

THE
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CLUB JOURNAL
1954

Edited by HAROLD G. WATTS

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 27

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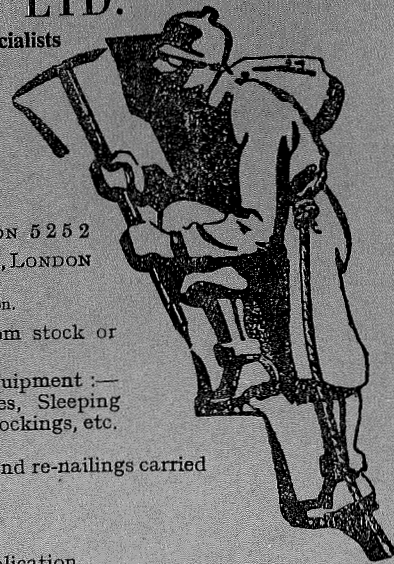
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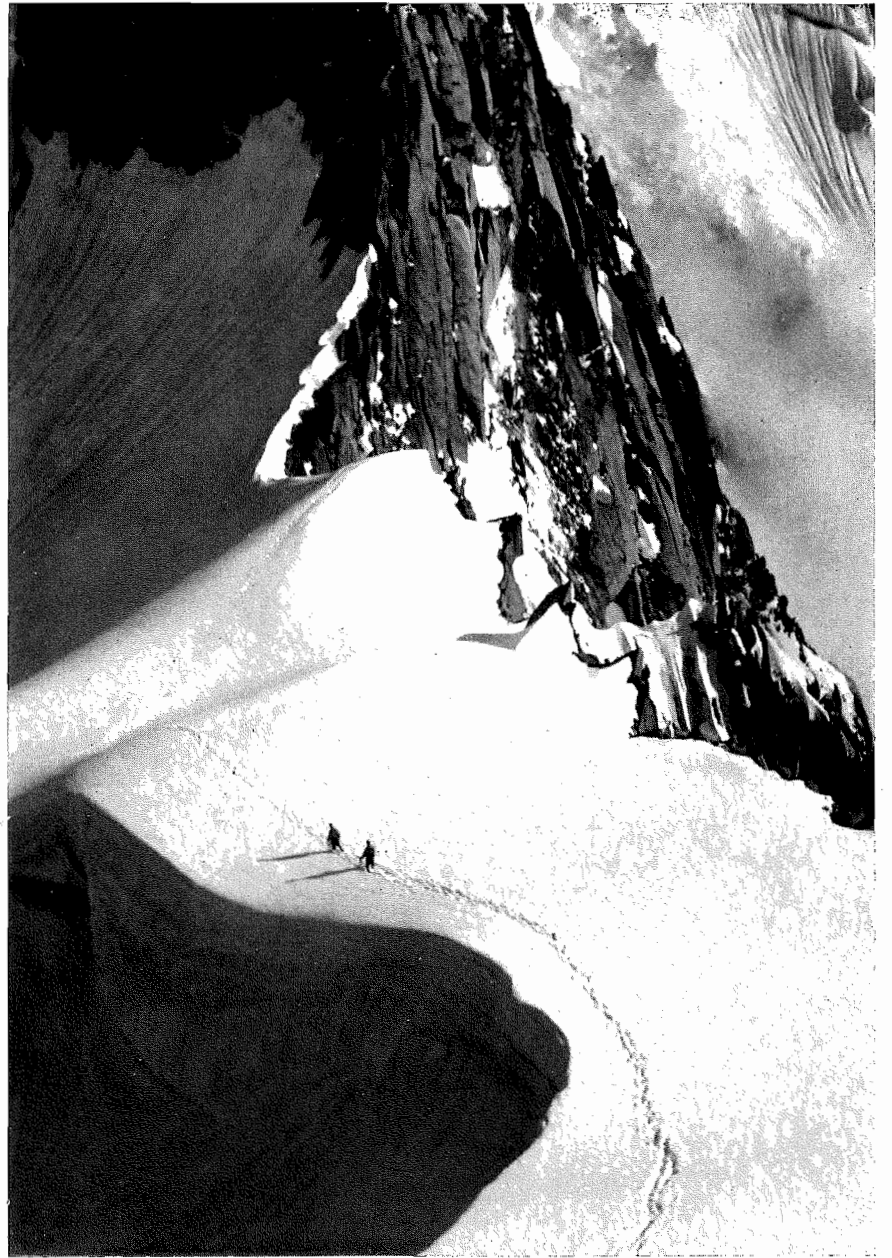
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THE COL DU PLAN

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SOME POTHOLES IN LEITRIM—EIRE

by H. L. Stembridge

TWO roads run seawards from Manor Hamilton, the one westward by way of Glencar reaches the Atlantic at Sligo Bay, while the other, striking more northerly, passes through the cleft of Glenade in the direction of Bundoran on the Bay of Donegal. Whether he travels by Glencar or by Glenade, the wanderer will enjoy himself, for in these parts there is no discordant note. The hills, fields, cottages and people blend quietly together to form a soothing and a pleasing whole. The jingle-jangle of modern life becomes an unpleasant memory, bustle is unknown, the land is tilled as it was a century ago and the men following the laden donkeys or cutting the turves consider it a natural thing to stop and talk to the stranger. The trees are greener than we know them in England, yellow iris cover the fields with gold and the roadside banks are starred with flowers.

Moreover, in both valleys there is much to ponder over, the tremendous detached pinnacles of Glenade, the curious parallel ridges which cross the valley east of Glencar Lough and the deep "Swiss Valleys" beneath the limestone cliffs in both valleys are all worth investigation. Deep clefts, some clean cut, others tree-shrouded, seam the cliffs which face both glens, tempting the wanderer to explore their hidden recesses.

The great triangle of uplands contained by the two roads reaches, at its highest point, Truskmore, a mere 2,116 feet, but just as Ingleborough from the Hill Inn looks a great deal more imposing than does Ben Nevis from Fort William, so do the limestone cliffs which surround these uplands give to them an appearance of height far beyond their actual stature.

Once up above the cliffs romance goes by the board and hard slogging is the order of the day, for here is a desolate undulating succession of peat hags, tussocks and bog, only occasionally relieved by a peat digging or by an outcrop of limestone or grit. In winter these uplands are swept by the Atlantic gales and, as a

result, vegetation is limited to bents and sphagnum moss. Sink holes provide protection for a few rowans whose tops can be seen poking up here and there, a refreshing green among the more sombre purples and browns of the bents.

The whole area appears to be covered by limestone several hundred feet thick and a diligent study of the map indicates the possibility of potholes which induced John Godley, Jack Holmes and the writer to spend a few days looking round in June 1951.

A few miles west of Manor Hamilton we took the wrong turning and pulled up at what appeared to be a dead end just as McMahon the farmer was driving his cows in to be milked. Naturally, we stopped to talk and our eyes grew wider as he told us of all the deep holes on the moor — lots of 'em — all over the place.

Following his direction we urged the car up the steep and stony track to Rocktown above Gurteen. Joe Rooney was on the moor cutting turf, but the eldest of his eight lovely children, Bernadette, shy and timid as a fawn, led us to a hole known as Teampol (pronounced Shample). This place was well known locally, as a few years ago a Sligo girl fell down a 90 foot shaft with fatal results. We scrambled down as far as we could but, having no ladders, we were soon stopped. Yet the place looked promising enough, there was a substantial stream going down and the pitch which stopped us yawned wide and deep.

Anxious to chart as many new pots as possible we set off over the moor and in a few hours found five more shafts, all sufficiently deep to warrant bringing over tackle at some future date. Hunger drove us back to Manor Hamilton, whence, replete with ham and eggs and in great good humour, we blarneyed our way across the frontier two hours after the official closing time.

Then followed several of those gloriously happy days, all too rare in a lifetime, when we wandered in sunshine untied and unencumbered over hills new to us, finding new pots every day. In Glenade we scaled the cliffs of Polnachorry and plumbed the muddy depths of Polnawaddawee. For hours on end we scrambled up and down the innumerable rifts on the fringe of Cope's Mountain.

Going north we approached Truskmore through Gleniff and found that the poor thing marked on the 6-in. map as "Cormac Reagh's Hole" which is no more than a partially blocked

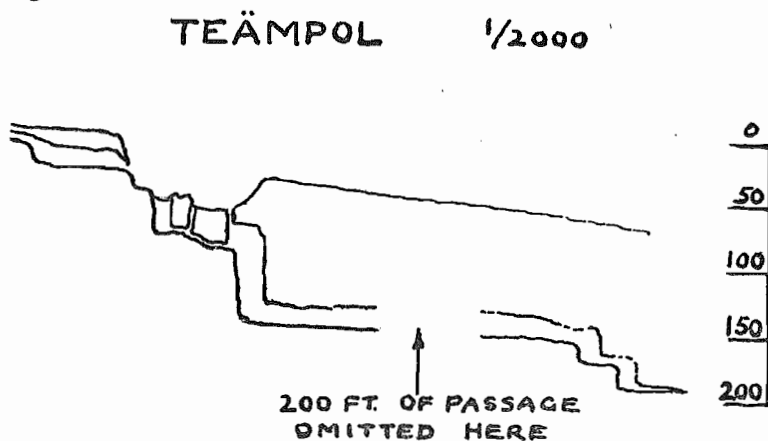
boulder jam is more than compensated for by the enormous cave "Dermot and Grania's Bed," high in the cliffs at the head of the glen. Days of hard walking among the peat hags on the southeast slopes of Truskmore were rewarded by the discovery of more deep shafts, and while we had a lurking fear that many of them might turn out to be "pigeon pots" we noted the position of about twenty in all which were sufficiently deep to warrant a visit with tackle.

Our time was short and we made the most of it, covering great areas and often forgetting to eat until fatigue reminded us of the need to refuel. From the hill folk we received much kindness and great help, they regaled us with "skilly" and many a crack we enjoyed, finding them wise in local lore and as full of stories as the hills are full of spirits. Banshees and leprechauns occupied their minds as much as crops and cattle. When a child dies its spirit may marry that of another dead child and the fruits of the union are the leprechauns, tiny fellows about eight inches high who live in the potholes on the moor. We were carefully instructed how to catch them and how to get them home, but this availed us little for, being strangers, the little fellows gave us a wide berth and we were never fortunate enough to see one. There were signs that some of the holes had been occupied but these traces were left by fugitives in the "troubles," for the leprechauns, being fairies, leave no trace except the straw stalactites called in some places "fairy pipes."

Our leave ran out and we came home full of plans for future visits, but fortune which had smiled so steadily upon us in 1951 showed the rougher side of her tongue when a larger and properly equipped party pitched their tents at Rocktown twelve months later. Day after day great cumulus clouds rolled in from the Atlantic, pelting us with a cold rain which turned the ground into a quagmire and made us realise once more the limitations of camping when potholing. We attacked Teampol and although two men did get down to the bottom of the shaft and one explored a succeeding passage, they came back half drowned and we retreated to give the flood time to subside.

The following day we gave our attention to some of the shafts on the moor above Gurteen and bottomed four or five, none exceeding 120 feet in depth. We found the limestone thoroughly unreliable and dislodged a lot of loose stuff.

We were up at Teampol in good time next morning and to our relief found much less water going down. This pothole is divided into two sections by a large open pot which is easily accessible from the moor. A substantial stream goes underground about fifty yards north-east of this pot at an altitude of 600 feet. Entering by a passage three to four feet high the stream goes over a ten foot pitch below which the passage assumes majestic proportions, at least fifteen feet high and, in places, twelve feet wide. Ten yards from the pitch the passage forks, a minor branch going straight ahead while the stream takes a sharp bend to the right.



Beyond a pillar which divides the stream the passage is sufficiently narrow to bridge but it becomes very high indeed. A dry passage goes off to the left and another somewhat tight passage on the left runs parallel to the main stream passage at a rather higher level. The stream goes down an eight foot scoop into the large open pot already mentioned and immediately goes through a hole in the floor over a thirty-foot pitch. It is easy to by-pass this pitch by moving to the left, passing behind a huge boulder which divides the open pot and climbing down a dry fifteen-foot pitch. The bottom of the thirty-foot waterfall pitch can now be seen a few yards to the north.

Turning south, and scrambling down through a labyrinth of small passages a rift is reached running roughly south, which in ten yards ends in a fine shaft fifty-five feet deep, roughly circular and about twenty feet in diameter. When the stream is in spate

the roar of the water going down this shaft is intimidating, streams enter at the four points of the compass and the luckless potholer who hitherto has kept moderately dry cannot avoid a soaking. In such conditions the bottom of the shaft becomes a boiling cauldron.

On our second visit when the flood had subsided we found the pitch wet, but not uncomfortably so and on reaching the foot of the ladders we could scramble down large boulders to the opposite side of the shaft where the stream left by a fine passage. This we followed for well over a hundred yards. Its width varied from five to ten feet and it was always high; overhead could be seen the edges of three or four old floors. There seemed to be only one deep pool, the rest being wadeable.

Finally the passage narrowed and the stream vanished through a two foot wide slit in the floor. Relieved that we need not go with it, we continued a little further down our passage, climbed down a fifteen-foot pitch and rejoined our stream in a large chamber. A dry passage ascended to the right but the main stream passage continued straight ahead, still broad and high. There were indications here of flooding to the roof. In a few yards the stream leaped twenty feet into a further chamber and as the only ladder run was down the waterfall an attempt was made to climb down by traversing to the left but this proved impracticable as the ledges were rotten and the lower part was undercut, so down the waterfall we had to go.

Leaving the chamber we crawled with the stream along a low passage until we reached a canal whose still waters were covered with several inches of froth. Crawling through this it was obvious that the end was near. Ahead lay the still black waters of the sump, so still indeed that at first glance it looked like another pitch. Beyond, the roof joined the water.

It is possible that further progress could be made if the side passages and the false floors were thoroughly explored. The limestone in the lower reaches is very unreliable and in spite of the size of the stream the walls give the impression of being corroded rather than eroded.

We came out to a steady downpour and blessed the Land-Rover which had been taken to within a few hundred yards of the pot.

Piling the tackle on the car we returned to camp thoroughly soaked, the evening was cold and wet and when someone

suggested that we should spend the night in Sligo it was agreed to, almost with acclamation. Wet clothes were heaped on ground-sheets, tents were closed, and within two hours we were enjoying the warmth and luxury of a comfortable hotel.

Even that feeling of well-being induced by a good meal and a good fire could not revive our enthusiasm for potholes and we decided that on the morrow we would leave the holes alone and spend the day walking the hills. Evidently this was what fortune was angling for, the following morning dawned bright and fine and in the words of a real Cave enthusiast we "wasted two fine days walking."

The first of these days took us up into Gleniff from the north, past the slender spire of Ben Wiskin and away to the head of the glen, shut in by the great cliffs which surround "Dermot and Grania's Bed," up the steep hillside on to the ridge and along it as it narrows to the knife-edge of Ben Wiskin itself.

As you lie on the crest you see far below and within a mile or two the great waves pounding on the white sandy beaches. Fifty miles away the mountains of Mayo hover on the south-western horizon and away to the north the hills of Donegal hang, a misty blue across the great stretch of Donegal Bay. The cliff falls sheer for hundreds of feet and you can see on the flat coastal plain below, as on a map, the marks of the folk who lived there thousands of years ago, the green mounds and ditches and the stone circles.

Although a gale may be blowing in from the Atlantic you can strike a match on the edge of the great cliff and it will burn without a flicker and this is only one of its marvels, for if you lie on the edge and drop over a piece of orange peel, the up draught is so great that it will fall thirty feet and then come up again and hit you in the eye, as it should do for not being litter minded.

And, if you don't believe that contrast is the spice of life, try slogging, as we did, across the peat hags of the Ox Mountains of Sligo (Ox-like they are indeed!) beneath a cloud that followed us around all day until, unable to withstand temptation any longer, we raced down to a little cove on the Atlantic shore whose sun-flecked waters had beckoned us for hours. Into its clear green depths we plunged, coming out tingling, and as we dried in the sunshine the great Atlantic rollers thundered over the rocks.

THE 1911 ASCENT OF THE GARDYLOO GULLY

by E. E. Roberts

THE books tell us that the Gardyloo Gully of Ben Nevis was climbed by Geoffrey Hastings and Haskett-Smith in April, 1897, and again by Raeburn and Lawson in April, 1901. At the time of our blundering ascent we had the impression it had only been done by Raeburn.

Erik Addyman had climbed the Tower Ridge one summer, before he, R. F. Stobart and I camped at Achintee in Easter week, 1910. We all saw the marvellous winter north face of Ben Nevis for the first time when we did the Castle Ridge, and again on the superb day when we attacked the Tower Ridge, one of life's great days. From 10 a.m. till 1.50 p.m. we cut our way up the snowy curves of the ridge to the foot of the Tower, sheeted in ice. Had we known more of it we might have forced part of the way to the east but could not possibly have climbed the sheer wall to the top.

To the west was more attractive, and in that marvellous situation Addyman tried all afternoon to work up an icy West Wall route. He would have succeeded perhaps but the brilliant sun loosened the veneer. Towards 4 p.m. our position was critical, and Douglas of the S.M.C. in clear view on the slope of Ben Nevis was quite sure we were in for a night out. Not at all, up went a piece of chip to Erik, it was rammed into a snow patch, and he climbed down safely. Then followed a masterly retreat down a steep snow slope to some extent under fire, right over all the pitches of Tower Gap chimney, right down to Corrie na Ciste, something it is good to look back on, the right decision at the right time. The snow was magnificent, just right for kicking, stable ladder for a long way before we could face out, and at 6 p.m. the finish was a little bergschrund. We were clean away.

Now I have another sort of story to tell. We did not see the face again that week and had an over-simplified idea of the Tower Gully next to the Tower Ridge, having seen only mist on the round of Corrie Lias over Carn Mor Dearg.

Next Easter, 1911, we were a party of eleven at the hospitable Waverley Hotel, in those days the only reasonable hotel in Fort William; its charges appear today fantastically low. But of course today everything by comparison is fantastic in Fort William,

what with motor transport, wars, and industrialism. At nine on the Saturday, a poor sort of day, eight left for the Tower Gully, Dorothy Payne (Mrs. Knappett), Erica Stevenson (Mrs. East), Payne, Raymond Bicknell, Addyman, Hazard, Walter Roberts and myself. With the exception of the great iceman Bicknell in place of Stobart it was the party of the Sunset Hole accident and rescue.

Well up on the pony track, it became clear it was not to be a good day; in fact the rain, once it began, went on for seven days and a half with only few intervals. A wonderfully accurate aneroid of mine graded only to 3,000 ft. never recovered from a low barometer trip to over 4,000. Still we pushed on in the usual three hours to where the hut now stands and into the clouds. However, we had never heard that there was any route-finding difficulty over the Tower Gully and ploughed on up the great wide snow slope to the left of the Douglas Boulder, the end of the Tower Ridge.

It was grand to be on the hills again with a little tit-bit ahead in the excavating of a tunnel under the cornice. Then something surprising met us; we ran into a big face of crag barring half the slope and throwing us to the left. We were in thick cloud, it had begun to snow and there was a steady flow of powder snow down the slopes; whether from the heavens above or blown by the wind from square miles around, the air was full of fine snow. Up we went till we were between two walls of rock which closed in till the place agreed not at all with our ideas of a wide Tower Gully and the slope had developed a deep channel down which raced a stream of powder snow of no great weight.

The truth dawned on us — we were well up the much more difficult Gardyloo, we ought to have cut up a slope which seemed to lead on to the Tower Ridge — the crag which threw us to the left was but a step in the Tower Gully. But none of us had seen a front view of the place and conditions were so bad we might have to turn and go home. So we were committed to the Gardyloo and went on three ropes.

Addyman, Hazard and I led up one narrow band of snow, crossing twice to the other side when forced through the deep channel filled with racing powder. It was amazing to see a man waist deep in it and yet not swept off his feet. At long last we saw the bed of the gully lift, and, high above, the loom of the

great final wall and the cornice. Straight for the pitch which blocked the gully, hopeless to the left, but to the right against the wall was a chimney veneered with ice, and the snow had stopped. Afterwards it was generally agreed we ought to have retreated.

But there followed the second of three marvellous ice climbs in my experience, the first by Wright in Pikes Crag B Gully (Scafell). The third by Beetham on La Setta (Engadine) years later. Erik Addyman attacked the V chimney, fortunately not quite vertical and writes:

“It was possible to lean against the left wall and cut steps on the other side at an angle of about 20° so as to hold one into the chimney as well as to stand on. On the left wall small heel holds were cut for pushing up on. This continued for about 50 feet when a small névé ridge built parallel to the right wall was reached. Once astride this it was possible to bring up Hazard, Roberts, and Bicknell who remained astride the ridge for two hours hauling up the other four.”

We were fairly committed to it now, and, as soon as Dorothy Payne was up, there was a rope to spare. Also the snow began again. Addyman, I and Miss Payne roped up, traversed right out into the concave sweep of the gully, and cut up through the growing snow cover to where the cornice, not formidable, was least, but the wall just as high and vertical as elsewhere. Hurrah! slanting up to the left was a crack in the wall near its base, a regular cave bedding plane, and from the top it was obviously quite possible to tunnel up to the summit level of Ben Nevis. It was cold, cold, and we felt the wind as we had not done below. Lying flat in the crack it was calm and almost warm. We crawled up it as far as possible, then Erik began to cut at the roof. Presently, held in hard by the rope, he was able to sit on the edge and hack away at the snow while behind we pushed the stuff down the Gardyloo.

It was all right for us, but the others were having an awful time exposed to the storm. Climbing the chimney as we had done was impossible, some faced the wrong way under the flow of powder snow. First Miss Stevenson, then Payne were literally hauled up by Bicknell, and lastly my brother, who swore he had waited three hours before he began the struggle against the stream.

Meanwhile Addyman's hole had become large enough for a man to work in crouching and he retired exhausted. We feared holding up the others. I replaced him and was soon able to stand up. Now the ice axe could really do its work, first a slit was cut well into the wall, then the roof was attacked, every piece hitting one in the face, then a step was excavated ahead. Once on this a wild yell told that the pick had gone through the top, and another step meant that I was soon scrambling out on top, streaming with sweat. The two behind cleared the way, and the three of us were up in the gale, realising we had done the job rather too soon. An ice axe was rammed into the snow, the rope tied on and dropped to the leader on the traverse.

It was a pretty bad wait in the storm and drift. We put it in racing to and fro to the Observatory, and no doubt had to seek refuge in the slit from the wind. At this date and till after 1913 the tower entrance to the Observatory was still secure, and the inside just as it had been left, the floor then covered with clear ice. The first burglary was in 1912 and after 1913 the method must have become obvious. Some hooligans left the door open and decay was rapid.

At last to our joy we saw the sufferers rope up, Hazard lead out and grab our rope. At about 6.30 p.m. all were on top in a curious mood, disgust at having done the wrong climb, mutual blame for not having suggested turning back at the proper time, and a certain satisfaction that in spite of the initial error we had not misjudged the strength of the party. The cold had been severe, the girls suffered a good deal, and it was years before any of us ceased to regard the expedition as something to be half ashamed of.

Naturally we cleared out quick, but the last stretch along the pavements of Fort William was in the dusk. There is a reference in *S.M.C.J.* XI, page 299, but whether the Gardyloo Gully was repeated before the Macphee era, I don't know. In 1926 Dr. and Mrs. Inglis Clarke and party spent the night before the opening in the hut, and the Doctor's belief in its usefulness was confirmed when a man who had fallen from the Gardyloo pitch staggered in.

GAPING GILL EXPLORATIONS

August 1951 to May 1952

by G. W. B. W. Parker

If anyone finds something new in Gaping Gill these days a certain section of the pot-holing fraternity becomes alarmed lest it results in some fellow club triumphantly finding a way through it into Clapham Cave. These fears are always groundless when one dispassionately considers the problems involved. However, they do assume real proportions when seen through the rosy spectacles of wistful optimists. Rosy spectacles are standard equipment for the true pot-holer, otherwise the game would have been given up a long time ago.

This may explain why John Lovett, on hearing of the Brindle brothers' new pitch, immediately telephoned the secretary of the Craven Potholers' Club, Arnold Waterfall, for further details. Waterfall agreed that the Brindle brothers had found a new pitch, a deep one, but he didn't know much about it. Lovett, his fears confirmed by this seeming reluctance to part with information, rang up David Brown in Knaresborough and an expedition was arranged for the next week-end in late August, 1951.

August, 1951

Accompanied by B. Wilkinson the party descended Bar Pot on the Friday evening and proceeded to search Gaping Gill for this new pitch. Main Chamber was carefully explored and a bit of digging produced a small pitch followed by a short, tight, passage. Abandoning this dead end and one or two other tight places round the west end of the hall, a thorough examination of East Passage was begun. Excitement became tense when a tight passage was found running southeast out of the rock jamb at the bottom of Boulder Chamber, but progress along it showed signs of a previous visit, in point of fact the passage has been known since 1927. At the end of this passage they came across and descended the two known pots and then encouraged by a distant roar in a nearby fissure, they crawled through to what appeared to be another pitch. This distant roar of water is a remarkable feature of the far end of this passage. It is now thought to be an acoustic illusion; the rocks apparently amplify the sound of a very small stream over 100 feet below. However, this was not known at the time and the roar was the Sirens' song which lured the party

to make several further visits. As tackle was now exhausted this pitch could not be explored, so a retreat was called and the surface regained about two o'clock on the Saturday afternoon.

After a meal and a rest they returned to Bar Pot late that night. Brown and Lovett descended, Wilkinson declining to go down, quite rightly as this was his first pot-holing expedition and he was feeling pretty tired. By the time the new pitch was reached both men were having trouble with their lights, Lovett being reduced to burning candles. Fifty feet of nylon ladder was placed in position down the pitch which, owing to its extremely tight and awkward approach, had to be entered head first and descended this way until a ledge was reached where it was possible to turn round. Brown reached the end of the ladder and found himself still a long way from the bottom. Lovett came down to him with a second fifty feet of ladder, which was then attached to the first. It is a tricky manoeuvre attaching an extension on to the ladder on which one is standing, especially when the pitch is very loose and every movement results in a shower of stones.

Inspection showed the bottom to contain two small eyelet holes from which ran a short crawl. At the end of this, just out of reach, was a small stream which seemed to disappear over a waterfall but bad lights made an accurate account of the surroundings difficult and it was therefore decided to withdraw.

Both Brown and Lovett were at this time convinced that they had found a new pitch of their own, but some time later when they went down to Wales and there met the Brindle brothers, they found on comparing notes that they had only re-discovered the same pitch. The Craven Potholers' Club men, who had presumably had a better look at the place, declared that further progress was unlikely and that as far as they were concerned the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club could help themselves to it.

December, 1951

In December another assault was arranged and five people turned up:—D. Adams, D. Brown, J. Lovett, G. Scovell and myself, four of us making the descent. Flood conditions prevailed in the pot and everyone was wet through before the bottom of Bar Pot was reached. Water was thundering down the misnamed Flood Exit Pot (no one could retreat that way in a flood) and crossing this involved a thorough showerbath. Main Chamber was filled with spray and noise but it was still possible to walk

about some parts of the floor where we carried out some experiments with an ex R.A.F. Mark XIV sensitive altimeter for survey purposes. This meter looks like proving a valuable instrument in pot surveys once the proper technique has been worked out. East Pot was unapproachable owing to the torrent of water running into it, over knee deep at that end of the hall.

Entrance to East Passage was only accomplished by crawling through a waterfall, and another fall much larger barred the entrance to Boulder Chamber Passage. However, this was negotiated and the new pitch reached. Brown went down and reported about fifteen feet of water in the bottom, making further exploration impossible. We returned to East Passage and continued further along looking for other likely digs, stopping at the place where the main fissure of East Passage peters out, the main passage bearing to the right. Here Adams produced a Primus stove and made a hot drink which greatly helped the ingestion of some wet, gritty, sandwiches.

It was noticed that a candle placed in the narrow fissure straight ahead was deflected by a strong draught. The indefatigable Brown crawled into this wet, muddy, hole and declared that just beyond the point where he had become stuck the passage seemed to open out. Everyone agreed that we had had enough for the day and we retraced our way out arriving at the top of Bar Pot at about 8.0 a.m. in a very exhausted condition having been underground thirteen hours. Exhaustion was aggravated by the ensuing walk down to Clapdale carrying sopping wet tackle through a beating rainstorm.

January, 1952

Another expedition went down on the 13th January to show some members of the Fell and Rock Club round the pot. Brown took the opportunity of digging at the windy crack in far East Passage. He crawled through into a small aven but after a few feet progress was again barred, the draught continuing through a narrow horizontal fissure on the far side. The new pitch or Avalanche Pot as D. Brindle named it (see *The Craven Pot-hole Club Journal*, Vol. I, No. 3) was not visited on that occasion.

April, 1952

Saturday the 26th April found Adams, Brown, Lovett, Harry Stembridge and myself assembled at Bar Pot again, all except Stembridge going in about noon. We had lunch in Mud Hall at

3.0 p.m. and were descending Avalanche Pot at about 4.30 p.m. The entrance to the pitch was enlarged by Brown so that it is now possible to enter feet first. In the process he broke the head off our only hammer and this dropped down an adjacent pitch. He was sent down to recover it, not without some of those expletives so deplored by Mr. "C.H." of the C.P.C. Adams, who seems to be able to produce any mortal thing in a pot found a large knife in the remoter parts of his kit-bag and with this the hammer head was reshafed.

During the four hours that Lovett and Brown were banging away at the bottom of the pitch Adams produced his usual stove pans, and the rest of the makings of a brew of cocoa. It should be mentioned that he is an acetylene fan as far as lights are concerned thus his kit-bag contains, besides cooking gear and food, all the surprising apparatus associated with keeping those infernal devices going, thus in a pot-hole he has the appearance of a travelling ironmonger.

Following a prodigious amount of banging and stone moving, the two diggers, after nearly walling themselves in, reported that no further progress was possible with their inadequate tools and that a further expedition would be necessary. Everyone was out of the pot well before midnight after a very smooth-running expedition.

May, 1952

A fortnight later, at the meet at Dent, an encouraging number of members visited the Upper Easc Gill cave system, some finding their way via "Poetic Justice" to the lower Lancaster Pot regions. From these it was hoped to raise a large party to knock the bottom out of Avalanche Pot the following week-end. Enthusiasm was lacking and apart from the members of the last expedition only Wharldall and A. Tallon promised to come.

The following Friday evening four of us left for Austwick where we collected the ladders and went up to Bar Pot. Some B.S.A. members were putting in their ladders when we arrived so we took a walk round the moor until they had finished. The weather had been very dry and little water was flowing over the lip of Gaping Gill.

On our return to Bar Pot we found the B.S.A. ladderers coming out. We rigged the pot alongside their ladders without any difficulty from crossed tackle, and returned to enjoy the hospitality

of Sheila Lovett at Harden, where we were joined by Tallon and Wharldall.

Everyone was up at 5.30 a.m. the next morning and we entered Bar Pot before 7.30 a.m. Avalanche Pot was quickly reached and rigged. A large crowbar and a hammer were thrown down the pitch, together with some sacks for transporting stores. As we anticipated a long stay, a telephone was also rigged. Brown went down first, his report over the phone was that he was unable to find the hammer or the sacks, not a very good start. Lovett followed him down and entered the small passage, making rapid progress with the crowbar. Brown eventually found the sacks and hammer head with no shaft. Wharldall was next to go down and when about half way a shout of "below" announced the start of an alarming avalanche of stones. After an agonising pause Brown announced over the phone that he was all right but that several rungs towards the bottom of the ladder had been smashed.

Much banging and movement of bags of stones was followed by the entry into a small short stream passage which runs parallel to East Passage and towards Mud Hall. This has a waterfall going down a crack about twelve feet deep. The bottom of this must be over 480 ft. below the surface, probably lower than some of the higher bedding planes of Clapham Cave. When we visited this pitch in flood conditions the water was backing up at least twenty feet above this level. Probably in times of very high flood, when several feet of water collect in Main Chamber, the water backs up this pitch to a higher level, and might even appear in the bottom of Mud Hall, as the lowest part of its floor is only about forty feet higher. Should an expedition visit the system under these very wet conditions they should note if there is any water standing in Mud Hall. This might throw some light on the theory that a large master drain runs under Mud Hall.

The three men at the bottom of the pitch all had a go at the crack but it will only just admit a body which then acts as a cork and the water begins to collect round one. This tightness precludes further descent and despite encouragement and finally threats over the phone the project was abandoned.

Once again the realists who sat at home and shook their heads have been proved right, the law of diminishing returns has set in on Gaping Gill with a vengeance. But look at a survey of the area, slowly that gap between Gaping Gill and Clapham Cave is

being filled. As Edward Calvert said at the end of his paper in the first volume of our Journal (*Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. I, No. 2, page 132).

"These expeditions prove that if it be possible to pass from Gaping Gill to the upper part of Clapham Cave, the way is difficult to find and difficult to follow."



LOUBENS AND THE DEEPEST POT-HOLE

by E. E. Roberts

THE tragic death of Marcel Loubens, a noted French pot-holer, in the gigantic Gouffre de la Pierre St Martin (on the Pyrenees border) which turns out to be deeper than anything in Italy, has excited much attention. The curious failures of elaborate equipment, the feats of ladder climbing, and the courage and endurance shown, deserve our notice.

Loubens was the first to try the great Henne Morte Pot in 1940, and in 1947 he was Casteret's companion in its lowest channel, 1,463 feet down. It is astonishing that a man of his experience of accidents should not have inspected the clamp on the loop of the wire cable which came loose and dropped him 30 ft. *The wire did not break*, as is still being repeated.

The *Times* articles and the book *Gouffre de la Pierre St Martin* by Tazieff, who saw him fall, make clear that there was only one bolt. The loop replacing it had several clamps and bolts. One paper had a dubious diagram showing a screw through the two bits of cable. One comments that the cable, 5 m.m. (1/5 in.) thick, contained a plastic-covered telephone wire. The loop, etc. was under an aluminium hood.

The narrow opening to the great shaft, in a shake-hole, high and very remote in the Pyrenees, was found in 1950. The well-known Belgian explorer, Cosyns, led an expedition to it in 1951. The discoverer and another went down and up in turn on a wire rope worked by a pedal-driven winch, evidently geared. Each touched a 40° slope at 1,135 ft., and stopped at 1,168 ft., reaching the site of future camps in a vast hall at 1,247 ft.

On the following day Tazieff and Loubens were lowered and at midnight discovered a second huge hall into which Loubens descended by too short a ladder, he was away two and a half hours. His return was from 1,617 ft. (505 m.), beating the then French record of 1,463 ft. in the Henne Morte. Work on the winch was most fatiguing, with trips of two hours the party was too exhausted, after raising the two men, to do more.

Heavy expenses were incurred to improve equipment in 1952, to be met as far as possible by sales. Hence is explained the great anxiety to secure photographs. Tazieff, a complete novice, was brought in specially to make films.

The pedalled winch was replaced by a design by Cosyns, electrically driven, the main part weighing 286 lbs. This was carried on a horse with the greatest difficulty to its remote site. There is a clear statement that there were handles for two men, but there is no mention of a brake. Time of run was one and a half to two hours.

After days of preparation Loubens fixed a wheel or roller, "diabolo" on the edge of a ledge, 20 ft. by 6 ft., 260 ft. down. The winch shied both up and down. Next day Tazieff was ready at 1 p.m. to follow Loubens right down when the winch went wrong and he did not start till 10 p.m. It reads as if the drum had seized.

In the next two days the first hall was thoroughly explored, more stuff lowered, and Labeyrie and Occhialini added to the party. On the fourth day the vast second hall was visited, three men carrying each nearly 40 lbs. of fluorescein, and Tazieff 44 lbs. of photographic material. He and Loubens had agreed that they lived in an epoch when every discovery, every adventure above ordinary, ought to be registered on the film.

The fluorescein having been dumped in the stream, a long search revealed a fairly easy way past the syphon into a colossal third hall, then back to camp for a fourth night.

Loubens had a long wait for winch repairs, then started up at ten in the morning. The loop gave way at 30 ft. clear, down the 40° slope of rocks he rolled 100 ft. and was smashed up terribly. Thirty-six hours later he died just as his friends were about to raise his battered body.

Hours went by repairing the loop, obtaining a stretcher and altering it as far as possible, and a terrific storm raged during the night. For fifteen hours the telephone was not working. The gallant Dr. Mairey, who had been through another terrible disaster, reached his patient at 10 a.m. on the sixth day. During this day an almost incredible feat of ladder work was done, no doubt with narrow wire and metal ladders. Five Lyons men put 800 ft. of ladder down, two men on the 260 ft. ledge, one somehow fixed at 400 ft., another at 600 ft., and a fifth at nearly 800 ft. (240 m.). Their dangerous duty was to ease the raising of the stretcher. Loubens died after 10 p.m. and they withdrew during the sixth night, the last man reaching the surface at 4 a.m. To this astounding feat of courage and skill we pay humble homage.

The names ought to be known. The men deserve the Legion of Honour.

The seventh day Loubens was buried below ground, and on the next two men were worked up. On the ninth Tazieff and Mairey, between six and four, had the grit to go down aided by drugs into the enormous third hall, alongside a big river, and into a big continuing tunnel, turning back at over 600 metres (1,968 ft.).

Tazieff ought to have been out in daylight, but the windlass went seriously wrong. For 2 hrs. 20 mins. he hung in spray without his waterproof overalls and was lucky to survive. He had been down eight full nights. Mairey could not be got out till next day, four nights below.

In 1953 Mairey, Casteret and Levi penetrated further down to 2,395 ft. A better winch was built and France now claims the deepest pot-hole. An English newspaper sent a special correspondent unfortunately inadequately briefed and with no sympathy for the work. He did not try to throw any light on the vital question of the winch. It is to be hoped someone, somewhere has done.

The drum and cogs ought to be strong enough to allow of hand-winding when the engine fails. There is some serious problem, as one recalls that in the Henne Morte Casteret's party were held up seven hours at a 300 ft. haul by the friction of a winch and the exhaustion of the winding party. Yet it had been put in by the Regular Army and organised by the Speleo Club de Paris which had had previous experience.



ZERMATT AND CHAMONIX, 1951

by C. I. W. Fox

I ARRIVED at Zermatt with Donald Bennett of The Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland early on Sunday, 1st July. We established our base camp a little way down-stream from Zermatt, near a wooden bridge. The site is a good one, being situated near a supply of good fresh water, and within easy shopping range of the village. Leaving our surplus gear in the tent we went to the Z'Fluh hotel in the afternoon in great heat, pausing frequently to "admire the view," a justifiable excuse, as the Matterhorn filled the sky behind us, soaring an incredible height into the blue.

We got away at 0245 on the following morning, and were soon puffing our way over the Alderhorn and Strahlhorn. These peaks were intended to provide us with a training walk, and they certainly sweated quite a bit of civilisation out of us. Beautiful cloud effects over Italy and the Monte Rosa Range glowing in pure pastel shades before us, were our reward as we made our way along the connecting ridge, which was corniced slightly. We gasped our way onto the Strahlhorn summit at 10 o'clock and after getting a little of our breath back, ran down to the glacier, passing on our way two people toiling up from the Col on ski. There was much new snow, and the afternoon sun made the glacier a purgatory on the way home.

We decided to go up the Rimpfischhorn on the following day, getting away at 0240 we were on the top at 0830. We were still far from fit and through getting slightly off the route at the top, found ourselves involved in some rather hair-raising antics on verglazed rocks. However the summit view was very fine, with the Oberland peaks plainly visible many miles away to the North. I found it curious to consider that I was at the "other end" of a photograph taken from the Gross Grunhorn last year. [Y.R.C.J., Vol. VII, No. 26, page 291]. We pounded back to the hotel in broiling heat. A glacier pool proved too tempting, and, throwing off our clothes we were presently gasping and splashing in the refreshing water. Donalds "Shelter Stone" tendencies were greatly enlivened by the sight of various large boulders in the vicinity; and when, later, we were presented with a somewhat steep bill at a hotel, he swore in future he would sooner bivouac. I could not but agree with him.

Coming down the lovely path through Findelen Alp the peaks on the other side of the valley beckoned to us. After spending a night at the camp, we bought some food and toiled in great heat up the Trift Gorge to the new Trift Hut, situated on the Eselschuggen rocks below the Zinal Rothorn. The cheery Huttenwart made us welcome and we turned in early, arranging to be called at 0200.

Two parties of two besides ourselves made for the Zinal Rothorn in the morning. Yet another of Americans was making for the Schalihorn and the glacier basin presented a curious sight with lanterns flitting about like will-o-the-wisps. We climbed up to the upper glacier in dense cloud and were soon on the snow ridge. The other two parties decided to turn back in view of the conditions, but Donald and I considered that we could find the route despite the cloud, and that, in any case, the cloud would prevent the sun from loosening the considerable amount of new snow lying on the ledges of the traverse across the south face. So we launched out, and eventually found ourselves in a fearsome couloir disappearing into the mist above and below our feet. We cut our way up and emerged on the Gabel with the weird summit ridge looming ahead. As we did so the mists parted and the red rock flashed in the sun and the silver cornices glistened in the brilliant light. We were on the summit at about 0930, and had made the first ascent of the season. In view of the warm sun, we decided not to linger, but to get back across the face as quickly as possible. The traverse, to our great relief, was still shrouded in mist; we sped across very quickly following our morning tracks, and were soon damning and blasting our way down the soft snow of the glacier to the hut, at times sinking up to our waists. We learned later — too late for us to take advantage of the fact, that it is more usual to follow a band of crags which land one immediately above the hut. Next morning we were away at 0320 en route for the Wellenkuppe, and were rewarded by most striking views of the north face of the Matterhorn. As we made our way up the hollow of the great wave the dawn light streamed ethereally over the clouds in the Zermatt valley below us. Our heads popped dramatically over the rounded summit and the lovely elliptical slopes of the Obergabelhorn burst upon our sight. The connecting ridge was heavily corniced. A guided party was about half an hour ahead of us and we followed their

steps in blissful confidence. Suddenly there was a great crack, and about a hundred feet of cornice started to drop down the south face of the ridge. Donald, who was leading at the time, gave a tremendous leap over the other side, and I, who was luckily following a parallel track somewhat lower down belayed with my axe into the firm snow. After this rather shattering experience we kept well clear of the other party's tracks.

The rocks on the final part of the Obergabelhorn were rather iced, but the summit was incredibly beautiful with three huge cornices curling over the great precipices. We returned over the Wellenkuppe getting back at 1540 to the hut. Our walk down to Zermatt in the cool of the evening was very pleasant, and we found the flowery Alps delightful after the glare of the high snows.

The next few days were definitely "off," as the weather was bad. One day we hopefully went up to the Tasch Hut, with intention of doing the Rotgrat of the Alphubel, but the weather turned out to be abominable and we tramped down again in great disgust. The most beautiful path up through the woods in some measure compensated for our frustration.

July 10th showed some signs of being decent, so we wandered up to the Schonbühl Hut with designs on the Dent Blanche and 0230 next morning saw us wending our way up the glacier moraine in perfect conditions. As directed by the guide-book we made the customary sweep in approaching the south ridge and soon were scrabbling up by the side of the great ice-cliff. A cold breeze made us move quickly when we got on the ridge, and we found the snow in excellent condition. After a second breakfast we put our crampons on and ran briskly around the Grand Gendarme. We were tempted to get too far down, and soon scrambled up to the ridge again. Great streamers of cloud were forming on its windward side and the ridge itself sprang in great pinnacles and snow cornices in front of us. The summit was formed of a very fine cone and at ten we were admiring the grand view. Our ascent was the first of the season.

On our way we saved time by the rather unorthodox method of sliding down avalanche troughs, and arrived very speedily on the glacier once more. We saw no avalanches falling until we were well clear of the glacier. Our route back, in contrast with the morning, was straight across to the moraine. We had studied

it from far aloft and it had seemed free of crevasses. Sure enough we had no trouble at all, although our progress across must have presented a model of caution. Which only goes to show that one mustn't pay too much attention to guide-books!

Next morning we walked down to Zermatt for provisions and plugged up to the Hornli hut in the afternoon. The hut was packed and we spent a most unrestful night before staggering out into the dark at 0230 en route for the Zmutt ridge. Our way lay first in a slightly downward direction for a few minutes, and then up a break in the ice wall of the Matterhorn Glacier. The Glacier was in a shocking condition with soft snow, and we had to take it in turns to break a trail. A convenient snow-bridge took us up across the schrund below the snow-ridge, just below and to the left of a tongue of rock clearly visible from afar. The slope that followed involved further hard work kicking and cutting our way. In the gullies in the slope the snow had turned to ice, and we had to cut many dozens of steps. At 0700 we stood on the snow-ridge and ate some chocolate. The wind was quite strong with clouds boiling up over the Col de Lion. After a short rest we pressed on up the ridge and were presently involved in some entertaining rock-climbing on the Zmutt teeth.

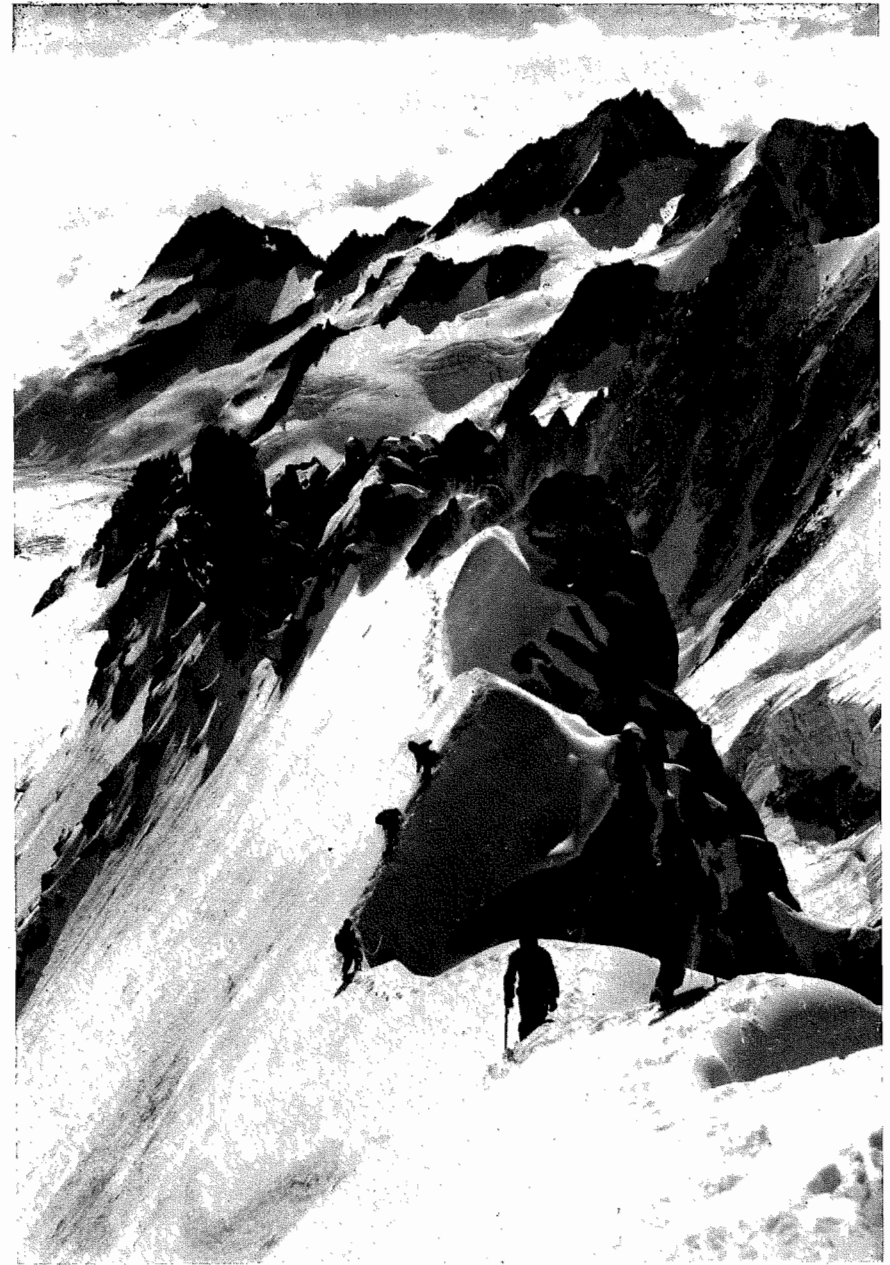
The ridge swung up into the heights above and the tremendous Zmutt nose, formed of contorted yellow strata leered at us across the depths of a vast couloir. The rocks that followed were heavily blanketed with new snow, and belays were few. But we had confidence in one another and moved steadily up. As we emerged on the Tiefenmatten face the weather rapidly worsened and presently a full blizzard was blowing. The rocks were heavily iced and we found crampons of real effect in our rock climbing. Cracks and slabs forced us to the right and presently we found ourselves close to the Italian ridge. We peeped over and had a most impressive view of savage precipices falling away through breaks in the snow squalls. As I was climbing an icy-chimney my ice-axe, which was hanging by a sling from my wrist, fell a couple of hundred feet down the face. The sling had evidently chafed through on rocks. We held a hurried conference and decided not to waste time by retrieving my axe, but to press on over the summit. I was sorry not to be able to linger over the celebrated Matterhorn view, but the great mountain was howling and shrieking in its fury and snow was driving over in

terrific squalls. We ran briskly in a crouched posture along the summit ridge, and plunged down the Hornli ridge. The ridge was smothered in snow and our progress with but one axe between us was necessarily slow. We passed the Solvay hut at 1900 but decided to go on. That abominable ridge! I am convinced that it is telescopic! We saw the hut through breaks in the storm, but the confounded thing appeared to get no nearer. At length we were at the site of the old cabin, and, as it was getting dark, we decided to bivouac. We took off our boots, stuck our feet in the same sack, clasped each other in an attempt to keep warm, and dozed the night through. We had a good supply of food, and spare clothing, we were in good condition and spirit, and we knew to an inch where we were. Surprisingly enough we slept a little. Every hour or so we ate some pemmican and chocolate. At 0530 we battered our boots into shape, donned them, and clattered cheerfully down towards the hut where we ate a very welcome meal. With the inner man in fine fettle we strolled down to Zermatt finding new zest in living things after our encounter with the formidable Cervin.

The following day we decided by way of a rest to have another try at the Rotgrat of the Alphubel but our arrival at the Tasch hut was greeted with a storm and again we made our way cheerlessly down to our camp. The weather had obviously broken, with the wind steadily south, and it was time to shift our base.

We established a base camp in Chamonix, and then went up to Argentière en route for the Refuge d'Argentière. From there our first peak was the Chardonnet — a most delightful climb. The day was made more strenuous by the task of helping a member of another British party from half-way up the Chardonnet with a broken ankle. We thought that the Frenchmen who watched us toiling up to the hut with our unfortunate friend, without lifting a finger to help, made a poor showing. One must suppose that they get somewhat hardened with such a number of their somewhat reckless compatriots about. Anyway our friend's behaviour in considerable pain was an inspiring exhibition of pluck.

Next day, the Argentière proved a very easy peak, but most enjoyable. We ran quickly up and down in crampons for much of the way. The view of the Verte across the glacier was most



THE FORBES ARÊTE CHARDONNET

impressive. On the following day, the Tour Noir proved easier still, but was an incomparable viewpoint. On the latter peak we only used the rope on the final rocks.

Our food was finished, so we descended to the flesh-pots of Chamonix. On the 22nd July we got a lift to Les Contamines and walked up to the Hotel de la Trelatete with four days food on our backs. This is a fine little place, run rather like an Alpine Club Hut, and can be thoroughly recommended both for cheapness and service.

At 0300 next morning we trudged off for the Aiguille de Beranger, and found it a most dull peak. However, we hoped for better things on the Domes de Miage, and were not disappointed, for the easy Domes gave us magnificent views of the surrounding scenery. The colossal Brouillard face hung like a vast red-brown curtain in front of us, buttressing the snowy dome of Mont Blanc high above.

The weather did not look very inviting for our project of traversing Mont Blanc via the Aiguille de Bionnassey, but we decided to go on as we had a reasonable line of escape down the Miage Glacier. We got to the Durier Hut at 1145, having difficulty in finding it because of the deep snow. As we were the first party to visit it that season, we had to clear the snow away to get in, and clear up inside. Luckily blankets were plentiful, if somewhat damp, and we were soon cosy. It started to snow heavily during the afternoon and a snowstorm raged all night.

Our project was obviously out of the question next morning as it was still snowing heavily; so we packed up after a leisurely breakfast and at 0800 went down the steep slopes to the Miage Glacier. It was raining on the Miage Alp, but we brewed up under a great boulder, watched curiously by a little herd boy in a great Poncho and his charges.

So ended our climbing holiday. We had climbed a number of goodly peaks, we had seen the power of the great mountains, we had been turned back — and there were so many more still to climb!

TWO CLIMBS ON THE CHAMONIX AIGUILLES, JULY, 1953

by C. I. W. Fox

THE two climbs which I am about to describe were the high spot of an otherwise disappointing season. With Bill Kelsey and a C.U.M.C. climber, Neil Jackson, several marathon expeditions were undertaken on the Saas peaks by way of training. The very late season made these trips somewhat trying, and I can still hear (in my imagination) the avalanches crashing down either side of the Portjengrat as we made our way along the ridge. A descent on Zermatt via the Rimpfischhorn revealed conditions so bad that we determined to follow the well-known advice of "Go West, young man."

THE EAST RIDGE OF THE PLAN

Early in the morning the steep little glacier below the Aiguille Du Plan was in good condition, and, in crampons, we quickly walked round from the Envers hut and then up into the glacier bay bounded on the left by the cliff of the Pain de Sucre and on the right by the Blaitière. Ahead of us the Plan Crocodile and Caiman formed the end of a huge cul-de-sac.

The glacier quickly steepened and then was slashed thrice by enormous bergschrunds. The first 'schrund could be turned on the right but the second cut the glacier from side to side.

However, I had been up on the previous day on a reconnaissance of the Caiman and knew the secret. Making an ascending traverse right under an overhanging ice-cliff, we went to a cave formed by an overhang of rock on the extreme right (true left) of the 'schrund. There a vertical ice-tunnel about 10 feet long led up or rather through the difficulty. This was so narrow that it was necessary to remove sacks to negotiate the obstacle.

Above the tunnel a steep slope of firm snow led to the foot of the third 'schrund. Here, while the second man firmly belayed in good snow, the leader stepped across unstable bridges, clambered awkwardly up a slab of smooth projecting granite and then delicately stepped up ice steps over the vertical upper lip of the 'schrund until he could belay to a convenient rock above. We were then clear of objective danger from the Plan-Crocodile couloir and could breathe more easily. We saw no stones falling although many were embedded in the snow below.

Shortly after this we took to the rocks and removed our crampons. Moderate and entertaining rocks led us quickly upwards until we came to the point where the route (which at first keeps to the right of E. Ridge looking upwards) at last goes straight up to the crest. The view from here was very thrilling. Across the couloir the slabs of the Crocodile's east ridge rose steeply, beyond the Crocodile the monolith of the Caiman was rose-tipped with morning light, and below us the glacier was still in shadow.

Now the character of the climbing changed. In place of clean rocks we found everything plastered in snow. In between the rocks lay black ice, covered with powder snow. And the rock was unstable. I realised that we would have been better advised to go on the south side of the ridge on the alternative route which is cleared by the sun. The south side of the Plan-Crocodile couloir only receives about two hours early morning sun in a day.

However, we were now committed to the route like Smythe and Bell before us. It was, of course, necessary to clear the snow away and then beat the black ice into submission. Seldom have I felt more precarious. Occasionally we came to something really solid and great was our relief. Towards the end of our toil we had to cut delicate steps up a layer of ice overlaying slabby rock, being careful not to hit too hard for fear the whole crazy structure might peel off. This couloir occupied some three hours of our time and we were very glad when at last we stepped out on to the sunlit ridge.

Here, our situation was magnificent. Across the couloir to our left the Pain de Sucre N. face rose incredibly steeply and we could see the fantastic ice-route worked out by Greloz. Above us our route soared up like a huge fin into the blue sky.

According to the guide-book, this was where the difficulties started. Under good conditions the couloir should present little difficulty, but many parties seem to find bad conditions.

After a number of nice chimneys and cracks we were suddenly confronted by a savage fissure which swept up for some forty feet and then curved more steeply. We had arrived at the "Fissure de la Grand 'Mère." This curiously named fault proved less difficult than it looked although in common with all pitches on this climb it was strenuous.

From then on chimney followed chimney and crack followed crack all strenuous and some very awkward. We felt that our sacks were far too full and the expenditure of effort involved in hauling them up some awkward pitch was considerable.

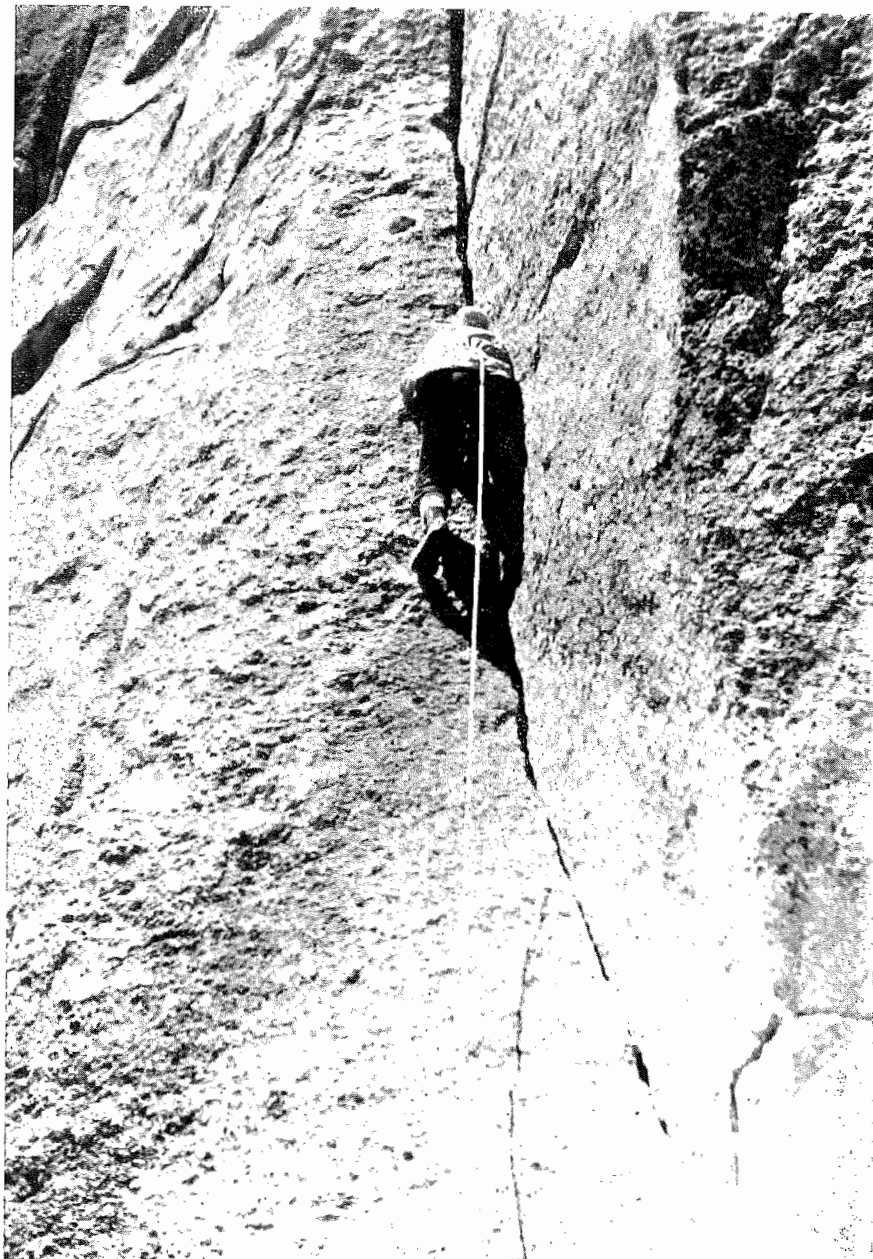
Hard as the climbing was (it was rated at "4," probably about mild severe), Neil evidently thought it too easy for he led us up a chimney which I thought at least "5." The exit from this was one of the airiest things I have ever done. A magnificent pitch.

The climb keeps to the left of the ridge (looking up) for much of the way. Eventually it led us to a saddle where a high bank of snow provided refreshment.

After a slight descent another savage crack reared up. About eight feet up this a piton grew (after grasping it I would have said "bloomed"). Progress is made by jamming the fingers in this fissure and planting the feet on the rough granite at the side. Near the top another piton enables the leader to hook carabiner on for a running belay. A stirring pitch, but my admiration for Ryan and Lochmatter, who did this stupendous climb without pegs and in nailed boots, grew as we followed their wonderful route. Truly there were giants in those days!

A broad ledge eventually led round to the left and we knew from the guide-book that we were approaching the final tower. Belayed round a large boulder, the leader disappeared round a corner and the only sign of activity was the slow movement of the rope. A delicate move of "5" was indicated in the book and we wondered what was in store for us. However, this was not too bad, a long step to the left while holding on to a vertical fissure with the right hand. I find that delicate moves in the Alps are generally over-rated, at any rate from the British rock-climber's point of view.

Several more chimneys led on and up until we came to a route finding problem. The guide-book said that the bottom of the next chimney was distinguished by a large detached flake but all the chimneys in the vicinity seemed to be so adorned. Eventually we went straight up an overhanging chimney using lay-back methods. This I found the hardest pitch of the climb coming as it did at the end of such strenuous exertions. Of course, as soon as we were up it was obvious that a very much easier fissure round the corner was the correct route. Above this pitch the chimney went only vertically upwards (a great relief) for about fifty feet



THE RYAN LOCHMATTER ROUTE ON THE PLAN

and then split into a Y. The way was by the left fork of the Y. To attain this it was necessary to make a curious manoeuvre in which one lay on one's left side, planted a foot across into the right fork of the Y and shoved vigorously until traction was obtained up a sort of trough.

After a few more easier pitches we at last stood below the final tower, and a few minutes sufficed to put us on the summit. Here we three met up with Geoff Pigott of the Rucksack Club and Neil Mather who had been ahead of us all the way. Physically we were tired but very satisfied with a memorable and magnificent climb.

The ordinary way down went very swiftly, although the snow was soft. As we followed the well-trodden track, we kept looking over shoulders at the wonderful peak we had climbed, glowing red in the rays of the descending sun.

For future parties I would advise: climb in Vibrams, as we did. Pick a good settled day and travel light. Early in the season it might be advisable to go on the southern side of the ridge in the lower part; and reconnoitre the bergschrunds on the previous day. Finally "train on raw meat and stout, wear bull-dog buttons."

THE GRÉPON BY THE MER DE GLACE FACE

For long this climb has been in the nature of an unattainable ideal and it was therefore with some surprise that I found myself with George Spenceley walking up the tortuous path which leads to the Envers d'Aiguilles hut. The weather was fine, George was full of enthusiasm, while it was my last climb of the season.

We had determined to go up to the Tour Rouge hut in preference to the Envers, as the former is high on the face of the Grépon. The usual manoeuvres on the steep little glacier below the Grépon landed us on the rocks. On the way up another English party passed us on their way down, and we could not help thinking how typical they were of many "British parties" to be found in the Alps. They had done the climb that day and returned the same way. Obviously, they were first-rate rock climbers. But when they got on to the snow their incompetence to cope with this medium was plain. Each man ran out 100 feet of rope before the other moved across traverses. Should any man

have come off, the huge pendulum swing would have disorganised the party (to put it mildly). Apart from this the loss of time involved was considerable as they painfully progressed down. As Dr. Longstaff has often said, speed and safety are almost synonymous in the mountains.

A striking contrast was provided by two young Frenchmen who appeared round a shoulder of the glacier below and approached our position with speed. As we waited for the British caravan to coil its way past us, we observed with amazement these young stalwarts speeding up. When they arrived we saw that only one of them had an axe and sack. This arrangement is fairly common around Chamonix, although it must be admitted that it makes for less safety on snow and ice. On the other hand, the extra speed achieved probably lets the party arrive on snow section in reasonable conditions. Much must depend on their competence and nerve. I once saw such a party going down the Nantillons Glacier at a pace which can only be described as a full gallop. The man with the axe was last on the rope.

A vertical crack classed as IV landed us on easier rocks and we were soon peering into the squalid little shelter which was our home for the night. To our amazement four new blankets and a new mattress had been installed. We lost no time in staking our claim. The other end of the hut had a sinister looking pile of very old blankets which we did not disturb. The two French lads arrived shortly afterwards and preparations for a meal were soon under way. We were congratulating ourselves on our good fortune at having the hut to ourselves when one of us saw a party of four coming up the glacier below. Many and loud were the curses. Space in this hut is strictly limited. However, our fears were completely unjustified for the party of four French people were courtesy itself and our sleep was undisturbed.

Next morning, when it was light, we crawled out to observe the weather. This was by no means perfect, with low cloud swirling about. At length we decided to go on until we saw how things materialised, at least as far as the abseil into the couloir. Our optimism was justified as the weather improved when the sun rose and the clouds dissolved.

What a beautiful face this is! Charming little streams cascade down from small snow patches and the great sheets of slab sweep down cleanly through the sunlit air. Occasional patches of

brightly coloured flowers relieve the austerity of the scene. The climbing was not unduly difficult and we could look around to admire the scene. The two young Frenchmen were ahead of us and going well. However, we caught up with them at a point where a traverse was indicated and it was necessary to look for the route. Here they tried to climb some extremely difficult rock, and as no difficulties were mentioned obviously the route was elsewhere. Sure enough, a traverse above a prominent pinnacle led over to the left on reasonable ground.

Traversing a large chimney which vanished steeply below our feet we landed on a broad ledge. Ahead of us a huge couloir blocked our advance. This was obviously the obstacle mentioned by G. W. Young and we began looking for a rock shaped like a milestone. This was readily identified as it had a necklace of slings about its "Shoulders."

An abseil of about 30 feet landed us in the bed of the couloir. I traversed this and got onto a ledge at approximately the same height as our departure point.

Typical Chamonix cracks and chimneys led us upwards. The exposure was considerable but the climbing so engrossing that the rock seemed to charm us on to new heights. At length we arrived at the Niche des Amis where there were certainly plenty of "Amis." The two young Frenchmen were up a vicious chimney which rose straight up and their voices floated down to join us. The other four French people (one was a woman) were munching chocolate and gazing earnestly at the chimney. Shortly afterwards progress again began and one after the other we grunted, swore and coiled our way up the fissure. The top part was decidedly airy, but one could protect oneself with running belays at several places.

After a series of similar pitches we arrived at a snowy shoulder. A passage of IV Supr. was indicated ahead. This was said to be delicate and we wondered what was in store for us. The pitch materialised as a shallow crack sloping from right to left, about 10 feet long and almost vertical in section. Some kind soul had planted a piton at the bottom and this dispelled most of the apprehension about the large quantity of fresh air which was immediately below. The pitch went easily however with a lay-back technique and landing was excellent on an earthy ledge.

Ahead of us the great chimney mentioned in the first ascent glared at us, and we marvelled at the temerity of the pioneers. It was hard to see, however, why they did not oblique to the left to avoid this pitch, as moderate rocks led off to the left via a broad ledge.

Along this ledge we walked and then climbed an open chimney back to the right again, where we emerged on a broad ledge which cut into the great chimney at half height.

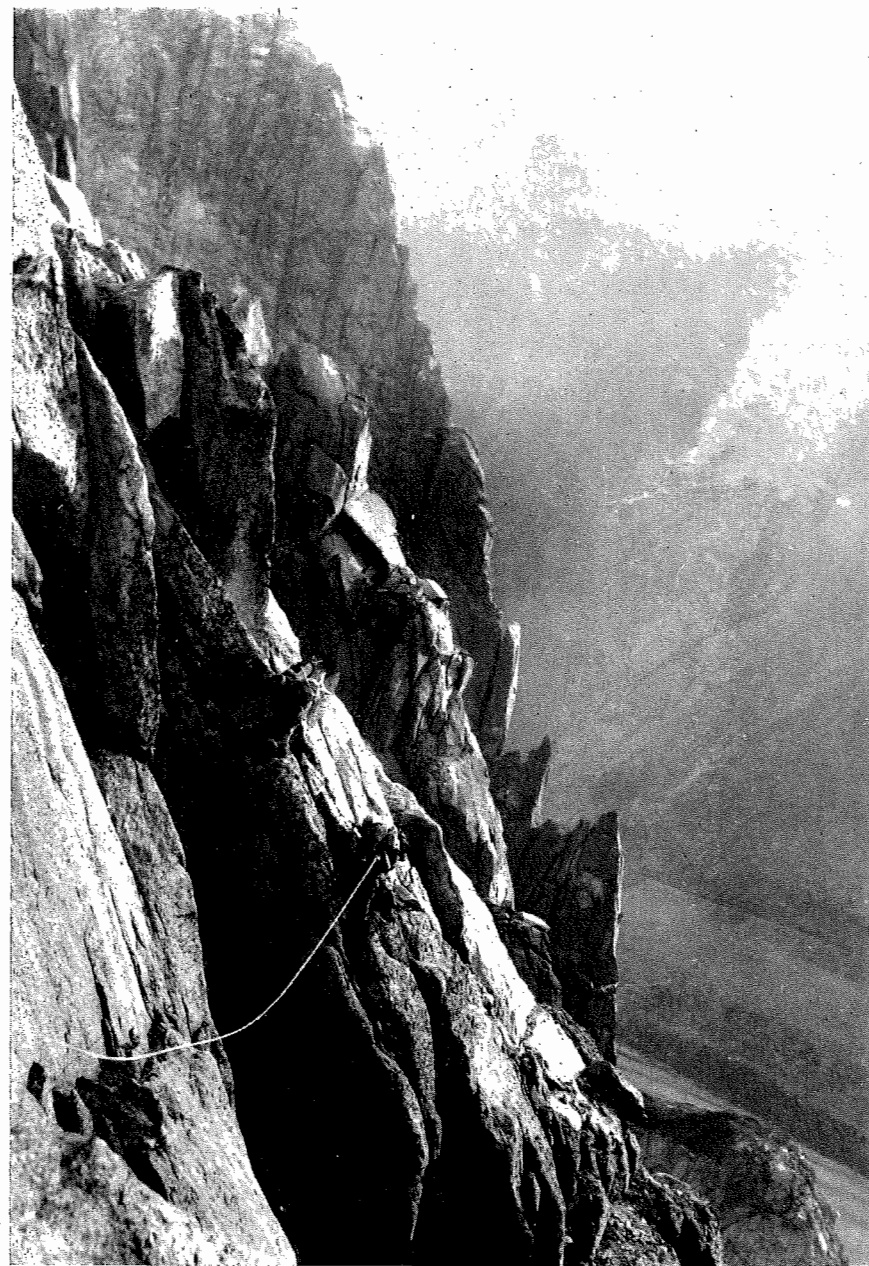
The continuation of the chimney above this proved to be hard, but went well if one tackled it methodically. Near the top things got very thin and the few good holds were grasped thankfully.

We were now near to the Breche Balfour and the Aig. de Roc leered at us almost level with our heads. A rounded pinnacle caused a little bother until we tumbled to the technique of slinging a bight of the rope around its blunted snout and penduluming out to swarm over the further side. Our arrival at the Breche was signalled by a blast of icy wind laced with driving snow and, peering over the rocks we saw that black clouds were boiling up on the far side of the crest and the weather in general looked very menacing. A growl of thunder made us look apprehensively at each other, and although we went along and looked at the final crack, we knew in our hearts that the half-hour involved in getting up the glorious finish might well put us in a mess with the vicious storm obviously about to hit us.

So down we went by the C.P. route with the raw wind chilling us and snow swirling in our faces.

At the traverse over the knife-edge the conditions were so bad that it required considerable mental effort to face the exposed little bit of climbing on the far side.

Eventually we arrived at the Col des Nantillons and soon we were speeding down the glacier. Our judgment in not delaying our departure was amply proved as, when we had just got down to the easier portion, the skies opened and thunder and lightning interspersed with hail, snow and rain, lashed the heights about us.



ON THE MER DE GLACE FACE OF THE GREPON

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT VICTORIA

by W. Kelsey

SEEN across Lake Louise, framed between the dark forested mountain sides, the huge snow-covered east face of Mount Victoria, 11,365 feet, sweeps up 4,000 feet to the long, level, summit ridge. This summit ridge, part of the continental Great Divide, drops steeply at each end; at the north to the Kicking Horse Pass and the Canadian Pacific Railway, at the south to the Abbot Pass, 9,598 feet, between Victoria and Lefroy. A hut on the Abbot Pass is used in the ascent and although it is possible to reach it from Lake Louise, two hanging glaciers above a narrow box canyon deter all but the least imaginative climbers. The normal approach route is from Lake O'Hara on the west side of the mountain and it was from there that we started. Unfortunately, from this side, Victoria is hidden behind several other smaller peaks and it was not until some time later that we could see the true shape of the mountain we had climbed. The route, we had been told, was straightforward, just follow the trail to the Abbot Pass hut, a mere four hours walk. From there on, we understood, the route was obvious.

There were three of us, Neil, Benny, and myself, straight from the plains of Manitoba. We had walked up the eight miles of forest trail from Wapta to Lake O'Hara the night before, and so it was not until four in the afternoon that we left that idyllic spot and took to the trail by the lake and up through the trees. Once above the tree line we followed the trail past a series of clear, emerald green glacier lakes until it finally disappeared on a scree slope by the shores of the highest lake. On our left, long slopes of scree and glacier mud descended from beneath huge crumbling buttresses, while round the head of the lake similar slopes descended from beneath the snow mantle of Lefroy. The buttresses we presumed to be part of the lower slopes of Victoria, and so we chose a large scree slope beyond them as a means of ascent. At first we made rapid progress where the scree slope was well consolidated with the glacier mud, and then over large beds of old snow. These were soon left behind and it was as the scree slopes steepened and contracted into a large gully that the difficulties began. We were soon sliding back one step out of every two forward and progress became funereal. Some six hours after starting we were struggling up the gully, hanging onto the walls

and attempting to stabilise the moving ground beneath our feet. Thus far we had come across no sign of human passage and as our view was very limited, the possibility that we could be wasting our time in the wrong gully was only too evident. Benny was having a very bad time as this was his introduction to mountaineering, and we were all very much out of condition. Seven hours after leaving Lake O'Hara we stumbled out of the gully onto the narrow ridge of the Abbot Pass to see the hut some short distance to the left. We were very much exhausted and barely able to eat anything before going to bed.

Early next morning we were awakened by a guided party moving about. Benny was feeling unwell as a result of his exertions the night before so Neil and I made the usual scanty breakfast and left the hut as it was becoming light, slightly ahead of the other party. Behind the hut a faint track followed the crest of the ridge until it joined the main mass of the mountain. Above a plinth of vertical cliff a rounded buttress soared steeply up for about 500 feet. As it approached this band of vertical rock the ridge of the pass twisted sharply to the right to a narrow breach, and by an easy scramble we reached the buttress above. Although steep the buttress was in the last stages of decay, and in places resembled a scree slope. Much of the rock was held in place by friction alone and one particular strata that I remember bore a distinct resemblance to compacted coal dust. At the top of the buttress we emerged on a snow shoulder below the next upward sweep of the ridge. The day was gloriously fine already and the snow was hard from the night frost. Slightly in front, having passed us on the buttress, the guided party were kicking steps across the snow. By taking a low line across a rocky patch we kept our step-kicking to a minimum and crept in front of them. The ridge above was easy, but loose and broken, and required care. On either side the exposure was tremendous, resembling somewhat the south-east ridge of the Finsteraarhorn. To the left huge cliffs dropped vertically to Lake O'Hara, which was now visible among the woods, 5,000 feet below. To the right the snow slopes descended very steeply to a small hanging glacier, 1,500 feet below, before taking an even bigger plunge to the valley beyond.

About an hour after we had left the hut we scrambled onto the first pinnacle of the ridge at about 10,500 feet. For the first time

we saw the upper part of the mountain; a knife edge of snow sweeping in a series of crescents into the far distance. On either side there was the same tremendous exposure, vertical depths to the left and a sweeping snow slope to the right. Behind us as we had been climbing, the bulk of Lefroy loomed very close and beyond, the shapely peaks of Hungabee and Deltaform cast their long shadows across the pine forests at their feet. In all directions from horizon to horizon, a sea of mountains thrust their jagged tops into the clear blue sky.

The guided party passed whilst we were taking photographs and we did not catch them up again until we had reached the summit. A few minutes later we turned to the descent of the far side of the pinnacle. Here the crescent of the snow ran steeply down for about 100 feet before levelling off, and the descent of this short steep stretch, with that enormous exposure in front, we found to be the most intimidating part of the whole ridge. Fortunately the snow was in good condition and we were soon moving quickly together along the beautiful, undulating, knife-edge of snow. The general angle of the ridge was quite easy and we made height slowly, until an abrupt step in the ridge of several hundred feet appeared to bar our progress. By traversing to the right across the snow we reached a horizontal band of sound rock and gained the snow slope above by a steep crack about 15 feet high. Traversing again right and then left, back across the snow, we were soon out on the crest of the ridge again. Our height now was nearly 11,000 feet and at this point we encountered a bitterly cold wind. Above the step the ridge became mixed snow and rock, but still very narrow. In the teeth of the icy blast we pressed on as fast as possible and at last reached the summit cairn about three hours after leaving the hut, just as the guided party were leaving to return. We quickly extracted the copper cylinder from the cairn, attached our names to the list inside, took a quick look round, and sprinted back along the ridge. Below the step and out of the wind we thawed ourselves in the sun as we ate our second breakfast. The guided party was already a long way back along the ridge, and as soon as we stepped onto the snow we could understand their reason; out of the cold wind the snow was softening quickly in the heat of the sun. We had to move more carefully but experienced no undue difficulty until we reached the face of the first pinnacle. The slope here was very

steep, the same steepness as the face below, and the soft condition of the snow left little security. Our rope was too short to reach to the top of the pinnacle while one man was securely anchored on the horizontal part of the ridge. The usual "You jump left if I go right" precautions were taken but fortunately the snow was just firm enough and we were soon on top of the pinnacle. The descent to the shoulder went easily but the rock buttress below proved much more difficult to descend than to climb. The hut could be seen but the breach in the cliff was not obvious. To avoid each other's line of fire we moved down slowly in parallel tracks to where we thought the breach should be, but at the bottom we were forced to make a delicate traverse across the dangerously loose rock before we could scramble down and run down the track to hut.



THE NEW GENERATION

by G. B. Spenceley

"THERE was a time," said my companion, his voice raised above the raucous shouting that came from a party above, "when all whom you met on the hills were people pleasant to know." We were sitting separated from the crowds on a ledge some twenty feet above the foot of the crag and sheltered by an overhang from the descent of any unheralded missile. Below, a little way down the scree, in the "cave" among the orange peel and paper sat the young members of yet another new club.

We had finished our sandwiches and while waiting to see which of the four buttresses would be least occupied, we had been discussing the behaviour of some of the recent recruits to the climbing world. Later we found solitude above the climbs on the summit of the mountain and as we watched the sun sink behind the western hills, my friend, a mountaineer of distinction and twice my age, told me of his own novitiate. He described his feelings on seeing for the first time high mountains and how it came as a revelation to learn that their remote summits, could, through toil and skill, be attained. The years that followed were a period of careful schooling for the ultimate purpose but his adventures were as yet lived vicariously in the pages of mountaineering literature on which he fed hungrily. In his later teens, hardihood and endurance were tested on long walks over northern moors, alone and in all weathers; and there were holidays too in the Lakes and Wales with here and there a little scrambling. But during all this time he knew no climbers, indeed had never even spoken to one, although he had seen them at work, remote figures clinging to a Napes ridge, and once in a hotel room he had stood back and listened in respectful silence to an account of a winter ascent of the Old West on Pillar.

However, in those days people never passed one by on the hills without a friendly chat and it was just such a casual meeting that brought my friend his first offer of a climb. He was taken in hand and with infinite care taught the basic principles. For some time he was not allowed to lead and from the first there was instilled into him an awareness of the potential danger that lay in every step of a climb and a respect for even the smallest of mountains. Being a man of imagination, fear took a prominent part in those

early expeditions, until with experience he began to distinguish between apparent and actual danger, and with increased mastery of his craft to reduce, if not quite eliminate, the latter. With new friends then and a new rope, working through all the moderates and then the difficults, and so upwards through all the standard courses my friend was launched on what was subsequently to become a great mountaineering career.

I have often thought of this man's approach and attitude to mountains, of his respect for them and love of them; love for their unearthly beauty as well as for the adventure they give, and inspired not only by the mountains themselves, but as much by the breed of men who were mountaineers in those days, forty years ago. Then, more than today, there was a very real and personal relationship between the experienced climber and the novice, and the older man's influence was a powerful factor in forming, in the budding mountaineer, the correct outlook and values.

No sport has greater traditions than mountaineering; traditions not only of courage and high endeavour but also of unpretentious and gentlemanly behaviour. I could not do better than quote the words of Geoffrey Winthrop Young from an article in the *Alpine Journal*. He wrote:

"Mountaineering was a discovery . . . It was perhaps fortunate that the discovery was not made until Victorian days and then by a number of leaders of thought. By the authority of their writings and by their dignity of approach to the new activity, they set a seal of distinction upon climbing; and this preserved it as a practise respectable, if inexplicable, during the decades of popular derision and criticism. They established a notable tradition of the spirit in which mountains must be climbed; and this in our country alone, and in this sport more than in all others, has served to protect its force for good from the progressively corrupting infection of competition and publicity hunting."

Mountaineering failed to become a popular sport and its recruits continued for many years to be largely drawn from the cultured and moneyed class. But if forty years ago climbing was for the few, now it is for the many and at the same time it is no longer the perquisite of the leisured and learned. That this is the case will be welcomed by all of open mind who have at heart the

common good, but the most tolerant cannot help but feel regret at the resultant loss of values and standards of behaviour.

Perhaps it is impertinent of me to criticise a group of climbers belonging to a generation so little removed from my own, but living as I do on the edge of the Lake District I may have a better opportunity than most of our members for observing the actions of those who tend to bring disrepute upon our sport. Perhaps a certain sense of superiority over the mere walker may be afforded and allowance made for the climber's boisterous spirits after a good day on the very severes within sight of the road, but the mature climber and the tourist will feel irritation and sometimes disgust at the noisy and affected behaviour of many young climbers who haunt the popular valleys of the Lake District.

Climbers they may be, but mountaineers no; although they have been heard discussing in loud voices their plans to do that year the Eigerwand and the Eperon Walker. Bring them to the point and they will probably admit to a complete lack of interest in mountains as such; the most stirring of mountain aspects will leave them utterly cold; their interest may not even extend as far as the major crags of the Lake District except perhaps where conditions are suitable for the ascent of some notoriously difficult route or when there is the prospect of knocking pitons into ten feet of unclimbed rock. Their playground is the low crag, close both to road and gazing crowds and to hotel bar and awestruck listener. They are essentially fair weather climbers; when the wind is too strong or the rocks too wet and cold for the ascent of climbs sufficiently hard, then all day will the hotel visitor hear their ringing voices.

There was a time when the rope was not seen until the foot of the climb was reached. It is now not only the practise of these young climbers to carry ropes in a prominent position on all possible occasions but liberally to drape themselves with slings and karabiners and even pitons (used for display purposes only, in most cases) before they consider themselves suitably attired for public viewing. Thus garbed it is their custom to talk loudly, for all to hear, of super severes, new routes and sometimes, as was heard recently, of accidents, comparing and boasting of distances fallen.

Is there a remedy to combat this general lowering of standards and loss of values? Writing thirty years ago George Mallory

expressed the belief that the time had come when it should be the principle of a climbing club to suppress the propagation of a gospel already too popular. It is certainly tempting to view the situation thus selfishly and to wish the hills only for those completely deserving. We can well imagine what the feelings of Mallory would be today, nevertheless the principle is the wrong one, now, as it was then. The invasion of the hills by young people from the cities should not, and indeed cannot, be halted. Whether we like it or not, we have to accept the fact that rock climbing, and to a lesser extent mountaineering, have in the last few years, become popular sports. Nothing but profit can come of it and if we feel at all for the common good then we should rejoice. The answer lies not in any attempt to arrest this movement but in education, not the education of the schoolroom, but rather the education in mountain manners and in the tradition and values of what is really not merely a sport but a religion, and this can only be given when there is re-established that close and personal relationship between the experienced mature mountaineer and the novice.

For prospective climbers of an earlier generation it was not easy to get started. The only clubs were what today we call the senior clubs and admission to them was closely guarded and limited only to the experienced; there was in existence no organisation or machinery by which the inexperienced climber could be brought into contact with others of similar interests. The young recruit to the climbing world was dependent on his good fortune in meeting kindred spirits and on the good nature of others in devoting their few and precious hours in the hills to his instruction. I myself owe a debt of gratitude to those brilliant climbers Colin Kirkus and Alf. Bridge, who in between forcing new routes up the most precipitous cliffs in Wales found time to take me, then aged seventeen, and many others equally youthful, on crags and routes of lesser difficulty. No doubt most climbers then and to some extent today, felt it a duty to encourage and train the beginner, and perhaps the flow of newcomers into the sport was so small that the unselfish efforts of these experienced and older cragsmen was sufficient to meet the demand.

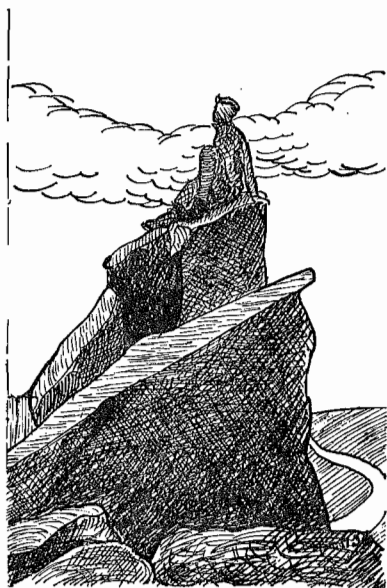
Now it is different; the way of the would-be climber is made smooth and he may choose one of many paths, but in some respects the situation is less satisfactory. The number of small

local clubs whose membership is open to all and who will undertake the responsibility of training their new members in mountain craft or in rock gymnastics must now be close on a hundred and every month sees the birth of others. At the same time there are a number of other bodies who have interested themselves in mountaineering and the sport is now regarded as an educational benefit with the Ministry itself giving its official blessing. Local Education Authorities in some areas run courses both for children and adults in mountaineering and rock climbing; the Central Council of Physical Recreation have a permanent centre in the Cairngorms where at holiday times the general public may receive skiing and mountaineering instruction; nearer home is the Outward Bound Mountain School with the accent more on discipline, team work and toughness, where the coalminer's son will rub shoulders with the boy from Eton; since the spate of post-war accidents the Youth Hostel Association and the Ramblers' Association have concerned themselves with mountain training and have run week-end and holiday courses both at home and abroad, and there is the Mountaineering Association who have made training in rock climbing their special province.

Necessary though a more widespread knowledge of mountaineering is, some criticism can be levelled, not only at the training offered by the Junior clubs — often extremely dubious training — but also at some of the bigger organisations, well-meaning though they may be. The climber of an earlier generation learned his craft behind men usually much his seniors, not only were they of adequate experience, but they were fully imbued with the highest traditions of the sport. Now, while men of character, ability and experience are lending themselves wholeheartedly to the training of beginners, the need is so great that others hardly out of their teens, some having little over a year's experience, are given the responsibility of running an instructional course; not only are they not qualified to give the technical instruction but their attitude to the hills and their conduct is not always the best example for the young and impressionable novices under their care.

Sufficient is being done by these organisations both in fostering the spirit of adventure and in training the young in its path, but is enough interest and care for the new generation being taken by the individual? It is the personal relationship between mentor

and pupil that really matters and will in the end do more good than a thousand lectures and all the collective training. Is it not the duty of all who feel deeply about the hills and who love adventure simply and purely for its own sake, free of all competitive elements and of exhibitionism and sensationalism, to pass on to the new generation, by their influence and example, the traditions and spiritual values that the true mountaineer holds so dear?



A NORTHERN BOG TROT

by A. H. Griffin

AUGUST is undoubtedly the worst month for visiting the Northern Highlands of Scotland. In the first place, there is the incessant rain (or at best a clammy Scotch mist which reduces visibility to about five yards), secondly, there are the midges, and third — in the second half of the month, at any rate — there are the deer-shooters crawling over many of the best mountains.

I have long known about all these snags, but until the Ministry of Education does something constructive about school holidays I am committed to this shocking month if I wish to take my family on holiday. This year I wanted to take my family with me for two very selfish reasons — first, because my 13-years-old son actually enjoys carrying a heavy rucksack, and second, because you have to cook for yourself in remote Scottish Youth Hostels or take your own cook.

Unless you are a director of several flourishing companies and can afford to pay quadrupled hotel bills, or you really enjoy camping out day after day in the vilest of weather, youth hostelling seems about the only way to “do” the Northern Highlands with a family in August. One great advantage of Scottish hostels over the English variety is that you are permitted to arrive in a motor car provided the vehicle is “garaged” at least 15 yards away from the hostel, and the motorist is accepted as a normal human being. There are of course no garages and the car stands out in the open in the pouring rain, often up the fell-side half a mile from the hostel. A possible disadvantage of living in these hostels, depending upon whether or not you really enjoy cooking your own dinner when you come down from the tops wet through and hungry, is the self-cooking clause. My plan, when I had studied the form, was for my son — who fancies he would make a Sherpa porter — to carry the rucksack and for my wife (assisted by my small daughter) to prepare the evening meal ready for the mountain heroes upon their return. And everything — callous brute that I am — worked exactly according to plan.

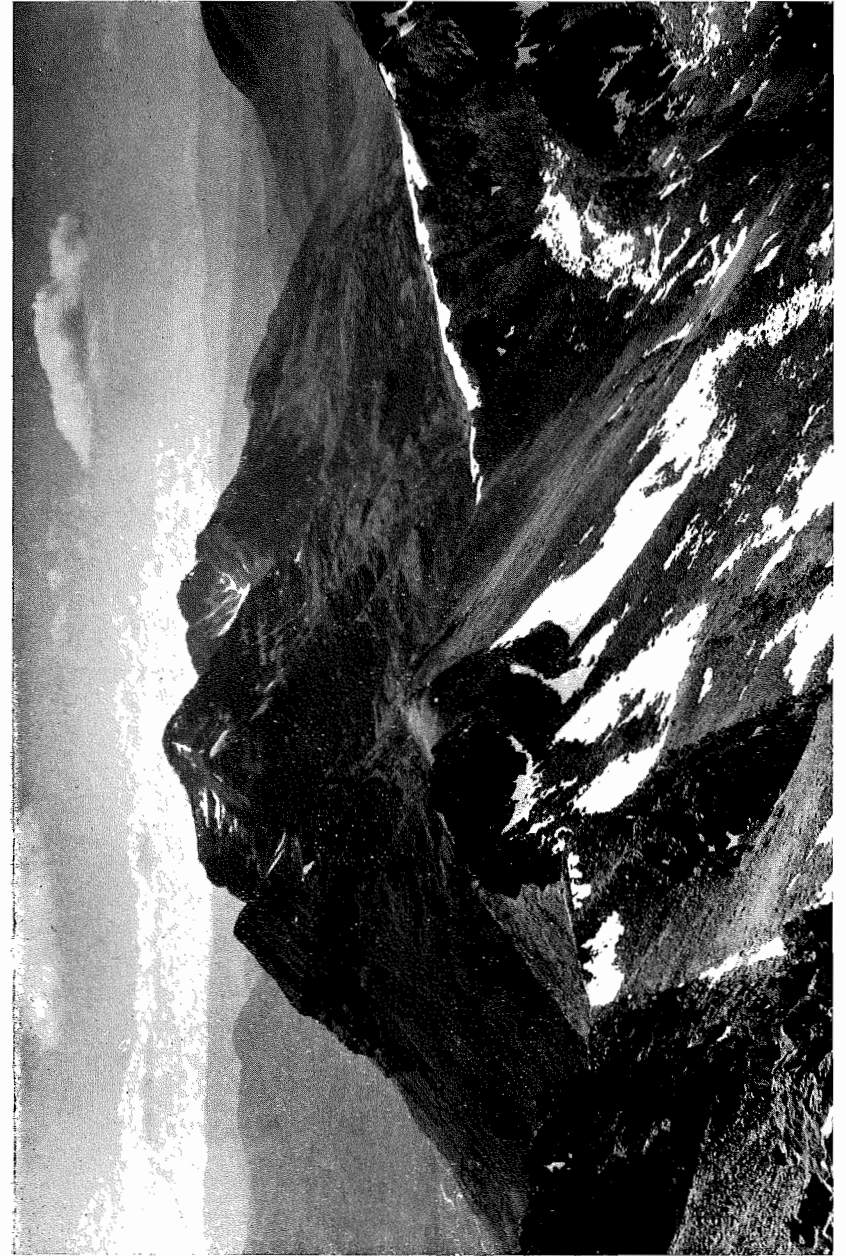
At the outset, I listed three major snags which you meet in these parts at the end of August, but if you are lucky enough to pick the sort of weather we had, these snags are reduced to one,

and life becomes just bearable. We fortunately chose the wettest fortnight of the year — of the century, I should say — with a result that the midges were washed away and the deer shooters were trapped in their lodges, unable to stir. All we had to put up with was the rain, and I had had plenty of training for this in the Lake District.

One meteorological feature which helped us to secure this fortuitous weather was the fact that the previous few weeks had been extremely sunny and warm and the midges were said to be operating in record numbers. It was even reported in the daily press that the workmen on the Garve Road had downed tools and gone home because somebody had forgotten the Dimp. Undoubtedly, on the occasion of our visit shortly afterwards, millions of midges were lurking in the heather waiting to beset us as soon as the rain stopped, but fortunately, from this point of view at least, it kept on raining.

On our way north to the wet lands we did a training walk over the Carn Dearg range and Ben Nevis, and found this good practice, for although we picked up four tops considerably higher than Scafell Pike, we never saw one of them. This was our first wetting, right to the skin, but before the end of the fortnight we were quite accustomed to this, for it happened every day except one: it was good compass training for the boy. On the way up to the Ben from the Arete we bumped into a man coming down who informed us that he had spent ten minutes on top trying to find the Observatory. We managed to take rather less time, but it was not too easy finding the beginning of the broad metalled highway leading down from the summit to the glen.

The compass, I should say, served us very well. Having lost my own earlier in the year I was, I suppose, extremely fortunate to find one lying at the top of Walker's Gully on Pillar a few weeks later. As it would not work I presented it to my son, and then, of course, I forgot to get one at Black's when we called there on the way through Glasgow to buy a milk can. In the meantime, however, Robin had dropped the compass several times and this must have done the trick for when we suddenly remembered it before our first walk we found it had started working again. It only really failed us once and that was on the top of Liathach. It was the usual kind of day, pouring with rain, sleet as well, with the mist down to about 500 feet or so all day. We found the first



LIATHACH FROM THE BEINN EIGHE RIDGE
(Photograph by Kenneth Shephard)

summit, traversing the mountain from the east, and, with a certain amount of difficulty from a navigational point of view, made our way along the whole ridge with its six or seven tops. It was at this point at the far end of the ridge that the compass began to be temperamental and we were alarmed to find that by turning it round we could get the needle to point in any direction we wished. Probably the rain had got in, for it was in two halves which you had to hold together. The result was that we made what might well have been the first descent of the north side of Sgorr a' Chadail — no person in his right mind would normally dream of going down there — landing, in our stupidity, a long way up the trackless Coire Mhic Nobuil instead of in Glen Torridon. It was six or eight miles back to the car. This was trying enough but the really irritating part of the day was when the Torridon postman, giving us "Good evening" as we squelched along, with my precious matches limp as wet macaroni, thought fit to add "Rather showery, isn't it?"

An Stac (or Stack Polly) went easily in a short morning. The occasional view of a spike of rock along the summit ridge from its adjacent spike was quite interesting, but that was all we ever saw. It was good to note how well vibram soles stick on Torridon sandstone when the water is streaming over your toecap.

I thought Suilven a particularly hard day. We made the mistake of calling at Glen Canisp lodge — braving the warning notices about the danger of stray bullets — to ask for permission to go on this particular deer forest. Here we were informed that we must not go along the track which continues past the lodge and ultimately goes quite close to the northern side of the mountain, but that we might go along another track to a keeper's cottage. Thinking in our ignorance that this might be a better route we did not bother to consider the Fionn Loch route to the south of the mountain, and I believe I even went so far as to thank the people at the lodge for their kindness. I found we could get the car to the keeper's cottage, but having arrived there we had to ask the occupants in which direction our mountain lay, for as usual, the mist was more or less down to the deck. We noted the direction on our invaluable compass and marched — not that this is the word — along this line for what appeared to be several hours. There was not the vestige of a track at any time, and never a distant aiming point on which to set the compass.

The situation was complicated by the fact that having ascended each of the innumerable hillocks which lay between us and our distant and unseen goal we found that we were separated from the next hillock by a depressing looking lochan which had to be circumnavigated on a different compass course. It was, needless to say, pouring with rain, the going was appalling, and we never seemed to be getting any nearer to anywhere, particularly as each hillock seemed exactly the same as the one before. At times we wondered, like Mr. Tilman, whether we were even holding our own, and then, just when we were debating whether we were still in the same county — a reasonable point, if you look at the map — we more or less walked slap into Caisteal Liath, and we knew that the day would eventually be ours. We managed to find our way round to the northern side of the mountain and when we thought we had gone far enough we crawled up the steep heather and scree — we could now see about three yards ahead — and at last found the summit ridge. It was then an easy matter to turn sharp right, squelch up to the highest point and enjoy the experience, for a few drenching seconds, of standing on the summit of the mountain which some people declare is the best viewpoint in Scotland. All I could see was my very wet son, in my second best anorak, standing about three feet away, with the rain streaming down his face and bubbling out of his boots.

We reserved, however, the wettest day for An Teallach. The night before, I rang up the noble baronet who owns this mountain, and for all I know, several others, and asked him whether he would be shooting deer the following day. He replied that that was his intention, and that, in any case, An Teallach was impossible in bad weather. He was kind enough to suggest, however, that I telephone him again the following morning. The telephone is only fifty yards from the hostel but when I reached it after breakfast the next day I was already wet through. It was, in other words, a perfect non-shooting day, and the baronet was able to tell me that his shooting trip was off. His suggestion was that I should come to do An Teallach next May, but when he realised how determined we were he was extremely pleasant and co-operative. He recited a list of the people who had come to grief on the mountain in bad weather, suggested a route well away from his deer, asked us to do as little shouting and

banging as possible, and finally gave us his blessing. Sir Michael Peto is obviously a gentleman worth cultivating.

I will not bore you with an account of the day. We never even saw Loch Toll an Lochain which is the celebrated viewpoint from which to photograph the numerous summits of An Teallach, although I believe we stood on its shores. Without any exaggeration I think the fells were wetter that day than I have ever seen them. The water was running an inch deep off the slabs in the corrie and we were over our boot tops at nearly every step. We reached the ridge in the end, but did not traverse the mountain, being content with one out of the fourteen summits. On the lower slopes when we emerged from the worst of the mist we saw ptarmigan and then, very low down, about fifty of Sir Michael's deer, but, as requested, we passed them without a sound, save from that of our squelching boots.

There was, of course, one consolation for all this bog trotting — a most remarkable day. The torrential rain one morning, following about ten other similarly wet mornings, must have made us lazy and we idled and made, I believe, some food purchases. About 2.30 p.m. we set off gallantly in a heavy down-pour and thick mist to deal with the Ben More Coigach group. The compass got us to the top of Beinn nan Caorach and we were plotting the direction to the next top, when, almost miraculously, the rain stopped and the mist began to lift. We pushed on with all speed fearing the mist would come down again, but for some extraordinary reason the sun came out — the only time we saw it on the mountains during the holiday — and we reached the top of Sgurr an Fhìdhleir in the most perfect weather. From this remarkable summit from which drops a 700 feet high precipice, we saw An Stac, and beyond it Suilven, beyond that again the most northerly mountains on the Scottish mainland and, in between, dozens of lochans and a wild lovely countryside.

With our wet clothes steaming in the sunshine we hurried on to the top of Ben More Coigach itself and then along the rocky ridge to the last peak overlooking the sea. And this was the view which made the holiday worth while. Far below us, sparkling in the evening sunshine, and so close we felt we could have dropped a stone into the depths, was the deep blue sea, the waves breaking white on a dozen yellow beaches fringed with grey, brown rocks, and the sea birds wheeling and screaming over the tide. Just off

the coast, like great ships at anchor, lay the Summer Isles, beyond we could see the magic outer islands and far to the south rose the dark spires of An Teallach.

We trod down through the heather with the smell of the peat from the crofters' fires in our nostrils, the whirr of a million insects in the undergrowth in our ears, the sight of sunset over the Atlantic to enjoy, and the thoughts of a good dinner to keep us going.



HOLES IN THE GROUND

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THE significance of the word "rambler" appears to have changed considerably since the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club was formed. It has had ample time to do so. That body is celebrating this year the Diamond Jubilee of its foundation. It has spent the sixty glorious years since 1892 in indefatigably clinging by its teeth to overhanging crags, swarming up wholly inaccessible pinnacles and plunging through torrents of cold water into vertical abysses. There is only one thing it has failed to do in those sixty years; it has never, in any normally accepted sense of the term, rambled.

The Club's activity, is, in fact, mountaineering. Its 160 members live all over the habitable world; but the centre of that world is, not unnaturally, Yorkshire. Now, Yorkshire is a county rich in all manner of Nature's choicest products; but it lacks a supply of rocks of the kind esteemed by mountaineers. The Club has to travel, therefore, in search of such rocks, to the Lake District, Switzerland, Norway, the Andes or some other locality where they abound. This it does; but it is a long way to the Andes, and sometimes the members of the Club can only spare a week-end. They solve the problem by doing their local mountaineering below the ground instead of above it. The county is freely supplied with subterranean holes. These contain great quantities of unscaleable limestone which the members of the Y.R.C. scale in conditions of the most delectable darkness, dirt and discomfort imaginable.

A word or two about pot-holes. A pot-hole is not to be confused with a cave. A cave is a hole in the side of a hill; a pot-hole is a hole, or a system of holes, in the ground. Most of the pot-holes are situated in the parts of the Pennines around Ingleborough; they have delightful names, like Gaping Ghyll, Cowskull Pot, Jingling Pot and Boggarts' Roaring Holes. They are descended by men of unusual calmness, amiability and muscular powers, equipped with ropes, rope-ladders, large boots with large nails, dungarees, and miners' helmets bearing either electric or acetylene lights. A partial descent of Bar Pot was, however, accomplished lately by the writer, who lacks almost all these requisites. He owes the experience to the friendly invitation of the Y.R.C., and his life to their constant attention and support. Had he read, before going down, of the recent disastrous descent in the Pyrenees, he would have stayed resolutely above ground.

Bar Pot is a part of the Gaping Ghyll system. There are many such subsidiary means of access to the great main chamber of Gaping Ghyll, which can otherwise be reached only by lowering the sufferer down on a bosun's chair through a waterfall. The writer, having gratefully accepted the Y.R.C.'s invitation, found himself standing at the bottom of a boulder-filled hollow in the



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moor above Clapham, Yorks. In front of him was a small mouse-hole at the foot of a limestone crag. Kindly hands placed a miner's helmet on his head. The electric light in this particular helmet was very weak, so a further light was slung round his neck. He then entered the mousehole feet first.

A cold wind blew strongly up the mousehole and cold water trickled steadily from its roof. It led down to a place where a man squatted by a narrow hole in the floor. He was waiting for the writer. He tied a rope round him and the writer stepped into the hole.

This hole is called a Loading Gauge. It serves to ensure that nobody with a waist measurement of more than forty inches can get into the hole at all. The writer is not in this category. He passed slowly through the hole, leaving his arms behind him.



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Below the hole his feet were waving about, knocking against rock walls but finding no manner of foothold. He sank till, looking down by his side, he could see a widening cleft below with an illuminated man wedged in it. The man advised the writer to place his right foot on an invisible ledge. The writer placed his foot on the ledge. It slipped off. This ledge moved upwards past the writer's knee; but his left foot struck another.

The writer was now stationary, and supported, though insecurely, by one foot. It seemed a good place to stay, permanently if

need be; but both the man peering through the Loading Gauge and the man wedged in mid-air advised him earnestly to proceed. Five feet or so below his feet a rope ladder issued from the rock. There were no handholds or footholds whatever between the writer and the ladder. He listened patiently to a great deal of friendly advice, and at last decided to descend. The decision was reinforced by the sudden departure of his foot from its ledge.

After some confused passage of time the writer found himself grasping the upper part of the rope ladder, with his stomach wrapped round a rock and his legs waving in black space looking for a rung. The manner in which the descent from the Loading Gauge to the rope ladder was made is not fully known, but the technique used is believed to have been entirely new.

At the foot of the ladder the writer de-rope and descended a narrow and nubbly funnel, appreciably out of the vertical, for a hundred feet or so, till a great hole was reached. He was requested to crawl like a fly round the vertical side of this hole and through a tiny aperture in its far wall.

The aperture led to another chasm, obviously bottomless, and about twenty feet in diameter. Several men standing about the

edge of this chasm tied another rope round the writer's middle and led him to the brink. Thirty-five feet down, they said, there is a ledge; step off there and have a rest before going down the next sixty feet.

The writer descended thirty-five feet to the ledge. His head-light was now completely extinct. The lamp round his neck warmly illuminated the front of his jacket; a little tiny light on the head of a man shone, sixty feet below. Otherwise all was darkness. Water dripped liberally upon him. If he stepped to the rear of the ledge the water



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became a torrent; if he stepped forwards he tended to fall off. He decided to continue the descent, and stepped back on to the ladder.

The ladder rotated smartly three times and deposited him on the ledge again.

The writer made nine unsuccessful attempts to get off the ledge on to the ladder and descend. The moment a downward step was taken the ladder bucked like a mule and shot him back on to the ledge. Distressed at the unhappy relations between himself and the ladder, he decided to reascend. Reaching the top of the chasm, he sat reflectively on a boulder, until he was at length moved to ascend to the Upper Air. In this he collaborated with the secretary, a man of immense strength, who hauled him bodily up the final pitch to the Loading Gauge.

As the writer was passing up the narrow cleft leading to the Loading Gauge, his remaining light, the one slung round his neck, was torn off by the circumjacent rock and flung into the depths. He finished the journey in complete darkness. His final discovery was that daylight has an overpowering and wholly delightful green smell. He had, he was told, spent four and a half hours below ground and been to a depth of about 200 feet. The pot goes down another one hundred and sixty.

Pot-holing, the writer decides, is an admirable sport for the young, strong, nerveless and elastic. It is also the only sport known to him in which one participant may remark to another, in complete seriousness. "Can I have a light from your hat?"



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CLIMBS ON GUISE CLIFF

by G. P. A. Scovell

NOTE.—The directions “right” and “left” apply when facing the rock.
All place names and descriptions of approaches should be read in conjunction with the following maps:—

Sheet 91 “Ripon” of the Ordnance Survey New Popular Edition.
Sheet 26 “Harrogate” of the Ordnance Survey Popular Edition.

GUISE CLIFF is the line of high gritstone crags extending for half a mile along the upper part of the escarpment culminating on Heyshaw Moor on the S.W. side of Nidderdale between Pateley Bridge and Summerbridge.

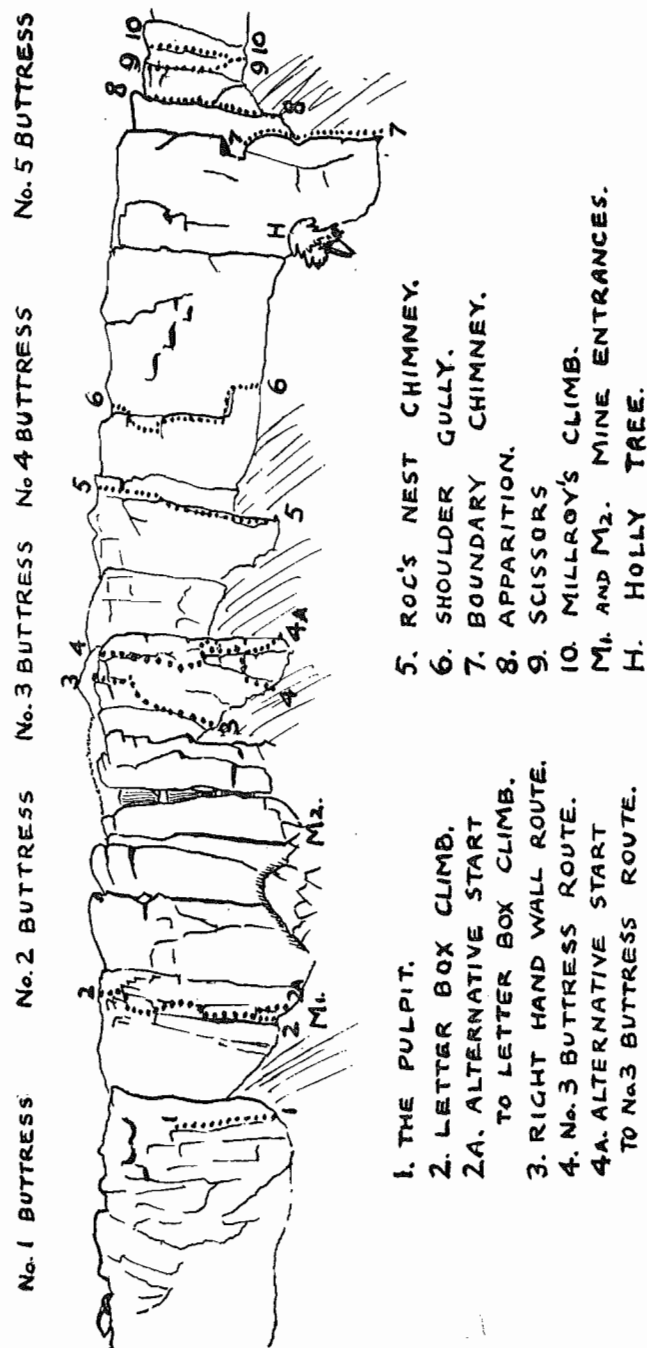
The Normal National Grid Reference is 44/167633.

The history of Guise Cliff as a climbing ground is obscure. As far as the writer knows the earliest visitors were E. T. W. Addyman and friends. In later years H. L. and F. W. Stembridge were visitors but they were not enamoured of the place. The cliff was then left alone and details of climbs done faded into obscurity.

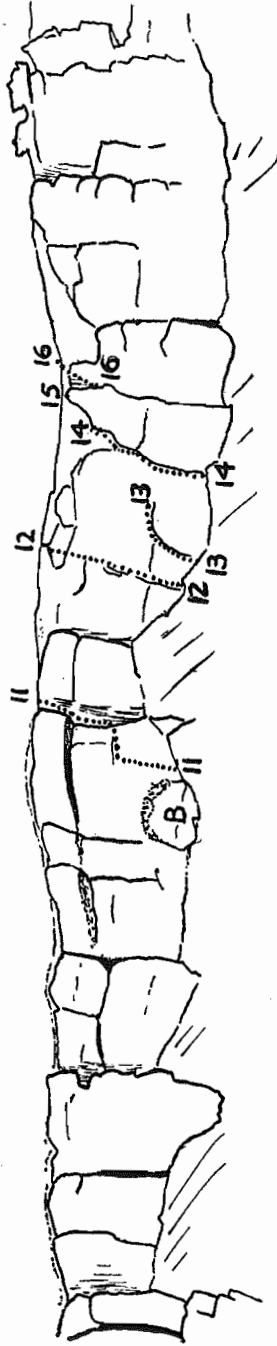
In recent years since the war a small contingent of Y.R.C. men has been active at the cliff and after much down-to-earth work its value as a climbing ground of great merit has at last been appreciated. Other visitors have included the York Mountaineering Club, and Royal Engineers Climbing Club from Ripon and small groups of independent climbers.

Starting the description at the left hand end of the escarpment there are first a few low broken rocks. Next, situated by itself is No. 1 Buttress. Buttresses 2, 3, 4 and 5 follow in that order and are situated together on the same high stretch of cliff. The right wall of No. 5 Buttress goes sharply in towards the moor and tapers off at an internal corner into a Long Low Wall of rock which becomes slightly higher at its right hand end. Then comes a stretch of wooded hillside and two small blocks which are not illustrated in accompanying sketches. Finally, situated below the brow of the escarpment and in the woods, is the high North Buttress, below which is a large and easily identified square-cut boulder.

The main part of the cliff has been sketched and the routes numbered to correspond with the numbers of the climbs in the text.



THE LONG WALL.



- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 11. SHELTER CLIMB. | 15. AIGUILLE DES MOUTONS. |
| 12. LEDGE AND CRACK. | 16. FIREPLACE CHIMNEY. |
| 13. SHORT PITCH. | B. BILBERRY TOPPED BLOCK. |
| 14. INTESTINE. | |

The rock is mainly steep and in many places unreliable. As the climbs described are not yet necessarily free from unsound holds, all those used should be carefully tested. The rock does not dry quickly and on a humid day the lichen growing there retains a small amount of moisture and makes nailed boots the most convenient form of footwear.

Owing to the undeveloped nature of Guise Cliff there are many possibilities for the pioneer, particularly the one who revels in showering loose rocks, earth and vegetation on to the heads of those below.

Particular care should be taken not to tamper with the portions of fence built at strategic places along the top of the cliff to restrict the wanderings of suicidal livestock, or the rightful and tempestuous indignation of the farmer will be invited. Apart from the usual unpleasant consequences of such an action the climbs would all have to be considerably upgraded for the occasion!

The easiest approach to Guise Cliff is along the path which traverses the full length of its crest from the prominent ruin of Yorke's Folly at its right hand end. The easiest descents are at the right hand end between the end of the Long Wall and the N. Buttress and at the left hand end between Nos. 1 and 2 Buttresses or to the left of No. 1 Buttress.

As the distance between the right hand end of the Long Wall and the left hand end of No. 2 Buttress is considerable it is useful to know of the descents along this portion to prevent too much walking between climbs. These descents are included in the section describing the climbs. It is possible to abseil at many places along the Long Wall using one of the many trees as an anchor.

Another approach is through the village of Glasshouses immediately below the cliff in the dale. Take the first cart road on the left after crossing the Nidd. Follow it as it goes under the "I" of "Hollin Ho" on the map, until a gate is reached through which on the left is a wood and on the right a farm. Either go up the track in the wood on left for the left hand end of the cliff or go through the farmyard and bear up through the wood immediately on the left for the centre and right hand end of the cliff.

Although it is easy to walk up to the bases of Nos. 1, 2, 3, and the N. Buttress it is necessary to indulge in a grim struggle through a tangled mass of undergrowth and great boulders to any desired goal along the base of the rest of the crag.

To get a general idea of the layout of the crag it is best to view it well away from its base and best of all, at the seasons of the year when the trees are bare.

There is no drinking water at the crag itself but lower down in Guise Cliff wood are several tiny streams.

At the base of No. 2 Buttress are two old mine entrances which give excellent shelter in the event of bad weather. Penetration of these mines is rendered unsafe by rotten timbering.

The climbs described below are all those known to the writer as having been led, and the gradings have been decided in conjunction with other climbers.

The lengths of climbs given are the distances climbed through.

E. = Easy	V.D. = Very difficult
M. = Moderate	S. = Severe
D. = Difficult	V.S. = Very severe

The writer gratefully thanks all of his friends who have rendered him such invaluable assistance in the gathering of information for this article.

The Sketches are by H. L. Stembridge.

No. 1 Buttress

1.—The Pulpit via Right Hand Chimney. V.D. 20 ft.

Climb the chimney first using holds to the left of its rear wall. Then back up a few feet using holds for the feet and hands on the right wall. Continue up the left hand crack and finish with a comfortable pull on to the top of the pulpit.

It is inadvisable to follow the obvious route to the top of the crag from here. Its loose rock and rubble has already been the cause of a narrow escape by one party.

No. 2 Buttress

2.—Letter Box Climb. D. 63 ft.

The Start is at the prominent chimney above the left of the two mine entrances.

- (1) 24 ft. Climb the ridge formed by the junction of the right wall of the chimney and the main rock face to a large ledge of cave. Belay to block above ash tree.
- (2) 25 ft. Climb mouth of cave to mantleshelf on right outer wall. Step across to the left wall and leave the cave mouth by climbing diagonally left on earthy holds to a large bilberry-covered shelf. That plant provided the necessary balance for the last move. Belay to tree.

- (3) 14 ft. Shunning the easy escape to the right or left, climb the recess at the rear of the shelf and post yourself on to the moor through the letter box slot at the top of the pitch.
- (1a) Alternative start. Rather easier. Start in the corner to the right of the chimney and by means of large slot hold, swing across and up to the first large foothold on the ridge.

No. 3 Buttress

3.—Right Hand Wall. V.S. 36 ft.

This route starts above an earth step on the hillside half way along and against the right wall of the Buttress.

Start at bottom of wall on good holds which diminish in size until they are non-existent below a narrow mantleshelf. Gain this mantleshelf and traverse right to the pair of adjoining cracks. Climb these to the moor.

An alternative and easier start is at the left end of the mantleshelf and traverse right along it to the cracks.

4.—No. 3 Buttress Route. V.D. 76 ft.

This climb starts to the left of the trees growing out from the base of the buttress to the left of its highest part.

- (1) 23 ft. Climb past the trees straight up to an earthy ledge. Either climb over the pinnacle above and to the right or traverse round it at mid-height to a recess. Belay over the top of the pinnacle.
- (2) 23 ft. The Signal Lever pitch. So called because of an unstable flake of rock which used to adorn it.

Step off the top of the pinnacle into the crack on the left. There is a good incut hand hold to the left of the crack. Continue straight up ledge crack to ledge. Above the crack to its left is a terrific hold through which the whole forearm may be inserted. Owing to the lie of the strata this hold should be used with extreme care.

Traverse to the right under the overhang to a thread belay at the near side of a large block resting on the ledge.

- (3) 30 ft. Climb the chimney at the L.H. end of the ledge to a tree belay at its top.
- (2a) 17 ft. As an alternative to pitch (2). Climb directly up from the recess to the ledge. There is a useful hold in the vertical crack below the ledge.

- (1a) S. As an alternative to pitch (1). Climb directly from the lowest part of the buttress to the recess at the bottom of pitch 2.

No. 4 Buttress

5.—*Roc's Nest Chimney*. S. 80 ft.

Situated prominently on the nose of the buttress.

- (1) 40 ft. Gain the bottom of the chimney by traversing under the overhang to its left with much difficulty. Climb it inside and leave it at its top to the right. Belay round the corner.
- (2) 20 ft. Traverse right to a greasy ledge.
- (3) 20 ft. Continue up gully on to moor.

No. 5 Buttress

6.—*Shoulder Gully*. V.D. 85 ft.

A very dirty (not the grade) ascent immediately to the left of large overhangs on the centre of the left wall of the buttress.

- (1) 15 ft. Climb crack in wall directly beneath overhang to belay at tree on ledge.
- (2) Walk 20 ft. to left along ledge.
- (3) 35 ft. Climb the chimney to the ledge on the left and traverse out to the left round a block. Then climb back on bilberry holds to a tree belay at the top of the chimney.
- (4) 15 ft. Scramble through the tree to a small earthy ledge and climb the short gully direct to the moor.

7.—*Boundary Chimney*. V.D. 50 ft.

A few feet to the right of the wire fence beneath the nose of the buttress.

Climb overhanging chimney to cave on ledge which runs from base of the next climb horizontally to nose of the buttress. There is a good stance and a tree belay 4 ft. above to the right.

The natural continuation of this climb is straight up the chimney to the right of the nose of the buttress and has only been climbed with a top rope.

8.—*Apparition*. D. 60 ft.

On the right wall of the buttress. The dirty looking chimney with a tree growing down from its top.

- (1) 35 ft. Climb the chimney over the tree to a large recess with a belay on the left.

- (2) 25 ft. Climb the continuation of the chimney and emerge on to the moor either by going under the overhang to the left or by finishing the chimney itself.

The Long Wall

9.—*Scissors*. M. 40 ft.

In the angle where No. 5 Buttress meets the Long Wall. A convenient descent route.

Scramble up to a platform at the mouth of a large cave. Climb the jammed rock in the corner to the moor.

10.—*Milroy's Climb*. V.S. 40 ft.

The rock is extremely loose and unreliable.

Start at the same place as the Scissors and having reached the foot of a very slimy crack, continue up it to the moor.

11.—*Shelter Climb*. D. 50 ft.

Beneath a large overhang to the right of a bilberry topped block standing prominently away from the base of the Wall.

- (1) 25 ft. Climb the left side of the wall to a ledge under the overhang. Traverse to the right to a large block resting on the ledge and a flake belay above.
- (2) 25 ft. Traverse round the corner using large holds on the shelf below the overhang to a small ledge. Finish up the gully ahead.

The moor may be easily gained by starting at the bottom of the Shelter climb and working diagonally upwards to the left. This is a useful means of descent.

12.—*Ledge and Crack*. D. 47 ft.

To the right of a narrow gap between a huge detached block and the Wall.

- (1) 33 ft. Climb the crack on good holds to a large ledge on the left.
- (2) 14 ft. Continue up the crack to the right of an overhang to an excellent finish.

13.—*Short pitch*. V.D. 15 ft.

A few yards to the right of the ledge and crack.

Climb straight up from the centre of the base of the wall and traverse horizontally to the right to a large bilberry-covered platform.

14.—(LONG WALL)

Aiguille des Moutons. V.D. 15 ft.

A squat pinnacle the top of which is level with the moor. It is near the right end of the Long Wall and at the left end of its highest part. Do not approach this climb through the natural tunnel from the moor as this entails moving a fence, but scramble up from the base of the cliff by the slope on the right.

Climb the pinnacle by the side nearest to the main cliff.

15.—Intestine. Technically M. Severe on the nerves. 40 ft.

Below the Aiguille des Moutons to its left.

Climb the loose subterranean chimney and emerge on to a ledge of matted branches below the pinnacle. Quickly gain the ledge behind the pinnacle.

16.—Fireplace Chimney. V.D. 15 ft.

Climb from the tunnel behind the Aiguille des Moutons on to the moor.

The Left Block between the Long Wall and North Buttress

17.—The Chimney. D. 30 ft.

The entry is not easy but after a lodgement has been effected, climb easily to the top.

The North Buttress

18.—Thin Man's Delight. V.D. 40 ft.

The overhanging crack to the left of the holly tree at the left hand end of the buttress.

- (1) 20 ft. With much difficulty and expenditure of energy enter the crack and climb it to ledge on the right.
- (2) 20 ft. Continue up the crack to some loose rocks below an overhang. Traverse under the overhang to the right to a gap below a pinnacle. Climb easily to the top of the North Buttress Pinnacle.

19.—North Buttress Pinnacle, Ordinary Route. D. 40 ft.

A large holly tree grows from the top of the first pitch.

- (1) 20 ft. Traverse from right to left along the base of the mossy slab into the wide crack. Climb the crack and scramble round the holly tree to a large recess.
- (2) 20 ft. Climb the crack on the left of the recess to the gap and continue easily to the top of the pinnacle.

Boulders

There are boulder problems galore at Guise Cliff of which three excellent examples are described.

There is a well scratched warming up boulder on the track below No. 1 Buttress.

A large square cut boulder with two routes on its south-west corner and many other problems as yet unsolved lies a few yards below the North Buttress.

Beneath Yorke's Folly and near the road is a large cubical block with a fine problem on its west face

DR. JOHNSON AND THE MOUNTAINS

by J. Geoffrey Brook

“Dr. Johnson in his famous dictionary defined us as barbarians and savages.”

G. D. Abraham

(*The Complete Mountaineer*)

WITH all due respect to Mr. Abraham, Dr. Johnson in his famous dictionary did nothing of the sort.

His definition of a mountaineer fell into two parts, the second being complementary to the first, thus:—

(1) An inhabitant of the mountains.

(2) A savage; a freebooter, a rustick.

In Johnson's day, and for some time after, the name mountaineer was given exclusively to one who lived in the mountains, and it was not until the practice of scaling mountains for pleasure developed that the word changed its meaning and widened its application, so that today the mountaineer is not so much one who lives in the mountains, but rather the casual visitor to them. We could perhaps recall some mountaineers to whom the terms of Johnson's second definition might be applied, but let that pass!

Dr. Johnson held strong views, which he did not shrink from expressing on all subjects of interest, whether he rightly understood them or not, and it is interesting, if not edifying, to recall his recorded comments on the mountains and the country scene generally.

Johnson was essentially a townsman, more interested in people than in places. He believed that when a man is tired of London he is tired of life, and said that the only excuse for living in the country was when a man had a task that could only be done better there than in the town.

When Mr. Thrale once rashly asked him to contrast English and French scenery he received the following broadside:

“Never heed such nonsense, Sir; a blade of grass is always a blade of grass whether it grows in one country or another; let us, if we do talk, talk about something; men and women are my subjects of inquiry.”

He was not a mountaineer, neither in his own definition nor in ours. He was, however, no pale literary man, but a character

of robust physique, who thought nothing in his youth of walking from Lichfield to Birmingham and back, a distance of 32 miles, and in his old age of holding at bay, single-handed, a gang of street ruffians.

Johnson lived just about the end of the period when man approached the mountains with fear and trembling, and just before the period when the poetic—romantic view began to prevail. Therefore it is not surprising to find him regarding the mountain scene with neither abject fear nor fulsome adulation. With one or two perverse exceptions he took up his usual position of sturdy common sense. One exception was when he wrote:

“He that has seen Dovedale has no need to visit the Highlands.”

One can only assume this was written with the dual object of pleasing his Derbyshire friend Taylor, and annoying his Scottish friend Boswell.

So far as we know he never reached the summit of a single mountain, but had he visited the Highlands as a younger man, we feel sure he would have done so. Is there not a note of regret in a letter he wrote to Mrs. Thrale from Skye?

“Here are mountains which I should once have climbed, but to climb steeps is now very laborious, and to descend them dangerous; and I am now content with knowing, that by scrambling up a rock, I shall only see other rocks, and a wider circuit of barren desolation.”

In spite of his remark to Mrs. Thrale that, “seeing Scotland, madam, is only seeing a worse England” he was persuaded in 1773, by his friend and biographer James Boswell, to visit the Highlands and the Islands. Considering the state of the Inns, roads and lack of transport at that time, this journey, for a ponderous old gentleman of 64 years, used to a sedentary life, was no mean feat. He braved filthy, flea-ridden hostels, rough roads and rougher seas, came through it all with general good humour and set down his impressions in his “Journey to the Western Islands,” and in several letters.

But the chief source of our knowledge of the great tour is Boswell's Imperishable, “Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.”

The couple left Edinburgh on August 18th, 1773, and travelling up the east coast visited St. Andrews, Dundee, Montrose, and

Aberdeen. From there Fort Augustus was reached via Banff and Inverness. They stayed a night at Anoch, then crossed to Skye at Glenelg. In addition to Skye they visited Raasay, Coll, Mull and Iona, returning to Edinburgh after calling on Boswell's father at Auchinleck.

Thomas Gray, the poet, visited Gordale Scar in 1769 and "stay'd there, (not without shuddering) a quarter of an hour." Somehow we cannot imagine Dr. Johnson shuddering even if he had suddenly and unexpectedly found himself on top of the Inaccessible Pinnacle, but he was without doubt impressed in a gloomy sort of way by the Highland scenery, as two quotations from his "Journey" will show.

"It will very readily occur that uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks and heath, and waterfalls; and that those journeys are useless labours which neither impregnate the imagination nor enlarge the understanding."

And later:

"Regions mountainous and wild, thinly inhabited, and little cultivated, make a great part of the earth, and he that has never seen them, must live unacquainted with much of the face of nature, and with one of the great scenes of human existence."

Near Loch Ness they visited the Fall of Fiers. The Doctor must have been tired that day, for he writes:

"The country at the bridge strikes the imagination with all the gloom and grandeur of Siberian Solitude. We desired our guides to show us the Fall, and dismounting, clambered over very rugged crags, till I began to wish our curiosity might have been satisfied with less trouble and danger."

Later we imagine the travellers moving slowly through Glen Shiel, each probably lost in his own thought, when Johnson suddenly becomes aware of his surroundings. Let Boswell speak:

"Dr. Johnson owned he was now in a scene of as wild nature as he could see; but he corrected me sometimes in my inaccurate observations."

"There, (said I) is a mountain like a cone."

Johnson. "No, Sir, It would be called so in a book, but when a man comes to look at it, he sees it is not so. It is indeed pointed at the top, but one side of it is larger than the other!"

Another mountain I called immense.

Johnson. "No, it is no more than a considerable protuberance!"

Anyone more thin-skinned than Boswell might have found this sort of thing a little irritating!

The travellers passed over Mann Ratagan which Johnson called, "a formidable hill which we climbed with more difficulty than we had yet experienced."

They stayed a night at Glenelg, their chief worry here being the live-stock.

"Mrs. Boswell" writes Johnson "had warned us that we should catch something, and had given us sheets for our security, 'for — and —' she said, 'came back from Skye scratching themselves.' I thought sheets a slender defence against the confederacy with which we were threatened."

But clean hay was found, and the night passed in comparative comfort.

Next day they were rowed in the pouring rain from Glenelg down the Sound of Sleat to Armadale, from thence past Isle Oronsay and arrived eventually at Coirechatachan to stay with one Mackinnon.

Says Dr. Johnson:

"The hill behind the house we did not climb. The weather was rough, and the height and steepness discouraged us."

A pity the weather was rough, but probably even in fine weather the height and steepness of the scree slopes of Beinn na Caillich (2,403 ft.) would still have discouraged them.

From Coirechatachan they crossed to Raasay, and here Boswell somehow got permission to leave Johnson for a day, going off with old Malcolm McLeod and others. The party was called between 5 and 6 o'clock a.m.; spent the day traversing the island, and climbed to the top of Dun Caan (1,450 ft.), on the summit of which they performed a Highland dance. What the philosophical Rambler thought of this escapade is not reported.

To the reader who loves mountains as much as he revels in Boswell and Johnson there is one profoundly disappointing omission in both their accounts of Skye. So far as both are concerned, the unique and unforgettable feature of the Island, the Cuillin Hills, might never have existed.

There is just one passing remark in a letter of Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, written from Talister, which could refer to the Cuillin.

"The mountains about it are of great height, with waterfalls succeeding one another so fast, that as one ceases to be heard another begins."

So much for the Cuillin.

On the Island of Coll they did at least set off to climb a hill, an episode which must be told in Boswell's own words.

"I proposed that Col should show me the great stone, mentioned in a former page as having been thrown by a giant to the top of a mountain. Dr. Johnson, who did not like to be left alone, said he would accompany us as far as riding was practicable. We ascended a part of the hill on horseback, and Col and I scrambled up the rest. A servant held our horses, and Dr. Johnson placed himself on the ground, with his back against a large fragment of rock. The wind being high, he let down the cocks of his hat, and tied it with his handkerchief under his chin. While we were employed in examining the stone, which did not repay our trouble in getting to it, he amused himself with reading "GATAKER ON LOTS AND ON THE CHRISTIAN WATCH," a very learned book of the last age.

When we described him from above, he had a most eremitical appearance, and on our return told us, he had been so much engaged by Gataker, that he had never missed us."

Before leaving Skye I recommend any climber who is also a Johnsonian to take a day off from the hills to visit Dunvegan Castle, where Johnson and Boswell stayed for several days. Amongst other things such as a lock of Prince Charles' hair and part of Flora MacDonald's corsets, he will see the original letter written by Dr. Johnson on his return to London thanking Lady McLeod for her hospitality.

In 1774 Johnson made a journey into Wales with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. Perhaps he missed the stimulating company of Boswell, but whatever the reason, his only record of this tour was a diary of brief notes, published posthumously.

He wrote to Boswell:

"Wales is so little different from England that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller."

And he said that:

"Instead of bleak and barren mountains, there were green and fertile ones."

I wrote earlier that in all probability Dr. Johnson had never climbed a mountain, but in this same letter to Boswell there is one brief, tantalising sentence throwing the whole question in doubt.

He wrote:

"I have been in five or six counties in North Wales . . . have been upon Penmanmaur and Snowdon, and passed over into Anglesea."

Did Dr. Johnson ever climb Snowdon — or even Penmanmaur? Alas, we shall never know, but, as Boswell might have said:

"The thought of Dr. Johnson, that majestick teacher of moral and religious wisdom, ascending to the summit of mighty Snowdon, conjures in the mind a succession of Pleasing images."

If Johnson was never a mountaineer he had at least a glimmering of the truth that physical elevation brings, or should bring, moral elevation. In one of his Rambler essays, "Adventures of Living in a Garret," he writes:

"I have found dullness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water, though not very hot, boils in a receiver partly exhausted; and heads, in appearance empty, have teemed with notions upon rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and extension."

But, he adds later:

"I know there are some who would continue blockheads on the summit of the Andes or the peak of Teneriffe."

And with these chastening words we can take leave of Johnson, Boswell and the hills, carrying only perhaps in our ears the faint murmur of an imaginary conversation.

BOSWELL:

"As many worthy men have suffered death in late years, is not mountain climbing a foolhardy pursuit?"

JOHNSON:

"Sir, he that climbs mountains must expect to meet with difficulty, discomfort and danger.

"That the rewards are regarded as adequate compensation for these is a strong argument in favour of the pastime.

"Little can be known of either the hardships or the rewards by the man that never strays above the level plain, and the testimony of those who have attained great heights cannot be disregarded. That valuable lives have been lost is regrettable, but unavoidable."

BOSWELL:

"But, sir, might not some means of mechanical transport be contrived up the mountain side, thus enabling the old and infirm, as well as the young and vigorous, to view the extensive panorama to be seen from the summit?"

JOHNSON:

"Why, Sir, what paltry stuff is this.

"Nothing of value is acquired without effort, and he that is carried up a mountain side in a conveyance will derive little of value from either the excursion or the panorama.

"As for the old and infirm, how many have the inclination for mountain ascents?"

"If a man has not satisfied such desires in his youth, then when age and infirmity arrive, let him be satisfied with the prospect from the plain.

"And now, sir, let us change the subject."

IN MEMORIAM

BERNARD A. BATES

It must be nearly 50 years since Bates and I first met. He was then a young man studying for his examinations with Williamson as coach.

Thus it was inevitable that he should be co-opted into some of the caving and climbing excursions for which the cottage at Stainforth was the starting place. This excellent headquarters was the choice of F. Botterill and H. Williamson. With such strenuous beginnings he soon naturally aspired to become a member of the Y.R.C.

On occasion Bernard came with me on some early nautical trips. On one of these, owing to a slight mishap, he earned for himself the soubriquet "Casabianca." (We subsequently recovered the anchor at low water).

Between the Wars Bates was an active member of the Committee and his work as Honorary Treasurer for so many years will long be remembered with gratitude by the Club. During these years the sea claimed most of my spare time so that Bates and I came together but seldom.

But Mountain, Pot-hole and the Sea have it in common that they inculcate a spirit in their devotees — a spirit which makes the latter the most trustworthy and dependable of comrades. It is just these qualities which will long live in our memories of a departed friend.

M. BOTTERILL

WALTER MEAKIN ROBERTS, 1876-1953

W. M. Roberts, O.B.E., M.A. who died 16th October, 1953 was a member of this Club from 1926, and of the Alpine Club from 1910 to 1948. From the Manchester Grammar School he became a Scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford and won both the Junior and Senior University Mathematical Scholarships. After five years at St. David's College, Lampeter he was appointed a civilian instructor at "The Shop" (R.M.A. Woolwich) and became the professor of Mathematics in 1922.

When the first war broke out he was released in early 1916 to be a gunner cadet in the first O.C.T.U. The later technical training being given by the major to a certain cadet corporal. After service at the front in France, he raised and trained a battery, and finished the war at the Stokes Mortar School. In 1939 "The Shop" closed down and he did valuable work as R.A. Major and instructor. All his life he followed with interest the careers of the many sappers and gunners he had taught.

A great Alpine guideless climber, trained on the British hills, he began in 1904 with guides, but from 1909 on went guideless, often with his brother and with Dr. H. L. R. Dent and J. H. Hollingsworth. He was one of the six who carried Boyd through the night out of Sunset Hole, but thereafter left pot-holing to one of the family. However, in armistice times he took soldier parties through the Belgian Caves.

Resuming after the First War, he delighted in introducing to the Alps many beginners, who will remember him with the greatest affection, recalling his sound judgment, his humour and patience. "Martin" Roberts was one of those few generous people who are prepared to take younger men on their

rope year after year to train them. His expeditions extended from Dauphine to the Stubaital. He joined the S.A.C. in 1905, was a founder of the A.B.M.S.A.C. and joint Secretary 1923-31, President 1931-33.

E.E.R.

HENRY HUMPHREYS; HAROLD HUMPHREYS

The name of Humphreys has for long been associated with the Y.R.C. and it is sad to record here the deaths of two members of this family, father and son, within a few weeks of each other.

Henry Humphreys died in February, 1953. He had been a member of the Club from 1920, and previously a member of the Y.S.A. He took part in many major pot-holing expeditions both with the Y.S.A. in his earlier days and then with this Club. His caravan near Castleton formed the base for many explorations of Derbyshire caves and pot-holes. He will be sadly missed by his many friends.

Harold Humphreys died suddenly on May 24th, 1953 whilst on holiday with his wife in Anglesey. Following in the footsteps of his father and uncle, both life members of the club and past vice-presidents, he joined the Y.R.C. in 1929 and became interested in pot-holing, mostly in the Derbyshire district. In recent years he suffered from ill health and was forced to curtail his activities, but continued to derive enjoyment from hill walking and fishing and attended many of the club meets. The last meet he joined was at the Hill Inn on January 31st, 1953. He will be long remembered by his friends for his good companionship, quiet patience and above all for the uncomplaining courage with which he faced his illness.

W.P.B.S., R.E.C.

SIR JOHN BARRAN

Sir John Barran died in his sleep in his 80th year at his home Sawley Hall, Ripon on the 8th July, 1952. He was born in Leeds, succeeded to the title in 1905, represented the Hawick Burghs in Parliament from 1909-1919 and stood for the N.W. Division of Hull in 1922, 1923 and 1924. He was Managing Director of his family business John Barran & Sons Limited, director of numerous other companies, a Justice of the Peace, Chairman of Governors of Ripon Grammar School, and local Chairman of the National Playing Fields Association. He displayed a keen interest in the activities of the Club since becoming a member in 1896, and his hospitality to the Club at Sawley Hall will long be remembered.

R.E.C.

RICHARD NOEL MIDDLETON

Noel Middleton died on 2nd July, 1951 at the age of 72 after a very short illness. He was a life member of the Y.R.C., which he joined in 1901.

Although his principal interest in life was music, Middleton had a great love of the country and of the mountains; as a young man he spent many holidays in the Alps, Norway and the English Lake District. In the later years of his

life he spent many week-ends walking over the hills and enjoying the countryside of Upper Wharfedale and Little Langdale. As a member of the Friends of the Lake District he always did everything he could to preserve the beauty and tranquility of the countryside.

A.L.M.

WALTER CLARKSON

Walter Clarkson died in 1953 after a long illness which latterly prevented him from taking any active part in outdoor activities.

All his life Clarkson was a keen supporter of the Co-operative Holiday Association, and of the Holiday Fellowship Movement. He was also a member of the Leeds Association Football Club.

He started climbing at Almscliffe with Frankland and Charlesworth, and accompanied them in the Lake District and to Skye. He joined the Y.R.C. in 1912 and served on the Committee in 1921 and 1922.

He had a fine baritone voice and sang at many of the Club's Annual Dinners; in particular he is recorded (*Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. IV, No. 13, page 169) as having taken a prominent part in the 21st Annual Dinner in 1913, when he sang "Yorkshire," "On Ilkla Moor" and "Ho! Jolly Jenkins."

His passing away is deeply mourned by all who knew him.

A. CHARLESWORTH

JOHN SEGAR ROY AVILA

John Avila fell to his death on Yellow Slab, Lliwedd, on 1st August, 1953, while taking part in the joint August Bank Holiday meet with the Rucksack Club.

When about 100 feet up the climb Avila was leading and was only a few feet above his companion, G. R. Robson, when he called "Hold." Robson, who was well belayed, braced himself to take Avila's weight, but he fell past him on to the rocks at the bottom of the climb, and was killed instantly.

The rope was a full weight nylon in good conditions. It was evident that while Avila was falling it caught on a sharp piece of rock, which he had just been using as a foothold, and was cut through.

Avila joined the club as a junior member in 1951 and had climbed in Switzerland, Scotland and other parts of Britain. His quiet friendly nature quickly endeared him to all who met him. By his untimely death the club has lost not only a keen and promising climber but a valuable member and a happy companion.

H.G.W.

CHIPPINGS

WHERE THE PENNINES END.—The importance of the Pennine Way movement is that it seems to have opened a route over Kinder and Bleakhouse freed from the fear of the grouse-landlords, but it is amusing that the protagonists fear to go beyond Crossfell and walk down to Alston, thence to the Roman Wall.

There is a popular impression that the Pennines join the Cheviots and one notable writer has said that they stretch unbroken to the Highlands. He must sleep between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Driving to Scotland by way of Teesdale and Longtown you cross no pass after Alston; following the Roman Wall to the Solway is through Lowlands. The conclusion is that the Pennines end south of the Roman Wall.

The professional Geographer will tell you the Northern end is at the Tyne Gap and here the width is such that the two highest motor roads in England run, not over the main watershed but from Weardale, both 2,056 ft., one into Teesdale, the other into Tynedale, whence the road over the main range reaches only 1,985 ft.

Ellis joined in the early *Times* correspondence, and pointed out that the end of the Pennine Range, seen so dramatically from the train along Edendale is marked by the steep 1,200 ft. scarp of Cold Fell above the village of Hallbankgate. For 10 miles North of Cold Fell there is no spot above 1,000 ft.; the Cheviots appear as a high group from the far distance.

More Ramblers must do the joyful tramp from Hartside to Cold Fell but the bold spirits who go from Crossfell to Alston via Hartside will find the cafe a wreck; the view is still there

E.E.R.

CAVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY.—Conscience has at last been roused among the newer clubs. The C.P.S. has been formed and an excellent code issued.

But our field of work is very small really and the main trouble is not yet being tackled and must eventually be insisted on—don't take bands of people into caves. Caves should be for those who appreciate them, are too easily damaged, the damage is progressive and there is no natural seasonal renewal of beauty.

Anyone who has visited the Valley of Kings and has entered one of the Tombs opened up during the nineteenth century will know what irreparable damage can be done by the ignorant, the hooligan and the souvenir hunter.

LAKE DISTRICT.—At the moment there is no immediate threat to any of the Lakes, but Ennerdale Water is only too tempting, Barrow is a constant threat to Duddondale, Wastwater is easy meat to the destroyers, and Ullswater is only doubtfully safe.

The great danger of the moment is the enormous encroachment of the bus and coach traffic everywhere, alongside the popular knowledge of the beauty of Lakeland. This is the Golden Age of the private motorist. In ten to fifteen years he will be driven off the main roads by the decay of the railways and ceaseless processions of lorries, buses and coaches. A recent meet brought us in contact with a coach delivery of 200 people on a February Sunday in Langdale.

If people do not rally to the support of the Friends of the Lake District and laugh out of court the cry for huge wide roads, we shall see Seathwaite and Dungeon Gill turned into vast coach stations, and the beauty of the dale roads destroyed.

ALMSCLIFFE—A PLEA FOR RUBBERS.—Several of the climbs on this fine practice crag have already lost their character. Foot-holds that used to be delicate and sloping are now worn into bucket steps by the nailed boots of generations of climbers. Far more people now climb on the crag than ever before, and the damage is increasing rapidly.

The Stew Pot, The Easy Way, The Long Traverse on the Low Man, The Long Chimney, and many of the boulder climbs have already lost much of their difficulty. Nothing, of course, can be done to repair the wear that has already taken place, but unless climbers make up their minds not to climb in nails on Almscliffe, many more climbs will be ruined during our lifetime. There are few days in the year when Vibrams cannot be worn.

We must protect for future generations this happy hunting ground where we have had so much fun. Y.R.C. members are only a small proportion of those who climb there, but it would be a thoughtful act to draw the attention of their friends in other clubs to the damage that is being done.

BRANDRETH CRAGS.—Climbers who live in the Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate area can count themselves fortunate in having so many first-rate practice crags within easy reach—Almscliffe, Ilkley, Crookrise and Rylstone have already been described, Scovell has now put Guise Cliff on the map, and Brimham is well known though not yet charted. The climber, thirsting for pastures new, may spend an enjoyable day on Brandreth, particularly if he combines with it the crag which faces the Blubberhouses road, half a mile west of Moorcock Hall.

For Brandreth, take the West End road from Blubberhouses, and in just over a mile strike westwards, first over a field, and then over heather. The crags lie three quarters of a mile from the road—in the form of an “edge” facing north, towards Redshaw Gill. In height they range from 20 to 35 feet, and provide several interesting climbs.

The few climbs we did there were endowed with nautical names, beginning with the Bell Bottomed Crack (difficult, 27 ft.) at the Eastern End, and finishing with the unmistakable Bowsprit (severe, 27 ft.) in the west.

DEEPEST GULFS IN FRANCE.—Of late years great caverns exceeding 1,000 ft. in depth have been discovered in France until a revised list rivals that of Italy.

1953.—Gouffre de la Pierre St. Martin (Basses Pyr.), 2,395 ft.; Dent de Crolles and Trou de Glaz (Chartreuse), 2,159 ft. (658 m.); Gouffre de Caladaire (Basses Alpes), 1,595 ft. (487 m.); Henne Morte (Haute Garonne), 1,464 ft. (446 m.); Grotte de la Luire (Drome), doubtful, 1,444 ft. (440 m.); Grotte de Biolet (Chartreuse), 1,109 ft. (338 m.); Gouffre Martel (Ariège), 994 ft. (303 m.); Grande Aven de Canjuers, 941 ft. (290 m.).



ROCK TOWERS FROM THE SUMMIT RIDGE OF THE GRAN PARADISO

ON THE HILLS

1952.—*Britain.* Marshall and Stoney at Easter ascended 30 "Munros" in the Cluanie and Glen Shiel district, and Stoney from Crianlarich in September did 19 more. Gowing had a very fine August in the Highlands in the Coigach — Stacpolly area; Mail did the Teallachs and Conival. Both men visited the Inchnadamff Cave of Roaring and cleared up the mystery.

The Continent. Harry and Frank Stembridge, and Watts were ski-ing in Switzerland; Jorgensen and R. L. Holmes in Norway.

Fox, with Bennett of the J.M.C.S., carried through a marvellous season in the Alps, in which were notable Requin (Mayer-Dibona), Dent du Géant (North Face), Mont Maudit (Frontier Ridge), Les Droits (Traverse), Aiguille Verte, Moine Ridge, Col du Plan (N. Side, 7 hours), Weisshorn (N. Ridge) and other four thousanders.

Jones had a brilliant season of good weather and did an astonishing traverse of Charmoz and Grepon, following that of Plan, Crocodile and Caimen.

Spenceley, Scovell and R. L. Holmes climbed Mont Pourri from Bourg St. Maurice over the Col de Chal, spending the night at the Refuge Mont Pourri and returning down the Val de Nancroit to Landry. Bad weather prevented an attack on the Grand Casse, but an ascent of the Grand Motte was made from the Col de Fresse. Spenceley and Scovell, now joined by Arnison of the Fell and Rock then crossed the Col de Galise and the Col Nivolet to Pont at the head of the Val Savaranche. They climbed the Gran Paradiso from the Refugio Victor Emmanuel. Spenceley and Arnison then went up the unspoiled Val d'Ollomond — dinner, bed and breakfast and unlimited wine for two cost them 300 lira (4/-) — and traversed the Grand Combin from the Refugio Amiante to the Panossière Hut, making a direct descent from the summit through seracs on to the Glacier Maison Blanche.

1953.—Members' holidays showed a stronger bias than ever towards the Alps, M. Wilson, Scovell and Tallon were at Belalp, Harry and Frank Stembridge with Godley skied in Austria.

Jones camped at Saas and Zermatt, taking in the Zinal Rothorn and the Dent Blanche, Brook was also in Switzerland and Watts, ripe with life in Brussels, restored himself with the Aiguille de Javelle, the Aiguille du Tour, the Pigne d'Arolla and the Haute Route via the Bertol Hut to Zermatt.

Fox and Kelsey had mixed weather but a large programme traversing the Portjergrat, Fletschorn, Rimpfischorn, then to Chamonix and Aiguilles des Glaciers, Aig. de Beranger, Aig. de Bionassey and Aig. du Plan by the Ryan-Lochmatter route. Later Fox with Spenceley did the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon and Spenceley later did the Chardonnet traverse with Neil Mather of the Rucksack Club.

The President recuperated in the Engadine and Evolene and Slingsby made an October journey to the Gran Sasso d'Italia. C. E. Burrow took a sail through the Lofoten Islands to the far north of Norway in very wintery conditions.

T. Shaw, with seven other members of the Cambridge University Physiological Expedition, visited Spitzbergen. From a base camp at Brucebyen in Billefjord they carried out Physiological, Geographical and Ornithological research. During his stay of three months Shaw made several journeys, including the first crossing of the Norderskjold Glacier. An attempt to reach the east coast at Edlund Fjord by sledging across the ice-cap was foiled by persistent fog.

Britain. David Reed, looking out on to Kanchenjunga while on a business trip to Darjeeling in October, writes about climbing the highest mountain in the Irish Republic in July. This is in fact three mountains in one, Beenkeragh, Carrantuohill (the highest, 3,414 ft.) and Caher, in Macgillicuddy's Reeks and a much more interesting climb than was to be expected. Oxtoby also spent a fortnight of the early summer exploring this district.

The following description of certain new climbs is taken from the Club Cottage Records.

CRINKLE CRAGS

TERRACE CRACK 200 ft. (about) *SEVERE*.

An obvious route up a series of cracks to the left of "A" Gully on the summit Crinkle. Of sound rock through and of high angle.

Pitch 1, about 60 ft. Ascend a short wall of 15 ft. from the terrace and go right, into a corner, slight right. A layback crack gives access to a spike from which a pull up brings one into the first crack. This is climbed to a large block vertically above.

Pitch 2. Step left and into crack. This is ascended. About 50 ft. to a pinnacle belay formed by a large detached flake.

Pitch 3, about 30 ft. Step left into a scoop and climb about 15 ft. to a crack, left. This is ascended with the right foot in a vertical crack on the right wall and a wriggling stomach. Traverse left over a bulge (without handholds). This is the crux. Belay on grass ledge.

Pitch 4. Ascend pleasant wall above ledge slightly right on good holds to top of climb and second terrace of crag.

Broken rock leads to the summit of Crinkle Crag or an escape along second terrace may be made to the left.

WETHERLAM

HEN TOR

A prominent buttress on the south shoulder of Wetherlam, facing due East.

Seen from Little Langdale this is a magnificent Buttress distinguished by a deep gully at its northern (right hand) edge. It is about 4-500 ft. high. It may best be approached via the Tilberthwaite gill paths or directly upwards from the cottage and cutting across the east corrie of Wetherlam. Seen from a distance the buttress looks magnificent; from middle distance a botanist's paradise; from the foot even worse. The rock is however excellent and of high Angle and vegetation is not troublesome. It is in fact well worth a visit.

The route — about 200-250 feet. V.D. in rubbers, hard severe in boots.

Pitch (1), 50 feet. Starts at Nebulous cairn 15 feet to the left of the lower apex of the buttress on the cleanest-looking part of the rocks. Ascend vertically on small holds to a heather ledge. Belay.

Pitch (2), 40 feet. Continue vertically for 30 feet then slightly left to a grass ledge with a small belay.

Pitch (3), 40 feet. Step right again and climb on sloping holds, but improving into a small groove above which is a heather ledge. This is unsafe to pull up on and a step on to a small nose, left, enables the upper wall to be reached and then the ledge. This latter requires some gardening but time was short. Belay on flake. Slight right and 8 feet above ledge. Best for line.

Pitch (4), 90 feet of rock. This affords a magnificent finish on a very high angle rock with small but incut holds. Ascend vertically to the belay of pitch (3) and step left then right on to a wobbly but apparently quite sound flake immediately above

the belay. Continue vertically on steepening rock to a running belay (spike) in about 70 feet. This is loose, but will stay jammed to a vertical force. Continue upwards for a further 20 to 30 feet to grass ledges. A good stance is available on a small cave at about 110-120 feet above the top of pitch (3) finish.

Broken rock leads in 200-250 feet to the summit. An alternative escape may be obtained along a broad sloping heather ledge to the right and down and thence into the north gully.

Both these climbs are excellent approaches to the summit Crinkle Crag and Wetherlam respectively.

D. M. Oxtoby

R. Lockwood

P.S.—There are other routes of high standard on Crinkle Crag on the same buttress.

CAVE EXPLORATION

I NEW DISCOVERIES

Leitrim, Carrickeemy, Teampol (on 600 contour, $\frac{1}{2}$ N.N.W. of Rocktown, 5 miles W.N.W. of Manorhamilton Fair lanes).—June 1952, H. L. Stembridge, Rusher, Hilton, F. S. Booth. Internal waterfall pitch, 60 ft. followed by 150 yards stream passage, 20 ft. wide, to a 20 ft. climb, then a 20 ft. pitch and a sump.

There is a curious local story that many years ago Teampol was done by a Frenchman with a boat. The modern legend is clearly a version of Martel in 1895 at Marble Arch.

Leitrim, Gorteenaginnell and Lary Pots (N. of Gurteen, alt., 800-900 ft.).—Teampol party with Godley and E. E. Roberts. June 1952. Four pots laddered, 60 to 80 ft., three near the Hat Pot W. of the peat road end, one to the E. Weather too bad to continue.

Identification of pot-holes on this vast moor is almost hopeless until it is surveyed. N.E. of the track end two can be spotted on the 6 inch map to serve as bases, one each side of the intake dyke. To the N. are two patches of clints; in between, the Forest Pot has so many trees one will know it again.

Feb. 1953. A Sandhurst Exploration Club party, Robinson, Churchill, Tulloch, Cartwright, did most of the pots listed and found them generally 60 ft. and choked with mud. *Poll na Leprechaun?* (wire fence round) however had climbable pitches 20 ft., 18 ft., 12 ft., separated by scree, to a fairly large chamber, then a passage to a shaft of 25 ft. diameter needing a 30 ft. ladder, the end 30 yards to a mud choke.

Fermanagh, Knockmore, Pollarastra. A survey and narrative appears in the *Craven Pot-holers' Journal* No. 3. The total length of this grand passage is over 2,000 yards. It reaches to within 200 yards of the Gortgor Rising, altitude 480 ft. Swallet altitude, 700 ft., the pot-hole about 720.

Fermanagh, Pollnagollum (of the Boats) (alt. 620 ft., 6 inch map 5 of Marble Arch, near Legg Farm).—The 1953 Craven P.H.C. survey agrees with that of the Y.R.C. except that the end has disappeared. It was not visited in 1947 owing to shipwreck. It is clear that a big fall has occurred at the far end of the Great Hall beyond the Third Pool.

On the way to Pollnasmera, 400 yards short, D. Brindle in 1950 somewhere dug under three overhangs of a shake-hole cliff and got down into a chamber, 100 ft. high, 60 ft. wide [*Pollna brindle*].

Fermanagh, Polliniska area. 1953. Tyas and other Craven men opened out 2 new pots near Peter Bryant's Hole alongside a natural causeway, one 200 ft. total depth in 3 pitches, two of 50 ft. labelled *Pollnagawley*. The other is 55 ft., and Peter Bryant's Hole is given as 155 ft., but it has no 75 ft. pitch as planned.

Clare, Lisdoonvarna, Pollnagollum (Baker's).—The 1936 penetration beyond Baker's Furthest Pool into the final river tunnel has not been repeated. The two crawls are unmistakable. Whitsun 1952, Tyas and Brindle (C.P.H.C.) crawled all round the pool and got into a short stand-up passage. We conclude there has been silting up, but no one seems able to describe the place clearly and its connection with the dry East Tunnel.

Clare, Sheve Elva, Pollnaelva. 1952. In the short cave below the 70 ft. pitch, Hartley and Dickenson (C.P.H.C.) forced a way on and went due S. for 700 yards to a water-filled bedding-plane. Killeany Rising half mile.

Hampton and Holgate after excavating a possible return went east 450 yards to where the passage broke up into small channels.

Clare, Lisdoonvarna, Pollan Ionain (in the dry valley below Ballynalaekan Castle). 1952. Dickenson and Varley (C.P.C.). Difficult entrance. Low, wet uncomfortable passage for nearly 300 yards to a great chamber containing an enormous 30 ft. stalactite.

Clare, Lisdoonvarna, Polcullaun (E. slightly N. of Cullaun Farm). August 1951, Bristol University Spel. Soc. 1,100 yards long.

Ingleborough, Gaping Gill. In autumn 1953, some of the innumerable visitors via Bar Pot found a deep pool between T Junction and Pool Chamber where no water has been reported before.

It appears from *Craven Pot-hole Club Journal* No. 3, p. 118 that in 1950 a sensational traverse was done by Edgar Smith and perhaps others from the West Chamber over the Pool into Pool Chamber, not before recorded.

Ingleborough, Newby Moss, Rosebay Pot. December, 1950. Bradford Technical College Club. The boulder choke at the

bottom was opened out. Ten ft. pitch to high belfry. Tight water-worn passage, through thin crack to lower level. 40 ft. pitch into large chamber with boulder floor.

Lancashire Bank, Easegill Kirk Upper Gunbarrel Hole. March, 1950. Lovett and R. L. Holmes. Low, dry crawl for five yards, left bank leads to a gunbarrel tube, 18 inches diameter, 20 ft. long to a rock fall. Keep left to a 30 ft. pitch down a fissure, climbed but better to ladder.

Second pitch similar, into a small dry "stream" passage, tributary to a high one. Upwards 20 yards to a block, down 50 yards to a deep pool. Round the right wall to a block at 20 yards. Four feet up is a continuation of the tributary passage for 15 yards to a sump. Total depth 92 ft.

Westmorland, Kirby Lonsdale, Easegill Caverns and Lancaster Pot.—Easegill water reaches limestone 360 yards above the feared Boundary Pot, left bank, and after the great pool of Easegill force (Cow Dub) the bed is dry past the kirks to the rising at Leck Beck Head.

Lancaster Pot, 150 yards below Cow Pot, 100 ft. ladder, discovered by the B.S.A. in 1946, proved to lead down through Fall Pot to a great master cave carrying Easegill water to a sump at 250 ft. depth, and upstream impassable after Oxbow Corner. But this point was also reached by following a high level system from Fall Pot to Stake Pot, etc., skirting round Pots Scylla and Charybdis above the chokes 80 ft. below.

A sandy crawl near Oxbow Corner led through a complex to Monster Cavern, one acre of unsupported roof. A route can be found to Stop Pot and by 25 ft. ladder to the water of the Main Drain. B.S.A. men went on up to the strange Gypsum Cavern and Thackray's Passage, and 100 yards below Stop Pot penetrated up Pierces Passage to waterfalls near Upper Easegill.

Oxford Pot, above the Force, was opened in 1947, and led to the Main Drain between two sumps. Not until 1950, 29th October, did the Red Rose Club climb into the roof below its Spout chamber, dropping into a parallel passage whence a 15 ft. pitch led to Pierces Passage and the Main Drain.

Joint parties of the Red Rose and Northern Pennine Clubs were busy in the winter of 1950-1951 as described in the N.P.C.'s *Caverns of Upper Easegill*, colour testing, excavating and even attacking solid rock. The Slit Sink system, entered July 1951,

yielded only 200 yards thin passage and two 50 ft. pots but the Slaughterhouse Sink, opened September, 1951, just below Oxford Pot gave a comparatively easy but unstable route on. Via a 15 ft. pitch it joined Broadway in Oxford Pot (beyond the Snake) and so to the climb, Pierces Passage and Lancaster Pot. Long and arduous trips extended the network to 6 or 7 miles, a waterfall 100 yards from Top Sink was reached and the descent forced in 1953 down to the Main Drain complex.

Finally Oxford Hole being blocked and Slaughterhouse Sink unsafe, an all-weather entrance just above Oxford Hole has been sunk through 12 ft. of solid rock to the 15 ft. pitch above Broadway.

(We are grateful to the Northern Pennine Club for information of which this is a summary).

Dent, Tub Hole (S. bank of the Dee, one mile E. of Dent). A cave at the head of a dry wooded tributary watercourse. Inside a long deep pool with good headroom was waded in 1924 to the far wall up to the chest. In 1933 J. A. Holmes and others waded knee deep only, then a fairly open bedding plane led through two more chambers into a high passage with deep water too wide to bridge. Unfinished.

Malham Cove Dive. May, 1953. Sufficient boulders were moved by the Craven Pot-holers to enable two unnamed Cave Diving Group men to crawl below a cave six feet under water and walk. A cave stretched left and right but at 70 ft. ahead the roof came too low for crawling.

Malham Tarn Sinks. The C.P.C. mine has been given up at 85 ft.

Wharfedale, Kettlewell, Douk (or Don) Cave Extension (E. up the back at the foot of Park Rash). June, 1953. John Hobson (C.P.C.) and an unknown dug through the final block upwards into a very beautiful area, once visited by lead-miners, since explored by the C.P.C. to a distance of 250 yards. Survey in *Craven P.H. Journ. No. 5*.

Wharfedale, Starbottom, Knucklebone Pot. (Keep to the left of Starbottom Beck, in shakehole 200 yards short of old mine workings, near the head of the valley. Line of sinks runs between shakehole and workings). July, 1951. Sanderson, Crunden, Birkett, Lake (C.P.C.). Small stream, good sized entrance under cliff. 40 ft. ladder to small chamber, then down into a rift which becomes low, wet tunnel of 17 yards.

Littondale, Arncliffe, Falcon Cave (up the hillside above Boreham). October, 1948. Tyas and A. Mitchell. Into a stream at right angles, downwards a low, wet, difficult 15 ft. ladder pitch, then choked by stones. Upstream, crawl a long way, then walk. Left round a roof fall into a long narrow aven with 25 ft. waterfall. October, 1949. D. Brindle climbed the fall, also one of 5 ft. stopped by tight crawl.

Derbyshire, Peak Cavern, New Area Diving. March 9th, 1952. Davies and Balcombe, C.D.G. It is a very strenuous journey with diving tackle to the two sumps in the new area, and several expeditions were made. Finally in the Lake Passage, "the most exciting find since the Eleventh Chamber in Wookey Hole." 200 yards of wire were run out into very deep water approaching the 30 ft. limit in a wide, high, passage with no mud so the return was not in a black-out.

Somerset, Priddy Swildon's Hole. January 1953. A way was blasted into a large passage leading to low, muddy, tunnels and containing one exquisite crystal pool. *St. Paul's Passage*. 270 yards.

Devon, Plymstock, Radford Cave. 1951-52. A small but interesting cave, close to a housing estate, which has been surveyed and provided with an archway and gate by the Devon S.S. In the meantime a man got stuck and had to be rescued.

Breconshire, Glyn Tawa, Ffynnon Ddu Cave. The Black Springs are an obvious rising on the left back of the Tawa, impenetrable by the C.D.G. The cave was discovered above them by sinking a shaft in 1946 where water was said to have appeared. A dry labyrinth led to a surprising torrent, with four deep pools in $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of fine passage. It strikes one as a case of river capture. Great lengths of tributary network have been surveyed by the South Wales Cave Club and their allies.

In this obviously risky trap, Roilton and Little were caught from Saturday to Monday in August, 1951, but with a store of food against mischance. They had an unpleasant time, and it is understood an escape route has since been dug out.

II.—FLUORESCENCE. Cave Research Group

Gungling Pot, Fountains Fell. October 5th, 1950, four pounds. October 8th-9th, Brants Gill, Thornton in Ribblesdale, a three mile crossing under a dale and a high ridge.

Longkin West. October 8th, two pounds. Green flow Moses Well, 9th.

III.—OTHER NOTES

Wharfedale, Sleets Gill. Mr. Huff of Grassington has watched flood water for two hours behaving in the most extraordinary way, well up the 100 ft. slope of descent. There is no truth in the legend that one can get through from the cave to the risings.

Mail has seen flood water pouring from the cave down the old channel.

Somerset, Priddy, Swildon's Hole. Mr. O. C. Lloyd is arranging cleansing parties to remove carbide, clean out *gours* and remove rubbish. It is a good sign that several clubs are establishing discipline, there is much room for education by the Cave Preservation Society.

Somerset, Charterhouse, Great Tynings (G.B.) Cave. Archbridge R.D.C., the owners, leased exploration rights to the Bristol University Speleological Society who realised too late the position into which caving was drifting. At Easter, 1951, a lost party had to be rescued. The R.D.C. was annoyed and frightened as they have the idea of commercialising this fine cavern.

The conditions are now so strict it is doubtful if a Yorkshire Rambler can get admission.

Sutherland, Inchnadamff, Caves of Roaring Water. Both Gowing and Mail have entered the cave of Roaring and been through the Fairbank crack into the river chamber. It has not yet the width given it in the Sheffield University plan.

IV.—THE CAVING CODE (*Revised 1951*)

1. Always leave word as to destination and approximate time of return.
2. See that all tackle is in good order.
3. A large party should be split into small groups of six or eight, each under an appointed leader. Keep to your party and obey the leader.
4. Every man should use a miner's helmet with light attached and should wear plenty of clothes. Remember also that rubber soles can be dangerous.
5. Equipment should invariably include spare carbide, acetylene burners and cleaners or alternatively spare batteries and spare bulbs; match-box or lighter and candles in waterproof container; short length of line and carabiner.

6. Every man should carry a whistle and should learn to use the standard signals: one blast — "Stop"; two blasts — "haul in"; three blasts — "pay out."
7. Remember that the upward journey is always more arduous than the descent so physical strength must be conserved.
8. Do not let yourself be over-persuaded and use discretion as to where and how far you take the inexperienced.
9. In the case of an open shaft leave a look-out man or obvious signs that people are below.
10. Keep an eye on the weather.
11. Use a life-line on all pitches. A knotted life-line is dangerous. Where a pulley-block is used for the life-line the block should be independently belayed and should never be tied to the ladder or belay ropes. Be sure also that the life-line will run clear.
12. Stand clear of the pitch when any one is coming up or down or when tackle is being moved.
13. Remember that a pitch of 150 ft. is proportionately far more arduous than one of 100 ft., therefore divide long pitches into smaller sections when possible.
14. Adequate food for the period underground should be taken and in addition an emergency ration (hard) for about six hours.
15. It is very desirable that every pot-holer should have a knowledge of First Aid.
16. In case of an accident telephone SETTLE Police Station and remain at the telephone until instructed to leave.

REVIEWS

ALPINE JOURNAL (21s.)

The last three years are packed with interest, the Himalayan articles for instance including the ascents of Tirich Mir, Annapurna, and Everest. For the Swiss autumn attack, 1952, and the last we must wait till 1954.

In the Alps the British guideless are very active and successful. Many remarks they make show how the steeplejack technique has opened out many sensational routes, but is spoiling some grand rock climbs as noted in the last *Y.R.C.J.*

In the French and Italian Alps there is a terrific use of hammer and nails, a Dent du Géant climb is a succession of artificial pitches, the north face of the Dru has fourteen spike belays, a Grépon route has ten pitons on one bit.

There is a most enlightening article on a long piton climb on the Peigne (Chamonix), one of Dolphin's last.

Can we imagine Almscliffe being supplemented by hammer and nail work on the mill chimneys of Leeds?

E.E.R.

THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS: by E. W. Hodge. (Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide. 162 pp., 34 illustrations, 12 line diagrams and a map, 15s.)

This is the third edition of this guide. It has been completely rewritten by Mr. Hodge, who has added much fresh material and has brought the climbs up to date since the first publication in 1932.

This book must not be considered a mere "guide" in the stereotyped sense of the word: It is much more than that. There is history, geology, folk lore; it tells where accommodation can be had, an important point this, in the wildest and most thinly populated district in Britain. And not only does it tell what the Gaelic names mean, but gives some indication of how they may be pronounced. A holiday in the northern Highlands, even if one is not climbing or walking, but merely fishing or motoring, cannot but be enriched by the presence of this book.

H.G.W.

MOUNTAINS WITH A DIFFERENCE: by Geoffrey Winthrop Young (*Eyre & Spottiswood*, 282 pp., 14 illustrations, 21s.).

To the old this book brings back the very early days of climbing in Britain, and the pioneering enthusiasm of the eighteen nineties and of that glorious decade at the beginning of our troubled crazy century. There is great charm and intimacy about his descriptions of climbs and of his companions on them.

To the young the book turns back a page in climbing history, and brings to life the climbers of one, or even two generations ago, whose names have been made legendary by routes named after them, or whose photographs appear in bygone numbers of club journals.

But the "difference" is that Geoffrey Young continued to climb after losing a leg in the first war; he developed a "peg" which came as near as is humanly possible to overcoming the deadness of an artificial limb, and he battled and successfully defeated the tendency to rapid weariness which deters so many legless people from an active life.

H.G.W.

THE ASCENT OF EVEREST: by John Hunt (*Hodder & Stoughton*, 300 pp., 8 plates in colour, 48 photographs, 2 maps, 25s.).

So much has already been said and written about Sir John Hunt's book that there is little we can add except our admiration not only of his expedition's magnificent achievement, but also of his own almost equally brilliant feat of producing within six months of the day on which Hillary and Tensing stood on the summit, an account of supreme interest.

The book, without the use of one superfluous word, gives us all we want to know, preparation, approach, rehearsal, plan, assault, and return. The appendices give the details, equipment, oxygen, diet, physiology, medicine and loads. The photographs are superb.

It is not a scientific treatise, it is a story of human aspiration, human endeavour and attainment, written with simplicity, understanding and humour.

H.G.W.

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS. 2nd Edition. Editor H. MacRobert. Published by the Scottish Mountaineering Club, price 15s. 145 pp., 48 illustrations, 15 line diagrams.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club have produced another edition of their invaluable Guides to the Highlands. These comprise a great geographical work and the standard of excellence achieved by other volumes is well maintained or even surpassed by the latest edition on one of the most popular and interesting areas. There can be no higher praise.

It is interesting however to speculate on the future. The Central Highlands are as varied as they are vast and throw into relief the problem facing future editors. Are they to follow the traditional form or abandon it in favour of some one or more volumes more on the lines of the present Fell and Rock Climbing Club guides to the Lake District or Climbers' Club guides to Wales? In the traditional form the rock climbing is covered only by general descriptions of the classic routes and the reader is referred for anything more comprehensive to Murrays "Rock Climbs in Glencoe and Ardgour." The Purchaser may feel some disappointment at the need to buy two overlapping books to obtain the full details of such a highly developed area as Glencoe. Perhaps the additional space could be found by the adoption of note form and the omission of such material as is reasonably apparent from a study of the map. And how useful (if it were possible) would be a list separating the habitable from the non habitable bothies, with notes for the law abiding on how, if at all, to obtain permission to use them! The Editors must some day choose between a study of traditional size and shape for fireside reading and a handy note book for the anorak pocket.

It seems however that for the time being at least they have decided against spoiling too much the joys of route-finding and exploration, and after a bank holiday week-end on Gimmer, who dare say they are wrong?

R.E.C.

EXPLORING CAVES: by C. H. D. Cullingford. (*Oxford University Press Compass Books*, 1952; 148 pp., 7s. 6d.).

An excellent little book. We congratulate the author on his survey of English cave districts. He is headmaster of Monmouth Grammar School and has done much caving with boys. The account of the minor caves at hand along the Wye and in Gower is most useful.

The opening chapters summarise the stories, fantastic and otherwise which have gathered round caves, then follow surveys of South Wales, Devon, Mendips and Derbyshire. With Yorkshire there is laid down emphatically the clear distinction between pot-holing and caving. There are many words of warning as to the seriousness of pot-holing and much sound advice on equipment and behaviour. E.E.R.

BRITISH CRAGS AND CLIMBERS: edited by Edward C. Pyatt and Wilfrid Noyce. Published by *Denis Dobson Limited* at 21s., 235 pp., 16 illustrations.

This volume consists of an anthology of British Mountaineering literature taken largely from the Journals of the British Clubs. Our own Journal is represented by Fred Botterill's account of the ascent of his Slab (*Y.R.C.J.*, 1903) and Frankland's description of the Central Buttress of Scafell (*Y.R.C.J.*, 1922).

There is a brief introduction to mountaineering terms and technique for the layman and the anthology then follows in date order. The Editors have made their extracts with great skill and judgment and have the knack of lighting upon just the essential passages without encumbering the volume with unnecessary material. Their choice extends from Professor Tyndall in 1859 to R. L. Colledge in 1951, and ranges from the heroic (e.g. Owen Glynne Jones' ascent of Walker's Gully in 1899) through the idyllic (Smythes description of the Surrey hills) and the reminiscent (G. Winthrop Young on Early days) to the humorous ("A great effort" by J. M. Edwards.)

The whole is extremely readable and our thanks are due to the Editors for presenting the best of club Journals to a larger public and for showing British Mountaineering as a craft of its own. R.E.C.

THE CARNEDDAU (*Climbers' Club Guide to Snowdon District VII*): by A. J. J. Moulam. (123 pp., 8 maps and diagrams, 1951).

A complete and entertaining account of the many climbs which have been worked out on the great crags and on the many minor crags of the Carneddau. The West Gully (Block Ladders) and the Great Gully (Craig yr Ysta) are ranked as the best in Wales with Cymr Las Great Gully.

Across Nant Francon the delightful Ebdwr Pillar and Gleision are included. One can wander to old Ogwen climbs and see if they have got in. E.E.R.

The British Ski Yearbook. 1903-1953

The Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a Dinner and Ball on the 6th May, 1953, exactly 50 years after the Foundation Dinner of 13 members at the Cafe Royal in Regent Street.

Ken Foster takes us round the "Forty-four little Grey Tombstones" as he calls the past issues of the Yearbook, and Jimmy Riddell tells us of the distant nineteen-twenties—how distant everybody seems to think they are nowadays—and of Mürren in the Golden Age of downhill ski-ing.

Peter Lunn who has given up ski-racing for 16 years still feels compelled to ski fast and straight; he has found out what we all learn, that once we start to ski slowly and safely we might as well not ski at all. His father, Sir Arnold, describes a new and interesting form of competition, the "Arlom." Competitors are taken for a long run among the mountains, each section of the run being allotted maximum points based on a total maximum of 100 points. Competitors, who are sent down each section one by one, are marked for choice of line and control, being given high marks for fast fluent "tempo" turns, and lower marks for slow turns. The Arlom is intensely popular with many skiers who hate racing but who welcome an opportunity of proving that they are better all-round skiers than many racers who specialise in hard snow. It is eminently suitable for holiday skiers with short holidays who have no time to train for real racing. It is an answer for those who hate the "piste" and a breakaway from what Field Marshal Montgomery so rightly called "The Decadence of Ski-ing."

The equipment section describes the Gomme Ski, an all-British production of high precision, consisting of wood, plastic and steel bonded together to become stronger and more efficient than the orthodox wooden ski. Contact lenses made of plastic and slightly tinted to cut out glare are an absolute necessity to the short-sighted racer and to the more humble they are a godsend, as they cut out hunting in the snow for glasses—taking off gloves—un-zipping pocket—pulling out handkerchief—wiping glasses—putting on glasses—replacing handkerchief—zipping pocket—replacing gloves, a process which becomes irksome when repeated at 200-yard intervals on a long run. H.G.W.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club

It comes as something of a shock to those of us who still think of ourselves as young, lithe and active, to read Graham Wilson's "The Days of Our Youth" and to realise that it is the 1920's he is writing about, not the 1890's, and that we are in the 1950's, so finely separated from the 1930's by the nightmare 1940's.

Dorothy Pilley Richards advocates the Middle Alps for the Middle Aged—a hint to us of the 1920's.

T. H. Tilly and J. A. Jackson, with three other Englishmen and four Sherpas, spent an adventurous summer between 18,000 and 20,000 feet in the Himalayas, and proved the theory that a swimming movement will keep one from being submerged in an avalanche. Nothing daunted they conquered the 20,330 ft. "Avalanche Peake."

A. H. Griffin, a Fell and Rock member as well as a Y.R.C. brings home the bitterness of exile with a nostalgic description of the less known life of the Lake District throughout the year. The Club has a new home, Birkness, in Buttermere, and Frank Simpson describes its inauguration by the President, T. R. Burnett, on June 2nd, 1952. The Salving House at Rosthwaite has also been opened as a Club Hut.

R. T. Wilson leaves one in no doubt of the excellence of Kinlochewe for a Whitsuntide meet.
H.G.W.

The Climbers' Club Journal

With no mountains near London the Club certainly moves about. Scalantag (6,300 metres) in the lordliness of the Andes climbed in 1952 by Bernard Presse, who at Christmas-tide 1950/51 had also enjoyed some interesting and amusing climbing in the Hoggar district of the Central Sahara: "Plumb Vertical," a graphic and vertiginous description of climbs on the Cime di Lavaredo in the Sexten Dolomites: a long day ascending Mont Blanc by the Pillars of Frenez: the horrors of a cold wait while the other end of the rope hacks his way out of an overhanging crevasse: Mulhacem (3,481 metres) in the Sierra Nevada — and so back to the cliffs of Cornwall.
H.G.W.

The Rucksack Club Journal, 1953

The articles in this journal give the impression that the members of the Rucksack Club, like some of our own members, are turning more and more to the Alps for their advanced climbing. J. N. Mather has an interesting description of a traverse of the Péteret Ridge, including a bivouac on the Brèche Nord, and illustrated with beautiful photographs by Basil Goodfellow.

Allan Allsopp's account of a holiday among the Zermatt Four Thousands makes good reading, and has that attribute of all good climbing articles, of making us feel we must go and do it too. He imbues the Dent d'Herens with almost the tranquility of Kanchenjunga.

It is only when we turn to "New Climbs and Notes" that it becomes evident how active the Club continues to be on its own ground. Three new climbs in Wales, one of them "Very Severe," and four in the Lake District, including three "Very Severs."

The highlight is the Jubilee Walk from Tan Hill to the Cat and Fiddle, 120 miles linking the two highest inns in England. There were five starters, and the course was completed by V. J. Desmond in 54 hours 10 minutes, and by E. W. Courtenay and Frank Williamson in 55 hours 40 minutes.

We join the Rucksack Club in mourning the tragic death of Alexander Taugwalder, for whom a very moving obituary has been written by W.H.H.
H.G.W.

CLUB MEETS

1952.—Twelve Club Meets were held. Little Langdale has been fairly well used and has paid for outgoing. Much work has been done at the Cottage and further gifts of equipment made, culminating in the munificent presents of a slow combustion stove and a hot water tank.

The Club wishes to thank George Spenceley, who has undertaken the Office of Club Cottage Warden, for the time and thought he has given towards making the Cottage a successful venture, also Harold Armstrong and A. H. Griffin for their earlier labours to the same end.

The Club also thanks those members who have generously donated equipment and others who have given freely of their time and skill in work at the Cottage.

The December Meet at the Buck Inn, Buckden, was distinguished by a special Christmas Dinner. Much snow plugging and rain was the lot of those who walked on the fells.

The Hill Inn Meet on the week-end of 9th February, drew the usual big crowd. For perhaps the first time ice-axes were brought and used on the Saturday on the ice expected on the fells. Fierce wind and snow on Sunday changed to heavy rain and thaw by noon.

At the Cottage in March the weather was mild and pleasant but very cloudy. Easter at Dalwhinnie was a great success for the few who assembled, five at a discovery under Ben Alder, Culra Bothy, and two at Loch Ericht Hotel, but much too far for most men. Spenceley was a climbing instructor at a Glenmore Lodge course. Except on Good Friday the weather was really good, followed in the week by four hot summer days, many Munros were done and three cars did long-distance drives.

Dent (May 10th-11th) opened with an expedition into the new Easegill network and a search for pots in Barbondale, but Sunday was too unpleasant for the descents proposed.

May continued to be abnormally warm but after that the summer became most erratic, some people having continuous bad luck and others having really fine spells.

The legend of Ireland's miraculous weather was entirely destroyed in Leitrim at Whitsuntide. The party of six who were lucky to get into camp and out dry, suffered continuous cold wind and much rain for four days and finished with two grand days, though the wind was arctic. It was only possible to do one worthwhile obvious pot; Teampol and four shafts of 80 ft. The number of minor shafts appears incredible, of caves nil.

The Kingsdale Meet was planned to take Punch's writer and artist down Rowten Pot. Two feet of water where the beck is usually dry wrote off all ordinary pot-holing as impossible, and all that could be done was to go over to Bar Pot hoping for the best. We have all read *Punch*.

Dolgelly for August Bank Holiday was again too far though the four or five who camped there were delighted with Wales and the journey.

The Crummock Dale camp and the great bonfire to celebrate our Diamond Jubilee were favoured with a fine interval in a cheerless period. Hearty thanks are due to John Lovett and his helpers for providing and transporting fuel.

Mrs. Winthrop Young, daughter of Cecil Slingsby, for ten years our enthusiastic President, was present with about forty Club members. Juniper Gulf was partially descended.

Members who enjoyed the hospitality of Harry Spilisbury and the Wayfarers' Club at R.L.H. in September, had heavy rainstorms on the Saturday but Sunday was a glorious day. Gimmer Crag was fairly dry and several parties spent the day running up and down that delectable face.

Late October gave twenty-seven of us a last and really warm and delightful week-end in the luxury of Lastingham Grange amid the wonderful colouring of the North Riding.

1953.—There were twelve Club meets during the year, three being at the Club Cottage. The comfort and popularity of this Club asset continue to increase. It is now fitted with Calor gas and a hot water supply, thanks to the gifts and efforts of various members. The Committee wishes particularly to thank the warden for his dictatorial rule which has proved a great benefit.

The first meet of the year at the Falcon, Arncliffe, was accompanied by snow. Thirteen members attended, enjoying the ridge walk between Wharfe and Skirfare to the Horsehead Pass. At this point the President deserted but was easily tracked and recovered in the conditions prevailing.

The January meet was made memorable by a very high wind, some members reporting that on Ingleborough it had been necessary to advance to the cairn on hands and knees. The evening was occupied by young and incautious members in the usual energetic revels. A visit was made to Easegill on the Sunday, one party entering Slaughterhouse Drain.

Nine men went to Low Hall Garth in February and enjoyed bright sunshine on Dow and Gimmer. The contrast of thick fog on the return was not so good.

A party of eight men spent Easter in Fort William and did a fair amount of walking in a snow-covered world, encountering a blizzard on the Ben Nevis — Carn Dearg ridge. There was also Kelsey in command of the R.A.F., Kinloss, Mountain Rescue Team.

The meet for April was in Rosedale and again had good weather and an excellent inn. The days gave complicated excursions in Farndale, Rosedale, Great Fryup and Danby Dale, and the evenings some equally complicated story-telling.

The Whitsuntide pot-holing week-end was spent by five men chiefly in the hospitable recesses of Harden. No members camped and only one visit to Juniper Gulf was made, where the party turned back due to excessive water at the second pitch. A larger meet of nine men and a dog was at Low Hall Garth, chiefly climbing.

The next camping meet in Easegill in June was more successful, twelve men being spread round the valley, the main party on a very pleasant site overlooking the Upper Kirk. Some arduous crawling was done in various places but the party then retired to Lancaster Hole for sight-seeing in all directions, this being continued on the Sunday.

There was another full house at Low Hall Garth in July.

Bank Holiday followed its usual pattern with a joint meet with the Rucksack Club at their Hut in Nant Peris. Five members and guests attended but the

meet was abandoned following the death of Avilia. He fell whilst leading up Yellow Slab, Lliwedd, and by a fatal mischance severed the rope. He was buried in Llanbeblig, Carnarvon.

At Low Hall Garth in September there were seven Ramblers and six guests from the Army Engineer Regiment in Ripon. The weather was misty but entertaining and climbs were had on Scafell and on Bowfell Buttress.

The eight members who attended the joint meet with the Wayfarers' and Rucksack Club at R.L.H. were favoured with glorious weather. Beginning the Saturday with climbs on Bowfell, most men took advantage of the sunshine and walked along the ridge until the evening. Sunday was spent climbing on Harrison Stickle in continuous sunshine.

The last meet of the year was the Punch Bowl, Low Row, instead of Keld as planned, fourteen men attending. The weather was excellent and a good round was done over Rogan's Seat and down East Gill.

It has been reported that the Hut Warden and his Labour Force held a New Year Dinner at Birk How. It has also been reported that the dinner was highly successful.

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

1951.—The Annual General Meeting was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, on 17th November 1951, when the officers for 1951-52 were elected:—President, D. BURROW; Vice-Presidents, S. MARSDEN, J. GODLEY; Hon. Treasurer, S. MARSDEN; Hon. Secretaries, F. S. BOOTH, F. W. STEMBRIDGE; Hon. Librarian, H. L. STEMBRIDGE; Hon. Editor, H. G. WATTS; Hon. Assistant Editor, R. E. CHADWICK; Committee, C. W. JORGENSEN, R. L. HOLMES, J. LOVETT, J. HILTON, J. E. CULLINGWORTH, C. I. W. FOX.

At the 38th Annual Dinner which followed, the Chair was taken by S. Marsden, Vice-President, owing to the unfortunate illness of the President, Davis Burrow. Mr. J. H. B. Bell, Editor of the S.M.C. Journal, was the principal guest. Kindred Clubs were represented by Mr. J. Byam-Grounds, Alpine Club; Mr. J. Lomas, Rucksack Club; Mr. F. C. Gorst, Wayfarers' Club; Mr. G. S. Major, Midland Association of Mountaineers; Mr. R. Hainsworth, Gritstone Club; Mr. D. C. Birch, Leeds University Climbing Club; Mr. Graham Watson, Bradford Pot-hole Club; Mr. A. Jowett, Northern Pennine Club.

1952.—The week-end meets were:—February 9th-11th, Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale; March, Low Hall Garth; Easter, Dalwhinnie; May 10th-11th, Dent; Whitsun, Leitrim, Eire; June 27th-29th, Low Hall Garth; July, Kingsdale; August 2nd-5th, Dolgelly; September (Diamond Jubilee Meet), Crummock Dale; September, R. L. Hut; October, Lastingham Grange; December, Falcon Inn, Arncliffe.

We regret to record the deaths of Sir John Barran, a member since 1896; R. N. Middleton, elected 1901; and B. A. Bates, who joined in 1921, and served as our well loved treasurer for 27 years.

During this year the Club celebrated its 60th anniversary. Many autograph letters from Whymper, Slingsby, and other great mountaineers, written to Thomas Gray, our first Editor, and to other members of the Club, have been carefully bound up into a volume and presented to the Club by Chubb.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, on 15th November 1952; the following officers for 1952-53 were elected:—President, J. HILTON; Vice-Presidents, J. GODLEY, F. S. BOOTH; Hon. Treasurer, S. MARSDEN; Hon. Secretaries, J. CULLINGWORTH, O. STONEHOUSE; Hon. Librarian, H. L. STEMBRIDGE; Hon. Editor, H. G. WATTS; Hon. Assistant Editor, R. E. CHADWICK; Hon. Cottage Warden, G. B. SPENCELEY; Committee, C. W. JORGENSEN, I. E. MAIL, J. LOVETT, F. W. STEMBRIDGE, C. I. W. FOX, D. ADAMS.

It was approved that the Club Library be loaned to the Leeds City Reference Library for a probationary period of 3 years. At a subsequent Special General Meeting it was agreed that the Club Subscription should be 30/- per year and that 35 years' membership should qualify a member for Life Membership.

At the 39th Annual Dinner which followed, the President, J. Hilton, was in the Chair and the principal guest was W. H. Murray. Kindred Clubs were represented as follows:—Alpine Club, Mr. C. A. Elliott; Scottish Mountaineering Club, Mr. W. H. Murray; Climbers' Club, Mr. H. R. C. Carr;

Rucksack Club, Mr. J. E. Byrom; Wayfarers' Club, Mr. C. D. Milner; Fell and Rock Climbing Club, Mr. C. E. Arnison; Derbyshire Pennine Club, Mr. D. Carr; Midland Association of Mountaineers, Mr. C. Machin; Gritstone Club, Dr. A. Garvie; Leeds University Climbing Club, Mr. J. D. Foster; Craven Pothole Club, Mr. C. Whiteoak, Bradford Pot-hole Club; Mr. F. O. Ackroyd; Northern Pennine Club, Dr. J. Aspin.

1953.—The week-end meets were:—January 30th-February 1st, Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale; February 27th-March 1st, Low Hall Garth; Easter, Fort William; April 24th-26th, Rosedale, Crown Hotel; Whitsun, Juniper Gulf; June 19th-21st, Ease Gill; July 10th-12th, Low Hall Garth; August Bank Holiday, Nant Peris (Rucksack Club Hut); September 4th-6th, Low Hall Garth; September 25th-28th, R.L.H. Langdale; October 23rd-25th, Low Row, The Punchbowl; December 11th-13th, Austwick (Harden).

We record with deep regret the deaths of C. E. E. Riley; W. Clarkson; Henry Humphreys; H. Humphreys; W. M. Roberts and J. S. R. Avila, who was killed by a fall on Llywedd on August 1st.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, on 21st November 1953; the following officers for 1953-54 were elected:—President, J. HILTON; Vice-Presidents, F. S. BOOTH, F. W. STEMBRIDGE; Hon. Treasurer, S. MARSDEN; Hon. Secretaries, J. E. CULLINGWORTH, C. I. W. FOX; Hon. Librarian, H. L. STEMBRIDGE; Hon. Editor, H. G. WATTS; Hon. Assistant Editor, R. E. CHADWICK; Hon. Cottage Warden, G. B. SPENCELEY; Committee, I. E. MAIL, D. ADAMS, W. R. LOFTHOUSE, J. LOVETT, O. STONEHOUSE, D. McKELVIE.

At the 40th Annual Dinner which followed, the President, J. Hilton was in the Chair, and the principal guest was Mr. F. Lawson Cook. Kindred Clubs were represented by Mr. H. R. C. Carr, Alpine Club; Mr. Alistair Hetherington, Scottish Mountaineering Club; Mr. F. Kiernan, Rucksack Club; Mr. A. G. Spencer, Wayfarers' Club; Mr. A. B. Hargreaves, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; Captain B. G. Rhodes, Gritstone Club; Mr. J. O. Myers, Northern Pennine Club.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE JOURNAL No. 26

1951

- *Smythe, Peter John Francis 86, Ridgeway, Weston Farel,
Northampton.
Roberts, Paul Douglas The Royal Free Hospital, Grays Inn
Road, London, W.C.1.
Wilkinson, Britton 4, Stockwell View, Knaresborough.
Lockwood, Peter 903, Manchester Road, Cowlersley,
Huddersfield.
Wilson, Maurice Frederic "Viewfield," The Avenue, Stokesley,
Yorks.
Beaumont, Harold 239, Barton Road, Stretford,
Manchester.
Tallon, Arthur Toll Bar Cottage, Lupton, Holme,
Carnforth, Lancs.
Sherman, Patrick

1952

- Green, Eric William Westmorland County Hospital,
Kendal.
Mackintosh, Ian Brine Sir Wm Halcrow & Partners,
Portishead "B" Power Station,
Bristol.
Lether, Joseph 111, The Drive, Gledhow, Leeds, 8.
Slater, Malcolm Hurworth Flat 3, 15, Park Drive, Harrogate.
*Storry, Alan 20, Wimbledon Road, Linthorpe,
Middlesbrough, Yorks.
Maude, Stanley Morgan 11, Moorlands Avenue, Bogthorn,
Oakworth, Keighley.
Barr, John Malcolm Shadwell House, Slaid Hill, Moortown,
Leeds.
*Salmon, Trevor William 136, Middleton Park Grove, Middleton,
Leeds, 10.
Prince-Smith, William Richard Southburn House, Nr. Driffield,
E. Yorks.
Hemingway, John 217, Bradford Road, Staningley,
Leeds.
*Allen, Cedric Roger "Lochee," Larkfield Road, Rawdon,
Leeds.

1953

- Anderson, Wilfred James Raynor, Skipton Old Road, Foulridge,
Colne, Lancs.
Humphreys, Robert Gordon "Braida Garth," Kinders, Greenfield,
Yorks.
Large, Clifford 15, Berkeley Avenue, Leeds, 8.

New Members

- Brook, John Geoffrey 153, Beeston Road, Leeds, 11.
Stonehouse, Walter Patrick Bowman 82, Mossley Road, Grasscroft,
Nr. Oldham.
Schofield, John Anthony "Brackenholme," Lands Lane,
Knaresborough, Yorks.

1954

- Newbery, Nigel Colm c/o Young, Birks House, Sedbergh,
Yorks.
Medley, John Albert 13, Regent Park Avenue, Leeds, 6.

* Junior Members when elected.

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