

THE GWYDYR NO 14 (JAN 2011)

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GWYDYR MOUNTAIN CLUB



Burn's Night at the Chapel (looks like Chris has the blues ☺)

Welcome to the latest newsletter and while the weather seems decidedly unseasonal with little snow and mild temperatures we've not been resting on our laurels and there have been some good trips this past month which one hopes bodes well for the coming year.

The first 'official' club trip was the seemingly traditional Saturday walk on the 8th January which this year was organised by Dave Gray and it proved a delightful walk with an exceptional attendance of 20 odd members plus a few prospective's.

The walk began near Llangollen and took in Velvet Hill and Llantysilio Mountain in a walk of approximately nine miles. It was cold but we were afforded some excellent views of the Snowdonia mountains and the nearby Clwydian range. Dave Chadwick left a bit earlier than the rest of us as he had to cycle to Wrexham to catch a train so for miles covered he wins hands down.

A cracking beer in an unknown pub on the way home in front of a roaring fire rounded off a great day out and thanks to Dave for organising.



Lunch stop beneath Moel Y Gamelin

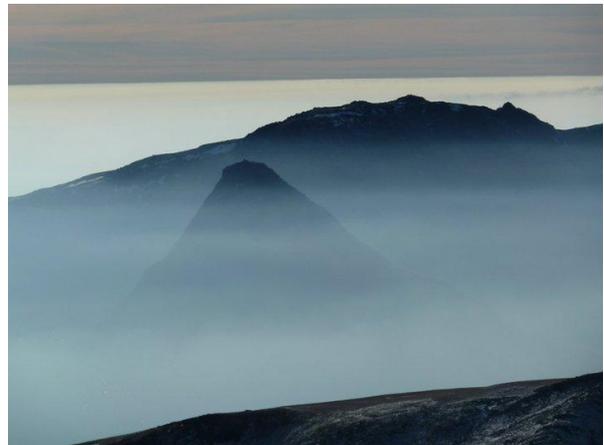


View towards Moel Famau

The same day Andy Odger, Neil Metcalfe and Phil Earl went up Pen Y Ole Wen in the Carneddau (after telling me they were not getting out !) and they sadly witnessed the aftermath of a bad accident in Cwm Lloer when a climber died after falling nearly 500ft.



Andy, Neil & Phil on Pen Y Ole Wen



Tryfan, like a shark's fin piercing the water



The gang, minus Melinda, before the walk



Beautiful mountains eh ! 😊

The next club meet was the now regular Burn's Night celebration in the Chapel and this year's was truly memorable with excellent, almost restaurant quality, food provided by Chris & Janet Harris and entertainment provided by John Murphy and his guitar.

We were not slacking on the hill front either with a party led by Dave Gray heading up into the Carneddau accompanied by bright winter sunshine, Tony & Richard went climbing in the Moelwyn's and a motley group of us decided to trust my judgment in heading off to the Llyn Peninsula.

It transpired that the only hills in all of Snowdonia that were to be in cloud on the Saturday were the shapely Rivals above the village of Trefor and it was a, actually the first of a couple, faux pas on my part to suggest going there in the hope of following a walk in Ken Wilson's great book 'Wild Walks'.

The drive over to the Llyn passed without incident save for a decidedly average cafe in Beddgelert and a slight detour through the back streets of Penygroes to look at a footbridge not shown on the OS map !!!

The walk led off from the end of Trefor village on a lovely path leading to the sea and then we were supposed to follow a vague path beneath the cliffs to the headland of Trwyn Y Gorlech. The path was indeed vague especially so the further we headed away from Trefor and it soon became apparent to me that this 'path' was indeed no longer. I walked a bit further on while the others caught up and after crossing a sixty degree loose scree slope I was confronted with a section of near vertical grass, which was damp and without any sign of man ever having been there before.

Altruism got the better of me (well, I would say that wouldn't I) and I headed back to tell the others that it was not worth attempting as one slip would have deposited you into the sea after a fall of some 250ft over near vertical cliffs.

Walking back along the pebble beach we came across many pieces of nautical detritus in the shape of lobster cages and an old wooden ships mast. There were some cracking pieces of rock too as well as several thousand plastic bottles. We brought a few back with us as a token gesture but there way too many and it is such a shame that a remote beach can be spoiled in such a way.

We took a brief lunch at the start of the normal way up Yr Eifli and with only a few hours daylight left I hoped we'd have enough time to visit the Iron Age fort of Tre'r Ceiri. At a little after one o'clock we headed up into the mists and once we had crested Bwlch yr Eifl we snatched some beautiful views of the whole of the Llyn Peninsula, bathed in sunlight, before the mists rolled in again and a left turn saw us join the Llyn Coastal Path which led eventually to the absolutely magnificent Iron Age fort of Tre'r Ceiri. If you have never been there I can strongly recommend it, especially on a nice day where one will be able to appreciate the commanding position of the fort as well as its immensity.



At Least we were warned !!!!



Allan walking the plank, well ship's mast then !!!



As the mists cleared momentarily.....



An Iron Age chair ☺



One of the entrances to the fort.

It was now gone four and we decided we'd best head back down and followed a really good path which sadly went in the wrong direction thus forcing us to contour round and down some steep rocky and heathery hillside to join another vague slippy and boggy path which eventually led back to Bwlch Yr Eifl and the track back into Trefor where arrived in near darkness after a great day out.

A quick stop for booze in Penygroes and an 'off the hill' at the Cwellyn Arms saw us all back at the Chapel with minutes to spare before the superb Burn's Night meal.

Mention must be made of Chris & Janet Harris's efforts in preparing a meal for twenty odd of us as well as John Murphy's guitar playing which made a really great night for all concerned. One hopes that this meet will continue for many years and I fear that such is its popularity now that it may well be over-subscribed next year.



Haggis, Tatties & Neeps – Gwydyr style ☺



Reg telling how eating Haggis made his hair grow ☺



Plenty of Booze – as always !



A tired Chairmen !!!



Sunday morning arrived all too soon and it was not long before a massive clean-up operation was underway before we all went our various ways. Dave Gray et al walked over to Crafnant while Richard and Melinda Kinsman went to the Moelwyns. Carol Boothroyd and I went for a nice walk up Conwy Mountain, seeing some wild ponies and a rather poor Iron Age fort before retiring to a lovely cafe in Conwy for the obligatory brew.

Forthcoming Meets :-

05	Sat Walk: Bleaklow (Dave Gray)
12	Sat Walk: Creigiau Gleision (Keith Colwell)
25-26	HUT -Weekend
MARCH 2011	
05	Sat Walk: Darwen area (Mark Barley)
11-12	Winter S/C Meet Blencathra Centre (Sue Taylor)
22	Club AGM

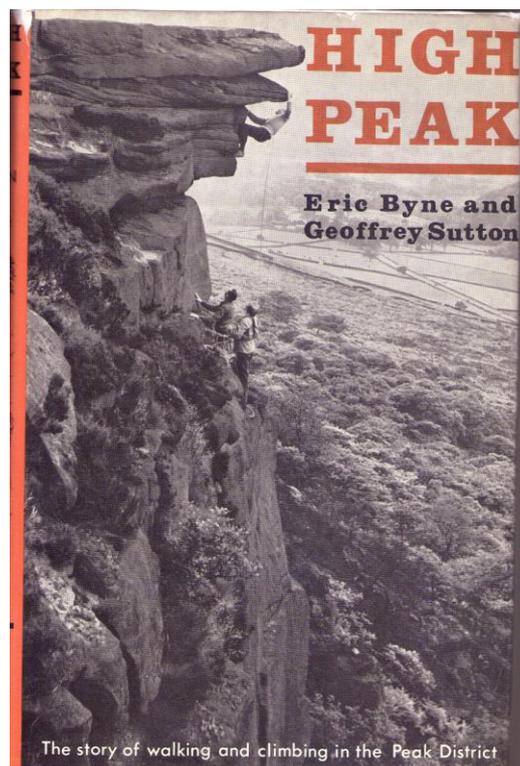
First up is Dave Gray's walk to Bleaklow from Glossop and descending down the Doctor's Gate path. Bleaklow is a great hill and can be really hard going in less than ideal conditions so one hopes the weather holds fair.

Keith Colwell's walk the following weekend is also a good 'un over quite rough terrain and little frequented hills.

At the hut weekend of the 25/26th February I was thinking of opening it up to members of the Peninsula Canoe Club (they walk as well !) but this will depend on how many of our members are going out so please let me know if you are considering going before I mention it on their forum. It may well be that it's all at a little short notice however it may prove popular and generate some extra funds for us.

There is a committee meeting on the 10th February 2011 and so if there is anything you wish us to discuss then please feel free to email either myself or Mike Dunn – Thanking you !

Given that there is a Peak District walk this weekend I thought some of you may be interested in the following (abridged) chapter from a book called 'High Peak – the story of walking and climbing in the Peak District' ! This kind of follows on from a song that Joy Mills got us all singing at the Burns Night 'The Manchester Rambler' by Ewan McColl. We have so much to thank our early walking pioneers for and their feats are all the more remarkable given that their weekend only began on a Saturday afternoon. So read on.....



Early Development of Peakland Walking

That the Peak should have produced a more outstanding tradition of walking than any other range of British mountains can be explained by its topography. The wide tablelands lead on the eye for mile after mile, and while they call for great physical endurance and navigating skill they make less demand for specific climbing techniques than the mountains of Cumberland, Wales or Scotland. All around them a huge population is cooped up in smoky industrial town, and it is natural that many active city-dwellers should seek recreation on the surrounding fells.

Walking as an organised sport began as early as 1880, when the Manchester Y.M.C.A. Rambling Club was formed. The earliest classic moorland walks were from Penistone to Ashopton and from Flouch Inn to Bamford, traversing the public right of way over Cutgate and Midhope Moors to the valley of the Derwent. Articles and letters relating to this walk, which Baddeley described as 'crossing the wildest English ground south of Westmorland', may be found in the Manchester City News between 1888 and 1898. One of them discusses the origin of Flouch Inn's curious name, which seems to be a corruption of 'slouch'. An early proprietor is said to have had a slouch lip. The first organised walking meets over the untracked tops of the high plateaux seem to have been those of the Kyndwr Club, and their memorable crossing of Bleaklow from Lawrence Edge to Slippery Stones after a climbing meet at Wharnccliffe was probably the first of its kind. Their further wanderings, and those of the newly formed Rucksack Club, rapidly increased knowledge of the remotest areas.

Another club which began with the new century was the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers. One of the first rules, still strictly adhered to today, was that 'The Leader takes the ramble as printed – wet or fine'. The moving spirit behind the club was the late G.H.B. Ward, a fervent idealist and a man of wide culture. 'The man who never was lost never went very far,' was his motto. Ward was a great fighter for access to mountains. Besides the Clarion, he was one of the founders of the Peak Branch for the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (the C.P.R.E.), and the great organiser of the mass trespasses from Sheffield. The Clarion took its first ramble, the round of Kinder Scout, in September 1900, and two years later elected Councillor Tom Shaw as its first president. Another early member of the club was Bill Whitney, an amateur champion boxer and wrestler who used to enjoy teasing the toughest and surliest gamekeepers, none of whom dared to take him on. These early Clarion ramblers were a tough and determined crowd with strong socialistic views and an unshakeable belief in the rights of man and freedom of the hills. The gamekeeper who tried to stop a party of them crossing his master's grouse moor had an unrewarding task.

Perhaps the greatest long-distance walker of this time was Cecil Dawson, a Manchester cotton merchant. A big upright man, light of body but long of leg, he was taciturn to those he did not know, and his gruff voice startled many a stranger. His determined features were adorned with a great flowing moustache, and altogether his appearance was that of a Prussian officer in mufti. It is said that his map-and-compass work was faultless. He

appeared never to alter speed or stride, continuing at the same pace uphill or on the flat. Very soon he became something of a legend, and even today mention of him in the bar of the Nag's Head (in Edale) may bring forth some reminiscence from one of the local worthies.

The late Harry Summersgill, one of his early companions and a great Rucksack Club walker, has stated that one of Dawson's first expeditions was from Llandudno to Manchester in the company of another man, now long forgotten and unable to finish the walk.

It was Dawson who developed the most famous moorland traverse of all, the Marsden to Edale, though he himself stated that a man called Ross Evans was the originator. This expedition, which in wintry conditions is probably the best twenty-five mile bogtrot (continuous walking) in the Peak, is meritorious for leading straight across the tops of Black Hill, Bleaklow and Kinder Scout, without roads or easy options for many miles. Dawson extended the Marsden – Edale by starting from Colne and including Hebden Bridge, whence a crossing of Blackstone Edge leads eventually to Marsden. He then went on to become the originator of the fifty-mile bogtrot by inaugurating the Colne to Buxton walk together with Frank and Harry Summersgill. This expedition remained the longest in the area until 1919, when Harry Phillips extended it to Ashbourne.

About 1906 or 1907 Cecil Dawson, probably the first person to adopt the gym-shoe as footgear for fast walking over peaty ground, attracted a group of hard fell-walkers who became known as 'Dawson's Crowd'. For some time they were disposed to regard the Rucksack Club with disfavour, but in time the majority of them joined it. Dawson's Crowd did not by any means confine their activities to the Peak District. On one occasion, while touring in Wales, they stayed at Trawsfydd where they met another group of tough walkers and they christened Cecil 'the Colonel' !

With new friends from the Welsh trip Dawson, Alf Schaanning et al went on the Marsden to Edale walk in mid December, this 'loose' club of tough walkers christened themselves the '94th regiment' and after the walk enjoyed a special dinner in the Nag's Head.

The late Mac Forrester, who died in 1962 at the age of seventy-nine, said that the term 'bogtrotting' was evolved to describe the art of fast movement over the peaty and often pasty bogs and grouches of the high Peak District plateaux. In wet weather fast movement was essential to avoid sinking into the morasses, and in dry weather it was equally essential to escape from gamekeepers.

'When I joined' wrote Forrester, 'Dawson's 94th was comprised of Tom Arnfield, Harry Lees, Jack Capper and Billy Thornber, with Dawson 'the Colonel' in command. The Colonel was a man well over six feet in height and formed like a pair of compasses, or maybe a greyhound. His staying power was unequalled by anyone I ever met on the hills, an no-one ever saw him tired. With his suitable build and continuous practice every weekend he was capable of terrific speed. He carried his food with him and slept in barns, and this food always

reminded me of the proverb 'half a loaf is better than no bread'. For his seemed literally to be half a loaf made into one sandwich, off which he would hack huge lumps with a very large clasp knife.'

'He was know, hated and hunted by all the Bleaklow and Kinder Scout keepers, but was never caught, although on one occasion after a day on Bleaklow we were followed to the Miller's Arms near Hazlehead (now dismantled) and only managed to escape by climbing through the window while the keepers were waiting for us in the passage.'

'After the first Marsden-Edale walk the Colonel moved to Littleborough-Marsden on Saturday afternoon as an appetiser. I was with him on the first Colne-Edale walk, but found it enough and subsequently left the long-distance stuff to the others'

'In the early days we did not have rucksacks, but managed with poacher's pockets fitted all around the inside of the coat. At the start of a week's tour we must have looked like escaped umbrellas. On one tour in the Lake District, during snow conditions, we found that someone had cut steps all the way up the Central Gully on Great End. The Colonel, seeing these, thought that this would be a novel way to make the top. Unhappily he missed the top step and came down the whole flight in one'

'There was an occasion when Angus Lees must have been swanking about his walking powers to the people of a farm near Langsett, where we used to go for tea. I suppose he was offering to show them round a bit. Eventually the son of the farmer accepted the offer, and a date was fixed. On the Sunday Angus got off the 6.40am train at Hazlehead, picked up the man at the farm, and bogtrotted him across the moors to Edale, arriving with just enough time to have some tea and catch the train to Manchester. Angus turned to his man and asked if he was staying the night in Edale to which he replied 'Oh no, I'm walking back (25 miles) as I've got the cows to milk at five in the morning' – Angus was careful with his offers after that !

The late Bill Humphry said that when he went to live in Manchester in 1909 there were only about a dozen people who ignored the roads and footpaths and regularly crossed the bleak vastness of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow.

Men were not the only protagonists in the long distance walking, Louise Dutton was an exceptionally strong walker and was the first woman to walk the Pennine Way and at the age of eighty was still crossing Bleaklow and Kinder Scout regularly.

Eustace Thomas was one of the most remarkable persons ever associated with the Peak. A contemporary of Owen Glynne Jones at Finsbury Technical College, he came to Manchester in 1900 and helped establish a reputable engineering business though at the age of forty he was an ageing businessman with weak digestion and troublesome feet. Suddenly everything changed and he developed a deep rooted passion for hard walking.

He began to literally get into his stride in 1918 when he repeated the Colonel's Colne to Buxton walk of 51 miles in just under 18 hours, Eustace Thomas was by then 49 years of age.

Eustace approached bogtrotting in a scientific manner, not only spending much time studying the terrain but also going deeply into the matter of diet. Harry Summersgill had already expressed the opinion that 'in rubber shoes and very light clothing one can go on almost indefinitely if one can manage to eat, and if the feet are tough'. Eustace Thomas, however, felt that digestion was the greatest problem, and he experimented with various types of food until he discovered the diet most suitable for himself, both before and during the walk.

His next great feat was the Derwent Watershed walk, one of the toughest and difficult of walks entirely in the Peak District National Park. The terrain is exceptionally rough, few paths and much bog over its 37 mile length which he managed to complete with four friends in 11 hours 39 minutes, 41 minutes ahead of their anticipated finish time. This was to be the most difficult walk in the National Park till 1953 when Ronald Lambe and John Sumner made a high level horseshoe walk from Hen Cloud to Matlock via Combs Moss, Kinder Scout, Blealow and the eastern edges. Despite terrible weather they covered the 70 miles in 37 hours and 10 minutes.

Eustace Thomas now began his efforts to break the Lakeland Summits record from Keswick to Keswick and in 1922 he succeeded by ascending 25,500ft in 24 hours, after a short rest he then extended the course over the top of the Grassmoor range climbing a total of 30,000ft in 28 hours and thirty five minutes. This was no mean feat for a 53 year old businessman.

Thomas's later career was no less spectacular. The year after his successful attempt on the Lake District fell-walking record he began his alpine career and by 1928 had become the first Englishman to climb all 83 summits over 4000m. Later still he took to flying, and at the age of ninety was still making polar traverses. He remained physically and mentally active until his death in 1960 at the age of ninety-two.

Long distance walking and bog-trotting were now becoming more popular and in 1922 three men, Fred Heardman, Donald Berwick and H. E. Wild inaugurated the Three Inns Walk of approximately 40 miles from Whalley Bridge up to the Cat & Fiddle (2nd highest pub in Britain), over Kinder Scout to the Snake Pass Inn and then over Bleaklow to Isle of Skye Inn in Marsden. It was around this time that Heardman did the first recorded double crossing of the Marsden to Edale walk which has subsequently been done in less than 12 hours but this could hardly be called walking !

The area around Bleaklow and Kinder Scout can offer some of the most dangerous and demanding walking ever to be found and a sad tale from 1922 illustrates this:-

On New Year's Day 1922 Henry Fowler Martin was lost on the plateau. He called at the Snake Inn for some food around 2.00pm and told a maid how he had walked over via

Doctor's Gate battling against a wind so powerful that it had once blown him off his feet. He left the Inn without mentioning what route he proposed to follow. The weather was still bad and a terrific gale was raging over the high, shelter-less top of Kinder. From that moment he disappeared.

Because nobody knew Martin's route or intended destination the task of finding him proved difficult. For a week intensive searches by local farmers and gamekeepers met with no success, and at the weekend hundreds of ramblers and climbers gathered in Edale to begin an organised combing of the plateau. The body was eventually found about 400 yards from Kinder Downfall in the direction of Kinderlow. Evidently Martin had been making for Tunstall or Hayfield and was still on course, but the constant battling against that terrific hurricane must have gradually reduced him to a state of exhaustion. It is difficult for anyone who has never been on Kinder Scout to realise the force of the winds which on occasionally roar across the exposed plateau in winter. No less an authority than Professor Graham Brown was once blown off his feet on this mountain, and he remarked afterwards that he had never experienced such a wind in the whole of his explorations to the Alps, Alaska and Himalaya.

A month later, 250 men and women were again assembled in Edale to organise a search for Edwin Newton who had been missing for eight days somewhere on the Kinder Plateau. The mountain was in a wintry moor, and the searchers were considerably hampered by heavy drifts of snow. They walked across the plateau in an extended line, carefully scanning the peat groughs and heather until they came to the Downfall, where they made contact with parties that had come from different directions. Nobody had seen the smallest trace of Newton and the search continued for another fifteen days before his body was found in a small ravine some 300yds from where Fowler Martin had died.

These incidents had unfortunate repercussions. The landowners of the Peak District were aware of the rapidly growing interest in walking, and there were a few walkers who did not come up against notice boards with the ominous inscription 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'. These notices deterred many of the more timid. In some cases they were put up in order to prevent people establishing a right of way. This was quite understandable, since the existence of the notice was sufficient to prevent any such claim. Many landowners, however, were prepared to use force against walkers who ignored the placards or took them as a challenge, and sooner or later the bolder spirit was confronted with the owner or, more usually, his gamekeeper. Often the owner was reasonable and sometimes even a gamekeeper could be influenced, especially by the fairer sex, but on the whole the gamekeeper was a short tempered person who considered the game reserves sacrosanct. Thus began a game of hide-and-seek which made nearly all moorland crossings an adventure on one side and hard work on the other, although it cannot be doubted that many of the more sporting keepers enjoyed stalking and catching the more skilful trespassers. The accidents to Martin and Newton gave the landowners a good excuse to

restrict access to Bleaklow and Kinder Scout, and from this time on the keepers began to patrol more vigilantly.

On the 30th April 1923, a remarkable advertisement appeared in the Manchester Evening Chronicle. It showed two photographs of walkers on Kinder Scout, and underneath it read: 'Kinder Scout Trespassers £5 reward will be paid for the name, address and occupation of any of the persons represented in the photos. Apply Cobbett, Wheeler and Cobbett Solicitors, 49 Spring Gardens, Manchester'. The area shown on the photographs was at that time owned by Mr James Watts of Manchester. The photographs had obviously been taken by somebody who had seemed above suspicion to the walkers. There was widespread indignation that ramblers should be treated in this way as criminals. H. E. Wild of the Ramblers Federation, Footpath Inspector for the Northern Counties and Peak District Preservation Society, wrote to the paper as follows :

KINDER SCOUT TRESPASSERS £5 REWARD

Many readers have drawn my attention to the above advertisement, which appeared in the columns of the Chronicle on Monday last.

Will you allow me to state that the Ramblers Federation stands for freedom of access to mountain and moor, including Kinder Scout ?

I shall be pleased to supply any of your readers with details of membership on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

The letter was neither answered nor published, but there were no more advertisements of the kind which inspired it.

By 1925 there was a marked increase in the number of hill walkers. The Manchester Rambling Club was expanding rapidly, and membership of the Rucksack Club was around the 200 mark. Over in Sheffield the Derbyshire Pennine Club was in a healthy state, and the Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers and the Clarion flocked out into the Peak District each weekend. The expansion of the latter was indeed so rapid that offshoots composed of small groups of young members were quite common. Perhaps the most noted of these were the Peak Rambling Club and the Halcyon. Of the many tales about the Clarion, one of the best concerns a man who had unknowingly sat for some time on an ant-hill. During the journey home by train it became obvious that many of the insects remained with him, so while the train was passing through Grindelford tunnel he took off his trousers and shook them out of the window. He performed this operation so thoroughly that eventually the suction wrenched the trousers from his hands. Away they flew into the gloom of the tunnel beyond all hope of recovery, and the unfortunate owner had to be hustled into hiding until Sheffield was reached and a blanket could be fetched.

The fifty-mile Colne to Buxton walk had become almost a tradition in the Rucksack Club since Thomas and Begg had repeated Cecil Dawson's original route, but early in 1926 Fred Heardman and Harold Gerrard put their heads together and planned a ramble which they thought would improve on the old one. To strengthen the party the long-legged John Firth Burton was persuaded to join them, and in March that year the seventy-three mile Colne to Rowley walk was inaugurated.

The trio climbed out of the smoke of Colne at about 4.15 on the Saturday afternoon, starting along cart tracks, then crossing the moors to Hebden Bridge. About 8.00pm it grew dark, and the long stretch of peat, sedge and shale between Hebden Bridge and Marsden was completely blotted out, but 'with uncannily precision Heardman found the light railway track which, although it spoils one's rhythm and blasts one's stride, is nevertheless preferable to reservoirs'. A dinner had been ordered for midnight at Marsden. Although they were late it was still in good condition, and they fell to eagerly. Dawn had not yet arrived as they moved their sore feet over the cruel cobbles of Marsden once again, observed suspiciously by the village constable. The route up the Wessenden Valley to the Isle of Skye Inn was comparatively easy, but as they fumbled in the cold gloom with their first breakfast they were seized with unaccountable forebodings. There was a disagreement as to where to leave the road, and finally they decided to work by compass. After much stumbling and floundering in the groughs they finally plodded over Black Hill. Dawn broke as they were descending to Dunford Bridge, and although a clammy mist enveloped the landscape they took their second breakfast. At 9.45am they were off once more, bound for Milton Lodge and Cutgate.

About this time Gerrard and Burton dropped into low gear and Heardman began to forge ahead. Near Abbey Brook the sun came out and cheered them – and by this time they certainly needed cheering. In fact a little mini-motor would have been a great help, for they calculated that the twenty five miles to Rowsley would have to be covered at an average of four miles an hour if they were to catch the last train home. When they reached Ladybower [the old village and not the reservoir that is there today] at 1.15pm Heardman offered the others some delicious food from the depths of his Rucksack, and was instantly accused of trying to lighten his load.

As they were going over Stanage Gerrard developed trouble in his knees, probably due, according to Heardman, to the fact that he had been the only one in shorts all through the bitterly cold night. Whatever the reason, the pain was serious enough to force him to retire at Hathersage. The stockily built Heardman and the tall figure of Burton strode on with renewed determination through Longshaw and along the Froggat edges, resisting temptation to climb the Eagle Stone and pacing on through Chatsworth without a halt. Rowley was reached with a quarter of an hour to spare, twenty seven and a half hours after they had set out. Burton recorded subsequently that he had shot his bolt, but that Heardman still seemed to have plenty of go in him.

The Colne to Rowsley was repeated the following year by a party including Gerrard whose knees did not fail him and one member of the party, Harry Gilliat, finished the walk in under 24 hours. What is more remarkable is that he continued the walk on to Matlock thus extending the distance to seventy five miles. In 1928 Harry Gilliat repeated the walk from Colne to Matlock in well under 24 hours, a remarkable achievement.

Since the first Colne to Rowsley walk, Heardman, the man who once walked barefoot from Langsett to Edale for the wager of a pint of shandy, has become a legendary figure in the Peak District. For many years he was the licensee of both the Nag's Head and Church Hotel in Edale, where he became a Rural District Councillor and fought successfully, despite bitter opposition, against the attempt of steel magnates to industrialise this beautiful valley. An indefatigable worker on the Peak District branch of the C.P.R.E, he has been a life-long collector of local lore, and when the Peak District National Park was founded the Nag's Head became its first Information Centre and Mountain Rescue Post. Here, until his retirement in 1960, he dispensed good cheer and advice over the bar room fire. In the year of his retirement his services were recognised with the award of the B. E. M., but perhaps retirement is not a possible word to apply to Heardman, who has continued living in Edale, helping the Peak Park Board and the Mountain Rescue Committee, writing walkers' guide books and occupying himself with a hundred other activities including, of course, regular walking over the length and breadth of Kinder and Bleaklow.

1925 was also notable for the appearance on the scene of Alf Bridge, a burly young climber whose tireless lungs and muscles also made him a superb walker. He and Eddie Holliday became members of a new band of Peakland walkers, the Bogtrotters Club. The members of this club did their best to follow in the footsteps of Eustace Thomas, Fred Heardman and Harry Gilliat, who, according to Bridge 'were used as a mighty yardstick'. Their own feats soon became famous in the walking world, and groups of them traversed the double Marsden to Edale, Colne to Rowsley, Pensitone to Ashbourne or Macclesfield, and Greenfield to Macclesfield, all in exceedingly fast times. In 1927 they elected Bridge their president, though he was by no means a specialist, preferring a mixed climbing-cum-bivouacking-cum-bogtrotting weekend.

The Marsden to Edale walk began to take on a more competitive edge and Bridge completed the 'walk' in some four hours. Others followed and the Sheffield Harrier, Vin Skelton, also completed the course in well under four hours though not all who tried were successful and one, Phil Altman, died on Bleaklow during his attempt.

In an effort to try something new, Alf Bridge set out straight from work one Saturday lunchtime. His plan was to make a climbing and walking circuit of the Peak, beginning at Greenfield and finishing at Chinley. Wearing gym-shoes, and with only a primus and food in his rucksack, he strolled over the usual track to Laddow Rocks and climbed North Wall, Long Climb and Cave Indirect before being driven off by midges which pursued him all the way down to Crowden. Some friends were gathered in a tea place there and he felt reluctant to

leave them, but presently set off up Wild Boar Clough and across the wastelands to the head of the Derwent and Slippery Stones. A meal of biscuits washed down by a brew of cocoa fortified him for the journey down to Ashopton and the long pull up to Stanage End via Jarvis Clough, but by the time got to High Neb an empty feeling in his stomach made the best possible excuse for an early breakfast. Feeling stronger again he climbed Norse Corner and Tango Buttress, then wandered along the top of the edge, resisting the temptation of the excellent bivouac in Robin Hood's Cave. The visit was rounded off with ascents of Right-hand Buttress Direct and Flying Buttress.

His next objective was Cratcliffe. At last the distance was beginning to register, for he confesses that this next stretch seemed a very long way. In fact it was 12.30pm before he reached the Tor, approximately 24 hours since he had started from Greenfield, during which he had had very little sleep.

After a quick lunch and a rapid ascent of Hermitage Crack and Giant's Staircase (two of his favourite climbs) he walked across to the twin towers of Robin Hood's Stride and climbed the Weasel Pinnacle. It was now time to plod on to Castle Naze, a section of country where the route lies across the dry limestone dales. Traversing this long and rather tedious stretch all through the afternoon of a hot day, Bridge found it 'sheer purgatory'. It was 6.30pm before he arrived at Castle Naze and could gaze down at the promised land of Chinley. The A. P. Chimney (the letters stand for Absolutely Perpendicular) seemed much harder than usual, and blistered heels forced a gingerly tread across the classic Scoop climb. For the final climb of the weekend he had planned to do Castle Naze Crack, but realised that in his worn-out condition it was beyond him, so instead he struggled wearily up the safe but clinging cleft of Deep Chimney.

The last lap to Chinley for the 9.06pm train home was literally a stagger. Friends came out to greet and accompany him, but, said Bridge 'like the Duke of Plaza Toro, I led me regiment from behind'. Comment seemed superfluous. Few indeed would be capable to such a feat.

The middle twenties were, it will be seen, exciting years for hill-walkers. The clubs were full of robust characters and it was a time of growth both in numbers and in performances. This very growth however, had brought about a tightening of access to high moorland country, and a new vigilance on the part of owners and keepers. The depression with its dole queues was not far away, and the crowds of young people who escaped from their frustration by flocking out into the Peak to climb and walk were bound to lead to a confrontation on a larger scale than hitherto.

The song below was written by Ewan McColl (the father of Kirsty McColl) for the Mass Trespass that took place on Kinder Scout in 1932. Over 3000 unarmed walkers were met by gamekeepers and police armed with clubs and truncheons and several walkers went to prison 'on trumped up charges' for trespassing on land that is now, thankfully, free for us to roam.

Manchester Rambler
(Ewan MacColl)

I've been over Snowdon, I've slept upon Crowdon
I've camped by the Waynestones as well
I've sunbathed on Kinder, been burned to a cinder
And many more things I can tell
My rucksack has oft been me pillow
The heather has oft been me bed
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

Ch: I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way
I get all me pleasure the hard moorland way
I may be a wageslave on Monday
But I am a free man on Sunday

The day was just ending and I was descending
Down Grinesbrook just by Upper Tor
When a voice cried "Hey you" in the way keepers do
He'd the worst face that ever I saw
The things that he said were unpleasant
In the teeth of his fury I said
"Sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead"

He called me a louse and said "Think of the grouse"
Well i thought, but I still couldn't see
Why all Kinder Scout and the moors roundabout
Couldn't take both the poor grouse and me
He said "All this land is my master's"
At that I stood shaking my head
No man has the right to own mountains
Any more than the deep ocean bed

I once loved a maid, a spot welder by trade
She was fair as the Rowan in bloom
And the bloom of her eye watched the blue Moreland sky
I wooed her from April to June
On the day that we should have been married
I went for a ramble instead
For sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

So I'll walk where I will over mountain and hill
And I'll lie where the bracken is deep
I belong to the mountains, the clear running fountains
Where the grey rocks lie ragged and steep
I've seen the white hare in the gullys
And the curlew fly high overhead
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead.