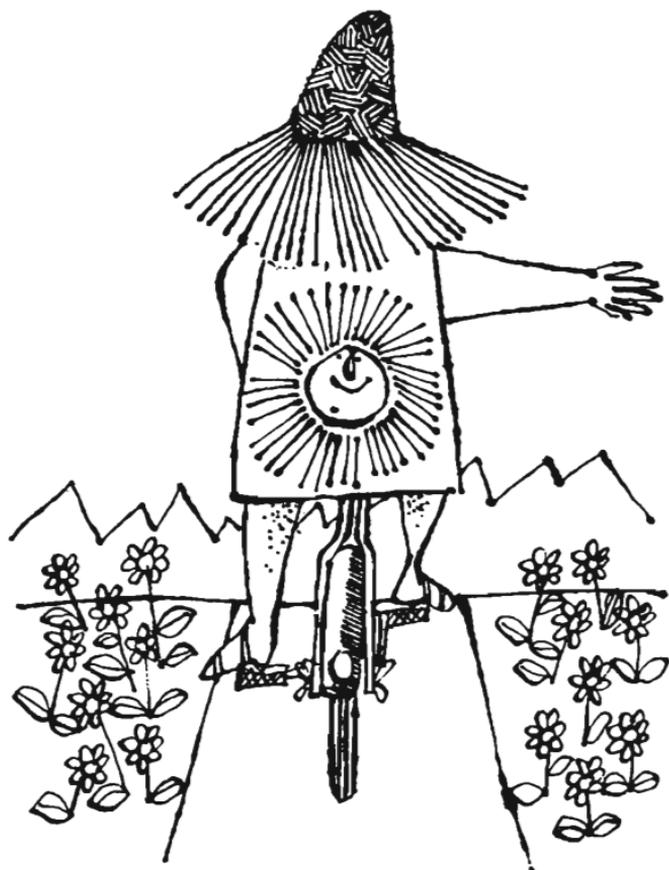


THE ASSOCIATION  
OF BRITISH MEMBERS  
OF THE  
SWISS ALPINE CLUB



JOURNAL 1969

# Roam the Continent



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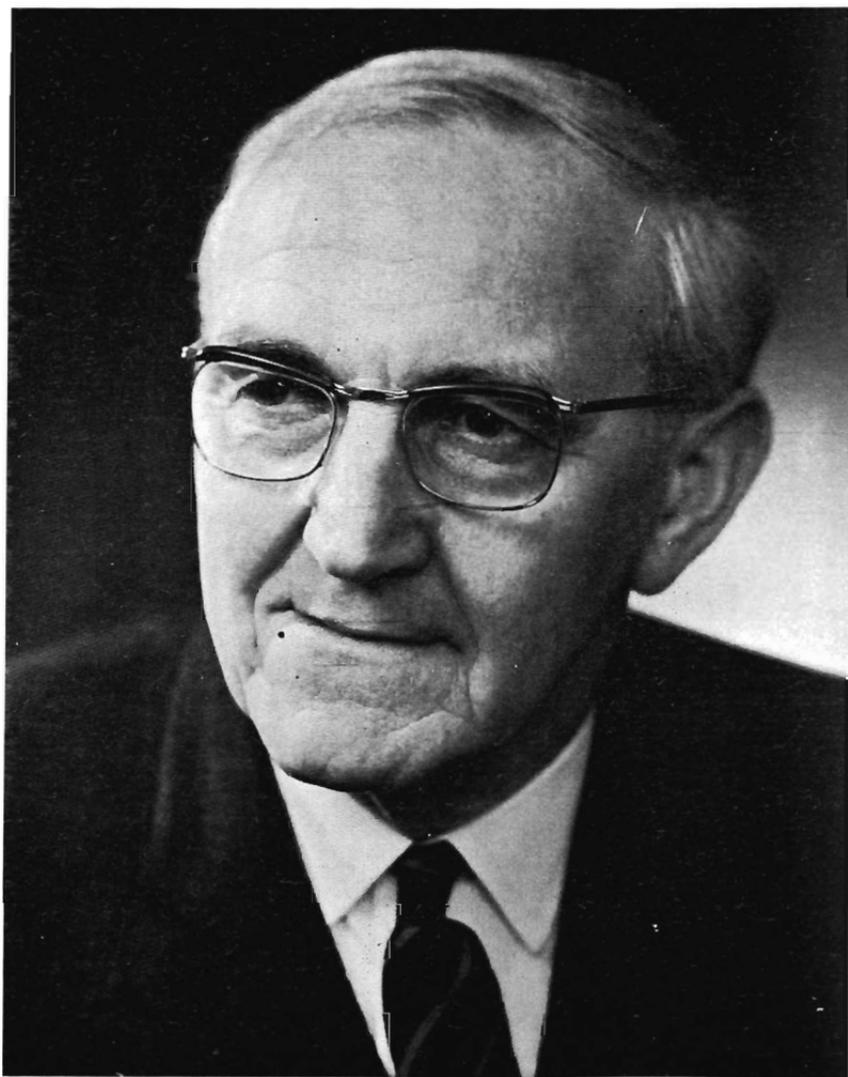
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Frank Solari

Photo by Cecil Drake

# FRANK SOLARI

## New President of the A.B.M.S.A.C.

There are many names that spring to mind when one tries to think of which members of the A.B.M.S.A.C. would be suitable candidates for the Presidency of the Club. There are however very few who can match the climbing experience of Frank Solari, and fewer still who can approach his vast experience in the administrative field of mountaineering activities.

Born in the Midlands, his climbing career began when he became a founder member and subsequently President of the University of Birmingham Mountaineering Club. After graduating he joined the Midland Association of Mountaineers. He then moved to Manchester and was very active with the Rucksack Club. In addition to being warden of their club hut at Tal-y-Braich in the Ogwen valley, he climbed in many parts of the Lake District and Scotland.

In 1942 he went to the U.S.A. and climbed with the Appalachian Mountain Club in New England and the Rockies. A second trip was made to the Rockies to honeymoon with his wife Babs and to introduce her to climbing. On this trip they climbed Gannett Peak, the highest mountain in Wyoming.

Since returning from the U.S.A. in 1947 he has climbed in the Alps (Valais, Bregaglia and the Oberland), Swedish Lapland, the Lahul area of the Himalayas, Turkey, the Pyrenees and the Tyrol. At home he was President of the Rucksack Club in 1959-60.

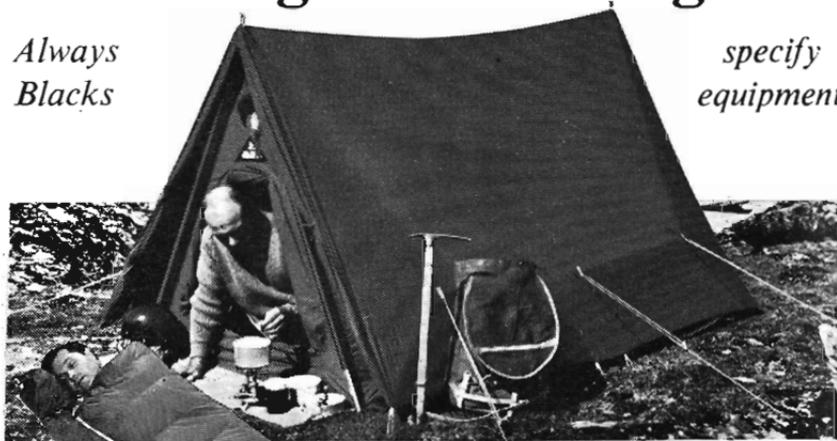
For many years the Rucksack Club representative on the main committee of the B.M.C., he has been the mainstay of the Council's Equipment Sub-committee. While working at Harefield he was able to carry out many tests on the hawser-laid and core-and-sheath types of climbing ropes, and was instrumental in persuading the British Standards Institution to bring out in 1959 a standard for climbing ropes. Nowadays the sub-committee's work ranges over the whole field of mountain gear and Frank represents the B.M.C. at the U.I.A.A.'s equipment committee.

Outside the mountaineering world Frank Solari is a senior civil servant at the Ministry of Technology, is a member of the Royal Photographic Society, and a keen opera goer.

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# EDITORIAL

## An Invitation to A.B.M.S.A.C. Members

Most members of the A.B.M.S.A.C. appreciate that the editor of the Journal is dependent on the members of the Club in as much as they contribute the articles that form the bulk of the Journal. Please resolve now to record your activities during 1969 and make a note to forward details to the Editor by November 1.

It is probably less readily appreciated that the Journal is the main form of contact between the Club and the members. Because this contact exists, it is natural that it should be used to try and collate the views of members who are scattered all over the British Isles and who often may feel they have insufficient voice in the affairs of the Club. A brief questionnaire has been compiled overleaf and members are invited to complete and return same. The overall response will be taken to indicate the interest of the members in their Club, and the replies taken as a guide for future activities. Any further comments on any aspect of Club activities will be welcomed.

First a few words of explanation. During the past few years, and under the guidance of Vincent Cohen, the committee of the A.B.M.S.A.C. has made efforts to broaden the activities of the Club within the British Isles.

The reasons for this broadening are many and varied; one reason is that it is felt that the Club has for too long revolved solely about the few members who live close enough to London to attend the monthly lectures. Another is finance. Because we are primarily members of the Swiss Alpine Club and enjoy rights and privileges in continental huts, the major portion of our subscriptions is remitted to Switzerland. The balance, regrettably small, has to cover all A.B.M. activities. It is desirable that the majority of members should be in a position to partake in 'home' Club activities, and thereby obtain full benefit from their subscriptions.

All of us face the same difficulties in getting to Switzerland to climb in the Alps. Equally all of us are in a position to, and want to, climb regularly in the hills of Britain. It was in recognition of this fact that the Club's climbing programme, for long confined to Easter and Alpine meets, was expanded to include occasional weekend meets in Wales and the Lake District.

These meets will be continued, and the formula of staying at a hut and dining together at a local climbing hotel seems satisfactory. The question is, to what extent do members wish to participate in Club activities? Most members will already belong to a local climbing club and will probably wish to only occasionally climb with the A.B.M.S.A.C.

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Please complete and return to:            G. A. Daniels  
 Hon. Editor, A.B.M.S.A.C. Journal  
 10 The Old Drive  
 Welwyn Garden City  
 Herts.

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Should the Club try to be an active climbing club in the U.K.?  | YES | NO |
| 2. Should weekend meets be held at a frequency of<br>a) MONTHLY    b) QUARTERLY  |     |    |
| 3. How many weekend meets per year would you like to attend?<br>NONE/ONE/TWO/THREE/MORE THAN THREE                         |     |    |
| 4. Would you attend a weekend meet in Scotland?  | YES | NO |
| 5. Would you like the objectives of a meet to be defined as say, easy rockclimbing OR harder rockclimbing?                 | YES | NO |
| 6. If yes, which type of meet would you prefer to attend:<br>a) easy rockclimbing and scrambling<br>b) harder rockclimbing |     |    |
| 7. Would you like the Club to run a meet in Scotland over Christmas?   | YES | NO |
| 8. Would you buy a Club tie if they were available at say £1. 1. 0d.   | YES | NO |
| 9. Would you purchase Club Christmas cards   | YES | NO |
| 10. If so how many (indicate in dozens)  |     |    |

# NEPAL WALK

*E. C. L. Jarvis*

Reading and discussing the accounts of Himalayan climbing over the years and the lack of opportunity and, indeed, ability (at any rate at my age) to do any ourselves had often elicited the remark that it would be splendid just to experience the "march in" and at least get a close up look. Thanks to the help and kindness of Col. J.O.M. Roberts who I met on a previous brief visit to Kathmandu when I was en route (by devious ways) to Australia two years ago, Tom and I were able to do this in October and November 1967.

We flew to Delhi via Cairo and Teheran. Then came the final hop to Kathmandu over the forested Terai with exciting though still somewhat distant, views of the big mountains which we were already at pains to identify.

A day in Kathmandu left little time for anything beyond repacking kit for the trek but we managed a glimpse of the old town with its conglomeration of temples and palaces, many of the latter decorated with lovely Newar carved woodwork, and its populous bazars.

Bright and early the following morning we were collected by our Sherpas and, after being duly invested with ceremonial scarves of welcome, drove in a Land Rover thirty miles up the new Chinese road (which now links Kathmandu with Lhasa) to Dolalghat. Although we were rather too excited about starting to appreciate it on the outward trip, this is quite a fine drive across the Kathmandu valley, over a road pass and down to the confluence of the Indrawati and the Sun Kosi where is Dolalghat at 2,000 ft. (Kathmandu 4,400 ft.). Gear, supplies and porters were assembled here and in due course we set off straight on to a steepish hill path, and walked for about four hours, camping at about 5,000 ft.

Our party consisted of Pasang Kami, our sirdar (who in addition to other achievements has been three times to the South Col of Everest), Pasang Tendi, his second in command and our cook, and five porters (one sherpa and four sherpanis); all delightful, jolly people, as sherpas are. Our daily routine was tea and biscuits and cheese at around 6.15, strike camp and start half an hour later. Walk for about three hours then stop for the long haft for breakfast cum lunch, wash, airing tents

and bedding etc. This about two and a half hours. Walk on for three or four hours according to time of arrival at a suitable camp site (with perhaps the odd halt to consume chang, local beer made from rice or other cereals and which can vary from a clear, cool and refreshing drink to something resembling fermented pond water). Arrive at the camp site, brew up, a little time for odd jobs like writing up diaries and recording photos, supper, an endeavour to read a bit perhaps by candle or lantern light (it being always dark by six o'clock) and fairly early into sleeping bags.

Our thirteen days switchback walk up and down the age-old paths to Namche Bazar took us broadly north east, the principal passes being the Manga Deorali, Thotang, Lamjura and Taksindu and the rivers the Bhota Kosi, Likhu Khola and, of course, the Dudh Kosi, the walk high above the vast gorge of which is just one of the things worth coming to do. As a measure of ups and downs Tom calculated that in the course of the whole trek of approximately 350 miles over the ground there is 81,700 ft. of ascent. Day temperatures were in the 70's as we traversed the colourful countryside with every inch terraced for cultivation with rice as the main crop.

It became progressively cooler with altitude and the latening season until at Namche we had our first really hard night frost. We had had a number of glorious views of the high mountains on our way—particularly thrilling was the first view of Everest from just above Junbesi looking up the Solu valley—but when we reached Namche (the capital of the Sherpa country) we felt that we were now definitely treading the path of mountaineering history. Namche seems quite a metropolis as it is here that passports and trek permits are examined and prolix records inscribed in ledger-like volumes, the ultimate use of which is not discernable. However, it provides an opportunity for a pleasant chat with the provincial governor, the schoolmaster, the chief of police and other officials. We were entertained by Pasang Kami in his house; I like the practical informality of Nepalese (especially sherpa) houses. The only thing I could never quite get used to was the lack of illumination after dark, the only addition in a large room to the open fire under its smoke-hole in the roof being one or two guttering candles—in which gloom, however, the residents (plus, usually, a number of droppers in) move around and cook with practised ease. P.K.'s entertainment did not omit rakshi (spirit distilled from rice) and Tibetan tea was constantly, as is usual, on tap.

After a short ascent the path traversed high above the Dudh Kosi

giving magnificent views of Everest, Lhotse, Ama Dablam, Taweche and Thamskerku. This was the finest part of the trek so far; indeed it was what we had come to see. The valley slopes, too, were made very striking by the gold and red of berberis which grows in profusion. Unfortunately we arrived at the famous Thyangboche monastery in freezing fog. "Om manipadme hum"—and you tell me what it really means. The so-called monastery guest house looks a respectable building from a distance but on closer acquaintance appears to be constructed of a large number of holes joined together by flimsy, ill-cut and ill-fitted woodwork. We had a wretched first night the only favourable feature being the change from the constriction of a tent but for our second night we debated whether this was powerful enough compensation for the appalling freezing draught. Then P.K. had the bright idea of pitching the tent inside the building thereby craftily getting the best of both worlds. The morning after our first night dawned gloriously fine and we were able to judge for ourselves the justification of the description of Thyangboche as "the loveliest spot on earth"—a very big claim but we ruled it, to mountain lovers, valid. The monastery is sited on a high spur (12,700 ft.) completely ringed by peaks including Everest, always with its characteristic snow plume. We scrambled up 2,000 ft. on the south side to see the views further opened up and to look down on the monastery in its unique setting. On our return we paid the usual courtesy visit to the Head Lama, handing him the customary ceremonial scarves and a donation to the funds. He extended to us the hospitality of tea, the conversation over this being of necessity restricted. He is a youngish man which perhaps explained his impression of us (expressed) that we "seemed rather old" We did not quite know whether this was intended as a sort of compliment or merely an assertion of indubitable fact.

Our next day's march took us to Pheriche at 13,800 ft. where the fields were brown with frost and the surrounding country had a slightly moorlandish look as the trees seem to end at about 13,000 ft. Ama Dablam is very much the dominant mountain over all this section—we had already voted it the queen of the great peaks of the region for its sheer, graceful beauty and we never revised our opinion. A steady climb from here brought us to a sort of belvedere giving a magnificent view of Pumori (23,442 ft.). We crossed a small bouldery valley and followed up the western side of the river with the great snow and ice wall of Nuptse prominent and hiding Everest. We camped at Lobuje, an idyllic spot in a small, grassy boulder-strew side valley backed by rock butterresses crowned with the snow of Lobuje peak. Lobuje consists of one stone hut and some stone walls for wind-breaks and, although we had



Everest beyond the shoulder of Nuptse

Photo by E. C. L. Jarvis

eight hours of blue sky and unbroken sunshine, the temperature fell to  $0^{\circ}\text{F}$ . (at 16,100 ft.) at night in the open (inside the tent we recorded  $18^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).

On November 4th we crossed the terminal moraine of the Khumbu glacier, which is so stone-covered that very little ice is visible hereabouts, and descended to the frozen lake of Gorak Shep (17,000 ft.). After a rest and lunch (I was feeling the altitude a lot) we went up the slopes of soil and grass, stones, boulders and tiny rock summit of Kala Patar (18,200 ft.) which physically and metaphorically was our high spot. All the time Everest was coming more and more into view behind the shoulder of Nuptse and finally we looked across to a superb view of Everest, Nuptse, Lhotse with the South Col of Everest and the lower part of the great ice-fall. All around was a really almost overwhelming grand panorama of high snow mountains. Why record just names when it is impossible to describe the individual peaks of such a superfluity of magnificence. Anyway there are about thirteen of 20,000 ft. and over not to mention the "rank and file". The whole of the Khumbu glacier was seen to advantage, we could see over the Lho La pass to the peak of Changste (24,780 ft.) in Tibet. Pumori (of which Kala Patar is on a spur) rose up so steeply that we couldn't photograph it. A perfect day

with nine hours of continuous sunshine.

The last day of our "outward" journey took us across the lateral moraine on to the centre of the Khumbu glacier arrayed with large seracs and "glacier tables". Then up to the area where the various expeditions had their base camps (and where we added a sardine tin to the accumulation already there) right at the head of the valley in the horse-shoe of giants and close to the foot of the ice-fall with a good view of Lhotse behind. The weather clouded over about mid-day and as it got cold our down clothing came into use.

We varied our route back from Lobuje by traversing high up the hillside giving much finer views of the mountains than we had had on the outward journey with Lhotse Shar showing up particularly finely behind Nuptse. Rounding a shoulder we suddenly had a terrific view of Chola lake with its western part frozen whilst immediately opposite us rose Cholatse in a 6,200 ft. precipice apparently as steep as the Eiger face. Further up the valley were four fine rock peaks any of which would have been famous in the Alps. We descended to the lake for refreshment by a prayer flag erected on a boulder and, again deviating slightly from our upward route, reached Dingboche. Ama Dablam looked almost the finest we had seen it. Tom said it was the most wonderful afternoon's walk we had ever done or were ever likely to do—I agreed with him. From our camp at Dingboche we looked straight up 8,000 ft. of Ama Dablam. We went to a point 600 ft. above the village where are two fine stupas (Buddhist monuments) and which gave a glorious panorama of the great surrounding peaks gleaming in the clear sunshine and quite a few of which were becoming almost old friends. But this time Makalu was added.

On our way back to Thyangboche we visited the gompa (temple) at Pangboche where they keep the alleged yeti scalp and where they also have a "yeti hand", the bones assembled and mounted by a Delhi firm of jewellers. The visitors book, which we signed, has, of course, a lot of well-known names. Passing Thyangboche we branched off to Khumjung where we spent a comfortable night in the temple attached to Pasang Tendi's parents home. We visited the hospital at Kunde erected for the Sherpas by Sir Edmund Hillary and where Dr. and Mrs. McKinnon (N.Z.) are doing a great job. We also walked up to a point (13,200 ft.) west of Kunde for the glorious view, the particular thing about this one the vista up the Bhote Kosi to Thami (birthplace of Tensing) where the route to Tibet over the Nangpa La and the route to the Rowaling over the Tesi Lapcha come in. And so back to Namche Bazar and Kathmandu.

# LEYSIN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MOUNTAINEERING

*Dougal Haston*

To start a new mountaineering school in Switzerland might seem a strange idea when the Swiss Alpine Club have such efficient guiding services in all the main mountain resorts. It was felt there was a need for a small English speaking school to teach modern methods of Alpine climbing. The late John Harlin was the first to put this idea into practice. In 1965 he founded in Leysin the International School of Mountaineering. Leysin is not in any of the well known Alpine chains but there is a range of limestone cliffs rising to 1,000 ft. behind the the village and it is very close to the glaciers of Les Diablerets and Les Dents de Midi. Still not overpowering reasons for the siting of a climbing school? Then look closely at the situation of the village and you will find that it is only two hours drive from each of the main Alpine chains, Zermatt and the Valais, Chamonix, Mont Blanc, Lauterbrunnen and the Bernese Oberland. This means one can reach the big mountains easily in good weather and can also carry on a full instructional programme when the weather is bad, as it so often is, in the high Alps. This point was well proved last summer, which was one of the worst in Alpine history. Only one day was lost because of bad weather from June to October.

But let us regress to the beginnings of the school. John Harlin had only one brief formative summer at the helm before a broken rope on the Eiger Direct in 1966 tragically ended his days. I had talked a lot with John and gradually came to believe in the need for a school of this type. So much so that the next summer I found myself directing the climbing programme. One happy thing was that we had the full backing of the local guides. There had been much soul searching on this subject, but we found that we did not in any way encroach on their terrain and to seal good will one became a member of the board of directors of the school. The last two years have seen the establishment of the school and its policy. I shall try without too much propaganda to explain the ideals of the school and the way the staff try to put them into action.

Climbing is a very individualistic sport and often in the early stages one has great psychological problems such as fear of heights, distrust of rope, lack of self-confidence, as well as the more obvious physiological

troubles. If these problems are not tackled and worked out during the earlier stages of learning climbing they can lead to severe curtailment of enjoyment later. For an instructor to tackle these problems he cannot have a large class, as individual problems are often lost in the problem of managing the class as a whole. After working with various numbers of students and studying reactions and results we came to the conclusion that the student would advance more quickly and confidently if the classes were small. So we fixed the ratio at one instructor to two students. This enables the instructor to keep a close eye on individual problems as well as providing a high degree of safety. The methods and approach to Alpine climbing change every year. Better safety techniques are constantly being tried and tested. For this reason we have a young staff who not only know the theory of these methods but are capable of putting them into practice. If we hear of new techniques we go out and try them. If we find they are better than the old the knowledge is passed on to the student. Nothing is dogmatically taught. If the advanced student thinks he has a better method of doing something than the instructor then once again it is worked out in practice. Students? They come as young as fourteen and as old as the fifties, from the complete beginner to the competent rock climber who wants a safe introduction to the Alps.

The programme is flexible but an average weekly course would have three days rock climbing and rock rescue, two days ice climbing with crevasse rescue and two days on a high peak with a glacier crossing and perhaps a bivouac. But this is varied to the student's needs.

There is also a special group course where the basics of rock and ice technique are taught and then the emphasis swung to learning to live in high mountains with discourse on rescue and meteorology and ascents of easy snow peaks.

The school is situated in Chalet Vagabond, Leysin, which as well as being a ski lodge in winter and housing the climbing school in summer is a meeting place for international travellers.

Students stay in comfortable six bunk rooms and eat in the communal dining hall.

Next year we shall introduce a ski mountaineering course during April and May. Here we shall try to combine the ascents of major Alpine peaks under winter conditions with the delights of high powder skiing.

# A ROCK CLIMB IN ANTARCTICA

*David T. Todd*

Herfried Hoinkes in 'The Mountain World 1960/61' in an article entitled 'Mountains and First Mountaineers in Antarctica' said: 'Although there are in Antarctica a great number of magnificent mountains, one has a feeling that the time for the mountaineer has not yet come.'

An extract from the entry in my diary for 7 February 1966 read: 'Today I took part in what is perhaps the first serious rock climbing ascent to be made in Antarctica: the ascent of the 2,000 ft. Pinnacle Buttress of Roman Four Promontory.'

I spent two and a half years in the Antarctic, from December 1963 to April 1966, as a Mountaineer/General Field Assistant with the British Antarctic Survey, based in Marguerite Bay on the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula (previously referred to as Grahamland on British maps and Palmer Peninsula on American maps). During this period of time, in the course of my work on topographical and geological surveys I travelled fairly extensively by dog sledge and aircraft around Marguerite Bay and King George VI Sound on the west coast of the Peninsula, and in the region of Mobiloil Inlet on the east coast. On these trips I managed, with various members of the survey, to do the first ascents of some twenty odd peaks ranging from 2,000 ft. to 12,000 ft. The most notable of these climbs was the ascent of Mount Andrew Jackson (12,000 ft.) at 71° south, the highest mountain on the Antarctic Peninsula. The majority of the climbs were made on snow and ice and little or no rock climbing was involved but technically difficult snow and ice routes are certainly feasible in Antarctica.

Whenever I returned from a field trip to our base on Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay 68° south, the question of a rock climb was always in my mind owing to the compelling presence of Roman Four Promontory (2,200 ft.) which soared impressively from the sea only one and a half miles away on the other side of a small bay. The main summit of the mountain had been climbed many times, via the easy north-east ridge. What attracted my eye was the unclimbed pinnacle with the spectacular defensive buttress facing north-west towards our base; it received unlimited sunshine in the summer. I often spent what



Roman Four Promontory

Photo by David Todd

appeared to be hours scanning the buttress with binoculars for a possible line. In winter when the sea was frozen, I reconnoitred the foot of the mountain with my dog team searching for a weakness in the rocky fortifications. In summer I climbed the main peak by the north-east ridge to study the problem in profile, and also to see if the pinnacle could be gained by a traverse along the main ridge. An approach along the main ridge was found lacking in aesthetic appeal on account of the serried ranks of tottering gendarmes which would have deterred even the most die-hard Sorbonne student from his objective.

### PINNACLE BUTTRESS, ROMAN FOUR PROMONTORY

1,950 ft. Grade IV Sup.

1st Ascent: 7 February 1966 by:

D. Todd, J. Gardner, J. Noble and M. Cousins

February 7 1966 was beautiful when I rose at 8.00 a.m. There was not a cloud to be seen in any direction and it was absolutely windless with the thermometer reading a tropical  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and rising slowly. We had the time at our disposal, all our field work was completed for the season and we were idling the days away waiting for the relief ship which was to take us back to the U.K., and now quite definitely we had the weather. The assault on Roman Four Pinnacle was now very much on. The team consisted of two ropes of two: Jimmy Gardner (who was on the ascent of Mount Andrew Jackson) and myself on one, and John Noble from Nottingham, and Mick Cousins, of Leicester, making up the other.

Safe in the knowledge that we had twenty four hours of daylight in which to climb if necessary, breakfast was a leisurely affair and sac packing was done in a lackadaisical manner. We pushed our fifteen foot fibreglass boat through a fringe of shore brash at 11.00 a.m., brought the twin outboard motors to life, and pointed the nose at Roman Four Promontory a little over a mile away. The sea was a mirror, cracked only by the occasional leaping penguin and the wake of our boat.

By midday we had our boat beached well above the high water line on the promontory, with our emergency camping gear, food and radio stowed in it, and were on our way up the scree towards the buttress. Several flights of aggressive terns gave us the kamacazi treatment as we struggled up the sliding stones. The direct start to the buttress looked

far from encouraging as it led to a horribly steep, smooth step a few hundred feet up. We turned up the gully on the left of the buttress and searched the wall on that flank for a weakness. There were a couple of alternatives in the form of precipitous grooves which looked as if they might go all the way up the four hundred feet of wall to the crest of the buttress above the steep step which we were hoping to circumvent. We chose the more likely groove of the two.

Purists in the sport might complain that we should have taken the direct line from the lowest point of the buttress instead of starting a few hundred feet higher up in the gully as we did. I agree, it would have been 'nicer', but in view of the environment in which we were climbing it was thought more prudent to push on and not waste time. Storms in Antarctica do not require the usual stage props of clouds, mist, snow, rain and so on before they act. Several of the most terrifying storms which I have encountered in the south were accompanied by cloudless skies. Ten months before we tackled the Pinnacle two of our companions suffered severe frostbite, and were fortunate to escape with their lives, when their tent disintegrated in one of these clear sky blows (the wind gusting over 100 knots) less than ten miles from where we were climbing. Exactly three months after we tackled our Antarctic rock climb another two of our companions were less fortunate, they died in a blizzard only fifteen miles from Roman Four. Bearing in mind the schizophrenic tendencies of the atmosphere of Antarctica, we climbed always with an eye open for the weather: not just for clouds but also for the drifting snow on the glaciers and ridges which always heralds a blow.

The first pitch was mine. Confidence surged into every limb when I realised that we were climbing on extremely sound granite and not frost-shattered rock as we had expected. A shallow groove, steepening in steps for fully 90 ft., offered a delicate exit on the right to a crack at an easier angle which led after 40 ft. to a spacious ledge. Firmly ensconced with a fabulous natural belay, and an even better peg-belay, I gave oral vent to my feelings in the way which climbers do when they are enjoying themselves.

Gardner followed smoothly and pushed on to the next pitch which had a 20 ft. boulder-problem start to it; it looked easy but wasn't. A good sound runner beneath a bulge psychologically eased the difficulties and after a few attempts he delicately moved on across the problem to an easy rake on the left. At the end of this rake a mammoth detached flake offered a spectacular belay, seating two on top, and an



The Polar panorama from Roman Four

Photo by David Todd

excellent view of the remainder of the gully face leading to the crest of the buttress. Noble and Cousins were both at the belay at the top of the first pitch as I traversed left on the start of the third pitch: We exchanged yodels of delight; morale was high, the rock was terrific and the weather was beautiful (safe looking).

Forty feet left of the huge flake on which Gardner was sunning himself, I entered into a system of very steep cracks and chimneys which obviously led to the crest. Climbing on such remarkably sound rock (the standard was around Severe) surrounded by such unique mountain scenery was an experience which I shall never forget; it was intoxicating. I drifted up the rock in a dream, hardly aware of making contact with it. Gardner's cry of: 'Twenty feet left!' snapped me back to reality and I found a chockstone belay with only a few feet to spare. Whilst fitting a sling around the chockstone, I noticed that the back of the crack which was in shadow, was lined with ice—a reminder of where we were.

Gardner came on at a steady glide and pushed on to the next pitch with only a momentary pause to collect gear and complain about the heat. There was a dead calm and the temperature was +2°C. His pitch,

the fourth, continued up the same line of cracks and chimneys finally leading him, after a fight with a Snowy Petrel about nesting rights, to the crest of the buttress. At last we were on the route proper and could see much more of it ahead of us: 500 ft. of broken slabs leading to a tower, about 100 ft. high, which barred the route to the upper ridge and our view beyond. It required a truly determined effort to keep ourselves from rushing on with the route instead of waiting for Noble and Cousins to appear from below. The polar panorama of ice-clad peaks, writhing glaciers, pack ice, icebergs and the contrasting blue sea which showed green around the jagged coastlines supplied the tranquillizing effect necessary for us to sit patiently and wait for the others.

Nobles' arrival after fifteen minutes shook us from our reverie. Before he had time to bring Cousins up we had moved on. Belays on this huge tract of slabs were in short supply but fortunately so also were technical difficulties; the standard throughout remained 'Difficult' with only a few moves which might have merited the tag of 'Very Difficult'. We moved together over the entire section of slabs, only pausing to move individually when the occasional awkward bit made it prudent to do so. Our companions were not impressed by our 'alpine technique' on the slabs and chose to move singly using belays. Consequently Gardner and I gained more than an hour on them in reaching the 100 ft. tower.

Throughout our climb up the slabs the tower seemed to grow bigger and more menacing as we approached it. Surely this would be the key to the route up the Pinnacle Buttress? From close at hand it did not look any more comforting, but there was a prominent corner on it which started about forty feet up and eventually led into a chimney that definitely finished on top of the tower. A lead by Gardner established us on a stance at the base of the prominent corner. Then it was my turn. The corner itself was 'Severe' and most interesting, but the struggle came in the chimney above it which had an obnoxious chockstone topped with large loose stones.

There was a surprise in store for us when we reached the top of the tower; a knife-edge horizontal arete lay between us and the continuation of the route. Traversing the arete, with a drop of 800 ft. into a gully on either side, proved most exhilarating. I negotiated it with my arms extended on each side for balance like a tight-rope walker, whereas Gardner thought it safer on all fours. After the arete there followed the only section of loose rock on the entire route. Gardner, who led it with much difficulty and one purely psychological runner at 70 ft.,

described it as overhanging scree. From then on the rock was again remarkably sound, despite its shattered appearance, and offered us splendid climbing with several pitches of fine character en route to the summit of the pinnacle. One pitch of 100 ft. took me around a gendarme, and out of sight of Gardner before teasing me with a wee problem which barred my way to easy rocks and a belay: a 20 ft. traverse across a vertical wall with an unsettling pice of exposure. Somehow, in spite of the rope dragging badly as a result of my zig-zag route, I managed to struggle across. My companion's gasp on reaching the traverse told me that I had not suffered from an over-imaginative mind. We named it 'Traverse of the Mods' in a moment of satirical revelry. Another pleasant piece of climbing led us to the base of the final tier of rock which was 90 ft. high and the last line in the defences of the Pinnacle of Roman Four. This final section was as difficult as anything we had encountered on the route but Gardner romped up it in fine style. I joined him on the summit at 5.30 p.m., we had climbed the buttress in a little over five hours.

We built a cairn, took photographs and ate chocolate as we waited for the other pair to arrive. Suddenly, after only twenty minutes on top, we were enveloped in mist and the temperature started falling noticeably. Anoraks, gloves and whatever else we had were dug out of the sacs in double quick time. When Noble and Cousins finally joined us about quarter-to-seven, we were extremely anxious about the weather and the prospects of finding a descent route in the thick mist. I don't even remember if we congratulated the lads when they appeared; the glories of the route had been swallowed by the mist and chilled out of our thoughts by the dropping temperature which was advertising greater meteorological things to come.

Twenty feet beyond the cairn, on the side of the summit remotest from our ascent line I banged in a piton and we made an awe-inspiring 150 ft. abseil, free in places, through the mist and into a small, snow-filled subsidiary gully. We kicked steps down the erosion path for more than 100 ft. in an eerie gloom and then much to our relief found ourselves in a broad, scree gully which led safely to the shore. Tension and anxiety were our fellow-travellers on the descent until we emerged beneath the mist and spotted our boat, then someone said, 'That was a good route!'

# HERTHUBREITH: Monarch of Iceland's Wilderness

*G. R. E. Brooke*

Herthubreith, 5517 ft., is termed the Queen of Icelandic mountains. Looming like a colossal plinth above the broad desolation of the Icelandic plateau, its bold, symmetrical form achieves a distinction unmatched by any other peak in that sombre, northern land. Steep fans of scree soar to the foot of a forbidding battlement of crag which completely encircles the mountain. Above these crumbling cliffs, which are breached only at one narrow spot on the western side, a gently inclined summit plateau culminates in a little peak standing above a lake-filled crater. Inaccessibility is the dominant characteristic of this strange mountain brooding in lonely ruin amid its barren domain of lava and volcanic sand.

Dark, scudding clouds flying before a pitiless wind cast their stern shadow over the bird-haunted waters of Myvatn as the motorbus carried me the last miles to Reykjahlith. This remote hamlet situated at the Lake's northern end, constituted the last outpost of civilisation on the long journey towards my objective which still lay hidden from view behind wide volcanic ranges. The next stage of the venture seemed problematical indeed. Herthubreith stands far from the highway and can only be approached along a rough, and at times, scarcely perceptible trail threading fifty miles of virgin terrain, a formidable exploit for anyone unversed in the art of Icelandic cross-country travel. But in Sverri Tryggvesson I found a past-master. This strong, ruggedly-built farmer, born and bred in the isolated community around Myvatn, proved to be the very type of colleague I was seeking. He made a ready offer to take me to Herthubreith in his land rover. The financial consideration seemed rather substantial: in retrospect, it proved fully justified.

Before we could start we had to wait five days before the weather relented and gave a clear day. By 7.45 a.m. our thrust into the open wilderness had begun. We mounted swiftly through sulphur-coated hills where white jets of volcanic steam rose with a hissing roar from the sterile ground and solfataras oozed and bubbled within their small, black craters. For twenty miles we sped across a forlorn, level plain, a long plume of dust hovering in our wake. A gaunt finger-post appeared ahead and we lurched abruptly on to a rough trail leading southward into a desert of sand and stone.

Herthubreith now ranged in full view, its grim, truncated cone towering more impressively with each minute of our advance. Hurling past a succession of low hills we at last slackened pace at the approach to a lava-field. The land rover bucked like a mustang among the contorted rocks before descending to the banks of the River Lindaa where we charged through the two-foot-deep waters in a fountain of spray. Not a single vehicle or human being had been encountered in sixty miles but now the little oasis of Herthubreitharlindir appeared before us with the bright canvas of a few camper's tents occupying a pleasant greensward where angelica plants flourished.

Herthubreith squatted massively 5 miles to the west but the strategic rift in its craggy coronet lay on the further side and the most savage phase of the motor journey was yet to come. We were soon on the move again, jolting wildly through a chaotic jumble of lava until we could bear westward over sandy ground towards the base of Herthubreithartogl, a desolate massif clothed in a ruin of shattered stones. The trail had degenerated to two scarcely visible ruts in the barren surface. To Tryggvesson's experienced eye it was clear that no other vehicle had passed this way for a year or more. Edging northward we crawled tortuously



Herthubreith: Iceland

Photo by G. R. E. Brooke

through another lava-belt and at last emerged at the very foot of Herthubreith. We crept slowly around the western side until, far above us, the forbidding crags that seemed to encircle the mountain with relentless continuity suddenly revealed a breach 200 yards wide leading into a high amphitheatre.

I set off towards the lonely heights under a bright midday sun that beat fiercely on the sterile earth. Volcanic mountainsides are invariably loose but in the present instance the general angle was also phenomenally steep for a peak of this character. For an hour I plodded up a laborious 35 degree slope of fine grey sand and small stones. The slope steepened perceptibly at the approach to the amphitheatre where towering cliffs flanked the narrow gap. A boss of yellowish rock occupied the centre of the gap and I chose the southern passage which appeared to offer more scope for manoeuvre higher up. It was a gloomy spot rendered all the more oppressive by a sense of hazard from stone-falls. I hastened diagonally upward until I attained the shelter of the boss and no sooner had I done so than a solitary rock descended with an evil clatter on to the screes I had just traversed.

Clambering into the amphitheatre I searched for a viable exit on to the plateau above. Away to the right a promising spur ran up on the far side of a long tongue of snow. I moved hopefully across to the latter but found it to be hard ice lying at a prohibitive angle. I turned along the near side of the snow where another incipient spur, crowned by a little cockscomb of wobbly blocks, abutted against the final rock-face guarding the summit plateau. The spur afforded reasonably safe if tedious going, but from where it died out at the foot of the crag the prospect became less reassuring. Although of no great angle, this final "step", 50 feet high, was very loose. Not a single hold could be relied upon. I was obliged to spread myself over as many points of contact as possible and grope my way cautiously upward while a distressing cascade of dislodged fragments went streaming into the depths. At length I overcame the steepest section and accelerated with some relief on to the lip of the plateau. Three thousand feet of ascent had taken 1¾ hours.

The culminating peak could be seen rising half a mile away. I made easy progress over a field of boulders with sporadic snow-patches. Annual precipitation is relatively light in this sector of Iceland and Herthubreith carries very little permanent snow in contrast to the heavily ice-capped heights in the southern parts of the country. I came to the foot of the final peak and scaled a little boulder-strewn ridge to the cairn: the ascent had occupied 2¾ hours.

Close beneath the summit lay the little, frozen crater-lake, its surface glinting in vivid shades of aquamarine. The more distant scene embraced

a tract of country weird in the extreme. Around the mountain-foot spread the great lava-field Odathahraun, "the Lava of Evil Deeds", its wrinkled surface looking like a petrified ocean. Fifteen miles to the south-west ranged a complex massif encompassing the celebrated ring-crater Askja: the new lava-flow resulting from the 1961 eruption was clearly visible as a dark, jagged scar on the landscape. Far to the south a faint whitish "ice-blink" above the horizon denoted the presence of the huge Vatna Jokull Icefield and in the south-east, Snaefell's snowy dome floated in the sky like a remote cumulus.

I returned across the plateau to the brink of the plunging mountain-side aiming this time for the north exit from the amphitheatre in the hope that it might offer a less treacherous way of escape. Edging my way down the shifting debris I made fairly untroubled progress for several hundred feet before arriving at the top of a little 15 foot step of rotten crag. A few anxious moments passed as I lowered myself precariously down the disintegrating rocks to dig my heels into the security of the scree below. There were no further problems and with the angle slackening off I swung into a rapid stride that ploughed a generous furrow down the long, dusty slope to level ground where I rejoined Tryggvesson after an absence of 4½ hours.

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# THE OLD BRENVA ROUTE

*T. H. P. Brown*

Mont Blanc is a very beautiful mountain. From Chamonix it appears as a great white dome, hugely big, very distant, but not steep; it is on this side that the easiest routes go up. From Italy the summit is seen guarded by great precipices of rock and ice divided into three panels each over four thousand feet high. The left precipice is formed between the Brouillard and Innominata Ridges; here are the mighty Brouillard Pillars. The middle precipice is the Freney Face with its Central Pillar—one of the most extreme climbs in Western Europe but also one of the most beautiful. On the right between the Peuterey and Brenva Ridges is the Brenva Face with Graham Brown's three magnificent routes—the 'Triptych'. Although the Brenva Ridge is the last true bastion of Mont Blanc the line of precipices is well continued with Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc de Tacul, making the south side of Mont Blanc perhaps the most remote high standard climbing area in Europe.

Last year I traversed Mont Blanc by the easiest route with my friend Pete Lewis. Leaving the hut on the Aiguille de Gouter at 2.15 a.m. we passed along a ridge and then up the steeper slope to the Dome de Gouter by the light of the full moon. Beyond the Dome the route drops gently before rising again past the Vallot Emergency Hut. Here it joins the well known Bosses Ridge, in places fairly sharply defined, in others broad and indefinite. Soon, it seemed, we stood on the summit and, in the freezing cold, watched the sun rise. The rest of the traverse over Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc de Tacul to the Col du Midi was so fine in the clear sunlight of a perfect alpine day that we even walked down by Montenvers to Chamonix that same evening.

Towards the end of July this year Pete and I were again in Chamonix together with our friend Lindsay Griffin. We were all fit, the weather was fine, and the question was what could we usefully climb as a rope of three. After some consideration we agreed on the Brenva Ridge. This is a rib of ice and rock rising in a great sweep from the Col Moore to just above the Col de la Brenva, between Mont Blanc and Mont Maudit. Under good conditions it is not technically very hard but it will always maintain a certain seriousness because of the difficulty of getting off. From the exit of the route the ethical finish is to go up to the summit of Mont Blanc and then descend the ordinary route past the Vallot Hut.

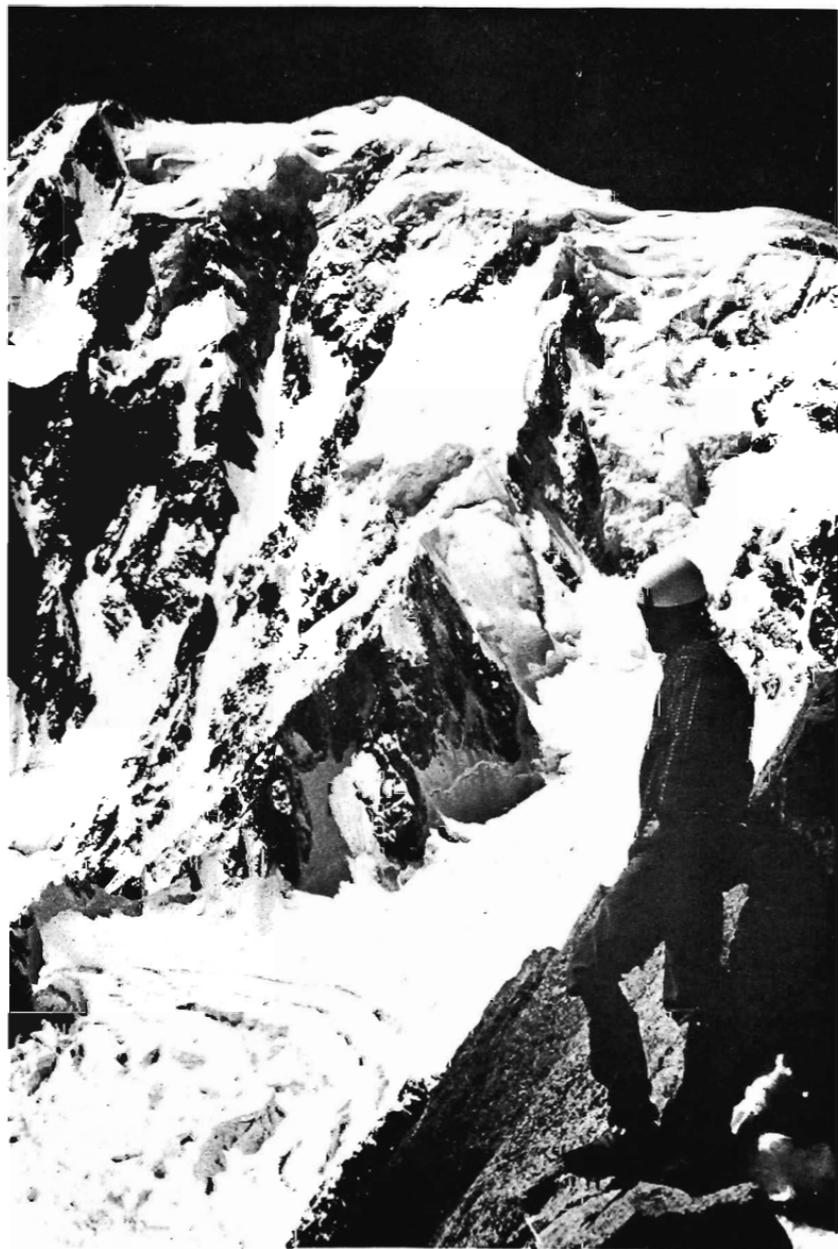
However ethics count for nothing in a blizzard and some people consider the alternative exit over Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc de Tacul to be easier. I cannot conceive circumstances in which it would be preferable; it is longer and in a storm would involve some very difficult route finding on broad featureless snow slopes, but parties still take it (and some die on it). From the exit of the route the climb to the summit of Mont Blanc is unremittingly tiring but fairly short and the route finding is quite easy—it is only necessary to take a rough compass bearing and keep going uphill until one can go no more. Descending from here to the Vallot Hut is not completely easy in a storm, but quite feasible.

The Brenva Ridge was first climbed by A.W. Moore and his party in 1865—hence the common name Old Brenva. It was the first route on the Italian side of Mont Blanc and a remarkable achievement done well before its time—it had only been repeated about a dozen times before the First World War. Moore's ascent took place on the day after the first ascent of the Matterhorn, but whereas the ordinary route on the Matterhorn is no longer highly regarded the Old Brenva maintains a reputation as an elegant and serious climb.

Mont Maudit throws out a fine ridge south from its summit, the line taken by the Franco-Italian border. The ridge plunges steeply to a little col, the Col de la Fourche, hemmed in on the south side by two spectacular granite spires, the Fourche de la Brenva. The French side of the col is a steep ice slope, while the Italian side is equally steep but composed of broken rocks mixed with bands of snow. Clinging precariously to the Italian side of the col is a diminutive Nissen Hut with room for ten people—the Col de la Fourche Bivi, the usual starting place for routes on the Brenva Face.

When the three of us arrived at the bivi in the late afternoon of July 29th it was already overfull, but considering the gloriously fine weather of the last week this was not surprising. For the moment, though, the weather was threatening, and great banks of cloud obscured the Brenva Face; as we packed tightly onto the bunks which almost fill the hut we did not hold out too much hope for the next day. However two Czechs bound for the Central Pillar of Freney confidently asserted it would be fine for at least two days; since they stood every chance of being killed if it wasn't we felt they might be prejudiced, but when the alarm went off at half-past midnight the sky was clear and starry.

There is so little room in the hut that it is impossible for everyone to get up at the same time, and so we slept some more while the others got away. By the time we were ready to leave it was 3.10 a.m.; we had



The Brenva Face of Mont Blanc

Photo by Lindsay Griffin

planned on being away at 1.30. We had to climb down the slope out of the hut because our rope was not long enough to abseil as the other parties had done, and this was time-wasting. Eventually we reached the lower glacier and here my headlight failed. Looking towards Italy we could see long clouds at about our altitude—too high for valley mist. The weather would not last the day.

We felt thoroughly disconsolate—everything was going wrong. All the other parties were far ahead but we thought we might at least go across to Col Moore and have a look at things. A quick walk across the glacier and then a short but steep slope led up to the col. We went along the crest of the col and then got quickly onto the rock. There was a fifteen foot jamming crack—quite tricky in crampons and without a torch. Above it another snow crest led up to the foot of a considerable step in the ridge cut diagonally by a ramp. This gave easy climbing, rock with occasional patches of snow, and we were able to climb fast in our crampons.

At the top of the step we had a drink and put our torches away; unfortunately it was not yet light enough for photography. Behind the Grandes Jorasses the sun was rising as a dull red ball blanketed by hail and surrounded by murk; it was one of the worst dawns I have ever seen in the alps, but we decided to go a little further before turning back. The ridge was now mostly snow, and we noticed to our surprise that we were catching up fast with the parties in front. We were going well, we all felt on excellent form and after several weeks in the alps were fit. Soon we came to a little step just before the famous ice arete and stopped for a consultation. A few flakes of snow were drifting down from a dirty sky and there was a big cloud on Mont Blanc. From our left came the sound of hammering; two Czechs were on the East Face of the Eckpfeiler. We were amongst the last people to hear them alive. The other parties on the Old Brenva seemed to be continuing, but to our way of thinking there was only one decision; we had read too much Bonatti to think of going on. As we reached our sad decision the step Lindsay was standing in collapsed and he shot down onto a large and conveniently positioned rock. I was altogether fed up but we decided to go just far enough to see the famous ice arete before turning back.

After a few minutes climbing there at our feet was the arete, looking fine but very easy. There just in front were the other parties. The watch showed that despite our early delays we had taken exactly half minimum guide book time to this point. For the moment it had stopped snowing. We hardly conferred; we'd stopped when we arrived at this point and as the details slowly sank in we came to the same conclusions.

We swung off our sacks, took out our ice daggers, and went on.

A small terrace of steps led along the side of the 'ice' arete, which was in fact snow. I suppose the arete is really quite sharp, but after all I had read about it I was slightly disappointed. Beyond it a steepening led onto the big slope which is the most obvious feature in all views of the route; it was in superb condition and we moved up easily in the steps kicked by the previous parties. Occasionally it was icy, but with a good kick the crampons bit well. Near the top it got steeper and one was conscious of the slope stretching down for about 2,000 ft. below; a slip here by any one of us would have pulled the other two off, but I calculated that if one kept one's head it should be possible to brake before going over the seracs at the bottom. Anyway I didn't think any of us would slip—this is the pleasing mutual confidence which can only come from climbing with one's friends in all sorts of conditions on all terrains. We were now right behind the other parties and had to wait as they cut steps through the seracs that guard the exit from this route.

We stood one above the other in our steps chatting. We were in a predicament; the cloud came and went but it was evident that the weather was getting worse and we still had to complete the route, climb to the summit of Mont Blanc, and descend to the Vallot Hut. We could not even be sure that it would be possible to complete the route: there had been a note in the hut book that the serac barrier was impassable—the English writer had been forced to retreat from where we now were. From time to time painfully large lumps of ice shot down the slope as the other parties cut steps, giving this sunless slope the atmosphere of a north face. However we were not unhappy at all; the situation was so improbable that we found it almost humorous. We had enough ice pegs with us for most 'impossible' seracs, and to back this up we had complete confidence in each other. I would be happy to do many hard rock climbs with relative strangers, but the south side of Mont Blanc is a place for those who really know each other, especially when there is a blizzard blowing up.

At last the continentals moved on and we went up after them. I was using my dagger now, not because of any intrinsic difficulty but to maintain the maximum number of points of contact in case another ice-block from the parties above hit me. We came to a steepness caused by the seracs and I got Pete to give me a proper ice axe belay for the first time on the route. The little wall was awkward and I brought Pete up, going on round a corner as he brought up Lindsay. The cloud was thick now, but after various serac obstacles we sensed that we had come out on a broad slope and what little we could see confirmed this. We

could hardly believe it; we had done the Old Brenva; it had taken us just five hours from the Fourche.

We were all alone now in thick cloud driving a steady snow; we took off our sacs and sat on them. We could have a meal and take a bearing if the cloud lifted sufficiently.

Twenty minutes later the snow was whipping down and we could see even less than when we arrived. We had just picked up our sacs again when the continentals appeared out of the blizzard. They seemed surprised to see us, and a bit sore about its having taken them twenty minutes walking to reach a point we had attained sitting on our sacs eating. What was never properly explained was that they seemed to be on some sort of compass bearing.

"It is best that we to the Aiguille du Midi go."

"We think the Vallot Hut."

"No, no. You must to the Midi go." They were emphatic.

"You go where the hell you want. We're going to the Vallot."

And with that we set off on a compass bearing for the summit of Mont Blanc. In a line behind us followed the continentals.

I was going first, then came Pete with the compass telling me to go left or right, and finally Lindsay keeping behind Pete and allowing me to get my line by looking back at the two of them. For the most part the surface was good, though in places soft snow set us floundering; the white-out was so complete that one couldn't see how steep the next pace was and we were forever stumbling. Worst of all we couldn't see the summit we were making for and this was psychologically terrible. Under these conditions and at about 15,000 ft. I found it impossible to strike any sort of rhythm, although this is so necessary. About every hundred feet we stopped bent over our axes panting. At long last I stumbled onto what I sensed was the summit; casting around I was delighted to find a patch of urine-stained snow and then a rag fastened to a broken ski stick as a flag. I kicked at the snow with my crampons; rapture, some orange peel. We gathered on the summit; for Lindsay it was his first time there, and he seemed pleased, although it could have been Leith Hill for all he could see. For myself I was thinking of how a year before I had stood on this point watching the sun rise out of the distant Valais into a clear blue sky; no doubt Pete was thinking of this too,

We felt no wish to linger. Pete worked out a bearing and I started off down the Bosses Ridge with the others following. The ridge here is fairly sharp but in the white-out it was almost impossible to tell and

Pete walked straight off the edge. Quickly Lindsay took a step down on the other side and held him; Rebuffat himself could not have done it more neatly. Pete climbed back up unhurt and we carried on down. Normally there would be a big track in the snow here and luckily it was still visible in places. I was surprised how much I recognised from the year before, but when we got further down I was at a loss. We now had to rely absolutely on Pete's map and compass work which was superlative. However the storm was howling furiously across the exposed ridge and we were all coated in hoar-frost; I know that both Lindsay and I were wondering what a bivouac at over 15,000 ft. was like. Using the compass Pete told me in which direction to go, and we were getting on fine when suddenly Lindsay in the rear gave a yell; there was the Vallot and we had almost walked right passed it. We trudged back up and in. Some guides there went outside and whistled and shouted; after some minutes the continentals arrived.

The hut was full with climbers caught by the storm while ascending the ordinary route, but after an hour the cloud lifted temporarily and they all disappeared with their guides. We were left all alone with our brew, and about half an hour later set off on the easy route down to the Aiguille du Gouter hut, now quite relaxed. This of course was fatal and we got lost; the situation was not helped by my not being able to see without my glasses, which iced up whenever I put them on, and I twice turned back from 'precipices' which turned out to be easy snow slopes. We reversed the order on the rope, but after a while visibility was so bad that we decided to stop for a while. We sat down on a broad snow shelf; from our feet a steep ice slope disappeared down into the cloud, at our backs another serac pushed up. We had come from the right and really the left was the only hope, but the compass didn't like it. We sat there slowly getting covered in snow and once again thoughts turned towards bivouacs. After a quarter of an hour we could see half as much as when we arrived and a thunder storm had come very close but there was no point in staying where we were and we decided to try going left. Soon the shelf broadened considerably and we were able to start following the compass again, but navigation was not made easier by the Aiguille du Gouter which we were aiming for being just off the edge of our map. However Pete did a truly excellent job and eventually he found a trace of the track. A few minutes later we were at the hut.

I found it hard to believe that we had really done the Old Brenva in bad weather. I had always regarded the route with such respect that I had never envisaged attempting it on any but a perfect day. I still consider it a very fine and serious route, but I also think we climbed it with

an acceptable safety margin. We had enough bivi gear to have survived a night at high altitude without frostbite, but more important we were sufficiently fit and knew the mountain well enough for this not to be necessary.

Mont Blanc is a very beautiful mountain; I recommend it to anyone who appreciates true alpinism.



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# ALPINE MEET - SUMMER 1968

Wing/Cdr. H. D. Archer

The Alpine Meet for 1968 was held at Obergurgl, the currency restrictions being the deciding factor in forsaking, but temporarily, Switzerland for Austria. It was hoped that the scope of the meet would be widened by having both hut and hotel based parties. Time, weather and other factors hindered the hut party which never really got started. Let's hope for more success next year.

Members travelled to Obergurgl by a variety of means, by car, a speedy journey if the Autobahnen were used, by train to the start of the Otztal, by air to Munich then by bus—a succession of buses for the unlucky. Some arrived a few days early; by Sunday night most members had arrived.

The chosen rendezvous was the Pension Josl, an excellent choice for comfort (after some alterations to the plumbing!) and for the hospitality of Frau Josl and her husband, a former Olympic skiing champion. The Sport Bar downstairs became the evening meeting place for plans and preparations, and for story-telling.

Obergurgl was disappointing in some ways both for scenery and as a centre for climbing. After the beauties of the Otztal with its forests and streams below, rocks and snow above, the vicinity of Obergurgl is bare and without satisfactory views. One must travel a way up the sides or along the valley or ascend some prominence, such as the Hohe Mut, to get the feeling of being in the mountains. Still this bare terrain has made Obergurgl a mecca for skiing—one cannot have everything in one place. The village itself has few old buildings; nearly all are new, built on the riches to be gathered from winter sports. Some carvings on the Edelweiss Hotel, the paintings on the houses—that of the doctor being very grand—and the church, with its dramatic combination of old and new, gave the village a distinctive air. The gathering of the hay harvest, its stacking on poles and the aerial journey of hay from distant meadows on a slim wire rope showed that in some matters times do not change. The crack of whips disturbed the calm of evening, as men and boys engaged in a spot of practise. Each day almost regardless of weather, a procession of day tourists invaded Obergurgl, a proportion ascending the Hohe Mut mainly by the chair lift. By evening most had returned to the lower valley.

Paul French, the meet leader, and Virginia were early on the scene taking get-fit walks in unsettled weather. The weather was continually unsettled, however the breaks between the storms gave some wonderful clear, crisp days. A walk up the Hohe Mut opened the meet. After this leg stretching exercise most of the members on the meet joined the first event in the climbing programme, an ascent of the Hochwilde. A path on the east side of the Gurglertal, led via the Neue Karlsruher hut, a convenient lunching place, to the Hochwildehaus. If memory serves, considerable food was carried during the earlier part of the meet but, as time went on almost complete reliance was placed in the excellent catering facilities of the semi-hotels which pass for mountain huts in this part of Austria.

Four ropes (or was it three?) plus guide left early the next morning in brilliant clear weather, the mountains glistening with the fresh snow that fell overnight. A trek over a wide snowfield led on to a ridge of the Hochwilde but a short distance from the North summit. The only obstacle to the ascent, a rock pillar, had been 'improved' to make its ascent straightforward; the old wire rope and iron stanchions in doubtful condition added extra obstacles rather than assistance. Fresh snow covered the route to the South or main summit, and the party had to be content with the North summit. The weather held, though the wind was cold. Below lay the territory of the South Tirol, of disturbed history in recent years. Carrying all kit and leaving nothing behind at the hut, made it possible to descend by the Langtaler Ferner, a long warm walk, ending in refreshment at the Neue Karlsruher hut, and so back to Obergurgl.

The remainder of the programme required preliminary journeys by bus or car to Vent, the aim being the higher peaks in the area rather than those close by Obergurgl. The one-way road to Vent (up one hour, down the next) had its hazards in bumps, bends and falling rocks. Vent itself is in a narrow enclosed valley; new buildings show increasing prosperity. The large number of parked cars indicate its use as a road-head when en route to the many large mountain huts above.

En route to Similaun, the Martin Busch Hut was a convenient overnight resting place. A warm, sunny afternoon was spent 'just sitting' or walking up the slopes behind and finding crystal clear lakes and new vistas. The hut was full with a complement of walkers, and parties undergoing climbing instruction, including some young Danes—yes, they were doing Similaun but by the North wall!

Early morning saw the party on the path along the rocky ridge of the

Marzellkamm to the NW ridge of Similaun. Broad slopes at an easy angle led to a sharp snow ridge which was followed to the summit. Before the final part of the climb the guide decided that there was safety in numbers and joined the ropes together, seventeen on a rope, a truly unusual sight. The difference in speed between fastest and slowest gave rise to some tension—not just in the rope! Meanwhile over the edge of the ridge came the leader of the party on the North wall. There is no moral to the story—it just seemed amusing at the time. Cloud partly obscured the scene but the weather held. A few delays to eat, to become separate ropes again, to decide whether it was this way or that, then descent by the Niederjochferner for variety, or possibly to avoid uphill.

A rest in Obergurgl, back to Vent, lunch at the Hochjoch Hospice, and on to the Brandenburger Haus. Without much warning a storm of wind and snow hit the party when crossing the glacier before the hut. Crusty fresh snow made the going trying. The line of guide posts ended abruptly with no hut in sight, but a break in the storm showed it nearby up on its rocky pedestal. A damp but cheerful group of snowmen were greeted most affably by the guardian.

The Brandenburger Haus was indeed a port in a storm that evening. Plenty of Zimmer but the Stube, being somewhat out of scale, was packed. Food could be obtained only by intercession with the young master who appeared to control the financial arrangements as well. The next day the storm continued unabated. The party now divided, the 'pessimists' leaving for the valley, the 'optimists' staying for a further night. Up until an hour before dusk it appeared that the 'pessimists' were right, then the skies cleared dramatically and the mountains glowed pink in the evening sun. Next morning breakfast by candlelight, then a long plod across the snowfields below the hut led to a rock step, down this then up the glacier leading to the NE slopes of the Weisskugel. Twenty or more climbers were set on the Weisskugel that day. For some reason, probably so that the guides could chat, three ropes moved alongside each other gaining and loosing with variations in pace rather like trains on parallel tracks. The North ridge looked promising but a consortium of guides decided that the bridge across the bergschrund would not stand so many boots. Traversing back and forth across the eastern slopes, a fierce burst of wind gave warning of the gale to come on the final snow ridge to the summit. In the cold northerly air the visibility was exceptional and the view unusually fine, the mountain standing in a pleasing relationship to its surroundings. It was too cold to want to

linger for long. Descending, one party turned to return to the Brandenburger Haus, the other to go directly to Vent with the guide and mountain rescue dog Ilya whose performance on snow and rock put the humans to shame. For the party returning to the Brandenburger Haus there was an unexpected drama yet to come; they were arrested! Italian soldiers equipped with machine guns, crampons, ice-axes etc., were waiting on the rock step, now revealed as the frontier between Austria and Italy. Language was a further barrier but, in essence, why were they in Italy and where were their Passports? Regrettably only one could be produced, the others being at Obergurgl. The Italian language expert in the party was not fluent, to put it politely. However, he gathered from the soldiers that it would be necessary to descend to the border post to consult Headquarters or the officer. Two hours later, after lunch and discussion between all concerned (including three Germans similarly detained) it became clear that any form of identification would serve. Austrian Alpine Club cards secured release. The result, a veritable run back to Vent.

The meet was running slightly behind Paul French's programme and split into several groups. Some to the Ramolhaus, for the Ramolkgugel and the pass to Vent, a 'senior' party to the Martin Busch hut for the Kreuzspitze, the main climbing group to the Breslauer hut for the Wild Spitze and the 'hut' party to the Kaunergrat hut in the Pitztal for the Waze Spitze. The weather now became unhelpful, depositing much fresh snow on mountains just beginning to improve after earlier storms. Neither the Wild Spitze or the Waze Spitze, were practicable. The 'hut' party, anxious not to seem too easily deterred, took a look at the Verpeil Spitze but conditions were miserable and they called it a day.

A disappointing end to the meet, but not unexpected in such a poor summer and, taken all-in-all, good use was made of the better weather. But things are never as bad as they seem, indeed one member declared that it was much worse when he was last at Obergurgl and, subsequently, produced a picture to prove it.

The consistent climbing chronicler from Baldock has, no doubt, a better record of the meet than the author, who apologises for any errors, having written from memory and maps. Also, omitting names from this article is not just an admission that no record was made (if only I had been asked to do this before the meet), rather a realization that in these meets people find pleasure in the mountains in different ways, and comparisons of who does what are out of place.

A most successful meet, except possibly in one respect—did all that hammering of rocks produce one good garnet?

# UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS D'ALPINISME

The U.I.A.A. is an autonomous body to which the organisations representing climbing interests in various countries belong. Although it has no executive powers it does have sub-committees, such as Equipment and Rescue, which issue reports and recommendations to member countries. Each year the U.I.A.A. Assembly meets in a different country, and in 1968 for the first time the British Mountaineering Council acted as hosts to the Assembly in London.

*S.A.C. President visits London* When it became known that the President of the S.A.C. Central Committee would be heading the Swiss delegation to the U.I.A.A. Assembly the Committee of the A.B.M. decided that so exceptional an opportunity to get better acquainted with our Swiss clubmates should not be lost.

So our President, Vincent Cohen with M. Gaspard Bodmer representing the Swiss Ambassador, and Walter Kirstein one of our Vice-Presidents, were at London airport early on Friday, 4 October to greet Herr Hektor Meier and other Swiss delegates on their arrival from Zurich.

That evening a dinner party was held at Durrants Hotel, one of London's old coaching inns, at which Hektor Meier, President of the S.A.C. Central Committee was guest of honour. The other guests of the Association were Hans Muller, chief of the Huts Committee, Professor Pierre Vaney, Editor of the French edition of 'Les Alpes', who had come from Geneva, Dr Campel, a former President of the Central Committee who was attending this U.I.A.A. Assembly as chairman of the International Rescue Committee, and Gaspard Bodmer, First Secretary at the Swiss Embassy. The officers of the Association, our representatives on the B.M.C. and their wives were at Durrants Hotel to welcome them.

Briefly toasting the guests after dinner Vincent Cohen said that the warm friendliness and pleasant informality which characterised the evening was reminiscent of a 'family reunion' and appropriately so since we were all members of the same club.

Hektor Meier in his reply (reported in the December issue of 'Die Alpen') expressed appreciation of the very warm way in which he and the other Swiss delegates had been welcomed. He delighted those present when he announced that a day or two previously agreement had been reached with the Italian Alpine Club by which all members of the S.A.C. whether resident in Switzerland or not, would be entitled to



In the U.I.A.A. Assembly

Photo: F. Solari

R. to L. Herr H. H. Muller, Herr Hektor Meier, Prof. Pierre Vaney.

exactly similar privileges. He brought gifts of Toblerone for the ladies present and handed the President a handsome illustrated book on the Swiss Alps which has since been presented to the library.

Fortunately, the U.I.A.A. programme provided several more opportunities that weekend for meetings with our Swiss friends. When Hektor Meier, Hans Muller and Pierre Vaney were leaving England on Monday

morning, 7 October Vincent Cohen and Peter Ledebøer were at the air terminal to say goodbye.

*1968 Assembly of the U.I.A.A.* The B.M.C. as hosts welcomed delegates from twenty countries, one delegate from each Alpine organisation being the guest of the B.M.C. In all there were sixty delegates and wives. Dr Edouard Wyss-Dunant, President, and Dr Hans van Bomhard, Vice-President, presided over the meetings. The Executive Committee Meeting was held at the Bonnington Hotel on Saturday morning, 5 October. In the afternoon there was a short coach tour of London for the guests. In the evening the delegates, club presidents and other guests attended a Government Reception at Lancaster House where they were received by Mr. Dennis Howell, M.P., Minister for Sport.

On Sunday morning the Annual Assembly met appropriately at the Alpine Club. Among the topics for discussion the recommendations for international classification of climbing routes received much attention. Dr Rudolf Campel spoke on the organisation of mountain rescue in the Alps.

Following the morning meeting the delegates were entertained to a buffet lunch at the hotel by the B.M.C. and afterwards the meeting continued at the hotel. Mr. Albert Eggler, of Everest fame, was elected President. A fuller account of the meeting will appear in due course in 'Les Alpes' and in 'Mountaineering'.

In the evening, one hundred and eleven guests attended the Annual Dinner held at the Cafe Royal at which the President of the B.M.C. Mr. Basil Goodfellow presided. The Lord Mayor of Westminster welcomed the guests to London, particularly to Westminster. Lord Hunt proposed the toast of the U.I.A.A. and Dr Wyss-Dunant replied. Dr von Bomhard spoke in appreciation of Dr Wyss-Dunant, the retiring President. During the dinner generous gifts were presented by the guests to the B.M.C.

On Monday, Lord Hunt and Mr. H.D. Greenwood accompanied thirty-six delegates to North Wales. Two days were spent seeing and taking part in the training programmes at Plas-y-Brenin and Ogwen Cottage, and climbing or walking in the Ogwen and Tremadoc areas.

A number of guests who did not visit Wales were taken to see the new sports centre at Crystal Palace and later to visit the Royal Naval College at Greenwich. The guests returned home on Wednesday, 9 October.

It was a great pleasure to have the Assembly in this country and to welcome the delegates and guests, to meet old friends and make new ones.

# DIARY FOR 1969

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|---------------------------|--|
| 29 January                | Lecture—'Nepal—the walkin' by Mr. E.C.L. Jarvis                                |
| 15–16 February            | Meet—Edale. Leader, Tony Streater  |
| 26 February               | Lecture—'A visit to the High Atlas' by W/Cdr. H.D. Archer and Dr. D.J. Lintott |
| 26 March                  | Lecture—'The climbing in Britain', by Mr. Denis Gray                           |
| 2–9 April                 | Easter Meet—Bettws-y-Coed  |
| 23 April                  | Lecture—'The Zagros mountains of Iran', by S/Ldr. J.D.W. Edwards               |
| 10–11 May                 | Meet—Three Peaks, Leader, John Kemsley   |
| 21 May                    | Ladies' Night Dinner, Connaught Rooms  |
| 25 June                   | Lecture—'The Easter Meet', by members of the Meet                              |
| 12–13 July                | Meet—North Wales. Leader, David Lintott  |
| 23 August—<br>6 September | Alpine Meet—Kandersteg, Switzerland  |
| 24 September              | Lecture—'The Alpine Meet', by members of the Meet                              |
| 11–12 October             | Meet—Langdale. Leader, Walt Unsworth   |
| 22 October                | Lecture—'Expedition to the Blue Nile', by Mr. Christian Bonnington.            |
| 26 November               | Annual Dinner, Connaught Rooms   |

Fuller details of these events are notified in the bulletins. Lectures are held at the Alpine Club at 6.30p.m. and are followed by an informal buffet supper at the R.N.V.R. Club, 38 Hill Street, W.1., price 16/6d. Places at these suppers must be booked by first post on the Monday preceding the lecture by writing to Mr. S.N. Beare, 64 Kensington Garden Square, W.1.

Information regarding the Easter and Alpine Meets is obtainable from Maurice Bennett and, regarding the Weekend Meets, from the Leaders.

# ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

## Ladies Night Dinner

The Ladies' Night Dinner was held at the Connaught Rooms on Wednesday 22nd May.

The main feature of the evening was a lecture by Mr. Ken Wilson on "New Climbs in Anglesey", showing us for the first time his fine slides of the new cliff climbs in this area—probably the most important in Britain today. As a recognised authority, this must be regarded as a fine performance of considerable interest.

Guests of the Association included Monsieur Jean-Louis Grandjean, First Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy, Monsieur Egmond d'Arcis and Madame d'Arcis, and Mr. and Mrs. G. Unselde from the Swiss National Tourist Office.

## The Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner was held at the Connaught Rooms on Wednesday, November 27th. About a hundred members, their ladies, and friends were present, and the following were guests of the Association:—

His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador, M. Rene Keller.

The Lord Hunt, C.B.E., D.S.O.

Mr. F. Spencer Chapman, D.S.O. (Alpine Club)

Mr. G. Starkey (President, Ladies Alpine Club)

Mr. Harry Sales (Climbers Club)

Mr. A. Kunz (Swiss Centre)

The toast 'The Swiss Confederation' was proposed by Dr. David Riddell, ably deputising at very short notice for Lord Tangle, K.B.E., L.D. who was indisposed.

Dr. Riddell spoke of the growth of the Swiss Confederation from the three original Cantons, and expressed his belief that the British members of the Swiss Alpine Club regarded the Swiss Confederation as personal friends, rather than as members of a political association. It was this happy, human relationship which had given the Confederation its strength in the past, and assured its prosperity in the future.

His Excellency, The Swiss Ambassador replied. He was, regrettably,

only able to share with us part of the evening as he had to go on to Buckingham Palace for a reception for the Diplomatic Corps. That an Association such as ours could exist, consisting as it did of British members of a foreign club, was most unusual. He traced the existence back to the special relationship that had existed between Switzerland and Great Britain ever since the Reformation.

Switzerland, said the Ambassador, was deeply indebted to the British mountaineers who had explored and first climbed most of the major mountains, and to the British skiers who had transformed the sport by introducing downhill and slalom racing.

In his mind the Ambassador always connected Britain with mountains. Just as 1968 had been the year of the lone yachtsman, his previous stay in England had been in 1963, the year of the mountaineer and the major Himalayan peaks. He well recalled how, on the morning of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, he had heard of the success on Everest of the British climbers under the inspired leadership of (the then) John Hunt.

Closing, the Ambassador expressed his hopes that he would have a longer stay in Great Britain than his two predecessors. He echoed all our thoughts when he said he hoped that the £50 limit would be ended in the near future, and that we would once more be able to spend all the time we wished in the Swiss mountains.

Our President, Vincent Cohen, thanked the Ambassador for joining us and welcomed all our guests, making particular mention of Herr Kunz of the Swiss National Tourist Office who had rendered so much invaluable help during the year.

In reviewing another active year he mentioned the weekend meets that had again been successful but unfortunately affected by the foot and mouth disease. Paul French had again planned and run the Alpine meet and most objectives had been attained. Bob Hards' sub-committee had arranged for after-lecture buffet suppers at the R.N.V.R. Club and this had given much more opportunity for members to circulate.

The U.I.A.A. Conference in London had given the Committee a welcome opportunity to meet Hector Meier, President of the Swiss Alpine Club and some of his colleagues. At the Conference it had been announced that the restrictions on foreign members in their huts had been lifted by the Italian Alpine Club.

Vincent thanked all those committee members who had put in much work during the past year. He particularly mentioned both Hon.

Secretaries and George Starkey who had worked so hard as Hon. New Members Secretary—this onerous duty was now being passed to Dr. Frank Schweitzer.

Maurice Bennett proposed the toast of the guests. In briefly mentioning the guests he welcomed Mr. Spencer Chapman as representing the Alpine Club. He noted that our elder sister club had recently followed the merger pattern so popular in the City and had merged with the Alpine Climbing Group—this he suggested gave rise to the title of the 'Old Lady of South Audley Street'. Mrs. Starkey as President of the Ladies Alpine Club was most welcome, particularly as the presence of the ladies enhanced not only our social occasions, but also our climbing meets.

Mr. Spencer Chapman replying for the guests said he felt at home at the dinner because he had joined the S.A.C. in 1928. Regrettably he had let his membership lapse. He had few claims to fame in the realms of alpine climbing but did claim to have been one of the few climbers to have been held up by an elephant on an alpine pass. It transpired that on the way to his first serious climb—the traverse of the Meije—he had met a travelling circus. Somewhat euphemistically he suggested to those of us who feared the breathalyser, that when going to parties we drink a cup of oxo first and then drink only gin. This would inevitably result in our breathing pure oxygen if required to give a sample.

Roy Crepin proposed the toast of the President and the President Elect. He said the club had advanced much in Vincent Cohen's term of office. He had been most conscientious and most ably supported by his charming wife Kay.

Frank Solari, he foresaw, would be a most successful President in the coming years. He had already served under Lord Hunt as Vice President of the British Mountaineering Council for ten years.

## The Easter Meet

For the first time for ten years we returned to the Lakes for our Easter Meet. Obtaining accommodation at Easter for a party our size is not easy, but we were fortunate in getting in at the New Dungeon Ghyll where we were made most welcome and comfortable by Mr. and Mrs. Pease.

There was also a welcome change in the weather as compared with recent years. We had little rain and some days (particularly Good Friday) were glorious.

Those attending the Meet were: Dr. and Mrs. A.W. Barton, Dr. D. Riddell, Mr. and Mrs. M. Bennett and Mr. David Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. S.M. Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. D.G. Lambley, Mr. Julian Lambley and Mr. William Lambley, Mr. and Mrs. B.L. Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Starkey, Mr. and Mrs. T.A. Thorpe, and Messrs. D.M. Clarke, M.N. Clarke, Jeudwine, Jones, Kirstein, Ledebøer and Smith.

Full advantage was taken of the weather conditions and in addition to a variety of fell walking and the finding of the occasional snow gully, climbing was done on Gimmer, Bowfell Buttress and Pavey Ark.

## The Alpine Meet

The constant search for a centre from which we could have a fortnight's climbing on the £50 allowance resulted in our returning to Austria after a lapse of many years.

The Meet was based on the Hotel Pension Josl at Obergurgl. An excellent programme was arranged by the climbing leader, Mr. Paul French. An account of the climbing will be found on other pages of this issue.

Those attending the Meet were: The President, Mr. V.O. Cohen and Mrs. Cohen, Wing Cdr. Archer and family, Dr. D. Riddell, the Revd. J.M. Bogle and Miss Elizabeth Haslehurst, Mr. and Mrs. M. Bennett, Mr. David Bennett and Miss Christine Kaye, Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Broadbent Mr. and Mrs. S.M. Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. P. French, Mr. and Mrs. H. Noake, Mr. J. Noake, Mr. and Mrs. N. Peskett and Messrs. Flook, Gardiner, Jeudwine, Ledebøer, Walker and Whyte.

We are indebted to Wing Commander H.D. Archer for the account of the meet to be found on page 31.

## Week-end Meets

The experiment of the week-end Meets has continued successfully and they may now be regarded as a regular feature of our activities. The meet that was to have been held in Derbyshire was cancelled on account of foot-and-mouth restrictions.

*8/9 June*—North Wales (Leader: Frank Schweitzer)

Based on Glan Dena, we were blessed this year with fine dry conditions. A visit to Amphitheatre Buttress proved somewhat protracted with the diversion of watching the efforts on Pinnacle Wall, and indeed one rope went on to have a go at it. But the most remarkable feature

of the week-end was the unusual clarity of views from the tops, both from the Carneddys on the Saturday and the Glyders on the Sunday—in fact a considerable discussion took place with map and compass as to whether the Irish coastline really was visible.

In between of course some 15 of us enjoyed the usual excellent dinner at the Pen-y-Gwryd.

*12/13 October—Langdale (Leader: Peter Ledeboer)*

Based on R.L.H. and Raw Head, it was another “wild” week-end this year. Bobby Files again offered his services by taking a rope on to Gimmer and he and others climbed Gimmer Chimney and Bracket and Slab. Most of us battled with the gale on the circuit from Bowfell and a few stalwarts even reached Scafell via Scafell Pike.

Sid Cross managed to set 32 of us down to dinner at the O.D.G., including Hamish Brown who had come south of the border, and this was followed by Bill Comstive’s slides “In Search of Snow”. The fact that so many of us had difficulty in standing up the next day on Pavey Ark was due, let it be said, to the gale and not the dinner.

## Officers and Committee

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Connaught Rooms immediately prior to the Annual Dinner. The following appointments were made:—

*As President*

Mr. F. Solari

*As Vice-President*

Dr. D. R. Riddell

*As Hon. New Members Secretary*

Dr. F. A. W. Schweitzer

*As Hon. Librarian*

Mr. S. N. Beare

*As Hon. Editor*

Mr. G. A. Daniels

*For the Committee*

Mr. J. J. Burnet

Rev. F. L. Jenkins

Mr. R. W. Jones

Mr. J. S. Whyte

*In place of*

Mr. V. O. Cohen, M.C.

Mr. J. S. Byam-Grounds

Mr. Geo. Starkey  
(on his resignation)

Mr. R. W. Jones  
(on his resignation)

Mr. G. A. Hutcheson  
(on his resignation)

Mr. R. R. Fedden

Mr. R. J. Hards

Mr. E. H. J. Smyth, F.R.C.S.

Mr. J. G. Broadbent

Vacancies also arose on the Committee following the appointments of Dr. F. A. W. Schweitzer and Mr. S. N. Beare, in whose places the following were elected for their unexpired term of office:—

Mr. W. R. Neate (1 year)

Mr. W. Unsworth (2 years)

*Hon. Auditor*

Mr. A. Hart was elected in the place of Mr. G.A. Daniels on his new appointment.

## The Library

Last year was described as a year of consolidation rather than acquisition; this year can best be described as one of transition. In the first place there has been another change of Librarian, for Wendell Jones found it increasingly impossible often to include South Audley Street in a life split between Oxford and Surrey and when he eventually decided upon Oxford, he resigned. His successor inherited the recataloguing project, but distant places had a more persuasive call during the summer months than the front basement, and this idea remains unfulfilled.

The stock of guides is being augmented and the series of Climbers' Club Journals for the past thirty years has been substantially completed. We are particularly grateful for two gifts of books during the year. The late Dr. N.S. Finzi bequeathed all his Alpine books and journals to the Association and these have now been added to the Library. Also Hector Meier, the President of the Central Committee, presented a copy of "Erlebte Berge" by Willy Furter to the President of the Association when he was entertained at dinner by the officers during his visit to London in October. This handsome volume of superb mountain photographs has now been placed in the Library.

We are also grateful to the publishers who have presented books and our kindred clubs who have presented their Journals.

## Obituaries

A.G. SCHOFIELD, Assistant Honorary Treasurer of this Association from 1949—1964, died on 9th February aged 84 after a heart attack. He became a member in 1936 and was always one of the most regular attenders of our monthly meetings and of the informal dinners which followed.

The Association had a difficult period following on the resignation of C.F. Lehmann as Hon. Treasurer, which lasted till the Swiss Tourist

Office took over the work of collection of subscriptions and their remittance to Switzerland. Both before and during this time Schofield's most willing assistance to the Hon. Treasurer was invaluable, particularly in view of his experience as a retired Bank Manager. We shall always be greatly indebted to him.

Gerald Schofield was always more a mountain walker than climber, but his love for the Alps drew him, with his wife, back to Switzerland year after year. He was a welcome member of several of the early Alpine Meets.

Those of us who looked forward to seeing him, with Mrs. Schofield, month after month, must find it difficult to realise that he had reached such an advanced age. He will be much missed at our meetings, and our sympathy goes to Mrs. Schofield in her great loss.

F.R.C.

WE REGRET to announce the deaths of the following members of the A.B.M.S.A.C.

Lt. Col. W.S. Blunt, R.E., M.C.

G.E. Hale

B.C. Harward

R.B. Jones (climbing in Skye)

H.W.P. Kander

G.W. Murray



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# BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September, 1968.

LIABILITIES AND ACCUMULATED FUNDS						
	£	s	d	£	s	d
Life Membership Account	...	...	...	1277	12	6
Accumulated Revenue Account						
Balance as at 30th Sept., 1967	...	...	...	1354	3	4
Add excess of income over expenditure	...	<u>103</u>	<u>12</u>	1457	15	10
N.S. Finzi, Bequest	...	...	...	100	0	0
				<u>£2835</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>

ASSETS						
	£	s	d	£	s	d
Cash at Bank	...	...	...	641	4	10
Projector W.J. Foster Bequest	70	0	0			
Less Depreciation	...	...	<u>69</u>	1	0	0
Equipment at Swiss Tourist Office	...	...	...	80	0	0
Less Depreciation	...	...	<u>79</u>	1	0	0
Investments at Cost	...	...	...	2172	3	6
Sundry Debtors	...	...	...	20	0	0
Investments (Nominal Values):						
4½% Agricultural Mortgage Corp. Deb. Stock 1977/82	£1000	0	0			
Brunner Investment Trust Ord. Stock	£135	0	0			
5½% National Development Bonds	£300	0	0			
London Scottish American Trust Ord. Stock	£177	10	0			
Market value at 30th Sept., 1968	£2603	0	0			
(1967—£2182 15 Od.).				<u>£2835</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>

I have examined the Books and Vouchers of the Association and report that the above accounts are in accordance therewith.

Wrotham Hill Park,  
Wrotham, Kent.

(signed) A.H. Hart, Hon. Auditor.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Book of Modern Mountaineering*—Edited by Malcolm Milne: published by Arthur Barker price 63/-, lavishly illustrated in colour and black-and-white.

“The theme of this work” writes its editor “is one of contemporary knowledge and achievement set against a single chapter on the history of mountaineering.” This theme is developed in what is acknowledged to be a somewhat arbitrary way, part geographical, part technical and part personal. There are perhaps better classifications—Tejada Flores’ article “Games Climbers Play”<sup>\*</sup>—springs to mind as providing a more rational basis for classification of the climbing pursuit. Nevertheless any enterprise such as this is limited by the material available for publication and it would be wrong to make adverse criticism of this. Besides it is a work whose every article and every section repays reading for its own sake and it will doubtless be read in parts rather than as an essay in toto. Curiously it does stand as an entity and the reader is left with a picture of “Modern Mountaineering”. So far as technical matters are concerned this is no doubt a valid picture, but in matters of “philosophy and mysticism” (editor’s words) your reviewer at least is left in doubt whether the reader thirty years on might see not today’s Mountaineer but himself reflected in the pages. M.F.B.

<sup>\*</sup>“Ascent” (*Journal of the Sierra Club*) 1967. Reprinted *AJ* 1968 (1).p.46.

*The Mountain World 1966/67*—Published by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, price 50/-.

The preface claims that this volume, taken with its predecessors, constitutes a kind of history of climbing and exploration among the world’s great mountains. Certainly the high standard of the previous volumes is maintained, the illustrations are, as before, superb, and the subjects chosen cover a wide range. The volume begins with a generous tribute to Hermann Geiger, which is followed by Dougal Haston’s—Reflections on the Eiger Direct, and a critical analysis of direttissima climbs by F.H. Schwarzenbach. Thereafter the articles are grouped under each continent and they make up a valuable compendium of recent exploration. More detailed information about many of the expeditions is of course available elsewhere, but this book will have a wide appeal, not only to serious minded mountaineers, but also to those who like to read about exploration in remote and distant parts of the world. S.N.B.

# MEMBERS' CLIMBS

*M. Bennett*

Fell walking with the Easter Meet at Great Langdale. With the Alpine Meet at Obergurgl, the Hochwilde and Similaun.

*James M. L. L. Bogle*

With Hamish Brown and party to the Atlas in the Spring. Anrhemmer, Toubkal W. Ridge and Toubkal ordinary route with Harry Archer and David Lintott.

The journey from the coast to the High Atlas was accomplished relatively smoothly and easily. Base camp was the little village of Imlil, where there is a very pleasant and spacious CAF hut. From there the climbing party crossed a col to another little village, Tachedirt, where there is another CAF hut, not quite so spacious, but pleasant nonetheless. Our packs were carried by mule, a great convenience, as all food cooking utensils and bedding have to be taken to the huts. That day the sun shone with real African brilliance; it was the hottest we had.

The six of us set out the next morning before dawn. Three of us were to climb Anrhemmer, Harry, David and myself; Anrhemmer proved a good climb. There was a long approach up the valley to the col, a steep snow trudge up to an exposed ridge and then along it, with more than one false summit before we reached the true one. The day was fine, but the wind was bitterly cold, and by the end of the ridge climb I was feeling it. I think we all found it difficult to get acclimatised. It seems to be a strange feature of the Atlas by comparison with the Alps; there were comments on it in the hut books. It is partly due to the low altitude of many huts, so that to climb Anrhemmer, for example, means nearly 7,000' of ascent and descent in the day, but there seems to be some other cause too.

The return to Imlil the next day was made easier for the two ladies in the party by the presence of two mules, which provided lifts. Harry, David and I were to set out early the following morning for the highest hut in the Atlas, the Neltner, standing at over 10,000'. The mule took our packs to the snow line, but we were left with a couple of hours to go, staggering under packs that seemed unbelievably heavy. The hut itself was much more primitive than those at lower levels, and one had



The Neltner Hut.  
Photo by David Lintott.

to choose between choking with smoke or freezing in the wind. We made a short reconnaissance in readiness for the next morning.

It was fine first thing the next day and it did not take us long to gain the West Ridge of Toubkal. As we did so we could look past a small mountain lake, over the Anti-Atlas towards the Sahara. Though the wind came from that direction, it didn't feel like a desert one, and it wasn't long before the cloud came down around us. The ridge was another exposed one, longer than before, with more climbing on it. We met a lot of steep ice and progress did not seem very rapid. By mid-afternoon we were on the main peak of Toubkal, which is easily approachable without taking the West Ridge, and were in fact about 200 yards from the summit. But conditions had worsened; the cloud was as thick as ever and it was snowing, so we turned back for the hut by the normal route.

The day after, determined not to be beaten, we again set off for Toubkal, by the ordinary route, which for by far the greater part is a straightforward snow climb. There had been a lot of fresh snow, and we soon found we were sinking in deeply. We struggled on and by midday the weather had worsened, just as it had the day before. Determination won through this time however, and we reached the summit. Toubkal was equally determined not to go under to us without a struggle and it laid on an electric storm. First Harry's axe started to buzz, then all our axes started to buzz, and then Harry's head began to buzz. We got off the mountain as rapidly as we could.

In the summer I made an almost totally abortive trip to Skye with a friend from York; we were washed out of our camp site, but we did have some good walking.

I had a very enjoyable day climbing in the Elbesandstein Gebirge, a district of curious sandstone outcrops on the East-German/Czech border which offers excellent climbs in the range 100'-300'.

With the Alpine Meet at Obergurgl getting acclimatised on Hohe Mut, then the Weisskogel. With Harry Archer and John Noake I attempted the Verpeilspitze from the Kaunergrat hut, but we turned back with bad weather. The Wazespitze, which we had intended to climb, looked a good peak from the same hut.

A few excursions on gritstone outcrops near York.

### *G. R. E. Brooke*

In County Kerry, Eire, in March—April.

Carrantuohill, under heavy snow; Knocknapeasta, Purple Mt, Manger-ton Mt and other peaks in and around the Macgillicuddy's Reeks. Weather conditions exceptionally cold and snowy for S.W. Ireland.

In Northern Iceland in July—August.

Hverfjell and Hlitharfjell in the Myvatn District. Herthubreith, 5517 ft. on the central plateau of Iceland.

### *Hamish M. Brown*

ATLAS revisited with mixture of fellow Braehead teachers; David and Anne Lintott, Harry Archer and James Bogle. From the Tizi n' Tachedirt with Ann Winning (BFMC) over Djebel Tacheddirt, 3791, to Igue-

nouane, 3875 while the others did the full traverse of Anrhemmer. Ten in all enjoyed painting, music and the city life of Marrakech.

ALPS. In August five out in a Renault 4L to Martigny and camp base there, good fester centre. From Leukerbad up to Gemmi Pass and Lammernhutte where bad weather gave the Steghorn and a traverse of various summits of the Wildstrubel and off across the big snowfield of the Plaine Morte. Exit over the Pointe de la Plaine Morte as fog down to the Rhone and new snow. From Susanfe Hut cross the Susanfe Pass to Salvan with the Haut Cime of the Dents du Midi only interesting as done in winter conditions. Cross to Cogne for a last wash-out.

AT HOME: 1968 looks like being the year of greatest-ever Munro-bagging; a pastime that has the advantage of taking one all over Scotland. Even the 'great days' are too many to list. David Riddell and John Lawton were up for the annual Hogmanay battles and binges and in Skye in summer there was a game called 'Hunt the Bogle'. The Lakes were visited once or twice including the Autumn meet at Langdale and also Wales for a week. Most unusual were visits to Jura and Scarba on either side of the Corrieveckan. New routes were done on Ben Loyal and in Skye. The return led to a fantastic autumn and early winter with one period of only eight days at home out of about sixty. It makes the exile pine—Cobbler, Lui, Cruachan, Stob Ghabhar, Starav, Etive, Buachailles, Bidean, the Mamores, Nevis, L. Quoich, Skye, Glen Shiel, Affric, Glomach, L. Lochy, Torridons, Sutherland, Cairngorms, Lochnagar, Monaidh Liaths, Dalwhinnie, Lawers, Rannoch, Clova—days or weeks in all these areas and others. Some peaks were bagged in the west by canoe sortie while canoe-ing in the Great Glen.

### *T. H. P. Brown*

Aig. du Peigne; by the Arete des Papillons, a very enjoyable training route with some technical difficulty but no overall seriousness.

; by the Chamonix face, a rather bitty climb made much harder by quantities of snow and verglas. Retreat was made from the platform just below the summit owing to an imminent blizzard.

Aig. d'Argentiere by the Voie Normal. An unusually fine glacier route done in great quantities of loose snow after a protracted spell of bad weather.

Dent de Requin by the Voie Mayer-Dibona. Not a good route, definitely much worse than the fine write-up in the English Guide suggests. The initial couloir was made very dangerous by great quantities of loose boulders and unstable ice; above the rock is good but the real problem is route finding. However the summit is so fine as to justify its ascent by almost any route.

Aig du Midi by the S. Face, Eperon Rebuffat. A glorious training climb of some technical difficulty but no seriousness.

### *Peter Farrington*

In February: Snowdon Horseshoe and Tryfaen in wonderful weather and perfect snow conditions.

In May: Camping on the west coast of the Isle of Islay. Scrambles on the sea cliffs and a walk up Beinn Bheigar, the island's highest peak. The mountains are similar to the Welsh Carneddau and are almost untrampled. The sea cliffs are generally scattered and isolated, yet there appear to be many lines worth exploring including some spectacular routes for a strong party.

Several weekends spent walking in Derbyshire, Snowdonia and the Lakes and rock climbing at Stanage, Froggat, Helsby, Langdale, Tryfaen, Cwm Idwal and the Llanberis Pass.

### *Gordon Gadsby*

A very active year with my friends in the A.B.M.S.A.C. and the Oread Mountaineering Club.

*January.* Whitwick Quarry, Leicestershire. Amongst many fine routes, remembered best were Sceptre 115' VS with Eric and Merle Wallis and Crossbow VD, a first ascent with Tom Green.

*February.* Camping Langdale, wonderful snow conditions on the Sky-line Traverse. Several routes on Wildcat rocks, Derbyshire. Traverse of Carneddau. Gulley climb on Glyder Fach.

*March.* Cairngorms, with Geoff Hayes and Chris Culley. Traverse of Ben Macdui and Cairngorm, visit Shelter Stone and Loch Avon. Climb Five Finger Gulley on Sneekda. Walk the length of wild Glen Feshie. Ski on other days. Stanage and Black Rocks, Derbyshire.

*April.* Easter. Camping in Devon with Rock and Ice and Summit M.C.

Many climbs on Dartmoor Granite including the magnificent 175 ft. Central Groove (on Devils Rock), with Dez Hadlum.

*May.* Napes Needle at last! A lucky escape from a rock fall of Alpine proportions whilst descending Sphinx Gulley. A cannonade of rocks all around us. George Reynolds left hanging by his finger tips. May 17th to 19th, a forty mile walk across Central Wales, culminating in the traverse of Plynlimmon. May 26th, climbing Froggat Edge and Mountain Rescue practice Stange.

*July.* Bernese Oberland, Oberaarhorn 3638m. by South Ridge, descent in blizzard. Simelihorn 2751m. a rock peak traversed from First by North and South Ridges, rain and mist on ascent.

Monch 4099m. by South East Ridge, descent in white-out conditions with Mrs. D. Gadsby and Roy Sawyer. This was a stolen climb done direct from the valley on the first good day in an appalling season.

We arrived at the Jungfrauoch station and hurried along the network of tunnels to the exit on to the Jungfraufrirn. The mist swirled around us as we roped into two ropes, one of 3 and one of 4 climbers. It was 10-10 a.m. as we started the trudge across the glacier to the Ober Monchjoch. The snow was good, the weather improving and we soon settled into the rhythm of an alpine pace.

As we approached the col the mist cleared right away, the Monch looked magnificent, its icy precipices gleaming against the clear blue sky. We could see the black dots of climbers already returning along the narrow summit ridge. On reaching the Ober Monchjoch 3629m, we turned left and ascended an easy snow slope to the foot of the S.E. ridge proper.

We ascended steadily until held up at a rock step by climbers coming down. Once over the difficult section we made good progress up mixed rock and snow until we reached a fine snow summit 3887m. about two thirds the way up the ridge. The view from here was superb, away to the East the Shreckhorn Lauterhorn Chain looked particularly impressive. Whilst behind to the South West the Jungfrau. Even as we watched a cloud cap started to form on the summit of the Jungfrau—bad weather was on the way!

I had a quick consultation with Stewart Bramwell who was leading the second rope and we decided to press on for the summit, about 40 minutes away. The route continued along a delightful narrow snow ridge, then traversed to the right of the crest and gained the rocks again by an awkward move up onto some slabs. From here the climbing was easy, although we were held up many times by ropes of excited French-



Point 3887m on South East Ridge of the Monch.  
Photo by Gordon Gadsby.

# The Swiss Observer

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**News from Switzerland**  
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**Supporting Articles in French, German**  
**and Italian**  
**Church Services**  
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men descending in haste to reach safe ground before the threatened storm broke.

A final steep arete of crumbling snow was overcome and we were on the long summit ridge. This ridge undulated gently upwards to the highest point 4099m. with giant cornices on our right and the steep S.E. face dropping away beneath us to the left. In fifteen minutes we were on the summit, the only difficult part being a section of pure ice midway along. (Two American mountaineers had fallen to their deaths from here 2 weeks before). We only stayed on top for two minutes, had a quick look at the connecting ridge to the Eiger and then set off down our route of ascent (a far cry from last season when we lingered for an hour on the summit of Monte Rosa in idyllic conditions). Stewart's team followed us and were the last to leave the summit. We were part way down the steep snow arete when the storm struck us. There was no lightning, just strong winds and snow, snow and more snow. Within seconds the bucket steps were almost filled in, it became difficult to see where the edge of the arete was. I decided to belay whilst my wife and Roy Sawyer edged there way down. They were soon out of sight in the surging waves of mist and snow. Ten minutes later (it seemed like hours) I heard Roy's faint shout to "come on". I picked my way carefully down the steep section, axe right in, crampons balling up at every step. I seemed to be following the rope down into a white void of emptiness. Suddenly two shapes materialized in front of me, I had reached the bottom of the worst part.

The ridge from here was rocky and we moved together for a time, until forced to belay at some normally easy slabs, that were completely plastered in new snow. First Roy and then Doreen climbed down on a tight rope, then Roy belayed and I slithered down to join them, just above the narrow snow ridge. Crossing this was an anti climax, as all sense of exposure was lost in the white out conditions. So with a false sense of security we traversed across, then down the broken rocks until we reached the large metal marker just above the Ober Monchjoch. From here a short triangular snow slope (knee deep) and we were on the col.

*August.* Camping Patterdale. Traverse of High Street Range, fantastic weather conditions.

Dovedale Derbyshire. Three great climbs on Tissington Spires,—Simian, Campanoli and Sillycun all with Nat Allen and George Reynolds.

Pembrokeshire. Camping at Whitesand Bay. Many climbs on good sound rock, the best one being the classic Reptillian a 420 ft VS with Doreen and Ray Colledge. A day on Ramsey Island including the ascent

of Carn Llundain 446 ft, a modest hill but second to none for its summit view.

*September/November.* Camping Langdale, Gimmer and Scout Crag N. Wales walking and climbing. Black Point area Anglesea with Margaret Hodge. Monday September 30th, Mountain Rescue call out on Kinder-scout Derbyshire. (2 girls and dog found safe). Curbar Edge with Nat Allen and Doreen. Agden Roacher several routes. Snowdon Horseshoe Stanage. Camping Langdale wonderful colours.

### *Lindsay Griffin*

Argentiere by the Glacier du Mileau, Traverse of the Tour Noir. Two good routes for getting fit on and for good views over the Mont Blanc Massif.

The Chamonix face of the Aiguille Du Peigne. Done in bad conditions and the descent made quickly to avoid approaching thunder storm which in fact did not strike us until the Plan des Aiguilles.

The Rebuffat Route on the Aiguille du Midi. A fine rock climb on perfect granite—unfortunately popular and over-pegged—arrive there early to avoid the slow continentals!

The Old Brenva—Mont Blanc. A classic route of great seriousness—climbed in perfect snow and ice conditions but the descent from the summit proved epic in a blizzard.

The North Face of the Tour Ronde. Done in bad conditions, it proved a hard ice climb for Hugh Drummond and myself—but a very recommendable and safe climb.

The South Face of the Dent du Geant. Again done with Hugh Drummond (U.B.M.C.). This proved a very strenuous climb as we were already tired from the Tour Ronde and A2 at 4,000 metres is no joke.

The Mer de Glace face of the Grepon. A fine climb on a huge face. The route finding presents most of the problem as far as the Niche des Amis—Some of the cracks on the higher part of the route I found harder than the famous Fissure Knubel which although over-rated in difficulty is certainly *not* in quality. As we wasted a lot of time at the beginning of the route the descent made necessary a forced bivouac at the foot of the Nantillons Glacier. Accomplished with Martin Colwell (T.V.C.C.).

Altogether I spent seven weeks in the Alps this year out of which 3½ were spent in Chamonix in bad weather. There were only two good spells of weather—early and late on in the season.

*E. C. L. Jarvis*

*Nepal:* Trek to Everest base camp—with Tom Littledale.

*Kenya:* With John Clements and Don Clarke in Ramblers' Association party—Point Lenana on Mt. Kenya. A perfect day when we did it but an awful lot of unseasonable new snow.

*Ireland:* Fell walking with Tom Littledale—Knockmealdown, the Reeks, Knocknapeasta ridge, Brandon, (some of) the Twelve Bens, Croagh Patrick, Slieve League, Errigal. Splendid country in the good weather we had.

*Lechthaler & Silvretta:* With John Clements and Tom Littledale in A.A.C. party. Dremelspitze, Parzinturm, Fluchthorn, Piz Buin, Klein Litzner. Snatched from 1968 Alpine weather.

*John Kemsley*

*At Home:* Hill walking in Scotland, Lake District, Pennines and Cheviots.

*Alps:* Walking tour in Dolomites, climbing en route Kesselkogel, Marmolata (both tops), Civetta\* and Alpini Weg to the Passo D. Sentinella.

*W. Kirstein*

*January:* Skiing with Eleanor in the San Bernardino Mountains, California.

*March:* On skis; Piz Murtel, Piz Surganda, Piz Cambrena, all Engadine.

*Easter and October:* Rock climbing, Langdale.

*D. G. Lambley*

February—Traverse of Langdale Pikes and Pavey Ark, under severe winter conditions. April—Attendance at Lake District Meet in Langdale. Traverse of Bow Fell after snow gully ascent. Traverses of Langdale Pikes, Helvellyn, and Ling moor. My son Julian, during the meet, apart from ascending Bow Fell by the snow gully, also climbed Bow Fell buttress with Donald Clarke on another day.

I have made about five visits to Derbyshire in the year, and in this time have traversed Bleaklow by two different routes. I have traversed the Peak itself, and also several summits in the Margery Hill area, as well as a very long day from the Snake Pass to Castleton over the tops.

We had a poor season in the Alps. My ascents, the Balmhorn by the ordinary route, and Monte Leone, with Oskar Ogi as guide. In view of the bad weather Julian was more fortunate since, in addition, he made two rock climbs on the Birre with Oskar on separate days, ascended the east face of the Gellihorn and abseiled down it, and then took part in a somewhat involved rock climb which was associated with a tunnelling procedure on the Felsenhorn which Oskar had discovered near the the Schwarenbach. This, apparently, was a most exciting expedition, half the rock climb being within the mountain itself. It is not described in the book. We also ascended to the Doldenhorn hut and came down again the next morning having borrowed umbrellas from the guardian; it was raining very hard.

One small comment of interest about the new guide to the Bernese Oberland. It seems a pity that the Balmhorn Massif has been completely missed out of this since there are some very good climbs on this mountain suitable for guideless parties coming out from England.

### *Brian Melville*

Alps in July but rather bad weather. The following climbs were done with Arthur Roby.

*Saas Fee* – Egginer by S.W. Ridge.

*Otztal* – traverse of Similaun east to west.

– traverse of Hintere Schwarze by the north ridge, a fine little route.

– ascent of Wildspite from the Breslauer hut.

### *J. N. Merrill*

*Jotunheimen*—Home of the Giants. An extended cross country trek including ascents of Kjyrka, Galdhoggin and Glittertind.

### *J. J. Noake*

*Easter*: A few days walking and scrambling in North Wales.

*Summer:* At the Otztal meet climbed the Hohe Wilde, Similaun and Weisskugel. On the way back from the Weisskugel captured by Italian border guards and detained for 1½ hours. After a cooling-off period allowed to go on our way. With H.D. Archer and J.M. Bogle attempted the Waze (east ridge) but bad weather during the night prevented the attempt.

After the meet I went to the Zillertal and between bad days climbed the north ridge of the Olperer with Erich Hotter—good rock but covered with ice and new snow.

### *L. Poolman*

During the latter part of May, I had a most enjoyable couple of weeks, ascending a further thirteen Munros in Argyll and Inverness. A total of 232 (45 still to come!) means that I can no longer collect them in such quantities as formerly.

With D. Grace (Bristol), I had a very pleasant fortnight in the Stubai and Otztal regions of the Tirol. The weather, generally speaking, behaved well, and seven Dreitausenders included the Schontalerspitze, Hochreichkopf and Hohe Geige.

To conclude, the first three weeks of October provided an even finer Herbstbergfahrt than I had in 1967. It snowed a couple of times but many days were of magnificent warm sunshine, with very clear skies for views and photography. My wanderings took me to Walliser, Bernese, Urner and Tessiner Alps. Of the twelve huts in which I slept, I had four (Brittania, Doldenhorn, Voralp and Corno) to myself. I was lucky enough to ascend seventeen Dreitausenders, including the Egginer (3367 metres), Ulrichshorn (3925), Stockhorn (3532), Barrhorner (3610), Gross Leckihorn (3065) and Piz Centrale (3008).

Quite a satisfactory year, as illness early in January suggested there might be nothing at all.

### *David Riddell*

Hogmanay 1967/68 with Hamish Brown, at Lagan gargh. Cold. Snow above 1500 ft. Attempt on Bidean nam Bian by the Stob Choire nam Beith failed owing difficulty in taking off on to the ice-glazed steep bit. Hamish completed HIS round over Bidean and back by the Diamond Buttress. All in thick mist. Attempt on Stob Dearg with Hamish stopped at 2,500 because the snow slid off the underlying rock. Lots of snow

nightly. Walked up Beinn a Chrulaiste, east of the Devils' Staircase. Hamish skied up. Walked up the side of the ski lift on White Corries (Meall Buiridh). Very cold, frostbite for me if I stopped moving. Excellent cuisine at Lagangargh Hut, supplied by Hamish with leavings from his sojourns in the Alps and Morocco in 1967.

AMB/SAC Easter Meet in Langdale. Best weather at Easter for years. Walked over Bowfell & Crinkles, then Pavey Ark by Jack's Rake and on to High Raise and back to the Langdale Pikes. The visibility this sunny day was the best ever. The walk up Blencathra by Sharp Edge was the best walk we had.

ABM/SAC Obergurgl Meet. Hohe Wilde, North top. Our caravan was too big to do the traverse to the S. summit, also the ridge was also corniced and icy. From the Martin Busch (Samoar) hut to Similaun. From the Brandenburger hut some of us came back from the hut next day owing to "nil visibility", although the mist cleared as soon as we got on the glacier. The peak, in this case the Ramol Kogl was not climbed on our next trip, again owing to Nil Visibility but the hut is well worth going to for its own sake. The same story for our last expedition to the Breslauer hut, Fine weather to the hut and snow-storm next day to make us call off the Wildspitze in the morning. The last walk was a lazy one, up the chair lift to the Hohe Mut, and back by the Gaisberg Tal, with some scrambling on the way.

Whilst we are the Swiss A.C. (A.B.M.), I would like to say how much we all enjoyed our enforced visit to Austria. The more moderate distances and the splendid staff work of Paul French and the camaraderie of the Members made it for me one of my best Alpine holidays.

### *Oliver St John and Family*

*July 1968.* This was intended as a fortnight in the Bregaglia and around Pontresina, but the doubtful weather precluded bigger climbs and forced a change of plans. The following peaks were however climbed:

1. *From Forno Hut.* N.E. ridge of Vazzeda, Kluckerzahn and traverse of Monte Rosso, S. and E. ridge of Casnil.
2. *From Albigna Hut.* Punta de l'Albigna, La Fiamma, a short but exhilarating climb, S.W. ridge of Balzet and La Vergine.
3. *From Stripsenjochhaus in the Kaiser Gebirge.* Fleischbank, N. ridge and S.W. ridge of Totenkirchl. Kleine Halt by Enzenspergerweg,

Gamshalt and Ellmauerhalt. North ridge of Predigtstuhl with traverse over Hintergoingerhalt.

*August 1968.* A quick two-day trip to North Wales, including 6 good routes on Dinas Mot, among them West Rib and Diagonal Route. Also 8 other routes on Dinas y Cromlech and Clogwyn y Grochan, including Kaisergebirge Wall, Brant and Phantom Rib.

*J. O. Talbot*

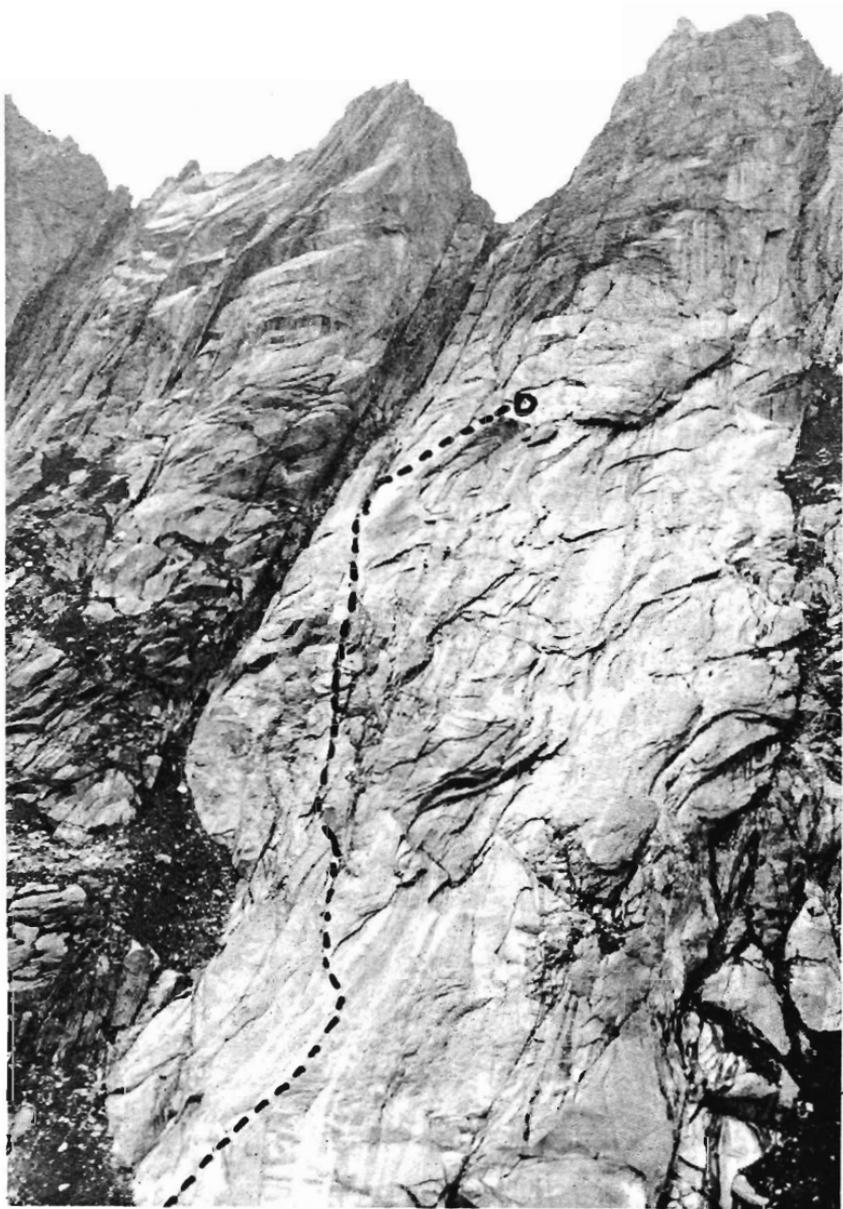
*Lochberg South West Wall:* First British ascent with Martin Epp. The weather was already deteriorating as we walked up from Tiefenbach to the Albert Heim hut. Wreaths of mist trying to obscure the surrounding cirque of peaks; threatening black clouds building up in the S.E.

The wisdom of leaving for the Lochberg S.W. wall at midday is dubious; but something had to be done, so we decided on this. The first pitch or so was not difficult, but a greasy traverse below an overhanging wall with little protection soon changed matters. Thick mist swirled around us and a cold biting wind had sprung up; 'to go on or to retreat' was the question.

An ugly black, wet, greasy diedre and crack followed, then an easy stretch to below a very steep grey wall cut by a large cracked diedre. A small block overhang then wonderful free climbing on steep perfect rock up to a minute stance. An awkward move right, up to a large overhang; a difficult committing move on a dubious wedge; then straight up an easier crack to an enormous stance.

The route now led around left avoiding the smooth block-like wall above and up behind over an exposed spiky crest. Climbing had now ceased to be pleasant, the wind shrieked through the crags, the licheny rocks were like glass from water and snow; visibility was nil. Route finding became difficult; a precipitous rock gully sheeted with ice disappeared down to the left; the fantastic forms of the ridge above seemed impracticable in the wind and wet. The slabs of the S. wall were the only alternative. Unpleasant but not unduly difficult rocks eventually lead up to below a steep wall cut by two sharp diedres. The right one was hard, but quickly led out onto the flat summit blocks.

Light was now failing and there was no time to waste. A quick traverse N.W. across soft snow led to the main summit. The problem was now to find the way down to the Winterlucke; to bivouac in such conditions was unthinkable. Numerous vague icy gullies led down W.



Gelmerspitz VI—East Wall.

----- route taken by J.O. Talbot & M. Epp.

O marks the Great Terrace.

Photo by J.O. Talbot.

from the summit. Not too far left or too far right was the rule; the former leading to steep icy slabs, the latter into the wrong valley.

Eventually after several ups, downs and traverses we espied through the gloom, the gleam of snow slopes; the Winterlucke. All problems over we sped back towards the hut; the sky was leaden and ominous and night was with us. It snowed heavily, nearly half a metre by the time we left the hut the next morning to the problems of a car without chains on the Furka pass.

*Gelmerspitzen—VI:* Attempted first ascent on East Wall. This wall is one of the most impressive in the Gelmerhorner. A great sweep of smooth slabs terminating in the final summit wall, which is extremely steep and barred by a series of overhangs.

We started the route just to the left of the bottom slab up a deep distinct crack. This cut up through the first slab and followed through the second overlapping slab to a psychological belay; 2 short American pegs. Another delicate run out on smooth compact rock led to a similar belay.

All progress directly above now seemed barred by a series of overhanging flake-like slabs. The alternative to the right seemed problematical, so we traversed up left and reached a good stance. Easier, pleasant climbing on perfect rock eventually led up to a distinct smooth groove which was followed until approx. halfway up a huge triangular shaped slab on the right. An exposed delicate pitch led up across this slab to a small corner, with a minute web sling belay, too thin for the smallest of ropes. A short distance to the top of this corner and over a steep wall which led to a very large terrace above.

The weather was decidedly unsettled; it could not decide whether to rain, snow or sleet. Such delicate slabs were not the place to be caught; we retreated. A spectacular pendule traverse from the sling belay to the upper part of the groove, over the overhanging rib on the left, a short traverse, then down a steep but easy gully.

This would make a splendid route. The lower slabs are wonderful for climbing on perfect rock. The great terrace could be reached by a more direct route or by bearing right, but both these would be extremely difficult and delicate. The final summit wall is the main problem, no definite line can be indicated, but any would involve extreme techniques of both free and artificial climbing.

*Seewenhorn South Ridge:* First British ascent with Martin Epp. The

Hoch Seewen—Bachlistock—Schafschijen group forms an impressive cirque of peaks, steep, wild and remote. No hut exists here; one must either climb from the road or bivouac beneath one of the numerous large boulders. Water is in abundance, to be had from the little lake in the Seewenalp.

To reach the Seewenalp is a long seemingly interminable trudge up steep grass, bogs and every conceivable form of unpleasant terrain. Easier routes do exist, as we proved by finding one on the way down, but strangely enough these tracks seem to cunningly stop a short distance above the road.

Time was not with us, nor the weather, the quickest most straightforward climb was decided upon. The S. ridge starts from the Seewensharte, perhaps a pleasant enough place to reach when not in a hurry, but otherwise steep, loose and unpleasant. The lower section of the ridge was quickly and easily passed, then it suddenly became more serious. Steep rock and black lichen with little or no indication as to the correct route. A short diedre followed by a smooth wall cut by a thin blind crack with a very awkward move to a stance. The mountain seemed lonely, remote and untouched as if very few people had been there since its first ascent in 1933. The final problem of the climb, an exposed overhanging wall with excellent holds led quickly up to the easier summit ridge.

Deterioration of weather and lateness of time determined a quick series of abseils back down the ridge to the Seewensharte. A hasty scramble down to the Seewenalp and back to the road by nightfall.

An abundance of loose debris and lichen somewhat mars the quality of these climbs, but the basic rock is sound and with a little more use the routes could become excellent.

### *N. E. D. Walker*

*August*—Summer meet at Obergurgl. Climbed to Hochwilde Haus in good weather, but while there, bad weather upset the programme. From the Hut climbed Schwarzen Spitze in poor weather. Hohe Wilde Spitze in glorious weather and same day climbed to Ramol Haus. Following day climbed Hinter Spielgelkoglin in poor weather; all with Johann Gstrein. With Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Cohen and Mr. & Mrs. Harold Noakes climbed to the Hohe Mutt and descended via the Gaisberg Glacier.

*September*—With his section of the D.A.V. visited the Lienzer Dolomites, in a party led by Rolf Graich, climbed Laserzwand from Karlsbader

Hut, and on the high footpath climbed to Odkar Scharte and on the ridge of Leitmentzer Spitze. All in good weather.

*September & October*—Back in the Karwendels. Karwendel Spitze from Brunnstein Hut via Sulzleklamm, Gamsanger, Fruhbeetlen, Kirchlekar and Linder Spitze; this is one of the great classic routes in the Karwendels and it took little under 3½ hours from Brunnstein Hut. Descended via Mittenwalder Hut. Climbed Lindenkopf from Arzgrubenklamm. All with Wilhelm Winneberger in fine weather.

#### *E. L. Wallis*

*Strahlhorn*: From the Fluhalp with Mrs. S.M. Wallis and K. Hodge. Conditions on Adler Glacier were very bad with over 12" fresh snow. As a result we decided to bivouac in a crevasse under the E. face of the Rimpfischhorn until the following morning.

*Bernese Oberland*: Oberaarhorn.

*North face of Doldenhorn*: No previous record of a British Ascent in the Hut Book (Fruenden Hutte). This route is entirely on snow and we spent 8½ hours cramponing from the bergschrund up to the summit. This ice was about 45° angle to commence with from the bergschrund but steepened up considerably (average angle of face 56°) and ice-screws were inserted every 60 feet for a belay. The summit was reached in a white-out.

*Otztal*: August with P.F. Gentil and W. Grossett. 1st British ascent of N. face of Hochvernagt wand. The face itself is snow and ice (45°—50°) 900 feet long and gives excellent practice in not too-serious N. face work. After the N. face we traversed the ridge westwards and over the Hochvernagtspitze.

*Otztal*: Taschach Eis-Flanke (2,000 long) with P.F. Gentil. Although given in the guide book as 60° it was found to be much easier than expected and there was so much fresh snow that occasionally ice-screw belays were dispensed with and axes used.

#### *S. R. C. Walmsley*

My son Charles and I again ventured to the Alps in our dormobile; I to indulge in what might well be a last fling before old age and decrepitude overtake me, and my son to gain at the age of eighteen, as much early experience as possible for a planned life of joy and pleasure to come in the mountains of the world.

The weather was very poor and ten days at Saas-Grund yielded only a walk to Monte Moro pass; a traverse of the Mittaghorn and ascent of the Jagiwand by the junior member of the party, and an abortive attempt on the Allalinhorn which ended in a gentle glacier crossing to the Britannia Hut and down.

In an attempt to find better weather we moved first to Gstaad and Zinal. After three weeks of unutterable misery the weather did just relent for two precious days. Being on the spot the most was made of them by a snap ascent of the Bieshorn from the Tracuit Hut. The wonderful view obtained from the summit and the glorious sunset the night before were however amply paid for by the most appalling sweat ever experienced in deep new snow up to the knees, and by a violent wind driving ice particles into the face the whole way. That same afternoon the clouds enveloped the scene again and the rain belted down in sheets. So, after a dutiful visit to headquarters, i.e. Zermatt, and a Victorian tea in the Monte Rosa Hotel with the rain pattering on the window panes, the party decided to call it a day and join the rest of the family in South Devon.

What about next year—will limbs, wind and currency stand it?

#### *J. J. Whitehead*

*April:* Ski Touring in Dauphine. Including Col du Clot des Cavales; Breche de la Meije; Les Rouies; Dom de la Lauze.

*August:* Couronne de Breonna; Pigne de la Le; Petit Dent de Veisivi traverse; Mt. Blanc de Cheilon; Pigne d'Arolla; L'Eveque, S. ridge; Dent de Tsalion, W. ridge; Tsa by ordinary route.

#### *I. F. G. Whittington*

Spent ten days, over Easter, climbing and skiirg in the Cairngorms, based in Coire an Lochain, followed by a fortnight in August, climbing in the Jostedal Glacier, based on Lunde.



# LIST OF OFFICERS

## Since the formation of the Association

### Presidents

- 1909–1911 Clinton Dent.  
1912–1922 A. E. W. Mason.  
1923–1926 Dr. H. L. R. Dent.  
1927–1930 Brigadier-General The Hon. C. G. Bruce, C.B., M.V.O.  
1931–1933 W. M. Roberts, O.B.E.  
1934–1936 A. N. Andrews.  
1937–1945 C. T. Lehmann.  
1946–1948 Dr. N. S. Finzi.  
1949–1951 Gerald Steel, C.B.  
1952–1953 Colonel E. R. Culverwell, M.C.  
1954–1956 F. R. Crepin.  
1957–1959 Geo. Starkey.  
1960–1962 B. L. Richards, G.M.  
1963–1965 Dr. A. W. Barton.  
1966–1968 Vincent O. Cohen, M.C.  
1969– Frank Solari.

### Vice-Presidents

- 1948 Gerald Steel, C.B., and Colonel E.R. Culverwell, M.C.  
1949 Colonel E. R. Culverwell, M.C., and Brigadier E. Gueterbock.  
1950 Colonel E. R. Culverwell, M.C., Rev. G. H. Lancaster (died April, 1950), and Dr. C. F. Fothergill.  
1951–52 Dr. C. F. Fothergill and Lieut.-Colonel A. E. Tydeman.  
1953 Lieut.-Colonel A. E. Tydeman and J. R. Amphlett.  
1954–55 J. R. Amphlett and Robert Greg.  
1956 Robert Greg and Dr. J. W. Healy.  
1957–58 Dr. J. W. Healy and B. L. Richards, G.M.  
1959 B. L. Richards, G. M., and Dr. A. W. Barton.  
1960–61 Dr. A. W. Barton and D. G. Lambley, F.R.C.S.  
1962 D. G. Lambley, F.R.C.S., and V. O. Cohen, M.C.  
1963–64 V. O. Cohen, M.C., and F. Solari.  
1965 F. Solari and J. G. Broadbent.  
1966–67 J. G. Broadbent and J. S. Byam-Grounds.  
1968 J. S. Byam-Grounds and W. Kirstein  
1969 W. Kirstein and Dr. D. R. Riddell

Prior to 1948 the Vice-Presidents of the Association did not hold office for any definite period, and in the majority of cases, once elected, held office for life. In later years, with few exceptions, only those who had held office as President were elected Vice-Presidents. In 1947 it was considered that this system was not satisfactory and that in future there should be two Vice-Presidents only who, like the President, should not hold office for longer than three years in succession. At the Annual General Meeting in 1947 the existing Vice-Presidents were created Honorary Vice-Presidents, and as such hold office for life subject to re-election at each Annual General Meeting. The following were Vice-Presidents of the Association between 1909 and 1948:—

Brigadier-General The Hon. C. G. Bruce, C.B., M.V.O.	
A. N. Andrews.	A. E. W. Mason.
J. A. B. Bruce.	Sir R. Leonard Powell.
F. W. Cavey.	H. G. Pulling.
Dr. H. L. R. Dent.	W. M. Roberts, O.B.E.
Sir William Ellis, G.B.E.	Dr. O. K. Williamson.
C. T. Lehmann.	

## Honorary Secretaries

1909–1911	J. A. B. Bruce and Gerald Steel.
1912–1919	E. B. Harris and A. N. Andrews.
1920–1922	A. N. Andrews and N. E. Odell.
1923–1928	A. N. Andrews and W. M. Roberts.
1929–1930	W. M. Roberts and M. N. Clarke.
1931–1944	M. N. Clarke and F. W. Cavey.
1945–1948	M. N. Clarke and F. R. Crepin.
1949–1953	F. R. Crepin and George Starkey.
1954–1956	George Starkey and R. C. J. Parker.
1957–1958	R. C. J. Parker and H. McArthur.
1959–1960	R. C. J. Parker and F. E. Smith.
1961–1962	F. E. Smith and M. Bennett.
1963	M. Bennett and J. P. Ledeboer.

## Honorary New Members' Secretaries

1965–1968	George Starkey.
1969	Dr. F. A. W. Schweitzer.

## Honorary Treasurers

1909–1911	C. E. King-Church.
1912–1925	J. A. B. Bruce.
1926–1954	C. T. Lehmann.
1954–1957	J. R. Amphlett.
1957	F. R. Crepin.

## Assistant Honorary Treasurer

1949–1964	A. G. Schofield.
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1909–1914	A. B. Challis.
1915–1922	Reginald Graham.
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1931–1940	F. Oughton.
1941–1952	J. A. Marsden-Neye.
1953–1956	S. E. Orchard.
1957–1967	R. A. Tyssen-Gee.
1968	A. Hart.

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1909–1918	J. A. B. Bruce.
1919–1928	C. T. Lehmann.
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1964–1966	J. Kemsley.
1966–1968	R. Wendell Jones.
1968	S. N. Beare.

## Honorary Solicitors

1909–1932	E. R. Taylor.
1933	The Lord Tangley.

## Honorary Editor

(The following officers carried out the duties of Hon. Editor until the post was created in 1949:— 1909–1911 J. A. B. Bruce, 1912–1928 J. A. B. Bruce and A. N. Andrews, 1929–1948 M. N. Clarke)–

1949–1962	M. N. Clarke.
1963–1964	W. R. Jeudwine.
1965–1968	G. A. Hutcheson.
1968	Graham A. Daniels

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