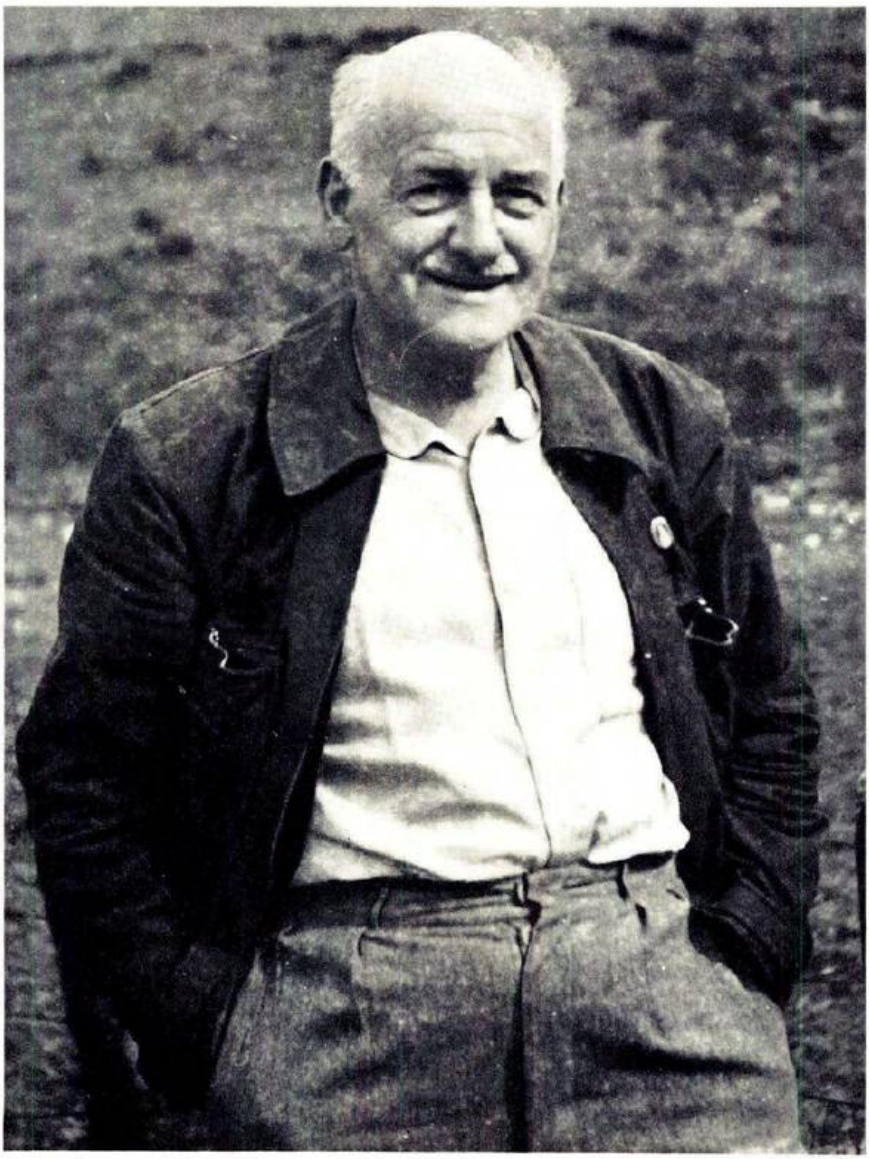

H. P. Spilsbury (President, 1958 - 1960)

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THE NORTH FACE OF THE GRANDES JORASSES

J. F. Gunn Clark

The irritations of the journey out vanished as the train turned up the Chamonix valley and the Aiguilles swung into view. There was not a patch of snow to be seen and the weather could hardly have looked more settled. At Snell's sports shop we discovered that the sun had been shining for ten days and that the great faces were thought to be in condition. After a brief discussion Robin Smith and I decided to go up to the Leschaux Hut that evening. There was a rumour that we should find Whillans and MacInnes already there.

At the Montenvers I caught my breath in awe. The Jorasses hung there above us, higher and steeper than I had remembered. It seemed quite fantastic that by the same time the following day we might be half-way up that magnificent face.

Two hours later our hopes were washed away by a violent thunderstorm. Crouching under a boulder on the glacier below the Couvercle we debated whether to carry on or go back to Chamonix. In the end we decided to press on, if only for the sake of spending a night in the legendary Leschaux Hut. When we arrived there we found five assorted Continental parties. As the evening wore on the clouds cleared and we realized that the storm had been only local. Our hopes rose again and we took stock of the situation. It was clear from the mass of rope, pitons, karabiners littering the hut that each party was intending to do a big route, probably the same one as ourselves. Since everyone was being rather secretive, I innocently asked if anyone was going to the West face of the Petites Jorasses, a modern rock climb. Haughty head-shakes confirmed our suspicions and we retired to bed, leaving the impression that *les Anglais* would not be competing. We set our alarm for midnight and dozed off, confident that we at least would have a spot to bivouac on the following night.

We left the hut at 12.30 a.m. and started the long slog up the glacier to the foot of the face. After an hour the great black wall loomed so high above us that it hid the stars completely. Bobbing lights started to follow us. While we were strapping on our crampons beneath the rimaye, a Polish

pair caught us up. In good French they introduced themselves and told us modestly that they had just done a six-day traverse in the Caucasus. What had we done so far? Rather than admit to a couple of Sundays at Harrison Rocks, we mumbled something about the undiscovered ranges of Scotland. Suitably impressed, they passed us, moving easily on their heavy twelve-point crampons, while we limped after them sharing an old pair of ten-point Grivels.

To avoid step cutting on the initial ice slope, we chose the alternative start which follows a steep loose couloir just to the left of the base of the buttress. In the dark this couloir and the snow slope above it were very tiring. I felt sick and hopelessly weak. This may have been due to the altitude or to lack of training, but I suspect it was, rather, the result of the imagination trying vainly to cope with the unknown problems of the 4,000-foot wall which soared above us in the darkness. Certainly, when dawn came and I started to concentrate on the individual pitches, this lethargy passed and I began to enjoy the climbing.

The first real problem was the Thirty Metre Crack. From directly below, the angle appeared to be reasonable and Robin set off carrying his sack. Bridging wide, he seemed to float up the first 40 feet. Higher, the more familiar staccato movements of hard British rock climbing began, until with a final great heave he disappeared against the blue sky. Meanwhile the Poles, who had been off route, arrived below us. They were obviously impressed by the pitch and so, before starting, I offered to take up one of their ropes. They gratefully accepted, and a few minutes later I rejoined Robin, having found the upper half of the crack reminiscent of Kipling Groove.

We helped the Poles to haul up their vast rucksacks before setting off across the famous Bands of Ice, the traverse of which proved less difficult than expected. After several mixed pitches we rounded a corner overlooking the central couloir and rather unexpectedly found the Seventy-Five Metre Dièdre. The angle was easier than that of the Thirty Metre Crack, but the Poles insisted that we took their top rope on the first pitch. For the rest of the dièdre we climbed with them and saved each other a lot of time and energy. We arrived on easier ground, already catching the afternoon

sunlight, and looked around. The weather was still settled and almost imperceptibly the Aiguilles were sinking below us.

Above, a chimney led to an exposed traverse ending on the edge of the buttress. Two fixed pitons enabled us to abseil to a tiny platform from which we crossed an awkward slab to an icy bulge. Higher up, the angle eased and we found some ledges to relax on, while the Poles continued.

The Tour Grise rose above us and we examined the Dalles Noires with interest. Although reputedly the crux of the climb, in the afternoon sun the angle did not seem particularly steep and we set off again optimistically. But the holds turned out to be small and the route far from easy to find. The resultant sense of frustration and tension was increased when a great block started to gather momentum on the slabs above. I was tied to a belay at the bottom of a slanting groove and watched fascinated as the block engaged itself in the top of the groove and approached like a homing missile. It landed on the neat coils between my feet and bounded on. When we had sorted out the bits we found that the effective length of our double rope had been reduced from 150 feet to less than 100!

Darkness was coming on and still there was no sign of the top of the tower. Robin led out two more long, steep pitches with great verve and at last an exultant shout announced that he had found the bivouac site. The Poles were already installed and, rather than crowd them, we climbed down to a small ledge right on the nose of the buttress. Two pitons rang home and we snuggled into our duvets, feet dangling over the Leschaux Glacier. Having satisfied our immediate hunger with cold meat and chocolate, we filled our brewcan with chipped ice, coffee and sugar, and lit the stove. With a great sense of well-being we dozed off beside it as the meths flame flickered in the darkness. I dreamt undramatically, continually meeting people and shaking them by the left hand. This handshaking became more and more insistent until I woke to find that for increased warmth I had unconsciously leant over to the left against the meths burner: a large hole had been burnt through my anorak and the arm of the duvet jacket underneath was alight. I eventually managed to put it out, spreading burning down everywhere in the darkness. By some miracle the brewcan had remained upright

during the excitement, but the precious coffee had become laced with charred feathers. Our mirth at the incongruity of nearly being roasted on a freezing North face quickly disappeared as we began to suck the vile but vital liquid through cracked lips.

At 5 a.m. our alarm-clock jolted us awake to find another fine day already dawning. Memories of the previous day's stone-falls prompted us to get in front and we passed the Poles just as they were putting on their rope. Two hundred feet of steep rock separated us from the crest of the ridge. At one point a karabiner found abandoned on a peg finally convinced us that Whillans and MacInnes had not passed that way. Once on the crest, we were in the sun. We felt considerably fitter and less tired than on the day before and the thousand feet of ridge leading up to the base of the final Red Tower was a joy to climb.

In our enthusiasm we continued past the traverse to the right leading to the chimney which splits the side of the tower, and by the time we had retraced our steps the Poles were some way up this repulsive-looking rift. Robin set off during a lull in Polish activity and by a powerful piece of climbing on very loose verglased rock arrived safely at a small stance to the right of the chimney. I started at much the same time as one of the Poles 100 feet directly above, and so was bombarded by almost everything he pulled off. For speed I resorted to climbing one strand of our double rope while Robin heaved on the other. While doing this, a large stone hit me on the back of the head, drawing some blood and all the French abuse I could muster in the dizzy moments of coming to! Once united on the ledge, we decided to let the Poles finish the chimney before going on ourselves. We remained perched awkwardly in deep shadow on the side of the tower for an hour and a half before it was safe to continue.

Above the chimney a sensational traverse 50 feet below the proper route took us to the start of the final 500 feet of the spur. It was 4 p.m.; white clouds suddenly boiled up around us, making the summit ridge seem thousands of feet away. We were getting tired and our double rope was beginning to irritate us more and more; we took it off and climbed up together, relying on the incredible position to safeguard us against carelessness. The last 50 feet were very loose, so we

roped up again and broke through the cornice a few feet from the summit. My first feeling was of relief at being able to stretch out in the soft snow and relax. For a few moments a long-cherished dream hovered as a reality before taking its place among other memories.

At 2.30 a.m. we crept into the Boccalatte Hut in our stockinged feet, fifty hours after leaving the Leschaux.

The Poles came in the next morning having lost their way on the route down. Two days later in Courmayeur we met a haggard-looking party in duvets: Whillans, MacInnes, Streetly and Brown had left the Leschaux Hut a day behind us but a storm on the summit had necessitated a second bivouac. We joined forces for an appropriate celebration.

EXTREMES AND EXCESSES

Harold Drasdo

The disparity in quality and standard between the most difficult climbs in Wales and the Lake District is still hard to understand. Certainly, we don't expect to be able to offer routes for comparison with White Slab and The Boulder; quite simply, we haven't got cliffs which present possibilities like these. At the same time, why is it that we have nothing like the more difficult of the shorter Snowdon routes? Climbs like The Mostest, Troach, November and Taurus, for instance, have an aura about them which attaches to nothing of ours. Yet these routes are no longer than the unclimbed lines still waiting on some of our crags, and the same people visit both districts. Even the objection that Lakeland does not give good non-artificial lines seems dubious now, at least with respect to some of the cliffs mentioned in the *Eastern Crags Guide*.

It is true that during the last five years a handful of routes has appeared to give a taste of what is to come. At Thirlmere, Whillans's Delphinus is the outstanding entry: difficult, inescapable, and superbly related to the structure of the cliff. I have always hoped that this area will one day give climbing to rival that in the Llanberis Pass. In fact Castle Rock has now become quite popular and any week-end you can watch the little white wall testing the adhesiveness of its adherents. But the next advances will probably not take place here.

The trouble with the Deepdale climbs is that you cannot reach them in the state of mind and resolution that you nourished indoors; that with the cliffs enlarging and developing before him for the best part of two hours the average man feels a diminished sense of purpose and may be prepared simply to re-examine what he swore to assault. Hutaple, said variously, is the biggest crag in this area. It is a place for the mountaineer and technician alike. When it is wet it becomes a nightmare, slimy and more obviously terraced; but in good conditions, after the walk, Amphitheatre and Brown Study will fill anybody's day. When you get to know the place well you find that, short of perfection, it is most rewarding to do one of the long face climbs—say North-West Grooves—on a very cold winter's day with dry rock, a few ribbons of ice to either side, and a big wind scouring the cove. You make note then of something new in atmosphere, not comparable with

anything else in this locality. There is scope for some harder routes and for the removal of grass and other debris from the existing ones.

Scrubby Crag already has some excellent climbs. In fact, there isn't much obvious climbing left to do since Jack Soper went over the place, except one of the finest routes in the neighbourhood, if you look carefully enough. I hope it will have gone by the time this is in print. The climbs here are steep and well-placed, very much like the White Ghyll routes in lengths and standards but taking better lines.

It is not for want of trying that only one new route has appeared on Dove Crag in the last twenty years; and this route—Dovedale Groove, by Whillans and Brown—indicates at what level the next ones will be carried out. I have not seen a more impressive piece of igneous rock, of similar size, anywhere. All we can say is that we have failed; others can try.

Grisedale, on the other hand, doesn't offer much for the future, but it is a very pleasant valley to climb in, especially if you stay at Ruthwaite Lodge. You have Eagle Crag, only ten minutes' traverse across the hillside, with Mike James's Sobrenada, a finely composed little route. At the top of the valley Falcon Crag has a selection of short, difficult climbs of which Bottleneck is the best. Whilst I am writing about Grisedale I should like to anticipate the remarks of those who look across from the Lodge to St. Sunday Crag for the first time. I said the same sorts of things myself. We make mistakes and it is a good thing to suspend judgement until you have climbed the Nose Direct. In trying to fix the atmosphere of the climbing on any cliff one could always begin by trying to give the atmosphere of the valley; for the feeling of any climbing is always qualified by the feeling of the surroundings, the particular impression of place. Grisedale, I have said, is very pleasant; which, ultimately, may mean no more than that there is usually evidence of man, people to be shouted to in case of need; whilst in Deepdale one has no such recourse.

I only mention the peripheral places: Carrock Fell, with its archaic and modern ways, Lakeland's final geological gesture, staring over the flat plain of the Eden; Swindale and the leet—the ingenuity of man!—and the compact little buttresses; Longsleddale and the senile decrepit Dandle. It's easy to

get attached to these little crags, close to roads and often in sunshine.

But now I must put things in perspective. After all this talk about the retarded development of Lakeland climbing I want to add that some of us have tried very hard. We have not been idle. Some people simply don't realize what qualities are demanded of the leaders of new routes and at what physical and nervous expense these sometimes dangerously vegetated enterprises are effected. I can think of no better way of conveying this than by describing two days spent in Swindale by my brother and myself last July or August.

I had noticed this line, a heather-tufted, overhanging groove, the previous year whilst completing the *Guide*. On a perfectly fine day we went up to try it. Evidently someone had been about 15 feet up very recently. I attacked and after a great deal of fiddling and nervousness and tweaking out bits of heather I made about 20 feet, having to learn every move, forward and back, by copious experiment. After a half-hour, with the heat, dirt and awkwardness, I seemed discouraged and disgraced and decided to leave it for another day. And I was about to descend when suddenly, though capacity was not yet present, desire swelled and although I couldn't get up I would not come down: a frustrating and embarrassing situation for leader and second alike. So that I was constrained to remain where I was for a while, supported at that height by appetite, checked there by a faint overhang, whilst my nervous energy began to suppurate slowly.

I started to let fall the clichés of the uncertain leader, drawing neither encouragement nor acknowledgement other than subtle adjustments in the tension of the rope. I said that if I could just get my feet where my hands were . . .; that it was no use; that one good hold would take me to the resting place; that the holds all sloped; that I was going to fall off; that I was not going to fall off; that I would have to move back for a rest; that we were wasting our time; that I would have one final go. I had it; and several more. Another half-hour slipped by. 'It's no good,' I said. 'I'm coming down. Right. Take in.'

When the leader was in the resting place, these struggles rewarded, an access of pride took him and he stood there in a

composed but dramatic attitude, surveying the next problem coolly, as if his fumblings of the last two hours were somehow negated by the simple act of standing in that arrogant pose above them.

Taking myself very seriously, I had a suitably tense rest and after prevaricating with running belays as long as I decently could I moved up to the next problem; but it stopped me, as, indeed, I had seen it would. We changed places and Nev had a go; he too came back agreeing, to my extreme annoyance, that it was flatly impossible. Unfortunately, it was. But as he was descending I noticed that a slanting flake, a good way out of reach, showed a tiny step that might just take quarter-weight nylon. I urged him to flick a sling over it but he wouldn't believe me. However, I knew, and began to try; once, twice—he was grinning sceptically—and the third time, there it was. I pulled up and stood high in a shorter sling with difficulty against the tilted wall. Until, finding that time and intention had gone, I came down resolving never to come back.

A half-hour later I believed that we could climb it the following day; my mind mauled the little corner, I could not eat or sleep, I recognized a grand infatuation.

There we were again. Rather apprehensively, I set off. Perhaps the 30 feet to the resting place, two hours' work yesterday, took a whole minute. I adjusted myself for the sling-flicking whilst Nev watched with admiration and interest. I swung; again; and again; and again and again and again; probably fifty times, maybe a hundred. Sometimes I climbed up to within 6 inches of the tooth but could not spare a hand; sometimes I tested extravagant intermediate positions, making futile gestures with the sling whilst holding myself in precarious balance. Theories were advanced: I had not got the optimum length of sling; yesterday's was older and less springy. The heavy arm went monotonously backwards and forwards, the sling rebounded consistently, occasionally squatting idiotically on the edge of the notch. Nev called out in wonder remarks about unicellular organisms, made exclamations not listed here, jeered and advised. Clearly, I had been wrong all the time. Yesterday's success had been a pure accident. 'You were right,' I said. I prepared to descend.

Later it went on. I moved awkwardly up and after exhausting failures managed to place a solid piton. Relaxing for the first time, I was able to move up and fix a sling around the stem of a rowan tree which exuded strongly from the rotten cracks.

So there I was: the protection was perfect, only 8 feet to the stance, I knew I could do it. I abandoned the thing. I felt as if I'd done enough and I stretched and smoked cigarettes while Nev grappled with a dangerous overhang of holly and heather. But he dared not fail, he hadn't done his share and he knew it. Soon he was up and I followed very confidently having to leave the piton, which promised decapitation before extraction, in place.

Then it was easy. But, counting resting time, we had spent about four hours on that 60-feet pitch. We had used ourselves, we had climbed a towering Extreme, I said. And look at it now, the holds all cleaned out, the methods noted, a solid piton in place; a Medium Very Severe; the reward of the devotee of these vegetation ceremonies.

The route on Scrubby Crag was ascended at Easter by N. J. Soper and a new route has been made on Dove Crag by Don Whillans. Added to this there have been further developments on the East Buttress of Scafell. In Wales, however, new routes are appearing even more frequently and H. I. Banner's traverse of the Pinnacle of Clogwyn du'r Arddu seems, perhaps, to open, or close, yet another episode in the history of that cliff.

THE EVENING ALPS

Dorothy Pilley Richards

'Nothing like it!' we thought again, breathing anew the alpine air—muscles, tendons and joints as it were champing the bit. All the delights of who-cares-how-many seasons crowding aboard to live themselves through once more. Those first alpine mornings—with, it feels, an ocean of time ahead—how limpid and leisurely. Better for them to be 'untouched by solemn thought.' How would it help, if, for example, something told one what the future held?

On 9th November, 1958, a drunken driver was to swing across the traffic and there we were with no choice but to ram into the wreckage; head through wind screen, broken hip and the joint all chaos within. Afterwards, well, the scale of the Alps, and of much else, is strangely changed.

Even before this horrid accident, the relativeness of mountain efforts had been growing upon us for some time! How arduous the simplest trips may become. 'A great proportion sum,' I kept saying to myself all that last good season, 1958. A: B:: C: D: this little peak is to me now as the greatest adventures were in earlier years. The Blümlisalp! Once upon a time—I seem to remember—could I have talked as if a *traversée intégrale* would be the only thing worth planning there? Did the Oeschinen See really have to listen to such airy stuff from me in about the year that Sir Austen Chamberlain was saving the world at Locarno? And as to the Fusshorn—call it even the Grosser Fusshorn—keep that, (did I rule?) for the doddering days. It will come into its own then! And so it did.

One measures things, I suppose, against the run of one's strength. A slight lift, as against one's personal general level, and how the day gleams; a decline and we don't look that way. Would I have done differently, I wonder, if I had known it would be my last free-moving season? Probably not. And now the proportion formula will have to be applied on a still more modest scale.

The Oeschinen See—like the wall beyond it—ignores humanity perfectly well. The concertina troop makes no more impression on it than the bathing beauties fleeing from its sudden storms. Thunder and a smart splash of rain sat us down there to salad and *fendant* with our bread and cheese. For an hour, just within the curtain of drip from the roof, the alpine 'Will-you? Won't-you?' held us swinging: a bed—a

nice bed here, or the week-end overcrowding in the Hohtürli Hut? Why does it always have to be Saturday night on which one chooses to visit the most frequented huts in the Alps? Every thought you can have about that and every thought about the choice in hand has a kind of vintage quality. One has lived through it so often before: all laid down providently long ago to be retasted every year, ever the same, even the jokes, as familiar and nostalgic as the *fendant* and the *fondue*: nothing more melting to resolution. Just as one 'decides'—with a self-indulgent secret relish—for the sensible thing, the cloud veil sways up, there is a sombre gleam from the lake, and there you are again humping your hut sack on through the streaming forest. Then it rains really hard, just where you can scuttle under the great limestone overhang where the path follows a horizontal shelf high above the waters. Off come the sacks; how tiny already the little beetle-like bicycle-paddle skiffs scooting back now to the shore under the drench.

If the weather were finer in the Alps, how much less we would see! One is always rushing on and, without a good physical excuse, our lingerings would perhaps have a shade too much of conscious intent. We would be pausing deliberately, expressly in order to study and enjoy the views: a thing which views, very naturally, don't care for at all. Whereas when it is rain that sits you down in chance-given shelter—there you are, no help for it, having to see the sights. In a measure, of course, being out of condition, with no wind or strength left, can do the same thing, if distress doesn't intervene. All reasons, these—if you want them—for pitying the perfectly fit, top-of-his-form mountaineer, in the midst of an unbreakable *beau-fixe* season. What a chore! How does he keep it up? What? No respite? No release? I have been on that fantastic treadmill, had it; but I don't recall that I *then* had any of these sorts of feelings!

Where the path crosses the torrent and starts to wind up beside it, another splash came on. We crossed to the Unterbergli *alpage* for shelter again. It was deserted except for a man with a big umbrella who was sending crates of fizzy drinks up a wire to Oberbergli—which put appropriate ideas into our heads.

The path climbs two abrupt little steps above; greasy with mud they were. You watch the inexperienced and rather

competitive young people in town shoes leaping about on them with the feeling that there is nothing like luck. At Oberbergli, an old-style, well-worn chalet, peace—till a party arrives whose leader unwraps his guitar. That tells you! However, there is an outside shelter from which you can watch well-spaced thunder storms creeping up from way beyond the Wildstrubel and, between them, the ridge of the Lohner grows clear cut against a pearly sky.

All quiet, save for cow-bells in the morning, after the guitar departed; a thick woolly cloud soaking everything; but local word of 'clear' above. As we walked up, the valley-ward traffic reported 'sunshine soon.' Suddenly, with a 10-yard transition, the sea of cloud was below us and we were on the high moraine crest opposite the glacier. How well does one remember just where a glacier came to three or more decades ago? We sat down to discuss this and sandwiches on a grassy knoll and to wonder at the variety of styles in the traffic on the path: 300 that day through the hut (125 sleeping) and how many more over the col?

Fritz Kunzi, who was to go with us on the morrow, didn't turn up till after 10 p.m. with a bad cold; and his new orange-covered nylon rope had been all but cut through in two places coming down the Galligrat. So he was rather pessimistic before daylight, but the weather was beyond praise: hard-frozen and diamond clear. We had a vague Solitary rather too near us up the glacier, and partly to escape him turned up toward the Morgenhorn. We thought, too, that it might be suitably shorter. He went off to haunt four who were Blümlisalphorn-bound. Soon we crossed—in the sharp morning shade—a big sérac-fall that had swept across a handy line of deep tracks kicked in soft snow but now lump-sugar hard. These took us up to a schrund too huge and overhanging. Down and round, in crampons now, we had to go. Are such slopes really steeper than they used to be? The drag of crampons certainly felt more so—especially when the slope, which had been steep, grew very steep and then steepened.

As the morning gale struck us, we came into sunlight and to the summit: a fine corniced crest of snow with not much room for lounging. It was not yet nine o'clock—the climb had been strangely timeless and dream-like—and there, as we looked across to the Weisse Frau, was a dream walk

indeed awaiting us: the snow still firm and crisp, the dip and soar, dip and soar of the hand's breadth edge sharp-shadowed in the slanting sunrays. On we went, the wind behind us, with a gaiety to match even the grace of the way before us.

Those were really steep walls below: to the left the sun-scorched decaying limestone verticalities that drop to the level of the Mutthorn Hut and the Kanderfirn; to the right, the shadowy up-ended sheets of snow, pristinely smooth and uncrumpled. Down they swept—too unbroken to give the eye its balancing hold—all the way to the scallop of the schrunds. But we had our feet to watch as we walked between the gulfs. On the Weisse Frau, after an hour of this, we rested. Mont Blanc had added itself to the view of all the Valais: it felt like the recovery of half the high hours of a lifetime.

Here we made a mistake. Not wanting to risk spoiling something that had been so perfect, we decided not to continue along to the Blümlisalphorn. The ridge—more and more and ever the same, but with deeper drops and what looked like longer rises—trends away and away, with a slight leftward turn, to the culminating point. It looked far, very far, and on this first 'real climb' of the season, we were afraid of becoming too tired to enjoy it, of slowing down and of the snow softening. So, after a rest and a bite, we went down the North ridge of the Weisse Frau. It was already very icy and steep, and narrow enough to make one feel once more what a queer trade a guide pursues—taking care of all varieties of humans down such places. 'I am too old,' wrote Captain Farrar, characteristically, 'to fall out of ice steps.' It was comforting doctrine, at least, I thought, realizing ever more clearly how decidedly *not* a place to fall off this was. I had an equal claim to immunity with the Captain. Fortunately, knees which, in recent seasons, had been prone to pretend they couldn't, here did their stuff, bent and held with elasticity and alacrity. Thanks be! Needs must. I marvelled at them as I went. None the less, it was pleasant to come to good snow and then the length and the dazzle and the heat and the softness of the lower hollows began to take effect. Tired? Yes! But still we would have done better to have added in the Blümlisalphorn.

Rest days in high frequented huts, grassless, shadeless without, turmoil and hubbub within, grow increasingly a

price to pay. We were ready to pay it now for the Blümlisalphorn. Without two nights' sleep and whatever strange rest the day between contributes, mountaineers of our Class (as they say in American Universities, meaning years!) do not operate. All very well about the spirit being willing; it knows too much about the muscles to make any professions about that. So a rest day there had to be: (the usual gloomy views about tomorrow's weather from pre-breakfast on). The dazzle, the scorch, the chill, the lack of shade, the nowhere to sit, the widespread pollution of the purlieus—most dangerous of all, the Telescope—are things we do not emphasize, still they can make your rest day as exhausting almost as a peak. Where are those socks I put here on this wall to dry? Where indeed? Why—still wet, in a huddle, behind the S.A.C. parlour door. Who has taken my map? Who indeed? It is in a previously unused, but very secretive pocket inside the top flap cover of your rucksack. Why does the *Huttenwart* not allow us to REST upstairs, out of the song and din? Why? Because he and his family rest, themselves—after the all-night, tohu-bohu, hither-thither, hugger-mugger, to and fro,—and people going Up and Down the stairs disturb them!

Our chief trouble was the Telescope. In an unlucky minute round 10 o'clock I became fascinated by a party of four alpinists under the summit of the Weisse Frau. I had seen them go up. They hadn't bothered to improve a step. So when, in descending, it became evident to the naked eye—not to say through our pocket Kern binoculars—that they were sticking, if not stuck, the Telescope became irresistible. Unluckily it exposes one's retina to a fearsome onslaught of rays. They were stuck, it appeared, because not one of them knew at all how to walk down ice steps—probably worn and rounded from yesterday's fine and fierce afternoon sun. When we saw that the last man, with long loops of rope dangling down from him, was *sitting* again and again in one step while trying to get his foot in another, stuck seemed, suddenly, a peculiar word to be using. Heaven send they didn't become *un*stuck! This went on for three and a quarter hours before our anxieties were relieved. Towards the end, No. 1 man down gravitated towards the awkward little limestone ridge on his left—a steep, tiles-on-the-roof affair—and there hammered in (you could watch it) a piton. After that, as the

party joined him and reversed, interest shifted—whom would which detached block hit?

At last, they reached good snow and we thought all worries were over. But no! On a hot afternoon, on a sufficiently crevassed glacier, they had unroped. One of the party—not hitherto distinguishable as the Dashing One, took off with something between a run and an attempted glissade; soon he seemed to be rolling—anyway he was descending rapidly. Where the snow field steepens and narrows to a ridge, he shot down our side plump into the wide yawning schrund. About 100 yards away from him a long line of Scouts returning from the Blümlisalphorn were by this time halted—petrified by the spectacle. What an object lesson! It was amusing to see them relax when the Dashing One suddenly reappeared—to stand shaken and bewildered this side of the shrund. He had hit a lucky spot, it appeared. Meanwhile, unconcerned, two of his companions were immobilized anew! this time in an Altercation. Whenever one hears of good and careful climbers being struck by bad luck I think again of all the fools that Fortune is kind to.

This telescopy frizzled our eyes and might have spoilt the morrow. But by 5 o'clock there was an immense halo 20 degrees to 30 degrees from the sun, and next morning was grey and blustering. An aircraft flew two climbers up from Sion, landed them on the glacier for the Blümlisalphorn and flew off again within five minutes. Is this a preview of the next decade's mountaineering? The aero-alpinists did not get much reward for their enterprise; cloud wrapped their summit before they reached it. The 12.30 weather forecast was conclusive and we went down again to the gleaming wet streets of Kandersteg.

Then fell rain. When it stopped at last we found the Blümlisalphorn had hooked us. But the way up from the Oeschinen See side seemed too much of a repeated good thing. Why not try the Kiental side? Lovely, unimaginable valley with all the Romanticism that even limestone can achieve. (Stay at Hotel Pension Waldrand auf Pochtenalp.) The Griesalp bus somehow didn't get us there till 7.45 p.m.—just in time to dash up to the Bund Alp while a pink sunset glory flamed and waned on the Büttlassen and the Gspaltenhorn. Another Saturday night, of course, and pandemonium

in the two dosshouses at the *alpage*. However, having telephoned, we were given footage to sleep in—footage we felt, indeed, as folk stepped over us. But we slept, slept right through the 4 a.m. departure uproar, on to a sunny delectable outdoor breakfast around 7 a.m. We had only to wander gently up a good though continuously high-pitched path. At night the Hohtürli light had seemed to be perched actually on the Bund Alp's roof.

Back again at the Hohtürli Hut, we found, in time, that Fritz Kunzi had arrived and was sleeping off the outcome of being in the miniature Fründen Hut with thirty-five others, repaired our forces and got off next morning at 4 a.m. along with crowds of mixed parties: amateurs, juveniles, guides and guide-aspirants. I must confess this tiresome mob, when actually met, disintegrated into entertaining companions. In the pre-dawn murk, on the half-frozen, squashy glacier, those other parties, we know them well of old, are a menace to the day's delight. Either they will soon be crowding us behind, or they will dash past—puffing and blowing—and then settle down to a recuperative but sluggish plod immediately before us. Far be it from us to indulge in that Declaration of War—a re-passing of them. In this way energies needed by the thighs tend to fade away.

But this morning on the Blümlisalphorn nothing of the sort happened. There is a drop—half-way to the ridge—of near 500 feet: all to be regained but that disturbed no one. At the foot of the ridge we all halted and perched with the unanimity of rooks. The rock ridge is easy, but it is a heavily littered house-roof of a thing. Somehow or other a mysterious unspoken consentaniety saw to it that the juveniles—jolly and able they were—got the tail-end. The best place for a budding mountaineer to learn how important it is not to disturb debris on a rock face is at the tail-end of the lower-most rope. Mature, not to say ripe, alpinists can profit from no such lessons. Probably the general and genius behind these admirable arrangements was Hermann Ogi, with two amateurs and the young aspirant guide Killion Ogi, factotum and diplomat at the hut. Hermann, at the head of the cavalcade, seemed to be continuously throwing into the harmless void everything anyone could ever dislodge. When you think how often a week he must climb this mountain you appreciate the

maxim: nature abhors a vacuum. The Blümlisalp range must feel dreadfully at a loss without loose stones. Moreover, Hermann refashioned the steps, always with his mind on the way down. The year before, an eye-witness had told us how four Swiss boys—after dashing gaily along the main ridge of the Blümlisalp from the Morgenhorn to the highest point—slipped on the slabs of this ordinary way. They had not bothered to take their crampons off but just ran on down, full of their glory. A trip—then, spikes skittering and shricking on the limestone like ineffectual brakes, they were off. All gone in an instant. It haunted us. That can happen so many ways on, or away from, the mountains.

At the summit, when we had all gathered, thick as choucas, on the sheltered bit of rock outcrop, there, amid us, Hermann lolled at ease, while some of us hurt ourselves in laughter at his extravaganzas. He pointed, with grave seriousness and elaborate descriptive phrasing, to a meadow somewhere in the Switzerland now displayed below us. When a considerable part of the crowd had at last well-formed personal opinions as to which meadow he had directed their attention upon, he remarked cursorily, "Well, it's not mine!" and resumed his recitation of the names of visible peaks.

Thanks to all this, a much refreshed miscellany of parties addressed themselves to the descent. It was far easier and safer than the Weisse Frau: but still, falling stones are stones and heads are tender. So again the younger went below to take it and the responsible and experienced followed down aloft to refrain from sending. So happily down to the col: a pause for sweets, then the hutward plug. We arranged to meet Fritz Kunzi again at the Doldenhorn Hut, so off he went and we rested.

The Doldenhorn is easy but reputedly long. Prudence, the accumulated experience of unnumbered seasons, indicated an early walk up to the hut—among the most attractively situated in the Alps—and a good rest there before the ascent on the morrow. But there are always things to be done. Before they were done the day in Kandersteg had become appallingly hot. Why kill yourself on a hut path with a hut sack exactly at the hottest moment of the day? You know the answer. *The Times* to be collected at Kandersteg Station. The Post Office business. A cool drink to speed departure.

The Doldenhorn Hotel, invitingly displaying its facilities for a delicious salad and cheese, white wine and soda. Easy hammock chairs, with leg-rests (rest them!) on the shady lawn. Repose. Catch up on the sleep we will soon be missing. Hurried departure rather later than 4 p.m. O young and inexperienced alpinists, take warning!

The path up is rugged, if you have to keep going and with sacks, afterwards it wanders off up and down, through sanctuary woodlands with elegant closed chalets where visiting biologists can live and reflect. Then up more than a few zigzags in lush vegetation; then sudden park-like beauty where the path swings under a huge limestone precipice to mount from glade to glade quietly to a perfectly kept, perfectly placed hut. M. and Mme. Peter Kunzi and their eight-year old daughter welcomed us to this Eden. Fritz Kunzi came up about eight. Everything looked promising.

At 1.30 a.m. there was a sea of cloud below us; clouds above; a few stars shining; general dubiety. We had been hurrying—mistake of mistakes. Better pocket all pride; arrive late, if you must, but fresh. Aroused again, things seemed to us all less promising: in fact poor: so back to bed; a rest day. And it was the day of the year! This is hard to recall, hard to recount, but some will remember similar decisions, so called, of their own and sympathize. Some too, no doubt, may know that *they* will never do likewise. Anyhow, we won ourselves an uneasy day of perching about among the larches in that paradise and staging snaps of I.A.R. to meet a publisher's obscure requests, hardly realizing that the most accidently melodramatic of them was to be blown up later to be the back jacket of *Goodbye Earth.* Fritz, having to run off to meet week-end clients, suggested we take Peter's young son Werther.

On the morrow: how powerful this moral anecdote is becoming: no stars, grey skies but we were not to be tricked again! Well rested now, we were up at 1.30, off at 2 a.m. by candle-light. Oh never such an interminable grind. Zigzags; scree patches; zigzags; more scree; rubble; zigzags etc. At last up a rock knob to the point where you take to the glacier. There we sat to have a bite and put on crampons. An odd couple of men joined us; they seemed to be waiting upon our unexpressed opinions. Half an hour ahead, up on the glacier,

a party of four appeared to be distressfully wading. Then the rain began to fall and all the west, from which the wind blew, grew blacker and blacker. Off came our crampons. Our two observers did likewise. As we watched, the four up on the glacier turned about and began wading down too. The situation was obvious. As Peter Kunzi succinctly said when we got back to the hut, the weather and the snows were *krank*.

So, next, up to the Fafler Alp, in the evening, we advanced —admiring, mile by mile, the increasing beauty of that valley. Further up still, above the hotel, it becomes to my eyes a model of what non-calcareous Alps can be. Perhaps my coming fresh from a spell of limestone had something to do with this judgement; yet somehow the fall of each fold of the ground, every rock, grass-swell and tree, an hour above Fafler Alp, could hold you there gazing the rest of your life.

Early next morning, Alfred Henzen of Wiler, a large solid man, quietly charming in manner and skilful and considerate, strolled along with us towards the Hollandia Hut. It did not look, at first, a tenth as far off as it was. Cows were pouring out from dark sheds into the sun-striped pastures as we went by. Goats frisked, nibbled and squeaked on sandy patches at the foot of the moraines. Then kilometres of dry moraine, live moraine, dry glacier, a flanking rubble. A haven of solid rocks hove up on the left and we wound up and across a tributary of ice, between crevasses, to gain it. Hard to believe, as we lunched on its crest, that the hut could still be two hours away. Soon we put on the rope and trudged up gentle snow. The hut moved imperceptibly down towards us. At last, a couple of steps in ice, a pitch of easy rocks and we had arrived.

Rightly enough there were Dutch parties, with Austrian guides, in the Hollandia, also some wealthy, weight-throwing young Swiss without much training in hut customs. It was important but difficult to rest in the *dortoir* which rang with witticisms and giggles. At 3.30 a.m. there were more than seven stars shining: there was also a most terrific wind out of the west. It felt as if it would be taking the Hollandia off to the Concordia in a minute or two. We made a leisurely breakfast and were away by 5 o'clock: first across a deservedly regarded schrund. Alfred fled over like bulky thistledown in the gale; we followed. Thenceforward we were each of us

chiefly a focus of resistance to the wind. I had had hardly an hour's sleep and felt depleted of forces as the gale tore at me hour after hour. At the junction we gave up the Ebnefluh for the Mittaghorn, as shorter. Soon the wind became charged with light rain. We passed two coming in to the Hollandia from an experimental bivvy. We would have liked to have learnt from them what they had learned, but the wind stopped all that. Before long we were on a ridge: none of the views of the Lauterbrunnen we had come for. But a few rocks under foot were a relief. Then up the last snow ridge, the wind rising with us every minute. Two young Swiss returning cried to us. Their voices conveyed nothing. Then just above a vast crevasse, which looked infinitely sheltering, we were on the summit. Alfred had to kneel on his sack to keep it from being blown away, while he extracted a thermos. Visibility, near zero. It was harrowing to remember how tempting, as belvedere, this point had seemed, two weeks before, from the Büttlassen, our first training climb. There was nothing to be done but gulp a mouthful of tea and get down.

After five minutes we turned to face the wind, now charged with rain, that had pushed us up. It was soon clear that we would have a struggle. However, our tracks helped. We got in at 10 a.m. The Dutch party had turned back from the Ebnefluh because of the storm, so our choice had been justified. No ordinary storm it was; snow piled up in quantity that night, and the damage done over half of Switzerland we were to see in the coming weeks. We thought the two experimental bivvy men had missed a real chance to give their system a thorough trial.

We were all ready early next day for the descent: ready but waiting—until it dawned on us that the other parties were hoping that Alfred would make them some tracks. So with spare loops on the rope off we went—the open-work bridge across the schrund looking solider under its fresh white blanket—out, round through the schrund cluster, and down. We soon came out under the roof of still scurrying cloud. The day was clearing. Alfred took us by the route on the true right bank: an immense improvement on the moraines but with the drawback that you have virtually to wade a torrent, which matters when you are going up into the snows but not when you are going down. The raging stream reminded us of

Canadian problems but there is no real difficulty. Down below the good path loops through such beauty of knoll and plain and vale and glade, that we let Alfred step out off home and lingered till we almost lost the last bus and train back to Kandersteg.

What now? What would be not too big and yet not too small and not something we had enjoyed to the full in earlier days? We tried this and that! A day of surprises came on the Schneehuhnen Stock above the Oberalp. We had noticed a wire going up its way, but not till we were among the cliffs did we realize that they were full of voices. The mountain has been virtually hollowed out, to become a great Radar station we gathered. Tiny figures lounged and carolled, Italians, tunnellers and stonemasons as ever, on the lips of vast orifices. We felt in a Wellsian fantasy as we clambered up an artificial, wire-hung, ladder-way while mighty clangings and the roaring of compressors echoed from within.

Perhaps it was the too, too much traffic on the Oberalp that made us remember out of the way Binn, its bridge and its church and the orange-berried rowans and magenta fireweed of the Hotel Ofenhorn. A jeep, we found, could take us up the valley as far as Freische. That was a wild pre-dawn drive with a huge setting moon holding level with us as we rose. Then came a long walk in our own shadows till a clear dawn showed us what stones we were stumbling through. It is a long way up the Ofenhorn, a piece of interesting mountain travel rather than a climb. From the aluminium cross on the summit you look down to the Italian Rifugio Citta di Busto. It was plainly closed. You have to get the key from far down the valley but that would be a better thing to do. The Rifugio is 2,400 m., the Ofenhorn 3,242 m. and Binn but 1,400 m. and a long way off too, we found, as we tramped, facing a flaming sun now where that moon had hung on our way up. We were truly surprised to find ourselves back just in time for a delicious dinner in an old-style alpine mode. All the guests taking a preprandial constitutional, exclaimed, 'Are you tired?'

And so we came to the Grosser Fusshorn with our old companion and friend Joseph Imseng of Brigue. I began the day by falling all the way down the near vertical staircase of the Ober Aletsch Hut. I.A.R. was just warning me of it when down I came in the dark. I was lucky to have nothing

broken. In order not to have to come back to this awkwardly placed hut, we took everything with us in our sacks as we picked our way by moonlight, always in our own shadows, up the ledges of the ridge. This was before 4 a.m.; it was September and dawn took her time. We left our sack-loads where we crossed what Imseng told us would be a swift and restful way home: down pleasant snow streaks in the early season we gathered: 'Swish! Ah la-la!' But, up to the col and the nice rocks of the summit mass, there was no snow, only ice and poorly embedded debris. Nuisance all the way.

However, the summit rocks were solid, their great flanges poked up boldly between vast dark clouds that occasionally threw hail at us but opened grandly to show us now the Ofenhorn, now the Ebnefluh and Mittaghorn. The day wore on. Back again at the sacks it turned out that a hot year had removed the much anticipated snow. No 'Swish! Ah la-la!' about it at all! Only the most exasperatingly tiresome rubble. Below that, expert local knowledge is quite necessary if you are to get down onto the glacier. People without it just don't get down; there are too many big overhangs. We had the local knowledge; it led us on little sheep tracks from one shelf to another. At the glacier edge, too, the way is not easy to find or to follow. Dawn had taken its time but dusk seemed in a hurry. It came at a gallop. The flashlight had been a bit too useful too early. We were relieved to be off the moraine and on the real path just as black night shut down—but there is a lot of that path between where we were and Bel Alp. We quenched our thirst at a stream, sat down to enjoy the evening Alps and rest.

As fresh energy welled up, what could that gleam be across the vague Aletsch trough, somewhere in the Rieder Alp direction? After getting so suddenly dark, very dark indeed, how could it be getting lighter again—so soon? A cloud shifted, and there it was; we saw our rescuer. It was the lovely Moon! Having lit us up the ridge, it was back to light us home. We felt triumphant when we succeeded in knocking up the patron. Cognac, cake and bed—fatigues forgotten and the over-all renewal of the morning. A: B:: C: D we thought again, remembering long-past alpine days. Many Happy Returns.

THE MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE

Peter Grindley

Question anybody in the English-speaking world and, while he may well have difficulty in naming the world's highest summit and be blithe in the belief that Clogwyn du'r Arddu is a Welsh television series, he will surely be able to tell you with categorical certainty that the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea. Strangely enough, most climbing circles can claim no higher level of knowledge of a range of mountains which, while not ranked amongst the major climbing grounds, possesses great individuality of character and charm of position. Practically all those climbers from this side of the water who have had the enterprise to doubt the ancient decree that there is no climbing in Ireland have made headlong for the Poisoned Glen or the cliffs of Slieve League in County Donegal. Some have occasionally torn themselves from the economically advantageous drinking facilities of Dublin and penetrated to the Wicklow mountains, while a very few have arrived in deepest Connaught; but, with the exception of a handful of exotic residents, the English (or Scottish or Welsh) climber is still a rare and transient bird in Ireland. The Irish climbing fraternity enjoys a state (lost years ago in England) in which, if one meets another person on rock, he is almost certainly a personal acquaintance of long standing. There is plenty of rock for everybody and a leader can still enjoy the unequalled pleasure of making a new route without undertaking a long course of prayer and fasting beforehand. It is in this spacious and cheerful atmosphere that Mourne climbing has developed.

The Mournes lie in the south-east corner of Northern Ireland. From the northern shore of Carlingford Lough they run roughly north-east to meet the sea again at Newcastle, cutting off from the rest of County Down a triangular coastal plain a dozen miles long, two or three miles wide at its southerly end and with its apex where the eastern spurs of Slieve Donard slant straight down into the Irish Sea. The mountain valleys all open out into this coastal plain, and the area was at one time almost an independent country exporting vast quantities of granite paving to the growing towns of Lancashire and south-west Scotland, while dozens of fishing boats worked out of Annalong and Kilkeel. The farmers near the shore were fishermen, the farmers near the hills were

stone-masons, and the whole region had an economy which had little to do with the interior of Ireland. Now the stone traffic is a trickle of kerbs and tombstones, and the fishing is fighting for its existence; but the coastal plain of Mourne still carries that stamp of individuality imposed by the mountains and the sea which have dictated its whole mode of life, from the layouts of its farms to the lines taken by its roads, and which give it a quiet beauty of its own. The mountains themselves have a similar beauty, not the spectacular beauty of the Snowdon Horseshoe or the barbaric ferocity of the Cuillin, but a beauty of shades and tones and masses. They are bare yet not gaunt, barren yet at the same time not desolate: they have that strange charm of Ireland which the Englishman may find intriguing, irritating, repelling, or an irresistible lure.

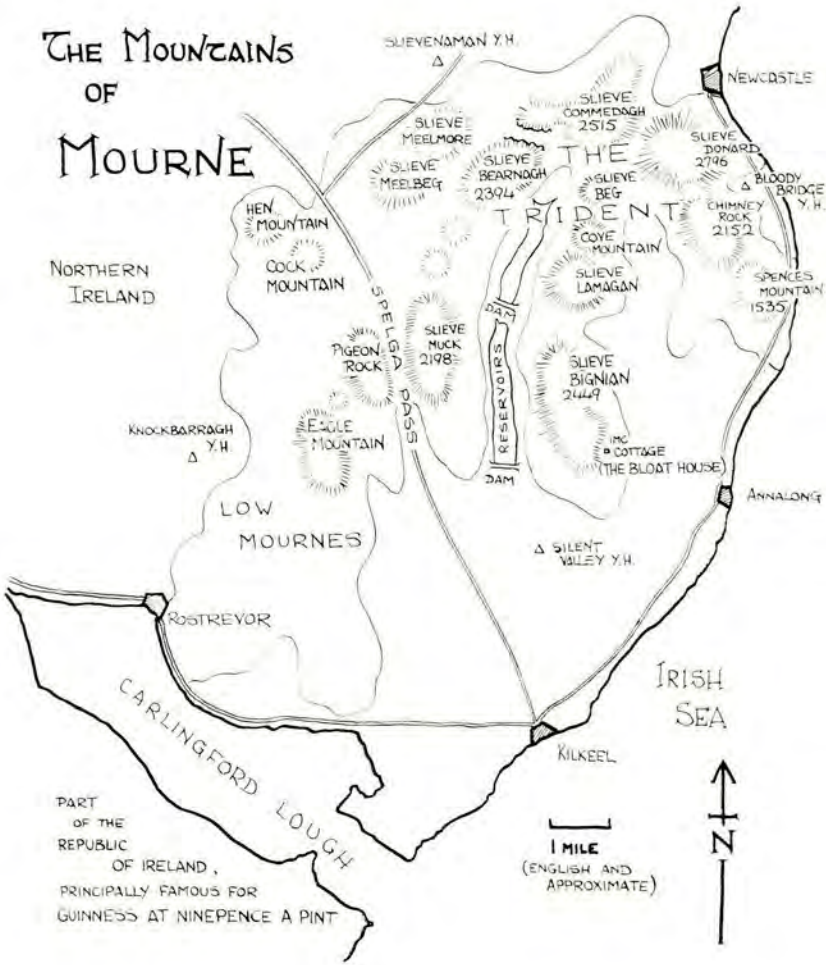
The general lie of the high ground is from south-west to north-east and the Mournes may be divided, by a line parallel to and a little south of the Spelga Pass, into the High Mournes towards the north-east and the Low Mournes to the south. The Low Mournes are less rocky, more rounded, and less well defined than the High Mournes and contain none of the worthwhile climbing. The Spelga Pass, the only motor road which crosses the main mass of the group from the coast, is a good access route to the western areas.

The High Mournes are the true mountains: sometimes known to climbers as the Trident, they consist of three chains of summits pointing south, the westerly prong longer than the others and all three prongs joining in the boss formed by Slieve Commedagh. The short eastern prong consists of Slieve Donard (the highest summit 2,796 feet), Chimney Rock, and, where it meets the sea, Spence's Mountain. The central prong is made up of Slieve Beg, Cove, Slieve Lamagan, and Slieve Bignian, the latter being a long mountain with a spine of summit tors. Between these prongs lies the Annalong Valley, long, broad and roadless. To the west of the central prong is the deep, narrow, steep-sided Silent Valley, now flooded by two large but unobtrusive dams, and to the west again is the last prong of the Trident: Slieve Bearnagh with its fantastically weathered twin rock summits; Slieves Meelmore and Meelbeg; various minor heights; and finally the long slate-capped mass of Slieve Muck. Beyond

the Spelga Pass lie Pigeon Rock and Eagle Mountains, which should be included in this group; then the High Mournes lose themselves in the Low Mournes which run on down to Rostrevor.

The rock is granite or, more accurately, the rocks are granites, a number of variations being present in the climbing area: from the point of view of the climber they are all coarsely crystalline with a tendency to monolithic blocks and slabs giving holds which are either the juggiest of jug-handles, or an exercise in imagination. The tiny incut holds profusely provided in the Lakes are almost unknown in Mourne. The junctions of the blocks and slabs tend to weather into shallow grooves with rounded edges which, together with the fact that most of the buttresses are summit tors or outcrops between 60 and 200 feet high, gives a remarkable resemblance, seen from a distance, to gritstone. This resemblance is completely spurious and has resulted in stretched nylon before now. The rounded cracks mentioned above are often insufficiently incut to provide any conventional hold, not deep enough to allow jamming of appendages or the other low stratagems of the V.S. man, and without enough thin crack at the bottom to accept a piton with any conviction of security. Finally, the hard glassy granite is very unsympathetic to the frictional approach of the gritstone artist. Accordingly, many of the steeper faces have yielded only along very positive lines of weakness, and the classical routes often break through steep portions by traverses or slab moves of great elegance and delicacy. Usually, the steeper the face, the greater the tendency to absence of holds; while the shallow slabs have weathered to great jug-handled plaques and flakes and the junctions of their blocks have been worn by water into deep cracks, the steeper slabs remain monolithic and shallowly grooved. The slabs of Slieve Lamagan and Slieve Bearnagh offer hundreds of feet of both sorts and have slab routes of most entertaining variety.

Most types of rock have a key which, when found, opens the way to hard routes. In Mourne it is the presence in the granite of small cavities lined with quartz crystals. These cavities, mainly an inch or two in size, have a tendency to lie in definite lines. They often weather to provide small fingerholds, but, more important, the rock weathers along


THE MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE
NORTHERN IRELAND
SLIEVENAMAN Y.H.
NEWCASTLE
SLIEVE COMMEDAGH 2515
SLIEVE MEELMORE
SLIEVE MEELBEG
SLIEVE BEARNAGH 2394
THE TRIDENT
SLIEVE BEG
SLIEVE DONARD 2796
BLOODY BRIDGE Y.H.
CHIMNEY ROCK 2152
HEN MOUNTAIN
COCK MOUNTAIN
COVE MOUNTAIN
SLIEVE LAMAGAN
SPENCES MOUNTAIN 1535
SPELGA PASS
SLIEVE MUCK 2198
PIGEON ROCK
DAM
RESERVOIRS
SLIEVE BIGNIAN 2449
KNOCKBARRAGH Y.H.
EAGLE MOUNTAIN
MC & COTTAGE (THE BLOAT HOUSE)
ANNALONG
LOW MOURNES
SILENT VALLEY Y.H.
ROSTREVOR
IRISH SEA
CARLINGFORD LOUGH
KILKEEL
PART OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, PRINCIPALLY FAMOUS FOR GUINNESS AT NINEPENCE A PINT
1 MILE (ENGLISH AND APPROXIMATE)
N

the line in a very slight groove; this combination of finger-holds with a slight improvement in foot-grip and an occasional toehold is a feature of many of the best slab pitches. It makes the difference between a slab which will go and one which will not, and in the more pronounced form sometimes provides means to force otherwise intractable walls. A less reputable method of circumventing difficulties is by grass ledge traverses. Mourne is no more heavily vegetated than other areas, but the small ledges, when they occur, seem to do so in completely impossible places. Recently, while climbing with the writer, a high official of the Belfast Section of the Irish Mountaineering Club followed a grass ledge down and thus upgraded the route by two degrees; but usually the ledges are quite secure in spite of there being no supporting rock ledge beneath. On most faces they are altogether absent, but a notable exception is Pigeon Rock Mountain where the main face overlooking the Spelga Pass is a system of steep rock walls with grass and heather ledges in profusion between. I treasure memories of a harassed climbing companion scaling the upper face with the speed and dexterity of a baboon, unsympathetic friends having fired the face beneath him at the suggestion that he was stuck.

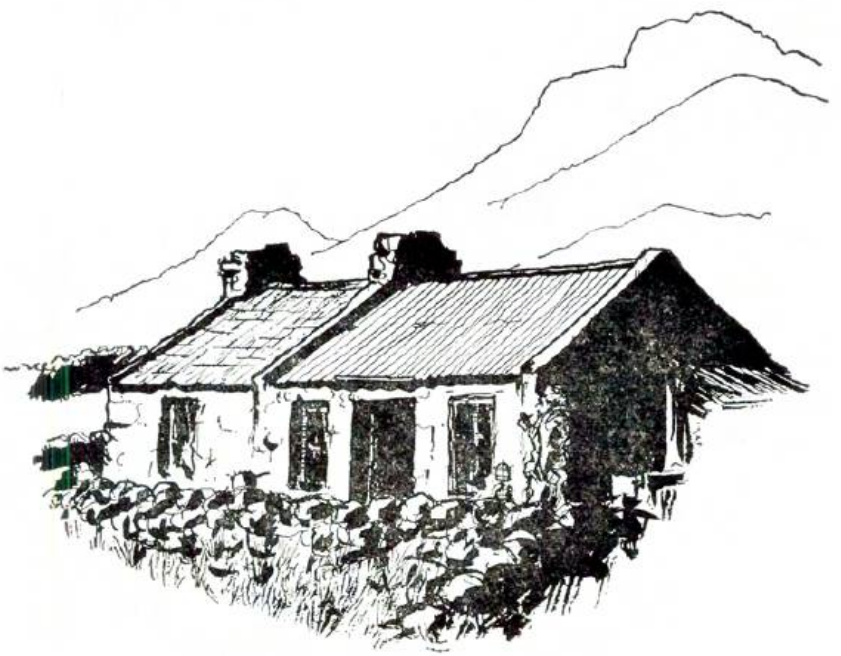
Mourne climbing is fairly recent. There was an initial phase of activity in the late thirties and about a dozen routes are recorded from this period. From the beginning of the war until 1947 little or nothing was done; then a new school arose and by the early fifties was in full cry. The leading spirits were Phil Gribbon and Maurice McMurray with other members of the Belfast Section of the I.M.C. and the then newly-formed Queen's University of Belfast Mountaineering Club. The Irish Mountaineering Club cottage, the Bloat House, was instituted and soon became the centre of a culture and civilization unknown since the days of Tara of the Kings; routes multiplied and gradings steadily advanced. The tigers of Glendalough and Dalkey Quarries occasionally raided north over the border leaving new climbs strewn in their wake, and from the portals of the Bloat House the fumes of Guinness and Phil Gribbon's herbal smoking mixture ascended each week-end like a grateful incense to the gods of the hills. Then in 1955 the scourge of Ireland, the tendency to emigrate, began to deplete the Mourne climbing society.

By 1957 practically the entire old guard of the I.M.C. had fled the country and, in a community so small that the loss of one good leader is a major set-back, this was a crippling blow. Only in the past year or so has Mourne climbing begun to recover, as new and experienced leaders are developing to the point where they can push on beyond the current best routes. No doubt in time emigration will again take its toll, but it seems likely that climbing has come to Mourne for good now, great though its fluctuations may still be.

There are other influences peculiar to Northern Irish climbing which deserve mention. All students of politics are aware of a Disaffected Minority among the populace, but rather fewer know of that magnificent body of men, the 'B' Special Constabulary. The 'B' is not an abbreviation but its origins would take too long to explain. They are an armed constabulary for one special purpose. Whenever the Disaffected Minority take to letting off high spirits, usually by way of discharging firearms into some local police station under cover of darkness, the 'B Specials' are roused to man the road blocks and repel the invasion. It is said that they will also shoot sheep, shadows, rock climbers, passers-by and each other on the smallest provocation, especially at night. The existence of two heavily patrolled dams close to choice climbing rock and the difficulty the patrols experience in grasping the idea of rock climbing for pleasure lead to suspicion of climbers' motives. I have myself been peered at heavily from behind a sten-gun when coming down from the hut late at night. Having at one stage been instructed in the temperamental nature of these weapons I was most doubtful about the way it was being held and we hastened to assure the owner of our bona fides before it was too late. Our relief appeared to be mutual and we passed on unmolested. This sort of thing can lead to misunderstandings: after a heavy Hallowe'en party in the Bloat House, a brisk stagger over Slieve Bignian in the early hours clears the head marvellously, and if wind-carried snatches of ribald song should be mistaken by the Forces of Authority at the dam for the frenzied battle cries of charging rebels and result in a search of a steep boulder slope (where like better men they laboured all night and caught nothing) mountaineering cannot wholly be blamed for the unquiet conscience of the Law.

But this is a digression. The 'polis' are only a secondary factor in Mourne climbing, one of the minor entertainments, like the English club which came over with no contacts and no *Guide*, fell upon the nearest crag rapaciously and (due to the combination of vibram soles and few climbers which has left the rock largely unscratched and pristine) claimed three of the main trade routes as new climbs a grade higher than those generally accepted. This caused comment, but by and large Ulster withstood the shock. Climbers and climbing there are not much different in the heart of the matter from climbers and climbing elsewhere; only the circumstances differ. The dish is the same, but the sauce is different, and to me fresher and more lively than I have encountered elsewhere.

Oh, about the wee people. I've never seen any myself, but if you are really interested, pop in at the Half Way House in Annalong some Saturday evening. There are those there who speak with authority.



LLANBERIS PASS

G. Oliver

The rainless summer of 1959 dried out even the vast damp cliffs of Cloggy, high up on Snowdon's North Face, and brought within the capabilities of lesser climbers the Extremely Severe and Exceptionally Severe routes—some of which had to wait several years for a second ascent—made since the early 1950's, when the group of climbers led by Joe Brown began climbing around Llanberis. The advance represented by these routes, which surpassed all existing ones in technical difficulty and were very often much more exposed, with long run-outs and few belays, seems to have been due mainly to improved technique in hand and foot jamming, sprags* and moves of this kind perfected on gritstone outcrops; but better equipment, notably the new climbing footwear designed by Pierre Allain, has contributed to its development.

Tales of the wonderful conditions prevailing in 'the Pass' last summer reached us in Lakeland and we thought we would take a trip to Wales to try our luck; so, early in September, Don Laws and I travelled overnight from Newcastle, finally reaching Llanberis in the late afternoon to find it bathed in sunshine, a most unusual sight. Pitching our tent close under Clogwyn-y-Grochan, we immediately set about the urgent business of eating prior to doing our first climb. Clogwyn-y-Grochan is ideal for the so-called rock gymnast for it can be reached from the main Caernarvon road in less than five minutes. Arrived at the crag, we assembled our heap of equipment: half a dozen slings and karabiners, 150 feet of rope, three pitons, a hammer, and, most important of all, our P.A.s.

Our intention was to attempt Sickle which was graded by Brown as Hard Very Severe, although it is now recognized by most climbers as being as difficult as most of the Extremes. As its name implies, it follows the shape of a sickle, the handle being formed by the right edge of a large flake. From the top of this the blade goes up and slightly right, then follows a sweep of overhangs to the left.

The first pitch proved to be rather strenuous, the crack behind the flake being too wide for good jams and too narrow to bridge. The top of the flake did not seem very appropriate for a belay so I put on a runner and then turned my attention

* A sidehold in a crack, usually in a corner, with the thumb pushing in opposition to the fingers.

to the next pitch which went up an extremely steep wall; the only holds available were small incut and sideholds on a thin crack running vertically up it. After several attempts I came to the conclusion that the pitch called for fast climbing so I launched myself at the wall and in about 15 feet the holds improved, easier moves leading to a stance and belay. Don then joined me and I started the crux pitch while he took over the rather dubious belay.

A rib of loose rock led to a corner below the overhangs where there was a good resting place. A traverse was now necessary, but in order to reach the first holds I had to lean low to the left on a sidehold. With this move ahead my mind naturally turned to thoughts of running belays for my second was some 40 feet below. A thin crack ran across the wall in front of me which, after ten minutes diligent work with a short length of wire, provided me with a single line threaded running belay. With the psychological aid derived from this, the elusive handhold, a small quartz pocket, seemed to move closer and I grasped it with my left hand; then a couple of rapid hand changes brought me to the foot of a short groove which I ascended on small holds. I was now halted abruptly at the undercut line of overhangs but was able to have a short rest in a squatting position. The only handholds at this point were underholds, but as movement seemed preferable to remaining still I traversed left, leaning out on my hands while my feet used sloping friction holds. After 10 feet the difficulties eased and a final layback move deposited me on easy slabs at the top of the climb.

Then it was Don's turn. He climbed up to the level of the overhangs and a short pause followed while he seemed to be contemplating the problem. Suddenly there was a flurry of activity below and, within a matter of seconds, he was up beside me saying that it was too hard to linger over.

The following morning was bright and sunny, a day for something difficult we thought, so after a late breakfast we walked up the pass to Dinas Cromlech. During the night a friend, Eric Rayson, had arrived. The presence of an extra man is good for the morale of a party on hard rock climbs and it was particularly welcome on this occasion, the route of our choice being Cenotaph Corner which was heralded as a symbol of a new era when it was climbed by Brown in 1952.

In the 1951 *Llanberis Guide* Harding said there was no doubt that with sufficient ironmongery and few scruples the Corner could be ascended. In fact, only two pitons are used and these for protection only. The Corner still commands a great deal of respect, and in the present edition of the *Guide* Moseley describes it as a ferocious piece of work demanding exceptional strength and skill.

As we prepared our gear at the foot of the climb another party arrived from the valley. After exchanging greetings we discovered that they had come to attempt the Left Wall of Cenotaph, a route following a very thin crack and requiring the use of several inserted pebbles.

Having donned my P.A.s and a dozen slings, I climbed the first few feet of easy ledges to the bottom of the Corner while Eric found a comfortable stance, displaying his great confidence in my ability by putting on a pair of thick gloves. The climbing became vertical immediately, but small footholds on both walls and good finger-jams in the corner crack made progress possible. After 30 feet, holds became scarce and I was forced to mantelshelf onto a small ledge on the left wall. Meanwhile, the variations in width of the crack enabled me to arrange an assortment of runners in the form of jammed knots, threaded line, and inserted chockstones. Although the angle of the rock was steep and the holds small it was possible to rest at intervals by clipping my waistloop into a running belay and so conserve valuable finger strength.

Fifty feet up, the crack widened to about 6 inches; the right wall became holdless and the left wall had only minute wrinkles. A large jammed chockstone below this section provided a good thread runner and then the next resting place was in a niche 30 feet away. The intervening distance had to be climbed by jamming the right arm and leg deep in the crack while the left hand and foot sought support on the left wall. I found it a strenuous form of movement and by the time I reached the niche the fingers of my left hand were extremely tired. Unfortunately there was one more awkward move to enter the niche as there was no good finishing jug inside it. A high step brought me to the level of the niche and I was able to grasp a large piton and clip in a karabiner.

Thus secured, I could make myself relatively comfortable on my airy perch and watch the party on the Left Wall.

Phil Gordon was leading, balancing delicately in a line sling while he endeavoured to insert a pebble, the size of a thimble, into the crack above him. Having succeeded in this, he threaded another sling through it, tested it warily with his weight and then pulled up to stand in it. A few minutes watching this daring display made me glad that I was on a 'free' climb and I turned my thoughts to the next move.

Above the niche the left wall bulges slightly so that a semi-layback has to be made facing right. Knowing that several people had fallen from this section I tackled it cautiously. After the first move no good handholds came to light so I had to be content with an uncomfortable right hand-jam high above my head. Using this I straightened up on a sloping hold on the right wall and then better handholds were within reach. The route seemed to relent on the last few feet by presenting the fingers of my groping left hand with a magnificent jug, and a final pull brought me to the top of the Corner into a pleasant green bower known as 'the valley.' The 120 feet of climbing had taken me forty minutes, but each of my two companions was up beside me in half that time.

It was still early in the afternoon, but the ascent seemed to call for a celebration so we returned to camp and spent our time sun-bathing and eating. The weather report for the morrow being favourable, we arranged to visit Cloggy and with an early start in mind we soon retired to bed. The new day dawned bright and clear but we did not wake to see it, and, in spite of our good intentions, it was midday when we finally crossed the rack railway at Cloggy Station, and 1 o'clock when we reached the crag.

The huge frowning cliff looked almost friendly today, the normal wet streaks on the rock being completely dried out. High up on the wall of East Gully we could see the deep crack marking the line of Octo, one of the earlier Extremes on the crag which we thought a good route to try as an introduction. With the normal collection of hammer, slings, rope and so on, Eric and I began the scramble up the gully to reach our route, while Don took up a suitable position for his rôle of photographer. The last 70 feet below the actual rock climbing consisted of almost vertical grass which was really fearsome when tackled solo in rubbers.

Once established on a grass ledge below the climb, we were able to view the first two pitches. The second pitch had an almost classical appearance, being a deep chimney, but the initial pitch had a definitely modern look. It was a crack requiring jamming or layback tactics, and a number of discarded socks at its base testified to its normally damp condition. However, it was now merely green and lichenous so we soon surmounted it and belayed in the inner recesses of the bottleneck chimney. When it came to climbing out of the bottleneck I found myself in some difficulty for it was both overhanging and constricted. Eventually I managed to move upwards by adopting a position with my left arm and leg outside the chimney and the rest of my body inside. Above this section, 120 feet of delightful airy climbing followed up a vertical corner, splendid hand and foot jams making up for the occasional lack of more conventional holds, and all too soon we arrived at the top of the East Buttress.

Octo had not taken us very long so we looked round for another route. Eric now took over the lead and we climbed Curving Crack which, although less difficult than the routes we had already done, was nevertheless interesting and well sustained. The afternoon was now well advanced so with one accord we beat a hasty retreat to the Halfway House for a welcome cup of tea.

While on Curving Crack we had been impressed by the line of Vember on our left. Three hundred and ten feet long, it was graded Exceptionally Severe by Brown and Whillans who first ascended it, so, needless to say, next morning saw us again trudging up the track to Cloggy, accompanied this time by two Londoners who were intending to do the Girdle of the East Buttress.

Vember seemed to have become much steeper since the previous day, but it was a little late for misgivings, so I approached the first pitch. For 70 feet it was a crack, generally very wet, which is usually laybacked. Having once adopted this position I found upward progress relatively easy, but the ground seemed to recede at an alarming rate, while no runners were forthcoming. In fact, I was at the top of the crack before I was able to thread a sling behind a doubtful chockstone. The next few feet were awkward grass-work till a grassy ramp terminated at a ledge with a large solid block belay.

The second pitch, which was quite short—about 25 feet—consisted of a narrow crack behind a flake. The wall on its right had some small footholds, but I decided that a layback was again the answer to the problem. It was steep, but the edge of the flake was good and, after a short but strenuous struggle, I reached a small ledge above the flake crack. This was supposedly the belay, but as the only position I could assume on it was a gargoyle-like squat, I put on a thread runner instead and prepared to continue up the crux pitch, making a total lead-out of 150 feet.

Above the ledge the route went straight up a shallow vertical groove which looked very fierce. Holds were few and far between, and it was only by bridging with feet wide apart that I could maintain a balanced position and move upwards. After 30 feet I began to realize that this pitch, so far as I was concerned, was irreversible, but having committed myself I had to carry on. Just as the strength in my fingers began to ebb, a small spike came into view above me; I thankfully looped a sling over it and rested while I reassured Eric who was beginning to give me worried glances from below. His apprehension was apparently due to his having forgotten to bring his thick gloves.

A respite in the form of several feet of easier climbing followed, then the groove faded into vertical rock. At this point I found a piton solidly inserted in a crack, a sure sign that the section above was difficult. After climbing past the piton holds diminished until I found myself crucified against the rock on very small holds, the problem being to step up and to the left onto a little shelf. After a few attempts in that direction I discovered a reasonable sidehold and was able to pull myself onto the shelf. From here a corner of about 15 feet provided a last obstacle. Then the main difficulties were over and I was able to relax on a broad grass ledge. Eric followed me up this pitch in grand style, but we both agreed that it was the most harrowing piece of rock we had so far encountered during our holiday. The rest of the route was exposed but endowed with good incut holds for which we were duly thankful. After this climb, the thought of another simply did not arise; a cold wind had sprung up and we at once retired to the valley.

The following day was our last in the Pass and we had time for only one climb. Cemetery Gate seemed a suitable one to finish our holiday in spite of its rather morbid name. It is a companion route to Cenotaph Corner, following its right wall, and, like the Corner, is graded Exceptionally Severe. It is longer, however, as the ground drops away sharply to the right of Cenotaph. We arrived at Dinas Cromlech before noon and found the whole crag bathed in sunshine, so Eric selected a belay among some thick bushes to protect his feet, rigidly encased in P.A.s, from the heat.

Meanwhile I climbed the introductory section of moderate rock until I was brought to a sudden stop below a bulge. After arranging several runners on small spikes, none of which inspired great confidence, I started up the bulge on finger and toeholds. A foot above my outstretched hand was a small shelf, but to reach it I had to raise my right arm while my left hand took most of my weight, hanging on a wrinkle scarcely more than a quarter of an inch wide. However, the hardest part of the move turned out to be plucking up courage to attempt it, and in a moment I was pulling up onto the shelf. Twenty feet higher, the crack above brought me over another slight bulge to a belay. The angle of the rock at this point proved to be too steep to allow me to balance on my stance, but by jamming a piton hammer in the crack and clipping myself to it I achieved the desired effect.

Eric then came up to join me and a short pantomime followed as we changed positions. Eventually we got organized and I continued up the crack which swept upwards vertically for another 60 feet. The holds were quite substantial, the situation airy and exhilarating, and only the occasional loose hold marred the pitch. The crack ended at a narrow ledge from which my companion led through to the top of the crag up a thin flake which did not look particularly sound but proved to be solid enough.

Re-united at the top, we had a short bask in the sunshine, and then it was time to return to camp to pack and prepare for the all-night marathon train journey back to Newcastle. But as we were leaving we knew that a return to Llanberis was inevitable, for these steep Welsh cliffs throw out an irresistible challenge to the rock climber and mountaineer alike.

SOME SCOTTISH SCRAMBLES

Terry Sullivan

We had been in the C.I.C. Hut for three days in late February and I hadn't even seen Ben Nevis; in fact I had begun to think it was a myth. However, a fine spell came along, and seeing is believing. A few days later we had made sorties on to the North-East Buttress and into Garadh and Comb Gullies. Then my friends left and I went down to Fort William for food and a companion. Actually I found three companions and they had food, so, in such ideal company, I returned to the hut.

The next day we went to 'look at' Platforms Rib. Hamish* mumbled something about 'first winter ascent' and started off. After about 100 feet there was a hair-raising traverse left for 15 feet, followed by a nasty ice-choked groove which took Hamish quite a time.

'Come on up.'

'Shouldn't we rope up?'

'Oh, all right then.'

We all joined up and went on our way. THE problem was an ice-coated overhang which Hamish climbed by using two ice pitons. He put them both in and then took out the bottom one, placing it above the other; this was repeated twice and the overhang was climbed. The rest of us were now faced with several feet of unclimbable ice.

'How do I get over this?'

'Traverse right above the overhang' a helpful voice said.

Above the overhang I duly traversed right, did a tension move into a gully and climbed a horrible loose snow-ice wall to get out. There was then a 250-foot groove, and it was getting dark. Suddenly the situation was serious. With axe in one hand and the rope in the other, we struggled up, blinded by spindrift and the growing darkness. We beat a full retreat down the North-East Buttress, not even removing our crampons until we got to the hut.

My next visit was at Easter and everything was covered with fresh snow, but, in brilliant sunshine and with clear skies, we set off for Tower Ridge. At the bottom of the Little Tower we roped up as the climbing became difficult. There was a lot of new snow over ice and it took a total of four hours to reach the foot of the Great Tower. We ate chocolate and

* Hamish MacInnes.

looked at the Eastern Traverse. I started on it, scraping and cutting; the soft snow was balling under my crampons. After 40 feet there was a dip, the snow was slightly corniced and the step down was out of balance; indeed it was the *moment de verité*. I went back. We tried to the right of the Tower but the snow appeared ready to avalanche, so we returned to its foot once more. The only safe way was Pigott's Route. This started up a little ice-coated slab.

'Should I take my crampons off?'

'No, it's just like wearing nails,' Eric said casually.

The slab led to a steep chimney, then a ledge which brought me to an ice-filled crack. I always get nervous at cruces and I was nervous now. Forty-five minutes later and 25 feet higher I was on top of the Great Tower. The dying sun turned the snow to pink, the whirling spindrift from the summit plateau seemed to beckon us, and ahead stretched an unbroken arête of snow. In the gathering darkness we fought our way across the Gap and cramponed on to the top. We were more than satisfied with our seven hours when we heard later that the parties behind us had been benighted.

One day in June we toiled up the Alt a' Mhuillin, had a leisurely lunch, then did the Long Climb; very pleasant, but we were here for something else; on the Great Buttress of Carn Dearg were two of the most coveted climbs in Scotland, Sassenach and Centurion. Ian* had made the third ascent of Sassenach the previous week, so the next day we turned to Centurion. This was a Downes-Whillans innovation which had not yet been repeated throughout.

We spun for leads and I started. The tension in my stomach was like a fist and the words of the typical Rock and Ice description kept going through my head: words like 'awkwardly', and 'delicately.' The second pitch is a 120-foot crack, one of the most magnificent pitches I have ever done. On the left is a holdless wall, while on the right is a sweep of smooth armour-plated slabs that fall to the ground. Ian was 80 feet up when the rope jammed. I had to untie and climb down to free it while Ian tied himself to a hastily inserted piton. At the top of this crack a traverse left and a groove led to an overhung bay with a piton belay: a splendid situation. We made a difficult exit by the left wall, and from

* Ian Clough (Y.M.C.).

here things went unsteadily by alternate leads to a junction with the traverse of Route 2.

Breaking through the overhangs above was the crux of the climb. A very awkward step is made, without handholds, on to a flake. This leads to a smooth slab which is climbed with more faith than friction. Now, with one pitch to go, the tension was at its highest. I climbed the 'spiky arête' and from the 'bulge' I could see the finish. The most tired person in the world could have done that last little layback, and the climb was over. Without hesitation I say it is the finest route I have ever done.

Three weeks later I was back. Sassenach for the Sassenachs was the theme. The principal feature of the climb is a huge dièdre, the entrance to which is barred by a big roof. The climbing is quite reasonable until just below the roof. Here my two friends and I surveyed the problem.

Laden with slings, I attacked the initial crack. The first step was to stand in a jammed knot sling; this brought another sling into reach. But this second one was old and tatty and there was no room for another. I looked at the sling, looked at the belay, breathed deeply, pulled up, and promptly hit my head on the roof. An étrier was clipped in and I 'rested.' The more I looked at the sling, the worse it appeared, so, deciding that the situation was bad for my nerves, I left for the 'safety' of a chockstone about 10 feet to the left. Another sling went round this and more étriers were clipped in to give both rest and security. A look round the corner, and I said to myself:'Ah, layback on that flake, stand on the ledge and I'm up.' I stepped up and started laybacking; the flake was loose. Back in the étriers, I viewed the situation again. But there was no other way. With profound respect for the flake's stability, I tried once more and it went: the pitch, I mean; the flake is still there to my knowledge.

As I was bringing up Alan and Peter,* black clouds began rolling in and the wind was increasing; when the three of us viewed the big dièdre, the rain was lashing at us. After a hurried conference we decided to go on, so I put my socks over my rubbers and started up. The way led up, past, and over the biggest, loosest and dirtiest flake in the world. All three of us found this part most harrowing, but except for this one short passage the rock was quite good. As we gained

* Alan Parkin and Peter Drake (J.M.C.S.).

height, the rain increased to a torrent. However, the main difficulties were behind us and things went fairly well until we came to the final grooves which are normally quite reasonable. But in the wind, rain and hail, and with our numbed fingers and tattered socks, they were very hard and we found ourselves fighting a new crux which delayed us and made a total time of seven hours for this magnificent climb. Later, I read an article in which R. O. Downes described Sassenach as perhaps the finest mountaineering route in Great Britain.

Progress is akin to perpetual motion. In one year Sassenach and Centurion have gone; they have been eclipsed by the grandeur and difficulty of such climbs as Shibboleth, Yo Yo, He Haw, Carnivore—perhaps the hardest climb in Scotland—and for those who like slabs there is the Long Wake in Glen Etive. On Carn Dearg, Robin Smith and Haston have put up the Bat, a superb line running between Sassenach and Centurion.

However, it is the winters that provide the greatest climbing in Scotland. One of the 'last great problems' on Ben Nevis, Point 5 Gully, was climbed by Clough, Pipes and Alexander last year; Zero Gully and the great faces both of the Comb and the Orion have fallen under the adze. This year Robin Smith and Jimmy Marshall made the first winter ascents of Gardyloo Buttress, the Long Climb and Minus 3 Gully; and, in seven hours, the second ascent of Point 5 Gully. To prove themselves, the authors of these new climbs have been to the Alps and 'ambled' their way up such things as the West faces of the Dru and the Blaitière, the North faces of the Cima Grande and the Cima Ovest, the Civetta North Wall, and the Éperon Walker—the most coveted climb in all the Alps. Scotland is swinging along in a New Big Era and the password is 'tremendous.'

A BRAKING HITCH

John C. Lyth

This hitch (illustrated in Fig. A) was designed primarily for abseiling on a single rope; but its most important use may be the saving of a falling leader by his second. With no tension on the loose end of the rope, the hitch slides quite easily through the karabiner; but when braking, surprisingly little tension on the loose end will check or hold it.

TO ABSEIL ON A SINGLE ROPE

This needs little explanation. The karabiner carrying the braking hitch on the main rope is snapped to a sling round the waist (or a figure-of-eight round the thighs) of the climber. The hanging rope below this can be held in any way desired. I usually carry it over one shoulder. This is not needed for friction; but it prevents the fingers holding it from getting caught in the hitch as it slides. The abseil can be made at any required speed, except that, at the beginning of a very long abseil, the weight of the loose rope may slow things down through the hitch for a short period.

As my design of the braking hitch was originally for abseiling in this way, perhaps I may be excused if I enlarge upon it a little. My reason for wishing to abseil on a single rope was in order to climb up again. Not being very brave, very young or very experienced as a leader on anything harder than a Moderate or easy Diff., I was glad of the security of a rope, which I used as a safeguard only, with the help of a Prusik sling.

Some of the climbs which I wished to 'lead' in this way were much too long to be covered by a doubled rope of any normal length. Since after abseiling I should in any case be returning to my belay, I began to use a single rope for this purpose. The drawback was a 'hot bottom' (or a 'hot shoulder,' if the rope was run through a karabiner at the waist). That this was a very real drawback will be appreciated when I mention that many of my abseils were over 100 feet long. Using a 150-foot nylon, 3,200 lbs. B.S., I have many times abseiled down the three chief pitches of Bluebell Wall on Shepherd's Crag in one swoop of 140 feet.

Also, my Prusik sling has been of more than academic interest. On an occasion three years ago I came off backwards as clean as a whistle on a new climb I was exploring. I had been unable to bring up the Prusik for a bit, and went

down some 15 feet before the rope tightened. I was quite pleased when it did, with a further 30 or 40 feet down to steep scree.

THE PRUSIK SLING

For any who wish to try this as a safeguard when 'leading' in the manner described, or exploring a new climb, I give these hints from considerable experience.

(*a*) The sling should be thinner than the rope, otherwise the knot may slip instead of locking.

(*b*) Three turns round the rope, instead of the usual two, doubly ensures its locking, and adds little to the friction when slipping the knot up.

(*c*) When one hand only is free to bring up the sling, the rope may be held down by catching it between a knee and the rock face. If there is a second, he can be told to hold the rope down when called on—but warned not to pull his 'leader' off!

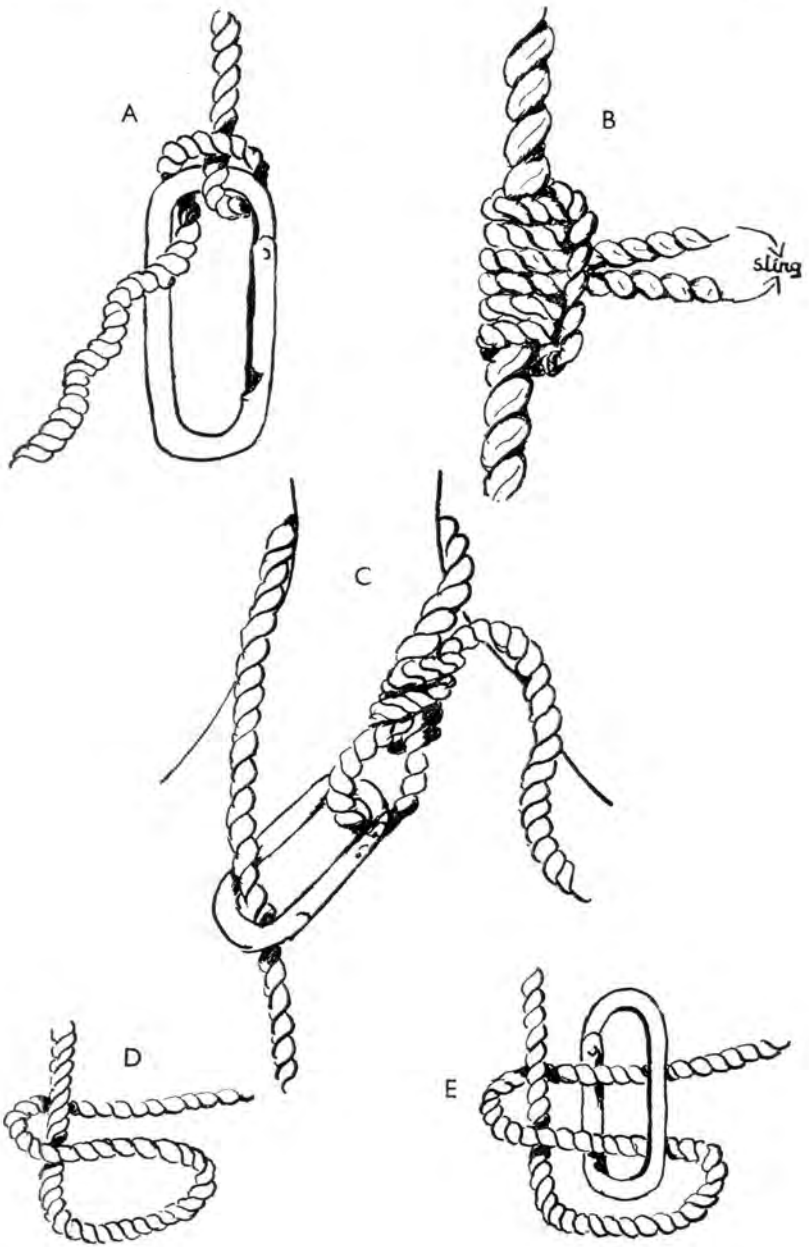
(*d*) Use a sling long enough to allow the knot to slide up 2 or 3 feet at once—in fact above the head; and if both hands are free, pull the rope down taut through the knot. With a long, elastic nylon, this makes a comforting 'tight rope'—until one begins to climb again!

(*e*) For those unacquainted with the Prusik sling (described in various books), Fig. B shows it applied to the rope with three turns. It needs no explanation.

TO ABSEIL ON THE DOUBLED ROPE

When it is required to bring the rope down after abseiling, the braking hitch can be used with the double rope; but it is better to prevent one side from running round the belay, and to use that as a single rope. This is readily done by making an overhand loop in one rope, and snapping a karabiner through the loop and onto the other rope, as in Fig. C. This other rope, complete with braking hitch on a second karabiner, is then used for the abseil.

The rope with the overhand loop can hang loose or be grasped with the hand which holds the rope above the head. Alternatively, I have found it useful as a life line for a novice. When finally it is required to bring the rope down, it is necessary only to pull on the end with the loop and karabiner, when the other end will slide round the belay in the ordinary way.


A
B
sling
C
D
E

It will be noticed that when the hitch is used for abseiling, the friction which provides the braking effect is 'rope to rope.' This is what makes it so effective; and the rope never gets hot, because the point of friction is constantly changing. The karabiner gets warm, but never really hot, as it is not supplying the friction. This is important since, in the case of gadgets now on the market designed for braking effect, the necessary friction is got between the rope and the metal of the gadget, which must surely become dangerously hot in a long abseil.

The wear on the rope with the braking hitch is negligible. I am still using a 150-foot nylon for all purposes, having abseiled many thousands of feet on it, as a single rope, with this hitch. In addition I have used it very frequently for ordinary climbing with three on the rope.

TO SAFEGUARD A LEADER

The karabiner is attached by a sling either to a belay, or to the waist of a well-belayed second. The rope is paid out by the second to the leader through the braking hitch, the loose end of the rope being held in one hand. Should the leader fall, the rope could instantly be checked by a very moderate pull on this end. Indeed, any weight which the rope might sustain could be held in this way easily with one hand; so much so that, in such a case, it would be as well to apply tension gradually in order to avoid stopping the falling leader with too much of a jerk. After the fall has been checked, it will naturally not be possible to pull the leader up again through the hitch; but if the rope below this can be drawn up at all, so easing the tension, it can of course be pulled through at will. Moreover, a climber hanging from the hitch could be lowered very readily at any desired speed to the full length of the rope.

This method of safeguarding can also be applied by the leader when bringing up a second. In this case, the leader draws in the rope through the braking hitch; and, should the second come off, his fall is instantly checked by tension above the hitch.

TO PREPARE THE BRAKING HITCH

The braking hitch can be prepared, in a matter of seconds, at any point in the rope, since no threading through is required, if the following method is used:—

The rope is laid as in Fig. D, i.e. curled round and taken a half turn round itself. The karabiner is then snapped on to the *doubled* part of the rope, as in Fig. E, *not* through the single loop only. It is immaterial in which direction the hitch is laid with reference to the rope, as when the karabiner is held and either end is pulled, the hitch adjusts itself through the karabiner.

The advantages of the braking hitch are:

(1) It is used with an ordinary karabiner.
(2) It provides enormous braking effect without danger of over-heating metal, which could lead to melting of nylon rope.
(3) The braking effect can be varied at will.
(4) It can be applied in an instant at any point in the rope, without threading either end.
(5) It costs nothing!

I have thought it worth while to publish details of this braking hitch, which I designed some ten years ago, because of the many serious and often fatal accidents to climbers, resulting partly from the inability of the second to hold a falling leader. It is manifestly impossible for a woman or small man to do more than slightly check the fall of a moderately heavy leader who has come off even a few feet above. The gadgets on the market intended to brake such a falling leader are fairly expensive, some heavy and not easy to apply quickly. In fact, of the thousands now climbing (in Britain alone), not many will carry them. But nearly all climbers have a karabiner and sling; and if adopted as a matter of course, perhaps this braking hitch would help to solve the problem of the weak second; and the belaying of the leader would become more than a psychological demonstration.

POSTSCRIPT—THE LYTH HITCH

BY J. ROBERT FILES

John Lyth has demonstrated the value of his braking hitch in abseiling and as a safeguard used by a leader in bringing up his second man. He saw that a more important use might be to save a falling leader but could not find a climbing friend sufficiently co-operative to prove the point.

On his suggestion we joined him to carry out some tests using a ten stone sack of stones as the 'leader.' This victim was pushed over the edge of an old slate quarry in Borrowdale and allowed to fall

free for distances up to 42 feet—the maximum fall possible in the quarry, leaving a suitable margin for the elasticity of nylon rope. An old 1¼ inch nylon rope, referred to in John Lyth's article, was used. The karabiner was attached to a stout birch tree on the edge of the quarry. In each case the fall was easily checked and the victim held, by one hand, with very little effort. It was perhaps easier to check the fall when the karabiner was placed behind the second man; the extra half turn of rope on the karabiner providing some additional friction. In the 42-foot drop, however, the karabiner was directly in front of the second who experienced no difficulty in holding the leader. No grip was applied to the rope until it began to run; about 6 feet were then allowed to run as the fall was checked and the 'leader' held quite easily. The second wore a leather glove (always a wise precaution whatever type of belay is used) and felt that he might have suffered a minor abrasion if a glove had not been worn.

Although the Lyth hitch has not yet had the final test of holding a live leader we feel that a very good case has been made—the evidence being ten stone, falling free for 42 feet, held easily by one hand. The shock to the 'leader' was eased by the stretch of nylon rope plus the gradual braking effect of a further 6 feet running through the karabiner. After the fall the 'leader' could be lowered with great ease. There was no apparent damage to rope or karabiner although the knot securing the rope around the victim was very tightly jammed.

Probably the most suitable karabiner for the purpose is the large oval type; the kidney-shaped karabiner might obstruct the running rope. It might be worth adding a general reminder that care should always be taken, when allowing a rope to run through a karabiner for any purpose, that the rope does not unscrew the locking ring and that side pressure cannot be applied to the gate by rope, projecting rock or a second linked karabiner thus causing it to open.

If a runner, consisting of sling and karabiner, is used it should not be forgotten that this will reverse the direction of the pull, should the leader fall. The arrangement of the belay, whatever method is used, should then always be adequate to safeguard against an upward as well as a downward pull.

CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

BORROWDALE — *Peter Moffat*

EAGLE CRAG

TRAPEZE — 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 31st May, 1959. P.R., G. Woodhouse. Starts at the extreme left-hand side of the crag where a smooth wall joins the main crag and forms a large crack.

Climb about 20 feet, when the crack steepens. The next 15 feet are strenuous laybacking on an undercut spike. Continue up the large cleft until stopped by big chockstones forming a cave. Swing out to the left to escape.

THE CLEFT — 210 feet. Very severe. First ascent 22nd August, 1959. P.R., A. Rosher. Starts to the right of Falcon Crack, at an obvious cleft in the centre of the crag.

(1) 50 feet. Start in the corner then move left and up two grass ledges until below an overhanging crack. Move with difficulty right, onto a large ledge below the smooth-looking cleft. Block belay.

(2) 50 feet. (5 pitons, 3 in place.) Ascend the corner direct with the aid of pitons until a move left can be made to a sharp spike for sling and étrier. The last piton is reached from this spike and an awkward move right made to a good ledge and spike belay on the right.

(3) 60 feet. Pitch 5 of Girdle.

(4) 50 feet. Traverse left to the edge, then straight up to the top.

EAGLE CRAG GIRDLE — 340 feet. Very severe. First ascent 31st May, 1959. P.R., G. Woodhouse, F. Carroll. Starts at the extreme right-hand side of the crag to the left of a large grassy gully.

(1) 70 feet. The groove is climbed via the arête on the left. Move right at the top to a large grass ledge and block belay.

(2) 30 feet. Move down left onto the lower grass ledge, then traverse the steep open groove round the corner. Continue left to a small steep corner; pull over this towards a tree in a groove up to the left. Straight up to the belay on pitch 3 of Post Mortem.

(3) 50 feet. Delicate moves left from the ledge for about 20 feet; then continue to belay above large shattered blocks. (Low chockstone belay on Green Wall.)

(4) 25 feet. Move out left up to large grass ledge, belay on the right.

(5) 60 feet. A very steep traverse left on good holds until a ledge (with a nest) is reached. High holds over the bulge above are reached and a strenuous mantelshelf to a good ledge and piton belay.

(6) 40 feet. Traverse out left to the steep rib, then descend to a belay below a large chimney.

(7) 65 feet. Finish up the chimney (last pitch of Great Stair).

BLACK CRAG

WACK 90 feet. Very severe. First ascent 15th March, 1959. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts from the traverse of Troutdale Pinnacle and goes up the overhang above. The overhang is ascended by the right-hand crack (two pitons in place). When the lip is reached, the last piton being used high up to the left, move right, then left and straight up the centre of the buttress to the summit. (6-7 pitons.)

BLACK CRAG ORDINARY ROUTE About hard very difficult or easy severe. First ascent 23rd August, 1959. P.R., E. Rocher.

VARIATION FINISH Starts at belay of pitch 10, and goes up to the right in the groove then makes an easy traverse above the holly tree up on the right and continues up the buttress above the overhang.

(1) 50 feet. Move up in the corner of the open scoop, mantelshelf onto a sloping ledge, traverse right above holly tree, then drop down slightly to a small ledge (poor belay).

(2) 45 feet. Move up right, and finish straight up the rib to the summit.

SHEPHERD'S CRAG

BLUDGEON 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent 14th April, 1957. P.R., P. Lockey. Starts between Little Chamonix and Crescendo.

(1) 60 feet. Straight up the little steep arête, then up to the left of the spike on Little Chamonix. Scramble up to a wide groove just to the right of the last pitches of Crescendo.

(2) 50 feet. Move into the groove, then out right and cross Scorpion into a groove which is climbed to its top, until below and to the right of the large overhanging pinnacle. Move into the corner to its right with the aid of a piton. With difficulty jam the pinnacle until one can swing to its left. The overhang directly above the top of the pinnacle is climbed with the aid of a crack (very difficult).

CONCLUSION 80 feet. Very severe. First ascent 2nd October, 1955. P.R., P. Whitwell. Starts about 20 feet to the right of Brown Slabs Wall and goes straight up the obvious vertical groove.

The first crux is reached after climbing 15 feet to a small tree (piton runner here advised). Continue straight up, laybacking another slight overhang until an easier groove is reached which is followed onto Brown Slabs Arête.

P.S. 115 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th April, 1959. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts a few feet to the right of North Buttress and goes up the broken groove above the holly tree.

(1) 50 feet. Straight up the groove until the belay of the last pitch of North Buttress is reached.

(2) 65 feet. Continue up the fault above, which is very steep, until a protection piton is reached (in place), swing across to the right (with difficulty), then follow easy rib to summit.

BROWN CRAG GROOVES — 190 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th September, 1959. F. Crosby, P. Muscroft. Starts 15 feet to the left of Brown Crag Wall and takes the obvious groove between Brown Crag Wall and Vesper.

(1) 80 feet. Up the steep wall for 10 feet, then move right, under the steep corner. (Peg for protection.) Over the corner and bear left. Climb another steep corner using holds on the left-hand rib. (Peg in corner.) A good belay is found above the corner.

(2) 110 feet. Climb delicately onto the block behind the belay, then move left into the groove which is climbed for 30 feet; then right, to the top of the crag. Finish at a small birch tree.

P.T.O. — 80 feet. Very severe. First ascent May, 1959. P.R., R. Marshall. Goes up the steep rib just right of Conclusion, and joins Brown Slabs Arête.

PORCUPINE — 95 feet. Very severe. First ascent 2nd July, 1955. P.R., E. Ray. Starts a few feet to the right of Devil's Wedge.

(1) 65 feet. From a sharp pinnacle pull directly over the small overhang, continue until a sloping ledge is reached (runner). Move out left onto the edge, then straight up a groove above a small tree.

(2) 30 feet. The small overhanging corner just to the right of the last crack of Monolith (2 pitons).

FALCON CRAG

FALCON CRAG BUTTRESS — 210 feet. Very severe. First ascent 4th May, 1958. P.R., P. Lockey. Starts above a grassy hump where an ash tree grows. The last pitch of this route goes up the corner of the very obvious smooth wall, which is the main feature of the crag.

(1) 80 feet. The broken groove (in which, a few feet up, is an oak tree) is climbed until one can move right and up another small black groove; then traverse up to the right until one can traverse no longer. A small ledge is reached below the steep wall (piton belay).

(2) 70 feet. Climb straight up the wall until a protection piton (in place) is reached. Traverse to the left, then climb a rather awkward overhanging crack (protection piton in place above). Continue straight up until a groove can be entered, which brings one to the corner of the small wall. Belay a few feet up this groove (piton).

(3) 60 feet. Four pitons needed, two in place (channel type). The first 15 feet of the corner can be climbed free; artificial is then used until the last groove is reached which is climbed with difficulty.

FALCON CRAG, LOWER

HEDERA GROOVES 180 feet. Easy very severe. First ascent August, 1956. P.R., P. Lockey. Same start as Funeral Way.

(1) 25 feet. Pitch 1 of Funeral Way.

(2) 100 feet. The same as Funeral Way for 25 feet, but after ascending the steep corner and traversing about 15 feet, continue traversing. When a small bulge is reached move down below a groove above the ivy. Climb this, then move left to belay at a holly tree in the main groove.

(3) 25 feet. Straight up the groove to a ledge with a rotten tree.

(4) 30 feet. Move up left and continue to the summit.

SELECTION TRAVERSE 320 feet. Very severe. First ascent 8th February, 1959. P.R., B. Aughton.

(1) 65 feet. First pitch of Spinup (piton belay).

(2) 80 feet. Second pitch of Spinup but before the top is reached traverse down to the last belay of Hedera Grooves.

(3) 45 feet. Traverse right with difficulty until one can descend to a small uncomfortable ledge (piton belay).

(4) 30 feet. Move down slightly, then traverse right, crossing Funeral Way, which brings one to the last pitch of Deruptus.

(5) 100 feet. Last pitch of Deruptus.

CASTLE CRAG

DISILLUSION 105 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 21st March, 1959. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts about the centre of the lower left-hand buttress below a noticeable crack.

Climb a steep corner on good holds to a sloping ledge. Traverse right until a long step right is made. Straight up a rib followed by a corner, at the top of which, traverse left on fingerholds and small toeholds to a broken crack which is climbed to the summit.

HIND CRAG

SOUTH BUTTRESS 545 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 20th February, 1959. D.N.G., J. P. Greenop, E. Brown. Starts at the southernmost limit of the crag, up a shallow corner some 60 feet up the scree from an old sheep wall.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the corner until it is possible to step left to a mantelshelf. A balance traverse left ensues. This peters out, forcing movement up and left to a large flake and adjoining ledge.

(2) 80 feet. The short wall to the left of the flake is crowned by a mossy slab. Steep rocks above are climbed starting left and then trending right. Follow a diagonal line right, over heathery rocks, for 40 feet or so, then traverse directly

right, round a rib, into an open exposed chimney which is climbed to a heather ledge and block belays.

(3) 25 feet. Up and left over much easier rock to the foot of a vertical ill-defined chimney. Block belay.

(4) 60 feet. The chimney, then continue up and left to a grassy platform in a little gully.

(5) 30 feet. A short rough wall on the left. Poor belay.

(6) 25 feet. The arête ahead.

(7) 50 feet. This broadens to a buttress with an awkward finish on a grass ledge.

(8) 80 feet. A short wall is followed by sterner rock which can be climbed direct by using a crack or by a groove. Easy-angled slabs lead to a belay.

(9) 40 feet. Keep to the right-hand edge of the slabs overlooking the gully.

(10) 85 feet. Easy climbing and scrambling, keeping right over slabs and a broad cracked ridge.

(11) 25 feet. The final gendarme turns out to be a steep wall.

NATIONAL TRUST CRAGS

DECEPTION 210 feet. Mild severe. First ascent 3rd June, 1959. I. Clough, S. R. Wilkinson. Starts at a large cairn at the lowest rocks of the northern of the two National Trust crags. Follows the left-hand side of the cliff which projects from the rest of the crag.

(1) 60 feet. Up a 15-foot groove, then scramble up right to a tree belay below the steep wall.

(2) 60 feet. Up above belay and round right, into an undercut slab corner. Up to the overhang, traverse right to the edge, then up the rib to a tree belay. A good pitch.

(3) 40 feet. Up left, then right, to a tree belay.

(4) 50 feet. Diagonally left up the wall then follow the arête to the top and the tourist path.

GREAT END CRAG

REDBERRY WALL 345 feet. Very severe. First ascent November, 1958. J. A. Austin, B. A. Fuller (alternate leads). Starts 30 feet right of a big cave by a 20-foot embedded pinnacle.

(1) 100 feet. Climb the pinnacle. Step onto a grassy gangway sloping up left, and follow it to a large holly tree at the foot of a groove slanting to the right. Climb the slab to a large tree belay.

(2) 20 feet. Follow the thin rake slanting right behind the tree to a small holly and an oak tree belay.

(3) 60 feet. Move back down the rake until it is possible to step round the rib into a shallow groove. Traverse across two more grooves to a grass ledge. Along the ledge until it is possible to climb up past a tree to a ledge and belay.

(4) 20 feet. Up left to a better belay.
(5) 65 feet. Move left round the rib and climb the shallow groove slanting right to a small ledge. Move left then trend right up the wall above to an oak tree and a flake belay.
(6) 80 feet. Up to the square ledge on the right, then traverse left to a holly tree at the foot of a heather groove which is climbed until slabs lead to the top.

RAVEN CRAG, COMBE GHYLL

PENDULUM 355 feet. Very severe. First ascent 16th August, 1959. F. Crosby, D. A. Elliott.

Starts just above Solfidian's Route and follows the gangway running up the great overhanging wall to the left of Raven Crag Buttress.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the centre gangway to a bilberry patch. A small mantelshelf in the first 15 feet is the main difficulty.
(2) 65 feet. Continue until this gangway peters out. Move right into an alcove at the foot of the gangway proper.
(3) 105 feet. The gangway, now a more serious proposition. Easiest climbing on its outside edge—move cautiously over precariously perched blocks and continue to where the gangway merges into the overhanging wall. Very poor stance with small knob or piton for belay.
(4) 55 feet. Piton pitch. Straddle across the gully to below a vertical corner. Ascend for 20 feet, then move left to avoid the largest overhang and finish over the smaller one to reach a stance and belay in a grassy nook by an old raven's nest. About 7 pitons.
(5) 80 feet. Clamber right 10 feet to finish up the last pitch of Raven Crag Buttress.

SUMMIT ROUTE VARIATION FINISH 70 feet. Severe (just) if taken direct. Very difficult by the traverse. First ascent 3rd October, 1959. D.M., D. A. Crawford.

(1) 20 feet. The corner 10 feet to the right of the start of pitch 10 can be climbed direct. (Alternatively, from a shelf about 6 feet up, traverse 5 feet to the left into a V groove. From a bollard about 6 feet up on the right wall a sloping slab leads to the top of the corner.) Ascend a few feet to a belay at the foot of a steep slab on the right.
(2) 50 feet. The slab is climbed on small holds to a sentry-box in a well-defined crack which is followed to the top.

BUTTERMERE

BUCKSTONE HOWE

CAESAR 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent 27th September, 1959. L. Brown, A. P. Turnbull.

Starts 20 yards right of Honister Wall at the lowest rocks.

(1) 30 feet. Scramble up for a few feet to the base of a green groove which is climbed to a ledge and large pedestal belay.

(2) 100 feet. The belays are just on the left of the point where the overhangs are at their greatest. Just above the overhangs behind the belays is a sentry-box. Climb into this. Exit on the right onto a small ledge. Step onto a groove on the left and climb, mainly by bridging, to an oak tree and belay on the right.

(3) 70 feet. Climb easily for 20 feet, then the rock steepens and good holds lead to the top.

YEW CRAG

EXUDATION 120 feet. Hard severe. First ascent 8th February, 1959. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. Starts 40 feet to the left of Holly Tree Grooves and is marked by a small cairn.

(1) 90 feet. The wall is climbed for 30 feet on small holds; looking right diagonally, holds can be seen which are used to gain the arête above. This is climbed direct until the gully is reached. Spike belay.

(2) 30 feet. An awkward move across the gully is made using sideholds. The groove above is climbed to an overhanging bulge which is ascended on good holds.

GIRDLE TRAVERSE 255 feet. Very severe. First ascent 8th February, 1959. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas.

(1) 20 feet. First pitch of Flake and Crack.

(2) 40 feet. Second pitch of Flake and Crack.

(3) 65 feet. A fine traverse to the right is made for 20 feet; ahead and above a small spike of rock can be seen; a sling can be looped over this and a semi-pendulum effected onto small holds. The rib above is climbed on good holds. Spike belay. (Third pitch of After-Notion.)

(4) 50 feet. Climb diagonally right until an arête is reached and climbed. Spike belay.

(5) 30 feet. Looking below, a groove can be seen with a bulge; this is reversed on indifferent holds. Spike belay. (Second pitch of Exudation.)

(6) 25 feet. Round the corner to the right a fine descending traverse can be made until one is at the bottom of the fourth pitch of Holly Tree Grooves. Spike belay.

(7) 25 feet. Fourth pitch of Holly Tree Grooves.

AFTER-NOTION 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent 15th February, 1959. R. McHaffie, M. Monk, J. Douglas. Starts 20 feet to the right of the Flake and Crack climb by a small cairn.

(1) 25 feet. The small buttress is ascended awkwardly on small holds. Scrambling follows, up to and behind the big flake which serves as a belay.

(2) 20 feet. The wall above is climbed with the aid of a crack until

a gangway is reached, which is climbed on good holds to a spike belay.

(3) 65 feet. A fine traverse to the right is made for 20 feet; ahead and above a small spike of rock can be seen; a sling can be looped over this and a semi-pendulum be effected onto small holds. The rib above is climbed on good holds. Spike belay.

STRIDDLE CRAG

SCHIZOPHRENIA 140 feet. Very severe. First ascent 5th April, 1959. C. J. Crowther, D.N.G. Starts up a large detached boulder, 15 feet left of Ding Dong.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the boulder and cross to the main slabs. Follow Ding Dong to the poor belays below a nose.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the nose direct and continue up a slab to a position below the final nose. Move right to a large ledge and belay. Stance below pitch 3 of Ding Dong.

(3) 45 feet. From the belay a delicate ascending traverse left is made to the foot of a steep open corner which is climbed. The wall above is crossed to a crack which contains a large recessed hold, the key to the upper face. Once the feet are in the hold difficulties are over and the final moves, though still exposed, lead amiably to block belays at the top.

ELVINA 210 feet. Very Difficult. First ascent 31st August, 1959. D.N.G., S. Thompson. Starts 3 feet to the left of Schizophrenia below an obvious heathery groove.

(1) 30 feet. The groove is climbed until steep rock above suggests a finish up the wall on the left. Belay well to the right of the heather ledge.

(2) 45 feet. The 10-foot wall to the left of the belay is surmounted and is followed by an easy traverse left to a steep rib which terminates the ledge. Belay.

(3) 40 feet. Climb the crest of the rib, and as it broadens bear slightly right to a good spike belay. Junction with Fretsaw Climb.

(4) 35 feet. Descend slightly and cross the wall on the left by traversing above a large detached flake. A spike belay is reached after 10 feet of climbing up the rib which bounds the wall.

(5) 60 feet. Step up and right into an open scoop, then ascend the fine rock ahead on good holds. Flake belay.

THE GIRDLE OF CESTUS 450 feet. Severe. First ascent 4th October, 1959. D.N.G., J. P. Greenop. Starts at the foot of the great chockstone pitch in Fleetwith Gully.

(1) 45 feet. The imposing left wall of the gully is climbed on magnificent rock. Bear left at 30 feet and pull onto a small

stance with good flake belay below a deeply cut groove which starts up to the right.

(2) 35 feet. The groove soon impends and is left after 20 feet in favour of the exposed wall on the right. This is climbed directly to a heather platform with poor belays.

(3) 30 feet. Descend a little to the left and traverse left over heathery rock to a prominent spike belay.

(4) 70 feet. Pitch 3 of Traverse and Slab Climb.

(5) 40 feet. Pitch 3 of Pedagogue's Chimney.

(6) 25 feet. Pitch 4 of Pedagogue's Chimney.

(7) 110 feet. Climb up and left for 10 feet, then descend a lichen-covered slab into the steep heathery groove on pitch 2 of Ding Dong. Descend this for about 5 feet, then mount the short steep wall on the left to gain a slab below a diagonal crevasse. An exposed traverse left is made on small holds for some 30 feet until it is possible to round a mossy nose. Easier climbing up and left brings a ledge and triangular block belay within reach.

(8) 35 feet. Pitch 4 of Elvina.

(9) 60 feet. Pitch 5 of Elvina.

CONISTON

DOW CRAG

MISTAKEN ROUTE 180 feet. Hard severe. First ascent 10th October, 1959. M. P. Hatton, P. Riley (alternate leads). Starts as for Quest at the small cairn.

(1) 70 feet. Climb diagonally left up the wall to grass ledge and belay.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse left under the large overhang for about 20 feet, then up bearing slightly left to a small line belay on a grass ledge.

(3) 45 feet. Step down and traverse right above the overhang. The next few moves are the crux of the climb. Ascend diagonally right to the base of a grassy groove, climb this for about 10 feet then make an awkward step left and ascend to a grass ledge. Follow this to the left-hand end where a thread belay exists.

(4) 35 feet. Climb the wall above trending right to a mossy slab. Traverse to the right across this and ascend the clean wall on its right on good holds to a line belay round a block. This is the top of North Wall (North Gully).

NORTH WALL 'A' BUTTRESS DIRECT FINISH 80 feet. Severe. First ascent 19th September, 1959. M. P. Hatton, P. Riley (alternate leads).

(1) 55 feet. From the belay at the top of pitch 3 of North Wall the vertical right-angled corner is climbed. Flake belay below an open crack.

(2) 25 feet. The crack, which runs diagonally upwards from right to left, is entered by an awkward movement after climbing 5 feet up the right-hand wall of the corner. Strenuous. Good holds are reached after 15 feet.

LOWER HOWE CRAGS

POSTCRIPT 170 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 14th March, 1956. G.W.M., D. Heald, R. Bosomworth. Starts at the finish of Sunshine Arête at a large grass shelf.

(1) 70 feet. Up a right-angled scoop for 20 feet. Hand traverse right beneath a huge overhang to a good pull up in the corner. Climb the crack and continue over gendarmes to a large belay.

(2) 30 feet. Moderate rocks to the summit of the pinnacle. Descend the slab to the pinnacle gap.

(3) 45 feet. Up a steep crack and traverse left to the foot of a cracked wall. Straight up this.

(4) 25 feet. Easy but pleasant rock leads to scrambling to summit of crag.

RED DELL BUTTRESS

This crag lies behind the Coppermines Youth Hostel on the spur to the right of the outlet of Levers Water; near small aqueducts.

DIAGONAL 160 feet. Difficult. First ascent 16th March, 1956. G.W.M., D. C. Villani, E. Wood. Starts on the side of the crag away from the Youth Hostel at the foot of a long diagonal chimney splitting a large steep wall.

(1) 25 feet. Up to a sentry-box and flake belay.

(2) 100 feet. Climb chimney on its lower edge to fissure at top.

(3) 35 feet. Straight up a pleasant slab to the top of the crag.

HEATHER CHIMNEY 130 feet. Difficult. First ascent 16th March, 1956. G.W.M., D. C. Villani, E. Wood. Starts at the foot of the obvious ridge on the side farthest away from the Youth Hostel.

(1) 30 feet. Up the ridge to a broad ledge.

(2) 100 feet. Into the chimney on the ordinary (well marked) route for a few feet. Then climb the crack widening to a chimney.

(3) Finish up the easy slab to the left of the last pitch of Diagonal.

RAVEN CRAG, YEWDALE

The crag is seen on the right of Tilberthwaite Valley looking from Yewdale Farm.

COBRA 150 feet. Very severe. First ascent August, 1959. R. C. Cain, M. Tweed, P. Shotton, E. Tweed. Starts at a small cairn about 25 feet diagonally above and to the right of a tree.

(1) 40 feet. Up the wall and rightwards to a stance and belay on a large block on a sloping ledge.

(2) 70 feet. Traverse left into a groove and follow this up to the left. Ascend a little corner on the right and move to the right up to a raven's nest. (Piton from a previous attempt). Move right and up steeply to small trees.

(3) 40 feet. Follow a gangway to the right to a small ledge below a bulge (piton). Climb the bulge with difficulty to an abrupt finish.

DEEPDALE

SCRUBBY CRAG

BEOWULF 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent 29th September, 1959. N. J. Soper, P. E. Brown.

Starts as for Ringway on the wall between Juniper Crack and Ringway.

(1) 20 feet. As for Ringway—climb the wall to a ledge.

(2) 70 feet. Climb the wall above on small holds, first trending right to surmount a bulge, then left into and across a shallow groove. An awkward grass mantelshelf leads to a stance with flake belay 15 feet up on the right. (Junction with pitch 3 of Long Ledge Entry.)

(3) 110 feet. Ascend past the belay to the prominent overhang which is reached at its left-hand end. Climb the overhang on good flake holds to a resting place below the curved crack. Thread runner. Climb the crack to a flake, traverse right for 15 feet and ascend on poor rock to the top of the crag. Piton belay recommended.

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL 80 feet. Mild very severe. First ascent 14th
INDEPENDENT June, 1959. N. J. Soper, R. Collier, J. M.
FINISH Rodgers. Starts on the small grass ledge at the start of the final pitch of Ringway.

80 feet. Climb the groove (which is 15 feet left of the final pitch of Ringway) by strenuous bridging to a recess at 40 feet. Move diagonally right and continue to the top of the crag. Natural belay 20 feet higher.

DUDDON

WALLOWBARROW CRAG

NARROW SLAB 95 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 6th May,
VARIATION 1957. G.W.M., G. Pilkington. Starts after a long 100 foot run out on first two pitches of Wall and Corner route. A belay is taken at the perched block. A walk right of a few feet brings one to the foot of the narrow slab.

(1) 80 feet. Straight up the narrow slab and then to the right on poor holds until a step left and a long stride right bring the top of the slab within reach.

(2) 15 feet. Now up an Amen Corner.

EASEDALE

HELM CRAG

BEACON RIB 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent September, 1959. D. G. Farley, B. A. Fuller, J. Wright. Starts 10 feet left of the arête to the left of Beacon Crack.

(1) 60 feet. Climb an indefinite gangway for a few feet until a traverse right can be made to a small ledge on the arête. The overhanging wall above is climbed to a tiny ledge on the left and the groove above followed to a ledge on Beacon Crack and belay.

(2) 40 feet. Climb the groove on the left into Beacon Crack.

ENNERDALE

PILLAR ROCK

VANDAL 250 feet. Very severe. First ascent 13th June, 1959. G.O., J.M.C., L. Willis. Starts in a corner 10 feet right of Route 2.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the grassy corner to a stance and chockstone belay, 15 feet below the large overhang.

(2) 50 feet. Step right onto the wall and climb past the overhang to a small ledge above on the right. A short steep crack leads to a grass ledge and belay beside two perched blocks 10 feet below the second overhang.

(3) 100 feet. Avoid the overhang on its right and climb the obvious crack to another overhang at 40 feet. From a half-inch ledge on the left wall make a long step left, then move up to the foot of a clean rock rib. Climb this to overhangs, then move right and up to a grass stance and poor belay.

(4) 70 feet. Traverse diagonally right across a short slab to the arête. Finish up the last few feet of Route 1.

GOTH 230 feet. Very severe. First ascent 13th June, 1959. M. de St. Jarre, N. Hannaby. Starts by traversing grass ledges leftwards from the level of the foot of the Appian Way to the foot of a groove below the huge sloping overhang between the North-west climb and Appian Way.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the groove to a stance beneath the overhang. Small chockstone belay.

(2) 100 feet. Traverse left for 10 feet to the foot of a groove leading up to the roof of the overhang. This is climbed until a dubious block in the roof of a small overhang is reached; then break out left across a small slab to an arête and running belays. Climb the overhanging wall above to a narrow sloping ledge. Traverse right, along the ledge, into the corner above the overhang and continue up until a small overhang bars the way. Traverse left across the wall to a stance and belay.

(3) 60 feet. Climb up to a short curving crack on the right. Climb this and finish across rough slabs.

GREEN GABLE

GIRDLE TRAVERSE 580 feet (650 feet including abseil). Severe. First ascent 17th May, 1959. J. D. Oliver, K. C. Ogilvie.

Leader needs 100 feet of rope. Starts at right-hand end of crag.

(1) Pitch 1 of Alpha, follow variation to ledge above overhang, belay.
(2) Pitch 3 of Beta.
(3) Ascend Gamma.
(4) Descend Delta.
(5) Descend Pitch 2 of Epsilon.
(6) Ascend Pitches 1 and 2 of Epsilon Chimney.
(7) Descend Pitch 3 of Aaron.
(8) Traverse to Pitch 2 of Eta and ascend to top of small chimney, belay.
(9) Abseil to foot of Fie!
(10) Ascend Fie!
(11) Descend North Face.

GABLE CRAG

ARRON'S SLAB 130 feet. Severe. First ascent 11th August, 1959. J.W., A.E.W., P.W. Starts at the foot of a clean slab some 15 feet left of the start of Mallory's Left-Hand Route.

(1) 50 feet. The slab is climbed in the centre, then on its right-hand edge to a small grass ledge with a spike belay 10 feet above.
(2) 40 feet. The slab above the belay is climbed to a large ledge and belay on the left.
(3) 40 feet. Traverse left over ledges and climb either the steep crack or, farther left, the steep edge of the wall.

ESKDALE

ESK BUTTRESS

SATISFACTION 85 feet. Very severe. First ascent 30th May, 1959. P.R., F. Carroll. Goes from pitch 5 of Frustration up the natural line of continuation.

(1) 55 feet. Climb the crack for about 20 feet, then traverse left out onto the exposed buttress until upward progress is possible. Move back right to spike belay and poor stance.
(2) 30 feet. Straight up the groove above.

ESKDALE NEEDLE

THE LONG SIDE 70 feet. Hard severe. First ascent 15th November, 1959. D. Gregory, N. J. Soper, R. Collier. Starts at the foot of a wide crack on the Eskdale side of the Needle.

(1) 25 feet. Climb the crack strenuously to a cave and belay.
(2) 15 feet. Climb the overhang above by means of the crack, moving out right.
(3) 30 feet. Climb the face above to the top of the Needle.

GRISEDALE

FALCON CRAG

FALCON FRONT 170 feet. Very severe. First ascent 13th June, 1959. N. J. Soper, J. M. Rodgers. Starts at the foot of Dollywaggon Great Chimney and takes the overhanging buttress between Bottleneck and Dollywaggon Great Chimney.

(1) 85 feet. The objective is a small grass ledge with a diminutive rowan tree high on the left. From the foot of the chimney make an ascending traverse left into a shallow impending groove. Climb this (slings for aid as necessary) to a point 15 feet to the right of, and just below, the ledge which is reached by a traverse on good holds. Continue straight up for 15 feet to a stance and thread belay.
(2) 50 feet. Climb the blunt arête above to a belay at the point of exit of the 'through pitch' on Dollywaggon Great Chimney.
(3) 35 feet. The steep arête on the right is climbed on poor holds to a bilberry mantelshelf.
80 feet of steep scrambling to easy ground.

EAGLE CRAG

DANDELION GROOVE 125 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th October, 1959. N. J. Soper, R. Collier. Starts at the right-hand end of the green wall below the prominent overhang right of pitch 3 of Sobrenada at a groove.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the groove (30 feet). Ancient peg belay 10 feet above on the right.
(2) 85 feet. Step down and back into the subsidiary groove on the left. Climb this moving right then left to a good ledge by a tree stump. Climb the groove on the right to a rowan tree, then move round the rib on the right into the main groove. Climb the groove which narrows and slants left, stepping out left at the top. Large spike belay 15 feet back.

EAGLE 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent 12th August, 1959. M. A. James, O. Woolcock. Starts as for Dandelion Groove.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the groove for 20 feet then step left onto the face and traverse left to a ledge. Continue the traverse, stepping down then across into a corner with a large block belay. (Junction with pitch 3 of Sobrenada.)
(2) 60 feet. As for pitch 3 of Sobrenada, moving left across the second slab to reach a groove which is climbed to the top.

LANGDALE

GIMMER CRAG

KIPLING GROOVE
DIRECT START — 195 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th August, 1959. H. I. Barre, J. P. O'Neill, L.J.G. Starts up a fault from the bottom to the top of the North-west face.

(1) 55 feet. Pitches 1 and 2 of the Crack.
(2) 70 feet. Up the groove straight above the belay and its continuation crack to a stance and large belay on the left.
(3) 70 feet. Climb the monolith; then move right, under the roof, and then up the chimney to a stance and belay at the top of pitch 1 of Kipling Groove.

INERTIA — 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent 26th August, 1959. L. Brown, R. G. Wilson, C. E. M. Yates. Starts at the top of the grass rake leading up to pitch 6 of Hiatus, taking the steep corner groove between Hiatus and the Crack.

(1) 90 feet. Climb to the top of a pedestal and into a groove on the right which is climbed for 20 feet until it is possible to step right, onto a wall. Climb the wall past a small sentry-box to a grass ledge and belay high on the right.
(2) 60 feet. Descend to the left, traverse beneath the overhang almost to the edge overlooking Hiatus. Gain a small spike on the edge using a sling as a foothold. Move up and slightly left to enter a mossy groove which is climbed to a belay below Grooves Superdirect.
(3) 50 feet. Grooves Superdirect to top.

THE RIB — 90 feet. Very severe. First ascent 12th September, 1959. G.O., M. Connell. Starts from pitch 8 of the Crack.

From the Bower, climb 15 feet up the Crack, then traverse right, across the wall, to the edge of the rib above the chimney of Kipling Groove. Continue straight up the crack above.

PAVEY ARK

TROLL'S CORNER — 210 feet. Very severe. First ascent 29th June, 1958. J. A. Austin, J. M. Ruffe. Starts a few feet left of Gwynne's Chimney.

(1) 50 feet. Climb past a small tree to a large grass ledge.
(2) 30 feet. The slabby corner to a belay.
(3) 30 feet. Climb the groove above the belay until it is possible to traverse left to a grass ledge which leads to a corner on the left. Flake belay.
(4) 50 feet. Climb the corner which is strenuous to a ledge and belay.
(5) 50 feet. The wall above is climbed past a grass ledge to easy slabs.

ROUNDABOUT 170 feet. Severe. First ascent 29th June, 1958. J. A. Austin, R. B. Evans (alternate leads). Starts on Jack's Rake at a cairn about 50 yards left of Gwynne's Chimney.

(1) 40 feet. Up the obvious break for about 25 feet, then a slab trending slightly left to a stance below a very thin steep crack.

(2) 45 feet. Move up to the thin crack, then round the corner on the right on a grassy gangway to the foot of a short shallow square-cut chimney, which is climbed to a thread belay at the top.

(3) 45 feet. Step onto the rib on the left, and climb it to the top.

(4) 40 feet. Up the short steep walls and ledges to the top.

STALAY 205 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th September, 1959. J. A. Austin, R. B. Evans.

(1)
(2) } 110 feet. First three pitches of Troll's Corner.
(3)

(4) 20 feet. Traverse right along a sharp-edged flake until a comfortable stance is reached behind it.

(5) 25 feet. Move right for a few feet, then pull up onto a small ledge with a doubtful spike. Climb a short slab to a sitting stance and floor belay.

(6) 30 feet. Climb the thin steep slab on the left until it is possible to step round the corner and gain the small balcony above. Step left and climb the overhang direct to a good belay and a pile of blocks.

(7) 20 feet. Swing round the rib on the left and up to the top.

GOLDEN SLIPPER 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1958. J. A. Austin, R. B. Evans. Starts 20 yards left of Gwynne's Chimney at a small gangway slanting up right from Jack's Rake.

(1) 60 feet. Up the gangway, and gain a grass ledge. Climb the wall to a small juniper and continue up to a grass ledge with two small flake belays, at the foot of a long steepening slab.

(2) 80 feet. Climb the slab until a series of holds lead to the rib on the right; then up to a large ledge.

(3) 60 feet. Up the slab and rib on the left.

WHITE GHYLL

MOSS WALL 140 feet. Very severe. First ascent 8th August, 1959. G.O., D. Laws. Starts at the same point as Slip Not.

(1) 40 feet. Easy scrambling up a groove slanting left to a grass ledge and belay below a mossy wall.

(2) 80 feet. An open groove on the left of the wall is climbed for 20 feet to a slight overhang. Step right and traverse across the line of moss to good holds on blocks. Climb the wall

above almost to a junction with Slip Not, then step left into an overhanging groove. Climb this, exit left onto a ledge and belay.

(3) 20 feet. The vertical broken wall above on large holds.

NECKBAND

VIRGO 150 feet. Very severe. First ascent 2nd May, 1959. G.O., F. Carroll, N. Brown. Starts 10 feet right of Gizzard.

(1) 75 feet. Climb the corner and overhang at 30 feet to a sloping ledge. The next few feet are done with the aid of a piton, and the corner climbed to beneath the final overhang. (Chockstone for runner.) Move right onto the rib and continue to a ledge and belay.

(2) 75 feet. Climb the broken wall on the left.

RAVEN CRAG EAST

SCHIZEN GROOVE 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 5th September, 1959. M. Burke, G. Woodhouse. Starts 20 feet right of Ornithology.

An awkward start leads to a small pinnacle. Traverse a few feet right and climb up into a groove below a small overhang. Good hold over the bulge enables the overhang to be turned. Another move brings easier climbing until a final roof is reached. Traverse right and easy climbing leads to a big grass ledge.

RIGHT OF PEASCOD'S ROUTE 85 feet. Severe. First ascent 30th July, 1959. D. Brown, D. C. Ivins. Starts 40 feet to the right of Peascod's Route.

(1) 70 feet. Start directly below a pinnacle and climb slightly left for 10 feet to a large grass ledge. Then climb directly onto the pinnacle, first on the front, but gradually moving onto the right-hand edge to a small ledge. Thread belay.

(2) 15 feet. Climb left from the belay and make an awkward move onto the outside edge which is followed to the top.

RAVEN CRAG FAR EAST

WARLOCK 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 11th July, 1959. M. J. Burke, G. Woodhouse. Starts at the top of pitch 2 of Nineveh.

(1) 40 feet. The Girdle is reversed until the slab can be ascended to a holly tree belay on the left.

(2) 60 feet. Traverse right to the open groove beneath the roof. Three pitons lead to the roof; another three enable the groove on the edge to be reached. Climb the groove to a small ledge and spike belay.

CAUSTIC 130 feet. Very severe. First ascent 27th September, 1959. R. P. Grounds, C. Harkins. Starts 30 feet left of Nineveh.

(1) 30 feet. Straight up the left-hand side of a rib to a small stance.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the small wall to the left of a small tree onto the overhang, where a traverse left is made to the back of a large holly tree.

(3) 50 feet. Make a rising traverse left until a tree is reached in the middle of the last pitch of Babylon. Finish up Babylon.

SIDE PIKE

CHEROOT 80 feet. Very severe. First ascent 15th November, 1959. P. Seddon, P. Callaghan. Starts 20 feet left of Spider Crack up a small crack, 6 feet left of a small tree and 15 feet up on a mossy wall.

(1) 40 feet. The small crack is climbed for 15 feet to a ledge. Continue up a broken wall for 15 feet to a grassy ledge 5 feet left of and above a small tree.

(2) 40 feet. The overhanging grooves above to a large grass ledge. Easy rocks lead to the top.

JUDITH 70 feet. Severe. First ascent 15th November, 1959. P. Callaghan, P. Seddon. Starts 30 feet to the left of the fence.

Climb the arête to the top of the crag.

GIRDLE TRAVERSE 235 feet. Severe. First ascent 17th September, 1959. D. Evans, J. A. Hartley (alternate leads).

(1) 80 feet. Limpet Groove as far as the ledge above the chockstone. From the ledge continue round to the right up a series of steps to a stance with poor flake belay.

(2) 30 feet. Continue right to the piton on Wall Climb, and cross the wall to a gully with an arrow-shaped boulder on the right.

(3) 50 feet. Move round the corner, cross a groove and continue above a small tree to the niche belay on Spider Crack.

(4) 75 feet. Spider Crack.

THIRLMERE

CASTLE ROCK OF TRIERMAIN

PRE-NOTION 235 feet. Very severe. First ascent 8th February, 1959. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. Starts 10 feet to the left of the wall left of and near the foot of Overhanging Bastion and goes up the gangway sloping to the left. The route follows a natural line up the crag.

(1) 50 feet. The gangway is climbed on small but sufficient holds until a groove can be gained. Spike belay.

(2) 60 feet. The overhanging groove is the next object. This is climbed until a tree is gained. The tree is overcome easily and the groove above is climbed with slight difficulty. Spike belay.

(3) 45 feet. An incipient chimney is ascended on small holds inside the groove until a break out can be made. A further 15 feet of scrambling leads to a tree belay.

(4) 80 feet. This pitch is the crux. The prominent crack behind the tree is climbed until the groove above is gained. The crack in the groove is climbed with the aid of a loose chockstone which is safe. From the groove a traverse left is made on to an arête which gives exposed climbing. Spike belay.

RIGOR MORTIS 190 feet. Very severe. First ascent 18th April, 1959. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts just to the right of Thirlmere Eliminate. Possibly the hardest climb on the crag.

(1) 50 feet. Climb to the small overhang, then straight up the steep crack above.

(2) 70 feet. Ascend straight up the corner from the left end of the ledge. The last 10 feet to the piton, which is in place at the top of the white cone, are climbed resting in slings on two flakes. Using an étrier on the piton, tension out across the left wall until a sling can be placed on a minute flake. Use this as a foothold to reach a shallow groove; climb straight up to the ledge of the second pitch of Thirlmere Eliminate.

(3) 70 feet. From the ledge traverse round the corner to the right. After two small gangways are passed bridge a bottomless groove and swing onto the arête. Finish up the easy chimney to the right.

AGONY 300 feet. Very severe. First ascent 24th May, 1959. G.O., N. Brown. Starts a few feet right of a stone wall near the start of Gossard.

(1) 130 feet. Climb the wall on small holds past a small ledge to a junction with the gangway of Zigzag. About 20 feet to the right of this point is a crack running straight up the face. Reach this by a traverse on good handholds and climb it (piton runner) to the slab above. Traverse 10 feet left and step up to a big flake, then traverse right to a flake belay. Tree belay 6 feet higher.

(2) 120 feet. Climb the easy corner above for a few feet until it is possible to traverse right to the edge of the arête. A diversion to the right is soon necessary and is followed by a delicate move back onto the arête. Big holds then lead to the slab above. A final pull up leads to the sloping glacis of Zigzag and a tree belay on the right.

(3) 50 feet. Straight up the easy-angled glacis on the left.

RAVEN CRAG

COMMUNIST CONVERT DIRECT START 150 feet. Severe. First ascent September, 1959. R. C. Cain, D. Francis. Starts below the messy lower buttress just left of the corner gully which forms the lower section of Anarchist chimney.

(1) 50 feet. Scramble a few feet to a tree, then go up behind the tree and up a crack to the right to a stance in the gully.

(2) 50 feet. Up the gully until a shaky grass ledge can be followed to a stance on the lower edge of the bounding rib of the great cave.

(3) 50 feet. Straight up the rib to a junction with Communist Convert where it leaves the cave.

WASDALE

SCAFELL EAST BUTTRESS

PERNOD 160 feet. Very severe. First ascent 4th April, 1959. G. O., F. Carroll. Starts 10 feet left of Tia Maria on the left edge of the wall.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the corner on the right of a large slab for about 20 feet, when it is possible to traverse right onto the arête which is climbed to a stance and piton belay.

(2) 100 feet. From the right-hand end of the ledge climb an obvious thin crack past a detached block. After 20 feet the angle eases and easy climbing leads to the top.

MAY DAY 160 feet. Very severe. First ascent 21st June,
DIRECT FINISH 1959. G.O., L. Willis. Starts above pitch 2 of May Day and goes up the steep corner.

(1) 80 feet. Straight up the crack above the belay and enter the corner on the right. The corner is climbed using inserted chockstones and a piton. From a foothold above the piton a good handhold can be reached on the right wall and a traverse made to the arête. Continue up easy ground to a grass ledge and chockstone belay.

(4) 80 feet. Climb the wide crack behind the holly tree for 40 feet and finish up easy rock.

MOON DAY 250 feet. Very severe. First ascent 13th September, 1959. L. Brown, J. Gerrard. Starts at the lowest point of the easy-angled slab to the left of and lower than Overhanging Wall.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the slab until a step right brings one onto a ledge stance of Overhanging Wall.

(2) 25 feet. Climb the bulging wall above until an awkward move lands one on the grass ledge below an overhanging groove.

(3) 60 feet. From the ledge manoeuvre up until a piton can be reached above the bulge. Pull over and climb the slab above to the large ledge below the White Slab.

(4) 120 feet. Follow the right-hand side of the White Slab for a few feet until another light-coloured slab leads off to the right. Go up this to the stance below the final chimney of Overhanging Wall.

MICKLEDORE 20 feet. Very severe. First ascent 24th May,
GROOVES 1959. D.W.E., D. Beatie, M.V.McK. Instead
DIRECT FINISH of stepping right to the small grass ledge on the last pitch, continue up the groove with difficulty until stopped by

the final overhanging corner. A rest may be taken on a ledge to the right and a doubtful block used for a belay. Work back right, and after bridging the top of the groove make a delicate finger change in the corner, after which good holds on the left wall lead to the crevasse of the normal belaying point. This pitch is very mossy.

SCAFELL CRAG

NARROW SLAB 285 feet. Very severe. First ascent 22nd August, 1959. H. I. Barre, J. P. O'Neill, L.J.G.

Starts up a crack which splits the groove to the left of Slab and Groove.

(1) 105 feet. Traverse left under the overhang, then climb the crack until it eases (where Slab and Groove enters from the right). Then go left to a stance and small belay.

(2) 60 feet. Climb up past the overhang onto the slabs and so to a grass stance and belays.

(3) 120 feet. The corner on the left is climbed (junction with Moss Ghyll Grooves), then climb to the right, up broken rocks with pleasant slabs and corners, to the top.

BOSUN'S BUTTRESS 390 feet. Very severe. First ascent 21st August, 1959. H. I. Barre, L.J.G. Starts up an obvious crack on the right edge of Pisgah Buttress.

(1) 45 feet. Up the chimney to stance and belay.

(2) 45 feet. Up the steep crack to stance and belay.

(3) 40 feet. The wall on the right of the arête is split by a deep chimney which leads to a rock ledge and large belay.

(4) 50 feet. Climb the edge for a short way, then traverse right to the foot of a twisting crack which leads to a stance and belay on the left.

(5) 25 feet. Climb the slab on the left and then the short wall above to a pinnacle belay (junction with Pisgah Buttress Direct).

(6) 60 feet. Climb the short wall above, and then follow the arête until one can move right and climb a steep little wall.

(7) 125 feet. Finish as for Pisgah Buttress Direct.

SCAFELL PINNACLE

MOSS LEDGE FROM THE FIRST NEST 90 feet. Severe. First ascent 5th September, 1959. D.W.E., M.V.McK. Starts from the First Nest of Jones's Route.

Step up onto the nose on the right and climb the small buttress to Moss Ledge. From here the steep crack to the right of Herford's Slab is climbed on good holds.

DEEP GHYLL BUTTRESS

XERXES 240 feet. Very severe. First ascent 30th August, 1959. L. Brown, C.E.M. Yates.

Starts on the side of the buttress overlooking Lord's Rake at a prominent V-shaped groove beneath a wall split by narrow

discontinuous cracks. The face is bounded on the right by grass terraces and on the left by a prominent wide crack.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the groove on good but awkwardly placed holds, to a ledge with a large block belay.

(2) 60 feet. Follow the line of the crack up the face behind the belay via two small ledges to a sloping grass ledge. Chockstone belay at the left-hand end of the ledge.

(3) 50 feet. From the small corner at the left-hand end of the ledge climb up a few feet then follow a line of holds right for 10 feet until a wet mossy scoop is reached. Go up slightly to the left of this to a big terrace.

(4) 80 feet. Enter the wide couloir above at its left-hand side and climb it until an exit can be made on the left to slabs which lead to the top.

THE SCREES. LOW ADAM CRAG

PITUITRIN 160 feet. Very severe. First ascent 14th May, 1959. A.H.G., A.J.S. (alt. leads). Starts about 50 feet left of Adrenalin from a huge fern-covered balcony below obvious green streaks.

(1) 50 feet. The crux. Climb thin crack to awkward landing on big grass ledge.

(2) 80 feet. Step from huge flake onto left wall and climb to overhangs. Traverse left from a flake, round a rib and across delicate slab to stance. Poor belay.

(3) 30 feet. Ascend groove above. Scrambling finishes the climb.

KEY TO INITIALS

J. M. Cheesmond	M. V. McKenzie	A. J. Simpson
D. W. English	G. W. Morrall	J. Wilkinson
A. H. Greenbank	D. Murray	A. E. Wormell
D. N. Greenop	G. Oliver	P. Wormell
L. J. Griffin	P. Ross	

DEER BIELD CHIMNEY

It has been reported that owing to a recent rock fall the 'delicately poised blocks above pitch 4' have been dislodged and some are jammed in the chimney lower down. One sizeable block is particularly delicately poised, making the climb dangerous until it has been removed.

IN MEMORIAM

HENRY BRAITHWAITE, 1906-1960

Henry Braithwaite, the oldest surviving original member of our Club, and one of the first three life members, died on 27th January, 1960, at the age of 91 years. He had done quite a lot of climbing and fell walking during the years before the Club was formed in 1906, and he was all his life keenly interested in mountains. Unfortunately for his activities on the fells, he was the proprietor for all the most active part of his life of Kendal's most popular café, which meant that he was always busiest at those seasons and on those days when most people can get away to climb; and on Sundays his keen personal religion brought him and his family regularly to church rather than on to the fells. Hence he was not often seen walking or climbing by other members of our Club. His son Gilbert would so far have inherited his father's skill (and that of his uncle, Darwin Leighton) as to have been a fine rock climber if he had not had a severe wound in the hip during the First World War which caused his early death.

Harry Braithwaite was for 32 years a Town Councillor of Kendal, for 30 years on the local Education Committee and for 50 years a Freemason. He took an active interest in all Lake District affairs, and also in sport, being a keen supporter of the Kendal Rugby football club. Though latterly in gradually failing health he was present at our Jubilee Dinner in 1956. He was made an honorary Freeman of Kendal in 1945. If it had not been for his business ties he would doubtless have been one of our best-known members, and his mind was often exercised, even when his body was incapable of doing long walks or climbs, by constant reading of mountain books. He retained his fine and sterling character and the clearness of his thinking as well as his enjoyment of mountains (though latterly only in books) to the end.

T. HOWARD SOMERVELL.

GRAHAM SUTTON, 1940-1959

Our distinguished and well-loved member Graham Sutton, a true son of Cumberland, passed to his long rest in Carlisle Infirmary in November after a lengthy illness. We had not expected so robust a man to go so soon. He was only 67.

Graham had the great gifts of genuine friendship for his fellow men whoever they happened to be, a warm sense of

humour on all occasions, and a charming modesty. I first met him on the crags, a big, lumbering man of surprising agility, laughing at his occasional lack of grace, but long before that I had secretly envied his professional reputation.

He was, above all, a teller of tales, and a superb craftsman at the job. Scores of people, many of them able enough, have pictured in words the Lakeland—and particularly the Cumberland—scene, but none have done so with more authority or greater accuracy than Graham Sutton. When he wrote of fell farmers, or slate-quarrying, or the old smugglers, or the first railways, or the stage-coach days he knew his facts either from personal experience or from painstaking research. And once certain of the details he weaved around them stories which always smacked of the sweet smell of woodsmoke, the tang of the retreating tide, or the fresh wind across the tops.

He wrote easily, just as he talked, without apparent effort, so that his stories and word pictures are simple, unaffected and completely innocent of any straining for effect. 'Once I've got the thing in my head it's more or less finished' he once told me. 'Then I just lock myself up for a day or two and rattle it off. And I never know or care whether it's snowing or thundering or even what day of the week it is.'

He was a craftsman insatiably interested in words and modest and eager enough to learn from anybody. I remember he once got me—a simple scribe—to lecture to his Cumbrian Literary Group on writing, afterwards questioning closely on the most minor points. He was always generous in his praise, helpful to the struggler, self-effacing about his own work, completely without side.

Graham was proud of his Cumberland birth, proud of his old school (St. Bees), and proud of his associations with the oft abused crafts of acting and journalism. After reading classics and English at Oxford he first entered the teaching profession and then toured with repertory companies, including those of Sir Frank Benson. A spell of free lance journalism in London, writing articles, short stories and plays, followed, and his well-known Fleming novels came much later. *Shepherds Warning* was the first and was followed by *Smoke Across the Fell*, *North Star*, *Fleming of Honister* and *The Rowan Tree*—all tales with solid historical backgrounds, packed with a great deal of Cumberland lore and the wisdom

of an observant and imaginative man. His *Fell Days* is a gem of honest writing. In many of his plays, too, he concentrated on the Cumberland scene, and the local dialect, which he spoke easily and accurately, shines out natural and unstilted. But typically, he thought nothing of his marked play-writing ability and was always telling me to try my hand at play-writing for the B.B.C. 'Easy money' he would say, but I had neither his confidence nor one quarter of his ability.

Many of his plays were broadcast by the B.B.C. and he also produced and took part in radio plays, acted as compère or interviewer, and even tackled straight reporting. Graham was essentially a versatile man. He was also an artist of some ability both in black and white and in water colour, a skilled craftsman in wood, and—unlike many men of letters—an extremely handy man about the house.

In later years his great joy was his pleasant home 'Dancing Beck' under Skiddaw—a former school—the company of his many friends, and his daily sight and smell of the fells. In the Club he was a good stayer on crag or fell despite his bulk, the best of company on social occasions with his endless stream of stories, a wise man on committee, and an acknowledged authority on anything from Herdwicks to railway engines. He is survived by his second wife, an equally well-loved Club member, a son and a daughter. We mourn with them a kindly man of Cumberland who was everybody's friend, a man who not only knew his homeland fells but also knew how to bring them to life so that all could love them.

A. H. GRIFFIN.

S. R. BAWTREE, 1914-1960

Stanley Rogers Bawtree died in his sleep from pneumonia at his home in Woking on the 25th February, 1960, shortly after his ninetieth birthday. He had a severe coronary thrombosis in 1946 and for the last years of his life was practically bedfast; and he had almost lost his sight. He started his working life with Ralli Brothers in the City of London, but then trained at New College, London, for the Congregational Ministry, his first church being at Tiptree in Essex in 1901. His second Christian name was from an ancestor, Rogers, a Protestant martyr of the sixteenth century. He later held churches at Southport, Huddersfield,

Sunderland and Woking; retiring, due to ill-health, in 1946. The *Journal* is scarcely the place for full mention of his varied religious activities, but it may be said that he had served as a Director of the London Missionary Society and on the Councils of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and of the Friends of Reunion (of the Churches). He was a godfather to the writer's son 'taking the vows in the spirit rather than in the letter' as he put it. No one could have had a better one.

He did some glacier tours around the Chanrion-Arolla-Zermatt area in the 1900s and his companion then, Todd, (who, although he lived to be older than Bawtree, predeceased him a few years ago) was a great solace to him in his later years. Like many of 'the best people,' the Bawtrees honeymooned in the Lake District and the writer first met him and his wife at Wasdale Head in that wonderful snowy Easter of 1913. He served during the 1914-1918 War in the Y.M.C.A. in the Somme-Arras forward areas.

His illness of 1946, when he was seventy-six, stopped his hill walking but he and his wife when visiting the writer in Patterdale were able to manage some side-valley walks. In his last housebound years, whilst still able to read, he achieved much happiness through teaching (free) English, and in some cases classical Greek, to young women coming to England to work and learn English.

His long survival after his severe illness of 1946 was due to the devoted care of his wife (who luckily had been a trained nurse), to his calm acceptance of the limitation to his activity and to thankfulness for his fitness up to the age of seventy-six.

He leaves a widow and two daughters, the elder of whom has worked for many years in Greece with the Save the Children Organization.

W. ALLSUP.

R. J. PORTER, 1910-1959

Robert J. Porter, B.Sc., Ph.D., will be remembered by older members as a regular attender at Thornythwaite for the Whitsuntide Meet from 1910 to the late twenties. He was educated at Hull Grammar School and remained there as a master until his retirement in 1945. Porter did a little rock climbing, but fell walking was his great love and for many

years all school holidays were spent in the Lakes and Scottish Highlands; later he extended his travels to Corsica, the Alps, Spain and South Africa.

Porter did a great work for mountaineering by training scores of schoolboys, of whom the writer was one, to walk and climb safely in all conditions and to treat mountains with the respect they deserve.

J. C. APPLEYARD.

ARTHUR ACKERLEY, 1919-1960

Arthur Ackerley died at his dairy farm in Shropshire on the 7th May, 1960, after a long illness bravely borne. Educated at Birkenhead School, he joined the Club in 1919 when only 16 years of age. In 1927 he became a partner with his brother, Graham, in the family business of Benjamin Ackerley and Sons Ltd., Steamship Agents, and remained an active member of the firm and its associated companies until his death. In 1932, he married Miss K. A. Bloxridge, who survives him.

His first climb was Great Gully, Pavey Ark, with the late Dr. A. W. Wakefield in 1917, from which time his enthusiasm for the Lakeland crags knew no bounds and he spent every available holiday at his family's climbing hut at the foot of Hell Ghyll, near Stool End Farm, in Langdale. I and many others have the happiest memories of being the guests of the Ackerleys at their hut, which was well equipped with hammocks and cooking gear and at which there was always an apparently inexhaustible store of cases of luscious tinned fruits.

Exceptionally tall, Arthur was an extremely fast goer on the hills and he regarded the hut in Langdale as a convenient base from which to climb on all the main crags, including Pillar Rock. His diaries record a walk from Keswick Station to the Buttermere Hotel in under two hours and the round of Wasdale from Scafell to Red Pike. It was his practice to give most others a good half-hour's start in the morning and for the party to arrive at the crags at the same time, each going at their normal pace.

He was a resolute and most capable leader on rock and Graham and I had good reason to be thankful for his skill and courage when, caught on Gimmer by a sudden wind of full gale force, he came as last man down Oliverson's Variation,

with the rope streaming out horizontally and his corduroy breeches cracking like pistol shots.

During World War II Arthur served as an embarkation staff officer in Liverpool and Reykjavik until 1942, when he was invalided out of the Army owing to an illness from which he never fully recovered.

Following an accident when attempting the outside route on Kern Knotts Crack with me he insisted, in spite of what turned out to be quite serious injuries, on walking back to Langdale; and from the fortitude and courage he displayed on that occasion I can well understand the unquenchable spirit with which he faced his many years of illness and consequent banishment from the fells and crags he loved so well.

GRAHAM WILSON.

IDA M. WHITWORTH, 1924-1959

Ida Whitworth joined the Club in 1924. It must have been while she was qualifying for membership by adding some rock climbs to her long list of fell walks that my husband and I lured her over to Buttermere at New Year for a day on Pillar. I think we did the North Climb; I remember it was pretty wet and cold. She had just time on our return to bolt one of Miss Edmondson's superb teas, and then she had to set off back to Ambleside by car to play the violin that evening at a concert. All this was typical of Ida. She was game for anything, she embraced life from so many angles and her zest was an unfailing spring. Typical also were the days at her home at Broad Ings when we would set off in the morning with her four children for a family fell walk, and spend the evening after the children were in bed discussing politics in general and the League of Nations in particular. Ida was an idealist; she had strong individual dislikes, but she could not help believing that human beings as a whole are motivated by generosity and a warm disinterested love of their fellows, because these were her own motives. When one sometimes teased her or argued that she was being unrealistic, it felt rather like winging a bird in flight.

She expended a lot of her idealism on 'causes'; all her life she was an ardent Liberal. Her husband, who was killed in 1918, had been a Liberal candidate and her father was for a

number of years a Liberal Member. But causes never prevented her from turning her idealism to people. Those who knew her well knew the careful, loving and continuous trouble to which she would go to help anyone in any sort of distress. She was a member of the Society of Friends and a frequent worker in their undertakings, and in her was exemplified the Quaker spirit of *caritas*, corporate and personal, at its best.

After the first World War she took her four small children abroad and lived for a time in Switzerland. She climbed a number of peaks either then or on subsequent visits and made several ski-tours. She got to know the life of the peasants in the high valleys and her translation of Prior Siegen's fascinating book on the Lötschenthal, just now published, is her tribute of affection and admiration. She had also translated a collection of Valaisian folk stories: 'The Alp Legends'. I do not think that she attended meets of the Club very often, with the exception of the Annual Dinner, but many members must have known her and responded to her warmth and enthusiasm.

K. C. CHORLEY.

R. S. KNIGHT, 1958-1959

H. G. STEPHENSON, Graduating Member 1956-1959

In the terrible misfortune which befell the Batura Mustagh Expedition of 1959, the Club lost two of its most promising young climbers, Dick Knight and Harry Stephenson.

The only way to breach the great Batura Wall and gain access to the high peaks had been to ascend a very rapidly-moving icefall. This done, and the support party dismissed, the five climbers of the assault party were effectually cut off from Base Camp, but the mountains lay open before them. They were at 18,000 feet, they believed their biggest difficulties to be behind them, and they had 28 days' food. They never returned, and it is presumed they were lost in the violent storms which occurred some ten days later.

Knight came from Betchworth, Surrey. He was educated at Epsom College and served two years in the R.A. before going to Nottingham University, where he met Stephenson. Stephenson had come to Nottingham from Workington Grammar School.

They formed a firm climbing partnership and under the discipline of gritstone were soon leading at V.S. standard. In successive seasons they visited the Oberland, the Pennine Alps, and the south side of Mont Blanc, showing a nice blend of caution and determination. They preferred traverses to mere ascents, their best being those of the Schreckhorn, the Weisshorn, the Dent Blanche, the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa. During their final alpine season, and in very mixed weather, they climbed the Aiguilles du Diable, the North Ridge of the Géant, the Route Major and the Peuterey Ridge.*

Their last two years were full of plans and paperwork for their Himalayan expedition. Knight had already been on two Nottingham University expeditions to North Norway and Spitzbergen. They did this work with pleasure, saying frequently that even if nothing came of it, it would still have been fun. It was only towards the end that the other members, including the leader, Keith Warburton, came in. It was these two youngest who set the whole enterprise afoot.

It would be easy to imagine them as single-minded zealots, bent ascetically on their ambition. Nothing could be further from the truth. They enjoyed life hugely, and loved society. Dick Knight had a courteous and easy manner and a ready laugh. Stephenson, tall and humorously diffident, had nevertheless big ideas; his first motorcycle was a big twin, his first car a second-hand Jaguar. They got a great deal out of life, and contributed a great deal, too, as all who knew them will testify.

The only clue to their progress before the exceptionally violent storms which doubtless caused their death lies in the report of a native ibex hunter who claimed—*before* the news broke of the diaster—to have seen through his telescope a party moving steadily up the summit ridge. The good weather continued for four days after this, and one would like to hope they died after climbing their peak.

Such conjectures are, of course, unprofitable. The bitter fact remains that they did not return. And unfortunately in mountaineering more than in most things nothing succeeds like success. Failure is always liable to bring criticism, largely because of the illusions climbers cherish of the safety of their sport. Lest any should feel that these men were tackling something they were not yet ready for, I would venture to

* See Harry Stephenson's article 'The South Face of Mont Blanc,' in the 1959 number of the *Journal* (Vol. xviii, No. 3, pp. 262-268)—EDITOR.

assert that, protected by all that modern science could give them, and backed as they were by the accumulated knowledge of a generation of Himalayan climbing, their enterprise was not a bit less 'justifiable' than that of, say, Mallory and Irvine, of honoured memory.

One must grieve for their death, yet one cannot but applaud the fearless and joyous spirit that took them there.

TOM PRICE

It is greatly regretted that it has been found impossible, up to the time of going to press, to obtain obituary notices of the following members whom the Club has lost through death since the last issue of the *Journal.* The Editor would welcome notices for the 1961 number and hopes that anyone who could help will get in touch with her.

A. W. BOYD, 1911-1959
K. KING, 1937-1959
A. E. OLLERENSHAW, 1929-1959
R. SOUTH, 1913-1959

This applies also to Miss M. D. Weston and L. G. Lowry whose deaths were reported in the 1959 number of the *Journal.*

Since going to press it has been learned with much regret that one of our earliest members, A. H. Binns, who joined the Club in 1907, has died at his home at Stockton-on-Tees. A memoir will appear in the 1961 number of the *Journal.*

But we like to think
Their spirits, passing like the summer breeze,
Still draw their fragrance from our heather slopes,
And wander on to greet the tufted grass
Within the crevices of some high rock,
Where distant views entrance.

Lawrence Pilkington

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

ANTARCTICA

On the 18th December, 1959, Ron Miller left in *Kista Dan* for his second spell in Antarctica with the Falkland Islands Dependencies' Survey. They became trapped by thick ice in Marguerite Bay and were unable to reach Adelaide Island. After the ship was extricated by the U.S. ice-breaker *Glacier*, Ron was taken to spend the season at Hope Bay where he hopes to do some sledging.

HIMALAYA

CHO OYU EXPEDITION, 1959

I was the only Club member in this party and did not get above about 20,000 feet, as I was sent down to Namche Bazar, with Loulou Boulaz, on doctor's orders. The leader was Claude Kogan and the other members were: Dorothea Gravina and Eileen Healey (British), Jeanne Franco, Colette Le Bret and Micheline Rambaud (French), Claudine Van der Straten (Belgian) and Tensing's two daughters and niece.

We crossed the Nangpa La and set up Base Camp at about 19,000 feet on the 14th September. By the 1st October Camp 4 (the last camp, about 24,000 feet) was established; the ice cliff, the main obstacle, had been surmounted and there are no further technical difficulties. Claude Kogan, Claudine Van der Straten and Ang Norbu were at Camp 4 in readiness for an attempt on the summit. The weather now turned bad. On the 2nd October Wangdi (the Sirdar) and Chewang started up from Camp 2 to help the Camp 4 party down and all the others returned to Base. Chewang was lost in an avalanche above Camp 3; Wangdi managed to dig his way out and struggled down to Base Camp alone, arriving exhausted and with badly frostbitten hands. (He has since made an almost complete recovery).

Great anxiety was now felt for the three at Camp 4 but snow conditions made it impossible to send up a search party before the the 6th October and that party was delayed by unstable snow higher up. On 11th October Dorothea Gravina and Jeanne Franco went up with Sherpas to the site of Camp 4 but could find no trace of it as the whole area had been swept by avalanches.

It had been hoped to attempt other unclimbed peaks, but, after this tragic accident, these plans, as well as the attempt on Cho Oyu, were abandoned.

MARGARET DARVALL.

LAPLAND

G. B. Spenceley felt that Lapland was the only place left in Europe where a holiday would have something of the flavour of an expedition and during the summer of 1959 he spent six weeks walking and modest climbing alone in Arctic Norway, Sweden and Finland.

He carried a light tent, cooked where possible on wood, fished in the evening for a supper of sea trout or charr and was able to make journeys of seven or eight days without being overburdened. Except for a fisherman who had flown up to a lonely lake, he met no other traveller on his journeys in Norway. In Sweden, however, in certain areas, even though isolated and far from road and rail, the tourist industry flourishes, served by well-marked tracks and a chain of huts.

Starting from Narvik, Spenceley made two journeys into the mountains extending to the frontier, climbing Sälkacokka (5,558 feet) and the Domstind (4,904 feet). At Storvatn Cuno Javrre he waited two days in poor weather for an opportunity to climb Storstienfjell (6,237 feet) the highest and most isolated of this group. From Skjomdalen, where he reprovisioned, Spenceley made a five day trek to Kebnekaise (6,965 feet, Sweden's highest mountain) at the foot of which there is a well appointed Fjellstation served by a daily helicopter service.

There were many fine mountains here, but the rock was poor—there was none of the sound grey granite of northern Norway—and there were so many other walkers that the expedition flavour was lost, even if in compensation there were sunburnt Swedish blondes to delight the eye. In the company of two Swedes—blonde but of the male sex—Spenceley made the traverse of Kebnekaise, a fine expedition of almost Alpine character.

Three days' journey to the south-east near the head of the Kaitum ålv, far from all tourist routes, he found a small community of semi-nomadic mountain Lapps and lived with them for a time. Quite different from the dressed up 'tourist Lapps' of more frequented parts, they were simple, kindly and hospitable. For some time in the company of a reindeer calf astray from its herd, Spenceley made a four-day journey through the birch forests bordering the Kaitum ålv to Fjallasen on the railway.

He concluded his holiday by visiting the hills of north-east Finland, but the short summer was over. The mosquitoes had gone, but a bitterly cold north wind brought days of wet September snow.

ALPS

CHAMONIX

The following notes have been supplied by Geoff Oliver.

In late July, 1959 I arrived in Chamonix to be greeted with mixed weather. During the first week I did two routes.

Aiguille du Peigne, North ridge, with Les Brown: a magnificent rock climb which was marred slightly when we dropped a sack containing an expensive camera.

Aiguille du Géant, South face, with Mev (Melville) Connell: a completely artificial route in an exposed situation. Another Club

member, Paul Ross, did this route the same day with Eric Rayson.

West face of the Dru. In the second week, with the weather looking doubtful, Eric and I embarked on this. After a bivouac at the foot, we climbed the initial couloir without meeting any stone-falls and by evening had reached the top of the 40-metre crack, an artificial pitch climbed on wedges. Here we bivouacked again. We started early next morning and by mid-day had reached the 90-metre dièdre which, with about 50 assorted pitons and wedges in position, took three hours to ascend. Above this, the 80-foot diagonal rappel was made easier by a fixed rope. At about 4 p.m. an electric storm broke. It soon turned to snow, but luckily we found a tiny cave for another bivouac, this time very wet. At 5 o'clock next morning we joined the North face route which was plastered with 4 inches of fresh snow so that it was seven more hours before we reached the summit. More snow fell during the descent to the Charpoua Hut which lasted another 7 hours.

Paul Ross has sent an account of the following routes done in July-August, 1959:—

Aiguille du Géant, South face. This, with Eric Rayson as second, took approximately 4 hours from the Torino Hut.

Aiguille de Blaitière, West face. This was attempted with 'Jock' Connell but, after ascending both the 'Fissure Brown' and the 40-metre crack, I fell 60 feet when a piton on which I was resting on a Grade V pitch came out. Due to bad weather and a slight injury to one of my hands we had to return. It is worth noting that the 'Fissure Brown' is hard by British standards.

Aiguille de l'M, the Menegaux, with B. Aughton as second. A short route on the Chamonix face, but very interesting when higher things are out of condition. It is T.D. with some artificial and is comparable with the West face of the Pointe Albert in difficulty, but is a finer route.

Grand Capucin by the East face. This was the finest route of my holiday. Although the climb is almost completely artificial, there are wonderful situations and the route finding is a credit to Bonatti. B. Aughton was again my second and we had excellent weather so did not hurry at all. We bivouacked at the foot and started climbing about 8 o'clock, bivouacking again on a most pleasant ledge (the 2nd Bonatti bivouac) at 4 p.m. The next day, another 4 hours saw us to the summit (making 12 hours for the climb) after a most enjoyable route. The descent is very easy and not dangerous.

The following two routes were climbed solo later in the season (September). I found the times quite surprising. The N.N.E. ridge of the M. (guide-book time 2½ hours) took 16 minutes. The second solo climb was a very easy one, the N. - S.E. traverse of the Petits Charmoz.

Terry Sullivan, with Gunn Clark, also climbed the Menegaux on the M. in August, 1959. He has sent the following notes on an ascent of the

Aiguille du Plan, North face (Charlet route). The rock ridge which the Vallot Guide casually dismisses with 4 - 5 hours was so heavily plastered with snow that it took four of us (Gunn Clark, Ian Clough, John Alexander and myself) 10 hours.

The tremendous 2,000-foot hanging glacier was gained by tunnelling into a crevasse and ice-pegging our way out by the right wall. We found that the ice was covered by soft snow and had to scrape and cut the whole way to the summit. With about 1,000 feet to go, Clough was hit by a small avalanche with the result that we were both hanging from an ice peg—a most harrowing moment. Just above this the four of us found an ice cave in which we shivered the night away.

The first 4 hours of the next day were spent cutting up a very steep 200-foot high ice wall. At the top of this we had to do a 70-foot tension traverse to the left: a most exciting piece of ice gymnastics. Another 200-foot ice wall was climbed with the aid of ice pitons and by midnight we were at the Requin Hut. We all had slight frostbite and mine required treatment.

The weather after this became settled—bad all the time—so we came home.

DOLOMITES

Several members were in the Dolomites in the summer of 1959, but the Editor has received first-hand information from only one, Gunn Clark, who climbed the Cima Grande di Lavaredo by the Comici and Direttissima routes; the Cima Ovest by the Cassin North face route; and the Spigolo Giallo. He writes: 'Although the Cassin route on the Ovest took a mere one-seventh of the time of the Direttissima, the memories of the splendid free climbing it gave are just as vivid as the monotonous verticalities of the Direttissima—a three-day epic which, in retrospect, hangs so much on rusty bolts and pegs.'

It is said that another member, having failed to complete the ascent, abseiled down a considerable portion of the Cima Grande North face; readers who are familiar with John Wilkinson's article, 'Excitement in the Dolomites,' in the 1959 number of the *Journal*, will realize what this implies even if they have never seen the face.

CORSICA

E. N. A. and C. E. Morton, who camped in Corsica in July, 1958 and August, 1959 (on the latter occasion with A. J. and P. Langner), have sent the following information based on their own experience.

To reach most of the summits it is desirable to camp or bivouac. The Grotte des Anges is probably the best centre; 4 miles up the Viro Valley from Calasima, it can now be reached by a track for forestry lorries. Two other possible sites exist farther up this valley.

Climbs available include: Capo Tafonata, 2,343 m.—moderate; Paglia Orba, 2,523 m.—several routes from easy upwards; Mte. Albano and Cinque Fratri; Mte Cinto, 2,707 m. via the Col de Crocetta—a scramble; Pta. Minuta and Capo Larghia—reported difficult; ridge from Paglia Orba to Pta. Minuta includes Capo Uccello and numerous pinnacles of which we know nothing. The approach to this group of mountains from the west via Galeria and Manso might be interesting.

From Calaccucia, Mte. Cinto can be reached via the Bergerie d'Ascita by scrambling up a steep gully. Asco is said to be a good centre and Mte. Cinto can be climbed from here also by bivouacking above Asco. Mte. d'Oro, 2,391 m., looks a fine pile from Vizzavona, but the popular route up La Scala gully is easy; the route via the C.A.F. cabin (shelter only) appeared to catch far more cloud. Mte. Renoso, whose summit can be reached by rough walking from Bastelica, provides a fine view across the island. The Aiguilles de Bavella are very impressive and might prove interesting.

A climbing booklet to Mte. d'Oro and Rotondo is available, others are in preparation. The Guide Bleu and Michelin map are useful. Black and white maps 1/50,000 (no contours) can be obtained. The Syndicat d'Initiative (Ajaccio, etc.) will supply a leaflet of buses, trains, hotels, etc.

Facilities at official camp sites may be good, bad or non-existent. In the mountains level areas free from *maquis* are hard to find; bivouacking is feasible in summer but warm equipment is needed over 5,000 feet. Pigs ravage unattended camps, so goods must be stacked out of their reach.

Meals and provisions are obtainable in most villages. Wood fires are recommended for cooking in the mountains. Paraffin (petrol) is scarce; meths. (alcohol) is better and petrol can be obtained at the rare filling stations. Butane is often obtainable. At some places scooters, cars, donkeys and drivers can be hired.

The paths shown on the maps are often non-existent or obliterated by animals. The shepherds are at the bergeries from mid-June to mid-September. It is useful to have cigarettes for them as they will not accept payment for small services. It is essential to rise at dawn because of heat later and the likelihood of midday clouds. In April the *maquis* flowers are said to be at their best but the mountains are snow covered.

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

Harry Ironfield

New Year 1959 fell in mid-week, but despite this the customary good attendance was in no way diminished. The weather was often wet but those who arrived early on New Year's Eve had the benefit of some fair periods. All, however, were present for the enormous feast which the 'Innmates' had prepared. This splendid repast had scarcely been consumed when the Party began. Musical items interspersed with doggerel, satirical sketch and quiz continued until the approach of midnight when, to the accompaniment of many thunder flashes, a model hut was towed into the room and from its interior came the strains of the climbing song 'Clean the place up spick-and-span, see the doors securely shut, if you really are a gentleman, you may use our ruddy hut.' The roof opened to reveal the lusty singers within—the President and the Hut and Meets Secretary. Hot rum punch and cake served by our hosts and prolonged well-wishing brought to a close a most enjoyable evening.

On New Year's Day, after due attention had been paid to the need for exercise, we felt well able to cope with tea at Raw Head and dinner at the hotel. This was followed by Simon Clark's illustrated talk on the ascent of Pumasillo by the members of the Cambridge Andean Expedition. It was a thrilling narrative of a well organized and daring climb in the Peruvian Andes, beautifully photographed in colour. Of great interest were the slides of the Inca cities which some of the party had visited on their journey. An impromptu dance organized by a group of young members, but enjoyed by many of the older ones too, brought the evening and the meet to a close.

At the end of January, some thirty members and friends assembled in Mardale. Saturday was a sunny, cloudless day with a sharp nip in the air and from the tops there were extensive views. Sunday was also fine but overcast. Two parties ascended High Street; they returned by a variety of routes but reached the hotel within half an hour of each other. A third party who had in the morning inspected the dam, arrived two hours later. They had been the most energetic of all, doing a traverse of nearly everything that encircles Haweswater and arriving very fit at the end of it.

Poor weather was the lot of those who arrived in Eskdale at the end of February. There was little zest for rock climbing but the fells were popular, the Wasdale hills no less so than those surrounding Eskdale. One of the least hackneyed walks was undertaken by the valley party who traversed the south bank of the Esk to Eskdale Green, paid a most interesting visit to the Outward Bound Mountain School and returned via Miterdale and Burnmoor. After dinner on Saturday, a colour slide show of members' holidays in Corsica, Scotland and the Lakes was greatly enjoyed.

At Easter all four huts were in use by the meets, most of which were well-attended despite the rather unfavourable weather. High

winds and rain cramped the style of rock climbers but some routes were done, and quite a lot of walking.

Fresh ground was broken in June by a meet held at the Kirkstile Inn, Loweswater. A savage squall marred the brilliance of Saturday and caused a hasty retreat from Grasmoor. The next day was spent exploring the lesser fells of Mellbreak, Hen Comb, Gavel Fell, Blake Fell and Carling Knott. Unfamiliar views of the central fells were made dramatic by the masses of heavy grey cloud, whilst westerly, fleeting cloud shadows and a brilliant sun shining across the Solway enhanced a delightful scene.

At Whitsun, between forty and fifty members and guests were established in the Salving House and elsewhere. Many 'locals' turned up during the day. Saturday and Sunday were fine and hot, Monday still fine but cooler. On Saturday most people went to Gable where, amongst other things, a large number climbed Eagle's Nest Direct. In the West Chimney ascending and descending parties became entangled, causing a considerable traffic jam.

On Sunday Scafell was visited and many went to Birkness Combe. On Monday 23 climbers were concentrated on Gillercombe Buttress, the earlier starters being encouraged and otherwise by comment and criticism from the earthbound. The fell walkers were busy every day. It was recorded that the son of a member took the first step in graduation by his introduction to the leader at the age of ten months.

There must be many who feel that the Club's birthplace should support a meet worthy of the name, and it is most gratifying that Coniston has become once again popular. In July, more than 70 people were accommodated at the Sun, in the village, at Raw Head, and in tents by Boo Tarn. There was sunshine everywhere, except on Dow where climbers were enveloped in mist.

For the first time the annual North Wales Meet was held at the Pen y Gwryd Hotel, an overflow being housed at the Pinnacle Club Hut. The weather was excellent and everyone had three good days on the hills, climbers visiting the Llanberis cliffs, Lliwedd and Glyder Fach in turn.

The remarkable summer continued through September and a very crowded meet at Wasdale enjoyed a delightful week-end. Under these ideal conditions, Scafell was the supreme attraction, C.B., Great Eastern, Pegasus, Botterill's, Moss Ghyll Grooves, being among the great routes climbed. The last of the 'outdoor' meets confirmed the pattern set by its predecessors—sunny days, pleasant walking, good climbing from Bassenthwaite in October.

The indoor meets, those devoted to maintenance, were, with one possible exception, enthusiastically supported by the Club's technicians—electricians, builders, decorators, not to mention 'chars.'

In retrospect—a good year.

ANNUAL DINNER, 1959

F. H. F. Simpson

'And he help'd his guest to a bit of the breast
And he sent the drumsticks down to be grill'd.'
A Lay of St. Nicholas.

In accordance with custom the Friday 'early birds' wedged themselves in the upstairs lounge at the Queen's to view the year's accumulation of members' colour slides, ranging from Skye to sylvan mid-Surrey and the Canadian west, many of them studded with Club personalities in action and repose. The rain fell conveniently in the night, and on Saturday everyone was away early, in air keen and dry, and sunlight strong in the lee of any well-placed outcrop.

The Annual General Meeting will always be remembered for its length. After a quiet start proceedings hotted up when the 'establishment' came under heavy fire for permitting the use of cement breeze blocks in parts of the Raw Head extension. The promise that slates would be hung to disguise the blemish was no more favourably received than the reasoning which required access to shower baths to be 3 ft. 6 in. wide. The debate exploded in a laugh when G. G. Macphee suggested concealment by Virginia creeper. H. P. Spilsbury was re-elected President and F. Lawson Cook recited six lines of verse recording the presidency of three Clubs and suggesting the Yorkshire Ramblers as a fourth member of the Spilsbury commonwealth. More routine business gave place to two great debating points: new provisions for the election of members, and the admission of young children to huts. The Fell and Rock never has rows, only differences of opinion, and many of these were expressed in lively oratory. The meeting divided on the second issue, and the President glanced anxiously at his watch during the count.

With minutes to spare members hurried away, the ladies to transform themselves, the men for a quick flick of the hair brush. Places filled quickly in the main dining-room and the two overspill areas. Canon Hervey said grace, and, statistics say, 329 sat down to soup, at least two squadrons of turkeys, cranberry sauce and sausage, assorted vegetables and the sweet. At 9 o'clock a toast to Absent Friends, telegrams from afar and coffee. In the interval menus circulated for signatures and the big room filled up. The President opened the proceedings by drawing attention to the presence of the official guests, calling upon each to rise for identification. Miss Brown of the Northumberland Mountaineering Club was saved this duty when neighbours lifted her chair above the table.

Showell Styles, the chief guest, in proposing the health of the Club, explained that there were three ways of making a speech—the diffusive, the exclusive and the abusive. Before making a choice he told several funny stories and described the ascent of something called Murray's variation* on Raven Crag. Like 1959 diplomacy it

*See Climbs Old and New—*Editor.*

skilfully avoided a summit. In considering the approach to this toast a proposer must remember the response which must follow. Of the three methods, the first was unfair to the audience, the second comprised only a rude limerick followed by the toast, the third was impossible as he could abuse neither the Club nor the district, which he did not know, living as he did in Wales of which the Club had heard. He had discovered a first-class Journal, a remarkable Dinner Secretary, and an enthusiasm undimmed by time. Being quite unqualified to speak, he proposed the toast of the premier climbing Club.

Describing John Hirst as an ancient prima donna who had attempted to retire, the President called on him to sing, and we heard a ballad describing the two faces shown by the President during his career, and recalling Jekyll and Hyde.

In responding to the toast the President said that everyone would be happy to see P. D. Boothroyd, senior of seniors, back among them again after his recent illness. Doctors had expressed concern about him, but he had had quite different ideas. Jack Wray, the Club's ancient institution was there, and J. B. Wilton, greatly respected original member. Edward Wormell was to be noted, too, after his misfortune on Pillar, remarkably mobile in spite of the handicap of a pair of crutches. The President called on these four to rise to cheering and applause.

The President then described how he had been made to work at maintenance meets. The Scottish meet had been a delight. He met some nice people and experienced the volcano kettle which had replaced the Burnett open fire. The Presidency was a wonderful experience. The devoted officers and committee always obtained his opinion on matters of policy, but took little notice of it. The success and popularity of the Dinner sprang directly from the energy and resourcefulness of Lyna the Club martinet. Soon the only way to get a dinner ticket would be to undertake never to apply for one.

Frank Alcock sang of the hell suffered by minstrels, following up with a musical account in broad Yorkshire of the first ascent of Goat Fell.

A. H. Griffin proposed the toast of the guests and described himself as the little man who appeared at the circus after the elephants had been on. A good wine waiter could help the proposer of this toast by ensuring that the listeners were in good fettle. It was the custom to assemble facts about the chief guest and the rest of the top table, bordering on defamation. Mrs. Pickering, now a Vice-President, was no longer part of the speakers' spy-ring, and the fabrication of facts was most difficult for a journalist. Labouring cheerfully under this handicap he gallantly complimented the ladies and disparaged the men, with the exception of Eric Byrom who had yet to speak.

John Hirst did another jovial stint on the serving table while the final speaker checked his notes. Eric Byrom, responding for the guests, described his courtship by correspondence with the perfect Secretary who planned the Dinner, who had written him four letters, one with the stamp upside down. He assured the guests that they had dined with a remarkable Club, with an even more remarkable President, known to a whole generation as the terror of the Robertson Lamb Hut, and who had worked in the Inland Revenue for ten years before he dared to tell his father how he earned his living. After a loud and sincere Auld Lang Syne, Ruth Spilsbury performed the last honour of the evening by calling on Mr. Beck to appear with a somewhat reluctant Monica and the rest of the staff to be thanked on behalf of the company. The dining-room emptied and the lounge filled up, and well after midnight a crowd still talked and talked.

In the morning out went the President, freed for the moment from the cares of office. Out went the members and the guests, into the quiet and sunshine of a friendly Autumn day. The fine weather tempted many to Combe Gill. The more energetic made for the Napes and the ridges were soon densely populated. Errant mist patches played in the gullies and a burst of sun gave a fine brocken spectre for the more or less exclusive benefit of the Editor, who viewed it appreciatively from the Needle. For your reporter there is the memory of the emptiness of Langstrath, the darting fish in the still shallow pool, and cloud shadows hunting on the grey buttresses. Another memory we all can share is that of Bentley Beetham's afternoon lecture on the 1924 Everest Expedition. For well over an hour Bentley took his audience step by step along the classic approach. Nothing spectacular; only a simple tale of a great adventure which had lost nothing of its freshness, holding the listeners spellbound and bringing to reality in the pictures, the wind, the cold, and the dynamic attraction of the great mountain. Even the least of us travelled with him and—most remarkable of all—only Bentley in that crowded attentive company did not appreciate the impact of this moving experience.

JEKYLL AND HYDE

Our Jekyll is a kindly soul who toils for our enjoyment.
But Hyde performs a different rôle,
And while I would not say he stole,
The fact remains that to pinch our dole is his regular employment.
And which is which we can never make out, despite our best endeavour.
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible, shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Our Jekyll is a famous cook; his omelets are delicious.
But Hyde is all too prone to look
On the humble chef as ordained a crook
Whose villainies must be brought to book; his nature's so suspicious!
If you can Hyde what he wants to find out, your cookery must be clever!
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Thus Jekyll's clients are yearly faced with forms crammed full of questions.
The answers Hyde demands with haste
In letters curt, severely laced
With H.P. sauce, which spoils the taste, and ruins their digestions.
Though what he wants to bother about, they can discover never,
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible, shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

While hateful Hyde is all alert our happiness to fetter,
The gentle Jekyll will exert
His influence to allay the hurt;
Thus, after Hyde has had your shirt, you borrow Jekyll's sweater.
So gentle Jekyll's kindness will rout the hateful Hyde's endeavour,
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Now Hyde has plumbed, we all agree, the depths of degradation.
He did it so efficiently,
That Her Most Gracious Majesty
Presented him with the O.B.E. for preventing tax evasion.
And why She did that, I could never make out, despite my best endeavour,
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

But Jekyll, he was most annoyed, and showed his great displeasure.
Now Hyde has joined the unemployed,
His powers of evil quite destroyed,
While Jekyll's joy is unalloyed as a gentleman of leisure.
Which proves that Jekyll's a very good scout, as kind as he is clever,
And of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible, shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

J.H.

Sung by John Hirst at the Annual Dinner on the 31st October, 1959

SCOTTISH MEETS

SLIGACHAN, May, 1959.

What with Fell and Rockers about to depart after a glorious holiday in Glen Brittle and others arriving late and leaving early, I doubt if we ever did agree on the number attending the meet at Sligachan. The general consensus of opinion, however, was that there were 31 members and guests, many of whom had not previously attended a Scottish meet.

Two things stood out above all. First the weather, hot sun and a cloudless sky gradually deteriorating towards the end but never a really wet day and, secondly, the traverse of the Main Ridge.

The arrival of the Murrays and Charles Pickles by Jag. (I almost said Comet) on the Saturday evening was the signal for a series of conferences between them and Dick Cook. Plans were being made and caches of food and drink hidden on the Ridge until on the Wednesday, Dick Cook, Donald and Nancy Murray and Charles Pickles traversed the Ridge in the day. Leaving the Sligachan Hotel at 0200, the party set off from Glen Brittle House at 0245 and reached Gars-Bheinn at 0600. Their times on the Ridge closely followed those of L. G. Shadbolt and A. C. M'Laren who first did the traverse in one day on 10th June, 1911. The top of Sgurr nan Gillean was reached at 1815 when two of the party descended to Sligachan arriving at 2040. The other two included Sgurr na h'Uamha and reached home at 2100.

Small boats and the sea appear to exert a strange fascination upon members of the Fell and Rock. Whenever they meet in the west of Scotland curious expeditions requiring lengthy trips by car followed by sea voyages to little known lochs or islands become the order of the day. This meet was no exception; three such journeys were planned and two of them successfully carried out. The first was a trip to Raasay and the ascent of Dun Caan (1,456 feet). In view of the difficulties encountered when the Fell and Rock previously attempted the conquest of this mountain, arrangements were made to land 3 miles north of the usual landing place. Graham Wilson had the honour of being the first member of the club to reach the summit. There was some delay, due to adverse tidal conditions, in starting the return journey over the sea to Skye. By the time the boat was launched a fresh off-shore breeze had sprung up and the voyage had its exciting moments.

The day after the Ridge traverse most people set off in a fleet of cars to Elgol and then took boat to Loch Scavaig. Thereafter, the party split up, some walked back to Elgol via Camasunary, others back to Sligachan. Certain non-seafaring members even walked from Elgol to Coruisk and back.

The boating trip that never was would have been the best of the lot. The idea was to make an early start, drive to Glen Brittle, boat to Loch Scavaig and then divide the party into three: the

energetic to scramble back to Glen Brittle via the Dubh Ridge, others to walk back to the Hotel via Glen Sligachan and the lovers of the sea to picnic at Coruisk and return by boat to Glen Brittle. This was planned to take place on the last Saturday of the meet. However, by Friday night the Cuillin were covered in heavy cloud and the wind was rising. By early morning half a gale was blowing and the weather looking distinctly wet. The boat was cancelled, the early risers returned to bed and later spent the day visiting Talisker Bay. Of the rest, the Andrews and Lings climbed Sgurr nan Gillean by the Tourist Route and a small party led by Dick Cook walked to Coruisk and back. The conditions there were such that they were very glad they were not trying to find their way over the Dubhs after what would have been a very rough sea passage.

However, the days that will be best remembered were those spent on the Ridge: Sgurr nan Gillean by the Pinnacle Ridge; the traverse of Clach Glas and Blaven; Bruach na Frithe and Sgurr a' Bhasteir; Sgurr Sgumain to Alasdair, Thearlaich and Mhic Coinnich; Sgurr Dearg; Sgurr nan Gobhar to Banachdich, Thormaid and Ghreadaidh and down by An Dorus; and the traverse of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh—glorious hot sunny days on the tops and even more glorious cold baths in the rock pools during the walk back in the evenings.

Rock climbing, as such, took perhaps second place but the Cioch was visited by two parties, Slanting Gully was climbed once and Charles Pickles and the Murrays climbed the Western Buttress of Sgurr Sgumain by the Slant, a new climb of John Wilkinson's which they considered absolutely first class.

Off days were spent touring the north of the island by car, visiting Dunvegan Castle and climbing the Quiraing.

Altogether a very happy and successful meet and no small thanks are due to the President for the way in which he planned our days so that there was always something worth while doing for all of us, however varied our tastes or condition.

GRAHAM ACKERLEY.

GLEN BRITTLE, September, 1959.

Some thirteen members and guests camped by the beach and enjoyed the best weather seen on the island since the departure of the Fell and Rock from Sligachan in June: not a drop of rain fell on the tents and the cold nights reduced the midge population to a satisfactorily low level. Several other members joined the meet for short periods and others camped, in comfort, in Glen Brittle Lodge.

Ridging was popular, as usual, despite the near-benightment of a large party at the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap largely due to an excessively late departure of the boat for Scavaig: a dozen people

traversed the gap in the half-hour before dark. A very fine day was spent on the Glach Glas—Blaven traverse. The Main Ridge was traversed by Harry Griffin and his son and, the following day, by Des Birch who did the round trip and back to Glen Brittle in thirteen and a half hours, a remarkable performance, particularly as most of the ridge was unfamiliar to him.

The rock climbers were so fond of their sleeping-bags that crags farther away than Coire Lagan were out of the question. In a series of brisk half-days, however, many ascents were made on Sron na Ciche including Cioch Direct, Cioch West, Petronella, Arrow Route, Mallory's, Trap Face, Integrity, Crack of Doom by the Direct Start and with the Direct Finish, Rib of Doom, etc. The West Buttress of Sgumain was climbed by the West Trap Route and Final Tower Direct, and John Wilkinson and G. J. Ritchie (S.M.C.) made a new route, Sou'wester Cracks (600 feet, Mild Severe) starting about 15 feet to the right of the start of the West Trap Route. For about 300 feet the route principally followed cracks trending towards the right-hand arête of the buttress: a line of trap was then followed diagonally left to the finish on the crest of the buttress.

Most people acquired fine suntans although one leader lost a little of his whilst making an involuntary descent from an unclimbed section of the Cioch Upper Buttress which some misinformed observer had assured him was the line of Integrity. Despite the hot weather, the thirstier members of the party so restrained themselves that the large quantities of imported ales actually lasted until the end of the meet. The boatmen were elected honorary fish purveyors to the party and several members suffered from a surfeit of mackerel.

It was an enjoyable meet and most of those who attended can hardly wait to get back to Skye again.

JOHN WILKINSON.

LONDON SECTION, 1959

During this year walks have again been our main activity and they have been very well supported. They are certainly a pleasant way of keeping in touch with fellow members, at the same time helping to keep the legs in good training. Jim Beatson (whom we congratulate on his marriage later in the year to Miss Joyce Kettle) led the first on 8th February from Coulsdon to Merstham in the Surrey hills—a route new to most of us. Mud was expected and muddy it was, but we kept to high ground and enjoyed fine views.

As has become traditional, we joined the London Section of the Rucksack Club for their Dinner Walk on 15th March. All day the sunlight glinted through the beech woods on the breezy heights of Berkhamsted, and the final descent to Tring with a wide panorama of the plain of Aylesbury made a fine ending to the walk.

On 26th April we were again in the Chilterns when Margaret Darvall led a circular route from Great Missenden by way of Holmer Green and Little Kingshill. The woods were now showing the fresh green of spring and the whole eleven miles were most attractive. On 31st May, Stella Joy and Joyce Lancaster-Jones took us to the Thames Valley from Tilehurst to Whitchurch and along the Thames towpath to Goring and Streatley. There is always something fascinating about walking along a towpath and watching the craft on the river. The lock at Goring was a gay scene and a swan with her brood of cygnets attracted the photographers.

June 21st saw us in the Cotswolds. We took advantage of a special excursion to Chipping Campden which gave us a long day for exploration. We included Dovers Hill (754 feet) with its fine view over the Vale of Evesham to Stratford-on-Avon. This hill was for 200 years the scene of the Cotswold Games, founded by Robert Dover in 1604. We then continued on to Broadway Hill (1,000 feet) from which it is said that 13 counties are visible on a clear day. The view extends to the Malverns and the Black Mountains, but unfortunately the day was rather cloudy and the views limited. We were very pleased to have with us several members from the north, who had sportingly driven from Liverpool. It was generally voted a most successful day, which we hope to repeat next year, with north and south meeting at some half-way point such as this.

Our next walk was on 12th July when M. N. Clarke led us on the favourite round from Leatherhead through Norbury Park to Boxhill and Mickleham Downs. We were glad to be able to give our parting good wishes to Margaret Darvall, so soon to be on much sterner ground on the All Women's Expedition to Cho Oyu.

On 30th August David Hill gave us a fine tramp on the Sussex Downs. Starting from Steyning we soon arrived at Chanctonbury Ring, that mysterious earthwork, with its clump of trees, which is a landmark for miles. The colouring was particularly rich and for

most of the day we were in sight of the sea. After tea at Findon, the two miles back to Steyning were prolonged by some blackberrying forays.

On 15th November David Ferguson again led us on the Surrey uplands around Reigate. It was a typical November day, but he had carefully planned a walk to suit the time of year and the autumn tints were still in evidence. As the foggy evening closed in we were glad to reach the Bridge House on Reigate Hill, a sybaritic road-house which accepted our muddy boots with equanimity. Perhaps the subdued lighting had something to do with this!

So once more to the Section's Annual Dinner on 12th December, held as usual at the Connaught Rooms. This year our numbers had increased to seventy-two. Everyone was particularly pleased to have Dr. Hadfield with us again in the Chair; it will be remembered that, on account of illness, he had to miss the previous dinner—his first absence for many years. The business of the Annual Meeting was dealt with in the usual expeditious way, but one important item was the election of Mabel Burton to the post of Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the London Section, in place of Robert Tyssen-Gee, who has served for no less than twelve years. At 9 o'clock we drank the time-honoured toast of Absent Friends. We were delighted to have with us our President, H. P. Spilsbury, and Mrs. Spilsbury. During the evening the President entertained us with some of his delightful songs familiar to many members of the Club. Mrs. Spilsbury was the skilled accompanist and everyone joined in the choruses. We were also pleased to have with us as guests Sir Edwin Herbert (Alpine Club) and Lady Herbert, George Starkey (A.B.M.S.A.C.), Mary Starkey (Ladies' Alpine Club) and Vernon Chapman (Rucksack Club). The toast to the guests was proposed by Robert Tyssen-Gee to which Sir Edwin Herbert gracefully responded. A toast to Dr. Hadfield was proposed by E. W. Hamilton. The speeches were all short and there was plenty of time for friends to meet; this, together with the President's musical entertainments, made it a particularly jolly evening—one of the best we had had in recent years.

The year ended with the Dinner Walk led by the Walks Secretary. It was, unfortunately, foggy and the going heavy. But the route was purposely a short one and although the party trod the paths of Berkhamsted and Ashridge without seeing very much, a happy buzz of conversation enlivened the stillness of the fog. Luckily the leader did not lose the way and all were within the portals of the Kings Arms Hotel by a roaring fire soon after 4 p.m.

ROBERT TYSSEN-GEE.
E. W. HAMILTON.

Ivor Nicholas

RUSSIANS WITH SOME OF THEIR HOSTS IN WASDALE

L. J. Griffin A. Ostchinnikov, A. Ashworth, D. English
D. Thomas M. Borushko, J. Kukhiani, M. Khergiani, E. Tar, P. Moffat, D. Miller

EDITOR'S NOTES

A number of events and achievements, some of which are referred to elsewhere in this number of the *Journal*, invite record or emphasis in these notes. The background is the remarkably fine summer of 1959 followed, even more remarkably, by the equally fine summer (up to the time of writing) of 1960. This is reflected in the quality as well as the quantity of Climbs Old and New which occupy 22 pages instead of the normal ten or eleven. It will be noticed that a great many of the new climbs were made by our own members.

From the Alps, although the weather there in the 1959 season was by no means uniformly favourable, came the news of notable exploits, the outstanding one being the first British ascent of the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses by Robin Smith and our member, Gunn Clark, who were followed a day or so later by Don Whillans, Hamish MacInnes, John Streetly and Leslie Brown. In Climbs and Expeditions there are brief notes which only hint at the high standard of other enterprising ascents; nearly all of these would be full articles if only *Journal* space and the time of the authors permitted.

The dedication of the memorial footbridge over the Liza by the Rev. G. W. Ellison on the 7th May was the occasion for the meeting of friends of all generations. The day was warm and sunny, the service simple and effective, with Pillar Rock dramatically dominating the scene. Relatives of those members who gave their lives in 1939-1945 and whose memory we were honouring were invited and many others joined them, so that there were over 100 present; a considerable number had accompanied the President over Scarth Gap from Birkness, a few had walked from Wasdale over Black Sail, and a small party had made their way from the top of Honister Pass via the 1914-1918 War Memorial on Great Gable and over Kirkfell. There were also representatives of the Cumberland County Council who, with the help of our own War Memorial Fund, built the bridge and have undertaken to maintain it. After the service John Appleyard unveiled a memorial plaque fixed to a rock near by. More I must not write as the Treasurer, who was very closely concerned with all the arrangements connected with the building of the bridge and its dedication, has undertaken to contribute an account for the 1961 number of the *Journal*. There are excellent photographs of the bridge, the personalities and the plaque and these are being held to appear with the Treasurer's article next year.

A gathering of a very different character took place in Wasdale on the 1st June. The visit of the party of Russian mountaineers to this country, following that of Sir John Hunt's private expedition to the Caucasus last summer, has been widely publicized, but our own meeting with them in Wasdale was most informal and friendly. On Tuesday, 31st May, when the Wayfarers were entertaining the Russians in Langdale, a number of our members joined them on

Gimmer where Paul Ross and Dennis English led parties up Kipling Groove (which was climbed later by an all-Russian rope). On Wednesday morning they walked via Esk Hause and Scafell Pike to Hollow Stones where they were met by another sizeable Fell and Rock contingent. For various reasons, only two of the five Russians climbed on Scafell, but, in perfect weather, they did some excellent routes, including Central Buttress and Great Eastern by the Yellow Slab Variation. As they were ready, the climbers wandered into Brackenclose for an informal tea prepared by Lilian and Ron Brotherton and Peggy Diamond, and they eventually assembled for dinner at the Wastwater Hotel where they were joined by a number of other members who had been unable to get to Wasdale in time to climb. After an excellent meal, followed by expressions of mutual goodwill and friendship by our President and their leader through the interpreter, and a speech of welcome in Russian by Edward Wormell, the Russians presented badges to those who had climbed with them and to some Club personalities; and, to the Club, a red velvet banner embroidered in gold. In return we presented the Russians with a set of *Guides* and gave them Fell and Rock badges as mementoes. Later there was ample time for meeting and talking to the Russians either with the help of the interpreters or, more arduously, but more amusingly, without their help. One or two of the Russians, when encouraged, spoke quite a few words of English. Much later they returned to Brackenclose for the night, accompanied by some of our members, while others of us drove home to be ready for work in the morning.

It was a memorable occasion for all who were privileged to be there and Harry Ironfield is to be congratulated on the excellence of the arrangements. He took endless trouble to ensure that everything went smoothly, and this is but one example of the conscientious way in which he has unobtrusively worked for the Club. It will therefore be learned with extreme regret that he feels unable to continue as Hut and Meets Secretary. He has done this very exacting job for five years and has been most enterprising in finding new centres for Club meets and in giving a new lease of life to the old ones; both in the new and in the old places the meets have become increasingly popular and well attended. In his other capacity, as controller of huts, Harry, combining as he does firmness with tact, has been invaluable to the Club which owes him a great debt of gratitude for his devoted service.

Molly FitzGibbon has recently returned to the Lake District after spending a year in the United States. As a member of the Lake District Planning Board she had introductions to the Planning Authorities over there and was shown many of the American National Parks. She brings news of our Original and Honorary Member, Charles Grayson who, at the age of 80, still goes to business.

He sends his best wishes to the Club, as do also Alf and Joyce Mullan with whom Molly stayed at Denver.

The universal popularity of colour photography has had serious consequences for the *Journal*. Monochrome prints (which are required for the half-tone blocks) cannot of course be made directly from colour transparencies and experience indicates that it must be very rare to get professionally made prints which are good enough for reproduction, no doubt because both skill and time are essential. I am therefore greatly indebted to Douglas Milner who has most kindly made the prints (three of them from colour transparencies) which illustrate Gunn Clark's article on the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses and I should like to say a special word of thanks to him.

This seems a suitable opportunity for appealing to those members who still work in monochrome to submit prints which they think might be of interest. Photographs of rock climbs, particularly new ones or those of high standard, are always welcome as, indeed, are Lake District subjects in general. I am grateful to Jack Carswell for sending a batch of prints one of which I am glad to have been able to include in this number.

The Editor's thanks are due to everyone who has helped with the *Journal* including the printers (who, by their co-operation, have enabled the date of publication to be advanced) and the authors of all the items which appear in this number. Special mention must be made of Peter Moffat who has looked after Climbs Old and New for seven years and whose job has increased so much; and of Mary Greenbank who spent many hours typing the new climbs.

Geoffrey Stevens has, once again, most generously read the final proofs—a considerable task which has to be performed at short notice and in a matter of days. The knowledge that there is a check at this stage is of incalculable benefit to an editor, and it is difficult to find words adequately to express my appreciation and thanks.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Club, I should like to congratulate Mary Glynne on receiving the O.B.E., G. F. Peaker on receiving the C.B.E., A. B. Hargreaves on being elected President of the Climbers' Club, and John Jackson on being appointed Warden of Plas-y-Brenin. Perhaps it might not be inappropriate to congratulate here Brigid and Elspeth Ackerley on having made the tour of the Lake District 3,000-ers in 23½ hours from the Salving House at the Whit meet. Although it is not uncommon for this walk to be done by men, it is not so frequently undertaken by women and, in this particular case, Brigid and Elspeth had the further trial of having to catch a bus at 7 a.m. on Whit Tuesday for Southampton, after returning to the Salving House in the small hours of the same morning.

July, 1960 MURIEL FILES.

CLIMBING BOOK 1893–1906

A note by J. C. Appleyard

Mr. George Abraham of Keswick has generously presented to the Club *The Climbing Book*, a manuscript volume compiled by two early Lake District climbers the brothers G. D. and C. W. Barton. It consists of accounts of ascents (a number of them first ascents) in the Lakes, Wales and Derbyshire, between 1893 and 1906, together with extracts from the original Wasdale Climbing Book, numerous magazine and newspaper cuttings and many photographs, the excellent quality of which, after over half a century, is remarkable. In addition there are a number of letters from such well-known climbers as O. G. Jones, W. P. Haskett Smith and J. W. Robinson.

Probably the most interesting item is an eye-witness account of the first ascent of Botterill's Slab contained in a letter to G. D. Barton from W. E. Webb. Both, I think, were original members of this Club.

June 9th, 1903

'There was a remarkable chap named Botterill of Leeds staying at the Temperance Hotel and he simply mopped up everything.

Hearing he was after the long crack leading up to Keswick Brothers final chimney I went up to see the fun.

Botterill took a small axe up and cleared lots of moss out of the crack and worked up it until it became impossible. He then managed to traverse out across about 12 feet of smooth slab at an angle of 75 degrees with the minutest of holds, on to a shocking overhanging arête. He said afterwards that the arête was worse than the Eagle's Nest. After a time the arête became impossible and he managed to get back into the crack and then the dangers of the climb were over.'

I feel that one of our historical enthusiasts might study this volume with profit as it must be one of very few books giving an account of climbing done in this district over a period of eleven consecutive years in the early climbing days.

EXPOSURE METERS AND COMPASS ERRORS

A warning on this subject based on information provided by Mr. B. R. Goodfellow has been circulated to club secretaries by the British Mountaineering Council (Circular No. 281). As it is of great general interest it is quoted below:

Many climbers do not seem to know that a photographic exposure meter can seriously upset compass readings. Nowadays the meters which many mountain photographers carry are generally photo-electric. This type contains a small magnet which is so powerful that it can deflect a compass needle a yard away and can completely reverse a reading a foot away. This means a lightmeter in a pocket or even in a rucksack can lead to bad mistakes in route finding. The remedy is obvious; walkers, climbers (and others such as yachtsmen) should try the effect of their own meters on their own compasses and then remember before taking compass readings to place their lightmeter far enough away.