and challenging routes in the mountains of Wales, the Alps and Himalayas. Some of that sounded terrific and I'm sorry that I missed it. But Brian's enthusiasm for past epics on Lliwedd, involving climbs over wet, steep grass, and loose rock with little or no protection gave me a sense of relief to be a newcomer. I never was persuaded to venture onto Lliwedd!

But it was my great privilege to be inspired by Brian to climb lots in North Wales and even join him on trips to the Alps and Himalayas. No matter where you went Brian's enthusiasm for climbing was infectious and his knowledge of the climbs, and their history, impressive. Brian also made the odd concession to the modern age and did permit the use of technologically advanced protection such as cams ("friends"), but his choice of clothing was, shall we say, a little less than elegant, and certainly frugal – the same battered down jacket appearing year after year!



There's much one could say to describe Brian's attitude to climbing: enthusiastic, joyous, determined, encouraging. But a bit like Brian's taste in outdoor clothing, not exactly elegant or refined. Faced with the sort of problem move that required a subtle shift of balance, or a delicate back footing or a precarious rock over, Brian seemed to find a solution that was unique. Maybe it was because he was tall or maybe he wasn't quite so flexible. But somehow he seemed to wind his arms and legs into improbable positions before easing past whatever problem needed overcoming. It was always hard not to think, at least a little, of John Cleese and the Monty Python sketch about the Ministry of silly walks. But one had to admit he was very effective and rarely defeated.

Kate and I had so many wonderful adventures climbing with Brian, far too many to recount them all here. Instead I'd like to share a few random memories of some of these adventures that help illustrate those unique and glorious characteristics that made Brian such a great companion and dear friend.

Cioch in boots

I'd heard much about the exploits of the Gorphwysfa on earlier trips to Skye. Epic traverses of the Skye ridge and Brian's encounter with the ghost of Corrie Lagan. We had neither the time nor weather to attempt any such repeat, but after a few days the weather cleared enough to take in a climb. Brian as always had a great scheme in hand, a classic climb of an early route - a piece of real, epic climbing originally scaled in tweeds and hobnail boots.

Fortunately, we had neither available, but did get into the spirit by setting out in standard walking boots: me, Kate, Bill McCann and of course Brian as expedition leader encouraging us to do the route in traditional style. That is to say, urging, squirming, crawling and sliding on one's bottom. High up, just below the top of the Skye ridge, is The Cioch. A huge cube of rock improbably attached to the main rock face by a narrow saddle of rock.



Having scrambled up to the start there was a damp squirm to get onto a rising diagonal line up the side of a gully. Then across the top of that onto a section of the rock face with a ledge that was best tackled by crawling until we reached the infamous, exposed saddle ridge. The ridge is about a foot or so wide and descends at an angle of about 30°. In modern rock shoes it would be possible to stroll down it with little trouble. However, in standard walking boots, let alone hobnails, it's a different prospect. But Brian knew the history of the climb well and explained how one needed to somehow shuffle around on one's bum to get one leg resting either side or just in front, then edging down the airy ridge to reach the sanctuary of the final head wall onto The Cioch.

The sun shone and we all giggled at the sheer absurdity of the route down the ridge then popped up onto the top of The Cioch "boulder" high above the land below and drank in the magnificent views. Brian permitted us to abseil from the top, via an awkward diagonal slab (it would be, wouldn't it!) until we rejoined the lower part of the route and could return to the safety of the valley. In rock climbing terms I think it is graded moderate (in modern terms very easy) but it made for a memorable day out: thanks again Brian.

Milk from your tea

Whilst living in Cardiff, Brian embraced the local area as his playground and couldn't but help to enthruse visitors to join him in various quests. A trip to Little Neath cave, involving a squeeze into a big rabbit hole in the hillside followed by pressing one's body, molecule by molecule, through a gap in the rock the size of a letter box, convinced me that caving was not my forte!

So when on a subsequent visit he suggested a visit to a local crag we jumped at the opportunity. After a short drive we arrived next door to a very run down village, the sort where you can buy a whole row of houses for a pound. The crag was fairly small but offered some entertaining climbing. As we sat at the top taking a rest, one of the locals walked by the bottom and was soon engaged in conversation by Brian. As he was about to leave the man pointed to our rucksacks at the foot of the crag and advised "If I were you I wouldn't leave your bags there. Round here they'd nick the milk from your tea".

163 years on the rope

The Idwal Slabs were a frequent draw for climbing expeditions on Brian's visits to Wales. Their long history and variety of long, traditional routes in a great setting made them one of his favourites. One fine day, not so long ago, a party of us made it to the foot of the slabs for a day of adventure, with Brian egging us on and entertaining us in equal measure.

We split up into a couple of groups and I headed up the route with two ropes, one attached to Brian, the other to Jesse James. Somewhere about half way up, as I sat on the belay bringing in the two following ropes, I started chatting to a guy on another belay close by. He, in astonishment, ask me to repeat what I'd said, after I explained that I had "163 years" attached to the ropes below me - both climbers below being over 80. And up they came enjoying the setting and lovely weather; a fantastic inspiration in grabbing life and enjoying it. It's not every day that one has the privilege to ascend with two such great climbers and lovers of the Welsh rock.

Crackstone rib in January

Why oh why? How could Brian persuade us to go rock climbing in January with the outside temperature well below freezing. But persuade us he did. Where? "Crackstone rib. That dries quickly". And off we went with as many warm layers as it is humanly possible to wear.

Now Crackstone Rib is a lovely classic climb that starts up a gully, followed by a traverse that accesses the rib above. Whilst gloves were useful getting to the start of the route they were completely impractical once the climbing started. That first short section should have made the prospect abundantly clear. As one's fingers gripped onto ice cold edges and ledges, the feeling in the finger tips slowly drained away. But no, we didn't do the sensible thing and reverse off to warm up in Pete's Eats, we carried on - of course encouraged to do so by Brian.

Up onto the rib we went, each hand contact with the glacially cold rock further drawing what little feeling remained in one's fingers. The heat continued to drain away until hands felt like boxing gloves, but with no feeling left whatsoever. Hands were placed, hopefully, in position on each of the holds and fingers set to grip on, except there was no feeling left at all and no confidence that the hand was actually holding onto anything useful.

And so it went on for what seemed like an eternity, just the slight sense of feeling left in one's feet, (and I mean slight), enabled us to edge our way up. Then finally with a great sense of relief

we reached the top, only to realise that the descent to the start involved climbing down steep, frozen grass slopes to reach the bottom. Once safely down we rejoiced in the great pleasure of the climb, the “epic”, a great day out with friends. It wouldn't have happened without Brian's infectious enthusiasm.

Classic Tryfan with Andy and John

Whilst some of us may have been drawn to some roadside crag hopping, Brian maintained a love of the “classics”. None more so than those reached by the heather terrace on Tryfan. Such was Brian's charisma he managed to persuade Andy and John Middleton to re-engage with climbing and so a party set out to climb The Grooved Arete.



It starts with an initial narrow slab section, the groove, requiring delicate footwork and with sparse protection. As described by Ron James "Climb the groove, then thrutch up left..." – exactly to Brian's tastes! This is followed by a further pair of sharp edged ridges with an awkward step from one to the other in order to progress. That in turn leads to the main feature of the route, the Knights Move Slab, a strange angled slab of rock with an awkward entry and an even more improbable exit corner, all high up on the East face of Tryfan.

As was common, Brian had his own unique technique to move through the difficulties. Where others used a delicate finger hold and a small edge as a foot placement, Brian somehow stretched out into improbable positions which allowed him to pass with relative ease leaving the rest of us astonished at these extraordinary "acrobatics". They were not very elegant, but always effective. For some a classic line was one straight and clean, but for Brian it was always one with interesting route finding and even more interesting moves! So did we enjoy it? Of course we did; it wasn't possible to climb with Brian and not enjoy it.

Holyhead mountain - the happy place

November, for the annual dinner, does not often offer good rock climbing conditions in the high hills. But the weather out towards the coast at the far end of Anglesey was quite often dry and somewhat sunny. Many a time we went there with Brian to climb some of the classic slabs on Holyhead mountain. A pleasant walk across the moorland, followed by a bit of a scramble up a boulder field delivers the climbing party at the bottom of the rock face.



Brian knew all the climbs like the back of his hand and always had useful advice on which lines to take and which holds would unlock the puzzle of how to progress. Many a happy hour was spent there enjoying the rock, but more especially the company. It's a place where Brian always seemed to be relaxed and happy, as is evidenced by the picture below.

Lockwood's chimney

It will come as no surprise that not all trips to North Wales had the benefit of sunny weather: just occasionally it was a bit damp. But this never reduced Brian's enthusiasm for climbing. Drawing on his amazing, encyclopaedic memory of historic climbs he always seemed to find an option for the day, and somehow persuaded us what a good idea it would be to go climbing in the pouring rain.

An eternal favourite on a wet day was Lockwood's Chimney off the Gwynant valley. It of course involved climbing in boots and fighting one's way up. Lockwood's Chimney is within a great cleft in the rock face, where a million tons of Welsh hillside looks ready to fall away at a moments notice. The guide book mentions a short vertical wall at the start. It fails to mention that in the rain it becomes a waterfall: the first reach up resulting in water pouring down one's sleeves.

After that a ledge delivers you at the bottom of the great cleft, in a sort of cave - dark, wet, greasy and with an awkward off width chimney. The first attempts to move upwards usually result in an ungraceful slither back to the cave floor and some expletives. "If you squirm up a bit, then twist there's a bit of a hand hold" advises Brian. And of course he's right, at least in principle, but it still requires a lot of udging and squirming to pull through into the bottom of the great cleft.

Brian climbs it in typical Brian style, with moves of his very own and amazing determination until he too pops out safely into the floor of the cleft. From then on it's a relatively simple crab like scramble up and along the floor of the cleft, with a final exit through a window onto the main rock face and terrific views (as much as the rain permits). Another great Brian adventure.

Summers in the Dolomites

Brian had many glorious summer trips to the Dolomites, often based around Cortina, which gave access to spectacular climbs and via ferrata. His enthusiasm drew us in and before we knew it we too spent some happy summers climbing around the Cinque Torre and Tre Cime di Laverado with Brian. As always there was something characteristic about each and every one of Brian's climbs.

The Tomaselli via ferrata is a hard, top graded climb using fixed lines and metal hand holds to provide safe climbing over steep ground. I think Brian had had a look at the start in past years and was somewhat intimidated (he was not alone in that – many a party has turned back when faced with the start!). But one fine, sunny day we managed to persuade him to give it a go.

The start involves an airy step out onto a nose of rock with a great deal of exposure (a huge drop). It is delicate and energetic, but ultimately not as hard as it looks. Kate made it look far too easy, with some lovely footwork and graceful moves to get fully established on the steep route. Brian took it on boldly and with great determination, but should we say, somewhat less balletically than Kate.



After continuing steeply up one arrives high on the mountain at a saddle where there is no option but to adopt an "a cheval" sitting position with one leg either side of the ridge. The joy could be seen in Brian's face as he finished up the last headwall above the "a cheval" and in the long, but easier descent down a mid grade via ferrata to get home. I'm not sure if the grin on my face or Brian's was biggest – it was lovely to share that wonderful climb with him.



But there remains one other day that fulfilled Brian's particular love for mountaineering and climbing – an "epic". Brian's and the Gorphwysfa's history thrives on numerous "epics": caught out on the hills in appalling weather, only just getting back in time for the annual dinner and so on. On one trip to the Tre Cime it was Kate and I who indulged in an epic. Having abandoned one climb we chose to summit a different peak by an easier route. With a late start and an over optimistic estimate of how long it would take we ended up at the top just as the sun was setting.



With no useful torches and only a vague idea of the route down we got a bit lost and took forever to reach the bottom – in pitch dark at around 11pm and "rescued" by Tom and Adam as the fog set in!. We eventually returned to the hotel in Cortina around midnight where Brian and Regina met us with much needed snacks and drink. Whilst Brian wasn't actually with us he absolutely revelled in the "epic" which I think gave him as much pleasure as if he had been on the climb.

These and other memories will live with us for ever. It was such a joy and privilege to share time in the mountains with our great friend Brian.

Pete & Kate Williams

Brian and the Gorphwysfa in the Himalayas

1981 Garhwal Himalayas Expedition

Brian's first trip to the Himalayas was a major expedition in 1981 to the Nanda Devi Sanctuary in the northern Indian Garhwal Himalayas, which planned to make the first ascent of Deviston South (21,810 feet). The leader was John A Jackson, Principle of Plas y Brenin National Outdoor Pursuits Centre and a very experienced Himalayan mountaineer who had been a member of the team that made the first ascent of Kanchenjunga in 1956. Brian and Mike Leask took two years planning the expedition, buying and testing equipment and seeking sponsorship, which was obtained from fourteen organisations including the Mount Everest Foundation and the Sports Council. The other expedition members were Eileen Jackson, Stephen Simpson, Jim Murray, Jeremy Nash, John Rowlinson, and a very young Stella and Paul Barczak who acted as team doctors.

A two-day bus journey took the team to Josimath near the Tibetan/Chinese border, from where it was a six-day hike following the gorge of the Rishi Ganga to reach base camp. This was an adventure in itself - the gorge rising from 7,000 feet to peaks 23,000 high – deeper than the Grand Canyon. As the team planned to spend a month in the Sanctuary, their equipment and supplies were carried by a caravan of sixty porters and 160 large goats, able to carry about 20lbs each. Base camp was established on 15th September at 15,500 feet on the west moraine above the Trisul glacier, where some Indian staff stayed on to act as cooks, with four high-altitude porters. Although the expedition had been given permission to climb Deviston South by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, a mix-up resulted in an Italian party being given permission to climb the same route at the same time. As the Gorphwysfa team also had permission for Mrigthuni (22,494 feet), they agreed to climb this first, leaving the Italians the first attempt on Deviston South.



The Rishi Ganga Gorge leading to the Nanda Devi Sanctuary



After a day sorting gear, Camp I (advanced base camp) was set up at 16,500 feet on a prow of moraine above the east edge of the glacier, well placed for both Mrigthuni and Deviston South. Camp II was placed on a snow dome on the north face of Mrigthuni at 18,500 feet on 20th

September. The main problem was to find a way through the maze of crevasses that covered the face; Brian and Mike established Camp III four days later at the top of an open snowy gully with seracs forming its left wall at about 20,500 feet. The following day this was occupied by John Rowlinson, Stephen Simpson, and Govind Singh in preparation for the summit attempt.

The next day, however, the expedition woke to deep snow and further climbing was out of the question. The party at Camp III struggled down through waist-deep snow and after seven hours, reached Camp I just as a rescue party was setting out. It was decided to retire to base camp the same day. If the bad weather had come just a day later, the Gorphwysfa team would almost certainly have reached the summit of Mrigthuni. The Italian team were also forced to abandon their attempt on Deviston South. The team later discovered that over 20 mountaineers and high-altitude porters - 25 per cent of climbers in the region - tragically died during the serious storm and subsequent avalanches.

After a further heavy snowstorm on 27th September, the team established a ski camp on the Trisul at 18,500 feet and skied down from 20,000 feet – a new activity for several expedition members. The team also explored a new route into the Inner Sanctuary that had been reported by villagers of Paing. The weather improved from 1st October, and the team regained Camp I, where one tent was found torn with a broken pole and others were deformed by the weight of snow but recovered. On the 3rd, members reached Camp II after a struggle in deep snow to find the tents crushed but undamaged. Camp III appeared to have been obliterated, buried in avalanche debris, and after two unsuccessful attempts to reach it, the attempt on Mrigthuni was abandoned and the remaining camps cleared.

The heavy snow cover also ruled out any attempt on Deviston South, but then as a consolation, the expedition turned its attention to an attractive peak behind base camp, Bethatoli South (20,700 feet). John and Stephen set up a high camp on 7th October and the next day reached the summit by crossing a large glacier in breaking crust and tackling a steep ice slope. Mike and Brian attempted the summit on the following day, but Brian was ill and had to stop 700 feet below the summit. This was an early indication of Celiac's Disease, which was not diagnosed till several years later. The expedition's time was now up: the porters returned, camp was packed up and the trek out began – seeming even more spectacular and beautiful than on the journey in.



Avalanche on Mrigthuni which missed the tents, the tiny specks on the right

Langtang 1989, and Naya Kanga, Harvey's account.

Sadly this trip was never reported in the Gorphwysfa Journal. Building on the success of the 1981 Gorphwysfa expedition to the Garhwal Himalaya, and a trek with Regina to the Annapurna Sanctuary, Brian proposed to bring together a small but strong party to attempt the South Face of Naya Kanga (5844 m) in 1989.

Before this ambitious trip Brian and Regina had taken on the trek to the Annapurna Sanctuary, which is a great bowl formed by the Annapurna Himal, a range of mountains which form a great barrier to the north. Part of the barrier, on the western side, are a number of what were termed trekking peaks, mountains that the Nepal government allowed mountaineers to climb without a peak fee being charged and complex paperwork. One of these mountains Tharppu Chuli (18,045 ft) or known as Tent Peak was popular for a number of reasons, and it is thought that the added attraction of Tent Peak drew Brian to the Sanctuary. The Annapurna Sanctuary is a superb walk

and Brian spoke about it many times. With Regina they had very heavy snow falls that made the trip and arduous but very memorable. Whilst in this area he met Bill O'Connor, who leading a group had climbed Tent Peak. Bill O'Connor was at that time in the process of writing a guide book called *The Trekking Peaks of Nepal*, a book that became the bible for all who wished to explore these mountains. They became friends in the future, and I believe it was because of this contact that in 1989 Naya Kanga became the destination for the 1989 Gorphwysfa Expedition. Sadly again Brian and Regina's trek was not written up.

With this knowledge and background (Bill's book had not been published early in 1989) it was decided that the Naya Kanga expedition would use a major new Himalayan route by a party with limited time at its disposal, to tackle a route to the peak, on which Bill O'Connor and John Cleare had failed in the past because of 'technical difficulties'. When the proposed trip was announced the Gorphwysfa Club members response was not great – Brian, Mike Leask, Geoff Woods, and Harvey Lloyd were very positive about it, but others turned down the opportunity, though there were questions about the weather so early in the season.

Naya Kanga lies to the south of the Langtang Valley which is roughly north of Kathmandu and close to the Tibetan border. A great advantage to this region is that it can be accessed by a comparatively short road journey to the road head (about 10 hours' drive) at Dhunche and then in about 4 or 5-days base camp can be reached – which makes it ideal for a party with only limited time.

Brian and Mike Leask used Elspeth Norman's company Roama Travel to organise the flights with Biman Airways and the mountaineering in Nepal. Accommodation in Kathmandu was booked at the Shangri-La Hotel, providing somewhat higher standard of accommodation than we normally used on in the future! The sirdar leading the expedition was Pemba Norba Sherpa, a very intelligent and capable leader on the hills. The club employed him for the next trek, and even invited him to visit the UK in 1992, when he attended the Lakes meet near Keswick. He went on to summit Everest in the later 1990s.

However all was not well for the expedition. Indian sanctions against Nepal resulted in a petrol shortage, (all fuel was supplied via India, and the supply was stopped) so that the journey by road from Kathmandu to Dhunche had to be made on foot. I must say that I did not feel too upset about this problem. We were in a new wonderland as far as I was concerned and the sooner, we got walking over it the better! Of course I had no knowledge of the nature of what we had to confront, or the technical problems of re routing the whole trip. However a decision was soon made – (there was no other alternative) for us to walk all the way to base camp. A Land Rover was found that would drive us to the outskirts of the city and presumably Pemba the Sirdar, brought together a gang of porters, cooks etc to carry gear and look after us.

Off we set – the details of the trek are lost in the 35 or so years of time that has passed, but one or two incidents have stuck. The route we took was what is call across the grain of the terrain; we were often climbing steeply up and the dropping steeply down to a valley, followed by climbing out of the valley and descending into the next one, so on and so forth! Rarely did we follow a ridge either up or down. Although I do remember one ridge that took us high into the mountains. At this stage altitude was starting to be felt, and as in the future, I tended to be near the rear end of the group. Somewhere along this ridge, early afternoon, I had the call of nature and disappeared off the path into some bushes. When I emerged there was no sign of the group, but of course as the way following this ridge was very obvious, I plodded on, it was a sunny afternoon and I was surrounded by big mountains, a real-world Shangri la. As late afternoon arrived and there was no sign of anyone I continued plodding.

Around about tea time I noted the ridge was leading into a large open valley and nearby was a local lodge, my spirits rose! I thought Ah I have caught up with them! But no such luck, the hut contained one man who did not speak a word of English, and however I tried, I could not communicate anything about a group of English having travelled that way! After a little thought

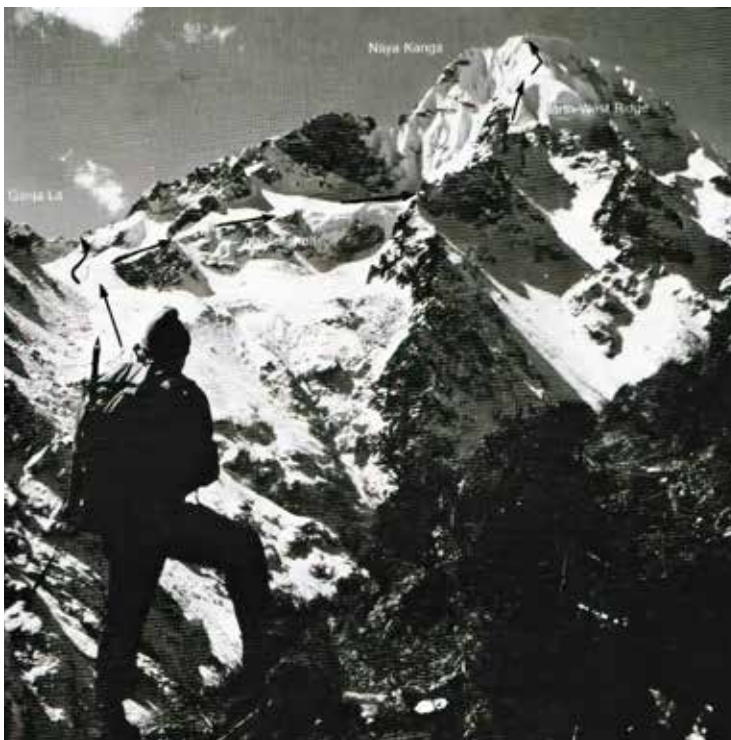
it became clear that the trek had not passed, because they would have waited there for me, and as I saw it, my only way forward was to go back!

Being reasonably fit in those days, and the ridge sloping slowly downwards I was able to adopt a good jogging pace. Then after about one hour decent, far in the distance, as this ridge curved to the right, I could see a figure. It was a person, one of the cooks. I am not too sure when I was missed, but of course the group had dropped off the ridge, right, into a valley where camp was to be set up. Perhaps after a while someone came up with the idea that I had missed the drop off point from the ridge (they had put an arrow mark in the dusty path). I, after a long descent through rhododendron forested country eventually I arrived in the camp in the dark – fortunately the heard torch worked! An interesting afternoon - just part of this wonderland that I was passing through.

The countryside that we were sometimes travelling across, until we arrived at the snowline was largely wooded, very remote and except for isolated villages mainly uninhabited. One village that we camped at had a substantial Gomba built near by, our first taste of Budism.

The trek was certainly a follow the leader exercise, but the area was full of interest in so many ways. We eventually arrived at the snowline and the first problem that we faced was a long traversing line climbing up but diagonally across a steep slope to reach a col. We were well equipped, but it was soon realised that the porters were not, so as we climbed wearing crampons and ice axes, we created a wide path for their safety. Somewhere not far from the col one of the porters lost his load, disaster, as it tumbled down the slope to the valley bottom, probably 1000 feet or more below us. On reaching the col the next move for the sirdar was to get two of the porters to descend and rescue the lost equipment, which contained the cooking equipment, plates and cutlery etc for us! Later in the evening they returned and reported that they could not find two teaspoons, everything else was retrieved!

We were now climbing high, and the porters did not like it – if fact after another day or so they deserted us, during the night – we got up for breakfast and they had all gone, leaving us with the Sirdar and the cook gang in a very remote spot! Somewhere we found a shepherd's hut and enclosure and made that our base whilst the Sirdar set off to the nearest village (six hours away) to recruit another gang – which amazingly he did!



Naya Kanga

Now well into our trek, but there was still no sign of Naya Kanga. Having passed through the steep snow area we then were traversing a plateau with a range of low hills on our left. I think it was Mike who suggested that we climbed one of these to get a better view point of the surroundings – and of course the top might be unclimbed so we could claim that we had bagged it! We did this, we were not impressed with the view and the top had a stone cairn on it!

But despite the odd negative thought (!!??), soon we were in the snow again and this was now more serious – together with the thoughts that we had been trekking for days and still not able to see Naya Kanga. Camping in snow, the

sirdar set off to explore the track and reported that the snow was chest deep in places and not safe to go on! The English and Welsh detachments deep in the Nepalese hills did not believe a word – first of all Brian set off and reported that it was not that deep and passable. I then gave it ago and on return agreed with him. It was conference time – which way should we travel? At about this time Brian discovered small remains of a mountain deer (Himalayan Tahr?) – we were never able to identify it – but clearly the animal had been devoured by a Snow Leopard. This was not far from our tents!

Somewhere in the discussion it became clear that even if we dug our way through the 6-foot-deep snow, we would still not be within striking distance of our mountain. I don't remember who it was that suggested we head back for Kathmandu – but that was soon the collective decision. We had given our all, but that was not enough to climb Naya Kanga when the buses have no petrol!

The return journey, partially following a different route was again full of incidents. One incident that even Brian retold over the years was when we arrived at a remote village and unpacked our rucksacks on the campsite which was probably the 'village green' area for the village. I carried quite a large poly box of first aid gear, marked boldly with a red cross. A local person spotted this and in about two minutes a queue formed wanting medical attention! The queue grew and I had to do something – actually I could see that I was faced by a real growing problem because my level of first aid did not extend to little babies in arms and lots of other nasty medical conditions and problems. A quote from Brian in Volume 20 No.1, Journal, 'Harvey sat dealing with the most awful injuries and diseases – at which all the rest of the party could not even look!' Added to this was the fact that I did not speak a word of Nepalese – although of course the sirdar could translate. There is no doubt that I lived to tell the tale, and I may have added a little treatment to someone with a bad head, but at the time it was a fairly large problem that was not easy to handle – Brian spoke very positively about the outcome – but I had serious thoughts about that!

Well all good things have to come to an end and we eventually arrived at the outskirts of Kathmandu were, believe it or not, a vehicle picked us up – remember this was pre mobile phone days. Despite our failure to even find the mountain it was a great trip, wonderful companions, and loads and loads of fun, a good standard for all future Nepalese mountain treks. In retrospect it is a little sad that we did not return to the area – Brian spoke a number of times of saying of how he would have loved to revisit the area, but time and economics did not allow it to happen.

The 1991 Gorphwysfa Lobuje East expedition

In 1990, Brian announced in the Gorphwysfa Journal a proposed expedition to climb Lobuje Peak East, (20, 075 ft) the following Easter, leaving London about March 12th with a return flight about the 12th of April. By this time Bill O'Conner had published his book so there was no problem in finding the mountains! Pemba was our Sirdar again.

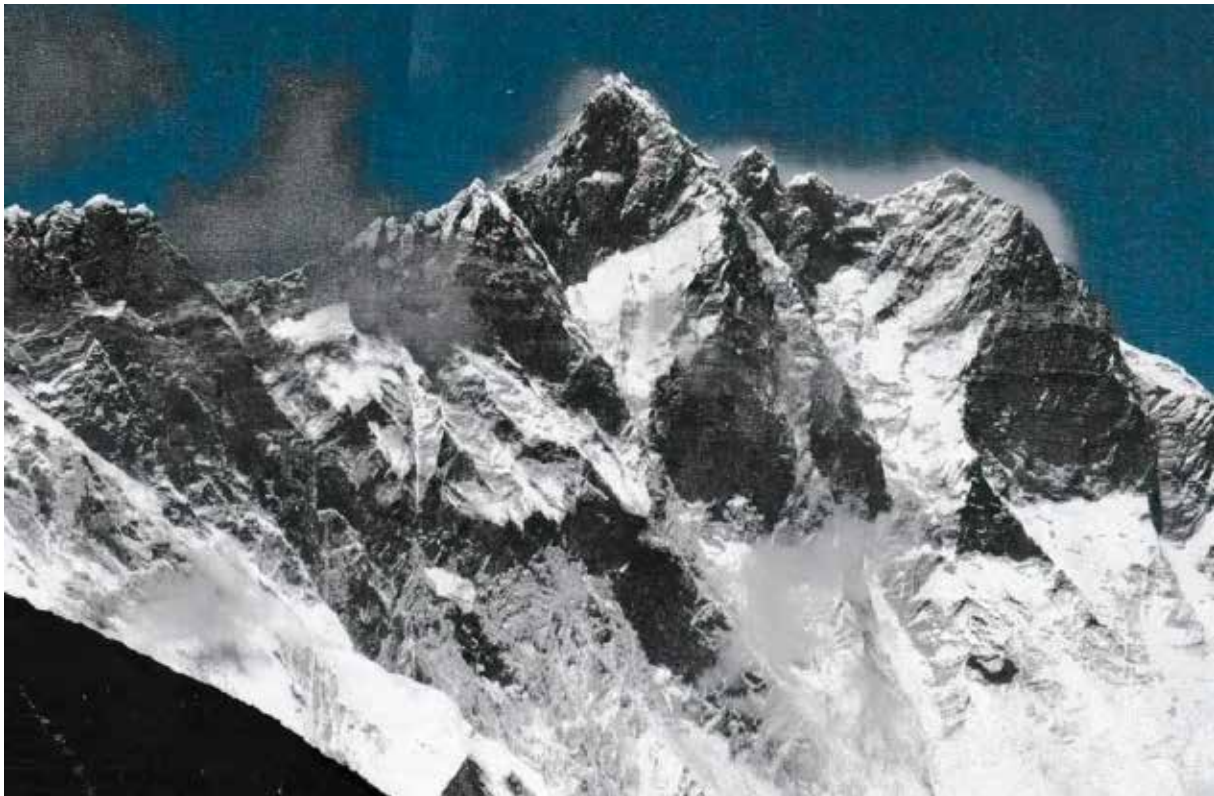
It was a well-supported expedition and trek, by the club – 9 members and friends were involved. The two nights spent in Kathmandu in a hotel were not without incident, On one sunny day we hired bikes and went out for a bike ride in the Kathmandu valley – it was good riding in those days – the traffic was not too heavy. On the return I had a good drink of water from a roadside water fountain – which was not a good move! I spent a very uncomfortable 36 hours with a very serious dose of Delhi Belly – or whatever it is called in Kathmandu. The next day the team flew to Lukla, and I wondered if I could make it – but as there were not too many options I did, but Brian did agree that we spent 12 hours in Lukla for me to recover a little.

The trek followed the Everest Base Camp trail via Monjo, Namche Bazaar (with a rest day for acclimatization), Thyangboche, Pheriche and Duglha, where the route left the main trek to reach Tshloo. This was where base camp would be set up for seven days. It was somewhere

on the walk in that Brian developed a medical problem, sickness and other problems – the first signs that he had a gluten problem, but at the time he did not realize this. Of course, he ate more chapati's for energy but this of course made the condition worse.

At the base camp plans were made to summit Lobuje. A camp was to be set up on the mountain, from which the stop would be attained and the return to base in one day. Sadly, Brian was not able to attempt the summit through his medical problem, and Harvey stayed an extra day to further recover from his problem. When Pember returned with the first group he immediately arranged again to climb the mountain to take Harvey and his partner, who were successful.

We did have a fairly large disaster when camping on the walk in. One of the group, over night (memory does not allow me to say which one!) had his equipment kitbag stolen out of the store tent – we did not keep our big bags in the sleeping tent as space was tight. But he was able to reequip from a store nearby.



Everest from Kala Pattar.

The plan was to then spend another week or so trekking into Everest Base camp, near where we camped and climbed to enjoy the early morning view of Everest from Kala Pattar. The whole area was worth exploring. This worked well – Kate and Pete also managed to get up a local trekking peak in the area. The return to Kathmandu was uneventful, and the whole trek was considered a success. Details of the Everest Base Camp Trek appear in the 2005 Gorphwysfa Journal. On his return home Brian, after extensive tests, was diagnosed with Coeliac's disease. I would presume that this was one of the problems that stood in his way, regarding future Himalayan treks – although he did once more venture forth, with Regina in 2007.

The final trek – the Singalila Ridge, 2007

In autumn 2007, Harvey organized a two-phase trek, the first part flying from London to Delhi with a stopover and then on to Ley, the capital of Ladakh, with Frances and two friends. From Ley they did a demanding nine-day trek in Ladakh, northern India, from the Zaskar valley across a section of the Himalayas mountains and then back to the regional capital.

Flying back to Delhi they met other club members who were joining the group, Regina, Brian, and Terry. The arrival was complex but amazingly worked like clockwork. Brian and Regina, arrived by B A on a different day than Terry, and of course our four flew in from Ley on a completely different time and day! A day or so in Delhi then took the train from Delhi on a 23-hour journey, very much a train journey that was found to be a somewhat different experience than the trains had been used in the past. The train journey had a definite Indian feel about it, crowded, the food was prepared in a huge vat in the middle of an empty carriage, the bed linen was clean and white, but Harvey was a little shocked in the morning when he found the banana that he had tucked under his pillow had been gnawed by what seemed to have been rats teeth! Eventually they arrived at Siliguri where a night was spent in a hotel before Journeying to Darjeeling - from where a shorter six/seven day trek along the Singalila Ridge which separates Sikkim from eastern Nepal would be taken.



Darjeeling with Kanchenjunga rt.

Owing to the weather, the trek did not have a strong Himalayan feel about it but it was certainly different than the journey by train!



Darjeeling train in the High Street.

The ridge extends from Darjeeling towards Kanchenjunga (8,586m), the third highest peak in the Himalayas, and affords the best views of the mountain. The group comprised Brian and Regina, Terry Maher, Harvey, and two friends Lucy Oakley and Vernon Hewitt who had been with Harvey and Frances on the Ladakh trek. Their base in Darjeeling was the very posh Raj-era 4-star Windamere Hotel, where they were awoken at 3.30 a.m. on their first morning for a trip to Tiger Hill to watch the sun rise over Kanchenjunga and Everest. This was followed by a trip to Ghum on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway or Toy Train, a UNESCO world heritage line.

Using horses and sherpas, some of whom had taken part in major mountain expeditions, the group set off along the ridge on 9th October, with mist turning to gentle rain. The next day, heavy drizzle progressed to rain when the route descended to an army post then reascended up a jeep track, where Brian arranged a lift in a passing jeep for Regina, who was suffering with

her back. Faced with the choice between camping or staying in a lodge, the group opted for the greater comfort of a dry indoors. It was Brian's birthday, with a birthday cake and cards, but sadly he was unable to enjoy it due to a dose of Delhi belly.

On day three the group had their first and last view of Kanchenjunga and Kabru. The higher ridges were in bright sunshine, the valley below filled with cloud but after lunch the cloud obscured the mountains once more. Next day some of the party rose at 5 o'clock in hopes of seeing sunrise over the mountains from the viewing hill above the campsite but were disappointed. The area was alive with leeches, and Brian wanted to test one – for scientific purposes of course. Terry offered him one on a stick, and the leech duly bit Brian's hand, let go, and disappeared. Brian's verdict was that the bite was not as pain-free as had been suggested but had a definite crunchiness.

The return to Darjeeling was by Land Rover, followed by a six-hour descent on the Toy train, and, again at Harvey's suggestion they took the train back to Delhi as it was more interesting, as 23-hour train journeys are. I am not sure that everyone agreed – but to say it was very memorable would raise agreement from all! The Journey home from Delhi was uneventful.

Frances Richardson and Harvey Lloyd



Brian's love of orienteering

When I moved back to Oxford in about 1980, I was persuaded to try orienteering by Brian who, as with all he did, was a great enthusiast. Along with some others, we would drive up to 2 hours to take part in events in wet, dank woodlands and on wind-blasted moors. Brian, very wisely, wore his oldest clothes, some dating back many decades. One pair of trousers bore his family crest, which on closer inspection was a shield-shaped burn from an iron. In the 80's, Brian achieved great things, being Welsh Champion and getting the "gold standard" in several events. I, however, was less successful and Brian (and others) showed great patience waiting for me in a fogged-up car for an hour or more until I arrived, wet, frozen and exhausted.

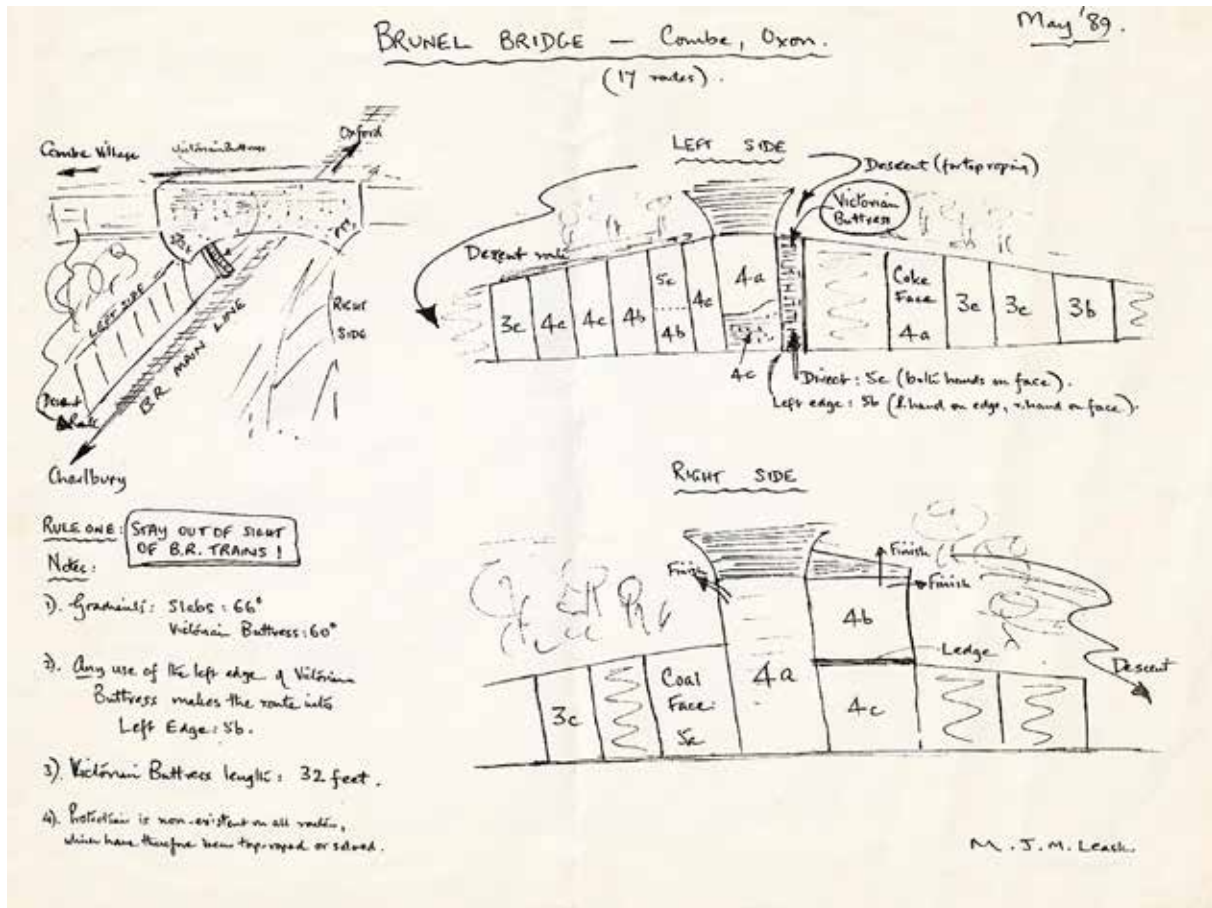
Brian delighted in close analysis of the maps and the discussion of tactics after an event. He would be very harsh on himself, saying "How on earth could I have made that stupid mistake...". Brian continued to orienteer through the following decades, right up to last year. Still highly critical of his performance, he would vow to give up the sport, but could always be persuaded to come along just one more time. He was looking forward to competing at M90 in 2023. Alas, it wasn't to be.

Pete and I will miss our Sunday orienteering jaunts with Brian; he made it all much more fun.

Kate Williams

Brian climbing on Brunel Bridge, Combe

Brian had a long and very productive climbing partnership with Mike Leask. I don't know how they discovered the potential of the railway cutting at Combe, where the sides had been faced with natural stone and a section of brickwork, but by the time I was introduced to it, they'd explored and graded a number of climbs. It was a great discovery – interesting and challenging climbing on good stone within half an hour's drive of St Catherine's College. There was no possibility of protection on any of the routes so they were initially top-roped and then some of them soloed. The left side (facing towards Oxford) offered the better climbing, with both natural stone and, with Victorian Buttress, a harder grade on brickwork.



It was an unusual climbing venue because of the trains. We were well aware that 'the authorities' would take a very dim view of what we were doing, so Rule One (see plan) – and, in fact, our only rule – was to stay out of sight of the trains. There was good visibility on the track in both directions, and our normal practice was to consult the timetable to give us plenty of time to get off the face of the cutting before the train appeared. However, there were occasions when the timetable appeared not to be accurate, and I still have a vivid mental picture of Brian sprinting down the track from the bottom of a climb to reach the cover of a large bush. He had imagined a headline 'Master of Oxford College caught trespassing on railway line' and the prospect gave him real speed!

We never did get caught, but by the end of that summer of 1989, the attraction of the climbing faded, and we stopped going. But, along with hang-gliding, it was one of the experiences that I couldn't have foreseen as a consequence of my appointment at Oxford, and that I associate strongly with Brian.

Gilliane Sills

Vignettes of escapades with Brian

Harvey asked me to write something about Brian for the journal. Attempting to do this reminded me of something I had forgotten: I have a really terrible memory for details. Dates and times, and names and places pretty much evade me. This has its advantages. I can enjoy the same films and books many times over without risk of remembering the plot. It's a disability in other areas though, like for writing something about my memories of Brian.

There is a well-known quote, probably unattributed, but made famous by the poet Maya Angelou. Her version goes like this: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." There is a worthwhile thought in here that doesn't need much explaining, and which becomes poignant when someone is gone.

So these are the bits I can remember. They are vignettes. Just the fragments I can dredge up from my poor memory. Most of it probably happened just like I say it did. What I am sure about though, is that a world shared with Brian *felt* like a better world to be in. I suspect Brian had that effect on almost everyone.

Climbing

Looking back, I climbed quite a lot with Brian. In North Wales I remember mountain days on Tryfan, Y Lliwedd, Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, Glyder Fawr, and Clogwyn Pen Llechen, multi-pitch routes in the Llanberis Pass on Dinas Cromlech and Craig Ddu and shorter routes on the Milestone Buttress, Clogwyn Bochlywd, the Vivian Slate Quarry and the higher Dinorwig quarries. In the Wye Valley we climbed at Symonds Yat and Wintours leap, and on the Culm Coast at Scantling Zawn and the Promontory at Baggy Point. On the Gower Peninsular we climbed at Great Tor and Three Cliffs Bay. We also had a memorable day at Pontesford rocks in Shropshire, and the Roaches in the Peaks. I'm sure we climbed at other places too.



Pontesford Rocks, September 2010

Brian knew mountains intimately, and—even well in his eighties—he was a strong and fluent and safe climber who moved intuitively on the rock, could read routes quickly, and had an appropriate approach to risk. I have observed that people climb for a variety of reasons. A surprising number seem to be trying to prove something to themselves, or are trying to project something to others. Then there are those who simply love being out on rock, who love the physicality, the exploration, the excitement of air beneath their feet, the chess game of getting to the top in one piece, then the whimsy of lunch on a remote and unlikely terrace in a sheer face of rock. Brian was in the last camp. He simply loved being out on rock. People in the last camp make for relaxed company in the mountains.



At the bottom of Scattling Zawn, June 2010

Perhaps because he climbed for almost eight decades, more than half of the period of time in which climbing was acknowledged as a sport, Brian had a particular fascination with routes with *history*. Brian had seen it all, from hobnails, to pockets full of pebbles and hemp slings, to machine nuts, plimsolls, and then the first carabiners and purposely designed climbing protection. Not only did he know British climbing routes intimately, but he had a real sense of each route in its historical perspective. If we climbed on Lliwedd I would be told tales of how Avalanche Wall came to be so-named. “This is where Archer Thomas and E.S. Reynolds were almost struck by a boulder in 1907” Brian would say, pointing to the exact point from which the boulder fell. Then a pitch later there would be a history lesson about King Arthur. “This is where the knights came after his death” Brian would say, in a hushed tone, “They sealed themselves in a secret cave, to await his return.”

We had a day (with Jesse James and Bill McCann) on Winthrop Young’s Climb on Clogwyn Pen Llechen. We were on two ropes, Bill leading one, and me the other. We clawed our way up a desperate, black, lichen covered slab, with no protection for what felt like fifty feet, landing exhausted on a small terrace at the top of the first pitch, happy to simply be alive. “That,” Brian explained excitedly from below, “is the exact spot where the famous photo of Mallory was taken. Can you imagine leading that pitch without letting your pipe go out! What a thing.” That was Brian in the mountains.

If we were on some awkward pitch and it started to rain, it was our habit to have an informal contest whereby the loser would be the first person to acknowledge the change in weather. Normally I would crack first. "Brian, it's getting quite wet up here, could you give me a tight rope please?" And he would say, "Oh it's damp up there is it? It must be the altitude". Then, if the heavens opened and the rock gushed in a torrent so we were saturated and it was pouring into our sleeves Brian would say, "I see what you mean, there is definitely dampness in the air." And if it got really bad and a winter blizzard came in so that the rock was plastered with snow and ice, and we could barely see through the whirlwind, Brian would invariably recount the story of being with John Rowlinson high up the Täschorhorn. A storm had come in, and everyone was plastered with snow, the rope thick as a hawser with ice, every other climber having beaten a retreat to safety. In the face of possibly mutiny, John had turned to Brian and Mike and sternly said "mountaineering isn't about pleasure you know, it's about satisfaction." And so they went on. And so we would climb on into the blizzard, post-holing through snow, unable to see more than a few feet ahead of us, until I could only just hear Brian shouting above the gale, "Tom, do you think it might snow? I'm sure I just saw a snowflake." Turning around, Brian would be caked head-to-foot like the yeti, and bashing snow off his crampons with his ice axe.

Climbing was in Brian's blood. I remember sitting with him at a formal dinner, where a distinguished barrister, on discovering Brian's love of climbing, remarked, "what a fascinating hobby." Brian nearly choked on the food he was eating, and said with complete seriousness "climbing is no hobby. It's a religion!" I think he meant it.

A day on Grey Slab

Decades before, Brian and Mike Leask had embarked on a lifelong mission to climb all the routes in Ken Wilson's *Classic Rock*, a huge undertaking and one that they would almost certainly have completed had Mike's climbing not been cut short by illness. I don't think I can remember a day in the mountains with Brian where he didn't mention how much he missed Mike. After a long day of climbing, we would unrope at the top of a route, Brian would sit on his battered army rucksack, pour himself a cup of tea, take a long look out across the mountains, and eventually say "what a wonderful day... Mike would have *loved* a day like this... I miss Mike so much." Brian was a faithful friend to Mike.

One of the few routes they had left unfinished was Grey Slab on Glyder Fawr. Though the route is not particularly hard, sitting high above the Idwal Slabs, and even higher above Llyn Idwal, it rarely comes into condition. The guidebook reads: "delicate, sustained and excellent. The route is not well protected and is prone to seepage on the initial crack and upper crux. Care required if at all damp." The route is always damp, and the attempts Brian and Mike had made had been unsuccessful. Years after Mike died, Brian said that he had engaged the services of a guide in the hope of completing the route, but that the guide, having offered to lead all manner of ferocious routes in the Llanberis Pass (like Left Wall and Cenotaph Corner) and having offered to guide Brian up such horror shows as Great Gully on Craig Yr Ysfa "would not, so long as he had breath in his body, set foot on Grey Slab." So the story goes. And for all these reasons Grey Slab had acquired a bit of a reputation.

In May 2006, after an unusually settled spell of weather, we set off for North Wales with the sole intention of doing that route. Brian would normally drive on these trips, and once we were on the road and settled in for a long drive, Brian would invariably say, "Right, now you must tell me about *all* your projects." And the next hour would pass with Brian wanting to hear of every development in every project I was working on. If I missed anything out, or tried to skip over anything, Brian would say, "But you didn't tell me about..." And so I would have to fill in all the details until he was completely satisfied. Brian loved celebrating other people's successes. However small the achievement Brian would say "Gosh you *are* impressive Tom... you do so much." Then I would feel good for a moment about whatever minor victory we were talking about, and we would rumble on up the A5 to North Wales.

The climb itself was surprisingly uneventful, and this led to debate at least a decade later about whether we had really followed the correct line on the crux pitch. "But it just seemed too easy" Brian would say. And I would reply "but I think there was only one line." We had that conversation many times. We got to the top and Brian sat on his rucksack and immediately called Regina. It was the last days of film cameras, and I have a lovely 35 mm slide photograph of him talking on his brick of a mobile phone. "We *did* it!" he said. "Yes I know. I know darling. I can't believe it myself. Tom was brilliant. Yes, the weather was wonderful. No it was all perfect. Mike would have loved to be here on a day like this." It was a memorable day but I felt sorry that Brian couldn't have done it with Mike. It was their route, and though Brian was happy to have done it, it could only have been bittersweet. As usual, we talked about physical chemistry all the way back home.



Brian calling Regina after a successful ascent of Grey Slab, May 2006

Caving

Brian and I went caving about once a year. Particular favourites were the caves in the Little Neath Valley (Bridge Cave, Town Drain, and White Lady Cave) and the nearby Craig Y Nos Quarry Cave and Llygad Llŵchwr. We also explored some caves in Derbyshire (Giant's Hole), and others in the South Wales valleys that I don't recall the names of. "Caving" Brian would say, "is the only real exploration these days." In some sense this is true, in that the surface of the earth and bottoms of the oceans have been forensically mapped, but new caves are discovered every year, often with miles of passages that no human has ever seen.

On one occasions we did a tour of the Little Neath Valley caves, including a trip to the very far end of Town Drain. This was disconcerting because that cave is a dead end that floods fully to the roof for most of its length as soon as there is any rain; the only means of drainage is through the sandy floor. We were probably only down it about an hour, but it felt considerably longer. Brian then wanted to show me the entrance to the Little Neath River Cave proper. This is the hardest and most serious undertaking of the local caves. We walked up the bank of the river a few hundred yards, flies buzzing, hot sun on our backs, tired after a long day of caving. Eventually we came to a slow bend in the river, where the water pooled deeper and ran more slowly. It's a beautiful spot under the dappled shade of trees, just on the edge of a meadow. Brian took off his boots and waded the few paces to the other side. "Come on," he said, "this is it! This is the entrance". And there, literally in the bed of the river, was a tiny hole just large enough to wriggle into, with water pouring in at such a rate that the hole was almost full to the roof. "It's just as bad as it looks!" said Brian, triumphantly. "It's a flat-out crawl for a hundred yards, with just enough airspace to breath, then there is an underwater duck, but then it opens out and is fabulous!" Brian looked at me with barely contained excitement. I looked down at

the hole, then back up at Brian. All I could think about was drowning in the dark. Any rational person would feel the same. "You'll make a name for yourself if you do it!" said Brian.

On the long drive back home, Brian offered further advice about the cave. "The thing is," he said, "once you are through the duck, it opens up and becomes relatively easy. There is one exciting pitch on a waterfall, and you have to swim for about a hundred meters, but other than that it's just simple crawling." I looked at the surveys of the cave over the following weeks, and it runs for almost nine kilometres underground. The only way in and out without cave-diving equipment is that tiny hole in the bed of the river, and the first hundred meters or more floods to the roof the moment it rains. We got to Brian's house, and I got into my car to drive home. Brian stopped me as I was driving off. "Just one more tip," he said, "you mustn't wear a cagoule. I tried that, and the water filled it up so it acted like a plug. When I got going again it was like a cork coming out of a bottle. You really don't want to do that."

I did eventually complete a full round-trip of the Little Neath River Cave loop, four times to date, but never did make a name for myself. The entrance is utterly terrifying every single time.

When he got to the age of about eighty-five, Regina pointed out that caving wasn't a suitable sport for an elderly gentleman. We were sitting in the lounge at Appletree House. "Is that so, darling?" Brian said, pretending that this was an altogether confusing notion that needed some thought. Then, as he started to laugh, "Well I suppose you do have a point, dear." Reluctantly, we had to accept that Regina was right, and the caving did stop. Though Brian did ask, "You're not going to ask me to give up professional surfing next, are you dear?"

Misdirection and magic...

I think I became aware of Brian's interest in *the occult* pretty soon after we first met. There were the stories of Brian's "feats of memory." So the story goes that Brian would direct some senior academic visitor to go into any room of the house, pick out any book from the bookshelf, pick any page, pick any paragraph, then pick any line. And then Brian would recite out loud from the other corner of the room without missing a beat, and without making a mistake. So the story goes. Brian never did reveal his secret.

It wasn't unusual, after dinner, to be regaled with a magic trick or two. Strings and boxes and other paraphernalia were produced, and objects would be made to appear and disappear, often accompanied by some exaggerated patter that explained the conjuring. This of course, done deathly serious, other than an almost imperceptible twinkle in the magician's eye. This was, as Brian liked to explain afterwards, all a matter of misdirection. "Misdirection," Brian would say, "is at the heart of all good illusions." Occasionally Brian would have a gimmick of his own device that he would invariably explain "was at prototype stage." They never worked, but were always inventive, and often decorated with stars and other magical symbols. I had an advantage, having had an interest in magic my whole life, and knowing the principles of many standard tricks and misdirection's, but I still think very few lay-people would have been fooled by Brian's magic. Only occasionally would a trick *really* work. But despite this Brian was a brilliant magician of sorts. I would suspend my disbelief to the utmost, be the best audience I could, and try desperately hard not to see the obvious. And the effect was magical. And the effect was mesmerising. And I always looked forward to the next trick.

Here was a man who, well into his 80s, would spend literally hundreds of hours of practicing in front of a mirror, perfecting a sleight, or refining a misdirection, or building a new gimmick from cardboard and stick-on stars. And it was all done for the delight of a friend, or colleague, or grandchild. It was all done for the fleeting moment in which their face would light up in a smile, and Brian's eyes would twinkle. That—I feel—was the real magic.

A trip to the Magic Circle

When Brian was well into his eighties, he became a full member of the Magic Circle. That actually happened. For a man who had published hundreds of papers, been Master of an

Oxford College and Vice Chancellor of another university, Brian was unaccountably proud of this achievement. The way he talked about it, one wondered if it wasn't his proudest moment; he gave the impression that it meant as much to him as his knighthood. It is certainly true that entry is very selective. New members are admitted annual by panel, largely based on the quality of a twelve-minute live performance. Anyone who knows anything at all about magic will tell you that in twelve minutes there is a lot of opportunity for a trick to go wrong. It seemed that nothing did go wrong though, and Brian was admitted as a member. He was, he said "a rising star young star in the world of magic." I did secretly wonder if the panel felt Brian was unlikely to do harm to their order and had looked generously upon him for that reason. These thoughts went unvoiced.

To exercise one of his resulting privileges Brian invited me to attend a members-only night at the Centre for the Magic Arts in London. There was to be a performance, followed by magicians'-eyes-only reveal of the secrets. We met at Nando's in Euston Square, an hour before the performance.

"The thing is Tom," Brian said, "I shouldn't really be inviting you to this because it's for magicians only you see." I couldn't tell if he was being serious. "You can only come to these events if you are an Aspirant Member of the Magic Circle." Perhaps he was being serious.

"You'll need a cover story," Brian continued, "but don't worry I have one all worked out for you." He pulled out a pocket book. He was definitely being serious. "Right..." he said, now reading from some notes he had hastily scribbled on the train, "when asked what your area of magic is, you are to respond as follows..." Brian looked at me to check I was paying attention. "You are to respond... 'I'm interested in the intersection of mathematics and magic'".

"Right..." I said, "but... I'm not."

"Naturally," said Brian, as though his plan was perfectly obvious, and I might be being a little slow. "It's designed to prevent further questions though. Don't you see?" Brian didn't want his entrée into the world of high magic to be jeopardised.

"I see." I said, and bit into a chicken wing. None of this had been mentioned when Brian had invited me a week before.

The evening was superb. There was a card show by one of the world's leading *close-up* magicians, followed by a reveal of all his secrets. Someone asked if the effect had been achieved with an Elmsley count or a double lift. The effect, the magician said, was essentially self-working, he was using a standard bicycle deck, but before the false cut he had finger-palmed the card, then done a French drop before using an Equivoque. Brian gave an exaggerated nod of understanding, and winked at me. Neither of us had any real idea of what had just been said.

After the show we descended to the basement for a drinks reception. I was, Brian reminded me, not to let my guard down. "Remember the cover story" he reminded me sternly as we joined the crowd. Surrounded by posters of famous magicians, and artefacts from well-known acts, we joined a huddle of sweaty men in bowties. And so we began to swap tales of our greatest achievements in magic. One of our number, it transpired, had just won the coveted Magician of the Year Award. Brian knew of his act. It was, Brian congratulated him "one of the best levitations I've ever seen." The conversation moved on to modern interpretations of the Indian rope trick, until finally our celebrity turned his attention to us. "I'm working on my first professional show" Brian said, "just simple things really, I have a new take on the cups and balls that I'm working on". I couldn't tell if he was being serious. "And what is it you do?" said the Magician of the Year, turning to me. "Me?" I said, "I'm interested in the intersection of mathematics and magic." One of the sweaty men leaned in intently. The veins on his forehead popped alarmingly with his evident excitement. "How fascinating," he said, "that's exactly my field!" I felt Brian's vice-like grip on my shoulder. He looked purposefully off into the crowd, and loudly announced "Tom, let me introduce you to someone..."

Last words

I think I knew Brian for just over 22 years. Mathematically he was almost exactly three times my age when we met, and almost exactly twice my age when he died. Spiritually, some people said that we had the kind of relationship that only old school friends have. I knew Brian as larking, playful, and mischievous, and we seemed to have a way of leading each other astray. Those people were right. The last time I saw Brian, we were planning a trip to climb some of the easier multi-pitch routes on Little Tryfan in Snowdonia. We had stayed up late looking at guidebooks, and, as often happened, it had suddenly become very late. Brian and Regina would always stand on the doorstep and wave until the car was out of the drive. As I drove away from the house, the last thing Brian said to me was "I'm thinking I should probably give up leading this year though... so you'll have to lead everything." Brian was a few months away from his 90th birthday. Brian's friendship meant a huge amount to me. I miss him tremendously.

Tom Povey



Wintour's Leap, June 2010

Brian in Scotland

Brian attended the first Gorphwysfa Scottish meet, in April 1981, at Seaview Cottage in Ballachulish. Following a few weeks of wonderful high-pressure weather, conditions were perfect for both rock and snow climbing. On the first day, most of the party did a glorious scramble up Castle Ridge onto Carn Dearg, in the Ben Nevis range. Next day saw the whole party on Buachaille Etive Mor. Walkers walked up via Coire na Tullaich, scramblers ascended the North Buttress, while Brian did a V Diff climb with Mike Leask, up Agag's Groove on the magnificent Rannoch Wall.

Next day saw a mass traverse of the Aonach Eagach ridge in glorious weather, under a warm sun, blue sky and little wind. On the last day, a group of dedicated snow climbers walked up to the foot of Central Gully on Bidean nam Bian. At least one would-be leader was repulsed by a tricky start, then Brian took over, mastered the problem, and led the whole party up the lovely snow gully to the summit of Bidean, where a photo was duly taken, to show off the new down jackets worn by Brian and John Rowlinson, in preparation for their subsequent adventures in the Himalayas in 1981.

Richard Sills



Brian on Bidean nam Bian. Bidean nam Bian is the highest peak in a group of mountains south of Glen Coe and north of Glen Etive in the Scottish Highlands. With a height of 1,150 metres, it is a Munro and the highest point in Argyll.

My First Via Ferrata ... with Brian in the Dolomites

In July 2008 I went to the Dolomites Club Meet for the first time with a group that included Brian and Regina. We stayed in the village of Colfosco, near Corvara.

On our first morning Brian was keen to introduce me to the excitement of going on a via ferrata. Despite the murky weather we drove up the Passo di Garden towards the mountain called Piz di Cir V with Richard and Gilliane, parked and climbed up to the restaurant, but the rain unfortunately got heavier! Hot chocolates helped while away the time and forever optimistic Brian encouraged us to kit up as the cloud began to show signs of lifting an hour or so later.

The via ferrata was graded a 2 A so I wasn't starting on a very easy one and of course the rock was wet even though the rain had stopped. It was an unforgettable experience for various reasons and with the help of my holiday diary I can share the memory.

Gilliane and Richard went ahead of me, Brian brought up the rear. The hardest part was actually stepping up and round on the wet surface to get onto the V F and I felt completely stuck and began to panic. Brian kindly suggested retreating but that looked even more impossible! I decided that going on was the least scary option and just made it. Once clipped on some feeling of security returned and I got the hang of working along the wire and around the fixed points with the 2 carabiners. We were very exposed but as long as I didn't look down, I felt reasonably safe and the reassuring encouragement that came from Brian behind me was a big help.

The whole ascent took about an hour. In lovely sunshine and with a huge effort we clambered onto the top to join 5 strangers. Space was limited, meaning we couldn't linger as more climbers were on their way up.

By now I had built up more confidence in the equipment and anticipated an easier descent ... wrongly. We had to go down a very steep and treacherous gully and I can still hear Brian saying, "It's just like walking on mini marbles". Thankfully we were clipped on to a wire much of the way down as



On the top!

it was still fairly wet, but the adrenaline certainly flowed that day. Personally, I found that the wildflowers were a good distraction.

Exhausted and with a sigh of relief (from me) we reached an area near the bottom of the gully where we could sit and relax amongst the Edelweiss flowers in the Alpine Garden, and in sunshine enjoy the view of the valley below. While we snacked and recovered from all the excitement the cheeky Alpine Choughs came begging for crumbs and caused some amusement.

Soon thunder began to rumble, and we descended quickly, getting to the car as the heavens opened. How lucky we felt to have had that window in the weather! Such an exhilarating and memorable day!

Lucy Norton

The Gorphwysfa Club and the Welsh 1000 metres Race

The race that brought the club of age!

Preamble: Brian from the earliest days was always enthusiastic about the 1000 metre Peaks Race. Following the fiftieth race and the Gorphwysfa deciding to withdraw from the organisation Brian and Harvey initially set out to publish a comprehensive history of the event; the booklet celebrating the 50th year had been received very well. Sadly Covid came along, and the publication was put on hold, however the following results and typescript are taken from the draft that was partially brought together.

In the late 1950s the concept of the race in Snowdonia grew out of the fact that mountaineers were already competing against each other informally, whilst endeavouring to climb continuously, the 14 x three-thousand-foot mountains as a personal challenge. The competitive element developed and Dai Rowlands from the 3rd Company Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) devised the challenge for soldiers to carry a message from Snowdon to Foel Fras and this soon became an Army race. As a safety measure the RAF mountain rescue (MR) team were recruited to sweep behind and this was the introduction of Dr Ieuan Jones to the event, as he was RWF member. The civilian MR personnel joined in too.

The origin of this race for the soldiers had to compete in full army uniform and carry a gun, probably a sub machine gun, which could be dismantled. It is said that this practice was dropped when a Gurkha soldier lost part of the weapon somewhere along the route. The race started on Snowdon and finished on Foel Fras. A very grand reception was held after the race in a marquee situated low down on the track up to the mountain called Drum. Eventually the race was stopped due to the ever-escalating costs. Could the high living standards of the officer ranks have contributed to this?

Ron James who was the warden of Ogwen Cottage Outdoor pursuits Centre. He had initiated the Ogwen Cottage Mountain Rescue Team, which consisted of the six instructors based at the centre plus a few others, one of which was Dr Jones. Thoughts of a mountain race for civilians traversing the peaks had been tossed about in 1969. At about this time James pointed out that there were only four mountains over 1000 metres(m) in England and Wales, and with the implication of metrification, a new race open to all could be launched, starting at sea level at Aber and going via the summits to finish on the summit of Snowdon.

Of course, the details of the early organisation extended beyond the mad chase over the hills. By using helpers mainly from the mountain rescue a high standard of safety was achieved and in 1970 a trial race was organised. Sixty competitors were invited to take part, but atrocious weather caused it to be cancelled although Jim Smith (Bury) did complete the course. Following this the first race proper took place in 1971. The entry form proposed that perhaps in 1972 the prizegiving and reception could be held in the Snowdon Summit Hotel, however nothing came of this idea, and accommodation was arranged for competitors in the Church Hall in Llanberis, and as of now, competitors were taken to the start by bus. The start was always a grand affair, excitement running high. The area above high-water mark at Aber had been used by all and sundry as a good place to dispose unwanted rubbish, (it is now a nature reserve), so route choice in the first few hundred yards was as equally important as on the high tops of the Carneddau. Choice of the wrong line often meant a derelict car or an old frig barred the way! The army entrants continued to wear uniform, and as they lined up on the start line Dr Jones would produce a pistol, (there is still debate on whether it contained live ammunition or blanks). But when he pulled the trigger, he made sure that there were never any seagulls overhead. After the bang a roar arose from the entrants as they dashed across the roughest few hundred yards of any organised running event.

After Carnedd Dafydd competitors were allowed to choose their own route to Carnedd Ugain, but details had to be sent in advance to the race Organiser. This meant that often the controls in Ogwen had to be duplicated, the first race probably having more officials than competitors!

Dr Jones organised the event till 1983. Harvey Lloyd and the Eryri Harriers took over in 1984, and in 1990 the Gorphwysfa took over the reins.

So, in 1971 Dr Ieuan Jones took the plunge and with the help of his wife Joan and a few other volunteers set out to create a race that would test both mountaineers and fell runners to the limit, and at the same time allow the Army to retain its involvement, from the early days. It was decided that runners would start with one foot in the sea at Aber and, after traversing the four highest peaks of Snowdonia, finish on Yr Wyddfa, the summit of Snowdon. The exhilaration of forcing a tired aching body to the finish of the 1000 m Peaks Race is an experience many of us have enjoyed and occasionally suffered over the following years. It would have been beyond Ieuan Jones' wildest dreams to believe that fifty years later the race would be thriving and that over the years more than fifteen thousand competitors would have enjoyed the race. The race has evolved most recently to include the newly remeasured summit of Glyder Fawr when it was decided that, by a few centimetres, the summit merited inclusion as a 1000 m peak.

Harvey met Ieuan in 1972 and with his son Christopher (aged 9 & 10) initially marshaled the event at Pen y Pass Youth Hostel for the 1973 and 1974 years, Tim was too young to get involved. The control at that time was situated in Cwm y Ffynnon, at the back of the hostel. With a shelter provided by a very small tent and times and numbers of the competitors were carefully recorded. Of course the control moved down, a year or two later, through my influence, to a more comfortable vocation near the hostel.



Below are listed the first 5 years of the results which contain Gorphwysfa results and are marked in red font. Other results and the booklet published at the 50-anniversary are available from Harvey Lloyd.

In 1975 Gorphwysfa set out to make an impression on the event, but the first competitor home was Joss Naylor, the most famous of all fell runners. Andrew Middleton led the Gorphwysfa home. A very strong ladies team of six entered the ladies Class.

Class A: (61 entries, 42 started, 39 finished). No Start time was listed but it would have been about 9am. 1st Joss Naylor 3 22 20, 2nd Mike Short 3 33 15, 3rd Peter Walkington 3 39 40.

Class B: (95 entries, 80 starters, 7 retired) 1st John Wagstaff, 4 39 00 **12th Andy Middleton 6 08 30**, 16th Trefor Owen 6 22 00, 17th Cyril Hodgkin, 30th Nev Tandy, **41st Harvey Lloyd 7 31 15**, **41st Brian Smith 7 31 15**, **Gerry Lynch 50th**, **Brian Manton 54**, (before he was a member), Tom Beattie 54, **Richard Sills 62**, **Derek Bergal, 62**. Retired, **Ernie R Brewster**. The team, **Pen y Pass - Puffers (5th) gets a mention!**

Class C Junior Men: (33 entries, 26 started, 25 finished). Start Time, 10 04am 1st David Roberts 2 21 56, 2nd Paul Higgins 2 23 55, 3rd M Angel 2 26 30, 4th M G Thompson 2 33 25, **19th Mark Smith 3 16 00 (Brian's elder son)**.

Class C Junior Ladies: 2 entrants 1st A Statham 3 23 40, 2nd R Jones, 3 37 40 (Ieuan's daughter.)

Class D: Lady Mountaineers, Ogwen: (26 entries, 18 started, 17 finished). 1st Joan Glass 2 28 50, 2nd Carol Walker 2 34 35, 3rd Mary Duncan 3 02 45, **4th Brit Brewster 3 11 15**, **6th Nicolette Bergal 3 20 45**, **8th Peggy Smith 3 30 25**, **9th Gilliane Sills 3 34 20**, **10th Christine Middleton 3 40 00**, **11th Kate McColl, 3 44 50**, 14 Sue Manton 4 09 50. **Team 'Pen y Pass Puffers' are 3rd.**

1976: The Race day was 05 06 1976. Probably Harvey's first year as chief marshal, but he continued to entered too. Also the year that Ken Jones first volunteered to help, he was promoted to the summit of Snowdon as timekeeper. Harvey managed to sort out marshals to some degree, with a lot of support from the club and elsewhere! The usual comments that headed the results, however the support was 'This was a bad year for the organisers.' Together with 'Too few marshals, and too many entries, leaving the closing date off the entry form!' 3 controls not marshalled, but radio operators from 3 RWF coped. Ieuan explains that the event needs the transmission and recording of 5000 items of information. He states that next year will need a much-expanded organisation. No clubs were listed on results. Entry fee was still 50p. The race centre was the Wardens Centre, Nant Peris. Total of 331 entries, the first runners beat the clock to the finish. Pen y Pass control now on car park. Again the Ghurkha's entered the event. Joss was again 1st, with Mike Short, another name that became well known was second, with Ernie Brewster managing to get in from of Andrew and Brian got in front of Harvey! The Junior entry increased with mark smith the first club finisher.

Class A: (86 entries, 64 starters, 58 finishes.) Start time approx. 09 29am. 1st Joss 3 26 46, 2nd M Short 3 32 23,

Class B: start Approx. 09 29. (105 entries, 91 starters, 60 finishers) 1st J R Jackson 4 59 36, 2nd H Gurang 5 02 29. 3rd J A Evans 5 93 51, 4th K W Hesketh 5 22 11, 6th Gurkha unable to identify 5 43 03, **7th Ernie Brewster 5 53 07**, **11th Andrew M 6 08 48**, 29th Nev Tandy 7 09 15, 22nd Trev Owen 6 43 37, **27 Brian Smith**, **28 Harvey**, **32 Cyril Hodgson**, **38 Martin Lynch**, **43 Gerry Lynch**, **60 J Rowlinson**, G Jones, **Gorphwysfa Puffers, 2nd team**,

Class C Junior Mountaineers Ogwen: (48 entries) Start 10 19. minimum weight now 10 lbs: 1st Paul McHugh, 2 05, 2nd Stephen Tosh, 2 15, 3rd John Clayton, 2 18, **28th Mark Smith 3 08 40**, **32nd Chris Lloyd 3 18 13**, **37th Nick Smith, 3 50 46**.

Class C Ogwen: Junior Ladies: (8 entries, 3 retired), 1st S Williams, 3 00, 2nd Barbara Druce 3 09 18.

Class D Ogwen: (33 entries, 23 Starters and finishers.) 1st Bridget Hogge, 2:16:00. 2nd Joan Glass 2:21 34, 3rd A Salisbury 2 31 43, 4th Carol Walker 2 40 27, **9th C McColl 3 28 26**, 12th Ann Bland 3 36 55, **23rd N Rowlinson 6 12 35**.

1977: The Race day was 04 06 1977. **The Race Celebrated the Queens Jubilee.** leuan reports interesting weather, difficult navigation, better new format for results, with time and **position** of competitor at that stage, also times recorded at control Mike (the bottom of the zigzags. Note Scrutineering this year to ensure all competitors obeyed the rules. Joss started late, (he thought the time was 10am start, one hour or so late) and finished 31st 4 45 43. The start time had probably previously been flexible, set to the arrival of the buses from Llanberis, sometimes about 8 45am. Ann Davis, Gorphwyfsa entered Class B, having been refused entry as a women. She finished 43rd 7 50 36. No Ghurkha's entry

Class A: (84 entrants, 71 starters, 57 finishers). Class started 8 47am. 1st Mike Short 3 33 54,

Class B: (101 entrants, 73 starters and 57 finishers.) 1st B Temmen, 5 12 16, 2nd WP Tassiker 5 26 47. 3rd K W Hesketh 5 33 43, 4th G Roberts 5 40 17, **5th Ernie Brewster 41 16**, **8th Andy Middleton 6 00 02**, **12th Gerry Lynch 6 17 52**, **15th Harvey 6 41 51**, **17th Brian Smith 6 44 51**, 19th Nev Tandy 6 46 19, **26th Geoff Woods 7 07 49**, **29th C Hodgkinson 7 17 30**, **40th A E Davies 7 50 36**, **45th Paul Rowlinson 7 54 34**, **56th John Rowlinson 8 45 49**. John Middleton, Martin Norton, P Smith, Geoff Pocock retired. **Gorphwysfa 'A' won the team award, Gorphwysfa Seniors were 3rd and Gorphwysfa Pensioners 4th.**

Class C Ogwen: Junior Mountaineers. (54 entries, 40 starters and 39 finishers.) Start time 9 37. 1st P McHugh, 2 09 20, 2nd A Johnson 2 16 40, 3rd S Tosh, 2 17 16, 3rd A Collins 2 19 01. **Joint 27th Nick Smith and Chris Lloyd 2 58 51. Retired, Mark B Smith.**

Class D: Lady mountaineers from Ogwen. (20 starters 19 finished.) 1st Ann Bland 2 42 30, 2nd C Walkington 2 45 18, 3rd G Dodd 2 58 30, 9th Joan Glass 3 30 17, **14th Stella Rowlinson 4 12 36**, **15th C E McColl 4 27 26**, **Nancy Rowlinson 19th 5 42 59.**

Conclusion: Alterations to the results issued provisionally have been made as delay allowances and penalties have now been included. Joss misunderstood the start time this year, and started about 50 minutes behind the field, finishing 31st. The short report issued with the results includes the time when Class A started, 8 47, probably for Joss's benefit!



1978: The race day was 03 06 1978. No remarks in the report about this year's huge entry level in the race. The weather was fine, this does get a mention! This year women were officially designated a fell race – from Ogwen, but also entering the long mountaineer's course (for the first time?). Nicola Jackson entered Class B, which excluded female runners and finished 31st 7 05 40, as did Catherine McColl and Helen Middleton, who retired. Ernie Brewster entered Class A but retired. Harvey's fasted finish time!

Class A: (150 entries, 122 starters, 108 finishers.) No start time published. 1st Mike Short 3 21 35, Retired, Iorwerth Roberts and **Ernie Brewster.**

Class B: (120 entries, 100 started, 66 finished, 34 retired). 1st Paul McHugh 5 09 48, 2nd Bernhard Temmen, 5 23 06, 3rd Rob Collister 5 25 06, **4th A. J Middleton 5 41 31, 8th Harvey 5 54 14, 16th John Middleton 6 27 40**, 20th Nev Tandy 6 36 02, 27th John Pope 6 50 37, **31st Nicola Jackson 7 05 40**, 34th C Hodgson 7 14 38, 41st Peter Smith, 50th Ian Smart, 51st Cliff Randles, 63rd Catherine McColl 8 49 40, 66th (aged 70) Eric Garside 9 10 20. Retired: **G Lynch**, Trefor Owen, **John Rowlinson, G C Sills, Mike Leask, Helen Middleton**, D Frances. Not recorded on the finish list, although they entered, **E B Smith, R Sills**. Gorphwysfa 'A' team 1st.

Class C Ogwen: 1st Stephen Tosh 2 09 05, **8th Chris Lloyd 2 33 56**, 26th David Glass 3 16 50, **33rd N H Smith 3 27 54, who had a 30-minute penalty for not going to Ugain!**

Class C Ogwen: Junior Ladies, 2 entries, 1st Karen Wright 2 53 13, 2nd Christine Humphries 4 18 18.

Class D Ogwen: Lady mountaineers, 26 entries. 1st Gillian Dodd 2 50 33, 2nd Ann Salisbury 2 57 00, 3rd Anna Eldred 3 02 30, **9th Elizabeth Leask, 3 49 31, 16th Stella Rowlinson, 4 09 33.**

Conclusion: No Joss this year, perhaps unhappy about his 1977 result. But we do have Bill Smith (43RD 4 33 12), more of him later! **Also Nicola Jackson entered Class B** (Normally Men Mountaineers only!) and finished 31st in a time of 7 05 40, as did Catherine McColl, G C Sills and Helen Middleton. Lady Fell runners listed on results under Class D not as Class F. (Note in Gorphwysfa Journal report, Ian Smart, in folder.)

1979: Race start Saturday 2nd June. Race H Q at Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis, B & B available, £3.80, ½ price for children, free car parking at the lower car park. Prize giving 7pm at hotel. Because of problems crossing the Ogwen valley, new route down Water Board road. Entries to Mrs Joan H Jones. No dogs, they will be shot! A relay event involving two persons was introduced this year for police teams, a team to be one competitor in Class B and one in Class C. The baton carried by B competitor. The Class C competitor waits a Golf until B arrives at the control who then hangs it over to the C competitor who continues to the finish. Joss entered but finished 2nd.

Class A: (Entries 151, starters 116, finishers 101). Published start time 8 45am. 1st M. Short 3 32 59, 2nd Joss Naylor 3 41 07, **96th Ernie Brewster, 6 09 58.**

Class B: 105 entered, 84 started, 67 finished). 1st Rob Collister 4 50 32, 2nd Eric Wallis 4 55 32, **3rd Andy Middleton 4 59 37**, 4th J D Wood 5 31 42, 5th S Sprostor 5 48 22, P Tassiker 5 48 22, **7th John Middleton 5 52 13, Martin Lynch, 9th 6 03 35, 11th Harvey Lloyd 6 12 16**, 15th Nev Tandy, **21st Paul Rowlinson 6 41 23, 24th Bill McCann 6 48 27, 25th Gerry Lynch 6 48 50, 35th Cliff Randles, 7 08 30, 39th Mike Leask 7 14 41**, 42nd P Smith 7 26 30, **50th G Woods 7 48 02, 57th Ian Smart 8 04 07**, 67th Eric Garside 9 34 39, (aged over 70). **Retired R Sills. Gorphwysfa A won the team prize, Andy, John, Harvey & Paul. No Brian Smith!**

Class C Ogwen: Junior Mountaineers. (25 entries, 20 starters, 18 finished), joint 1st I Maynard, M Maynard, 2 10 20, 1st, 3rd P Hayes, 2 19 10, **4th C Lloyd 2 21 58, 5th N H Smith, 2 31 18**, 6th I Haddon 2 45 27, 7th J Ainsley, 2 46 29, 10th D Glass.

Class D Lady Mountaineers Ogwen: (18 entrants, 16 starters 15 finished). 1st Ruth Parry 3 02 50 and Val McCann joint 1st, 3 02 50, 3rd J Evans 3 04 07, 4th E Holman 3 15 19, 7th A Tandy 7, 12th Caroline (???) Smith, 3 46 55.

Conclusion: Brian did not seem to enter this year. Not clear definition of Lady fell runners on entry List and results, but still on short route. New route went well, but other possibilities to be looked at for next year. Major problem this year was radio failure and competitors not reporting retirement, although other competitors did inform of these retirements. This is the first year to introduce Class F Fell Runners, from Ogwen for females.

1980: Introduction/Preamble: Race HQ Royal Victoria Hotel, prize giving 7pm. Tenth event, Race day 31 May. Lower entries this year, perhaps less supported classes will be dropped. Entry fee £1.50 each. £1 for class C. an early entry from Colin Donnelly finished 19th.

Class A: (130 entrants, 103 started, 5 retired. 98 finished), start again published at 8 45am. 1st Mike Short, 3 46 35, 96th John Disley 6 10 54. Dave Woods retired.

Class B: (96 entries, 76 started, 27 retired).1st Eric Wallis 5 16 50, **2nd Andy Middleton 5 18 51**, 3rd Trevor Pilling 5 32 02,4th David Booth, 5 32 02, 5th Glyn Jones, 5 45 30, 9th Bill McCann, 10th John Middleton 6 06 46, 18th Nev Tandy, 26th David Archer, **33rd Brian Smith 7 30 20**, **34th Mike Leask 7 35 20**, **35th Paul Rowlinson 7 36 56**, **35**, **39th Harvey Lloyd 7 53 04**, **46th Kate McColl 8 52 00**. Retired: Trefor Owen, **Ernie Brewster**, **Cliff Randles**, **Liz Leask**, **R Sills**, **G Sills**. **Gorphwysfa 'A' 1st team**, **Gorphwysfa B 3rd place**.

Class C Ogwen: Junior Mountaineers Male, (10 entries, 9 finished). Alister Saunders 1st 2 13 13, **4th Chris Lloyd 2 44 22**, **5th Nick Smith 2 44 49**, **6th Richard Naish 3 18 39**, 9th David Glass 3 45 19.

Awards: Special awards to all who had completed 10 events, Peter Walkington and Neville Tandy.

Conclusions: Entries down this year, again considering dropping the smaller classes. First event for Colin Donnelly Class A finished 19th 4 28 30. FRA cutting in folder.

Summary: Apart from involving so many competitors, the race has required armies of marshals and officials. It is a great tribute to the Gorphwysfa Club, local clubs and individual volunteers, that over the years there have always been enough people prepared to sacrifice a day to give pleasure to others. The race also requires much advanced planning and organisation. Many dedicated people have given their time to enable the race to go forward smoothly and efficiently. **At the 50th event Brian** paid a special tribute to Harvey Lloyd who for most of the race's history has been the person driving it forward. Without his remarkable dedication one can, be certain that the race would have ceased many years ago. The 50th race is the last for which Harvey would be responsible. Of course, the most important people concerned, far more important than Harvey, were the competitors, but certainly equally important were the individuals, like Jean Hall, and many others, who ensured the event ran like clockwork. All involved played their part in a grand event, and hopefully went home at the end of the day satisfied both with their contribution and please that they had had a day out on the hills in Snowdonia Each year we were delighted to welcome them, and wished all of them a most successful, enjoyable, and exhilarating day.



Colin Donnelly & Gerry Wigglesworth

Post 1984 the most famous of the fell runners has been Colin Donnelly, He wrote on 7 May 2013, "Hi Harvey, entered race 15 times, first in 1987, when the race was terminated at Pen-y-Pass, but the big controversy was about someone knocking over a wall in Cwm Tryfan. The years I won were 1991 (3.49), 1992 (3.39),1993 (3.40), 1994 (3.46), 1995 (4.18), 1996 (3.38), 1997 (4.07), 2004 (3.53), 2007 (3.55), 2008 (3.50), 2009 (4.42), 2013 (4.04-new course) so 12 wins. My PB was 1999 when fifth (3.32) when it was a British championship race and Gavin Bland broke the record. Was British Senior champion 1987, 1988 and 1989, British Veterans champion 1999 and 2004.

'I love Rob Piercy's Art and they are great prizes but I don't like his style in this picture, which is different from his usual vivid style, with his Cwm Idwal print, however I'd never think of selling it in a thousand years as it is a fantastic and very personal memento of the race with only one thing lacking--it doesn't say "Welsh 1000 m race" on it! The new course is excellent. Please thank who baked the delicious flapjacks at Ogwen, they were really welcome, bananas.'

An army entrant draws this story to an end, "And what of me, **Dai Richards**, I've completed the race about 7 or 8 times in its various guises, my glory years were 1992 & 93 when I won the military class and Jeff, Mad Mike and myself won the team event, my favourite memory is the Thursday evening before the event in 1993 when as a team we had a training run on Kinmel Beach near Rhyl at sunset, we were all barefoot in Chariots of Fire style,



running across a sandbank in about two inches of water and with the reflection of the sun on the water it looked as though were running on fire, I felt like I was floating and with the race a couple of days away, we were coming to peak form, I was with friends, we were invincible, we were to go to defend our title and in two days' time we sang as we passed the Gurkhas on Carnedd Llewellyn. That's what the Welsh 1000s means to me, and to us as a group, great memories, great friendships, great organisation but not just by Barrie Smith our hero, but by Harvey Lloyd and his team, thanks for making it possible, we owe a massive debt of gratitude to you all. You are all heroes, THANK YOU." Dai Richards.

We both hope these notes give an indication of how the race impacted on all those involved, the organiser, the helpers and marshals and of course all the competitors, together with the Gorphwysfa club from the earliest of days. The Gorphwysfa took over the full management of the race in 1990.

Sir Brian Smith, Gorphwysfa Club Chairman, & Harvey Lloyd, 2021

A Tragedy on Lliwedd

Many accidents have occurred on the steep, unyielding cliffs of Lliwedd since its West Buttress was first climbed in 1883. Even in modern times the cliff is considered unusually dangerous as its rock is not always sound and more specifically it offers few points of attachment to protect the climber. In 1888 a tragic accident occurred which was commemorated by the building of a marble cross at the foot of the cliff. The cross eventually was destroyed by rockfall or more probably vandalism by people who thought it inappropriate to commemorate a fatality in this way. But even as late as the 70s and 80s, pieces of the cross could still be found by those approaching the face. Surprisingly, the location of this cross continued to be marked on the Six-Inch Ordnance Survey map until 1948. (Fig.1)

To understand the accident commemorated by the cross it is helpful to know something of the topography. (Fig.2) Lliwedd has two main buttresses separated by a steep gully, the Central Gully. The West Buttress was the first to be climbed by A. H. Stocker and T. W. Wall on January 1883. They started from ledges near the foot of the Central Gully and traversed west (right) before turning up to reach the summit. The following year Stocker together with A. G. Parker climbed another route on the West Buttress which they called the Primitive Route. This again started from the ledges near the foot of the Central Gully but followed a more direct route to the summit. In 1887 a third route on the buttress, the Central Gully and West Peak, was established by climbing higher up the Central Gully before traversing out onto the face of the buttress. At the end of the traverse the route climbs steeply upwards with one more challenging section, called the Quartz Slab. These last two routes were the scene of the tragic accident.

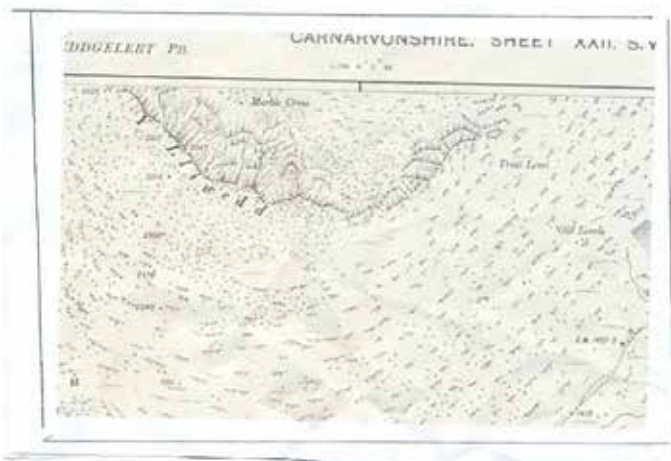


Figure 1: The Six Inch Ordnance Survey Map, 1888 edition, showing the location of the marble cross.

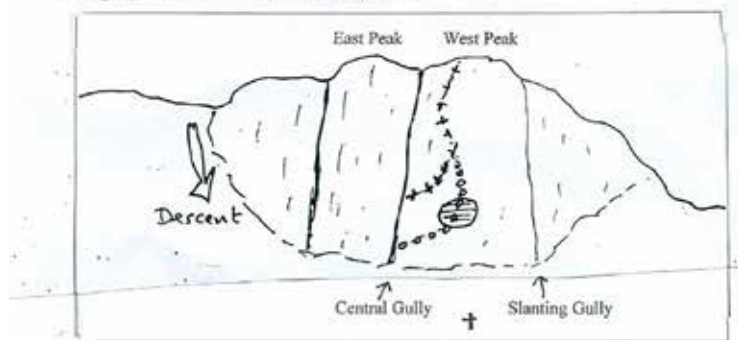


Figure 2: The North Face of Lliwedd.

- + + + + Central Gully and West Peak Route.
- o o o o Primitive Route.
- ⊗ Scene of accident, † Marble cross.

On 20th May 1888 Mr Alfred Evans with two friends, Corlett and Kidson, left the Pen y Gwryd hotel at 10 AM for a day of climbing. They walked to Cwm Glas, climbed the Parson's Nose, and then traversed Crib y Ddysgl to the summit of Snowdon. From there they descended one of the gullies on its north face to Llyn Llydaw and traversed to the cliffs of Lliwedd, reaching them at about 5 PM. The account by the two survivors suggests that they started to climb the Central Gully and West Peak Route, first climbed just a year earlier. The rocks of the gully are smooth and usually wet. Though they are not steep, the leader, Corlett, experienced some difficulty in gaining a ledge known as the Quartz Shelf (by their account) some 300 feet above the screes. Evans, unable to climb this difficult step, decided to leave the gully at a level approximately 80 feet lower and soon got into difficulties.

The survivor's account continues: *Corlett descended some distance, and sent down the rope to his assistance, but as it was too short to tie round his chest and fearing he would not be able to climb if he simply took it in his hands, Evans refused its aid. He remained fixed in the gully for some time, unable to go up or down, and at this point Kidson could not give him any assistance. After a great struggle he succeeded in getting down three or four feet and was then assisted by Kidson to a fairly comfortable seat just out of the gully. Corlett swung out right to the Western Buttress and descended some distance, so that his comrades might have the assistance of the rope passing over the ledge..... This ledge in one place is exceedingly difficult, and it was almost at this point that the accident afterwards happened.*

Evans made determined attempts to join Corlett but eventually shouted: *We are going down. I'm clean fagged out.* Corlett then made his way to the top of the climb but when there noticed that Evans and Kidson were not descending as he expected but struggling to climb a difficult

step. Having passed one difficulty, Evans seized Kidson's ankle and using this grasped a ledge above and began to traverse to the right.

When he had gone about five or six feet - half the distance of the traverse - his feet slipped, his arms gradually came to their full stretch and with one quietly uttered "Oh" he fell. He slidand was deflected outwards from the cliff, falling upon his feet almost at the edge of a steeply sloping grass ledge running up this part of the cliff. This was a distance of about fifteen feet, and from this point, in four or five terrible leaps he fell a total distance of some 200 feet to the screes below.

About five minutes later Kidson reached his friend but he was already dead. Corlett reached the summit at 7 pm and, worried about his companions, he immediately descended a gully at the far side of the Eastern Buttress. He met Kidson who was already on his way running to the Pen y Gwryd hotel for help. Corlett made his way to the body and waited nearly three hours until a rescue. It was concluded that had Evans accepted the rope when he was so tired after having already completed a full day's climbing, all would have been well.

This is the sad affair that is commemorated by the marble cross near the foot of the rocks. It was erected by Evan's friends to perpetuate his memory and recorded that his age was merely twenty-four. The current guidebook to Lliwedd contains the comment: *The cross erected on a grassy knoll opposite the cliff to commemorate the death of Evans on this route [Central Gully and West Peak] has been vandalised, the cross itself lying in two pieces next to the approach path.*

Some eleven years later the distinguished climber J. M. Archer Thomson, who wrote the first climbing guidebook to Lliwedd, found the climbers cap (which he described as containing Chrysalides) and what he identified as *other plain indications of the fatality* close beside the Primitive Route and not the route they had originally attempted to climb.

In August 1894 second fatality occurred on Lliwedd. T. Mitchell (said to be the assistant editor of the *New Historical Dictionary*), climbing alone, attempted to make the first ascent of the Slanting Gully which bounded the West Buttress to the west. He climbed some 400 feet to a difficult step. Failing to get up this and unable to retreat he remained trapped for half an hour before falling to his death

These accidents did little to hinder the exploration of Lliwedd. In the years that followed a large number of new climbs were pioneered on its West Buttress. The Slanting Gully remained a particular challenge but in 1897 it was climbed by the Abraham brothers from Keswick. Their achievement was only grudgingly recognised by the climbers who did their climbing in North Wales. However, the biggest challenge, climbing the East buttress, remained. Climbers had sought a route up this face for twenty years before J. M. Archer Thompson and O. Eckerstein made the first ascent in 1903. In 1909 Archer Thomson in association with A. W. Andrews produced a guidebook to the cliff describing over thirty climbs. Later guidebooks were to increase this number to more than a hundred. Lliwedd remained one of the cliffs most favoured by rock climbers for a further thirty years after which it fell out of favour as new crags provided steeper challenges.

Footnote: My interest in this accident was stimulated by learning of an email sent to Harvey Lloyd by a friend, Paul Newby. Paul had been alerted by a friend to the marble cross marked on the 1888 edition of the OS map, published in the same year as the accident, and was anxious to find further information about it. Both Harvey and I have vague memories of discovering pieces of marble below the cliff in the early 1950s. The cross was already broken by then.

Most of the information I obtained about the accident was from:

Rock Climbing in North Wales, George and Ashley Abraham, G. P. Abraham, Keswick, 1906.

The Climbs on Lliwedd, J. M. Archer Thomson and A. W. Andrews, Edward Arnold, London 1909.

Brian Smith

The Gorphwysfa Plastic Bottle

[The bottle originally buried on a ledge on Lliwedd, by Brian, Harvey, & probably Mike and the Middleton brothers] to commemorate the founding of the club was replaced. Sadly, we were told by members of another climbing club that the second bottle had been found at the bottom of the cliff some years later. We have not been able to return to the ledge to confirm if this is true. Gorphwysfa Journal, 27 (1) 2004.]

On the day following the first dinner of the club October 26th, 1975, the minutes of the club's first meeting and a list of its members were placed in a bottle and buried on a ledge in the very centre of the east buttress of Lliwedd.

Almost 30 years later on the 22nd May 2004 the original glass bottle was recovered and replaced by a plastic container containing the current membership list and articles about the club and its members. Water had leaked into the original bottle due to a poor seal and though the papers were recovered no sign of any writing was visible. The bottle and its contents have now been placed in the club's museum in the hope that future scholars will be able to recover the lost text. It is believed that the plastic container containing the current papers will be more resistant to the weather.



It was a bright spring morning when the expedition set off from Hafod y Gwynt. Its members, Tom Povey, Bill McCann, Andrew Middleton and Brian Smith started from the Heather Shelf at the foot of the East Buttress. Climbers were already on the Horned Crag Route and so Bill and Andrew rashly explored a variation start called the Runnel, a Hard Very Difficult climb described in the guide book as in "ruinous condition". (Only those who know Lliwedd well will understand just how rash this venture was!) It was an ashen faced pair of climbers who rejoined the main route sometime later.

From then on, the moderate but bold climbing led to the secret niche where the original time capsule was immediately located and replaced. The party then fought its way to the summit, raised the Gorphwysfa Pennant, and returned triumphantly to Hafod y Gwynt to the applause of the flag-waving spectators who lined the route.

The party will return in approximately 30 years' time to replace the cache with updated material.

Brian Smith



Preparing for the big expedition.

Eds. Note: The Executive Committee are pleased to note that the Gorphwysfa are in the forefront on modern technology in the 21st century by using a plastic bottle, when it is next changed can we ensure that the old one is recycled? Congratulations to all concerned!

The Radyr Chain Meets

In 1993, Brian was appointed vice-chancellor of Cardiff University, a job that came with an official residence at Radyr Chain, a grand Victorian mansion with a full-sized billiards room, a tennis court and nine bedrooms. This enabled Brian, at Harvey's suggestion that he could act as a youth hostel warden for a weekend, to host a south Wales meet every March till his retirement, sometimes while Regina was visiting family in America.



After moving to Cardiff, Brian had taken up caving in the Black Mountains, and was keen to share this new pursuit with the Gorphwysfans. On a March Saturday in 1995, an intrepid group comprising Martin, Lucy, Jack and Peter Norton, Harvey Lloyd, Frances, Tanya and Katia Richardson, Kathleen Siddle, John Rowlinson, and Mike Leask accompanied Brian to explore the 'moderate' dry cave of Llygad Llychwr in the western Black Mountains described as suitable for beginners. The cave entrance was a small hole about 3m up a rock face with a spring source gushing from a low cavern into a pool alongside. After a brief exploration, Peter Norton decided that age five was too young to begin a caving career, and Harvey's dog Jade also wanted to come out. Mike Leask nobly volunteered to guard the entrance to help the party out or call cave rescue if necessary.

Heaving oneself through the cave mouth, it was necessary to wriggle headfirst down a slope before there was enough room to turn around. After squeezing round the first bend, we slid down a rock shelf, taking care not to fall down the deep cleft to one side, below which lay a pool of indeterminate depth. Most passages could be negotiated by squatting or crawling. The crux came with a tight section only passable by squeezing round an obstruction on one's left side with arm outstretched. As the sump was filled with water, this involved immersion of the left side of the body.



The team's efforts were rewarded by finding several small caverns decorated with stalagmites and stalactites, including some teeth-like formations. The journey ended at a rushing underground river, only passable by experienced cave divers. On the return journey, the constriction had to be negotiated lying on one's right side, ensuring that the other half of the body also got wet through. The final challenge was the exit from the cave mouth above the river. The choice was between crawling up the slope and emerging head first before attempting

to turn round in the cave mouth in order to downclimb the small cliff outside, or to squirm backwards up the incline to emerge in the right position for downclimbing. The consensus was that Brian's description of Llygad Llychwr as a dry cave was a few degrees for correct, and that it had proved quite enough of a challenge for the novices.

On Sunday, some opted for a walk over Pen y Fan, while the adventurers went climbing in Three Cliffs Bay and succeeded in maintaining the Gorphwysfa doom and gloom tradition even on a sunny day on the Gower. When it was discovered that there was only one rope for a party of seven, Liz Leask led the ladies and girls un-roped up a desperate scramble. Frances and Katia then tried a spot of bouldering and found the tide lapping at their heels, though we had been assured it was low tide. A long cliff traverse took them back to the main party, by now cut off by the tide. Brian and Mike led the group to safety by a tricky traverse across the outer cliff face.

The overall verdict on our first Radyr Chain meet was that it had been a most enjoyable weekend; the bathrooms were definitely superior to Pen y Pass, but the drying room facilities not up to youth hostel standards.

Two years later, Brian proposed that the caving beginners should tackle something more adventurous and arranged for members of the Cardiff University caving club to guide us round part of the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu in the Brecon Beacons. Tricky sections included jumping across a cross-shaped canyon onto a sloping slippery shelf barely a meter wide and chimneying up a shaft with a deep drop beneath. On the Sunday Brian and Harvey attended the South Wales Caving Clubs AGM, at Bryn Mawr in order that the Gorphwysfa could become affiliated to the club. They were accepted and the club could then be able to access more exciting caves, though some members decided to revert to hill walking for future meets!

Again as always the comforts of Radyr Chain were much appreciated after a challenging weekend, but sadly like all good things, Brian retired from Cardiff in 2002, and our wonderful South Wales meets were drawn to a close.

Frances Richardson

What do we do now?

A typical Saturday morning at Pen-y-Pass many years ago now. Brian: "It's got to be Cloggy today. I'm keen on doing Longlands climb (the first climb on the West Cliff of Clogwyn Du'r Arddu by Jack Longland in 1928. V.S.). What do you think?" Of course, you were immediately consumed with his enthusiasm. It was infectious. So, I, brother Andy and Brian found ourselves at the foot of this historical climb. I was climbing well at this time, rarely leading, enjoying being second watching Andy and others at the sharp end.

A modern Guide Book gives the climb the below description.

Longland's Climb VS 4c. A fine old classic that takes an intricate line up the slender slab on this side of the West Buttress. The first route to breach the imposing West Buttress. Start at the foot of The Black Cleft.

1) 15m. Scramble across easy ground to a block and traverse right to a ledge below the narrow slabby corner.

2) 4a, 25m. Climb the slabby corner to a belay in the base of the widening chimney-crack.

3) 4b, 12m. Climb up the chimney and slab above either on the left (easier) or by pulling out right and traversing back above (better) to a belay on the right.

4) 35m. Easy climbing leads up the slab to a crevassed ledge on the right.

5) 4c, 25m. From the right end of the ledge, pull up steeply over the overhang on good but spaced holds. Then move right into a chimney. Climbing up this leads to easier ground and the top.

Throughout the walk in, I convinced myself I would like to lead today. I was having second thoughts and nearly changed my mind when the majestic cliff came into view. There was a moment of apprehension and excitement (*could I lead V.S.?*). Then it was agreed that I would lead the first pitch. In fact, I lead the first two pitches with Brian second and Andy stayed on the ground below to support the attempt. It was a strange feeling being at the sharp end.



The cliff was living up to its reputation as being like no other; dark, foreboding and beautifully awesome. I looked across at the East face. There was a lot of space beneath my feet. When we got to the crevice stance, neither of us could lead the overhang at the final pitch. The rest became a history etched in my memory. Brian smiled at me "What do we do now?" There was silence. Brian may have had a fag; I still remember him when he smoked hiding his nub ends in small cracks. To get off route on Cloggy is serious. Brian lead the traverse of his life that day, moving right on to White Slab. He then topped out on this famous piece of rock (unknown to him!).

It was exhilarating making delicate, thin moves in the footsteps of the climbing greats. We hardly spoke on the way down. "That was a brilliant lead, Brian" He never replied; he knew what he had done was a special moment for him. In the many times that Brian and I met since then, this climb always seemed to come up in our conversation. I know that it meant a lot to both of us. A very special rock-climbing moment, one I will never forget.

John Middleton

Some Snippets...

For some time Brian has been working on a book, he titled in Memories and More, to give to his family members, on the background to his life – he thought, correctively, they would love to read about his life. He told me, early on this year, in a very satisfied tone of voice, that he had finished it and it was with the printers. I, of course, told him to make sure I got a copy, which I now have!

The closing section of the book he gives it this name – and points out that as the material in the book so far was all serious it needed a section more light hearted to finish off, so he entitles it,

Some Snippets!

Clearing out the Garage.

Some time ago my wife decided we needed to clear out the garage, a remarkable space that was packed with many interesting objects but that had, as yet, never contained a car.

In a great moment of archaeology history, the tomb of Tutankhamun was revealed, packed with all the objects the king needed in his afterlife. Lord Caernarvon asked, the great archaeologist, Howard Carter "Can you see anything"? Carter replied "Yes wonderful things". Is it too much to think that had the two great men broken down the door of our garage their excitement would have been no less. They would have seen goods not required for the afterlife, but for many, many years of later life, Behind the door they would have found a large sofa over thirty years old in perfect condition except that the springs had broken through the seat. It was

waiting, ready for repair when its careful owner had the time, in the years to come, to go on an upholstery course. Nearby was a television set only slightly compromised by the fact that it switched itself on and off at the most unexpected times. Howard Carter took ten years to clear out the boy king's tomb. The clearing of our garage deserved no less. It demanded careful procedure as, step-by-step, the dusty objects were delicately examined so as not to compromise any treasures. Treasures not only of historical and social importance but possible of considerable commercial value.

As I set about my task, I recalled those television programmes in which people discover in their attics or in their garages objects which they prepared to discard. throw it into a skip when I heard a voice in my head. However on the advice of experts , they discovered just in time, that they were in fact priceless. This made my challenge more difficult. Yesterday I had in my hand a broken cup just about to throw into the skip. When I heard a voice in my head. It was calm and measured and very professional just like the antiques experts on television.

'I'm glad you brought this along, I have always wanted to see one of these . Will you allow me to handle it? Yes, its 20th century, a fine example of English cupware and we do know something of its provenance. You can see turning it over the W W shows it was part of a collection purchased by F W Woolworth and later sold on to the public. I am sure that you would not dream of parting with such a delightful object that has, no doubt, been in your family for many years, but you will want me to give you an estimate of its value. I would suggest that you sold it in an auction attended by specialist broken cup collectors we would be looking at something in the region of £1000. Of course if it were not cracked and had not lost its handle it would be worth much more. Clearly, I could not throw such a remarkable specimen of English craftsmanship away.'

I moved on to the next object which I had intended to throw away when the voice returned. *'Though I am an expert on ceramics I do have a personal interest in broken toasters from the late 20th Century. The one in your hand is a very beautiful example of fine metalwork and would attract great interest from collectors. They would find it particularly attractive sine a small fragment of burnt toast still remains inside it. Again, I cannot imagine you would wish to part with such a delightful object, but if you were to sell it we would be talking about many thousands of pounds.'*

It is not easy to clear out the garage.

Brian Smith

P.S. from the Editor. A few years ago on one of my many visits to Brian at Appletree house he was genuinely clearing out his garage – the garage space was to become part of the living quarters of the house.

The builders had earlier in the day, removed the up and over door from the garage, and he was viewing it alongside the skip that had been hired – clearly the door would not fit in the skip – and the sign on the side of it stated it was not to be overloaded. My arrival was like manner from heaven for Brian – at Hafod y Gwynt the wooden doors on the garage had expired many years before, only my improvisation ensured the life could continue beyond any expectation.

A deal was struck – Brian would not accept a penny, - a big van was hired and a month or so later the HyG garage was a proud owner of an electrically operated up and over door, it fitted perfectly!

It of course was luck that I arrived at the moment – a previous caller might have been the Television programme director and could well have convinced Brian that a mid-20th century up and over door was a collectors piece and worth thousands!

Harvey



Dolomites 2006



Scotland April 2015



Dolomites date unknown



Dolomites 2008



Plynlimon September 2022



Dolomites 2010



Shotover 2023



Zermatt 2015



After placing the second bottle on Lliwedd
May 2004



Hafod y Gwynt 2003



Tyn y Coed June 2019



Zermatt 2015



Dolomites 2006



Dolomites 2010



14 Peaks 1972 Ogwen Valley



Scotland April 2015



Tryfan 2003



Pen y Pass December 2015



Dolomites 2006



Outside Hafod y Gwynt June 2019



May 2015, returning from Scotland meet



Dolomites 2010



Zermatt 2015



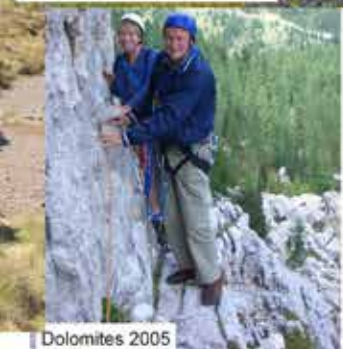
Dolomites 2010



Plynlimon September 2022



Ascending Stac Pollaidh April 2012



Dolomites 2005

LOOKING FORWARD

If but the kindly years may grant us still
To track the lonely valley to its end,
And view, though from afar, the crag – bound hill
Lift its long greeting – as old friend meets old friend
In life's brief rest from labour at the last,
When all that asks the clearer word is spoken,
When heart knows heart, and all the wistful past
Wakes in one glance – then shall this love, unbroken,
Ye mountains, by our striving and your strength,
Finds its last pleasure only in the seeing,
And deep beyond all depth of words at length
Pulse with a life more lasting than mere being.

There will be voices whispering down these ways
The while one wanderer is left to hear;
And the young life and laughter of old days
Shall wake undying echoes, while one ear
Still hearkens for the music made erewhile:
The shout of triumph at the new ascent,
The friendly chorus chanted to beguile
Long hours of restful evening idly spent
About some cottage hearth; voices that speak
Upon the moorland path the rugged slope
To those whose later pilgrimage shall seek
To walk with memory 'mid these heights of hope.

No heart that loved the heather and the hill
But lives for us and for all later time.
We hear them hail us from the mist – cap still,
We feel them near us on the resolute climb;
A strange sure company of unknown friends,
They cheered our boyhood up the hard – won height,
And throng about us as our old age wends
More slowly down the vales of old delight.
They share with us the silver fire that burns
From moonlight summits on the lonely dreams,
They smile upon us from the brown – eyed ferns,
And join our challenge to the voiceful streams.

And when our last gold sun shall turn to wake
Late amber shadows in the sleeping grass,
And the grey lashes of the evening lake
Shall close forever on our last dim pass,
The best of us, the soul we never lost,
Shall join that host upon the cloud – girt stair.
Selfless, a part of all we loved the most,
Friends of the Mountains, you will find us there.

*Taken from Geoffrey Winthrop Young's Book
'Wind and Hill' Published 1909*