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UNTO THE HILLS . . . . .

Ernest M. Turner

In the final consummation of all things we are told that mankind will be divided into two groups, the sheep and the goats. But while we inhabit this earthly sphere, we know that mankind is in any case irretrievably split into two groups. There are the ardent lovers of the hills, and the lovers of the plains and the flatlands. Nor can the members of one group understand the predilections of the other. The devotee of the hills thinks it impossible that there should be human beings so perverse as to prefer the dullness and amplitude of the plains to the exciting contours and challenging ridges of the objects of his passion. The lover of flat country thinks it mere idiosyncrasy that men should prefer the high and restless parts of the earth to the landscape of his choice, and instances the advantages of flatness, the chief being that the glory of the open sky can be observed the whole day long; and he is acutely unhappy in hilly country, suffering in fact from a kind of claustrophobia which hill men find hard to understand.

Now the present writer makes no disguise of the class to which he belongs. The *raison d'être* for this article would otherwise be non-existent. So for that matter would this *Journal,* and our Club itself. The hills dominate our thinking, and the thoughts of all like-minded with ourselves. They stand there as a challenge to us, to pit our physical strength against their vastness; but more than that, the true hill lover knows that they speak to the spirit within us, inspiring us to turn from things of baser mould to the things that really matter. It is not for nothing that ennobling thoughts, and all the great artistic creations of man, are described as 'lofty' in conception; and that a man who is high-principled, with high ideals, is described as a man of lofty character. The connexion between morals and religion and the high hills is a long one. The Psalmist in the old days derived fresh strength from the thought of Zion built upon 'the holy hills'; and hills have been looked upon as the abode of the Divine Majesty from the time the ancient Israelites wandered in the wilderness round the foot of Mount Sinai, to these modern days, when the men of Nepal and Tibet still believe that Everest and Kangchenjunga and their Himalayan neighbours are the home of the gods.

Then let us call to mind all that the hills mean to a landscape.

This has, in fact, been understood for generations. Think of those exquisite hilly landscapes which so often appear in the background of early Italian paintings of the Madonna or the Holy Family. And how much the hills were borne in mind by the early 'town planners!' What would Rome have been without her seven hills, Athens without her Acropolis, or Edinburgh, the modern Athens, without her impressive Castle rock, or Salisbury Crags, or Arthur's Seat? The northern industrial city in which I was reared is built on the hills — 'There,' noted one perspicacious observer, 'the trams go perpendicularly uphill': and it is the vision of the surrounding hills which must make life tolerable for the inhabitants in many an otherwise drab Pennine cotton or woollen town.

And then, what great variety there is amongst hills! — for they are as strongly differentiated from each other as is each individual human being from his neighbour. What a difference there is between the smooth tops and softly rounded curves and graceful outlines of our more southern hills, such as the Malverns, contrasted with the rugged heights of Cumberland or Westmorland, or some of the Scots giants, Ben Cruachan or Slioch or Ben Nevis himself, all of them enormously bulky peaks. On a more majestic scale among the Alps this same variety is manifest — from the airy spires of the Dolomites, and the Chamonix aiguilles, to the snowy summit of Mont Blanc, and of many lesser snow-crowned heights. There is indeed a mountain for our every mood.

And then, though your true mountain lover does not climb hills just for the views they afford of the nether earth, how goodly is the rich heritage we can look out on from many a mountain top, from the luxuriance of our midland counties as seen from Bredon or the Malverns, to the wide views from such a mountain as Grassmoor, which besides embracing the Lakeland fells, traverses the whole of north Cumberland away to the Solway Firth and the distant Galloway hills, or the splendid sweeping views over fantastic country and many a tiny lochan as seen from the hills around Inchnadamph, in Sutherland. As for views in the Alps, these speak for themselves !

And if the mountains are fine to look from, they are also wonderful to look towards, whether it be the immense wall of the Himalayas, as seen from Darjeeling, or the High Atlas which travellers have told me show themselves grandly behind

Marrakesh, in Morocco, or the noble triumvirate of Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau, seen from many points near Interlaken, or the summit of the Weisshorn from Belalp, or the well-known thrust of the Matterhorn above Zermatt, or the fascinating and restless outline of the Cuillins seen from the coast between Arisaig and Mallaig, or even the view over Morecambe Bay at sunset to the beckoning summits of our Lakeland hills.

Nor is it only the big mountains which make a landscape. Much also is owing to the little hills. Adorable Catbells completes any view near Keswick, Castle Crag is an essential feature of the Borrowdale landscape, the thriving resort of Llandudno owes not a little to its position between the two hills of the Great and Little Orme, and Carn Llidi, the topmost point of St. David's Head, in Pembrokeshire, is barely 600 feet in height, but because of the absence of competing heights, and the very rocky nature of its slopes, has all the impressiveness of a mountain five or six times as big. Stac Polly, too, near Ullapool, is not very high, but is a most impressive feature of the Ross-shire landscape, as well as a splendid viewpoint, as all lovers of that wild and rugged country will agree.

For myself, I can scarcely remember a time when the hills have not had some share in my inner consciousness. Very early on in childhood there was read to me a fascinating story by Mrs. Molesworth, a one-time popular writer of children's stories, about a family that lived in an industrial town, from the window of an upper room in whose house could be seen, far away, a white farmhouse gleaming amidst the hills that bounded the horizon, beyond the grimy streets. The very title of the book now eludes me, but I can still recall its impression on me. I remember that the children in the story were inspired by what they saw to go and seek this farmhouse — whether they found the farmhouse of their view, they did not know, but they certainly discovered the hills and their beauty, contrasting so strongly with the grimy city where they dwelt.

My introduction to the hills was gentle enough. The Malverns, the Clent Hills in Worcestershire, Win Hill and Lose Hill and Mam Tor in the Peak District were the stepping stones in my education that led on to sterner stuff. Then as a boy of eight I experienced the glories of Cader Idris — my first real mountain — and the mysteries of the scree-strewn Fox's Path. Later came walking tours through the hills of Snowdonia — how

exciting to set foot for the very first time on Y Wyddfa itself ! — and through Lakeland, when as a matter of course one climbed all the higher fells. How pleasant it is through the lapse of years to recapture that 'golden time' again! Then came two early visits to the Alps, of which vivid memories still remain. There is, indeed, everything to be said for encouraging young people to travel abroad while everything is fresh to the imagination, and our senses are at their keenest, while 'earth is crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God.' I can still recall the profound effect on me of the downward journey from Vallorbe to Lausanne, when I was thirteen, made in the evening light, after a hot train journey across France from Paris to Dijon, before climbing into the Juras, the effect of that short journey being all the greater by contrast with what had gone before. There on the Savoy side of the Lake of Geneva stood a company of majestic shapes of enormous height — could they really be mountains, or did they belong to this earth? — the Dent d'Oche and her sister luminaries, all bathed in that extraordinary reddish light of an Alpine sunset, a gorgeous spectacle, especially when seen for the first time by the eye of youth. None of these peaks is much more than 8,000 feet high, but that was prodigious for one who had never seen anything higher than our British hills.

What enchanted holidays those were in one's early teens !

'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.'

and to be savouring the delights of Switzerland for the first time! 'O Switzerland!' wrote Mark Twain, extolling its praises in nostalgic mood in the States. 'The farther it recedes into the enriching haze of time, the more intolerably delicious the charm of it and the cheer of it and the glory and majesty and solemnity and pathos of it grow . . . There are mountains and mountains and mountains in this world, but only these take you by the heartstrings.' And Professor G. R. de Beer, in *Escape to Switzerland,* a book written during the grim days of the war, describes some of the simple things in Switzerland that stick in the memory : 'The spacious cleanliness of the post offices, the cheerful ding-dongs as the trains go by, the neatness and the tidiness of the chalets which do not in any way detract from the picturesque, coffee in thick cups with rolls and cherry jam at the buffet at Basle station (arrival platform).'

Our route on that first journey led us by Lausanne and Montreux and storied Chillon, under the Dent du Midi, and up the valley of the Rhone by Martigny to Sion, that attractive capital of the Valais. The route thence was up the Val d'Hérens, in the postal motor 'diligence,' by spiral twistings which took us quickly up to Vex, and then by the crazy earth pyramids of Euseigne, above the foaming torrent of the Borgne, to Evolène and Haudères, with superb views of the Dent Blanche. The road in those days was then succeeded by a rough pony track, which after five miles of walking brought one to Arolla. What a Mecca to reach! How many generations of our countrymen have found it everything an Alpine centre should be, with its incomparable girdle of hills, the Dents de Veisivi, the Aiguille de la Za, Mont Collon, the snowy crest of the Pigne, Mont Blanc de Seilon, even turf mountains like Mont Dolin, or rocky outliers such as La Roussette! And what a superb centre for wild flowers ! And then there was the little English church, tucked away in the pinewoods, where worship in such surroundings was itself an inspiration. And on days of relaxation, there were always smaller excursions to be made, such as to the Lac Bleu de Lucel, at Satarma, with a little problem rock-climb nearby, the Dent de Satarma, described by Abraham as a 'tough little rock for its inches.' There are places with a special flavour of their own, which causes them to be regarded with particular affection, and to be visited again and again. Arolla is one of these.

We stayed at the 'Mont Collon,' and Dorothy Pilley has noted how this rendezvous has also contributed to the affection its devotees feel for Arolla :

> 'The long tables of the 'Mont Collon'; the stone stairs so steep after a 'first day'; the crowded glass-walled verandah where one sits on cane chairs to gossip, to read detective novels, to play cards on wet days, with the feet against an electric heater; the miscellaneous rooms in which one interviews the guides over coffee and liqueurs; the salon which has the red plush chairs and sofa, and regal gold-tasselled curtains and the piano, but in which one may not smoke — what is there in all these to hold the fancy?'

Yet the 'fancy is held,' nevertheless, and the 'Mont Collon' has especially appealed to English folk, since the days long ago

when Walter Larden was served at the original inn with marmot soup under the gleam (and smell) of a paraffin lamp, as he so charmingly tells us in *Recollections of an Old Mountaineer.*

From Arolla we made our way by the Col de Collon to Prarayé, in the Valpelline, tramped the entire length of that fascinating valley — with exquisite views at its lower end of the Grivola and the Grand Paradis — called at the ancient town of Aosta, and then moved up to Courmayeur, where we tried to get our teeth into something the hotel menu called 'English roast beef,' while we admired the magnificent Brenva face of Mont Blanc in the evening light. There followed a quite exciting pedestrian tour round to Chamonix by the Col de la Seigne, the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme, the Col du Bonhomme, and the Col de Voza, a high level expedition round the chain of Mont Blanc, of which the early pioneers thought highly.

A second visit to the Alps two years later brought us again to Arolla, and included a walk over the Simplon Pass, and then a journey up the Val d'Anzasca to Macugnaga, from which is a first-class view of Monte Rosa, ten thousand feet of rock and snow and ice, which we were fortunate enough to perceive in all its rosy splendour, at sunrise one summer morning, when we emerged from the chalet where we had spent the night. The holiday was continued with a walk over the Monte Moro, and a sojourn at Saas Fee, that exquisite village set amidst delightful pastures below the immense wall of the Mischabelhörner, with the mighty Feegletscher curving round the dark ridge of the Langefluh, and fine views of the other great peaks on the far side of the Saasthal. We traversed the glaciers, and looked out from the passes to the great peaks of the Zermatt region, the Matterhorn and the Weisshorn predominating, and climbed our first real snow mountain in the Alphubel. In moments of relaxation we read the accounts of the early exploration of these peaks and passes by Sir Alfred Wills, in *Wanderings among the High Alps,* or as described by the first members of the Alpine Club in their original journals. How often the curé of Saas seems to have been a willing partner on these expeditions! Truly, the Church has from the first been associated with the craft of Alpine climbing ! One recalls the feats of another priest, Achille Ratti, who, as Pope, became Pius XI. And climbing annals are full of the doings of luminaries of the English Church.

Saas Fee is one of those places, like Arolla, which captivate the heart and mind, and for which English people have a special affection. It is certainly a place to which one returns time and again, even though it may now be up a first-class motor road, instead of the rough Kapellenweg, trodden by so many of us in the old days.

This second Alpine holiday of my youth was completed by a stay in Kandersteg. Since then how many times have I repaired to the Alpine regions, how many Welsh crags and northern fells and Scottish bens ascended, how many exciting mountain scenes beheld both here and abroad; and yet the mind goes back in perpetual delight to the early days of boyhood and youth, when one learnt to walk and climb the hills, and love them with as passionate an adoration as is possible this side of idolatry. Surely for many others also has the foundation for a love of the hills been early laid, and surely many too could trace an odyssey similar to this.

MOUNT RUAPEHU AND ITS CRATER LAKE

N. E. Odell

There occurred on Christmas Eve, 1953, a railway accident, unprecedented in the history of New Zealand, when the Wellington-Auckland express, just north of Tangiwai, crashed through the bridge over the Whangaehu River, then a raging torrent, involving a total casualty list of 151 persons. This river has its source in the small Whangaehu Glacier* which lies high on the south-eastern flank of the crater of Ruapehu, New Zealand's culminating volcanic summit of the North Island. Actually the crater is composite, conforming to a 'caldera,' and consists of an outer rim enclosing an area of about a mile and a half long from north to south and half a mile wide, within which at its southern end is an inner volcanic cone with a central crater occupied by a lake. The latter is nearly circular and approximately 600 yards across, whilst permanent fields of névé fill the depression between the inner cone and the outer rim on the north, west and south, and form ice-cliffs in places along the border of the lake. On the east side of the lake rises a cone of scoriæ (cinders) and ash, culminating in Cinder Peak (Peretini), often called the Pyramid, whose outer slope falls steeply to the Whangaehu Glacier. Ruapehu's highest point Tahurangi, 9,175 feet, is situated on the crater-rim to the southward, and overlooks the lake. It was during what has been claimed to be the first complete ascent of the mountain in 1879 by George Beetham and Joseph P. Maxwell, of Wellington, that this crater-lake was discovered, and surprisingly found to be hot.† On only two subsequent occasions has it been reported as frozen over, for usually it is warmed by volcanic vapours from below, and at times it steams strongly. Often a sulphurous scum is scattered over its surface, which otherwise is

*Pronounced Wha-nga-e-hu: *not* 'Wong-gy-hoo' as frequently heard—*vide* Sir Peter Buck, *The Coming of the Maori*, p. 76.

† *The First Ascent of Mount Ruapehu, N.Z., and a Holiday Jaunt to Mounts Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe.* George Beetham. Privately printed. London: Harrison and Sons, 1926.

The actual first ascent, however, of one or other of the summits of Ruapehu appears to have been made in the late 1850's or early 1860's by Sir George Grey, who initially experienced great difficulties, as had others, on account of the tapu placed on the mountain by the Maoris: vide *N.Z. Alpine Journal II*, 1895, 75.

of a milky colour. There is interesting evidence of variation in depth of the crater, and therefore of the depth of the lake, in the recent past. At the time of the great eruption of Ruapehu in 1945, a mass of molten lava rose to form first an island in the lake, and later to occupy the whole floor of the crater. This was subsequently withdrawn, or blown out by explosion, and a pit of about 1,000 feet resulted, which was eventually filled up with water. In 1950, however, an adventurous party of the N.Z. Canoeing Association ascertained that the greatest depth of the re-formed lake was 264 feet at the point of principal eruptive activity in 1945; whilst soundings over much of the bottom elsewhere indicated anything from 60 feet to 130 feet. Since the Tangiwai disaster, further enterprising canoeists, carrying their craft to the top of the mountain, have again embarked on the mysterious foaming waters of the crater-lake, and they have recorded approximately the same depths as previously.

It was the bursting of its barrier of scoriæ, ash and névé, at the lowest notch in the crater-rim south of the Pyramid on 24th December, 1953, and the sudden outlet of the lake-water, that was the cause of the flooding of the Whangaehu River, with its load of volcanic mud and boulders, which travelled a total distance of twenty-five miles to Tangiwai. But two points initially were not clear: (1) whether renewed volcanic activity had played any part in causing the sudden collapse of the barrier, and (2) if the latter consisted predominantly of névé and had thus been melted through. It can be said at once that the report of Mr. James Healy, of the N.Z. Geological Survey, before the Board of Enquiry on the Tangiwai Disaster (cited briefly in *The Times* of 11th May, 1954), stated categorically that there was no evidence of earthquake or volcanic disturbance to bring about the collapse of the lake-barrier, and allow the release of the large body of water that formed the destructive 'lahar'*, or mud and boulder flow, in the lower reaches of the Whangaehu river.

Our first attempt in February, 1952, to reach the top of Ruapehu and view the crater-lake was fraught with disappointment, since my wife and I experienced very bad weather, and on

* 'Lahar,' a Javanese term, referring to a torrential mudflow, caused by the bursting of a volcanic crater-lake; or the melting of snow and ice by volcanic heat; or by the action of rain on ash deposited on the steep flanks of volcanoes.

the upper snow-fields, in thick cloud and freezing wind, we were unable to see anything beyond a few yards, fearing eventually that we might stumble into the lake itself. However, in May last, *en route* to the Science Congress in Auckland, we turned aside to the Château Hotel in Tongariro National Park, and in perfect weather again made the ascent by the north-north-western side. From the Château at 3,710 feet, one can motor up to ca. 5,100 feet by the skiers' road, and the remaining 4,000 feet involves an easy walk, with a minimum of scrambling and the final straightforward slopes of the Whakapapa Glacier. This glacier, incidentally, like others on the mountain, seems to be in a state of slow bulk-shrinkage, but according to Mr. L. O. Krenek, of Wanganui, it has not in recent years shown such evidence of terminal retreat as have the others. As to extant indications of maximum advance of these glaciers during or since the Pleistocene Epoch, polished rocks are to be found not lower than about 6,000 feet on the northern side of Ruapehu. Moraines are conspicuous by their absence; and only in the case of the Waikato (or Mangatoetoenui) glacier, on the eastern side of the mountain, are there any clear signs of old moraines, terminal or otherwise, whilst this glacier, I understand, indicates no lower elevation of former glaciation than in the case of the Whakapapa. The compact and massive character of the lavas, varying in composition from hypersthene-andesite to basalt, may be a factor which inhibits rock-fragmentation and the formation of morainic material. But other contributing (negative) factors are no doubt the sluggishness as well as the thinness of these névé, rather than true glacier, masses.

During a perfect morning, when light cloud still lingered in the valleys, we were surprised on the upper glacier to see a magnificent mushroom-like column of smoke, simulating that of an atomic bomb explosion, suddenly arise from the summit of Mt. Ngauruhoe (7,515 feet), some ten miles away to the north-east. It was just one event in a succession of gas-explosions and lava-emissions that have been intermittently continuing for many months down to the time of writing (December, 1954) from New Zealand's single active volcano. On reaching the Dome (or Patatau, 8,700 feet), at the head of the Whakapapa glacier, we obtained at once a commanding and impressive view of the crater-lake, backed by the highest serrated portion of the crater-rim, which culminates in the peak of Tahurangi. The lake is

enclosed by steep banks of snow and scoriæ on the northern, eastern and southern sides, whilst cliffs of névé inter-bedded with ash drop some fifty or sixty feet along its western margin. The water appeared a milky blue, streaked with whitish and pale yellow exudations from its depths and, with the rich golden lighting of the late afternoon upon its serrated rocky and snowy frame, formed a peculiarly romantic and beautiful prospect. The thought struck one that the early Maoris had denied themselves much by placing such a strict tapu on any ascent of the mountain, thereby forbidding access to this lovely and indeed inspiring scene! Time did not permit of our proceeding beyond the Dome on this occasion; so leaving the top at 4-15 we descended in fast time to the car at the head of the road, and were back at the Château by 6-30.

A brilliant day followed, and I decided to make another ascent for the purpose of closer examination of the crater-lake outlet, and hopefully to reach the highest point, Tahurangi. Travelling solo, in quick time I made my way up by the same glacier route, halting only for occasional observations; and skirting the Dome, proceeded westward and southward along the inner flank of the crater rim below Paretetaitonga (9,025 feet) to the Mangaturuturu Glacier. The latter forms an extended shelf of névé to the foot of Tahurangi, and to reach it from the girdle traverse that I had embarked upon, it was necessary to descend several hundred feet of steep and schrund-rent ice-slopes. Fortunately I had provided myself with crampons, which greatly reduced the amount of step-cutting necessary, and ere long I had reached the snow-crest of the crater-rim at the north-western foot of Tahurangi. Thence followed some two to three hundred feet of steep ice-draped rocks and by about 4-10 p.m. I was standing on Ruapehu's culminating point. A truly amazing panorama is commanded from this eminent point: across and beyond the partially shadowed crater-lake below was Ngauruhoe, with its billowing tower of ashy cloud sharply confined at some 6,000 feet above its summit to a mere fantastic stratum; round westwards to the far horizon one gazed beyond a glowing mist-flecked terrain to the symmetrical cone of Mt. Egmont (8,260 feet, New Zealand's 'Fujiyama'), precisely eighty and a quarter miles distant; and then southwards one could identify, some thirteen miles off, the site of the calamity of Tangiwai, lying just clear of the mighty cone of purple shadow cast from Ruapehu by the fast-

sinking sun. These scenes from a mountain-top at sunset must always be not merely impressive but almost overwhelming: such as to rivet one to the spot in breathless adoration. But I still had a long way to go and some further important observations to make. Dropping down the eastern ridge and ice-slopes towards the Pyramid, I soon found myself on the broken ashy névé in the vicinity of the outlet of the crater-lake. The latter was clearly draining, as for long it has, through a tunnel in this dirt-choked névé, and over a lip of solid lava and/or tuff (compacted ash); and then after appearing in a chasm formed by a collapse of the névé cover, the water could be seen to take its plunge beneath the main mass of the Whangaehu Glacier. Briefly, it would appear to have been the movement, settlement and crevassing of the mixed névé and ash on the crater-rim at this point that released the waters of the lake which had, for an unknown period, become pent up above the sill, or lip, of compact lava. Thus, when critical pressure had been exceeded, or progressive melting had proceeded, or both, the dam must have finally given way on Christmas Eve. I have discussed further details of these matters in the current issue of the *Journal of Glaciology* (Oct., 1955), whilst a variant of this article has appeared in the *Alpine Journal* for May, 1955. News has lately reached me that the level of the crater-lake has dropped two or three feet, although last year's ice-cave is completely closed. Moreover, the last exceptionally dry and hot summer has caused an immense amount of surface melting and wastage of the glaciers, so that where formerly were ice and snow, now great areas of volcanic ash and scoriæ are exposed, which derive from the eruption of 1945.

Failing light prevented my lingering; and climbing a long, steep snow-slope, now frozen to hard ice, I reached the sharp ridge of the Pyramid, which rises perhaps 400 feet above the lake on its eastern side. As I passed along the ashy and snowy crest, the moon was rising, and soon through a clear sky its light afforded all that was necessary for rapid progress. Whilst making my way down the Whakapapa Glacier, its surface sparkling in the moonbeams, I fell to wondering why climbers are so prone to rush early from their summits and thus miss the glories of sunset dissolving into moonlight upon the mountains.

KANGCHENJUNGA RECONNAISSANCE, 1954

S. R. Jackson

A rough impatient hand on my shoulder and an excited voice inviting me to 'Come and look at this,' tumbled me out of bed and into a dream world. We were properly attired for dreams in pyjamas of many hues, as out we stumbled on to the lawn of Jill Henderson's lovely 'Rungneet' bungalow on the outskirts of Darjeeling. Dawn was breaking and there, only fifty miles away across intervening range after range of dark blue-green foothills, floated like a sea of distant cloud the mighty sunlit snow bastions of Kangchenjunga. For half an hour we stood spellbound and shivering, drinking in the beauty of that wonderful scene — now in imagination cutting steps up fantastic snow ridges, traversing glistening ice slopes, and scaling impossible buttresses; now calling attention to some new discovery, some new breathtaking feature; now turning to pick out the neighbouring ice-clad giants Jannu, Kabru, Talung, Pandim . . This was my first sight of the great mountain and as I swept binoculars over its southern flank it seemed part of the dream to realise that in a few weeks time we ourselves would be there exploring the mighty S.W. face which rises from the Yalung glacier, to find, if possible, a route on to the great ice shelf at 25,000 feet. The cold, the clamouring demands of appetite and a growing sense of propriety eventually drove us indoors, soon to begin the final hectic preparations — organising loads, hiring coolies, engaging mountaineering sherpas, fixing terms, buying native foodstuffs, haggling, estimating, analysing, cabling, phoning . . .

Three days later on the 10th April we were on the move. The advance party of Europeans leaving with the main caravan was composed of Trevor Braham, Hon. Secretary of the Himalayan Club, Don Matthews our New Zealand Doctor, Jack Tucker of the Fell and Rock and myself. Our Leader, John Kempe, who at that time was Headmaster of Hyderabad Public School, was still shackled to a desk but had arranged to race after us by double marches a few days later, together with Gilmour Lewis who had been with him on Kabru the year before. We had engaged eight Sherpa mountaineers and sixty-five porters, of whom twenty-five were Nepalese and the rest Sherpa coolies. Our Sirdar was Ajeeba, whose name is already associated with many expeditions, including the successful but ill-fated French expedition to Annapurna in 1950: our other Sherpas were Balu,

Pasang Phutar, Ang Dawa's 2, 3 and 4, Lathakia and Pasang Dorje.

For some time it had not been possible to obtain a permit to proceed through Sikkim north of Pamionchi and our approach route therefore lay along the Singalila ridge which forms the boundary between Nepal and Sikkim. For the climbing party the Singalila ridge is interesting, healthy and good for acclimatisation, but for the main party of porters it is far from ideal as the passes are covered in deep snow in April, heavy storms may be encountered and food for coolies cannot be obtained along the ridge. During the early stages of the march we trekked along this switch-back at an average height of 10,000 feet through rugged mountain country. On either hand long sweeping valleys with steep slopes covered with rhododendron bushes wound into blue depths and in the crisp air of early morning we could see ahead of us the snow-clad peaks of the greater Himalaya.

On the fourth day out, a tremendous storm arose at Nyathang whilst we were having dinner. We had no common mess tent at this time and were feeding in our individual tents. Suddenly for a single, stunning, literally electrifying moment of time, the universe exploded and became all sound and light. The metal plate in my hand appeared to expand into a blinding ball of blue flame, a searing pain ran along my right arm, the plate was whipped into the air, scattering its contents, whilst I was flung violently backwards to the rear wall of the tent. A second later there was a relieved and thankful acceptance I had escaped the fate of a burnt offering, but some chagrin regarding the wholesale distribution of food. As I was groping about searching for chicken legs and picking up occasional peas I heard Trevor in the next tent shout—' Are you all right, Ron?' ' Yes, I'm O.K. Trevor, but I have been struck by lightning and my right forearm has been burned. How are you?' ' I have been struck also, but . . .' ' . . . so have I,' came from a third tent, ' and I've lost my so and so potatoes . . .' We dissolved in laughter and assured Jack we also were fellow losers. A little later one of the large tents for porters was ripped to pieces and we worked through the height of the storm improvising shelter. The next morning as the rising sun brought life and warmth, transforming a purple land into a world of colour, the happy voices of Sherpa coolies replaced the thunder of the storm and to the west on the

far horizon, roughly eighty miles away, could be seen the brilliant sunlit snow slopes of Cho Oyu, Everest and Makalu.

At Megathang, on the 16th, after another heavy storm during the night, twenty-four Nepalese coolies deserted us and thereafter we had to reorganise loads and proceed by relaying them. On the 17th we crossed the Garakhet La (14,200 feet) and the Dain La (15,000 feet), the latter being waist deep in snow, and some of the coolies must have suffered terribly. The majority wore no foot gear and a few were without snow goggles. As a result, one or two were affected severely with snow blindness, but although all bare-footed coolies complained of cold, none appeared to suffer frost bite. The following day we equipped everyone with some makeshift protection for feet and distributed all our spare snow goggles, which just sufficed to cater for the needy.

The Chumbab La (15,800 feet) was crossed on the 19th and whilst on the pass another severe snow storm broke. We had considerable difficulty getting everyone over the snow covered pass and down to safety with loads intact: some food was lost which was later to cause us much concern.

Heavy snow was encountered during the remainder of the trek to Tseram at the foot of the Yalung Glacier. On the Semo La (15,300 feet) for example, the north side is extremely steep, and we were all engaged getting coolies safely down, several hours being spent descending 2,000 ft. of snow and ice slopes. Here again a number of loads were accidentally, or otherwise, rolled down the pass, their contents being scattered far and wide as their bands were burst and once more some food was lost.

On the 21st April we arrived at Tseram (14,500 feet), so completing the first important phase of the journey. Here we paid off most of our coolies, retaining only the best for carrying loads as far up the glacier as they could go; thereafter we relied on our eight Sherpa mountaineers. We camped on a lovely alpine meadow surrounded by pine trees and rhododendron, carpeted with alpine flowers and feeding, during the summer months, a herd of about forty yaks. Up to about sixty years ago a small community lived at Tseram, but now for ten weeks or so of the year there is only a yak herdsman and his family from the neighbouring village of Khunza, two days to the north-west. To the north the snowy ramparts of Kabru could be seen ascending into the blue of heaven and the savage aspect of its face coupled with

the thunder of distant avalanche and glacier stream contrasted vividly with our camp site of grassy glades and the tinkling of yak bells.

Another food problem arose at Tseram because the headman of Khunza did not honour the agreement, made by an advance reconnaissance in January, to supply us with Tsampa (roasted barley) and Atta (native flour) for our Sherpas. Our Sirdar and one other Sherpa had therefore to forage far afield to get supplies and did not succeed in obtaining all that was required: coupled with our previous food losses this meant that both Sherpas and ourselves were on short rations at a later period.

From Tseram, Braham and I pushed on ahead one day before the others, to try and discover a route through the Yalung Glacier but the main party, who had that day been joined by Kempe and Lewis, caught up with us whilst we were still exploring. In the lower reaches the Glacier is covered with a mass of stones and boulders and is carved by movement and weathering action into a maze of deep valleys and great ice cliffs with dirty glacier pools at their feet, through and around which it is necessary to find a way. The glacier is about twelve miles long, but the lower half is easily circumvented by travelling along ablation valleys formed by natural action on both sides. The glacier nevertheless has to be crossed in this lower section. Firstly there is a rather awkward descent to the glacier floor down extremely steep loose rubble slopes followed by interminable boulder hopping over boulder covered ice slopes. Although less than two miles in width it took many hours to weave a tortuous path through the quarry of stone and rubble in the broiling sun.

From the far side, Jack Tucker and I pressed on to have a preliminary look at the mountain, fixing camp on the slopes of Kabru at 18,000 feet, from where we had a splendid view across the valley to the immense face of rock and ice comprising the south-west face of Kangchenjunga.

Three days later we joined the rest of the party who were toiling up the valley to establish a reconnaissance camp at 16,500 feet. During explorations from here Kempe and Braham came across the remains of a camp site at 18,000 feet. Nearby, marked by a wooden cross, was the grave of Lieut. Pache, the Swiss climber who, together with three porters, was overwhelmed in an avalanche during the 1905 expedition. Several

old tins lay around and tent platforms were clearly discernible, the whole camp giving an impression of recent habitation despite the lapse of time. Following exploratory work by us all to find a safe route, Braham and I went ahead to see if we could place base camp in the natural basin below the south-west face. A dangerous way was found through heavily crevassed areas covered with avalanche debris and we established camp at 18,000 feet.

All our future explorations were made from the upper basin and for three weeks we lived in this wonderful amphitheatre, surrounded by great ice cliffs and stupendous rock buttresses soaring upwards in places as much as 6,000 feet and then upwards again to the very summit 10,000 feet away in vertical height.

Avalanches were heard probably every ten minutes or so and we never ceased to marvel at the magnificent spectacle of hundreds of thousands of tons of ice falling thousands of feet from the ice shelves, to be ground and pulverised into great clouds of fine snow particles which advanced rapidly across the glacier at speeds upwards of 60 m.p.h.

The first route tried was via the Talung ice fall, the top of which is at an altitude of about 20,000 feet and leads into a cwm below the Talung saddle from where it was hoped to strike left to attain a 'hog's back' or snow ridge leading on to the lower end of the great snow shelf at about 23,500 feet. Braham and I climbed through the Talung ice fall to within 100 feet or so of this cwm on the same day that we together pitched base camp. On the steep lower slopes, covered with powder snow, Trevor who was leading, came off, but saved himself by braking in the approved fashion with his ice axe. Disregarding the buffeting he had received we returned again to the foot where, after a little rest, we exchanged positions and, ascending by a more direct route, eventually found a way to a point just below the lip of the cwm.

Two days later when Lewis joined us we got to the rim by striking left near the top and ascending a short gully on the left hand edge of the ice fall; here, Lewis and I left Braham and ascended a 300 feet rock buttress which afforded us a wonderful view through moving mist and cloud into the Talung Cwm. Before attaining the rock buttress we displayed horrible rope technique over a treacherous 100 foot section and I think we

were all rather ashamed of ourselves. The buttress was easy to begin with, the first real pitch being a gully followed by a severe traverse of which the first move was an exhilarating simian swing across a gully on to a 15 foot 'hand traverse.' We returned in worsening weather and my diary notes for the day, probably echoing all our thoughts, end tersely — 'Enjoyed the adversity. Best day since leaving England.'

On the 9th, the entire party joined us and concentrated on finding a way into the cwm, but were baulked by a huge 15 foot wide crevasse just beyond the rim; the short gully route was written off as too dangerous, although even further right where we worked our way through, the route passed over and by crevasses and seracs strewn with avalanche debris. Kempe, Tucker and Braham twice returned and made determined efforts to cross this great crevasse, but without avail.

And now the party was re-united it became possible to appreciate to the full the enlivening qualities of a common mess tent. There we would congregate with wet frozen feet, with bowed back and laterally curved spine pressing against the wet wall of the tent, seated painfully on small tins of various sizes but consistent hardness, with one's aching knees doubled tight at an elevation higher than one's aching seat. Awful cramp would develop, demanding stretching or moving one's legs — but this type of delicate manoeuvre usually involved upsetting the salt container, the milk kettle or some other vital item of food, to the considerable annoyance of the other suffering inmates who realised, nevertheless, their own incipient repetition of the same disastrous manoeuvre.

But the mess tent had its compensations! Jack was a raconteur of no mean order and his rollicking laugh irresistible; and Don was a tonic in himself without his pills. The nights were long and cold. Often, we turned into our bags at dusk (6-30 p.m.) to write up our logs and record experiences by flickering candle light, not emerging until 5-30 a.m. or so the following morning.

At this point, whilst two of our Sherpas were away down the valley searching for suitable logs with which to bridge the Talung crevasse, we turned our attention to the main Kangchenjunga ice fall. One or two other possibilities were tentatively examined at different times as opportunity afforded, but our principal efforts were the two ice fall recces.

The main ice fall is in two parts, upper and lower, connected by a long, almost horizontal stretch. The lower part is buttressed on the west side by a 1,000 feet rock rib, the right hand side of which falls steeply to the main glacier floor.

On the 13th May we split into two parties and made initial probes.

The next day Kempe, Braham and Tucker left the camp at 6 a.m. to attempt the left hand route and an hour later Lewis and I were on our way to see if we could ascend the right hand side of the ice fall from where, early in the day, we hoped to get on to the bounding right rib and thence proceed upward on rock. By 9 a.m. Lewis and I found ourselves about 300 feet above and well to the right of the other party who were experiencing great difficulty and who eventually returned to camp at midday.

We, ourselves, had not been able to cross on to what I believed was easy rock and, for another four to five hours, we had to continue through dangerous but beautiful ice conditions. For eight exhilarating hours we were cutting steps and hacking a way up glistening walls sculptured in the gleaming ice. Repeatedly we thought we had come to some impasse but always we discovered some way of turning or surmounting the difficulty. Now we prodded cautiously across some innocent looking stretch of snow, interlaced below by a matrix of hidden crevasses, into whose icy blue-green depths we would suddenly gaze as with our ice axes we broke the crust of hard snow; next we would ascend an ice rib on to a frozen snow shelf; then, weighing our chances, crampon quickly across the debris-covered slopes below a mighty serac or threatening ice tower. Gil's shorter frame repeatedly experienced difficulty with the spacing of my steps but time was pressing and he continued uncomplainingly. At long last, to our great relief, after ascending two-thirds of the ice fall, we were successful in breaking across on to the rock rib from where we quickly ascended to the top, attaining it around 3 p.m.

From below, in base camp, our ascent had been followed hopefully through binoculars but during our return anxiety mounted as dusk fell. We experienced great difficulty at one point where we lost much time and darkness was falling when, tired but elated, we met a group coming out to meet us with chappaties and hot tea.

The route we had pioneered was through unstable ice conditions and we thought Sherpas should not be asked to climb it with loads. Early next morning, therefore, we all set out to force a route low down on to our simple rock rib, but quickly abandoned the idea as being dangerous in the extreme. Whilst, therefore, the rest of the party set off to re-examine the crevasse above the Talung ice fall, Lewis and I explored the eastern cliffs to see if we could attain the top of the rock rib via that side. We arrived at the top in the early afternoon but the ascent was over difficult rock not suitable for Sherpas, two successive chimneys of V.D. standard being particularly memorable. Nevertheless, whilst descending we discovered a simple, hidden and most unexpected way down over which it was hardly necessary to do more than walk on steep rock and scramble down scree slopes. Elation once more! The exposed rock cliffs had seemed most unlikely but the way discovered was in fact easy and a few pitons and lengths of rope at the tricky points provided an easy route even for heavily laden Sherpas.

We therefore established camp on the rib at 21,000 feet, level with the top of the lower ice fall, in order to continue our investigations from there. Before carrying out much further exploration, however, news arrived that an avalanche had hit the glacier camp. Our doctor, who the day before had been hit by a falling stone, severely damaging his right hand and breaking his little finger, had dashed out of his tent in bare feet across the stony moraine to escape what he thought would be annihilation, and had been overcome by the blast. Handicapped as he was by his injury, the Sherpas had had to assist him into a change of clothing, they provided hot drinks and got him into a sleeping bag, but he was, from reports, obviously very shaken. It was, therefore, decided for a variety of reasons to discontinue operations, return to the glacier base camp and have a final look at the Talung ice fall.

We had a long discussion and it was eventually decided that the day following the return to base camp, Trevor and I, with Sherpa Balu, should set off in a final attempt to gain the 'Hog's back' on the Talung route. We agreed between us to try the top left hand gully route which had previously been out of favour and we set off in the very early morning. By 10 o'clock, just as we were climbing out of the gully to at long last enter the cwm, the world became a screeching, whistling stream of stones.

Miraculously, although I was in front, I escaped unscathed, but Balu was hit in the back and Trevor was struck on the head, receiving through the thick padding of his headgear, a long scalp wound which bled profusely. Trevor gallantly staggered to his feet and, although almost in a state of collapse, struggled forward. Quickly we scrambled out of the gully into the comparative safety of the cwm. With snow and ice packs we were able to staunch the flow of blood and aspirins helped to ease the pain. The incident, however, killed our ambitious plans for the day and slowly we set off back. During the return, Trevor was obviously suffering considerable pain and was not at all steady in his movements, but he repeatedly guided and safeguarded Balu who was somewhat unnerved. Once off the ice fall, Balu hurried ahead to warn the others. Back in camp, part of Trevor's head was clipped and shaved and his wound stitched.

We now broke camp in real earnest and dropped down to our original base camp below the main basin. From here the following day, Trevor and Don set off back to civilisation and lower altitudes where they could more quickly recover. The rest of us stayed on another two days in order to attempt Talung Peak and make a final assessment from afar of the routes attempted on Kangchenjunga.

Two days later we returned; the monsoon was about to break, we were almost without food, our time was up. In one long day, we dropped down the glacier, crossed over and so, after four weeks, returned suddenly to a colourful and musical world of grass, flowers, bird-song and tumbling streams.

At Tseram, my brother John joined us too late, unfortunately, for us to have benefited from his greater Himalayan experience and mountain knowledge. In seventeen days he had travelled about two hundred and fifty miles through remote Himalayan ranges, over high unfrequented passes, and forced his party to the limit in an endeavour to join us in time. When he arrived he had been twenty-nine hours on his feet but still looked fresh and was obviously tremendously fit. For both of us it was a wonderful, incredible occasion, and the fulfilment of an eighteen-year-old dream — to have climbed together in England, Scotland, Skye, Switzerland and eventually to be together in the great ranges of the Himalayas.

When we met, our party had been living, more or less, on soup thickened with Tsampa, for three days previously, but

John, with beautiful flowing beard, like Father Christmas in manner as in appearance, produced from his coolies' loads sundry sacks of delicious food — tinned tongue, vegetables, biscuits, rich fruit cake . . .

It was a happy march back. John and I shared a tent and talked far into the nights. And in this fashion on the high Singalila ridge in sunshine and driving pre-monsoon rains, we returned to Darjeeling.

And it was in Darjeeling some days later that we were vouchsafed one more glimpse of the great mountain. Once more in the cold of early morning we foregathered on Rungneet's dewy lawn; once more across the shadowy outline of intervening purple ranges we could see the savage silhouette of mighty peaks . . . and then, one by one, they reflected the flush of dawn until we could see them shining white and splendid, surrounding the mightiest of them all.

And gazing, memory flooded with thoughts of what had passed . . . of eventful days not mentioned here; of the simple pleasures of a pipe sheltering behind an all too tiny boulder in the driving pre-monsoon rains; the companionship; the plaintive piping of a Sherpa flute; memories of the intense heat in the upper Yalung glacier and of the biting winds of a blizzard whilst returning through the Talung ice fall; the lovely moonlight nights amongst the upper snows; the glorious sunsets; the cold beautiful austerity of sunrise breaking into a frozen world of rock and ice and the menacing growl of an avalanche mingling with the roar of the mighty winds tearing across the rocky crests of Kangchenjunga's summit ridges . . .

The foregoing article is printed with the concurrence of Messrs. Elek Books Ltd., publishers of the recently issued book *Kanchenjunga* by John Tucker.

A FAMILY WALKS IN VALAIS

Graham Ackerley

When I returned from the war in 1945, Elspeth, the younger daughter, was rising eight and my wife and I decided for purely selfish reasons that the time had come to introduce the family to the hills. From then on New Year and Summer holidays were spent in the Lakes or Scotland, while occasionally an odd week-end would be snatched in North Wales.

The children took to fell-walking like ducks to water and my thoughts went wandering further afield. I wanted to show them some real mountains, either Norway or the Alps, before we finished in the natural course of events with family holidays. However, there were some very definite snags. First, I knew nothing about Norway from a mountaineering point of view, and precious little about the Alps, having had only one short season there as far back as 1929. Secondly, I had decided that the youngest of the children must be, at least, fifteen before we made the attempt. Judging from the outspoken remarks of my family, it seemed likely that by then I would be too heavy and slow to be able to do anything worth while.

It was then that I bought a copy of Walker's *Walking in the Alps*. It was a real find, giving as it does climbers' and walkers' routes, through various districts in the main Alpine chain. His routes keep away from the more fashionable centres and are selected so as to show the best of the country. It seemed to me that this was the kind of thing I wanted and that the walkers' routes should be well within the family's powers.

I then mentioned the idea to the rest of the family as a possibility for the summer of 1953, at that time some eighteen months ahead, and they immediately settled down to a long period of training. Rucksacks were bought and I was no longer the sole weight carrier on the hills. Elspeth religiously walked six miles a day to and from school, while Michael did all the 3,000 footers in the Lakes within twenty-four hours as a training walk.

In the meantime, after a great deal of discussion, it was decided that we would spend three weeks away from home, and in that time walk across the lateral ridges running down to the north from the main chain of the Pennine Alps, staying at night as high up the valleys as possible without using huts, and crossing by the highest passes which did not entail walking over snow-covered glaciers. The start would be made from Mauvoisin in the Val de Bagnes and the finishing line, if we reached it, was

to be Saas Almagel in the Saastal. As the plan developed we decided to book accommodation for three nights at Mauvoisin to find our feet, and four nights at Saas Almagel to recover. For the rest, we left it to chance and in the result only once had any difficulty in getting in, and that was at Sion which we never intended to visit.

As the time of departure drew near I insisted that every effort should be made to cut down the weight to be carried. I still remembered my feelings in 1929 when I humped 35lbs. on my back across the Col d'Hérens from Arolla to Zermatt. We finally succeeded in reducing the weights to 25lbs. for Michael, 23lbs. for myself, 15lbs. for Brigid, 12lbs. for Elspeth and 11lbs. for my wife. This included an ice axe apiece, one 100 foot length of rope for the party, and a complete change of clothing for everyone. Washing equipment was reduced to a minimum, but the only time this was embarrassing was at the Mt. Collon Hotel at Arolla when the five of us were in four separate rooms on four separate floors and we never could remember the other room numbers when we wanted the soap. The ice-axes proved useful, but we used the rope only once when we found ourselves the wrong side of a glacier stream and had to wade across rather than descend and re-ascend some 1,000 feet.

The journey out was made by Newhaven-Dieppe-Paris, and the high lights were the rush at the Gare de Lyons for the tap of 'eau potable,' the embarrassment of walking the full length of the station restaurant in climbing boots on a wooden floor that squeaked, and the devout attitude taken up by Michael during the night, when, finding a full third-class compartment cramping for his long legs, he slept kneeling on the floor with his head and arms on the carriage seat.

It was a perfect morning when we reached Martigny and started up the Val de Bagnes to Mauvoisin by mountain railway and bus. The first shock came at Fionnay, where the works of the great hydro-electric scheme, which is being carried out in the Val de Bagnes, were only too evident. The town has been practically evacuated except for workmen and all the buildings were covered with dust and grime from the continuous blasting. It was here we first came across the sign 'Danger de mines' which was so frequent in the Val de Bagnes that it became a family slogan. The main part of the work, the great dam, was being built at Mauvoisin itself, and the Hotel was full of engineers employed on the job. However, Brigid, our linguist,

was able to convince them that they had agreed to put us up for the following three nights and they made us very comfortable. The noise of a fleet of Mack trucks, without silencers, tipping spoil on to the great dam never stopped day or night, except for half an hour of blessed silence morning and evening between 5-30 and 6 when the old shift came off. This was ended at 6 promptly when all the blasting charges were exploded, and as the sound of the last rock fall died down the first Mack trucks started up once more with the new shift.

The next day we walked up the valley to the Chanrion Hut, delightfully situated amongst green alps and near a group of small tarns. The cloud effects on Mt. Gelé were worth seeing. By the time we returned in a lorry through the half made tunnels to Mauvoisin we felt we had had a really good first day.

In the morning we got away early and climbed to the Col des Otanes, delayed somewhat by taking a short cut at the start that was the steepest thing in grass that we have ever come across. The only compensation was that as a result we collected our one and only specimen of eidelweiss. From above the Panossière hut we had the most glorious view of the Grand Combin, the family's first sight of a snow mountain.

The next day we caught the 5-30 a.m. bus down to Fionnay with a view to crossing the Col de Sevreu to the Val des Dix. Arriving there just before the zero hour of 6, the 'Danger de mines' was imminent and, before we could get clear instructions as to the start of the path to the col, we had to race up the mountainside for shelter while large portions of the path we should have been on were blown up.

The day had started badly and by the time we had climbed up about 1,000 feet we realised we were the wrong side of the stream and wasted half-an-hour getting across it. By one o'clock we were still 1,000 feet short of the summit and the route to it was by no means clear. Our rate of climb on this first day carrying full loads was slow to say the least of it, so I decided to call it a day, return to Fionnay and get bus and train to Sion for the night.

That night and the following day, while we were making our way up to Arolla, there were a series of thunder storms and some torrential rain. By morning, however, perfect weather had set in again, so we climbed up to the Col de Riedmatten to have a look at the Val des Dix, which we had missed. The views were

excellent, particularly one of the Pigne d'Arolla and another of Mt. Blanc de Seilon seen through the Pas de Chèvres.

Taking up our sacks once again we left Arolla late next morning, picnicked at the Lac Bleu and reached La Sage in the afternoon. The old chapel there, set on the crown of a small hillock, has an interesting altar painting of the Shepherds at Bethlehem with all the figures, men and women, in Swiss peasant costume.

We got away by 6-50 the following morning to walk over to Zinal by the Col de Torrent and the Col de Sorebois. We made the tarn above the Alpe de Torrent for lunch and saw a small boy acting as both cowherd and dog, driving cattle down to the tarn to drink. His speed and agility made the older members of the party thoroughly envious. By the time we reached a bank of snow on the far side of the Col de Sorebois and sat down for tea, I certainly felt more than a little short of wind. The usual long descent in the afternoon ended with a very tired family arriving at the Hotel Durand at 5-20, to find that our rooms were at the top of that skyscraper-like building and that there were another eighty-nine steps to climb before the day's work was done.

We spent a couple of days at Zinal, one less than planned because we were a day late as a result of our failure on the Col de Sevreu. It goes without saying that the first was a rest day, but on the second we walked up the Zinal Glacier to the Mountet Hut. We got there just in time to see the famous view before a thunder storm blanked it out. Returning to Zinal that night we left next day for St. Luc, a pleasant walk along a shelf high up the valley side, the meadows through which the path wound being covered with autumn crocuses.

The weather seemed to have broken when we set out from St. Luc. The clouds were down over the tops and there was a cold wind with a drizzle of rain. We, therefore, took the Z'Meiden pass instead of going over the top of the Bella Tola to Gruben. Descending into the valley we could see masses of people around what was obviously the one and only hotel. It looked as if at last we were going to run into difficulty regarding accommodation. But no, it was the whole valley celebrating a Swiss National Holiday with wine, song and dance, and the festivities lasted long into the night.

We had a glorious walk the next day over the Augstbord Pass to St. Niklaus. While the old folk ate their lunch on the top of

the pass the three children climbed the Schwarzhorn, their first 10,000 foot peak, from which they had magnificent views. A sight that will long live in our memories was the scene that suddenly burst upon us as the path wound round a shoulder of the hillside on to a shelf high up above St. Niklaus, incredibly far below, while towering above us, dazzling white in the afternoon sun, were the Bruneggborn and Weisshorn.

That night we stayed at a small pension in the middle of St. Niklaus, dined in its open air restaurant and slept in a suite of rooms all leading off mother's and father's, which became a kind of communal passageway. Our host, was a delightful man, spoke a little English, played Beethoven on his piano till the house shook and looked after our creature comforts.

One day at Zermatt and the Riffelalp and we were off on the last leg of our journey by the Hannig Alp and Eisten to Saas Almagel. The long pull up the road and track to the Alp was wearisome in the hot sun, but after lunch the path down into the the Saastal proved a real find. It first traversed across high up on the hillside through woods and under cliffs, in and out of gorges and stream beds. It then started a zig-zag descent through green alps and down rock faces to the road. I'll swear that on one occasion that path passed through one door of a hay barn, took a sharp hairpin bend and came back through another door in the same building!

We took the bus from Eisten to Saas Almagel, and were met by the English-speaking waitress of the Portjengrat Hotel, who was waiting to see that everything was as we would wish. Three days of real comfort there, during which we visited the summit of the Monte Moro pass in heavy mist, the Plattje above Saas Fee and the Almageleralp, completed a grand family holiday. There only remained the task of getting home during a French railway strike, but that, as Kipling says, is another story.

Looking back there are one or two things, apart from the scenery and the walking, that will always be remembered. A Swiss Hotelier's idea of a packed lunch, vast and stolid; the French boy we met on the path to the Mountet Hut: immaculately clad in a town cloak of heavy wool, he paused in his scrambling ascent to raise his hat politely and wish us 'Bon Jour'; Swiss hotel service: breakfast was served from 6 a.m., or earlier if asked for. No question of getting away at '10 o'clock when climbing with the Fell and Rock.'

THE BLIND WHITE TROUT OF WEARDALE

D. H. Maling

In the first place, I must admit that we did not discover the caves. The resurgence of the Ludwell Burn was already well-known in Weardale and the name ' Fairy Holes ' has appeared on every edition of the six-inch Ordnance Survey map. In the second place, I must confess that, although I was actively concerned with the initial examination of the caves, visits by other parties have now carried the exploration of the system far beyond the parts which I have visited. From what I have seen of the first half-mile of caves, I have no great desire to explore the remainder. The truth is that I am not a pot-holer by preference, inclination or temperament. I am most reluctant to wade into places where there is any likelihood of wetting my cigarettes. In a place like the Fairy Holes, this aversion tends to restrict one's movements.

A few years ago, most people doubted the existence of any large caves in this part of the Pennines. The rock succession is altogether different from that in Craven or Derbyshire. Weardale is situated on the eastern slope of that rigid part of the Northern Pennines which is known to geologists as the Alston Block. This tract stretches eastwards from the great Pennine faults below Cross Fell and Hartside, between the Tyne Gap in the north and Stainmore in the south. Most of the rocks are Carboniferous in age, and, throughout the Alston Block, there is great similarity in the rhythmical sequence of limestone, shale and standstone. The individual beds are quite thin. The lead-miner's names for certain beds : Three Yard Limestone, Five Yard Limestone and Four Fathom Limestone, suggest the usual thickness. Only the Great Limestone approaches a thickness of sixty or seventy feet. Between the limestones are impermeable sandstones and shales which inhibit the development of underground drainage, so that the depth of a cave never exceeds the thickness of a single limestone bed.

A few small holes and corners have been recorded in Teesdale and Alston Moor. Most of them were originally discovered during mining and such caves as Ayleburn, Flushimere and Silverband, seem to have no natural entrances at the surface. The Heatheryburn Cave, in Weardale, where important Bronze Age remains were found in the 1860's, was discovered during quarrying and was subsequently destroyed as the quarry

extended. A large number of incipient pot-holes — 'shake-holes' is the local name — occur along the limestone outcrops, but few appear to lead anywhere. They form a useful place for sewage disposal at many farms and the carcases of the sheep which died in the 1947 blizzards were dumped into these convenient depressions.

I began geomorphological field-work in Upper Weardale towards the end of one October, when the weather was too wild to do more than splash through miles of sodden peat. It so happened that one evening each week, a W.E.A. course in geology was held in the village institute at Ireshopeburn. After one lecture, I was told a story which is widely accepted in the dale and which we have shown contains more than a grain of truth. About one hundred years ago, a party of Weardale miners visited the Fairy Holes where the Ludwell Burn emerges from the Great Limestone. They were missing for seven days and eventually crept from a cave two miles away, in Westernhopeburn, carrying their last inch of candle. It is not recorded whether any of them subsequently died of pneumonia, but our experience of the caves suggests that this would be the least of the afflictions of anyone who spent a week in them.

I was inclined to dismiss this story as apocryphal. It seemed geologically impossible for a cave of this size to develop in limestone which was little more than fifty feet thick. I suspected that there was some confusion between natural caves and abandoned lead workings. I said that I thought it more likely that the miners had been into an old mine.

A few days before the Coronation, I was working in the headwaters of Westernhopeburn. High on the moors, in the bed of Blaeberry Beck, I found the outcrop of the Great Limestone and a stretch of dry stream bed downstream of it. A few yards above an old mine dump, the stream disappeared into a hole partly choked with boulders. I immediately concluded that the stream drained into the old workings of this mine, for the stony floor of the dry bed was completely devoid of vegetation and this suggested a very recent diversion.

A day or two later, Rosemary and I looked at the Ludwell Burn, the next tributary east of Westernhopeburn. We found the place where the stream emerged from the base of the Great Limestone at the foot of a small crag. The actual resurgence was buried under large boulders which had fallen from above. On

top of the outcrop, fifteen or twenty feet higher, there was a flat shelf of limestone which contained two interesting fissures, three or four feet wide, and, apparently, quite deep. As Rosemary peered into one void, a large white object shot up towards her at alarming speed. She leapt back into a bed of nettles and a stock dove, which was nesting in the hole, flew away.

We were not equipped to look at these fissures in greater detail, so we walked up towards Snowhope Moor, looking for the place where the Ludwell Burn sank underground. None of the small trickles which reached the limestone seemed big enough to account for the volume of water at the resurgence, so we concluded that the percolation of several small streams led to some sort of underground reservoir. A moment's thought would have shown that this was really an absurd suggestion, for the volume of the burn at the resurgence demanded that an equal amount of water must be sinking into the limestone somewhere near. I did not, for a moment, consider that there could be an underground connection between the sinking in Blaeberry Beck and the rising of the Fairy Holes, for the two places were about two miles apart and three tributaries of Westernhopeburn crossed the intervening ground.

Since another visit to the two fissures at the Fairy Holes might prove interesting, I asked John Newrick, who appeared to know everyone in Weardale, if he could think of a suitable companion. John considered the matter carefully and decided that he, himself, would like to come; indeed he would have tried to get into the cave before if he had been able to find someone to accompany him.

In due course, we assembled at Ludwell one Sunday morning. I had brought all the necessary climbing equipment. John had a pocketful of candles.

At the top of one of the fissures we roped up and I made a secure belay. John moved down a step or two and, just out of sight from the surface, stepped into a gently sloping mixture of dead sheep and rotten wood. This slope of rich humus led to the bottom of the fissure.

After a short search, John announced that there was a narrow crack leading off to the left, but he thought that it was too narrow to squeeze through — too narrow for me at any rate. So we looked at the second fissure. This, too, led to dead sheep and rotten wood. There was a very low passage with a draught

through it which blew out the candle, but the roof had fallen and it was impassable. When we reached the surface, we returned to the first place with a narrow crack. As John had forecast, the squeeze was too narrow for me. I could not even get my boots through it.

We walked up the moor looking for other possible entrances, though we were sure that they did not exist up there. We tried to dig down under the boulders at the resurgence, but soon decided that this route was too dangerous. Finally we looked at a series of rabbit holes along the top of the limestone outcrop. There was a strong smell of foxes at the entrance of the largest.

With the aid of an entrenching-tool, John enlarged the fox-hole until he could get his head and shoulders into it. Gradually he disappeared from sight. He seemed to have turned a right angle and was proceeding parallel with the outcrop. Eventually a hand appeared from a rabbit hole about ten feet from where I had last seen him and John demanded another candle. After a great deal of digging, passing stones and clay through the rabbit hole, John said that the passage was getting bigger. Ahead of him there was a small cavern. ' As big as the Crystal Palace ' was his conception of it after his tortuous crawl.

I attempted to follow him, but I could not get round the first right-angle and, after sticking two or three times, I managed to back out into the nettles. Two farmers, who had come up to shoot rabbits were quietly watching me. It was one of those embarrassing moments when you suddenly become aware that you have been watched, when you feel as if you had been indulging in some secret vice. One wonders how long the spectators have been there; how much they have seen. I weakly explained my presence in a fox-hole as if it were venial delight. ' We do it for fun — you know.' They remained politely sceptical, but showed obvious mystification when, from the rabbit hole in front of them, the voice of their District Advisory Officer said, ' Pass in another candle, this one has almost burned away.'

John had investigated the small cavern and found a variety of routes down towards the stream. I had another attempt to crawl round the right-angle, but failed. So I backed out and fed the rope through the hole to John. He descended to the stream bed, untied, and went off to explore. He was away for about half-an-hour, during which time he had waded about thirty yards upstream to a large waterfall. The route obviously led up the

twelve-foot wall of the fall, so he did not attempt to go further. Then, as his candle was failing, he returned to the surface.

We decided to wait until the following Sunday for our next attempt. In the meantime, I was advised to eat very little and take strenuous exercise.

I sent postcards to those people whom I thought might be interested and a large party turned up the following Sunday. One family of five broke their holiday in Borrowdale to come and look at the cave.

There was plenty of manual labour available and we soon dug out a more direct entrance passage. It was now big enough for me to squeeze through and, on the principle which makes me the inevitable leader across bridged crevasses, it was now deemed adequate for those who followed.

There was an assorted collection of children who found the narrow crawl perfectly simple. In fact, as we soon discovered, some unscrupulous parents use their children as ferrets to see whether a cave widens beyond a tight squeeze. I am, perhaps, slightly prejudiced against the employment of children in caves, for my field season in 1953 was abruptly terminated when I caught chicken-pox from one of the ferrets.

On this occasion we were able to penetrate about eighty yards into the system. Beyond the waterfall there was a deep pool which could not be waded. It was necessary to climb up and traverse ledges ten or fifteen feet above the water. The walls were seldom more than six feet apart so that the passage was easy to bridge and it would generally require a determined effort to fall down into the water. The cave had been formed by the enlargement of joints in the limestone, so that each passage led to a right-angled corner every ten or twenty yards. Eventually we reached an impasse and the route beyond this point was not found until three or four months later. During the winter and spring, various parties extended the exploration to about 1,300 yards from the entrance. After about one hundred yards of scrambling, one reaches shallower water and it is possible to continue upstream along the stream bed. The principal ingredients of the cave are mud, water and sharp limestone edges. The system is already notorious for its unrelenting discomfort and it is considered to be an adequate test for the quality of waterproofing of all equipment. On the whole, the climbing might be classified as moderate. Only the waterfall pitch and initial

chimney could be called difficult. The ascent of the chimney, when one is tired and one's clothes are heavy with water, is very strenuous.

During the early exploration we found a small cavern about four hundred yards from the entrance. Scratched on the wall were the names of four visitors with the date 1844. These were all local surnames, so it seems that the miners got as far as this. Later exploration further inside the system suggests that the miners never visited these parts, for the first party found the calcite formations completely undamaged and many of the formations could not be passed without breaking them.

By Easter, 1954, the experts from the West Riding had heard about our activities, had come to see the cave and had approved it. They promptly classed it in the highest category of severity and showed their distrust of face climbs by finding a dirty, wet crawl which circumvented the waterfall pitch. They set about proving the trend of the underground stream and quickly showed that the sink in the Blaeberry Beck was, indeed, connected with the Ludwell Burn. By diverting the stream into its flood course and out of the hole, the water level in the cave can be lowered appreciably and the discomfort greatly reduced. Several attempts to enter the sink were unsuccessful and although we examined various shake-holes along the approximate course of the cave, no other entrance has been found.

Within the system, the limits of exploration were gradually extended. At about 2,000 yards from the entrance an impassable sump has so far proved the decisive limit to progress. However, it takes about twelve hours to reach this place and return to the entrance, so that no one has had time to find another route. It seems that if the rest of the cave can be explored, the party must either find another entrance or camp underground.

Concurrently with pressing to the unknown limits, other parties were content to potter about the lower reaches of the cave.

It was on one of these excursions when we first saw the fish. It was not far in —perhaps one hundred or two hundred yards above the waterfall, where there were a series of small waist-deep pools. It appeared to be a trout, but a grey translucent fish which was not affected by the light from our lamps. Its eyes seemed to protrude considerably, and there was no coloration of the retina.

We advised the Cave Research Group who, in turn, told the British Museum. The reply was immediate, for, apparently, this

was the first example in the British Isles which had been reported to them. We later discovered that other cavers have seen them in other parts of Britain and, indeed, the trout in the Fairy Holes were known in the nineteenth century, when reference was made to them in a local guidebook. But all this was news to the zoologists, who sent their expert on trout to see them for herself.

She wished to bring elaborate fish-catching equipment which required, amongst other things, a small petrol generator. We warned her that if she intended to electrocute fish, it would be wise to remember that she, and presumably we, would be in the same water as the fish. Besides, as a member of the Upper Weardale Angling Association, I had to point out that there were certain limits to the sort of tackle which might be used. I also thought that it would be wise to join the party, for I knew that none of the others would have a trout licence.

The zoologist took advice from an electrician and added a pair of gum-boots to her list of equipment. She dispensed with the generator, but brought an elaborate box-full of batteries which we were supposed to keep dry. It required eight of us to get the stuff into the cave. We were underground for nine hours. We went about six hundred yards into the cave and we saw two trout.

The first fish emerged in the middle of the party as we were wading through a pool. Although it ignored our presence for a time, it had gone before any of the hand nets could be brought into action. However, we expected great things of the electrical equipment and when the necessary connections had been made, certain members of the party moved a considerable distance downstream and the current was switched on.

Nothing happened and although some optimists had visualized dozens of trout lying stunned under the limestone edges, none were washed out. Eventually, when everyone was properly chilled and when the subversive elements had grumbled enough, we moved on. On the return journey we found another trout where a net could not be used. We watched it for about ten minutes as easily as if it had been in a tank and were able to convince the expert that such fish existed (she never saw the first one). The trout-stunning apparatus was prepared, the induction coil buzzed, but when the electrodes were placed within a foot of the fish, it swam slowly away into a deep and inaccessible pool.

There seemed to be little object in remaining there any longer. Despite the failure of this expedition, we had been able to convince the scientific world that there were such fish.

John was determined to get a specimen, and eventually he caught one. It survived the experience of capture and transport to London, where it lived for several days. But the longer it remained in captivity, in daylight, the more it reverted towards the normal coloration of a brown trout.

But it serves John right—he caught it with a detonator—in the close season, too.

THE BERGAMASQUE ALPS

R. K. Jackson

In the recent post-war resurgence of Alpinism it is not surprising to find ourselves overlooking the lesser known climbing grounds in our eagerness to overcome the classic hazards of the day. This is probably inevitable and indeed it is desirable that the limit of endeavour should never remain static, but the true spirit of mountaineering is in danger of being replaced by a show of mere technical skill or an imposing list of the latest T.D.s. This state of affairs is to be found in the Alps, no less today than it was forty years ago, largely due to the lack of enterprise in getting beyond the deservedly popular centres; but there are those amongst us, I am sure, who would venture further afield if it were not for the inadequate system of guide books in English given to such outlying ranges, for it cannot be said that they are inaccessible. As regards information in general I would refer readers to the various alpine journals. Meanwhile the purpose of this article is to give a brief outline of one particularly attractive group — the Bergamasque Alps.

This outcrop of the Southern Alps lying on Italian soil, between the lakes of Como and Garda, is really a continuation westward of the Brenta-Dolomite and Adamello ranges. I shall not attempt the impossible by trying to give a complete picture of a naturally complex landscape in words alone, but merely outline the salient features. The peaks of interest are those of the Redorta range, cut off from the central Alps by the extensive Valtellina, and some scattered summits, such as La Grigna, Pora, Presolana and Aretta, stretching south to the plains of Bergamo. In the midst of these lies an isolated wilderness of plateaux and remote valleys where wolves still roam. Rarely does the height of these mountains exceed 3,000 metres, and though they may seem insignificant alongside the giants of the ' summer snow ' they are a delight to wander and scramble amongst. The Redorta range especially, whether it be roaming at will over virgin rocks or joining in a desperate chamois hunt, is the dream of the solitary climber. For most of us, however, the Grignetta will provide more attraction for here abounds rock of truly dolomite form, and it was here that I spent two most enjoyable days.

The group can be approached from Varenna on the shores of Lake Como, from Introbbio which lies to the north of the group at the head of Val Sassina, or from the south via Lecco (famous

as the scene of Manzoni's novel 'The Betrothed'). By the latter route, which happened to be the one of my own particular choice, a short bus ride can be taken as far as Ballabio. From here a delightful walk lies ahead through a wild and wooded glen. The track, in places difficult to follow, winds its way up through the tangled undergrowth alongside a little mountain torrent to open out on to the Plain of Resinelli — a pasture as verdant and luxurious as one could wish for. Richly carpeted with alpine flowers in the spring and summer it is fairly well scattered with chalets, refuges and even a couple of hotels. Immediately above stands the southernmost of the two peaks — la Grigna Meridionale.

Whilst travelling over to the Bernina from Como in the summer of 1953 I can well remember being captivated by my first sight of these twin peaks across the water, rising majestically out of the very depths of the lake as it seemed, and aflame with the vivid colours which are so characteristic of an Italian sunset. It was not long afterwards that I was fortunate enough to make closer acquaintance with this, by then, irresistibly fascinating mountain, about which I had gleaned enough information from local climbers to warrant investigation on grounds other than purely romantic.

It was already late in September and the weather, though still pretty fine, looked like breaking up soon — which in fact it did. I had arrived at Resinelli by midday after a night of travel and had planned to postpone further operations until the next day; but my vacation was running out and I could not afford to wait for the approaching storms to pass, moreover a repast of local salami and wine had fortified me beyond belief. So without more ado I hunted out the young guide whom Cassin had recommended as one of his most promising protégés. I was eager to tackle the Cresta Segantini — the main ridge which leads up to the south peak. My guide looked rather sceptical, and with good reason, considering the hour of day and the fact that I was only the second Englishman he had ever set eyes on. He finally agreed and off we set at a pace which would have done credit to Alfred Gregory! Within half an hour we were at grips with the climb which lay up beautifully sound dolomite, just as I had imagined from the other side of the lake, amongst a maze of gendarmes and pinnacles, but all so rugged and secure that it was hardly necessary to lay a hand on the rock. Here and there

were an odd piton or fixed rope which my guide in his quaint dialect was quick to inform me were for ladies only. I tried to conjure up the sort of lady he was referring to and supposed he must mean the variety in high heels, for I afterwards discovered from him that the place is a veritable Langdale at weekends — when the rocks swarm with climbers from the neighbouring towns and cities of northern Italy.

But to continue with the climb; we soon reached the main ridge which soared upwards in an unbroken series of pinnacles, each one more intriguing than the last. The climbing was in no place difficult and was a fine opportunity for continuous movement unmarred by frequent halts to belay. We made one detour to climb a small tower of local fame, la Guglia Angelina. This is a steep 200 foot problem on Grade 4 with a magnificent abseil down. There are many such problems scattered about waiting for their pioneer; a few have been named but even fewer have been climbed. The most fascinating of those I saw was undoubtedly 'Il Fungo,' a most realistic mushroom, that might have been carved out by man; needless to say the ascent requires some rather ingenious manipulation of the rope. Having left 'Angelina' a little more sedately than I had approached it, after I had discovered a newly fixed cross on the top, we continued towards the summit, taking a few steps down or even a short abseil between each gendarme. Though we could skirt round these obstacles in places we kept mainly to the crest of the arête which very soon began to level out as we approached the top. For the last hour or so we had been enveloped in mist that obscured our view over to the Alps and gave a decidedly eerie look to the steep precipices on either side of us. But we were not to be totally disappointed, for on arrival at the summit cairn we emerged, as if by magic, from the cold and clammy grasp of the mist into one of the most perfect sunsets it has been my good fortune to see. All around was a billowy sea of cloud stretching from our feet to the distant Alps beyond, where the snow-capped peaks rose, each in majestic isolation, from horizon to horizon—the Graians and Pennines to the west, silhouetted starkly against the setting sun, the Lepontine and Bernina Alps in the north, and the Adamello and Brenta mountains melting into the eastern haze of the Dolomites. It was already dusk as we turned to descend by the easy grass track, but I could not help noticing another cross with a bronze plaque beneath it to commemorate

the untimely death of a local guide. This symbolic custom which is to be seen in varying degrees all over the Southern Alps plays a very vital part in the mountain-lore of these Italian peasants and as a result has reached this elaborate, albeit alarming, proportion. Within minutes it was pitch dark and we were picking our way down to the refuge of Carlo Porta at Resinelli which we reached in about twenty minutes — having taken four hours to complete the tour.

The following morning I awoke in my comfortable bunk to the sound of wind and rain. After careful deliberation I decided that this must be my last day and rather dispiritedly set out to explore the northern summit — la Grigna Settentrionale — for any hope of rock climbing was quite out of the question in such weather. I discovered that the north peak was a few hundred feet higher than its neighbour and not nearly so rocky and interesting, and I returned via the south peak to have a last glance at the innumerable little outcrops. Here I was once more handsomely rewarded by my scramble through this fascinating collection of rocks, weathered and worn into every conceivable shape and so inviting to the piton hammer! However there is climbing of every standard to be found here, and though this group does not justify an entire holiday or major expedition in itself it would provide excellent entertainment and a most unusal diversion if included as an apéritif or *en route* from say the western to the eastern Alps.

BONFIRES

From time to time passing mention has been made in our pages—both in prose and verse — of Dr. Burnett's prowess in the construction and lighting of fires. Many members have benefited from the resulting supplies of tea, and not only the maker's immediate companions—others, seeing from afar off a column of smoke rising from some rocky fellside or secluded corrie, have hastened to the spot, and have later resumed their way warmed and refreshed.

Full justice has now been done to these picturesque and beneficent activities by the letter reproduced below. We are able to print this through the good offices of Dr. Burnett (who has supplied the text) and with the permission of his old friend who wrote it. It seems that in the spring of 1953 the proprietor of a Kirkcudbrightshire hotel telephoned to Dr. Burnett and asked for his advice on the making of a Coronation bonfire on Criffell. T.R.B. modestly disclaimed any special knowledge of the subject, and asked the enquirer why he had applied to him. The letter was then read out by its recipient. Ed., F. & R.C.C.J.

Dear Sir,

I was most interested to read your letter in the current issue of *Country Life* re Bonfires. On reading your address it immediately occurred to me that you had living in your neighbourhood the greatest expert in the initiation and maintenance of conflagrations (major and minor) in the world. I refer to Dr. T. R. Burnett, Airdmhoire, Kirkton, Dumfries. Since a very early age he has been interested in the science and art of fires. He has built fires in most parts of England and Scotland, the continent of Europe and Scandinavia. In most of these areas, indeed, he has supplies of combustible materials stored and ready for immediate use, should he in passing feel an overwhelming desire for a hot cup of tea or a minor pyrotechnic display expressing the joie de vivre of the moment. He is, in fact, the very founder, president and patriarch of the global order of conflagrationalists. Should you have any doubt on any particular method of starting an all-consuming flame, he is in a unique position (after many years of practice) to advise you on the relative merits of petrol, gunpowder trains, remote control electric devices and even atomic fission. I feel sure that with only a little encouragement he will be delighted to build, prime, ignite and maintain your Coronation bonfire, provided, of course, that materials and transport are available.

In conclusion, may I urge you to get in touch with Dr. Burnett, show him this letter merely mentioning your bonfire, and your troubles will be over.

Yours in flames,

E. O. Harland.

' OFF-DAYS '

R. G. Plint

I have been asked to justify the photograph entitled ' Off Day ' which appeared in the previous issue of the Journal. Since my method of spending an ' off day ' has brought me into much closer touch with the fells I feel that that in itself is sufficient justification; but if my questioner is still not satisfied I can assure him that I also caught some fish !

In the years following the 1914-1918 war I spent many holidays in the Lake District on my own — I climbed when I could get a companion, I walked and I took up fishing on my ' off days.' What a game it was. I knew nothing about the art of catching trout and was too shy to go and practice in the wide open spaces of the lakes. I was told that most of the becks held fish so I decided to try my luck in them and I can still see my first catch following the gaudily dressed fly which I was pulling upstream !

To learn fly fishing in a beck is to learn in a hard school. The becks are usually only a few feet wide, the surface of the water is generally well below the edge of the bank and the whole area within range is full of tufts of heather and grass lying in wait to catch the fly that is allowed to fall too low on the back cast; after having safely dropped the fly in the water there is always a clump of rushes growing on the bank, with little tufts of flowers on the stems, which has been created solely for the purpose of catching the fly as it is withdrawn for the next effort, thereby causing the angler to come into full view to release it and thus frighten every fish in sight. After many years of practice these hazards still remain; but so does the charm of beck fishing.

The fish that live in them are not big but run about five to six to the pound, a quarter pounder is the exception, anything bigger is an event to be remembered. The water usually is perfectly clear and there is little cover for the angler. Each pool must be cautiously approached, sometimes even by crawling and, if the ground is at all boggy, care must also be taken to tread lightly, as the slightest thump will send a tremor through the earth into the pool and put down every fish in it.

Care is also needed in the choice of footwear. I prefer an old pair of climbing boots, they give a good hold on the greasy boulders and it does not matter if they get wet. Even so there is always the unexpected slip and it is curious that my immediate

reaction is not to save myself but to save the rod from damage. Instinctively, as the slip occurs, I thrust my rod-arm upwards and hope for the best!

As a change from beck fishing, some of the high tarns are worth a visit; but there should be a sufficient breeze to ripple the surface. When there, however, the ripple always seems to be in the wrong place! If the tarn happens to be in a deep hollow the wind usually travels round in a circle and it is necessary to wait until the ripple reaches the spot where one is fishing — a slow process.

The trout vary a good deal in colour and shape according to their habitat. Some becks and tarns produce lovely golden coloured fish speckled with bright pink spots, in others the fish are dark coloured and in some so thin that they hardly seem worth the trouble of catching. All, however, are grand fighters and there are no regrets when the trout wins. It is sometimes said that beck trout are a distinct type when compared with the lake brown trout but this is not so. Given equal feeding conditions, trout hatched from eggs of the beck trout grow just as quickly and just as big as those hatched from the eggs of lake trout. Lack of food keeps them small.

Trout are generally found in all becks having their sources in tarns and usually in other becks as far as the first really big fall. There are some becks, however, which do not rise in tarns and have many big falls, yet trout can be found in every pool almost to their sources. Perhaps a tarn has existed at some time or other or they may have been stocked by spawn carried there by water fowls. I do not know, but at any rate do not be put off by the first big fall.

Beck trout are not very particular about the type of fly offered to them, so long as it is presented carefully; but I prefer to use small hackle dressed flies of the partridge and snipe types, a greenwell or a cock-y-bondhu. For a cast I use nylon, the finer the better. The stretching quality of a nylon rope is well-known and the same applies to a nylon cast, so do not strain it too much if you get snagged; after a time nylon loses its elasticity and is liable to break — usually near a knot — and almost certainly when there is a bigger fish on than usual. Nylon is not expensive so do not hesitate to renew a doubtful cast.

Opinion on landing nets is divided — some think them an unmitigated nuisance; they either flick the fish out of the beck

or if it is too big to flick, they play it until it is tired and then draw it out over the shilla—others prefer to carry a short handled collapsible net that can be tucked into the bag and yet be easily available in an emergency. I prefer to carry one. A short time ago I was fishing up a beck and came to a fine pool. On the first cast I saw a big trout rise out of the depths with a great sweep and take the fly in the approved manner; there I was above a steep sided rocky pool, no landing net, and only a small patch of shilla on which to make a possible grounding. I paid the penalty and lost the fish.

It may be asked why I have said nothing as yet about worming for trout. Well, it's very deadly when a spate is on and when practised upstream in low water it requires much skill. I don't like it — it is a messy business and the trout that takes such a bait has little chance of getting away; worm and hooks are sucked right down. You can, of course, suit yourself — it is a matter of taste; but I prefer to stick to my flies and my losses.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure and justification is in the beck itself — to follow one up from the valley, to fish it pool by pool, and to finish out on the fellside perhaps 2,000 feet up in the quietness of a summer evening is an unforgettable experience.

MOUNTAIN TRAVEL WITH THE SNOWMAN EXPEDITION

J. A. Jackson

As the name implies this was not a mountaineering expedition, nevertheless a good deal of high ground was traversed in Sola Khumbu and several interesting passes were crossed in order to link up the parties which were searching the various valleys. Because of this it is thought that a short resumé of the mountaineering might be of interest.

The expedition left Kathmandu on 25th January, 1954, and after staying a night at Banepa proceeded on the seventeen days trek to Namche Bazar in Sola Khumbu. It was a cool and pleasant journey so early in the year and the views of the distant snow-deckled Himalaya were the clearest I have ever had. Day after day we could see the Annapurna massif, the Langtang Himal and Gosanthain, the 26,000 feet sacred mountain in Tibet. Gauri Sankar and other high peaks of the Rolwaling were also clear to see and for several days a long white plume streamed to the south-east from some peak hidden behind Menlungtse. We felt it could only be Everest.

A very comfortable Base Camp was placed near the confluence of the Dudh Kosi and Imja Khola, at a height of 12,000 feet, and plans were made to split into three parties which would stay in their various areas of search for periods of two or three weeks.

In mid-February Jeeves and I visited the Swiss Lake Camp site of 1952 and the Everest Base Camp site of 1953 and were able to climb on rock pinnacles above Lobuje to a height of 18,000 feet. Though there had been surprisingly little snow on arrival in Sola Khumbu (less snow fell during the winter than within living memory) the last two weeks of February made a strong bid to make up the lack of precipitation. Yak dwellings in the Chola Khola were completely snowed over.

During the first two weeks of March activity in the Chola Khola took members of the expedition to greater heights. A col of 19,000 feet at the head of the valley was reached by Edgar and myself with the Sherpa Ang Dawa V on 9th March and much to our surprise we were at one part able to follow the boot prints of Charles Evans and Dawa Tensing who had visited the col in the previous October. One could only assume that the light winter snow-fall and the strong winds that blow almost continuously over the col had kept the prints free of snow. From the col we

were able to look down on to the Chakri Kang (Ramparts Glacier) and the Chakri La which connects the Khumbu Valley with the Upper Dudh Kosi.

Two other cols of over 18,000 feet were also visited in the Chola Khola. One of these immediately south of 'Pointed Peak' was reached by Edgar and me on 6th March. We thought it would be a quick direct route to the Dudh Kosi. Though possible of descent it was steep and extremely dangerous because of loose rock; certainly impossible for laden coolies. The third col was the one used by Hillary, Noyce, Wylie and Ward in 1953 during their circuit of the Taweche peaks. On 15th March Stobart, Edgar and I made the same circuit to enable us to link up with Izzard's party in the Dudh Kosi. Two days later Edgar and I returned to the col where we were joined by Jeeves and Lagus.

On the following day, 18th March, Jeeves, Edgar and I ascended the peak to the north of the col, the peak which the local people named Kang Cho Shar — East snow-sided peak — and not to be confused with Kang Cho Chang, the peak climbed by an Everest acclimatisation party in 1953. Kang Cho Shar, which is 20,000 feet, provided a good test for acclimatisation in mid-March and from the summit useful views of the local topography were obtained. Climbing varied, sometimes providing us with enjoyable traverses over rock pinnacles, or at other times with easy scrambling which, however, was always dangerous because of the large amount of extremely loose and shattered rock. A snow cone of a hundred feet or so leading up to the summit cornice was a fitting finish to a happy climb.

Later in the same month Izzard, Edgar and I ascended an easy prominence of 19,000 feet above the Dudh Pokhari (Milk Pool) from which we obtained excellent views of the Everest massif and of the Cho Oyu-Gyachung Kang cirque of peaks at the head of the valley. The day following this ascent we back tracked wolf prints to a pass of 19,000 feet which led to the Dudh Kosi. This entailed the crossing of the glacier above the Dudh Pokhari and a few hundred feet of scramble to the pass, which was named the 'Changu La' — Wolf Pass. Later, in April, accompanied by three Sherpas, I completely crossed this pass from the Bhote Kosi to the Dudh Kosi. We stayed a night at Landgen, then had a long uphill walk over grassy slopes and through boulder strewn corries to the small remnant glacier below the pass on the Bhote

Kosi side. The glacier was very short but steep, and once again at the pass footprints of a wolf were discovered.

During the first seven days of April I journeyed with Izzard and Edgar to the head of the upper Dudh Kosi and crossed by a col at the extreme north-west of the valley, to the Bhote Kosi. The height was perhaps 19,500 feet and, because of new snow on steep flanks, proved to be an awkward crossing for the heavily laden local porters. This was part of a journey to the Himalayan watershed and the Nangpa La, 19,050 feet, the highest trading route between the Sherpa and Tibetan peoples. We crossed the stony glacier at the head of the Bhote Kosi and after camping at Lonak and Jasamba reached the Nangpa La on 7th April. On the pass we found a curving bamboo shoot festooned with prayer flags, and round it squatted a number of Tibetan travellers. We had seen them the previous day at Jasamba where they slept out the night with no fire for warmth or roof to their heads, but merely a rough-built wall to shelter them from the chill wind that blew over the Nangpa Glacier. Their toughness is incredible. For the first few minutes at the pass we were besieged by the children clamouring for sweets and their parents for cigarettes, which we gave freely. Though their clothes were ragged and patched, feet barely covered, and lips bleeding and cracked, they were a happy group, and we followed their gaze over to their own country. The view across into Tibet was beautiful, and provided a remarkable transformation in the scenery from that on the Nepal side of the pass. Beneath a fine line of copper-tinted cumulus clouds were gently rolling hills showing various shades of green and ochre and a glimpse of pale blue lakes, a country much more serene and peaceful than that from which we had come.

A possible third pass between the Bhote Kosi and Dudh Kosi was seen as our caravan returned from the Nangpa La and the day after the crossing of the 'Changu La' I visited the glacier with Ang Dawa. Though the pass was not crossed it is probably the easiest of the three passes between the two valleys.

Before returning to camp we ascended a 19,000 foot peak on its north-west side, enjoying several rock pitches of difficult standard. The north side was a perpendicular rock wall as is often the case with the Dodh Kosi mountains, and the walk off to the south extremely easy.

During the third week of April, Stoner, in the company of

several Sherpas and the splendid Ang Tharkey (Sirdar), crossed the difficult Ambu Lapcha, 19,500 feet, to the Hongu Lake above Mera Kharka. From Hongu they then ascended the west col of the Barun Saddle, but from there Stoner returned as he thought he might find the east col an impracticable route on return. This was a fine achievement by Stoner, who has done little mountaineering.

In the last week of April Jeeves and I trekked to Chukung and from there placed a camp near the Yak Pass or Pokalde Col which leads from the Imja Khola to the Khumbu. This col, about 19,000 feet, was crossed by Lambert in 1952 and by an Everest party in 1953. A crossing was also made on 1st May, 1954, by Stobart, Lagus and Edgar. From the col camp Jeeves and I ascended Pokalde, a peak of 20,000 feet, which was climbed by Ward, Noyce and Bourdillon the previous year. The rock is not good and snow conditions were also bad on the north-west side, but the views from the summit—of Ama Dablam, the Barrier, and the Lhotse-Nuptse wall — recompense one fully for any disappointment in the climb. During the next four days the two of us crossed the Ambu Lapcha to the Hongu and ascended an enjoyable glacier peak above the lake, which gives splendid views of Chamlang, Fluted Peak, Ama Dablam and the two cols which lead over to Mingbo and the Imja Khola. Later in the year Charles Evans used this summit as a survey point.

In May most of the members of the expedition visited Parek's Camp I, which is between 19,500 feet and 20,000 feet on Pumori. This camp-site provides excellent views of the route to the summit of Everest by the ice-fall, Western Cwm, Lhotse Face and South Col. The North Col and the slopes up which the pre-war Everesters climbed are also clear to see, and the viewpoint is a ' must ' for anyone who visits the Khumbu valley.

On the last day that the expedition members were together six of us joined in a token climb on the ice-fall in commemoration of the ascent of Everest the previous year.

Whilst the rest of the expedition returned to Kathmandu, I made the journey from Everest to Kangchenjunga by way of Makalu. With Ang Dawa and a number of porters I crossed the Ambu Lapcha and within five days of leaving the Khumbu ice-fall reached the Makalu Glacier after crossing the west and east cols of the Barun Saddle. A height of 21,000 feet was attained on this crossing in order to obtain photographs of Makalu and the

Barun Plateau. On the Makalu Glacier I met Sir Edmund Hillary and Brian Wilkins, and for the next day and a half stayed with Dr. 'Mike' Ball and Jim McFarlane at the New Zealand Base Camp in the Barun Valley. Part of a day was also spent with the Californian Makalu Expedition which had just established Camp III on the col below the south-east rock ridge.

After reaching the Arun Valley at Sibrung we crossed the Chepua and Chyamtung by a pass above Namoche. We stayed at Goyem in the Wakang Khola and then crossed the Rakha La and followed the Naktang Chu in Tibet for several miles past the flat-roofed village of Küdo. The following evening we camped on the Tipta La, thus recrossing the Umbhak Himal and returning to Nepal. The journey down the Tamur Valley to Walungchung Gola was very wet and misty, a foretaste of the weather that prevailed for the next few days during the crossing to Ghunza via the Nango La. After an eventful passage up the Yamatari Glacier, Ang Dawa and I then journeyed through the night across the Senon La and the Mergin La to reach Tseram and join the members of the Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance. That last stage of the journey was a hard one but is well remembered for several reasons — Everest and Makalu seen at dawn across a sea of cloud from the Mergin La; Kangchenjunga, Jannu, Kabru and a host of other great peaks seen from the pass above Tseram; the meeting with the reconnaissance party in the Yalung Valley; and finally, perhaps most memorable of all the meeting with my brother, a story told more fully elsewhere in the *Journal*.

In all, five peaks over 19,000 feet were climbed in Sola Khumbu, three of them 20,000 or more in height. Two passes over 20,000 feet were crossed, and seven of 19,000 feet or over were either crossed or their topmost point attained. At times it was galling not to be able to set down a camp and attempt a larger or more difficult peak, but nevertheless the writer feels that the frequent cross-country journeys compensated more than fully for such moments of frustration.

The days spent among the happy Sherpa people, and in mountain wandering in Sola Khumbu will always remain a rich memory.

A WARNING TO NOCTURNAL 'AQUABATS.'

K. I. Meldrum

Mike and I had been members of the school mountaineering club since it was restarted after the war, and the frequent visits we had made to the British hills during the holidays had whetted our appetites for greater things, further afield. However, this summer would be our last opportunity before our National Service. Following in the footsteps of our former members, Sir John Hunt, Michael Ward and Charles Wyllie, we headed for the Mecca of all Alpine climbers, Chamonix. Circumstances forced us to travel by different routes. Mike, whose time was limited, flew, whereas I spent a week in hitch-hiking through France, waiting patiently for my leg to regain its old strength, having been in plaster for the previous five weeks.

We met in Chamonix towards the end of July, and the stifling heat drove us to the more temperate regions of the Plan de l'Aiguille. In good heart we set out at two the next morning, with a French party who were going to climb l'Aiguille de l'M, but we had not gone far before we were captivated by the scintillating ridges of the Caiman and Aiguille du Midi. Regardless of scale we thought we would traverse the Fou, Caiman and Midi returning to the Chalet in the afternoon. Soon, however, we were sadly disillusioned — it was a weary pair of climbers that plodded back at dusk having barely set foot on the mountain.

In the light of our experience, we resolved to try something a little easier and, after much deliberation, the 'Moine' was chosen. This was not to prove such a light undertaking as one might at first suppose. At last we were glad to be away from Chamonix — for here a feeling of intense depression seemed to follow us wherever we went but was soon dispelled on arrival at Montenvers, only to return with the discovery that Mike's axe had been left on the station in Chamonix. We had the greatest difficulty in persuading the railway authorities to forward it by a later train, and we waited its arrival with growing impatience and anxiety. The consequences of this delay were not felt for several hours to come.

Our objective was that most elusive of huts—' The Couvercle '; the difficulty involved was increased by our lack of maps, which had been left, together with the axe, in Chamonix. However, we were assured by all the denizens of the ice tunnel that it was

only a question of following the numerous guided parties. This advice we took as far as the glacier de Geants; there we were confronted by the sight of welcome lights further up the glacier, it wasn't until later that we learnt that this was the Refuge Lechaux.

At this stage we made the first of a series of mistakes which was to end in near disaster. We pressed along the comparatively well defined track for some time, and during one of our rather frequent stops we chanced to look behind us — there, on a shoulder of the ' Moine ' lay The Couvercle.

Carefully retracing our steps in the quickly fading light, we made a brief survey which seemed anything but promising. The only weakness appeared to be up the cascade falling from the Télefre glacier to the Mer de Glace; on its left was a wall of uncompromising cliffs, the right was flanked by water-worn slabs, so smooth that even in stockinged feet they would not ' go.' A heated argument ensued, wasting several of our precious minutes, in which we decided not to bivouac, but to make every effort to reach the hut. Accordingly we began what was undoubtedly the first ascent of this waterfall, and was later to prove our undoing.

The initial stages were not difficult, and we were able to avoid a wetting by adroit use of the infrequent stepping stones which presented themselves. Every foot brought us nearer to the glacier snout which once gained would be our salvation. Now only one hundred feet from it, we took the plunge, literally. The terrific roar of the water being swallowed up in the caverns of the Mer de Glace justified the use of a rope. The water tumbled over a chock stone for ten feet in an unbroken stream, and it was only by jamming the pick of the axe that I could pull up until my knee was poised over a lower stone. The pressure of water on a heavy rucksack was tremendous, and it was touch and go whether we would make it. At length we did make it, only to discover after a brief pause that the axe had been lost, together with the loaves which had been threaded through the rucksack— perhaps to satiate the Gods of the Mer de Glace ! The loss of an ice axe was in itself a disaster, but not as catastrophic as the loss of the rope, seconds later. As the rope was hauled in, the loose was dragged down into the swirling foam, where it became well and truly jammed. Rather than abandon the rope altogether, we cut it with our remaining axe — still not free — two more cuts freed a length of some twenty feet, combined tactics now

brought us in a state of complete exhaustion on to the smooth slabs which lead easily to the glacier.

Darkness was now upon us, no rope, one axe and a doubtful pair of crampons, soaked to the skin, with no food — what a prospect ! Thoughts we had entertained of a bivouac had by necessity to be abandoned, the only alternative was to go on. Holding hands, we cramponed up for about one hundred feet, making full use of all the embedded stones, until the angle relented, only to lead into a maze of unstable seracs and gaping crevasses, a world of cold desolation under the velvet ceiling.

Our progress was finally halted by a seemingly bottomless crevasse, where we stood whimpering almost in a state of hysteria. This was emphasised by the hut lights shining boldly and so tantalisingly, only a stones throw away.

Deciding that this lunacy must end, we began to shout as much to keep up our morale as anything, but it was with a tremendous feeling of relief that we saw the tiny pinpoints of light emerging from the hut, collecting, dividing, and finally coming nearer. We prayed that soon we should be released from our agonies. Oh! To be able to sit down to a steaming mug of coffee, but this was not to be, despite our frequent shouts of 'Secour.' It may have been that our inadequate French was misunderstood. However, nothing happened. Having exhausted our French vocabulary, we resorted to our native tongue. In retrospect my only hope is that our would-be saviours were not conversant with the language. Gradually the various groups dispersed along the perimeter of the glacier and always we heard the call, ' Ne traversez point,' echoing from one side to the other, being answered by other fainter calls, and above all the stentorian bellows of ' Secour,' rang out as if from souls in torment. Eventually it dawned on us that nothing could be done to help unless our position was known, and since all our matches were ruined, we were unable to help our rescuers. ' Nous n'avons pas un lumier,' but this was only a shadow of our former calls as we realised its implications.

Slowly a peace descended on the whole affair, parting remarks were thrown at us in abuse, as the groups retreated whence they had come, to the warmth and security of the hut. Left alone in the cold, pale moonlight our thoughts wandered. Why were we born? — All that money wasted on my education, what will my parents think — Students Die In Alps Tragedy ! Then

suddenly, as if by telepathy our thoughts joined in the natural fight for survival. What had before seemed impossible was done without a murmur, the great crevasse was crossed by a narrow snow bridge, and progress was made steadily upwards.

The place where the rescuers had been was given a wide berth, since we naturally assumed in our light-headed state, that the party being unable to reach us, we would be unable to reach them. Consequently, we meandered up the glacier, bathed in the incredible deceptiveness of a moonlight, which bore a resemblance to modern street lighting and, like it, surrounded everything with that sickly colour, which can only be associated with putrefaction. At last we reached the 'Jardin' (why it bears this name is beyond me, it is nothing but an icy wilderness), whence a horizontal traverse would lead us straight to the hut. We staggered on not bothering to remove our crampons on the easy rocks. It seemed an eternity, at last we saw a glimmer, but was it the light from the Requin Hut? . . . No, these lights were moving, and where there is light, there is hope, so we moved on with renewed vigour, soon running into a French party which was just leaving for the Vertes. Little did we know at the time that this was the last time we should see them alive — their adventure did end in a tragedy.

On arrival at the hut we were treated like heroes, and the rescue party were the first to enquire after our health, at the same time assuring us that had they known the circumstances, they would certainly have persevered in the rescue. However, further excuses fell on deaf ears — we were asleep.

In spite of our experiences, we set off at ten the next day to complete our plan, the ascent of the Moine. Although it was only made by the ' voie normale,' it formed a contrast so complete to the events of the previous night, that in retrospect they seemed almost worth while.

It would no doubt be of interest to those who are new to this district, to know the correct route. This consists of a series of hand-rails and metal ladders leading straight from the Mer de Glace up what we had considered to be the uncompromising cliffs!

INNOCENTS IN THE EAST

A. H. Griffin

The busy Kendal to Keswick artery through the Lake District and its continuation along the north shore of Bassenthwaite Lake towards Carlisle, cuts the National Park and its mountains into two approximately equal portions, and the layman might assume, if he was sufficiently interested, that it does much the same thing for the rock climbs of the district.

Climbers, however, know differently. West of the main road, with its double-decker buses, caravan sites and flourishing ice cream trade, there are listed, in half-a-dozen stout guide books, between six and seven hundred rock climbs, and many more routes still await official recognition. In the neglected eastern area, however — a reasonably hilly area which contains the Helvellyn range, Skiddaw, Blencathra, Fairfield, High Street and many more elevated sections of countryside — the climbs are easily contained in one modest section at the end of the old Dow Crag and Langdale guide, published in 1938. Even including obscure routes which have since proved unidentifiable the grand total is — or was — the miserable one of thirty-eight.

No doubt there are geological reasons why there should be more rock climbs west of Dunmail Raise than east of it but it seems rather strange that there should be as many as seventeen times more. You have only to examine the head of Deepdale or spend half-an-hour with your eyes open near the Thirlmere dam to realise that even these despised eastern fells can run to rock now and again. Moreover, many of the crags stand bare and bold on the fellside instead of lying hidden in the undergrowth or jungle like certain crags in a well-known western valley.

If you care to look for it there is, in fact, any amount of rock among the eastern fells, although some of these crags may only be reached by walking, which may not suit everyone. There are also several beautiful and, so far, almost deserted valleys, comparatively free of tracks, orange peel and litter. At the moment you can climb on these crags without the need for queueing, watch the buzzards soaring undisturbed or bathe in the pools without considering the proprieties — an idyllic state of affairs which doubtless will soon change when the new guide comes out. It will probably contain something like three times as many climbs as the old one — a modest increase occasioned, not by the authors, but by the commendable exploratory instincts of a small group of much tougher climbers.

The original authors of the 'Outlying Crags' section of the old guide were C. J. Astley Cooper and E. Wood-Johnson, but this was by no means their principal literary task at that time. The former had been rather more intimately involved with the Gable guide and the latter with the Borrowdale guide — in pre-Bentley Beetham days. Apparently, in the very beginning, the word 'Borrowdale' was held to include 'all outlying climbs between Shap and the sea not provided for under the main crags.' Had Beetham been told this before embarking on his new Borrowdale guide there would now be climbs on John Bell's Banner and Wansfell Pike, great evidence of tree felling over most of Westmorland, and no need for this article.

Faced with the addition to their already considerable labours of completing the outlying crags section of the guide and trembling at the thought, as Astley Cooper put it in the 1933 *Journal,* that they might be saddled with researches into 'the basalt cliffs of Northumberland or the mouldering ironstone of the Cleveland hills' the early joint authors did not waste any time peering up untracked valleys for new climbs or signs of old ones but rushed into print as quickly as possible.

That was also the idea of G. B. Spenceley when he was detailed to investigate what another seventeen years had done to the outlying crags but he has been thwarted at every turn by people increasingly keen on scaling vertical or even overhanging rock. As I live in the district and have transport I was enrolled as assistant and at first we innocently thought the task might not be too formidable. We were aware that some able climbers had discovered the existence of eastern Lakeland, but we took much comfort from the assurance of Astley Cooper that guide book writers 'need not be brilliant exponents of the art of rock climbing, provided that they can call upon others to carry out the difficult routes.' We therefore cast about for people who could not only do very severes but could also record what they had done in readable English.

Having thought of someone who might be able to drag us up some of the less overhanging things on the Castle Rock of Triermain and, having actually ascended Hangover on Dove Crag at the end of a piece of very reliable nylon rope, we thought we might be able to press on with the difficults with some confidence. But we were in for a rude shock.

One evening I happened to be tending my front lawn, which

abuts on to the main road through the Lake District, and idly wondering whether we might be able to rise to a couple of very difficults on Carrock Fell the following day when Donald Hopkin, laden with rope and travelling northwards, stopped his motorcycle at my gate. Glad of the excuse I abandoned my mower and we talked shop. He was on his way, he told me, to Raven Crag and, thinking he meant the Langdale one, I felt on familiar ground. Oh, yes, we'd cleaned up most of that, I boasted, but of course it was not an outlying crag. 'It most certainly is,' he countered. 'I mean Raven Crag, Thirlmere. That's where the real climbers go now. There are nine V.S's. there already.'

This ruined our weekend. We had always known Raven Crag, Thirlmere, but had automatically written it off as much too steep for our attention. Now people had actually started climbing on the wretched thing and, although it lies a few hundred yards to the west of my quite arbitrary line of cleavage between western and eastern Lakeland, it was held to be an 'outlying crag.' 'Marvellous routes, too,' went on Hopkin, who I was beginning to like less every minute. 'When we'd finished with Castle Rock we just moved across to the other side of the dam. Very convenient, really.'

That sort of thing has been going on, I am sorry to say, ever since we started and my manager now authorises me to invite climbers who can do overhangs to come to our aid. We may even be able to get them a mention in the new guide.

To counter this distressing accent on verticality and to find something we could do, George and I once discovered a new crag, Eagle Crag in Grizedale, after watching a nimble sheep accomplishing the last few feet of what looked a pleasant climb. We thought that if a sheep could get up there must be holds on it and we might even be able to get up ourselves. The result was three quite nice, sunny routes, a couple of possible routes which better climbers might be able to polish off and a fearsome-looking thing which Jim Birkett thought might go on a good day. Seeing that none of us could even get off the ground on this route we did not even bother to inspect the overhangs higher up on a rope.

Of course, our principal concern has been sorting out the older routes. The oldest of them — apart from Iron Crag Gully in Shoulthwaite, which dates back to the heroic era and should be

written off — is Dollywaggon Gully, climbed by Col. Westmorland when he was a little lad and probably never repeated until our ascent generations later. That was our impression at the time, anyway. This gully is now rather safer than before, large portions of its retaining walls having peeled off during our ascent. This was a climb which we felt might be within our powers — it was classified 'moderately difficult' — but as it was rather a wet day we employed Jack Carswell to lead the enterprise. At one point, I discovered that the wall against which I was negligently leaning was about to collapse. George, who was below me, had to do some urgent scampering before I could step to one side and allow the force of gravity to replenish the screes below.

For some reason, I seem to have been considerably involved with loose rock in recent years. One occasion, not concerned with this guide, was when Eric Arnison inconsiderately dropped a large rock on me in Newlands Gully on Miners' Crag. I did not see the thing coming down but it felt exactly like being crushed by a heavy sideboard. Eric shouted down: 'Tie yourself on in case you faint, and sit down for a bit,' and I was trying to comply with the instructions when he dropped another one on me. I saw this one coming, but, being a sitting bird there was not much I could do about it, and he winged me on the arm . . .

Oddly enough, Eric was also involved in some rock juggling on Migraine on Hutable Crag in Deepdale. It was my turn to lead and I was pedalling about in a little crack quite a way above the screes without making much progress. Eric was twenty feet below me, and as I was making heavy weather of it he kindly came up and took a fragmentary belay just below me. I then made my effort, reached up for the top of a jammed flake — and the whole mass lurched outwards.

Several things then happened very quickly. Eric reached up and pressed me on to the rock, just holding me in balance, I managed to hold the flake in place for a second or two with my knee and George, who was supervising from the screes, was told to get himself and Eric's dog out of it as quickly as possible. This took about three seconds but it seemed like three hours. At the end of it a few tons of flake hurtled to the screes. We all had another look at the crack, both from below and from above, and decided — greatly to my relief — that

I had so wrecked the pitch that it was now quite impossible. The route now goes to the left.

One of the disadvantages of being assistant to a guide writer is that on unsavoury routes you have to do all the dirty work, leaving him to his writing in the comparatively comfortable position of second man. This mostly happens in dirty gullies and the literary work is carried out on miserable bits of notepaper which are completely bedraggled and unreadable at the end of the day. This casual approach to creative work is to be deplored. I once received, through the post, a missive from Spenceley and Tom Price, then holidaying in Skye, which consisted of the sodden side of a Quaker Oats packet, date lined 'The Howff, Coruisk, Monday,' with the message more or less obliterated either by spray, paraffin or both. On the pleasanter routes the manager probably insists on leading as many of the best pitches as you will allow, and the assistant's job then becomes largely a question of trying to remember how many pieces of white tape — tied on the rope at five feet intervals — have passed him by.

Now and again a conscientious guide book writer feels himself compelled to investigate one of the harder routes — even if he has to be dragged up by a minion — but an assistant can plead loss of form or indifferent footgear and wriggle out of the duty. George felt himself impelled for some extraordinary reason to check the already excellent description of Hangover on Dove Crag and secured a young tiger to do the hard work. I felt no urge whatever to attempt this overhanging cliff but I promised to walk up the screes and shout directions. Having thus washed my hands of the whole affair I spent the day before the attempt in motoring some very active young men about the Lake District. They were pacing an even more active and younger man on an attempt to break Bob Graham's fell walking record. As two of the pacers had to cover between them nearly all the Lake District mountains this meant quite a day, even for the motorist. Weather interfered with the attempt but that was no reason for cancelling the celebration which followed, and the party finished in the early morning hours.

The screes below Dove Crag are steep, but the next morning they were nearly vertical and I was very relieved to reach the foot of the crag where I hoped to sit and gloat. Most

unfortunately, however, this was not to be. Despite the promises that had been made, supported by every excuse I could manufacture, I was eventually bullied into tying on. The thing which really clinched the matter was that the young man who had run up and down about twenty mountains the previous day was also to be taken up the climb by one of his pacers. After that, it was useless saying anything.

All I can say about the climb is that the crux seemed to be both strenuous and delicate at one and the same moment, and that nylon rope is extremely reliable. I would have thought that the leader would have been demoralised by the discovery of the piton lying at the foot of the climb — the longest and rustiest one we had ever seen, something like a large piece of railing. However, he had more of his own and, later on, hanging from one of his pieces of ironmongery at the friction stance, I marvelled at the wonders of engineering and thought longingly of the comfortable grass ledge below me on the screes where I had planned to sleep and smoke. Afterwards we all agreed it was a magnificent climb — it was certainly a very fine lead.

There is much more to be done among the eastern fells — maybe not climbs like Hangover, but probably pleasant routes for the average climber in rather different country. These new routes need not include the 'thirty foot moderates' which Astley Cooper so despised twenty-two years ago, but there may be several 150 feet very difficults for the picking. Such routes are not to be discounted — as one grows older they become more and more attractive — and they would be even better if twice as long. Certainly something has been done on a smallish scale to offset the weekend congestion in Langdale and Borrowdale and no doubt the work will continue. Perhaps this is a selfish thought, but I only hope the eastern fells will not become *too* crowded.

Note. This article was written before G. B. Spenceley was selected to go to South Georgia. When this happened the 'guide assistant' was promoted to 'collaborator.' Ed., F. & R.C.C.J.

MY FIRST MEET

Dai Evans

I emerged from Seascale station in the early hours of a summer's morning with a suitcase in one hand, and as a gesture to the fells, a small rucksack over my shoulders. Still imagining, I suppose, that I was in London, I waited for a taxi to drive up. I waited and waited — at last, in disillusionment, I set off on foot towards Wasdale.

Some hours later I arrived, footsore and weary, at Brackenclose. All breakfasts were over but my selfless host promptly cooked me another one and, thus refreshed, I began to look about me with an inquisitive eye. I was presented with a chaotic scene of mountaineers, men and girls, hurrying to and fro with ropes, climbing boots, buckets and brooms. Up to that time I had imagined that mountaineers in general would look as formidable as the north face of the Eiger, and that lady climbers in particular would be complete battle-axes. I had begun to be agreeably surprised when my host interrupted my reveries and proceeded with some ceremony to present me to a large climber. Although that person regarded me with an indifferent eye, I realised that an important ritual in my graduation as a member of the Club had nevertheless just been performed; its significance I only came to understand later, but it was, of course, *being introduced to the Leader of the Meet.*

As with an eye to a pleasant snooze after my all-night journey I now retreated in the direction of the dormitory, a rope was plonked on my shoulder and I was whisked away to the fells. Our route led up a long and very steep shoulder to a conglomeration of stones, which I learnt was called Hollow Stones. From this viewpoint my attention was directed to an earlier party, already half-way up Pisgah Buttress. That noble tower of rock with its soaring sweep of pale grey slabs, flanked on either side by the great precipices of Central Buttress and the Low Man, cast an immediate spell on me. It remained much in my thoughts during the ensuing week, until at last I was able to do the only adequate thing that can be done with such an indifferent and motionless beauty—climb it.

After some deliberation our party split up and I was relieved to find myself safely on a rope between W.E.K. and J.Mc.G. (as she then was). The earlier pitches of Moss Ghyll passed without incident and having negotiated a step which, since all steps seem

to be called Collie's step, I will call Collie's step, we arrived at the Amphitheatre. Here, to our delight, we had a stalls-eye-view of another member of the Meet, stuck in a damp, green chimney; if he was not upside down then he was very nearly so, and the rope between him and his leader, higher up the chimney, was wound round the chockstones and protuberances of Scafell in a most ingenious manner. It was some time before we could tear ourselves away from this happy sight, but I was secretly glad that the chimney was thus occupied, since we had no choice but to finish our climb by the easy and delightful slabs to the left. Except for this final pitch, Moss Ghyll had seemed to me a long and formidable affair; while it was clearly practicable to follow up it (having just performed the feat), it was beyond my understanding how anyone could venture to *lead* it.

The evening in the hut is a confused memory of people cooking, drinking tea, chatting, washing up and making their bunks for the night. The night itself was disturbed in its earlier hours by the buzz and clatter of fresh arrivals from distant parts, and in its later hours by the chattering and screaming of the more desperate climbers in their sleep. It was, therefore, in no very refreshed spirit that I looked out next morning (Sunday) on a grey sky, with threatening clouds low over Yewbarrow and the Screes. The whole meet had now arrived and twenty or so people soon set off in a gigantic crocodile, strung out across the Screes. When, in the undistinguished middle of this crocodile, I arrived at the foot of Great Gully I took the precaution of mingling in the thickening crowd, in the expectation that the Leader of the Meet (J.E.C.) would in due course tack me on to some powerful climbers. What was my dismay to find every member of the party but one called before me; and I was then commanded to lead that one. I wobbled up the scree towards J.E.C., mumbling my inexperience; but it was useless.

Passing the fearful remains of a shattered aircraft, I started with shaking knees up some rickety and mildewed rocks. In no time I found myself scrabbling crabwise on slithery footholds at an alarming height above my second. I managed to complete the pitch, half-dazed, but I was appalled at the prospect of the endless climbing ahead. However, I soon succeeded in persuading my second to lead the more difficult pitches and, indeed, every pitch whenever J.E.C. was not looking. In this way we eventually emerged, triumphant, at the top of the Gully. The

clouds, we found, had cleared. The whole of Eskdale and the long slopes rising to Scafell were flooded with sunshine, and a secondary light gleamed from the retreating clouds, piled in great white towers above the ridges of Bowfell and Crinkle Crags. It was in gay and spirited mood that we meandered in twos and threes along the tops and down the pony track to Brackenclose. As, later, we sat in the hut over steaming mugs of tea, with Wastwater glittering between the oak trees and sunlight streaming in through the wide windows, I began to feel that intense affection for Brackenclose which so many Fell and Rock members must have experienced.

Monday was overcast again, with a thin drizzle falling. Our party, somewhat diminished, were at Hollow Stones once more and we soon noticed, high on the upper part of the Flake, a distinguished member of the Club preparing to climb it by means of a lay-back in boots. We disposed ourselves as comfortably as we could and waited for him to fall off. When he had fallen off, a friend of his appeared at Hollow Stones. '—— has fallen off C.B.,' we remarked. His friend was shocked. '——? Never !' he exclaimed; and it was not until we had pointed out the intrepid climber, now some twenty feet above the Oval and swinging gently in the summer breeze, that he would believe us. We could hardly have had a more dramatic demonstration of the safety of a climbing rope than this, yet the event caused a general disinclination to climb among our party, and it was with no enthusiasm at all that I was dragged by W.E.K. up Keswick Brothers.

There followed several days of climbing and fell-walking, in overcast but bone-dry weather, on Gable, Pillar and down into Borrowdale. On Saturday, the last but one of the holiday, the weather dawned grey but dry as usual, and we set out (considerably after dawn it must be admitted), five men and two girls, for Pier's Gill. At the foot of the Gill it was our sad duty to say farewell to the girls; we had neither the time nor the leaders to complete Pilgrim's Progress in more than two parties. The first pitch (like many first pitches) I found somewhat nerve-shattering, particularly its earthy finish. Our subsequent progress up this deep and narrow ravine seemed to consist mainly of wading in rivers and climbing up waterfalls; even on the few dry pitches the rock was little better than mud and water: it was so rotten that one could have dug handholds in it, if there had

been any shortage of them. Nevertheless, the canyon had a certain Wild West grandeur about it, and the break-away to the right up the steep slabs of the scoop pointing straight at the summit of Lingmell, was quite delightful. The scoop got narrower and steeper as one proceeded and culminated in a cave formed by a boulder jammed across it. Climbing out of the cave, my partner and I crossed the scree of the upper gully (careful not to dislodge any of it on the heads of the others below) and sat down on an airy ledge of the final arête. As once before from Great Gully of the Screes, so now we had emerged into a world of summer sunshine. Bees buzzed, heather glowed, and Scafell Pike and Gable shone high and misty yellow in the sunlight. We raced up the bouldery arête to the top of Lingmell and there, lazing about while waiting for the others, occupied our time in studying the shadowed face of Pisgah Buttress opposite. When everyone had gathered at the summit I got a promise that we would climb Pisgah Buttress next day, which would be the last day of our holiday. Settled in this decision we rounded off the day, yawning and sleepy, on the sun-warmed rocks of the Wall and Crack.

When I looked out of the hut on Sunday morning wisps of white mist were slowly drifting and dissolving up the gullies of Yewbarrow; the whole dale was glistening and sparkling in the sunshine and each stone, leafed branch and frond of bracken round Wastwater was mirrored in its surface. We hurried through breakfast and having said goodbye to the two girls and one male member of our party, who were leaving that morning, the remaining four of us were soon toiling and sweating up Brown Tongue. It was with a measure of relief that we passed out of the shimmering sunlight into the shadow of Scafell Crag, clattering our way slowly up the screes. When we reached the foot of Pisgah Buttress we were glad to fling ourselves down and lean back against the cool rock. Here, the other three started to eat their sandwiches; quite frankly, I was too nervous to do more than nibble at some chocolate: for we were to climb in two pairs, and since the experienced E. had promised his wife not to lead, I incongruously was to lead him. Having phlegmatically consumed an enormous lunch, W.E.K. and J.B.K. started up the steep first pitch of the direct route. I dried the soles of my rubbers on my socks and then, with mind submerged, followed after them.

Every step I took seemed to lift me the height of a house above the last one. I noticed, through the corners of my eyes, the whole dale falling away beneath my feet. My legs and arms were shaking slightly; but there was no real difficulty yet.

Thirty feet up my nose arrived at the level of a narrow ledge; there was a good handhold above and I was able to step comfortably up. But in vain I looked for further handholes (the reader may not recognise Pisgah Buttress Direct from this melodramatic description, but this is how it seemed to me at the time). I side-stepped cautiously along the ledge to the right, moving my hands to and fro across the rock. Above the ledge the rock began to bulge further and further out, tending to push me backwards as I inched along. I came to a full stop.

Let it be admitted at once that a rope was lowered to me by J.B.K., and with its temporary support I negotiated the bulge. Now the ledge merged into the rock-face, and I began to stretch my right hand upwards, searching for a handhold. At the limit of my reach, delightfully, the whole length of my fingers sank into an absolute crater of a hold. I pulled myself up on the one hand and continued without further incident to the top of the first pitch.

I was relieved to find myself on a grassy ledge, broad enough for a coach-load of trippers. From this comfortable haven I started to bring E. up. W.E.K. meanwhile had climbed the next pitch and J.B.K. was starting after him. I was intensely aware of the great cliff towering behind and above me, casting cold shadows over my nerves. Half the sky was shut out by it, so that the ledge where I stood seemed airless, even musty. When E. arrived, it was a positive relief to get moving, and continue the climb.

Pitch followed pitch, very steep, and seemingly endless. Vaguely as I climbed I was aware of the sunny slopes of the valley behind me, but they belonged to another world. From time to time I noticed the depths below my feet: a brief bit of black rock and then the misty fan-like screes. Always the cliff loomed overhead, apparently undiminished, and transmitting its oppressive influence downwards. Yet by this time I imagined I was climbing smoothly and neatly, positively in a dandified way.

On looking up from one stance where I was belayed I was appalled to see W.E.K.'s heels (nothing more) projecting out

from the rock directly above me, and side-stepping slowly across to the left. From my position below, the movement looked delicate in the extreme. At the top of the next pitch, E. and I were able to inspect this part of the route. We were in a small recess in the face of the cliff two or three hundred feet up, snug and secure; a parapet of rock protected us from space. A little way above our perch a tenuous ledge started from the centre of the cliff-face and carried across to its extreme left edge. It was from this ledge that I had seen those heels protrude.

With pleasurable excitement I stepped out on the rock-face. The holds were good and in a few movements I reached the tenuous ledge. There was no hold above the ledge but the ledge itself undercut the rock, so that I could jam my hand into that horizontal fissure; using this as a hold I stepped into a crouching position on the narrow, flat edge. Carefully I withdrew my hand from the undercut and straightened up. I found I could stand quite comfortably on the ball of each foot, palms pressed against the rock-face, my heels in space. The ledge dipped gradually to the left and maintained its width, or rather, narrowness. Deliberately, with pleasure, I now looked past my feet, down the great sweep of rock to green ledges far below. I began side-stepping along the ledge, brushing the palms of my hands along the rock-face. I had a feeling of controlled elation. This whole movement high up across the precipice was a sustained thrill.

But all good things come to an end, and too soon I had to step round the corner of the cliff to a little grassy platform in a niche high up in one wall of a gully. Here I had to wait in a very cramped position until J.B.K. had climbed out of the niche, before I could belay round a chockstone. The niche was in deep shadow, and the rock behind and above rose, as it seemed, vertically; black and forbidding. High on the opposite side of the gully the sun was shining. Was I enjoying myself? Well, yes, in an oppressed sort of way.

In due course E. appeared round the cliff edge and joined me in the niche. The position was so cramped that, as soon as he had belayed, I started up the crack above. There was some jamming of the left arm and leg in the crack, while the right foot pushed and slipped, pushed and slipped on the smooth rock, as I levered myself up. But soon it was possible to step out on small holds. As I climbed I said to myself: 'Surely the rock is

less steep? Surely the air is brighter?' Suddenly I felt a great surge of excitement. I found myself bounding up the slabs. My face came into hazy, late-afternoon sunshine. I was laughing and talking to myself: 'What a climb! What a superb climb!' I sat down in a comfortable hollow in the slabs, banged my heels on the rock, and called to E. to come on. The transformation from the dark, confined cliff-face to the sky and sunshine and distant views of cloud-flecked hills was so sudden that I felt quite light-headed. As E. climbed up, it was sheer delight merely to feel the thin nylon passing through my fingers, and across my back.

We picked our way lazily up the final gently-sloping slabs. At the top we coiled our rope and joined W.E.K. and J.B.K., already lounging against the summit cairn; a gentle wind sounded in its nooks and crannies. Indiscriminately we devoured sandwiches of sardines, jam and fois gras. We stretched out our legs to the westering sun, chatting contentedly. In the distance was the sea, a sheet of gold. There was a faint, bitter smell of sheep and mountain grass.

That moment was the true end of my first meet, and a perfect holiday.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

W. G. Stevens

Readers whose memory goes back to the beginning of the present century may recall the difference of opinion which then existed (and may still for all I know) as to when the new century began — on the first of January, 1900, or 1901. The assignment of a precise date for the beginning of a century would seem to be a matter of simple arithmetic, but for the founding of a new organisation, such as our Club, it may sometimes be a difficult and possibly controversial matter.

The purpose of these notes is to summarise the documentary evidence as to when the Fell and Rock Climbing Club was founded, so that the time of the Club's Jubilee celebrations may be appropriately agreed upon, the fireworks ordered, and the editor instructed to produce a *Journal* suited to the occasion. We are primarily concerned here with *when* the Club was formed, but the questions of *where* and *by whom* it was founded are closely interlinked. The 'documents' comprise the *Journal*, especially the early numbers, the Minute Books, and sundry other printed material, such as Prospectuses, Lists of Members and the like.

Turning first to the *Journal*, we find in Volume I, No. 1, issued in October or November, 1907, an article entitled 'The Origin and Aims of our Club.' It is not signed, and the only internal clue to the author's identity is a reference to discussions he had had with J. W. Robinson 'well over a quarter of a century' ago. This indicates that he must have been a man of middle age and not one of the 'keen young mountaineers' mentioned in the opening sentence of the article. Omitting some inessential sentences the first page of this reads as follows:—

'For a number of years a coterie of keen young mountaineers, living on the southern confines of the English Lake District, employed most of their leisure hours in exploring the Fells and Rock climbs of the Coniston and Langdale sections of the District.

During the fine summer and autumn of 1906 . . . the desirability of founding a climbers' club for the Lake District began to be seriously considered.

The idea assumed definite shape in the autumn of that year, when at the instigation of Messrs. E. H. P. Scantlebury and Alan Craig, of Ulverston, an informal meeting was held in the Smokeroom of the Sun Hotel, Coniston, on the evening of the 11th November.

These two gentlemen, along with Mr. Charles Grayson, Kendal, and Messrs. S. H. Gordon and G. H. Charter, of Barrow-in-Furness, were at that meeting appointed as a local Committee (pro tem) to draw up a circular letter or prospectus to be issued to mountaineers and likely

sympathisers . . . Mr. Scantlebury undertook the Hon. Secretaryship, and Mr. Alan Craig the Hon. Treasurership.

The response to the circular from many well-known Lake District mountain lovers and climbers was unexpectedly encouraging, and proved beyond question the existence of a widespread feeling in favour of the formation of a properly constituted and comprehensive Lake District Mountaineering Club.

At a subsequent meeting of the Committee, after mature discussion, it was enthusiastically decided to proceed with the formation of the Club; to adopt the name of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District; to draw up rules, etc., and to appoint officers; all, of course, subject to the approval of the first general meeting of members.

Before the end of the year upwards of 40 members had been enrolled.'

This brings the story up to the end of 1906 (as far as it is recorded) and the author goes on to describe the happenings of the first few months of 1907. Early in the year the Secretary reported acceptance of office by Ashley Abraham, as President, J. W. Robinson and George Seatree as Vice-Presidents, and G. F. Woodhouse as Editor of *Journal*. Four additions were also made to the Committee to include parts of the District not represented before. Eleven gentlemen were invited to become Honorary Members; a revised Prospectus, List of Members, Rules and arrangements for Club meets were issued to members, who, by the middle of March numbered upwards of 120. The article then goes on :—

'The first regular General Meeting of Members was held at the Wastwater Hotel, on Easter Saturday, March 30th (1907), during the first officially arranged " Meet " of the Club.'

(The names of the thirteen members present follow, and include four of the five original local Committee, Charter being absent).

'In the unavoidable absence of the President and Vice-Presidents the chair was taken by Mr. T. C. Ormiston-Chant, and the chief business was the confirmation of the appointment of Officers and Committee, the approval of the Balance Sheet, the fixing of the permanent entrance fees and subscriptions, the fee for life membership, the arrangement for publishing a Club Journal, and for several future Club " Meets " at different centres.

The gathering, though not so large as had been expected, was very enthusiastic, and the send off thus given to the new Club was most hearty . . .

The wonder is not that a Lake District Climbing Club has been formed in this year, 1907, but that it should have come so late in the field. It is well over a quarter of a century since Mr. J. W. Robinson and the writer discussed the desirability of bringing climbing frequenters of the Cumberland and Westmorland Crags together at Wastdale Head for some such purpose. However, better late than never.

> This is a plain statement of the facts surrounding the Club's formation, and it would be ungracious and unjust to withhold from Mr. Scantlebury and his indefatigable local Committee the fullest measure of appreciation of their untiring efforts so splendidly sustained during all the initial stages.'

The remainder of the article is a long quotation from the 'revised prospectus' setting out the aims of the Club.

The author of the article quoted from at some length above, rather pointedly refers to the Club as 'formed in this year 1907' and there seems to be some suggestion of challenge in the words of his last paragraph—'This is a plain statement of the facts . . .' If this categorical statement is accepted our enquiry could end, as far as the year of the Club's foundation is concerned, but in view of what the author had previously said some further examination seems desirable. The preliminary and informal character of the meeting of 11th November is stressed, and the Committee then appointed is referred to as 'local' and 'pro tem.' But at the 'subsequent meeting' it was 'decided to proceed with the formation of a Club' and various important steps were taken to this end, and the Club received the name it still holds. Unfortunately, the date of this meeting is not recorded, but it is reasonable to suppose that it took place well before the end of 1906, for after the account of the meeting comes the statement that over forty *members* had been enrolled before *the end of the year*. This also seems to imply the existence of *a* Club at that time.

Again, the account of the meeting or meetings held early in 1907 refers to acceptances of office, additions to the Committee, and invitations to an impressive list of mountaineers and others to become Honorary Members. These all seem to indicate a club already a going concern. The Club can certainly be regarded as having been founded prior to the first 'regular General Meeting' in Wasdale on 30th March, 1907. This was a meeting of members of the Club and its main business was to ratify the appointments and decisions made by its Committee. Actually only thirteen of the 120 members attended, and of these three arrived at the end of the meeting 'owing to delay on Pillar Rock' — by no means the last case of unpunctuality in Club affairs due to a like cause!

We will now turn to the first Committee Minute Book, which covers the years 1907-1915. The Minutes proper are preceded by some notes in Grayson's beautiful handwriting and these are reproduced here with some omissions as noted :—

'*March 21st*, 1907. It is much to be regretted that no definite minutes of the first few meetings have been recorded up to the present, but as such is the case, it is only possible to give the general idea of the past proceedings of the club, such as can be gathered from sundry notes, circulars, etc.'

(Signed) GRAYSON.

'It had long been felt that a club, for all those interested in fell and rock climbing, should be formed in the district. Though the accomplishment of such was often discussed, nothing definite was done till November 11th, 1906. On that date, when going up to Coniston in the morning train, we decided to have a meeting at the Sun Hotel before returning in the evening, to consider the preliminaries of formation of a local fell and rock climbing club.

When the different parties returned from their rambles, the meeting was held as arranged.

A working committee was elected, the general lines of the club roughed out, and a preliminary list of rules drawn up.

The Committee then elected consisted of :—

Edward H. P. Scantlebury (Hon. Secretary). Chas. Grayson.
Alan Craig (Hon. Treasurer). G. H. Charter.
S. Hamilton Gordon (absent, to be asked to stand. This he afterwards agreed to do).'

The general aims or rules suggested are then set out under Rules 1-19. No. 1 is that the club be called 'The Fell and Rock Climbing Club.' The account continues :—

'For some time no recognised meeting was held, but various questions arising were talked over between the several members of the Committee in odd moments, the Hon. Sec. acting in accordance with the decisions.

It was decided in this informal but, none the less thorough way, to ask Mr. Ashley Abraham, of Keswick, to be President of our club, which office he, later, kindly agreed to fill.'

There follow short accounts of what transpired at meetings held at Ulverston and Coniston on 16th January, 9th and 10th February, at which Vice-Presidents were elected, and rules, subscriptions, etc., generally discussed. Then come the more or less formal minutes (the first to be signed by the President) of a meeting held at Ulverston at a date not given, but probably towards the end of March, 1907. This meeting decided on the invitation to honorary members. Next are the minutes of the First General Meeting at Wastwater Hotel, and there is no further record of a Committee until 25th September, 1907.

Certain discrepancies are apparent in the stories of the early days of the Club as recorded in the *Journal* and in the Minute Book. Both of them agree as to the date of the first organised meeting, i.e., 11th November, 1906, but according to the *Journal* this meeting only appointed a local committee which was to draw

up and issue a prospectus. The Minute Book attributes more to this meeting including the drawing up of preliminary rules and the naming of the Club. On the other hand the author of the article in the *Journal* states that these matters were decided at a 'subsequent meeting' of uncertain date. He probably gathered his information some time later, and it may be that the evident informality of the early proceedings led him to endeavour to make the story a little more precise. In the main, however, there is no important divergence between the two accounts.

The first Prospectus, unfortunately not dated, is inserted at the beginning of the Minute Book, but does not appear to be referred to in the preliminary note or the minutes themselves. Part of it is reproduced here :—

THE FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB.
HEADQUARTERS — SUN HOTEL, CONISTON.

'Dear Sir,

I wish to call to your notice the above Club, which has recently been formed.

This Club was founded in November, 1906, with the sole object of fostering a love of mountaineering and the pastime of rock climbing in the English Lake District . . .'

(The letter goes on to mention the facilities which the Club offered, and other advantages of membership under Nos. 1-7).

'The Club hope that eventually they will be able to erect Shelters at convenient spots for climbers, to improve mountain tracks and footpaths, to arrange lectures, to publish if possible a Journal or Annual, and generally to study the interest of climbers in the English Lake District.

Your support in this movement is solicited.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours sincerely,
EDW. SCANTLEBURY,
Hon. Sec.

11 Clarence Street,
Ulverston.

This must have been the prospectus referred to in 'The Origin and Aims of our Club,' as having been drawn up as a result of the first meeting at Coniston on 11th November, 1906, and the article seems to infer that it was sent out well before the end of the year. It is rather puzzling that the prospectus itself seems to imply by the words 'was founded in November, 1906' that it was issued somewhat later. On the other hand the Minute Book records that at a Committee on 16th January, 1907, the clause in the *early circular* about improvements of tracks, provision of shelters, etc., was 'struck out entirely, being only too evidently a thorn in the flesh of all true climbers.'

The first 'Membership Season Ticket' is dated 1906-07, and contains a short statement in exactly the same words as that beginning 'This Club was founded in November . . .' in the prospectus.

This completes our survey of the contemporary documents and, though the stories they tell vary in certain respects all point to the conclusion that the Club was, in every effective sense, founded during the last two months of 1906. If more precision is required the first organised meeting was that of 11th November — there is no doubt whatever as to this — and from this meeting originated all those actions and measures which brought the Club to its full stature during the next few months.

This conclusion having been reached from a study of the contemporary documents, we can now see how later evidence serves to support it, or the reverse. First, two references in the Journals of kindred clubs are of interest. The *Rucksack Club Journal,* Vol. I, No. 2 (February, 1908) has a review of the first *Fell and Rock Journal* which contains the following :—

> 'The first year of this Club sees it strong and flourishing, and the Journal of 100 pages is a most interesting and highly creditable production. Indeed, it sets one wondering if there will be anything left in the Lake District for future members to write about.'

This is inconclusive as to the date of the Club's foundation, but the doubts expressed in the second sentence have, fortunately for subsequent editors, not been realised.

In the *Climbers' Club Journal,* Vol. X, No. 39 (March, 1908), the speech of the President at the 11th Annual Dinner on 14th February of the same year is reported, and the speaker evidently considered the Fell and Rock was founded in 1907 :—

> ' . . . we have to chronicle the formation during the past year of the Rock and Fell Club — a Club which, I believe, is devoted mainly to climbing in the English Lake District. I am sure we all wish the Club great success (applause). Perhaps to many of us a more interesting event is the formation of a Ladies' Alpine Club, under the designation of the Lyceum Alpine Club.'

Returning to our own *Journal* there are a considerable number of references to the date of the Club's foundation in articles, reports of speeches, obituary notices, etc., and we can only mention a few of them here. The first *Journal* was published in November, 1907, and contains a memoir of J. W. Robinson written by George Seatree (the other first Vice-President) in which the formation of our Club *last year* proves that the writer regarded the Club as having been founded in 1906. In the next

(1908) *Journal* the speech of the President, Ashley Abraham, at the first Annual Dinner on 23rd November, 1907, is reported at length, and he exclaims 'Faith has been justified by her children! We can look back over a year of prosperity in every branch of our undertaking,' and later refers to 'our first year's existence.' In the 1909 *Journal* the account of the second Annual Dinner (held at Coniston) refers to 'Coniston being the actual birthplace of the Club' and the new President, George Seatree, is reported as saying :—

> 'Perhaps I may be permitted a few words with regard to the formation of the club . . . It was in this very room, not over two years ago, that in solemn conclave a few local climbers met together — I have been reminded that it is on the very spot on which Mr. Slingsby is now sitting from which the resolution to form a club was made — a curious coincidence. It was an historical occasion and we are mindful of those founders of the club . . .'

This evidently refers to the Sun Hotel meeting or meetings of 1906.

Passing to later *Journals*, the 'Lakeland Number,' Vol. XI of 1936-37, contains the article 'A Short History of Lakeland Climbing,' by H. M. Kelly and J. H. Doughty. This contains a short but delightful account of the Club's beginnings 'by the shores of Goat's Water' in 1906, and attributes its formation to the five climbers who became the 'local committee.'

Finally let us revert to 1927, when the 21st birthday of the Club was celebrated on 8th October at Windermere Hydro. Strangely enough no reference to this event has been found in the Committee Minutes, but it was given considerable prominence in the *Journal*. The account was written by W. T. Palmer, and he reports Ashley Abraham, proposing the toast of 'The Club' as saying categorically 'The Club was formed in Coniston on 11th November, 1906 . . .' In the same *Journal* there is a light-hearted article by E. H. P. Scantlebury on the early days.

1927 seems to have been accepted at the time without question as the 'Coming of Age' of the Club, and 'simple arithmetic' points undoubtedly to 1956 as the year of its jubilee. The testimony of the 'early fathers' and later chroniclers of which we have only been able to quote a selection, confirms too the conclusion reached from the basic documents that its main celebration should be most appropriately on some date not far removed from 11th November, 1956.

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

Muriel Files

In this survey of the meets held during 1953-54, the New Year Meet, as next in popularity to the Dinner Meet (which is reported elsewhere in the *Journal*) deserves precedence, even although not chronologically the first meet of the year. The now well-established good habit of celebrating the New Year in Langdale was continued. As in the past, both Raw Head and the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel were filled to capacity and our host and hostess at the hotel again provided the excellent fare which they have led us to expect. Throughout the meet they never spare themselves and there is no doubt that their efforts are greatly appreciated. Although unfortunately it was impossible for everyone to attend the New Year Dinner (each year a few more appear to be squeezed in) the whole meet assembled at the Old Hotel as 1953 drew to a close. An unexpected visitor, having tracked down his old friend, Alf Gregory, arrived at midnight, and the Club had the good fortune of seeing positively the first appearance in this country of the elusive Yeti, an affectionate creature who warmly embraced the President. Fortunately Greg's well-known linguistic ability was equal to the occasion and he was able to interpret the good wishes which accompanied the Yeti's well-chosen New Year gifts. Next day Alf Gregory delighted everyone by a memorable lecture, illustrated by his splendid colour slides, on the ascent of Everest. A happy innovation was the tea-party at Raw Head, where we all assembled on Sunday afternoon, the climax of this enjoyable occasion being the cutting of the magnificent New Year cake, made and iced, complete with a sugar Needle by Edward and Phil Wormell.

Although it is unavoidable on account of numbers that we should be housed in two separate places, the President's aim of unifying the meet was completely fulfilled and he successfully organized the rendezvous for outdoor activities alternately at Raw Head and the Old Hotel. The fell-walkers were enthusiastic and on New Year's Eve a group of staunch supporters of this meet made the round trip from the hotel to Grey Friars and Carrs without indulging in hitch-hiking. Even this noble effort was surpassed the following day by the tour made from Raw Head to Keswick by way of Esk Hause, the Gables, Brandreth and Dale Head, although it must be admitted that the return was

by car and that those who stayed the course were late for dinner. Rock-climbing was enjoyable even for the not-very-tough, and for the large party who climbed Tarn Crag Buttress, Saturday, 2nd January, was a day to remember. They started from Raw Head rather doubtfully in thick mist, but two or three hundred feet up it thinned, and by the time they reached Tarn Crag they were basking in the sunshine. The photographers were kept busy trying to capture the changing patterns as the clouds boiled up from the valley, but eventually the clouds won, and those who, not content with climbing under summer conditions on Tarn Crag, tempted Providence by going on to Porphyry Slabs and Harristickorner ended the day as they had begun it in cold, wet mist. Another party walking over Sergeant Man found a compass useful.

To return to 1953, the November meet, which, incidentally was the first to be held at the Salving House, attracted eighteen members. The weather was fine, although cool, and on Saturday several parties climbed in Combe Ghyll, most of them going on to Glaramara, while on Sunday the Barrow Boys gave their attention to Black Crag and Woden's Face.

The maintenance meet at Raw Head in February, 1954, was well patronised and both Barn and Cottage were thoroughly cleaned. The Barn living room was emulsion painted and the Cottage kitchen white-washed, but thanks to the many pairs of hands, the meet was able to adjourn before mid-day on Sunday to the field behind the Cottage to enjoy the snow which had fallen thickly on Saturday night. The few lucky people with skis were most generous in lending them and no-one who wanted a turn was disappointed. This was one of the few week-ends in a bad season when ski-ing was possible, so those who had turned up to clean were amply rewarded.

The Eskdale meet, which was held in March, again proved popular and the seventeen people who attended were quite energetic although the weather was only moderate. On Saturday, although the snow had disappeared from most of the fells, the advance guard of the meet cut steps up Deep Ghyll, and on Sunday the main body visited Harter Fell, ascending Birker Force (in fair spate) en route. A number of Vince Veevers problems were attempted, though few successfully, and the traditional scramble to the top was greatly enjoyed.

At Easter bright sunshine and blue skies lasted the whole week-

end and the fine weather was fully appreciated at all the huts. Brackenclose was crowded, but everyone seemed content and all were active in one way or another. Some members were occupied on Guide Book business and many others climbed every day, but one unlucky party had to give up their climb after they had topped the Flake on Central Buttress owing to an accident to another party. The inmates of Raw Head also appear to have been busy. White Ghyll, Gimmer and Pavey were all visited, while some new climbs, none of them severe, but a welcome change for those in the very difficult class, were made on Pike o' Stickle. Some of the more youthful even travelled as far as Scafell, only to find a queue for the Flake, so that they had to content themselves with Botterill's Slab. There was a good party at Birkness, too. The Grey Crags were very popular and a new route was found to the right of the Oxford and Cambridge. Pillar, for a change, came in for its share of popularity, and on Easter Sunday, two members reported fourteen people ahead of them on the New West and others following. From the Salving House comes a report of idyllic conditions disturbed only by the scream of tyres and the roar of exhausts as the 30,000 visitors to the Lakes tried to ram each other in the Rosthwaite narrows. A dozen members and guests made the most of the sunshine, some taking refuge from the rigours of climbing by sleeping in the sun on Haystacks or just ' pottering ' in the valley. Others cooled off in Sergeant Crag Gully but failed in the ascent of Sergeant Man due to heat and general inertia. More energetic folk climbed in Combe Ghyll or on Miners' Crag, Shepherd's Crag, Gillercombe Buttress, Bowderstone Pinnacle, the Napes Ridges or the Grey Crags. More vigorous still was the party which accompanied the meet leader on a long fell walk over Pillar and Gable, finishing up with a large dinner at the Royal Oak, Keswick.

The opening of the 1954 season was indeed too good to last. From Whitsuntide on it is a sorry tale of storm and tempest and there is little to report about the Club's activities during the latter part of the year. The Whit meet was well attended as usual, but little was accomplished on account of the weather. Brackenclose and Birkness were duly cleaned, although the general public seem to have exhausted themselves at Raw Head and only the faithful few turned up at the other huts. No report was received on the Welsh meet at Glan Dena, but it is believed that few were

present and that these unlucky people had the usual August Bank Holiday downpour. The weather was again shocking for the novices meet in September and there were not many clients.

The year ended where it began, at the Salving House. Over forty members and guests came along, so that all the places in the hut were taken and the overflow had to be accommodated in tents and vans. Saturday was fine and many people climbed, although to the leader's disappointment, the crowds flocked to the popular resorts of the Napes, Shepherd's Crag and Combe Ghyll, instead of, as he had hoped, the less well-known grounds such as Blencathra. Sunday was wet and stormy, but in spite of this some stalwarts climbed on the Napes and on the crags nearer home, while the President conducted a party to Pillar by the Old West and back by the Pendlebury Traverse in thick mist and rain. Indeed, the enthusiasm shown at this meet made a most encouraging finale to the year's activities.

THE SLIGACHAN MEET, MAY, 1954

John Hirst

The Misty Isle is sometimes referred to as the Mecca of the rock climber and the informal committee which suggested this venue for the Scottish Meet hoped that it would attract some of the Club's 'Ultramontanes,' to borrow a phrase from the S.M.C. But, alas! the 'Salvationists' predominated, as at previous Scottish meets. The 'Ultramontanes' were represented by the President, Dick Cook and the President's guest, A. J. J. Moulam, but the crags did receive more attention from other members of the party than usual, even if for some it was a motoring and motor-boating rather than a climbing or even walking affair.

The majority foregathered at Bridge of Orchy and Inveroran after a gruelling wet drive, but the completion of the journey next day was made in brilliant sunshine.

The following day we were full of energy, and parties climbed on Sron-na-Ciche, the Basteir, and the Pinnacle Ridge. Perhaps this was too severe for the first day; we never rose to such heights of energy again, though subsequently a caravan of four ropes conquered the Cioch, Miss Hicks fulfilling a long-standing ambition, and there was an expedition to Coire-na-Creiche, some members traversing Mhadaidh and Bidein.

Next day we motored to the Quirang, and on towards Eig, where we encountered an almost impassable 'washout,' three of the cars returning the way they had come. There followed a wonderful expedition to Coruisk via Elgol and a very sporting motor-boat operating a shuttle service. One member was so entranced by the beauties of the scenery that she missed the last return boat, walked round to Elgol, was rescued by the local police and spent the night at Broadford.

A day was devoted to an expedition of almost Himalayan proportions to the island of Raasay, on which the chief objective was Dun Caan (1456 feet), whose flat top is a familiar sight from Sligachan. Dick Wilson had made preliminary arrangements for the voyage from Portree before leaving home, and a small advance party left soon after breakfast to clinch these with with Mr. Sutherland of Inveralivaig, a somewhat remote spot on the coast south of Portree. The main body followed, and all assembled at Portree harbour after a little delay owing to visits to the local barber by one or two members of the party. Here two well found motor launches were awaiting to embark the

expedition, twenty-four all told, the cabin cruiser being in charge of Mr. Sutherland (with expedition members at the helm) and the second boat with Maling as captain and navigator. After a pleasant trip of about seven miles the expedition was landed somewhat after noon near Raasay House (now a hotel), an operation that took a little time and caused some dispersal of the party.

Although the transport arrangements were admirable, the same could hardly be said of the organisation of the climbing party, owing to the lack of a suitable map of the island, and some vagueness as to the best route to the mountain four miles away — not to mention that there seemed to be several self-appointed 'leaders.' At an early stage the 'Sherpas' retired into the forest and made fires for tea, whilst the climbers, after some not very useful enquiries about the best route from the natives, became widely dispersed amongst the foothills. Two of them ultimately claimed to have reached within striking distance of the summit cone of Dun Caan, but were deterred from going further partly by a deep 'gorge' which had to be crossed to reach it, but mainly by the fear that they would be marooned on Raasay if they did not get back to the boats by 4-30, the appointed time for re-embarking. Dun Caan thus remained unclimbed by the Fell and Rock, and although from a mountaineering point of view the expedition had not been an unqualified success, it at least reached Sligachan punctually for dinner, and everyone had thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Another lovely day was spent awheel, lunching on Eist, the westernmost point of Skye, previously reconnoitred by Appleyard, inspecting the lighthouse, and in the afternoon doing the tourist route of Dunvegan Castle. On the same day a strong climbing party took cars to Loch Slapin with the intention of doing the traverse of Clach Glas and Blaven. Owing to rain and bad visibility the Clach Glas ridge took much longer than was expected, and Blaven had to be abandoned, the party coming down a very unpleasant scree gully between the two peaks. The Malings went up Bruach na Frithe with the intention of going over Sgurr nan Gillean and down the Pinnacle Ridge, but also found conditions very bad and came down Fionn Choire instead.

Later two parties enjoyed the lovely drive down the eastern side of Sleat and across to the western side, taking in the small amount of road thereon. For those who like to test their cars

and their driving ability, this tour is highly recommended.

Such, and many more, were the doings of the majority, but a few members upheld the honour of the Club by serious climbing. The President and his pal seemed to spend the entire holiday on Sron-na-Ciche, returning only for meals and bed! They appear to have cleaned up Sron-na-Ciche, but also climbed the Fluted Buttress, a magnificent route on the north-east face of Mhic Coinnich where there is a huge crag overlooking Coruisk. There is nearly 700 feet of it, mostly severe to very severe, and the lower part contains two pitches of superb quality. Including a rather difficult approach from the Mhic Coinnich-Thearlaich gap in midst, over steep terraces and snowfields, the climb took them nearly six hours. As it was fairly dry they climbed in rubbers, but at one point near the top socks came into use and a piton was put in for security.

Then Dick Cook and Sid Walker fully redeemed the Club's reputation by traversing the Coolin ridge. Leaving their bivouac at an early hour they reached the summit of Gars Bheinn at 5-30 a.m. After sheltering from rain for 1½ hours at the Inaccessible Pinnacle they reached Bealach na Banachdich where they were joined by Bramley, and all continued to Sgurr nan Gillean (5-30 p.m.). Walker then returned to Sligachan while Cook and Bramley continued to Sgurr nan Uamha (6-20 p.m.) reaching Sligachan two hours or so later.

A fitting finale was a visit by the whole party to the Drill Hall at Portree to see the film, 'Laxdale Hall.' An added interest was the fact that the film was shot at Applecross during the time when a party from the Kinlochewe meet of 1952 visited it, and fraternised with the actors.

For the rest, we enjoyed ourselves if we did not earn any laurels. The usual happy atmosphere prevailed, and Mr. Campbell and his highly efficient staff made us very comfortable.

Members and Guests attending: R. C. Abbatt, J. C. Appleyard, Mrs. Appleyard, Bentley Beetham, H. Bramley, C. Budenberg, T. R. Burnett, R. Cook, Mrs. R. Cook, F. Lawson Cook, Mrs. E. Gerrard, A. B. Hargreaves, Miss M. Hicks, John Hirst, D. H. Maling, Mrs. R. Maling, J. L. Marsland, W. G. Milligan, Miss U. Milner-White, A. J. J. Moulam, R. G. Plint, Mrs. Plint, Miss A. Plint, H. R. Preston, Mrs. L. Pryor, R. Shaw, Miss M. Shaw, W. G. Stevens, S. Walker, G. H. Webb, R. T. Wilson.

CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

Peter Moffat

WASDALE

THE NAPES

SALOME 275 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 10th October, 1954. G. Fisher, D. Oliver. Starts on the large slabs to the right of Needle Ridge, immediately behind the Needle.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the steep crack which lies 20 feet down right from the Gap, to a ledge rising to the left which is followed to a stance and belay.

(2) 40 feet. Climb above the belay and swing right round a nose and climb on small but good holds on the slab, finishing against a large rock. Skirt around this to the right for good belay and stance. An easier open groove on the left leads to the same belay.

(3) 30 feet. The rock behind and to the right is climbed. A difficult move to the right and a good ledge enables one to gain the crack which is climbed to the top and belay.

(4) 30 feet. A crack in the corner is climbed, then bear left up the face of the pinnacle on small holds; belay at the top.

(5) 35 feet. Easy rocks are climbed to behind a large rock, belay on rock set in a grass ledge.

(6) 30 feet. Climb immediately behind the belay for 20 feet then bear right to the foot of a chimney.

(7) 50 feet. Climb the large chimney then bear right on to a rock ledge. The crack to the right is then climbed to a large rock ledge and belay.

(8) 30 feet. From the ledge bear left over the gap on to the ridge.

ALTERNATIVE TO PITCH 7. 30 feet. Very severe. First ascent 10th October, 1954. P. Ross. Starts to the right of the chimney, a few feet round the corner.

Climb the overhang by jamming and small holds on the right wall until a chockstone is grasped and a pull up affected. Then up and on to a ledge. From here a pull up over an overhanging block brings one to the belay.

DIRECT START. 95 feet. Very severe. First ascent 10th October, 1954. P. Ross. Starts 20 feet to the right of Salome.

Climb 15 feet into the grassy gully then swing left on to the slabs. Move up a few feet and then up the groove on the right underneath the overhang, step left and then go straight up the steep delicate slab, then left to belay on second pitch of Salome.

KIRKFELL

IGNITION ROUTE 265 feet. Severe. First ascent 2nd May, 1954. J. D. Oliver, W. Scott. This route is on a buttress to the right of Kirkfell Gill and starts to the right of the water worn slab.

(1) 20 feet. Move over the bulge and traverse right to a ledge and belay.

(2) 20 feet A steep slab.

(3) 65 feet. Left past a massive block, then round a corner into an overhanging scoop. Up a few feet then right to the edge. Straight up past doubtful blocks to a grassy ledge. Belay on small flake.

(4) 35 feet. Walk back along the ledge for 10 feet and climb the wall to a small spike, then traverse left on the edge and straight up to a ledge and belay.

(5) 20 feet. Step up then right round the corner and climb the scoop on the left wall.

(6) 30 feet. The wall above moving right to a large grassy terrace.

(7) 20 feet. Scramble up the grassy gully to the foot of an overhanging chimney.

(8) 55 feet. Climb the chimney on good holds. Move left at the top, then right to the belay.

LANGDALE

RAVEN CRAG, WALTHWAITE

ALFRESCO 120 feet. Severe. First ascent 6th February, 1954. A.C.C., P. J. Greenwood. Starts midway between Walthwaite Chimney and Route 2 and follows a rib to the right of a shallow depression.

(1) 30 feet. Up the wall to an overhang which is turned on the right. Move left into a glacis to poor flake belays.

(2) 65 feet. Climb the steep rocks to the right of the belay until a step right enables one to ascend easily to a good running belay to the left of a dead tree. A flaked crack above is climbed until a step right into a steep groove enables one to reach the top of the flake. Climb the bulge using doubtful holds to a good ledge (Junction with Route 2).

(3) 25 feet. The open groove above leads to the top.

EASEDALE

HELM CRAG

FLARE PATH 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 28th March, 1954. P. J. Greenwood, A.C.C., D. Ball. Starts in a steep corner a few feet right of Holly Tree Crack.

(1) 40 feet. Straight up the corner to stance and belay at the top of Pitch 1 of Holly Tree Crack.

(2) 60 feet. Climb up an open groove on the left and step left on to a slab which is traversed diagonally left to a ledge. Step across from the left end of the ledge and pull up on the final chockstone of Beacon Crack.

BENTLEY 110 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 28th March, 1954. D. Ball, P. J. Greenwood, A.C.C. Starts in a wooded corner about 100 feet right of Holly Tree Crack, at the foot of a slab with a crack in it.

(1) 20 feet. Up the slab via a flake to a grove of trees.

(2) 20 feet. The crack in the corner above is climbed to a ledge below an arête. Tree belay.

(3) 20 feet. Up on the right of the arête then traverse left round the arête to a stance and belay in the corner.

(4) 50 feet. Continue up the corner and over the bulge at the top, finishing by a short slab. Tree belay.

DEEP DALE (SLEET COVE)

HUTABLE CRAG

CYRANO 455 feet. Severe. First ascent 12th May, 1954. G. Batty, A. D. Marsden. Starts 90 feet left of Curving Gully in a small square-cut recess.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the recess moving out to the left at its top and then traverse to the right to a square mossy corner, continue up a rib shortly moving left again to a belay in a very constricted stance under the overhang.

(2) 30 feet. (A poorer variation exists to the right). Traverse 10 feet to the right and go up a shallow groove to a large grass ledge and belay.

(3) 45 feet. Go slightly to the left to clear the slab which follows, bearing slightly right to the foot of a prominent V chimney.

(4) 20 feet. (Can be avoided on left but this would miss hardest part of the climb). Go straight up the chimney with an awkward landing on a ledge to a belay on right.

(5) 40 feet. Traverse right to the foot of the third scoop and go up it to a grass ledge and belay.

(6) 45 feet. Go up three short walls directly above belay.

(7) 40 feet. Walk 10 feet to the right and go up a corner to a ledge on the left. From it go up a wall on the right to a stance and belay.

(8) 35 feet. Go up wall on right to foot of a V groove to the left of an overhanging nose ('Cyrano'). Go up the groove to a grassy stance and a thread belay.

(9) 35 feet. It is best here to descend a few feet before traversing right on to the tip of the nose and then go directly up to its junction with Curving Gully at foot of the 9th pitch where there is a belay.

(10) Interesting rocks lead to the finish.

GULLY WALL 250 feet. Severe. First ascent 11th May, 1954. G. Batty, A. D. Marsden. Starts on the Terrace and runs fairly closely to the right hand of Curving Gully.

(1) 30 feet. Strenuous. Lay back in the corner of a vertical wall. Finishes on an awkward mantelshelf below a large pedestal with belay on a grass ledge to the left.

(2) 20 feet. Climb groove above the stance roof by an awkward finish to a belay in the gully at the foot of the sixth pitch in the gully.

(3) 35 feet. Climb the wall on the right to a belay on a grass ledge.

(4) 35 feet. Go up a bracken wall to a large grass ledge and belay.

(5) 45 feet. Climb up the centre of a wide wall to a detached block and climb over it to reach and ascend a groove to a stance and belay.

(6) 40 feet. Bear right to easier rocks leading to a large ledge and belay.

(7) 45 feet. A step round and delicate wall leads to easier rocks.

WEST HUTABLE GULLY 260 feet. Difficult. First ascent 11th April, 1954. A.H.G. and G.B.S. The obvious gully on the extreme right-hand side of the crag.

(1) 50 feet. Scrambling leads to the foot of an open chimney.

(2) 45 feet. The chimney. There is a block belay 20 feet above its exit on the right.

(3) 60 feet. Walk to the foot of a cave pitch.

(4) 20 feet. Climb under the large jammed chockstone and gain its top. Belay in cave.

(5) 65 feet. From the chockstone climb the left wall. Block belay on the right.

(6) 20 feet. The wall in front.

FAR WEST RIB 160 feet. Difficult. First ascent 9th May, 1954. G.B.S., A.H.G., C.E.A. Starts 30 feet to the right of West Hutable Gully Cairn.

(1) 50 feet. Straight up the rocky rib above the cairn, keeping to the centre of the rocks. Move right to grass ledge and ballard belay.

(2) 70 feet. Climb up to the left of the belay for 10 feet then round the corner to the left and up slabs keeping to their right edge, to grass belvedere.

(3) 40 feet. From the belvedere go straight up with better climbing on the left.

BLACK BUTTRESS.

COFA WALL 260 feet. Severe. First ascent 30th May, 1954. A.H.G. and G.B.S. (alternate leads).

Starts 30 feet to the right of Portcullis Ridge.

(1) 50 feet. Easy grass and rock.

(2) 35 feet. Climb above belay and move left and up the corner to bilberry ledge.

(3) 45 feet. Climb the scoop and at its top step left to find a line belay.

(4) 40 feet. Step up to the foot of some shattered rocks. Traverse right and round the corner on to a bilberry ledge. Flake belay for line.

(5) 90 feet. Up the chimney for a few feet and gain a sloping rock platform on the left. Make a mantelshelf movement and reach the foot of a slab which climb to its top and leave by an awkward step right. Ascend bilberry ledge to easy ground.

ERN NEST CRAG A low and not very conspicuous crag on the left as one begins to ascend into Link Cove. On the O.S. map it is marked as Earnest Crag.

ERN NEST CRACK 100 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 12th May, 1954. G. Batty, A. D. Marsden (alternate leads). Starts towards the right-hand side of the crag directly above the small lower buttress. Cairn.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the crack to a small ledge. Doubtful block on right. Move round this block and go up slab above to stance and belay.

(2) 50 feet. Ascend groove on left where pleasant slabs lead to terrace.

ERN NEST WALL 115 feet. Severe. First ascent 12th May, 1954. G. Batty, A. D. Marsden (alternate leads). Starts in the centre of the crag to the right of Ern Nest Crack.

(1) 50 feet. Climb wall and move left into and up a groove to grass ledges. Go leftwards again and then up a grass scoop to a belay.

(2) 35 feet. Climb rib on left and then walk right under an overhang to a bilberry ledge with tree belay.

(3) 30 feet. Slabs above on good holds to a large terrace.

GRISEDALE

EAGLE CRAG

The first clean-looking buttress north of Ruthwaite Lodge.

KESTREL WALL 140 feet. Severe. First ascent 19th July, 1954. R. J. Birkett, A.H.G. Starts to the left of some smooth slabs near the lowest part of the crag. Magnificent rock.

(1) 20 feet. Climb to rock ledge. Only belay 25 feet to the left.

(2) 50 feet. Pleasant climbing up the steep crack. At its top step left to a stance and belay behind a flake.

(3) 20 feet. Climb above the belay to a terrace.

(4) 15 feet. Attack the wall underneath the vertical corner.

(5) 35 feet. Gain a scoop at the right-hand edge of the grass ledge and after a few feet leave it on the right and go up the rib.

GRISEDALE CORNER 105 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 4th July, 1954. A.H.G., G.B.S. (alternate leads).

Starts 60 feet up the open gully which bounds the left-hand side of the crag up a rib below a rowan tree.

(1) 35 feet. Straight up to a rock ledge and belay at the foot of a large detached flake.

(2) 20 feet. Climb the crack to the left of the flake, then up a short, steep wall to a bilberry ledge.

(3) 40 feet. Climb easily above the belay or preferably move left 10 feet, then up to a large ledge.

(4) 10 feet. The wall above at its steepest.

JUNIPER SLABS 150 feet. Difficult. First ascent 4th July, July, 1954. A.H.G., G.B.S. (alternate leads).

Starts a few feet to the right of the left-hand corner of the crag.

(1) 20 feet. Steep but easy climbing to the foot of the groove below a rowan tree.

(2) 40 feet. Climb up the groove for a few feet until the rib on the left can be gained. Rock ledge with flake belay to the left.

(3) 20 feet. Balance up above belay to a ledge above juniper bushes.

(4) 50 feet. Scramble up to a grass ledge below a steep wall which climb to the right of a prominent flake.

(5) 20 feet. Climb up immediately left of a bilberry crack.

YEWDALE

RAVEN CRAG

PUSSIES PARADISE 140 feet. Difficult. First ascent 23rd April, 1954. A.M.W-J., C.E., E.W-J. From the top of Raven Crag a small clean crag will be seen to the right at about the same level and a few minutes walk away. This was climbed from the lowest point at its right-hand corner.

(1) 40 feet. Up the pinnacle and steep rock to a small ledge and belay.

(2) 20 feet. Steep rock to a large ledge and belay.

(3) 40 feet. Slab and scramble on the right.

(4) 40 feet. Rising traverse left on to the face and directly up to the summit.

BORROWDALE

CASTLE CRAG

LIBIDO 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent 9th February, 1955. P. J. Greenwood, C. Drake. Starts at the foot of the gully which splits the upper right-hand side of the crag from the centre and lower left-hand buttress. The large obvious diagonal crack on the right of the gully is the main feature of the climb.

(1) 30 feet. Two short slabs lead easily to the bottom of the crack and a good tree belay.

(2) 100 feet. Ascend the crack mainly by hand jamming to a small ledge and awkward thread belay in the crack. Continue up the crack to a grassy stance below a small overhang (small flake belay for line low down on the left-hand wall). The next section is overcome by a step left, whence strenuous climbing with the aid of a small tree leads a little right and upward on to a steep vegetatious ledge below a short wall. Climb the wall and belay in the tree above.

(3) 50 feet. Climb the wall behind the tree and pass a large embedded flake below a steep slab on its left. Ascend the slab to the top. Care is required due to the detached rock on the last section.

SHEPHERD'S CRAG

DERISION GROOVE 105 feet. Severe. First ascent 27th February, 1955. P. Ross, J. A. Wood. Starts to the right of the first pitch of Shepherd's Chimney and crosses this route at the top of Pitch 1.

(1) 25 feet. Up the flaw to the left of Shepherd's Chimney.

(2) 80 feet. Continue straight ahead up the slab and continue in the groove. Traverse left at the top of the groove on to the Belvedere.

ROGUES GALLERY 260 feet. Very severe. First ascent September, 1954. P. Ross, G. Fisher, E. Ray, D. Oliver. Starts a few feet to the left of the Devil's Wedge as far under the overhang as one can scramble and girdles the main mass.

(1) 20 feet. A steep corner is climbed using small holds on the left face bringing one to the foot of Pitch 3 on Shepherd's Chimney.

(2) 30 feet. Pitch 3 of Shepherd's Chimney.

(3) 60 feet. Move down left and using a flake traverse the smooth rock for 20 feet to a corner. Climb above and to the left for a few feet then a difficult move round into Shepherd's Gully. Continue traversing left until behind a large oak tree.

(4) 50 feet. Traverse left on to the saddle on Chamonix and descend Pitch 6 of Chamonix to the tree belay at the foot of the slabs.

(5) 65 feet. Pitch 4 of Scorpion.

(6) 35 feet. Pitch 8 of Crescendo.

BOWDERSTONE CRAGS

WODAN'S NEEDLE DIRECT 95 feet. Severe. First ascent 29th March, 1954. A.P.R., N. S. Brooke. Starts to the right of the Needle.

(1) 50 feet. Up the difficult crack until a large spiked block permits a turning movement to the right, after which the Needle can be climbed by jamming.

(2) 45 feet. As for the Ordinary Route.

BESIDE THE POINT 90 feet. Moderately difficult. First ascent 27th March, 1954. A.P.R. Starts either at a fallen pyramidal block 8 yards left of the start of Wodan's Needle and below a holly, or further left, passing through a tree on to an earth ledge.

(1) 60 feet. From the first ledge traverse slightly right and upwards to another holly tree in a corner. Straight up to a large oak growing in the rock. Pass through and belay on it.

(2) 30 feet. Behind the oak a straight wall leads to the corner of the glaciated slab above the Needle.

THE WRONG WAY 80 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 27th March, 1954. A.P.R. Starts midway between the usual start for Wodan's Needle and the cairn marking Pitch 3 of The Higher the Better, and goes up just behind a crooked ash.

(1) 25 feet. Up a straight crack on to a pedestal through a tree in the crack top, to a belay on the next tree and earth bracket.

(2) 55 feet. Slightly ahead for a few feet, and then left and up into a wide groove which is climbed on the right.

BLACK CRAG

TROUTDALE PINNACLE DIRECT 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 27th August, 1954. J. D. Oliver, P. Ross. Starts from the top of Pitch 4 of Troutdale Pinnacle where a conspicuous crack can be seen on the left below the pinnacle.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the crack to a small stance and belay.

(2) 30 feet. Move up left into an overhanging corner, make an awkward swing up right until an almost horizontal crack can be grasped and a semi-hand traverse made 6 feet from where an easy scoop is followed to the top of the pinnacle.

FALCON CRAG

SKIN DEEP 150 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 18th September, 1954. P. Ross, D. Fielding. This climb is on the south end of the lower crag and is recognized by a small pinnacle on the skyline.

(1) 90 feet. Up easy slabs for about 70 feet to a corner, then traverse right for 20 feet to a good oak tree belay.

(2) 60 feet. Up the broken groove and out left to a ledge below an overhang. Continue left and climb the conspicuous pinnacle to the summit.

RED WALL 80 feet. Severe. First ascent 18th September, 1954. P. Ross, D. Fielding. Starts 50 feet right of Skin Deep and goes up the red coloured wall.

(1) 25 feet. Climb up the lowest portion, and up a small slab to a ledge with a thread belay through a small hole in the rock.

(2) 55 feet. Straight up the steep wall on good holds to a sloping ledge then up an awkward bulge and slightly right to the top.

NEWLANDS

WATERFALL BUTTRESS

RIGHT HAND ROUTE 150 feet. Difficult. First ascent 4th April, 1954. A.P.R., B. Rossiter. Starts at a sloping slab on the right of the rocks walling the gully where the Direct route starts, and about the lowest point of the crag on this side. Cairns below and above.

(1) 40 feet. The slab is climbed to a sloping ledge below a steep corner. Belay.

(2) 25 feet. A small awkward chimney, and thence to a spiked corner. Belay on the terrace 5 yards away.

(3) 35 feet. Cross the terrace slightly right and climb the wall on good holds, till a traverse right facilitates a landing on another terrace. No belay.

(4) 50 feet. Traverse left along heather bushes to a corner, turn right and ascend slabby rocks. Belay on the pinnacle above and to the left.

(5) The route is forced to the left and joins the Ordinary Route.

KEY TO INITIALS

C. E. Arnison	C. Egan	G. B. Spenceley
A. C. Cain	A. P. Rossiter	A. M. Wood-Johnson
S. E. Dirkin	A. H. Griffin	E. Wood-Johnson

CORRECTION. Journal No. 48 (1954), page 82.

For "NEARAPOLIS, 270 feet," read "NECROPOLIS, 360 feet," and begin description of pitches as follows:—

(1) 20 feet. Climb the small chimney to a large block belay.

(2) 90 feet. Move out left and up to a small tree . . . etc.

Subsequent pitches to be renumbered accordingly, giving seven in all.

IN MEMORIAM

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL E. F. NORTON, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., 1924-54.

General Norton was made an Honorary Member of this Club after the Everest Expedition of 1924. Born in 1884, he joined the Army in 1902 and was Brigade Major, R.A., during the first world war, being awarded the D.S.O. and M.C. He died of a stroke on 3rd November, 1954.

He had considerable experience of climbing, especially on the lower and more rocky peaks in Alpine country, for he often stayed in his family's chalet in the Sixt district of the Alps. He went on the Everest expedition of 1922, when he attained the height of 27,000 feet on the first attempt on the mountain. In 1924, owing to the illness of General Bruce, Norton became leader of the expedition, and in his own attempt on the summit reached 28,200 feet, while his companion, who writes this notice, was unable to go higher than 28,100 feet, and there awaited him. Although he was taller and thinner than the standard build for climbing mountains, he went on both these expeditions higher than anyone else who climbed without oxygen. It was his mind, his 'guts,' his strength of purpose, which made him climb to these heights.

As a leader he was excellent; strong and sensible, yet always ready to ask advice even of younger climbers, and his strength of character was matched by a real humility, and a remarkable way of doing everything in the friendliest possible manner. He would never wilfully hurt or offend anyone, nor would he ever let anyone down. Many of us were irritable at high altitudes, but he was the most equable of us all. Yet with all this humility and evenness of temperament he was a born leader, keen to find out the best way of doing the job, and having done so to rely implicitly on those to whom the tasks were allotted, always taking his full share himself. As a friend, on or off the mountains, he was charming, a lover of nature and especially of birds, completely stable and reliable, intolerant only of what is sham or base, generous in every way. On his chalet he had carved the words: ALTIORA PETO — 'I seek the highest things.'

T. Howard Somervell.

WILLIAM T. PALMER, 1906-1954

Dalesman by birth and breeding, journalist by profession, he was a founder-member and a life-member. From 1910-18 he edited the *Journal,* to which his last four contributions were in '39-'42. Rock-climbing apart, he had been a prodigious walker —his record was eighty-five miles in the twenty-four hours—and it is typical that his first editorial commends a group of articles about rambling: 'the charms of wandering along the unfrequented paths are apt to be overlooked.' His best-known book is probably *The English Lakes,* with paintings by A. Heaton Cooper; but he wrote many others, as well-stored and as readable. I am told that his Scottish work is no less sound; and I know from experience the richness of his successive revelations of the fringes of Lakeland. I should judge that his most invaluable legacy to us is his record—in *Odd Yarns* and elsewhere, for instance — of the customs of older days.

In style he was terse, detailed, accurate, and a sticker-to-the-point. He owed this partly to his profession; for the taunt of verbosity against the journalist is long out of date, pressmen being disciplined by never having as much room as they want, nor even as they are promised. But conciseness, one may surmise, was enforced on him anyhow for personal reasons; his joy in fell-life so abounded, he durst not be undisciplined; his detailed knowledge was at all points so various, he had no need to be diffuse. His trump card was integrity: the sort that grew from belonging essentially to the life about which he wrote. Offcomers tend to be no more than the word-painters of scenery—the still-life men, in monotone or purple-patch as their temperament moves them; if they want life in action they must research with diligence and report it at secondhand, having no other method of arriving at local truth. In this sense Palmer did not need to arrive, because he was there already. Old ways and crafts and superstitions? He had been part of them. Wrestling or rock-climbing, poaching, fishing, foxhunting? He had graduated with honours. Sheep-work in blizzard, gale or darkness? His family lived by it, and his great-grandfather had died at it; unlike the holiday-spectator, he had seen the worst of the game. His books reveal how widely as he grew older he enlarged his horizon; he was geologist and antiquary, F.R.G.S., an expert camper, an apostle of Y.H.A. In his death the Club lost one whom it had much reason to honour.

GRAHAM SUTTON.

ARTHUR AUDUS, 1907-1954.

The Club lost one of its original members by the death of Arthur Audus on 31st October, 1954, at Keswick. His membership was not continuous as there was a gap of several years before his re-election in 1949. He was active in the early days of the Club and regular in his attendance at the Wastwater Hotel, and since 1949 again figured prominently in the Club's life.

After the death of his wife he became a frequent visitor to the huts, especially to Raw Head Cottage. Here he took a great interest in the activities of young members and "adopted" the Cottage on which he spent much time and energy, exercising a kindly supervision over those who stayed there. In their turn the frequenters of Raw Head adopted him as an honorary uncle, a designation which summarises the affection and respect in which he was held. We sadly missed his cheerful presence when his health began to fail. He had a wealth of information and stories about the early days of the Club and the climbers of that period and was in fact introduced by George Seatree.

He took great pride in the fact that he was entitled to the letters 'O.M.' in the list of members and our last memory is of his quiet happy smile when he found that, as an original member, he had been given a place at the top table at the last Annual Dinner. During that dinner he said to the writer of these notes: 'Mr. Whiting took me on my first climb; you took me on my last.' To this I replied: 'Not your last but your latest.' Unfortunately 'Uncle' was correct. He died peacefully in bed a few hours later.

We shall long remember the quiet, unassuming and kindly man who contributed greatly to the life of the Club and who took such pride and pleasure in the companionship of its members.

J. R. FILES.

MRS. A. RUSSELL.

Mrs. A. W. Wakefield writes: 'Older members of the Club will have read with regret of the death, reported in last year's *Journal*, of Mrs. A. Russell. Better known as Nellie Howard, she brought to the sing-songs of earlier meets a joyous contribution of music and song. A gifted artiste and a most endearing personality, she won the affection of all who knew her.'

R. G. BAXTER, 1924-1955.

Robert Glover Baxter came to know the hills when still at school in his native Liverpool and as a member of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club. He climbed in the Lake District, North Wales, Derbyshire and Scotland, and also tasted the rarer air of Alpine mountains. Before his work took him to the south of England he was an active member of the Wayfarers' and Rucksack Clubs as well as joining the Fell and Rock in 1924. There was no doubt where his main affection lay for though living at the opposite corner of the country he still answered the call of the Lakeland fells and sought respite in his other home in Coniston whenever a busy life gave opportunity.

He seemed at his happiest when toiling up a long fell slope on a grilling day. In this was reflected his ever-present willingness to expend all his energy in whatever work engaged him. Always meticulous and unselfish to serve others, both in his chosen vocation and on behalf of the profession he actively supported, he delighted in unobtrusively helping younger people to advance their knowledge and to stir their appreciation of the more enduring pleasures of life. It was probably this devotion to the heavy tasks and high standards which he set himself which fatally overtaxed his physical powers. May the solace of the mountains which strengthened him come to the comfort of his family. His example will enrich the thoughts of his intimate friends and his influence will be felt over a circle the compass of which is unmeasured.

J. A. KENYON

R. D. BRYSON 1953-1955.

H. WALTON JONES 1934-1955.

J. M. PHILIPSON 1923-1954.

After the *Journal* had gone to press we heard with great regret of the death on 12th August of George Wood-Johnson, one of a family well represented and highly regarded in the Club. We hope to print a memoir in our next issue.

EDITOR'S NOTES

After attending the Scottish meet at Fort William and the Whitsuntide meet in Borrowdale, the President left for India early in June, and all members will wish him well during his temporary absence, and look forward keenly to his return next spring. In the meantime the exercise of the presidential function is in the very capable hands of our two Vice-Presidents, who will, we feel confident, carry out the duties which fall to them with their customary zeal and efficiency.

Two years ago we printed an 'Appreciation' of the Everest Expedition of 1953, by Peter Lloyd, which concluded — '. . . . the ascent of Everest breaks a preoccupation that has dominated Himalayan climbing since the first world war. All the energies that have gone into the long siege are now free for new enterprises. We are at the beginning of a new epoch.' This prediction seems to be fully justified by subsequent events. Not only have several more of the Himalayan giants, including K.2 and Kangchenjunga, been climbed, but an almost bewildering number of expeditions with less exalted objectives have gone to the Himalayas from many countries. From Britain alone this year there have been not only the triumphant Kangchenjunga Expedition — in which our member, J. A. Jackson, took part — but smaller parties from Scotland and Merseyside, this last led by Alf Gregory, have notable achievements to their credit, while another party from Wales is now on its way to India.

While on the subject of Himalayan travel, it was probably a unique event for two brothers, taking part in separate expeditions based over a hundred miles apart, to meet one another as did John and Ronald Jackson at Tseram in 1954. This opportune meeting is referred to in the articles by both brothers which I am pleased to be able to print in this *Journal*.

In 'Editor' Notes' last year I mentioned the approaching Jubilee of the Club, and undertook to print this year a summary of the evidence on which is based the conclusion that the Annual Dinner of 1956 is the proper occasion to celebrate the event. I hope that the article to be found on an earlier page will prove of some interest to present members; at any rate it may help the Club officials of early next century to decide on the appropriate year for the centenary without more ado!

My note last year brought several interesting letters from original members about the early days of the Club, and I am very grateful to them and to one or two previous correspondents on the same subject. Fuller reference to this correspondence is fittingly held over for next year's *Journal,* but in the meantime it can be said that there is general agreement as to the date of the Club's foundation in 1906.

At the Annual Dinner of 1953 the then President, A. B. Hargreaves urged 'younger members' not to be backward in letting the rest of the Club know about their activities by means of the hut log books or in the *Journal.* I think that a good proportion of the contributors to this issue may be considered as coming in the category which A.B. had in mind, and I am sorry that limitation of space has prevented the inclusion of one or two other accounts of the activities of 'younger members.'

If a sort of 'Gallup Poll' was organised amongst Fell and Rock members to ascertain which of the Lakeland dales they considered the most beautiful and as most deserving of their regard through its associations, it is probable that Borrowdale would take a very high place, if not the very first. It must, therefore, have been very welcome news to many members that Borrowdale is to receive its electricity supply entirely by underground transmission, at any rate, as far as Rosthwaite. We are not concerned here with the controversies of the past, but to express gratification with the final outcome, which seems to indicate a new approach, not, we hope, to be confined to Borrowdale.

W. GEOFFREY STEVENS.

July, 1955.

ANNUAL DINNER, 1954

A. H. Griffin

The most important business at the 1954 Annual General Meeting was the election as President of Dr. T. Howard Somervell, although it was explained that owing to a change in procedure he would not actually take up his high office until the end of the dinner meet. We were informed, however, that the new rule meant that Dr. Somervell would be able to take the chair at the club jubilee celebrations, which seemed to everybody an excellent arrangement.

It was not the easiest thing in the world to get Somervell elected as President. After Burnett had spoken of his well-known qualities as mountaineer, surgeon, missionary, artist and musician, the object of his praise got up and started to apologise for 'throwing a wet blanket over the proceedings.' He agreed that he had retired, but explained that he had received urgent requests to go out to India again as a locum for nine months for one of the senior surgeons at Vellore who was going on furlough. As a result he had arranged to go in the following June—after the Whitsuntide meet—and he would not be back until March or April, 1956. If elected, therefore, he would be absent for nearly half his term of office, and he urged the club to think again.

This prompted Ormiston-Chant to point out that most members would rather have Somervell as President for a few months and absent for nearly as many than not have him at all, and Boothroyd suggested that the salaries of the Vice-Presidents might be doubled. On a show of hands it was obvious that the club wanted Somervell as President, even on his own terms.

The retiring President, A. B. Hargreaves, paid tributes to the two Vice-Presidents, the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Editor (for again getting out the *Journal* in the nick of time) and F. H. F. Simpson for his photographic exhibition. He also referred in particular to the work of W. E. Kendrick who had retired from the office of Hut and Meets Secretary after seven years' outstanding service. Kendrick, replying, proposed the election of H. Ironfield as his successor, and this, like all the other committee suggestions for new officers and committee, was approved. Sincere tributes were also paid to Hargreaves for the enormous amount of work he had done for the Club, for his infectious enthusiasm and his regular attendance at meets.

The guest of honour at the crowded annual dinner in the Royal Oak Hotel, Keswick, was M. André Roch, the well-known Swiss climber and writer, who was described more than once during the speeches as 'one of the world's foremost mountaineers.'

Proposing the toast of the club, M. Roch congratulated the English-speaking world on climbing Everest and we basked in reflected glory. 'If you climb for the fun,' said André, 'that is the best way of climbing, although perhaps climbing Everest is not so funny.' We enjoyed his climbing stories, particularly the one about the goat which followed them up the Aiguille Noire de Pétéret. In the end they had to rope it down

the climb, but André explained it was a young goat and very good on the rope.

On Himalayan climbing M. Roch said that of the fourteen mountains more than 8,000 metres high so far only five had been climbed and it was doubtful whether all of the remainder would ever be climbed. On the other hand, some of the great mountains were comparatively accessible, and he mentioned in particular Rakaposhi with only three days' march to the base camp. Future mountaineers, he thought, might make their approach march by helicopter. His advice to would-be Himalayan climbers was to go for the smaller summits where you could at any rate see what you were making for. On the biggest mountains he thought people usually spent a great deal of time in failing to get up and did not see the summits either.

M. Roch told us some interesting stories of avalanche rescue and ended a fascinating speech by paying tribute to our climbing spirit. He did not care for what he had seen of our weather and confessed that he would not have gone out climbing the previous day if he had not been with club members.

In reply, the President said it was refreshing to hear from André Roch that the British were being recognised again as real climbers and he had little doubt that this country would probably be in the forefront of future Himalayan exploration. The club had recommended no fewer than eleven members for possible inclusion in the Kangchenjunga party. Perhaps in future it might be possible to hire club planes for the Himalayas. He hoped that in the great new world of adventure that was opening up in the Himalayas the ugly spirit of nationalist competition would not arise.

Hargreaves said progress was being made with the new guides to Scafell, Dow Crag and the Eastern Fells, a great deal of climbing was being done, and the meets for the most part were being well attended, but for the club to succeed it would have to preserve its club spirit. He warmly welcomed Somervell as his successor in office — 'the very man for the jubilee celebrations.'

Somervell spoke of the 'old days' of the club when they were all friends enjoying the mountains together. He wanted those days to return and hoped that meets would increasingly become 'real meets of friends of each other and of the mountains.' After again explaining to a larger audience his forthcoming nine months absence from the presidential chair, Somervell confessed that he had 'always been a very ordinary sort of mountaineer'—a sentiment with which we were all in complete disagreement. He told us that he had been started off by reading George Abraham's *The Complete Mountaineer* — a book which must have inspired hundreds of people to climb mountains. His pride now lay in the younger generation and he was delighted that his own son had just done his first rock climb in India, and that he himself had been able to found a climbing club out there. The new President's concluding words were in praise of his predecessor in office.

The toast of Guests and Kindred Clubs was proposed at some length by J. R. Files, one of the Vice-Presidents. He spoke of André Roch's wonder-

ful expedition record, his skill as writer and photographer and his acknowledged supremacy as an expert on snow and avalanche conditions. He also warmly welcomed, among others, Mrs. M. Morin, Past President of the Ladies' Alpine Club, representing the Pinnacle Club, A. S. Pigott (Alpine Club) and Frank Solari (British Mountaineering Council).

Solari's reply was in his best form and we particularly enjoyed the one about the false teeth and the undertaker. In serious vein for a moment he told us that a committee of the British Standards Institution was working on the task of getting a standard for nylon rope. The speeches were punctuated, as usual, by some of the choicest excerpts from the repertoire of John Hirst and Harry Spilsbury, delivered, while festooned in climbing equipment, from a table top at the far end of the room.

On the Saturday and Sunday the guests were conducted up some very wet rock climbs on Gable and elsewhere and on the Sunday evening André Roch delighted us with a fascinating account of the 1953 Dhaulagiri expedition, illustrated with one of the most intimate and entertaining colour films of the mountains that many of us had ever seen. This ended a dinner meet where the good fellowship remained completely unaffected by the weather.

CLUB NOTES AND COMMENTS

During 1955 a number of our members have again taken part in explorations and mountaineering in various parts of the world. John Jackson was a member of the successful Kanchenjunga expedition, while Alf Gregory led a Merseyside party to the Gaurisankar region of the Himalaya where they climbed nineteen peaks, exploring and surveying the Rolwaling, Tolam Bau, Menlung and Ripimu valleys. Among those who have gone to the Antarctic are J. M. Bechervaise, who is with the Australian expedition to Heard Island, Don Atkinson, who left early in the year with the Grahamland party and George Spenceley, who went in August for ten months to South Georgia. No one who knows him will be surprised to hear that the indefatigable Bentley Beetham has again been climbing in Africa.

John Wilkinson (whom we congratulate on his marriage to Ardys Alferoff) was working in Canada in 1954, but managed to find time for some climbing in the Rockies, where he made a new route on Mount Eisenhower. He also climbed Peak 2 and Pinnacle Mountain in the Morraine Lake region and two hitherto unclimbed peaks in the Brazean Valley region. Incidentally, during the summer of 1953, he took part in guideless ascents of the Via della Pera on Mont Blanc and of the North Face of the Cima Grande di Lavaredo.

Ski-ing in the Lake District was more popular than ever this winter. Some fortunate people managed to find suitable snow (usually, but not invariably, on Raise) every week-end from January to the end of March, but not content with this, several parties of Fell and Rock members went at various times during the spring to Austria, where they made their headquarters at Solden, while others, including Jack Blackshaw (doubly enthusiastic for being so recent a beginner) had a good Easter in the Cairngorms.

Dr. C. F. Hadfield, President of the Club in 1932-33 and Chairman of the London Section continuously since its formation in 1920, attained his eightieth birthday on the 17th June and we congratulate him warmly. Unfortunately he has not been able recently to take part in many of our Lake District meets, but it was good to see him at the opening of Raw Head Barn in 1950, and we understand that although he does not now do so much walking, he can still cycle up to twenty miles a day.

Douglas Side has added to his activities in the interests of mountaineering by taking on the honorary secretaryship of the Mount Everest Foundation. Others of our members who serve on the Committee set up to administer the trust established by the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society to encourage expeditions to the mountain regions of the world are H. N. Fairfield (who, with Lord Chorley and R. Tyssen-Gee represent the Fell and Rock on the British Mountaineering Council), Sir John Hunt and Eric Shipton. We congratulate Tyssen-Gee on his marriage which took place just before the Annual Dinner.

Word has come that our President now has a namesake in the Rockies. Mount Somervell (10,050) was climbed in 1953 by G. I. Bell of the American Alpine Club, and J. R. Rowson of the Alpine Club and the American Alpine Club. Finally, to follow up one of our last year's news items, it appears that Graham Macphee was not completely cured of Munroitis in 1953, and has since done all the Munro tops.

LONDON SECTION, 1954

It is encouraging to see that although the countryside within thirty miles of London is known so well to all the active members of the London Section, there is no sign of any lessening activity, and the number of people who come on the walks whatever the weather is encouraging to the Secretaries. British Railways appear to be busy on maintenance work on Sundays, making some trains up to thirty or forty minutes late and, with fares again on the increase, it is difficult to plan many walks away from the Home Counties.

M. N. Clarke again led the first walk of the year and is a great help both on account of his enthusiasm to act as leader and for his expert knowledge of the country round London. If a route is flooded out or impossible for any other reason he is almost certain to know a suitable alternative route. On this occasion we started from Westerham, doing a circular walk including Crockham Hill. E. W. Hamilton took us again to the Surrey heights in February with a fourteen mile walk starting from Boxhill station and visiting Headley and Brockham Green before returning to the starting point. All on the walk enjoyed the breezes of Walton Heath after the steep climb up from the Mole valley. Miss Stella Joy gave us a variation of her usual walk round Windsor Park by starting at Egham and taking us to the R.A.F. Memorial and Coopers Hill. She appears to be a good weather forecaster and has always chosen a day with excellent weather and a large party was afterwards invited to tea. Her hospitality on so many occasions is greatly appreciated. The weather was rather unsettled for our joint walk with the Rucksack Club which we always have in the spring. This is an excellent occasion for us to meet members of our kindred club and the walk is always well attended. This year the joint party visited the Chilterns on 2nd May, starting from Great Missenden, finishing at Wendover. Sir Edwin Herbert invited us once more to his home at Blackheath, near Chilworth, and R. P. Mears took us there through wild and romantic scenery from Wootton Hatch. Further summer walks were led by M. N. Clarke and E. W. Hamilton, the former taking a party from Guildford to Hascombe and the latter from Leatherhead via Norbury Park and Polesden Lacey to Effingham and back to Box Hill, so named from its numerous box trees. Although Surrey's beautiful walks should never be belittled and new routes can usually be found, a leader with a good knowledge of the Eastern counties would be welcome, as few of us have walked in Essex or Suffolk.

A Lakeland meet in September for the London Section was contemplated and preliminary arrangements made for one at Raw Head. Unfortunately, although there was some enthusiasm for this new idea, the interested members found at the last moment that they could not come and the project had to be cancelled. We greatly appreciate the trouble that W. E. Kendrick and Dick Cook took on our behalf and it is a pity that their work was in vain.

We had two more walks in the autumn with M. N. Clarke, acting as leader once more, who showed us the beeches in the Chilterns with their colours at their best. Chorley Wood, Chalfont St. Giles and Chenies

were all seen in fine weather. In spite of the general wetness of 1954 we had only one outing when mackintoshes were really necessary. In November, R. A. Tyssen-Gee led a walk once more from Leatherhead to Reigate and after tea W. A. Poucher showed some of his excellent colour slides. This year the Lake District was his subject and we saw familiar scenes under different weather conditions and wondered whether autumn bracken or winter snows made the district look its best.

Only one informal dinner was held this year at the Rossmore Restaurant as the support had not been so good recently. Our annual dinner was held as usual at the Connaught Rooms on 11th December with Dr. Hadfield in the chair. The club was delighted to welcome as guests Brigadier Sir John and Lady Hunt, Sir Edwin and Lady Herbert, R. Janes from the Imperial College Mountaineering Club, Alan Stewart from the Rucksack Club, as well as Dr. Howard Somervell. The toast to the guests and kindred clubs was proposed by Geoffrey Howard, who, although speaking with the handicap of a troublesome throat, was clearly audible and entertained us with a witty speech to which R. Janes and Sir Edwin Herbert responded, the latter mentioning among other points that he remembered the songs that were a feature of our pre-war dinners and hoped that a successor to Darwin Leighton might be found who would again entertain us in London. Sir John Hunt gave us some advance information on the forthcoming Kangchenjunga expedition which, we hope, will meet with every success.

M. N. Clarke led the walk on 12th December round the Surrey Hills, once more starting at Leatherhead and finishing at Epsom Downs. Burford Bridge, Box Hill and the Roman Road, always delightful spots, were the high lights of the day.

R. A. Tyssen-Gee.

E. W. Hamilton.