

FYLDE

Mountaineering

CLUB



1955-56

JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

"No more wine? then we'll push back chairs and talk" Surely the pleasantest time of the day for the meditative mind is the leisurely chat after a meal with congenial companions - wine or no wine.

Looking back on days out I can picture many chats round the fire, after "the feast of the Gannets"! The stories and experiences that are told would fill volumes. Many happy hours have been spent in this way and just think of the wealth of material there for the journal if only members would put pen to paper.

The Club would like to hear more of your experiences and articles are welcome anytime.

Before finishing I would like to thank all those who have helped in the production of this journal, in particular John Mackeson and Bryan Knutton.

THE CLUB YEAR 1955

The events of 1955 Club Year were overshadowed by the tragic loss of our late chairman, Mr. Alexander, (Sandy) Mc.Beath.

In undertaking a review of the year's activities, a task which he would have carried out in so able a manner, I am conscious of the inevitable feeling of inadequacy, but tribute has been paid to his outstanding qualities elsewhere in this Journal and I must fulfil the obligation to the best of my ability.

In every organisation such as ours there will always be an ebb and flow in the degree of enthusiasm which must reveal itself in the number of attendances at club meets. Contrary to the note of pessimism which became evident from time to time at the 1955 A.G.M., the attitude of optimism, engendered as a counter-measure has been justified by the increase in both membership and in meet attendances.

The strength of the club undoubtedly lies in the fact that it is essentially a compact unit in which everybody is known to everyone else. It is perhaps only in such a body that we can come to know, to understand, and to make allowances for the individual idiosyncrosies and characteristics which each one of us, without exception, must reveal from time to time to our fellow-members.

It is the diversity in expression, outlook, ideals and pursuits that forms the character of the club, and the club has set itself out to foster an interest in all the many facets of mountaineering. One of the less tangible of these facets, which may possibly come under the general heading, "Mountaineering Ethics", is concerned with the creation of equanimity, comradeship and goodwill which is so essential to the general spirit of a mountaineering club.

Each of the mountaineering interests has drawn its quota of adherents and though the past year has shown a decline in the standard of rock climbing perhaps the recent infusion of vigorous young blood will inspire some of us to stage a "come back".

The opportunity of putting the ice axe to good use in this country occurs infrequently and the fact that so many of us have become "ski-bound" in recent years reduces still further the number who wield the weapon. But here again, a number of gleaming, virgin blades were in evidence on a recent meet. A most encouraging sight.

In no branch is there more evidence of enthusiasm than in the ever growing number of ski fanatics eager to take advantage of every brief snow fall. The extent of this enthusiasm may be gauged by the splendid turn up of no fewer than sixteen members to a club meet of seven days in the Grampiano in February.

Each year sees a number of members venturing further afield and 1955 has been no exception with parties visiting Norway, the Dolomites, Austria and Switzerland while nearer home the Scottish Highlands and North Wales have tempted others for briefer holidays.

It is pleasing to learn of the activities of our good friends the country members who have emigrated and are now apparently conquering lofty peaks in Canada. It is even more gratifying to receive contributions for this journal from some of them.

The pot-holers have formed a small and very active group and though it has proved impracticable to run coach meets to the pot-holing areas, regular well organised and well equipped expeditions in private transport become a feature of the club activities.

At home, though the few lectures have not been supported as well as they might, the purely social events have again proved a valuable means of maintaining contact between meets and in creating the convivial atmosphere upon which the club thrives. We owe a great debt of gratitude to those members who offer their time, labour and hospitality so unstintingly on these occasions.

The choice of venue for the annual dinner dance was perhaps not the happiest and though most members enjoyed themselves thoroughly, the atmosphere, largely due to the deplorable attitude of the serving staff, was somewhat strained at times. The event proved beyond doubt that the very nature of our club demands the unrestrained and informal occasion at all times, a point that will certainly be born in mind for the future.

At the Christmas Dinner Meet, always one of the highlights of the club year, both the dinner and the impromptu entertainment which traditionally follows was of the high standard we have come to expect. Denied use of the hotel lounge however, the occasion lacked something of the congenial atmosphere which easy chairs and carpeting have provided in the past.

The decision on this occasion to confine the meet to one day instead of two caused some controversy and it cannot be denied that the two day meet is more popular to a considerable majority. The committee made it quite clear that the decision was reached in an effort to ensure that a small number of members

who would not otherwise be able to attend should not be denied the event indefinitely.

It was a most gratifying indication of the members confidence in the good faith of the committee that even the most adamant two day adherents were still quite willing to leave the decision to the committee in future years and there is little doubt that their trust will be rewarded by a two-day meet next year.

We look forward to another year of varied activity and with the increase in membership there is every prospect of a happy and successful programme in which no meets are cancelled through lack of support.

D. E. Legge.

IN MEMORIAM:

Sandy was born in Edinburgh in 1895. In 1914, at the outbreak of war, he left his job as a newspaper reporter in order to enlist in the Cameron Highlanders, and, after being engaged in some bitter fighting in Flanders, he found himself in a transport unit in the Dardanelles. It was here that he had a remarkable escape from drowning after his ship, carrying a load of Mules required for the battlefront, was sunk by enemy action. He was a non-swimmer and saved himself by clinging desperately to one of his charges, and, after gaining the beach was picked up by a rescue craft. "Since then", he would say, "I have always had a great love of horses and a great distaste for water".

At the end of the war, Sandy signed on as a regular soldier for a period of 22 years and served in Germany, India and Great Britain. His interests now became absorbed in athletics - in which he was outstanding - especially at long distance running, and now he had the opportunity to cultivate this ability. He represented the Army at National and International events; ran at Wembley and Berlin Stadiums and was twice presented to the late King George VI.

It so happened, however, that he had previously met King George (when Duke of York) at Holyrood Palace where Sandy, as guard Commander, was invited to dinner and evening party games in the Palace - as was the custom at the time.

In 1936, he was discharged from the Army, and after working at Croydon for a short time, he secured a position as

Armament Instructor to the R.A.F. He was at several stations before being posted to Kirkham. It was at this time that he became interested in mountaineering. This interest very rapidly assumed a very important place in his life; first because of a deep rooted love of the hills; secondly, because of the need of physical expression now that his athletic career was ended; Thirdly, and most important - for the comradeship so essential to a man of his nature. In passing, I should record that all his life, he was the champion of the working man and followed his sincere beliefs in very practical ways, working on many committees, reading, studying and always striving to improve his knowledge.

At this time, Sandy joined two climbing clubs, the R.A.F.M.A. and the Mountaineering Association but neither of these seemed to provide a sufficient outlet for his great enthusiasm. So it was that in February 1950 he spotted a notice in the press announcing the inauguration of a local club. Sandy attended this meeting and became a member of the F.M.C.

The following winter proved to be one of the best post-war ski-ing seasons we have had. He was one of the first in the club to equip himself with skis and although he never attained great skill, he was always among those who went to the furthest point - the highest peak - to enjoy that extra long run back.

Many members will have treasured memories of climbs with Sandy in Skye, Glencoe, Lakeland, Derbyshire and Wales, while others will recall how he was among the tiny band of pot-holers who started caving as a branch of the club's activities. In addition, he was a traveller, taking every opportunity of climbing abroad and incidentally, taking classes in languages during the winter months.

Dorothy and I have the happiest memories of the holiday abroad which we shared with him in 1951. All three travelled to the Dolomites on my ancient bike and sidecar; a journey punctuated by many breakdowns. In spite of these, we did reach our destination and had some good climbing. The ascent of the Angue Torre and the Tre Aime de Lavaredo were the two most enjoyable climbs I remember with Sandy.

The following year he organised an ambitious programme in the Alps, starting from Chamonix. This was curtailed by Sandy falling into a crevasse, from which he was extracted with some difficulty by the combined efforts of Eric Lomas and a French climbing party. The remainder of his holiday was spent in a Chamonix hospital and the resulting spinal injury troubled him

for some time afterwards.

This misfortune did not deter him, and next year he was off again - to Zermatt - with a party of the R.A.F.M.A. - He enjoyed good conditions and, among other major climbs, did the Matterhorn by the Hörnlie Ridge, At this period, Sandy still had great stamina although he was troubled by arthritis in his leg and a weakness in the wrist, which finally compelled him to give up rock climbing. Consequently, at Zermatt on the following year, his activities were considerably reduced, while at home, his interests were turning more towards pot-holing.

In 1955 he was serving his second year as Chairman of the F.M.C. and planned a walking tour starting from Zermatt and following a high level route.

Bad weather prevented him from accomplishing this - so he travelled to Fruthwilen near Lake Constance to join with friends in the F.M.C. who were camping there. His last mountain walk was with them among the mountains of Eastern Switzerland and one of his last actions was to post them in Portland of his safe arrival in England.

In the fading light of an autumn evening we gathered from the fellside, the heather and mountain ferns which were to form a last tribute to our friend and leader.

This was not the end, however, for to everyone who has known him, every valley and crag of Lakeland is forever alive with the memory of happy days spent in the mountains with Sandy McBeath.

Jack Jowett.

CLUB NOTES AND COMMENTS by the Secretary

MEETS - During 1955 19 meets were held, of these 11 were coach meets on which the average attendance was 22. The remainder were non coach meets to various venues. Undoubtedly the most popular coach meet was the Xmas Dinner Meet to Gt. Langdale on Dec.18th, 43 persons attended, 33 on the coach and the remainder by private transport. The Bank Holiday week-end meets to Buttermere have been well supported, in fact the attendance on these meets grows each time. It might be said that from the point of view of activity 1955 was a very successful year. A week-end coach meet to N.Wales was held in September which though not very well supported numerically was highly successful from the mountaineering point of view

MEMBERSHIP: This has risen by 14 new members and at the end of 1955 there were 61 paid-up members - the highest yet. During the year there has been an influx of young keen types which is just what is needed and may have an influence in raising the average attendance on meets, which appears to be the case to date.

CLUB HUT -In spite of one setback after another the search for a club hut in or near Langdale continues. The Kennels near Elter-water on which we had pinned so much hope did not materialise and the committee were forced to begin the search again. No doubt some premises will be found in the future, in the meantime we can do no more than continue to make enquiries.

MEMORIAL TO OUR LATE CHAIRMAN: Elsewhere in these pages has been recorded the untimely death of "Sandy" Macbeath, our beloved Chairman. Efforts have gone into raising some suitable memorial and after negotiations with The Lake District Planning Board a suggestion was made by them that perhaps we might like to provide a footbridge across a beck in Gt. Langdale. A site at Oxendale Beck at the head of the valley was finally decided on. Although this has passed the committee stage the details have to be finally agreed with the Planning Board. Around £40 will be needed to carry out the scheme. To date £9 has been received from club members and further donations will be gratefully received by our Treasurer, Mr. J. Cooper at 245, Bispham Road, Blackpool.

NEW CLIMBS - Some members have concentrated their efforts on more local ground and a number of small routes have been put up on Ell Ell Crag near Bay Horse and Windy Clough Crag near Quernmore. Details of these routes can be obtained from the Club Log Book by application to me.

SKI-ING: The hardy band of skiers has been active both last winter and recently. The search for suitable slopes locally has yielded results and some good nursery slopes have been discovered on which practice can take place when suitable conditions prevail. The Annual Ski Races will be held as soon as conditions are suitable, and members will be notified if it is decided to hold them on a non coach meet week-end. A small trophy will be awarded to the member who covers the course of three runs over eight gates in the shortest possible time taking into account penalties for infringements. There are now eighteen members with skis in the club and a meet is being planned to Ben Lawyers from the 15th to the 25th of February next and any members wishing to attend should contact either Ray Legge or The Secretary. Already 15 members have intimated their willingness to attend.

EXPEDITIONS - Dennis Wildridge is already ahead with plans for a six weeks expedition to the Lofoten Islands in July next. This expedition which is being organised by a private party will also include Alan Roberts. A canoe will be part of the equipment taken to enable members of the expedition to reach certain climbing grounds approachable only by water. We wish Dennis and Alan the best of luck.

Bill Comstive and Enid Taylor are planning a fortnights expedition to the Zillertal Alps in Austria with the Berliner Hut as base. Any members wishing to join them will be welcome and should contact Bill as soon as possible. Alan Bell is talking of visiting the Norwegian Mountains in July and will no doubt welcome any members who wish to join him.

Various other members are talking of visiting the mountains on the continent this summer and a mass exodus of members promises to provide some very good material for next years journal, and lectures.

ROMANCE: I am sure every member will wish the very best of luck to Alan Brown and Jean Sharples on their forthcoming marriage at Easter.

CONGRATULATIONS: To John and Margaret Cooper on the birth of a son - Ian.

ODDS AND BODS: Will the member who "flogged" the Secretary's tin of beans from the club hut and wrote "ta" on the lid, please forward 8d to the Treasurer in aid of the club hut fund. Alan Bell's hangover at New Year was due to some "knock-out" drops quietly administered by a member - he still qualifies to join the elite "bevymoppers" in spite of infringements. That grand set of gentlemen the National "Scivers" Association have now lost their "headquarters" at Wall-End barn but "Ghaulighter" Shecklemyers states that they have left behind their heraldic shield bearing the inscription "Eat all, sup all, pay nowt". Perhaps one of them will collect it the next time he is passing.

Suggestion - that sometime we have a "Muckmeet" at the huts just for the benefit of the Secretary who never tires of "sprucing" up.

SOCIAL MEETS - Special thanks are due to the Mackeson's for their continued hospitality and splendid efforts to help raise money for the hut fund.

The highlight of their efforts being the garden-party for which the club is extremely grateful.

W.A.C.

THE LONG ROAD

The Trans-Canada Highway, in years to come, will be a great trunk road, but at the present, in places, it is not unlike a farm track.

Leaving Toronto on a glorious day in May, we headed North in a Sedan delivery van, packed tight with our worldly possessions. Our proposed 4,000 mile trek seemed doomed from the start. Only 50 miles had passed, along a perfect macadam road, when the left rear tyre decided the weight was too much and gave in. We had expected things like this to happen further north, but not on such a good road. However, after repairs, we carried on, camping at night just off the road, in a secluded glade.

Animal noises during the night were hard to get used to, especially after hearing many tales about black bears, Bobcats or Lynx, which frequent the North Ontario bush-land. Although we never saw any of the latter, in the close quarters of a tent the imagination can run pretty wild. Another dreaded animal in these parts is the skunk whose aroma has to be smelt to be believed. Only once did we have a distant encounter with the species - never again!

Through North Bay, we came upon the Trans-Canada Highway, which crosses Ontario from Ottawa straight across to North Bay, thence north through Cobalt into the Arctic watershead to Cockran. Here the road turns west across some really desolate bush-land.

At Val Gagre, a small French Settlement, we stayed at the one and only hotel, which was a frame building where one could plainly hear the neighbours' snores. The following morning a carpet of snow lay on the ground, and a biting wind was blowing from the north. We cooked our breakfast on an open fire-place by the roadside. These outdoor kitchens, which comprise a stone fireplace with hot-plates and a plentiful stock of wood, are maintained by the Forest Wardens. The purpose is to deter people from building fires in the bush, as the fire hazard in this area is very great.

Travelling on through Kapuskasing to Hearst, we really hit some rough roads. Occasionally we came upon a macadam road, but they were broken up into an uneven surface by frost boils. We were really thankful when we reached a good shale road beyond Hearst, it runs through the bush and yet still

more bush for 150 miles before reaching the next community. It is not a stretch of road to run out of gas - sorry, petrol! To us Hearst presented a strange picture, the main road - mud of course - ran past shacks which made up the town, and everywhere were large signs, "Dealers in Raw Hide and Skins"; The population seemed to consist of trappers and loggers in high boots and hunting jackets. Then, onward through Port Arthur on Lake Superior, with its huge grain elevators; Kenora with its many saw-mills, across the provincial line into Manitoba and the prairies.

We had taken five days to cross Ontario, but across Manitoba and Saskatchewan along the straight ribbon of road with the flat uninteresting prairies on either side, we only took two days sleeping and driving in shifts. A brief stop was made in Winnipeg but a temp of 90° F. soon drove us out of this thriving city, centre of the prairie wheatfields. The small townships with their exciting names such as Regina, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, were all very similar with their frame, shack-like houses. Before leaving Saskatchewan the road vanished into a sea of mud, and for about 60 miles we had to keep the wheels on two tyre tracks. At one point a huge transport lorry had slipped sideways off the track into the ditch. Eventually we reached Medicine Hat in Alberta, and had a solid road under us once again, and the townspeople watched with wonder as we emerged safely from the mud bath. It was near here we saw our first cowboy, but he did not have spurs or guns!

Just beyond Calgary, we had our first view of the Rockies. It was a perfect day and after four days of rain, the peaks stood out on the horizon against a deep blue sky. Banff (4,534') lives up to its reputation as a mountain resort. The views from the town are marvellous and it is surrounded by peaks. We camped in a spot with a wonderful view of the mountains, and fed the not-so-wild deer before crawling into our sacks ready for our toughening up course on Mt. Rundle (9,838') on the morrow. It was early in the season for serious mountaineering as we found out, trudging through the soft snow. Above the timber line and about 1,000 ft. below the second summit, we had to descend due to worsening weather. The following day we bathed in the hot sulphur springs. The water as it leaves the earth is 112°F and it is fed into the open-air swimming pool at a temperature of a 100°F. A notice on the side

of the pool reads: "Do NOT THROW SNOWBALLS". This dip laid us both out for a few days (the shock of the bath you understand). We would have liked to stay longer in Banff, but we had other places to see, so we carried on through the Banff and Jasper National Parks to the town of Jasper (3,470') another noted mountain resort. It is not as well located as Banff, but is still very picturesque. After stocking up with provisions and films we intended to spend a few days driving back slowly through the National Parks to Banff. En-route we stopped at Athabasca Falls and Jonahs Creek, where we rested and fished all day (NO LUCK!) amidst perfect scenery. We next set up camp at Athabasca Glacier, intending to stay a couple of days and climb on the glacier, perhaps as far as the Columbia Ice Field. The afternoon however, brought snow and by nightfall there was six inches on the ground. Next morning (1st June) we awoke to find it was still snowing and two feet of snow lay on the ground. Deciding the best thing to do was try to reach some habitation not to mention warmth, we dug the buggy out of the camp-site and onto the road, which took all morning, then slipped and skidded to the south gate of Jasper Park. Here, the warden made us very comfortable along with another dozen refugees from the storm. The warden himself was a very interesting person. He had in his possession many documents and records of the first settlers explorations in this part of the country, and from him we heard many tales of the great difficulties and hardships they had to face. He also had a vast collection of all the wild flowers of the Rockies, and he knew the haunts of the many animals. After two days at the South Gate House, the road over the Bow Pass (6,785') was ploughed, so we were able to carry on our journey. To walk, climb or even wander far from the road, was now out of the question.

The Trans-Canada Highway crosses into British Columbia via the Kicking Horse Pass and the Big Bend, but the road had been closed due to land slides, so we had to take the alternative route further south over the Vermilion Pass. Whilst in the Rockies we saw, moose, deer, bear, wolverine, elk and a golden eagle.

Kootenay National Park in B.C. proved to be very picturesque, with high mountains on either side of a narrow valley. Over the Selkirk Range we went, into meadow land and open cattle country; through the beautiful Okanagan Valley with its many lakes and fruit trees, many of which were in blossom. Then on across

the barren wastes of the southern Caribou, where only the sage brush grows and the tangle weed blows around. Finally, following the Fraser River down the awe-inspiring canyon, where the road and railway cling precariously to the mountain side, we reached the Fraser lowlands, baking in a temp of 92°F. Then, at last we saw the Pacific Ocean and Vancouver, after four weeks and 3,942 miles on the road.

Ron. and Angela Freeston.

THE ZUCKERHUTTL

This was it! The start of the ascent of my first Alpine peak. After a rude awakening at 4 a.m. and the usual frugal Alpine breakfast of hard brown bread and coffee, we were at last on our way. The morning air was ice-cold but the steady unceasing pace of the guide soon warmed us up and, as we gradually gained height, our efforts were rewarded by the increasing panorama.

The first rays of the sun were just lightly touching the highest peaks and as the sun climbed higher into the bluest of skies the mountain tops flamed with an unbelievable brilliance but as we reached our first big snowfield they gradually subsided into recognisable masses of snow, rock and ice. The nine of us, who had set out together from the Dresdener Hütte, stopped as the angle of the snow became steeper and divided into two parties, myself being on the rope of four. From then on the going was much harder work but not at all technically difficult.

First we had to cross a wide snow field until we came to a barrier of snow-covered broken-up rocks. We scrambled up without difficulty and set off again up a longer and even steeper snow slope. It was far more tiring for the heavier members of the party as the crust on the snow more often than not gave way under their weight whereas the girls practically waltzed over it. However, we were all very thankful when our guide suggested having our second breakfast on a col about 300ft. below the summit. The views were quite breathtaking. To the south we were looking at the mountains of Italy, while to the west the eye followed the long sweep of snow to the summit of Zuckerhuttli (11,400ft) and beyond its snowy peak could be seen other peaks of the Tyrol.

After eating and resting we renewed our efforts and soon

reached the summit after quite a hair-raising climb (to me, anyway) up very steep snow. We didn't delay on the top as by this time it was clouding over and a cool wind had sprung up. So after the customary handshake from our guide we descended quickly, rather more quickly than one person had intended, down to the col and then on and up to the summit of the neighbouring peak, the Wilder Pfaff. We paused only long enough on the top for a photograph of the conquerors, then down a very long and interesting broken-up-ridge until, miracle upon miracle a mountain hut appeared before our eyes! It was the Refugio Cima Libera one of the Italian Alpine club group so we were over the frontier. We thankfully untied, banged the snow off our boots and entered the hut where we ordered soup and a bottle of chianti wine and with the remains of our bread made the most of our mid-day meal. We paid for the soup and wine, bought some postcards with the huts insignia stamped on them just to prove that we had really been into Italy and then set out for the last lap of our journey.

Leaving the hut, we made a steep descent down onto a glacier and then it was just a long, rather tiring, walk through soft snow made interesting by the varying views on the left hand, of rocky peaks and pinnacles and, later on, of a magnificent icefall where our tributary glacier joined the main one. At last we reached the huge boulders at the edge of the glacier and we scrambled over them and on to the track leading back to the Dresdener Hütte where we arrived at 3 o'clock. One of the biggest advantages of the Alpine Huts is the fact that one can order meals at any time and we soon made short work of a huge meal and afterwards sat back and reflected upon what was, for me, the most memorable day of my holiday in the Austrian Tyrol.

P. Silcock.

"The star extinguished; darkness falls"

At 10.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 10th August 1955, a cruel stroke of ill-luck robbed the Club of its Chairman and all who knew him of a friend, when his machine collided with a motor-lorry in Sittingbourne, Kent and he received injuries to which he succumbed in Rochester Hospital soon afterwards.

Although an original member of the club, his orbit crossed that of mountaineering rather belatedly, a fact which caused him some regrets. In his desire to offset this, he became perhaps the most active member of the club, leaving no aspect of club

life, either outdoor or indoor, unexplored. In consequence, members, each and all, found a friend however widely different were their interests.

This ability to make new friendships and strengthen old ones was only one facet of his unique character. Lacking any semblance of guile, he was outspoken without malice and, as a guide and counsellor, he towered above all others. His opinions were deep rooted and usually unchangeable but always they were considered ones based upon a careful assessment of facts. His erudition in world affairs and life in general went unchallenged.

In the Club's earliest years when services were at a premium, his were invaluable both as an officer, committee member and regular supporter of outdoor meets. Indoors, he was not less active - indeed, his appearances in the Club's annual pantomime and Burns' recitations at the annual dinner were things of reknown.

Gradually, more of his time was devoted to potholing and it is perhaps in this field that his achievements were the most remarkable. There was a winter descent of Jingling Hole when, whilst preparing the first shaft, it became apparent that the freezing wind would heavily ice the wet ladder before we could ascend. The ascent of a 160' ladder, the upper third of which is encased in snow and ice, might well dismay a much younger man. His performance, however, was as first rate as were most of his others.

With the onset of underground fatigue comes perhaps a greater test of true friendship than at any other time and artificial facades collapse with both ease and rapidity: that very much younger men should continue to regard him as their equal and place in him their highest trust, is the greatest tribute I can pay to him.

The memory of one incident, however, proves to be merely the forerunner of a legion of others. I think again of blue skies and grey ones, of nice moves and nasty ones, of sunny slabs and windy ridges, of mossy chimneys and dripping gullies, of lying in the sun and squelching through the rain of electric storms and hailstones, of shivering in snow and freezing on ice, of rat-infested barns and fly-infested tents, of high winds and zephyrs, of stumbling through the darkness of Leck Fell with heaps of waterlogged ladders and wandering through the mists of the Caillin with crippling loads, of all-pervading freshness and all-consuming weariness, of hotel high teas and Primus low teas,

taxis and hitches, brandies and shandies.

As I stand in the now empty caravan, I see again the frost sparkling on the window panes, feel the warmth inside, smell the fumes of the leaking valor stove, hear the clatter of the teapot and the crinkle of a biscuit wrapper.

Hear again the discussions, confidences, arguments, chats, debates, songs and jokes that made so many evenings in the sanctuary now so silent.

Like elusive wisps of mountain mists, the memories come and go, clamouring for mention in all their confusion - and at the end of a mountain day, I am guided again through the wind and rain along the endless miles of darkened road by his red tail lamp, unblinking, matched in steadiness only by our friendship - a friendship that was a source of pleasure in the easier times and strength in the harder.

That such worth and ability should be so tragically and needlessly scythed is inexplicable and, like Burns, I wonder also.

"Why has worth so short a date,
While villains ripen grey with time".

A Cannell.

AN ASCENT OF TRYFAN

North Wales Meet, Sept. 1955

It was good to see a Welsh Meet back on the syllabus once again and it was even better when our Booking Secretary told me that the coach would go. Saturday was heralded by rain which persisted for most of the day, turning to drizzle in the late afternoon. The hard core of "regulars" huddled in the shelter of a garage in Cookson Street to await the coach. Undeterred by the unsatisfactory weather forecast, on the way to Ogwen we mainly discussed what was to be done the following day.

The coach reached Ogwen soon after 11.30 p.m. where most members alighted to scurry off to their sleeping holes, the remainder staying aboard the coach for the night.

E and I had booked in at Ogwen Y.H. and although we arrived at such a late hour a friendly bearded face welcomed us, and we were offered the choice of either a bed on the common room floor or on a table in the members dining room. I chose the latter abode and settled down for the night enshrouded in "Black's best". I awoke in the small hours to find my head hanging over the end of the table so I moved to the floor already incumbered by three other bodies who had fallen off before me.

Sunday morning breakfast was chaotic, the hostel being much overloaded but we managed somehow and bade our host farewell about 9.15 a.m.

Approaching the car park a small car drew in and a familiar figure emerged, a coil of rope about him. It was Ray. He had been "zooing" down in the south and had motored up from Reading the previous day. The three of us took the path to Cwm Idwal passing Alan Roberts' tent well pitched in a hollow near the lake shore. A glance inside told us that the occupants had breakfasted and left. Soon Tony Richardson and two guests heading for the Idwal Slabs overtook us.

Our object was Tryfan by Dud Ridge but low clouds and occasional spots of rain were leading me on to the Slabs also. At Llyn Idwal I paused for a photograph. The rain had now ceased and the clouds were lifting. A quick word with E and we decided on Tryfan after all and bidding au-revoir to the others struck off to make our own path over Y Gribin. Some shouts from a nearby crag told us that Dennis, Alan Roberts and party were attempting the Monolith Crack. This brought back recollections of my own attempt on this climb which I was forced to abandon after stripping down to my underclothes; even then I was unable even to get into the crack, bulk being the barrier to achievement.

We pressed on past Llyn Bochlwyd "boulderising" on the way. We passed over the south col and down to the South East face of Tryfan and the start of Dud Ridge.

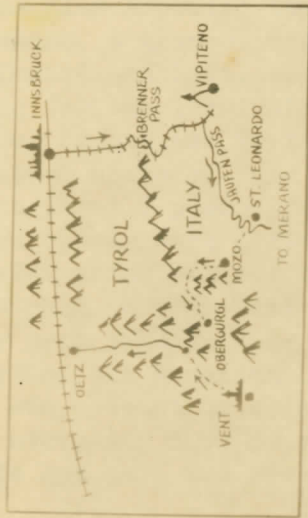
This route is no more than a scramble yielding some awkward bits which perhaps might be termed difficult but has character and interest in that route - finding plays an important part in threading ones way up the many variations which can be made. One needs a keen eye for suitable terrain, keeping clear of broken or loose rock and scree but some of our "tigers" would probably consider it kid's stuff by comparison. Sometimes the route is no more than a walk along heather and grass covered terraces but halts were frequent to discuss the next move and admire the view which gradually unfolded as upward progress was maintained. Bud Ridge takes a more or less straight line for the south summit and it is quite a change to have to pull up onto the final plateau instead of walking up a gradual incline to the highest point; the ridge provided just this, voices could be heard at length above us which indicated that the summit was not far off. A walk along a heather terrace a climb up a short but steep crack and I pulled



THE FREESTON'S See "THE LONG ROAD"



BLACK CRAG BORROWDALE



See "THE MOUNTAIN HUT"



BRIAN & CATHY BRADLEY ON THE YORKSHIRE DALES.



"...A MOUNTAIN IN ITS OWN RIGHT, VIEWED FROM THE ROAD."
See "THE ASCENT OF TRYFAN"



ALF IN INGLEBORO' CAVE.



SANDY



ROUTE TAKEN - ZUCKERHÜTTL (A) TO W. PFAFF (B) DOWN RIDGE, RETURN VIA GLACIER.
See "THE ZUCKERHÜTTL"

up onto the South summit of Tryfan. We crossed the South Gully to the summit proper which was occasionally enshrouded in cloud and sat down on a comfortable boulder to catch our breath and have lunch. Although I must have conquered some twenty odd summits in the British Isles. Tryfan was no exception to the thrill of yet another. For E it was a personal triumph being her second three thousand footer and for myself it was my first ascent of the mountain so we ate our lunch with relish feeling happy in our small achievement. We looked about us. Tryfan must surely be the best summit on which I have stood, the mountain falls away on either side in steep cliffs abounding in routes of all grades from scrambling to top grade stuff. By no way can the summit be reached without using hands which adds to its interest and character. Viewed from the road between Capel and Ogwen it stands aloof and detached, a mountain in its own right. I was impressed by the view and its lofty position in relation to the surrounding peaks and spent some time shooting off colour film in all directions. To the South west were the twin peaks of the Glyders, the col between them framing the distant summit of Snowdon capped by clouds. Occasionally the sun broke through to dapple the fellsides revealing the rich colours of the near-autumn tints. To the south, Moel Siabod was clear of cloud, and between it and Tryfan, Capel Curig lay bathed in sunlight. Suddenly we were hailed by Pat and Bryan who had come up from Milestone Buttress and having already lunched were continuing on to the Glyders to accomplish the ridge - quite a trip. We exchanged a few words with them and packing our sacks left the summit and descended by the south east track.

We reached the South Col and climbed on up the ridge to Llyn Caseg-fraith where I took a photograph of this small but charming hill tarn set high in the Welsh hills, the water being a rich blue in the late afternoon sunlight. We pressed on down Cwm Tryfan making our own track which more often than not crossed marshy ground with the water coming over our boot tops but who cared after such a grand day. Down we went climbing walls and fences in our path for we realised that if we did not hurry we would be late for the coach. At length we reached Ogwen and I darted into the coach and emerged with the stove and billy-can with which I soon produced a golden brown brew which we both polished off with relish. A refreshing cold splash in Llyn Ogwen, a pause for a photograph of the lake in the evening sunlight and we embark for home.

As the coach left Llanwrst behind, some fanatical photographer of sunsets kept leaping from one seat to another searching for a suitable stance to get the shot to end all shots through the coach window. E and I settled down in our seats, I lit my pipe which I puffed contentedly and no doubt our thoughts at that moment were back on Tryfan's summit as we sped home at the end of another grand club meet.

W. A. C.

THE CAVING YEAR

Since the publication of the last Journal in March, 1955, eleven official caving meets have been held. The first of these was more noteworthy for the journeys to and from the pot rather than for the descent itself.

The weekend chosen for this novices' meet to Bull Pot was one of heavily iced roads and, long before Kirby Lonsdale was reached, several skids and spills had occurred. The scene on the moorland road to Bull Pot Farm, however, was one of fantasy as motorcycles were driven sideways up the road and cars slid backwards on the steep hairpins. Collisions with both walls and other vehicles proved disastrous and finally one car was abandoned until later. After a nerve shattering two hours and a long trek, the party reached the pot, the descent of which proved relatively easy. A curtain will be drawn over the hair-raising return in the darkness over the still-iced road.

The descent of Lancaster Hole on April 3rd was made in order to explore the Graveyard and Stump Cavern Sections. The scenery here is on a huge scale, its impressiveness being enhanced by the unbroken silence and eeriness of the surrounds.

In direct contrast to the vast size of Lancaster Hole, was the descent into the constructed depths of Echo Hole on Lead Mines Moss at Easter. The narrowness and ugliness of the sharp, fluted entrance shaft gave the 100' ladder the dubious honour of being the nastiest climb of the year. The following day, despite the most careful damming of the surface stream, efforts to descend the notorious Quaking Pot proved abortive. The party were finally halted on the brink of the 90' pitch where an inspection through the maelstrom of spray revealed the suicidal nature of any attempt to descend further.

The majority of the party having returned home, the last day saw the remaining two motoring pleasantly up to Ribblehead in bright sunshine. A round was done of the Gearstones' Caves Katnot,

Holme Hill and Thorne Gill. The blue and red formations of the first named together with the discovery of a particularly rare type of formation, won for it the title of the 'best cave of the year'. Finally, mention should be made of Clapham Cave, visited on Good Friday. Although a show cave, it is well worth anybody's time and money. Commercialism has been kept to a minimum even to using candles, whilst the scenery is striking.

The weather on May 1st was even worse than at Easter, a truly foul day drove us from the vertical holes to the horizontal ones of Homeshaw, Hawes Gill and Gatekirk, the last named being perhaps the most notable since an apparently new section was entered and explored.

If May the 1st was foul, the 15th was even fouler. In the middle of May, we staggered across a Derbyshire moor in a blinding snowstorm seeking shelter. We found it in Windy Knoll Cave, a rather horrid affair compared to which Giants Hole next on the list, was considered quite sporting and interesting until the forcing of an abomination called 'The Wringer' ended all further enthusiasm. Blue John Mine was descended most respectably and we returned, finally, back across the moor, this time in a miserable rainstorm.

On June 19th, good weather favoured the meet to Hardraw Kin Pot and Sunset Pot as it did the July meet on which some investigation was undertaken on Park Fell. The death of Sandy Macbeath, a corner stone of the group, in August was keenly felt and led to a hiatus until October when Newby Moss saw further action.

These meets have been interspersed with four meets to Bull Pot, the last of the year being in December. These, in conjunction with other Casterton explorations formed part of a pre-arranged programme. The Bull Pot system is considerably more complex and extensive than is generally imagined. The survey which we have undertaken shows that the size of many of its halls and length of its galleries is considerable whilst in one section, fortunately difficult of access, the formations are indescribably beautiful and must rank as amongst the finest in the country.

1956 was opened by a 'tour de force' on Jan. 22nd. in which Bull Pot, Hidden Pot, Hellot Pot and Cow Pot were descended. Hellot Pot proved an even nastier version of Echo Hole and was descended only with considerable difficulty. Cow Pot proved to be a splendid descent, the initial 90' pitch being very fine. It is hoped that the success of this meet augers well for future meets

and sets the keynote for the coming season.

A. Cannell.

The Zillertal: Tyrol

Very pleasant are my recollections of visits made to the Zillertal Alps in 1929, 1932 and 1934. In those days I also visited the Otztal, but in my opinion the former win easily for summer climbing, especially in provision of good and plentiful rock. I hope the following notes may be of help since I hear that several of our members may visit the area this year.

The Zillertal Alps run eastwards from the Brenner Pass, and therefore lie pretty well due south of the lovely old city of Innsbruck, in one of the delightful hostelries of which one had better spend the night before travelling to the mountains which form the frontier between Austria and Italy. The Berliner Hut is easily the best centre, approached on foot from the mountain resort of Mairhofen, a few hours from Innsbruck by rail or bus. With the inevitable heavy pack, it is a long day from Mairhofen (2,000 feet) to the Berliner Hut (nearly 7,000 feet). Luckily about half way (in height) the BREITLAHNER (hut or pub) if still open, offers succour. The Berliner Hut is larger than most. Like all the Austrian Club Huts it is well stocked with food and drink (long draughts of Pilsner beer, do I not remember you?). Also about a quarter mile up the valley towards the glaciers dirty snout, there is a little bathing pool. Fed from rain and melted snow it soon warms up in August, and is just the place to laze on a summer's day, after some strenuous struggle with the surrounding peaks. The hut provides an excellent centre for the following:-

Rock Climbs - The Sigismundi Spitz (named after the two climbing brothers). Approached by the delightful but icy cold Schwartzee, a rock climb of moderate to difficult standard by the ordinary route, which after starting on the right hand ridge traverses on a shelf left, and zig-zags back to the right hand ridge and then up it to the summit.

Morchen-Scharte - Close to the last named but I forget how we approached. This is a tougher proposition. Scharte means ridge (you will see the word often on the map) and this is no mean ridge of about 500 yards with some difficult rock pitches here and there. No snow or ice. Well worth while.

Greiner - A rock peak on the opposite side of the Berliner valley. A grand expedition is to climb the Mosele, descend to the Furtschagelhaus Hut in the next valley, staying a night or two,

returning by a traverse of the excellent rock ridge of the Greiner. The route off the Greiner ridge passes down some pretty loose stuff and requires care.

Rock and Ice Climbs -

Mosele (11,000feet) The standard route, to leave the Schonbichler Horn path high up and cross the glacier to the frontier ridge east of the summit and then west up that ridge to the top. But it is more interesting to leave the glacier earlier by the little N.W. ridge known as the Waxe Grat. This starts from the bergschrund as a rock ridge, and after one or two strenuous passages, joins the main ridge by a delicate little snow ridge with very steep slopes on either hand. Then east up the main ridge to the top by easy rock and snow. The descent on the other side over the snow field to the Furtschagelhaus Hut is not difficult.

Turnerkamp -

(11,000feet). Going east along the main frontier ridge, this is the next peak. Approach is usually, as far as I remember, along the same route as for the Mosele, thence up the splendid west ridge on sound rock including one splendid passage up stiffly ascending rock taken a cheval. Descent down a subsidiary ridge to the north and over the glacier back to base. This provides a fairly long day.

Schwartzenstein - A glacier and snow peak at the head of the Berliner hut valley. If conditions are good it is for the most part an easy snow walk, not much crevassed. It provides the usual route over to the Greizer Hut in the next valley east, from which I suppose the Loffler is climbed. The map shows a hut close down on the Italian side. In the days of Mussolini there was no cross traffic except by smugglers but now I hope it is different. It will however take a long time before the north Tyroleans accept what they consider to be the rape of South Tyrol.

This completes the list of climbs which I have done, all with a guide except the Sigismundspitz, which I first climbed with a guide and later without. I also climbed the Rotkopf, a disgusting example of a mountain muck heap, about 3,000 feet of shifting scree with a 30 foot pitch up a little rocky summit at the top.

On my first visit my friend and I were not climbing but we had a very pleasant time wandering over the passes from east to west. From Mairhofen we went up the valley to the Greizer Hut, next day over the Schwartzenstein to the Berliner Hut. Thence to the Furtschagelhaus Hut by the easiest route, a well defined path which traverses the little rock peak of the Schonbichlerhorn.

Later to the Dominicus Hut and over the Alpeinerscharte to the Geraer Hut, and so down from the mountains, to St. Jodok, near the Brenner Valley. The Olperer and the Riffler could no doubt be done on the latter part of this tour, but I am convinced from experience and reports that climbing is best in the area round the Berliner Hut. (Heights given are approximate only)

J. F. Mackeson

"THE MOUNTAIN HUT"

This is the true story of an unusual experience - a high level crossing of the Alps, from Italy to Austria, without guide and alone, without maps or any knowledge of the country or of the language on either side of the frontier and almost without food. There were also some other things about the journey which were unusual but they will appear in due course.

When I went to Tyrol with a mountaineering party in the summer of 1951, it was my intention to take a couple of days off to visit Northern Italy, the Brenner Pass and the beautiful old city of Innsbruck. As we were climbing in the great horse-shoe of peaks and snowfields which almost surround Vent, the obvious way to do all this, in the time available, would be to travel by jeep to the village of Obergurgl, cross the Alps, with one or two companions, to the Italian village of Mozo and then to make a way, by the little town of St. Leonardo and over the Jaufen Pass to the ancient town of Vipiteno. Here the railway, though the Brenner Pass to Innsbruck, would be struck. By leaving Vent by the first jeep in the morning, I planned to reach Mozo by evening.

At Vent, however, I met two disappointments. In the first place, none of the party would volunteer to come with me, and, secondly, we found that the Italian frontier was still closed. Anyone entering Italy, except at certain control points, such as the Brenner, is arrested. There is, fortunately, no ban on entry into Austria from Italy, so I could still do the journey in the reverse direction.

But reversing the route, strange though it may seem, made it more difficult. The Italian vallies are 4,000 feet lower than the Tyrolean - an important matter in muscular effort and hours of daylight. I would have to travel light, long and fast.

Also, no information or maps were available to show what I would find on the other side of the frontier. No one, not even the guides, had crossed the mountains into Italy. In theory, Italians could cross to Austria but they could not return; except by a

detour taking two to three days and with a suspicious cross-examination into the reason for their activities, at the frontier control.

As a result they just stayed behind their mountain barrier. The mountains which form the frontier between this part of the Tyrol and northern Italy are known as the Oetzaler Alps. The frontier ridge rises to peaks of 10,000 - 11,000 feet and is covered with ice and snow all the year round. I was then 53, worked in a Technical College for most of the year but had, when opportunity allowed, done a fair amount of climbing in three continents. My knowledge of Italian is limited to two words and my German is also very slight.

I left Vent at 7.15 a.m. on Tuesday the 31st of July, As far as Zwieselstein, 11 kilometres down the valley, the journey was made by jeep, with a trailer. The track was no wider than the vehicle and for most of the way there was a steep drop on one side of the road, of course unfenced. At intervals we dashed across a torrent, crossing a bridge of slippery planks, again no wider than the jeep and completely unfenced. As the track usually entered and left the bridge by a right-angled turn and as the trailer had the habit of cutting the corner, the journey was far from uninteresting.

From Zwieselstein the route lay down the beautiful Oetztal valley, running almost due north to meet the main valley of the Inn at Oetz. Down this latter valley runs the Tyrol's only railway. Here I boarded an electric train, going east.

The train reached Innsbruck at 12.20 p.m. and I found that there was a train leaving for the Brenner and Italy at 1.45. This gave me time to either have lunch or else to see the historic buildings of this lovely old City. I chose the latter. If I had known that it would be two and a half days before I would have my next meal, I might have decided otherwise.

The heat in Innsbruck was intense and I was glad when the Italian electric train climbed the valley of the Sill to the Brenner Pass.

From Brenner, the train ran down into northern Italy and the lovely old town of Vipiteno was reached at 5.30. Although it was evening, the heat was even more intense than in Innsbruck.

Here I found that the "auto" for St. Leonardo had left an hour earlier and that there would not be another bus until the next day. I had now completed three sides of my "square" tour but the difficulties were before me and, unless I could reach

Moze tonight, it would take me another day to reach the mountains I had to cross. I therefore decided to try to "hitch-hike" over the 7,000 ft. Jaufen Pass to St. Leonardo, 39 Kilometres further on.

I was hungry but every minutes delay reduced my chances of getting over the mountain range before me that evening. So I took the road to Merano, and after I had gone $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres an ancient Fiat with two men, came up and I was given a lift.

Twice we had to stop to let the old engine cool. The air gradually grew cold and then, as we reached the snow line a gap appeared in the ridge. Through the gap we looked down on St. Leonardo, 4,750 feet below us. It was 8.0 p.m. when we entered St. Leonardo and the waiters in the hotels were serving appetising meals. If I stopped for one, the inn or inns at Moze would be locked for the night when I arrived there; so I had to push on.

First, I had to buy a map of the country over which I had to climb but when I tried shop after shop (using my Austrian maps to explain what I wanted) the shopkeepers looked scared and signified that I would have to apply to Merano - the seat of government for this province.

They could, they explained, sell me a picture postcard of the town. Finally I came upon a black-bearded giant - a survivor of the Austrian minority - who welcomed me when I addressed him in German and showed me an ancient chart on cracked linen. From this, I could see that a road climbed a gorge, eastwards, to Moze and then stopped; for a great massif of peaks blocked the gorge. From Moze, however, a gorge went north for some miles, into another going east and, at its end, was a high alpine valley, which lay south, between the massif and the frontier range. In other words, I could turn the massif to the north and would then find myself in front of the mountains I must cross to reach Austria.

It was still light when I left St. Leonardo but it soon became dark. The road climbed unceasing up through a narrow gorge. Four times the road tunnelled through the great rock walls which hemmed it in and I had to grope my way blindly forward with water dripping from the roof. Not a sign of life was met and it seemed that I had been going for hours when at 9.30 p.m. I reached Moze (3,300ft) and found the "gast-haus". My attempts to raise a meal produced a cup of coffee, a roll, with $\frac{1}{4}$ litre of wine. I tried to appease my hunger with an orange and some of my emergency chocolate and food tablets. It was 6.0 a.m. next morning when I left Moze, after another cup of coffee and roll, this time with a pat of butter. I found a track going

through the narrow gorge, northwards. It was made of pine trunks, bracketted out from the sheer rock wall. In places, parts had collapsed and looking down into the gaps, one could see that all the timbers were completely rotten by age and decay. Breathing a pious wish that a contrivance, which had lasted so long, would survive another hour I pushed on. After some miles, I crossed by a footbridge constructed of two pine logs, so rotten that my ice-axe went through it each time I used it to steady myself.

Up the slopes I toiled, in the sun, diagonally to a saddle in the sky line. Over this, I found myself in the second valley, going westward. A delightful path ran through cool pinewoods. The gorge floor rose to meet me and, eventually I crossed it, by another footbridge.

A steep grassy slope led to the third valley and the massif had been turned. The woods were now sparse. At 10.0 a.m. I stopped for lunch - my other orange, half a bar of chocolate and two food-tablets washed down with icy water. I continued to push up the valley until at a height of 6,000ft. I could survey the whole frontier range. Now, for the first time, I learnt the nature of the task before me; for there was no pass, in the accepted sense. From north to south the range stretched in an unbroken wall - literally a wall - with a jagged sky line of peaks and saddles, like a worn out saw held upside down. At intervals, steep couloirs (grooves filled with ice and snow) streaked the wall.

Opposite me on the ridge, was the northern summit of the Konigskogl (9,249ft) and, to the right, a conspicuous saddle called the Konigsjoch. I toiled up to it over trackless wastes and a concealed glacier. Above it towered a great couloir, 850 feet high, going straight up at a very steep angle to the summit of the "joch" but this route was unthinkable. After having the hot sun on it all day, the snow would be wet and soft and would not bear my weight.

I mounted to a ridge and worked along its edge until I reached the great buttress of the northern summit of the Konigskogl. The buttress turned out to be composed of a rotten shaly rock cracked and splintered into small pieces, which came away in showers as soon as any weight was put on it. Finally, at 4.30 p.m. and at a height of 8,530ft. I had to admit defeat. Even if the snow in the couloir hardened as the sun left it, it would be dark before I could reach the summit ridge and the Austrian maps showed a disquieting absence of tracks on the other side of it.

At the head of the valley which I had left; my Austrian map showed a mountaineers' hut - the Seebertal Hut. From the ridge, I

had already spotted it, through my glasses. In fact, I had studied it several times for there seemed a peculiar atmosphere about it. I cannot describe the feeling. Perhaps the best description would be "unearthly". One saw it as a mirage - visible but not really there. There was a feeling that one could see right through it to the mountain wall behind but, although I searched it carefully through my glasses I could find no grounds for this feeling. True there was no sign of life but, in that lonely valley, that did not surprise me. There would be sure to be blankets and emergency stores there and though, no doubt, the doors would be locked, I had my ice-axe with which to force an entry.

It was not possible to traverse along the mountain side as the cliffs consisted of the rotten and broken rock I had already encountered, so I had to descend. At 6,900ft I struck an old track leading to the hut. Every few yards I had to rest. A mountaineer reckons to ascend 5,000ft or so in a day. This day, the second day of my "fast", I had ascended a total of 7,000ft as well as making my way, mapless, over 12 miles of difficult unmarked mountain terrain.

Finally, I could see the hut above me, silhouetted against the sky-line and my heart sank. A gable showed, roofless and windowless. After a few minutes thought I decided to go on. Since the structure was still shown as a hut on the Austrian map, I felt sure there must still be an emergency store there (under-estimating how surely a sealed frontier can conceal events only a few miles beyond it).

The "hut" which completely occupied the top of a small knoll, consisted of two walls and half a third. On its front gable the name in giant letters - "REFUGIO PRINCIPAL DEL PIEDMONT" seemed to mock me. Besides the burnt-out ruins (for the hut had been destroyed by fire) there was nothing, except this on one side was a lean-to which, since there was no room for it on the knoll, had been built over the slope. It therefore had a basement which, being below the fire, had escaped total destruction. There was still a door and a part of a ceiling, though much of the walls had collapsed. Apparently it had held goats. Above it was an opening with two cross bars down it. These bars had been bent and I remember realising that some human being had been trapped in that inferno and had attempted to escape through that window. It was now 5.30 p.m. to retreat to a farm, where I might obtain shelter and possibly food would mean abandoning all the height which I had gained so hardly. Also, I would not reach it before it was time to set out again. So I decided to spend the night, without tent or blankets, on the snow

line, in the ruins of the hut. I blocked up holes in the basement walls with fallen masonry, to keep as much of the wind out as possible and collected charred rafter ends for fuel. The wood was split by my ice-axe but was too wet to ignite. Finally, I sacrificed half my candle and soon had a warm but very smoky fire. My supper was $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of chocolate and two food tablets. For some time, I dozed, rousing at intervals to make up the fire. It was now dark. Eventually I fell asleep and woke about 11.0 p.m. to find that the fire had gone out. After that, there was nothing to do but wait for daylight. I was sick but only brought up the unused digestive juices (the price for living on tabloid food). It was about midnight when my heart started to give trouble - fluttering or shivers which became steadily worse. Never having had the slightest heart trouble before, I had no idea what was happening to it. In my rucksack were two glacier mints, I sucked one of these. Gradually the shivers subsided. It must have been soon after this that I realised that there were people all around me, talking in the pitch darkness. There was a woman among them and they took no notice of me. I was too exhausted to try to speak to them. Later on, the heart trouble returned in a more alarming form. In my present state, I would need my last mint for the climb the next day and I resisted the temptation to take it now. My position was however, now becoming serious. If I developed a heart attack I knew that no help was likely to reach me for five days. It would be 24 hrs. before a search party would be organised at Vent and they would spend the next day searching the Austrian side of the border. After that, a party would come into Italy, via the Brenner, and would probably trace me in three more days, but my chance of surviving those five days in my present situation and condition would be small. It was then that the voices returned, the same voices for I heard them distinctly. I seemed unable to speak to them but their presence gave me a wonderful feeling of re-assurance. With people around me I could be sure of help and the heart trouble died away.

Later, the cold must have penetrated my stupor for I realised that I was still alone in the barricaded ruins and that no one could possibly have entered. After that, came the long and seemingly endless wait, in the cold silence, for daybreak. I lay quite still for what seemed days.

About 4.0 a.m. strange grey shapes appeared all around me and they worried me until I realised that they were the first light of dawn coming through the holes in the walls. I went outside and found the promise of a fine day. My breakfast was the last half an

ounce of chocolate and $1\frac{1}{2}$ food tablets. It was now just two exhausting days since I had had a meal and I was feeling far from fit. By five o'clock it was light enough to see the way and I set out. My plan was simple. Using every art known to the mountaineer to conserve energy, I would "ease" myself over the mountain range before me. I had until 9.0 a.m. to reach the summit ridge and a fit climber could do it in two hours, provided he knew the way. That was the difficulty. I had no guide or knowledge of the route and the wild masses of rock and ice presented no obvious route. Unless I found the route easily, I would be beaten.

Traces of an old track led to the foot of a glacier. Here I expected to lose it but a track went off to the right, zig-gagging up the scree, straight for the northern summit of the Konigskogl. As this was obviously the wrong direction, I would have dismissed it as a climbers route to that summit had I not noticed that it had once been well used. The track, therefore, must have some other purpose. Half way up the scree the track died and I toiled on up only to find another buttress of the same rotten stone which had turned me back on the previous day. On my left was a couloir and beyond it, another buttress. Looking down the couloir, I noticed a ledge on the far buttress, opposite the point where the path had stopped. Keeping my eye on this ledge, I descended and saw, on the rock face near it, a faint painted red mark. The sign must have dated back to, at least the First World War, when the South Tyrol was a part of Austria. A track going in that direction must lead to Austria; since there is nowhere else where it could lead. I stamped steps across the snow couloir and climbed on to the ledge. From it, the route ascended the edge of the buttress in short vicious zig-zags. Good height was gained and soon the ruined hut was a thousand feet beneath. The glacier, which, from the hut, had appeared to be the best route, now could be seen to end in sheer ice walls of great height. At length the ridge was reached. On my left, it fell a thousand feet to the glacier, but, on my right, it enclosed a hidden glacier, beyond which the mountain wall towered. Just opposite me a couloir went right up to the skyline. The rock, as elsewhere, was near-vertical enough to demand climbing technique but too rotten to be trusted. The couloir would "go". Down its left hand side, yellow streaks showed the track of rock avalanches but on the right the snow was undisturbed. The "bergschrunn", or cravasse where the moving glacier pulls away from the mountain above, was blocked by an avalanche from the couloir and presented no difficulty. I crossed the avalanche tracks quickly

and had scarcely done so when a mass of shivered rock above, thawed by the rising sun, collapsed and shot by me. The biggest piece was as large as my body. The couloir was 900ft. high. From across the glacier it appeared vertical, a smooth icy slope almost as high as the Eiffel Tower. Conditions were good; the sun had now softened the frozen surface of the snow but, beneath, the frozen snow held the steps I kicked in it. But this is fatiguing work when it all has to be done by one man and so is the monotonous work of lifting the body up, foot by foot, up that great height, for hours on end. Half way up, my progress was getting slower and slower, my halts for rest more frequent. Presently I found myself digging one hand into the snow to steady myself and finally I collapsed, from sheer exhaustion, on my ice-axe, driving it deeply into the snow. My heart and legs told me plainly that I could go on no further but my mind kept repeating "You can't stay here". This was literally true, since the softening snow would presently give way beneath my feet. This was the emergency for which I had saved the last glacier mint. I waited some minutes and then started up again. My rest, however, had given me fresh grounds for concern. It was now possible to discern that the ridge above me was not in the general line of the frontier. Would I reach it only to find that the frontier ridge still lay beyond; or, if it was the frontier, would the other side be an impassable cliff? Again the feeling of exhaustion came on and I made over to the right side and sat on a rock ledge. The ledge fell away starting a small avalanche. Fortunately I stayed behind. The snow was still holding but I had no time to waste. The ridge was now only a few yards above and I just had to know what was beyond. The couloir continued right up to the skyline and finished against a bench-like slab of rock. I lent over it and looked down into - Austria. The ice-field on the other side was very steep but not difficult. I could now see that I had missed the saddle, which is concealed from the Italian side, and was on the summit of one of the minor peaks in the range. The error had given me an additional 200 ft of climbing.

I glanced at my watch. It was 9.15 a.m. The next moment I slithered down glacial gravel onto the ice-field and glissaded down, ski-ing without ski, to the foot of the glacier. Here, in a wilderness of boulders, I found, by luck, the marked path into Austria. After that it was just a down hill walk through a long and dreary valley. I was sick again, for the same reason as before. The valley empties into the Gurgltal at a high level and the last part of the descent was a traverse through woods. The stream was

crossed by a plank but the final gentle ascent to the village of Obergurgl seemed the hardest part of the journey. I was going pretty badly now. At the entrance to the hamlet, I passed several people and tried to give the impression that I was just strolling casually, to conceal my difficulty in putting one foot before the other. The second building in the hamlet was an hotel and I went in. As I stood still at the counter and the manager came forward I felt my legs giving way and I leant over the counter, gripping its far edge for support. The manager and his head waiter were most helpful, I could not hold even a sip of coffee but managed a cognac and two glasses of warm milk. They looked at me strangely when I mentioned the burnt-out mountain hut, (Later, I was to understand why,) It was now 10.45 a.m. I boarded a jeep leaving for Zwieselstein, from whence another took me back to Vent. I arrived at 2.30 p.m. and went straight to bed. At 7.30 p.m. I was awakened and went down to worry an omelette but it was not until the next day, after a good night's rest, that I could eat solid food again.

That should be the end of the story but some of the party remained for another week and, later, the leader of this group wrote me a letter which concluded -
 "P.S. From our second Guide, Rudi Fiegl, I learned that the burnt-out hut was one which had been used for smuggling. About 1933 the smugglers were caught and kept in the hut. They overcame their guards, imprisoned them in the hut and set it on fire. The smugglers were later caught in Obergurgl".

As I read, I thought of the iron bars across the window opening, just above me in the burnt-out hut, and of the voices round me in the night.

T. H. Jackson.

MEETS HELD IN 1955 -

January 15th:	Thirlspot.	C.M.
March 5/6th :	Langdale	H.M.
March 20th :	Langdale	C.M.
April 8/11th :	Wasdale Head	O.T.
April 24th :	Coniston	C.M.
May 15th :	Kinder Scout.	C.M.
May 29th/30th:	Buttermere.	O.T.
June 12th :	Gt. Gable	C.M.
July 3rd :	Langdale	C.M.
July 30th/Aug. 1st:	Buttermere	O.T.
August 7th :	Ell Ell Crags	O.T.
August 14th :	Patterdale	C.M.

MEETS HELD in 1955 (Cont'd)

September 4th :	Coniston	C.M.
September 11th :	Windy Clough Crag	O.T.
September 24th/25th.	Ogwen - N.Wales	C.M.
October 9th :	Langdon Castle	O.T.
October 16th. :	Borrowdale	C.M.
November 27th :	Newlands	C.M.
December 3/4th :	Langdale	H.M.
December 18th :	Christmas Dinner Meet	C.M.

C.M = Coach Meet : O.T = Own Transport : H.M. = Hut Meet.

OFFICIAL
POTHOLING MEETS

Held between March 1955 and Jan.1956.

March 13th 1955.	Bull Pot, Barbondale	
April 3rd. 1955	Lancaster Hole	
April 8th 1955)	Ingleborough Cave	} EASTER
" 9th "	Echo Hole	
" 10th "	Quaking Pot (P.102A)	
" 11th "	Holme Hill Cave	
	Katnot Cave	
	Thomes Gill Cave	
May 1st.1955	Hawes Gill Cave	
	Gatekink Cave	
	Homeshaw Cave	
May 15th 1955	Windy Knoll Cave	
	Giants Hole	
	Blue John Mine	
May 22nd. 1955	Bull Pot, Barbon	
June 19th 1955	Hardraw Kin Pot	
	Sunset Hole.	
August 1st.1955	Bull Pot, Barbon	
October 30th 1955	Newby Moss	
December 11th 1955	Bull Pot, Barbon	
January 22nd 1956.	Hidden Pot	Hellot Pot
	Cow Pot -	Bull Pot.

THE CLUB LIBRARY

1955

The following additions have been donated to the club library:-

Panorama from the Gornergrat
Touring Map of the Dolomites
Tourist Map of Norway
O.S. Map of Buxton and Matlock area
Map of the Mont Blanc Massif
Map of the Youth Hostels of England, Wales
S.M.C. Map of the Black Cuillin of Skye
F.R.C.C. Guide Pillar and Neighbourhood
F.R.C.C. Guide Borrowdale.
C.C. Guide Tryfan
C.C. Guide Cwm Idwal
S.M.C. Guide Glencoe and Ardgour
S.M.C. Guide The Isle of Skye
"Annapurna" by Maurice Herzog
Ski-ing Handbook by A.Lunn.

Members are reminded that application to borrow any of the club library books must be made to the Secretary. A charge of 2d per volume per week is made. Any loss must be made good by the borrower.