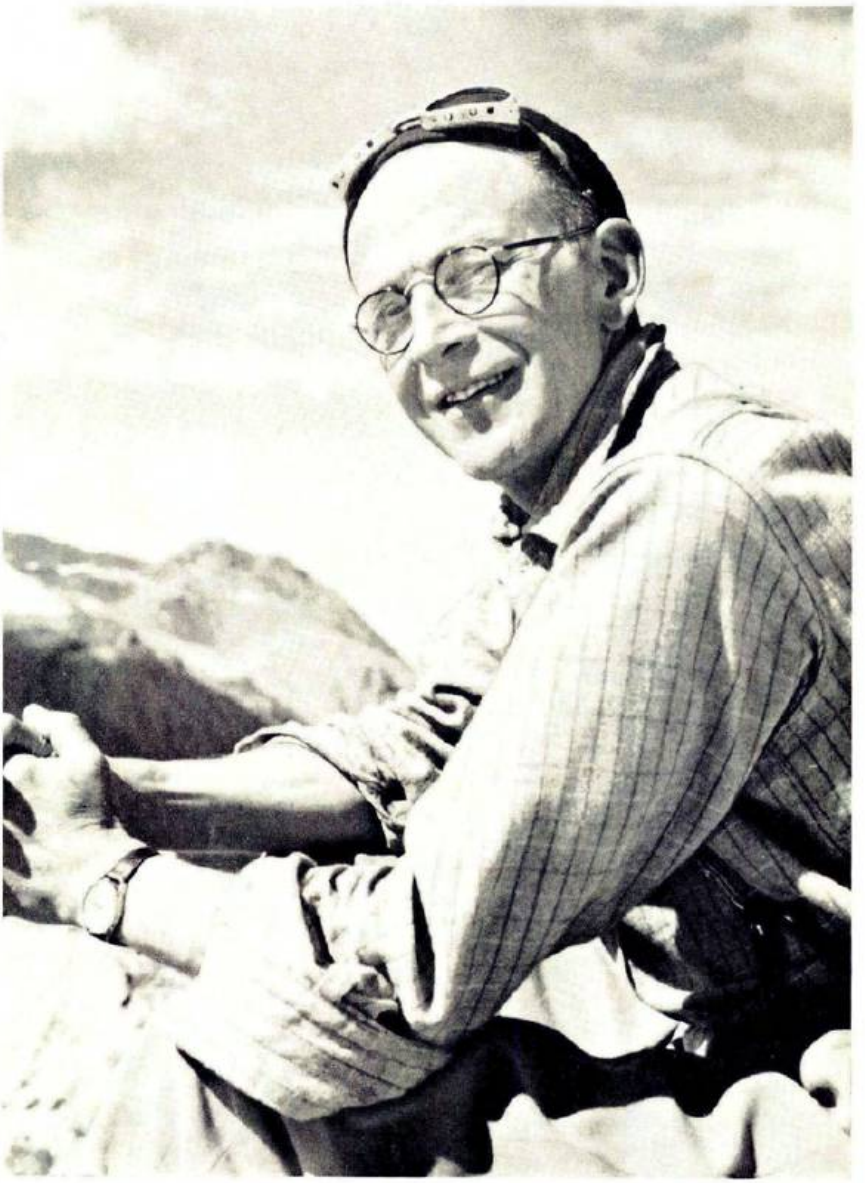

C. E. Arnison (President, 1960-1962)

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CONTENTS

A PROBLEM OF WEATHER

BIG BEN, HEARD ISLAND

John Béchervaise

Since last I pitched my tent on Sty Head at 'the backend o' the year', and accepted whatever Lakeland tarn and crag offered of midwinter skating and climbing, I have scrambled over a good many pitches between Great Gable and the mountains of Antarctica. I think the years have provided progression in experience rather than in delight, for I can recall Cumbrian days and nights possessing every element of happiness, as memorable as any amongst the icefalls of Heard Island or on the pointed peaks and nunataks of the south polar plateau.

During the last decade I have had the good fortune to lead three antarctic wintering expeditions and, incidentally, to be a first-footer on many antarctic mountains including the northern peaks of the extensive Prince Charles Mountains which occupy five degrees of latitude south of the seventieth parallel (between 60° and 70° E.), and are drained by the world's largest glacier. In this account, however, I shall write almost entirely about an unsuccessful attempt upon a mountain more fascinating than any I know within the Antarctic Circle. This is Big Ben, on Heard Island, one of the most beautiful and interesting mountains in the world.

Antarctic conditions are not exceptional in varying with several factors other than latitude, but some of the variations are, nevertheless, difficult to foretell. Ocean drifts and currents cause immense accumulations of pack ice and make even the approaches to the continent difficult in some sectors and impossible in some seasons. Surrounding Antarctica is a zone of frigid water extending northward to latitudes varying between approximately 45° S. and 60° S. Its northern limit, where there is a slight but abrupt temperature change, is known as the Antarctic Convergence. By some, this is considered the true boundary of the icy south; it coincides roughly with the limit of drifting bergs, and its few enclosed islands are all sub-antarctic in character.

The first of Australia's post-war National Research Expeditions in the Antarctic (which have been maintained continuously for the last fifteen years) were based on Heard and Macquarie Islands. The former, in latitude 53° S., longitude 73° 30′ E., although closer to the equator than is the Isle

of Man, is situated within the Convergence and culminates in a permanently ice-sheathed mountain of singular majesty. The great white mass of Big Ben rises more than 9,000 feet directly from the sea where its steep glaciers end in ice cliffs and tottering séracs. Some of the glaciers and their icefalls, notably those to the west of the island, possess a fairly constant inclination between the high dome and the ocean, but most of the mountain is defended by immense ice walls and buttresses two to three thousand feet high.

Mountaineering on Heard Island, however, possesses no problems of contour or crevasse remotely to compare with those of weather. The great mountain, well over a hundred square miles in basal area, lies directly in the path of a succession of cyclones which follow each other with such depressing regularity that a total of three isolated fine days in any month is exceptional, while a week's settled weather has never been known. It is probable that the mountain often projects above its clouds for, when local weather is execrable, the summit is occasionally seen from expedition vessels at considerable distances, but a zone of blizzard and freezing mist several thousand feet in depth generally extends between the sea and the upper glaciers. Winds of a hundred miles an hour may occur at sea-level. Radio-theodolite observations of weather balloons have shown that hurricane winds, nearly doubling these in strength, sometimes blow at elevations below that of the summit.

At Mawson Peak, the cone that surmounts the main dome, evidences of the volcanic nature of the island are supported by a plume of vapour issuing from a vent that has not yet been reached by any party. The summit is visible from the island itself perhaps twenty times in a year. Once or twice since the island was discovered, considerable volcanic activity has been observed. Though, superficially, Big Ben might be thought to resemble the famous volcano of Mount Erebus on Ross Island, Sir Douglas Mawson, who first ascended Erebus, regarded Heard's mountain as infinitely more difficult because of weather and unstable ice.

The immense differences between this insular mountain and those of the Antarctic Continent have surprised many expedition men. Snow falling at Heard Island adheres to the mountain, producing such vast masses of névé that only

swiftly moving glaciers, icefalls and avalanches can relieve its instability. Westerly disturbances, heavily charged with moisture, are lifted by the mountain to produce sleet, ice and snow at temperatures often close to freezing point. The temperature of the upper mountain itself is much lower, with the result that even vertical faces become encrusted to a depth of twenty or thirty feet. It is precipitation similar to that of the Himalaya after the monsoon, of the Andes and of the New Zealand Alps, but the constantly unseasonal conditions at Heard Island never allow ablation by wind and evaporation to overtake deposition. Big Ben seldom shows any rock from base to summit, except for a few days after a face avalanche; above five or six thousand feet there are odd gendarmes on sharp ridges which are occasionally visible. The overburdening of the mountain is the result of a unique combination of latitude, humidity, altitude and insularity. There are a few sea-level capes and bleak beaches unreached by the ice.

A thousand miles farther south the ice of the Antarctic Continent rises steadily from the ocean until it attains heights of between one and two *miles*. Here, latitude, distance from the sea, altitude and albedo combine to produce the lowest temperatures on earth. Even the warmest coastal region of Antarctica owns a mean annual temperature about 20° F. below freezing point. In blizzards the wind may move many millions of tons of snow, but this is too dry to adhere to rock surfaces. It streams past mountains, though the leeward sides of some rock ridges are drifted to their summits. Quite commonly, immense wind-scours, hundreds of feet deep, separate windward drifts from the rock. Many considerable mountains, of course, are completely buried by the ice-cap itself, but it is absence of ice, snow and vegetation that so clearly distinguishes most of the dark rocky pinnacles of Antarctica from those of lower latitudes.

Heard Island was discovered in 1833 by a British sealer, Peter Kemp, but it was lost and rediscovered several times before its existence found a place on maps and in literature. It is named after Captain Heard, of the *Oriental*, who sighted the island on 25th November 1853. The first landing took place in 1855 and thereafter for twenty or thirty years gangs of sealers camped on its few black beaches and exploited the vast herds of elephant seals for their oil.

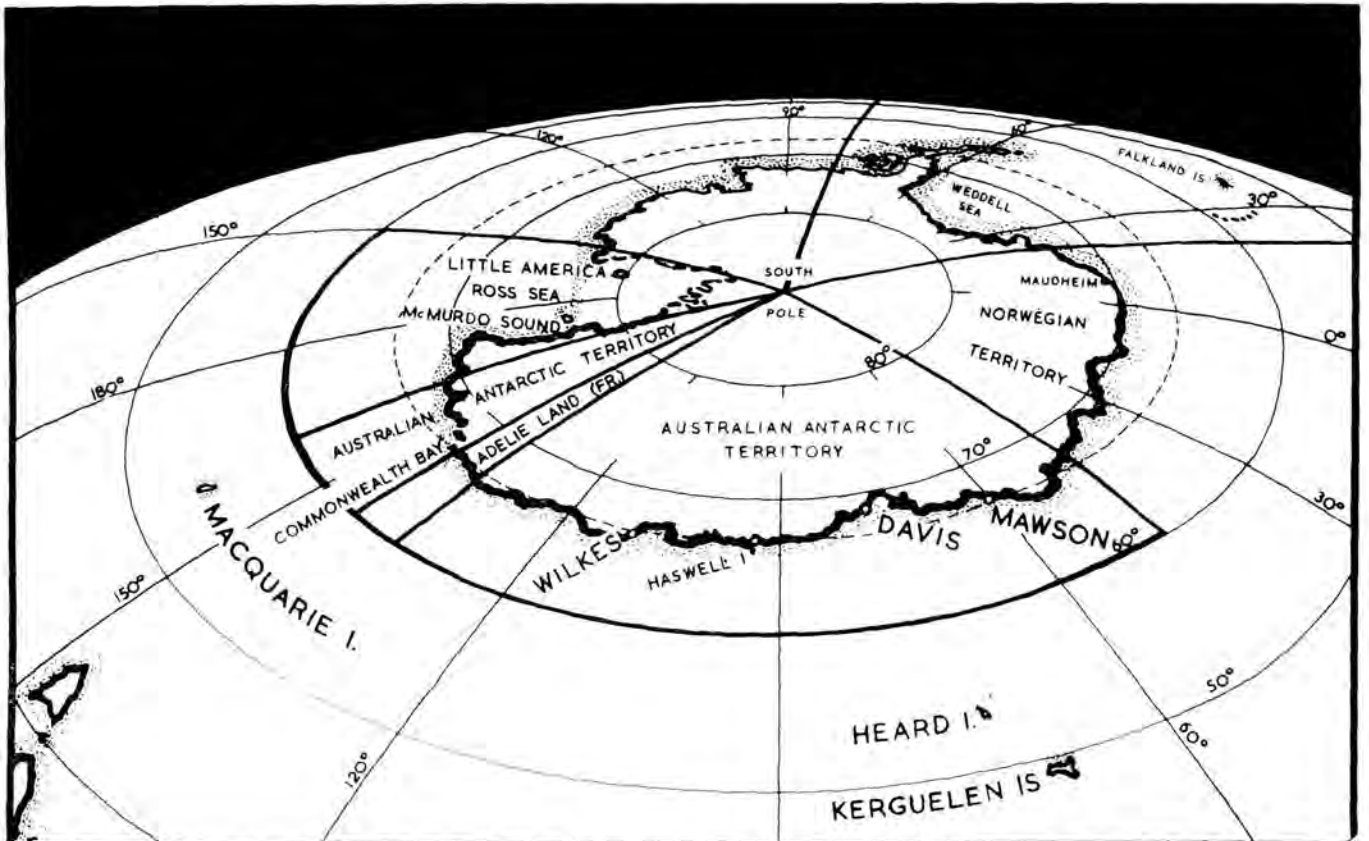
Scientific interest in Heard Island began with the *Challenger* Expedition, in 1874. Baron Erich von Drygalski made a brief but scientifically fruitful visit during his *Gauss* venture in 1902; E. Aubert de la Rue undertook geological investigations in 1929 and, later that year, Sir Douglas Mawson's B.A.N.Z.A.R. Expedition* also carried out some biological and geological exploration. The first A.N.A.R. Expedition† was landed from H.M.A.S. *Labuan* on 11th December 1947.

In spite of its intriguing history, the island was still virtually *terra incognita*. Existing charts were miles in error and anything approaching precise knowledge of the island's topography was limited to the lowest fringes of the oceanic ice-cap. From 1947 onwards, reports of the splendid mountain steadily reached Australia. For men of successive expeditions it constituted a challenge which was taken up on the rare occasions circumstances and weather permitted. It must be stressed, in fairness to the several parties who made serious attempts, that no expedition was given the glittering assignment as a project, and that absence from the scientific work of the station for more than a few days cast a considerable burden on those who remained.

For several years knowledge of the mountain slowly accumulated. The immensity of the great blunt dome seemed to dwarf all its difficulties. Miles of contorted ice, upon which a man was an invisible and insignificant speck amongst vast ravines and leaning towers of ice like wrecked cities, were smoothed out by distance to gentle inclines. Some men even envisaged toboggan runs down from the summit dome. Only experience and a sober evaluation of heights and distances could interpret such views and, naturally, there were many who reached the island full of confidence and strength of purpose but with a sense of mountain values learned on uplands too limited. At the first opportunity, when a day dawned clear and still, roped and cramponed they set out to gain experience; all found that a brief day measured little progress against the scale of the Baudissen and Vahsel Glaciers (the latter of which appeared an obvious line of approach). Invariably the weather changed, and the ice-charged wind howled through the séracs and obscured both

* British-Australian-New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition 1929-1931.

† Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions 1947—(continuing).



THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT

Heard Island is 3,000 miles from the continent

Map by courtesy of A.N.A.R.E.

difficulties and ambition. With blizzards, at any time of year, so powerful that it was almost impossible to stand, so cold that no climbing clothes could give full protection, and so dense that the leading man on a rope was a stumbling, probing figure scarcely visible in the murk, men were thwarted by discomfort, lack of time and the difficulties of carrying sufficient food for a prolonged siege.

Gradually the compound interest of successive years' experience emphasized the weather as the dominant factor militating against men's efforts on the mountain. Such is what I gathered from a few of the men who had been on the glaciers of Heard Island. I hadn't met all of them, but Gilchrist and Dovers, Ealey and Chittleborough and Lied all knew something of the problems, and what they told me constituted a powerful reason for my acceptance of the leadership of the 1953-1954 expedition to Heard Island.

We landed from the little Norwegian *Tottan*, an ex-sealer of 540 tons, on 22nd February. It was almost exactly six months later that we made our first major reconnaissance. The installation of new scientific equipment had occupied the few weeks that remained of an entirely nominal autumn but we had spent many isolated days and week-ends on the glaciers. Peter Shaw and Fred Elliott were my companions, but we were supported across the Vahsel Glacier by Arthur Gwynn, Kenneth Dalziel and Jack Hughes. They camped with us for the first night on the edge of the Abbotsmith Glacier, at a height of about 1,500 feet. At this level the ice stream is about a mile and a half wide and, unlike its lower reaches, is so broken into séracs that it is virtually impossible to cross.

The night was tranquil with only twelve degrees of frost, and next morning dawned clear, but the north-west wind was too strong for such conditions to last. Arthur, Ken and Jack turned for home, and we continued our reconnaissance. The innocent-looking, gently rising snow-fields were quite dangerous, as the crevassing was constant and it lacked any of the usual indications. Two aspects became evident: the underlying ice was much contorted by the movement of the Abbotsmith Glacier, but the snow surface was so frequently augmented that it effectually screened danger and never slumped to reveal the course of a crevasse. The abrupt open fissures we sometimes crossed had opened very recently; only

very large crevasses had an appearance of age, and we felt that this was more apparent than real. We kept a taut rope and probed carefully; none of us disappeared beyond the arm-pits but in spite of the utmost care this occurred too frequently for us really to enjoy the scenery. The trenches were deep and, when opened for inspection—involuntarily—generally averaged about six feet across at the top, and sixty or seventy deep. At this stage we were still able to man-haul our pulka-sledge of provisions although the incline was becoming steep. Had the ground been less foul, we should have preferred to carry them. Whether ski provide the most practicable and speedy means of travel in such country, taking into account the considerable loads of provisions and fuel necessary and the frequent icefalls, where they would have to be carried, is still a moot point. From any distance, many Heard glaciers appear natural ski approaches, especially the Gotley Glacier in the south-west. With or without ski, the mountain might certainly be climbed, given the weather.

The wind increased to gale strength and brought snow. Gradually visibility became nil. The snow was whipped up into stinging drift to augment that which fell. By four o'clock we were blizzard-bound. We crossed a final wide crevasse, not fully bridged in places, and commenced making camp. If I recount what followed, the description will serve for the happenings of twenty subsequent occasions in the course of the year. We worked in uncomfortable, swirling white darkness. Even the nearest pressure ice of the Abbotsmith Glacier could not be seen. There was nothing to give direction or distance; only a scrap of nylon on a bamboo pole marking the now hidden danger about twelve feet from the tent. The roaring blizzard threatened to carry it away as we hung on grimly to the ridge rod, gradually anchored the guys, and stamped down shovelled snow on the surrounding apron. The dusk came quickly in the storm; it was almost dark by the time we had unpacked our necessary gear and placed markers for the sledge, our ice-axes and crampons in case they should be entirely drifted over.

With all necessary food, stoves and sleeping-gear in the tent, space was extremely limited. Three men must act as one, each movement of a limb affecting the composite comfort. Outside, the blizzard increased in violence. Our breath and the steam

from the pemmican stew formed a crust of hoar all over the roof; the slightest chink in the ventilator let in streams of flour-like snow. Sitting against the outward sloping fabric at the bottom of the tent was quite comfortable as it was backed by the snow on the apron. Gradually, however, the drift crept up the walls and we were glad of the strength of the duralumin poles. The blizzard came in gusts of seventy to eighty miles per hour, with a mean wind of perhaps fifty.

The difficulty about leaving a tent in a blizzard, for any purpose, is not merely one of comfort; the main trouble is that one becomes impregnated with fine snow; it penetrates pockets, folds, seams, every crevice and opening, within seconds. Though it may be dry as talc outside, it must be laboriously brushed from the floor of the tent after entry or, of course, it thaws. It must be disposed of through the 'trap-door' flap, for, every time the tent sock is untied, it admits sufficient snow to cover everything inside. We spent a cheerful night at an altitude of 3,000 feet.

Visibility next day extended no more than three yards. A slight clearing showed us that the cloud ceiling above was ragged and unbroken. It was the snow-charged barrier that we had not penetrated in time; for better or for worse, on this reconnaissance, it was hard to say. For weeks this wild, blizzardly barrier was likely to remain. Possibly 3,000 feet higher was clearer air with furious plumes of drift, but between us and that region stretched contorted ice that would require absolute vigilance. The blizzard clamped down and we were quite storm-bound. All our gear was deeply buried. The temperature fell to + 10° F. and the wind was merciless. It was depressing to think of the next movement—digging out our sledge and tent.

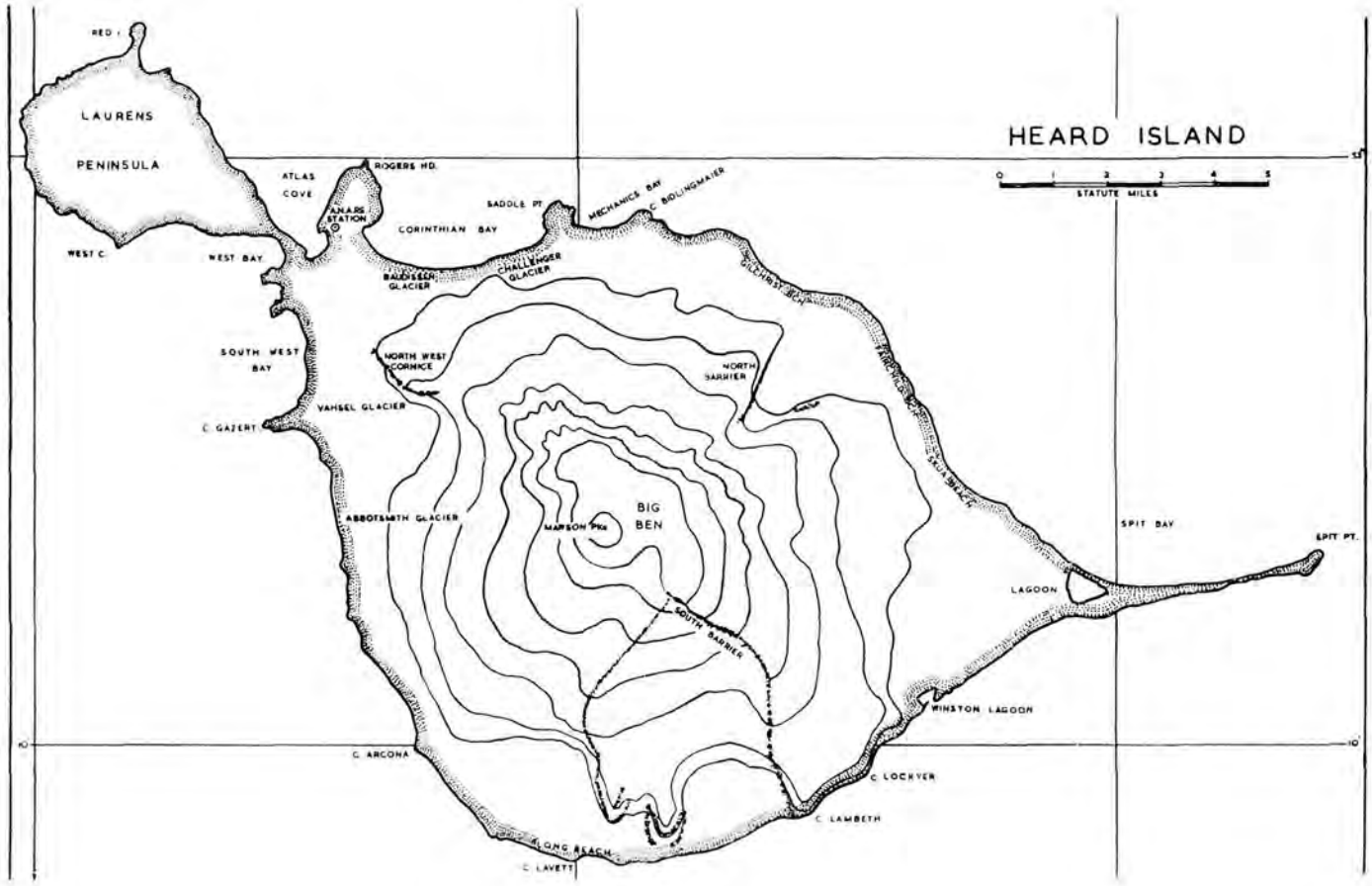
For about thirty-six hours we stayed in the area, amusing ourselves by digging a commodious ice cavern with a great central pillar. These sorts of shelters we had constructed at several strategic points lower down in stable ice where they lasted for months. It was hard work and often extremely uncomfortable but we thought we might as well prepare for a prolonged siege. We also decided that we should demolish the tent when the shelter was complete and reclaim our other buried gear and take it down to our scintillating candlelit refuge so that we might move on immediately the weather

allowed. But, outside, the blizzard increased and dismissed such buoyant hopes.

We learned a grim lesson that night. The snow accumulated so rapidly that our exit route and the several roof ventilators we had pierced became blocked, and lack of oxygen dulled our senses. We began to blame the quality of the candles when they spluttered and went out. The stoves burned badly. There was probably some generation of carbon monoxide but it is almost beyond comprehension, now, that none of us realized the trouble sooner. Suddenly and simultaneously we clawed for the exit, desperately pulling down our door-blocks before an avalanche of fine snow. For two or three minutes we struggled to clear a flue, holding our heads close to the icy downdraught, oblivious of the streaming snow. We were all right, but later we lay back devitalized, very tired, chilled deeply, and with nauseating headaches. We left a candle burning as an indicator and every couple of hours took turns to clear the air-ways.

There was no sign of the weather improving on our fourth day. It seemed that hope of success in climbing the mountain would always depend upon getting to a height of 6,000 feet in a burst of reasonable weather; it would then probably be profitable to remain tent-bound, if necessary, until the upper 3,000 feet of the mountain were clear. Ultimately we got down, with no further sight of the upper mountain. We left a quantity of provisions, including fuel, under ten foot markers.

It was November before opportunity coincided with another suitable break in the weather. We allowed ourselves ten days this time; twelve days' provisions. On 2nd November we set out and, moving swiftly, reached the site of our ice house. It was fortunate that we didn't count on our cache, for all our August provisions were at least eight feet under snow, and the movement of the underlying ice had made their location, in any case, quite uncertain. That night was an exact repetition of any of those spent there in August. Next day, in a lull, we reconnoitred a thousand feet of heavily crevassed ice-field onto the central Abbotsmith, and made a further altitude record for Heard. Blizzard returned, the tent was buried to the ridge and we spent some hours digging away snow or consolidating it to prevent it crushing the tent. On the 4th we dug it out and moved up to the end of our


HEARD ISLAND
STATUTE MILES
LAURENS
PENINSULA
ATLAS
COVE
ROGERS HD.
ANARE STATION
CORINTHIAN BAY
SADDLE PT
MECHANICS BAY
C. BOLLINGHAIER
WEST C.
WEST BAY
BALDISSERA GLACIER
CHALLENGER GLACIER
SOUTH WEST BAY
NORTH WEST CORNICE
NORTH BARRIER
VAHSEL GLACIER
C. GAZERT
ABBOTSMITH GLACIER
MARSON Pks
BIG BEN
SPIT BAY
SPIT PT.
LAGOON
SOUTH BARRIER
WINSTON LAGOON
C. ARCONA
C. LOCKYER
C. LAMBETH
ALONG BEACH
C. LAVETT

reconnaissance route. For the whole of the 5th we were again blizzard-bound but, on the 6th, we managed another five hundred feet through dense cloud, and camped amidst ghostly séracs in the middle of the Abbotsmith Glacier. By the evening of the 7th we were at 4,250 feet and optimistic. We had negotiated thousands of yards of crevassing and ice fall and reckoned that another day would give us the final slopes to the dome and possibly much more solid ice underfoot, once we were in an area of less movement. In fact, however, it was not until the evening of the 11th that we reached the apparently unbroken ice slopes leading up onto the dome. We had left the Abbotsmith Glacier behind and entered a wide rising snow-field beyond the outflow of the glacier's vast cirque. We were the second party ever to cross the glacier, the other having traversed it some thousands of feet lower.

In broken ice the management of our loads was necessarily difficult, requiring combined tactics, but on better ground we tried using a pulley attached to an ice-axe driven into the névé. Ordinary man-hauling, on such an incline, was too difficult; the pulley technique was slow and hard. Eventually we just roped independently on the 120-foot rope and hauled the sledge at intervals, hand over hand. We had spent endless hours immured by continuous blizzard and now, unless we could make really assured progress, we might be forced to return without success. Nine days to climb 5,000 feet, and never more than a fleeting glimpse of what lay ahead . . .

Space makes a consecutive account difficult, especially as I should like to quote from the journal (*Log for Lorna*) which I had more than sufficient time to scrawl while blizzard-bound. Where I can I shall use extracts.

Wednesday, 11th November (*late afternoon*). The slope was steep but free of crevasses, it seemed. We were very tired but as the evening became clear we kept moving. We were in a world apart, a beautiful frost-sculpted region above infinite enduring cloud. The walls of the Abbotsmith cirque, rimed with thousands, tens of thousands of tons of frost crystals on plastered ice, slowly receded behind us. We could clearly see the slope between Mawson Peak and a smaller dome to the north. Now, in our camp, we cannot be more than a mile and

a half from both; a mile and a half and certainly less than 4,000 feet to the summit. All the afternoon we struggled. Just as the sun was lost behind clouds we reached this flat behind an icy knoll. We pitched our tent, elated, while the slopes of Big Ben were reddened by an incomparable alpine glow . . . Between us there is great optimism; with another day's good weather we could be on the plateau.

12th November. We are utterly bored . . . We had hoped for a great deal today, for last night we could see every detail of the final peak. We have hauled our sledge for many miles; the rest of the climb can be done cramponed, with rucksacks, probably in two days, from this camp and back again, with good weather . . . unless we strike some completely invisible and unsuspected physical difficulty. But again to be weather-bound is hard. All we can do is have patience. Ten days since we left the Station! We have already begun to make our rations stretch and we do not think the descent will take long given the weather; all our gear will be piled on the sledge and we'll go down packless.

As for the day . . . at 5 o'clock we were up and by 6.30 had completed everything for a start. I went outside. Momentarily, visibility was good; but heavy, turbulent clouds, racing in from the west, threatened a rapid change for the worse. A quite awesome cloud movement was encircling the summit—ragged black vapour whirling round at an enormous speed, caught in a strange eddy, like a vortex reversed. At that moment existence on the summit seemed unthinkable.

Then, within minutes, the warm front struck us. The thermometer rose to 36° F. with the arrival of heavy sleety rain. It was like the *föhn*, bringing soft snow, making everything mushy, the tent soon dripping. We had never thought to see anything like it. The air was full of cloud but there seemed to be little precipitation after a while. We decided to push on up, regardless of cloud; but while we were turning to dig out the tent, heavy snow started and has continued ever since. The glass is dropping steadily once again. Peter predicts high winds and a return of intense cold. Meanwhile we just sit. We play chess with pieces we have drawn on a cigarette packet. Fred and I have both read two of our three books and Peter has the other. This is the worst part of such

climbing, being cramped in a little brown tent. It is avalanche weather but I think we have passed the most dangerous zones and are out of harm's way . . .

13th November. Still at camp 5, but the tent is completely buried, the ridge pole under about eighteen inches of snow. We have consolidated the snow by pressing as much as possible and I think it will remain firm—about three tons of it. At nine last night I awoke to see the tent bowed under tremendous snow. There was blowing as good an antarctic blizzard as anyone would be likely to experience. Technically a 'southern outbreak' had replaced the equally immoderate 'warm front'. Soon it seemed necessary to go outside and dig the snow away. This meant fully dressing from a warm triple sleeping-bag. It wasn't so bad and, in a fury of energy, I removed a mass of snow, working in a torch-beam soon dispersed by blinding white dust. It was quite dark . . . there was the usual curse of returning to the tent and attempting to remove every trace of snow.

The night wore on. At one a.m. I asked Peter to get up and shovel snow. It seemed a case of survival as the tent kept pressing down on us. The drift continued and at five Fred had to take a turn. The drift was terrific and increasing every hour. At nine-thirty this morning it was my turn again, but no longer could my shovel keep pace with the snow. Before I had finished one side, it was almost up to the ridge again. It was not so bad with some daylight; there was only one thing to do. All of us exerted pressure together on the tent from inside against the high piling drift; we held it from crushing the tent until it consolidated. Something in the texture made this more difficult than usual. Soon it topped the ridge pole and we were in a deepening sub-nevean gloom. The effect of the hurricane was lost; it became a recurrent booming sound. In spite of all our efforts the sides of the tent bulged inwards alarmingly.

We lit a stove in the timeless morning. This melted the hoar-frost entirely lining the tent like white mould, and probably helped the consolidation process. But another serious problem was air; we had to struggle to keep one remaining ventilator free of snow. When we had no more than warmed our water, we were forced to extinguish the stove . . . the entrance and both ventilators were completely

snowed over. This state couldn't continue indefinitely. Peter forced a way out, clawing back the snow onto a groundsheet inside the tent. He dug a ramp down to the entrance sock, giving considerable but quite temporary relief.

At about midday I decided that we should have to build an igloo over the entrance to the buried tent. It was blinding, evil work at the height of the blizzard. We cut blocks from a wind-scoured drift of older snow, staggered across to the markers, often difficult to locate, and gradually constructed our snow house. Our faces, beards and clothing were completely iced when, after two hours, we finished the igloo. It was quite a fair size, high enough for a man to stand and stretch. We returned to the tent, which now sagged more heavily than ever, through an aperture we had sealed behind us during the building programme, then we connected it with the igloo by a short rising tunnel. When this was complete we sealed the igloo against drift and I was able to sit out there to relieve the crowding. A stove burned well there but we are rationing fuel and food fairly strictly.

14th November. At 5.30 a.m. we pierced our igloo to see the world . . . nothing but cloud and endless drift. We are not altogether at ease concerning the tent as it is bowing heavily everywhere. The ridge-pole, of duralumin, possesses a five-inch bend. The space is slowly, imperceptibly, becoming more and more constricted so that we are lying on top of each other. This slow compression is more frightening than the possibility of a sudden collapse; there must come a point, we think, when the fabric will reach a breaking point. However, we'll make another cavern. The difficulty may be retrieving the tent and gear.

So strong and full of snow was the blizzard that there seemed, after the initial inspection, no point in prising ourselves out of our sleeping-bags. There is a lethargy that is bad; one is not hungry . . . it is not unpleasant lying in a semi-conscious doze, insensitive to time. The barometer is falling 'like a bomb' . . . we have gained an apparent thousand feet of height effortlessly. Gradually we all got dressed and, for the whole morning, just sat about under the snow. Odd to be about a mile above the Indian Ocean; we are a fair way removed from the huts at the edge of Atlas Cove, and that is the community most distant in the world

from women and children. My feet, after I had been four hours in the igloo without much movement, froze. I had to change places with Freddie down in the tent for the hour and a half it took to restore circulation.

The decision to descend is being forced upon us. It seems a great shame that weather and lack of food (or conjointly lack of time to sit things out) may remove our chances of success. No one has ever been right under the peak as we are now. Simple arithmetic says pretty short rations before we get down . . . added to which is the unhappy thought of inevitable concern back at the station.

At about 3 o'clock, Fred dug his way out of the igloo and tried unsuccessfully to reach the sled. However, he found one of my bags containing some cigarettes. Then Peter went out and persisted until he ultimately located the sled and sent down some much needed fuel, candles, food . . .

By the time he was back and the igloo made drift-tight, and he was free of snow, it was about 5.30, so we stayed under the snow for the rest of the day. Peter remained in the igloo and prepared the evening meal . . . half-ration pemmican stew, coffee and dried fruit. Fred and I slowly prepared the tent for sleeping . . . we take turns for position. We wriggled into our bags on either side, pressing hard against the snow-bulged walls. It takes an eternity to manœuvre in such restricted space. Peter came at last and wedged himself between us. There was still some blue light in the igloo when we settled to sleep. Still the barometer fell. The wind has been northerly most of the day. Peter predicts a fresh 'southerly outbreak' for tomorrow and more large quantities of snow. It's going to be an enormous job digging ourselves out, but I do not think we can possibly abandon the tent.

15th November. I broke through the igloo to inspect the weather . . . visibility nil and the drift from the south-west, but not driving so densely as during yesterday's northerly blizzard. For a few minutes I stood outside in an utterly bleak void. No sign of the tent below, even the igloo buried except for a slight hump, no sign of anything except some bamboo markers trailing long frozen streamers . . . that Peter had used to mark the position of the sledge.

I returned and sealed the igloo. But it is not good just sitting here while the snow piles deeper. It looked as though our

digging might now be a match for the drift, so I went out again. From inside the tent they shoved an ice-axe up through the rear ventilator sleeve and showed me its position; so I commenced digging. My hole was finally about six feet deep. Gradually the rear end of the tent was uncovered. Inside they appreciated the light. After an hour I came back to the igloo and Freddie took a turn. Freddie has just been replaced by Peter. The tent will be revealed at the bottom of a rectangular hole six feet deep, with great mounds of snow piled even higher. We are not certain yet what our next move will be . . . perhaps to re-erect the tent up above on the new snow surface. We must dig out the sledge. I am afraid that when it becomes clear we must make all possible speed down and across the Abbotsmith.

Later . . . the most difficult part of the job still remained. The guys disappeared into walls of snow all round and the apron at the bottom was set in solid regelated névé, ice almost, no doubt the result of last Thursday's warm front. The blizzard howled and snow again began to drift up the walls and nothing invited us to continue the heavy labour except the knowledge that, if we could repitch the tent a couple of yards higher on the new surface, much labour would be saved when the storm abated and we could be on our way. Eventually we were ready to lift the tent. The gear was piled into the igloo and we all got to work on the frozen apron. The guys had necessitated tunnels and trenches anything up to six feet long. Inch by inch we got everything free. We were white from head to foot and icicles hung from our noses and beards. We lifted the tent out bodily and re-erected it on the other side of the igloo with a tunnel leading down to its level that had been well above the tent's floor a few days before. By eleven at night we had finished a meal and were able to prepare for sleep at last. We are really happy at being on the surface of the mountain again. What of tomorrow? If it dawns clear, we shall almost certainly make an unjustifiable bid for the top.

16th November. The snow fell steadily and the wind howled and the dense grey cloud gave no visibility beyond the sledge-markers rimed with inches of frost. There was not much incentive to leave our bags, but we urged each other, dressed, and rolled our gear. The food situation was not good; I had a

feeling that we might remain up in Camp 5 just a little too long.

It was forced on me that we must risk a descent through dense cloud, even over the crevassed ice ridges. We dug the tent out from under a new four feet of snow. It seemed hopeless. We were completely iced up before we even started.

I reckoned I could keep a compass course down, using the steady oil prismatic. We started after a small meal, a couple of biscuits and some cheese. Working entirely by compass, we pushed down the steep traverse of the great snow slope leading to the cirque. One had the impression of moving in a vast circle to the left, downwards and backwards. It was extremely difficult to believe the compass. Just when the altimeter showed that we should be somewhere up against the first ridge of pressure ice and crevasses, we rested for the third or fourth time. There was a sudden lifting of the mist, only for a few minutes, and there, right ahead of us, was the solitary marker we had left days before. It was the most amazing coincidence, and certainly due to no navigational skill. But the important thing was that we were facing a route across the icefalls, one that we had previously taken, one that we might just be able to negotiate in this weather by feeling our way.

With eight markers we did feel our way through the crevasses for about three or four hundred yards, leaving the sled and packs behind. It was infinitely slow, deadly careful work, probing the white emptiness. Greatly in our favour was the lack of wind, for our footprints remained clear. But we found a route through to the site of our great crevasse camp. Part of the wide ice ridge upon which we had camped had collapsed during our absence. The whole pattern indeed had changed, shedding light on the speed of glacier movement.

We retrieved sledge and packs. Again proceeding over the next long downward traverse we moved in obscure cloud and driving blizzard. The great effort kept us warm but we were caked in ice from boots to hood. We suddenly hit a second marker in mist, too astonished to believe our eyes. But when, for the third time, just when we were quite uncertain of our position—I felt I had been moving too low—a lifting of the cloud revealed our third marker, on the site of our 'knuckle' camp, the event challenged our belief in chance. Three

markers, the only three, all spaced over a distance of miles, all showing up at critical moments . . . I could never have believed it possible; it would have seemed normal under such conditions if we'd seen none of them.

We pressed on towards our final marker, and a camp for the night next to what we had named 'the broken pediment' crossing of the other crevassed margin of the Abbotsmith. The marker was only fifty yards ahead. We approached it from a slightly different angle—next thing I knew, I was dangling on the rope, twenty feet down a crevasse!

The suddenness of my fall was such that there was no consciousness between looking at the bamboo marker and finding myself hanging between vertical walls of blue ice with unfathomable depths below. I hadn't even felt the jerk of the rope; for three reasons—my felt hauling belt which contained a nylon grommet to which the rope was attached by a snap-link, my thick anorak, and the manner in which the rope had cut back through four or five feet of soft bridging.

The crevasse narrowed from about five feet where I was to a foot or so thirty feet below; then there was just blackness. Fortunately I had my ice-axe on a rope sling but I lost a glove from its harness. In the same instant I became aware that a few yards behind me, but six or eight feet above, Peter was also down. That meant that Freddie was supporting us both, aided fortunately, of course, by the unbroken bridging between Peter and me, and by the friction of the rope through many feet of soft snow. Very rapidly I made a few niches with the axe and wedged myself, feet to shoulders, so that the strain was off the rope, but my hands were very cold.

Peter, in a narrower part of the trench, was vigorously carving his way upward; I could do no more than wedge myself up about eight feet to a ledge which gave me better purchase. In the end Peter managed to get out unaided and was able to join Fred. I made myself secure and my rope was taken up vertically and firmly belayed. I sent my pack up, dislodging masses of snow which thudded on my head and shoulders. However, without the pack, and with an extra rope for support I could cut steps and reach the surface. An hour in a crevasse is long enough.

Just as I got out and we were all reunited, there was a clearing in the cloud and for a few minutes we saw West Bay

immeasurably far away and below us. In the same moment, four thousand feet beneath and several miles distant, I glimpsed a flare. It was impossible to answer it before the clouds filled the breach. The time was 7.40. I think the flare must have meant that we had been seen. We had a frugal meal but Fred managed to find three cigars! The temperature was 5° F. with brusque squalls and more snow.

17th November. Slept reasonably well and awoke to our sixteenth day. It was an evil and morose day of impenetrable cloud, heavy snow and low temperatures. Several times we tried to find a route through the remaining four hundred critical yards of the Abbotsmith Glacier.

At about 5.30 in the evening, we made a big effort to break through the blizzard. We had been sitting very cold for seven or eight hours, cramped in the tent, listening to the skirl of drifting snow and the wild movement of the fabric. The evening meal prospects were extremely bleak and the end of all our food, rationed now for more than a week, loomed ahead. As we had been blizzard-bound at Camp 5 for so many days, there was nothing now to indicate that the same conditions might not continue indefinitely. So we went out into the flowing ice that immediately plated our clothes and beards and faces. Visibility didn't exist. The atmosphere of the planet had changed to everlasting, frozen murk. On a 120-foot rope it was just possible to see the shadow of the man at the far end. Things might have been worse. In three-quarters of an hour we had moved something over a hundred yards, but I couldn't reconcile the slopes of the ice and snow. When I saw some big ice hummocks, split in all directions, looming up and found we were moving parallel with a great crevasse incompletely bridged, I judged conditions hopeless for the time and announced our return.

. . . We made a little stew of pemmican and butter, much watered for we couldn't afford any other drink . . . but we talked of the meals we should eat when we got back. It was one of the coldest and most restless nights imaginable.

18th November. The blizzard, in the dawn, seemed stronger than ever . . . there seemed no point in disturbing the others. In fact it occurred to me that now energy was too precious to use unless it could be directed to the descent. We could, of course, live for a considerable time without food but we

should require some strength to strike camp and get down. . . .

In half sleep another couple of hours passed. The wind continued to shriek. Then suddenly, at about seven-thirty, the shadow of a frosted, distorted rope appeared overhead on the brown jappara ! Wildly swaying, its intensity grew. The sun ! It seemed utterly impossible. Peter, in the middle, the man who could move most easily, sat up to squeeze open the ventilator. It was true. The mountain-top was clear and we were above a vast bowl of cloud. The light hurt with its brilliance. The snow everywhere was torn and ripped into bewildering sastrugi shadows; their pattern was confusing; there was neither space nor distance.

. . . It seemed as though everything took an eternity, as though movement and thought were enmeshed in some atmospheric thickness like the departed blizzard, some force that laid friction on the limbs, even on desire.

Following the normal pattern, the camp was struck in an orderly manner. The sun removed some of the frost so the tent could be folded. We bent to our pack-frames, packed and freed the sledge, adjusted our goggles, took some photographs. But we knew the glory couldn't last long. Hogs' backs and zeppelins of black cloud drifted about the high horizon and there were strange upsurges over the Laurens Peninsula, invisible below. The clouds were writhing. At no distance, it seemed, the crater of the mountain smoked away.

Then we commenced the descent. It was hard work urging the sled over fantastically bridged crevasses, hauling backwards and forwards, and, hardest of all, preventing side-slip on steep traverses . . . Probing frequently, we eventually reached the 'broken pediment' crevasses. New tons of frost had cemented yet further amazing whorls and extraordinary overhangings defying gravity. Then we saw our marker beyond, and at last reached it. The Abbotsmith icefalls were behind.

A couple of hours later we were met by Arthur Gwynn, Ken Dalziel and Jim Brooks who realized that we would take this first opportunity of a descent. The mountain disappeared and was withdrawn for ten days, reappearing briefly on 28th November.

It proved impossible to mount another party for an attempt on the mountain before the relief vessel came. There were big events then in train. The new station on the Antarctic Continent, at Mawson, was founded that summer. I have since spent two years there. In early 1955, Heard Island was abandoned, mainly because of the much increased expedition work farther south. I last visited the deserted station, briefly, in 1960.

The fame of Big Ben still stirs the interest of many Australian mountaineers, and overseas enquiries about possible expeditions now occasionally come in to Phillip Law, the Director of the Australian Antarctic Division. There is talk of a Melbourne University party making an attempt next summer. Some day, perhaps quite soon, a fortunate team will reach the summit in clear weather; their reward will be great, for Big Ben is, in spite of its aloofness, a generous mountain. Its ascent will always be primarily a problem of weather.

DOLOMITE CONTRASTS

John Cheesmond

On an August morning in 1961, Maurice de St. Jorre and I dropped our weighty sacks on the south side of the Tre Cime near the Lavaredo Hut where there were already many English tents. Pleasant conversation with the occupants at first helped to keep our attention off our immediate surroundings but, after pitching our tent and eating breakfast, we became aware that ancient cans, piles of old food, crowds of tourists combined to make the site fall short of perfection. However, we had only to look up to forget the local squalor in admiration of the tremendous views of yellow and grey walls against a deep blue sky and, after our long journey by ship, train and bus I was quite content to relax in the sunshine and gaze at the scenery. But I had not bargained for the keenness of Maurice. By 11.30 we were toiling up the screes in search of our first climb.

The Preuss Chimney on the Cima Piccolissima had been recommended by our camping companions as an ideal introductory route, 700 feet in length, with climbing of reasonable severity on unusually solid rock. After some scrambling and searching, we roped up at the foot of the reputedly crucial Preuss Wall which proved to be quite hard even with two firmly placed pegs already in position. This pitch led to the base of the chimney up which ran the route to the summit. The second rope length turned out to be more difficult than the supposed crux, but thereafter we wedged and bridged our way up pitch after pitch of open and vertical chimney with increasing enjoyment until, after two and a half hours, we reached the flat top of this tiny peak. It was crowned by two Germans who later impressed us by their behaviour under stonefire during the long abseils in the descent gully. Maurice and I quivered under protective overhangs while pebbles whined and rattled past, but our companions remained calm, peering up the gully to discover the source of the missiles.

After a longer but easier climb—the Dibona route up the north-east ridge of the Cima Grande—we decided to attempt the famous Yellow Edge of the Cima Piccola. This 1,000-foot rib of red, yellow and grey rock looked most impressive from our camp site, but, as many English parties had already done it, we were hopeful of success. Doubtful weather then condemned us to a day of inactivity, but the following

morning was bright and clear and by 7.30, after a quick bite and brew, we were stamping about at the foot of the climb, awaiting our turn. Two parties were ahead of us, but by 8.45 we were able to set about the first 200-foot groove. This was steep and the rock was doubtful in places, but pitons grew out of the cracks at fairly frequent intervals and gave both confidence and strenuous aid. The final section of the groove bulged more than ever, but a slyly used sling eased things considerably and climbing soon became more straightforward. The route is here forced to the right and several hundred feet of Grade 3 and Grade 4 rock brought us back towards the Edge. A steep wall, with five pegs and some difficulty, was followed by an easy traverse round a corner into a fine niche adorned by many famous carvings. Hermann Buhl, Kilroy and others had passed that way, it seemed.

The next pitch was very exciting. Maurice, in the lead and searching for the way, moved too far to the left and found himself almost without support. While placing a piton he dropped another which, after a preliminary clink, fell about 700 feet clear to the screes. My thirst suddenly became acute, but a few minutes of tension brought Maurice into the correct groove which, although very tiring, was well equipped with holds and pegs. A further short ascent, followed by a most energetic traverse, led to a pleasant corner which finished on a broad ledge. On reaching a second wide band we were misled by a single peg and foolishly moved right for 150 feet to a chimney. For about two hours we wandered upwards on strangely unpitoned rock, eventually reaching the correct chimney just short of the top of the climb.

After a day lolling in the sun, we again walked round to the big north side of the peaks, this time with our thoughts on the North-East Ridge of the Cima Ovest. In passing, our eyes were drawn to the gently impending wall of the Cima Grande where parties were already engaged on the fantastic, continuously overhanging Via Direttissima and the more reasonable Comici-Dimai route. Our ambitions for the day were more modest as our climb was graded 5 with only one short pitch of artificial climbing, said to be Grade 6. The route was very pleasant; even the mechanical section started from a broad ledge and fell easily to the technique and étriers of de St. Jorre. From the multi-pinnacled summit we cast about

for a while, looking for the descent. Once found, it proved easy to follow and by 4 o'clock we were filling ourselves with lemonade beside the tents.

An attempt on the short, but difficult south face of the Piccolissima was foiled by the presence of seven Germans ahead. Then, at last, an early morning found us clambering up the easy rock at the base of the Comici-Dimai route on the North Face of the Cima Grande. Although made in 1933, it is still a magnet for aspiring Dolomite climbers and many were ahead of us but, after we had waited for an hour, feeling rather sick, only two parties remained on the wall, the rest having descended. Quickly we roped up and, within minutes, our étriers were clattering on the much photographed first difficult pitch.

For about 300 feet above the first two pitches we used our étriers only occasionally and were able to climb fairly steadily up fine cracks, often strenuous but rarely exceeding mild V.S. in standard and well equipped with pegs for protection or progress, as desired. A feature of this part of the wall is the excellence of the belay ledges. We had been told about these but had found it difficult to believe in them until actually at grips with the face. The Germans ahead of us were involved in the slower business of mechanical climbing. As a result, I was forced to swing around from a piton for about a quarter of an hour while waiting for the one small stance on the route to become vacant. While Maurice was at work on the following pitch, the most difficult artificial section of the climb, two Frenchmen came hurtling up from below, saving energy by very adept use of their étriers; they passed us with cries of greeting in the course of the two final pitches of the very steep part of the wall.

Above the concave lower part, the angle of the face eases considerably; but the stones, which had previously been flying well out of range, started to pass very close, some even exploding on near-by projections. After three straightforward rope lengths up the great couloir splitting the upper part of the wall, the difficulty again increased, but steeper angles at least brought relief from the missiles, as a great roof deflected the hail of stones accidentally kicked down by the six climbers ahead. A fine, wet cave, its ceiling formed by the big overhang, was very secure; but to the left, where our route lay, the

rocks were receiving a barrage of crashing and whining stones. It seemed hazardous, but Maurice is very brave and has a woolly hat, so he went up first, and when my turn came the bombardment had stopped. After this traverse leftwards the major part of the climb was over and soon we were sitting at the summit preparing for our descent to the delights of the camp site which we reached 11* hours after leaving the foot of the face.

After two days of sunning and swimming, Maurice departed for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Terry Sullivan arrived from Chamonix. Terry, fresh from a successful ascent of the East Face of the Grand Capucin, was eager for action, and early on the first fine morning we walked along to the Cima Ovest, only to find that our intended climb, the North Face, was already occupied by two ropes, one German, the other from Manchester. Within minutes, a third party (two Germans) had passed us all by a more circuitous, though easier route. The congestion slowed us up considerably and, after climbing only 200 feet in two hours, the Mancunians and ourselves decided to retreat. Feeling rather deflated, we slid down our doubled rope to the screes and made our way slowly back to the tent.

Our failure on Cassin's great route, the increasing crowds of climbers and tourists about the Tre Cime, deteriorating weather, and shortage of food made us decide to move to a new area; so we packed our gear and wet tent and caught an early bus to Cortina en route for the Civetta Group. After a night spent in our tent, sited pleasantly by the small village of Listolade, we sweated up an interminable loose and stony track to the Vazzoler Hut, almost hidden among the pine trees which cover the slopes below the great rock walls. The toil was unexpectedly relieved by the splendour of our surroundings and the comparative loneliness; fewer than half a dozen people passed us in either direction during the whole afternoon. We were also staggered at the vast acreage of rock which seemed to tower up all around. As this was the small side of the Civetta, we realized that if the crowded Tre Cime had seemed a Dolomitic Shepherd's Crag, this must surely be the Italian answer to the East Buttress of Scafell.

Our first night at the Vazzoler Hut was disappointingly succeeded by a day of doubtful weather spent larking about on

*9½ hours spent actually on the climb.

the local boulders, but the next morning was very fair and by 8 o'clock we were roping up at the foot of the South Face of the Torre Venezia. This peak lies at the end of the Pelsa Ridge which descends towards the south from the main Civetta summit, and the route up its 1,600-foot high southern face was first climbed by Attilio Tissi and party in 1933. It is a very fine free climb of steady, but never extreme difficulty and in recent years has been ascended by a number of English parties and one solo Scot. Although in Grade 6, it is neither so high nor so hard as the Comici-Dimai route on the Cima Grande; being less accessible, it has not become so popular.

Straightforward rock, with occasional pitons for belaying, led towards a lone pine tree growing from a ledge half-way up the face. The last rope length to this ledge was harder than any previous section, but pitons were always close at hand, and soon we were straddling the gnarled branches. The famous Tissi Traverse, winding its way between two sets of overhangs which almost block the central part of the wall, follows. Terry dealt with it in his customary efficient manner and, after a final bulge, fairly reasonable ground took us towards the terminal steepening of the wall.

The difficulties which provide the splendid finish to the climb start with a crack of about Severe standard and continue up chimneys of gradually increasing severity. A fair-sized roof was strenuous, even with the aid of the two pegs in place, and the last feet of chimney up to the top required terrible efforts; nevertheless, these two pitches are amongst the finest on the climb, for the rock is both perfect and very steep, with an impressive exposure of 2,000 feet to the lower slopes of boulders and alpine pastures below.

My recollections of these great days in the Eastern Alps have changed with the passing of the months. The bird-cage thirsts and cramped arms have gone, only pleasant memories remaining clear. Unforgettable was our last evening in the Civetta, with the dying sun burning the yellow cliffs of the Torre Trieste, the Bancon and the Busazza while we sat in shadow, already making plans to return to the wild corries at Vazzoler; to revisit this 'Kingdom of the Sixth Grade' and sample again the delights of climbing at, and sometimes beyond, the vertical.

LIGHTING FIRES IN SNOW

Tread out a marble hollow
  Then lay the twigs athwart,
    Teepee-wise or wigwam,
So that the air can follow
  The match-flame from the start:
    As we begin a poem
  And some may win a heart.

For twig to twig will beckon
  If lightly laid above
Better than you can reckon.
    Waste no time devising.
  No, no, it is not love,
    But the drying fume arising
  If the draft be free enough.

As the under cavern reddens
  Leave well alone!
Cold fuel only deadens.
    But pile across the smoke
  And give a dog a bone.
    For its life's sake, don't poke!
  The wise fire knows its own.

The wise poem knows its father
  And treats him not amiss;
    But Language is its mother
To burn where it would rather
  Choose that and by-pass this
    Only afraid of smother
  Though the thickening snow-flakes hiss.

I. A. RICHARDS

AGUA

Dorothy Pilley Richards

Agua is the huge and graceful volcano that towers up in perfect symmetry over Guatemala City. You don't, from here, at all realize how far off it is or how high, 12,393 feet. Nor do you from Antigua—thirty miles nearer—nor from Santa Maria, the jumping off village to which motors can climb. You only realize all these things high up on the peak itself—when the lights of Santa Maria and Antigua and Guatemala are floating, as in a nether sky, beneath you as you start wondering if the night is yet half-way worked through.

Santa Maria is a compact little village with a large central square in which a brisk game of *futbol* was scuffing up the dust when we arrived to bargain for a guide and two horses. The local Indians feel that the volcano is their possession and that to hire a guide for it is only a visitor's duty. The horses were: one for the provisions and blankets, the other for me. Since my broken hip-joint disqualified me, through a motor smash three years ago, I have been experimenting with ascent-descent devices. Once despised wire ropeways of all varieties now find in me a *connoisseuse.* Carrying chairs too, as in ancient China, would appeal could I find them. I even read a bit enviously in the Chronicles of Bernal Diaz del Castillo of the way Cortez' Indian *cargadores* could bundle you up in a hammock and porter you off thirty miles or so a night. Imagination has played happily also with the Rope Trick of the Other India—herewith depicted by that rising artist of New Delhi, Krishen Khanna; the more so since an indignant correspondent protested that 'this superstitious trickery has long since been exploded!' Krishen's adepts don't seem however to be letting that bother them a bit. And a contrary minded correspondent exclaimed, 'Well, we have been messing about with ropes for long enough, it's time somebody got onto the Indian method.'

In comparison, use of a mere horse seems commonplace. However, he can take you up the continuously steep path to tree line—more than 3,000 feet of lift—leaving you rather more of a rather steeper path to amble up yourself in the dawning. That was the plan; the bargain was struck and six-thirty, half an hour after dark, was very deliberately selected as the exactly right moment for departure.

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK OF TODAY

Note how the space climber demonstrates tomorrow's technique

DESIGN
BY
KRISHEN
KHANNA

Futbol died out as dusk fell and neat little fires under cooking pots glowed out in the corner of the square where soup awaited passers by. Pilgrims preparing for the nation-wide thronging to Esquipulas on the morrow, 15th January, were expected. Lads of the village loafed and gazed. The girls gathered in a group, poised their burdens on their heads and departed. The great open church door brightened with candlelight, while brats played an indecent kind of tag on the platform before it. Just in the doorway—neither inside nor out—a three-man band: drum, pipe and 'cello, established itself to play distorted versions of juke-box favourites while devout men dodged in past them to their prayers. We watched through clouds of copal incense burnt rather in the doorway than within. Beyond, the long pavement of the nave was strewn with pine needles and flower petals and ablaze with candles. The drum beat mechanically, the tunes jigged on; nobody however seemed much interested; they have a dogged capacity for just going on endlessly. But where were those horses?

It seemed they could not be found. The Alcalde or village mayor—to whom we had brought a persuasive letter—tired of assuring us that they would soon appear and went off with a powerfully built young crony. Another hour wore by. Then he reappeared. Alas! The time had been spent on *aguardiente* in a pilgrimage spirit. Alcohol, so high Guatemalan authorities are quoted, 'carries prayers aloft by its volatility.' It certainly had added wings to the Alcalde's tongue—and to the crony's. He posted himself up against us and harangued us fiercely—with formidable gestures—on, we gathered, Guatemala's wrong at the hands of British Honduras. (On local maps this is a province of Guatemala, Belize, and the President had just been voicing his recurrent threats of violent action.)

Somehow local violent action didn't seem too impossible. I wasn't sure that the Alcalde's badge of office, which he kept slapping, would do us much good. We began to feel that a Rope Trick might be exactly what we would want to waft us skywards away from a somewhat frightening situation, since the strong young man was getting to the ugly stage. But the Alcalde's wife, a slight, firm-featured, bare-footed woman with an understanding look, now appeared and said a few

effective Mayan words from time to time while keeping a watchful eye on the fiery one. None the less it was a relief to hear a clatter of hoofs on the cobbles.

Our guide was a tall, thin, pleasant-faced lad with a two-foot long machete on his belt, and the horses were nimble-footed little idle-bones, both of them. Not having been on horseback since my accident, I suddenly realized that I might not be able to mount. However, a score of onlookers and would-be helpers settled that. They were just longing for a good laugh and burst out as I gave a howl of disjointure on swinging into place. I.A.R. had duly warned me ! I rode off proudly, but as soon as we were out of sight of the audience, I had to have the stirrup replaced by a high loop from the saddle-bow. So perched, I could just take the jerking of my horse, who would charge up six strides and then pause to puff and blow, timing his spurts, it seemed to me, to meet over-hanging boughs and spiny bushes which, he hoped, might sweep me off his back.

Before long we began to realize that the half moon we had counted upon was due soon to vanish behind Agua's vast black mass. Heavy clouds too were clinging to the cone and scudding across the great sky-lantern. To supplement it we had only a pocket flashlight, which our guide soon borrowed to help him locate the path. It zigzagged and twisted among terraces and steep planted slopes of peas and beans and corn. When we halted, cornstalks rustling in the wind backed up the panting horses. Fusilades of fire crackers from Santa Maria reminded us of the pilgrimage. Enormous kapoc trees over-hung at intervals, casting impenetrable shade, lit only by glowing fire-flies. In gullies the path sucked and gurgled underfoot from unusual, recent rain. There was not another soul on the mountain. Out on the open ridges, cold struck, and the remote galaxy of Guatemala City shone up at Orion.

At last, the moon set. We had started about 9.0 p.m. and were a bit surprised to find it was near one o'clock. Time to repose. We were on a hummocky slope of big grass tussocks dotted with conifers—not too bad for a blanket-wrapped perch. As we tossed and wriggled under a cluster of pines, plop ! the cloud cap on the mountain was coating the pine needles with glistening drops. Our tossings and the passing gusts brought these down on us in showers. So did tugs of the

horses tethered to these trees—munching, redolent presences dragging pack ropes across our blankets. We felt it very clever and kindly of them not to step on our toes. Why they had to be tethered so near we did not make out fully.

You most of you know such nights *à la belle étoile* with not a star shining, how the lumps are in the wrong places, how you cannot find the very thing you have brought for your comfort, how the rain (it turned to that) keeps your face under the cover and you stifle, how you wonder why you do such things, how dawn seems plainly Joshua'd—and then suddenly it is there.

A blazing fire (7.0 a.m.) was soon cheering up the thick white mists. It was interesting to watch local woodsmanship. Guatemala has a pine that is incredibly fat in gums—so much so that slivers of it can be burnt as candles. In a soaked forest—as now—a Mayan hacks out some of it with his machete, builds a little shelter of boughs and bark, and lights up his fat pine under this to dry his fuel out. We had tea going in quick time and before we had drunk it a cloud shifted and there shone the ghost of the sun. Before we had packed and set off on our walk up (8.30 a.m.), the only too actual sun was blazing and we were getting ready to reverse recent judgements on the pleasures of travelling in the night. Crumbling coffee grounds (volcanic ash) lay underfoot thence to the crater.

Imagine a pine-dotted basin with a level floor about the size of Trafalgar Square. There is one entrance to it, the rest of the lip being thin and made of firm red rock offering mild climbing. You wander round this rim looking out over Central America searching for the Oceans it divides. Down one long twisting gully in the slope below you can see the site of the first capital of Central America. In 1541 an exceptionally atrocious earthquake followed by a water-carried landslide from high on Agua (whence the name) utterly wiped it out. Refounded a few miles away, at Antigua (the ancient), it became the most important city in the Americas and then in the 18th Century, after many damaging shakes, on 29th June 1773 came a sharp jolt sending everybody out into the streets. Ten minutes of perfect calm. Then such a minute as has rarely happened anywhere. The capital was shifted again. Antigua became a ghost town and is now a national monument.

Oddly enough it has not had a bad shake since. From the summit you see it laid out below you dreaming idly in the sunshine.

Good to perch in the Spring-like air by the cairn and review some of one's night thoughts. Why do such things still? Why not defer to one's disabilities and desist? The answer then and there seems too plain for any words. It is not merely that you are tuned back by it into how much else of your mountain life. That is true, but the real answer is far simpler than that: too simple indeed for me to say, but—to borrow from A. D. Godley—

'Yours is a spice of the Ultimate Good.'

IN THE BREGAGLIA

John A. Hartley

'The hut can't be so far away now. It looked quite near with the sun glinting on the roof. Whose idea was it, bringing this weight of tackle? Strewth, I'm hungry; haven't eaten for hours—feels more like days. The hut *must* be over this next rise, but that's what we said last time.' This was about the sum total of the more restrained and printable comments passed between Rodney, Edwin, Mike and myself during the five hours in which we made our painful way up to the Sciora Hut.

By the evening of the second day we had brought up further provisions and recovered from the initial exertion of supplying ourselves for a lengthy stay in the Bregaglia. Our exhaustion then gave way to curiosity, and the following morning the four of us meandered up the Bondasca Glacier to the Passo Bondo, over which we should be returning from the Ganetti Hut in Italy, if our plans went well. Information about this area was rather sparse. We possessed isolated descriptions of the North Ridge and North-East Face of the Badile, and the West Ridge of the Fuori, but our first object was to become a little more familiar with the whole group. There are many stories of people coming over the ridge at the wrong place—the Falso Passo Bondo—and having rather a harrowing time reaching the Sciora Hut*.

Near the hut was an encampment of British climbers, and soon suggestions were put forward for our first route. One which received a favourable report was the North-West Ridge of the Pioda di Sciora. Our description was rather hazy, but 'it's quite simple you just can't go wrong'. We soon showed them. After three pitches, the leading rope was retiring from some delicate slabs. Time passed quickly, and after a whole series of mistakes too painful to recount, we left our original line and crossed over the ridge in an effort to descend, but then saw that our way would be over snow, now in a dangerous condition. A bivouac was imminent, but we were well placed for a rapid descent in the morning. As is so often the case in a situation such as this, we had no bivouac equipment, but luckily we had plenty of food. There was even a choice of two spacious sites, and after a few quarrying operations, followed by a little wall building, we had an almost comfortable emplacement. The night was fine but rather

* See *Journal* No. 46, 1952 (Vol. XVI, No. 2), p. 156.

chilly; in the morning we did not feel bad at all. Between the four of us we could raise only two ice-axes, so I was placed on the sharp end of the rope with instructions to cut vast holds across the snow patches separating us from the col between the Pioda and the Ago di Sciora, whence there was the easiest line of descent. From the col we descended the couloir to the Albigna Glacier in two enormous pitches with both our ropes tied together; Edwin, stout fellow, came down last. Then followed a long hike down the Albigna Glacier, over the Catchabella Pass and so to the hut—a most scenic walk and some compensation for our ignominious defeat.

Morale dropped after the Pioda episode, the result of not knowing enough of the topography of the mountain and not moving fast enough. Still, we could not give up—better organization was needed next time. The North Ridge of the Badile is one of the classic routes of the area, a superb line seen from the hut, and not too difficult. We considered it a worthwhile climb, not only for the great enjoyment to be gained from the ascent itself, but also as a reconnaissance, for one has good views across the North-East Face. It would be useful, too, to get to know the descent on the south side.

A strong north wind greeted us at the foot of the ridge and soon threatening clouds were building up. Two Swiss climbers passed as we wondered about the weather. Encouraged by them, we moved slowly upwards, not wishing to get too high in case the weather deteriorated. It did: a few flakes of snow brushed past us, the wind became stronger, and the descent began. From the bottom of the ridge we watched an Italian party on the North-East Face and, for the first time, were able to appreciate its immensity. It must have been very cold up there.

To our dismay, the weather improved. Some Austrians who were staying at the Sciora Hut appeared again after having descended almost to the glacier. There was still time to complete the climb, so the ropes were uncoiled and we started off once more. The first part of the route keeps to the crest of the ridge, giving quite delicate climbing; then, at half height, follow a series of steep pitches round on the south side until the ridge can be regained 400 feet higher. These were the most consistently difficult pitches on the ridge, but there was one delicate slab near the top which was rather hard. The

climbing on the upper part is ideal: sound rock, a high degree of exposure and magnificent views. The Austrians followed close behind, but not too close, for we were now climbing much faster than previously. Two of their number could speak a little English, one being a ski instructor for British parties; our German was negligible, but we were quite a happy gang by the time we reached the summit. The descent on the south side of the mountain is pure delight—1½ hours, and one is at the hut.

Our previous explorations paid dividends during the return. Our Austrian friends were heading towards what appeared to be an obvious col over to the Bondasca Glacier, but by showing them our diagrams we persuaded them to take the correct, although more improbable route. That evening they prepared their equipment for an attempt on the North-East Face—the eventual object of nearly all climbers who visit this area.

We did not yet feel ready for the face, but chose the north ridge of Piz Gemelli, the famous Bügeleisen. This incredibly smooth lower part of the ridge is about 1,200 feet in height: the usual procedure is to climb only this difficult section and then abseil off the ridge, as the continuation is nowhere near the same standard. Long overlapping flakes, climbed in the layback fashion, took us up several pitches till we were confronted by an ominous bulge bristling with pegs. This proved to be difficult and a little hair-raising as the pegs looked anything but safe. Above this was an awkward overhanging corner followed by a smooth V-groove. Then came the hard part. We all stood on a ledge and gaped up at the smooth ridge curving away above us, and without much prompting would have sworn that the route finished here. The pitches below had not been easy—now we were in for it! Edwin spotted a peg behind a small flake, then, exercising his imagination to the limit, declared that there were some holds leading up to the peg and that the route went up there. The rest of us voted unanimously that, as Edwin had spotted the line, he should start off.

The first ascent of this route must have needed great courage and confidence, for the delicate friction moves would be very hard to reverse, and there are few places to drive in a piton. At about 100-foot intervals there was a reasonable

foothold and a crack for a peg; that was the stance. It was also possible to arrange the occasional line runner and clip into the odd peg for protection on a pitch. For many years this was regarded as the hardest climb in the district; and indeed, because of the continuous smoothness and difficulty, the route must be unique.

I climbed up to and over Edwin, then stopped on a little hold just above him. A line of small flakes provided some positive holds for a short distance, then came what appeared to be a completely blank stretch to a peg about thirty feet higher. The flakes were a great help, but here and there they were broken off where someone had tried to insert a peg. From the top of the flakes it was a matter of chosing the largest crystal or the deepest hollow and pushing oneself up with the 'heel'* of the hand and the big toe. There were four hundred feet of these slabs; they reminded us of the Widdop boulder problems at home—but those are only 15 feet from the ground. We continued, still amazed by the route, until the rock became rather less compact and the angle eased. This seemed far enough, for ahead the ridge looked broken and time was marching on. After a rest we started down the long abseils, not as spectacular as some in the Dolomites, but nonetheless fascinating as one had the opportunity of looking across these incredible slabs and wondering how they first came to be climbed. Time had flown, for when we reached the glacier the afternoon sun had done its work and there were crashing blocks of ice and groaning crevasses to enliven our descent.

Everyone was now thinking of the face. It surely could not be as thin as the Bügeleisen, but we could expect it to be more strenuous. Before we were able to find out, however, there was a slight fall of snow and the route was out of condition for a couple of days. During this period quite a queue developed so that, in addition to our party, there were Colin Mortlock and Lyn Noble, who had been camping near the hut, and two Swiss climbers from Zürich. The weather improved again and it was obvious that we should all be on the face at the same time. Unfortunately we possessed only one operational torch and, as it was important to save as much time as possible (and incidentally several bruised shins) in

*The hand is reversed so that the fingers point down the rock; you can get a better push with the 'heel'.

getting to the foot of the face, we planned to bivouac in a cave near the snow-field leading to the start of the climb. Mike was not feeling too well and as he had to return to England shortly afterwards, so obviating any chance of a later attempt, we reluctantly decided that only the three of us should set out.

Our stay in the cave was not an uncomfortable one; and, once on the snow, we could see where we were going. The torches of the Swiss climbers were soon behind us; they must have left the hut about two o'clock. We crossed the bergschrund about five-fifteen, with the Swiss just behind us. They were moving very quickly so we invited them to pass us on the first easy pitches. From the bergschrund the route follows a series of ledges leading rightwards, away from the Central Couloir, to a series of easy chimneys which bring one to the foot of the first dièdre. The Swiss were soon up and we followed to gain a large slab, furrowed by deep cracks slanting up to the left, which gave three pitches of fairly easy climbing. On the easier sections both the leader and the last man moved at the same time, number two taking in the rope from the last man and also keeping an eye on the leader's rope. At the end of the cracks was a big block split away from the face, affording a stance large enough to accommodate the three of us in comfort.

Rodney passed through to lead the first Grade 5 pitch up a leftwards-slanting dièdre. There were several pegs hammered in under the eaves, but there was no need for étriers as the friction of the rock was excellent. Edwin belayed Rod whilst I took a photograph and peered over the edge to see our two British friends just starting up the lower ledges. Across on the North Ridge people were visible, just as we must have been the previous week. After a while Edwin gave the all clear and I followed; the dièdre certainly was rather awkward, but with the pegs in place and a little help from the rope it was by no means desperate. Edwin embarked on a long, rather delicate traverse to the left where it was difficult to find the correct line. By the time he was across, Lyn had appeared at the top of the dièdre and we waited for him and Colin to pass us whilst we were still on reasonable stances. At the end of the traverse the route went straight up for a change, and after another pitch or two we were on the easier

angled and more broken section leading up to the snow patch a third of the way up the face.

From a comfortable ledge by the snow we had a little to eat and enjoyed a grandstand view of the parties on the dièdres above. Here the face becomes vertical and there are several small overhangs. The first 500 feet above the snow contain the greatest concentration of hard climbing on the face, fortunately starting with the most difficult pitch of the climb. We had read Gaston Rébuffat's description of it in *Starlight and Storm* and had noted his classification—Grade 6 and A3. This was made on the second ascent, when the climb is bound to be harder, but we still expected quite something. It certainly was steep and there were a few comforting pegs for protection, but the artificial bit at the top was rather an anticlimax as the pegs were needed only as handholds. The dièdre above curved over in a huge roof, but fortunately one can break out on the right to a small stance and then gain a more amenable dièdre, but still in the fifth grade. An easier angled pitch brought us underneath the roof highlighted in Rébuffat's account. From the stance directly under the eaves I belayed Rod as he inched round the angle of the roof, supported by a little tension on the rope and friction only against the rock. Once he had gained the dièdre above the roof there were a few grunts and the rope ran out steadily with a couple of stops when he clipped into a peg.

When it was my turn I found that the whole dièdre round the roof was pegged and that the easiest way to climb it was to hook a finger through a peg and pull up, reach for the next one and layback up in that manner. It would have been very difficult to climb that pitch if the pegs had not been in place, but, as they were, there was no need to resort to artificial techniques. A further pitch lying up pleasant slabs brought us to the traverse leading left into a gully and another comfortable resting place. We ate a little more, Edwin massaged his feet which had been affected by the bivouac of the Pioda episode, and Rod lightheartedly calculated the chances of abseiling down all those impending corners should one be unable to continue because of bad weather.

The route now followed a crack which after 200 feet developed into a gully. This gully leads out onto the North Ridge, but after 600 feet Cassin followed another line of

weakness leftwards in order to reach the easier but more broken ground of the Central Couloir. Although the gully would appear to offer an escape route from this part of the face, once bad weather had set in a huge torrent would sweep down, making ascent almost impossible. Now there was only a little trickle of water at the back, but progress was exhausting, the rock was worn smooth and the sack always jammed at the most awkward places. The two pitches prior to the traverse left were again in the fifth grade but were well pegged and were quickly dispatched by Rod. Instead of making the traverse, the parties in front had ascended a rib of good rock to the summit ridge, thus saving time and, as we were shortly to find out, some unpleasant climbing up the couloir. We chose to follow the original route to the bitter end and after a few hundred feet of easy climbing came to the last Grade 5 traverse, which nowhere reached the standard of the Bügeleisen as regards difficulty, but nevertheless was a pitch of high scenic merit—especially downwards.

From the small ledge overlooking the couloir we abseiled to a small rib and then reached the couloir itself by another short descent on the rope. We climbed a short way up the vague rib in the centre of the couloir as suggested by the route description, but were so appalled by the rock that we traversed onto the right-hand side and continued in that line, passing a couple of rusty pegs, until we reached the summit ridge just a little north of the cairn. Once again we enjoyed being able to descend without having to use the rope, and reached the Ganetti Hut a little before dark, looking forward to a good meal and an even better sleep.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON SCAFELL

G. Oliver

Few mountains in Britain can boast so long a climbing history as Scafell, yet new routes are still to be found there. This is due to the variety of the crags to the west and east of Mickledore which provide scope for the gully scrambler as well as the devotee of the 'super-severe'. As Holland pointed out in his preface to the *Guide*, Scafell's development as a climbing ground has taken place in waves with each new generation and the improvement in technique.

In spite of their remote position, or probably because of it, these crags lured the pioneers as long ago as 1869. By the turn of the century the major gullies had been climbed and O. G. Jones had shocked his contemporaries by discarding boots to make his audacious lead on the Pinnacle Face. The new century was barely under way when Fred Botterill ascended the slab which bears his name. Then followed a lull which was brought to an abrupt halt by Herford and Sansom taking the crag by force, their efforts culminating in 1914 with the ascent of Central Buttress, a route which was not to be surpassed in difficulty for 20 years.

Following the 1914-1918 war came a host of new names and faces, and by the end of the twenties Kelly and his associates had pioneered a number of climbs, Moss Ghyll Grooves and Moss Ledge Direct being among the finest. Then another wave arrived, eager to test their powers on new courses. The possibilities west of Mickledore appeared to be exhausted, so the bulging walls of the East Buttress began to attract attention. First to break the ice was Kirkus with his now very popular Mickledore Grooves. In 1932, just over a year later, his friend Linnell really shattered the East Buttress myth by climbing Great Eastern* and then, in 1933 with A. T. Hargreaves, Overhanging Wall, at a point where the angle is fiercest. In 1938 Jim Birkett appeared on the scene with May Day and the Girdle, and at the outbreak of the second world war the East Buttress was firmly established as the most serious climbing ground in the country. After the war Birkett was again at work on Scafell, leading Gremlin's Groove and South Chimney, and in 1948 he added to his list of first ascents Slab and Groove which has a long and exposed pitch to the left of Moss Ghyll. Another lull followed and the next

* This route was recorded in 1932 Climbs Old and New (*F.R.C.C. Journal*, Vol. ix, No. 2, p. 215) as East Buttress climbed by M. Linnell and S. Cross. In 1933 (Vol. ix, No. 3, p. 303) the name was corrected to Great Eastern, and Mickledore Grooves described as well as the 1933 climbs on the East Buttress—EDITOR.

climbers to make advances on Scafell could be said to belong to the 'modern school'.

The first of these was Arthur Dolphin, a tall, rangey Yorkshireman, who came to Lakeland after an apprenticeship served on gritstone edges. He left his mark in several places with magnificent routes, notably Kipling Groove on Gimmer and Deer Bield Buttress. In his search for unclimbed rock he inevitably arrived at Scafell East Buttress. In 1952 he and Peter Greenwood examined the hitherto untouched walls and grooves to the left of Morning Wall. This examination led to the ascent of Pegasus, an exposed route taking a slanting line below Morning Wall and joining it at its last pitch. A week later they returned to make a climb which was a standard higher than anything on the crag. It followed a groove breaking through the overhanging rock around it and joined Pegasus in its upper section. By comparison with its surroundings the groove appeared to be a line of weakness, but this was an optical illusion and the overhanging wall which guarded it proved a tough nut to crack. Dolphin's great height was a disadvantage on this pitch, but Greenwood, a fellow of wiry build, led it without difficulty and climbed onto a sloping stance below a vertical groove. The next pitch consisted of a series of extremely difficult moves, and as it was 80 feet in length, the protection piton which Dolphin inserted seems quite justified. They named the climb appropriately Hell's Groove, and there is little doubt that the partnership would have pioneered further routes but for Dolphin's fatal accident on the Dent du Géant the following year.

1953 passed without any addition to Scafell's rock climbs, but in the early part of 1954's wet summer Harold Drasdo climbed a crack 140 feet in length on the left wall of Mickledore Chimney. It was shorter than most of the existing East Buttress climbs, but not without difficulty. He named it Tia Maria. One year later to the day the East Buttress saw another route in the making. The climber was Don Whillans and the line of his choice a groove to the left of Hell's Groove. As with many of his routes elsewhere, overhangs figure largely in the description of Trinity, and those who have since climbed it say it is of the same standard as Hell's Groove. At about this time another Manchester climber, Ron Moseley, ascended the easy gangway of Morning Wall, then took a more

direct line up the cliff above, a piton being used to scale the initial overhang. This route was named Phoenix.

For three years exploration on Scafell ceased, at least no new developments were recorded, and people again thought that its crags were worked out. Then in 1958 the regular Lakeland climbers found their complacency shattered when Robin Smith, a student from Edinburgh, in one day put up two new climbs on the East Buttress, Chartreuse and Leverage. These follow cracks in the steep buttress between May Day and Mickledore Grooves which had been passed by many prospective explorers on their way to more remote corners of the crag. As there is always an element of competition between climbers from opposite sides of the border, Smith's routes acted as a tonic and the following year there was renewed activity on Scafell.

For some time I had been studying the East Buttress and, thanks to a dry spell, it was in prime condition by May. The rib on the left of Tia Maria yielded us a pleasant route which, to keep in line with its neighbours, we called Pernod. Encouraged by this success, we climbed the big corner above May Day, a problem which was dry for the first time for several years, and in this state it gave an excellent direct finish. Meanwhile, Les Brown had been visiting the crag from Eskdale and on the left of Overhanging Wall he made a route up to the White Slab which was very steep and direct. He named it Moon Day.

The fine summer of 1959 saw further routes opened up on the other side of Mickledore also. Xerxes on Deep Ghyll Buttress led by Les Brown, Narrow Slab on Central Buttress and Bosun's Buttress on Pisgah Buttress—the two latter led by Banner—are all fairly long climbs. In addition, a new variation to Moss Ledge was found by Dennis English.

Early in April 1960 Brown was back on the East Buttress, once again assaulting the overhanging wall in the centre of the crag. He called his route, which branches left from Moon Day in a series of short, steep pitches, Armageddon—a name which speaks for itself. Good conditions continued into May, so I took advantage of them to climb what is probably the last big natural line on the cliff—a corner which goes straight from Morning Wall to the top. We named the route Ichabod. One month later the indefatigable Brown put up Centaur to the

right of Great Eastern, a line which others had tried without success in the past. It may be that route finding was the problem, for Brown states that it is in no place extremely severe.

Yet another variation on the Pinnacle Face, this time by Jeff Allison in 1961, completes Scafell's development as a climbing ground up to the time of writing. However, as this account has so far been little more than a list of routes and climbers, I should like to end with a description of the first ascent of one of these climbs, Ichabod, which is, I think, typical of modern climbing on Scafell.

The walk from Borrowdale to Scafell in hot weather is sticky and long, and the arrival at Mickledore is the automatic signal for a rest in the sunshine. On just such a summer day Len Willis, Geoff Arkless and I sat there, gazing across at the stern lines of the East Buttress and delaying the moment when we'd put on P.A.'s for the day's climb. Our intention was to attempt the unclimbed corner above Morning Wall and to this end we eventually took up rope and slings and scrambled across the grass ledges below the crags.

At the foot of Morning Wall we tied onto a double rope and all too soon I was on my way. The first 50 feet consisted of pleasant scrambling up a gangway, but this was not to last. A short overhanging corner crack followed and this led to a large niche below a roof. Ten feet to the right was the corner I hoped to attain, and this was the immediate problem. On a rickety flake in the corner of the niche I arranged a line runner and tensioned to the right to reach a handhold at shoulder height. The hold was not big and the angle bulged slightly, but it seemed as though it might be just possible to mantelshelf on it. One hour and 10 attempts later I realized it was not feasible, so I called in science in the form of a thin-bladed piton. At the side of the crucial hold was a crack, and a few gentle taps of the hammer pushed home the peg, jeopardizing the existence of the hold by widening the crack. With a sling on this flimsy support, I straightened up to reach a good hold for the step across to the corner, and the first obstacle was overcome. The going was easier for 10 feet, then the angle steepened and I had to leave the corner for a diversion onto the right wall. Not knowing what lay ahead, I knocked home a good solid piton without feeling any pang of conscience.

My route from here was dictated more by the position of the holds than by my own wishes and I progressed diagonally right by a succession of delicate mantelshelves. My objective was the foot of a V-chimney above and 20 feet to my left, but the few holds available still led to the right. However, the prospect of reversing the moves I'd just made was appalling, so the only possible course was to push on. Eventually I came to a crack with reasonable handholds and here I rested after a fashion. The rope snaked down for 70 feet and dragged abominably through the pitons, but I was cheered by the sight of the V-chimney with which I was now level. The approach to it was via a narrow sloping ledge with no handholds at all in evidence. I dearly wanted a piton in the shallow crack which I was about to leave, but the best I could arrange was a combination of two pegs jammed side by side. The rope running through these helped to hold me in balance as I inched across the traverse. On reaching the chimney I found an ideal thread belay and the gravity of the situation disappeared completely. I was not at all surprised to learn that the ascent of this 110-foot pitch had taken three hours.

By the time Geoff joined me I was eager to get to grips with the chimney, for the issue would be in doubt until we were up it. The chimney itself was reasonable, but the exit from it onto a sloping, lichenous shelf provided an anxious moment. Above this I began to enjoy the climbing again. Steep rock with big holds led to a stance below a final crack and, after that, the top of the crag where I could lie in the sun and feel utterly contented while my companions still grappled with the problems below.

We were all very impressed with this route, so called it Ichabod, the significance of which can be appreciated by reading Holland's introduction to the Scafell *Guide*. Climbers in the past have often thought that the high-water mark of achievement had been reached, only to be later proved wrong. Whatever the future may now hold, it can at least be safely affirmed that the field of activities open to those seeking to make new advances on Scafell will be greatly limited by the dwindling amount of unclimbed rock remaining there.

CLIMBING IN AUSTRALIA

W. Peascod

It took me a long time to accept the fact that the like of our English mountains cannot be found in another land and that one has, therefore, to substitute. However, I think I have managed to substitute quite well. The Australian bush has for me a magic that cannot be found in my beloved Lake District. It is different in kind from the magic born of the intimacy of seeing the familiar curve of a well-known rock peak; of the contentment and quiet of summer Buttermere; of the silver and indigo of hard snow at night on the main ridges. Maybe it springs from the limitless expanses of eucalyptus growth, the heat beating back off the rock, the thrill of meeting one's first eight-foot snake, or contesting one's small stance with a five-foot lizard. One may feel it as one dreams in one's sleeping-bag beneath the high constellation of the Southern Cross and the intertwining arms of stringy barks and blue gums, or find it in the smell of wood smoke and the low conversation of Australian friends about music and the wonder of Sibelius, about painting and painters and, finally, about the mountains themselves—so very different from those of my homeland.

Because we do have mountains in this country—not so glamorous as those of other lands, but little known and superb in their own right. For a couple of weeks a year I fly to Queensland, some 600 miles from my home in New South Wales, and on each occasion snatch one or two week-ends in the mountains with rock-climbing companions of the Brisbane Bushwalkers.

The Glasshouse Mountains are isolated rock peaks springing from a perfectly flat coastal plain sixty miles north of Brisbane. There are eleven of them, but only three or four give climbing. Beerwah, the highest at 1700 feet, has magnificent faces and ridges on all sides. On two occasions we were benighted on the southern face before finally making its first ascent to the saddle. Tibrogargan is a squat hump of rock about 1,000 feet high with tremendous faces to the east and north. Coonoorin (or Crookneck as we call it) is a wonderful slender spire rather higher than Tibrogargan with steep faces on all sides.

Nearer the Queensland - New South Wales border we have the Macpherson Ranges and peaks such as Mount

Barney, Mount Warning, Mount Lindsay, the Steamers and so on. Barney is over 5,000 feet high and has (I think) nine peaks. Although it may appear sacriligious to say it, one could probably lose Pillar Rock, the Scafell cliffs and Gable on Barney and hardly be perturbed by the fact. One face, rising out of a wide gully, hasn't a name. It's just there! We climbed Barney by a long ridge; the weather was bad and the mists came down. My companion, Neil Lamb of Brisbane, took me to a little col on the ridge and we waited until a break appeared in the mist. It occurred low down, many hundreds of feet away, with black, angry rock glistening through. I watched this break as, like the lens of a camera, it climbed the wall—up to me, level with me, then above me, stupendous, dripping overhangs leering through the break. I have never seen anything so magnificently terrifying. It would be difficult to say exactly how high the wall is, but one can cheerfully state at least 1,500 feet without feeling that one is handling the truth too carelessly. We spent the night near the summit of Barney in a patch of rain forest.

In New South Wales there are other mountain massifs, including the well-known Kosciusco and all its snow. But I prefer to leave Kossie to the Snowy Mountains Scheme and the society columns for the ski-socialites. Of far more interest are the Warrumbungle Mountains in central New South Wales, some 300 miles north-west of Sydney and two hours from there by air. Here we have peaks similar to the Glasshouses, but much higher. They are, like the latter, denuded volcanic rock and rise to over 3,000 feet. Crater Bluff is the highest I have been on. A companion and I made the first ascent of its north-east face (about 1,500 feet of rock) in 1953; also the first ascent of a pinnacle known as the Bread Knife which is a remarkably weathered andesitic dyke running across country for several miles. The dyke is little more than twenty to thirty feet thick over most of its upper exposed portions, and its greatest weathered face is, I should say, around 600 feet high. Other fine peaks in the area are Belougerie Spire and Tooraweena Spire. They are rocky on all sides.

Besides these peaks there are many fine gorges and sea cliffs to be found. Two gorges which have to be seen to be believed are Bungonia Gorge and Wollomombi Gorge.

Bungonia, 100 miles south-west of Sydney, is limestone. The walls are about fifty feet apart at their base and rise on both sides to nearly 2,000 feet. It is possible to lean over the lip of the southern wall and drop a stone the full height.

There has been a lot to discover. The cliffs of Tibro—with its sleeping cave half-way up the East Face—and Beerwah are now old Australian friends, and because they are such friends I would not decry them for any English peaks. But I know they would forgive me if I wished, just for a week or two, to change them for Birkness Combe and Eagle Front and long summer days on Pillar and Scafell with old friends some of whom, alas, are no longer with us.

THE CHIMANIMANI MOUNTAINS

D. R. Barr-Wells

At the end of March 1960, I set off on a three months' visit, which eventually lasted eighteen, to Central, South, East and North-Eastern Africa. Much of the time was spent in Rhodesia and I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity of exploring the climbing possibilities there.

The situation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia on the vast Central African peneplain, nearly 5,000 feet above sea level, gives them a generally pleasant and dry climate without excessive heat; rain is heavy in summer but negligible from March to November. Mostly bushveld or savannah (locally called 'the bundu'), with high yellowish grass and stunted trees, these lands present a dull scenery. The wide Zambesi valley between its escarpments cuts across the plateau at an altitude of approximately 1,500 feet. The Kariba Dam is set in a gorge surrounded by photogenic hills rising to 1,200 feet above the surface of the 150-mile lake, but these hills are useless for climbing or walking.

Unfortunately little rises above the general level of the country but, provided you are lucky enough to be in the right district or are prepared to motor for many hours, you will certainly be rewarded with fine, unusual scenery and plenty of worthwhile climbing. None of the Rhodesian mountains is high enough for snow. Nearly all are situated in National Parks. The best are the least generally known and—maybe fortunately—the least accessible.

The Matopo hills, some 35 miles south-east of Bulawayo, owe their main reputation to Rhodes's grave, dug in solid granite on the summit of one of its kopjes. The Matopos are a naturalist's paradise, but their climbing potential is negligible and, due to their very rough nature and dense vegetation, they deter all but the most determined walkers. Here, as in other parts of the country, there are balancing rocks in profusion: huge granite boulders of odd shapes looking rather like eggs delicately poised on their points, apparently ready to topple over. The most spectacular comprise two or more rocks set on top of one another, each seeming in similar delicate balance. They offer many boulder problems and those at Hatfield and Widdicomb, near Salisbury, are used for training by the local climbing fraternity.

The Central African peneplain dips eastwards to roughly 2,000 feet. The land then sweeps up steeply to the Eastern Highlands which reach to over 8,000 feet and form the wall separating Rhodesia from the Mozambique plain, stretching beyond to the Indian Ocean. This is the main mountain range of the country—really part of the great mountain belt running from Ethiopia to the Cape. The Vumba, in the centre, is close to the small town of Umtali, the loveliest in Rhodesia, nestling among the hills; it will appeal to those who prefer to appreciate their mountain scenery from the *stoep* of a hotel or week-end cottage. To the north is Inyanga, a paradise for walkers and anglers alike. Here, as in all mountain regions, the streams are free of bilharzia. Moreover, the grass is short and this is one of the very few districts where one can walk reasonably easily at a good pace. The distances are great and the scenery varied; the few hotels dotted about make suitable centres for excursions. Mount Inyangani (8,514 feet) is the highest in Rhodesia but, as is so often the case with highest mountains, it is not the most notable. The climber will prefer the wilder, craggier southern part: the Chimanimani Mountains, with their own distinct vegetation and beauty, uninhabited by Black or White.

The Mountain Club of Rhodesia, the country's main climbing club, is small but active. Based on Salisbury, it operates every week-end at various climbing areas within reasonable reach (200 miles) of the city, such as Mazoe or Urungwe. Incidentally, the climbs are normally graded by the South African alphabetical system. When opportunity allowed, I joined the meets and spent several pleasant week-ends with the club. One of the best was at Shawanoe, an area of large rounded granite kopjes, some fifty miles north-east of Salisbury, off the road to Nyasaland. There the starts of the climbs are easily reached from the cars. More usually the approach to the crags is laborious through the bush vegetation. Climbing is a warmer and thirstier business than in Europe and it is essential to carry one's own water supply. In the rainy season it is also wetter.

Wild bees were one of the worst hazards and on one occasion put three members of a climbing party into hospital where 2,800 stings were removed from them. Snakes were occasionally seen but in my experience the snake bite outfit

carried by each party was never used. One source of mild irritation, when struggling on a cliff, was to see a family of baboons doing a parallel route of higher grade with the greatest of ease and total disregard of all the rules.

Most of the granite kopjes are smooth and holdless. At first sight the routes appear either too easy for serious consideration or plainly impossible. However, it is chiefly a question of getting used to relying almost entirely on friction holds, which undoubtedly makes for good balance. Narrow cracks occasionally provide more conventional holds and belaying points. Most of the climbs are of good length, some up to 400 feet.

This sort of thing forms the main climbing diet of most Rhodesian mountaineers for the greater part of the year, but, whenever sufficient time allows, many get farther afield: north to Nyasaland, the home ground of the Mlanje Mountain Club—Mlanje, with its 9,843 feet, is a particularly fine and relatively unexplored mountain; to the Drakensberg in the Union; or to the Chimanimani Mountains which are no less challenging and, moreover, are nearer. The only Outward Bound School in Rhodesia is situated in this region.

The Chimanimanis Hut, owned by the National Parks Commission and attended by an African caretaker, is excellent and forms a good base for the northern end of the four parallel ranges (running north and south and numbered from west to east) of the group. The closest that a car can be taken is Dead Cow Camp, a clearing in the wattle plantations, 280 miles from Salisbury and 140 from Umtali, the nearest town. The road from Umtali, in baobab country, is picturesque, but the last fifteen miles beyond the tiny village of Melsetter are more suitable for a Land Rover than a saloon car.

From Dead Cow Camp a path leads up a thickly wooded kloof, a steep gully reminiscent of Rossett Gill. The wise will tackle this part at night to avoid the two to three hours' ordeal in the heat of the day. At the top the temperature is lower and a grassy path leads one in forty minutes to the other side of the Second Range and the hut which has a magnificent view over an amphitheatre formed by Ben Nevis, Skeleton Pass, Uncontoured Peak, Point 463 and Turret Towers, the queen of the Chimanimanis. These names can be confusing. The

area is not properly mapped and each mountaineer makes his own from the maps of others and corrects it with growing local knowledge. Most features can have up to four names: Portuguese, African, Rhodesian Survey and Mountain Club. I have used the Club's.

I was lucky enough to be taken up several fine routes of varying types and standards on Turret Towers and neighbouring heights. The scale is intermediate between the British and the Alpine and I found that with the sudden appearance of darkness at about 6 o'clock all through the year it is particularly important not to forget the clock. Furthermore, there is a sharp drop of temperature soon after sundown. Most of the formations are supposed to be granite but I am still not convinced. They are certainly unusual and provide as good a climbing medium as one can wish for.

Since there is no road access to the southerly parts of the ranges, these are less well explored and many of the summits are still virgin, due not so much to technical difficulty as to inaccessibility. When the Mountain Club invited me to join in their second attempt on the Dragon's Tooth, this seemed a golden opportunity to 'do' an untrodden summit as it is one of the less remote tops and reputed to be reasonably easy. Eleven of us, men and women with varying degrees of mountaineering experience, had five days available. Our journey to Dead Cow Camp was enlivened by the more alert spotting a leopard, a rare sight on account of their nocturnal habits. We carried no tents and settled down to sleep in the open after a two hours' moonlight walk up from Dead Cow Camp.

Early on the first day we reached the Airfield, a large plateau on the Second Range. The mass of Turret Towers on our left was capped with cloud but some twenty-five miles ahead, on the horizon and astride the Third Range, was the Dragon's Tooth. I began to think that the programme set by our leader, well versed in African hills from Mount Kenya to Table Mountain, was over-cautious. It was an easy walk down to the Bundi River where we lunched, but the other side of the valley proved to be rough and steep. We divided into three parties to speed up route finding. The greatest loss of time occurred at the gullies. These kloofs, filled with dense vegetation of varied and often interesting species such as

giant stryletsias and tree ferns, were often steep-sided and could take up to thirty minutes to cross.

After this section, the broad Puff Adder Pass, covered with grass and proteas, was a welcome rest. We were now in Mozambique (illegally according to the Portuguese authorities) and traversing the eastern slopes of the Third Range. Once again we bivouacked under boulders overnight, but short of our day's goal.

The next day heavy rain clouds were forming. Although this was the dry season, the term cannot apply in the mountains which, here as elsewhere, have their own weather. Eventually we all undressed to the limits of decency—a most effective, if somewhat chilly way of avoiding wet clothes (and, incidentally, of preventing the climber from clinging to the rocks). This weather and the dripping undergrowth of the gullies did not encourage progress. Much of the day was spent in scrambling over an area of rocky pinnacles, weathered to the most fantastic shapes, and occasionally glimpsing the crags of the Dragon's Tooth, now seemingly quite close. This gave the party renewed vigour. A large shallow cavern, the Lion's Den, gave shelter to the camp fire and sleeping-bags.

In the morning we reached the foot of the Tooth after a couple of hours. The showers turned to continuous rain and the clouds were now close above. We soon roped up and made a start, but half-an-hour later even the more optimistic agreed that the only prudent step was to return to the Lion's Den. At daybreak the weather had not changed; there was no time and insufficient food to wait for a second chance, so a quick conference voted reluctantly for retreat which lasted through the next two days. Throughout the trip we saw no other person in the area.

The time had not been wasted for we discovered a much easier approach route which, following for some miles a game track (the path created by wild animals on their way to water points), enabled the Dragon's Tooth to be climbed at the next attempt.

ANOTHER 'INQUISITOR' LOOKS AT THE CLUB

W. G. Stevens

In our *Journal* for 1943 (No. 37) there was an interesting article by the late George Anderson, entitled *The Club, 1906 - 1941.* This described its growth during that period (illustrated by a graph showing the number of men and women members respectively) and the geographical distribution of the members in 1942. Some other aspects of the Club's development were briefly touched on, but these need not concern us here.

It may—twenty years on—be of interest to print again a chart showing the Club's continued growth, which has been stimulated by the introduction of Graduating Membership in 1938, and to see what changes have occurred in the location of members at home and overseas. The chart on p. 277 is based on that previously printed for the years up to 1942, and thereafter the figures were compiled from the annual 'List of Members'. The mathematically inclined should note that these Lists have not been issued at exactly the same time each year, and this affects the curves to a slight extent.

It will be seen from the curves that, following some slowing down during the war years, there was a rapid increase of membership up to 1947 (reaching 981 at mid-summer) when Rule 7 imposing a limit was adopted. There followed a considerable fall, which stabilized the membership until 1956; since then it has again risen steadily, and has almost hit the 'ceiling' laid down by Rule 7. The previous author commented on the decrease in the ratio of men to women members between 1910, when it was 12 : 1, and 1940 when it had fallen to less than 4 : 1. This trend has continued and the ratio is now down to 2·75 : 1.

George Anderson's article included a map of England and Wales showing, by means of a dot for each member, the distribution of the Club 'population' in 1942, with its greatest density mainly in the Lake District and in Lancashire and Cheshire, with smaller groups in Yorkshire and the London area, and much more thinly spread over the rest of the country. A similar map drawn today would not look greatly different, apart from a marked increase in the number of 'dots'. A comparison of the figures tabulated on the 1942 map, with those based on the 1962 'List of Members' is given overleaf,

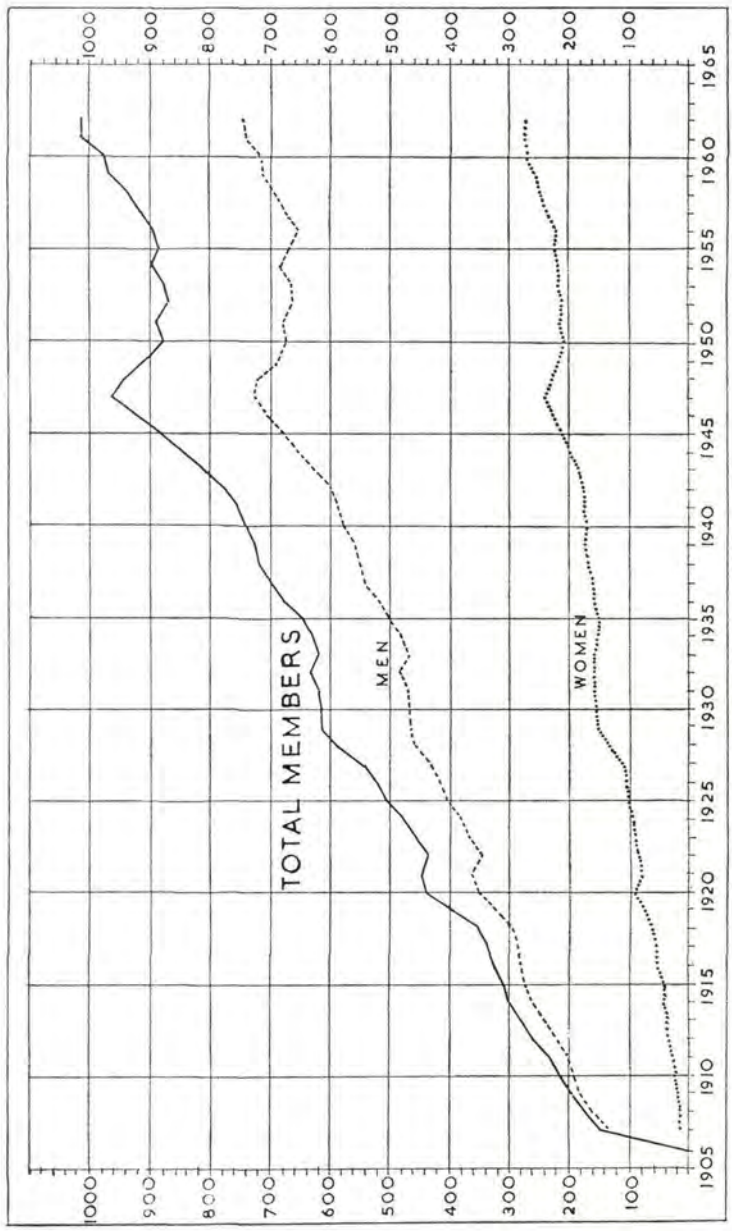
with percentages added for a truer assessment. The figures include Graduating Members, the majority of whom attain to full membership in due course.

District	*Number of Members*		*% of Total*	
	1942	1962	1942	1962
Cumberland	56	86	7·2	8·5
Westmorland	74	89	9·6	8·8
Yorkshire	89	106	11·5	10·4
Lancashire	156	199	20·1	19·6
Cheshire	53	59	6·8	5·9
London	57	60	7·4	6·0
Home Counties ..	61	79	7·9	7·8
Rest of England and Wales	187	266	24·2	26·2
Scotland and N. Ireland	22	21	2·7	2·1
Overseas	20	43	2·6	4·2
Unknown	—	5	—	0·5
Grand Total	775	1013	100·0	100·0
Men	603	744	77·8	73·4
Women	172	269	22·2	26·6

The number of members whose home is in the 'Lake Counties'—Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire 'north of the Sands'—is now almost 23% of the total membership, a slight increase on 1942.

For individual counties, Lancashire, even if Furness is excluded, still easily heads the list, with Yorkshire second, then Westmorland and Cumberland not far behind. In the South, apart from London, Surrey is the most favoured county, with its 'highlands' much frequented by the London Section.

If the figures for 1962 are further broken down it will be found that every county of England has at least one member within its boundaries, with the exception of Huntingdonshire —though the present writer is scarcely two miles from supplying this deficiency. Wales, with twenty members (concentrated mainly in Snowdonia and in the academic and industrial South) ties with Scotland, and Northern Ireland scores 1.


TOTAL MEMBERS
MEN
WOMEN
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
1905
1910
1915
1920
1925
1930
1935
1940
1945
1950
1955
1960
1965

In speaking of town membership, George Anderson claimed for Kendal (the town of his adoption) the palm for numbers proportionate to population. At the present time it is probably safe to say that Kendal comes first, irrespective of population, reckoning London, of course, as a county.

The number of members overseas has more than doubled since 1942, and the Fell and Rock is now represented in every continent. In recent years several members have spent long periods in Antarctica, though a postal address in this continent has not, I believe, yet appeared in our Handbook. Of the 43 members overseas over 30 are in Commonwealth countries.

In case any 'grand inquisitor or unofficial stocktaker to the Club'—as George Anderson described himself—should undertake another survey of this kind, say in 1982, a word of warning on the geographical data is needed. A good many of the younger (unmarried) members retain their home addresses while actually living elsewhere, and no adjustment for these is practicable. There are also some 'accommodation addresses' (e.g. banks and institutions) for members who, at any given time, are as likely to be in Katmandu as Kensington, or in Patagonia as Putney.

Another pitfall for the statistician is that some members live in places whose 'post town' is in an adjoining county, so that, for example, dwellers in Hawkshead might be inadvertently allotted to Westmorland, and those in Arnside to Lancashire. Then there is the odd case of Todmorden, which was transferred from Lancashire to Yorkshire in 1888, but is still in 'Lancs.' for postal purposes. The nine or ten stalwart members of the Club who live in or near the town can be assured that they have been assigned to Yorkshire in these notes.

Finally, in 1982, when the Boundaries Commission will presumably have finished its current investigations, there may be changes in county boundaries which will have to be taken into account. Rutland's fate is already in the balance, but should Westmorland be threatened with dismemberment or extinction there is no doubt that the men of Kendal will be in the forefront of the battle in defence of their county.

IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE ANDERSON, 1916-1961

By the death of George Anderson in his 88th year we have lost a sound mountaineer of the old school and a good friend.

He was one of a few climbers who, in the early days before the First World War, happened to meet at Wasdale Head. This chance encounter ripened into life-long climbing friendships. Every year, except during the two wars, this little group met for a few days of climbing and hill walking in spring and autumn, sometimes in Wales, more often in the Lakes. In due course we all became members of the Fell and Rock, but we little thought that we should produce a President in Dr. C. F. Hadfield and two Vice-Presidents in the late B. S. Harlow and George Anderson.

But George Anderson's activities were not confined to British hills alone. He made many ascents in the Swiss Alps and was elected in 1932 to the Alpine Club, where he was a familiar figure at the lectures and various functions. He was also a member of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club and acted as their Honorary Librarian from 1933 to 1938.

Apart from his love of mountaineering, he was a keen and accomplished fly fisherman, a sport which brought him into close contact with the hills and dales he held so dear.

J. OSBORNE WALKER

The seven years George Anderson spent in Kendal with our family formed but a small slice of his long and busy life, but we felt privileged to know him. His quiet humour, wisdom and unassuming goodness spread far and wide.

George Anderson was born and spent his boyhood in Kingston-on-Spey. He had a great interest in shipbuilding and was instrumental in acquiring drawings of early wooden ships for South Kensington Science Museum. Shipbuilding and engineering were, indeed, his life's work and he became managing director of the Westminster Dredging Company. He was Vice-President of the Fell and Rock from 1943 to 1945 and was a great help during the early days of Raw Head. He was an active member of the London Section and served on its committee for many years. Among his alpine ascents was that of the Bietschorn with his friend, Sir L. Pearce. His son, Fergus, who predeceased him, was a famous racing motorist and George himself sportingly rode a motorbike to his fishing

haunts on Deeside when well on in his seventies. During his later years George was cared for by his daughter Ailsa; they spent much time in Scotland, which he loved, and the winters in the south or in Italy. He was a staunch and lovable father, grandfather and friend.

MARY COCKERTON

GRAHAM ACKERLEY, 1919-1961

By the sudden death of Graham Ackerley on the 11th October 1961, the Club has lost a most popular member, and Southampton has been deprived of one of its leading personalities. His passing, so soon after the deaths of his wife, Anne, in 1957 and of his brother, Arthur, in 1960, is a great blow to his numerous friends.

Educated at Birkenhead School, Graham and his brother commenced climbing and were elected members of the Club when they were in their teens, and they were fortunate to have the use of their family's climbing hut at the foot of Hell Gill, near Stool End Farm in Langdale, from which they climbed on all the major crags of the Lake District. I and others have very many happy memories of holidays with them at their hut.

Following four years in the offices of the White Star Line, Graham joined his family firm—Benjamin Ackerley & Son—which, by unremitting work and their considerable ability, he and his brother built up into a flourishing concern, with offices in Liverpool, London, Southampton and Manchester and which in 1934 became the Port Agents for the United States Lines. Graham was mainly responsible for the Southampton office, in the life of which port he took a very active part, being the deputy chairman of the Southampton Harbour Board and having served as chairman of the Southampton branch of the Institute of Shipping and Forwarding Agents, as vice-chairman of his branch of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers and as president of the Southampton Chamber of Commerce. He was Vice-Consul for Denmark.

Graham rendered outstanding service during the war as an officer of the Royal Engineers in Movements and Transportation, serving first in Egypt. He was twice sent to Malta during its siege and there gave valuable assistance in obtaining the rapid discharge of the convoys. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on the planning Staff for the invasions of Sicily and Italy and throughout the Italian campaign he

served with distinction as a colonel on the Headquarters Staff of General Alexander, his services being recognized by his being made a Commander of the British Empire.

Coming of a family devoted to our Lakeland hills and dales, Graham took every available opportunity in a very busy life to visit the district for which his enthusiasm knew no bounds. With his wife, Anne, he made many strenuous expeditions in Scotland, and his presence at the Scottish and other meets of the Club will be sorely missed.

The sympathy of all goes out to our fellow members, Brigid, Elspeth and Michael in their grievous loss.

GRAHAM WILSON

DOROTHY THOMPSON, 1915-1961

Dorothy Thompson, whose death last December came as a shock to many of her friends, had latterly suffered from heart trouble and its attendant frustrations and restrictions.

Dorothy, or Tommy as she was familiarly known to her circle, joined the Fell and Rock in 1915. She was a frequent attender of Easter meets in Dr. Hadfield's party. She joined the London Section in its early days and enjoyed its walks which she found a welcome distraction from city life. She held a secretarial post at the School of Oriental Studies for many years. A small alert person with a keen sense of humour, she concealed beneath a very quiet exterior an indomitable will and purpose. She knew exactly what she wanted and quietly pursued and achieved her goal.

It was in the Alps that her main mountaineering achievements took place. Her first alpine season was spent in the company of Ivor and Dorothy Richards in the early twenties. These training days and guideless expeditions in the Valais opened a new world for her. Through the Richards she was introduced to Joseph Georges 'le Skieur', an encounter which was to result in many seasons' climbing with him whom she found to be not only an outstanding guide but a lively and sympathetic companion and friend.

A notable expedition made with him in 1929 was the ascent of Mont Blanc by the Brouillard Ridge, the first time it was climbed by a woman. She very vividly and amusingly described this expedition in the *Journal* of that year. The Innominata without a bivouac was to follow, amongst other classic courses including, in 1934, an ascent of Mont Blanc by

the Aiguille de Bionnassay returning by the Peuteret Ridge, the only time it had been descended.

Between Tommy and Joseph Georges an ideal link of client and guide relationship was forged. I was privileged to join her party on one or two of her later seasons in the Alps, realizing plans she had worked out with great detail and foresight and which were furthered by Joseph's initiative and inspiration. This cheerful *camaraderie* obtained on all occasions as, when on an understandably infrequent line of traverse of Mont Vélan, the party crept along a seemingly endless arête of precariously balanced slabs; or when on a wet walk down from Entrèves we went arm in arm with Joseph, sheltered from the downpour by an enormous umbrella he had borrowed from a local.

I like to think back on a holiday in Dauphiné in 1928—baking days of sunshine—open glaciers—but day after day of opportunity. There was an unforgettable bivouac before the traverse of the Écrins—the refuge having been destroyed by avalanche the preceding winter. After supper and a good *tisane* of camomile prepared by Joseph, we lay on flowery turf gazing at the stars till the mosquitoes drove us into sleeping-bags. A perfect prelude to a grand course in the mountains.

Other amusing guideless tours were to follow, when Molly FitzGibbon joined the two of us. Tommy was a good all-round mountaineer on rock and ice. She generally took the lead on the glacier—and it was a comfort to know she was small and light should we have to pull her out of a crevasse. It was the heftier members of the party, however, who carried the rope when we went laden to huts. The war broke up all such diversions, but Tommy's constant interest and pre-occupation with mountain associations remained.

She worked on a book of climbing reminiscences and completed these shortly after the war. Undaunted by the difficulties of publication in the post-war era, she finally decided to have the book printed privately by Titus Wilson of Kendal, a scheme interrupted by her death. One is happy to know that, through the initiative of the Ladies' Alpine Club and the good will and assistance of her friends both inside and outside the clubs with which she was associated, the publication of this book is now assured, so fulfilling the long desired ambition of the author.

D. L. PILKINGTON

MABEL M. BARKER, 1922-1961

It was with great regret that we heard of the death in September 1961 of Dr. Mabel Barker, Litt.D., B.Sc. at the age of 75. Born at Silloth, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Barker of Silloth, she was educated in Cornwall. She gained her geography diploma at Oxford and her B.Sc. in geology in London; and she assisted Sir Patrick Geddes at Edinburgh University before helping the Society of Friends with refugees in Holland during World War I. When the war was over, Dr. Barker lectured in London and afterwards taught at a school at King's Langley, Hertfordshire. Then she went to France and, at the University of Montpellier, once more assisted Sir Patrick Geddes. She wrote a French thesis on education, which was printed, for her doctorate of literature. She then returned to Cumberland and opened her own private school at Friar Row, Caldbeck. After a few years she retired but, when World War II broke out, she nursed at Garlands Hospital for a time and then taught at Peterborough. She retired to Caldbeck after the war.

A superb rock climber, she joined the Club in 1922 and continued to climb routes of the highest class until, after an attack of arthritis during the war, she ceased climbing altogether. Although she always regretted her lack of physical strength, she had a fine natural style which seemed to dissolve all difficulties, and to climb in her company was often a chastening, though always rewarding experience.

She was very proud of being the first woman up C.B. and, at the age of 50, being the first woman to descend it.

Greatly attracted to Skye, she often camped there and was the first woman to traverse the main ridge*. In 1926 she did the round trip from Coruisk with Claude Frankland and they arrived back at camp 'tired, but by no means done' in spite of bad weather which kept them wet through for most of the time. In fact, she allowed the weather to interfere very little with her plans. On one occasion, after finishing C.B. very late in rain and thick mist and groping our way down Broad

* For Mabel Barker's own accounts of these climbs in the *Journal*, see:
Vol. vii, No. 1 (1925), p. 110 'On Scawfell'.
Vol. vii, No. 2 (1926), p. 219 'The Third Round, or Ridge-Walking in Skye'.
Vol. xi (1936-37), p. 161 'From Both Ends of the Rope'.
—EDITOR.

Stand in pitch darkness, we had great difficulty in persuading her to come back to Wasdale Head with us instead of going alone over the Pike to Seathwaite.

Mabel Barker was particularly happy to have climbing folk around her, and for many years a hospitable welcome awaited all who cared to call at Friar Row. Many of us will find it difficult to believe that it all belongs to the past.

JACK CARSWELL

MRS. FLORENCE CAIN, 1921-1961

By the death in her 83rd year of Mrs. Florence Cain, the widow of the late H. P. Cain, the Club has lost another of its older members.

Mrs. Cain joined the Club in 1921. Though never a great hill walker, she always used to set out with a party and, whilst they climbed, she enjoyed walking on the lower fells and up the valleys with other kindred spirits. Her love of the fells continued all her life and in later years she liked to walk on the hills surrounding her home at Ramsbottom. A regular attender of the main meets for many years, she last joined us at the 1960 Dinner.

In her home town, besides being a Justice of the Peace, Mrs. Cain was connected with a great number of local bodies, especially with those concerned with social welfare and the hospital service.

Mrs. Cain is survived by her younger son and daughter, both members of the Club as are also two of her granddaughters. To them the Club extends its sympathy in their loss.

J. C. APPLEYARD

LANCELOT W. DAVIS, 1929-1960

Lance Davis was well known in County Durham where he gave great service to students and to the cause of education as teacher, headmaster, inspector and deputy director. Many individuals will remember with gratitude his interest and ability when they were in need of extra coaching, and a large proportion of his well-stocked library was always on loan.

Although his constitution was weakened as a result of service in the 1914-18 war, he was a strong walker on the fells and spent many holidays camping in Lakeland. Though not much interested in rock climbing, he would tackle effectively

a long and difficult rock climb if it led him to the ridges and mountain tops which made for him a satisfying day. His interest in everything, his readiness for anything, his gentle candour and his quiet wit made him an ideal companion and he will be missed by all who knew him.

W. G. STANDRING

ROBERT PEEL MEARS, 1943-1961

Robert Peel Mears who died on the 25th November 1961 at the age of 77 was a great nephew of Sir Robert Peel. He had been in failing health for the previous two years. He was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge. A civil engineer by profession, he worked for many years in India, where he specialized in bridge building, until the climate finally undermined his health. He returned to England in 1932 and for the next 22 years held an appointment with the well-known firm of Rendel, Palmer and Tritton. He took a prominent part in the construction of the great bridge across the Neath estuary in South Wales. He was a very keen member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and read several papers there which were highly thought of in the engineering world. He retired in 1954. He had, however, been a very hard worker all his life and after a few months he found that time was hanging heavily on his hands. He therefore obtained an appointment with another firm of engineers and finally retired in 1959.

Among climbers he will be best known for the extensive research work he did on climbing ropes, and his house on the outskirts of Reigate was often to be found festooned with ropes which he had been testing in the chalk pit on Colley Hill. He contributed articles on the subject to our *Journal* in 1948 and 1950.

He joined the Club as a Life Member in 1943 and was an active member of the London Section. Apart from serving on this committee, he led numerous walks for them and organized a number of visits to Harrison's rocks, for he was a fine rock climber. He frequently visited the Lake District. He was also a member of the Alpine Club and had served on the committee. Both he and his wife were energetic and enthusiastic country walkers.

Of a somewhat shy and retiring disposition, he had, nevertheless, a dry sense of humour, and, on the rare occasions

when he could be induced to make a speech, it was always extremely witty and very much to the point. He set himself a very high standard and expected the same of others, but he always practised what he preached. He will be sadly missed and we should like to offer to his widow our deepest sympathy in her irreparable loss.

M. N. CLARKE

B. A. GREENFIELD, 1944-1961

B. A. Greenfield, who joined the Club in 1944, was not known to many members as he was seldom able to attend meets, but during the last 30 years of his life he spent many holidays walking in the Lake District and learned to know and love the fells in all their varied moods at all times of the year.

His great interest was in mountain flowers. Each year after the war he visited the Alps in search of them and got much pleasure from photographing them in their native habitat and in collecting them and growing them successfully at home. At the recent Alpine Garden Society's show in Birmingham, an Androsace Helvetica, collected on the way to the Hohtürli Pass in 1953, gained the Farrer Medal for the best plant in the show. At Harrogate in April a collection I showed of plants collected in the past few years by both of us was awarded the Roger Smith cup for the highest aggregate of personally collected plants.

C.G.

HARRY MIDGLEY, 1910-1961

Harry Midgley, who died last September, was very fond of the Lake District and particularly of Eskdale, in praise of which he contributed an article to the 1914 number of the *Journal* entitled 'Why not Eskdale?'. He had not been able to come to meets in recent years but, happily, found it possible to attend the Jubilee Dinner in 1956. The Editor would welcome an obituary notice for the 1963 number by someone who knew him. This applies also to the following members of whose deaths we have recently been notified and for whom it has proved impossible, up to the time of going to press, to obtain notices.

ALFRED BINNS, 1927-1960,

J. R. BROWN, 1913-1959

BORROWDALE *Peter Moffat*

CASTLE CRAG

JIGSAW 140 feet. Very severe. First ascent 18th September 1961. J. J. S. Allison, L. Kendall. Starts at the foot of a deeply cut crack just to the right of Libido.

(1) 30 feet. Follow the crack to block belays.

(2) 65 feet. Move to the right to a yew bush, then climb straight up the edge of the buttress. A succession of awkward moves leads to a yew tree belay.

(3) 25 feet. Vegetation to a tree belay.

(4) 20 feet. Climb the short wall to the top.

CASTLE WALL 110 feet. Severe. First ascent 18th October 1961. J. J. S. Allison, L. Kendall. The route follows the obvious line of flakes and cracks on the extreme right-hand buttress. Starts below a yew tree reached by scrambling. One pitch only.

After forcing a way through the tree, jam the deep crack beyond. At 40 feet an exposed shallow groove leads to a rowan sapling. Pull up on this and finish with a mild layback.

EAGLE CRAG

GREEN WALL 155 feet. Very severe. First ascent Easter 1955. M. Thompson, P. Lockey. Starts between the Cleft and Post Mortem after scrambling up a short chimney onto a large green platform.

(1) 80 feet. Climb the groove to a tree and then the wall above to a sloping ledge. Step left and climb an overhanging crack to a good stance. Chockstone belay low down.

(2) 25 feet. Move easily leftwards to a grass ledge.

(3) 50 feet. Climb straight up to the top of the crag.

QUAYFOOT BUTTRESS

IRONY 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent 3rd June 1961. L. Kendall, J. J. S. Allison. The climb takes a line up the clean right-hand edge of the buttress, going left past the conspicuous triangular roof near the top. Starts at the foot of an obvious crack on the left wall of the dirty gully which bounds the crag on the right.

(1) 80 feet. Climb the crack to a ledge and move left along it to a break. Follow this, continuing up a thin crack. At the top of the crack swing right and move up a few feet to a stance and piton belay below the triangular roof.

(2) 30 feet. The little slab on the left leads to a bulge. Cross this (piton and sling). Mantelshelf up to a good resting place. The groove straight ahead leads to the top.

SHEPHERD'S CRAG

FISHER'S FOLLY 80 feet. Very severe. First ascent Easter 1955. M. Thompson, P. Nicol. Starts 10 feet to the left of Kransic Crack.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the obvious groove to a small grass ledge.

(2) 40 feet. Traverse delicately left for 15 feet and then climb up to an overhang. Pull over this on good holds and continue to the top.

BUTTERMERE

STRIDDLE CRAG

SLINK 120 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th March 1961. G. Steel, M. Wainwright. Starts as for Ding Dong and traverses to join Fretsaw. One pitch only. 140 feet of rope advised.

Climb the wall until the angle eases. Then traverse the slab upwards to its left-hand end. Climb the steep wall above to a small ledge. Then traverse left across a slab to a large block belay.

DEEPDALE

SCRUBBY CRAG

GIRDLE TRAVERSE 400 feet. Very severe. First ascent June 1961. N.J.S., O. Woolcock (alternate leads). Traverses the crag from right to left, giving some good pitches with a poor middle section. Start as for Firedragon.

(1) 65 feet. As for Firedragon. (There is an unnecessary piton in this pitch which we could not remove).

(2) 65 feet. Traverse left into the groove of Hrothgar and across to the left arête. Descend 10 feet, then left again into Grendel. Ascend to chock belay.

(3) 140 feet. Step down and traverse the left wall to a hold on the arête (crux). Continue into Sennapod which is joined at the top of the second pitch. (It is advisable to split the pitch here with a piton). Descend 10–15 feet and traverse below a hanging flake on good jams. Climb diagonally left on bilberry ledges, crossing Midnight Special to poor belays.

(4) 60 feet. Continue the traverse across Ringway to the flake belay below the second pitch of Beowulf.

(5) 70 feet. An interesting pitch. Climb diagonally left into the overhanging corner groove (continuation of Juniper Crack). Climb this, using two slings on rather doubtful flakes, and continue to the top of the crag. Belays.

DOVEDALE

BLACK CRAG

POLLUX VARIATION — 230 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 18th March 1962. C. Griffiths, Miss A. Richardson.

(1) 70 feet. As for Pollux.

(2) 60 feet. Move up to the cave. Then take the obvious line to the left, descending slightly at first to a small ledge. Climb the wall at the end of the ledge. Belay as for Pollux.

(3) 100 feet. Climb the crack to the right up the slabs; then into a scoop to reach a short vertical corner. Pull up to the right, then step left into a groove. Climb straight up and finish by a wide easy corner. Loose rocks on the last moves.

EASEDALE

DEER BIELD CRAG

DEER BIELD CHIMNEY VARIATION FINISH — 30 feet. Severe. First ascent May 1960. D. Brown. At the top of the oblique hand traverse step right and do a semi-hand-traverse for 8 feet into a corner. Pull up into the corner and lay-back up for 15 feet until stopped by jammed capstones. Transfer delicately onto the right wall and move up 6 feet to the top. Belays higher up among grass and broken rocks.

ESKDALE

HERON CRAG

GIRDLE TRAVERSE — 540 feet. Very severe. First ascent 30th July 1961. N. Raby, L. A. Goldsmith (alternate leads). Starts as for Heron Corner and traverses rightwards across the left-hand section of the crag, up and across the central pillar, then horizontally to the right across the mossy right-hand section to finish up chimneys to the top of the crag.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the slightly overhanging wall and then up easy ledges into the grassy corner. Belay on the right, also peg. (Heron Corner, pitch 1.)

(2) 85 feet. Move down towards the arête, step round into a groove, then up and out to a small stance on the edge of the arête. Traverse the slab on the right to a corner with a steep crack above and a small tree below. Ascend the crack, pull out right at the top and go up the steep grass slope to the peg belay on Babylon. (Hard Not, pitch 2.)

(3) 45 feet. Move down Babylon for 10 feet, then follow a slightly descending traverse line to the right onto the central pillar. After 20 feet step round a rib into a groove. Climb this on good holds to a stance and belays.

(4) 25 feet. Climb the groove behind the belays to a holly tree and stance. (Gormenghast, pitch 4.)

(5) 80 feet. Step to the right from the tree and climb on good holds past a prominent block. A crack containing a jammed flake leads onto the nose. Traverse right across to the right-hand edge. From the edge a descent of 10 feet is made by the aid of a thin crack to a small ledge. Climb the crack on the right to the top of a pinnacle and belay. *Alternatively* step directly across the steep wall onto the pinnacle. (Gormenghast, pitch 5.)
(6) 50 feet. Abseil down Bellerophon to the large grass ledge.
(7) 40 feet. From the end of the ledge move down slightly and traverse horizontally to the right to a holly tree and spike belay.
(8) 50 feet. Continue the horizontal traverse to a groove with twin cracks which is ascended for 10 feet to a ledge and belays.
(9) 30 feet. Descend to the right and move across the steep wall to an open chimney. Ascend a few feet to reach a belay on the left wall.
(10) 25 feet. Climb the chimney to a pinnacle belay.
(11) 45 feet. Climb the crack behind the belay to a holly tree at 15 feet. The crack widens to a tree-filled chimney which is climbed to belays.
(12) 35 feet. Scramble diagonally right to the top of the crag.

SPEC CRACK 215 feet. Very severe. First ascent August 1961. P. Walsh, J. A. Austin, E. Metcalf. Starts 30 feet to the left of Bellerophon where an overhang at 30 feet is split by a thin crack.

(1) 80 feet. Climb the wall to the overhang which is crossed by climbing the crack to a belay by a holly tree.
(2) 40 feet. A few feet to the right is a crack which is climbed to a small stance below an overhanging crack.
(3) 65 feet. Climb the crack until it is chocked with rock, then break out on the exposed left wall and ascend to a very small stance.
(4) 30 feet. Climb up the same crack to the top.

GRISEDALE

EAGLE CRAG

DANDELION WALL 150 feet. Very severe. First ascent Easter 1961. N.J.S., O. Woolcock (alternate leads). Starts from the grass ledge above the first pitch of Dandelion Groove.

(1) 80 feet. Climb onto a block below the steep wall 20 feet to the right of the belay on Dandelion Groove. Climb the wall above, using a small dead tree, until it is possible to move left into a groove. Climb this, then traverse to the right,

round a corner, into another groove which leads to a grass ledge and belay.

(2) 70 feet. Descend 10 feet to the right to a tree. Climb a steep groove behind the tree direct to the top of the crag.

FALCON CRAG

FIASCO 130 feet. Very severe. First ascent Easter 1961. N.J.S., D. McE. Dixon. Starts in Chock Gully at the same point as Sideline.

(1) 90 feet. Make an ascending leftward traverse of the left wall of the gully (looking up) to gain a steep groove which is an obvious feature of the crag when viewed from the path. The groove is reached, by means of a rope move, just below a square overhang. Turn this on the left and continue up the groove until it is possible to move to a good ledge.

(2) 40 feet. Easier climbing soon leads to bilberry ledges and belays.

LANGDALE

RAVEN CRAG, WALTHWAITE

PROTUS Very severe. First ascent 1961. G. Steele,
VARIATION FINISH M. Wainwright. From the doubtful spike on the last pitch, traverse left and climb the bottomless slab where the overhang is split by a groove.

WHITE GHYLL

BLOCK AND RIB 170 feet. Severe. First ascent 1st October 1961. J. Gaymon, D. Hall. Starts 15 feet to the right of Inferno.

(1) 60 feet. Climb diagonally right over easy rocks to the foot of an incut corner.

(2) 110 feet. Climb the corner for 30 feet. Traverse out of the corner and up to a block 30 feet above. Ascend the wall to a rib 40 feet higher. Climb this in the centre.

LONGSLEDDALE

BUCKBARROW

DANDLE TRAVERSE 370 feet. Severe. First ascent 20th July 1961. T. H. Robinson, B. Pedley, F. Smith, D. Hutchinson, J. F. Wadeson. Starts as for Dandle Buttress.

(1) 30 feet. First pitch of Dandle Buttress.

(2) 70 feet. Step to the right round the ridge and traverse under the overhangs to a belay at the top of pitch 4 of Dandle Buttress Direct.

(3) 40 feet. Climb down the chimney to a belay.
(4) 70 feet. Step down a few feet and traverse to the belay at the end of pitch 3 of Sadgill Wall.
(5) 160 feet. Pitches 4, 5, and 6 of Sadgill Wall.

FALCON RIDGE 250 feet. Severe. First ascent 19th July 1961. J. F. Wadeson, D. Hutchinson. Starts at a ridge on the left of Cleft Ghyll immediately above the chockstone.
(1) 30 feet. Scramble up the broken part of the ridge to a block below the slightly overhanging wall.
(2) 110 feet. Above and to the left is an open corner overhanging at the foot. Climb the corner, then the face to some overhangs which are turned on the right round the ridge. Climb to the top of this section of the ridge. Belay round a tree.
(3) 50 feet. Continue up the broken part of the ridge to a short corner.
(4) 60 feet. Climb the corner then straight up to the top.

DOMINATION 165 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th June 1961. A. D. Hallsworth, J. F. Wadeson. Starts 30 feet to the right of Low Crag Chimney.
(1) 25 feet. Climb the slab on the left of an arête for 10 feet, then traverse right for 6 feet under the overhang to an awkward corner. Large flake belay low down on the right.
(2) 60 feet. Return to the awkward corner and climb the wall directly above to a dead tree and green ledge. Belay.
(3) 50 feet. Descend until a traverse right can be made to the bottom of an impressive chimney. Climb this. Belay on rowan tree.
(4) 30 feet. Climb the right wall of the chimney to the top.

GERONIMO 240 feet. Very severe. First ascent 9th May 1961. D. Hutchinson, T. H. Robinson, J. F. Wadeson, F. Smith. Starts 15 feet to the right of Low Crag Chimney at the foot of a slab in two parts. The lower part has a line of overhangs a few feet from the bottom.
(1) 60 feet. Start just to the right of the overhangs and climb level with them. Climb the crack, moving right and then left to the top. Belay well to the right of the ledge. (Two pitons used as runners.)
(2) 90 feet. Climb the slab about 6 feet from the belay, using a small dirty groove. Walk up to the belay at the foot of the buttress with a long pointed overhang at the top.
(3) 90 feet. To the right of the overhang is a chimney. Start at the foot of this and ascend diagonally left to the front, then

straight up to a few feet below the overhang. Step left onto a ridge and climb this until an open corner above and to the left of the chimney is reached. Ascend this to the top.

DECEPTION 190 feet. Difficult. First ascent 23rd June 1961. D. Hutchinson, J. F. Wadeson (alternate leads). This climb is on the more broken crags to the right of Buckbarrow Southern Buttresses.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the wall, then go straight up the slope to the foot of a small wall below the buttress.
(2) 50 feet. Climb the wall in the centre, then up the lower part of the buttress, trending towards the right-hand edge.
(3) 70 feet. Climb the buttress to the top.

FOUR SQUARE 470 feet. Severe. First ascent 5th July 1961. J. F. Wadeson, D. Hutchinson, T. H. Robinson, F. Smith. Starts to the right of Deception at the lowest part of the crag.

(1) 40 feet. Climb *either* the broken groove on the left, *or* the crooked chimney 4 feet to the right, *or* the front of the buttress.
(2) 60 feet. Walk up to the foot of a prominent crack leading to a small chimney.
(3) 70 feet. Climb the crack or the groove to the left, then the chimney.
(4) 60 feet. Go up the slope and over a wall to the foot of a large wall (30 to 40 feet from a pinnacle at the right-hand edge).
(5) 100 feet. Climb above the belay for a few feet, then step right and back diagonally left to a belay at the foot of a short broken wall.
(6) 50 feet. Follow the base of the wall to the right, then climb a short corner to a bilberry ledge with no belay.
(7) 90 feet. Climb the slabs to the top.

SUNDOWN 170 feet. Severe. First ascent 29th July 1961. D. Hutchinson, J. F. Wadeson. Starts at the foot of a ridge 50 feet to the left of Waterfall Buttress (the lowest part of this section of the crag).

(1) 70 feet. Climb the ridge, then step left and up to a belay on a ledge.
(2) 40 feet. Step left onto the ridge and up to a dead tree which is passed on the left to gain access to a chimney. Belay on a pinnacle on the left of the chimney.
(3) 60 feet. Step onto the pinnacle, then across to the right and round the edge. Go straight up the ridge keeping to the left edge.

NEWLANDS

RED CRAG

CAPITALISTS' CRACK — 165 feet. Very severe. First ascent 17th September 1961. J. J. S. Allison, L. Kendall. Starts a few feet to the right of Cossack Crack at the foot of a thin continuous crack.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the crack for 40 feet to a narrow rock ledge. The continuation of the crack is slightly easier and leads to a stance and huge flake belay.

(2) 40 feet. The steep rock behind the belay is climbed on good holds. Stance and belay.

(3) 65 feet. Broken rocks to the top.

SABRE CLEFT — 190 feet. Severe. First ascent 14th October 1961. L. Kendall, J. Teasdale. Starts at the right-hand end of the terrace at an obvious deeply cut corner containing a crack. This forms the first pitch.

(1) 60 feet. The crack behind the holly bush is best climbed facing right. After a slight bulge is passed the holds improve and a stance and rowan tree belay are reached on the lip of the corner.

(2) 30 feet. Climb two cracks on good holds. Stance and belay.

(3) 100 feet. Easy rock to the top.

ROULETTE — 165 feet. Very severe. First ascent 17th September 1961. L. Kendall, J. J. S. Allison. Starts below a cave-like recess in the face left of Cossack Crack.

(1) 25 feet. Go up the steep break to a block belay on the left of the recess.

(2) 65 feet. In the back of the recess is a pair of cracks; follow the right-hand one, using slings on the inserted chockstones. At the top, traverse left and mantelshelf up to a good resting-place beyond the roof. Move straight up to a stance and spike belay at the foot of a rib.

(3) 75 feet. Follow the rib to the top.

THIRLMERE

RAVEN CRAG

COMMUNIST CONVERT — 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent June 1961. E. Metcalf, J. A. Austin.

DIRECT FINISH

(1) 40 feet. From the stance above the crux, traverse left across the wall to the stance on Delphinus.

(2) 70 feet. Climb up and to the right to enter a groove formed in the angle between the steep wall and the overhangs above Communist Convert.

ULLSWATER

GOWBARROW CRAG

BIRKETT'S VIEW 180 feet. Very difficult. First ascent July 1960. C. Griffiths, J. Siddle. An interesting climb starting at the corner about 50 feet to the right of and below Gowbarrow Buttress.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the wall immediately to the left of the corner on awkward sloping holds. Oak tree belay on the second ledge.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the shattered wall behind the oak to a rock ledge. A delicate step to the right to a grass ledge follows. Belay in the cave.

(3) 40 feet. Ascend the corner above the cave to a large oak. Then cross a wide ledge, bearing left, to a further oak.

(4) 45 feet. Take the corner behind the oak. Two large steps follow; pull over an impending block and finish up a short crack. Continue up easy rock to a good stance with an attractive situation.

Variation to pitches 2 and 3. Severe. 75 feet.
Climb the shattered wall as in pitch 2 to the rock ledge, then a steep crack to a wide grass ledge.

WASDALE

BUCKBARROW CRAG

WITCH 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent 2nd March 1961. P. Walsh, M. Burke. Starts up the overhanging chimney to the right of the middle crack on the left-hand side of the crag.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the chimney for 30 feet to a flat pinnacle. Move to the right to a small niche, then up for a few feet until the crack can be regained. Follow this to a ledge with a chockstone belay.

(2) 40 feet. Move up for a few feet until the big open groove can be attained. This is followed to the top.

GAGARIN 215 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 15th April 1961. D.N.G., E.I., P. Magoriam. Starts 50 feet to the left of the huge pillar which leans against the central part of the crag, where an incipient rib forms the right wall of a scree gully. Cairn.

(1) 35 feet. The rib. Bear right to a ledge and block belay.

(2) 40 feet. A short wall on the right is followed by a step up left to a slab. Climb the short corner to a small stance with good blocks.

(3) 55 feet. Move left to the edge then climb up, bearing right over mossy slabs to a clean ridge. Belay above a corner stance.

(4) 25 feet. The simple ridge ahead to an obvious crack.
(5) 60 feet. The crack and ridge which eases off to a slab.

PIKE'S CRAG

CREMATION RIDGE — 365 feet. Difficult. First ascent 14th May 1961. E.I., D.N.G. (alternate leads). Starts between Southern Corner and Mickledore Buttress, Western Corner. Some 250 feet up a deep scree gully is a small amphitheatre where the main gully suddenly turns sharp left. The climb lies on the jagged ridge on the left of the amphitheatre.

(1) 50 feet. The shallow corner on the right for 10 feet, then traverse left for 30 feet just below a narrow grass ledge. From the edge of the ridge continue up to a block belay on a sloping slab.
(2) 35 feet. Step up and traverse to the right round the rib into a small chimney overlooking the gully. The chimney becomes a steep crack which leads to a stony ledge and block belay.
(3) 35 feet. The rib on the right, followed by easier rocks. Ledge and belay.
(4) 35 feet. Bear right when climbing the flaked wall ahead. Ledge and belay.
(5) 20 feet. A chimney.
(6) 50 feet. Easy rocks to the foot of a gendarme.
(7) 20 feet. The gendarme is climbed to the left of its crack.
(8) 25 feet. Descend, then over blocks to a cracked wall.
(9) 50 feet. Climb the wall via a groove on the left and continue easily to a small leaning pinnacle.
(10) 45 feet. Move right and ascend steep rock to the right of a narrow chimney, finishing on the top of Pulpit Rock.

SCAFELL PINNACLE

RIGHT-HAND EDGE — 215 feet. Very severe. First ascent 21st May 1961. J. J. S. Allison, C. J. F. Rowbotham. Starts as for Jones's Route Direct from Lord's Rake.

(1) 25 feet. Jones's Route, pitch 1.
(2) 50 feet. Follow the Gangway for a few feet until it is possible to step onto the slab above. Climb up this to a sloping stance on its right edge (piton belay).
(3) 100 feet. Move left under the steep wall and ascend through a break onto the slab above. Climb this slab until overlooking Deep Ghyll. Traverse round the corner on the Deep Ghyll wall, using undercut handholds, and go across to a resting-place. From here climb leftwards up the steep overlapping wall to a sloping stance (crux). Piton or wire sling belay.
(4) 40 feet. Scramble up the slab above to Hopkinson's Cairn.

PINNACLE FACE DIRECT FINISH — 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 21st May 1961. C. J. F. Rowbotham, J. J. S. Allison (alternate leads). Start from the large block on Sansom's Traverse.

(1) 40 feet. From the left edge of the block, climb the grooved wall on excellent rock to the edge of the platform under Slingsby's Chimney.

(2) 60 feet. Traverse to the right onto a slab. Step up through the overhangs onto another slab and from its right-hand end ascend a delicate slab to join Low Man from Hopkinson's Cairn.

SCAFELL CRAG

NARROW STAND TRADESMEN'S ENTRANCE — 60 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1st September 1961. H. I. Banner, G.D.

(1) 20 feet. Traverse left as for the Variation start of Moss Ghyll Grooves.

(2) 40 feet. Ascend the groove for a few feet, then traverse right until the wall steepens. Ascend a thin crack on the right until further steepening forces a move to the right. A delicate traverse to join Narrow Stand under the crux follows.

KEY TO INITIALS

G. Dyke D. N. Greenop E. Ivison N. J. Soper

DOVEDALE

A first ascent by Don Whillans and Colin Mortlock, Extol on Dove Crags, was described in Climbs Old and New (*F.R.C.C. Journal* No. 55, 1961). The name Entity is ascribed to this climb in an article by C. J. Mortlock in the 1961 *Climbers' Club Journal*, but it has been confirmed that Extol is the official title.

PIKE O' BLISCO

A. Wainwright (*A Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells. Book IV. The Southern Fells*), when describing the Needle, Black Crag, Pike o' Blisco, mentions that there is no evidence of the ascent of this pinnacle (height 35 feet). E. W. Hodge wrote to the Editor (10th May, 1961) that J. P. O'F. Lynam and he had climbed it about six years previously.

CORRECTION

F.R.C.C. Journal No. 54 (Vol. XIX, No. 1) 1960, page 67. H. I. Barre should be H. I. Banner.

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB, 1961

C. E. Arnison

Meets outside the Lake District are an attraction to many members, for they give an opportunity of exploring places and hills which are often new discoveries; thus, the meet on the Howgill fells, above Sedbergh, led by Neville and Betty Morton in late January 1961, was an introduction to most interesting country, and the walks —particularly the descent by the side of Cautley Spout, in snow conditions—were greatly enjoyed by the dozen members who attended.

In June, at Gilsland, the meet called for the purpose of exploring Hadrian's Wall provided an opportunity to walk along the Wall, and to investigate the Vallum, mile-castles, ancient roadways and camps, plus an interlude to watch Hilary Simmons climb one of the steep routes on Crag Lough. Hilary and Joan Newby had camped literally 'on the Wall' and had chosen their site well, for they were on a natural drainage area, and were not flooded out.

A similar 'away' meet, and one which was vastly better supported as regards numbers, was that held on the gritstone of Stanage Edge, preceded by an excellent dinner served at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Baslow. Certainly on the Sunday, in the sunshine and on the steep, rough rocks, fully fifty of our members were seen at work—at times, this was interpreted by sleeping in the sunshine in a sheltered spot!

The March meet in Eskdale, the Easter meets at the huts, the Whitsuntide meet in Borrowdale and the July meet at Coniston followed the usual pattern and the climbing books at the huts show that there is no falling away in energy or ability. At Whitsuntide, particularly, the weather remained glorious throughout the week-end; Gillercombe Buttress was swathed in ascending and descending people, while Birkness Combe, the Napes and Combe Gill had their own devotees.

A small select party at Glenbrittle in September found themselves on a not very familiar beach where, through the generosity of Dame Flora Macleod, they enjoyed for the first time the luxury of piped water, proper sanitary arrangements and dustbins—all for 2s. 6d. per night (shades of the pioneers). The week began with a fine day, but the weather then degenerated. One day was spent on Rhum looking in vain for Askival; another day the Dubhs were 'done' but with escape into Coire a'Ghrunnda in atrocious weather; and some climbing was found in Coire Lagan.

An interesting innovation for the November meet was a mountain rescue demonstration, laid on by the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team. To the thirty-five members assembled in the Salving House John Lyth spoke about mountain rescue for the ordinary climber, while John Foster, with the assistance of a prospective member as 'casualty', demonstrated simple ties and splints, including the invaluable Thomas splint, and also gave a most enlightening account

of the general hospital set-up in the Lake District. There were many questions, which showed—as indeed did the large attendance—a healthy interest in the subject.

On the Sunday morning, in the Quayfoot quarries, with an even larger audience, the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team staged an impressive demonstration of equipment and techniques. Members watched, and then took part in, various types of rescue, including the 'tragsitz', or pickaback harness, and the 'barrowboy' method. Two lady members acted as stretcher cases, while another even took a stretcher down Woden's Face. Thanks to the two medical members and the Keswick Team this was a very good meet.

Late in December 1961, when the smoothly frozen tarns provided skating of rare character, there was an unofficial meet at Tarn Hows, where, on two days at least, over a dozen members of the Club showed their prowess on skates. Not since 1947 have we had such superb ice. Just before New Year 1962 there was a heavy snowfall which prevented some members reaching Langdale for the official meet. But the large number who got there enjoyed crisp, frosty, sparkling weather with good snow; and those who climbed, walked or skied were rewarded in relation to their energy output which, in turn, was related to the excellent meals provided by the 'Inmates'.

SCOTTISH MEET, 1961

Graham Ackerley

It was the biggest ever. Fifty-five members and friends attended the Kintail Meet and stretched accommodation to bursting point. Kintail Lodge Hotel, Ratagan House and the Bungalow were full; and the overflow slept in farms, Dormobiles, caravans or tents. If the Scottish Meets grow any bigger, we shall have to set up base camps in Glasgow or Edinburgh and lay on a helicopter service to the hills!

The weather was more than kind, with only three wettish days. The rest were gloriously sunny and the reflections in the still water at the head of Loch Duich in the early morning will long be remembered.

Kintail is a wonderful fell-walking centre. Dick Cook, who had all 'Munros' marked on his maps, reckoned there were forty-nine within striking, or rather motoring distance. No one succeeded in doing all of them, but there were few tops in the district that were not climbed by someone at the meet. In terms of man/peaks the total was some 470. In fact, hardly a day passed without a party being on one or more of the main ridges: the Five Sisters, Cluanie Forest, Ben Attow, or the Saddle.

The expedition to Ladhar Bheinn was undoubtedly the longest undertaken. The plan was to divide the large number who wanted to go into two groups, the first to climb the mountain on the Wednesday and the second on Thursday. Two small launches were laid on to ferry the climbers across Loch Hourn from Arnisdale to Barrisdale Bay and it was hoped that, by placing the fastest walkers in the last ferry trip, all would reach the summit at approximately the same time.

The launch which was to do the first trip was the postal one and the first arrivals at Arnisdale were just in time to see it sailing away up the Loch without them. The result was a late start and an even later finish due to a number of engine failures, the launch which now had to do all three trips strongly objecting to the extra work. In spite of bad weather Ladhar Bheinn was climbed successfully and the last boat-load reached the hotel after ten o'clock at night to find dinner waiting for them.

Although the weather on Thursday was perfect, the second group decided to cancel the Ladhar Bheinn expedition when they heard that the launch was going to be employed in connection with a funeral and would only be available to ferry them back across Loch Hourn after the last rites had been completed in accordance with age-old custom. It seemed altogether too much to expect our hosts, hospitable and understanding though they were, to serve hot meals at around midnight! So four of the party climbed Ben Sgriol and the rest the Five Sisters.

The last day of the meet was undoubtedly the best of all. Not only were the President and Mrs. Arnison with us, but a number of Lakeland members came up for the week-end. There were thirty on the hills enjoying the day-long sunshine, the cool breeze and the magnificent West Highland scenery. A party of ten walked over Sailеag, Sgurr a' Bhealaigh Dheirg and Sgurr an Fhuarail. On the Cluanie Forest ridge there were sixteen of us, ten of whom walked the whole length of it from Creag a' Mhaim to Creag nan Damh. It was on this day too, that Lawson Cook and Geoffrey Stevens shamed all the younger members by walking along the road from Dornie back to the hotel.

In addition to the fell walking there were visits to Glenelg, Totaig and the Glomach Falls. Off days were spent motoring to Skye and Shieldaig, or boating on Loch Duich.

One wet day, Gilpin Ward and his friend were at a hostelry in Skye having lunch. Encouraged by the sight of Clach Glas and Blaven emerging from the clouds, they finished their meal, traversed the two peaks and got back to Kintail in time for dinner. This was the only rock climbing done during the meet, apart from the occasion when Dick Cook led a party of twenty up the Saddle by the Sgurr na Forcan ridge.

There is no doubt that cars are a tremendous asset at Scottish Meets and allow long ridge walks over a wide area to be accomplished within a reasonable time. There is, however, one disadvantage—their possession does limit the choice of approach routes. Many of us envied Phil Wormell and Anne Dowlen who, carrying sleeping-bags and provisions, spent five days walking from Glenfinnan to Kintail through some of the wildest and loneliest country in the west of Scotland.

Dick Cook and Raymond Shaw put in a tremendous amount of work to ensure that everyone had an opportunity of climbing the hills and walking the valleys of their choice. Our thanks are due to them and to our hosts in Kintail who went to endless trouble to see we were well looked after.

Approach to the Kintail Meet, 1961

Phil Wormell has sent the following note.—

Abandoning their original plan to start walking from Carlisle, Phil Wormell and Ann Dowlen contented themselves with a five-day trek through Knoydart to Kintail carrying their food and sleeping in bothies. The route led from Glenfinnan to the head of Loch Arkaig and on to Barrisdale via Loch Nevis, taking in Sgor na Ciche, Meall Buidhe and Luinne Bheinn. A pleasant off-day was spent boating up Loch Hourn and photographing eucalyptus trees before crossing the Bealach Dubh Leac to Glen Shiel.

ANNUAL DINNER, 1961

F. H. F. Simpson

> When eating refrain from speaking lest the windpipe open before the gullet, and life be in danger.
> Chew well and thou wilt feel it in thy heels.
>
> *Babylonian Talmud*

The postman said it had been a wet week. An even grey cloud sheet held the high fells by their shoulders. The rain was back again, dancing in the puddles in the empty road by the boat-landings. Long skirts of rain drove up the lake and the motor launches lurched and fidgeted at their moorings in the white-flecked swell. A great wind roared in the trees by Friar's Crag. Through the town the Greta rustled along in bank-high flood. Not a good start, but peaceful.

So adept are we now at rearranging the furniture in the lounge at the Queen's Hotel that the annual colour transparency exhibition got away to a flying start. All of fifty people were neatly packed into the darkened room. Late-comers squirmed into an intimate heap near the doors. Several members contributed to the display, and every one who could added a commentary. We watched mountains, valleys, crags and people, and a deal of bright-coloured windproofs.

With a pardonable show of toughness, some went off onto the fells to face the rain on Saturday. A minority headed for the low country in pursuit of better conditions. One party fled to Carlisle, sighting for ancient British settlements, exploring the city's museum and castle, and rounding off the day in a new establishment in Keswick (for the curious, it's near the post office) with soft lights, sweet music and fancy cakes.

The Annual General Meeting, lately remarkable for moving oratory and a degree of explosiveness, was this year a quiet affair. Some thought was given to future finance. A ballot identified the new committee. The former debate on the size of the committee was resolved by the report of a subcommittee which advised that all was well in that respect. John Waddams presented a sound argument for the adoption of membership cards to thwart the hut trespasser and thief, an innovation approved after discussion. One or two ladies objected to the 'men only' meet with the Yorkshire Ramblers at Clapham. This, the President explained, was not an outmoded Victorian discrimination thought up for the occasion, but an old and invariable rule of the Yorkshiremen. Graham Wilson said it must be remembered that potholing was conducted in darkness, and the ladies said no more.

If the Club is to assemble promptly for Dinner, it must one day submit to a semi-military discipline. The President reached his chair at 8.15, after a prolonged and jovial struggle. Grace was said. Soup flowed swiftly round. Next, the indefatigable turkey which is above Club politics. Not so the soup, which appears to be subject

to Presidential influence. R. G. Plint produced in 1957 *Crème* du Barry, and the next year Cream Caroline. H. P. Spilsbury was responsible in 1959 and 1960 for a neutral brew—Cream Velours. One must go back to A. B. Hargreaves's Presidency in 1953 for anything so austere as *Crème* Sports. In 1961 Eric Arnison flung caution to the winds and found two ladies at once, the sinister and voluptuous *Consommé* Olga and *Crème* Reina Margot of Ruritanian royalty, throwing in for good measure with the sweets two American details—Cranberry Sauce and Maple Syrup.

The Loyal toast was made at 9.05 and then the time-table went awry. The President restored order, first through an unresponsive microphone, and finally with loud and ringing direct, but polite, appeals. H. B. Lyon, a long absent original member, was greeted with cheers. The 83rd birthday of Jonathan Stables was given musical honours. Absent for the first time for many years was John Hirst. He was greatly missed, as was his own particular brand of humour which has entertained us at so many Dinners.

A. S. Pigott, chief guest, proposed the toast of the Club. He recalled how, forty years ago, Harry Scott had referred to the guests as 'vultures of peace'. They were still among us, well pinioned but noticeably balder. The Club was not only the nursery of British mountaineering, but a builder of huts, guardian of the District, and an exporter of presidents for the use of other clubs. We had many sterling qualities, and a wise and tough President whose educated palate could distinguish the produce of grapes trodden in bare feet from those trodden in vibrams. Our most striking presidential export of the time was Howard Somervell, next in the chair at the Alpine Club. He had yet to be elected but there was only one candidate. We could be justly proud of our many accomplishments, including the remarkable annual performance of the Dinner Secretary who, when it came to launching things, was better than Helen of Troy.

Following the toast of the Club, Frank Alcock, in his opening number, recited a parody of Kipling's 'If'—the subject, human weakness among mountaineers.

The President delivered a racy, fast flowing speech. He praised the officers and committee for the many ways in which they had helped him in his first year of office. It was impossible to know everyone, but he had made a real effort to meet novices and new faces. He advised the younger candidates for membership to buy him a pint, and thus assure that he would recall their names at election committee meetings.

The musical item which follows the President's speech is traditionally concerned with his character and private life. Harry Spilsbury and Frank Alcock upheld the tradition and sang in praise and damnation of Eric Arnison.

Muriel Files, the proposer of the toast of the Guests and Kindred Clubs, paid a sincere tribute to Fred Pigott, referring to his notable mountaineering achievements and to his immense service to mountain rescue first as secretary and latterly as chairman of the Mountain Rescue Committee. The speaker welcomed the other guests one by one and when, following the usual custom, her words contained the faintest sting, added a soothing smile.

Harry Spilsbury's solo performance was a ballad about bankers, treasurers, high finance, and those who did not pay.

Dr. C. G. M. Slesser, representing the Scottish Mountaineering Club, replied for the guests. He had volunteered as representative for his club at this function and he brought with him official apologies for the choice. One funny story followed another. We were pleased with Dr. Slesser and he with us.

Those who could not sit down in the lounge to fill in a year's arrears of talking, stood up in the searing heat. There must soon be a first time for sitting on the floor.

Sunday's weather was playful. Slow-moving showers idled across the fells, giving the unfortunate a private wet day of their own, while others moved in sunshine. Stonethwaite in the late afternoon was quiet and warm, and chaffinches came for crumbs. Close to the old barn a neatly tied parcel lay in the roadway. A passing walker stooped to lift it, and it leapt smartly away from him. Your reporter, once caught, sat and smoked in the grass, signalling the approach of new victims (of whom the postman was one) to the three small boys inside the barn. This relaxing occupation is recommended for the off day. The fishing line must be very thin and strong.

In the recently completed assembly room behind the Royal Oak dining room, Countess Gravina told the story of the courageous but ill-fated expedition to Cho Oyu. That which the speaker left unsaid of the final tragedy brought the attentive audience gently into her mood. This was an impressive story, with fine colour slides of the approach journey and of action and landscape above the snow line.

LONDON SECTION, 1961

Change begets change, or so it is said, and although this year was mainly uneventful, December brought further changes: the appointment of a new Walks Secretary after fifteen years, and news of the immediate necessity of finding a new general Secretary as well. However, to deal first with the year's events; again the walks have been the chief activity and have continued to be well supported.

Mabel Burton led the first one on 26th February in the nearer Surrey hills, from Coulsdon to Merstham, starting up and over the breezy Farthing Downs. There was the usual amount of mud, inseparable from our walks at this time of year in these southern regions ! But the route via Chaldon and White Hill gave fine views. The annual walk held jointly with the London Section of the Rucksack Club on 19th March was in familiar country from Holmwood up to Leith Hill, Holmbury St. Mary and Friday Street. It was a sunny day with signs of spring everywhere, although we did have a short snow shower. Our thanks are due to V. C. Chapman of the Rucksack Club for a splendid day. Our next walk on 30th April saw us again on the downs, but bluebells were now out in the woods and the cuckoo was heard. Mabs Burton and Pam Waterworth led us across Epsom Downs from Tattenham Corner to Mogador, where we were pleased to see David Ferguson and his wife who had come specially from their home at near-by Reigate to greet us. After lunch we circled back across Headley Heath to our starting point at Tattenham Corner. A meeting of rather a different kind took place on Saturday, 27th May, when Margaret Darvall led us for an afternoon stroll across Hampstead Heath and through Ken Wood. The fine views over London and across to the hills south of the Thames were at their best and so were the velvet lawns at Kenwood House and the fine display of rhododendrons. Our leader entertained us to a sumptuous tea and then to a show of very interesting slides of the 1949 Cho Oyu Expedition of which she had been a member. We were pleased that John Clements could join us for tea as he was now recovering from the effects of being knocked down by a car and was able to get about again with the aid of sticks. We are glad to be able to report that he is now back in his normal climbing form.

25th June was a very hot day for our walk from Cranleigh. There was a special 'Ramblers' Excursion' train, and the numbers (and varieties of costume apparently considered suitable for the occasion) that detrained were intimidating; but we need not have worried, for our leader (Peter Ledeboer) quickly extricated us from the motley crowd, and we had a peaceful day wandering across the hills by steep and shady paths. The view from Pitch Hill is splendid, and across to Peaslake and back all was quiet, which shows that even Surrey can swallow up such crowds as may elect to take to the byways on a summer Sunday. But we could not help wondering *where*

they all got to; perhaps our leader was clever in taking the least likely route.

The autumn season of walks began on 22nd October when Jim and Joyce Beatson led us again in Surrey (which seems to have had a good innings this year !). The day was rather showery, but we had an excellent circular round from Dorking by Ranmore to Abinger Hammer and Friday Street, then through the Nower back to Dorking. The autumn tints were at their best, and all enjoyed this colourful October day. But are juke boxes in pubs really necessary ? Usually, we can make the lunch halt a time for pleasant conversation, but today the bar at Abinger was invaded by young ladies and gentlemen who worked this infernal machine without ceasing, so that we could hardly hear ourselves speak. Perhaps we should have complained ? *O tempora* ! *O mores* !

Our November walk on the 19th was led by Peter Ledeboer from Gerrards Cross to Burnham Beeches; the autumn leaves still lingered, but we could have done with some sunshine. Amusement was caused at the outset by the absence of a necessary footbridge over a stream and the consequent enforced traverse on barbed wire only. But no one fell off. We were pleased to have three members of the Pinnacle Club with us on this walk, and also to meet Frank Solari out on his own prospecting a walk for the Rucksack Club. How busy we keep these leaders ! The last walk of the year was on 10th December, a real up-and-downer led by the Walks Secretary from Leatherhead, including the fearsome chalk slide down from Mickleham Downs, at its very best after the heavy rains. The afternoon was relatively level through the Druids Grove and across Fetcham Downs. At lunchtime a presentation of a silver tankard, cigarette case (loaded) and an autographed 'retirement' card was made to Ned Hamilton, the retiring Walks Secretary. In thanking members for their kind thoughts and good wishes, he said that all this was a complete surprise and that he would always treasure these souvenirs of a very happy fifteen years. He hoped, of course, to continue to come on the walks.

As had been agreed last year, the forty-first Annual Meeting was held before the Annual Dinner at the Connaught Rooms on 9th December. Both were presided over by our new Chairman, Robert Tyssen-Gee. Sixty-seven members and guests were present, including R. L. Jones (O.U.M.C.), B. Turner (L.M.C.), Miss Storey (L.A.C.), Miss Jackson (Pinnacle Club) and Muriel Files from the Lake District. H. Fairfield proposed the toast of the Guests and Kindred Clubs and R. L. Jones replied in an amusing speech. Absent friends were remembered at 9 p.m.

In his opening speech, the Chairman mentioned the losses the Club and the Section had sustained during the year through the deaths of Douglas Side, George Anderson and R. P. Mears, all of

whom had been active members of the section and would be greatly missed. The Chairman then reported the resignation of Ned Hamilton as Walks Secretary after fifteen years. A vote of thanks for all the work he had done in organizing the walks programme was subsequently accorded, to which the Walks Secretary suitably replied. A welcome was given to Peter Ledeboer who had agreed to take over the job. The Chairman then reported the resignation of M. N. Clarke from the committee after many years of faithful service. He had led more walks over the years than anyone else, in fact, no less than twenty-eight.

MABEL BURTON
E. W. HAMILTON

Although not generally known at the A.G.M., it was learned before the end of the year that Mabel Burton had taken up an appointment at Addis Ababa and would have to give up the Secretaryship of the Section. Our grateful thanks for all she has done and our best wishes to her in her new job.

R. A. TYSSEN-GEE
E. W. HAMILTON

News of the death of another member of the London Section, Dorothy Thompson, who was very active in its early days, came too late for mention by Robert Tyssen-Gee at the Annual Dinner. Mrs. N. E. Morin writes that the book of climbing reminiscences on which Dorothy Thompson was engaged at the time of her death will soon be published under the auspices of the Ladies' Alpine Club. The title is 'Climbing with Joseph Georges' and particulars may be obtained from Mrs. Morin, 17 Church Road, Tonbridge Wells, Kent.

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

ANTARCTICA

Yet another of our members is continuing the Club tradition of service with the Falkland Islands Dependencies' Survey in Grahamland. Bob Lewis has gone as a geophysicist to Base 'F', Argentine Islands, where he arrived towards the end of January 1962. He reached Port Stanley in *Kista Dan* on the 1st January and left the following day in *R. R. S. Shackleton*. His account of the journey from the Falkland Islands to the Argentine Islands follows.

The weather was good and we soon crossed the Drake Passage. The following week was spent in the Bransfield Strait, between the South Shetlands and Trinity Peninsula, doing a seismic survey, with H.M.S. *Protector* letting off the bangs. On the 10th we went over to Hope Bay F.I.D.S. Base 'D' on the tip of Grahamland to put off personnel and to pick up dogs for the southern bases. While ashore I was able to climb my first antarctic summit; this sounds rather a grand title for Mount Flora which is only 1,800 feet high. Still, the traverse of the peak involved some fine scrambling along narrow ridges—very pleasant even although I was so unfit. After unloading cargo at Deception Island (F.I.D.S. Base 'B') on the 12th, I was able to walk up onto Mount Pond with one of the chaps—again, hardly worthy of the name 'mount', but route finding on the snowfield near the summit, avoiding crevasses in dense mist, proved a good compass exercise. It seemed odd leaving the base at 8.30 p.m. to climb a mountain, but the snow is in far better condition at night than during the summer day.

We left Deception Island on the 14th for Port Lockroy, F.I.D.S. Base 'A' on Wiencke Island which is situated between Anvers Island and the mainland. It was very misty as we passed down the Gerlache Strait, but the lower cliffs of the mountains on either side looked most forbidding. When the cloud cleared the following day some impressive mountains, rising to 4,700 feet, were revealed on Wiencke Island. Across on Anvers Island, Mount Français* (9,060 feet) and Mount William (4,900 feet) presented rugged aspects. It was disappointing to be unable to have a go at one of the lower summits close at hand, but Base 'A' was being evacuated and we were kept busy. On the 16th we set off on the last leg of the journey and, after sailing for six hours through the most wonderful mountain scenery I have ever seen, arrived at Base 'F'. The passage through the Peltier and Lemaire Channels is said to be the finest in Grahamland and this is not difficult to believe. The Peltier is about 500 yards wide, with peaks rising straight up to 3,600 feet; and the Lemaire, 800 yards wide, has peaks of 3,000 feet on both western and eastern sides. What a place for a climbing expedition!

The Argentine Islands are situated four miles off shore, with a coastline of mountains rising to 5,000 feet just inland. Two minor

* Mount Français was first climbed in 1955 by its longer western ridge. The second ascent was made by John Thompson and John Bull on the 27th November 1956 by way of the shorter and steeper south ridge in 8 hours. Mount William is still unclimbed.—EDITOR.

peaks, Mount Demaria (3,000 feet) and Mount Mill (2,400 feet) are the only ones that have been climbed. Mount Scott (about 3,000 feet), Mount Shackleton (about 4,000 feet) and Mount Peary (5,900 feet) have yet to be attempted. During the winter the sea ice extends some 30 miles off shore so that there is access to the mainland with dogs and ski. The programme of work here is most arduous during the summer when the sun is up for 20 hours a day; but things ease off in the winter and there may then be a chance of some climbing. Whether anything serious can be attempted in the few hours of daylight is another matter, though the snow should be in good condition. The areas round the peaks are heavily crevassed and, in fact, no route onto the inland plateau has yet been discovered. Most climbing has been subsidiary to surveying and, apart from the major prizes, numerous lesser peaks are awaiting first ascents. The islands themselves rise only about 200 feet above sea level, but provide good opportunity for ski-ing.

ALPS

As usual, many members were in the Alps last season. John Hartley's ascents in the Bregaglia and John Cheesmond's in the Dolomites are the subjects of articles in this number. Terry Sullivan, who climbed the East Face of the Grand Capucin, has sent the following short account of his activities at Chamonix.

Unfortunately, the season was not very successful, but we did manage a route or two. I teamed up with John Woodhead, Jeff Allison and Peter Mullan for the Contamine route on the East Face of the Moine. Unfortunately, when we were about 1,000 feet up, John was hit by falling ice and this necessitated a retreat first to the Couvercle, then to Chamonix, for stitches, etc. A few days later, Jeff Allison and I took the *téléphérique* to the Midi and walked over to the East Face of the Grand Capucin. We shared the bivouac at the foot with Jim O'Neill and M. Connolly. All the pitons were in place and we arrived at the second Bonatti bivouac at 4.30 p.m. There is no convenient bivouac site between this and the top, so we decided to stay for the night. The next day, in deteriorating weather, we reached the summit and descended to the Requin Hut. I might add that Jim O'Neill suffered from altitude sickness for the whole time. His courage is beyond question. From Chamonix I went to the Civetta and, with John Cheesmond, did the South Face of the Torre Venezia.

HIMALAYA

As many people are aware, Countess Dorothea Gravina set out early this year as the leader of a women's expedition to the Himalaya of western Nepal. Another of our members, Nancy Smith, went with the party as their doctor, and it was a pleasure to read in the press recently that she was among those to reach the 22,000-foot summit of an unnamed peak in the Kanjiroba range.

ICELAND

Our members Peter Moffat and John Thompson, with John Bull and Norman Innis, went to Iceland in August 1961 and crossed the Vatnajökull ice-cap in the south-east of the island. The weather and the conditions underfoot were both bad, and one suspects that the following account by Peter Moffat is a modest understatement.

During our three weeks' holiday in Iceland last summer we were experimenting with a fibreglass sledge which we had made; this and the tents, etc. were sent by sea. We flew to Reykjavik and then went by lorry to the foot of the Skafterjökull. The dry glacier was very rough and this was followed by a lot of wet snow, so that we had to relay the loads. It was not until the fifth day that the surface improved and that we were able to move the full load on the sledge at once. The weather was mainly wet and misty, but we were lucky that it cleared for an hour when we reached Grimsvatn. We were able to see into the crater and get a view of the peaks ahead. We then started to descend the Skeidararjökull, hoping to climb some of the peaks in this area, but the glacier soon became very rough and crevassed and we were forced to abandon the sledge. We had some difficulty in finding a route through a large icefall and had to ford several rivers before reaching a farmhouse. From there we got a Land Rover to an airstrip and then a plane back to Reykjavik.

LAPLAND

Don Greenop led a Ramblers' Association party on an enterprising and strenuous holiday in Arctic Lapland during August 1961. Their starting point in Sweden was Abisko-Turiststation on the shores of Lake Torneträsk. Carrying spartan camping and climbing equipment, the group of six men and five women worked over some 80 miles of the great mountain, forest and swamp area which separates the arctic lakes of Torneträsk and Altavatn. This little-known (even locally) wilderness harbours the fine and distant, but not technically difficult, peak of Rokkomborre (5,476 feet) and the ascent of both this and the Dittitind (4,969 feet)—another worthwhile eminence—realized the party's primary aims. Don Greenop writes that his most vivid recollections of the trip are, however, of a less tangible quality: the ghostly aura of decline that existed in the weird and lonely recesses of the birch forests, for example; or the all-pervading properties of the wood smoke that eventually assumed the proportions of a drug essential to the party's peace of mind. In his opinion, this is a region that demands much hard work and patience from its travellers and which provides a reward in terms of distinctive atmospheres rather than beautiful vistas.

LAKE DISTRICT

On the 24th—25th June 1961 (too late for mention in the 1961 *Journal* except, briefly, in Editor's Notes) Kenneth Heaton made a fell round of 51 tops, ascending and descending approximately 31,000 feet and covering about 82 miles in 22 hours, 13 minutes. He thus (to quote from the *Guardian* of the 26th June 1961) improved on his brother's 42 peaks in 1960 and on the performance of Mr. Bob Graham of Borrowdale 29 years ago. Among the articles in the *Journal* on fell-walking feats, two of the most interesting are Ashley Abraham's 'Lake District Fell Walking' in the 1920 number (Vol. V, pp. 173-180) which describes Eustace Thomas's 1920 walk and compares it with earlier fell rounds, particularly Dr. Wakefield's, and Eustace Thomas's own account of his 1922 walk (Vol VI, pp. 81-87). Some readers may like to make a comparison between the times given for these earlier walks (Eustace Thomas urged the dropping of the term 'Fell Record' which was apparently in current use at the time of his own 'records') and those quoted below.

Kenneth Heaton had four pacers who accompanied him on different stretches of the course—Alistair Patten, Paul Stewart, Stanley Bradshaw and Desmond Oliver. He wore rubber cross-country shoes, vest, track suit top, and shorts, and carried fruit juices. At the check points (italic in the schedule) Mr. and Mrs. Rogerson of Windermere and his brother Alan (who would have been running with him but for a torn tendon) provided suitable refreshments (mainly soup, tea, fruit and biscuits). During much of the time, as will be seen in the notes accompanying the schedule, the clouds were low and the wind strong.

	Time of Arrival	
Dungeon Ghyll		
Old Hotel		*Dep.* 12 *noon. Accompanied by A. Patten.*
Pike o'Blisco	12.37 p.m.	Warm and sunny at start. Mist and
Cold Pike	12.52	cloud down to 2,000 feet. Strong wind.
Crinkle Crags	1.15	Cool on tops.
Shelter Crags	1.27	
Three Tarns	1.30	
Bowfell	1.43	
Esk Pike	1.58	
Allen Crags	2.07	
Esk Hause	2.10	
Great End	2.25	
Ill Crag	2.36	
Broad Crag	2.43	
Scafell Pike	2.52	
Scafell	3.11	Cut hand descending Deep Ghyll. Scree
Lingmell	3.41	very loose.

	Time of Arrival	
Wasdale Head	3.58 p.m.	Tea, biscuits and tinned peaches. *Dep.* 4.20 *p.m. Accompanied by P. Stewart.*
Yewbarrow	4.57	Warm and sunny at first. Yewbarrow top clear. All others in mist. Strong wind. Cloud.
Red Pike	5.30	
Steeple	5.43	
Scoatfell	5.47	
Pillar	6.05	
Black Sail Pass ..	6.20	Drink of water. Filled water bottle. Ate a few pastilles. *Dep.* 6.25.
Kirkfell	6.43	
Great Gable	7.11	Mist very thick on Great Gable. Took wrong track from summit—lost approximately 10 minutes. Should have taken bearing before departure. Summit of Grey Knotts clear.
Green Gable	7.32	
Brandreth	7.45	
Grey Knotts	7.50	
Honister Hause	8.00	Tea and biscuits. *Dep.* 8.15 *p.m. accompanied by A. Patten.* All summits clear. Good to be on grass. Enjoyable run down ridge of Robinson to Newlands. Warm on road to Keswick.
Dale Head	8.39	
Hindscarth	8.51	
Robinson	9.07	
Keswick	10.04	Soup. Tinned peaches. Biscuits. Tea. *Dep.* 10.35 *p.m. Accompanied by S. Bradshaw.* Warm work ascending Under-scar. Summits in cloud. Gale force winds. Had to take compass bearing. Enjoyable jog down Skiddaw to Calva. Moon appeared through broken cloud. Slow descent of Narrow Edge, Hall's Fell due to darkness and wind.
Skiddaw—Low Man	11.38	
Skiddaw	11.57	
Great Calva	12.40 a.m.	
Blencathra	1.50	
Threlkeld	2.30	Soup. Biscuits. Tea. Dep. 2.55. *Accompanied by S. Bradshaw and D. Oliver.* Every prospect of a good day, but weather had deteriorated by the time we had climbed Great Dodd where it was cold with thick cloud and strong wind.
Clough Head	3.45	
Great Dodd	4.15	
Watsons Dodd	4.24	
Stybarrow Dodd ..	4.35	
Sticks Pass	4.38	Fruit juice. Feeling hungry. Ate a few biscuits. Worst section, due to wind and cold. Cloud broke and sun shone for a brief spell while traversing Nethermost Pike and Dollywaggon Pike.
Raise	4.52	
White Side	5.05	
Helvellyn—Low Man	5.19	
Helvellyn	5.24	
Nethermost Pike ..	5.38	Weather much improved by the time summit of Seat Sandal was reached. Cloud lifting and sunshine. *Fred Rogerson paced us down to Dunmail Raise.* S. Bradshaw had to leave the party for another engagement.
Dollywaggon Pike ..	5.47	
Fairfield	6.33	
Seat Sandal	6.56	
Dunmail Raise	7.10	Rice pudding. Tinned peaches. Tea. Changed socks and shoes. *Dep.* 7.40. *Accompanied by D. Oliver, P. Stewart, and A. Patten.* Warm ascending Steel Fell. All the summits from Thunacar Knott onwards in cloud. Warm descending to O.D.G.
Steel Fell	8.07	
Calf Crag	8.28	
High Raise	9.02	
Sergeant Man	9.09	
Thunacar Knott ..	9.20	
Pavey Ark	9.24	
Harrison Stickle ..	9.35	
Pike o'Stickle	9.47	
Loft Crag	9.55	
Dungeon Ghyll		Tea and hot bath provided by Sid Cross.
Old Hotel	10.13	Felt O.K. Feet in good condition.

EDITOR'S NOTES

This year's outstanding event, for those concerned with the preservation of the Lake District, was Lord Birkett's successful motion in the House of Lords on the 8th February, instructing a Select Committee to leave out the water clauses of the Manchester Corporation Bill. Ullswater was thus spared the fate of Thirlmere and Haweswater. No reasonable person would grudge a great city its necessary water, but one has the feeling that the resources of the Lake District offer the easy solution to Manchester's problem and that full exploration has not been made of all other possibilities. The recent decision to allow greater access to Thirlmere and Haweswater is most welcome, but a reservoir is, intrinsically, an 'unnatural' feature of a landscape, and it is difficult to believe that Ullswater's natural beauty could have survived intact had it become a source of Manchester's water. Through Lord Birkett's death, which unhappily followed closely on his brilliant speech in support of his motion, those who seek to preserve the countryside have lost a valued friend and champion. No more appropriate memorial could have been found than the hitherto nameless Birkett Fell overlooking Ullswater. It is good to know that Lord Chorley will write an appreciation of Lord Birkett for the 1963 *Journal*.

Another threat, this time to the tradition of climbing, is the increasing use of pitons on routes which have previously been climbed without their aid. It is reported that five pegs were recently taken from Kipling Groove; in 'Climbs Old and New' in this issue it is noted that it was impossible to remove an unnecessary piton from the first pitch of Firedragon; one hears that pegs have been used on Eagle Front and in Deer Bield Chimney; not long ago, it was only with difficulty that a leader was persuaded not to try to insert one on E route on Gimmer*. The use of pitons is now well established as a means of protection for the pioneers (and subsequent leaders) of serious routes. It is unfortunate that this legitimate use should be abused by less competent parties repeating classic routes which were originally climbed without pegs, thereby lowering the standard of the climbs. This is a matter that concerns the Club and all rock climbers.

The Lake District mountain rescue teams continue to be kept busy. During February and March this year, in

* Reports are still being received of unnecessary pegs on Lake District crags; but rough justice prevails, the less expert who plant them providing a steady supply for the more expert who retrieve them and can put them to better use.

addition to accidents resulting in broken limbs, there were several deaths on the snow-covered fells. One man fell when descending steep snow on Nethermost Pike and was found dead; another died after being swept down in an avalanche on Great End; and a girl, glissading on Scafell Pike in unsuitable boots, fell into the combe above Piers Gill and was killed.

Last year the establishment of a panel to organize searches for people missing on the fells was reported in these notes. This first step towards co-ordination has been followed by the formation of the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association. Its purpose is to increase the co-operation already existing between the mountain rescue teams and to associate with them other bodies, such as our Club, which are interested in the means of preventing accidents as well as in the rescue operations when accidents unfortunately occur. The Association's President is Howard Somervell.

We welcome the new series of Alpine Club Guide Books under the Editorship of Wilfrid Noyce. John Neill's recently issued *Selected Climbs in the Pennine Alps* is reviewed in this number, and three other volumes are in preparation (Dolomites, Engadine and Bregaglia, and Dauphiné). The Alpine Club is to be congratulated on this venture which will result in enormous benefit to British parties in the Alps.

The Club library is now conveniently placed in Kendal, a suitable room having been secured through the good offices of the Treasurer. Many members have found their way there and the library is being well used, more books being now borrowed in person than by post. This is good news. Our library is well stocked and is kept up-to-date with both books and journals; access to it is one of the advantages of Club membership and this privilege was almost lost between 1959 and 1961 when the books were virtually inaccessible, first in distant Eskdale and, later, in packing cases. The List of Books circulated to members in January 1962 (the first printed list since 1947) has certainly contributed to the renewed popularity of the library. Many members who joined the Club after 1947 must have been quite unaware of its contents.

The Club will wish to congratulate Howard Somervell, our own past President and Honorary Member, who has been elected President of the Alpine Club; Countess Dorothea Gravina who has led a successful women's expedition to

western Nepal; and Nancy Smith who, as a member of this expedition, reached the 22,000-foot summit of an unnamed peak in the Kanjiroba range. Our good wishes go with Sir John Hunt who, at the invitation of the Soviet Government, is leading the first British party to visit the Pamirs.

After the *Journal* had gone to press, we heard with sorrow of the death on the 15th June of our Honorary Member, Mr. P. D. Boothroyd. He was in his 90th year, but he had kept up an active connection with the Club and was known to members of all generations. We hope to print a memoir in the 1963 number. In the meantime, the sympathy of the Club goes to his family, so many of whom are members.

It is a pleasure to thank all who have helped in any way with the *Journal* during the past six years. In the first place, there are the contributors who, by cheerfully and sympathetically accepting the inevitable cuts, have greatly eased the Editor's task. Special mention must be made of those who have looked after the regular features. Robert Tyssen-Gee and E. W. Hamilton have faithfully recorded, year after year, the activities of the London Section; for four out of the six numbers Harry Ironfield compiled the 'Year with the Club' (co-ordinating the reports of the meet leaders is always tricky); Frank Simpson followed Harry Griffin as reporter of the Annual Dinner—no sinecure for the man who has to concentrate while everyone else in the room (except the speakers) is relaxing. Graham Ackerley wrote three of the Scottish Meet reports; these were ideal from the Editor's point of view—always concise, yet omitting nothing of importance. It was altogether in character that, on arriving home from the Kintail meet, he immediately got down to the report, which was the first item received for the 1962 *Journal*. We are privileged to print what may well have been his last published piece of writing.

Of all the regular contributors, Peter Moffat has had, I think, the most arduous job. Since 1954 he has been responsible for 'Climbs Old and New'. This means obtaining details of all new climbs from the hut books and from non-members; the work demands accuracy and clear handwriting as well as patience, and a great debt is owed to Peter for keeping the records up-to-date over such a long period.

Since advertisements were reintroduced in 1960, Graham Wilson has had complete control of this side of the *Journal*

and my sincere thanks are due to him for having always sent his copy to the printers in good time. One hears of journals being held up because the advertisements were not ready. Such a situation could never arise with Graham Wilson in charge.

To my predecessor in office, W. G. Stevens, I am probably more indebted for help with the *Journal* than to anyone else. He has never failed, when asked, to give sound advice; and each year he has read the final proofs. Often a very few days, at short notice, are available for this exacting job; at times it must have been inconvenient, but he has never failed to return the proofs on the appointed day. It is invaluable to have a check at this stage and Geoffrey Stevens has certainly earned my gratitude.

The Secretary of the Club must not be forgotten. The supervision of the distribution of the *Journal* to members was undertaken by Lyna Pickering in 1958 and 1959 and by Charles Tilly in 1960. For this I am most grateful. Now that the Club has its own addressograph machine, the labels have in any event to be run through by the Secretary or his assistants; Mrs. Tilly has most kindly helped this year and I take this opportunity of thanking her.

We are all indebted to the printers who produce our *Journal* so well. They have always been most helpful and have made it possible for me to realize one of the aims I had in mind when I became Editor—the issue of the *Journal* earlier in the year. My thanks to them for this and for their courtesy at all times.

My best wishes to my successor for as agreeable a term of office as I have had.

MURIEL FILES.

July, 1962

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