

T H E J O U R N A L O F
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

Edited by
W. G. STEVENS

No. 47
VOLUME XVI
(No. III)

Published by

T H E F E L L A N D 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

1953

CONTENTS

PAGE

The Mount Everest Expedition of 1953	... Peter Lloyd	215
The Days of our YouthGraham Wilson	217
Middle Alps for Middle Years	Dorothy E. Pilley Richards	225
Birkness F. H. F. Simpson	237
Return to the Himalaya	... T. H. Tilly and / A. Jackson	242
A Little More than a Walk Arthur Robinson	253
Sarmiento and So On D. H. Maling	259
Inside Information A. H. Griffin	269
A Pennine Farm Walter Annis	275
Bicycle Mountaineering Donald Atkinson	278
Climbs Old and New A. R. Dolphin	284
Kinlochewe, June, 1952 R. T. Wilson	293
In Memoriam	296
E. H. P. Scantlebury	O. J. Slater	
G. S. Bower	G. R. West	
J. C. Woodsend		
The Year with the Club Muriel Files	303
Annual Dinner, 1952 A. H. Griffin	307
'The President, 1952-53' John Hirst	310
Editor's Notes	311
Correspondence	315
London Section, 1952	316
The Library	318
Reviews	319

THE MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION OF 1953 — AN APPRECIATION

Peter Lloyd

Everest has been climbed and the great adventure which was started in 1921 has at last been completed. No climber can fail to have been thrilled by the event, which has now been acclaimed by the nation as a whole and honoured by the Sovereign, and to the Fell and Rock Club with its long association with Everest expeditions there is especial reason for pride and joy in the achievement. Let us then praise famous men, not forgetting those whose efforts on earlier expeditions laid the foundations of this year's triumph.

The list is a memorable one: first our own members, John Hunt, the leader, and Alf Gregory who provided the support to the successful assault party and carried a heavy load to close on 28,000 ft.; then the redoubtable New Zealanders, Hillary and Lowe, successors to Dan Bryant of an earlier decade; Tensing, the only man to go high on both flanks of the mountain, and the worthy representative of a famous race; Bourdillon and Evans who first reached the south peak; Wilfred Noyce, George Band, Charles Wylie, Michael Ward, and Westmacott who played their essential parts in the preparations for the assault; and last but not least, Pugh and Stobart, with their specialist functions as physiologist and cameraman. Such was the team that succeeded where for so long we had failed; they had their chance and knew how to take it.

And of the Everest climbers of earlier years one thinks especially of Eric Shipton, who, after four expeditions to the Tibetan side of the mountain returned in 1951 to explore the southern route, and of George Finch who pioneered and so consistently advocated the open circuit oxygen apparatus with which the mountain has now been climbed.

But the event of 29th May, 1953, was not just the ascent of the world's biggest mountain and the end of a thirty year old endeavour. It was also the climax of that sequence of events which suddenly broke the stalemate of the 'forties, a drama which, while mercifully free of tragedy, had something in common with the story of the Matterhorn. For till 1949 Nepal was still a closed country and till 1951 the southern route on Everest was no more than a doubtful speculation. The reconnaissance of 1951 was, in fact, a last chance, an attempt to prove a route which, like any unknown way on a big Himalayan peak, must be judged doubtful, and one which some who had seen it

had already condemned. The confirmation that the route seemed possible was followed at once by the two skilful and determined attempts of the Swiss in 1952, and had we failed this year the stage would have been set for a succession of competing expeditions of different nationalities.

The ascent is notable too as having involved such mountaineering difficulties as are rare in Himalayan climbing; the great icefall of whose practicability as a supply route Eric Shipton had been doubtful, the forbidding Lhotse wall, and the final ridge which was certainly much harder than those of us had expected, who in 1951 were emphasising the apparent relative easiness of the last 1,000 ft. on the southern side.

It is, of course, the first time that a mountain has been climbed with oxygen, just as the expedition was the first ever to base its whole planning and tactics on the use of oxygen. Not only is it agreed that it was this that made the ascent possible, it is also clear that using oxygen took some of the pains and hardships out of climbing at extreme altitudes. Will others now feel impelled to attempt the ascent of Everest without it? Or, conversely, will the use of oxygen be extended to smaller mountains and will it become to the Himalayan climber of the 'sixties what crampons and pitons were to Alpine climbers of the 'twenties? This is not the place to debate these questions but both eventualities are possible.

Another point of some importance is the enhanced status of the Sherpas and other mountain peoples of which Tensing's achievement is at once the symptom and the symbol. It is true that as long ago as 1907 the Gurkha, Karbin, accompanied Longstaff and the Brocherels to the top of Trisul and that many Himalayan climbers have come to regard the Sherpas as being companions rather than coolies, but the fact remains that in the Everest expeditions of the 'twenties and 'thirties the Sherpas were essentially porters. They were never expected to form part of any assault team. All this is changed now and, though Tensing is undoubtedly a man of exceptional qualities, there will certainly be others to follow his example.

Last and most important of all is the fact that the ascent of Everest breaks a preoccupation that has dominated Himalayan climbing since the first world war. All the energies that have gone into the long siege are now free for new enterprises. We are at the beginning of a new epoch.

THE DAYS OF OUR YOUTH

Graham Wilson

All Meets of the Fell and Rock Club are events to look forward to, but none of the meets which I have attended have been more enjoyable than those which were held during the two or three years immediately following the First Great War. The slaughter and the years of exile from the fells and crags were over, and the exiles came back to the quiet and ever welcoming dales with an unbounded determination to make up for the years that had been lost. I count myself extremely lucky to have been privileged to take part in the activities of the Club during the first few years after 1918.

It was apparently easy to become a member of the Club in those days, for I had been elected on the strength of one short walking holiday and an epic ascent of a certain gully, the name of which I need not mention to any of my own generation. Before I started for the Lakes on that short leave in 1916 I had received a stern parental warning—'If you go to Wasdale, don't try any rock climbing.' What greater incentive could have been given to youth? Wasdale became the immediate objective and there my friend and I had the great good fortune to encounter Robertson Lamb and A. J. Lancaster, who, although they were going home the next day, insisted on lending us a rope and directed us to the foot of a teeming series of waterfalls, from which, after overcoming what seemed to us to be super-human difficulties, we emerged, soaking wet but triumphant, on to the summit of Great End. It has always been a matter of regret that I repaid Robertson Lamb for his kindly interest and advice by splitting open his forehead with a ball driven hard to the top cushion of the hotel's famous billiard table.

On my way back from that war-time leave I bought a copy of Abraham's *British Mountain Climbs*, which I knew almost off by heart by the time the war was over, in contrast to Indemaur's *Common Law* which I also carried with me on my voyaging and in which the bookmark never got beyond the first chapter.

Coniston—February, 1919—was the first meet that I was able to attend, and the first greeting I received was a somewhat disconcerting remark from a fierce looking Captain wearing the badge of the East Lancashire Regiment, who glared at me and said that he hoped I was not a member of the Fell and Rock

Club. It transpired that Herbert Cain, for it was none other, had vowed he would be the first to arrive at and the last to leave each Club meet that year and that I had pipped him at the first of them. We came to the obvious happy solution and, thanks to a most efficient intelligence service organised by Cain, we kept his resolution in partnership, though we were severely tested several times, particularly at the Eskdale meet the following month, when the two Miss Rogers kept on deciding that each successive day was too fine to go home and even Cain had qualms about work waiting to be done during a week-end meet which lasted from a Wednesday until the Thursday in the following week.

Dow Craggs were very badly iced at the time of my first meet and I still shudder when I think of my tribulations when, wearing army boots with worn toe and heel plates, I was taken in hand by Curly Wilson and G. H. Jackson. The peak of my terror was reached in Black Chimney where, each time I tried to back past the chockstone, I shot off into space with my feet performing a graceful arc over my head. That was not the last time that I came off that day, but the subsequent occasions were not so alarming as we joined up with another party and they put two ropes on me. (In deference to the Editor I have spelt 'Doe' as 'Dow,' but I do so under protest for it will always be 'Doe' to me. Surely the general acceptance of the spelling of a name renders that spelling correct, just as, through common usage, a split-infinitive is no longer bad grammar.)

I received much kinder treatment at the Easter meet when Cain, Milligan, the Woodsends, Reggie Weeks and Harry Lyon put me through a really good climbing course, my outstanding recollection being of Harry Lyon leading me up a heavily iced Keswick Brothers with the aid of nicks cut with a silver-bladed pocket fruit knife, a tool which I cannot recommend as an efficient substitute for an ice-axe.

Bentley Beetham turned up at the Wastwater Hotel for the August meet, and as I was feeling very puffed up by the fact that I had then led two or three climbs I patronisingly offered to take him out after he had said that he knew nothing about rock climbing, apart from an ascent of South-East Gully in snow with Thco Burnett. Needless to say Bentley soon realised my limitations and it was not long before he was the leader and I the grateful second. That August Bank Holiday was remarkable for

being the wettest day I have known in Wasdale. It started to rain about 8 a.m. and in less than an hour the beck had risen several feet and water was seeping into the kitchen of the Hotel. As luck would have it I had arranged to meet a friend on the top of Styel and take him for his first climb and with the superiority of youth had told him to be sure to be there however bad the weather might be. Bentley and I were the only ones who stirred out of the Hotel that day, but we found my friend at the appointed place and swam, rather than climbed, up Kern Knotts Chimney and the Needle Ridge.

I do not know how many times I have been up and down the Needle Ridge, probably some hundreds, but it is a climb of which I never tire and of which I have many happy memories. I was once joined at a Borrowdale meet by my sister, and, although she had suffered minor abrasions when the canvas bottom fell out of a home-made sidecar on the way to the meet, she obviously had to be taken up the Needle Ridge. My sister was on two ropes between Jack Wray and an ex-President with a most commanding presence and a stern regard for proper conduct on climbs, and all went well until she appeared to be completely immovable on the stomach traverse near the top of the Ridge. She had been climbing very well up to that point, but Jack Wray, in spite of my protests, exerted all his force in a vain effort to pull her up. After quite a time we heard, in the deep tones of the ex-President, the apology 'Oh dear—I'm terribly sorry—I'm standing on her other rope.'

One very snowy day Cain and I went up to the Needle Ridge with two beginners and on Cain's orders we roped up in two parties. I had to take my boots off before I could get up the slab on the first pitch and my second man made several attempts to join me, but each time I thought he was practically up the slab Cain commanded me to lower him down. At last Cain shouted 'Pull like mad—he's cleaned up the slab nicely—I think I can lead it now.'

One fine summer's day Basterfield and I found Holland, Crawford and another man waiting for us at the top of the Needle Ridge early on what we had fully intended should be a most energetic day. Holland explained that he and Crawford had decided to have an easy day and to go down to Seathwaite for tea before returning to Wasdale, but as their third man wanted to do some more climbing would we mind him joining us. I

did not then know the man in question, but, to my astonishment, Basterfield immediately said he was not feeling very well and that he was going back to the hotel for lunch. I did not want to give up a day's climbing so — and I went to the top of the Arrowhead Ridge, where——said he would come down as last man. When I was ready for him to join me at the bottom of the top pitch I received the surprising request to let out the rope as he came down. It appeared that——had threaded his rope through a pulley spliced into a loop which he had placed round a belay, and as it proved impossible to flip off the loop after he had joined me I had to go up and bring it down. This process was repeated on each pitch and when we finally got to the foot of the Ridge I also pleaded illness and rejoined Basterfield in the dale. When Holland and Crawford got back they were almost fulsome in their thanks for my kindly act which had enabled them to have a pleasant climb up Gillercombe Buttress. Either that same evening or a little later——tried to do the traverse of the billiard room, but found that, if he let go of a nail on the right-hand side of the chimney breast, he could not keep his balance on the narrow marble mantelpiece. Advised to press his head up against the ceiling he did so with such force that the mantelpiece broke off and he fell, in a cloud of plaster, on to a chair, breaking off three of its legs. The rest of us immediately went to ground under the billard table, from which safe position we had the pleasure of listening to a few well-chosen words addressed to——by Sally Whiting, who, despite her warm and kindly heart, could, when the occasion demanded, be somewhat cold and biting.

'Loopy,' for so — was known for the rest of his life, once joined Raymond Shaw and me on a climb on Tryfaen. Raymond had a small bottle of glycerine with which he was trying to curb a cough and as I followed him up a rather thin slab I managed, unbeknown to 'Loopy,' to leave a blob on each small sloping hold. When, after much assistance from the rope, 'Loopy' joined us he was loud in his praise of the way in which Raymond had climbed the greasiest bit of rock he had ever encountered.

During the drought in 1922 the Ackerleys, Raymond Shaw and I spent fourteen days in Wasdale and as the heat got progressively greater so our climbing capabilities diminished, until, on an ascent of Moss Ghyll, Arthur Ackerley, who had watched us until we reached the foot of Tennis Court Wall, had time to

walk on to Bowfell and back, before we had passed the Tennis Court. Returning, weary and dirty, to the hotel in the evening, we were accosted by an American girl who wanted to know what we had been doing. When we diffidently explained that we had been climbing she turned to an old lady sitting beside her and said, 'Say, Ma, ain't that just grand,' and then to us, 'We only landed in Liverpool last night and already we've seen the highest mountain, the deepest lake, the smallest church and we've heard a cuckoo and now we've seen you.'

About six of us were sitting in semi-darkness in the hall of the Wastwater Hotel very late one night when, during the deathly silence following the telling of a ghost story by Wilton, the front door suddenly flew open and the body of a man fell into the hall and lay quite motionless on the floor. We sat transfixed, until Ella Mann, greatly daring, put the rest of us to shame by leaning forward and very gingerly poking the body with her ringer, only to start back and scream, 'Oh—its real.' It turned out that the man lying on the mat had been lost on the Pike on his way over from Langdale and that, when he reached the Hotel, he had leant against the door in an attempt to pull himself together and had then fainted as he turned the door knob.

A man once asked me if I was a yachtsman when he saw me tying a bow-line in a piece of string after a game of tennis. After I had explained that it was a knot used in rock-climbing my new acquaintance said he had once tried a rock climb when he was out in the Far East. I then remembered that Trobridge had written to me from Hong Kong about a year before, describing an attempt he had made to get some members of a yachting party up a cliff on the coast of China and, taking a chance, I said that I knew all about my new friend's climb. When he replied that I could not possibly do so as I did not know who he was, I said that I had the very embarrassing faculty of being able to read the whole of a man's past life and, without mentioning any names, started off on some details from Trobridge's letter, with the result that the victim left very hurriedly and for some months after, until I let out the secret, he avoided me as though I was suffering from the plague.

A young man once ran after Bentley Beetham, Miss Pilkington and me when we were walking up Eskdale on the way to Dow Crag and on catching up with us said he saw we were going

climbing and that he would come with us. Bentley's only response was to quicken his pace to about five miles an hour which he increased to about six miles an hour a mile further on when the youth panted out that he had a friend following behind. The friend never materialised and although the youth talked very knowledgeably of a number of climbs he insisted on being roped for the easy start of Intermediate Gully. After a very tentative inspection of the first hard pitch the youth declared that he was not going any further and that we must take him down again. Then followed a trial of strength with Miss Pilkington, Bentley and I pulling with all our might and the youth using every possible underhold to keep himself back. After a time our united efforts prevailed and the youth was flipped up the pitch like a fish on a line. The battle continued pitch by pitch to the top of the crag and from the number of holds which our self-invited guest found to stop him from climbing I am quite certain that, if Dow Crag could be turned upside down. Intermediate Gully would be a very easy climb.

Falling stones can never be treated light-heartedly but two instances were rather out of the ordinary. The first occasion I have in mind was when a rock about the size of a baby grand piano came crashing down Intermediate in which a large party was strung out, and it was a miracle that we were not all killed. As it happened the only member of the party under safe cover was the only one to be hurt, fortunately not very seriously. She, being feminine, could not contain her curiosity and stuck her head out to see what was happening.

Holland and I were once leaving the New Hotel on our way to Gimmer when a new member arrived on his bicycle and asked if he could join us. Knowing that he was the Income Tax Inspector for Holland's own district I warned him that it would be putting too great a temptation in Holland's way, but he came, and all the way up to the crag Holland gloated over having him in his power. The inevitable happened when we were coming down Gimmer Chimney. The Inspector was on a large stance about 80 feet down and I waited on my holds, owing to shortage of rope, to enable Holland to come down to a turf ledge about 20 feet below the top of the chimney. No sooner had Holland stepped on the ledge than a stone, about the size of a cigar box, fell from the underside of it and dropped clear on to the Inspector's head. I fear that during the several months which

he spent in hospital he took cold comfort from the fact that he had been warned.

One of the best holidays I ever spent in Skye was with Cain and Walker-Jones in 1920. Henry Harland, George Abraham, Ormiston-Chant, Geoffrey Summers and Howard and Leslie Somervell were there at the same time. As Howard was very anxious to do the ridge from end to end I volunteered to try to keep up with him from Glen Brittle to Dearg and then see how I felt. Leaving Glen Brittle at 7-11 a.m. we were on the top of Dearg, after traversing the Inaccessible Pinnacle, at 1-25 p.m., but the pace was too hot for me and when we had crossed the peaks of Banachdich I had to drop out owing to violent cramp. I persuaded Howard to continue on his own and after a long rest I got to the Sligachan Inn about seven o'clock and tried to sidle in without letting several ladies who were sitting in the porch see that I had completely lost the seat of my trousers. After a bath and a change into respectable clothes I returned unrecognised into the porch and listened to the ladies still indignantly discussing how Campbell, the proprietor, could allow such a disgusting man to enter the Hotel. Howard got in at 9-29, having beaten Shadbolt and MacLaren's time by 2 hours and 27 minutes. When we sat down to dinner Howard came out with a prescription which he said would clear the stiffness from our muscles and as a result he and I drank a magnum of champagne between us in large draughts from tumblers. I do not remember going to bed but we were assured that both Howard and I did so unaided. I can thoroughly recommend the prescription, especially if, as in our case, someone else pays for the champagne, for we woke the next morning like giants refreshed and with Ormiston-Chant climbed the Slanting Gully on Mhadaidh direct in very short time on our way back to Glen Brittle. One of my recollections of a really glorious holiday is

an entry in the Visitors' Book at Sligachan—'Lady——and lady friend, from London in private motor car, with chauffeur and maid,' followed by the comment, 'There were also a dog and two spare tyres.'

During the early 1920's, until I sought safety on four wheels, I used to travel to the Lakes and Wales by motor bike, generally with, or rather in the wake of, Raymond Shaw, who rode an enormous Zenith at terrific speeds, but who was kind enough to wait every ten miles or so until I came in sight. I suppose I

must have been a most incompetent rider for I had innumerable crashes, always on the way to the hills and when I did manage to arrive safely it was a great satisfaction to be able to say, 'The dangerous part's over—let's go climbing.'

My bad luck followed me on my first trip to the Alps with Raymond, for, owing to my train from Warrington being late, I missed the connection at Crewe, although I might have just scrambled into the London train had not my porter thrown an old clergyman down the footbridge steps by hooking his legs from under him with my ice-axe. After various other contretemps we got into the dining car on the train from Lausanne to Sion and being very hungry ordered a large omelette, sufficient for six, for the two of us. Unfortunately, when it arrived, balanced on the steward's palm, the train gave a lurch and he fell, plonking the omelette on Raymond's chest with all his weight behind it. Raymond's face should have been seen to be believed.

But recollection piles on recollection and there is no end to memories. As a dearly loved Secretary of the Club once said, 'In the hills we store up happy memories of glorious days yet to be.'

MIDDLE ALPS FOR MIDDLE YEARS

Dorothy E. Pilley Richards

Great are the temptations of the Middle Alps, especially for the middle-aged. Or even for those whose forces are still mounting but who need to train or 'come back' after the Tropics or an illness. One of these charms may well be the absence from the scene of anything over-big. I find it a relief to escape from giants who tantalize you with challenges which you don't find yourself able at that moment to take up! Most of us still have our secret ambitions. It is an easement not to be surrounded by climbs you would give anything to do but somehow can't. I.A.R.—carrying, as always, the hut sack which makes all our high touring possible — reinforced this by reminding me that the point had always been to avoid overstrain; enjoy and be thankful. So, when the Editor asked me for this article I told him I had little enough serious climbing to chronicle, amblings over peaklets at the best. He said I wasn't the only one these days whose 'footsteps feel from granite to grass.' Wouldn't I just put down what I had found? Well, here it is.

Andermatt is a communications hub. Those who are comforting themselves with reasons why they are not on the Brenva, the Eigerwand or the Furggrat can flatter themselves they have a scope and choice here that the great centres deny. They have other comforts too (which combine with modesty in expense at the Hotel Badus, handy to station and buses) but I put ease of communications first. One can buy holiday train tickets with half-fare bus options in England and the game of using them to advantage is a pleasant gamble. Here are sketches of some of the circuits we found worked out well.

The Badus itself is a perfect training walk. You can take an early train to the Oberalp and walk up a swiftly gentle path to Lake Toma, a source of the Rhine, a Welsh llyn of a pool just right for a bathe on the way down. After that you can shiver in the wind on the Oberalp and shudder at the signs of the great avalanches which swept the old hostelry away in 1951. It is startling to think how chalets which had stood since the 15th Century were wiped out that spring. That windy saddle of the Oberalp is bleak enough to balance the green radiance of the vast alleys on either side.

We had noted the Grosse Muttenhorn as suited to our next

upping. It is best to start from the Furka itself. The region bristles with military fortifications and new roads. A level jeep-track takes you all the way across the top cranny of the Rhone valley to the moraine of a little glacier. But we used part of a Brigue-wards ticket, went through the tunnel to Muttbach and had to plod up to this traversing highway. The north ridge gave us a jolly little scramble, a taste of wondering where you go next on a narrow enough crest, and the west ridge and glacier supplied convenient ground down which to run as fast as I still can for the last return train. An eventless but shapely day between the Galenstock, benign old friend, to the north and Pizzo Rotondo, who rebuffed us some years ago, to the south. He was to become on the whole our best new friend, later in the season.

You are always hearing of new huts or stumbling on them unexpectedly these days. On the summit of the Badus we heard of the Vormigels and two other huts up in the Unterwald and thither we bore our first hut sacks the next hot day. We might never have found it without a sad-faced shepherd's aid, for it is a military barrack handed over to the Swiss Alpine Club and the military try to hide their barracks. They must build them, too, with a view to hardening their soldiers, if banging one's head on unnecessary obtrusions is hardening. To have everything open the wrong way is doubtless also good for morale. We were rubbing our pates and making plans when a soldier came dropping down the slope with a notice of artillery practice for several days over all the peaks we had thought of going up. He pinned his sheet up on the door and dashed off—"Danger de Mort" in his hand—to another hut somewhere. This is a minor disadvantage of the region. Andermatt is an artillery centre and needs targets. Neither I.A.R. nor I wanted to fill that bill.

We were settling down from this and congratulating ourselves on having the hut to ourselves, when a step sounded. A little grizzled fellow in city workman's wear with Alpine stock and umbrella blocked the entrance. So anxious was he to get through the narrow door that he forgot to close his umbrella or take off his bulging sack. He performed an elaborate jig to sidle through. Inside at last, he flung down his burdens. He was loaded with Alpine literature, guide books which he displayed at once with passionate enthusiasm. Above all there was an immense panorama of the summits visible from Pizzo Centrale. He kept up a flow of talk of which we could not make out one word. He

therefore produced an enormous horn ear-trumpet. It cleared up nothing though we shouted into it in various languages. All we could do was to feed him and give him tea which inspired him to produce paper and pencil. Then followed a communication written in English. He had taught himself English from books. Slowly he wrote down that he had no food left but proposed to sup and spend the night. He was from Schwyz and wove baskets at three francs a time but only made two baskets a day. He liked the work and spent every centime holidaying in the mountains. And he talked and talked unintelligibly about every least detail of his tours with the zeal of the possessed. This strange old deaf fanatic filled me with admiration both as a linguist and as a single-souled mountaineer. At dawn he bade us farewell with cheerful noises, offering me a tip of one franc for my pains. He had awakened with his original idea that I was the guardian of the hut.

Pizzo Centrale, whose panorama he carried, had become our choice. Heavy dew sparkled in the flowery grass. Cows clanked bells all around us in the morning mist. How they confuse the paths. Ptarmigans — whirring and creaking, soft silly things — fled to the nearest skyline. Six marmots went in procession up a moraine ridge and then glided up snow into the cloud, sagacious folk hurrying home. But the clouds lifted with us and blew off! as we came out on the Passo Sella. We put down our sacks to adjust to the view: the flakey twinkle of Monte Rosa's shoulders beyond the Basodino took some absorbing, and the unfamiliar rearrangements of Fletchorn, Blindenhorn and Monte Leone; eastward, beyond the ever surprising Scopi, the Bernina. Near at hand a rock and grass ridge twisted away to drop down on the hidden Gotthard. We lunched and lazed. It seems to me that the virtue of small peaks is in the leisure they allow you and we found our ridge, bold, narrow and easy and, as they often are round here, partly a rocky sheep walk. These sheep walk the crest for the breezes and maybe the view. Their ancestors were probably safest with no slope above them.

Dawdling down we began to remark, with no sense of alarm or novelty, the approach of nightfall! There is a lake with a military road beside it; stepping out we discerned in the dusk other roads coiled over all sorts of necks and shoulders. Not a light showed. Up or down which of these was the Gotthard? An ice-white surf of mist was racing through the pass, combing

itself across the ridges. The ghosts of Roman armies seemed to be fleeing home—driven out perhaps by the motor car. We waded knee deep in mist by the lakeside to find dinner still on at the Monte Prosa.

Returned to Andermatt, refreshed by this circuit, we looked for a longer one and found it by taking the bus over the Sustenpass to Stein. (You go first by train down to Göschennen.) We hadn't seen Stein since 1929 when we walked over the Susten on a grassy packroad to take the train at Göschennen for Vladivostok. Naturally we found changes. The finest new Alpine highway hummed with endless traffic. What crowds of cotton-clads trying to enjoy the wind-swept passes. On the Passhohe children and adults in slippers slid and screamed on the snows. The bus halted at prepared viewpoints which did steal one's breath away with admiration. The inn, unenlarged, had become an eating and drinking stop. But the bedrooms, when we got through the long lines waiting for the use of the bathroom, were as of old. Looking out though, you beheld much that was new; the international stream of visitors to the Stein gletscher. It must now be to many what the Rhone glacier once was to the travelling world. At evening a bus from Germany pulled up and out bundled some forty outsize and mostly aged hausfraus. I must say they were sportswomen too. They were shepherded, in a light rain, to what used to be merely a small hay chalet. One by one they disappeared through the doorway. It looked like a conjuring trick, a vanishing act, for each one of them seemed almost as large as the chalet itself. However it did not burst and they all emerged, looking quite spry and chattering like school-girls, in the morning.

To escape the whirl of the wheels we wandered off to one of the lakelets a few minutes away across the bridge. Breeze-fretted waters, skimming dragon flies, Chianti and salami, Arctic stone pines and heathery knolls were the same as ever. Only a flight of jet-fighters belonged to the present. High up across the Gaden trough, Siitteli caught our eye—a tiny alluring nick in the limestone wall of the Titlis chain. We took an early bus in the morning and made for it. A slender path waggles up and up and then a long way up again. It starts in a beech wood, winds among the hazels, then curls among hay meadows, reaches a pine-dotted plateau and gains a cluster of *alpage* chalets (Birchlai). Avoid a *level* path that goes out across the

steepening pastures. It tilts oft down in time, the grass slopes above are glassy enough when dry to make you think of your crampons! Go up instead *direct* from the alpage. When, at last, you reach the Sätteli, a delicious change awaits you: the way 'down' to the Engstlen Alp (your destination) is almost all level.

A high contouring path under the Tellistock takes you across to one of the peaceullest, old-time, small Alpine hotels still existing. It has everything: a Fumoir lined with bound Tauchnitz, oilcloth-covered benches in the entrance and through the doorway the perfectly posed group of the Wetterhorner across the Haslithal. We lost our hearts to it all at once, the pillars on the chalet steps carved into cables and darkened by a century's weather, the goats, the pigs, the round ponies gambolling in the meadow, the campaigns to keep them from the lettuces in the kitchen garden, the preparations for the August 1st bonfire—a basket of billets more than man-high—the singing round the roaring flames, the answering points far off through a rainstorm. One of these beacon lights was actually on one of the Engelhorner. Above all there was the Lake, almost unspoiled still, whose beauty not a thousand picnics could dim.

We had our minds on the Titlis. It proved to be a mountain with a good old Victorian plot. There is always another chapter or two between you and the next step forward in the action! The glacier has shrunk so much that you have to go up what seem endless debris-slopes. What little rock-climbing there is, is all fixed up with iron stanchions (no doubt useful in new snow or ice). Anyhow, we got up between quick little thunderstorms which were characteristic of that part of the season (Saturday, August 2nd, 1952).

We looked out at leisure next morning, through gaps in the giant white cloudbanks, at the Wetterhorner. We had been taken with the Rosenhorn one season when we crossed over the Wetterhorn from the Gleckstein to the Dossen Huts. Why not approach it now while the weather settled? Here was a chance to test the theory that you should always leave a suitable peak in every group to tempt you back in later years. So we left the Engstlen Alp—with regrets which still ache a little. However, we left the Tellistock to tempt us back. In the cool of occasional showers the walk down the Gental under the cascades of the Achfelsassbache, 'best after rain,' was a fresh and scented

saunter from the pine to the sycamore zone. I'm not sure that I want to walk up it any hot afternoon, but there are zeilbahns to the Melch-See and the Joch-pass which can spare us that toil.

From Meiringen a bus whirls you up to an over-thronged Rosenloui. It is important to go up to the Dossen Hut via the Gletscherschlucht *and early*. When no other human beings are there to dissipate the awe, those walls, that spray, the boiling waters, their monitory thunder, the palpable presence of the unthinkable durations . . . can expunge all trivialities. You come out and up into the sunlight again with a cooled body and an unfevered mind. A proper use indeed of anyone's last franc and a suitable prelude to the unexpectednesses of the Dossen Hut 'path.' There are two wooden ladders and I do not know how many wire cables and iron stanchions at the 'no-fall' points, which are many. A week after our visit, the hutkeeper, a robust, agreeable man, returning to it with his young daughter, died on one of the ladders from heart failure. It is no place to be taken ill on.

At the hut we remarked the increased steepness of the little glacier which leads to the Dossenhorn. Hans Kohler of Willigen, who joined us there that evening, told us lots of stories of guideless *and* guided parties who had had more and less disastrous slides into the rockpiles below through taking it too light-heartedly. Under slushy snow it is just the place to think you can, till you find you can't, or to learn how a crampon can ball up. Nothing in it at all, of course, when all goes well. It was great fun to find that Hans was the Hans Kohler who led the Japanese party on the first ascent in 1925 of Mount Alberta, that giant of the Canadian Rockies in whose second ascent so many parties were foiled. He is a very pleasant companion with much more English, left from his Canadian seasons, than he will actively use.

The Rosenhorn lived up to its name all the way. The crevasses, for whose sake we had enlarged the party to three, were well covered. We knew too much about our capacity to pull one another out of holes nowadays to risk it. The summit was restful though warm, the afternoon thunderstorm violent, and the snowfall in the night just enough to make the wire hangings on the upper path welcome.

Returning to Stein, we started out on another circuit and went up to the Tierberg Hut. How individual approaches to huts

can be. Some, of course, are just so much bran and sawdust. But others are like a well-planned dinner. The Tierberg approach is one of these, attractive alternations all the way. A short, light, clean moraine path alight with fireweed, a grassy corridor beside a swirling brook, wide gravel flats breaking the main stream into a thousand rivulets which dazzle under the westing sun against the Tierberg shade. When you have leapt all these rivulets you reach a zigzag. It looks—as good manners require, I believe—like a three-or-four-fold affair, at the start. By the time you look down, count a dozen windings below and begin to divine another dozen above, the Tierberg shade has caught them in its kindly cool. Out you come on a sunny terrace and before you is a mild, engaging rock-walk following paint dabs up slabby ledges. You still do not see your hut. It hides to the last, as a good hut should. You come across it. Here it is, coyly close! What a contrast to those haughty horrors, the Ponteglias or the Baltschieder Klaus, who disdainfully look down on you crawling up all their thousands of feet!

We went up the Gwächtenhorn, a companion-piece to the Sustenhorn which we had done in 1948. While lounging on the summit we spied a Solitary coming up the west ridge — an uninteresting and rather rotten little climb. Solitaries make me uncomfortable. This one, however, was a pleasant taciturn fellow, a Swiss Army officer. After a little he put his crampons on, which seemed queer since the snow was pretty soft—but, maybe, he had subterranean thoughts—and set off for the Sustenhorn down the route we had just come up which gaped with crevasses. No walking delicately however; giant strides would be a better description. We wandered off to a rocky hump whence we could look down on the Goschennen Alp (soon to be whelmed beneath the vast waters of a power project) and the Kehlen Alp Hut and reminded ourselves of old days on the Dammastock and Winterstock. It was a relief to spot our Solitary up high on the Sustenhorn. He had not gone into some hole, but as we tramped back ahead of him in sodden snow to the Tierberg Hut, we stopped to look reflectively into a grim, bottomless-seeming pit near the hut which had not been there when we came up. One of a big party of Scandinavians, who had left the hut a little after we did, had gone through with a wallop. It seemed to have taken quite a lot of team work to fish him out again.

Few middle-peak routes lend themselves to description. They

are reminiscent of so many trips and therein is their enchantment. What you miss in difficulties and dangers you gain in leisure and contemplation. We went, next day, up a Tierberg, with the Solitary somewhere ahead of us. Arrived at the Trift Hut, we had the keen pleasure of admiring a truly well-planned and well-built new hut. Water ran through a kitchen sink; water for washing pulsed through the mouth of a lion-faced rock; water sluiced continually wherever you would wish it. Baskets with handsome curves, hungry for your meagre provisions, hung from their hooks. Windows opened in almost picture fashion to all quarters: the great glacier bowl before them merits almost as much fame as any. The bunks are spongy; the blankets thick, fluffy and light. I could continue . . . We talked to the Solitary and to a young married couple of stalwart and aspiring climbers who gathered up all the provender and cooked us a splendid meal. I.A.R. had been inspired to try a novelty, dried chestnuts. Don't! They need hours of soaking and boiling and even then parch the throat. We watched a queer afternoon blaze up into stunning sunset lights and sat long outside under the star spangle.

Whining winds woke us before the alarm watch, and there was a shrill draught whistling by the Cabane as we set out. It kept the snows crisp (and our hands gloved) as we wound up from one subsidiary dimple to another in that immense glacier hollow of the Trift. As usual, our Solitary had slipped off ahead, heading over the ridges for the Dammastock. As usual, we wondered if anyone would ever know what had happened if one of the countless crevasses he crossed played any of its most ordinary tricks. With this in mind we dealt with ours reservedly, and advanced, at a temperate gait, through one tilted and blanketed labyrinth after another. When we came out we could well believe Hans' accounts of the difficulties he had met in taking parties down through the Triftkessel in soupy afternoon snowstorms. Years ago, with Joseph George, we had had our troubles going from the Gelmer Hut, in a hot mist, across up the Dammastock.

The Diechterhorn is a pile of sharp-edged, large-grained granite heaped high and beginning now to miss its cementing ice and plastering snow. We perched on its top boulders to admire the Galenstock—how graceful those lines are from every angle—and to hunt the Weissnollen Dammastock ridges for the

Solitary. What could we have done if we had seen him through the glasses bob into a hole all those miles away. After this vain bedazzlement the sombre pyramid of the Ritzlihorn was a rest to the eyes. If mountains are like flowers and design themselves for their future visitants, the Ritzlihorn must have resolved to know only chamois and their hunters. From every side its interminable stony slopes look equally uninviting. Does its proud dark heart rejoice to be the least frequented mass of its size in the Alps?

The Diechter gletscher drops one down from terrace to terrace to a moraine just behind the Gelmer Hut. Meanwhile the Gelmerhörner are rising up—spires in a cragsman's dream. But it was family parties we found in the hut, busy with domestic chores. While the children dashed about the precipice brink, the women mended and cooked and conversed in vigorous tones; the men chopped wood, repaired the hut and adjusted the water supply. We took it to be the water supply, until we discovered that it was the hut's own power installation. The Gelmer Hut enjoys its own electric light and kettles, and blazes like a grand hotel. At first we raised an eyebrow a little at the solid spreads the tables groaned with—huts are for climbers, we thought, not for gastronomes—till we gathered what a pride the Section Brugg takes in its hut and what care its craftsmen lavish on the maintenance. Eyebrows came down finally when one of the residents approached us with a large pail of freshly picked bilberries and explained that they had all eaten far more of this fruit than was good for them. Would we help them out by eating a pint or two apiece? Would we not! And they had bowls of sugar and whipped cream to go on top.

All round the hut water seeps wherever there is soil and wild harebells cajole you in every coign. Don't sit down thoughtlessly to admire them, however, or you will be a long time drying out. I don't know what demon of restlessness drives one from such Paradises, down in the early morning, feeling, so many are the little torrents, like Arethusa ' by cloud and by crag with mam a jag shepherding her bright fountains '; down to where granite walls tip crackless into the Gelmersee's green-grey depths. You cross them on a neat little cement cornice. On to a bridgeless stream where you get well wet amid its spray. We came then upon a group of Italian workmen resting placidly in a cool shade. They stirred so hurriedly and guiltily as we appeared that for a

moment I thought them to be the bandits they looked like. But they were only loafing on pay-time and afraid we might report. They laughed when they saw we were harmless. On, on, down a modern dam-builder's design for a 'primitive' cliff path, all boulder-steps eighteen-inches high, equally and interminably hard on the feet and on the knees; down again through a William Tellish defile, the Gelmergasse, wilder and more picturesque at every pace, to, at last, the glare and traffic of the Grimsel Highway and in the daze that follows a descent said 'Goodbye' to Hans, got a bus and rolled back by stages to our base at Andermatt again.

Now the Val Bedretto and Pizzo Rotondo beckoned. We roared up the Gotthard again and down to sun-drenched, smiling Airolo, like a parterre of pastel-shaded primulas. Then on, in a Poste which so restfully combines the yellow paint and polish of Switzerland with Italian ease and pliability. It sauntered up the valley, stopping for us to take photographs of the Rotondo and lingering for gossip in the villages. It turns round rather arbitrarily at Ronco, leaving you a couple of miles of good road to walk to Al Acqua. The little hotel behind the Hospiz was unchanged, but pinned on the near-black wood of a chalet was a notice: 'Capanna Piansecco.'

We went into the hotel to shelter from the sunshine, sip fendant and soda, and change our plans. It was hard to make out where this 'hut' — a disused barrack — would be, or in what condition we would find it. They had a key at the hotel and handed it over with all the cautions to be expected so near the Italian frontier. When we thought the shadows were lengthening enough we set off, repeating to ourselves the vague directions of the girl at the inn who had never been anywhere near it. Fortunately we ran into some soldiers bounding down the slopes, or rather they ran into us—and we were spared having to choose between many melodramatic paths on the uplands. When short of something else to do, the Swiss army cuts another path somewhere, another trap for the evening traveller.

When we arrived we found the door propped open and all the windows of the snug lean-to a-swing in the breezes. But it was clean and tidy, had a terrace with a lovely view in which the shimmering lights of Airolo soon took the leading place, and a well-filled tank supplied by rain from the roof. This was •welcome, for a notice stated that the nearest other water was

something like an hour away. This Capanna is well named Piansecco. We supped and turned in, hardening our heads again in military fashion, then and in the dawning.

I may as well confess that we mistook our mountain—until almost too late—and gave ourselves miles of unnecessary boulder-crawling as a consequence. The Kiihboden and Rotondo show very similar silhouettes to persons perched on their knees; when you don't know for sure whose knees you are on it is not hard to confuse their owners. When, somewhat drearied down by too, too much scree, we came to what we thought was the starting point of the ridge, it became in ten seconds only too plain that we were on the Kiihboden. There was Rotondo as large as life across a sizeable glacier. We were not perhaps as silly as we sound, for quite large glaciers on the map, can nowadays turn out to be no longer more than rubble.

For a few moments we gave the day up and toyed with other plans. But a sip and a nibble can work wonders. So we walked across the glacier, buoyed up to find it smaller than it looked, and picked a safe way, reflectively, up the ice-slant dotted with thawing-out boulders which led to the Passo di Rovino we had thought we had reached once already. Thence onward the S.E. ridge was just the thing to lighten the steps of the weary. All solid, narrow, steep, convenient and amusing. The chimney Kurtz mentions as giving sole access to the summit proved to be nowadays a face offering several easy lines. Incidentally, the snow routes in those diagrams have decayed into stone-fall shoots decades ago.

Happily we lolled on the little summit, relishing its entertainment the more from having thought we had failed. All the Alps seemed to be standing round to share our pleasure. Rotondo kings it modestly among his courtier peaks. There were no near rivals whose hospitality we had not enjoyed in former years. Even the great, regarded from this seemly and respectful distance, might almost have been recollecting our visits in friendlywise. Peacefully we turned to the scramble down. It went quickly—as quickly as the sun descended to the horizon.

Back on the glacier we deliberated. Much of our way back to the hut would evidently have to be walked in the dark. It is an old choice: the ills we knew were boulder fields, *casse-jambes* as extensive as any you could dread; the evils that we wist not of might be precipices, the map suggested a very possible *casse-*

con. We resolved to beat the dusk to a view-point whence, from above, we could spy out an easy line. Not at all surprisingly, the dusk beat us, and theory as to where there should be grass instead of boulders began at once to suffer a long sequence of defeats. Fortunately a kindly mental haze descends about the time when you must truly get on all fours. I recall the usual discussion whether a nice restful seat under an allegedly sheltering overhang is not far better than the risk of rolling an old rock where it shouldn't be. The warmth of this argument is brief, however, beside the prospect of a crisp autumn night. We crawled and slid some more. How queerly one's eyes see smoothness everywhere else than where one is! How readily they pick out a black dot which surely can be nothing but some aspiring larch! How gaily its flames leap up in one's imagination! How dull the cold stone it turns out to be. How resolutely one decides then and there to give up in future all such foolishness. A moment later there is grass underfoot; a sidelong slope invites to its crest; and there suddenly, sparkling like a jeweller's tray, is Airolo glinting from the same angle as it did the night before. A few steps further, and a path is caressing one's sole, the roof of the Cabane and its terrace.

Fire and food—even in a smoky stove and from a humdrum tin—only show themselves for what they are in such a sequence. It seems odd to have to admit that one owes the best hour of an Alpine holiday to errors of judgment that any novice should blushfully conceal. We were blissful as we supped, sitting up for hours to realize where we were. We burned our candles lavishly, blinking at one another in the smoke and thinking of the blankets and the, at least, flat bunks awaiting us by contrast with the chill edges of the fracturing rocks. What a funny way of being happy! Purely animal relief and restauration? Hardly. There was another recovery which all this somehow symbolized. Our mountains might shrink in scale with the forces we could pit against them and still give us such an hour on the summit and more lasting lights than Airolo's on our return.

BIRKNESS

F. H. F. Simpson

This is the story of the opening of Birkness, as we have called our new home in Buttermere, which embraces the gardener's cottage, barn, cow-shed and coach house of the former Mansion House of the Hassness estate. Even though of recent construction, following the demolition of the old house, the modern residence is in many respects unique in its position at the head of a Cumberland dale. To me, passing often on the way to our former quarters in the village, it had a somewhat feudal atmosphere, a place where a pull on the drawing-room bell-rope might still bring a dutiful response. Our buildings are old, so there is no excuse for damning the architect. They have undergone a transformation for a new purpose at the hands of a willing few, and for them there can be nothing but praise. They gave their leisure, energy and skill and our gratitude should be as enduring as the results of their labour.

On June 2nd, 1952, the Club made its way afoot and awheel to Birkness, with permission on this occasion to enter by the main gate and curving drive. It was a day of lively sky and stiff wind, High Stile nudging a passing cloud; Eagle Crag pulling at its tumbling heels, the lake dark blue, ruffled, spray-swept. The great trees roared and swayed in the wind, but the booming note failed to smother the sound of Bobby Files' construction gang rough paving the path which runs round the rampart supporting the house. One recalls Bentley Beetham, detached from the rest and standing on two loose boulders in the steep supporting wall and assembling equally loose material to close a gap, an undertaking in which he has had much experience. Inside the building, silence, and the orderly assembly of furniture and equipment, and neat little notices advising that the grey-blue paint was wet—a statement which proved upon experiment to be true.

Members assembled on the gravel to the east of the house, below the ready-made rostrum formed by the railed off coach house approach. At the appointed hour the President, Dr. T. R. Burnett, called for order, his hands laid on the railing, the sun searching him out through the waving shadows of the trees.

The President welcomed members, representatives of kindred Clubs and friends. In seeking suitable words he cast across to Criffell at the foot of which lay Caerlaverock Castle, the ancient stronghold of the Maxwells, with its stone tablet bearing their

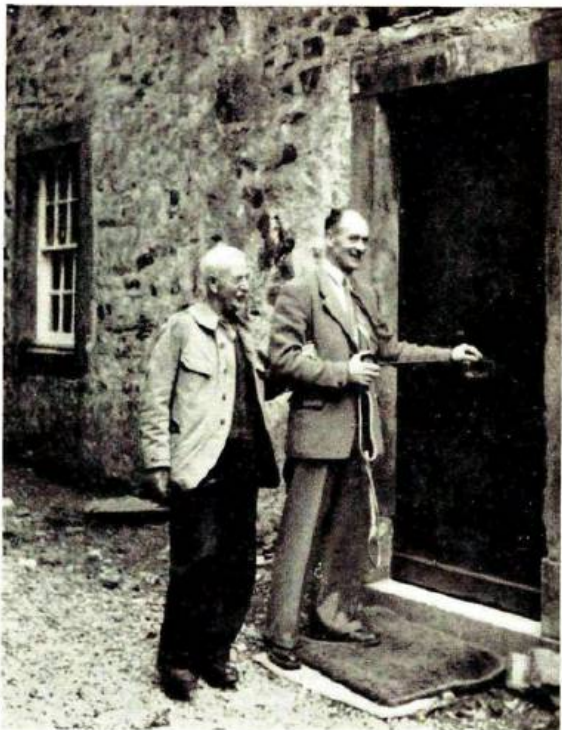
arms and motto—'I bid ye fair.' That building had as a precaution against *unwelcome* visitors, a drawbridge, portcullis and crenellations for the distribution of molten lead. We offered no such obstruction to our guests that day and even had we wished to do so, the Club funds would not run to lead at its present price!

Letters of apology for absence and good wishes to the venture had been received from Provost Claude Elliott, President of the Alpine Club, and from A. B. Hargreaves. To give the history and evolution of the Birkness scheme the President called upon a past Secretary, past President and present hut expert, Leslie Somervell.

Somervell told the story. It began many months earlier with a preliminary session over tea with the former owner; Lawson and Tom Cook and Dick Plint attended. The two powers of law and finance. The bargain struck, came the turn of the planners, and negotiations with the Local Authority, the Central Land Board and the contractors, into which came Kenyon and Kendrick with their special skills. Simultaneously Cordingley assembled his labour force, and directed them tirelessly, with only one substantial pause, during which he made time to get married. Spilsbury's travelling workshop moved in to dominate the scene. Gifts of horsehair mattresses came from the Wayfarers' Club and of curtains from Billy Cain, and many other Members assisted in this way. Slowly the alterations took shape and the results, now embellished with two coats of distemper and six gallons of paint awaited our admiration. No list of the willing workers could be complete but Somervell added to those already named, Peter Moffat and Edward and Phyllis Wormell. Finally he expressed our gratitude to the contractor, Mr. Stoddart, for his skill and care and to Mrs. Hawley, with whom negotiations had been carried out by the Officers of the Club in the most friendly and neighbourly atmosphere.

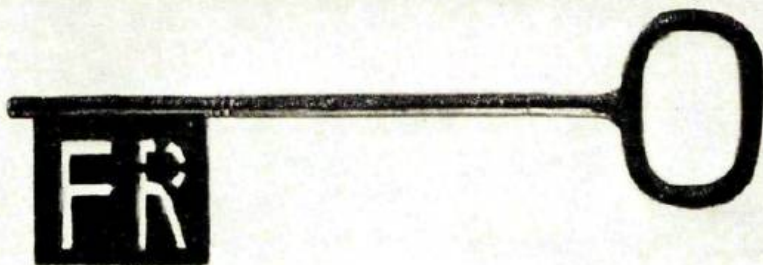
The President addressed us: His first visit to a club hut, he said, was made in February, 1899. On the same occasion he came off a snow slope. Instinctive use of the axe just prevented it being his last, as well as his first, Alpine experience. The approach to a club hut gave him today the same thrill of pleasure as he had first experienced so long ago. He hoped that many would share this feeling at Birkness.

The first suggestion in our district was for rough shelters



J. R. Files

O'IMNC OF BIRKNESS



placed high in the fells, with corrugated-iron roofs—an idea naturally condemned. In 1935 came the proposal for a hut in Wasdale, starting a great controversy and arousing strong opposition. The approval of the majority was, however, secured, and there followed a remarkable display of generosity from some of the opponents, who came forward with gifts in both cash and kind. The principle was conceded, the usefulness proved. Raw Head came next, then the Barn, now Birkness, and soon the Salving House. These names were significant. Brackenclose was that of a field Raw Head and Salving House local place-names. Birkness recalled the lovely Coombe opposite.

It was intended that the small cottage adjoining the hut should be available for members with young families and the President hoped it would be well used. He turned then to Jim Cordingley who stood nearby, saying that he would present him with a piece of hut equipment and with a token of his office. A-Cordingley—(a well earned groan here) he asked him to accept a draining rack, fashioned in his own workshop — he held it aloft amid laughter and cheers—and built in oak, a noble wood. As an ex-director of Education he had derived much satisfaction in putting an old school desk to a good purpose! Next he handed the Warden a large wooden key, the wards of which shaped the letters F.R. and with sling and snap link attached. He handed these articles over with the earnest wish that Birkness might contribute in full measure not only to the progress of mountaineering but to the good fellowship of the hills which we all valued so highly.

Spilsbury then expressed our thanks to the President. There could be few persons better qualified than the President to address us on the matter of Club huts, but he doubted if the new key would work. He had enjoyed his share in the planning and reconstruction, having escaped the really dirty work, and praised again those who had undertaken it so cheerfully. They would be interested to know that more awaited them in the Salving House. A smiling Warden, draining rack in one hand and key in the other, led the procession to the door. Birkness was declared open.

An inspection of everything from bunks to shower baths followed, reminding your reporter of view day before an auction sale. The paint was still wet. Ladies of the Club dispensed tea and cakes, and we all talked at the top of our voices, signed the

visitors' book, and put our contributions in the safe. Birkness was an accomplished fact.

My original terms of reference from the Editor are at this point exhausted, but I have secured his approval for a short historical note. My enquiries began with the perusal of the correspondence files of the Agent and Surveyor to successive owners since the first world war. Unfortunately these papers, while demonstrating again the resourcefulness and tenacity of a good Estate Agent did not touch on historical matters. I tried a letter to our member, Grace Edmondson, who passed my enquiry on to a cousin living in Loweswater. Mrs. Catterall was able to put me in touch with a local landowner having family connections with Hassness, Mr. A. R. Sale, of Aylesbury, now 84 years of age. He spent much of his boyhood and early manhood at Hassness until 1900 when he went to South Africa.

Fully 100 years ago Mr. F. J. Reed, grandfather of Mr. Sale and High Sheriff of Cumberland in 1878, acquired the property from a General Benson. The original building was designed by Ruskin. For several years Mr. Sale managed the estate for his aunts, daughters of F. J. Reed, from whom they derived the property. In those days the estate extended along the lake shore to the outfall to Crummock, and included the house—then known as Bowderbeck Hall—a mile further west along the road, and Wilkin Syke farm in the village. Near the turn of the century Mr. Sale's relations sold the property to Mr. Marshall, and when it next changed hands the new owner demolished the old house, and the building then erected survives today. Mr. Sale's grandfather constructed the retaining wall on the lake side from Pike Rigg Wood to Hassness How Beck, using material believed to have come from the tunnel which he had cut through the water-side cliff to the boat house. Mr. Sale says that the Club's buildings are as old as the original house. Down the fell from the cottage there ran a walled garden, in which stood an ice house which was supplied from the lake in the hardest winters.

In Mr. Sale's time Buttermere was a most isolated corner of Cumberland, seldom visited at any time of the year, and during exceptional winter conditions, the journey was a serious undertaking. The post was, however, delivered every day from Lorton, by Harry Peel, a nephew of John, the great huntsman. The mail bags were slung across the back of a donkey, and no matter how fierce the lash of rain and wind the post never failed to

arrive. It was no discredit to this intrepid postman, that during the hour's wait at Hassness pending the return journey, he had a very good dinner.

When we lie in our bunks or idle in the common room, and the great winds roar down from Robinson on a winter's night, we shall perhaps hear the footfalls of the amiable ghosts of Harry and his donkey.

Mr. Sale expressed pleasure on learning that the Club had acquired the old buildings and regret that the whole property did not become ours. In his last letter he recalls that when his mother was married, his grandfather gave a party for the villagers as part of the celebrations. When he was last in the old barn the remains of the decorations then put up still hung from the roof.

Clearly then this place has given much happiness in days gone by to people whose attachment to the valley ripened before our Club was born. May our recollection of this quiet corner in the hills remain as bright as that of Arthur Reed Sale who fished and walked and climbed—and, dare I say?—played and dreamed here 60 years ago.

Editor's Note. In July, 1953, Mr. A. R. Sale presented to the Club a number of photographs, in a single frame, of Hassness as it was shortly before the turn of the century. These photographs have been placed at Birkness.

RETURN TO THE HIMALAYA

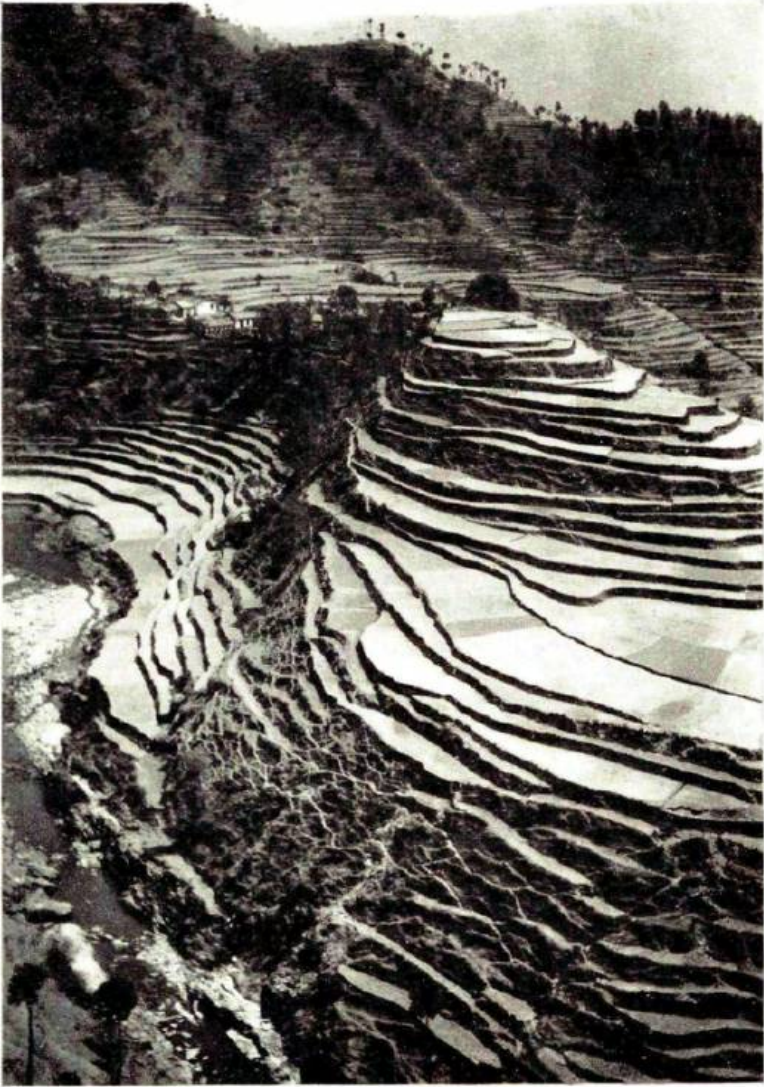
T. H. Tilly and/ A. Jackson

That indefinable element in the mountain scene which is capable of communicating a sensation of romance should be the most prized of all. Beauty and good climbing may be had almost for the asking but romance so easily and so quickly takes wing and does not return. Romance seems to derive to some extent from apparent remoteness, from a separateness from the rest of the world, and at the same time, paradoxically, to depend on a degree of human association, of history and tradition. It may be the paradox which precludes the definition, but to the British climber who spent some of his early climbing days in, say, Skye or Torrison no definition is necessary. He understands. And he will therefore understand why, having once travelled and climbed in the Himalaya, it becomes after a time necessary to travel and climb there again.

It was seven years since we had been in the Himalaya. One of us had travelled in the eastern Himalaya (Sikkim) and both in the western (Kashmir and Ladakh). To both a journey to the centre, to Garhwal, to the ranges of Nanda Devi and Kamet and Badrinath, to the valleys of the Alaknanda and the Dhaulī was a long desired experience. Plans were hatched, irrevocable steps taken, the nucleus of a party collected and application made to our good friends of the Himalayan Club for a pass to Garhwal.

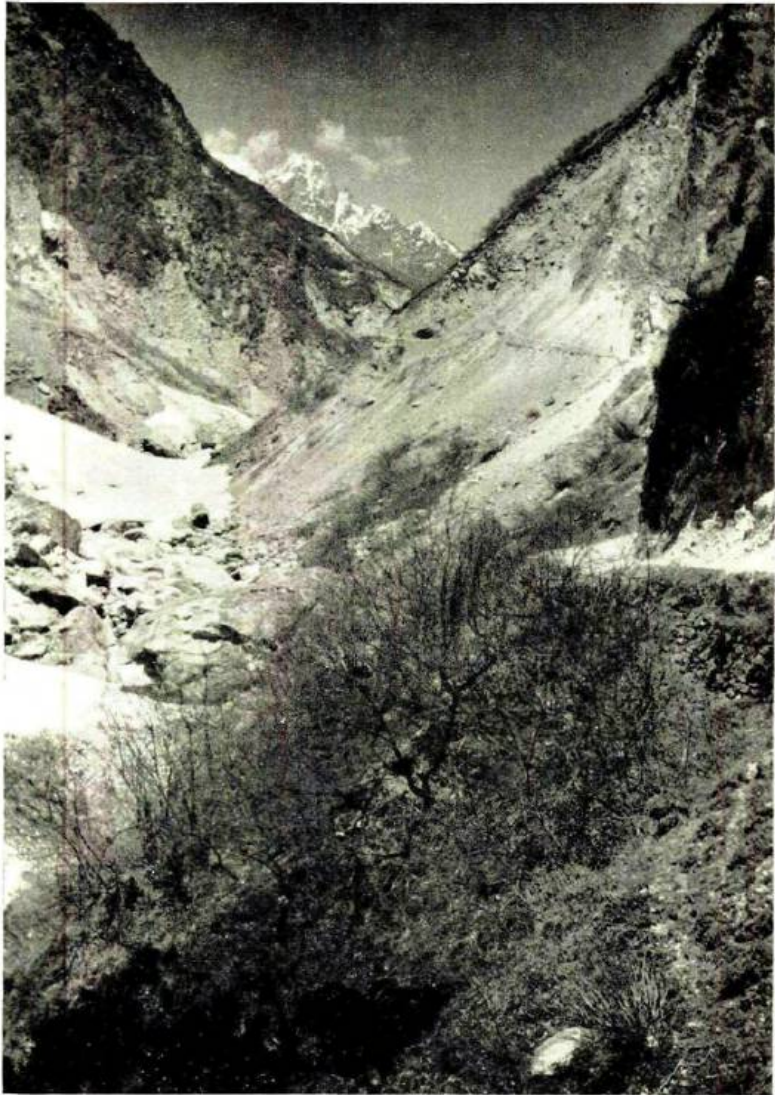
We decided to start from Ranikhet and to carry out the long trek, so often and so well described by Frank Smythe and others, across the foothill ranges west of the Trisul — Nanda Ghunti massif to the Dhaulī valley and Tapoban, thence down the Dhaulī to its junction with the Alaknanda (the incipient Ganges) below Joshimath, up the Pilgrim Road to Badrinath, and from there to a Base Camp in the Satopanth Valley for an attempt on Nilkanta (21,640 ft.). This beautiful and much photographed peak, queen of the Garhwal Himalaya, was and remains unclimbed. It was then intended to carry out a journey to the Banke and Raikhana Glaciers, to the East of Kamet and expected to be beyond monsoon influences, exploring sundry peaks and returning to the outward route at Tapoban, by way of the magnificent valley of the Upper Dhaulī. This was the plan, but it is the gods who dispose.

The train from Bareilly to Kathgodam trundled across the



J. A. Jackson

TERRACING IN GARHWAL



7. A. Jacks,²¹¹

PILGRIM ROUTE UP THE ALAKNANDA VALLEY

endless plains. The carnage was dusty. David Bryson was deep in conversation with the distinguished Vice-Chancellor of Agra University. Jack and John Kempe joined casually in the conversation or watched birds through the window. Harry was desperately fighting off a large and excessively friendly Alsatian puppy, while its owner, a young Sikh I.A.F. officer, looked delightedly on. Our charming and serious Indian friend, Misra, was quietly taking in both the scene and us. Everyone was drinking tea. Forgetting the dog for a moment, Harry looked out of the window. Through the insubstantial haze, the plains stood up on end: the foothills of the Himalaya. We crowded round the window. It is a moment, this, after seven years, or for the first time.

At Ranikhet that evening in the Dak Bungalow, in the coolness of 6,000 feet in April, the years seemed to slip away. Night fell on the noble woods of chir, the Chowkidar was late with dinner, the beer was bad, but the food was good when it came and it was like old times to sit out of doors afterwards drinking tea, smoking and planning for the morrow. We rose at 6 a.m. and put in two hours before breakfast unpacking our trunks and putting the gear up into loads. Later the Dhotionals started to arrive. They rolled up in twos and threes until the maidan was black (or brown) with them. It was evident that we were not going to have an easy job selecting a team. There were mutually antagonistic cliques. Perimal was unable to come but suggested someone else as headman. Harry made the mistake of engaging him. He should have remembered Tilman's dictum that, if they do not carry a load, headmen and cooks are merely idlers. Gorla appeared and on being selected with three of his friends stated that all or none would go. Needless to say, none went. However, at length eighteen men were picked, of whom some were very good indeed and all worked well together. The four Sherpas, Lhakpa Tensing (Sirdar), Ang Tsering, Nima Sitar and Nima Tensing, sat on the grass and watched the proceedings with a grave and rather detached interest. But it was a good day's work and the following morning, April 24th, when we all 'embussed' for Carur at the end of the road one had the feeling that the party was in good heart and reasonably well found.

It is small wonder that this trek has been so fully and so frequently described. It must be one of the most beautiful minor journeys in the Himalaya. In the lower valleys the chestnuts

were in flower. We passed through long avenues of them, with intriguing glimpses of Trisul through the foliage. Higher the brilliant scarlet and crimson of the blooms on the tree rhododendrons, the tremendous depths of the valleys, the massive columns of the deodars so reminiscent of the nave of Bourges, the fascinating terracing of the hillsides, the lungurs playing on the rocks near at hand and the distant snows of Nanda Ghunti—all these things and many more besides emphasised both the intimacy and the remoteness, above all the unequalled charm and splendour of the Himalaya.

We slept out in the open, using our sleeping bags and dispensing with tents. The sun during the day was brilliant, the heat great. But as we rose it became cool at nights, even cold at the wretched camping ground at Dakwani. The following day in perfect weather an orgy of photography was indulged in on the Kuari Pass. The immense panorama more than justified its reputation. We all climbed a friendly hill above the pass and enjoyed long glissades down the upper slopes towards the woods of Tapoban.

In the Dhauli valley it was difficult to resist fascinating backward glances over the right shoulder up the Rishi Ganga to Nanda Devi, but our way led westwards to the junction of the Dhauli and the Alaknanda rivers and thence up to Badrinath. From Joshimath we intermingled with the pilgrims on their way to the opening of the Temple at Badrinath, though we actually preceded the Rawal by a few days. The Alaknanda valley from the Dhauli confluence at Vishnuprayag to Badrinath is a magnificent series of gorges, rising steeply. Great beds of winter snow blocked the track in places and the two ponies had a hard time. Badrinath, an unattractive place, was not only snowed up but more or less in ruins. Winter snows had been much heavier than usual and the spring avalanches had been devastating. The famous Temple, however, together with most of the other buildings at the North end of the little town, had escaped. We had a chat with the Tehsildar, the local Magistrate, and the Chief of Police and our pass was inspected. All seemed well: we actually lodged in the Police Station!

Through the jaws of the nala behind Badrinath the upper part of the east face and north-east ridge of Nilkanta was visible. Conditions seemed wintry to a degree and the peak is in any case hardly assailable from this angle. We were becoming aware

that the season was exceptional. The suspension bridge having been destroyed, we crossed the Alaknanda by huge snow beds between Badrinath and Mana, a Bhotia village at the junction of the Alaknanda and Saraswati rivers, and crossed the latter, flowing in a deep rock canyon, by way of a natural rock bridge. Mana itself was silent and deserted; the Bhotias, who live here during the summer, had not yet arrived from their winter quarters. The weather was superb. Nilkanta stood up into the sunshine, her granite precipices impeccably white with driven snow. Flocks of snow pigeon flew up the valley, and the abundant bird life of all kinds seemed, as it were, the sap of life rising up the tree of the valley after the long winter. The great cliffs rose on the north of the valley, to the south the ridges soared to Narayan Parbat (19,480 ft.) a satellite of Nilkanta. Ahead the junction of the Bhagirath Kharak and the Satopanth Glaciers was visible, each glacier curving round from its own valley and the two glaciers flowing together for a short distance before ending in a joint snout. In the angle between them rose the twin spires of Balakun (21,230 ft.) with Chaukhamba (23,468 ft.) visible beyond. From the cliffs on the north emerged the two Vasudhara waterfalls, vanishing in spray before reaching the rocks at the bottom. A short distance beyond, within easy reach of some beds of winter snow but on warm turf, we pitched our base camp and here paid off all our Dhotal porters except two or three whom we retained for a few days to bring up a few loads left behind at Badrinath.

After a day or two we set out in deteriorating weather to explore the Bhagirath Kharak. The word "explore," is of course, used only in the personal sense. This glacier has been traversed by many parties since the time of Meade who examined the col at its head. The ablation valley between the glacier and the hillside was more or less snowed up but the narrow top of the moraine was practicable. Two camps were established and from the second at 13,500 ft. an easy snow mountain of about 18,000 ft. on the north side of the valley was ascended. The conditions were those of early spring and the long, steep, initial slopes proved trying to Misra whose experience was limited. The ascent gave us valuable acclimatisation as well as magnificent views of the east face of Chaukhamba. The enormous avalanches falling from this peak and its neighbours obviously precluded further examination at this season, though

as spectacles they were worth a long journey. We returned to camp in a mild snow-storm.

The following day, 14th May, David, Jack and John, with the Sherpas, established a further camp at about 17,000 ft. on a large snowy plateau near the 18,000 ft. peak with a view to the ascent of some fine mountains in the vicinity. The Sherpas returned to the lower camp. It snowed almost continuously and the higher camp proved bitterly cold, much sleep being lost in consequence. A clear morning induced an attempt on a fine peak of 20,250 ft., about 19,800 ft. being reached, but the decision to retreat was the right one in view of mist and heavy snowfall. The party were lucky to find their tents, their outward tracks being obliterated, visibility only a few yards, and the willow wands brought for way-marking having been left at the base camp for bigger game. The following day they returned to the glacier camp and the day after that the whole party reached the Base Camp. It had been an illuminating experience, and it seemed to us that the amount of new snowfall was at least making up what was lost by melting during the day.

After a day off at the Base Camp, Harry and John with two Sherpas set off up a very steep nala just beyond the camp, at the top of which was a glacier system, the Bangneu Bank, bounded by a ring of high peaks. The nala became a sinister-looking gorge, overhung with green ice. However, scree slopes on the left, mostly snow-covered, enabled the first vertical step to be overcome. In a flurry of snow, camp was pitched high up on these slopes and the two Sherpas returned. The following day another vertical step in the bed, which had now become a glacier, was by-passed and after a further camp had been established it proved possible to avoid an impossible icefall by means of very steep snowslopes on the left which led to a branch of the Bangneu Bank. Another and milder icefall, which became dangerous later on due to the snow peeling off steep slopes into the wide crevasses beneath them, and easy slopes conducted us to a rocky rib separating the two branches of the glacier. A steep descent led to the other branch in the middle of which we camped. The glacier was surrounded by fine but difficult looking peaks. At the head one mountain of 20,320 ft. and another almost 21,000 ft., both rock peaks, appeared impossible under existing conditions. Immediately opposite the camp a massive mountain of 20,330 ft. seemed to possess two routes which might repay examination.

John, unfortunately, had to retire to the Base Camp escorted by two Sherpas, having distinctly the worse of a violent attack of dysentery. This was the only illness of any kind suffered by any member of the expedition. Leaving the other two Sherpas at the glacier camp (about 17,000 ft.), the other four left for the peak at 7 a.m. (how hard it is to make an early start from a high camp). It was a fine though cold morning and the snow was in perfect condition. An easy, winding snowy rib led up the centre of the south-west face of the peak, joining the main westerly ridge only a short distance from the summit. This seemed the easier of the two routes, the other being the ridge mentioned, the continuity of which was interrupted by many rocky towers and gendarmes. Good progress was made though Harry and especially Misra, lacking the others' acclimatisation, were slower. Nevertheless, after a stop or two for photography and to recover breath, the steep slope leading up to the western ridge was tackled. The sun had been shining on the slope for some time but the snow, though softened, did not appear to be avalanchy. David and Jack made the steps. Harry remained with Misra, who was very tired and uncertain whether he was able to go further. Then, leaving him sitting on the almost flat snow at the foot of the slope to be picked up on the return, Harry set off after the others. The steps were good, in spite of the labour of making them, and rapid progress was possible. The peak seemed to be in the bag.

It seems possible that the avalanche may have started through some snow sliding off the sun-warmed rock of the main ridge and causing the surface at the top of the slope to slip. David and Jack, both almost at the ridge at about 20,000 ft. were swept off their feet at once. Both retained their axes. David soon felt his feet on the solid snow, the avalanche having slipped away beneath him. As the avalanche gained weight and momentum (as was verified afterwards) deeper snow strata became involved, sliding off the underlying strata and breaking up into blocks. Jack was carried on the surface from nearly the top of the slope to the bottom. He only suffered from superficial bruises but received some laceration of the right arm. Harry, on the steepest part of the slope, looked up to see a wave of snow about to break over him. However, the surface began to slide and he had to release his axe, which had been plunged up to the head. Both he and Jack practised swimming motions on their backs, head

downwards, and it may well be that this kept them on top of the sliding snow masses. Harry was unhurt except for a badly strained or twisted knee, which would not take his weight so that he was unable to walk. Nothing was lost except Harry's axe and one pair of snow goggles. David especially, assisted by Jack so far as he was able, performed prodigies of valour and endurance in getting Harry back to camp before dark. Two days later the base camp was attained, David again, with the assistance this time of Lhakpa, proving a tower of strength.

Unhappily a note had been sent up from the police that our pass had been altered. It had indeed! Movement was absolutely prohibited, except in a downward direction, with the exception of an attempt to climb Nilkanta. The long journey to the Zaskar range, the whole plan, was at an end. It proved impossible to persuade the authorities to relent. Nevertheless we felt a renewed attempt on Avalanche Peak (as we now called it) in addition to Nilkanta would not be outside at any rate the spirit of our orders. However, on 28th May, John and David, followed by Jack three days later, left with three Sherpas, to reconnoitre Nilkanta. They established a camp beside the Satopanth glacier, but appalling snow conditions and worsening weather rendered an attempt to reach the snow col at the foot of the west ridge hopeless. On 2nd June the party were reunited at the Base Camp and it was time for John Kempe to leave us to return to his work in Hyderabad. The weather, which had been poor, now became frankly impossible. Floods of rain followed by heavy snow fell day and night at the Base Camp. A nearby cave was utilised for cooking and having meals.

Harry's knee had improved very little but nevertheless it was decided that he would accompany David and Jack in another attempt on Avalanche Peak. The steep gorges were successfully traversed but the soft snow of the upper part of the glacier proved to be so troublesome and painful to negotiate with the knee bound up solid that after a night at Camp 2 (as we called the Bangneu Glacier camp) he descended to the Base Camp assisted by Lhakpa and returned to England.

Jack and David, after bidding Harry goodbye, left at 6 a.m. after a good breakfast, to attempt Avalanche Peak by the ridge route. A cold wind was blowing for the first hour and a half and icy particles rustled over the crusted snow slopes, but soon a hot sun softened the snow as they went higher. They caught a last

glimpse of Harry and Lhakpa as they ascended the slope to the rock rib between the glaciers. The party made good speed to the foot of the central rocky part of the ridge but soon found that the snow and the cornices on the awkwardly sloping gendarmes were far from safe. At 11-30 a.m., having attained an altitude of approximately 19,800 feet, it was realised that another three or four hours along the ridge would be needed to reach the summit. The heat of the mid-afternoon would have made the return dangerous and unjustifiable. However, it had been a memorable mountaineering day, with splendid views across the rugged Arwa Nala to the peaks on the border of Tibet. Nanda Devi and Trisul could be seen clearly as they soared majestically over the ranges of eastern Garhwal.

Before retracing their steps to Camp 2 (as we called our Bangu Glacier camp) Jack and David decided upon a new method of attack. This entailed the placing of a Camp 3 at 19,000 ft. below the snow bulge in the hope that the ascent or descent of the dangerous avalanche slopes could be made while they were still frozen board-hard before the sun had gained much power. Thus on June 13th with the help of Lhakpa and Ang Tsering, who had now returned from below, the lightest Meade tent was placed below the bergschrund on the bulge, the two Sherpas then returning to Camp 2. This high camp is a rich memory. Peaks and valleys, high and low, seemed on a level or beneath the high perch, life was down to its elementals, and the morrow would tell if the peak was possible or not. Mists occasionally shut out the world, and the chill wind made Jack and David early seek the warmth of sleeping bags. Both slept little and each hour glanced at the watch to see the time.

Leaving the Meade tent at 4-30 a.m. a patch of deep powder snow caused fears that the cold had been too intense. The old avalanche route was tried, but as the slope steepened doubts and fears increased about the underlying snow. Retracing their steps they then tried an even steeper slope beyond the powder snow and to the left of the snow bulge. It had been noticed that the sun only reached this slope late in the morning and at once they found the going easier. David was wearing crampons and he kicked excellent steps all the way to where the rock gendarmes joined the corniced snow ridge. Here the two roped together and began to traverse the steep ridge above the avalanche bulge. Always there seemed a doubt. Would the snow remain firm—

or once again would they hear that sickening crack and feel the mountain stir itself? A snow hollow on the face gave some relief, for if the surface slid they would be precipitated speedily but safely into its soft centre. On arrival at the west gendarme it was decided to traverse its base and ascend a steep little couloir to reach the summit rocks as David was still in crampons. Soon they were sitting upon the summit rock enjoying a superb mountain panorama. Mists filled the Arwa Glen and the valley of the Alaknanda, but across the rolling sea of cloud could be seen the great peaks of the Central Himalaya towering above in magnificent splendour. Northwards rose a long line of high un-named peaks on the Tibetan border. The knife-edged east ridge of Avalanche Peak drew the eyes along and out over silvered clouds to Kamet and Mana Peak, and further round to the south-east there soared into a clear blue sky the peaks of Rataban, Hathi Parbat, Nanda Devi and Trisul. Snow flecks glittered on the summit cornice. Swift rising cumulus clouds threatened close by as Nilkanta, the Queen, pushed herself majestically through the misty layer. Westwards the sickle ridge of Peak 20,860 ft., sister to Avalanche Peak, stimulated thoughts on its none too obvious possibilities.

At 7-30 a.m. they started to descend. The snow remained good and, as calculated, the sun was only beginning to touch the snow of the traverse along the ridge. Once back at Camp 3 it was noted that the sun had been on the possible avalanche slopes for only twenty to thirty minutes—the plan had worked. At Camp 2, reached late in the morning, news was not very good. Nima Tensing had delivered a letter from Harry and also a telegram from the Indian Government refusing a further request to cross the Bhyundar Khanta to Gamsoli in the Dhauliganga. Dark clouds became quite menacing and as snow flakes began to fall a snap decision was made to return to the Base Camp. This they did during quite a vicious snow storm.

On June 17th David, Jack and Lhakpa, after a trip down to Mana and Badrinath, ascended the Bhagirath Kharak glacier to the French Base Camp to congratulate them on the ascent of Chaukhamba. The French broached a delicious cognac to toast the expeditions. Victor Russenberger and Lucien George, the two who had made the ascent of Chaukhamba, decided they would join forces with David and Jack in an attempt on Nilkanta. Accordingly two days later the French and British parties met at

the confluence of the Satopanth and Bhagirath Kharak glaciers, and with the help of Mana Bhotias established a Base Camp near the grazing alp of Majna on the Satopanth Glacier. Compared with Sherpas and Dhotials the Bhotias seemed very slow and expensive and the camp was not reached until late in the day—and that only by resorting to the expedient of hiding the Bhotia pipe and tobacco in ruck-sacks. Majna had changed much since the attempt on Nilkanta five weeks before, and the lower slopes leading up to the basin at the foot of the slopes below the Nilkanta Col were partly covered by grass with a lovely show of purple primula, potentilla, and an aromatic Dwarf Rhododendron. The sun shone brilliantly the following morning and Lucien, David and Jack, with four Sherpas, left Base Camp and placed a Camp 1 at 16,000 ft. at the foot of the slopes beneath the col. In the afternoon layers of ominous-looking clouds moved relentlessly up the Satopanth from the Alaknanda, but above them Avalanche Peak and the Kamet group could be seen.

Though awake by 3-30 a.m. the following day an early start was delayed until 5-30, due to the primus stove ceasing to function. Snow conditions on the route up to the ridge were infinitely better and Camp 2 was placed on the col at 18,500 ft. Monsoon clouds were massing. Snow fell throughout the night. A reconnaissance of the west ridge was started the next day but quite early hail and snow reduced visibility to little more than a dozen yards. At the second gendarme Lucien's head was cut by a fall of ice and stones. The three returned to the col in hopeless weather conditions. Soon three Sherpas arrived with food and fuel, and apparently had had a trying time on the steep slopes below the col, with small stone and snow avalanches passing them on either side. It began to snow heavily again towards evening and through the night. Clearly this was the monsoon.

It seemed doubtful whether Sherpas could carry beyond the col due to the difficulty of the rocks and it had been planned to bivouac at about 20,000 ft. The snows now made this hopeless. Rocks plastered with snow also increased the dangers of the supply route between Camps 1 and 2. It was decided to descend. Through a break in the clouds, far to the north could be seen the Kamet peaks, and Ganesh Parbat on the Tibetan border, cloudless, and clearly outlined against a blue sky. These were to have been the main objectives in June, but withdrawal of the permit

prevented the carrying out of the plans devised by Harry to avoid the rigours of the monsoon.

It was galling to see these mountains as the party finally left the col and descended. The weather showing no signs of improvement after four days, a further descent was undertaken on the 26th to the Vasudhara camp, with several tricky and amusing moments crossing streams swollen to raging torrents by monsoon rains.

Ponies were hired to carry loads down the ancient pilgrim route to Chamoli and within two days the caravan passed through Badrinath. Three days of rapid descent along the rugged pilgrim path seemed a hot and sticky anti-climax to the expedition—yet it was realised that this was the way of all pilgrims, whether they had been to the source of the Ganges or to seek out romance and adventure amongst the eternal snows.

A LITTLE MORE THAN A WALK

Arthur Robinson

' Oh Blaren, rocky Blaven,
Sow I long in be **with thee again**,
To see lashed gulf and gully,
Smoke white in the windy rain . . . '

* * * * *

' Blaven- can be ascended by the gentle Tourist along
its delightfully easy South Ridge from **Camasunary**.
This is little more than a pleasant walk . . . !

S.M.C **Guide**, *Island of Skye*.

The magnificent cirque of hills around the summit of the pass beyond Tomdoun had never looked more glorious than it did now, and I had made many previous ascents of the pass on my annual Easter pilgrimage to Skye. The sun blazed down from an egg-shell blue sky, and by all the canons of a mountaineer's creed we four, Norrie Covell, Arthur Strahan, John Wharton and I, ought to have been in ecstasy. Deep snow, trackless and glittering, lay above the 900 feet contour, all of it deposited during the previous night, Wednesday, April 1st, 1953, perhaps a significant date in view of the fly in the ointment in the presence of a nice new shiny blue Ford Zephyr, a trusty car which had carried us here—nosing swiftly along through the windy, sleety, gale-torn night, over Shap Fell, with the wind shrieking like a Banshee in the telephone wires, through the Braes of Balqhiddier, axle deep in water, under Buchaille Etive, streaming a cloud of snow from its hurricane beaten summit, along the lovely winding road by Loch Garry, strangely quiet under the hurrying clouds, zooming disdainfully up the pass towards the snow line—and now lay forlorn and quiet bogged up to its shiny sleek mascot in thick new snow, only about a hundred feet from the summit of the pass.

We discovered that the snow filled all the available space under the bonnet, having been scooped there in our gallant but unavailing effort to storm the Pass. We also discovered that ice axes are not the best of instruments for unbogging a snow-bogged car, but after a blasphemous hour or so, we rescued the blue beauty from her predicament, and then gently backed down the pass until a quarry of sorts offered a place to turn. Retracing our sad way back to Invergarry and the long road round by Fort Augustus and Invermoriston we discovered again that the

human mind works strangely. We courteously stopped five other cars travelling in the direction of the snowed-up pass, and informed the owners of the difficulties ahead. In each case a polite, supercilious and doubtful smile was our reward, and they proceeded onward to see for themselves — they would be convinced in due course. Such a heavy fall of snow in one night at Easter-time is unusual and we awaited with lively interest our first sight of the Coolin this year. As we topped the rise above Dornie we were aware of the peaks standing white against the dark sky, we were going to have fun again this Easter. The wind had been steadily increasing as we approached Kyle and on arriving at the Jetty we were greeted by lashing spray as the gale whipped off the tops of the waves in the tossing Sound of Sleat. The new ferry, however, made light of the crossing and as we were the only car aboard, decanted us on Skye in a very few minutes.

Streaming rain belts trailed across from Beinn na Caillich; at Broadford it was raining hard, and by the time we approached Loch Eynort, the Zephyr's wheels threw up a steady bow wave as the torrential rain flooded the road. The view down Loch Eynort was superb. Banners of gale-driven snow streamed from the peaks, Garbh-Bheinn looked particularly fine, corniced, smoking in the gale and flying a long snow plume. The clouds scudded crazily above as a background to the scene and spume and spray from the storm torn Loch lashed across the wind-screen.

We ate dinner at Sligachan to the accompaniment of rattling windows, howling wind, and the southing snow breath, the barometer was below 29". After a session before the huge lounge fire, making optimistic plans regarding the Pinnacle Ridge for the morrow, I parted from my friends on the stairs with the admonition, 'Have I not always had good weather in Skye, after being welcomed by gales, wind and storm, and have not the Gods of the Coolin always relented during the night?' 'Tomorrow will be good,' I bravely promised, with a whispered 'Unberofen' with fingers crossed whilst touching the door, as a sign to the said Coolin Gods who had always been kind.

The following morning Norrie hammered at the door shouting, 'Raus,' 'Raus.' 'Wunderbar,' 'Wunderschön,' and I came downstairs to see the three of them outside, looking at Gillean, mist-capped under a blue sky, and the Red Coolin dazzlingly

white in the morning sun. 'It's happened again,' I exulted in my mind, and registered silent thanks to the Gods of the Coolin.

The Pinnacle Ridge was our intended expedition, and it was obviously going to be a good do, even as seen end on from Sligachan. We had taken into account the new snow, but as we approached the ridge above the Bhasteir Gorge we found that the snow was very much deeper than we had anticipated. After spending a deal of time wallowing knee and waist deep in the stuff we approached the base of the first Pinnacle, and the few half-hearted attempts we made to secure lodgment on its ice and snow-hung slabs never gave any promise of success. 'Perhaps,' we said, 'the West Ridge would be better today,' a bit of a come down but even yet we still had the summit in mind. We spent the rest of the available time in reaching the West Ridge, at one point carving a furrow nearly chin deep in the incoherent snow. Snow burrowing under a hot sun is an energy sapping, moist and uncomfortable business, and, as the day was far advanced, we retired in good order but discomfited. A good day of long views, much endeavour but little achievement.

Saturday's dawning brought sun, cumulus cloud, blue sky and a nippy wind. In view of the deep snow in the Corries we decided to go to Blaven, take the car around Loch Slapin and ascend the South Ridge from Camasunary. The ridge had looked very fine when seen from the moor below Gillean on the previous day. It appeared to sweep up in volutes of snow and corniced ridge and gave promise of an enjoyable day. We started out in good time, but there were three Leicas in the party and other assorted cameras and the views along the coast and down Loch Eynort called for many halts for photography. We were late at Loch Slapin and left the car at 1 p.m. in a small quarry to the east of the usual Camasunary track, having had a car bogged in the entrance to that track during the previous Easter. It was a mistake to start for Camasunary from the quarry as our ascending contour on the eastern side of the valley led us a little high, so high in fact did it lead two of the party as to lure them on over Slat Rheinn to be eventually bogged down around the south-eastern face of Blaven and to miss the summit. Norrie and I pressed on and eventually at 2-30 were approaching the top of the first steep bit of the South Ridge. Norrie was a little way behind when suddenly as I rounded an outcrop, I saw directly in front some forty feet away, sitting on a pillar of rock.

and gazing down at three deer grazing below, a great bird which could only be an Eagle. I bobbed down quickly. ' . . . I hope he hasn't seen me . . . I hope he stays put . . . I need the 9CM long focus for this bird . . .' I feverishly whipped out the lens from its chamois cover, changed over the lenses in the Leica and bobbed up again. This time he was looking directly at me and the deer had disappeared. He had a horror-stricken look, and slid gently and majestically sideways into space, riding the wind without even a flap, and leaving me to press the button despairingly without hope of reward, and getting none. I changed the lenses back sadly, life is full of might-have-beens, but what a bird, and what a shot, with Gillean, icy, remote and impossibly high looking, as a backcloth to the noble profile.

We proceeded up the ridge; being slightly in the lee we had not yet experienced much wind but could hear it booming among the crags, a challenging noise at all times, but giving promise of a spot of bother ahead if there happened to be much new snow. ' Three o'clock,' I said to Norrie, ' We had better press on, we haven't a deal of time.' Scrambling up a little gully we emerged on the ridge and were smitten by a blast of wind which brought us to a halt gasping for breath and hiding our faces from the stinging spicules of snow. Scrambling slowly up the ridge, and fighting the wind we reached the first of the snow aretes we had seen from Gillean. A lovely little arete in miniature. Three steps on it and we were up to our waists in snow, not so lovely. Instead of the airy balancing across in the booming wind, a snow wallow, flailing the axe to get some coherence in the snow track. Our struggle ended in a short rock scramble which led to another levelish snow ridge. We went even deeper into this one and reached the next rocks panting more than somewhat. Norrie had been feeling queasy all day and the slogging snow plug didn't help a lot, he subsided breathing hard into a little slightly sheltered nook and announced in the classic phrase, ' Hier steht ich und can nicht zu andern.' Furthermore, here he would tarry awhile, ponder on the inscrutabilities of nature and then descend. I would press on and turn back at 4-30 p.m. and return down the ridge, instead of descending into Coire Uaigneach as I first intended. The ridge stretched away in front, grand and Alpine looking today, pity about the soft snow though, it was going to be a nuisance.

Blaven throws down, on the Glen Sligachan side, several

deeply cut gullies. The col which crowned the first gully I met was narrow, short and ridged like a roof. A wind like a blast from the Poles swept it. I gingerly essayed the crossing, the first three steps held nicely, good, I strode boldly and sank straight-way to the waist. The remainder of the col was a snow wallow above two grim-looking couloirs which I hoped were filled with snow and not ice in case the wallow came unstuck. I didn't come unstuck and had no need to test the stability of the couloirs.

I had noticed for some time a deterioration in the weather, a dirty-greyish film of alto stratus had for some time been turning the brightness of the day into a sickly pale shadow of itself. One by one the distant views of islands and hills had faded, and the sun now leered palely through the greyness. Numerous slimy looking fish-shaped clouds slid blackly across the murk driven by the gale which was now getting down to it and was shrieking among the rocks. I looked up the ridge still soaring up ahead, my aneroid said 2,600 feet, not a deal more to do. I pressed on, more ridge scrambles and wallowings above howling gullies, and the time was now 4-30, time I had promised to return. The aneroid said 2,900 feet, almost there. Visibility was now zero plus 10 feet, one of the fishy clouds had obviously descended a bit. I slammed on in the deepening snow and gloom and found a steepish slope where I could at last kick steps, and mounting this I arrived on a small dome which must be the summit I thought.

No cairn tho'. The aneroid said 3,100 feet, something screwy about this. I decided that the glass must be falling rapidly which would account for the high reading. I peered into the blackness and was about to descend when I remembered that Blaven has two tops, the Southern being 11 feet lower than the Northern. Being a purist I must do the North Top. I proceeded along the plateau, crawling like a serpent in the blast and fetched up against a rock buttress rising in front. 'This is all wrong, should be a steep dip not a rise, can't be the summit.' Another scramble and snow plug. The aneroid said 3,250 feet. Could be the little people were at work on Blaven today, this aneroid is never wrong therefore I am suspended in space 219 feet above Blaven!! 'Don't be silly, see if there is any more mountain.' There was . . . A nice little traverse round a snow dome, I didn't fancy tunneling through it, a short steep rise, a crawl across a shrieking viewless waste and Allah be praised, here is the Cairn. The aneroid said 3,350 feet, definitely the little people were at work.

I crawled to the edge of the dip between the two peaks. A boiling cloud-filled roaring cauldron, obviously going down to the nethermost pit, filled with Gows, Warlocks and riders of the storm, lay below. The map with cold blooded accuracy says it is a dip of 60 feet. This it no doubt is on a still calm day, with the demons not abroad, but shall I descend this icy chimney, whose bottom lies hid in the writhing depths where no doubt fiends await me with frosty breath? No, sir, I will leave the 11 feet to the Djinns.

5-30 p.m., time to be going, I crawled back to the cairn. It was then that I became aware of the voice of Blaven. It spoke loudly and clearly. It shrieked through the rock fangs. It boomed in a hoarse basso from the broader crags, it howled from snow-laden lungs across the summit and spoke gently in whispers among the stones. A welcoming, powerful, aloof, all embracing voice.

It was glorious to be up here alone and to hear it.

I took a quick compass bearing and plunged down to the snow wallows of the South Ridge.

SARMIENTO AND SO ON

D. H. Maling

I remember only a vague impression of our informant. I believe that he sold sheep-dip and insecticides throughout South America, and he was reputed to fly his own aircraft from the flesh pots of Buenos Aires and Montevideo to the more remote parts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Anyway, he stood us a magnificent dinner at a hotel in Montevideo, where our sterling balance would have barely paid for the coffee. After dinner the conversation turned to Tierra del Fuego and our vague plans to visit the Straits of Magellan after our return from the Antarctic.

He seemed to be a useful contact, for mention of his name in Punta Arenas would apparently provide boats, horses, food, anything we might require. Dick, I think, was slightly more sober than I was, for he remembered all this and he later enlightened me about some of the lavish offers which had been thrust upon us. Only one remark by our informant became engraved in my memory: '*When you get to Punta Arenas, go to the English Club, mention my name . . . etc'*

Was there an English Club in that one-horse place? Punta Arenas is a name which reeks of salt water, tar and whale oil. In my imagination it conjured up visions of log cabins by a wooden jetty, of dismasted barques limping through the Straits of Magellan, of sealers prostrate with scurvy or gin or both, of Indians who lived in skin boats, ate raw shellfish and shot at strangers with obsidian-tipped arrows. The only description of the settlement which I had read referred frequently to convicts who broke out of their compound and took charge of the town. In the urban splendour of Montevideo, the English Club appeared to have been built round a bar which was frequented by remittance-men. What sort of rough-house would we find down in Punta Arenas?

Three years later, relaxing in the Edwardian luxury of the English Club in Punta Arenas, I was able to reflect that perhaps my imagination had run riot, or that I had been prejudiced about the habits of the emigré Englishman in South America. I suspected that I was not correctly dressed for the occasion and I was painfully aware that my knife had come adrift and was prodding me in the thigh.

I had forgotten the name of our informant, which was possibly

just as well. Some delicate questioning about his identity was countered by an abrupt "That old B——." It appeared that he owed money. There were no boats, only unbroken horses and it was the middle of winter. As far as the mountains were concerned, we had had it.

Again, perhaps, just as well. We had left our rope and ice-axes in the Falkland Islands.

#

When we returned to the Falklands from the Antarctic in March, 1950, some of us had to resign ourselves to a wait of three months before we could expect a passage home. I learnt, by roundabout means, that the Falkland Islands Company steamer might visit Punta Arenas. Dick had already sailed for England, so Ken and I put our names on a list of potential passengers to Chile. We also planned a tentative campaign should we reach any mountains. This is difficult when one only has the vaguest idea where the mountains are, when you only know of one by name, and when the time factor is completely unknown. Our only map was in a school atlas. I remembered reading Conway's book many years ago. I thought that he had tried to climb Mount Sarmiento, but I didn't know whether he had reached the summit.

Six weeks passed and we had almost forgotten about the possibility of going to Tierra del Fuego. Then, quite suddenly, it was announced that the *Fitzroy* would sail for Punta Arenas in a fortnight. The girl in the Secretariat wasn't sure whether a visa was necessary. My passport didn't cover Chile, so she wrote this on page four, together with Argentina, Brazil and Peru for good measure. She did not bother to stamp this amendment, so that the Foreign Office have been suspicious of me ever since. We got ourselves vaccinated, oiled our boots, and acquired some Chilean currency .

Further enquiry at the shipping office revealed that the ship would probably visit a sawmill 'somewhere in Tierra del Fuego,' but the clerk did not know where this was and he hadn't a map. The only person who was likely to know the whereabouts of the timber yard was the skipper of the *Fitzroy*, but he was at sea and would not be back until three days before sailing for Punta Arenas. Anyway the return fare would cost £14, would I please pay for my berth at least ten days before the sailing date. He didn't know whether there would be any extra charge to go to

the sawmill. The ticket only covered the journey from Stanley to Punta Arenas, but if I took his advice I wouldn't stay on the *Fitzroy* any longer than was absolutely necessary.

The *Fitzroy* returned and more information was forthcoming. The sawmill was at a place called Puerto Arturo, but the skipper had not been there himself. He had heard that this part of the island was flat and uninteresting. There was no point in taking any climbing equipment. If we had any sense we would stay in Punta Arenas. There was a very interesting cabaret. If we must come all the way, then we ought to bring a gun and try and shoot some parrots. He had heard that they were very good to eat.

Finally we disgraced ourselves for ever in Falkland Islands society, for we went aboard the *Fitzroy* instead of attending the May Ball—the principal social function of the winter. About midnight the last greaser staggered out of the 'Stanley Arms' and fell up the gangway. The *Fitzroy* cast off.

We spent a week cruising about the Falkland Islands, unloading stores at various outlying settlements. Our last call was at Fox Bay on West Falkland, where we filled the holds with 850 sheep. So that they should not suffocate, we sailed with open hatches. Once we were clear of the Falklands we began to roll and I began to wonder what happened when a green sea filled the hold. After all, the *Fitzroy* is only 600 tons burthen. The first night, however, was not too bad, although a general aroma of sheep began to pervade the ship.

All next day she pitched and twisted into a head sea. The change in direction of the swell made it less likely that the *Fitzroy* would fill up like an open sardine tin, but as the smell of sheep became stronger I began to yearn for the cleansing effects of a few large waves. I made a beast of myself at both the breakfasts which I managed to consume, but had to retire to my bunk for the rest of the day. Ken was wiser. He retired to his bunk before we left Fox Bay and did not get up again until we had passed Cape Virgins. About this time I was bitten on the chest by a cockroach and a sheep died just outside our porthole.

Towards midnight we came under the lee of Cape Virgins and the motion of the ship became easier. We hove-to, awaiting the tide which would carry us through the First and Second Narrows.

About four o'clock in the morning Ken shook me vigorously.

'There's a volcano erupting just ahead,' he said urgently. Sure enough the cabin was lit by the reflection of leaping flames. It would be pleasant to recall that I said that there were no volcanos in Tierra del Fuego, which is perfectly true. But at this stage my knowledge of the geology of the region was imperfect and I would not have been able to say this with any authority. After all the country has a name to live up to. How was I to know that the fires which Magellan saw were lit by the Indians? What passed between Ken and myself on this occasion remains a dark secret, for the spirit of scientific enquiry within me sinks to a very low ebb in the hours just before dawn. Fortunately I was first in the saloon for breakfast. The Steward asked me whether I had seen the burning oil-well during the night. When Ken emerged I was able to remark casually that there were some oil-wells near here, perhaps we might see them burning off the gas.

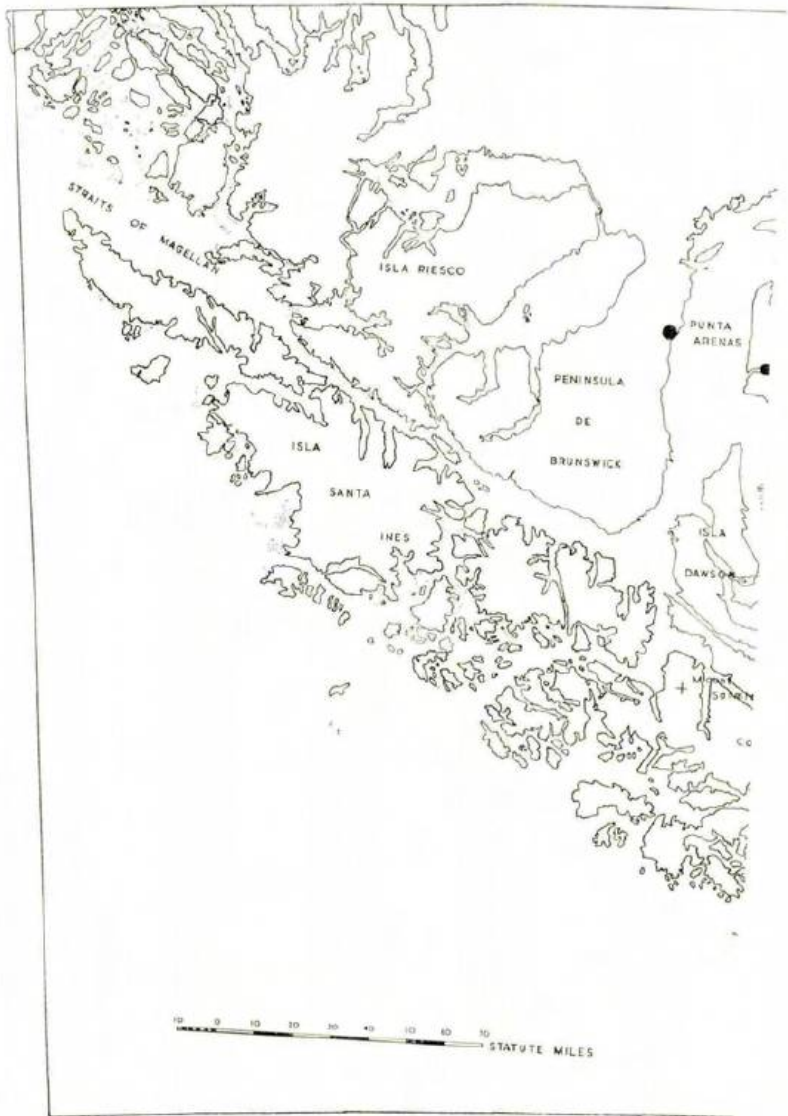
We passed through the Straits most of the day. At times the shores widened into obscurity in the driving rain; in the Narrows, we fled on the tide at an effortless twenty knots. All the land we could see was as flat as a pancake.

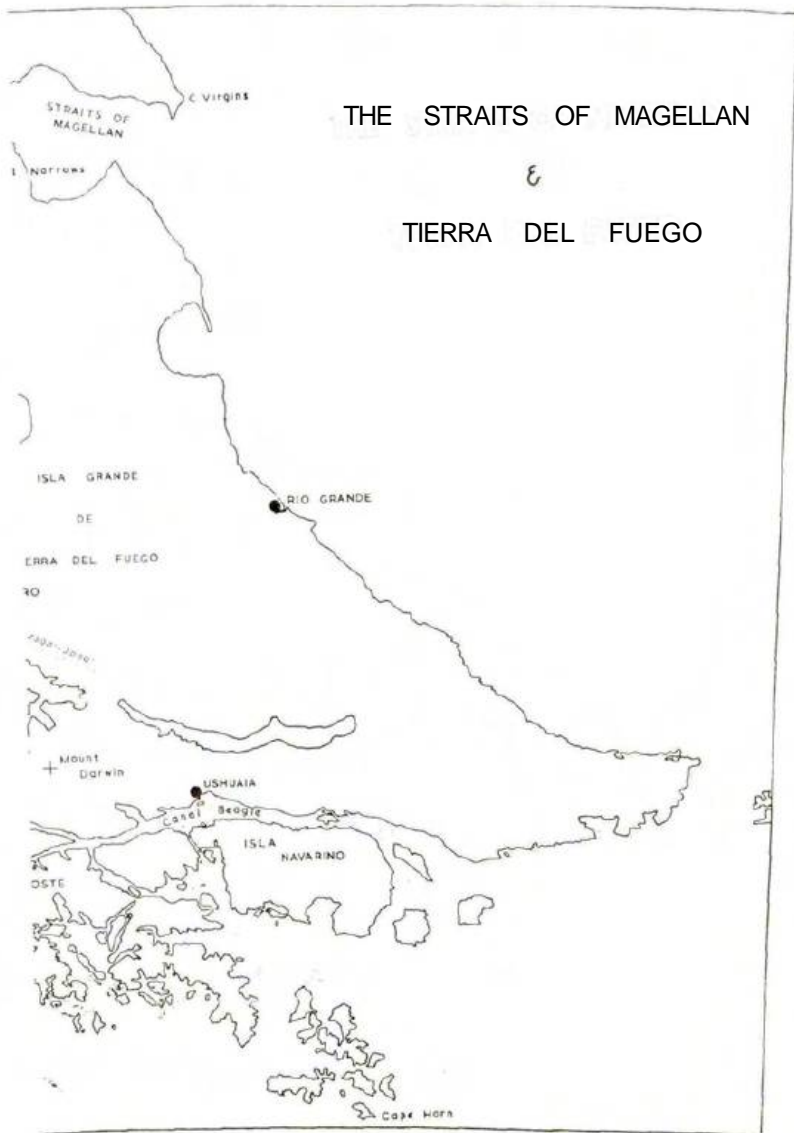
Finally Punta Arenas loomed up through the murk and we anchored some distance off-shore among a collection of old hulks and rusty steamers. So far as my romantic notions of Punta Arenas were concerned, the dismasted barques were here. But they had been here for the best part of fifty years.

When the gale moderated, we moved inshore and moored alongside the pier.

It so happened that we fell into conversation with a young man with a large shooting brake. He offered to take us to the English Club and we drove out of the docks without so much as a glance from the customs people. This was very different from our subsequent journeys through the gates on foot. Each time we were carefully frisked for weapons. Punta Arenas now has an air of prosperity and respectability which must not be disturbed by visiting seamen.

It is no longer a frontier outpost with whalers on one side, Indians on the other side and convicts within. Two generations of sheep farmers have built a city, which, despite earthquakes, has grown to accommodate between thirty and forty thousand inhabitants. Although half of these live in an appalling shanty town on the hill above the harbour, the rest of the city is superficially civilized and the sheep-barons of Patagonia glide past in





spotless Cadillacs. There are severe blocks of offices and super-cinemas, a park and a museum. Nevertheless, the best hotel in the city, where we later went to find an American petroleum geologist, is built of wood and corrugated iron, but since this building dates from the last decade of the nineteenth century, it is preserved as an antiquity.

The English Club, if not quite S.W.I., would certainly not be out of place in the provinces. The bar is merely a peripheral adjunct to the heavy leather armchairs and month-old copies of *The Times* and *Field*. But we obtained little more information about the mountains of Tierra del Fuego than we should at the Junior Carlton.

A book-buying expedition was more successful, for we were able to buy several works by de Agostini, the Salesian priest, who, for twenty years, combined his missionary work with exploration and mountaineering throughout southern South America. His work was clearly the most authoritative to which we could refer, but, at this stage, we had no Spanish dictionary. After buying a vast half-million atlas of Chile and two of de Agostini's books, I was temporarily insolvent. By the time I had found Ken and borrowed some pesos from him, the shop had closed for the night.

On our way back to the docks, we found what appeared to be a junk-shop kept by a diminutive Jew. He greeted us in English, probably because we were the only people in Punta Arenas who weren't wearing black berets. He appeared, on the face of things, to be a dealer in curios and second-hand clothes. He produced a collection of Indian relics, some of which were clearly bogus, a few possibly genuine; penguin skins such as we had already spent two years preparing for the British Museum, and various bits of cast-off saddlery which might have been picked up in any up-country shearing shed. We thought that if he only managed to sell things when occasional tourist vessels visit the Straits of Magellan in summer, he must live a hand-to-mouth existence. After a time, however, he took us into his confidence, or mistook our intention, and escorted us to an inner office. Here he produced a remarkable variety of lethal weapons, automatic pistols, revolvers, and even a sub-machine gun. The piece de resistance came when he fished an automatic from his hip-pocket, unloaded it, and with a flourish said: 'Ver now, only seex tausend pesos.'

It appears that the second-hand firearms business has great opportunities for an enterprising young man in Punta Arenas. There are no great risks and plenty of room at the top. One requires a contact man with a shooting brake to get the guns through the dockyard gates, but, on a fifty-fifty basis, there still ought to be sufficient profit for one carload to finance an expedition to Sarmiento.

Without a Spanish dictionary we could not make much headway with the information about the islands. The only sentence which we managed to translate with certainty referred to the animal life. Regarding *el león puma*, de Agostini writes: *No hay ninguno en la Tierra del Fuego*. That, at least, was a comforting thought. However de Agostini's books were lavishly illustrated with photographs and sketch maps, so we could at least get some idea of the topography. Although the atlas appeared to be the most modern available, it left much to the imagination. The coastlines were clearly defined, and, as far as we could judge, reasonably accurate. Inland, however, the information became more and more scanty. On many of the islands in the archipelago there was virtually nothing except the name, although the scale would have permitted much more detail. On the mainland sheets of the map, it was interesting to see how much detail was available along the disputed Argentine frontier, whereas elsewhere only the vaguest generalities of the topography were shown.

Anyway we were able to identify Puerto Arturo with certainty. A mountain range trended towards the south-east from the settlement and the hachuring was at least as dark as that of the Cordillera Darwin to the south of Seno Almirantazgo. The Admiralty Chart (554), to which we were now able to refer, described these hills above Puerto Arturo as 'Detached ranges of high mountains.'

Perhaps we had been rash to leave our rope and ice-axes behind.

The *Fitzroy* sailed with the tide and by daybreak we were passing the wide entrance to Bahía Inutil. It had stopped raining and the morning was crystalline with a bitter southerly wind. Away to the east the principal island of the Fuegian archipelago, Isla Grande, stretched as a great flat plain with an occasional drumlin and hardly a trace of woodland. The northern part of the island is similar to the grasslands of Patagonia, just across the Straits.

South of Bahia Inutil, the island rose gently towards low wooded hills on which the mist was slowly dispersing. The foothills of Isla Grande and Isla Dawson converged ahead so that it seemed that we were entering a cul-de-sac. The maps, however, showed that Canal Whiteside led, beyond Puerto Arturo, into the great Seno Almirantazgo and westwards, by tortuous channels, to the Pacific.

As we sailed south, the hills sloped more steeply to the coastline and we could see that the trees reached right down to the high-water mark. The upper limit of tree growth was at about 2,000 feet, though this level was appreciably lower on the south-facing slopes. Above this, the foothills appeared to be grassy with a thin covering of winter snow.

Above and beyond these hills was the snow-covered crest of the Cordillera Darwin, dominated by three great peaks, Mount Sarmiento in the west, Mount Darwin in the east and an unidentified peak ahead of us. The Cordillera appeared to maintain a constant height of 4,000 or 5,000 feet along its whole length, whereas the three main summits rose to 7,000 feet or more.

Quite suddenly a new range of hills loomed up and we altered course for the settlement at their foot. A flock of small green parrots flew over the ship. The 'Detached ranges of high mountains' turned out to be wooded foothills 3,000 feet or so high.

We tied up to two trees growing close to a wooden jetty and the bell went for dinner.

We now knew definitely that the *Fitzroy* would remain here for two days before returning to Punta Arenas. There were no other craft in the bay which could take us further and, besides, we could not get far in two days.

Since there were still about four hours of daylight left, we went ashore to reconnoitre a route through the woods up to the first hill in the range.

The settlement at Puerto Arturo consists of about twenty wooden shacks and a sawmill. For about a mile inland from the camp, the forest had been cleared, first by felling and later by fire. The ground was littered with charred stumps and secondary undergrowth, but there were plenty of clear lanes through it. Before long, however, we began to climb and soon reached virgin forest. The path which we were following died out beyond a particular tree which had been felled and then we

were scrambling over rotten stumps and through thick wet moss. Upwards, the going became worse, for the trees masked the ruggedness of the surface. The vegetation became thicker and it was difficult to maintain our original course. When we struck directly uphill, we would soon come up against a small rock outcrop which would force us to traverse and possibly lose height. Finally, the belt of dwarf *nothojagus*, which surrounded the forest at its upper limit, proved practically impenetrable. The only way to maintain progress through these thickly matted shrubs was to scramble along the tops about three or four feet above the ground. It was very much a matter of agility to keep going at all and I doubt whether this belt would be passable with any load without resorting to cutting through it.

Above the treeline we reached grassy moorland country very similar to that of the Falkland Islands. We walked to the summit of the first hill. South of us, the land dropped steeply to Seno Almirantazgo so that we had an uninterrupted view of the the Cordillera Darwin. It was a tantalising view of high unclimbed and unexplored mountains stretching right across our southern horizon and only twenty miles away, but, as far as getting to them was concerned, they might have been on the moon.

Instead, we looked along our own range, to see what it had to offer. The ridge continued in a straight line on a scale slightly smaller than the Five Sisters of Kintail and we could see six or seven peaks ahead of us. It seemed to offer an attractive walk, so we decided to follow as much of this as we could the following day.

In the meantime, we had spent so much time struggling up through the forest that the afternoon was far advanced. It would be dark at five and we had to get down through the tangle of bushes, moss and rotten stumps before that time.

Fortunately we saw a better route down the north-west spur of our peak and we were able to get down with far less trouble than we had climbed it.

Now if the weather of Tierra del Fuego had maintained its usual severity, the next three or four days ought to have been deplorable, but, for once, it remained fine for two consecutive days. The night was clear and frosty and we left the ship before daybreak.

We reached the crest of the spur below the first peak as the

sun rose over the plain of Isla Grande. We continued along the ridge until midday, when we had reached the summit of the sixth peak. The range continued in a straight line far to the east, across the Argentine frontier. We returned by the same route, for the going on the tops was infinitely easier than fighting our way home down the thickly-wooded valley which lay to the north of us.

The whole walk was dominated by the view southwards, for we could see the entire Cordillera from Mount Sarmiento to Mount Darwin. Below us, a thin layer of stratus hung over the waters of Seno Almirantazgo so that the mountains became ethereal wonders detached from any solid foundation. But the low cloud also prevented us from examining the approaches to the lower glaciers and the extent of the forest cover on their lower slopes.

At last, we plunged down through the dwarf beech thickets, and, as darkness fell, we stumbled along the last mile of sea shore back to the ship.

Of our further activities there is little to tell, for those two fine days were all we had. By midnight it was snowing, but it turned to rain later. Although Ken went off again in the morning—it was alleged that he had gone off to shoot parrots—he returned three hours later, wet, muddy and empty-handed.

The last fencing-posts were secured in the hold and in the early afternoon we sailed for Punta Arenas. It continued to rain until we left the country two days later.

Any serious expedition to the higher mountains must rely upon two factors; mobility and fine weather. A small cutter or motor boat is absolutely essential in order to reach the mountains and to act as a mobile base. The higher peaks are thirty miles or more from the nearest settlements and overland travel is impracticable. Both Conway and de Agostini had to visit different fjords round Mount Sarmiento before they were satisfied that they might find a route to the upper parts of the mountain. Reconnaissance overland would be greatly hampered by the restricted visibility and interminable struggle through thick forest. Long periods of settled weather are virtually unknown. If anything, the summer months are more stormy than those of winter, and snow showers can be expected at sea level even in midsummer. In 1898, Conway reached a height of 4,000 feet on Sarmiento but was defeated by rapidly deteriorating weather.

During the summer of 1914, de Agostini spent forty-five days on the mountain with only two opportunities to attempt the summit.

The prevalence of low cloud favours heavy rime accumulation so that west face routes are out of the question. The frequency with which depressions cross the area means that the snow seldom settles to a climbable condition before it is covered by a fresh fall. Consequently there are grave risks of avalanches. The dangerous condition of the rime and snow defeated de Agostini at a height of 6,200 feet in 1914.

There has not been a serious attempt to climb Sarmiento since this date, and, as far as I know, none of the other mountains have ever been approached.

A small mobile expedition, lasting six months, would cost something like £4,000. The principal cost would be the hire or purchase of a seaworthy boat. If anyone would like to make me a present of this amount, or, alternatively, provide me with a consignment of machine guns, I would take a party myself.

REFERENCES

- A.M. de Agostini S.S. *Prima Spedizioni nella Cordillera Patagonica meridionale*. Boll. Soc. Geog. Italiano, 1931.
- A.M. de Agostini S.S. *Andes Patagonicos*, 2nd Edn., Buenos Aires, 194s (Deals with the mainland mountains only).
- A.M. de Agostini S.S. *Paisajes Magallanicos*, Punta Arenas, 1945.
- A.M. de Agostini S.S. *Guia Turistica de los Lagos Argentinos y Tierra del Fuego*. Buenos Aires, 1945.
- Sir Martin Conway. *Aconcagua and Tierra del Fuego*, London, 1902.
- Lord Conway. *The Autobiography of a Mountain Climber*, London, 1933.
- Carta Nacional, Republica de Chile. Instituto Geografico Militar, Santiago de Chile, 1945 (Bound half-million maps).
- American Geog. Soc. *Hispanic America 1: 1000000 maps*, Sheet SN-19, 1930 (this is less reliable than the detail would suggest).

INSIDE INFORMATION

A. H. Giffin

Every morning when I peep outside to see if it has stopped raining I look north-west across my lawn and the busy main road and admire for a moment — except when the mists are down—the shapely profile of Ill Bell and, just beyond, the great broad shoulder of High Street. They are there now, boldly framed in my window, as I write, and I have only to glance up from my typewriter to see, just over a clump of larches, the top part of Rainsborrow Crag, beloved of foxes but a hopeless place for climbing. This afternoon, I notice, there are still two tiny patches of snow hanging below the High Street plateau.

Tomorrow we will be going climbing as usual. From my house we can be on the climbs in White Ghyll in less than an hour and I have been on Buckbarrow in lonely Longsleddale in just over half an hour. Even the Wasdale hills are only two hours away.

And sometimes the fells seem nearer still. There was one afternoon less than a month ago when I dropped my skis over the back garden wall and trudged easily on skins all the way to the top of the fell. Ten minutes later as I topped the last rise there was the sudden glorious view of the whole of Alpine Lakeland—the Scafells, the Coniston Fells, the Langdale Pikes, the Kentmere tops and many more—sparkling in the afternoon sunshine. There was not a soul about, not a mark on the snow except my own, and it was very still and very, very lovely. Then a train whistled on its way to Windermere and, turning round and looking down, I could see the smoke rising straight up from the chimneys and, underneath the old castle on the hill, the Town Hall clock. Half an hour after stealing out I was back—after the usual falls—at my garden wall, having seen the snows on Scafell Pike and the dark rock towers above Langdale.

All these joys, and many more, are possible because I have the great good fortune to live on the edge of the Lake District. When you come to think about it our club can be said to consist of two different types of member—those who live in the district or are so near that they can see the hills every day if they choose, and those to whom the Lake Country can never be more than a place of happy holidays, even although these holidays may occur every weekend. According to the latest list of members only about 135 of us are fortunate enough to be in the first category—something

like one seventh of the total membership — so that to the vast majority of members the Lake District must appear as a happy hunting ground, far enough away to be a complete change from their normal environment, a place of wonderful memories to which they return as often as they can.

But what does the Lake District mean to a member who lives either in its midst or on its borders? Can it possibly mean the same to him as it does to the man who has planned his week-end in the hills for perhaps months in advance, who leans out of his carriage window somewhere north of Carnforth hoping to catch his first glimpse of the fells? I can remember, during a long exile from the district, looking out for the first limestone outcrops which told me that industrial Lancashire was behind, and when I reached Levens Bridge I used to feel I was home again. Then, further on, there were the first views of Windermere, the glimpse, from near the Lowwood Hotel of the Langdale Pikes, looking surprisingly jagged, the sight of old, lichen covered, dry stone walls, perhaps a few Herdwicks browsing among the boulders, and, when one stopped to fill up with petrol or tobacco, the old familiar dialect.

I can remember how I used to count the days before the chosen week-end, listen anxiously to weather forecasts, check up my equipment over and over again, and read up the climbs we had planned to do until I knew the descriptions by heart. Lite was a series of exciting week-ends strung together with long days of almost unbearable boredom in between.

For 14 years the Lake District was a dream country anything from 70 to a few thousand miles away. Sometimes I could go back there for a quick week-end, but always there was the sad drive southwards in the evenings with a last glance back from the top of Bannerigg at the purpling hills backed by the setting sun.

When I came back again a few years ago—for good I hope—I wondered whether the old, nostalgic love would fade, and for a little time I felt almost shy of taking up the old familiar threads again, lest they should wither and snap in my hands.

Naturally, much of the old excitement has gone, but something else has taken its place. I no longer count the days to the week-end nor memorise the descriptions of climbs, but it is quite remarkable how the well known scenes still retain their charm. I suppose I travel beside the waters of Windermere at least four



SALVING HOUSE FROM MAIN ROAD



H. P. Spilbury

SALVING HOUSE, BACK VIEW



SALVING HOUSE FROM MAIN ROAD



H. p. Spilsbri

SALVING HOUSE, BACK VIEW

or five times every week—sometimes a dozen times—yet the other morning the almost hackneyed view across the lake was so breathtaking I had to stop and feast my eyes upon it for five minutes. It was early morning, and the water so calm that a bird alighting on the surface would have ruined the effect. A shadowy mist was hanging over the mere and through a gap in the slowly drifting curtain you could see the sun glinting on the distant rock turrets above Langdale.

Yes, the Lake Country is just as lovely even if seen every day, and there are so many sensations, experiences and sights to be enjoyed, so much knowledge to be won and discoveries to be made, besides the basic pleasures of climbing and fell walking. When I was an exile from my native Furness Fells the mountains meant everything, but nowadays, although rock climbing is just as attractive, there is so much else to enjoy—foxhunting on a crisp winter's morning, a green sports field in a hollow of the fells, the wrestling, the hound trails, the fell racing, the old Grasmere dialect plays (now, alas, only a memory) the sheepdog trials, the country dancing on a sunlit lawn of a summer's evening, the happy, colourful rushbearing festivals, the village choirs, sailing a dinghy on Windermere, ski-ing on Harter Fell, skating on moonlit Tarn Haws, joining in the choruses at the Troutbeck shepherds' meet—oh, and a hundred and one other things.

Always there is something new to learn—the ways of the raven, the peregrine and the kestrel, the life of the mountain plants and the glory of the changing colour of the trees around the old quarry, the many differences between the Herdwick, the Swaledale and the Rough Fell, the problem of the bracken marching up the fellsides and the struggles and joys in a farmer's year, the old mines long since derelict, and the miners of centuries ago, the forgotten bloomeries on the lake shore, the holes where Lanty Slee made his whisky and the old paths that Moses Rigg knew so well, the story of the rocks and the meaning of the clouds, the red deer and the fell ponies, the Stone Age axes and the old stone walls winding over the fells, the unwritten lore of a dozen ancient crafts, the old local words and their meanings, the contribution the Norsemen made—the list is endless.

To a climber who lives near the fells there is the excitement and interest of finding new crags in remote, little visited dales—perhaps not major crags, but crags unscratched and too far away

from the bars and the main roads to interest this strange new breed of mountaineers who are not interested in mountains. Without much difficulty I can think of half a dozen minor valleys in the Lake District, unmentioned in any climbing guide, where there is rock for climbing—perhaps not routes like those on the Pinnacle Face, but climbs worth doing all the same. There is one valley within a circle of 10 miles radius centred on the summit of Kirkstone Pass—I must not be more explicit for fear of giving the show away — where there is a magnificent, sensational traverse of very severe standard embracing the entire width of an unexplored crag, which is quite unlike anything elsewhere in the district, and is waiting to be led. Two of us spent many Sundays at the place without success — my leader would have fared better with another second—but as far as I know nobody else has ever been there, before or since. And there are many other possibilities, even in the once very popular Conistone area. The lovely, unspoiled Deepdale where the buzzards soar was almost completely unknown to climbers until very recently, although one of the crags is only a few yards away from the walkers' route over Fairfield, and the perfect Vale of Newlands was surprisingly neglected until Eel Crags was opened up.

And then there are the characters of the district—the little old cobbler stolidly knocking nails into hikers' boots, who has climbed Liathach on a winter's day, seen three Brocken Spectres and knows the fells better than I know my back garden, the tough rock climber from one of the inner dales who knows and loves the birds, the flowers and the trees as well as the scholar knows his books, the lively old rascal still hunting at 80 and the quaint little man in an old straw hat who has seen 80 Ambleside rushbearings, the very old gentleman with the silvery hair, the light step and the courtly manners enjoying himself with the youngsters at the folk dancing, the famous general in charge of the turnstile, the foxhunter with more successes than John Peel, the expert on making shepherds' sticks and the man who makes violins, the dalesmen showing me where the fox cubs had danced and waiting with guns at the ready for the terriers to bolt the fox from the borran below Esk Buttress, the rough, farmer's lad with the lovely, tenor voice at the shepherds' meet sing-song, the inborn artistry of the little lad of eight at the stone walling contest, and a hundred more.

There is so much to see in a Lakeland year when the fells are all around you—little things which may be missed when one is in the district for rock climbing alone. To say the fells look different every day is not an outworn platitude but a wonderful truth which the resident will notice if he has the eyes to see. And there is so much to learn—facts, background, history, weather and nature lore—that none of us will ever know the whole.

At random I dip into my notes of a Lakeland year seen from the inside, and the memories come quickly flooding back. There was the stolen hour of ski-ing on a January afternoon, with the sun sinking down towards the sea, the estuary dancing in the distant sunshine, and the old grey town smoking in the valley at our feet. Then, a day or two later, a chat with the old waller, kneeling in the snow to finish off his prize-winning section of wall at the local competitions, and, on the last day of the month the sight for five long minutes of an arrogant fox, taking a leisurely stroll across his homeland fells, and, the same afternoon, the red deer climbing out of Riggindale on to High Street and the black-maned, shaggy fell ponies quietly grazing just below the 2,500 feet contour line. In February I remember the quarrymen opening up the old quarry among the larches and the silver birch which Lanty Slee knew so well and the shrill whirr of the diamond cutter as they rived the lovely sea green slate—the best, they say, in England. I remember the day when two of us found the site of the old smuggler's still deep down in the darkness, and the thrill when we discovered the ash from his fires, the bits of old barrel hoop, and even a piece of his clay pipe. The same month there were the merry sounds of the tree felling and hedge laying as well as the lorry drivers marooned in their cabs at night in the snows on Shap Fells. March brought the first lambs in the southern dales, the bird nesters secretly combing the crags for ravens' eggs, the practice hound trails on the lower fells, cheerful 12 year olds handling tractor ploughs at the local competitions, and a terrible battle between two game terriers and a most determined old badger. In April there was the glory of the damson blossom on a thousand trees in the Lyth Valley and, in May, the early morning fox hunts, fishing for char on Coniston Water and sailing a dinghy on Windermere with loose jib sheets and a limp racing flag on a calm evening perfect for everything except sailing.

Then June and the lazy, communal clipping with the country

meals in the kitchen, and July with the folk dance festival, the sheep dog trials, a visit to the stone axe " factory " and another to the radar station on the top of Great Dun Fell, and the joy of a bathe on the hottest day of the year in the deepest pool in Eskdale. And so the year goes on—August and the rushbearing with the television cameras and old Joe Grizedale in his 50 years' old straw hat, Dog Day at Patterdale with the sheep dogs, the terriers and the trail hounds as well as the fancy shepherds' sticks. Grasmere, with the fell races, the brave music, the wrestling and a hundred familiar faces, and September with the sheep brought down for the dipping, and the huntsman out again in his bright red coat. October brings the colours, the bracken harvest, small boys already hauling bonfire material along the lanes and perhaps an exploration of the old barytes mine. In November we talk sheep at the shepherds' meet and sing 'The Mardale Hunt' at the tatie-pot dinner, and, as the year finishes, we may be skating round the frozen tarn which five minutes earlier had borne the weight of a fleeing fox, and, nearer the edge, the scurrings of a frightened mountain mouse.

A thousand sights, adventures and discoveries in a single year—and a thousand more next year if we care to seek them out—with enough new beauty to last for a lifetime. The nearer one can live to the centre of Lake District life the more worth while the search for beauty; the nearer one is to the hills, the lovelier they appear. How fortunate, those who live within the shadow of the fells. What a heritage to guard and to share.

A PENNINE FARM

Walter Annis

We visited Birkdale during our attack on the Pennine twenty-fivers. We felt it was too much like work to do all five in one day so we looked on the map for somewhere to sleep. 'Birdie' appears specially designed for this as it is about two miles north-east of Mickle Fell, about four miles from High Cup Nick and one from Cauldron Snout, and it stands beside Maize Beck at 1,534 feet—surely the highest inhabited farmstead in England?

Maps are crowded with associations, and vague ideas began to form. One concerned a remote farm in Upper Teesdale noted for its hospitality to Pennine Ramblers. Another was a half-remembered article in the *Westmorland Gazette* at the time of the last election, about people from the far extremities of the county beyond the Pennine watershed being taken by taxi all the way round Barnard Castle and Brough, to vote in Appleby! Accordingly I wrote to 'The Farmer, Birkdale,' etc., hoping there was someone who would answer to that description, and asked for accommodation for three for a couple of nights. In due course I received a favourable reply, yet with an understanding that one of us should be willing to sleep on the floor. I felt J. could do that and accepted promptly.

Regarding it now as being all arranged, I put it out of mind until a few days before we were due to go and then discovered I had been much too sanguine about it. My idea was to take in Cross Fell, both Dun Fells and Knock Fell on the way to Birkdale, and I found we could not do it in a day because we could not get near the foot of Cross Fell earlier than late afternoon and this only on Tuesdays, whereas we were due at Birkdale on a Thursday. Consequently, we set out on Tuesday hoping to find beds elsewhere and were fortunate to get good, reasonable accommodation at Dufton Post Office.

On Wednesday we did the four northern fells. We endured two hours of biting north-east wind and driving rain while we were on the ridge and got rather wet but dried out on the way down. As the Eden Valley enjoyed perfect summer weather all day, we appear to have been in a partly developed helm wind. The complete phenomenon would have been more interesting and probably little more uncomfortable. On a fine day there are excellent views from this ridge; otherwise the walk is somewhat ordinary unless you have an affection for bog-trotting. You are

between two worlds: below your right hand are the lush, easy meadows of the Eden but behind the ridge is the stark Pennine silence, the endless miles of blanket-bog, dreary and featureless, cold in a storm, sombre at any time, home of red grouse and hare; yet a wonderful place for a stout heart and stout boots. But it lacks the inspiration of the water which illumines the Lakeland view.

The following morning was very warm as we walked up to High Cup Nick by a pleasant grass road, with many a halt to admire the view of the Lake mountains and to identify familiar peaks from an unfamiliar angle.

Once round the shoulder of the fell we came in sight of the great Whin Sill, unique and full of interest to the geologically minded if not to the climber, and paused for refreshment on its brink at the Nick. Equally interesting is the nearest part of Maize Beck where it appears to be liable to imminent capture by High Cup Gill and flows through a miniature ravine in the limestone. Its acid, peaty water has stained the limestone black and burnished it like marble. The fossils, however, have been largely unaffected by the colouring and stand out beautifully on the dark background like jewels on velvet. We lost some time here, pleasantly lazing, paddling and hammering, so decided to omit Mickle Fell for that day. With our eyes on the gently sloping heather, hot and dusty, which separated us from its summit, we were by no means loath to accept postponement and to press on towards our dinner.

Birkdale belongs to Appleby Castle and remains, an anachronism, in Westmorland for its affinities are all with Teesdale down which march Durham and Yorkshire. Its cheerful, hardy tenants are a young couple with three small children. They moved in last winter in deep snow with the two smallest children in a pram and the eldest, a young lady of almost three years, walking. Adjoining it is a similar farmstead occupied by a cheerful hermit. Together they make a bright green oasis patterned with limestone walls amid the encroaching heather. In the few meadows are exactly three trees; two sycamores near the buildings and, across the fields, a dying ash. Firewood is scarcer than winter pasture. Some hundreds of sheep range the moors and a few bullocks share the meadows with one milking cow and some rams being groomed for the Show. There is no arable land, no flower or kitchen garden. Snow lies long and

deep and fruit blossom is certain to be nipped by spring frosts. Yet the valley hereabout is a botanical paradise; the home of many scarce alpine plants and especially of spring gentians—a flora the Lakes can by no means match.

Normal approach is from Langdon Beck along a roughly-metalled moorland road to Cow Green Farm three miles away. From this road, there is a footpath over the heather and peat. This is usually travelled on foot, less frequently on horseback, for shopping and the like fifteen miles away in Middleton. Pity the poor postman and the District Nurse from Dufton who first must drive all the way round Stainmore to visit this remotest family in the parish. A tractor can be coaxed over this route after a spell of fine weather. Coal, firewood and provisions, feeding stuff, fertilizer and furniture are deposited at Cow Green. Their final transportation presents a very serious problem in wet or snowy weather. On the window-sill is a notice: "TEA." I thought this odd until I realised its accuracy. It would indeed be difficult to provide "TEAS" for the hundreds of walkers who pass by every year along the Pennine Way.

The continued existence of this marginal farming outpost is a monument to the virile folk who created it — probably the monks of Fountains Abbey—and to those who have followed and still maintain it. To my knowledge, it has no counterpart in the Lake District. The closest resemblance is with Skiddaw House but this is more accessible. We greatly enjoyed our stay though the accommodation, necessarily, has its limitations. We secured Micklc Fell for our bag by braving the Warcop artillery and the guns of the grouse-shooters, and potted and scrambled round Cauldron Snout. J. in particular, who had begun each night on the floor yet had somehow gravitated (or levitated?) into the bed, was desperately sorry to leave. But we tore ourselves away early on Saturday morning and made a forced march to Langdon Beck where we caught the bus—the 'Tees' le Queen '—to High Force for its scenery and then Middleton for its aliments. Thence home by way of Barnard Castle and Appleby.

It was a most interesting trip, largely over new ground. P. and J. had not been enthusiastic to start with. We had just spent a few lovely days at Birkness, and in their opinion the Pennines were a very poor substitute for the Lakes. Nevertheless, they enjoyed it immensely.

BICYCLE MOUNTAINEERING

Donald Atkinson

It was a day in late November, 1952, when I found myself with my bicycle 'Flossie' outside the railway station at Bolzano. The man in the tourist enquiry office had just assured me that the Tonale Pass was still open. I had already come along the Rhine Valley from Basle to Winterthur, and then by Wil and the Wildhaus Pass to Feldkirch in Austria. On the next section I had met the first deep snow of the winter, and had been snowed up for a week on the Arlberg. By the time I had reached Innsbruck the snow lay thick in the streets and ski-ing conditions above the town were excellent. The sleet which fell on the way over Brenner was soon succeeded by frost and snow, but with the descent into Italy to a mere 1,000 feet above sea level, I arrived at Bolzano on dry roads and through green countryside. So that it was with great relief that I received the agent's information regarding the Tonale Pass, as the next section had promised to be the toughest of my journey through Western Europe.

'Flossie' was of Swiss manufacture — a heavyweight among bicycles, she was not correspondingly robust. She boasted hub brakes—though they were nothing to boast about—and a unique 3-speed gear. To change gear it was necessary to dismount and loosen the rear wheel, to enable a smaller or larger sprocket to be engaged. This rather laborious process was only worth while in the case of the long ascents and descents of the Alpine passes. The dynamo had a tendency to play a tune on the front wheel when switched on and this was augmented by a very annoying squeak from the crank. Despite these faults and foibles, however, she carried myself and a mass of gear consisting of heavy rucksack, pack-frame and skis, over a thousand miles of mountain pass, valley and plain.

My bed that night was a bale of hay at a farm some 25 kilometres south of Bolzano. The farmer insisted that I should first share a meal with his family and see his wine cellar, of which he was justly proud. The family bade me a very friendly farewell in the morning as I left in the direction of Trento. My road, however, did not go as far as that town, but branched northwards again at Mezzolombardo onto country roads. The very rough surfaces immediately caused 'Flossie' to begin a chattering complaint; the sum of the area of the potholes must surely have

exceeded the total area of the road, and I was almost glad when the steepening gradient forced me to start walking. I was soon joined by a young priest, and we walked and chatted together over many miles of winding road towards Cles. We conversed on varied topics in a mixture of languages, and I was to discover that I had now left the German-speaking South Tyrol and the people here spoke only Italian. By nightfall I had already cycled for some hours again on frozen snow and finally reached Ossana before weariness forced me to stop for the night.

In the normal way I was wearing two or three of everything and must have looked very unlike the genuine cyclist of the open road. For several days now, however, I had been so warm as to cycle without my windsmock and jerseys. It came as a bombshell then, when two Carabinieri stopped me to announce that the pass was closed. It seemed that I had been misinformed in Bolzano after all, and that I had already come over nearly forty miles of very difficult roads and climbed 3,000 feet only to find this route impassable. This news stopped me in my tracks and I had to consider it quite a while before coming to a decision. I thought, perhaps rather optimistically, that the notice 'Passo Chiuso' might be somewhat exaggerated, and that it probably did not apply to bicycles. I decided that the unknown difficulties ahead were preferable to the known ones of the return.

The hard packed snow was still fit to ride on when I left the village, but my high hopes of a tolerable crossing were soon dashed when I arrived at the first avalanche. It was piled six feet high over 20 yards of road, and with the warm sun it was not quite as solid as treacle. To drag my heavyweight 'Flossie' and her load through it was a desperate undertaking indeed. I paused again to take stock of my position. High on a thoroughly Dlocked pass, with a heavily laden cycle, this was without doubt unusual to say the least of it. Had there been time to spare to appreciate the countryside mine would certainly have been an enviable lot. There was more snow than we ever get in the Lake District, and many good ski slopes. The Brenta and Ortler groups of peaks were close at hand.

My wandering imagination was interrupted as one of the fir trees unloaded its snow to shatter into a million sparkling crystals against the lower branches. There was still a height of about 2,000 feet to cover, and I had passed the limit of the snow plough's operations. It was fairly obvious that there would be

many similar and bigger avalanche heaps on the way ahead. On the other hand, I argued—the weather was good and there was no danger of further avalanches coming down; I had my skis, furthermore, and could at the worst carry 'Flossie' and gear. In this way, and goaded by a streak of stubbornness, I talked myself into continuing.

The heaps of avalanche debris interrupted the surface of the road now with monotonous regularity, and made this part of the journey like a huge natural switchback. Presently I found that the only way to progress was on my skis, carrying alternately my load and 'Flossie' on the pack-frame in a laborious shuttle service up the pass. There was a group of Italian roadmen having their lunch by the roadside, and the spectacle of my sweating figure ski-ing up the pass with a bicycle on my back naturally caused a great deal of amusement. They were very friendly nevertheless, and each insisted on giving me some food. One of the party even went to bring up my pack from my last halting place, while the rest of us made attempts at conversation. A very bewhiskered jovial character tried, with the help of gestures and his meagre German, to tell me something; the others seeing my blank look tried to make me understand in Italian. By the frequent use of the word 'maquina' (snow plough) I gathered eventually that the pass was to be opened by snow plough in two days time, and that the other side was already open. This was good news, but I resolved to push on as far as possible without waiting for the plough. This Juggernaut of a machine came up in fact later the same afternoon. Roaring and cleaving its way through the deep avalanche heaps, it would chop up all but the largest branches in the debris and hurl everything, in a thirty feet high fountain of white, clear of the road.

That night I discovered a very comfortable cave near the road, and despite the intense cold outside the inside temperature seemed to be quite good. I thought 'What a splendid place for a camp fire' and in my mind's eye I could already see a huge meal cooking there. Alas! it was not to be. My pockets contained many matches, but all were safety matches, and I had no box on which to strike them.

The morning brought another glorious day, and I was able to delay my start until I had made up for the meal that I had missed. There was no difficulty about getting a fire going this time, as I had obtained some of the more practicable type of

matches from a passing road worker. I had a substantial breakfast, and thus fortified, I had crossed the 6,200 feet summit in two hours and was in the saddle again for the first time in three days. Riding down the pass towards Edolo over hard packed snow, I glanced back to the summit receding into the distance, and was thankful to leave that episode behind. My road now lay through the lovely little town of Edolo and over Col d'Aprica. In terms of effort this meant a descent from an altitude of 6,200 feet to a mere 1,000 feet and then back up to 4,500 feet. The long climb started immediately on leaving Edolo, and the view back towards the town in the evening sunlight is one that I will long remember. I looked over the green fields and white-washed houses of the valley to the great rock gorges of the Tonale Pass. The precipitous forests and immense buttresses led the eye upwards through the green, the dark shadows, and the light greys higher until all was white, and the final snow cones of Monte Mandrone and Monte Adamello shone in the day's last rays of sunshine.

That night I stayed at a peasant's house on the other side of Aprica. The old couple who lived there kept poultry under the table in the living room. This was an arrangement which I had already seen several times in the Alps, and if not very hygienic, it was certainly most practical, considering the extreme cold of an alpine winter. The eggs moreover were close at hand for meal-times.

'Flossie's' brakes, which were not very efficient at the best of times, came in for much hard use during the thousands of feet descent to Tirano. It was necessary to stop several times to allow the brake drums to cool and my cramped fingers to rest. At last we came to the frontier at Tirano and entered Switzerland again. As usual the customs officers were not at all interested in my luggage and only mildly so in 'Flossie.' So in a very short time after descending Aprica at 4,000 feet I was climbing towards the highest pass of my journey, the Bernina. It was my intention to go up as far as possible on the bicycle, and then to take the train over to Pontresina; so when I arrived at the beautiful little lake of Poschiavo it seemed that I had gone far enough for the day.

I stayed the night with the village schoolmaster and his family. We had a splendid evening together, and how I enjoyed the experience and privilege of joining their cosy little family circle

even for so limited a time. Though my new found friend, Giovanni, and I could converse in German, there was much amusement all round when I attempted to put a few words of Italian together for the benefit of his mother, his wife or his 'bambinos.' They were all very interested in our royal family and Giovanni was overjoyed when I left some illustrated papers with him when I set out in the morning.

The train journey to the top of the Bernina Pass provided a welcome change from my countless hours in the saddle. Looking out from the cosy electrically heated comfort of my railway coach, I marvelled at the succession of surprise views which constantly thrill the traveller on this steep mountain railway. One instant would find me drinking in the view of the Val Poschiavo and trying to settle in my mind which house in the village below was that of my schoolmaster friend, or perhaps just which of the valley roads I had trodden yesterday, and then the forest, a tunnel or a cutting would draw a curtain on the scene. The next instant would find me rushing to the other side of the coach to look on a baffling reversal of the same view. After several repetitions of this performance, each with some slight modification of scene, I was not sure whether this was the same valley or some other valley on the other side of the mountain range. At last the forest gave way to undulating drifted snow and the train came to a halt on the col at almost 8,000 feet. Down the other side it was my intention to continue on ski as far as Pontresina, and how glad I was to leave 'Flossie' and her load to do this part of the journey still on the train. Unencumbered, I felt as if I were floating on air as my skis swished down through the forest paths towards the valley. Happily Piz Bernina and Piz Palu were free from cloud, and the huge massif shone with quite a dazzling brilliance to thrill me as I rested near the summit lake. It was good to be alive on such a day, but I was down in Pontresina all too soon and on the road again with heavily laden bicycle.

At St. Moritz I decided to make a halt of three days, and when I started out again towards the south and Italy the *Föhn* wind was blowing. This rapidly transformed the hard packed snow surface into a thick layer of slush, and my efforts to negotiate this road on my bicycle reminded me of childhood attempts to ride on sandy beaches at the seaside. My endeavours to keep 'Flossie' going were full of thrills and spills, and my progress

was very slow. When I reached the pass I had already crossed several snow slides.

If the slush made cycling difficult, in the morning it was dangerous also, the snow being ridged as well as frozen, and the long descent from Maloja was altogether too thrilling. Presently, however, and almost imperceptibly I crossed the snow line again, and I was able to pay more attention to the splendid country through which the road led. The forest-covered slopes of Piz Duan rose directly on my left, while on my right the 11,000 feet high Cima di Castello towered above a sea of pines to great buttresses too steep to hold the snow which adorned the summit like the icing on some lavish cake.

Through the customs once more at Castasegna, I rode speedily down to the vineyards, the sun and the warmth of Lake Como. In Italy again, my travelling companions were an endless succession of advertisement hoardings and the murmur of the mountain stream gave way to the incessant and impatient honking of Italian motor horns. The valley was widening. The mountains over the lake were smaller than those of yesterday. As I glanced back up the great valley to the splendid peaks at the pass I realised that they were now almost lost in the distance and I thought for a moment of the toils, the trials and the joys of the last few weeks.

I was now heading for the Mediterranean.

CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

A. R. Dolphin

The post-war stream of new routes has become a flood and exploration is proceeding apace in all districts. It has been necessary, therefore, to omit a considerable number of the less important climbs that have been recorded, particularly on Raven Crag, Langdale and in Borrowdale.

I am indebted to members of the Carlisle Mountaineering Club for descriptions of the Borrowdale and Buttermere Routes.

WASDALE

SCAFELL EAST BUTTRESS

PEGASUS 300 feet. Very severe. First ascent 17th May, 1952.
A.R.D., P. J. Greenwood. Starts at about the same point as Morning Wall.

- (1) 45 feet. Follow the leftward gangway immediately beneath the one used for Morning Wall to a stance and belay beneath the 'sentry box' on Morning Wall.
- (2) 80 feet. Traverse round the corner to the left with the hands on good holds and continue the traverse into a very steep, open gully, just above where it merges into a large overhang extending to the bottom of the crag (running belays). A six-foot chimney gives access to a steep gangway running up to the left. This is followed until it ends in a vertical corner which forms the right-hand edge of a grassy groove. To enter the groove a rope through a piton was used to maintain the balance while handholds in the groove were cleaned out. The groove is ascended for a few feet to a rather poor stance and belay, the latter being improved by jamming a piton hammer.
- (3) 45 feet. The grassy corner above is ascended until a steep V-groove is reached. This is ascended with difficulty (a sling on a spike of rock forming a useful foothold) to a good ledge and belay below an overhang.
- (4) 25 feet. The overhang forms a cave on the right. This is ascended and left by means of good holds in a crack on the right wall. Stance and belay adjacent Morning Wall.
- (5) 35 feet. Traverse diagonally upwards to the left, across the steep wall on magnificent holds. Stance and good belay below a crack.
- (6) 25 feet. The crack is climbed on good holds to the left-hand side of the amphitheatre below the last pitch of Morning Wall.
- (7) 45 feet. Finish up Morning Wall—move up to the left and step across the gap into an easy chimney which is ascended. A cave-pitch completes the route.

HELL'S GROOVE. 265 feet. Very severe. First ascent 24th May, 1952. A.R.D., P. J. Greenwood (alternate leads). Starts about mid-way between Morning Wall and Slime Chimney and is an obvious chimney or deep groove protected at the foot by a short overhanging wall.

- (1) 30 feet. Climb an easy slab to a stance and belay below an overhanging crack.
- (2) 25 feet. Ascend the crack with difficulty and enter the main groove. Stance and thread belay.
- (3) 80 feet. A magnificent pitch. Climb on to a sloping ledge in the corner of the groove. Pull out to the right into a crack and ascend to a 2-foot wide, but sloping, ledge. Continue up to a similar ledge, from the right-hand end of which a vertical 10-foot wall gives access to a crack which gives good holds for the ascent to the ledge above the third pitch of Pegasus. The final move on to the ledge is rather awkward. 2 pitons were used as running belays on this pitch and removed after use.
- (4), (5), (6), (7) As for the correspondingly-numbered pitches of Pegasus.

SCAFELL CRAG

SLAB AND GROOVE 220 feet. Very severe. First ascent 28th August, 1948- R- J- Birkett, L.M. Starts up a big slab capped by an overhang on the left-hand side of Moss Gliyll, opposite Tennis Court Wall.

- (1) 120 feet. Climb up groove on right-hand side of slab for 20 feet, when a line of holds leads across to left into a shallow depression at the foot of a thin crack. This is climbed until it is possible to step into a pocket hold near the arête, then follow the edge for a few feet and traverse left into a groove, landing on a small, grass-capped pedestal. Climb the groove until level with a recess on the left, then make a long step to the right and go straight up the wall into a corner (block belays). This corner is immediately above the overhangs that cap the starting slab.
- (2) 80 feet. Up groove to stance and belay at top.
- (3) 20 feet. Easy climbing to top of crag.

PIKES' CRAG

MARE'S NEST BUTTRESS 250 feet. Severe. First ascent 14th September, 1952. D. C. Birch, Miss J. Lovell. A route up the buttress on the left of Wall and Crack, visiting a pinnacle (the Mare's Nest) en route. Follows the middle of the overhangs and then slightly right to ledge level with pinnacle and on right of it. From here the ridge is easily attained and a descent can be made to visit the pinnacle before proceeding up the interesting ridge to the summit of Pulpit Rock. To keep to the ridge one must make a short abseil of about 15 feet to a gap.

ENNERDALE

PILLAR ROCK

LIZA GROOVES 410 feet. Very severe. First ascent 26th May, 1952.
D. Hopkin, J. N. Mather. Starts from the Green ledge about 50 paces west of North Climb in a prominent bilberry corner.

- (1) 35 feet. Up the crack on the right till it is possible to traverse to the crack on the left, which is climbed to a large ledge.
- (2) 25 feet. Scramble up grassy ledges to a corner.
- (3) 25 feet. Ascend the steepening corner. Belay on right.
- (4) 35 feet. The steep crack in the corner on the left is climbed to large ledges.
- (5) 50 feet. Straight up the V-groove to a chockstone belay on the right.
- (6) 25 feet. Over the overhanging chockstone and up grass to a belay on the wall above.
- (7) 30 feet. Climb the steep wall to the left of a steep groove into a small corner, then up to good ledges. Belay 8 feet above.
- (8) 15 feet. Up the wall above to a grassy recess. Belay.
- (9) 45 feet. Up the corner, then left across a blackened mossy slab till a difficult move leads into the groove on the left, which is followed to grassy ledges. Belays.
- (10) 25 feet. Traverse leftwards and up to more grass ledges.
- (11) 35 feet. Up the V-groove above to a spike belay.
- (12) 25 feet. Follow the steepening crack above. Stance and pinnacle belay overlooking Stony Gully.
- (13) 40 feet. Up the steep wall above to finish at the summit cairn on Low Man.

ESKDALE

ESK BUTTRESS

TRESPASSER GROOVE 445 feet. Very severe. First ascent 6th September, 1952. A.R.D., D. Hopkin (Non-alternate leads)
Starts as for Bower's Route.

- (1) 100 feet. Pitch 1. Bower's Route.
- (2) 35 feet. Pitch 2. Bower's Route.
- (3) 50 feet. Pitch 3. Bower's Route to stance and belay at right-hand end of large slab.
- (4) 90 feet. Move left for a few feet along a grass ledge and then ascend the slab diagonally left to enter the crack in the corner. Climb the crack into a shallow niche and continue over a bulge into another niche. The bulge above is overcome by bridging followed by a pull-out on to the left edge. A tiny stance is reached with a spike belay above.

- (5) 40 feet. A ledge on the right wall is attained by a mantelshelf. The wall above is climbed with difficulty to a good flake where a traverse right leads to grass ledge and belays (Direct Route, Great Central Climb).
- (6) 40 feet. The corner on the left is climbed to the overhang. A long and awkward step is made out to the right when good holds lead up to ledge and belay below Frankland's Finish to Bower's Route (The Waiting Room).
- (7) 50 feet \ Frankland's Finish to Bower's Route.
 (8) 40 feet j

LANGDALE

BOWFELL, NORTH BUTTRESS

The North Buttress is the name given to the steep but broken buttress above and to the right of the crag of Cambridge Climb. The main features of the crag are three open grooves.

SIAMESE CHIMNEYS 220 feet. Severe. First ascent 23rd August, 1952.

D. Hopkin, A.R.D., P. J. Greenwood. Starts up the obvious chimney, 50 feet below and to the left of Sword of Damocles.

- (1) 60 feet. Steep but easy rocks lead into the chimney which is then ascended until a large overhang bars progress (running belay). Step right on to a slab which is climbed to a sloping grass ledge and belay.
- (2) 80 feet. Move round to the right into a triangular corner which is climbed and left via the narrow crack on the left. Move rightwards and climb easy rocks below a steep wall to stance and belay below a large chimney.
- (3) 80 feet. Ascend the chimney until it peters out, avoiding huge detached blocks near the top. Easy climbing leads to the right to ledge and belay below a final buttress.
- (4) 30 feet. Climb the buttress, moving to the right to small stance and belay.
- (5) 3° ^{rect} - Ascend directly above the belay to a small crack which is climbed to the top of the crag.

SWORD OF DAMOCLES 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent 23rd August,

1952. P. J. Greenwood, D. Hopkin, A.R.D. (alternate leads). Starts below the right-hand groove. Scramble up broken rocks to belay at its foot.

- (1) 30 feet. The groove is entered by an upward hand-traverse from the left, and easier climbing then leads to stance and belay behind a huge pinnacle.
- (2) 30 feet. Climb the groove on the right until a long stride can be made to the right to attain a ledge on the edge of the buttress. Belay.
- (3) 15 feet. Climb straight up until a semi-hand-traverse can be made across the groove to a sitting position and belay.

- (4) 45 feet. The groove above is ascended to a large detached flake (The Sword) which is used first as a running belay and then as the only means of upward progress until a very awkward move below a steep chimney is followed by a delicate step round to the right. The situation eases and a stance and good belay are soon reached.
- (5) 60 feet. The very steep flake crack immediately above the belay is climbed by layback to a resting place and running belay. Continue up the crack until a move right leads to easier climbing and then to the top of the crag.

RAVEN CRAG, FAR EAST BUTTRESS

THE FAR EAST TRAVERSE 300 feet. Very severe. First ascent 9th February, 1952- P- J- Greenwood, D. Gray, H. Drasdo. Start as for Pianissimo, at extreme left of the crag, to the

right of a tree.

- (1) 45 feet. Climb up to and through the tree where a short crack leads to the edge of the arête. Traverse right on small holds and attain a small ledge by means of a mantelshelf. Belay, for line, 10 feet higher (part of Pianissimo).
- (2) 65 feet. Step up from the ledge and move round to the right to a triangular nook. Descend a few feet and continue the traverse with difficulty across an open groove until a line of good holds is reached, leading to the edge of a heather-filled gully. Cross the gully and climb over a large block to a stance and holly-tree belay.
- (3) 20 feet. Move round the corner to the right to a ledge and tree belay (top of Pitch 2, Babylon).
- (4) 40 feet. Descend on to the great slab below the large final overhang. After a long stride the traverse, delicate at first, leads to a good running belay and is continued until a diagonal ascent leads delicately to a holly-tree on the edge of a vegetatious open groove to a tree belay (top of Pitch 2, Nineveh).
- (5) 25 feet. Step down the groove and move out on to the right wall and a detached flake is used to descend into a small tree and so to a grass ledge (Pitch 2, Nineveh, in reverse).
- (6) 35 feet. Move along the grass ledge to the right and climb through a holly-tree to a small sloping ledge beyond, when a diagonal ascent leads to a good ledge and small belay below a crack (top of Pitch 2, Damascus).
- (7) 30 feet. The crack is climbed mainly by layback until a short slab on the right leads to the large ledge on Peascod's Route (Pitch 3, Damascus).
- (6) 25 feet. Climb the crack in the corner to a small ledge and large flake belay beneath the overhang (Pitch 4, Peascod's Route).
- (9) 15 feet. Traverse right and up to the top.

WHITE GHYLL

SHIVERING TIMBER 125 feet. Very severe. First ascent 16th August, 1952. A.R.D., J.W. Starts just to the right of Garden Path and takes an obvious groove containing a holly-tree.

- (1) 40 feet. Climb a short wall to enter a scoop and leave it on the left. Scramble up to stance and belay on the immediate right of the sentry box of Garden Path. This pitch is well-scratched.
- (2) 50 feet. The vertical groove above, with a holly-tree in the middle, is entered by an awkward two-step movement from the left to overcome the initial overhang. The groove is then climbed to the top, followed by easy climbing to stance and good belay below an impending wall.
- (3) 35 feet. The overhanging wall is ascended on good holds to the top.

PAVEY ARK

CHEQUER BUTTRESS 220 feet. Very severe. First ascent 20th April, 1952. A.R.D., A. D. Brown. Starts at the bottom of Rake End Chimney.

- (1) 45 feet. Move up and round to the left to enter a steep vegetative groove. This is ascended to small stance with spike belay 10 feet higher.
- (2) 30 feet. Traverse across a steep wall to the right and make some difficult moves up the right-hand edge overlooking the chimney until a traverse round a large flake can be made to enter Rake End Chimney at stance and belay.
- (3) 55 feet. Traverse back left round the flake and ascend into a shallow groove in the centre of the face which is followed to a tiny ledge (part of Girdle Traverse). Carry on straight upwards to a ledge with tree belay on left.
- (4) 20 feet. The edge of the steep slab on the right of the tree is followed to grass stance and good belay above the tree.
- (5) 45 feet. Grassy scrambling leads to the foot of a narrow, overhanging crack straight above. This is ascended by hand-jamming until a pull-out to the right can be made to a stance and belay.
- (6) 25 feet. Step back left and climb steep, interesting rock to the top.

EASED ALE

DEER BIELD CRAG

DUNMAIL CRACKS 170 feet. Very severe. First ascent 24th August, 1952. P. J. Greenwood, A.R.D. (alternate leads), V. N. Stevenson. A companion route to Deer Bield Crack, taking the easiest line up the left-hand corner of the large amphitheatre. Starts at an embedded pinnacle 30 feet left of the start of the Crack.

- (1) 55 feet. Climb the steep wall to a small stance and running belay in the groove. Move out on to the left wall and climb with difficulty to a short crack which leads to a good ledge and large flake belays. Climb over the flakes to another good ledge beyond.

- (2) 2n feet. A crack at the left end of the ledge leads to a chockstone belay and small ledge on the right.
- (3) 15 feet. The crack in the corner is climbed on good holds to stance and belays. The left-hand side of the crack is formed by a large detached block and should be treated with care.
- (4) 80 feet. The steep crack in the corner is climbed until a move right leads to a small ash-tree (running belay). Continue up the corner via a large flake until a move right leads to a dead tree and so to the top of the crag.

THIRLMERE

CASTLE ROCK OF TRIERMALN

HARLOT'S FACE 230 feet. Very severe. First ascent 26th June, 1949.
CLIMB R. J. Birkett, L.M. This route goes up the middle of the buttress to the right of May Day Cracks. Starts 60 feet to the right of Overhanging Bastion. There is a small ash-tree six feet up.

- (1) 60 feet. Climb up and traverse left behind the tree into a corner, up this and left again to pinnacle leaning against the rock face. Climb to the top of this and step up on to a long, narrow ledge with a small yew-tree at its extreme right-hand end. Belays.
- (2) 60 feet. Up the overhanging crack behind the yew-tree until it is possible to step out to the nose on the right and ascend with difficulty to a shallow recess (flake for running belay a few feet to the right). Continue straight up to ledge and belays.
- (i) 3° feet. Climb behind the yew-tree at the top left corner of the ledge into a crevasse and step into the bottom of a chimney at its left-hand end (belays).
- (4) 80 feet. Climb the chimney to a chockstone and then break out on to the left wall which is climbed to where it merges into the face above; then straight up to the top of the crag.

NORTH CRAG 250 feet. Very severe. First ascent 7th September,
ELIMINATE ¹⁹⁵²- H. Drasdo, D. Gray. The climb starts in the commencing groove of the Gossard and continues up the steep face above. The difficulty is very sustained in the upper part and the exposure is considerable.

- (1) no feet. Climb the groove at the start of Gossard to where a traverse right is made on that climb and instead continue leftwards to a point on the edge of the slab. Step up and move slightly right to gain the big terrace. Belay on wall.
- (2) 30 feet. Step left and climb up easily behind the big pinnacle to the large yew-tree.
- (3) 30 feet. A gangway slants up the overhang behind the tree. Climb up using the tree and surmount the overhang on the left of the gangway. Swing across to the right and pull on to the ledge at the top of the gangway. Round to the right is a fine balcony with tree belays.

- (4) 80 feet. On the left is a short gangway which disappears beneath a large, but not very obvious flake. Step on to this gangway and (with difficulty) gain the crack behind the left-hand side of the flake. Layback up this to a poor resting-place at the top. Then swing down into the crack which runs round the corner on the left and follow it by an ascending hand-traverse to a small sentry-box. Above on the right is a piton to protect the last section. Climb diagonally rightwards to the corner. The difficulty relaxes after 10 feet and easier climbing leads to belays on the nose, or a tree belay 20 feet further back.

BORROWDALE

GOWDER CRAG

LODORÉ BUTTRESS 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 1952. H. Drasdo, A. Bcanland. A strenuous climb up the steep right-hand side of the face. Some way up this part of the buttress three large yew-trees will be seen, forming a triangle. The route starts in a groove directly below the left-hand and lowest of these. Cairns.

- (1) 50 feet. Up for 5 feet and on to the rib on the left, continuing across to a detached block beneath a steep, undercut groove. Move up to a magnificent handhold directly above. A standing position in the groove is then effected with difficulty. Step left, when bridging becomes possible and good holds lead to the yew-tree.
- (2) 40 feet. Move diagonally up to the right over steep grass and loose rock to a narrow terrace below a slanting chimney. Belay blocks a few feet further right.
- (3) 35 ^{feet}. From the blocks climb on to a small ledge on the right, step delicately over a perched block, then leftwards to a recess containing a withered tree.
- (4) 40 feet. Traverse with difficulty round the vertical rib on the left until it is possible to step up to easier ground on the right of a tall pinnacle. Flake belays.
- (=5) 35 feet. The deep, clean chimney on the left leads pleasantly to the top of the crag.

BUTTERMERE

MINERS' CRAG

BRONCO 315 feet. Very severe. First ascent 16th July, 1952. D. J. Wildridge, R. Wilkinson. Follows the broken-looking groove to the left of Miners' Groove, starting from cairn 4 feet to the left of the latter.

- (1) 20 feet. Ascend easy slab, moving left to spike belay beneath a bulging crack.
- (2) 40 feet. The crack is climbed direct to good stance and small, doubtful spike belay.
- (3) 30 feet. Up the groove on the left to small stance and good belay.

- (4) 55 feet. Up crack on the right. Belay at top of hard groove of Miners' Groove.
- (5) 40 feet. Move down and step on to top of overhang on left wall and continue up broken rocks to spike belay below a wall.
- (6) 60 feet. Move up on the left of some small grooves, then left and up slabs to belay on left.
- (7) 70 feet. Finish up heather-covered slabs to the top.

THE GIRDLE 1,000 feet. Very severe. First ascent 29th July,
 TRAVERSE OF 1950. W. P., S. E. Dirkin. A splendid route,
 MINERS' CRAG probably the best in the Newlands area.

Up Gully Arête; move right on to cannon of Gemini; up to Green Flake; belay on Newlands B route, then up. Descend top pitch of Rope Walk. Traverse right and up overhangs of Corona Wall. Continue-out across gully on to upper buttress. Traverse horizontally out to left to groove of Miners' Groove. Up this, and cross slab of Corkscrew to stance on ridge. Traverse out to Double Slab, up this and across to start of Jezebel. Finish up Jezebel.

BUCKSTONE HOW

CLEOPATRA 270 feet. Very severe (exposed and possibly the
 hardest route on the crag). First ascent W.P., B.
 Blake.

The climb runs up the steep wall with three sets of overhangs to the right of Honister Wall, about midway between this climb and Groove Two. A ridge leads to the first line of overhangs. Climb these direct and continue up a steep crack. An airy traverse then leads to the right to stance below a steep groove. Step back on to the face and ascend above the second lot of overhangs to small stance on the face. The wall above, which is very hard, is climbed to the third line of overhangs. Traverse left to bottomless groove, up this, then back out to stance and belay. Continue up steep groove to top of crag.

HONISTER CRAG BUTTRESS

DELILAH 185 feet. Very severe. First ascent, August, 1951,
 W.P., B. Blake. Starts at same spot as Gatesgarth
 Chimney.

- (1) 80 feet. Up to ledge on left, then up a few feet and traverse right to a long, thin crack, which is ascended. Step left and then work up and left to stance and block belay.
- (2) 105 feet. The big groove just above and to the right is climbed, with a difficult move half-way up. Above this move out on to the bulging face on the right of the groove and ascend this to the top.

KEY TO INITIALS

A. R. Dolphin.	W. Peascod
L. Muscroft	J. Wilkinson.

KINLOCHEWE, JUNE, 1952

R. T. Wilson

As Whitsuntide fell rather later than usual this year our popular Scottish meet took place in June, with the result that although we had longer days, there was much less snow in evidence. From all parts of the country the 24 members converged on Kinlochewe Hotel, where a warm welcome awaited them. In addition to four Past Presidents, we had this year's President among our company and, for some sin still unrevealed, I was appointed leader, for the third occasion, of this august band. Accommodation problems were soon solved and the customary spirit of fellowship was quickly established.

Our preliminary canter came on a morning rather dull with lowering clouds, which did not daunt our spirits however, when the majority of us went 'round the block,' officially known as the Heights of Kinlochewe. This walk of about 17 miles was most enjoyable and, incidentally, provided an interesting way of seeing Loch Fada (pronounced 'Atta' according to our Gaelic authority, F.L.C.). The other members formed three parties: Webb and Abbatt, thirsting for the tops, climbed the Slioch, some explored Glen Bannisdale, whilst Hadfield and others took cars to Grudie Bridge and walked up the Glen to Coire Mhic Fear-chair on the north side of Beinn Eighe.

The following day four cars containing 14 members left on the rough Torridon road, whilst others went towards Inver Alligin and spent the day traversing the ridge of Beinn Alligin. The four cars disgorged their passengers at Annat; here Cook was seen hurrying in the wrong direction, an anxious expression clouding his face. On enquiry it was learnt that he had forgotten his sandwiches and was in search of victuals. However, at great sacrifice, each made a contribution, with the result that he was the best fed man of the day and I am sure put on a couple of pounds weight. We immediately started through the woods, past Ben Damph House and up Coire Roill, with the normal collection of firewood at Burnett's instigation. With some regret our President denied himself a real fire, and water was quickly boiled in a 'volcano' brought by Milligan. After a pleasant walk to the head of the glen we returned by way of Loch an Eoin to Annat, where a good tea in a cottage rounded off an easy but enjoyable day.

Next morning was cold and showery with low cloud, and it

was decided to postpone the proposed assault by the whole party on Beinn Eighe. An alternative programme was quickly arranged and the majority went by bus to Achnasheen. After an hour's wait the train was taken to Achnashellach, whence by varying paths we reached Loch Coulin, and at length Kinlochewe, despite some delays and diversions at stream crossings, all getting extremely wet and weary. The capacity of the drying room was taxed to its utmost on this, our wettest, day.

Wednesday dawned cold and unpromising, and 'Operation Ben A' was again postponed, the day being devoted to one of those combined excursions which have been such a pleasant feature of the Scottish meets. The whole party left about 10-30 a.m. in six cars for Gairloch, Poolewe and Grunard Bay. During lunch here the 'volcanoes' and a real fire competed for the honour of supplying tea, the former being easy winners. After a visit to the Falls of Measach we returned by way of Garve and Achnasheen. Our early doubts about the weather proved unjustified and a perfect afternoon enabled us to enjoy an excellent outing.

Next day a more promising morning at last enabled our well laid plans for Beinn Eighe to be put into effect, and about 20 members took part in the expedition. The varied happenings of this day of sunshine and fleeting cloud can only be briefly referred to here. First, in order to avoid the long trek back on the Torridon road on our return, we organised four cars to be left there, the fifth bringing all the drivers back. Two main parties took different routes to gain the ridge, one traversing the 'pinnacles' and the other the heart-breaking screes above the Torridon road. The latter included amongst others, Hadfield, the leader and Oulton—the last would not be led but appeared to be following a path which only he and the deer knew! The two contingents foregathered on Sgurr an Fhir Duibhe, and everyone was delighted to see Hadfield reach this 3160 ft. peak only a few days before his 77th birthday. From here the more energetic made the traverse of the whole ridge and came down into Coire Mhic Fearchair, whilst others left it at points more convenient for the road—and transport. Everyone reached the hotel by degrees, thanks to the services of the car drivers, some of whom made an extra trip to pick up stragglers. The leader, re-named the Admiral, set forth after dinner with Mr. Dinely, landlord of the hotel, to the pier opposite Letterewe to make plans

for a naval expedition next day. A small deputation accompanied them to inspect the fleet.

All being organised with the exception of the weather, 19 brave members, accompanied by a gillie, set forth on Friday, 13 th June, in four row-boats, one with an outboard motor—destination the islands of Loch Maree—charted and uncharted. Our first port of call was Isle Maree. The old burial ground was inspected and the old tree trunks into which had been hammered hundreds of pennies received similar treatment from some of our more superstitious members. Lunch on the beach completed what was to be the best part of the day as rain prevented any further dallying, and the fleet, after a brief visit to Eilean Soubhain, returned to base. Those who did not venture on this expedition had Liathach for their objective. About 6-30 p.m. Preston, who was of this party, arrived at the hotel and reported that Abbatt's car had become ditched on the Torridon road some five miles from Kinlochewe. The leader and Appleyard quickly organised a salvage squad, and after considerable effort managed, with the opportune help of two Land Rovers, to get the Jaguar on the road. Abbatt and Webb, though wet and hungry, were none the worse for their adventures.

On Saturday morning all members were assembled outside the hotel for photographs. Later they split into parties, land and marine, for an attack on the Slioch. The marine party were to row across Loch Maree in order to cut out some of the level walking, but were defeated by squalls and had to return. After locating the 'leaking ferry' they crossed the river instead. Everyone had a grand day on the mountain in spite of a few snow and hail showers.

On Sunday, another stormy day, a few members decided to attend the church service but the minister did not arrive. The majority went to Applecross by car, quite a thrilling run for most of us and well remembered by all. This was Hirst's suggestion and proved a great success.

Finally, we must not forget that special thanks are due to W. E. Kendrick, our very able Meets Secretary, for the work he had put into organising the meet on our behalf. I am most grateful to the members of the meet for their generous appreciation of my willing efforts.

IN MEMORIAM

E. H. P. SCANTLEBURY, 1906-1952

Edward Hugh Pengelly Scantlebury, son of a distinguished Servant of Admiralty, Thomas Scantlebury, came to Barrow-in-Furness in July, 1900, but it was not until six years later that he began to dream of a club that should be for those who were devoted to Lakeland. He was on a visit to his father's house in N.W. London, in the Summer of 1906, and told me that friends in Barrow, Kendal and other parts of the District supported him. In November, 1906, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club was formed, and members of other mountaineering clubs received a letter asking them to become members.

The response made Scantlebury a very happy man; for he had come to the Barrow Shipyard from his apprenticeship at Fielding and Platt Ltd., Gloucester, and had not yet been accepted as a native. However, he had the strong support of many splendid friends and it was at Wastwater Hotel, on 30th March, 1907, that the first General Meeting was arranged by him. It was a disappointment to him that Ashley Abraham and John W. Robinson, could not attend as President and Vice-President. Our Honorary Members could not come, and G. H. Charter, one of our Founders, was absent. A Chairman was appointed and the meeting duly confirmed its confidence in Scantlebury and the other Founders. How well they justified that confidence! What an everlasting debt of gratitude we owe to those men of Barrow, Ulverston, Kendal, Keswick and the rest of Cumberland, Furness and Westmorland. It was their local daily effort and their unbounded practical energy which built such a firm foundation.

I hope that Charles Grayson will be happy to know that we send to him, in U.S.A., our expressions of gratitude for his work, as a Founder in daily contact with E.H.P.S. The following is an extract from Grayson's letter to me, dated 9th May, 1953:—'It seems a very long time since that Sunday—11th November, 1906—when Scanty, Craig and I had been climbing on Dow Crags. When we returned to the Sun Hotel at Coniston, for supper before train time, we started chatting about forming a Club. Gordon and Charter must have been climbing too, and were sitting at another table. We called

them over and—before train-time at 6-30—we had decided to start the F. & R.C.C. I should mention that Grayson wrote this just after the death of his wife. They were both enthusiastic mountain walkers together, and some of the older Members will remember how active she was when she was a Member of the Club. My recollection is that she joined in the second year. She resigned in 1921 when she realised that they would remain in U.S.A. Grayson has our deepest sympathy.

From a first (1906) membership of under 60, the Club became about 260 strong in under three years and—in spite of the First War—increased to nearly 450 within 13 years. Unfortunately it lost some of Scantlebury's unique help, as Editor and Secretary, after the end of 1910, but Palmer and Grayson replaced him, and Craig remained as Treasurer. Slingsby followed Seatree as President, and Colin Philip and Scantlebury became Vice-Presidents, after George Abraham and Woodhouse. His home duties and work, at the Gun Department of Vickers, Sons and Maxim, prevented his regular attendance at Meets and Dinners but indirectly he was very active in the Club's interests. Until I left for India in 1911, I was with him almost continuously, and learned then how exceptionally versatile he was. His colour and monochrome photography, water-colours and writings, his complete knowledge of the District's topography and his musical taste were his more obvious gifts. Also, he was an enthusiastic gardener, a lover of animals, a skilled mechanic, and a woodworker. The pleasure in joining him in his hobbies was enhanced by the fact that he was never satisfied with his high standards.

Although we spent much of our time in rock climbing—he trusted me in all conditions of weather and on severe climbs—there is no doubt that he took the wider view of the glories of the District. He loved roaming into unfrequented valleys, villages and woods, as well as walking over the moors and fells. When the inevitable motor invaded the District he was able to make expeditions with his wife, Nancie (née Ada Annis Normandale, of West Hartlepool) and his daughters, Jessamine and Mollie. Excepting for a few climbs at long intervals, he gave up the more difficult climbs in 1921, when he was 46 years of age. Among the many climbs we did together, those which

appeared to me as the most difficult, were: — Gimmer 'A,' in wind and rain; Great and Intermediate Gullies, Dow Crag, in winter conditions, and Keswick Brothers', Scafell. The last was a mass of ice. The one ice-axe took a dive to Hollow Stones, and fortunately attracted the attention of Gemmell and Worthington, who went again to the top of the face and lowered a rope to us, from the soft snow in the shallow finishing gully.

He was born on 16th October, 1875, at Haddenham, near Aylesbury. Although of Cornish descent, his Alpha and Omega was Lakeland; and it was his genius—in approaching so many famous mountain lovers, and in seeking the generous support given by existing clubs—which made the Fell and Rock Climbing Club an immediate success. Although our membership is now nearly 900, it is well that we should approach 1956, the Club's Jubilee year, with a proper expression of gratitude to the Alpine, the Climbers', and other Clubs which responded to Edward Scantlebury's appeal for members. I know that it would have pleased that great and generous comrade, if the Club celebrates its Jubilee by thanking those parent clubs, and by establishing some additional safeguard for the sanctity of the Lake District. On 16th December, 1952, I received a long and cheery letter from him in all the buoyancy of earlier days. He died on 17th December at the age of 77, and, like the great man that he always was, showed a sense of humour to the end. I thank all those who have helped me in this attempt to pay homage to Ted Scantlebury.

T. C. ORMISTON-CHANT.



EDWARD SCANTLEBURY.
AT TARN MOWS, NOVEMBER, 1952.



H. Coates

A WASDALE PARTY, EASTER, 1923.

Back Row—J. H. DOUGHTY, B. EDEN-SMITH, H. M. KELLY, N. L. EDEN-SMITH,
Front Row—G. S. BOWER, R. E. W. PRITCHARD, R. S. T. CHORLEY, W. EDEN-SMITH, H. COATES.

GEORGE S. BOWER, 1916—1953.

George Bower was born at Marsden, Yorkshire, in 1890. He was an Engineer by profession and a Ph.D. of London University. He married Annie, the daughter of that popular President, the late George Basterfiteld: so there was a good Fell & Rock atmosphere about his household. Throughout his life the mountains and climbing upon them were his absorbing interest, and it was just as he was preparing to leave home for a short holiday in Langdale that he was taken ill with coronary thrombosis, from which he shortly afterwards died on 7th January, 1953.

Marsden is not far from good gritstone climbing, especially at Laddow, and it seems to have been here that George Bower started rock climbing in his late teens. Coming to Barrow-in-Furness to work at Vickers Ltd., about the time of the first world war, he soon found himself among the group of strong cragsmen for whom Vickers was at that time famous. Their important technical duties in connection with the war effort ensured that a number of them should remain at the works during the war years, and in their company Bower developed into an excellent rock climber, becoming a member of our Club in 1916. By 1917 he was known as a competent leader, with a taste for attempting new routes, and in that year he added the Hawk Route to the standard climbs on Dow Crag, this being his first known new ascent.

With the end of the war many strong climbers returned from the forces and that tremendous development of rock-climbing, which has gone on ever since, commenced. George Bower played a prominent part in this. From 1919 onwards he was for a number of years recognised as an outstanding leader, and no season passed until about 1928 without his adding important scalps to his collection of first ascents. The Dow Crag Guide records no less than eight of them between 1919 and 1921, of which, perhaps, the most important were Giant's Corner, the Trident Route and Southern Slabs. In Langdale his work was hardly less important; among some half dozen first ascents made there during the same period may be mentioned 'D' Route, Ash-tree Slabs and the Main Wall Climb on Gimmer; Stony Buttress and Crescent Slabs on Pavey Ark; Harristickcorner on Harrison Stickle. As late as 1926 (Pallid Slabs) and 1927 (Hiatus) he was pioneering 'very severes' on Gimmer. These

two areas so near to Barrow were the ones he knew best, and most frequented, but he often visited Wasdale where he had led practically every one of the most severe climbs, and had amongst his first ascents the Innominate Crack on Kern Knotts.

During the years immediately following the war he was taking short holidays in North Wales and in Scotland, where he was one of the first to open up the great buttresses on Ben Eighe, making a first ascent of the westernmost of them in 1919: he also climbed in Arran. As the great courses in the Alps came to demand his devotion more and more, his climbing holidays in Great Britain, apart from the Lake District to which he remained deeply attached, became rare. He never lost his early interest in gritstone climbing, however, and after his transfer from Barrow to Derby, where he joined Rolls Royce Ltd., he was able to give a good deal of attention to this interesting and exacting sport. He had a number of first ascents to his credit on such crags as Stanage, and the Black Rocks at Cromford.

Bower first visited the Alps in 1920 with a Fell & Rock party. They did a number of first class climbs guideless. He was with the same friends during the two following seasons, climbing mainly in the Pennines and the Mt. Blanc massif, where the aiguilles particularly attracted him. In 1921 he was elected to the Alpine Club on a list covering only two seasons of climbing. After this for many years he seldom missed a season in the Alps, tending to concentrate, as I have indicated already, on the Mt. Blanc massif, and especially on the aiguilles almost all of which he climbed. He also did many climbs in the Pennines and the Bernese Oberland. Perhaps the most important of his Alpine expeditions was the first guideless ascent of the Grepon by the Mer de Glace face, accomplished in 1923 with a party of Fell & Rock and Rucksack Club friends. It was a prelude to the great guideless expeditions which were such a feature of the years between the wars. He was indeed for a number of years the leading British guideless climber in the Chamonix area.

After the war, though by this time in the middle fifties, Bower transferred his affection from Chamonix to Courmayeur where he climbed regularly down to 1952, mostly with G. L. Travis. The numerous first class ascents he made during these years, such as the Brenva Ridge, the Grandes Jorasses, the Géant, the Aiguille Noire de Pétéret, the Pic Eccles (the last two in 1952) do not suggest any falling off in power.

Physically Bower was rather stockily built and not tall. His appearance rather belied his high abilities as a cragsman, and indeed my impression is that he was endowed with less natural aptitude than some others of his great contemporaries. What brought him into the very small group of the great leaders of his day was his concentrated scientific study of his craft: he was not an engineer for nothing.

He was quiet and reserved by disposition, perhaps a little shy, but a splendid companion who could and did from time to time enliven the proceedings by his spontaneous wit and humour. Though ambitious to make first ascents his modesty and sportsmanship often kept him back because he thought that some other climber had a prior right to make the ascent first. He had had an eye, for example, on the Black Wall Route on Dow Crag for quite a long time when he got the idea that J. I. Roper had the first refusal, so to speak. Within a week of that fine cragsman completing the first ascent Bower had made the second—it was then, perhaps, the most difficult climb on Dow Crag. He was indeed always ready to surrender the lead on a new climb to one of his companions, and thus his name often appears as second in ascents of first importance, such as Great Central and Raven Routes on Dow Crag. He not only had a keen eye for new routes on old crags, but also for steep unexplored outcrops. Quite early in his career he opened up interesting little crags like Lower Howe Crag and Grey Buttress on Grey Friars. More important was Dow Crag on the Eskdale side of Scafell Pike on which he did Bower's Climb in 1920. Again the exploration of Pikes Crag with its good face climbs was largely due to his initiative—he and I made a short exploratory climb there late one evening in 1923 at his suggestion. We went away fully intending to come back and try some of the obviously good face routes, but during the following Easter when there was some excellent weather we were away in Scotland and others had the good fortune to explore this fine crag.

Bower's engineering aptitude came out on the technical side of climbing. He was fond of experimenting, for example with new types of footgear or with new nails, or with new knots or types of belay, and in numerous other ways. He also had marked literary ability, and his Dow Crag Guide, which led off the well-known Fell and Rock series, set a high standard for its successors not only for the clarity and accuracy of the descriptions,

but for the felicitous and often witty style in which it was written. His occasional articles in the Fell & Rock and Rucksack Club Journals were always enjoyable reading, and it is a pity that he did not make more use of his pen. He was a keen and helpful member of the Club, especially during his Barrow days, served on the Committee, and was a Vice-President in 1929-30.

Although the number of expeditions I made with George Bower was not large they were among the best I ever had, especially in the Lake District, and I look back upon my companionship with him with special pleasure. He was an understanding and resolute comrade, always ready to take more than his fair share of the burden, and to be helpful in half a hundred ways: and his quiet and encouraging smile was a great help in times of difficulty and danger. It is because the mountains give a peculiar richness and depth to our friendships that our thoughts turn to them so constantly.

CHORLEY.

O. J. SLATER 1944-1952.

G. R. WEST 1907-1952 *Original Member.*

J. C. WOODSEND **1908-1952.**

Shortly before going to press we learnt with regret of the death on 9th June of W. Me.Naught, who was widely known as Editor of the *Musical Times* and writer on music. He was an ardent mountaineer and had been a member of the Club for over 30 years.

Later came the news of the untimely death of two other members, W. R. B. Battle, drowned while on a Canadian expedition in Baffin Land, and A. R. Dolphin, as a result of a fall in the Alps. The Club thus loses within the space of a **few** weeks a mountaineer and explorer of great promise, and one of its finest climbers.

We hope to print memoirs of these three members in our next issue.

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

Muriel Files

This account of the Club's activities during 1951-52 is confined strictly to meets, as the two most important events of the year, the opening of Birkness and the acquisition of the Salving House, are dealt with elsewhere in the Journal. On the whole the meets were well attended, though there were exceptions, one unfortunately being the potholing meet led by G. Spenceley in July. The lack of support for this meet was particularly regrettable as it was a new departure for the Club, and entailed a great deal of work for the organiser and his Y.R.C. helpers. A very good expedition was made to Gaping Gill, although the original plan of descending by Flood Entrance and coming out by Bar Pot had to be modified owing to lack of manpower. The party explored the South-east Passage and the South Passage to the main chamber, and then, using another rope ladder to descend into Mud Hall, traversed the full extent of the East Passage. They thus made one of the best underground expeditions in the country which can be undertaken by a small party during one week-end, and the few who were there thoroughly enjoyed it, appreciating, however, that potholing is a most strenuous occupation. The leader naturally thinks it would not be worth while to arrange another official potholing meet, but has kindly offered to organise a similar expedition unofficially should there be sufficient demand.

In December, 1951, eleven members met at Brackenclose, and, although the weather was indifferent, everyone either climbed or walked both on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday two members went to Pillar Mountain by the High Level Route, returning by Scoat Fell, Steeple, Red Pike and Yewbarrow. Conditions on the tops were bad and they reached Wastwater in complete darkness at 5 p.m., whereupon one of the party suggested a swim, and to the horror of his companion, had one. This should be noted by those who believe that the present generation is not as tough as that of O. G. Jones.

The New Year meet was again very popular. Both Raw Head and the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel were full and befittingly festive, and our host and hostess at the hotel gave us a royal welcome as before. Snow covered the fells and there was some ski-ing by enthusiasts although walking was in greater favour. On Sunday a gale was blowing, so that on Crinkle Crags weighty

members of the Club became airborne while lesser mortals proceeded on all fours, and even on the Band it was impossible to be sure of keeping one's feet. More snow fell heavily on New Year's Eve and several people had adventurous journeys home after a hilarious party. There were over 60 to dinner (during which one member mysteriously lost his waistcoat and a shoe—both, happily, recovered later), and, after W. Cowen's excellent colour film of the Lake District, 1952 was let in to the accompaniment of punch and cake and much merriment. A chastened Club appeared at breakfast and Pike o' Blisco was the most ambitious expedition tackled on New Year's Day. On Monday the weather rallied to give a splendid day on the fells and there is a record of a marathon over Harrison Stickle, Pike o' Stickle, Rossett Pike, Bowfell, Crinkle Crag and Pike o' Blisco accomplished in 5 1/4 hours. The evenings were enlivened in a variety of ways. The President led us in reviving the Club's old songs, and a rather startling demonstration of the superiority of mind over matter was given when a large stone was shattered on the chest of one of our members by a mighty blow from a sledgehammer. The choice of victim for illustrating R. W. Eldridge's lecture on first-aid provided a little comic relief for a serious subject, well presented, while a fitting finale and climax to the meet was Bentley Beetham's unforgettable lecture on the 1924 expedition to Everest.

Those fortunate enough to arrive on Saturday for the Raw Head February meet had a glorious day on the snow-covered fells, though the 'Barrow Boys' found that the surface was rather more appropriate to skating than to ski-ing. The main body of the meet, however, was unlucky, as Sunday was literally a 'wash-out.' The maintenance meets at Raw Head, Bracken-close and Birkness were patronised by the faithful few who regularly turn up year after year to put the huts in order. It was unfortunate that in the case of both Bracken-close and Raw Head many regular visitors were prevented from enjoying their usual week-end at the huts, but enthusiasm helped to make up for small numbers and excellent work was done. It was a pity that so long had to be spent on routine cleaning which should already have been done, as this greatly reduced the time available for maintenance and major repairs, which are actually the objects of these meets.

The Easter weather was superb and the meets at Bracken-close

and Raw Head were well attended. Plenty of climbing and walking was done from both huts and there were parties on most of the crags. A complete contrast to the Easter sunshine was provided by the Whitsuntide rain, although fortunately the weather managed to clear up in time for the opening of Birkness where a number of members stayed and worked the whole week-end. The major portion of the meet at High House was also active and there was climbing on Gillercombe Buttress, the Napes and Boat Howe. A noteworthy event on Whit Sunday was the Editor's Jubilee ascent of Scafell Pike, made with the support of a strong party by the Tourist Route. Arriving wet through at the summit, there was undisguised disappointment when the leader failed to produce from his rucksack the bottle of champagne which it had been reasonably supposed to contain.

Of the 'foreign' meets little need be said here, there being a separate article on Kinlochewe, while August Bank Holiday at Glan Dena was extremely wet, few attended and little of note was done.

There were two meets at Birkness, the first at the end of June, led by W. Peascod, whose swan-song it was, on the eve of his departure for New South Wales, where the Club wishes him the best of luck. The members of a very active meet climbed on Pillar and Gable, in Birkness Combe and Newlands and on Round How, though, the leader wistfully remarks, nothing outstanding was recorded. In July the novices were at Birkness, 13 members and guests attending. The meet went very well in moderate weather, everyone climbing somewhere. Birkness Combe was the most popular spot, but some went as far as Shepherd's Crag. On Saturday, while the Warden gardened the roof, rendering movement through the doorway unjustifiable during the day, a strong party, led by J. Blackshaw, fixed the chimney to the stove and lit a very welcome inaugural fire later in the evening.

The August meet at Brackenclose was most successful. The members, some of whom were only 'hopefuls' as regards Club membership, were all keen, and there was much climbing on the Napes, Pike's Crag, Pillar and Scafell. The meet benefited greatly from the presence of the President and both he and the leader were impressed by the good climbing spirit and sociability of the 'hopefuls.' The September Committee meeting at Raw Head was a lengthy one, but this did not dis-

courage the axe-hunters, who spent next day happily on Pike o' Stickle under the guidance of the Treasurer, returning to the hut bent beneath their loaded rucksacks. The nine members who assembled for the October meet at Thirlspot were, perhaps because it was drizzling at 10 o'clock, persuaded to go into Borrowdale and up Combe Gill. By mid-day the sun was shining and at Raven Crag they had the good fortune to meet the pioneer of many of the climbs who gave directions and, later in the day, dispensed tea.

The Annual General Meeting and Dinner on October 31st, of which there is a separate account, marked the end of a Club year memorable in a number of ways, not least because it was distinguished by the second presidency of Dr. Burnett.

ANNUAL DINNER, 1952

A dull October evening, with mists shadowing the fells, found a cheery company of 250 members and guests enjoying good Cumberland fare in the Royal Oak, Keswick, at the fortieth Annual Dinner. Before that, a smaller number had attended the Annual General Meeting where the most important business was to elect A. B. Hargreaves as the new President and to thank T. R. Burnett, described by John Appleyard as 'far and away the oldest active member' for his second successful term of office. Dr. Burnett, it was stated, had been walking, climbing, hacking at glaciers, and lighting fires on the fells for 44 years, and probably nobody in the long history of the Club had given more service to his fellow-members.

Proposing the election of the new President, Graham Wilson said he also had done a tremendous amount of work for the Club, serving two terms as Honorary Treasurer. He was a strong walker, a very good rock climber, had been a member for 25 years and lived in the district. The new President's message to members was that he hoped that during his term of office the club meets could become rather more 'friendly' affairs. Too often, he thought, people staying in the huts seemed to keep quite apart from those in the hotels, and he hoped that all members attending meets would in future get into touch with the leader and let him know where they were staying.

The meeting also produced light-hearted criticism from H. P. Spilsbury of the way in which an item relating to hut donations had been set out in the balance sheet, and the debate which followed became technical and even confusing. Fortunately, Sir Arthur Cutforth was at hand to give distinguished advice and the affair was finally straightened out to the satisfaction of most of us.

The only other item of importance before we went off to book our seats for the dinner was the handing over by W. Allsup to the President of the old Coniston climbing book. This book which comes from the family of the late Mrs. Harris, of Parkgate, will be preserved by the Club as an interesting record of its earliest days. The entries from 1907 to 1918 are in the handwriting of the late Denis Murray, who copied them from the original Sun Hotel climbing book. After that date the book was kept at Mrs. Harris's cottage—a place remembered with affection by the older generation of climbers.

The principal guest this year was the distinguished Scottish mountaineer, W. H. Murray, a member of the Mount Everest reconnaissance expedition, and, in proposing the toast to the Club he gave us a fine, thoughtful speech. He admitted that his love of mountains had first been aroused by a Sassenach—our original member, George D. Abraham, whose book, "British Mountain Climbs" had been the first on mountaineering he had read. Reading Abraham had given him the idea of rock climbing as a means of exploration and he thought that one of the greatest rewards of mountaineering was the comradeship it gave in exploratory work with adventurous men.

He didn't think he had done any climb which gave him as much joy or sense of achievement as the first ascent of Clachaig Gully in Glencoe. Besides the exploratory side of mountaineering there were, he thought,

two other most important ways in which it should be regarded. One way was to look upon mountaineering as a battle with wind, rock, snow and ice which could be won only when one had mastered, to some extent at least, both oneself and one's craft, and the other was to enjoy mountaineering for the great beauty which could so often be seen.

He thought that there was sometimes the danger of mountaineering as a recreation becoming perverted into mountaineering as all-in warfare. The Fell and Rock Climbing Club had sent nine members—Bruce, Odell, Somervell, Wakefield, Beetham, Smythe, Wood-Johnson, Longland and Lloyd to Everest, and he believed that so long as men of this quality, well grounded in mountaineering tradition, could go out, they need have no fear of the basic principles being thrown overboard.

One result of his mountaineering abroad had been the still greater delight which he found in Scottish mountains on his return. 'I have so far seen nothing,' he confessed, 'to exceed them from the point of view of mountain beauty, and I love our home mountains no less than the Himalayas. The sheer joy of mountaineering is to be found at its highest here on our homeland hills and not at the ends of the earth.'

In his reply to the toast, our new President rammed home several important home truths in typically forthright fashion. The Club, he said, was one of the most important British climbing clubs for many reasons and it undoubtedly owned the finest collection of club huts, but he saw one defect. It had to be admitted that because of the Club's size and its chain of huts there was a tendency for it to develop into a mere association and he thought that the club policy ought to be to resist this tendency. He liked to think of the Club as it was when he first joined, when almost everybody knew everybody else and when they were happy to go on the hills with each other. He thought they should continue to restrict severely their membership, notwithstanding the apparent advantages of expansion. They should insist on a very strict qualification for admission.

'We should also try,' he went on, 'to initiate among the people of this Club an even higher standard of behaviour in the huts and on the hills than there is at present. We should also take every practical step to foster the club spirit so that we do not split into sections. I do not believe there are many people in this Club—but there may be some—who are only interested in the Club as a means of getting cheap accommodation.'

The President said he wanted to give a message to the young climbers of today. 'We mourn the loss,' he said, 'of our distinguished member, A. T. Hargreaves, who was a climber of style and solidity. Only once, to my knowledge, did he fall while leading, and that fall was not a serious one. Mark that, you young climbers, and do not fall! I hear stories nowadays of those who fall off quite frequently, and even boast about it, comparing the distances they have fallen.'

Paying tribute to Dr. Burnett, the President said he had given wonderful service to the Club over a very long period. He wished there was something more the club could do to show its appreciation of his services and he hinted at 'a little plot' which he had in mind.

Before resuming his seat the President requested T. C. Ormiston-Chant, the only original member of the Club present, to rise so that everybody could see him, and T. C. O.-C. did so amid well merited applause.

The toast of Guests and Kindred Clubs was proposed by Mrs. H. P. Spilsbury, who also spent part of the evening accompanying on the piano the delightful songs of her husband and John Hirst (who topically included several verses on the virtues and vices of the new President). Mrs. Spilsbury made a delightfully witty speech—so witty in fact that G. W. S. Pigott (Rucksack Club and son of a famous father) who amusingly responded, accused her of being responsible for the preparation of her husband's speeches, besides being his pianist.

Mrs. Spilsbury made the charming suggestion, which was immediately endorsed by all present, that we should, from the 40th Annual Dinner of the Club send a message of congratulations to the Yorkshire Ramblers Club which was celebrating its 60th anniversary.

The biggest social event in a most important club year ended with our thanks to Mr. Beck and his staff for their contribution towards a most successful evening.

A. H. GRIFFIN.

THE PRESIDENT - 1952-53

I have a song to sing, O!
Sing me your song, O!
It's a song, you sec, of a bold A.B.
Whom the sea has never seen, O!
It's a song of a President newly born,
Whose climbing clothes are exceeding worn,
His coat all rent and his trousers torn,
You'd think that he hadn't a bean O!
A.B.! A.B.!

Who would have thought washing's his forte!
His clothes all worn and his trousers torn,
He's really not fit to be seen, O!

I have a song to sing, O!
Sing me your song, O!
It's a song of a lad who was climbing mad,
And who likes his glass of beer, O!
It's the song of a laddie who served his club
By hunting down the elusive sub.,
For fifteen years he performed this feat,
And year by year at the Annual Meet
Presented us with a Balance Sheet,
Which we passed with a well-deserved Cheer, O!
Cheer, O! Cheer, O!
Where the cash goes, nobody knows!
But we don't squeal—we want our meal!
And we give him a jolly good cheer, O !

I have a song to sing, O!
Sing me your song, O !
It's a song of a boy whom you cannot annoy,
For he knows his mind, too well, O!
It's a song of a boy who is ne'er afraid
To call a shovel a blank dash spade,
A well built boy of stature short
Who's never stuck for a tart retort,
For idle talk not a fig cares he,
And washes his linen quite publicly,
It's a song of a boy who will say his say,
And take good care that he gets his way,
And the rest of the Club must just obey,
And vote him a jolly good fellow.
A.B.! A.B.!

Everyone knows what you say goes !
Just say your say and we'll all obey,
And vote you a jolly good fellow.

JOHN HIRST.

*Sung by John Hirst and Ham/ Spilshury of. the Annual Dinner on
25th October, 1952.*

EDITOR'S NOTES

At last year's Annual Dinner, as reported on another page, our principal guest, Mr. W. H. Murray, referred to the members of the Club who had taken part in previous Everest expeditions, and upheld the finest traditions of mountaineering. To these names have now been added those of John Hunt and Alfred Gregory, who, with their companions, have added new lustre to the traditions established by their predecessors, and brought the efforts and experience of so many years to a splendid fulfilment.

Peter Lloyd, who was a member of the expedition led by Tilman in 1938, and who has been closely concerned with the development and testing in this country of the oxygen apparatus used by the recent expedition, has very kindly contributed *The Mount Everest Expedition of 1953 — An Appreciation* which appears on an earlier page.

It is appropriate to place on record here that J. A. Jackson (who with T. H. Tilly contributes an account of their experiences in the Garhwal Himalaya last year) was one of the reserve climbers selected in this country for the 1953 Expedition; and that J. W. Tucker had been chosen to accompany the post-monsoon Everest team which it was proposed to send out had the earlier expedition not succeeded in reaching the summit. Last, but not least, Bentley Beetham, an Everest veteran of the 1924 Expedition, returned to the Himalaya this year as a member of W. H. Murray's party, and so fulfilled an ambition of long standing.

As in 1952, the first half of the present year was notable for the official opening on Whit Monday of yet another Club Hut, the Salving House at Rosthwaite. 'Official' is used advisedly, as in spite of the strenuous efforts of many working parties, the hut was not quite ready for general use, though no doubt it will be well before these notes are read. 'Opening' is not, perhaps, the right word, as the ceremony, in which Mr. P. D. Boothroyd took the leading part, was, owing to a violent thunderstorm, held within the building. F. H. F. Simpson has kindly undertaken to write an account of this event for next year's *Journal*, and also to make some research into the building's history, as he has done so successfully and at no small trouble into that of Birkness, as recorded on another page. Meantime the two photographs here printed may be of interest as showing the property as it was when the Club acquired it. The door which formerly gave rather

hazardous access on to the main road has been replaced by a window, and one or two windows added on the other side, but the essential character of the ' House ' has not been changed.

It is reasonable to predict that another hut opening will not occur for many years to come, and in the meantime it behoves all members to do their utmost to ensure that the debt still outstanding on the purchase and conversion of Birkness and the Salving House, amounting to nearly £3,800, is paid off without undue delay.

In my notes last year I said that the next of the new series of Guides to be published would be that for Scafell. It was later decided that the Borrowdale Guide should have priority, and it has recently been issued. This is the largest of the new Guides so far, and in the words of the General Editor, H. M. Kelly ' puts Borrowdale absolutely on the climbing map.' The old Guide (1937) recorded only 22 routes whereas the new one describes about 200, and these (according to a calculation made by Bentley Beetham, the author of the Guide and pioneer of so many of the climbs) provide over 60,000 feet of climbing—and all for 6/6 (or 4/6 to members)!

Readers will notice that in this *Journal* there are several changes in the authorship of regular features. Jack Carswell has for several years compiled ' Climbs Old and New ' with care and competence, but has now relinquished this task at his own request. A. R. Dolphin kindly agreed to take it over, and the record is thus continuing in safe hands.* W. E. Kendrick has been wont to describe ' The Year with the Club ' with characteristic aptness and humour, and last year added an admirable account of the Annual Dinner. The addition of one hut after another has naturally much increased his responsibilities as Hut and Meets Secretary, and he asked to be relieved of those concerned with the *Journal*. I am grateful to Mrs. Files for her excellent account of the events of 1952, and also to A. H. Griffin for his of the Dinner. I hope that both will regard themselves as permanent members of the *Journal* staff!

*A hope unhappily not to be fully realised. A.R.D. sent me his manuscript just before he left for what was to prove his last visit to the Alps.

But in welcoming new recruits, I must not forget other contributors who, year by year, record Club activities and do so much to lighten the Editor's task. The joint report of R. A. Tyssen-Gee and E. W. Hamilton annually reassures us of the welfare of the London Section, and of its activities in climbing (as far as circumstances permit), walking and dining. Miss FitzGibbon keeps us informed of the progress of, and additions to, the Club's valuable Library, and has once more shouldered the responsibility of placing books for review, and given welcome help in other directions.

'The Library' report has for some years ended with a note on the Club 'Scrapbook,' asking members to send suitable cuttings, photographs and the like to Mrs. Files, who tells me there has been little response for some time. I had the opportunity of examining the 'Scrapbook,' a ponderous volume, last New Year at Dungeon Ghyll. It contains much of interest referring to the earlier years of the Club, but little of more recent date. Many members must have suitable material in their possession, especially photographs, and Mrs. Files will be very glad to receive anything that may add to the value of the book for posterity. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for the book to be on view at the next Annual Dinner.

The recently issued Lake District Report of the National Trust is full of interest. It covers the years 1951 and 1952, and not only describes the new properties acquired, of which the most important is the High Close Estate of over 500 acres lying between Elterwater and Grasmere, but deals with some of the problems of management of the Trust's farms, woodlands, quarries and the like, which form an increasingly large part of its responsibilities. Of special interest to the walker is the formation of several footpaths on Trust property adjacent to main roads, whose hazards and noise can thereby be avoided.

All over the country 'open air' organisations are busy checking the Draft Footpath Maps prepared by the County Councils in accordance with Part IV of the National Parks Act of 1949, many of which are now open to public inspection. In the Lake District a Joint Committee of such was formed some time ago, on which the Club is represented, to deal with this important matter. While most of the work—and it involves much time and

patience—is being done by voluntary helpers, considerable expense is bound to arise, and the Club have responded to an appeal for assistance in meeting this. After the maps have been checked much work still remains, e.g., in making claims for paths not included, and if necessary producing evidence that they are rights of way. (This matter is very fully dealt with in the recently issued Annual Report of the 'Friends of the Lake District.')

The work of Lyna Kellett during the years she has served the Club as Honorary Hut and Meets Secretary and as Honorary Secretary, need no emphasis here—it must have been evident to all members how much her capability and energy have contributed to the Club's welfare. The occasion of her marriage to Mr. George Pickering has already brought her congratulations and good wishes from many of her fellow members. I feel confident that I can here extend these to Mr. and Mrs. Pickering on behalf of the Club as a whole.

July, 1953.

W. GEOFFREY STEVENS.

CORRESPONDENCE

DOW OR DOE?

To the Editor of the ' Fell and Bock Journal '

SIR,

As, presumably, the primary cause of Mr. Allsup's letter on the spelling of Doe Crag, I would be grateful for the opportunity for explanation.

You, Sir, are congratulated on your Stand for Purity against, one supposes, Aggression by the Forces of Evil. But, as far as I am concerned, this gallant attitude of defiance is wasted, for I can assure you, Sir, that I have no designs whatever upon the welfare of yourself or Mr. Allsup or the F. & R.C.C. in general. Indeed, I am not concerned how others may spell this word—it may be Dow, or Dubh, or Dough for all I care. To me it is entirely a matter of sentiment. The uncertain steps of my novitiate trod, as I understood, the rocks of Doe, and this understanding remained, so that to be on the crag conjured up the pleasant word 'Doe,' and to read of 'Doe' brought to mind the beneficent form of that crag.

But Dow: what does that conjure up for me? Nothing at all, 'a perfect and absolute blank.' iNot for a moment would I claim that Doe is technically correct, but not for a moment would I spell it in any other way. In these days of coldly exact reasoning such an attitude may be incomprehensible. But that is how it is.

Yours, etc.,

Buckland Newton,
Dorchester.

FERGUS GRAHAM.

29th December, 1952.

LANTERN SLIDES.

To the Editor of the ' Fell and Bock Journal '

DEAR SIR,

Members actively interested in photography will be aware of the increase since the War in the use of 2" x 2" slides. The need for them springs largely from the wider use of miniature colour transparencies, which have improved so much in quality in recent years and which are primarily designed for projection.

At the Whitsuntide Meet our member, H. Ironfield, who uses the process, asked me if I was interested in slides of this size and expressed his willingness to present me with some specimens in due course. He agreed with me that if several Members would display a similar interest the nucleus of a collection would be quickly achieved. I consider that the Club could make good use of such a collection and if any Members are of like mind I shall be interested to hear from them.

Ironfield reminded me that unlike the normal process of making monochrome transparencies from a negative, the colour process does not produce more than one finished subject from each exposure. It is, therefore, realised that any photographer intending to benefit the Club will, as an alternative to sacrificing the finished transparency, have to take a second exposure of the particular subject.

While some Members will, perhaps, be prepared to defray the added expense themselves, others may be unable to do so. I would be prepared to make an overture to the Treasurer and Committee when the need arose.

Yours faithfully,

F. H. F. SIMPSON,

Custodian of Lantern Slides.

20th June, 1953.

LONDON SECTION, 1952

The London Section's activities have again been popular, with an average attendance of some 15 on the walks and nearly as many at the informal dinners held at the Rossmore Restaurant in Park Road. The latter give members the opportunity of meeting if they are not able to come on the Sunday walks, and have the advantage that if the trains or buses are late they do not miss the party. Club members, living at a distance, on visits to London are always welcome at any gathering and details will be sent on request. In addition, meets are held at Harrison Rocks from time to time, but last year it was arranged that there should be no definite leaders, and dates were suggested for members to make up their own parties.

The first meeting of the year was a dinner. Photographs and maps were much in evidence and plans were made for trips to the Alps and Lake District later in the year. Other dinners were held in March, May, October and November, and Mrs. Dorothy Pilley Richards, the first Secretary of the Section, was a welcome visitor in October.

Good weather favoured most of the walks, the first being Stella Joy's attractive route from Windsor to Virginia Water. R. P. Mears can always be relied on to provide as hilly a walk as is possible near London, and in February his party tackled the steepest parts of Colley Hill, starting and finishing at Redhill. Lovely views can be had from this part of the North Downs when clear and Chanctonbury Ring is often visible. The leader probably knows every possible and impossible route up that part of the North Downs. M. N. Clarke took us to Eashing Bridge from Guildford in March on a cold but dry day. In April we joined up with the Rucksack Club, going from Woking to Ascot via Chobham Ridges. This annual joint walk is always popular and 24 turned up, some half from each club.

In May we went to the river at Cookham and Marlovv, the leaders being Joyce Lancaster Jones and Stella Joy, starting the walk from Beaconsfield. In June British Railways let us down. Mrs. Milsom had planned a fairly long walk from Pangbourne station, but half the party waited there for the others coming in the much delayed London train. The first section of the walk had to be cut out, but all will have happy memories of lovely paths and hot sunshine along one of the most attractive reaches of the Thames. We crossed the river at Pangbourne by Whitchurch Bridge, but learning that the toll is $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per head, we returned by a ferry a few miles further up at Gatehampton!

In July, R. A. Tyssen-Gee led a party on a circular route from Guildford, lunching at Shere and drinking tea at Chilworth. Two months later R. P. Mears conducted us from Gomshall over Surrey's heights, Pitch Hill, Holmbury Hill and Leith Hill, ending at Dorking, the last hour in heavy rain. The top of Leith Hill Tower is just over 1,000 feet above sea level, the only place near London where this height is reached. The views on clear days are superb, but London is so smoky that St. Paul's Cathedral and the City churches are rarely visible though less than 30 miles distant. The Club had an unusual outing with I. Clayton. Mem-

bers started from Lewes and found their own routes by map. As usual on this Autumn event there was some rain, but the scenery and sea air were enjoyed by a large party.

With shortening days, the winter excursions have to be nearer home and in November R. A. Tyssen-Gee led a party from Leatherhead to Reigate where Mrs. Tyssen-Gee had invited the club to tea, and W. A. Poucher showed a selection of his superb coloured slides of the Northern Highlands. There were 27 present in all, possibly a record number, who greatly appreciated the entertainment. Fortunately neighbours helped with cups and saucers and a tea urn, which eased the situation. The final walk of the year was led by L. R. Pepper on the Sunday following the annual dinner. This started at Guildford with lunch at Eashing and tea at Witley, in cold but bright weather.

The Annual Dinner took place at the Connaught Rooms on 13th December, which was rather later than usual. London had one of its worst fogs on record the previous week, which paralysed traffic for about four days. The secretaries breathed sighs of relief, as well as purer air, when the weather cleared and 13th December produced nothing worse than slightly icy roads after the dinner was over. Fifty members and guests were present. R. P. Mears proposed the toast of the guests and kindred clubs in a humorous speech, and Michael Holland from the O.U.M.C. and J. H. Emlyn Jones from the Climbers' Club responded. Our other guests were Michael Holton from the London School of Economics, and A. B. Hargreaves, the President. Dr. Hadfield was, as usual, in the chair and everybody had an enjoyable evening.

Unfortunately the Section loses one of the Committee members, Mrs. R. Pickersgill, who will have left for Uganda when this account is printed. For some years past she has provided the Committee with accommodation and refreshments whenever a meeting is held, and has arranged for a room at College Hall to be available for lantern shows on several occasions. She will be greatly missed, but we all wish her every success in Kampala.

R. A. TYSSEN-GEE.

E. \V. HAMILTON.