

## *The Anabasis in 50 Objects: Objects Number 1 to 10*

This has been inspired by the approach used by Neil MacGregor, outgoing Director of the British Museum, in (among other books) his *History of the World in 100 Objects*. The idea is that the Objects tell the story of the Club and its people - not just historically, but in its present incarnation too. The growing collection allows us to tell some personal stories, give attention to some of those ordinary-taken-for-granted objects that are important in the life of the Club, and to celebrate those things we all share and which give the people of the Anabasis their collective identity. Let us begin with:

### **Object Number One:**

#### *The Objects*

These statements appear in the Current (2013) Constitution:

*2.4 The purposes of the Club are to promote and provide support for the amateur sport of mountaineering and community participation in that sport. KR*

*2.4.1 The term 'mountaineering' is deemed to include climbing and walking and related activities such as caving, fell-running and skiing.*

The letters KR indicate that this is a 'Key Rule'. Identifying the Key Rules was necessary in order to get the Club's Governing Document into the format required for registration as a Community Amateur Sport Club, a status that would have enabled us to claim Gift Aid on donations. We were not successful in this in the first instance and it has not been pursued further.

The previous (1992) Constitution stated that:

*The objects of the Club shall be to encourage the pursuits of mountaineering, walking, skiing, cave exploration and fell running; to bring together men and women who are interested in these pursuits and to whatever shall be deemed by the Committee, or the Club from time to time, to be conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objectives.*

I am sure there is lots more to be said about all that but it's enough for now!

### **Object Number Two:**

#### *A Red Fleece-Lined Sleeping Bag (Simon Letts)*

It lives in the cupboard in our bathroom, hidden by all sorts of other sleeping bags, duvets, sheets. It was probably the second or third time I'd stayed at the hut; I wasn't a member then, just Dave's guest. Dave, a member of a climbing club; I didn't know people like that. On the first occasion, I'd been introduced to Stan, with the words "He's a runner". I didn't even really understand what that meant; all I knew was that Stan, the Runner, had cycled over from Liverpool, so he was more than just a runner. I didn't know people who did that sort of thing.



One of the next times, we went to Craig Yr Ysfa and I met Rob, with the hint that “he’s a proper climber”. We’d set off early, before Rob arrived, so my first sight of him was a figure powering up the access road below us. I didn’t know people who did that sort of thing. At the crag a route called Mur y Niwl was pointed out and I was told that someone called Billy had climbed it recently. It looked hard to my new eyes. I didn’t know people who could do that sort of thing. (It is hard, Ed.)

Anyway, the red fleece sleeping bag? I’d got to the hut and realised I had no bag – what to do? A visit to Joe Brown’s shop was the answer and I was sold something they told me would be a two-season bag or a four-season inner – very useful. All I can think is that Garth must have its own seasons – I was frozen! I don’t often use the bag these days, it’s too hot to be an inner and not good enough on its own. I don’t forget my down bag anymore, though.

Nowadays the bag usually stays in the cupboard but whenever I happen to see it poking out from under the other stuff I always get a warm feeling, remembering those cold nights and the fact that I still know those same people, and more, who do that sort of thing.

### **Object Number Three:**

#### *The Cement Mixer*



The cement mixer has an illustrious history, initially serving time with the President during the construction of his present house, before being passed to the Club for duties associated with maintenance work at the Hut. The principle keeper of the cement mixer during the works was Billy Murphy and the picture shows him feeding the beast from its supply of feed in the yellow buckets. On the many occasions he was subject to abuse and ill-treatment by his work colleagues, Billy could be found seeking solace with the cement mixer. As is clear from the photo, it was a relationship founded on deep levels of mutual affection and regard.

The cement mixer resembles an infant child in that it requires constant feeding and cleaning and generates semi-solid material of varying consistency. In key respects, however, it differs from the child: whereas the infant human has separate openings for imbibement and evacuation, the cement mixer has just the one, everything going in and out through the same orifice. The point

may be made that the infant child (and indeed other humans when unwell) will on occasion use the same opening for imbibement and evacuation, but the key characteristic differentiating factor remains. A further feature which separates the cement mixer from the infant child is that, in the case of the mixer, what comes out of the opening is far more useful than what goes in. This little whimsy is weighted with the gravity of truth: dung has been used as a building material for thousands of years.

#### Object Number Four:

##### *A Pink Tape Sling*



My last climbing visit to Clogwyn d'ur Arddu was a while back, maybe 18 years ago. I was with my mate Simon Letts and our main objective for the day was Llithrig, a climb of Hard Very Severe standard, on the East Buttress. First climbed by Joe Brown and Nat Allen in 1952, it moves from the foot of a deep cleft (Sunset Crack) onto an open wall where the crux moves lead to a spike whence a ledge low down on the right is attained by a swing/lower/downclimb manoeuvre providing sufficient oomph! is attained to prevent being dragged back into space by the rope. There was a pink tape sling on the spike and after Simon joined me on the ledge we flicked it off and continued upwards without further (or at least not very much) ado. Of course all this is supposed to be climbed 'free' these days but as well as making it easier, the character of the climb owes much to the rope antics originally thought to be required. We continued to the top of the East Buttress by way of the Direct Finish at Hard Severe and then decided to embark on a West Buttress adventure to round off the day. In the event, discretion was easily the better part of what little valour we had left to call on and we opted for Pedestal Crack. Taken by its Direct Start it proved fruitier than anything we had encountered on Llithrig. After, that as the athletes say, we had left nothing on the track.

So that was my last climbing visit to Clogwyn d'ur Arddu but it was not my last encounter with that greatest of Welsh mountain cliffs. In Summer 2013 I went up in the train with Jackie (yes...the train!) and on reaching the top she decided to eschew her return ticket in favour of a linger on the summit and a leisurely walk down in the evening sunshine. My reward was a great look at Cloggy which was more than just a view, it was as if a book had opened before me and there for me to look at were some of the best days of life and I was once again with the people I had shared them with. The picture gives no sense of scale-it's 250 feet from top to bottom. Llithrig takes the wall between the deep cleft of Sunset Crack on the left and the sunlit blocky line of Piggot's Climb on the right. When I check in at the end I shall report to the Big Fella upstairs: 'days well lived, those, climbing Llithrig with Simon and taking the train up Snowdon with Jackie. And here's the pink tape sling and a picture to prove it'.

## Object Number Five:

### *A Square Frying Pan*

Thank you Lyn Appleton for an excellent Object!



I've never seen a square frying pan since. Once, it disappeared for ages. The Square Frying Pan speaks of full English breakfasts washed down with endless cups of tea, followed later by mugs of instant coffee, whilst outside driving rain kept us off the hill and we were free to enjoy bacon, sausages, eggs, fried bread, fried tomatoes, tomato ketchup or HP, slices of white bread to mop up the bacon fat, and toast with lashings of butter and jam. (A good square meal! ed.)

Healthy eating hadn't come to our shores yet. And, anyway, we'd work it all off on the Hill once the rain stopped...

A greasy breakfast was the panacea for a hangover. True! And whilst we fried, dim recollections from the previous night would be examined and elaborated on, heroes were made and winnets (whinnets?) mocked. Good-natured banter, lots of laughter, and cigarette smoke filled the Hut. That's going back a bit.

I am advised by Roger Reid that the term 'winnet' was created by Ray Rogers, and instantly adopted by George M. It was loudly, joyously - and frequently - hurled at someone whose performance, despite majorly good intentions, was pathetic.

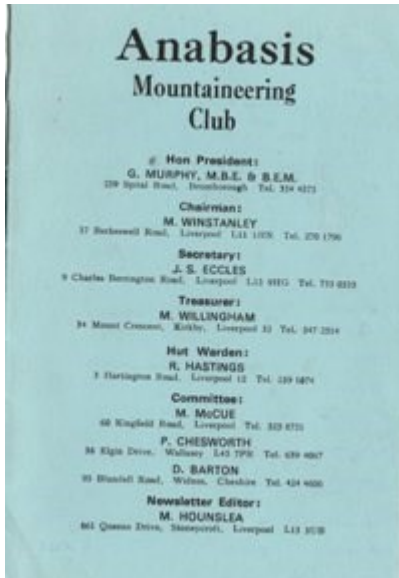
George Murphy reports that the Square Frying pan was the work of a Cammell Laird apprentice.

## Object Number Six:

### *The Meets List*

Here is an Object that may make some of our older members misty-eyed with nostalgia -the Meets List. Of course we still have a Meets List of sorts now but it is a somewhat phantom thing which makes fleeting appearances on the website and in no way comparable to the physical reality of the List on the Meets Card. Interestingly, nowhere on the Card does it reveal what year it was, but a bit of detective work by yours truly indicates that it was 1982.





The Meets List reads like a roll call of high ambition and order of fun, with gatherings at Anglesey, Pembroke, the Yorkshire Dales (under and over), the Lakes, and at two ends of some kind of spectrum - a Skye Ridge trip and a Booze Up at the Hut. Were both these, I wonder, delivered as advertised? My money is on just the one, and that one being the Booze Up. Now someone will tell I am wrong, and that the Skye Ridge was indeed done - I hope so! And there was to be a Winter Meet - that was before the sun rock days!

I leave you to wonder, if it is in your lifetime: what did I (meaning you, not me!) do in 1982?

Official Meets		Leader	
<b>April</b>	9-10-11-12 Pembroke Bosherton	M. HOUNSLEA	
<b>May</b>	1-2-3 Yorkshire Dales	R. HASTINGS	
	15-16 Hut		
	29-30-31 Skye Ridge & Borrowdale	S. WINSTANLEY	
<b>June</b>	19-20 Hut		
<b>July</b>	3-4 Valley of the Rocks Anglesey	D. BARTON	
	17-18 Hut		
<b>August</b>	1-2 Hut		
	28-29-30 Wasdale	J. HILL	
<b>September</b>	4-5 Derbyshire	M. WILLINGHAM	
	18-19 Hut		
<b>October</b>	2-3 Cycling, Climbing, Potholing Yorkshire		
<b>November</b>	6 Dinner, Waterloo		
	16-17 Hut		
	20-21 Potholing		
<b>December</b>	Booze Up Hut		
<b>January</b>	1-2 Hut		
	15-16 Patterdale		
<b>February</b>	5-6 Hut		
	19-25 Wintermeet	S. ECCLES	

**Members Notice**

MONDAY EVENINGS — ALL YEAR  
For Aspirant Rock Stars — Pax Hill

THURSDAY EVENINGS in SUMMER  
at Halsby or Frodsham

TUESDAY EVENINGS  
at Rose & Crown, Cheapside, Liverpool 1

Children may attend Hut meets

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**HUT FEES**  
Members — 50 pence  
Members Guests — £1.00  
Childrens Fee & Day Fees at Hut Warden Discretion  
Non Members  
must be accompanied by a full member

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Members may take 2 guests to the hut — more than 2 guests must be by arrangement with the Hut Warden  
Clubs & groups wishing to use the hut should contact the hut warden.

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**Hut Season ticket still £5  
This offer must end soon**

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The Peter Llowarch Memorial Hut is situated at Garth farm between Capel Curig, and Pen-y-Gwryd N G R SH 700-569

Object Number Seven:

*A Cadbury's Creme Egg*

Thank you to EstherThrelfall for this very tasty object (and as you see, we get not one but two).



A few years ago I stayed at the hut over Easter weekend with a friend. Sadly there was only the two of us there but we had a fabulous day, with glorious weather for doing the Snowdon Horseshoe. In fact the unexpected weather meant that we got a little sunburnt and my winter walking trousers were rather too hot. The weekend took me on a trip down memory lane and I spent the time with ghosts of Easters past

The highlight of the morning was Dave Barton's Easter Egg hunt and we loved following him around the outside of the hut and no doubt squeaked with delight each time we found a cream egg deftly hidden and lovingly left by the Easter Bunny. It was a magical time of year with lambs in the fields and everything coming back to life. In my mind, the sun always shone at Easter. Whether that is true or not, I'm happy for it to remain that way in childhood memory.

## Object Number Eight:

### *(A) Sheep*



Linguistically, the 'sheep' is interesting in that the word has no, and needs no, plural, encompassing as it does both a single animal and a multitude of them. It is, therefore, at one and the same time single in its plurality and plural in its singularity.

It is easy to take our woolly friends for granted, but they are integral to the Anabasis tree of life - without the sheep, no farm at Garth and without the farm, no abandoned barn which became our Hut. Without the sheep, the Snowdonia we know and love would wear a coat of trees up to 2,000 feet. Igneous upheaval and glacial gouging may have given the landscape its figure, but it is the sheep - the one and the many - who tailor its outfit. And when the wind falls still, the music of the mountains is the sound of the sheep.

Sheep farming is in decline in Snowdonia. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were over 3,000 farms in Snowdonia, by the 1960's this had dropped to 1,600 and there were only 1,000 actively working by 2010. Only larger scale farms are viable and Thomas Jones at Garth has been able to expand through acquisition of a farm in Llanwrst.

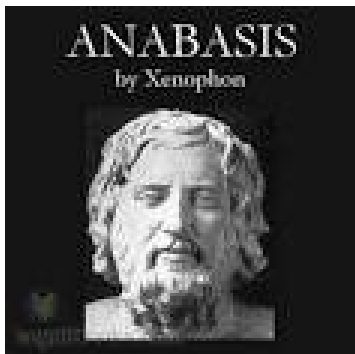
Much of what little I know about sheep farming I learned from Thomas Firbank's book 'I Bought A Mountain'. Of course it was not a mountain that he bought but [the farm across the valley](#) from Garth: we came to know it as Esmé's place, for Esmé his then wife who stayed on after they went their separate ways during the Second World War. Some things will have changed since Firbank wrote his book (1940), with National Park rules and EEC regulation and economics having a big say over the farming industry in Snowdonia, but I bet the fundamentals of what Firbank called 'the ultimate joy of tending nature in her labour', remain unchanged. At this time of year (March) the new-born lambs are evidence of nature's labour continuing: in their singularity and plurality, the sheep are always with us. In Christine Garster/McCombe's lovely words:

'The sheep are Wales, the sheep are peace, the sheep are grounding, they are just there.'

(There's more on the sheep at **Object Twenty Two** and at **Object Forty**).

## Object Number Nine:

### *The Founding Myth*



George Murphy recalls "how I spent many hours in later years attempting to explain...the name!" but the written record (in the 40th Anniversary Anthology) reveals only that he was "eventually presented with a copy of the Book of Xenophon by Eddie Gray". (Apparently the idea for the came from Ian Cass). In the same Anthology, Ray Rogers provided this: "ANABASIS (Greek anábasis, meaning literally 'to go up' and more generally used to describe any journey away from the coast".

"Historically...it is the epic story of Xenophon and the March of the Ten Thousand. This was an expedition comprising some ten thousand Greek mercenaries led by Xenophon, who, in 400 B.C., assisted Cyrus the Younger in attempting to wrest the throne of Persia from his brother, King Artaxerxes II. Ill-fated from the very start (Xenophon failed to heed correctly the advice of Socrates) and beset by difficulties throughout the course of the campaign, the expedition eventually returned home to Greece having marched over 3,000 miles in approximately 15 months. To the very end, through leadership, discipline and comradeship, the expedition remained largely intact as a fighting body. It is perhaps not surprising that ANABASIS was readily accepted as the name of our Club. It is unique and gives rise to expectations of dependability and accomplishment which, in the main, have never disappointed".

Warwick Waterworth has read a Penguin translation of the original Anabasis. He notes that the book was actually titled "The Persian Expedition" and surmises that 'Penguin thought that this would make the contents clearer, or maybe that the title "Anabasis" had been besmirched by association with a suspect group on Merseyside'. Warwick notes that the word 'Anabasis' has 'come to suggest an interminable plod through mountainous country, assailed by ferocious locals who view you with extreme disfavour (rather like club trips to Scotland, in fact)'.

Warwick adds: 'Anyone consulting a dictionary may be informed that "anabasis" refers only to the initial march up from the sea to a battlefield near Babylon, whereas the long withdrawal was a "katabasis". I have even read an allegation that Xenophon misnamed his book. Surely this is nit-picking and what Ray says above is in essence and spirit correct. The root meaning is simply "a going up" and the battle takes place only near the beginning of Xenophon's narrative. Much the greater part concerns the Greeks' fortitude, mutual reliance and thoughtful planning during their arduous trek homewards'.

Founder Member Keith Britton writes: 'The name was from me and the reverse of "sea to mountains". Xenophon's Anabasis was a disciplined fighting retreat from the heart of the Persian empire to reach mountains, and thence the Black Sea and escape to Greece.'

So, it does appear that whilst the original Greek meaning of 'Anabasis' gives a fitting title for our Club, association with the tale of Xenophon's 'disciplined retreat' is more problematic. Does it matter? No, of course not, just making our own 'myth' of the original one!

## Object Number Ten:

### *The Beard*



The Object to be celebrated here is not a particular beard (although there are some fine examples of male chin and cheek wear to enjoy (left), and indeed on the face of the figure in **Object Nine**). Rather, we seek to celebrate a general beard of which these are but passing evidence. Necessarily, this Object requires focus on the male of the Anabasis species only, and as a past and potential beard wearer I would get into no end of trouble celebrating, or indeed 'objectifying', any features which are particular to female members of the Anabasis species. Philosophically, making our Object 'The Beard' but not any particular beard, presents us with a problem. But moving seamlessly on from the Founding Greek Myth, we turn to Plato and Bertrand Russell's Story of Western Philosophy. (Of Xenophon, Russell says: 'a military man, not very liberally endowed with brains').

Paraphrasing, and substituting 'beard' for Russell's 'cat': In the logical part of Plato's doctrine, there are many individual beards of which we can truly say 'this is a beard'. But what do we mean by the word 'beard'? Obviously something different for each particular beard. A beard is a beard, it seems, because it participates in a general nature common to all beards. But if the word 'beard' means anything, it means something which is not this or that beard, but some universal kind of beardiness. This does not appear when shaving ceases (or does not start), nor does it disappear when the beard is shaved off. In fact, it has no position in space or time, it is eternal. According to the metaphysical part of the doctrine, the word 'beard' means a certain ideal beard, 'the beard', created by God, and unique. Particular beards partake in the nature of the beard but more or less imperfectly; it is only owing to this imperfection that there can be so many of them. The beard is real; particular beards are only apparent.

So there you have it: four particularly flawed examples of the ideal beard (apparently), partaking imperfectly, temporarily, in some universal kind of beardiness!