

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB.

This last year, in spite of bad weather conditions most of the coach meets took place. It might be said here that these were only made possible by the support given by the R.A.F. at Weeton to whom we are most grateful. We would like every time to have a full coach of our own members, it is managed for the Christmas meet so why not for the others ?

Last winter excellent skiing was enjoyed by members on Pike o' Blisco and the hollow between Pike o' Stickle and Harrison Stickle.

Of the holiday meets, Easter at Buttermere was, in spite of the bad weather, attended by nine people and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all. Easter Saturday which was fine was the best day resulting in a good days climbing in Birkness Combe. It was most amusing to climb in rubbers and walk from climb to climb on hard snow.

The August week end meet was poorly attended, only four being present. Nevertheless, two enjoyable days were spent on Shepherd's Crag and Miner's Crag, the most notable ascents being Slings (Shepherd's Crag) and the Corkscrew (Miner's Crag).

Coach meets suffered greatly from bad weather. One meet when the coach was cancelled, the most common reason given for not going was that it might rain. Four people fixed up their own transport and an excellent day was spent in Borrowdale in glorious sunshine..

A pleasant meet was held at the Carlisle M.C. hut. On the Saturday the Napes were visited and Eagle's Corner and Eagle's Nest Direct ascended. Later in the summer two of us did some of the lesser known climbs on the Napes namely, Eagles Corner, Sabre Ridge and Cutlass Ridge. All these climbs are rather difficult to find being unscratched, and although they are short provide excellent climbing which fully compensates the time spent in search.

I think the most successful coach meet from the weather point of view was the one to Dow Crag when the weather was perfect.

This year there has been a noticeable improvement in

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the standard of climbing in the Club. When this Club was first formed two years ago only about four leaders were available and great difficulty was found in fixing up ropes on a coach meet. Now sufficient people are leading to enable everyone to climb at the standard he or she desires, and each leader organises his own rope.

I would like to mention here that during the year a number of minor accidents have taken place. On enquiry the majority appear to have been shall we say "natural hazard", but one was caused by inexperienced persons attempting to climb in bad conditions without an experienced leader; the result a "peel-off", fortunately with no injury. It could have been a fatal accident and I would urge all novices to observe at all times the rules of safety and the advice given by the more experienced members of the climbing fraternity.

The social activities in Blackpool have on the whole been quite successful, and of these, two are worthy of mention; an excellent lecture was given by Mr. Robinson of Preston on Skye and Switzerland illustrated by a set of magnificent colour slides; secondly an Italian night held at the R.A.F.A. Club, Cleveleys which was attended by about twenty members. A meal of spaghetti was eaten in a room decorated with photographs, maps and items of climbing equipment. The illumination was provided by candles stuck in Chianti bottles, and an amplifier provided suitable background music.

So far this winter, conditions have been milder, but sufficient snow has fallen at the time of writing to make Central Gully an enjoyable climb. South East Gully also on Great End is well worthy of an ascent by the tigers. May I take the liberty of saying a few words about the latter. It is hard! Under perfect conditions it took five hours to do the ascent. The snow slopes were at an angle of not less than fifty degrees and mostly sixty, and the main difficulties were; a 20 foot vertical ice wall, a 60 foot almost vertical ice wall, a chockstone pitch on this occasion needing combined tactics and a cave pitch. The climb necessitates some 600 feet of step cutting, and on this occasion six pitons were found necessary to ensure the safety of the party.

During the last club year members got as far south as Italy and as far north as Skye where excellent climbing was enjoyed.

As I am writing this in the train, returning from the land of crag, scree and gully, the fields are getting whiter and I keep muttering "Snow you so-and-so, snow!" and at the same time thinking of a thought common to us all on these occasions, of a verse of an old climbing song:-

I'm lonesome since I left behind the land
Of crag and scree and gully.
While living in this lowland plain,
My memory will not sully.
I oil no more my well nailed boots,
For they do but remind me
Of the crags and climbs in the good old times
On the fells I left behind me.

J.D.J.W.

REVELATION.

With willing, early-morning eager feet,
Steadily climbing, we mount in sun swept weather,
Uplifted faces, the warm south wind to greet
After fragrant passage over ling and sun kissed
heather.

Slowly the path winds as to our goal we strive,
From greed of nations -- that cursed earthly pain-
Free this warm English day, vividly alive;
Soul's ambition spiritual, not material gain.

The last great pull to summit cairn; we race
Forward in our flushed youthful exultation.
The kingdoms of the World, before us at a glance
Stretch limitless in beauty into distant space,
As we stand in silence at that wondrous revelation
Of Power Divine, Creator of Universe's wide expanse.

A.

WITH LADDER AND ROPE.

"Come on! Get up! It's eight o' clock." This is a most unpleasant sound on a cold and windy morning but reluctantly you leave the warm bed, shiver, and drag on some mud stained clothes which are now unfit even for climbing. The sight of steaming tea, porridge, bacon and egg and the beaming face of our hostess "Mother Walker" soon revives the spirit and you decide that the weather is not too bad after all.

Soon we are striding merrily over the fell with ladders and ropes. "Where is it today?"

"Down to t'Cavern - right to t'sump." says a familiar voice. At last there we are at a large 'shake hole' in the ground. At the foot is a dark and gruesome looking hole, little enough indication of what wonders lie below it. Soon you are wriggling through it into a new world. at first it seems dark, but as the eyes get used to the change from daylight to lamplight on the safety helmets, you see stalagmites and stalactites of huge dimensions, glistening coloured rock shaped into crazy patterns by running water, and the ever changing shape of the cavern. Listen now to the music of the wonderland we are in! Music made by the constant dripping of water, the rush of a distant waterfall, the tinkle of 'musical stalagmites' when tapped with a rock - all combined with the very unmusical talk of the cavers as they go down and down through labyrinthine passages; fairy grottoes, huge waterfalls which sparkle in our lamplight. Down always down; your eyes are now aloft admiring the delicate tracery on the roof, then - Splash! you have learnt another lesson of potholing and paid the penalty in a soaking. However impressed you are by the wonders around, the caver must always be on the alert for the unexpected drop or a rock pool suddenly appearing at your feet. Finally the Master Cave which is so vast that our lamps will not penetrate its black space and only a magnesium flare which someone has thoughtfully remembered to bring will reveal its breathtaking grandeur. So it goes on, and in spite of wettings, we come back for more, for there are always fresh caves to explore or discover. Now that our Club has its own equipment we hope to see more members on the caving meets and before you pass a verdict on pot holing, why not have a go and see for yourself. Our 'speleo' experts will gladly help on matters of equipment - so climbers go down for a change!

BROWNCOVE CRAGS.

It may be of interest to members to hear news of the January 20th coach meet of the Club to Dow Crag which departed from Talbot Squ are at 8.30 a.m. in the Treasurer's car and was attended by four members. The fact that the ultimate destination turned out to be Thirlspot did not detract from the pleasures of a most enjoyable meet, and, in effect, brought to light three very good snow gullies on one of the lesser known fells of the Helvellyn range - Browncove Crag.

One member preferred the softer (?) pleasures of skiing, so there were three in the party which left Thirlspot with vague intention of traversing Swirrel and Striding Edges, should the snow conditions there prove favourable. It was one of the most perfect winter days imaginable - bright sunshine, almost unlimited visibility, and dry powdery snow on the fells. The east wind was rather cold up on the ridge leading to Helvellyn, but the snow was harder on the edge of the escarpment and a first view of the three Browncove gullies was obtained. They were filled with old, hard snow and, seen in full face seemed very steep as they rose in one magnificent sweep of perhaps 500 feet up to the corniced summit ridge. The gullies, however, belied their appearance so far as angle was concerned, as later investigation proved them to be quite amenable to a moderate party.

Swirrel and Striding Edges were disappointing this day, as there was little old snow visible and the new powder snow lay loosely at such an angle where the ridges abutted on to the main mass of the mountain, as to make an attempt to descend inadvisable. Besides which, the cornices, which were considerable, were coming away in many places.

Returning to Browncove Crag, a glissade was enjoyed to the level of the foot of the gullies, the centre one of which was entered about 2.45 p.m. It was hard, old snow to the top, entailing about

one and a quarter hours of step-cutting. Ice was visible in several places and invisible, under the snow, in others. The general angle was 45 - 50 degrees, steepening at the top rather, and the snow in such a condition as to render deeply cut steps essential. At least one member of the party will agree with this, as he performed an involuntary stomach glissade out of his difficulties !!

To sum up, this was a most interesting day, spent in near perfect winter conditions, and served to introduce three members of the Club to Browncove Crag Gullies. Late winter or early spring should increase the amount of snow and ice, as the altitude (about 2400 feet at the foot of the gullies) plus the fact that they face north east, will help in the retention of winter conditions. Altogether the gullies seem well suited to moderate parties without much experience of winter climbing, and they also have the advantage of being not much more than one hour from the main Ambleside - Keswick.

P.C.

OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS.

The following Ribble Bus is now operating on Sundays;

Leaves Ambleside 10 a.m.

Leaves O.D.G. 4.45 p.m.

This is being tried for an experimental period of three months.

HOW I CLIMBED GREAT GULLY.

All this happened many years ago, long before the F.M.C was there to point the correct approach to the mountains. 'The Voice' had whispered in our ears and the mountains had seeped into our adolescent blood. We steeped ourselves in the literature so that the words of Abraham and the other prophets were known by heart; so were his pictures -- pictures of real climbers. How nochalantly the leader held the rope with one hand whilst his second struggled below; what splendid beards they had - probably essential in order to hang on by their whiskers. Much as we tried, we couldn't grow whiskers like that, but we studied their dress and I decided that a cap and braces rather suited me. Boots were essential of course - but what a price - twenty five 'bob' for a ~~skin~~ pair of climbing boots! However, we saved up until we were equiped with proper boots and a rope of doubtful origin. We were all set for the Rocks, and after much research, we selected Pavey Ark's Great Gully. We took it in turns to borrow the book from the Library until we knew the climb by heart and the librarian complained about the mudstains on it.

Week after week we would take it up to Langdale, walk up to Stickle Tarn and decide that the Gully certainly looked a 'stinker'. Transport, equipment, reconnaissance, all these had been studied and a master plan evolved. We borrowed a tradesman's carrier bike and pedalled away to Langdale with a huge tent aboard. Then we carried the tent, equipment, food, half a dozen blankets and several tree branches up to Stickle Tarn (the latter were for fuel, not having a primus) At 6 a.m. the tent was up and we settled down for a good night's sleep - until 11 a.m. when we awoke feeling awful so we had a swim, ate some cold breakfast - we were too tired to bother lighting a fire, then we sat for half an hour looking at the Gully, agreeing that it certainly looked difficult. Finally, we slowly packed up and went home. The 'Plan' had misfired. Tents were useless, so we tried the hostels. We would sleep at Grasmere and try from the other side. When we reached Pavey Ark we were at once confused because it all looked different from the diagram in the book when viewed from the opposite side. Was it the second or third gully? This must be it we decided, so we roped up and Eric led up the first pitch in fine style until he announced that the Gully had disappeared.

"Don't be silly, gullies don't disappear - especially great ones - have another look, it will be somewhere around!" But Eric's knees were knocking. "I'm ~~coming~~ coming down - if I can" he shouted, and down Crescent Gully he came. At first we were despondent, until we remembered Everest, Whympet and all that, so we kept our upper lips as stiff as we could and tried again.

By now, summer had gone and our return found the Gully full of wet snow. Eric fell off before the first pitch so we went snowballing instead. It was at this stage that we met The Expert. He had done Middlefell Buttress - omitting the first pitch of course - so he was our new leader. Our next attempt was made on a wet February day. All went well until the Cave Pitch when The Expert announced that there were no footholds. "No footholds!" There is nothing about that in The Book!
"Then they must have been worn away"
"Well never mind, climb it without, or do something, it's wet down here"

"What do you think I'm doing up here, sunbathing?" We were interrupted at this point by two climbers who caught up with us. "Perhaps you would like to pass us" we volunteered obligingly.
"Thanks - perhaps you would care for a top rope on this pitch?"

Well, why not, No one will know - mutual co-operation and all that. And that is how we climbed Great Gully. We scrambled and scraped our way up the rest of it and came down Jack's Rake in fading light, but we had done our first rock climb.

"You were wonderful we told The Expert but he in turn returned the compliment. "You are climbers now, just like those in the Book, and just a minute, let me have a close look - Yes they are - There are definitely some whiskers on your chin!"

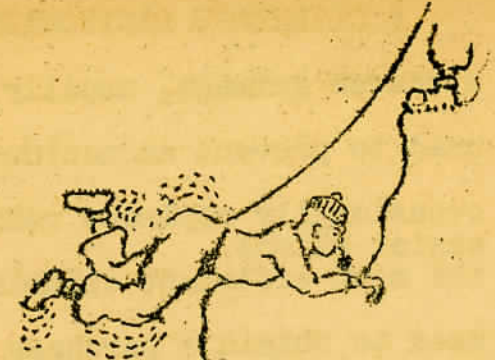
J JOWETT.

A CLIMBER'S DICTIONARY

- ANORAK a coarse garment, usually inscribed USNAVY.
- BELAY used to prevent an accident when it happens.
- BOOTS occasionally replaces rubbers on some easier climbs.
- CLINKER the most efficient climbing nail.
- CRAMPONS used to obtain a purchase on ice and a seat on a bus.
- GUIDE BOOK adds to the difficulty of route finding.
- HUT a long way off when returning from a climb.
- ICE AXE used for cutting steps, bread, wood etc.
- JUG-HANDLE term used by a well known climber to describe minute wrinkles on a sheer face.
- KARABINER used for removing finger nails.
- MOUNTAINEER see O.D.G.
- NYLON used by wealthy climbers and their girl friends.
- PITON unnecessary except when used by one's self.
- RAPPEL a useful means of descent.
- STRETCHER another useful means of descent.
- TRICOUNI the most efficient climbing nail.
- VIBRAM rubbers disguised as boots.

D.B.

OUR RUTHLESS OBSERVER
ILLUSTRATES
OUTSTANDING INCIDENTS OF 1951



A REVOLUTION IN
BELLY-FLIP TECHNIQUE



QUE TARD
OR
E TARD OR OTHER



SPLITS BOULDERS WITH
HIS HEAD



HELD BY HIS
"BETTER HALF"



EILEAN - A- CHES.

It certainly was living up to its name the day my wife & I arrived at the Kyle of Lochalsh. We could see across to Kyle Akin and the buses waiting there, which would take us to Sligachan. But of the hills, not a sign! - the mist was down to the 500 mark. When we arrived at Sligachan we found we had just missed the bus to Glen Brittle, so we rang up the Macraes at the Lodge and they promised to send one within the hour. So we adjourned to the hotel bar where we refreshed the inner man as is the custom in such circumstances. Here we were told that they had just had seven weeks of glorious weather and that it had just broken that day. Being of an innocent nature we expected that it would pick up again on the morrow. If only we had known!

Tomorrow dawned, as usual but certainly not bright, the mist was doing its best to creep into the Lodge porch. So as there was no improvement after breakfast we decided to call it a rest day, the first since we left the Fylde, as we had spent a strenuous week in Glencoe. There is one thing about the Lodge, if you do not go out for the day you still get your sandwiches for lunch, which was certainly a surprise to us. Between us I think we read seven books during our short stay; they certainly have a good collection of detective novels, they need it! Monday dawned the same, so we decided to be brave and get out somewhere or other. So off we went to Coire Lagan then followed our noses until we hit the ridge, which we did right at the Inaccessible's south face which was as cold and wet as mine. After a chilling lunch we decided to return the way we had come, arriving back in time for afternoon tea.

Tuesday dawned a little better with the mist only up to the first step of the porch. Still, our spirits were not damped, so we set off up Ailt Coire Na Banachdich and from there on to Gobhar. From there we followed the ridge on to Banachdich and Sron Bhuidhe, down to the Bealach and up on to Dearg and the Inaccessible once more. The weather was still atrocious, so we decided to come down the same way as the previous day and nearly succeeded for we 'mist' the way and had difficulty in finding the route again.

On Wednesday the mist, like the proverbial poor was still with us. So after breakfast we set out. From time to time our route ascended and occasionally we scrambled over rocks, but where we went or what ridge or peak we traversed, only the map and the compass knew!

Thursday. We went a trip round the Island in Macrae's bus having lunch at Portree. The weather was not too bad at times, but whenever we came to where there should be a view of the Cuillins we 'mist' it! and the roads, well, the name is a misnomer, any speed in excess of 10 mph. would result in a blow on the head from the back axle! Friday. We awakened in the hope that the weather would show us some pity, giving us a last day to remember. It did, it doubled the mist! Having by now become acclimatised to this, we did a complete traverse of all the ridges with the aid of a good map and picture post-cards.

Saturday. We had to get up early to catch the 7 a.m. bus and still the mist was with us. This time we did not worry as we were starting our long journey home. So if anyone should say, "Have you ever been to the Cuillins?" I should reply politely "Yes" but if they should say, "Have you seen the Cuillins?" My not so polite reply would be, "X?X?XX??-?-X?-?-X)X? ! ! ! " So as we started off poetically by naming it "Eilean - A - Ches", I would just like to ad, "Ches, Ches and more Ches! ! ! "

J.W.B.

CLARENCE THE CARELESS CLIMBER.

Excuse me fellow-climbers, while I introduce myself,
I'm sure you'd like to meet me in the flesh,
Though I've often climbed close by you, I'm afraid
we've never met,
Just a moment while your memories I refresh.

I'm the chap who dropped the boulder last time out
on Gimmer Crag,
Though I'm awfully, frightfully sorry for that slip,
It really wasn't my fault, it's the rock, you know,
it's loose,
When I felt that handhold move, I lost my grip.

They call me Clarence, and I'm such a clumsy climber,
I'll trample my tricounis on my rope;
You remember on that rubbers climb on Gable ?
I'm the thoughtful chap who left that bar of soap !

Yes I'm sure it must have been quite unexpected
When your foot came off and left you clinging tight
To that piton --- it was I who left that also,
It was broken anyhow, so that's all right.

You remember on that awkward pitch on Tophet,
Where that vital handhold went not long ago ?
Well, I must confess it happened accidentally,
And I only tapped it gently with my toe !

And then there was the Mountain Rescue Practice,
When the stretcher turned completely upside down;
And I only slacked the rope off for a second,
I never knew before a corpse could frown !

You heard about that time in Central Gully
When the head came off an axe ? You understand;
I returned it to its owner, who turned purple
When I told him that it came off in my hand.

Now when you're climbing Pavey Ark Great Gully,
And you come to where the chockstone used to be,
When you're vainly groping round in search of
handholds,
I hope you'll spare a thought or two for me.

My abseil karabiner never closes,
My bowline's almost sure to come undone;
You'll always find my nylon in a tangle,
And my running belays very seldom run.

I think that what I've told you will convince you
That I've left my mark on many famous routes,
So if you like we'll go and make another
By climbing up the Needle in nailed boots !

D.B.

SONGS THE MOUNTAINEERS SING.

(1)

To all you young climbers a tale I will tell,
'T will make even the stoutest heart quail,
Of a space in a boot where a clinker would suit,
'T was all for the want of a nail.

There was a young climber who with his two friends
Were camping in Emmerdale Vale.
In all youth and zest they would do the North West.
'T was all for the want of a nail.

Early one morning the young lads set off,
And walked up the path past Black Sail.
When he got to the foot he looked at his boot
To find it was lacking one nail.

They started to climb midst contentment sublime,
Found nothing to cause them to fail,
Till the third Dicy move up a long slimy groove.
't was all for the want of a nail.

Three hundred feet up and nearing the top
The next bit he just couldn't scale,
And ten feet away was a perfect belay.
'T was all for the want of a nail.

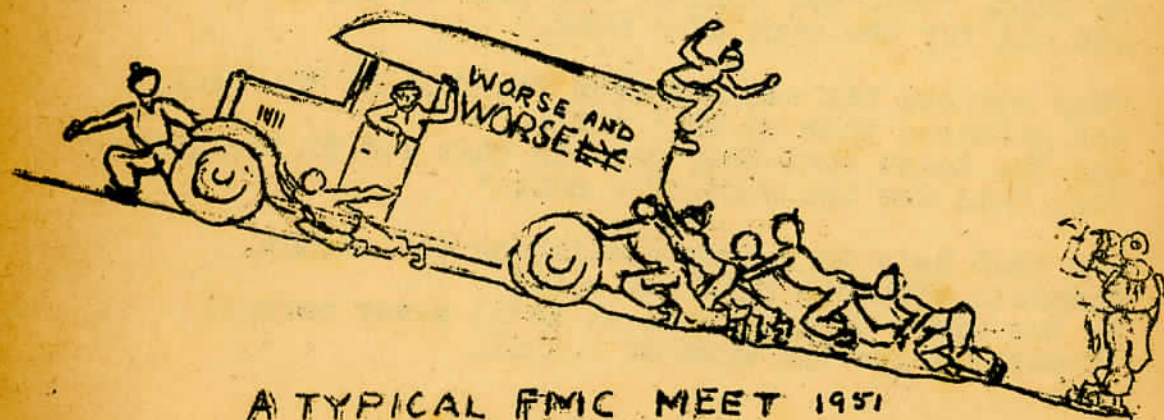
A shepherd looked down and he said, "Oh you clown
Now here is a rucksack for sale,
For by Moses and Jesus this lad's going to leave us,
And all for the want of a nail."

Off came his feet and his heart missed a beat,
He looked at his second (quite pale),
He said, "Good bye friend, for this is the end,
And all for the want of a nail."

They scraped his remains from the foot of the rock,
And gathered them up in a pail;
And the toast that they gave to that lad in his grave
Was, "All for the want of a nail."

Now that he's in heaven a-climbing the clouds,
Complete with his halo and veil;
He has wings on his feet, so he'll never repeat
'T was all for the want of a nail.

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A TYPICAL FMIC MEET 1951