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T H E        F E L L        &        R O C K  
C L I M B I N G        C L U B  
O F        T H E        E N G L I S H        L A K E        D I S T R I C T

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## ONCE UPON A TIME

*Fergus Graham*

When I was actively climbing, in the 1920s, the year 1900 seemed so remote in climbing history as to be practically out of sight. Now those 1920s are as far from the present year. A solemn thought. Generations of Tigers have had their day since then, but I am still unable to realise my antiquity as I creep back into the evergreen pages of the *F. & R.C.C.J.*

Back in 1920 an equally youthful friend and I had come to the New Hotel, Langdale, with something of a Livingstonian attitude, imagining ourselves as explorers in a little-known country of wild mountain fastnesses. We struggled about on various beetling precipices, and actually achieved, after coming on Jones' book, an epic three-hour conquest of the South-East Gully, Great End. Then one day, as we strolled up Mickleden, there came the sound of purposeful steps behind us, and we were soon overhauled by two men of awe-inspiring strangeness. Tattered breeches, dirty torn sweaters, an enormous rope, and dangling from the rope—a pair of gym-shoes ! They went by silently, relentlessly, two Olympians who never even noticed us.

Later we saw them again at the New Hotel and found that they had been writing something in a book. A furtive glance revealed the signatures of G. S. Bower and A. W. Wakefield. Thus for the first time I read one of those typically Bowerish records in the naive handwriting that I was to know so well.

Next year I boldly went to Wasdale alone. The astringent atmosphere of the hotel oppressed me at first, but there were no terrifying giants there. At the weekend, however, a motor-bicycle chugged into the yard carrying none other than G.S.B. Presuming on the Langdale meeting I made myself known to him, and was taken up Shamrock Buttress Route II for my pains. The day was wettish and I a more than wettish climber ; indeed, the affair became a long-drawn agony until, paralysed by incapacity and terror, I begged to be taken home. A more abject beginning could scarcely be imagined.

Very soon afterwards Baker's *Moors, Crags and Caves* came my way with the result that I soon found myself week-ending alone in Derbyshire. I am not ashamed to say that for me the whole matter of climbing was saturated with Romance. Everything connected with it seemed to exist in a sort of rarefied fairy atmosphere. And this book conspired to conjure up a land of golden promise with fabulous deeds to be done.

Then George Bower moved to Loughborough, and there followed a long, delightful series of week-ends on gritstone and, occasionally, dolomite. I would leave London on Saturday afternoon, meet George in the evening, talk till all hours, climb next day till tea-time, and be back in London that night. These week-ends are among the happiest of my memories. I can still vividly see the white roads round Cromford, and still feel the bumping from George's carrier as we careered along through rain or sun to the Black Rocks, or Cratcliffe, or Brassington.

But our favourite was Laddow, and we would often foregather at Mrs Goddard's at Crowden. This establishment was noteworthy, in addition to its hospitality, for a 'tame' magpie of fiendish cunning and malevolence. His game was to go for one's eyes. Sometimes he would dive-bomb you silently from a tree. Sometimes he would hop along in front of you roaring with laughter and talking about 'Mag,' as he called himself; then, directly he saw he had you off guard, he would whip round and go for you. A coiled rope was the standard defence. He got many buffets but remained irrepressible.

Many happy days were spent here, mostly with George, in all weathers. A visit by Frankland formed an outstanding event, and I was actually privileged to do a climb with him. His was the finest climbing I have ever seen, and a wonderful object lesson. He would choose his hold carefully, and once it was found he just stuck to it till he passed on to the next. There was none of that nervous padding with the toe, or taking a handhold, letting it go, trying another, etc. It was just slow, smooth and inexorable movement.

Of course, one thing led to another, and it was not long before I became embroiled with that stern pair Pigott and Morley Wood. Climbing on gritstone with them was a tough affair. Neither seemed strictly human, Pigott steeplejacking the faster the harder the climb, and Morley Wood's form improving in inverse ratio to the weather.

One day, when pottering alone on some Laddow rock that I erroneously imagined to be unclimbed, I was passed by a party on a nearby climb. Foregathering at the top, we discovered we all came from London. Naturally we had tea together at Mrs Goddard's and took the same train home. This party consisted of Maurice Guinness and some friends, the upshot being that before long Maurice and I were sharing rooms in Chelsea. I do not think I know anyone so completely devoted to climbing. Disadvantages that would have deterred many only seemed to increase his devotion. At this time (1922) he was absorbed in the resuscitation of the

Climbers' Club then moribund and within sight of extinction, and it was due to his unceasing efforts that the Club did revive and grow to flourish again vigorously. The years have in no way dimmed his enthusiasm.

In common with everyone who knew Cain I have the pleasantest memories of him. It was my good fortune to meet him early in my climbing life and I was influenced by the atmosphere of simple friendliness with which he was always surrounded. He was one of my sponsors for election to the F.R.C.C., and seemed to me to be the personification of the essential spirit animating the Club at that time.

But how many one could name, some acquaintances of a climb or two, some companions of many days, all good friends of instant mutual acceptance.

\* \* \*

One fantastic week-end around 1922 remains vividly in my mind. I had been away from our lodgings for a day or two and returned at the week-end to find nobody there. Thinking I had heard Maurice talk of going to the Staffordshire Roches, I set out without hesitation for that destination. But on reflection in the train I realised that I had no permit, that I had never been there before and that I had no idea where to stay the night ; indeed that I had no idea about anything.

However I did eventually decant myself from the bus from Leek and on arrival at the Rocks ran full tilt into the keeper. Guinness ? No, no permit for him : in fact, never heard of him. No, nobody else on the Rocks. So there I was, being regarded with cold suspicion, and only too conscious of the thinness of my story. But he thawed eventually, and I was allowed to climb.

So far so good, but I was hungry. I found my way to Rock Hall, a cottage partly hewn out of the solid gritstone of the Roches, shadowy and tree girt, and looking like something out of Hans Andersen ; a Witch's house if ever there was one. And it was. There opened the door to me an undoubted Witch, dark and sinister and making hissing noises. An idiot son completed the ensemble, and in this improbable place I had my tea. But it was in fact a pleasant meal, and my hostess turned out to be affable and friendly. Presently I found myself out on the Roches again, but soon the sun began to set, and I was alone with nowhere to sleep ; so, acting on advice, I set off for Dane Cottage at Gradbach. Minute and forlorn I felt as I trudged across the lonely darkening moors.

At length I reached Dane Cottage, to be met with blank refusal : they were full. I tried another place farther on. Sorry, full up. This was serious : it was getting late. For two miles I trudged

along a lonely valley, eventually reaching a farm—my last chance. Ah ! They unbolted the door and ushered me in, and it was wonderful hospitality I found in that back-of-beyond farmhouse. The wife gave me supper in the kitchen, which I ate under the fixed but benign stare of yet another idiot son. Then she made me up a bed on the floor and in the glow of the kitchen fire I went to sleep.

Next morning, fortified by a princely breakfast and a packet of sandwiches, I asked my hostess how much she charged. Blushing heavily she asked if two shillings would be too much.

After a good day at the Roches and neighbourhood I decided to walk into Leek, spend the night there, and catch the first train in the morning. Arriving in Leek at dusk, I accosted a policeman on the matter of a bed for the night. After a searching look at me he directed me to the most suitable place he could think of ; and presently I found myself at a very grim Oliver Twist sort of establishment, where I was met by a gent in shirt-sleeves. On my request for a bed he took me upstairs to a large and grimy dormitory, where, on the bed next to mine, there lay a dirty and malevolent-looking celluloid dickey and collar. This was too much for my morale and I asked in desperation if I could not have a room to myself. After stalling for some time the man eventually showed me into a cell-like room, filthy of course, but with only one bed and no collars. Fortunately I was tired enough to ignore the condition of the sheets. Early next morning I was woken by banging on the door and a hoarse voice shouting, ' Come on, there. Get out of it ! ' I got out like lightning, gulped a poor breakfast, and wasted no time in escaping from that ill-omened place. It was not till later that I remembered that I had my climbing clothes on when I asked the policeman.

This gritstone climbing, to me and I fancy to many others, always seemed a more formidable proposition than that in Lakeland or Wales. The nature of the rock played a big part, but the main reason was that the classification standard in the two latter districts was lower than the Gritstone standard. This was forced on my attention early on, while staying at Wasdale during the remarkable Whitsun of 1922. Surely never before or since has the place known anything like the influx of climbers. Practically every active climber must have been there, and every inch of accommodation in the valley and beyond was crammed.

For six glorious days the weather remained perfect and everyone climbed and climbed. At the outset a great event was in store for me—George Bower would lead one or two of us up the Pinnacle Face. It may seem strange nowadays, but at that time this face still held its reputation for great severity. I was a prey to mixed

feelings ; this was just the kind of thing I liked best, but surely the Pinnacle Face was flying rather high ? Well, eventually I was on the Gangway. What, a hold ? But another and another : plenty of them. First Nest, Second Nest, Moss Ledge, a moment on Herford's Slab, then Hopkinson's Cairn ! I felt a wave of joy. This was no grim destroyer, but a place of happiness, with lovely rock, lovely positions, and no great difficulty after all. Then came the Bad Corner, and even that was mainly a matter of exposure. And so it ended, and I was busy readjusting values.

It is certainly true that, within limits, difficulties are largely psychological. Once, at the Wastwater Hotel, an oldish gentleman approached me with charming diffidence, said he understood I had done a thing or two, and that he and his son would be most grateful for an 'expert' lead up Deep Ghyll. I put on the usual modesty act, said 'Er, I would be delighted,' and off we went. On arrival I uncoiled the rope in slow affectation, roped up, and went off lazily to the start. I rose perhaps 10 feet and stuck, a little more and stuck again. At the chockstone I stuck for good. I had to come down and in the end the oldish gentleman led the thing with ease. It was just one of those days.

Without wishing to belittle my own generation, I do feel that on the whole our climbs lacked the stature of their successors. It is not only a matter of difficulty, but of greater all-round sternness, though Pigott had shown the way on Clogwyn d'ur Arddu before the end of the 1920s. (My greatest climbing disappointment was the inability to accept an invitation to join the first ascent of this great climb.) But perhaps I am seeing things in too personal a light, for, from a combination of nature and circumstance, I was a trifler. Because I generally got away at short notice at unfashionable times of the year, I often found myself alone, and the idea of tackling the greatest things by myself and of making long new routes solo was too formidable, so I became accustomed to spending much time on the shorter climbs.

This solitary climbing, though frowned on officially, had much to commend it. The fells, the rock, the earth itself take on a specially intimate quality on these occasions. In my exploratory rambles I was led into many delightful and quite unfrequented places, of which perhaps my favourite was a patch of rock I came across one day in 1921 on the Mosedale slope of Pillar Fell. I named it Mosedale Buttresses but learned later that the real name is Wistow Crag. I would never recommend it for a serious day's climbing, but for a solitary off-day I found it ideal. The climbing was sufficiently interesting, and the situation charming. The view down Mosedale is simple but strangely satisfying, leading the eye



over Wasdale to the mass of Scafell. And there was the enchantment of the special bond between oneself and this unfrequented spot of one's own discovering. Holland, I believe, was something of a kindred spirit in this matter : at least he used to drop tantalizing hints of private climbing grounds, but I was never able to find out where any of them were.

Mention of Holland reminds me of an ancient arrangement at Wasdale concerning the spare bath. This was not, as you might suppose, for bathing in, but acted as an old clothes repository, and from it I got my most notable climbing pants, a pair of blue corduroy plus fours made for Holland in the Dolomites. They were in good order and lasted me for many a day. A rather different story can be told of a pair of rubbers. Wellbum and I, sometime in 1928, were going out for a mooch around Boat Howe, and he selected a pair of rubbers from the dresser in the hall. In due course we came to Breakwater Slabs, which we climbed unroped. Towards the top we found it necessary to take a long stride to the right. Wellbum did this, and as his weight was coming on to that foot, there came a loud rasping noise, and down he went. I was above and looked over just in time to see him shoot off the slab and land 60 feet below. I felt physically sick as I rushed down, but was intensely relieved to find he had no more than a dislocated shoulder and sprained ankle. It was an almost miraculous escape. We discovered afterwards that the rubber of the old shoes he had chosen was perished, and had sheared off on the long step, causing a perhaps unique accident.

People talk of the Golden Age of climbing, but every age is golden. For me, of course, it was the 1920s. The climbing world was so much smaller then that one knew practically every really active climber. Perhaps to the modern generation our antics may seem a little childish, not least our off-day activities at Wasdale. But what a lot of fun and laughter one got from such absurdities as the traverses of the various barn walls. And who, except perhaps the occupants of the office, does not remember the Billiard Fives with affection ? Such shameless scooping and homeric laughter.

On the whole my climbing life pursued a fairly even tenor without sensational high-lights. Of course there were many moments of fear, of which easily the worst came on the first ascent, alone, of the humble little Chantry Buttress. I had reached the top traverse to the right, now probably a mere walk. But in its then ungardened state there were no usable holds and I had to balance across above the very steep wall. It seemed likely that the nose above would touch my left shoulder as I passed, in which case I would certainly come off. Time after time I funk'd it, becoming more demoralized

with each attempt. At last I launched myself desperately across and was quite surprised to find myself in safety. I was absolutely done in and had to rest for a long time.

Another heart-thumping affair of a different sort took place at a Dinner Meet. The day before I had unwittingly done a new climb alongside C Ordinary of Doe Crag.\* Early on the morning after the Dinner, Hewson and I set off to try a better finish. We reached a platform high up on the buttress, and found that it would be necessary to remove a large perched block. Immediately beneath us was the Cave, where people had by now begun to gather. I shouted a request for them to take cover while the block came down. After a short discussion one of them shouted back that they would not take cover. After one or two further exchanges, seeing that they were determined I exclaimed to Hewson, 'Oh, *come on!*' and petulantly jerked the rope. But it had become lodged under the block, which before our horrified gaze slowly toppled over and bounded down straight for the Cave! To our unspeakable relief everybody went to ground in time, but we were not really popular. It took a long time before all of them could be convinced it was not deliberate.

I was at the receiving end myself one day in Wales with C. B. (now Sir Bertrand) Jerram, another good climbing friend. We were on those indeterminate slabs on Far West Clogwyn d'ur Arddu. I reached a vast belay and in a fit of absurdity wound my rope round and round and round it. A party, finishing ahead, had just disappeared over the skyline, when I heard a shout. Looking up, I saw a great rock trundling down on a bee line for me. Securely bound, I could do nothing but goggle in sickened fascination. It came crashing down with great joyful leaps—and hit the rock six feet to my right. Jerram was safely tucked into a groove over to the left, and well out of the line of flight.

Not unnaturally several ideas for new climbs remained in my mind to be tried sometime; but at last I had to admit that 'some-time' was never. Many of them have been done, but two still remain, and in spite of the risk of appearing ridiculous, I cannot resist mentioning them. The first is the Deep Ghyll edge of the Pinnacle Face. It would start from the scree of Deep Ghyll up a little buttress that leads in 20 feet or so to the edge of the Face above the Gangway. From here I am convinced the edge would go to the fierce vertical mass below Hopkinson's Cairn. Even this

\* An editorial request that this should be altered to 'Dow Crag' was withdrawn on the author's plea that he is 'an ardent Doe Cragger.' Future contributors please note that this is a special concession, not to be lightly repeated!—ED., *F. & R.C.C.J.*

I feel could be managed, possibly by going out a little to the right over Deep Ghyll. Incidentally I was always amazed that there was supposed to be a lack of belay by Moss Ledge. Before crossing the flakes on to the Ledge, go up a little way and you will find, in the bed of a crack, a good firm spike. I always used this.

The other idea is on Pillar. Ever since 1923 there has been in my mind a route that has been, so to speak, brushed in passing, but as far as I know not actually climbed. It would start up the grand sweep of slabs to the left of the North West. The Nor Nor West, of course, touches them at the start. Alone, under unfavourable conditions, I explored up them a little way, but they became too serious. However, I felt they would go. Next would come the widening fault in the steep wall to the right of Hadrian's Wall. This stiff-looking fault becomes mossy in its upper part, but one might be able to break out to the right, though that is rather a wild guess. I even went so far as to christen it Liza Wall. Perhaps it is only an optimistic dream.

I cannot resist a word about classification. I always did think that the expressions Severe and Very Severe were, in those days at least, too lightly used. Surely the word Severe suggests something unusually formidable, something that takes a deal of doing. And I personally thought and think that a great many of the climbs we called Severe were not so in fact even then. Now, of course, the situation has become absurd. I believe that the only possible solution, however unpleasant to some, is the issue by a central committee of a complete reclassification. It bristles with difficulties, I know ; the personal factor is so strong (for example, I always thought Kern Knotts Crack was far harder than the Innominate). But it could be done. Let them, however, keep the traditional categories.

But all these arguments are only a manifestation of every climber's deep interest in his calling, and a reflection of his love for what is after all the finest earthly activity man has yet discovered.

## PAINTING WEATHER

*W. Heaton Cooper*

Sitting here in my car on a Sutherland moor in the early hours of the morning, with my tent in ribbons and a 90 m.p.h. gale rocking the car like a ship at sea, I am finding a certain amount of satisfaction in facing fair and square this question of weather, attacking it direct, and carrying it and myself off into the realm of sweet memory and imagination.

For anyone who attempts to paint among the mountains of Britain, the weather is just about as important as it is to the farmer. When the weather is quite decisive, as it is this morning, the issue is clear, and, like the farmer, one finds something else to do. **But** it is those subtle variations and changes on days of doubtful or capricious weather that present the painter with his most difficult and interesting problems, and they are inseparable from the form and local colour of the country. In the painting of mountains, there is no doubt that form plays the most important part, and, in such a complex system as the Lake District, where each side of each mountain presents a different shape, it is a fascinating game to scour about on the hillsides, finding the height and angle that will bring out best the character of the mountain in view.

In British mountains, especially those near the western seaboard, the sky and the land are so intermingled that weather and light can make or unmake a good subject. Too often one has returned to an interesting subject, and wondered why it was so dull. On the other hand, sometimes an object one has seen almost every day without any discernment can, one day, suddenly come alive, very often due to some fleeting effect of light or weather. But don't expect it to happen every time.

' He who bends to himself a joy  
Doth the winged life destroy.  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Shall live in eternity's sunrise.'

On most days of the year among our hills, there is a veil of moisture, either suspended or falling, between oneself and the distances. It shows most obviously in the farthest distances, but, in a lesser degree, in the darks of the middle distance, and it is here that one can gauge its colour value, for it is still possible to compare it with local colour showing in the lighter parts of the middle distance. This veil is the effect of certain light on certain density of moisture, and is important to the painter, for it determines the ' colour of the day ' and, so, its mood.

This moisture is thinnest in the first three months of the year, and we have many days on which each local colour sings out its notes away into space, when blue skies turn to green at the horizon, and clear cloud forms carry the eye beyond the skyline.

During the second quarter there is often a dusty shimmer in the air, of a subtle colour, for which I would mix cobalt blue and light red, with a touch of crimson. This shimmering haze is very transparent, and the form seen through it is clearly defined, though transformed in colour by the air. Combined with the pale gold mottle of young leaves and grasses, and often patches of snow in the high distance, the effect of lightness is pure magic. If there occurs a long spell of fine weather at this time of year, as so often happens, the colour of the light towards the end of the anti-cyclone assumes an orange glow, which turns to vermilion in the evening.

In July and August, the light is often very white and cold (due to much evaporation from standing water) or else a violet colour in finer weather. These two months are the least colourful of the whole year.

September and October, especially the latter, bring more colour again to the air, so often that full rich blue (ultramarine with a touch of light red in it), and sometimes, on fine days in September, that smoky blue with a hint of violet.

I find the winter months the most dramatic in colour, when the distances are anything from thunder-blue and black in the darks to copper and gold in the lights.

One cannot speak of distant colour separate from foreground colour, for the richness of autumn foliage intensifies all the blues. And in these days the great shadows made by the low sun pick up the colour of the air and show the mountains in strong relief.

An interesting experiment is to pick a subject in which the basic mountain forms come together in an attractive way, and then to make a number of studies at different times of year and kinds of weather. It helps one in a very considerable degree to assess the effect of light and colour.

If, while walking among mountains, the painter is moved by something he sees, he needs to do a certain amount of analysis while still retaining the emotional pressure necessary to give vigour and unity to the final result.

He must determine what is the essential form, and decide how much depends upon it.

He must recognize both the atmosphere and the local colour, and determine how much of the interest depends on each and on both.

Then he must decide upon his strategy.

Often he can attempt to complete the painting in one sitting. This is generally the most attractive strategy, and given favourable conditions, it is a very good one, if he retains the motive that first made him want to paint it, whatever may happen subsequently. In this event, he refers continuously to the permanent forms, and trusts to his memory of what it looked like under the conditions in which it was first seen.

In weather of quick changes, I find it is useful to make rapid colour sketches on a small scale for the effects of light and colour, and, either at the time or on another occasion, to make thorough drawings in pencil or pen to enable me to understand the essential form. Then there may come a time when I can bring these studies together in one statement, the form and colour explaining each other if the result is successful.

Another method of approach is to work entirely from imagination and memory. It is the method of the great painters of the East, particularly of the Chinese of the Sung period, and it is the method most likely to result in really great painting.

But it must be the fruit of much contemplation and of exact knowledge ; it must be the expression of an understanding of the essence of things, of the relation of each part to the whole, and of the unity of which all things are part.

And that is why there have been so few really great landscape painters.

## HENCE, VAIN DELUDING JOYS

*C. S. Tilly*

There are some who hold that a holiday begins at the moment when the front door is slammed and one's face is turned away from home. There are others who regard the period between leaving home and arriving at one's destination as a period of purgatory to be endured as best one may, and to these there comes, year by year, a moment of realisation that, however good the holiday may be, it can never be an adequate recompense for the torment of the journey. The revelation is fleeting and quickly overlaid, and during the succeeding twelve months the horror of it is softened, subdued and eventually forgotten, which is the only reason why in the middle of a cold, wet and typically August night I found myself on Newcastle platform fighting my over-heavy rucksack and my kitbag of assorted camping gear into an over full train which I hoped was going to Fort William. I fought my way off again just before the train left for Aberdeen and repeated the process with the right train five minutes later.

But short of wishing oneself to one's destination there is no better approach to anywhere than by the West Highland line. The sun rose, there was breakfast, by Rannoch Moor life was tolerable and by Fort William it was almost good. The little town was sultry and Nevis had a cloud cap. It looked a long way away and a dreadfully long way up ; my rucksack was already heavy and as I walked through the main street I told myself that the others would have brought plenty to eat and that anyhow at my age a light diet was best. But there is a persuasiveness about the Fort William grocers and so I left the town with my shoulders depressed to my waist, wondering how much of what I had bought I could eat or jettison on my walk up to the C.I.C. hut. I decided to start systematically, if gently, by walking for the first 25 minutes in each half hour and resting for the last five minutes and as it was then 25 minutes past the hour I adhered to my time-table and started to rest. Two minutes later I thumbed the post van and arrived at Achintee just in time to take advantage of my next rest period.

It rained on the way up and I was thoroughly annoyed to find, on arriving at the hut, that Jack and Hannah were out and had taken the key with them. This, I admit, was unreasonable of me as I had arrived without warning on the wrong day, but something had to be done so I decided to walk up and have a look at the Douglas Boulder Direct. Not to climb it, as theoretically I do not approve of solo climbing and anyhow I had not been on rock for many months.

Thoughts of that kind are usually indulged in only as an excuse for one's own timidity but here the thing worked the other way round for presently a downward glance assured me that I must either go on or bed down for the night where I was, and as it was cold and damp I went on. It was grand to be on something big again, to feel that one was on a real mountain.

**Jack** and Hannah had been on Tower Ridge and we more or less coincided at the door of the hut. Supper was quickly prepared and over it we arranged that tomorrow was to be a fine day and that we were to do Slav route.

As it happened, the only noteworthy thing about the next day, apart from the volume of the rain and the velocity of the wind, was the Visitor. A glance at the weather had convinced us that we needed an off day, but by the middle of the morning we were becoming rather tired of the hut and were gazing out of the window down the Allt a' Mhuilinn in a jaded fashion. It was then that we first saw the Visitor, a damp dot in the distance, and with a barely quickening interest we watched his approach.

The Visitor was not very tall but was so narrow that he looked immense. The widest thing about him was his moustache. He was very wet, but there was a gleam in his eye which should have warned us. He was carrying a rope and a certain amount of ironmongery. We asked him in for a drink, and he told us his story. He was camping with a companion in Glen Nevis and the intention had apparently been to climb. Consequently, the Visitor was somewhat surprised when, on the first morning, the Companion announced that he would climb on the Thursday of next week. The Visitor thought this unreasonable : we kept open minds on the subject. Jack suggested that the Visitor might call at the Nevis hostel where he would probably find someone who was unattached, but the suggestion did not seem to appeal. Instead, the Visitor had another, and better idea. It was, that he should join us and that we should thenceforth climb in two pairs. The situation was getting beyond me ; I effaced myself and left it to Jack's more agile brain. The silence became oppressive. ' Well . . . ' began Jack. ' Or perhaps,' interposed the Visitor, ' we had only one Leader.' ' Yes,' said Jack, a shade too quickly, ' that was it, we had only one Leader.' Hannah expelled her pent-up breath and dropped the kettle, and Jack, who has a tendency to embroider, suggested that if the Visitor were to lead one rope . . . But no, the Visitor was not a Leader.

We heard the not unmusical tinkling of his karabiner for some time after he had disappeared into the mist.



That evening the cloud lifted and we could see, far in the north-west, the hills and coastline bathed in sunlight. 'That's where we should be,' said Hannah, voicing the thoughts of us all, and we resolved to go tomorrow afternoon.

That left us time for a quick climb in the morning so we decided to do Observatory Buttress and descend to Fort William after lunch, but partly due to the weather and partly due to a certain dilatoriness which, except in the Alps, seems to overtake every party I am in, we eventually made a brisk start at about 11 o'clock. The weather was not unduly cold but it was dampish and the mist made it difficult to see whereabouts on the Buttress was the best place to start. When Jack and I climb together we usually do alternate leads, and the one who has read his Guide Book most carefully has an obvious advantage. On this occasion I had read up the route the night before and by proper manoeuvring had little difficulty in ensuring that the only awkward pitch fell to Jack's turn. So really it was only justice that it should be he who found the shilling as we came down No. 3 Gully.

But by the time we had fed, the day was too far advanced for a removal, so we again went up Douglas Boulder Direct and from the top watched the interplay of sun and shadow away to the north-west. We watched without bitterness. After all, we should be there tomorrow, basking in the warmth.

It was a relief the next day to come down out of the cloud in which we had been living, and shortly after reaching the pony track we started to meet the day's ascending pilgrims. This growing awareness of our high places among people of all ages and conditions is refreshing. Jolly and friendly people they were, and our hearts warmed to them, but to nearly all, the meeting was an opportunity for a breather and a chat. The opening inquiry was always whether we had been to the top, and in time the task of explaining just where we had come from, and why, became irksome. 'From now on' said Jack, 'the answer to all questions is "Yes".' Almost at once we met an ascending couple. Had we been to the top? they queried, and 'Yes' came the answer in unison. **Did** we get a good view from the top? asked one. 'Yes' answered Jack. Simultaneously the other remarked that he supposed we had been in an impenetrable mist on top. 'Yes,' answered Jack, and we hurried on.

I was conscious, as we entered Fort William, that my beard was just at the wrong stage but was nevertheless puzzled when, at the outskirts of the town, Hannah abruptly left us for the opposite pavement. The reason soon became apparent. There, barring our path, was the Visitor with his rope and his climbing irons.

He was, he said, waiting for a party whom he had encountered yesterday and whom he expected to be passing this way today, but by some accident he seemed to have missed them. Privately we doubted whether it was wholly accidental. The Visitor's plans were to include a trip over to Skye since he had heard that some people whom he thought he might know should be going there at about this time. Poor Visitor ! We were all slightly ashamed of our selfishness.

We chose Fort William's largest hotel for lunch, feeling that we owed ourselves a good meal. Hannah disappeared with her rucksack and returned in a few minutes looking all feminine and alluring, and making me feel rather self-conscious about the hole in my seat, but the lunch was good. We then wedged ourselves into the car and departed in search of the sun.

That evening, as we descended upon Kinlochewe through lashing, blinding rain we were able to see, away to the south, Lochaber bathed in sunlight. We looked at it, and at each other and remained silent.

From now on we were to camp in Glen Torridon but we dearly wanted a roof over our heads that night. Kinlochewe Hotel was full and although the only other available house had one unlet room the landlady registered grim disapproval at the suggestion that it might house us all. And so we found the barn. It was the coldest, dampest, draughtiest and at the same time most hospitable barn I have lived in, and it was to be our home for some days. We did, indeed, spend one night under canvas, but then the goats ate the ground sheets so we returned to the barn.

Having installed ourselves, the first necessity was a meal, and while Jack and Hannah were searching for their old Primus and antiquated utensils, I produced my new, lightweight camping gear, namely one pan, an ingenious cross between a frying-pan and a saucepan (and, as events proved, of little use as either) and the Demon. I was proud of the Demon. He was a compact, lightweight stove, so simple that a child could use him. All that was necessary was to fill him with petrol and apply one match to his jet. By the time the match had burnt itself out the Demon was roaring merrily, ready to boil any number of pints of water in almost no time at all. The practice, however, differed slightly from the theory. Trial and error disclosed that if the Demon had so much as a thimbleful too much or too little petrol in his tank he would not light at all but that if the level were exactly right he would produce a sinister blue flame of the intensity of an oxy-acetylene blow lamp, which could cut a hole through a pan as neatly and swiftly as an electric drill.

The following day Jack and I traversed Liathacb, lured on to its superb ridge by a fair morning and there battered by rain and wind as I have seldom been battered on a mountain. But it was a great experience and the fleeting views offered us, endless vistas of desolate loch and mountain, had a sombre grandeur which can neither be described nor forgotten.

Hannah alleged that while we were out she had bathed in Loch Torridon and had enjoyed it, but there were no witnesses to either statement.

The weather now passed from the very bad to the frankly impossible. How many days we continued to exist in the barn I am not now sure but I do remember the night the roof leaked on Jack and Hannah : and the night my lilo died : and the day when I solemnly forswore mountaineering and bought a fishing rod which I never used and have since lost.

I also remember the midges. And that on our way south the three of us slept on the roadside in a single-seater tent which we had tethered to a steam roller on one side and a snow plough on the other.

And perhaps most vividly of all I remember our arrival at Workington in the small hours of the morning and the exquisite pleasure of a bath and a bed.

I did enjoy that holiday—but I cannot for the life of me think why !



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## SEXTEN DOLOMITES—1950

C. Douglas Milner

Our party last year consisted of John Hirst and Will McNaught (the Elder Statesmen), John and Rene Poole, Betty Emery, Gwyn Williams and myself. John Hirst particularly wanted to do the Glocknerstrasse on the way out, and asked Will and me to join him as relief drivers—the relief coming whenever either of us handed the wheel back to him. The others also went out by road but more directly, except Gwyn who came later.

After dropping Paddy Hirst in London to fly to Zermatt, we dined in Maidstone and phoned fraternal greetings to Graham Wilson, said to be still at the office. Then on to the rigours of the night crossing, the search for the right road in the dawn among the remains of Dunkirk, and the boredom of the first hundred miles or so of flat France.

After a bottle of something appropriate in Rheims, France seemed more colourful, and deterioration began to set in. The party gradually drifted from the status of mountaineers eager to grip the rough dolomite, to that of a small Committee of the Food and Wine Society. Some days elapsed as we tasted our way across Europe. There was the jolly evening at Vesoul, with George, the landlord-cum-chef ; there was a memorable dinner near a trout tank under the trees at Feldkirch, leading to *Vaffaire* Bludenz. Here I awoke in the back of the car to see a cropped head and field grey uniform in the seat next to Will who was driving and, beyond this sinister foreground, the unmistakable courtyard of a fortress. 'Concentration camp,' said John gloomily, having himself just awakened, but it was not so. The helpful Austrian guard was only returning to get a motor-bike and with his corporal on the pillion tore up a houeroof of a road to Bad Sonnenberg, where they found us a comfortable inn. Good wine and bad singing, in which the military joined heartily, ended a remarkable evening. There was . . . but these unworthy memories crowd in upon me too thickly. Let us get nearer to the climbing.

The Glocknerstrasse went well, and the mists cleared as we levelled out on the top, before dropping down to Heiligenblut for lunch. Here Will, who is musical and not of this world, put his passport on the car roof for safety. Ten miles down the Leinz road the military again appeared, put its head in the window and inquired for Herr Mak-Nowt. *ifa voll*, cried the Lancashire group in delighted recognition of the language, and Herr von Nix he was for the rest of the holiday.

We raced back to Heiligenblut for the passport, and then by fast going came to Leinz and the Italian Pusterthal. Halting only to admire the lovely Diirrensee in late sunshine, we reached Cortina in time for dinner. The direct group, who had succumbed to less Food and Wine on the way, were established and had already taken a training walk.

Next morning we got a guide, Verzi, for the elder statesmen, who were instructed to climb the Torre d'Averau by the gully, and keep themselves out of trouble ; whilst John Poole, Rene, Betty and I went over to the Torre Inglese. This is a fine little pinnacle with a route that perhaps epitomises dolomite climbing . . . a gully, a short chimney, a few easy slabs, then a big vertical wall, and lastly an airy arete. I was rather shaken to find I had left my rubbers in Cortina, and found the wall thinner than was good for my vibrams, then in their fourth year. But with soothing remarks from John it went, though not with that dancing grace shown by Brenda Ritchie in Herbert Carr's film of the climb. After a little time vainly scanning the big tower for the E.S. we abseiled off, and came down to the Cinque Torri Hut for drinks. This is on the ' trade ' route to the Nuvolau Hut, a heavily over-populated place in the season, rivalling Snowdon and the Zugspitze for the dishonour of being the most vulgar *Anssichtspunkt* in Europe. Presently we wandered down through the grasses and tiger lilies of the alps to the Cortina Valley.

The next day we drove up to the Caldart Hut, formerly the Principe Umberto, now accessible all the way by car, accompanied by a gang or mob of selected guides ; a Verzi, a Dibona, a Pompanin. As I was responsible for guide arrangements I spent most of the day guiltily contemplating the obvious excess of hired retainers. We could have done with one only, or one and a half at the most. The route was up the Kleine Zinne by the Innerkofler way on the north wall, descending by the ordinary (or Sanger-Davies!). The approach to the North Wall is by a fine steep route on the South to the Col between Punta Frida and the Zinne. This starts along a broad ledge, then up by a stiff overhanging chimney to the face. There is a good view hereabouts of the vertical edge of the Kleine Zinne, the *Spigolo Giallo*, where a party were seen about 200 feet up, nailing their way on this remarkable sixth grade route.

At the col, the Zinne goes up **with** sustained steepness for another 500 or 600 feet. The Innerkofler route is on sound rock, chimney and wall, with plenty of fresh air, and nice pitches like Gimmer ' C ' but much longer between halts.

Any tendency to take the climb too seriously was removed by a young gentleman on the *Spigolo Dibona* of Grosse Zinne who was playing either a piano accordion softly or a mouth organ loudly.

The difficulty of the route suggests the latter as the more likely. Another Austrian party were kicking stones down Punta Frida. At times the whole affair recalled the Guards Officer's complaint of modern battle—'the *noise* and the *people*.'

We arrived at the top at the same time as a thunderstorm, roped hastily down the Zsigmondy chimney, and soon afterwards walked across the famous traverse, in rubbers, holding the spare coils in the unoccupied hand, with the rocks spouting water. When we were sheltering in the cave below the traverse Hirst burst into song, the thunder roared, the lightning flashed. Soon John and the thunder stopped, the mists rolled away from Sorapis and we descended the lower buttresses to the path where we saw the *sesto grado* party who had come down on the long rope to safer surroundings.

Climbing from hotels depletes lire stocks too quickly, and a majority of the party supported a removal to simpler surroundings. Leaving John Hirst and Will to do the face of Punta Fiammes with their man, we packed up and went over the Ampezzo Pass to Toblach, where we arranged quarters in a nice little Austrian inn. The Punta Fiammes party were to spend the next day in a leisurely ascent to the Zsigmondy Hut.

We (Rene, Betty, John, Gwyn and I), then went up to the Hut, having already engaged Michel Innerkofler for the Zwolferkofel. He was a substitute for Sepp Innerkofler, son of the great Sepp, whom we had hoped to get, but he had twisted a foot whilst working on his farm and so sent his cousin. Michel, an Austrian guide of the old school, was suitably impressed with the standing of the entire party on our presenting Gwyn as a Herr-Professor-Doktor!

The Zwolfer has a great reputation but, by the normal route which we did, it is not at all difficult in its detail. The route itself would be extraordinarily hard to find for it wanders across the west face by chimneys and ledges, eventually passing easily under the big overhang on the ridge, so well seen from the Pian de Cengia. John Poole led the second rope, and was inclined to inquire at times as to when the climbing would begin—an attitude proper to a man who has, in his day, led the *Schleierkante* at San Martino. But the summit justifies the climb. The view to the Zinnen and Croda Rossa, to Sorapis and Pelmo and the Marmolata is as good as any in the northern Dolomites. The afternoon thunderstorm broke on the Zinnen again, missing us this time. We returned to the hut to meet young Michel Innerkofler, who had been sent to join Happacher, the hut Warden, to make up two ropes for the great North Wall of the Einserkofel on the next day. Old Michel was

held in reserve for the elder statesmen ; he took them up the Elferturn, which they enjoyed but found easier than it looked.

Gwyn, who now claimed to be visiting the Dolomites for the scenery alone, ' stayed below and chuckled. He did not want to come.'

The North Wall of the Einser is over 850 metres high, ranking with the South Wall of the Marmolata (750), the South Wall of Tofana (800), the Croz dell' Altissimo (1,000), and the North Rib of the Langkofel (900), as one of the great climbs of the region. These big walls are longer than many of the famous Chamonix rock climbs such as the East Ridge of the Plan, the Mer de glace face of the Grepon from the Tour Rouge, or even the North Face of the Dm.

On Einser there is a choice of routes. The Phillimore route (the original) goes up by a system of strenuous slanting chimneys ; the terrific Steger route is distinctive by its formidable finish up the face of the final tower of the mountain. The fine Dibona route is almost as hard, though less direct. Among the variants is the Langl Loschner which finishes up the north-west angle of the mountain. With ladies in the party the Steger was ruled out, whilst reports of a heavy rockfall on the Dibona made that inadvisable. The Phillimore and the Langl remained available. The possibility of stonefall in chimneys is very real, and it is advisable in Dolomite climbing to avoid having parties strung out at any length when off the frequented routes. So John elected for the Phillimore with Rene and Innerkofler, and I for the Langl with Betty and Happacher.

Neither of our young guides had done the climbs before and they were inclined to ask very fancy figures as a tariff, in fact 24,000 lire per rope. As we were not proposing to acquire the freehold of the mountain, we brought them down to 16,000. The implication of length and difficulty conveyed even by this figure was enough to send us to bed early with expectation of a long and arduous day—an expectation that was fully realised.

We left at six, and descended by the Fischlein track to traverse along the scree and snow slopes at the foot of the north wall. The face is best seen from near Fischleinboden, as in the photograph, and even then it is not easy to realise the immensity of 3,000 feet of rock. But the *Platle* of yellow rock, overhanging in parts, which is the main barrier to the ascents of both the Dibona and the Langl could be seen well enough, about mid-height.

The climb starts under the western summit in a gully which soon steepens into a sloping chimney, its left wall necessarily climbed as a slab as it was too wide for any real chimney work. Always trending to the left we went up in hundred-foot runouts, climbing singly of





*E. A. Emery*

THE OVERHANGING CRACK  
(CONSIDERABLY FORESHORTENED)



*C. D. Mitton*

THE KORTH WALL OF EINSER  
(1) PHU-IMORE (2) STECEH (3) DIBONA  
(4) LANGI-LOSCHNER CRACK AT X



*C. Douglas Althner*

EINSENERKOFEL-OBERBACHENSPIITZEN FÜR DIE A. T. ELFERKOFEL IN BACKGROUND.  
LINE SHOWS FINISH OF L. GEL-LOSCHER BY THE WEST WALL.

course, and in rubbers. It was one of those climbs that is more exhilarating than photogenic, a quality I always deplore. The leader usually went out of sight in ten or fifteen feet from any belay (yes, we used belays), the third man was clearly audible about 100 feet below, but of the mountain above or the drop beneath nothing could be seen. With all his expert care, Happacher could not avoid sending some stones down, and selection of halts under suitable eaves quickly became our chief occupation. After about 1,200 feet of work that was continuously exposed and fully up to Grade IV, a delicate traverse round a buttress brought us into sight of the steep hollow between the summits, where the Dibona and Steger routes leave the common approach we had followed so far. To the right were the vast impending yellow crags of the *Platte* with the scar of the rockfall most clear. A few hundred feet above on the left, in the upper cracks of the Steger, were two men, who were identified from the summit book as Austrian amateurs.

About 300 feet of rising traverses to the right, or west, brought us to a small scree slope on the edge of a gully which split the vertical rocks of the west buttress. We had traversed below the *Platte*, almost to the end. The gully narrowed to a nasty crack, overhanging awkwardly about 100 feet above us, and difficult to estimate thereafter.

The passage of this crack is the crux of the climb, and though the whole of it was brought into the compass of two rope lengths it took us over two hours, in exploration and execution, to overcome it.

Happacher climbed up the buttress or left retaining wall of the gully for about 40 feet, found a bollard and brought me up. Then we both read the book (we were using Gallhuber, not Berti) but didn't make much of it, mainly because (and not for the first time during the day) neither of us knew quite where we were. Happacher continued another 30 feet or so, put in the first piton, crept across a delicate slab to a little gallery, and put in the second piton before trying a possible exit to the right, on ground which looked feasible but in the event was of bad rock, with no future about it whatever. It was not easy for him to get back to the gallery, and after trying one or two other lines, he was forced back into the crack as the only possible exit, first unclipping himself from the second piton. The left end of the gallery gave out in a black cave from which a few strenuous feet led to a little ledge, the only resting place before the worst part of the crack. This latter was for the next IS feet tilting outwards and formed of yellow and red dolomite . . . and you know what that means. By this time, there was about 60 feet of rope out, and I was expecting him to call me up to the piton at the gallery. But he must have been so keyed up to the climb that he went straight

on with the crack, which demanded a distinct effort, coming as it did after nearly an hour of exploratory moves. A few pieces of red rock splintered away as he went up, and bounced into the gully, then over the edge to the distant screes of the Altensteinthal.

On he went, in one of the most sustained bits of leading I have seen. When he had nearly 100 feet of rope out he found a small niche, secured a third piton and called for me. It was obvious that the 100-foot nylon between me and Betty who was 40 feet below, would not cover the distance, so I first reached the gallery, clipped on to the second piton, and brought her up. The crack above was quite as hard as I care to tackle and my fingers were not good for much by the time I joined the guide.

It was obvious that Betty, whose climbing experience had not been great, was in for a heavy test. Her first attempt at the crack did not go right and she was played down to the ledge for a rest. I think she would have made the overhang at the next shot had not the red rock decided that 'more it could not.' A large section left for the valley, Betty came on the rope, and I heard Language. Happacher hung on with the rope through the karabiner-piton whilst I shouted down for news. She complained of revolving about three feet clear of the rock—adding (some hours later) that the view of Fischleinboden was very pretty. Again we lowered her off to the ledge, and after another rest she gamely prepared to try again. But we had still 1,000 feet to go, and on a big climb like this one cannot come back and try again with declining finger strength. It is a battle with the mountain. I hauled in the idle rope between Happacher and me, tied a loop knot, and slung it down with firm orders to Betty to put it under her arms. She was allowed to climb up to the point where the rock had fallen. With an extra karabiner in our one piton, Happacher and I, with a rhythmic repetition of *ein-zivie-drei-ziehen!* then brought her up in the lift for nearly 10 feet, by which time she was over the worst and climbed up to join us. It was as well that the piton held as the stance was very sketchy.

The next pitch, also with an overhang at the top, went more smoothly, as we were back on the good grey rock. Soon the difficulties eased to a normal Grade IV. A few more slabs, and a last traverse round the corner of the north-west buttress brought us into the afternoon sun. Another steep chimney of red rock broke the continuity of the grey, until slabs led into quite a deep gully with a cave exit just like that of Deer Bield Chimney writ large. Beyond this, an arete of about 500 feet with splendid holds led to the western tower, opposite the Oberbachenspitzen from which our mountain was separated by a deep cleft. I remember a curious tiny square

hole, across the gap, obviously a gun emplacement of the 1914 war, recalling the times when night patrols of Alpini and Jager fought each other across these fantastic front line posts.

Beyond the western tower, the Dibona route is joined for the last buttress to the summit of the mountain. It was already six o'clock when we signed the book, read of the Austrians who had finished the Steger, and first felt anxiety because our friends with Innerkofler had not yet arrived. Two Sexten boys who had followed us up the Langl said something about a party having returned by a descent of the Phillimore. It is amazing how the bush telegraph works in the hills. I am still wondering how they knew this, for it was true. John had ordered a descent from about two-thirds of the height of the climb, because of the very thing that so nearly defeated us . . . the excessive strain of overhangs on the fingers. They had abseiled down a large part of the way, but even so, had actually done more climbing in their day than we.

But we did not know this at the time, and were worried. We waited for half an hour, and then decided that whatever might need to be done, it could least well be done from the summit. So we descended the easy chimneys of the ordinary route, and reached the hut at about 7-30. News of John's return had already come through, and before long he and Rene joined us, whilst the Herr Prof, and the Elders plied us with wine and questions.

We had all been very tired, and no one suggested a climb for the next day. We rose late, discovered by inquiry and search a piece of brown leather that on being cut turned out to be smoked ham, so had ham and eggs and coffee for breakfast. Outside was a 'soft' day, like Cumberland, but we just couldn't have cared less, as we walked down to Sexten through the alpenrosen, and glimpsed again the great grey wall that had given us such a tussle.

## POSTCARD POSTMORTEM

Though I've been sixteen stone for years  
Kind friends still coax me up Severes :  
**Which** earns me many an envious eye  
From other hippopotami.

Last winter I dispatched these lines, on a postcard, to my old friend and tutor F.C.G. of St. Bees. They were prefaced by an abrupt *Translate*, and footnoted by the familiar and ill-omened tag, *Candidates should attempt not less than ALL the questions*. Card Two came back with the candidate's brilliant version, in scazon metre : 'the limping character of which is perhaps not unsuitable to the subject,' said he.

Quamvis ducentis iam diu gravis libris,  
At fune comitum **non** minus **benignorum**  
**Suadente** in OssamPelionque conscendo ;  
**Mirabilique** subter adstupens visu  
Hippopotamorum similis invidet turba.

Meanwhile I sent a copy of Card One to the President, who replied with Card Three as follows :

The big man came from Bigwood Court  
And climbed the Mountain Way **with** glee,  
Then **drank** some beer he didn't ought  
And petered out on Chamonix.  
Yet fun it was to hoist him high  
O'er lesser hippopotami.

The incident then seemed closed : till, seven weeks afterwards, the Editor was shown the cards and demanded an explanation. This I give gladly, both in respect for him, and to refute a slander uttered by the President in the last week of April, the **Scafell** Hotel, and the hearing of other members : which slander, subsequently put on paper, forms an adhesive libel. I am advised, that Libels true in Fact and Substance are none the less actionable ; and since the Poor Man's Legal Racket is now operative, I shall take that advice. But let me first outline the Fact ; I myself am the Substance.

In brief, then : the President and I bestowed an afternoon on one of Beetham's Beasts. Later, he lured me into the Borrowdale bar, where I had a quart-pot of shandy. I don't remember what he had ; we were there for some time. We then resolved that it would be a thousand pities, etcetera—a resolve prompted by the sly proximity of shandy and Chamonix, of the beers and Severes. The party soon got under way, and weather ; and I let the President lead.

By dusk, strung up to the top pitch of resolution and Chamonix, we reacted each in his fashion. The leader climbed it, having the situation well in both hands. I also managed to remain in the saddle—if you happen to know that saddle?—remarking merely, when requested to follow him, that I should like an hour's sleep. From these words, intended humorously to restore the party's morale, hangs the libel complained about. Should the defence be raised that the President took them seriously, I shall call witnesses that he takes nothing seriously : or if he did, that he had shared the spirit in which my remark was made.

So far, though there may have been some infringement of the Acts of Blasphemy and Exposure, the point of Libel had not yet arisen ; neither had I. But our predicament (as the old climbing-writers used to put it) was desperate : one half the party having collapsed, and the other already suffering agonies of frostbite, exasperation and laughter. Did we survive, you ask ? Let these cards testify. In the small hours—by hook, crook, might, main, objugation and ridicule : by faith and hope : by the technique of pleading from above and commenting from below, which cragsmen call Combined Antics—we attained our objective. And there in the first gleam of dawn (or was it our afterglow ?) we searched our sacks for the emergency-ration : and enjoyed a full half-hour, drunk with exhilaration that the summit was half-ours.

G.S.

## OVER SANDS TO THE LAKES

*Katharine Chorley*

So Edwin Waugh entitled an account of a journey he made to the Lake District about 1860 along the coastal route from Lancaster to Ulverston. But the title was a misnomer, for Waugh went quite prosaically by the new Furness Railway, opened a year or two before he wrote. And the true route 'over sands,' the old famous route, ran, of course, right athwart Morecambe Bay and the Leven Estuary. At high tide, 12 foot of water might be washing over the spot where the Ulverston coach had halted a few hours earlier while the guide was prospecting for the day's correct fording place over the river Kent.

The old road took to the sands at Hest Bank, just where the expanse of the great bay, with the pale beautiful mountains crowning the farther shore, lies open to view. You look right across to Kentsbank almost along the line of the oversands route ; and the level crossing which leads straight on to the beach marks the start. The general course—the details varied considerably even from day to day owing to the vagaries of currents—is marked on all the old maps and on the modern ordnance map as well. It regained *terra firma*—a term in this connection with not a little of meaning to it—at Kentsbank ; there it joined the road and crossed the Cartmel peninsula, taking to the sands once more about a quarter of a mile below the point where the modern railway touches the shore of the Leven Estuary. The route across Leven sands made dry land near the mouth of the Ulverston canal. It was 21 miles from Lancaster to Ulverston, and most of the way over that odd sea-floor of superfine sandy mud, now slimy and hard like greased boards, now with every ripple of the outgoing water imprinted on it, now quaking and shivering ominously under one's footstep ; and always showing blue black and strange below whenever its dull brown surface is grazed.

Certainly, a romantic road ! And its history goes back as far in time and is in its own way as exciting as that of any road in the kingdom. It is quite likely that the Romans used it when they were occupying Ravenglass ; and perhaps they used it for the first time on their conquering march northwards from Chester under Agricola. Tacitus, writing of Agricola's campaign, says that he 'tested the woods and estuaries'—a phrase that applies perfectly—and Roman and British remains are to be found on the Cartmel and Ulverston peninsulas. You can picture the first cohorts out from the new fort at Lancaster assembled on the patch of beach at I lest Bank, leaning at ease on their spears and gazing



across the bay to the unknown land of mountains beyond, while the General questioned a big-boned, red-headed British hostage about the nature of the sands. Agricola would be thankful that there was a way of avoiding that country inland of inhospitable hills and soggy matted forest studded probably with unseen foes. On the march oversands, no enemy could ambush him. Moreover, he had probably learned a bit about tides and sands since he left the Mediterranean. There were the sands of Dee and the sands of the Menai Straits. You can hear him giving the order to shackle their guide to the leading legate's horse, so that if he tried to play them false, he would have to share their fate. You can see the column advancing, a little out of the famous marching discipline perhaps, owing to the queer ground underfoot and the waif lagunes left behind by the sea.

The first absolutely certain reference to the route occurs apparently in 1325 when the Abbot of Furness asked King Edward II to extend his jurisdiction to take in Leven sands which were so dangerous that numbers of travellers—on one occasion 16—had been swept to death by the oncoming sea. This petition was granted and the Abbot promptly established a little chapel on an island half way across the estuary where monks kept up a chain of prayer for the welfare of voyagers over the sands all through the 24 hours. This chapel was no doubt run as a subsidiary to Conishead Priory little more than a mile distant on the mainland. At any rate, we know that away back in the Middle Ages, a regular guide was paid by the Priory. Prayers were not the Church's only effort for the safety of travellers. Like their colleagues on the St. Bernard, the monks of Furness clearly believed in giving active assistance. The guide was apparently a layman, and he was given 15 marks a year and three acres of land. At the Dissolution, the Crown took over this payment (later, the 15 marks became 10 pounds) and more than 300 years afterwards, when the Furness Railway was opened, the guide was actually included in a clause in the Railway Act which laid down that he should be paid £20 a year compensation for loss of tips. Mrs Radcliffe, of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* fame, who also wrote a very purple-coloured account of a visit she paid to the Lake District about 1794, pictures him 'shivering in the dark comfortless nights of winter and scorched on the shadelcss sands under the noons of summer.' Mrs Radcliffe's romanticist vision evidently included the summer climate of the Lake District.

There were two guides across Morecambe sands. Their job was to test the streams that had to be crossed from day to day to find out the best fording places. The first, on foot, met parties when they reached the Keer which flows into the sea about three miles

north of Hest Bank. The second, and more important, guide was on horseback and he saw to the safe crossing of the bigger Kent. West, who wrote the earliest guide book to the Lakes in the 1770's, thus describes him : ' When the traveller reaches the side of the Eau (or Kent) he drops down a gentle descent to the edge of a broad and seemingly impassable river where the only remains he can perceive of the surrounding lands are the tops of distant mountains, and where a solitary being on horseback (like some ancient genius of the deep) is descried hovering on its brink, or encountering its stream with gentle steps in order to conduct him through it. When fairly entered into the water, if a stranger to this scene, and he does not feel himself touched with some of the most pleasing emotions, I should consider him destitute of common sensibility. For in the midst of apparently great danger, he will soon find that there is really none at all . . . "

How delightfully typical of the eighteenth century's sophisticated taste in sensationalism. What could be more satisfactory than to get your kick out of an obviously exciting situation while knowing the whole time that you weren't going to come to any harm !

In the Middle Ages, these two guides were paid by the Priory of Cartmel ; but after the Priory was broken up their wages became a charge on the funds of the Duchy of Lancaster. The guide over the Keer got £10 a year and the guide over the Kent £20. The latter was rather oddly known as ' the carter,' perhaps because a family of that name had held the job for many generations.

The over-sands route to the Lakes was very much in vogue during the era of ' picturesque tourism.' In 1785, a daily coach service was started between Lancaster and Ulverston which shows that there must have been a considerable amount of traffic. No doubt, the picturesque tourist was panting to get to the Gothic ruins of Furness Abbey in order to compare his or her impressions with Mrs Radcliffe's description, and going over sands saved 16 miles. Then there was the tang of adventure . . .

But West, who was probably the first to popularise the route, actually underestimated its quite real danger—a most unusual attitude for the eighteenth century to take up and one that he himself certainly did not extend to his descriptions of ways through the mountains !

The sands are dangerous, particularly the Leven section. The Registers of Cartmel Priory Church are sprinkled with entries recording losses beginning right back in the sixteenth century. One of the worst accidents happened in 1557, the very year the railway was opened and the oversands coach stopped, when seven farm hands were drowned crossing Morecambe sands to Lancaster.

There was another nine years earlier when nine people coming home from a Whitsun spree in Ulverston drove into a quicksand on the Leven Estuary and were all lost.

The poet Gray, who toured the Lakes in 1769, records the story of one accident. It is tragic and rather beautiful and worth quoting in Gray's own words :

' An old fisherman mending his nets (while I enquired about the danger of passing those sands) told me in his dialect, a moving story, how a brother of the trade, a Cockier, as he styled him, driving a little cart with two daughters (women grown) in it, and his wife on horseback following, set out one day to cross the seven mile sands, as they had been frequently used to do ; when they were about half way over, a thick fog rose, and as they advanced they found the water much deeper than they expected ; the old man was puzzled ; he stopped, and said he would go a little way to find some mark he was acquainted with ; they staid a while for him, but in vain ; they called aloud, but no reply ; at last the young women pressed the mother to think where they were and go on ; she would not leave the place : she wandered about forlorn and amazed ; she would not quit her horse and get into the cart with them ; they determined, after much time wasted, to turn back and give themselves up to the guidance of their horses. The old woman was soon washed off, and perished ; the poor girls clung to their cart and the horse sometimes wading and sometimes swimming, brought them back to land alive, but senseless with terror and distress . . . The bodies of their parents were found the next ebb ; that of the father a very few paces distant from the spot where he had left them.'

Those who knew the sands best were readiest to admit their danger. ' People who get their living following the sands seldom die in their beds, they end their days there, they and their horses and carts, too.' So it used to be said on Morecambe shore. And on summer evenings, after the sun has dropped beyond the hills and the scarlet afterglow has faded off the bay, when the rich colour gives place to violet on die sands and stee! on the lagunes and the sky is going green and then grey, it is not difficult to repeople the place with ghosts. I know of no other scene where the cold light which succeeds a brilliant sunset seems so comfortless, where it advances so evenly and relentlessly. You cannot but feel uncomfortable ; and in this mood, Edwin Waugh's comparison of ' those silent currents which shimmered so beautifully in the sunshine ' to ' the ribs of death ' does not seem exaggerated.

## THE LONG WAY UP MONT BLANC

*W. GreenhaJgh*

In 1949, Charles and I had taken a party of senior boys of our school for a climbing expedition to the Alps. Such was the enthusiasm and ability of the boys, although they were entirely new to the mountains, that after a preliminary crossing of the Oberland from Kandersteg to Fiesch our original programme had to be hastily revised, and culminated in a mass ascent of the Nadelhorn by a party of 14. On our return to England, it was tacitly assumed that we should take a similar party in 1950 ; all that had to be arranged was the programme. The boys were in no doubt ; those who had been last year wanted to go back to the hotel in Saas Grund which we had used as a base, and they all wanted to climb Mont Blanc. That appeared to settle the programme—we would climb Mont Blanc from Saas Grund. Charles and I boggled a little, and then had an idea—the High-Level Route. We wrote cautious letters to our guides of 1949, Oscar Kalbermatten and Edmund Walther, and received replies which merely asked for the date of our arrival. So that was that.

But when we reviewed our party at Saas in August, we began to have qualms. We were 18 in all—Charles and I and the two guides as leaders, with four more adults and 10 boys of ages between 16 and 19. And having been up to the Cabane du Gouter on Mont Blanc the previous year, I did not see how a party of that size could get into a hut which would already be filled to capacity. Still, in view of Oscar's motto of " Jamais la route normale," ours would probably be a higher-level route than usual, and by the time we reached Mont Blanc the party should be reduced to reasonable dimensions. And so we shelved our doubts, sent large parcels of food to strategic points on the route, and left on a scorching Sunday afternoon for the Britannia Hut. Our plans for the ends of the route were simple enough : we would cross the Adler Pass to Zermatt and the Col d'Herens to Arolla, and we would cross the Col du Tour from Orsieres to Argentiere. How we should get from Arolla to Orsieres depended on the weather and the boys' feet to such an extent that we could not make plans in advance ; all we could do was to walk there and see.

The walk from Saas to the Plattje Hotel, half-way to the Britannia, was a hot and fatiguing grind which brought everyone to melting-point. We had warned the boys of that, and they were not unduly disturbed. But when the sun began to set, they started to be worried. They clearly did not believe that it was possible to walk uphill for so long without coming to a summit and starting to go

downhill, or that there could possibly be any form of habitation in the desolate mountain recess towards which we were leading them. Fortunately, before rebellion became open, the hut came into view about an hour's walk ahead and our reputations were saved. And on our arrival there was unanimous agreement that no other drink could compare with hut tea.

The four o'clock start next morning caused less disturbance than we had imagined, probably because the boys were too stunned to realise what they were doing, and by sunrise we were well out on the Allalin glacier with the Adler Pass, the gateway to the enchanted castles, gleaming in front of us. Although the snow was good, the slopes were far longer than the boys expected, and when we reached the pass (3,798 m.) most of them were glad to sit on an outcrop of rock and argue about cricket, while Charles and the guides took the more energetic ones up the broad snow ridge to the Strahlhorn (4,191 m.). During their absence I began to cut a staircase down the far side of the pass, for it was much steeper and icier than we had anticipated. The guides kicked at it gloomily on their return and did some more cutting, and in due course we began the descent. At first the boys held the rope so tightly that it was scarcely possible for them to move at all, but they soon began to trust their balance and we descended more rapidly to a rib of rubble and so to the open glacier. 'It's only a walk now,' said one boy, and sat down with one leg in a crevasse. Edmund smiled interrogatively, twitched the rope, and we ambled or slithered according to our various abilities down to the Findelen glacier and Fluhalp, Elastoplast and bed.

There was much complicated accounting to do next morning over breakfast, due to the pronounced individualism of the adult members of the party in eating and drinking, but in due course we found ourselves strolling down towards Zermatt in bright sunshine. Time for the moment did not matter, as all we had to do that day was to walk on to the Schönbühl Hut, and there was a prolonged halt at the Stellisee to admire the reflection of the Matterhorn. The chair-lift down to Zermatt was an attraction not to be missed, and it provided Charles and me with some curious sensations as we watched the boys for whom we were nominally responsible being bundled in pairs on to the seats and thrust out over the edge of a precipice. However, we counted heads at the bottom, and all appeared to be well, except that Oscar was still paddling at the Stellisee.

After lunch and a shop-window tour of Zermatt, we retrieved our first parcel of food from the post office and departed up the track to the Schönbühl Hut. It is a most impressive position for a

hut, with the two great mountains, the Matterhorn and the Dent d'Herens, looming almost overhead and the snows of their north faces glistening in the light of the setting sun. We sat on the steps for a long time while Edmund told us how on his second visit to the Matterhorn he had made the first ascent of the season up the Zmutt ridge, and the boys were silent as they went to bed.

Next day we crossed the Col d'Herens and the Col de Bertol to Arolla. The route took us first up to the ridge of the Stockje rocks, on which the boys achieved some startling attitudes, and up the slopes of the Stockgletscher to the little rock scramble at the crest of the pass (3,480 m.). From here everyone seemed to expect the route to be downhill, but Oscar led steadily uphill to the summit of the Tete Blanche (3,750 m.). I collect small peaks with views, and the Tete Blanche is a worthy addition to any collection. For an hour we sat on the snow dome of its summit while the great peaks gathered round to bask in the sunshine, and the cloud shadows chased each other across the gleaming snowfields. Behind us the Rimpfischhorn and Strahlhorn stood guard over the gateway of the Adler Pass : in front stretched the mountains and valleys of the way—the long way—to Mont Blanc.

In the sheltered hollows of the snowfields leading to the Col de Bertol, the boys began to show signs of mountain sickness, and by the time we had gaped at the Bertol Hut perched on its spire of rock and trudged down the interminable moraines into Arolla, they were very tired indeed. In consequence the next day was spent at Arolla as a rest day, and we took the opportunity of returning the excessively blistered members of the party to Saas by way of Sion and Visp. The loss of the day, although the weather decided to justify our decision to stay at Arolla, was none the less disappointing, since we should not have time to cross the Combin massif but must outflank it by bus from the Val de Bagnes.

By next morning the weather had improved somewhat, and after settling an enormous lunch, and an equally enormous bill, we shared out the contents of the second parcel and departed for the Vignettes Hut. I caused some indignation by leading without a halt up to the crest of the moraine by the Glacier de Piece, but the weather was visibly deteriorating again and I had no wish to get soaked. Oscar then repeated the procedure up the three reaches of the glacier, with the result that we arrived at the hut just a few minutes before a promising little blizzard. The hut was empty, even the guardian being away in Sion 'pour les affaires,' and we made the most of its comforts as the wind moaned and thrashed against the windows.

Overnight the wind dropped, and this permitted a somewhat belated start on the following morning, but the sky was overcast and promised much rain later in the day. For the moment, though, conditions were good enough for us to traverse the Pigne d'Arolla to the Col de la Serpentine and thence to the Chanrion Hut, and putting on all our gloves and balaclavas we staggered along the ridge and on to the slopes of the Pigne. The ascent soon became a sort of geometrical progression : as we climbed higher, the wind diminished, but the clouds came lower and the snow grew softer. We reached the summit (3,801 m.) with the snow at knee depth just as a large damp cloud came down to meet us. We shivered and stamped for a short time in the hope of a view, but the clouds steadily descended and began to thicken into rain. Eventually we gave in, scuttled away across the snowfields, slid over a huge crevasse in a welter of arms and legs, and reached the Col de la Serpentine just as the clouds sagged dispiritedly on to the snow. A little rain shower followed us half-heartedly down the icefall of the glacier, but it lacked the enthusiasm to chase us over the enormous moraines of the Breney glacier, and we were left to reach the Chanrion Hut at the head of the Val de Bagnes in comparative peace.

A prolonged discussion took place over mugs of tea on the terrace of the hut. Next day we had to reach Orsieres in time to ascend to the Trient Hut, or at least to the Orny Hut, for the crossing of the Col du Tour. If we stayed the night at the Chanrion Hut, we should have a three hours' walk in the early morning to Fionnay to join the bus route, and that plan was not favourably received ; equally unpopular however was the suggestion that we walk on to Fionnay now. So a compromise was arranged, based on the small inn at Mauvoisin, two hours' walk down the valley, and the boys rushed away down the track with Charles in hot pursuit to prevent them from falling into the gorge. But Mauvoisin turned out to be full of engineers making tests of the rock in preparation for the building of a dam 720 feet high, and we tramped on down the rain-filled valley in pursuit of an ever-retreating destination. But at last we came to the little village of Fionnay, full of the scent of the pines and the sound of waterfalls, and found a small hotel to offer us beds and cook surely the largest omelette ever made in a single pan.

Next day was Sunday, a fact we had overlooked in our planning, and there was no bus service. But Oscar was equal to the emergency, and soon a private bus appeared to take us round the north end of the Combin massif to Sembrancher and thence to the Val Ferret for the last stage of the traverse. At Orsieres we stopped to collect our last food parcel, but as the post office was closed we

abandoned the parcel without regret—it meant so much less to carry—and continued up the steep zigzags to Lac Champex. Here we parted reluctantly from the bus and climbed gently into the Val d'Arpettaz. After a halt in warm sunshine for lunch, much prolonged by the presence of extensive tracts of bilberries, we struck steeply up the side of the valley, across the ridge into the neighbouring Combe d'Orny, and arrived about five o'clock at the Orny Hut. At this point the clouds closed down and it began to rain, and there was noticeable reluctance to pass the hut to continue for another hour and a half to the Cabane de Trient. However, judicious use of the argument 'Better now than tomorrow morning' prevailed, and we struggled up to the ridge at the head of the glacier just in time to find the hut before dark.

The weather next morning was again glorious, and we ambled in the growing sunlight across the glacier towards the twin towers of the Aiguilles du Tour (3,542 m.). The rocks were friendly and warm to the touch, and I made some exuberant variations up the little ridge to the summit. There at last we could see the end of our journey, and for an hour we lay in the sun and looked past the range of the Chamonix peaks to Mont Blanc rising disdainful of the valleys of men. At length we struggled to our feet and climbed down to the Col du Tour, and at 12 o'clock we crossed into France. Then Charles realised that the passport he was carrying was also that of his wife, who was bringing the rest of the party round by rail from Saas to our new base at Argentiere and was due to cross the frontier at the head of the Chamonix valley at four o'clock. We had thought that if we got down from the Col du Tour in time, it might be advisable for us to go to meet them at the frontier station of Le Chatelard, to help with the luggage ; now it seemed that we had to, to get them into France at all. And so Oscar led us rapidly down the glacier to the Refuge Albert, and Charles and I, leaving the guides to take the boys to Argentiere, hurried on down to the valley. We reached the railway at half past two with sweat dripping from forehead, nose and chin. The train up to Le Chatelard was due to leave at three o'clock, and there was a hotel in front of us ; we had some beer. That night, in Argentiere, we had a little celebration. We felt that we had achieved something, even if it was not quite what we had intended ; all we had to do now was to climb Mont Blanc.

Most of the following day was devoted to money-changing operations and the sorting out of the incredibly confused finances of the party. One thing however was quite evident: in the present unreliable state of the weather, we should have to take the immediate opportunity of going up to the Gouter Hut ; if we waited



even one further day to rest the boys after the traverse of the High-Level Route, we might miss our chance of Mont Blanc altogether. And so plans were laid, time-tables consulted, and heads counted, and as a result we ordered breakfast and provisions for 13 for 6-45 next morning.

When the flurry over breakfast had died down, we found we were reduced to 10—Charles and I, the two guides, and six boys, three boys having decided that their strained muscles and internal disorders would be too great a handicap for the party. The weather was fine and bright, everyone was optimistic, and Oscar and Edmund were frankly on holiday. Edmund had never been in the Chamonix valley before, and he hung out of the window of the train all the way down the valley gazing up at Mont Blanc. From Les Houches the teleferique took us rapidly up to the level of the rack railway running to the Glacier de Bionnassay, and there we sat by the side of the line to wait for the train. There was a large crowd of Frenchmen, much ornamented with crampons, also waiting, and we surveyed them with some despondency. But when the toy train appeared, it absorbed us all without obvious indigestion, and we cheered up in the hope that the Gouter Hut would do the same.

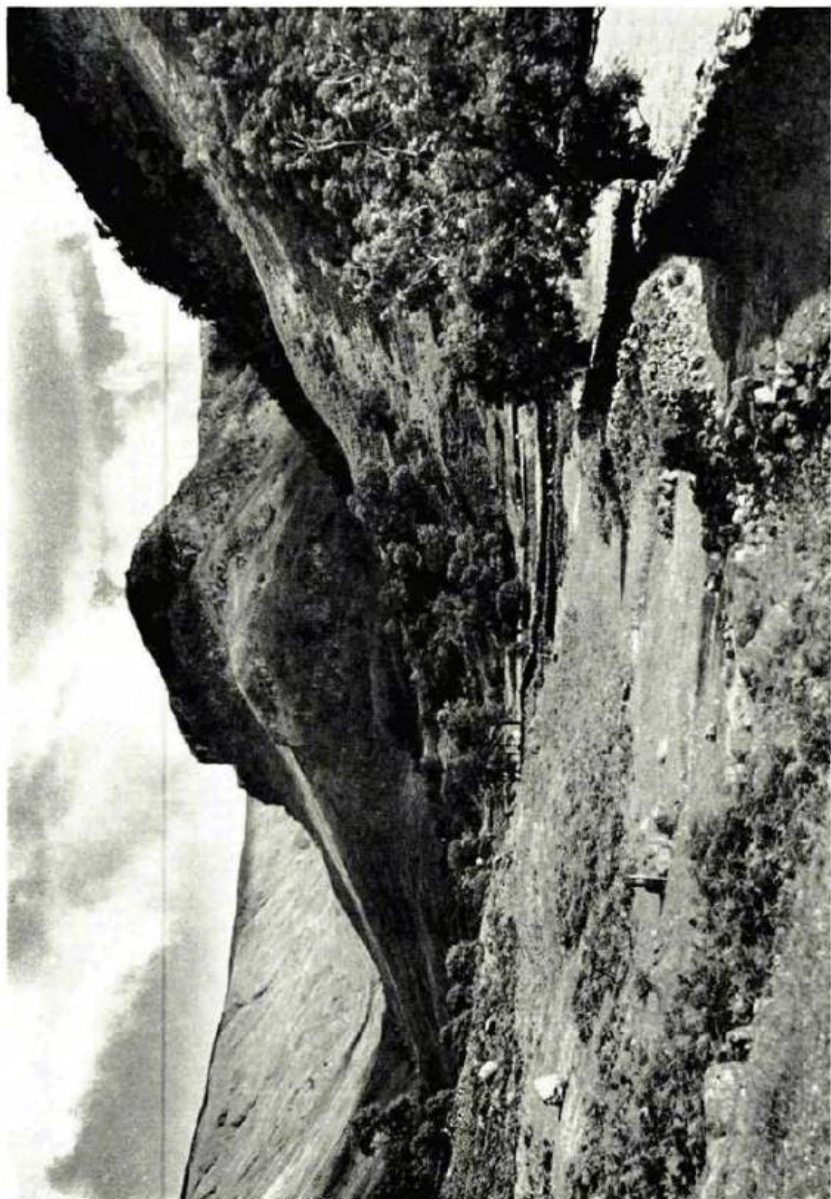
The path from the end of the railway to the Tete Rousse Hut was occupied by a continuous line of holiday-makers of all shapes and ages intent on eating their lunch at the hut. Beyond there, however, we had the mountain almost to ourselves, and we climbed slowly up the broken face of the Aiguille de Gouter, arriving at the hut on its summit about 4 p.m. We had our meal early and retired to bed to make sure of at least some rest that night. As fresh parties arrived, we were wedged further and further into the corner of the bunk, and by 8 p.m. the hut designed to accommodate about 18 people held upwards of 50. Later arrivals were put into the small overflow 'shack,' but even so the conditions in the hut are better imagined than experienced. This is the regular state of affairs in the season, and I for one will not go there again until a new-hut of adequate size is constructed.

In the morning we had to wait until most parties had left before we could even emerge from our corner of the bunk, but that proved to be a considerable advantage. There was a strong and exceedingly cold wind blowing, and those who had left early were so chilled that we rapidly overhauled them, and actually overtook at the Vallot Hut a party which had started a full hour before us. We found the slopes of the Bosses surprisingly steep and had to cut a large number of steps, but with four of us to share the work we advanced at a reasonable speed. On the final slope a young priest and an even younger guide with his hands in his pockets and his

ice axe under his arm pranced down past us on crampons, slipped, and slid downwards with considerable speed. We followed their subsequent career with interest, but when they elected to stop in a snowdrift rather than continue down the face to the Dome glacier, we returned to our step-cutting with some complacency. And so at last we came to the summit, and looked back over a sea of clouds, past the peaks along the High-Level Route, to the Dom and Tiischhorn marking our starting point at Saas. It looked a long way indeed, but it was the right way to come to Mont Blanc.

We did not stay long on the summit, for it was very cold. Once past the Vallot Hut, we were in shelter from the wind, and the descent to the Grands Mulets was hot and exhausting in the soft snow. As we crossed the glacier towards the teleferique of the Aiguille du Midi, the weather broke for good and all ; it began to rain, and rain or snow continued to fall for 24 hours without a pause. We had been only just in time.

As far as mere climbing was concerned, our journey contained nothing unusual or of any difficulty. But Charles and I were well satisfied. We had taken a party of boys new to the mountains and shown them something of what mountaineering meant. They had climbed Mont Blanc as they had wished, but we had ensured that when they did so they saw Mont Blanc not as the highest mountain in Europe but as the great and worthy king of a great and noble mountain range.



*Gerrald Lacey*

EAGLE CRAG AND GREENUP

## THE FELL COUNTRY

There is a benediction in this place,  
This coign of land beneath a northern sky ;  
Where, in the blend of crag and folded hill  
And nestling farms, does its enchantment lie ?  
What, in the cloud-reflecting tarn, the ghyll,  
Gives it peculiar grace ?  
Here is a canvas all of light and shade,  
So that, upon a winter-seeming day,  
Colour delights in subtle tones of grey,  
Or strikes, in autumn brilliance, like a blade.

The bracken flames along the Derwent's edge ;  
Touched by a breath of wind, the slender birch  
Sways to her image in the silver stream,  
Where dart the troutlet and the spotted perch,  
And shoals of little minnows turn and gleam  
Within the rippling sedge ;  
Sweet are these rivers, green and clear and cool,  
Home of the dipper and the kingfisher—  
Their very names fall gently on the ear :  
Derwent and Duddon, Greta, Rusland Pool.

Haunting and lovely are these northern fells :  
Blencathra, Glaramara, Looking Stead—  
Rugged and English ; names to dwell upon  
In winter evenings, when the map is spread  
Beside the fire, and many a peak is won  
In tales the climber tells ;  
We feel again the warmth of summer noon,  
The air upon the summit, hazy, still ;  
See, in the sheep-cropped grass, the tormentil,  
And know the magic of a Lakeland June.

Here is acceptance ; here, too, is surprise—  
As when a well-loved friend, known but in part,  
Grants us at times the valued privilege  
Of entrance into his most secret heart—  
So for the man who to the mountain ridge  
Lifts contemplative eyes ;  
He sees the sweet familiar curve of fell,  
The earth revealing, through its moods, the soul,  
Knows what great spirit animates the whole,  
And feels, within himself, that all is well.

Great are the riches he will surely find  
Who deeply loves and knows this countryside ;  
Its beauty and integrity can lift  
The spirit above doubt, and can provide  
The peace which is the mountains' secret gift  
To a world-wearied mind.  
That rare and lovely thing, serenity,  
Lies for the seeker on the lonely fells,  
Where man in harmony with nature dwells,  
And glimpses, now and then, what life can be.

KATHLEEN LEONARD.

## NINE DAYS FROM A DIARY

*F. H. F. Simpson*

*Thursday, April 2nd, 1931*

Changing at Preston is always a pleasant vexation. The atmosphere is one of surprise ; anxious glances into the smoke filled distance across the Ribble for the train, announced in a chalk message by an unknown hand, as twenty-seven minutes late at Warrington. At Carnforth one may relax. This is journey's end only for the few. There is a wide sky, limestone outcrops in yellow sun, a fresh prowling wind and hungry sparrows in the track ballast.

We ambled into Cumberland, the dialect of station staffs altering pleasantly. Black Combe wore a heavy cloud cap. Washing capered in sea wind at a farm on its lower slopes. At Ravenglass the smell of seaweed and the roar of surf behind golden sand dunes. The road to the east steamed after rain, in sudden sunshine. Lunch beneath the fir trees at Santon Bridge, where wild flowers were already opening and the Irt rustled along with a load of floodwater. Bright images in the lake, inverted scree fans, crag and sky. The granite surface of the enchanting road is not for the breaking in of new boots.

*Sunday, October 2nd, 1932*

Scrambled off the dry rocks of Westmorland Crags about two o'clock. The same strong wind dominated the weather. Gable is a good mountain on which to be alone. No figure on the Esk Hause track, no one coming over Brandreth, or upon the Napes. Ennerdale empty. Blue shadows poured over Haystacks, closing over the valley to spread a carpet of darkness. In the plain beyond Cocker-mouth the cloud-free sun picked out grass and ploughed land ; a white strip of road near Lorton shone for a moment. A procession of parallel sun shafts shortened and extended as they crawled along the humped ridge above Watendlath probing Stonethwaite, climbing in a muddle of golden discs and ovals up the shoulder of Glaramara. The whole Pennine range lay in shadow except for one touch of orange sun.

Idled and explored by turns on the Ennerdale face until evening, returning by Aaron Slack and over the pass as the first stars winked. Still no one about. At Burnthwaite a solitary new comer, to occupy the other fireside chair—Jack Lovelock the world's champion miler, exercising after appendicitis.

*Saturday, December 30th, 1933*

Several inches of new snow fell overnight. Laurence and I retraced our steps to Birkness by way of Gatesgarth and the green northern shoulder of High Crag. The well-remembered springy turf for summer siestas was frozen solid under the snow. Mist shawls dragged across Eagle Crag. A curtain of hail met us as we mounted the long moraine. Hail gave place to snow. Black rock faces faded to unsubstantial grey in a veil of fine lace, only the long straight nose of Eagle Crag preserving its identity. A tedious wallow in soft snow led us at length to the toe of Introductory Buttress. Every ledge was already carrying half an inch of new snow. We sat down to smoke in a flurry of saucer-shaped flakes which drifted up in our faces. We spoke of the progressive misery of frozen fingers. Laurence said guide or no guide, the Editorial chair might that day go snow-covered. Bread dipped in hot Oxo, tongue sandwiches and crystallized fruits. Numb fingers fumbled the round fibre tub holding these delicacies ; it vanished in gleeful bounds into the cloud-filled void.

As we kicked steps in the wide open gully, the air was calm, but a great wind ranged round the Combe as the warmer air below thundered in the upward rush of displacement. Presently came an uneasy stirring in the curtain of falling flakes. A savage blast sweeping up the screes found us perched astride a short splintered ridge ; others followed in quick succession stripping off the soft snow in a blinding volley, sheeting our clothing. Briefly we saw, as those who peep under doors, down a narrow space between rock and cloud driven clear by the great wind, past white leaning buttresses, to a corner of the lake, calm and grey, 2,000 feet below. The random wind frisked with us to the plateau under the cairn, there leaving us in crackling frozen clothing. We roosted sadly behind the cairn, finishing the Oxo. Upon the ridge running north the turbulence found us again, fierce and chill. A fitful glissade down Gamlin End screes to High Wax Knott where cloud and snow ceased together. Across Ennerdale little Looking Stead flew a pennant of wind-blown snow. We staggered and jumped in the great roughness of the short cut to the level portion of the Scarth Gap track, crosser almost, as Laurence said, than Winthrop Young's historic ninepins. We found the track in a copper-hued reflection from an unseen sunset in which the near snow slopes glowed, the ghostly pall of the falling snow hanging uncoloured above the valley. Skeins of grey wound inquiringly down, vanishing in the lower warmth. Birkness Wood, patched with darkness under the trees, motionless under heavy snow. One lonely uncertain owl, reminding us of a late start. A lane of open sky came up **over**

Crummock as we reached the bridge, and the hurrying, noiseless stream showed the dancing image of a star.

We sat late before a big fire. Laurence unfolded again his scheme for the improvement of mankind. I listened, but we had, as usual, to rouse Grace before turning in.

*Saturday, September 22nd, 1934*

A mid-afternoon train for Penrith. The west wind sang in the ventilators as we laboured up Shap past Scout Green, piped louder over the long swinging curves by Lowther. At Penrith weak sunshine, wet pavements, and a thin drizzle. The bus bounced and rolled across the fields of rich red loam in the sandstone country where buildings seem to give out again some of the sunlight of summers gone by. At Pooley Bridge, between the closing walls of fell, the bad weather system reasserted itself. Awaited here a second bus seated on the steps of a weighing machine. An optimistic site for one of these devices, so placed to catch the pence of the unwary. It showed that the rucksack weighed 29½ lb. On the journey up the lake, through steamy windows, could be seen grey water, and surf breaking on the road margin.

From Grisedale foot a gravel path runs between the fast-flowing beck and a long creeper-clad wall. A fine house this, providing private sitting rooms for its guests. This one possessed a cheerful fire, deep armchairs, a settle in the window ; a view across the water meadows to Place Fell glowing in the sundown. Dined luxuriously on fried trout and roast chicken. Mighty winds poured into the trough of the dale in the thickening dusk ; hail rattled on the window-sill. The moon later sailed up over Boardale Hause. Down to Stybarrow Crag where a lane of bright silver swayed gently in the slow swell from the windy eastern shore. Another hail shower whispered in the shallows, filling the sky with pale faltering gauze.

*Saturday, April 6th, 1936*

Sharp Edge, frozen fingers and the call for some cautious movement ; and so to the widening ridge beyond and the summit cairn, helped by a blustering North-Easter. We arranged ourselves in such shelter as there was below the lip of the long drop to Threlkeld, spread map-wise beyond our boots. To the north-west the blue and grey shoulders of Skiddaw Forest, a pale green sky, and a hint of the Southern Uplands fringe. West, and south, a jumble of cloud rags, and here and there the bending shoulder of a fell under snow. We ate ; tongue sandwiches, hot Ovaltine, a bottle of chicken breasts, sweet biscuits. A shadow climbed quickly behind us and a cascade of gritty sleet poured out of a leaden sky. Food and clothing began to vanish under a white carpet. In five minutes over half an inch piled up on the level spaces. A flurry of big wet flakes signalled



the tail of the storm which withdrew as quickly as it came. The long ridges below steamed in the returning sun ; the fresh fall lay thickly down 1,000 feet from the summit. We packed and turned into the teeth of the wind along the Roughten Ghyll side, over open grass and scars of slate scree. Mungrisedale Common reached away to Carrock barred with old snow drifts. Across the Saddle and on to Bowscale Fell in a second storm of dense mist and driving sleet. Criffel, framed in the saddle above Dash, blue lanes of sky and a silver strip of the Solway. The valleys of the Caldew, Gillicambon, Petteril and Eden, and above their smiling greens the barrier of the Pennines, white and breeding great masses of cloud in the arctic wind. Over the whole the sun sketched in bright colour on the trailing snow curtains. Bowscale Tarn down a funnel of steep fell, turquoise and ruffled with a rim of froth ; the faint wavering cry of the River. South again along the rim of Bannerdale Craggs in two more spiteful flurries, and the third soon after, building up a small and noisy tornado on White Horse Bent. A pause above the Glenderamackin to glance back at the banner of cloud on the high ridge and summit. Next to Scales where the wind dropped suddenly. Hot sunshine and the song of a wren as we pulled off our ice-clogged boots. Up the Lowther Valley again in the still of a spring evening. Hot baths, sherry and a leisurely dinner. The adventure of a telephone call to our next headquarters ; the instrument at the top of a steep flight of stairs in a narrow cul-de-sac ; on the left a galvanised iron water-tank full of bubbling interruption ; above, a skylight and the faint cold glimmer of Ursa Major ; on the right a soldierly row of hot water jugs.

*Monday, May 17th, 1937*

Fat cumulus over the dale, with tops erupting in golden towers ; a great cuckoo chorus. Pape, leader of the Meet chivied the Club into parties, sending finally two festive car-loads to Seathwaite. Towards Stockley Bridge a knotted string of humanity stumbled and chattered. Grains Ghyll, a mixture of sun-warmed rock and cooling morass for rubber-shod feet. Long-legged boys carrying their bicycles from Langdale, consciously proud of an early start. In a sun trap at the top of the ghyll was a place for a prolonged lunch and a great boulder on which to dry socks. Thunder boomed grandly in the south-east at noon, and the cloud pillars nodded over Esk Hause and the furrowed patches of old snow. A slow grind to the shoulder of Great End, frying in the sun till the wind was discovered and then a careful tip-toe progress over the rock wilderness behind Ill Crag. From the first col the twin humps of Rough Craggs, two acknowledged twenty-fives, are well seen. Just on the critical contour, they lie on an eastern shoulder of the Pike above Little

Narrowcove overshadowed by Yorkshire Rake Craggs. The wind surged warmly out of Eskdale and into the great hollow above Piers Ghyll. Awkward rocks are linked by wide grooves leading down to the cove on the edge of which the twin tops lie. No scratches or churned up scree show here and the afternoon crocodile from Langdale to the Pike is only a faint shouting from the rocky notch. There is an echo hereabouts which whispers of the slightest untidy pace or turned stone. The second and smallest top boasts a turf-lined rectangle with a back-rest, designed for an idle afternoon. Thunder columns still rose and slowly swayed in the south, whence blew, now and again, the sultry wind. In the stillnesses came Jack Carswell's voice, raised in timely instruction on Overhanging Wall three-quarters of a mile away. A long drink presently in the small beck, by which was seen, in a bank of moss, the mountain saxifrage, spray-flecked, pure and sturdy. Its tender stems grew bravely in a hostile world, rooted in the fibres of its less ambitious host.

Late in the day the ridge above was deserted again, and the clouds dissolved as the sun lost power. A prance and scramble back to Esk Hause, a joyous exercise. In the low curtain of rock running west from Allen Craggs is a small notch at 2,200 feet from which runs a cairned and little used track leading quickly to the waterlogged springing turf below. The heat of the day still stagnated the valley air, and warmth radiated from the angles of the walls. A message scratched on a slate at Seathwaite explained why the morning transport had returned to Thorneythwaite. Slowly home by the meadows. Blackbirds whistled in the woods above the road. After the heat, welcome salty soup, pork and a disturbed night.

*Saturday, April 16th, 1938*

Rose when the bell went. A bright still morning and a light frost. Along the Green Path young bracken uncurled. Followed the ravine above the Greta inflow among quiet pools. A little distance above the Sty, deep in the screes of Little Hell Gate stands a small outcrop, crowned by a tree. The figure of the Librarian poised on a stance half-way up its grey front, proved for the first time its exact stature. Already could be seen the slow antics of small figures on Kern Knotts. The way lay over the scree talus below Skew Ghyll, dusty in the Spring drought, up to the lowest depression in the ridge above Great Slack. A cold dry wind blew under Great End tempering the sun ; the two elements competed for the comfort of toiling bodies right up to Esk Hause, where, strangely, the wind gave up the struggle. To Esk Pike, pushing over many silly little cairns on the way. The cairn on top is half monument and half shelter, with a wide Eastern prospect. Cigarettes here, and barley sugar. In the

early afternoon a quick clatter down to the Hausc and up to the rising of the Esk for a long drink. Thence by a private route high on the Wasdale side in and out the green hollows above Greta Ghyll, where no one seems to stray. The air was still and hot and the sea showed beyond Seatallan, bright rippled silver, dark under cloud shadows. Into Hollowstones for forty winks and an apple, with no plans and a sense of timelessness. Voices called in Moss Ghyll, and on Pinnacle High Man a pigmy struggled into a jersey. George Basterfield passed by with a remark about early tea, and crossing the long shoulder of Lingmell, vanished on a direct line for the hotel. Here was an untried way home. Marched on a line with Pillar's flat crest to the edge, and a wondrous view into the dale.

Most striking is the sight of Mosedale and the slope of its green floor not seen from elsewhere, and the difference in elevation of Wasdale and the lowest point of the smaller valley, closed by the stricture of opposing moraine tongues from Yewbarrow and Kirkfell. The way is steep. A long zig-zag leads to Ill Ghyll, dry and screeless, which is best left, when great boulders are reached, for the grass bank of Bracken Ghyll, and a smooth drop to the highest intake. Here should be planned the way through the network of flood courses and gorse.

Beer, hot baths, gossip and postcards for home. A brilliant sundown, so clear the air that the evening struggles of a diehard on the Wasdale Crack of the Needle could be watched from the front door. After dinner a full Committee with a claim to fame for begetting the idea of graduating membership, which infant notion was passed to an unsuspecting sub-committee to be reared. At eleven o'clock the dusty green fingers of the Aurora came climbing from behind Kirkfell drawing after them the restless curtain of violet and pale rose. The yellow twinkle of an erratic lantern above Burnthwaite marked the progress of Somervell and Beetham towards Borrowdale.

*Thursday, April 6th, 1939*

To Bolton from Manchester at noon through squalid acres of industry. Waited for Laurence by the bookstall. We gained the refreshment room together, by means of platform tickets, for coffee, biscuits and more coffee. To Shuttleworth to collect Pape, and on to Morecambe for lunch in a gloomy café, watching a smooth drab tide, swiftly on the ebb. The fells were far away grey-blue and snowless. We had three ice-axes in the car. We bought tobacco and sped away to Levens. Pape slept in the back. The trees were misted with tender buds and the Duddon bounded angrily over the shallows. We climbed out of the car above Ulpha for a breather. There was little wind : a pale sun was experimenting with warm colour in the

bleached grass and grey outcrops. Young lambs called to each other from the pastures near Devoke Water. Coming off Birker Moor we saw the sea again, slate-coloured, and the Isle of Man, darker still. By Eskdale Green there passed an old man, carrying with easy grace, a sheep across his shoulders. Gable wore one small snowpatch and the Pikes Crag Gullies showed each a clinging wedge. The lake, stained a jade green by the flood of July, 1938, was clear again. Gorse aflame at Overbeck. Speaker greeted us in the hotel yard. In the evening walked as far as the foot of Gavel Neese. In the half light the mountain appeared as high and unfamiliar as when I had first passed that way.

*Saturday, December 30th, 1939*

Cold struck through the blankets. The ceiling of the annexe bedroom gleamed white with the reflection of an inch of new snow on the gravel. Bacon and eggs again. Laurence was for an easy day. We left together for Newlands Hause, without plans. The snow silenced our boots, and ice subdued the becks. A freak sun patch traced a yellow oblong across the breast of Wandope. Snow began to fall again. We took the ridge above Moss Force, 650 feet of steep snow, crisp under the unconsolidated fresh layer. On the Moss a cold wind searched us out. The bog, frozen hard, creaked musically under our tread. Steeply up into cloud, wherein we froze up, ice beads growing on our hair and clothing. The outcrops were plastered with snow, and we plodded on to Robinson through soft drifts. By the cairn we saw through a cloud window Hindscarth, milky blue, and behind, in a pale sunflush, Glaramara; later a glimpse of the lustreless ice on Derwentwater. Our minds began to jump about in time and place recalling days gone by, until cold drove us on again. By the edge of Robinson Crags in thick cloud and heavier snow, above shallow gullies and shattered slate buttresses. Out of cloud again we found Littledale and its minute tarn, a flat plate of snow-covered ice ringed with stiff dark turf. The wider landscape was all in a fine check of black, grey and white. A long dawdle down High Snab Bank. Skiddaw ahead, and pearly luminous snow-clouds. Great icicles hung from a brow of peat, and we chose two to suck. A two-mile trudge to the pass, and an hour for contemplation in a bed of granite chippings, in the shade of an ancient steam roller. Off the road in sight of the church and down the bracken choked path behind the hotel. Buttermere without light, a sheet of black glass. The high fells in heavy cloud but a great brightness in the west over Floutern, the echo of a fine day in the lowlands. The hotel was full. In the evening, saw Burnett's slides of the Alps and Norway. His lantern is a cheerful thing of shining brass and smooth movement.

## A KENDAL LASS IN CANADA

*Mary Cockerton*

From the soft greys and greens of Lakeland to the vivid blue and gold of Alberta I came five years ago, and I still want to shout about Alberta while quietly and deeply dreaming of Lakeland, for the newness and freshness and space of the West exhilarate the spirit and deepen the breath.

Here in Calgary, 3,500 feet above the sea and nearly 1,000 miles away from it, with the Arctic Circle 1,200 miles to the north and the forty-ninth parallel 200 miles to the south, flat prairies merge with the foothills of the Rockies.

From a grassy ridge to the north of the city one's gaze sweeps round almost 360°. To the north and east eternal flatness, green and gold in summertime, stretches far into the invisible distance, only relieved by an occasional group of grain elevators. Southward across a sea of brightly painted houses and tall, clean stone buildings, gently rolling hills and a higher ridge appear faintly blue. Looking west, from steep banks and dark pine trees by the swift-flowing Bow River, undulating foothills dotted with clumps of poplar and willow rise to thick forests under snow-capped peaks.

There is no smoke or 'smog' to mar the view; natural gas from oilfields 50 miles away and electricity from waterpower in the mountains supply almost all fuel needs of Calgary's 112,000 inhabitants. Hardly any coal is used in the city which must be one of the cleanest for its size in the world.

My first trip to the mountains was made in July, 1946. My husband and I drove westward along the 'Banff Trail,' which is now a first-class hard-surfaced road, and which we have travelled many times since then, always getting a great thrill out of this very lovely approach to the Rockies. Following along the high north side of the Bow River valley we pass through rolling ranching country and the small town of Cochrane, then along the shores of Ghost Lake to the Stoney Indian Reserve. The Indians are wards of the Federal Government; most of them make a living out of farming and are often to be seen riding on horseback or in their ancient 'buggies' around the village of Morley where red and white buildings make a pretty picture across the foaming milky-green river with its floating logs. West of Morley in a wide grassy clearing they hold their annual Sun Dance Festival. Here the valley begins to narrow, well-wooded hillsides cradle small lakes, and the steep cliffs of Yamnuska (End Mountain) come into view. Beyond the small village of Exshaw with its limestone quarries, cement works, and two tall belching chimneys, steep mountainsides sparsely dotted with small dark trees rise from both shores of Gap Lake, and some-

times a mountain goat will be grazing high up on the apparently barren stony ground. Soon Mt Rundle comes into view, a great ridge of tilted and terraced peaks nearly 10,000 feet above sea level. Looking back to our left we get a splendid view of the famous 'Three Sisters,' rather like giant cousins of the Langdale Pikes, standing shoulder to shoulder above the emerald green river. On our right the Fairholme Range thrusts clean grey spires into the almost infallible blue sky of Alberta. Once inside the Banff National Park, where wild animals are safe from the hunter, there is a good chance of spotting a coyote, bear, elk, mountain sheep or goat, and any number of beavers, chipmunks, and other animals. Among the birds one may see hawks, crows, magpies, whiskey-jacks and robins.

The small town of Banff, 85 miles west of Calgary, is a famous holiday resort. Climbing, riding, canoeing, fishing, golf, tennis, ski-ing, skating, tobogganing, swimming in cool pools or in warm sulphur springs, everything the tourist ever dreamed of can be enjoyed in Banff.

Having got through Banff one can breathe again the quiet, vast loneliness of the Rockies, mountains, forests, rivers, and that one good road which is, one must admit, an asset.

We camped that July night by the clear green waters of the Bow River near Castle Mountain (now Mt Eisenhower) where I was introduced to the spine-chilling shriek of the mountain lion and to chattering chipmunks in the pine trees.

Next morning we drove to Lake Louise, a truly lovely gem, not emerald nor jade nor turquoise but a blend of all three plus a generous scattering of brilliant diamonds, firmly held in a setting of black rock and forest under heaven-high white snowfields and shimmering blue-green glaciers. We left the car and climbed up a steep trail among thick pine trees which gave welcome shade from the hot sun and which gave us dazzling peeps now and again of snow-capped Victoria, Lefroy, and Temple (all over 11,000 feet) with the sparkling lake below. After scrambling up by a waterfall and along the hummocky summit of the 'Little Beehive' we came onto a high bluff 7,500 feet above sea level. A great sweep of forested slopes led our gaze down to the Bow River valley; the road and river wound lazily along, and a train like a toy was pushing its way up to the Great Divide whence it would plunge down Kicking Horse Canyon and the Columbia River valley to the Pacific Coast. Across the valley we saw Mt Hector, Mt Richardson and other peaks. To the east, the way we had come, the valley broadened, flanked by still more dark forests and gleaming snow peaks. From this eyrie we could look down on the Chateau Lake Louise, a mere doll's house far below with its bank of golden Iceland poppies by the lake,

and some of its 700 guests disporting themselves in the glass-surrounded pool or canoeing on the lake.

On our way down we walked by the shores of the ' Lake in the Clouds,' jade green under a clear sunny sky, and at our feet were rainbow-coloured rock gardens, many varieties of Alpine flowers planted by Mother Nature for the enraptured admiration of those mortals who ventured into this paradise of peace and sunshine and glowing colour. The air was fresh yet warmly scented where the pine trees grew, sparkling with icy coolness where snow still lay in the hollows, shimmering in blue light against the clean grey rock of the ' Devil's Finger ' and calm again in the soft green light of spruce trees across the lake. We walked among pink and white bell heather, blue harebells, pale yellow fairy-like columbines, campanulas, vetches, primulas, daisies, and dozens of other flowers whose names we did not know.

We left Lake Louise in the late afternoon and drove home along the way we had come. Some of the lakes were blue instead of green, and grey rocks seemed brighter and more wide awake than they did in the sleepy lavender gown of evening. Banff was sizzling with tourists and Indians and horses. As we swung down from the foothills into Calgary a huge dark cloud was passing over the city : a dust storm ! All windows tight shut and the wind howling like a demon. In half an hour it was all over, the sun shone fiercely in a red sky while the thermometer hung innocently in its accustomed place registering 92° in the shade.

On a September week-end three of us drove over the Great Divide into British Columbia. On the shores of Emerald Lake, while we were birdwatching, some saddle-ponies were being prepared for a trip along the pinewood trail to Twin Falls and the Yoho Glacier. We took the less romantic but speedier route (time being limited) and motored up the Yoho Valley, a deep gorge cool and green under sun-warmed limestone crags, past Yoho Lodge (where blue woodsmoke curling quietly in the evening stillness suddenly brought a great longing for Thorneythwaite and Seatoller Fell) till at last we saw across the gorge 1200 feet of shimmering loveliness, the Takakkaw Falls, plunging down the cliff with a thunderous roar only to be forced back in smoky clouds of billowing spray like huge gossamer veils recklessly abandoned in a tornado. We camped that night where the Yoho joins the Kicking Horse Canyon, and after supper a young bear came scrounging food. The night was perfectly clear and still, a pale young moon sat in the lap of Mt Stephen, 6,000 feet above us, and the faintest whisper of a breeze stirred the dark trees. Slowly we became aware of a distant rumbling, a faintly discerned quaking of the earth, and suddenly a piercing light shone

through the blackness of the night. The mountainside was convulsed as this heaving, belching, screeching monster of a train drawn by two powerful engines forced its way up a 2-2% grade, through two tunnels each about 3,000 feet long, from Field to the Great Divide, the toughest part of its journey from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast. During the night it was an eerie sensation to feel our sleeping bags shaking with the mountain as the trains thundered by. Early morning was a symphony of colour and freshness ; delicate golden sunlight touching the tips of the tallest spires on Cathedral Mountain, tiny chickadees flitting among the yellowing leaves of cottonwood trees, while beyond the delta flats where the gorge opens out to the south-west a whole ridge of pyramid peaks glowed deep rose against a lavender sky.

On our way back to Calgary we turned off at Lake Louise and followed eight miles of narrow winding trail along the side of Temple Mountain to the Valley of the Ten Peaks. It was exhilarating to have a very brief dip in the glacier-fed, ice-blue Moraine Lake and to dry oneself in the hot sun on a carpet of warm, aromatic pine needles while the Ten Peaks glowered and gleamed in black rock and white snow against a flawless blue sky.

The trips I have described are typical of what can be enjoyed in a mild, lazy sort of way in the Rockies. If you have read thus far these 'rambling' (as requested by the Editor) notes, it is probably because, like myself, you are content to potter through the beauties of this world. The tigers can refer to the very excellent journals of the Alpine Club of Canada, which tell of numerous exciting adventures on hitherto untrodden peaks.

I could go on and tell of sparkling winters, clean dry snow, blue sky and sunshine, with an occasional blizzard and sub-zero temperatures, how sometimes a Chinook wind brings warm air from the Pacific and sends the mercury from thirty below to thirty above in one hour ; of ski-ing and skating from November until April ; of our homes built mainly of wood with wide eaves for summer shade and with insulation and natural-gas central heating to keep us snug even when it is forty below outside. I could tell of the rosy alpenglow seen on the Rockies across blue-shadowed snowy foothills as we sip our morning coffee, of flaming sunsets enjoyed as we sit by the fire on winter afternoons, while myriads of multi-coloured lights are lit in the city below us, later to shine like gorgeous jewels set on black velvet. I could go on to tell of clear golden-blue days of Indian Summers in November. I could go on and on . . . **but** enough of the shouting !

There came a day in last spring-cleaning time when from out a trunk pungent with mothballs fell a few grains of the white sands of



Iona, and there was I sitting on a pile of winter woollies dreaming again of sunsets, autumn colours, bright snow and warm sunshine I have known in Scotland and in Lakeland. . . . More often it was the all-enveloping greyness that I knew—grey scree rattling down into Mosedale or Corrie Laggan : wet mist creeping round Pillar or Sgurr Alasdair : the sickly-sweet smell of gorse as we munched soggy sandwiches under a dripping boulder. . . . Now colourful highlights flash across the grey dampness—echo of loud laughter in Buttermere at first ski-ing lessons on Knott Rigg . . . blue faces among the bilberries on 'Blisco . . . hot summer days in and out of Langstrath's emerald pools . . . warm coppery light of evening on Thorneythwaite's tall firs . . . silver moonlight on the Burnmoor track, scent of hay and bracken, and a great stillness . . . steaming Shetland woollies on the warm hearth at Brackenclose . . . flickering firelight on the old oak cupboard at Raw Head . . . ski-ing at sunset on High White Stones while flaming clouds rode roughshod over Helvellyn . . . . There is no end to dreaming. It is the constant undercurrent, the spirit level of present living and experience.

This rich store was added to in 1950 when I took Donald (aged three) on a visit to the 'Old Country.' He rolled in the bracken and scrambled up wet rocks by tiny waterfalls in Lakeland, was introduced to the inviting coffee-and-bacon smells of 48 Highgate, explored quaint corners of my little grey Kendal of blessed memory, and bought a mackintosh in Garstang. In June he ran naked on the White Sands of Iona and splashed in that sea of unspeakable loveliness.

My own special undying memory is of two perfect views from Dun I, the highest point of Iona. On a brilliantly clear afternoon, when a resident told me the visibility was the best she had ever known, the pale blue ridge of the Cuillins swung on the bluer sea to the north. Nearer were the mountains of Rum, and nearer still shone Staffa, Ulva, Inchkenneth and Mull. Away west and nor'west riding the Atlantic breakers were two dazzling strips of amethyst and silver, Coll and Tyree, and the distant faint blue smudges of Barra and South Uist. In the evening the same scene was enriched by a path of gold leading from Iona across a sea of indigo to mysterious, deep purple islands, while the great sun sank regally in billows of fiery clouds. One could almost hear a fanfare as his majesty's proud attendants went about their business of heralding the dawn across the miles of sea and land westward to the Rockies and beyond. . . .

And so from greys and greens to blue and gold. Happiness was there. Happiness is here. There is no escape from Happiness.

## THE MATTERHORN AND ALL THAT

*George H. Webb*

Whiter and whiter grew the mountain and day by day more beautifully it glittered ; blacker and blacker grew the hearts of the mountaineers down in Zermatt, for it is hopeless to climb the Matterhorn whilst still covered by any large amount of fresh snow. So, in this late summer of pre-war days, I dismally packed my bags and went back to England.

When a fleeting interest in mountaineering has been raised in friends and the inevitable foolish questions : ' What do you see in climbing ? Why do you do it ? ' have been unsatisfactorily disposed of, another question often comes along—' Have you climbed the Matterhorn ? ' To the uninitiated, whatever other Horn, Spitze or Cima may have been climbed by a difficult route, the Matterhorn is the only really important Alpine peak. Mont Blanc may just possibly be considered as a reasonable substitute, but no other will suffice.

Many years later, in 1949, I was at Zermatt again, partly to bring enthusiastic brightness to the eyes of my friends and partly because every true mountaineer wishes to climb the Matterhorn at least once in his life. One eager gaze upwards and I was seized with consternation, for the mountain was as abominably beautiful and gleaming white as before ; it had not been climbed for a week and would not be climbed for some days, so we abandoned the Matterhorn for the time being and considered other possibilities. There is plenty of choice at Zermatt and I had vivid memories of the jagged outline of the Rimpfischhorn (13,785 feet) as seen from the peaks of Saas, so Alexander, my guide, spare but tough of body, a friend, R., and myself decided to climb it.

The new, and quite acceptable aerial cable chair took us in a glorious swoop above the pines, whence an easy rough path led to the Fluh Alp, now promoted to a comfortable, if simple, inn. Not being one of those hardy folk who, apparently, take a delight in sleeping on stones, in bogs or even on a communal mattress amongst a variety of strange and restless bodies, I was highly gratified at sight of a single bed at the Fluh Alp. It was, therefore, an unusually fresh party which sallied forth into the darkness next morning. As we climbed over the lower slopes of our mountain, two shadowy figures rushed past at great speed, not to be seen again for some hours when they scurried past us in the reverse direction. They had climbed the peak and, presumably, having said, ' That's the Rimpfischhorn, that was,' immediately climbed off it. Our shaken self-esteem was restored on our return to the village on learning that the young guide had been extremely anxious to get down quickly

as he was marmot shooting the same day, and his young client was feeling decidedly the worse for wear.

The Rimpfischhorn is a pleasant climb with two short stretches of rock work, interesting, if of no particular difficulty. The summit view is of the best, the mountain being sufficiently detached from the main Zermatt peaks for one to get a fine view of the whole cirque of mountains from the Cima di Jazzi to the Irunegghorn, whilst in the other direction are the great Taschorn, Dom and the peaks of Saas. Sitting on the airy top in the sun, I speculated as to whether anyone climbed the curious and attractively shaped Adlerhorn nearby. Although it is such a prominent object from many points none of us had heard of anyone having done so, probably as it is just below 4,000 metres.

At last we reluctantly turned our faces downwards, descended the rocks and snow slopes and took a slightly unorthodox line down the small glacier. R. and I, several feet apart were discussing affairs of moment when suddenly I discovered I was talking to myself, which meant one thing only, and after the usual surety run to the full length of the rope, I made a hasty investigation. The rope led to a hole whence protruded several hairs, which were obviously foreign to the normal flora and fauna of glaciers. Held on the rope by Alexander, I cautiously reconnoitred and discovered a somewhat dazed R., firmly wedged in a narrow crevasse which tapered lower down. Although he expressed himself as being secure and quite happy, any reasonable climber would naturally feel a distinct urge to restore his companion to the active list. So, sitting on the firm lower lip of the crevasse, I seized the trapped one firmly under the armpits and gave a mighty heave. The result was sudden and entirely undignified for, like a cork from a bottle, he shot out knocking me flat on my back; then, with myself as a human sleigh, we sped backwards down the slippery glacier till Alexander, full of unseemly mirth but securely stanced, pulled us up at the end of the rope. It is unlikely that this method of crevasse-extraction will appear in any future edition of Young's *Mountain Craft*.

The following day saw two figures marching up the long hot path to the Hornli, en route for the Matterhorn. One possessed an elegant new white linen hat, which was transferred with regularity from one side of the head to the other at each turn of the interminable zigzags (he had once experienced excessive Alpine sunburn and had no desire to repeat the performance); the other, smaller, figure wore an old beret of uncertain colour. The men should not have been on this particular path at all that day, but bad conditions had destroyed all hope of 'L'itineraire classique' of traversing the Matterhorn by the Zmutt arete and by the Italian Ridge, and

'La vole habituelle et !a plus facile' was the only practicable alternative. It would be rather more **difficult**, but safer than usual in one way, as the snow would freeze in and hold the loose rock which is the only real danger of the Matterhorn N.E. arete. Alas that there is to be no description of the knife-edged ice and snow arete of Zmutt, the Tiefenmatten precipices, the glazed overhangs and the iced ropes of the Italian Ridge, the echoes at the Great Tower ; in its place is only an account of the ordinary route climbed by two not excessively ambitious mountaineers, R., by the way, had decided to climb Monte Rosa instead.

The path led up to the Lac Noir, then over the bleak, featureless slopes above, and to the rougher ground of the Hornli itself, which is quite an effective mass of cliff at close quarters. A fairly level path followed for some distance, and then came the final 43 zigzags to the Hornli Hut. The sight of the small Belvedere Hotel next door called to mind the creature comforts of the Flub Aip, but my tentative suggestion to Alexander was greeted without enthusiasm and we entered the Hornli Hut as originally decided. The hut (10,820 feet) is magnificently placed and, before turning in, I went alone up to the ridge just above. Shimmering softly, in the light of a full moon were the great giants of the Pennines in the distance whilst, on my left, large and close, loomed the mighty ridge of the Matterhorn. I clattered down in my hut sabots to our resting place, and composed myself to the lack of sleep which is the usual accompaniment of hut life. At midnight, as I listened to the creaking mattresses, and to the groans of sleepless anguish from the other occupants, I wished that I had pressed **that** small matter of the Belvedere a little further.

Next morning Alexander and I had ambitions of getting off first, but a major catastrophe reared its ugly head—Alexander's beret was missing ! Although an expert in berets, I never could tell whether this particular specimen was originally born black or green, but one thing was certain, it was evidently of considerable climbing value and was a necessary adjunct of this particular climb. As we ransacked the hut I soon, reached the melancholy conclusion that either Alexander, plus beret (and I), **would** go up the Matterhorn, or Alexander (and I) were due for a pleasant day spring-cleaning the Hornli Hut, with a definite possibility of pulling up the floorboards. Spurred to desperation, I developed methods of search which would have left the Gestapo cold, and with a mighty shout produced the *sine qua nan* ; we lit our lantern and started, last of the parties, Alexander with the happy smile of the now complete man.

There was the shattering roar of a rock-fall in the distance and then dead silence ; the distant peaks still glimmered in the moonlight and an odd lantern could be seen twinkling ahead of us.

During its absence from duty the famous beret appeared to have sprouted Mercury's wings for Alexander rushed aloft, with me in hot pursuit, and soon we passed two earlier parties. We had been conscious for some time of stentorian shouts of command in front, and soon appeared the reason. Stumbling along was an unhappy little tourist, far removed from his first youth, roped between two large young guides who shouted admonitions whenever he made a false step. Poor man, for all his expenditure of francs he never reached the summit! Eventually we caught up a party of two who could not be passed, and soon the breeches seat of the rear climber became almost part of the landscape. Once more I wondered why it is fashionable to patch climbing breeches with what appear to be bits of rexine or old carpet rather than to make some attempt to match the original cloth.

The N.E. arete itself has never been climbed in its entirety, partly because of many difficult gendarmes. The route leaves the ridge several times, when extensive traverses are made over the rocky but easy ground of the eastern face, until the Moseleyplatte is reached. Here there is a short rock climb up to the Solvay emergency hut, spectacularly placed on its minute platform at 13,120 feet. Sleeping in this hut is forbidden except in case of emergency (fine 10 francs !). Above the hut another short climb up the Ober-Moseleyplatte took us, in a few minutes, again to the arete and over to the edge of the immense North Face, an impressive sight. Here was quite deep snow, although we had been in and out of snow for some considerable time. A steep section followed and, as the arete angle grew greater, the route turned to the eastern face once more and led up to the Shoulder. From here we returned to the N. edge and, taking full advantage of the fixed ropes for the loose snow on the slabby rock was treacherous, we climbed several roped pitches to the final steep slope. Through knee-deep snow we reached the Swiss Summit and there was Italy beneath us. We followed the sharp crest of snow to the Italian Summit, with its massive metal cross, and sitting on the dry rock lunched and gazed lazily at Breuil far below. The sun blazed on us from an apparently settled sky and I felt well satisfied. Half-way down, on the return, we looked back and saw clouds scudding past the summit at a fearsome rate. Just as we reached the Hornli Hut the sky, which had rapidly been growing blacker, exploded into blazing lightning and thunder with hail and snow. So much for the settled weather !

Of the major climbs around Zermatt which are predominantly rock there are three which are done a few times during the season. One is the Taschorn Teufelsgrat, immensely long and of doubtful rock, and therefore not very popular. Another is the Leiterspitz

nearby and the third is the Rothorngrat, the S.W. ridge of the Zinal Rothorn, which is more accessible, of sounder rock, and therefore rather more often climbed. There are, of course, other popular rock climbs which are considerably shorter and longer ones which are rarely done. Two days after the Matterhorn episode, three of us, Alexander, his son who wished to be a guide himself, and I walked up the Trift Valley and over the moraine to the new Rothorn Hut, which is quite a superior affair. Early morning saw us crossing the glacier, feeling slightly doubtful as to whether we should do the usual Rothorngrat climb only, or throw in the Trifthorn as well and make a really big day of it. Eventually we decided on the latter and, taking a doubtful short cut, we crept diagonally and in close formation up the unstable, rotten rock of the Trifthorn face. We fancied we were moving as silently and stealthily as panthers, but such certainly was not the opinion of the mountain and, as rock after rock thundered down, a party crossing the moonlit glacier to the Wellenkuppe would halt and gaze up at the shadowed darkness of our crazy cliff. Doubtless they wondered what descendants of Hannibal's elephants were doing up there, and why they should be shod with clogs. With feelings of relief we reached the ridge near the Triftjoch and, as I threw back my head to gaze up at the narrow rocky arete of the Trifthorn, I was certainly most impressed. It was a good climb to the summit and the rock was much more stable than on the face. There followed a small drop to a snowy col, a scramble up easy rock and then we saw our true Rothorngrat ahead, with its array of gendarmes. The rock is of the Skye variety, in that the impossible-looking becomes possible by virtue of the rough surface. As we mounted higher and higher, a new and unfamiliar Matterhorn revealed itself above the Wellenkuppe-Ober Gabelhorn ridge. The Grand Cornier on the other side fell away beneath us, but the Dent Blanche always looked the magnificent mountain it is.

In rock climbs lasting several hours I have always been impressed by the apparently photographic memories of climbers who seem to remember every detail. Perhaps they do not remember, but climb with note-book in one hand and pencil in the other. Whichever they do they have my admiration, for I seem only to recall the difficult bits. One such I remember very clearly. We had climbed up one large gendarme and discovered no immediately obvious route down the other side. Whilst circling the top I made an unfortunate discovery for there, in a narrow slit, was an alleged abseiling loop composed of three thicknesses of weatherworn rucksack cord. This was hailed with joy by Alexander, who was again in one of his more dashing moods and in no mind to waste time doing a difficult climb down. 'He proposed, and nobody seconded' that we should use

the loop. Still quoting Leslie Stephen, 'This proposition produced a subdued shudder from the travellers and a volley of unreportable language.' I have no objection to abseiling on principle, as it can be quite a pleasant pastime, but this old cord violated all the canons of F.R.C.C. practice. Cutting valuable climbing rope and making a new loop was not welcomed as a reasonable alternative and Alexander went down, using the old loop. As I heard no dull thud or cry of anguish, I should have been reassured, but that I weigh a good 30 lb. more than he does. Taking a final look at the icy **world** and reflecting on the virtues of a nice flat green field, I swung into space, and, wondrously, the old loop held. After this escape my climbing morale became extremely high and even if Kern Knotts Innominate had miraculously appeared on the ridge I should undoubtedly have made a most gallant, if unavailing, attempt. At last we came to the foot of the final pyramid, where we joined up with the ordinary route. One more sporting climb up the remaining rocks and, at 2 p.m., we were swinging along that sensational ledge between the twin summits, over one of the sheerest drops in the Alps. There on the top in the sunshine, gazing at the distant friendly peaks of earlier days, I felt that happy satisfaction well known to all of us whether the mountain be Rothorn, Tryfan, Gable, or even little Catbells.



*D. Atkinson*

AX IGLOO ON ESK HAUSE



## AN IGLOO ON ESK HAUSE

*D. Atkinson*

It had been a bright day on the frozen lakeland snows that first Saturday in March (1951), and as we walked towards Grains Ghyll in pale blue twilight there was every promise of another sub-zero night. It was in fact just the right time for our plan. This surely was to be the culmination of all the furtive conferences between Cliff Coates, Ralph Carter and I in the odd moments when the chief was not looking, and all the optimistic theorizing on the sun-warmed rocks of the summer. Now we would know whether or not an igloo is a practicable type of winter base in the Lake District.

We did not need to put on our skis, but tramped instead over a crust as hard as metaphorical concrete, up past the Esk House shelter onward to the highest part of the plateau against the final slopes of Great End.

There was no immediate need for haste and we sat on the rucksacks to eat sandwiches, and while eating our eyes wandered over the phantom of familiar summits in the gathering darkness. The severest winter's night, however, is no time for lengthy contemplation and the icy air stirred us into action.

A level site with a good depth of snow was not difficult to find and we decided on the edge overlooking Eskdale. We then marked off a 6 feet 6 inches diameter circle which was to be the inside line of the first row of blocks and we both commenced the excavation of a trench nearby from which to cut the snow blocks. I soon discovered the effective technique of cutting a line of blocks along the top of the trench and then cutting the row exposed underneath and repeating the process. Meanwhile Cliff was trying the first row of blocks round the marked circle. When this row was completed, it was cut back at an incline to a point at ground level. The block laying was now continued starting up the incline from this point, each block laid leaning in so that the continuous line of blocks formed a progressive spiral.

While I carried out the extremely strenuous work of cutting and carrying, Cliff was doomed to the inside, placing and trimming. He was very patient, even when a solid block of snow weighing perhaps 30 lb. was accidentally dislodged on his head. His remark on this occasion was similar to that of the plumber who, when his mate dropped molten lead down his back, said : " Try to be more careful with that lead, Bill."

His relief came at last with the great moment when I climbed up the side of the igloo with the key block to close the final hole at the apex. Only the door hole remained to be cut and then the prisoner

was freed from his icy vigil. Just how cold his task must have been was brought home to me when I took off my mitts for a moment to get the primus from my rucksack. In the space of half a minute they were frozen so solid that it was impossible to put them on again until they had been thawed over the primus. Metallic parts froze instantly on to our fingers and we felt that physical activity was necessary to avoid frostbite. There was still work to do, and we heated a tin of soup over the primus while completing the entrance tunnel.

Later, the finishing touches completed, we lay in our sleeping bags, physically exhausted, but happy at the successful execution of our plan.

This is a type of camping which can definitely be recommended to enterprising members, snow conditions permitting. An igloo is more substantial than the most expensive mountain tent—it will stand the weight of several men on the roof and will withstand the most severe gale (our igloo lasted four weeks). It is more roomy than a mountain tent, being six feet high and 6 feet 6 inches in diameter. Perhaps the most important advantage is that it is built from material available on site, and does not require any carrying apart from the tools. The only tool needed is a light but robust spade with a short handle.

Contrary to popular belief, an igloo is not cold inside. Cliff and I passed a most comfortable night and awoke to a truly Alpine morning.



## FIRST EXPEDITION

G. A. Sutherland

Writing has always been one of my bugbears but from time to time I am cajoled or browbeaten into overcoming my reluctance to put pen to paper. Let me pay tribute in this instance to both the iron hand and the velvet glove of the Editor.

This reluctance to write, like most of my other characteristics, has always seemed to me entirely natural and the apparent readiness of many of my fellows to rush into print, albeit highly enviable, to be evidence of a regrettable lack of care and modesty. For the written word is irrevocable. The idle boast of one's own prowess carefully veiled as a compliment to someone else in an after-dinner speech may in such an atmosphere be accepted by uncritical fellow-diners as evidence of magnanimity, but the same thing in print would bring smiles of pity or flushes of indignation to their faces and a blush of shame to that of the perpetrator. It is no accident that in the eyes of the law slander is a venial offence compared with libel.

Politicians rely on the shortness of their listeners' memories, journalists on the largeness of the waste paper baskets or the inefficiency of the filing systems of almost all readers of daily papers. But with annual publications the attainment of oblivion is less speedy and less sure, and a different technique is required. Some have both the vivid imagination that convinces themselves, and the literary skill that persuades their readers, that their quite undistinguished expeditions were really outstanding performances. Others enjoy a climbing reputation that enables them to hope that they may dispense with both imagination and good writing and still convey that impression. But one who has no pretensions to any of these virtuositities must seek other means of obeying the editorial command.

So I have set out to give an account of the admittedly entirely undistinguished expedition that was my first, confident that as far as argument as to the facts is concerned I am on safe ground, because it is most unlikely that any reader of the *Fell and Rock Journal* has ever seen or even heard of the mountain in question let alone thought it worth the trouble of an ascent.

It is interesting as one grows older and looks back on the high lights of one's life to speculate as to what led up to them. Much has been written, with more or less satisfaction to the writers and their readers, in the attempt to elucidate *why* men climb mountains. But in the end all that can be convincingly said is that men climb mountains because they want to. Why they want to is another

matter and their motives are doubtless legion. But what may be called the previous question is the one I often ask myself: How did it come about that I in particular wanted to ?

There was certainly no mountaineering tradition in our family. My father was an enthusiastic cyclist. He had ridden a penny-farthing and was one of the earliest owners of a free-wheel. He couldn't understand anyone preferring to walk, any more than I can understand anyone using a car except as a means of transport. In fact I don't want a car at all, I want a magic carpet to get me from the town to the hills in the least possible time, in order to get my feet on to attractive uneven ground at the first opportunity. Cycling, not as a means of transport but cycling for cycling's sake, gave the same sort of satisfaction to him as walking has always done to me. If proof of his enthusiasm were needed I could add that after 12 miles cycling round the South African town we lived in when I was a boy, he seldom had fewer than two punctures to repair—and I have known him have as many as eight—owing to the operation of a particularly vicious tetrahedral thorn appropriately known as a deviltje. Small wonder that towards the end of his life, after he had strained his heart in a vain attempt to catch the only train of the day at the town where his cycle tour was to come to an end, he began to think that the motor car might some day supersede the cycle. My mother did not share his cycling enthusiasm, indeed she refused to cycle at all, but she had no love of walking either and was content to be driven where she wanted to go.

So it clearly wasn't parental influence that made me want to climb the mountain one could see at the end of our street, yet the desire to do so goes back as far as I remember. I say at the end of the street, for so it seemed in that crystal clear atmosphere where to my knowledge a heliograph had been used over a distance of 85 miles. Actually it proved to be about 18 miles away. It was generally known as The Coxcomb, not because that was its name but because it was commonly mistaken for a higher mountain of that name, farther away but in a similar direction, which it resembled in outline.

Anyone brought up in Britain would find it difficult to conceive the maplessness of South Africa 50 years ago. There had been a triangulation survey of the district and a small scale map based on it could be seen in the Divisional Council Offices, but it was a map without shading or contour lines and when we had identified the peak we wished to climb as that named Streydomsberg, saw its height given as 3,870 feet and measured its distance as 18 miles, that was the sum of the information the map could give. The rest was hearsay. Some of the bolder young men of the town, generally

regarded as not quite respectable for embarking on such an unusual enterprise, had been known to go there 'laden like pack oxen' as the aunt of one of them said. From them we got general directions as to how to approach the base. How primitive it all was, how inadequate our experience and how stupidly inept our arrangements, how easy the peak and yet how much more satisfying in many ways than anything I have done since !

Mountaineering regarded as travel no longer exists in Europe; everything is laid on at suitable centres. One could hardly walk to the base of one's mountain if one wanted to. It is necessary nowadays to go to the Rockies or the Himalayas for a mountaineering expedition to be a real trek. But for us the travel and the adventure began before we left home, for we had to improvise the simplest of our equipment. We had heard of the rucksack, but had never seen one. With my mother's help I fashioned one out of a flour bag with straps of felt. Fortunately we hadn't to consider water-proof qualities ; it was seldom so inconsiderate as to rain. There were four of us altogether, myself 16, one 18, one 19 and one, the local Y.M.C.A. secretary, probably between 25 and 30. Thinking back I imagine it must have been the fact that he, though he knew nothing about mountains, was to accompany us that made my parents raise no more than the mildest of protests. They were firmly convinced, I discovered afterwards, that the trip would cure us once for all of our extraordinary ideas of pleasure.

We had, of course, to consider the weather to some extent. Summer would have been impossibly hot, in winter we might at such a height even have encountered snow ! The summit had been white within living memory. At a distance of 44 years I can't remember whether it was spring or autumn that we finally decided on, but in either case it would be sufficiently warm to avoid the necessity of more than a single blanket as covering.

The man of 18 constituted himself the leader of the party and he was firmly persuaded of the desirability of keeping weight down. This he decided to compass by limiting the amount of the commissariat and in the interests of simplicity he persuaded us further to adopt a uniform diet. We knew no better than to follow his lead. Parents were after all notoriously unimaginative and incapable of advising us on a matter altogether outside their ken and their protests were swept aside. So we set out, mercifully having had a good meal first, with 'food for four days,' consisting of 24 slices of bread and butter, ready spread, 12 hard-boiled eggs and pint water bottles containing tea without milk or sugar. The Y.M.C.A. secretary was a man of few words, he loyally adopted the prescribed diet, but he secretly arranged for a Cape cart to take

us for the first nine miles of the journey. For some reason that I cannot now recall we decided to refer to him as The Colonel.

Sleeping out or, more correctly, spending the night out was a new experience for us all. The ground was undeniably hard and what had seemed smooth enough when we lay down soon presented each of us with the problem of 'balancing on a small stone situated somewhere in the middle of the back,' a problem that we discussed at some length without getting nearer a solution. The noise of insects and frogs was deafening and from the Colonel I learnt the word stridulation and its meaning for the first time. The only other recollection I have is an uncomfortable and unaccountable burning sensation in my right leg, the explanation of which appeared in the morning when I discovered that the pill box in my trouser pocket, in which I had been carrying potassium permanganate in case of snake bite, must have leaked while I was on the march and the crystals dissolved in sweat had produced a corrosive solution which stung me into awareness for a considerable time after I had removed the primary cause.

The details of the ascent, which was without technical difficulty, are of no interest. There was no track, the ground was rough and the only landmark we knew of was some 'bushes' on the way up. There we decided to establish 'Camp I' by the simple process of carrying our blankets, four slices of bread and butter and two hard-boiled eggs each up to them. There was no flat ground to lie down on and we slept in a sitting position with a gentle drizzle falling on us for most of the night. The warmth of our bodies and the air and the thickness of the blankets successfully turned the rain and the next day we went up to the summit, where we had a hundred mile view, and down again to the base camp without incident. We spent a day in camp sleeping and bathing in a pool that in my memory is equal to the best in Eskdale but was probably only a quarter of the size, for any pool deep enough to dive into and with water running through it would be a phenomenon in that part of the country. The leader of the expedition shot a bird of some sort which we roasted in the embers of our camp fire. It was only half-cooked but it was a welcome variant from our staple diet. The uncertain prospect of further similar fowl was not, however, sufficient to deter us from setting out for home the following morning. When about 12 miles from camp we struck the first farm on our route and called in to buy a watermelon with only sixpence between us. The largest melon they had seemed none too big to tackle. It must have weighed nearly a stone and the price was two shillings, for which the farmer agreed to give us credit. But when he had watched us, wide-eyed, finish it without a pause he

gave it to us gratis for the entertainment. Thus fortified we arrived back two hours ahead of schedule.

To my parents' intense astonishment three of us decided to repeat the expedition a year or so later. We left the previous leader behind and instead took with us two native porters and large quantities of reasonable food. Our plan was to do a traverse of the mountain and strike the railway at the other side. We knew the railway was on the other side but as the area covered by the district map stopped at our peak we had no idea exactly where we should strike it. There were also known to be two trains a day.

We spent a night just below the summit and in the morning found ourselves in mist, an almost unheard-of phenomenon. Having no compass we set out at six and walked by faith for three hours till the mist lifted. We found we were very nearly back at our sleeping place, but the way off to the plain of the Karroo, which was our objective, was now clear. Walking almost continuously in torrid heat we reached the first karroo habitation at 4-30. There we were told that the railway was 35 miles away, that the night train in any case didn't run on Saturdays and that we were only 45 miles from home. As the Colonel had to keep an appointment on the Sunday morning there was nothing for it but to unload all spare kit on to the porters and walk on through the night. What made it the more tantalising was that as soon as it was dark we could see the sky lit up by the lights of our town all that distance away. The distance was probably nearer 35 than 45 miles, for we got in at 5-30. The soles of my feet after walking practically round the clock finishing up with some 40 miles of dusty road were continuous blisters. But the Colonel kept his appointment and though I have never sought to exceed the distance I inadvertently walked on that occasion the expedition in retrospect gives as great satisfaction as any I have undertaken since.

## EXCURSIONS AND ALARMS IN THE GREEK MOUNTAINS

*Joan Whalley*

Though I did not go to Greece for the mountains, they offered an immediate challenge, which despite the burning quality of the August sun, and the constant threat of brigands, it was impossible to ignore.

Mount Hymettus was the most immediate and easily accessible to Glyphada, which was the small seaside place outside Athens where we were living. The mountain forms a long bulky range not unlike Skiddaw in shape, presenting a rather stark appearance, being unrelieved by trees or much vegetation. The suburbs of Athens have crept right on to its lower slopes, and because of its size and dominating position, it makes itself felt wherever one goes.

When I first arrived in Greece, it was reliably reported that there were brigand strongholds on all the mountains surrounding Athens, and it would certainly be unsafe to attempt any climb. However, the success of the Greek army at this time, culminating in the victory on Mount Grammos, gave us our opportunity, and we decided to climb Mount Hymettus, and see something of the unique painted churches, and old monastic ruins, built on its slopes in the preceding centuries by the monks, who had withdrawn from the life of the town.

Mount Hymettus is renowned for two things. Its honey of classical fame, and the almost fantastic purple hue, which it assumes in the setting sun—due perhaps to the thyme growing on its slopes, and the abnormal clarity of the light in Greece.

The pleasure we feel in our approach to the foothills of our British mountains was in no way apparent here. We had a hot tiring walk, over a seemingly endless plain, and were continually irritated by the clouds of dust blown up by the wind, which is always present in Greece. We came across innumerable refugees, who were trying to live wherever they could find shelter, with pathetically few amenities of life. When we finally arrived on the mountain, and contemplated the boulders strewn about on its bare slopes, and the long weary grind before us, in order to reach the top, our ardour abated somewhat. Perhaps we could be excused for never reaching the summit, as before we had got even half way up, suddenly from out of nowhere, a chain of bullets whipped across our path. I had never been so near to bullets before, and hadn't realised the tremendous searing and cutting quality that they possessed, in which the whole air around seemed to be cut in pieces.



After a hasty consultation we contoured hurriedly into a friendly fold of the mountain, and from there decided to tackle an outcrop, which at least brought us on to a small top.

The two other mountains dominating the plain of Attica, are Pentelikon and Parnassos, and we decided that the former should be our next attempt. In contrast to Hymettus, Pentelikon was sheer delight—we climbed through resinous pine woods, and were surprised by little streams and mountain flowers and shrubs. Farther on, we came to the quarries, which formed great scars in the mountain side. Most of the marble used for the Parthenon on the Acropolis, and other Greek temples was taken from here—the mountain being composed almost entirely of marble. This, because of the other minerals in it, has been changed by the weather to a light rust colour.

Standing on the top, we looked across to the plain of Marathon, which culminates in desolate salt marches merging into the sea. Pentelikon is a beautiful mountain in shape, and after having lived down in the dusty plain for so long, we were singularly refreshed by our climb.

At first we did not think much about Parnassos. For one thing it is much farther from Athens. It forms a tremendous massif, about 8,066 feet in height, and was not to be lightly undertaken with the heat growing daily more oppressive. Brigands still roamed about there, long after they had been cleared from the nearer mountains. However, as time went on, in spite of these drawbacks, we found ourselves becoming more and more conscious of it every day, and so at last decided to try.

In a country where the communists were daily trying to gain the upper hand, anyone doing anything the slightest bit out of the ordinary, was viewed with the very deepest suspicion. Perhaps it was not surprising then that, having just started our climb, we were immediately rounded up, and arrested by aloof and arrogant soldiers of the Greek army. These, I decided, must have had some unforgettable encounters with the fierce women who were at this time fighting in the communist lines, as they took no chances **with** us, and in a very short time we were clamped down in a formidable-looking tank, in which we were badly shaken as it bumped rapidly along the dried up uneven ground, over which we had so laboriously come some time before.

We had heard very frightening stories of the prisons where people were thrown into communal cells, and there left in horrible conditions until they could prove their innocence, so it was with

no small relief that when we emerged from the tank, we found ourselves still on the plain, at some sort of mobile headquarters of the Greek army. Standing in the grilling sun, with numbers of Greek soldiers around us, and the commanding officer sitting high up on his tank, our position grew considerably worse because of their complete incredulity that anyone, especially two women in a country where the women are expected to be essentially feminine, should want to climb a mountain with no other purpose than that of getting to the top. Knowing also very little Greek, we had to use German as our sole means of communication, and this made them even more mistrustful. When things came to a deadlock, I suddenly turned round and said, 'Thank you, we will go now,' and in as dignified a way as we could we turned and retreated from the mountain.

The rest of our time in Greece was very full, and we made no more attempts to climb mountains, but it is good to know that the summits will still be there waiting when we return.

## WEATHER IN THE BRITISH MOUNTAINS

*R. A. Tyssen-Gee*

The large number of accidents during the 1951 Easter holidays has shown that the weather in Britain during winter and early spring can produce very dangerous conditions in the British mountains. The contrast between the climate on the top of Snowdon or Scafell Pike and Cornwall may be almost as great as that existing between the tropics and Arctic Circle. Heavy rainfall combined with low temperatures and strong winds can make what is normally a comparatively simple trip in the British mountains one of great severity in adverse weather conditions. In addition, daylight in winter is shorter in Scotland and the North of England than in the South and an incautious party may be more readily benighted through failure to recognise this additional winter handicap.

Rain may occur whenever warm air is lifted into the upper layer of the atmosphere. The warm air cools itself by expansion as it rises to regions of lower pressure and, as cold air can hold less moisture than warm air, the resulting fall in temperature, if sufficiently great, may cause precipitation. Rain may be of three types : cyclonic, orographic or convectional. Cyclonic rain is caused by the rising of warm air over cold air, which takes place in a depression. Orographic rain may occur when warm air rises over a mountain range, and convectional rain may take place when there is instability in the atmosphere, due to a rapid fall in temperature with height, resulting in the formation of cumulus or cumulonimbus clouds and possibly thunderstorms. The heaviness of the rainfall in mountain districts of Britain, especially Snowdonia, the Lake District, and parts of the western Highlands of Scotland, particularly Ross and Cromarty and Argyll, is largely due to the combination of orographic and cyclonic or convectional rain. Another reason is the proximity of Britain to the Atlantic, so that the air is often very moist when it reaches the mountain areas in the west of Britain.

A comparison between the rainfall of the wettest and driest districts of Britain is of interest. A small area of Wales near Snowdon, Borrowdale between Seathwaite and Sty Head Pass and certain districts in Scotland, especially near Sgurr na Ciche and Ben Nevis, have annual rainfalls of 180 to 200 inches a year. Some of the western districts in Ireland, particularly the mountain areas, are nearly as wet. This rainfall is hardly equalled in Europe. Manchester, which has a reputation for excessive rain, only averages 35 inches a year, while London's average is about 26 inches. The driest districts in Britain are a narrow strip of the Thames Estuary round Shoeburyness and the north coast of Kent and the Fen district

south of the Wash, where the annual average is under 21 inches. As a general rule the rainfall increases with altitude, the annual increase being about 2 inches per 100 feet, but this figure is very unreliable in mountain valleys whose rainfall is largely influenced by the surrounding peaks.

Outside the British Isles, Bergen has a reputation for being excessively wet and the inhabitants enjoy jokes about their rainfall almost as much as the Aberdonian enjoys his reputation for extreme parsimony. In Bergen it is stated that on one occasion an inhabitant went out without his umbrella and a horse was so startled that it bolted. In spite of this reputation, however, Bergen only averages 72 inches a year which is less than half the rainfall of many mountain areas in Britain.

In really wet years the annual totals in the wetter districts of Britain are remarkable. In the Lake District, the rain gauge at the Styé recorded 250 inches in 1928, 247 in 1923 and 244 in 1872 and at Glaslyn, 1,000 feet below the summit of Snowdon, 242 inches fell in 1909. Similar results were recorded at the observatory on the top of Ben Nevis, which was in use until 1904, when it was unfortunately abandoned.

The wettest months are usually August, October, November and December and in bad years a monthly total of 50 inches has sometimes been recorded in the wettest areas, a depressing figure which we hope we shall seldom see in the future, as this is about twice London's average yearly fall. Torrential downpours not only make an expedition hazardous because of the actual rainfall but in addition bridges may be washed away and small streams become unfordable and an incautious party may be cut off. During the terrific Tweed floods in 1948, the Tweed and the Whiteadder rose about 17 feet in a few hours carrying away large quantities of livestock and wooden huts and great damage was done to many of the bridges, some of which were washed away by the enormous force of the water.

The rainfall, although excessively heavy over an area of a few square miles falls off rapidly farther away from the higher peaks around Styé Head and Snowdon. At Seascale only 40 inches fall in an average year and Penrith's fall is the same. At Windermere the average is 78 inches. In doubtful weather it is often possible to avoid the wettest districts and have a comparatively dry day, owing to the small area of the Lake District and the variation of the rainfall in adjacent districts.

Fortunately, however, in spite of the heavy rainfall in most mountain districts, dry spells occur at times and droughts even in the wettest areas are not unknown. February, 1932, was one of the

driest months on record over the British Isles and many districts in the West of England and Wales had no rain at all. On other occasions when the South East of England is having steady rain, Wales and the Lake District have dry spells. This happened during the August Bank Holiday week-end in 1931, when the conditions round Snowdon, although cloudy, were excellent for climbing and no rain fell at all.

Our knowledge of temperature and wind changes with altitude is largely derived from radio sondes which are small radio transmitting sets that are sent up by balloon four times a day from various meteorological stations in the British Isles. These radio sondes give details of pressure, temperature and relative humidity throughout their flight, which starts near sea level and ends when the balloon bursts, which may be at any height between 30,000 and 100,000 feet and the radio sonde is let down by parachute. It has been found that on an average the temperature drops about  $1^{\circ}$  per 300 feet increase in altitude, but this figure varies considerably from day to day. In Scotland, there is the additional information that was obtained from the old Ben Nevis observatory. At Fort William the mean temperature during the period 1884-1903 was  $47-2^{\circ}$  F. while the summit of Ben Nevis averaged  $31-5^{\circ}$  F. giving a fall of  $1^{\circ}$  per 270 feet which is rather greater than the average over Great Britain. The temperatures at the summits of the higher peaks will often be below freezing when it is comparatively warm in the valleys and rain may freeze immediately it falls, producing dangerous ice slopes. In settled anticyclonic conditions the hilltops are sometimes warmer than the valleys which may result in brilliant sunshine on the hill tops while the valleys may be foggy especially in the winter months.

The velocity and direction of the upper winds can be computed from the courses of the radio sondes which are equipped with radar reflectors. Usually there is an increase in wind and a slight veer with increasing heights, i.e., the wind direction usually moves to the right. In mountainous areas, however, the surface winds are largely determined by the contours of the hills and the winds on the ridges can sometimes be estimated by watching the clouds. In stormy weather, the gusts at 3,000 feet or more may be dangerously strong and people have been blown off their feet when standing on snow.

Generally winds are stronger in more Northerly latitudes and experimental work is now being carried on in Orkney Mainland to determine the increase in velocity on the tops of hills of different shapes and to find suitable sites for the erection of large aerogenerators for electricity production. Two different exposed hills, Costa Head, which is slightly less than 500 feet high on the north-west

coast of the island, and Vestra Fiold, which lies halfway down the west coast and is 420 feet high, have been chosen and anemometers have been mounted on both hills. Another instrument of the same type has been erected near sea level at Bignold Park just outside Kirkwall for comparison purposes. As was expected, the two hill stations showed considerably higher wind speeds than the Bignold Park Station and at Costa Head the average was 50% greater than at Bignold Park from 10th July to 8th August, 1948, when observations were made hourly. As the air pressure, which varies with the square of the wind speed, amounts to 15 lb. per square foot on a flat surface at 70 m.p.h. the force on the body when walking against a strong wind can be estimated in the shelter of a hut and felt in no uncertain manner when struggling against it on the hilltops. The maximum gust recorded in Britain reached 111 m.p.h., producing a pressure of about 37 lb. per square foot on a flat surface.

Unfortunately, weather forecasting is not an easy task and in Great Britain, which lies on the edge of the Atlantic, from which few reports are available, the job of the forecaster may be very difficult when the weather situation is complex. Until March, 1950, the amateur was helped considerably by the excellent service known as 'Airmet,' which broadcast hourly weather reports from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. during the summer and from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. during the winter, giving up-to-the-minute information of the weather conditions over the British Isles and changes expected in the immediate future. Airmet was listened to by a great number of people interested in out-of-door activities, particularly airmen, farmers, yachtsmen, glider pilots, pigeon fanciers, and housewives when deciding when they should do the weekly wash and whether their children should take a mackintosh to school. It is to be hoped that, as a result of a petition signed by a large number of people, a suitable wavelength will be found so that this service can be restored. It will be of great help to mountaineers and everybody else whose livelihood or sport is largely dependent on the weather.

Good forecasting can only be acquired by long experience, and the forecasters at the meteorological office at Dunstable have not only the advantage of years of practice but, in addition, they have up-to-date charts showing the weather over the whole of the British Isles and Europe. They also receive reports from aircraft and ships in the Atlantic and details of upper air conditions obtained from radio sondes.

The amateur has none of these aids but he can often receive helpful advice from the local farmers and a pocket altimeter is a useful accessory. A rapidly falling glass is nearly always a sign of approaching bad weather and when the sea level pressure is much

below 294 inches, settled conditions are unlikely to last for long. Little reliance can be placed on the indications of rain and change that appear on the dials of popular aneroids. If they are placed at a lofty situation such as the Kirkstone or the Cat and Fiddle Inn, the needle is likely to be permanently at rain or storm as the barometric pressure falls with increasing altitudes as well as on the approach of a depression with its unsettled weather. The fall in pressure with altitude is slightly over 1 inch per 1,000 feet for heights up to 7,000 feet so that a correction to sea level is necessary to get the best value from an aneroid. Other signs of bad weather are a spreading veil of high cloud or cirrostratus which may be accompanied by a halo and backing winds, i.e., winds moving in the reverse direction to the sun. Exceptionally good visibility such as a clear view of the Isle of Man from the Lakeland Fells is another bad sign. In really settled weather, particularly in England and Wales, visibility is usually restricted to a few miles by the industrial haze which is unable to scatter because of the light winds which usually accompany fine weather. In Scotland and Ireland, however, clear conditions often prevail in settled weather owing to the smaller number of factories sending their smoke into the air.

Although the British Mountains are small compared with many of the mountain masses in the world, it is essential to keep a watchful eye on the weather conditions at all times. This will not only make an expedition safer but in addition the changes in visibility and cloud formations will add considerably to the interest of any trip.



## NEED SUCH THINGS BE ?

*H. Westmorland*

During the five years in which I have been engaged in Mountain Rescue work from Keswick, I have been surprised to find that nearly all the loss of life has been to fell walkers rather than to their more adventurous brothers, the rock climbers.

As in the Alps, most of the fatalities are due to bad weather and bad judgment, here aggravated by ignorance of conditions and poor equipment. Some of these unfortunate people set out, even in winter, insufficiently clad to withstand any unlooked for exposure. They march gaily off in shorts and cotton shirts with no wind-proof clothing or sweaters for a change in the weather. Some of them are unable to find their way in cloud by the use of map and compass. Many have no reserve food to sustain them when lost or injured. Others wear inadequate or slippery soled shoes, and come to grief on ground quite safe in nailed boots.

This spring we had a big accumulation of snow until June—snow is a most enjoyable added attraction of the fells, but those lacking experience or the right equipment should not venture onto it where it is steep and above crags.

Some of these fell lovers who came so sadly to grief failed to realise that the thinnest covering of fresh snow may conceal slippery ice, making an innocent looking snow slope into a very dangerous place.

Quite apart from snow or the use of the ice axe, others died because they started to run down the fell-side, and, letting their heads get ahead of their feet, were unable to catch up and plunged head foremost over small declivities. Another accident, though not fatal, was caused by a man looking into the view-finder of his camera and stepping backwards over a small outcrop in his efforts to include all he wanted in the picture.

' Don'ts ' are most annoying things and tend to have the wrong effect, but it is difficult to reverse them to the positive. However, I shall try, and, based on these fatalities, wish that the following points could be brought to the attention of all inexperienced people who intend to walk the fells :—

1. Save your high expeditions for good weather.
2. Wear or carry sufficient warm clothing to keep you alive if lost or injured.
3. Carry reserve food.
4. Equip yourself with good, well-nailed boots.



6. Learn something about snow before venturing onto steep slopes, and if you do so venture take an ice axe and know something of its use. In a snow shower or after one, scrape the snow to test for hidden ice.
7. If following a stream to find a way down, keep out of the ghyll or you may be trapped by a rock pitch.
8. If you are expected somewhere by people who will raise the alarm should you fail to turn up, and for some reason you go elsewhere, then for Heaven's sake notify the Police so that the Mountain Rescue Team is not turned out to look for you. (This happens too often. Only recently the team searched Skiddaw for a missing fell walker who was sitting happily in Windermere. The greatest enemy of the Mountain Rescue Team is the tiring, fruitless search for people who are not lost.)
9. Above all, remember that even the small difference in altitude of 2,500 feet can take you into another climate ; into conditions where the wind can sweep you off your feet ; where it can be so cold and wet that the lost or benighted risk death from exposure. Especially is this so in winter, but it is not confined to winter. I have experienced nearly thirty Canadian winters. 30° F. below zero was common, and that is 62° of frost—on occasion the thermometer would drop to ' forty-five below '—yet I cannot remember ever having colder hands than I had once in June on Green Gable Crags, in a driving, bitterly cold, north-west rainstorm.

Down in the protected valley the stormy winter day may not seem so bad, but remember that it may be very different on the tops.

I have written these notes at the request of the Hon. Editor. The problem is how to reach those who are just beginning their fell walking. Our own members who may read them do not need to be told these simple things.

## CONVERSION OF RAW HEAD BARN

*J. A. Kenyon*

The first chapter in the history of Raw Head Hut is well and truly recorded in the 1945 *Journal* by S. H. Cross, one of the prime movers in finding and equipping the second hut belonging to the Club.

Due to him as the first Warden and the small band of willing helpers, the venture proved such a success that the Committee had full confidence in negotiating for the outright purchase of the property from our friend and lessor Cyril Bulman, when he expressed the desire to dispose of the lease in the spring of 1946. At that time most thoughts were on the retention for the Club of the converted farmhouse, on which we only had security for the remaining eight years of the lease. But a few members had sidelong glances at the nearby barn which was already being used by the more hardy spirits as an overflow dormitory when the house was thronged.

While the financial wizards were speculating on values based on current interest rates, existing rents and valuation tables, others were snooping round the barn with surveyor's tapes and appraising eyes. After much consultation two members were appointed to beard the landlord in his den—or perhaps one should say Dungeon—armed with a maze of facts and figures. These were never boarded, of course ; it just turned out to be a good old Cumberland and Westmorland wrestle. One or two preliminary gyrations over, the Eskdale Bull faced up to the Kendalian and after talking about everything from Herdwicks to split cane salmon rods, honours were declared even and a clap hands bargain was made. Both parties felt they had given the other most generous terms. Metaphor is stretched no farther here than the imaginations were during that midnight session in the old kitchen at D.G. The hut was ours, and with it a sizable barn, two acres of fell and a stream. Democracy must have its way naturally in the shape of the Committee and A.G.M. approval given two months later. In the meantime the tapes were stretching across the barn again. Improvements were required in the house kitchen to provide more light, floor space and air. The need for overflow accommodation became more insistent and allowed the plans of the barn to come into the daylight. Tentative suggestions were made for conversion, bearing in mind the limitations of finance, labour and materials.

The appeal for funds at the end of 1946 brought in just about enough to cover the purchase price of the property. Even this amount would not have been achieved had not a happy thought

occurred to the Trustees of the G. R. Speaker Memorial Fund, who offered the sum of £360. In the words of the Memorial Plaque—' In 1947 the freehold of this barn was purchased by members of the London Section and their friends in memory of G. R. Speaker.' A fitting tribute to a well-loved President and long-time leader of the London Section.

Time passed on with much discussion on paper, in informal talk and in Committee cross-chat. Club funds could stand an expenditure of about £1,200 on alterations, barn conversion and equipment ; caution counselled against too great elaboration. ' Guides were being published,' reminded the Treasurer. ' We will want huts in other valleys,' said the long range planners. ' Development charges,' murmured the legal luminaries. ' Rising building costs and licences,' snorted the surveyors. ' Bunks and bread-boards are enough,' said the spartans. A plan was produced for conversion on simple lines for Committee consideration and democracy got to work again. ' We must have a fireplace, this stove can go into the kitchen to heat water,' ' Where are the bathrooms.' ' The larder isn't big enough.' ' Board in the roof.' ' Resident Warden's quarters ? ' ' Plaster the ground floor ceiling.' ' All bedrooms must face south.' ' Wide solid staircases.' ' Electric light and power.' ' Hotel Splendide ! ' ' But it must be inside, you can't go outside in the middle of the night.' ' Maximum light and height are absolutely vital in a kitchen.' ' Who wants to wash anyway.' ' Plan 7 is better than plan 6.' And so on into the night—many nights. Meanwhile contracts for purchase were exchanged and conveyances completed.

The question of a local architect to supervise the work was quickly and most appropriately settled when Mr. J. Stables, a one-time member of long standing, accepted the commission and persuaded a friendly builder, Mr. Usher of Hawkshead, to take on the job. With what patience did they tolerate the aggravations of the changing tunes of varying Committees ? With what skill did they transform the old barn into the new ? With a patience and skill only equalled by that of the President, L.W.S., in leading his enthusiastic but temperamental team to agreement. In the final process it was left to a Sub-Committee of three, which by acting with a Presidential quorum of one reached an ultimate and acceptable solution. Democracy at its best! One typical meeting in May, 1948 (yes, 1948) started at 10-30 p.m. on the Friday night and went on till dawn at 4-30 a.m., when two figures tottered out to look at some of the details.

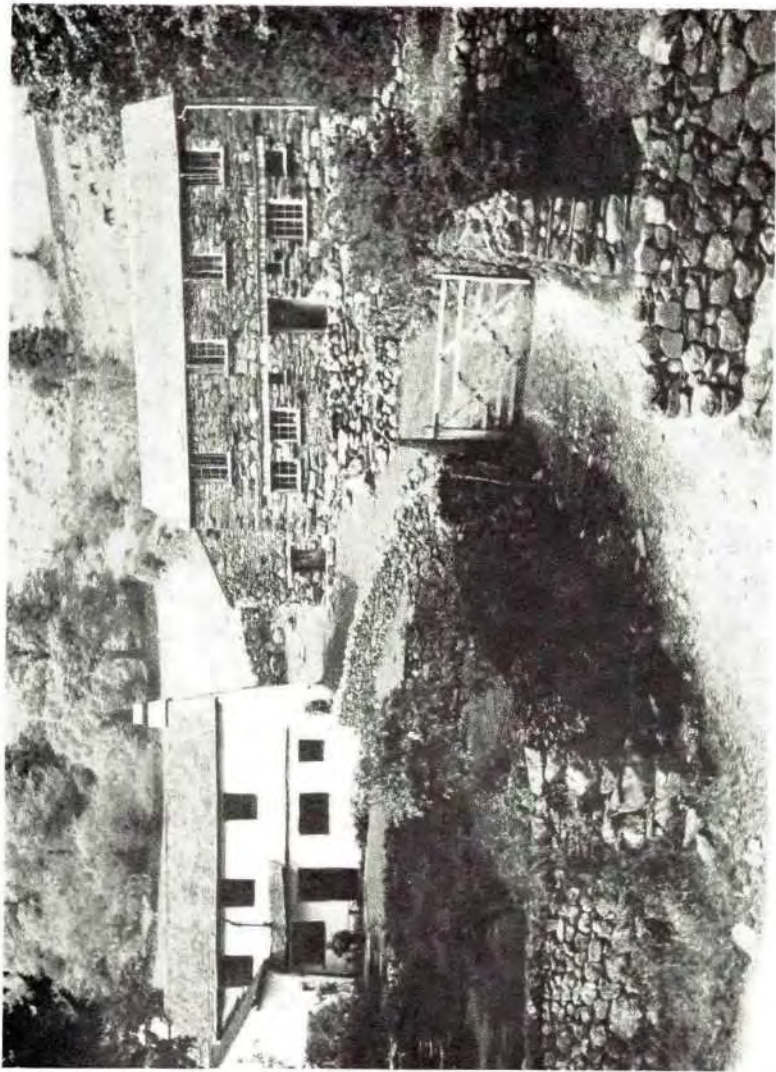
After two years of intensive cud-chewing the scheme was sufficiently digested, not without occasional hiccups, to approach those

processes oft dubbed barriers to progress—applications for planning, byelaw and National Trust approval, determination of development charges, building and timber licences. However, with a guiding pull or two on the ropes, these pitches were surmounted in a matter of a week or so. Mr Usher's men took possession and with that astonishing local skill carried out the long awaited transformation. No one who hasn't tried walling with Lakeland stone will appreciate the cunning required to make regular shapes out of such uncompromising and diversely sized lumps of rock. Ask those volunteers who excavated the floor of the shippon to provide adequate head-room for the kitchen and living room—what intractable stuff it is. Gradually, as labour could be spared, the shape of things to come emerged and although several 'opening dates' went by, the building work was completed early in 1950.

While the builders moved about their skilled tasks, members—the energetic few—did odd jobs, including the digging of the pit for a water tank higher up the stream to get more head and enable 'it' to be put 'inside' upstairs. More volunteer work on selecting equipment, buying furniture and decorating. Much ingenuity on 'mouse-proofing' the food cupboards and 'draught-proofing' the stair hatch—students of the running belay please observe.

At last all was ready, the opening day arrived and the finished barn was open for inspection. The altered building still fits snugly in the landscape. There is the memorial plaque, inconspicuous and true with its delicately proportioned lettering, the spacious living-room with its handsome and unique fireplace (who dares a mantel-shelf problem?), and its surprise view down the dale, the airy kitchen with elbow room and calor gas. Upstairs lofty dormitories with southern sun and a way-in at ground level for those too weary to mount the ladder. 'Brushes, etc.—please use and replace.'

In an account of the erection of a building, one often sees a lengthy list of acknowledgments to those responsible (and sometimes irresponsible) for its conception and completion. The professional architect and builders have already been mentioned and the result is living testimony to their art and craft. A list, long in itself but short in proportion to the club membership, could be drawn up of all those Officers, Wardens, Hut Secretaries, Committee and ordinary members who volunteered their own particular brand of knowledge, skill or brawn. Many gave days when they might have been on the crags or fells but they did so happily and their reward is the satisfaction of having been in the party which made the barn 'go.' They and all others with them will support their tireless and tenacious leader, L. W. Somervell, whose Presidential term coincided with the greater part of the fulfilment of the task. Their



*Arthur Robinson*

2  
RAW HEAD—THE F. USE AND BARN



J. R. Files

OPENING OF AV HEAD BARN

work and his stands four-square for all to see and use. Their satisfaction will be measured by the numbers deriving pleasure from its shelter. 'It is the duty of all using the hut to carry out hut duties before going out for the day'—of course!

The result is a working compromise between very many suggestions; minor improvements can and will be made as time and funds permit. Three enthusiastic Presidents reigned from the time of its inception to completion; perhaps the proof of its success was sealed when a fourth commandeered its living room for his March committee in preference to the farmhouse kitchen.

## OPENING OF RAW HEAD BARN

*T. R. Burnett*

From the very nature of the case the activities of our Club have, in general, little to do with ceremonial. The annual dinners, with the possible exception of that which celebrated our twenty-first birthday, can hardly be classed as ceremonies, and the only events which could be properly so regarded are the centenary pilgrimage to Pillar by the Old West, the unveiling of the War Memorial Tablet on Gable, Haskett-Smith's fiftieth anniversary ascent of the Needle, and the formal opening of the Club huts. Of these last the third took place on Saturday, 8th April, 1950, when the adapted barn at Raw Head, Great Langdale, began life in its new capacity.

On that day a small band of enthusiastic workers brushed and scrubbed, polished and garnished, to such a degree that when the great moment came the inclination before crossing the threshold was to remove one's boots!

The day was unfortunately cold and wet, but it is hard to believe that this accounted for many absences, seeing that about 150 members and friends gathered at Raw Head. It was almost like a dinner meet in one respect, namely that many distant members made a special effort to be present and were rewarded by the opportunity of encountering old friends, and participating in reminiscent conversation.

When the time for action arrived the President, J. C. Appleyard, supported by several past Presidents and other prominent members and officials, took up his stance on the terrace of the new hut, and in a short and fitting speech, called on Leslie Somervell to address the gathering. The Ex-President gave a brief summary of the history of the venture, but made light of the many obstacles, such as shortages of materials and labour, and the obtaining of permits, which had been successfully overcome. He also paid tribute to the architect, Mr Stables, and to the contractors and their men whose efforts had resulted in the production of a modernised building which, while completely appropriate to its new use, formed a pleasing feature in the charming landscape in which it was set. The speaker also acknowledged the help, financial, administrative, and practical, which had been given by members, and expressed satisfaction that the pressure on the accommodation at Raw Head would now be relieved.

Dr C. F. Hadfield, 'permanent' President of the London Section, welcomed the opportunity of explaining that the trustees of the Speaker Memorial Fund had agreed to add their resources to those of the hut. This gesture had a two-fold consequence, for not only did it enable the present venture to be launched free of debt, but also served to link in a lasting manner, the name of one of the Club's outstanding Presidents and personalities with a branch of its activity with which he was deeply and generously associated.

Prior to the actual unlocking of the door, the writer of these notes had the privilege of reminding the company of how greatly the Club was indebted to Leslie Somervell in connection with the scheme. He had been the real creative and driving force, without which it was very doubtful whether today's great consummation would ever have been attained. These remarks were received with enthusiasm by all except the victim, who, with his accustomed modesty attempted to pass them off by turning to throw open the door. The whole party thereupon followed him into the building, and were much impressed with its design and equipment. Tea and cake were dispensed by a group of willing helpers, and an opportunity to subscribe to the Hut Fund was adequately utilised.

So another cairn in the Club's progress was set up, and it will be the hope of all that the new dwelling will make a large contribution towards those objects for which the Club stands, and that those who use it will show their appreciation by giving it full support, and by preserving its amenities.



The ordinary citizen in these days has increasing opportunities for the study of the workings of the official mind, and frequently enough his investigation has not to be pursued very far before he discovers that they are peculiar, to say the least of it. If that is the limit of his discovery or his thought about them he may consider himself reasonably fortunate.

Officialdom is not confined to the governmental sphere, and the conduct of the affairs of our own Club would be impossible without it. The ordinary member, however long his standing, may sometimes be momentarily mystified by its manifestations, but sooner, rather than later, he comes to see that they have had their origin in a real concern for his own personal welfare.

This has been clearly shown year by year in the arrangements so excellently made in advance for the Scottish Meet, now fast becoming almost an institution, with its own peculiar characteristics, and this was especially so in the matter of the choice of a Leader for the Meet at Clachaig in May, 1950. R. T. Wilson performed all his functions in an ideal manner, even to the extent of displaying a becoming modesty in ascribing his success partly to the ready co-operation of 'the troops' and partly to the examples set for him by Leaders of the previous Meets, in which he had participated as one of the rank and file.

Numbers at Clachaig were somewhat disappointing, for they only reached nine at the maximum, but there was no falling off in the spirit of happy comradeship, which has come to be recognised as the hall-mark of these Meets. The fact that the proportion of 'old timers' was high may have contributed to this, but it cannot be emphasised too often that there is no cliquishness of any sort about these Scottish Meets and that members of the Club, however 'unknown' at the outset, soon find themselves fully accepted as 'good companions' in every sense of the phrase.

The main party foregathered on Saturday, 13th May, and as the following day opened with every promise of being all that could be desired, it was decided to explore the nearest corrie of Bidean nam Bian (Coire nam Beith) and see how we got on. As befitted a first day, pace was moderate, and a stop for lunch was made at about 2,000 feet up the left-hand (easterly) branch of the corrie. The promise of the morning proving no false one, the party continued to the bealach between Stob Coire nan Lochan and the main peak, and followed the ridge to the latter. Here a long halt was made in warm and almost windless conditions, with due attention to the extensive

but somewhat hazy view, after which a descent was made over Stob Coire nam Beith and An t'Sron by routes varying according to taste. A bathe in the Coe after tea, and a short walk in the nearby woods after dinner completed a thoroughly successful first day.

The Monday was again fine, and the tigers (W.G.M., L.W.S., G.H.W., and H.R.P.) set off to traverse the Aonach Eagach ridge from east to west, while the rabbits (W.G.S., R.T.W. and F.L.C.), entrusted with several provisioning commissions, took the morning bus up the glen to Altnafeadh, and followed the old military road (Devil's Staircase, etc.) to Kinlochleven and its shopping centre. The tigers reported a thoroughly good day on their ridge, on one part of which incidentally they were spotted by the rabbits from their humbler path, but seemed more impressed by the roughness of the final descent to Clachaig than by any difficulties at high level.

For the Tuesday, when we were again favoured by fine weather, an assault en masse on Buchaille Etive Mor was planned and duly executed. Cars were taken to a convenient parking place near the Study in time to join the morning bus as far as Altnafeadh. Crossing the Coupall there, an ascent was made up Coire na Tulaich, involving only a very little step-kicking near its head, whence Stob Dearg was reached for lunch and other restful pursuits, though one or two of the tigers visited the Crowberry Tower, presumably as a token climb. In due course, in more than one party and in varying times, the whole ridge of the mountain was then followed over Stob na Broighe and somewhat farther, before breaking off north-west down a steep but shallow gully into Lairig Gartain, whence the southerly end of Buchaille Etive Beag was rounded into Lairig Eilde some way short of the bealach. Once at the bealach the troops proceeded rapidly in open order back to the car park.

An off day seemed to be dictated for the Wednesday and a visit to the Lost Valley (Coire Gabhail) was acclaimed as filling the bill, but a majority of the party, including the Leader, pleaded that they had an urge, which called for priority treatment, to go shopping. The minority (W.G.S. and F.L.C.) concurred in this desertion on the understanding that the shoppers would bring their cars sufficiently far up the glen to ensure transport on the way back, and join them near the 'Meeting of the Three Waters.' It is recorded with sorrow that these carefully laid plans went astray—for reasons too controversial to be recounted here—but the two parties were at length reunited and reconciled over lunch at the head of the gorge. After this an exploration of the Lost Valley itself, though cut short by rain, confirmed that it fully merits all that W. H. Murray has so effectively written about it in his *Mountaineering in Scotland*.

For the Thursday, intrigued by the statement on page 40 of the

S.M.C. Central Highlands Guide (1934) that Beinn Fhionnlaidh was pronounced 'Ula,' which appeared clearly to beat all other Gaelic peculiarities known to any of us, it had been decided to visit the hills in that direction. The full party got away in good time after breakfast and kept more or less in contact as far as the foot of Aonach Dubh a' Ghlinne. From that point each took his own route and the ridge line was reached at as many different points, but unanimity prevailed as to taking lunch at a small tarn just beyond the first top. As the ridge was followed over Stob an Fhuarain there were magnificent views in most directions with Bidean nam Bian lording it to the east and Beinn A'Bheithir (Ben Vare) luring us in the west, with Mull in bright sunshine beyond. Then, for a time we were caught in one of the snow blizzards, which we had for some time seen moving across the surrounding hills, and we hurried over our highest point Sgorr nath Ulaidh (the true 'Ula') to Corr na Beinne, urged on by the Leader who refused to permit any shirking. He relented, however, as the blizzard intensified, and acquiesced in a rapid descent, not without impairing the pristine beauty of his own leather waistcoat, to the lower levels of the Allt na Muidhe. Here the sun re-emerged and after a short halt for further refreshment a speedy return down the glen was made back to Clachaig in time for tea.

There were not too many regrets on the Friday morning at finding a distinct change in the weather, with heavy rain confirming the general decision to have an off day with lunch at the hotel, but when the afternoon gave indications of turning out fine, energy revived and all but two of the party paid a visit to the Pap of Glencoe. As the only aneroid barometer in the party pronounced the altitude to be 4,000 feet, everyone felt that honour had been satisfied, and a rapid return was made to base. The two 'non-combatants' meanwhile had 'explored' the road toward Kinlochleven and returned with a harrowing tale of their desperate efforts, for a long time unsuccessful, to induce a bus to pick them up on the way back. In the evening our members were augmented by the arrival of C.E. and Mrs Arnison.

On the Saturday, possibly because of certain ignominious treatment by G.H.W. the previous afternoon, but certainly to the regret of all the rest of the party, the Leader departed in company with H.R.P. in the latter's car as far as Carlisle. It is reported that in retrospect he regards that experience as the most hazardous of his adventures during the week. Without him discipline noticeably deteriorated. The official programme was a complete circuit of the east and west ridges and the main summits of Ben Vare by the full company, with the aid of car transport to and from the church

at Ballachulish. Although the strength of the force was augmented by our enrolling a new recruit in J. S. Logie of the Wayfarers' Club who was staying at the Glencoe Hotel, morale was completely upset by the struggle to penetrate the Forestry Commission's handiwork on the lower slopes of Sgorr Bann, and after lunch at about 2,000 feet, the fact that Mrs Arnison had retreated lower down was used by some of the weaklings as an excuse for following her example. These deserters spent the rest of the day motoring round the coast to Glen Creran and imbibing tea at the Appin Hotel. Thus it happened that only four of us duly accounted for the Munro tops and then by varying routes made our way down to the Ballachulish Hotel, where in due course contact was effected with the missing mountaineers. To crown his day, and he had been one of the faithful four, C.E.A., both before and after a late dinner, went fishing in Loch Achtriochtan with satisfactory results, in which all shared with appreciation, on the breakfast table next morning.

Again on the Sunday the absence of the Leader showed itself in a divergence of plans. The tigers, this time **with** F.L.C. in company as a rabbit too frightened to resist, had a good day on Aonach Dubh, making use of the well-known terrace below Ossian's Cave, and Stob Coire nan Lochan, whence a return was made by the bealach and (in the reverse direction) the route taken on the first day of the Meet. The two W.G.'s had been having what they regarded, with becoming modesty, as an easy day, with Altnafeadh as their car base, up the Devil's Staircase followed by a bog-trotting visit to the Blackwater Reservoir.

In the evening the Arnisons departed and numbers were further depleted early on Monday morning when W.G.S. and G.H.W. left by bus, the latter to experience renewed pleasure in finding that for some unaccountable reason it was cheaper to take two single tickets from and to Tyndrum than book a return. The day made a very wet start and the three surviving members fled by car to Corran Ferry, crossing to Ardgour, where they found summery conditions prevailing and enjoyed a low-level walk.

Next day the Meet finally broke up, to become a memory only, but a delightful one from every point of view. Hospitably received at Clachaig Hotel, comfortably housed and adequately fed, there were 'no complaints' for the Leader to handle, though, had there been any, he would no doubt have dealt with them **with** tact as well as firmness. It could have been wished that more members had attended, and perhaps this account of our doings may stimulate others to take part in the next Meet of the Club in Glencoe, for it would be hard to imagine that Clachaig will not summon us again, and that before very long.

## CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

*J. Carswell*

The new guides have once again absorbed most of the material which would normally have appeared in this section.

New climbing grounds are still being discovered, the latest addition being Deepdale, where climbs of quality await those looking for a change of scene.

### ULLSWATER

#### DEEPPDALE

##### EAST WALL

430 feet. Severe. First ascent, 11th June, 1950.

A.G., C.P. About 500 yards to the right of Deep-

dale Gully is a huge overhanging buttress bounded on the left by an open gully which descends from the summit of the mountain. The climb starts near the left-hand corner of this buttress at the foot of some water worn slabs. Cairn.

- (1) 80 feet. Up the water worn slab for about 30 feet then by a scoop and up a brown slab to a large terrace. Continue up the grassy terrace to a point below a grassy slab 10 feet to the left of a huge block.
- (2) 30 feet. Up the centre of the slab to a grass ledge. Step up a few feet to a small stance and good belay. Immediately above is a fault and chimney which starts upwards to the left.
- (3) 70 feet. Climb straight up for about 10 feet until it is possible to traverse right to the skyline and a ledge. Continue the traverse right for about 10 feet then round a corner out to a grassy ledge and belay.
- (4) 80 feet. Step up on the right in the corner and gain a small grass ledge. Climb upwards and slightly right then straight up the face of the buttress to a large belay. Bollard belays a few feet higher below a steep right-angled corner.
- (5) 70 feet. Climb the steep corner to a rock ledge, then by steep slabs to a large bilberry terrace below a wall.
- (6) 70 feet. Up the wall by a shattered crack to a ledge.
- (7) 30 feet. Easy climbing to the summit.

#### MIGRAINE

510 feet. Very Difficult. Pitch 5 Severe. First ascent, 9th July, 1950. A.G., J.W. Starts to the

right of 'East Wall.' Cairn.

- (1) 40 feet. By steep grassy rock to spike belay on small ledge.
- (2) 90 feet. Climb upwards to the left to a corner below a groove which is followed to a bilberry ledge. Continue along the ledge to a belay by a huge block.
- (3) 20 feet. Climb the crack to the left of the block to a grass ledge. Belay at the foot of the wall.
- (4) 80 feet. Step down two or three feet and traverse right to the edge of the buttress. Continue upwards and slightly right then straight up the nose of the buttress to a ledge below a brown slab.
- (5) 80 feet. Junction of pitch 4 of 'East Wall' then up on the right in the corner and gain a small grass ledge. Climb upwards and slightly to the right then straight up the face to a large ledge. Bollard belay a few feet higher below a right-angled corner.

- (6) 30 feet. Climb the steep rib to the right of the corner taken on ' East Wall' route to a rock ledge. Step right to a grass ledge and good belay.
- (7) 60 feet. Up immediately above the belay to an overhang which is climbed direct on good holds and gives access to a large bilberry ledge with a huge square block.
- (8) 50 feet. Traverse to the right end of the ledge to the foot of a wall. Cairn. Up the wall by the line of least resistance to a ledge with a square block below a pinnacle.
- (9) 30 feet. Climb the right-hand corner of the pinnacle to a grass ledge.
- (10) 30 feet. Up a rib to the finish of the climb, then by easy scrambling to the top of the mountain.

CENTRAL GULLY 265 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 11th June, 1950. A.G., C.P. A climb of no great worth and rather dangerous at the moment on account of loose rock. It is the prominent gully to the right of Deepdale Gully.

- (1) 15 feet. A steep pitch in the gully.
- (2) 100 feet. Easy scrambling up the gully to a point where it forks.
- (3) 80 feet. Up the left-hand branch by steep rocks and vegetation to a thread belay below an overhang.
- (4) 70 feet. Straight up the deeply cut chimney to the finish.

### BORROWDALE

#### SHEPHERD'S CRAG SLINGS

First ascent, 24th October, 1948. V.V., George Fisher. Starts 10 yards to the left of Audus.

Large cairn.

- (1) Climb 6 feet to a corner immediately below a **firmly** wedged rock which projects and forms a comfortable handhold. Once this has been grasped traverse left across the wall using small flake handholds (the footholds are rather scarce) to a small stance and block belay which is better ignored as the stance is poor, continue up the steep wall on good holds for 6 feet, then across left round an awkward and exposed nose until a good stance and belay (tree stump on rock) is found below the broken wall.
- (2) The broken wall is climbed first in the right-hand corner and then over to the left to a good tree stump belay and wide grass ledge.
- (3) Traverse 24 feet to ash tree belay.
- (4) Climb the corner overlooking Audus on good holds bearing slightly right onto the slab then up to a grass ledge, the climb is then finished up the steep crack which has a small root protruding from the centre, this has been found to be well anchored and makes a good running belay if required.

#### DESPERATION

115 feet. First ascent 17th October, 1948. V.V., George Fisher. Starts 20 yards to the left of Audus

at a corner near a sawn-off tree.

- (1) 40 feet. Climb onto the corner, difficult balance. This can be avoided by starting near the sawn-off tree. After surmounting the corner continue up on very good holds to the large earth stance and tree stump belay.
- (2) 35 feet. Traverse left under the overhanging buttress for 15 feet and then up the steep corner, rock needs care. This leads to a large grass ledge and good belay.

- (3) 40 feet. Walk right to the end of the ledge to a small oak tree where an arrow marks the start of the next pitch. Climb on the left of the buttress then bear right to the top on good holds. Good belay.

## LANGDALE

### SCOUT CRAG

#### SYLVAN ROUTE

225 feet. First pitch severe the rest difficult. First ascent, 8th July, 1950. J.R.F., M. Moxey.

Starts half way between the cave at the foot of Route 2 and a holly tree.

- (1) 20 feet. The steep wall is climbed to the right of a shallow dirty scoop. This pitch is severe, more so for a short leader.
- (2) 70 feet. Starts with a short strenuous crack in a steep undercut wall immediately above holly and rowan trees. The crack is well scratched and has been used as a more difficult alternative to part of Route 2. Continue to the right past a second holly tree to belay below oak.
- (3) 80 feet. Pass behind oak, traversing a few feet left to small nose, continue up nose, passing aspen on left, small hawthorn and dead holly.
- (4) 25 feet. Straight up to right of ourstanding flake forming a small cave.
- (5) 30 feet. Straight up black streaked slab to top of crag.

### RAVEN CRAG

#### EAST CRAG

#### MAMDA

70 feet. Severe. First ascent, 28th May, 1950. A.R.D., J. Bloor. Starts at a cairn at the extreme

left of the crag and follows an obvious line trending to the right on perfect steep rock.

#### SPECKLED BAND

60 feet. Very Difficult. First ascent, 28th May, 1950. J.B., P.T., J.R. Starts at a cairn about 30

feet to the right of the previous route and follows an obvious line.

#### JUNGLE WALL

80 feet. Very Severe. First ascent. A.R.D., J.L. Runs up a vegetatious wall about 50 feet to the right

of the previous route.

- (1) 50 feet. Climb the mossy wall to the right to attain a sloping heather ledge which is followed to the left to an ash tree belay.
- (2) 30 feet. A vertical crack on the right is climbed to the top of a rickety pinnacle. Move left and finish up the gully.

## HANGING KNOTTS

### DON'S DELIGHT

155 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 23rd June, 1949. A.G., N. Flew, J. G. Rauldon. On Hanging

Knotts looking from Angle Tarn an 'X' formation can be seen, the upper 'V' consists of rock ending in two gullies and the lower 'V' of rock strewn grass. Starts at the point of meeting of the two Vs. 30 feet of easy slab leads to the start proper.

- (1) 50 feet. Up the left-hand side of the arete finishing in the groove onto a large grass ledge. Belay in the corner some way over the grass.
- (2) 30 feet. Up to a grass shelf and round the nose to a small spike belay in a groove.
- (3) 35 feet. The 'knight's move.' Up the groove for 15 feet and across the sloping slab to the right. Belay.
- (4) 40 feet. Up the arete. Belay round large block.

## WHITE GHYLL

- QUESTION NOT 185 feet. Very Difficult. First ascent, 1st July, 1950. C.P., J.R. The climb begins 40 feet to the right of the start of Hollins Groove. The rock in parts needs care,
- (1) 45 feet. Climb straight up the steep rib and then make into a sentry box. Doubtful belays.
  - (2) 50 feet. Move slightly left and up a steep crack which leads to loose rocks at an easier angle, work slightly right.
  - (3) 50 feet. Pleasant slabs lead to a point beneath the large overhang.
  - (4) 40 feet. Walk right and ascend a conspicuous groove. Easy scrambling leads to the finish.

## HELVELLYN

Sandbed Ghyll. Difficult. First ascent. E.W.H., F. B. Hume. This is the steepest and deepest of the ghylls at the north end of the west side of Helvellyn. It lies north of the steep buttress whose profile cuts off the view from the Keswick road, and just south of the big quarries. It contains the debris of half a dozen buzzards nests, many saxifrages and good rock scenery. Most of its length is scrambling, but the pitches are not avoidable. Starts 400 feet above the road with two moderate pitches on the left wall. 200 feet higher is a difficult waterfall pitch exceedingly wet in the driest weather. The chockstone can be passed on either side ; the right hand is harder, but the left hand is wetter. Good finishing holds on the chockstone. After more walking the next waterfall is reached and is by-passed by a dry slab on the left arriving at the upper scree funnel. None of the pitches are very long.

## BUTTERMERE

- GREY CRAGS  
SYCOPHANT 95 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 28th May, 1950. D. Greenop (solo). Starts approximately 6 feet to the left of January Crack. A steep climb on rock of perfect texture and quality.
- (1) 30 feet. The steep obvious crack which leads to a semi-detached flake. The flake forms a superb belay above the minute, rather doubtful stance.
  - (2) 25 feet. Bear slightly right, then up the wall to a rock scoop where two cracks will be seen rising directly ahead. Belays in the scoop.
  - (3) 25 feet. Ascend the wall ahead using the two cracks. When these terminate, continue the pitch by climbing an identical section directly above the first two cracks. Belays on rock ledge immediately above.
  - (4) 15 feet. Scrambling to summit. Belays.

## WASDALE

- PIKES CRAG  
WESTERN BUTTRESS An interesting extension to this climb. 90 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 21st September, 1949. E.S.W., S.A.
- (4) 50 feet. From the end of the final pitch as described in the guide scramble in same line up grass and rock to a spike belay on the left.
  - (5) 40 feet. Traverse right to the edge of 'A' gully and ascend the steep nose on good holds on the edge.



KEY TO INITIALS USED

A. R. Dolphin  
J. R. Files  
A. Gregory  
E. W. Hodge  
J. Lancaster

C. Peckett  
J. Renwick  
V. Veevers  
J. Woods

Names of non-members are given in full in the text, except in a few cases where they have not been identified. It will assist the compiler of ' Climbs Old and New ' if all names, whether of members or others are given in full in the Hut Log Books.



## THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

*W. E. Kendrick*

' Rainfall figures recorded at Rydal for the past 50 years show that the average for September is 7.02 inches but that 18.55 inches **fell** in September, 1950.' Other weather reports for 1950 read similarly, and as we usually look on September as a dry month, it needs no imagination to picture conditions in the other months of the year. Towards the end of the summer the weather broke the spirits of the hardiest. Meets were poorly attended, and there is little to tell about them ; which only adds to the difficulty of writing this account.

After the preceding, it will be no surprise that we began the year at Coniston in bad weather. The Tigers made their way to Dow Craggs more from habit than from an eagerness to climb in the cold and the rain. The walkers made a rapid tour of the Tarns as an excuse to indulge in the customary bonfire with tea brewing, only to return as early as possible for more tea at the Crown. The event of the meet was the dance at the Institute, when a dozen or so members expended more energy in three hours dancing, than they had ever done in a day's climbing. A certain revered President of the club did not sit out a single dance, and was even seen doing the ' bumps a daisy.'

The week-end for the February meet at Brackenclouse was a good choice. It was fine. Unfortunately only five attended ; and they, strange fellows, chose to climb on Pillar out of the sun, in the cold. Modern nomenclature led the leader of this meet to believe that the contents of a food tin in the larder, marked ' Pool ' were for communal use. The next meet, in March, was listed as a cleaning meet for Raw Head ; it was used, as were two or three other week-ends, for working parties on equipping and decorating the Barn, the builders having just completed the structural alterations. The report of its opening appears elsewhere in this issue ; here it is only necessary to thank those members, and particularly Leslie Somervell, who helped in changing it from a disused barn to a very comfortable hut.

Easter, which should have seen our hopes resurgent for the coming summer was one of the worst for many years ; a foretaste of the weather to come. The party at Raw Head was able to see the opening of the Barn, without effort. Not so Brakenclouse, which, nevertheless, sent its representatives ; two car loads of them, and two stalwarts who walked over. There is nothing else to relate of the four days' holiday. As one leader remarked, the people who

worked hardest, were those who stayed in as stokers for the drying room fires, and coped with masses of damp clothing.

A month later, the weather was still poor, when some dozen members attended the Coniston meet. In spite of the cold showers and strong winds, most of the easier routes on Dow were climbed ; the members enjoyed each other's company, even if climbing conditions were far from pleasant. Our hopes for Whitsun were raised in the latter half of May by a spell of dry weather, which, however, gave out when we arrived in Borrowdale and was replaced by rain and wind. In consequence the climbs on the lower fells were popular. The ' hutters ' were grateful for the comforts of High House, that once again had been kindly lent to us by the Fellfarers. We were glad to welcome a group of T.A. Commandos from London, who held a week-end ' camp ' in a barn at Rothwaitc. It was a pleasure to introduce them to mountaineering and a comfort to the ageing amongst us, to find that they were as tired as we were, at the end of the day. Not only did we admire their hardihood in camping, but also their tenacity in climbing in ' ammo ' boots, and being undeterred by not infrequent slips. We are indebted to one of them for a new version of Father Christmas and Chimneys, which the Editor could not possibly print.

Of the remaining meets, from June to October, there is little to tell. Rain in copious amounts spoilt them all. There was one tyro at Raw Head for the Novices meet, several leaders, and the members of two committees. The novice's instruction in climbing was confined to Sunday afternoon on Scout Crag, but he, no doubt, learnt many other things about the club, including the accessibility of places of refreshment from Raw Head.

Only seven went to the Mardale meet in October, where at least they enjoyed the hospitality of the Haweswater Hotel, even if a hail storm on the Sunday spoilt the walk on the fells, and the climbing on Dandle in Long Sleddale.

The ' away ' fixture at Glencoe is described separately. We have received no news whatever, of the North Wales meet in August, at Glan Dena. We presume that rain fell there as much as it did in the Lake District, and that in consequence the party made good use of the considerable comforts this fine hut provides.

After this long story of rain and yet more rain it is a relief to end it with a brief account of the very enjoyable October Dinner Meet at Keswick, for which we are again indebted to Mr Beck, his staff of the Royal Oak, and to our indefatigable Secretary for the excellent arrangements.

We had two days sunshine and cloudless skies, with a touch of frost at nights to give additional sparkle to the mornings, and to

the superb autumn colours. The rocks and the fells were dry everywhere. The number of members at the Dinner itself, was a record for recent years ; applications to bring guests had to be refused. This revived interest in the club is very welcome. The business of the Annual General Meeting, was soon completed. It consisted mostly of the long minutes of the last Annual General Meeting. We are grateful to F. H. F. Simpson for accepting year after year, the dreary task of taking them. According to custom the Presidency changed hands at this meeting, and we, therefore, welcomed Lieut.-Colonel H. Westmorland to this office, and we warmly thanked John Appleyard for two years of devoted service to the club, in addition to the many others that he has already given us. The prompt despatch of the small amount of business at the Annual General Meeting, left us with ample time to talk with old friends, and to slake thirsts, before sitting down to a fine meal. We welcomed B. R. Goodfellow as the principal guest, Sir A. Cutforth, C.B.E., A. Duff, Miss E. Bray, G. S. Bower, A. G. Spencer, Miss E. Stark and F. Solari representing respectively, The Alpine, Fellfarers, Pinnacle, Rucksack, Wayfarers, Ladies' Scottish Mountaineering Clubs, and the Midland Association of Mountaineers. Our guests always 'sing' well for their suppers (it is not suggested that they are selected for this attribute), and we thank them for delighting us with their speeches. Our own members who responded, know, of course, that they dare not make a poor speech. We welcome H. P. Spilsbury's innovation of describing the company by Wagnerian song, though the sensitive amongst us blushed at such flattering phrases. Needless to say he and John Hirst also gave us great pleasure with their singing of their (and our) old favourites, and of a new song 'Climbing, Climbing, Climbing.' What could be better ?

## IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE W. MULLER, 1907-1950

George W. Muller, who died at Cockermouth, on 3rd October, 1950, at the age of 75, was not a 'good Club man' by any conventional standards. He often claimed, with characteristic impishness, that he was the only member of the original Committee who had never attended a meeting. Few men knew the Lakeland hills and crags, whether as a climber, fisherman or follower of the foot-packs, better than Muller, and this knowledge gained during a long life coupled with a keen and lively mind which the years seemed powerless to blunt, made his friendship a privilege which younger climbers were proud to enjoy.

He was of American parentage, but his family came to Cumberland when he was in his teens and he followed his father in the profession of journalism. For a great many years he was associated with the *West Cumberland News*; but first and foremost he was a freelance, whose reputation stood high in every newspaper office of consequence in the country. It was characteristic of him that he disliked being described as a 'journalist' and insisted that he was a 'newspaper man.' He had a healthy dislike of the pretentious. He was a fine craftsman with words, concise, lucid and apt; intolerant of pomposity, clichés and slovenly writing. His *Manchester Guardian* 'Nature Notes' over the initials 'G.W.M.' were models of exact observation and wide knowledge expressed with a beautiful precision and economy of style which never lapsed into the purple mists of 'fine writing' on the one hand, or the bleak wastes of mere 'objectivity' on the other. To his skill as a craftsman-writer was added a deserved reputation of being 'the best informed man in Cumberland,' a sound and penetrating judgment and a fearless independence of mind.

His love and knowledge of the fell country had many facets. As a young man he often climbed with J. F. W. Robinson and other 'pioneers.' He had a good knowledge of most of the crags of the district and though his experience was largely limited to the classic climbs he was always keenly interested in new climbs and would question his informants closely about them. He was a fine fisherman and for many years was accounted one of the best salmon fisherman on the Derwent. There are few fell becks or tarns which he has not fished for trout. To the end of his life he took a keen interest in the foot-packs which he followed as a younger man, and he was also an acknowledged authority on hound trailing, able instantly to produce from his orderly memory the right answer to some recondite inquiry on the ancestry of some long dead hound. He was known and respected in practically every dale in the District.

George Muller led a very full life, he worked hard and he played hard, life for him was such an exciting, absorbing thing that he never had time to grow old in mind. He died suddenly, as he would have wished, after a late night's work. His friends are the poorer for his going. We salute his passing both as an Original Member of the Club and as a man whose long life was bound up with the life, work and sport of the county he loved.

E. BANNER MENDUS.

#### RALPH MAYSON, 1914-1951

Ralph Mayson, who was known throughout the Lake District as 'Ralph,' died on 1st March, 1951, after a long illness. Was there ever a greater lover of the Lakeland hills than Ralph? I very much doubt it, for being among them for upwards of 50 years there was little he did not know about them. He was always in the fells with his friends and camera, and his photographs, especially his coloured ones, are in nearly every home of those who visit the English Lakes.

He was a great companion, and it was grand to have him with you, whether rock-climbing or just a day on the fells. He loved and knew his mountains as few men do, and they were always in his mind. He had a special love for his Great Gable, and he used to say to me: 'Let's go there on the crags, the finest place on earth.' We used to go winter and summer, rain or sunshine, and always enjoyed them to the full.

The Club has lost a fine member, and although he did not take a great interest in its social side, none surpassed Ralph in his love of the English Lakes. He was seldom out of the District, although we have visited together Skye and Wales, and done most of the climbs these places offer, but Ralph was always happiest in his 'own mountains' as he called them. All who knew him will agree with me that now he has passed away the District has lost a grand man.

LIONEL GLAISTER.

#### GEORGE DIXON, 1921-1950

Lieut.-Colonel Dixon was, at the time he joined the Club, an active walker of the fells, and occasionally attended meets when these were held on the Western Approaches. His interests were many sided, being a staunch churchman, an ardent lover of music, and in his young days an enthusiastic member of the Territorial Association. In consequence his contact with Club members was intermittent, although his concern for their well-being was as constant as his love of the hills they trod.

L.W.S.

P. J. H. UNNA

It was perhaps as a Mountain Traveller rather than a Climber that Percy Unna became one of the best-known personalities in climbing circles.

He was an Old Etonian and graduated at St John's College, Cambridge, and became a Civil Engineer. Fortunately his circumstances were such that his professional activities served to accentuate rather than interfere with his love of the mountains. He travelled extensively and became well acquainted with British hills and the whole range of the Swiss, Austrian, Italian, and French Alps. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1904 and served on its Committee in 1923. On behalf of the Club he gave skilled technical and practical assistance in the preparation of the Oxygen equipment for the 1922 Everest Expedition. He was for many years a prominent member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and became its President in 1939. He joined our own Club in 1923 and was much in the Lake District. Until recently he frequently took part in the Sunday walks and other activities of the London Section. Latterly, however, he was warned that his heart was over-strained and though he continued his walks and even expeditions abroad they became solitary ones as he was unwilling to interfere with others owing to his slower pace. It is this unselfish impulse, with perhaps a prevision of possible catastrophe, which no doubt accounts for his lonely collapse and death on the slopes of Ben Eunaich, near Dalmally, on 31st December, 1950. He was 72 years of age.

Unna was a man of very marked individuality and among his many characteristics, one might almost call them foibles, should be stressed his generosity (often anonymous), his lavish hospitality, and what may be best described as a sort of 'puckish' sense of humour. Nothing delighted him more than the discovery of some small flaw in a rule in some official regulation which he would then exploit to the amusement of his friends and especially of himself.

At the Alpine Club he rarely missed a meeting and was the personal friend of an extraordinarily large number of members. He will be sadly missed there and at many other club meetings perhaps especially at those of the Cambridge Alpine Club of which he was a very keen member.

He never married and seems to have survived all his near relations but he lived a very happy and unselfish life and the closing act in the hills he loved was much as he would have wished it.

C. F. HADFIELD.

## LAURENCE HILTON POLLITT, 1926-1951

Late in an afternoon towards the end of December, 1930, I reached the cairn on High Stile in thinly falling snow. A figure came out of the mist from the west, and I presently made room alongside me for Laurence. So began an association which I shall value for the rest of my days. There must be many of my generation who have glanced round a crowded room or farmyard, at a Club Meet, seeking his small figure, much as one searches for a jig-saw puzzle piece of a bright colour, with which to begin the construction of the whole. With his passing, for me at least, the picture can never be the same.

In the early '30's there was in Manchester a luncheon party of about a dozen, variously composed of Fell and Rock, Wayfarers, and Rucksack Club men. The passing years reduced our numbers but Laurence and I and Ernest Wood-Johnson were still together last July. Four times a week for 20 years I sat down to the mid-day meal with Laurence. He was usually there first, and his greeting, half nod, half wink and slow smile, never varied. Naturally we exchanged experiences in the hills, and often prolonged arguments would develop on such topics as the most convenient route from Coniston to Borrowdale. Weeks, sometimes months afterwards, Laurence would produce an envelope with a few notes on a recent journey over the same ground, and we would start all over again.

About the beginning of June in each year he commenced the planning of his annual visit to the Alps. On his return to England he would sit silently beside me on his first day back in harness until I asked him about his adventures. His methodical approach to the exercise of the craft, his eye for detail, infinite patience, and absorbing passion for mountains, would shine out in the slow unfolding of this tale told in instalments over a period of several months, beginning and ending in the Customs Shed at a Channel port.

Laurence was deeply read and had many interests. As a cricketer in the years after the first war he played for Swinton, and his bowling carried his Club to the top of the table and the Championship Shield in 1921. The son of a Methodist Minister, he was closely connected with St Paul's Church, Swinton, of which he was a trustee, an activity which afforded the opportunity for performing many Christian acts in his unobtrusive way. Mathematics and astronomy fascinated him. We often discussed the latter subject, coupled with my own interest, geology, and Laurence took an impish pleasure in pointing out the weaknesses in the theories on which it depended. Our profound differences on the glaciology of the Lake District were a source of much enjoyment to others.



His outstanding qualities were kindness and courage. During his father's last illness he spent many sleepless nights nursing the old man and ultimately showed the strain, but was never missing from his post at the Salford Dental Clinic nor from the lunch table. When the German Air Force attacked Manchester we found, on the second day, our restaurant flooded and on fire, and had to move to a new rendezvous. After the meal Laurence fell asleep for a few minutes. It was some time later that I heard of his narrow escape in the direct hits upon Hope Hospital when the Matron and several of his friends and colleagues on the Staff lost their lives, and of the quiet self possession with which he applied himself without pause to his duties in the chaos and distress which followed. Twice in recent years I have found myself a surgical case in hospital and on each occasion my first visitor from afar was Laurence, laden with climbing literature: the last time an elementary geology treatise was included, 'in the hope,' as he said, 'of your ultimate enlightenment.'

Of his climbing it only need be said that he was supremely happy on the hills, and steady and unspectacular as a leader. He and Edgar Pollitt formed what had become almost a traditional team at home and abroad. He was conservative—shy almost—in making friends but unswerving in his loyalty to those in whom he could confide. He is survived by a brother, Mr Eric V. Pollitt, to whom he was greatly attached. This was, he said, to have been his last Alpine season, for he thought the greater peaks were becoming too much for him. With sadness one recalls his anxiety that the Matterhorn should be among this year's successes which adverse circumstances had previously withheld. This last wicket did not fall.

Edgar saw him to his last resting place in St Martin's Cemetery, Vevey, from which the snows can be seen across Geneva. Wood-Johnson, in a note to me a few days ago, said, 'he was a gallant lad, and we'll all be worse off now.' I would only add that he was our most excellent and well-beloved friend.

F. H. F. SIMPSON.

On leaving school Laurence H. Pollitt had a very promising future in cricket, but he found that his greater interest was in the hills. That was in the period 1921-1926. In those years his visits to North Wales and to the Lake District became more and more regular—often solo visits, made at no little inconvenience. Having read of the climber's Easter gatherings at Wasdale, he first made his way there in 1924. Cain took him in hand, and subsequently nominated him for Club membership. He joined many of the parties headed by the best of the climbers of those days and quickly proved his

ability as a careful yet enterprising climber. It was natural that in a short time Laurence assumed leadership of his own parties. Always patient and helpful to beginners, he trained many in his own sound methods.

He did a great deal of reading and planning in the winter months and acquired a wide knowledge of the hills of Great Britain and of Switzerland. In 1929 he made his first visit to the Alps. Every year afterwards, apart from the war years, he climbed there unguided, with Zermatt and Grindelwald the favourite centres. Arolla, Zinal, Saas, Linthall and Belalp were amongst the places in which his Alpine experience developed. Whether it was due to height, diet or nervous tension is not known, but usually on Swiss peaks he suffered from sickness. His interest, however, never waned and his courage was admirable.

On certain climbs in this country he found that he was handicapped by lack of reach, but he developed a technique which enabled him to overcome most difficulties. Few first ascents stand to his name but his ability was recognised when he was chosen to write the Club's Buttermere Guide of 1936.

Laurence's tragic death in the Alps on 30th July, 1951, occurred whilst merely training. On the low-angled ridge of the Pigne de la Lex he stepped on to a loose rock. Thrown out of balance he fell some 300 feet, receiving fatal injuries. So ended a climbing career of 30 years which had produced many affectionate friendships. He was the perfect climbing companion, and we who enjoyed his friendship, have reason to be very proud.

E. C. POLLITT.

#### E. T. PLACE, 1941-1950

Eric Thomas Place was a young mountaineer of great promise. He joined the Goldsborough Club (the mountaineering activity of Barnard Castle School) in 1935, and soon became one of its most capable and reliable members. He was a beautiful rock-climber, ever enterprising but always prudent, and his ski-ing was also of a high order.

During the war he served with the K.O.S.B., attaining the rank of captain, was twice wounded, and awarded the American Distinguished Service Cross for 'extraordinary heroism in action.' When hostilities were over he went to Canada to take up a post in the Forestry Service. It was there that he was killed at Quyon,



*Helen Boothroyd*

LAURENCE H. POWELL\*

(AT GRIMSEL AFTER CROSSING THE STRAHLEGG PASS IN 1936)

Quebec, on 8th September, 1950, when a car in which he was travelling crashed in the forest. By his death, we who knew him well have lost a very staunch comrade and the Club has lost an interesting and promising personality.

B.B.

DERRICK G. RITSON, 1944-1950

It is 20 years since I first climbed with Derrick one foul winter's day on Pillar when we did the Rib and Slab with I think six on the rope. Since then I climbed with him many times on gritstone, in Bavaria, at Chamonix, in the Lake District and in Wales. During all that long time my first impression of him never varied. He was always, to me, a young boy with an elfin spirit and a passion for the crags which suffused his whole life.

To be with Derrick was always a joy. He was meticulous in everything ; in the way in which he climbed ; in the keeping of records of times taken to reach various landmarks ; in his photography in which he excelled ; in camp his ghost stories were hair raising and in mountain huts he quietly and efficiently did more than his share of the work.

On a window in a hut in Bavaria is etched in German, the line : ' Only those are dead who are forgotten.' No one who was fortunate enough to know Derrick will ever forget him.

R.C.

W. BALDWIN, 1924-1951

w. L. BULL, 1949-1950

*Pilot Officer, R.A.F., killed in a flying accident in Canal Zone of Egypt, on 8th December, 1950.*

A. c. EDWARDS, Graduate Member.

*Died from exposure on Scafell Pikes on 24th March, 1951.*

T. H. HARGREAVES, 1924-1950

MRS R. s. HEAP, 1928-1950

R. E. W. PRITCHARD, 1916-1950

J. F. H. TODD, 1920-1950

## EDITOR'S NOTES

In April, 1950, as recorded in Dr Burnett's article on another page, the Barn at Raw Head was opened as a fully equipped Club Hut. A few months later it was reported by an alert West Cumberland member that the stables and barn, together with a cottage, on the Hassness estate at Buttermere, were in the market. The Committee forthwith commissioned the President and a few other members to make further enquiries, and if these were promising, to inspect the property with a view to its suitability for purchase by the Club. The Sub-Committee were so impressed with the possibilities of the Hassness buildings that a full Committee was called in September, and—on one of the few brilliantly fine days of the summer—visited Buttermere and made a thorough examination of the buildings and their surroundings. This visit confirmed in all respects the previous reports, and at a special meeting held the same afternoon the decision to negotiate for purchase was taken.

If any evidence were needed of the vitality of the Club, and of its confidence in a long-term policy to meet the needs of present and future members, this acceptance of new commitments at Hassness, so soon after the strain on its resources had been met at Raw Head, would surely provide that evidence.

As members already know, completion of the purchase took longer than could have been expected, but when this had been brought to a successful conclusion—thanks largely to the unremitting efforts of the Hon. Treasurer—little time was lost in carrying out the necessary repairs and alterations. By the time these notes are read, furniture and equipment will doubtless have been installed, and 'Birkness' will be in use by members and their friends who desire to enjoy to the full its surrounding fells and crags.

I am indebted to J. Osborne Walker for taking a number of photographs of Birkness of which two are reproduced in this issue. It should be noted that these were taken when the reconditioning of the buildings had only just begun.

Thanks are also due to Arthur Robinson for going to a great deal of trouble to obtain pictures of Raw Head Barn, involving, it appears, some hazardous climbing on the roofs and in the tree-tops on the other side of the road. Several excellent views resulted, all worthy of reproduction, had space permitted. One of them accompanies J. A. Kenyon's article printed herein.

Recent visitors to the Barn will have noticed a marked addition to the amenities of the kitchen, where the top of the cooking bench has been covered with most attractive tiles. The Club is indebted to Mr J. Stables for this pleasant aid to good housekeeping.

Speaking of Raw Head reminds me that its near neighbour, the Robertson Lamb Hut—the forerunner of all Club Huts in the District—recently attained its 21st birthday, an event celebrated by the Wayfarers at a special meet in March of this year. I have it on good authority that this anniversary is to be marked in a permanent form, if all goes well, by an extension of the cottage which will provide much needed light and space in the kitchen, and other improvements. As the design of this is in the same hands as that of the Raw Head Barn conversion we can be assured that its material and character will be fully in keeping with the buildings now grouped so happily on both sides of the road.

On more than one occasion during recent years the Editorial in the *Wayfarers' Journal* has contained its writer's considered views on some topic of concern to all climbing clubs. In the number issued this year Douglas Milner makes the suggestion that the principal Northern Clubs, of which he names four, should discuss the publication of a joint Journal, each Club being allotted a section for its own proceedings, but otherwise pooling their resources in regard to literary contents and illustrations.

To a Club like our own, which has published an annual Journal almost without interruption since its formation over 40 years ago, and which has special regional attachments not shared by other Clubs, the proposal is not likely to have any immediate appeal. At the same time the difficulties of production under present conditions are undeniable, and seem more likely to increase than otherwise. Apart from the financial and material aspect, another problem which confronts editors is that of obtaining contributions from their members under present day stresses and strains. This is accentuated by the fact that many of the more active in the mountaineering and literary fields are 'pluralists' and as such are regarded as legitimate prey by more than one Editor!

The suggestion which Milner puts forward should not therefore be dismissed out of hand, but should have due consideration by the Clubs concerned as a possible solution of present and future problems of Journal production.

We welcome the reappearance of *Mountaineering*, the Bulletin of the British Mountaineering Council, after a period of eclipse, and wish Mr Herbert Coates every success in his efforts to ensure regular publication, and so enhance its interest and value to all mountaineers.

Dr Hadfield, in his memoir of the late P. J. H. Unna which appears on an earlier page, refers to his great and often anonymous generosity. Since this was written the National Trust for Scotland has revealed that Mr Unna's benefactions as 'The Anonymous Donor' to their funds, and by the purchase of properties, were indeed magnificent. He was largely instrumental in making possible the purchase of the Dalness estate, which with that already acquired in Glencoe brought the area in Trust ownership in that district up to 12,000 acres. Later he paid the entire amount needed to purchase Kintail Forest, north of Glen Shiel, covering about 15,000 acres, and comparatively recently his gifts enabled Ben Lawers and Ben Ghlas to be acquired. The Trust thus holds some of the finest mountain country in Scotland largely through Mr Unna's generosity, and in addition he bequeathed the residue of his estate (estimated at £50,000 after payment of duty) for furthering this side of the Trust's work.

Members who were fortunate enough to attend the Club meets in Glencoe last year, and recently in Glen Shiel, will be able to appreciate the work of the National Trust for Scotland, so splendidly aided by these benefactions.

When the 1949/50 Journal was, after many vicissitudes, finally issued to members the year 1950 had taken its departure. With the over-optimism of a 'new hand' I then set myself the task of getting that for 1951 out before the A.G.M. and Dinner. This hope seems unlikely to be realised, but I am most grateful to contributors for all the help they have given in making the attempt. Again I am particularly indebted to the Hon. Librarian for distributing books and Journals to the reviewers, who have responded so acceptably, and also for guiding my halting footsteps through the somewhat complicated maze—as it then seemed to me—involved in the distribution of the last Journal.

The Lake District National Park is now in being, and its boundaries defined and approved. These conform substantially with those recommended in the Hobhouse Report, with a welcome addition to the coastal belt of S.W. Cumberland.

There has been considerable controversy in the Peak District and Snowdonia National Parks, whose area extends into several counties, as to whether their administration for planning purposes should be the responsibility of a Joint Board, or of the separate County Councils. The first, and very much preferable alternative, has been adopted for the Lake District, and the members of the Board—the first of its kind—have been nominated. The County Councils have



BIRNESS—GENERAL VIEW

F. Osborne Walker





r. Osham Walker

BIRKENESS—THE OLD BARN

appointed four members each, an arrangement that appears to give Lancashire with only one sixth of the area an undue representation as compared with Cumberland and Westmorland.

The Minister has nominated the remaining six members, and one notes with pleasure that these include two members of the Club, Miss M. R. FitzGibbon (cited as Librarian of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club) and the Rev. H. H. Symonds. Both will bring an ardent love of the Lake District, and a long and intimate knowledge of it, to the service of the Board, and our good wishes go with them in the responsible and important work they have undertaken.

The appointment of staff is left entirely to the discretion of the Board, and much seems to depend on whether it has its own officers, or utilises the separate existing county planning organisations. If the Park is to be National in reality as well as in name it seems essential that the Board should have its own chief executive officer together with an adequate staff.

It will not be news to most readers of these notes that on 14th July, 1951, Dr T. R. Burnett was elected an Honorary Member of the Club 'in recognition of his long and highly valued service to mountaineering in general, and to the Club in particular.' The honour is richly deserved, and I feel that I shall be voicing the wishes of his many friends in expressing gratification that his name has been added to the distinguished roll of the Club's Honorary Members.

Finally, may I extend on behalf of their fellow members, cordial good wishes to the following on their marriage: R. B. Conn; O. A. Geere; Peter Lloyd; C. P. Pickles; Dr N. Heron (now Mrs C. Smith); T. Hill; Miss D. H. Smith (now Mrs D. H. Hall); Miss S. C. Trench (now Mrs O. P. Wood); and Miss D.M. Shaw (now Mrs D. M. Jowett).

August, 1951.

W. G. STEVENS.

#### ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM

With the passing of Ashley Abraham, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club mourns the loss of one of its founder members and its first president, the English Lake District that of a notable citizen, and the mountaineering fraternity as a whole that of a lifelong enthusiast and pioneer.

At the time of his death, which occurred on 9th October, 1951, the *Journal* was already in the press, but a memoir will appear in our next number.

## LONDON SECTION—1950

The London Section has had another active year with lectures, walks, visits to Harrison Rocks and an informal dinner, as well as the annual dinner in December. In all, there were 28 events.

The year started with the informal dinner held on 19th January, at the Rossmore Restaurant, Park Road, which was attended by about 16 members. Holiday photographs were soon being passed round the table and plans discussed for possible summer trips. In both January and February we had invitations from the Ladies' Alpine Club to attend two of their lectures. The first was by Professor Stephenson on 'The Watkins Expedition to Greenland' and the second by Douglas Milner on 'The Dolomites.' Both talks were enjoyed very much by those who were able to hear them. Another lecture arranged by the B.M.C. was given by K. Tarbuck on 'Rope Technique' and several of the members heard an excellent talk on this important subject. In March we saw a coloured film on 'Sweden' given by Harry Ely at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. A fault with the projector nearly caused a calamity, but fortunately it was repaired just in time and the audience saw many aspects of an attractive country stretching well into the Arctic Circle which, even if not very mountainous, well repays a visit.

The walks generally were well attended and in spite of the wet year quite a number were held under excellent weather conditions. We had 11 during the year. The first was led by R. P. Mears on 29th January, starting from Dorking which is always a popular centre. The party were taken along the ridge of the North Downs to Abinger Hammer for lunch and back to Dorking by Holmbury. In February and March, E. W. Hamilton and L. R. Pepper acted as leaders, the former conducting a walk from Beaconsfield to Chalfont St. Giles, and the latter, as in 1949, probably led the longest walk of the year starting from Haslemere. M. N. Clarke, whose knowledge of the country around London has few equals, led two during the year, one from Clancn and the other from Godalming, visiting Hydon's Ball. Ian Clayton covered ground unfamiliar to many with a walk over the Sussex Downs, starting from Lewes. Unfortunately it blew half a gale and rained hard but the party enjoyed some healthy sea air. It is rumoured that one member suggested that the walk resembled a commando training trip, so it seems that the London Section can be tough at times.

Stella Joy and Joyce Lancaster-Jones gave us the lovely walk by Cookhain and Marlow to High Wycombe. J. E. L. Clements' walk in November was memorable for the glorious autumn tints in Ashridge Park, and the fine views from Ivinghoe Beacon.

We had eight visits to Harrison Rocks under R. P. Mears' expert guidance. These sandstone rocks are an excellent training ground. Unfortunately the attendances were not as good as in previous years. Possibly the wet weather was responsible, but the general difficulty of reaching the rocks, combined with increased train fares are doubtless another deterrent.

In the autumn we had a joint photographic evening with the Rucksack Club, the M.A.M. and M.S.C.C. An enthusiastic audience saw views of many districts including the Alps, Pyrenees and Ireland which were shown by the epidiascope. There was also a meeting called by the Ramblers' Association to appoint a Committee in London and support the North Wales Hydro-Electricity Protection Committee which was attended by some of our members. It is hoped that the beauty of North Wales is not

going to be sadly spoiled by such a scheme where production of electricity is not likely to be commensurate with the terrific cost and damage to the heart of Snowdonia.

In December the annual dinner was again held at the Connaught Rooms and 67 were present. Our guests were Colonel Culverwell from the A.B.M.S.A.C., Miss Eileen Austin from the M.A.M., Mrs J. Hirst from the Pinnacle Club and Professor Paul Garrod. Unfortunately Colonel Westmorland was not well enough to join us, but we had the pleasure of Miss M. R. Fitzgibbon's company instead. H. N. Fairfield proposed the toast of the guests and kindred clubs, and Professor Garrod and Colonel Culverwell responded. Dr Hadfield was in the chair, a position he has held since the foundation of the London Section, and we all hope that he will preside for many more years.

The usual 'dinner walk' led by the Walks Secretary was held on the following Sunday. The route included Leith Hill, which with its Tower just reaches 1,000 feet—about as high as we can get down here on a short winter's walk within easy reach of London. A snow storm came on while the party was having lunch at the foot of the hill, but conveniently ended before they had finished. The sun came out and the thin mantle of snow sparkling on the golden bracken and winter trees made a memorable picture for the last walk of 1950 for the London Section.

R. A. TYSEN-GEE.

E. W. HAMILTON.



## A NOTE ON THE FOUNDING OF THE LONDON SECTION

In the current edition of the Club Rules and List of Members, as no doubt in many earlier ones, the statement is made that the London Section was formed in 1919. It has recently been brought to my notice by W. Allsup and confirmed by reference to my own records that this date is inaccurate and should be 1920. The error is perhaps unimportant but is better corrected.

In looking up the facts it has occurred to me that it might be worth while to place on record the actual steps that were taken to found the Section whilst most of those concerned are still available. The facts given below are from the records of W. Allsup and myself.

Allsup tells me that he was recalled to Woolwich in February, 1920, and it was after that date that he, J. Coulton, H. F. Huntly, and the late L. Halliday met at the Cavour Restaurant to discuss the formation of a London Section of the Club.

On 13th October, 1920. Coulton and Huntly came to my flat in Devonshire Street, W.I, for the same purpose and we determined to proceed to form such a Section and hold an inaugural dinner. It was either at this or the next meeting that I was asked whether I would be willing to act as Chairman of the Section.

On 21st October. A more formal provisional Committee meeting met at the same place at which it was resolved to hold a dinner on 4th December. Present : J. Coulton, T. C. Ormiston Chant, L. Halliday, Dorothy Pilley, and myself.

On 4th November. A further Committee at my flat to arrange dinner details. Present : Dorothy Pilley (first Hon. Secretary of the Section), Coulton, Huntly, Allsup, R. S. T. Chorley (Editor of the *Journal*), and myself.

On 4th December. The inaugural dinner was held at Villa Villa Restaurant. It was a great success there being about 90 members and friends present. Owing to the numbers some had to dine in the general restaurant and join the main body later. Mr W. P. Haskett-Smith was in the Chair.

### *Toast List :*

- 'The Club,' proposed, C. F. Hadfield ; reply, H. P. Cain.
- 'Kindred Clubs,' proposed, G. F. McCleary ; reply, W. C. Slingsby.
- 'The Ladies,' proposed, Dennis Murray ; reply, Dorothy Pilley.
- 'The Visitors,' proposed, G. Howard ; reply, W. M. Roberts.
- 'The Chairma i,' proposed, J. Coulton ; reply, W. P. Haskett-Smith.

C. F. HADFIELD.