

FYLDE

MOUNTAINEERING

CLUB

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C O N T E N T S

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- Getting to know you.
- From the Chairman.
- Easter - 1959 & 1960.
- Club Notes.
- In the Mountains.
- The Bending Groove.
- This way to the Bears.
- Ascent of Dent du Requin.
- Glencoe by Moonlight.
- An Approach to the Hills.
- La Ruinette.
- Down Under.
- Blizzard.
- Information.
- List of Members.

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GETTING TO KNOW YOU

How happy we are! A pleasant buzz of conversation fills the air. Snatches of song float over the busy throng of people gaily engaged in their domestic duties. A happy band of folk are pulling their weight, learning to give and to take, and, above all, learning the joys of living together in one big happy family. In this cheerful, homely atmosphere we get to know each other better and quicker. We discover one another's little personal habits and mannerisms and realise the astounding fact that no two men are alike and, moreover, there are definite differences between men and women.

One of the young lady members is talking about pigs in rather a shrill voice, but it is probably just a term of endearment and she is getting to know her fellow members better. Another group are quietly discussing the colour to paint the common room door. One of the participants, probably suffering from altitude, says she is going to be sick - although she is looking very well.

After a hard day on the mountains, the members, one by one go upstairs to their comfortable beds and, after an hour or two of interesting folk stories, silence reigns. Broken only by the harmonious charm of snores. This is a good opportunity to study the variety of styles in the art of snoring; the steady purr, the noisy crescendo to an explosive climax, the weary groan and so on. In various combinations, many interesting effects may be obtained. Then there's that poor fellow who has some emotional problem on his mind. He shouts and screams, so we gently console him. We are at last drifting into a well earned sleep when there is a sharp tearing noise very close to us. It is a sleeping bag zip. Our friend above has decided to go for an evening stroll and, leaping out of bed he is soon on his way. On his return journey he bumps into number two who is also on his way for some exercise.

Unfortunately our friend cannot remember which bed he was in and some confusion arises when he starts getting into a sleeping bag which is already occupied. But in time, the British say, it is all sorted out and as, one by one, the entire male population make their way down and out and round, and back again in next to no time, silence reigns again. Broken only by the screams of our little neighbours who have been awakened by the noise. We are sorry for them but very soon they too are quiet and, save for the gnawings of our little friends, the woodworm as they chew away at the timbers, silence once more reigns. Broken now by a happy group of late-comers arriving. How merry are their shouts! and with what strength they slam the car doors! Fine fellows these!!

Scarcely have our friends settled in their beds than we are awakened by the sound of chipping wood. Time to get up already! How quickly the night has sped.

A shaft of sunlight pierces the haze of tobacco smoke (before the A.G.M. of course!). We open a window to gulp in the fresh morning air but already someone has got the incinerator going outside.

Gaily we trip downstairs and, after picking ourselves up we survey the scene of dirty pots and fag ends. Our latecomers must have forgotten - but we are only too willing to put our shoulder to the wheel. Our friends are now up, eager for the mountains. They pass in their dirty pots. Some slyly slide them into the water and, catching our eye, give a friendly little smile. Others slap us on the back "Washing up, dear friend? Just a few more won't harm will it?"

Now for breakfast. The mice have not quite eaten the bacon, I must remember to bring a tin with me next time. There is still a bit of bread left over.

By the time we have finished and cleared away, it is too late to go out and, in any case, some of our friends are returning, anxious to be on their way. We know that they will be in a hurry and perhaps have insufficient time to wash their faces afterwards but perhaps I can forgive them because I know they would sooner be out

Many will be reading this magazine and it will, I know remind them of happy days on the mountains with the F.M.C.

Good climbing to all members.

J. HOWETT.

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EASTER - 1959 & 1960

Nowadays, with this Journal having to be published once every two years, it is rather difficult for members to remember exactly what they did at a given time during that period. Looking back now at Easter last year, we know most of us had a good time, though the weather was rough. There were several parties out on the hills throughout the country. The cottage was full, though the main Easterites emigrated north of the Border.

Following up the enjoyable Easter of the previous year, a party again went to Black Rock Cottage on Rannoch Moor just above Glencoe. From the cottage, there was a party out skiing most of the time, and other people were out walking and snow climbing on the Buchaille Etives and the Aonach Eagach.

Not very far away from Glencoe another party were enjoying -- I'm not sure whether this is the correct word to use -- the same Highland type climate, and our thanks are due to John Outhwaite for the following account of that party:-

The party setting out to "do" Ben Nevis arrived in Fort William at various times, by various means and in varying weather conditions (heavy drizzle upwards). Nev arrived first on the Thursday night having hitched up. Johnny arrived next by the same method having been helped on his way by the Glencoe party picking him up in a blizzard at some ungodly hour of the morning, just south of Rannoch Moor. These two then spent most of the Friday morning vainly chasing each other round the cafes in the town, until

in disgust Nev set off for the bus on his own.

The next to arrive were the Blackpool party represented by Carolyn, Stella, Gordon and Doug. in Gordon's van. The Brian rolled up on his motor bike from Edinburgh, making the party complete. Breakfast was unanimously voted as being first on the agenda, by the remaining six members, who adjourned to the local Lobster Pot. Carolyn, after stating that she didn't want any eggs, was somewhat dismayed to discover that every dish included egg. This was nothing to the two girls' expressions when they discovered that quaint old Scottish custom, whereby the men get two eggs and the girls one. This was immediately rectified on their part by launching a frontal assault on the Chef's precincts.

After this interlude the van was parked most appropriately near the local distillery, and our six resourceful climbers staggered up to the hut, or at least one of them did. The path they followed was a prime example of what Englishmen must be expected to deal with up there, only taking in one electrified fence, five bogs and no signposts. Having arrived at the hut and finding Nev is residence, tea was consumed, the snow pronounced to be in good condition and everyone hit the hay.

The following morning our seven intrepid mountaineers set out in the teeth of the blizzard and reached the Carn Mor Dearg Arete. Here Johnny, who had a bad cold, turned back and staggered to the hut, whilst the others roped up and continued to the summit. Here a splendid view of driving snow greeted the weary travellers who turned for home. That night Gordon told the legend of the Green Mossy Man, and sundry other Ghost stories were recanted to the accompaniment of a howling gale. Carolyn apparently wasn't very keen on Green Mossy Man, and only once put her head out of doors after dark. This was in the company of her female companion for a quick dash to the wee hoose round the corner. It must be recorded however that the gentlemen in the hut had grave doubts as to whether they got that far from the giggling that was going on outside.

The next day dawned not quite so badly and after the usual Scottish breakfast the party set out. Nev, Carolyn and Doug climbed No. 5 gully, leaving a rather symmetrical hole in the cornice in passing. They then continued to the summit meeting Gordon, Stella and Brian who had ascended No. 3 gully. Then all descended No. 4 gully. Meanwhile Johnny had set out on his own to explore the corrie, and had continued up No. 4 gully and so to the summit, evidently missing the others in the bad visibility. The blizzard now worsened and as his compass, map and guidebook were in Nev's rucksac and he didn't want to do a swallow dive off the cornice, he struck well off to the left. After passing the summit twice more in his travels he at last found a path and following it dropped below the bad weather. Unfortunately he discovered himself in Glen Nevis, and after much breath had been expended in expletives, he began the long circular trek back round the foot of the mountain to the hut across sundry other Scottish bogs.

As the next day was to be their last, nearly everyone resolved an early start. Brian, unfortunately had to return early, so the remainder formed themselves into two parties according to which gully they wanted to do. The weather was great, and everyone was on their way well before 6 a.m. Gordon, Stella and Nev circled the foot of Tower Ridge and the Douglas Border, going up Observatory Gully to Tower Gully, their main objective for the day. The snow in the latter was extremely steep but luckily in good condition and they made good progress. After having reached the summit very early and obtaining a fine view for miles around, they continued to the top of No. 2 gully to see how their comrades were progressing. Meanwhile Doug, Carolyn and Johnny had ploughed through deep snow in the corrie and up a boomerang shaped No. 2 gully; taking in their stride an ice pitch half-way up and a ninety degree snow slope under a heavy cornice. They were later quashed

however after being informed that the last 100 feet or so had taken them nearly two hours. The second party then completed the time honoured ritual of a quick dash to the summit and then followed their companions down No. 3 gully.

Once back at the hut, lunch was consumed and more farewells taken. This time Stella and Nev who set off in a south-easterly direction over the arete, with bulging rucksacs, to join the S.U.M.C. meet at Steall. The remaining four then set off back to begin the long journey home.

So ended a most enjoyable Easter for which Gordon must take most of the credit; for acquiring the C.I.C. Hut and arranging everything and we can only hope that our friends don't drink any of the 1959 vintage Fort William Whisky. - John Outhwaite.

As most of us were packing up to come home, another party from the club were just setting off on the long trek to the Cairngorms. There, the Legge family and the Briscalls stayed at Aviemore and had some good skiing for a week. Though the weather, apparently, still didn't settle very well.

There you are then, that was Easter 1959.

Three main parties from the Club having a good time on the Scottish Hills in lousy weather.

Which leads us to Easter this year.

What a contrast, for weather, for many things.

Once again, members went all over the place, wherever they fancied. But, the main meet was to Derry Lodge in the Cairngorms, and on the Thursday night, over twenty people packed themselves - and gear - into three cars and a van, for the journey North.

We had a couple of stops on the way and surprisingly we all stayed pretty well together to arrive at the top of the Devil's Elbow in Glenshee at about 8 a.m. From there, the non skiers went off onto the hills whilst the skiers stayed on the slopes of Glas Maol.

We were all fairly tired and there wasn't much snow left - about as much as we get on Helvellyn in a good winter - but after a time the sun came out and it was very pleasant. Unfortunately, Jean Clayton, who had been looking forward so much to skiing in Scotland, had a bad fall within a few minutes of putting her skis on, and she wrenched her knee. Severe as it was and though skiing was out, she still managed to hobble up and down mountains over the following days.

After a few hours we had all had enough and we drove into Braemar then onto Derry Lodge.

What a great place it is!

The Lodge is surrounded by pines and nestles at the foot of a hill. From the windows you can look out onto the river and the valley and away up into the Cairngorms themselves. The only habitation near the Lodge is the cottage of Bob Scott the gamekeeper. He is a character and told us some great tales. We found that whenever he spoke his brogue was so strong we had to call on Gordon Waldie to translate. Gordon, incidentally, met us at the Lodge after travelling from Yorkshire where he now lives and works.

For most of us the Cairngorms was a new area and I think most of us were surprised the following morning, at the distance and terrain we had to cover before we could ski or climb. After a while there were groups of twos and threes strung out over a mile or so on the main track. Eventually Gordon Waldie and a party went off to climb a gully. The rest of us went on to ski on the shoulders of Ben Macdhui. The weather by this time was superb. It was a clear day with a blue sky and dazzling sun. We didn't even get to the summit that day, but the snow climbers did. What a view they had! After leaving us they had split into two main groups and each climbed a gully. The snow in the gulleys wasn't in very good condition, but from the photographs taken at the time (photographs to be seen during the next Winter Social Season) they seem to have enjoyed it. (Especially Baron Pete Blacow, who on

one photograph is seen to be emerging through a hole in a cornice like toothpaste out of a tube).

Meanwhile, all the skiers had eventually congregated on one fairly large snow field on which were some very good runs. In the afternoon it was so hot we were sunbathing and skiing at the same time.

Later on in the day, Rita Holmes, who had been sitting in the sun and keeping Jean Clayton company - just at the bottom of the run - decided to join us.

Unfortunately, she had only skied a few yards before she fell and broke her ankle.

We carried her down to where Jean was, and decided to pack up and see about getting her back to the Lodge. As we were doing this, Tony Marriott and his brother - both Doctors - came down the mountain and after examining the ankle said she had to be carried. So with the aid of ski slings, bits of string, anoraks, and sweaters, we made a very crude but workable stretcher.

We set off.

It took us over four hours to get down to the Lodge. The climbing party met and joined us at the foot of the mountain, so we had a full team. I won't dwell on all that happened inside that four hours or so, but I think most of us were pleased that though the F.M.C., had had it's first fairly serious accident, the club had looked after it's own without calling on outside help.

Back at the Lodge we found some of the girls had been busy. There was soup, food, and plenty of hot sweet tea waiting for us.

It was a tired bunch of people who staggered up the stairs that night.

It was quite funny next morning too. Nearly everybody groaned with stiffness or walked with a limp, and it was like an old creak endurance test watching everyone move off to the hills.

Les Lord borrowed Baron Pete's Car and with Jean for company, drove Rita to the nearest hospital for treatment.

Also during the night we had been joined by Tony Iddon, who with his friend Alan, had roared up from Blackpool. They looked quite fresh in the morning even though they had only slept for a little while, and they joined a party setting out to climb Ben Toul.

The rest of us climbed to where we left our skis, then went skiing and trekking over Macdhuil. Again the weather was superb. When we were hungry, Gordon Waldie introduced us to the food known as Jam Snow. (see note)

In the Lodge of an evening, everyone was together in the main Lounge for the communal brew of 'glubwein'. And on the final night, Rita, recumbant in an armchair with her plastered leg held out of the way of milling bodies, suddenly announced she didn't like the look of Doug Brown with a moustache. She suggested it should be removed. After some heated argument, a compromise was made, and one side of the offending moustache - after struggling for survival for several weeks - finally succumbed to a razor wielded alarmingly and inexpertly by the injured one herself.

There is little more to tell.

On our last day, we cleaned out the Lodge, said farewell to Bob Scott - who presented the Legge boys with a magnificent pair of stag's antlers, which came home lashed upright on my roof rack - and left in glorious sunlight after a very enjoyable and eventful Easter.

Roll on next year.

NOTE: Jam Snow - Mix Jam and Snow to taste.

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CLUB NOTES

Weddings.

Marriages within the club since the last Journal - Tony Whitely and Beryl Jones. Nev Adams and Maureen Helm. Mike Peel and Greta Wolstencroft. Dave Maclean and Claire Foster. Bill Comstive and Enid Taylor. Sheila Bryant is now married and lives in Africa.

Best wishes to all.

Engagements.

We are happy to announce the following engagements:-

Dave Baker and Claire Towler.
David Escourt and Mavis Barker.

Birth.

To Stan and Kathy Lawson a boy, Brian -
Congratulations.

General.

Eric Lomas came home for two months and thoroughly enjoyed himself. He certainly is a very good skier now, and he would be a great asset to the club if he was home for good. From what Eric was saying before he left for Canada again, it might not be long before he does come back.

Tony Richardson and Denis Wildridge are home after nearly three years, counting travelling time, in the Antarctic. Denis has a mass of Cine films and Tony has hundreds of colour transparencies, all of which will be seen, I'm sure, at Socials during the Winter months.

After five years Ron and Angela Freeston are said to be due home this year. The last we heard, they were in New Zealand after leaving Canada. They should have some tales to tell.

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IN THE MOUNTAINS

When you read an article in a Journal such as this you get to know about an experience concerning one or two individuals. Though you never really know just how often individual members of a club get out into the hills during a year. To list every member and their activities is impossible, but there are some highlights which deserve to be mentioned and can give some indication how our club gets about. That's what we've tried to do in the following article and perhaps some of the information given may be of use to members in the future.

The Dolomites - 1959.

Starting from Bolzano, three members completed a climbing tour of the Central Dolomites and climbed many of the classic routes of the area. The Piz de Cir in the Val Gardina was the first objective. Two of the Sella Towers were climbed from the Sella pass, and a traverse of the Marmolada, the highest peak in the Dolomites, was undertaken in wintry conditions. Thick cloud and cold conditions were also experienced on the nearby Sasso Vernel. But, the weather was perfect for the final climb of the Cattinaccio d' Antermoia the highest peak of the complex Rosengarten Group. The party found the huts first rate, most of them providing meals at a very reasonable cost.

The standard of climbing chosen was moderate. No guides were employed and no pitons used.

Jack Jowett,
Dorothy Jowett,
Ian Williamson.

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The Valais Alps - 1959.

To complete some of the high level Chamonix-Zermatt route was the objective of six members and this was achieved. The route was joined some distance west of Zermatt where the party arrived after several days. Some enjoyable climbing was done along the route, notably the ascent of the Glacier Dottima from Cabin Chanrion to Cabin Vignette, the ascent of the Aiguille de la Za, and the trek from Cabin de Bertol over the glacier to the Tete Blanche and down to Shoenbuhl Hut over the Col d' Herenes. Two members of the party made a very fine ascent of the Point de Zinal, a climb harder than the guide book rating because of a rock fall on route. From the Rothorn Hut above Zermatt the Trifhorn was climbed, as was the Zinal Rothorn on the following day. This was the highest and last mountain climbed. The standard of climbing chosen was difficult, though there was plenty of exposure at times.

The huts were quite good, though the popularity of English climbers in the huts was not found to be overwhelming by any means. No food is provided in the Huts and all the food required had to be carried by the party.

Gordon Waldie.
Doug Brown.
Carolyn Ivins.
Brian Wilson.
John Mackeson.
Alan Bell.

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Chamonix - 1959.

Chamonix in the French Alps was the site chosen by four members. They pitched their tents at Montenvers, a mountain railway terminus, plus hotel, above Chamonix. This was found to be an ideal spot, for from there, they could easily get supplies brought up the railways, and yet the higher huts were within striking range.

The first mountain climbed was Le Petite Charmoz, this was followed during the holiday by three more peaks,

the Aguilles de Blaitieres, Dent due Requin, and Le Cardinal. The standard of climbing was from difficult to easy severe.

The C.A.F. huts were found to be good, and meals could be obtained.

Ken Croasdale, Glyn Rodgers,
Dave Baker, Mick Hargreaves.

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Skye - 1959.

Ray Legge became the first member to complete the Guillin Ridge. Ray and Sylvia, and John Cooper and Margaret, were staying at Mrs. Lorrimer's cottage in Glen Brittle and from there Ray and John left late one evening and slept out. Unfortunately John was suffering from an upset stomach and had to come down after going a good distance, but Ray carried on alone and completed the ridge.

Austria - 1960.

There were about four main groups of people from the club skiing in Austria at two centres, all more or less in February. Bill Comstive and Enid and a party skied in Gargellen, a small village in the mountains. As their holiday ended, the Legges and Briscalls arrived there too.

Some distance from Gargellen Carolyn Ivins was having a good time in Kitzbuhel and as she left, Gordon Heywood, Bill, David Ivins and Alan Bell arrived. They were later joined by Eric Lomas - home from Canada for a brief visit.

A type of holiday and sport to be recommended and tried at least once.

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Winter - 1960.

As we all know, it was a poor winter for snow, and we had to travel far afield for it. Except for

one or two weekends in the Lakes.

Notably, one such weekend was when Tony Hargreaves, Ken Croasdale, Pete Blacow and Doug. Brown, camped near Llyn Llydau and set off to do the Snowden Horseshoe. They had to come down from Snowden after traversing the Crib Groch ridge in a driving blizzard.

On another weekend, towards the end of winter, a party bundled into Gordon Heywood's van and trundled up to Glen Shee for two days skiing.

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Potholing - 1959 - 1960.

And along with all this, a small but very active group of potholers have been out at weekends throughout the months and they have been doing some first rate stuff.

Of course during the last two years we've had Bank holiday weekends and meets have been in Arran, Scotland, (generally), Wales and the Lakes. All interspaced with these there have been the weekends spent at the cottage and coach meets, which have been very rarely cancelled, and not forgotten of course the all time record Dinner meet at the O.D.G., when 90 members were present. And there would have been more too but we were restricted in numbers.

And the activities go on of course. As this goes to press news has come in that six more members have completed the Skye Ridge.

This is as it should be. We hope the activities continue to go on.

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THE BENDING GROOVE.

SHOWELL STYLES

(This deals with a thing almost unique in the history of Welsh climbing - a First Ascent which in twenty years has not, as far as the author knows, been repeated. It appeared in the M.A.M. Journal in 1949 and is reprinted

by kind permission. One member of the party is a member of the F.M.C.).

It was in July 1938 that H.T. Jackson, Phil Wareing and myself stood at the foot of Moel Hebog's East Face on a wet and windy morning. We had slept in the hay of a barn belonging to Cwm Clock farm and felt ready for anything. We carried 180 feet of rope and two ice-axes, the reason for which highly unseasonable weapons will appear in due course.

Jackson - "Jacko" to us - was not at that time a member of the M.A.M., though he has since joined. He (had on the previous year reached the foot of Pitch 4) and had already made an unsuccessful attempt on this route with R. Woods in Easter of the same year, when they had been forced to make a difficult traverse off the climb at the top of the fifth pitch. Jacki, then was to lead. The massive and imperturbable Wareing was to be second, and I whose main duties with the expedition were those of cook and chauffeur, was to bring up the rear; or, more accurately, to be brought up in the rear. As we stood staring up at the face I felt more and more that plain as was my cooking and un-coded as was my chauffeuring, I was better fitted for both than for First-Ascending. However, I had not the moral courage to tell my companions this.

Seen from Beddgelert, this East Face of Moel Hebog looks insignificant. Seen from its base, it looks monstrous and unclimbable. The cliffs are a good 500 feet in height, all of it very steep rock. They have a base of about 1,000 feet, with a shorter and easier section at their southern end. At the central and highest face of the crag there are ascending tiers of savage-looking overhangs; a conspicuous black groove about 200 feet up indicates the only breach in these defences. This, said Jacko, was the Bending Groove, and thither he would lead us forthwith. We roped up with 100 feet between leader and second and the assault commenced.

The rocks were streaming wet, but sheltered from the gale that was roaring over the crest of the mountain.

Twenty feet left of the deepest-cut groove in the centre of the cliff is the short slab buttress which begins the climb.

Pitch 1. 25 feet. Up the slab buttress and traverse into grassy gully. Stance, with belay high above.

A short pitch, not very hard, and - yes, a good belay. I began to feel better. Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute, I told myself. And Echo answered "Oh yea?" The pitch was the easiest, and the belay one of the only two, on the whole climb.

Pitch 2. 45 feet. Leave gully by steep crack to R. Up ridge of buttress to stance on grass ledge. Doubtful running belay.

Doubtful indeed. The climbing was harder, but still not more than V.D. As for the grass ledge, I thought it insecure and was glad to leave it; at that time my ignorance of grass ledges was profound.

Pitch 3. 60 feet. Climb up to R and traverse across the bottom of Central slab by balance on good footholds. Into and across gully to rather insecure grass stance by ash sapling. No belay.

Good footholds there were, but not a handhold in reach. The Central Slab (the names on this climb are of Jacko's choosing, as are the words underlined) was as smooth as the proverbial infantine stern. But that was all it was fit for. How it was glued to the sheer black wall of the gully I cannot imagine. Under the weight of two of us it sagged horribly, and when we jabbed the pick of an ice-axe into it to make a belay (the purpose of the axes is now explained) it would only go in an inch or two. The term "psychological belay" was not known to me then, but the most rudimentary analysis of my psyche would have revealed an utter lack of confidence in this one.

Pitch 4. 75 feet. Up the gully to the grass stance.

Just like that. The gully was narrow, steep, and lacking any decent holds. In place of holds it provided

sloping ledges loaded with dirt. The only way to climb it was in "one smooth ascending rush". Jacko christened it "Kruschen Gully" and went up it with an energy typified by those optimistic advertisements. The grass stance - of course - had no belay. Once more, feeling rather like men mending an iron girder with stamp-edge, we dug in the ice-axe pick and laid the rope round it.

Pitch 5. 35 feet. More diagonally L. to another stance.

Nice to have a shorter run-out, particularly as the ice-axe was again our only belay. Jacko called our attention to a black cleft overhanging us close above. The Bending Groove itself, he said; and added that from this point it was possible to make a difficult traverse off the climb to the left - the only place where a traverse-off was possible, as he had discovered when retreating at Easter.

I glanced at my watch. We had been three hours on the climb and the climbing was getting harder. It was also raining gently. We were approaching the crux. Beddgelert looked very, very, far below.

Pitch 6. 60 feet. Up a grassy slab to a small ledge at the bottom of a V-groove.

It was small, but it was a ledge - none of your jelly-like grass tufts. There was naturally no belay. The V-groove continued straight ahead; straight overhead, in fact. It looked high intimidating. I didn't see how, lacking wings, we were to get away further and began to wonder if I would be held when - as was very likely - I came off in descending to the traverse-off. But the indomitable Jacko had spent months planning his solution of the problem. He moved up without hesitation and spreadeagled himself on a perpendicular wall.

Pitch 7. 30 feet. Climb up into the groove and traverse out L. on delicate holds and by an awkward balance-movement round an exposed corner. Two good belays on wide grass ledge above.

If the last sentence wasn't already in capitals it would be in capitals of the most ecstatic. I actually enjoyed this pitch - perhaps because of those "two good belays" of which the invisible Jacko informed us. The exposed corner projected right out to overhang the whole 250 feet we had climbed, and the holds on it were just adequate. The grass was spacious and based upon firm rock. The belay was taken by threading under a massive boulder on the ledge, and here I squatted shivering for the next half-hour while Jacko and Phil sought an exit.

The V-groove out of which we had escaped led up from the right-hand corner of the ledge; from its left-hand end another V-groove with a sheer and holdless wall at its bottom shot up into uncertainty. Jacko and Phil tramped backwards and forwards between the two until I was lashed in a cat's cradle of rope and had to be disentangled. At last they made a determined attack on the left-hand groove, Jacko standing on Phil's head for a take-off.

Pitch 8. Traverse 10 feet round the corner L. to foot of second V-groove. Up groove on very thin holds. Resting place at 15 feet. Up again until it is possible to climb out on the rib at R. and so by slab to a good grass stance. No belay.

After giving of my cranial cuticle to Phil's nails it was my turn. Voices above assured me with unconvincing heartiness that I could be held and even pulled up. I assured them with convincing plaintiveness that as there were no holds at all for ten feet I would require pulling. Luckily I weigh less than 11 stone. I have never gone up a pitch so fast or so effortlessly.

Pitch 9. 80 feet. Traverse into groove on R. - the Bending Groove once more - and up its centre, passing an obstructing boulder on L. side. Above this slab on L. provides footholds, and steepens into a wall with small but sound square-cut holds, which ends the climb. Stances and belays above. (There is a short but optional chimney above).

It was the last pitch, and I think the hardest, though the knowledge that we were so near the top gave us all a kind of exaltation that would have got us up a brick wall. Jacko led up it like a man inspired, and even I didn't come off on the tiny holds of the final wall.

At the top, with mist driving round our wet and chilled bodies, we congratulated Jacko on a fine lead and the accomplishment of a long-planned project. The 480 feet of climbing had taken us just 7 hours.

"Severe, I think" opined Jacko as we turned to descend.

"Very," I agreed feelingly.

"No - just severe" said Jacko.

It would be interesting and instructive to learn, from a second ascent, what standard should be applied to Bending Groove, and I may add without undue boasting that I am ready and willing to lead any ambitious party up to *this notable and neglected crag.

*Kindly note this little word; it is important.

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THIS WAY TO THE BEARS.

This intriguing sign greets the visitors to Banff, the Zermatt of the Canadian Rockies where I lived for some time. One follows the sign, not to the bear pit, nor even the bush, but to the corporation Garbage Dump. Here, bears corrupted by civilisation, abandon their natural diet of honey and berries to skive from old cans, and pose self-consciously while well-heeled tourists take movies. These shabby, greasy creatures are the only bears one really encounters, for the honest, independent black bear (Yogi's type - Ed.) keeps himself to himself. He ambles off into the bush at the approach of human kind I'm happy to say; although

Bruin is a timid beast, what big teeth he has! And what long claws! Despite the commercialism, the garish motels and lurid neon lights, Banff is an attractive little mountain town. The view up its main street to the tall limestone peaks, reminds me of Zermatt.

Forty miles distant is Moraine Lake, whose deep turquoise waters are encircled by rock and ice peaks with strange and attractive names. There are no huts in this area so one has to camp by the lake. On one holiday in this district we bivouaced twice and my shoulders still shrink at the memory of taking kit for three days up the long moraine. One peak we climbed, bad weather drove us from another after a wet and uncomfortable night listening to falling rock all around us.

In my opinion, the Rockies are better to look at than climb. The mountains are not spikey and dramatic like the Chamonix Aiguilles, but in their chunky way are spectacular. The sedimentary rocks lie in clearly marked bands of beautiful colours, golden, grey, mauve and black, but are crumbling ruins. In the Rockies you find overhanging scree, and when a hold comes away in your hand, you put it back as a foothold.

Lake Louise is as far as most tourists get, and the hideous luxury-hotel, (known locally as Lake L. Penitentiary) commands a fine view of Mt. Victoria, and only approached by a long walk. This is Lake O'Hara, green as an emerald and set like a jewel among golden-grey and ice blue mountains. We camped here in alpine meadows, and all is green and peaceful with just the sound of mountain streams and the whistle of comical gophers, on the look-out for food scraps. Very early, one dewy morning, a cow moose and her calf crossed the camp site, stepping high and proudly, and disappeared into the bush.

We climbed Mts. Victoria and Orderay from here.

After struggling up the most devilish scree known to man to a hut 9,500 ft. on the shoulder of Victoria, we traversed the ridge to the highest summit. This was a good long climb, on sounder rock than most, and with several steep ice pitches and narrow snow aretes. What a view from here! Great snow peaks extending for hundreds of miles around, in all directions.

It is a shock to descend from this splendour to the gasoline smells, the harsh lights and commercialised bears. One feels nostalgia for the scent of wood-smoke, the sound of cow-bells and the simple dignity of the Alps. Jukebox civilisation may intrude on, but cannot subdue, nature's kingdom. On the wide highways, the great cars roar along, but beyond the headlight's glare, lies the dark bush, the fast-moving rivers and the mountain walls. There is the world of the Moose, the bear and the cougar, the chipmunk and the beaver, a world the mountaineer enters as a guest.

Eric Lomas. Vancouver.

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ASCENT OF THE DENT DU REQUIN - 11,350 FT.

The morning showed good promise as we left the hut to cross the moraine. The four of us, Ken, Glyn, Dave and myself, had walked up from Montenvers the previous day. The weather then had seemed doubtful with a leaden sky and icy showers, but now as the sun's first rays dissolved the morning mists, everything had a touch of unreality about it.

Although there are a few crevasses in the Requin glacier, it is very steep and it took us an hour to reach the small ledge which we presumed to be the start of the Vois des Plaques route. Soon the sun would be beating down full on the east face and the 3,000 feet of towering slabs and buttresses seemed an exciting prospect as we left our ice-axes and crampons on the ledge.

The route seemed to lie diagonally for the first 1,000 feet or so, and Ken and I set off on the first rope. Being nowhere more than "v.diff", we safeguarded ourselves by the leader fixing a runner here and there as he climbed. The great terrace was reached about 9 a.m., and here it was necessary to traverse left a few hundred feet to bring us below the huge slabs which are such notable features of this face. Our position was now superb, a glance down and the Requin hut became a dolls house, and intermittently the flash of sun on binoculars showed our progress was being watched by interested spectators.

We were now on the crux of the climb. Pitches became harder, belays few and far between and the very real danger of falling stones brought us into a more sober state of mind. Eventually the ridge was reached and the vista before us seemed to shake off our tiredness. The beautiful Tour Ronde and the Col du Geant made the perfect contrast for a glance to the right, which brought into view the ice-sheathed battlements of the Aiguille du Plan and the needle-sharp pinnacles of the Pain de Sucre. But of Mont Blanc itself, ominous cloud was gathering round its summit and to the drumbeat of thunder we ascended the tooth.

The descent to the ridge was accomplished by abseiling and there Dave and Glyn decided to have lunch, but Ken and I were anxious to get down, and so after a hurried mouthful we started to descend. The great slabs were easier than we had expected and we were half-way down them before the clatter of falling stones warned us that Dave and Glyn had started. We reached the glacier about 4 p.m., and by then the weather was threatening, so after fixing on our crampons we immediately started to descend.

The snow was in a treacherous state by then and intermittent showers of hail did nothing to improve the situation. Our comrades, who were still high up on the rocks, could not be seen due to the poor

visibility. The glacier seemed endless, but after an hour's hard going, we at least reached the moraine, just in time to see Dave and Glyn climb down off the ledge into the glacier. So with a sympathetic wave we trudged over towards the hut.

It was quite a while before our friends arrived owing to some difficulty they had on the glacier, but a meal was quickly produced by the guardian. Later as dusk fell and lamps were lit, four weary climbers trudged up to bed.

M. HARGREAVES.

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GLENCOE BY MOONLIGHT

At the beginning of January we travelled hopefully to the Isle of Arran in search of snow and ice, but the weather was too mild and on our second day the ice-axe was replaced by slings and karabiners. Colin was keen to do a rock climb on the Rosa Pinnacle of Cir Mhor.

A two hour's march from the camp, in bright sunshine and shirt sleeves order, brought us to the foot of the climb. Four hours later we were back at the foot of the climb, having found the top cracks coated with verglas and impassable. But even a series of abseils and the cheerless prospect of a long walk back down Glen Sannox in the gathering darkness, had not dampened our enthusiasm for these splendid granite mountains. Especially when we realised that a moonlit traverse of Goatfell, Arran's highest peak, coincided with the most direct route to the bar at Corrie. It proved a fascinating walk, eerie at times as the lights of Brodick appeared, nearly 3,000 feet below and apparently two miles out to sea. It set the pattern for the following week's climbing in Glencoe, for there were still six days before the full moon.

Colin had to return home then, but at Glencoe Youth Hostel the solitary climber can usually rely on meeting others of the enlightened. Before George turned up, an intended solo ascent of North-west gully of Stob Coire nam Beith, resulted in overtaking a S.M.C. party and tying on their rope of three. With funeral slowness we reached a large cave, and the next twenty feet took one hour's painstaking step-cutting up the vertical right wall. The ice-axe was too clumsy and the toffee-sized piton hammer too light. By the time we had reached and left the summit, torches were needed, but moonlight soon began to pierce the clouds and the unusual views provided a pleasant descent. Patches of verglas-coated slab made it the more interesting, for these were invisible from above, as all four would-be leaders found out.

Thereafter it became a point of honour never to descend in daylight. Getting up early was very hard anyway and this allowed later starts. Next day George, on leave from the R.A.F., completed his first snow climb up Central Gully to the summit of Bidean. From there we shared with a solitary sheep, an unforgettable view of the sunset over Loch Etive. There must have been some anxiety over the descent, for we left the sheep to its solitary fate; the snow was hard and required step-kicking till well below and to the north of the col connecting with Stob Coire nan Lochan. On two occasions, before the moonlight broke through the cloud later and made it possible to move together again, an interesting example of relegation held up the descent. The ice-axe shaft, which had been forced into the snow up to the blade for a belay, froze there as soon as the pressure was released, and had to be dug out.

After two late returns, getting up was even harder, so for an easy day we walked up Stob Coire nan Lochan from its east face, in a snowstorm, and glissaded down it in the luxury of daylight. To make up for this lapse, that evening we persuaded Peter to embark with us on a moonlight traverse of the Aonach Eagach Ridge. He was passing through Glencoe and spending the night at the hostel, but agreed that he might as well make good use of his one night. We left the hostel just

before the warden locked up at eleven o'clock, muttering "Most irregular" and explaining that we could not be let in again before 7 a.m. At a quarter past one we had reached the summit Stob Coire Leith at the west end of the ridge, which is $1\frac{3}{8}$ miles long and the narrowest on the mainland. Under hard snow, the first half of the ridge provided a splendid expedition, with spectacular views in full moonlight of the peaks and corries of Bidean, Ben Nevis and the Mamores, But before Meall Dearg our trials began, for George was flagging and the famous pinnacles looked quite impassable. The first offered no traversing possibilities so the route went up and over, never revealing the way past each obstacle until it was reached. By now clouds were drifting over and by 4 a.m. we were in a white-out snow-storm on a broader part of the ridge. In this condition it is quite possible to fall over while walking on level ground, and there was great difficulty in moving together. At the same time it was freezing hard, and one pair of eyelashes froze together. On lifting a hand to unclog them, the glove was found to be frozen to the ice-axe head.

The ascent to Am Bodach at the east end of the ridge provided the first and only bit of step-cutting in ice, but the descent into Glencoe was appalling. On the road at 7 a.m. we were surprised to see a lorry appear out of the darkness, and even more surprised when the driver stopped to pick up three rough-looking characters armed with pick-axes. He must have thought that some rather odd things happened at full moon.

Ron Hockey.
Rossall School.

AN APPROACH TO THE HILLS.

Very little comment has appeared in these pages in the past on the subject of a lasting approach to the hills; this article is not intended to finally answer the question or to create a dogma for mountaineers, it is merely one persons idea of what he considers to be a good recipe for an approach to the hills. Because we differ widely both in temperament and character the physical and mental feelings towards the hills are bound to be different in the majority of individuals. As an example of this people may be divided into various types, there are those who like to play tennis within sight of mountains but at a safe distance from them, there are those who ascend them by funicular and rack railways, and finally those of us who climb them by our own efforts, either to satisfy an ego, or for the pure joy of it.

As in infancy one has to learn to walk before being able to run, applied to mountaineering I am a strong follower of the old school who believe that a novice should learn to walk over the mountains safely and confidently before attempting serious rock climbing. For instance, how many members honestly believe that they can read a map and use a compass and thereby walk in complete safety on our homeland hills, a test in this direction would, I am sure, raise a blush on many a cheek. Far too many aspirants commence rock climbing first when they have exhausted their ego drift off never to return. I have seen these types come and go, and I believe that in some cases they would still be in our ranks if they had been taught a different and more lasting approach to the hills.

Most of us work on the average about 48 weeks out of the 52 and escape to the hills at week-ends and holiday times. From this it could be assumed that since our jobs keep us indoors for the major part of our working life then we naturally take to the fresh air and wide open spaces for our recreation. This does not naturally follow, otherwise the hills and mountains would be thronged with people. It is due to the fact that for some unknown reason a number of us are

attracted to mountains, and as a result have a great desire to climb them. What then is it that causes us to brave the elements, take risks, and undergo other discomforts to climb mountains? Since we have now narrowed the question to those who actually climb mountains it can be narrowed still further to those who climb them all the year round. The pure rock gymnast disappears with the autumn leaves, for cold and damp prevent him from performing his tricks. He retires for the winter because although like many of us he could climb all the year round, this would mean that he may have to climb some of the easier and more popular routes.

The all season all weather mountaineer continues to enjoy his expeditions, when snow falls his ice-axe appears and perhaps he even takes a days skiing by way of variation. Whatever the weather or season he adapts himself to the hills in their various moods and thereby builds up a wealth of knowledge skill and understanding which endears him to them for the remainder of his active days and thereafter he is able to recall a store of lasting memories of days spent in high places. If you ask such a person why he likes to climb mountains he cannot give a straight answer but recalls a number of incidents such as a particularly beautiful sunrise from Scafell or an equally glorious sunset over Buttermere, an anxious moment on a tricky rock climb, an early start from an alpine hut or evening mist descending over a Scottish glen. In some cases this interest is inborn in a particular type, in others it is acquired by a slow process of awakening to the beauty and majesty of mountains. Such appreciation is acquired often by long excursions into the hills. The seasonal rock gymnast cannot recall such moments either because his climbing career was very short or because he spent most of his time with his face glued to rock and the beauties of nature passed unnoticed. On the other hand the pure peak bagger is to some extent guilty of being a materialist although he

does have the opportunity of beholding the beauty of mountains, and if there is any spark of that interest in him then it can be inwardly seized upon and kindled.

It is with the materialistic cragsman and peak bagger with which this article is mainly concerned, those who monotonously tick-off climbs and peaks in the guide book as though they are train spotting. A well known climber once remarked to me that he does not see any reason why some of these types do not build a concrete crag in their back garden on which to practice their circus tricks and feats instead of filling the bars of well known mountain inns with their bragging.

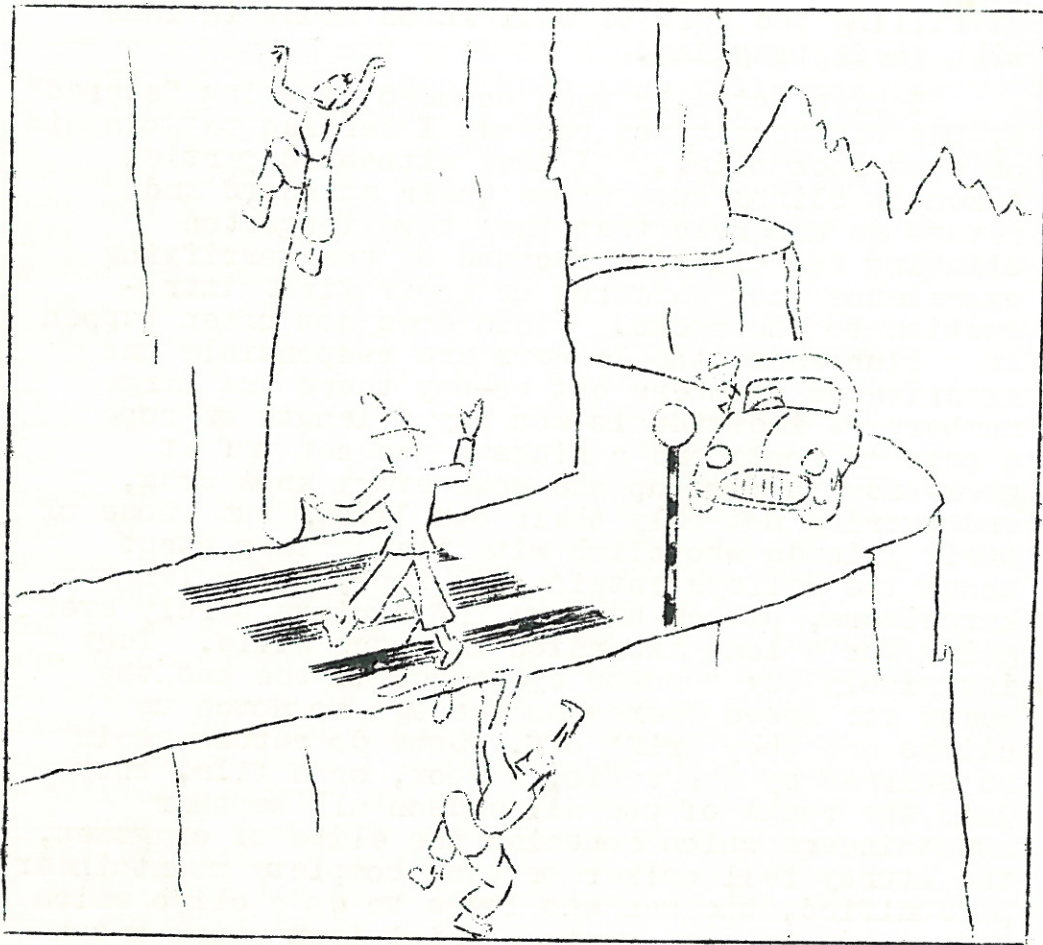
I have actually been accused of being "scared" by one of these types because I refused to join him on some rock climb. I have witnessed parties taken on climbs much above their standard and return so unnerved that they have forgotten climbing for all time because of the terrifying experience they suffered on their first introduction to the rocks. This does not often happen in a club where the leaders are responsible and experienced climbers but to-day there are large numbers of individuals who buy a length of rope a pair of boots and a rucksack and set off at week-ends to rush up and down every know crag, endangering not only their own lives, but those of their friends who climb with them. They strut about the valleys entwined in rope, belay lengths karabiners, pitons hammers and etriers hardly ever going for a long excursion into the hills. They invariably buy a motor cycle and in the end the quest for speed overcomes the ego to notch up climbs and they drift off. Some do return again as stirred by the radio, a book, or a film, they join the ranks of the all season all weather mountaineers which contains the elite of cragsmen, the sturdy fell walker or that complete mountaineer personified, the man who loves to do a climb which brings him to some vantage point from which he can

set off for a good ridge walk.

I hope that this article achieves the purpose for which it was written, but it is controversial, it is meant to be, but if it stirs any readers to debate the problem of an approach to the hills then I shall have achieved my object.

W.A. COMSTIVE.

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LA RUINETTE.

We arrived at the Chanrion Hut in the late afternoon and found it well situated, commanding fine views of the frontier ridge, the Grand Combin and La Ruinette. After dumping our kit in the dormitory and sorting out our food baskets we settled down at a table to discuss the possibilities of our first climb.

We decided on La Ruinette, a mountain of over 12,500 feet, and first climbed by Edward Whymper. From Mauvoisin and the route to the Chanruon Hut it had appeared very fierce, and the faces seen by us certainly were. We discovered, however, that the ordinary route was fairly easy, providing rock and snow climbing of a moderate standard. It seemed that this would be an ideal start to our first Alpine climbing holiday.

In the evening, Gordon Waldie and myself followed the track as far as the glacier in order to ensure that no time would be lost in route finding the following morning. Everybody was very cheerful in the hut that evening and I think we were all enjoying the novelty of our first evening in the Alps. Gordon, the member of the party of whose Alpine experience we were relying, discussed the route with us and asked the hut guardian to call us at 4 a.m.

We went to bed fairly early, taking care not to disturb the remaining climbers who had retired before us. I was unable to sleep for some time, lying awake thinking what might be in store for us tomorrow. Eventually I slipped into oblivion and dreamt of things to come. Almost immediately I was awakened and, much to my amazement, was informed that it was 4 a.m. We staggered downstairs, the eagerness of the previous evening sadly lacking. We ate a variety of small things and drank substantial amounts of coffee. Everybody felt much brighter after this and we hastily packed our ricksacs and left the hut at 5 a.m.

It was bitterly cold outside and the party moved rapidly towards the glacier to keep warm. We scrambled over the moraine, which was frozen into a good firm condition and in a very short time we were on the glacier. It was not necessary to rope up as the glacier was quite dry and there was no covering snow. As we moved across, the sun rose and the peaks took on a reddish glow which gradually faded as the light crept into the valleys. With the sun came warmth and we sweated and laboured our way up steep scree towards a rock ridge leading to the main ridge of the Ruinette.

We arrived at the foot of this ridge and ate our second breakfast, but we soon began to feel cold again as we were somewhat exposed to the wind. At Gordon's suggestion we moved on. The ridge was quite easy scrambling and the party moved rapidly unroped. In half an hour we were on the main ridge, which was a long climb to the distant summit. Alan was feeling the altitude and the pace of the party in general began to slow down. We were now climbing on snow, gradual at first but steepening as we moved higher. After several hundred feet Gordon began to kick steps. He moved slowly but continuously up the slope in perfect rhythm. After about a quarter of an hour I took over and we continued to climb. The sun was now shining directly onto the slope and the snow conditions gradually deteriorated. By the time we reached a group of rocks three-quarters of the way along the ridge the climbing was proving very tiring. We waited at the rocks for the others. Brian was right behind us, whilst Alan and Carolyn brought up the rear. All three were being somewhat troubled by the altitude and Alan looked particularly unwell.

The snow ahead was much steeper now and we decided to rope up. Gordon and Brian tied onto one rope whilst Alan, Carolyn and myself tied onto a second. We had been so intent on the climbing that we had not really noticed the weather closing in. The cloud was now building up and the summit was covered. We realised that we should have to move rapidly.

We moved off quickly but the higher we climbed the more unwell Alan became and the slower we were forced to move. We had now reached the final four hundred feet which was entirely rock. Gordon was now out of sight and must almost have reached the summit. We gradually moved up the rock but Alan was now having great difficulty with his breathing, and his movements were purely mechanical.

Suddenly with only about two hundred feet to go he collapsed face down into the rocks. It was obvious that he could go no further. We rested for a short time while he recovered and meanwhile Gordon and Brian arrived from the summit. Between us we helped Alan down about two hundred feet and here amazingly he seemed quite well again. He tied onto Gordon's rope and thus allowed Carolyn and myself to climb on to the summit.

This we did and as we reached it the clouds lifted giving us a superb view, which unfortunately Gordon and Brian had missed. This was our first Alpine peak and we felt justly proud. We were sorry that Alan had not quite made it. He deserved to, more than anyone else, and he had driven himself to the absolute limit endeavouring to climb those last hundred feet or so. We felt that he could quite justly claim to have climbed the peak.

Carolyn and I rested on the summit for a short while but the storm was now gathering quite rapidly and we realised that we had better rejoin the others. As we left the summit the cloud descending upon us once again and the wind began to stir.

D. BROWN.

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DOWN UNDER

The past year has been an active and adventurous year for the potholing section of the club and, indeed such has been the enthusiasm that several new faces have been attracted to the scene. During this period members have tackled County, Lancaster, Bull Pot O' Witches, Jingling Jackdaw, Cow Skull, Alum, Penhygent Long Churn, Rowton, Bull Pot Kingsdale, Gaping Gill and several others. Some of these have, in fact, been descended on several occasions.

From this admirable selection, however, perhaps the most worthy of mention are the visits to Gaping Gill and Lancaster Pot. Quite a crowd of members turned up on August Bank Holiday for a visit to Gaping Gill. For some this was their first effort at potholing and it certainly made a great impression on everybody.

The descent was made by means of a winch set up and operated by the Craven Club. Even the most stout hearted felt a little weak in the knees as they sat in the winch-chair waiting to plunge 365 ft. into the bowels of the earth. Once seated in the chair you are secured by a safety belt (ha! ha!) and lowered gently down the first 40 ft. until you are hanging directly in the centre of the great hole. The brakes are then taken off with the result that you reach the bottom whilst your stomach is still passing the half-way mark.

The Gaping Gill System is very large and a fair amount of time was spent exploring the various passages. A rather too large party squirmed head to toe through Booth Parson's Crawl resting half way in the one and only suitable sitting position. This was quickly evacuated however, due to the rather suffocating practice of several people lighting cigarettes. Two members left the System by way of Bar Pot and then walked over to the winch again to enjoy a further descent. The

remainder having exhausted themselves by crawling down every hole in sight ascended by means of the winch. This proved somewhat nerve racking due to the very slow upward progress during which one had far too much to look at the ever deepening abyss below.

Lancaster Pot did not provide us with the luxury of a winch and the descent was made by a strenuous 110 ft. ladder pitch. On the first visit the party descended into Fall Pot and spent considerable time trying to find a way into the sump. This was not discovered until late in the day and though they found their way down to the underground river there was not very much time to explore upstream. The same party with one or two additions returned some weeks later and were able to descend to the river quite speedily. The escape down to the river was made by the very inconspicuous pot hole discovered on the previous visit. Thanks to the very dry summer of 1959 we were able to wade a considerable distance upstream, so far indeed, that half the party got lost on the return journey and wandered around for about half an hour before finding the right passage. A reconnaissance was then made downstream but progress was soon stopped by deep water. Exposure suits (the Dress Uniform of all respectable potholers) would have proved most useful to further exploration in this section.

Though the summer of 1959 was such a scorcher and potholers were blessed with the best conditions for years, it was not all cut and DRY. A visit to Bull Pot Kingsdale, though enjoyed by all concerned, proved sufficiently tiring and wet to drive home the point that potholers must maintain a high standard of physical fitness.

One of the most spectacular weekends was the visit by a small party to Rowton Pot after a spell of rainy weather. After a brief and wet reconnaissance it was decided to attempt to descend direct by the Eyehole and after taking careful precautions in belaying the ladders the first section was accomplished successfully. From a spacious ledge it was then necessary to descend deeper

into the hole, accompanied unfortunately by a stream of somewhat large proportions. One member of the party managed to descend almost a hundred feet down the ladder before finding further progress quite impossible due to the overwhelming amount of spray being thrown about by the raging torrent. The conditions were intimidating to say the least and it was decided to abandon the attempt, having promised ourselves that we would return in the future, when weather conditions were more favourable.

Two members of the party then descended Jingling Pot nearby, by means of a 130 ft. ladder pitch. Here, unfortunately the plumbing arrangements were also most unsatisfactory. The result being that they were forced to climb back up the ladder without any rest and arrived at the surface somewhat fatigued.

The Potholing section is looking forward to this summer with many adventurous plans in mind. Through trips between various potholers have been discussed, tentative enquiries have been made as to the possibilities of gaining access to the far reaches at White Scar Cave and various ideas are in the air.

The number of active potholers in the Club at present is not very large, but for those who are attracted to mountaineering by its exploratory aspect, it is quite probable that they will gain much greater satisfaction and indeed find far greater scope in potholing. In this country it is in potholing alone that you stand the chance of setting foot where no man has ever stood before.

D. Brown and Brian Hughes.

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BLIZZARD

On the night of December 29th 1951, the central highlands of Scotland were devastated by a storm of ferocity unknown in living memory. Now this was a Saturday evening, the start of the New Year festivities and many Scottish climbers were keeping the fine old custom of foregathering in lonely spots in the mountains to celebrate Hogmanay. With this intention then, a party of four men and a girl were climbing slowly up a snow-field glen, the Visge Labhrach, which falls down the western flank of Ben Alder down to Loch Ossian

It was Friday and I impatiently hoped for an early start to my holiday. My boss, a stickler for time-keeping, was intrigued by the job I had taken in hand: strengthening a pair of ex - W.D. snow shoes. He asked for a demonstration. So shouting "Mush!", I damped a circuit of the workshop at four o'clock in the afternoon, made a theatrical exit and was never seen again for five days. We were off. The little Ford chugged up to Glasgow where Calum suggested a mild diversion to "Oklahoma", then the toast of the town. Thus the last three seats in the orchestra stalls were filled but in those ex- W.D. boom-days, climbers were easily distinguished from tinkers by their karabiners. We eventually reached Crianlarish.

Our Saturday peak was Ben Dubhraig, mostly ice and boulders and in the evening we boarded the West Highland train to join five friends. Our party now eight strong was heading for Corroul, a lonely halt beyond Rannock Moor and the highest on the line. From there we would take the track by Loch Ossian, climb up the Visge Labhrach, strike eastwards for the bealach before Ben Alder and descend the Visge Alder to Loch Ericht by whose shores stands the deserted Ben Alder cottage. A distance of some twelve miles and a great inspiration on Calum's part to think of such a fine place for Hogmanay. Every man with a bottle of good whisky in his russac and no one to bother us.

But now we learned that a university climbing club was heading for the self-same spot. Perhaps a dozen or more noisy folk. And now the crowning blow: on this same train were four men and a girl, members of a small climbing club, also making for Ben Alder cottage. But Calum still had a few cards. As the train slowly climbed over Rannoch Moor, we laid our plans. The keeper from Carrour Lodge would likely be down at the station with his lorry collecting a week's supplies and the main. We would rush out of the train, cadge a lift in the lorry and put four miles between us and the other prospective tenants of the cottage.

Now this was no ordinary train. For one thing it was the last transport northwards before Hogmanay and it was packed with roistering Highlanders. Excepting the few sober-sided climbers, every man jack from the two men at the front to the wee man at the back appeared for. Then as the train drew in to Corroun we discovered to our confusion, that the Crianlarich station-master had taken the precaution of locking every door. Through the window half of us filed, on to the line beyond the tiny platform. Rucksacs and ski were being thrown out when the train suddenly started and moved off into the night, nicely splitting our party and gear. It was here we discovered that pulling the communication cord has precious little effect on a train's speed when the driver has his vacuum pump full-on and the fireman is wiring into his fifth ton of coal. The summit lay but a mile ahead and Fort William's pubs close at nine. An assault party rushed the Guard's van and spun the big wheel to bring the West Highland express to a grinding halt. We jumped out into the snow and trudged back to Corroun. But our lift had been lost to the rival party. We could now only walk to the Youth Hostel by the Lochside. It was a brilliant night, crisp and clear with the snow crackling underfoot. The hostel was crowded to the rafters; only the warden and his

pals occupied bunks but I was glad of a corner of the floor, I wasn't even a member.

The wind might have increased slowly in force whilst we slept. But suddenly everyone was wide awake as a window crashed open and a blast of snow-laden air swept through the crowded room. There was little more sleep for anyone that night as the building rocked and the storm driven crescendo deafened our ears. Dawn came slowly and still the blizzard raged. Our party was sick of the crowded squalor and by mid-afternoon set off along the lochside track, which was covered by fallen trees. The waters of Loch Ossian driven into dense spray a hundred feet high, raged in great waves and now the snow changed to sleet driving into our backs and soaking us to the skin. I was blown over several times; my rucksac, heavy with food and the luxuries of conviviality, even contained a dismantled rifle and ammunition. I had been daft enough to swallow Calum's tales of living off the land. We reached the keeper's house, tired and chilled and sought his permission to stay in the bothy. He was in a bad humour but eventually agreed and then proceeded to light a grand fire for us. He had advised the other party to spend the night here but they had declined and had carried on up the glen. We wondered how they were faring in such weather as we settled into dry clothes before our fire

The previous evening it appears, they had travelled in the keeper's lorry to the head of the loch and brewed a billy of tea in the shelter of the woods before shouldering their rucksacs. Ben Alder's cottage lay eight miles away and they intended to reach it in one march. But the Visge Labhrach was deep in drifted snow and they found the work most punishing. Their rucksacs were filled with weighty foods and luxuries, a pressure cooker, canned vegetables and climbing gear. Snow shoes or ski would have been invaluable in that deep snow. Barely two miles had been covered when two of the men and the girl decided to halt for the night but the others would not agree to this and elected to carry on with their journey.

The bivouac party, though close to a sheep fank, made no attempt to build or dig a shelter and put on none of the woollens and wind-proof clothing which they carried. Nevertheless it was not an unpleasant night for them. The others must have found the going increasingly exhausting as they climbed the glen hoping to strike the correct bealach.

Towards morning the weather rapidly became worse and at about five o'clock, the full force of the blizzard struck the bivouac party. They lay huddled together, wet through, for hours until they realised that they must move away. By dawn they decided to try and rejoin their friends and so with the storm driving into their backs they started up the glen. They had eaten nothing. Presently they met the others who had failed to find the bealach and now had turned back. One, greatly distressed had abandoned his rucksack and was being helped down by his stronger companion. Perhaps at this moment the seriousness of their position was now fully realised. All the rucksacks were abandoned as they turned to face their way back to safety. But soon after this the distressed man collapsed and died. The others reached the bivouac site but the two men who had spent the night here, could go no further. The girl stayed to comfort them as they lay at the foot of a gully but at last she saw that they too, had died. One of them was her husband.

The fourth man had continued alone and the keeper's house and safety lay less than a mile ahead when he too, collapsed and died. The girl did not see his body as she passed alone down the Visge Labrach and there must have been little strength left in her when at last she came to the Keeper's house.

It was two o'clock that afternoon when the keeper burst into the bothy with news of the girl's return. Scarcely believing his story, we climbed back into our wet clothes and leaving the warm fire behind, set off into the sleet and half-light of the still-

wild storm. We were barely clear of the sheltering woods when we discovered the first body and in the gathering dusk had nearly abandoned our search, when the little gully below the sheep fank revealed two more bodies, half-hidden under the slush and storm water. We covered them with our capes and returned to our bothy. Our two strongest men left to summon aid from the hostel and pass the news down to Fort William by the railway telephone. I well remember that night, lying on the bothy floor by the door, listening to the dying storm moaning softly through the pines. I slept but little.

One might well ask if all this could really happen in these islands, how could men perish in but one night of storm. Admittedly they made mistakes of management of rucksack loads, of clothing, in their choice of bivouac. They separated when they should never have done so. They fought a blizzard and dissipated their energies instead of sheltering. Women's evident superiority over man in withstanding exposure is a sobering thought for the superior sex. The inability of the human frame to face the ferocity of a winter's blizzard was the final blow against this ill-fated party. I have sometimes wondered how this tale might have read if our party had won that lift in the keeper's lorry

A.G.W.

BEALACH: a col or pass between the hills.

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HUTS AND ACCOMMODATION

The club is affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council as a result of which our members can apply for the use of certain huts of other member clubs. For your information details of some of these huts are appended giving the situation, accommodation and in most cases the address to which application for the use of the respective hut has to be made. Please note that the charge quoted is per person per night.

THE CORUIISK MEMORIAL HUT. Standing near the entrance to Loch Coruisk the hut fulfils a long standing need for explorers of the "otherside" of the Cuillin. It has places for nine persons of either sex, application to be made to the J.M.C.S. Glasgow Section, charge 4/- per night.

LINNERAINEACH. A cottage on the north side of Loch Lurgain, Coigach, Wester Ross, administered by The London Section of the J.M.C.S. The hut has basic furniture including canvas bunks for four people but not mattresses or blankets. Some cooking utensils are provided. The fee is 1/- per night and the hut may not be used in August, September and October. Applications for use to Hon. Custodian, K.R. Cox, 78, Salisbury Road, Bromley, Kent.

BLAEN-Y-NANT. This hut belonging to the Mynydd Climbing Club is situated at Llyn Crafnant, Trefiw, Llanwrst, Denbighshire. It can be reached by road from Trefriw or 35 minutes walk on the footpath from Capel Curig. Air beds are desirable to supplement a limited number of mattresses, calor gas stove, primus stoves and cooking equipment are available; sleeping bags are necessary; the charge is 2/- per night application to be made to Hut Warden: Miss B. Armstrong, 21, Delamere Road, Gatley, Cheshire.

RUTHWAITE LODGE. Situated at 1,350 ft. in Grisedale Pass which links Grasmere with Patterdale belongs to Sheffield University Mountaineering Club. There is mixed accommodation for 15 persons; coke stove,

RUTHWAITE LODGE (contd)

primus stoves and other cooking facilities including coke and paraffin are provided. No blankets, so sleeping bags are essential.

Application to Hut Custodian, Sheffield University Mountaineering Club, c/o, University Union, Leavygreave Sheffield. 3.

PEN CEUNANT. A hut belonging to the Ceunant Mountaineering Club. It is one storey cottage 300 yards up the main Snowdon track from Llanberis. There are bunks for 16; sleeping bags must be taken; cooking by Calor Gas. The overnight fee is 2/6 per person, application to be made to the Hut Warden, Mr. J. Urwin, 79, Bells Lane, Birmingham 30.

DALE BOTTOM FARM. The hut belongs to The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club and is situated 2½ miles south east of Keswick (Grid Ref.296218) just off the main Thirlmere Road. Barn type accommodation is offered at 1/6 per night. Application to Dr. J.C.Foster, "Green Trees", Burgh-le-Sands, Carlisle.

ILKLEY. The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club also have a hut at Ilkley, it is partially furnished and equipped, containing eight beds and primus stoves. Visitors are required to take sleeping bags and cutlery. Applications to Hut Secretary, A.M. Warnes, "Bella Vista", Sunset Drive, Ilkley.

NANT FFRANCON. Situated on the old road a little west of upper Gwern-y-gof Farm this hut belonging to The University of London M.C. has accommodation for 20 in bunks. Application to The Hut Warden, University of London. M.C.

TWNYFFORDD. This cottage belongs to Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club and is situated 2½ miles N.E. from Dinas Mawddwy in the valley towards Bwlch-y-Groes and Bala. Accommodation in bunks for seven, sometimes the hut sleeps more; calor gas cooking; utensils and crockery provided; spring water; campings and parking space; sleeping bags essential. Bookings to Cottage Warden, A. George, Croft Caravan Site, Lawn Lane, Coven, Staffs.

GLASHGOUR. (Glasgow University M.C.) Situated at the foot of Stob Ghabhar, 1 mile west of Forrest Lodge, Loch Tulla. Marked "school" on O.S. maps. Reached by road from Bridge of Orchy. Accommodation consists of places for six persons; coal fire; paraffin cooking and lighting. Charges 2/6d per night. Custodian - A. Douglas Forbes, 7, Rowallan Gardens. Glasgow.

BLACK ROCK COTTAGE. (Ladies Scottish C.C.) situated at the foot of Meall a' Bhuriridh, ½ mile south of main road, 1½ miles east of Kingshouse Hotel. Access by Old Glencoe Road from Kingshouse Road end. Calor gas cooking and lighting; charge 5/6 per person, calor gas 6d. Keys from Hut Custodian.

LAGANGARSH. Glencoe (Scottish M.C.) Situated at the foot of Buchaille Etive Moor, ¼ mile south of Altnageadh Cottage, access by path from latter point. Accommodation consists of bunks for 12 (men only). Charge 4/-, keys from Mr. Cameron, Altnafeadh on production of permit.

STEILL. Glen Nevis. (Lochaber M.C.) Situated 7 miles from Fort William on the South bank of Water of Nevis. Access is by path from the end of the motor road in Glen Nevis. Accommodation is for 12 persons, cooking by Primus Stoves, Lanterns, Cutlery but no paraffin supplied. Charge 2/6 keys from British Linen Bank, Fort William during bank hours otherwise at "Ardmore", Cameron Road, Fort William.

G.I.C. HUT. Ben Nevis (Scottish M.C.) situated on the west bank of Allt a' Mhuillinn at the foot of the cliffs of Ben Nevis, altitude 2,400 feet. Access by faint track from Ben Nevis Distillery or from Achintee by Ben Nevis path to Lochan Meall an t'Suidhe. Accommodation for 8 persons in bunks, minimum of 3. Facilities - Coal and paraffin. Primus Stoves and Tilley lamps. Charge 4/- per night, keys from Dr. J.S. Berkeley, Onich House, Cameron Rd., Fort William on production of permit.

GLEANN LICHD HOUSE. Kintail (Edinburgh U.V.M.C.) situated between Beinn Fhada and the Five Sisters of Kintail. Access - leave main road A87 at Morvich. Road on south bank of River Croe (cars can go 3 miles). Hut is 4½ miles from main road. Accommodation for 20 persons. Facilities - Tilley Lamps and Primus Stoves. A few cooking utensils. No paraffin, beds but no mattresses (lilos desirable). Charges 1/6d per night - Keys from Bothy Secretary, c/o. University.

LING HUT. Glen Torridon (Scottish M.C.) Situated immediately south of Lochan an Iasgaich, Glen Torridon. 6½ miles from Kinlochewe. Accommodation - bunks for 6, facilities - Coal and calor gas. Charge 4/-, keys from Mrs. Macdonald, Torridon Road, Kinlochewe on production of permit.

MUIR OF INVEREY. (Cairngorm Club). A cottage situated between Inverey and Linn of Dee, 5 miles from Braemar. Accommodation for 12. Facilities - Electric lighting and cooking. Charges 4/- per night, electricity extra. Custodian Robert Bain, Viewfield, 176, North Deeside Road, Milltimber, Aberdeen.

DERRY LODGE (Cairngorm Club). Situated at the south end of Glen Derry 5 miles from Inverey, 10 miles from Braemar. Access by key for the gate on the Derry Rd. from Mrs. Gordon, Victoria Bridge Lodge on payment of 2/6d key charge. Accommodation in beds for 20. Custodian as for Muir of Inverey.

There are also many bothies throughout Scotland, but three in the Cairngorms are of particular importance. These provide shelter only and no keys are required:-

HUTCHINSON MEMORIAL HUT. (Etchachan Club) Situated in Coire Etchachan Grid Ref. 025998. This hut is closed during the stalking season August to mid October.

SINCLAIR MEMORIAL HUT. Situated in the Larig Chru, Grid Ref. 958037. 150 yards south of the point where the path crosses the stream. 100 feet above the path. (Not visible from the path as one passes it).

CORROUR BOTHY. Situated in the Larig Ghru. Grid Ref. 981959. 100 yards east of River Dee. May be approached from path by a wire bridge over the river.

W.A.C.
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The appreciation of the whole club must surely be accorded to the Hut Sub-Committee who have improved the amenities at the Hut beyond all recognition.

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LIST OF MEMBERS.

I.M. = Introductory Members.
F.M. = Full Members.
C.M. = County Members.

- F.M. Miss F. Ashton, 11, Ashley Close, Bispham.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. N. Adams, 19, Ashley Close, Bispham.
- F.M. Mr. G. Alcock, 175, Normos Rd. Normoss, B'pool.
- F.M. Mr. M.J. Axtell, 27, Fairclough Rd. Thornton.
- I.M. Miss. J. Bailey, 229, Highcross Rd. Hardhorn, Poulton.
- F.M. Mr. D.H. Baker, "La Rosay", Holmefield Ave., Thornton.
- I.M. Miss. H. Bannister, 290, Blackpool Rd. Carleton,
- I.M. Miss M. Barker, 21, Central Drive, Ansdell, Lytham St. Annes.
- I.M. Mr. N.M. Bancroft, 64, Lindel Rd., Fleetwood.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. J. Baron, 40, Kings Walk, Cleveleys.
- F.M. Mr. A. Bell, 16, Dobson Rd., Staining Road End, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. P.T. Blacow, 31, Bryan Road. Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. D. Briscall, 29, Upper Westby St., Lytham.
- I.M. Mr. J.H. Brooks, Westleigh, 288, Queens Promenade, Norbreck.
- I.M. Mr. D. Brown, 116, Preston Old Rd. Blackpool.

- C.M. Miss M.E.M. Bruce, c/o. 88, Arnold Ave., Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. P.J. Bucke, 144, Layton Rd., Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. A. Caygill, 22, Green Drive, Cleveleys.
- I.M. Miss J. Clayton, 28, Ramsay Ave. Layton, B'pool.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. W.A. Comstive, 38, Dean St. Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. J. Cooper, 245, Bispham Rd. Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. K.R. Croasdale, 61, Acre Gate, Blackpool.
- F.M. Miss J. Croft, 1, Jesmond Villas, Crabtree Rd., Thornton.
- F.M. Mr. N. Crowther, 14, Knowsley Cres, Thornton.
- F.M. Mr. C. Day, "Sharon", Briar Rd., Thornton.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. G. Dawes, 24, South Park Drive, B'pool.
- I.M. Mr. A.A. Deas, 9, Orkney Road, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. G.J. Denner, 3, Kenwyn Avenue, Blackpool.
- I.M. Miss. M. Denner, 3, Kenwyn Avenue. Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. D. Estcourt, 31, Windermere Rd., Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. J. Fairburn, 61, Cleveleys Ave., Cleveleys.
- F.M. Miss. L.S. Hamer, 21, Stonycroft Ave., Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. W.A.P. Harper, 15, Westbourne Rd. Rossall Beach, Cleveleys.
- F.M. Mr. M. Hargreaves, 59, Acre Gate, Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. T. Hargreaves, 34, Ferndale Ave., Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. W.H. Haywood, The Little Cafe, Grasmere.
- I.M. Miss K. Helm, 21, Rydal Ave., Fleetwood.
- I.M. Miss. A. Hetherington, 33, Forest Gate, Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. G. Heywood, 42, Shaw Road, Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. R.A. Hockey, Rossall School, Fleetwood.
- F.M. Miss R.A. Holmes, 81, Beaufort Ave. Norbreck, Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. & Mrs. J.H. Howard, 11, Wodow Rd. Thornhill, Egremont, Cumberland.
- F.M. Mr. D. Howarth, 59, Ripon Rd., Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. J.B. Hughes, 14, Sunningdale Ave. Marton, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. T.E.E. Iddon, 25, Westcliffe Drive, Blackpool.
- F.M. Miss A.C. Ivins, 27, Coniston Road, Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. D.C. Ivins, 27, Coniston Road, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. H.T. Jackson, c/o. The Technical College, Palatine
- F.M. Mr. D. Jacobs, 70, Sharow Grove, Blackpool Rd. B'pool.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. J. Jowett, 58, Queens Walk, Rossall Beach, Cleveleys.
- C.M. Mr. & Mrs. B. Knutton, Ghyll Side, Ings, Nr. Staveley, Westmorland.

- I.M. Mr. R. Lascelles, 10. Crestway, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. S. Lawson, 28. Beckdean Ave. Poulton.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. R.E. Legge, 88, Arnold Ave. Blackpool.
- C.M. Mrs. S.G. Lewis, Government College, Keffi, via Gudi, Benue Province, Northern Niberia.
- F.M. Mr. P. Lever, 23, England Ave., Bispham.
- F.M. Mr. E.K. Lewis, 10. College Ave. Anchorholme, Cleveleys.
- F.M. Mr. L.H. Lord, 115, Caunce St., Blackpool.
- I.M. Miss A. Malloch, 20, Wilvere Drive. Little Bispham.
- F.M's. Mr. & Mrs. D. McClean, 24, Granville Rd. Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. & Mrs. J.F. Mackeson, "Minorca", Michaelstone-y-Fedw, Nr. Cardiff.
- F.M. Miss S. Mackeson,
- C.M. Mr. J.H. McSweeney, BM/JHMCS, London. W.C.I.
- F.M. Mr. J.S. Marriott, c/o, Victoria Hospital, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. K. Marsden. 14. Park Rd., Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. & Mrs. P. Miller, 59. Ribblesden Ave. Preston.
- F.M. Dr. & Mrs. W.W. Muir, 11, Lockwood Ave. Poulton.
- F.M. Mr. J. Mynard, 9. Highcross Ave., Poulton.
- F.M. Mr. B. Osbourne, 8. Birchway Ave. Layton, B'pool.
- C.M. Mr. J.M. Outhwaite, 10. Knowsley Gate, Fleetwood.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. J.M. Peel, 16, Chester Ave. Cleveleys.
- F.M. Mr. K. Peel, 10, Abercrombie Rd. Fleetwood.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. F. Pendlebury, 26, St. Patrick's Rd., N. St. Annes.
- I.M. Mr. J.R. Preston. 66, Westcliffe Drive, Layton, Blackpool.
- F.M. Mr. P.M. Ray, 23. Fairhaven Rd. St. Annes.
- I.M. Mr. T.H.H. Richardson, 86, Lord St. Blackpool.
- F.M. Miss S. Rice-Jones, 30. Loxham Gardens, Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. A. Roberts, 5, Church Mount, Sutton-on-Hull, Hull.
- I.M. Mr. G.W. Rogers, 42, Fitzroy Rd. Bispham.
- F.M. Mr. P.H. Roscoe, 1, Coveway Ave. Layton, B'pool.
- I.M. Mr. J. Seddon, 32, Pcwel Ave., Blackpool.
- I.M. Miss B. Schofield, 28. Woodland Dr, Hardhorn.
- C.M. Mr. D. Scott, New Arnaba, The Green, Millom, Cumbs.
- F.M. Mr. W. Shawcross, 78, Harris St., Fleetwood.
- I.M. Miss A. Sheard, 44, Holmes Rd. Thornton.
- I.M. Mr. R. Spencer, 18. Hogketh Rd. St. Annes.
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- I.M. Mr. G. Stevens, 23, Farringdon Ave., Blackpool.
- I.M. Miss C. Towler, 27, Everest Drive. Bispham, Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. A. Towne, 24. Lindell Road, Fleetwood.
- I.M. Mr. & Mrs. Turner, Hiberry Flat, "Fairway", Carleton Crossing, Blackpool.
- C.M. Mr. A.G. Waldie, "Woodlands", Victoria Rd. Saltburn, Yorks.
- I.M. Mr. B.M. Walters, 40. Dunelt Rd., Blackpool.
- I.M. Mr. P.S. Ward, 9. Highcross Ave., Poulton.
- F.M. Mr. & Mrs. A. Whiteley, 30. St. David's Rd. S. St. Annes.
- F.M. Dr. J.P. Williamson, 13, The Crescent. Cleveleys.
- I.M. Miss S. Wood, 23, Ivy Avenue, Blackpool. S.S.

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We apologise for the delay in publication and we would like to point out that some of the views expressed within this Magazine may not necessarily be those of the club or the Editor.

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NOTES

