

THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FOREIGN TREK 1981 OST TIROL



The flood at Obervellach



Heading up to the Glorer hut on Berger Törl

LEADER G Leversha

STAFF LA Witton, D Stubbs, WH Souster, AP Dobson (2 tents)
Dennis Hughes (coach driver) plus his assistant driver

TREKKERS

Tent	First named are tent leaders		38 trekkers
1.	Julian Kurer	Rob Brown	David Brunt (OM)
2.	Piers Daubney	Adrian Marchbank	Nas Gill
3.	Danny Fletcher	Alex Connock	Simon Hicks
4.	Steven Linton	John Davis	Tim Williams
5.	Jeremy Johnson	Paul Lister	Phil Watson
6.	Jimmy Byrne	Paul Berry	Mark Dyble
7.	Neil Stanford	Oliver Phillips	Robin Hilton
8.	Adrian Newby	Paul Taylor	Richard Jones
9.	Simon Smith	Fen Baker	Graham Hall
10.	Ken Brown	Sunil Bhojwani	Nick Goddard

Originally 40 boys were due to come on Trek. Tragically David Douglas was killed in a cycling accident in May. Two days before Trek David Offland contracted glandular fever and was ordered by doctors to rest.

DATES Monday 13th July to Monday 3rd August (22 days)

COST £150

MAPS

	Scale	Sheet	
Freytag & Berndt Wanderkarten	1:100,000	12	Glockner - und Venedigergruppe
		19	Goldberg - Ankogel, Radstädter Tauern
Alpenvereinskarte	1:25,000	36	Venedigergruppe
		39	Granatspitzgruppe
		40	Großglocknergruppe
		42	Sonnblick
		44	Hochalmspitze - Ankogel

There is a series of Kompass maps at 1:50,000, but we didn't use these.

Boys were given copies of the Freytag & Berndt maps, but navigation was based on the AVK maps.

GUIDES

Two AAC guides by Philip Tallantire ("Felix Austria") No.1 Venediger Region No.3 Niederer and Hohen Tauern. These are strictly hut-to-hut descriptions, with skeleton accounts of easy ascents.

The text of this Log was originally hand-written in 1981 by Gerry Leversha in the Trek Log Book which Chris Little established in 1977. I word-processed the text using a BBC computer and Wordwise in about 1988. I re-processed this version with digital sketch maps and scanned images in 2020, using an Apple Macintosh and Microsoft Word, with iPhoto and Preview to edit the images.

I scanned the images from my 35 mm slides. I took just 50 photos, and as I have so few I've included all of them, including some less interesting ones. After so long in storage, the quality of some of the images, especially those taken in low light or high contrast, is rather poor. Editing them has improved them somewhat, but many are only just adequate.

To keep the overall file size down, all the images are low resolution but of sufficient quality to display fairly well at A4 page size. The average size of the 53 images (3 are duplicates) and 3 map scans is about 58 kB, giving a file size of about 3.9 MB, about the size of a single medium digital compact camera image.

After such a long time it has obviously been impossible to obtain permission from individuals to use images which include them. Anyone who finds this a problem should contact me.

Allan Witton 2020

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PLANNED ROUTE

The original plan was to cross the Hohen Tauern from east to west, passing close to Hochalmspitze, Ankogel, Sonnblick, Glockner and Venediger groups, and culminating in an ascent of the Venediger. Unfortunately poor weather caused drastic day-to-day revision of the route, and none of the planned ascents were made. The intended itinerary was as follows:

Thursday	16th July	Coach Trek	to W.H. Zirmhof (854) near Gmund - and as far along Gößgraben as possible. to Gießener hut (2203)
Friday	17th	Trek	over Mallnitzerscharte (2676), with possible excursion to Säuleck (3085) to Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus (2272)
Saturday	18th	Trek	down Döserner Tal to Mallnitz (1182) and coach to Obervellach (Half-day)
Sunday	19th	Coach Trek	back to Mallnitz along Taurental to Jamnig hut (1745) and over Feldseescharte (2712) to Duisburger hut (2572)
Monday	20th	Trek Coach	Glacier crossing of Kleine Zirknitz Scharte (2800) and down to Döllach to Heiligenblut
Tuesday	21st	Free day	Heiligenblut
Wednesday	22nd	Trek	up Leitertal to the Salm hut
Thursday	23rd	Trek	over Pfortscharte (2872) to Stüdl hut (2802) and down Teischnitztal to camp somewhere near point 1793 on the road
Friday	24th	Trek	Climb from W.H. Taurer (1521) to Hohes Tor (2447) and thence to Sudetendeutsche hut (2650)
Saturday	25th	Excursion	Grosser Muntanitz (3232)
Sunday	26th	Trek Coach	to Stein (1304) Matrei, camping (Half day)
Monday	27th	Coach Trek	to Gruben (1164) ascending Froßnitztal to Badener hut (2606)
Tuesday	28th	Trek	over Löbben Törl and cross snout of glacier to Alte Prager hut (2489)
Wednesday	29th	Excursion	Großvenediger (3674)
Thursday	30th	Trek Coach	Descend to Matreier Tauernhaus (1509) to Salzburg
Friday	31st	Free day	Salzburg

This itinerary is more or less continuous and keeps close to the main backbone of the Hohe Tauern. In the event it was necessary to alter most of the high stages as follows:

- (i) The stage from Mallnitz to Heiligenblut was abandoned.
- (ii) The route via the Salm and Stüdl huts was replaced by a route via the Glorer hut and Neues Lucknerhaus.
- (iii) The Muntanitz excursion was abandoned, and the Kals to Matrei stage was walked in one day, including an ascent of Roten Kogel.
- (iv) The Venediger ascent was abandoned.

All the huts were contacted by post and most replied giving permission for us to camp. Also campsites were booked.

OUTLINE ITINERARY AND WALKING ROUTE SUMMARY

		22 days	6 days travel	6 free days	10 days walking
Monday	13th July	Coach	MGS - Felixstowe		
Tuesday	14th	Coach	Zeebrugge - Stuttgart		
Wednesday	15th	Coach	Salzburg		
Thursday	16th	Coach	Gmund		
		Trek	Gießener hut	2203	
Friday	17th	Trek	Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus	2272	
		via	Mallnitzerscharte		2676
Saturday	18th	Trek	Mallnitz		
		Coach	Obervellach		
Sunday	19th	Free day	Obervellach		
Monday	20th	Excursion	Polinik hut		1873
Tuesday	21st	Free day	Heiligenblut		
Wednesday	22nd	Trek	Leitertal	2150	
		Excursion	Salm hut		2644
Thursday	23rd	Trek	Kals	1325	
		via	Kasteneck		2824
Friday	24th	Coach	Lienz		
		Free day	Lienz		
Saturday	25th	Coach	Kals	1325	
		Trek	Matrei	977	
		Excursion	Roten Kogel		2762
Sunday	26th	Coach	Gruben	1164	
		Trek	Achsel	2225	
Monday	27th	Trek	Innernschlöß	1735	
		via	Löbben Törl		2770
Tuesday	28th	Trek	Matreier Tauernhaus	1512	
		Coach	Krimml		
Wednesday	29th	Free day	Krimml		
Thursday	30th	Coach	Salzburg		
		Free day	Salzburg		
Friday	31st	Free day	Salzburg		
Saturday	1st August	Coach	Stuttgart		
Sunday	2nd	Coach	Zeebrugge		
Monday	3rd	Coach	Felixstowe - Manchester		

SKETCH MAPS

Neither with Foreign Trek nor with the Old Trekkers have I trekked in the Hohe Tauern east of Heiligenblut since 1981, so I don't have a prepared digital sketch map of the whole area of the 1981 route.

In 1990 Foreign Trek followed a route down the west side of Grogßglockner and along the flanks of Großvenediger, overlapping with the latter part of the 1981 route.

The top map on the next page is an amalgamation by screen shot of the two maps from the 1990 Trek Log. Each original was on an A4 page, and compressing them together here means that the original text is now rather small. I have left the 1990 route in place (in blue) and added the 1981 route in green and some other 1981 features.

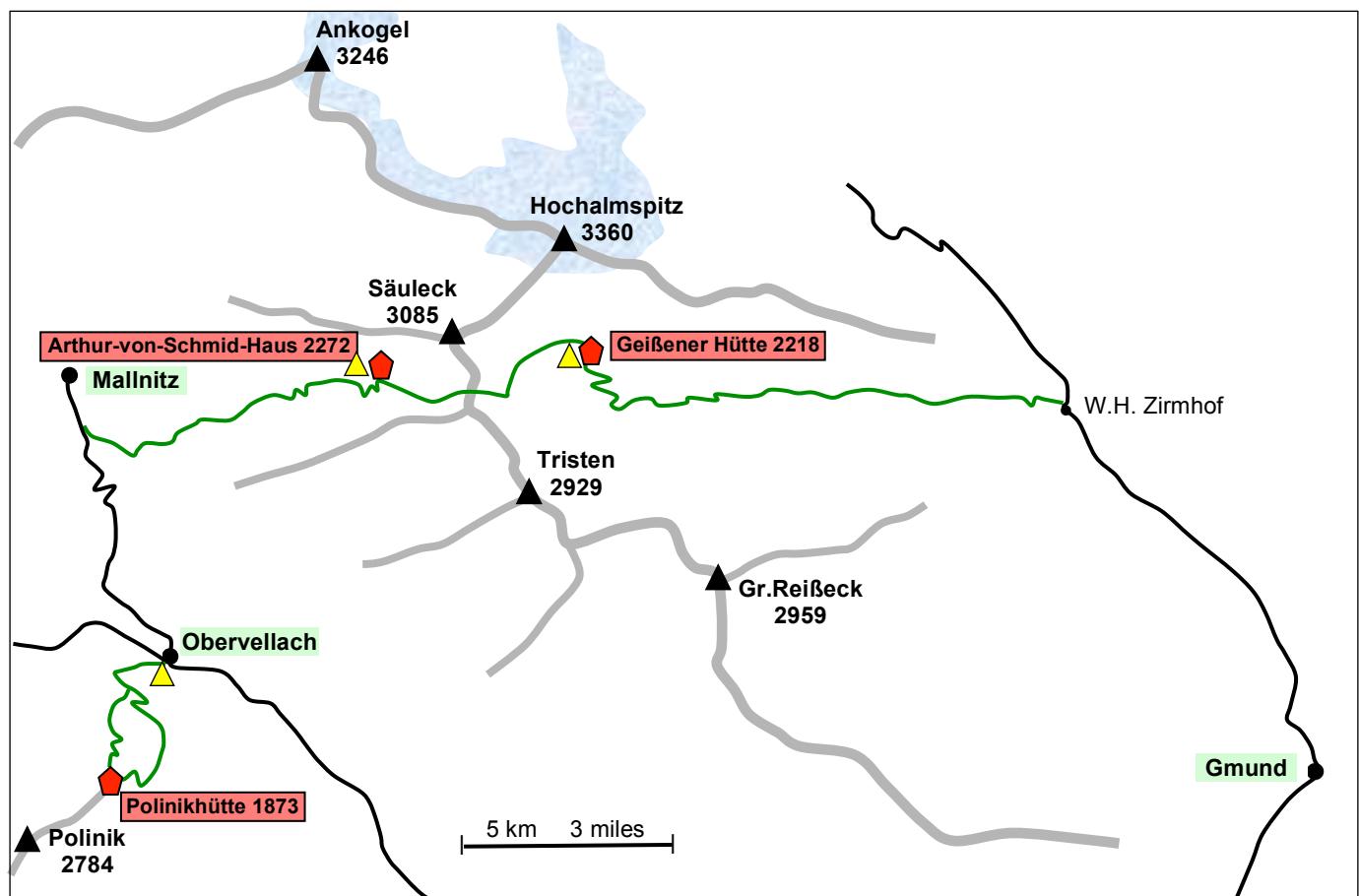
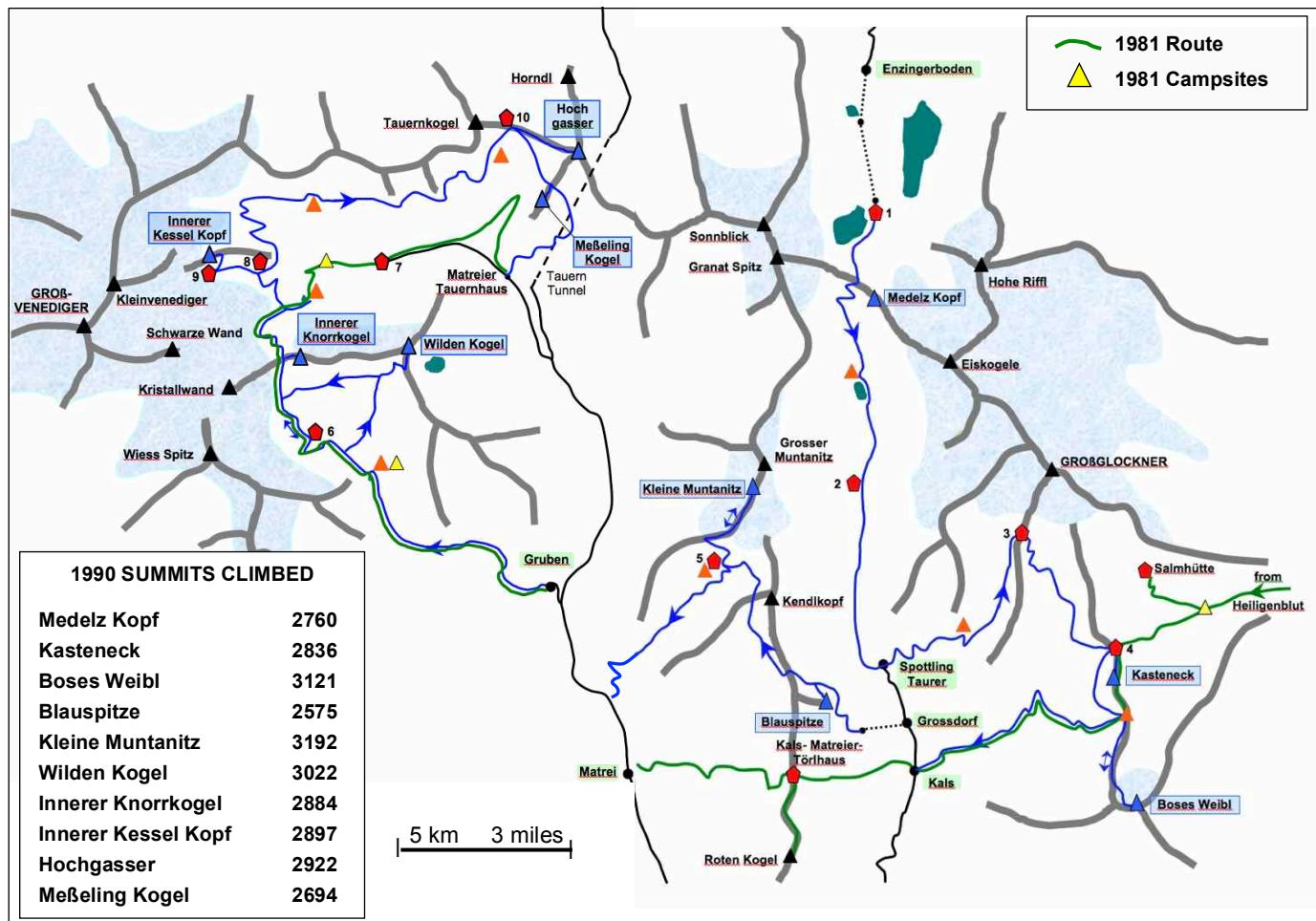
The bottom map is a rough sketch of the first section of the 1981 route from W. H. Zirmhof to Mallnitz. I haven't included the planned section from Mallnitz to Heiligenblut which wasn't included in the walking route.

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1990 KEY		
— Principal ridges	◆ Huts	
— Glacier limits	1 Rudolfs	2315
— Lakes/reservoirs	2 Kalser Tauerhaus	1755
— Roads	3 Studl	2802
● Towns and villages	4 Glorer	2624
— Route	5 Sudetendeutche	2650
	6 Badener	2608
	7 Venedigerhaus	1691
	8 Alte Prager	2489
	9 Neue Prager	2796
	10 St Poltner	2481
▲ Summits climbed	▲ Campsites	
▲ Other significant summits		

▲ Other significant summits

▲ Other significant summits



ITINERARY

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday 13th, 14th, 15th July	Coach	MGS > Felixstowe > Stuttgart > Salzburg
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Monday: Left school about 1 p.m. Tyre burst near Bury St Edmunds. Reached Felixstowe at 9.45 for 11.00 crossing.

Tuesday: Zeebrugge 8 a.m. No incidents. Reached Leonberg, near Stuttgart at 8 p.m.

Wednesday: Left Stuttgart at 9.45. Two long delays, one at German/Austrian border. Arrived Salzburg at 6 p.m.

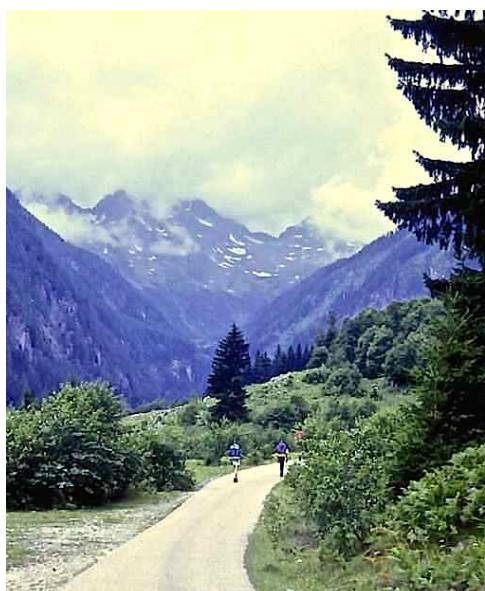
Thursday 16th July	Coach	Gmund	
	Trek	Gießener hut	2203

Poor weather. Picked up D Collins at Salzburg station and left at 9.20. Reached W.H. Zirmhof (854), near Gmund, at 11 a.m. Weather brightening, although cloud remained on tops of hills. The road up the Gößgraben proved to be impossible for the coach to negotiate, due to an awkward initial bend - otherwise it would have been possible to proceed to the Kohlmayrhütte (1124).



About to set off from W. H. Zirmhof

Set off at 11.48, taking track by Gößfälle to join road within 1 km. Reached Kohlmayralm (1124) after 1 leg and had lunch. Blisters had already made themselves felt! Two legs to point 1599, mostly tiring road walking, with one steep section beside the Zwillingsfall.



Heading along the road up Gößgraben



View up to the camp at the Gießener hut, with Hochalmspitze (3360) above

Track north on map is poorly waymarked and we continued along dam road to Obere Thomasbaueralm to take new access track. Two hours climbing through woods and rocky pasture brought us to the Gießener hut (2203) at 7 p.m. Party very tired after 1360 m climb. Camping cramped, and ground stony and hard. Weather remained dry, although by 8 p.m. visibility was poor. Hut very friendly.

Friday 17th July

**Trek
via**

**Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus
Mallnitzerscharte**

**2272
2676**

Delayed start until 11 a.m. because of cloud - there should have been a magnificent view of Reißeck - Tristen - Säuleck - Hochalmspitze cirque! One leg contouring round to point 2403 at foot of Großer Göllspitz east ridge, then 50 minutes to foot of snow couloir beneath Mallnitzerscharte. One hour's ice-axe braking practice. Couloir proved easy because of snow conditions, but could be tricky if iced up - there is a waymarked route through the rocks on the south side with some fixed ropes.



Outside the hut with Mallnitzerscharte in cloud on the left



Ice-axe braking practice

Impossible to see anything at top, so we abandoned the proposed Säuleck excursion. (According to hut warden this excursion is both easy and rewarding in clear conditions.) Descended through easy snowfields and rocks - not always well waymarked - to Dösener See and Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus at west end of lake. Arrived 4 p.m. Good camping at edge of pasture. Hut most hospitable, even putting out a line in Gastzimmer for wet socks.



Arthur-von-Schmid-Haus and Dösener See, with a view back to Mallnitzerscharte

Due to carelessness with a gaz stove one boy managed to burn down a new tent, but fortunately no casualties. The tent group in question either shared tent space or bivouacked - a wet night!

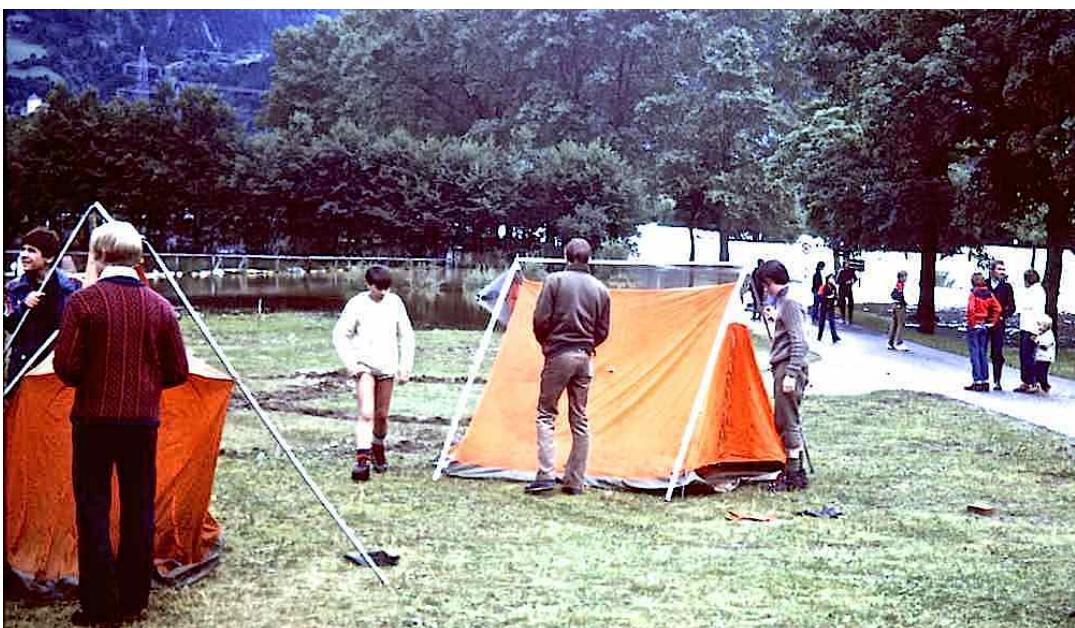
Saturday 18th July**Trek
Coach****Mallnitz
Obervellach**

Rain all day, light at first, then torrential after 11 a.m. Struck camp at 9.40 and followed good track down Dössener Tal, mainly through woods, with two stops, reaching Konradhütte (closed) at 10.40, and Mallnitz station (1181) at midday.

Took coach to Obervellach, campsite beside Möllbach. Hot room set aside for drying clothes. Spare tent found in coach. During night, continuous rain caused river to flood over most of campsite, cutting us off from village. Most of the tents were moved and boys sheltered inside buildings until light.

Sunday 19th July**Free day****Obervellach**

A free day for drying out. Rain stopped in early morning and flood subsided by 11 a.m. - tents were repitched. Cool and windy with sunny intervals. Obervellach is a pleasant, unspoilt town, one of the most attractive we passed through.



Repitching the tents

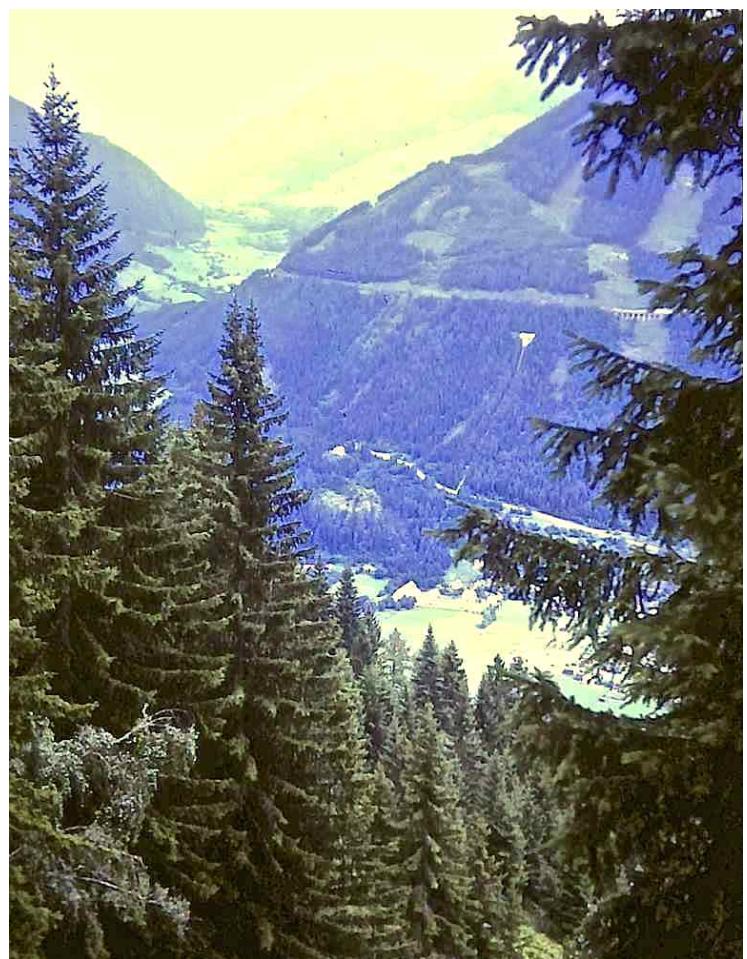
It was decided to abandon the stage Mallnitz to Heiligenblut because snow conditions at altitude would have made the route impassable. As an alternative we planned an excursion from Häusleralm (1872) (taking chair lift from Mallnitz) along the Lonzaköpfl - Törlkopf ridge, with the possibility of descending into Mölltal.

A poor start to the day, with cloud low over the ridge we had in mind, so the objective was changed to the Polinik hut (1873) behind Obervellach (687).

We started at 9.10 and climbed for 3 hours through the forest along tracks and paths.

The Freytag and Berndt map is incorrect - the waymarked path takes a very roundabout route and arrives at the hut from the north.

View back over Obervellach



Small hut in high pasture with views of Polinik behind, but even at 1873 m it was bitterly cold and we decided to descend immediately by the east path to Wunzenalm. Steep path through woods, including a 5 metre fixed rope over a sloping slab which took us over an hour to pass. Arrived campsite at about 5 p.m. and took coach to Heiligenblut, camping beneath the village, again by Möllbach. This time it did not burst its banks!

The decision to take another free day was not taken lightly. It would certainly have been possible to continue at once, and several trekkers, especially the staff, were feeling restless after all the lack of activity. However, two main decisions led to the decision to stay.

(a) The weather was still poor, and it was thought that couldn't fail to improve after another day. In practice this happened; there was some sun in the afternoon, after a wet start to the morning, and visibility stayed good until dusk.

(b) The boys had been promised a free day in Heiligenblut, and there were no more planned before the end of Trek. It seemed the only opportunity for them to cook a chicken dinner. The previous (unplanned) free day in Obervellach fell on a Sunday, when no shops were open.



Food distribution at the coach



Ingredients for the chicken stew and dried food for the following day



Preparing the chicken

Heiligenblut is an attractive place in a beautiful setting, with the Freiwand Spitz and Schwertkopf ridges towering behind it, but it has been spoilt by over-exploitation by hotels and gift shops. Kals would have been a preferable half-way point, or, if necessary, Lienz.

Wednesday 22nd July	Trek Excursion	Leitertal Salm hut	2150
			2644

Fine and sunny with northern view of peaks. Struck camp by 9.40 and set off on road on right bank of Möllbach, bearing left at Winkel onto steep track through woods and break in crags, to point 1504 after one leg.

One more leg along good, gently ascending path through woods to Trogalm. Trek photographs. Path turned west along Leitertal, on left bank of stream, with (higher up) evidence of recent avalanches.

One more leg to Ochsnerhutte on high pasture.



Decided to camp below path junction at about 2150, since snowline was not far above us, and it looked as though we might change the following day's route. Camped at 2.40. Marmots much in evidence.



Excursion to Salm hut (2644); ascent 1 hour, descent 30 minutes. Conditions very wet underfoot with slushy snow. Thunderstorm at hut, with some sheet lightning. Pfortscharte looked hard in these conditions. Saw edelweiss.



Cold and threatening at the Salm hut



A sunnier interval back at camp

Thursday 23rd July	Trek via Coach	Kals Kasteneck Lienz	1325 2824
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In view of the lack of improvement in conditions, and the previous day's evidence of conditions at the Salm Hut we decided to go via Berger Törl and Neues Lucknerhaus. Struck camp at 9.25 and reached Glorer hut (2642) in one longish leg at an easy gradient.



Heading up to the Glorer hut on Berger Törl, with the Salm hut somewhere in the middle distance.
and Großglockner hidden in the dense cloud above



Approaching Berger Törl, with a view back down Leitertal

Much less snow than at the Salm hut. Decided to go over Kasteneck, rocky spur south of the col; half an hour to the summit - cold and windy. 90 minutes contouring clockwise brought us to Peischlach Törl (2490) - it might have been easier to stick to the ridge, but the 1:100,000 map is not detailed enough to decide this in advance.



The scramble up to Kasteneck, with the Glorer hut top right



On the summit

45 minutes down to Neues Lucknerhaus (1984) via streambed and meadows. Thence an hour on good wide landrover track to Kals (1325), meeting coach. Local health regulations prevented us using local campsite, so coach was taken to Lienz.



Upper Kofnitztal from the Neues Lucknerhaus

Descent into Kofnitztal

In the first aid inspection that evening one boy was found to have badly infected blisters and was taken to Lienz hospital. He was given treatment and ordered to rest. In fact he spent the remainder of Trek in the valleys, using B&B where necessary. This emphasises the need to stress proper attention to one's own health.

Friday 24th July**Free day****Lienz**

Due to the need to sort out matters at the hospital, we decided to stay in Lienz and planned an excursion, using the chairlift, from the Steinermndl (2213) along the Schleinitz ridge. However, conditions were again unfavourable with low cloud and heavy rainfall, and we cancelled this. Thunderstorm in evening.

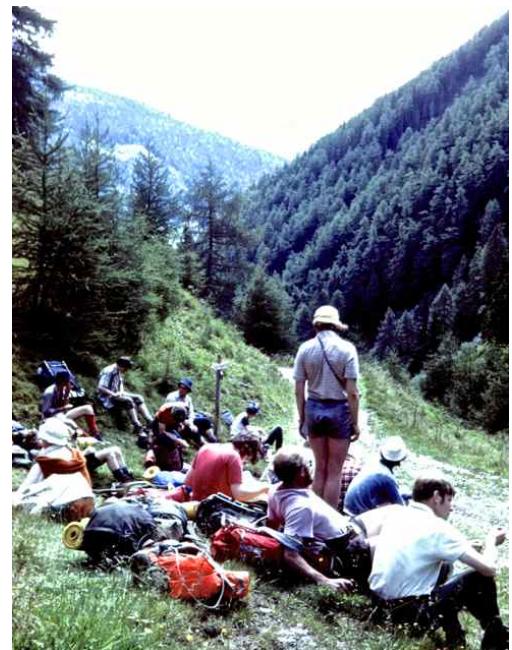
We decided to abandon the attempt on the Grosser Muntanitz planned for the next stage, since both the summit and the campsite near the Sudetendeutsche hut seemed too high to guarantee success. Instead we settled on a single day excursion to Roten Kogel, leaving sacks at the col and camping wherever seemed convenient.

Saturday 25th July	Coach	Kals	1325
	Trek	Matrei	977
	Excursion	Roten Kogel	2762

Took coach to Kals and left at 11 a.m. A beautiful, sunny day with steadily improving views east to Schober and Glödis group. Easy gradients, woods and meadows. Reached Kals-Matreier-Törlhaus (2207) in two and a half legs.



View back to Kals



Großglockner on the left rising above Teischnitztal



View east back over Kals to the Schober Group



View north over the Kals-Matreier-Törlhaus (bottom centre) to Kendlekopf and the Muntanitz Group beyond

Excursion to Roten Kogel (2762) on marked path. Boulders and some easy scrambling brought us to second and higher top in 2 hours. Weather by then very changeable, but some magnificent views: north-east to the Glockner; north-west to the Rainer Horn and Venediger massif; and west to the Rieserferner group and Italy.



View west over Matrei into Virgental with the Deferegger Group to the left, the Venediger Group to the right and the distant Rieserferner Group



On the summit of Roten Kogel with a clear Großglockner (Because of poor colour original I have converted this to monochrome)



View north-west to the main Venediger group

Some storms noticed over the Deferegger group to the south-west, so we descended rapidly (1 hour) to the col. Decided not to camp on col, despite some promising sites, because of possible bad weather and lack of water, and because reaching Matrei leaves us an extra day. An hour and a half to Matrei (977) along good forest track. Camped at Matrei - cloudy in evening.

Sunday 26th July

**Coach
Trek**

**Gruben
Achsel**

1164

2225

Coach arrived from Kals by 11 a.m., and, after leaving boy with blisters in B&B, drove to Gruben (1164). Sunny by 12.40 when we set off towards Badener hut. Path good all the way, initially steep and then levelling out, beside Froßnitz Bach all the way.



On the track up Froßnitztal



Horses bringing supplies up for the Badener hut

High alm pasture at 1842 with a large population. Camped after 4 legs, at 5.15, by Achsel, a small lake, height 2225. Snowline seemed to be about 2400. Badener hut visible west-north-west on glacial moraine. Evening bitterly cold, with impressive views south. Snow began to fall at about 7 p.m.



View north-east of camp at Achsel, with Wilden Kogel just visible on the right skyline



View west, up towards the Badener hut

Monday 27th July

Trek
via

Innergletschör
Löbber Törl

1735
2770



A brief bright spell showing the newly fallen snow, and a view to the Mitteregg Spitz (3045) - Sail Kopf (3209) ridge



It was bitterly cold for breakfast, with a view of the days col, Löbber Törl on the right skyline, our last view of it all day

Left camp at 9.30 - snow on ground but visibility fair. One easy leg up moraine to Badener hut (2608).



About to depart the Badener hut

Snow began at 11.50. Contoured anticlockwise through crags at valley head to Löbben Törl (2770). Narrow path was well waymarked, and some fixed ropes were in position, but it was necessary to fix safety ropes in two places on steep snow above gullies.



About to cross one of the snow gullies en route to Löbben Törl

Löbben Törl would be a doddle in good conditions, but when we reached it there was a strong wind with spindrift over the col, and we could see nothing on the north side. We relied here on footsteps of a guided party which had come the other way, and eventually picked up waymarks on moraine on east side of Unterer Keesboden. We pressed on, not stopping until junction with Gletscherweg (2200).



Following the path down the crest of the old lateral moraine



The snout of the Schlaten glacier emerging below cloud

Route across glacier snout was clearly impracticable due to hidden crevasses, and we decided to descend to Innergschlöß, and camped at the head of the valley (1735).



Heading down the steep descent to Innergschlöß

GL and APD crossed the Gletscherweg (a fascinating route over roche moutonnées under snout of glacier) and climbed to Alte Prager hut to meet coach drivers, before returning to campsite. Rain in evening. It was now clear that the Venediger excursion was not on. This was a pity, since it is clearly an easy ascent in good conditions.

Tuesday 28th July	Trek Coach	Matreier Tauernhaus Krimml	1512
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Set off to Venedigerhaus at 10.30. Rain eased off at 11.30 and we continued down the valley to Außergschlöß (1695) and took path north for St. Pöltener hut, with the aim of continuing Trek via Felber Tauern and Grüner See. After 2 legs, at about 2162, conditions worsened, and the journey was abandoned. Returned in 1 leg to Matreier Tauernhaus(1512) and took coach to Krimml.



The point where we gave up the struggle



Down to the Matreier Tauernhaus

Wednesday 29th July	Free day	Krimml
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Weather improving all day. Excursion to Krimml falls. Toll path on left of stream costs 5 ÖS, but can be avoided by ingenious use of waymarked path on right of stream.



Our sunny, warm and **dry** campsite in Krimml!

Thursday 30th July	Free day	Salzburg
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Coach to Salzburg for a free day. Fine weather!

Friday 31st July	Free day	Salzburg
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Salzburg is an interesting old town. Trek Meal: soup, pork chops and chips, fruit cocktail. Very small portions and an unpleasant atmosphere marred by a dispute over sausages. Left in a hail of insults. I suppose that sums up our bad luck.

Saturday 1st to Monday 3rd August	Coach	Stuttgart > Bruges > Manchester
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Same as route out, stopping at Bruges on final evening.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

The particularly difficult conditions of this Trek placed a heavy strain on all the party. Personal antagonisms were exacerbated and enforced leisure served to encourage restlessness and indiscipline. Also the persistence of wet weather led to an above average crop of blisters and unhealthy feet. Boys must be warned of the dangers of inadequate hygiene.

All the same, a difficult Trek brings out the best in certain boys. Several trekkers distinguished themselves by maintaining good humour and aiding the morale of the party, as well as stepping in spontaneously to organise operations in moments of crisis e.g. the Obervellach flood. A lot of the frictions which did occur would have remained undetected on a straightforward trek

The coach journey in both directions seemed far too long for most people. Had we known in advance that there would be two drivers, we might well have telescoped the journeys into two and a half rather than three and a half days. There is a problem in Germany where only 400 miles can be travelled in a day by one driver. Attention should be paid to alternative routes.

The coach proved useful for ferrying to campsites (Mallnitz - Obervellach, Heiligenblut, Kals - Lienz, Matrei - Gruben), but it takes a long time to load and unload rucksacks. Routes should be planned to be as continuous as possible, and to avoid the use of the coach for taking us off route.

Austria is good trekking country, but some of the passes and huts are really too high to guarantee passage in poor conditions. Attention must be paid to planning alternative low-level routes in advance.

G. Leversha



ARTICLE FOR THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE ULULA

WE MIGHT have foreseen some of the bad luck which was to pursue the 1981 trek, when we were driven down off Snowdon in June by icy winds and heavy rain. But back at Pen-y-Pass, with scarcely a square inch of dry clothing between us, we reflected that this was after all a training weekend in wet and windy Snowdonia. And so it was that we set out to the Alps, equipped with shorts and sun-tan cream, still cherishing visions of rosy Alpine sunsets over pink snowcapped peaks.

Our original plan was to cross the Hohe Tauern range from East to West, passing the Hochalmspitz, Ankogel, Sonnbllick, Glockner and Venediger groups, and culminating in an ascent of the Großvenediger, Austria's second highest mountain. The party consisted of 38 boys and five staff, Messrs. Leversha, Stubbs, Witton, Souster and Dobson.

There comes an awful moment on trek when the coach stops, ice-axes are distributed and it is time to walk. Atrophied muscles seize up, foolishly guzzled chocolate-bars weigh heavily in the stomach, and aching limbs stagger off up the meadow-path through the rich tapestry of Alpine flowers. We climbed into the damp cloud which was to accompany us for many days, and set up camp in the misty surroundings of an almost subterranean Alpine hut, built thus to avoid the fate of its predecessor—destruction by avalanche.

The facilities at the huts may be simple, our camping-spots beside them stony and hard—especially when we are asked to leave the green patches for the horse—but the welcome is nearly always genuinely friendly. As we sheltered from cold wet weather, fires were lit for us and washing lines hung up for our damp socks.

The boys took it in turns to impress the masters with their culinary expertise: a not inconsiderable task, since meals are prepared from small unlabelled bags of greenish powders. Thus temporary colour-blindness may result in chicken-flavoured tea or Instant Whip Stroganoff.

After descending in torrential rain to the municipal camp-site at Obervellach, we camped beside the Mollbach, a pleasant little stream. By the early hours it was in spate, breaking its banks and flooding much of the campsite. Most tents were moved and we took shelter in the campsite buildings until dawn broke over a sad mess of abandoned tents and floating debris, none of it ours. Several boys distinguished themselves by cheerfully serving porridge and hot tea to homeless campers, who admittedly approached their first English breakfast very warily.

Routes were changed drastically in view of poor weather and occasional glimpses of fresh snow-fall at higher altitudes; and yet there were periods when the sun shone and we set out again for the mountains. On such a day we reached the Salm Hut and camped in a valley of squeaking marmots above a tiny hut where a mountain cowherd was happy to sell us fresh milk for a few Schillings. There too we found edelweiss, watched chamois, and saw the sky illuminated by sheet lightning. In another burst of summer we reached the summit of the Roten Kogel (2762 m) and took in an immense panorama of sparkling peaks, sheer walls of rock, and far below on dizzily plunging slopes the hazy greens of pinewoods.

It had been hoped that a successful ascent of the Großvenediger would round off trek and compensate for earlier disappointments. However, as we camped beneath the Badener-Hut, an icy wind brought snow, making the next day's crossing of the Löbbentörl one of the most harrowing. The track was completely obscured, and safety ropes had to be fixed when we crossed snow above steep gullies. The difficulties encountered in such weather on a relatively easy route convinced us that the Großvenediger would have to be left to another more fortunate trek, so an excursion to Europe's highest waterfall at Krimml was substituted.

By this time, however, many of the boys had developed a certain allergy to water, and opted instead to watch the Royal Wedding on television in a local hotel. As a final touch of irony, when our coach took us back to Salzburg, the sky turned blue, the sun began to shine and we were at last able to dry our damp socks.

A. P. Dobson

2020 NOTE

As part of the Trekking Centenary celebrations in 2004 a printed Centenary Brochure was produced which gives a comprehensive account of the 100 year history of Trekking at MGS, together with various summary tables. In 2015 a digital version of the Brochure was produced in order to make it more widely available.

ORGANISATION

Training Edale outing was cancelled due to problems with minibuses.

4th -5th July Snowdonia Dreadful weather - in the event quite good preparation!

Transport Hughes Coaches, jumbo version. Even so there was only just enough room for the party, food and equipment.

Equipment As for the 1980 Trek, everybody being issued with axes and instep crampsons. Five ropes were carried and also a spare tent, which was needed after one was destroyed by fire. An arrangement for 20% discount was made with Alpine Sports.

Food Organised by LAW. Everything was packaged pre-trek and the distributions proceeded without hitches. Very little was bought on trek.

First Aid Administered by DS. First aid was in great demand, especially for blister care. One boy needed hospital attention in Lienz and was told to rest for the second part of Trek.

Insurance Commercial Union as first negotiated in 1975.

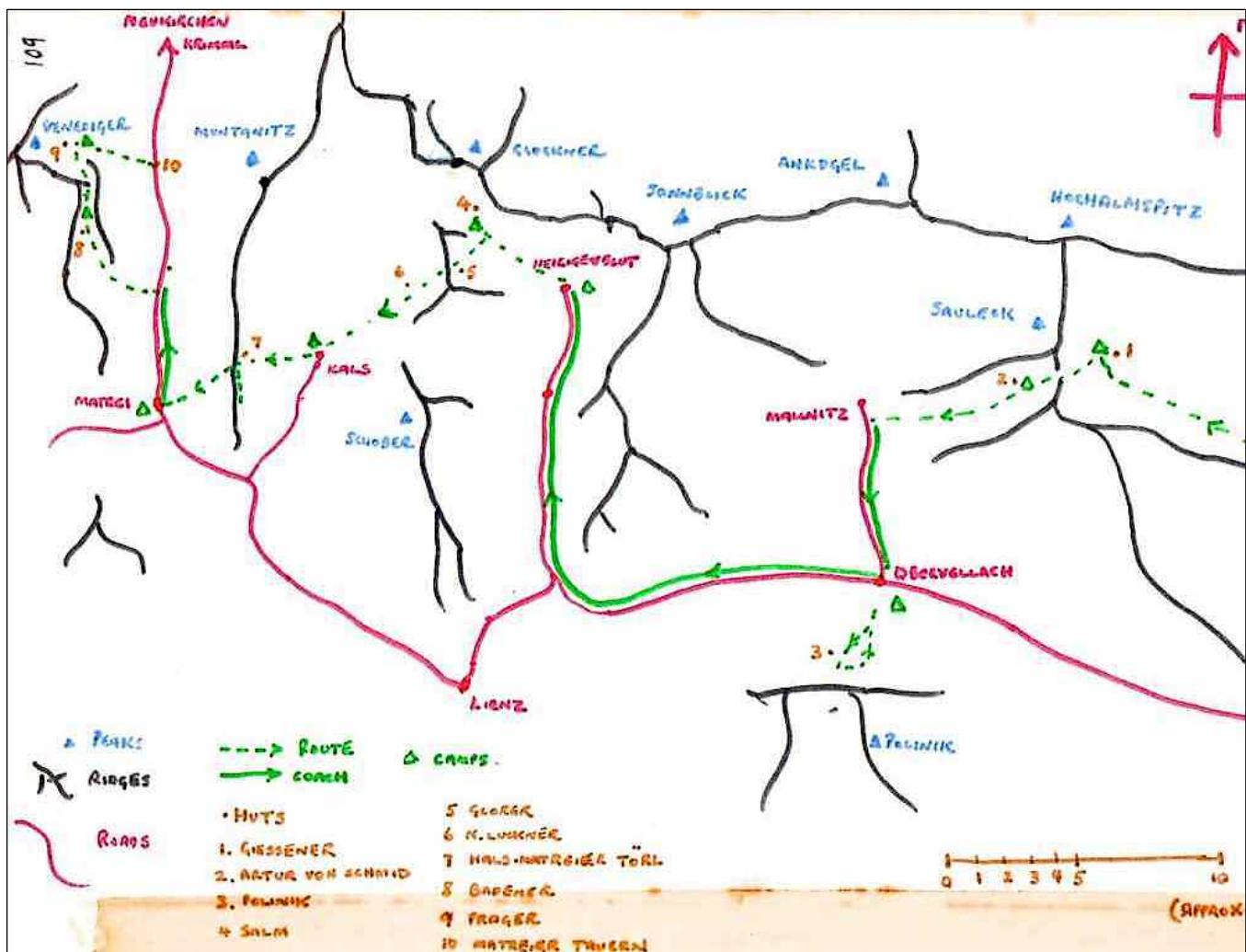
Four claims were made on the policy and CU paid out as follows:

- (a) Lost camera (P Berry) £50 single article limit under Personal Property
- (b) Medical expensed (N Goddard) £35.78 paid in full
- (c) Cancellation costs (D Offland) £100 paid - policy limit for curtailment/cancellation
- (d) Damaged tent. £99 paid (£5 policy excess)

The claims were made at the beginning of September and, after some correspondence involving documentary evidence, the cheque was dispatched to us on 13th October.

ORIGINAL SKETCH MAP

This is a scan of the sketch map that Gerry drew for the original hand-written log. Digital map-drawing technology wasn't available in 1981!



ACCOUNTS

EXPENDITURE

	See Note	Cost/head (40)	
Travel	[1]	£2880.00	£72.00
Food	[2]	£1064.10	£26.60
Insurance		£130.50	£3.26
First aid		£6.32	£0.16
Minibus hire/petrol		£35.00	£0.88
Camping fees	[3]	£529.37	£13.23
Miscellaneous	[4]	£38.59	£0.96
Camping gaz		£195.37	£4.88
Equipment	[5]	£400.00	£10.00
		£5279.25	£131.98
			TOTAL EXPENDITURE
			£5279.25
INCOME	[6]	40 x £150	
			TOTAL INCOME
			£6000.00
			BALANCE
			£720.75

Notes

[1] Travel	D Hughes	£2200.00	
	Ferry fares	£680.00	£2880.00
[2] Food	Manchester purchases	£784.20	
	Trek	£70.78	
	Trek meal	£131.72	
	Breakfast on boat	£77.40	£1064.10
[3] Camping fees (No of nights)	Leonberg (2)	£80.50	Average cost per night: £37.81
	Salzburg (3)	£116.34	Average cost per head per night: 88p
	Obervellach (2)	£53.12	
	Heiligenblut (2)	£57.69	
	Lienz (2)	£82.81	
	Matrei	£54.28	
	Krimml (2)	£84.63	£529.37
[4] Miscellaneous	Trek postcards	£2.34	
	Hut fees	£7.50	
	Film	£50.00	
	Stationery	£10.35	
	Maps/ guides	£13.40	£38.59
[5] Equipment	This is calculated on the basis of £10 per boy. Actual costs sustained included:		
	Replacements/repairs	£76.33	
	3 new tents	£318.00	
	20 new axes	£319.20	
	10 instep crampons	£44.50	£758.03

but naturally these will carry over several years

[6] Income

I have used a figure of 40 boys since, even though only 38 boys actually came on Trek, this was the number budgeted for.

D Douglas's parents asked us to keep the money and use it to provide help to boys in financial difficulty. D Offland's money was refunded in full and part of it (£100) was recovered from an insurance claim.