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PEAKS AT THE HEAD OF THE PAREK CHU

*John Hunt*



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# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

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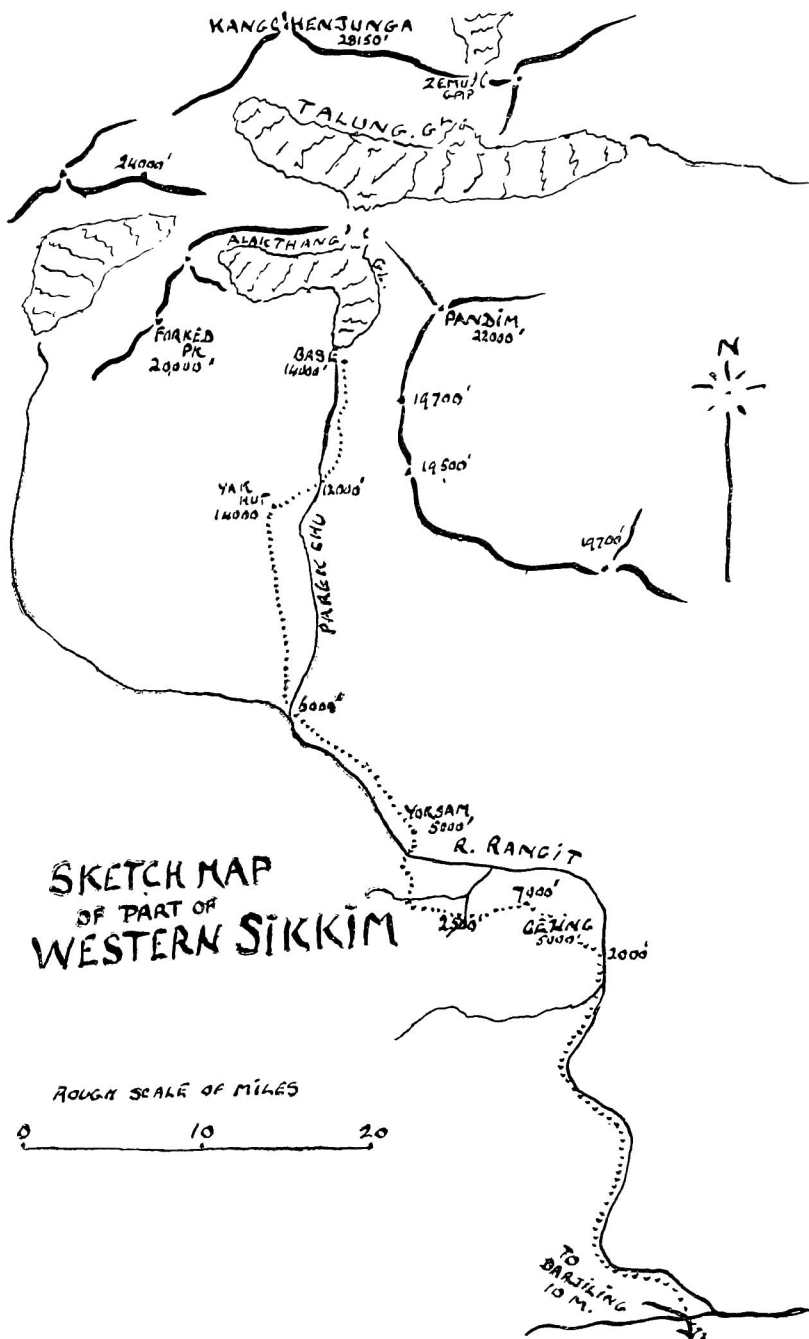
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# OPPORTUNITIES

JOHN HUNT

**M**OST of us, I suppose, have missed the hills during the past year. The Alps are out of reach, and even here at home, it has not been as easy as before to get away to Wales, the Lakes, or elsewhere.

My own experiences in a very lean climbing year, have been somewhat tantalising, although the opportunities must sound better than most. They amount in fact, to a small expedition in the Himalaya and a week's leave in Wales. The latter terminated abruptly on the first day, when I came off while climbing on Glyder Fach—the less said about this episode the better. The expedition was a slightly more protracted affair, and may be worth the telling.

Our objective was Pandim, an unclimbed peak of 22,000 feet, lying immediately South of Kangchenjunga and separated from the South face of the latter only by the width of the Talung Glacier. We had inspected the peak from close quarters a year previously, and had chosen what seemed to be a promising route leading up to its South ridge. The mountain has a reputation for great difficulty, but one of its chief advantages to us was the ease with which it can be approached from Darjeeling ; a matter of six or seven days should enable us to reach our proposed Base Camp in the Parek Valley, a fact of no small importance in view of the restricted leave conditions (even in India) in war time.

We chose May as our month, and from Christmas onwards were spending all spare moments making our preparations. Even a small private expedition of limited duration is a complicated affair, and much depends on careful planning.

Well, in spite of various alarms that leave would not be granted, the departure date came, and found us assembled in

Darjeeling. Out of six who were to have taken part, only four (of whom one was a non-climbing member) were able to come ; we had four porters and thirty coolies. The party decided to divide and move out separately by different routes for part of the way, my wife and I with half the men, leaving a day later and following the quicker route along the low-lying valley of the Rangit river.

I was officially supposed to be within five days recall, and I felt that some provision should be made for such a possibility. We therefore posted two special runners at villages on the route, leaving a third in Darjeeling, to carry any such message by rapid stages—it was a pity we did.

I will not dwell on the journey out. The valley route, starting at only about 1,000 feet above sea level, is very hot and airless, and Sikkim is constantly overhung by heavy clouds at this time of year, obscuring the magnificent views of the Kangchenjunga massif, which looms larger and more imposing as you move northwards. On the fourth day, after leaving the last habitations at a pleasant alp named Yoksam, perched above the gorge of the now constricted torrent, we began to make height. The heavy dank vegetation of the 6,000 feet level and below, began to give place to rhododendrons and firs. First came the big tree rhododendrons growing from 8,000-10,000 feet ; these had almost finished flowering, and the track was strewn with their many coloured blossoms. For the next 2,000 feet the bush rhododendrons, slowly diminishing in size as we rose higher, were blossoming in their full glory—they and the firs now monopolized the vegetation—and as we climbed above 13,000 feet we found the dwarf types scarcely in bud. We camped that night on a high ridge overlooking the Parek valley, and as the evening mists cleared, the peaks surrounding it stood out, bathed in the setting sun. Pandim was there, its South ridge looking enticingly easy from that fore-shortened angle, and, forming a backscreen to them all, the vast mass of Kangchenjunga, with the whole length of its imposing East ridge rising from the Zemu Gap. We said then, and it was as well to remember it later in view of what happened, that it was worth coming if only to see this.

Packing up early next morning in a sharp frost, we continued for some distance along the ridge, then dropped steeply into

the valley. The track climbed steadily beside the stream along the broad bed of the valley, as far as the snout of the Alakthang Glacier at its head. At this point Pandim towers 8,000 feet directly above on the true left side of the valley, and it was here that we had on our previous visit selected the site for the base. With its comparatively low altitude, warmth, the abundance of juniper bushes and the array of splendid peaks rising to over 20,000 feet on either side, this is an ideal position for a camp.

According to our schedule, we still had about ten days in hand before commencing the assault by our pre-fixed plan. It was time in which to acclimatize and carry stores and equipment to an advanced base higher on the mountain. By way of prospecting our route and acclimatizing, we decided to climb an elegant virgin summit—Forked Peak (20,000 feet)—on the opposite side of the valley. Bad weather, with fresh snow down to 13,000 feet, was an unpromising beginning, but four days after our arrival we had taken stores, tents, etc. to a height of 17,000 feet on Forked Peak, prior to attempting the ascent in the following two days. This had provided some interesting climbing, partly on somewhat difficult rock, masked by wet, fresh snow. We descended that evening well satisfied, and tired out.

At about 8 p.m. as we sat finishing our evening meal over a big blaze of juniper, a slight noise was heard outside our rock shelter—someone suggested a bird, while I had uneasy forebodings. A moment later, the special runner posted at the last village, stood before the fire, and handed me a telegram. It was a message recalling me for posting back to England.

We looked at the date ; the message had taken three and a half days to reach us. It left us exactly one and a half days to get back—a distance of 70 miles over extremely mountainous country. There was nothing for it but to leave there and then, and cover as much distance as possible that night ; this was the end of all our high hopes of Pandim. Four hours later, after an exhausting march of 10 miles down the valley and a steep climb up to the ridge, all in pitch darkness, my wife and I stumbled into the hut of some yak-herdsmen, who bring their cattle to these isolated alps for the summer pastures ; fortunately for us they had arrived two days beforehand. We were refreshed

by yaks' milk and slept with the inmates round a huge fire ; even the constant grunts of a dozen restless yak calves which shared the hut, did not keep us awake.

The following day, working to a very strict time-schedule, we covered 30 miles, including 9,000 feet of ascent and 13,000 feet of downhill going. At Yoksam we presumed on the hospitality of the local priest and headman, who provided us with tea and eggs—we unceremoniously spread out our sleeping bags in his prayer room and rested there for the exact time allowed at this halt. Later a refreshing half hour was spent bathing in a rock pool, and at 8.30 p.m. we eventually reached the tiny bazaar of Gezing, at 5,000 feet and 30 miles from Darjeeling. Our reserves were fairly low—the two porters who had accompanied us had failed to keep up, so we had no food and lacked our sleeping bags—leeches had been troublesome and our legs were covered with them. As it was beginning to rain hard into the bargain, we were extremely grateful for the hospitality shown us by the local “ postmaster ” (a pretentious title), who cleared his own sleeping quarters, bathed our legs and prepared tea and rice. Next day we continued our journey to Darjeeling, where we arrived in the afternoon ; the whole journey back had taken 46 hours.

It was only the day after our arrival, that the full extent of the tragedy was revealed. I was then informed that there was no particular hurry, as it was unlikely that I should sail before the beginning of June (it was then the 14th May—I actually sailed on the 6th June). Before going down to Calcutta, we spent ten wretched days in Darjeeling, waiting for news that did not come, and gazing back over Sikkim. We had left behind with the other two members of the party nearly all our kit, and were almost tempted to risk going out again, at least for the sake of Forked Peak. I usually like Darjeeling, it is a threshold to the hills, but we both hated the place then.

If only we had not been so conscientious in arranging that system of runners, but had instead fixed up for a messenger to bring out all our mail from Darjeeling, say about the 20th of the month ; but in that case, I suppose, the ship would inevitably have sailed sooner !



# A GREAT EFFORT

J. M. EDWARDS

**I**N the last three years three people have asked me how I climb. Hence this personal article. They said also that it was the state of mind and not the mechanics that they thought important, and that if each man would write of himself under this head then others coming after might know better what to imitate and what to avoid. A primary condition for this of course would be to lay aside any modesty that one had at any other times assumed.

It will be best to describe directly a given instance.

I will not weary you with the preliminaries. There were none. Everything had been in order, the customary had occurred. I had come here for the week-end to climb, had got up, dressed, eaten a good breakfast with a good appetite and having nobody to climb with had gone out for the day alone. I had considered carefully which cliff to visit and chosen a near one not to make too strenuous a day. This involved walking along a stretch of road, then a slope up towards the cliff.

The slope I took by stages. Three hundred yards then a rest, three hundred yards then a rest. During the last war it was explained to me that the British soldier marched by stages and it has been my chief method since. It is easier. Some people prefer to go up hills at a steady ten miles an hour, as if they were an army tank cruising or Scott hauling sledges in the Antarctic. I do not. During each rest I gazed at the cliff exploring from a distance how a route might go. Then when quite near the cliff I stopped again and looked up at it more slowly, heavy with the fresh air, and it looked at me, and it slid about in my eyes as a cliff sometimes does, and was difficult to focus. I shall go there and there, I thought and then perhaps

coming to the steeper portion, I shall go there, or perhaps it will be too hard for me to go there then I shall not go there but will go there instead by what appears so far as can be seen from here to be a dirty and a bare sided finger crack, but which may not be so, or otherwise examining the rock closely when we are there, rubbing the nose against it, there may be some third or fourth way, not guessed at from a distance. But first I thought, husbanding my energies I will rest here for a little time where stability can still be assured without effort or trouble by sitting down. So in the middle of the mountains upon a pile of rocks I sat down. A certain tendency to inertia in the mind can have great force.

Do not mistake me, the choice of cliff and of pastime had been free, it was unhampered by any conditions either of expediency or friendship, there was no particular unhappiness on me at this time beyond the normal. Yet I sat down. And as I lifted my head, stones, blocks of rock, sky, cliff faces lay round the field of vision arranged in various ways.

Then later I got up and walked to the foot of the cliff meditating carefully where to start. Then tied the rope on, flung the loose end down the slope and arranged it so that its coils should open without snags. This took some time, due to a complex cluster of small rocks in the way which needed re-arranging before I could be sure that the rope would come clean across them. Then I moved on to the rock itself.

Now perhaps you looking on might remark of these actions that none of them had been done in any rapid or decisive mould. You would be right. Perhaps that is why there was no great resultant from them. After twenty minutes I had advanced about fifteen feet and was trembling slightly, not too sure of my position. The rock now before my face was ordinary rock, surfaced at an angle of sixty to seventy degrees, fairly smooth. Heaven was above, the earth a few yards beneath, and I remember nothing of either. As for myself the fore part of my right foot was planted well on a square ledge, the heel overhanging into the air and demanded a constant muscular effort at the calf ; my left foot was three feet higher and one and a half feet to the side put against a small sloped piece of grooving. In appearance therefore, had anybody been passing, I was about to step up. In practice I had been trying to do this for ten

minutes but had not yet succeeded. It seemed simple, the need was clear, holds were there, but they were small and I am not a man in any way to make a move until satisfied that it is safe, so that to remain in this statuesque and silly position was my only choice for the time being. Every minute or two when my right leg began to tremble I pulled the left leg down from its unserviceable height, bent myself this way and that a little to relieve the strain, then put the leg back again, using the action also as a gesture of purpose.

But any man must be to some degree hard pressed before he gives up on a point where his heart is set: so I began to struggle. Oh, good heavens, good heavens I thought, what on earth am I to do, this is not very good, you are being a coward, an arrant coward and this cannot, must not continue, I have time and again pointed out that you are being very silly but you do nothing, you do nothing except stand there with that fixed and ridiculous stare a few feet from the foot of this wretched precipice. But I still accomplished nothing. Then I began to struggle again. I thought, what is wrong, there is something missing, there is no spirit, I am heavy and unable to move; perhaps if I launch out and become sufficiently frightened; in fact I am sure that once over the border there would be no holding me. So I made several attempts to launch out, but nothing happened. Then I thought perhaps if I eat my sandwiches that will improve me, but no no for shame, it is not yet half-past eleven how can I eat them now, yet there can be no harm in it, give yourself a change, I said eat them all and that will be a load off your mind, then you will not have the temptation to eat again until you get home. So standing still on my footholds and feeling firmer than I had done for some time, I got the tin of sardines out of my pocket, twisted the lid off in the usual way but carefully because of the position, and ate the fish one by one with my mouth. This took some time. Then drained the tin, put it back in my pocket and turned to the rocks once more. Now how will it go I thought, every excuse is exhausted. And I tried again. No, it is no good, I said, it is no good: here I am fifteen feet from the ground on easy rocks as I said before, it is after lunch but in my own bones there is no more energy than there ever was and my whole soul is as flat as a carpet, what am I to do: perhaps if I

were to recall former victories or to picture glory, but how can you do that when you are alone, perhaps if I shouted and sang, but you know you were never able to shout or sing : now if there were an onlooker, that would make an effort worth while : perhaps—is there anyone in sight : no, not a soul, not one in the whole valley : there is no representative of the human race, none to praise, nobody to look surprised at cowardice or to laugh at folly, to provide me with gibe or comparison or stage : there is a sheep, but the sheep do not know about these things, a little bird but she is away out of sight already. So I stood on waiting, unable to move. It is difficult to describe what it feels like to be so, to describe that extreme desolation that may be left behind in the human brain when it is without anything working in it to spur it on. I stood on that hold for a long time. Then quickly, with the sweat standing out on my skin and my heart beating, I moved up on to the next holds and then the next and then I did not see what to do and the movement stopped again.

The view had changed. There was heather now in front of my eyes, and some of the thin dust that goes with it. I took a handful of the heather in my right hand. It seemed firm but when bent back it snapped and broke off. A bad material. I made a final effort. Look at yourself I said, and do you know what this is, that it is schizophrenia, the split mind : I know but I do not care I said : it is stupid : what could you do if you did get ten feet higher up, the rocks have not started yet to become difficult, take yourself off from this cliff : oh, this climbing, that involves an effort, on every move the holds to be spotted and often there are none, then every limb placed, the body set into the one suitable position found but with trouble, then with the whole organism great force must be exerted, before anything happens, and this to be done while the brain is occupied sick and stiff with its fears : and now you have been doing this for well over an hour and a half and the strain must be telling : get down therefore.

My mind made up, it only remained to go, not always an easy thing to do. But as it has often been remarked God may be merciful, and is so sometimes when you least expect it ; and on this occasion it happened that feeling in behind the heather I almost immediately found a good enough spike of

rock for my rope and was able to get back down again in no danger. Then I walked a little way up the hillside slowly, rested and walked home.

But the resilience of man is great, and his ingenuity. So I was not done yet and on the way back setting to work I soon picked up my pride in this way, by thinking, today the victory has been to the devil, but tomorrow is not to him yet, also by thinking, it has been said that the secret of life is in detachment from it, good.

# NOTES ON SOME WELSH PLACE-NAMES

RUDOLF CYRIAX

**I**N the year 1928 there was published by the University Press of Cardiff a book on the place-names of Carnarvonshire, called "Enwau Lleoedd Sir Gaernarfon." The author was J. Lloyd-Jones, M.A. ; his book gained a prize at the Eisteddfod of Caernarfon in the year 1921. It is written throughout in accordance with the principles of modern scientific philology, and can be relied on. Unfortunately for most English readers the text is in Welsh. I have taken notes of some places of particular interest to mountaineers, making here full acknowledgment to Mr. (now Prof.) Lloyd-Jones.

But first let me briefly touch on certain peculiarities of Welsh grammar. One of the great difficulties of learning Welsh is that the first letters of words sometimes undergo mutation. The chief mutation to trouble climbers is this, that feminine nouns beginning with certain consonants (namely C, P, T, G, B, D, M,) undergo what is called the first mutation when preceded by the article ; thus Cader, Carnedd, Crib, Craig, Bron, Moel, Pont, become respectively Y Gader, Y Garnedd, Y Grib, Y Graig, Y Fron, Y Foel, Y Bont. Similarly an adjective or noun added to a singular feminine noun undergoes also the first mutation of the letters mentioned : thus the following forms are correct—Moel Fras (not Bras), Crib Goch (not Coch) Carnedd Ddafydd (for Dafydd), Aran Fawddwy (for Mawddwy), and so forth. The rules for Ll (at the beginning of a word) are not in every case the same as for the letters already specified. It will be enough to say here that while Carnedd Lywelyn is strict literary Welsh, in colloquial Welsh the Ll—that begins Llywelyn is often or generally kept as regards this combination.

Further, the following names should have the article : Bwlch y Moch ; Clogwyn y Person ; Clogwyn y Garnedd (but Clogwyn Twll Du is correct). The word clogwyn being masculine, any attempt to turn it into Y Glogwyn is ludicrous.

Now for the philology of some individual names : *Y Wyddfa* (wrongly given as *Yr Wyddfa* in Morris-Jones' Comparative Grammar). *Wyddfa* is the first mutation of the feminine noun *Gwyddfa*, and means "grave, tomb, sepulchre." It refers to one of the giants long ago supposed to inhabit the mountains, and a similar idea about heroes is also very likely as regards "*Carnedd*," which means a heap of stones, and so a grave, tumulus. (cf. also *Cader Idris*.)

*Y Glyder*. This is probably a corrupt writing (due to the English) of the Welsh word *cludair*, "a heap, pile." Being feminine, the form with the article is *Y Gludair*. Attempts to derive *glyder* from English are not science but popular etymology. Personally I prefer to use the proper Welsh form, having only headed the paragraph "*Glyder*" owing to this form of the name being so well-known.

*Y Tryfan*. This is probably a compound of *tri* (three) and *ban* (of which *fan* is the first mutation ; see also *Tal-y-Fan*). *Ban* means peak, top. The *try* has been regarded by some as being a corruption of *trwy*, but the meaning "three peaks (or tops)" is surely obvious enough. Cf. also *Ban-au* (Pl.) *Brycheiniog*, the Brecknock Beacons.

*Yr Eifl*. *Eifl* is the first mutation of *Geifl*, which is an ancient dual form of *Gafl*, "a fork." The English "the Rivals" is almost a record in the way of corruption.

*Y Garn*. *Carn* is feminine, and therefore has the first mutation with the article. *Carn* means "a heap of stones."

*Elidir*. Should be spelt thus, without any *y*.

*Y Lliwedd*. Is probably derived from a personal name *Lliw* that is from the same root as the Latin name *Livius*.

*Gwyliwr*, "The Sentinel," is the name of the top of *Cludair Fach*.

*Clogwyn du'r Arddu*. This means "the precipice black of the black height." *Arddu* is a compound of *ardd* "high" and *ddu* the first mutation of *du* "black." Those who maintain that *Arddu* in this name means *Arthur* are merely making a wild guess, another piece of "popular etymology." To begin with

Arddu has the article before it and Welsh names do not take the article. This is as in English: we say "Arthur's seat" not "the seat of the Arthur." Further, Arthur is an original Keltic name; our own spelling is from the original Welsh form "Arthur" (pronounced a little differently from the English of course). Yet more, "Yr Arddu" is the name of two hills, meaning in each case "the dark height," not so far from Dolwyddelan.

*Siabod, Ogwen and Llydaw.* The origins and meanings of these names are in dispute.

*Rhaeadr y Wennol.* "The Swallow Falls." *Wennol* has generally been regarded as the first mutation of *Gwennol*, "a swallow," which makes no sense. The word seems to be a corruption of *ewynnol* (also *ewynnog*) meaning "foaming," which does make sense. *Rhayader* and similar forms show corrupt spelling.

So far Mr. Lloyd-Jones (with some small comments of my own). I should like to add some remarks regarding the inn at the top of Llanberis Pass. *Pen-y-Pass* is a tasteless hybrid that should be disused; the correct Welsh for "head of the pass" is *Pen-y-Bwlch*. The right name of the inn is *Gorffwysfa*. The symbol *ph* for *ff* has been banished from modern correct Welsh orthography. *Gorffwysfa* means "man-resting-place," which is quite apt. There is no connection whatever with the Welsh *corff* "a body" (from the Latin *corpus*), nor is there any need to seek any other far-fetched explanation.

As regards certain other names:—

*Helyg* means "willows"; the singular *helygen* is a later formation.

*Ynys Ettws* (*Ynys* pronounced "unniss," *Ettws* as in *bettws*). *Ynys* means "island." The meaning of *Ettws* is obscure, as it does not appear in Spurrell's standard dictionary, neither does the alternative spelling *Hettws*. Mr. Lloyd-Jones refers to *Ynys Bettws* as being in Nant Peris, so conceivably it is a misspelling of this. *Bettws* is a loan-word from Old English; it is not native Welsh. The Anglo-Saxon was *bede-hus*, and meant "prayerhouse." To "bid one's beads" was originally to "pray one's prayers." As Skeat remarks, "The bead was so called because used for counting prayers, not vice-versa."



*Yr Esgair Felen* means "the yellow ridge"; *felen* is the first mutation of *melen*, the feminine of *melyn*, "yellow."

*Moel Hebog* means the bare hill (*moel*) of the hawk.

*Pen Llithrig y Wrach* means "the slippery head of the hag (witch)." *Wrach* is the first mutation of *gwrach* (a witch).

*Nant Ffrancon* probably means "the vale of free men" (cf. the Franks), i.e., who did not pay tribute. The interpretation "the vale of the beavers" (*ifanc-beaver*) only does credit to the imagination, although it is true that in long past ages there were beavers in the valley.

I should like also to add a note on the name of a village in Anglesey, as illustrating a certain principle regarding Welsh names. The full name is *Llanfair Pwll Gwyngyll* (written as three separate words); it means "the Church of St. Mary by the pool of the white hazels." *Llan*-church; *Fair* is the first mutation of *Mair* (Mary); *gwyn*-white, and *gyll* is the first mutation of *cyll*, the plural of *collen*-hazel.

In Victorian times someone who fancied himself as a humorist wrote the three names as one, and added much more that he invented, making the whole name some 50 letters long; and then he disseminated his forgery to make the English ridicule the length of Welsh place-names. To do this is merely a stale, vulgar, and wholly unjustified insult to the Welsh. On the average Welsh words are not longer than English ones. English people should remember that their own language has such words as *latitudinarianism*, which contains 17 letters; *incomprehensibility* which contains 19; and such place-names as *Ashby-de-la-Zouch*, *Ashton-in-Makerfield*, *Barrow-in-Furness*, *Burton-on-Trent* (to consult only the first two letters of the alphabet).

In conclusion, I would draw attention to the fact that the Ordnance Maps were drawn up before the days of the modern school of scientific philology, and their spelling of Keltic names is not always to be relied on. There is no more striking example than the word "*loch*," which is the same in Irish and Scotch Gaelic. But for *Eire* (which is really the correct native name of "Ireland."), the Ordnance surveyors used the absurd misspelling "*Lough*." When I was in *Eire* I enquired of Irish scholars about this word, and got the answer, expressed contemptuously, "O that's Ordnance Survey Spelling!"

# THE POINTE PERCÉE

B. H. KEMBALL-COOK

WHEN the early follower of Pococke, Windham, and de Saussure put up for the last night of his pilgrimage at St. Martin, he would not fail to repair to the old stone bridge over the Arve, and watch the sunset gild the awful dome of "Sovran Blanc." This view still takes one's breath away, as the train labours up from Oex and the gorges of the Arve, through the great mountain gateway of St. Martin, into the plain which reaches to St. Gervais. It may lack the structural harmony which this same group possesses when seen from the east—say from the Aiguilles des Grands Montets—with the white dome compactly buttressed by its black aiguilles, and the Peuterey Ridge springing like another flying buttress to the south ; but from no other direction can such an impression of sheer height be gained.

The view has been often described. The gateway to it has, however, received less attention, and perhaps some random memories (from a barrack-room) of the hills about St. Martin and Sallanches would interest readers of the C.C.J. A fascinating account of the whole district is to be found in Douglas Freshfield's *Below the Snow-Line* (out of print but still obtainable). There are some good pictures in Charles Gos' book on Savoy.

As you stand on the famous bridge, and look up to the left, you are dominated by a great, reddish bluff—one pillar of the gateway—which stands out as the final bastion of the limestone range which runs from East of Chamonix to St. Martin, and confronts M. Blanc across the Arve. This is the Aiguille de Varens (2,488 m.). Everyone knows the Brévent and the Buet. But the Aiguille de Varens and the higher, but hidden, Pointe

du Colloney behind it, are worth visiting too, and not only for the view of M. Blanc.

We ascended in 1937 by a path which runs North from St. Martin along the western slopes of the mountain.

We mounted through dense woods above the Arve, and in the direction of its flow (here be vipers and raspberries: we killed the one and ate the other). This brought us first to a magnificent cascade, then to a little alp, with chalets, which terminates in a rocky cliff. This is mounted by a gully, and brought us to a cleft beneath the northern shoulder of the Pointe de Colloney. This cleft is the Col de Monthieu. Here we saw before us that extraordinary phenomenon, the Desert de Platé, which Freshfield describes. It resembles nothing so much as a petrified glacier, at this point at least two miles wide. We leapt or skirted ridges, tongues, chasms and crevasses of rock, all in hard limestone, to find ourselves in the evening by the little Lac de Gers. Rather than push on to Sixt, we slept in a chalet, and returned next morning to the Col de Monthieu. We climbed the Pointe du Colloney (2,692 m.) by its northern side, and followed the ridge to the curious little crumbly tower which is the final apex of the Varens. Here, perched up as you are on one pillar of the gateway, your gaze plunges down long precipices to the Arve turning from East to North round your feet, while M. Blanc rises—all 13,000 feet of him—across the plain. The descent to St. Martin takes you again through fantastic rock scenery to upper slopes; here you must hit off a path—well to the West—which pierces the line of abrupt precipices characteristic of the whole of this range right up to Chamonix.

Return now to the bridge of St. Martin, and look up, this time across Sallanches, to the South-West. You see a romantic tangle of rocky precipices and towers—the other pillar of the gateway. This is the Point Percée, culminating point of the Aravis; and the Aravis but continue the range of the Varens, the Brévent and the Aiguilles Rouges beyond the ravine cleft by the Arve in its journey to Geneva.

The Pointe Percée is a meritorious and enchanting mountain, though it played us an evil trick. It is seen at its best from M. Blanc. Climbers of M. Blanc from St. Gervais must often have lingered outside the Gouter hut at sunset, reluctant to

venture in where "thick the airy throng swarm and are straitened." Thus lingering, they will have watched the sun sink behind the long, jagged ridge of the Aravis. As it sets, the range becomes sharp-cut and intensely black, losing substance and retaining form alone, till it is a mere silhouette against a yellow background—as if it were the quintessence or Platonic ideal of a mountain range. (Tryfan can produce the same effect.) The Pointe Percée is then seen as a bold fang, dominating the whole line of sharp summits.

This nightly performance, watched for two weeks from a chalet on the Prarion, naturally made me want to climb the Pointe Percée, a desire which was only satisfied in August 1939—just before that marvellous spell of weather ended, and the war began.

I find it hard to explain why a rock mountain—only 8,994 feet high, and of no particular difficulty—should seem more enchanting in retrospect than other climbs of the season—the Aiguille d' Argentière or the Grépon. I think that rock mountains are essentially more romantic than those which are clothed in ice and snow, or approached over glaciers. My thoughts go back to the corries of the Cairngorms, to Laithach and to Coire Mhic Fhearchair of Beinn Eighe, above all to Coruisk. However that may be, some notes on the Pointe Percée may be of interest.

We started from Sallanches, using a local tourist map, as the French Ordnance maps are useless, being entirely covered with a thick black hachuring like squashed flies. Our map led us up through rich fields and grassy alps, by the hamlet of St. Anne, to a line of cliffs such as appears on the Varens. Here you must hit off a path—again called "le Monthieu"—which brought us suddenly to the lip of a wild, boulder-strewn corrie which would have inspired E. A. Poe. It is walled in by sheer, yellow cliffs over which sprays a stream, while above frown the final cliffs which compose the ridge and tower of the Pointe Percée. From here too, you can see the curious gendarme—the "Doigt"—with a hole through it, which gives the peak its name. In the middle of the corrie is the chalet of Lanchéron, a hut where we toasted cheese during a thunderstorm.

To reach the summit you must hit off another path up a stream bed, which brings you through the cliffs to the final

ridge. The summit is gained by climbing the final rocks rather to the West. We found the route indicated by red paint.

The view of M. Blanc from here surpasses that from the Varens, while to the West you gaze down precipitous slopes to the valley leading to Cluses, in which is to be found the charming Chartreuse du Reposoir (illustrated in Gos' book).

We elected to descend by the East face, and as a result were benighted on the grass slopes above the corrie, an episode reflecting little credit on the expedition. As we shivered—it rained for two hours—and passed round the last pipeful of tobacco, it was mortifying to me to realize that my first enforced bivouac had none of the traditional accompaniments—the pitiless, moonlit ice slopes and greedy crevasses below, the frosty and uncaring twinkle of the stars above, or the stonefall's thundering roar—"it passed harmlessly by, though one or two boulders fell uncomfortably near Old Zum Taugwald, who relieved his feelings in vigorous patois,"—nor had we any Bouvier. Still, even bivouacs do not last for ever, and grey dawn released us to run down in two hours to Sallanches, and coffee—and the news that the French were mobilising.

## RUBBERS

WHO was it raised rebellion first and went  
One step beyond the immemorial law,  
And freed us from the bonds of precedent  
Which fixed the footgear that all climbers wore ?  
Was it perhaps some atavistic urge  
From ancestors who made their cave fool-proof,  
So that the way to enter or emerge  
Was by an overhang upon the roof,  
On which the heavy tread of Alpine boots  
Would have been little use for surface worn  
And smoothed by constant trial of new routes,  
Where even naked feet in time had torn  
The lesser knobs away in scrambling through ?

And did he feel his skin was not so tough  
As he could wish and used a rubber shoe  
With a thin sole, to grip on smooth or rough ?  
And turned our climbing on this downward trend,  
Towards the use of artificial aid  
By those who had forgotten the true end  
Of mountain climbing for which boots were made ?

A. W. ANDREWS

## RED

THERE is a story of an innkeeper  
Who, at Arolla, kept the Old Hotel—  
Facing the Za—  
Who had this tale to tell.  
“Some one has phoned—  
A Canon Blum—  
I do not like the name—  
He shall not come.”  
And that was all ;  
He didn't. Prejudice  
Is a peculiar thing—  
Some people kiss  
On meeting. Others don't,  
But turn their heads away  
And simply won't.  
And some are bored  
By any line  
Of Poetry  
And all of mine.  
And why this is  
I do not know.  
I can but say  
That this is so.  
It's no use arguing  
When all is said  
With me or with my bull ;  
WE DON'T LIKE RED.

A. W. ANDREWS.





# SKI TOUR IN THE SOUTH TYROL

J. A. MARTINEZ

ON the 26th of March, 1939, Tommy and I arrived at Innsbruck. Fritz had come up from Vienna and was there to meet us at the station. It was our plan to spend four or five days getting our ski legs on the Alpe di Siusi (Seiser Alm), a high pasture land on the southern slopes of the Val Gardena in the South Tyrol. This is a wise precaution for the occasional ski runner to take. A few days of diligent practice on easy slopes before the tour is well rewarded by greater comfort and speed on the more difficult climbs. So next day we travelled south by train as far as Chiusa (Klausen). At Brenner a long succession of German and Italian officials put us through a close scrutiny which we managed eventually to survive without incident. From Chiusa a local train took us up the Val Gardena to Ortisei, whence a useful funicular carried us up the steep southern slope of the valley and deposited us on the northern border of the Alpe di Siusi. Here we donned our skis for the first time and traversed westwards in twilight and falling snow. After thirty minutes we arrived at our destination, the Rifugio Monte Piz, a pleasant wooden inn surrounded by undulating snowfields.

Next day in good weather and in recent powder snow we set out in a southerly direction across the Alm. After three hours of gentle climbing we reached the Seiser Alpenhaus. Turning left along the ridge of Monte Palaccia we reached the summit at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Here we had a good view of Langkofel and Plattkofel to the north-east, Marmolata far to the south-east, the Rosengarten group close to the south, and on the west the sharp pillar of Schlern sticking out of the snow. A good run down to

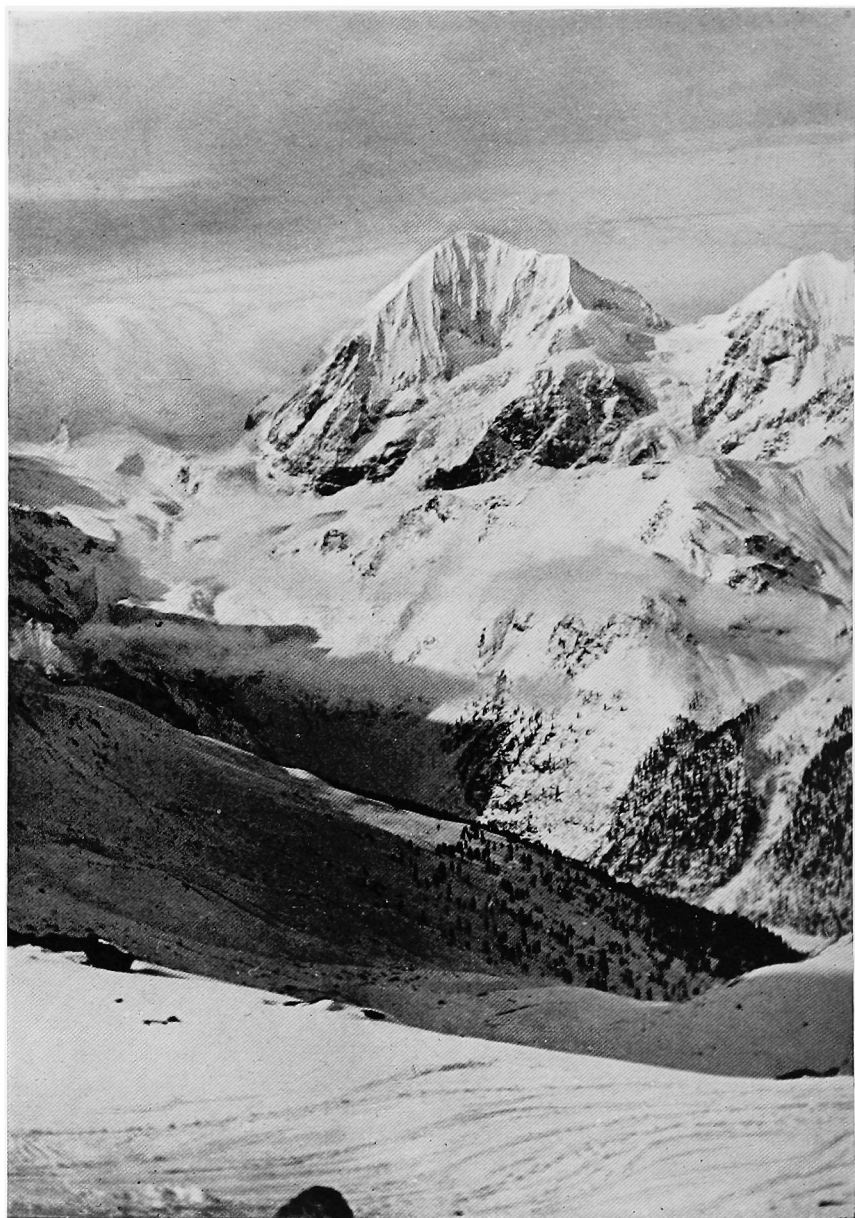
Zallinger and a long gentle trek past Saltaria brought us home in six hours. This was a good beginning, we thought.

We spent the next day practising stem and swing, kick turn and jump turn, traverse and "schuss" over and over again with much labour and sweating.

We were still blessed with good weather on the third day and made an early start towards the south-east across the Christiner Weiden to Monte di Soura, then eastwards north of Langkofel and up to the Sella Joch, a broad saddle strewn with large boulders. On the far side the broad pillars of the Sella group faced us. A collection of miscellaneous buildings which constituted the Sella Hut were carefully avoided, and turning westwards we made the steep laborious ascent of the Langkofelscharte (2,681 m.) between the Langkofeleck and the Fünffingerspitze. The skis were carried near the top where the steep gradient forced us to scramble sweatily up steep soft snowsteps. We were rewarded by a good run past the Langkofel Hut to Saltaria, and then came what seemed to be a never-ending trudge upwards along an obscure path in the twilight. We arrived home in the dark, thoroughly tired, eleven hours after setting out, luckily in time for a large evening meal. This is the only trip in the district which can be classed in the category of "hochalpin," and at this early stage it certainly taxed us to the utmost.

It was time now to move on to bigger things, so next day we said goodbye to Monte Piz and walked down an icy path to Roncadizza. At Chiusa the main line took us to Bolzano where we had a mid-day meal. In the sunny, narrow streets, occupied by rows of stalls, we bought food for our tour. Dried fruits, oranges, jam, bread, butter and chocolate constituted most of our requirements. At 7 p.m. we again boarded the train towards Merano and the Val Venosta (Vintschgau). We tumbled out sleepily three and a half hours later at Spondigna. A number of cars were waiting at the station to carry passengers across the valley a bare two miles to Prato, but we had done enough travelling for the day, and after some argument thankfully made for the Hotel Posta, a large bare building near the station. Rather surprisingly we were given a good meal at this late hour. Next day a car came to fetch us and we ran up the good road in





KÖNIGSPITZ FROM THE RIFUGIO SERRISTORI

*J. A. Martinez*

the Sulden Valley. We met the snow near Sulden, and arrived at 11-30 a.m.

The natives of the South Tyrol are racially Austrians who acquired Italian nationality when this land was transferred to Italy by the Peace of St. Germain in 1919. Place names are now officially Italian, but German is still universally spoken in spite of the efforts of the Italian government to suppress it. One decree had recently ordered that the word *Hotel* be replaced by the Italian *Albergo*, and everywhere we could see the results of the half-hearted compliance with this order. On the front wall of the Hotel Tembl, where we had lunch, a recent coat of thin paint covered the word *Hotel*, and the Italian equivalent had not yet been substituted.

Most of the mountain huts are owned by the Italian Alpine Club, but they were built and named originally by the German and Austrian Alpine Club. The older, more familiar, names are still in common use, and the huts still possess an atmosphere which is purely Austrian. They are used almost exclusively by Austrians and Germans. Indeed, we did not meet a single Italian in the huts throughout our journey.

Leaving a heavy rucksack with food and a change of clothing at the Tembl, we once more clipped on our skis and set out for the Rifugio Serristori (Düsseldorfer Hütte). We were using artificial sealskins stuck on with "fellwachs," and we found them quite simple to use and absolutely reliable. They seemed much superior to any other type of skin we had seen. The climb was slow and hot, and the unaccustomed weight of the rucksacks made our task greater. From the hut the magnificent expanse of the north wall of the Ortler group faced us, and we could see the first party to ascend Ortler that year making its way up the buttress near us.

Next day we started off at 7-30 in mist and snow and climbed easily up the Zay Ferner at the head of the valley. Bearing right towards the south-east we passed over the Angelusscharte, between the Hohe Angelus and Vertainspitze, into the Laaser Ferner. A short run down this and a traverse to the south brought us beneath the Rosim Joch. This was reached with difficulty in bad conditions by stepping up in deep soft snow. The skis had to be carried, and a high wind near the top made the ascent even more difficult. Tommy was making

heavy going, and stayed behind on the saddle. Fritz and I left our skis there and climbed quickly up the ridge to the Vertainspitze (3,544 m.). The absence of any view at the top sent us soon down again, and from the saddle we ran down in good time on deep snow to the hut. We still had an afternoon before us, so Fritz and I went up the valley again to the Zay Joch at the head of it. The Kleine Angelusspitze is the northernmost peak of the ridge which bounds the Zay Tal on the east. From here, on a clear day, one can look round and see the peaks of the Bernese Oberland, the Silvretta, Stubaier, Ötztaler and Zillertaler Alps, and the Dolomites. But we were unlucky. Clouds obscured all the horizon except towards the north-east where we could make out the Ötztaler Wildspitze. An excellent run down brought us to the hut. We had been away only two hours. From the hut we could see our tracks of the morning's run from the Rosim Joch. Fritz had made a graceful wavy pattern of wide and narrow swings, and it caused much comment and admiration from the hut keeper who had watched us through his telescope.

Tommy was still rather dispirited with his morning's bad form, but we persuaded him to accompany us to the Kleine Angelus again next morning, thinking that the easy ascent and good run down would restore his confidence. But we were disappointed. He could do nothing right, and after he had tumbled down to the hut he reluctantly decided to leave us. After some conference we all ran down to Sulden and spent the night at the Tembl. Next morning a car took Tommy down to Spondigna where he was to take the train to Chiusa and rejoin the party of the Seiser Alm.

From Sulden, Fritz and I climbed up the Suldental to the Rifugio Città di Milano at 2,694 m. This is a new hut built by the Italian Alpine Club near the site of the old Schaubach Hut which was destroyed during the last war. We permitted ourselves the luxury of sending our spare rucksack up by a porter, and I was smitten with twinges of conscience as I saw him make his way very slowly and steadily behind us. The weather was bad. Wet snow was falling at Sulden and farther up the valley a strong wind was blowing which became a gale near the hut. There was a jolly crowd at the hut, and the evening passed rapidly in good company.

It was still stormy next day. We went out once for a little practice near the hut, but could see very little through the thick mist. I amused myself by treating two patients. One was a girl who had stuck the point of her ski-stick deeply into her calf ; the other a bad case of snow-blindness. We were surprised to find that no first-aid material was kept in the hut, but our own box contained the necessary articles.

Next day was Good Friday. Leaving a rucksack with some food in the hut we started off in company with a crowd of Dutch and Germans. The Dutch party had a guide, but the Germans attached themselves to us according to a decidedly obnoxious custom in high Alpine ski tours. It was very cold and windy as we trailed up the eastern edge of the Sulden Ferner. Near the top of the Eisse Pass the gradient became much steeper and we had to shoulder the skis and proceed cautiously in order to avoid avalanching. At the top we were met by an icy easterly wind which blew the snow hard against the left side of our faces. We passed the ruins of the small Hallescher Hütte, destroyed in the last war, and traversed gently upwards to the Rifugio Casati (3,269 m.). It was then noon, and after warming our insides with a large plate of "erbsensuppe," we started on the easy ascent of Cevedale (3,778 m.). The summit was soon reached, and a short ridge walk on good steps brought us to the adjacent Zufallspitze (3,764 m.). Here for the first and only time we used light three-pronged crampons in order to negotiate the steep ice slopes near the summit. The run down was difficult ; the snow was blown into irregular ridges and frozen hard. In order to preserve one's balance it was essential to keep the legs perfectly supple, allowing the skis to oscillate rapidly up and down while the body moved forwards without bumping.

Once in the Casati Hut I knew I was in for an attack of 'flu, probably caught in the stuffy atmosphere of the overcrowded "gastzimmer" at the Rifugio Città di Milano on the previous day. I felt feverish and went to bed early in all the clothes I could find.

At 7-15 next morning we left the hut and climbing gently along the southern edge of the Langenferner soon reached the Innere Köpfl (3,308 m.), a small rise which separates the Langen and Zufall glaciers. At this point, labelled "Drei Kanonen" in our maps, the remains of three Austrian four-inch guns were

lying in the snow. We heard afterwards that they had been dragged up in 1915, but had never been fired.

The long descent down the Zufallferner was not a pleasant one. Patches of soft snow alternated with longer stretches of hard, wind-blown ridges and we had to traverse cautiously most of the way. The smaller Hohenferner lies next to the Zufallferner at the head of the Martell Tal. We put on the skins and zig-zagged up it to the Cima Marmotta (3,327 m.). Without stopping we passed over the ridge and traversed beneath it to the Cima Venezia (3,385 m.). On the way down from this point two small windslab avalanches fell near us below the ridge, the second directly in our path, and we were obliged to make a descending detour to avoid them. Another cautious run down the Schranferner in treacherous snow brought us to the Zufall Hütte (Rifugio Val Martello) at 2,264 m. It had been a disappointing day because the ski-runner's reward for his climb had failed us. We had not had a good run down. We had been obliged to carry our rucksacks all the way, and I was too tired to be happy.

The hut was situated fairly low down the valley, and it was chock full of Easter trippers busily acquiring tanned complexions. Porters were continually arriving from the valley laden with skis, rucksacks, and even suitcases. We were given one end of a large communal straw mattress in the guides' room. That too was full, and we spent a bad night disturbed by the noise of late arrivals and early departures.

We gladly left the Zufallhütte next morning in dull weather, moving up the Madritsch Tal, a small offshoot near the head of the Martell Tal. On the Madritsch Joch we sat down for a meal and spent some minutes admiring the massive wall of the Ortler group which faced us. The ascent of the Hintere Schöntaufspitze from the saddle was made on skis as far as the summit, and we were rewarded by a good run down to the Rifugio Città di Milano again. By good luck, there was plenty of room in the hut, and it seemed to us a much more remote and hospitable place than our last night's lodging. The sky was now clearing, and we went out and practised for a while on the nearby slopes, but we had to climb a little as the snow was beginning to disappear from the vicinity of the hut. Later in the afternoon we lay on the verandah of the hut and looked steeply down into



the shadows of the Suldenferner where a party was rushing down the icy track to Sulden.

Next day we started off for the Königspitze at 7 a.m. There was a clear blue sky and warm sun. We made an easy ascent up the Suldenferner to the Königsjoch and then turned to the right up the long ridge. About halfway up the ridge from the saddle the gradient became too steep for the skis, so we plunged them firmly into the snow and continued on foot. It was very hard work. The snow had been softened by the hot sun and the steps were none too solid. The gradient was steep. The cold I had caught three days before had developed into a severe laryngitis which was made worse by the cold dry air. All my efforts at communicating with Fritz could produce only a barely audible croak. After struggling up uncomfortably for an hour and a half we reached the summit (3,859 m.) at 11-30 a.m. We spent an hour in the still air at the top, enjoying the warmth of the sun. A rapid slither down the soft steps brought us to our skis. The run down was difficult. The snow was in the same condition as we had met on the Zufallferner, and we felt we had been cheated out of our reward for the hard climb. Back in the hut we found a man with a broken ankle, the common torsion fracture of ski-runners. We gave him first-aid treatment and made arrangements for sending him down to Sulden on a sledge on the following day.

It was our intention now to make our way to the western end of the great ridge of which Ortler forms the highest point, and in order to do this we were to traverse just south of the ridge, taking two days for the journey. We started off next morning, in hot sunny weather, climbed up to the head of the Suldenferner, over the Eisse Pass, and along the Langenferner to the Casati Hut again. This time Fritz and I were unaccompanied and we made good time. At the hut we had several cups of tea and I found a letter from home. We then continued over the Langenferner Joch, which lies near the hut and at the same level, and down the Cedec Ferner on the other side. We left this glacier at its westernmost point by passing over the Col di Pale Rosse and then up the small glacier called the Vedretta della Miniera to the Cima della Miniera (3,402 m.). Strangely enough there was no snow on the top of this peak, and we carried our skis up the loose stones to the top, where we lay

down and dozed in the warm sun for about an hour. For the descent down the rocky ridge to the Vedretta dello Zebrú we tied our skis and sticks to our rucksacks, leaving our hands free, but making it very difficult to turn. We were helped, however, by a relic of the last war, a stout cable which had been used by Austrian detachments defending this ridge. Fritz was decidedly unhappy on this, to him, unaccustomed rock, but the descent was finally achieved without mishap. There followed a cautious run down on steep frozen snow covering scree to the Rifugio V Alpini, a small, clean hut, dedicated to the fifth regiment of the Alpini. There were only three other guests in the hut when we arrived at 4 p.m. We had the usual enormous evening meal, washed down by many cups of tea, and retired early to our bunks.

We started off next morning at 6-45, traversing uncomfortably along the steep frozen snow of the Vedretta dello Zebrú. Fritz had steel edges and made much better progress than I. The strain of driving the upper edges hard into the ice was very tiring to the ankles, and before long they ached uncomfortably. We passed over a low ridge and continued westwards over the Vedretta di Camosci, then thankfully up firm steps in frozen snow to the Passo di Camosci (3,195 m.), and down again to the Vedretta di Campo. Traversing still westwards along this glacier we reached the Tuckett Pass at 3,304 m., a narrow saddle on the ridge with the small empty Locatelli Hut on it. On both sides of the saddle there were traces of the fighting during the last war. Concrete blockhouses in the rocks, cables, barbed wire, ladders, and the remains of wooden huts recalled the untiring watchfulness of the defenders of this frontier. Looking back towards the east we could see the massive ridge of Ortler, Zebrú, Königspitze and Cevedale, and the high undulating snowfields over which we had come. We rested on the pass for an hour, and then ran down the Vedretta del Madaccio in bad snow. Soon we put the skins on once more and climbed gently to the Rifugio Livrio (3,175 m.), where we arrived at noon.

In the previous two days we had travelled over five passes and eight glaciers, traversing westwards beneath the ridge which bounds the Val Zebrú on the north and which formed the Austro-Italian frontier before 1919.

The Rifugio Livrio is a large hut situated on a rise between the Madatsch and Eben glaciers in the midst of excellent high snowfields and within easy reach of the village of Trafoi. To our surprise there was not one visitor to be seen. The keeper had not bothered to heat the hut and it was uncomfortably cold and uncongenial. To compensate for this we had the ridge of the Geisterspitze and Cristallo and the glaciers north of it all to ourselves. In the afternoon we started out for what was intended to be a short ski-walk near the hut. By this time we were both in excellent form, the hut was high, and the rise to the ridge gentle, so that without much exertion we found ourselves kicking off our skis and walking up the snow ridge to the Geisterspitze (3,465 m.). From here we had a most exhilarating run down the Eben Ferner to the Giogo dello Stelvio (Stilfser Joch). At this point a first-class road crosses the frontier into Switzerland. It was the 12th of April, and the Italians were at that time busy with the invasion of Albania. We had received no authentic news for many days, but had picked up all sorts of disquieting rumours and were much disturbed by thoughts of war. Accordingly we were interested in the possibilities of making an escape out of Italy by the Stilfser Joch. It would have been quite simple. There was five feet of good snow on the road. Several hotels and garages on the pass lay covered in drift, the tops of their petrol pumps showing. There was not a soul to be seen. We sat down on the sunny roof of a verandah and discussed the chances of war between our countries. A massive St. Bernard frolicked up to us. One heavy paw on my snow goggles which were lying beside me smashed them beyond all hope of repair. But no matter, our tour was nearly over.

We climbed slowly up to the hut again, very tired. It was difficult to get warm in this huge empty place, but an enormous dish of "pasta asciuta" helped in the process.

There did not seem much to do next morning. We casually climbed the snow ridge of Monte Cristallo (3,431 m.). From the summit we could look down into the dark green depths of the Trafoi valley with the road zig-zagging down its western slopes.

Back in the hut we realised we could not face another night in this large cold place, so we rapidly changed our plans. We

shouldered our rucksacks once more and ran down to the Stilsfer Joch. In the Trafoi valley we came off the good snow quite suddenly and found ourselves floundering in deep snow which had a peculiar unsubstantial porous quality. You would be gliding comfortably along the surface when suddenly you would sink to your knees. Your skis would come to an abrupt standstill, your body would be hurled forwards into the snow, and your rucksack, following after, would administer the "coup de grace," pushing your face firmly into the snow. After several attempts we were obliged to abandon this method of progression and reluctantly took off our skis for the last time. The road was still covered with soft drifts, so we walked down the stone parapet, occasionally taking a short cut by slithering down steep grass slopes. Suddenly we met the unaccustomed smell of pine trees. After the mixed odours of food, sweat, tobacco and ski-wax which had been assailing our nostrils for the past days, the scents of the valley were most welcome. It was delightfully resting to gaze on brown earth and green trees once more.

Trafoi was empty of visitors. The winter season was over, and the summer not yet begun. We spent the night in comfortable beds in the deserted Albergo Bella Vista. Next morning a car came for us at 9 a.m. and we were down in Spondigna half an hour later. By noon we were in Bolzano. The town was hot and dusty and uncomfortably full of soldiers strolling the streets in endless streams. Our spirits sank at the sight of so many uniforms. The glaciers and high snowfields seemed already very remote amongst these reminders of impending war.

We comforted ourselves with a large meal of pasta and "vino rosso"—a special treat which we had reserved for the end of the tour. The journey to Innsbruck was spent in a sort of coma engendered by this unaccustomed luxury. When I last saw Fritz he was reluctantly obeying the orders of a newly-appointed German station official who was instructing him how to carry his skis in a crowd. "That this should happen in Innsbruck," thought I, "and to Fritz!"

## IN MEMORIAM

H. J. R. BARKER

**J**IMMY BARKER was one of those who inherited a natural aptitude for rowing, which when given the opportunity often develops into an aptitude for mountaineering and rock climbing. This opportunity came when he went to Eric Powell's house at Eton ; his housemaster was the most enthusiastic oarsman and mountaineer and under his teaching Barker developed an equal enthusiasm and great ability at both sports. He soon became a regular member of those gatherings of masters and boys which assembled at Capel Curig or Pen-y-Gwryd at New Year or at any other possible time. He was a very welcome member of those parties where the climbing was never too serious, and a struggle round the horseshoe in a snowstorm was sometimes the only achievement.

From Eton he went to Oxford from where he was able to make more trips to Wales, and later when he started working at Birmingham he was able to get an occasional week-end there.

He was exceptionally strong, especially in the arms and shoulders, which were massively broad, but he climbed soundly and well balanced for all that. He probably never climbed a very severe route, nor would he have much ambition to, being content to enjoy the hills and rocks from the less exacting level of the very difficult. He was an exceptionally good companion on a climb or elsewhere ; not unduly talkative, always good tempered and appreciative and quite unperturbed by cold, wet or any discomfort.

He could always produce a happy grin and a quick remark to anyone.

He was in the eight at Eton and narrowly missed his blue at Oxford. He is a very great loss to the Club and to those with whom he rowed.

A. D. M.

### N. J. M. BARRY

Nat Barry came up to Cambridge from South Africa in the summer of 1938. He joined the University Mountaineering Club and very soon, in the burst of Cambridge enthusiasm at that time, the Climbers' Club too. He was a mountaineer keen on the physical processes of climbing, and all the pleasures of the heights rather than the intense rock-climbing campaigns of his brother. To be in the hills, to be smoking a pipe on Tryfan ledges or glissading Ben Nevis snow made him feel happy, and gave the thrill he found also in flying. So he joined the Cambridge Air Squadron, did some gliding too and in the intervals studied engineering. These things were his life-blood, and he took them all with a calm and lovable equanimity that made him an ideal person for a harassed President to have by him on Meets. For he knew also how to take command at need, and he knew somehow instinctively that a mountain party is still a party, and needs organising accordingly. His death in a flying accident was a really great loss to the Climbers' Club, for he combined all that makes for a good companion and a true-hearted mountaineer.

C. W. F. N.

### R. J. BORCHARDT

It is one of the great tragedies of war that men like Roger Borchardt should be killed when they have laid the foundations to a successful and happy life and have not had time to make that life of real use.

Roger Borchardt had a successful school career at Cheltenham College, where he was an exhibitor and a Mathematical prize winner. He went on to St. John's College, Cambridge, where, alongside a successful academic career and among his other

interests he was a member of the Mountaineering Club and of the Cruising Club. He was a regular attendant at all the Mountaineering Club activities and was known and well liked by all the active members of the club. Though only a member for two years he attended four meets and on these made many friends. These were memorable, not because of any great climbs achieved, but because of the light they threw on his character. One week at Helyg, during spells of severe winter weather, his energy, keenness and helpfulness showed him to be no superficial mountaineer. He joined the Climbers' Club in 1939, but since the war broke out so soon after, he was not well known to many club members.

He was never a brilliant climber, but he was a man with a deep love of mountains and the sea. He loved them under all conditions and that must have been the secret of his pleasure in climbing and sailing. He was a quiet unassuming person, who got on well with everybody with whom he came in contact. Uncomplaining and unselfish he was liked by everyone.

At the beginning of the war he joined the Navy and early in 1940 he was posted to the Ajax. Transferred to small craft, he first saw active service off Dunkirk, after which he returned to the Ajax and on October 12th, 1940, in an action off Sicily, was killed while serving as an Able Seaman.

J. A. B. G.

### HENRY GALE GOTCH, C.A., J.P.

The combination of athletic prowess with civic distinction demands the pen of a Pindar, who, indeed, would have delighted to set forth in noble verse the career of this mountaineer, rock-climber, scholar and musician whose whole life was intimately bound up with that of his native town of Kettering—that cradle of great pioneer missionaries. Alas, I am no Pindar, but I welcome this opportunity of paying tribute, in humble prose, to one whom I was privileged to know for the last twenty years of his long life.

It must, I think, be correct to say that, with H. G. Gotch, the Climbers' Club has lost the last of its founders. Pen-y-Gwryd was then, as now, its spiritual home, but most of its

original members were really alpinists—snow and ice men—who used our English playground only when times and seasons forbade visits to the higher mountains. This was certainly true of H. G. Gotch as of most of the earlier officials of the C.C. Gotch was elected a member of the Alpine Club on February 1st, 1876—his proposer was Edward Whymper, and seconder, C. E. Matthews—what a long way back these names seem to take us. He did much of his climbing as the only amateur member of the party and the friendships thus formed with Swiss guides endured as long as they lived.

In the A.C.J., Vol. viii, May 1877, No. 56, is an account of an attempt on the Meiji—a footnote is of permanent interest and gives a vivid picture of H. G. Gotch in his mountaineering prime. It runs thus: "Whether or not physical exertion is more exhausting at a great height is a question not easily reduced to experiment. On the top of Mont Blanc last year I adopted as a test the attempt to jump repeatedly and quickly over the axe held in both hands. I did not find the feat appreciably more difficult than it is at sea-level. Some days afterward D. confided to me his abiding astonishment at so peculiar a method of resting after an ascent!"

D. was Devouassoud and most people would have shared his astonishment. The pioneers of our great sport were certainly not lacking in energy. Indeed they were not lacking in any of the qualities we admire and there can have been no better example, in mind and body, of the ideal mountaineer than H. G. Gotch.

Of his prowess on the mountains, I am not qualified to speak, but of his charm in later years when I met him at Pen-y-Gwryd, whither he often returned, or at his house in Kettering, I can bear ready witness—his breadth of mind with its many and various interests was one of his most striking features and it impressed all with whom he came into contact—that and, perhaps a fundamental humility. The one characteristic was part of the other—he was always learning something and therefore always happy and this happiness radiated to others. Wise in counsel, firm in friendship, no wonder that he was so closely bound up with the fortunes of his town. Especially was he interested in education and for seventy years was connected with it in some intimate way. He was not a schoolmaster but



he could have taken forms in several subjects, including both Classics at the one end and Mathematics at the other and Kettering honoured itself by naming a school after him.

With the passing of Henry Gale Gotch we have lost one of the last of our mountain pioneers and one of the best of our friends.

R. B. H.

### J. C. MORLAND, 1866–1940

John Coleby Morland was in his seventy-fifth year when he died on June 25, 1940. He went to the Sidcot and Bootham schools of the Society of Friends, and after some business training in Birmingham, entered the family business of Clark, Son and Morland at Glastonbury, and was the active head of this for nearly fifty years.

He took a great interest in the Climbers' Club, was a member of the Committee from 1907 to 1910, and was always ready to help younger members by his advice and interest.

He had a keen appreciation of mountains which he kept throughout his life and spent many vacations in North Wales, where he climbed a good deal with Sir J. B. Farmer and myself.

He was not a botanist but took great interest in mountain flowers and had a love of gardening which he showed in the care he took of his garden under Glastonbury Tor.

His real passion was mountaineering. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1906, and went to the Alps for most years till just before his death, and in his last years he took up curling when unable to climb.

He climbed constantly in the Alps with Sir J. B. Farmer and myself, and I have recollections of pleasant tours in the Graians, The Ortler, Zermatt, and the Zinal district, the Val de Bagnes, which he especially loved and where he climbed a good deal with the local guide Bruchez. He was a delightful companion on a climb and had a great sense of humour and he never lost his head in difficulties. He had a wide interest in everything to do with mountains and the people who lived in them.

He kept a lifelong interest in sport. He captained the Somerset County Association Team in the 'eighties and was keen on cricket and golf.

I think what struck me most about him was his keenness on all he undertook and his hard work. I remember turning up at his house at 7 a.m. one summer morning and finding the family and children already up and breakfast ready. I cannot think of any other home in England where one would have been really welcomed at that hour.

He was a keen Liberal, though tolerant, and had great influence in his own district. He raised the ethical standard of every sphere in which he took part. In his own town he gave a great deal of help as County Councillor, County Alderman, and as Mayor of Glastonbury.

Outside his local work he was for many years an active and useful member of many Liberal organisations—the National Liberal Club, the Eighty Club, and the National Liberal Federation, in the Western section of which he long took a leading part in helping to secure candidates. Always a very independent politician and always thinking for himself, he was a good Party man and a tower of strength in his own district. He won the respect of everyone, friends and opponents alike.

During the war of 1914—18, Morland was one of a group of fellow Quakers who established and financed the Friends' Ambulance Unit.

A.W.A.

## H. I. OGILVY

Iain Ogilvy appeared at Cambridge in the October of 1938, and very soon his climbing enthusiasm had penetrated the depths and heights of the University Mountaineering Club. He joined at once, became known to everybody, attended meets, and knew every inch of every guide book. To some of us, it seemed as if this all-pervading life enthusiasm (his only other hobbies were shooting and breaking up communist gatherings) must be based simply on the rather fearful joy of doing difficult climbs and coming out unscathed if trembling at the top. There was no limit to the number of "severes" he could collect in a

good day, and he appeared to reckon the goodness of the day itself numerically. But I think the war showed up the genuineness of mountain affection in him, and his interest too in climbing personality. It looked as if the Cambridge Club were doomed, at the time he became President, from lack of members and the difficulty of travel and accommodation in the hills. But not only were meets organised, they and the Club lectures were attended more fully than ever before, and by an enthusiastic and skilful body of members. The Club had never had so formidable an array of leaders. And it was Iain who wrought this. He knew all the celebrated mountaineers who could be cajoled into lecturing. He knew all the climbing centres and exactly what could be done from each. Above all he knew the Club members, and how to stimulate them. When I think back to his enthusiasm for climbing as a sport, or break-neck thrill, as it seemed sometimes, impounded on a solid liking for hills, I put another picture in its place: that of a night spent by him and two others rubbing my cold, broken leg, on a ledge 3,000 feet up Ben Nevis. The talk, when it was not about the sort of meal we should like just then, was of Scotland, the hills and glens and days spent therein. Iain himself, I think, even enjoyed that night, and the cold dawn streaks over Carn Dearg, and the slow procession down. For Scotland was really the clue to him, and it was fitting, if especially tragic, that he should be killed among his native Cairngorms. We of the South do not realise how deeply interfused are the heather and the hills in the Highlander. And Iain Ogilvy's passion for gradient was, I now know, a superficial stratum laid over his mountain self, and which would have weathered to the grey of Scottish rock. The last time I saw him, in May of last year, his remark on events was: "I believe we're going to lose this war. At any rate, I get a week in Scotland before I'm called up." And so, unhappily it was—and the call came.

C.W.F.N.

#### JAMES W. PUTTRELL—1869-1939

In the late nineties and onwards "Jim Puttrell" was a member of a small gang of pioneers who made climbing history

on the crags of Lakeland, Scotland and North Wales. Latterly, his chief obsession was "pot holing" or speleology, to use the more pedantic word. He joined in many adventures with the late Owen Glynne Jones and one of his chief disappointments was that neither the great cragsman nor the "Keswick Brothers" ever joined him in a "pot."

What a truly typical tyke was this sturdy, cheery man from Sheffield; always willing and keen to join in anything tinged with a spice of danger. His uncanny ability to keep appointments at all times of day and night was remarkable; he was there on time, be it at P.Y.G., Wastdale, Kingshouse, Ben Nevis, or even the Jungfrau-Bergli Hut when avalanches were clattering down all round. Against all remonstrances at Zermatt he once took up food to a famished guideless party who had spent three days and nights weatherbound at the Festi Hut on the Döm.

Amongst climbing folk Puttrell was somewhat reticent and retiring, whilst formal dinners and club meets saw little of him. Like many others he loved the peace of the high hills; crags and crowds seemed wrong. His cave hunting was a different story. He was one of the original members both of the Climbers' Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, whilst several of the other clubs in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire owed much of their success to his early help.

Last year I took a friend up the Crowberry Ridge on Buchaille Etive and how vividly came back memories of that first ascent so long ago as 1900 in which Puttrell joined so keenly. In moments of dangerous excitement he had a queer way of crooning to himself some strange ditty. Above the famous Crowberry "Nose," where the excitement was tense during the initial climb, he was persuaded to repeat his song of that date. Last year the wild recesses seemed softly to echo the words sung to a well-known catchy tune, still not forgotten.

"Oh! Boys you should see Uncle Jim,  
He knows his way about the cliffs to climb,  
He spends his nights and days looking out for ways,  
Uncle Jim can find them every time,  
Yes! Uncle Jim can find 'em every time."

This was typical of Jim Puttrell and his joyous personal outlook on life, and there must be numerous climbers and "pot-

holers" glad to recall his enthusiastic absorption in the work in hand.

The other day, for the first time, I visited one of the celebrated cave-men's haunts at Alum Pot and the Long Churn, awesome and impressive places. It must have needed tremendous "pluck" to be dangled into the black depths on a rope or a swinging rope ladder. Perhaps the caves round Castleton were Puttrell's happiest hunting ground, and there he spent many "nights and days looking out for ways." His solitary first descent of the fearsome thin chimney into Peak Cavern was a striking example of personal bravery. Scores of similar feats of exploration and organization abound in his records of adventure and discovery. His name will long be linked with such places as "Blue John," The Bottomless Pit, Speedwell Cavern, Eldon Hole, Oxlow Cavern, Gaping Ghyll, Alum Pot, etc.

A fine collection of cave work relics had been made and these, including some wonderful stalactites and stalagmites have been presented to his native City of Sheffield.

Jim Puttrell was kindness, faith, hope and charity personified ; a true and loyal friend, and a lover of the good things that mountains can teach us all. He was a bachelor.

G. D. A.

#### E. W. STEEPLE, 1872—1940

By the death of E. W. Steeple rock-climbing has lost one of its quietest and most unassuming pioneers, but one whose intimate knowledge of climbs in this country and the Alps was surpassed by few.

From 1906 to 1924 he pioneered new routes in the Lake District, Wales and Skye and many of these have since become familiar names to a later generation of climbers. Amongst his first ascents were the N.W. Climb on Pillar (Lamb's Chimney variation), Grooved Arête of Tryfan, Girdle Traverse on Glyder Fawr, many variants of the Milestone Buttress, including the Sylvan Traverse, and most of the recognised climbs on the Ghrunnda face of Sron na Ciche in the Coolins, as well as various routes on Llech Ddu. All these he led with the

exception of the first. His favourite haunt was Skye, and many holidays there culminated in the production, in collaboration with Dr. G. Barlow, of the S.M.C. Guide to Skye, published in 1923. Anyone who has climbed in Skye can appreciate to the full the patience, labour and meticulous care which went to the production of a guide which is an example of everything a guide should be.

Steeple joined the Climbers' Club in 1907 and was also a member of The Fell and Rock Club, The Rucksack Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and the Swiss Alpine Club, and was one of the founders of the Midland Association of Mountaineers, of which he was Treasurer and Librarian until the time of his death.

Of recent years he had given up active rock-climbing, but his interest never flagged and at Meets in the Alps his amazing knowledge of routes and his unfailing kindness and sympathetic help were invaluable, not only to the leaders but to the other members of the parties as well.

W. O. DUNCAN (Ed. M.A.M.)

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The following list of Steeple's first ascents is interesting and worthy of record :—

- 23/8/1906. N.W. Climb on Pillar (Lamb's Chimney variation). (not as leader).
- 1907. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Central Gully (not as leader).
- 1909. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Median Route.
- 9/1910. Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, S.E. Gully.
- Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, Eagle's Gully.
- Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh, Vanishing Gully.
- 4/1911. Tryfan—Grooved Arête.
- 8/1912. Glyder Fawr—Girdle Traverse.
- 8/1912. Sgurr Alasdair, Ghrunnda face—West Gully.
- 9/1912. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Girdle Traverse.
- 8/1912. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Eastern Buttress—Chimney Route.
- 8/1912. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Eastern Buttress—Direct Route.
- 9/1913.—Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Eastern Buttress—Eastern Gully
- 8/1913. Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh—An Dorus Gully.
- 8/1913. Sgurr a' Mhadaidh—Second—Third Gully.
- 9/1913. Sgurr a' Mhadaidh—First—Second Gully.
- 9/1913. Sgurr Thearlaich—Gully A.
- 8/1913. Tryfan Milestone—Chimney Route.
- 8/1913. Tryfan Notch Buttress—Chimney Route.
- 9/1913. Tryfan Notch Buttress—Intermediate Route.
- 8/1914. Glyder Fach—Dolmen Buttress, Route II.
- 9/1914. Tryfan—First Pinnacle Rib.
- 4/1915. Sgurr nan Eag—The Chasm.

- 9/1916. Tryfan—Sylvan Traverse.  
 9/1916. Tryfan—Cantilever Route.  
       Tryfan—Postern Gate and Holly Crack Route.  
       Tryfan—Canopy Route.  
 4/1917. Llech Ddu—Primitive Route.  
 6/1917. Llech Ddu—Pillar Traverse.  
       Llech Ddu—Corridor Gully.  
       Llech Ddu—Y Chimney.  
 6/1918. Llech Ddu—Cave Route.  
 4/1919. Llech Ddu—Far East Chimney.  
 7/1921. Sgurr Sgumain—North Western Buttress—Final Tower.  
 8/1920. Sron na Ciche, Coire Lagan face—Parallel Cracks Route.  
 8/1920. Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh—Terrace Gully.  
 1920-22. Sron na Ciche, Ghrunnda face :—  
       On the South Crag—Far South Buttress.  
               Green Recess Chimneys.  
               Central Buttress.  
               Trap Dyke Route.  
               White Slab Route.  
               South Crag Gully.  
               Owl Chimney.  
       On the North Crag—The Stack Buttress : Direct Route.  
               The Red Wall Variant.  
               North Crag Gully and Black Knight's Wall.  
               Slab Buttress.  
 4/1921. Llech Ddu—Central Slab Route.  
 7/1921. Sgurr a' Coire Bhig—The East Gully.  
               The West Gully.  
 7/1921. Sgurr Alasdair, Ghrunnda face—Central Route.  
       1922. Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh—Terrace East Buttress.  
 21/5/1923. Glyder—Gribin facet—Slab Recess Route.  
               Two Tree Route.  
 27/7/1924. Sron na Ciche, Ghrunnda face—The Owl Buttress.  
 28/7/1924. Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh—Terrace—West Buttress.  
       5/1920. Trum y Ddysgyl—North Buttress.  
               South Buttress.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is also with deep regret that we have to record the deaths of one of our distinguished honorary members, S. H. Hamer, and also of H. C. Amos, J. C. W. Hawkins, and—as we go to press—of R. A. Fanshawe, who was killed whilst on A.R.P. duties.

Hamer was for some years Secretary of The National Trust and in that capacity the service he has rendered to mountaineering in The British Isles can hardly be measured in words.

John Hawkins was killed at Dunkirk whilst serving as a lieutenant in The Royal Artillery. He was one of our younger members and one of the best. One cannot read the letters sent to his parents by those who were with him in France without

being deeply moved by pride in being associated with him—and by bitterness. Here was a man who so obviously felt it good to be alive, who so obviously did everything so wholeheartedly, so cheerfully, and so well. Most of his leave from France was spent in Wales, and on his very last day when the church in which he had his observation post was blown up, he calmly returned after lunch to climb the ruins, and re-established his post. One who was not given to passing compliments lightly, said of him, “Only when the light got too bad to go on did he come down from his extremely dangerous position, and by that time he had destroyed a pontoon bridge across the canal, set two barges on fire, which must have caused hopeless confusion to the enemy, and made it impossible for him to cross before we left for the beach, so that we were able to do so unmolested . . . I had never seen or heard of him before and it was his most impressive behaviour which made me ask, and remember his name . . . I never hope to see greater gallantry, modesty, or efficiency.”



## NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

### CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU

THE CURVING CRACK. Direct Start.

First Ascent July 6th, 1940.

Party : N.P.P. and A.J.W.W.

Start : At the foot of the Curving Crack proper, and not to the right beyond the pillar where the accepted route goes.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the chimney to the green ledge at the top of the pillar.

*Standard* : Very severe.

This variation is a *tour de force* of no mean order although, in fact, it was done by mistake for the more usual start. It had been attempted in the early days of climbing on this cliff. It is extremely strenuous and has little to recommend it when compared with the elegant crack beyond the pillar which leads to the same place.

### CLOGWYN Y GROCHAN

THE BRANT.

First Ascent August 5th, 1940.

Party : J.M.E. and J.E.Q.B.

355 feet. A fine steep climb first on a wall and then on a series of slabs. Good rock, exposed, extremely strenuous.

*Standard* : Very severe, the hardest climb in this group of cliffs.

Start : Between Goat's Gully and Central Gully, on a pile of large blocks and 10-feet left of the beginning of a steep chimney-groove which has a hiatus at 20 feet. This groove is the start of the Slape. The climb goes up the wall above, strenuously, to a capacious ledge with a robust holly and other trees. From here, it bears down to the left beneath a little overhang and then up a difficult V chimney to a long ledge. Beyond this the region of overlapping slabs is crossed and the climb finishes up the main nose of this part of the cliff.

(1) 50 feet. Climb 10 feet up the wall to the beginning of a small scoop, then cross over to the left up small but sufficient holds to a large hold which gives access to a small ledge beyond. The movement to this large hold is the major difficulty of the climb.

A little ledge with a large thin flake on it is crossed and the wall

above it climbed more easily to a much larger ledge with a Yew and Holly tree.

(2) 30 feet. The little corner behind the holly at the extreme left-hand end of the ledge is climbed. Traverse from here upwards and downwards along the ledge to a comfortable stance and a large belay.

(3) 40 feet. Continue the line of the descent. Belly traverse under the little overhang to the foot of the V chimney beyond. The ascent of this V chimney is extremely severe, but it very quickly leads to an easy ledge up to the right.

(4) 35 feet. From the right-hand end of this ledge an ascending traverse to the left is made up the wall above. The last move from the wall on to the slab which terminates it is difficult. An extremely small belay and stance is reached.

(5) 50 feet. Continue up the slab and the steep rib to a more vegetable section beyond. From here a steep awkward corner and a dangerous grass landing leads to a grassy ledge which is one of the stances of Bluebell Traverse. There is a small belay here in the corner, and another small one on the wall about 3 feet left of the corner.

(6) 40 feet. From here the route goes up the little wall behind the stance, across the slab above to another vegetable section and a good belay.

(7) 50 feet. Bear up to the right and across a vegetable slab by an ancient Yew and up the derelict rocks to a much larger and more ancient Yew on the skyline.

(8) 60 feet. Follow the main nose of the buttress to the top.

### THE SLAPE.

First Ascent August 8th, 1940.

Party: J. M. E., G. F. P., Donaldson (non-member).

325 feet. A fine steep climb, good rock, very exposed, strenuous.

*Standard*: Very severe, comparable to the Brant.

Start: Between Goat's Gully and Central Gully from a pile of large blocks, a corner groove runs up the cliff from bottom to top, the first marked groove left of Central Gully. The start is at the foot of this. The climb goes fairly directly up the same section of the cliff as the Brant, often using the same stances.

(1) 20 feet. Up the corner for a few feet till a long step leads over on to the right edge at ledges that are the base of the main continuant corner.

(2) 40 feet. A few feet up to the left a gangway, which is in part inverted, slopes up and away from the groove to the Transverse Ledge and Holly tree at the top of Pitch 1 of the Brant. This is the route. It is precarious at the start and difficult on the central inverted section, where the rock above throws the climber outwards.

(3) 20 feet. About two-thirds of the way along the ledge there is an Ash tree. Climb the wall which is well furnished with incut holds, to the immediate right of this. Another stance of the Brant is gained.

(4) 70 feet. An easier chimney from the right-hand end of the ledge leads to the triangular grass ledge of Bluebell Traverse.

(5) 80 feet. Avoiding the easier ways to left and right, the back wall is climbed up a corner crack a little left of centre, to blocks and a stance. Traverse to the right over steep rock for 12 feet until it is possible to go a little left up a break in the cliff. This is steep on large holds, some loose. Avoiding the ledges which appear, go straight up the quartz slabs to the large Ledge of Yews, a stance used by Ledge Way also.

(6) 35 feet. Up easily to the left just on the right of the arête to a stance on loose blocks. The Brant arrives here also from the left.

(7) As for The Brant, or 20-30 feet to the right.

These two fine climbs are a notable addition to the routes already done on this cliff, and lead up rather steeper rock than is usually climbed in North Wales. They were both led without previous investigation. It is advisable to remember when climbing on these cliffs in Llanberis, that Clogwyn y Grochan is the fiercest of the four cliffs—(Dinas Cromlech, Carreg Wasted and Craig Nant Peris are the others) and demands an "all-in" technique not generally called for except on boulder problems. Here one would fall farther than from the Helyg boulder.

## CWM IDWAL. THE EAST WALL

### STEPPED CORNER.

First Ascent June 13th, 1940.

Party : D. F. H. B. and P. S. Boston (non-member).

*Standard* : Hard severe.

This is the corner between Ash Tree Wall and Route V. There are two thin wedge-like steps 30 feet up. The route goes straight up the groove on the left of these till one can stand on the top one. From here up the vertical wall for 10 feet to an awkward step to the right, followed by a fairly difficult mantelshelf. Thence easily to the top of Pitch 1 of Ash Tree Wall. Continue up Pitch 2 of Ash Tree Wall and the Eaves Variations to Route V.

This climb is considered to be harder than Rake End Chimney in rubbers.

## CWM IDWAL. HOLLY TREE WALL

*Variation.* In December 1938, N. B. and H. I. O. did a variation to Pitch 3 of the Holly Tree Wall original route.

(3) 20 feet. From the Holly Tree up crack for a short way until a big hold on the left can be reached. Using this hold, hand

traverse to the left, landing on the rocky bay at the top of the outside route.

This is easier but more exposed than the way straight up the crack.

## DINAS CROMLECH

### THE HORSEMAN'S ROUTE.

First Ascent October 20th, 1940.

Party : J. M. E. and J. E. Q. B.

345 feet. A mixed climb, with a fine finish in a good corner. Vegetation, an exposed traverse on bad rock, and some extremely good rock. The final pitches may be avoided along the Valley.

*Standard* : Severe.

Start : At the foot of Ivy Sepulchre. A way is made up this until it steepens, then a descending traverse to the right round the corner and up the short wall common to the Sexton's Route and Neb's Crawl, to a large corner leading to the top.

(1) A steep dirty slab leads to a ledge running across the foot of the Sepulchre.

(2) 25 feet. The steep wall above is climbed on the left by means of a crack to a decaying tree and ledge at the foot of the outward jutting mass between Cenotaph Corner and the Sepulchre.

(3) 25 feet. Step down to the right until a dirty chimney gives access to the roots of the vegetation on the next ledge.

(4) 20 feet. Up another short chimney to the large ledge and trees.

(5) 80 feet. Traverse downwards along the ledge to the right. Step across the damp scoop and up the broken wall round the edge of the buttress. Unsatisfactory belay and stance. The step across is exposed and the broken wall tends to be loose in a generous sort of way.

(6) 25 feet. Continue up the narrow rake to the foot of a comfortable looking chimney.

(7) 40 feet. Up the chimney, and along the ledge above to a belay, between the feet of the two cracks in the wall above.

(8) 25 feet. Climb the wall. The cracks to the left and right belong to the Sexton's Route and Neb's Crawl respectively.

(9) 30 feet. Walk up to the right through the trees to the foot of the large corner. Belay in corner.

(10) 35 feet. Climb the corner. This is quite hard and leads to a difficult landing beneath the overhang. The hardest pitch of the climb.

(11) 30 feet. Climb the overhanging chimney up to the right to the top, stepping out of it shortly before the end.



DINAS CROMLECH

*J. E. Q. Barford*



The finish is the chief attraction. It can equally well be used as a finish for the Sexton's Route or Neb's Crawl. The rest is good training for climbing of this sort and gives good views of really steep places, places generously left by those who are now elders of the Club, for more lithe and active youth.

### GALLT YR OGOF

#### THE CHALKREN STAIRS. VARIATION TO PITCH 2.

Pitch 2, as described in the guide book, is now impracticable as the crucial tree has been broken down by some vandal. Instead the pitch can be climbed rather more to the left.

(2) 50 feet. Stand on top of the large boulder above and to the left of the broken stump. Climb up and round the corner to the right on to the slab below the inverted V scoop. Climb the Scoop.

It was found necessary to lasso the Ash Tree in the scoop to assist the step to the right. This is probably not necessary as the party cleared a lot of the impeding vegetation away, and it should now be possible to climb it on the rock only.

The climb is a good one, and is sounder now as much vegetation and loose rock have been removed. In fact, the rock can now be said to be sound. The lasso moves lend interest, and the final crack is entertaining.

### CAPSTONE CLIMB

First Ascent November 4th, 1940.

Party : J. H. B.

*Standard* : Very difficult.

Position : On the upper main cliff of Skyline Buttress.

Start : To the left of Rocking Stone Climb start, near the edge of the cliff, marked by a large stake of dead wood.

Go up the steep wall to a heather shelf. Then up another wall, and slightly right up to a small tree beneath a larger one. Mount to the larger tree and up left to a heather bay, then up again to easier ground.

From here there is good scrambling to the top with several steep bits.

The climbing is continuous, steep, on excellent holds, and with no apparent ways off. The route is much better than the other two on this buttress which admit of various alternatives. The piton used and left behind by the inventor, is stated by him to be quite unnecessary.

### GLYDER FACH.

#### HAWK'S NEST BUTTRESS. VARIATION FINISH.

First Ascent December 1939.

Party : D. F. H. B. and N. P. P.

*Standard* : Severe in rubbers.

(4) 50 feet. Instead of going up to the mantelshelf go out to the left from the ledge below it. The greatest difficulty is in leaving the ledge as the angle is very steep and without satisfying handholds, but soon a projecting spike can be grasped and a narrow ledge reached. From here easy climbing by either of two grooves leads to the top.

This route affords an interesting finish as it is a good piece of rock with possibilities of further climbs.

#### HAWK'S NEST ARETE.

First Ascent July 22nd, 1940.

Party : P. W. W. N. and H. H.

140 feet.

*Standard* : Severe.

Start : From the left-hand end of the ledge at the foot of Hawk's Nest Buttress.

(1) 40 feet. Up the edge of the buttress to the top of a large block, which forms a stance and belay.

(2) 60 feet. Continue up the edge of the buttress for 15 feet until a small ledge is reached. Work along this to the right to the foot of a shallow chimney. Up the chimney for 5 feet until a large flake hold can be reached. This enables one to swing back to the left. Then straight up the wall to the top of the pitch.

(3) 40 feet. Up the crack behind the 6-foot spike.

The first half is grassy and may be avoided by the slab on its left.

#### LLIWEDD : EAST BUTTRESS

##### BIRCH TREE VARIANT.

First Ascent July 23rd, 1940.

Party : P. W. W. N.

*Standard* : Severe.

Start from the ledge 90 feet below the right-hand end of the Birch Tree Terrace. Cairn. At the left-hand end of this ledge, and 20 feet to the left of the Birch Tree Terrace Route, are some shallow, broken grooves sloping to the left. Up the grooves for 30 feet, then step to the right to a similar stance. Proceed straight up from this stance to the terrace above.

The hardest step is the first one of the final section.

#### LLYNAU MYMBYR ROCKS

First Ascent July 5th, 1940.

Party : E. Roberts (non-member), R. M. P. H., P. Hamblin (non-member).

These rocks are above the East Lake, and are mentioned in the Snowdon guide (p. 120). There is a corner about 30-feet high opposite



the middle of the lake. The corner faces Snowdon and there is a chimney behind it. The ascent of the chimney is "difficult" but the climb outside under and round an overhang is probably "severe" in rubbers. Other climbs done included the ascent (V.D.) of an 80-foot wall opposite the West End of the East Lake and a strenuous chimney (D) behind a big holly tree in a cliff some 20 feet farther up. The wall obviously offers several climbs besides the ones attempted but these have not so far been explored.

## MILESTONE BUTTRESS

### ROPE WALL. ALTERNATIVE FINISH.

First Ascent June 7th, 1940.

Party: D. F. H. B. and N<sup>o</sup> P. P.

(3) Instead of going up to the exposed platform and lassoing the block, traverse out from just below it, and with one awkward step, a small grass ledge is reached. From here up a chimney to the top.

This is exposed and severe, and a poor alternative to the proper way which is very interesting and good technical training. The possibility of this traverse was deliberately ignored by the pioneers, and it was only considered to be a good route on which to give "moral" assistance to any second who hesitated to do the pendulum movement.

## GENERAL

Apart from the tremendous activity of the Cambridge Club, which has mostly been confined to the Ogwen Valley owing to lack of transport, the major achievements of the year have been the two new climbs on Clogwyn y Grochan. Both these climbs are of a very high order of difficulty and interest, and in their lower halves break completely new ground. In fact, when the writer of these notes first saw the overhanging wall on which the Brant and the Slape grapple, he was quite certain that it could not be climbed. However, it has been, and by two fine routes, each extremely bold and strenuous leads. The rock is generally good, but there are still occasional loose holds.

Of the other new climbs Stepped Corner and Hawk's Nest Arête are both in the classic tradition and are the fruit of the increasing concentration of effort in the Ogwen area, a tendency which is inevitable in the circumstances.

In the spring of the year there was a great renaissance in Welsh climbing chiefly caused by the activities of the C.U.M.C.

On Tryfan, the Munich Climb, Belle Vue Bastion, Long Chimney, Old Long Chimney, The Scars Climb, Rope Wall and Soap Gut direct were climbed, Rope Wall no less than three times.

In Cwm Idwal, Clogwyn y Geifr was left severely alone except for the older routes. To make up for this, every route on the Holly Tree Wall and the East Wall was climbed, including hard variations like the Blade finish to the Javelin, the Balcony Cracks, Rake End Chimney, Heather Wall, and the direct start to the Piton Route.

On Glyder Fach, Lot's Wife has been climbed twice, on Clogwyn du'r Arddu the Great Slab and the Curving Crack have each been climbed once.

Finally on Gallt yr Ogof the Chalkren Stairs have been cleared up and put into fit conditions for climbing.

I am much indebted to the C.U.M.C., and in particular to Charles Rolland, Nicholas Piercey and the late Iain Ogilvy, for much of the information given above.

J. E. Q. B.

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\* Killed on Active Service.      † Prisoner of War.

While we have done our best to make this list as complete as possible it is inevitable that the names of many members serving in H.M. Forces have been omitted, and also that the ranks and units of others are incorrect. To those concerned we tender our humble apologies and ask them to help us to rectify the error for future reference. To all of them we send our best wishes wherever they may be.

## BOOKS

Among the mountaineering books published since June 1940 are the following :—

TEN GREAT MOUNTAINS. By R. L. G. Irving. (Dent. 12/6.)

LAKELAND THROUGH THE LENS. By W. A. Poucher. (Chapman & Hall. 18/-.)

HELVELLYN TO HYMALAYA. By F. Spencer Chapman. (Chatto & Windus. 18/-.)

BRITISH HILLS AND MOUNTAINS. By Bell, Bosman, & Fairfax-Blakeborough. (Batsford. 8/6.)

ENGLISH LAKELAND. By Doreen Wallace. (Batsford. 8/6.)

MOUNTAINEERING. By T. A. H. Peacocke. (A. & C. Black. 5/-.)

MY ALPINE ALBUM. By F. S. Smythe. (A. & C. Black. 12/6.)

THE ADVENTURES OF A MOUNTAINEER. By F. S. Smythe. (Dent. 7/6.)

ROCK CLIMBS ON THE COBBLER. By J. B. Nimlin, B. H. Humble, and G. C. Williams. (Scottish Mountaineering Club. 1/-.)

NORWAY, THE NORTHERN PLAYGROUND. By W. Cecil Slingsby. Edited by Eleanor Slingsby. (Basil Blackwell. 7/6.)

MAN ON THE MATTERHORN. Edited by M. Dodderidge from Edward Whymper's SCRAMBLES AMONGST THE ALPS. (John Murray. 1/6.)

ALPINE PILGRIMAGE. By Dr. Julius Kugy. (John Murray. Cheap edition. 6/-.)

## EDITOR'S NOTES

It is encouraging to find that mountaineers are making strenuous efforts during their limited leave or weekends to visit the hills again. There was a stage which I suppose most of us passed through, when one felt somewhat guilty when one presumed to contemplate a weekend in Wales—a feeling that one not only could not but should not indulge in such frivolities. Yet there was probably never a time when one's sense of proportion and values were in greater need of adjustment, and no place like the hills for setting them right. As Geoffrey Winthrop Young has it :

There is much comfort in high hills

And a great easing of the heart.

We look upon them and our nature fills

With loftier images from their life apart,

They set our feet on curves of freedom bent

To snap the circles of our discontent.

It is true that the scope is limited and practical difficulties great. Transport does not help matters ; one's sense of proportion needs to be very well adjusted to view with unmixed pleasure the floor of the waiting room at Crewe before prizing a snoring body to one side to give adequate lying room. Yet many have thought it worth while, and it has been good to see the steady and continuous use of Helyg. Members of other clubs have used it too, and as will be seen from New Clubs and Notes, the Cambridge University club had a most active meet there. Bosigran too, has been used.

Intending visitors to Helyg should note that E. S. Chantrell's new address is Roslyn, Queensway, Layton, Wirral. Much of his leisure is already taken up with A.T.C. activities (one member made an unpardonable mistake in the final letter) and he naturally has little time for visits, so users of Helyg are asked to be particularly diligent in their housework before leaving.

\* \* \*

The activities of the Club in other spheres continue. Though various members of the full committee are unable to take an active part in proceedings, the dark and some say epicurean machinations of the executive committee continue to bear good fruit. The forty-third annual general meeting and a lunch were held at Brown's Hotel in London on February 22nd, and twenty-five members attended. The president gave an entertaining summary of the year's activities, concluding with a stirring tale, the veracity of which can hardly be questioned, coming as it does from our noble daily press. The scene was set with a certain military gentleman standing outside the Bryn-Tyrch Hotel at crack of dawn, and summoning to his call the young climbers as they set forth to brave the untold terrors of the assault on the fastnesses of Snowdon.

In response to a suggestion at the general meeting a series of informal lunches were also held in London in the early spring.

\* \* \*

As a result of a discussion at the lunch it was felt that when so many are away from home, particularly in outlying districts, they would welcome the opportunity of meeting fellow-members. A gratifying response was made to an appeal on these lines, and a preliminary list, which has since been augmented, was prepared of those who would be prepared to see others who happen to be in their district. It is to be hoped that all concerned will find this a success and the secretary would be glad to hear of any others who would care to add their names to the list.

\* \* \*

The new edition of the Cwm Idwal guide was published last summer. It is a considerable improvement on the original, and amply justifies the hard work put in by J. M. Edwards and by C. H. French, who prepared an entirely new set of drawings. The guides editor has asked

me to express his extreme regret for failing to acknowledge French's efforts in the preface to the guide.

Probably few people pause to consider the amount of really exacting work that goes to the making of a guide book. To plough through all the climbs, bad as well as good—often several times—to measure and record all their details, estimate fair classifications, make diagrams, to keep abreast of all those who will persist in making variations, and finally assemble as a concrete whole for publication, is no mean task. We should all be very grateful to those who have given so much of their leisure in preparing them.

The publication of the Snowdon guide is becoming a promise of the modern political variety, and the time has come when facts must be faced and a strategic withdrawal made. Although certain sections are complete, there still remains such an amount of detail to be cleared up in others, that it would be rash to hope that those concerned will have time to deal with the matter until a more momentous issue, rather outside the scope of the Club, has been settled. However it may be found possible, though this is not a promise—even a political one—to publish a section in the Journal. This has points to recommend it, for at the moment we are, inevitably, in danger of becoming too intro- and retrospective about our climbing, and who knows what frightful conclusions may be reached about our complexes if some modern Freud gets to work. It would be most refreshing to read of new or little known climbs to which access is still possible.

In this connection I should be particularly glad to have articles for next year's journal from anyone who has been lucky enough to have good climbing this year, at home or abroad ; there seems no reason why we should not hear of exciting new routes, on the Pyramids for instance, though accounts of the next all-British ascents in the Dolomites may not be through in time for publication (Oflag VII papers please copy).

\* \* \*

Six members of the Club are prisoners of war in Germany. They are :—

Lt. J. S. M. Bingham.

2nd-Lieut. L. S. Deuchar, No. 1001, Oflag V B.

Capt. B. G. Evers, No. 1561, Stalag XX A.

Lt. R. M. Longstaff, No. 945, Stalag XXI D.

Capt. W. W. Price Rees, No. 351, Oflag VII D.

Major E. M. Viney, No. 877, Oflag VII C/H.

Originally they were thought to be mostly in Oflag VII and the Club has been sending parcels of mountaineering books to Major Viney in that camp for distribution. He has recently acknowledged the first arrivals. As it now appears that they have been dispersed, it is hoped that it may be possible to send further consignments to the other camps as well. The treasurer would welcome contributions to a fund for this purpose.

In spite of the amazingly cheerful letters that occasionally arrive life cannot be too amusing in these camps ; new routes are doubtless frowned upon, and pitons are certainly taboo. There is no doubt that letters from their friends would be appreciated more than anything else, so it may be useful to note the procedure for writing :—

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\*      \*      \*

The Editor craves indulgence, and much he needs it, for the late arrival of the Journal.

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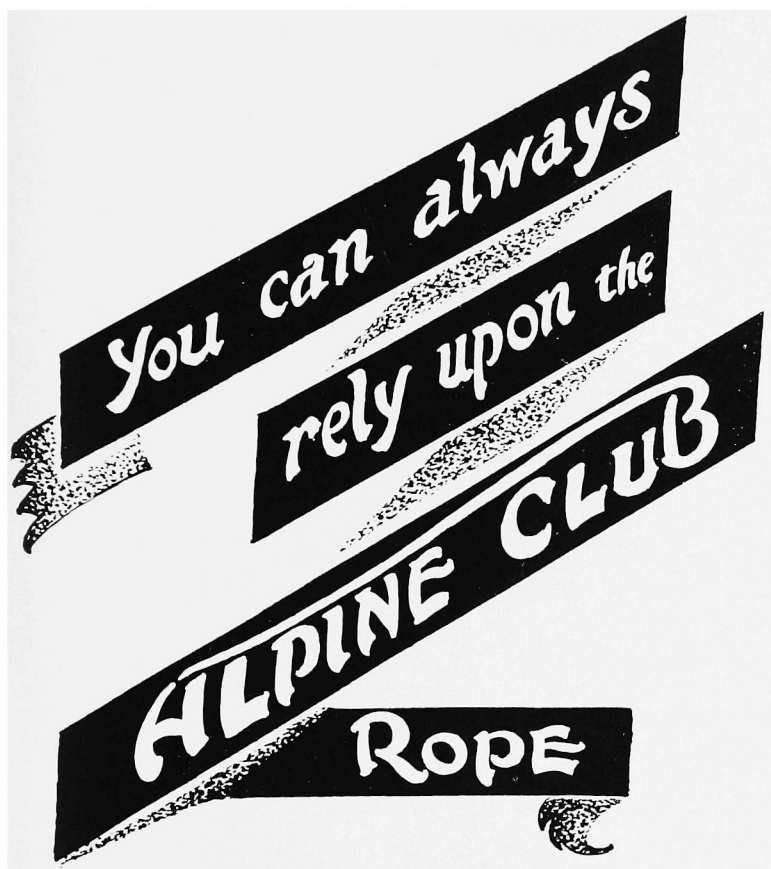
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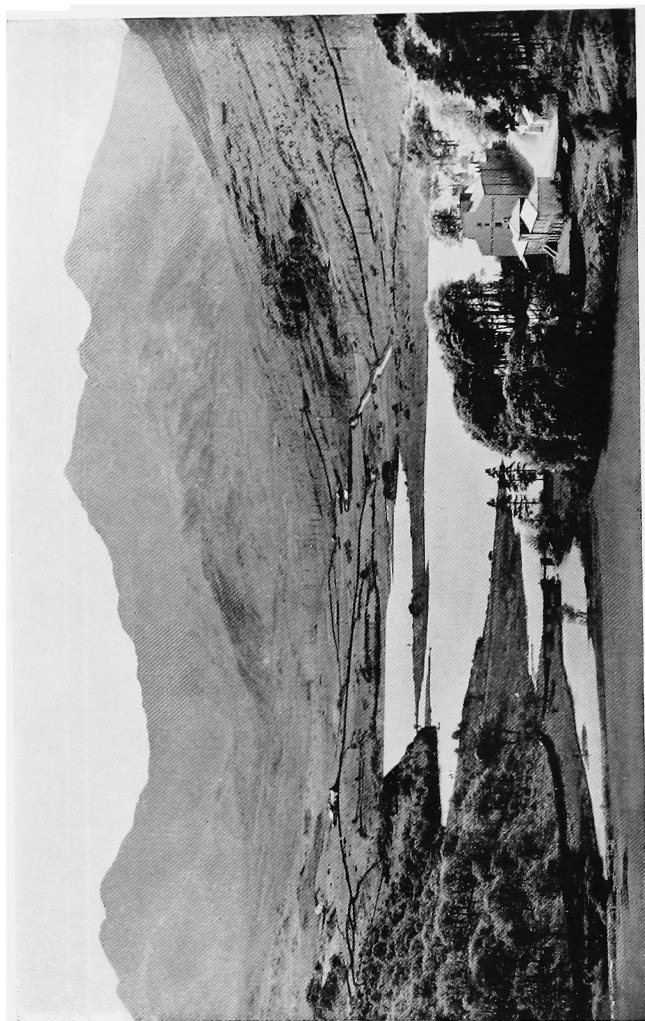
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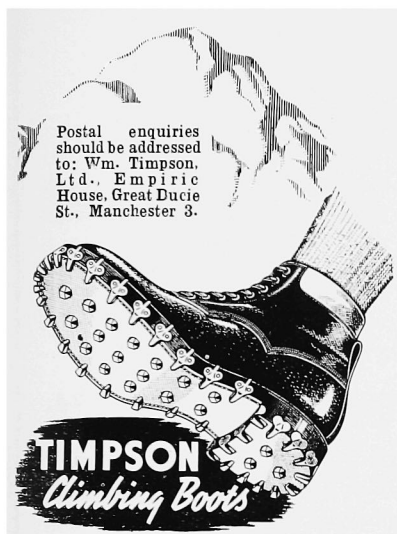
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