

Chapter 60

1958 – 1961

Bannockburn / Jordanhill College – 1960/61

So that evening it was onward to Arrochar and Ardgarten YH with transport vans as usual loaded with canoes, but also this time carrying some basic climbing equipment as well ropes etc. for the more adventurous to have a bit of scrambling fun on 'Jean's stout rock-face, or 'Cobbler's Wife', just to the south of the north peak of the 2891 feet high 'Ben Arthur' or 'The Cobbler' ... a name usually thought to have originated from the mountain's shape when viewed from Tarbet.



An Old Photograph of 'The Cobbler' from Tarbet, Loch Lomond

In reverse, this view is well illustrated by this edited picture of Jim Ramsey's.

Arrochar, Loch Long from The Cobbler



Edited version of a photograph by JR

Our 'climbing' party had an early breakfast and set off up the road a bit before cutting into the forest to approach 'Jean' (eventually) from the south. Most of us then took a wee rest and cuppa on the more grassy parts of the slope below the intended scramble.

'The Cobbler' with 'Jean' on left and the summit on right



The weather was fine and the rock was dry, so the more intrepid amongst us roped-up and very, very carefully started our ascents. I had never been so frightened in all my life when about half-way up I couldn't see any more obvious helpful hand-holds ... but I was rescued with a wee bit cheating from Brad [already up-top] as he took the strain, guided me to where I should reach and then lifted me just enough to be on my way again ... then shakingly edge my way upwards until his smiling face came into view ...whew!

Then it was on to the actual tiny summit platform atop a tower with a 'window' that had to be penetrated to access a ledge from where a pile of boulders had to be climbed to get to the top.

Summit of Ben Arthur ('The Cobbler') accessed by the 'Window'



Getting back down to the ledge from the pinnacle also caused a few ‘knocky-knees’ ... but all felt the effort and fears had been worth experiencing because of the marvellous views previously enjoyed.

Suitably elated, we lunched, relaxed in the sunshine, and then, in mid-afternoon, trundled downhill, Loch Long in our sights ...with thoughts of the morrow and our canoeing expedition that planned to take us paddling down to Loch Goil have an afternoon snack in Carrick Castle Hotel there before splashing wearily home to the youth hostel.



I wrote this poem to celebrate the outing

Trusty Old Poppy

"Not the Poppy this morn,
Says my sidekick, forlorn,
That fat canvas canoe.
Sunk in her belly,
Stuck you and me.
Long stretch with paddles
To just reach the sea.
Skim us way down,
Loch Long in this rain
Turn us in Loch Goil,
To head home again.'
'We'll splish an' we'll splosh.
Make slow headway, I'd say,
Might see basking sharks,
Probably O.K..
But best no fishing lines,
Trailed out today,
From this old canvas canoe."
"Worse luck, Poppy today,
Says me grumpily,
Most awkward but stable fat tank.
She'll skin all our elbows,
Make blisters that weep.
A most awkward craft,
For skimming the deep.
But let's underway,
With no further delay,
To reach Carrick Castle,
In this bitch come what may.



Carrick Castle Hotel in sight

Let's launch all trimmed fine,
Sitting high o'er the brine.
No fishing we'll do,
Just in case it we'll rue.
Yes, definitely taboo,
From this clumsy canoe.
'We've had Poppy all day',
Moans me, peevishly.
Elbows skinned bare.
Though weather stayed fair.
Too awkward wide keel,
To relax a great deal.
But sharks seen steered clear,
Causing no fear,
Afloat there in Poppy,
Who never got stroppy.
No hint of capsized,
Nor other surprise.
Made Loch Goil on song,
Safely back then up Loch Long.
Us tired through and through,
In fat, trusty canoe."

Quite a week!
