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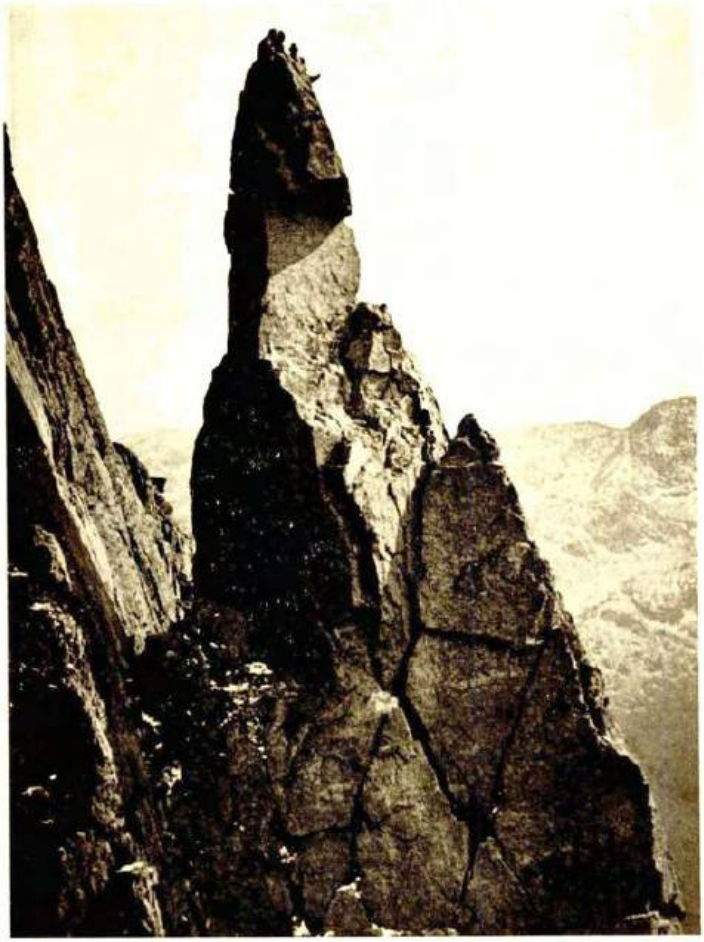

*J. Osborne Walker*

W. P. HASKETT-SMITH'S

JUBILEE ASCENT OF THE NAPES NEEDLE

EASTER SUNDAY, 1936

# THE JOURNAL OF THE FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

*Volume XI*

*LAKELAND NUMBER*

*Edited by*

G. R. SPEAKER

1936, NO. 30 *Published by* NO. 31, 1937

THE FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB

OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

# THE FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB
## OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

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# THE JUBILEE ASCENT OF THE NEEDLE

*T. R. Burnett*

While our sport is not one that lends itself particularly to ceremonial, and while in addition the true climber endeavours to avoid rather than to court publicity, there are occasions on which reserve may appropriately be relaxed and the spirit of celebration given free play. For example, on looking back over the history of our Club, one recalls with feelings of pride and satisfaction the send-off of the 1924 Everest Expedition, the centenary of the first ascent of Pillar Rock, the Dedication of the War Memorial and the Coming-of-age Dinner.

How natural, therefore, was the decision that the fiftieth anniversary of the first ascent of the Needle should receive more than passing notice, particularly as the world-famous hero of that great achievement was still hale and hearty and ready to repeat the feat. If the Committee had any apprehension regarding their plans, it was the fear that through inadvertent publicity the event might be vulgarised, but fortunately nothing of this type occurred to mar the harmony or to disturb the atmosphere of the proceedings.

The only definite arrangements were that all interested should assemble in the neighbourhood of the Needle at about noon on Easter Sunday and that W. P. Haskett-Smith should repeat his classic climb. If there was any doubt as to the fitness of the veteran to play his part, it was dispelled during the two previous days on which he motored from London to Wasdale in a light car and ascended the Pillar Rock by the Slab and Notch. The day was characteristic of the capricious weather which one associates with the Lake District at Eastertide, with sunshine and snowshowers alternating playfully. During the forenoon the whole route from Wasdale and Borrowdale to the Napes was liberally sprinkled with groups

of pilgrims old and young. Which was the oldest, none would dare to guess, but the palm for youth obviously belonged to the small *size* grandchild of an ex-vice-president. By the time when zero hour arrived it was estimated that about three hundred had gathered in the Dress Circle, Needle Gully and neighbouring crags. Every niche which commanded a view of the famous rock was occupied by an eager spectator, and the stances of many were lacking in comfort and even in safety.

The climbing party consisted of the president, Professor Chorley, as leader, W. P. Haskett-Smith as middleman with the Editor, G. R. Speaker, as third on the rope, and, appropriately enough, their footgear was boots, rubbers and scarpetti respectively! Their steady progress up the original route by the Crack was watched with keen interest, and the mind of H.-S. must have been crowded with fascinating thoughts as he compared the present circumstances of the climb with those of his lone adventure half a century ago.

Although the throng had gazed in silence during the upward progress of the party, a spontaneous cheer broke out when the summit was reached, and this subsided into a hushed stillness when it was realised that from his lofty pulpit the President was about to address the gathering. To the surprise of many it was immediately noticed that his voice came over with remarkable clearness, and it may be presumed that the rock face at his side acted as a sounding board. As nearly as may be, his words were as follows :

> 'Fellow members : We are met today upon this sacred mountain-side to celebrate the birth of our craft. To all of us here assembled the mountains have been one of the enduring passions of our lives. Among these crags we have found the peace of mind and contentment which are not found among the haunts of men.
>
> 'It is now fifty years since Mr Haskett-Smith first climbed the Needle. This date is one of those which mark the beginnings of the sport of rock-climbing in the British Isles. Since that time many more difficult courses have been made, but the Needle remains a fascinating and difficult problem. Since that time mountaineers who

received their training on these crags have made first ascents in many parts of the world and are even now assembled for an onslought on Mount Everest. Therefore, we look back upon this achievement of fifty years ago with emotion.

'But we are met today not only to celebrate this great occasion but to pay a tribute to the author of it and to that skill and courage which alone in those days made it possible. Mr Haskett-Smith has won eminence as a mountaineer in many lands, but we in Lakeland delight to honour him as the father of British climbing, and are proud that this place now dedicated to the memory of our dead should have been the scene of his achievement. And in praising him let us also praise those famous men who took the torch from him and who have passed it on from hand to hand until it came to those who in the present day worthily maintain the tradition.

'Mr Haskett-Smith, we, assembled here today, hope that you will accept from us this tribute of our admiration and affection.'

Then came Haskett's turn to speak and, in a few appropriate words, he thanked those who had accompanied him on the climb and the many who had come in support. His suggestion that he might not be fit to repeat the climb after another fifty years was greeted with laughter and shouts of 'Why not?' and when he had finished speaking the assembly resolved in the traditional fashion that 'He's a jolly good fellow.'

The descent was made by the ordinary route, the party soon began to break up, and the mountainside which has already done this to such a considerable extent projected one of its fragments on to the head of a lady in the lower part of the gully, fortunately without serious results.

The day was still young and much climbing was subsequently undertaken on the neighbouring crags. At its conclusion when tramping down the valleys all felt that they had participated in a memorable event in climbing history and wished all good things to the great pioneer who had this day erected yet another cairn to mark the onward progress of their beloved sport.

# HALF A CENTURY ON THE FELLS

*W. P. Haskett-Smith*

When an enterprising journalist manages to catch hold of the village 'oldest inhabitant' he usually gets very little out of the ancient one except comment on the modern scarcity of tobacco, the declining quality of beer, and the mountaineer, obsolescent or wholly obsolete, yields little of interest beyond a general impression that paths are rougher and hillsides steeper than they used to be. Still there are always a few points which are not entirely subjective, certain links with the past which he is sometimes able to supply.

Perhaps the most remarkable change of the last fifty years is the way in which the rocks of Cumberland have been cleaned up, to the great comfort of the climber but not without loss of picturesqueness. For instance, Sergeant's Crag has lost one very delightful feature, an almost vertical wall evenly covered with a thin layer of bright green moss which was starred all over with the beautiful little Filmy fern. It was a perfect picture, but it so thoroughly lubricated the rock that the climb was impossible till J. W. Robinson remorselessly raked it down, so that next time we attacked it, the holds were not only visible, but dry.

It has always been a puzzle to me how masses of sphagnum and other mosses have strength enough to support the gallons of water and fine mud they contain. Steep Ghyll under Scafell Pinnacle ended in a wall covered with huge sponges containing vast stores of very liquid mud, the mere weight of which might be expected to tear the sponges down. Perhaps the most striking instance of this defiance of natural laws was on the Milestone Buttress on the W. side of Tryfan. There the moss rose in a huge balloon-like mass, leaning against, without upsetting a slender balustrade of stone spikes three or four feet high. When this buttress was first climbed (which was downwards) it was a real obstacle, but now the

mud reservoir is tapped, one walks up without the least difficulty.

But it is not only the liquid obstacles that have been removed. When a sloping slab with a transverse crack lies at the foot of a bit of cliff, the particles detached by frost tend to run down and drop into the crack, gradually filling it up after which a short fine grass often grows on the top. This was the condition of the Stomach Traverse on the Pillar Rock. When the name was given, every hold was buried under hard earth and to get round was a tough job. Now all the earth has been dug or washed out and the climber stands perfectly secure in a deep rift.

What is now considered the easiest climb on Idwal Slabs was in the old days by no means easy, stones, earth and heather filling the long crack to the brim.

It is curious to reflect that this is the explanation of the great interval between the first and second ascent of the Napes Needle. Several competent parties were turned back not by the Mantelpiece or the top block above it, but by the now empty and convenient crack. People often wonder why the early comers to the Pillar Rock were so respectful to the broad slab. The fact is that the horizontal crack was then filled with small stones except at one spot which required a long stride to reach.

There was a similar filled-up crack on the Scafell Pinnacle—a crack which had to be avoided on the first ascent.

Another place where the removal of hard turf has made a climb easier is that of the East Jordan which cost me tremendous effort and was not repeated for many years. It was done by G. H. Craig whose extraordinary length of limb gave him a great advantage. By the way, he died only last year.

There is a certain interest in recording how in those early days climbs were classified. There were only two regarded as feats of agility—the Pillar Rock and Mickledore; but there were three crags which local men constantly mentioned

as impossible, and the list is a very odd one—Great End, Lingmell and Buckbarrow. All three are places where a foxhunter or a shepherd might easily get into trouble and perhaps the description meant no more than that a wise man should go round them. It is quite likely that the bad reputation of these spots rested on a tradition of accidents ; such traditions were very long lived, as in the case of ' Dixon's Jumps ' on Helvellyn.

Such accidents usually happened in the excitement of the chase, and actually there was a case some sixty years ago of two foxhunters getting pounded in one of the Great End gullies and escaping with the greatest difficulty.

Men who climb under modern conditions seldom realise how much we were hampered fifty years ago not only by moss and loose stones, but also by the paucity of climbers and the consequent difficulty of finding a companion for a climb. Manchester was in this respect better off than London, but there were then no climbing clubs and one often had to waste on a mere walk a day of glorious climbing weather.

It was therefore chiefly with a few contemporaries at the Universities that I made my first acquaintance with climbing in the British Isles, beginning with North Wales in 1880, and Scotland and Cumberland in the following year. But it was not until five years later that my eyes lit upon the Needle Pinnacle.

NAPES NEEDLE was for a long time unnoticed as it blends in with the ridge behind it and there are few spots from which one catches it in profile. In my own case as I think I have described in an early number of this journal it was the lucky combination of bright sunshine and great cloud-masses following a storm that revealed it to me and inspired me with the determination to go and look for it at the earliest opportunity. At that time neither Bowring nor I had ever met John Robinson but soon after the latter wrote offering to come over and meet Bowring on Styhead. We all met at the appointed spot and the old gentleman decided that he would

leave his two young friends to do a climb together. We formed a plan to make a traverse across the breast of the Napes, the idea in my mind being that in this way we ought to have a good chance of locating this unknown pinnacle. When it came suddenly into view we were about on a level with its top and J.W.R. was immensely impressed and delighted and said in awestruck tones,' Would a Swiss guide attempt a thing like that ? '

In the year 1886 between two visits to Scotland there was just time to squeeze in a few days at Wasdale and when the party broke up my way lay by Penrith to the North and the others were to walk to the South-going train at Seascale. They were eager to do a farewell climb on the way and as Buckbarrow was new to them it was agreed that we should all get up at 5 a.m. with me to act as guide for the climb and porter to the foot of Wastwater. We had our climb and parted ; but the early start and fast walk had left me with a headache and to walk it off I went up to Beckhead and down into Ennerdale where the then unclimbed face of Great Gable merited investigation. After a pleasant climb up the Great Chimney the idea occurred to me of trying to find the ridge leading down to the Needle. This descent was readily found and the ridge followed to the gap immediately above the Needle. The drop into the gap is abrupt and the lower part of it was then very mossy. By this time my headache was gone and the Needle itself had a more attractive look about it. The main trouble lay in the cracks and crevices which were tightly packed with small stones flush with the surface of the slabs and thatched with slippery grass. The prospect from the shoulder was not encouraging. The Lingmell face of the top block was covered with a brown and brittle lichen which concealed whatever holds there might be and if the top of the block were rounded, things looked hopeless. The only test of this was to throw up a stone and, if it stayed there, it would be a proof that the top was fairly flat. Diligent search revealed only two stones on the

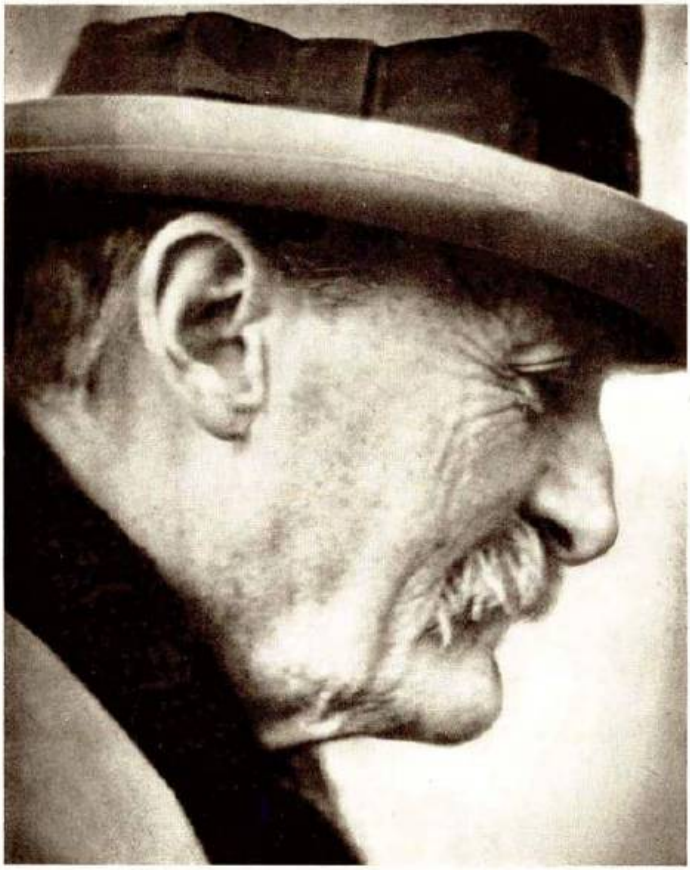
shoulder, one the size of a snuffbox the other nearly as big as a brick. The little one bounded off and was lost; but the big one behaved better and encouraged me to follow it. There was no means of recording my visit except a small boss near the North edge of the stone round which my handkerchief was tied with my brick on the top of it to keep it from being blown away. The descent was somewhat unnerving, as the lichen dust concealed all the little footholds but all went well. Below the shoulder I had half a mind to try the side opposite to that of my ascent.

My first taste of British rocks was however, in 1880 in the company of Rowland Williams and Arthur Galpin, both of Trinity, Oxford, and of W. A. Walker, of Kings, Cambridge, when we spent a month in Snowdonia reading hard and walking hard.

Next year the same party appeared at Wasdale Head where I had just concluded a month with J. G. Hamilton, of Balliol, afterwards Lord Sumner, Bartlett of Corpus, Oxford, H. B. Simpson of Magdalen, Oxford, and (a son of Lord Bowen the judge) Bowen of Balliol. The latter was rather younger than the rest of us and smaller, and to his great disgust was always treated by Dame Tyson as a petted infant and designated as ' lahl chop ' (little chap).

One day we were at the Pillar and met my college friend Bowden Smith, who invited us to lunch with his people on the coming Sunday at Buttermere. On the appointed day we started off all except Hamilton respectably attired, as we were to meet ladies. We were half ashamed of Hamilton who wore a not very clean flannel shirt devoid of collar. It was a day of terrific heat and as we perspired over Black Sail and Scarf Gap our nice clean collars soon went to pulp, while Hamilton walked in comparative comfort.

What was our disgust when shortly before reaching our destination, he produced from his pocket a stiff collar and a dicky and entered the house looking the only respectable member of the party.



*E. B Johnson*

W. P. Haskett-Smith
President 1913-1917
Honorary Member (1907)

Nothing could induce Bartlett to climb, but he would walk anywhere, and there was one gruelling Sunday when he and I not knowing how sabbatarian Dunnerdale was, walked over there by way of Ulpha and could find no food before reaching Cockley Beck. Altogether that day we had 36 miles walking in 12 hours including all halts.

J. W. Robinson. What numbers of climbers there must be to whom the essence of Lake Country climbing was John Robinson! The intense pleasure he took in it, the generosity with which he gave his time and trouble to the service of anyone who wanted a climb, combined to endear him to the whole fraternity. Never was there a man more utterly unselfish, never one who so cleverly continued to give the impression that he and not you was the person benefited. At the time of Petty's fall on Mickledore his strength and resource saved the life of that climber. John and I carried the injured man from Burnthwaite down to the inn and I had quite enough of it feeling my arms steadily pulled out of the sockets. J.W.R. was, of course, a splendid fellwalker and before one of his long tramps I took him over the Scafell section. A discussion sprang up as to the quickest way from Scafell to Bow Fell. J.W.R. maintaining the route by Esk Hause and I the direct drop into Eskdale. We decided to test it and to his great astonishment when he reached Bow Fell we had been there for three-quarters of an hour. After that experience he realised that the longest way is not always the shortest way home. Of course, he was influenced by the knowledge that except in dry weather, Eskdale is not easy to cross.

One could go on talking about J.W.R. for hours, his quick intelligence, his cultivated and charming old Quaker parents.

Only last week I was talking to a well-known K.C. when he suddenly remarked that of all the men he had known he would choose J.W.R. as a climbing companion.

Parson Jackson met his end just before my day. His was a truly gallant and adventurous spirit and for a man well over

eighty years of age as he then was the long rough solitary walk to reach the Pillar was by itself a formidable task. The old fellow's gay egotism somewhat distracted the attention of many from his original but unquestionably heroic figure.

Bowring and Maitland put up an iron rod in Great Doup to mark the spot where this brave old man's body was found.

GEORGE SEATREE. So many of us have climbed and so many more have listened to his cheery talk and racy dialect stories that it is hard to believe he was already doing good climbs as far back as 1865. Born in the mining village of Alston he spent his youth and middle age as a corn dealer at Penrith, where his business took him all over Cumberland and Westmorland. Going from mill to mill, where his flow of gay talk made him ever welcome gave him the chance of storing up in his retentive memory all sorts of quaint phrases and stories from his rural customers. He was a warm friend of John Robinson and took a leading part in erecting his monument on Pillar Fell. Quite late in life with his two daughters and Botterill he did a number of fine climbs.

CECIL SLINGSBY. Living within easy reach of the Lakes, he was almost as fond of climbing there as in his beloved Norway. He was always ready to speak in public in spite of a curious defect—or more accurately excess—of speech, for it consisted in the insertion of numerous unwanted syllables, not always the same syllables, but very frequently—num-num-num. If he was at a loss for the name of a place or person, these 'nums' came rushing in to take its place. Consequently, every now and then he gave vent to such a statement as, that he had met his old friend num..num..num—who had said to him 'num..num..num.'

C. A. O. BAUMGARTNER. Baumgartner was a powerfully built, deep-chested man of Swiss origin. Brought up in the Fen country he was, without being much of a figure-skater, a strong running-on skater and excelled at describing gigantic circles on the ice—a feat largely dependent on strength and

weight. Shortly after his climb of the Pillar Rock in 1850, he went to Australia and spent some time on the Bendigo Gold fields, at first as a digger and then more lucratively as an assayer. For many years he lived in Hammersmith, keeping up his arm-muscles with heavy dumb-bells, but taking no other exercise. Consequently when in 1886 I persuaded him to revisit Cumberland, he found walking laborious, but climbed all moderate rocks with ease and enjoyment. His father was a well-known physician who cherished the belief that he could claim to be the Duke of Northumberland.

THE WESTMORLANDS. Of this strong and active Penrith family I knew one only, Tom, the eldest. Their rhymed account of their ascent of the Pillar sixty years ago gave a certain stimulus to climbing, and it was a great pleasure to me to meet many years later his son Horace in the Canadian Rockies.

OWEN GLYNNE JONES. Strangely different opinions have been held of this climber and yet there is an element of truth and of falsehood in them all. He has been lauded not only as a climber but also as a good designer of climbs. He has been condemned as unsportsmanlike, conceited and self-centred. The fact is that to bring out his best qualities he needed a good guide not to precede but to follow him. Once shown the way, he had enough strength and dexterity to deal with the minutiae of any climb, but his eyesight served him poorly for distant detail. Self-centred he undoubtedly was, but what was mistaken for conceit was his scientific determination to speak only of what he knew. He had studied his own physical powers as a chauffeur studies his car and for that reason he talked a good deal about himself.

The charge of being unsportsmanlike arose during his early visits to the Alps, when he was really unaware of the little canons and conventions of mountaineering.

As instances how easily he could be baffled, he came to me for information about the Devil's Kitchen in Wales. He went with full instructions, but could see no way of leaving the

floor of the gully. Again he asked how to reach Walker's gully on Pillar Rock but failed to reach the foot of it and failed equally to find the fairly obvious way up the Great Chimney to the Steep Grass. All this shows that as a planner of climbs he had his limitations, but the strength of his fingers was something quite out of the ordinary and he was a splendid goer. One of the weekly papers (*The Sketch*, I think) published an interview with him by an enthusiastic lady not deeply versed in mountain craft, who reported him as saying that he had once, under specially favourable conditions, ascended a vertical height of 1,000 feet in 24 hours. The lady had left out a nought!

F. H. Bowring. Climbing owes more to him than to any other man. His knowledge of the rocks of Cumberland, Wales and Dartmoor was curiously complete, and his long, lean frame and springy gait enabled him to cover much ground. He was a Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, and practised at the Parliamentary Bar, trudging daily to Lincoln's Inn and back. Among the hills he always carried a 6 foot pole and with its aid swung himself across streams with great agility. He was a son of Sir John, the eminent linguist and was himself well versed in many languages. When he was over ninety he prepared for possible failure of eyesight by committing to memory a whole book of Homer's Iliad.

Norwegian was not in vogue in his youth, so he knew little of Scandinavian origins, but he had a sound knowledge of Welsh and gave ingenious explanations of many place-names, such as Shir-gant-maen (Shire-hundred-stone) for Sergeant Man, Huel-y-llyn (lake-mine) for Helvellyn. He also thought that Welsh bwlch (' pass ') may be concealed in some of the Bulls and Gaelic Beallach with the same meaning in some of the Bells. He sent J. G. Hamilton and me to climb Lingmell Crag, where we found no difficulty beyond those of the steep and crumbly kind, complicated however, by a curious geological feature of which no explanation has ever been given. We found there a number of slender spikes of slate, mostly

rising a foot or two above the surface of the ground. They stand generally on slopes at the foot of low crags and the marvel is that the debris falling from above has not knocked them over long ago. On a second visit a couple of years later we found few left, yet how had the others managed to survive so long? The finest specimens of this formation in Wales used to be at Bwlch-y-Saethau (Pass of the Arrows) but the making of the Watkin path up Snowdon destroyed hundreds of them. My belief is that the 'arrows' referred to in this name have nothing to do with any legendary fight, but are simply descriptive of the slate spikelets which mark the spot. The metonymy seems natural and once in the hills above Dinas Mawddwy when we stopped to speak to a young farmer who knew as little English as we knew Welsh, my eye fell on a fine spike of this kind two or three feet long. The Welshman said it was a natural stone and actually used the word 'Saeth.' Whether the idea was his own or in general use only a native could say. Bowring was indifferent to weather and seldom did more to meet it than tying a sort of grey bandanna over a hat originally of hard felt, but softened by the lapse of years. His tall figure bore a longtailed morning coat, probably the same which he wore in London, and in its pockets he kept an amazing assortment of loose fieldglasses, tobacco pipes, string, knives, sandwiches, maps, and usually several books of foreign poetry.

C. N. WILLIAMSON first went to Cumberland about 1879 and went up the Pillar, giving a very clear account of his exploit in one of the daily papers.

In 1884 he was there again with his friend Bryden and two medical students, called Zeperro and Petty. The latter, who was a strong climber, had a frightful fall on Mickledore. From the effects of this he made a marvellous recovery, and twenty-four years later when I met him again in Buenos Aires he showed no trace of it beyond a scarred lip.

Williamson was a writer of great vigour and precision and published two brilliant articles on Cumberland climbing

in 'All the Year Round,' which gave a real impetus to the sport. He afterwards edited various London papers, and in collaboration with his witty and charming American wife wrote many successful novels. Motor travel was just then coming into vogue and on it their stories were mainly based. For many years they lived chiefly on the Riviera and after his death she made her home near Bath. Both of them had the great gift of being able to make and retain friends.

ELLIS CARR. Of all my climbing companions in Cumberland, Wales and the Alps, there is none upon whom I look back with such unqualified pleasure. Though a wealthy man, his tastes were of the simplest, and so long as he had his flute and his sketch-block, he was happy as a king. His great strength and a certain mechanical precision which made him a good carpenter, made him also an untiring wielder of the ice-axe, while his vigorous circulation made him indifferent to cold. He spoke German with extreme fluency and was an earnest student of Italian and Esperanto. Nothing ever disturbed his serenity and he never argued any topic with heat, with two exceptions. First, that he scorned the suggestion that anyone could catch cold by sitting in a draught and secondly, he had views about the material of which rucksack straps ought to be made; but this latter question was one about which he and his old friend, Wicks, had waged war for many years.

At one time Carr took up Esperanto with characteristic energy. We had arranged to stay at Torver and met at Euston for the journey. The moment the train started he produced several little books on that subject, but failed to arouse any general interest. In fact, during that long day and the next, one or two of the party found the subject decidedly boring. Someone sent us a batch of newspapers, from which Carr read out extracts. Presently he said, 'I see that the Cunard Company have launched a new ship. There's no such country as Carmania, is there?'

'No. They've named it in honour of that new language.'

'What new language? Volapuk?

'Oh, no! Esperanto, otherwise called *Carr mania*.'

So we can always get at the date of that party by seeing when the *Carmania* was launched.

ARNOLD MUMM, afterwards secretary of the Alpine Club had an unusual experience, for he made the acquaintance of Deep Ghyll on Scafell at a time when it was so blocked with snow that both the great pitches were buried, and he ran down without suspecting their existence.

He did not go to the Lakes very often, being addicted to wider travels. Indeed there were but few mountain ranges which he had not explored. He had a special love for Western Canada with its vast forests, mighty rivers and abundant animal life. We met once at the foot of Mount Robson where I had been knocked out by a rock sent down by a clumsy companion and had lain helpless on the ground in my tent for many days waiting for a stretcher party to carry me down. Mumm was going off on a long expedition and came to say goodbye. What followed was eminently characteristic of the man. Just as he was leaving, he said casually that there was something he would like me to do for him. He had brought out more money than he could possibly require and would like to send home 150 dollars. Worn out physically and mentally I languidly agreed and did not guess his real motive, even when at the door he turned and said, 'And of course you will consider yourself quite at liberty to make use of it if occasion arises.' He had thought it out and concluded that this unforeseen disaster might have caught me insufficiently financed and to meet that possibility his delicacy had led him to invent that fiction about the superfluous dollars.

As a matter of fact, though his money was never touched, before landing in England my last sovereign had been broached, so it was a near thing!

ARNOLD HILLS. The finest runner of his day came over with another college friend of mine from Buttermere to join me and on the way passed a house which Bowden Smith,

the Harrow master, used to hire for the summer. That learned man was actually standing at his door when the thirsty pedestrians passed and Hills took it into his head that the house was an inn and that the scholar was Boniface inviting custom. Accordingly the great athlete turned in at the gate and demanded beer. Bowden Smith said politely that he had no beer, but could recommend some bottled cider. Hills still under his erroneous impression said he did not think much of a house where they kept no beer, and might in his disappointment have said a good deal more, had not his more observant companion suspected the real state of affairs and stopped him. Hills was then in all the glory of his strength, but very little later was struck down by some form of paralysis and condemned to pass the rest of his life in a bath chair.

CHARLES PACKE. Born in 1823 he was an original—and in some respects a very original—member of the Alpine Club and one of the earliest explorers of the Pyrenees. He was an ardent botanist and delighted in mountain bivouacs, sleeping, for instance, on the summit of Scafell Pikes or Bowfell. He joined me several times but never did any climbing except in pursuit of a flower. He had a positive passion for a plant called *subularia aquatica* which grows under water in shallow lakes, and I can recall many an hour spent in searching for the wretched thing, paddling about in a biting wind, only to be released when the rain fell heavily enough to churn up the surface of the water and render further search useless.

His philosophy of life was of a peculiarly rigid and uncompromising kind. He had a favourite phrase, 'There's a right and a wrong,' which meant that every man, himself included, knew or ought to know exactly what course to pursue, and accordingly that course could be predicted by all his neighbours. The more conscientious the man the more accurately could his conduct be anticipated by his friends. The theory was all very well, but he was forever knocking holes in it, as nothing gave him greater pleasure than doing things which no one could possibly expect. Another outcome of

his maxim was that all truths were of equal importance, and an inaccuracy due to carelessness was in his eyes unpardonable. Yet from time to time it happened that he landed himself in the position which he had so often condemned in others, and then his misery was painful to watch.

The hamlet of Héas lies in a remote Pyrenean valley noted for its chamois and its hunters. To a dead hero of the latter class Packe wished to erect a monument, for which he prepared a latin inscription and sent it to a friend who was a fair classical scholar. The latter returned it suggesting certain alterations, and as an afterthought embodied the sentiment of it in English lines and in some commonplace but neatly turned latin verses.

'Comest thou with rifle stranger the chamois swift to find,
Or midst eternal snows to shun the meanness of mankind :
A moment pause and for *Chapelle* a heartfelt tear let fall,
Best guide and boldest hunter most spotless soul of all,
Shot by a comrade's clumsy hand a hunter still he fell
And asks no nobler headstones than the peaks he loved so well !'

Packe entered his own prose in the visitors' book at Héas and added his friend's latin verses as follows :

'Capreolis levibus seu tendis tela, viator,
'Seu fraudes hominum per juga cana fugis ;
'Siste pedem et lacrima, venantum ex ordine primum
'Prosequere et justi cor sine labe viri.
'Me miserum ! Incauti telo confossus amici,
'Sternitur, at montes quos amat ossa tenent !'

One unexpected feature of Héas was that two Jesuit professors for some years spent their summer vacations in that lonely spot. Both were polished men, well informed and classical scholars. In the following summer we found them again and they at once began talking about the inscriptions rhymed and unrhymed. Never doubting that all were by the same hand they lightly touched upon certain blemishes in the prose latin and thought they were sweetening their criticisms by praising the latin verse which Packe pooh-poohed,

but the more he belittled the lines the more convinced were the clerics that he was the modest author, and at last Packe realised to his horror that he had accepted the imputation, and contrary to his most cherished principles taken credit or discredit for another man's work. He sat in silent misery while the two professors vied with one another in discovering fresh beauties in the verses which they thought he had composed.

Packe was devoted to dogs, and never really enjoyed a walk without one or two of them. As he thought it unkind to cramp their liberty by keeping them under any sort of control, they were always an unmitigated nuisance. On one occasion he arrived by train at Keswick with two half-grown puppies. At the hotel the landlady was very stern and condemned the dogs to the stable as she never let dogs into the house itself. The owner of the dogs said that they were not like other dogs, their manners were perfect and they were gentle and trustworthy almost beyond belief. He begged and prayed and finally threatened to go elsewhere unless his harmless pets were admitted to the same hospitality as himself. This argument prevailed. The dogs were admitted and shut in the bedroom while we went out again to do a little shopping in the town. When we returned it was dusk. I opened the door which seemed stiff on its hinges and the carpet seemed to me both soft and lumpy. A light was struck and then the full perfection of those well-trained and trustworthy animals was revealed. They had reduced the towels, sheets and curtains to lint and the floor was eighteen inches deep in feathers worried out of the pillows and eiderdown quilts. The landlady was furious but she charged a highly consolatory price on the goods destroyed, while Packe stumped up cheerfully, rejoicing that his dear dogs had had a really good time.

His devotion to his dogs was really astonishing. Even his taste for food was largely regulated by what he thought would please them. Once he determined to make a close investigation of dog foods and presented himself at the chief factory of Mr Spratt. He was received with the honour due to the owner of some thirty canine epicures, and all the

processes were shown and explained to him. When the round was finished the manufacturer invited the customer into his dining room and offered him a dainty lunch, but that would not do for Packe! He exclaimed: 'No Sir! What is good enough for my dogs is good enough for me. Please let me have one of the biscuits which you supply to my kennel.' And so the entertainment went on, the host enjoying all the luxuries of the season, while his guest with simulated satisfaction sat knawing at his rocky and uninteresting fare.

Packe was an untiring walker, not fast, for his love of symmetry and of the metric system led him to train himself to the rate of ten minutes to the kilometre, but he would go on indefinitely and went well downhill as few elderly people can. In cold weather he condemned gloves as unmanly and usually pushed each hand up the opposite sleeve, looking like a handcuffed man trying to conceal the fact.

But with all his oddities and eccentricities he was a sterling character and one whom it was a pleasure and a privilege to know.

Packe had a great friend who occasionally came to Cumberland, MAURICE BARNARD BYLES, a sturdy walker, a skilful angler, a good shot and an accomplished seaman. He did not care much for rocks, except when he had some other inducement, such as deerstalking.

REV. J. N. BURROWS. Bowring greatly enjoyed his company. He was a big, handsome man with a splendid brown beard, a benevolent expression and a grand voice. His main centre was Pen-y-Gwryd, where his equally handsome daughter led caravans of devoted young men to all the hills around.

He was at one time President of Sion College and a more stately head no such society ever had. It is the custom there for the outgoing officer to rise from his seat, while his successor is led before him. After receiving a few words of wholesome advice, the newcomer bows his head and the chain of office has to be passed over it. On this occasion Burrows got as far as: 'I now invest you....' and reached up to

loosen the chain, but failed to get hold of it, so began again : ' With this chain so long the badge of office in our Society. . . .' here he made another desperate grab for the chain, which seemed hopelessly entangled. And so it was ; for, unknown to him, the butler had firmly secured the badge by means of two large safety-pins. To stand up without loss of dignity to such a check would have baffled anyone but Burrows.

THE UNPALATED PEER. Among the occasional visitors was a very interesting man—no climber but a good walker, well informed and a most agreeable companion. Unfortunately, he had a defective palate and had to leave out altogether some sounds, while others demanded a tremendous effort of an explosive character. On one occasion the maid brought him a bottle of beer, opened it and turned to go when there was a sudden bellow : ' A hawk ! A hawk ! ' Everyone jumped, then it occurred to one of us that his lordship only wanted the cork left with the bottle. Another time a discussion arose concerning submarines, when his comment was : ' Aren't hay hyaboo hoo hurn hurkle ? ' It was some time before anyone penetrated his disguise of : ' Aren't they liable to turn turtle ? ' But the most comical incident occurred during a visit to the Rake's Progress. Knowing that this was a rather higher flight than his lordship had yet made, I put him in charge of one of the younger members of the party who drew him on by constant assurances that there was ' one more slight difficulty.' This became monotonous, and at last when the rest of us had just turned a slight bend of the Progress, we waited for the other two. We had forgotten that at that spot there is a very clear echo off Pike's Crag and consequently were considerably startled by a violent detonation across the ravine and thunderous tones proclaiming : ' No more hight ifficooties ! ' It was his lordship's final protest.

LORD SUMNER. A very different type of peer was at that time plain J. G. Hamilton, scholar of Balliol. He was a big heavy man and quite a capable climber. Once on the summit of Scafell Pike he challenged me to wrestle ; we found a

fairly level spot and knowing nothing of any rules, pursued a catch-as-catch-can method. Before long he gave me the chance of clasping his right hand with both mine, whereupon I had the sense to turn my back on him and give him what is called a ' full-buttock.' As my back bowed the future legal luminary flew over my head with such violence that luckily for both of us, he turned completely over and landed not on his head but on a part of his body which by nature was very amply protected. His meteoric flight brought him to the only spot thereabouts where the stones were small and padded to some extent with moss. It was a great escape and in after years I sometimes shuddered at the thought how easily it might have ended in disaster and deprived the Bench of one of its brightest ornaments. Many people rather dreaded him and spoke of him as cold and cynical, but I am bound to state that to me he never varied, and what is stranger, never failed to address me by name.

*Muster Losson could dew with a hoss !* My college friend, WILFRID LAWSON, son of the famous teetotaller, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, knew all about ordinary foxhunting, but was anxious to taste the reputed joys of fell-hunting on foot. Dan Tyson was very helpful, so in the grey of the morning we collected the pack and started off. Unluckily, my friend was in no sort of condition and found it a tiresome job. Then it was that Dan Tyson jerked his thumb in my friend's direction and gave vent to the oracular remark which heads the paragraph. It became a favourite phrase with John Robinson to describe anyone who was not in the pink of condition.

ALFRED HOLMES. He was a most experienced mountaineer not having missed his annual season in the Alps for half a century. Every Swiss hotel keeper knew him and conversed with him in a language which the traveller believed to be French and the innkeeper knew to be some sort of English, though it was complicated by a strong Bradford accent, and simplified by the dropping of the letter ' H.' He believed himself to be a master of French and really had a vocabulary

of about a dozen words of remote French ancestry, and when he shouted 'Ung bang shode,' every waiter knew that Monsieur Oll Mess wanted a bath. But whatever language he talked he was a good goer on rocks and a trustworthy man to have on your rope over ice or snow. There is a curious pitch on Great End sometimes called by his name and sometimes by that of the brothers Brigg who climbed it with him but it had been already done.

MAITLAND. A London architect and a great friend of Bowring—was a member of the party which found and named Rake's Progress. I met him only once, though we had some correspondence. Bell Rib End the outcrop of rock on the South ridge of Yewbarrow was a favourite with him.

F. BOTTERILL. I never had a climb with him, though I often saw him climbing brilliantly with the Seatrees. He was fond of taking a caravan among the Alps and invented an ingenious route up a difficult pinnacle on the Petit Dent de Veisivi.

RAYMOND BICKNELL. The last bit of serious climbing for me was spent with that fine mountaineer on Pillar Rock. We did several climbs on the North face and the North-West which was particularly interesting to me, because in 1881 I descended from the summit as far as the twin gullies, but failed to see that by crossing the first I should gain the second, which though steep is easily descended. When we parted, he said with polite earnestness that on that day's work he would predict for me ten more years of the best. Little did we think that within a few months his own brilliant career was to be cut off on the Aiguilles d'Arve.

In conclusion—for there must be a conclusion to everything even to the flow of reminiscence—it has been a source of warm pleasure to look back over half a century and recall one stalwart figure after another and rejoice in having known so many fine fellows and so many open-hearted friends. There have been many of them and hardly one whom I could have wished to be other than he was.

# A SHORT HISTORY OF LAKELAND CLIMBING

*H. M. Kelly and J. H. Doughty*

PREFATORY NOTE *by J. H. Doughty*

When the Editor first discussed with me his project for this article we were in agreement that H. M. Kelly, while obviously the best equipped person for the task of writing it, would labour under certain disabilities owing to his own great personal share in much of the more recent exploration. The Editor therefore asked me if I would be responsible for the history of post-war climbing, leaving to Kelly the earlier period.

Kelly and I both agreed to this scheme; but when we settled down to the job we soon found that it did not work very well in practice. For one thing it would have meant divorcing my collaborator completely from the very period on which, in most respects, he was supremely qualified to speak. For another, we found that such a complete dichotomy was likely to spoil both stories; each of us found himself wishing to poach, to some extent, on the other's domain, while there were certain important features which could not be assigned exclusively to either period. We therefore decided in the end on a joint article. My sole reason for requesting that this prefatory note should appear under my name alone is that it is easier for me to say what might perhaps have been taken for granted by the reader, namely that the ensuing history contains no passages of self-adulation. Apart from this he may follow his fancy, if so inclined, in attempting to assign different parts of the story to the individual authors—a task which they would admit in many cases, to be now beyond themselves.

## INTRODUCTION

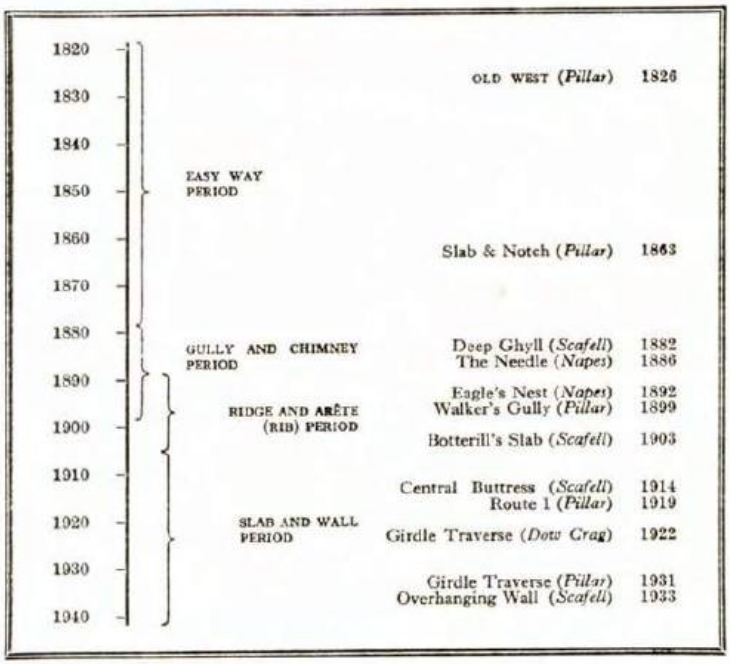
Climbing history, like the climber's rope, is made up of three interwoven strands, which we may designate as the rocks, the climbers, and the sport. It is our aim to trace the development of climbing in its broader technical aspects, but the tale must perforce be told largely in terms of men and routes. It is not proposed to mention all the first ascents

made or the persons participating in them. A full knowledge of these can be had from the lists of First Ascents in the new Fell and Rock Club Guides. But as names will have to be mentioned, only those considered to have made some contribution to climbing history and technique will be used. Naturally any references to individuals will be concerned mainly with the leaders of climbs ; but it must not be thought that, even if the praises of seconds and other supporters on a climb are left unsung, they have been ignored in our study of the subject : space alone prevents their inclusion. An interesting article could be written on ' Famous Seconds.' Such a one was Morley Wood, who became known as ' the perfect second,' whose unambitious mind and general self-effacement always led him to take second place, but did not stop him on occasion from taking greater risks than the leader of the party himself in order that success should crown the efforts of the party. Then there were men like G. S. Sansom and C. F. Holland, who, owing to their own aptitude for leadership, were a source of inspiration in their seconding of first ascents. Their climbing with others was in this respect a real partnership and not merely a case of providing morale to the leader by being tied on to the same rope.

Regarding the development of climbing on its technical side, we can distinguish four main phases—(*a*) the period of the Easy Way, no matter what kind of technical problem presented itself, (*b*) the Gully and Chimney period, (*c*) the Ridge and Arête (Rib) period, and (*d*) the Slab and Wall period. It is difficult to assign precise dates to these, as there is considerable overlapping. Perhaps the best course is to recognise this and label them as follows—(*a*) up to 1880, (*b*) 1880 to 1900, (*c*) 1890 to 1905, (*d*) 1905 to date. Apart from this overlapping there have been also, as in all evolutionary processes, the usual anticipations and reversions, such as Eagle's Nest Direct, a (*c*) climb done in the (*b*) period, and Smuggler's Chimney, a (*b*) climb done in the (*d*) period. The

accompanying time chart, and still more the list of first ascents at the end of this article, will indicate broadly the scheme of classification and the reasons for it.

One other point calls for mention here. In order to avoid scrappiness, and in the interests of a coherent and comprehensive story we have found ourselves concentrating almost inevitably on the best known climbing grounds and paying scant attention to work on the less frequented outlying crags. This is true both of the history and the accompanying lists of climbs. We should like to state emphatically that it does not betoken any lack of appreciation for this work; and to all who might feel themselves to have suffered disparagement by implication we beg to offer this explanation and our respectful apologies.



## THE PIONEERS

*(From the earliest beginnings to the ascent of the Napes Needle)*

The history of rock-climbing in the Lake District may be said to have started soon after 1880; for it was in the beginning of the last century that the thoughts of those who frequented these hills began to turn towards the crags which flanked the mountains they climbed. These cliffs must always have held some sort of interest for those who passed them by; but as the summit of the mountain was the object in view, and the grassy slopes seemed to offer the easiest line of ascent, the buttresses and pinnacles encountered en route presented little more than an awful spectacle for aesthetic contemplation.

The first rock-climb of which we have any trace is an undated and uncertain ascent of Broad Stand alleged to have been made by the poet Coleridge, who was presumably aiming for the summit of Scafell, and took this as the easist way he could find from Mickledore—the only evident breach in that long line of forbidding cliffs that appeared to extend from Eskdale nearly to Wasdale. Coleridge, who was a keen mountaineer, influenced Wordsworth in the same direction; and the latter must have helped even though unwittingly, to produce the change in men's minds, for it was his reference to Pillar Rock in his poem 'The Brothers' that gave general publicity to its existence. It is true that Green and other earlier Guide writers, had mentioned the Pillar Stone as one of the sights for the tourist to see as he wended his way up Ennerdale; but to them it was just a striking distant view, whilst Wordsworth's reference was of the morbid kind which always attracts closer and greater attention. It is not claimed that climbing had its genesis in morbid curiosity. All that Wordsworth did was to focus attention on the Rock, and its isolation naturally became a challenge to those who visited it; so that we may fairly assert that Atkinson's ascent of it in 1826 was the inauguration of rock-climbing as we know it today. Could it have begun in a more alluring spot!

Up to now, all that the mountaineer had been concerned with was the summit and the view he could see therefrom. A new element arose when Atkinson got to the top of Pillar Rock —the lure of the inaccessible. Yet it is interesting to note that the idea of reaching a summit of some kind remained for many years (as it still remains in countries where summits difficult of access are more plentiful) a controlling influence. The idea of a climb without some obvious top in view was a plant of very slow growth, and definite points such as Pillar Rock, Scafell Pinnacle, and Napes Needle were for long the main centres of attraction. Indeed, it was not until the late 'sixties, by which time nearly thirty people had followed in Atkinson's footsteps, that any crag other than the Pillar attracted attention from climbers at all, and by 1872 no less than four distinct routes to its summit had been discovered, the Old West Route, the Old Wall Route, the Slab and Notch Climb, and the Pendlebury Traverse.

Despite this concentration on Pillar, Scafell had not passed unnoticed, for this was the crag which, in the 'sixties, provided an alternative climbing ground. Here three routes had been worked out—Petty's Rift, the North Climb, and Mickledore Chimney. The motive behind these ascents is an interesting subject for conjecture. Was it climbing for climbing's sake, or were they prompted by a desire to avoid the awkward Broad Stand route to Scafell summit? Even as late as 1881 we find Jenkinson writing in his *Practical Guide to the English Lakes* 'To cross the Mickledore Chasm from Scawfell Pike to Scawfell, without making a detour, is considered, next to the dangerous ascent of Pillar Rock, as the most difficult bit of mountaineering work in the Lake Country.'

However, with the beginning of the Gully and Chimney period all doubt as to motive was set at rest. Rock-climbing as a sport in itself was definitely established. The Alpinist was to some extent responsible for this. Winter climbing in Switzerland at this time was not generally, if at all, thought of as a possibility; and the Alpinist's need to be on some

mountain or other drove him to consider whether his own lesser hills might not fill this winter hiatus. Moreover, there was always the possibility of winter conditions at home approximating to summer conditions abroad. His home mountains, too, would keep him fit for his beloved Alps. So he went to the gullies and wide chimneys which he might hope to find filled with snow and thus get some practice for the greater couloirs. That he did not always find them so—much to the benefit of his rock technique—did not stop him from treating British hills as small alps, and so his conquest followed Alpine tradition. Because of this training and mental outlook, he was rather inclined to frown upon anything savouring of what he dubbed ' rock-gymnastics.' Nevertheless, and despite the fact that his prejudices died very hard (for they were in evidence up to 1914, if not later), it cannot be gainsaid that he played a considerable part in the development of cragsmanship.

It was W. P. Haskett-Smith who showed the real possibilities of the sport as a thing to be enjoyed for itself alone, and during the decade of the 'eighties he set his mark for all time on British Cragsmanship. No other man has wielded anything like the same influence. It is no exaggeration to call him the Father of British rock-climbing. The impossible became at once a target for his skill and natural ability, and his successes were many and varied. At one end of the scale is the Napes Needle, while at the other is the long and successful siege of the North Climb on Pillar Rock. He made the Needle his very own, and his lone ascent of it was the second landmark in climbing history. He laid all the great crags under contribution, as a glance at the List of First Ascent will show. But it was the ascent of the Needle which had the greatest import. As an example of this, it is said that a photograph of it in a London shop turned O. G. Jones's thoughts to the possibilities of Lake District climbing, and there can be no doubt about the rôle *he* played in its development.

A constant companion of Haskett-Smith was John W. Robinson who lived at Lorton, near Cockermouth. He probably introduced the former to the Needle for he had an early acquaintance with it as the following will show. Seatree, in an obituary notice, writes : ' John told me of his father so far back as 1828 discovering and sketching the Gable Needle on one of his youthful excursions across the Wasdale face of that mountain.' Naturally with breeding such as this, Robinson acquired an extensive knowledge of fells and crags which he placed at the disposal of Haskett-Smith and others. He was a great walker and rock-climber and was endowed with extraordinary endurance and strength. For example, ' when living at Lorton he frequently rose at 4 a.m. walked to Wasdale Head to join a party of climbers, completed a hard day's climbing, and then tramped home apparently as fresh and vigorous as when he started.' In fact Lorton was almost invariably his headquarters for any day's climbing. Such enthusiasm was a great inspiration to others and it is not difficult to measure his contribution to the sport. The memorial notice to him in the first issue of this Journal gives a fuller insight into the character of this great-hearted mountaineer than is possible here.

Another prominent figure of this period was George Seatree, a native of Penrith. He was first attracted to the sport by the fame of Pillar Rock and made an ascent of it in 1875. Although he did not neglect the other crags, it was his first love which claimed most of his attention and he treated the Rock as a sort of shrine. Many were the parties which he conducted to the sanctuary on the top. His devotion was whole-hearted and the greater part of our knowledge of the early history of Pillar is due to the care and foresight with which he collected every scrap of information relating to his beloved crag. Perhaps this concentrated devotion was the reason why his name does not appear in First Ascents, for he was a skilful climber and a great friend of Robinson's with whom he did a great deal of climbing. Both being

'natives,' they had much in common apart from their genuine love for the fells.

### THE MASTER BUILDERS

Naturally, with this new-born enthusiasm, new ascents were quickly discovered. First came the easy gullies, such as those on Great End, in the early 'eighties, followed by such climbs as the shorter routes on Pillar Rock (Central Jordon, Great Chimney, etc.). There were, however, bigger fish to be fried, and the conquest of Moss Ghyll by J. Collier, G. Hastings, and J. W. Robinson in 1892, clearly received its inspiration from the wonderful victory over the north side of Pillar Rock in 1891 by W. P. Haskett-Smith, G. Hastings and W. C. Slingsby. Haskett-Smith with various companions had roamed up and down the north face of Pillar on and off for ten years, always to be defeated by that steepening of the cliff which extends from the north-west angle of Low Man eastward to the Nose overhanging Savage Gully. Did they turn down Savage Gully in despair of ever climbing the Nose? It is strange nowadays to think of the hero of the Napes Needle being defeated by the severity of the Nose. The cause could not have been isolation or altitude—one would have thought the exposure was about equal in both cases. Possibly what is now a clean landing on sound bare rock may have been an earth-covered ledge heaped with scree from Stony Gully above. Howbeit, the problem was solved in the following year by the Hand Traverse, a much more strenuous and exposed route than the Nose itself. After this the Nose seems to have lost its terrors for it was climbed in the following year.

Haskett-Smith collected another scalp in the shape of a short climb on to Scafell Pinnacle from Jordan Gap (another place which was probably earth-covered), and this naturally led to the frontal attacks on the Pinnacle by Steep Ghyll in the same year, and the Slingsby's Chimney route in 1888.

The leading figures during this time were Haskett-Smith, Robinson, Hastings, Slingsby, Collie, and Collier, and gullies and chimneys were falling right and left to their assaults. Noteworthy feats were the overthrow of the Great Gully of the Screes under the leadership of G. Hastings, and the conquest of Moss Ghyll in the same year (1892) by a party led by J. N. Collie. Moss Ghyll proved a most popular addition and along with the North Climb on Pillar has remained a classic to this day.

It was a little outside this period, however, when O. G. Jones sealed the Gully Period by his magnificent achievement, on a cold January day in 1899, over Walker's Gully, a truly noble cleft, as Laycock remarks, and in most respects our finest gully climb this side the Scottish border. Though Savage Gully was done in 1901 it belongs, by its very character, to a later phase, combining as it does all the qualities of the Gully-Chimney cum Slab and Wall Period.

It would seem that up to now the climber demanded from his climb some sort of enclosing protection for his body, and as the wide gullies were gradually vanquished, it was naturally to the remaining—and narrower—fissures that he looked for further routes. These, though often only wide enough for the insertion of an arm and leg, still gave some degree of the sense of security, and so it came about that a host of chimneys of varying widths were added to the growing list of climbs. Amongst these might be mentioned Gwynne's Chimney, Oblique Chimney, Kern Knotts Chimney, Shamrock Chimneys, and Hopkinson's Crack. Thus the climber was gradually squeezed out on to the faces of the cliffs in order to increase, and give variety to, his climbing.

He was, however, still reluctant to take undue risks and in consequence he turned to the edges or ribs of the crags, for these by the very nature of their structure would give frequent halting places, as well as afford more opportunity for anchorage than the more exposed walls and slabs. It should be

recalled that a foretaste of this was experienced in the middle 'eighties, for the Needle Ridge was ascended by then. Still, it was not until the late 'nineties that serious attention was paid to them, and bearing this in mind it still seems an outstanding feat on G. A. Solly's part to have led a party up the direct route of Eagle's Nest Ridge in 1892, two days before the West Chimney was first done, the latter a reversion to the Gully Period and very much in the nature of an anti-climax. The Arrowhead Ridge (Ordinary Way) followed suit the same day as the West Chimney under the leadership of Slingsby. Other climbs of this character were Pisgah Buttress, Shamrock Buttress, Bowfell Buttress, C. Buttress, Abbey Buttress, and Gordon and Craig Route. O. G. Jones, however, was now on the scene and had weighed up the possibility of scaling the Pinnacle of Scafell via Low Man from Deep Ghyll, a programme which he brought to fruition in 1896; this was a combination of crack, face, and perpendicular arête (rib) climbing. A later, but more wonderful achievement than this was his forcing of a way up the front of the Pinnacle Face in 1898, a feat ranking with that of Solly's effort on Eagle's Nest. It was, however, not a ridge climb but a great forerunner of the Slab and Wall Period.

With the turn of the century we enter upon a new phase of British Climbing. The great fissures and ridge routes had all been conquered, and the climber desirous of fresh triumphs was forced out on to the open faces; the Slab and Wall Period had begun. Jones's stupendous performance on the Pinnacle Face of Scafell had already pointed the way, and whilst this climb was not itself to be repeated until 1912, the new decade gave birth to a number of climbs of similar character. Some of these took place on Gimmer Crag, hitherto unexplored but now yielding to the efforts of some bold pioneers, among whom E. Rigby and H. B. Lyon were especially prominent. There was also considerable activity on Dow Crag, in which the brothers Abraham, the brothers Broadrick, and the brothers Woodhouse played leading parts.

But the most remarkable developments were due to that wayward genius, Fred Botterill, who startled the climbing world in 1903 by his *tour de force* on the famous slab of Scafell that bears his name, and followed this up three years later by his first ascent of the North-West Climb on Pillar Rock. Both were climbs of great severity and exposure which were looked at askance for some years. Like Jones's route, they were before their time both in character and quality, setting an entirely new standard.

Things were really beginning to move. Haskett-Smith had published in 1894 his small but charming guide to climbing in England and Wales, and O. G. Jones produced in 1897 his classic *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District*, in which he introduced a classification of climbs prevailing to this day.* The written word was not wasted on the desert air, for we find 'two enthusiasts' in 1906 making for Dow Crag 'every Sunday for fell rambling and first essays in rock-climbing, for they had read Owen Glynne Jones, and so knew all about it.' Obviously the thing could not rest there and they looked round for kindred spirits, discovered three in the persons of Charles Grayson, G. H. Charter, and S. H. Gordon, and decided that they were good enough to form a climbing club with. Thus started in 1906 the Fell and Rock Club of the English Lake District. It was by the shores of Goat's Water that it was born, and whilst the majestic Pillar of Ennerdale and the mighty cliffs of Scafell were magnetising men's minds and bodies, it was left to the humbler outpost, Dow Crag, to have the greatest influence of all. Little did Owen Glynne Jones, when his love for the Lakeland crags inspired him to write his book, and Alan Craig and E. Scantlebury when they devoured his words, realise what

*This statement requires a slight qualification. Jones divided the climbs into four categories—Easy, Moderate, Difficult, and Exceptionally Severe. Owing to the increase in the number of harder climbs, later authorities have found it convenient to subdivide two of Jones's groups and the classification now generally adopted is—Easy, Moderate, Difficult, Very Difficult, Severe, and Very Severe. Although the ratings of individual climbs have varied from time to time owing to changes in opinion or occasionally to objective changes in the nature of the route, it is interesting to observe how closely on the whole Jones's original rankings agree with those of contemporary writers.

they were starting. An extract from the first membership ticket will not be out of place here :

' 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, and to provide such facilities for its members as to enable them to meet together in order to participate in this sport in one another's company ; also to enable lovers of this branch of athletics to become acquainted with one another ; and further, to provide information and advice on matters pertaining to local mountaineering and rock-climbing.'

The Club commenced with a library of one book, naturally Jones's ' and one-100 ft rope for use in case of emergency,' the last a cryptic phrase which possibly means if a member turns up without a rope of his own. This question of the rope is of interest, for it must be borne in mind that the general use of the rope—if any at all—probably did not start till about 1880. When George Seatree ' met my old friend J. W. Robinson in 1886 ' he was surprised to find that the latter had brought a climbing rope with him, which caused Seatree to write later : ' I then found how vast had been the progress made in the art and sport of rock-climbing in Lakeland. A multitude of ascents had been achieved.' It will be noticed that Seatree refers to his ' old friend ' (elsewhere he states that he met Robinson in 1874). One surmises from this that Robinson had had the use of the rope recently introduced to him, by whom we cannot say. Probably some of the Alpinists were responsible. Anyhow, its introduction gave the climber greater confidence, with the result mentioned by Seatree.

Coming back to the Fell and Rock Club, its growth was mushroom like, for it at once attracted a host of men interested in the sport, among whom were the brothers George and Ashley Abraham, who by their literary enterprise, and their skill alike in cragsmanship and photography, have left their mark on British climbing.

Earlier mention has been made of the difficulty of assigning any particular date to any particular phase or type of climbing; but there is no doubt that about 1910 exposure was less and less considered a bar to route-finding, in consequence of which the technique of the sport developed in a surprising degree. Hitherto one might claim that the race was to the strong, if not necessarily of the Sandow type, but now it was found that delicacy of balance and good nerve could be put to considerable service in the cause. At the same time the climber was gaining a wider acquaintance with the cliff faces he frequented through the increase in the number of climbs, and increased geographical knowledge inspired further exploration.

Various factors contributed towards the new outlook; but it undoubtedly derived its chief impetus from the advent into the climbing world of S. W. Herford, G. S. Sansom, J. Laycock, A. R. Thompson, and their companions. The names of Laycock and Thomson must be mentioned, because although they were not in the big things the other two did, their knowledge of climbing was extensive, and their association with Herford was of real importance. From 1910 to 1912, while Herford was still an undergraduate at Manchester University, these three spent most of the week-ends, when time could not be spared for visits to the Lakes or Snowdonia, on the gritstone crags of Derbyshire. The repercussions of this fact, indeed, the general influence of the gritstone training ground on the modern development of our sport, are perhaps imperfectly appreciated. Gritstone climbs are short; but they have a high standard of severity and exposure; and the exiguous nature of their holds tends to produce a balance technique which is precisely what is required for face climbing of the delicate order. One need only cite the names of a few men who have had their early training and experience on gritstone—Botterill, Herford, Kelly, Frankland, Pigott, Linnell, A. T. Hargreaves—to drive home the point. Haskett-Smith would probably have led the Nose on Pillar

at the first attempt if he had had any gritstone experience at that time. Laycock's little book *Some Gritstone Climbs* has had a much bigger influence than its size and subject would indicate; and those acquainted with the climbs he describes will admit that it is not a far cry from The Crack at Castle Naze to the Pinnacle Face of Scafell; so that when Herford in 1912 carried his superfine technique to the greater cliffs, it is not surprising that these huge challenging slabs claimed his early attention. Their upper reaches had been explored by C. Hopkinson in 1893 and the lower part had been climbed by Jones in 1898, as already described. But Jones's Route had never been repeated, and the disastrously abortive attempt to link up the two sections in 1903 had only succeeded in investing climbers with an almost superstitious dread of the awful face, which even the brilliant exploits of Botterill did nothing to dispel. And now came a veritable Siegfried, to whom its legendary inaccessibility was as little daunting as Loge's encircling fires had been to his namesake of the ancient story. In April, 1912, Herford repeated Jones's climb, and before the year was out had not only climbed the face from bottom to top but had forced a way up Hopkinson's Gully, both climbs being done in company with G. S. Sansom. A year later, the same brilliant partners worked out the magnificent Girdle Traverse of Scafell, and it is perhaps not too fanciful to ascribe the novel development once more to the gritstone influence. When rocks are less than a hundred feet in height, the climbers are led to the idea of traversing in order to gain a respectable length, and we know that girdle traverses on at least two of the gritstone cliffs had been made prior to this date. The apogee of the Herford-Sansom combination was reached in 1914 when the hitherto impregnable Central Buttress of Scafell was vanquished. Despite the plethora and severity of more modern discoveries it can still hold its place with the hardest of them, and will continue to do so, for most parties attempting it have still to adopt the combined tactics invented by the

first leaders to overcome the Great Flake. Undoubtedly it stamped climbing with yet a new hallmark, and the inspiration due to it is not yet exhausted: all the great modern climbs in the British Isles are its lineal descendants. These men, too, gave evidence of the new spirit that had entered into the sport—the feeling that rock-climbing was an art in itself and could be pursued for its own sake and enjoyment. Unlike Jones and others of his day, they hadn't one foot on Scafell and the other on the Matterhorn. There was, indeed, something like an inversion of values; men began to measure the routes in the Alps against their own climbs. The former were certainly not technically more difficult; as far as rock work was concerned it was mainly a matter of more stamina. The self-reliance engendered at home may also have influenced guideless climbing abroad. The Central Buttress was first climbed in April, 1914. A few months later its conqueror was serving as a private in France, the prescience of the War Office having failed to discern in him sufficient evidence of powers of leadership to warrant the granting of the commission he applied for. In January, 1916, he fell in action.

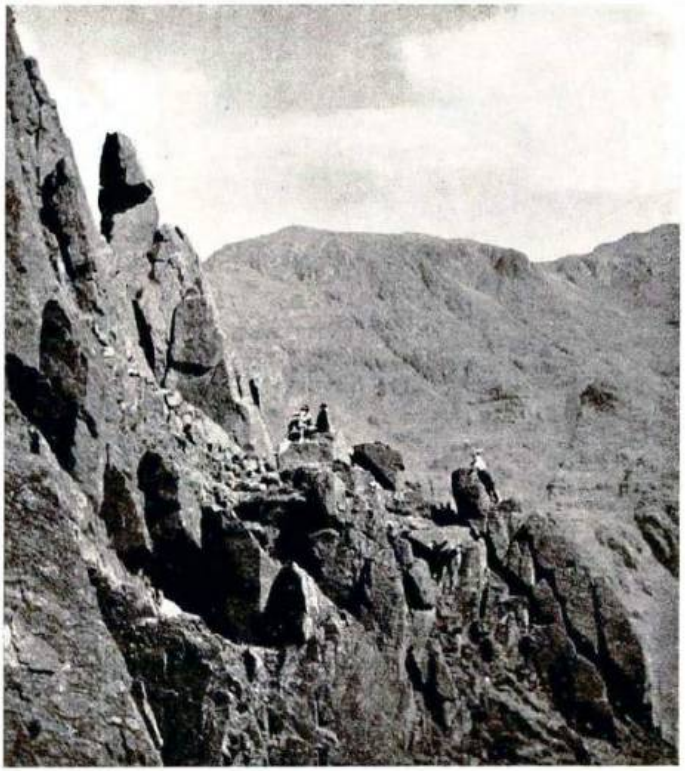
## THE INHERITORS
### (*Post-war climbing*)

With the close of hostilities in 1918 a great renaissance in climbing was naturally to be expected. For four long years the big majority of active climbers had been able to pay but brief, fugitive visits to their happy hunting grounds; and now they returned with an avidity sharpened by the lengthy period of rock-starvation, and the spirit of adventure which the searing experiences of the war had intensified rather than dulled. Yet an observer of those days might well have had misgivings as to the outcome. Had Herford been a solitary genius to whom no heir could be expected, whose vitalising influence had expired with his own demise?

Were there indeed the opportunities for further explorations of this order? Even so shrewd a judge as Laycock had expressed some doubts. 'From 1911 onwards it has been no easy matter to discover good new climbs in England and Wales.' Thus we find him writing in 1916. It is true that a few lines later he continues, with characteristic generosity and breadth of view: '....a new tradition has arisen. But all Herford's friends will be, as he himself would have been, the first to welcome the arrival of a greater climber still.'

All doubts were soon laid to rest. It would be rash to assert that a greater climber arose, or has since arisen; but this much can be said with confidence—that within a few brief years of the post-war era a new harvest had been garnered, far surpassing in quantity anything accomplished hitherto in a comparable period of time, and much of it at least worthy of the new tradition in its quality.

The first blow of the new campaign may be said to have been struck by G. S. Bower in his ascent of Route D on Gimmer Crag in May, 1919; but all other doings of that vintage year were eclipsed by the performances of that remarkable triumvirate, C. G. Crawford, C. F. Holland and H. M. Kelly. Of these, Holland formed a direct link with pre-war climbing: he had been with Herford and Sansom on their exploration of the Central Buttress. A great climber, an even greater inspirer, he has probably exerted more influence on ambitious youth in the climbing world than any other man of our time. His knowledge of the crags was extensive, his courage boundless, his temperament ideal. Holland's eye for a route, Crawford's cheery optimism in conjunction with his remarkable aptitude for the sport, and Kelly's technical skill in leadership formed an irresistible combination when these three got together. They first swept clean the face of Scafell Pinnacle, climbing every route already known upon it, and making numerous variations of great merit. They next transferred their attentions to the west face of Pillar Rock, which has had a curious history.



*F. H. F. Simpson*

NAPES
Dress Circle

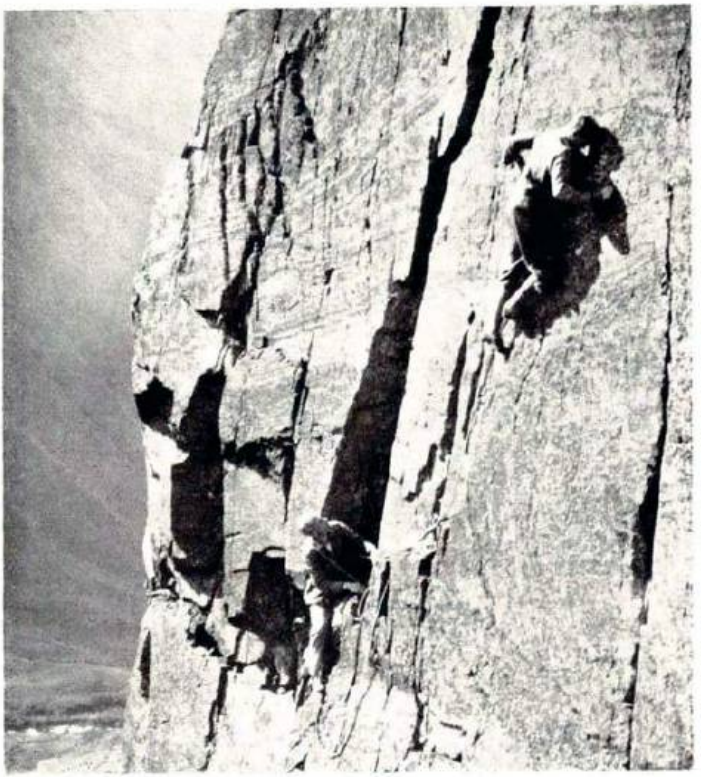
Although the Rock had proved a focus of attraction for more than half a century, exploration was for a long time concentrated on the northern, southern, and eastern sides, and Atkinson's original route of 1826 remained in solitary splendour on the western face until 1901, when the brothers Abraham worked out their ingenious and entertaining New West Climb. Then in 1911, H. R. Pope led the South-West Climb, a delicate face route of high standard. Thus we had three climbs spread over nearly a century. Within a fortnight the number was more than doubled; on 27th July they repeated Pope's climb and improved it by a direct finish. Two days later Holland led them up the Rib and Slab Climb, and Kelly made a new route up the West Wall of Low Man. Crawford and Holland now turned back to Scafell, while Kelly went off to Gable with R. E. W. Pritchard, and added three first-class routes to the four previously known on Kern Knotts. On 9th August he was back at Pillar, and along with Holland made two further routes of superlative difficulty up the west wall of High Man. It was truly a wonderful year, and before closing its account we must mention the ascent of the Great Central Route on Dow Crag by J. I. Roper and G. S. Bower. Though not a climb of great length, this was of the super-severe standard which the climbing world was now for the first time coming to take as a matter of course, and it had for its own crag much the same detonating effect that climbs like the Central Buttress and Routes I and II on Pillar had in other fields.

The story of the next year is largely concerned with the exploits of G. S. Bower. Besides accompanying Kelly and Pritchard on two notable routes on opposite sides of Deep Ghyll, he was himself responsible for quite a number of additions to the climbs on Gimmer, Pavey Ark, and Dow Crag, and broke entirely new ground by his climb on Esk Buttress, a course giving 400 feet of severe climbing.

It was now becoming clear that climbing had entered upon a fundamentally new phase. What had been regarded a

few years before as the unapproachable plane of performance attainable by occasional gifted geniuses like Jones, Botterill, Herford, was now looked upon rather as the norm by which our leading climbers measured their own achievements. Virgin rock was approached in a new spirit of confidence and enterprise. It was not that the best men were any better than the giants of the past, but they were more numerous, while the standard of ability among climbers in general had increased enormously. The quickened interest in climbing and the rapid growth in technical skill were stimulated by the timely appearance of two books, H. Raeburn's *Mountaineering Art*, and G. Winthrop Young's monumental *Mountain Craft*, in which the problems of climbing technique were handled with a fullness and clarity unapproached hitherto.

The first wave of post-war activity had by no means spent its force in the achievements of 1919–20 which have already been detailed; and although there was nothing later which quite matched those wonder-years in splendour, first ascents, continued to pour in for a good many years in a fairly steady stream. It is impossible within the limits of this account to particularise more than a few of these, and the basis of selection is perhaps a little arbitrary, so that the reader may take it that for every climb mentioned there are at least two or three more of approximately equal merit. Among the major crags, attention was chiefly focussed on Dow Crag, Gimmer, and the Napes. The last named cliff was pretty thoroughly combed by various enthusiasts among whom C. D. Frankland and Fergus Graham were prominent. Further east, Kelly and Bower added to their respective successes Tophet Wall and the repulsive (looking) Innominate Crack on Kern Knotts. Meanwhile Bower was continuing his explorations of the more holdless sections of Gimmer and Dow Crags, and in connection with these climbing grounds especially the name of H. S. Gross became increasingly prominent. His successive Eliminate Routes conformed to the best standards of contemporary severity,



*E. Wood-Johnson*

KERN KNOTTS
Traverse

WASDALE HEAD BRIDGE

*J. P. Taylor*

whilst the magnificent Girdle Traverse of Dow Crag was worthy to rank with its famous counterpart on Scafell.

After the great successes of 1919, it is not surprising that we have little fresh to record on Scafell Crag. The second and third ascents of Central Buttress were made in 1921, 1922 by C. D. Frankland and A. S. Pigott respectively. In 1925 the enterprise of Fergus Graham in forcing a direct route to Moss Ledge showed that even the Pinnacle Face was not quite exhausted, and in the following year Kelly found a new route up the Central Buttress by way of the Moss Ghyll Grooves.

We have said that it is impossible to detail all the new climbs made at this period; but some mention must be made of those enterprising explorers who collected not merely new climbs, but new crags. They included, among others, Mosedale Buttresses (F. Graham), Boat Howe Crags (G. Basterfield and G. Graham Brown), Green Gable Crags (G. G. Macphee), and Black Crag, Ennerdale (the Wood-Johnson brothers). In this class also may be mentioned the opening up of the southern end of Pikes Crag by Kelly and Holland in 1924.

Yet another noteworthy feature of this period was the rapid growth in the art of descent. Herford's famous article, 'The Doctrine of Descent' in the 1914 *Journal*, coupled with the increasing influence of gritstone-trained climbers to whom the descent of severe courses was all in the day's work, produced a marked effect and classic routes like Savage Gully and Botterill's Slab were now descended for the first time. Nowadays few first ascents of importance go for very long before a first descent is also made.

Toward the end of the first decade of post-war climbing a kind of lassitude set in. It seemed as if the great wave of exploration started by Herford and so brilliantly ridden by his immediate followers had spent its force at last.

But it surged up again in 1928 when the temporary association of H. G. Knight and H. M. Kelly produced new climbs

on Pillar, the Napes, and Kern Knotts—the Kern Knotts Chain, another girdle traverse, being a climb of quite exceptional severity. After that it seemed for a time to be almost in danger of subsiding altogether; and it must be confessed that about this period the centre of gravity of British climbing had shifted to another part of our island.

The history of Welsh climbing is, of course, beyond the purview of this article. The restriction is the less regrettable since developments in Snowdonia have followed courses roughly parallel to those in our own district, a fact which is not so remarkable when we consider that, apart from a few conspicuous exceptions, the same leading figures have been responsible for exploration in both regions. The post-war renaissance in North Wales lagged a little behind that in the Lakes; it was just about reaching its full force as the great wave further north was beginning to die down, and it obtained especial impetus from the ascent by A. S. Pigott in 1927 of the East Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu. The particular importance of this climb lay in the fact that it opened up the possibilities of a crag of major proportions, which had hitherto been regarded as invulnerable. It therefore set men thinking along new lines, much as the ascent of Central Buttress and the great 1919 campaign on Pillar had done. A year later the companion West Buttress fell, this time to J. L. Longland, with the original conqueror Pigott in the party. Thenceforward the exploration of the crag proceeded apace, chiefly through the enterprise of C. F. Kirkus, one of a band of brilliant young members of the Climbers' Club, who were specially active in Wales about this time.

The two years 1929–30 were comparatively barren in the Lake District, but the next year saw the making of two first-class routes in which the Clogwyn du'r Arddu influence was plainly discernible. There was no virgin crag in Lakeland to compare with this mighty cliff, but the nearest approach to it was undoubtedly the East Buttress of Scafell.

Though not on so large a scale as Clogwyn, its steepness, severity, and reputed inaccessibility were quite comparable; whilst in some respects, such as the relative absence of vegetation, it might claim a slight superiority. In 1931 Kirkus tried it at its northern end (an attempt on this out of Mickledore Chimney had been started but abandoned by Kelly some years earlier) and made the first ascent by the Mickledore Grooves.

The other great climb of this year was due to the inspiration of an equally brilliant young cragsman, Maurice Linnell, whose untimely loss in 1934 was a disaster to British climbing only to be compared with the death of Herford. Linnell had climbed a great deal with Kirkus and was himself responsible for one of the hardest of all the hard Clogwyn du'r Arddu climbs. And now in conjunction with A. B. Hargreaves and A. W. Bridge (who must be reckoned joint leader) he made the first Girdle Traverse of Pillar Rock. At this point we may summarise the intervening and subsequent history of the famous Stone, which was last mentioned in connection with the great campaign of 1919. In 1920 and 1923 Kelly made further climbs on the West Wall of Low Man, and in 1928, in company with H. G. Knight, yet another route, this time on the west wall of Walker's Gully. The Girdle Traverse opened the eyes of climbers to the possibilities of the last inviolate section of Pillar—the formidable stretch between the North and North-West climbs, and A. T. Hargreaves made two new routes here in 1932 and 1933, the Nor'-Nor'-West Climb and Hadrian's Wall, which are among the hardest of the Pillar climbs.

Meanwhile, Linnell had turned his attention to the East Buttress of Scafell, and in the summers of 1932 and 1933 (the last summer, alas! in which he was to climb) launched a series of great attacks with the result that this supremely formidable face, which three years before had been unclimbed, now possessed several magnificent routes. Two of these, it must be mentioned, were led by A. W. Bridge and A. T.

Hargreaves respectively, but Linnell was in at both and was himself responsible for the remainder.

## SUMMARY

With this series of splendid leads our tale of first ascents may fitly close. If it has been too much a tale of first ascents, we can only plead that these, like specific advances or battles in military history are the obvious, convenient pegs on which to hang the skein. But we have tried to indicate throughout the broad background of general development that lies behind these glittering fires of individual performance; and the present is a convenient stage at which to review a few of the more general aspects which have received too scant attention.

We have seen how British climbing, originally—like Alpinism—a pursuit of summits, and for long regarded even on its technical side as a humble handmaid of Alpinism, gradually established itself as an independent sport, in which the route is followed for its own sake. We have seen, too, how the early climbers, ever prone to seek the deeper recesses of the crags for their big routes, were gradually driven into the narrower fissures, and finally forced out on to the ridges and open faces.

Concurrently with this may be observed certain technical developments in the art of climbing. The main tendency here, as we have already noted, has been away from mere strength and toward delicate balance work. This is not to disparage the older climbers, especially the best of them. There can have been nothing seriously amiss with the technique that took Haskett-Smith up the Needle, Solly up Eagle's Nest Ridge, or Jones across the Pinnacle Face. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that a concentration on fissure climbing tends to develop a kind of 'all in' technique which lacks the delicacy and precision in the use of holds which are called for by the more difficult face routes so common today. In

some of the older text books the novice was enjoined to practice exercises which would develop his muscles, especially his arm muscles—such as pulling up and down twenty times in succession on a horizontal bar. In *Mountain Craft*, Geoffrey Winthrop Young recommends him to take up dancing.

Of course the comparison is not all to the advantage of one side. Some brilliant face-climbers of the younger generation are relatively clumsy in cracks and chimneys. Even the psychological situation may become inverted. Whereas the older climbers sought the rifts for the comforting suggestion of security afforded by their retaining walls, one may find nowadays an occasional cragsman who, whilst perfectly at home on the slenderest of airy stances, seems to suffer from a paralysing claustrophobia when immersed in the depths of a gully. On the whole, however, it must be admitted that the average modern climber has a much completer technical equipment than his predecessors; and there can be no doubt that there has been since the war, a substantial increase not only in the average standard of climbing, but also in the rapidity with which beginners learn their craft. In earlier days the neophyte was expected to begin on the easiest climbs and work his way upwards methodically through the moderates and difficults. If he was sufficiently gifted, he might hope, after some years of this patient apprenticeship, to lead a severe—and that (if he was a conscientious member of the F. & R.C.C.) only under conditions carefully prescribed by the Committee.* Our young men of today would laugh at such elaboration. They start their training on difficults and expect to be leading severes within a year or two; after two or three years the best of them will be hankering after Central Buttress or something near that class. And whilst at times this speeding up may be overdone—to the learner's ultimate detriment—it is as unnecessary as it would be futile to demand a return to the more pedestrian methods of the past.

* See F. & R.C.C. Journal, No. 3, p. 318.

One notable result of the lessened importance of muscular effort in climbing technique has been a marked increase of interest in the sport by women. There have been some women climbers almost from the earliest days, but for long they worked under serious handicaps. The great demands on strength made by some of the early climbs (at least as climbed by the early methods) and the unsuitability of the garb prescribed by convention: these were bad enough, but they were as nothing compared to the supreme psychological handicap imposed by the general relationship between the sexes. Women were still regarded very much as objects of male protection. Once the idea of their climbing at all had been accepted, the protective attitude was marked, and it is amusing to read some of the older accounts of climbs with a woman in the party (she was, of course, never referred to as a 'woman'—always a 'lady'). When the climb is finally accomplished the 'lady' invariably comes in for a special meed of praise; but one feels behind it all the implication that the plaudits should really be reserved for the gallant fellows who had cheerfully accepted the unwonted burden and risen so nobly to the occasion. And of course, one great difficulty in combating this attitude was that too many of the women climbers were prepared to accept it. The more independent revolted, naturally; but it was not until 1921 that this revolt showed itself openly in the formation of an independent women's climbing club. The term 'revolt' is perhaps a little strong here, and certainly the setting up of the new organisation implied no sort of antagonism with the Fell and Rock Club, which had admitted women from the start. But 'Pat' Kelly, the founder of the Pinnacle Club, believed, and rightly so, that women could not hope to develop fully their climbing potentialities under the conditions of that time unless they did some at least of their climbing quite independently of men. Her own remarkable powers (at that time she was probably in a class by herself among British women climbers) she willingly placed at the service

of this cause ; and it is profoundly to be regretted that she did not live to see the full fruition of her venture. The new club was an immediate success and has had a continuous growth, with precisely those beneficial effects on women's climbing that the founder foresaw. If we have yet to wait for outstanding pioneer work by a woman climber, it can at least be said today that the best of them are very near to the best of the men.

Another outstanding feature of post-war climbing is the enormous increase in the number of participants, an increase which brings various knotty problems in its train. Firstly, there is a social problem. In former days we had among climbers a preponderance of the more fortunate people endowed with a certain limited degree of means and leisure. Never what would be called a rich man's sport, it was not a poor man's either. Nowadays all that is largely changed. The general movement towards outdoor exercise and more frequent holidays, increased facilities of transport, and various other factors have combined to produce a large influx of climbers of more limited means. That many of them do not find a natural and congenial home in the old-established climbing clubs is not in itself, perhaps, a matter of great moment. But the organisations towards which they tend to gravitate lack the historical background and perspective of the older clubs. These latter are the repositories of the great traditions of our craft, and it seems a pity that the young aspirants should not enjoy more directly the benefits of that valuable store.

One of the less fortunate results of this great influx of new climbers who are not directly in touch with the main tradition is a tendency to the growth of slipshod methods, especially in rope management. The use of the rope has evolved gradually from its first tentative introduction, when it was almost more of a menace than an aid at times, to the present-day elaboration in which great care is devoted to its texture, storage, testing, method of attachment both to bodies and

rocks, handling in use, and a score of other details. For if the novices are inclined to carelessness, it can truly be said of experienced climbers that never in the history of the sport was more concentrated attention given to this subject than at present.

There is one type of climber to whom the art of rope management is a matter of secondary importance, that is, the solitary climber. There are probably few, if any, who addict themselves to solo climbing exclusively; but it has always had a fascination for certain minds. Whether because it has sometimes been frowned on by those in authority, or for other reasons, solitary climbing is but scantily documented; so that we must content ourselves with referring to its existence and mentioning that its devotees have included many of the most distinguished climbers at all times.

It was not our intention, for we did not feel that it came within the scope of this article, to deal with equipment, but as the rope has been mentioned a word or two about footgear might not be out of place especially, as in one respect, a change in it had considerable influence on the development of climbing. It is not easy to trace the introduction of the climbing nail into the boot and the various changes that have taken place in the composition and shape of it. No doubt climbers were first content with the strong type of boot such as was worn by the dalesman until the need for something affording greater friction started the various fashions in the projecting nail. But regarding the introduction of the rubber shoe there is less uncertainty, for gritstone climbing was chiefly responsible for it. Like most innovations this did not come about at once and at first problems demanding footgear of this kind were usually overcome by discarding the boot for the stockinged-foot; as Jones did on the final pitch of Walker's Gully, and Herford and Sansom on the Central Buttress. But when this method was applied to gritstone—and it was more applicable to this type of climbing than any other—the abrasive nature of the rock demanded something

more durable than wool, and ultimately the rubber-shoe was adopted as the most suitable medium for the purpose. Its durability, together with its better 'feel' and greater flexibility than the boot, brought it into favour for the bigger crags, and a pair of rubbers were naturally stored into the rucksack before starting out for them.

One or two features which have distinguished British from Continental climbing should also be mentioned here. One is the almost complete refusal of our own climbers to resort to artificial aids, apart from the rope. The continental climber, with his armoury of pitons (wall-hooks), hammer, and carabineers (snap-rings), has no counterpart in this country. Of course, our home crags offer a fair supply of natural belays, and do not call so imperatively for the piton (wall-hook), etc., as do the rocks of the Eastern Alps. And if the German and Austrian have perhaps been over-ready to rely on these adventitious aids, they have been led thereby to the development of new technical methods, enabling them to make attacks on smooth faces that could be surmounted by no other means. We may yet see such methods introduced in Lakeland as the supply of new routes gives out, but they will have to encounter the resistance of strong prejudice.

Another point of difference is the almost complete absence, until quite recently, of the professional element in British climbing. Before the war there was often to be found at Wasdale Head in winter a Dauphiné guide, but it can hardly be said that he was taken very seriously; and in the real climbing season he was always back in his native land. After the war, this practice was not revived; but about ten years ago J. E. B. Wright started an organisation known as the Lakeland Mountain Guides, and published a fixed tariff for various Lakeland climbs. His example has since been followed by others, and there are now quite a few professionals available. The mere fact that the Guides have grown in numbers may be taken as evidence that they are a need, but

whilst they include among them some first-class cragsmen, it cannot be said that they have yet played much part in shaping climbing history.

And what of the future? It is no use saying that the crags are exhausted. That has been said too often, and too often falsified. What new forms climbing may take is an interesting subject for speculation. Here is a fragment, hitherto unpublished, which was written some fifteen years ago by a well-known climber:

'Some time ago there passed away in London a great painter, little known to the world of those days. For the last few years he had lived in obscurity. He had lost interest in everything except his art, his wordly affairs being managed by a few close friends, including those who had been directly interested in his productions. He would take up his brush before his easel and endeavour to transmit his ideas into form and outline on the canvas. The picture always remained unfinished, idea after idea would be painted over each other until the canvas became nothing but a glowing mass of colour. Colour became the supreme thing—he would toy with dyed wools and silks; all the ranges of the modern dyer's colours expressed in these mediums attracted him.

'I think of rock-climbing. Routes jostle and spill over each other. Today there is definition and form in rock-climbing—gullies, chimneys, cracks—but it is fast losing this, and the cause of it is slab-climbing. The caterpillar form of movement demanded by the former type of climbing is giving way to the flowing movement of the latter; one might say one twinkles up a slab. It is on slabs that one enjoys the real delight of rock-climbing. And the trend of all this is that the rock climber of the future will view a face of rock from a new aspect—his climbing will be of the whole and not part only. Defined routes will be crossed and re-crossed, lines of movement will take him up and down, diagonally and otherwise, in every direction. Holds will be just caressed and passed by for others, a veritable flirtation will be carried on until he almost becomes a rock-climbing Don Juan. Think, for example, of wandering at will over Deep Ghyll Slabs. As the mind's eye follows the ramifications of one's movements, an exhilaration will ensure such as to fill the imagination with a sense of riotous feeling, analogous to the passion for colour of the great departed painter.'

There you have an ideal: it seems to envisage solitary climbing, a complete casting aside of the shackles of the

rope. Others, differently minded, may see in the future an eager embracing of the rope and kindred aids, tending to the development of a highly mechanised form of climbing which will satisfy a different kind of aspiration. Whether the climbing of the future will take on either or both of these forms, or perhaps develop along entirely different lines as yet undreamt of we cannot say. Enough for us that there is as yet no sign of diminution in interest in the sport. And if after another fifty years the Fell and Rock Club decides to celebrate the centenary of the first ascent of the Needle by another special number of the Journal, there seems no reason why the historian chosen to record the doings of those intervening years should not have at least as rich and varied a story to relate as that which we have tried to tell.

## LIST OF FIRST ASCENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

| Year | Name of Climb | Classification | Crag | Leader |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1826 | *Broad Stand* | M | SCAFELL | Not known |
| | *Old West Route* | E | PILLAR ROCK | J. Atkinson |
| 1850 | *Old Wall Route* (?) | E | PILLAR ROCK | C. A. O. Baumgartner |
| 1850 | *Corner above the Slab* | — | PILLAR ROCK | —. Whitehead |
| 1863 | *Slab and Notch Climb* | E | PILLAR ROCK | J. W. E. Conybeare |
| 1869 | *North or Penrith Climb* | M | SCAFELL | Major Ponsonby |
| 1869 | *Mickledore Chimney* | M | SCAFELL | C. W. Dymond |
| 1872 | *Pendlebury Traverse* | M | PILLAR ROCK | F. Gardiner |
| 1882 | *Deep Ghyll (descent in snow)* | M | SCAFELL | A. L. Munn |
| 1882 | *Deep Ghyll* | M | SCAFELL | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Central Gully* | M | GREAT END | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *South-East Gully* | M | GREAT END | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Central Jordan Climb* | D | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *West Jordan Climb* | D | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Great Gully* | D | PAVEY ARK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Western Gully* | — | GIMMER CRAG | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| 1884 | *High Man from Jordan Gap* | M | SCAFELL | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Steep Ghyll* | S | SCAFELL | W. P. Haskett-Smith |

| Year | Name of Climb | Classification | Crag | Leader |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1886 | *The Needle* | D | THE NAPES | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *Needle Ridge* | D | THE NAPES | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| 1887 | *Great Chimney* | D | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *The Arête* | M | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| | *The Curtain* | D | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| 1888 | *Great Gully* | D | DOW CRAG | G. Hastings |
| | *Slingsby's Chimney* | D | SCAFELL | W. Cecil Slingsby |
| 1889 | *Green Crag Gully* | M | BUTTERMERE | J. W. Robinson |
| 1890 | *Shamrock Gully* | S | PILLAR ROCK | G. Hastings |
| 1891 | *North Climb* | D | PILLAR ROCK | W. P. Haskett-Smith |
| 1892 | *Moss Ghyll* | VD | SCAFELL | J. N. Collie |
| | *Great Gully* | S | THE SCREES | G. Hastings |
| 1892 | *Eagle's Nest Ridge Direct* | S | THE NAPES | Godfrey A. Solly |
| | *Gwynne's Chimney* | D | PAVEY ARK | H. A. Gwynne |
| | *Arrowhead Ridge* | D | THE NAPES | W. Cecil Slingsby |
| | *Oblique Chimney* | D | GABLE CRAG | J. Collier |
| 1893 | *Hopkinson and Tribe's Route* | D | SCAFELL | C. Hopkinson |
| 1893 | *Collier's Climb* | VS | SCAFELL | J. Collier |
| | *Pier's Ghyll* | S | LINGMELL | J. Collier |
| | *Sergeant Crag Gully* | D | LANGSTRATH | O. G. Jones |
| | *Kern Knott's Chimney* | D | KERN KNOTTS | O. G. Jones |
| 1894 | *Shamrock Chimneys* | VD | PILLAR ROCK | R. S. Robinson |
| 1895 | *Intermediate Gully* | S | DOW CRAG | E. A. Hopkinson |
| | *Hopkinson's Crack* | S | DOW CRAG | C. Hopkinson |
| 1896 | *Jones's Route from Deep Ghyll* | S | SCAFELL | O. G. Jones |
| | *Doctor's Chimney* | D | GABLE CRAG | C. W. Patchell |
| 1897 | *C Gully* | S | THE SCREES | O. G. Jones |
| | *Central Chimney* | S | DOW CRAG | O. G. Jones |
| | *Kern Knotts West Chimney* | D | KERN KNOTTS | O. G. Jones |
| | *Kern Knotts Crack* | S | KERN KNOTTS | O. G. Jones |
| | *Keswick Brothers' Climb* | VD | SCAFELL | G. D. Abraham |
| 1898 | *Jones's Route Direct from Lord's Rake* | S | SCAFELL | O. G. Jones |
| | *Jones and Collier's Climb* | VD | SCAFELL | O. G. Jones |
| | *Pisgah Buttress* | VD | SCAFELL | O. G. Jones |

| Year | Name of Climb | Classification | Crag | Leader |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *West Jordan Gully* .. | S | PILLAR ROCK .. | W. P. McCulloch |
| | *West Wall Climb* .. | D | SCAFELL .. | J. W. Robinson |
| | *Rake End Chimney* .. | D | PAVEY ARK .. | C. W. Barton |
| 1899 | *Ling Chimney* .. | VD | THE NAPES .. | W. N. Ling |
| | *Walker's Gully* .. | S | PILLAR ROCK .. | O. G. Jones |
| | *Broadrick's Route* .. | S | DOW CRAG .. | H. C. Broadrick |
| | *Engineer's Chimney* .. | S | GABLE CRAG .. | G. T. Glover |
| 1901 | *New West Climb* .. | D | PILLAR ROCK .. | G. D. Abraham |
| | *Savage Gully* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | C. W. Barton |
| 1902 | *Shamrock Buttress Route* 1 .. .. | M | PILLAR ROCK .. | G. D. Abraham |
| | *Bowfell Buttress* .. | D | BOWFELL .. | T. Shaw |
| | *Broadrick's Crack* .. | S | DOW CRAG .. | R. W. Broadrick |
| | *South-East Chimney* .. | D | GIMMER CRAG .. | E. Rigby |
| 1903 | *Abraham's Route* .. | S | DOW CRAG .. | G. D. Abraham |
| | *A Route* .. .. | S | GIMMER CRAG .. | E. Rigby |
| | *Botterill's Slab* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | F. W. Botterill |
| | *Birkness Chimney* .. | S | BIRKNESS COOMB | N. Sheldon |
| 1904 | *C Buttress* .. .. | D | DOW CRAG .. | G. F. Woodhouse |
| 1905 | *Woodhouse's Route* .. | D | DOW CRAG .. | G. F. Woodhouse |
| 1906 | *North-West Climb* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | F. W. Botterill |
| 1907 | *B Route* .. .. | S | GIMMER CRAG .. | H. B. Lyon |
| | *Woodhead's Climb* .. | S | SCAFELL .. | A. G. Woodhead |
| 1909 | *Giant's Crawl* .. | D | DOW CRAG .. | E. T. W. Addyman |
| | *Abbey Buttress* .. | VD | THE NAPES .. | F. Botterill |
| | *Smuggler's Chimney* .. | S | GABLE CRAG .. | J. S. Sloane |
| | *Shamrock Buttress Route* 2 .. .. | VD | PILLAR ROCK .. | H. B. Gibson |
| | *Gordon and Craig Route* .. .. | D | DOW CRAG .. | S. H. Gordon |
| 1910 | *Arête, Chimney and Crack* .. .. | S | DOW CRAG .. | T. C. Ormiston-Chant |
| | *Various* .. .. | — | ELLIPTICAL CRAG | H. B. Lyon |
| 1911 | *South-West Climb* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | H. R. Pope |
| 1912 | *Kern Knotts West Buttress* .. .. | VS | KERN KNOTTS .. | G. S. Sansom |
| | *North-East Climb* .. | VD | PILLAR ROCK .. | G. D. Abraham |
| | *Direct from Lord's Rake to Hopkinson's Cairn* .. .. | S | SCAFELL .. | S. W. Herford |

| Year | Name of Climb | Classification | Crag | Leader |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Gillercombe Buttress* | S | GILLERCOMBE | H. B. Lyon |
| | *Hopkinson's Gully* | S | SCAFELL | S. W. Herford |
| | *Girdle Traverse* | S | SCAFELL | S. W. Herford and G. S. Sansom |
| 1913 | *Wayfarer's Crack* | S | GREAT END | S. W. Herford |
| 1914 | *Central Buttress* | VS | SCAFELL | S. W. Herford and G. S. Sansom |
| 1918 | *Murray's Route* | S | DOW CRAG | D. G. Murray |
| | *C Route* | S | GIMMER CRAG | A. P. Wilson |
| 1919 | *D Route* | S | GIMMER CRAG | G. S. Bower |
| | *Tophet Bastion* | S | THE NAPES | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Rib and Slab Climb* | S | PILLAR ROCK | C. F. Holland |
| | *West Wall Climb* | VD | PILLAR ROCK | H. M. Kelly |
| | *East Jordan Wall* | VS | PILLAR ROCK | C. G. Crawford |
| | *Jordan Bastion* | S | PILLAR ROCK | C. G. Crawford |
| | *Route 1* | VS | PILLAR ROCK | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Route 2* | VS | PILLAR ROCK | H. M. Kelly |
| 1919 | *Kern Knotts Buttress* | VS | KERN KNOTTS | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Central Climb* | S | KERN KNOTTS | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Flake Climb* | VS | KERN KNOTTS | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Great Central Route* | VS | DOW CRAG | J. I. Roper |
| 1920 | *Esk Buttress Route 1* | S | SCAFELL PIKE | G. S. Bower |
| | *Upper Deep Ghyll Buttress* | VS | SCAFELL | H. M. Kelly |
| | *North Wall Climb* | S | DOW CRAG | G. S. Bower |
| | *Black Wall Route* | VS | DOW CRAG | J. I. Roper |
| | *Ash Tree Slabs* | S | GIMMER CRAG | G. S. Bower |
| | *Central Route, Deep Ghyll Slabs* | S | SCAFELL | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Nook and Wall Climb* | S | PILLAR ROCK | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Trident Route* | S | DOW CRAG | G. S. Bower |
| 1921 | *Innominate Crack* | VS | KERN KNOTTS | G. S. Bower |
| 1922 | *Eliminate C* | VS | DOW CRAG | H. S. Gross |
| | *Eliminate B* | VS | DOW CRAG | H. S. Gross |
| | *Girdle Traverse* | VS | DOW CRAG | H. S. Gross and G. Basterfield |
| 1923 | *Tophet Wall* | S | THE NAPES | H. M. Kelly |
| | *The Appian Way* | S | PILLAR ROCK | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Bracket and Slab* | S | GIMMER CRAG | H. B. Lyon |
| | *Chimney Buttress* | S | GIMMER CRAG | H. B. Lyon |
| 1924 | *Various* | VD | PIKE'S CRAG | H. M. Kelly and C. F. Holland |

| Year | Name of Climb | Classification | Crag | Leader |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Right-hand Wall* .. | VS | BOWFELL .. | M. de Selincourt |
| | *Gimmer Traverse* .. | S | GIMMER CRAG .. | M. de Selincourt |
| 1925 | *Various* .. .. | — | BOAT HOWE .. | G. Basterfield |
| | *Tower Buttress* .. | S | SCAFELL .. | H. M. Kelly |
| | *Moss Ledge Direct* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | F. Graham |
| | *Eagle's Corner* .. | S | THE NAPES .. | C. D. Frankland |
| | *Tricouni Rib* .. .. | S | THE NAPES .. | C. D. Frankland |
| 1926 | *Diphthong* .. .. | VS | GIMMER CRAG .. | Morley Wood |
| | *Moss Ghyll Grooves* .. | S | SCAFELL .. | H. M. Kelly |
| 1927 | *Hiatus* .. .. | VS | GIMMER CRAG .. | G. S. Bower |
| 1928 | *Grooved Wall* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | H. M. Kelly |
| 1928 | *Long John* .. .. | VS | THE NAPES .. | H. G. Knight |
| | *Kern Knotts Chain* .. | VS | KERN KNOTTS .. | H. M. Kelly and H. G. Knight |
| 1929 | *Various* .. .. | — | BLACK CRAG .. | E. Wood-Johnson |
| 1930 | *Sepulchre* .. .. | VS | KERN KNOTTS .. | J. A. Musgrave |
| 1931 | *Girdle Traverse* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | M. Linnell and A. W. Bridge |
| | *Mickledore Grooves* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | C. F. Kirkus |
| 1932 | *Nor'-Nor'-West Climb* | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | A. T. Hargreaves |
| | *Esk Buttress Route 2* .. | S | SCAFELL PIKE .. | A. W. Bridge |
| | *Great Eastern Route* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | M. Linnell |
| 1933 | *Hadrian's Wall* .. | VS | PILLAR ROCK .. | A. T. Hargreaves |
| | *Overhanging Wall* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | M. Linnell |
| | *Morning Wall* .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | A. T. Hargreaves |
| | *G.E.R. (Yellow Slab Variation)* .. .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | M. Linnell |
| | *O.W. (White Slab Variation)* .. .. | VS | SCAFELL .. | M. Linnell |
| 1934 | *Engineer's Slab* .. | VS | GABLE CRAG .. | F. G. Balcombe |
| | *Buttonhole Route* .. | VS | KERN KNOTTS .. | F. G. Balcombe |

## REVERIE

This life seems but a dream ;
How easy to imagine that is true
When musing here beside this placid lake
Within the shelter of these quiet hills !
That lake, so calm, reflecting all above,
The woods that fringe the shire, the fells around,
That canopy of opalescent cloud,
The mirage changing when a gentle breeze
Plays here and there upon the water's face.

Before such scenes all thought of self is lost,
The soul attuned to nature's harmony
Forgets the tumult and the strife of man ;
Still in such moments it is natural
To muse upon the past with mute regret,
Reviewing past experience of life
And wondering what the human race has lost
In binding nature's forces to its use.

But now the cooler air of evening steals
Across the meadow underneath the trees,
And winding gently down beneath the shade
Before the path has gained the lake below
It verges on the open plain ; beyond
Stands Skiddaw quite apart from other fells.
When older eyes rest on such well-loved hills,
Past scenes come crowding in upon the mind ;
O for one day of youth to roam these fells
And see again those haunts of early days,
To tread the heights, to see afar and feel
Surrounded by a world of lasting peace ;
Such as the prophet viewed not in his dreams
When left on Nebo's solitary height.

The beat of oars from far across the lake
Falls gently on the ear, the ripple laps
The shore and murmers to the passing breeze,
That stirs amid the grass yet hardly moves
The trees to whisper, and the wild lone cry
Of curlews up aloft sounds distantly.
Is life a dream ?. . . . How beautiful it is !

*Lawrence Pilkington*

Armathwaite on Derwentwater, 1936.

# TWO CLIMBS

*R. S. T. Chorley*

Commanded by the editor to contribute something to his Lakeland number I reluctantly take up my pen.

MOSS GHYLL. Twenty years ago we still had one foot in the 'gully epoch' and like all young climbers of that period I was very anxious to venture up Moss Ghyll. I could never find a suitable companion, until on the evening of Peace Night, July 11th, 1919, somebody said 'Ask the doctor to go with you first thing in the morning. He is always game.' So I approached Arthur Wakefield—rather shyly for I had 'long admired him from afar,' being myself very much of a novice. He agreed at once.

I should say that on Peace Night the Club had made itself responsible for the bonfire on Scawfell Pike, and that we let off acetylene flares from 11 p.m. until midnight—there is an admirable description of this interesting meet by ex-editor Scantlebury in No. 13 of the Journal. The more enthusiastic members spent the whole night, which was very cold, on the top of the mountain. It certainly was a cold night—I have spent two nights on alpine glaciers and they were not colder. Arthur Wakefield always took a Spartan view of life, and he had come in shorts and a tennis shirt. By dawn he too was feeling cold, very cold. There were a few inky clouds in the sky, which was a cold sky, and Moss Ghyll seemed to him a less hospitable place, if possible, than the summit of Scafell Pike. He said that a storm appeared to him to be imminent, and that we had better postpone our climb until some other day. I conceded he was right—argument does not come easily at dawn—and watched him depart for the valley with a heavy heart. Moss Ghyll had eluded me once more.

I suppose I must have been looking very woebegone, for Harry Harland came up and volunteered to enlist his family party. There were he, and Evelyn, and Edward, quite a lad in

those days. They had come all the way from Hull, he explained and it would be a pity to return without doing a climb. I appreciated that it was really a case of kindly sympathy with an enthusiastic youngster, for they were all very tired, but I could not resist the temptation, and as soon as the risen sun had thawed our creaking joints a little, we adjourned to Mickledore and the foot of the climb.

It was about 5 a.m.—perhaps a record start for the Lake District. Harry Harland remarked that we had all the day before us, so we might as well climb the gully from the very bottom. There were, he said, several pitches below the Progress, and these according to Raeburn gave some of the best sport on the climb. I observe that the Scafell Guide mentions only one pitch below the Progress, but I seem to remember several, short and interesting. We soon found that one rope—I think it must have been an 'eighty'—was altogether too short for four climbers. The result was that Edward who was last man had to untie at the foot of every pitch. This made progress slow and gave the unoccupied members of the party plenty of time to admire the scenery.

That morning the scenery was fully worthy of admiration. It was the clearest day I ever remember. The cold northerly wind seemed to have swept every particle of haze from the sky—except that the doctor's clouds floated like dirty bits of cotton wool about half-way between Seascale and the Isle of Man. I have often been fortunate enough to see Ireland, but that morning it was unbelievably clear—the cliff of the coast line, the flattish land behind, the mountains of Antrim, almost like looking down on Furness from the Old Man. The view away to the north was the most interesting, however. We could see right across the Galloway penninsula to a sea dotted with islands. Arran with its rocky mountains looked fine, and away in the distance the hard coastline of the Mull of Kintire was etched into the background. The colouring was at first a steely monochrome, like an engraving and quite unlike real life. The smoke coloured clouds were

the first thing we saw to catch the morning sun. For long they glowed with a peculiar deep rosy glow in curious contrast to the surrounding greys. One certainly does get rewarded for rising early.

Meanwhile the climbers progressed slowly but without incident until they reached the last pitch—the direct finish. H. H. insisted that I should take the outside route which he said was much the more sporting. It was always a delight to lead with him as second. He made one do all the most interesting things, while his strength and calmness were a great comfort to a young leader whenever he got fussed. This pitch was rather a nuisance with our short rope and there was a good deal of untieing and tieing up again. Moreover H. H. came by the inside route and got a bit stuck with the chockstone. It is a very unpleasant place for a big man. On a later occasion I was there with Théophile Theytaz, a Zinal guide and a fine climber. He got himself thoroughly wedged for some time to his great amusement. We called the place the 'Trou Theytaz' which rather tickled him. Poor Théophile, he was a sunny cheerful companion, and I was grieved to hear that he had fallen on a slippery pavement and broken his neck only this last spring.

When after a long delay we lowered the rope for Edward, there was no response. What had happened to him? By craning over it was just possible to see him, and there he was comfortably asleep. To go to sleep on a difficult rock climb seemed to me a most remarkable feat. Years after however, I had the even stranger experience of holding a man who dozed off while he was actually climbing a pitch—the scoop in Intermediate Gully. I have never been more startled in my life and I still wonder how I succeeded in holding him so easily. However the job was to awaken Edward. We halloed and howled at him till we were hoarse, but he was dreaming about adventurous hill climbing exploits on his motor cycle, and refused to return to the cold reality of rock-climbing under his own steam. Then for some time we

dropped pebbles but with equal lack of success. There seemed to be nothing for it but to climb down and awaken him and I was just lowering myself over the edge when he stirred and waked. Before long he had joined us, and we strolled out on to the top of the mountain. It was 12 o'clock. We had taken seven hours and were very hungry because we had had practically no food.

I sent the Harlands home to Seathwaite by the corridor route with which I had then just become acquainted. In those days there were no cairns, and no sort of track. The party got much too low and climbed in and out of Piers Ghyll, Greta Ghyll and all the other numerous ravines which intersect the hillside. By the time they got in I believe they were walking in their sleep. I got back to Wasdale rather earlier, but in very much the same state. But it was a fine day's climbing—I never enjoyed one more.

THE FLAKE CRACK. My first acquaintance with the Flake Crack—I may say that I have never been on any other terms than distant acquaintanceship—was also somewhat unorthodoxly timed. It was the day I first met C. F. Holland, also in the summer of 1919. We had done some climbs on the Napes, and about 5 o'clock (in the afternoon) were sitting on top of Scimitar—he had just discovered it and had given me a demonstration. Suddenly he asked me if I would come with him to the Flake Crack to retrieve Herford's handkerchief which on the original ascent that gifted leader had tied in triumph through a hole in the top of the Flake.

In those days I was ready for most things but the idea of tackling the Flake Crack alone with Holland late in the evening and after a hard day on Gable rather took me aback. I looked at him dubiously but he soon explained that it was quite easy to get to the top of the Flake Crack from the top of Keswick Brothers' Climb along a broad ledge, and this was the mode of access which he was proposing to take. I was reassured. We quickly ran down to Burnthwaite, had a high

tea, and departed for Scawfell not much later than seven. Keswick Brothers I had not previously encountered. It was rather slippery ; all the holds sloped the wrong way ; my balance wasn't right ; and altogether I was glad not to be leading. Even Holland's pipe fell out of his mouth on one pitch and he afterwards warned me that when that happens the second must prepare for emergencies. However, he didn't seem to be in any particular difficulty, and by and by we were making our way out to the Flake Crack. It is a fascinating little expedition, and of very moderate difficulty. It should be better known, for the top of the Flake is about as exciting a situation as one could wish for. The Flake overhangs slightly so that a pebble allowed to drop falls clear on to the Progress, over 200 feet below. The rock scenery towards the Bayonet-shaped Crack and the Moss Ghyll Grooves is superb.

Unfortunately, Herford's handkerchief had disintegrated during the war years and we were not able to bring away even a fragment. Our labours, however, were more than rewarded by a view which was in some ways the most soul satisfying I have ever had. It was by now almost 11 o'clock and Wasdale had gradually filled with clouds until nothing was visible except the fell tops floating above them like a number of great black whales, aloof and majestic over the sea of cloud, but beyond Seascale the departed sun had left a warm peaceful glow upon the waters. There was no movement : even the becks seemed sleepily quiescent in the general calm. Suddenly the cloud formations in the neighbouring valleys—they must have been at a higher level—began a stately invasion of Wasdale. Their armies advanced in leisurely but irrisistible fashion like four-masters in a steady breeze until the Wasdale battalions were overwhelmed. At the same time the last touch of colour faded from the sea. Night and the new cloud cohorts triumphed over the last emergent fell tops, and left us to pick our way down Broad Stand and Mickledore to well earned sleep at Wasdale Head.

# LAKELAND MEMORIES

*Darwin Leighton*

Those who were privileged to frequent Lakeland at the end of last century can recall many happy experiences. It was a joy to talk to the old dalesman at the farm ; what a rare store of information he had, what a marvellous memory, relating (in Cumberland dialect) stories of feats in the Guides race at Grasmere Sports, 'lating lost sheep amang t' sna on top o' Glaramara, foxhunting, and how they took fox cubs out of Gillercoombe Crag. One story he loved to relate was about an old stone breaker who ' napped ' stones on the roadside near the Bowder Stone in Borrowdale ; our dalesman was passing about three o'clock one afternoon and stopped to have a chat with old Tommy ; he noticed a small bundle tied up in a red handkerchief on the stone heap—' What hev ya gitten in t' hankercher, Tommy ? '—Tommy looked at it, scratched his head, ' Hum ! it's mi dinner, I'd fergitten it.' At other times by the kitchen fire side he told how his father remembered the days of illicit whiskey stills on Haystacks, and how it was hidden in a cave ' back o' Gable ' and carried with the slates in panniers on pack horses down Ennerdale to Whitehaven. He knew Scafell and district well : ask him about Piers Ghyll, 'Aye, it's a trimindous queer darkly spot ! ' He took a great interest in world affairs, a daily paper was always welcome. Keen on cricket news he would ask, ' Ya don't happen to have heard howt Australians hev done today ? ' Two visitors at the farm one day remarked that as the weather was so warm they would prefer to sleep out in the open. He just looked at them and with a wink of his eye said, ' Ye'll finnd ceiling raythor heigh.' Being fond of nature study he could recall the days when Pine Martens frequented Borrowdale, Marts he called them : ' Aye, I was ya day in t' wood up aboon t' leead mines as I heeard sic a screeam, it was two marts feighten

and they com rowling doon t' hill hod a yan a nudder ta side o' me. I let oot wi mi stick and they cleared off gay sharp ! '

Looking through old guide books one may not perhaps glean much information for present day mountain climbing, but you will come across much of interest, a quaint style of literature now out of date. We know the higher hills were held in awe and ascents were made in fear and trembling. One famous writer gives the following advice : ' To they who would view the Lake District aright, do not travel on the wings of the wind, by post chaise or horseback ! ' were he to come back some bank holiday how bewildered he would be and afraid to cross the road. A farmer remarked the other day, ' Ya want fower eyes in yer heead and a neck like a jammie (heron).' Another sentence out of this old guide book (published in 1819, take note !), ' During the summer months the steep slopes of our mountains become quite dangerous, the grass becomes slippery. It is advisable you should carry a wet sponge with you that you may occasionally damp the soles of your shoes to prevent them from slipping.' A description of Honister Slate Quarries is worth recording, ' On the right, half-way down the hill, is the road to Yew Crag Quarry. A walk to this quarry will not only furnish some amusement but an idea of the muscular strength and rash exertion required of those whose business it is to conduct the slate from the quarry to the road. From Honister not many years since it was invariably brought down by men, on hurdles placed on their backs and on ground so precipitous that those not witnessing the act would deem it impossible. Few men are found to possess constitutions capable of sustaining such daily rounds of labour, but those who can endure it generally gain more than such as are less painfully employed. The average weight of the slate brought down each time is 896 pounds, the hurdle weighs 80 pounds. The usual number of journeys daily is nine, or fifty-four in a week, hence the weight of slate lowered to the valley each day is

8,064 pounds. A quarry man named Laurence Trimmel made fifteen journeys in one day, Trimmel was rewarded in addition to his price per hurdle, by the present of a bottle of rum. Another workman, Joseph Clark, once conducted forty-six loads, 11,766 pounds in one day, he resides at Stonethwaite in Borrowdale, and walks three miles each way to and from his work daily. He has performed these Herculean labours for several years without any striking inconvenience excepting thirst.' This trouble is much in evidence even in these days, but bubbling brims of shandygaff at Wasdale, or copious draughts of tea at Thornythwaite, have often saved the situation.

Not only do we recall the old dalesmen and their sturdy personalities but we are reminded of their wives who were equally famous in their day. Fragrant memories linger round many a Lakeland farm, hard working industrious dames, who went cheerfully through ' the daily round, the common task ' from early morn to dusky eve—not only ministering to the wants of the family but often having several visitors to cater for—one dear old soul was fond of reading and had read most novels of Scott and Dickens, when asked how she managed to find time she said, ' Well, no matter how late when I finish work, I always read for half an hour before going to bed. I often hev ta wait up for oor lads if they've bin to Keswick.' A neighbour, whose boys were also often out late, one day remarked to her ' Hoo I wonder what them lads of oors were up to last neet, Mary '—' Well, Jane, I nivver ex my lads a question I think they waint like ta answer, its nob-but t' way ta teach 'em to tell lees '—a bit of wisdom which would no doubt set Jane thinking on her way home.

Not long ago, staying at a farm in Eskdale, the old lady told how when a girl of 17 she once walked to Kendal with her mother over Hardknott and Wrynose, through Little Langdale and Ambleside to Kendal, stayed the night, and next morning went by Packet boat on the canal to Preston, thence by coach to Manchester, stayed a few days, then

returned to Eskdale by the same route. Pity it would be if this dear old track over Wrynose were spoiled by a motor way.

Alston Hughes with a pretty imagination has pictured for us Pavia, a Roman princess, walking over to Hardknott camp two thousand years ago. The rocks she rested on by the wayside are still there, the same kind of fern and flower still bloom, ' the glory of the sunset and the purple mists of evening' still linger in the peace, the quiet and the unsurpassed beauty of Lakeland.

# RUPERT IN THE CHAIR

*C. F. Holland*

I was seated at my desk one evening preparing to write this article, when a strange noise, which I regret to say I can only describe as a belch, made me raise my eyes in pain and grief.

Seated on the top of my desk was the familiar little gnome-like figure of Rupert with the well-remembered impish grin on his face.

'My dear Rupert,' I said, 'is that really necessary?'

He averred that it was quite unavoidable and excused himself on the grounds that he had made a raid on an allotment belonging to some Trolls, somewhere down below, and that the infernal mushrooms he had conveyed were distinctly *passé*.

After commiserating him I leant back in my chair and composed myself to listen to the flood of conversation that I knew would ensue.

Upon recovering myself from the startling effects of an astonishing eruption, which Rupert said cleared the air considerably, I settled down again and wedged myself in trying to avoid showing any further manifestation of nervousness.

'It's all very well,' said he, 'but your last article, which you had the audacity to entitle "Rupert Cuts Loose," was mainly by yourself and about yourself. Also you preached far too much, and I will not be associated with parsons or preaching of any kind. I will pass over it this time but if you offend me again I shall leave you for ever, and where will you get your articles from then?'

Having assured him of my contrition and promised not to repeat the offence I once again abandoned the conversational field to the arrogant and touchy imp.

I tactfully enquired whether he was going to delight me with another of his famous visions, and to this query he

responded that I should have to wait and see; but he was obviously pleased and I felt distinctly optimistic as to the chances of obtaining one.

'Well,' continued the squeaky voice, 'we must make a start somewhere; but first we might make some sort of a plan. I think you had better give a general review of climbing during the years you were an active climber, sticking closely to personalities and actual events, and refraining entirely from the didactic statements you are so fond of making. Much of your last article might have been written by a blinking (an euphemism this, Editor) bishop, and of all impossible people, bishops are the outside edge, the Ultima Thule of impossibility.

'However, let bygones be bygones, and let us now consider where you had better start. I suppose its the first step that counts, so let us go right back to the very beginning. You know you owe all that you have ever been as a climber to the combination of Owen Glynne Jones and the Abrahams. It was those early days in the library of Westminster School with "Rock Climbing in the English Lake District," and the subsequent wanderings round the abbey, with hungry eyes questioning the possibilities of routes up those magnificent flying buttresses to the summit towers and pinnacles, that fired your imagination and lit the flame that eventually drove you to the crags. Again, it was pure chance, or so it seemed at the time, that caused you to take a guide while winter-sporting and take the first actual step towards becoming a climber. Then luck once more stepped in when you cycled to Ogwen, stalked in on a rainy afternoon, and announced to the assembled company that you wished to climb and wanted someone to take you on. Aldous was there and his good nature in immediately complying with your request meant more to you than even you realised at the time, humbly grateful though you were.

'And then came Herford, and with him Sansom, and the great adventure of your life had really begun. Shall you ever

forget those early days? Think back and live again in the memory of what you did with them; much you have forgotten, but the high spots will be with you to your dying day, and beyond it. Jones's from Deep Ghyll on a cold January day in wet driving sleet; don't you remember your icy fingers on the arête, the stinging of the hail, and the friendly pull on the rope that came just in time to lift you over that apparently hopeless two feet on the second step? And what about crossing the Central Buttress in thick snow and roping down from the Oval? How you went down before Parker was ready and did some twenty-five feet in very quick time, shouting, "God Save the King," as you fell. You thought you shouted that, but you didn't; I was there, and I shouted it for you, or at least put it into your mind; yours was the voice and mine was the driving force. And how about Walker's Gully, in winter, with the gully full of ice? What a magnificent climb! Really I think that of all the high spots that was the most vivid and the most memorable. The long drawn-out struggle up the first pitch, the ever-striking ice-axe, Herford's double fall on the second, and the chilly wait in the cave for an hour before Herford and Sansom could force their way to the screes above. And then the most thrilling moment, after you had felt the black hard ice on the rocks and realised that to climb the pitch with the octopus was utterly beyond you.

'The jump into space! What moment in your life ever was or ever can be finer than that? And finally, while on this theme, there was the Central Buttress. The figure of Herford pulling up into the safety of the horizontal fault after climbing the terrible crack, and lying exhausted for some minutes before moving, is still alive in your mind's eye. You know, of all the magnificent men it was your privilege to meet, both on the rocks and in the ghastly vicissitudes of the Great War, he was second to none, and the memory of his splendour will always be one of your most cherished possessions. You have, I will agree, done your little best to express in writing

what he was and what you felt for him, but it required a far abler pen than yours to convey adequately his true greatness of heart and the unconquerable spirit that was in him. His loss seemed irreparable at the time, but you are now older and wiser, and know that death is not an end, but rather a new beginning, that his influence is still potent, and that some day, in God's good time, you will meet again. Look back once more over the long years and realise how happy a fortune has followed you consistently. But for an unusually gifted surgeon you would have lost your arm and climbing would have been cut out of your life completely.

'And talking about hospital life you must not forget Edmund Hartley, a brother climber, who came to see you when you were half-dead with septic poisoning; how, though wounded for the third time and with a deflated lung, he was longing to get back to the trenches. Shortly afterwards he got married, was urged to take the adjutancy of his reserve battalion and be safe, but insisted on returning to France, and was killed within a few weeks.

'How many men with a young bride, such experience as his had been of the horrors of war, and a gilt-edged opportunity for a get-away, would have chosen the hard path of honour? We will give him his epitaph—"a very noble English gentleman."

'He told you that when you were fit you would be as keen as ever on climbing, and that brings us to the post-war period. You did not believe him at the time, and you will recollect that within nine months you were leading severes that would have been beyond your powers before the war. And here you have to thank I. A. Richards who pulled you up some two hundred feet of Tryfan rock when you had your arm in a plaster cast and pulled all the adhesions out. With a less sympathetic and unselfish leader you might well have been discouraged and given up the attempt to resume climbing. A wonderful performer on the rocks, perhaps the most amazing of all the impresarios you had the good fortune to

meet. That day, for instance, on the Fach, when his boot appeared on a ledge instead of his head, which usually follows the hands in orthodox climbing circles. You told him his conduct was almost indecent, which was probably a plagiarization of his remark that Odell's legs were almost too long for decency.

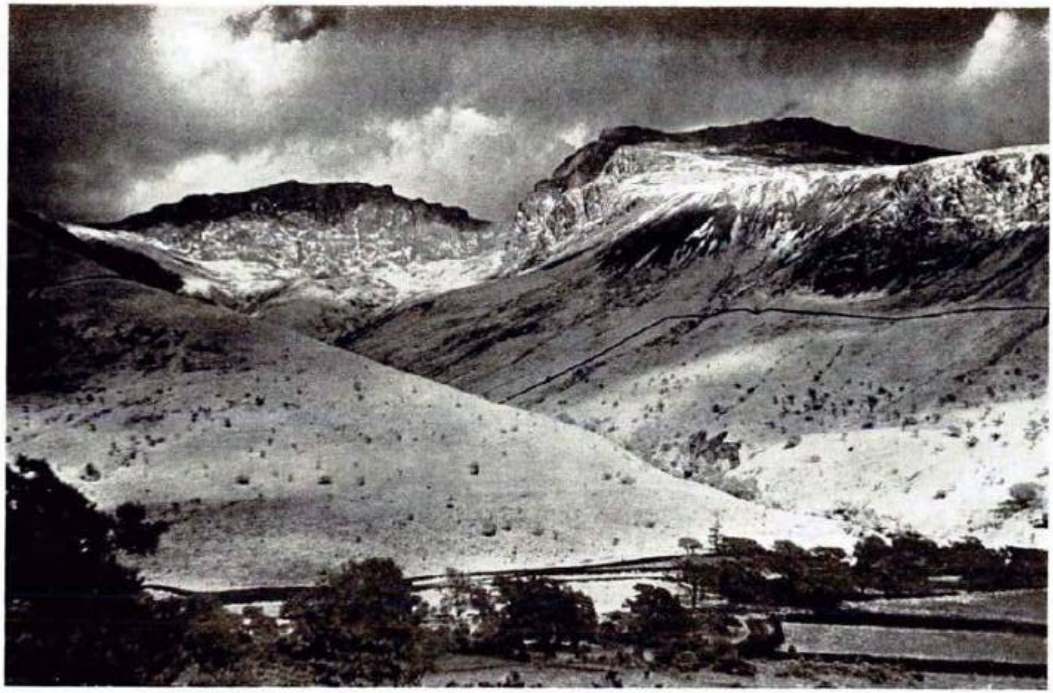
'A marvellous man with a hundred per cent. brain, able to explain relativity with a few gestures, intimately acquainted with the Afanc who seemingly abandoned the watery depths of Idwal to share his supper at Idwal Cottage, and a seer of visions who walked abroad with demons and giants, aloof among the cloudy pinnacles of a mental stratosphere. I often chuckle when I think of the unhappy effects of your celebration of the ascent of the Holly-Tree Wall, when you indulged in a small ocean of port and followed this up with hot whiskies; and how the next day you turned down the easiest climbs as being too difficult after such a debauch and did the Oblique Buttress instead. You remember your words, "Macpherson is drunk, Richards is drunk, but I am as sober as all the judges of the King's Bench." And then later you woke up and exclaimed, "I am Canute and the tide is rising fast." But let us draw a discreet veil over the subsequent ebb-tide and return to the word "bench" I just used. This reminds me of bishops, and they remind me of the fact that you gave some description in your recent so-called article, most erroneously ascribed to me, of your conversion to Christianity by a "Chance remark from an uncultured ruffian." So many people have wondered what this could have been that I feel impelled to disclose the exact nature of this phenomenal occurrence. The circumstances were as follows.

'It was a dark, wet winter's night in the trenches on the Somme near Serre, and our friend was taking the rum ration round the front line posts about four in the morning. The Trench system had fallen to pieces under the stress of weather, and long stretches could only be passed by climbing

on the parapet and walking along it. When he got to the last post a very large and rough private, in everyday life a miner and a bruiser, uttered the remark in question. "Sir, we feel that you run too much risk in bringing along the rum, and we would rather do without it." It was indeed a noble remark, and such as might well convert even a man like you, little better than one of the wicked. I have often thought of this man myself and have wondered what would have happened if he were to compete with a bevy of bishops in a spiritual tug-of-war. In a material one, of course, he would have pulled over the whole bench of the rascals. I have carefully considered the question and have decided that he would take on one archbishop and five bishops, or perhaps I should be more accurate if I put it at one archbishop, two bishops, three deans, and a Ruridecanal Conference.

'May they keep his mug in heaven well filled with nectar! But let us return to the mountains, and leave the murky atmosphere of war, incidentally remarking that it is just as well you were converted in the late one, for you will never have another chance like that, seeing that in spite of all the war talk and preparations there is never going to be another general conflagration, for the captains as well as the Kings have departed, and the forces of peace are marching to the final triumphant assault on the battle zone of Mars. And now I am going to deal with the best period of your mountain experiences, which I will call the Speaker, Kelly, Crawford period, the high noon of your climbing day, the exploration epoch.

'It may seem invidious to some persons of badly constituted mind, the type of person who drinks his bath water or would do so if he ever took a bath, it may seem invidious, I say, to utter personalities about men so universally known in the Club; I answer that it seems a great pity that we reserve our encomiums for obituary notices instead of letting our friends know while they are alive how much we admire them, and the reasons for our admiration. How many men would have



SCAFELL
(Infra-red)

*Marshall Brown*

felt less like pelicans in the wilderness had their friends overcome their reticence and given them the meed of praise they deserved. You yourself know how cheering and uplifting it is when, feeling that you are " of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot " you receive a note of kindly encouragement and praise from Speaker, or one from Kelly expressing appreciation of some literary effort. Corn in Egypt, indeed.

' Let us now praise famous men and send all diffidence, reticence and disguised pusillanimity to the limbo where such emasculated travesties of what is noble and of good report find their spiritual home. In the peace and quietude of the night, with all the little boys asleep and dreaming happily, what a flood of happy memories comes pouring into your mind ! So numerous and dissimilar that it is supremely difficult to make a start, or where or how to make an end. But I promise you a vision to finish with ; it will be better than the sermons you have preached of late ; you may be religious but you need not be sanctimonious.'

Dear old Rupert, he hits hard, doesn't he ? How's his last epigram for a verbal left hook ? Rupert is looking highly indignant at this interpolation and I dare not continue ; I do not want the left hook to materialise, as seems likely from the expression on his countenance.

' I will now proceed. You have invented a splendid slogan for your boys, " It's guts we want, not gas." I propose to use this as my theme and gas about guts, if you will pardon my seeming vulgarity, but after all it's your own phrase.

' And what a wealth of fine courageous action you have seen on the rocks ; many of these instances you have, I know, described in articles of the past, but these fine actions deserve repetition, and surely no one can object to reading once more of deeds that bring a glow to the heart and an uplifting of the spirit. Shall you ever forget that evening when Kelly led you and another up Walker's Gully, and when he, not feeling well, failed at the top pitch, and asked you to lead it, you turned it down and he had to come down last ? No !

and you never will forget his imperturbility and calm assumption of the responsibility. You have had many other examples of his detachment in moments of danger, his icy air of aloofness, his refusal to recognise the danger that was screaming at you from every one of the minute knobs of rock and loose tufts on which his balance depended. You know, too, what an inspiration his debonair attitude was to you, and how it heartened you in moments of stress. And what about his amused tolerance on that unfortunate occasion when you fell off during the initial ascent of Route II on Pillar. The taut rope knocked your pipe out of your mouth and you were extremely irritable for the rest of the afternoon. A lesser man would have cursed you up in heaps and left you to stew in your own juice.

'And we must not forget "Pat" Kelly's putting you to shame on Scafell, making a solitary ascent of Jones's from Deep Ghyll when you declined to lead a party up it on the ground that it was too difficult for the day.

'An euphemism for funk, as you very well knew at the time. Such actions never grow old and should never be forgotten. For Kelly, therefore, we will take as a motto "Guts not gas." Next we must deal with Crawford, he of the dancing feet and the nimble tongue. A quite indefatigable climber, as witness the evening when you were putting on your boots at 9-30 after a real hard day. His indignation at this extraordinary procedure. "What? Stopping now, and you've never done Colliers?" A most amazing climber who leapt from hold to hold in a manner that would have done Tarzan credit. You remember you called him Tarzan the second, and only instantaneous flight saved you from a severe trouncing. Had he lived at an earlier age he would have been a notable swingebuckler, and indeed his methods on the rocks were always of this type. May we not justifiably adopt as his motto "Guts not gas." He would certainly talk the hind leg off a donkey, and he made you limp a good deal. He will probably have it in for you for this, but you have been

training as an all-in wrestler lately, to say nothing of rough-housing and gangster methods generally, and you can likely hold your own if he tries any rough stuff on you.

'And so to Macfarlane. You recollect? A snowy day; try from buttress; you on the North Buttress, he leading Grooved Arête; he comes off; falls forty feet; alights in sitting posture on a grass patch; starts again; this time succeeds. Would you have done this? I trow not; You for P.y.G. and beer. He, too, has a place on the golden rope of courage in the great tug-of-war with pusillanimity, and has pulled his weight right manfully. For him the motto "Guts; occasional cryptic mumblings possibly better unheard; but no gas."

'And now for a little Scotch friend, who shall be nameless. As a climber, shall we say not so good as the best? But full of courage and determination. Of all the men you ever met he had the most tenacious grasp of the rocks. He would hold on longer without advancing than seemed humanly possible, and when he seemed absolutely in extremis would look up and enquire naively as to whether he was using any holds in an unsporting fashion and climbing the pitch in an orthodox manner. As he did not appear to be climbing the pitch at all this question was difficult to answer, but he generally got up in the end. He was responsible for the most original idea you ever heard on the physiological structure of mountains. At the end of a climbing day he exposed hands grimed to the *nth* and asked why it was his were so black and yours so clean? You replied sarcastically to the effect that you liked to handle rock and avoided the dirty holes for which he seemed to have preference. To which he answered, quite epically, "Nonsense, these mountains are volcanic, and this dirt on my hands is undoubtedly the burnt-out remains of the volcano."

'Talking about original people, one's thoughts naturally gravitate to A. R. Thomson, a very old member of your club, and one of the most remarkable. A list of his achieve-

ments at home and abroad would make an archangel blush with justifiable pride. Possessed of a puckish sense of humour with an uncanny knack of pricking bubbles of conceit, you will remember one thing he said which illustrates this sense of humour and its acid content. The occasion was at dinner at one of our better known climbing hotels, an elderly professor was dominating the conversation to the admiration of an attendant bevy of females. After a while he got on to the subject of languages, and after extolling his own linguistic capacity spoke eloquently and at length of the brilliance of a friend of his who could speak no less than seven languages fluently. On which Thomson, who had been gloomily silent for nearly half an hour, broke his silence and uttered a remark; a remark cataclysmic, devastating, shattering; after which the professor remained huffily and mercifully taciturn, while Thomson, countering the enraged glares of the females with a sardonic grin, conducted a lofty and animated conversation with you about climbing. The remark was this: "Would it not be better to remain silent in seven languages?" Of all the many anecdotes you could tell about Thomson I think the following must suffice. Up in Skye one wet day the climbers in the smoke room of the hotel heard a loud outcry from the garden. Here there was a hard boulder, and emerging to the rescue they found that Thomson had fallen off it and damaged himself severely; he was, in fact, bleeding extensively from a cut in the arm. First aid was administered. Half an hour later an uproar was again heard from the garden. Again they rushed out—just in time to catch Thomson who was attempting to climb the pitch again. In our tug-of-war team on the golden rope Thomson most decidedly gets a place.

'And, finally, we come to Speaker. We all know him and we all love him, but you have of all people the right to speak with authority of the guts that are so strangely interwoven with his kindly and unselfish character. Surely never were the lion and the lamb such cronies in any man before? In

the light of his tremendous enthusiasm the magic casements are charmed and the drab levels of existence are ennobled by a vision of similar peaks. You have had many splendid days with him on English crags, days of warmth and sunlight when the evening shadows lengthened imperceptibly, and days of storm and stress when every hold had to be fought for, days of mist and greyness, and days when the wild West wind tore at you like a mad thing, days that will be, no matter what the vagaries of the weather, precious memories for ever. But your finest memories of what happened in his company come from your expeditions to the Dolomites. The climb on the Murfreitturm stands out, as does the ascent of the Rosetta. The falling rucksacks on the Schmitt Kamin are an unforgettable memory, and also the night of revelry that followed and the ensuing walk back to Santa Christina ; a genuine severe. The two great climbs on the Campanile di Val di Roda gave climbs to be marked with a white stone, climbs when the margin of safety was at times perilously narrow.

But all of your expeditions together those on the Langkofel were the most outstanding, and the last of all the best, as it should be ; " the last and the best." Of all your mountain memories these must be the most vivid and enduring. Speaker, sitting all night on his precarious perch with the rain falling and the stones hurtling down out of the darkness ; the distant reverberations of the thunder and the intermittent lightning ; the Grohman alternately appearing and vanishing and the ghostly radiance of its glacier when the moon shone through the clouds.

' The second night out when you shivered through the long, long hours of darkness and thought mainly of beer and tobacco.

' The final terrific five hours working your way down to the safety of the screes. The last descent and traverse to the safe recesses of the last chimney when Speaker played you down and calmly faced the appalling business of tackling

these severities unguarded by the rope. These are memories that will indeed endure for ever.

'And so we draw to an end. I promised you a vision and here it is, but a short one this time.

'I see the new Club hut at Wasdale a great success, thronged with climbers at holiday seasons, the envy and admiration of other clubs, a boon and a blessing to our young members.

'I am glad to see also that the stretcher is very seldom in use, and then mainly for minor accidents to non-members.

'The rocks are frequented by crowds of happy climbers and new climbs are many and of the very best quality.

'And the last and the best thing I see is the dove of peace hovering benignly over the mountains for men of goodwill among all the nations of the world have combined at last and banished war for ever.'

## THE TREASURE OF HEIGHTS

SEEK them, ye strong,
the cold of morning and the mountain wind.
Through sun and whispering spray
there lies one open way
for manhood still to find
the lamp of vision and the river of song:
seek them for truth, ye strong.

Feel them, ye feet,
the spring of heather and the shrinking snow.
Cloud and the dews of night
leave them for your delight,
that ye may gladly go
through the grim city and the cobbled street:
feel them for hope, light feet.

Hold them, ye hands,
the rough of granite and the stinging rain.
Earth stores them on hill-slope,
cleansing and clasp of hope,
to cheer your age again
groping in darkness through the last grey lands:
hold them for strength, sure hands.

Take them, O heart,
the joy of comrades and the thrill of strife.
Who has the hills for friend
has a God-speed to end
his path of lonely life,
and wings of golden memory to depart:
take them for love, true heart.

*Geoffrey Winthrop Young*

# THE APPROACH TO THE LAKES

*E. W. Hodge*

In obedience to the Editor's demand for researches into yet other and other fresh aspects of Lakeland's mountains, I cast my despairing eye near and far over the map. I had heard that there were underground potholes at Caldbeck, and for all I know there may be some climbing to be done inside them. But this would not do. I was told that the morally beautiful and uplifting aspects of climbing, at any rate, were not to be met in potholes—unseen angels and ministers of grace were all around us on the bright airy rock faces, but that to climb downwards into the dark was impious, something like reading the Lord's Prayer backwards, and could bring no good. So I hunted about for a fresh subject. Now in dealing with the Lakes, it is not altogether obvious how to find such a thing. Even if I were a much better climber than is the case, it would be somewhat difficult to find any distinctly new climbs to report.* One is, as it were, between the deep sea and the devil; that is, between the accusation of selecting a subject or a place to write about, too remote from Cumbrian fells and rocks, and the still more shameful course of re-hashing things long since and better related by others. Not that a genuine personal approach to joys as old as the hills can be open to the charge of triteness or triviality, so long as one can be sure it is really fresh and uninfluenced by unconscious recollections of a conventional style in these things.

By way of accomplishing my immediate job of work, I was rather glad to find, therefore, that there was nothing in our Journal about the old route to the Lakes, across Cartmel Sands. This was the route recommended as the finest of all for approaching the Lakes, by the old Guide-Book writers,

*And yet this identical complaint was even more insistent in our first volume. See I, p. 51, and II, p. 57.

West and Green. Before the road between Levens and Newby Bridge was completed across the marshes, early in the nineteenth century, the way by the Sands was only half as far as the only alternative way from Lancaster to Ulverston (by Kendal) and there was a daily coach. Gilpin, the first man to study Lakeland scenery from the picturesque point of view, would have liked to cross the Sands too, but for sheer lack of time. He had less than a week to see and judge the district and to gather material for his book, so ' we were obliged to rest satisfied with forming imaginary pictures among the blue mists of the mountains.'

The sentimental advantage of a definite break, like a sea-crossing, between the everyday world and the holiday country, is certainly very great. A few years ago, before the motor age was fully come, one could enjoy this sense of isolation much better almost anywhere than in the most favoured (or should it be, least favoured ?) places today. A sense of sanctuary, so to speak, tinged the whole of one's stay. This is now hard to come by. But over the Cartmel Sands the herd of fair-weather motorists who take from others the enjoyment of that which they do not themselves appreciate, cannot follow.

In a country which is nearly flat, one can achieve isolation as easily as among mountains. Indeed, one of the principal charms of mountains is their intimacy, the presence of obvious landmarks, the comfortable sense of being a parasite on the person of a not unfriendly giant. In a flat country as a rule, if not especially on the Sands, one is very soon indeed below the virtual horizon, out of sight and sound of traffic and all but the higher chimneys. (We saw nothing of the railway viaducts over the estuaries.) There is not necessarily anything niggling about the landscape of a plain. Considered purely from a picturesque point of view the unrestricted arrangements of trees and buildings can have a grandeur which only a fine mountain can match.

At Hest Bank there still stands the room at the inn, in the

window of which a light was formerly exhibited as a beacon, but the window itself has been altered. The new arterial road and the main line railway now interpose between the inn and the shore. We started over the shore of humpy turf and mud, at an oblique angle to the rather uninteresting houses of the sea front, towards our invisible destination. I felt somehow slightly absurd, probably because of my rucksack, carrying which has acquired a fixed association in my mind with plodding up steep hills. Apart from its being a fitting way of approaching the Lakes, was this excursion itself a branch of the sport for which our Club exists, or was it not? It seemed indeed to possess some of the characteristic features of fell-walking, such as the need for finding one's way by compass although difficulty was negligible. Enveloped in the thin haze we felt the same delicious sense of isolation and peace as on a mountain top, and I sought, as one does with a long plod in prospect, for something to think steadily about to make the task seem shorter. The question which naturally occurred to me was: 'If it should ever become true, as some people assert, that there is nothing new to be discovered about the Lakes, what then, does the future hold for a club such as ours?'

Once upon a time, the task of working out the standard climbs could furnish a perfect means of expression, on a small scale, for the tastes which our club held in common—'on a small scale' because it was discovered that the appeal of climbing was more potent than could reasonably be accounted for. (No doubt this explains the badness of many attempts to account for it.) C. E. Montague expresses this well when he says (misquotation is the highest tribute to a classic), 'In climbing, we actually taste the ultimate good in small but authentic nips.' But as soon as this practical task began to be more or less accomplished, a cross-roads was reached. The sense of performing a valuable piece of exploration was more and more difficult to catch, within the limits of space and time. The lucky individual might

go to Tibet, but still with a perceptible and growing fear at heart that even this was only to defer the problem by one remove—divided between the wish to climb his mountain and the reluctance to spoil his own fun by taking the strictly practical means to do so. Something seems amiss here. Rather short-sightedly, as our sport advanced, some people proceeded to confuse the deep appeal which climbing made to them (or perhaps one should say rather, the suggestions which occurred to them in the course of it) too much with the inanimate fells and rocks themselves, whilst others overvalued the gymnastic difficulties. But it is clear that the whole value of climbing does not depend on either the number or the difficulty of the courses available, or on the result, whatever it may be, of too close a comparison of the physical difficulties of climbing in the Lakes, Wales, or elsewhere. The important fact is the existence of a club animated by common appreciation of the values incidentally manifested to us in the course of climbing. If the Lakeland fells should be incapable of giving in full measure what they gave to the pioneers then such a club would still be confronted with the duty of finding itself a task worthy of its enthusiasm and training, and could not fail to find it. (And for a movement to continue vital it is not usually enough for each generation to start again where the preceding one started.) Such a task might possibly lie in widening the circle of rock climbers. But no association having essential value or playing a leading part need ever consist of more than seven hundred members, if anything like as many—the popularisation of a good thing, once established, can very largely be left to look after itself. The task might lie in the development of, and giving expression to, the motives behind climbing, imperfectly explored as these are ; or it might lie in the safeguarding of the actual playground from suburbanisation. It might lie in the development of club life itself, by means of expeditions, such as our Alpine Meets, designed not to achieve the ultimately fruitless task of putting out-of-date the guide-books to a

highly technical pastime, but as exercises in team life and work under Alpine or desert conditions of suitably chosen difficulty.

Deep and powerful as the climbing impulse is, it might perhaps be broadened by developing realisation that mountains are not to be worshipped as stone idols but are only one aspect of nature's aesthetic or practical challenge : a reminder of the proprieties of man's relation to her, or by realisation that the conditions under which mountains are beautiful can only be a special application of the conditions constituting beauty in general—conditions which will bear application in town and country, indoor and out.

Thus, for example, the mental discovery of the mountains a hundred and fifty years since, was originally acclaimed as valuable because it seemed to supply a new perspective to the then-current subjects of discussion, artistic and social, and to broaden the discussion of them. If mountaineering should itself seem to be in any way nearing its limits and threatened with narrowness, it is time to apply the same process, in some measure, in the opposite direction, and to bring fresh air into it by broadening its scope, not only geographically but mentally. Meanwhile on the Sands, from which the tide every twelve hours wipes away all trace of us and our works alike, our lunch sandwiches and our civil engineering, one may, if one exerts one's sense of wonder, recapture undistracted something of the same impressions on approaching the mountains, as the earliest visitors had in the days when climbing was unborn.

Having by these considerations artfully filled in several miles at least of a walk, a great part of the pleasure of which consisted in its total absence of features (of at least certain kinds), I must admit having told members hardly more about Cartmel Sands than Unna told his readers about ' Ross and Sutherland,' in an article of that title which he wrote for the Journal of a kindred club, and in which actually he discussed a dilemma similar to the above. As for the route across the Sands, is there not an excellent historical account in the

(1935) Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire ? Anyone interested will enjoy the walk much more for lacking unnecessary description beforehand.

It may be said that there is very little chance of being cut off by the tide as the tide only advances to landward of the normal route for a very few hours, and an escape is available shorewards. Of course mistakes have occurred—the drownings have averaged about one per annum over the centuries since records have been available. A good mark in the early stages is the lighthouse-like tower at Jenny Brown's Point, which was provided early in the last century as a seamark for vessels approaching the quarries. The River Keer, which issues from Carnforth, used to enjoy a worse reputation than the Kent, but we found it only knee-deep, with a clean bottom. Once a few hundred yards off the coast, the sand was everywhere firm and clean. Priest's Scar was apparently buried under the sand, as also was the wall of the mid-Victorian reclamation scheme. The river Kent, where it flows close to the shore, is far too deep to ford, even on horse pack, and one must cross by boat, but it grows shallower again as it runs the last part of its course over the open sands far seaward of high tide mark. Quicksands, we were informed, can hardly be said to exist, unless after heavy rain, when the sandy banks of the usual channels become, as it were, waterlogged, or in semi-suspension, and require a day or two to reconsolidate. (Incidentally, it would be rather interesting if someone would study the subject of quagmires, sloughs, and bogs. What is their maximum depth, and how far can one sink in them ?)

Although there were none of the thrills of crossing swift glacial torrents five feet deep on an Iceland pony, or of the close calculation of tides and involved route finding of the four mile sea-ford between North Uist and Benbecula, the walk is one I am glad to have done, alike as a pleasant experience in itself, as a route to the Lakes of considerable historical interest, and as pre-eminently the pedestrian's route.

# ROMAN LAKELAND

*W. T. McIntire*

Surely among all the historical monuments bequeathed to posterity by successive races of men who have occupied our English Lake District not the least impressive are those which bear witness to the energy and pertinacity of Imperial Rome. Time and the hands of spoilers have dealt harshly with these mighty works of a race of conquerors and governors. As Wordsworth so aptly wrote—

> 'The mossy ways, carried across these heights
> By Roman perseverance are destroyed
> Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.'

The base utilitarianism of past ages has made use of Roman forts and buildings as convenient quarries, nor have the constructors of our modern roads and railways reverenced these memorials of the past. Little indeed remains to tell us of Rome's former greatness, yet that little, as it is hoped to show in the following brief article, is of surpassing interest to all lovers of our Lake country.

Even the least imaginative among us cannot but experience a thrill at the thought of the first arrival of the conquerors of the then known world amid the lonely valleys and mountain passes of our district. Here again, in his 'Pass of Kirkstone,' Wordsworth voices our feelings, when listening to the sound of the wind among the rocks of the pass, he exclaims—

> 'List to those shriller notes!—that march
> Perchance was on the blast,
> When, through this Height's inverted arch,
> Rome's earliest legion passed!
> —They saw, adventurously impelled,
> And older eyes than theirs beheld,
> This block—and you, whose church-like frame
> Gives to this savage Pass its name.'

Yes, the chief contours of our landscapes—the mountains crags and rocks—were doubtless much the same as they are today when in the first century of our era the Roman legionaries first broke their way into the secluded fastnesses of the Lake District. We must realise, however—and the realisation of this fact is of importance, if we would understand the nature of the Roman occupation of Lakeland—that the general aspect of the lower lying portions of the country was altogether different. The fair valleys and dales, now rendered habitable by the labours of succeeding generations of men since the earlier Norse settlers first redeemed them from the wilderness for their sheep-farms, were then a region of dense undergrowth and noisome morass. The scattered pre-Roman inhabitants of the district, though naturally they had to rely upon agriculture for the principal Part of their sustenance, shunned the unhealthy lowlands, and lived as best they could amid the comparatively barren middle heights. Their stone-circles, their settlements, their sepulcral mounds and their enclosures are all to be found in such places as Sizergh fell, Shap, Burnmoor, Upper Ennerdale and Moor Divock, and the lower valleys were tenantless.

An exceptional low lying site of human habitation was near Portinscale, where were found the remains of a factory of stone implements; but this site was upon an ancient track leading down to Derwentwater and probably employed by generations of fishermen. Thus when the Romans first appeared on the scene, Lakeland save for a few hill settlements was uninhabited. The inhabitants of the hill villages might occasionally—as discoveries of their weapons indicate—go hunting amid the heights or fishing down by the lakes, but in other respects the district was a wilderness.

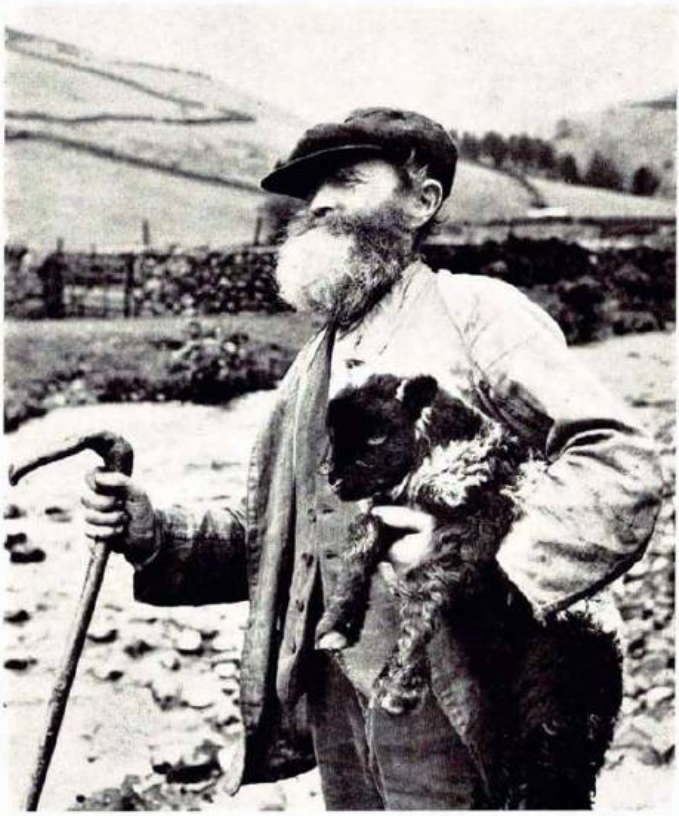
It was therefore with no idea of profit but purely for strategical reasons that Rome undertook the occupation of this difficult tract of country when about the year 79 A.D. Agricola, the great Roman general and governor, was enabled

after the conquest of Wales to turn his attention to the north of Britain and establish Roman government in that remote portion of our island.

Many and heated have been the arguments in the past by supporters of rival theories as to the route followed by the Romans in their first conquest of the North. It is enough here to state that whatever the route of Agricola's first invasion may have been, we find that from the earliest days of the Roman conquest of our district two main roads were used. One of these roads—that from York—entered the Eden valley over the desolate pass of Stainmore, and passing on its way the Roman forts of Brough, Kirkby Thore, Brougham and Old Penrith, ended at Luguballium or Carlisle, The other road from the south followed the Lune valley, and with forts at Overborough and Low Borrow Bridge went on straight across the fells to meet the first-mentioned road at Brocavum or Brougham.

These two roads, though they skirt the territory comprised within the Lake District, do not actually enter it, but direct access to its central portion was gained by a third road, which, leaving the Lune valley road at Lancaster, led straight to the fort at Watercrook, near Kendal, whence by way of Reston it proceeded to the fort at Borrans close to the head of Windermere. From Borrans it was carried on by the Brathay valley over the Wrynose pass to another fort at Hardknot, from which elevated site it descended into Eskdale and finally reached the Roman fort and harbour of Ravenglass. It is along the line of this road, passing through the heart of the Lake District, and constructed for reasons which will be discussed later, that the principal remains of the Roman occupation of that district are to be found. It will be necessary, therefore, to give a somewhat more detailed description of its course after a brief consideration of the general nature of the Roman occupation of the district.

In the first place, it must be remembered that this occupation was purely a military one. The Romans evidently



*J. P. Taylor*

Owd Joe
of Wasdale Head

regarded our part of Britain as a kind of buffer state between the more advanced civilisation of the south and the Caledonians of the north whose activities they sought to curb about 120 A.D. by the construction of Hadrian's wall. To present an obstacle to possible invaders who might break through this northern line of defence, and to overawe and keep in subjection the Brigantes of our district who might—and on more than one occasion actually did—ally themselves with the enemy, the Romans constructed a system of roads and forts, a kind of network in which the forts at the distance of about one day's march from each other were situate at the points of intersection of the meshes.

These forts were usually oblong enclosures containing the principia or headquarters of the officer in command, granaries, barrack buildings and other necessary adjuncts. They were of from two acres and a half to five acres and a half in area and were manned either by single or double cohorts, i.e., by 500 or 1,000 men from the auxiliary troops attached to the Roman legions. Outside the forts were the bath-house and drill ground of the garrison, while around them grew up vici or villages inhabited by Britons who were attacked by opportunities for trade and by the advantages afforded by the protection of the fort.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the reader will realise that it is useless in our district to seek for the remains of big country houses, or opulent towns such as are to be found in the south. The life of the soldier in this out-of-the-way part of Britain was probably a grim one in many of its aspects, and the relics of his occupation are limited to the remains of the roads along which he marched, the ruins of the forts and barrack buildings in which he lived, the altars and inscriptions he set up and the tombstone now and then which marked his grave.

Returning to the consideration of the Watercrook–Ravenglass road we must first deal with the Roman fort at Watercrook, now generally identified with the Roman Alone.

The site of the fort is in a bend of the River Kent, and there is little left to remind the casual visitor of the former existence of the station. In Thomas Machell's time, however, there was more to be seen, for he describes the remains of what was probably the bath-house of the fort. An altar to Bacchus and a monument of two freemen of a man named Publius Bassus and other finds on the site are still in existence. The site was partially excavated by Lt-Col. Oliver North, F.S.A., in 1930, when the remains of the North-East gate, with a double entrance and guard chambers, were uncovered. The area of the fort was almost three acres, and its date, as shown by the coins and pottery found on the site, of the second century. Finds of Roman coins in its neighbourhood would suggest that the British fort of Castlesteads upon Helme, the hill overlooking Watercrook, the summit of which commands a magnificent view of the lower valley of the Kent, was used by the Romans as a look-out place.*

The task of following the course of the road from Alone to the next fort at Ambleside has proved a baffling one. The road evidently crossed the Kent by the adjacent ford, and followed a line now shown by an avenue of trees which leads up to the Kendal–Milnthorpe road, but is lost on the hill above and cannot be recognized again until it reaches Reston, near Staveley. These Roman roads of the Lake District in all probability not infrequently followed the lines of pre-existing British tracks, though generally the course seems to have been adopted of sighting one conspicuous object from another and planning the road to run in as straight a direction as possible between the two landmarks.

The roads themselves were usually made upon a base of two layers of stones laid flat. These stones were afterwards covered with gravel metalling, and flanked with ditches some five feet in width to provide for drainage. There were frequently curb stones on each side of such roads, the average width of which was about twelve feet.

* For a description of Watercrook fort, see the recently published *Survey of Westmorland*, by the Historical Monuments Commission, p. 180.

From Reston, the probable course of the road was straight across the hills to Troutbeck and thence round the foot of Wansfell to Waterhead. Here, at Borrans Field—a name signifying rough or stony ground and frequently applied by the old Norse settlers in the dales to a site covered by ruins—is another Roman fort identified with the Galava of the tenth Antonine *Iter*.

This fort was explored by Professor R. G. Collingwood between the years 1913 and 1920.* It was then proved that there were two forts, one above the other. The earlier fort dated from Agricola's time and had earthen ramparts, its buildings being of wood. Probably the disadvantages inseparable from the lowland marsh surrounded site of the fort led to its early abandonment, but after the great rising of the Brigantes and the distruction of the Ninth Legion, it was deemed necessary shortly after 120 A.D. to re-occupy Galava. The level of the old fort was raised by covering it with clay to the depth of several feet, and a new stone fort was built. Some of the stones used in the construction of this fort were brought from as far away as Lancaster, and probably some of these were transported to the site of the fort by boat along Windermere, for there are the remains of a breakwater or jetty running down into the lake. There were partial destructions of this fort in the troubled times of 181 and 275 A.D., traces of which were found at the three main floor levels of the fort, but the damage was afterwards repaired and the fort appears to have been in use up to the last years of the fourth century and the departure of the Romans.

The site is now vested in the National Trust, and visitors will find that the principal sites of buildings revealed during the excavations have been left open and indicated by signboards. Old writers mention the survival of the ruins of several buildings at Borrans, but these have disappeared, and no wonder, for Clarke in his *Survey of the Lakes*, writing in

* For the reports on the results of these excavations, see the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological Society*, New Series, vols. xiv, xv, xvi and xxi.

1785, describes the manner in which the site was robbed for building stone, the carved and inscribed freestone having been broken up, he tells us, by the good housewives of Ambleside, to be employed as scouring sand. The only two recorded inscriptions, found at Ambleside have been lost, but fortunately the objects found during the excavations of 1913–1920, are still to be seen in the Armitt Library at Ambleside. Here the visitor can examine such objects of interest as Roman sandals, a silver spoon, Roman pottery, coins of various dates, a bronze bell and many other articles of domestic use. From our point of view, it was perhaps an advantage that the Roman soldiers freed from the supervision in barracks of their women folk were so careless in their household arrangements. If they broke a pot, the fragments were left lying about to reveal in after years the date of the deposit in which they were left.*

It used formerly to be supposed that from the fort at Borrans Field a road led up Stock Gill beck to join the Roman road which runs along the ridge of High Street, a road to be mentioned later in this article. No trace, however, of such a connection has up to the present time been discovered, and it would seem that the High Street road did not lead to Ambleside but joined the Watercrook–Galava road nearer Kendal.

The probable course of the main road we are considering at present led from Galava, in the direction of Rothay Bridge, where traces of it have been discovered carried on corduroy over marshy ground.† Thence the road led to Skelwith bridge and on to Colwith, Stang End and Bridge End and so on to Fell Foot,‡ whence it climbed Wrynose Pass probably much along the line of the road at present in use.

* A description of the fort at Borrans Field with a plan will be found in the *Report for Westmorland* of the Historical Monuments Commission, pp. 1–3.

† For a good account of the topography of this neighbourhood, see the late Miss Armitt's *Rydal*.

‡ See *Transactions*, N.S. xxi, 24–29.

This road, a famous packhorse route in former days, was used for wheeled vehicles in the thirteenth century as is shown by its mediaeval name of Wainscarth or waggon gap.* It is a sharp ascent and the present name of the pass Wrynose, derived apparently from the old Norse vreina—hals or 'stallion's pass,' would indicate that it was formerly regarded as a route fit only for a strong horse.

Crossing Cockley Beck, the Roman road then ran up, perhaps by Black Hall, to Hardknot pass, an ancient road being partly traceable along part of this route, and on the shoulder of Hardknott reached another fort overlooking the remainder of its course down Eskdale to Ravenglass and the sea.

This fort of Hardknott Castle,† which, as is shown by the pottery and coins found upon the site, dates from the time of Agricola, had a comparatively short existence as a garrison station, as it was abandoned early in the second century A.D. and, though a small building was probably afterwards maintained as a roadside rest-house, the scarcity of relics found upon the site of a later date than that of Hadrian would indicate its disuse after that period. This early abandonment of the fort probably explains the fact that no station which can be identified with it is mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary.

In 1889 the N.E. turret of the fort was cleared out by Mr H. S. Cowper, and shortly afterwards part of the central building—the principia—was dug out by Sir Herbert Maxwell, and afterwards the whole fort and the remains of the bath-house outside it were examined by a committee which included those eminent archæologists the late Chancellor Ferguson, the Rev. W. S. Calverley and Mr C. W. Dymond, whose report is to be found in the twelfth volume of the Old Series of *Transactions* of the Cumberland

* See W. G. Collingwood, *Lake District History*, pp. 31–32.

† For a full description of this fort, see R. G. Collingwood's *Roman Eskdale*, pp. 20–40.

and Westmorland Archæological Society. Fortunately, though in those early days the value of pottery as an index to the date of occupation of a site was not properly understood, the fragments of broken vessels then found were preserved, and have since provided invaluable evidence of the history of the fort.

It was built for the accommodation of a complete cohort of about 500 men and provided with the usual buildings of which parts of the principia, of the commandant's house and the granaries, can still be traced. It had four gates and though the area within its ramparts has been only partially excavated, it appears to have followed the usual arrangement of such forts with its via principalis and via decumana crossing the fort at right angles to each other. The remains of the granaries, which consisted of a twin block of buildings to the North-East of the principia, containing rooms each 54 feet long by 22 feet wide, show that due precautions were taken to ensure the preservation in good condition of this essential part of the food supply of the garrison. The walls are $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick and supported by massive buttresses to bear the outward thrust of the walls and the weight of a stone roof. The floor, as was generally the case with buildings used for a similar purpose, was raised on sleeper walls to keep the stored wheat away from the damp.

The remains of the walls of the fort show that it was originally surrounded by an earthen rampart with an external stone revetment. The corner towers are well preserved, forming chambers measuring some 12 feet by 10 feet, with their walls still standing to the height of nearly five feet. The eastern tower seems to have been used as a bakehouse, and the south tower for a forge. The gates do not seem to have possessed the usual guard-rooms on each side, but may possibly have had such rooms in an upper storey above their arched entrances. The ditch surrounding the fort is some 30 feet wide and has been cut through the solid rock. Traces of a second ditch, also hewn in the rock, are to be seen

here and there about a hundred feet from the fort on its north-eastern side, where the ground slopes down to it, and where additional protection was probably considered advisable.

A short distance to the south-east of the fort are the interesting remains of the bath-house, which here contained three rooms—the frigidarium, where the bathers undressed, the tepidarium where they got thoroughly warmed and the caldarium where in a heat more intense they perspired, and whence after being shampooed they returned by way of the tepidarium to the frigidarium, where they had a cold plunge path, before resuming their garments.

At Hardknott, the bath-house was a long narrow building, about 66 feet long by 20 feet 6 inches wide divided into the three rooms above-mentioned. At the south end is the caldarium, heated by a furnace built in a projecting part of the south wall. Unfortunately this furnace, which, when found, was complete to a level well above that of its main flue, has been wantonly damaged by trippers. It was solidly built of large flat bricks, and was so arranged as to support a large tank for heating water for baths in the caldarium. The hot gases from the furnace after heating the caldarium were led by a flue into a hypocaust whence they were conducted through pipes made of box tiles to heat the walls of the room and afterwards passed on to warm the tepidarium in a similar manner, one furnace thus serving to warm both rooms. The frigidarium which was a somewhat larger room than either of the others contained the cold bath, a tank of masonry lined with cement, measuring about 11½ feet by 8 feet, and approached by a flight of steps leading down into one of its corners. It was emptied by a waste pipe made of lead which led out of its south-east corner into a rock-hewn trench.

A few feet to the south of the bath-house are the remains of the sudatorium, a circular building of some 15 feet internal diameter. It was a room for the use of those

bathers who wished to linger on exposed to a still higher degree of heat, and it was heated by a special furnace of its own, and roofed by a brick dome in which a movable shutter allowed a certain amount of regulation of the temperature within the building. All that was left of the furnace and hypocaust of this building, when it was first discovered, was a heap of bricks.

It remains to describe the artificially levelled area known as the ' Bowling Green,' an area a short distance to the east of the fort and connected with its eastern gate by a road. This was evidently the parade or drill ground of the fort, and here the troops received that drill and training which were so essential a part of the discipline of the Roman army. This parade ground which has an area of about three acres, has been levelled at a considerable cost of labour by removing earth from the northern part of the ground and piling it up to the south so that only a slight slope remains.

This brief and very inadequate description of one of the most remarkable of our local historical monuments may provoke two questions. Firstly, why was this fort built in this out-of-the-way and lonely place, and, secondly, what causes led to its abandonment after it had been occupied for so short a period of time ?

The answer to the first question involves the discussion of another—that of the reason for the construction of the road upon which Hardknott Castle stands, the road from Watercrook to Ravenglass. The following answer to this question has been suggested.* Tacitus in his Life of Agricola records that in the year 81 A.D. that general ' placed troops in that part of Britain which faces Ireland ' with the idea of invading that country which he believed to lie half-way between Britain and Spain and thus to be able to provide a convenient stepping stone between those two parts of the Roman Empire, to their mutual advantage and to the added security of Rome's western dominions. Now Ravenglass

* See R. G. Collingwood's *Roman Eskdale*, pp. 10–14.

*E. Wood-Johnson*

KERN KNOTTS
West Chimney

fulfils admirably the conditions demanded for the port chosen by Agricola as the base for his projected expedition to Ireland. Moreover, there does not seem to exist any other comprehensible reason for the construction of a long road through the wild and sparsely inhabited Lake District than that of providing a means of transit for his armies on their way to Agricola's naval base for the purpose of carrying out his enterprise. There can hardly have been any other reason for the construction of the road, which serves no practical purpose. The existing roads by way of Stainmore to Carlisle and by the Lune Valley to Brougham would have sufficed for Agricola's ordinary requirements and any trouble caused by the inhabitants of the Lake District could easily have been dealt with by punitive expeditions from such forts upon the periphery of the country as Low Borrow Bridge or Brougham.

If Agricola's Irish ambitions were the cause of the making of the road, the existence of the fort at Hardknot might be explained by the suggestion that it was a signalling station. The site of the fort commands an extensive view down the Esk Valley, and a signal by beacon fire or semiphore could be conveyed from Ravenglass to Hardknott by the use of only one intermediate station. The message could readily be carried on by other signal stations from Hardknot back to Ambleside and Watercrook, and thus if troops were required for any special reason at Ravenglass they would at short notice be hurried up from the south.

As we know now, Agricola's dream of the conquest of Ireland proved unrealisable, but the framework which he had built up to support it continued in existence. Ravenglass itself was a useful port, indeed it continued to be employed until the silting up of its harbour in recent years led to its falling into disuse,* but with Hardknot it was otherwise. There was now no reason to maintain its garrison, and with

* For an interesting account of the port of Ravenglass, see an article by the late Rev. Caesar Caine, in *C. & W. Transactions*, N.S. xxii, 101–107.

the changes necessary in the organization of the Roman defensive system after the construction of Hadrian's wall, it fell out of use and was abandoned, save as a rest-house for troops and travellers on their way from Ambleside to Ravenglass.

The course of the road between Hardknott and Ravenglass is a question which presents many difficulties. Miss Mary C. Fair, an archæologist who has devoted much time and study to the old roads of Eskdale is probably correct in her theory as to the line taken by the Roman engineers in constructing the Eskdale portion of the road. The limits of space forbid the full discussion of her investigations in which she traces the probable line of the road from the foot of Hardknott pass to a ford in Stanley Gill and on by Dalegarth Hall to a place near Muncaster Head farm, where Miss Fair found it by excavation 9 feet wide and solidly constructed with good kerbstones. Thence, she considers, the road runs by Bull Kop to a private drive which it follows to a point 200 yards beyond High Eskholme, whence she thinks it can be traced on a line between Muncaster Castle and Muncaster Church without rising as has sometimes been maintained to a point some 500 feet above the sea level on the side of Muncaster Fell. From the point named above near Muncaster Castle the road runs straight to Ravenglass fort.*

Near the line of the road thus described, three miles north of Ravenglass, at Park House farm, are to be seen the remains of a Roman pottery and tilery. These remains consist of two kilns and a pit, the probable source of the clay employed in the manufacture of the pottery and tiles. Unfortunately the kilns were damaged during the course of the unskilled digging operations of the finders of the pottery in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but what remains is of interest. The kilns appear to have had in each case two underground chambers, one above the other. The lower

* A more complete summary of Miss Fair's conclusions will be found in R. G. Collingwood's *Roman Eskdale*, pp. 16–17.

chamber was doubtless the furnace, the upper one the oven in which the clay was baked. One of these kilns is built of local stone, the other of brick. The roofs of the kilns were supported by pillars of Roman tiles. These kilns are more substantially constructed than most of those found elsewhere. They would probably find ample employment in providing the requirements of the forts at Ravenglass and Hardknot Castle. A considerable quantity of tiles and bricks besides broken pieces of pottery were found, we are told, when the kilns were first excavated.*

Of the fort of Ravenglass or Clanoventa as it is marked on the Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain, but little is now to be seen except portions of the ramparts and their external ditch. Part of its area has been destroyed by the erosion of the sea, and part by the construction of the railway. It seems to have been about 140 yards square and to have had an area of more than 3½ acres. No traces are left of its gateways, corner towers or buildings, but when the railway line was being made in 1850, three underground chambers were found. There were pyramidal in form, about 15 feet deep with flagged bottoms about 10 feet square. Their sides were formed of tree-trunks laid horizontally and these walls gradually approached each other as they ascended, until they terminated in a narrow opening covered with a stone slab. They were probably storage cellars used in connection with the fort or the adjacent port.

To the north of the fort is an area which was probably the site of the vicus or village which grew up outside its walls. Here the British dwellers in the neighbourhood would congregate, and here the garrison of the fort would have their taverns and other places of recreation. Doubtless here too the soldiers would keep their wives and families, for though at first marriages were not legally recognised until the completion of twenty-five years of service, the irregular

* A description of these kilns is to be found in an article by Miss Fair in *C. & W. Transactions*, N.S. xxiv, 366.

unions contracted by the men seem to have been considered binding. The Emperor Severus at the close of the second century allowed his garrisons to reside outside the forts with their families, and Caracalla in 212 A.D. extended the rights of Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire. It must be remembered, too, that outside the walls of the fort, within which the official form of religion was obligatory, complete religious freedom was permitted, and that the shrines of the numerous gods worshipped by the men of different nationalities of which the army in Britain was composed were to be found in these villages. Hence the importance of the vicus increased as the years of the Roman occupation of Britain wore on, and one of the questions which await solution is the extent to which civilisation and organised government survived in its midst after the departure from Britain of the Roman army.

The most interesting relic of the Roman occupation of Ravenglass is, however, 'Walls Castle,' the surviving portion of the bath-house of Glanoventa. This ruin is in many respects the finest existing Roman building in the North of England; its walls are still standing to a height of over twelve and a half feet. The remains consist of two rooms which still retain traces of their hypocaust heating arrangements. Parts of the doorways remain and there are traces of five windows. The building is of red freestone, and the mortar used between the courses is of excellent quality. Internally, the walls seem to have been covered with a pink cement. The whole block of buildings would appear to have been some 90 feet in length; the surviving portion measures about 50 feet long by 40 feet wide. A curious niche to be seen in the wall of the outer chamber bears a strong resemblance to the niches to be seen in the bath-house at Chesters. These recesses were perhaps lockers to contain the clothes of the bathers. They may have had wooden doors.

There is a tradition that the bath-house at Ravenglass was used, long after the end of the period of the Roman

occupation, as the early castle of the Pennington family, and perhaps it may be to this continued use that it owes its excellent state of preservation. Legend has invested its crumbling walls with romance. John Denton, writing in 1610, identified it with the Lyons Garde of the Arthurian story; and Camden, who visited the spot in 1599, mentions a local tradition that it was once the dwelling place of a certain King Eveling. This King Eveling, the late W. G. Collingwood suggested in a fascinating paper upon the subject read before the Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological Society, may perhaps be identified with the Evelac of Celtish mythology who ruled over the isle of the blessed dead—the Avalon of Arthurian romance.*

Before quitting the subject of Roman Ravenglass, we might notice that its fort was garrisoned some time after its establishment by the First Cohort of the Morini. The Morini, whose land was the country around Boulogne, were a race of sailors, and were naturally employed at a place where seamanship was required. It is possible, however, as Professor R. G. Collingwood suggests, that there was an earlier garrison of Usipi from Germany.† These men, Tacitus tells us, mutinied, killed their officers, and seizing three ships, sailed off for home. After enduring many privations, they succeeded in sailing round Britain and landing on the Dutch or Frisian coast, only to be arrested as pirates and slain or sold as slaves.

From Ravenglass a Roman road probably led northwards by the coast to the forts at Moresby and Maryport, thus connecting with the roads to Carlisle and the Wall. These places, however, are outside our area and need not be discussed here.

Besides the Watercrook–Ravenglass road the only other Roman road in the Lake District proper is that which starting from Brocavum or Brougham leads past Tirril, and climbing

* See *C. & W. Transactions*, N.S. xxiv, 256.

† *Roman Eskdale*, pp. 48–49.

up over Moor Divock follows the top of the High Street ridge at an altitude of some two thousand feet above the sea, and then descends along the side of Ill Bill and Froswick, by a steep incline, known in the eighteenth century as the Scots' Rake. The line of the road can be followed a little further down Troutbeck to Allen Knot, but as has been stated in an earlier part of this article, a connection which might be expected with Ambleside by way of Woundale and Stock Gill, has not yet been established, nor has it been ascertained up to the present where the junction with the Watercrook–Ambleside road was effected.

The purpose of the construction of this extraordinary road still remains obscure. It possibly followed the route of an ancient British track, and its mediaeval name of Brettestrete or 'road of the Britons,' seems to lend some support to such a supposition. Recently, during the compilation of the Survey of the Historical Monuments Commission, the Roman origin of the High Street road was questioned. An interesting paper summing up the evidence was read by Professor R. G. Collingwood at a recent meeting of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological Socity. This paper awaits publication in the forthcoming volume of that Society's *Transactions*, but one suggestion made by Professor Collingwood has already received notice in the local press and may be mentioned here. Referring to the curious route followed by the road over Moor Divock, he reminded his hearers of the existence of a British settlement on that elevated site and suggested that the road might have been made to pass near that settlement in order to overawe its inhabitants and hinder them from giving trouble.

The two roads mentioned above and the forts along the course of the Watercrook–Ravenglass road are the principal relics of the Roman occupation of the Lake District. It has sometimes been maintained that there was a Roman fort at Keswick, and fragments of Roman pottery, found locally, are to be seen in the Keswick museum. It would be strange,

indeed, if a garrison of at least five hundred men could have occupied a place for any length of time without leaving behind them any traces of their fort, their roads and other indisputable relics of their occupation.

In several places throughout the district finds of Roman objects have been made, but it is impossible to argue from such sporadic pieces of evidence actual occupation of such places by the Roman forces. Men might lose such objects on journeys, on the march or during the course of hunting or fishing expeditions. Or, again, such objects may have come into the hands of Britons either before or after the Roman occupation and been appropriated by their finders. Hoards of Roman coins have been found, one for instance at Castlehead, near Grange. Castlehead, however, which was evidently once an island was for many ages a place of refuge for men who fled from the mainland, and the Roman coins found there were in all likelihood left there by some such British fugitive as were the Northumbrian coins found above them by a fugitive of later date.

Throughout Furness, for instance, though not a few objects of Roman origin have been found, no traces of a Roman fort have hitherto been discovered, nor can the remains of any ancient road be definitely ascribed to the Roman period. Though from time to time the discovery of a Roman road has been reported, subsequent examination has always proved that the road in question was of no earlier origin than the mediaeval times. A consideration, therefore, of the Roman occupation of the Lake District must be confined more or less strictly to the ground already covered in this article.

Of the causes which determined the departure of the Roman garrisons from our midst we know little. At first depleted to provide men for the defence of the East Coast against the new enemy, the Saxons, afterwards still further reduced in strength by aspirants for the imperial robe who took Roman troops across to the Continent to fight their battles for them, the garrisons seem finally to have been

withdrawn towards the end of the fourth century. The Romanised Britons whom they left behind them apparently continued unaided for many years to hold out in their mountain fastnesses against the invading Angles, and perhaps to have maintained something of the Roman tradition. In various parts of the Lake District are to be seen forts, which apparently date from the obscure period of our local history, and some of these show crude attempts to imitate Roman methods of fortification. Roman materials have been noticed, for instance, at Castle Crag fort above Borrowdale, at Shoulthwaite Castle, and at Peel Wyke by the shore of Bassenthwaite.

In some of the British villages, too, of this period Roman objects have been found, and the plans of such enclosed settlements as that at Hugill seem to suggest a clumsy imitation of the fortification of a Roman fort. More, perhaps, may someday be learned with regard to the survival of Roman culture in our district, when it is possible to excavate some of the sites of the villages whose existence as annexes to the Roman forts has already been mentioned.

As will be noticed in this brief and very imperfect summary of the principal facts known with regard to the occupation of Lakeland by the Romans, much remains to be learned. Sites require excavation, the exact courses of roads need determining the history of the occupation of many of the Roman stations calls for elucidation. It is hoped, however, that what has here been written may prove not without interest for some of its readers and that they may realise that a further knowledge of the part played by Rome in our local history may enhance their pleasure in exploring many a corner of our beautiful Lake District.

# ON LAKELAND BIRDLIFE

*Bentley Beetham*

In writing of the birds of a particular district or country the subject may be treated in either of two ways, qualitatively or quantitatively, as the chemist would say. One may record with meticulous care every species that has ever been known to occur in the district, and the rarer its occurrence the more prominence will be given to its appearance; or one may confine one's attention to those species which at present occur in sufficient numbers to attract the notice of the visitor, or whose influence in the past has left some abiding traces in the present. The former is of interest chiefly to the specialist, to the ornithologist; the latter is more useful to the bird-lover and general visitor, and it is for him in the role of climber and fell-walker that these notes are primarily intended.

At the outset of this brief survey I feel compelled to admit however unwillingly that our district has little or nothing to offer of special or peculiar interest in birdlife. The rock-climber or fell-walker who has roamed through the Cambrian hills, the Pennines or the Highlands will find in Cumberland no new bird forms, no surprising aggregations of birdlife; rather will he miss or be astonished at the paucity of certain species he has met with plentifully in other places. And the more we penetrate towards the heart of Lakeland, with Great End as the centre, the more noticeable does this dearth of birdlife become.

In Wales we may perhaps make or renew acquaintance with such rare and striking bird-forms as the Chough or Kite. The first glimpse or note of the former will instantly awaken a host of pleasant memories in those familiar with the Alps. True, the red bill and feet of this Welsh Chough at once inform us that it is not the Alpine species so familiar to all high mountaineers, but the slightly decurved bill,

shrill whistling notes and pert carriage of this slender little crow at once proclaim it to be a Chough; give its legs and bill but a yellow tint and it is the self-same bird we expect to see come mounting up through space to share our early breakfast as we sit on the first sunny rocks of Grépon, Rothhorn or other Alpine crag.

In the Highlands there is always the chance of seeing a Golden Eagle; a bird so grand that no amount of over-written and hackneyed stories concerning it can ever seriously cheapen it or make it commonplace when it is actually met with in person in its native hills. Would anyone, who has ever come upon an Eagle at close quarters in the mountains, ever forget that meeting or cease to hope for its repetition? I remember vividly such a chance encounter with this bird. It was on an April day in a very late spring. I was wandering up the Sgurr nan Gillean ridge alone and so no word was being spoken. New snow of the night before covered the rocks in a soft mantle six inches deep and muffled all sound. Arrived at the top of the third pinnacle I peered over into the gulf beyond and was quietly contemplating the wintry scene around when suddenly a great Eagle launched itself into space from an unseen ledge a few yards below where I stood. I do not think that from first to last it was ever aware of my presence, for it just floated slowly outwards from the rock face, and toying with an upward air current in the most leisurely manner it wheeled slowly round and round, turning its great head from side to side as it searched the abyss below. There, without a single wing-beat, it gained velocity as if by magic, and soared swiftly away. Probably from its first appearance to its going was not more than thirty seconds, yet so dramatic, so vivid was the incident that in that brief time the mind seemed to have absorbed almost an etching of the scene, and had I but had the artist's gift I could have traced every straining feather of those great wings, each straining primary widely separated from its fellows and curved upwards at the tip as it helped to bear the weighty

body across space. Such a close view of an Eagle comes seldom even to a mountaineer: more usually we have to watch them from afar and be content to marvel at their flight as they seem to set the law of gravity at naught by soaring round and round in great ascending spirals without a single flap of their broad wings.

Alas, these splendid birds, which are natural inhabitants of our Lakeland crags, have long ago been banished from our land, but their former presence here is plentifully attested by the numerous Eagle Rocks and Eagle Crags which are to be found in the district. Were it necessary, these place-names would inform us at once of the former existence of Eagles just as surely as the various Raven Crags betoken the home addresses of a present inhabitant. But we need not rely on inferences drawn from place-names for our information concerning Eagles, for these birds have always concerned and interested man—if only from an economic point of view, and so we find frequent references to them in Lakeland history. They were classed as vermin, and along with foxes, ravens, polecats and other freebooters a price was put upon their heads. And so it comes about that in archives of some Lakeland parishes, notably in those of Crosthwaite, there are frequent records of the churchwardens having made disbursements to their parishioners for killing Eagles in the days when these splendid birds still graced the neighbourhood. Thus under date 1713, we find amongst others, the following entries in the Crosthwaite Parish Register:

| | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|
| " To John Jackson for killing an old Eagle .. | 1 | 0 |
| ,, Widdow Harris' sons for 3 young Ravens .. | 1 | 0 |
| ,, Edward Berket for a young Eagle .. .. | | 6 |

and so on.

Imagine Golden Eagles at sixpence and a shilling apiece! Foxes were evidently much more feared by the flockmasters, for during the same period their slaughter was rewarded by no less a sum than three shillings and fourpence; big money in those days.

Although such entries for Eagles are frequent enough in the early part of the eighteenth century, the last recorded date for a payment on account of this bird is 1765. Persistent persecution of a species of such low fecundity as an Eagle was having its inevitable result. But we have evidence that they continued to nest around the head of Derwentwater until 1785 and perhaps a little later, for at that time, as the researches of the Rev. H. A. Macpherson tell us 'a long and strong rope was kept in Borrowdale, by subscription, for the purpose of letting down men into the rocks to take the nests and young of the Eagles..... The rope was available for Buttermere, Langdale, Eskdale, and other dales, but kept in Borrowdale, and was in requisition there in nearly every year and occasionally in other dales.'

But though we may no longer be able to count the Golden Eagle as a Lakeland bird we are indeed, fortunate in having the Buzzard—its understudy, as it were—still plentifully distributed amongst our crags. For though the Buzzard is not a true Eagle it is a splendid substitute for one, and as we watch a pair at the head of one of our dales soaring round and round and ever mounting in great sweeping spirals till they finally top the neighbouring heights and glide over into the spaces beyond, so exactly do they resemble Eagles that not vision but locations tells us that we are watching Buzzards and not the nobler species.

Fortunately the habits of these splendid birds bring them but little into conflict with the interests of man, whether he be shepherd or sporting lessee. Their staple food is rabbits, rats and other small rodents, frogs and moles, and though they may take a bird or two now and then, fortunately they never seem to molest even the weakest and sickliest of lambs, and so they may be allowed to remain an ornament to the district. With us the Buzzard nearly always builds his big nest of sticks and heather stems in a cliff, but elsewhere he often shows partiality for a tree site. He nests much later than the Raven seldom laying before the end of

April, but he lacks the Raven's cunning and his nest is not usually protected by a well-chosen overhang of rock, and so it gets the full brunt of any late snow-storms. I have photographed a nest when all around was deep in snow and only the cup where the bird's body had been was clear, and I have known a nest to be pulled bodily from its ledge by the weight of snow which trickled down a shallow scoop and piled up on its outer rim.

Of other Raptorial Birds the Peregrine claims our special notice, for it often chooses as a site for its eyrie the same precipitous rock faces as attract the climber for the practice of his craft. This bird is a typical falcon, and has little in common with the Buzzard. It is narrow, angular and pointed of wing instead of broad and rounded; its flight is swift, headlong and erratic, not slow and soaring; it usually descends upon its prey like a thunderbolt striking it in mid-air instead of pouncing upon it on the ground; moreover, it is wary and alert and highly intolerant of man's presence, while the Buzzard is often so sleepy and indifferent as to appear almost stupid at times.

It is always a grand, albeit a brief, sight, to see a Peregrine in the air, with its head sunk into its shoulders and its curved wings and longish tail giving it the outline of cross bow as it sweeps overhead, but it must be admitted that the bird is an out-and-out freebooter, a highwayman of the air, and only his excessive swiftness of flight, his keen vision and constant watchfulness, coupled with the inaccessibility of the eyrie have saved him from extinction. To the pigeon world he is a veritable Dick Turpin, and near his eyrie when the young are well grown one may find the metal rings of homing pigeons scattered round about, each ring telling of a regrettable incident and of a fruitless vigil kept by some fancier at his loft. However much we may wish to preserve our native fauna, and although we personally may not be interested in pigeon flying, we must, if sportsmen, appreciate enough of other's sport to feel that

it is really too bad that a fine 'homer' on which months or even years of patient, careful training have been expended should then be struck down in passage merely to provide a meal for falcons, and I am sure that if the very numerous fraternity of homing pigeon fanciers knew the whereabouts and could gain access (two different matters!) to the Peregrines' eyries, the bird would surely soon be added to the banished list and place-names would alone remind us of his former residence here. But as things are, he holds his own pretty well; firstly, because there is not much game, and therefore game preservation in the district; secondly, he gives no offence to his nearest neighbours the shepherds and hill farmers, and thirdly, because though himself a small person he lives in a strong castle and his home is difficult to despoil. Although there is still a fair number of these birds in the district, by reason of their habits we do not often see much of them on any given walk—a dot high up in the sky above some ridge; it floats swiftly through the air rapidly increasing in size as it advances with sidelong sweeps and occasional fast beating of the pinions; then it passes overhead and we catch a momentary glimpse of its pointed wings and cross-bow form, but almost before we have settled down to watch it, it is once more a dot in the sky fast disappearing behind a distant ridge. Far otherwise is it if we happen to intrude near the eyrie when the young falcons are nearly ready to fly. Then the old birds, sometimes working themselves up into a frenzy, cast all thoughts of care and self-preservation to one side and try by every means short of direct attack to drive the intruder away. They poise high above you screaming in the air and then swoop headlong downwards, generally from behind, swishing close past your head, but rarely, or never so far as my experience goes, do they actually strike. Instead, at the last moment when impact seems certain they shoot upwards leaving you ducking and with a sound of roaring wind in your ears from their rushing pinions as they swept by. If you reach the eyrie

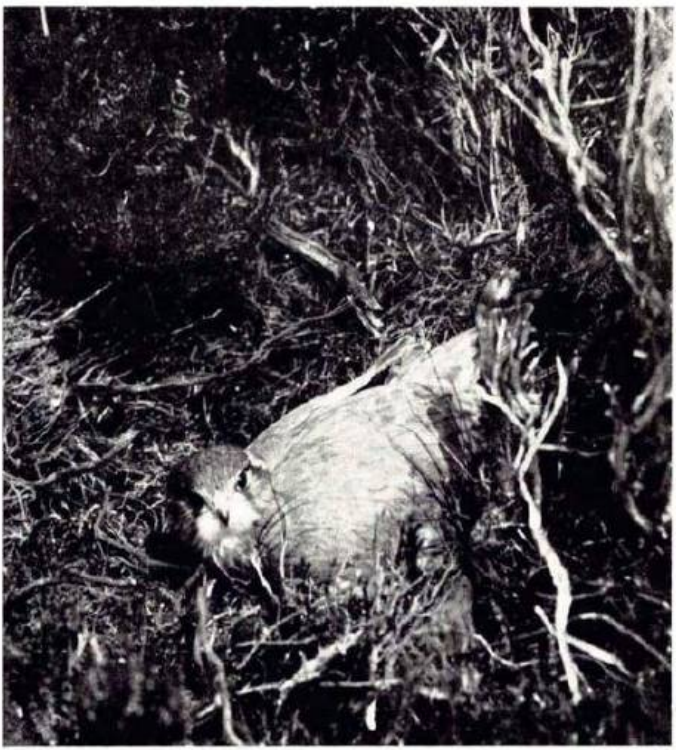
you will find that the youngsters have no finesse about their tactics but strike savagely at anything that approaches them, often throwing themselves onto their backs so as to present an unbroken front of claws and beak. Highlanders sometimes make use of this habit to obtain the young from eyries which are difficult of access. They lower a tam o' shanter or a soft scarf rolled into a ball down into the nest and the young falcons turning onto their backs strike savagely up at it embedding their long curved caliper-like claws so deeply into the wool that they are unable to withdraw them, and so are hauled up by the cord to the top of the cliff.

Of all our mountain and moorland birds none seems to have caught and to reflect the spirit of the fells so perfectly as does the Curlew. Its loud, wild cry, a boisterous rippling whistle, is a sound unique and a joy for ever ; and the careless abandon of the cry seem to be exactly in harmony with the wide open spaces the bird loves so well. Hear but one outburst of the bubbling joyous notes and one's mind is immediately carried to the brown uplands lit by an April sun ; for, like most of the waders, the Curlew is only a spring visitor to our fells, the rest of the year being spent on mud flats at the coast. In the heart of Lakeland the bird is strangely absent : we may wander for miles—over the Sty or Honister, go from Throstle Garth to Langstrath, from Mickledore to Burnthwaite, and never hear or see a Curlew, put on the outskirts of our district the bird is plentiful enough, and there the way of the fell-walker in spring is ever gladdened and made shorter by the wild music of this bird. If our luck is in we may happen upon its four large brown speckled eggs lying point inwards in an open unprotected nest which is no more than a mere depression in the ground ; but to search for them deliberately, unless we know the wiles and habits of the bird, is but a waste of time. I have, however, known shepherds who were so expert at finding the nest that they relied upon the Curlew to provide them with their breakfast eggs for many weeks in April, May, and even into June.

The bird is well known for its wary watchfulness, and if danger threatens it usually runs far from its nest before taking wing, but if in topping a rise on the moor we suddenly appear near its home it may spring into the air straight from its nest and so reveal the latter's whereabouts: this is, in fact, our best chance of finding the eggs.

On the same ground as the Curlew will often be found the beautiful Golden Plover, though the bird is much less common in the Lake District than it is in the Pennines. It is by no means such a conspicuous bird-form as the Curlew but nevertheless it has a very warm place in most fell-walkers' memories. Its note is a thin plaintive whistle, often uttered whilst the bird stands motionless on some distant tussock of brown grass, with which its plumage matches so well as to make it difficult to detect—so difficult, in fact, that many say the bird has ventriloquial powers of making its notes appear to come from where the bird is not. This I very much doubt, though no bird befooled me more than did the Golden Plover when as a boy I sought its handsome speckled eggs. The young are among the most beautiful chicks in birdland: perfectly delightful little things, like animated balls of the softest golden brown down running about on slender stilts. Like most of the Plover tribe they are able to move about and look after themselves almost as soon as they are hatched, but quite unlike the offspring of the highest animal they are born with a wonderfully strong instructive obedience to their parents. On a single warning note being given by their mother these fluffy little babies, only a few days old, instantly scatter to hide with amazing skill and then to lie absolutely motionless—'clapped' as the dalesman calls it. So strong is this instinct that they will lie thus motionless while a great clumsy animal-like man, more than a thousand times their weight, goes pounding about, around, and steps right over them while seeking to discover their hiding place.

The dainty Redshank, another of the waders, is a bird that now often attracts our attention in the marshier places



*Bentley Beetham*

MERLIN

on the fells. I say, ' now,' for this is a species that is definitely on the increase and rapidly spreading its range in many places. It is easy to recognise alike by its aggressive oft repeated yapping cry and by the white hinder margin of its wings seen only when the bird is flying. Of course if the light is right, that is coming from behind us, we may be able to see the coral red colour of the long thin legs as the bird stands on the top of a dry stone wall or other point of vantage.

Woodcock sometimes claim our attention, especially late in the evening and in the more timbered parts where undergrowth of rasp-canes and bracken abound : yet I have flushed a sitting bird from her four roundish eggs on the bare steep flank of Grisedale Pike—a most unusual nesting site.

Snipe are pretty generally distributed in the ' bottoms ' but I do not remember ever finding the nest above the 2,000-ft. line, as one often does on the other side of the Eden Valley. Perhaps this is only a coincidence, for there is plenty of ' Snipe ground ' above this level, and I should be interested to hear to what altitudes others have found it nesting. The same applies to the Sandpiper, which seems singularly absent from the higher streams. The Dunlin too is unaccountably rare (it is quite common in the Pennines) and the Dotterel has become almost or perhaps quite extinct, though whether this is wholly due to persecution on account of the suitability of its feathers for artificial fly dressing seems open to doubt.

Wheatears, Ring Ousels and Dippers are all birds which ' go high ' and so keep the climber company on his journey to the crags. They all show white plumage—the Dipper on the belly, the Ring Ousel has a collar round the neck which, however, is conspicuous only in the male, the Wheatear on head, tail and sides. Dippers' domed homes of moss containing pure white eggs may often be found in a crevice or on a ledge under the highest bridge spanning an upland beck ; Ring Ousels, which except for their harsh scolding notes might easily be mistaken for Blackbirds, nest in heathery outcrops

of rock and in the sides of ravines, whereas the Wheatears lay their very pale blue eggs underground, in a rabbit's burrow, a cavity under a rock or sometimes in the bottom of a dry stone wall. Wheatears and Ring Ousels are summer visitors, the advent of the former being an early and cheerful reminder of the passing of winter; but the hardy little Dipper is a resident, and we may often see him flying above the frost-bound streams looking for open water wherein to ply his trade. The quite remarkable clearness of many of our Lakeland streams affords us an exceptionally good chance to watch the peculiar habit these birds have of walking completely submerged under water holding their light bodies down by gripping the pebbles on the stream bed. Wading and diving are, of course, common habits in birdlife, but I know no other bird that thus walks and hunts the bottoms of the pools, and it is a surprising sight to watch one of these rotund little birds deliberately wade out of his depth and then proceed to walk on the bottom: it looks all wrong, and in contradiction to the laws of buoyancy.

Reluctantly I am going to pass over without comment the host of passerine small fry that inhabit the valleys, all the Warblers, Finches, Buntings, Larks, Tits, Flycatchers, Wagtails and Pipits, but stay! one at least of this last group does demand our attention, for probably there is no other bird the fell-walker sees so often and in so many differene places as the demure little Meadow Pipit. Wherever his journeys lead him, be it over heathery moor, bog, or brown-grass upland, he is sure to flush this little brown bird which, as he approaches, rises from an unseen lurking place to flutter on ahead a little way in an undecided faultering manner. before disappearing into the grass again. As it rises it shows a narrow white feather on each side of the tail and often utters a few little notes—wit-wit-wit, as it flutters out of sight behind some hillock. It never remains long on wing or mounts high into the air and is generally gone before we have time to get a good look at it. These retiring habits are forced upon

it by necessity, for it forms the staple diet of the Merlin. On wing the Pipit has no chance at all against the swift and courageous little Falcon ; its only hope of safety is to dive back into the grass and hide, which it does with great success.

I feel we owe the Pipit a peculiar debt of gratitude, for, however unwillingly, he provides the Merlin with his keep and enables him to remain a British bird. Unlike most other Falcons the Merlin does not choose an inaccessible nesting site but lays its eggs on the flat ground, often among old rough heather and generally on the highest, wildest and most unfrequented part of the fells, but occasionally on the sand dunes of the coast or other desolate spot. It is wonderfully plucky and will on occasion stoop at almost any bird up to and even larger than itself, but its daily bread is Pipit. Without this constant source of easy fodder I doubt whether the Merlin could obtain a livelihood on many of the bleak places which it now calls its home.

The last bird I have space to mention must be the Raven, for no matter where the climber may have wandered the sombre Raven is sure to claim a place in many of his memories of the hills. Not a very intimate place perhaps, for no one would call the Raven a friendly or confiding bird, but it has such a strong individuality, such a personality, one might almost say, that we feel to know it far better than our actual contact with it seems to warrant. This personality of the Raven is caused by its having certain human attributes possessed by hardly any other bird. It has, for example, the gift of speech, and freely practices it. Who amongst us has not stopped in his climb to listen to a pair talking to each other on the neighbouring rocks ? On a misty day in winter our first intimation of their presence is usually a few slow, deep, gutteral croaks, the chunterings of resentment from the crags above. I am not here referring to the hoarse hollow croaks the birds utter on wing, those are more of the same nature as the generality of bird-cries, but

to the guttural conversation carried on between a pair, often in so low an undertone that we have to strain our ears to catch the deeper notes.

If the main use of speech is as a vehicle for thought and as a transmitter of the mind, then even a burst of bad language may fulfil its purpose, and a Raven has more of speech than the talking parrot whose 'pretty Pol' reveals nothing whatever but a desire to repeat a sound devoid of any meaning. When we are clambering about the rocks beneath a Raven's nest, the outpourings of gutteral abuse rained down upon us leave no doubt at all as to what the birds think of us and our presence there, and if those low throaty notes are not avian bad language they are a very good imitation of it indeed. But I like to hear Ravens best when they are less agitated, as when a pair is only mildly resentful of our intrusion to their crag. Then we get more of com versation accompanied by much posturing and the making of expressive gestures with head, expanded tail and drooping wings, the birds chuntering to each other in low undertones like a couple of confirmed grousers. Now and then they take wing, disappearing into the grey mist, their course through the air being suggested to us only by the fragments of muttered abuse that come floating down. If the day be clear we may be treated to an aviation pageant that has no equal. Swifts are marvellous, and at chase and follow-my-leader flying are unexcelled; Eagles and Vultures soar to perfection; Kestrels hang stationary poised on fast-beating pinions; Falcons stoop and Gannets plunge like dropping stones into the sea, but none of these is such a varied and accomplished performer as the Raven. His ordinary flight looks somewhat laboured and clumsy, though it is actually much faster than it at first appears to be, but when he gives himself up to stunt-flying and aerial gambols—which he has a passion for doing near his nursery rocks—he reveals himself to be a perfect master of the art. Nothing shows this better than his tumbling turn. With steady powerful strokes he

mounts high into the air, poises a moment and then turning onto his back falls thus through space upside down and then tumbles completely over, base over apex, two or three times before flattening out to fly away chuckling to himself as he goes, in evident enjoyment of his own performance.

The Raven is an exceptionally wise and cunning bird, and although no rock-climber himself he shows a nice appreciation of the finer points of the art in the selection of his nesting site. Often the nest looks quite easy of access, but there is nearly always a holdless slab or an awkward bulge barring the approach on either side, while above there is generally an overhang, often a very considerable one, though this latter may be as much for protection against weather as against man. Ravens pair for life and are also very faithful to their nesting sites, of which, however, they may have alternative ones used in different years. If one of the pair of birds is shot or trapped the survivor always brings a mate in the following year and the nursery is again occupied. If both should be destroyed in the same season, then next year a new pair is almost certain to turn up—presumably, one of these newcomers being a chick that was hatched there in some previous year. I know one site where for twelve consecutive years Ravens tried to nest as they had done in the past, but each spring the gamekeepers destroyed them and no single chick was reared. The prolonged strain on the stock seems to be telling at last for now they come only occasionally to the sacrifice. How deeply seated this homing instinct to the ancestral site must be for it to persist through so many years, although unrefreshed and unrevived by a single successful enterprise !

In view of the conflicting opinions held as to the destructiveness or otherwise of the Raven, I have always made a point whenever opportunity offered to discuss the matter with shepherds, flock masters and hill farmers in both the Lake District and in the Pennines. Though few will acquit him altogether, there is general agreement that he is

nothing like so harmful as his much smaller brother, the Carrion Crow, about which no one has a single good word to say. The Carrion Crow, although only about half the size of the Raven, is by far the bolder and more harmful of the two. Not only will he directly attack weakly and ill-mothered lambs before they are dead but he will even peck the eyes out of a good ewe that has had the misfortune to get 'cast' on her back in a hollow from whence she cannot rise. More than one shepherd has told me that he has had to cut the throats of sheep that were still living but from which these ghouls, the Carrion Crows, had torn the eyes and had already started to eat alive. Of course, paradoxical though it may sound, the shepherds cut the sheep's throats to save their mutton!

## RETROSPECT

So far my mountain pilgrimage has gone,
from gentle valleys where no gold sun shone
to brilliant peaks magnificent with light
between a tropic day and arctic night.

From these my life took wing; no shadow cast
by eagle pinions overhead could last
more than the moment of his swift passing
or veil the music of his triumph singing.

Though in this night a cruder traffic breaks
more than the avalanche could ever wake;
remembering those bright dynamic heights,
I star portentous darkness with their light.

*M. Scott Johnston.*

# THE FELL FLORA

*Gertrude Bell*

To those who revel in the richness and profusion of the flora of a Swiss alp the flowers of our own fells are undoubtedly dull and scarce, but if the approach is made to them from a different angle the fell-walker may experience just as much pleasure from real intimacy with our few flowers as he gains from a passing glimpse of the colour and variety of an Alpine flora.

J. G. Baker in his 'Flora of the English Lake District,' writes the following: 'There are at the English Lakes just 50 ferns and nearly 850 flowering plants that are thoroughly wild, and we may count 100 more if recent introductions be included in the estimate'—A good count if one could find them all!

From March to September or October our Lake District mountains can provide us with something to repay our search if we take the trouble to look, and it is an interesting amusment to return year by year to see if some less common flower is again out in its usual haunt.

This article does not attempt to deal with the flora of the valleys which, though interesting, resembles more nearly that of other districts, but will be confined to plants found on the fells. A great number of these are common everywhere, but a new interest can be attached to them when we find meadow or woodland flowers such as Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) or Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis Acetosella*) at a height of over 2,000 feet.

Perhaps the easiest way of considering the subject is to link together the plants that grow under similar conditions, for example, those that can be found on bog-land or those that grow on dry slopes.

BOG PLANTS. In an early season by the end of March or beginning of April the flower of the Sheathing Cotton

Grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) can be found in swampy ground at all elevations. Those looking for a flower in the usual sense of the word may be disappointed, as this Cotton Grass or Sedge has a solitary oval head only, which at first when it comes out is yellow with stamens, and later, in fruit, develops into the beautiful, almost globular, white silken tuft so familiar to us all. A little later appears the Common Cotton Sedge (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) which differs from the former species in having several heads surmounting one stalk, and by June or July these lovely drooping tassels, formed by long hairs attached to the small fruits, make a beautiful show in many of the lower bogs.

From April on through May and June a variety of sedges with their triangular stems can keep the botanist busy. In one small bog near Ambleside we find without difficulty ten species. Whilst speaking of the less showy flowers the Scirpus, or Bog Rush, should be mentioned, of which there are three or four kinds on the fells. These are small and grow in dense tufts, mainly stalk with a little brown and green head bearing the stamens and pistils. Later several species of rush can also be found.

The true glory of the bog begins to show itself towards the latter half of May and through June. Two early flowers which can be found and are common from the lake sides up to the highest springs are the Water Blinks (*Montia fontana*) and the Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*). The dense tufts of bright green leaves of the Water Blinks attract our attention sooner than the almost microscopic pure white flowers. It is possible to confuse the Marsh Violet with the Dog Violet but the petals are of a paler blue streaked with purple, and the rather brighter leaves are hairless and less pointed. Another common flower having this wide range of altitude is the Golden Saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*).

One of the most beautiful little flowers is the Mountain or Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), bearing an umbel

of pinky-lilac flowers with a yellow centre. The leaves which grow in a rosette at the base of the stalk are covered with a minute white down, hence the name of Mealy Primrose or Dusty Miller. Although this plant is common on our fells it is generally rare in England. Side by side with the Primula grows the bluish-purple Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), a single spurred flower on the head of a slender stalk, 3–5 inches long. The pale green rosette of leaves at the base of the stalk have a sticky upper surface, the edges of which can be seen curling over some unhappy fly from which the plant obtains part of its nourishment, and several days may elapse before the leaf again expands. Another bog plant which catches insects is the Sundew, but in this case the leaves are covered with long red glandular hairs and it is well worth some minutes' observation to watch the process of assimilating the fly. The common species here is the Round-leafed Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), but the English Sundew (*D. Anglica*), with long narrow leaves, is occasionally found. The small white star-shaped flowers rarely open, but if the day in July or August is sufficiently warm and sunny numbers of open flowers may reward the frequently disappointed searcher.

The Marsh Valerian (*Valeriana dioica*) also belongs to June. Here one can look for the staminate and pistillate heads on different plants and note the different size of the clusters of pale pink or almost white flowers.

The lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus Flammula*) grows in every bog and might be taken for an ordinary small Buttercup but for the linear leaves which do not resemble the spreading, much divided leaf of our meadow species.

The Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis palustris*), though also common, must claim our attention on account of the beauty of its bright clear blue flowers with a yellow eye.

The Yellow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) and Star Saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*), both found on boggy ground, I will reserve till later. J. G. Baker speaks of them as ' a

great ornament to mountain streams,' and it is in such a habitat that they always recur to one's mind.

Two delicate creeping bog plants are the Cranberry (*Vaccinium Oxycoccos*) and the Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*). The former is out in June, the wiry stems bearing small ovate evergreen leaves with rolled back edges, and the beautiful deep pink flowers rather remind one of a cyclamen, though not more than ¼ inch in diameter. The Bog Pimpernel has, when fully opened, a cup-shaped flower of a lovely shell pink; this is found in July. The small orbicular opposite leaves on the trailing stem are a decoration to the ground they cover.

Nor must we forget the Red Rattle or Lousewort, an irregular flower with a large three-lobed lip below and a hood above. The Lesser Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) is a creeping plant with pink-red flowers, and the Greater Lousewort or Red Rattle (*P. palustris*) stands erect and is a deep purple-red in colour. The leaves of both are very deeply cut.

The most common Orchis of the mountain bogs is the Spotted Orchis (*Orchis maculata*) having black spots on the leaves. The pale mauve pink of the flowers often fades to such an extent that a patch of marshy ground may look quite white with these flowers. Less common is the Fragrant Orchis (*Habenaria conopsea*) and the Butterfly Orchis (*H. bifolia*), also possessing a delicate scent. The Marsh Orchis (*O. latifolia*) can also be found, and from high ground in Langdale and a few other places the little green Bog Orchis (*Malaxis paludosa*) is reported. The Lesser or Mountain Twayblade (*Listera cordata*) is known to me in a few localities, often hiding in damp ground on the edge of bogs, under juniper bushes or heather. The whole plant rarely reaches more than 4 inches in height and the small dark red flowers are not easy to see.

Another plant that is difficult to see is the Marsh Arrow-grass (*Triglochin palustre*), in which the small greenish-

yellow flowers, growing on the upper half of a slender stem look more like knobs than real flowers.

In July and August we can delight ourselves with the beautiful Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), with its orange yellow spikes. Later too, when in fruit, this plant attracts our attention by its deep orange seed cases. By this time too, the Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) is out, spreading its solitary white flower at the top of its stalk, and one leaf only below the middle of the stem.

This does not by any means exhaust the flowers to be found in our bog-land, but we must not leave it without at least giving the name of the Cross-leaved-heath (*Erica Tetralix*).

WATER PLANTS. There are a few plants that grow entirely in the water. First and foremost are the two Water-lilies. The White Water-lily (*Nymphæa alba*) attains a greater altitude, but the yellow one (*Nuphar lutea*) is also found in some mountain tarns.

The Bog Bean, or Buck bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), is a noticeable flower opening at the end of May or beginning of June. The red tinged stalk bearing a raceme of flowers rises some inches above the water and the white and pink petals are remarkable from the fact that the upper surface is fringed with hairs. This is truly a lovely flower.

In July the Water Lobelia (*Lobelia Dortmanna*) raises its flowering stem six to eight inches above the surface of the water, the rather small pale blue flowers grow at a short distance from each other on the upper part of the stem. The leafy tufts form a dense green carpet at the bottom of the water.

About the same time round the edge of some of the lower tarns can be found the lesser Bladderwort (*Utricularia minor*). This is a tiny floating plant, the hair-like leaves bearing in their axils little bladders full of air. The yellow flower is raised above the water, and though I look for it year after year I invariably find the leaves but often fail to find the flower. Here we must also mention the Water

Starwort (*Callitriche aquatica*), a mass of floating green spotted with gold dust.

PLANTS OF THE GILL. Let us next imagine ourselves scrambling up a mountain stream such as Raise Beck, or Sad Gill in Troutbeck, about the middle of June.

One inconspicuous flower which may still be out, though it would first open in April, is the Scurvy-Grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), not a grass at all, but a low growing plant with a small cruciform white flower, the somewhat fleshy orbicular leaves having a smooth shiny surface. Growing from a crack in the rock we shall probably see the Kidney or Mountain Sorrel (*Oxyria reniformis*). This plant can be recognised from is likeness to its relations, the docks, but is at once determined by its distinct kidney-shaped leaf.

Two species of Ladies' Mantle decorate the steep banks and the rocks in the gill, for our common Ladies' Mantle (*Alchemilla vulgaris*) of the meadows can be found above 2,000 feet. The Alpine Ladies' Mantle (*A. alpina*) is a smaller species, and the beautiful shaped leaves are rendered even more beautiful by the under-lining of shining silvery hairs which also cover the stem.

The Yellow Saxifrage and Star Saxifrage which have already been mentioned as bog plants are among the treasures of the gill. The bright yellow flowers of the former are made even more striking by the deep orange stamens, and the pretty white star of the latter is decorated with crimson stamens and an orange yellow spot on each petal. Another Saxifrage of the gill is the Cut-leafed Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hypnoides*), which puts us in mind of the Saxifrages of our gardens with its large creamy-white flowers.

The Bilberry or Blaeberry (*Vaccinium Myrtillus*) is sure to be growing somewhere near, perhaps up the banks or on the rocks above our heads. Its pretty pink flowers make one think of fairy Japanese lanterns. Another flower that may be growing out of the rocks is the Roseroot or Midsummer Men (*Sedum Rhodiola*). Broad fleshy leaves grow up the

stem and later in the year these turn a lovely autumnal colour. A dense head of yellow flowers terminates the stem which may be from six inches to a foot high.

DRY HILLSIDES. This category contains almost as many as the bog plants but several are so well known that they need little comment.

Can there be any greater joy than to lie on a bank in the warm sunshine of June amongst these small numerous flowers! Wild Thyme (*Thymus Serpyllum*), Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Common Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*), Sheeps-bit (*Jasione montana*), these can be found on any hillside, as also the soft-leaved Mouse-ear Hawk-weed (*Hieracium Pilosella*) with the underside of its lemon yellow head so attractively tipped with crimson. The Tormentil (*Potentilla Tormentilla*) too, is sure to be here, but it will also accompany us up to the very tops of the mountains.

One of the smallest of plants, the Parsley Piert (*Alchemilla arvensis*) delights in such a dry habitat. The leaves are very small and deeply cut and the insignificant green flowers are scarcely perceptible in the axils of their leaves. The Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*), though not common grows in several places, and the pinky-white dioecious flowers show us by their texture the origin of its name.

Ascending to an altitude of more than 1,000 feet is the Cathartic Flax (*Linum Catharticum*), a very slender annual, sometimes it stands erect and sometimes is more or less decumbent. It has small opposite leaves and the white flowers grow on delicate stalks.

Let us continue climbing, and if it is May or June we shall find the Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) in flower, bearing the stamens and pistils on different plants, these must be looked for carefully or they may be missed. The narrow leaves are evergreen and their edges are rolled back as in heaths. The fruit is black.

Still higher up the mountain (if it be the right one) we will find the Dwarf Willow (*Salix herbacea*). This does not descend below 2,000 feet and is one of the two most arctic plants of the Lake flora; it can also boast of being the smallest British shrub. The catkins, staminate and pistillate are best described as small editions of their larger relations, only the pistillate catkin is few-flowered and red.

High on the hills also and perhaps growing among the Bilberry is the Cowberry (*Vaccinium Vitis-idæa*). The stems are straggling, the leaves evergreen and shiny, the flowers campanulate and of a pale flesh colour. This is always a pretty flower to find, and equally pretty are the red berries which develop later.

The Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) with dioecious flowers, the Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), and the Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*), must not be omitted from this list whatever other flowers have been neglected.

RARER FLOWERS. There are plants which may occur in the habitats already mentioned but which are not so generally distributed. Cloudberry (*Rubus Chamaemorus*), Purple Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*), Alpine Thalictrum (*Thalictrum alpinum*), Common Thalictrum (*var. T. Kochii*), Moss Campian (*Silene acaulis*), Marsh Andromeda (*Andromeda polifolia*), Bladder Campion (*Silene Cucubalus*), Sea Pink (Armeria vulgaris), Teesdalia (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*), Burnet Rose (*Rosa Pimpinellifolia*), Mountain Willow Herb (*Epilobium alsinifolium*), Lesser Twayblade and Bog Orchis. All these I have found on the mountains, and the interested botanist should be able to discover them without difficulty together with many others by the aid of J. G. Baker's " Flora of the English Lake District."

# HERDWICK SHEEP AND AFFORESTATION*

*H. H. Symonds*

Ennerdale, part of middle Eskdale, and all one side of the valley of the Duddon, from just above the Duddon Gorge to the top of Wrynose—three of the very best of the dales—have now been invaded by the Forestry Commission. There are many arguments against this desolating invasion: what follows states the case of the dale farmer against it.

The mountains of the Lake District are grazed by Herdwick sheep, a unique local breed which through long experience has been found the one best able to withstand the rain, cold, and snow of the high fells. Herdwick sheep are bred by the fell farmers for their wool—and for mutton† also, for there is no better mutton in England. These Herdwick sheep and their wool are the basic industry of the Lake District: the whole economy of local farming depends upon them. All who walk the fells have their attention caught by the Herdwick ewes—by their nimbleness of foot, their heavy jackets, their efficient concern for the lamb 'at foot,' and the sneeze—half friendly, half contemptuous—with which they greet the passer-by in lonely places. They have been photographed for all the guide-books and for many picture postcards; and their escapades, when being worked on the fell side by the sheep dogs, are a liberal education for those who have never seen a leg of mutton in proper action. Every July they deliver up their long and heavy clip—a wool which is particularly rich in fat and waterproofing, and therefore carries great reserves of strength for the sheep which wears it: for the Herdwicks will live out not days only but weeks under a snowdrift, drawing on the supplies of fat in their own wool to beat off famine. No other breed of sheep has the same power of resistance and of ready wit, and there are few other

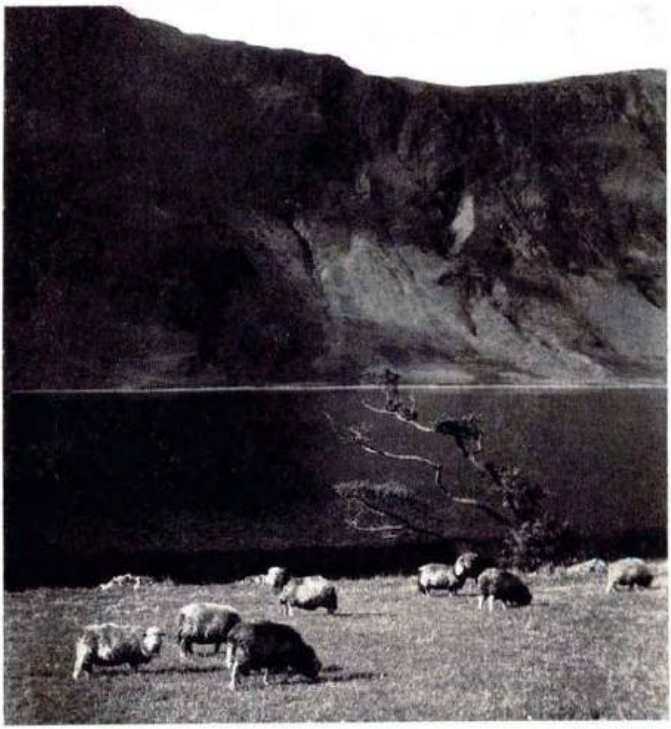
* See Editor's Notes.

† The wethers and wether lambs go for mutton: and so too eventually do the ewes when, in their sixth year or so, they have first been sold to a lowland farmer for a year of cross-breeding.

breeds with a better supply of obstinacy and common sense (in other words, more difficult to domesticate) : the Herdwick will scratch herself out of a snowdrift with the same persistent intelligence with which she returns over miles of unknown country to her own ' heaf,' the hillside grazing where she was first taught the ways of life by her mother. And when she is adult she will live the whole year round without hay or any artificial feeding.

Herdwick wool is used at the mills in mixture with other and finer wools : thus it is made up into tweeds : some of it is exported to America and becomes carpets. The Swaledale sheep—a less hardy but more widely known breed, which on some of the outer ring of farms has been crossed with the Herdwick—produces a finer but less heavy wool ; this sells at a rather higher price, but on the Herdwick ewe the difference of price is fully offset by the larger clip which each sheep gives. Apart, however, from any consideration of price or clip the Herdwick is unique in its resistance to the local climate, which is persistently wet and cold on the fells, both in the air and under foot ; in wits and in strength, the Herdwick outdoes all other breeds of sheep and is the irreplaceable source of local wealth and welfare. Aided by the profits of the tourist industry, the dale-head farmer has ridden out the storm of the last few years' acute depression in prices and his very vigorous independence is unbroken. During the war Herdwick wool sold at 1s. 6d. a pound : a few years ago it was down to 2½d. : now it is up to 7d. and 7½d.

But the breeding of Herdwick sheep is a strictly local industry : the breed, the technique, the tradition, is found nowhere else than in the English Lake District. The farms are interlocked not only by the sentiment of their peculiar trade but also by the necessities of inter-breeding from one dale to the next. For maintaining the true stock, as prolific in wool as in courage, the best rams are those bred in the farms whose sheep runs are at the actual dale-heads and on the highest fells, for here the discipline by which the fittest



*J. P. Taylor*

CRUMMOCK
WATER

survive is most exacting. These rams are hired and sold from farm to farm at the autumn fairs,* so maintaining the breed, and on the vigorous and continued existence of the relatively small number of these dale-head farms the strength and maintenance of the Herdwick breed depends.

Four such vital farms have now been bought out by the commission, two in Ennerdale—Ennerdale Dale and Gillerthwaite; one in Dunnerdale—Black Hall; and one in Eskdale—Brotherelkeld. Of these four flocks the first is gone entirely; the second farm just exists, mangled and unprofitable; the third is protected by its lease till 1939 and is then doomed; the fate of the fourth hangs in the balance—if none of its 'inside land' is taken for small holdings it can survive. To anyone with knowledge of local needs the position is pathetic, and a cause for much cursing. A defensive statement that these Herdwick sheep were 'poor miserable little things' was caused by that outside knowledge which is always the source of error in new and unknown circumstances, but for which there is a secure remedy, namely, a proper and relevant knowledge of the local facts. These suggest the following considerations: If you are working inside a large economic unit, of which the frontiers are indefinite—as in growing potatoes—the suppression of a few separate units of production makes no difference to the others, while the suppression of several units will actually put up the selling price for the survivors: but if your total unit of organisation is both small in extent, and also closely interlocked in its parts and strictly local in its skill and management, then the suppression of, say, five parts out of fifty or of six out of sixty is the suppression not of an arithmetical tenth, but of a necessary component in a whole which is integrated and self-contained: and you have not to increase your fraction much before you bring down the entire unit of production in disaster.

To some remote official handling files and generalities, from which the breath and detail of life have been squeezed out

* Significantly it is in Eskdale that one of the two chief ram fairs is held. A good ram fetches up to £5 for his winter hire, and may sell for £25 to £50.

and desiccated in that facile progress from the concrete to the abstract which is a means to all central government, the extinction of a local industry may seem of no account. Those will disagree who have a still lurking weakness for the particular; who have known the dalesmen of Cumberland and Westmorland in the warmth of actuality, and have admired the pride, the courtesy, the independence of their spirit and stock—a certain magnificence and largeness of heart, which the high places of the earth have bred in them and to which the severities of wind and weather have grandly led them on. The Lake District, unique in landscape, is unique also in those characteristic qualities of life which are bred by man's conflict and co-operation with this landscape. For these dalesman are a strain apart. Largely Norse by origin or racial admixture, and very little touched in the early days by any Celtic or Saxon culture, unconquered by the Norman and never surveyed in the book of Domesday, they have for centuries maintained a geographical and economic isolation; and it is built on the traditional sheep farming, the Herdwick breed. Such things as a local tradition, a type of speech, some particular cut of head and feature, a way of thought and feeling, mean little if your devotion is to asphalt, assimilation, and routine: but if human values have for you a value which is absolute, you will not willingly see a proud people regimented out of existence by the invasive conifer and the indifference of administrative persons. The office of the Commission is, we notice, in Savile Row—an odd place perhaps for trees; yet one which by its associations might suggest not the wholesale tailoring of life and landscape, but that regard for individual style, for personal usage, and for independent values and distinction which is a better wear for the spirit of man and a better tonic for the national self-respect: not the gospel of the steam-roller and the final blessedness of uniformity, but the final blessedness of local pride: not the smashing of a unique piece of this England and a unique group of the English people, but the careful

salvation of all local loyalties. The Herdwick breed, and those who breed it, must survive.

It should be explained that on the Lake District farms the larger part of the sheep are landlord's property, being part of the capital value of the farm for which rent is paid. The annual sale by the tenant of the increase of his stock by breeding and the annual sale of the wool provide his main source of income : when he leaves the farm he hands over to the landlord a flock of sheep which in the number and quality of the flock—heaf-going ewes,* wethers and gimmers of all ages, tups and the rest—corresponds to the schedule in his lease. The Commissioners, on purchasing an estate on the fells, therefore become owners of all sheep which are neither the tenant's own property nor retained by the former landlord to be sold off by himself ; but whether it is the former landlord or the Commission or the former tenant who sells off the sheep, the effect is in any case the same—the land is depopulated of its Herdwick flock. For the Commissioners do not want the sheep, they want trees ; nor can the former owner or tenant run sheep, where all the ' downfall,' the lower fell, is planted out.

For the particular methods of planting which the Commission must follow, to get the best results in timber, are those which are bound at the same time to do the greatest harm to sheep. The Lake District fells are very steeply contoured, coming sharply down to the valley bottom : where they face towards the sea and the west—and it is on the west side of the district that the Commissioners have set their most developed and regrettable affections—the shape of the valleys provides a long and deep funnel for the winds from the Atlantic. Somewhere about the 1,200 feet contour line—in some cases up to 1,500 feet—is therefore as high as planting can be pushed, with any hope of straight growth and good timber : indeed it is doubtful if some of the existing work in Ennerdale can ever be remunerative. In any case, the Commissioners, if

* i.e., ewes bred on and habituated to a particular allotment of fell (heaf).
Gimmer : a ewe which has not yet lambed.

they operate at all, are bound to plant out what is the best land, for the lower land is the best grazing land and the most important land for the farmer, and it is the lower land (and only that) which can be planted. The Herdwick sheep climb upwards, in summer, to the 2,500 and 3,000 feet summits: as the lambs grow, during the summer months, the ewes take them up higher and higher: thus the lower fell is left uncropped and remains available for winter keep. If you plant out all this lower land on a farm, so taking what is the sheep's resource in difficult months, the economic balance is destroyed: for, though the tops remain, the tops alone are, for sheep, useless. The most important land is gone, and the sheep farm is made unworkable, for without this lower ground —the 'downfall' to which the sheep come in winter—the economic unit cannot exist. It was with this knowledge that in February, 1935, the Herdwick Sheep Breeders' Association sent a resolution to the Commissioners, the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Agriculture against the extension of state afforestation into Eskdale and Dunnerdale: this purchase had just been made known, and enough trouble had been caused already by the Commissioners' forests in Ennerdale and on the Whinlatter, by Bassenthwaite and Blengdale. The resolution had no effect: so far neither economic nor aesthetic considerations have availed to deter the advance of the sitka spruce or effectively to provoke any member of the Government to uphold the local and national interests of the Lake District against the Commissioners' legal but insipid use of power.

And afforestation not only blocks out sheep farming in the valley afforested, it likewise damages the neighbouring valleys The fells are for the most part unfenced. A dale-head sheep run of, say, half a dozen square miles may have three or four miles of its frontier on the skyline: over the other side of the watershed is the sheep run of a farm in the next valley. Commonly there is no fence or sheep-proof frontier between the different runs; Herdwick sheep keep their own 'heaf' free

of invasive neighbours by their own local and effective patriotism. But if, as has happened in Ennerdale, a whole flock is extinguished and the upper territory is thus left uninhabited, the neighbouring sheep—in this case from Wasdale or Buttermere—will cross the skyline and come trespassing downwards. This blameless and natural escapade leads to great difficulty for their farmer. The fellsides are scarped steeply and are full of crag, and dogs which are trained for work on the fells are always taught to go above the sheep and to gather them in *downwards*, with the slope and not again t it; similarly the sheep themselves are habituated to move downwards, when the dogs are round them. When therefore sheep have crossed a skyline, and are now part way down the fellside of the next valley, they will be treated in the same way by the dogs and will themselves act in the same way, so that to get them all back again —uphill and contrary to use—is next to impossible. It is most costly in time and labour; and in any case results in strays, who get left out at shearing time and at dipping time, and commonly the fly attacks those so left and they are maggotted and perish. Equivalent trouble comes in winter, for in snow the sheep move according to habit, downwards; but when, as in the case under discussion, they are beyond and below the skyline, then as they move downwards—into the afforested valley—they come against the wire-netted frontier of the trees, somewhere about the 1,200 feet contour and a long way above the valley bottom. This brings them to a standstill, and so they are drifted up in the snow which piles against the netting: and, since these sheep are not in their own valley, they are what is locally called 'bad to find,' and probably are not found at all. Hence more waste of time, trouble and stock. The total of difficulties thus created in the neighbouring valleys by afforestation is such that one sheep farmer who finds himself in this position is intending to leave his much-pestered farm. And, if the Commission continues to plant in new areas of the Lake

District, these evils will not only accumulate, but accumulate in a gathering ratio, both in the valleys which are afforested and cleared of farms and in the valleys which adjoin them.

Such is the case of the Lake District farmer—an urgent case: it is as strong in economic claim as in its claim on sentiment. In proportion as a man knows and loves the Lake District he will oppose its commercial afforestation: he cannot sit by and watch this desperate and stupid fate come on the best and grandest of our future national park. And this movement to protect the treasures of its beauty is in all ways based soundly. Yet it becomes us no less well—indeed, if we are true lovers of the fells, it becomes us even better—to champion with well-informed opinion those for whom the country is not a playground, but a living.

# THE NATIONAL PARKS MOVEMENT

*R. S. T. Chorley*

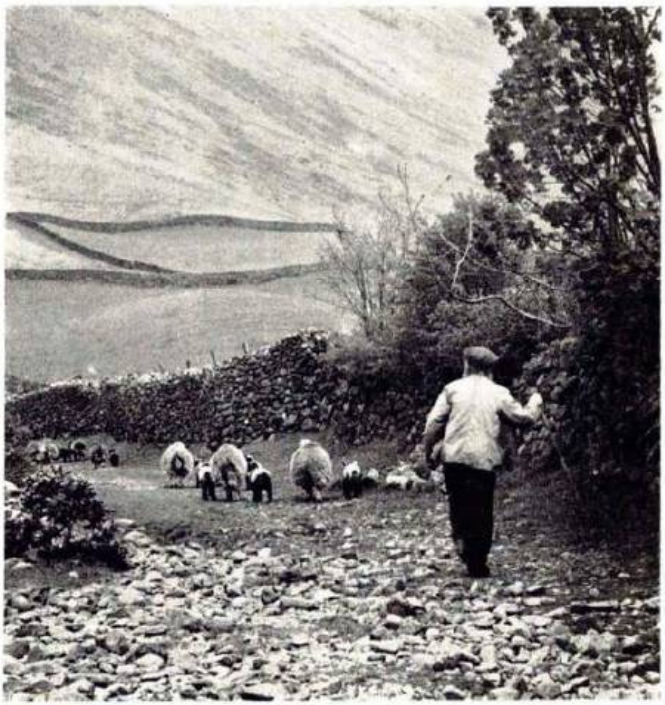
It will be remembered that in 1931 the Departmental Committee reported in favour of a very unambitious scheme for the creation of National Parks. Under its proposals, which were not very clear cut, some sort of organisation would have been set up with special powers and rather meagre financial assistance from State funds to handle the matter. Unhappily, the Report appeared just at the time when the economic depression was at its worst, and any chance there had been of the Government adopting and implementing the Report disappeared for the time being.

During the intervening period, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England has maintained contacts with the Government departments concerned, but without receiving encouragement. Action was accordingly limited to proposals for wide regional schemes under the Town and Country Planning Act, and these, too, met with little success. In 1935, however, a feeling grew up among a number of persons who are keen supporters of the proposal for National Parks, that the idea ought to be kept before the public, and that the time was approaching when further efforts might be made to enlist the support of the Government. A Conference was accordingly called in London on November 3rd, 1935, to which our Club was invited to send a representative, and which I attended at the request of the Committee. The meeting, which was presided over by Mr Norman Birkett, K.C., was well attended by representatives of practically all the Clubs and Societies interested in the matter, and there were many interesting speeches and much enthusiasm. Two resolutions were passed: one requesting the Prime Minister to receive a deputation which would urge the necessity of giving effect to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee; the other authorising the appointment of a Standing Committee from the Open Air Organisations, with a view to giving effect to the first resolution

and providing some permanent organisation to work for the objects in view. A Formation Committee was elected to carry out the task of bringing the Standing Committee into being.

The Formation Committee met shortly afterwards, and drew up a list of Societies which should be asked to nominate representatives to form the Standing Committee. The Alpine Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club were selected as representative climbing clubs, and nominated G. R. Speaker and myself respectively to attend the first meeting of the Standing Committee which was held in May last. On that occasion there was appointed a small working preparatory committee which has since met and done valuable work and issued a preliminary report as to the procedure to be followed in the immediate future. The Standing Committee decided that the ground had not yet been sufficiently prepared for the project of a deputation to the Prime Minister to be proceeded with, but it is hoped that this objective will be attained before very much longer.

It is hardly necessary for me to add that if the Government can be prevailed upon to give assistance, and it must be admitted that the rearmament programme recently undertaken has again somewhat queered the pitch, the claims of the Lake District to be one of the areas selected are bound to receive favourable consideration. The Departmental Committee singled out this area as being a particularly suitable one from every point of view, and suggested that an experiment might well be conducted in this region. Lovers of Lakeland are very well represented on the present Standing Committee, the chairman of which is Mr Norman Birkett, K.C., a native of Ulverston. We may, I think, rest assured that every practicable step will be taken to push forward a project which, if it could be realised upon an adequate basis, would solve all the recurrent problems associated with afforestation, roadmaking, building, pylon erecting and so on *ad infinitum*, which are an ever present anxiety to all who have regard for the beauties of our beloved Lakeland.



*J. P. Taylor*

GOING
HOME

# PACKHORSE BRIDGES

*M. R. FitzGibbon*

Cumberland and Westmorland are particularly rich in examples of old and interesting bridges. Those which appeal most to the mountaineer are the narrow single arched structures which always occur near farms or on fell tracks and are known as packhorse bridges; although these appear to be very ancient, it is doubtful whether we can say that any of them are earlier than the seventeenth century. Very little is known about them and this article is an attempt to discover something of their history.

Traditionally, a few are believed to date from the Roman occupation. Here, tradition seems for once to have blundered; although the Romans are known to have built bridges in other Parts of England there is no evidence of their having done so in the Lake Country. Perhaps their bridges were wooden and all trace of them has been lost, or more probably they used fords, as there is usually a ford at the point where the Roman roads cross the rivers.

Perhaps at this stage a few notes on some of the early pre-packhorse bridges may be of interest.

In the thirteenth century travellers were regarded as unfortunate people deserving pity, and the making and maintaining of roads and bridges to help them was looked upon as a charity and a pius work in order to please God. There is no trace in England of Bridge Friars, a Religious Order founded in the twelfth century, whose main work was that of the civil engineer of today, but there is plenty of evidence that the constructing and repairing of roads and bridges was at one time of a religious character. The medieval traffic from Penrith to Alston and Newcastle appears to have been carried over the Eden at Salkeld by a narrow bridge of stone, in 1360 this bridge was washed away by floods, and Bishop Welton of Carlisle issued an indulgence of forty days to all who should contribute to its repair. The

*Testamenta Karleolensia* (wills proved at Rose near Carlisle between 1362 and 1380) included bequests for the repair of this bridge. It must have been important as so much is known of its history; about 1510 the repaired structure was again destroyed, and was renewed in 1530, eventually being rebuilt on a different site in 1770; this last bridge was stone arched, but the description of the ruins of the earlier one (Hutchinson, *Cumberland*, 1, 282) show it to have been of stone piers across which ran a wooden causeway, this was a usual type of early bridge. Mention is also made in the *Testamenta* of the bridges of Warcop, Bampton, Temple Sowerby, Lowther, and the Bridge of Patrick of Asby; of these, the existing Warcop Bridge dates from the fifteenth century and has been little altered, Bampton from the seventeenth, and there is a footbridge at Asby consisting of a stone slab laid across two abutments which might well be a later edition of Patrick's bridge.

In 1380 there was 'a grant of pontage* for six months for the repair of the bridges of Loutherbrig and Amoutbrig (Langwathby and Eamont) on the confines of Cumberland and Westmorland from things for sale passing over them or under them....' Eamont Bridge was rebuilt in 1425. Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, made a grant of '40 days indulgence to any who should contribute towards the building of a new stone bridge across the water of Amot (Eamont)'; it has now been widened, but a considerable portion of the medieval structure remains.

Benedict de Rotington gave to St. Bees (*St. Bees' Register* of 1247)—'part of my land in Fors, from the ford above the bridge of Stockbrigholm towards the south....'; another early type of bridge was a wooden trackway laid across wooden piles or stocks. This one from the fact of its being near a ford was probably a foot-bridge.

The Devil's Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale, the finest in the north of England is mentioned in 1275, the present structure

* A toll paid on a bridge for the purpose of maintaining it.

dates probably from the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

Of the Kendal bridges—Mint Bridge is mentioned before 1246. Miller Bridge was originally a wooden one which was washed away by floods. It was rebuilt of wood on stone piers in 1669, a new stone bridge replaced this in 1743, the existing bridge was erected early in the nineteenth century (Curwen, *Kirbie Kendale*). Stramongate Bridge was mentioned by Leland (*Itinerary*, temp. Henry VIII) as having eight or nine arches; there are now only four, although the others may be hidden under the approaches. In 1379 the Bishop offered an indulgence to all who should contribute to the building of Stramongate Bridge; by 1582 it was so broken down that it was forbidden to draw across it '....tymber or other draughte whatsoever either by strengthe of horses or other cattall or by the power of men (above one only beast draughte at any one tyme)....' (*Kendale Boke off Recorde*). West speaks of it in 1778 as being 'more venerable than handsome.' In 1779 it was ordered to be rebuilt but the interior was found to be so firmly cemented that short of blasting it was impossible to remove it, and so the new bridge was built over the old one; from the underneath three distinct bridges can be seen. The medieval map in the Bodleian Library (c. 1300) marks the bridges of Kirbie Kendale and Kirkby Lonsdale.

Near the ruins of Furness Abbey is a low stone bridge of three rounded arches, with a trackway of eight feet. It must have been built originally to carry the road to the monks' mill. Comparisons of mortar have been made with that used in the Abbey buildings, and the date assigned to the same period as the Western Tower—1490–1500, it therefore appears to be the earliest existing small stone arched bridge anywhere in the Lake Counties. Penny Bridge at Crake Ford in High Furness is mentioned in 1274, and was rebuilt in 1587.

Edmund Sandford (*Antiquities and Familyes of Cumberland*, c. 1675) in his sparkling account of his peregrinations through that county, found 'at the Bottome of this Long

Bassenthait beck ; there is a wood bridg of 20 arch yet within twise twelve score below that a man may ride over....' It was at the foot of Bassenthwaite Lake over the River Derwent, and sounds a unique and complicated sort of structure.

Between 1624 and 1684 the tennants of Holm Cultram were petitioning the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the four bridges in the Parish which they said used to be repaired by the Abbot. The bills for their reconditioning show that these bridges were wooden, from the large quantity of timber used in their repair.

This mass of information shows that there were bridges of wood, and of stone piers with a wooden trackway across them, in the fourteenth century, and stone arched bridges in the fifteenth century. These bridges mentioned were on the outskirts of the Lake Country, carried main roads over large rivers, and none of them can be said to be packhorse bridges. Let us now see what evidence we have of bridges nearer to the heart of the fells.

Ancient Rolls and Charters throw some light on the very early bridges. In the period 1210–1216 (*Fountains Charters*). Alice de Rumelli* granted to Nicholas de Linford 'land called Pikerig and Fisgardhevd in Braitait within these bounds : from Porquenschal to the stone bridge (pons petrae) on the land of Thomas beside the great marsh...., thence as the marsh extends to the Derewente and, as the river descends, to the fosse which descends into the Derewente upon Ruchcroft ; thence to the fence of William Fraunceais, and as the fence extends by the bounds of Ruchcroft towards the west as far as the marsh, as the marsh extends to the highroad of Portquenschal....' This is very interesting, as when worked out on the map the bounds give Long Bridge, over the Derwent at the entrance to Portinscale village.† The bridge

* She lived in Yorkshire where she had large estates, and was the sister of the "Young Romilly" who was drowned in the Strid near Bolton Abbey.

†It seems to be the earliest mention of a stone bridge anywhere in Cumberland or Westmorland. It is not, of course, suggested that the present structure is the thirteenth century one.

of Derwent is mentioned in another Charter before 1250.

In 1209 Furness Abbey bought Borrowdale from Alice de Rumelli. The bounds of this deed go by Watendlath, Glaramara, Styhead Pass and Windy Gap to Gatesgarth, then over the tops to the head of Scawdel 'to the white stone on little Grenehope, then by the midst of the side of Grenehope to the sike (beck) that goes down to Bredinebrigge, and by the same sike to Derwentwater.' Now, High and Low White Rake are marked on the six inch Ordnance Survey map, above Grange, and the directions mean clearly that there was a bridge over the Ellers Beck. W. G. Collingwood thinks that it was a hurdle or wattle bridge as *bredin* probably means braided, from to *brede* or plait.

Troutbeck bridge between Windermere and Ambleside is marked on Saxton's map of 1576. Edward Ridge of Cambridge, who was connected with Hawkshead and who made his will in 1582, left a sum of money for repair of the ' Stang or bridge at Eskwaterfoote (Esthwaite) where moste need is..' Stang meaning a beam or plank was usually applied to a foot-bridge, so this was probably one of the older type of boards on stone piers, or wholly of wood. In the Chapel Deed of Ambleside of 1597 (*Rydal Hall MS.*)—a note of the land given by each tennant for the yearly payment of curates' wages—Roland Partridge pledges ' a rude at Horsebrige.' This may have been one of the first packhorse bridges. Ogilby's survey of 1670 marks stone bridges at Staveley, Ings, Grasmere, and Dunmail Raise ; these may have been single arched packhorse bridges, as they are mentioned in the County Council Records later as being ' narrow and in decay.' Sandford (*Antiquities and Familyes of Cumberland*) mentions ' a pretty stone bride brig* but of one arch ' near Calder Abbey (c. 1675). With the exception of the last, none of the existing bridges mentioned above can be called Packhorse bridges, but to quote Curwen (*Kirbie Kendale*)....' Those who have not noticed the way in which the packhorse bridges

* Bridle-bridge. Just wide enough for a packhorse.

of Westmorland were made available for wheeled carriages by the rude and simple plan of doubling them, will find worthy of observation the skilful manner in which the common stone of the country has been effectually adapted for this purpose in this bridge (Nether Bridge Kendal ; widened 1772).'

The new Survey of Westmorland with the customary caution of the archaeologist gives ' probably seventeenth century ' for all the packhorse bridges mentioned in it. In order to understand why there should be an outburst of bridge building then, on tracks which had been used for centuries without them, it is necessary to delve into the history of the dales. In 1600 an inquiry into the accounts of Queen Elizabeth's Mining Company in the Lake Distriot showed that during the 36 years it had been working nearly £130,000 had been spent in the dales. This would account for the prosperity of the Lake Country during the seventeenth century. About the time of the Restoration, the Border Wars and cattle raiding were things of the past, and a new era of wellbeing had settled on the district. With the spread of education came the desire for improvement and the farmers either reconditioned their primitive dwellings or built themselves new ones. Very few of the farmhouses are older than the seventeenth century so that the building of the packhorse bridges appears to be contemporary with that of the farms. The fact that they nearly always occur near farms or on fell tracks might be said to bear out the theory that they were built by the farmers themselves. By the Statute of Bri ges (Henry VIII) the liability to repair main bridges was laid on the county, but I have not so far been able to find out when the County took over the repair of the packhorse bridges such as Watendlath and Stockley Bridge on the Styhead track.

Was the building of these bridges anything to do with the grants of land ? Even as late as the eighteenth century bridges seem to have been more personal things than they

are today. The Records of the Borough Court of Egremont show that in 1683, and 1710, grants of land were given for the consideration of repairing bridges. Ellinor Patrickson on October 12, 1711, was 'found free of a burgage* in Egremont so long as she repaired the wood bridge known as New Bridge left her by her father Peter Woodhall. In 1726 a burgage was given '....for the building and for ever maintaining of a bridge to carry loaden horses over the River End att a place called High Steps....' In 1745 Francis Smith gave all his freehold estate 'for the building and for ever maintaining one bridge over the River End sufficient for a horse and load to go over.' While making no attempt to mention them all, description of a few of the best known packhorse bridges may be of interest.

The old bridge over the Whillan Beck at Boot in Eskdale has a slightly pointed arch; this would be an important bridge as it carried the corpse road to Wasdale Head, there are also many traces of peet houses† up on the moor; as it led to the ancient mill it is likely to be older than the seventeenth century, mills being an important item in the life of the dales as early as the fourteenth century. The 'Monks' Bridge' at High Wath over the Calder, about three miles upstream from Calder Abbey, with no parapets and a roadway 2 feet 8 inches wide, also has a pointed arch. With regard to the dating of these bridges with pointed arches, it is interesting to note that all the bridges in the north of England which are mentioned by Leland in his *Itinerary* c. 1539) have slightly pointed arches.

One of the best examples of the true packhorse bridge is Watendlath; it is about three feet wide at the narrowest point and has not been widened, the parapets were added about 30 to 35 years ago and are 1½ feet high, previously the voussoirs‡ stuck up slightly and unevenly above the trackway.

* A tenure whereby lands or tenements in cities and towns were held of the king or other lord, for a certain yearly rent.

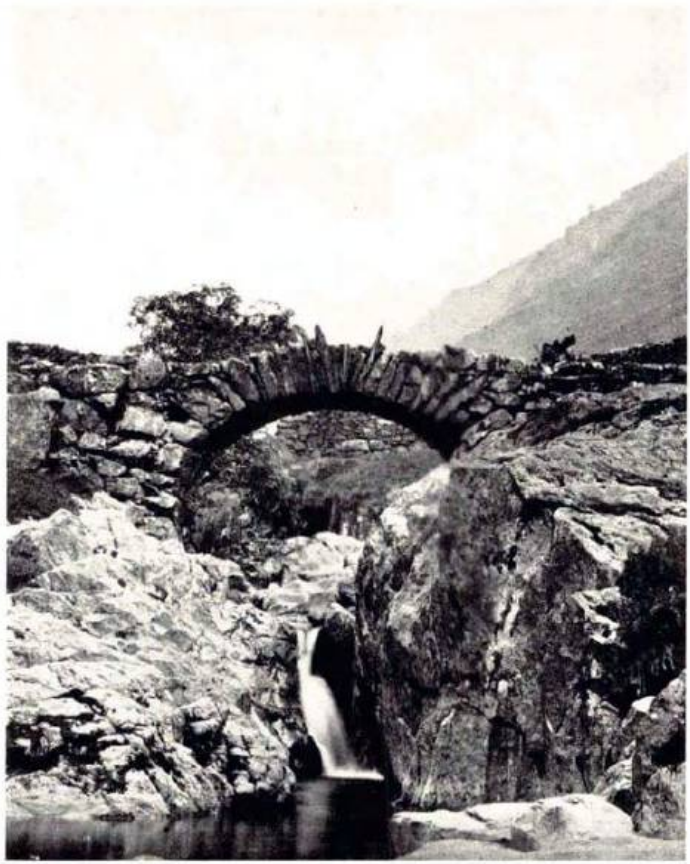
† Low stone buildings, slate roofed, and erected for the purpose of storing and drying peets.

‡ The wedge-like stones forming an arch.

Stockley Bridge at the foot of Grains Ghyll was originally of the same type but was widened less than 50 years ago, and the parapets were probably added then. The bridge in front of Middlefell Farm in Langdale was also a narrow one and has been widened for carts. Slater's Bridge over the Braithay in Little Langdale is $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and has no parapets, it was probably erected when the Mossrigg quarries were working as it appears to have been built of waste quarry material. Another of the very narrow type is High Beckfoot, at Barbon 3 miles N.E. of Kirkby, Lonsdale, this is only $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet wide between the parapets. Throstlegarth Bridge in Upper Eskdale is another of these ancient narrow bridges.

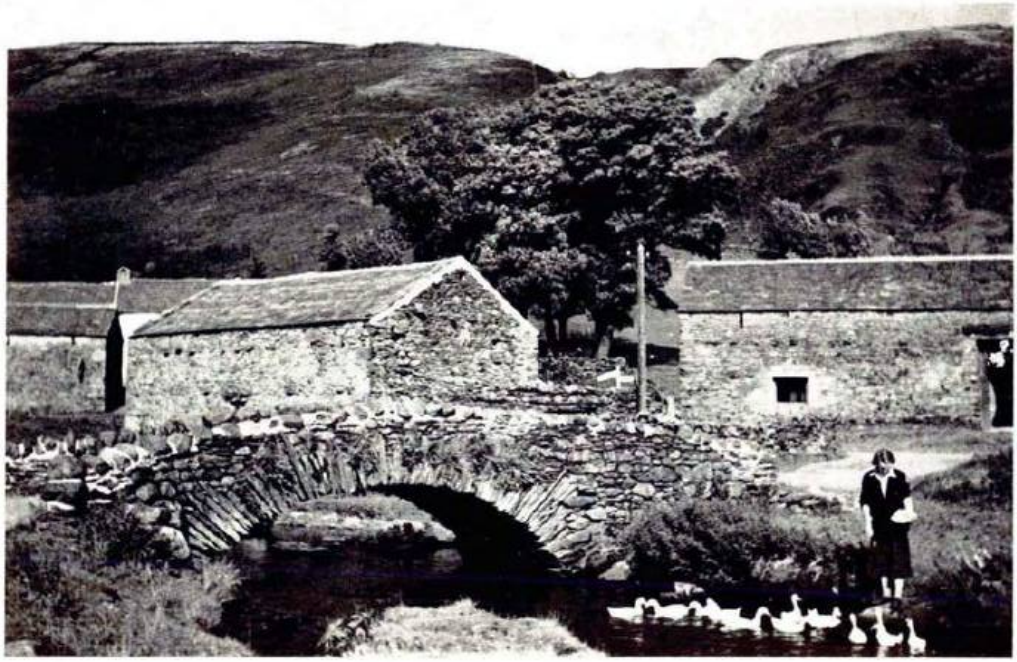
The third type of packhorse bridge is wider, mostly without parapets and with rather flatter arches. There are more of this kind than of the narrower ones. The bridge behind the hotel at Wastdale Head is a good example of this type; Ashness Bridge in Borrowdale is about 6 feet wide, with parapets, and appears to be of stronger construction than many of the others. The bridge over Torver Beck on the Walna Scar track has been widened, and was alluded to in 1745 as the New Bridge. Troutbeck Church Bridge was originally a packhorse bridge 6 feet 6 inches wide, it was widened about 1778. In the great flood of November 2, 1898 this addition was washed away, leaving the old packhorse bridge intact; it was rebuilt in 1899 (*Records of Kendale*).

Some of these bridges do not appear to have connected roads, and may have been built as cattle bridges when the becks were walled in, thus making some sort of bridge necessary. High Sweden Bridge above Ambleside seems to be one of this kind, the clue to the need for its erection may be a ruined barn about 100 yards north. In 1727 there is mention of Stockbridge, near Grasmere Townend at the entrance into Grasmere Field. Willy Goodwaller Bridge, near Grasmere probably stands on the site of an earlier one which carried a roadway to the fourteenth century fulling-mill which stood in Easdale. There is a local tradition that Willie



*Herbert Bell*

STOCKLEY
BRIDGE



Watend
Lath

*Gerald Lacey*

stood in the beck supporting the arch while the bridge was built over him! Doctor's Bridge, Eskdale, already a narrow arch, was widened in 1734 by Edward Tyson, surgeon, of Penny Hill, to take his trap.

While unable at the present moment to place any definite date on the packhorse bridges (except that at Calva Hall near Ullock, which is given as 1685, *Transactions of the Cum. and West. Archaeological Society*, n.s. xxviii), it appears probable that those with pointed arches may date from the sixteenth century, the narrow ones from the seventeenth, and some of the wider ones from the early eighteenth.

# NOTES ON LAKE DISTRICT GEOLOGY

*E. B. Johnson*

There have been so many excellent summaries of the geology of the Lake District that another seems unnecessary. When I remember the article by Dr. Marr in an earlier Journal, and the fact that no member has since wished to contribute any other geological article, I am conscious that my effort must bring to mind the proverb about fools and angels. Nevertheless I feel that the available summaries fail to meet the needs of the Journal, and that there is room for one which makes no attempt to include everything important to a student, but is designed simply for those who as climbers and walkers have an interest for the rocks and the scenery of the District but no interest in geology as such.

I commenced this sketch light-heartedly, but I find it impossible in reasonable space—to do as much as I wished. If the matter is of sufficient interest a detailed description of the rocks and of the scenery of particular fells or valleys could be given in other articles. The technical terms I use are few, and in any case less numerous and no more unintelligible than those in George Basterfield's recitation of the Tadpole and the Fish.

## PAST HISTORY

### *The First Glimpse : Cambrian*

The first knowledge to be obtained from direct evidence is in Cambrian times, roughly four hundred million years ago. The ' Skiddaw slates ' show clearly that the area was then a quiet, shallow sea, into which were brought by rivers the sediments worn from a continent to the north, which settled quietly on the sea bed. Though there were fluctuations in level, on the whole it was slowly sinking, and there was unbroken sea.

*Borrowdale Volcanic Series : Silurian*

In mid-Ordovician times (about 350 million years ago) there broke out perhaps the greatest volcanic activity which the British Isles have ever known. Eruptions broke out, and on the sea bed were deposited lava flows and showers of volcanic ashes. Into this mass were injected sheets and masses of molten rock which hardened without ever reaching the surface, and there was built up a complex mass whose thickness may well have exceeded twenty thousand feet. Attempts have been made to identify certain places as the site of a great central crater ; but there were probably many vents, each active only for a relatively short time. At length, activity died away, subsidence continued, further sands were deposited, and the volcanic rocks were buried many thousands of feet deep into a region of great pressures and temperatures.

*Devonian*

Later, the area was elevated into a continent, but was so tilted that at the north end the upper rocks were completely worn away by the action of weather and water, while to the south end of the district they still remain. In this period a great volcano at Shap was born, died, and was eroded away right down to the granite mass which was originally a great reservoir of molten rock beneath it. This Shap granite is found all over the country and is much in demand as a building stone. Ultimately, the continent sank again below the sea in which were deposited first the red rocks of Mell Fell (beneath which the old land surface can still be detected) and then the limestones which fringe the district and form the central mass of the Pennines.

*Ice Age*

For a long interval no direct record remains. Then perhaps 50 million years ago in the great ' earth storm ' which thrust up the Alps and the Himalayas, the Lake District was forced up, and once again weather and running water

wore off the outer rocks and made it into a hill district of normal type, probably resembling somewhat the Howgill Fells (to be seen from the railway near Tebay). The Ice Age was marked by a gradual reduction in temperature, and heavy snowfall, which first created local snowfields and glaciers, and ultimately a great ice sheet with its centre over Scandinavia and the Baltic, which over-rode all save the greatest heights in northern Europe and covered Britain down to the Thames. There were fluctuations, but gradually the climate ameliorated. The ice-fields shrank again to local glaciers, and finally, in our district, disappeared. The surface was profoundly modified. The ice had cut out deep valleys, and smoothed their sides while rock masses which for long periods had projected above the ice and had been exposed to the effects of Arctic weather, were worn into steep and jagged crags. The material worn from the heights had mainly been spread about the lowlands, but was in part dumped in masses where the ice front had halted for a time, choking up valleys and forming lakes and tarns behind moraine dams. The end of the age of local glaciers may possibly have been within the last twenty thousand years, and in places their remains are almost as fresh as those to be found in existing glacier snouts. Since, the changes have been matters of detail only: stream beds have been deepened, peat has accumulated, lakes have been drained or reduced in size by the lowering of their dams, screes have accumulated; but there has been little effect on the large-scale features and scenery.

### THE PRESENT ROCKS

It is quite easy to recognise to which great division the rocks belong. The Skiddaw slates form the masses of Skiddaw, Saddleback, Grasmoor, Melbrake, and, separated from the rest, Black Combe. At a distance they are made obvious by the smoothness of their slopes, and the relative absence

of crags. On them there is no climbing, but to the walker their ridges are almost as fine as those of the central area.

The Silurian rocks lie south of the line running roughly NE/SW through Ambleside, and are well seen when looking down Windermere. To the climber they have no interest; to the fell-walker they fall far short of the others; but to those who visit the Lake District for the sake of the lakes alone and who like well-wooded parkland they have scenery which it is difficult to equal.

The rocks of the Borrowdale series occupy the area between these two masses. They have been so altered by heat and pressure that the difference between lavas and ashes is usually difficult to detect; it is often impossible save by microscopic examination. Both form rocks exceedingly hard and resistant to the weather. A weathered surface is usually grey, and it is the undamaged existence of this skin which gives charm to such climbs as Boat Howe and Pike Crags. Most of the climbing, though by no means all, is to be found on the lava beds.

There is a tendency for lavas to form steep crags and ashes a gentler slope, but this is not invariable. The difference between Wasdale and Grasmere results chiefly from the fact that round the first lavas predominate, while at Grasmere ash rocks form the bulk. Noteworthy features are the frequency of eliptical crags of all sizes and the rapid alternation of steep crags and peaty hollows. The effect on scenery of these rocks and the Skiddaw slates is well shown round Derwentwater. Borrowdale rocks form the east and south sides, while to the north and west are Skiddaw slates.

Some of the masses of rock injected molten into the mass are large enough to affect the landscape. Everyone must have noticed the ' Wasdale granite ' at the foot of the lake, and along the track between Boot and Wasdale Head.

There have been many fractures in the rock. Some have formed ' shatter belts ' which have produced lines of weakness along which erosion has taken place. One of these runs

along Ennerdale between Great and Green Gables, over Esk Hawes, and through Mickleden. The shattered rock is clearly shown in Ruddy Gill. In other places the fracture has been filled up by lava which usually is softer than the surrounding rock. Lord's Rake and Piers Gill are examples of the effects of such dykes.

## THE SURFACE SHAPE

Although the nature of the rock ultimately determines the surface form, the agent which has given to the District its unique scenery has been ice. A few examples are more useful than any general description.

Standing on the shoulder of Ling Mell it is easy to see a similar surface on Scawfell and, in smaller patches, on Kirk Fell and the Red Pike mass. It needs little imagination to realise that these were once continuous, separated by valleys, but not by the great troughs which now exist. These are the result of glacial erosion. A mass of ice occupied the valley, cutting it most deeply at the head where the weight was greatest and wearing smooth the sides. On both sides for long periods crags projected above this local glacier and these were steepened and sharpened both by the action of the ice and by the weather, while the lower slopes were still protected. It is easy to picture the Napes projecting thus, and it was in this period of Arctic erosion that there were formed the sharp jagged ridges which make them so great a climbing ground.

Wastwater in part occupies a hollow cut in the rock by the erosive action of the ice. At the foot of the lake is a moraine dam, ponding up the waters over an area greater than the rock basin. At Bowderdale a stream has built up a green delta into the lake and at the head is a tract of flat land formed from the soil and stones washed and rolled down by the gills which enter there. Almost all the side valleys are on a higher level. They were occupied by a less thickness of ice

(or even empty of it) so that they were worn down to a less extent, and they fall abruptly, giving rise to rapids or waterfalls where they enter the main valley.

Practically every crag, every lake and tarn and all the greater valleys owe, if not their existence, their actual shape to the sculpture of the ice age. Usually the origin can be seen without difficulty when a few cases have been examined. To anyone with any interest in the rocks or the scenery of the district the best possible advice is to read Marr's 'Geology of the Lake District.' Although it was published in 1917 it need little emendment save in the purely technical parts, and it is at once complete, exact, and readily understandable.

# EARLY LAKELAND FELLWALKERS*

*Katharine C. Chorley*

A little more than a century and a half ago, the Lake Country was definitely introduced to the public as the Englishman's proper playground. Within three years, three writers had made tours of the District and published an account of their experiences. There was Pennant; and Gray (of the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*), and the Reverend William Gilpin, who drew from the Lake District the most exciting part of the material for his *Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*—those Observations which were so pungently parodied by the anonymous writer of *Dr Syntax* backed by Rowlandson's pencil.

These three may be regarded conveniently as the founders of the tourist movement; but West, the author of *The Antiquities of Furness*, was its High Priest. He wrote the first real Guide Book to the Lakes; and went the length of working out in great detail specially selected viewpoints where the worshipper of the picturesque might station himself in order to see 'the delicate touches of Claude verified on Coniston Lake, the noble scenes of Poussin exhibited on Windermere-water or the stupendous romantic ideas of Salvator Rosa realised on the Lake of Derwent.'

By the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Pilgrimage to the Lakes had become so popular that one tourist writer could say: 'It is now meritoriously the fashion to make this tour; I dare almost say that it will be considered want of taste not to be able to speak about it.' One might add that it would apparently have been considered want of taste not to be able to write about it—since almost every tourist seems to have regarded it as a duty to record his or her thrilling impression in print. Moreover, the official guide books were multiplying rapidly and running into several

* See Editor's Notes.

editions (a seventh edition of West was published as far back as 1799) ; the roads were being steadily improved, thus making access to the District quicker and more comfortable ; and the accommodation for tourists was surprisingly good. Last, but certainly not least, guides were attached to the leading hotels in places like Keswick or Ambleside whose duty it was to row the peaceable on the Lake and take the more adventurous up Skiddaw or just possibly Helvellyn. Even the American seven-leagued boots type of tourist was not lacking. Robin Partridge, the guide from the Salutation Hotel at Ambleside, told a story about one of this kind.

' "Good God ! how delightful, how charming," said the traveller as he was being rowed about Windermere ; " I could live here for ever and ever. Row on, row on." He spent one hour of exclamations on Windermere, half an hour at Ambleside, then ordered his phaeton and flew off to take, no doubt, an equally flying view of Derwentwater. Robin Partridge, telling the story, used to ask if the gentleman was as " composed as he sud be ? " '

The earliest tourists such as Gilpin and Gray cannot be counted as fell-walkers. They drove or rode, and when they could not advance either in a carriage or on a horse they gave it up. In their day it would have been an unheard of thing for any but natives to adventure across the mountains, except, of course, Skiddaw. Even women went up Skiddaw. Mrs Radcliffe of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* fame ascended Skiddaw in 1794 ; but then Skiddaw could be conquered on a pony. Gray, for instance, went into Borrowdale, but never got beyond Grange, where he heard about the eagles that nested every year on Eagle Crag, and also about ' a little path winding over the fells and for some weeks in the year passable to the dalesmen ; but the mountains know well that these innocent people will not reveal the mysteries of their ancient kingdom, the reign of "Chaos and Old Night," only I learnt that this dreadful road dividing again, leads one branch to Ravenglass, the other to Hawkeshead.' This

must have been the Styhead ; and it is interesting and odd that the branch leading direct to Wasdale, used perhaps more frequently than any other by modern fellwalkers, is not mentioned at all. A generation or two later, however, the Styhead route to Wasdale is listed as a possible tourist expedition. The Rev. John Robinson in his *Guide to the Lakes*, published in 1819 describes it as follows :—

> You pass Stockley Bridge, a rude Alpine structure, consisting of a single arch of stone. Hence you proceed up the northern side of the mountain Sparkling towards Styhead, a steep and precipitous crag, from which the eye looks down with terror . . . This summit forms a rocky plain, not quite half a mile in extent, and environed (except a narrow passage at each extremity) by a circle of steep slaty crags ; and in its centre is Styhead tarn, a small but deep lake, about three quarters of a mile in circumference and abounding with the finest trout. The scenery around this place is calculated to inspire emotions of the most awful kind ; but on reaching the brow, on the opposite side of Styhead, a most delightful view opens to the eye, below, the river Wastdale is seen falling from the adjacent mountains ; at the bottom are the fertile dale and village of Wasdale, with the lake of Wastwater beyond.

Other writers refer to the Styhead as a wild path, by means of which malefactors taking to the hills escape from justice. The Stake, on the other hand, was regarded quite early as a reasonable tourist route : ' Whoever chuses an Alpine journey of a very extraordinary nature,' says West, ' may return through Borrowdale to Ambleside or Hawkshead. A guide will be necessary from Rosthwaite, over the Stake of Borrowdale (a steep mountain so called) to Langdale Chapel, This ride is the wildest that can be imagined for the space of eight miles.'

The Stake, like Skiddaw, was a pony route. There were, however, a sprinkling of bolder and more curious spirits who did try, however, tentatively to explore the mountains on foot. The official tourist attitude towards them must have paralleled the old-fashioned attitude of respectable Alpinists towards those who had the rash audacity to go guideless. It is amusingly summarised by one who made a journey to the Lakes in 1804 and wrote it up a year or two later :

Our facetious landlord amused us at the dinner-table with a recital of the feats of those *magnanimi heroes*, whom he termed *pedestrians*, and of their first incursions into the northern counties. Some years ago (he observed) the young nobility and gentry, habited like sailors, with knapsacks slung at their backs, gained a difficult admission into his bar parlour; what then was his surprise to find that these gentlemen, apparently so little nice, were in fact, the most fastidious of his guests; they were, however, excellent paymasters, and from his frequent experience of their liberality, he regretted seriously the loss of their patronage. Nothing could be more absurd than this extravagance, which like most other excesses, however, soon corrected itself: this was that cant and affection of stoicism, which would convert a toil into a pleasure, by combating the existence, or steeling us to the perception of pain; and which as it originated only in sophistry soon terminated in disgust. What athlete could endure a series of such sudden and extraordinary labour?

It must have been a specially tough magnanimous hero who made an ascent of Saddleback in 1793. He was a friend of Hutchinson, author of the *History of Cumberland*, and his account is quoted in that book and also in *Housman's Guide*. He was very properly tempted to go up Saddleback because he had been told that all the tourists went up Skiddaw, whereas no one visited Saddleback which had just as good a view, and in addition the curious sight of Scale tarn. His party was accompanied by a local man, one Mr Clement, who lived near Threlkeld, whose house they left about 1 p.m. They proceeded by way of Scales-fell; and this is what the explorer says:

When we had ascended about a mile, one of the party, on looking round, was so astonished with the different appearance of objects in the valley, so far beneath us, that he declined proceeding. We had not gone much further, till the other companion (of the relator) was suddenly taken ill and wished to loose blood and return. I was almost ready to give up my project, which I should have done with great reluctance as the day was remarkably favourable, and exhibited every scene to the greatest advantage: Mr Clement assured us, if we proceeded a little way, we should find a resting place, where the second defaulter of our party might recover the effects of his journey. After labouring another half hour, we gained the margin of an immense cavity, in the side of the mountain, the bottom of which formed a wide basin, and was filled with water, that from our station looked black, covering the space of several acres. It is said to be so deep

that the sun never shines upon it, and that the reflection of the stars may be seen therein at noonday; but that was a curiosity we did not enjoy. From our station, there was a gentle declivity to a smooth and verdant lawn, several yards in breadth, which was the situation our guide had promised us; and the descent thereto led us about half-way to the lake: a like easy descent would have led us to the edge of the lake, round which there appeared a broad green walk: but our leader informing us of the danger of passing that slippery path, we did not proceed. We now contemplated the scene with *awe-struck wonder*. We stood directly facing the middle of the mountain, the form of which gives it the name of Saddleback; and to the lake a perpendicular rocky precipice presented itself, extending to the north-east side of the mountain, called Foul-Crag. To the right-hand the steepness of the rocks gradually declined; above us and on the left they were stupendous and perpendicular; so that in one half of the circle the rocks were lofty and precipitous, whilst in the other half they gradually decreased. My fellow traveller would proceed no further; and, with my guide, I was left to explore the other parts of the mountain. Winding round, and keeping the cavity on our right, we attained the ridge or summit of the rock, where we found a passage three or four yards broad—on the right, the descent to the lake looked truly awful; while the steep rocks on the other side were lofty, and not to be climbed by human steps. This passage, some hundred yards in length, may be compared to a bridge covered with grass. Having reached the summit, we went to the point nearest to Keswick Vale, and there enjoyed a most delightful prospect; from thence we passed to the next point, being Foul-Crag, with Skiddaw on the left; from whence we looked down into a dreadful abyss, the bottom of which the eye could not penetrate: sheep frequently perish in this place, as the number of dead carcasses and skeletons evinced. We walked back by the side next to the lake; but to look down from thence was so terrible, I could not endure it a moment. We perceived from thence, that my companion, who was last left, was laid upon the ground; I pressed the guide to hasten to him, but he refused, alleging that a fog was rising, and it would be very hazardous for me to explore my way alone down the mountain: in a short time we were enveloped in a very dense vapour, so that we were obliged to keep near to each other; the sudden change was almost incredible. It was with difficulty my guide regained the passage or dry bridge which we missed on several attempts; and one incautious step would have plunged us in the horrid abyss . . . We again reached Mr Clement's house after a laborious travel of four hours.

The hero of the Saddleback adventure was a brave man, but he hardly exhibits the modern spirit in regard to fell-walking. It burns, however, brightly in the person of Captain Joseph Budworth. Budworth visited the Lakes in

1795 and afterwards published the Journal of his tour (*A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes*). He was *sui generis*. It is true that one or two of his contemporaries made more difficult ascents than anything he accomplished, but they did not share his admirable point of view. He was the first fell-walker proper. He walked, partly because legging it was the only means of attaining the points he wanted to reach, but mainly because he liked going up mountains. He was extraordinarily energetic—he walked 240 miles in a fortnight—and delightfully enthusiastic; never afraid of taking on extras.

One morning he and his friend started out from Ambleside for an idle day, but as it looked specially fine—another endearing point about Budworth is that he never complains about the Lakeland weather—they decided to walk to Coniston and back via Hawkshead. They were sitting on a hill at the head of Coniston Lake and enjoying the view, when a farmer came up and began to talk to them about the Old Man: Symptoms appeared of wishing to ascend it,' Budworth writes. 'We did not stop to hesitate, but we had the precaution to take some brandy, and at 1 o'clock began the arduous task.' It took them a couple of hours to get up, and Budworth was extremely thirsty when he reached the top. However, the farmer found him a 'bulging spring.' Before indulging himself, he had the precaution to prepare his stomach for the luxurious beverage with a gulp of brandy. He is always consumed with thirst on mountains and longing to drink, but for some reason regards it as an indulgence of dubious wisdom. Budworth and his friend were back in Ambleside by 9 o'clock. They had walked some twenty miles; not despicable for an 'easy day.'

They also went up Helm Crag, making the first recorded tourist ascent—another good expedition in the circumstances. The main circumstance was the Sunday dinner they had just eaten at Robert Newton's in Grasmere. Here is their menu: roast pike, stuffed; a boiled fowl; veal cutlets and ham; beans and bacon; cabbage, peas and potatoes; anchovy

sauce ; parsley and butter ; plain butter ; bread and cheese ; wheat bread and oatcake ; three cups of preserved gooseberries with a bowl of rich cream in the centre. For two people at 10d. per head.

Budworth's best expedition, however, was his ascent of Helvellyn. Helvellyn is one of the few mountains which the very early writers pick out for individual mention ; it almost ranks with Skiddaw in celebrity. But Helvellyn you had to go up on your own feet and not on a horse's back ; hence it was seldom ascended. Indeed, Budworth's is the earliest description of an ascent of Helvellyn that I have been able to find. Nor was the enterprising fellow content with Helvellyn alone. He threw in Rydal Fell, Fairfield and Dollywaggon Pike as well, and he did the thing in style. He and his friend and Robin Partridge, the guide, left Ambleside at 4 o'clock in the morning—none of your slovenly after-nine-o'clock-breakfast starts for them ; they treated their mountains with Alpine respect. Their times are rather interesting ; at 7-15 they were on Fairfield, at 9-30 on the main top of Helvellyn, between 10 and 11 they were down on the Wythburn road, where a post-chaise picked them up to whisk them off to Derwentwater. No Alpine guide could have got them off a mountain with greater alacrity than Robert Partridgee seems to have done.

Budworth evidently enjoyed his expedition immensely ; he got terribly thirsty, as on the Old Man, but found another spring to drink from ; he indulged in the noble if illegitimate sport of ' boulder-trundling ' from somewhere near the top ; he found the descent sufficiently steep to stimulate his nerve, and when he got to the bottom he ' tript lightly ' along the Wythburn road, remarking that after descending a steep mountain he always felt lighter and walked brisker than his best usual pace. Observant man !

Just over thirty years later, we have another amusing account of an ascent of Helvellyn ; and it is perhaps a measure of the advancing spirit of mountain adventure that this time the mountain was attacked by Striding Edge and ' guideless '

that. The hero of this episode was Mr Edward Baines (an uncle, I believe, of Talbot Baines Reed), who was, like Budworth, an enthusiastic fell-walker. He took a young cousin with him and they evidently found the place rather a tough proposition :

> We now came in view of the most formidable part of Striding Edge and found that it rather deserved to be compared to a narrow wall, several hundred feet in height, connecting the hill which we had been ascending with the head of the mountain, than to the steep roof of a house. It appeared to us to be absolutely precipitous on both sides, and the top of the rocky wall was not more than one or two yards wide, whilst in some places, we could not see before we came to it, as much ground as would serve to plant a foot on—the rocks presenting their sharp and rugged ends upwards, like slates or tiles standing on end.

Baines spent several holidays wandering about the Lakes. Like others, he wrote a book which he called *A Companion to the Lakes*, published in 1829 or '30. On one occasion, he ascended Scafell Pike, evidently his most coveted mountain. Like Budworth, he was not going to be content with one summit. He was at Coniston, and he rode over to Langdale, picked up a young farmer to act as guide at Stool End, and then proceeded to tick off Bowfell and Great End on the way to the Pike. The Bowfell route was the farmer's idea, and Baines says he suspected it would not be the shortest, but agreed because he would be repaid by having ascended two mountains instead of one. They came down by Angle Tarn and Rossett Ghyll, and then Baines rode back to Ambleside. He says that his feet were rather blistered, but that the young farmer was nearly as tired as he was, a fact which evidently pleased him.

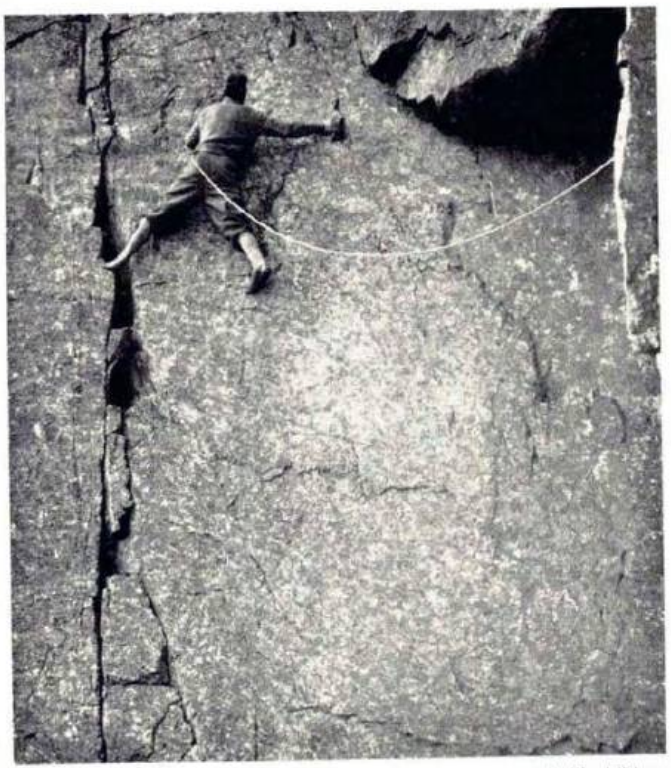
Baines is as refreshingly modern in his outlook towards hills as Budworth and his book, like Budworth's, makes capital reading. Both writers are enthusiastic without being high-falutin'—a considerable achievement for descriptive writing during that half-century. And they both take their sense of humour with them to the Lake District—another somewhat rare achievement. Indeed, they say and feel and do exactly the right things. They don't mind getting wet.

Budworth got soaked to the skin when rain overtook him on Helm Crag, and then wrote that he could not help wishing that a thunderstorm had come on—presumably so that he could have seen the special cloud and light effect. They don't mind getting hot. Baines sweated in the eye of Phoebus on his way up Bowfell, and when his young farmer guide remarked that it was 'terrible het,' he was so interested in relating the Cumbrian use of 'terrible' to the French 'bien,' that he never thought of complaining himself. And then both of them had the right attitude towards food—an infallible test of the genuine sort of fell-walker.

> The sandwiches eaten with grimy fingers upon the top of the Napes on Great Gable attain a strange quality of pleasantness; the meal like every meal that has not somehow gone wrong, achieves a touch of sacramental significance.

This particular quotation happens to come from C. E. Montague, who was one of the finest modern exponents of the art of holiday-making among the hills. But equally well, it might have been from Baines or Budworth. It is true that they never achieved the top of the Napes; but their spirit is the same. Baines wrote defiantly: 'Let no untravelled enthusiast despise me for the zest with which I have more than once mentioned the amusement of eating and drinking on the top of a mountain.' And Budworth remarks quite early on in his *Ramble*: 'What we had for dinner was of no consequence, never troubling ourselves about such trifles; for we were determined to be pleased with whatever was laid before us.' He understands the knack of slurring a bad meal, but he knows, too, the rare importance of a good one in the scale of enjoyment, and he is not too nice as we have seen, to catalogue his dishes.

At the subject of food, we may take leave of those two delightful travellers, Budworth and Baines. If they were right in their attitude towards food on a fell-walking holiday one may be quite sure that they were right in their attitude towards everything else. Between them, they discovered the modern art and pleasure of fell-walking.



*E. Wood-Johnson*

KERN KNOTTS
Sepulchre

# FROM BOTH ENDS OF THE ROPE*

*M. M. Barker and J. Carswell*

## (1) CLIMBING DOWN

*M. M. Barker*

'We don't climb down often enough.' This remark may be true in more than one sense, and certainly it applies to our treatment of most of the more severe routes in Lakeland. We go up them, and come down by some easier way, neglecting in consequence the technique of descending. This seems a pity, and means that one maxim of a great climber—never to make a move which cannot be reversed—is often neglected.

As a result of discussion round this point the idea was born of descending the Central Buttress of Scafell. Jack Carswell suggested it—at first tentatively, for it sounded rather crazy; then hopefully as the details were thought out. The main difficulty, the Great Flake itself, could at a pinch be roped down. (I believe this has been done before?) Apart from that, the most severe pitches of the climb are generally admitted to be the traverses: and why should they not go just as well from right to left as from left to right? Nobody had ever tried them that way; they might even be easier.

Therefore I was not too much surprised when on an evening in June, Jack Carswell and Ieuan M. B. Mendus arrived at Friar Row proposing that we try it next Sunday.

We duly met at Seathwaite, but we did not descend C. B. We went up one pitch of Gillercombe Buttress, got soaked to the skin, went home, and spent the rest of the day drying ourselves and our clothes.

But the following Sunday, June 21st, was perfect. We wandered slowly up the Corridor Route: left our spare gear in Hollow Stones, and went up Broad Stand, feeling rather

*Descriptions by the first man and the last man on the rope on the occasion of the First Descent of the Central Buttress of Scafell.

like conspirators. This feeling was heightened by meeting with friends on the top to whom we talked evasively. Having got rid of them, we hunted nervously for the top pitch of Central Buttress, and perhaps our excitement was responsible for the difficulty we had in locating it. But once found, we spent no time in contemplation, but got over the edge as quickly as possible.

Jack Carswell, the originator and leader of the enterprise, naturally came last : but one advantage of climbing down is the increased responsibility at the other end of the rope. The first down has certainly more of the job in hand than the third up : and being in that position I had all the fun of working out the route backwards. To begin with, I went down the first (14th) pitch rather too far left : met wet and rotten rock, and a foothold came off. ' Nice sort of a start,' I thought : but could of course warn the others against repeating my error.

When Ieuan joined me at the belay in the Bayonet-shaped Crack there came what proved to be, for me at least, the most difficult part of the whole climb. The route (Pitch 13) lies down part of the Moss Ghyll Grooves to a small but good stance with no belay. This has to be left for the first traverse and no belay is available till the V-Ledge. It looked, and was, extremely thin and exposed, but went delightfully, the rope being eventually carried over a small bracket visible on the sky-line from the M.G.G. stance. But the footholds by which this is reached when ascending to it from the V-Ledge are well underneath, and cannot be seen from above. I looked at the thing almost too long, for I began to be afraid that it would take more nerve than I possessed to hang on the bracket by my arms alone, in faith that an invisible foothold would materialise. Moreover, I was then so far from the belay in the Bayonet Shaped Crack that Jack and Ieuan could not hear me. I could not even, for some time, get them to give me enough rope for the next move (which would have to be made soon if I was not to fall off from sheer fright !). At last I

managed to ' get over ' a suggestion that Jack should come to the belay, and then hold Ieuan on the M.G.G. stance, whence my rope would be horizontal and well supported by the bracket (which is no use as a belay, but is slightly hooked, and a rope so held *might* stay on it if a climber came off here). This move was carried out, and I then slipped over onto the V-Ledge, finding as usual that ' the difficulties are purely mental.' Ieuan then followed easily, taking my word for it that there were footholds : and I suppose Jack made nothing of it, for I heard no comments from him.

The vertical crack from the V-Ledge to the second traverse (11th pitch) looks horrid from above, but its bark is worse than its bite. The traverse also really does go more easily, I think, from right to left : perhaps because one is making for such an obvious and comforting belay. The third traverse (10th pitch) also went beautifully and was a pure joy. We were making good time, and everything in the garden was lovely. But when we all assembled round the Cannon we became aware of an obstacle to our triumphal progress. There was a party coming up !

We arranged ourselves in a prostrate row on Jeffcoat's Ledge, and spent the next hour and a half as pleasantly and patiently as might be. We could not see much of A.T.H. and his party, but could hear quite well, so the wait was not monotonous, and pleasantries were being exchanged long before Ruth appeared and traversed over our recumbent bodies to the belay beyond them. With subsequent members of the party of four (led by S. Cross), we traded chocolate for cigarettes, for both Ieuan and I left ours in Hollow Stones, expecting to rejoin them sooner or later—but had not thought it would be so *much* later ; and our self-denying ordnance was dissipated in smoke.

When the last foot of the ascending ropes had passed over us we prepared for business.

So far Ieuan, as middle man on the traverses and carrying a spare rope, had had the least interesting time perhaps,

but this was a very co-operative affair, and now his turn came. Our order was changed: Ieuan went first along the Flake: Jack next, and I waited at the far end. Ieuan disappeared, belayed by Jack, and after much wangling with ropes announced with what breath was left to him that he had reached the chockstone, and had climbed all the way down. It took some time, and much discussion between the men for him to get the ropes round the chock and himself arranged to their complete satisfaction—(these details I leave to my partner to explain more lucidly than I can)—but when all was ready I passed Jack on the outside of the Flake, and with all the cold-bath thrill that one can get in such a moment, climbed down after Ieuan. We all three climbed this quite clean, without coming on the ropes at all: but when on Ieuan's shoulder, my right foot (I being quite unable to see where it was going) went on and on for a long time into space with no bottom to it. Eventually it found a foothold in what proved to be the poor lad's stomach! So it had to be got out again, with some agony to both, and carried round behind instead. At last, to his great relief, that feat was accomplished, and I went right down to the Oval. That descent is extremely thin, but naturally not so exhausting as an ascent, and one found oneself at the bulge (Pitch 4) with a sort of incredulous relief. The end of the spare rope was thrown down to me, its other end going through the loop on the chockstone and up to Jack. He then climbed down clean (leaving no loop behind on the Flake), over Mendus and down to the bulge, belayed by me. At the bulge he waited while Ieuan untied the loops, save one detached loop over the chock in which he stood and which finally carried the running belay by which Ieuan descended, passed Jack, and joined me on the Oval. Jack then flicked off this remaining loop, and came down to us, leaving no trace of rope behind.

The rest of the descent we were now in the mood to treat as a joke: but in fact it needed care. Our original order was resumed, and I found time at the bottom of pitch 3 to retrieve

some garments lost by the other party. (While on the Oval we could see bits of them on the upper traverses—a foot, or the flick of a rope now and then—and realised how far these traverses overhang the Flake itself.)

Above the last pitch we all met once more. Jack said it went straight down. I said it didn't, and I wouldn't; and after a glance over he agreed cordially. Actually Pitch 1 comes up a good way to the right of the stance we arrived on. It was amusing that our only hesitations over route were with the top and bottom pitches!

Well, it was a great climb!

(2) 'B.C.'

*J. Carswell*

While walking up that agreeable valley which lies behind Melbreak where my companion was wont to fritter away valuable climbing hours in attempting to obtain photographs of some very refractory buzzards, our conversation turned, as it always does to climbing.

A joking allusion to C.B. as a descent deposited the germ of an idea which rapidly attained maturity as the problem was examined. After all, the major difficulties were concentrated in the Flake and the traverses, and why should a traverse be any more difficult from one end than the other? The Flake however, was not to be disposed of so easily, for the purist in me said that it must be climbed, while conscience, with a strong backing of common sense, said I should have recourse to the obvious method and rope down, and the two waged a continuous war up to the very time when we were congregated on the tip of the Flake.

Soon the project developed into a conspiracy with all the secretiveness essential to a good conspiracy. The idea had met with enthusiastic though not unjudicial support from Ieuan M. B. Mendus who was to be our second, and together we broke the news to Mabel M. Barker. Her reply was never

in doubt, and we gathered that all her various inchoate engagements were to remain inchoate until the deed was done. Thereafter, it was a standing engagement for every Sunday.

The first attempt was a literal 'wash-out.' We met at Seathwaite and had Ieuan and I been left to ourselves we would have had the wit not to leave the valley, but Mabel who never lets 'I dare not wait upon I would' silently shamed us into climbing the first pitch of Gillercombe Buttress. Whereupon we beat a judicious retreat facilitated by torrents of water after a classical wetting. The famed hospitality of Friar Row boasts many things but male attire is not amongst them, and later that day, draped in two blankets apiece, Ieuan insisted that either he had forgotten how to don a toga or the Romans were only precariously decent. True, we achieved a certain dignity but it was a dignity that could be maintained only in repose.

The next week-end was glorious and after a delightful Saturday at Caldbeck and on Carrock Fell, Mabel Barker, Mendus and myself toiled up from Seathwaite under a broiling sun with a strong torrid east wind which occasioned some slight misgivings at first till we realised that owing to the tilt of the strata we should be fairly sheltered from any wind from the Mickledore end, as proved to be the case.

The problem of whether or not to bathe in Styhead Tarn, occupied as all discussions on hot days do, just sufficient time for us to get cooled down, a rather lengthy process. The corridor was just as long and dry as ever and it was in a very limp condition indeed that we eventually arrived in Hollow Stones.

We ate a very dry lunch, and after skilfully avoiding a direct question as to our intentions we found the top of the climb, a matter of no small difficulty, and one after the other dropped over the edge.

The downward view from the first few feet of the top pitch (which was unexpectedly awkward) must be unique in Lakeland, and with a wind that made conversation difficult I reflected to myself that we were asking too much, though

we could at least have a good day's climbing. The third and second had no difficulty with Pitch 13, but on the next pitch which leads down to the V-Ledge and in its upper portions is common to Moss Ghyll Grooves, our difficulties commenced. Comfortably sheltered at the bottom of the top pitch I listened absently to the full-throated but fruitless efforts of Ieuan and Mabel, who were spaced out below me at intervals of 40 feet, to establish contact in the teeth of the strong wind; both were audible to me and I finally gathered that she wanted him to descend until he was level with her, the better to receive her instructions with regard to her rope. It transpired that Mabel was standing at the V-Ledge end of the traverse (Pitch 12), so while she held to the rock—there being no belay—I joined my second and changing belays with him, let him take up the desired position. He was then able to give her a running belay over the hook on the traverse, after which she descended to the V-Ledge.

This awkward operation reinforced the opinion I had formed at the commencement, and I received warnings as to the difficulty. Thus I was cheered to find the traverse one of the most delectable things I have done, and my second said that he was more than relieved when I appeared with a broad smile on my face. But I found the warnings as to the descent on to the V-Ledge fully justified. The advice to lower myself, suspended on my hands only, to an invisible foothold was scarcely comforting, but I found it sound.

Foregathered on the V-Ledge my friends told me that Sidney Cross, A. T. Hargreaves and others were ascending the climb. Various suggestions were made as to how to dispose of them, none of which would have met with their approval.

Mabel tripped merrily down the right-angled corner and across the traverse to the pinnacle with only the suggestion of a pause on the traverse itself. However, she advised me to have a doubled rope for the corner but the knowledge imparted by two ascents discounted this.

After slinging a 60 foot coil over, Ieuan followed in great style. The holds found are not quite as good as one would like—they rarely are—but we were soon on Jeffcoat's Ledge, where we heard voices.

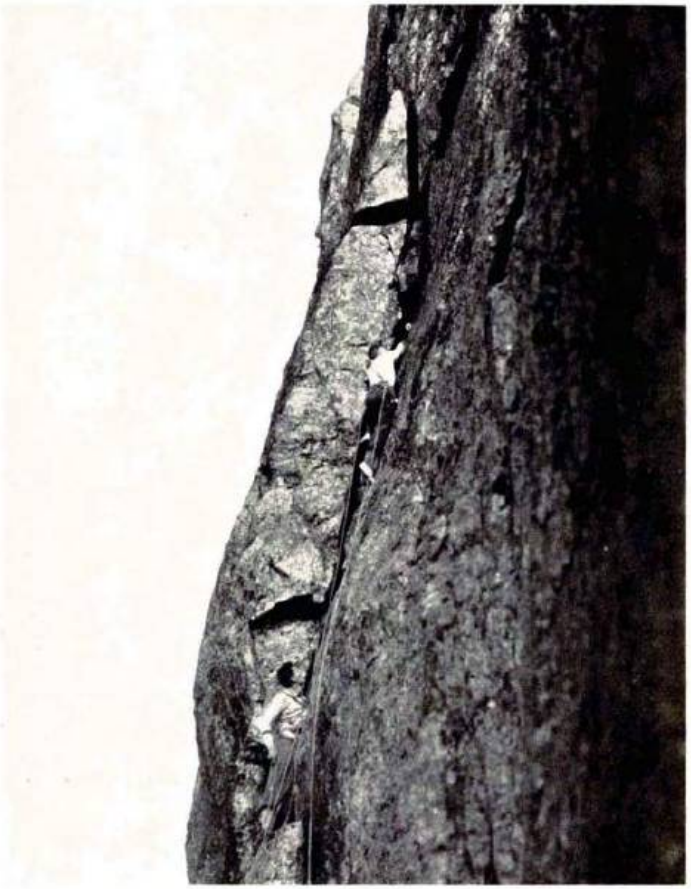
After much precarious craning of necks we discovered that the other party had already reached the Oval, so, not wishing for an audience while manoeuvring at the chockstone, we settled ourselves down for a lengthy wait, and made ourselves more thirsty than ever with chocolate and huge chunks of home-made marzipan (a well-known Friar Row delicacy).

Now commenced a diplomatic exchange which would not have disgraced a Foreign Secretary, the outcome of which, to the dismay of my companions, was the discovery that there were no cigarettes in the party. Thereupon the arrival of the others was more eagerly awaited than ever.

Many were the climbs done and places visited during the ensuing hour, but immediately a smiling face graced the tip of the Flake an agonized duet rang out saying in effect ' A cigarette, a cigarette, my belay for a cigarette,' which in view of the fact that there were four in the other party might not have been a bad bargain.

The difficulty, or apparent impossibility of accommodating seven people on Jeffcoat's Ledge will be obvious to anyone who has been there, but we did it. The problem of the passage was solved without ceremony in the only possible way, i.e., by their walking over our prostrate bodies and the barbarians actually seemed to enjoy the process. After we had got our respective ropes well tangled they passed on and left us to it.

We changed our order, Ieuan going first, myself second and Mabel last, and leaving her on Jeffcoat's we two edged along the crest of the Flake. The arrangement between us was that Ieuan should climb down to the chockstone and report on whether it was climbable. He lowered himself over the ledge, his hand disappeared ; a moment's silence and then a voice gently suggested that I might hold the rope



*Austin Barton*

FLAKE
CRACK
Scafell C.B.

a little tighter if it wouldn't inconvenience me. This, however, was not in accordance with my part of the plan and the rope remained slack, until a voice triumphantly and with not a little surprise announced that its owner had climbed it clean.

It was here that the 60 foot rope, hitherto Nobody's Darling, came into its own. First, while held by me, Ieuan hooked a short loop of line over the convenient spike below the chockstone and stood in it under the very mistaken impression that it would relieve me of some of his weight. Next he started to tie on to the chockstone, but stoutly denied the existence of a thread. Dialectics ('testing of truth by discussion, logical disputation') even from a lawyer meant nothing to me. I had used the thread twice, and eventually it was found. It is said that mild-mannered, inoffensive people are known to swear on occasion; my second evidently thought this an occasion.

Ieuan, having untied the rope on which he descended, Mabel went down on two ropes, thus disposing of a temporary surplus length. When she was safely on the Oval one length of rope was thrown down to her and the other hauled up by Ieuan, who threaded it through a loop and returned it to Mabel so that she might belay me from below.

I had been perched on the Flake for so long that I was stiff and sore, so I took a short rest before commencing the descent. This I found less trying than the ascent, because by getting the right shoulder in the Crack one can use sundry small holds on the inside, sufficient to control a descent but not of much help when overcoming the excessive friction of an ascent. Once past the chockstone my rope naturally became a doubled one, and I doubt whether it would be wise to attempt to descend this wall without such a safeguard.

I stopped at the bottom chockstone and once more the second pulled up an end of my rope after Mabel had untied, undid my running thread and rethreaded the rope, this time through the loop in which he was standing, and cast off the

loops from the chockstone and descended on the now doubled rope. I was then able to flick off the loop on the spike and join the others on the Oval, leaving no trace of our passage.

We coiled the 60 foot rope and unceremoniously threw it down to the screes, following later in a much more leisurely fashion. After the mixture of styles above we did not find any trouble with the remaining pitches. The climb, however, maintained its interest until the end, since the bottom pitch is always a pretty problem, and as Ieuan and I stepped off the last foothold we were greeted by Mabel in appropriately feminine manner.

On looking back we agreed that in the previous 5½ hours we had savoured the essence of climbing to the full, and that C.B. had no rival. As to difficulty we formed the opinion that for those who know the climb there is not much to choose between an ascent or a descent providing the party has some experience in descents. The Flake itself is both easier and safer.

Ieuan and I were proud to have had the company of Mabel Barker. We had read her account of her ascent with Frankland in 1925 many times before we had the pleasure of meeting her. She was the first woman up the climb and it was only appropriate she should also be the first down it.

As we sat in Mrs Edmondson's at midnight that night quaffing tea, Mabel said to us, 'Only one thing remains for you boys.'

'Yes?' we replied.

'To repeat the climb when you are in your 51st year.'

Truly a chastening thought.

# ON BOTH SIDES

*C. Douglas Milner*

June in Skye, blue water and the Black Coolin. The Editor standing on a small ledge with belay. Twenty feet below the Younger Member taking out loose holds and wondering how long his feet would stay put. 'Yes,' continued the Editor glancing benignly downwards, 'something on what the younger member thinks about climbing....' The Y.M. said possibly, and what about a little tighter rope in the meantime. The Ed. let out a few more inches and said firmly that it had better be in by the end of September and no mistake. Another handhold left in the direction of the corrie. Hasty capitulation, the *quid pro quo* of a tighter rope, and the resumption by the Editor of his contemplation of the distant Hebrides.

Obediently but with the difficulty that an unfamiliar task entails, the younger member thought. Occasional profundities were evolved during the summer, committed to scraps of paper and mostly lost. Those which survived proved on reflection or reference to be mere echoes of things already written in the Journals of the past twenty-nine years. It was the Assistant Editor who played devil's advocate. Ex officio he regards the Journal now as mere newsprint round which to wrap as many spellbinding advertisements as he can get. He said if I was really stuck the best thing was to read up all the old Journals and re-hash something which had been done before. The only results were an understandable dizziness and a conviction that

> 'There are nine and sixty ways
> Of constructing tribal lays
> And every single one of them is right.'

So I took a three months' rest cure, and was only reminded of the promise extracted under duress, by the eagle eye of Speaker at the Dinner.

I brooded. Particularly on the one point in the Journals on which there was a larger measure of agreement than any other. Pioneering as the highest devotion of the climber, or failing that an ardent pursuit of the latest thing. Attention

to these points make one nobler. Consider the Journals. First ascent....first descent....first ascent by a lady in ice and elastic sided boots. The highlights of climbing twinkling their distinctive way into print, as large as life and twice as natural. And very properly, too. Only thus could most of us follow the intrepid footsteps of our tigers as they insinuate themselves up the last uncharted sections of our crags. Only thus in front of a comforting fire could we stand on small holds in exposed situations with a sublimity and confidence denied us when in actuality crossing say the slab en route for the notch.

The Journal does not, nor need it, normally do more than this. But even for those actively concerned they are *highlights*, and the half-tones which complete the picture being common to us all are perhaps too often taken for granted, or even, by implication, alleged not to exist. I remember the pleasant if severe shock received soon after being admitted to membership when I discovered that the majority of members (it would apply equally to any other club) did standard climbs each in their degree, not secretly, but in open enjoyment. The whole climbing membership of the Club had been imagined earnestly concentrating on pioneering, lightly disporting themselves on E.N.D.* or the P.F.† as an off-day distraction.

Officially there seems to be a phobia on the subject. The pessimists say the glory has departed from Lakeland. The optimists fiercely assert that the best is not yet. A number of isolated individuals, widely differing in mountaineering tastes, have been solemnly grouped into the Modern British School of Climbers. The object of the group presumably is a diligent search for strawberries in December with a scarcity value far in excess of their intrinsic worth. Not always so good as those produced in June. Continuance of pioneering, ever to a higher level is considered essential to the survival of the sport—craft—religion—whichever we care to call it.

* Eagle's Nest Direct, Gt. Gable. † Pinnacle Face, Scafell.

'Faster, faster,' said the Red Queen, 'here it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place.'

The fact that in any other craft—sport—religion, maintenance of ritual by an adequate number of the devout is far more important than the discovery of some new thing, appears to have been overshadowed. Though the attraction of working out a new route as a personal experience can be understood even by those who like myself might as well wish for the moon as ever be in a position to do it.

Pioneering in the early days was a matter of sheer necessity, and in the golden age (wherever you place that) a graceful contribution by the skilful and courageous to the common stock, so that the weaker brethren might follow where they could not lead. If this were not so, there would be no object in publishing anything further by way of guide books than a set of training climbs for novices. Then climbs could be repeated without this distressing habit of using the same holds and belays as the discoverers. It can be done now if the guide is used simply as a means of identifying the foot of a climb. This had never occurred to me until two years ago on Pike's Crag with Holland, when he suggested Juniper Buttress. As he had originally pioneered most of it, I expected precise instructions. He wandered about a bit and said 'It starts about here and goes up.' So I went, and found the whole thing so delightful that I have since always used a guide only in situations of absolute necessity.

To return, however, to the utility of pioneering. I feel, possibly mistakenly, that this idea of service to the climbing community has been rather thrust into the background. New climbs are seldom repeated, they are accepted as pyrotechnic displays by brilliant cragsmen in tacit competition with others. The resultant standard is very high. The days when exposure was the chief difficulty have of course gone, certainly the few 'first-class' climbs I have had the opportunity of being taken up seem to be on the limit of what can be done on a rope, i.e., with no effective exposure. Probably

only sheer lack of space will dictate the final limitation of new routes, just as it has done on the gritstone crags for some time. But in the Lakes there is a small amount of good rock as yet unclimbed, a lot of bad rock, on Pavey Ark, for instance, and Deer Bield on the left of the Crack, and (dare it be said) considerable sections of 'impossible' rock which would need pitons as climbing aids. And anyone who insists upon climbs which are undefiled by the feet of a predecessor may have the lot of them! As a last infirmity of noble minds there is one record to be equalled. A boy who began climbing at Easter, went on Deer Bield at Whitsuntide and climbed the Crack solo, descending also solo, by the chimney. He left the Lakes trailing clouds of glory and has not climbed since. I hope no one else tries it when I am in Easedale. Stretcher-bearing is heavy work.

But all these outlets will be used by those who find them necessary, and that will be very right and proper for *them*. But they will try to be dogmatic that they are doing the only things worth while and that everyone else is not. And this will not be right and proper.

It is difficult to see why the two standards of difficulty and novelty should have been allowed to occupy such a preponderant share in deciding the quality of a climb. It is really a question of taste.

The historical background of a climb, the fact that it leads one into delightful parts of the crags, the interesting way in which a climb may reflect the personality of the man who pioneered it may all be more important. Curious too that in the ordinary affairs of life, difficulty of attainment and novelty are not always accepted as the only truths. Apply these assessments to simple fell-walking and they fail. The summit of Great Gable and its view are no less attractive because a thousand people have been there before, though the company of a dozen other people at a particular time may prevent our undisturbed appreciation of what we went to see. Dawn and sunset are the most commonplace of natural

phenomena, their times of appearance can be estimated with precision long before they are due, but even if they did not show their infinite variety, would they not still be charged with beauty and wonder? Like the purple passages of literature which have only achieved their distinction through some virtue which raised them above their context, the popular climbs and common mountain tracks are generally the best.

If one takes the widely held view that climbing is a high moral exercise in the practice of which we must always be climbing at the top of our standard—on and on and up and up. This puts out of court the question of what is and what is not worth climbing. Consider A, who has two left feet, fingers all thumbs and no sense of balance. An all-seeing providence has withheld from him those things which as a climber he most needs. He leads Middlefell Buttress when on form, not too safely at that. By using all the technique he has, plus considerable will power, he arrives at the top, rich in all the experience of narrowly averted catastrophes, crowned by victory. He has put into and got out of his climb as much as the first-class man who finds it necessary to do very severes in order to frighten himself into 'satisfaction.' A deserves, if he does not always get, our admiration, though he is unfortunate in being restricted as a leader to a small number of climbs. B gets the admiration, though he may be a man with ten talents who is only using one. In this sense, that his very ability may have induced too great a restriction of taste, so that in the last resort he is reduced to almost as small a number of climbs as A, when he should be a freeman of the hills, go anywhere and do anything.

It would be idle to question his courage and ability, and probably uncharitable to suggest that there is any predominant idea of beating the book, the mountain or the next man. Any given expert may have his preferences. If he chooses to approach the limit of human possibility within a hair's breadth, or to try to exceed it and be killed, no one will

criticise; rather will they commend. After all, no one minds some of the Munich 'succeed at all cost' school being killed except a few die-hard alpinists, and especially the unfortunate guides who are ever ready though to risk their lives in recovering bodies. Which is quite another matter.

It may be that these exclusive geniuses do not exist. Even if they don't, the impression of them does. And it has its followers who do not even carry the job through properly; that is, to get up, and if not, either to climb down or fall down. The practice of 'seizing up' is added as a comfortable alternative. On five occasions recently, friends of mine have had to interrupt their climbing in order to throw a rope from somewhere on the Idwal Slabs down the East Wall, or down the North-West face of Gimmer, and even on small gritstone crags, to rescue a leader whose ambitions had exceeded his climbing ability. In every case so far as could be ascertained, the parties concerned should never have been on the climb at all. Of course, they were not members of this or any other senior club, but they must have got their ideas about climbs from somewhere. Probably they were suffering from an excess of Solemn Warnings.

This is not an argument in favour of safety first, though when leading I find myself influenced by one fact, other than the usual cold feet. It is that recent accidents have shown that if the leader comes off, the second man seems to get the worst of it every time.

But questions of safety apart, there is a great deal to be said for Variety, for refusing to be too closely enslaved by 'keeping up one's standard' or 'sticking to severes.' 'Touch and go' on Scafell Central Buttress may be grand; retiring beaten but in good order from Moss Ghyll Grooves or Deer Bield Crack leaves one at least with a respect for Kelly or Hargreaves and an appetite for dinner as well....But why not the Needle Ridge in sunshine, with so much safety in hand that nothing short of a major Act of God would remove you? Lazy....of course....but it may fit in with

a mood. And the stimulating effects of contrast ; comparisons that fail to be odious. The enhanced appreciation of ' thin ' face-climbing following that wet, athletic course, clinkered up a gully the previous day. Stout fellows those lads of the 'nineties, gluttons for danger ! The personal thrill of leading a hardish climb ' unseen ' ; and the simple joys of the old familiar foot olds as you take a party up something *they* haven't done before....

For mountains can be all things to all men, and there seems to be no reason why it should ever be otherwise.

# WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?

## AN ADVENTURE IN WALLA CRAG GULLY

*Ashley P. Abraham*

In early July, 1898, there arrived at a Zermat Hotel two professors from a Continental University. They were brothers. The elder was about 38 years of age, a short, stocky man scaling about 10 stones, and the younger was about 32, strong and muscular, nearly six feet in height and over 12½ stones in weight. The former had left at home a wife and two children; the latter was unmarried and, except for his brother, had no near relatives. These facts are mentioned because they bear upon the subsequent action of the little brother.

Both had done a fair amount of mountaineering, sufficient, in their own opinion, to justify the traverse of glaciers without a guide or other companion. Although 1898 proved later to be an abnormally fine season, early July found the upper snows still heavy and most of the crevasses snow-bridged. The rock peaks were scarcely yet feasible, so the brothers decided to take a training walk up the 13,000 ft Breithorn. After obtaining the keys of the old Gandeck Hut, they shouldered their firewood and provisions and set out about mid-day, arriving at the hut in the early evening.

It had been a glorious day and they had the entire mountain to themselves. They sat at the hut doorway smoking and revelling in the afterglow which lighted up the great Furggen slabs of the Matterhorn and the rosy peak of the Dent Blanche, little dreaming of the terrible tragedy of which they were to be the victims next day. Soft snow, hot sun and lack of 'condition' delayed their arrival at the summit of the Breithorn, which they reached about 2 o'clock, two happy but very tired men. After a rest on the top they made good

pace down the upper slopes, and when they were just above the level glacier—an almost unbroken snowfield, miles in extent—the little brother, who was about 20 feet in advance, heard a shout behind him and was roughly pulled backward on to the snow.

So violent was the jerk and tug of the rope that he threw out his arms and lost his grasp of his ice-axe which slithered down the crusted snow a distance of about 30 feet, hopelessly out of his reach. Owing to the drag of the rope he got to his feet with difficulty and then saw the round hole in the snow through which his brother, rucksack, ice-axe and all had disappeared. He had fallen into a crevasse. Leading from his waist the tightly stretched rope cut into the side of the hole about six feet. He shouted frantically, but, at first, his cries were unanswered.

After a few seconds, however, the man down the crevasse called up that he was hanging by his hands from some looped rope, about 30 feet below and that the snow, through which the rope had cut, formed a ceiling above his head. He tried to climb hand over hand up the rope, but in a few seconds his strength evidently gave out, for a tremendous tug came on the rope, almost dragging down the little man above. Faintly came up the terrible news that the rope was now at full stretch, that he was swinging free and was unable to touch either side of the crevasse and that it was too dark to see its depth—after which . . . . silence.

Repeated calls brought no reply, and I draw a veil over what must have been the most awful experience a man could possibly live through. Suffice it to say that there staggered into the Zermatt Hotel that evening, just after dinner time, a haggard, dazed climber with the rope still tied around his waist, but now less than a yard in length. Incoherently he told his dreadful story and then collapsed. He had waited for more than an hour, receiving no reply to his frantic calls and cries for help, and then, realising that his brother must be dead, and utterly exhausted himself, had cut the rope.

The pathos of this particular case forbade comment at the time, but much subsequent argument arose.

Many of the mountaineers then in Zermatt, of whom I was one, condemned the cutting of the rope, advancing the reasons that it was against the first tenets of climbing and of sportsmanship and that it was a cowardly thing to do. Others, chiefly Continental climbers, at that distant time holding different ideas of sportsmanship from those of the British climbers, held that the little chap did the right thing. 'Why,' asked they, 'throw a good life away, the life of a husband and father, when no useful purpose could be served—and as for cowardliness, surely it needed more courage to face the world with that cut rope than it did to plunge through the hole in the crevasse?' The choice was surely the most terrible a man could be called upon to face. What would you have done? I suppose that 99 out of 100 climbers who have often used a rope would vote against our professor's action. They would have held out until exhausted and then joined their comrade in the crevasse: but it is, of course, difficult to forecast what they would do if faced with the actual problem, so many personal and quite unexpected factors enter.

A hard-headed writer to the *Signet* would appear to have solved the matter when I gave a lecture some years ago to the Palette Club of Glasgow, if one can judge by the effect his views had upon those present. The members of the Palette Club are mostly professional men, journalists, schoolmasters, legal men, doctors and so on. It is the custom of the chairman, after the lecturer has finished, to ask him to tell a few stories, preferably bearing on his subject. After one of my lectures there, I put, instead of the usual stories, to this very intelligent and non-climbing audience the problem I have outlined above.

These thinking men were greatly impressed with the problem and, before taking a vote on their decision, they asked many questions, some sensible, some not. Could

not the man at the top go to the edge of the crevasse, break the snow away and haul his brother out ? Quite impossible, of course. Was there no way of fastening the rope to something while help was brought ? Only deep crusted snow was in evidence. Was there no prospect of help arriving if the top man could have waited longer ? Not until the next day when doubtless a search party would be sent out—too late, of course. How could the top man know that his brother was dead ? How he knew I have no means of knowing, but a party of climbers, of whom I was one, slung a man (Dr Griffin, an old member of our club) with a rope around his waist, from a beam in the old barn at Sligachan. At the end of a bare fifteen minutes he was almost *in extremis*. The pain of the rope biting into his body was agonising and he would certainly have died from shock or asphyxiation within half an hour. Then arose the hard-headed legal man. 'If,' asked he, 'the man had retained his axe, could he have driven it into the snow, taken off his rope and tied it to the ice-axe while he went for help ?' 'Yes, undoubtedly,' I replied. 'Well then,' he said, 'there is surely no difference between leaving a dead man hanging on the rope while his brother went for help, and leaving him lying dead at the bottom of the crevasse while he went for help ; therefore, how could cutting the rope be anything but right ?' This seemed unanswerable. Anyway, when the vote was taken it was unanimous in endorsing the cutting of the rope. In my own opinion the wisest thing to have done (although I am sure I could not have done it) would have been to cut the rope while the suspended man was still alive, in the hope that his further fall down the crevasse would not have proved fatal. Against this, however, must be set the fact that help could not have been brought for many hours and he would doubtless be frozen to death when the rescuers arrived.

But I am addressing climbers. What would you do ? Many years ago I had this terrible choice thrust upon me, and what I did, or did not do, was rather surprising. My

problem was set on a rock climb, however, and my companion was the late Gerard F. Cobb. Cobb junior, Bursar of Trinity College for 25 years, was well known in Cambridge musical circles 35 years ago and composed charming choral and church music, and some very fine songs, ' The Scent of the Lilies,' ' A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea,' amongst others. But his outstanding songs were his settings of Kipling's Barrack Room Ballads. ' Mandalay,' ' Oonts,' ' Gunga Din ' and the others brought him more fame than did his difficult traverse of the Zermatt Gabelhorn from the Aben Joch, which he had done as a young man. For many years music supplanted his old love for the mountains, but an illustrated article which I wrote for a popular magazine rekindled his enthusiasm for the rocks. He wrote me a very charming letter, ending by a request that I would take him for a rock climb when he came to the Lakes. His letter was accompanied by a huge bundle of his own compositions. I readily agreed, making an appointment to take him up Walla Crag Gully at 3 o'clock on a day in the following week.

I was somewhat surprised to find him an elderly gentleman of 60 summers, but more surprised still when he told me he had been to the top of Blencathra in the morning and had enjoyed a pint of beer with his lunch ! I suggested a postponement of our climb, but he would not hear of it. He was a short, sturdily built man of about 10 stones a d looked in good hard condition, due, as I afterwards learnt, to long cycle rides. Incidentally, he was the first president of the C.T.C.

I had intended to walk round to our studio and pick up a 60 ft rope, but, in view of his morning's exertion, decided to take a 35 ft rope, which I had by me, and go direct from my home to the gully. This decision it was that led to a most desperate situation which narrowly missed terminating my climbing career. Walla Crag Gully is a succession of steep chimneys cutting into the Derwentwater face of the mountain, the longest chimney, the third pitch, being about 45 ft in height. My companion seemed tired, but stoutly

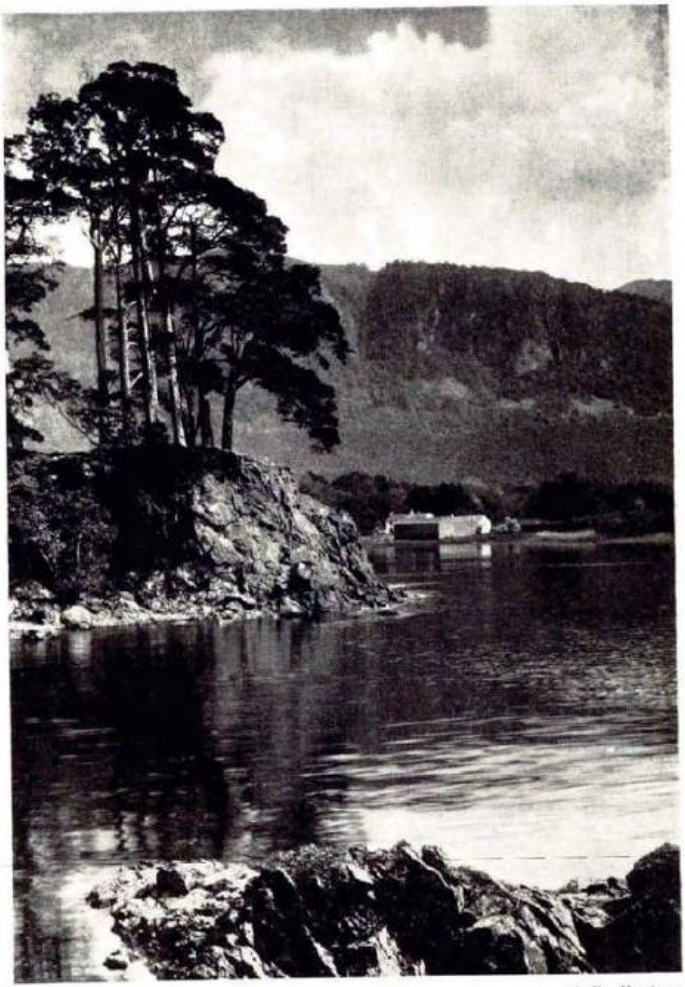
rejected any idea of giving up the climb, so we roped up at the foot of the Gully.

The first pitch, an open slabby groove, ' went ' well enough, but on the difficult traverse into the gully proper my companion came off rather badly, and reached me in a somewhat exhausted condition. However, the chock-stone pitch was successfully negotiated and we were confronted by the 45 ft chimney. Having only a 35 ft rope, and part of this round our waists, of course, I had to bring up Cobb to a very restricted and unstable position and leave him jammed across the chimney, while I climbed upward and finished the pitch. Here was no definite anchorage at that time, but, with my back on one wall of the gully and my feet on the other, I felt quite capable of holding his weight, although he was vertically below me. I called down for him to come along and was staggered to hear him announce that he was feeling very unwell. ' Never mind,' I called, 'do your best.' I heard his heavy breathing and the sound of his boot nails on the rocks and then the announcement that he felt very faint. ' For goodness' sake, you musn't faint there,' I called down, and the next moment his whole weight came on the rope. ' Look out,' I yelled, ' Pull yourself together and come on,' but got no response. He was evidently unconscious, suspended over a drop of about 150 ft and held only by the rope in my two hands. What was I to do ? I couldn't let him down to the foot of the pitch because of the shortness of the rope, and in any case the foot of the chimney sloped outward and was only about a yard in extent. The place was too steep and difficult for me to descend with so much weight dragging me down. The only person who could help us was my brother at Keswick, and it was impossible to let him know of our predicament.

In any case, I could not maintain my position for more than a few seconds, and I was quickly tiring. The sudden realisation and shock of this fact, and the impossibility of rescue, were so devastating that for a few seconds I lost all sense of

my surroundings. The impending crags, with the trees and the water of the lake below, became blurred and indistinct and were soon lost in a white mist of semi-consciousness. I was recalled from this by the rope slipping slowly, but with ever-increasing speed through my hands. For about eight feet it passed through and I waited for the jerk that must inevitably dislodge me, when suddenly the strain was relieved. What had happened? I called down, thinking that my companion had recovered consciousness and was grasping the rocks, but got no reply. I came to the conclusion that his body must have jammed in the chimney. Anyway, the rope was quite slack. On the opposite wall of the gully was, most providentially, a small projecting rock, so I risked letting go of the rope and succeeded in clearing away some splinters from behind the rock, thus obtaining in a very short time a belay around which I could tie the rope. I then quickly unroped and climbed down to my companion, to find him hanging partly by the rope and partly by his left arm which was firmly wedged in the chimney. He was quite unconscious, so I quickly climbed below him and succeeded in raising his weight off the rope. A deep groan, surely the most welcome sound I had ever heard, followed in about 20 seconds and soon afterwards he became conscious, and asked me for a drink. The nearest water was in Derwentwater, alas! so I climbed to the top of the pitch where, helped by the rope, he soon joined me. After a few minutes' uncomfortable rest, supported by the belay which, by the way, is still there, he professed himself quite better and made light of the whole business.

We then climbed the next chimney, known as the holly tree pitch, but it was not until we sat on the grassy top of the mountain together that I told him what had really happened, and what a narrow escape we had had. Much to my surprise, he was greatly pleased by the adventure and for many years afterwards spent a part of every annual holiday climbing the rocks of Lakeland!



*G. P. Abraham*

FRIAR'S CRAG
AND
WALLA CRAG

He always stayed at the Keswick Hotel and hired a landau which took four or five of us to Seathwaite, whence we did our rock-climbing. This was a great luxury for us young fellows, who in those days, often had to walk the distance. After dinner in the evenings, he played and sang his own compositions, 'Ford of Kabul River' being particularly fine. So well did he dine us on one occasion that a member of our party fell fast asleep immediately after dinner. Cobb sang to us for about an hour, and when we awakened the sleeper, in readiness to depart, he sat up suddenly and exclaimed, 'Go home? but isn't Mr Cobb going to sing us anything?' His last letter to me, at the age of 65, a fortnight before he died of pneumonia, contained an insistent request that I should take him up the 'New West' on the Pillar Rock.

In thinking things over afterwards it was apparent that, by lowering Cobb to the full extent of the rope, I could have sustained his weight from my waist, released my hands and cut the rope, thereby saving my own life. Such a thought never entered my head, however, and I am quite sure that, such was my shame at finding myself in such a position, I could never have saved myself and let my friend perish. Indeed, during the whole time I held him on the rope I had a subconscious feeling that we were in this thing entirely together, and as a single entity. I sincerely hope that a recital of these reminiscences may tend to prevent any of our members from finding themselves in a similar predicament, either on rocks or snow.

# THE MAN WHO BROKE THE NEEDLE

*Graham Suttom*

It was no place to have teeth out—an October morning in Borrowdale, and Ronnie dumping our three sacks into the Doc's old car, to go climbing on Gable.

But I'd no choice. An army marches on its belly, and I'd been marching on that rotten molar all yesterday; and the Doc swore he couldn't deaden it, it'd really have to come out. So after breakfast, when we'd phoned a dentist, they made for Seathwaite and I caught the bus into town.

He was ready, with his accomplice—I mean his anaesthetist. I'd ordered gas; but when he'd violated the tooth a bit, the chap said: 'H'm, trouble! I'd recommend an injection. Gas may not give me time enough....'

I said: 'I've got to climb today, and I can't climb full of dope. Gas goes off sooner, doesn't it?' But he dodged that, and countered me below the belt with a prophecy.

'If you come round before I'm through, it'll be no fun!'

I said I wasn't there for fun, and I'd chance it. I caught them swapping a nasty look: as though they weren't sure whether to humour me, or tell me to mind my own business. The accomplice picked up a needle-gun, and began practising an approach-shot; he lacked the delicacy of the dentist, who had put his pliers in a shaving-jug and was pretending they weren't there. But I said: 'Gas or nothing!' and climbed on board.

So the accomplice laid aside the needle-gun, and started juggling with that sinister conglomeration of tubes that they pump gas in you with ('Death of Laocoon,' you know). And the dentist said 'Open please!' and rammed a gag in my mouth—a thing that tasted like a cold hotwaterbottle and felt like a dumbell. He said: 'I'd hate *you* to get violent! What's your weight?'

I said: 'Eighteen stone'—at least I said 'Hay-hee-ho,' because of the gag. But I knew he was only making talk; it didn't matter whether he could understand me or not. He went on: 'This gag's in case you bite! It wouldn't do to have you clench your teeth when I was giving you an injection. You might break the needle....'

I said: 'Huch-hi-hoch-*hachi*ha....' Then I spat out the gag, and started again. 'But I'm not *having* an injection.'

He said: 'No, no, I don't expect you are. But I can't operate with your mouth shut.' So he replaced the gag, and asked if it was comfortable: sarcastically, I suspect. And I said: 'Hoch!'

Then the snakecharmer weighed in with his gas-machine, and told me to inspire deeply. And I inspired, and hoped like billy-o they'd have the nous not to begin too soon; and they didn't; and that was that....

After all, it was not too bad. I lay recovering in an anteroom, and read the obituaries in last week's *Cumberland Vews*, and sucked the hole with my tongue. And the first minute I felt good enough, I tottered out into the Keswick market place and caught the Seatoller bus.

The Styhead track on a fine fresh October day would but anyone on his feet. When I arrived below the Napes the others weren't visible, but I heard their voices above. So I lay out on the Dress-Circle, and began probing that infernal hole again—it's queer, your tongue won't give a place like that any peace—and stared at the old Needle.

The Needle has been compared with lots of things; but what it most reminded *me* of, just then, was a great tusk of a molar. It seemed the very thing for today—appropriate, and a nice heartening job of work, and not too long if I tired. So before long, when the other two came down off Eagle's Nest, we crossed the gully and began to scramble up to our rock. The Doc led it, by the ridge; and I came second on the rope, and Ron brought up the rear.

You'll know the ridge-route, of course ? In the old days, one used the central crack ; and the crack's still the merriest way down, you just slide, like down banisters. But the ascent's not so popular. The footholds were always slim ; and they've been worn so smooth, and you're so liable to jam your leg and have to leave your boot behind, or perhaps even your breeches, that a lot of modest men rather jib at it, and prefer to go upstairs by the ridge. From the main crack you edge out horizontally, on rather sketchy holds with a long drop beneath ; but once you're there, you'd be surprised how much less difficult it is than it looked. The ridge is jagged and sharp, with a belaying pin the size of a cricket bat halfway up ; and at the top, a regular armchair of an anchorage, where you can brace your feet across a gap and safeguard the next man. Then comes a scramble up some easy rock to the shoulder ; and there, trouble begins.

You're on a broad step—lots of room for three of you ; and your next job is to surmount a smooth little wall, on which the summit-block stands. It's like a mantelshelf—they call it The Mantelshelf—a long ledge, chin-high, and four inches deep. You can catch hold of it, and then press upon it, to put your knees where your hands are ; and the whole problem would be simple enough, if only you had more room. Try climbing any ordinary mantelshelf and you'll find out what I mean. You want to lean well forward across the shelf, but the top wall won't let you. You must perform the trick erect, like a toy monkey ; only the monkey's nailed on to the stick, and you're not. At home, you could catch hold of something like a picture-rail ; but here there's nothing at all.

My turn came when the Doctor was perched on top, out of sight ; and I just couldn't make it ! Three times I pressed up on the shelf ; but when I tried to squirm a good knee on to it, I conked out and slid back. Ron mocked at me, from the ledge : ' What's your weight, G.S.? '

I said : ' The dentist asked me that. I'm hay-hee-ho, less a few ounces for the tooth. . . . '

Ron's voice came up : ' You've spoilt your balance, having that tooth out ; it's left you too light in front and too heavy behind ! '

I said : ' Forceps to you— ! ' But in the end, by gosh, I got up. Half up, anyhow. I'd still the worst bit. I had to raise myself from my knees to my feet, without falling backwards.

It's not easy, any time ; and today—thanks to that beastly dentist, probably—it defied me. So I did something very wrong : reached up and helped myself in secret to a nice pull on the rope. Most unorthodox. The wrongness is, that if you pull up on a rope the leader feels that it's taut, and doesn't haul in the slack. So, as you rise, you get a two-or-three-foot loop hanging down by you ; and if you come unstuck just then, of course, you're going to drop so much, clear. And that's what happened to *me*. I was just upright when my toe slipped, my knuckles grazed the rock, a stinging pain made me let go the rope, and I swayed over backwards. I dropped two feet before the slack ran out ; and my full hay-hee-ho came on the Doctor's rope with a bang.

I must explain now, how the Doctor was fixed. He was up out of sight of us, on the flat summit of the final pyramid, with the rope belayed round his shoulder. And by the way, people ask sometimes if it isn't rather worrying, on a rock-climb, to have nothing beneath you. Well, it's not, really ; you don't think of it ; and you couldn't do anything if you did. It's much more of a stinker to have nothing above. You see, the leader's job is to tie on to something firm above, in case the next man comes off : some flake, or spike. But on the Needle, you're on top of everything and there's nothing left to tie on to. The only safe thing you can do is to drape several loops of rope round the peak itself, beneath where you're sitting ; you have to loop yourself below yourself, if you see what I mean—because there *is* no above. The Doctor'd done that all right. But when I fell, the jerk on my rope dragged him off his perch and he half dropped,

half slithered down the face of the pyramid, until his own belay held.

The whole thing happened in a flash ; but if you've followed me so far I think you'll see how it landed us. I'd been left dangling over Ron, a few feet above the ledge ; the Doctor's fall released my rope, and I came tumbling on to Ron, who collapsed with me. But the Doctor's case was more serious. He must have come down a good fifteen feet before the belay stopped him. Then the rope snapped —it wasn't built for such a strain. They make 'em good for a hundred and something pounds, you know, dropping umpteen feet—probably in a vacuum ; but the Doctor's gravity's a bit plus-ish. Still it broke his fall ; the wonder was, it didn't bisect the beggar. It stopped him dead, a yard above the pair of us ; and when it parted, down he slumped on to us.

But, by jove, we weren't finished yet ! As we lay there, half dazed, and sorting ourselves out, we heard a kind of rumbling. And Ron let out a yell. And I looked up and saw that the huge pyramid which forms the Needle-tip was adrift !

It's a poised block, you know : not part of the main mass. I'd always heard you could vibrate the thing, if you rocked on it. And now, the mighty jerk our rope had given it must have started it off. Not towards us, luckily. The fissure slopes west, towards the Needle Gully ; and the block was creeping that way. It slunk down, almost imperceptibly at first, but soon faster : with a queer, frightful, grinding noise. And then it passed beyond its centre of gravity ; and the noise stopped ; and the whole thing leaned very gently outward : and fell.

It hit the rock one single glancing blow, above the top of the crack. Then a long silence—minutes, it seemed like. And then a most almighty crash down below, as it struck the bed of the gully. We craned after it ; we thought we'd see it go on walloping down into Wasdale. But it never budged.

Just stuck embedded bottom up, in the loose scree of the gully. And a big mushroom-cloud of sunny dust spread on the still air. And Ron and I hung, gaping down at it, and heard our own hearts beating.

The Doctor was still laid out; his fall had winded him. By and by, when he sat up, he got the devil of a shock to see the needle-tip wasn't there; he thought he must be delirious —doctors are easily alarmed about themselves; dare say you've noticed that—but we assured him it was all correct, and he cheered up a bit. And when he'd satisfied himself that he'd not smashed any ribs, we got down as quick as we could.

We didn't say much; we were too scared; and if we'd overturned the Albert Memorial we couldn't have felt more guilty. You see, the Needle is a sort of national monument; men come back happily to do it again, year after year, from the far ends of the earth; and now.... ! So we just slid the crack and dropped into the gully bed, and ploughed across with our eyes turned away from the great foreign-body sticking there, and scrambled up to the Dress-Circle again; and there we sat and took stock.

The Needle looked pretty awful without its tip. It looked forlorn and stumpy and undignified. It looked *wrong* ! We stared at it without speaking. And—you know how it is, when you've come through a nasty fright and the reaction sets in, it plays queer tricks on you. Ron began to laugh.

He said: ' O lord, G.S., you've been and gone and done it now ! You'll go down in history ! The hiking heavyweight ! The man who left no stone unturned ! The man who crashed the old Needle ! My hat, whatever will the Fell and Rock Club say ? Oh, G.S., you've surpassed yourself ! '

I couldn't see anything to laugh about. I was too ashamed. I felt like that chap in the *Ancient Mariner*—' For I had done a hellish thing '—you know the passage I mean ? And there's another tag, in scripture somewhere; it came into

my mind: 'Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. Amen!'

I said: 'Oh, shut up! I've two more days' holiday; but I'm off home to-night, before this gets out.'

Ron rolled back, helplessly. 'Gets out! Hear that, Doctor? How long d'you think we'll keep it dark? Oh lord, I'm going to be sick!'

Then we heard nailed boots clicking on the rocks, and three fellows hove in view; they must have been on Abbey Buttress or Arrowhead, round the corner. And when the first man came in sight of where the Needle ought to be, he stopped dead. 'Great Scott! I say, George, look here——!'

Ron punched me. 'You're too late, G.S.—it's out!' And then he must needs jump up and point at me and say: 'He's broken the Needle!'

And the newcomers glared and shook their fists at me, and said: 'The big stiff! He ought to be handcuffed.'

And Ron's voice gurgling: 'It's out——!'

I hadn't heart enough to say anything. I sat there overwhelmed with shame, with my eyes shut; I felt feeble and limp. And the voices kept on at me: 'It's out....he's broken the Needle....ought to be handcuffed, the big stiff ....it's *out!*'

At last I opened my eyes: and saw the accomplice groping on the floor, where I'd kicked all his bag of tricks; and beside me the dentist, holding up triumphantly a great pyramid of a tooth.

# SKI ON THE FELLS

*E. Pirie*

Perhaps for the Alpine purist the amusement to be had from ski-ing in England is too little to be worth the labour of carrying ski to the snow line, or contending with the too frequent bad conditions. Yet when we are made a present of big hills, snow-covered, why look a gift horse in the mouth and criticize? Take ski to the summit of Skiddaw or Bléncathra on a windless, frosty day, when the snow is down to the valleys, and the two thousand feet of running, right down to the road will repay the days of fighting against a north-east wind, or groping along in a mist with needle snow hurting your eyes.

The grassy northern fells of the Lake District are undoubtedly the best, though Helvellyn gives the most varied routes. From Stybarrow Dod above Sticks Pass, down to the sheep fold is a good run; but better still are the slopes of Raise and White Side, down the shallow gully to Thirlspot. Nowhere on Helvellyn's western side is it hard to find a way for ski and the tourist path to the top by Birkside and Nethermost Pike is a popular though rather more difficult route.

One of our best days was spent, late in the season, on Bléncathra. Leaving the car near the Sanatorium, we skied on skins to the summit by the long, easy western shoulder. Was it the prickly frost in the air, the exhilaration of the tops in winter, or just a feeling of fitness after days on the fells? For though I distinctly remember the snow near the top being too awful for words, we enjoyed the whole of that run. Frozen moss poking through ice for two hundred feet did not dishearten us unduly and we ran out on to better stuff below, speeding down the gentle N.W. slopes of the mountain and circling left-handed to Glenderaterra, where we came all too soon to the short path which took us back to our starting point.

Another memorable day we spent on High White Stones. On this occasion we had come up from London for the week-end and were well rewarded for our efforts. After the steep walk from Borrowdale to Greenup Edge, we rose out of the mist filled valleys to be greeted by the brilliance of snowy fells under a warm sun. A little later we witnessed that rare phenomenon, in this country at any rate, of mock suns, the 'sun-dogs,' each with its rainbow halo, very distinct on either side of the true sun. We played till late on the higher slopes that day and it was dark when we reached the valley to stumble along the path to Rosthwaite, with the ski on our shoulders catching in the branches of trees and iced puddles taking our nailed boots unawares.

Wind is the spoil-sport of ski-ing in England; one longs to see the snow come gently, piling up evenly, Swiss fashion, but almost invariably it arrives with a raging blizzard which sweeps the windward slopes clear in a few hours, drifting it on to the often impracticably steep lee side. But even wind has its advantages, usually giving, on high ground, hard packed 'christy' snow, fit for any enthusiast to practice on. Wind-slab, dangerous in high mountains, but apparently quite innocuous on our hills, appears to be the predominant snow condition above 2,000 feet, with suncrust below that level. But that is not to say that all conditions cannot be experienced on British snow. Once, during a run from Walna Scar to Parkgate we started on powder snow under the top of the Scar, coming in for some good boulder dodging lower down, which to my mind corresponds with tree running in the Alps, to run out on to hard wind crust at the foot of the pass. This was a place to play on, and having reduced our patch of practice ground to something like a bombed area, the result of a painful hour's endeavour to master the Christiania, we descended the cart track. Real stemming practice this, and our knees were red hot. We then fought with patches of frozen crust, interspersed with soft powder; just the thing for training purposes. As a reward for all this we came to

the home fields and had a perfect ' schuss ' to the front gate.

Ski-ing is undoubtedly becoming increasingly popular, not only with Club members, among whom there are many who ski but with others who have discovered the possibilities of the game. Given only a moderately hard winter, when ski-ing from the front door is perhaps a luxury, though at the time of writing, early December, the snow has been lying at lake level for a week, there is plenty to be had above 1,500 feet, and last season we had our first fall (I mean of snow, of course) at the end of November : and there was a continuance on the tops, with intermittent falls in the valleys until the middle of March. From my diary I find that there were fourteen weekends, consecutive except for two, on which ski-ing was done on the fells. As the season went on we seem to have become ambitious, for one day we arranged a slalom course, running between ski-sticks and on another an embryo jump was built. The latter, I remember, was made in the middle of a snowed-up beck, down which the competitors came at speed, taking the jump in great style and landing in rather unorthodox attitudes ; in fact that was the only occasion on which I have seen a complete somersault accomplished on ski.

There is an immense amount of fun to be had from our snow, and a superb joy in being high up on ski, watching the amazing colours in sky and land which only winter can paint. It is very much worth while.

# OLD BILLY OF BIRKS

*Kathleen Sturgeon*

William Tyson—' Old Billy of Birks '—sat in the American cloth covered chair in the kitchen at Dale Head—his right to which was never disputed by any of the household, except the cats. Duffy, the Head of the Family of tortoise-shell cats, crouched cosily on his shoulder, and Spot, her daughter and frequent rival, was perched precariously on one shiny trousered knee. His kindly, intelligent eyes gleamed between the clouds of pungent smoke which arose from his twist-filled pipe. His stocky figure, with broad shoulders, which had carried many an injured sheep, was surmounted by a fine head. He was a grand type of the old Dalesman, and passing photographers were eager to ' take ' him. Of all the many Tysons in the Duddon Valley, Old Billy claimed few near relations. When a Tyson was mentioned we would ask him ' Is that a relation of yours, Mr Tyson ? ' for the joy of hearing him say, ' Nay, that's anither soort o' Tyson.'

He was at perfect ease with all men and women, and when occasional strangers tried to patronise him, he loved to tease them into a proper sense of proportion. It was an incident of this kind which led him into telling me of two interesting spots nearby, on the Birks land.

Two City men had wandered over Harter from Eskdale. They had come down to the banks of the Duddon between the Black Hall stepping stones and Birks Bridge, and having travelled over much marshy land, they were tired, and a little peevish.

Then they saw Old Billy, leading a horse loaded with bracken, and asked him ' Is it possible to get any tea in this benighted spot ? '

The only farms they could see were across the river, on the Lancashire side.

Old Billy told them they could get a grand tea at Cockley Beck, about 1½ miles away, at which they looked still more weary and peevish, and sat down and slaked their thirst at a little beck.

'Or,' said Old Billy, addressing their disconsolate backs, 'if you like to follow me up to Birks I'll give you a drink of tea, and a bite to eat, but being a bachelor, I live very simple.'

After a short discussion, one of the men asked how far it was to Birks. There was no reply. They jumped up and looked round. There was no one in sight. Old Billy and the horse had completely disappeared. There was no rising ground to hide them which they could have reached in the time between his speaking to them and his disappearance. They looked in bewilderment all round them, thoroughly shaken out of their weariness.

'This is a bit spooky,' said one.

'Let's follow the direction he was going in,' said the other And then, suddenly, Old Billy, horse and bracken rose up from the ground a few yards away, and at the same moment they came upon his hiding place. It was a perfect circular basin, grass-lined, cut out of the flat land on the river-side.

They caught up with him and questioned him about this strange formation, but he could not account for it. A little farther on, where the road bends upwards to the farm, he pointed out another depression, which he said was known as the Giant's Grave. Here, many years ago, a Jew, who had taken refuge from persecution at Birks Farm, had excavated in the hope of finding interesting relics, or perhaps even treasure; but, as far as anyone knew, he found nothing.

When I found the basin—and it is an elusive spot—I noticed in the neighbourhood definite earth works, which could not all be accounted for as the covered foundations of old walls. As I conjectured on the meaning of these curious features in such a place, I remembered finding a similar basin near a stream bed up in the Macedonian Hills. It was filled with dry leaves, and some feet below them was ice in

perfect condition, though we were then in the full torrid heat of summer.

Perhaps the dwellers in the Dale centuries ago had made this basin by the banks of the Duddon for the same purpose, and used bracken to cover and preserve the ice.

These two spots had been known to Old Billy since his childhood, for he was born at Black Hall. But he had never noticed my own particular discovery a few yards from his door at Birks. To the right of the track leading to Grassguards, there is a grassy enclosure, scattered with outcrops of small rocks. In the midst of these is one of a rough triangular shape, bearing on one side very weathered, but unmistakable spiral markings, similar to those found on the 'Cup and Ring' stones found in all parts of the world. These markings do not take the exact form of the Cup and Ring stones I have seen, but there must surely be some connection, and it is possible that the weathering to which they have been exposed may have altered the form and size to some extent.

Old Billy delighted to talk of these interesting spots and recalled a grand cave he found in Crinkle Crags one day when he was hunting, and which he never succeeded in finding again. He spoke of a now dead sport 'mart hunting,' which was popular in his young days; and of the time when coaches rode over Hard Knott and Wrynose, and the especial occasion when the shafts of a coach broke, and he caught the terrified horses, and was thereafter allowed free drinks at the Salutation at Ambleside, to which the coach belonged.

Those tales told in the lamplight, accompanied by a chorus of purring cats, showed the clean, simple, selfless life he had led. It came to an end in July 1935, through blood-poisoning after tooth extraction.

Dear, gentle Old Billy, we miss you.

## LAKELAND

Give me the far-flung mountain range
The ridge from peak to peak
Skies, seas and forests, valleys, plains
The river's silver streak.

Give me the awesome, dark ravine
Whose lonely depths are stirred
By little puffs and gusts of wind
And raven's croak is heard.

Give me in reverent mood to stand
Cathedral shapes among,
While thoughts unbidden, mystic, grand
Rise and are heavenward flung.

Give me the leaping, tumbling stream,
The rowan-skirted pool,
The depths where fishes' bellies gleam
The rocks foam-flecked and cool.

Give me the pass at eveningtide,
The valley's peace below,
The late sun's splendour spreading wide
The lake with fire aglow.

Give me the fells when night hath come,
The sounds the dark doth bring,
Faint squeak of bat, the beetle's hum
The flap of plover's wing.

Give me these joys that I may raise
Humbly my thanks to Thee,
For all the glories of Thy days
On fell and rock and scree.

*C. Paget Lapage*

# THE ALPINE MEET

The meet at Montenvers (Chamonix) took place from July 26th to August 8th, and was very much enjoyed by all. The party was a strong one, and some very good climbing was obtained in spite of a good deal of bad weather. The guides to the party were Camille and Michel Claret-Tournier, who showed themselves to be efficient and careful leaders, besides excellent climbers.

On Monday, July 27th, the guides led a party of fourteen climbers up the Petit Charmoz. Meanwhile, Bower, Travis, P. L. and J. M. Roberts left early for the Peigne, whence they returned late after experiencing some very bad weather.

On the following day the Grosvenors (father and daughter), Coxon, Medlycott, Fanshawe and Sanders climbed the Réquin with Camille. The rest went to the Couvercle Hut and did the Moine by the ordinary route. Speaker led Miss Scott-Johnston and Howe up the South-west Arête, which he described as ' a most enjoyable climb, with a severe twenty-foot angle crack of the Amen Corner type, and a fine, steep summit-slab.' They descended by the ordinary route.

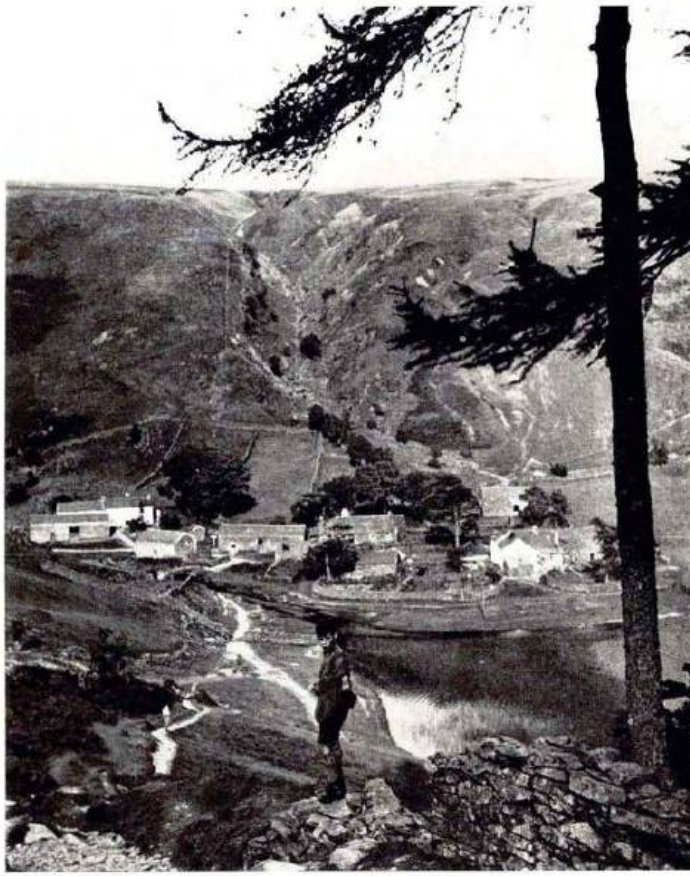
On Thursday, July 30th, Camille with Sanders, Howe, Edleston and Hardwick climbed the Grand Charmoz. The weather turned very bad during the descent, and the party only just got down in time. Two French climbers, who were following, got benighted on the mountain and had to wait stormbound to be rescued on the following day by our guides. Meanwhile, a guideless party, who had gone to the Réquin Hut on Wednesday, traversed the Rognon du Plan, returning in bad weather.

On the following Friday and Saturday there was no climbing, owing to heavy snowfall and rain. Excursions to Chamonix, and indoor games of a vociferous nature—such as ' Up Jenkins,' ' Cheating,' and 'Animal Grab '—were indulged in, while the quieter merits of Bridge and Vingt-et-un also received due recognition.

On Sunday the whole party went to the Réfuge de Leschaux, and on the following day climbed the ridge of Les Périades from the Glacier de Leschaux. The weather was unpromising at first, but steadily improved after sunrise until by midday it was glorious. The ridge gave us some good snow- and rock-scrambling, with several difficult pitches, while the views from it of the Grandes Jorasses, Dome de Rochefort, Mont Mallet, Géant, Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Aiguilles were really glorious.

On Tuesday, August 4th, Camille's party did the Grand Charmoz and Michel's did the Peigne. A small remainder did the Pic Albert-Aiguille de l'M traverse, finishing with the Petit Charmoz and descent ' en rappel.'

Wednesday 5th, all rested except Miss Winch, who climbed the Peigne with Camille, and Bower and Travis, who made an unsuccessful attempt



*Gerald Lacey*

WATEND-
LATH

on the Mummery-Ravanel. They reached the Col des Cristaux, where treacherous new snow prevented further advance, or the discovery of any crystals.

Thursday 6th, Bower and Travis climbed the Grépon from the Col des Pantillons. Others rested, while a third party climbed the Aiguille du Midi from the Réquin Hut, in wonderful weather and good snow. The panorama from the summit was superb, embracing Mont Blanc, Mont Blanc du Tacul, the Grandes Jorasses-Rochefort-Mont Mallet-Géant group, all the Chamonix Aiguilles, the Drus, Vertes and their group, Petites Jorasses, the whole of the Aiguilles Rouges, the Dents du Midi and many great peaks in the distance, such as the Matterhorn, Weisshorn, Monte Rosa, Grand Combin, Dent Blanche, Gran Paradiso and many others.

On Friday 7th, Howe, Coxon, Medlycott, Edleston and Mary Grosvenor with Camille, did the Grépon by the Mer de Glace face. Meanwhile the Midi party went to the Torino Hut and climbed the Aiguille de Rochefort by the famous snow-ridge, which France described as ' surely the thinnest ridge of snow which any of us had ever stepped on.' They then traversed the snow-ridge to Mont Mallet, descending to the Mallet Glacier and returning home by the Glacier de Leschaux.

The method of charging expenses for the guides was, that the salary and keep of each guide were shared by the party actually climbing with him. The expenses were only shared amongst the whole Meet when no guided climbing was possible. Therefore, people were at liberty to drop out or take off-days without feeling that they were paying for something they were not getting.

The hotel charges of 35 francs per day each, worked out at less than 10s. a day *pension*, which was certainly not dear.

Our thanks are due to Bower, the leader, and Travis, the treasurer of the Meet, for their most capable organisation of a thoroughly enjoyable fortnight.

E.C.W.R.

## THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

A large and jolly party assembled at Buttermere on the last day of 1935 to welcome the New Year, and in spite of wind and rain quite a number followed the President to the top of Pillar next morning. They were met at Gatesgarth in the evening and one or two allowed themselves to be motored back to the doubly attractive comforts awaiting them.

Glorious wintry weather favoured the many members who came to Grasmere meet in February. Sunday was a particularly fine day; there were parties on Saddleback and in Easdale and many went on both days to Helvellyn which was heavily iced. The high fells were deeply covered in snow like an alpine landscape and not a few enjoyed long ski runs.

In the evening the Dialect Play was well attended.

Easter Meet taxed the capacity of Wasdale to the utmost, as the Club had invited its Past-President and honorary member W. P. Haskett-Smith to be their honoured guest on this memorable occasion, which was to see the Jubilee Ascent of the Napes Needle fifty years after the first ascent of it by him in 1886.

Haskett had climbed Pillar by the Slab and Notch route on Saturday in snow and hail and was in excellent form on Easter Sunday, when with the President and the Editor, he accomplished the feat of climbing the Needle by the Crack without the least show of fatigue—a truly admirable achievement.

On the following day the first sod was cut by Haskett-Smith on the Hut site at Brackenclose Wood. It was generally accepted as a happy augury for the future of the Club that a new era of healthy development should be ushered in by the man who for fifty years had given such a powerful impetus to Climbing at home.

Unusually fine weather provided those attending the

Borrowdale meet in May with excellent opportunities for climbing and fell walking. It was a crowded meet and there was a big array of tents all round Thorneythwaite.

The All-Night Walk fixed for the full-moon night of 4th/5th July, found only two members ready to face the hardships of a wet night on a long tramp across the fells to the Woolpack. A party of Wayfarers who had joined this club meet actually succeeded in forcing their way through the darkness unsupported for some considerable time by the main body(!); but all reached the Woolpack in safety and then returned, the weather continuing wet and windy.

A smaller party than usual attended Buttermere meet in July and a good deal of climbing was done in Birkness Coombe. But by this time most members who had been to the Arolla meet the year before were making active preparations for the Alpine meet to be held at Montenvers on 26th July to 8th August. An account of this successful holiday meet appears in a separate article.

Early in September the Eskdale meet was held in poor weather, and most of the members confined themselves to fell walking: one party, however, succeeded in getting some climbs on Scafell.

The thirtieth Annual Dinner Meet at Windermere brought together a great gathering of friends. The weather was fine and numerous parties of climbers were to be found on Dow, Gimmer and Bowfell. All were happy to find themselves once more at the Hydro when about 160 odd attended the Dinner on Saturday, 3rd October. The Toast of The Club was proposed by W. P. Haskett-Smith, to which the President replied. In an exceedingly witty speech, Harry Scott proposed The Guests and Kindred Clubs, to which Norman Birkett made an admirable reply on behalf of The Guests, and A. S. Piggott provided excellent entertainment in replying on behalf of The Kindred Clubs.

Of a more intimate but equally delightful nature was the speech in which J. H. Doughty proposed the health of

The President, whose brief but cordial acknowledgment concluded the occasion in the happiest manner.

On the following evening T. Howard Somervell, who was due to return to India on the 14th to resume his missionary work for another three years, gave a sort of running commentary on Captain J. Noel's official slides of the 1924 Everest Expedition, in which Somervell had played so prominent and distinguished a part. The slides have since passed into the possession of the Club.

The promise of a perfect week-end in November brought over forty members to the Langdale meet—most of them on the committee, which was able to hold an exceptionally well-attended meeting that evening.

It will be remembered, too, because the Solly's were welcomed back after an absence of nearly a year. Solly was in good form, having been collecting 'Munros' in Scotland in the summer.

The lovely weather on Saturday was followed by a wet day on Sunday when the walking party made the ascent of Browney Ghyll, which was voted most enjoyable in spite of the wet and cold. Some hardy enthusiasts climbed on Gimmer and Bowfell buttress.

# THE LONDON SECTION

The popularity of the Sunday Walks arranged by a most energetic and enthusiastic Committee showed no signs of abating during the year. Naturally enough the number of those attending varied greatly according to the choice of district and the length of train journeys involved, but neither lack of participants nor bad weather caused any of the meets to be abandoned. Sixteen walks were held, ranging in length from as little as ten miles up to as much as seventeen miles—the official times never confessed to more than sixteen—and nearly all wended their circuitous way through unspoilt country away from roads and their din and smells.

All country walks are charming in the eyes of those who love the countryside, although, of course, this appreciation may be heightened by the change of the seasons, the peculiar characteristics of the district or even the moods and fancies of one's companions; but the most pleasant memories are centred on those excursions which terminated most appropriately around the genial fireside of a friend's house.

One of these occasions was provided on Joyce Chapman's walk over Ivinghoe to Berkhamstead at the beginning of May when Ashbridge beeches were still in their palest, softest green leafage and the Osborne Walker's garden looked its springtime best. After tea with our kind hosts, alpines and orchids came in for much admiration—even envy—and a grateful party returned to town by a later train than usual.

Another charming memory clings around a sunny day in June, when after a walk (considerately shortened) from Hatfield Broadoak a party of friends descended upon peaceful Dove House at Dunmow, where Dr and Mrs Hadfield had spread an excellent tea for their refreshment. They spent a restful and most pleasant hour or two under the spreading boughs of the old Tulip tree—or was it the still older Mulberry tree?—before returning home by motor-coach.

The autumn season began with Miss Bray's walk in September over Holmbury Hill and Pitch Hill and then back to the Manor House at Shere, where Miss Bray very kindly entertained all to tea.

During the earlier part of the year two lectures were held at the Alpine Club Gallery—kindly placed again at the disposal of the Section by the Alpine Club. On the 30th January, T. Howard Somervell gave a Lantern Lecture on the Tatra—a most interesting and informative account of his climbs while on holiday with his brother and Bentley Beetham.

On 25th February, Sydney Donkin, A.C., showed a very good 'action' film taken of his sons climbing on the steep granite cliffs of Cornwall; portions of a film taken in the Welsh Hills were also shown.

In November, the President, Professor Chorley, spoke on the work and objects of the National Trust, of which organisation he is a member both on the Council and the Executive.

The year's social activities of the Section ended in December with the holding of the 17th Annual London Dinner at the Connaught Rooms. It was as representative of the mountaineering world as ever. Among those invited by the Club were Mrs Bernard Allen, President of the Ladies' Alpine Club, General Bruce, Sydney Spencer and E. S. Herbert, representing the Alpine Club, Hugh Ruttledge and Frank Smythe of the Everest Expedition, and N. E. Odell and Professor T. Graham Brown of the Nanda Devi Expedition. The last named proposed the Toast of the 'Guests and Kindred Clubs.' Sir Claud Schuster, President of the Alpine Ski Club, replied for the Kindred Clubs and Ethel Mannin replied for the Guests. Sydney Donkin, President of the Climbers' Club, and Professor Kenneth Mason, the Editor of the Himalayan Journal, completed the Club's list of distinguished guests.

After the Toast of ' The King ' had been honoured, Professor Chorley in a short address referred to W. P. Haskett-Smith's great achievement in mountaineering and in token of the affection and esteem in which he is held by all members, presented him on their behalf with an effigy of the Napes Needle. He also announced that a replica in bronze would be given to the Club for use at all important functions.

The toast of ' The Club and the President and the Chairman ' was very charmingly proposed by Dorothy Thompson and Dr Hadfield briefly replied. One of the most gratifying signs of the popularity which this winter dinner enjoys with all sections of the Club was the exceptionally large numbes of northern friends who reinforced the London contingent to such purpose that all previous numbers were exceeded, and no less than 188 stood up and joined hands in singing ' For Auld Lang Syne ' at the conclusion of a very happy evening.

The Dinner Walk next day from Luton to Harpenden was led by Mary Glynne, and Dr and Mrs Garrod very generously entertained over forty walkers to tea under their cheerful and hospitable roof.

# EDITOR'S NOTES

This volume of the Journal covers number 30 for 1936 and number 31 for 1937. As will be seen it is a Jubilee issue devoted to the Lake District to commemorate the many mountaineering achievements of the Club's Past President and Honorary Member, W. P. Haskett-Smith, and to celebrate in particular his first and solitary ascent of the Napes Needle on Great Gable in June 1886, as well as his scarcely less inspiring latest ascent of that famous pinnacle on Easter Sunday this year.

Both are outstanding events in the history of the Club and both will continue to appeal to the imagination of men as long as there are intrepid explorers among the succeeding generations of climbers ready to carry on the fine tradition which has grown up around this noble craft of mountaineering.

The building of the Brackenclose Hut expresses the far-seeing and determined effort of the Club to provide the younger members in particular with inexpensive climbing headquarters in the heart of the Cumbrian crags ; very often the eagerness of the young climber is curbed by considerations of expense, a limitation which low hut fees will tend to remove. Every member should loyally support the Club scheme with a donation, however small, and so make the endorsement unanimous.

The treat of afforestation in Eskdale and elsewhere still persists, even though its scope has been narrowed, thanks to the unremitting care and energy of those who are best fitted to guard the treasured amenities of the Lake District. Influential deputations, letters to the public press, and books on the subject f this menace to mountain beauty may check the encroachment long enough, until in less anxious times, politically and economically, the idea of safe enclosure as

a National Park will, it is hoped, be turned into a happy reality. The Rev. H. H. Symonds' book on Afforestation, of which an excerpt appears in these pages, deserves the widest circulation. The Friends of the Lake District, whose treasurer he is, are keeping a watchful eye upon all signs of increased activities in tree planting or road-making or widening. With their newly-started London Section they should get a much bigger membership to help them to achieve their object of preserving the beauties of the District unimpaired.

The equipment of each of the five headquarters of the Club with an up-to-date First Aid Outfit, complete with Eustace Thomas Stretcher, has now been carried through and a nucleus of a small first aid committee of inspection ensures that they are kept complete and in working order.

The list of permanent officers has been enlarged by the creation of a Hut Warden and a Hut Treasurer ; a Custodian of Lantern Slides has also been appointed to re-organise and extend the Club's collection, and his appeal for loans of suitable negatives should receive the fullest support. Gifts of slides of any suitable subject or country would be particularly welcome.

Acknowledgments are due to Messrs Dent for permitting the inclusion of excerpts from the Rev. Symonds book ' Afforestation,' and to the Westmorland Gazette for allowing Mrs Chorley's article to be reprinted. The Club's appreciation is due to W. T. McIntire for his admirable article, to the well-known Cumberland writer Graham Sutton for his entertaining contribution, and to Miss Scott Johnston for her fine poem. We hope to welcome all of them as members sooner or later.

The Club's expert photographers responded with almost embarrassing liberality to the S.O.S. in the last Journal.

The Editor may be criticised for reproducing as many as sixty photographs, but his only regret is his inability to find room for them all. Special thanks must be given to Gerald Lacey for much valuable advice and help on the reproductive side.

The second Alpine Meet was successful—unstable weather conditions notwithstanding. The treasurer of the Meet, G. F. Travers, made himself responsible for arranging 'ropes' and expeditions and the difficult task of allocating guides' expenses to everybody's satisfaction.

It has been decided to hold the next Alpine Meet at Saas Fee from 31st July to 14th August, 1937. The Editor will again be making all preliminary arrangements, viz., with the Swiss Federal Railways and the Hotel at Saas Fee.

At the moment of going to press comes the news of the passing of J. H. Doughty. A special memoir of our distinguished member who had the affectionate regard of all who knew him, will appear in the next issue of the Journal.