

## DOLOMITES HUT-TO-HUT TOUR – ALTA VIA 2

8th – 21st July 2008

Allan and Lesley Witton, John and Judith Willson, Roger Hand



Approaching Rifugio Mulaz for our 10th and final night in the mountains



Judith and Roger on the via ferrata in Val Setus



On the Sella plateau

## OUTLINE ITINERARY AND WALKING ROUTE SUMMARY

For the most part our route followed the standard Alta Via 2 from its start above Bressanone, with a half free day and hotel stop in San Cristina. We planned to finish at Passo Rolle for convenient transport back to Milan, which allowed us an extra day in our schedule to include the variant through the Odle group via Rifugio Firenze rather than the more direct route between the Genova and Puez huts. We also include two excellent summit ascents, Piz Boè and Monte Mulaz.

14 days			2 + 2 half days travel		½ free day		9 + 3 half days walking		Time		
					Height	Distance	Ascent	Descent	Actual	Guide	Naismith
					m	km	m	m			
July											
T 8	Air/bus	Manchester > Milan		Hotel							
W 9	Train Cable car Trek	Bressanone Valcroce Rifugio Plose	CAI (60)	2446	2040		2	410	----	1-10	1-00 1-05
T 10	Trek •	Rifugio Genova	CAI (80)	2297		13	530	680	4-40	4-00	3-30
F 11	Trek •	Rifugio Firenze	CAI (99)	2037		13	810	1070	4-40	4-30	4-00
S 12	Trek •	Rifugio Puez	CAI (90)	2457		8	610	190	3-30	3-00	2-40
S 13	Trek Bus	Passo Gardena San Cristina - free half-day		2120		7	260	600	2-15	2-30	1-50
M 14	Bus Trek	Passo Gardena Rifugio Pisciadiu	CAI (80)	2585	2120		3	500	40	2-10	2-15 1-30
T 15	Trek • Excursion	Rifugio Boe <b>Piz Boe</b>	CAI (70) (10,342 ft)	3152	2873		6	740	450	3-20	4-00 2-30
W 16	Trek •	Rifugio Contrin	Priv. (130)	2016		17	880	1160	5-00	5-00	4-50
T 17	Trek •	Rifugio Fuchiade	Priv. (18)	1972		9	700	740	3-30	3-15	3-00
F 18	Trek •	Rifugio Passo di Valles	Priv. (40)	2031		11	430	370	3-00	3-00	2-50
S 19	Trek • Excursion	Rifugio Mulaz <b>Monte Mulaz</b>	CAI (70) 2906	2571		11	1090	550	4-20	4-45	3-00
S 20	Trek Taxi/Bus Train	Passo Rolle Bolzano Milan		1955		8	310	930	2-40	2-30	2-10
M 21	Bus/air	Milan > Malpensa >Manchester				Naismith daily average (all 12 days)				2h-50	

Grand Totals:	Distance	Ascent	Descent	Time
(All 12 days walking)	108 km 68 miles	7270 m 23,900 ft	6780 m 22,200 ft	40 hours
<b>Daily averages:</b> (All 12 days walking)	9.0 km 5.6 miles	610 m 2000 ft	570 m 1850 ft	3h-20
<b>Daily averages:</b> (8 full days walking •)	11.0 km 6.9 miles	720 m 2380 ft	650 m 2140 ft	4h-00

A Trek is a linear walk from one place to the next with full packs

An Excursion is a return walk without full packs

**Piz Boe** Summits are in bold, 3000 m points are shaded blue

CAI/Priv Italian Alpine Club/Private hut (with number of places)

### Walking Times (excluding stops)

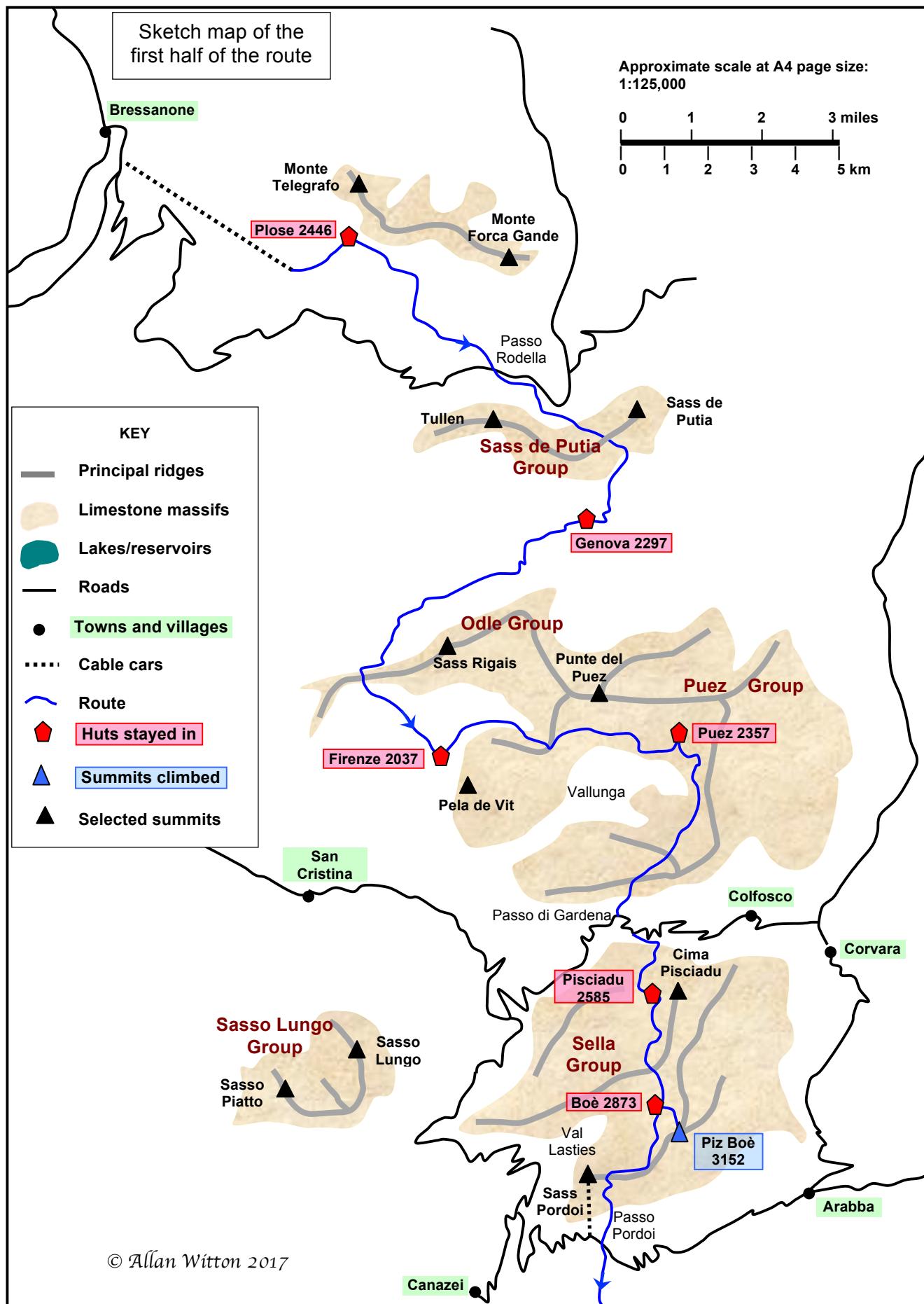
Actual: For the slowest of our group; lead times were often considerably shorter, especially on big climbs.

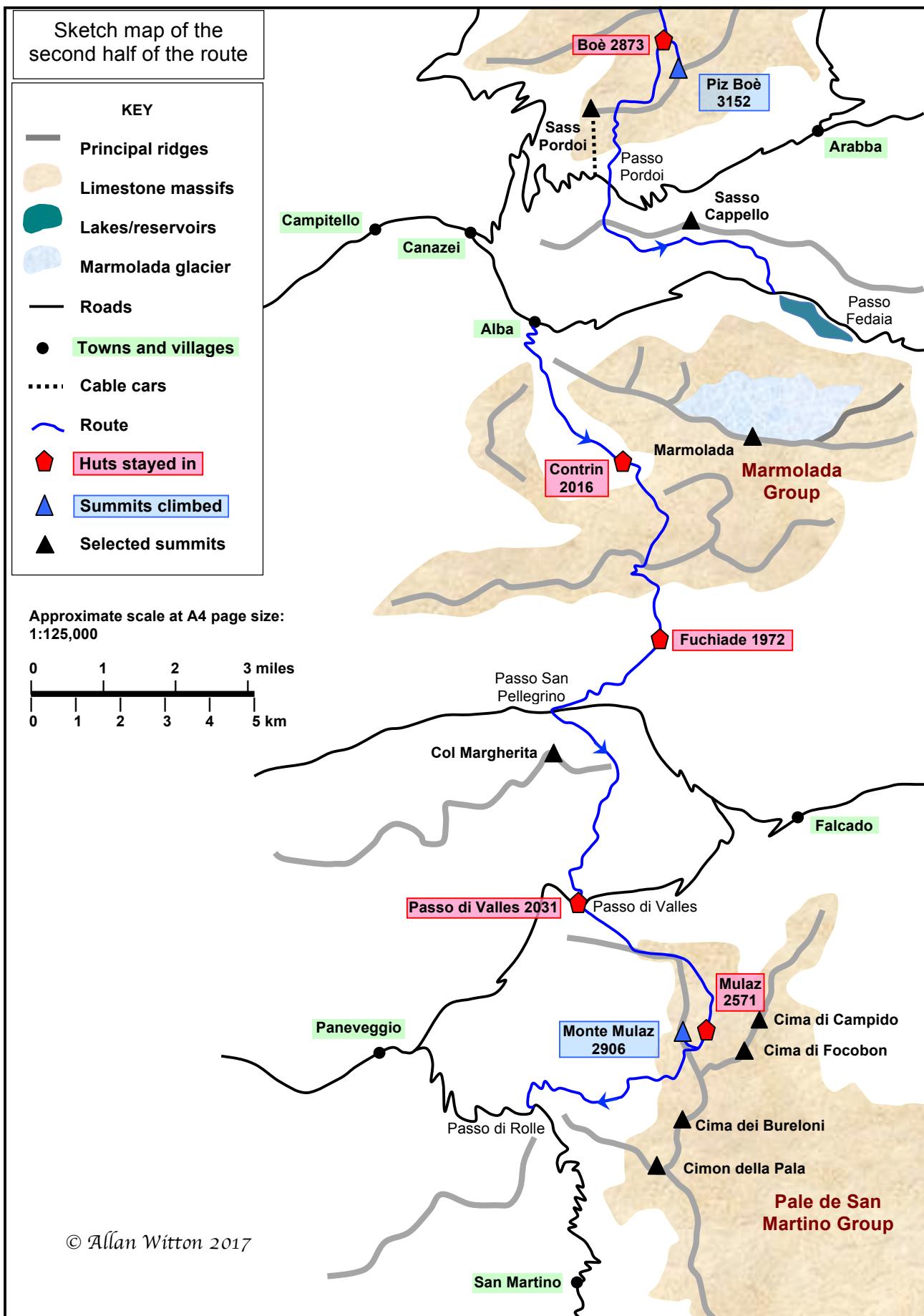
Guide: Times according to guidebook *Treks in the Dolomites* by Collins and Price (Cicerone).

Naismith: According to Naismith's Rule: 12 minutes/km and 10 metres/minute for ascent.

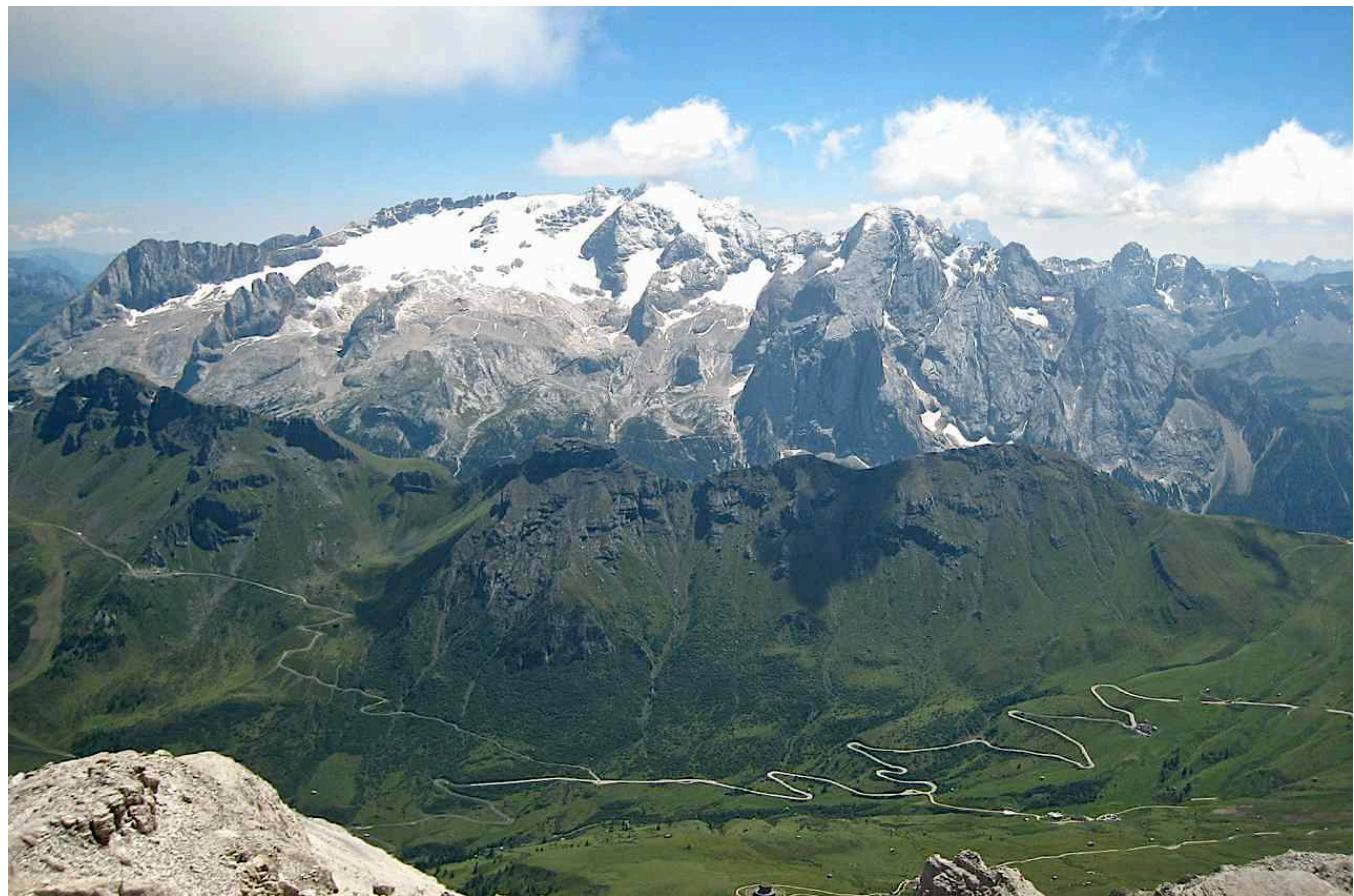
With few big climbs and mostly short days, our walking times were just 18% longer than Naismith's.

## SKETCH MAPS OF THE ROUTE





## VIEWS FROM THE SUMMIT OF PIZ BOÈ



The Marmolada, the green Sasso Capello ridge, and the road snaking up to Passo Pordoi



View down Val Lasties to Sasso Lungo (right), Cima Antermoia (left) and the distant Adamello Alps

**Tuesday 8th**

**Flight  
Bus**

**Manchester to Milan Malpensa  
Transfer to Milan Central**



The Alps from the air



Pizzas (the first of many) at La Porta Rossa

<b>Wednesday 9th</b>	<b>Train</b>	<b>Bressanone</b>	
	<b>Cable car</b>	<b>Valcroce</b>	<b>2040</b>
	<b>Trek</b>	<b>Rifugio Plose</b>	<b>2446</b>

It was a short walk from the railway station to the cable car, then an hour's walk from the top station up the broad, grassy ridge to the Plose hut.



At Bressanone station



At the top of the cable car: after a minute's silence  
for those unable to be with us ...



.... we're ready to go!



Drinks on the patio of the Plose hut



#### Summary

Distance 2 km

Ascent 410 m

Descent ---- m

Walking time 1h-10

Total time 1h-10

(Total times are the times  
between the start and the end  
of a day's walking.)

The Alta Via 2 starts from the Plose hut with a gentle walk down grassy pastures to the minor road pass of Passo Rodella. From there it ascends initially through forest followed by a steep rocky climb to Forcella de Putia, and our first day ended with an easy walk down to the Genova hut.



Setting off from the Plose hut, with the Odle Group (that we would cross the following day) on the skyline



Arriving at Forcella de Putia, with the Plose hut on the green ridge in the far distance



On Forcella de Putia, with the summits of the Puez group behind



Arriving at the Genova hut ....



.... for coffee and cake ....



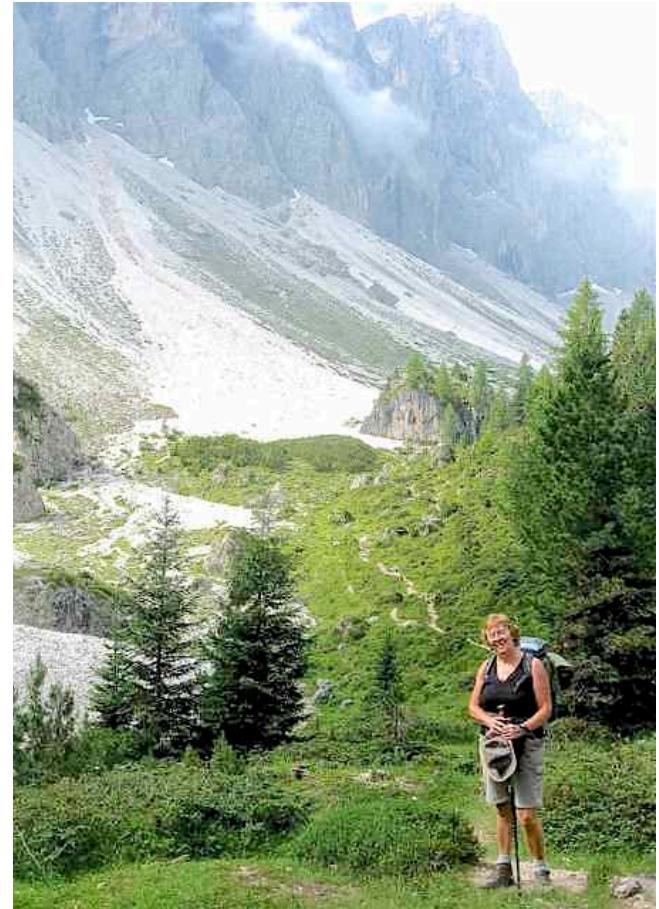
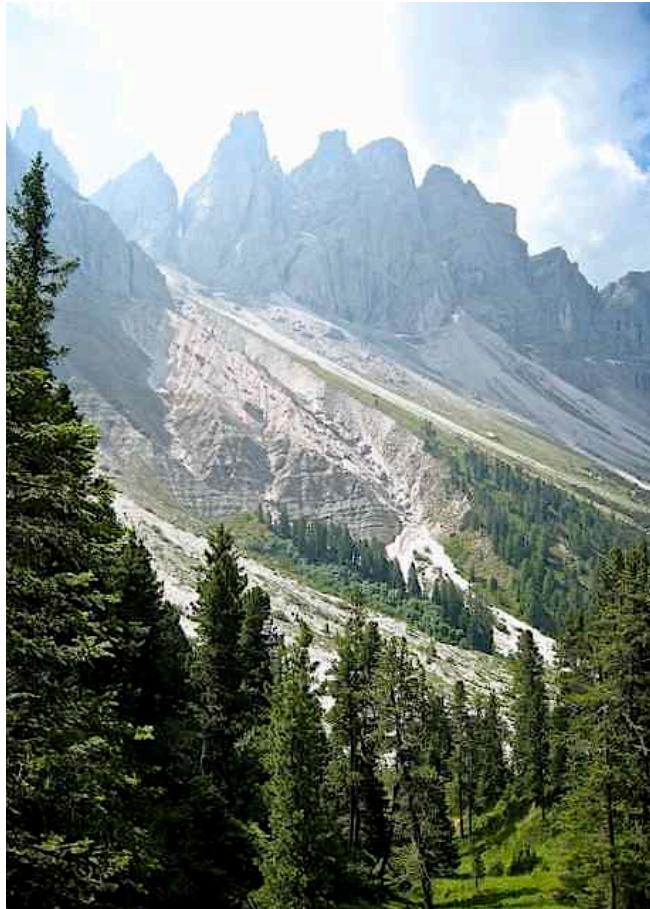
.... and a comfy, spacious bunk room for the night

<b>Summary</b>	Distance	13 km	Ascent	530 m	Descent	680 m	Walking time	4h-40	Total time:	7h-40
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After a short descent down a track from the hut, the AV2 variant via the Firenze hut follows an undulating traverse along the Adolf Munkel Weg, along the tree line beneath the scree and towering Odle peaks.



Our standard muesli and teewasser for breakfast



On the Adolf Munkel Weg

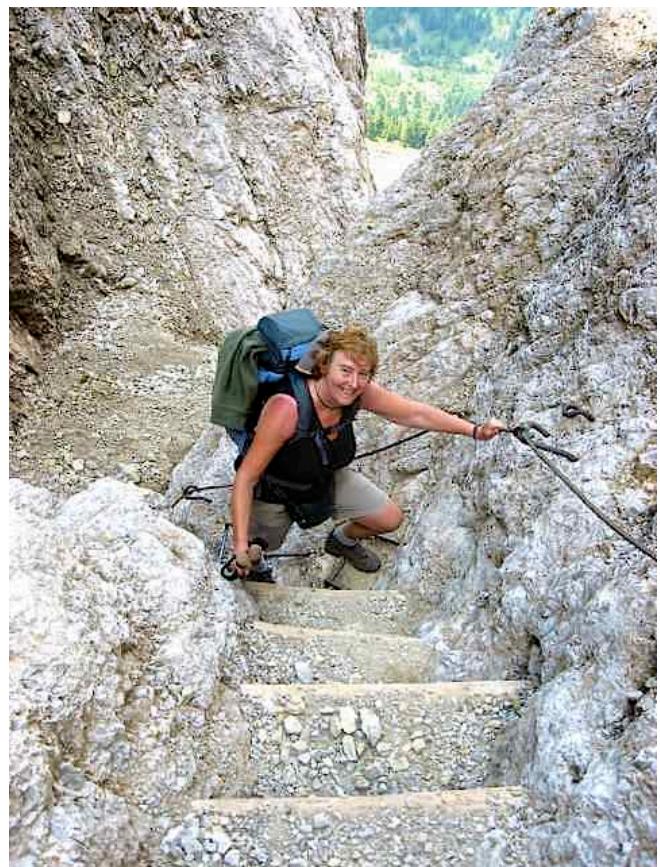
The path then climbs over the scree and below massive rock walls towards the ladder and cable aided scramble up the gully leading to Forcella Pana.



Martagon or Turk's-cap lily (*Lilium martagon*)



The interesting scramble up the gully to Forcella Pana, with the aid of a dubious ladder, steps, steel pegs and cables





South of Forcella Pana it was a gentle descent through the flower-filled meadows of Cisles Alp to the Firenze hut.



A rare Rhaetian Poppy  
(*Papaver rhaeticum*)



Edelweiss  
(*Leontopodium alpinum*)



Wood Pink  
(*Dianthus sylvestris*)

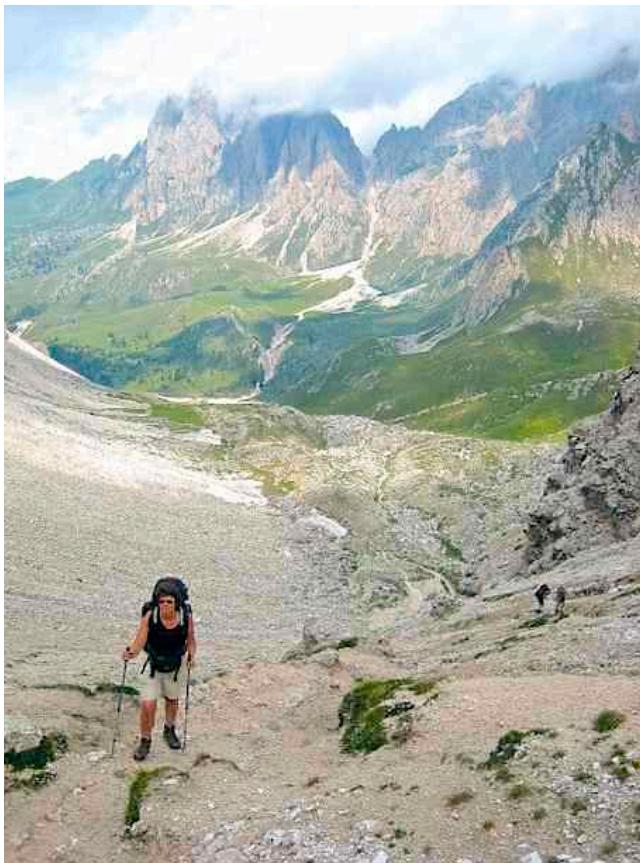


Approaching the Firenze hut with  
Forcella de Pizza and  
Pela de Vit on the skyline

#### Summary

Distance	13 km
Ascent	810 m
Descent	1070 m
Walking time	4h-40
Total time	7h-30

It was a cloudy/bright day for the easy walk up the Forces de Sièles valley followed by a steep ascent to its forcella, where we re-joined the main AV2. There follows an exciting assisted scramble along a narrow, rocky ridge leading to the grassy Puez Alp overlooking the Vallunga canyon, then an easy level walk to the Puez hut.

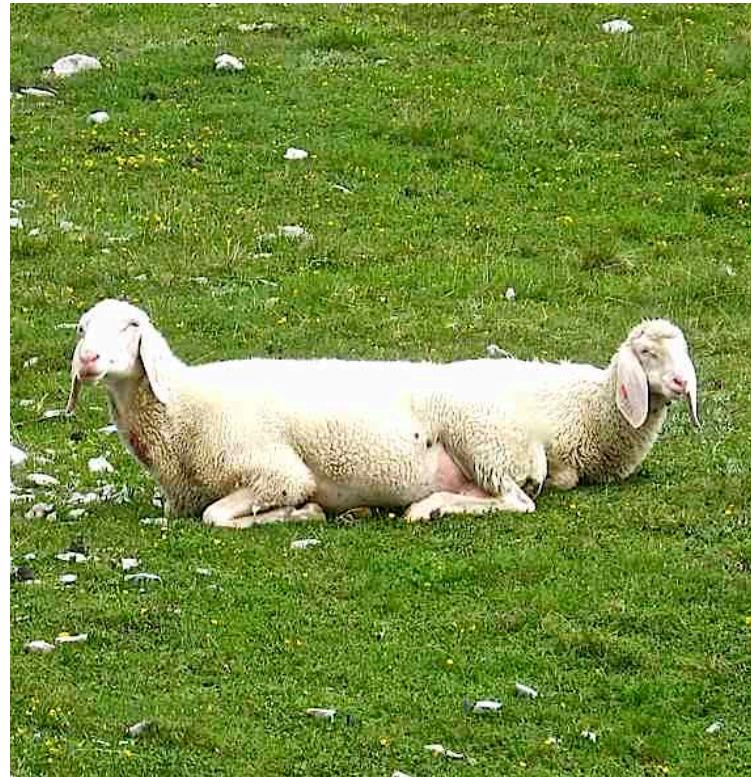


Approaching Forcella Forces de Sièles,  
with the Odle peaks in cloud



The beginning of the rocky ridge 'walk'  
above Forcella Forces de Sièles





Famous Dolomitic double-headed sheep!



On the grassy Puez Alp beside the Vallunga canyon, with the misty Sella group in the distance



Not too near the edge, Roger!



Arriving at the Puez hut



Seven bunks in a broom cupboard!

Summary	Distance	8 km	Ascent	610 m	Descent	190 m	Walking time	3h-30	Total time	5h-00
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**Sunday 13th**

**Trek  
Bus**

**Passo Gardena  
San Cristina for free half-day**

**2120**

It was a windy and cool day for the short and easy walk along Puez Alp, round the head of Vallunga, over the two minor cols of Crespeina and Cir, and down to Passo Gardena for the bus down to San Cristina for a free half day.



All wrapped up warm and ready to go, with sunhat handy just in case!



Above the head of Vallunga, with Forcella Forces de Sièles on the right hand skyline



En route between Passo Crespeina and Passo Cir



On Passo Cir



Lunch in San Cristina



Well, we are in Italy!

<b>Summary</b>	Distance:	7 km	Ascent	260 m	Descent	600 m	Walking time:	2h-15	Total time:	3h-00
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**Monday 14th**

**Bus  
Trek**

**Passo Gardena  
Rifugio Pisciadu**

**2120  
2585**

We took a bus back up to Passo Gardena, where it was a wet and dreary day. We spent 2 hours in a café waiting for the weather to clear before setting off for the ascent into the Sella group up the via ferrata in Val Setus.



At 10.30 the rain eased,  
and we decided it was time to brave it!



As we approached the start of the via ferrata  
up Val Setus the rain began to turn to snow.



I might need some more energy for this next stage.



Lesley on an early part of the via ferrata



I haven't had this much fun in a long time!



Allan asks 'Can you see the top yet John?'



We made it out of the top of the gully, with the tough 'guys' still wearing shorts!



A 'path' we will long remember



At 1 o'clock the hut appeared out of the cloud.



The Pisciadiu hut and Cima Pisciadiu as the weather began to clear by 3.30 in the afternoon



By 5.00 the storm had almost passed giving a clear view down to Colfosco.

Summary	Distance:	3 km	Ascent	500 m	Descent	40 m	Walking time	2h-10	Total time	2h-30
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Tuesday 15th

Trek  
ExcursionRifugio Boè  
Piz Boè2873  
3152

It was a cold, clear morning at the start of a fabulous high mountain day. We traversed the high Sella plateau to the Boè hut for lunch, and then made the excursion to Piz Boè, at 3152 m (10,342 ft) the highest point of our route, and it was all done in glorious weather and with marvellous views.



8.30 and ready to go, on a clear, crisp morning with fresh snow still dusting the peaks



Retrospective view of Lago Pisciadu, the Pisciadu hut and the Puez peaks beyond



First leg stop in Val di Tita



Piz Boè comes into view



View down Val de Mesdi to Colfosco



The very busy Piz Boè hut



Frozen waterfall at the rock band on the route to Piz Boè



Retrospective view of the Boè hut from the rock band



On the summit of Piz Boè with the Marmolada beyond



The canyon of Val Lasties, Sasso Lungo and the distant Adamello Alps from the summit of Piz Boè



Hot chocolate at Rifugio Capanna Fassa on the summit of Piz Boè

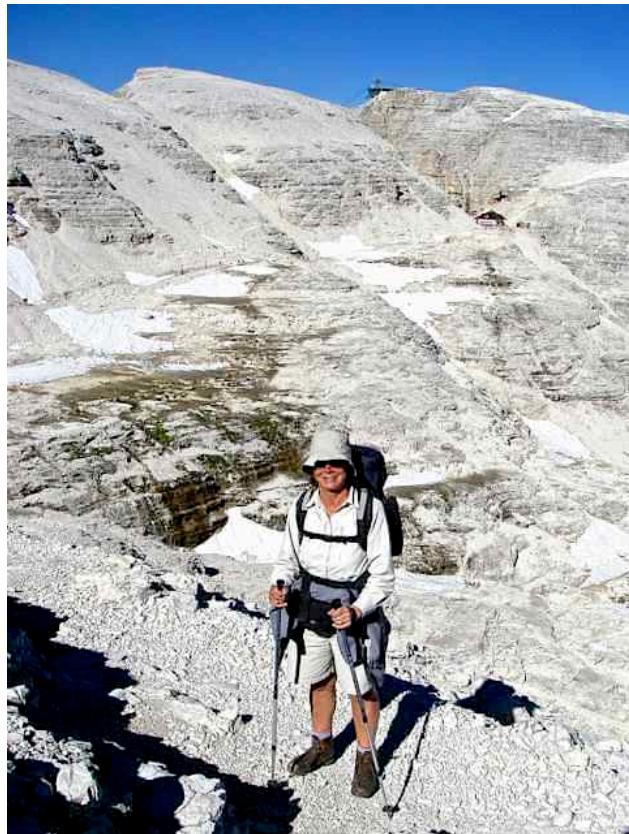
Summary	Distance:	6 km	Ascent	740 m	Descent	450 m	Walking time	3h-20	Total time	8h-00
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<b>Wednesday 16th</b>	<b>Trek</b>	<b>Lago di Fedaia</b>	<b>2053</b>
	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Alba</b>	<b>1490</b>
	<b>Trek</b>	<b>Rifugio Contrin</b>	<b>2016</b>

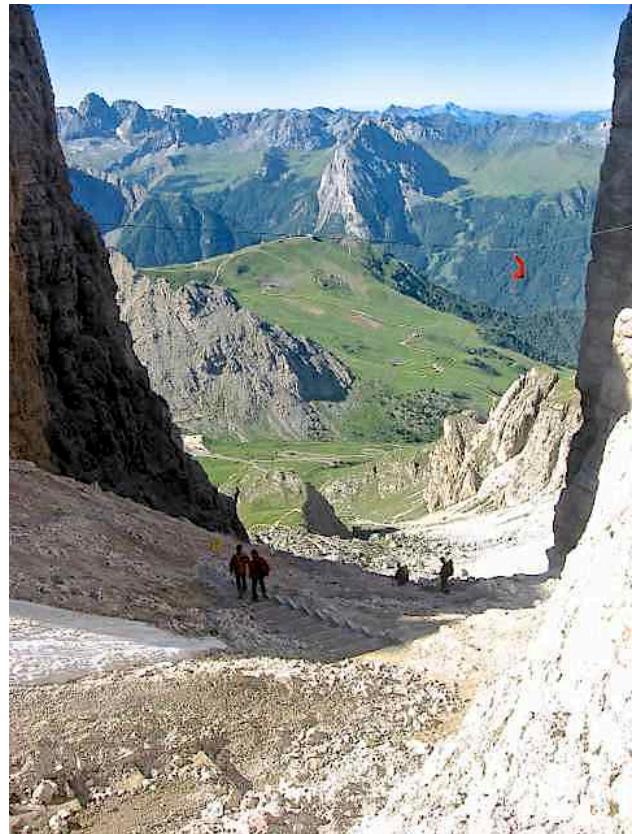
It was to be our longest day, but a varied and spectacular one. On another brilliantly clear morning we continued the high level traverse to the southern end of the Sella massif and went steeply down scree from Forcella Pordoi to the major road pass of Passo Pordoi. This descent has been much improved in recent years with steps to replace the worst of the loose scree.



An early start across hard-packed icy snow above the Boè hut



The balcony route across snow beds leading to the top of Forcella Pordoi



The steep scree slope leading 600 m down from Forcella Pordoi to Passo Pordoi



Friendly and inquisitive baby marmots right by the path



*Potentilla nitida*



The whole southern flank of the Sella Group: the cable car station on Sass Pordoi on the left, the scree chute and path coming down from Forcella Pordoi, Piz Boè the highest point on the skyline, and Passo Pordoi below

From Passo Pordoi we followed the balcony path (the Viel del Pan, a former smuggler's route) along the green Sasso del Cappello ridge before descending to the road at Lago di Fedaia.



The start of the Viel del Pan with the Marmolada in the background



The balcony route to Lago di Fedaia, with the Marmolada glacier on the right and the Civetta in the distance

After a short bus ride down to Alba it was an easy walk along the track up picturesgue Val Contrin to the hut.



The easy walk up Val Contrin, with the following day's col, Passo delle Cirelle, the low point on the skyline



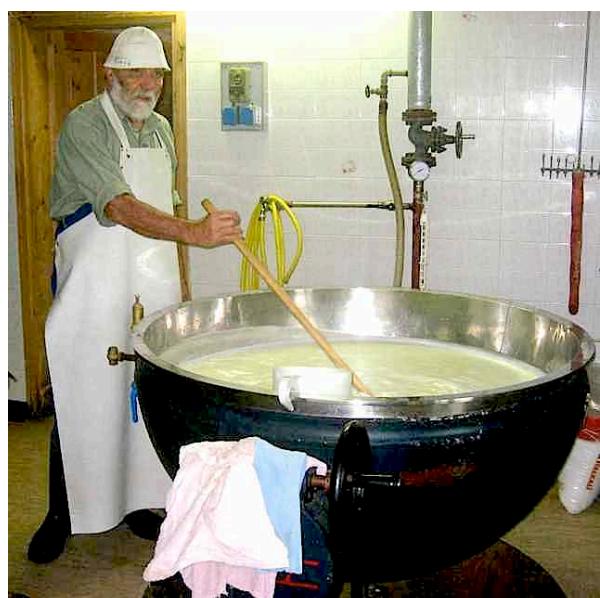
Rifugio Contrin, with the south wall of the Marmolada above

Summary	Distance:	17 km	Ascent	880 m	Descent	1160 m	Walking time	5h-00	Total time	9h-00
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After an interesting visit to Malga Contrin, a farm just above the hut where we bought cheese for lunch, the low cloud and poor visibility for much of the day matched the mood of the sombre and desolate slopes on either side of Passo della Cirelle with widespread remains from the First World War.



Malga Contrin





The cloud lifted momentarily to give a view of the desolate slopes leading to Passo della Cirelle.



A rare Rhaetian Poppy  
(*Papaver rhaeticum*)



Remains of a First World War hut below the pass,  
with old boot leather and rusting food cans





An ibex with a radio collar



Orange or Tiger Lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*)



Rifugio Fuchiade is an up-market guest-house with luxurious bedrooms and award winning food.



The interior was like a museum and art gallery with a display of rural artefacts and accordions.



The chances are  
John will win again.

<b>Summary</b>	
Distance	9 km
Ascent	700 m
Descent	740 m
Walking time	3h-30
Total time	4h-30

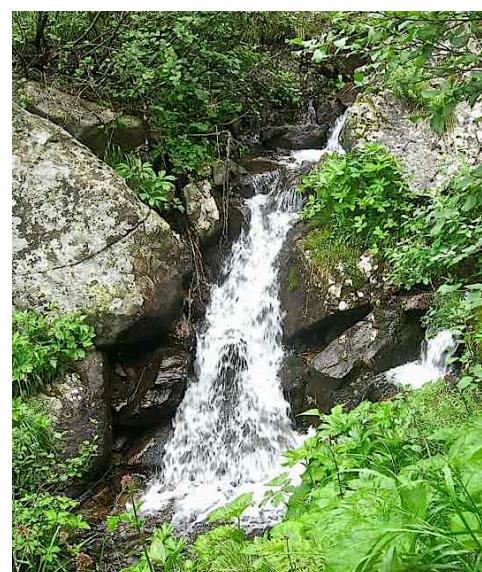
It was our least interesting day as we followed the track down to Passo di San Pellegrino, walked up through forest, along a ski piste over the shoulder of the dull mountain Col Margherita, and finally down another track to Passo di Valles, and all done in grey, cloudy and drizzly conditions.



What - no muesli and teewasser today?



Handiwork of the local wood-carver at Fienili di Fuchiade



The only waterfall we saw



Rifugio Passo di Valles



Fox, venison, mouflon, badger and chamois weren't on the menu!



A beautiful sunset promised a fine day in the morning

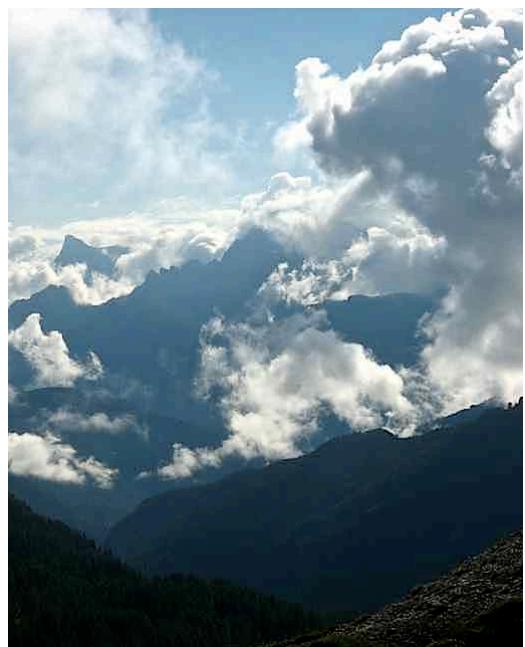
Summary	Distance	11 km	Ascent	430 m	Descent: 370 m	Walking time: 3h-00	Total time	5h-00
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<b>Saturday 19th</b>	<b>Trek Excursion</b>	<b>Rifugio Mulaz Monte Mulaz</b>	<b>2571 2906</b>
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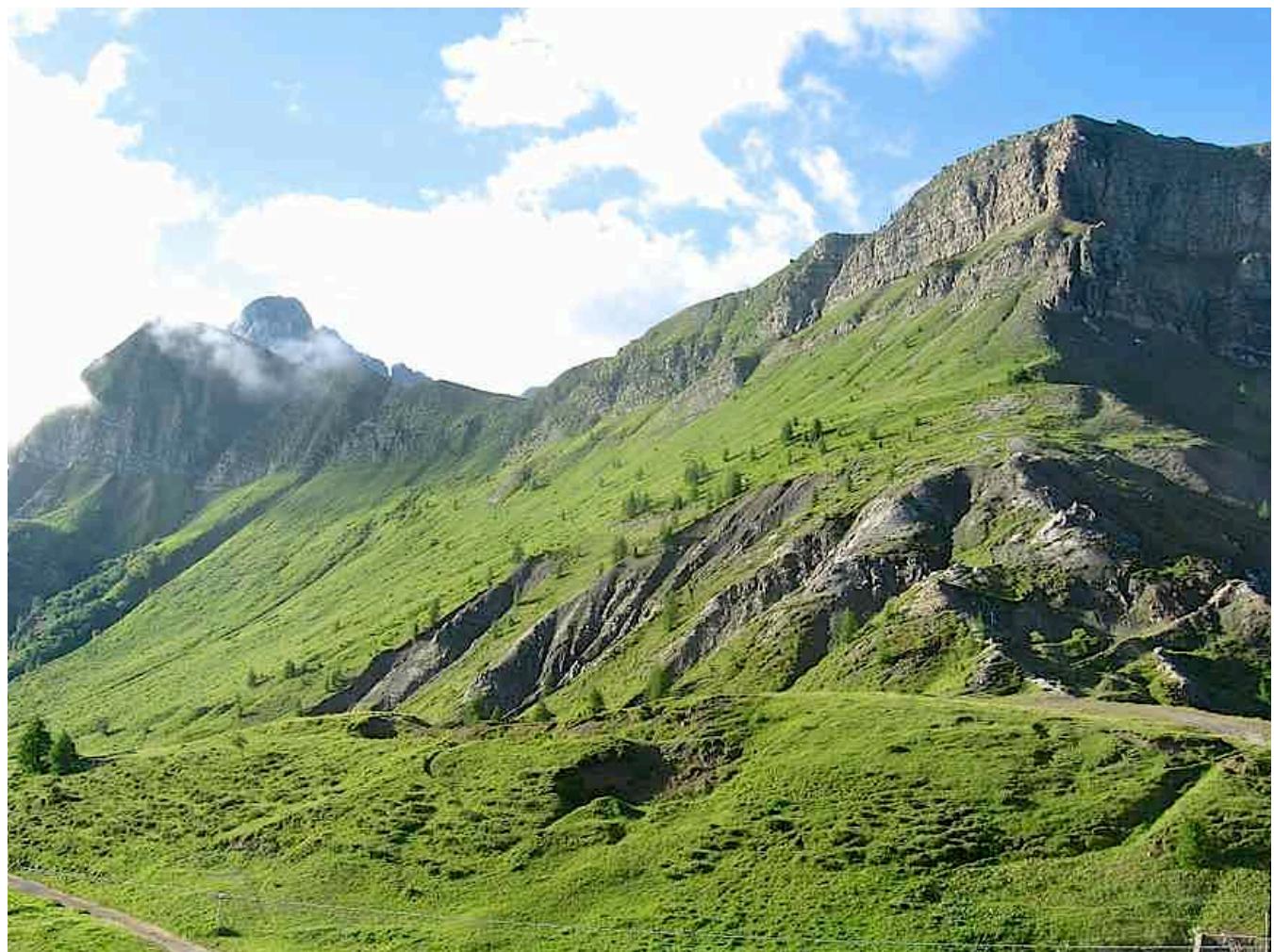
It was another superb high mountain day, made more dramatic by cloud billowing round the towering peaks. After a stiff climb to Forcella Venegia there were two easy cols followed by some cable-assisted climbs to reach the Mulaz hut. From there John, Roger and I did the enjoyable excursion to Monte Mulaz.



Clear morning skies to the west of the hut ...



... and billowing cloud to the east



Our first objective was up the grassy flanks to Forcella Venegia, with our final objective of the day the rocky dome of Monte Mulaz rising beyond it.



On Forcella Venegia, with Cima dei Bureloni, Cima della Vezzana and Cimon della Pala towering above Val Venegia



On Passo di Venegiotta.





Two of several rock bands with fixed cables on the climb to the Mulaz hut



Cima di Campido and cloud-wreathed Cima del Focobon



The Mulaz hut comes into view



A good day's lead, Lesley!



A refreshing mug of tea ...



... but Roger's got a fly in his!

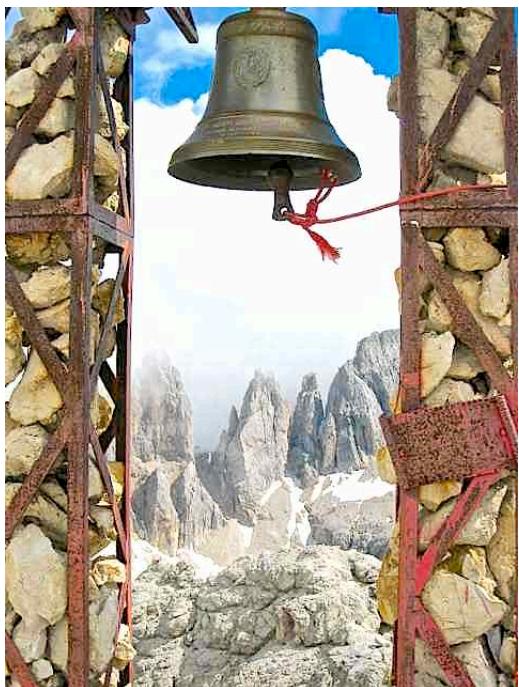


The only time we didn't have bunk beds, but were given mattresses on the loft floor instead

The waymarked route up Monte Mulaz turns off the main AV2 path just above the hut, and is a really interesting and enjoyable scramble. Billowing cloud produced dramatic views which would be even more spectacular in clear weather.



The pensioners on Monte Mulaz



The Cima dei Bureloni – Cimon della Pala ridge from Monte Mulaz



Cimon della Pala (in cloud) and the following day's route through Val Venegia to Passo Rolle



Sadly our last hut dinner for this year

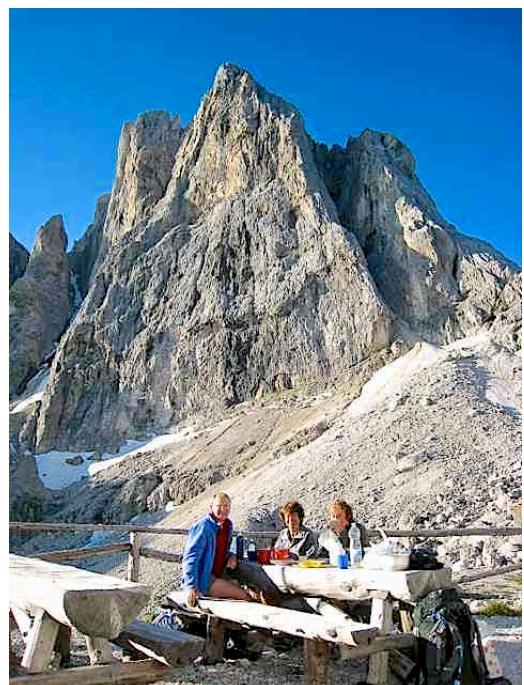


It looked like there might be a temperature inversion in the morning.

<b>Summary</b>	Distance: 11 km	Ascent 1090 m	Descent: 550 m	Walking time: 4h-20	Total time 8h-00
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<b>Sunday 20th</b>	<b>Trek</b>	<b>Passo Rolle</b>	<b>1955</b>
	<b>Taxi/Bus</b>	<b>Bolzano</b>	
	<b>Train</b>	<b>Milan</b>	

There was a temperature inversion, making it a spectacular dawn. After an early breakfast, our favourite muesli and teewasser again, we made the short climb to Passo del Mulaz then the steep descent into Val Venegia, from where we followed tracks and green paths to Passo Rolle and the end of the walking.



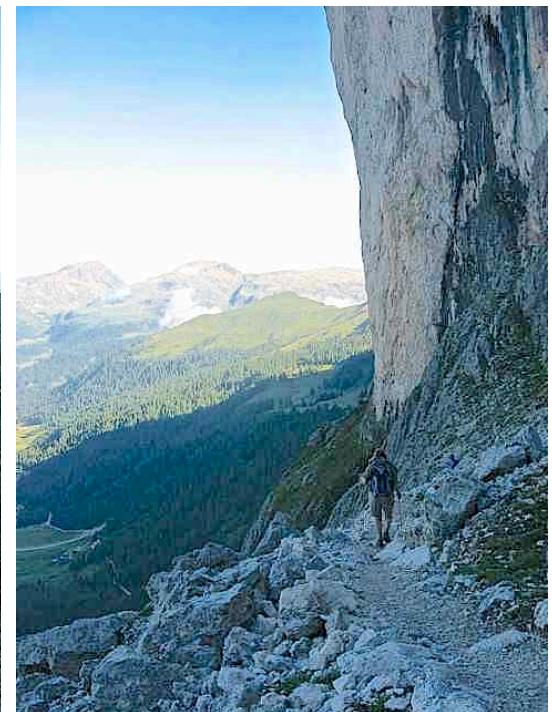
At 6.45 a.m. and 2571 m (8,435 ft) it was our earliest and highest breakfast ...



... with a superb view over cloud-filled Val di Focobon.



The short walk to Passo del Mulaz



The start of the steep descent into Val Venegia

<b>Summary</b>	Distance:	8 km	Ascent	310 m	Descent	930 m	Walking time:	2h-40	Total time:	4h-00
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None of us had realised that as it was a Sunday local buses might not run over Passo Rolle, which turned out to be the case. So we enquired at a hotel on the pass and the owner rang for a minibus-taxi from Predazzo which collected us and dropped us at the bus station there just in time to catch a bus to Bolzano and then a train back to Milan.

<b>Monday 21st</b>	<b>Free morning</b>	<b>Milan</b>
	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Malpensa</b>
	<b>Flight</b>	<b>Manchester</b>

With a 7 p.m. flight departure we had a free morning in Milan, so we bought hop-on, hop-off bus tickets to enable us to take in most of the main sights, before making the afternoon transfer to Malpensa.



The Vittorio Emanuele II arcade



The Cathedral



Sforzesco castle



Mont Blanc from the air

## MAPS

	Scale	Sheet	
<b>Kompass Wanderkarte</b>	1:50,000	56	Brixen/Bressanone
	1:50,000	59	Gruppo del Sella/ Gruppo della Marmolada
	1:50,000	76	Pale di San Martino

These three sheets cover the whole of our route. The cartography of the Kompass 1:50,000 series is rather crude and limited, but the huts and paths are clearly marked, and they were quite adequate as we were following the AV2 which was well signposted and waymarked the whole way.

In other areas of the Dolomites we have found the Tabacco 1:25,000 series most useful as the maps are more detailed and have excellent topography.

## GUIDES

**Treks in the Dolomites - Alte Vie 1 and 2**      **Martin Collins and Gillian Price**      **Cicerone**      **2002 (2nd Edition)**

We found this illustrated, well laid out, and informative guide really useful, both at the planning stage and when walking the route.

## TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Organisational details such as transport links, cable cars and details of the huts are not included as they are readily available online, and the above guide contains that sort of information.

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I produced the first illustrated version of a 2008 log in the autumn of that year as single A4 pages in Word using full size images, and then printed and bound it. The total size for all 34 pages was 280 MB.

This version, with the addition of digital sketch maps, a detailed route summary, some extra images, and a list of 3000 m points was produced in 2017 on an Apple iMac using Word for Mac 2011, with iPhoto and Preview for editing the images. Most of the images were taken by Lesley and me, but thanks to John and Roger for theirs that I have used. The images are low resolution versions which still display fairly well at A4 page size. The average size of the 144 images used is about 70 kB, giving a total file size of about 10 MB, about the size of 3 original images. Thanks to Dave Shaw who identified the flowers I didn't know.

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Version 2



## OLD TREKKERS' TREKS 3000 m POINTS

I first had the idea of producing a list of the 3000 m points that the OTT have reached in 2011 while we were on the summit of Petzek (3283 m). I couldn't remember the last two digits of Hohe Riffler's height (3231) and hence which of them was higher, making it the second highest peak we had reached by 2011. I have since produced versions for the earlier logs 2007 - 2010.

All are summits except where marked § for high points on a ridge.

Feet	Metres	Height	Year	High Point	Ascensionists	Whole party ascent
11,000	3350					
	3340					
	3330	3333	2006	Schaufel Spitz (10,936 ft)	Allan, John	
10,900	3320					
	3310					
	3300					
10,800	3290					
	3280					
	3270					
10,700	3260					
	3250					
	3240					
10,600	3230	3231	2007	Hohe Riffler	Allan, John, Tim	
	3220					
	3210					
10,500	3200					
	3190					
	3180					
10,400	3170					
	3160					
	3150	3152	2008	Piz Boè (10,342 ft)	Allan, John, Roger, Lesley, Judith	
10,300	3140					
	3130	3134	2007	Schönbichlerhorn	Allan, John, Tim, Nigel, Lesley, Judith	
	3120					
10,200	3110					
	3100					
	3090					
10,100	3080					
	3070					
	3060					
10,000	3050	§ 3050	2006	Gamsspitzl (S)	Allan, John, Paul, Lesley, Judith	10,000 ft
	3040					
	3030					
9,900	3020					
	3010	3006	2006	Rinnen Spitz	Allan, John, Mark, Judith, Julie	
	3000					
<b>3000 m points</b>				<b>Party members</b>	<b>Total party</b>	
2006	Tirol - Stubai Alps			(3) Allan & Lesley, John & Judith, Mark & Julie, Paul	7	
2007	Tirol - Zillertal Alps			(2) Allan & Lesley, John & Judith, Tim, Nigel	6	
2008	Dolomites - Alta Via 2			(1) Allan & Lesley, John & Judith, Roger	5	

**Total Treks** Allan & Lesley: 3 John & Judith: 3 Tim: 1 Roger: 1 Paul: 1 Nigel: 1 Mark & Julie: 1