

THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

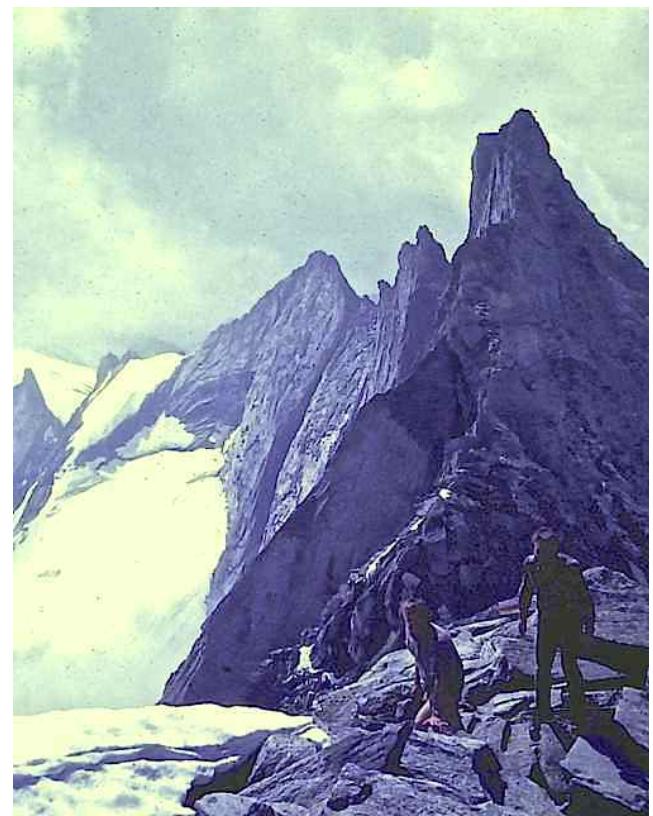
FOREIGN TREK 1985 ZILLERTAL ALPS



Morning after the first night's camp at Unterer Gerlos See



Heading off from the Kasseler hut



Climbing the ridge to Richer Spitz

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The party on the summit of Schwarzenstein (3368)

I originally word-processed the text of this log on a BBC computer using Wordwise in the autumn of 1985. I completed this version with a detailed walking route summary, a digital sketch map, scanned images and appendices in 2024, using an Apple Macintosh and Microsoft Word, with iPhoto and Preview to edit the images.

I scanned the images from 35 mm slides taken for the Trek Reunion in November 1985 and from a set of 'official' prints taken by Steve Adams. The slides have darkened over the years and scan with a strong blue cast, not easily removed without making the clouds and snow yellow. The prints have a warmer tone and scan with a warm orange tone not easily corrected. Editing has improved the images, but there remains a mismatch in colour balance between the cool slides and warmer prints that my simple editors cannot correct. Where I have been unable to produce a reasonable colour balance I have converted them to monochrome. Sadly, this year's slide scans are the lowest quality of all the 19 Foreign Trek Logs I have completed so far. There is an appendix with some better quality Zillertal images.

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 256 images used is about 64 kB, giving a file size of about 16.8 MB, the size of about 5 medium digital compact camera images.

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.

LEADER Allan Witton

STAFF Gerry Leversha, Bill Souster, Adrian Dobson, John Willson, Steve Adams (2 Mark 5 tents)
Dennis Hughes (coach driver)

TREKKERS

Tent	Leader	Members	37 Trekkers	* denotes a previous Foreign Trek
1	Howard Foxall (2My)***	David Williams (2My)	David Harrison (OM)*	George Franklin (2Mx)
2	Paul Atkins (1SS)***	Paul Seidman (1SS)*	Ian Bancroft (1SS)	
3	James Cornish (MS3q)	Steve Secker (MS3r)	Martin Freeman (MS2q)	Philip Cocker (3Mx)
4	Martin Boulton (3Mb)	Alex Ball (3Ma)	Nigel Clowes (3Mb)	Stuart Ingram (3Ma)
5	Jason Price (3Bb)*	Stuart Lawless (3My)	Alan Jackson (3Ma)	
6	James Fergusson (3Mw)	Mike Billingham * (3Mb)	Chris Sharp (4L)	Richard Spencer (4L)
7	Nick Gee (5F)	Pherose Jeejeebhoy (5F)	Adam Davies (5F)	Adrian Bever (5G)
8	David Walton (5H)	Andrew Garston (5H)	Greg White (5H)	Phillip Davies (5H)
9	Adrian Grundy (4K)	Luke Blackburn * (3L)	Steve Robinson (3M)	
10	Martin Broadhurst (3M)	Paul Elbourne (3M)	Mark Farrar (3M)	Matthew Maitland (3M)

DATES Monday 15th July to Sunday 4th August (21 days)

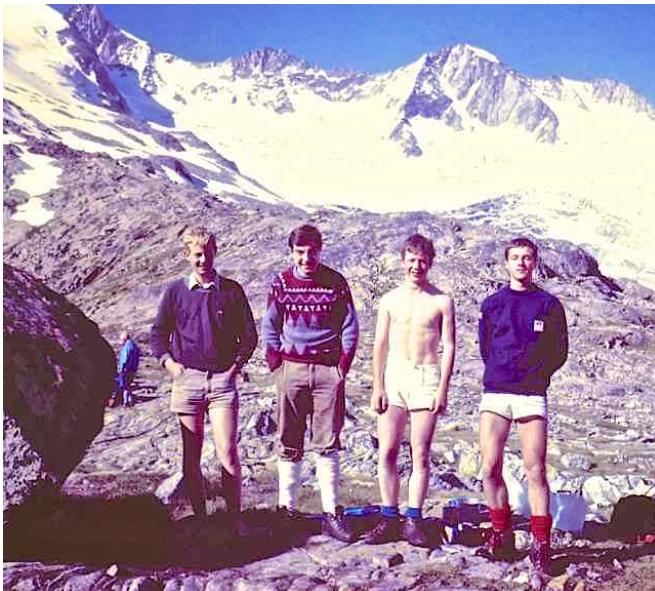
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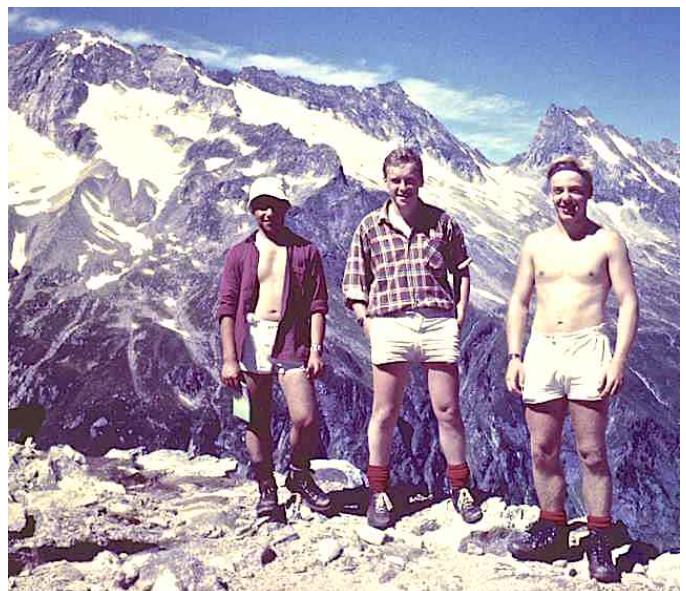
2024 note. It has been 39 years between taking these images and scanning them in 2024. From memory I remembered the names of about half the boys, and with the help of the tent group list and photos I've probably got most of the rest correct. Any help with correct names (via my website wittonmgstreks.com) would be welcome. Left to right are as follows.

Back row	James Cornish, Mike Billingham, Richard Spencer, James Fergusson, Martin Boulton, Nigel Clowes, Adrian Grundy, Paul Atkins, Alex Ball, David Williams, Ian Bancroft, Martin Freeman, Andrew Garston, Howard Foxall
Staff	Adrian Dobson, Gerry Leversha, John Willson, Steve Adams
Middle row	Luke Blackburn, Philip Cocker, Paul Elbourne, Philip Davies, Martin Broadhurst, Chris Sharp, Adam Davies, Bill Souster, Paul Seidman, Stuart Ingram, David Harrison, (hidden Nick Gee) Dennis Hughes, Jason Price
Front row	Adrian Bever, Mark Farrar, George Franklin, Steve Secker, Alan Jackson, Steve Robinson, Greg White, Matthew Maitland, Pherose Jeejeebhoy, Stuart Lawless, David Walton

TENT GROUPS Names I'm unsure about are in italics.



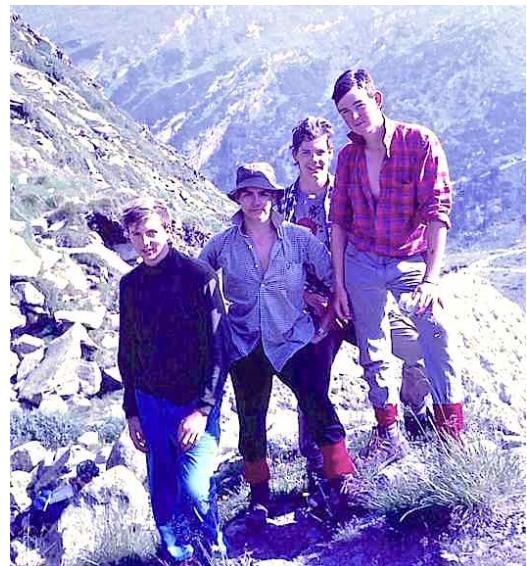
Tent 1: David Harrison, David Williams, George Franklin, Howard Foxall at the Zittauer hut



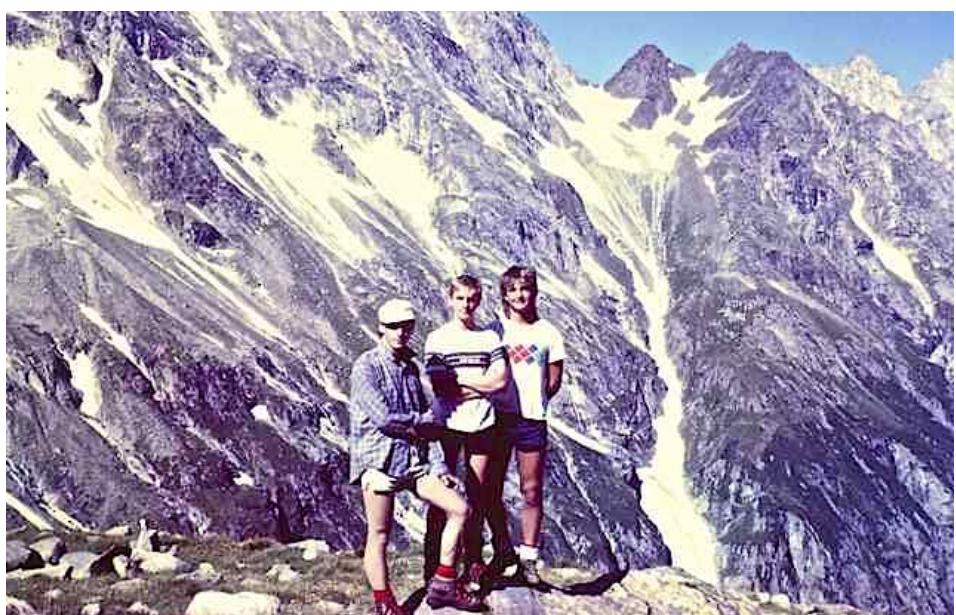
Tent 2: Paul Seidman, Paul Atkins, Ian Bancroft outside the Kasseler hut



Tent 3: Steve Secker, Martin Freeman, James Cornish, Philip Cocker on Lappenscharte



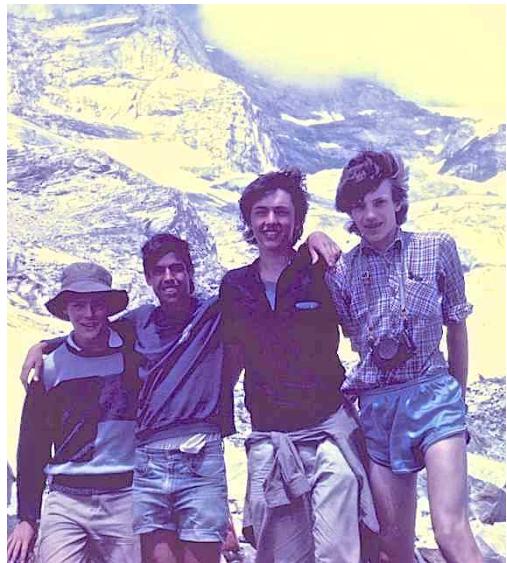
Tent 4: Martin Boulton, Stuart Ingram, Alex Ball, Nigel Clowes on Lappenscharte



Tent 5: Alan Jackson, Stuart Lawless, Jason Price above the Greizer hut



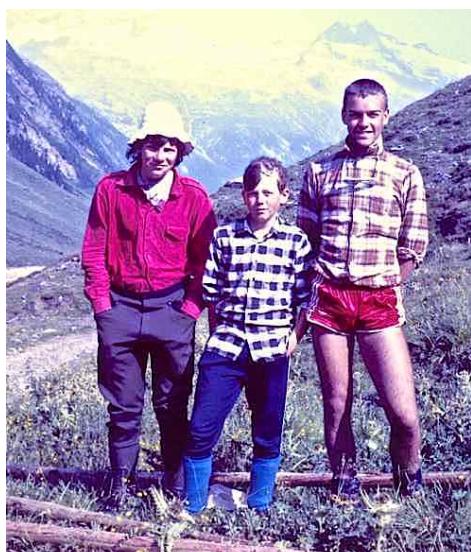
Tent 6: Chris Sharp, James Fergusson, Mike Billingham
Richard Spencer in Mayrhofen



Tent 7: Nick Gee, Pherose Jeejeebhoy,
Adam Davies, Adrian Bever



Tent 8: David Walton, Andrew Garston, Philip Davies, Greg White above the Furtschagl hut with Großer Mösele



Tent 9: Luke Blackburn, Steve Robinson,
Adrian Grundy in the Schlegeis valley

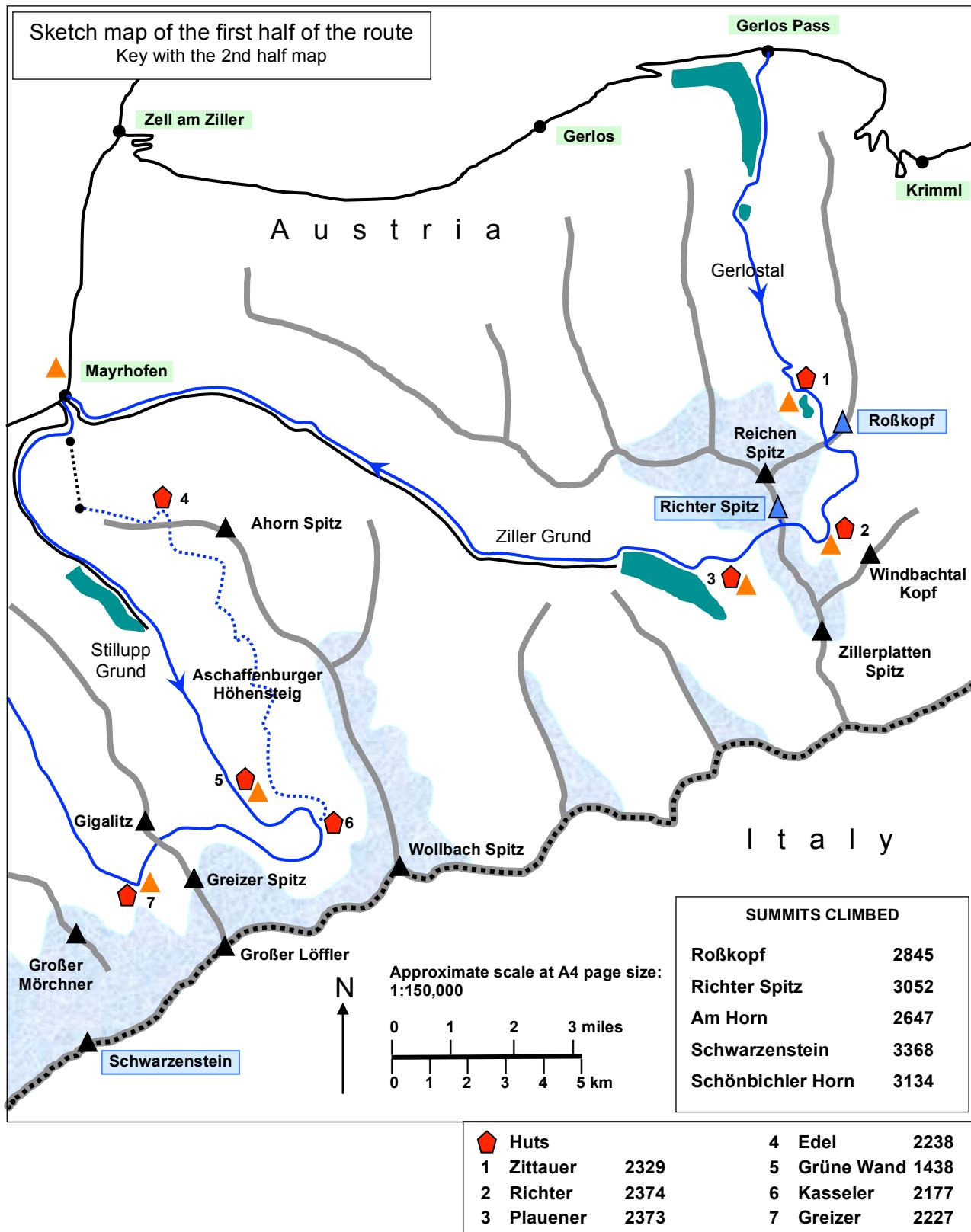


Tent 10: Paul Elbourne, Martin Broadhurst,
Mark Farrar, Matthew Maitland in Mayrhofen

THE WALKING ROUTE

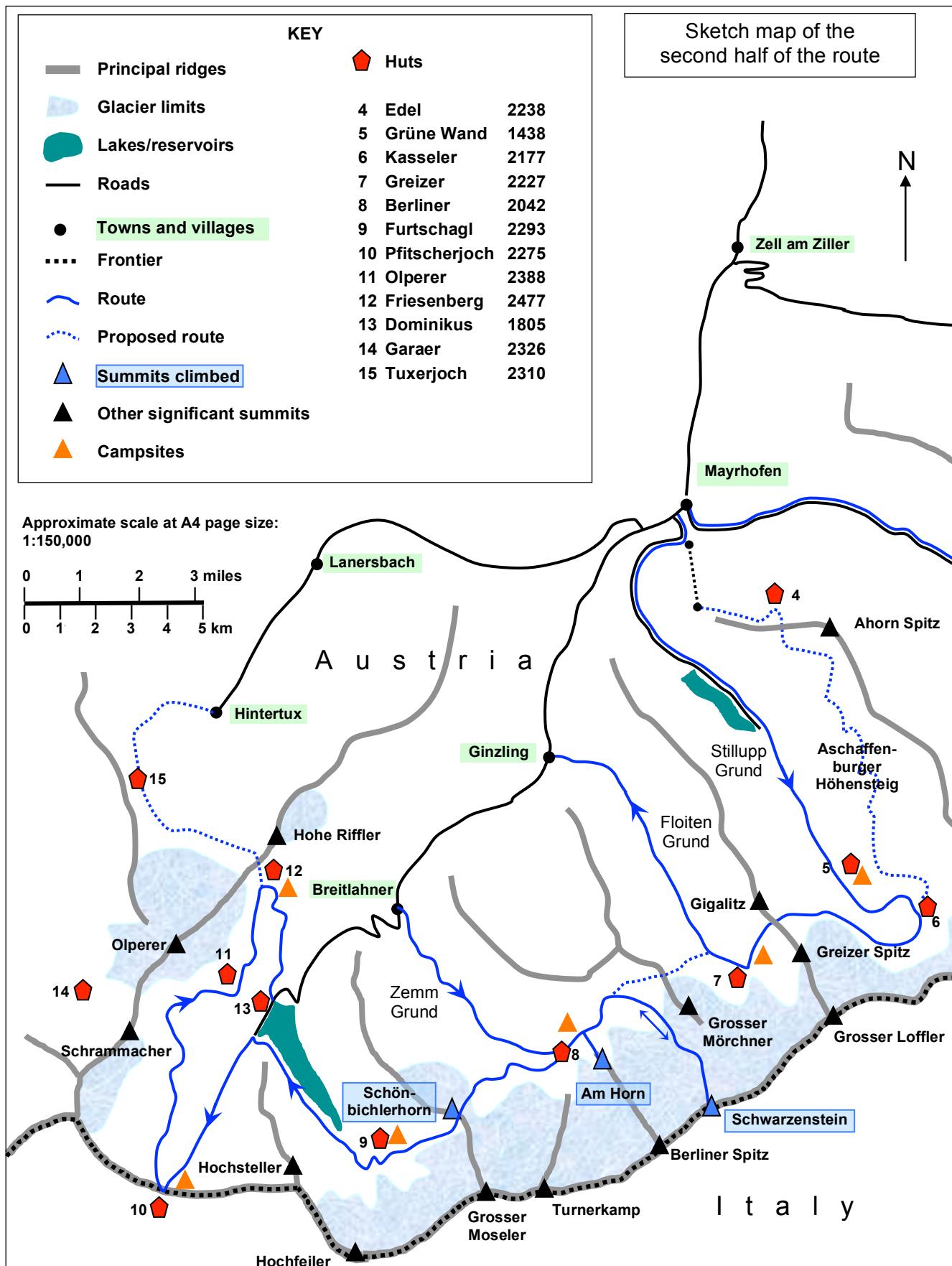
The route was a straightforward east to west hut-to-hut traverse across almost the whole of the Austrian flanks of the Zillertal range, and included ascents of five summits along the way. The arrangement of the main mountain groups together with the locations of the huts and connecting paths made for an easy selection of an obvious route, though we did have to make two changes en route because of ice-bound cols and to curtail the end of the route due to bad weather.

The first 4-day section was from Gerlos Pass, through the Reichen Spitz group and then down to Mayrhofen for a free day. The main frontier ridge was covered in the following two 3-day sections and the final stage was a high level traverse beneath Schrammacher and Olperer.



Logistically the route was simple too, with all the valleys leading down to Mayrhofen. Having Mayrhofen as a 'hub' had the advantages:

- food collection was easily arranged without the coach having to travel long distances;
- it was a convenient centre for David Willims to be left and later collected;
- the en route itinerary changes were easily arranged.



OUTLINE ITINERARY AND WALKING ROUTE SUMMARY

		21 days	5 + 2 half days travel	3 free days	11 + 2 half days walking						
July		All heights in metres		Height m	Distance km	Ascent m	Daily km	Ascent	Descent	Time	Naismith
15/16	Coach	MGS > Valenciennes > Stuttgart									
17	Coach Trek	Gerlos Paf Zittauer Hütte	1507 2329				12	910	90	3-10	4-00
18	Trek Excursion	Richter Hütte Roßkopf	2374 2845	7 1	540 170		8	710	670	3-40	2-50
19	Trek Excursion	Plauener Hütte Richter Spitz	2373 3052	4.5 0.5	600 80		5	680	680	7-15	2-00
20	Trek	Mayrhofen	630				24	50	1790	5-30	4-50
21	Free Day	Mayrhofen	630								
22	Trek	Grüne Wand Haus	1438				16	810	--	5-00	4-30
23	Trek	Greizer Hütte	2227				11	1440	650	6-30	4-40
24	Trek Coach	Ginzling Mayrhofen	980 630				10	--	1250	2-40	2-00
25	Coach Trek Excursion	Breitlahner Berliner Hütte Am Horn	1257 2060 2647	7.5 3.5	800 590		11	1390	610	3-40	4-30
26	Excursion	Schwarzenstein from Berliner Hütte	2060	3368			14	1310	1310	7-30	5-00
27	Trek	Furtschaglhaus via Schönbichler Horn	2293	3134			7	1170	920	4-30	3-20
28	Trek	Pfitscher Joch	2090				13	500	700	2-40	3-30
29	Trek	Friesenberghaus	2477				14	1120	730	5-40	4-40
30	Trek Coach	Dominikushütte Innsbruck	1805				4	-	670	1-20	0-50
31	Free Day	Innsbruck									
1 Aug	Coach	Heidelberg									
2	Free Day	Heidelberg									
3/4	Coach	Dunkirque > MGS								Naismith daily average	3h-50

Grand Totals: (All 13 days walking)	Distance 149 km 93 miles	Ascent 10,090 m 33,100 ft	Descent 10,070 m 33,040 ft	Time 59 hours
Daily average: (excluding 30th)	12.1 km 7.6 miles	840 m 2760 ft	780 m 2570 ft	4h-45

A Trek is a walk from one campsite to the next (with full packs).

An Excursion is a return walk without full packs

Roßkopf Summits are in bold

2329 Heights of mountain campsites in blue

Mayrhofen Official campsites in green

Naismith Times according to Naismith's Rule: 12 min/km and 10 metres/min for ascent

The fact that our average time was so much longer than Naismith was due to the fact that so much of the route was at a high level and over rocky cols, snowfields and glaciers.

"Why did nobody tell me Trek was this good, I'd have come on it years ago."

Ian Bancroft, who trekked for the first time this year in his repeat A-level year, and came back in 1986 as an Old Mancunian.

"It nearly killed me, but I'm going again next year."

Jason Price about the 1984 Iceland Trek.

MAPS

	Scale	Sheet	
Freytag & Berndt	1:100,000	15	Zillertaler Alpen

The Freytag & Berndt 1:100,000 maps are centred on particular mountain groups, and with footpaths and huts clearly marked they are ideal for outline planning and for boys to have to follow the route. Most boys bought a copy.

Kompass	1:50,000	37	Zillertaler Alpen/Tuxer Voralpen
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This sheet also covers the whole route, but the maps in this series are rather simplistic and show little in the way of extra detail compared with the Freytag & Berndt maps.

Alpenvereinskarte	1:25,000	35/1	Zillertaler Alpen (Östliches Blatt)
		35/2	Zillertaler Alpen (Mittleres Blatt)
		35/3	Zillertaler Alpen (Westliches Blatt)

The cartography of these maps is very good, and they are ideal for following the details of the route, spotting mountain campsites, and wayfinding off marked paths.

Maps were bought in bulk from the AAC at members discount prices. The discount more than covered my AAC membership and allowed a small profit on the sale of maps to boys.

GUIDES

Zillertal Alps	Eric Roberts	West Col	1980
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This is very useful for general planning and choosing possible summits.

"Felix Austria" II Zillertal Alps	Philip Tallantire	Eden Press	1971
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I think this is available only through the AAC. It is very dated but useful for some summit ascent descriptions.

Die Alpenvereinshütten	(The Green hut book)	AAC	1985
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This is a mine of useful information; wardens' names, contact addresses and phone numbers; times of ascents to huts, of summit ascents and of hut-to-hut connections; and sometimes, from the hut photo, an indication of whether camping near the hut looks feasible. It is such a comprehensive guide to the huts no description of them is included in the itinerary.

WALKING TIMES

For each walking day a table of times taken (in hours and minutes) between points along the route is given, together with the cumulative time. These are times spent on the move and exclude stops. The time given in brackets is the total time for the day including stops. A 'leg' is normally about 50 minutes walking (followed by a break of about 10-15 minutes), though this varies if the walking is exceptionally hard or easy or if there is a particular objective such as a hut, stream or summit ahead. The distance walked, ascents and descents each day include any optional excursions.



On the Schwarzenstein glacier with Berliner Spitz (3258) and Turnerkamp (3418)

ITINERARY

Monday 15th / Tuesday 16th July

Coach MGS > Valenciennes > Stuttgart

We sailed from Ramsgate to Dunkerque (this year's best value crossing) and drove the short distance to Valenciennes, where the site I had tried to book without reply turned out to be a residential caravan park.

There was some open grassland nearby, and that's where we camped, not noticing until much later the 'No Camping' sign.

We had a breakfast stop in Belgium then it was motorways all the way through Belgium and Germany to the well appointed and spacious site at Campingplatz Heidehof, Laichingen south-east of Stuttgart.



Setting sail from Ramsgate



A total of just over a thousand miles travelled each way by coach



Plenty of room at the Laichingen campsite

Wednesday 17th July	Coach Trek	Gerlos Pass Zittauer Hütte	1507 2329
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We were up at 7.00 and left at 8.45 to take the motorway to the Inn valley, then via Zell-am-Ziller to the Gerlos pass where we arrived at 2.45. Re-organising kit for walking and a food distribution (hampered by a herd of cows wanting their share!) took until 4.15, rather late in the day to begin trekking, but with the advantage of getting into the mountains on the third day out from Manchester.



Rucksack packing at the front of the coach ...



... and a food distribution at the back



Wandering cows trying to claim their share of the food, causing a queue of passing cars

We set off down the metalled road then track into Gerlostal, and a long, easy leg alongside the lake brought us to Finkau where we had a half hour coffee stop. There the day's climbing began gradually on a track through pastures with rather hazy views to the Reichen Spitz group at the head of the valley.



Heading down the track to Finkau in Gerlostal

The final steep 500 m climb to the hut spread the party out and we arrived, rather tired after a very long day, between 8.15 and 8.30.



Heading up the old lateral moraine of the Wildgerlos glacier

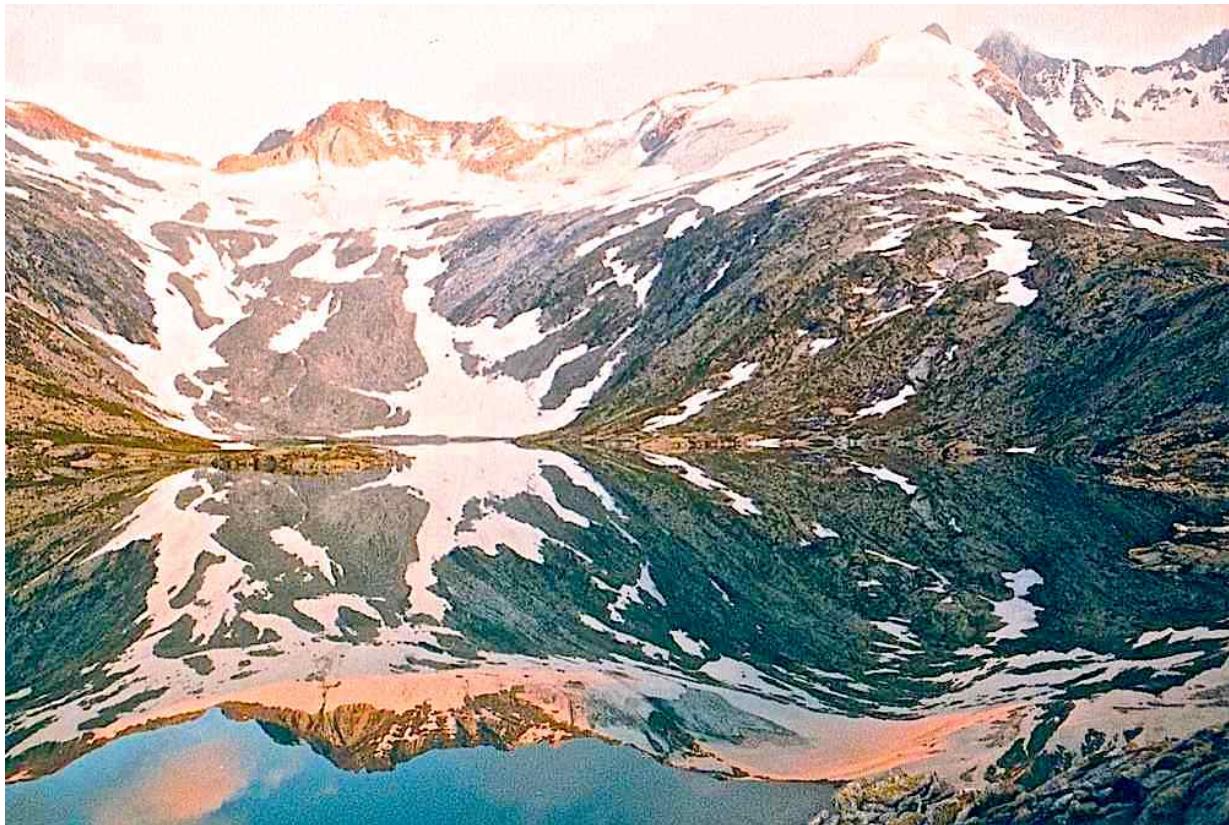


Crossing the outflow stream of Unterer Gerlos See

Unterer Gerlos See is in a superb setting with Reichen Spitz and Wildgerlos Spitz rising above, and there is good camping by the lake just south-west of the hut.



Good camping on grass beside the lake



The sun's last rays on the Wildgerlos glacier reflected in Unterer Gerlos See

The summary tables for each day's walk include walking times between selected points along the route, together with the cumulative time. The time in brackets is the total time between departure and arrival at the destination.

Times:	Gerlos Paß - Finkau	1-00	1-00	Distance:	12 km	Ascent:	910 m
	Zittauer Hütte	2-00	3-00	(4-00)		Descent:	90 m

Thursday 18th July

Trek
Excursion

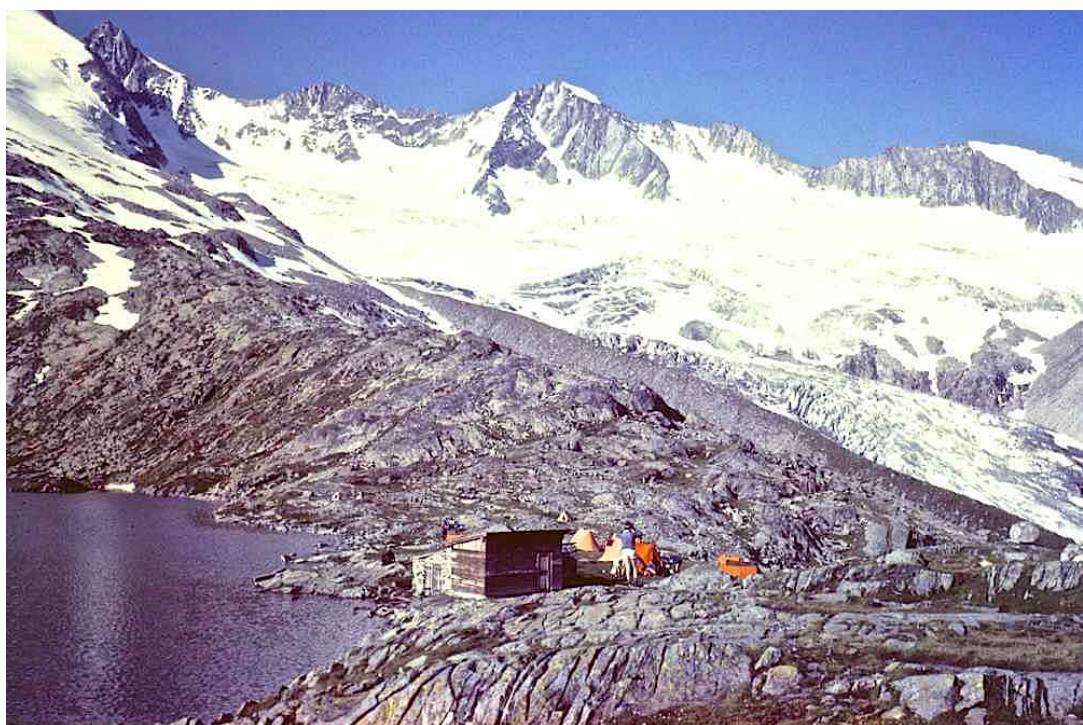
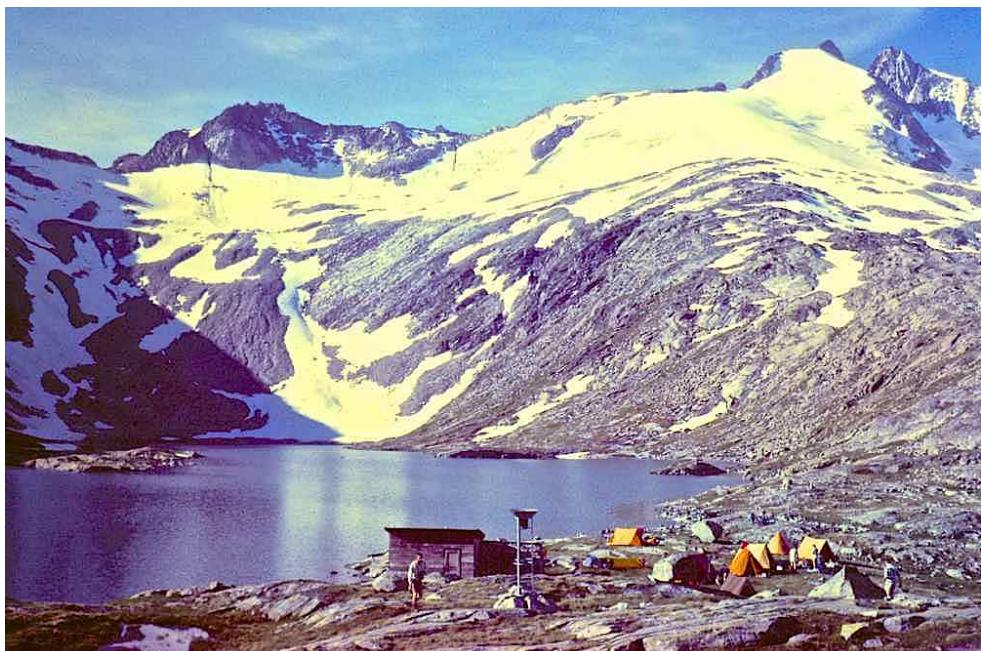
Richter Hütte
Roßkopf

2374
2845

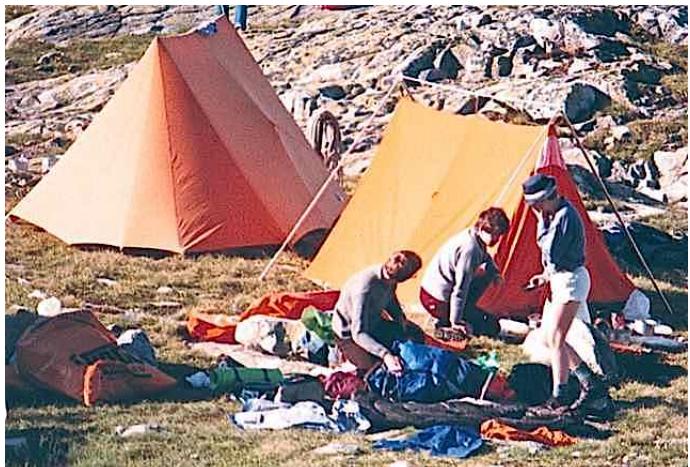
It was a beautifully clear, cold morning with the sun dazzling off the glaciers above.

After the previous long day and with lots of inexperienced lads in the party, most tent groups were slow striking camp and packing rucksacks, and the whole process took two hours.

Reichen Spitz (3303) on the right and Roßkar Scharte the dip on the left



View west to Wildgerlos Spitz (3278)



We left at 10.00 to follow the easy, well-engineered path which climbs towards Roßkar Scharte.



The path gains the west ridge of Roßkopf just above Roßkar Scharte, with fine views back down to Unterer Gerlos See.

We left rucksacks on the ridge for the easy 15 minute walk to the summit of Roßkopf (2845)

It is a superb viewpoint for the nearby Reichen Spitz group and ahead over Rainbachtal to the rocky Zillerplatten Spitz- Richter Spitz ridge with our objective, the Richter hut, set below it.

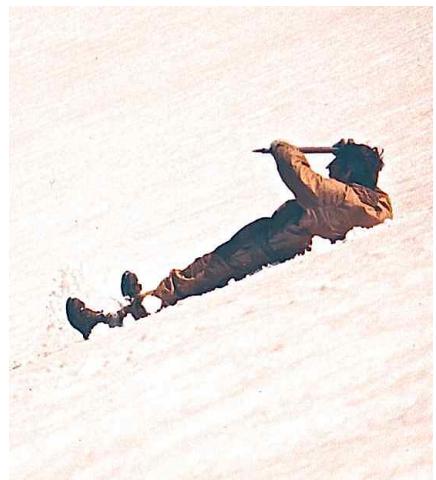


View over Rainbachtal to the rocky Zillerplatten Spitz - Richter Spitz ridge
The summits are Zillerplatten Spitz (3147), Rainbach Spitz (3130), Rainbach Schwarzkopf (3068),
Nadelspitzen (2955), [low point], Spaten (2956), three Schwarzkopf peaks (3045, 3082, 3086)
Gamscharte is on the right edge of the frame and Richter Spitz to its right

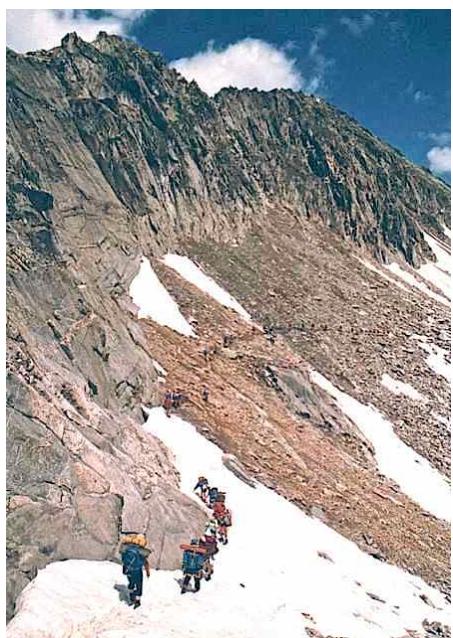


Reichen Spitz (3303) on the left and Wildgerlos Spitz (3278) on the right from the summit of Roßkopf

We collected packs and went down to the col where we found that the east side had an ideal snow slope for an hour's ice axe braking practice.



After lunch we continued down the easy snow to pick up the path which leads round into Rainbachtal and up to the hut, where we arrived at 4.40.



The descent into Rainbachtal

There's plenty of level camping just west of the hut with the pinnacles and snowfields of the Richter Spitz ridge high above. At the hut we met a retired guide who showed great interest in our trek and when we showed him our proposed route he expressed amazement that we could persuade so many youngsters to undertake such a challenging 'lange Bergtour', especially carrying camping and cooking equipment rather than staying in huts.



Rainbach Schwarzkopf (3068), Nadelspitzen (2995), Spaten (2956), Südlich Schwarzkopf (3045)
Gamsscharte and Richter Spitz are out of frame on the right

The initial plan had been to arrive at the Richter hut by mid-afternoon and climb Ziller Spitz as an excursion from the hut, then on the following day loop south over Windbachscharte and Zillerplattenscharte to the Plauener hut, bagging Windbachalkopf and Zillerplatten Spitz on the way if there were easy paths up them. Richter Spitz was to be done as an early morning excursion from the Plauener hut before going down to Mayrhofen.

With the 4 excursions this was a hopelessly ambitious schedule, especially so early in Trek, and having set off late from the Zittauer hut and spent an hour ice axe braking, there wasn't time for an excursion from the Richter hut. So we decided on the shorter option of going over Gamsscharte to the Plauener hut and climbing Richter Spitz on the way, even though Gamsscharte is a more difficult col than Zillerplattenscharte.

Times:	Roßkar Scharte	1-10	1-10	Distance:	8 km	Ascent:	710 m
	Excursion to Roßkopf	30	1-40			Descent:	670 m
	Richter Hütte	2-00	3-40	(6-40)			

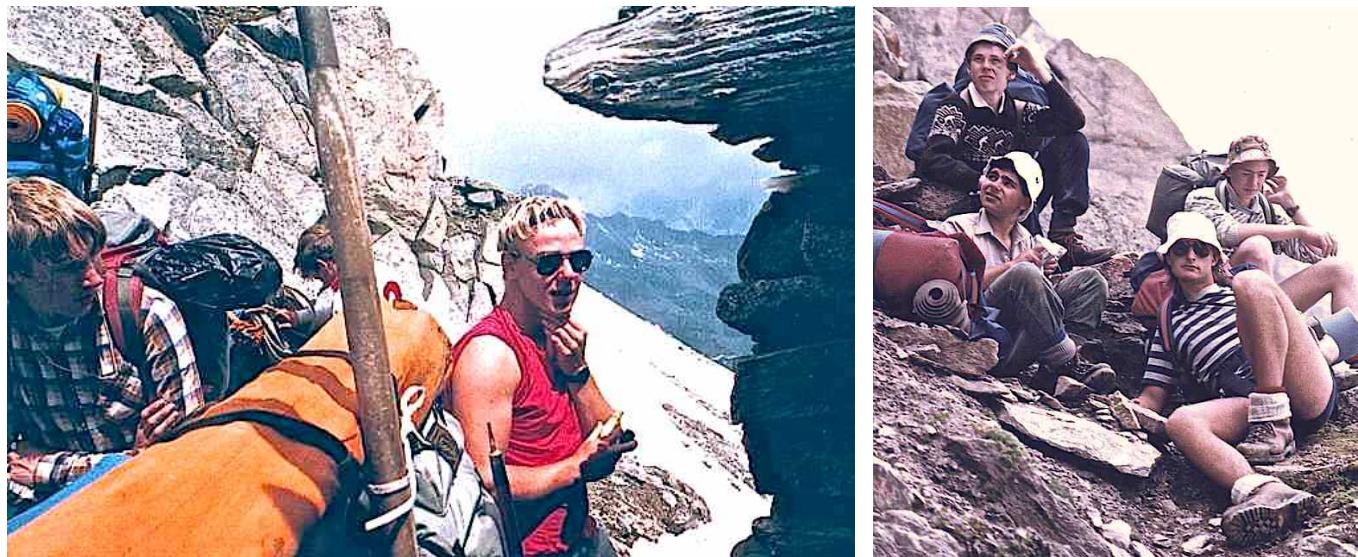
Friday 19th July	Trek Excursion	Plauener Hütte Richter Spitz	2373 3052
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It was a grey morning with cloud on the ridge as we set off at 8.50 for Gamsscharte, and it remained cloudy all day with just occasional sunny breaks. The waymarked path rises gently at first over snow beds and rock slabs and then steeply over snow and up many tight zig-zags to the rocky notch of the col.

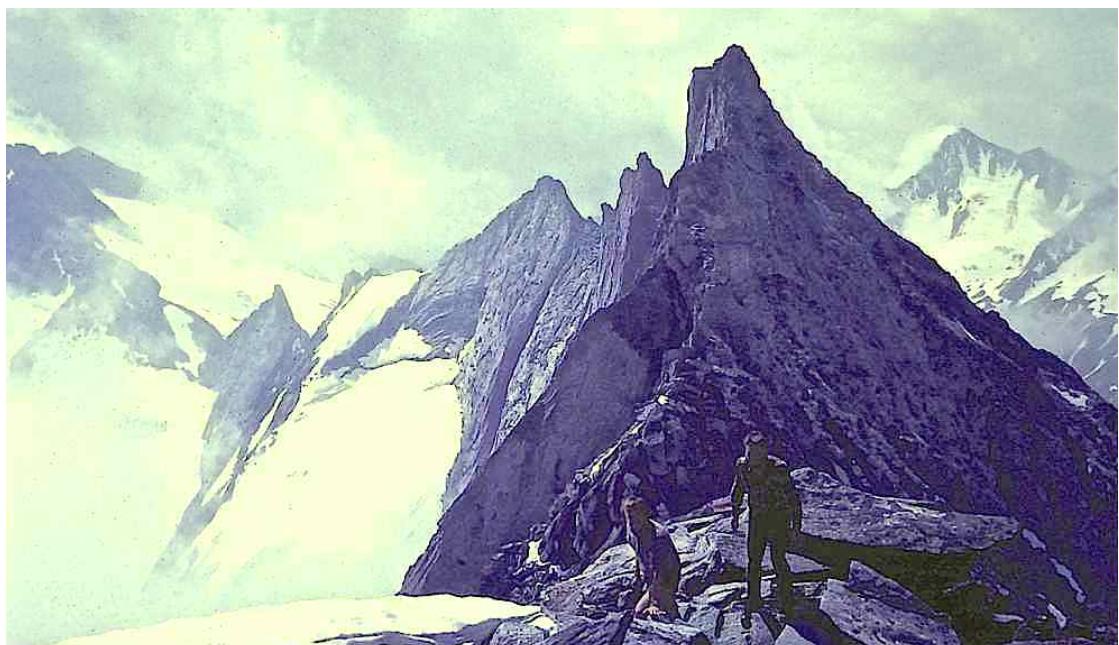
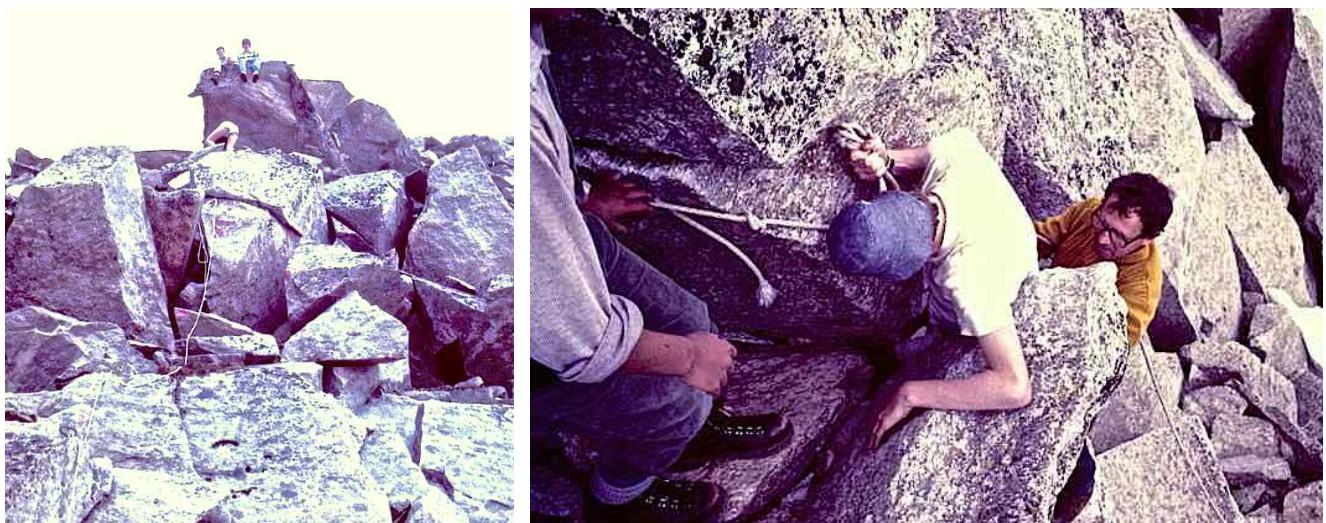


On the rocky zig-zags up to the col

There's not much room on the col where the boys waited while we investigated the route up the ridge.



The route to Richter Spitz begins with an easy fixed cable followed by a good scramble over large blocks, with some awkward big steps in places. Though technically not very difficult, with a large party moving together there was quite a lot of waiting around to move forward and it took half an hour to climb the 78 metres to the peak; without the waiting, 10 minutes would be sufficient.



View south along the narrow, serrated ridge of Schwarzkopf with Nördlich Schwarzkopf (3086) the nearest peak

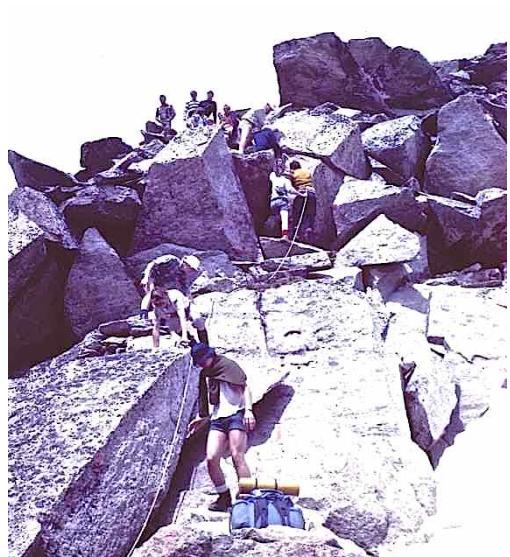


A more gradual final climb to the summit



View north towards Reichen Spitz

We returned to the col to collect rucksacks and at 12.45 began the descent to the Plauener hut. As suggested by the indication on the map, we found the west side of the col much more difficult, especially as it was done in descent and with full packs, and it turned into rather an epic event.

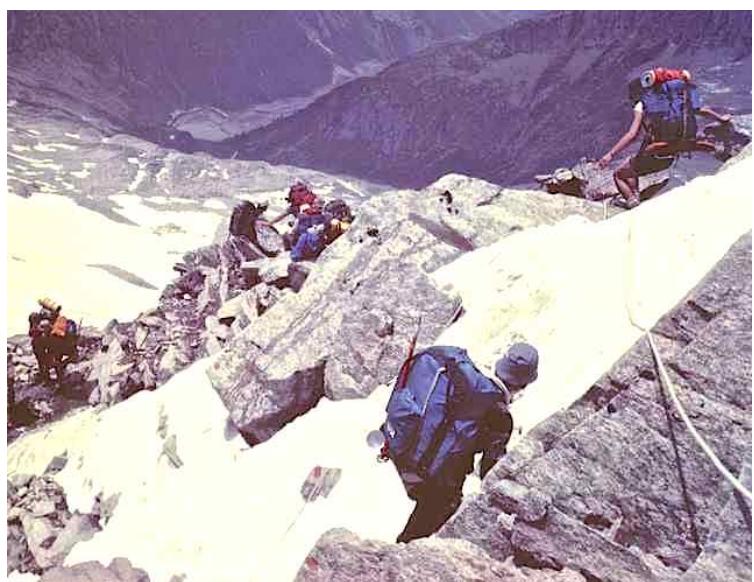
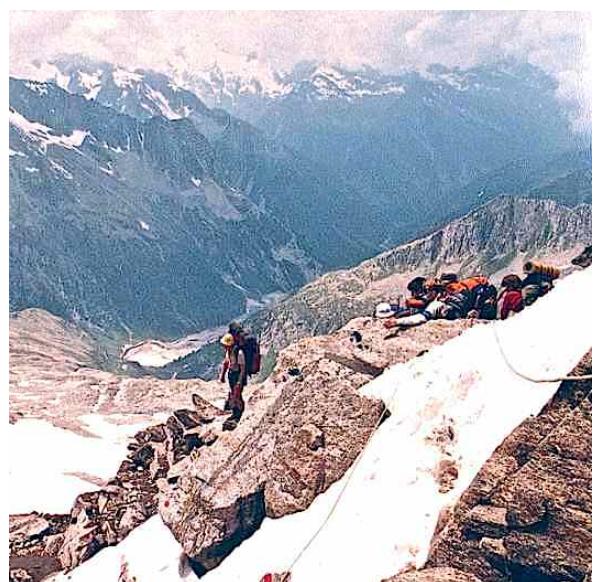


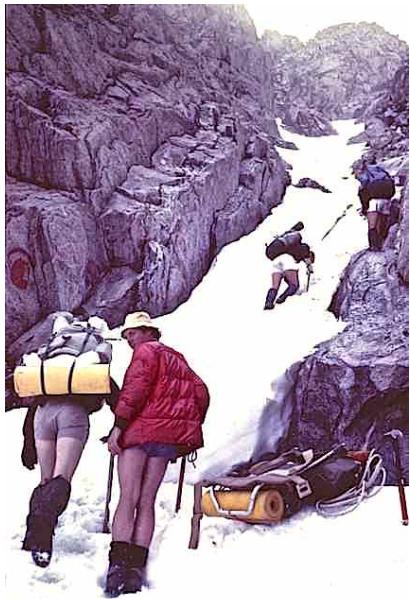
Return to the col



View from the col down into the huge valley of Ziller Gründ

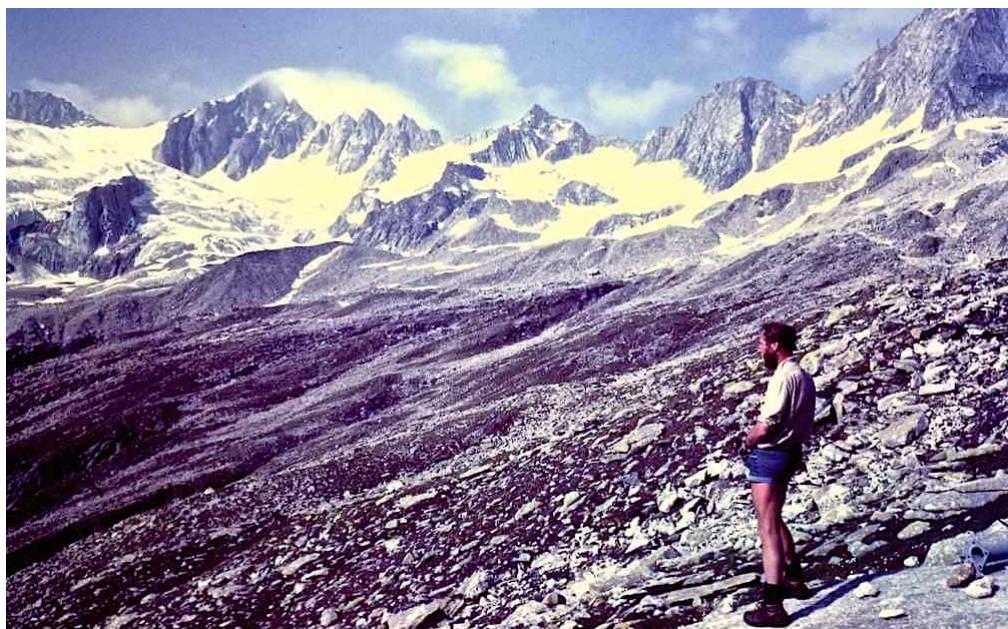
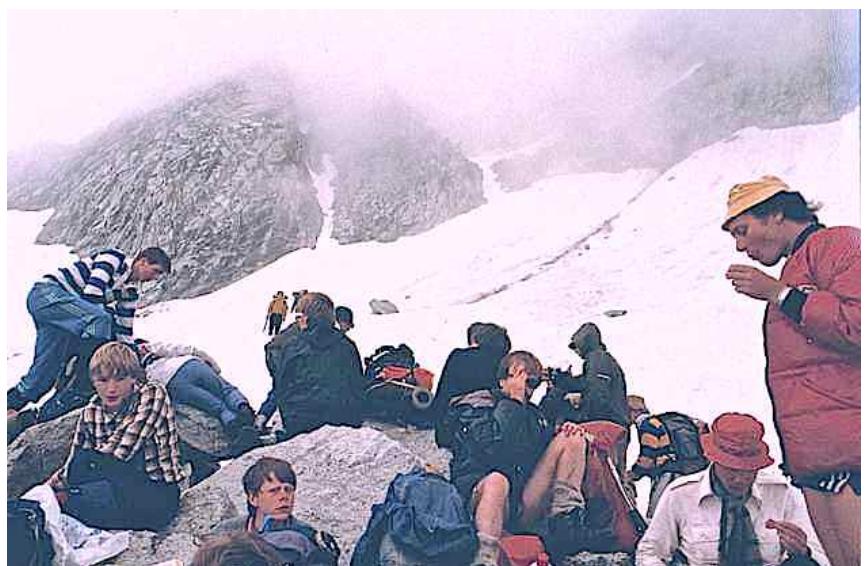
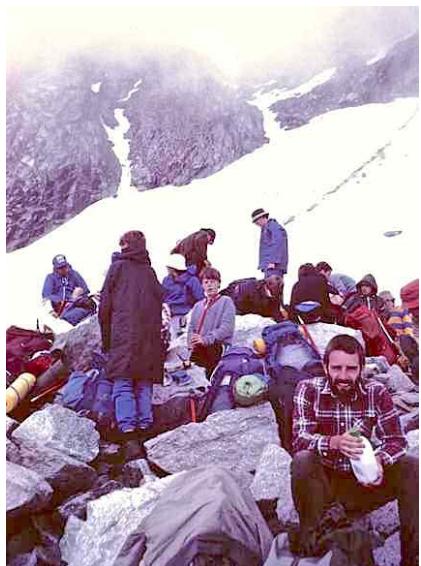
There are waymarks to indicate the way down the very steep, rocky descent, but the main problem was that the 'path' and some of the fixed cables were obliterated by deep snow, some of it hard packed. Even though we had split into two groups for easier party management, we had to use our own ropes as alternatives to the buried fixed cables, and it was a very slow and tedious process getting everybody safely down to the less steep snowfield below; almost 4 hours for 160 m of descent!





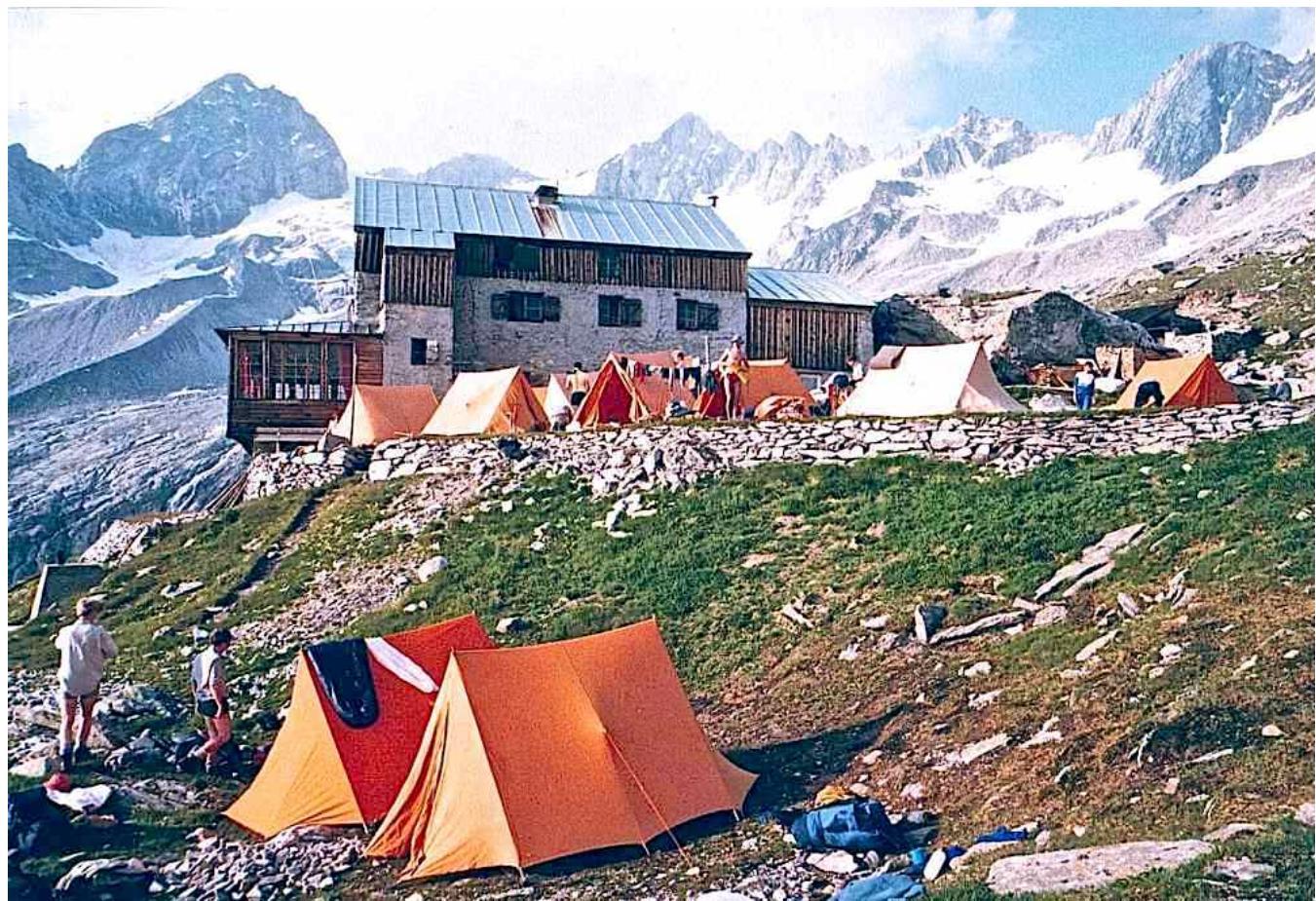
The final descent down a snow gully onto more gentle snow slopes below

Once off the snow at 4.30 we had a short, and very late, lunch stop, and it was then an easy leg's walk down to the hut, where we arrived at 5.30. Like the Richter hut, the Plauener hut is in a fine position beneath an arc of snow-flanked, pinnacled ridges to the north and east, and at last the sun came out and it developed into a warm evening.

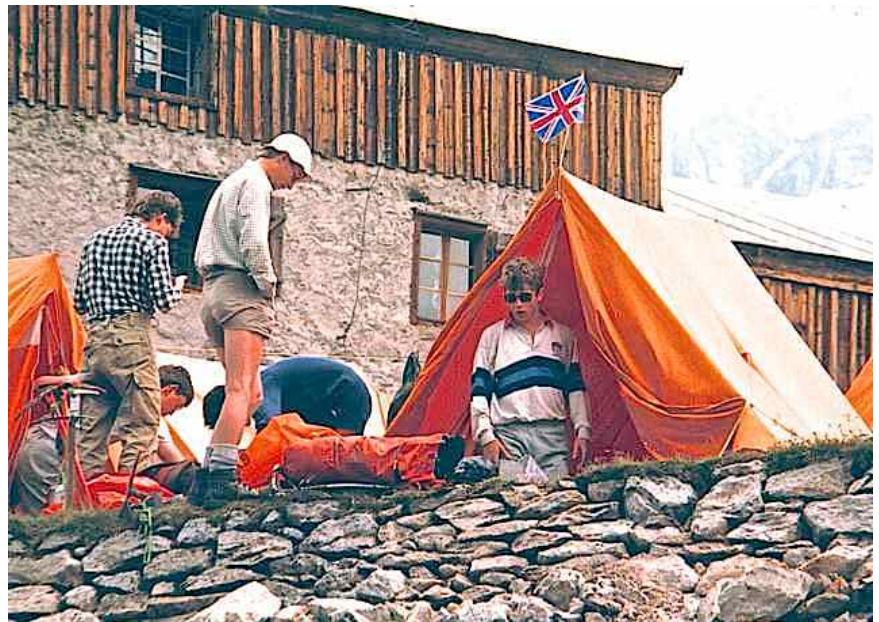
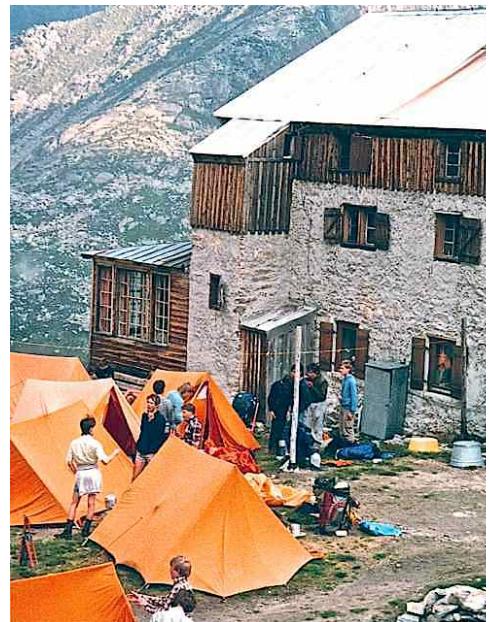


Reichen Spitz on the left with cloud, then pointed Ziller Spitz then Richter Spitz

There isn't much good camping in the vicinity of the hut but the warden was kind enough to allow us to pitch tents right by the hut on a level grassy area (almost a lawn) whose perimeter had been marked out for the foundations of an extension to the hut.



The huge bulk of Kuchelmooskopf (3215) on the left and the Reichen Spitz - Richter Spitz ridge on the right



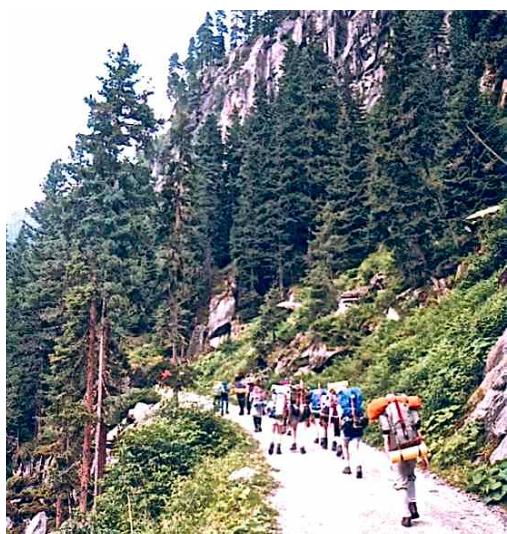
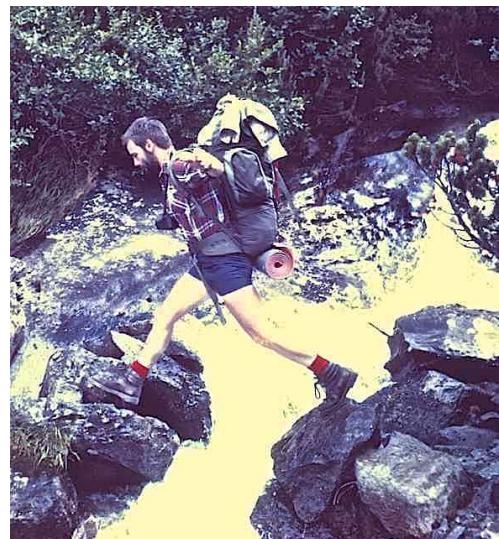
[2024 Note. When Lesley and I were following a similar hutting route from Gerloss Pass to Mayrhofen in 2015, there was a large sign beside the Richter hut making it very clear that the route over Gamsscharte was NOT a route for walkers! We went to the Plauener hut via Windbachscharte and Zillerplattenscharte, which was also quite a long day.]

Times:	Gamsscharte	2-00	2-00	Distance:	5 km	Ascent:	680 m
	Richter Spitz	30	2-30			Descent:	680 m
	Gamsscharte	15	2-45				
	Plauener Hütte	4-30	7-15 (8-40)				

It was to be a less exciting day than the previous two; 15 miles almost all downhill to Mayrhofen! We left at 9.00 and in two legs we had descended the steep zig-zags below the hut to join the contour track which will be alongside the Zillergründle reservoir when the dam has been completed.



A grey and overcast morning



Down on the new reservoir track



The dam for the Zillergründle reservoir under construction

Just before we reached the valley bottom at Bärenbad below the dam David Williams twisted his ankle badly and was having great difficulty walking at all, so staff took turns to carry his rucksack as well as their own. Fortunately there is a minibus service from there to Mayrhofen, so we left him there to catch it later in the afternoon.



At Bärenbad, the terminus of the metalled road up Ziller Gründ

The overcast morning turned into a brighter afternoon for the rather tedious 12 mile road walk to Mayrhofen where we arrived at 5.15. We had an hour looking round the town before making the 20 minute walk north to our booked campsite at Laubichl, which had plenty of room and good facilities. We had just put up tents when a heavy shower of rain passed through.



The quiet road down Ziller Gründ

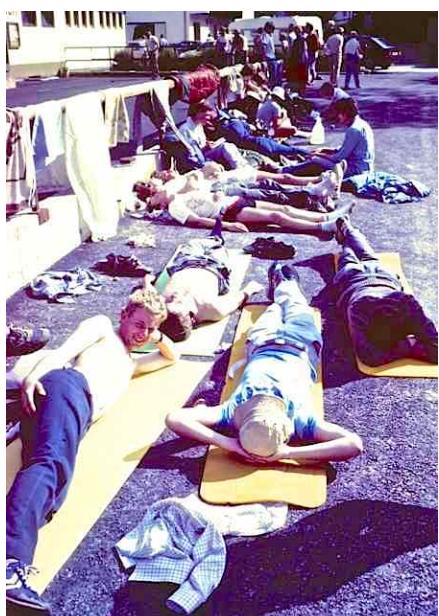


Clearing after the heavy shower

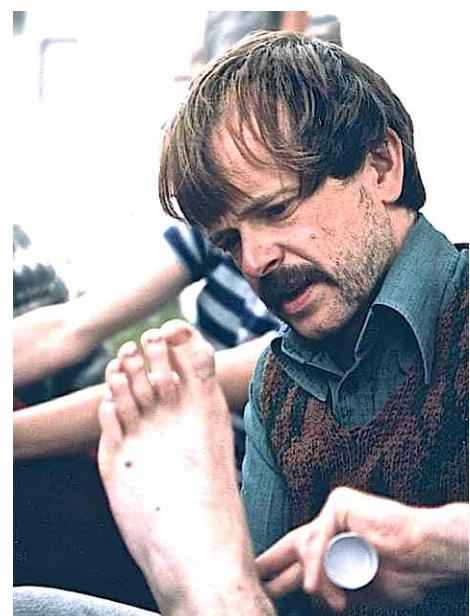
Times:	Bärenbad	1-45	1-45	Distance:	24 km	Ascent:	50 m
	Mayrhofen	3-45	5-30	(9-30)		Descent:	1790 m

In various ways it had been a demanding first 3 days of Trek and we were all ready for some rest and recuperation. It was a warm, sunny day with some cloud on the mountains tops, ideal for sorting out kit, washing clothes, looking round the town, eating and relaxing.

Sadly David Williams would not be able to continue to walk with us because of his badly swollen ankle. As we would be returning to Mayrhofen in three days' time and again at the end of Trek it was agreed that he should stay at the campsite and await our return. He was left with a spare tent and cooking equipment, some supplies and money to buy food and plenty of books to read. Sudden manifestations of aches and pains amongst others in the party were not considered serious enough to merit similar treatment!



Washing done and out to dry, time to relax



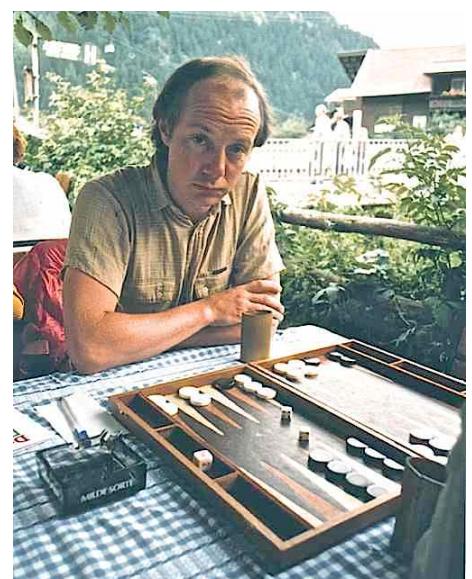
Dr Dobson's foot clinic



The main square in Mayrhofen



Staff lunch





Afternoon tea (Ryvita and jam) at the campsite



Dinner time

It was an unhappy day for another member of the party who made a fool of himself during 'Uncle Arthur's Happy Hour' and ended up falling over in the street, and banging his head. A local woman called an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital in Schwaz in the Inn valley. A phone call to the hospital revealed that there was no serious injury and Dennis kindly offered to take the coach down to collect him the following morning.

In the back of my mind had been the possibility of splitting the party into 2 groups, with a stronger group taking the Ahornbahn cable car and going via the challenging, high level Aschaffenburger Hohensteig route to the Kasseler hut. The second group would take the easy valley route with just a 700 m climb to the hut at the end. But with having to drive down to Schwaz, we agreed instead to all go via the valley route and meet up and camp at the head of Stillupp Grund, somewhere beyond Grüne Wand Haus and before the final climb to the hut.

Dennis and I set off at 9.00 to recover the miscreant from Schwaz hospital where we were treated very cordially. There were no formalities or payment required for his overnight sojourn, and his return to us in good health.

The main party left the site at 10.00, and at a leisurely pace with lots of stops spent the whole day walking along the narrow road which runs the length of Stillupp Grund to Grüne Wand Haus, where they arrived at 7.00.

The hospital party arrived back in Mayrhofen in the late afternoon and as there was no possibility of us walking to catch up the main party, we hired a taxi to take us all the way to Grüne Wand Haus.

Within a few minutes of setting off walking we found the main party pitching camp on rather rough ground between the path and the Stillupp stream.



A warm sunny day for relaxing on the banks of Stillupp reservoir
With a monocular the Kasseler hut could be seen just below the snowline



Philip Cocker, winner of the
Karrimor Award for best packed rucksack



Heading off to find the camp

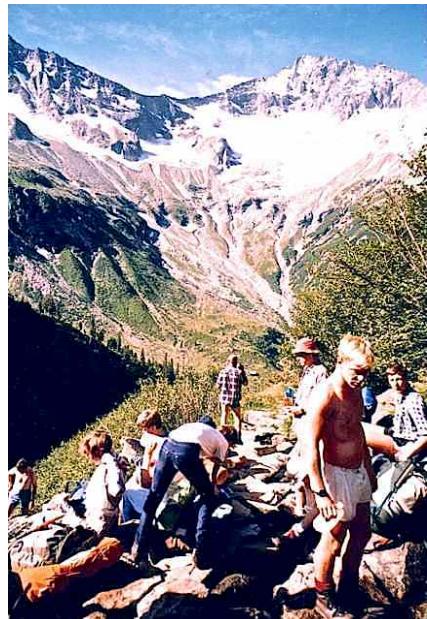


Camp set up, with Wollbach Spitz (3210)
on the centre skyline above the Kasseler hut

Tuesday 23rd July	Trek via	Greizer Hütte Lapenscharte	2227 2701
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With the additional climb to the Kasseler hut, and a total ascent of over 1400 m it was going to be a long day. We rejected the shorter alternative of the direct path to Lapenscharte as this omitted the interesting looking high level traverse from the Kasseler hut to Lapenscharte.

We struck camp at 8.30 and in 2 legs on a very good zig-zag path made the 700 m ascent to the hut for elevenses. Fortunately it was a glorious day and the improving views were some compensation for the toil of the long climb.



On the 700 m ascent to the Kasseler hut with Großer Löffler (3376) and the Löffler glacier at the head of the valley



At the hut with our balcony route along the base of the Löffler glacier

The balcony route at about 2200 m round the head of Stillupp Grund is a splendid walk with excellent views, though for us not quite as easy as the 1:25,000 map suggests. With hard packed snow covering the path in several places and the steep rock band to cross at Schuhscharte, it took 4 hours on the move to cover the 6.5 km and 530 m of ascent to Lapenscharte



Setting off from the Kasseler hut



View down Stillupp Grund with the Stillupp reservoir



Großer Löffler on the left and Lappenscharte on the right

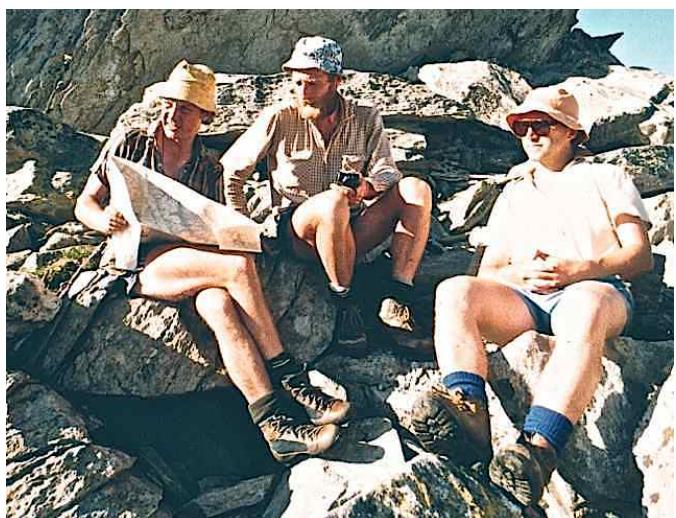


The final steep scramble to Lappenscharte

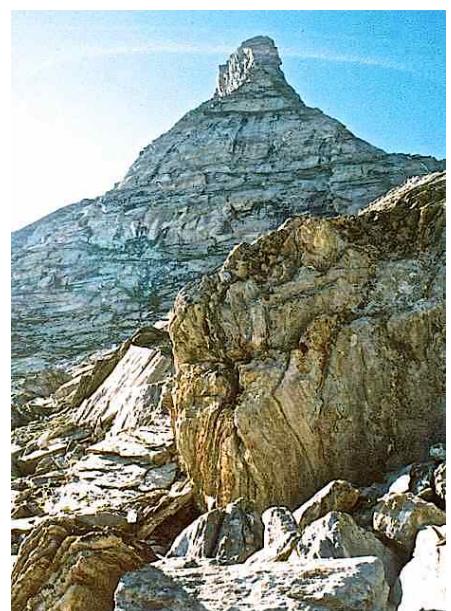
At 6.00 we reached the sharp col from where there were superb views back over Stillupp Grund, ahead to Großer Mörchner and the ice-falls of the Floitenkees at the head of Floiten Grund and of the impressive tower of Gigalitzturm above.



On Lappenscharte with a view back over Stillupp Grund



View ahead over Floiten Grund to the Floitenkees glacier and Kleine and Großer Mörchner (3197 and 3283)

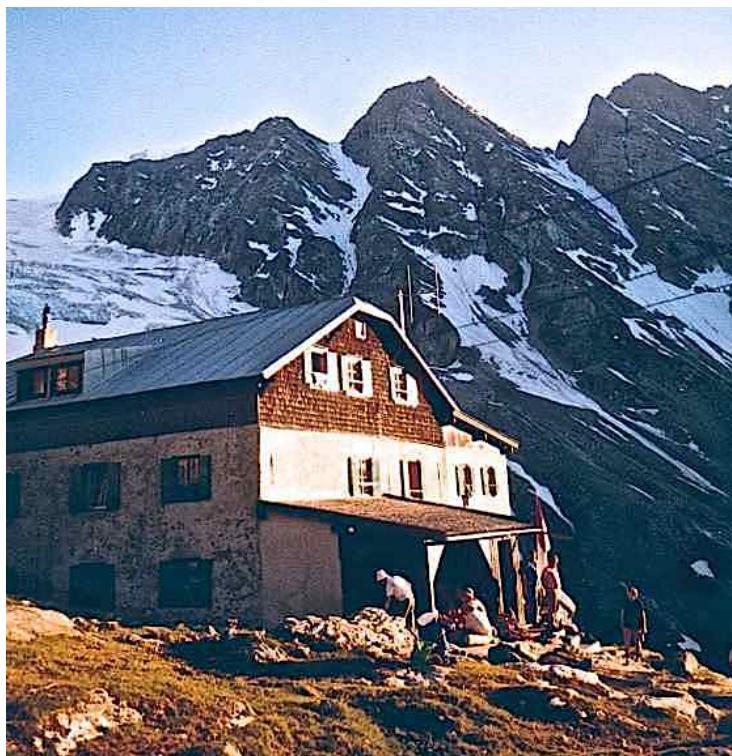


The tower of Gigalitzturm (2978) directly above the col

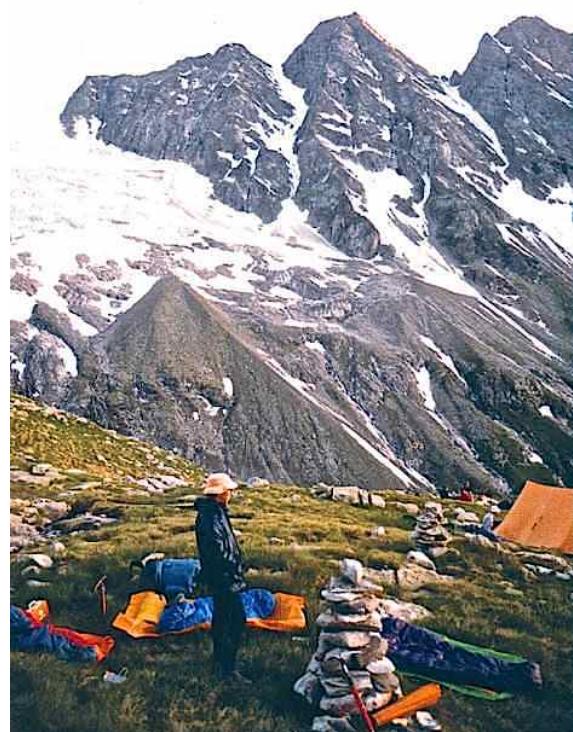


The walk down into the head of Floiten Grund and the Greizer hut

It was then an easy walk down the steep but good path to the hut. There is little level ground in the vicinity of the hut, and even the best pitches we could find (about 50 m above the level of the hut) were rather sloping. In view of this, and the fact that it was a crystal clear night, most groups bivvied without bothering to pitch their tent.



The Greizer hut



Only 2 tents erected as most of us bivvied

The plan for the following 2 days (once again a rather ambitious one) was to cross Mörchenscharte and go via the Berliner hut down to Breitlahner and take the coach to Mayrhofen. Then on the following day back to Breitlahner and walk up to the Berliner hut to climb Am Horn and Schwarzenstein, then resume the high level traverse.

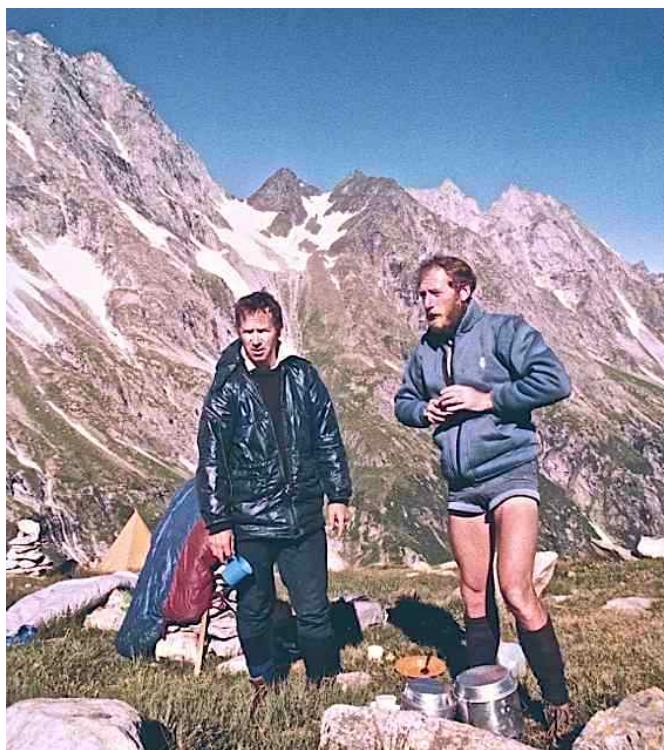
Crossing Mörchenscharte involves a steep 1000 m ascent up Mörchenklamm, and we could clearly see that the gully was almost entirely snow-filled right down to the valley floor, and the col was snow covered. Even though we all had ice axes and were by now confident on snow, it looked too serious a proposition so we decided to descend to Ginzling, take the coach to Mayrhofen, and then continue from Breitlahner the following day.

Times:	Kasseler Hütte	1-50	1-50	Distance:	11 km	Ascent:	1440 m
	Lapenscharte	4-00	5-50			Descent:	650 m
	Greizer Hütte	40	6-30 (10-30)				

It had remained a clear night and it was a very cold and frosty morning until the sun rose over the ridge to raise the temperature above freezing. So there was general reluctance to leave our warm sleeping bags and brave the sub-zero air.

Dennis left early to catch the postbus from Ginzling to Mayrhofen and return with the coach to collect us. We had a leisurely breakfast and set off at 10.30.

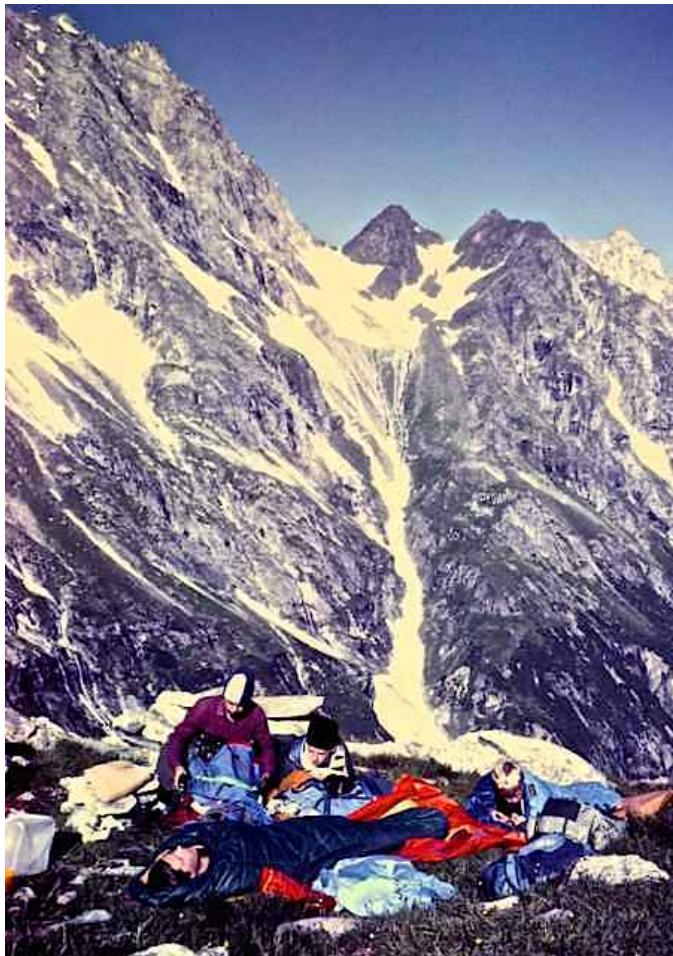
The staff 'dormitory' before the sun rose over the ridge ...



... and after the sun arrived, with a view up to Floitenkees

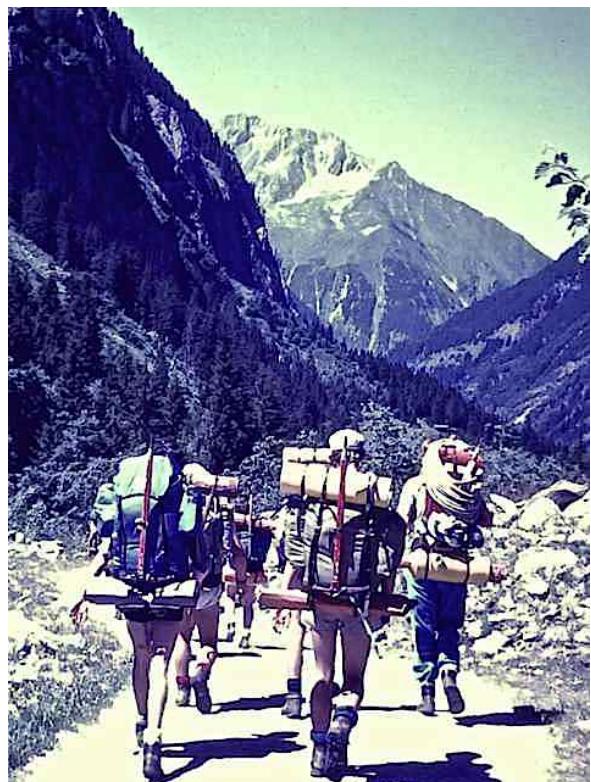
Second cup of tea brewing





View from 'camp' over the Greizer hut with Mörchenscharte above and the steep, snow-filled Mörchenklamm

Zig-zags below the hut lead down to an easy path then track down Floiten Grund. After 3 easy legs walking and an hour's lunch stop at the Steinbok hut we arrived at Ginzling at 2.30 where Dennis was waiting to whisk us down to Mayrhofen.



Lunch on the patio of the Steinbok hut

Time: Ginzling	2-40	(4-00)	Distance: 10 km	Ascent: --- m	Descent: 1250 m
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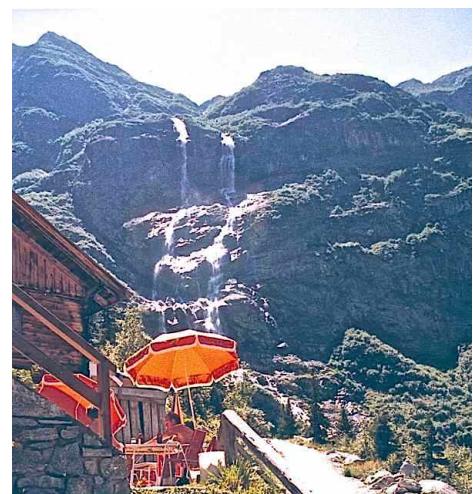
Thursday 25th July	Coach	Breitlahner	1260
	Trek	Berliner Hütte	2060
	Excursion	Am Horn	2647

We left the campsite at 9.15 and under clear blue skies set off walking from Breitlaner along the track up the beautiful, wooded Zemm Grund valley in 2 groups, with the intention that the advance group should set up camp early in preparation for the afternoon excursion to Am Horn.

The slow group set off at 10.45 and a leisurely two legs took us to the Grawand hut for lunch. After a further leg we had coffee at the Alpenrose hut and shortly afterwards arrived at the Berliner hut at 3.20.



Picking wild strawberries



The un-named waterfall above the Grawand hut



The rock peak of Steinmannle (2634) at the end of the long rocky ridge coming down from Turnerkamp



Leaving the Alpenrose hut with Berliner Spitz

The Berliner hut is huge and very impressive, and with wood panelling and chandeliers in the day room it gives more the impression of an Oxford college rather than a mountain hut. It's also in a spectacular location beneath the frontier peaks and glaciers.

The warden asked us to camp a little way from the hut and we found a good area about 250 m east of the hut and about 20 m higher, between the Am Horn path and the stream.

Camp can be seen at the bottom left with Steinmannle above and Turnerkamp and Großer Möseler on the skyline



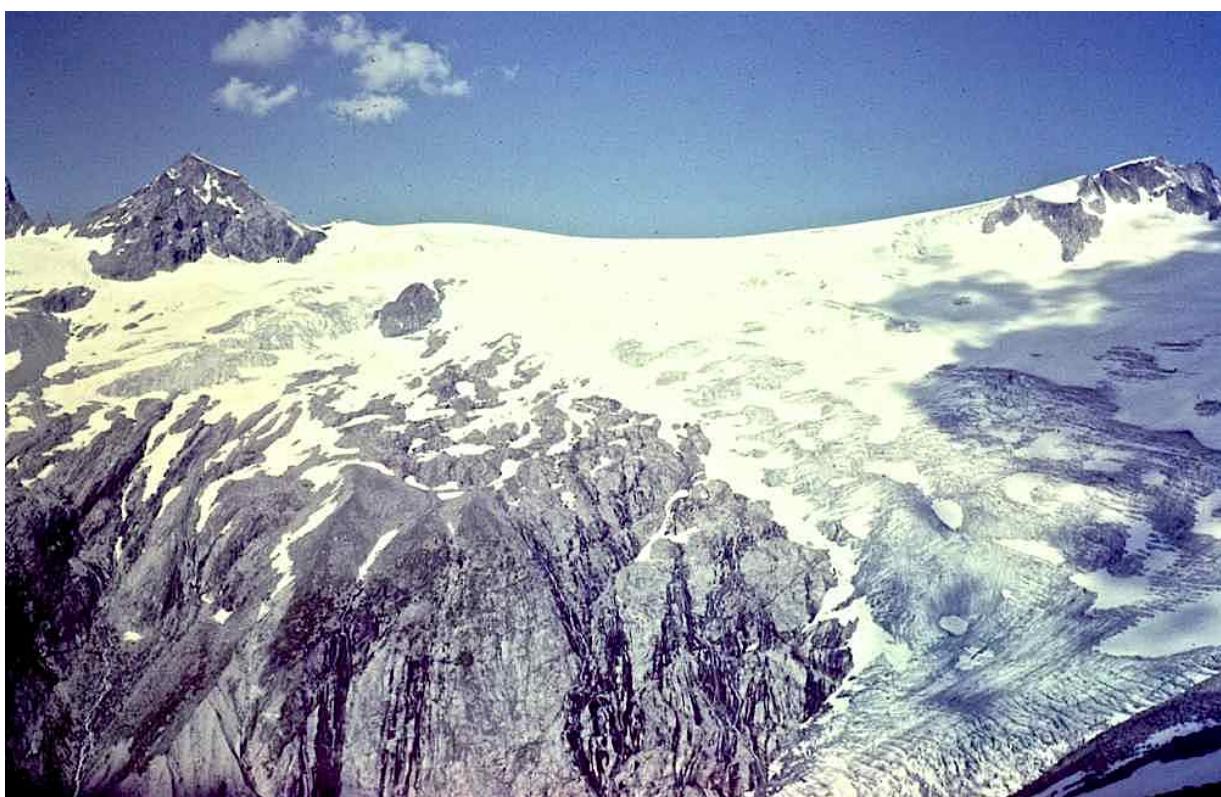
View from camp of the Berliner hut (bottom right) and Großer Möseler above the Waxegg glacier with the peak for two day's time, Schönebichler Horn, on the centre skyline

It was such a beautiful afternoon in such splendid surroundings that only 4 of the older and fitter lads opted to join the 5 staff for the excursion to Am Horn. The peak must be a popular excursion from the hut for there is a well-engineered and waymarked path up the steep, rocky nose of the ridge. Without the weight of full packs we set off at a cracking pace and made the 600 m ascent (on a good path all the way) in one leg and arrived dripping with sweat. It wasn't really a race, but if it had been the 6th formers would have won by a short head!

Though the summit is a mere pimple on the long north ridge of Berliner Spitz, it is at the very centre of a great arc of pinnacled ridges and glaciers sweeping through about 300° and the panorama is magnificent, though with the low sun views to the west were very hazy.

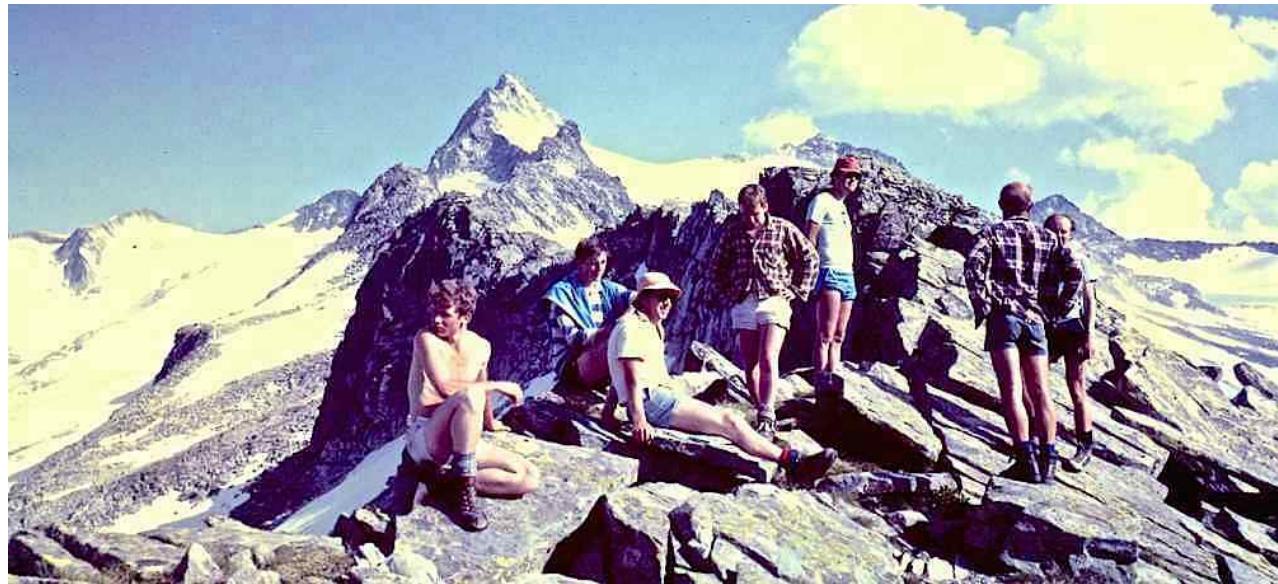


Ochhsner (3108) on the left and the granite rock tower of Zsigmondy Spitz (3087) on the right



View east with Großer Mörchner on the left and our peak for the following day, Schwarzenstein, on the right, separated by the Schwarzenstein glacier

Our route was to be from middle left in the image below the rock island then along the skyline to the summit



View up the serrated ridge to Berliner Spitz (3258)



Großer Mörchner on the left



Schwarzenstein (both images by Paul Atkins)



A self-take shot of the whole party: Ian Bancroft, Paul Atkins, John Willson, Martin Boulton, Bill Souster, Dennis Hughes along the back, Allan Witton, Gerry Leversha, George Franklin along the front

We galloped down to camp to arrive at 6.45, and after dinner had a very convivial evening in the hut.

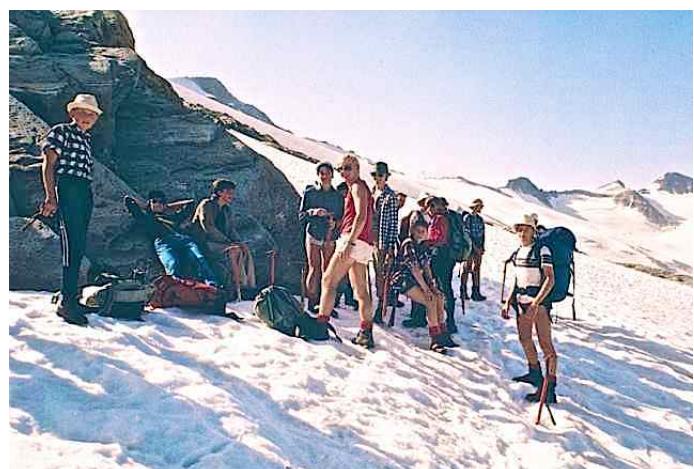
Times:	Berliner Hütte	2-20	2-20	Distance:	11 km	Ascent:	1390 m
	Am Horn	50	3-10			Descent:	610 m
	Berliner Hütte	30	3-40	(8-00)			

As it involves a significant glacier crossing, the ascent of Schwarzenstein was always going to be an ambitious undertaking for a party such as ours. In consultation with Gerry, I thought carefully before including it, but was encouraged to do so by the route description in Roberts which didn't suggest any great difficulties and grades it F. In the end I found it a brilliant and exciting ascent, though it was a little too exciting for some I suspect. 22 of the lads opted for the excursion while the remainder had a rest day around the hut. Leaving tents standing we set off at 7.10 under clear skies but in early morning shadow.



Schwarzenstein on the left and Berliner Spitz on the right

After two legs we had crossed the easy lower snow slopes and were just beneath the rock island (2942).



We then turned east and it was half an hour's hard toil kicking steps in the soft, steep snow up to the Schwarzensteinsattel where we had a leg-stop on the glacier. Fortunately there was a well-trodden trail in the snow, corresponding to the normal ascent route as shown on the map.

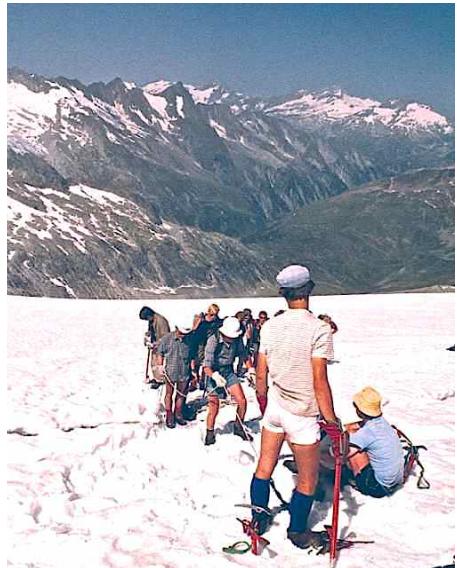


View back over Zemm Grund to the distant Olperer Group



Berliner Spitz across the Schwarzenstein glacier with Turnerkamp beyond

From there we spent some time carefully negotiating an area showing signs of crevasses before being able to proceed at a shallower gradient towards the frontier ridge.



The trail led us to the easiest point of access onto the ridge, about half way between the summit and point 3336. When we got there we found a deep, icy bergschrund which seemed might be too difficult to cross, but after half an hour cutting steps in the ice on the far side we made the crossing safe. Once on the ridge there's a gentle ascent on easy snow then an easy scramble over blocks to the summit where we arrived at noon.



The bergschrund, with the summit cross just visible on the far left



Waiting to cross the bergschrund

Easy snow along the ridge to the summit rocks



Photo by Steve Adams

It was still a glorious day and as befits a major summit the panorama was extensive.



View east along the ridge



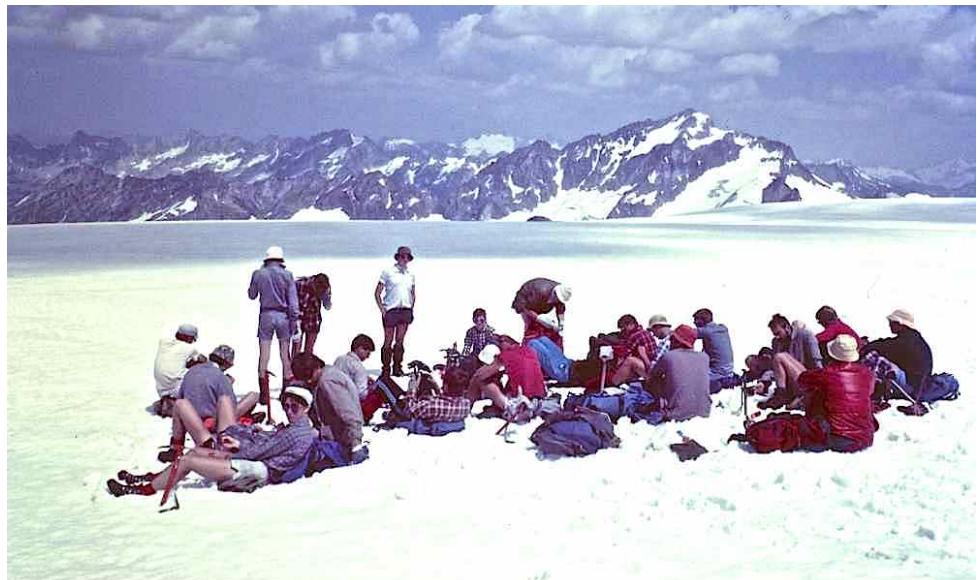
The smallest member of our party
(Steve Robinson, 1.5 m)
at our highest point 3368 m



View west along the ridge with Berliner Spitz, Turnerkamp, Großer Möseler, and distant Hochfeiler

We left the summit at 1.00, safely crossed the bergschrund and then had a short stop for lunch on Schwarzenstein-sattel.

Care was needed again in the area of crevasses and then we descended without a stop to arrive in camp at 4.30



Times: Schwarzenstein
Berliner Hütte

4-15 4-15
3-15 7-30 (9-40)

Distance: 14 km

Ascent: 1310 m
Descent: 1310 m

Saturday 27th July	Trek	Furtschaglhaus	2293
	via	Schönbichler Horn	3134

With an easier day in prospect we set off at 9.00 past the hut along the path which leads up to the crest of the old lateral moraine of the receded Waxeckkees. The path then leaves the moraine to zig-zag up onto the long east ridge of Schönbichler Horn.



Crossing the outflow stream of the Waxeck glacier



On the lateral moraine



Climbing up to the east ridge, with Schönbichler Horn the peak on the right



View back along the ridge, with Ochsner on the left and Kleine and Großer Mörchner on the right

The snow on parts of the ridge had a well-trodden trail and was soft enough not to cause any difficulties.



Schönbichler Horn is the peak on the right with the col to its left

The final ascent to Schönbichler Scharte is a straightforward rocky scramble aided by fixed cables, and we arrived at the col at 1.00. The col is narrow and rocky and unsuitable for a large party to have a lunch stop, so as people arrived those who wanted to made the short, easy, 50 m ascent to the summit of Schönbichler Horn and then we headed straight down the west side.



On the rocky and narrow Schönbichler Scharte



On the summit with rocky Furtschagl Spitz (3190) and Großer Möseler

The descent down rocky zig-zags then snow beds and moraine is easy and after a short leg we reached a stream with a stunning view of Großer Möseler flanked by the Furtschagl and Schlegeis glaciers.

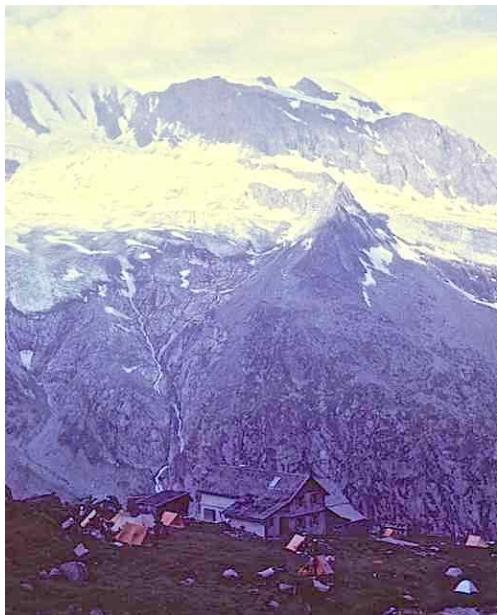


Descent from the col, with the summit cross just visible



Großer Möseler (3478) above the Furtschagl and Schlegeis glaciers

Another easy half leg brought us to the hut at 3.45. While we were taking refreshments in the hut a thunderstorm developed and it rained hard for a couple of hours; fortunately it cleared later which eased pitching tents on the rather uneven ground near the hut.



Hochfeiler, with tents pitched around the hut



Schönbichler Horn just left of the col and Furtschagl Spitz to the right

The initial plan for the following four days was:

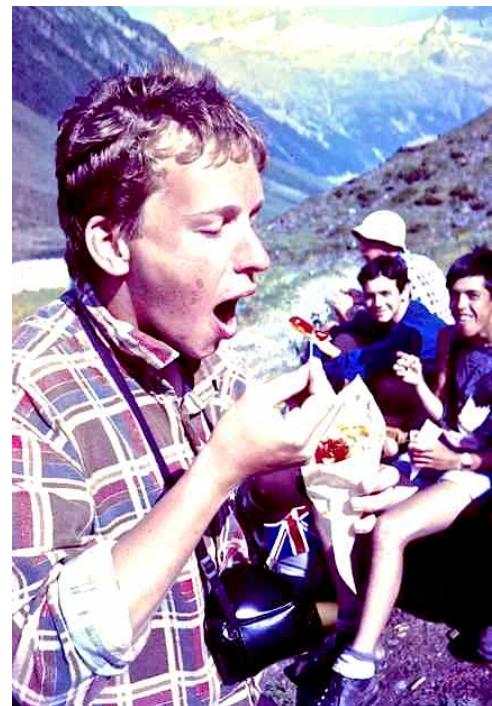
1. Easy trek to the Friesenberghaus
2. Morning excursion to Hoher Riffler (easy). Afternoon trek to Unterschrammacher (2279)
3. Trek over Alpeiner Scharte to Tuxer Joch Haus
4. Trek to Hintertux and transfer to Innsbruck.

We had been told that Alpeiner Scharte was covered in frozen snow and impassable for walkers (which is a frequent occurrence according to Roberts), so we adopted Plan B:

1. Trek round to camp below the Pfitscher Joch
2. Trek to the Friesenberghaus
3. Trek over Friesenbergscharte to Tuxer Joch Haus climbing Hoher Riffler as an excursion from the col
4. Trek to Hintertux and transfer to Innsbruck.

Times:	Schönbichler Horn Furtschaglhaus	3-15 1-15	3-15 4-30 (6-45)	Distance:	7 km	Ascent:	1170 m
						Descent:	920 m

It was a beautiful, warm day but with rather hazy distant views. It took just half an hour after leaving the hut at 9.00 to zig-zag down to the floor of the broad Schlegeis valley and to follow the track to the south-east tip of the reservoir. There, to the great delight of the lads, was a fast food van selling CHIPS! So a chip stop was called and it took half an hour for everyone to be served.

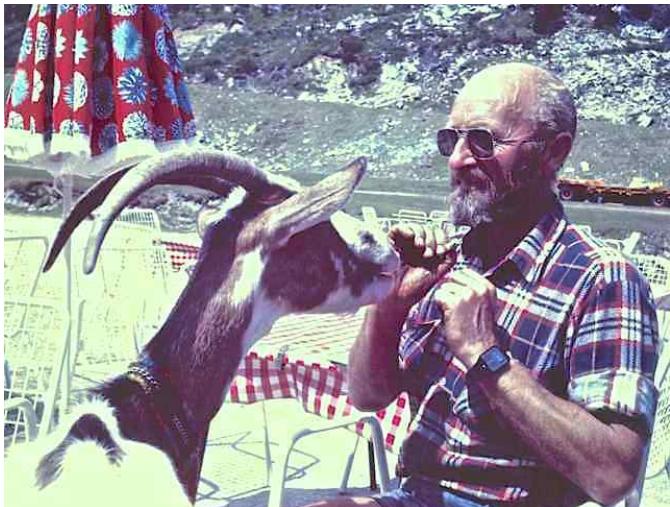


Descending into the Schlegeis valley, with the reservoir just visible

We continued along the track beside the reservoir heading for the Dominikus hut where we had arranged with Dennis to meet the coach to collect supplies. We turned a corner and were pleased to see that Dennis had managed to get the coach beyond the Dominikus hut and up to the car park at Zamsgatterl, saving us a 3 km return walk. There is also a cafe there and we had a 2 hour stop for coffees, ice creams and a food distribution for the following 3 days.

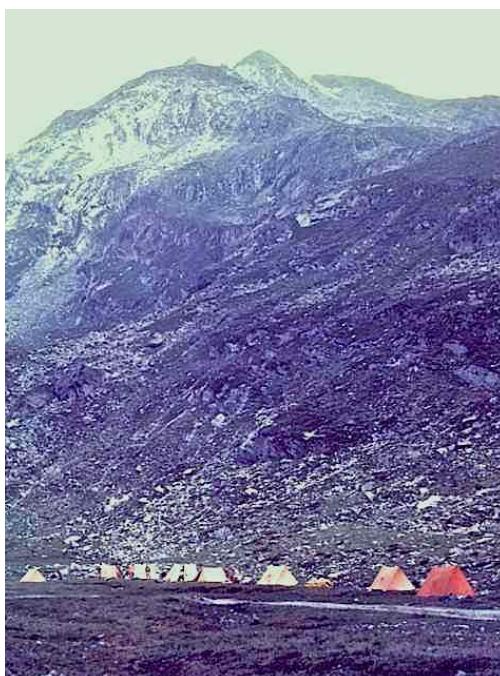


The large new car park at Zamsgatterl



That looks like a nice piece of Ryvita and jam!

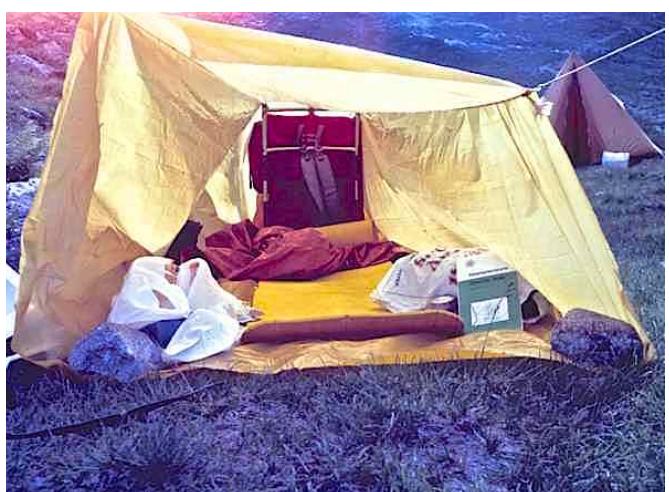
We then followed the path rising gently alongside Zamser Bach for a leg before lunch, after which a further half hour brought us to ideal camping at the head of Lofitzalpe just below Pfitscher Joch, where we arrived at 3.00.



Dr Dobson's latest foot clinic

It had been a pleasant and leisurely walk on a warm and sunny day and there was plenty of time and energy left for a game of ice axe cricket before dinner.

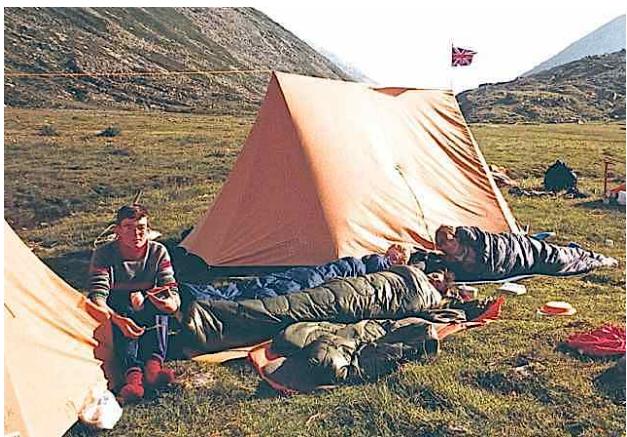
During the evening a small party made the short excursion over the col to the Pfitscher Joch Haus on the Italian side of the frontier.



Dennis' Mark 5 super-lightweight mountain tent
(a big orange plastic bag!)

Times:	Zamsgatterl Pfitscher Joch	1-30 1-10	1-30 2-40 (6-00)	Distance:	13 km	Ascent:	500 m
						Descent:	700 m

We struck camp at 9.00 for the short walk to the col to meet up with Gerry and Dennis who had popped over to the Pfitscher Joch Haus for an Italian coffee.



Not Ryvita and jam again!



At Pfitscher Joch with the hut beyond

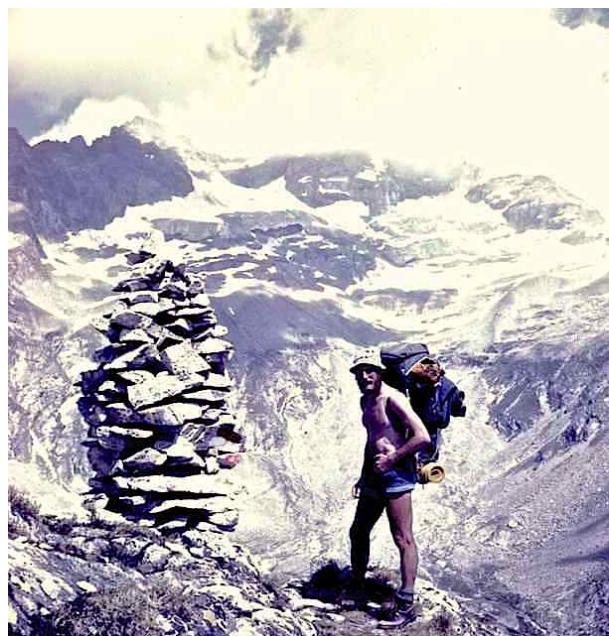
From the col a good path follows a superb balcony route round the eastern flanks of Schrammacher and Olperer.



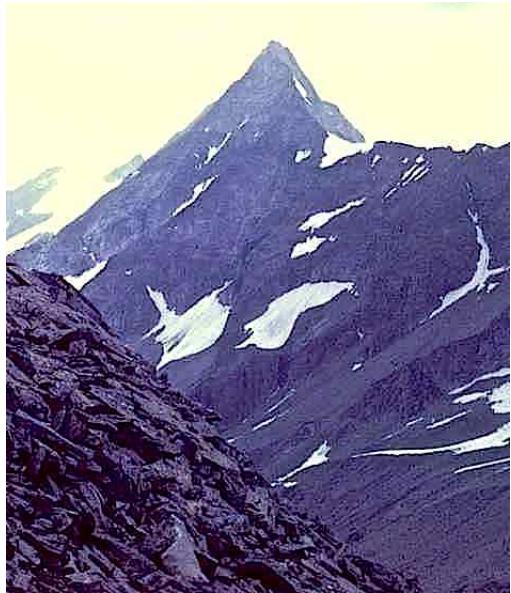
The 8 km balcony route follows a line just below the main snowfields, with Schrammacher (3364) in cloud



The Schlegeis reservoir just in view



Probably Olperer (3476) in cloud



The pyramid peak of Scrammacher (3364)

After rounding the eastern spur of Schrammacher we had a good view down to our previously planned campsite by 2 small tarns in Unterschrammackar (2279) and it looked an ideal spot. On the path we met two walkers who had come over Alpeiner Scharte and they confirmed that the western side was icy and very tricky in ascent and would have been really difficult in descent.



A Trek favourite - Glenrick pilchards for lunch

After 4 legs of really enjoyable high level walking we descended to the Olpererhütte with its hazy view over the Schlegeis reservoir to Hochfeiler and Großer Mösele.



The end of the balcony route and the start of the descent to the Olperer hut, with the Schlegeis reservoir below

Two more easy legs mostly contouring followed by a steep zig-zag descent brought us to the Friesenberg hut.



Just before the steep descent to the Friesenberg hut, with Hohe Riffler (3228)

As part of planning the route I sent letters to the wardens of all the huts we might pass to enquire about camping in the vicinity. All but two sent a friendly response indicating their approval. We were told we were not welcome at the Garaer Hütte, and from the Friesenberghaus we got no reply.

When we arrived at the Friesenberghaus we received a cool reception and were asked to camp some distance away. Fortunately, there is good camping by the stream about 100 m south-west of the hut.



View from camp to Hochfeiler (3509)

Times:	Pfitscher Joch	20	20	Distance:	14 km	Ascent:	1120 m
	Olpererhütte	3-50	4-10			Descent:	730 m
	Friesenberghaus	1-30	5-40	(8-30)			

Tuesday 30th July**Trek
Coach****Dominikushütte
Innsbruck****1805**

The morning brought really foul weather. It was cold, windy and raining hard, with the cloudbase down to about 2700 m when we got up, and while we were having breakfast it lowered and we were in pea soup cloud. We suspected it would be snowing at altitude, conditions which ruled out the ascent of Hoher Riffler and even the crossing of Friesenbergscharte. So the revised plan B was further revised to plan C - to walk down to the Dominikus hut and retreat to Innsbruck!



Cold with driving rain when we got up ...



... Pea soup cloud an hour later

Dennis left first at 9.30 to go and retrieve the coach from Zamsgatterl and bring it back to the Dominikus hut. We set off an hour later, wearing full waterproofs for the only time on this Trek, to splash our way down the path to the hut without a stop.



Approaching the Dominikus hut at the near end of the Schlegeis Reservoir dam

We loaded the coach and drove down to Mayrhofen to collect David Williams and arrived at the large Städt Campingplatz in Innsbruck at 3.00, where there was room for our large bedraggled party to spread out their tents. The afternoon was cloudy and very dull but the rain held off so we could start drip-drying our soggy kit.

Time: Dominikushütte

1-20 (1-20)

Distance: 4 km**Ascent:** --- m**Descent:** 670 m

The weather remained overcast with occasional sunny intervals, and the rain held off for the considerable amount of sorting out, drying off and repacking that needed doing for the journey home.



No need for an early rise today

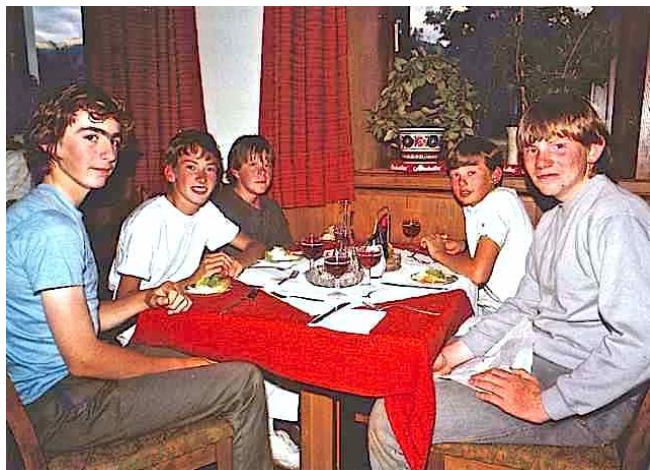


Real food for breakfast, fresh bread and milk and food out of tins rather than powders from packets



A sunny interval in Innsbruck

It was quite a long walk into town where most lads spent the afternoon. After sprucing ourselves up in the evening (including a collar and tie for one individual) Dennis drove us back for a very enjoyable Trek Dinner.



Martin Broadhurst, Mark Farrar, Matthew Maitland, Steve Robinson, Luke Blackburn



Paul Elbourne, Philip Cocker, James Cornish, Adrian Bever, Nick Gee



Stuart Ingram, Mike Billingham, Pherose Jeejeebhoy,
James Fergusson, Richard Spencer



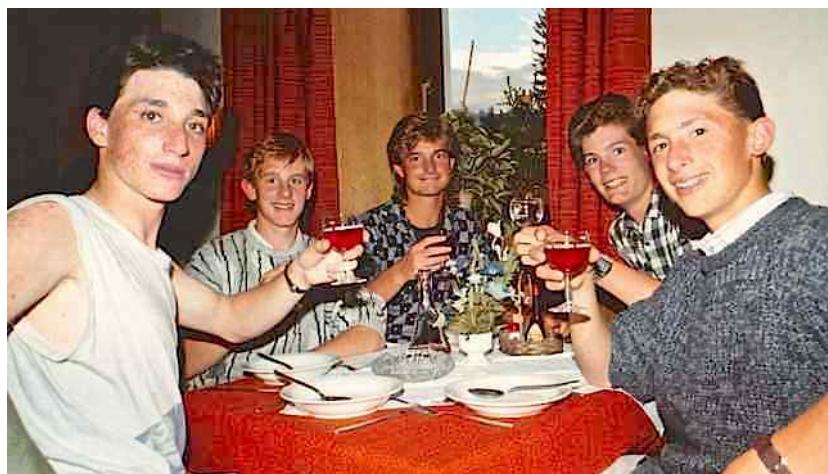
Greg White, Andrew Garston, David Walton,
Philip Davies, Adam Davies



Martin Boulton, George Franklin, Howard Foxall
David Harrison, David Williams, Nigel Clowes



Steve Secker, Adrian Grundy, Paul Atkins
Paul Seidman, Ian Bancroft, Martin Freeman



Alan Jackson, Stuart Lawless, Jason Price, Alex Ball, Chris Sharp

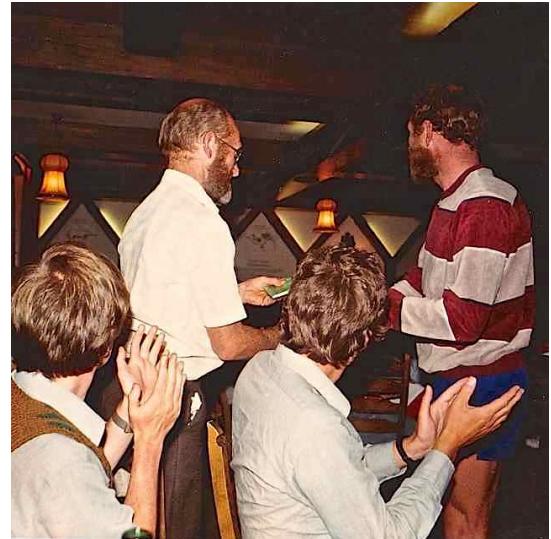


Alan John, Steve, Gerry, Dennis, Adrian, Bill

It was a most convivial evening, concluding with the awards for notable achievements.



The Karrimor Award for best packed rucksack to Philip Cocker (a piece of string)



Coach Driver of the year Award to Dennis



The Boddington Award to Alex Ball (a can of Coke)



The Wooden Spoon Cooking Award (wooden spoons) and also the Most Promising Newcomers Award to Tent 10



The Real Haute Cuisine Award to Tent 1 (a bag of local sausages and cheese)



Not sure what this award was for, was it from the boys to the staff?

Other Awards not captured on camera.

Trafford MBC Award Ian Bancroft

Refuse Disposal
(Scraping out and eating
the leftovers in all billies)

Packet of Whirl

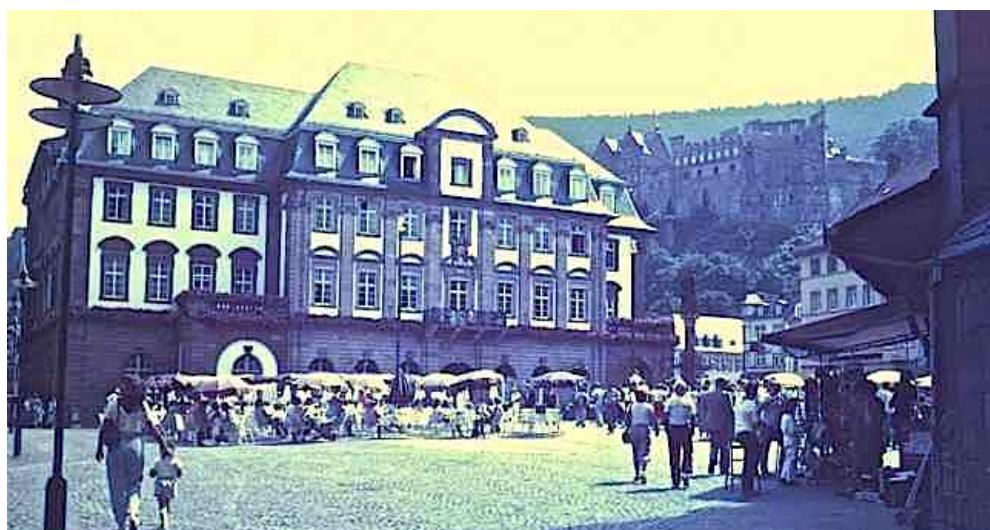
British Rail Award
Elastoplast Award

Philip Cocker
Stuart Lawless

Prompt get-aways
Greatest use of Dr Dobson's surgery

Bus ticket
Packet of Elastoplast

We still had a day in hand due to the bad weather and re-arranged schedule at the end, so we decided to break our journey home with a 2-day camp at Ostringen and a free day in Heidelberg, which proved an interesting town to look round for the day.



SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

The Area

The Zillertal Alps are an ideal area for a trek based on hut-to-hut routes. The area is 'concave', with most of the valleys falling from the Italian frontier leading down to Mayrhofen, and with a hut just below the snowline at the head of each valley, linked to the hut in the next valley by a walkers' route. The exception is the Reichen Spitz Group which is set north of the Italian frontier and with no high-level connecting path to the Kasseler hut, which necessitates a long descent to Mayrhofen.

The Route

The proposed route was rather too ambitious, especially in the first few days, and needed some modifications, and we made a significant change at the end due to bad weather. The total distance walked and height climbed were similar to those of recent alpine Treks

The scenery throughout the route is stunning with ridges of sharp 3000 m peaks fringed by glaciers, and generally good paths snaking amongst it all. Of the cols we crossed, only Pfitscher Joch could be described as easy. Roßkar Scharte was straightforward, but Gamsscharte, Lappenscharte and Schönbichler Scharte were all a bit of a challenge and Mörchenscharte was just too difficult.

Because of the very disappointing quality of most of the scanned images, I have included a section at the end with a few scenery shots taken with a digital camera when the Old Trekkers were in the Zillertal in 2007.

The Party

Although the party had a wide range of walking capabilities, from strong and fit sixth formers to relatively inexperienced 3rd formers, they all coped admirably, even on the tougher days. We were particularly impressed with the 3rd formers who coped really well with the big ascents. Strong friendships were developed between some of the oldest and the youngest trekkers, and the party spirit was excellent throughout.

Catering

We used the usual catering arrangements of pre-packing dried foods for mountain meals and using tinned food while at valley campsites with the coach. This meant that food distributions from the coach were simple and straightforward.

Camping

The Mayrhofen campsite had good facilities and plenty of room to cope with our changes of itinerary. I sent letters to the wardens of all the huts requesting permission to camp nearby, and received affirmative replies from all but the Garaer hut, whose reply was quite hostile. It was for this reason I changed the end of the route to go via the Furtschaglehouse and over Friesenbergsscharte rather than the Alpeinerscharte. In the end, due to bad weather, we crossed neither.

Weather

Apart from the torrential rain which curtailed the last 2 days of the route we were very lucky with the weather with clear skies for most of the way, though distant views were often hazy.

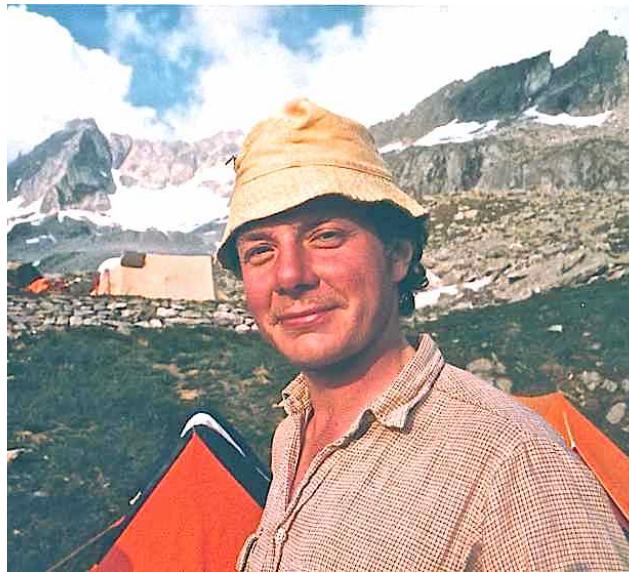
Travel

A Hughes 52 seat coach with surplus seats removed to stack rucksacks inside. The advantages of coach travel include cheap travel (£76 per boy return this year), almost unlimited 'free' staff places and the huge benefit of having pre-bagged 'mountain rations' and tinned foods available at the opening of a side locker. It was also useful for the local shuttle runs. The disadvantage is the journey time. It was partly for financial reasons that we recruited some younger boys with proven mountain walking experience to fill the coach, and with a party of 37, the finances were sound.

Overall it was a challenging, successful and very enjoyable Trek through spectacular mountain scenery.

My sincere thanks go to Gerry, Bill, Adrian, John and Steve for their help and support both in planning the Trek and on Trek itself, and for their very good company, and to Dennis for his many hours of driving and unfailing cooperation throughout, particularly the un-planned 'shuttle-runs'. Special thanks to Gerry, for his experience on the Gamsscharte crossing and the Schwarzenstein ascent.

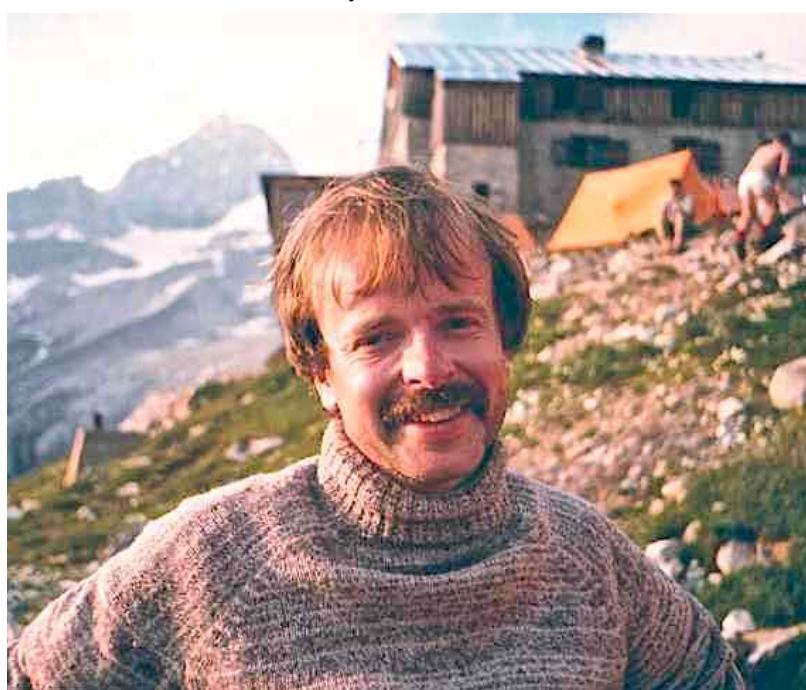
Allan Witton



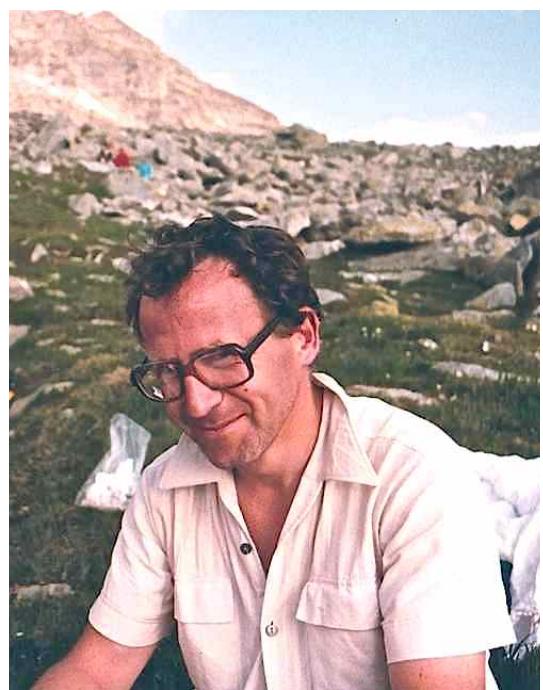
Gerry



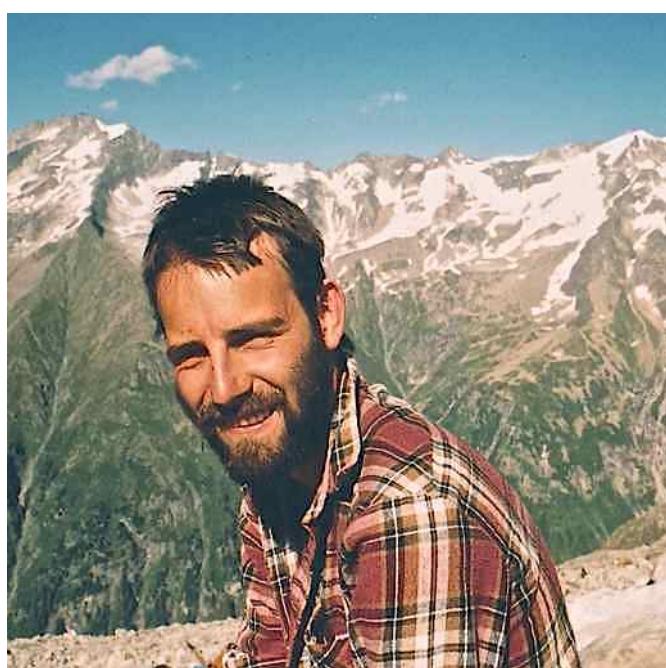
Bill



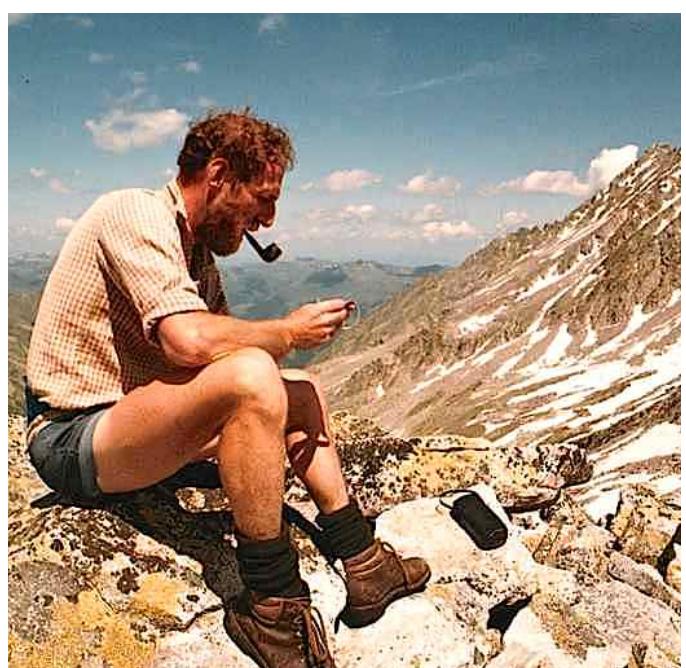
Adrian



John



Steve



Allan

ARTICLE FOR THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE ULULA by John Willson

Ferries, forms and food and finance, Allan Witton planned it all;
Forty three assorted bodies set off to Trek in Zillertal.
Some were fit and hale and hearty, long of limb and broad of back,
Others tiny, tired or timid, one no bigger than his pack.

At Gerlos Pass the coach disgorged us, then we walked for thirteen days
Via Mayrhofen to Dominikus, wandering through this mountain maze.
Gradually the route unfolded - one hundred miles of tracks and trails,
Thirty thousand feet of climbing - our homes upon our backs like snails.

The lower slopes were clothed with flowers, alpen rose and gentian blue;
A hanging tapestry of petals embroidered in each rainbow hue.
Through this scene the thread of trekkers wove its way up zig-zag tracks;
Nature's subtly patterned fabric interlaced with gaudy packs.

Clanging cowbells, clicking crickets filled the valley floor with sound,
But just the muted roar of water broke the calm on higher ground.
There beyond the mirror lake we camped beside a sparkling stream;
A pause for resting and reflection, a time to think, perchance to dream.

The nearby hut provided comforts, a convivial end to a splendid day;
A chance for schnitzel or apfelstrudel, schwässer or a jagatee.
The 'Hilton' was the Berliner Hütte with its massive pillared dining hall;
Chandeliers hung from the ceiling, portraits on the panelled wall.

On cloudless nights we bivvied out and lay beneath a sequined sky;
Across the spangled sea of stars we watched the satellites float by.
We woke refreshed, the sun beamed down, still not a cloud to bring us rain,
The bags were packed, the site was cleared, the crocodile set off again.

From hut to pass and col to ridge we climbed towards the empty space;
Onwards upwards slowly rising, moving at an easy pace.
Occasionally a problem surfaced - a broad crevasse or sheer ice sheet,
The worst a snow and scree filled gully - four hours to drop four hundred feet!

Three times we reached three thousand meters - that magic metric-munro line,
On Richterspitze, Schonbichlerhorn and the dazzling Schwarzenstein.
Here the burning snowfield scorched us as we scaled the bergschrund wall
And though this was a great achievement, the brilliant sun outshone us all.

Then the final poignant footsteps took us to the summit cross,
Erected there by kindred spirits in memory of a tragic loss.
Nothing else now stood above us - surrounded by just rock and snow
We gazed at distant ice-capped mountains and shimmering lakes a mile below.

Exhilaration! Satisfaction! We'd each achieved a personal goal;
For some the highest point of life, for others one more alpine stroll.
And so we came, we saw, we conquered - these memories we will long recall;
This was truly re-creation - we had lived in Zillertal!



ZILLERTAL by Steve Adams

Follow the ragged diagonals
zig-zagging upward and on;
into the minimal wilderness
foot follows footfall along.

Witness the delicate etiquette
carving the violent stone
the jagged haphazard horizon
the plane of impermanent snow.

In vastnesses larger than vision
from valley to pinnacled ridge
suffer vertical incomprehension
on unpredictable cliffs.

Capture that terrible photograph
dreaming the infinite pause
surrender to nature's oblivion -
thought that makes sense of it all

Scramble beyond the adventure
ascending at last to the peak
tremble a moment in silence
reverent despite disbelief.

Here in the spectral pavilion
glance at the weakening sun
aware of the spirit's dominion
the multiple worlds that are one.

Who from this island of quietness
can fail to look back on a day
cast like a die into darkness
absurd to the singular gaze.

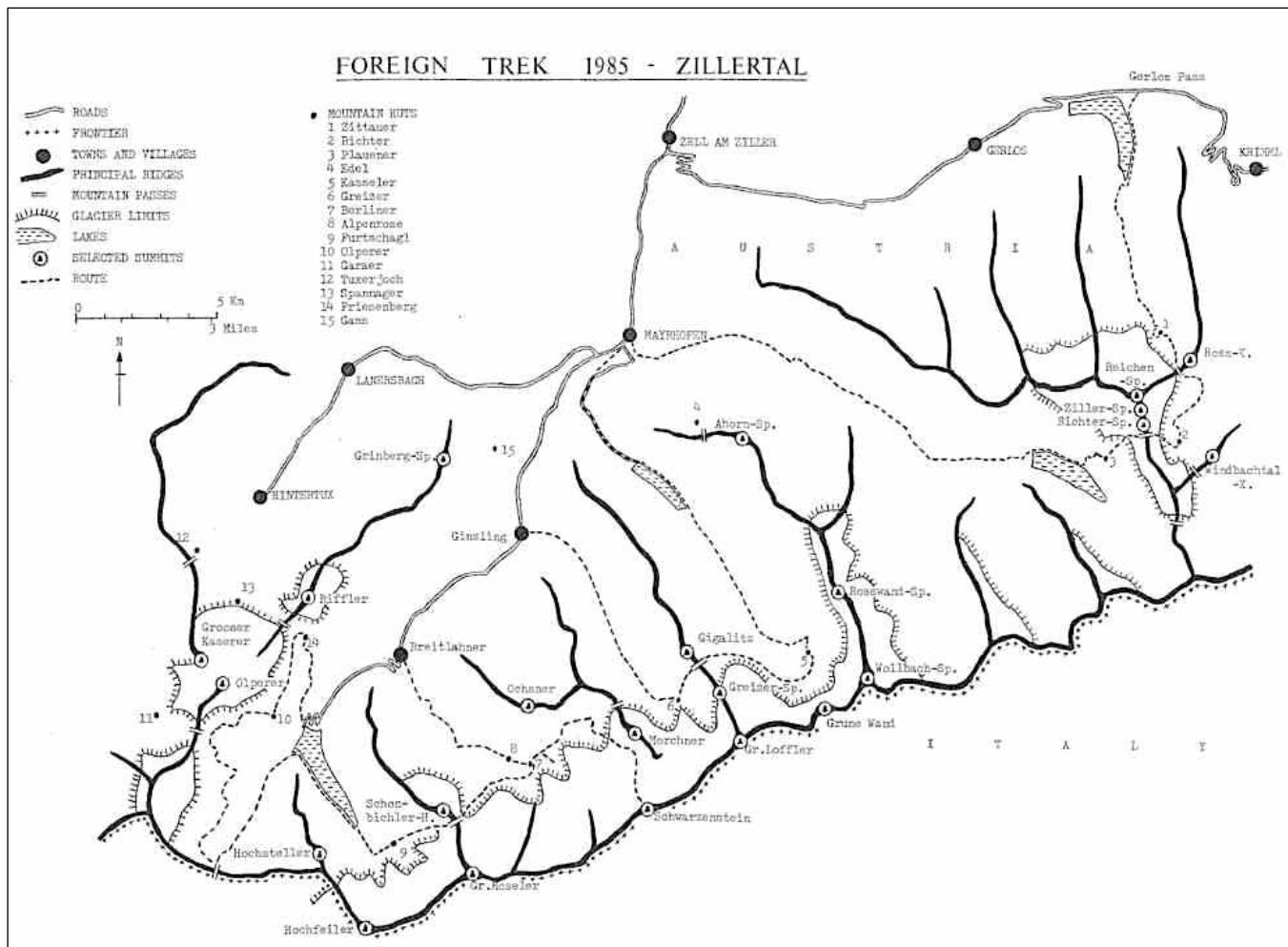
Recline into soft horizontals
alone in the looking-glass night
perspectives that alter perception
deny the one transient life.

Slowly the pattern of changes
dissolves into fragments and fades
earth and air become empty
empires of uniform grey.

Now question the ragged diagonals
criss-crossing lines of ice
can beauty so pure and irrational
be fashioned by casting dice?

SCAN OF THE ORIGINAL SKETCH MAP

This is a scan of the original pen-and ink sketch map provided for the boys. The original was printed in landscape format, double the size shown here. This is the amended version showing the actual route walked rather than the provisional planned route.



2024 Note

As part of the Trekking Centenary celebrations in 2004 a printed Centenary Brochure was produced which gives a comprehensive account of the first 100 year history of Trekking at MGS. In addition to the main historical narrative written by Adrian Dobson, it has numerous sections including one on the ascent of summits from the earliest days as recorded in Ulula, accounts and appendices concerning various aspects of trekking and various lists of treks.

In 2015 a digital version of the Trekking Centenary Brochure was produced in order to make it more widely available.

In December 2004, after the Centenary Reunion, High Master Dr Ray announced that '*Those of you with internet access might like to know that we are introducing a Trek Archive section on the School website*'.

In 2021 I created my own website, wittomgstreks.com, to give access to all the MGS Trekking archive material I have accumulated, including the Trekking Centenary Brochure and all the illustrated Foreign Trek Logs I have completed so far. I have still to process the images for some of the Foreign Treks I went on.

In 2023 an MGS Trekking archive website **was** created ([MGS Life > Co-Curricular > Treks](#)), and monthly over a period of about two years all my Trek Archive material will be transferred there. The uploads are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2025.

ORGANISATION

Travel

Dennis Hughes' 52 seat coach with spare seats removed to stack rucksacks inside.

Sally line: Ramsgate to Dunkerque was the best value channel crossing this year.

Although it's a longer crossing and the landing is further north, we just managed to get to Gerlos Pass on day 3.

Having the coach with us was very useful for shuttle runs up and down the valley and down to Schwaz.

Recruiting

Plans for the Trek were announced at Trek Reunion in the November, followed by a display of slides, maps and photographs in the Exhibition area until the end of term. Recruiting was slow, so we invited six 3rd formers whose mountaineering capabilities had been proven at Borrowdale camp to join us. They were very keen and had a very successful Trek.

Training

All boys were given comprehensive advice sheets in safety, campcraft and cooking, together with a copy of the excellent BMC booklet Safety on Mountains, together with a copy of the Provisional Itinerary and a sketch map of our proposed route. This was to encourage them to take an interest in the route we were walking and to be able to identify features and mountains.

On the Training walks rucksacks with full personal equipment were carried so we could check boys' kit.

The Practice camp involved all kit apart from snow gear. All boys performed well.

Training Walk 1

36 boys

L A Witton, A P Dobson

W H Souster, J S Willson

S F Adams

Saturday 20th April

Meet: Piccadilly > Train to Edale station

Route: Edale - Upper Booth - Edale Cross - Kinder Downfall - Ashop Head -

Doctor's Gate - Glossop (About 12 miles)

Training Walk 2

9 boys

L A Witton, A P Dobson

Sunday 12th May

Meet: School > Minibus to Hayfield

Route: Hayfield - William Clough - Kinder Downfall - Edale Cross - Brown Knoll -

Mount Famine - Hayfield (About 10 miles)

Practice Camp

34 boys

Saturday 6th June -Sunday 7th July

Travel by rail: 6th Victoria to Windermere Meet in the station at 9.30 am

7th Staveley to Victoria Returning at 7.16 pm

Route: 6th Windermere - Dubbs reservoir - Garburn pass - Ill Bell - Froswick -

High Street - Small Water (11 miles)

7th Small Water - Kentmere Pike - Cocklaw Fell - Over Staveley - Staveley (9 miles)

One boy failed to get off the train at Oxenhope to change for Windermere, and I had to wait there for him to return from Carlisle. The two of us then continued to Windermere and then caught up the main party (who had had a stop in Windermere) after about 2 hours walking.

Equipment

Tents

Vango Force 10: Seven Mark 5 (4-man) and three Mark 4 (3-man) for the boys, two Mark 5 for the staff.

Stoves, Billies and Water Carriers

Per Tent Group: 2 Camping Gaz S200 stoves, one set of 3 nesting aluminium billies and a polythene water carrier. Spare gaz cartridges were available as needed from the coach.

Ropes, Ice-axes and Crampons

We carried ice-axes and crampons for all and just 2 ropes for the whole of the trekking route. All the snow we crossed was sufficiently soft not to require the use of crampons. The ice axes were really useful on several occasions crossing hard-packed snow

Kit list

Essentially the same as last year. There is a copy in the file.

Discount

Discount of 10% for boys was arranged with Estcourts (15% on the two Open evenings). The major Trek purchases (see the accounts note for details) were from Cotswold Camping, whose discount prices were lower.

Food

The established practice of buying food in catering packs from Cash and Carry outlets and pre-packing the dried mountain food has been honed to perfection. Small bags of individual ingredients per tent group were bagged into whole meals labelled with the date, and these packed into date-labelled boxes, along with any tinned foods required for that distribution, and loaded into the coach in reverse chronological order. It's labour-intensive, but well worth it for the convenience of food distributions on Trek. Fresh bread and milk were bought when camped in the valleys.

First aid

Organised by Adrian. We carried two comprehensive kits between the staff in case we decided to split the party. Apart from David Williams' badly sprained ankle and his sojourn in Mayrhofen, there were just the usual minor blisters to be treated.

Insurance

The usual Commercial Union School Journey policy with the special endorsement about trekking, originally negotiated in 1975. There were no claims.



View over Rainbachtal to the rocky Zillerplatten Spitz - Richter Spitz ridge



Camped by the Richter hut beneath the ridge

ACCOUNTS

Comparison is with the previous coach trek in 1983.

EXPENDITURE	See Note	1983		1985	
		Cost/head (38)		Cost/head (37)	
Coach		£2,500.00	£65.79	£2,800.00	£75.68
Ferry		£900.00	£23.68	£539.50	£14.58
Other travel	[1]	£329.04	£8.66	£392.00	£10.59
Food	[2]	£1,514.86	£39.86	£1,759.94	£47.57
Equipment	[3]	£520.61	£13.70	£536.36	£14.50
Camping	[4]	£220.30	£5.80	£570.05	£15.41
Insurance		£127.62	£3.36	£157.00	£4.24
Maps	[5]	£13.77	£0.36	£58.52	£1.58
Guides	[6]	£38.08	£1.00	£30.30	£0.82
Postage, phone etc.		£47.61	£1.25	£45.58	£1.23
Gaz		£112.96	£2.97	£104.83	£2.83
Photographic	[7]	£22.47	£0.59	£73.94	£2.00
First aid		£12.00	£0.32	£6.52	£0.18
Currency/bank charges		£42.56	£1.12	£30.10	£0.81
Prizes		£45.15	£1.19	£42.60	£1.15
Subscriptions	[8]	£0.00	£0.00	£31.00	£0.84
		£6,447.03	£169.66	£7,178.24	£194.01

For Notes see the following page

TOTAL EXPENDITURE **£7,178.24**

INCOME

Charges	36 @ £185 1@ £100	£6,660.00 £100.00	<u>£6,760.00</u>
Other	Deposit Account Interest NSB Interest Tent hire Equipment hire Sale of 4 old tents to JGB	£32.07 £380.89 £27.00 £49.00 £120.00	<u>£608.96</u>
			TOTAL INCOME £7,368.96

PROFIT FOR 1985 **£190.72**

BALANCE at 8/1/85	Current Account Deposit Account NSB	£80.27 £53.90 £1,189.43	<u>£1,323.60</u>
	PROFIT for 1985		<u>£190.72</u>

NET BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD

£1,514.32

BALANCE at 6/1/86	Current Account Deposit Account NSB	£107.28 £161.72 £1,245.32
NET BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD		£1,514.32

NOTES

[1] OTHER TRAVEL

Practice walks	£85.63
Practice camp	£175.10
Taxi to school	£11.00
Fares in Austria	£27.07
Petrol	£43.20
Dennis' tip	£50.00
	£392.00

[2] FOOD

In Manchester	£1,417.01
On Trek	£61.33
Allowances	£56.85
Trek meal	£207.32
Reunion refreshments	£17.43
	£1,759.94

[3] EQUIPMENT

Mark 5 flysheet	£54.40
12 Pairs of crampons	£52.80
4 Ice axes	£63.84
Ice axe hire	£9.00
Other spares	£166.14
Hire gear: 4 sleeping bags	£70.24
10 sheet liners	£72.34
7 Karrimats	£47.60
	£536.36

[4] CAMPING

Laichingen	£36.18	Per night
Mayrhofen (3)	£187.72	£36.18
Innsbruck (2)	£179.64	£62.57
Ostringen (2)	£103.36	£89.82
Dunkirque	£35.89	£51.68
	£542.79	£35.89
Average: per night		
per person per night		
Grunwand	£10.72	£60.31
Hut donations	£16.54	£1.63
	£570.05	

[5] MAPS

Austria	£17.90
Vanoise	£40.62
	£58.52

[6] GUIDES

Roberts (Zillertal)	£5.25
Escrift (Iceland)	£5.50
Collins (Walking GR 5)	£5.90
Collomb (Grians West)	£6.15
Green Hut Book	£7.50
	£30.30

[7] PHOTOGRAPHIC

Cine film and splicer	£57.54
Other slides and prints	£16.40
	£73.94

[8] SUBSCRIPTIONS

AAC	£13.00
YET	£15.00
Iceland Unit	£3.00
	£31.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Weighted mean : £1 = 28.0 Sch = 3.87 DM = 11.98 FF

NOMINAL RUNNING COST

This figure reflects the running cost for this year's Trek, allowing for any unusual expenditure items.

Equipment	Annual allowance @ £12 per head	£444.00
	Less actual equipment expenditure	-£536.00
Maps and guides for 1986		-£92.00
1985 surplus food		-£55.00
		-£100.00
		-£247.00

Hence nominal running cost is £6931 i.e. £187 per head

Allan Witton January 1986

DIGITAL IMAGES OF THE ZILLERTAL ALPS

In July 2007 the Old Trekkers did a short hut-to-hut route in the Zillertal Alps covering some of the same ground as the 1985 Foreign Trek. Because 2007 digital photography produced images far superior to the 1985 scanned slides I have include a few selected images (mostly scenery shots) where we walked the same route. The full illustrated log of the 2007 OTT can be found at wittontreks.com.

The original plan was to stay at the following huts Edel > Kasseler > Greizer > Berliner > Furthshagle > Freisenberg. Heavy snow disrupted the first few days, then glorious weather at the end gave us probably the most spectacular 5 days trekking in all the 14 Old Trekkers Treks we have done.



The whole party at Schwarzen See, above the Berliner Hut, with Turnerkamp (3420) and Großer Mösele (3480)
Nigel Burin, John Willson, Judith Willson, Lesley Witton, Allan Witton, Tim Pattison

The Edel hut is where our Trek began, with a short walk up to the hut from the top station of the Ahornbahn cable car. A foot of snow fell during the night, causing a drastic change in plans, and the omission of the Aschaffenburger Hohensteig high level route to the Kasseler hut and then over Lappenscharte to the Greizer hut.



Ready to try to find the path back down to the top station of the cable car

Ascent from Ginzling to the Greizer hut

The trek proper started with the walk from Ginzling up Floiten Grund to the Greizer hut, from where the plan to cross Mörchenscharte to the Berliner hut was frustrated as in 1985 by the excess of snow. So the following day we returned to Ginzling, took the bus up to Breitlahner and walked up to the Berliner hut from there.



View up Floiten Grund



Snow-covered Mörchenscharte

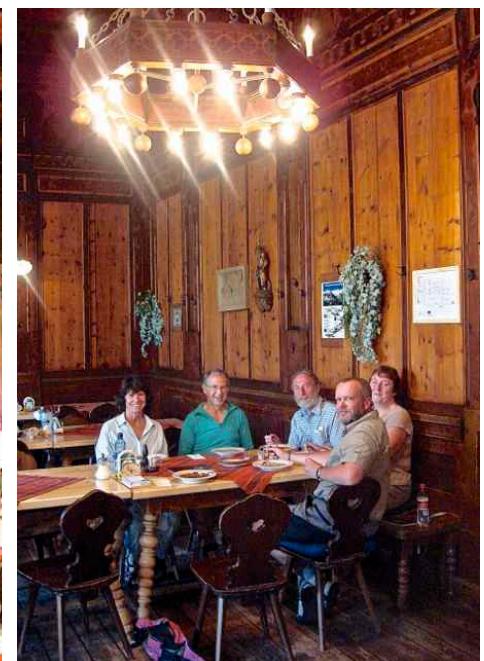
Ascent from Breitlahner to the Berliner hut



Leg stop outside the Alpenrose hut on the way up to the Berliner hut



The Berliner hut with Großer Mösele, the Waxegg glacier
and at the top right Schönbichler Horn



The panelled dining room

Excursion from the Berliner hut to Schwarzen See

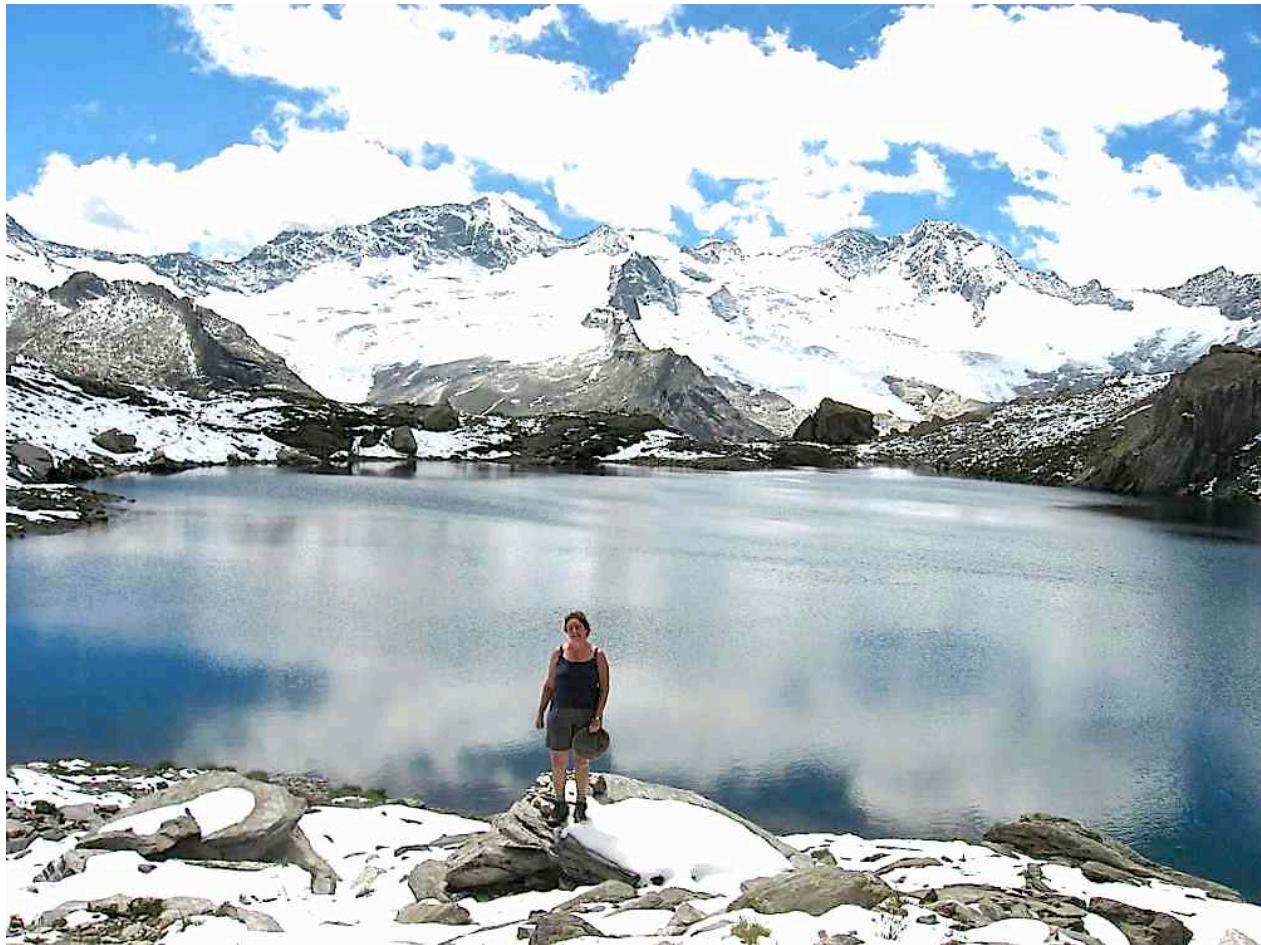
With some of us having turned 60, we thought Schwarzenstein was too challenging an excursion, but our substitute, Schwarzen See, was well worthwhile with splendid views



First leg stop with Kleine Mörchner (3198) and Großer Mörchner (3285) above left,
and Schwarzenstein (3369) rising out of the Schwarzenstein glacier
Trek climbed Schwarzenstein from this point in 1985



Our objective for the day, on the shore of Schwarzen See, with a view to Großer Mösele
The following day's summit, Schönbichler Horn, is on the skyline directly above John's head



View across Schwarzen See to Turnerkamp and Großer Mösele

Trek to the Furtschagl House via Schönbichler Horn



Bridge across the outflow stream of the Waxegg glacier, with the Berliner hut and Mörchen Scharte in the distance



View over Zemm Grund to Hoher Riffler (3231) that Allan, John and Tim were to climb two days later from the Friesenberg hut. The ascent route is the left hand ridge



The second leg stop with a view back over the Berliner hut (just below centre) to the peaks of Ochsner (3107), Zsigmondy Spitz (3089) and Kleine Mörchner with the notch of Mörchen Scharte



The same leg stop, looking up towards Großer Mösele



The final arête leading to Schönbichler Horn



On the summit of Schönbichler Horn (3134 m, 10,280 ft),
looking west to the Olperer group



View south from the summit of Schönbichler Horn towards the rocky Furtschagl Spitz (3190) and Großer Mösele



View south-west to Hochfeiler (at 3509, the highest mountain in the Zillertal Alps), with the sun glinting off the roof of the Furtschagl hut, 840 m below



The Furtschagl hut with Hochfeiler

Trek to the Friesenberg hut



The end of the zig-zag path down from the Furtshagl hut and the start of the track round the the Schlegeis reservoir with Olperer (3476) and Gefrone Wand Spitz (3288)



View back up the Schlegeis valley with the Schlegeis glacier at its head



On the track along the Schlegeis reservoir with Hoher Riffler in view

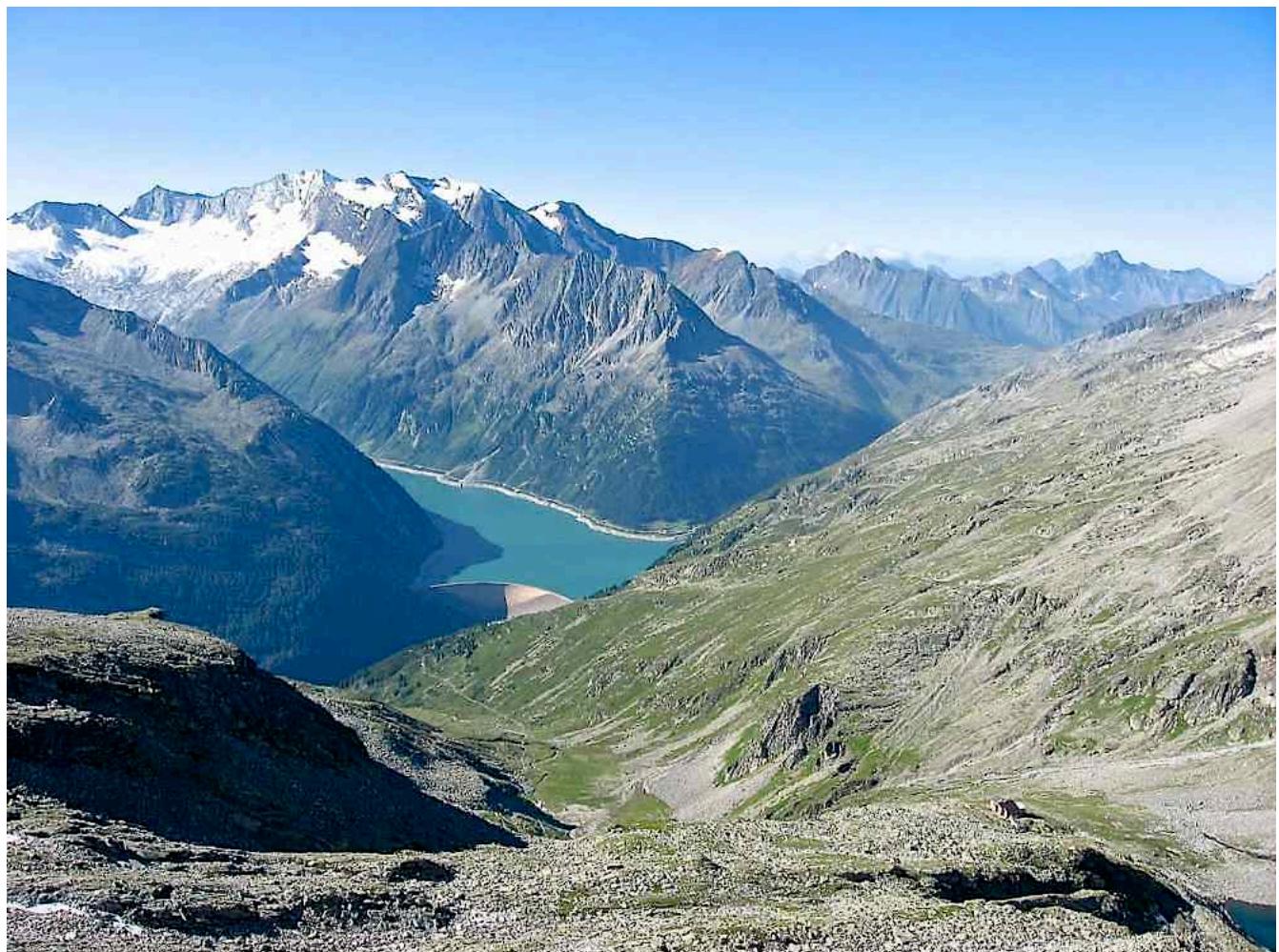


The head of the Schlegeis valley again

Morning ascent of Hohe Riffler, then trek down to Breitlahner



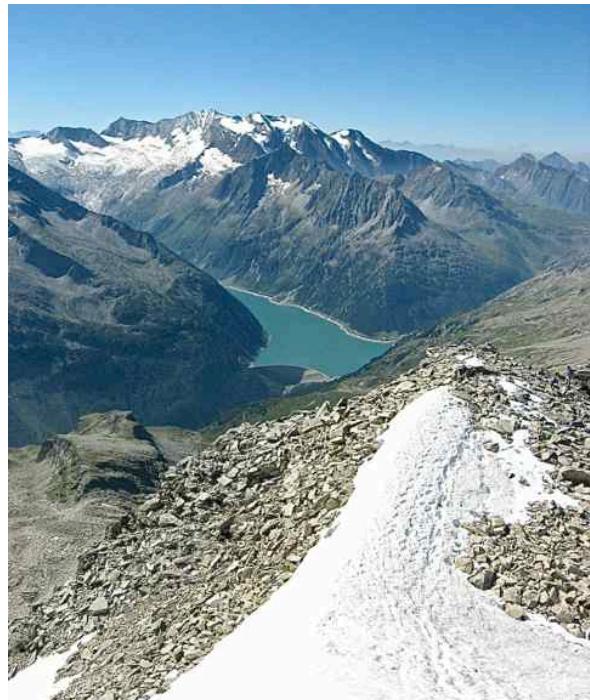
The Friesenberg hut with the ridge leading up to Hohe Riffler on the right



View back over the Friesenberg hut (bottom right) to the Schlegeis reservoir and Hochfeiler



On the summit (3231 m, 10,600 ft)



Hochfeiler from the summit



Lunch back at the hut



The long descent to Breitlahner, with Zemm Grund, and Schwarzenstein, Berliner Spitz and Turnerkamp on the skyline