

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

JOURNAL 1984

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30 March/1 April
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18/23 April
18/23 April
4/7 May
4/7 May
Wed. 16 May

25/28 May
25/28 May
25/29 May
Wed. 20 June
22/24 June

18 August/2 September

24/27 August
24/27 August
Wed. 19 September
5/7 October
Wed. 17 October
2/4 November
21 December/
3 January, 1985

Rhyd-ddu — Mike Pinney
Fondue party, book through Ernst Sondheimer
Glencoe, Ben Nevis — Alasdair Andrews
Expedition to East Greenland — John Wright
Patterdale Northern Dinner — Brooke Midgley
The Fourthousanders — Will McLewin
Patterdale — John Murray
Life in a Kinwauri Village — Nick Allen
Patterdale Easter Meet — John Murray
Llanrwst Easter Meet — John Berry
Patterdale — John Murray
Llanrwst — Alf Lock
Buffet party. Talk by Maurice Bennett — Book through E. Sondheimer
Patterdale — John Murray
Llanrwst — Alasdair Andrews
Ben Nevis & Glencoe — Alasdair Andrews
The Colorado Plateau — Frank Solari
Derbyshire, Grindelford — John Berry

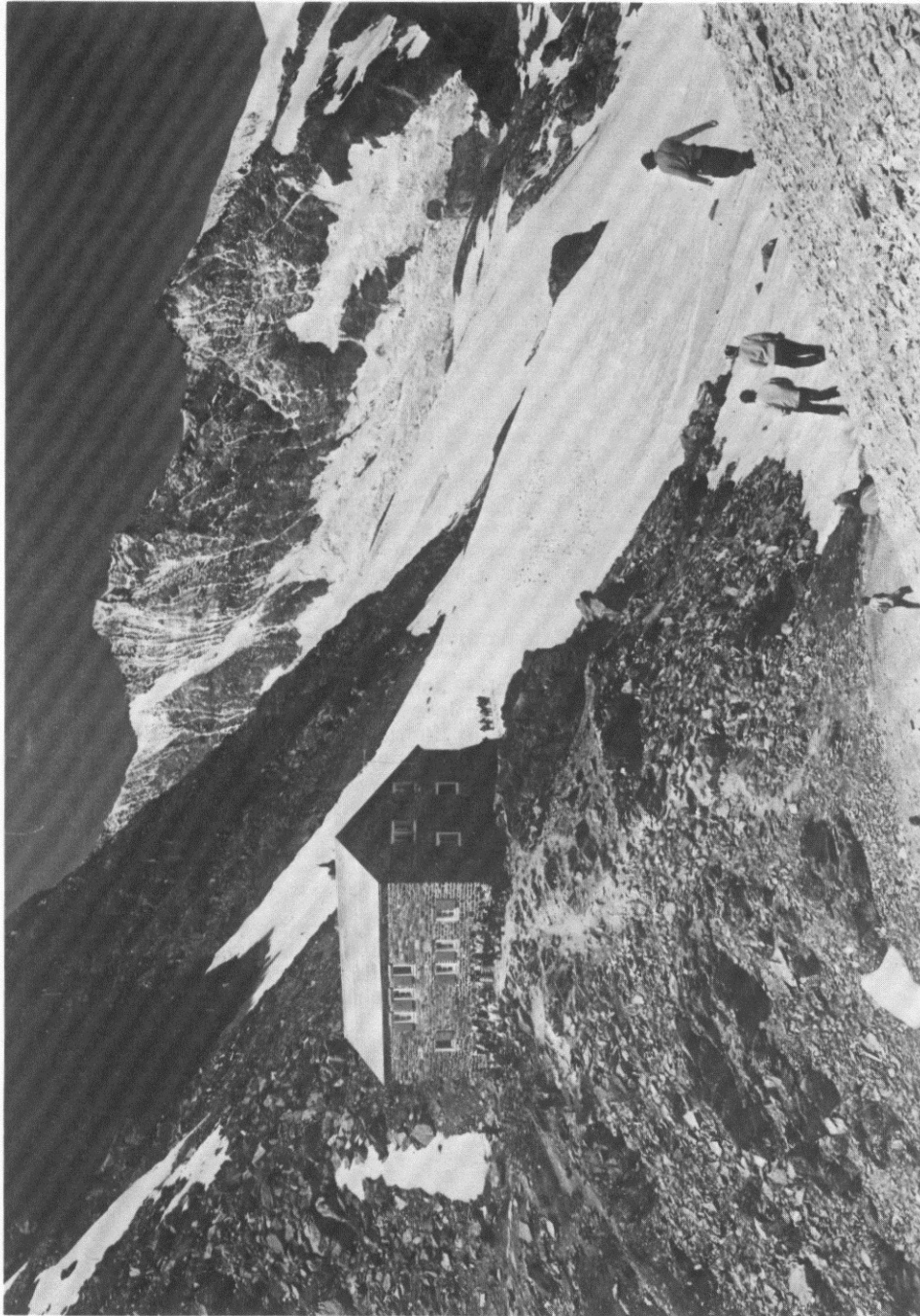
75th Anniversary meet at Saas-Fee

Patterdale — John Murray
Llanrwst — John Berry
Kashmir for Himalayan Flowers — Mary Briggs
Patterdale. Buffet party — Marion Porteous
Members' evening
Patterdale — Mike Pinney
Patterdale — John Murray

Lecture meets will be held at the Alpine Club, 74 Audley Street, London, W.1. at 7.15 p.m. Cash bar refreshments will be available from 6.30 p.m. and coffee will be available after the lectures. Please book with the person named for outdoor meets. Further details will appear in circulars.

Please note telephone numbers: John Murray 0539 821754 for Patterdale, J. Byam-Grounds 0492 640259 for Fron Francis. Addresses in list of members.

HISTORY OF THE BRITANNIA HUT



The Britannia Hut built by the ABMSAC and opened in 1912.

Translated by Mr. William Hills

When the Swiss Alpine Club began to develop its network of mountain refuges, many British climbers, most of them members of the Alpine Club, the pioneers of Alpine exploration, joined the CAS to support the work and enjoy the status of members when using the huts. Before long they joined together in a group and in 1990 founded the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, the ABMSAC.

In 1910 the ABMSAC held its annual dinner at the Holborn restaurant in London. About a hundred members of the total 260 were present; many were prevented by the voting in the House of Commons. Clinton Dent, former president of the Alpine Club, took the chair, and he announced that £370 had already been subscribed for the construction of a hut to be offered as a gift from British members to the Swiss Alpine Club as a gesture of their appreciation of the hospitality extended to them by the CAS.

A committee was set up to consider possible sites for this hut, to be approved by the SAC. The suggestions were:

1. The Klein Allalin (3,842 m) above Saas Fee, suggested by Dr. Dubi;
2. A site near the Mittel Aletsch Glacier, proposed by Colonel Repond, the outgoing president of the SAC (this hut was built and is still in existence);
3. A site in the Laquintal, Simplon, proposed by Mr. Richard Hughes, D.C.L.;
4. A site in the vicinity of the Col des Portons above the Otemma Glacier, Charion, at 3,000 m, on the "High Level Route", proposed by Professor F. Roget and J.M. Archer Thomson, representing the Ski Club of Great Britain.

The Chairman told the gathering that cordial messages had been received from the Section Genevoise, the Diablerets Section, etc., and read out a letter from Professor Roget. Toasts were drunk to His Majesty the King, to the President of the Swiss Confederation, to the SAC and kindred clubs and associations represented at the dinner and to the members of the SAC in general.

Among the speakers were Haskett Smith, Sir Clifford Allbutt, KCB, FRS, Dr. Norman Collie, FRS, (one of Mummery's climbing partners) and Dr. H.A. Dent. Dr. Carlin, Swiss Ambassador to his Majesty's Government, had agreed to represent the SAC, of which he was a member and a member of its Committee. He was greeted with acclamation when he stood up to speak. Apologizing for speaking in French, he spoke at length; the following are some of his remarks:

First, he expressed the fraternal greetings and good wishes of the Central Committee of the SAC for the prosperity of the Association; he thanked the Chairman for his kind words for the SAC. He went on:

"There is a tradition of friendship between Switzerland and Great Britain.

During the 19th century Switzerland had to fight for its independence and its liberties. Great Britain was on its side. There is a debt of gratitude towards Great Britain which we remember."

(I might add that after the Second World War, the debt is greater still, for the courage, the tenacity and the sacrifices of Great Britain inspired and led by Churchill).

The Ambassador continued:

"An Englishman member of a Swiss national club is in a better position to form an opinion on the life of the Swiss than a foreigner without any tie to the country. Many foreigners have a view of Switzerland as a country of hotel keepers and employees, guides, porters and coachmen. However, in spite of its small territory and its infertile soil, Switzerland is economically strong, thanks to the sobriety, the honesty and the enterprising spirit of its people. How otherwise could a nation surrounded by powerful neighbours succeed in keeping its independence during more than six centuries; how otherwise could a people made up of different races, speaking different languages and holding different

religious faiths keep its unity? This nation has developed its democratic regime to its ultimate expression, without falling into either demagogy or socialism." He thanked the assembly for electing him an Honorary Member and said that the hut when built would be a monument to the devotion, comradeship and activity of the AMBSAC.

The writer's father, Dr. Maurice Roch, who became Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Geneva, was then President of the Section Genevoise (from 1911 to 1912) and it was during his Presidency that the hut was built.

The ABMSAC held its next dinner on 8 December 1911; by then it had 330 members, the Section Genevoise a thousand.

The Chairman, once again Clinton Dent, read out a letter from Professor Roget saying that the projected hut would be one of the best equipped and largest of the Swiss Alpine Club's refuges. Its cost was estimated at 20,000 francs.

The plans were agreed between the contracting parties, the Central Committee of the SAC, the ABMSAC and the Section Genevoise; the Section Genevoise was entrusted with the execution of the project. The total weight of components to be transported was reckoned at 20 tons.

After a toast to the President of the Swiss Confederation proposed by the Chairman, Clinton Dent, Dr. Carlin, the Swiss Ambassador, replied: he conveyed greetings from the Central Committee which that year had its headquarters at Coire (the previous year it had been at Fribourg) and the grateful thanks of the Committee for the handsome gift presented to the SAC by its British Members. He called for three cheers for the members of the ABMSAC and its President, and its indefatigable honorary secretary, Mr. Bruce. Other speakers included Sir Felix Schuster, Judge Neville, Dr. O.K. Williamson, Mr. Richards and Mr. King-Church.

In 1911 the site of the hut was chosen by Dr. Dubi and the Saas Fee guide Mr. Imseng between the Klein Allalin and the Hinter Allalin at an altitude of 3,039 meters. The plans and the estimated cost of 22,000 francs were approved; the estimate was brought down to 20,000 francs. The hut was ordered on 3 January 1912 and its prefabricated parts were ready by 18 January. On 5 February it was delivered to Visp in the form of 35 to 40 kg. loads which were carried up on man-back to the site by the early summer. On 7 July a team of builders left Geneva to erect the wooden structure on a stone foundation prepared by the contractors, Clemens and Emile Imseng. By 27 July the hut was standing, though the interior had yet to be fitted out. Eighteen tons of material had been carried up in 500 loads. The total cost was in the end 19,425 francs, against an estimate of 19,888. The hut was 9.40 m long, 5.5 m wide and about 8 m high. It had 35 bunk places and 6 hammocks. On 17 August 1912 the inauguration ceremony took place, presided over by Mr. Archinard, former President, and Mr. Dunand, in the absence of Dr. Maurice Roch, who asked to be excused on account of the imminent birth of one of my brothers, Rene, who was born on 28 August and in due course became a doctor of medicine.

It was a charming occasion, well described in the *Echo des Alpes* by Egmond d'Arcis, founder and for a long time president of the UIAA (International Union of Alpine Associations). Fifty to sixty members of the Geneva Section had been expected, though whether they would find accommodation in Saas Fee was doubtful. Following a long spell of bad weather, only 20 participants arrived, including one or two young boys and several ladies with picturesque hats and long dresses. One young woman had a picture hat trimmed with flowers, feathers and flowing ribbons!

The rendez-vous was at the Grant Hotel, Saas Fee, where Mr. Bruce was master of the ceremonies. Fendant, Dole and Munich beer flowed freely. Then the climb of 1,300 m began, the party well provided with guides and porters who roped up the participants to cross the Fee and Kesjen Glaciers. The weather was fine, with light clouds drifting around the peaks.

Mr. Archinard welcomed the guests and Mr. Viollier, Chairman of the Hut Committee, told the story of its construction and presented the keys to the ABM. Dr. Williamson replied and handed over the keys to Mr. Meisser, Secretary to the Central Committee of the SAC. He expressed his satisfaction at the good relations

between the British and Swiss peoples and passed on the keys to the Section Genevoise, which thus became the owner and administrator of this splendid refuge. After an ample lunch, the Reverend C. Muller welcomed the visitors, thanked the British people for their gift and gave a toast to His Majesty the King. Mr. G.H. Radford, M.P., graciously replied, followed by other speakers: Mr. Noel-Buxton, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Harris. The treasurer, Mr. King-Church, announced that the full cost of the hut had already been subscribed. Other speakers followed: Mr. Larden, who had virtually established Arolla as a climbers' resort, Dr. Williamson and Mr. Dimier.

Mr. Imboden thanked the British people for coming to the alpine valleys and presented several bottles of Conthey, a gift from the Valais Conseil d'Etat. Dr. Dubi, the distinguished patron and virtual sponsor of Saas Fee as an alpine resort, spoke in German, French and English, followed by Mr. Faes of the Diablerets Section, Mr. Couchepin of the Monte Rosa Section and Mr. Verbani of the Italian Alpine Club, who all addressed the throng. Mr. Bernoud delighted the audience with his speech and last but not least, the Reverend Mr. Muller read out a poem entitled "The Hut". Altogether a feast, almost an indigestion of speeches. At 1 a.m. the assembly retired. On Sunday, some went off the climb, most went down to Saas Fee and rain came on. A memorable day in the midst of wild nature and rugged mountains.

As the years passed, the hut became too small. In 1928, under the Presidency of Dr. Eugene Robert, the architect Mr. Gallay planned its extension, to cost 40,000 francs. A subscription was opened in Geneva which brought in half this amount, the other half was given by the ABMSAC. The original wooden structure was kept, the extension built in masonry with a stone cladding for the older part. The hut was doubled in size, giving 80 bunks. But the interior arrangements became inconvenient and caused traffic jams on busy evenings. The hut was again rebuilt in 1952. Conserving the outside structure, the architect Mr. Schmid modified the interior completely. It became easier to move about and the hut keeper was more comfortably provided for. The hut can now accommodate 140 people overnight. The re-inauguration took place on 7 September 1952 at the Hotel Beau-Site in Saas Fee. Professor Gysin, President of the Section Genevoise, greeted the guests, especially Mr. Anthamatten, Conseiller d'Etat of the Canton of Valais, who brought the greetings of the Valaisan Government. The following day, Sunday, the ceremony began at the hut with a Mass and a Protestant service followed by an avalanche of speeches, among others, Mr. Casai, Conseiller d'Etat of Geneva, himself a confirmed alpinist, and Mr. Livet of the Lyons Section of the CAF. The new arrangements emptied the treasury of the Section Genevoise, but kept the hut full!

Thanks to the initiative of the AMBSAC, the Section Genevoise owns one of the most-visited of alpine huts in Switzerland. For the year from autumn 1981 to autumn 1982, the Monte Rosa had 8,633 overnights and the Britannia 8,076. British climbers can be thanked for their happy idea of 1912. This summer 1984, the ABMSAC will celebrate in Saas Fee and at the hut itself, the 75th anniversary of its foundation. It will be a festivity for British climbers, the SAC, the Section Genevoise and the friends of alpine climbing everywhere; it will be graced with the patronage of the Conseil d'Etat of the Canton of Valais.

Andre Roch

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EDITORIAL

1. The Seventy-fifth anniversary

Members will already have received details of the activities which centre around this year's special Alpine Meet at Saas Fee. The President and committee members are confident that it will meet with general approval and they hope that this approval will be signified by enhanced all-round support.

Those members who have not attended recent Alpine meets can be assured that they are most happy and informal affairs, which cater easily for the needs of the broadest spectrum of age and ability — and disability! There is total freedom to individuals or groups within the meet to devise their own programmes and, of course, Saas Fee is an especially good venue from which diverse interests can be met.

The occasion is one which our Swiss friends wish to make especially significant to the wider climbing fraternity, and they have shown considerable interest and support in helping us to shape a series of events which have broad appeal. They also recognise the central position of the ABMASAC in the celebratory programme which we jointly envisage.

The Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club will act as Patron to the full programme. They are anxious to make public acknowledgement of the gift of the Britannia Hut, which in 1912 was given by the then infant ABMSAC to the Geneva Section of the SAC.

By a most happy coincidence, Professor Noel Odell, who was present at the ceremony in 1912, will be present also next August. It is not an occasion lightly to be ignored!

T.G.B.H.

2. Other matters

Walter Kirstein's climbing and skiing career have been dealt with in the obituary by Frank Solari. Walter was such a regular and enthusiastic attender at meets that he has left many memories of a personal nature. The editor cannot miss the opportunity to refer to some such. I first met him at Sils Maria in 1964. It happened that I had the opportunity to do him some trifling service which cost me nothing. His typical gratitude for this small matter began a valued friendship. I retain pictures of the impish side of his nature. One day we were on the Steghorn, our route involving a walk along a level ridge which seemed to me to be distinctly thin and exposed. I was roped behind another departed old friend, a bigger man than I, who unhappily had eyesight problems. I had clear instructions that if he should slip and fall to one side (which of course he did not) I was to throw my lighter weight down the other side and pray. Walter, who was behind me, found my cautious approach to my duty unbearably funny. He responded by unroping and trotting backwards along the ridge (which I certainly could not have brought myself to do) whilst operating his reflex camera to capture the scene for posterity.

Another picture centres on Pont, where we stopped for refreshment on our way to the Gran Paradiso. With us was another old friend who occasionally mislays something. On this occasion it was his hat. Walter found it and clapped it on his head on top of his own hat. He then expressed great concern for our friend's plight, and insisted on accompanying him to the remotest and most private areas of the cafe in order to search, until at last he relented and pointed to his head.

Walter was very frequently present at home meets and almost to the end he loved any opportunity to climb rocks whenever a leader was available. His benefactors in this matter (such as Bobby Files and Les Swindin) must have been made aware of his deep gratitude, of which he often spoke.

Paul French's "Note on Schwarenbach" last year aroused some interest and was even found to contain some errors, mostly misprints following imperfect proof-reading by the editor. Mr. D.F.O. Dangar, the Alpine historian, and a club member, kindly provided the following corrections:

1. Page 9, line 1, Fellenberg. This rather suggests that Fellenberg made the first ascents of the Doldenhorn and Weisse Frau in 1869, but he climbed them both in 1862.
2. This cannot have been the "Japanese" Weston. He was born in 1861.
3. 21.7.71. G.E. Foster. His ascent of the Matterhorn from Zermatt is now regarded as the 4th.
4. Page 7, line 17, should read "6th HIGH mountain inn", not *highest*.
5. Page 8, near bottom. Tschingel climbed Balmhorn on 20.7.1868.
6. Page 8. It is Guy de Maupassant, and Gottlieb Studer.
7. Page 9. 23.6.71. The name Alfred Wheeler should follow Eliot Howard.
8. Page 12, last paragraph. Platterhorner. Ueschinengrat.

WHITE CHRISTMAS ON THE EQUATOR

by Gillian Bull

To climb the highest mountain in Africa has long been a dream of mine, but when the opportunity arose and I spoke to various people about it, they suggested that we try Mt. Kenya first! They claimed that it would be more interesting and not such a long walk, so we opted for second best.

On our arrival at Nairobi in mid December, Peter tried to telephone Naro Moru River Lodge, the centre for climbing the mountain. It was impossible to contact them; the weather had been bad and the lines were down, so we spent the first week visiting Game Parks with our two daughters, which was most enjoyable. Alas one of them became very ill right out in the bush. I had visions of a rapid return to England and no mountain climb. However, after endless difficulties, we managed to contact the flying doctor by radio, which was all very interesting! He informed us that it was more likely to be food poisoning than acute appendicitis, and if it was the latter there was little we could do about it as his plane only flew by day. We left for Nairobi very early the next morning, and by the time we arrived Nicky was slowly recovering, much to our relief.

Again we tried to contact Naro Moru; this time we were successful and managed to arrange our little trip. The four of us took the 3½ hour drive on the local bus to the Lodge. This was a very comfortable place with beautiful gardens. In the bar before dinner that evening I found a journal in which people who had recently attempted the mountain had written reports. It amazed me to read how few had actually made it beyond Mackinders Camp at 14,200 ft. The weather had been bad and some had not even made it through the notorious bog. Maybe, I thought, they were not used to climbing mountains. But, alas this was not the case, as they all seemed to be members of various walking and climbing clubs. We had been warned in Nairobi that conditions were very bad on the mountain and I began to feel pessimistic about the whole thing.

After dinner that evening we talked to a German couple very similar to ourselves who had made Pt. Lenana by the Sirimon Trek and had just returned that day. Their experiences sounded much more encouraging.

The next afternoon Peter and I set off in a rather elderly Japanese truck with our guide Mwangi, a cook and three porters. I had never had so many servants in my life! They were all very cheerful and excited. It seemed more like a trip to the seaside with my Brownies than a three day climb on a mountain!

Our driver was obviously taking the direct route to the National Park as he did not bother to drive along the track, but went straight through the bush! When we arrived at the entrance to the Park we had to sign in and read the rules and about the dangers which could possibly beset us. They didn't mention the muddy track which to me was the biggest danger of the lot.

The idea was to drive up to the Met. Station at 10,000 ft., spend the night in a hut, then start walking the next day. Our companions decided to put chains on the wheels to help us through the mud but alas this made little improvement. Due to the fact that there were no windows in the truck, mud was shooting in at us from all directions. Soon we were well and truly stuck, various strange methods were tried, all unsuccessful, to get us out of this predicament. I couldn't believe that we would ever reach the Met. Station under these conditions, so decided to walk. This I was advised against doing because of the wild animals, but to me it seemed a far safer option. Eventually it was a party of Europeans who rescued our African companions who picked me up further along the track. We arrived at the Met. Station in torrential rain, our supposedly short journey having taken three hours! We met Nicky who looked like a drowned rat. She had left at dawn that morning to spend a day on the mountain with a guide (who was dressed in a lounge suit and house shoes). The poor girl had hardly seen a thing due to poor visibility but had loved the whole experience. Her trip back to the lodge, in the dark, down that track in our decrepit truck, gave me great cause for concern.

That evening we went for a short walk with Mwangi to acclimatize. The vegetation of this equatorial mountain was fascinating and the jungle was rich in bird and animal life, the latter for which I had a great deal of respect. We spent the night in

a log cabin and slept reasonably well and were awoken at 5.30 am. with tea, shortly followed by an excellent breakfast. All very civilized.

As we set off and walked up the path from our cabin we saw paw prints in the mud, mostly from leopards. Like snakes these animals are far more frightened of us than we are of them, so there was little to fear. On the way down on Christmas Day we were fortunate enough to see two leopards by the side of the track. On seeing us they slowly returned to the jungle. I was amazed by their incredible beauty and longed to see them again.

It didn't seem long before we left the jungle and were on the mountainside where we could see magnificent views over Africa. Before us lay the infamous bog which lies on the route up the Teleki valley. We stopped and geared up to prepare for this ordeal: one of our porters was wearing wellies and shorts which to me seemed to be the most suitable apparel. I wore a large hat, sun top, gaiters and over trousers which went up to my armpits! All this proved quite unnecessary apart from the hat, as the bog turned out to be no worse than a muddy walk in Derbyshire, in spite of the heavy rainfall in the past few days. It didn't seem long before the walking became very pleasant again. We passed by Giant Heather like tall bushes, Giant Groundsel with its pretty yellow flowers and Giant Lobelia quite unlike any I had ever seen before, more like giant Cacti. There were two types of Lobelia, vegetable and flowering. Joy Adamson did many excellent paintings of these which can be seen at the National museum in Nairobi.

We later met two New Zealanders who made excellent company and we stayed together on the slow plod up to Mackinders Camp. We passed the Teleki hut at 14,000 ft. and I felt very glad we were not staying the night there as the local animals had moved in. It was an emergency hut (which had seen better days) for those who were unable to make the camp.

The sun shone nearly all day and the view made the peaks very inviting. We never did stop for lunch and I finished my ration of boiled sweets which were supposed to last the whole 'Foot Safari' as the Africans called it.

Mackinders Camp was really quite luxurious. All the tents were on wooden platforms, because I am sure, of the Hyrax which were in abundance. These little creatures rather like giant guinea pigs fascinated me, I took numerous photos and on being developed far more appeared than I saw at the time. There were also strange little mice with very unusual markings.

In the kitchen tent we enjoyed a very nourishing three course dinner while watching the sun go down. That evening was incredibly beautiful and the whole world really did seem to stand still. There were no clouds and the moon lit up the snowy rocky peaks of Batian and Nelion. I had never seen the stars so big and near before, it was all very exciting. The next day was Christmas Eve, it would be such a shame not to go to the summit of Pt. Lenana. The plan was to walk round the mountain, see more and acclimatize then climb Lenana on Christmas Day. But the weather might change and it had certainly been unsettled. So we had a long talk with Mwangi who agreed to re-arrange things.

That night was extremely cold, I covered my mattress with my cagoul as it was wet, but it was frozen in the morning along with my boots. I was later told that I should put them inside my sleeping bag and this wouldn't happen, I realised how inexperienced I was in these conditions. I was without my duvet which didn't help, as a kind friend back home suggested I wouldn't need it, just a good sleeping bag was necessary. Were we really on the Equator? I don't think that I slept at all. We were up shortly after 5 am. and having had a good hot breakfast; it was a relief to be walking along a frosty track in the moonlight at last warming up. Then the uphill really started and the pace became slower, fortunately the scree was well frozen and was only a problem on the way down which didn't really matter. Pole, pole, was the order of the day, which I was more than happy to abide by, but also decided to have a few stops with Mwangi. Peter was fine as he had taken the magic pill, which I was not brave enough to swallow having learned of all the side effects from a medical journal. Besides I do not think I had any problems apart from my speed, I have never been very quick at anything especially walking up steep hills.

On the ridge we walked through deep snow to the Austrian hut at 15,720 ft. and stopped here for lunch, which seemed to take rather a long time to arrive. Mwangi had gone to sleep and said there was no rush. However, as we watched the clouds gathering around our peak, which had been clearly in view, we became more concerned, so after eating we were rearing to go. I don't think Mwangi was feeling too good, he was very tired; we could hardly go without him, but it was certainly in our minds. I gave him my sunglasses as I was wearing my goggles, in exchange for his ice axe which he clearly had no idea how to use. He decided to leave his umbrella at the hut. So we set off, the snow was deep and icy, a huge crevasse appeared to the left of us on the Lewis glacier. Peter was well ahead of us to take photos. Acetazolamide was obviously working wonders! while Mwangi and I slowly followed. It took just under 45 mins. from Top hut to reach Pt. Lenana at 16,355 ft. I am sure some do it in ten minutes, but our guide had told us we must go slowly as we were so very old! He was all of 21 with a wife and son. He had told us earlier that one should go up the mountain with an experienced guide like him. On asking how many times he had climbed to Pt. Lenana, he replied twice, but recalled he had attempted the climb many times but hadn't made it! I don't think he enjoyed climbing mountains, it was just that he was born at the bottom of one and it was the only work there was for him. The view at the summit could have been better if we had been there earlier but it was very satisfying and I was quite happy not to try Batian or Nelion having had a much closer look.

On our way down we did our own tour of the mountain and while exploring we left Mwangi to rest. The whole area was fascinating. Back at camp we had a good meal and prepared for another freezing night, fortunately the mattress had dried in the hot sun during the day. My boots and socks were wet because of the deep snow so I hung the latter up in the tent. Father Christmas didn't come this Christmas Eve as my socks were so frozen he couldn't open them! Christmas morning was the coldest I have ever experienced and it was a joy to be off and up the mountain again. We went up to the area of the three tarns. The sun became very hot and sparkled in the snow, it really was a white Christmas on the Equator. That afternoon we walked back down to the Met. Station, took the truck back to Naro Moru River Lodge where we had a hot bath (brown water from the river of course) then indulged in a delicious Christmas dinner with candlelight, log fire, Christmas tree and silver bells. A wonderful end to an unforgettable trip.

NINE PASSES TO LAMAYURU – the oldies' trek through Zanskar

by Elizabeth Parry

It began with a 15-hour bus journey from Delhi to Manali in Kulu – an epic trip starting up the Grand Trunk Road which was “Kim” come to life, climbing steadily throughout the night, and ending in the morning, when we were luckily past caring, with a crazy driver whirling us through fearsome gorges leaving scattered caravans of donkeys in our wake. We spent four days in Manali, haggling endlessly in the “office” of the Manali Climbers' Association – a wooden shack perched on a rickety balcony – to organise our small trek in the face of competition from far grander and more luxurious German and Italian groups. We were three women – the youngest 54 – and we wanted to trek to Lamayuru. Heads were shaken doubtfully but we persevered, and at last we were fixed up with a Sirdar, Norbu, a cook, a boy and provisions for 25 days, bought with great difficulty as Manali was out of almost everything. We were to go by lorry over the Rothang Pass to Darcha where we would camp and meet our horseman Tashi plus five ponies, four to load and one to ride when we flagged. A spectacular 10-hour drive in wet monsoon weather landed us up at Darcha (10,500 ft.) after dark on what appeared to be a flooded camp site. We squelched around and got Phil's complicated new tent which she was sharing with her Indian friend Premalia up with difficulty in a stiff breeze – luckily the moon came out, and my little Vango was an old friend. Next day no Tashi, no ponies, also no knives, very inadequate cooking and eating utensils, and a cook who we discovered eventually was only a porter and had never cooked before. Our Sirdar too was inexperienced and spoke very little English. The atmosphere in camp was gloomy, it was wet and chilly, but read on because next day really was – *Trek Day 1 July 26th*. This morning Tashi, a tiny cheery bow-legged character, arrives with five ponies, and loading begins. It is soon obvious that four ponies are not enough so after much argument and persuasion the riding pony is also loaded and we finally set off, Tashi complaining that his ponies are overloaded (they reckon to carry 50-55 kilos each). [We have no riding pony, which we considered an essential for our age group, but never mind, we are on our way after all the problems and discouragements]. The first campsite at Paldenlamo (11,000 ft.) is on green turf above a foaming white torrent. I congratulate myself on feeling fine, eat a hearty supper (largely cooked by Phil) and retire to my tent and two sleeping bags. Three hours later I am struggling out into the cold to be violently sick! *Trek Day 2*. Still feeling queasy as we plod up an endless stony valley by the river Sumbo to a place where a large tributary from the valley we go up tomorrow joins it. Our Sirdar has not bothered to bring a rope, although we asked him to do so, as we have been told the rivers are dangerous to ford following much bad weather, and several people have been swept away and drowned. So we insisted on taking a longer route to this spot where a wooden crate suspended from a cable acts as a ferry. We climb in to it, one by one and are hauled over to the other side – good fun. The ponies of course must come by the ford. They reach the far side by evening but the water is high and Tashi refuses to cross till tomorrow. All our food and bedding is over there with them plus – worst of all – the medicinal whisky! However our side boasts a round stone shelter, roofed with canvas, grandly entitled “Otel” where a kind hotel keeper, up for the summer months, produces, tea, rice and dahl, and turns out of his tent for us. Phil and I lie back in a symphony of chattering teeth all night. *Trek Day 3*. Tashi, with our cook, boy and the ponies, ford the river successfully, and we all set off up our first pass, the Shingu La. As we are resting by the path a young Gaddi shepherd clad in oatmeal plaid and kilt, the image of Omar Sharif, reads to us from the writings of his Guru. We camp at 13,000 feet on greensward by a torrent, the setting sun warming high snow peaks around us, and feel we are really on our way at last. *Trek Day 4*. We probably take longer to cross the Shingu La, 16,375 feet, than any other party, but it's a marvellous day. As we plod up the final snows we meet our first Zanskari travellers in their high, red felt hats, and a great cavalcade of pack ponies followed by a trekking party who look doubtfully at us and say the Lamayuru trek is very tough. We are on top at 2.00 o'clock, which is too late as

the snow is getting very soft, and down in the valley at Lakang by 5.00, exhausted but triumphant, secretly delighted that most of a large German party following us failed to make it through the soft snow. We saw and heard choughs and marmots, and flowers to date have included blue poppies, bistorta, trumpet gentians and several varieties of pink primula. The glare and heat were terrific at noon, but this campsite at 14,750 feet is bitterly cold at night. Now we are in Zanskar proper! *Trek Days 5–10*. For five days we follow the Kargya river on its long route to Padum, through hot arid plains flanked by weird red and yellow rock peaks, along gorges with scree paths scratched high above the surging power of the white river water where a pony – or person – who slipped and fell would be gone for ever, past occasional flat-roofed villages set among brilliant green barley fields, and along more gorges where it's so hot that we can never get enough to drink, our choice of camp governed by whether there is some sparse grazing for the ponies and water for us. The first site, just called “Place opposite the village of Ki”, is surrounded by flowers, edelweiss, rosebay willowherb, primulas, blue poppies and many unknowns. A group of Zanskari travellers riding by on ponies with bright saddlecloths, women mounted behind the men, get off to talk to us, and we see the fine headdresses of the girls which stretch down their backs encrusted with turquoise and lapis lazuli. Next day is excessively hot, broken by a lunch pause in a willow grove at the village of Testha, where the chang is flowing for free after a wedding celebration. The delightful headman asks us to his house.

In the evening after a very steep and slippery descent we cross the Kargya river to camp near a one-house village called Purne (temperature in our tents 106° in the sun). Here a river from a side valley leading up to Phuktal Monastery joins the Kargya, and next afternoon we set off up the valley in superb scenery of red rock peaks. A swaying bridge of rope and plaited straw leads over the river, through the usual avenue of chortens to where the monastery is plastered improbably against a rock face 13,500 feet up. We climb through a maze of dark alleys and passages and small courtyards to the guest room, low-ceilinged, dark and smoke-filled, which already houses a small multi-national group of travellers. The monks feed us on rice and dahl, and stare as we get into our sleeping bags. Sleep is impossible – I am bitten all over till dawn, when we get up to go to the 6 a.m. pooja or service. This is delightfully informal; we sit around cross-legged, like the monks, and tea (Tibetan style) is served between bouts of chanting; the monks each have a bag of tsampa (barley flour) which they add to their tea to make a nauseous-looking but probably nourishing grey paste. The monastery's senior dog wanders in and out and is fed titbits by the younger monks. The topmost temple is set in a huge cavern and the views down are dizzy-making – it must be 500 feet to the river. The loo – particularly perilous in the dark – is a small earth room with three large holes in the floor and space below. We leave at 8.00, descend to Purne and pack up, then have a long, tiring walk following the Kargya gorges, up over a minor pass, and down to the river bed, where we camp on a stony beach with the water roaring by. Here the only serious row of the trek takes place when Premalia, whose English can be extremely fluent, insists that the beach must be cleared of “donkey shit”. This, in a stiff breeze, turns out to be one of the labours of Hercules, and the offending muck mostly blows straight into my tent. Nevertheless we have a convivial supper with Patrick and Simon, two young Englishmen who are following the same route as us. Next day there is a nasty moment when we have to cross a large avalanche which has swept away the path and left a dirty snout of ice running steeply down into the river. It is very slippery and our iceaxes and crampons are way ahead on the ponies who have somehow got across. We hear later that one almost went into the river but was grabbed by the rail just in time. We camp before Bardhan, next to a large German party which is going the other way. Norbu joins their horsemen, and gets very drunk and noisy on chang. Next morning we visit Bardhan monastery, small but with fine murals and perched on a great monolithic crag above the river. It's deserted – the monks are all down in the village at a wedding feast. Sounds of revelry and music float up. In the afternoon we reach Padum, capital of Zanskar, at 11,000 feet about the lowest point in the country.

Trek Day 11 is a welcome rest day on the Padum campsite, where streams from the high snow peak behind us, called Padma by the locals, turn a series of stone water-mills. A venerable bearded miller is in charge, with a large brood of grandchildren, all white-dusted with flour, who play around us by the water, and look after flocks of goats with adorable kids. In the afternoon it clouds over, rains a bit, and a violent wind chases dust storms over the great barren plain. The Bank Manager, Chief Policeman and two school teachers (all imported and I think hating this remote spot) call on us and invite us to drink tea. Padum is almost out of food as the only road in was cut by a landslide last October and is not yet repaired, so we can't replenish our inadequate foodstocks before setting off on the second and hardest part of the trek. But we go into the village through fields of peas and barley, jumping streams everywhere as irrigation has gone mad here, and gorge ourselves on rice, moomoos (meat balls) and yoghurt in a little restaurant.

Trek Day 12 and disaster. Philippa, racing down the hill by moonlight after an enforced sortie from her tent during the night, has sprained her ankle. Once again our future is in doubt; but after much talk loads are re-arranged and she is mounted on one of the pack ponies. Luckily we have several days of level going ahead, first a long detour to a bridge at Tungri where we camp before returning to nearly opposite Padum on the other side of the river. Here is the great monastery of Karsha with its 150 monks. We climb about 500 feet to the top temple and are lucky to hit off a spectacular ceremony; the monks are ridding the monastery of evil spirits which have first to be driven into a sort of triangular red cage, accompanied by much chanting, playing of wind instruments, huge long horns, drums and gongs. They then all race at great speed down the steps from the top temple, playing as they go, and down to the gates of the village where the red triangle is cast out. The red wool robes of the monks, their yellow headdresses, some of which are shaped like big cockscombs, and the flags and banners all make a brilliant sight.

Trek Day 14 starts pleasantly in our camp near Karsha. The fields are a mass of flowers, yellow lupins, pink geranium, and vetches of all colours, and the air is sweet. But the walk is purgatorial, shimmering heat, dark volcanic rocks and soft sand underfoot for much of the time. We are following the Zanskar river now, and in the evening find a surprising green oasis which Tashi knew of, where we camp. Next day, our 15th, Phil can walk again, luckily, because she has been suffering acutely on her hard pack saddle! We have a number of torrents to ford and there are some hilarious scenes as we get onto the rumps of the pack ponies and cling precariously to the loads. I am full of admiration for our ponies — they are unbelievably sure-footed. Today we are climbing again, up over a minor pass, down, and up again to Hanumil where we camp at 11,290 feet. A small urchin clad only in a cotton shirt kilts this round his waist and leads up through an icy torrent then whips out a placard from under the shirt which reads "Hotel Hanumil". This turns out to be a rather grubby campsite for which we have to pay — but there are trees (poplar and willow), running water of dubious origin, and a fine view of the gorge ahead. Next day we set off along a path that is sometimes built out over space, sometimes cut in rock steps where the ponies need help, sometimes on the very edge of the thick racing water of the Zanskar river. At midday we leave it to plunge into impassable gorges on its way North East to join the Indus, and we turn off West to climb to 12,835 feet over the Parfi La — splendid views from the top, but depressing as we must drop 2,000 feet to cross a river then climb again to Snerste at 12,400 feet — a swallow's nest campsite under the Hanuma La. Several other parties are at the camp — Tashi is upset because there is not enough grazing for all the pack animals. We are running out of many foods and fuel, but the men have a sweet-smelling fire of juniper and brushwood here.

Trek Day 17. We climb up the gorges of a small river, often on solid snow bridges and neves, to the top of the Hanuma La, 15,548 feet. Big clumps of white anemone and dark blue aconitum stand out amongst the many alpine flowers. We can see Lingshed Compa far away in the distance, but first we drop very steeply 1,800 feet, cross another river, up over the Sospang La, and then up and down a

weary number of times over a series of sort of mud noses (large ancient moraines) to a somewhat bleak, dusty camp by the path at about 13,300 feet. On Day 18 we walk along a level path to Lingshed, beautifully set beneath a fine rock peak above fields of rich green barley and wheat and peas. Here we catch up with Patrick and Simon, who got here two days ago, but have been laid low by dysentery. Climb to the top temple where we are annoyed to be asked quite a large sum to go in and see the paintings — it's a new development, encouraged by the authorities as it provides the monks with funds for repairs! All around are Himalayan rose bushes covered in vivid pink flowers. The path to the Makam La, 14,100 feet, leads through a stretch of black volcanic boulders, then we shoot down to a valley, ford two streams, up a zigzag-steep second pass to 14,620 feet, and round the flank of the hill to a high camp together with Simon, Patrick and their horseman. A large French party appears suddenly and our lonely campsite is like the Champs Elysees!

Trek Day 19. The big French party is going in the opposite direction, but we are a happy cavalcade of Patrick, Simon and their horses, a delightful French couple (he on his 6th visit to Zanskar) and their small caravan, and a picturesque Zanskari with a pigtail and lovely soft moccasins, travelling with four small donkeys and spinning red wool as he walks. As our camp was around 14,500 feet, the ascent to the Singi La, 16,217 feet, is not too bad and we are there by ten o'clock. Wait for the mixed bag of ponies and donkeys to reach the top by the summit chorten, where it is snowing gently with the distant sunlit peaks seen as through a wall. Then down over brown scree to a wide valley where we clamber onto the ponies to cross a river, and camp early at 14,360 feet, with yaks and zos grazing around. It is extremely cold in the evening — we collect yak dung for the fire.

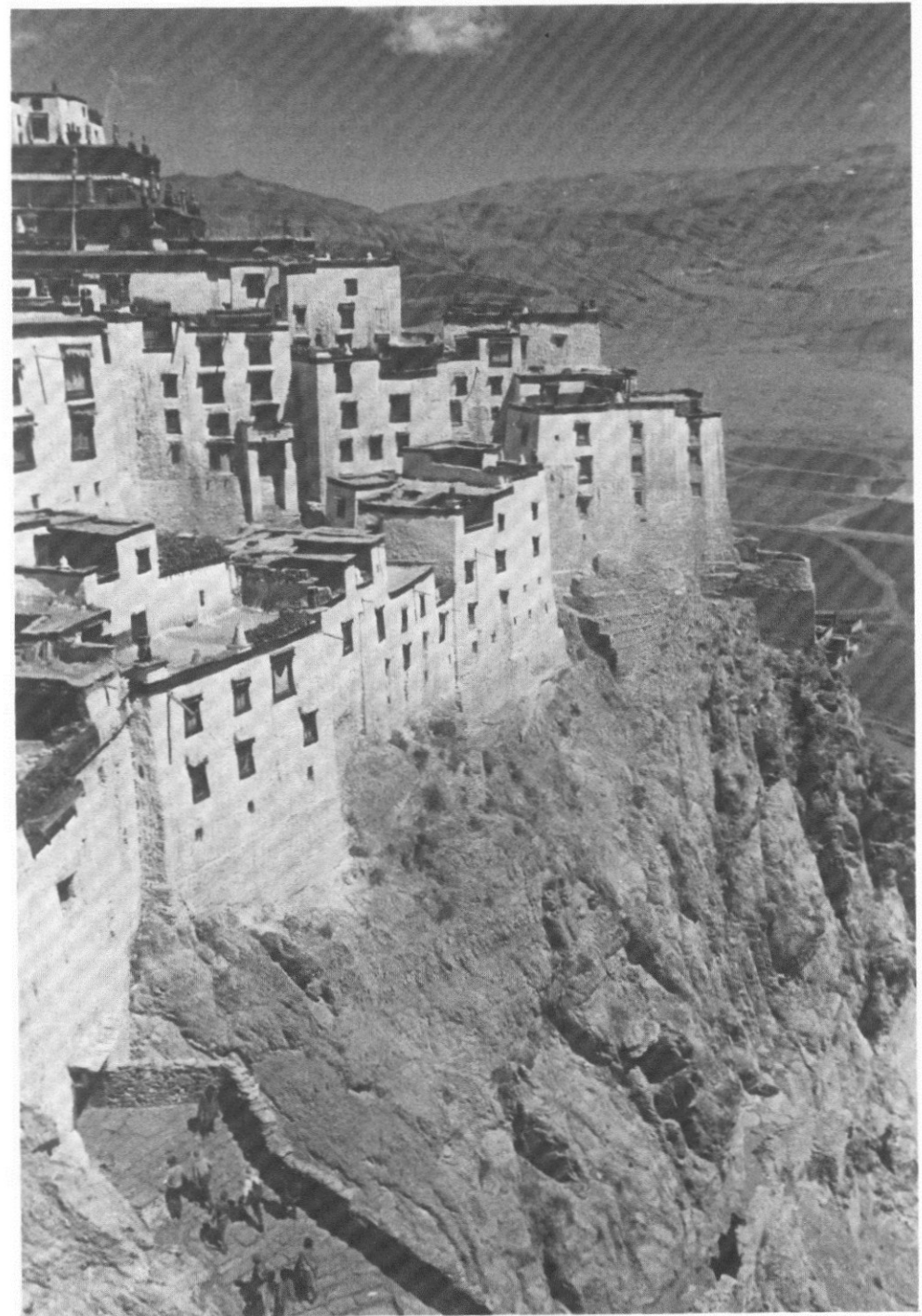
Trek Day 20. Patrick is again poorly with dysentery but he and Simon make it over our next pass, the Sirsir La, a strange mud and sand wall that rises steeply at the head of the valley. We watch them go — as we have two days in hand we walk along past the big village of Fotaksar then make another high camp at 15,400. I find my duvet jacket and two sleeping bags barely enough at this height.

Trek Day 21. We are on top of the Sirsir La, 16,200 feet, by 9.15, with fantastic views all around — ahead are peaks, pinnacles and needles of rock in red and ochre cut by deep gorges, behind us the snow mountains, light and colour ever changing as big clouds pass over the sun. This is our last major pass, and we plunge happily down a dusty path towards a wide river, the Spang, which we cross on a good foot-bridge though the ponies have to ford. An English boy has just been drowned here because he didn't know of the bridge. Follow the river down towards what must be the beginning of the Hanupatta gorges. Now there are clumps of tamarisk and willow by the water, and we find a steep track down to a spot called the Sacred Grove, where the villagers believe the trees stopped a major landslide just short of their houses. Everywhere there are signs of landslides — the mountains are cascading down into the valleys and road-or bridge-building is almost impossible. Our grove of silver willow and feathery tamarisk is delicious, and we stay two nights. Everyone washes and mends, and the trees are hung with garments. Starry Cambridge-blue gentians and a tiny brilliant blue one like *Gentiana Nivalis* grow in the short turf.

Trek Day 23. Memorable, awe-inspiring, sometimes terrifying — I see now why Tashi was not keen to bring his ponies by this route! The day starts beautifully — lovely flowers, fields of ripe peas (very good eaten raw!), groves of newly-planted poplar and willow trees, and even two fine old cedars at the picturesque village of Hanupatta which has handsome chortens and a long prayer wall outside it, and the usual white houses roofed with thickly packed brushwood. Ahead are receding planes of Dolomitic peaks, but we veer left into a hot, narrowing gorge with immense rock walls, red, grey and yellow. Strangulation succeeds strangulation, escape seems impossible, but always there is a path of sorts, built out crazily on tree trunks overlaid with flat stones, the rock wall often overhanging and so narrow that the ponies have to be unloaded to pass. Tashi runs ahead arms akimbo, and if his elbow hits the rock he knows the ponies won't get by with their loads on. In one place Phil, Norbu and I climb in burning heat over a little col while Tashi,

cook Tikkam Ram and boy Beli Ram and the ponies take to the river between vertical walls of rock. My prayers on this trip have all been for our ponies! They are magnificent, and the black lead pony highly intelligent, but so often one false step would be fatal, and sometimes they get competitive and try to overtake each other in very tricky places. The gorge goes on and on, a fantastic, claustrophobic world, but at last we emerge towards evening. Stop at an unfriendly village to get water and Tashi has to pay a lot for straw for the ponies to eat. The baked mud here produces sparse clumps of catmint and strange spiky plants which only the goats and little black donkeys will eat. Find a spot to camp above the river by an irrigation channel of swift-flowing water. Soon the sun goes behind the mountains and in the shade all is well.

Trek Day 24. August 18th. The walk starts through a tumbled mass of huge red pumice-stone boulders fallen from the mountains above. Lower the valley gets greener and at Wangla with its avenues of chortens and superb Gompa the meadows are lush and the women out harvesting the barley and wheat. In the afternoon we have a final pass, the Prinkiti La, only 12,800 feet, but somehow endless because we are tired and under-nourished and it's a dreary plod up a sort of gully between walls of baked mud; luckily it clouds over and turns cool and stormy. The path down a bare hillside is easy, and before long we round a spur and get an extraordinary view of pale, eroded rock cones and towers — a weird landscape — and there, its white houses and fine temples climbing steeply up the hillside ahead, is our goal, Lamayuru. It will take some time to realise that we've actually made it, but already nostalgia is setting in — the oldies' trek is over!



Shekka Dzong 1936 by Charles Warren.

MOUNT EVEREST IN THE THIRTIES

(Being a veteran member's account of the adventure)

by Charles Warren

The vision of a high and shapely mountain fills me with vague emotions the nature of which I find difficulty in analysing. Perhaps they are akin to those produced by great poetry, and A.E. Housman, when asked to define poetry (the request came from America), replied: "I could no more define it than a terrier can define a rat, but I thought we both recognized the object by the symptoms which it provokes in us. One of these symptoms was described in connection with another object by Eliphaz, the Termanite: 'A spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up'. . . This particular symptom is accompanied by a shiver down the spine. The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach."

Be this as it may, whatever organ is the seat of my emotions they fill me with a desire (a mad one if you like) to climb to the summit of a mountain; which is, after all, but an instance of our natural curiosity which compels us to have a look round the next corner —

"For lust of knowing what should not be known".

The adventures of the earlier expeditions to Mount Everest diverted the attention of mountaineers from the Swiss Alps to the Himalayas. There, in a new and unexploited range, they would be able to capture once again the thrill which men like Whymper must have experienced in the old pioneering days of scrambling amongst the Alps. This, rather than the notoriety that attaches to great altitudes, should be the genuine motive for going as far afield as the Himalayas to climb. Yet as far as Everest is concerned I can find excuse for any mountaineer whose ambition it is to tread the slopes of the highest mountain on earth. Thus far only do I venture to confess myself "a snob for altitude".

Soon after obtaining my medical qualifications I received an invitation from some friends in Liverpool to join an expedition which they were taking to Garhwal. Such an offer as this I was unable to resist. The charm of Himalayan travel once felt is not easily forgotten, but on returning from that expedition I managed somehow to settle down to the life of a house physician, and hardly expected to see the Indian hills again for many a day to come. Then quite unexpectedly one day towards the end of my 'time on the house' Eric Shipton came to ask me if I would be free to join as doctor and climber a reconnaissance expedition to Mount Everest which he had been asked to lead that summer. This expedition would not go out with the idea of trying to climb the mountain, for it would set out too late in the season, but it would have as its objectives the testing out of new climbers for the main expedition which was in preparation for the following year; the examination of snow conditions on the mountain throughout the period of the monsoon; and the making of a new and more extensive map of the Everest region by modern methods of survey under the direction of Michael Spender. After going out with this reconnaissance expedition in 1935 I returned to the mountain again in 1936 with the ill-fated Rutledge party, only to come away cheated of making a serious attempt on the summit. No party went to the mountain in 1937 because by then our Tibetan passport had expired. But in 1938 the Tibetans once more gave permission for an expedition, and I found myself setting out for Mount Everest for the third time.

After the 1936 expedition the Mount Everest Committee asked some of us to go into the question of discovering a suitable oxygen respirator for the climbers to use on the mountain. Oxygen is of value on Everest not only as an aid to climbing, but also for treating cases of pneumonia and frost-bite at high altitudes. We discussed this matter with Sir Robert Davis of Siebe Gorman, who kindly supplied us with two kinds of apparatus. These were then submitted to various authorities, including Dr. Douglas at Oxford and Dr. Matthews at Cambridge, for criticism and advice. Eventually it was decided to take both types of apparatus to the mountain. But before coming to this decision it was necessary to test the mechanical efficiency of the latest type of apparatus when climbing in it. For this purpose I took it to the Alps during the summer and tried climbing the Matterhorn when wearing it. The last two expeditions have set out from Kalimpong in the Himalayan foot-hills

of north Bengal. Kalimpong is the first bazaar of any size at the Indian end of the main trade route between Tibet and India. Almost every day throughout the spring and summer little bands of Tibetans come clattering down from the hills with a train of animals laden with wool, which they barter for Indian wares or money in the bazaar. Disease is common in these parts, and a small local hospital serves the needs of those afflicted with such diseases as tuberculosis, malaria, kala-azar and hook-worm infestation. A leper colony has also been founded there, in which I spent an interesting day looking at every clinical variety of leprosy. The lepers come into India down the trade-route, and from the bazaars at Kalimpong they are encouraged to enter the isolation colony, where they receive treatment for their disease.

To reach mount Everest from India it is necessary to go into Tibet and approach from the north. No doubt a quicker way would be through the native state of Nepal. But so far the Nepalese have been unwilling to allow travellers to go through their country. Even had they let us do so it seems doubtful whether the shorter route would prove a real advantage, for one of the essential factors in bringing about acclimatization is a certain length of time spent living at a high altitude, and what could be better for such a purpose than the long march through Tibet. Our party entered Tibet by crossing over the Kongra La, a pass through the Himalayan range at an altitude of 16,000 ft. The route through the mountains to this pass follows the great Tista river to its head waters. The path plunges steeply from the hill-tops near Gangtok down to the level of the Tista torrent at Dikchu. It then winds up the valley at first through sub-tropical jungle, until at last the deep-cut gorges open out into pleasant alpine pastures. We left Gangtok on the 4th of March, some three weeks earlier than usual. Each day we moved on from one rest-house to another in Sikkim, a stage of ten to fifteen miles. These early stages are always stenuous, for the path mounts gradually the whole time, frequently winding steeply up the hillside to avoid some impassable rocky bluff. Two miles an hour in this kind of country is considered good going. During the rains leeches abound here on all the foliage and lie in wait for the passer by. The scenery and vegetation in the lower gorges are magnificent. Giant creepers and brightly tinted orchids hang from every tree; while enormous gaily coloured butterflies float across the glades or settle on the paths to suck moisture from the earth.

For some reason at present not quite clear every expedition that has passed through Tangu at 12,000 ft. has suffered from mountain sickness more or less acutely; we suffered from headaches, loss of appetite, nausea, and even vomiting.

An abrupt change in the scenery takes place on crossing into Tibet. Undulating brown hills stretch away into the distance as far as the eye can see. Our caravan, a series of tiny black dots in the plain, moved imperceptibly in the direction of Kampa Dzöng. As we approached this important landmark the impressive fort on the rock began to take shape in the surrounding hills. At length we came into the village at the very foot of the rock, where our camp was pitched near the stream. At Kampa Dzöng a halt of several days became inevitable, while a change of transport animals was arranged, so amongst other things we visited the grave of Dr. Kellas, the physiologist, who had died there on the way to Mount Everest in 1921. Some mornings we would climb the hillsides near the camp to watch the sun rise on the great peaks. But soon we were on the move again, now in a westerly direction towards Shekhar Dzong.

When travelling in Tibet at all early in the year it is best to start the day's march as soon after sunrise as possible. The early mornings are cold and calm, and walking or riding across the plains is then wholly enjoyable. But towards mid-day a cold wind gets up and continues to blow from the north-west until some hours after sundown. Great clouds of dust are swept across the plain, which make afternoon marches extremely uncomfortable.

At a place called Jikyop we came to some hot springs, at which several members of the party settled down to bathe. The water reeked of sulphur, and it was so hot where it issued from the ground that a delay of some twenty minutes was necessary before one could accustom the body to the temperature.

Shekkar Dzöng is even more impressive than Kampa Dzöng. The gleaming white houses built up the side of the rock can be seen from miles away as one advances across the plain. The summit of the rock at Shekkar is crowned by an ancient castle in the usual Tibetan manner. At this important place we made friends with the Dzöngpen, or head-man, who kindly gave us permission to camp within the shelter of a grove of willow trees. In Tibet trees are scarce, and the willow is regarded as almost sacred; they are usually walled about by the lamas to protect them from destructive hands.

As an example of Tibetan architecture the monastery on the rock at Shekkar Dzöng is a thrilling spectacle. During our short stay we visited the temple and climbed to the fort on the summit of the rock, whence we gazed eagerly in the direction of Everest. But before going on there were social obligations to be fulfilled at the house of the Dzöngpen. When you are entertained in Tibet festivities begin early in the day and continue well into the night. We were invited to lunch and dinner also; but by four o'clock in the afternoon we were constrained to ask for an interval and short rest. The feast began with Tibetan tea — an excellent concoction when well prepared. Instead of milk or sugar the Tibetans take butter and salt in their tea. Then came freshly made macaroni with savoury meats and Chinese sauces. Throughout the meal we drank the local small-beer called "chang". It is prepared by pouring water upon freshly fermented barley and is mildly alcoholic. The best vintages are not unpleasant. The custom is for a servant to hand the cup and make you drink; it is then immediately replenished. When all the guests have been served in this manner you find that it is your turn to drink again. To avoid becoming too quickly intoxicated it is wise to take small sips of the brew. At the evening session chang was replaced by "arak", a much more noxious drink, which is made from chang by the simple process of repeated distillation. While we were busy drinking the servants of the household entertained us with singing and dancing. There was one song which they sang that almost proved our destruction. Each verse of this song was composed about a member of the party, and at the end of the verse the chang-girl handed him his cup, which he had to drain at a single draught. Odell was told he was like a god, and I was told that the girls of the village were in no immediate need of my services as a doctor. That about Karma Paul, our interpreter, apparently did not bear translating. Towards midnight we left the Dzöngpen's house, and on reaching our tents had some difficulty in preventing our servants from trying to put us to bed.

At Shekkar Dzöng I was called into consultation. The morning we were due to leave the Dzöngpen and his lady came to our camp with a gift of eggs. I was asked to stay behind and visit him on a medical matter. I went along with Karma Paul, and Tensing my servant carrying the first-aid case. In truly oriental fashion we sat down to drink tea and pass an hour or so in polite conversation before introducing the object of the visit. It turned out that the Dzöngpen had once been treated by injections in Lhasa for syphilis, and now he wanted to know whether he was cured of that disease — a question I found some difficulty in answering. Examination revealed the presence of many scars, the outlines of which were as serpiginous as those of the finest Tibetan dragon. We resumed our conversation across the tea-cups and I was paid my fee in Tibetan paper currency, now in the A.C. archives. My servant Tensing meanwhile had been given a meal and a tip, so henceforth I rose considerably in his estimation. The Dzöngpen and his wife then attired themselves in their finest robes of gold and purple brocade and led us to the door. There we found horses awaiting us, and before a crowd of gaping Tibetans I mounted with as dignified a mien as was possible considering my misgivings. Our restive steeds, excited by the mob, leapt forward in a cloud of dust. By a miracle I kept my seat; and in a flash we were lost to sight in the plain.

We now had but a comparatively short way to go before coming to the Rongbuk monastery at the foot of Mount Everest. Hitherto we had kept fairly well, barring Oliver, who had developed a bad cold at Shekkar Dzöng. But the day we turned

into the Rongbuk valley I began to feel ill, and on arrival at the monastery retired to my tent with a headache, sore throat and fever. We arrived at Rongbuk on April 7th, eighteen days earlier than in 1936. But even this slight difference in dates meant that conditions of living were much more severe. For the next four days I was confined to my tent with an illness that was very like influenza. Soon it began to snow, and a gusty wind which swept about the drifts added much to the discomforts of life. On April 10th the rest of the party left Rongbuk to start making the camps up the East Rongbuk glacier, and I was left behind to recover from my illness. Five days later I had recovered sufficiently to join the others at Camp III. A few days later Tilman went sick with symptoms which were much the same as mine had been, but he also lost his voice with laryngitis, so he had to return to Rongbuk to recover. These illnesses left us with troublesome coughs and post-nasal infections. Indeed my own cough was so irritating that I could not go more than a few yards uphill without coughing, until I became completely exhausted and had to sit down to recover. Coughs and sore throats have been annoying features on every expedition to the mountain. They are probably due to the combined effects of mouth-breathing in the rarified atmosphere, and dryness of the air pre-monsoon, for when cloud descends upon the East Rongbuk glacier during this season the sore throats improve remarkably. So far we have found no way of preventing them. But in my own case I found that I could get relief from my cough by wearing the "Matthews' respirator", a simple device designed for another purpose, namely, to prevent excessive loss of heat in the breath when climbing at great altitudes. The respirator consists of a few layers of copper gauze mounted in a face mask. Heat is conserved by the gauze and moisture condensed on it with every expiration; then on inspiration this heat and moisture is imported to the cold dry air taken in. When Camp III was first established it was still very cold, and we could see that a tremendous wind was blowing higher up on the mountain. We all had coughs or sore throat, and it was obvious, too, that no one was really sufficiently well acclimatized to make a serious attempt on the summit. In spite of this we were anxious to get on with the task of opening up a route to Camp IV on the crest of the North Col. We found the slopes below the Col at this point were ice from top to bottom so steps had to be cut laboriously all the way. At a certain place we were compelled to go beneath some alarming-looking ice cliffs, where I found it best not to imagine the consequences should they break away while we were still on the slope. After two days' work on the North Col ice we had seen enough to be convinced that the route we had chosen could be completed at any time without much further difficulty. But now the question to be decided was how soon to move an assaulting party up to Camp IV on the Col. Opinion on this matter was divided, but the majority were in favour of postponing an attempt on the summit, though Lloyd and I were anxious to carry out oxygen trials above the Col as soon as possible. It was argued that no one was yet fit enough to make such an attempt; and further that there would be a serious risk of frost-bite if it were made so early in the season. Then, too, there was a danger of breaking the health and morale of the high porters on an abortive early attempt. Shipton strongly advised us to retreat for the time being to lower levels in the comparatively sheltered Karta valley. After endless argument his plan was agreed to, and we decided not to come back to Camp III to continue the assault until May 15th, by which time conditions would have become favourable on the mountain. In a normal year this plan would have allowed a clear month for climbing the mountain before the onset of the monsoon; and we decided that we could only lay plans for a normal season.

The district known as Karta Shika is situated close to the northerly slopes of the Himalayas, and in consequence it enjoys a heavier rainfall during the monsoon than do other parts of Tibet. We had hoped to be able to live off the country at Karta, but only in the summer, between the months of June and October, does it become a flourishing agricultural district. When we went there we discovered that fresh food was difficult to obtain.

The great Arun river, as it flows from the Tibetan plateau into Nepal, cuts a series of remarkable gorges through the loftiest part of the Himalayas near Karta Shika. Wager considers "that the Arun and similar rivers have always had approximately

their present course, established at a time when there was a continuous slope from the Ladakh range (on the Tibetan plateau) to the Plains of India, and that the Himalayan mountains have risen across the course of the rivers, but so slowly that the rivers managed, by rapid erosion, to keep their channels open". We camped in a grassy hollow of the hills close to the entrance of the Arun gorges. It was but a short climb up to the crest of a rocky spur above the camp, and from that point we could peer down at the silver band of water a thousand feet below.

It was a relief to be able to laze about on grass once again, where we were sheltered from the discomforts of the Tibetan wind by the pine trees. A respite from the rigours of the East Rongbuk glacier was clearly much needed, for Tilman now went down with a mysterious fever, Oliver and Smythe had sore throats, Lloyd had developed an alveolar swelling, and Odell was suffering with toothache. For myself, I was feeling bruised and shaken as a result of a fall down an ice slope on the way over. We had been instructed to cut down loads to a minimum for this journey, but fortunately I had insisted upon bringing a certain quantity of medical equipment with me, even at the expense of addit to my own load. I was kept busy during the next few days attending to the sick, and I had to draw Odell's tooth. Throughout this period we experienced unsettled weather, and snow fell on the surrounding hills. Joking references were made about the arrival of the monsoon, but it was not until a month later that we discovered from the letters which we received from India that we were actually experiencing the first of the monsoon snowfalls at this time.

On May 10th we left our convalescent camp to return to Everest. Tilman was still a sick man, but the rest of us were better for the interlude. We were back in Camp III on the 18th, where it was now comparatively warm, with much cloud about. Snow fell every afternoon for the next few days, but work soon started on the Col. There was less ice on the slopes now, and the dangerous ice-cliffs beneath which we had been compelled to pass before had avalanched, leaving blocks the size of a house strewn across the route. Now that the mass had come away the lower section of the climb was much safer, but higher up the slope was very steep, and we had the labour of fixing almost 800 ft. of rope to make it safe for loaded porters to go up and down. Near the top a treacherous traverse had to be made across an exceptionally steep slope. Oliver, with two porters, was cautiously negotiating the traverse when the snow avalanched beneath his feet. His party shot away down the slope, but Tilman and I, foreseeing what might happen, had anchored ourselves firmly behind the lip of a small crevasse, and when the drag came we were able to hold them up quite easily on the rope.

The way was now open to the upper reaches of the mountain, but operations were held up by more unsettled weather. The mountains were in cloud most of the day, and we were recording high temperatures at night. As we lay in our tents the increasing dangers of the North Col route were forced home to us by the incessant roar from the avalanches pouring off the north-east face of Everest. Although nobody liked to admit it, we all felt that the monsoon had indeed arrived. At last there was a break, and Tilman decided to move the first assaulting party and the doctor up to Camp IV. Meanwhile Smythe and Shipton had left to go round to the west side of the North Col because it was felt that the possibility of finding a safer route to the Col from that side should be explored.

Six inches of snow fell during our first night at Camp IV, leaving the rocks on the north face of Everest barely visible through the fresh white mantle. Clearly all hope of climbing the mountain had vanished for the moment. Tilman had struggled on up the north-east spur for another thousand feet, but found it impossibly heavy work ploughing through the drifts. We lingered on for three nights at this camp before reluctantly deciding to abandon the attempt, and get down before the snow on the Col became too dangerous for the descent. There was nothing to do but retreat down the glacier and wait for an improvement. Meanwhile we had agreed that our next move should be a concerted exploration of the westerly approach to the Col. If the weather improved we would send up assaulting parties from that side.

A few days later our party was creeping up the little bay of glacier which lies

beneath the vast north face of Everest, keeping close under the precipices of the North Peak to avoid crevasses. For a time we were compelled to come within range of the stones which were falling from the crags of this peak. Now and then a sharp report would be heard, coming from somewhere high up amongst the crags. We would peer anxiously into the mists until a few seconds later, with a horrible whirring noise, a shower of rocks and stones would pepper the snow a few yards away. Whenever this happened we were goaded to even greater speed, short of breath though we were at the altitude.

The crest of the North Col was already aglow in the morning sun when we set out towards the unbroken sweep of snow which on this side led up to it. We crossed the debris of a large avalanche which must have fallen quite recently, for it had swept the slope clear, leaving bare ice. This ice-slope had to be climbed before steps could be stamped in snow. The icy section, though steep and unpleasant for the loaded porters, seemed infinitely safer than the upper slope, where the snow had failed to come away with the rest of the avalanche, and was lying in a very critical state. And now we were back in camp upon the North Col, where we heard from the porters we found there that they had left Smythe and Shipton at Camp VI ready to make an attempt to the summit. The men who had helped to carry this camp up to 26,000 ft. had returned safely and were well, except Pasang, who was said to be behaving oddly and was very exhausted. I crawled into Pasang's tent to see him, but apart from his speech, which seemed to be giving him a little difficulty, I noticed nothing wrong at the time. That same evening Smythe and Shipton stumbled into the big dome tent, and after they had been revived with hot drinks they told their story. They had reached 27,000 ft., but had been prevented from going any further by the depth of the snow on Norton's traverse.

The two climbers were going down off the North Col the following morning, so I asked them to take Pasang with them. But when they tried to make him walk they discovered that he could not do so. I was called to see him and found that he had had a stroke. Obviously it was going to be no easy matter getting a paralysed man down off the Col, so we returned to the dome tent to discuss how this was to be done. In the early hours of the next morning we were roused by groans coming from one of the tents outside. I flung on a few clothes and stumbled out into the snow to find out what was happening. I found Ondi sitting up in his tent groaning and holding his chest. It was dark, so I couldn't see what was happening, but he was cold and clammy, and seemed to have difficulty in getting his breath. We took him into the big dome tent, where I made him comfortable and gave him oxygen. He seemed to be much relieved by the oxygen and soon stopped groaning. Soon he developed a cough and said that he only had a pain in the chest on breathing or coughing. At first I thought that he might be getting pneumonia, so I arranged to get him down from the Col as soon as it got light. I left a note for Tilman asking him to help the others with Pasang, and then conducted Ondi down to Camp III. The subsequently course of his illness was unlike that of pneumonia. In 1933 Ondi had very nearly died on the North Col with pneumonia, so I was worried at the time, and only too anxious to get him down from the Col, where our supplies of oxygen were limited. The following day we watched the rest of the party bring Pasang down to Camp III. They had to lower him rope lengthly by rope length all the way down to the glacier.

Tilman and Lloyd had fared no better than the others on the mountain; they, too, had been stopped by deep snow on the rocks at 27,000 ft. We knew now that there was no longer any hope of climbing Mount Everest that year. Oliver and I should have made the next attempt, but I was now tied with a sick man on my hands. So reluctantly we faced the fact that the attempt must be abandoned.

I have told the plain tale of our adventures. Perhaps I should have mentioned physiological problems, and discussed the value of oxygen on the mountain; but these subjects would furnish a tale in themselves, so I deliberately refrained from introducing them.

It was a calm clear day when we turned away from Mount Everest to start the homeward journey. By a curious paradox the very weather which begins to make life pleasant in these regions bring incalculable dangers of its own on the

mountain. For myself, I had no regrets at the outcome of the venture, only a sense of disappointment that we had failed to accomplish more. Perhaps secretly I was even a little glad to know that the highest mountain on earth, the one that so many had striven in vain to approach, still remained to challenge another band of mountaineers. But now they would have to wait until Everest—

A year's snow bound about for a breastplate
— leaves grasp of the sheet?

Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet.

And there fronts you stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold.

SHORTER REPORTS OF MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

P.S. Boulter

We were up at our cottage in north Cumbria for Hogmanay. It was cold weather and when all the family had celebrated it with us there was a stately start on the fells the next day. David Bond (son-in-law) and I did a round on the Pennines north of Hartside — Black Fell and Thack Moor made what David calls one of Paddy's ***** bog trots. Next day the sun came out and we did a snowy circuit over Bowscale Fell. The holiday finished with a ceremonial family climb of Place Fell with grandchildren in their new boots.

We couldn't go ski-ing this year as I had a six week visiting Professorship in Australia and we had almost no leisure, but in South Australia we did two walks over extinct volcanos, Mount Gambier and Mount Schank — a real contrast in temperature — heading for 100° (late February) and we drove there from Melbourne through the last smoulder of the dreadful Australian bush fires.

All our hosts assumed that we had no need of leisure until we got to Brisbane where old friends had fixed to take us up to the lovely rain forest mountains of the Lamington Plateau on the N.S.W. — Queensland border. It was wild country complete with tree ferns, creepers and wallabies and the walks at the 4,000 ft. level were delightful. There are only two places to stay and we were at Binna Burra in log houses with a central mess room where a vast dinner was followed by very energetic barn dancing — Aussie style.

We worked our way back by Hong Kong which was misty the whole time until the last day when we got to Victoria Peak and marvelled at the view over the South China sea and the mass of little islands.

In the late Spring and Summer we had a few weekends in the Lakes and Border hills, keeping in trim for the Summer meet. This has been described elsewhere in the Journal, but it really was excellent. Peter's return visit to our beloved Bivio was wonderful. With our friends old and new we quartered the Peaks and Passes from the village including Langhard, Surgonda Lunghin, and Turba. A snow plog over Piz Corvatsch with unbelievable views was good preparation for the club rampage across Piz Palu on a lovely day. Most of the meet then went home but Mary and I stayed on and with Herbert and Lotte Norton, went over Piz Nair, the Fuorcla Traunter Ovas and Corn Suvretta. On the way back Mary and I were charged with the awful responsibility of looking at hotels for the 1984 Saas Fee meet, so we went there via the Oberalp Pass (Pazolastock) and the Furka (Klein Furkahorn). We had a most gracious reception in Saas Fee, looked at hotels, met Herr Perrig of the Saas Fee Kurverein and wandered up the Allalinhorn. (Dress rehearsal for 1984). We came back through the Black Forest and walked up the Kandel in thick mist. In October we were on a lecture trip in Portugal and had walks in the Serra de Sintra, the Bucaco Forest and the lovely Serra de Caramulo. We know the Portuguese hills from many years ago and they are still deserted and beautiful. The year ended with some more days in Cumbria and the Hogmanay appetite was sharpened by a round over the Howgills.

Peter Farrington

In the autumn of 1982 my usual partner Tony Perrons made a welcome return to climbing after his bad accident on Skye in the spring. After three months on our local hills, getting fit again and adjusting to monocular vision he felt ready for bigger things. We arranged a week in February, based at Onich and were lucky enough to catch the best winter conditions for many years. Routes completed were: Bidean nam Bian via North Gully, Coire nan Lochan; Aonach Eagach Traverse; Na Gruagaichean and Binnean Mhor from Kinlochleven; Cinderella Route, Inner Coire, Creag Meagaidh; Beinn Odhar Mhor and Bheag from Glenfinnan. Also walks up Glen Nevis/Steall and Gleann Cia-aig, near Loch Arkaig. A magnificent week of great variety.

In June we joined up again with Bill Gault who had been forced reluctantly to return to work after the first two days at Onich. This time we spent a week together in Wester Ross, starting from Dundonnell and going via Shenavall and over Beinn Dearg Mhor to Carnmore. After a bivouac we returned to Shenavall via Gorm Loch Mor, A'Mhaighdean and Glean na Muice. Later traverses of An Teallach and Stac Pollaidh were almost an anti-climax after the solitude of Carnmore.

As usual the rest of the year was spent climbing and walking on Islay and Jura including one special trip with my son Simon. On his tenth birthday we camped on top of one of the Paps of Jura and climbed together. Heatwave conditions and hordes of clegs deterred him from the third but we crossed the island, west to east, to complete a memorable walk.

Midgley Family 1983

We seem to have fallen into a pattern (or rut) for our outdoor activities for the past few years. This year was little different — Lakes for Northern Dinner, bit of snow, climbing and some lousy skiing. Lakes for Hut maintenance meet. Lakes — a couple of other weekends in Spring but generally poor weather precluded much activity. Easter for a complete week's skiing in Val di Aosta — Italy. Good as usual. I'm improving and can nearly catch the children again.

We spent most of August in Val di Aosta with George and June Heeles and family. We walked a lot, did the odd peak and generally enjoyed ourselves.

Back to the Lakes for a few weekends including the Buffet party — Splendid do — lousy weather. A few stolen days mid week with just desserts — lousy weather.

In between we've had many weekends at our house in North Yorkshire and done some walking (and climbing) on the N. Yorks. Moors.

Nothing of great note but lots of very enjoyable days in the hills.

G.B. Pennett

It has been a quiet year in the hills for me. Myself and my wife Valerie started the year with a walk in Wharfedale taking in Lindley Reservoir on January 2nd. We were not out again until February when we had another walk in Wharfedale to Simon's Seat and Lord's Seat. There was plenty of snow on the hills. We chose a deplorable day in March for another outing to the Dales. We drove to Arncliffe, continued to Halton Gill and Foxup, where we walked in pouring rain and wind to Cosh. The following month (April 1st, Good Friday) we visited Lancashire

to do a walk in the Pendle district taking in Pendle Hill (1831 ft.) It was a glorious day but unfortunately it was the day the Lancastrians made their annual pilgrimage to Pendle Hill. Nevertheless after climbing the hill we found peace and quiet in another direction. On April 3rd we visited the Lake District for the day. We stopped at Troutbeck and spent the afternoon on Wansfell (1597 ft.) and then continued to Wansfell Pike. Not very energetic but very rewarding so far as views. Late May and early June saw us in Scotland. We stayed at a farm at Machrie on the Isle of Arran. It was not a particularly good week weatherwise but we enjoyed moorland walks to Machrie, Stone Circle, Kilpatrick Dun and on the headlands. Another day we did the walk from Brodick to Corrygills where I met an old Rugby Union pal. We continued to Dunn Fionn (glorious views over Brodick to Holy Island). We returned to Brodick by the Claucland Hills. Another day we took the ferry from Lamlash to Holy Island where we spent a delightful afternoon on Mullach Mor (1030 ft.) and Mullach Beag. On June 3 we walked from Dougie along the Iorsa Burn to the loch where we ate our "piece" and then continued up the boggy valley. In August we visited Majorca and enjoyed cliff walks around Calas de Majorca. The Autumn was spent walking in Wharfedale (the Chevin) and on Baildon Moor. Hope to make more visits to the hills during 1984.

Ernst Sondheimer

A good and varied year for the hills, with four visits to Scotland and three to the Alps (West, Middle and East). To begin, Hogmanay at Suardalan again. We battled up A'Ghlasbheinn in a semi-blizzard, with lungs full of spin-drift and little to be seen of the splendid view recommended in Hamish Brown's book; definitely a 'bracing' day. Then to Bridge of Orchy to join the SMC meet. The hotel there is doing well again under its new management, but the weather continued poor; a bright interlude one morning just gave us time to climb Beinn Odhar and enjoy a view at last. More poor weather at the end of February, when we went up and down Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn) in zero visibility, and next day deep soft snow compelled a retreat from the long slopes of Carn Mairg. And the snow on the heights was still deep and soft at the end of April, during a long weekend at Allbeithe Youth Hostel in Glen Affric. I was even more unfit than usual, having strained my back hauling sacks of gravel up to my new greenhouse (a dangerous sport, gardening), and even the rough walk-in from Cluanie proved to be an ordeal, the boggy ground and my too-heavy rucksack causing frequent tumbles, usually into a stream, so that my camera filled with water. . . . All part of the enjoyment of the hill life, of course — and I *did* manage to get up Mam Sodhail. Finally, in August, I joined David Cutforth's party at Duirinish Lodge, near Kyle. We had (at last!) a beautifully sunny day for the South Shiel ridge, but I was still going so slowly that we bagged only 3 of the 7 Munros on this delectable ridge, leaving the rest for another day (d.v.). That brings my Munro total, over the best part of a lifetime, to all of 49 — far too many, I fear, still to do. If I ever do finish them, I think I'll be the first Munroist to have begun with the Inn. Pinn. 'the end to many Munroist hopes' (H. Brown).

The first week in the Alps, at the end of May, was spent with friend Richard at his chalet in Ladir, a village above the Vorderrhein in the Grisons. Our ambitious plans to do the local Hausberge were again frustrated by deep snow everywhere, the result of six weeks of bad weather in the Alps. Delightful walks were compensation enough, especially one up the Safiental, along the old road blasted through the cliffs. This is an idyllic corner of the Alps, so far (miraculously) spared the ravages of 'development'.

In July I paid my first visit to the Julian Alps, joining the Czech couple who had been to the High Tatra with us in 1974 (see the 1975 Journal) and who were now on their way to Australia (but that is another story). Like so many before me, I was

immediately captivated by this special corner of the Alps with its own very special flavour. Our plan, duly carried out, was to climb Triglav by easy stages from the South, starting and finishing at Lake Bohinj. The main problem was thirst! Be warned: there is not a drop of water to be found on these limestone ridges; at lower levels there are streams enough, but these gush fully-grown out of the hillside. On our first day, having started our walk by taking the Vogel cableway as recommended in Robin Collomb's guidebook, we found the café at the top, where we had planned to fill our water bottles, firmly closed. For the rest of the day there was not a pot of shade on the ridge, the temperature must have been around 100°, and I discovered what was meant by dehydration. However, the rest of the tour was pure delight: the system of paths and 'vie ferrate' (is that the right plural?) is excellent, the huts are good and cheap, the scenery is superb, the flora is quite incredible, and the Slovenes are very friendly. There is one other hazard, though: thunderstorms of great ferocity which interrupted the hot weather from time to time; it wasn't funny to be caught out in one of these. When the Czechs had departed I spent the rest of my time touring the region by car, walking to the Slemenova špiča from the Vršič pass for the famous view of the Jalovec, visiting the Kugy statue in the Trenta valley and the botanical garden nearby (which looked sadly neglected), and going on the rough drive up the Vrata valley to admire Triglav's N wall and the Partisan Memorial. A wonderful week: it made me return to Julius Kugy's book, surely the greatest song of praise to the mountains ever composed.

Finally, the second stage of our Grajan Alps walk was happily completed at the end of August. We started in the Valgrisenche where we had finished last year, went up to the Rifugio Clea Scavarda, then over the Col du Rutor to La Thuile (a long day), and over the Col de Chavannes to the Rifugio Elisabetta in the Val Veni. Mixed weather but good walking. We had promised ourselves the Gran Paradiso as a final 'bonne-bouche'. Walking up to the Vittorio Emanuele hut (that remarkable palace) it was raining hard, and it went on raining through the night and was still raining when we woke up. Well, as we all know (but do we always believe it?), one should always be prepared to make a start. This time it paid off: the rain stopped, the clouds began to roll away, and by the time we had reached the glacier, wonderful views began to unfold (a bit hazy for me because of trouble with spectacles — such are the hazards of mountaineering — but ample scope for photography). As everyone also knows, the Paradiso is one of the two easiest 4000-ers in the Alps (no rope is required), so one can just relax and enjoy oneself, and one is certainly not short of company. The main problem in fact was to squeeze through the crowds on the summit ridge to the platform by the Madonna, with one nastily exposed step on the way to provide a little tingle for the nerves.

Oliver St. John

'Auch kleine Dinge können uns erfreuen'

With the first full year after retirement from work, there has been a chance to visit a number of odd spots in different areas; the mountains have mainly been of very modest height, and quite straightforward, but they have given us great pleasure nevertheless.

At home, we continue to enjoy the Black Mountains and the Brecons and walks along the Ridgeway, which is now only 3 miles from our new home. The Greek Islands in May are certainly not Alpine, but the scenery, flora and fauna are magnificent. In Crete, the gorge of Samaria, aflame with oleanders and other shrubs, more than fulfilled our expectations, along with some scrambling on the central mountain group. The highest peak in Kos, Dikeos, is scarcely 850m, whilst Kalymnos provided good ridges where the rock is reminiscent of the Dolomites. In the Aosta valley in July, the weather was hot and perfect, and there seems no limit to minor, but interesting peaks about 3500m. high which can be climbed in a day from the nearest road-head. The Val de Themes and Val Grisanche, as well as

the Little St. Bernard area, revealed at least a dozen peaks which were new to us, after so many years exploring.

With one son in Hong Kong and another in Los Angeles, we found that the most economical arrangement was to fly round the world, so we took some lightweight boots just in case. Two impressions stand out: it was hot and humid and, whilst scampering up The Mound, at Stanley, before breakfast, we were soaked to the skin by a tropical downpour, which was extraordinarily refreshing. Then, we arrived at the top of the Peak just as it was getting dark, with a magnificent view of Hong Kong city lit up like a fairground. A short trip on a ferry brought us to a neighbouring island where we traversed Lantau Peak the highest summit locally. Although only 3000 ft. high, it is reached by an ascent of some 2000 rough rock steps from a monastery at its foot; a pilgrimage made annually by the monks. In September with the temperature about 90° and high humidity, it was really exhausting. A short climb to a peak on the Chinese border completed our exercise.

With a few hours only in Tokyo, our next stop was Honolulu, where we walked from the beach up to, and scrambled right round, Diamond Crater and so on to Los Angeles to meet up with my son Christopher.

I think it was Julius Kugy who, after climbing all the 'viertausender' in the Alps, was rudely disturbed from his retirement as a result of the remeasurement of a peak previously not qualifying. Fortunately I am unlikely to find myself in this invidious position but, with a motley assortment of 39 peaks over 4000 m, I was unable to resist a suggestion from Christopher that we climb Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the United States, outside Alaska. This led to a trip to the Sequoia Park where, as an extra bonus, we climbed some short routes on magnificent granite: the difficulty on these cliffs, The Needles, near Ponderosa, varies from about 5.5 to 5.13, covering the span of about Severe to Impossible!

The only practical route for Mount Whitney involved a trek of about 12 miles with a rise of some 7000 ft. There is a fine path, originally designed for pack-mules, rising evenly from the road-head through glorious scenery. We camped out at 12000 ft. and, after a wretched night, we were happy to leave by moonlight and tackle the 113 zigzags which lead to the final ridge and summit, a respectable 14496 ft, which provided outstanding views all around. The path, though covered over with snow and ice, continues to the top, but in spite of the lack of technical interest, I regard this as one of our most satisfying expeditions — a clear case of serendipity! At our camp site, we were besieged by exotic birds, chipmunks and families of marmots, so tame that they would take the food off your plate.

Les Swindin

My mountaineering activities in 1983 came to an abrupt halt at the beginning of September when a prolapsed disc left me with a useless right leg. A microscopic disectomy appears to have sorted out the problem but I now have to endure three months convalescence. I write these notes at the end of October and the New Year seems a long way away.

Last winter season got off to a good start in the two days before Xmas with some fine weather and climbing conditions in the Lake District so that then, and in the weeks following, I was able to do several routes both there and in North Wales. Before the thaw eventually set in I'd managed to do more snow and ice routes than in any previous winter.

This good fortune couldn't last, nor did it. I'd planned a ski tour in the Dauphiné, but rotten weather along with extremely high avalanche risk caused us to look elsewhere. We turned to the Queyras, a range of lower peaks to the south of Briançon, where we did a rather uninspiring tour before the storms put us off completely.

During the spring and early summer I enjoyed some fine rock climbing and, at Whitsuntide, a few marvellous days walking in Knoydart. I understand now

why people who talk or write about this part of Scotland are so enthusiastic. Peter Fleming joined me in the Alps again, both of us with the aim of adding to our lists of 4000ers. Our training route was the Dômes de Miage which we did from the Trélatête Hotel — crazy really because it is a 1700m. climb from there and far too much for training. We missed out on the traverse because Peter left his crampons in the Conscrit hut en route and we deemed it safer to return by our route of ascent. We stayed overnight at the Conscrit, which incidentally sleeps about 40 and does have a warden which is not what the A.C. guide book tells us, then nipped up the Aig. Bérange next day to complete our training programme. Les Droites was our first major objective which we climbed by its easiest route and although we had near perfect conditions it is not a climb that I can particularly recommend. Rather than sit around in Chamonix in what became somewhat stormy weather we spent the time moving base to the Oberland where we were able to climb the Lauteraarhorn, Jungfrau and Schreckhorn in that order. The first of these by its south couloir, a long and tedious approach from the Lauteraarhorn hut to reach the foot of the mountain followed by an uninteresting climb apart from the last 100m. Our attempts to find the correct way across the south face of the mountain to facilitate an easy descent to the new Schreckhorn hut met with failure so we had to reverse the ascent route and cross the Strahlegg pass. We simply could not face the Schreckhorn next morning. Still we were fit by now and had no difficulty with the stiff walk to the Rottal hut which we did in well under four hours. The Inner Rottal ridge took us to the Jungfrau and a return to poor weather again at the Monchjoch hut. This meant that Peter missed out on adding any further to his list and forced us to return to Grindelwald. With only two days of the holiday remaining we just had time to do the S.W. ridge of the Schreckhorn to complete my list as far as Switzerland is concerned. Now there are three left for me (more for Peter), but really what a silly exercise this is. Roll on 1984.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 30th June, 1983.

The AGM

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Alpine Club, 74, South Audley Street, London, W.1. at 6 p.m. on Saturday, 19th November 1983.

The President, Mr. J.P. Ledebor was in the Chair and 24 Members were present. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6th November 1982 which had been circulated in the Journal, were signed by the President as a correct record.

The Hon. Solicitor, Mr. M. Bennett, then took the Chair. As special business the following Resolution, on being duly proposed and seconded, was passed unanimously.

"The the proviso to Rule 6(a) of the Rules of the Association be relaxed to the extent necessary to enable Mr. J.P. Ledebor to be elected as President for a further period of one year".

The President then resumed the Chair and the following Officers and Committee Members were elected for the ensuing year:—

<i>President:</i>	Mr. J.P. Ledebor
<i>Vice Presidents:</i>	Mr. F.A.W. Schweitzer, F.R.C.S. and Wing Cmdr. H.D. Archer, D.F.C.
<i>Hon. Secretary:</i>	Mr. A.G. Partridge
<i>Hon. Treasurer:</i>	Mr. M. Pinney
<i>Hon. New Members Secretary:</i>	Mr. J.W. Eccles
<i>Hon. Meets Secretary:</i>	Mr. J.C. Berry
<i>Hon. Social Secretary:</i>	Professor E.H. Sondheimer
<i>Hon. Hut Secretary:</i>	Mr. W.B. Midgley
<i>Hon. Editor:</i>	Mr. S.M. Freeman
<i>Hon. Solicitor:</i>	Mr. M. Bennett
<i>Committee Members:</i>	Mrs. M. Baldwin Mr. J.F. Harris Mr. T.G.B. Howe Mr. D.A. Milwain Mr. D.E. Bond Mr. B.G. Bowes Mr. A.I. Andrews Mrs. P.M. Boulter Mr. V.V. O'Dell

Mr. N. Moore was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing year.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts for the year ended 30th June 1983. It was resolved that the accounts be adopted.

The Hon. Treasurer explained that the Committee had fixed the flat rate S.A.C. Subscription for 1984 at its last meeting at £20.00. He proposed that the Association subscription and the subscription for Affiliate Members be retained at £7.50 and the joint "husband and wife" subscription at £10.50. It was resolved that the subscriptions be so fixed.

The President called upon Mr. Schweitzer to outline the arrangements for the celebrations in 1984. These were explained by Mr. Schweitzer and Mr. Boulter spoke about the Alphubel Hotel in Saas Fee where the Meet would be based.

The President concluded the meeting by thanking all the Association's officers for the work they had done during the year.

	1983		1982
INCOME FROM MEMBERS			
Subscriptions (Note 1)	1914		1554
Life Membership Credit	50		50
Insurance Commissions	—		21
Management Fees	—		200
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	1964		1825
LESS: EXPENDITURE			
Hire of Rooms	350		350
Journal (Note 2)	1068		920
Printing, Postage, etc. SNT0	202		271
Printing, Postage, etc. ABM	178		175
Insurance	17		17
Entertainment	86		56
BMC Subscription	89		81
Sundries (travel expenses)	65		58
		2055	
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		(91)	(103)
ADD: INVESTMENT INCOME			
Association Investments	268		248
Building Society Interest	34		164
Bank Deposit Interest	94		43
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	396		455
LESS: Taxation (Note 3)	151	245	273
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		154	170
ADD: Surplus/(loss) on S.A.C. fees		(290)	(174)
VAT		—	104
		<hr/>	<hr/>
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		(136)	100

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

BALANCE SHEET
30th JUNE 1983

			1982	
			2	
FIXED ASSETS (Note 4)	2			
INVESTMENTS AT COST				
(Note 5)	2216		2881	
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock of Ties at cost	86		93	
Debtors	470		435	
Cash on Deposit	1696		774	
Current Account	95		128	
	2347		1430	
DEDUCT CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors	109		154	
Subscriptions in Advance	832		885	
	941		1039	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		1406		391
		3624		3274
SOURCES OF FINANCE				
Life Membership Account		652		702
Accumulated Revenue				
Balance at 30th June	2432		2332	
ADD Profit on redemption	336			
ADD Excess of income over expenditure	(136)	2632	100	2432
Donation and Bequests		340		140
		3624		3274
J.P. Ledebor — President				
M. Pinney — Hon. Treasurer				

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR

I have examined the books and vouchers of the Association and report that the attached accounts, together with the notes, are in accordance therewith.

N. Moore — Hon. Auditor

NOTES

1	SUBSCRIPTIONS. Subscription income is derived as follows:—			
	MEMBERS	Year to 31.12.83	162 @ 7.5	1215
		Year to 31.12.81	177 @ 7.5	1327
	AFFILIATED MEMBERS			
		Year to 31.12.83	60 @ 7.5	450
		Year to 31.12.82	58 @ 7.5	443
				1665
				1770
	Adjustment re subscriptions in advance			
		(82/83: 885— 832)		53
		In respect of earlier years		196
				1914
				1554
2	JOURNAL Cost of the journal is made up as follows:—			
		Printing		923
		Despatch costs and other expenses		165
				1088
		LESS: Advertising Revenue		20
				1068
				920
3	TAXATION			
	The Ass. is liable to Corporation Tax on its income from investments.			
4	FIXED ASSETS		COST	DEPRECIATION TO DATE
		Projector	166	165
		Equipment at S.N.T.O.	80	79
5	INVESTMENTS			
	These are as follows:—			
	1080 Brunner Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p			
	1043 United States Deb. Corporation Ordinary Shares of 25p			
	1500 3 Treasury 1985			
	Cost of these holdings was	2216 (1982— 2881).	Aggregate market value	
	at 30th June 1983 was	4456 (1982— 4160).		

THE ANNUAL DINNER, 19th NOVEMBER 1983

61 members and guests attended this year's dinner at the Washington Hotel. The arrangements were similar to those found successful in recent years, in that table wine was provided. Some of us find this more restful and seemly than the contest to catch the wine waiter's eye. The order of speeches also very properly followed hallowed custom. The President proposed the Royal Toast. Paddy Boulter spoke of the Swiss Confederation and its place in our affections, and Mr. C. Caratsch, Charge d'Affaires at the Swiss Embassy, responded. The President proposed the health of the Association and Guests, and gave an account of the state of the A.B.M. Maurice Bennett responded on behalf of the Alpine Club.

The evening began and ended with gatherings around the bar, which provide opportunity to converse again with old friends, a major raison d'être of the Dinner.—

SMF.

THE OUTDOOR MEETS

Brackenclose Meet January 1983

Peter Fleming

Probably due to the weather we have come to expect on this meet, the turnout was poor, but it was a weekend of contrasts. To begin with one member turned up in a Ferrari, and the other arrived on a bicycle complete with trailer — Yes there were only two.

On the Saturday, in very blustery but mild and overcast conditions, we set off up Piers Ghyll and then up to the col at Little Narrow Cove, where we began to encounter deep snow and a full gale. However, not to be put off, we forced ourselves, sometimes on all fours, to the summit of Scafell Pike, where we did not remain long.

Leaning at an angle of 45 degrees into the wind we made our way to Mickledore. On reaching the ridge we were met by even stronger winds sweeping up from Hollow Stones and with difficulty fought our way down the screes against it, to return to Brackenclose.

A most pleasant evening was spent at the Screes Hotel over a bar meal and a pint of or two, reminiscing over past climbing activities and discovering that we were a very well travelled trio.

On Sunday morning the fells were still being raked by high winds and low cloud, so we decided on a low level walk along the shore footpath below the Screes. We drove down to the end of the lake in the Ferrari, hardly ever getting out of second gear. The return journey on foot took a little longer.

Northern Dinner Meet 1983

W.B. Midgley

The formula was as for previous years with the meet based in Patterdale at the G.S. Hut and Glenridding Hotel. This year the weather was a little better than that of previous years and we had quite good snow conditions.

On Saturday the tops were clear and parties were out attacking gullies, ridges and faces all over the area.

The turn-out for the dinner was again extremely good and 93 members and guests attended the dinner at the Glenridding Hotel. John Jackson was Guest Speaker and his slide show gave an interesting comparison of the changes to parts of the Himalaya during the past thirty odd years.

Sunday's weather was reasonable but cloud covered some of the peaks. This didn't stop the intrepid climbers or even the odd (extremely odd) ski.

Fron Francis Easter 1983

S.M. Freeman

This year there was no confusion about the announcement of the meet, and nine people attended. The weather was not too bad except for a strong west wind, which drove us eastward, just like last year. We did not escape it altogether even on Siabod, where conditions were a little harsh for a time. Not much more was done apart from very agreeable wood walks and other tourist trips including Bodnant and a pilgrimage to Balenau Ffestiniog guided by Don Clarke. He also enlivened our evenings by taking us all round the world on slides.

Derbyshire Meet April 29—May 2nd 1983

D. Penlington

Friday evening was clear and dry promising well for the morrow. Most members had arrived by midnight, Scotland, the N.E., S.W., Wales and London all being represented.

Saturday — turned out warm and dry. The Hut was quickly deserted.

Frogatt Edge was chosen by the majority. Climbs of all standards were completed and it was not until mid evening that a return to the hut was made. A number went directly to the Wheatsheaf.

Sunday turned out to be a complete contrast. We woke to find a steady down-pour of rain. By mid-day there was no sign that it might clear so a walk was decided on. Cars were taken to the Scotsmans Pack Inn at Hathersage. The walk was then over Stanage Edge and south along the line of the Edges back to Baslow. Wet all the way.

Monday was like Sunday, in fact the rain had not stopped and did not appear likely to do so. By early afternoon everyone had decided on a return home. Derbyshire had been somewhat unkind.

Arran, Spring Bank Holiday 1983

S.M. Freeman

This meet was advertised for May 28—31 but in fact it continued until about June 4. Unfortunately the leader was taken ill at the last moment, so that the hotel based party was depleted. The caravanners arrived as planned but there was delay before the two groups made contact. The weather also fell a long way short of the wonderful standards maintained for a number of years past on Scottish Spring meets. On all those occasions we were much further north: meet organisers take note please. The indoor party did have the compensation of excellent quarters at a modest price at the Bay Hotel at Lamlash.

The caravanners traversed Beinn a' Chliabhan, Beinn Tarsuinn and the A'Chir ridge. Then we got together and had a good day on the Goat Fell group, ascending via Cioch na h'Oighe from the vicinity of the Devil's Punchbowl. On our next trip we were driven off Cir Mhor by weather. For the rest, we managed coast and lowland walks, a visit to the Castle gardens at Brodrick and so on. It is believed that the caravanners did little better after the editor's return on June 2.

Bosigran, 24th—26th June 1983

Gillian Bull

This was originally Mike Pinney's meet, but, as he was unable to attend due to his impending departure to the Himalayas, he sent me the key!

Arriving in the early hours of Saturday morning, we were confronted with the mysteries of starting the generator, which resolved itself in technique and forceful cranking. Then to our relief we were able to appreciate the hut's facilities.

I think the eleven of us found this a most enjoyable meet. The weather was beautiful and the rock warm. Many of the classic climbs on *Bosigran* were achieved including Commando Ridge, Doorpost, Doorway, Andrew etc., the conditions were perfect.

On the Saturday, Don Hodge entertained us all by swimming across to Porthmoina Island and climbing to the top where he disturbed the resident sea-bird community, causing quite a commotion.

On the Sunday, some of us watched for a while in admiration, Roland and Mark Edwards (possibly the finest sea-cliff climbers in the country) putting up a new route.

Bernina Alps 24th July—14th August 1983

Jeff Harris

We arrived at Silvaplana on the afternoon of Sunday 24th July along with the rain and thunderstorms which had followed us down the German Autobahns all day. As we waited in the car for the rain to subside and let us reach the camp office without being drenched, thoughts of last years meet at *Argentiere* flooded back. Within hours, however, the cloud was beginning to lift and the sun began to cheer us as we met up with some of the early arrivals on the site and began to make ourselves at home. The campsite was very crowded with sail boarders who had come for the Swiss National Day bank holiday and in fact we camped outside of the area roped off but this meant that we could stay together and form our own Vango village.

For the rest of the first week the weather stayed very hot and sunny and on the rest days between climbs the campsite was festooned with climbers happily sunbathing, reading, sampling the local cheap plonk and swimming in the beautiful but bitterly cold lake. Some members even managed to scrounge sail boards and show off their nautical skills. Unfortunately the glaciers were generally in poor condition as a result of the warm weather, with snow bridges collapsing very rapidly making for long days, tales of close escapes from crevasses and abseils down 30ft. bergschrunds. Of course, it was too good to last and on Swiss National Day the clouds gathered and thunder rumbled around the valleys. One party were lucky enough to be up at the *Diavolezza* Hotel and were invited to join the celebrations which included an enormous feast, while others at the *Tschierva* hut went to bed uncertain of whether they should set out to traverse *Piz Bernina* via the *Biancograt* in the morning. Although the weather did not seem so bad in the early dawn light it deteriorated as the day went on with the *Biancograt* party completing the *Bernina* traverse in a snowstorm with lightning piercing the gloom as they struggled to find the *Marco e Rosa* hut.

The blizzard continued for the next 24 hours condemning the people in the *Marco e Rosa* to its Spartan delights for an extra day and night. Meanwhile those in the valley sheltered from the rain in their cars and tents accompanied by the music provided by our talented classical guitarist.

Several days of rain followed and in between doing touristy things in Italy and *St. Moritz* several training walks were undertaken on the lower hills around the campsite in typical Scottish winter conditions. Towards the end of the second week several parties decided to move off to other areas in search of the sun — some went to *Zermatt* others to *Courmayeur*.

Those that stayed on were rewarded by an improvement in the weather and a large group ascended *Piz Morteratsch* in warm sunshine for glorious views of the whole

Bernina range. Some of the best routes were bagged in the last few days of the holiday as most people forsook rest days to cram in as many routes as possible to make up for the previous week, some teams climbing three routes on consecutive days.

It was a very pleasant surprise to be visited by our President as we were packing up on the final weekend. He was on the *Bivio* meet just up the road.

In total about 30 people attended the meet with a fair spread of people from the *Alpine Club*, *ABMSAC*, *Climbers Club* and *Loughton MC*. I hope that most people left for home feeling that the meet had been a success and I for one was impressed by the number of quality routes climbed.

The following mountains were climbed during the course of the meet:—

PIZ LANGUARD (3261m)

Ascended by all and sundry as a training walk.

PIZ DE LA MARGNA (3158m)

E. Flank (F) ascended by several parties in poor weather when the bigger peaks were out of condition.

PIZ JULIER (3380m)

By the tourist route — great fun was had pulling the chains and fixed cables out from under 2 feet of fresh snow.

PIZ PALU (3905m)

East — west traverse (F/PD) climbed by many.

North pillar of east peak (AD) an excellent climb, although the route generally taken does not follow the English guide book, climbed by several parties.

PIZ GLUSCHAI (3593m)

North ridge (AD/AD+) climbed by one party.

SW ridge (PD/PD+) climbed by many parties, a splendid rock ridge although the glacier approach was rather devious.

East — west traverse (PD+) combined with *La Muongia (3415m)* and *Il Caputschin (3386m)* by one ambitious party, the latter peak was also climbed by many, on its own.

PIZ BERNINA (4049m)

Biancograt (AD/AD+) a justifiably popular classic of the area, climbed by many parties in times varying from 6 to 11 hours depending on the conditions, combining with descent to the *Marco e Rosa* hut by the *Spallagrat*.

PIZ ZUPO (3995m) and BELLAVISTA (3922m)

Traverse (F/PD) completed by one party after climbing *Piz Bernina*.

PIZ MORTERATSCH (3751m)

North flank (F) probably the most climbed mountain in the area, a fine view point, usually traversed from the *Boval* to *Tschierva* hut.

PIZ TSCHIERVA (3545m)

East ridge (F) climbed by many in conjunction with *Piz Morteratsch*.

PIZ ROSEG (SCHNEEKUPPE) (3920m)

Middlemoregrat (AD) a fine route with most of the interest coming in the rock section, surprisingly for such a splendid snow peak, the final ridge to the main summit was not attempted in view of the time and unsettled weather, climbed by several parties.

PIZ SCERSCEN (3971m)

Eisenase (D) a fine route with a sting in the tail on a serious mountain, the descent of the ice nose was an interesting problem, climbed by two parties.

PIZ CORVATSCH (3451m)

Traversed solo by one intrepid member.

Several rock routes were climbed in the *Bregaglia* while the big peaks were out of condition by parties based at the *Albigna* and *Forno* huts.

The Alpine Meet, Bivio, August 6 to 20

S.M. Freeman

Before the meet began, some members took the opportunity of a little advance acclimatisation by making a few days' walk-in through the Bregalia, stopping in turn at Soglio, the Sciora hut and the Albigna hut, then across the Septimer and Forcellina passes to Juf in the Averstal, perhaps the highest village of the Alps. These travellers recommend the dortoirs at the Gasthaus — Pension Edelweiss. They finally crossed the Stallenberg to join the others.

The meet itself emerged splendidly from unpromising circumstances. An attempt to arrange a July meet in the Dolomites had foundered, largely because of the extreme difficulties of communicating by post or telephone with Italy, in spite of our having special contacts. We were fortunately able to make late arrangements with the Hotel Grischuna at Bivio on generous terms. We had been there before, and knew that it was good. At such short notice it was impossible to choose a date which suited everyone, with the consequence that the meet spread over three weeks, to about August 27. In spite of the problems, the attendance comprised C., H. and M. Archer, A.B., and G. Attridge, W. Barritt, M. and P. Boulter, R. and S. Cameron, J. and T. Coales, A. and S. Dewar, H. and L. Flook, M. Freeman, P. and V. French, S. Harris, N. Hetherington, B. Howe, H. and L. Norton, D. Riddell, G. Roger, J. Weller, J. and J. Whyte, a total of 30.

The weather was exceptionally fine and warm, provoking argument as to whether we could remember a parallel. The hotel, too, lived up to our best memories of it. A good deal of modest climbing was done from base level to about 3300m., but not much higher. A party of several ropes did, however, enjoy a day in excellent conditions on Piz Palu, some traversing and some being content to ascend and return. Of the lower peaks, Piz d'Agnel gave the most trouble, abortive attempts being made from sides which proved difficult, before an easier way was found. Other tops reached included Piz Corvatsch (cable car used on way up, walk down), P. Languard, P. Lunghein, P. Nair, P. Neir, P. Scalottas and Crap da Pala near Lenzerheide, P. Surgonda, P. Turba, Roccabella, Corn Suvretta and Uf den Fluen. Most of the familiar local alps were visited and many fuorclas crossed; gratified botanists gave particular mention to substantial beds of *Eritricium Nanum* on the Fallerfurka. A presidential visit was made to the camping meet at Silvaplana. The party gradually thinned out in the third week, leaving the Boulters to see the last two days through.

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Alpine Re-Union Meet, Patterdale November 5th, 1983

Jeff Harris

About 15 people attended the meet at the George Starkey hut in November. The weather was fairly typical for the time of the year, grey and overcast with the threat of wintery showers, but it did not stop some of the keener members from climbing classic rock routes on Bowfell and Dove Crag. The less adventurous of us resisted the seductive lure of damp greasy rock and went for walks on Blencathra and St. Sundays Crag where the autumn colours were at their finest. On the Saturday event entertainment in keeping with the date preceded the usual slide show of the summer activities, the highlight being Mike Pinney's slides of Pakistan.

Sunday was a less energetic day following the previous late night.

OBITUARY

Gladys Bennett

I must have met Gladys when I first joined the ABMSAC in 1963, for it was impossible to join in any of the activities of the Club without meeting her, occupied with the endless matters in which she played a kindly and helpful part. The aura of hospitality characteristic of the Club and made evident to a new boy owed much to her. At that time, and for a few years afterwards, we did not use British huts in an organised way, but we did have hotel based home meets, of which the annual Easter event was a highlight. These, and the Alpine meet, seemed to be the true Bennett environment. Gladys was always there, with Maurice and David, and usually with friends and relations, who were often being introduced to our kind of mountaineering for the first time, and who were gathered under Gladys's wing however many they might be. The work was well done, for several of them have continued their connection, and some are valued members today. Gladys herself did not join in the more strenuous activities, but was frequently off on walks and excursions, not only with her own people; others of us were kindly invited if we did not happen to be dashing off to a high hut.

I recall how we used to meet at the Bennett home to rehearse for the annual slide show and edit our contributions, when we were fed and entertained to our great comfort. Then other opportunities for hospitality arose as the Club began to organise for itself more of those events which centre on eating and drinking: the buffet parties, the wine and cheese parties, the fondue parties. Gladys was there with the ladies who have made the occasions so successful.

No-one who spoke for long to Gladys could have failed to appreciate her deep devotion to her vocation of teaching English. The only regret that she ever uttered was that she would be forced to retire sometime. At her Memorial Service numbers of her former pupils took part, paying touching tribute to her memory, and others waited to understudy or take part had there been time.

Our sympathies go to those who loved her, and particularly to Maurice.—SMF

Walter Kirstein 1896—1983

Our beloved Walter, whose zest for life enlivened the Association for so many years and who seemed able to defy the passing of time, is no more. A member of the UTO Section of the SAC for over 60 years and of the Association since 1947, he graced our meets and meetings in his inimitable fashion and he has left memories of an enthusiastically dedicated skier and mountaineer, a gifted photographer, and an unfailingly charming and kindly personality — and for those fortunate to have benefitted from his professional services, of an exceptionally competent and kindly dental surgeon.

Walter was born in Berlin where his father was a dental surgeon, and he early acquired his life-long love of mountains in the course of family winter sports holidays. Only 17 when the first world war broke out he was refused by the German army as being too frail so he joined the Red Cross in which he served until, in 1916 he was accepted for the light artillery from which he was invalided out with shell splinters in his leg shortly before the armistice. He qualified as a dental surgeon after the war and in the early 1920s he began cross-country skiing and ski-mountaineering in earnest (no ski lifts in those days) and for years took all his holidays in the wintertime in the Engadin, Berner Oberland, Valais or Austria. He married Lona in 1930 and introduced her to skiing and dentistry in both of which they were inseparable partners for so long. They came to Britain in 1936/7 with their young children and were enabled to practise their profession by the

acceptance of their German qualifications. In 1944 Walter was allowed to join the Home Guard in which he served with the anti-aircraft guns to make use of his artillery knowledge gained in the first world war.

Already a member of the UTO Section since 1931, he joined the Association in 1947 to become one of our most active members — it was with the Association that he really began his summer climbing in the Alps that was to culminate in that remarkable succession of Alpine seasons in his 70s and 80s with a list of climbs that must surely be unique for one of his years. The crags and hills of Britain also gave him challenge and delight, for which our meets provided many happy occasions. But above all he was a most accomplished and dedicated skier. His favourite ski grounds were in Austria and the Engadine and in California where his daughter's home beckoned him in most winters.

He had been interested in photography since a boy, and his colour slides, post-war, were very fine — his illustrated lectures on skiing and climbing in the Alps were outstanding and he was most generous in responding to invitations to give them on both sides of the Atlantic. Many of his colour slides were in demand for posters and magazine covers.

The loss in 1968 of his wife Lona from a cancer was a severe blow at the age of 72. A strenuous ski tour in the Oetzal including nine peaks in ten days taxed him physically but restored his confidence to tackle the future, and gave him courage to undertake summer climbs he had not previously considered. In 1972 Walter re-married, and Bertha although untrained in dental work soon became his very competent assistant in the surgery and in the management of his practice — and a most charming presence at our social occasions.

With all his dedication and self-discipline (including strict dieting) that enabled his spare physique to achieve such feats, Walter had a charm of manner and an almost impish sense of humour. As an example of this, I recall the occasion when, having traversed Las Trais Fluors from St. Moritz he and his companions arrived at the southern portal of the Albula tunnel to find that the next local train to stop there was two hours away. Accordingly, he phoned the General Manager of the Rhaetische Bahn in Chur, advised him that a party including the Vice President of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club was held up, and asked him to stop the next express train to pick up the party — which was done. What he did not say was that he himself was the Vice President in question. He was our Vice President from 1968 to 1970, and elected to Honorary Membership in 1979. He became President of the Alpine Ski Club which also bestowed Honorary Membership, a Life Member by Election of the Ski Club of Great Britain and Deputy Chairman of the Touring Committee of the SCGB. Our sympathy goes to Bertha and to Walter's son and daughter and their families.—F.S.

George Roger

(This note is based on that which Charles Warren wrote for the Alpine Club Journal, and is published by permission of the Editor of that Journal. Ed.)

I feel compelled to write something about my old friend George Roger straight away before the journal goes to press. Tragically, he perished on the railway viaduct between Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy on New Year's Eve, and on the occasion of the Scottish Mountaineering Club's New Year meet of which he was the organiser. It is not known exactly what happened because he was alone with his dog at the time. He was returning to the hotel at Bridge of Orchy having left his two companions to continue their walk and some hours later, when they too turned back and had to recross the viaduct, they found both him and his dog dead between the rails. The weather was bad at the time and it looks as if the wind and rain and with the hood of his anorak up, he may not have heard a train coming. But how very sad this is; and what a terrible shock for his companions on the S.M.C. meet it must have been that he should have lost his life on the very first day

of a New Year meet which he had himself organised. Normally, I would have been there; but how glad I was, in the circumstances, that I had to miss the meet this time through last minute minor illness.

George Roger was elected to the Alpine Club in 1949 and to the ABMSAC in 1947. A former President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club he was always one of its most popular and hard working members. It was he who, of recent years, was its most efficient meets secretary. Only last year he was with us on our meet at Bivio. He had had over thirty seasons in the Alps and had twice been in the Himalaya. Never a really great mountaineer in the sense that he became a leader outside his own Scottish mountains George was, none the less, highly experienced. And what after all really matters, he was a true devotee of the hills and mountains. Many have been the occasions on which he has climbed with me; and Munroed with me, both winter and summer, in Scotland. Memorable have been our excursions in the Alps together, both in the Val d'Aosta and Dauphine. But the episode which stands out most vividly in my memory of days out with him in the mountains was a last minute dash to that romantic peak in the Vercors, the Mont Aiguille, on our way home from a climbing holiday at La Berarde. What an unexpectedly memorable day that was, in more senses than one, on which we climbed the "Mons Inasensibilis" of Antoine de Ville by his original route of 1492. We were lent a rope by a friendly French party once they had discovered that we were English and not German. The climb was steep but not too difficult, and it landed us on a top which was a flowery meadow over which we walked to a cross on the summit to join up with our French friends in an *Entente Cordiale*. My salutation to the passing of a most important member of both our clubs and a memorable and much loved character.—C.W.

Robert Tyssen-Gee

Robert Tyssen-Gee was a member of the S.A.C. and of the Association from 1936 to 1977. He was for many years a regular attender at Association lectures and functions and was Hon. Auditor from 1957 to 1967.

Robert's climbing activities were combined with his consuming interest in nature and in particular in meteorology, glaciology and natural history. He was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a Member of the British Glaciological Society.

Although he climbed widely in the Alps and on the British hills, Robert did not confine his activities to those areas. He climbed in Norway in 1936 and in 1944 and 1945 he made various long treks in Iceland and ascended most of the major peaks there. He climbed in the Drakensburg in South Africa in 1950.

In 1974 Robert visited Antarctica. Although this was an occasion for nature study and sightseeing rather than climbing, he made landings at various points. These included Deception Island and Hope Bay in the Weddell Sea. The return journey involved spending several days in the Falkland Islands. On another occasion Robert's travels took him to the Galapagos Islands.

Robert had been a member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club since 1934 and he became a member of the Alpine Club in 1952.

Robert did not aspire to high grade technical climbs but he had a great love of and interest in the mountains. He was thorough in everything he did and considerable determination lay behind his friendly and modest manner.—M.B.

Sir Norman Watson Bart

We mourn the death of Sir Norman Watson, a very senior member of the A.B.M.S.A.C., the A.C. and the Alpine Ski Club.

He died on May 19th 1983, after a long illness, cared for to the last by his wife. To the end he kept his charm and his interest in the mountains.

He was born on March 17th 1897 in Manchester. As an Oxford Undergraduate he went to the first war as an officer in the King's Royal Rifles and after he was wounded in the Battle of the Somme he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps — soon to become a pilot and he spent the rest of the war on active service which took its toll of his strength. He went to Switzerland to recuperate and there discovered his life-long interest in ski-ing and ski mountaineering and joined the S.A.C.

He had special affection for the Rockies and did great things there. In 1935 he led an expedition which made the first ski crossing of the British Columbian Coast range, making the first winter ascent of Mount Waddington. His book "Round Mystery Mountain" is a great reminder of a pioneering exploit.

During these years between the wars he combined business interests and public life with the development of the Canadian Rockies into the ski Mecca which it is today. He founded the Ski Club of the Canadian Rockies which is based at Lake Louise. Here he encouraged mountain ski-ing and after service in the R.A.F. in the second war, he bought the Post Hotel at Lake Louise. This is still today a Swiss outpost in the Rockies and there his portrait looks over the later generations who come to enjoy the areas which he developed and preserved.

Here the Norman Watson Race is annually competed for and until the last year of his life, he loved to go there and share the delight of those who return to look from Whitehorn Mountain and from the Ptarmigan Hut that he built, to the majestic Mounts Temple, Lefroy and Victoria.

He had, of course, many interests in this country as well, and some years ago he served as High Sheriff of Berkshire.

We salute a man of great charm and ability — a true lover of the mountains and we grieve with Lady Watson in her great loss.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Poet of Action

Time Gentlemen. Some Collected Poems by Hamish Brown. Illustrated by Ian Strachan. Aberdeen University Press. 134pp. £4.90.

Many readers of the *Journal* will be aware of Mr. Brown's distinguished record as a mountaineer. Most folks, if they climb all the Munros, are content (and rather proud, probably) to do it once; Hamish Brown has done it five times so far, and there seems no reason which he shouldn't do it five more times. His knowledge of the Atlas mountains is probably unsurpassed, and a little jaunt like walking from *John o' Groats to Land's End*, along the tops of all the high hills in between, he takes in his remarkable stride and records in books which are valued by hundreds of lesser mortals. I don't know if his poems are so well known as his perambulations, but on the evidence of this book, they deserve to be.

For Hamish Brown is a formidable poet; he has good things to say, and he says them well, and clearly, in this age when poetry has lost its way and speaks with strange tongues, so that very often meaning, if there is any, is the first element to go by the board. These are simple poems — all the best poetry is simple, for its business is to speak of the human condition to as many human hearts as will hear it. An example, for mid-winter:

North Wind

North Wind, North Wind,
Pluck a cloud for me;
Shake it over sinners
For Nativity.

North Wind, North Wind,
Paint the starry trees,
Show us how to worship
As cattle on their knees.

Undoubtedly the mountain airs blow away cant and hypocrisy, but I doubt if this poet took any up with him as he climbed. He sees life steadily, and sees it whole, and this generous collection of his poems (beautifully illustrated by Ian Strachan) will grace any shelf it stands on, even if the reader who set it there never went higher towards Heaven than Hampstead Heath.

Kenneth Hopkins

High Level

The Alps from End to End, by David Brett. (Victor Gollance Ltd.).

207pp. 29 photographs. 9 sketch maps. £10.95.

This book repays reading. I have in fact read it twice, being prevented by circumstances from sitting down to write the review first time, and this has been no hardship.

In the summer of 1981 the author walked from la Bérarde to Heiligenblut, intending to emulate the manner of the Haute Route for the whole journey, that is to say to keep to a direct high level line as far as practicable. He also aimed to climb a number of peaks. As it turned out he was largely successful in his aims except, ironically, in the part covering the Haute Route itself. Here he was constantly driven back by evil weather towards the roads.

The walk occupied 44 days, with 41 camping stops. The bad weather described above actually shortened it, and the author recommends taking a little longer. All was done on foot except that the rule could be relaxed when a valley road was inescapable, in which case transport could be used. As everything was carried on the back, the loads were kept to a minimum: for instance, 100,000 scale maps were used rather than the necessarily more numerous 50,000 scales. Shortage of money reinforced this decision.

The route passed through la Bérarde, Modane, Val d'Isère, Zermatt, Airolo, Maloja, Poschiao, Naturns, Sölden, Sterzing, Prettau and Heiligenblut. 14 peaks were climbed, though more had been hoped for. The author was frequently weather beaten, weary and hungry. He sustained his spirits through adversity by ritual devices such as building tiny cairns to the honour of home and family, and punctiliously offering gifts to the marmots, with whom he was eventually able to sustain a conversation and from whom he seemed to receive advice and encouragement. Such events and the philosophical reflections accompanying them make the book appealing and human. Like an old fashioned novel, it passes through adversity to serenity as the good days come to predominate.

Back to the practical and mundane, the appendices cover the route sufficiently fully to allow the traveller with limited experience of particular sections to find his way. The variants covered include the route actually followed, that which would have been followed had weather permitted, and some possible improved lines that were revealed in the light of experience on the march. Further matters covered are maps and guides and, perhaps more important, details of the equipment carried, which had to be kept to the minimum compatible with achieving the objective safely though not always in luxury. The author writes, modestly, that he hopes the route fulfils the main intention of making a Grand High Level Route from one end of the Alps to the other, giving access to some 30 or so good summits, in a feasible time. He describes himself as "happy in the belief that somehow or other, and with much good fortune, I have been able to complete the finest mountain excursion in Europe". He has also given us a jolly good read. — S.M.F.