

THE FYLOE  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB JOURNAL



1956 - 58



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EDITORIAL.

Looking back through previous journals it is easy to see how they have improved through the years, until with the last journal, published in nineteen fifty six, we reached a peak which must be very high by amateur standards. We hope to maintain this standard in this publication.

Originally, we produced this journal yearly, yet through lack of contributions we could not publish one during nineteen fifty seven. There seems to be a dearth of people in the Club who are willing to put pen to paper. Every time we start to prepare a journal people promise us an article, then promptly forget all about it. So we have to argue, cajole, push and remind them all countless times until finally we manage to "Squeeze" a few words out of them. This may not be a satisfactory arrangement, but at least



the material is original and that is the most important point.

Within these few pages, you will find Articles and Stories of great diversity, in fact something to interest everybody, or so we hope. That is as it should be. This is your journal.

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### FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

#### COMMITTEE:

##### CHAIRMAN

Mr. J. Jowett.

##### Hon. Secretary:

Mr. J. Mackeson.

##### Booking Secretary:

Mrs. R.E. Legge.

##### Hon. Treasurer:

Mr. J. Cooper.

##### Hut Secretary:

Mr. A.A. Bell.

#### MEMBERS:

Mrs. J. Mackeson.

Mr. P. Roscoe.

Mr. R.E. Legge.

Mr. T. Iddon.

Mr. M. Peel.

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### THE CLUB -- SO FAR

It is just eight years ago since a notice appeared in the local press inviting anyone interested in mountaineering to attend a meeting at Blackpool Grammar School, with the object of forming a local climbing club.

The movement was initiated by a small group who were, at the time, active members of the C.H.A., but who felt that there was a need for a mountaineering club in the district.

Long before the general meeting was called, a great deal of work had been done, and the initial group had been encouraged by the generosity of the Holiday Fellowship in allowing the winter use of

some of their chalets at Wall End -- at very advantageous terms. The names of the founder members were :- J. Baron, R. Buckley, Miss I. Hacking (now Mrs. Rotherham) Miss. O. Hawksworth (now Mrs. J. Baron) and G. Kay -- who along with myself as chairman, formed a nuclear club before throwing it open to all comers.

About thirty five people attended the first meeting and most of them enrolled as members of the club. Not many of them are still with us, but we still have:- R.E. Legge, G. Dawes, A. Cannel, F. Pendlebury, Miss D. Shaw (now Mrs. Jowett), H.T. Jackson, and J. Fairburn.

We soon learned that this club was not a static group of people, but one of continually changing personnel. New members came - old ones disappear. Where do this disappear to? The main cause for the loss of memberships is that members leave the district. Many have emigrated. The next cause is domestic or matrimony. If a member is unwise enough to marry someone not interested in climbing then it's a case of "a rucksack for sale". Other reasons may be business commitments or personal disruptions.

The latter nearly ended the club in nineteen fifty two when, at a very stormy Annual General Meeting, all the officials resigned and Ray Legge found himself in the chair, which was quite a hot seat. He tried to find out what was wrong, but couldn't so he came to the conclusion that the club was worth while preserving and he set about the job of pulling things together.

The result was that the club had a very good year. Clive Wilson became treasurer and my wife took over the job of secretary from Roy Boothman. Eric Lomas was organising some first class pot holing meets and three or four people had provided themselves with Skis. The first ski meets were always in Langdale - from the H.F. huts, and I still hold the view that Harrison Combe and the back of the Pikes are as good as anywhere in the Lakes for ski-ing.

Then a new kind of meet appeared in the syllabus - an "Ambulance Meet". We had managed to locate the owner of a rather battered ex W.D. Ambulance who would run us up to the Lakes for a very moderate sum. The trouble was, that we very often failed to get back. One morning the South Shore contingent pushed it up and down the



road until they were dropping with exhaustion. Then someone suggested checking the petrol. Of course the tank was empty! Nevertheless, those were jolly meets and the uncertainty of our mode of return always gave an added tang of excitement to the day.

In the initial years the majority of our members hitched-hiked to the mountains when there was no organised transport. Then came the motor bike age when any local club functions would be guaranteed to bring complaints from the neighbours about noisy exhausts and, in particular, the clatter of spare parts as they fell from a certain Sunbeam combination!

Dennis Wildridge was, as ever, the choir leader on coaches and the tiger on the mountains. He was new to both ski-ing and pot-holing but applied himself to each with great enthusiasm.

Local socials were arranged with varying success, (one lecturer had an audience of three members, but we packed the Cleveleys R.A.F.A. for a spaghetti supper). Various venues were tried - Blackpool RAFA, the A.E.U. Rooms, Veevers Arms, and Blackpool Grammar School Gymnasium where we ran into bother by converting it into an indoor climbing school.

The job of secretary changed continually; Irene Hacking, Roy Boothman, My wife, myself, Alf Cannel, Bill Constive and John Mackeson. Club Treasurers have been - Roy Buckley, Clive Wilson, Sandy Macbeath and John Cooper.

Many of our new members came from other local organisations, mainly the Y.H.A., and these seemed to have arrived in two batches. The first influx came about four or five years ago when, Bill Constive, Alan Brown, Margaret Ormrod, and several other active members helped to give membership a boost and to take an active part in running the F.M.C. The next wave came two years later and brought along such useful members as Beryl & Shiela Rice-Jones, Pete Roscoe, Alan Bell, Tony Whitely, Tony Richardson and Mike Hornby. Mike's death on Ben Nevis along with the other climbers who were well known to many of us, was indeed a sad blow to all their friends in the club. The dreadful news came to us on Boxing day, nineteen fifty six.

Only a fortnight previously, we had assembled in Oxendale to officially hand over to the Lakes U.D.C., the Macbeath Memorial Bridge. Over a year previously, our chairman had lost his life in a motorcycling accident, and this bridge was a symbol of our respect and love of a man who had done so much for the club and who was a friend of everyone in it. The bridge had been built by members of the club. Cement, sand, the heavy main spars, and all the timber, had been man-handled up the fellside, and the work was carried out under the professional guidance of H.T. Jackson (Architect), D. Wildridge and G. Stanley. To our surprise the opening ceremony gave rise to considerable local interest and representatives of many local authorities attended - some of them speaking on the occasion. There, surrounded by the mountains that Sandy knew so well, we stood in silence, bareheaded. A few snowflakes drifted down and but for the sound of the beck and the wind, all was quiet.

Nineteen fifty six was indeed a year to remember. It was then that the club acquired the cottage at Little Langdale. The crucial point of the story (which is told elsewhere), was the securing of the bank loan and this was successfully negotiated by Bill Constive and John Mackeson. Now, having been granted the loan, it is our main responsibility to get rid of it - and so far, result are most encouraging.

There is a great temptation to look back on the old days and say how much better they were and what a good club it was then - but, as an older member I must admit that the club is better right now than it has ever been. A good "club spirit" is prevalent, a steady influx of the right sort of members has shot our roll towards the hundred mark. This month twenty six members are going to Scotland on a Ski meet, the pot-holing section has made some first rate descents and the climbing standard is as good as it has ever been.

So -- the outlook for the future is good. So long as there are mountains -- then there will be people who want to climb them, love them, and learn more of them - and there will be people who want to develop their individual skill in the art of mountaineering. And it is for these people our club exists.

Jack Jowett.



CLIMBING NOTES.

Since I took over a year ago, my impression is that the activities of members "on the rocks" have been well maintained. It can only be an impression for many excellent climbs undoubtedly go unrecorded. I hope that on future coach meets the leader will pass round a Log Book so that short details of climbs or walks can be entered. If climbs from the club hut are also entered in the Hut Log Book this would enable a very fair report to be made from time to time in our Journal.

I think we can say that we have a fair number of members who are quite capable of leading the average V. Dif or even mild severe. Naturally, those capable of the V.S., type of climb are much fewer. Most of us no doubt feel that if only we could have a holiday of two or three weeks in Langdale in the right weather, say in April or May, we should improve our technique and attainments to surprising extent. Perhaps younger members will be indulgent to me when I confess that the older one gets the more variable is one's form, and the more one needs to be constantly doing some climbing. That instance in June last year on a warm fine day I romped up number One route, on Scout crag solo with zest which in the autumn, after a summer holiday with no rock climbing, I was hard put to it to lead up the same climb. The mental and physical are very closely linked in rock climbing. In fact I think it is a mistake to climb anything serious at least if one is really off colour or unfit. The "nerve" is affected by a poor physical performance and rapidly causes such performance to become even worse. Many movements in rock climbing depend on the body's carrying out with ease the mind's decision on a nicely calculated risk. Nothing is so bad for climbing "nerve" than one or two really clumsy performances.

One of our main jobs as a club is to encourage and foster beginners, and it is the committee's aim to provide tuition by a place on the rope for any person, including non-members, who attend a coach meet. We also hope to have another Beginners Meet

this year. Last year's meet, instigated by Pete Roscoe, was most successful and introduced several new comers to the sport.

The year has not been a good one for mountaineering - the season in the Alps was bad with a number of disasters. The Eiger claimed its toll and there was a bad accident on Piz-Palu. Tony Iddon reported that even his Norwegian fastnesses were affected. Nearer home there have been successful climbs of Scafell from the Club Hut; whole on one occasion a notorious nocturnal expedition under the leadership of our chairman set out about four in the morning for the same objective only to be met by misty conditions on Bowfell. On the coach meet on January fifth this year, Striding Edge was climbed under very snowy conditions by a party which included someone who had never been up a mountain before and two lads whose father well known for his great dislike of publicity, shall remain nameless.

We are sorry to lose Dennis Wildridge and Tony Richardson, but we have recruited several new members who are active on the rocks including a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and it is fitting that the latter should have led a party up the Great End snow and ice gullies recently. The heavy fall of snow on Lakeland hills should ensure some good gully climbing this spring. The club faces another year in good heart and friendly spirit.

J.F.M.

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DYSCOMFITURE.

(With apologies to Lewis Carroll).

As one who strives a hill to climb,  
Who never climbed before:  
Who finds it in a little time,  
Grow every moment less sublime,  
And votes the thing a bore:

Yet, having once begun to try,  
Dares not desert his quest,  
But, climbing, ever keeps his eye  
On one small cairn against the sky  
Whereat he hopes to rest:



Who climbs till nerve and force are spent  
 With many a puff and pant:  
 Who still, as rises the ascent,  
 In language grows more violent,  
 Although in breath more scant:

Who, climbing, gains at length the place  
 That crowns the upward track:  
 And, reaching it with unsteady pace,  
 To rest while the minutes race  
 To turn and go back:

And feels himself, like one in sleep,  
 Glide swiftly down again,  
 A helpless weight, from steep to steep,  
 Till, with a headlong giddy sweep,  
 He drops upon the plain.

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#### CLUB NEWS.

ANTARCTIC) --- Congratulations to Dennis Wildridge and Tony Richardson on being selected for the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey Expedition in Antarctica. Both were on the boat which struck an ice berg on it's outward trip and had to return for repairs. The last we heard was that they were in South Georgia.

SCOTLAND -- The Ski meets at Glen Shee was a huge success. Twenty six members met at Tighe-ne-Coil cottage (now been re-christened Lochan Dubh Bearg - "Little Blackpool"). The weather was good and Ski-ing conditions were excellent, and many also enjoyed some good snow climbs. A riotous evening was spent at the "Drumore Hotel".

SOCIALS -- This year the standard and interest in local socials and lectures has risen. We have had some well known names in the mountaineering world, including George Band, Alf Gregory and Dr. Howard Somervell. Reg. Ainsworth's slides provided an enjoyable evening's entertainment and not to forget the splendid efforts of our own members Bill Constive and Tony Iddon. Dr. Madge (MOH Westmorland) gave us a very amusing yet instructive talk on the important subject of Mountain Rescue.

MEMBERSHIP -- Continues to rise. New characters come into our midst yet it is very nice to see old faces again. Last Christmas dinner meet we saw our former treasurer, Clive Wilson who was home for a few weeks from Canada. We have also received applications for membership from quite a few old members who are returning to the fold.

FUNDS --- Various schemes have been worked out by the committee for raising funds to pay off our debts on the cottage. The most popular have been the garden party and the "Casino de Lockwood" both provided by the hospitality of Mr. & Mrs. J. Mackeson.

THE COTTAGE --- Mr. H.T. Jackson has already spent many valuable hours at the cottage peering through his theodelite and preparing plans for the improvements in the club cottage which should be completed this year.

CONGRATULATIONS -- To Beryl Rice-Jones and Tony Whitely on their engagement. Also to Bill Constive and Enid Taylor who aptly enough announced their engagement on the Christmas dinner meet.

THANKS --- To Brian Knutton for the excellent covers for this journal. For the last two journals Brian has worked and produced a superlative design and we are indeed grateful to him.

RUMOURS -- It is rumoured that Peter Roscoe will shortly be going into the services. No doubt members who have been using the cottage regularly will be sighing in anticipation of two years undisturbed extra hours in bed on Sunday mornings, without the harsh purr of an alarm clock shattering everyone at some unearthly hour of the night.

HOLIDAYS -- There seems to be a mass exodus abroad this year. Quite a few members are heading for Switzerland. Tony Iddon is going to his usual holiday haunt, Norway, along what must be a very well worn track by now. Nev. Adams, Peter Roscoe and Alan Bell are heading for the Dolomites, and Tony Whiteley and Beryl Jones will be in Austria. Maureen Helm and Pat Greenwood are also planning to visit the Tyrol.

CONGRATULATIONS -- To Jimmy and Olive Baron on the birth of a son, and to John and Margaret Cooper on the birth of a daughter. And also of course to Jack and Dorothy Jowett on the irth of a daughter, Christine.

TRAVELS - F.M.C. members seem to rove the earth. Ron



and Angela Freeston who went to Canada a few years ago have now moved on. The last we heard was that they sailed for New Zealand. At this rate they will have worked their way home within the next three or four years. Also from Canada, Eric Lomas is supposed to be coming home for a holiday.

WANTED -- Articles for the next journal. No matter how poor you are with pen and paper, or with the number of words you can write, please try and contribute something to this journal. Let other members share your holidays with you. The editor will accept almost anything (well almost!!).

Ed.

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#### AUSTRIAN INCIDENT.

I concentrated on my feet; on placing one in front of the other as I had been doing for hours. Up and down, up and down, in a steady rythm and slowly but surely the Col above us drew nearer, an incentive to get there and rest.

From behind me came the sound of boot on rock as Neville Adams stumbled. "How much further?" he asked.

"Not far", I answered. I had to conserve my breath to speak and the words were pushed out with each sucking gasp of air. "I'm dead beat", I said.

"So am I", was the reply and the conversation ended. It took too much effort to talk.

With the temperature rising to the middle of the eighties every day of our holiday, it had been a hard fight to tear ourselves away from the cool relief of swimming in the river. But we were determined to climb at least one more peak before we left for home. Now, as I walked, I could see the Cross at the summit, seemingly a mere stride away from the Col: and we were flogging ourselves to get to that point.

At last we reached the Col and we just flopped to the ground, completely oblivious to the grandeur all around us. We rested, then stripped to the waist and laid out our steaming, sweat - wet, clothes to dry in the warmth of the day, and then we began to

take an interest in the landscape.

I shall never forget the view from that col. The whole land seemed to be ablaze of light with everything shimmering in the heat. A yellow sun glowed in an azure sky with white wisps of cloud sliding through the blueness. On our left, the savage, jagged rocks of the Kagogel reared up from the long grey screes. In front of us the land rolled away down to meet the dark green pines, which spread like a carpet to the lighter green of the valley below.

The river in the valley twinkled in the strong light, and seemingly match box sized houses, glared back at the sun with their whiteness while they themselves lay scattered upon the yellow-green earth. Far away, and all around us, the mountains rose tier upon tier of them. White caps on grey rock. The peaks were green blue and purple, outlined against the sky, a sheer brilliance of colour on the ice and snow. Behind us lay our own valley, the Stubaital. More pine trees, more rocks. Wide at the mouth, it gradually narrowed until it divided. One leg reaching to oblivion amongst sheer walls of rock, the other, stretching on further, before it too came to an end almost at the foot of the Zuckerhuttle glacier. Glistening white, this twisting river of ice, soared upwards to lose itself in the snows. High above it, one iced peak rose from the long ridge to pierce the blueness with it's tooth-like shape, dominating everything with it's magnificence.

This was Austria and mountaineering at it's best.

A cool breeze sprang up refreshing us as we sat and ate. Only the sound of it's passing disturbed the silence until suddenly, the peace and tranquility was broken by a new sound. The sound of metal on metal. Faint at first, it grew steadily louder and stronger until it sounded like the ring of a bell.

From around the bend in the track below us lumbered a cow.

Solidly, invincibly, it came towards us, the bell round it's neck clanging furiously with a dull, nerve racking tone. Neville and I watched carefully as the beast showed no signs of stopping.

Twenty yards, fifteen, ten ----- five -----.



"Here, Neville", I said, springing to my feet. "Take my camera". It was only a cow, I could see that, but I was taking no chances.

"Give it a sandwich", he said as he grasped the camera and retreated out of harms way.

I did so. The beast munched contentedly. With a sigh of relief I gave it another; that too disappeared with fantastic rapidity. I made as if to retire; the cow followed.

"What do I do now?" I yelled. Neville was standing to one side and he seemed to be amused by the spectacle. And all the time that bell rang and rang as the cow continually shook itself in a vain attempt to rid itself of the flies. In a dense cloud that buzzed angrily, they swarmed around the cow's head, though some devoted their attention to me.

"Swear at it", Nev. answered.

I did so; no affect.

"Shout at it in German", was the next suggestion.

One word came into my mind; the name of the next valley. "Girshnitzal", I roared.

The cow recoiled, turned tail, then thundered away down the track to seek shelter in the pines.

The bell clanged furiously.

When we both had recovered from laughing, we dressed and continued up the track to the mountain summit.

At the tall white cross on the crest, we surveyed all that glorious landscape again. We felt the wind on our faces; we let our bodies absorb the sun and we talked.

And time passed.

As we returned along that same track where the boots had pinched and the sweat had dripped, the fatigue and weariness of the day was almost forgotten. The sweet, cool mysteriousness of the pines was all about us, -- and we were happy.

July, 1956.

Alan A. Bell.

### BIVOUAC.

Nanook of the North using a marvellously shaped knife, built an igloo in less than an hour to shelter his wife, and family in a blizzard. Yet in such conditions in Scotland, I have stumbled upon the bodies of climbers who had perished after only a few hours of exposure.

Now all the mountaineering text books contain diagrams of cleverly designed snow caves, but are textbook conditions likely to be found when the chances of a safe descent are slim? What margin of strength, of time do we possess when an expedition has been pushed farther than our experience can guide us? These were now my thoughts as Mick and I, roped together, tired and almost blinded by the wet driving snow, halted on the Plateau de Trient, the glacial basin high above the Chamonix valley. Darkness had fallen and our second alpine day was proving rather a full one.

We had left the Albert hut that morning at four, with our companions Scott and Mollie and we had climbed up the Tour glacier towards the Col du Tour. We had left thankfully for never did I imagine a hut could be so uncomfortably full. On the long trudge up the moraine two days before, my legs had suffered agonies of cramp as my back bent under a load of food and climbing gear. The hut bulged with hordes of French youngster who giggled and chattered far into the night and kept the windows tightly shuttered. On our first day they all trotted gaily past us in their basketball boots as we broke our wind on the easy route of the Aiguille du Tour, but now we were engaged on something more ambitious; the traverse of the Aiguilles Dorces.

Crossing the col, we entered the most flooded Plateau du Trient and skirting it's crevasses, passed below the full length of the Dorces until a break in it's eastern rocks was reached. Crampons were removed and we were soon making steady progress on the granite, though our unacclimatized lungs panted



furiously at every strenuous move. This was real alpine climbing!

Scott and Molly, still troubled by the altitude, reached the first peak and decided to return. Mick and I voted to continue though our route finding was slow and our ability to understand the guide book negligible. Presently a high wall forced us off the ridge onto the upper slope of a steep couloir. We cut hand and foot holds up 200 ft. of ice to reach a narrow snow arete which brought us back on the ridge. The exposure on our left hand, deep into Switzerland, was quite startling and perhaps we failed to notice the steady build-up of cloud and ominous mushrooming cumulous which rose out of the cloud sea in the west. Snow showers were now falling frequently. We had covered most of the ridge and the final peak lay ahead, it's rocks covered with new snow. It was already 3 p.m. and we made the overdue decision; to turn back.

Wet snow fell steadily and we found the route finding no easier than on our outward journey. The snow arete was reached and we searched for our steps leading down the couloir. Mick climbed slowly down, feeling for the holds in the snow which raced down the ice. The descent took over an hour and we were chilled and soaked to the skin. At the bottom we sheltered under the rocks for our first meal. We descended the rockpitches quickly and returned again to the glacier where our sadly pulped map was opened out and a compass course set. We moved blindly into the gale. The crevasses somehow appeared much more numerous than on our morning crossing, and we were glad at last to find ourselves moving up a slope to what, we hoped, was our col. Suddenly, we stood on the edge of the glacier and peered over - into a sickening drop down steep rocks. We turned back and slid down the slope, jumping the remaye\* with a reckless elan. It was now 9 p.m. We decided to stop and dig in, and the decision boosted our morale.

We dug furiously by torchlight. The snow

became harder and soon the hole was too deep for two workers. So one hacked with his axe and scooped up handfuls of crystals, while the other stood impatiently like a querulous distrusting foreman, growing colder every minute in the high wind and watching hawk-eyed for the slightest sign of flagging on the digger's part, so that an immediate change of jobs might be enforced. The one pair of gloves in the party was an essential part of the digger's equipment and the frequent changing of these became more and more painful. Presently all feeling had gone from my hands and arms. The digger was now deep into the glacier, and each handful of rapidly freezing snow was transferred to the foreman who shaped it into a domed roof.

At last we could both crawl inside and block up the entrance hole. The time was midnight and our simple shelter had taken three full hours to construct. Sitting on the rope, we slowly thawed out and with much slapping and rubbing, produced a damp and satisfying fug. We felt very pleased with ourselves.

By dawn, the storm had passed over and as the first light filtered through our roof, we broke out and stepped into the cold, clear morning. Our clothes crackling, towards the col and made our way down the Glacier du Tour.

\* Bergschrund.

A.G. WALDIE.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fiction

A TROGLODYTES' TRAVAIS.

Now potholing is a sport with a somewhat limited appeal, but the true 'died in the mud' caver is an enthusiast, and such a one was the friend I joined in Ingleton. He had a plan. There was, so he said, a good route to be done in a nearby cave. As he guaranteed a dry route, my main stipulation, I joined a party of rather uncouth beings who vanished from the face of the earth, later that day.

The first pitch involved aerobatics not usually in favour with rock climbers as each of us shot down an incredibly rickety rope ladder, laden with the



heavy packs beloved of the troglodyte. This to the tune of Clementine and the merry clang of dislodged stones on helmets. Many an engineering contractor would have been proud of the rope system put up to safeguard the last man, though in our capable hands it turned into a cats cradle gone sadly wrong, and taking a lot of patience to untangle, without its having performed any useful function whatever. In spite of this all landed safely in the main pot and the primus was set up for the inevitable brew. One impetuous youth however immediately seized an entrenching tool and set out to look for new chambers. His wanderings led him to a pile of debris in a corner, perhaps concealing the entrance to a cavern of monstrous proportions. One mighty swip sufficed to effect entry into the cavern, which proved to be the rib cavity of a rather long dead sheep. Needless to say he did not further force the entry, and retired for a shower, fully clad under a nearby waterfall, which was the main stipulation of his being allowed to rejoin the party.

Exploration then commenced in real earnest, consisting of a series of constricted wriggles on mud, similar in condition to old sump oil, followed by a highly delicate traverse high up a wall, to avoid what the leader described as a black deep pool. Investigation of this pool followed, and I shall always maintain that these manouvres were unnecessary, but perhaps the potting code states that small pools the size of soap plates shall be avoided in the most difficult manner possible. That they are not concerned with anything larger was shown by the fact that farther on the party plunged into a passage with plenty of room for all. Unfortunately it was at the time being used by another body, a stream with a very mean annual temperature. I must say that I was warned that there would be a bit of dew at this point, when we stopped to put our socks in our pockets. I fail to see what was gained by this move, since shortly afterwards we were chest deep in water, and my pockets became mere repositories for souvenirs of the pools, which I should have

been quite happy to do without. Still perhaps it left room for the feet to grow. Finally when all feeling had left what we had once been pleased to call living bodies, the leader, by now addressed by all the unpleasing names in our collective vocabulary, pointed to a rat hole high in the wall, announced that there we must go, and called for the Ferret, the smallest of us, stood him on someone's head, and sent him through in the manner of a cork.

These operations cannot be called combined tactics, since anything approaching co-operation was not in evidence. The only combination involved was part of a rather chic pair that could be glimpsed through a rent in the Ferret's trousers. He, having passed the obstacle, gave a helping hand to the larger members, excepting the Fat Man, whose head was the stepping stone to success for the rest of us, his girth being prohibitive for himself. His moment soon came for the hole proved a dead end and the return involved a great deal of anguish both mental and physical. Moreover a projecting rock completed the job of the Ferret's trousers, by neatly bisecting them, so they were discarded. This strip tease act marked the explorations end and the return to the surface proved uneventful by comparison with what had gone before.

Except for one thing which was that on emergence into the early morning sun I discovered I had forgotten to bring a change of clothing and as those that I was wearing were rather more than damp, several good Yorkshiremen were treated to the sight of a body walking the Queen's Highway clad only in a shirt, bathing trunks, boots and a rucsac. This besides causing me embarrassment, provided a hearty meal for sundry ferocious insects.

And now if you wonder why people do these things, and what there is in it, I can only say that there must be something for I went again.

J.M.P.

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## CLIMBING IN THE DOLOMITES.

=====

Italian women are gorgeous.  
Five really keen climbers left Blackpool  
intending to do great things in the  
Dolomites. ---

Spaghetti is superb.

After a most tiring train journey we  
arrived in Bolzano. ---

Italy is full of Policemen and Soldiers.

After a bus journey we got up to the  
Cimo di Laverado. ---

Italian Huts are great.

Alan Ackers and I had a look at a delightful  
route, a face and chimney climb some 800 ft long.---

Italian rock is rotten!

We did not climb or exert ourselves after that, but  
we lazed in the sun, ate great quantities of steak,  
and drank spuma (pronounced spuma)

Dolomite rock is rotten and of a structure  
similar to Cheddar Cheese. ----

But Italian women are gorgeous.

Pete Roscoe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet countless climbers sing and write  
In praise of rock that's Dolomite.  
But signorinas always please  
Then toughest rock will turn to cheese.  
Sp now we have a pretty question ----  
What really gave Pete indigestion?

A. Non.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEWLANDS MEET.

The coach was cancelled - no support  
So cars became our new transport  
Thanks to Sylvia and Alan.

Car spring's broken - views are aired  
With best barbed wire - car repaired  
Thanks to Ray from Alan.

Climbed on Miners, what delight!  
Climbing still in fading light  
But not for poor old Alan.

Back to Keswick drinking tea  
A happy gang of F.M.C.  
But rotten luck for Alan.

October 1957.

P. Roscoe.

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POLAND - 1957.

Last summer, at very short notice, I was asked to  
join the Great Britain Athletic team to visit Poland  
and Germany.

I travelled by train to London, staying at the  
Lancaster Court Hotel overnight. There I met the team.  
Early in the morning two Airport 'buses took us to  
the Airport. Our first stop was Copenhagen and here we  
ate the last good meal we were to have until we  
arrived in Germany a week later. Unfortunately, we  
did not have time to go into Copenhagen as we were  
back on the aeroplane within an hour.

Flying towards Warsaw, I could see through the  
cloud the brightly coloured strips of land, evidence  
of the strip farming on the Continent. It was quite  
some time before I saw any buildings; they were few  
and far between on Poland's great flat plains. Long  
straight roads ran across the land and occasionally we  
flew over huge ponds, the size of small lakes, brown  
and muddy. The air route followed the Vistula river



and we gradually lost height. I was surprised: I could see only a few buildings. Surely this could not be Warsaw? We landed safely and excitement mounted as the Air Hostess and Crew wished us all luck. We were wondering what life, even as a guest, would be like in an "Iron Curtain" country.

Once outside the aeroplane we stood in the warm sunshine and were welcomed with speeches made both in English and Polish. We were all presented with red roses and carnations. In fact everywhere we went we were given flowers.

The Poles made us very welcome, and there was even an ultra-modern Leyland Coach awaiting us outside the Airport. We sped over cobbled roads into Warsaw, past enormous blocks of shabby flats. There were no gardens to be seen, just one block of flats after another, surrounded by spare ground. Children, tanned with blue eyes and fair hair, were everywhere. They stopped and stared at our gleaming coach which must have been very unusual to them. Intermingled with the flats were the ruins. Along the way were bare, fire gutted shells of once beautiful buildings. On many of the walls it was still possible to see the pock marks of shells and bullets.

The Hotel Warsaw, where we stayed, was seventeen stories high and looked very modern from the outside. However, inside, it was a mixture of the old and new: the bizarre and uncomfortable to the sublime and ridiculous, and over everything a thin layer of grime. The water system at first was very amusing, and then not so amusing. It was erratic. I was washing my hair when suddenly the water was turned off. I was left looking like an advertisement for a bubble bath. At times we had no water and then we had too much. One just had to turn the bath tap a little too far one way and water would spurt uncontrolled in all directions.

Warsaw was depressing. Perhaps because the new buildings were so roughly built and many had no plaster over the hollow bricks. Little progress had been made to tidy up the city and free it from

the debris of war. Towering above all and given a place of dominance in the centre of a cobbled square, was the Palace of Culture - a gift from Russia to Poland. I learned later that both Polish labour and materials had been used in its construction. It was about three hundred and fifty feet high but most of the rooms were unoccupied. The ground floor was of marble, and there was an exhibition, but as far as we could see no one was interested.

The militia in the city wore uniforms which were coarse, dirty and shabby. They looked anything but happy as they were moved about in open trucks.

We visited the old quarter of Warsaw which was very quaint and interesting. The streets were unbelievably narrow and the walls of the houses and shops were painted with gay and colourful patterns. Here in the shops the goods were of better quality.

We became great friends of the Poles. Whilst we were watching the Athletic meeting at the Stadium, two Poles tried to make themselves understood. One of them handed round bags of apples and the other bought us some Lody (ice cream).

The Stadium was magnificent. It was built solely for athletics and was completely circular with the red shale track built slightly above ground level. This certainly was an athletic's dream come true. The seating capacity of ninety five thousand gives some idea of the size. Outside there was a warming-up track which was better than any track in the Fylde.

The Polish people really do go in for sport in a big way. Full use was made of the Army stadium which consisted of an open-air swimming pool, complete with all the equipment for water polo, a running track, some excellent tennis courts and an indoor ice-rink. Sailing on the Vistula was popular, both in dinghies and canoes. As the weather was warm we took full advantage of the facilities and had quite an exhausting time.

One very warm evening, some of us went to a Traditional Jazz Club with one of the Polish athletes



who was a student at the Polytechnic. It was a most original place with strange and ridiculous paintings on the walls and ceiling. It was an experience to remember and the jiving was very different to ours.

We left Warsaw and travelled by coach to a commercial town called Lodz. We passed through agricultural country and here the poverty was shocking. The houses were merely lean-to sheds which could have hardly been warm in the winter time. If a peasant wanted to build a new house he had to go into the towns and gather his materials from the rubble. The farming strips were narrow and seemed to be completely worked by hand. There were few horses and certainly no tractors. The Peasants wore very ragged clothes. When the coach stopped in a small village and we got out to stretch our legs, these peasants could hardly believe their eyes. The women folk stared at our shoes and were evidently very envious.

In general the standard of cleanliness was very low. We had the new and unwelcome experience of fleas in the beds. Overall there was a dank, earthy smell that penetrated the food and drink, upsetting quite a few of us.

In spite of all the strange happenings it was with great regret that we left Poland. We had had a wonderful time and learned what a spirited, brave and courageous nation Poland is.

A. Carolyn Ivins.

\* \* \* \* \*

The New House

at

NEWHOUSES.

It was Christmas Day,  
And I'm sorry to say,  
The Club were as glum as could be.  
The news had been broken,  
The Council had spoken,  
Condemning their W.C.

It needed repair,  
Through years of wear,  
Though the locals would never complain.  
But with extra force,  
By the climbers, of course,  
Well, it wouldn't stand up to the strain.

They decided to meet,  
By the lavatory seat,  
To contemplate what they intended.  
And shed a few tears,  
When they thought of the years,  
They had sat there, together, contented.

Then Jackson arose,  
Took a dignified pose,  
And told them the job, to be proper  
Should be built upon rock,  
to withstand the shock,  
And all of the nails be of copper.

"The law", said John Mac,  
While scratching his back,  
"Is set forth in the clauses hereunder:-  
"Whereas aforementioned  
Whereby foreunto ---  
Well, why not let's buy a goesunder?"

Then spoke Billy Muir,  
Who said "I am sure,  
The medical aspect is clear.  
It remains in the essence,  
to create effervesence,  
We'll all have to drink much more be . . ."

"A point I should mention,  
Which calls for attention,  
It hasn't been thought of 'till now.  
Jim Hidgson, I be,  
I bring milk for your tea,  
And I ask you, consider the cow."



"Yon gradely earth clbset,  
Creates a deposit,  
Which makes grass grow richer and longer.  
And so supplemented,  
Our cows are contented,  
No wonder your milk was much stronger."

Then Pote appeared,  
He was minus his beard,  
"Hey lads, we must have a heater.  
When winter winds moan,  
It's cold on your own,  
Much colder than our old two-seater."

Said Alf, "What I've heard,  
Strikes me as absurd,  
Confirming my previous fears.  
I tell you my braves,  
In our Ingleborough caves,  
We've had running water for years."

Then up sprang Ray Legge,  
"To differ I beg,  
Please pay no attention to these.  
I wouldn't be rash,  
To bet my moustache,  
You've made no provision for skis."

And next came Big Bill,  
He couldn't keep still,  
To urge us to greater endeavour.  
"We must put more attack in it,  
Each with our back in it,  
Finally - all pull together."

The Treasurer cried,  
"I'm not satisfied,  
Consider the awful expense of it."  
And Tony was critical,  
Spoke analytical,  
"I think we will have to dispense with it."

The Chairman sat there,  
His head bowed with care,  
He listened to each with devotion.  
"I've heard all your views,  
You've now got to choose,  
Will comebody please pass a motion?"

"I propose," said Alan Bell,  
That the fainthearts go to hell,  
It's the sanitary inspector we should  
thank.

For we need much bigger drains,  
Especially when it rains,  
And the Club deserves a decent septic  
tank."

So they bought a pretty privy,  
From the Co-op and got divy,  
And the opening day was marked with  
celebration.

The Chairman nearly cursed,  
Said "By gad I will be first,"  
And solemnly performed the inauguration."

J.J.

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THIS SKIING LARK, AND IT'S ECONOMICS.

Although skiing has long ceased to be regarded as the sport of the wealthy few, there are still many who are deterred by the high initial cost of equipment. Gone alas, are the vast supplies of surplus W.D. ski equipment which enabled many of us to make a start some years ago and it is true that unless one is fortunate in acquiring second hand equipment, as indeed quite a number of our members have, it can be a very expensive undertaking. If, however, skiing has ceased to be the prerogative of the wealthy few, it has certainly also ceased to be the prerogative of the fashion-plate model, and, since it may safely be assumed that climbing club members will be in possession of suitable clothing, only the really essential equipment need be



considered in the first place.

What are these essentials then? the skis, the sticks and the boots, and how may they be acquired? An advertisement in the local paper, or better still, in the Manchester Guardian, has proved fruitful in the past, particularly towards the end of the season. Again, anybody visiting the Continent should be prevailed upon to bring a pair of skis back if it is humanly possible.

Not infrequently when used skis are bought, the sticks are thrown in to seal the bargain but in any case a tolerably good pair can be made by anyone possessing a modicum of manual skill.

Boots. Invariably the question is asked, "will my vibran-soled climbing boots do to begin with?" Almost invariably the answer is "no". Some climbing boots, constructed on continental lines, with platform soles, can, it is true, be modified to serve a dual purpose, the provision of a groove in the heel to take the binding and perhaps the addition of a strengthening strap across the instep and such a boot will be perfectly satisfactory.

Boots are so important that it is not enough to be able to fasten them securely to the skis. They must hold the foot in a vice-like grip and provide support for ankle and instep if proper control is to be achieved and injury avoided. It is better to purchase a proper pair at the outset. Those costing between four and five pounds in this country are adequate but a really first-rate pair are obtainable for this figure on the Continent.

From this brief account it will be gathered that unless one is very fortunate the initial outlay is likely to be in the neighbourhood of £10, but let us take a practical view of this figure:- how much did you spend on your holidays last year? Why not have an economy holiday and a skiing holiday combined. Spend the £10 on equipment and put up at a Youth Hostel in Scotland during the early months of the year. Two years ago the writer and his family (four persons), enjoyed a delightful week of skiing in the Grampians for a total cost

of £14. This included travel, food and hostel dues.

Both the Youth Hostel Association and the Central Council for Physical Recreation run ski courses at various centres in Scotland for very modest fees.

Let there be no mistake, once you have taken the initial step and have overcome the first frustrating stages, you will have joined the ranks of ski fanatics. It is significant that there are undoubtedly more people in the world today who indulge in this particular activity than in any other single sport. All those people cannot possibly be wrong.

If the local skier can derive so much obvious pleasure out of sliding down a gentle slope of moist snow, which unfortunately, is more often than not the state of affairs on our Lakeland hills, some idea may be gleaned of the unbelievable thrill of skiing on perfect powder snow in the crisp cool air at high altitude in the Scottish Highlands or on the Continent.

It will not be long before the beginner aspires to higher and better slopes and sooner or later the question of a Continental skiing holiday will be considered. Nowadays the travel agencies offer a bewildering variety of winter sports holidays at prices to suit every pocket and there are ways and means of pairing down expenses even further. Rather than burden these pages with lists and details the writer would be glad to put such information at the disposal of any individual members interested.

If I may, I will conclude on a note of apology and explanation. So great is the hold that this, the most fascinating of all sports, obtains upon one, that it will eventually be understood why we enthusiasts talk so much about skiing. It is inconceivable that once you have thrilled to the whisper of skis travelling fast on powder snow and felt the wind whistling past your ears, that you too will not feel inclined to talk about it. There are now so many enthusiasts in the Club that you will be in good company.

R.E.L.

\* \* \* \* \*



THE ZILLERTALJuly, 1956.

After a long journey across France, we arrived in Innsbruck. And, as we stepped from that train into the early morning sunshine, it was hard to realise that our visit had finally materialised after so many earlier disappointments.

We breakfasted in the Bahnhof Buffet and returned to find that our rucksacks etc., had been placed on a train for Kufstein - a place miles away from our ultimate destination. After a heated argument with the head porter, carried out partly in English, and partly in Collins clear-type German phraseology, we were told to proceed to Myrhofen, our destination, and that our baggage would follow later. It was 4.30 p.m. that afternoon before we finally received all our gear.

Myrhofen is a large village which lies at the head of the Ziller valley, and is the railhead for the "Zillertal Express" which connects with the main line at Jenbach. Myrhofen is a very beautiful village, so picturesque with its mural adorned Inns and houses, and it is also an ideal centre from which to reach the higher Huts of the Austrian Alpine Club.

We obtained accommodation with the local Postmaster and spent the next three days pottering about the lower slopes and getting to know the place. We were informed by the local guides that the spring was late and that snow had been falling in the high Alps and we were strongly dissuaded from attempting the Ahornspitze, one of the local peaks, owing to the danger of Avalanches. This peak lies to the North East of Myrhofen and it was easy to see the tracks of avalanches with the aid of my binoculars.

The news was not too good from the high mountaineering angle, and it was two rather apprehensive people who left Myrhofen for the Berliner Hut on the Thursday morning. This hut is perhaps the best centre for climbing in the Zillertal. It lies on a plateau at the head of the Zemmgrund,

encompassed by the main Zillertail peaks from the Oschner, morschner, Schwarzenstein, Turnerkamp, Mosele, Schonbichlerhorn and Griener, all peaks over ten thousand feet.

We missed the first bus to Ginzling, and had to wait until 1.30 p.m. for the next. It was very hot when we reached there and the prospect of the march up to the Berliner Hut was not a very pleasant one. The valley was a veritable suntrap and as we slogged up the winding track the heat was intense. As the afternoon wore on, it became evident that we would not reach the Berliner that day, so we put in at the Alpenrose Hut for the night. The Goolash and wine there considerably refreshed us and we turned in early.

The following day was dull and cloudy, not pleasant to hang about it, and we arrived at the Berliner Hut at midday.

In the Hut, my dormitory window faced the main peaks and proved to be an admirable vantage point from which to plan routes. That evening I threw open my window and, with the aid of my binoculars and in the glory of an Alpine sunset, I picked out a route to the Moselle which was the object of our expedition for the following day.

John Mackeson had climbed the peak in the nineteen thirties, by way of the Waxgratt - a sharp ridge running from the Wazeck glacier almost to the summit. I planned to avoid the long slog up the glacier by taking the route up the left hand moraine, and across the glacier to a snowy saddle between Schonbichlerhorn and Mosele, and so up to the summit on the South West ridge. The "Teeth", or Gendarmes on this ridge, seemed a major obstacle, but it was found later that these could be turned on their South side by taking a route along the snow banked against them.

Next morning we were away very early and half way up the moraine before the sun came up over the Oschner. At the top of the moraine we were joined by two Dutchmen who indicated that they would like to come along as well. I saw that they had neither



rope nor an ice axe between them, one being shod in Klettershuh and I wondered how far they had intended to go like that. Anyhow four is always better than two on a glacier and I tied them on our rope.

The new snow made the going difficult and we were often half way to the knee. The two Dutchmen were not very fit and they soon began to tire. On a glacier table we halted and refreshed ourselves with snow and boiled sweet which with a little imagination is rather like an iced drink in a crude form. I urged them on with the reminder that we must get across the glacier before the heat of the sun gets to work otherwise we might be in trouble. At length the snowy saddle was surmounted, the icefall not being too difficult, steps only requiring to be cut in the last 100 feet or so. On the summit of the ridge we looked over into Italy. On our right was the Hochfiellerspitze, the highest of the Zillertail Alps and ahead the long snow covered ridge to the summit of the Mosele. In a mossy nook between a break in the rock and ice I found four little Edelweiss.

We moved off but were brought to a sudden halt by the sound of an avalanche and head of us part of the ridge gave way and crashed down on to the glacier. At that moment Enid slipped and grasped a big boulder which came away and hurtled down on to the glacier. A tight rope from behind held her firmly and she recovered her feet none the worse for the episode. At 12.25 p.m. we reached the highest point and after refreshing ourselves with mock-ived drink we beat a hasty retreat.

At the lowest point of the ridge we crossed back on to the glacier and floundered down often knee deep in melting snow. How we missed falling into a crevasse was nobodys business, we surveyed the snow field and irregularities in its surface denoted the larger ones but we must have crossed many small ones without noticed.

The Berliner Hut was reached at 3.15 p.m. and after a good wash we all met in the dining hall and ordered a huge meal of soup, steak, goulash,

vegetables, coffee, cheese, bread and wine. This was followed by a siesta on the sunbaked verandah and we watched the sun fade behind the snow covered Mosele, the evening clouds making patterns on the upper Waceck Glacier and mist eddying its way down the Zemmgrund. To the west the valley was already in darkness but the tip of the Olperer was a golden red in the sunset, like a firebrand in the purple sky.

We then retired at the end of a wonderful day which for Enid and I had been our first guildless ascent of an alpine peak.

Bill Comstivo.

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#### ROCK CLIMBING ON THE CORNISH COAST.

If undecided whether to go climbing or go to the sea-side, next summer, solve the problem by spending your holiday at Bosigran, in Cornwall, where you can do both. (Not at the same time - or, to be exact, not more than once, but more of this later). The Climbers' Club have there a "hut" which was once the "count-house" of a vanished (almost) tin mine. A long stone building about the size of the three cottages at New Buildings, Little Langdale. Members of clubs with reciprocal arrangements pay 2/- a night and other non-members pay 3/-, but one can, if so desirous, camp in the bracken and gorse on the moors which surround the "hut".

The hut is available for men and women, has two calor-gas cookers, a bath and paraffin pressure lamps. It also possesses a ghost - a long deceased sea-captain who enters the front door, climbs the stairs, passes through one of the bedrooms, descends the other stairs and goes out through the back door.

On arrival, I found the building practically full but one room was empty and I took possession. Nobody claimed the other bed so I had the room to myself. The only disadvantage, that I could see, was that it lay between the two staircases and people had to pass through it to get from one end of the house to the other. Later I was told why everyone avoided it but I must confess that I did not see the ghost. At



least, I don't think so. What is the difference between a rock-climber on holiday, who has not shaved for a week and the ghost of a long-dead sea captain?

The climbs are all on the sea cliffs and on a stack in the bay. They all start at the bottom of the cliffs, at low tide and, with the exception of the stack, you do not descend after completing a climb. In fact any descent, voluntarily or otherwise, would be fatal, as 20 foot high Atlantic rollers sweep the lower pitches, as soon as the tide turns, and the currents and undertow are deadly (as the Royal Marines found when training commandos there). There is one very nice climb of Very Difficult standard and the remainder range from Mild Severe to Extraordinary Severe, so it is not a place to train beginners.

For relaxation there is bathing and sun-bathing in the beautiful and lonely Portheras Cove, a four mile walk over the moors to the southwest, and when the sun shone brightly, the women all voted for bathing while their menfolk - followed. True; the "tigers" saved their reputation by doing a V.S. before breakfast.

Details of the climbs will be found, complete with the usual diagrams and photographs, in the Climbers' Club handbook and there are excellent photographs and directions of the latest climbs in the "Hut". The following climb is an unofficial variation but is very interesting and only just Severe.

Leaving the Hut, cross the bracken towards the Sea and descend to Porthmoina Cove (a rope is permissible in bad weather). If arrival in the Cove has been correctly timed, the tide will be out and one can scramble over the boulders to Porthmoina Island (sometimes known as the Bosigran Pinnacle) a stack. The best climbs are all on the west face.

The climb starts with the first pitch of the Lower West Face Wall up a steep slab, at right-angles to the Wall, and then to the left (Mod.Diff.)

The second pitch is the first pitch of Central Climb, up to the Guillemots' Ledge (80 feet and Just Severe).

The third pitch starts with a ledge to the left which is soon blocked by an overhang. The

face of an overhang goes straight up and the face beneath goes straight down, into the cruel sea. There is not a hand-hold or foot-hold in sight. The leader's rope goes under the overhang so one gingerly lowers oneself down off the ledge. A horizontal crack now appears under the overhang, into which one can wedge one(s) fingers. A hand-traverse of considerable exposure under the overhang brings one to some small but very welcome holds. The route now goes up the face and to the left. This is the upper part of the Western Slant (150 feet and Just Severe). The fact that we had to shelter from a thunderstorm on the Guillemots' ledge and that two of us were wearing tennis shoes made the standard more severe.

From the top of this pitch, a scramble to the summit of the Pinnacle was made slippery by the wet rock and the guillemots. At the top is, (or was) what is probably the longest geranium in the world (not advisable as a belay). The ascent of the pinnacle, on the landward side, is by a crack rising above a rock platform half way up the stack. As the lower part of this crack overhangs and finishes not on the platform but over the sea to the left of it, it is usual to abseil down the wall on the right. We showed we were tough by climbing down.

One last piece of advice; it is desirable to complete the climb before the tide comes in, unless the weather is fine and your companion is charming. (A footnote - Cornish names have the emphasis on the middle syllable so you say Bos - ig - ran).

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#### THE TORRIDON HIGHLANDS.

Remote though they may be, the Torridon Highlands are something of a paradise to a mountaineer. Here he can forge his own way and choose his own routes instead of following a well worn track.

The Highlands are on the North West coast of Scotland, practically opposite the northernmost

H.T.J.



point of Skye and South Uist. Inver-Alligan is perhaps the best centre, being ideally situated amid the main peaks. It is served by a Youth Hostel and three or four small houses who offer accommodation at moderate rates. The nearest Railway Station (and incidentally nearest licensed premises) is twenty miles away at Achnasheen. The only transport in the whole area being a local bus and two shooting brakes.

One Monday morning in June, we motored from Inverness to Inver-Alligan along a narrow, but good road. When we left Inverness it looked as if it might be a pleasant day, but by the time we reached the summit of the pass from Achnasheen, the mist had closed down around the Mountains. The view from Loch Maree was partially obscured by the rain and mist which was drifting veil-like across the valley.

Once in Inver-Alligan we soon found the Hostel which seemed devoid of life completely. However, we found a boiling kettle on a stove which proved there was an occupier somewhere, so we stored our gear, made up our beds and prepared a meal. Bill was the only occupant of the men's dormitory, but there were two neatly made beds in the ladies room. We speculated on the age and type of our neighbours. Bill thought they would be a couple of teenagers. Imagine our complete surprise when sometime later, two old ladies entered and greeted us warmly. Apparently they were sisters, both in their sixties, who had travelled by train from Kent, complete with boots and rucksacks, and who intended to spend a few days exploring the area.

Tuesday and Wednesday were both cool and showery. The clouds swirled low and menacingly over Ben Alligan and Liathach, but in spite of the rain we set off on Tuesday to climb Ben Alligan. We reached the "Horns of Raithan" before being turned back by low cloud and heavy rain. The effort was not wasted, for Bill spent some of the time picking out a suitable route up Liathach.

Wednesday was well spent in an easy ramble to Torridon village and back along the shore path; a

delightful place from which to view the Loch and surrounding mountains. The weather cleared towards tea time and Bill set off in the evening to fish for trout. He returned about 10 p.m. with five brown trout which provided us with a good breakfast.

On the Thursday morning we left the Hostel early and climbed the fellside to the top road which joins the Villages of Torridon and Diabaig. From there we took the path up Coire-Mhic-Nobuil before striking up the mountain side to the col between the South West peak of Sgorr-a-Chadail, and the subsidiary summit, Mullach-an-Rathain. We made good time to the summit and saw behind us the vast expanse of Loch Torridon sweeping out in a great arm beyond the village, far away to the sea. South westward we looked over the hills of Shieldaig, to the jagged ridge of the Cuillens on Skye, and the hills of the Outer Hebrides just faintly visible in the distance. The tide was coming in on Torridon and the wind streaked the grey waters in ever changing patterns as the shadows of the clouds darkened them.

From the col, a gentle slope led onto the plateau sweeping up to Mullach-an-Rathain. We finally reached the peak at 4 p.m. and rested by the cairn as we identified the jagged mountains all around us. The clouds were thickening as we left the summit and it started to rain just before we arrived back at the Hostel. We timed it just right.

Friday dawned bright and clear and the wind had abated somewhat. We decided to climb Ben Damph and we motored round the head of Loch Torridon through Fasag village. Parking the car near Ben Damph House, we set off up the stalkers path.

The first stage of the climb was through the Ben Damph Forest until we broke out of it below the col separating Sgurr na Bana Mhoraire from the main bulk of Ben Damph. We surmounted the col and turned South east towards the main peak. On the highest summit we rested to eat and drink and photograph the magnificent panorama.

To the south west Loch Damph reached out to Loch Alsh and the sea. The Black Cuillin were



clearer how their bristly ridge showing above the Applecross Hills. South Uist was clearly visible - a deeper blue above the horizon to the north west Ben Alligon beckoned, a detached mass of purple terraces shouldering out the lesser peak of its neighbour, Ben Dearg. What a feast of mountain scenery rewards the climber on Ben Damph on a clear day.

Though Saturday morning started with a drizzle and low cloud, we left the Hostel early, intent on climbing Ben Alligin. We took a direct route from the Hostel to the lower summit of Ton na Gruagaich (Knoll of the Faery Woman) where we had lunch. Behind the cairn the wind whistled in the great coire of Toll a Mhadaidh (Hollow of the Wolf) whose sheer precipices resembled a cauldron as the low cloud swirled around its sides.

We carried on along the ridge to the highest summit of Sgurr Mhor. The low cloud had lifted somewhat and to the south east the great bulk of Liathach was carressed by misty clouds hiding her four summits. Whilst due east Beinn Eighe's great ridge was hidden by curtains of mist and drizzle which drifted across the mountains. It was extremely cold on Beinn Alligin this day and after taking photographs we left the summit descending to Tom na Gruagach and then down by the coire to the Coire Mhic-Nobuil path and on to the Hostel by the shore.

We had crammed three good ascents into the past three days which had been very rewarding. All three mountains commanded fine views of the surrounding country with the added attraction that we had pioneered our own routes to a great extent. The stiffest climb was undoubtedly the ascent of the south summit of Bel Alligin from the Hostel and it is recommended that the ascent would be better made either up the "Horns" on the north east end of the mountain, or by way of the coire to Tom na Gruagaich by which we descended.

We finally left Inver Alligin early on Sunday morning. Beyond Achnasheen we stopped, while Bill

caught two or three trout for breakfast for the following morning. We motored down past Loch Ness to Fort William, Ballachuilish and through Glencoe to spend the night at Dunblane Hostel. We arrived back in Blackpool on Monday teatime.

For us the Torridon Highlands will hold many memories. Torridon is an area where progress is slow and although the road has come to Inver Alligin little else has changed. In such remote communities modernisation moves gently, almost unobtrusively; and beyond it all, the wise old faces of the mountains remain ever the same. Perhaps for the visiting climber this is one of the chief attractions of a district such as Torridon. Here, at least, is something of permanence, something of the lasting peace, tranquility, and spaciousness known only to the mountaineer.

It is in quest of such serenity among the mountains of our isle that the wanderer rediscovers his faith in the beauty of nature, and succeeds if only for one memorable stay, in attuning himself to the silence of the ancient hills of Torridon.

"Mysterious Glen Torridon,  
What marvels, night and day  
Light, mist, and cloud will be working here  
When we are far away! ....."

Enid Taylor & Bill Comstive.

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#### NO. 2, NEWHOUSES.

In the beginning, as can be read elsewhere, the F.M.C. was a collection of individuals held together by a common bond of interest in mountains. Later, the individualism was still there, but the common bond had unified all into a well knit club, from then on the aim was to have our own premises in the Lakes.

From the beginning we had the winter use of the Holiday Fellowship Huts at Wall End and when the interest in the club started to grow and approach



was made to the H.F. with the view of renting some of the Huts for all the year round. The negotiations broke down because the overnight fee would have been trebled to meet the high rent demanded by the H.F. The club even contemplated leasing a plot at Wall End for the erection of a hut, but the problems to be met were far too formidable to overcome and the idea was abandoned.

Hope rose, then fell, when the club almost leased the "Kennels" in Gt. Langdale. For no justifiable reason the owners suddenly withdrew their offer, and so the search continued.

One damp, drizzly Sunday in the early spring of nineteen fifty six, the Chairman and Bill Comstive (then Secretary) stumbled upon the cottages in Little Langdale. They were informed by a local farmer that the premises had been condemned, but they were likely to be sold by The Lakes Country Cottage Association. Bill wrote to them and he was told that the cottages were not for sale at that time, but might be in the future.

A few weeks later Bill received a letter from Porters & Sons of Ambleside to say the cottages were for sale as a whole for the sum of £1200. Later, Jack Jowett, John Mackeson and Bill met Mr. Porter who showed them around the Cottages. They were greatly impressed. Yet, the position of the property in relation to Langdale was a source of worry, though it was evident nothing would be available in Gt. Langdale for some time. There was a lot to be done, more to discuss, and many decisions to be made, but the colossal size of the undertaking seemed small in comparison to the enthusiasm.

That enthusiasm was severely strained at the committee meeting called to debate the proposition. There was a lot of talk, a great deal of argument, both for and against the project, but no concrete decision could be made without the sanction of the club as a whole. However, this was given by a majority vote at an Extraordinary General Meeting held in the Veeners Arms. The

scheme was not without it's critics, indeed, at one stage of the meeting it looked as if the whole thing would have to be abandoned, yet once the decision had been made the real obstacle, money, had yet to be overcome.

An appeal was made to members for donations and long term free interest loans. This appeal raised £150 and the necessary percentage for the deposit was sent off. It was agreed to sell the two outside cottages to two members and to raise the balance on the club cottage by a private loan. This was easier said than done. An appeal was made in the local press and committee members personally interviewed many well known local people in a vain attempt to secure a loan. When all seemed lost we approached our bankers and the necessary balance was met in the form of an overdraft on the security of the property. On the 8th December, 1956, final completion took place in the office of the vendors solicitors in Ambleside.

The battle was won -- almost. The local Sanitary Inspector informed us that a formal demolition order had been placed on the cottages, and that it's removal was conditional to certain improvements being made to the drainage and sanitation.

Plans for the improvement scheme were left in the capable hands of Mr. T.H. Jackson, our Architect, to whom, together with John Mackeson, our lawyer, we are exceptionally grateful for the excellent work they did in securing the property for us.

From the end of August to the beginning of December, working parties regularly attended at the cottage. Calor Gas cooking and lighting equipment was installed and a great deal of decorating done. From the Preston Mountaineering Club, the cottage was practically furnished with the basic articles of furniture. We obtained from them, two folding tables, about six chairs, a mat for the common room, eight two tier bunks, and a quantity of blankets and crockery, and not forgetting the safe - all for a cost of thirty shillings! In reward for their generosity the P.M.C. can use our cottage and they



will always be welcome.

At the end of October the Cottage was officially opened.

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Briefly, that is the story of how the cottage came into being. Words cannot describe the amount of work, time and devotion members gave the club. Nor can words do justice to the sense of achievement the workers had when the cottages were thrown open for general use for the first time.

It is now well over a year since members started going regularly to the cottages. At first it was rather strange to be away from Gt. Langdale. Little Langdale was a valley most members had been through at some time or other, but a place nobody had ever bothered to fully explore. It was also a bit of a nuisance curtailing a day's activities with the bus schedule either from Coniston or Langdale. As with all new things, troubles arose and were overcome, minor factions appeared and disappeared, but gradually, as the months past, members settled in to their new quarters.

Early last year, many week ends were spent exploring the valley. We found one or two minor crags and some new routes were even claimed though none of them are of any great length. (Details can be had from the cottage log book). We got to know the locals with whom we have spent many a pleasant evening in the "Three Shires".

The cottage was full at Easter, Whit, and Bank Holiday, and most week ends during the summer, Fishing and Swimming in the beck was a part of those weekends.

As time passed the number of cars owned by members rose considerably and in the latter part of the year most weekends were organised to the extent that everybody got a ride there and back.

There were over four hundred bed nights spent in the cottages last year and the bednight fees resulted in the total of £90. I am firmly convinced that we shall do better this year, and go on doing better with each successive year.

There is still a lot to be done, yet, it is not our fault. The structural alterations for the sanitation and water etc., have been in the hands of a builder for some months, and it is hoped that these will be begun in the next few weeks. When they are done the cottage will be as complete as we can make it, the rest is up to us. We cannot rest until that overdraft is paid off.

One final word. If there are still any critics let them go for a week-end with the "regulars". Let them listen to the conversation around the fire on a Saturday night. Let them hear of the club's activities during the past winter when for week after week, members, new and old, went out together for some good sport. And if after all that they are still critical, I am sure they will not be able to deny a belief held by myself and many others, that the cottage in Little Langdale has become the moulder and the maker of the F.M.C.

March, 1958.

Alan A. Bell.

(Note: I wish to thank Bill Comstive for the use of his notes and article in the preparation of this work).

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#### LIST OF MEMBERS.

The following is a full list of members at the time of going to press:

- Mr. & Mrs. R.E. Legge, 88, Arnold Ave., Blackpool.  
Tel: 44189.
- Mr. & Mrs. G. Davies, 8a, Preston New Rd., Blackpool.  
Marton 0596.
- Mr. A. Cannell, 57, Ventnor Road, Blackpool.
- Mr. & Mrs. J. Baron, 40, Kingswalkd, Cleveleys.
- Mr. J. Fairburn, 36, Thornton Gate, Cleveleys,  
Tel: Cleveleys 3839.
- Mr. & Mrs. J. Jowett, 58, Queens Walk, Cleveleys,  
Tel: Cleveleys 3039.
- Mr. H.J. Jackson, c/o, Technical College, Palatine Road, Blackpool.
- Mr. D. Howarth, 59, Ripon Road, Blackpool.



Mrs. M. Fisher, 30. Lodore Rd., Blackpool.  
 Mr. J.M. Peel, 10, Abercrombie Rd., Fleetwood,  
 Tel: F'wood 2663.  
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Cooper, 245, Bispham Rd., Blackpool.  
 Mr. A. Roberts, 220. Anlaby Rd., Hull, Yorks.  
 Mr. A. Brown, 131, Highfield Rd., Blackpool.  
 Mr. W.A. Comstive, 38, Dean Street, Blackpool.  
 Mr. W.B. Lawrenson, Army.  
 Mr. G. Stanley, 12, Princess St., Blackpool.  
 Mr. & Mrs. B. Bradley, Limerick Rd., Blackpool.  
 Tel: N.S. 54094.  
 Mrs. M. Chadwick (Nee Ormerod) address unknown.  
 Mr. T.E. Iddon, 25, Westcliffe Drive, Layton,  
 Blackpool. Tel: 23280.  
 Mr. D. Scott, New Arnaby, The Green, No. Millom.  
 Mr. & Mrs. B. Knutton, Greengate Lane, Kendal.  
 Mr. J.D. Macnamara, 6, Aldis Bank, Rawtenstall.  
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Mackeson, 15a, Lockwood Avenue,  
 Poulton. Tel: 2130.  
 Mr. & Mrs. F. Pendlebury, 26, St. Patricks Road, N,  
 St. Annes on Sea.  
 Miss. M. Wolstencroft, 14, Vicarage Rd., Poulton.  
 Tel: Poulton 2737.  
 Miss. R. Douglas, c/o. "Oakville", 66, Reads Ave.,  
 Blackpool.  
 Mr. B. Hudson. Army.  
 Mr. J.H. Howard, Greengarth Hall.  
 Miss P. Ashton-Rigby, 28, Willows Avenue,  
 Cleveleys.  
 Dr. J. Williamson, 13, The Crescent, Cleveleys.  
 Mr. J.H. Wheeler, The Vicarage, Thornton.  
 Miss. E. Taylor.  
 Mr. A. Bell, 16. Dobson Road, Staining Road  
 End, Blackpool.  
 Miss. B. Rice Jones, 30. Loxham Gardens, Blackpool.  
 Mr. E. Donnelly, 41. Smethills Croft Rd., Bolton.  
 Mr. A. Bailey. Army.  
 Mr. N. Adams, 56. St. Heliers Road, Blackpool.  
 Mr. P. Roscoe, 1, Coveway Avenue, Blackpool.  
 Miss. S. Rice-Jones, 30. Loxham Gardens, Blackpool.  
 Mr. P. Blacow, 31. Bryan Road, Blackpool.  
 Miss. M. Helm, 21. Rydal Avenue, Fleetwood.

Mr. D. Jacobs, 70. Sharrow Lane, Blackpool.  
 Mr. H. Landis. 63, Moorway Avenue, Poulton.  
 Mr. J.D. Jackson, 73, Westmorland Avenue, Blackpool.  
 Miss. P. Greenwood, 2, Kingscote Drive, Blackpool.  
 Miss. M. Garvey, 61. Dinmore Avenue, Blackpool.  
 Mr. R. Brooks, Preston.  
 Mr. D.A. Johnson, Address unknown.  
 Miss. S. Bryant, 30. Moor Road, Poulton.  
 Mr. D. Bryant, as above.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Pierce, 386, Lytham Road, Blackpool.  
 Mr. W. Haywood, 40. Red Bank Road, Blackpool.  
 Miss. J.C. Foster, 9. Golsboro Avenue, Blackpool.  
 Mr. J. Wolstencroft, Address unknown.  
 Mr. A. Tomlinson, 63, Westfield Avenue, Fleetwood.  
 Miss. H. McEvoy, 24, Westgate Road, Thornton.  
 Mr. M.J. Axtell, 27. Fairclough Road, Thornton.  
 Mr. W. Shawcross, 78. Harris St., Fleetwood.  
 Mr. K. Peel, 10. Abercrombie Road, Fleetwood.  
 Mr. F. Holden, 15, Quebec Avenue, Blackpool.  
 Mr. K. Marsden. 14, Park Road, Blackpool.  
 Miss. F. Ashton, 11, Ashley Close, Blackpool.  
 Miss. J.M. Lloyd, 61. Lightburn Avenue. St. Annes.  
 Mr. D. McClean, 24, Granville Road, Blackpool.  
 Mr. P.M. Ray, 25. Fairhaven Road, St. Annes.  
 Mr. T.R. Boothman, 17. Russel Avenue, Bispham.  
 Mr. A. Whitely. 59. Warbreck Drive, Blackpool.  
 Dr. & Mrs. W. Muir, 11, Lockwood Avenue, Poulton.  
 Tel: 3095.

Note: If there are any members who are not listed  
 above, please accept our apologies.

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