

The Anabasis in 50 Objects: Objects Number 11 to 20

Object Number Eleven

The Mount Suphan Air Crash



In some respects this epic tale is a second Founding Myth, sharing with **the Anabasis one** an Asia Minor setting and a fair bit of going up and journeying from the coast. The facts are sufficiently awesome to need little 'rounding' by President George Murphy who was awarded the BEM for his efforts. Since then it has taken sufficient hold in the Club's imagination for it to be suggested that the original heroics be honoured by a Club Meet in situ, but current political and military factors make this untenable.

Mount Suphan is a 14,547 foot mountain in Eastern Turkey, close to the Soviet and Armenian borders. In winter 1959, an Avro Tudor crashed and there was concern not just for the crew (who sadly all perished) but also for the top-secret equipment on board bound for the Woomera Rocket Site in Australia. It was important that this did not fall into the wrong hands. Once the crash site had been located, the RAF Mountain Rescue Team based in Cyprus was dispatched. They climbed the mountain and in very poor conditions and working with the grim remnants of the aircraft and its crew, played a key role in the destruction of the secret equipment. This was Murphy's own Anabasis and it was the most be-medalled Rescue in RAF Mountain Rescue history.

On September 3rd 2016, Club Member Pete Simpson, with companion Ismet, climbed Mount Suphan and visited the crash site. No debris from the 1959 crash was found, but given the length of time and the use by local people (who are mainly poor) of anything useful to build their houses, this is unsurprising. Pete is, I think, the only Club Member to have climbed the mountain, there being no Anabasis when Murphy was there. Of course there is a lot more to this and you might want to begin with:

<https://heavywhalley.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/turkish-aircraft-crash-mt-suphan-1959-limited-gear-and-a-map-with-a-scale-of-18-miles-to-the-inch/>

There is more in George's own Memoir, *A Long Way from Biddle Street*, in Gwen Moffat's *Two Star Red* and Frank Card's *Whensoever: Years of the RAF Mountain Rescue Service 1943-1993*.

Object Number Twelve

The Weather

Visitors to the Club Hut at Garth will know that not every day is dry and that sometimes the stillness of the mountain air can be disturbed by a breeze. But what stays in the mind are the days of extremes, especially of wind and rain. 'Prepare thee thy ark!' I wrote once in the Hut Book when the river overflowed and flooded the A5 at Capel Curig. And the strength of the



wind out of the west can make a trial of that walk from the car to the Hut. But you do not need to go to Garth to know this because the Capel Curig Weather Station is situated just behind the Farm where cars park, just up the hill from the Hut. So when you get a weather report from Capel Curig it is not really from Capel Curig at all - the village is a mile away - it is from Garth. So henceforth we shall refer to it as the So-Called Capel Curig Weather Station.

Weather reports from the So-Called Capel Curig Weather Station often suggest that it is trying to break, if not world and national records, at least its own Personal Best. In the 48 hours beginning 9.00 am on Christmas Day 2015, the So-Called Capel Curig Weather Station recorded 210.6 mm of rain, that is over 8 inches in old money. Between the 1st and 28th December 2015 the So-Called Capel Curig Weather Station recorded 1012.2 mm (39 inches) trouncing its previous best by over 400 mm and its average total of 308.9 mm. Those 39 inches exceed the average annual total for most parts of the UK. In December 2013 a wind speed of 85 mph was recorded by the so-called Capel Curig Weather Station and in January 2015 it claimed a gust of 96 mph. Anything in excess of 73 mph is 'Hurricane Force' on the Beaufort windspeed scale. But as we know, sometimes it can be absolutely lovely, and then we will not hear a peep from the So-Called Capel Curig Weather Station and will just have to get out there to enjoy it.

Object Number Thirteen:

The Stile



Thank you to Barbara Conway for this lovely story about Style over Stile! Probably the stile which was such a severe challenge to Barbara's style was not The Stile, the Object that crosses the wall by the Hut, but we like to think of her enjoying similar challenges when crossing The Stile..

The Stile was once a more significant Object in Club Life than it is today: in former times, the usual parking spot was below the Farm buildings, followed by a trek across the fields on the north side of the stone wall which runs down from the Farm to the Hut. The wall was then crossed by means of the stile, a sometimes hazardous adventure if fully laden and with a slippery rock to catch the unwary on the Hut side.



"Having been "picked up" by a gang of Anabasees at a dance, I was invited by (Dave) Bradshaw to the hut for the Christmas get together, I think in 1964. We all went out in a mini bus. I don't remember the doo, but I do remember the following morning going out for a walk, I think we walked to a pub! I must explain that I was a beatnik at the time and was wearing some very very tight trousers, that were almost sewn on to me. We got to a stile and I couldn't bend my legs to get over the dratted thing, I was mortified, and would still be there now if it wasn't for the ingenuity of some Anabasis members".

After reading about Barbara and her very tight trousers, some of you may need to go for a little lie down. It is as close as we are going to get to 'objectifying' features which are particular to female members of the Anabasis species. The image on the left has been supplied to assist in your recovery.

Object Number Fourteen

The Barbecue



The annual bar-b-q event in mid-summer has been an Anabasis institution for as long as I can can. The Barbecue used to have its own semi-dedicated space in the formerly derelict section of the Hut and this provided shelter for the glowing charcoals and a few cooks and diners. Since work started on on restoring the derelict section back in 2011, a 'popup' approach has been necessary with the Barbecue set up in a more exposed position at the front of the Hut. A collection of rickety looking metalware is assembled, and as there is metal involved I deduce the hand of Dave Barton here.



I can assure the concerned that on no occasion was Snowdon itself set alight.

Object Number Fifteen

A Pair of Ford Wellies



In past times, some of our members were employed by the Ford Motor Company at their plant at Halewood, Liverpool. The plant is now owned by Jaguar. During the Ford days, many were the stories about the goings on and goings out at the factory. Among the goings out was this pair of wellington boots, which the Ford Motor Company has been kind enough to let me have on indefinite loan - some 38 years and counting. In truth they are past their best, but nothing that a bit of sticky tape could not fix. I was by no means the only Club Member to benefit from the Ford Motor Company's generosity and this led to another of those odd Club traditions - the welly throwing contest. Typically, this was a feature of summer bar-b-q gatherings at the Hut. So far as I know there are no records of contestants and results.

Object Number Sixteen

A Penmaenmawr Fell Race 25th Anniversary Coaster



In 1974, David Jones, a member of the Penmaenmawr Mountain Club suggested running a fell race. The first race, in November 1974, was open only to PM Club members, but it proved 'so enjoyable' that it was opened up to others and having been introduced to fell running by Malcolm 'Stan' Winstanley the Anabasis was soon entering a team. Both Team and individual events were won by Club Members in those early years ('Stan' once, Pete Simpson twice).

Subsequently teams of 'Harriers' entered and these dedicated athletes were soon dominating the race. Latterly the Club's participation has reduced but a few people enter every year, notably Simon Rogers. The coaster is made of Welsh slate and one was presented to everyone who took part in the 25th Anniversary race. There is a 30th Anniversary one too. My recollection is of an enjoyable occasion day out, once the awful business of the race - 12 miles over rough, high ground - was over. There was soup and a roll to reward the finishers and a fine atmosphere and great company in the pubs, plus more good fellowship to look forward to back at Garth later on. That last bit can still be relied upon, even for those not taking part in the Race. And the date of the event continues to be a fixture in the Club calendar because it sets the date for our annual Bonfire gathering at Garth.....cue hotpots and bonfire Guys!

Object Number Seventeen

The Bonfire Guy



Every year for as many as I can recall, a highlight of the Club's annual Bonfire gathering at Garth has been the Guy, each and every one of them a masterpiece crafted by the skilful hand and (it has to be said) disordered mind, of Chris Hatton. Chris's skills as a craftsman are well known, and he has used these to good effect in the Hut's fittings. What is less recognised is that Chris is an artist, and a courageous and challenging artist at that. Let us just waddle off on a philosophical rambling about the nature of art: does a work of art, a painting, say, or a piece of music, exist in its own right or only in the moment that it is being experienced: seen (in the case of the painting), or heard (in the case of the music?). Of course, the seeing, the hearing, may persist in our mind's imagining, but that does not prove the existence of the art. So is the art the picture on the wall, the notes on the score, the recorded medium, or just the moment of our experiencing it through our senses?

So now let us turn to the courageous and challenging artist that is Chris Hatton. Chris confronts the existential question of art head-on by making the peak of his artistic creation the instant of its destruction. Numerous lovingly crafted 'Guys' have been set on top of the bonfire pile and put to the fire. There is then, no Guy to imagine still sitting on top of the timbers at the Hut after we go, no Guy to pop in and see again next time we are in the area. All we are left with are fond memories of popping ping pong balls and peeling paintwork, fiendish fireworks and exploding splinters, frying spaceships and flying planes, sizzling soldiers and charred collapsing timbers, and in the illustrated case, the limp hand of the skeleton (believed to be that of Hut Warden, Clive Lane) waving eerily to the incredulous fire-glowing human faces before being consumed by the flames. (That was November 2014's Guy).

Thank you Chris. What a Guy!

Object Number Eighteen

A Cow's Tail



It was the morning of the work-meet, and a cow, having paid her rent in the form of milk to Farmer Jones, proceeded out of the barn, and up to the weather station. Weather forecasting was her talent, and she always enjoyed mocking the over-complicated weather predicting devices by simply lying down next to them. She already knew it was going to be the one day in the year that it did not rain on Garth. Several club members walked by rather sheepishly with their tools. She looked at them nonchalantly and they looked rather speculatively back at her

The workers scurried around like ants as she watched from the top of the hill. Counting the men as they hopped back and forth over the stile, she drifted off into a dream wherethanks to Kamadhenu, the grass was o' so much greener on the other side... Suddenly, she awoke to the sound of the generator getting jolted back to life. "What's that?" she thought, as she got up as quick as a maverick. She bounded down the hill to take a closer look. Having not been near the 'barn-for-humans' before, she admired their 'brick shit-house' attempt of keeping up with the Joneses. The members could be seen hard at work, basking in the sun and sipping tea.

The cow's attention had now been caught by something far more alluring. Engaging 'cow-espionage', she pranced up closer to this apparent UFO, and it was clear now what it was. A fresh juicy sapling decorated with ripe berries, only heard of in myth from her welsh bovine ancestors, had landed from the heavens, framed in a beautiful wooden shrine! Slowly edging towards this godly hamper, she thought that her shroud of camouflage had 'suddenly' been lost on the PG chimps, and she looked speculatively at them, and they looked rather nonchalantly back at her. "I haven't seen cows down by the hut in years..." muttered one of the workers, continuing to drink tea. By now the cow was only a cow hair's breadth away from this forbidden fruit, and the only thing that was inconveniently in her way was the sheepish wooden defences. The tree was gently swaying in the breeze, and the wooden fence was holding its ground as good as the British flood defences. With mouth open and tongue poised she prayed to her God. With one mighty breath from Kamadhenu, the wind caught the sapling and swayed it over the edge of the wooden platter! Her tongue stripped the branch of its berries and leaves; the taste was divine, and in this moment of ecstasy, with the workers suddenly shouting and clapping praise, or so she thought, she pranced off back up to the weather station for another nap!

(Thank you to Alex Gray for this piece of bovinery. A mountain ash was planted in 2012, in memory of his Dad, Eddie Gray, and originally wooden defences were put in place to protect it from the sheep. After this episode, the defences were significantly reinforced. The 'Welzch Hedgehog' now stands as a static anti-tank cow obstacle defence, protecting its cargo from all creatures great and small! Kamadhenu is divine bovine-goddess described in Hinduism as the mother of all cows. She is a miraculous "cow of plenty" who provides her owner with whatever they desire).

Object Number Nineteen

A Hotpot Pan



Thank you to Jan Murphy for this one.....and for all the hotpots! Jan says:

'This is extreme catering. Cooking hot pots for the club. When we had the gaslights I had to use a head torch to see the hotpot through all the steam. Good times and no complaints.'

I was hoping Jan might divulge the recipe, but if she did that, she might have to kill me!

Object Number Twenty

A Black Dog



Not an Object, but a black dog, unavailable because dead. My sole claim to fame of a sorts in the annals of the Anabasis is that, long ago on a crowded train in Czechoslovakia, said animal in dire need chose my leg as a substitute for a tree or lamp-post. I was standing in the doorway of a compartment speaking to my so-called chums, with my back to the corridor. Never since have I seen so many people so convulsed with helpless laughter. The dog was attached to a young lady who scarpered like greased lightning.

*Thank you to Warwick Waterworth for contributing this canine object, a companion for our bovine one: Warwick shows unnecessary modesty in saying that a Dog is not an Object - for our purposes it is one of the many things that can be, and is. The illustrated dog is not the dog which is the hero of Warwick's tale, so it is not that dog, nor indeed any other dog, it is simply an image of some universal kind of doginess. The philosophically inclined may wish to refer to **Object Ten, The Beard**, for more.*