

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

JOURNAL 1974

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DIARY FOR 1974

- 23 January Lecture, An American View of Everest by Dr. J. Lester
- 20 February Lecture, Ski Mountaineering by Jeremy Whitehead
- 23-24 February Northern Dinner Meet, Glenridding - Leader, W. Brooke Midgeley
- 20 March Lecture, Papuan Adventure by Bob Hards
- 10-17 April Easter Meet, Braemar - Leader, Alasdair Andrews
- 24 April Lecture, Medical Aspects of Survival by Gp. Capt. P. Whittingham
- 10-11 May Meet, Ogwen - Leader, Richard Coatsworth
- 15 May Cheese and Wine Party. Short papers
- 8-9 June Meet, Helmsley - Leader, J. Kemsley
- 19th June Members' Evening with slides from Easter, Whitsun and weekend meets
- 20 July-
3 August Alpine Meet (1) in Arolla - Leader, Tony Sperryn
- 17-31 August Alpine Meet (2) in Meiringen - Leader,
- 25 September Lecture, Climbing in Ireland by J. Roche
- 4-6 October Meet, Langdale - Leader, Walt Unsworth
- 23 October Members' Evening. Slides of the Alpine Meets
- 27 November Annual General Meeting followed by the Annual Dinner. Connaught Rooms, Kingsway, London

Fuller details of these events are notified in the bulletins. Lectures are held at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London, W. 1. at 7.00 p.m. and are followed by an informal supper at the Waterloo Despatch, Adams Row, W. 1. The cost has, inevitably, risen to £2.00 and it is essential that Members should book not later than the preceding Saturday with the Secretary, A.B.M.S.A.C., The Medical Centre, St. Luke's Hospital, Guildford.

Information regarding the meets is available from the leaders.



The Parish Rooms Patterdale

Photo: W. A. Comstive

THE A.B.M.S.A.C. HUT IN PATTERDALE

By the time this journal is published in March 1974 club members will have received formal notification of plans to raise money to finance the conversion of the Patterdale Parish Rooms to a club climbing hut. This journal is able to include pictures and plans of the building and site and generally to give a broader appreciation of the project.

Every club needs a hut of its own as a sort of base camp, and this need was recognised by the Association's members in their overwhelmingly favourable response to the questionnaire put out 3 years ago outlining such a project in the Lake District.

Unfortunately we were not successful in obtaining planning permission at that time for the conversion of a building on a very attractive site in Borrowdale. The Lake District Planning authority believed that individual buildings outside present existing village boundaries should not be developed. The search for a site continued against a background of rocketing prices and rapidly diminishing sites. The net was cast much wider than Borrowdale and a number of hopes did not materialise. Then a year ago came the chance of conversion of the disused village school in Patterdale. It had to be kept quiet for security reasons until the Committee were reasonably sure that we had a viable offer and that planning permission had been granted. A number of issues needed careful thought:

The site —A hut in the precincts of a village is not quite as ideal as in the hills, but the latter is no longer possible. This site is, however, good in a developing climbing area and transport today is no problem for getting nearer to the climbs and here we must assume that petrol restrictions will not be with us for ever.

Ownership —We are not able to purchase the freehold of the building outright because it is the policy of the Church Commissioners to lease their properties rather than sell them. The 28 year lease that has been offered is sufficiently long to justify the expenditure of a considerable sum on conversion of the property. This sum could be written off over the period of the lease, it being calculated that the hut fees would be sufficient to cover rental and running costs. The contract for the lease of the property contains good prospects for the renewal of the lease for a further term at the expiry of 28 years.

Conversion —The stone building is in reasonably good shape structurally but it will be necessary to instal a first floor for sleeping accommodation. Here we are fortunate to have the services of Alec Wells, an architect, who has good experience of the Lake District. The actual conversion will,

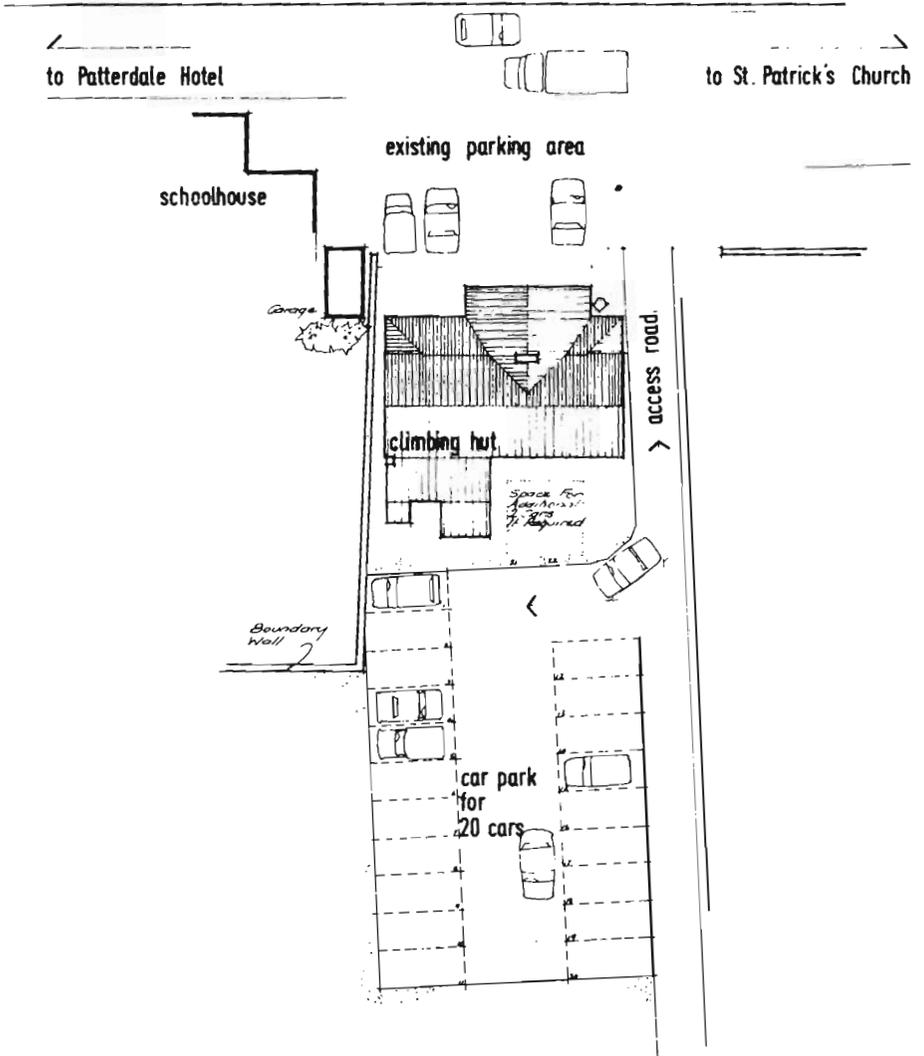
of course, take time but it is hoped that the building and site will be fully converted and developed within a year of the lease being signed. The line drawings show the site area, shape of the building and provision for parking of cars. The other plan shows the ground floor plan as envisaged at present. A plan of the upper floor has not been shown as it only contains dormitory accommodation split into approximately equal areas for male and female beds. This fact may surprise members but you will appreciate that it will be necessary for us to let the hut to other climbing clubs, education authorities etc. in order that we achieve the revenues to cover running costs. The amount of such letting will, of course, be governed by the basic demand for accommodation for members and the extent of this will only be shown by time. Support of club meets in England and Wales has shown that there is a considerable demand for a great extension of the A.B.M.S.A.C.'s home climbing activities.

Cost

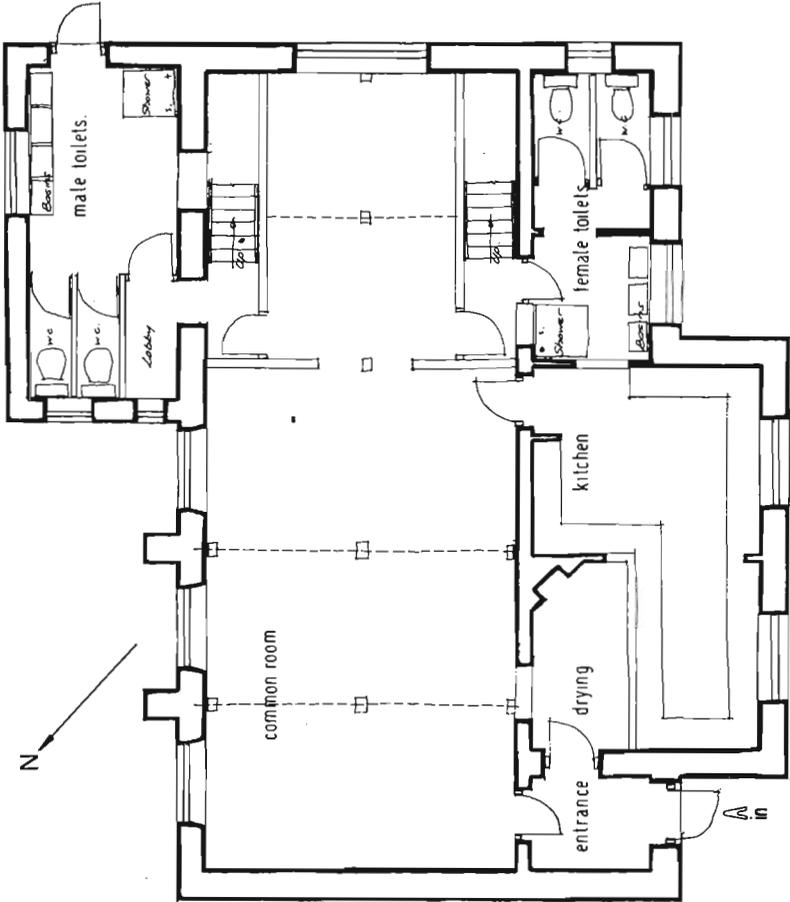
—The Committee is satisfied that, with a Sports Council grant and a good response to our appeal from members, it should be possible to raise the necessary capital and look forward to adequate revenue from bookings by members and from outside. The main fly in the ointment is the increase in the cost to our membership of the subscriptions to our parent club in Switzerland. The deterioration of the exchange rate between the Swiss franc and the British pound means that the current subscriptions may well be so high as to cause a considerable drop in our membership. This we hope will be offset by making the Club more attractive to members by having our own hut in the Lake District.

These questions have been considered at great length by the Committee and the Annual General Meeting. There have been some misgivings by people who are quite properly cautious, but there has also been a wide recognition of the importance of getting ahead speedily. A Hut Sub-Committee has been drawn up and detailed proposals have been circulated to members.

Some say we are years too late, but it is better late than never. Some say we cannot afford such major expense in present circumstances, but such arguments may very well lead to the failure to proceed with the hut and the demise of the A.B.M.S.A.C. in the very near future. Have we forgotten our early members and their memorable achievement in enabling the Britannia Hut to be built in Switzerland? Our Swiss colleagues have not. We cannot afford not to grasp this opportunity. We must have faith at this time and do everything we can to establish our own hut on British soil.



Site plan shewing situation and possible parking plan.



Possible ground floor layout

CHAMONIX SUMMER

J. Gregson

The sweat of the walk chills and cools as we reach Montenvers. The sacks are thankfully dropped, the stove lit, a brew on its way. At two o'clock our torchlight dimly picks out the path. Stumble up the evil ball-bearings of the moraine to the ice of the Nantillons glacier. Stop to rope up, fish out gear, crampons on. Morning silence shattered by the arrival of a helicopter; faces peer through the dawn. It goes away. We crunch on up the ice, hard and glassy. The roar of the helicopter comes back and within two minutes a couple of figures like rag-dolls are winched off two-hundred feet above us. A short flight we hope we won't need.

As we reach the foot of the Spencer Couloir so does the sun. We will have to race it; our task to go up and down safely, the sun's to make the going unpleasant. Steep sweep of ice, yielding to points and picks, screws placed every now and then to soothe the nerves. Breath coming in gasps on this, the first route of our season. The col gets nearer; we arrive at the foot of the rocks, pause to look over the void to the north face of the Plan. Two rope-lengths on granite take us in a sweat to the top of the Pointe de Chamonix, north peak of the Aiguille de Blaitiere. Rest at last, calf muscles can stretch for a while, hearts try to slow down. Swollen tongues crave for liquid.

Two long abseils lead back to the couloir. Down and down, snow sliding in the sun's heat. More level glacier allows a rest again, and drinks for drive-power. A strange sport where stopping is a large part of the pleasure. Repeat a day later, in the grinding haul to the Albert Premier hut—with its crowds.

Short of sleep, we shuffle across the glacier, each following a pool of yellow light. Up steeply to the start of the Forbes Arete of the Chardonnet. Beautifully sharp, curving crests of snow separate the gendarmes, each demanding a crampon-scraping scramble to overcome. Revel in the exposure, slopes falling away from the airy way posed in the sky. Thirst intrudes, the summit is eagerly grasped for it means a place to sit down, to stop, to drink. The ice faces of the Argentiere peaks beckon from across the valley. The hut looks a long way off, but there is water, coffee, tea. It becomes a target. The eyes behind goggles long for relief from the glare, the throat croaks for cold flow of liquid. Hearts and lungs heave with the effort of moving the body across the ice. The last slow rise to the hut gives way to hours of rest and recovery. Strangely, in view of the effort involved, we set off again next morning. Up the steep little gully, water ice at the top, to Col Purtscheller. Out into the great white reflector of the Trient Plateau, slowly up the crowded Aiguille du Tour. Down soon, not caring for the babel of voices, back to the hut. Down again, the long loose moraine path getting hotter and hotter, thinking of drinks, meals, a cleansing shower, drinks and more drinks. And plans to go through it all again in a day or two.

Five-francs-worth of cable-car, as much sun as would render you to dripping, two days' supply of food and gear wearing away your shoulders, a long dusty plod along the railway line. And then the uphill bit—up and up, and then more up. The mouth drying out, the lungs gasping for oxygen that isn't there, dreams of pints with heads on. The slushy stagger across the glacier, the collapse outside the Tete Rousse hut. Relief. A marathon session of melting snow on a stove that doesn't want to co-operate. Cheese, stew, lovely liquid brews.

A quick look at the approach to tomorrow's route. Prepare food for breakfast, more brewing. 'Levez a deux heures' says the hut guardian. Squeeze of bodies into minute bed-space, German feet pushed up one's nose; major eruption whenever somebody tries to turn over. More people cram onto the mattress. Sleep an unknown ingredient. Across the glacier waits the north-west face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay.

Rise to bright frozen moonlight. Outside to melt snow, and more snow, and still more snow. Chew on cardboard crispbread, struggling. Pay the bill, tiredness lessens the shock to the wallet. Sacks hoisted, off to be down the gully before the rush starts.

Stop, sweaty, at the bottom. Chill and shiver while roping-up and crampon-strapping. The face, a mile across the glacier, fills almost all the sky. Oh! for a drink. Off we go, striding crevasses, up and down, drawing into shadow at the foot of the face. Breathless clamber through huge mounds of sugary blocks, debris of not-so-old avalanches. Crash! a big serac further up the glacier decides to roll.

Up now, onto the face, steepening and causing necks to crane even more to see up it. Overtaken by one or two fitter parties, glad of the helmets now. Hard, frozen ice, avalanche-scraped, short work on front-points, a nice solid ice-screw every so often to cut down a slide. On and on, rope-length after rope-length, torch-light dimming as batteries give out. Here and there a steeper, more difficult stretch, moving singly. Awkward crevasses to cross. Daylight creeps up on us. Luckily it's a north face so we're not yet in direct sunlight. Halts for photographs welcome as they allow a rest, but a drink would be better.

A long slope, moving together, lets us catch all the other ropes at the hardest pitch, a very steep wall of hard, bare, blue ice. The continentals take ages, we get very impatient, but it's wait and wait as we can't get past. Craving for water to smooth the cracked throats. At long last we can move, the ice flakes beneath the picks and points, but soon it's below us. Onwards and up towards the sun. Long, long sweeps of ice soaring to the sky. One or two minor obstacles to deal with. In the sunshine now, slower in the heat, sweat and suncream run into the eyes, vision blurs, calf-muscles ache. Out onto a ridge, up, one, two rope-lengths, then it's over, the arete levels for some yards then begins to fall away.

A summit, rest, food, drink, life-giving drink. Later, views, photographs, congratulations, jokes. But the sun is the enemy. Very short rope, movement constant but concentration striving to be at maximum. A strip of walkway as

wide as two boots, dropping three or four thousand feet on both sides, circus performance with no audience and no net. Down and down, on and on, hotter and hotter. Nervous energy drains away, reserves are low. The uphill starts again, much slower now. A couple of hours pass and very wearily we shamble up the ladder to the Vallot hut. Collapse, wait, hearts slow down. Brew and brew and brew.

The hut fills up, the four small bunks overcrowd, hardy ones curl up on the aluminium floor. Up, not having slept, at three o'clock for Mont Blanc; an hour and a half's struggle with a mutinous go-slow stove results in three half-cups of lukewarm coffee. Crampons on inside the hut, hands stick to the frozen metal ladder outside. It has to be a rush job. An enormous thunder-cloud lights up from the inside with flashes of lightning every thirty seconds. Plod and plod, the rest of the peaks falling away below now, over the humps, sky getting redder and redder. The throats like Sahara. Quickly up onto the roof of Europe, only five people altogether, camera in action very rapidly as cloud begins to obscure the only-just risen sun. Then down. A speedy descent, through the morning crowd panting upwards for a view they won't see, for the thunder-cloud has burst and spread. Snow begins to fall and the wind picks up.

A brief stop at the little metal hut, now incredibly full of shelterers from the storm. A drink is won from dirty snow. Outside again, jackets on, down and down, faster and faster, away from the snow, the height, the effort, the strain. Along and down the glacier, over the crevasses, through the seracs, across the slopes, and then—out into the sunshine, slow down, jackets off, and at last stop. And brew and drink and brew and drink and drink and drink. . .

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110TH ANNIVERSARY

Derek G. Lambley

In June 1973 I was extremely gratified to receive an invitation from M. Charles Cevey, President of the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club to attend the Fete Centrale 1973 at Lausanne. This was the 110th anniversary of the Swiss Alpine Club and I was asked to represent the A.B.M.S.A.C. The idea of spending a long weekend in Switzerland in the autumn with a good excuse appealed to me and I hurriedly accepted. I left England on a night flight on Thursday 27th September and arrived in Geneva. It was impossible to travel to Lausanne by steamer completely in the daylight the following day, since boats did not leave in the winter until after 3 p.m. In Lausanne I found the hotel booked for me was quite close to the railway station. I made my way down to Ouchy and then travelled by metro to the city centre. The metro I was delighted to find was a Swiss rack railway. I hadn't realised before how much of Lausanne was built on a hillside; the buildings are all on steps on this hillside and the central part of the city is about half way up the hill. Having toured the shops and made some useful purchases including an Alpine calendar for next year I returned by metro to Ouchy, had an excellent lunch of lake perch and spent the afternoon traversing the lake on a steamer to Evian les Bains where I landed and spent three pleasant hours sitting in the sun and watching the fish jump in the shimmering lake. It really was a lovely day.

The following day at 1 o'clock I went to the auditorium of the Polytechnic and met the other delegates. There was an enormous mass of people present and it seemed to me that the delegates from the rest of Switzerland well out-numbered the total number of British members of the Association, I came to realise what a very small part of the Swiss Alpine Club we really are. I collected various documents about the meeting and met not only M. Cevey but also M. Robert Vichaux, the local President, who was responsible for all the organisation. I distributed our Association ties to these Swiss officers. I was put in the charge of M. Pierre Nicolet who showed me round and suggested that I should not attend the business meeting that afternoon but might be more interested to go with the other visitors to tour Lausanne and to taste wine in a vineyard. This naturally appealed very strongly. I collected my souvenir of the meeting which I thought was an excellent idea. A first day cover had been prepared which had as its stamp the stamp of Switzerland which bears 'Les Diablerets'; this cover was stamped with an official postal stamp prepared only for the day of the meeting. One cover was given to every delegate but it was also possible to purchase, as I did, five other first day covers each of which was decorated by an engraving of one of the five huts belonging to the Diablerets section. Only a thousand of each type of cover was being stamped so the philatelists in my family were overjoyed with this comparative rarity.

A tour by coach of the city of Lausanne showed it to be a delightful city but unfortunately we couldn't get the views across the lake that we wished, though as we came back in the early evening it was possible to see the mountains of Savoy on the other side. After touring the city for over an hour, we went towards Montreux and were deposited in the cellar of a vineyard. Here, a very sturdy and comprehensive wine tasting took place for the next hour or so ending up with the purchase of some of the wine we had tasted. I even managed to get these bottles back to England unbroken. In a somewhat soporific condition I was returned to the auditorium where yet another drinking session was under way; this was a reception offered by the state of Vaud. There was just time for a quick bath and a change before we were all taken to the Palais de Beaulieu. Here there were more apéritifs, this time offered by the city of Lausanne, then the grand banquet took place.

I was honoured by sitting at the table of Herr Otto Meyer, the new President of the Swiss Alpine Club, who comes from Lucerne. I had not previously realised that the Presidency changes every three years, as do all the officers, and the officers of the Central Committee come from the same section as the President. Thus, at the same table was also Herr Conradin Steiner, who was the new Secretary in Lucerne and also sitting with me was Miss Cécile Roos, the new Administrative Assistant. She had most excellent English and I was able to talk through her to Herr Steiner and to point out our very considerable difficulties in England both relating to the rate of exchange and the problems of attracting new members. Herr Meyer and Herr Steiner promised to consider the whole matter of country membership if I would write to them on my return to England. This of course, I have done. I only hope it will bear some fruit and help us preserve our own Association here. They have promised to consider a reduced subscription for overseas members. I am not too hopeful about this, since so many sections are involved and no sort of 'country membership' has ever been used in Switzerland before. They pointed out that if we were given these privileges, other members outside Switzerland might require similar assistance. I did however, point out that the English Channel was a very considerable barrier to our own members.

I met various other people amongst whom was the outgoing President of the Monte Rosa Section and also his successor who was to take up office on the 1st January 1974. I also met the President of the French Alpine Club and the Italian Alpine Club. I fear I did not get to bed very early and was in no state to make an 'Alpine Start' the following morning when a large paddle steamer had been hired to take us all on the lake. It was a marvellous day and we had an excellent view of les Dents du Midi. Our return was at 1.30. Sad farewells were said to all my new friends and best wishes of the President were given to me to convey to the members of our own Association. Altogether it was a most rewarding trip and I hope it may bear fruit in the way of helping our own Association in these difficult days. It was a festival to remember. I felt very much at home with our fellow members in Switzerland and if anyone else is lucky enough to be invited they should most certainly accept. I was most grateful to the President and Central Committee for all their excellent hospitality.

SWISS JOIN CLUB MEET

Peter Ledeboer

The Spring Bank Holiday week marked a milestone in the history of our relationship with our Swiss friends in the S.A.C., for as far as I know it is the first time that a party of Swiss climbers has been invited to Britain to take part in an Association Meet.

The idea really originated at the U.I.A.A. Annual Assembly at Montreux in 1972, when the B.M.C. suggested that the best way to promote international friendship was for climbers of different countries to climb together, and what would be more natural than for a party of S.A.C. members to spend a week with their British friends? The invitation was gladly accepted by Charles Cevey, President of the S.A.C., and willingly taken on by the Association with the aid of a British Council grant.

The Swiss party were selected from applicants from all parts of Switzerland and all had some connection with the O.J. It is right that we should record their names : Ernst Beck (Davos, Leader), Guido Bumann (Saas Fee), Joos Burger (Bex), Claude Defago (Monthey), Hermann Geilinger (Zurich), Michel Minois (Martigny), Louis Merlo (Netstal), Giovanni Petazzi (Bellinzona), Rudolf Tobler (Basel), Kary Zwimpfer (Altdorf).

On 24th May Frank Schweitzer met them in a superb red minibus at London Airport, and that evening many of us were invited to meet them at a reception kindly offered by the Swiss Embassy. The evening went well, culminating in an informal dinner at the 'Bistingo'. Later we discovered that one of them had earned the title of 'Mr Piccadilly'!

About a dozen members on the British side assembled at Brackenclouse the next day and the warm dry conditions rewarded those who camped. The hut was soon a masterpiece of organisation in large scale catering and resounded over the next few days with discussion in French and German. I was even paid the compliment by a Fell & Rock member of being asked if I was English! Under the able charge of Dennis Gray an extensive climbing programme was arranged, and over 30 climbs of varying grades were done in 4 days on Great Gable, Scafell and Pillar. Some of our Swiss friends were climbing to a high standard, and if at first one wondered whether they would find our mountains too small, we were left in no doubt that they were impressed and satisfied. After all, one does not hear yodelling every day on Scafell!

I must of course hasten to add that the institution of the English pub was highly appreciated. The Wasdale Head is well situated for quenching thirst in the heat, even if it is difficult to get inside. We also had an informal dinner at another pub down the valley, to which Bobby and Muriel Files drove all the way from Scales to attend, and it was quite remarkable how much local bonhomie was expressed in German that evening.

We managed a short tour of the Lake District on the last day when the weather was less settled, including a brief visit to the Training Centre at Derwent Hill, due to Frank's able piloting of a full minibus over Honister Pass, and here I must pay tribute to Frank's sterling work as chauffeur and commissariat manager.

The Meet was a great success. Our Swiss friends certainly enjoyed it and when they left London by train many personal friendships had developed. I am sure some will want to come again, and I hope therefore that a further link has been forged in our long tradition with Switzerland. I feel privileged to have been asked to be the Meet Leader.

The following is a free translation of an article which appeared in the September issue of Les Alpes. Michel Minois, one of the Swiss party, describes his impressions of English climbing.

After a good night's rest and a real English breakfast we forgot our fatigue from the journey and prepared for our first climb on British soil. The approach march was through fields in which grazed countless sheep. The mild weather surprised us - it made for a warm walk. Passing the sheep we looked further and admired the walls which separated the fields; about one and a half metres high they were made of stones piled one on another without cement, and they extended for kilometres. Soon we came to the foot of Great Gable. Our British friends organised the ropes according to abilities. I climbed with Claud and one of the English. He started up a slanting crack and left a thread belay at the top. Pitons were notable by their absence and to safeguard himself our leader inserted two nuts in a crack and then passed the obstacle in good style. Shortly after the leader passed the belaying nuts they were pulled out and fell into our hands thereby eliminating the recovery problem.

The leader having reached the stance Claud and I followed. The rock was good and gave pleasant climbing. The route was short and soon we rejoined our friends who had climbed as impressive crack—Innominate Crack. We also climbed another easier route before stopping to eat.

Next we attempted a more serious route. In company with Dennis (Gray), his son Andrew and Giovanni we approached Tophet Wall. After Dennis and Giovanni had climbed the first pitch we were able to start. Andrew climbed that first pitch with ease and speed which made me wonder. I began in my turn—the start is difficult (fifth degree). It is a polished slab and a slanting crack; at the stance there was no piton. This style of climbing without pitons disconcerted us at first but by the end of the week we were quite at home with the technique. The route continued with a long ascending traverse. On the right the scene was that of a large climbing school. The view which opened beneath my feet was memorable. We were approaching the end of the climb. I could not see my partner and Andrew called to me to come on. This last pitch was very exposed. At the top we recoiled the rope and then went down a rocky gully to regain our starting point.

We then passed under the face of Great Gable where we saw several of our Swiss party finishing their climbs. They rejoined us later. On Sunday everybody climbed to the summit of Scafell the highest point in England (979m.)

The rock climbs completed were:

Saturday (Great Gable)

Innominate Crack (VS)
Kern Knotts Crack (VS)
Kern Knotts Chimney Main (D)
Kern Knotts Chimney West (VD)
Tophet Wall (S)
Needle Ridge (D)
Napes Needle (VD)
Arrow Head (D)
Abbey Buttress (VD)

Sunday (Scafell)

Jones Direct (S)
Hopkinson's Chimney (D)
Slingsby's Chimney (D)
Dual Face Buttress (VD)

Monday (Yewbarrow)

Zigzag (VS)
Gargoyle (VS)
Bowderdale Climb (S)
Central Crack (S)
Central Chimney (VD)
Cunning Crack (S)
Corner Climb (VD)

Tuesday (Pillar)

Vandal (VS)
Appian Way (S)
S.W. by W. Climb (VS)
S.W. Climb (VS)
N.W. Climb (VS)
Grooved Wall (VS)
New West (D)

COOKS

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- * **6 to 20 June:** Constance Spry tour to Northern Greece. £199
- * **2 to 19 September:** Pyrenees Adventure. £198
- * **18 May to 13 June:** Climbing in the Kulu Valley. £295
- * **2 September to 2 October:** Karakoram Adventure. £445
- * **24 October to 23 November:** Everest and Annapurna. £495 & £480

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ALPINE MEET 1973

Graham Dmiels

The Alpine Meet began as the brilliant sunshine of the preceding fortnight continued and the party gathered with feelings of expected triumphs. Paul French and his party had as usual stolen a march in fitness and in actuality and were already bronzed enough to go home happy a fortnight hence even if it rained solidly for the whole meet. For a lot of us Saas Almagell was a revelation in that it had grown greatly since former visits but unlike other similar spots it had retained a relatively unspoilt appearance. The Hotel Portjengrat where we stayed is probably the largest hotel and it certainly has the best position overlooking the town square on one side and the glacier torrent on the other and these together ensured a pleasant open aspect.

The possible climbs and walks had been planned and publicised by John Whyte long before the meet commenced and we knew our first sweat would be up the Melig. This short walk was accomplished in good order with the previously mentioned French party distinguishing themselves by the ease of their ascent. David Riddell distinguished himself in a different manner by leaving his breeches on the summit. Some unkind souls said it was an advanced ploy to provide an excuse for avoiding greater excursions later in the meet but that seemed too cheeky to be true.

Further fitness was gained the following day when a large party followed the delightful path to the Antronapass. Most stopped on the pass and gazed into Italy but David Cutforth, his two sons and Ernst Sondheimer continued up the ridge towards the Latelhorn. They returned to the hotel a lot later but triumphant. Then came the first proper climbs from the Weissmies Hut. Ropes ascended the Laquinhorn and Fletschorn individually and the Whyte men (Peter and John) together with Hamish Brown, John Thorne and Fritz Anthamatten distinguished themselves by completing the traverse of both peaks. Next day while Frank Palmer and John Coales climbed the Jagigrat the main party in three ropes traversed the Weissmies and descended via the Zwischbergenpass to the Almagelleralp. The ascent was straightforward if a little slow and the main excitement came when Otto Stoller insisted that we cross the summit snow ridge quickly as the clouds were thickening rapidly and a few peals of thunder were heard in the distance. The thrill of an electric storm was denied us however and we ran down the rocks and the steep snow slope and then slogged on to Almagelleralp.

The Portjengrat was the next objective and those who had missed out on the Weissmies came up from the valley and the party, strengthened by another guide, started early for the hill. The large party with many ropes and many rope leaders and with personnel of very mixed climbing abilities led to a remarkably confused climb. The party succeeded in overcoming the main initial difficulties of the ridge but as time ran out escaped down a side ridge.



This climb brought to an end the first week's climbing and as it turned out also brought to an end the good weather. Maurice Freeman had a very wet day on which to lead a party on the high level path from Gspon to Saas Grund. The chair lift from Stalden to Gspon was voted the best value of its kind in Switzerland and even on such a gloomy day the high level path was rewarded with good views. The meet was fortunate in having Arthur Bell now removed from his more remote ecclesiastical duties in Athabasca to Cambridge in the party and he conducted a short service in the television lounge of the hotel on Sunday.

The need for more climbing had to be satisfied however and parties went to the Britannia hut which is now an easy exercise with the choice of two cable cars. Those who chose the longer path under the Mittaghorn were rewarded with the sight of many chamois close to the path. A large party was due to climb the Strahlhorn next day but it was snowing heavily at 0300 hrs. and most of us turned over thankfully and slept on. Later the day brightened up and Otto Stoller took us onto the glacier for crevasse rescue practice. When the ice-axe belay came out we photographers positioned to record the exercise had visions of Peter Whyte disappearing more than the intended five metres into the large crevasse chosen but a quick lunge by Otto saved the day (and Peter).

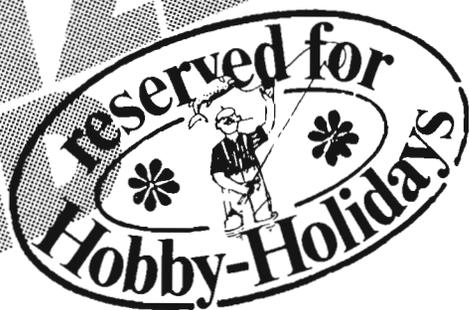
Again the next day the weather in the early hours was doubtful and we slept on only to be wakened at 0600 hrs. with cries of 'Come on the day is now good!' We circled across the glacier to the north and then climbed steeply up deep soft snow to attain the north east ridge of the Allalinhorn. Fritz Anthamatten and his rope chose a rather icy route which took a long time and thereafter in fairly soft snow the party made its way in cloud to the summit in a new all time record of seven hours. The descent was very different as we found a well trodden path leading all the way down to the Feejoch and we reached the Langfluh in two hours to enable us to catch the last cable car down.

The Allalinhorn was the last serious peak ascended by the meet as a whole. The guides led small parties over the Dri Hornli which was also climbed by Frank Palmer and Keith Hindell shortly before they climbed the Sonningrat. Elsewhere in the meet Hamish Brown and other campers climbed guideless most of the same peaks as the hotel squad. Throughout the meet was most capably organised by John Whyte who seemed to know not only what people were doing but also what they were going to do next. The financial records were kept straight by John Coales and only his infinite patience could have coped with the fluctuating exchange rates and fluctuating numbers on each climb and in each hut. In all a most enjoyable and successful meet.

The large number of people staying in the hotel to attend the meet and the camping contingent down the valley at Saas Grund showed that the Club Alpine Meet continues to be more popular each year. As a result the Alpine Meet is to be officially run on a two-tier basis in 1974 with a guided, hotel based, traditional meet and also an unguided pension based meet.

Approaching the Summit of the Weissmies Photo: E. Sondheimer

SWITZER-
LANITZER-



*Please contact your Travel Agent or the
Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street,
London W1V 3HG, Tel. 01-734 1921*

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES 1973

The very reason for its existence ensured that the A.B.M.S.A.C. had firm European ties long before our political masters decided only recently that it was time to join hands across the Channel. In the course of this year the Club has seen contacts with Dutch climbers in Skye and Swiss climbers in Wasdale on one of our own meets.

Another contact which may prove to be of more lasting moment to members of the A.B.M.S.A.C. was the visit of our President, Derek Lambley, to the 110th Anniversary gathering of the S.A.C. in Lausanne. On this trip Derek met outgoing and incoming officers of the S.A.C. Central Committee. He was able to inform them of our plans to establish our own hut in the Lake District. He also took the opportunity to advise them that the recent increase in value of the Swiss franc vis-a-vis the English pound made the subscription of English members to the S.A.C. a very poor buy for English climbers who could only visit the Swiss mountains for a short annual summer holiday. He advised the Swiss that this fact would undoubtedly lead to a rapid drop in English members that would probably lead to the extinction of the A.B.M.S.A.C. The only answer is a reduced subscription for British members and the A.B.M.S.A.C. Committee is most anxious that this should be achieved without delay.

The hut in the Lake District is of course the most tangible result of the Committee's endeavours over the last few years. For many years the only meets organised by the A.B.M.S.A.C. were the Alpine Meet in the summer and the Easter Meet at various places in Britain. Both were traditionally held in comfortable hotels which were too expensive for many members and which provided the wrong atmosphere to encourage new and generally younger members of the Club. The Committee appreciated this problem and in the late sixties under the guidance of Peter Ledebor a more informal programme of weekend meets was launched. These meets were usually held in climbing club huts and immediately proved popular. As a result a new spirit and a more active club has been evolved that aspires to become a major climbing club in the British Isles. A base for such an operation is clearly required in the hills and so the idea of acquiring accommodation for use as a climbing hut was born. The desirability of such a hut was canvassed to members in a questionnaire. Over 200 members replied and of these over 90% favoured the hut idea.

The Committee took this favourable response as the go-ahead and after a few false starts the Patterdale Parish Rooms were located. It is hoped that if the lease is successfully negotiated the property will be converted without delay. With hut accommodation in the Lake District the desirability of Club membership would be enhanced and members would feel that they could have value for their subscription every year.



Northern Dinner Meet Weekend.

Photo. W. Comstive

Association Climbing Meets

The first meet of the year was led by Bill Neate and those attending mostly stayed at Beetham Cottage a Fell and Rock Climbing Club Hut in Patterdale.

By chance this turned out to be possibly the best weekend of a very poor winter, climbingwise, with a fair amount of snow and excellent weather. Among other things, various parties tramped the High Street range and also tackled the Helvellyn edges and gullies, while some achieved skiing as well.

On Saturday evening, at dinner at the Glenridding Hotel, the President, other members and guests, forty-four in all, welcomed Dennis Gray, the BMC National Officer, whose speech was greatly appreciated, including a song to guitar accompaniment by his wife. It was good to note that many of those present had felt it worthwhile to travel considerable distances, at a difficult time of year, and from points as far apart as London and Edinburgh.

The Easter Meet in Wales comprised two sections. Maurice Bennett led one group from an Hotel in Betws-y-Coed and John Fairlie another from his cottage in Nant Peris. Both Meets had one thing in common—the atrocious weather. It started cold and bright. The cold continued but the brightness did not. The Nant Peris party managed some climbs on the Llanberis

cliffs in rather unpleasant conditions but apart from this ridges were walked in weather which varied between bad and worse. Even a walk up Moel Siabod in semi-blizzard had its moments.

On the Saturday evening the two Meets and various other members who were climbing in the area got together for a very good dinner at the Hotel which was enjoyed by all. Afterwards the proceedings were enlivened by John Fairlie who produced his parlour pipes and regaled us with many Scottish airs. Our thanks are due to David and John Turner (the new landlords of the Glan Aber at Betws who have taken over from our old friend Rupert Yates) for the way in which they looked after our party, put on such an excellent meal on the Saturday evening and coped with the temporary take-over bid by the Association on the Saturday evening without referring it to the Monopolies Commission. We are also most grateful to John and Lisbet Fairley for making their cottage at Nant Peris available to members and for running the Meet there.

Peter Ledeboer led the first international meet of the A.B.M.S.A.C. at Wasdale at the end of May and it is fully recorded elsewhere in the Journal.

In June a week-end meet was organised by John Kemsley in north-west Yorkshire. On the Saturday a party of 12 walked to the summit of Ingleborough via the Norber erratics and returned by Simon Fell and Austwick Beck to enjoy a good dinner at the Gamecock Inn at Austwick. On the Sunday the commercialised walks beside the rivers at Ingleton were proved to be worth the entrance fee and the meet ended with visits to White Scar Cave and to the limestone pavement at Scar Close.

The Alpine Meet was the most successful for years and John Whyte the leader is to be congratulated.

At the last minute Bill Comstive was asked to lead the October meet by Walt Unsworth, whose wife was convalescing after an operation. There were no problems whatever as Walt, in his usual meticulous way, had laid everything on and it was only left to Bill to see that all went well with the climbing and walking parties.

The weather on both days was fine but rather humid, with some sunshine on the Saturday. On the Saturday the main walking party ascended Pavey Ark by Jacks Rake and from here we continued round over Harrison Stickle, Pike O'Stickle, Rossett Crags, Esk Pike, Bowfell and down by the Band. Climbing parties were out on Pavey Ark and some of the hard men motored over to Eskdale and climbed on Esk Buttress. Another small walking party did the Fairfield Horseshoe. On Saturday evening, as usual in convivial company, we all sat down to dinner at the White Lion at Ambleside. Sunday was rather dull with misty conditions but no rain. The main walking party went on a traverse of the high Tilberthwaite Fells from Little Carrs to Wetherlam. A smaller walking party was out on the Eastern Fells and the hard men climbed on Gimmer whilst lesser mortals visited Scout and Tarn Crags. Again a most successful and enjoyable meet and our thanks to the Fell & Rock and Wayfarers for their hospitality and Shelter at Rawhead and Robertson Lamb Huts.

London Lectures

The monthly series of lectures followed the usual pattern and were usually attended by 30-40 people. The Kodak strike made it impossible to show slides of the Alpine Meet and at short notice Wing Commander Pymm came along to speak on a ski traverse of Lapland.

Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held immediately prior to the Annual Dinner and the following officers were elected:

As Vice-President

P. S. Boulter

In Place of

M. Bennett

As Honorary Solicitor

M. Bennett

Lord Tangley

For the Committee

D. Abbott

J. P. Ledebuer

J. S. Whyte

O. St. John

Prof. E. Sondheimer

J. Fairley

After some discussion which centred on the amount of information made available to members the following resolutions were passed:

1. The Committee be empowered to proceed with negotiations, and subject to adequate financial safeguards, to conclude a Lease with the Carlisle Diocesan Board.
2. The Committee be empowered to appoint Trustees for the management of the Hut, such Trustees to be suitably indemnified by the Club.

The Annual Dinner

The Connaught Rooms, Kingsway, London were again the venue for the Annual Dinner on 21st November, 1973. The guests of the Association were:

Dr. J. A. Iselin (Swiss Minister Plenipotentiary)
A. Blackshaw (President, British Mountaineering Council)
Sir Douglas Busk (Vice President, Alpine Club)
Miss M. Darvall (President, Ladies Alpine Club)
R. Serex (First Secretary, Swiss Embassy)
G. Unseld (Swiss National Tourist Office)
J. S. Whitehouse (Fell & Rock Climbing Club)

The after-dinner speeches followed the usual pattern and this year the toast of the Swiss Confederation was proposed by Wynne Jeudwine. He used, amusingly, Noel Coward's Uncle Harry and Aunt Mary to illustrate his feelings for Switzerland. Overall he was anxious that the Swiss should keep their country free from the worst excesses of modern developments.

Doctor Iselin replied to the toast and explained that for the second time the Club Annual Dinner had clashed with a diplomatic reception at Buckingham Palace which the Ambassador had felt obliged to attend. The reception, while unfortunate for the Ambassador, had enabled Dr. Iselin to attend the A.B.M.S.A.C. dinner on several occasions. These happy occasions had enabled him to find out what the mysterious letters A.B.M.S.A.C. stood for—they had also made him realise that Englishmen in general nowadays, did not, unlike Byron, regard the Swiss as brutes.

After a brief interval our President, Derek Lambley, proposed the toast of the Association. He had been indisposed last year and he again thanked Maurice Bennett for standing in for him on that occasion. He briefly reviewed the work of the Committee led by Frank Schweitzer and Wendell Jones. The decision to negotiate the lease for the hut in Patterdale would he hoped be an incentive to increase our activities at home. He himself had been the guest of the S.A.C. at their 110th anniversary celebrations at Lausanne. He had taken the opportunity to press for a country membership of the S.A.C. for British members because the movement in exchange rates had made the subscription hopelessly uneconomic. John Whyte proposed the toast of the Guests and Kindred Clubs and Sir Douglas Busk replied.

The Library

During the year we have continued to add, though on a less extensive scale than last year, to the range of modern guide books, and it is hoped that they may be kept reasonably up to date, especially those in English. For other acquisitions we are grateful to the Rev. M. C. Crowdy and to Mr. M. N. Clarke, who have presented books to the library.

The library possesses a large number of duplicates of *Les Alpes*. Any members who may be in need of back issues to complete their sets can probably be accommodated.

Obituary

LORD TANGLEY

Edwin Savory Herbert was born in June 1899. He served in the R.N.V.R. as a signalman in World War I and shortly after the war qualified as a solicitor. His legal career was outstanding; he became senior partner in his company and President of the Law Society in 1956. During World War II he was Director General of the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department. He was created a Knight Bachelor in 1943; created K.B.E. in 1956 and became a life peer in 1963.

In addition to his busy professional career he was always a keen climber and became an administrative mountaineer of distinction. His service as Honorary Solicitor to the A.B.M.S.A.C. for 40 years is without parallel. He was Honorary Secretary of the Alpine Club from 1935 to 1940 and President of that Club from 1953 to 1955. He was Chairman of the joint committee of the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club which managed the 1953 Everest expedition. In this position he held the balance between the different interests and as the climax drew nearer his guidance was invaluable as it was later in the post-expedition period with its world-wide programme of lectures etc. He was also the principal architect of the Mount Everest Foundation established by the expedition's sponsors from the proceeds of lectures, books and other activities. In the last 20 years the Foundation has enabled a steady stream of young people, and some not so young, to climb and explore and carry out scientific work in remote mountain regions.

It is with regret that we also record the deaths of the following members:

A. Clapham, Sir Edward Windley K.C.M.G.

NORTH WALES ASSOCIATION

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SECRETARY: K. C. GORDON, B. M. C. GUIDE

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ENQUIRIES TO: SECRETARY,
15 CILFODAN,
BETHESDA,
CAERNS.

ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS 1972-73

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ended 30th September, 1973

	1973	1972
<i>Income from Members:</i>		
Subscriptions (Note 1)	566	878
Entrance Fees	44	62
Life Membership Credit	47	—
Profit on Sale of Ties	—	4
Insurance Commissions	22	—
	679	944
 <i>Less Expenditure:</i>		
Hire of Rooms	100	100
Journal (Note 2)	372	349
Library	18	—
Printing, Postage etc. SNT0	123	147
Printing, Postage etc. Association	56	148
Insurance	21	6
Entertainment	40	37
Visit of Swiss Climbers	113	—
BMC Subscriptions	80	82
Lecture Expenses	15	46
Sundries	16	(7)
Depreciation, New Projector	33	34
Profit on Sale of old Projector	—	(39)
	987	903
	(308)	41
 <i>Add Investment Income:</i>		
Association Investments (Gross)	106	120
Building Society Interest	62	27
Bank Deposit Interest	—	2
Premium on Redemption of Bonds	—	6
	168	155
<i>Less: Taxation (Note 3)</i>	40	50
	128	105
<i>(Excess of Expenditure over Income)</i>		
<i>1972 Income over Expenditure</i>	£ (180)	£ 146

BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September 1973

<i>Fixed Assets</i> (Note 4)	1973	1972
Projector (N.S. Finzi Bequest)	99	132
Equipment at Swiss Tourist Office	1	1
<i>INVESTMENTS</i> at cost (Note 5)	1,872	1,872
 <i>CURRENT ASSETS</i>		
Stock of Ties at cost	42	9
Debtors	113	223
Cash on Deposit - Bank	1	1
Building Society	989	1,104
Cash at Bank	150	60
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,295	1,397
	<hr/>	<hr/>
 <i>Deduct: CURRENT LIABILITIES</i>		
Creditors	154	101
Subscriptions in Advance	167	178
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	321	279
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>NET CURRENT ASSETS</i>	974	1,118
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£ 2,946	£ 3,123
	<hr/>	<hr/>
 <i>SOURCES OF FINANCE:</i>		
<i>LIFE MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNT</i>	903	900
 <i>ACCUMULATED REVENUE ACCOUNT</i>		
Balance at 30th September, 1971	2,123	
Less: Excess of Expenditure over Income	(180)	
	<hr/>	
	1,943	2,123
<i>N.S. FINZI BEQUEST</i>	100	100
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£ 2,946	£ 3,123
	<hr/>	<hr/>

I have examined the books and vouchers of the Association and report that the above Accounts are in accordance therewith.

19th November, 1973

Signed A. H. Hart, F.C.A., Hon. Auditor.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Subscriptions

Income from this source is made up as follows:	1973	1972
Subscriptions—Town Members	317	332
Subscriptions—Country Members	363	381
(Deficiency on Flat rate of subscription levied against the sterling equivalent of subscriptions due to the Swiss Sections of the S.A.C.)	(114)	171
1972 Surplus		
Miscellaneous Items	—	(6)
	<u>£ 566</u>	<u>£ 878</u>

2. Journal

Cost of the journal is made up as follows:

Printing	333	366
Despatch costs and other expenses	54	51
	<u>387</u>	<u>417</u>
<i>Less: Advertising Revenue</i>	15	68
	<u>£ 372</u>	<u>£ 349</u>

3. Taxation

The Association is liable to Corporation Tax on its income from outside sources.

4. Fixed Assets

	Cost	Depreciation to date	
New Projector (N. S. Finzi Bequest)	166	67	99
Equipment at Swiss National Tourist Office	80	79	1

5. Investments

These are as follows:-

- £1,000 4½% Agricultural Mortgage Corporation Deb. Stock 1977/82
- 1,080 Brunner Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p.
- 710 London Scottish American Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p.

Cost of these holdings was £1,872. Aggregate market value at 30th September, 1973 was £2,202 (1972 £2,528).

MEMBERS' CLIMBS

P. S. Boulter

In early January we started our mountain year on skis. With a surgical friend, Gordon Gill, we stayed for a week at Lenzeheide and spent most of the time off-piste and getting on to the top of several of the local hills.

In the first half of April we were back in Switzerland again—this time in Zermatt where we arrived in time for the best snowfall of the winter. On the way up from Visp our hearts fell as we saw a succession of off-brown fields; only the upper pistes at Zermatt were open. 48 hours of blizzard solved all our snow problems and on the last day of the holiday we were the first party up the Breithorn for a couple of weeks on a brilliant and intensely cold day with views down to Monte Viso and with Mont Blanc apparently in the middle foreground. Various week-ends in the Spring and Summer took us to the Lake District and Wales.

Our summer holiday had to be early to fit in with our daughters and their husbands and this turned out to be quite providential as the weather was very good. Based on the house above Les Houches of the legendary Gilles and Andrée Souchon Jossieron we did a series of days varying from carrying our granddaughter up the Prarion to the traverse of the Aiguille du Tour. Peter Ledebor was with us for most of the time and his Breton beret and cigarette adorned many of my photographs (including some still immured at Kodaks at the time of writing). Other follies were a family ascent of the Wildstrubel with the first recorded game of cricket on the Glacier de la Plaine Morte. P. L. demonstrated some very fine ace bowling and this deserves immortality either at the A.C. or the M.C.C. The flowers at this time of the year were a revelation and as it was the earliest holiday we had ever had in the High Alps we realised how meagre is the August and September show in comparison. The last day, a short one, just allowed us to make a quick dash up the Petite Verte. The snow, weather and views were all superb but it was just a bit frustrating that we chose the same day as did two 'collectives'.

When the European Society for Experimental Surgery chose Garmisch for its joint meeting in September there were a few very satisfied members and the Zugspitze was well patronised. I chose the Alpspitze for a solitary climb and after a misty start had a delightful day.

A lecture tour in America in October was preceded by a week in Colorado. As soon as we could Mary and I went from Boulder at 5,280 feet to the Trail Ridge at 12,200 feet. A 22 hour previous day and a rapid height gain caught up with Mary and I was surprised that I could be as energetic as I was on that first day. We settled at Granby for four nights spending the days at 12,500 to 13,800 feet on tops in the Rocky Mountain National Park and the adjacent Continental Divide. The winter snow cover had started, views were long and conditions and our acclimatisation perfect. The U.S.

Geological Survey maps are easy to get, very clear and reasonably priced—there is only one snag, it is usually easier to get 1-25, 000 sheets than 1-62, 500 ones and in a big range like the Rockies this means a lot of maps. I can recommend Robert Orme's 'Guide to the Colorado Mountains' published by the Colorado Mountain Club, it is a very good index of a lifetime's climbing chances. We only scratched the surface, Specimen Mountain (an old volcano), Sundance Mountain, Mount Flora, Rabbits Ears Peak and Stanley Mountain were climbed and the tundra vegetation was once or twice relieved by the American Blue Gentian (a variant of the Bell Gentian). The remains of Arctic Gentians were seen but they were well past their best. A trip over Independence Pass by way of the old silver mining capital of Leadville to Aspen brought us into 48 hours of real hard snow which closed the passes and sent us scurrying north to the lower mountains on the Wyoming border. This coincided with the start of the Colorado deer hunting season and we felt a bit vulnerable without protective red 'Dayglo' waistcoats and hats. The last day was spent on the ridge on the Continental Divide above the Berthoud Pass and was pluperfect. There was more snow and longer views even than we had experienced at the beginning of the week. For anyone thinking of the Rockies can I say what a splendid treat we found them. Only once did we see anyone else on the mountains. The solitude was impressive and the climbing easy—rather like the Cairngorms elevated by 10, 000 feet. The cost of motel rooms and food was very much less than we have paid in Europe in recent years. If cheap excursion fares across the Atlantic continue and as long as one avoids the American holiday season, one can have a magnificent wilderness holiday in high mountains for a most reasonable outlay.

Hamish Brown

An Eagle Ski Club training course at Easter with the first week based on Otto's Schwarenbach Inn above Kandersteg. Days of training in ice and snow craft, crevasse search and rescue, ski-ing roped—even abseiling mit ski! Tours also to the Gemmi, Danbenhorn and out superbly from the Roter-totz down the Uschene Tal. The second week should have been in the main Oberland but we stuck at Kleine Scheidegg with big snowfalls and only managed local tours: Manlichen, Tschuggen, etc. Lots more technical training, snow-holing, swotting up weather, first aid and other papers, sitting an exam, practical rope tests—and five out of sixteen ultimately received their high altitude certificate. An excellent course for climbers who also ski. Details of this annual event can be obtained from Mrs. J. Reid, Chalet Bär-gsunne, 3777 Soñanenmöser, Berne.

1973 saw many long expeditions in Scotland, particularly in the summer. Before heading for the Alps a resignation meant scope for freelancing in matters mountaineering. I camped with others during the Meet and as it came to a close went off over the Antrona Pass on a big descent into an incredibly beautiful, tough, wild Italy. Road reached at Antronapiana after 11 hours out and night at Villadossola before returning, tourist fashion,

over the Monte Moro. A return to the Michabel Hut yielded the Nadelhorn, Ulrichshorn, Balfrinhorn and Bigehorn, with a five-figure footage of descent to St. Niklaus. Penny had her rock introduction on the Egginer and then the squad flitted to Otto's. Hospitality at the Schwarenbach was liberal to say the least! However the next day the classic traverse of the Balmhorn—Altels was accomplished, despite Hamish curling up like death on the glacier. Gaining height seemed to cure things! A trip to Kleine Scheidegg for the Eiger ended in a spectacular thunderstorm; but in the discovery of a superb 'hut' accomodation attached to the big hotel. Like a barn outside, inside gave showers and heating and all mod. cons, which along with breakfast in the hotel, cost 12 S.F.

An autumn visit to Ethiopia is planned and courses over the winter and an expedition for several months in 1974 all pile up in rapid succession. Soon time for the Alps again.

Alan Burke

Four members of the Castle Mountaineering Club, Richard Colquitt, Paul and Barry Goddland and myself set off for the Pennine Alps at the end of July. The first day was very hot and sunny and we plodded slowly up to the Mountet Hut laden with three days supply of food (and drink!) We all found the going hard despite the excellent path (complete with fixed ropes) but the magnificent scenery more than compensated for the hard work. The view from the Mountet Hut must surely be amongst the finest in the Alps.

Bad weather arrived in the afternoon and remained with us for a week. We attempted the Trifhorn but were defeated by the new snow, crossed to the Rothorn route, ascended to its ridge and traversed Blanc de Moming. The next day we descended to Zinal where the evening was spent celebrating the Swiss National Day. Speeches in the village square were followed by a procession of children all carrying most exquisite paper lanterns and later, a tremendous fireworks display. Much free wine was distributed from a local hostelry. Altogether a good evening.

At the start of our second week we moved to Reid, a small village above St. Niklaus and once again set off with three days supply of food, this time to the Bordier Hut. This is an excellent hut, out of the way, but well placed for five good peaks. We did the Balfrinhorn on the next day then Paul and I ascended the Dürrenhorn (4034 m.). The crux, two rope lengths on 45-50° ice about 600 feet above the bergschrund, was very fine. Our next objectives were the Ulrichshorn and Nadelhorn. Paul, who was suffering from severe backache waited on the summit of the Ulrichshorn whilst I soloed the N.E. ridge of the Nadelhorn. We then descended to St. Niklaus. A long day! Two days later we climbed the Alphubel and Feekopf in perfect weather descending to Täsch the same day.

The good weather was obviously going to last so we bought food for a three day stay at the Dom hut and began to pack our sacks again. A violent storm immediately developed and one inch of rain fell in ten minutes reducing the campsite to a shambles. The next morning was fine again and we left

Randa at 8.00 for the Dom Hut. This well known hut slog is in fact a pleasant walk and we reached the hut in three hours. The next day everyone was feeling 'off' but as the weather was fine I soloed the Dom (4545m.). A very fine viewpoint. Arriving back at the hut it was great to find Paul much better and eager to climb. What was it to be? The Nadelgrat or the Täschhorn by the Kin face?

We settled for the Nadelgrat and traversed the ridge the next day. A magnificent expedition involving four 4,000 metre peaks; we had excellent weather until the Lenzspitze when a storm developed and visibility became bad. We missed the correct route down the ridge and descended a deceptively easy looking snow slope. It turned out to be twenty dangerous rope lengths on chossy snow/ice including a Tyrolean over a gully filled with moving sludge and a twelve foot leap over a crevasse before we reached the glacier. Then followed a tremendous hailstorm and we skated back to the hut on ice ball bearings. A truly great day.

This was my fourteenth 'go' in the Alps and my first as a member of the S.A.C. Suddenly the hut guardians have become considerate, courteous, helpful and kind. I shall continue to wear my badge in a prominent position.

Our total 'bag' of twelve peaks including eight four thousanders has encouraged me to consider attempting all the four thousand metre alpine peaks, particularly those not easy of access. I would be most interested to hear from other (mature!) alpinists with the same idea.

Steve Chadwick

My last year based in Plymouth; climbed in Cornwall and repeated favourites on Baggy Point including Pink Void for the third time. Climbed on Lower Sharpnose with Keith Darbyshire and repeated a fine climb of his. Did some new routes around the north Cornwall/Devon border mainly of local interest only, the best being V.S. and H.V.S. routes of 210 ft. each.

Summer was spent on having a honeymoon and now I'm finally based back in Scotland. Spent a fine day on Etive Slabs a few weeks ago trying to find 'Dan' 1000 ft. V.S. and ended the day with 'Hammer' which was a superb route. Two weeks later back in Glen Coe with Ian Duckworth we did 'Big Top'. A brilliant route combining continuously hard climbing (to me anyway) with an incredible position. From all the stances the rope hung well free of the rock.

It was a poor winter. Soloed most of the easy stuff in Coire an t-Sneachda including Aladdins's Couloir, Aladdin's Mirror, Central Gully, The Runnel and Spiral Gully where the exit was a 'bit' awkward. Spent Easter by Lochnagar camped by the Loch with Tony Mercer and did Raeburn's Gully as a warm up and then got stormed off Polyphemus a week later.

I now spend days climbing out from Dunkeld and Glen Clova and waiting for winter.

With my sister Ann I travelled by car to Belap below the Aletsch Glacier. Although we had explored the Valais quite thoroughly over a number of years including many of the lesser peaks and some of the standard 'vier-tausenders' we had never done a proper gletschertour. I had long nurtured an ambition to complete the high level route from Gletsch to Brig and this seemed to be a favourable opportunity since Belap would make a most convenient end point. I elected to attempt the traverse from N. E. to S.W. as this seems topographically the easier direction. The path which runs along the north bank of Oberaarsee ends at the abbreviated tongue of the Oberaar-gletscher. This part of the day would have been quite pleasant (the path is virtually horizontal) but for the depressing effect of our heavy packs.

The Oberaargletscher proved to be relatively straightforward and only the middle section which was heavily crevassed caused any trouble. We had been warned that due to the lack of snow during winter snow bridges throughout the Alps were likely to be thin. This was certainly the case on the Oberaar though no doubt conditions were aggravated for us by the advanced stage of the season and the lateness of the hour. On several occasions I experienced that special sinking feeling known only to those who have stood on a suspect snow bridge one eye gazing into the blue-green depths on the left and the other on the similar view to the right. On the upper section of the glacier we had merely to follow the usual rutted track and eventually we gained the Oberaarjoch and from there quickly reached the hut arriving at 17.45 hrs.

Next day the weather was again fine and we had only the short trip to the Finsteraarhorn hut before us but in fact it occupied us for some 7½ hours. We had chosen to go by the Gemslücke on the advice of the A.C. guide which deems this route 'no harder and more sporting' than that via the Ratlock corner.

The crossing of the Studerfirn and ascent to the col was an easy snow walk enlivened only by the close attention paid us by a squadron of Swiss Air Force Vampires. The descent to the Fieschergletscher was a different matter. No doubt conditions here as in many other parts of the Alps have altered drastically over the last few years and where we expected to find snow slopes practically all the way to the top we actually found rubble all the way to the bottom. The first 200' of descent is incredibly steep, is composed of loose shale and is threatened by stone fall from the Finsteraar Rothorn cliffs. Eventually one reaches the top of a buttress split by three gullies the central one leading easily but hairily to the screes below. A belated lunch taken on the moraines of the Fieschergletscher was followed by a quick and pleasant walk to the Finsteraarhorn hut.

Another short day followed since we had only to cross the Grünhornlücke to Konkordia hut. It is worth noting the drastic changes in landscape which have taken place since the production of sheet 264 of the C.N.S. The Fieschergletscher opposite the hut is now heavily crevassed though in September the crevasses were open and we crossed easily. We reached the Grünhornlücke in good time but there was no joy to be had in lingering in the

cloud on the col and we soon departed down the Grüneggfirn towards Konkordia. The length and steepness of the ladders giving access to the Konkordia still come as something of a surprise to the uninitiated.

A walk straight down the Grosser Aletschgletscher to reach Belap remained so we had hopes of a quick trip home. We experienced no difficulty in the upper section but just short of the Eggishorn we entered an area of crevasses of unbelievable complexity. I spent a long while trying to force a way through but finally was forced to give up, retreat out of the crevasse band and make for the Eggishorn bank which we reached three hours after first entering the crevasses. I knew the folly of trying to force a route down the bank of a glacier but there seemed to be no alternative if we wished to complete our route. It proved as difficult as I had expected. By 1800 hrs. we had only reached the area below Pt. 2315 on the Bettmergrat and since it seemed unlikely that we should be able to get off the glacier before dark if we continued we decided to make for Riederalp.

We reached Riederalp at 2000 hrs., 14 hours after leaving Konkordia. Having had visions of a bivouac in the woods we counted ourselves lucky indeed to find the Hotel Riederfurka open and even luckier to be offered a bed in the dortoir and to be provided with a dinner of unsurpassed excellence.

We completed our trip next day by crossing the Aletsch to Belap via the normal route, accompanied by intermittent rain showers and prolonged storms of Sunday tourists. For us the journey had been an unqualified success if only because it gave us a taste of what mountaineering must have been like for the pioneers.

W. A. Comstive

On only two occasions last winter was the snow in the Lakes sufficiently stable to enjoy good gully climbing. There was plenty of snow on the occasion of the Norther Dinner Meet in February but it was mostly powder and had not consolidated sufficiently to allow serious climbing. Stuart Beare, David Lintott and I did the round from High Street to Grey Crag on a perfect day with fine views all round.

Easter was again spent on Arran in company with friends and their family. We traversed all the main peaks with the exception of Caisteal Abhail. Concorde chose to roar down Boom Alley just as my companion and I were negotiating one of the trickiest parts of the A'Chir ridge. It really was quite hair raising as we had no idea what it was for a few seconds until the distant roar of jet engines confirmed our suspicions. The power of the sonic boom caused loose stones to clatter down neighbouring gullies.

We spent a week at Alyth on the borders of Perthshire and Angus during the Spring Bank Holiday and Enid and I bagged two outlying Munro's, Mayar and Driesh, at the head of Glen Prosen. What a day that was, not a soul to be seen from leaving the car at Glenprosen Lodge to our return in the evening. Glorious wild moorland country with hardly any paths and the added pleasure of route finding for oneself. We disturbed a large herd of deer when approaching the summit of Mayer but they jumped a fence and

bounded westwards away from the disturbing strangers. Grand country this with fine views northward to the Cairngorms the higher summits and gullies of which still held some large areas of spring snow.

Our prospective Alpine holiday was finally thwarted by our unsuccessful efforts to find a reasonably priced package holiday to take us to an Austrian alpine centre. In the event Enid and I pushed off to Scotland in search of Munros in the highest temperatures to date. We traversed Ben Cruachan, Ben Lui and its satellite Ben-a-Clee. Moving north we had our eye on The Five Sisters of Kintail but somehow the weather contrived to be worse on that side of Glen Shiel so we traversed the ridge of Maol Cheann Dearg. This is a fine group, there are numerous ridges leading up from Glen Cluanie and its a matter of selecting the most convenient in relation to whatever length of day is planned. Again we disturbed a herd of deer near the highest point and another small herd on the way down from Aona-chair Chrith. On the way home a traverse of Carn Mor Dearg and Nevis eluded us as the weather had broken and we retired to Appin to live in comparative comfort for two days before returning home.

In between these excursions Enid and I have attended most F & RCC meets in the Lake District. The A.B.M.S.A.C. meets to Austwick in the Yorkshire Dales and the October meet to Langdale were most enjoyable. On the latter occasion the weather was rather humid but the parties I joined had two good days ridge walking, first on the Langdale Horseshoe and then a traverse of the High Tilberthwaite Fells the following day.

George Cubby

We were a party of four, the others being Eric Cook, John Dumbill, and Angel Vila. Although we had only two weeks in Switzerland during August I think we must have had the best fortnight's weather of the season despite the occasional evening thunderstorm which put down a bit of snow.

Having set up 'base camp' at Zinal we went first for the Mountet Hut from where a traverse was made of the Besso and Blanc de Moming, two members of the party climbed the Trifhorn, and we all turned our attention to the North ridge of the Zinalrothorn. Sickness struck however and I was obliged to turn back; the need for a companion in this retreat unfortunately deprived someone else of the summit and the fact that he had been there before eased my conscience hardly at all. But we did get above the four thousand metre line.

By driving madly from valley to valley we managed the Dent Blanche from the Rossier Hut; the Bishorn from the Tracuit, surely the easiest Four Thousander and a magnificent viewpoint; two of us did the Dom from its hut while the other two rushed up and down the Matterhorn's Hornli their original intention of a traverse having been foiled by snow in the night.

Throughout the holiday I kept thinking of Laurence Binyon's 'Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn'.

Graham Daniels

In the spring I planned with John Dempster a route between Loch Mullardoch and Glen Affric that would see us mop up all unclimbed Munros in the area. When in the first week of June we camped under Carn Eige all was well for one afternoon. Then it rained for days finally driving us from the glen. Result for a whole week—only three new hills.

Later the whole family joined the Alpine Meet in Saas Almagell. I climbed the Weissmies and the Allalinhorn. At other times in the year I joined various A.B.M. and Fell & Rock C.C. meets.

N. M. Davison

Gandschizen. South pillar before the snow arrived and the skis came out. Weekends at Andermatt and Pitzol before returning to England for Christmas and New Year. Weekend with friends in the Steall hut from which Castle Gully, Ben Nevis and some tops behind the hut were climbed. Memorable for the mist seas, sun sets and company.

Late winter and spring spent skiing or ski touring. Kn. Kärfp from the Legler hut. (Glärner alpen). Round tour over the Schonegg Pass to Oberreichenbach and back over the Bannalp pass. One week's skiing at Disentis with wonderful powder snow. Britannia hut—Rimpfischorn, Allalinhorn and Strahlhorn, Adler pass and then down to Zermatt. Lochberg from Göschenalp which was the best tour and the start of the climbing season during ascent of the Diamantstock west ridge. Damma hut. Mosstock and Schacestock east ridge with descent via Dammastock east rib. Salbitzchen east ridge and Meiggelenstock west ridge. Rottal hut, Jungfrau via Rottalgrat. Descent to Grindelwald and over to the Engelhorner hut. Kn. and Gr. Simelistock. Dossen hut. Dossenhorn and Wetterhorn all in a wonderful week.

England—weekend in Lakes, wet of course and a lazy day on Ravenshough, Northumberland.

Dolomites—Vajolet towers. Delago kaute, Stabula via chimney route and Winkler via the original Winkler route. Rosengartenspitz west ridge and down the normal route. Cinque Torre. Torre Englaze, normal. Gross Zinnen. Debonen Kaute.

Blümlisalp hut—Weisse Frau N. W. ridge.

Peter Farrington

After a five month lay off nursing strained ligaments, I managed a few walks on Islay before going to Glencoe in April. Camped down Glen Etive in very mild conditions and walked up Stob na Broige via Llaraig Gartain, Buachaille E.M. via Curved Ridge and Bidean and Stob Coire nan Lochan via Lost Valley. Continued to climb and walk on Islay and Jura until my wife presented me with a son in July. Restarted in September on the Paps of Jura then spent a day on Stanage relearning gritstone technique after a gap of three years.

February: Camping at Mungrisdale village below Blencathra in the Lake District on the Oread Mountaineering Club Meet, over 50 members turned up! Traversed Blencathra on Saturday 3rd Feb. in very poor weather. Two weeks later Margaret and I stayed at 'Glan Dena' Ogwen on a joint meet with Midland Association of Mountaineers. Had fabulous traverse of Glyders and Tryfan in superb snow and ice conditions.

March 3rd: Attended opening of Geoff Hayes Memorial Barn in Chatsworth Park, Derbys. At end of the month we camped in Langdale in atrocious weather.

April 7th: Traverse of the Berwyn Mountains from Llangollen to Bala 25 miles on a great day. Did Lockwoods Chimney with Stuart Bramwell on weekend in the Gwynant and also did climbing in the evenings in Derbyshire.

Easter: Camped at White Sand Bay, Pembrokeshire, despite some rain and very strong winds but we did get a good day's climbing on Easter Monday on the sea cliffs between Solva and Newgales.

May/June: Visited Skye after a lapse of ten years, a nostalgic return to this fabulous island. Although the roads are much improved and there are many more people about, it has still not lost its charm. This was my wife's first visit and the weather was all I'd hoped for. We stayed at Elgol for a few days and then camped for five days at Glenbrittle. It was a great thrill to tread once more on the summits of Blaven and Sgurr Na Gillean, my favourite British mountains. Later in the week we traversed 4 tops on the main ridge, again in glorious weather and not a midge in sight! We saw from the moors above Talisker on our last night, the sun sink behind MacLeods Tables and watched a heron fishing in the afterglow, and we both vowed to return as soon as possible to this peaceful land.

July: Camped at Wasdale on the Oread Club Meet and I began to realise what a great summer we were having as Frank Goldsmith and I roasted our way up Arrowhead Ridge on Gable. The sun never relented all weekend.

July/August Zillertal Alps: On the continent however the weather had been just the reverse and as we drove down the autobahn in torrential rain we heard that the snow level was down to 3,000'. Our luck held however and from the first day the skies slowly cleared and the weather steadily improved, until in the second week it was 86° in the shade. Peaks climbed were Mittenock 3072m from Furtschagl Hutte, Berlinerspitze 3273m from Berliner Hutte and Gschollkopf 2039m from Erfurter Hutte, the latter peak being in the Rofan mountains near Peritsau in the Karwendal. All peaks climbed with my wife, Frank Goldsmith and Stuart Bramwell. The hot weather and the lure of our local swimming pool restricted us to these three peaks. In retrospect we should have achieved much more, still it was a grand holiday.

August/September: Four glorious days spent camping, swimming and climbing at Symonds Yat on the President's Meet, including an excellent route on

Wintours Leap with Nat Allen. Later in September, climbs at Crag Lough, Northumberland with Brian Cooke and Jack Ashcroft were enjoyed.

J. Gregson

Arrived Chamonix in August during very unsettled weather. First clearance saw abortive attempt on peaks bordering the Trélatête glacier. A week later started with Spencer Couloir of the Blaitière. From there to Refuge Albert Premier where with my wife I did the traverse of the Char-donnet by the Forbes and west ridges and the Aiguille de Tour. After a brief rest, hoping the weather would hold, we went to the Tête Rousse hut. From there we climbed the north west face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay, descended the east ridge and carried on to the Vallot hut. Next morning we completed the ascent of Mont Blanc and retreated via the Grands Mulets in a thunderstorm.

F. L. Jenkins

New Year: Skiing at Aviemore and Glencoe with J. J. Whitehead, Am Bodach in the Mamores with members of the S.M.C. Meet.

February: Kinder Scout Downfall and Froggatt Edge.

March: Bosigran with Duke of Edinburgh Award party. Climbs on Bosigran Face and Commando Ridge.

Easter: Ski-touring in the Dauphiné with J. Roche and J. J. Whitehead.

August: Dauphiné with General J. L. Moulton and P. A. Brownrigg-Mont Pelvoux, Les Ecrins, Pic de Neige Cordier, Allefroide Orientale, Pic Coolidge, Les Bans, a circuit of Monte Viso, and ascent of Mont Blanc on the way to Switzerland to visit the ABMSAC Meet, where the weather turned bad and we retreated from the Lagginjoch in storm.

November: Clogwyn y Person to Snowdon Summit and descent by Crib Goch, North Buttress, Tryfan, Eastern Buttress of Craig Lloer in a blizzard, with P. A. Brownrigg and I. D. Hilton.

John and Freda Kemsley

Our activities have been limited by a succession of injuries but in April we managed some walks in Central Wales and in June we were on the hills behind Newtonmore.

In August we visited Switzerland with our sights set lower than in former years. An easy day near Arosa gave us a once-in-a-lifetime half-hour with a herd of Ibex that showed no fear of cameras at close range. Then we embarked on a hut to hut tour of the Albula Group, a district chosen for its restauranted huts and its selection of three-thousand-metre peaks that can be climbed without rope and crampons. This proved to be a very suitable choice with easy cross-country routes and interesting mountains, and in six days we walked from Bergun to Lavin via the Kesch Hut, the Grialetsch Hut and the Vereinahaus, and climbed Piz Forun, Chuealphorn, Piz

Grialetsch and Piz Fless. Three hours short of Lavin, however, as we walked down the Val Saglains a stone rolled forward under Freda's foot and caused a fall and a broken right arm. Thus our triumphant tour was transformed into a painful retreat to Chur where good friends provided hospitality and rest to supplement the expertise of the cantonal hospital.

In the autumn four good cross-country days in Glen Clova and at the Langdale Meet left us with hopes that in the future we may again reach some of the higher Alpine summits.

W. Kirstein

January: skiing in the Sierra Nevada (Mammoth) in California.

March-April: skitouring. Peaks—Buffalo, National Park, Zernez. Stellibodenhorn from the Rotondo Hut.

August: East pillar Palu; Fletschhorn with the A.B.M.S.A.C.

A. B. Knox

Most of my mountaineering last year was, as usual, in Wales chiefly in the Arans. I spent most of July on Chamonix but the weather was so awful that the only thing I actually got to the top of was the Aiguille de l'M.

Peter Ledeboer

Easter: Cairngorms. Cairn Toul, Lochnagar and 5 other munros with George Roger and other eminent members of the S.M.C. in blizzard conditions.

July: Chamonix. Petit Verte and traverse of Aiguille du Tour with Paddy Boulter. Short incursion into Switzerland to the Wildstrubel, followed by a unique and breathless game of cricket on the glacier of the Plaine Morte (first discovered by Sir Martin Conway).

J. Mash

General rock climbing in N. Wales and at Swanage (Guillemot Ledges and Boulder Ruckle) throughout the year.

A very wet day on Lliwedd (Avalanche—Red Wall route) prior to the Alps did nothing to help our condition. Nearly two weeks spent in Chamonix, cut short due to bad weather. As a training climb we chose Frendo Spur on the N. face Midi D. sup. intending to split it over two days starting in the afternoon. This is a popular route and due to our poor condition we were overtaken by other parties on the lower spur. There is still a fair amount of loose rock and clumsy climbers ahead can make life quite hectic. The final rognan is quite a sting in the tail after a flog up the ice arete but a good route. A trip to the Couvercle hut ended with a thunderstorm, no frost and a retreat to the valley. The weather remained bad for the rest of the time. Better luck next year maybe.

Hoping to make up for this with a week's ice climbing in Scotland in February.

L. G. Poolman

In early May, a visit to Dalwhinnie yielded Meall Chuaich and Carn na Caim (second ascents) while waiting for sufficiently good weather to walk to Ben Alder—rather a long way! On the third (and last) day, things relented a little, and after some seven hours, the summit cairn was finally located.

In early June, I was lucky enough to have the company of Bob Aitken (Aberdeen), and four outstanding Munros were cleared—Sgurr nan Coireachan, Sgurr na Ciche, Am Basteir and Blaven. This left one only—Ladhar Bheinn, but unfortunately bad weather, uncertainty of accommodation and infrequent access facilities combined to defeat me, and defer final success until (we hope!) 1974.

As the former South Tirol is now more peaceful, David Grace (Bristol) and I decided to have a look at this area in July. The five C.A.I. huts we visited were in good condition, and wardened, but the weather was very unsettled, and only five summits were attained, the highest being the Hohe Wilde (3482m.). In addition, we crossed some interesting passes.

Finally, to my long-awaited autumn trip to Switzerland. Ambition was high but, unhappily, barometric pressure was low. In nearly three weeks, there was only one really fine day throughout; on this I climbed the Cassorte (3301) from Arolla. The only two other summits reached were the Tete Blanche (3724m) from the Bertol, and the Sasseneire (3254) from Evolene. In three of five S.A.C. Huts visited, I was alone for the night—one being the new Oberaletschhutte—very fine! It snowed overnight (as at the Bertol), but in the morning there was a fine view of the Nesthorn.

A somewhat disappointing year, but it had its compensations.

Robin Richards

Bill Wade and I were lucky enough to be in the Mont Blanc area for the first two weeks of August, which must have provided some of the best conditions of the entire season.

We left England and Ireland respectively by air on Sunday the 29th of July and, after joining forces at Geneva Airport, took a bus to St. Gervais which we reached that evening. After buying food in the village the following morning, we ascended to Nid d'Aigle by the Tramway du Mont Blanc and walked up to the Goûter Hut in the afternoon. After a 4.00 a.m. start and a lot of puffing and blowing we were on the summit of Mont Blanc by 10.00 a.m. on the Tuesday morning. One way of getting fit! It is interesting to record that Bill, who is 55, was on this occasion much less affected by the altitude than I.

After that we climbed the Géant by the ordinary route—a longish day as we started from Plan de l'Aiguille and in consequence didn't leave the Téléphérique Station on the Col du Géant until about 10.30 a.m. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and the views of the Brenva face were quite breathtaking.

To our astonishment, we had the Forbes Arete on the Chardonnet completely to ourselves in equally superb conditions, though it must be recorded

that I would like to have been able to join our rope to that of another party for the crossing of the lower Tour Glacier which was in a particularly dangerous state.

I finished off the season with the Whymper Couloir on the Aiguille Verte—a rather dull climb and not one to linger on in the prevailing snow conditions.

Oliver St John

To visit the High Atlas in Morocco is now scarcely novel, but it is certainly still different. Earlier visits had been frustrated either because of bad weather or sickness.

Largely due to Hamish Brown, the area is becoming increasingly popular with the British, but the number of climbers still seems very small. Reliable information is hard to come by. We had the 1938 guidebook by Lepiney, and the large-scale maps of the Toubkal massif, dated 1935. The former is hard to come by and out of date, whilst the latter contains major errors: a more recent general guidebook to Morocco contains only a few brief notes about climbing routes and there would seem to be a real need for even a simple, up-to-date climbing guide to the area.

The whole party consisted of 14, of whom 8 went to the mountains, and of these 5 were aiming to climb seriously, with my son Hugh and myself leading. The idea was first to cross from the ski resort of Oukaimeden to Imlil, the village base for the Toubkal area; then to spend a week climbing routes around Toubkal itself.

From Oukaimeden, the plan was to keep as high as possible, traversing interesting peaks en route. It was August and we took no tents, merely sleeping bags and a polythene sheet, and even on the summit of Aksoual, 3910m the cold was not too excessive. We started up the North face of Angour, 3614m and then climbed the whole of the long ridge from Anrhemer 3893m over Igenouane and its pinnacles and past Aksoual and its subsidiary peaks, which provided interesting, if broken climbing. Descending to Imlil, we met up with our van and the main stores, after 3 days good training.

Imlil has become quite a tourist attraction in recent years, and organised parties tend to arrive in coaches, to be whisked off for a mule ride into the mountains. This has inevitably affected the local population and considerable diplomacy was needed.

On arriving at the village, a certain Hamid instantly offered us a fine camping site, alongside the stream near the top of the village. This was just what we wanted, and the charge was modest, even though we had to pay for a night-watchman to guard us and our property from the local population and the village dogs and cats. But in the morning there was a tremendous upheaval, when it turned out that Hamid had hired out someone else's field. He tried it again the second night, with a different field, but I was forearmed and found the real owner. He was called Mohamed 'le petit' to distinguish him.

Mohamed and Hamid came to blows, but the local head man's representative backed Mohamed, who was also appointed night watchman, to his great delight. He turned out to be a mountain guide, and he had been nominated by the Authorities in Rabat to go on a UIAA Meet in Germany with one other representative from Imlil. This latter, who sported a large brass badge engraved 'Guide Touristique No. 1' also wore an SAC badge which he had acquired on the Meet. They were both thoroughly charming characters and most interesting to talk to.

Meanwhile we were approached by Brahim, who produced a letter of commendation from Hamish Brown, extolling his virtues. We were therefore inclined to trust him when he offered us a mule to go to the Neltner Hut for 15 dirhams. This seemed a good buy, but no sooner had we agreed terms than we were visited by an angry crowd which insisted, in effect, that Brahim had purloined Hamish's letter, that he was a black-leg, that he was undercutting the proper tariff of 25 dirhams, and that all hiring of mules was on a rota basis under the control of the Chef des Muletiers. We summoned a rather sheepish Chef, who after much prevarication, appointed a substitute at 20 dirhams.

It was extremely difficult to establish the truth. Subsequent events tended to exonerate Brahim as we eventually found out that the correct tariff was indeed 15 dirhams, but he was certainly using his initiative in taking advantage of his competitors. We finally parted good friends, but I suspect that we had stumbled on a local feud.

Next morning we were greeted at 6 am by the driver with his mules, quite upset that we wouldn't take more than one. He protested that a mule could only carry 20 kilos of luggage, although he subjected his mule to his ample weight. We did not wish to ride and he eventually accepted our load of food for a week and I set off behind. As the path left the village, he shook hands gravely with me, bade me farewell, and went his way, leaving a diminutive boy of about 12 to drive the mule. In spite of our 3 days' training, the mule was fitter than I, and the boy had to spend more time restraining than driving.

During the next few days, we bivouacked close to the Neltner Hut, near a fine spring, moving into the hut when, one afternoon, some 4 inches of large hailstones fell in a very short time, leaving a wintry aspect and destroying the path in many places where it crossed the steep hillside. However the weather was otherwise perfect and we methodically explored all the peaks in the cirque around the hut.

Toubkal, 4165m, was climbed by three different routes, including the longish but delightful WSW ridge and the broken WNW ridge. A traverse was made of the Biiguinoussene ridge, starting at an unnamed peak just over 3900m, climbing Tadat, Biiguinoussene, La Tour, Les Clochetons and the two peaks of Afella Ouanoukrim, with a quick visit to the great plateau of Tazarhart. Some of the climbing on the pinnacles was quite spectacular, but with a few exceptions the rock is very broken and great care is needed. Another day

took us from Tizi n'Ouagane over the two easy peaks of Ras and Times-guida n'Ouanoukrim, 4083m and 4089m and along the ridge to Akioud, 4030m. On this latter, the climbing was more interesting and Hugh, who is tireless, added a traverse of Tadaft from NE to SW.

On the last day, when Hugh went off to climb a TD, the NE face of Akioud, Peter, who is 14, and I polished off the last of the nine 4000m peaks in the immediate area by climbing Immouzzar, 4010m. This expedition had the added bonus for Peter that we were able to see the remains of the aircraft which crashed on the peak some three years ago. The empty ammunition boxes are still strewn over the mountainside.

In many ways, this area is reminiscent of parts of North Wales, and the arid, rocky peaks made it hard to believe that we were climbing at about 4000m. We met a variety of folk of all nationalities, but most merely came up to the hut with a guide, to 'do' Toubkal. However, this gave us a good chance to talk to the guides as well as the local shepherds who, without exception, were both friendly and helpful. It soon became known that we had a good medical kit and we were much in demand for all sorts of minor ailments. We accomplished one 'miraculous' cure to a man at Sidi Chamharouch, on the way up to the hut. He had a most unpleasant abscess in his eye, which we tackled with anti-biotic tablets and eye-drops. All pain and swelling had gone when we returned and he rushed out, beaming with gratitude, to meet us with a tray of Mint tea. We did not stay long enough to see the results of our other efforts and I can only hope that they were equally successful.

Ernst Sondheimer

I attended the winter meet at Glenridding and enjoyed sun and snow on the fells. In June I was tempted to the Skye meet, my first return to the Coolins after 27 years. It was raining in 1946, and it was still raining; in fact not much seemed to have changed. In spite of the weather it was a good week and the Dutch were splendid company. In August the family—strengthened by the delights of Provence—braved the rigours of an Alpine meet and found them quite acceptable. We were particularly happy to discover the valley leading to the Antrona pass—best described as resembling a Highland glen, without deer but with plenty of gentians instead.

After Saas I joined my Swiss friends for the annual walking tour—the meeting place being the little shelter hut on the Panixerpass, a spot famous, and still well remembered, for the epic crossing by the Russian army under Suvorov in October 1799—and now, alas, threatened by a roadbuilding project. We explored the region around the Tödi, spent 3 nights at the Planura hut and climbed the Claridenstock before crossing the Sandpass to descend into the Rhine valley. This region is wild, beautiful, not crowded and unjustly neglected by British visitors. By now it was time to attend to unfinished business in the Bernina: this year the weather behaved better, and (led by Othmar Wenk) I managed to climb the Bernina by the Biancograt, the Disgrazia by the Corda Molla and the Badile by the North Ridge. The Disgrazia climb starts from the Bivacco Oggioni, a romantic spot if ever there

was one. There is now also a bivouac shelter just below the summit of the mountain, well equipped with necessities such as cognac; we had planned to spend the night there, but an approaching thunderstorm drove us off to the Ponti hut (locked as usual). The Badilekante—done in shamefully slow time but every bit as magnificent as the descriptions would have it—seemed a fitting way to mark both my own 50th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the first ascent, by Zürcher and Risch on 4th August 1923.

Les Swindin

I think I can claim '73 to have been quite a good year apart from the winter in this country and the summer in the Alps, if you follow my argument.

All the pundits forecast a hard winter and an ascent of Moss Ghyll in powder snow and with verglas on every hold as early as November made a fine start, but from then on nothing but mild weather. Just one good day in February, when I climbed Ladies' Gully and Cave Gully on Snowdon, made up for much of the disappointment. That was winter. Even skiing over the Christmas period at Sölden did not come up to expectation because of the shortage of snow.

At Easter I visited Torridon for the first time. I spent a week there bagging Munros with Barbara. It was back to Scotland a few weeks later on the annual trip to Skye. The plan was to do the traverse of the main ridge, Clach Glas and Blaven and return to Glenbrittle via the Dubhs ridge. The generally unsettled Whit. weather prevented an attempt on this but did not prevent us having a thoroughly enjoyable visit. After several visits to Skye one really starts to get to know the place and even in poor weather one is prepared to explore further. The highlight of the week was undoubtedly an ascent of South Gully in Coir' a' Mhadaidh. This was accomplished in heavy rain, but it was four very happy climbers who emerged from the depths of the gully through the final waterfall. A perfect gully as the old guide book describes it.

With Barbara I left for the Alps on Friday 13th July. It certainly was unlucky weatherwise. Acclimatisation amounted to three days snowed in at the Hollandia hut. At least it wasn't crowded, our party of seven, in the absence of the guardian, having the running of the place. A break in the weather allowed us to walk, or maybe wade would be a better word, to the Konkordia hut. A fine cold day followed and six of the party climbed the Gross Grünhorn. That was the end of the fine weather for a while.

Saas Fee was not much improvement. A wade up the Strahlhorn and another on the Hohlaubgrat on the Allalinhorn were all we could show for four hut nights. We had better luck in the Engadine. It was a delight to stay at the Tschierva hut after previous experiences there and the Biancograt next day in perfect conditions made the long trip East all worthwhile. Barbara still can't believe that it only took her five hours to the summit of Piz Bernina from the hut. Our final stop was Chamonix. I'd decided to take Barbara on Mont Blanc, but stormy weather delayed us for a few days. I think it delayed a few others too because when we got to the Gouter hut about two

hundred others joined us. However, the sardine feeling was soon forgotten as we left the hut in the light of a full moon and walked to the summit, unroped, in three hours arriving at sunrise. From there we continued via Mont Maudit to the Aiguille du Midi.

I did say it had been quite a good year. It was from a rock climbing point of view. Climbing mostly in Wales and the Lakes I've visited Pillar, Sca Fell, Esk Buttress, White Ghyll, Gimmer, Wallowbarrow, Deer Biell, Borrowdale, the Mot, Cloggy, Tryfan and others often in the company of John Oaks, who has having a 'great push' year and doing mostly HVS routes.

The trip to Skye was in company with Geoff Causey and I've also climbed widely with other members of the Lincoln M. C., several of whom are club members. We all attended the Langdale meet.

Ray Vipond

Five days in North Wales with my wife Greta in early April provided two particularly memorable days. The first on Moel Siabod when after overnight snow we battled through knee deep snow and in temperatures well below freezing (though in brilliant sunshine) to gain the summit for a panorama reminiscent of a winter alpine landscape with views upwards of 60 miles. The other day was an ascent of Crib Goch to Snowdon summit; some of the snow and ice on the ridge required delicate negotiations as also did the descent down the Miners Track. The top 100 metres of descent required step cutting into the glazed snow and ice .

Two weeks were spent in Zermatt from the end of August into early September. The first week presented little opportunity for more than walking at lower levels because of cloudy cold conditions. The second week however gave ideal conditions for exploration at higher altitude such that Greta was introduced to higher regions in particular the border summits about Testa Grigia. . . . How the condition of the Upper Theodul Glacier has deteriorated over the last four years.

Some interesting comments relating to our following of the guide books Zermatt and District, and the Alpine Club Guide Book—Pennine Alps Volume 1, may be worth noting.

In the first mentioned book excursion 19—crossing the Findeln glacier to Grünsee, it is now not possible in safety to descend to the glacier as suggested from Fluhalp. We found that by ascending the moraine to just above a small grassy dell containing two small lakes—on the left and about 10 mins above the hotel, it is possible to pick ones way down to the glacier, and just below the first major crevass region. Thence the glacier crossing is simple with no obstacles—generally making a line SSW to the south bank where it is easiest to keep low down on the moraine near to the glacier until the hydro electric scheme is reached. There is now a feint workers track for about 15 mins after which the route is straightforward.

In the Alpine Club Guide Book page 50 route 13—Monte Rosa Hut to Gandegg Inn connection we again had experiences in following the instructions. The

initial problems encountered were those of anyone turning west from the Monte Rosa-Rotboden route to go down the glacier; the rivers on the glacier are (as to be expected in late summer) frequent, deep and wide. By making a straight line as per the route we crossed no fewer than 12 'rivers' which necessitated our finding crossing points. To reach the corner below Trifti took almost 3 hours. It is now necessary to continue west for about 10 minutes more since the south edge of the Gorner glacier at its junction with the Unter Theodul Glacier has collapsed and is about 40 metres below a very steep ice slope. Eventually access can be gained to the central moraine which is initially rather steep. Crossing to the right bank should not be attempted until about 250 metres have been climbed. The route is then as stated though in total 4 to 4½ hours for the connection is a more realistic time.

In view of the present state of the Gorner Glacier and its moraines I also doubt the possibility of crossing from Gandegg Inn to Rotboden as given in Route 6 of the Zermatt and District guide unless intending sojourners have much experience of moraine descents or ascents such as that below Rotboden.

N. E. D. Walker

August—in Grindelwald. Led a small party of members of the Old Camfordian Mountaineering Club; J. E. L. Clements came along as a guest. We attempted to climb the Jungfrau but only reached a point about 300 ft. below Rottalsattel due to physical exhaustion and the glacier conditions; with Hans Kaufmann and Kobi Weiss. The other guided climb was the Grosse Krinnenhorn from Glechstein Hut with Christian Baumann; all in glorious weather.

Our unguided climbs included Faulhorn from First, descended via Ober and Unter Lager; Gemsberg from Grosse Scheidegg, in rather dull weather. Mannlichen from Kleine Scheidegg in fine weather. A lovely walk through the Lauterbrunnen Valley to a point just above Schwand in glorious weather; and a high route along the Lower Grindelwald Glacier to Banisegg in glorious weather.

End of September: Back once more in Mittenwald. Climbed Hohe Krauzberg, twice; from Ferchensee with Beryl Isgrove in glorious weather; and from Lautersee in a party led by Erica Winneberger in glorious weather.

Week-end visits to Edale and the surrounding countryside—Mam Tor and the ridge to Loose Hill were amongst the climbs.

Jeremy Whitehead

April: Spent an excellent fortnight ski mountaineering in the Dauphiné with Jim Roche and Fred Jenkins. We climbed Pic Blanc de Galibier, Dôme de la Lauze, Pic de Neige Cordier, Roche Faurio and Grande Ruine. Conditions were generally good, though poor snow often spoiled downhill running.

August/September: Was lucky to be able to take 5 weeks, and for once to get good weather. Jim Roche and I started in Central Alps with Gletschhorn S. ridge, and traverse of the Galenstock.

In the Engadine we found hut conditions much better than we had been led to believe, perhaps due to a change of guardian at the Boval. We did Piz Morteratsch by the Sprauzagrät and traversed Palu, and then up Bernina by the Biancogrät. The route was as crowded as the Matterhorn!

Crispin Agnew joined us, and we did Palu by the 'Ostfeiler' and the Cambrena Ice-Nose. Round to the Sasc Fura hut, we did Piz Badile N. ridge, but lost the route on the descent (the English guidebook is very unclear) and had a wet and cold bivouac just above the scree. At Zermatt the weather was poor, but we got in the Rothorngrät even though we were mildly struck by lightning on the descent.

Crispin and I now fled East to the Salbitschijen, where we much enjoyed the S. ridge on a crowded Sunday. Then to Grindelwald where the Guggi hut and Monch by the Nollen provided a tranquil contrast till we reached the Jungfrauoch. We expected to find peace at the Strahlegg hut, but no, there was a guides course in occupation, and we had to follow up the Schreckhorn S.W. ridge. Descending the normal way we came across an American lady with a badly broken leg, and had to hurry to summon help by helicopter. A blessing for her that the hut is equipped with a telephone.

R. W. Woodman

Early September 1949 Charles and I intended to finish off our season in the Swiss Alps with the ascent of the Zinal Rothorn from Zermatt. However, snow and mist drove us back to the valley. 'Next year' we said. Although I always climb mountains somewhere each Summer, for various reasons I never climbed again in Switzerland until 1973, when Charles suggested that, with our wives, we have a week in the Valais.

We stayed at St. Luc. The weather was set fair. Several walks and scrambles amid the lower hills whetted our appetite for a go at the beautiful white peaks at the head of the valley. In deference to our age, Charles being over 60 and I too close for comfort, we hired a guide. It is a long pull to the Mountet Hut from Zinal, especially starting after lunch on a hot and windless day with bulging rucksacks.

Next morning as we left the hut at 3.45 I felt the old excitement, plodding up to the glacier, the peaks beautiful and remote in the waning light of the moon. High up on the Mountet glacier we stopped to watch the first rays of sun strike the surrounding peaks. The unrelenting slope of the glacier grew steeper. It was with relief we crossed the burgsrund at the top of the glacier and reached the col.

The steep shoulder joining the col, to the rock arete proved trying for Charles, who had no crampons. As on most mountains in the Alps, it is at this level, three quarters of the way up, that the dramatic beauty of the hanging glaciers, ice falls, snow caves and crevasses which seem to protect the mountain, is best seen.

I had somehow imagined that the final rock ridge to the summit would be like Crib Goch, but there was hardly a yard where hands were not needed.

The ridge was knife-edged in places and the exposure considerable. After the first ten minutes getting accustomed to these facts, we really enjoyed an exciting scramble. A short lay back to avoid an overhanging gendarme made me realise how much energy this requires at 14,000 feet. The traverse of the large gendarme sitting on the ridge like the organ in Exeter Cathedral was sensational, but holds were good. After 2½ hours of this we were thankful to reach the summit, 24 years after our first attempt.

The sun was warm, the wind was light, the entire Alps were visible. No conqueror of Everest could have felt more joy than we did at that moment. Two other parties joined us. Reluctantly we retreated. The heat down on the glacier was excessive. I always try and forget the sliding, stumbling, sweating descent through the soft snow, twice as far as one thought.

Clouds were massing as we reached the hut at 2.30 p.m. After eight glasses of lemon tea and a little food I felt revitalised ready to return to the valley. Half way down a savage thunderstorm broke. 'The heavens were bowed about our heads shouting like seraph wars, with rains that might put out the sun or clean the sky of stars.' It was awe inspiring, but no longer mattered. Happily we splashed down to the valley to find that the river had become a torrent drowning the little footbridge, necessitating a long detour to reach our car.

An ordinary ascent of a high mountain maybe, but the image had not changed in all those years. A wonderful day!



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