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CLUB JOURNAL
1960

Edited by HAROLD G. WATTS

VOLUME IX NUMBER 30

THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB JOURNAL
Vol. IX No. 30

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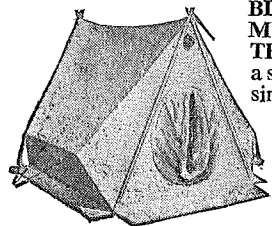
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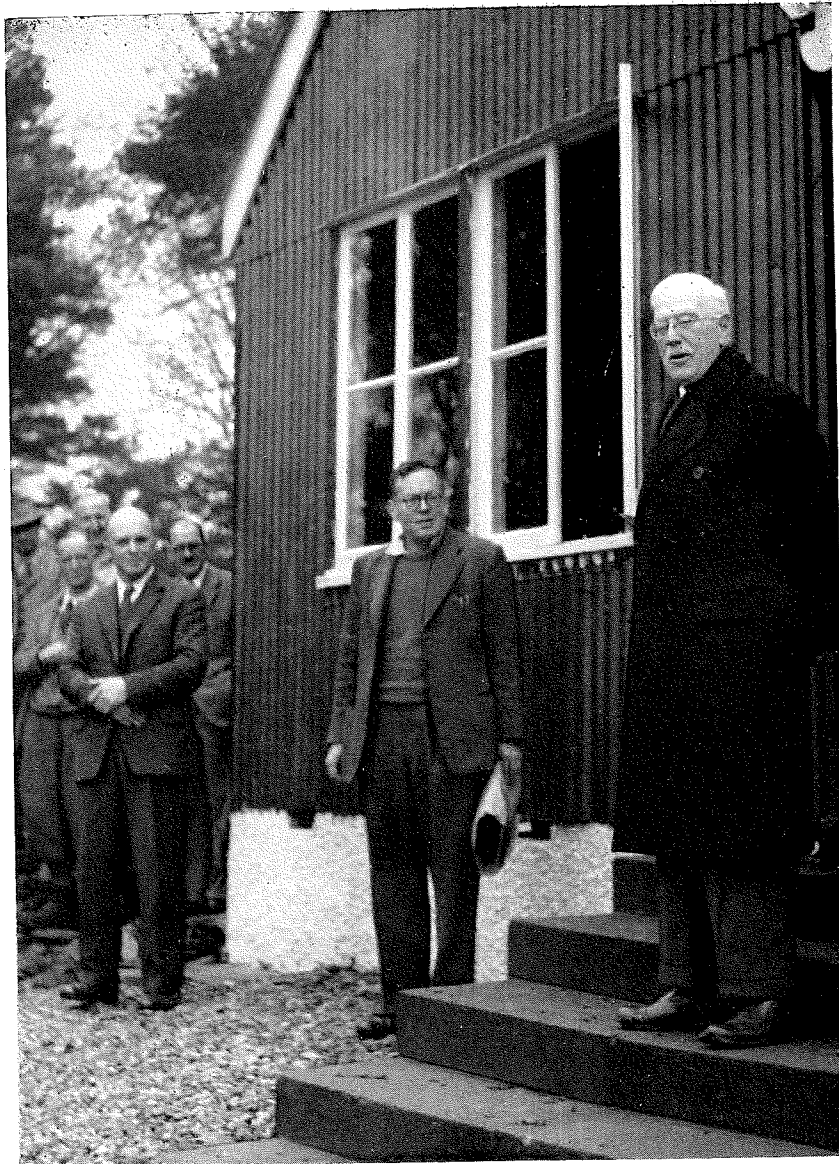
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OPENING OF LOWSTERN HUT BY E. E. ROBERTS. NOVEMBER 16th 1958.
Photo by B. E. Nicholson

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CLAPHAM CAVE, 1946 to 1959

by A. N. Patchett

WITH the exception of some notes on an exploration on 10th May, 1930, little or nothing about Clapham Cave has appeared in the *Journal* since C. A. Hill's excellent article in the 1913 issue. (*Y.R.C.J.* 'Vol. IV, No. 13, page 107). With this in mind I am attempting to bridge part of the gap by recording some of my encounters with the difficulties and hazards of this redoubtable cave system over the past twelve years.

I did little of note in the cave before the 1939/45 war but immediately after the war I made a solo effort. This was merely to renew my acquaintance with the various features, including the direction of flow of the water in the different sections, the disposition of sand in the Cellar Gallery, and so on. The results of my investigations were depressing to say the least, because there seemed to be no major exit from inside the cave to Beck Head Stream before the latter emerges into daylight. Why should there be? The magnificent entrance is big enough to let out a stupendous volume in time of flood. On the other hand there must be a major inlet passage (or a *large* number of smaller ones) from the Gaping Gill main drain to carry the immense flood required to cause the water in Lake Avernus, and indeed the whole vast bedding plane system, to rise up into the upper series and flood it with such vigour from time to time. In September 1953 a veritable river swept out of the Main Entrance. The great quantities of stone, sand and gravel deposited on the slope outside the cave bore witness (and still do) to this.

The possibility of a large inlet passage then, seemed the thing to try and find, and early in 1947 I managed to muster a large party, many of whom were Bradford Pothole Club members. An invasion of the lower series was made; one group headed for Lake Avernus and, having become thoroughly soaked and altogether frozen by long immersion in the icy water without

discovering anything of note, decided that Clapham Cave did not attract them any more. Another group tried the upstream passage towards Gaping Gill. The remaining five of us crossed the stream at the foot of the slope from Giant's Hall, and went up a slight slope which led to a filthy pool of water round which we contrived to climb. Beyond that point a bedding plane spread out before us. Keeping near its left wall we eventually reached an aven which afforded no small measure of relief, for we could then sit up. After a rest three of us decided to press on but the other two said that they would make their way out. The three of us then went forward down a very gentle slope on our stomachs until we reached an area of shallow pools and wet sand. At this point, which I called the Far Eastern Bedding Plane, my two companions waited whilst I went on a little further. Progress could only be made by removing helmet and light and holding my head sideways. Soon I stopped and lay still and began to think how much more pleasant it would be to lie in the warm spring sunshine stretching my limbs on the soft green turf; slowly my breathing quietened and in the near distance I heard a low rumbling noise. I forgot the soft green turf and pressed on with the job—ahead of me was a swiftly flowing stream. My aching legs and half frozen feet rebelled against further immersion and I returned to report to the others.

On our way back to the aven two lights suddenly appeared coming towards us; their owners proved to be the two men who had left us at the aven half an hour previously. They proclaimed that they were on their way out and were making for Giant's Hall! We were quite certain that we were doing the same!! Since it was three to two our little party prevailed and we escorted them to the aven to prove our point. Having reached it none of us was quite sure that it was the right one. In the end we established that it was and pressed on again only to become involved in countless side-tracks. Eventually we huddled together for warmth, turned out our lights and allowed our thoughts to settle. In about ten minutes we heard a dull booming sound. Its direction? No one could even guess. We called out but there was no reply. Then we made individual sorties and it was on one of these that I stumbled into the main stream of Lake Avernus and, on returning to report to my companions, saw far over on the left one of the lighted candles

we had left as a guide. At that moment I heard another "boom", the voice of the Hon. Photographer who was blithely taking flashlight photographs of elephants' legs, coffee pots, and pools of reflection!

That summer Frank Butterfield and J. Leach (N.P.C.) completed a survey of the area below Giant's Hall; later in the same year they fired my enthusiasm enough for me to organise another siege. Elaborate preparations were made and all manner of gear, food and drink were taken to Giant's Hall. A small army of men descended from the Hall and, after leading the way across the river I stood aside and with devilish glee pointed the way through that horrible pool of filthy water. On they came with balls of string and candles and, cursing their way through the pool, disappeared into the unknown of the Far Eastern Bedding Plane.

Beyond disturbing the sandy floor the siege had little effect except that it gave the Bradford Pothole Club men a better idea of what they were up against, not one reported that he had come across my stream beyond the bedding plane.

It took three years to whip up enthusiasm again, but this time the siege was to be from without. Through the courtesy of Mr. J. Farrer a tiny foxhole was enlarged, about 30 yards up the dry valley, by Charles Salisbury, Frank Briggs and other Bradford Pothole men, till eventually they were able to squeeze a way down to the Beck Head Stream which they found ran in a sizeable passage.

It was on a Sunday evening in June 1951, when I was wallowing in a hot bath after a day's gardening, that the telephone bell rang. "We've broken through!" the voice said, and such was the enthusiasm that a Club meet was arranged for the following Wednesday evening. We left Bradford at 5.30 p.m. and by 7 o'clock some of the party of twelve had already begun to squeeze their way into the entrance. The vertical squeeze led to a horizontal squeeze, thence to the beck which ran swiftly down a passage about five feet square. The water runs obliquely across rift after rift in the floor. To the right we saw a vast bedding plane which looked full of possibilities. After about 170 yards twin waterfalls pour down through water-worn gaps in an extraordinary false ceiling. These were christened Broadbent Falls, Johnny Broadbent being the first man to set eyes on

them the Sunday before. We easily climbed up the side of the falls and through another gap in the ceiling to gain the floor of a high level passage down which the water flowed. The passage continued roughly in the same direction as its lower counterpart but it contained numerous oxbows. Finally, some 70 yards from the top of the falls, the passage came to an abrupt end, but to the right we found a narrow pool 30 ft. long and 16 ft. deep from which the water overflowed and formed the beck. It was an extraordinary pool for it was situated in a lofty rift at right angles to the main passage. At water level thin water-worn wafers of rock extended from the sides. This wafer-like rock was identical with that found at the head of Broadbent Falls. Here the water welled up through the gaps and at the falls it poured down through them. It seemed obvious that the water feeding the pool came from a low level passage and was forced up by pressure from behind. A large block of limestone therefore, some seventy yards long, rested, so to speak, on the lower stream bed so that the water had to rise up the pool, overflow, and run along the top of the block, regaining the lower level via Broadbent Falls. We came out just before midnight after a very thrilling exploration.

Many visits followed this and all the bedding planes were forced as far as they would go but with little success. Eventually in May 1953 I had the pleasure of arranging a joint meet of the Cave Diving Group and the Bradford Pothole Club with a view to diving the pool at the head of Beck Head Stream Passage. Dr. R. E. Davies and John G. Buxton dived with 385 ft. of life-line apiece while Don Leach and I held on to the ends. Down they went through a shoal of albino shrimps and we watched their lights grow redder and redder until they disappeared from sight. Then followed an eternal wait in Tilley lamplight, we managed to keep our apprehensions at bay with chocolate and wet sandwiches. After what seemed a lifetime I saw a faint glow of light at the bottom of the pool, then another—up they came all smiles. They had found, as expected, a totally submerged passage leading from the bottom of the pool. It was 30 ft. wide and the roof was like a small segment of a circle, the top of which was eight feet from the floor in the centre but gradually sloping down to nil at the sides. The passage went on, they

said, for 375 ft. in a dead straight line—every inch of the line was used and the passage still went on.

In December 1953 a strong party of Cave Diving Group and B.P.C. members and I passed through the well-known iron gateway of the main cave on a fine but very dark Saturday evening. Every man was heavily laden and by 9 p.m. 'aflos', food, rucksacks, rubber dinghies, bundles of candles and so on had been deposited at the diving base at the entrance to Lake Avernus. The following morning one party tried the upstream passage from below Giant's Hall whilst Bob Davies and I concerned ourselves with Avernus itself. The dinghies were inflated and Davies, having put on his headpiece and breathing apparatus, walked along the floor of the lake with several feet of water above his head, the two dinghies, piloted by Arthur Clifford and myself, accompanying him.

About half-way along the lake the current slowed down considerably, so a small quantity of fluorescein was poured into the water; the vivid green colouration was watched carefully until, nearly at the end of the lake, it swung over to the left-hand wall and disappeared! We drew the dinghies together and watched Bob's headlight disappear far below. Lights were turned out and we talked quietly of the thrilling prospects. Soon we heard the sound of Bob's electric horn and by slapping the surface of the water as previously arranged, we attracted the diver back to the dinghies. He rose out of the water and as far as we could make out by lip-reading and gesticulations Bob had been in a rift-like chamber somewhat similar to the part of Lake Avernus in which we were floating at that moment, having reached it by means of short submerged passage. For a few moments he thought he had come to the surface of Lake Avernus itself to find that we had vanished!

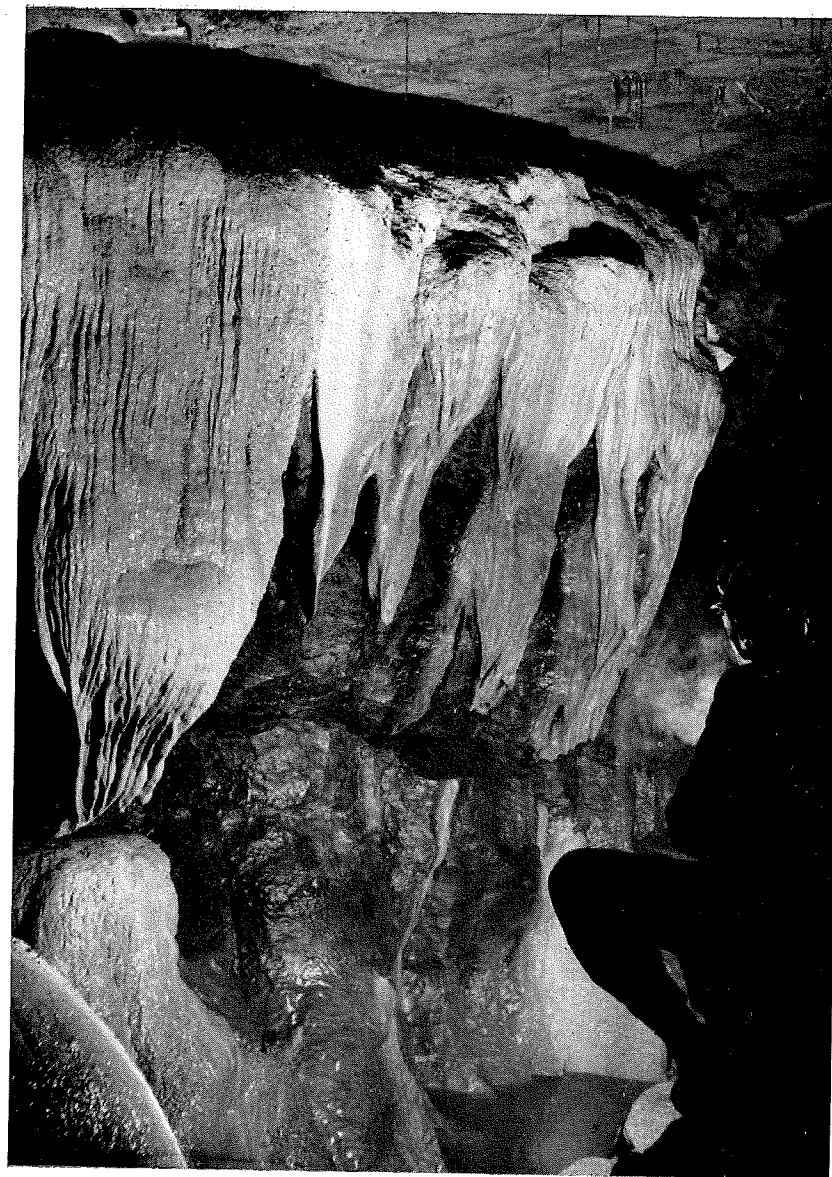
A further dive was made, and again we watched the underwater headlight grow fainter and fainter until it finally became lost to sight altogether. As we counted the minutes the safety line was being paid out and out, yard by yard; two minutes, four minutes, six minutes . . . and still the unmistakable pull persisted on the line. There could only be one conclusion—the outlet had been well and truly discovered. And so it had, as Bob explained later when he was free from his headgear and the 'aflo' had been safely stowed in a dinghy.

It appeared that Bob had gone through two rifts, each sealed off by water from the other but with an air space in each, and had then emerged into a really big rift 80 ft. long, 12 ft. high and 10 ft. wide. At the far end a lake stretched away to the right—a vast new lake, what name better than Cimmeria, now challenged us and we were already planning another visit whilst we sailed back to the base.

After a meal we wondered why we had decided to plan another expedition at a later date. The Lake was there, waiting. So we reloaded the dinghy, filled it with Bob's gear and off I sailed towing Bob as far as the submerged opening near the end of Avernus. Bob donned his headgear, dived and left me to my fate in the dinghy which had now developed a leak; all I had to do to ensure my safety was to keep on blowing. I was thus engrossed when Bob returned to report that the lake was far bigger than he first thought. So extensive had been his wanderings that I think he must have lost all track of time and it was only when he suddenly thought that I might have sunk to the bottom of Avernus that he returned. The new lake, it was estimated, covered about 5,000 sq. ft.; the length of Lake Avernus has been carefully measured and is 120 ft.

Another remarkable discovery was made earlier in 1953 by R. D. Leaky who not only reached the stream that I discovered beyond the Far Eastern Bedding Plane in 1947 but fully explored it. This stream passage is a very fine one, 335 yards long, but it still keeps many of its secrets.

The following year, 1954, two more important discoveries were made; the first was quite remarkable. In the early days it was thought that Lake Avernus water travelled roughly parallel to the dry valley but later explorers stated that the compass showed the lake to point West-North-West, it therefore passes under the upper series almost at right angles. All plans of Clapham Cave have for many years shown this and nobody has apparently ever troubled to check the direction until early 1954 when, on two separate occasions, I was confronted with the news that the Lake Avernus water did in fact run in a south-easterly direction. How then could it run under the upper series? At the first opportunity I took a compass and, standing astride the rapids at the very start of Avernus facing downstream, I was astonished at what I saw. The compass pointed quite definitely to within a



CLAPHAM CAVE

Photo by B. E. Nicholson

few degrees of south-east! It was now clear that many long-held theories would have to be scrapped, in fact it now seemed certain that Lake Cimmeria could only be a comparatively short distance from the end of the explored portion of the submerged passage beyond the pool at the end of the Beck Head Stream Passage.

The second discovery of 1954 was made when Bob Davies and John Buxton, assisted again by a party of Bradford Pothole Club men, including myself, dived the upstream passage below Giant's Hall and reached a large chamber 10 ft. high with 8 ft. of air space some 70 ft. from the sandbank at the foot of the slope from Giant's Hall. Beyond the chamber, Davies and Buxton went further upstream where the arched roof lowered but, making their way through a slit on the right, they crawled up a mud slope which led to a large cave passage with a rippling stream coming towards them. Beyond this point there were many routes, none of which needed breathing apparatus. The main route covered about 300 ft. on a bearing of 315° magnetic, thus in the direction of Gaping Gill!

The next diving expedition took place on 26th September, 1954, but it was found that the water level was far too high, rain having fallen for several days previously, so the whole project had to be abandoned. Another dive by Cave Diving Group, with Bradford Pothole men assisting, took place in 1955; this time an attempt was made to join up the submerged passage beyond the pool at the head of Beck Head Stream Passage with Lake Cimmeria. Little progress was made but it must be recorded that the end of the submerged passage was reached about 25 ft. beyond the previous point. At the end it was found that a complicated mass of rocks existed and a difficult underwater climb seemed necessary if further progress was to be made.

In July, 1959, I again had the pleasant duty of arranging a joint meet of the Bradford Pothole Club and Cave Diving Group men, with the co-operation of Dr. J. A. Farrer and Mr. Arnold Brown, the cave guide. Avernus was the objective and this time we were favoured by the well-remembered drought. The water was very low but the task of dragging all the gear to the diving base was as painful as ever. Thompson and Dawe of the C.D.G. were in the lead, and were rapidly followed by several waterproof Bradford men. Soon a bobbing line of fairy lights was stretched out down the first 100 ft of Lake Avernus. Meanwhile at the base

we made complicated plans with the divers John Buxton, Brian de Graef and Jack Waddon, to replace the wire fixed by Bob Davies six years previously.

Soon a number of dripping figures returned to base and astounded everyone by saying that there was an air surface, that they had been through into Cimmeria and that they had found a deep water-filled canal whose end they could not see. A passage beyond Cimmeria! Three divers went to investigate saying that they would be away five to ten minutes. Forty minutes later they returned and confirmed that whilst there was an air space it was only two inches! However, once through there Lake Cimmeria was at their mercy and beyond it to the right was a long canal which seemed to run in line with Avernus. This newly discovered canal was really a continuation of Avernus, a huge mass of limestone dividing the two but Lake Cimmeria providing the link. The new canal-like lake, Pluto, turned out to be approximately 300 ft. long, nearly three times as long as Avernus. It was between six and ten feet wide and from the water level to the roof was between four and eight feet. The bottom could not be felt except at the very beginning and about half way along where a few flakes of rock were touched. Buxton reported that progress was made for some distance by walking on a narrow under-water shelf, and later on, in water up to the arm-pits, by going hand over hand on a slender groove just above water level. Most of the rest of the journey was made either by swimming, floating or pushing oneself along on whatever minute projections offered themselves. For the last eight feet or so the left-hand wall appeared to be undercut. This seems to be an exact repetition of Avernus on a larger scale, even to the undercutting near the end at the left-hand side.

At the end the roof closed down a little but the narrow crack in the roof still went on; the walls closed in but could be felt to be opening up a little under water, the bottom could not be felt. One more sump and surely the top end of the submerged passage upstream from the final pool in Beck Head Stream Passage will only be a matter of yards.

Apart from actually making physical contact between Lake Pluto and the Beck Head dive, future work must lie upstream from below Giant's Hall and in the series beyond the Far Eastern Bedding Plane, where much useful work over a number of years has been done by Bradford Pothole Club members, R. D. Leaky and others.

LONELY IN LAPLAND

by G. B. Spenceley

I READ somewhere that Lapland, covering an area as great as the whole of the British Isles, had a population of under three million. That fact alone was enough to entice me away from the crowded huts and téléphériques of the Alps. Northern mountains might not be as high but they were lonely and isolated and distances great; getting to their foot would in itself be a challenge. Lapland seemed to be the only place in Europe where a holiday would have something of the flavour of an expedition and yet where I could travel and climb alone, safely if modestly.

For some weeks I travelled in spirit over hundreds of miles of territory on the map of a Library atlas. There was so much to do. I had thought of starting from Tromsø, but in the end it was that knot of mountains behind Narvik that held my attention, and from there I could journey south-east across the frontier to the massive of Kebnekaise, Sweden's highest mountain. I knew of many who had climbed far north in Norway, but in no club journal could I find reference to these highlands of Arctic Sweden. It seemed to be an area much neglected by British mountaineers and south of Kebnekaise were the Sarek mountains, even less known.

From the Svenska Fjällklubben I got kindly information and advice and I was surprised to find that there was a chain of huts fifteen to twenty miles apart, and at Kebnekaise a fjellstation, where meals and provisions could be bought. But in spite of these unexpected amenities I was warned not to venture alone into these wild and uninhabited parts.

The only available maps of the area, supplied to me by the Svenska Turistförentingen, were on the rather inadequate scale of 1 : 200,000. Norway, although less organised for the tourist as far north, had better maps. Those on a scale of 1 : 100,000 are readily available from their London Tourist Office, but I was advised to approach the Norges Geografiske Oppmåling for the new 1 : 50,000 N.A.T.O. sheets. Ultimately I was well provided with maps, including some of Finland showing no roads, tracks or habitations, just hundreds of square miles of forests, swamps and lakes with unpronounceable names. In practice they all proved outdated, vague and inaccurate but it added to the fun.

Departing every night from Bergen is the Express Mail Service, sailing round North Cape to Kirkenes which carries, not only wealthy American tourists on the round twelve day Midnight Sun Cruise, but all the mail, supplies and people going from one isolated point to another, along a thousand miles stretch of coast. On July 27th I left my camp site, an excellent place at the summit of the Fløienbaner with a vast panorama of Bergen below, and boarded the Harkon Jarl. The four days' journey to the Lofoten Islands is remarkably cheap at £6, but I had no cabin. With clear skies and a sleeping bag one is not unduly concerned by this until the nightly washing of the decks and again a few hours later when, in all the noise, commotion and excitement of calling at Florø, Trondheim or Leka, someone falls over you. The great granite peaks of the Lofoten Islands were capped in grey cloud, but it was less the attraction of a scramble the next day, than the desperate need for sleep, that made me decide to spend twenty-four hours in Svolvær before catching the boat for Narvik.

The weather was no better in Narvik otherwise I might have made one of the easier ascents that can be done from there in a day. Instead I decided on a reconnaissance into the mountains further inland and so, loaded up with three days' food and along with weekend fishermen and hunters, I took the train on the famous Swedish ore line which climbs spectacularly up above the Rombakotn to Bjornfell on the frontier. One hundred and fifty miles north of the Arctic Circle, yet far below in the fjord there was an open swimming enclosure.

I got off at Katterat—a station and three houses—walked through a tunnel, crossed the torrent on the railway bridge and made my way slowly up the Sordalselven, pursued by a million mosquitos. A footpath was marked on the map but I found little evidence of it. At first I pushed my way through thick birch forest with no view and only the river to guide my direction, then through dwarf birch and polar willow with silver grey satin leaves, before breaking out into the tundra where only swamps and an occasional torrent delayed my progress. The cloud was low and now it was drizzling, there was little to tell I was not in some Scottish glen.

I was delightfully free; no definite plans, no timetable to keep. When I got tired I stopped, put up my tent and made my evening

meal. While doing this the sky cleared. High above, a rock pinnacle appeared, poised seemingly unattached, floating on a sea of cloud, then on all sides glaciers and other peaks to remind me that this after all was not Scotland. Commanding the scene a few miles up the valley was Sälkacokka. I would make this my first peak.

As a solo climber I knew I must act with the utmost prudence and as yet these northern glaciers were an unknown quantity. I had been told that in August I should find little snow cover and that in any case the crevasses were too small to fall into. In fact these statements proved to be only partly true; the upper half of the glaciers were invariably covered in snow and occasionally I did see crevasses into which I could certainly have fallen. But if a few such perils did exist, their position on the glacier was easily seen and avoided.

Many of these mountains I knew I could not climb safely alone, not on account of the glaciers, but because of the steep rock with which, on all sides, their summits were defended. Sälkacokka had no such complete defence it seemed. Great granite walls there were indeed, but between them, facing down the valley, was a ridge, a rock ridge but wide and broken, and set at an easy angle I thought. A few hours pleasant scrambling and the top would be mine.

Of course there was no darkness and I should have set off straight after my meal to take advantage of the wonderful colourings of an all night sun. But that first day I was tired and I decided to sleep.

I set off at 5.0 a.m. after my usual breakfast of uncooked porridge and powdered milk, walked a few miles up the valley to where I could ford the river and climbed up the snow streaked slope opposite to a level waste of moraine and partly frozen pools that extended for four or five miles along the eastern side of the mountain. A little below this waste was the glacier, and a mile across it, the ridge up which I had intended to scramble. Now viewed closer and partly in profile it did not quite present the easy line of ascent that it had earlier promised. The whole ridge was perhaps 2,000 feet high, the first half of which I could climb easily, but what I had not been able to see so far distant, was that in its upper section it steepened and narrowed, at one place becoming almost an arête. For certain there would be

real climbing of a difficulty which I was not prepared to tackle alone.

Facing me was the great east wall of the mountain, but half way up the glacier there was a break. A broad snow couloir which would bring me out onto the summit ridge. This seemed a safe alternative route.

It was now hot and the glacier alive and noisy with a thousand rivulets but I was half glad of the sun for when I had crossed the bergschrund it made the snow of the couloir admirable for step kicking. So I slowly mounted for a couple of hours, relieving the monotony of the final slope by taking to an island of rock where I could enjoy moderate rock climbing on rough reliable granite.

I came out on the ridge at a saddle some way along its length and walked up to the north summit of my first Arctic peak. There was a small heap of stones to show that it had been climbed before; how long since the last ascent I wondered, how long before the next? There were a hundred peaks around me and more stretching away into blue inestimable distances north and south. I sat there for an hour in warm, still air, utterly content; a modest peak, little over 5,000 feet in height, climbed without difficulty or excitement, but it had given me immense satisfaction. Perhaps that is one of the rewards of climbing alone.

I was sitting on the north top of the mountain; separated by three miles of easy ridge was the south summit, the highest point, to which I now walked. From there two hours later I looked down 3,000 ft. of steep rock to the brown water of Sälkajavrre still in a grey and dead valley, devoid of colour or vegetation. Far across to the south-east was Storsteinfjell, an enormous elevated snowfield from which sprang thirteen rock summits, some separate, others linked by crazy ridges. Only a few years ago had the last of these peaks been climbed.

I did not linger here. I knew I could make an easy descent down a shallow couloir at the head of the glacier but already the sun was low and I was anxious to be down before the snow had time to harden. When I got back to the camp I calculated I had been out for seventeen hours so that the next day I was content to be engaged on more restful activities.

The length of my journeys from civilisation was limited only by the weight of food I could comfortably carry. I would live off the country I decided and I was now the owner of a light

spinning rod. Encouraged and tutored by a kind friend, I had already had a modest success at home and I felt confident that in the abundant waters of these northern rivers my supper and breakfast would be easily caught. And so after an afternoon of botanising I went down to the river in high hopes, but three hours later I had succeeded only in losing both my temper and my spinners. This was a blow indeed but I was later more content to learn that because of the waterfalls there are no fish in the upper reaches of the Sordalselven.

This first journey was intended only as a reconnaissance to get the feel of the country. Later I had planned to walk from Skjomen, a lonely community to the south of Narvik, several days journey up the Norddalen to the frontier, and to some of the most isolated mountains in Norway. But the same mountains could be reached from the valley in which I was now camped by crossing a pass to the head of the Oallavagge.

I would have climbed another mountain but the next morning it was raining so I returned to Narvik for a week's food so that I could carry out this modified plan. At Katterat the Station Master stopped specially for me the Stockholm-Narvik Express and dishevelled and dripping I climbed up to a train of surprised passengers.

Back again the next evening I moved the camp a few miles up the valley but so appalled was I by the load I now had to carry I decided to spend another day locally. Curling round the back of Sälkacokka was the Hunddalsbotn, a valley at the head of which, among an array of fine peaks, rose the Domstind, particularly shapely, so pointed indeed that it seemed it might fall outside the narrow limits I had set myself. But if the ridges of Sälkacokka proved more formidable and steep at close quarters, those of the Domstind receded. A fearsome south face it presented still, but the main ridge, a great horseshoe, I gained easily enough up slopes of scree and snow and with only twenty feet of actual climbing on shattered red rock I gained the summit. One half of the mountain was of this red friable rock, the rest of the more usual grey granite. The strata was vertical and the two met on the summit itself.

Preferring the granite to the crumbling mass up which I had just scrambled, I prospected the opposite ridge. I found it delightful. Broad but with near vertical walls so that it was airy enough,

I descended walking down great slabs set at an easy angle, separated by five to ten foot steps. I was soon at the bottom where I came to the little glacier embraced by the two ridges of the horseshoe, and suddenly, round a bluff of rock, there were a dozen reindeer. As nearly always when I saw them, they were on the snow to get most value from the short summer sun.

Now the weather deteriorated; the next few days were dull and I could not make photography an excuse to ease my overburdened back on the long marches that followed over the col and down the Oallavagge and Sälkajokka to Storvatn Cuno Javrre. In a place of the utmost isolation, beside the torrent which fed into the lake and within a couple of miles of the Swedish frontier, I camped for two days hoping for an opportunity to attack one of the summits of Storsteinfjell. I was now catching fish. Half an hour's work and I would have a fine three pound sea trout which fried in butter made delicious eating. But even with this addition to my food I knew I could not linger too long. When on the third day I could still see nothing of the peaks around me I decided to start moving down the long valley of the Norddalen. If the weather improved I could still climb my mountain from the opposite side.

It was not on the mountains that I had most cause for fear, for I acted with great caution, but my greatest alarms were in an element much less familiar; in the fast or deep waters of torrents and rivers. Once, thigh deep in white water I had felt utterly helpless and very frightened and the prospect of the return crossing had put a shadow over the whole day. Here I would have been faced with a serious problem, but, where none was marked on the map, I was relieved to find a bridge, a flimsy wire construction in itself quite alarming. Although so isolated, I learnt that where there is a good fishing lake, sufficiently large for a seaplane, such provisions are sometimes made, there may even be a hut. A further day's march down the Norddalen at a tributary, where on the map a bridge was clearly marked, none seemed ever to have existed and I had to face another alarming performance.

It was a long day with the cloud continuing low so that it was not until the evening that I got a view of Huinarcokka, a granite pyramid and the best of all these peaks, but interesting, for the valley was full of wild fowl and bright with Arctic flowers. I

lengthened my walk in order to get to a building named in large letters, Stations Holmens. So prominently marked I felt certain it must be a place of importance with someone living there and I was now eager for company. But I found only a deserted Lapp Kata, a primitive conical structure of birch branches and peat.

Again the next morning there was no view of the mountains so in a long day but with a light load I walked down to the farms of Skjomdalen and the first human company I had seen for a week.

Rested and reprovisioned I set off on the five day trek to Sweden's Kebnekaise. It was a route that was to take me across a fine expanse of high tundra and by many lakes, Kabbvatnet, Baatsvatn, Gautelisvatn, Vannaksvatn and a dozen more. Each is remembered for some little incident; the attack of a fearless but fierce lemming, a particularly large charr that I caught, the fishermen I met who had flown up by seaplane and whose catch would pay for its charter, the sophisticated Lapp with modern mountain tent and Primus, watching through binoculars his reindeer herd. On the fourth day I passed by five lakes, none smaller than Grasmere, that were not even marked on the map. I descended then into a prominent valley.

For the first time I was on a well trodden track for this was the Kungsladen, the Royal Trail, which extends 150 miles from Jackvik to Abisko through Sweden's wildest and finest country, and for the first time too I met tourists and at Singistugan there was a hut, one of the chain along the route, belonging to the Svenska Turisföreningen. There were long legged Swedes with enormous rucksacks and Swedish girls, fair haired and sunburnt; enchanting creatures who bathed naked not very far away. A progressive country Sweden!

I enjoyed my evening at Singistugan. The next night, after a Sauna bath, I sat down to an excellent dinner at the well appointed Kebnekaise Fjellstation still 50 miles from Kiruna and roads and railways, but connected from there by a daily helicopter service. Supplies for the station are brought up by sledge during the Spring months.

Around the valley of the Ladtjo Vagge were grouped the finest peaks I had seen in the north. The Fjellstation deserved to be popular, but the chief attraction, rising so steeply above it that little could be seen, was Kebnekaise, 7,000 feet and Sweden's

highest mountain. Each fine summer day it is climbed by guided parties. I had not the money to hire a guide, nor in fact was one necessary. Although the peak is held in some awe in Sweden, its ascent by the east route presents no difficulty in good conditions.

I was away at 4.0 a.m. long before the guided parties were astir but already the tops were flushed with gold. From the glacier at 4,000 feet I could see the eastern face extending for a couple of miles below the twin summits of the mountain. A mountaineer could pick out a dozen engaging routes up buttress ridge or sharp snow arête. But these were not for me; tracks across the snow led to a break where a snow slope mounted towards a dip in the ridge, the two separated by only 500 feet of easy, broken rock. A staircase of bucket steps pointed the way.

I came out on the ridge near a small hut, the Topstuga. Outside gathering their ropes and ice axes were three friendly Swedes, the only mountaineers I ever saw on this holiday. They had spent the night there and were now setting forth on the traverse of the mountain, an expedition which I was cordially invited to join. The Sydtoppan, a confined snow crest and the highest point was easily climbed. Alone I could have gone no further, for ahead, over the Nordtoppen and beyond, was a sharp snow arête of truly Alpine character. We roped up and walked along its undulating crest with the whole of Lapland it seemed at our feet. For two hours we continued, now and again leaving the crest to avoid the cornices, until we were off the snow and looking down vertical and overhanging rock to a col below. We reached it by climbing down easier rock to the west. We had completed the traverse and we now descended a couloir, steep, so that for most of its length we moved one at a time, to the glacier whose snout overhung the Tarfaladalen, a valley of wild beauty dominated at its head by the fine rock peaks of Kaskastj and Tarfaldtj.

It had been a wonderful day and it was made complete for me that night by an unusual sight. Close on midnight I took a last look out of the tent and found, filling both level bed and the steep sides of the valley, a vast herd of reindeer. There must have been several thousand of them; driven by no Lapps or their dogs, for half an hour or more they moved slowly down on natural migration.

These highlands are quite uninhabited in Winter, only in Summer will you see the tourists on the Kungsladen and the occasional Lapp. Few of these Lapps are truly Nomadic; some are fisher Lapps only and live in permanent villages, others who are herdsmen have two homes many miles apart. Winter is spent deep in the coniferous forests but as soon as Spring is on the way the herd is restive, full of the urge to move away from the coming swarms of mosquitos and gadflies and the heat of an Arctic summer. With their possessions piled onto boat-shaped sledges (pulkas) the Lapps and their herds move to the mountains on their Spring migration, a journey which is halted in May for the calving.

When he has arrived among the fjells in mid-June the Lapp repairs his birch and sod Katas and settles down for five months. His herds are left to browse at will, while he can be busy at his crafts and hunting and fishing. My Swedish friends told me where I might find one of these summer settlements in a valley three days' march to the south-east.

Except for the tourist on the Kungsladen and at the Fjellstation I had met no other travellers. But I was not the only solo wanderer in Lapland. On the third day of that march I met a kindred spirit walking in the opposite direction. She was a weather-beaten, middle aged Swedish lady, like me with tent and sleeping bag, who told me that for six weeks she had been travelling alone and except for the Lapps, from whom she bought food, I was the first person she had met. A stout hearted soul, I thought.

That day I was crossing almost level tundra not unlike Rannoch Muir, with views to the peaks of the Sarek ahead. After twenty miles of such going I looked down over a vast expanse of birch forest and lakes and below me, beside the Kattumjaure, smoke curled up from a group of rough birch huts—the Lapplager of Tijuonjokk.

Except for an occasional seaplane with its fishermen, few tourists pass this way and as with all simple people, little touched by civilisation, I was received hospitably. Before I was allowed to pitch my tent I was taken to the head of the family, a colourfully dressed old lady, and was seated on birch branches in the main kata, a fire on the floor, smoke going through a hole in the roof, the whole family gathered round, while I was entertained to

coffee. That night, after a meal of delicious smoked charr, I slept on a pile of reindeer skins.

I now had to travel down the birch forested banks of the Kaiturm alv, a river of considerable size. Just how long it would take me to reach the railway line and civilisation, I did not know for I was soon to walk off the limits of my map. I did know however that I only had to follow the river and I should come to the line and the small halt of Fjallasen. I hoped I could do it in three days.

It was early on the second day's march after a night with another Lapp community that I joined up with Rupert. Rupert was a reindeer calf astray from his mother and the herd. Perhaps he had not seen a human before for he certainly showed no fear. All day he followed me, lying beside me when I rested, sometimes falling behind to graze but soon running to catch me up. Only late in the day when I crossed a river did we part company.

I might indeed have made the journey in three days but lacking a map I had to follow every bend and twist of the river. All too often my way was barred by swamp, bog or deep sullen river and if I did find a track, it was of elk or bear for it led nowhere. I pushed on as far as I could on the third night, not really expecting to come suddenly out on to the railway, but hoping to find more Lapps for I now had a taste for their company, even if no word of their language could I understand. But when I had been going for twelve hours I made camp, but not before I had climbed a tree for the view ahead. I could see nothing but endless forest.

One can have too much of solitude and forest. There was much beauty, if no wide vista, and the weather was good, but the scene changed little and the swamps were tedious as now was the constant diet of fish, however excellent it may first have tasted. On the fourth day I was really longing for the railway and yet at every bend the river stretched ahead bounded by limitless forest, no sight of dwelling, railway track or bridge. I did not stop for lunch and in any case my provisions were running low, but in the late afternoon, rather weary and discouraged, I halted to make a soup. I was just lighting the fire when I heard in the distance the hoot of a train, it was the same note that I last heard nearly four weeks before in Narvik. That night I dined well if expensively in the iron ore boom town of Kiruna.

The most strenuous part of my expedition was over. I was to go into the forests and smaller hills of Arctic Finland, further north than I had already been, but never again did I see mountains or have quite the same solitude. In retrospect it was the solitude and isolation that were the most satisfying part of the expedition. There are many finer mountains than these, but few places so wild. If it was not the mountains that were the challenge it was the country, its wildness, its loneliness, its wide expanses. To travel for days in such a land, alone and self supporting, was in itself sufficient reward.



THE LOWSTERN HUT

by E. C. Downham

THE IDEA of a second Y.R.C. Hut developed out of discussions amongst members generally about the establishment of a suitable memorial to Crosby Fox, the Leader of the Y.R.C. 1957 Himalayan Expedition so tragically killed in an avalanche. However it was later felt that, as Fox was an accomplished mountaineer rather than a pot-holer, some other form of memorial to him was preferable, but nevertheless the idea of a hut in the limestone area of Craven persisted and received the approval of the Committee. It is surely fitting that the Club which pioneered pot-holing and caving in this part of the country should have a permanent base in Craven. A sub-committee was formed and it was on a bitterly cold Sunday in February, 1958 that possible and impossible buildings were inspected. Not until after a fortifying lunch did our Clapham member John Lovett recall that the old and derelict hut known as "The Golf House" at Clapham might be worthy of consideration, so it was to this edifice that the sub-committee ventured forth.

The situation was superb; approached by its own drive from the Bentham road, a quarter of a mile out of Clapham village, standing secluded in a small plantation, entirely private and with a glorious uninterrupted view south over the rolling hills of Bowland, it was an ideal spot. The Lowstern Plantation is marked on the One Inch Ordnance Map, Grid Reference 732691. On the hut itself opinion was sharply divided. The Architects and Surveyors in the Club viewed the rusty and dilapidated structure with a critical eye, with mutterings of rot, both wet and dry, and other technicalities of which lesser mortals were blissfully ignorant, but all agreed that the site was perfect. That a terrific amount of work was necessary to make the place habitable and worthy of the Y.R.C. was tactfully not mentioned! The hut and its grounds comprised part of the Ingleborough Estate, thus the possibility of buying or renting was somewhat doubtful, but a hopeful approach was made to the Lord of the Manor, Dr. J. A. Farrer.

At this point one realised the high regard in which our predecessors of the Y.R.C. are held and on what secure foundations the Club was built. Dr. Farrer immediately gave the project his

blessing and was kind enough to say that as the Yorkshire Ramblers had for so long been closely connected with the Farrer family we could go ahead immediately. Unfortunately, owing to the ramifications of the Estate, outright purchase was not possible but Dr. Farrer agreed to a long lease at a purely nominal rent.

The Legal Department of the Club then swung into action as did also the general body of members; finally even the Treasurer was noticeably enthusiastic but perhaps this was due to the influence of the President—what a good thing it was that in the year 1958 the President, Stanley Marsden, was one and the same person as the Treasurer! An appeal for donations to the hut fund was opened and, as always, the response was most gratifying; the Club will be eternally grateful to those many members who helped to provide much-needed and costly equipment.

The Hut is a bungalow containing five rooms; these immediately suggested a layout of two dormitories (containing eventually twelve bunks), a common room, kitchen, bathroom and an annexe for clothes. Plans included showers with hot and cold water and full cooking facilities; all these things have now come to pass. Adaptations and extensive repairs started after Whitsuntide 1958 and up to the end of the summer of 1959 scarcely a week-end passed without members working on the Hut. Just how the ambitious construction of a septic tank for flush lavatories came into being remains a mystery, but one recalls a young member of the Club, known affectionately by the name less polite than that of Sewage Engineer, wandering about with rolls of plans under his arm, and finally the inhuman glee with which he watched slave labour digging a monstrous hole some eight feet in diameter and nine feet deep to house a pre-fabricated concrete tank.

All this work went with a tremendous swing and great enthusiasm; superhuman efforts succeeded in making the Hut presentable for an official opening at the After-Dinner Meet in November, 1958, and it was surely fitting that the Club's Oldest Member and doyen of pot-holers, no less a person than Ernest E. Roberts, should perform the opening ceremony.

A crowd of about eighty members and friends had assembled in the Hut grounds when the newly elected President, John Godley, mounted the steps leading to the Front Door of the Hut.

In a brief speech he outlined the efforts which had led up to the acquisition of the Hut, he went on to make a strong plea for care in pot-holing. There was no virtue, he said, in getting into difficulties underground, the Club possessed both the tackle and the experience to make trouble unnecessary. He urged younger Members to take the greatest possible care and not to be afraid to ask for advice. He then introduced our Landlord, Dr. J. A. Farrer of Ingleborough who, in a few happy words of welcome, made it clear that both Landlord and Tenants were more pleased with each other than is normally the case!

Roberts then took his stand on the steps, it was obviously a proud moment for him and everybody listened with delight to his characteristic speech, packed with humour, anecdote and sound common sense. True to his pet hobby of exploding fallacies he insisted that he was not a founder member of the Club but belonged to what he called the "second wave." He paid handsome tribute to the early stalwarts, Fred and Matt Botterill, Tom Booth, Parsons, Gray and Green and others who made the foundations of the Y.R.C. and laid down the principles of pot-holing technique. He hoped that the Y.R.C. would never slavishly follow fashions, and he could not resist a passing swipe at rock-climbers who encumber themselves with ironmongery—"it must be a great impediment."

He then declared the Hut open, unlocked the door with an enormous "eighteen carrot" gold key, flung it wide and invited members to come in after the President had smashed a bottle of champagne on the steps.

There is no doubt that the Hut, "this building of character," now thoroughly equipped and luxuriously comfortable, will prove a great acquisition for the Club.

THE 1957 EXPEDITION TO MONTE MARGUARIES

by W. A. Linford

IN THE early months of 1957 the Club had the pleasure of taking Sir John Hunt down Gaping Gill. So impressed was he by our enthusiasm for potholing that when shortly afterwards he received an invitation from the French Speleologists for several English potholers to join them in exploring some caves in North Italy, he very kindly passed it on to the Y.R.C. As a result I broke off my holiday in Switzerland and, with two friends, Malcolm Kay and Brian Angell, joined the French for the latter half of their expedition.

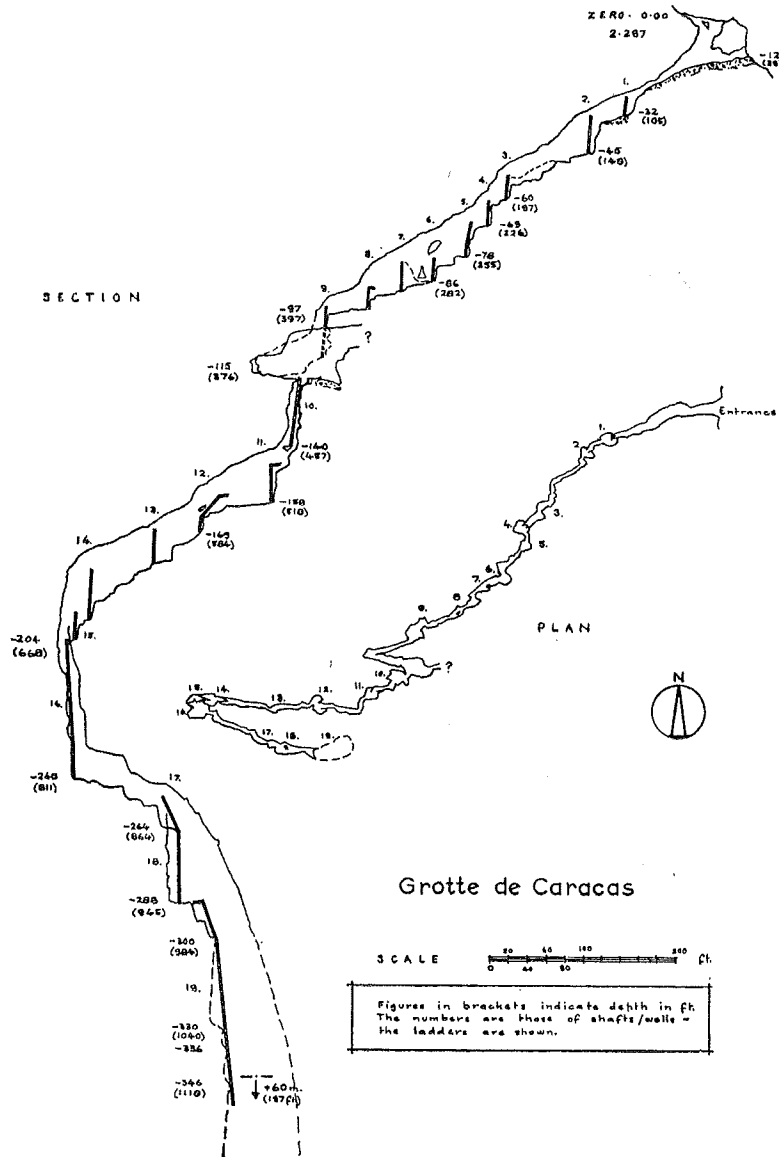
The Speleological Club of Paris had organised for August, 1957, an exploration of the massif of Monte Marguaries in the Alpi Maritime. Their plan of campaign was —

- (i) The exploration of the Grotte Caracas and its possible connection with the Piagga Bella, a pothole 340 metres deep.
- (ii) To study and explore the Pian Ballaur at a point named Solei, to find the origin of the water in the Piagga Bella.
- (iii) To search the Lapiaz between the Cime della Saline and the Sargant de Piscio.
- (iv) To search the slope of Mongioje. (8,368 ft.)

This, we were soon to find, was an ambitious programme, of which only the first and last sections were accomplished. The Grotte Caracas proved to be so difficult that only a small portion of it was actually explored.

Our adventures really started when we alighted from the train at Ormea, where we expected to find an Italian, Alberti Giovanni who, Raymond Gache had promised us, would guide us to the French base camp at Upega. After waiting an hour, and no Alberti, we decided to make our own way to Upega, only to find that there was no public transport and the road, though clearly marked on our map, was in fact nothing but a cart track and no taxi driver would attempt it.

Ormea is on the road to the coast so we got a lift as far as the Colle di Nava where we were left, with 11 Km. to Upega and large heavy packs. Having little food and not speaking Italian



we decided to camp and push on next day. However, just outside a shop I ran into a very sunburnt Englishman who introduced himself as the interpreter for the British Consul in Turin and asked if he could help. After a brief absence he came back with the information that Alberti Giovanni had taken an injured Spaniard to hospital and if we liked to wait in a tavern down the street the Italian Military Policeman on duty would stop him on his return. We had no sooner settled down to drinking beer than a tremendous clatter and babble of voices, from which we several times distinguished the word "Speleogive," heralded the arrival of Alberti. We emerged to find our rucksacks being secured to the top of a battered and ancient Fiat which didn't seem to have either springs or, from the sound of it, exhaust pipe.

Alberti, we later discovered, had the important task of organising the food supplies for the French potholers. He was a very jovial character and looked after us extremely well. After heaving and swaying down the cart track for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours we arrived at his "hotel" where we were given a meal of spaghetti washed down with chianti and shown a camp site behind the house.

At 7.00 a.m. next day Alberti woke us with the news that we should be leaving in an hour for the French speleo camp. On arriving at the hotel we saw a sight to gladden the heart of any mountaineer, our sacks packed on the back of a mule. On the long walk to the camp we learnt one or two things about mules: apply the law of the boot, never walk just behind them and never let them have their head.

After six hours' walking we arrived at the camp on a small plateau between two butresses, level with the entrance to Piagga Bella and obviously the abode of numerous cows. We were most heartily welcomed by Raymond Gache, Max Coudère, several members of the Club Spéléologique de Dijon and three members of the Cuneo Club who had arrived just before us. Very soon our tent took its place among the thistles and cow dung, looking very small among the French bell tents. Whilst Paquerette prepared eggs and bacon for us the conversation turned naturally to potholing and to the details and difficulties of Caracas. Fortunately the Frenchmen spoke very good English, but in order to make himself fully understood Raymond gave us a demonstration on the tent floor of the very narrow "snail" pitches. For a man with a weak heart Raymond did very well and in the few

days we were together I formed a deep respect for him. The entire camp revolved around Raymond and all the "speos" there held him in the highest esteem and admiration, one of the pioneers of French speleology.

A Venezuelan named Eugenio de Bellard-Petrie discovered the cave in 1954 and in that year descended to a depth of 115 metres by a system of 9 pitches. It was not until this year, 1957, that it was again entered and it was from the point at 115 metres that the year's exploration began. We were disappointed to learn that the pot was proving more difficult than expected and that because of its unsafe nature the French had only brought 350 metres of ladder, which in fact proved enough to reach a depth of only 346 metres.

Caracas is a true pot-hole, consisting principally of one narrow pitch after another. Parties of four had been going in at 8-hour intervals, each taking a few ladders, and linking up below for exchange of information. One such party was to leave that evening with 25 metres of ladder and link up with Abel Chochon, Toni Senni, Yves Créach and myself, who would enter at 08.00 hrs. the following day with the remaining 50 metres. We could ourselves have gone in that evening had not Trotte Coudère (Max's wife) made a brew of wine, cinnamon, lemon and sugar which, with our natural fatigue, put an end to any such thought.

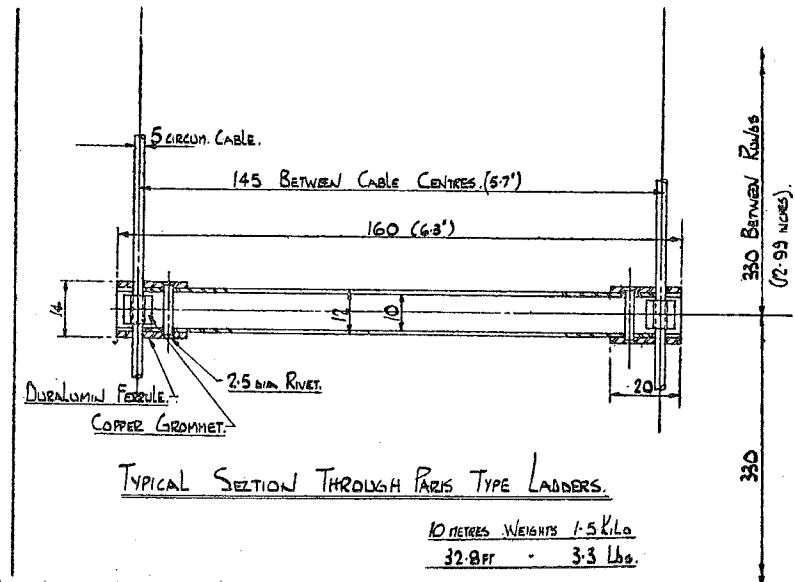
Respective clubs was the topic of the evening and we discovered that despite its reputation for pioneer work the "Expéditions Spéléologiques Françaises" is in fact a young club. It had ten founder members who held their first meeting in a back alley with dustbins for seats. Their first potholes were only 20 ft. deep and their equipment a collection of home-made ladders, but after a campaign in the local press a meeting was held at the Café de Lyon in September, 1947, at which the Club Martel was formed, to be amalgamated with the French Alpine Club after 3 years of precarious existence with insufficient funds and equipment. and no meeting place other than side-streets, cafés and cellars.

Transport provided them with many adventures, their first vehicle being a 1905 Model T Ford salvaged from the scrap heap and rebuilt. This served them for 4 years though only two people were able to tame and drive it and when the oil consumption exceeded the petrol consumption they decided to venture upon

something more modern. In due course they acquired a 1928 Model A Ford which, apart from losing wheels, breaking con-rods and blowing valve tops off, gave them excellent service and they still had it when we met them.

Soon after 8 a.m. we were making tracks for the col, while Kay and Angell left for Piagga Bella. The entrance to Caracas opens in the centre of a large buttress on the opposite side of the hill from Piagga Bella, at 2,300 metres above sea level. The path from the col leads to a great porch which gives way to the first gallery and narrows immediately to the top of Pitch 1. Zero is taken from the top of the porch, 14 metres above Pitch 1. The Italian shepherds have their own name for this porch, "The Church of Baukas."

We packed the equipment, which had already been brought up by the 'resting' members of the party, into six short circular bags, drank our fill of water and started the descent. While packing the ladders I had my first glimpse of them and was horrified at their apparent weakness and very small width, 145 mm., just enough for one boot, with 13 inches between rungs. They are very light per unit length, 10 metres weigh



1.5 Kg., are made from 3 mm. watchmaker's wire with 12 mm. diameter 'Duralinox' tubing for rungs. They are quite different from the English 9 in. wide, 10 in. between rungs, and they provided the French 'Speos' with one or two good laughs while I learnt the necessary technique.

Pitch 1 was not the best place to try a new ladder; 10 m. deep, it started with a very narrow chimney which ended abruptly, leaving one swinging in space. The chimney presented no problems but transferring on to the ladder near the start of the free section was terrifying as I could not find a rung to stand on and so take the body-weight off my arms. Convinced that I did not have my feet in the ladder I tried to find it by swinging my feet but the ladder being very light just oscillated and added to the confusion. After a while, having got one foot between the wire strands, I slowly lowered myself and after what felt like several feet, found a rung. Because the wire strand is rather dangerous to the hands, it is necessary to wear gloves which make it difficult to hold the ladder when it is against a wall. Looking for the next step took me out of the chimney so that I could see where I was moving and I stepped down to the next rung, only to find I could not reach it. The additional 3 in. between rungs makes an appreciable difference and the technique is to keep the ladder close to the body with the hands low, about chest height, behind the ladder, dropping one hand as the free foot is lowered. Once you get used to dropping 26 in. instead of 20 in. and moving the hands quickly, descent by these ladders is rapid and easy, but ascent can be rather strenuous. Their main advantage is their bulk/weight ratio.

A greasy gully led to the top of Pitch 2, a straightforward pitch which went rapidly to within 6 ft. of the bottom when again I had difficulty in finding the ladder with the lower foot. "It is O.K.," called Abel from above, "we changed the 15 m. ladder for a 10 m. one to conserve ladders, just drop!" The next 7 pitches, which were not difficult though narrow and constricted, took us down to 100 metres where a sharp corner only just wide enough for my helmet led into the "dining hall" at 115 metres. This is a lofty chamber containing a natural stone table with a limestone tablecloth surrounded by several blocks forming seats. Numerous empty tins placed in strategic positions reminded one that Caracas is a dry pot with no flowing water, when using

acetylene lamps this can be quite a problem. The dryness did not add to comfort, for had there been water in quantity it would no doubt have washed the walls clear of "monmilch" This is a limestone paste containing sand and grit which covers one from head to foot, making life most uncomfortable and ropes difficult to control. Plaited nylon cord is used because it has better wearing qualities than spun nylon rope. Rope is generally used only for raising and lowering equipment, only on Pitch 16 is it used as a safety rope. On much of this first section the route between ladders ran several feet above the true bottom and the baggage had to be passed in chain fashion; this often meant that one man had to bridge the clint with the bags stacked upon him while the others clambered over him, a strenuous process which added much to our fatigue, especially on the ascent.

We did not stop to eat in the 'dining hall' but crossed to the top of Pitch 10, a dangerous pitch of 23 metres, the start and walls of which are covered with loose pebbles which detach at the slightest touch and rattle down the pot making a tremendous noise in the confined space. Yves decided to move the ladder farther out to avoid some of the stones and the following half-hour was spent boring a hole in the wall to cast in a 10 mm. steel peg using Plaster of Paris as a cement. At Pitch 11 we met a party on the way out, Noële and the three Italians, who said they had found another shaft which had taken them down to 246 metres where they had left the rest of the ladders. The Italians wore a broad heavy waist belt with two shoulder straps forming a harness which carried several 'D' buckles, hooks and eyes, none of which had any apparent use.

Pitch 11 passed uneventfully, leaving us to climb up to Pitch 12 where after 4 metres it was necessary to leave the ladder, descend in reverse a slippery 'Monmilch'-lined chimney, return under the ladder and finish through a foul vent-hole. Here baggage was a problem. Pitches 13 and 14 were similar, taking us down to 200 metres. Yves and I were now measuring as we progressed, charting with tape, compass and inclinometer, Yves getting excited when a change in direction after Pitch 11 indicated that we were moving towards the Piagga Bella. Pitch 15 was very awkward, 8 metres of sweat and struggle, leading to the top of the first big pitch, No. 16, 44 metres. After 10 hours of movement we stopped here to eat while Toni and Abel connected the

ladders of Pitch 16 to those of Pitch 15. We lowered the baggage and went down to 265 metres where we fixed a peg for Pitch 17, a short narrow pitch, separated from Pitch 18 by a sharp bend. We had to connect the Pitch 17 ladder to that for Pitch 18, and very tiring and exasperating work it proved for the ladder would not lie where we wanted it.

Here we left the monmilch for the familiar sinister black rock to be found in most pots, this, said Toni, was good for the connection with Piagga Bella. Having lowered the remaining 60 metres of ladder we descended to a small platform at the base of Pitch 18, but we were now moving away from Piagga Bella. Now we were on virgin ground and the question was how deep our next pitch would be. Toni drilled holes for the pegs while we connected two ladders together and manœuvred them into position. The ladder started horizontal for 3 metres then down obliquely, ending in a 20 metre pitch where there was a tiny platform only big enough for one person, and not enough room to place a peg so we had to connect up our last 30 metres of ladder. Abel went down to a spacious ledge at 330 metres and from 300 metres I could see him heaving into the shaft great lumps of rock which hit the bottom with a terrifying crack and rolled on down the scree. At least 60 metres more! What fun this would be if only we had more equipment, Pitch 19 must be well over 100 meters deep. Abel moved on down to a third ledge at 346 metres while, prompted by curiosity, we climbed down to the upper ledges. The shaft looked black and gleamed with moisture, very like the main shaft of Bar Pot, only the depth is measured in metres, not feet.

This was the end, a deep shaft and no equipment and we were now passing away from and under Piagga Bella, so after 12 hours underground we returned to 288 metres and prepared for the return to the surface. It was obvious that future expeditions would have to camp—but where? Yves said they would build a platform from timbers supported between the walls!

Taking only 3 bags with us we started for the surface, arriving at 5.30 a.m. just 22½ hours after going in. The return was very tiring, particularly the last 8 shafts, which seemed never-ending. Toni persisted in going to sleep at the bottom of each pitch, and Abel swore he fell asleep on a ladder—how it was nobody fell off I do not know. The sun was rising, tinting the summit of Monte

Marguaries red, but we were too tired to appreciate such beauty as we tumbled down to camp and into our sleeping bags.

We all needed a day's rest to mend grazed knees and elbows and we spent the following two days removing the equipment from Caracas, leaving only the pegs and the mystery of how the pot finished. The third day was spent washing the ladders, and badly they needed it.

A few notes for those proposing to visit the lower depths. Take rubber boots, not nails, two boiler suits, an umbrella and a catapult to ward off curious cows. A French type carbide lighting set is an advantage, larger and more substantial than ours, electricity is not so good. Finally if it is beauty you are after do not go to Caracas, it is deep, dark and dirty, and does not contain a single formation.



A TRAVERSE OF THE EIGER AND THE MÖNCH

by R. Gowing

IN THE long evenings of the summer term, talking together after a lecture by a visiting climber, or sipping pints at P.Y.G. after a day on the Three Cliffs, climbers' thoughts turn to their plans and ambitions for the coming season in the high Alps. It was on such an evening that Nigel Rogers put forward his scheme for a sky-line traverse of the great northern wall of the Bernese Oberland. After suitable training we would traverse the Eiger by the Mitteleggi ridge, bivouac on the Eigerjoch and traverse the Mönch to the Jungfrauoch. From there we would climb the Jungfrau by its magnificent north-east ridge, and descend the Aletsch Glacier to the Rhone valley.

After many pints our plans were completed, also the party by the inclusion of Geoff Baldwin; we walked and climbed, and walked again on the Welsh hills, we attempted the Wetterhorn and succeeded on the Schreckhorn; finally we posted out camping gear to Sion to be picked up after the traverse and sent a large box of food up on the railway to the Jungfrauoch.

Now the day had come, rain was falling in the streets of Grindelwald, and the mountain wall was covered with cloud as we boarded the train that was to take us on the first leg of our journey. The train clanked down through the village, past the bathing pool, down to Grund station in the valley bottom, then went winding up among the châteaux towards the Kleine Scheidegg. Below the clouds we could feel, but not see, the vast wall of the Eiger rising above us. A few châteaux, a desolate moor and we were at the Kleine Scheidegg where we hurriedly bought our tickets and dashed through the rain to the Jungfraubahn.

There were few people in the train—a Swiss climber, and an American magnate with Mom and Junior. Up we went through the avalanche shelters to the Eigergletscher station, where the Swiss climber left us. Then the train plunged into the heart of the mountain, past gloomy portals opening on to the north face, until at last it came to a stop: Station Eismeer. We got off and watched the train disappear into a pinprick of light, then went into the station hall: a large window looked out on to a jumble of

glacier, and cloud-rent peaks; we shuddered and sat down to our tea.

When all was ready we set off, groping down a cold, damp tunnel until we emerged on to the glacier. "Achtung, Steinschlag vom Eiger" said the guide book, so we moved well out on to the glacier away from the south face. Making our way between the slabs of the Eiger and the edge of the glacier shelf, we headed for the buttress below the hut perched up on the ridge. A thump, and Rogers had discovered a crevasse—in up to his knee; he had wrenched it but luckily was able to carry on. In gently falling rain we started up the rock buttress. The climbing was not difficult but it was slaty limestone with no belays; as we mounted higher we became increasingly aware of the sweep of slabs below us and of our insecurity. Dark was falling and we were relieved when the slope eased off and we arrived at the little hut, perched high on the Mitteleggi ridge. Four Frenchmen were there; we had a quick meal, filled the pans with snow and went to bed.

The morning dawned overcast and snowing; after poking our noses outside we retired to bed. The Frenchmen went down, leaving us to a pleasant restful day in the hut. Through breaks in the clouds we could look straight down on Grindelwald; later it cleared enough for us to see the cirque of peaks surrounding the lower Grindelwald glacier, while to the east the ridge rose towering into the clouds. We spent the day lying on the bunk reading the hut-book. Many parties had come up to the hut only to go down again in the face of the weather. Our experience of the ascent to the hut made us reluctant to go down again over the treacherous slabs, specially since they were thinly coated with fresh snow.

Next morning at 3.30 a.m. it was overcast and doubtful; by 5 o'clock it had cleared and looked promising so we breakfasted and at 6.30 we were off. The ridge was horizontal and easy to begin with, and we soon reached the first obstacle, a nick some 20 feet deep. We climbed gingerly down into it, testing every hold on the slaty limestone as we went. From the nick rose the first fixed rope. Rogers led off, trying as much as possible to climb on his feet, using the rope as a steadying handhold. In places the holds became sparse, so we had to swarm up with feet pressed against the rock; this was strenuous and the tendency to

hurry, making full use of the ropes, made tiring work of it.

This short ascent led to another horizontal section from which we climbed gradually upwards in a stepwise fashion, with the stout ropes to help us on the difficult sections. There was some cloud about, but not enough to diminish the impressions of our aerial highway. To our left the slabs plunged down to the Kallifirn and the jumble of the Fieschergletscher backed by the rugged peaks of the Schreckhorn and Fiescherhörner. On our right ice slopes and cliffs dropped down to Grindelwald, with the valleys and foothills stretching away into the distance.

At last we reached the gendarme at the foot of the final bastion, which marked the furthest point of early attempts; it was not until artificial aids were used that it was finally climbed. Soon after the first ascent the guides draped the ridge with fixed ropes so that the climbing, though strenuous and exposed presents little technical difficulty. We climbed down the fixed ropes into the gap and started up the bastion. There was much snow about and the rope was icy in places; at one point it was buried under snow and we had a delicate traverse above the north face, but we finally reached the top of the rock and left the ropes behind.

We now had to cope with soft snow and cornices, at times creeping below the cornice on loose rocks above the snow face, at times on the crest of the snow ridge, thus rope-length by rope-length we worked our way to the summit, a mere scoop in the snow. A stack of gear bore silent witness to the tragedies and triumph of the rescue attempt on the Eigerwand two years before, and a pole with a flag "Bally Schuhen" showed that not even on the high summits is there any escape from commercialism.

We rested and had a quick meal. It was already 3.15 p.m. and we had given up the idea of continuing over the Mönch to the Jungfrauoch, but hoped to make the Bergli hut. We were 6½ hours guide-book time from this and would have to hurry to reach it before dark. We set off down the south ridge, over mixed snow and easy rock, but had not gone far before an Eiger storm brewed up and we were surrounded by dense cloud, hail and lightning. This slowed us down and as we groped our way down the ridge our prospects of a night under shelter looked remote. However, the storm soon passed and, leaving the south-west ridge away on the right, we abseiled down a chimney on to the snow-slope which curves down towards the Eiger glacier.

The snow was in a tricky state as we made our way slowly down towards the northern Eigerjoch.

It was 7.30 p.m. when we reached the Eigerjoch and, since it would take us at least four hours to reach the Bergli, we resolved to carry on along the ridge until we found a suitable bivouac site. What a delight it was to reach the first rocks and to grasp firm gneiss after the loose slaty limestone of the Eiger. We scrambled over and round rock outcrops by airy snow arêtes. The darkness gathered round us, but eventually we found a shelf on one of the outcrops where we could spend the night in safety.

Rogers' original skyline traverse plan had included the possibility of a bivouac in this region, so we were quite prepared. We put ourselves on short belays, put on all our spare clothing, removed our boots and put feet and boots into our rucksacks and put ourselves into 7 ft. by 3 ft. stout polythene bags. With the rope coiled underneath to soften our stony seats we were tolerably comfortable and so, after a bite, we settled down for the night.

It was clear and we looked out over the dark valley of Lauterbrunnen; above us, gleaming in the starlight, rose the snowy Mönch. It must have been very cold, but we were quite snug in our polythene bags and we slept a little before the sky began to lighten. Then followed what is probably the worst part of a bivouac—the bitter cold of the night as it fights its rearguard action against the approaching day. At last it lightened; we stretched, shook the condensation out of our bags, packed up and had breakfast. Within a few hours we should be at the snug haven of the Jungfrauoch—a bit of ridge and a couple of easy snow cols and we'd be there.

But—it was a perfect morning, and there in front of us was the Mönch, beckoning us on. We were well placed to traverse it; we should be up the steep snow arête before the sun had softened it, and should still reach the Jungfrauoch by midday. We set off, scrambling over more rock outcrops till finally a gentle undulating snow arête led us to the foot of the Mönch. The north-east ridge rose before us, bounded on the left by the snowy north-east flank, on the right by the north face, which plunges down to the Eiger glacier four thousand feet below.

After Rogers' fine lead over the Eiger I led up the ridge. The bergschrund gave little trouble and we climbed up keeping

fairly well to the crest of the ridge. In places rock outcropped on the ridge; this was mostly a help, and at other times we used the rocks bounding the snow on the north face. The upper part was a fine steep snow arête where steps needed careful kicking and I handed over to Rogers' superior icemanship. After some exhilarating climbing, we reached the broad flat summit at 10.15.

After a quick meal in company with another party who had come up a different way, Rogers led off down the south-west ridge. The going was easy at first—good snow, then straight-forward rocks mingled with snow. We looked down to the Jungfrauoch, its nearby slopes dotted with people, up at the Jungfrau, with its North-East Ridge rearing, and down to the right at the Guggi glacier far below. The ridge gave good scrambling without much difficulty, but once again the dark clouds gathered, the hail started and we heard the sickening buzzing sound with that feeling of utter helplessness in the face of the electric storm. Of course this had to hit us just as we were negotiating the tricky part of the descent, a thirty foot slab. Rogers and Baldwin fought their way down it in the storm but when my turn came it had passed and one slab was already drying out.

We scrambled down the remaining rocks and out on the snowfields. A final trudge through soft soupy snow brought us to the beaten track, which we followed to an entrance into the rock; a hundred yards of tunnel led us to the warm, welcoming haven of the Jungfrauoch.



A YEAR IN KOREA

by J. R. Robinson

KOREA, "The Land of the Morning Calm," is probably one of the most interesting countries in the Far East. For the rock-climber and walker there is enough scope for the most ambitious.

I left England in December, 1954, bound for service first in Korea and then in Hong Kong. Early in January, 1955, I arrived at the busy military post of Pusan and set foot on the peninsula of South Korea for the first time. First impressions were not favourable; the live war had not long been over, many of the population were homeless and the United Nations were beginning to settle down to rather an uneasy truce.

I found the atmosphere depressing; the town of Pusan, largely composed of shanties and makeshift houses, was dirty and squalid, the people were ill-fed, inadequately clothed and thoroughly demoralised. Most of them looked as if they would be lucky to survive the winter and many did not seem to care whether they did or not. The scenery added to the general feeling of depression; true, it was very hilly but the country, in spite of its ruggedness, was lacking in character, it was so bleak and desolate, and there was no vegetation to be seen.

I had arrived, as I was later to appreciate, at the worst possible time of the year, everything frozen solid. Even so, although the days were short and very cold, we did have quite a lot of bright blue sky and sunshine which, if not very warming to the body did at least unfreeze the spirit.

During the whole of the year that I was in Korea my unit formed part of the First Commonwealth Division and we were encamped at Sinjinpo, a few miles south of the 38th parallel, on the southern bank of the River Imjin.

The hills of Korea are not really high, the highest peak, Faik-Tu-San, "White-capped Mountain," is in North Korea on the Manchurian border and is just over 9,000 ft. No other peak is much above the 4000 ft. mark although the Diamond Mountains in North-east Korea have some summits approaching 5,000 ft. In the portion of the country now accessible to the Western Powers most of the hills can only boast a mere 3,000 ft. or less, but as most of the valley bottoms are only just above sea-level, the general effect is more rugged than one would expect.

The climbable rock is much weathered and eroded, due to a combination of extremes of temperature and torrential, if not excessive, rainfall.

In winter the countryside is brown and barren of all foliage but when spring eventually arrives the change is remarkable, vegetation which was apparently dead suddenly comes to life and the landscape becomes really beautiful. Spring flowers are everywhere in profusion, especially lovely are the azaleas, which cover most of the hillsides and there are many flowers well-known in England; the wild iris, the violet, the primrose and the crocus. The hills are a mass of colour and look magnificent in the slanting rays of the sun early in the morning or at sunset.

There are also many kinds of animals and birds, species as different as the deer and the Korean bear; British birds such as the Magpie, Thrush, Blackbird, Sparrow and Skylark are common while rarer are various strains of the Parrot family and the exquisite Golden Oriole. Game birds, Partridge, Quail, Pheasant, Francolin, Duck and Goose provide good sport during the season. Other wild life includes the most entrancing butterflies and moths, some with a wingspan of eight inches or more and colouring that defies description. There are many snakes but fortunately only three varieties are poisonous.

From the camp in Sinjinpo I was able to get about the country by jeep and during the spring and autumn I got in quite a lot of rock-climbing. The restriction to spring and autumn is mainly due to the climate. During the winter it is too cold on the fingers for all but the shortest of pitches and snow and ice work is not possible owing to the scarcity of snow, so activities are confined to hill walking. The early summer brings heavy rainfall, on some days almost as many inches as hours. The rest of the summer is too hot for enjoyable climbing, and if one did manage to summon up enough energy to be really active the irresistible temptation was to seek out the nearest mountain tarn and to spend the rest of the day there. Climbing in summer is only really pleasant in the evenings, during the day the rocks get so hot as to be almost unbearable to climb on.

Many of the climbable faces are of ancient and very much eroded granite and some climbs need extensive gardening to make them reasonably safe. In much of the rock the strata slope in the wrong direction and this, combined with weathering, makes

some of the faces quite smooth and almost devoid of any kind of hold.

I spent most of my climbing time in an area of granite peaks around Uijonbu, a large village about ten miles north-east of Seoul, the capital. An article in "Mountaineering," (Lonsdale Library) mentions this area and contains a photograph of Insupong, one of the peaks.

No summit in the district is higher than 2,500 ft. but there are at least two faces that give some 600 ft. of climbing. The routes vary from 'difficult' to 'super severe' and many of the pitches are very exposed. The area actually includes three main groups of peaks, Insupong, Tobong-San and Samak San, the last two being joined by a ridge. Tobong-San is of particular interest and has a large and very fine temple just below the summit. The main rock face has over 600 ft. of fine climbing. The rock is good, the vegetation sparse and the angle of the face about 70 degrees. There are three routes to the top; the time taken to complete each climb being about 3½ hours. On one part of the face we found many pitons, presumably left there by members of the Seoul climbing club, a flourishing organisation whose members I often met but never actually climbed with.

The area also contains some interesting problem boulders, some of them as much as 100 ft. or more in height, many of them seemed to be erratics.

Another feature of the hills of "The Land of the Morning Calm" is the many temples literally hewn out of the solid rock and perched in the most inaccessible places. The monks who serve in these remote eeries are most friendly and invariably make one very welcome. They provide the traveller with refreshment or a night's lodging and expect no payment in return although it is usual to give some sort of a present in appreciation of their kindness. Hardly any of the monks that I met could speak any English but their descriptions of such local events as floods or storms were both eloquent and expressive.

I remember arriving at one of those little mountain retreats after a hard scramble and being greeted by a very excited priest waving of all things, a large and antiquated alarm clock. After a great deal of most amusing gesticulation we discovered that he wanted to know the correct time; he had forgotten to wind up his clock and it had stopped. We wondered why time should

be important in such an outpost, but concluded that they liked to have this one contact with the outside world.

Another temple incident, more amusing in retrospect than at the time, occurred one week-end when a friend and I were on a long hill walk. It had been raining ever since we left camp and by the evening we were feeling just a little depressed. As we were near to one of the temples which we knew quite well we decided to go and spend the night there. The monks took us in and installed us in one of their shrines. After we had been there for about two hours and were beginning to feel really warm and comfortable, a little priest entered the shrine and, sitting cross-legged on a low stool in the darkest corner, began to recite his prayers, whether solely for our benefit we never found out. We did not take much notice and quietly carried on with our conversation. Suddenly and without warning the priest reached up into the gloom above his head and struck the most deafening of bells. It was the most nerve-shattering of sounds and he continued to strike this bell every thirty seconds. So regular was his timing that it was possible to count the seconds before clapping hands to ears during the actual awful moment. I learnt that night that there is a limit to what a man can stand; we reached that limit. We packed our kit and fled into the darkness, even though it was still raining heavily.

It is a pity that the political situation in Korea at the present time makes access difficult for the normal visitor; I count myself lucky in having had the opportunity of seeing something of this charming but very little known country. Perhaps one day Korea will again be open to the casual tourist and then maybe these brief notes will give the climber or walker some ideas about where he should start.

LOST JOHNS' CAVE. 1959

by S. W. Stemberidge

IT HAD long been the ambition of certain members of the Club to get a party down Lost Johns'. The prolonged spell of dry weather seemed to favour the attempt so it was arranged that six of us should meet at Clapham for the week end of September 18th to 20th. At the last moment one member gave backward and it was rather a despondent five who arrived for a meal at Lowstern on the Friday night; they were John Lovett, Trevor Salmon, Michael Selby, Brian Nicholson and myself. After some discussion it was arranged that Nicholson, Selby and I should get down on the Saturday morning, taking with us enough tackle to rig the first two long pitches, while Salmon and Lovett would follow as soon as Lovett was available after lunch.

The advance party was underground by 10.30 a.m.; there was not a drop of water entering Lost Johns', the stream bed was quite dry. After going downstream past the "T" junction we found the entrance to the new roof traverse without difficulty; a short traverse on ledges led to a wide comfortable looking passage where we left a candle for the following party. The roof traverse passage continued for a short while until No. 1 Hole was reached and easily climbed, although a 20 ft. handline would have helped and provided an extra aid for the return. All the tackle was passed down and we went on down a short, winding and narrow passage until we came to another short climb which we descended using a 20 ft. handline.

This pitch proved to be the entry to the Vestry, and after admiring the extremely fine formation hanging down the left hand wall, we prepared to ladder the Cathedral Pitch, 70 ft. which followed immediately. A belay was found just inside the Vestry for the ladders and another for the pulley block; it was discovered on the return journey that it would have been much easier if the ladders had been belayed further out in the fissure. I went down but found the ladder tangled on a ledge about 20 ft. down (The Pulpit); after freeing this a very nice climb of 50 ft. followed, a 150 ft. lifeline was used.

After a brief glance at the Survey we turned right handed down a short narrow passage (The Crypt) leading to the edge of the Dome pitch, 80 ft. Three rock eyelets in the wall of the

passage made excellent belays for the ladder and pulley. Nicholson descended first and found the ladder was almost 10 ft. off the floor of the pitch, but this was really quite convenient as it was a simple matter to step off on to a ledge which gave access to the next part of the pot. As this pitch had exhausted the tackle brought in by the advance party, it was decided to make a stop for lunch.

After the 170 ft. floor lifeline had been secured Selby and I reconnoitred the tunnel and the window so that there should be no delay when the other party arrived with the tackle. We heard Lovett and Salmon coming down as we were having lunch, soon they were at the head of the pitch and the tackle was lowered. All had gone well with them except that they had traversed over Nos. 1, 2 and 3 holes before realising that No. 1 was the hole they should have descended, nevertheless they had made the descent from the surface to the bottom of the Dome in 45 minutes. The Dome pitch had been laddered on Electron and all the following pitches were laddered in the same manner.

Selby, Salmon and Lovett went up through the tunnel and round to the far side of the window while Nicholson and I passed the tackle up by means of wire belay rope before going through the tunnel to join them. A few yards from the end of the tunnel we came upon a short pitch which we descended by means of a handline, the same line being used for the next short pitch which followed immediately. This second pitch almost warrants a ladder and, if one is not used, a good handline is advisable. We were now at Dome Junction and a short but pleasant passage led to Bob's Pit, a fissure in the floor estimated as 30 ft. deep. The roof around this area is beautifully encrusted with gypsum crystals. Traversing over Bob's Pit we came almost immediately to "Candle" and "Shistol" pots which we descended by two short ladders each of about 15 ft.; a 100 ft. lifeline on a pulley block at the upper pitch served for the two pitches. As these pitches are almost adjoining, a 35 ft. ladder would be ample to do them both.

It was about here that we realised how closely the pitches in Lost Johns' follow one another, for a further short passage led us to the Battleaxe pitch. Although only 35 ft. we laddered this with a 50 ft. Electron which deposited us on a small ledge marking the edge of the wet pitch. It was here that we met our first

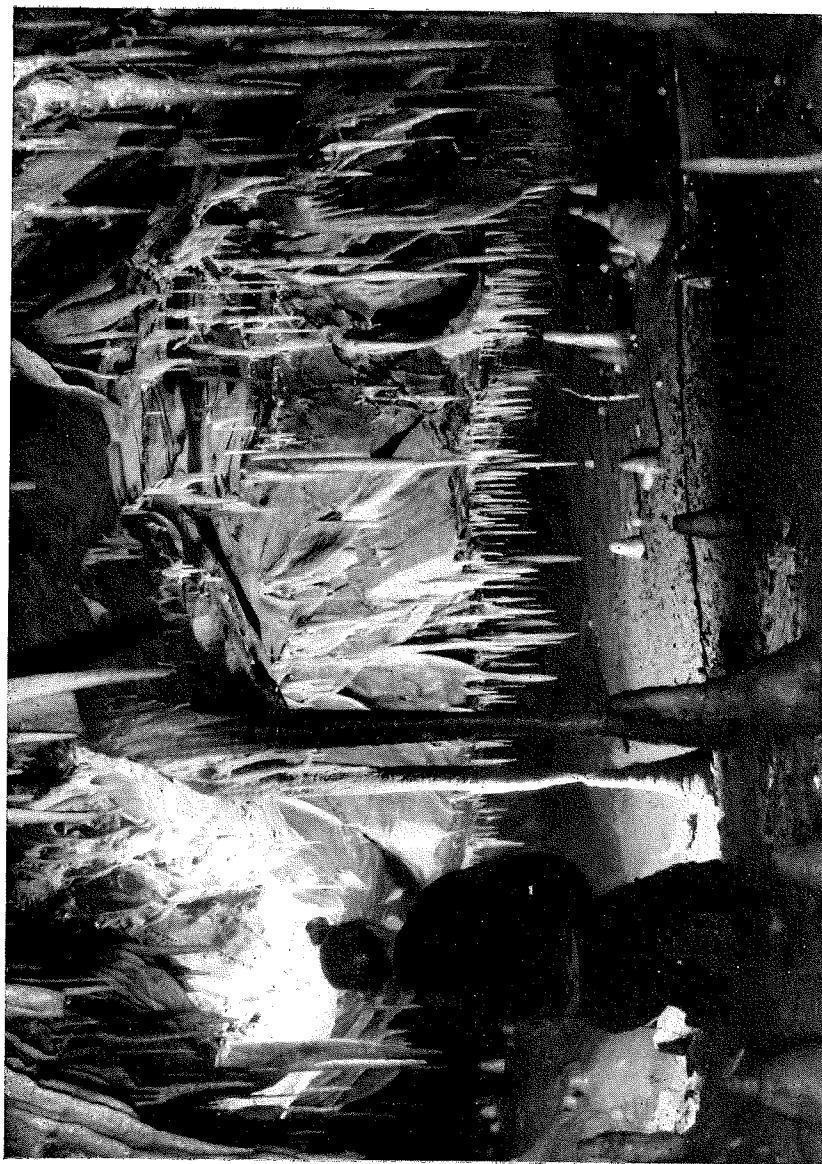


Photo by B. E. Nicholson

MUNGO GILL

running water, although it was only a trickle. This water issues from a stream passage on a ledge marking the floor of the Battleaxe pitch which we passed on our way down. Fifty feet of ladder were then fastened directly on to the Battleaxe ladders and all descended the wet pitch without mishap. The ledge connecting these two pitches is known as Thunderstorm Depot.

On reaching the last pitch we had two choices of route for the descent, one providing a dry landing on a bed of shingle, the other, slightly wetter, ending in a pool of water. As there was only enough ladder for the wetter descent this was rigged and Selby and Lovett went down, followed by Salmon. As Nicholson had kept quite dry up to this point Salmon and I carried him across the pool at the foot of the pitch, so that he could say he had arrived at the bottom of Lost Johns' without getting wet. A narrow winding passage led eventually to Groundsheet Junction and the Master Cave. Lovett and Selby had already been up the left hand passage as far as the boulder choke so, after leaving a candle at the entrance to Groundsheet Junction we all proceeded downstream towards the Sump.

The Master Cave is a fine passage, high and wide with a firm floor and many weird formations. Mud, thick, black and ages old clings to the walls and the passage twists and turns in all directions, at each bend there is a pool and these gradually get deeper and deeper. At about 3,000 ft. from Groundsheet Junction the water became continuous, deepening all the time; also a band of shale caused calf-deep mud along the bottom. As Selby and Nicholson were not wearing Survival Suits it was considered good policy for them to go back from this point to Groundsheet Junction. Salmon, Lovett and I laced up our Survival Suits, put our hoods up and walked forward into the lake. Soon the mud section was left behind but the roof was rapidly lowering and it was obvious that in normal weather conditions this would be the final accessible point in the Master Cave. Just as we were preparing to turn back a small lift in the roof about 6 in. above the water level gave us access to the further reaches of the lake. Swimming in Survival Suits is a very pleasant form of transport; the secret being to have the suits inflated just enough to keep the body balanced in the water. We crossed the lake successfully, the roof rising all the time till suddenly the water became shallower and we found ourselves in a rock passage exactly the same as the one

we had just left. This passage continued for a further 1,000 ft., ending in a large mud bar beyond which there was another lake of about 100 ft. in length and this ended in a small pear-shaped sump.

From the very low portion in the first lake to the pear-shaped sump is believed to be a new section of passage. Careful examination was made for any signs of a previous visit and although footprints had been noted in the mud as far as the duck, none had been seen afterwards, and certainly no one could have crossed the mud bar without leaving traces. So, unless the passage has been found in a very dry season previous to that of 1959, it is the opinion of the party that this section of the Master Cave is a new discovery.

We made a speedy return to Groundsheet Junction and ate a little food before the upward journey. Leaving at 4.30 p.m. everything went well as far as the Dome, but there we were nearly all beginning to feel tired. We reached the surface at 8 p.m. and the only member who appeared as fit coming out as he was going in was Lovett, and there was vague talk of an assault on Mere Gill next day. This idea was soon abandoned however and we were all glad to get under the hot showers at Lowstern and in front of a warm fire. After half a pint of coffee with a tot of rum, and a good meal we were ready to turn in after a highly successful trip.

Five men out of five reached the bottom, the pot was rigged and derigged in the one trip, the advance party was underground $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours and the second party $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and it is believed that a new section of passage rather more than 1,000 ft. long was discovered.

References:—

Y.R.C.J., Vol. II. No. 5, p. 28 (1903).

"A Night in Lost Johns," by A Silent Member.

Y.R.C.J., Vol. VI. No. 19, p. 44 (1930)

"Lost Johns' Cave," by Innes Foley.

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Tackle Required.

No. 1 Hole .. 20 ft. Handline.

Vestry	20 ft. Handline.
Cathedral	70 ft. Ropeladder, 150 ft. lifeline, pulley block, two 30 ft. wire belays.
Dome	80 ft. Electron ladder, 170 ft. lifeline, pulley block, two 12 ft. wire belays.
Two short adjoining pitches.	40 ft. thick handline.
Candle and Shistol Pots	35 ft. Electron ladder, pulley block, upper pitch, 100 ft. lifeline, two 6 ft. wire belays.
Battleaxe	50 ft. Electron ladder to Thunderstorm Depot, 200 ft. lifeline, pulley block, 3 ft. wire belay, 6 ft. wire pulley belay.
Wet Pitch	50 ft. Electron ladder belayed on to bottom of Battleaxe ladders.
Last Pitch	Wet Route, 15 ft. Electron ladder. Dry Route, 27 ft. Electron ladder, pulley block, 30 ft. or 70 ft. lifeline, two 6 ft. wire belays.
<i>Total Tackle.</i>	
Ladders	300 ft. 312 ft. if dry route used on last pitch.
Lifelines	650 ft. 690 ft. if dry route used on last pitch.
Handlines	80 ft.
Belays	117 ft.
Pulley Blocks	5.

A STOP FOR A SMOKE

by J. Geoffrey Brook

IF ANYTHING has been written on the relationship between walking, climbing and smoking, I have not seen it. Almost certainly, in these days when zealous research, "serious contributions to the subject" and so on are seemingly indispensable: when we must not set foot on the hills without everything being regulated down to the last calorie, some earnest soul will have gone into this whole question with scientific thoroughness. But, as I say, I have not read his findings, and I do not want to. He will, in any case, regard any essay like this as being too trivial for attention. But if only one or two kindred spirits are with me we can relax, take that intense look off our faces, and quietly consider one of the milder offshoots of our outdoor days.

Before going any further it might be as well to recommend that non-smokers skip the next few pages. They will not be amused, and will almost certainly be irritated. Your average non-smoker is apt to be a little impatient of this weakness, as he judges it to be, in his fellow men. He would probably agree with Dr. Johnson when he said, "To be sure it is a shocking thing blowing smoke out of our mouths into other people's mouths, eyes and noses, and having the same thing done to us; yet I cannot account why a thing which requires so little exertion, and yet preserves the mind from total vacuity, should have gone out." But the Doctor spoke too soon. Smoking has not gone out, and tobacco is burning more strongly than every before—probably Johnson would retort, because there are so many more of us today whose minds require preserving from total vacuity!

And right at the outset I shall arouse the ire of many smokers by asserting, as I do, that the only smoke to be taken seriously is the pipe. Many will contend that a cigarette is the best solace after a long day on the hills, or during the break in a difficult climb. Indeed when the Italian climber, Corti, was eventually extricated from his hazardous position on the Eigerwand recently, the first thing he asked for was a cigarette. But this was almost certainly a temporary aberration arising from his exhausted condition, and when he felt more composed he must surely have filled his pipe.

As a quick and handy soother of irritants the cigarette has its points, but it is only a makeshift smoke, requiring none of the artistry, experience and loving care that go with pipe smoking at its best.

At the same time I cannot leave the cigarette without mentioning the remarkable tribute paid to it by G. I. Finch in his "Making of a Mountaineer," where he contends that apart from its soothing influence it has a beneficial effect at high altitudes. He is writing of his experiences on one of the early Everest Expeditions, and so far as I can understand his theory it runs as follows.

When climbing at height he found that unless he kept his mind constantly on breathing, instead of leaving it as an involuntary action, he suffered from lack of air and suffocation. To counteract this it was necessary to force the lungs to work more quickly than they would do naturally. Owing to the large volume of air it is necessary to take in at high altitudes in order to obtain a sufficient supply of oxygen, the amount of carbon dioxide normally in the blood is largely removed. This carbon dioxide apparently serves to stimulate the nerve centre controlling the process of involuntary breathing. The nerve centre being no longer stimulated, involuntary breathing has to be replaced by voluntary breathing with a consequent strain on the mind due to the concentration. But both Finch and Geoffrey Bruce found that after a few puffs at a cigarette they could resort once more to normal involuntary breathing, and this they attributed to the fact that there must be something in the tobacco smoke that takes the place of the carbon dioxide in which the blood is deficient, and acts as a stimulant to the involuntary breathing nerve. Finch noted that this effect lasted for as long as three hours.

I will leave our medical members to chew over this, and apologise to others for this brief lapse into the more technical side of smoking.

The cigar, favoured by so many of our Swiss friends, still seems to me to be as out of place on a mountain as an umbrella, although even here at home the whiff of a certain brand can evoke nostalgic memories of the Alps. But if we were to smoke a cigar surely the right time for it is at the end of the day. It is essentially a smoke for indoors, an appendage of good dinners, good wine, and blazing fires. And for many of us an evening in

an Alpine hut would not be complete unless the inevitable fug were laced with the aroma of Rossli-Burgers.

The pipe however is not, like the cigarette and the cigar, an occasional smoke, but it is for any time and any place. It is a smoke in its own right, and there is a certain primitive quality of nature about it that makes the burning of a fragrant tobacco in a briar bowl seem entirely fitting whether the smoker is sitting exalted on a four thousand metre top or is crouching behind a grit-stone block on a gusty Northern moor, or is meandering pensively through wood and meadow. The smoke rises as a benediction.

Dare I strike a discordant note in this rhapsody, and mention the fear that haunts many a would-be young pipe smoker? I mean the fear that smoking is the enemy to fitness, the fear that speed, confidence and stamina will all disappear, that a broken-winded wreck will curse the day he first put match to pipe.

I will answer this not with argument, but with a story. I brought up this very question with a good friend of mine, a guide of Randa, whilst we drew on our pipes sitting under the huge boulder that is generally recognised as a resting place on the steep pull up to the Dom Hut. He told me that as a youth, when he aspired to be a guide, his father, also a guide, once took him on a training climb up the Weisshorn. The old man was then 69 years of age, and all that day he smoked his pipe. When they were almost back in Randa he asked his son, "How many pipes do you think I have smoked today?" Young Emil replied, "I do not know, Father, but you have been smoking all day." "Twenty-eight," confessed the old man. I met this same patriarch last summer. He is now eighty years of age. He looked fit, was carrying a huge bundle of hay—and was smoking his pipe.

Take a look at the portraits of the old guides, and notice how many of these gnarled stalwarts like to be portrayed with their pipes, and more interesting, how often the shape of the pipe seemed to fit exactly the features of the man. None other than a magnificent curved briar would suit the aristocratic features of a Michel Croz, or a sturdy old briar the rugged face of Jean-Antoine Carrel.

Someone has said that when a man is really fit he can smoke his pipe whilst moving steeply uphill. This may be a good

idea as a test of fitness, but no one is going to pretend that it can give any real enjoyment as a smoke. However slowly and rhythmically you climb, some toil is involved, and a pipe can only be savoured in a state of relaxation. Stevenson had the right idea when he wrote in his essay "On Walking Tours," "There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march. The flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and fine."

Another tramping essayist, Hazlitt, said he could not see the sense of walking and talking at the same time, but if he could have thought to include smoking in the walking and talking then it would have made sense. Everything depends on your companion, and if he be a pipe smoker also there is nothing more delightful at the end of a long day, with the hard work behind you, than the leisurely tramp back to the hut or camp, with pipes drawing well, and the smoke inspiring the conversation, be it profound or trivial. As Thackeray rightly insisted, "The pipe draws wisdom from the lips of the philosopher, shuts up the mouth of the foolish, and generates a style of conversation contemplative, thoughtful, benevolent and unaffected."

What kind of pipe, and what brand of tobacco will, to paraphrase Sam Weller, depend on the taste and fancy of the smoker. No one would be so presumptuous as to lay down rules, but a few observations may be made. A clay pipe is out of the question without any doubt. It only has to be dropped once and you are without a pipe. I once saw a climber puffing at a calabash, but I thought this mere affectation. A corncob fits in well with the countryside and, being cheap, it does not matter much whether you lose or break it. In Austria the large pendulous Tyrolean pipe is naturally favoured, but very few Englishmen have acquired the art of looking really at home with this model.

Probably the best pipe for all round use is a short-stemmed briar, like the Fraser Lovat, which can be carried without much inconvenience in the pocket of either trousers or anorak. Never on any account take a long stemmed pipe; it can be too easily snapped off, especially if you are rock climbing and likely to get into a constricted position, such as a chimney. Most important of all, never fail to carry all the time a spare pipe in your rucksack. There is nothing more provoking than to have the keen

anticipation of a smoke ruined by the dreadful discovery that you have got tobacco and matches but no pipe.

Thus we can settle for the briar as the best and handiest pipe for the mountains. But apart from these utilitarian considerations it has a more potent claim on the affections of the mountaineer. For the briar is in a sense an offspring of the mountains. It came about in this way. Just over a hundred years ago a French pipe manufacturer made a trip to Napoleon's birthplace in Corsica. One day he dropped and smashed his meerschaum pipe. Just why a pipe smoker and maker should not have had another pipe in his luggage is hard to understand, but he had not, and must have been in sore straits until a village carpenter fashioned him an improvised pipe made from a piece of wood cut locally—which was in fact briar root.

The Frenchman was delighted with the cool, fresh smoking of his new pipe, and felt so sure that other smokers would be the same, that he ordered a consignment of this wood to be delivered to his factory. And so from the little town of St. Claude in the shadow of the Jura Mountains the briar pipe went forth to the smoking world, and who dare deny that the Frenchman's predilection was not amply vindicated?

As regards tobacco, a fairly solid flake is probably the best as it does not blow about in the wind. A light mixture can be a menace in this respect, and herb tobacco, if anyone still smokes it, quite impossible. It burns like dry hay, and if you are walking behind anyone smoking it in a strong wind, be prepared for a shower of sparks.

I cannot recommend smoking in potholes. The tobacco will not burn as it should in the prevailing dampness, and a valuable pipe is always in danger of being lost or broken in the inevitable wriggings. A fine briar of my own has now been lying for some years in the jagged depths of Eastwater Cavern in the Mendips.

It would be impossible, and indeed impious, to lay down rules when, where and how a man should smoke. So much depends on the place and the mood. Sometimes restraint during a whole day will make a pipe in the evening, either in relaxation before the fire, or when taking a final stroll, taste all the more fragrant. At other times, sitting perhaps on a hard earned summit with the world at your feet, the feeling of legitimate self-satisfaction causes you instinctively to reach for pouch and pipe. It is always

possible that murmurs about the pollution of God's pure air might be heard, but the pipe smoker is above all things a creature of tolerance; he will quietly knock out his ashes and hold his peace—when he has finished his smoke of course.

The Red Indian certainly gave the pipe its character when he made it the symbol of peace and comradeship; although we draw the line nowadays at passing around and puffing the same pipe, we still recognise its binding spell in a small company of kindred spirits.

One last word on the subject of lighting up. The sensitive smoker will not sully one of the purest of æsthetic pleasures by using anything in the shape of a petrol or gas lighter. Let us stick to the simplicity of matches or spills and keep one small corner free from the all-devouring machine. Even in a high wind the common match can, with a little practice, give a far more reliable light than any of these expensive little monstrosities.

Moderation, even in smoking, is the golden rule, so let the last word be with old Burton, the Anatomist of Melancholy —

“Tobacco, divine, rare, super-excellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all the panaceas, potable gold, and the philosopher's stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A good vomit, I confess, a virtuous herb, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken and medicinally used; but as it is commonly abused by most men, which take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health; hellish, devilish and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul.”

reaches of Marble Arch and in descending Noon's Hole and are indeed a necessity for protracted immersion in water underground.

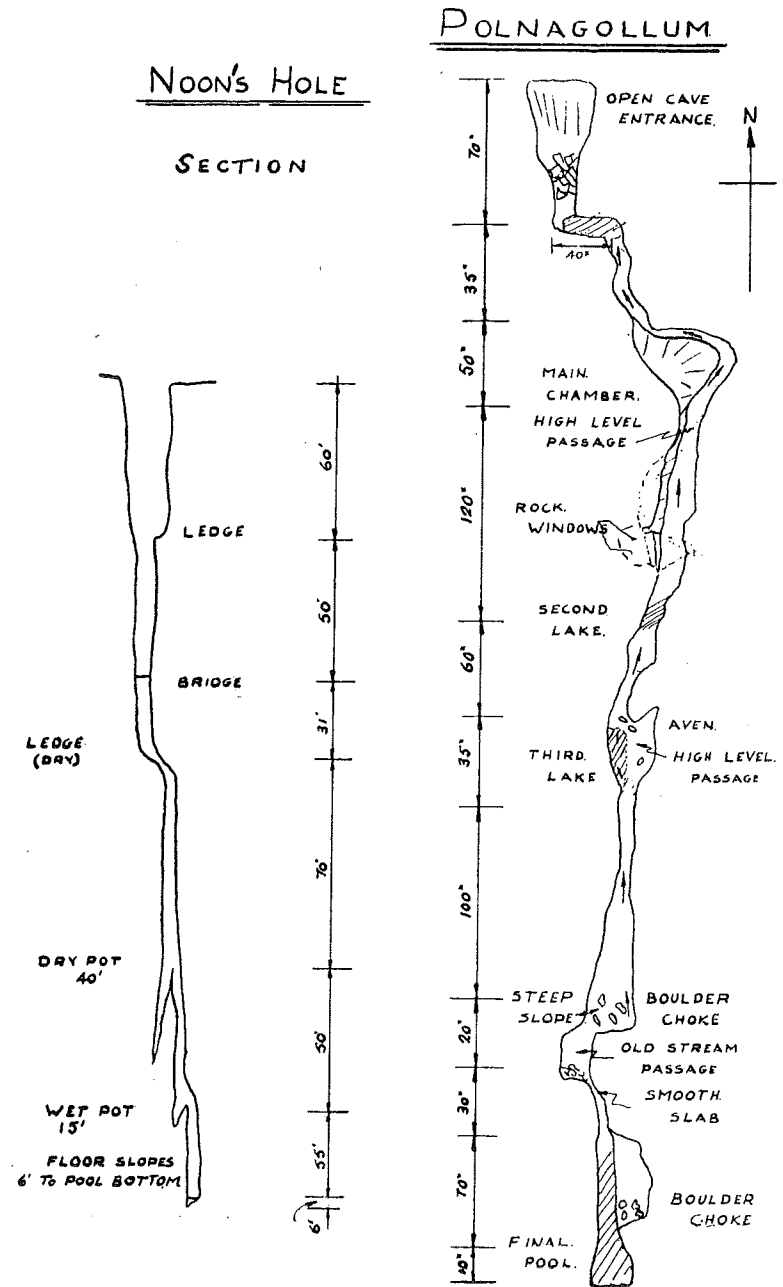
Most of the potholes descended had been explored by Y.R.C. members in visits covering a period of over 50 years; the descents of 1907, 1908 and 1912 were not by official Y.R.C. parties but by members of the Club who accompanied E. A. Baker. For this reason a resumé of previous exploration has been included in the descriptions which follow of the work done in 1959, and it is hoped that these notes, together with the maps, will be a help to members on future Irish meets.

POLLNAGOLLUM

Until 1938 Pollnagollum was just a hole in the ground about 54 ft. deep. It is entered from the north down a boulder-strewn slope and ends in a shallow cave, the roof of which looks very unsafe. In 1938 the Y.R.C. found a small hole under a boulder in the floor of the cavern, and the entrance to an immense system was discovered.

A 24-ft. ladder pitch leads down a steep slope into a chamber 18 yds. long and 7 ft. wide. At the southern end of this chamber a tight pitch leads down to another chamber and at the southern end of this there is a lake 40 yds. long and 15 ft. wide running west to east, but turning southwards at its end on to a sandy beach. This lake is deep and very cold; collapsible boats needed to effect its crossing. A large passage leads south eastwards for 35 yds. to the main chamber which is 50 yds. long and 18 yds. wide. The stream passage then turns southwards for 120 yds. and then joins a second lake. In 1959 this lake was shallow and could be waded; 60 yds. further on a third smaller lake is reached. A high level passage for 35 yds. on its east side makes another wetting unnecessary and 100 yds. further on the stream emerges from rocks on the east side of the chamber but no progress is possible that way.

A climb to the south west up a rock fall leads to a small chamber which has at some time been part of a stream passage, and a climb of 12 ft. over a smooth slab in the south east corner leads through boulders for 30 yds. to the main stream passage. The main passage then leads south for another 70 yds. to a pool 18 ft.



wide and 8 yds. long which opens out into a pear shaped chamber 10 yds. long and 15 ft. wide, the far end of which is choked with boulders and impassable.

NEW HOLE

This hole is half a mile east of Rattling Hole on a small hill covered with heather. A sink, 40 ft. by 20 ft. with three fluted holes, is wired off. The hole in the north east corner was laddered, the belay was a tree on the surface. The first 20 ft. is very tight and not too steep but the next 12 ft. is very steep and leads to a boulder floor covered with loose stones. The next pitch is 65 ft.—the belay is to an eye in the rock—and is again very tight, to a boulder floor. Digging showed that the boulder jam extended for at least 6 ft., it was then abandoned.

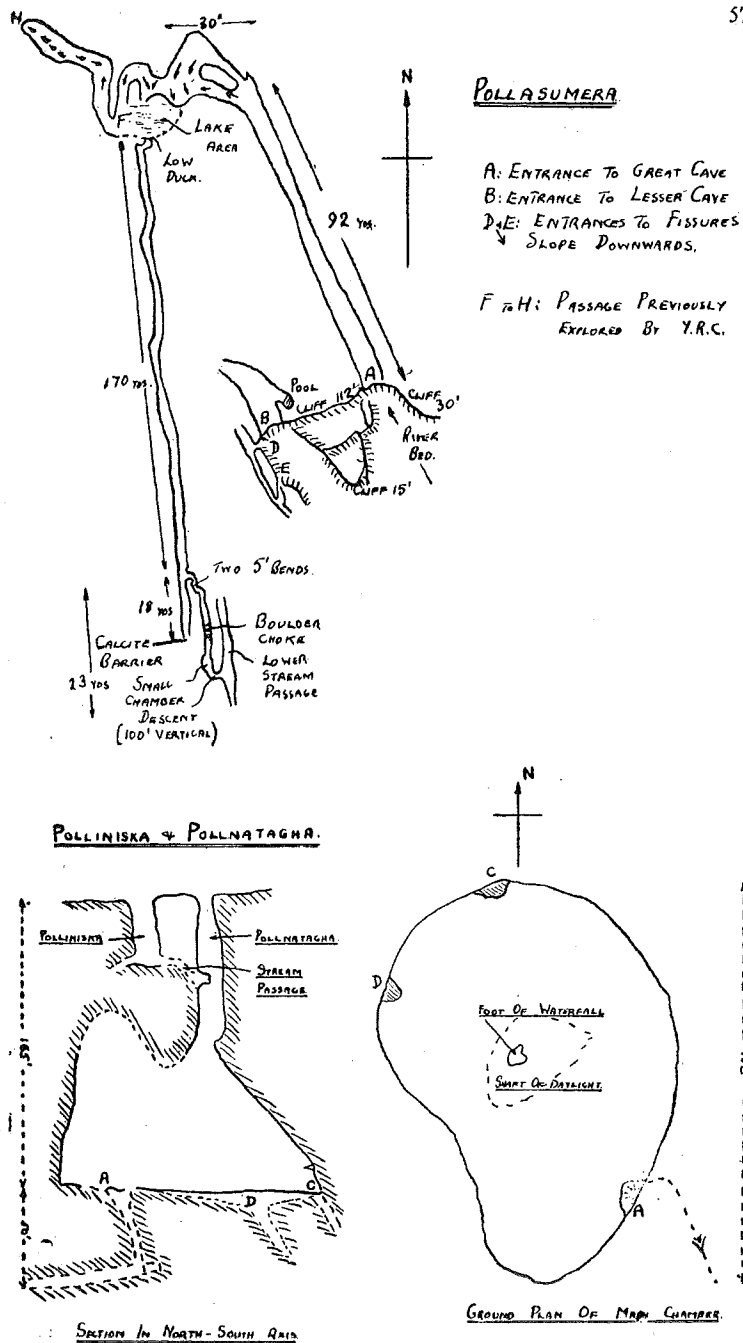
POLLINISKA AND POLLNATAGHA

These two holes in the peat bog in the Swanlinbar area were first descended by the Y.R.C. in 1947. They are 30 feet apart and each is surrounded by a low earth wall. Polliniska is about 15 ft. by 10 ft. and Pollnatagha circular and about 8 ft. in diameter. A stream flows from the east over the moor and enters Polliniska over its southern tip; it then falls about 35 ft. to the floor and flows north westwards through a passage into Pollnatagha, where it falls about 130 ft. to the floor. This floor is about 150 ft. long by 100 ft. wide and the centre is a high mound of boulders and peat. The water percolates through the boulder floor, but there are three passages leading out of the chamber which were not fully explored either in 1947 or 1959, due to lack of time. These three passages are shown on the diagram as follows:—

(1) Depression 'A' is about 20 ft. deep among boulders, and is 15 ft. long by 12 ft. wide. From the bottom of this depression a steep narrow pitch of 30 ft. leads to a floor of stones with a dry passage leading off to the south. This was followed for about 200 yds. against a current of fresh air, and could be seen to continue in a southerly direction.

(2) A steep peat slope 'C' leads down about 30 ft. to a drain. This requires laddering and was not investigated.

(3) A rock slope at 'D' peters out in a rift 3 ft. by 2 ft. forty feet below the top of the boulder and peat mound.



These passages could quite possibly lead to a system not yet discovered and further exploration of this hole must be considered to be of the highest priority.

NOON'S HOLE

This is the deepest known hole in Ireland and is situated near Boho. It is completely surrounded by trees and vegetation and has been formed by a stream flowing from the west. The fissure runs from east north east to west south west. It was first attempted by Martel in 1895 but because of the force of the water he did not reach the first ledge 60 ft. down. Y.R.C. with E. A. Baker descended in 1907 to 143 ft. and in 1952 to an estimated 240 ft. to 250 ft.

In 1959 the party went in force to bottom of this hole and all twelve members took part in this operation. The previous expeditions had dammed the stream to make descent easier but this time it was decided that the risk of a dam giving way under the pressure of water whilst a man was on the ladder was too great and the four members with immersion suits who made the descent preferred the steady fall of water rather than a possible sudden onrush. The pot was laddered from the southern end, practically above the waterfall. After 35 ft. the next 25 ft. is in the waterfall down on to a ledge where it is possible to get off the ladder. After the next 50 ft. there is a bridge and a further 31 ft. down, a large ledge. The next 70 ft. is down a dry, fluted chimney, 4 ft. to 5 ft. in diameter, and the ladder continued down a dry pot for another 40 ft. This was choked with boulders and the ladders were lifted out and let down another rift where a 50 ft. descent was very wet. This rift is 10 ft. by 4 ft. at the top and narrows to 5 ft. diameter. Again the ladders were in a boulder-choked hole, 15 ft. deep and very wet, so they were once again lifted across to another rift 3 ft. in diameter which proved to be the main shaft to the bottom and which widened to 5 ft. The main stream enters the shaft at this point and the full weight of water falls on to the ladder for the final 55 ft. to the floor. The final boulder slope leads 3 ft. down to a pool of water and when entered to a depth of 3 ft. no exit could be found; the water was obviously dissipating through the boulder floor. Because of the weight of water no acetylene lights could be used and electric lights were short-circuited by the water. It is obvious from

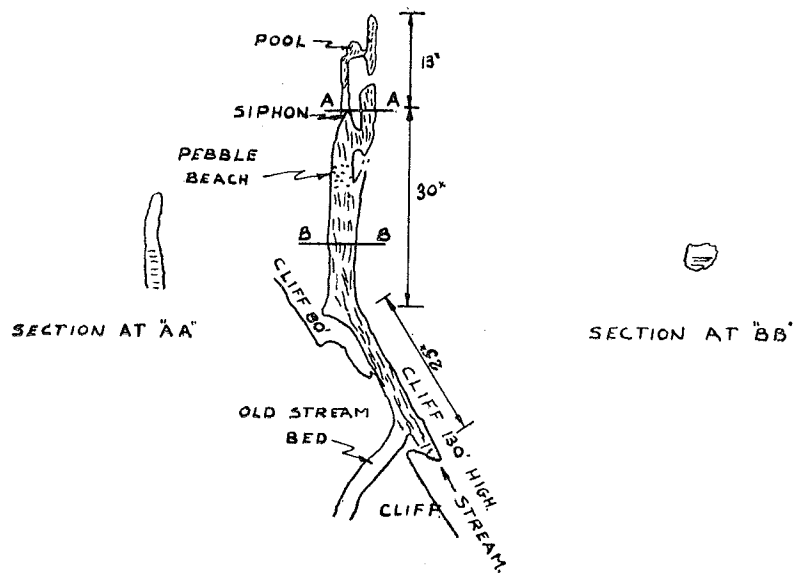
previous exploration that the floor of Noon's Hole frequently gives way and deepens the pot. The depth was most carefully checked—the ladders being measured by tape measure as they were removed—and the total known depth is now 322 ft.

MARBLE ARCH SYSTEM

This is beyond doubt the finest system yet known in the British Isles. Every visit has produced new discoveries and new routes and further exploration may still produce new and exciting things. The first real exploration of the system was by Martel in 1895. He went down the boulder chamber and on to the junction where he floated a collapsible boat and paddled along the Grand Gallery. He then returned to the junction and went up to Pool Chamber. The Y.R.C. went with E. A. Baker in 1907 and 1908 and found other entrances into the system, but it was not until 1935 that any serious exploration was done, and then the Y.R.C. went in force and among other things swam from Marble Arch to Lower Cradle Hole. In 1936 Skreen Hill Passage was discovered running parallel to the passage between Pool Chamber and the junction. The Y.R.C. went again in 1936, 1938 and 1939 and after the war in 1947, 1948 and 1949, and found that some considerable changes in detail had taken place but made no major discoveries.

In 1959 the members penetrated to the final known pool in the Skreen Hill Passage, then swam about 44 yds. to a curtain of rock and ducked under this into a chamber 30 ft. long. A passage in the far left-hand corner over a calcite shelf leads into two passages. The right-hand one runs in the same direction as Skreen Hill Passage for 25 yds., it is 2 ft. 6 ins. wide and 5 ft. high with rock curtains down to within 1 ft. of the water; it ends in a sump. The left-hand passage runs parallel to Skreen Hill Passage in the reverse direction for 13 yds., is 2 ft. 6 ins. wide and 8 ft. high, and ends in a curtain of rock. The passage along the Grand Gallery to Cradle Hole was again swum but for a great deal of the distance it was possible to wade, the depth of the water varying between 3 ft. and 6 ft. (the deepest places were where the screens came down to within 1 ft. of the water). Upstream from Cradle Hole a small dry passage 27 yds. long ends in a small chamber after a tight mud crawl. It was noticed that the main stream entered the passage from underneath a rock wall from the

MONASTER SINK.



In the 130 ft. high cliff at the end of the gorge there is another cave 80 ft. up from the bottom in the north east corner. The entry passage slopes down at about 30 deg. in a northerly direction for 80 ft., it then steepens to an angle of 80 deg. and continues northwards for 20 ft. A passage to the west leads back to the cliff in a southerly direction but is choked by a boulder fall. The main passage goes on, still northwards, down through a small boulder chamber to the top of a 22 ft. pitch which ends in a still deep pool 10 ft. by 25 ft. from which there is no visible exit. It is thought however that there may be a siphon at the northern end of this pool. Parallel to this passage to the east is another which is linked in several places with the main passage but has no other exit. The total estimated depth from the entrance to water level is 80 ft.

POLLBWEE

This is mentioned by Martel but was not descended by him. The fissure runs from north to south, the north being a mud slope, it is bridged in the middle by a boulder. There is a vertical climb of 67 ft. on to a steep mud slope leading down to a deep pool some 100 ft. below the surface. In 1907 the Y.R.C. explored a side fissure, position not stated, which was blocked by a huge boulder. On the other side however the passage led forward for 60 ft. over jammed boulders and the floor then sloped steeply downwards turning to the right and ending in a small pool. On the left-hand side the passage ends in a steep slope of water-worn limestone and after a 30 ft. climb is too narrow for further progress. In 1959 the Y.R.C. swam the main pool in a south easterly direction for 60 yds. and no exit above the water line was found.

NEW POT

In 1959 a new pot 100 yds. north of Cat Pot was found and after a large boulder had been removed a narrow fissure in broken rock led down 20 ft. on to a steep boulder and mud slope which itself descended another 15 ft. into an old stream passage. This passage ran south for 30 ft. ending in a mud block; another passage leading off this to the west 10 ft. from the end was also blocked after a further 8 ft. Ten feet below this old stream passage the present stream runs south to north and is blocked to the south

by boulders after about 15 ft. The passage northwards was explored for 80 yds. and this ends in a siphon. At a point about 50 yds. along this northern passage the stream enters another passage to the west with about 4 ft. of still water, which runs 80 yds northwards but has no visible exit.

POLLTHANACARRA

This was first descended by the Y.R.C. in 1908 and is 100 yds. south of Pollnagollum. The fissure runs from north to south, it is 40 ft long by 20 ft. wide and is surrounded by a low wall. The Y.R.C. went down in 1938 and again in 1959, on each occasion laddering from the north to north western end. A 30-foot pitch leads to a steeply sloping floor and this goes down another 30 ft. to the bottom which is 45 ft. long by 21 ft. wide. At the north end the floor is weak and composed of loose stones and as this is now used as a depository for dead animals by the local farmers, there is little to be enjoyed by its descent.

RATTLING HOLE

This was first descended by the Y.R.C. in 1908; the entrance is a long open fissure partly surrounded by a wall and mostly by very dense vegetation. By 1959 it was extremely difficult to break a way through this growth, and because of its narrowness the descent can be very difficult. At the bottom the chamber widens to 7 ft. and is 14 ft. long. The floor, which is 90 ft. from the surface, runs steeply upwards from south to north.

GORTMACONNELL

This is the first in a line of sinks running from Pollasumera in the west in a north easterly direction, it was first descended in 1908 by the Y.R.C.; the main entrance is covered with tree trunks and surrounded by bushes and trees, the hole being contained within a wire fence. The main shaft, which runs north east to south west and is 48 ft. long by 3 ft. 6 ins. wide, was laddered in 1908 to a depth of 68 ft. One corner of the floor showed signs of water.

In 1959 the shaft was laddered through a small hole 18 ins. in diameter 8 ft. to the north of the main fissure. The descent is very good but care must be taken as rock projections are very sharp and capable of damaging both clothing and person.

POLLASUMERA

This is half a mile from Monastir Sink and was entered by the Y.R.C. with E. A. Baker in 1907 and revisited in 1908. The river runs down a gorge which disappears into a cliff face 112 ft. high, the entrance being about 35 ft. by 10 ft. There is another cave entrance 30 ft. to the west which is quite shallow although the entrance is very imposing. The main entrance leads northwards for 92 yds., where the roof descends to within 5 ft. of the floor. The passage then turns westwards, becomes very broad and low and is strewn with huge boulders, it leads down a slope of about 30 yds. to the lake.

The 1908 party skirted the northern end of the lake in 3 ft. of water with 12 in. of air space to reach a pebbled pitch from which a curving passage led northwards and north westwards and in which curtains of rock came down to within 3 ft. of the floor. The passage gave out eventually in a dense bank of peat and old branches, flood water evidently continuing through narrow fissures. In 1959 the lake was dry and the party searched for another passage leading out of the lake area. To the south of the lake, brushwood was followed to a low duck 18 in. high leading into a passage running southwards for some 170 yds. This passage varies from 2 ft. 6 ins. to 5 ft. in height and is about 2 ft. 6 ins. wide. At this point a calcite formation had to be broken to enable the party to proceed, but after another 12 yds. a second calcite barrier proved too substantial to be broken; beyond, the passage could be seen to continue southward descending steeply. On retracing steps for 19 yds., another passage was found to the east under a low duck and parallel to the first. This went on southwards for 20 yds. through two S-bends. A 16 ft. climb over a boulder choke leads to a rift, with a floor composed of chockstones, over which the party travelled and which has a roof 40 ft. high. After about 7 yds. there is a small chamber with a pitch 30 ft. deep at its southern end. The lower passage then leads northwards underneath the passage just travelled and leads down about 100 vertical feet via steep slopes and pressure holes into a stream passage again running north to south. It is known that the water from Pollasumera flows through to Pollnagollum and further exploration may find the passage connecting the two systems. It is strongly advised that markers be left in this series of passages to ensure a safe and easy return to the lake area.

There is obviously a terrific amount of potholing still to be done in County Fermanagh, especially in the Swanlinbar area, the peat moor between Pollnatagha and Pigeon Pots can itself be the scene of a whole week of exploration. It has been proved by the use of Fluorescein that:—

- (1) the water from Pollasumera flows underground to Pollnagollum and then to Skreen Hill Passage in the Marble Arch system.
- (2) the Monastir River flows from Monastir Sink underground to Pollnagapple and Cradle Hole and on into the Grand Gallery of the Marble Arch system.
- (3) the Sruh Croppa, which sinks in its own bed south of Cat's Hole, joins the Monastir River underground between Monastir Sink and Pollnagapple.

Already on the homeward journey plans were being drawn up for another Irish Meet in 1960, at which Pollasumera and Pollnatagha were to be the main targets.

The Club's most grateful thanks are extended to those who make these enjoyable Meets possible:—

To the Earl of Enniskillen, who has always given us every encouragement;

To Mr. Barbour of Killesher, for his help, generosity and co-operation;

To the Irish people themselves, for without their kindness and friendliness these Meets would never take place.

The Author thanks all those members who have supplied information, diagrams and maps; also the Craven Pothole Club for permission to use their survey of Pollnagollum.

A PYRENEAN JOURNEY

by C. Large

BENASQUE is a rather dirty village at the end of the tarmac road up the Val d'Esera. We spent a night in the comparative luxury of the smaller of its two hotels after climbing Pic d'Aneto and Maladetta from the Refugio la Renclusa two days earlier. The weather had been mixed; we had been thoroughly drenched in a thunderstorm which started an hour before we reached the Refugio, but two days later climbed the two mountains in brilliant sunshine.

Our plans for the next few days were to reach Bielsa, 24 miles and two passes away, and to attempt the ascent of Pic des Posets, a peak of 11,050 ft., on the way. Compared with the Alps the country is very poorly mapped. The only map we had been able to get was a revised edition of one based on a survey by Schrader about 80 years ago. The scale of 1/100,000 was small, but we had to make the best of it and be prepared for mistakes caused by errors and omissions on the map.

Two miles lower down the valley, at Eriste, a good track leaves the village close to the west bank of the river descending the Aiguela de Eriste. First it passes through cultivated fields, then through clusters of small Box trees where sheep shelter from the midday heat and scrape a frugal existence on the parched grass below the trees. As the sides of the valley close in the vegetation becomes greener, and big trees, pine and beech, give more shade. According to the map three large streams run into the valley from the west. A cabane was also marked, near the junction of the third stream with the main river. This seemed a likely place to spend the night, and we would be in a good position for an attempt on the mountain next day. From Eriste to the cabane was about four miles with a rise of about 4,000 ft. Progress was slow with heavy loads, and in the great heat of the day. After some three miles it became evident that our simple assumption of going as far as the third stream on the left was not going to work out. We reached the third stream: but obviously a lot of streams were not marked on the map. The excellent track we had been following petered out after the third stream had been crossed but a few hundred yards further on the valley opened out into what seemed to be the highest pasture used by the villagers.

No obvious track appeared to leave the pasture. A shepherd's cabane offered shelter so we decided to leave our loads and explore the route. There were two possibilities: one to follow the valley bottom; the other to find a possible route up through the trees on our left. Our investigations showed some signs of a track in each direction; the map seemed to indicate the valley bottom so that was the way we chose. After half a mile we came to another small pasture where the sides of the valley rose steeply all round. Time was getting on: in two hours it would be dark and the shepherd's cabane seemed a reasonable place to spend the night. We decided that the best way of using the remaining hours of daylight would be for two to prepare the evening meal while the other two tried to find a route we could follow in the morning; I was one of the route finders.

At first the going was rough up a steep pine-covered slope, but once clear of the trees the rocky ground rose steadily in front of us and we made good speed, always looking for any signs of a track. After climbing about 2,000 ft. we found a reasonably good track which appeared to go in the direction we wanted. Compass bearings were taken on the surrounding peaks to determine our exact position on the map; this turned out to be close to our original planned halting place. Darkness was less than an hour away when we set off down the track. After some forty minutes we saw the others about 300 ft. below so we split up, one joining the others and the other following the track which eventually came out near the shepherd's cabane half a mile lower down the valley.

Over our evening meal we discussed plans for the following day. The track was a good one for most of the way we had followed it; by it we could gain height easily—a point worth considering when carrying heavy loads; using it we could get close enough to the Pic des Posets to leave our packs and make an attempt on the mountain. After supper we made our way down to the cabane to sleep in its luxury and in the hope of escaping from the clouds of marauding clegs and mosquitoes which infested the upper reaches of the valley.

The sky was overcast when we rose soon after dawn next day, but by the time we were ready to start it was clearing. We made steady progress up the track and in just over two hours we reached the point by the stream coming down from the Col

d'Eriste where we had planned to leave our kit. One of the party was feeling ill so he stayed with the packs while the other three of us made the attempt on the Pic des Posets. The mountain was not visible from our position nor was there an obvious route to it. One member of our party, who had been forced back by bad weather the previous year when trying it from the opposite side, thought we should approach by the south-east ridge. The best way to reach this seemed to be across the south-east ridge of Las Espadas to a valley with two small lakes between the two ridges.

We reached the lakes after a climb of 500 ft. and a descent of one thousand. A scramble of about 1,500 ft. up the steep rocky side of the mountain brought us to the broad crest of the south-east ridge. From here we could see another party, who seemed to have come from the north side, a quarter of a mile further up the ridge near where the last steep section rises 500 ft. to the summit. We soon reached the bottom of this section and roped up to tackle the rock climb ahead; on the way we passed the other party who were resting at the top of a large couloir. Since leaving our kit the sky had been clouding over and now there were occasional rumbles of thunder in the distance. The rock forming the ridge was of poor quality and great care was necessary in selecting holds. After going up about 50 ft. we came to a more difficult pitch and at this moment a flash of lightning and a loud peal of thunder, combined with the difficulties directly ahead, made us realise that if we pressed on we might find ourselves in a very unpleasant position on an open ridge were the approaching storm to hit the mountain. Not knowing the route ahead we decided that retreat would be the most prudent course.

We had just arrived at the flatter part of the ridge when the full fury of the storm hit us. The quickest way off was down the rocky couloir on the south side where we had passed the other party on the way up. They were nowhere in sight and must have left without making any attempt to reach the summit. After half an hour we reached a patch of permanent snow at the foot of the couloir. During the descent we were continually battered with hailstones the size of peas which soon covered all hand and foot holds. On the previous evening's reconnaissance we had noticed a snow-filled valley on the west side of Las Espadas that came out near where our packs were left; we had even thought

of it as a possible route but had not been able to place it on the map. From our present position an easy route seemed to skirt round the south flank of Pic des Posets to a col between the two mountains whence we might make a descent to the snow-filled valley. To reach the col involved taking a diagonal descending course over moraine and occasional large patches of snow. Snow in the Pyrenees does not seem to achieve that same soft consistency as it does on Alpine snowfields, even on a hot day, and we found going down on these patches very easy. At the col we were thankful to find that the way we had selected had been the right one; an easy climb down sound rock brought us to some steep snow and with a short glissade we reached the flatter valley bottom. Half an hour after leaving the col we joined our waiting companion at our kits. Had we used this route on the ascent we would have reached the final ridge much quicker but in this instance we would certainly have been caught in the storm much higher up on the mountain, probably in some very awkward situation.

The storm had now passed on though the sky remained overcast. While having a meal we had to decide upon a plan of action; there was no shelter in our present position; the next shelter on our route was six miles away over the Col d'Eriste; the weather did not look like improving and might be bad for a few days. Almost four hours of daylight remained so, allowing for route finding, we ought to have enough time to find somewhere to spend the night. After studying all possible alternatives we decided to push on over the Col d'Eriste.

Soon after starting the 1,500 ft. climb to the col rain began to fall. Our map showed a stream running from the west, starting just below the col. Actually we found it to come from a lake, not marked on the map, in a southern leg at the head of the valley. The cloud level was just below the col at about 9,500 ft. and steady rain made route finding difficult. There are two cols at the head of this valley, the Col d'Eriste being the lower and further south. To reach it involved scrambling up a rocky slope to the last 200 ft. which was steep scree and mud, the final 30 ft. being very steep snow. Visibility at the top was down to 20 yds. but in spite of this we made a good pace down the upper snow slopes from the col until the valley levelled out and became rocky. After a mile

we chose the left hand of two possible ways and this took us down a steep grassy slope to the Lago de Millar.

The worst of the journey was now behind us. A good track ran down the valley from the lake and although it continued to rain and we were thoroughly soaked we made a good speed. Darkness was falling as we approached the inhabited part of the valley; we would stop at the first likely looking shelter and spend the night there. We found an empty shepherd's hut soon after crossing the river a mile from the Hospital de Gistain. We were all thankful to be under shelter and so change into dry clothes after a tiring day.

A hot meal and a good night's rest saw us refreshed and ready to be on our way again. The day dawned fine and sunny; our wet clothes were quite dry after two hours in the warm sun. We were almost ready to leave when we were surprised by the arrival of four members of the Spanish Civil Guard, armed with rifles and sub-machine guns. This part of Spain bordering on France has every mountain pass between the two countries guarded. Woe betide the unsuspecting climber who thinks he can enter Spain without having his passport stamped at one of the official road posts; he is bound to meet armed guards in the Spanish valleys and will be sent unceremoniously back the way he came. We were aware of this position and when our passports were demanded we were able to show that we were not in the country illegally. With our small knowledge of Spanish we managed to find out that there was a Refugio half a mile away on the other side of the valley where we could have spent the night in comfort. After they had drunk a glass of wine and shown us the first part of the route we parted the best of friends.

Bielsa, our destination on this part of the journey, was about 12 miles away across the Paso de las Caballos, a low pass of about 1,500 ft. The first three miles were on a good track which petered out at some pastures and we had difficulty in finding a way through the woods covering the valley sides. Often we found signs of tracks but when followed they soon disappeared. When passing the Hospital de Gistain, now a ruin, we were again asked for our passports. On reaching the pass we found a reasonably good earth road running down the valley on the other side; it must have been made for the construction of a dam up in the mountains serving a hydro-electric scheme down the valley.

We had been late starting in the morning so we thought we might find accommodation in the village of Real, indicated on the map as being three miles from Bielsa. On reaching the place where it should have been all we found was a tree-covered hillside; another example of our map's inaccuracy. We later found that Real was in another valley, six miles to the west. Obviously the best course now was to press on to Bielsa. Spurred by thoughts of hot baths in a hotel we soon covered the remaining distance to the village, to arrive in time to clean up and rest before an excellent evening meal in Bielsa's only hotel.

It is difficult to liken the Pyrenees to the Alps. The mountains are much smaller and, apart from a few of the highest ones, not visited very often. Maps are poor; guide books of the Alpine type non-existent; huts are few and far between so sleeping bags must be taken. Route finding can present some very awkward problems which give a feeling of great satisfaction when they are overcome. All told the Pyrenees make an excellent change after a number of seasons in the Alps.



REMINISCENCES

Part I. 1902 to 1909

by E. E. Roberts

TWO WORLD wars in a lifetime are a piece of bad luck, but nevertheless I have been fortunate to see Lakeland before it was swamped by crowds and motors: to visit the Alps before roads and hydro-electric schemes penetrated everywhere, and before the tramps up to the huts began to be replaced by ski-lifts and rope railways: to make some novel expeditions even in the Highlands: to find how little the Irish have explored their countryside and to come into potholing whilst there was still much to be done.

The Eastern Alps have long been developed and simplified, but the present day threat to the West is the steeplejack with his spikes—more generally called 'pitons'—and the wire cableway. A generation hence there may be a cable service to the Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn summits; helicopters will certainly reach some of the huts.

I am told that in the French Alps there is a spike on every tricky pitch nowadays. The Alps are vast and there are many faces like the Dru and the limestone crags around Engelberg of which the steeplejack can have a monopoly if he will leave the grand climbs alone. The most advanced performers are using, instead of stirrups, short wire ladders—'étriers'—to overcome over-hangs' Where will this stop? It is a dreadful thought that steeplejack practice may develop in pot-holes, with permanent staircases.

In summer holidays, long, long before the first war I learnt on the delightful hills behind Llanfairfechan that the hills were friends, that in cloud and shine water runs downhill to join other streams, that dangerous bogs belong to the lowlands, that wire fences and walls run continuously for miles, but we townsfolk were free from the mysterious terrors which affected the hillman Buchan, as he records in "Memory Hold-the-Door" so amusingly, free to enjoy the friendly open spaces without grouse moors and deer forests. There were no scouts in those days, school and club camps were only then being pioneered. There were no organisations tempting young people with the best of intentions to districts positively dangerous. In fact, but for the pioneer minds we were mostly becoming a lot of 'cissies' to use

a modern expression, with the exception of sports and games. However, at nineteen I did live in a tent as an assistant officer at a "Hugh Oldham's Lads' Club" camp and found that whilst other fellows could not sleep on a hard floor boarding, I could.

In the course of the next few years my brother Walter and I swept the Lakeland hills, walked from Coniston to Scafell Pike and back, did much scrambling and some rock climbing. Also we walked from Salford to Liverpool by a quite interesting route.

My first day at Wasdale was New Year, 1902, and with three or four exceptions every New Year before the first war saw me there. In the summer I met that wonderful couple, Frank Payne and his wife. Payne had made an unsuccessful attack on the Teufelsgrat just before Mummery and had done some caving near Geneva. Full of the joy of life he was a most interesting talker and the inspirer and leader of novel expeditions. I also met the Reverend W. F. Wright who led us up the great pitch of 'B' Chimney on Pikes Crag when it was sheeted with ice, the most incredible feat I have ever seen. Unhappily he was killed on the Grand Paradis with Merrion and others.

These were the years when Fred Botterill rose to fame with his climb of the slab on Scafell and later of the Pillar North West. He and Harry Williamson joined the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club in 1903, Payne came in 1907. They formed an alliance and carried out the amusing fifth descent of Gaping Gill in 1904 by cable with a minimum of tackle, i.e. without a winch. This does not mean that Botterill climbed the shaft as some people have supposed. The heroic rope ladder period was July, 1905 to 1908. The 1896 and 1903 descents were by cable. Payne and his friends put a beam across the end of the lateral passage, but I cannot find when the great baulk of timber which used to carry the pulley for the cable was put in. It was there in 1910 and I suppose, still is. Going down, the cable, as in Calvert's account, was run round a bollard outside, which got very hot and had to be watered. Coming up was a fearful series of sawings as twelve or thirteen people hauled in on the rope and brought their men up very unevenly—one of them sea-sick! Matthew Botterill has described what it was like in *Y.R.C. Journal*, Volume V. (No. 18, page 310).

Payne and Mrs. Payne camped and hunted caves in 1905, first in Edendale and then, coming South, blundered on to Mere Gill Hole. This fired Payne beyond belief. At Easter 1906 he led me

into the pot-holing and climbing game, and five of us camped two nights on Newby Moss below Long Kin. We spent a day carrying ropes—heavy ropes—over the moor towards Crina Bottom, and I did my first pot-hole—Gritstone Pot. These were the days of the only known ladder, the heavy 12-incher, and rope hauling was the only practical way for wandering about. Towards evening we found Boggart's Roaring Hole which Payne had spotted, 150 ft. deep in all, with a 90 ft. second pitch. We got one man to the bottom, three hauling at the top and one in between trying to keep No. 6 from being knocked out by a stone.

Mere Gill completely revolutionised practice and it is amusing to remember that 20 years later Frankland and I, after a heavy carry from the road of four ladders and four ropes, did Boggart's Roaring Hole in one hour, both down. The life-line for the 50 ft. gave us a loop to keep the life-line for the bottom 80 ft. well clear of the scree between.

After the second night in that delightful camp we moved on, for three nights by Rowten Pot (baggage going, of course, by road to Kingsdale by cart) visiting Mere Gill on the way. It was most impressive and as there were three waterfalls on the way to the first pitch, very wet indeed. The becks were too high for us to traverse the two Rowton Caves, but at Bull Pot all five went down two pitches with the help of pulleys and we left one man down the bigger third, then another down the big Jangling Hole pitch, a complicated job. Up above Bull Pot I went into a crack so narrow that Payne never expected to haul me out, but I had the sense to stop when I realised the depth below.

The Climbers' Club, inevitably centred on London, had done very little to arrange Meets, but the 1907 New Year is famous for the Wasdale Head Meet arranged by Oppenheimer. Many men who were only names met for the first time. There was any amount of snow: I tried to get over from Grasmere against a terrible storm and, though I fought my way to Angle Tarn, at 3.30 p.m. it was obvious my reserve of strength would only carry me back to the Old Dungeon Gill. Soon after five Anthony, the huntsman, saw a moving snowman come into the hall and attacked it with a broom. What a change next morning; brilliant sun and hard frost. With a quarryman companion the crossing to Wasdale was simple as the deep snow was in perfect

condition and even required a few steps to be cut near Esk Hause. Beyond we realised the parties from the Wasdale Hotel were moving along the front of Great End Crag, and lower down I had my first acquaintance with Harry Williamson, beginning a happy friendship of many years. He became one of the live wires of the Club, and socially he and his wife, the sister of Fred Botterill, were quite a centre, many little groups enjoying week-ends at their Stainforth cottage. It was the base for the Hull Pot attacks and many others. Till after the war Williamson was seven years Vice-President and it was a sad thing that he drifted away.

Wasdale Head Hotel had been almost empty in 1906 except for F. S. Young and his boys of Bishops Stortford School, but in 1907 there were twenty or so men, Oppenheimer, E. A. Baker, Field, the Abrahams, Seatree, Barlow Minor, Botterill included. The evenings were extremely lively, even apart from the famous billiard table and the games of fives at which Professor Dixon showed the most uncanny skill. Though the Climbers' Club organised no more Meets at the New Year at Wasdale Head, the New Year gatherings became an institution, and one played fives in the evening to the point of exhaustion.

The following Easter, after the crowd had departed, I found myself at Wasdale with a Swiss, Hoessly, who had walked over from rooms at Eskdale and decided to stay the night. He was a fine and daring mountaineer, a lively card. Our second climb was the Needle, and G. F. Woodhouse coming along was staggered to see a man roping down from the top block. I gathered him in for Mere Gill.

Whitsuntide 1907 was Payne's first Mere Gill camp. Besides us three there were only Clarke of Chesterfield, Williamson and of course, and most important, Mrs. Payne and Dorothy. It was expected that the cave entrance would be under water and the scheme was to put the beck into a wooden trough with a canvas pipe over the end. Then the pipe was to be pushed into the cave entrance and up the beck inside so that the bagged waterfall discharged into the passage and the Mere could lower its level. Unfortunately the difficulty was to keep the pipe over the end of the trough, the strain of the water invariably tearing it away. Williamson went down the climb into the water and found the cave entrance much deeper under the water than was expected and so the bank inside much higher. This was the coldest

Whitsuntide ever, the infamous 'Cold Camp', worse even than the Leitrim camp of '52. Nevertheless Mrs. Payne fed us so splendidly we did not hesitate to tackle Hardraw Kin. Our methods were simple—hand line and body line. Hoessly made through the waterfall the first descent of the pitch at the end, and we got him back though he had to use his teeth at the top on the hand line. I shall never forget the wind and cold on the wet tramp back.

At Easter Williamson had a large and jolly camp at Wasdale, and Hoessly and Boyd camped in the wood. We were some of the thirty-three who built the Robinson cairn on the Pillar High Fell. We added a new climb near the Pulpit Rock, Hazard and I did another in the fine rocks opposite the Pillar Rock West and Hoessly led us up a very difficult chimney adjacent. There was any amount of snow and I gained much kudos by leading up Slingsby's Chimney on Scafell. To tell the truth the difficulties were above, below there was no ice in it, and I found that other parties had seen to it that there were two belays on the way. Above I had to cut a step in ice to reach a safe stance.

Payne had camped at Christmas by Sprinkling Tarn and at Easter in Hollow Stones; he now led us to camp by Mere Gill at Whitsuntide and had much success. I got over to Ingleton from Whitby in the last of four glorious years there, walked up in the evening, and with a hand line climbed into Mere Gill. The cave was open! With Boyd and two Swiss, Hoessly and Oechlia, the three engineers from Old Trafford, we were only five. The snag of the rope hauling method is that there is usually terrific friction round corners, above and on the edge, which can only be avoided by a pulley, if it is possible to fix a beam. This was done on the first pitch and the life line held from below for the last man. A beam was fixed on the deeper second pitch in the succeeding night attack in July. *Y.R.C. Journal*, Vol. II, page 312, relates how Hoessly and I were lowered into the magnificent one hundred yards canyon and reached the third pitch. The experiment was made of fastening the pulley to the victim's waist, fixing one end of the life line, and so reducing the load to a half. It worked but the friction was still so great, Payne refused to reduce the hauling party to two. There were twelve or so in the night attack of July, and there was direct hauling over a pulley. Five reached the third pitch and the ledge below, but evidently

the problem of getting men up had to be solved. The French go down by 'rappel,' but usually keep secret the plan of return!

At this Whitsun Meet I was, for a time, the last elected member of the Y.R.C. and the Alpine Club, duly celebrated in champagne at the 'Hill Inn' on the way home. I walked from Ribbleshead to Hawes, lay down by the roadside very weary, and woke up in the dusk to realise Hawes was still a long way off. Next day a glorious eight miles to Aysgarth was my first vision of Wensleydale. Three weeks before I had been to my first Y.R.C. Meet and had seen Nidderdale and How Stean. The coming of the motor has taken the glory of the flora from the roadsides.

How did I get in the Alpine Club? The first of four seasons, 1903, Forbes and I did eight peaks at Arolla and the Weisshorn with the guide Pralong, and two guideless. I did not get out one season, and in the next my brother and I had very bad weather. However, we got the Finsteraarhorn and went on to Arolla for three entertaining peaks, finishing at Fionnay. The third we had a very pleasant time at Zinal in spite of having to sleep on the floor at the Mountet Hut twice. On a misty, stormy day we struck some very fine climbing on Lo Besso, but could not see to finish, in fact we were lucky to be able to find the right chimneys down. The Theytaz brothers, made famous by G. W. Young, then led us up the Grand Cornier, over the Zinal Rothorn to Zermatt in very quick time, and after a rescue by them on a day of storm, up the Matterhorn to the Shoulder. The day was good but the wind terrific and waiting had no effect.

The delightful walk up to Saas is now replaced by a motor road, but nothing can alter the astonishing effect of the mighty ramparts of the Dom range as you come out on the meadows of Fee. Zermatt has a railway and the walk up from Brigue has ever since been again a delight. The Partengrat and Weissmies with guide was long but glorious, the Rossboden Pass and by the alps direct to Simplon Hospice is varied exercise in route finding. I finished with Monte Leone, and had much conversation with the guide once we found we could get on well in German, three words at a time.

We brothers had learnt a lot by this time, and realised that in those days the British climber trained to accept bad weather as inevitable had a great advantage over the guides. Since the awful

season of 1912 things have been very different and guides in many seasons have had to take a chance they would once have declined.

The fourth season, 1907, was not successful. After making a possible second ascent of a minor peak near the Grimsel we hired a guide and crossed the glacier to Ried. We spent a doubtful day at the Concordia and put in time going up the Faulberg. Sitting peacefully on top there was a flash and we were struck by lightning, or more probably, I am told, suffered a 'return shock.' We bolted some yards and lay down in heavy rain, each with a sore spot on the top of the head. Our man just went to pieces, poor chap, and I had to force him down by treading on his fingers, whilst Walter, behind, said "It's just like the Lakes," as the water dripped from our clothes. Next day we could not start till the weather settled at 7.20. We had only done three minor peaks and in spite of soft snow there was a higher, the Mittaghorn, perhaps possible. At ten, in spite of the guide's protests—'Never have I been on the mountains so late'—we turned off to Ried. However, he worked well to get through some crevasses and after twelve it became a sheer plug for his crazy employers for the next two hours to win. At five we were off the glacier but it was an awful long way to Ried.

There a local guide took me up that superb peak, Bietschorn and then via the Tschingelhorn our man took us over to Lauterbrunnen, introduced us to an old guide of the first rank, Schlunegger, and left us. Schlunegger led us magnificently up the Wetterhorn and more so down to Rosenlauri. The snow was terrible on the glacier and he did not know the way to avoid the gigantic icefall which begins with a very big descent to a col above the Dossenhut, so we went down the right edge and the face of the Dossenhorn, a great lead.

The next six days were spent solo with Schlunegger in the huts. Up in the train to Eismeer station from Grindelwald, across the glacier to the Bergli Hut, one day confined there, third day improving, over to Concordia, fourth day with heavy loads of food in bitter cold to the Jungfrau, bergschrund the only small difficulty, 2.30 a.m. to 8 a.m. Mönchjoch noon, top 2 p.m. What an honour! "You come last, you are quite good enough." I did not like it but came down the ice steps easily. Bergli 5.30. Terrific crowd, little rest.

The aim of this season had been first of all the Jungfrau, and to do it I had walked all round the mountain. Fifth day, a fine descent to the Schwarzegg Hut, Schlunegger led through crevasses and whenever I put my foot in one he blew me up. People did not do such things. Sixth day, a superb climb of the Schreckhorn, six and a half hours bitterly cold. Another party failed to get up. Again I came down last. We were back at 12.30, under four hours, with a leisurely return to Grindelwald.

By the end of 1908 I knew quite a lot of the Y.R.C. Williamson had had me over to climb on Almscliff, the pride of Leeds. I had seen the pioneer Skye camping party off. In fact I had found my spiritual home and come in touch with other people who wanted to climb in the Alps. Fred Botterill arranged for me to go with him and his friend J. M. Davidson, of Liverpool, but fell out. In the end I met Davidson and E. A. Baker, with whom I had climbed once, at Lausanne to climb at first with guides, the Ogis, with whom Davidson had done something novel near Kandersteg.

We climbed the Adler Pass ridge of the Rimpfischhorn and traversed the Zinal Rothorn and the Obergabelhorn, then we started guideless over the Col de Valpelline on the High Level Route to Chamonix. The climbing went well and these glacier traverses were magnificent, but we rapidly acquired experience, e.g. the Parayé Hut, being Italian, had an iron door, locked. Happily it had been burgled via a window! No cutlery, etc.—solution in the last five minutes next morning—in a table drawer.

Baker was older than we were, a man with a British reputation, so that we wondered at first if we could stand up to him, but he started too old and found the big peaks and long days a strain, so at Mauvoisin our very faithful friend was content. Davidson and I went on to carry a glorious guideless partnership right up to the first war. Via Champex we found ourselves at the Col d'Orny with a day of cloud before us. No point in stopping, due West lay the Col du Tour over a flat glacier of one and a half miles. Might as well go on down to Chamonix. The going was good, but after a time steeply uphill. We could see nothing but our steps behind and when we saw rocks it was fully clear we were somewhere high on the Aiguille du Tour. Back to the hut till the morrow, ruminating on a mystery. I doubt if it was solved until a glorious day revealed the Col du Tour South-West and

our track nearly to the top of the Aiguille. The Swiss map had been left for the Vallot-Barbey map; the Mont Blanc range runs North-East so the map is 'skewed.' The makers had been good enough to put on it two thin grid lines, but we had not noticed them. Ever since I have held strong views on 'skewed' maps. The first thing I do with one is to put a good strong N-S line across. We could only avenge ourselves by making the finer passage of the Col du Chardonnet.

Next summer I came to the Montanvert with Oppenheimer and Fox. The weather was bad and we began forcing Aiguille du Tacul immediately after deep snow. We certainly learnt respect for such conditions and were lucky to spot the place in the dark where the path home starts from the Mer de Glace. Davidson joined us and we crossed to Courmayeur and traversed Mont Blanc from the Dom Hut. The meat went bad on the way, but I could see nothing to stop us cooking part of it. However Oppenheimer saved my life by hurling it down the precipice! On the way home Davidson and I had the energy to climb to and cross the glacier above the Pierre Pointue. I shall never forget that leisurely walk in the moonlight along the excellent path, and then to Montanvert, twenty hours out.

On the way to the Charmoz Traverse we were nearly demolished by a fall of serac and then we found our learning of the face of the peak. Like Mummery before us we found the ice chimney up which Oppenheimer led brilliantly and so to the nick, but we had been wrongly advised that a spare rope was unnecessary and so were beaten.

Our eventful day on the Géant has been described by Davidson, *Y.R.C. Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 23, page 1. The reviewer of that number in the *Manchester Guardian* deplored the article coming first. Did he consider the yarn about people in a conducting cage of snow being struck twenty times by lightning as fiction? I take it as internal evidence he had not read it. I was there and felt the discharge pass down the snow. But the frightful thing was to see the great slab smash to bits above Oppenheimer's head on the most dangerous scramble to the foot of the great peak. The slope is deceptively easy, but never go unroped and trust nothing. Two brilliant mountaineers have been killed on it.

ON THE HILLS, 1957, 1958, 1959

1957

Richard Gowing was in the Dauphiné with the Oxford University Mountaineering Club. A snowstorm near the top of the North East Pillar on Les Bans and a thunderstorm on the summit ridge made the party late and they had to bivouac in a snow-rock hole. He climbed several peaks in the Zermatt district but fresh snow on the final rock ridge denied him the summit of the Pointe de Zinal.

F. D. Smith had poor weather at Chamonix but was able to climb Mont Blanc Brevent and two smaller aiguilles.

Slingsby was walking in Sardinia and Corsica in the autumn and found much of archaeological and historical interest.

Linford was with a French speleological expedition to Monte Marguaries in Northern Italy.

1958

D. C. Haslam and F. D. Smith found snow and ice conditions difficult at Chamonix; they made the ascent of the Aiguille Moine, the Brenva was impossible but they had a wonderful ridge climb on the Mont Maudit, including an abseil of 300 metres. From Zermatt they made the first ascent of the year of the Zinal Rothorn in icy conditions.

Brook, driven away from Chamonix by bad weather, walked over the Col de Balme and Col de Forclaz to Martigny, thence to Zermatt where he did 3 peaks, some rock climbing on the Riffelhorn and a lot of walking.

Richard Gowing, from Saas, traversed the Fletschhorn, the Weissmies by the North Ridge and later the Allalinhorn and the Rimpfischhorn, descending by the North Ridge and taking the gendarme direct. Moving to Chamonix he traversed the Grand Charmoz by the classic route but damaged his hands with the rope while checking his leader who slipped as he was traversing into the Mummery Crack.

Pat Stonehouse, T. H. Smith and Chapman in August travelled the High Level Route from Saas Fee to Chamonix by way of the Britannia Hut to Zermatt, the Schönbuhl Hut and Col de la Tête Blanche to Arolla, Vignettes Hut, Ottema Glacier, Chanrion Hut with its lovely flowers, Col du Sanadon, six hours

of step cutting on the descent to the Valsorey Hut from the Plateau du Couloir and so to Champex. A few days' rest then on to the Trient Hut, Aiguille de Tour and Chamonix. Perfect weather until the end, but storm foiled their attempt on Mont Blanc.

Godley and H. L. Stemberge in Austria climbed, on ski, Brunnenkogel, Wildspitz, Schuhaiber, Daunkogel and Zuckershurtl.

Watts was in Montenegro and Serbia in June but almost continuous rain confined him to the car, monasteries and Slibovitz.

Chapman and a friend, J. B. Rayner, spent four days crossing the Cairngorms in January from Aviemore to Blair Atholl. They spent a comfortless and windy night in the Sinclair Bothy and three nights in the Corrou Bothy from which they climbed Devil's Point and Cairn Toul, walked over Ben Macdhui and Derry Cairngorm. On their last night they were awakened by bangs on the bothy door and scraping sounds on the roof. The complete absence of any explanatory tracks in the snow next morning spurred their steps down Glen Tilt with thoughts of the Great Grey Man of Ben Macdhui at their heels.

Aldridge and Hemingway tramped the Highlands, each carrying everything for the holidays in 60-lb. packs and living on a diet of Pemican, Porridge, Honey and Ryvita. Starting from Cluanie they made Glen Affric by way of A'Chralaig, then six days northwards over Sgùrr nan Ceathreamhnan, An Riabhachan, Bidean an Eoin, Sgùrr a Chaorachain to Achnasheen. Turning westwards into Achnashellach Forest they traversed Càrn Breac, Beinn Liath Mhòr, Fuar Toll, Sgòrr Ruadh and Maol Chean-Dearg, finishing at Loch Carron.

1959.

H. L. and D. W. Stemberge were in the Champex district and spent at intervals six nights in the Trient Hut (10,461 ft.), finding it comfortable and never crowded. As a training trip they crossed the Col de Chamois in deep snow, descending to Champex by the lovely Val d'Arpette; then from the Trient Hut they did the traverse of the Aiguilles Dorées from west to east, ten hours of good steep rock with two fine snow pitches and fourteen aiguilles, one of them, the Javelle, a hard severe. The Aiguille Purtscheller gave them pitch after pitch of steep exposed granite nearly as

wearing to the finger tips as Skye Gabbro. They had their best snow and ice climb on the Aiguille de Chardonnet, up by the Forbes Arête and down by the West Ridge. The bilberries and wild strawberries in Champex had to be eaten to be believed.

Tallon, Pat Stonehouse, T. H. Smith and Chapman started in the Bernina by the traverse of the Piz Palü from the Diavolezza Hut; the weather broke so they moved to the Oberland and climbed the Mönch, Weissenallen and Finsteraarhorn; they joined up with Brook at Saas Fee for the Jubilee Dinner of the A.B.M.S.A.C., climbed the Weissmies and finished with the Fletschhorn/Lagginhorn traverse. Brook started from Grimsel and crossed the Eggishorn via the Oberaarhorn, Finsteraarhorn and Concordia Huts. From Saas Fee he crossed by the Weissmies Hut to Zermatt, where he met Wilson and Evans.

F. D. Smith and Haslam were again at Chamonix and Zermatt. A storm drove them off the Voie des Plaques on the Requin when 75 ft. from the top and they had to abseil on to the Plan Glacier. A beautiful day granted them a peak of the Grand Charmoz and the Forbes Arête of the Chardonnet. Later they climbed the Cervin by the Hörnli.

Richard Gowing and Baldwin climbed the Schreckhorn and did the traverse of the Eiger and the Mönch, including a bivouac. Then from Chamonix they traversed the Chardonnet by the Forbes Arête and climbed the north west face of the Aiguille du Tour.

P. A. Bell, from Arolla, traversed Mont Collon, climbed Mont Blanc de Seilon and Aiguille de la Tsa and arrived at the Bertol Hut on the same day as the new, non-smoking stove. He had a perfect day on the Douves Blanches ridge, a good ice climb on Les Bouquetins and finished with the south west ridge of the Grand Cornier and the Zinal Rothorn from the Montet Hut.

Large was walking in the Pyrenees and Spenceley, carrying tent and provisions, walked through Northern Norway and Sweden from near Narvik to Kiruna.

CHIPPINGS

Gaelic WHY NOT? The curious unfriendliness of the Highlander is not surprising in view of the remarkable social position, but I trace much of it to the fact that no one will take any notice of the pronunciation of his place names. The ordinary Scotsman is the most fearsome John Bull of all us British in his attitude to other languages. It is true that the number of double vowels and gh's make the place names look dreadful but after all the spelling stands for the pronunciation, not as in English for the almost certainly wrong pronunciation.

Sir Walter has made the Highlands only too fashionable. It is pathetic to read in 'The Scotsman' appeals to name the clan to which names like Jones and Robinson belong. Yet I was horrified to meet a body of Scottish students, not one of whom knew the simple name of the hut at which he stayed. These are the youthful élite.

The following is a card I made out for one Y.R.C. Meet.

Gaelic. ('A' stands for Anglic, the Lowland Scottish and English language.)

- (1) *fh, dh, h* are nil, *sh, ch*=h (A). *mh, bh*=V (A).
- (2) Final *g* is *k* (A). Old Scottish books have Mallek for Mallaig Arkek for Arkaig. *b* is *p*; *d* in the middle of a word is *t*.
Forget all about Latin and French *c* and *g*.
C is *c* and *G* is *g* usually.
- (3) Vowels *a, e, i*, are continental.
Practice *kah, kay, kee* for *ca, ce, ci* and the same for *ga, ge, gi*.
- (4) *ib, if, im, ip*. The *ee* is distinct.
- (5) Second vowels faintly heard, but *ea, eo, ia, iu, ua*, are two syllables. (Note particularly *ea* which the Scot insists on calling *ee* (A).
- (6) *ao*=ur as in (A) burn.
- (7) Before *e* and *i*; *d* changes to *j*, *s* to *sh*, *t* to *ch*.
After *an*; *c* is *g*, *t* is *d*. RT is *rst* or *rsh*.
- (8) *All*=(A) awl; *Ann*=(A) awnn.
oll=(A) owl; *onn*=(A) oun, e.g. Fionn=(A) Fee-oun.
- (9) GH at start of a word is Scottish mis-spelling otherwise consonant *γ*.

- (10) R is fully heard. Practice saying Harry, then Harr-k. *Dearg* will obviously be Je-arr-ack.
- (11) The Gael cannot say the following without putting a vowel between:—
 lb, lg, lm, lp.
 nb, ng, nm, np.
 rb, rg, rm, rp.

E. E. Roberts.

COLLOQUIUM INTERNATIONAL de SPÉLÉOLOGIE. BRUSSELS, 1958. The Fédération Spéléologique de Belgique made the year of the Brussels Exhibition an occasion to organise an international colloquium. The meeting lasted three days, the first two being devoted to the reading of eleven papers, the third to an expedition to the Grottes de Han in the Ardennes.

Unfortunately only about 25 people attended the meeting and several of the authors of papers were unable to be present in person, which meant that their papers were read for them and subsequent discussion was not possible. The Y.R.C. was represented by the Hon. Editor, who was asked to read the paper presented in English by Dr. G. T. Warwick of Birmingham University on "Some by-passed Swallow Holes in the Meuse and Lesse Valleys."

Many of the photographs entered for the photographic competition were excellent, especially a set showing formations in the caves at Scarisoara in Roumania, described in a paper by Iosif Viehmann of the University of Cluj.

Some of the papers were of a highly technical and scientific nature, but of particular interest to the potholer were the description by Professor Vandersleyen of the work, begun by Dom Anciaux de Favaux, a Benedictine Monk from the Abbey of Maredsous, and carried on by the Fédération, of preparing a complete register, with maps and plans, of the caves in Belgium. The topographical section of the Fédération publishes its own bulletin every two months; information and documents can be obtained from P. Vandersleyen, 182, Rue du Moulin, Brussels 3.

A paper of great practical interest was read by Jacques Choppy, Spéléo Club de Paris, who called for the adoption of an international set of conventional signs to be used in all cave maps.

C. Queffelec of the Groupe Spéléologique de la Pierre St. Martin described the underground rivers in the chalk of the Paris basin.

Two bound copies of the papers read at this colloquium and several of the recent topographical bulletins are now in the Y.R.C. library.
 H. G. Watts.

BIRDS ON RHUM. Notes made during the Club's Whitsuntide meet on the Island of Rhum in 1957.

The coast provided a magnificent opportunity for seeing many different species of sea-birds. One Universal Shag was found sitting on no less than 6 eggs, the normal number being three. Four were the usual chalky white colour, while the other two were larger, and green-blue in colour with marked brown spottings. Guillemots were nesting on nearby ledges and the suspicion was raised that this bird had in some way acquired its neighbour's eggs.

A Whooper Swan was seen at Kilmory on June 13th which seems to be a very late date although it is reported in "The Handbook of British Birds" as being seen occasionally in May, June and August.

Golden Eagles were seen every day and pellets were found on the Askival Ridge and on the summit ridge of Traelval. Two of these were measured and proved to be 75 × 30 mm. and 95 × 24 mm.; they had all the appearance of being made up almost entirely of Manx Shearwater feathers.

The most exciting experience of all was provided by the colony of Manx Shearwaters on the Hallival-Askival ridge, when the birds flew in from the sea to feed their mates and their young in the burrows. The birds in the air set up an amazing hullabaloo of groans and squawks and half-strangled screeches, which were answered by the mates in the burrows. The best performances were put up when the nights were dark and overcast. A point specially noticed was the amazing speed of these birds as they flew to their breeding grounds; they sounded like miniature jets going overhead; they seemed to prefer to land below their burrows and then to scramble rapidly upwards to enter them. The colony must be unique on account of the long distance of the burrows from the sea, most of them occurring at about 2,000 ft. above sea level and at least 1½ miles from the sea.

Birds identified during the week were —

Red Throated Diver; Manx Shearwater; Fulmar Petrel; Gannet; Shag; Heron; Mallard; Eider; Red Breasted Merganser; Sheld-duck; Whooper Swan; Golden Eagle; Peregrine Falcon; Red Grouse; Ptarmigan; Corn-crake; Oyster-Catcher; Ringed Plover; Golden Plover; Snipe; Common Sandpiper; Redshank; Great Black-backed Gull; Lesser Black-backed Gull; Herring Gull; Kittiwake; Razor-bill; Guillemott; Black Guillemott; Puffin; Cuckoo; Swift; Sky-lark; Raven; Hooded Crow; Blue Tit; Dipper; Song-Thrush; Ring Ouzel; Blackbird; Wheatear; Stonechat; Whinchat; Robin; Willow Warbler; Meadow Pippit; Rock Pippit; Pied Wagtail; Chaffinch; House Sparrow.

W. P. B. Stonehouse.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor acknowledges the receipt of the following letter from R. H. A. Staniforth, the Editor of "Mountaineering":—

"Dear Sir,

Apropos 'Bird Watching in the Hills' (*Y.R.C. Journal*, Vol. VIII, No. 28), on the relevant matter of the Peregrine Falcon's chance of survival in the Lakes, it appears that a recent survey of crags from Kendal to Keswick and from Haweswater to Ennerdale and Loweswater—including the heights round Wastwater and Buttermere—showed that only three out of eighteen eyries were missed by egg collectors.

"It was of interest to note in 'The Countryman' Autumn, 1957, that... 'The growing interest in rock climbing, rightly fostered by the National Park Authority and other bodies, may seriously interfere with successful breeding unless guides and instructors are encouraged to keep people away from eyrie crags during the breeding season. At week-ends relays of climbers, by staying for hours near certain crags, may unwittingly keep peregrines from their eggs for so long that they become chilled.'

(Signed) R. H. A. Staniforth."

THE CLIMBER

How steep the slab above the overhang
seems from my little stance beside the lip.
For forty feet, so far as I can see
the holds are slight, mere shadows on the face.

Below my heels the crag drops to the scree.
Far, far below the stream glints in the sun,
sending faint murmurs through the quiet air.
Shadows of clouds chase across distant hills.

Once on the slab the butterflies
that gnawed my stomach fade
and calculating calmly I can weigh
each move unflurried by the grip of nerves.

Smoothly I shift my weight from toe to toe.
Splayed finger tips now near, now reaching far
for sustenance, until, by movement
imperceptible, I gain a little height.

Now comes the crux, with nought but pressure holds,
a balanced lift by muscles smooth and slow,
a gentle press of fingers on to rock.
My whole world centred on the next few feet.

I do not think of all the years when I,
on training bent, made my reluctant limbs
go where I willed up crag and sliding scree
until they ached and threatened to give in.

This is my harvest. Here on this sunny day,
poised upon meagre holds, high on the slab
with sinews, balance, nerves working in tune
I would not change my place with any man

H. L. S.

CAVE EXPLORATION

NEW DISCOVERIES

Ireland Co. Fermanagh—Y.R.C. Meet, May, 1959.

Killesher—Monastir Sink.—

1. Cave 50 ft. from top of Monastir Sink, in north east corner. The entry passage runs northwards for 80 ft. sloping down at an angle of 40 degrees, then a 20 ft. pitch sloping at 80 degrees. The passage continues running north—south, the south branch leading back towards the cliff face is choked by a boulder fall after 20 ft. The north branch goes down through a small chamber to a 22 ft. pitch ending in a still deep pool about 10 ft. wide and 25 ft. long from which there is no visible exit. Water level about 80 ft. below the entrance.

2. The stream running into the west opening at the base of the cliff was followed to the siphon which had stopped previous parties. A climb 20 ft. up a crack on the right hand side of the passage leads to a pressure hole which goes down into the passage on the other side of the siphon. This runs for 12 ft. due north then turns north-east to a pool 2 ft. deep with only 6 inches air space; beyond this pool a 12 ft crawl leads into a small chamber 20 ft. high, 20 ft. long and 10 ft. wide with a pool going down from a beach to a depth of about 6 ft. A passage 2 ft. 6 ins. wide, with the roof about 18 ins. under water leads out of this pool. Two men swam this underwater for about 8 ft. and found a passage 18 ins. wide filled with very deep water and about 10 ft. of air space, which could be seen to go on for some 20 ft. to a sand bar

Killesher—Pollbwee. Main section as described in *Y.R.C Journal*. Vol. 3, No. 9. Extension to system.—The lake at the bottom of the pitch was swum and a passage was found running off in a northerly direction for 180 ft. finishing in a sump.

Killesher—New Pot. 180 ft. due north of Cat Pot. First pitch 20 ft. very tight, one wall solid rock, the other jammed boulders, leads to a boulder slope about 30 ft. long at an angle of 45 degrees. Half way down is an old stream passage to the south ending in a round block after 30 ft. The main stream passage runs south to north. The stream can be followed southwards for 15 ft. to a boulder block. To the north the passage runs for 250 ft. to a siphon. At 150 ft. a passage on the west side of the main stream

passage turns north after a few feet and can also be followed for about 250 ft. until roof meets water.

Florence Court—Pollnagollum. From the farthest point reached by previous expeditions a passage 1 ft. 6 ins. wide with deep water and a high roof was followed, in exposure suits, for 12 ft., at which point a screen came down to within 9 ins. of the water. The passage goes on beyond the screen for 25 ft. and opens out into a pear-shaped chamber 30 ft. long, the end of which is blocked by an impassable boulder jam.

Killesher—Pollasumera. The lake was found to be dry. To the west of the lake a wide low passage was followed for 170 yds., it then turns due south and after 7 yds. is nearly blocked by a large calcite formation; a second calcite formation 12 yds. further is impassable, but the passage can be seen to slope down sharply beyond this point. Twenty yards back a small hole leads into another passage which after about 20 yds., and including 2 S-bends, leads to a high rift passage and a climb of 16 ft. over jammed boulders. Seven yards beyond this there is a very tight pitch of 30 ft., at the top of which there are jammed boulders which are not very secure. At the bottom of this pitch the passage runs north, descending down steep mud slopes about 100 ft. to a stream passage running north and south which was not explored.

Killesher—Marble Arch. A swim of 44 yds. in the "final" pool of Skreen Hill Passage led to a rock curtain coming down to within 18 ins. of the water. On the other side of this screen the passage continued for 10 yds. to a vertical wall. A fissure 2 ft. 6 ins. wide in the left-hand corner branched after 6 ft. into two passages. The right hand one, going in the same direction as the stream, runs for 23 yds., when the roof comes down to within 4 ins. of the water.

The left hand passage turns and runs in the opposite direction to the main lake passage; after 13 yds. it is blocked by a series of rock curtains.

Gortmacconel—New Hole. A mile east of Rattling Hole on a small hilltop. Descent in north east corner of a sink with 3 fluted holes. There are two 20 ft. pitches with a steep 12 ft. boulder slope between them. The bottom is closed by a boulder jam.

J. Lovett.

Leck Fell—Lost Johns' Cave. Extension to Master Cave. After the dry summer of 1959 a Y.R.C. party was able to swim under the roof barrier which was hitherto considered the end of the Master Cave. They reached shallow water in a fine rock passage which they followed for 1,000 ft. to a large mud bar. Beyond this a further lake continued for 100 ft. ending in a small pear-shaped sump.

S. W. Stembridge.

Belgium.

Grotte de Hotton-Hamptean, 1958. Discovered in 1958 in a working quarry and first explored by the Spéléo Club de Belgique. Partly surveyed. Length of known part 1,370 m., depth 600 m. Two series of passages, upper and lower, run parallel and are connected at 3 points.

Grottes de Han, 1959. Members of the Brussels cave-diving group have penetrated a 15 m. siphon and discovered two new sets of passages and chambers with fine formations. A second and more difficult siphon remains to be attacked.

Abime de Nettive, 1959. Rediscovered by University of Brussels, signs of earlier penetration. Length 60 m. Depth 27 m. Closed by lakes. Surveyed.

France.

Le Gros Aven, Verdon, Var, 1958. Exploration by strong Belgian party, 1st-15th August, 1958. Survey and photographs.

Italy.

Alpi Marittime. Upega. Grotte Caracas, 1957. The speleological Club of Paris descended 19 pitches to a total depth of 346 m., with object of finding a possible link-up with Piagga Bella on the other side of Monte Marguaries. The system goes on, but the exploration had to be abandoned owing to shortage of equipment. A member of the Y.R.C. took part in the expedition.

H. G. Watts.

Kettlewell—Dow Cave and Providence Pot—July 8th, 1960. In view of the growing notoriety of this system due to numerous calls on the Cave Rescue Organisation, I enclose the following

notes. I recently completed the through route in a party of three, one of whom knew part of the route quite well, and we took 7½ hours, hard going all the way.

Entering Dow Cave the first section was easy; we carried our potholing gear and clothes and wore as little as possible to avoid getting wet through at "the Duck." In normal weather only head and shoulders can pass through above water into the main Dowber Gill Passage. However, due to the drought it was only waist-deep. The passage narrowed immediately, and we dressed in a confined space.

The passage follows the stream and varies in height between 20 and 40 ft. It is vital to keep as far above the water as possible. If in doubt about the route, keep up! Never go down to the stream as it is deep and impossible to follow the whole way through.

Now we began to traverse and the next 5½ hours were spent bridging an interminable greasy fissure with few or no holds. With our backs to one wall and feet on the other we shuffled along. The water rushed 10 to 20 ft. below, and we knew that a slip would be disastrous; it would be impossible to climb out of the stream or from a jammed position. Occasionally a large boulder jam would cause a climbing problem, and an element of teamwork was necessary.

The "Gypsum Traverse," as this section is called, continues into the "Terrible Traverse" which lives up to its name. Here the passage was sometimes so wide that we were at full stretch to bridge it; at other times the gap was so narrow that the length of a boot jammed in it, and occasionally the passage was so tight that helmets had to be removed to squeeze through. Any bag of any sort would have been a hopeless handicap. I carried all my carbide, food, candles, matches, etc. in tobacco tins in my pockets. The rock on either side of the passage was either smooth and slippery, or rotten and crumbly, and there was an alarming amount of loose rock about.

After about 4 hours underground we began to feel very tired from continued traversing. There were few rest places, and every time we stopped moving we began to slide towards the stream, and it was a tremendous effort to "chimney" back up again. By this time we expected to be near the half-way

mark, "800 yds. Chamber", but we were not to know that it would take us another 2 hours' traversing to reach this point.

After an eternity we came across "800 yds. Chamber", feeling very leg weary, but knowing that the worst was over. The second half was considerably easier. "Bridge cavern" was passed quickly, followed by "the Crawl" a long and very tight section which took us away from the stream, and into Providence Pot itself. Several little climbs tested the remainder of our strength but by helping each other we were quickly out.

It should be noted that the first half in distance took roughly four times as long as the second half, due to the long and arduous traverses, in constant danger throughout both from loose rocks above, and the possibility of falling into the fissure below.

D. W. Stembridge.

REVIEWS

ROCK CLIMBS IN ARRAN: by J. M. Johnstone. (Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide. 84pp., 9 line-diagrams and a map).

This little book (4½ in. x 6 in.¼) is invaluable to anybody visiting Arran to climb. Eighty-two numbered climbs are described in detail, and most of them are sketched in the diagrams. A classified list at the end of the book shows six very severes, five hard severes and twelve severes.

In the introduction there is a warning note about the structure of Arran rock: holds either generous or entirely lacking; abrupt transitions from delicate balance moves on steep slab to strenuous jamming in a holdless chimney: rock dust and lichen making vibrams treacherous if not used with great care: a shortage of good belays. 120 ft. of rope per man is advised and a length of nylon line for thread belays where full weight rope cannot be introduced.

H.G.W.

CLIMBERS' GUIDE TO GLENCOE AND ARDGOUR. (Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide.) Volume I. Buachaille Etive Mor. Edited by L. S. Lovat.

The S.M.C. published in 1959 their second edition of the guide to rock-climbing in Glencoe and Ardgour. The first edition was published in 1949; climbing activity in the area over the last ten years has been such that the new guide has spread into two volumes.

Volume I is a guide to what many people must consider to be the finest rock mountain in Great Britain, the Buachaille Etive Mor. The climbs on this mountain have almost doubled since 1949 and the majority of the new climbs are of V.S. standard. They have been reclassified for vibrams instead of nails as in the first edition and in consequence many of them have been down-graded. Modern methods are apparent in one new climb of "unclassified" standard which "is climbed almost entirely by artificial technique."

One of the most noteworthy of the new climbs is a winter ascent of Raven Gully, which is described in detail. The following is an extract . . . "Pitch 4 took 1½ hours; two pitons were used and crampons were worn. Socks were then used until the final slopes when crampons were again worn. The chock-stone in Pitch 5 was lassooed, saving much time in icy conditions."

The second edition of the guide follows the style of the first in "a deliberate compromise between extremes of vagueness and detail" in its descriptions of climbs. It may appear to err on the side of vagueness to those accustomed to the English guides, the majority of which adhere to the pitch by pitch method of description. Anyone who considers that not enough detail is given would do well to read W. H. Murray's introduction to the first edition.

A.T.

BULLETIN D'INFORMATION: Commission de Topographie de la Fédération Spéléologique de Belgique. 1959.

This bi-monthly bulletin is mainly devoted to accounts of surveys, accompanied by carefully drawn plans of caves. There are also notes on

Geology, Underground Flora and Fauna, Underground Photography; in the January number is a review by the President of the Federation of Y.R.C.J. Numbers 27 and 28 in which high praise is given to the photographs.

Some interesting experiments are being carried out on the ringing of bats. From results so far obtained, one showed that a bat ringed at Vechmael in Belgium, on 15th November, 1958, was recovered at Zaandam in Holland, on 17th March, 1959, a distance of 96 miles. Another bat, ringed on 29th March, 1954, was found in the same locality as that in which it was ringed, on 8th February, 1958, an interval of nearly 4 years. H.G.W.

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING 1958.

OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING 1958.

These journals from the Climbing Clubs of our two senior Universities are of high quality. The writing has a youthful freshness, and is lively, graphic and informative, the photographs are good and the humour bearable. A glance at the contents shows that the well trodden tracks around Chamonix and Zermatt no longer satisfy these young enthusiasts, and they are quite ready to take on anything between and including the Arctic and the Antarctic.

First "Cambridge Mountaineering." Interest is aroused at the outset by 'A Letter from Tibesti.' Some lightly humorous writing softens the shock by which we are jerked from French West Africa to the Homathko Snowfield, British Columbia, and thence to the Arctic Circle, of which T. J. C. Christie writes on "Litotes and the Last First Ascent."

"Climbing in Ireland" by J. C. Cooper impels one to feel that the Y.R.C. should give serious consideration to a climbing as distinct from a potholing meet in the Emerald Isle. There are useful climbing notes on North Lyngen, the Island or Arnoy and Ben Nevis. The *Journal* concludes with what is too modestly described as an 'Interim' guide to the Carnmore district of Loch Marce.

"Oxford Mountaineering" is built on more or less the same lines. A fine description of the Welzenbach route on the Dent d'Herens should arouse the interest of some of our younger members. S. K. Richardson takes us to the Arctic, and K. I. Meldrum gives a brief account of the assault and conquest of Pumasillo.

A. D. M. Cox writes of the attempt on Machapuchare in the Reindeer Mountains, when he and Noyce in a splendid effort got within 150 feet of the summit. Whilst on the Falkland Island Dependencies Survey, Tickell and Grant bagged two mountains on the South Orkneys, Devil's Peak, 2,439 ft. and Mount Nivea, 4,179 ft. J.G.B.

THE JOURNAL OF THE FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB.

1958. Pride of place is given to Meldrum's account of the ascent of Pumasillo, a fine achievement under the joint leadership of Simon Clark and John Longland. The full story of the expedition, in Clark's recently published book "The Puma's Claw" is a notable addition to mountain literature.

To whatever part of the world he is exiled the climber's first concern is to look around for the nearest mountains, hills or crags. T. Howard Somervell writes of what he found in South India, and judging by the text and photographs it was very much more than most exiles can hope for.

There is a general impression that the Antarctic is inclined to be both grim and monotonous: Atkinson and his friends did not find it so; they had a rattling good holiday with some splendid climbing. Harold Drasdo went to Donegal and climbed in the Poisoned Glen: some of us have felt the hot breath of the tiger on our necks at times, but not many the 'damp neuter breath of granite' on our faces.

Coleridge has been overshadowed by Wordsworth as an interpreter of the beauties of the Lake District. In the F.R.C.C. Journal of 1954, A. P. Rossiter came out as a champion of Coleridge, and in a well-argued article redressed the balance somewhat. Now, four years later, E. M. Turner, taking advantage of the new insight into Coleridge's mind and art by the continuing publication of his notebooks and letters, carries the process considerably further. Coleridge was indeed a true mountain lover: he did not merely rhapsodise about them from a distance like so many literary men but knew the hills at first hand, tramping over them in all weathers, noting their changes of mood and colour, and then setting it all down in graphic prose.

1959. This number opens with Sir John Hunt's "Caucasus Diary." Several members of the British Caucasus Expedition 1958 have written their accounts of this venture behind the Iron Curtain, and now we have the leader's version. Sir John emphasises that the British went first to climb, and second to meet and make friends with the Russian climbers, and there can be no doubt that both objectives were fully realised.

A photograph in an illustrated magazine of the North Face of the Cime Grande di Lavaredo called up for John Wilkinson reminiscences of his own days in the Dolomites and he sets them down here in lively style. H. G. Stephenson recalls five strenuous but unforgettable days on the South Face of Mont Blanc, and Jack Carswell tells of a delightful week-end in Scotland of which the climax was an ascent of the North Climb on the Central Buttress of Buachaille Etive, with Arnison, Milne and George Spenceley.

In his "Lakeland Stories 1958" P. G. Satow reveals what bad weather does to the Lake District apart from making it very unpleasant, and John Lagoë draws the attention of rock climbers to neglected Eskdale. J.G.B.

THE RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL. 1959.

Eric Byrom, in a delightful essay "A Rock Climber Before the War," recalls with middle aged nostalgia his first steps to the rocks—when Abraham was the high priest, when vibrans were unknown, and thin Alpine line was used; when the occasional solo climb was sneaked and enjoyed, and chance meetings on the hills ripened into lifelong friendships.

The complications facing the newly married mountaineer can constitute a formidable barrier which many never really succeed in surmounting, but Dennis Davis reveals how he has at least made a breach by contriving what he describes as "Climbs on a Holiday" as distinct from a climbing holiday.

We can only conclude that Albert Dale's subconscious must be in a bad way if his nights are commonly made hideous by the dream he recounts in "Climb or Excursion." But he really should have set this down in verse after the style of the Lord Chancellor's nightmare song in "Iolanthe," thus providing a new item in the repertoire of John Hirst and Harry Spilbury.

J. R. Hastings made his first acquaintance with the Alps by visiting the Silvretta as one of a Ramblers' Association party. With delightful freshness and humour he describes how he saw his first crevasse, crossed his first glacier and ascended to 11,000 ft. "The bug, a little one, had bitten us," he says. He will soon find it is a very big one.

David Thomas gives a fascinating account of the 1958 Caucasus Expedition. Those who heard Chris Brasher speak at our 1958 Annual Dinner will be particularly interested. A group of friends in the Climbers' and Rucksack Clubs conceived, discussed and eventually carried out this idea of an expedition to the Caucasus; feeling the need for someone with really high altitude experience, Sir John Hunt and George Band were invited to join the party, Sir John taking over as leader. There was an unhackneyed freshness about its whole conception and fulfilment, and somebody must have put in a lot of patient, and at times despairing, work, to get this party of British climbers through the Iron Curtain. It probably could not have been done in the days of the Stalin regime.

Some hard climbing was done, and relations with the Russian mountaineers seem to have been happy. It is to be hoped that the ice is now broken, and that many more British parties will be given permission to visit these great mountains. They are obviously quite unique and distinct from either the Alps or the Himalayas. There are superb photographs and two useful maps. J.G.B.

THE ALPINE JOURNAL. No. 298. 1959.

As always, a first class record of Mountain Adventure, but is not its subtitle "and Scientific Observation" now only a passing nod to the Mighty Dead?

This number has a strongly cosmopolitan flavour; the contributors include an Austrian, a South American, a Russian and a Chinese; the others remain Englishmen, and the most English of them is surely Sir John Hunt, who leads off with a reprint of his Valedictory Address to the Club. He comments on the recent remarkable run of successes and near misses in the Himalayas, and touches on the important literary activities of A.C. members not only in the translation of foreign publications, but in the original researches of such writers as Graham Brown, Gavin de Beer, Wilfred Noyce and Sir Arnold Lunn.

Sir John is perturbed at the relations between the Alpine Club and other home kindred clubs. He feels that the Alpine Club is now held in more esteem abroad than at home, and wonders if this could be due to a suspicion of patronage and even arrogance in the attitude of some A.C. members towards members of less illustrious clubs. He rightly deplores this, pointing out that the A.C. no longer holds a monopoly in either individual or collective climbing achievement. Sir John pleads that pride in the past history of the Club should not imply claim to pride of place today.

Heinrich Roiss writes of the successful Austrian expedition to Haramosh, and Hamish McInnes gives a graphic account of the Bonatti Route on the Petit Dru—a piton, carabiner and étrier climb. Douglas Busk introduces the new 1:50,000 map of the Ruwenzori area recently published by the Land Surveys of Uganda.

M. J. Harris, of the British Caucasus Expedition, writes about climbing the East Summit of Dych Tau with George Band, and Blackshaw tells of Jangi Tau. Harris supplies some interesting information about Russian climbing equipment; most of the tackle seems to be good but heavy.

The first ascent and first traverse of Victory Peak in the Tien Shan range is recorded by Ariy Polyakov, who is described as a Master of Sports in the U.S.S.R., and who, judging by his splendidly posed photograph is also the true Intrepid Mountaineer.

It is surprising to read Shih Chan-Chun's account of the joint Sino-Soviet Expedition to Muztagh Ata promoted (T.U.C. take note!) by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and its Russian counterpart. The mountain which defeated Shipton and Tilman in 1947 fell to these tough trade unionists and the Chinese and Russian flags were planted on the summit.

Anne Davies, Eve Sims and Antonia Deacock had a rewarding trip on the Women's Overland Himalayan Expedition, 1958. They had no desperate projects to worry them but covered a lot of interesting country, meeting the natives and rounding off things by climbing Biwi Giri (18,500 ft.).

J.G.B.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL.

1959.

The highlight is Tom Patey's account of the successful British-Pakistani courtship and conquest of Rakaposhi, which Patey aptly entitles "The Taming of the Shrew." The wooing was carried out with ruthless military efficiency, which eventually wore down this 'tempestuous Himalyan virgin.'

Bennett, Slesser and Bryan give a detailed account of the expedition to the Staunings Alps in Scoresby Land, Greenland and a brief report is included by Wallace of the Edinburgh Andean Expedition, 1958. About a dozen pages of the *Journal* are devoted to recording new climbs in various parts of the Highlands and Islands.

There is a depressingly long list of accidents on Scottish mountains in 1958/9. The report concludes with a pertinent comment. "Too many clubs, and books on technique, are to blame for teaching young people how to climb rocks and ice by mechanical methods before they have learned simple hillcraft on our Scottish mountains, first in summer, then on the easier hills under snow."

J.G.B.

THE HIMALAYAN JOURNAL. 1958.

Like the mighty range from which it takes its name, there is a solid grandeur about the *Himalayan Journal*, loaded as it is with long informative articles and profusely illustrated.

Captain Banks gives us his version of how Rakaposhi was climbed and H. Roiss records the ascent of Haramosh. Dennis Davis communicates graphically the disappointment and frustration felt at the brave assault on Disteghil Sar, led by Alf Gregory.

Those whose holiday period is restricted and whose aspirations are modest will read with interest Frank Solari's account of the Chamba-Lahul Expedition which he undertook with his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Hamish McArthur, Miss Margaret Munro and Monsieur Emile Bayle. This is the second time this enterprising party has made a sortie into the Himalayas, and its experience should give encouragement to the average alpinist who has perhaps too readily regarded the Himalayas as being far beyond both his purse and his capabilities.

With the memory of our own expedition still fresh in mind all Y.R.C. members will read with sympathy of the tragic end of the Manchester expedition to Masherbrum, in the Karakoram, in 1957, when the deputy leader, Robert Downes, died of a throat affliction at 24,000 ft, during the second attempt on the mountain. In spite of this J. Walmsley and Don Whillans launched a third attack but were defeated by difficult rock and soft deep snow at 25,000 ft. when only 600 ft. from the top.

Kurt Deimberger writes of the Austrian Alpine Club Karakoram Expedition, 1957. The members were Hermann Buhl, M. Schmuck, F. Wintersteller and Kurt Diemberger; the object—Broad Peak, 24,000 ft. This was climbed, then in the attempt on Chogolisa, Hermann Buhl lost his life. J.G.B.

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL. 1959.

Here George Band gives his reflections on the Caucasus trip, which was obviously a Good Thing for all concerned, British and Russians.

Most climbers must have wondered, in their more morbid moments, what it would feel like to have a big fall and in "Connaissance" Simon Clark tells us. As in many other matters the thought is more frightening than the act, and although Clark was badly bruised after his fall, of eighty feet on the north face of the Grand Fourche, he found the sensation at the time rather thrilling and not unpleasant, which is a comforting reflection for all of us.

The last article is an account of the first ascent of Malham Cove in August, 1958, accomplished by inserting rawlplugs in chiselled holes. Two strands of the quarter weight nylon rope snapped while the first man was abseiling down, but he was held on a life-line. J.G.B.

THE BRITISH SKI YEARBOOK. No. 40. 1959.

In this issue Sir Arnold Lunn celebrates both his 70th birthday and the editing of his 40th Yearbook. As a birthday present the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research gave him a flight, piloted by Hermann Geiger, from Sion to the Tête de Valpelline and a ski-run, guided by Walter von Allmen of Mürren and Hans Furrer of Zermatt, from the Tête de Valpelline to Zermatt. For a record of sheer enjoyment, and some common sense remarks thrown in about the value of stick-riding and the Telemark, Sir Arnold's account of the day makes good reading.

Harold Taylor, with his son John and a Cambridge friend, followed a second 'Haute Route' across the Bernese Oberland; an alternative to the well-known one across the Valais. Starting from the Rotondo Hut near Andermatt, they crossed the Oberaarjoch, climbed the Fiescherhörner, had three day's superb ski-ing based on the Concordia Hut, then went on by Blattan and Kandersteg to Schwarenbach, finishing with the Wildstrubel. The account gives details of equipment and provisions taken, and the cost from Andermatt back to Andermatt was £17 7s. od. each for 17 days' ski-ing.

In "The Pleasure that is sometimes a Pain" Viscount Glentworth answers the question 'What makes you walk up mountains when a machine will help you to get much more downhill ski-ing?' by describing an attempt at the Valais Haute Route in 1958, frustrated by shocking weather and including a night in the snow, and a glorious week's ski-ing on the Oberland glaciers a year later.

Peter Lunn, in "Revolution and Counter-Revolution" has a few words of kindly encouragement to those of us who want to go on enjoying ski-ing but:—

Each year the old familiar slopes
Seem steeper than of old.
'Lone Tree,' the grave of buried hopes,
I leave to K's of Gold.
To younger and to bolder K's,
While I with stems sedate
By traverses and devious ways
Slide down to 'Menin Gate'!

Too much of the Yearbook is devoted to ski racing, which makes dull reading for the non-racing skier; in fact Sir Arnold himself, in an open letter to the Chairman of the Downhill/Slalom Committee of the F.I.S. complains of the increasing dullness of modern racing and suggests that the F.I.S. should encourage variety in competition, above all the "Inferno" type of racing, which is designed to test line judgement.

Metal ski are gaining ground, there is a reversion from metal sticks to long wooden ones, boots are lighter and rucksacks bigger, release bindings are on the increase, but there is a suggestion that the fatal accident in the 1959 Arlberg Kandahar might have been avoided if the victims had not been wearing them. H.G.W.

KINDRED CLUB JOURNALS

The Librarian gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the journals of the following clubs:—The Mountain Club of South Africa, 1958; Die Alpen (quarterly); Appalachia (quarterly); National Speleological Society (monthly); Craven Pothole Club, 1958; Midland Association of Mountaineers, 1959; Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, 1957-58.

IN MEMORIAM

Since the publication of the last *Journal* the following members have died: E. E. Roberts, G. W. Young, W. B. Odgers, A. W. Sykes, A. Rule, M. Botterill.

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG

By the death of Geoffrey Winthrop Young on September 6th, 1958, the Club lost one of its small distinguished band of honorary members. An obituary appeared in the 'Times' on September 8th of that year and full notice of his career by Sir Claude Elliott in the *Alpine Journal* for May, 1959.

After walking tours in Wales with his father, Sir George Young, and reading parties in the Lakes when he was an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, Geoffrey Young first visited the Alps in 1897; in 1900 he was elected to the Alpine Club. In eleven subsequent seasons of Alpine Climbing before the first World War he rose to an outstanding position among British mountaineers, climbing sometimes guideless but more often with such guides as Louis Theytaz (the 'Young-grat' on the Weisshorn, etc.), the Lochmatter brothers and more especially, from 1905 onwards, Joseph Knubel (the S.E. face of the Weisshorn, the Furgg-grat of the Matterhorn, the Täschorhorn by the S.E. face and, in 1911 the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon and a whole series of new climbs in the Mont Blanc area).

Then came the first war in which, after a brief period as a war correspondent accredited to the French armies, he volunteered for the Friends' Ambulance Unit and commanded it on the Western Front; thus he saw the bombardment of Ypres at the end of 1914. When Italy entered the war he was persuaded to join an enlarged Friends' Ambulance Unit with its own field hospital which served with the Italian Second Army on the Isonzo front. It was when he was commanding this unit in 1917 that an Austrian shell from behind Monte Gabriele shattered his left thigh, necessitating a high amputation.

Appalled at the inadequacy of the artificial limbs usually provided, he used his years of convalescence to contrive a practical peg leg of duralumin; with this he first practised in the Lakes and at Easter 1919 (when I first met him) on the Snowdon range from Pen-y-Pass; the right leg soon developed great muscularity, providing a strong contrast to the elegant Italian artificial limb with which he had been provided. During subsequent years he was able to make many expeditions on British hills and while living at Cambridge, 1924 to 1930, his home became a favourite meeting place for undergraduate mountaineers; he was also invited by the Fell and Rock Club to deliver a tribute at the dedication of the summit of Great Gable to the memory of members of that Club who had fallen in the War.

In 1927 he returned to the Alps, climbing with old friends and guides whom he had known before the war; in that year, after some training climbs, he reached the summit of Monte Rosa; the next year he was first in the Dolomites, then, returning to the Pennine Alps, he climbed the Wellenkuppe, the Weisshorn (to within 500 ft. of the top) and the Matterhorn; in 1929 from the Montanvert he climbed the Petit Charmoz, the Réquin and the Grépon. In 1939 he

ascended the Zinal Rothorn from the Trift; this was his last Alpine climb and nearly proved fatal, for while adjusting his snow glasses he lost his balance and fell over an overhang.

In 1938 he became Vice-President and in 1941 President of the Alpine Club. To meet the problems of new mountaineering developments he took a leading part in forming the British Mountaineering Council whereby the Alpine Club became closely associated with other clubs mainly concerned with home climbing. At the Alpine Club Centenary in 1957 he was selected to deliver his last paper 'An Alpine Aura' to that Club.

His association with the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club arose from his long friendship with my uncle, William Cecil Slingsby, with whom he used to stay at Carleton-in-Craven and whose youngest daughter, Eleanor, he married in the Spring of 1918. He was also a friend of the Brigg family, our erstwhile neighbours at Kildwick Hall. In 1907 he delivered a paper on 'Some Alpine Variations' to the Club which is recorded in *Y.R.C.J.* Vol. II, No. 8, page 253. It was then that he was elected an Honorary Member; his election as such is therefore contemporaneous with that of Matthew Botterill as an ordinary member. At the Annual Dinner in 1910 he toasted the Club and his speech is recorded under the title 'Romance and Effort' in *Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. III, No. 11, page 233. After the first War, in his eagerness to keep abreast of new climbing developments, he went over by arrangement to see C. D. Frankland making solitary ascents of his own routes upon Almschiff and he was also a witness of the first ascent of Clogwyn d'ur Arddu's western buttress by Jack Longland, Frank Smythe and others.

Geoffrey Young leaves behind memories of help and inspiration accorded to numerous young mountaineers and to many persons disabled like himself in the first War and a magnificent example of courage and endurance, shown in his pre-war achievements, in his war service, in his acceptance of the loss of his leg as 'an irresistible challenge' and finally in his struggle against his last illness. When he delivered his 1957 paper to the Alpine Club he did so without faltering but at the end was obviously very tired and in pain; this was the last time I saw him; his wife had told me the evening before that he had only a short time to live; nothing but his will and his exceptional fitness and strong heart enabled him to survive for another nine months.

He was not only a very genuine lover of the mountains but also a great believer in their influence on character by their call to adventure and self-discipline. His feeling for them appears in his 1907 paper to the Club and again fifty years later in his 1957 paper, from the conclusion of which I quote an abbreviated extract:—

"Mountaineering cannot exist divorced from mountains; from their æsthetic appreciation, and from the strong and continuous response to them.

Not personal prowess or competitive achievement but the understanding of that which mountains—and mountains only—mean to us; the long harsh days of endurance and discipline; the hours of splendid sunshine; of glorious self-forgetfulness; the hours of blizzard . . . and of the little cats' paws of fear, that die away again as fate is pushed back step by step.

Most memorable—that hour before dawn . . . And then—the miracle of the coming of light, as it breaks only over great mountains. Light alive with a purpose . . . bringing out of dead matter and darkness a fresh resurgence of cleansing spirit."

F. H. Slingsby.

WILLIAM BILLING ODGERS

W. B. Odgers who died on December 28th, 1959, joined the Club in 1919. He was never himself a very active member, but was always keenly interested in everything Members had done. He was a great lover of the countryside in all its aspects, especially our Yorkshire hills and dales which he knew so well and in such detail.

He was a voracious reader of the more serious travel books, and having a retentive memory had the capacity of comparing the various authors' experiences and completing an unusually comprehensive picture of little known lands, and the problems facing big expeditions.

Davis Burrow.

ARTHUR WILLIAM SYKES

Arthur William Sykes who died at the age of 91 at his home in Huddersfield during September of 1959 would only be known to the older members of the Club. He was a close friend of the first President—George Lowe—who would, no doubt, be the one to encourage Sykes to join the Club in 1911. For a large number of years he had taken no active part in the affairs of the Club—indeed for some years before his retirement from the Textile Industry, some 20 years ago, he could not indulge in long walks—but to the end he retained a very keen interest in the Club and was very proud of his connection with the Yorkshire Ramblers. He was by nature of a quiet, retiring disposition, with gentle manners and an abiding love of the country-side and particularly of the hills. He was a keen naturalist and photographer.

W. Stoney.

ALEXANDER RULE

Alexander Rule, who died in his eightieth year on January 12th, 1960, after a short illness, joined the Club in 1907 when he was a lecturer and demonstrator in chemistry at Liverpool University. As contemporary numbers of the *Journal* show, Rule was a keen and active member until the outbreak of the first war; he was a leading spirit in the early survey parties in Gaping Gill and was one of the party trapped by a flooded Fell Beck in May, 1909, when they had to spend an uncomfortable thirty-six hours underground. In 1908 he joined Brodrick and others in the exploration of the Florence Court cave system in County Fermanagh and in 1913 took part in the excavations at Foxholes above Clapham Cave, when sundry prehistoric bones were unearthed. In between these activities he managed several successful seasons in the Alps.

During the first World War, Rule worked for the Ministry of Munitions and after the war he spent some years in India advising on wood distillation and the utilisation of forest products. From 1924 to 1927 he represented British interests in Mannheim during the development of the Bergius 'oil from coal' process and then joined Imperial Chemical Industries at Billingham

for research in this field, becoming Assistant Research Manager and Laboratories' Controller. He retired in 1944.

On returning to the North of England in 1927, Rule immediately showed his deep and lasting interest in the Club. Although he did not again take a very active part in climbing and pot-holing he was a frequent attendee at meets, particularly the now legendary Gaping Gill camps of the late twenties and early thirties. His enthusiasm for and loyalty to the Club were manifested in many ways and he was instrumental in introducing a number of his younger colleagues at Billingham to membership. He had been a Vice-President in 1909-10 and when he was elected President for 1934-35 he proved a worthy successor to a long line of holders of this office, rarely missing a meet or a committee meeting during his term and guiding the Club with energy and wisdom.

After the second World War, towards the end of which he retired from Imperial Chemical Industries, we did not see much of him. Distance and his inability to take an active part kept him from meets and, except on one or two occasions, his health in the winter months kept him from attending the Dinner, although each year he made an effort to do so. The writer of these notes, who was one of the recruits introduced by Rule in the twenties, has spent many an odd hour in his flat on the walls of which hung one of Percy Robinson's photos of Gaping Gill and a group including Rule, Percy and Brodrick in camp outside Foxholes. On these occasions Rule would reminisce about the Club's activities in those far-off days before 1914 and tell tales of the stalwarts of that time, when push-bike or horse-drawn trap were the normal means of transport to meets.

G. S. Gowing.

MATTHEW BOTTERILL

In the second great wave of the Club before the first war the Botterill group were very prominent, Fred the almost legendary rock climber of Botterill's Slab and the North West on Pillar, Matthew with his yawl in the Hebrides, who trained up L. S. Chappell, D.S.O. (Zeebrugge) and Holmes as seamen, and not to be omitted, Arthur who made the eight-inch ladders which conquered Mere Gill and revolutionised pot-holing. Williamson, brother-in-law, was vice-president for four years or more and the cottage at Stainforth was a social centre.

Fred left the family business in 1907, but Mattie was managing director for years. He moved to Ilkley about 1917 and constantly entertained us on our visits to the rocks.

He was well known in literary circles. His band was quite a feature at Wasdale Head; he himself was a skilful harpist and played in the former Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra. He must have done much climbing with Fred before the first war and has articles in the *Journal* on his pioneer climbs in the Hebrides from 1920. There is a 2-page article (*Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. V, No. 18, p. 309) on the extraordinary Gaping Gill descent in 1904, man-hauling by Payne and the three Botterills, before any of them joined the Y.R.C., and containing a vivid description of what happens in the way of vibration to a hemp rope. No wonder they headed the second wave, but we must not forget Wingfield, Kentish, Hill, Rule and Brodrick.

For many years Y.R.C. men crewed for Matthew in his 10-ton yawl "Molly" off the Scottish west coast and in the Hebrides and there are several accounts of these combined sailing and climbing holidays in the *Journals*. I remember him turning up at Easter with his crew at Fort William. Wright, who sailed with Botterill four times after 1920, says he had a deep knowledge of the Highland coast, a sound sense of seamanship, a strong sense of humour, was quite firm about being called "Skipper" and delighted in telling in a kindly way of the blunders made by his amateur crew. E. E. Roberts.

ERNEST E. ROBERTS

E. E. Roberts, who died on the 21st June, 1960, was a Member of the Y.R.C. for fifty-two years. He joined the Club in 1908; in the same year he was also elected to the Alpine Club, being proposed by Geoffrey Winthrop Young; he resigned from the A.C. in 1934.

Born in Salford, Roberts was educated at Manchester Grammar School and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he won both the Junior and Senior University Prizes for Mathematics—as did his younger brother Walter, also a Member of the Y.R.C. Both brothers achieved First Class Honours in Mathematics.

After going down from Oxford, Ernest had some teaching experience at Lampeter in South Wales before joining the Board of Education as a Junior Inspector in which capacity he served in Lichfield and Wolverhampton. In 1904 he was promoted to Senior Inspector for the North Riding of Yorkshire (eastern portion) and in 1909 for the whole of the North Riding, where he remained until 1913 when he was appointed to the Bermondsey, Camberwell and Lambeth districts of the London Section. In 1916 he was seconded to the Ministry of Munitions and a few weeks later to the War Office where he became responsible for the administration of the leather trade and the supply of army boots. In October, 1919, he returned to the Board of Education as Inspector in the West Riding covering the central portion—Batley, Dewsbury, Ossett and Wakefield, a post which he occupied until he retired at the end of 1933. At that time he was living in Leeds but moved to Harrogate on retirement.

Roberts was attracted to the hills early in life and, like so many others, his interest grew from walking our native hills in the Lake District. It was at Wasdale Head that he met and climbed with the giants of those days, Oppenheimer, the Abraham brothers, and many other interesting climbers; he was himself no mean rock climber.

He went first to the Alps in 1903 with his brother Walter, and began climbing with guides who helped them to become proficient by allowing them to lead and to come down last over difficult places. Soon he became a skilled guideless climber and he and J. M. Davidson climbed guideless up to the first world war. It was in 1910 in the Dauphiné that Roberts and Davidson made the first ascent of the season of La Meije, having with them a novice, Crawford, who was making his first visit to the Alps and who later was a member of two Everest Expeditions. Ernest Roberts made ascents of all the major peaks in the Alps and it was ever a delight to be climbing with him.

In 1906 Payne introduced him to potholing a couple of years before he joined the Club which became, as he often said, his spiritual home. He came into potholing and caving whilst there was much to be done but he always insisted, as Members will recall from his happy speech when he opened the Lowstern Hut at Clapham in 1958, that he was of the "second wave" of potholers. He was in the great siege of Mere Gill, his first big venture, and was also involved in the Gaping Gill flood episode, but he always paid tribute to the pioneer work of the early Members of the Club. He was in the first descent of Sunset Hole when a mishap to Boyd led to the first cave rescue on record and to some consequent hard thinking on potholing practice. He became a great leader of potholing expeditions in, as he termed it, the Golden Age of Potholing, and his introduction of the light Botterill ladder revolutionised the sport. He also introduced the use of the pulley block, thus making it possible for all members of a party to take part in the adventure. Roberts was there when Lost Johns' Cave on Leck Fell was finally explored and amongst very many other first descents, far too numerous to tabulate, was included Gingling Hole on Fountains Fell which he did with W. V. Brown and Jack Hilton.

The 1914-1918 war was a severe blow to the Club's potholing activities, and after the war finished it was Roberts who was largely responsible for keeping the sport alive in the Club and introducing new young men—of the right type—to take the place of the older generation. Roberts was always an outstanding figure in the Club and an absolute authority on the Mountains and Potholes of the British Isles. Ireland claimed his attention in caving and he was in the early expeditions of the Club to Enniskillen and the opening up of the Marble Arch system, Pollnagollum, and many other Irish Pots in Counties Fermanagh and Sligo. Somerset, South Wales and all the caving districts saw Roberts with E. A. Baker, Cuttriss and many others.

He was the first chairman of the Cave Rescue Organisation, formed after the Gingling Hole accident in 1934 and he guided its affairs with wisdom through difficult times.

Though potholing and caving were perhaps his greatest love, he by no means neglected mountaineering both at home and abroad. He climbed many times in Scotland and J. H. B. Bell in one of his books pays the greatest tribute to Roberts as a safe mountaineer⁽¹⁾. He climbed also with F. S. Smythe in the Tyrol, the Dolomites⁽²⁾ and Corsica⁽³⁾. He often recounted how he started Frank Smythe climbing on our own local Almscliff and Smythe mentions this in his book 'Climbs and Ski-runs' (Page 10). Roberts climbed with many famous mountaineers and fortunately retained all his correspondence with them over the years, a fascinating record of long friendships. He was instrumental in guiding many youngsters in potholing and he can best be summed up as the complete mountaineer and potholer.

Quite apart from his mountaineering and potholing, Roberts was a man of many varied interests; his keen powers of observation, his careful thought, sound judgment and strict accuracy made him an authority on any subject of which he had knowledge, and it was always a delight and an absorbing

(1) Progress in Mountaineering by J. H. B. Bell, pages 151 - 154.

(2) Y.R.C.J. Vol. V. No. 16, page 153.

(3) Y.R.C.J. Vol. VI No. 19, page 1.

entertainment to listen to him holding forth at Club meets. These interests included such diverse subjects as the facts behind the Arthurian legends, the history of Scotland, weather conditions, glaciology, the correct pronunciation of the Gaelic speech, and many other things besides mountains and caves. He was always greatly amused at the extent to which popular ideas often deviated from the truth, and he was at his most entertaining in exploding these fallacies.

Roberts was active with the Club up to the last, he was in fact at the joint meet with the Fell and Rock Climbing Club at Clapham the week-end of 13th-15th May, only a few weeks before he died. During his many years in the Y.R.C. his counsel was always eagerly sought and respected. Eleven years after his election to the Club he became Vice-President, from 1919 to 1922, and was Editor of the *Journal* for twenty-eight years, from 1920 until 1948. He was President from 1923 to 1925, became a Life Member in 1938 and was made Honorary Member of the Club in 1949; a remarkable record of devoted service.

Perhaps, as the present Editor of the *Journal* has commented "Roberts' best obituary is the publication of his own memoirs." It was only during the last four years of his life that he could be prevailed upon to tackle this task and though he had completed a huge amount of writing, it was never finished. However, as Roberts always kept meticulously detailed diaries of his activities and a terrific amount of correspondence and personal notes, it is hoped that it may be possible to complete the work.

Roberts' maxim was that mountains should always be treated with the greatest respect and that the exploration of a severe pothole should be considered the equal of a major Alpine Expedition. "Both can hit the careless and reckless very hard indeed."

We can consider it a privilege to have known Ernest Roberts who was held by all his many friends in very affectionate regard.

E.C.D.

J.H.

S.M.

F.H.S.

CLUB MEETS

1957/58. Thirteen Club Meets were held during the year, the average attendance, excluding the "After Dinner" Meet, was 22.

After nearly half a century of annual dinners held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, tradition was at long last put aside and the 44th Annual Dinner took place at the Majestic, Harrogate. Tradition dies hard in the Y.R.C., but in spite of one or two misgivings, particularly among some of the older members, the dinner was an unprecedented success and left nobody in doubt that the decision to move was certainly the correct one.

The "After-Dinner" Meet was based on the "Tennants' Arms" Hotel, Kilnsey, whence a throng of Members and Guests dispersed to the hills and holes, to reassemble for a very good high tea which was followed by the outstanding event of the day, an auction of the surplus equipment from the Y.R.C. Himalayan Expedition. This was so successful that several articles seemed to have been sold twice, most buyers bid more than was their original intention and the sale realised £130 towards the Club's outstanding debts for the Expedition.

The December Meet took place at Low Hall Garth; it rained and Lake Windermere rose 3 feet in 48 hours. Members who ventured outside the cottage mostly returned dry but were secretive as to where the time had been spent. The January Meet at the Hill Inn was attended by 58 members and guests. The Saturday was made memorable by the President rising at 6.45 a.m. to make tea for five misguided individuals whom the previous evening he had cajoled into accompanying him on the Three Peaks Walk. A party visited Holme Mill Pot and Ling Gill. After dinner R. Hainsworth of the Gritstone Club showed some most interesting films on climbing and pot-holing; Barn Pot was excellently rigged by the more energetic members, one of whom completed the expedition carrying a tankard of ale throughout. On the Sunday a party of 14 descended Sunset Hole, but were stopped by water.

The Saturday of the February Meet at Low Hall Garth dawned fine and clear for the 24 members who attended, and shortage of snow dictated rock-climbing and walking. However it was found that many rocks were coated with ice at higher levels and only one party attempted a really serious climb, but they too encountered ice on the last pitch and had to rope down. Snow began to fall at 4 p.m. and by the time all were safely gathered into L.H.G. it was obvious that there would be lots of wet soft snow in the morning. This kept some members in bed, others doing chores and still others busy with fire-side discussion. Lurid press reports about deep snow in the Cleveland's frightened all but 12 members away from the mid-March Meet at the Blue Bell Inn, Ingleby Cross; a pity because the Cleveland's, under sunshine and snow were a rhapsody of scenic beauty, and all the roads were clear. Saturday was a lovely day and four members who had arrived the night before enjoyed a glorious view from the triangulation point above Osmotherly, broke through snow crust up to the knees for the rest of the day and, amidst perfect vistas of rolling moors in virgin snow, found that the only other living creatures were those that left innumerable tiny footprints in the snow. The Tees-side members arrived in time to share an excellent dinner, followed by a showing of colour

transparencies of the Club Himalayan Expedition, photographs of an exceptionally high order. Sunday was an even more perfect day, the Tees-side contingent spent it ski-ing on the hills above Great Ayton where stands the memorial to Captain Cook, others climbed Roseberry Topping and got overheated in bright sun and deep snow.

The dispositions of the nine men who attended the Easter Meet at Ben Nevis were, apart from the weather which was Alpine and the best available in all Britain, somewhat reminiscent of the memorable Cairngorms Easter Meet of 1950, (*Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. VII, No. 26, page 295). Three members and a guest were at the Steall Hut (*J.M.C.S.*), another member and a guest were reported 'gone to ground' lower down the Glen, while the President and two others enjoyed the fleshpots of Fort William. On the Saturday the Steall Hut party had a pleasant ice and snow climb to the summit of the Ben by the Steall Gully, while on the Sunday the President walked on the Mamores and enjoyed glorious views of Bidean nam Bian. The Glen Nevis party went up Coire Giubhsachan to the col between Aonach Beag and Carn Mor Dearg, and up the latter by its eastern arête, whence the view extended from Schiehallion in the east to Rhum, 50 miles away to the west. On Easter Monday parties walked from Binnein Beag to Sgurr a Mhaim, explored the Aonach Eagach Ridge, and skied on Meall a' Bhuiridh.

Rowten Pot was bottomed by four men during the May potholing meet at Austwick, the last man down providing hilarious entertainment for the other three by swinging on the ladder into the waterfall, gyrating and repeating the performance several times, arriving at the bottom with water flowing from sleeves, boots and ears amidst the hiss of carbide fumes from his pockets. A match at that stage would have produced the picture of the year. The Skye Meet at Whitsuntide took place on the shores of Loch Scavaig, where sixteen members and one guest had a most enjoyable week. Several parties traversed the Dubhs, one visited the Inaccessible Pinnacle, another the Cioch, two parties traversed Clach Glas and Blaven, while another ascended Blaven in more gentle fashion by the South Ridge. On the last day three men climbed the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann.

It was fitting that the week-end of June 20th/22nd should have been chosen for the Club's first attempt on the Welsh 3,000's; the President, with 25 members and guests who assembled at the Climbers' Club hut at Helyg, found themselves in good company, for on the Sunday the very same walk was being made a final fitness test by Sir John Hunt's climbing party before leaving for the Caucasus. Y.R.C. operations started up the P.Y.G. track in low cloud and drizzly rain at 4.30 a.m. on the Saturday. Crib Goch, Crib-y-Ddisgl and Snowdon led to bacon and eggs at the Rucksack Club hut at Bewdy Mawt. Then Elidr Fawr—a long grind—Y Garn, Glyder Fawr, Tryfan to the M.A.M. hut at Glan Dena. At this point the President and eight members were still going strong; five of these finished the course over the Carnedd to Bethesda, three arriving at the Douglas Arms at 9 p.m. and the other two at 11 p.m.

The July Meet at Lowstern was attended by twelve potholers and six hut workers. Eight men descended Flood Entrance Pot and did the through route, returning by Bar Pot. A support party of four lowered the ladders

after the last man of the 'through' party had gone down the 130 ft. pot, these and the life lines were tailed through to Bar Pot, where they were eventually hauled up to the 100 ft. pitch on a line lowered by the support party, who then rigged the pitch and brought the through party up, the whole operation taking 8 hours. Persistent rain washed all thoughts of fresh air out of the minds of the President, nine members and a guest throughout the August Bank Holiday Meet at Low Hall Garth, but much valuable maintenance was done inside the cottage. The meet at Lowstern at the end of August, was attended by the President and 24 members and guests; half this number potholed while the remainder indulged in hard labour connected with drainage. The potholders divided into two parties and traversed the Ease Gill/Lancaster systems in both directions, not without difficulty for the Lancaster to Ease Gill party who missed a light left by the other party and emerged from County Pot three hours overdue.

The Club's contribution to the Joint Meet with the Wayfarers and Rucksack Clubs at the Robertson Lamb Hut in Great Langdale was 22, which shows how popular this annual occasion has become. The high lights of the week-end were the successful ascent of a new route up Tarn Crag by the President, and his companion, and the pioneering by two other members of a new climb named "White Wall" up Blake Rigg. This very severe route was not quite finished on the Saturday and rain on the Sunday prevented a return to complete it. Perfect weather prevailed for the October Meet at the Rose and Crown Hotel, Bainbridge, where the attendance was 14. Walking included, on Saturday, Lovely Seat, Great Shunner Fell and various routes to Hardraw for tea; on Sunday, Semmerwater and an ascent of Addleborough.

1958/59. Fourteen Club Meets were held, including the After-Dinner meet and two separate meets at Whitsuntide. The average attendance, excluding the After-Dinner meet, was 25.

The 45th Annual Dinner was again held at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate, and the following day was one of the most memorable in the Club's history. About 80 members and friends assembled in the Lowstern Plantation, near Clapham, for the official opening by E. E. Roberts of the Club's new 'Lowstern Hut.' After the ceremony a large body of members entered Clapham Cave, some groped their way to the top of Ingleborough in poor visibility, others walked to Gaping Gill and all reassembled at the New Inn for high tea. The success of the December Meet at the White Lion, Cray, where 23 members enjoyed fine weather and Christmas fare, was such that many clamoured for this to become one of the annual fixtures. Activities were various, Yocken-thwaite, Addleborough, the head of Semmerwater Valley and Dodd Fell for the walkers, with Buckden Pike and Great Whernside thrown in on the Sunday; Lowstern Hut for the workers, while four potholers claimed constructive work with spades on Birks Fell.

Saturday morning of the January Meet at the Hill Inn dawned crisp, clear and frosty. A goodly sized party watched the winter sunrise from the top of Whernside and were back for breakfast, to carry on and complete "The Three Peaks." Fifty-six sat down to dinner, after which the President was invested with the Chain of Office; the Photographic Competition showed the usual

high standard, Barn Pot was found to include a new hazard, Beam Crag was pushed up at least 2 grades, the older members invented a new form of shove-halfpenny and the younger ones, heralded by the sound of a hunting horn, departed in the early hours to spend what was left of the night on the summit of Wherside. On Sunday tradition was upheld and Sunset Pot was bottomed. Of the eight living ex-Presidents five were present at the meet and a message was received from a sixth. The Club has held this meet at the Hill Inn for some 63 consecutive years with only one exception, the year of the fatal accident to the Landlord's father.

The February meet at Low Hall Garth was outstanding only for the absence of snow. Twenty-three members got wet on the Saturday, but were able to spread out over the hills on Sunday. The Easter Meet was held at Muir of Inverey, in the Hut kindly lent by the Cairngorm Club; it was attended by the President, 14 members and one guest. Two members climbed a snow gully on an un-named spur of Macdhuil, others carried skis to a patch above the 3,500 ft. contour, but on the Sunday and Monday bad weather and shocking visibility curtailed most activities, though one party reached its objective, the summit of Beinn a' Bhuid. The Aurora Borealis provided a fine display on the Saturday evening. The last week-end in April saw the President and 16 men at Lowstern Hut, now becoming comparatively luxurious. Bull Pot in Kingsdale was bottomed after rigging throughout with electron wire ladders which were found so much easier and quicker to handle than wet rope ladders.

For the first time in the long history of the Club two separate meets of a week's duration were held at Whitsuntide, a potholing meet in Northern Ireland and a climbing meet in Wester Ross. The Irish meet took place, by the kindness of Mr. Barbour, on the Club's old hunting ground at Killsher, where the President and eleven members camped beside the lovely Cladagh River. A new road had been built, running within a few yards of Pollnagollum, and although this somewhat upset the map-reading capabilities of the older Members, it saved a long carry of tackle and was greeted as a glorious boon by all. During the week many potholes were bottomed and some of the well-known systems were pushed beyond the limits of previous exploration. Two new holes were found and bottomed and Noon's Hole, the deepest pothole in Ireland, was found to be 320 ft. deep, not 250 ft. as previously recorded. Potholing was at its best, there were caves with incredibly beautiful formations, there were caves with lakes where rubber dinghies were used, where flooded passages yielded to swimmers in exposure suits, and where siphons were passed by diving. Sixteen members and two guests attended the Wester Ross meet and pitched their camp on the shore of Loch Clair, by the courtesy of the Laird, Colonel Gibbs. Parties covered Beinn Alligin, Dearg and Eighe during the week. Slioch proved a very long-drawn-out ascent and was very cold on top in spite of brilliant sun. Sgùrr na Rhuaidhe, Sgùrr Fhuar-thuill, Beinn Liath Mhor and Maol Cheandearg were climbed in shimmering hot sun but always pursued by the cold north-east wind on the tops. There was fishing in the hill lochs, and rock climbing on Liathach, Beinn Eighe and Sgùrr na Rhuaidhe.

In contrast to the previous year the June Meet at the Climbers' Club hut at Helyg was held in fine and clear weather and 24 members and guests set off

from Pen-y-Pass soon after dawn on Saturday to tackle the 3,000's. Route finding was easy, breakfast was served at Bewdy Mawr by a support party, the crystal clarity of Llyn Cwm proved irresistible to many of the walkers and a second feeding point within sight of the summit of Glydr Fawr, established by the President and the Hon. Librarian, was a vital factor in the success of the walk. Another support was ready at Glan Dena, kindly lent by the M.A.M., and the bunks were available for a short rest. Plain sailing over the Carneddss to the finish at Bethesda was made easier by at least three more support parties and 14 members and guests completed the full round, two of them for the second year running. At the potholing meet held jointly with the Gritstone Club in July any hope of reaching the Master Cave in Lost Johns' was spoilt by a cloudburst on the Saturday morning, but nine men did a sight-seeing tour of Lancaster Hole and then encountered deep water in the main drain. Sunday's plans were upset by a rescue call at 3 a.m. to the fatal accident in Dow Cave, but six members laddered Alum Pot. Thirty-seven sat down to the joint dinner at the Hill Inn on the Saturday night and both Clubs showed collections of films and slides.

Ten members spent a restful Bank Holiday week-end at L.H.G. mostly walking owing to congestion on the climbs. The attendance was 20 at the High Force Hotel in Teesdale for the last week-end in August. The long drought had created such unusual conditions that two members were able to scramble up the watercourse at Cauldron Snout and three others climbed the High Force. Another three, at the suggestion of the oldest member, took ladders and ropes to White Rigg in the hope of discovering a cave behind the waterfall, but a scramble up the rocks showed the landing devoid of any cave. The Club contingent at the joint meet with the Wayfarers and the Rucksack Club at the Robertson Lamb Hut in September was 24 strong; this meet has become so popular that R.L.H. was full and there was an overflow into L.H.G. This was a pity as the unavoidably dual character of the meet caused by its very popularity made it difficult to get together in the evenings. There was climbing on Pavey Ark, Gimmer, Dow Craggs, Bow Fell and Crinkle Craggs, but the overflow at L.H.G. spent their time building a High Dam to ease the water supply.

The last meet of the Club's year was at the Millburn Arms in Rosedale, a centre not visited for some years. Attendance was 25, which would have strained the accommodation had not a cottage been available. A party tramped down Wheeldale and found the Roman Road, now forbidden to horses because it once suffered from tanks. Some new routes were found on two outcrops within a mile of Rosedale Abbey.

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

1958.—The week-end Meets were: January 31st-February 2nd, Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale; February 21st-23rd, Low Hall Garth; March 14th-16th, Ingleby Cross; April 4th, Easter, Ben Nevis; May 2nd-4th, Harden, Austwick; May 24th-31st, Coruisk, Isle of Skye; June 20th-22nd, 'Helyg' Hut, Climbers Club, N. Wales; July 18th-20th, Harden, Austwick; August 1st-4th, Bank Holiday, Low Hall Garth; July 18th-20th, The Lowstern Hut; September 26th-28th, Robertson Lamb Hut, Joint Meet with the Wayfarers' and Rucksack Clubs; October 17th-19th, Bainbridge; December 5th-7th, Cray, Buckden. The average attendance at Meets throughout the year was 22. The Club Membership in 1958 was 179, an increase of 4 over the previous year. The death took place during the year of our Honorary Member Geoffrey Winthrop Young.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Hotel Majestic, Harrogate, on the 15th November, 1958. The following Officers for 1958/59 were elected: President, JOHN GODLEY; Vice-Presidents, J. A. HOLMES and J. E. CULLINGWORTH; Hon. Treasurer, S. MARSDEN; Hon. Secretary, E. C. DOWNHAM; Hon. Asst. Secretary, J. HEMINGWAY; Hon. Librarian, J. G. BROOK; Hon. Editor, H. G. WATTS; Hon. Asst. Editor, R. B. WHARLDALL; Hon. Hut Secretaries, Low Hall Garth, J. D. DRISCOLL, Lowstern, P. R. HARRIS; Hon. Hut Wardens, Low Hall Garth, A. TALLON, Lowstern, J. LOVETT; Committee, J. A. DOSSOR, W. P. B. STONEHOUSE, F. S. BOOTH, A. J. REYNOLDS, B. E. NICHOLSON, F. D. SMITH.

At the 45th Annual Dinner which followed at The Hotel Majestic, S. Marsden was in the chair and the principal guest was C. W. Brasher. Kindred Clubs were represented by Dr. Graham Macphee, Alpine Club; Raymond Shaw, Wayfarers' Club; Edward Moss, President of the Rucksack Club; B. Firth, Gritstone Club; A. H. Robinson, Midland Association of Mountaineers; J. R. Nield, President of the Craven Pothole Club; A. Shepherd, Bradford Pothole Club; D. J. Clarke, Leeds University Mountaineering Club; and R. Gowing, Oxford University Mountaineering Club. There was an attendance at the Dinner of 161.

The After Dinner Meet on the Sunday of the Dinner week-end saw the official opening of the Club's new Hut—'Lowstern' at Clapham by E. E. Roberts.

1959.—The week-end Meets were: January 30th-February 1st, Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale; February 20th-22nd, Low Hall Garth; Easter, March 28th; The Cairngorm Club Hut, Muir of Inverey; April 24th-26th, Lowstern Hut; Whitsuntide, 16th-23rd May, Two Meets—An Irish Potholing Meet based near Enniskillen and a Scottish Climbing Meet in Wester Ross; June 19th-21st, 'Helyg,' Climbers' Club Hut, North Wales; July 17th-19th The Lowstern Hut and Joint Meet with the Gritstone Club; August 1st, Bank Holiday week-end, Low Hall Garth; August 28th-30th, Teesdale; September 25th-27th,

Robertson Lamb Hut, Joint Meet with the Wayfarers' and Rucksack Clubs; December 11th-13th, Cray, Buckden; New Year week-end Meet, Low Hall Garth.

The average attendance at Meets throughout the year rose to 25; the Membership of the Club remained the same, 179. The deaths were recorded in 1959 of A. W. Sykes and of W. B. Odgers, and early in 1960 of Dr. Alex Rule, Matthew Botterill and E. E. Roberts.

The Annual General Meeting, the 67th, was held at The Hotel Majestic, on 21st November, 1959. The following officers were elected for 1959-60: President: J. GODLEY; Vice-President, J. E. CULLINGWORTH and J. LOVETT; Hon. Treasurer, S. MARSDEN; Hon. Secretary, E. C. DOWNHAM; Hon. Asst. Secretary, J. HEMINGWAY; Hon. Librarian, J. G. BROOK; Hon. Editor, H. G. WATTS; Hon. Asst. Editor, R. B. WHARLDALL (R. B. WHARLDALL resigned shortly after the A.G.M. and H. L. STEMBRIDGE was appointed in his place). Hon. Hut Secretaries, Low Hall Garth, F. D. SMITH and for Lowstern, P. R. HARRIS; Hon. Hut Wardens, Low Hall Garth, J. D. DRISCOLL and for Lowstern, J. LOVETT; Committee, A. J. REYNOLDS, W. P. B. STONEHOUSE, B. E. NICHOLSON, F. D. SMITH, T. W. SALMON and R. J. ALDRIDGE. Two Honorary Life Members were elected by general acclamation, DAVIS BURROW and FRED S. BOOTH.

For the 46th Annual Dinner which followed at The Hotel Majestic, the Club reverted to dressing for Dinner, and the principal guest was Alf. Gregory with the President, John Godley in the Chair. Kindred Clubs were represented with I. G. McNaught-Davies, Alpine Club; H. Stirling, Scottish Mountaineering Club; C. Topping, Rucksack Club; F. N. Walker, Wayfarers' Club; A. B. Hargreaves, Vice-President of The Climbers' Club; H. P. Spilsbury, President of The Fell and Rock Climbing Club; C. Smith, The Gritstone Club; P. L. Tyas, President of The Craven Pothole Club; D. N. Bailey, The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club; There was an attendance at the Dinner of 146. The After Dinner Meet on the Sunday was at Ramskill.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE JOURNAL No. 29

1958

Piercy, Henry 2, Conifer Grove, Billingham, Co.
Durham
Short, John 31, Parliament Street, Stockton-on-
Tees, Durham
Smith, Stephen Hattersley Pool Hall, Pool-in-Wharfedale, Yorks.
Varney, John Arthur 2, Scotton Moor, Knaresborough,
Yorks.

1959

Baldwin, Geoffrey Leonard 14, Hawthorn Avenue, Timperley,
Cheshire.
Barker, Dennis Thornton 200, Warwick Road, Carlisle,
Cumberland
Bates, Geoffrey Booth Station Lane, Birkenshaw, Bradford,
Yorks.
Carr, Ian c/o J. Sheperdson, The Hollins,
Grosmont, Whitby, Yorks.
Selby, John Michael 22, St. Philips Avenue, Middleton,
Leeds, 10.
Simpson, James David 2, Trenance Drive, Shipley, Yorks.

1960

Baume, Louis C. Flat 4, 2, Cleveland Gardens,
London, W.C. 2
Bell, Peter Alexander 192, Cromwell Road,
London, S.W.5

RESIGNATIONS

1958

D. G. Liversedge, E. W. Green, W. Kelsey, W. S. Norris

1959

J. A. T. Stock, J. Umpleby, P. Thornton, A. G. Smythe, H. E. Kern

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