

EDITORIAL

Recently I was in Llanberis. This fact is not in itself remarkable. What is remarkable is the change that has come over the place since I was first there, eleven years ago. Not only physically - though the heaps of rusting cans and broken glass bear witness to the diligent efforts of the litter-lout in recent times - but in the type of climber one meets there, the type of climb he does, and above all the extraordinary atmosphere which pervades the valley. The latter is so powerful that when a stranger asked me what I had done the previous day, I felt an acute sense of shame when I replied, "The Horseshoe", so much so that I was obliged to add, by way of excuse, "Just showing a lady round, you know". For it is old-fashioned to go to Llanberis to climb mountains; one goes there to climb the Three Cliffs; and the Three Cliffs are, to a layman's eye (and I am a layman in these matters), little outcrops of crag which land their conquerors within comfortable spitting distance of their cars. (Assuming they want to spit on their cars, of course.) Eleven years ago most of the rock of these cliffs was considered unclimbable, and not long enough or high enough to be interesting anyway. Today they are the valley's principal attraction. Their hardest routes are, it turns out, surprisingly long, and though not impossible, are at any rate highly improbable. This change is symptomatic of the revolution which has swept over rock-climbing during the last decade. Strange to think that many Creads who are not yet thirty belong to a bygone generation of rock-climbers, a generation that has, in a sense, had its day. But these new routes of the modern generation are not merely harder than those on which we were brought up - they are of a new kind. One admired the man who led such climbs as Longland's; today his skill is commonplace. Imagination boggles at the thought of the nerve, skill and tenacity of the man who can put up a route like Cenotaph Corner; but even that is, presumably, tomorrow's commonplace. This revolution is very largely due to the increase in respectability of artificial aids. The current issue of the eminently respectable Climbers' Club Journal speaks casually of "one pitch of 120 feet, requiring 25 pitons and one wooden wedge", and equally casually of Grade VI Alpine ascents. It contains a photograph of a "stance" consisting of a peg and a pair of stirrups, and another which I took to be a picture of a snowy hill seen across a moor, but which turned out to be a close-up of an overhang which has recently been attempted. (I was holding it the wrong way up) In general, the photographs and descriptions of the fantastic climbs which are being done by a large number of people these days are enough to turn many would-be climbers into non-starters, and to make old stagers like myself wonder if we dare call ourselves rock-climbers at all. To end with, there is one comment of Don Roscoe's which I must quote: "Rawbolts are definitely beyond the pale". Like to bet? I'll lay you a yard of karabiners to a tent peg that in fifteen or twenty years' time

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ASCENT OF S.C. GULLY,
STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAN, MASTER 1956 by JIM KERSHAW

Beneath the riven precipice we wait,
 Feeling the need to put on anoraks
 And sweaters, nylon-link ourselves in fate.
 Ascending, kicking footsteps in the snow
 Until the underlay of ice requires
 The keener penetration of an axe,
 Changing the leader when he tires.
 We circumvent a patch of doubtful ice
 By traversing up to the left on rock,
 Each poised in turn upon an airy slab,
 A flimsy knot belay to take the shock
 Of a sudden fall,
 The leader taut in readiness
 To stem the rush of burning rope
 That follows the frantic hands
 Bereft of fingerholds of hope.
 Ahead, a slope of sixty feet of ice
 Is sculptured step by step, until a face
 Of rotten rock looms high above our stance,
 Stripped of its winter carapace.
 And now
 The coire shadows lengthen far below,
 The menace of approaching darkness
 Spurs us on;
 There is no choice, the pitch must go.
 Hand by hand seeking,
 Probing, testing the shattered rock,
 Foot by foot trusting,
 Avoiding the loosened block
 Until the glassy lip is reached,
 The friction of a vibram sole on ice
 Between oneself and paradise,
 The gully's last defence is breached.
 Treasure the moment passing fleet
 As toiling up that frozen labyrinthine street,
 The cornice, promise,
 Gold in the dying sun
 Herald the rising star on Bidean.

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THE RIGHT HAND KNOWS NOT by BARRY PRETTY

Gerry Britton provided the car; Dave Penlington contributed a most handsome gadget - a most comprehensive piece of equipment, which cooked, washed up, aired sleeping bags, carried the rope, stimulated, inspired and simultaneously insured against all those rigours which beset us in the wilderness - he called it "Miss Hughes".

I originally thought that I was brought in to add a certain "Je ne sais quoi" to the party. In point of fact I was hired as a "front man"!

From Stanton-by-Bridge to Glencoe in eight hours - overnight - to find Parslow, Turner, Kershaw & Co. encamped in Glen Etive.

"A rock climb on the Buachaille", said Penlington.

"An easy one", said the drivers - recollecting that Penlington had snored the hours away beneath a great heap of sleeping bags. "Crowberry Ridge", said Penlington, "----- a moderate route".

The Buachaille is of an almost constant shape when seen from any point within the Eastern quadrant - a most confusing fact - so we consulted the book again, stretched our respective imaginations (not difficult, this) and thought it a pity that Murray couldn't have found someone who could draw the mountain in a recognisable fashion!

The second pitch was surprisingly hard - no belay in 110 feet, and D.F. ferretting about on toe holds. Gerry and myself traversed crab-like on to "easier" ground. The weather was perfect - we climbed in shirt sleeves.

A series of short entertaining walls followed. We professed to recognise the V.S. alternative fork in Crowberry Gully to our left. (All good "front men" can recognise at sight, preferably from a distance, the famous V.S. alternatives). Shortly afterwards Penlington was balancing about on the flank of an overhanging nose. It was a hard "moderate", and it wouldn't go; so down into a snow-filled gully bed to find an exit by the right-hand wall where it grew upward to the roof of a shallow cave. We spied Crowberry Tower at the head of its ridge a long way to our right.

Apparently we had wandered without particular merit on to "B Gully Buttress" and, as someone once remarked to Smythe when he confessed to having merely connected different pitches of half a dozen different routes on Lliwedd, - "You haven't done a real climb at all, then".

We followed with a day on the ridges of Bidean, finishing on the summit of Stob Coire Nan Lochan. I glissaded in a few minutes down into the Lost Valley whilst the others descended more sedately down the west side of Gearr Aonach.

1. Bearded ruffian usually dressed in very soiled (very) high altitude clothing scavenged from the cast-off dept. of the A.G.S. - one who has learned by heart where all the hard bits are on all the fashionable thrutches from the Cobbler to Creag Bionard - should be competent to "life" his way from the Whangie Lar to, at least, the Dundonnell Hotel.

A small group of Creag Dubh, bivvying in the Lost Valley, invited me to eat gherkins and vienna sausage - with mince to follow. An excellent meal. It is a long way down Gearr Aonach and it was dark when Gerry, Dave, etc. arrived back at the car.

On Easter Monday we had the camp down in half an hour when a fire (started by a careless tourist) advanced up to Glen Etive at a steady walking pace. Expensive cars, owners unknown, were burgled and pushed into safe quarters. Dury set up his tripod and appeared now and then out of the smoke and flame like some devil's disciple doing a commercial series on the amenities of Hell.

Kershaw, Parslow and Bridges rushed down off the Duachaille - but the excitement was over, and everyone fell to picturing an imaginary Welbourn horrified upon the summit of Crowberry Tower whilst fire engulfed his camp.

The Austin party, together with Andy Kenville, left the blackened heath of Glencoe for Glen Nevis whilst Mike Turner's Vanguard was warming up for the journey South.

The wonderful Easter weather had deteriorated by the following Wednesday and new snow was falling on the Ben and surrounding peaks. Conditions had therefore become very interesting as all reports spoke of much ice above 3,000 feet. A very early start from the region of Poldubh was necessary if any of the bigger climbs were to be attempted. Dave's alarm clock had become remarkably ineffective - 7 a.m. starts were always several hours late.

No-one fretted however. The camp was magnificently equipped with electric lighting hung from trees and inside the tents ("--- like Blackpool pleasure beach on a wet and windy night"). It was a matter of considerable satisfaction to Gerry who engineered the power line without electrocuting anyone.

A cave was explored - another Britton fetish this. Not content with dragging us into the bowels of a Glen Nevis hillside, he lured a party of ladies from Steall into its innermost recess where they squealed and carried on alarmingly. We were assured by our "Guide" that the cave in question is a genuine clan refuge in which relics have been dug up. "Wouldn't be much of a refuge if Britton was there," said Miss Hughes.

We flogged ourselves up to the foot of Terminal Gully on Stob Ban in sharply falling rain. This changed to snow at 1,500 feet and one could see even less. It was just a steep walk on hard snow, kicking steps with some cutting in ice at the top. It was also cold and wet. Andy said he enjoyed it!

Crouching by the cairn was a lone Scot who wished for our company on the descent - visibility was by now a negative quantity. Our companion seemed to know more about the mountain than we did - not surprising since we knew practically nothing, although I had traversed it solo some years ago. Somehow we got off the sharp ridge of normal descent on to a steepish buttress, then into a gully where we couldn't see a thing except ourselves and the still falling snow - so we went on down the gully which turned out to be an easy way off.

One day Gerry and I did the almost classic traverse from Frasers to the Jacobite Bar whilst Miss E. pursued Penlington up something called Sheepflank Wall on the Poldubh Slabs - and Andrew left for home via Bryn-y-wern (where he found a "Jumbo" in distress).

The weather had really clamped down, but at least one day on the Ben was vital to our peace of mind, so on the Friday we walked over Meall An-t-Suidhe to the Allt a Mhuillin - pressed close against a ceiling of heavy cloud. Mid-day is rather late to start on anything very serious from the region of the C.I.C. hut - particularly in the prevailing conditions.

A promising break gave us a few minutes to look about and we were properly impressed by the spread of white across the entire precipice between N.E. and Observatory Buttress. It had the dull metallic look. Observatory ridge looked as if it would warrant an Alpine start.

It was probably too late for Gardyloo so we turned up towards the steep straightforward funnel of No. 3. Sardines were taken beside the snow-covered lochan of Coire Na Ciste - cloud enveloped us and it snowed fairly steadily.

No. 3 is generally no more than a steep walk in someone else's buckets, but no old steps were to hand and half way up we encountered unstable new snow lying on icy hard stuff. From that point on it held our interest and steps were cut only after preliminary excavation. Penlington cut the steps and the rest of us mantleshelfed from one step to the next. There was a deal of loose snow under the cornice - the latter was ice. There was also a fine verandah beneath the curling wave of ice into which we crawled whilst Dave eased himself round a bulging wall, traversed left, swimming through a powdery hang of snow until he could haul up over the edge where the cornice relented.

The Nevis plateau was about as hospitable as Echo Pass at its worst - I doubt whether we could see ten yards. An average course was assessed from several compasses and the Red Lurn track located. We were off the mountain by 6.00 p.m.

Our tents were folded between sharp spasmodic showers and we enjoyed a last scene at Frasers. A very drunk highlander was also encountered - he declared me "a beast" and alternately asserted that 10,000,000 men had died to save my soul - he didn't seem to think it a fair exchange!

EASTER IN THE CALINGORMS by JULY HANDLEY and BETTY BIRD.

Mike Moore and Betty Bird in the Handley's vehicle arrived and met the Langworthys in Aviemore on Good Friday after a non-stop journey. On arrival we found a crowded camp site at Glenmore Lodge or a three mile trek beyond the forest towards Cairngorm.

Having decided on the latter, we then had to repack all our gear, as the Handleys had only one rucksack and a great cardboard box for all their food and equipment. The box (which contained among other things 12 lbs. of potatoes and 7 loaves) was strapped on the rucksack and carried by Ray. Judy followed behind, draped in sleeping bags and carrying two pairs of skis.

Eventually, after many stops and rests in the blazing sunshine, we emerged from the forest and decided to choose the first possible camp site, as by this time we were all completely bug-eyed, as we had had no sleep at all the previous night.

Soon after waking next morning, the sun still shining out of a cloudless sky, the other skiers from Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, etc. were wending their way towards the snow-line. We soon joined them, and on arrival at the summit of Cairngorm, we had a magnificent view of mountains and snowfields stretching away towards Ben Macdhui. We launched Moore on to the skis, and he proved to be no novice, even though it was his first attempt on boards. In the evening we returned to camp and lashed cream on to burning faces.

Sunday, Betty, Ray and Les skied over to Ben Macdhui, leaving Judy, Ronni and Mike on the nursery slopes. Still another most enjoyable day with faces getting ever blistered.

Monday, unfortunately, the Langworthys had to make steps for home, and the remainder of the party joined the other throng of skiers. Here we might easily have been in the Alps. There were expert Swiss skiers, and also beginners' classes with instructors from Norway, Austria, etc., their broken English mingling with the shrieks from the falling beginners.

Tuesday came all too soon and we seemed to have just as much gear as before, even though we were 12 lbs. of potatoes and 7 loaves lighter, among other food that we had devoured during our stay. This time the sun did not bother us, but instead rain, hail and snow.

We left Aviemore at 1 p.m., arriving in Neward at 2 a.m., Burton at 3.30 a.m. and Derby at 4 a.m., all having agreed that it was our best Easter ever!

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"BLOW YOUR OWN TRUMPET" by ERIC BYRNE.

The Editor will, no doubt, grin when he reads this, but I don't suppose he will dare to publish it - after all, mountaineers are supposed to be modest and retiring blokes, for no matter where they congregate you will never hear them "shoot a line" about their deeds of daring. It's always your pals who broadcast how good you are, what you have done, and what you are capable of doing - or so tradition says! Now I have reached the stage of no shame. If I don't wish to follow on a rope up a hard climb, I no longer feel a guilty cowardice, but answer complacently, "Ah, but you should have seen me a quarter of a century ago". Now that's a hell of a time ago; more than one Oread has a mother who was not even staying out late with "her intended", and there are many others who were still crawling on hands and knees, when Clifford Moyer and I began rock climbing in 1927.

So let's begin then, and in my own modest manner I will tell you how good I was, so that you can compare the past glories with the shell you now know - you're getting this for nothing remember - no doubt the "News of the world" would be glad to pay!

Well, I was seventeen in 1927, and an athlete of promise. My physique resembled a drainpipe - my pals called me "Narrow" - my weight was 8st.7lbs. (it's only 9st.7lbs. now) - I was a county skipping champion with a "Health and Strength" certificate of 7,364 unbroken skips, nonstop, in 52 mins.18secs. (I've still got it framed) - I could weight-lift 175 lbs. on a singlehanded lift known as the "Bent Press" (and was eventually to reach 190 lbs.) - and I was rapidly nearing the full collection of "Health and Strength" certificates. That was me when I began to climb, and believe me this was no easy decision for I was on

the "Dole" and trying to satisfy my mother's ambition, which was to see me an expert banjoist like my Burton-on-Trent grandfather and uncles.

By now those of you who climb will realise that to be a fanatic one must give up something. You will of course realise that I couldn't sacrifice the "Dole" - so I gave up my banjo practice, preferring finger exercises on rock - and never regretted it!

I must confess that I never possessed the calmness, the confidence, or the skill on rock, which was so characteristic of Moyer; however he was no athlete and weighed two stone more than I, so his proficiency usually excelled on face climbs, and that suited me, for I preferred cracks and chimneys and would gaily lead up the most strenuous laybacks and insert my narrow body in the most constricting of cracks, much to the annoyance of my friend.

Face climbs at first appalled me. I had a highly developed sense of fear, which coupled with strength to weight ratio, usually meant that I could quite safely lead and climb the V.S.s of our day, wimply because fear plus strength gives a clutch on rock handholds which will not be denied. Yet the fact remained that a hard lead on a face usually meant a nightmare afterwards. Believe it or not, I did make one or two hard new face routes, and yet doubt whether I should receive any credit for these. After all they were accidental, and only "went" because fear took hold and strong clutching hands took control and hauled the body up instead of allowing the brain to balance the body down. A typical example was the "Count's Buttress" on Stange Wall End, a climb not repeated until Arthur Dolphin proved it still possible in 1950. Another route was the "Tower Face Direct" on Wall End, and the second ascent of this has been deferred until Easter this year, when Peter Diven clawed his way up this unrelenting wall. I warned you I was going to tell you how good I was!

So my early gritstone days followed the pattern of steady progress which can usually be found amongst all the practitioners who exercise their talents every weekend without fail. Nevertheless, many things eluded me. The "Unconquerables" of Stange defied all my laybacking efforts, the Rivelin Needle I could only peg on its South West Corner (thereby probably achieving infamy as the first defiler of grit), Moyer's Buttress I could only top rope (but I don't think I need feel ashamed of that), and I never managed to get up "Brooke's Crack" on Eurbage South Edge, except on a very tight top rope.

And so the years rolled on. I founded the Sheffield Climbing Club in 1933, and discovered that all my new friends were better climbers than I. I went to the Lakes for the first time and during a week of incessant heat wave, exhausted my companions (amongst whom was my future wife) by dragging them along to the ascent of nineteen climbs in Langdale, on Scawfell, and around Great Gable, and all this on a diet of boiled potatoes, scalloped potatoes, fried potatoes, baked potatoes, raw potatoes and bread. That's what a holiday on the "Dole" meant - and so you can imagine how like a millionaire I felt when a week later I wrote an article on Moss Ghyll, sent it to the "Out of Doors" magazine and received two guineas for it.

I was reaching my "Peak" form in 1934 when I came to Birmingham on the back of a lorry, with 10s.0d. in my pocket and two heavy suitcases (mostly containing climbing gear). You've got to admit I was tough to come to a town like Brum! Could any place be more God-forsaken to one who had climbed every weekend on gritstone for six years or so? No Crags! No Money! What would you do, chum? I had a job with poor wages, but could manage to get to the Peak about once

every six weekends. The remaining five I used to travel about on foot exploring the town, and as I "digged" in a tough quarter, I could tell some seamy stories, but I won't. Sunday nights were spent in the Reference Library wading gradually through the complete set of the "Fell and Rock Journals", and on one occasion I was "nabbed" at 10.30 p.m. by a copper who found me climbing on the Town Hall. However, he too was a climber, a Cumberland native, and knew my landlady who came from Welsh Wales.

Then I had a break. J. J. Futtrell (God bless his name and memory) introduced me to E. J. Steeple, and the latter sponsored my membership to the M.A.M. I was the "baby" of the club, and they thought me mad. I gave them a lecture on grit which was so long-winded and detailed that it had to be continued at a further date. However, it brought me friends - A.B.W. Fritchards, the companion of H.M. Kelly, and Harold Westall, the kindest and most generous personality I've ever met. He took me to Wales, to the Cotswolds, to the Peak, and we climbed regularly together - and I repaid him by handing him over to the Sheffield Climbing Club's fiercest tiger on a joint Stange meet. Harold climbed more V.S.s that day than all the rest of his climbing life in one, and it's still a mystery how he managed to navigate his Morris Isis back to Lrum. Perhaps the car should take the credit, for it's the same one he still uses despite the passing of 20 years, and if it's possible for a car to possess a soul, then the "Isis" must certainly come within that category.

So the years pass - visits to grit, days in Wales, shirt sleeve ascents on Tryfan's Terrace Wall and the Bastion, holidays in Arran and a fall of 50 feet whilst leading my future wife up A'Chir Crack, and no bones broken - and then the War, and my climbing guide to the Peak destroyed by Hitler's Luftwaffe, and the rewriting and exploration during snatched holiday weekends.

This period saw my wife and me putting up new routes on the Wall Buttress of Garton's. Of these the best being perhaps the very severe "Right-Hand Crack". It was a hard lead! It still is a hard lead, and if you don't believe it, ask Ernie Marshall. He could tell you a tale about this crack. I won't, it's Ernie's privilege.

After this, deterioration began. Lack of climbing opportunities during the War led to this, and when hostilities ceased I began to meet the "new school" - Harding, Moulton, Dolphin and others. Then I knew that as a rock climber I had never been in the top class. My own trivial efforts could not be compared with those who produced such daring ascents on the cliffs of Llanberis, the precipice of Cloggy, or the steep crag of Gimmer.

Fortunately, at this time I met the "Burton Anorak", liked Harry Pretty's flowing handlebar moustache, and remembered taking George Sutton up Blind Man's Buttress on Cromford Black Rocks, early in his career. The Guide Book work was beginning and George and Harry's part in this is now history.

You are probably beginning to think the "has-been" is now beginning to show - well, don't believe it. After all, I'd just been to the Oberland, and had been greeted graciously by Arnold Lunn and Graham Brown, who both remembered me, and moreover Bill Murray had borrowed a pair of my socks (which I still possess and treasure as souvenirs). Also I was still churning out new routes, having discovered that a greater kick could be found in climbing virgin rock of moderate standard, than in sweating profusely and vainly on some V.S. walk. These efforts will no doubt be recorded in some future Tryfan guide and will, with luck, provide me with an occasional pint from some admiring novice.

However, my rapidly declining standard on rock could no longer be denied. But my ego received a boost at this critical period. First I took over the "Organisation of Meets" for the M.A.M., then White Hall was opened and I was able to exhibit my remaining talents to complete novices, and finally the Sheffield Area Guide Book was published and proved a best seller. Life was rich, my friends many and sincere, the "Oread" made me a President, then exalted me to Honorary Membership. The Mountain Club saw fit to offer me Presidency. And so here I am, in all my glory, rich in friends numbering amongst the hundreds. I feel there can be no doubt that I must be good, despite the fact that George Sutton has been known to call me "stubborn" and Harry Pretty has said I've a "single track mind" (however, they are privileged). In view of all I have written, my ego needs but one thing more. I think I would be satisfied if Jim Kershaw were to pen a poem or ballad in my favour!

Yet perhaps even this would not satisfy my desires, for there is something else I would wish if it were possible - and that is, I'd like to go back - to see again Colin Kirkus on Stange; or Maurice Linnell in Robin Hood's Cave; to follow Cliff Moyer up one of his face routes; to sun-bathe with Derrick Ritson; even to repeat the Robin Hood Girdle with Toni Nicholson, a Toni who started up Inverted V fully clothed and several hours later descended Flying Buttress completely nude except for socks.

I'd like to climb again with "Kuba" (Dr. Jacob Bujak, the Polish mountaineer and conqueror of the East Peak of Nanda Devi in 1939), and to wander along Wharaccliffe with J.W. Futtrell. It would also be pleasant to repeat the first "Wall and Girdle Traverse" on Stange with Freda Aylatt, that wonderful girl climber who hailed from Mathersage. But what's the use? I'm the only one active on this earth. All the others I've just mentioned are using handholds on the "Heavenly Walls" - and so you see if anyone has to tell you what a good bloke I am, if it is necessary that history should record my talents, then I must for your education "BLOW MY OWN TRUMPET".

APRIL IN LLANBERIS by HARRY PRETTY.

The meet-leader was roistering in Uruguay (awaiting that legendary vessel the "S.S. Fitzroy") but this did not deter a remarkably large group of Oreads from enjoying perhaps slightly more prosaic pleasures in the Llanberis valley - although, on reflection, is there one among us with so little soul as to describe Welbourn's weekend zest as "prosaic"?

With a coach of twentyfour, four car loads and several motor cycles (Cooke and Cullum were astride their combinations - and Andy Denville had come from Kent) there was a positive glut of Oreads. Some camped, others used a re-conditioned Cwm Glas hawr, and some did both. It was particularly good to have Doug Cullum with us - in fact the "matratzenlage" in "Cwm Glas" bore a distinguished company. Incidentally, Dave Thomas is to be congratulated on this most comfortable piece of hut equipment. Perhaps if Penlington were to seek inspiration at the same source, he might increase the sleeping accommodation and lessen the barrack-room sterility of "E-y-W" and at the same time earn the gratitude of us, the gregarious Oread.

Except for the latter part of Sunday afternoon (when it rained in response to an unpopular prophet crying aloud upon the slopes of Comlech) conditions were excellent on the rocks, and a wide variety of things were climbed.

Handley, Janes, Millward with Bird were performing on Dinas Mot and Main Wall. Penlington, Cooke and Fisher were taking it in turns to leap up and down the first pitch of Curving Crack. Marshaw and Hatchett were seen on the Rectory Chimneys. There were people strolling round the Horseshoe and others taking tea in the summit hotel. There was the fastidious person who refused to go to the summit of Snowdon "at this time of the year". He was last seen standing at the top of the P-y-G track speaking in nostalgic terms of Crib Goch, ice and moonlight.

There were parties on Carreg Mastad and the Cromlech (Ernie Marshall and Brenda Goodwin on Cemetery Gates).

"P-y-G" was thick with humanity on Saturday night - hopelessly overcrowded and no place for a quiet beer. A small crowd descended on Cwm Glas before turning in.

As if compelled by some invisible force, nearly everyone went to Dinas Cromlech on the Sunday - and stood in a queue under Flying Buttress. Of course there were those like Penlington, Cooke and Fisher who can climb things on the Cromlech other than "P.D.", and there was Handley flaying about on Kaisergebirge Wall lower down the valley, but, generally speaking, Sunday was sociably enjoyable with an Oread head round every corner and an Oread boot on every hold of this delightful climb.

When you tires of watching the procession or of listening to Peter Janes who talked himself up the climb without a noticeable break, from the first to the last hold, you could go down and join the gallery beneath Cenotaph Corner - across which Ron Moseley was stretching a network of slings and double ropes. It was raining by 3.30 p.m. and it was time for most of us to be off the crag.

We watched the small concentrated figure clinging to some invisible means of support in the back of Cenotaph Corner. There was the occasional staccato ring of hammer on peg - it all seemed rather casual, and yet the immense technical competence of these men who can swing for hours across such walls was suddenly very clear - but it was no whit less fantastic.

Beneath the overhang of Ivy Sepulchre a second man struggled desperately and fell off again and again - it all seemed rather pointless unless perhaps you care to compare him with Bruche's legendary spider.

It was raining hard now, but it gave most of us plenty of time to catch the bus. Others were less conscious of passing time and Fisher was heard to murmur something.

There was only one really sad occurrence. Muriel Tucker, recently recovered from an ankle fractured on Snowdon, took a falling stone on the nose on Dinas Cromlech. Perhaps she was fortunate that the stone was no larger and had fallen no farther.

I was left with one rather unpleasant impression. If the weekend crowd was typical of the number of people who inhabit Llanberis during good weather - then give me a weekend in the winter, or perhaps we should be grateful that "P-y-G" is not too far away. It was altogether too much like a vast open air gymnasium floored with rusting cans and broken glass.

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Present for the latter part of Sunday afternoon (when it rained in response to a weather forecast) were a number of people who were excellent on the rocks and who were climbing.

MID-WEEK THOUGHTS by V. ERAM.

Though in an office closed about,
with plans and memoranda pent,
The weekend will without a doubt
remove all things somnambulant.

What though for six days out of seven
We serve conventionality?
Perhaps we should! We are new men
On Faith, or Hope or Charity.

The sun shines, but uncrease that frown,
If thoughts afar on Kinder roam;
'Tis not, as others think, our Down-
Fall, but our spiritual home!

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TO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH by ERNIE PHILLIPS.

After some complicated shuttling with vehicles, Moani, Laurie, Jim and myself left Derby on Friday evening in the Marshaw-Bridges tonk-wagon, en route for South Wales. We camped in the early hours of Saturday morning at our usual place on the Brecon Beacons. The morning was uninviting, and after various errors in map-reading we arrived at the Glyn Arms, Craig-Y-Nos, in the Tawe Valley.

Here we were horrified to learn that 11.30 a.m. still means half an hour to opening time! On enquiring from Mine Hostess the whereabouts of Ffynon Odu, we were referred to one, Peter by name, who was reputed to have some knowledge of the local caves; we found out later that he is one of the leading-lights of the South Wales Caving Club! I shall never forget the look which appeared on Burns' face when we were told that we could not go into the caves without a leader. In my experience it has only been matched by the look on his face later in the day when the leader announced that he was somewhat doubtful of the way out of the Tunnel Cave system!

After lunch we set out, with several other people to "do" the Tunnel Cave. We were somewhat disappointed at first, because the description we had read dismissed it as being of little importance, just a rock tube about 50 yards long. However, the S.W.C.C. have broken through at the end by blasting, and made accessible a great system of considerable complexity. We were astonished to hear that the blasting, on the only entrance, was carried out from the inside; better they than we. Five hours was spent negotiating narrow rifts and great caverns, to end at a place where a huge boulder choke is amalgamated by deposits into a "cascade" 70 or 80 feet high. On our eventual return to the exit, we were all nearing the point of exhaustion, and reeled back to the camp site as if we were slewed.

After a good meal at the camp (twenty yards from the boozery), we repaired to the Hostelry, where we consumed quantities of Crown Ale (a headache in every bottle according to Burns), and at the same time conferred with other members of the Caving Club. Bill agreed to take us into Ffynon Odu the next day, and we were just ready to roll into bed, when we were rushed off to a luxuriously appointed trailer caravan, strategically parked on the lawn at the rear of the

pub. Liquid food appeared as if by magic, and before we knew where we were a carousal was in full swing. The songs bore a striking resemblance to those of the cread, although possibly not quite such a good vintage. We found out later that Fretty and Sutton were not unknown to these people, and we were asked, when we saw them, to say "Hello you dirty old sods", from the S. Wales Caving Club!

The next day, feeling somewhat the worse for wear, we rolled down the road a few hundred yards to their Hut. The wall of one room featured a scale plan of the cave we were going to, and its ramifications covered the whole wall! Eventually we arrived at the entrance, and arraying ourselves with our inadequate equipment, proceeded to the main stream passage, where we climbed down a short rock pitch. Bill stepped straight into the water up to his knees, and as I hesitated, the others, boring along behind, left me no alternative, and in I went. To my surprise, there was no particular discomfort, and we walked along the stream bed for about half a mile. Occasionally pot holes appear under the water, and it is necessary to straddle across them, while in other places a steel tube has been placed so that one can edge across sideways a few inches at a time, feeling like Blondin over Niagara. This part of the system is really awe inspiring, with the impenetrable darkness, the roar of the water sliding over the rock, and the ever present risk of falling headlong into the stream.

Eventually we left the stream bed and proceeded via great caverns and tortuous passages, mostly of easy walking height, but with one or two notable exceptions, to the dry upper system, the convolutions of which defy memory. We were told that it takes two to three years to become reasonably familiar with the whole system which contains miles of passages, and provides a real hope of finding many miles more.

We were in the cave for about 3½ hours, and only saw a small part of it, but what we did see can only be described by one word - fantastic. Masses of stalactites, stalagmites, helictites, curtains, cascades, moon-milk, cave pearls, bugs, etc., coupled with awe-inspiring caverns up to 120 feet high, combined to make a weekend which will stand out long in our memories.

We were indeed more than fortunate to meet that friendly group of people, the S. Wales Caving Club, who took us into these places, and without whose generosity we should have seen nothing.

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Dear Editor,
 I would draw your attention to the article on Kibitai in the March/April issue of the Newsletter. I quote from the first paragraph "..... solved the problem of continental travel once and for all - have a sleeper....." From my experience, this idea turned out to be a complete shambles!

On the outward-bound journey to Austria, we were to connect up with the sleeping-car at Aachen. So far so good! We had reasonable bunks and a not too broken night's rest. We requested a call for 7 a.m. the next morning as we had to change again for the rest of the journey. At 9 a.m. we awoke with a start and looked out of the window. We were in a railway sidings and quite,

quite alone - no more coaches, no engine, and, to our horror, no conductor or official in sight. The fifteen or so travellers gathered together for consultation and after a while demanded from a passing linesman in our best German to know where we were. He informed us we were in Munich sidings but couldn't say where we were supposed to be going, then wandered off whistling. Nobody dare leave the train to trot back along the tracks to the station as sundry engines kept puffing along the lines and shunting us on to different sets of lines. Eventually, 4½ hours later we were rescued by an efficient looking engine and hooked on to a passing express. Through all this, we reached our destination 10 hours late.

We were naturally very wary on the return journey and so were delighted to discover that our sleeper had H & C running water, fitted carpets, wardrobes and all mod.con. We spread ourselves out in this luxury, practically unpacking all our ski-ing gear, and settled down to a last bottle of wine and a good night's rest. However, such luck was not to be ours - at 2 a.m. there was a horrible grinding noise and we came to an abrupt halt. An agitated official came rushing down the corridor, yelling at us to get out "Schnell, schnell", and we very hastily dressed and packed and jumped down on to the rails, thinking the train was on fire at least. It turned out that the back axle had broken and we were pushed headlong into another train, which had pulled up alongside, and so spent the remainder of the journey to Ostend on hard wooden seats, trying to catch up on our broken sleep.

And then I am recommended to "have a sleeper - it's worth the extra quid"! Not b----- likely! From now on I take to the air.

"PEGASUS".

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O R E A D S I N S H O R T S

Miss Laura Fretty (age 4½ years) - "That's the trouble with Harry".

Ragged tinker to President in rain street of Fort William - "Och, man, is it you that ga-en narrit - dinna I remember ye frae fifteen years ayin - ye bocht me a pint in Kingussie an gevie haf a croon. Ye wadnae haf the price of....." By this time the President had left!

Oliver Jones was in Fort William at Easter for his annual attack on Gardyloo Gulley. He succeeded in leading the ice-pitch once again. When he has done it fifty times, it will probably be a record. We doubt whether he cares very much one way or the other, but in any case a ritual ascent of Gardyloo at Easter is a sure sign that Oliver is "still with us".

One Oread to another, as he settled down comfortably with female, "Do you want a sleeping bag?". Reply, as he looked at girl, "No thanks, I've already got one"!

Our beloved President almost lost his beard at the Llanberis meet. He was gallantly lighting the stove in "Cw. Glas Mawr" and it blew back and almost set his beard alight. As he pranced about, swotting at this "face fungus", a voice from the back of the hut was heard to say, "Do it again, Harry, I missed it"!

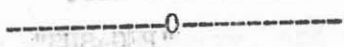
A report from Nottingham suggests that two Oreads were recently married there, though they have not yet been identified. Congratulations and best wishes, whoever you are - do let us know, won't you?

Eric Byne and Wilf White are joint editors of Vol. IV of the Gritstone Guides - "Further Developments on Gritstone". Ernie Marshall is preparing sections on Gardom's, Birchen's and Chatsworth Edges.

Eric Byne has been re-elected President of the Mountain Club for the fourth successive year. This necessitated an alteration to the constitution, and the occasion was marked by the presentation to Eric of a musical tankard which plays "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow". And so say all of us.

Ernie Marshall has put up three new routes on Gardom's: Infirmary Crack (up Overhang Buttress), Traction (up the front face of Gardom's Gate) and Contempt (up the chimney rib left of Ball Bearing Wall). A number of very hard new routes have been done on Stange by Peter Bivens and Trevor Peck.

Many new routes have been done on Craig Cowarch and Larry Lambe is busy on a guide.



Jim Kershaw has pointed out an error in his verses which appeared on page 6 of the last issue. The second line of verse 4 should read: "The convolutions of the mountain ice". Sorry, Jim.

The stencils for this issue and the previous one were cut by Peggy Urnston, who was with us at the A.G.M. and at the Llanberis meet. Peggy has undertaken this as a regular task, and we owe her a debt of gratitude for it.

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No-one would suspect that Fred Allen is a Civil Servant; he is certainly never servile, and on occasions he has been known to be uncivil. During the day he stands on the edge of a trench full of Irish navvies, knout in hand, singing "Sixteen tons" in a gravel voice, with "Put me in a Chain-gang" for an encore.

We have never been able to find out when he first came into the mountaineering domain, and although he talks learnedly about the Pyrenees "before the war", he seems a little vague about which particular war he uses as a datum. As he never mentions Table Mountain we can only assume that it was not the one in which Kruger played a leading role.

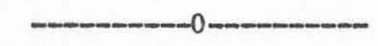
His entry into the state of connubial bliss caused an eclipse of his diurnal activities for some little time. Being "bought out" by Welbourn must be a bitter blow! However, results which would have daunted lesser men left Fred unscathed, and having finalised(?) his family, he returned with them to the fold. We call to mind the memorable occasion when young Richard marked his inaugural Oread meet by "dropping his load" in the doorway of Janes' tent, and adding injury to insult by laughing like a drain as he did it.

His friends tell us that he has now "gone the whole hog" and bought a complete new camping outfit so as to be able to attend camping Meets for the whole weekend. (Oreads requiring prayer flags to hang on guy-lines, apply to the Newsletter Printers and Publishers.)

Fred's other outstanding accomplishment is his driving prowess. We should not be astonished to hear that in a previous existence he was Doadicea's chief charioteer - the only thing missing from his Volkswagen is the scythe blades on the axles! Suffice it to say that he drives it as if it belonged to someone else, and in truth, he has never been the same since he took Geoff Thompson's Hudson over the Col d'Aprica in the dark.

His linguistic ability is worthy of note, as the fact that he only speaks one language, English, is not the slightest inconvenience to him when abroad. By adopting a form of pidgin English, unintelligible even to his compatriots, he is able to get what he wants by repeating his requirements in ever increasing volume, accompanied by much arm-waving, until eventually it sounds like the foghorn on Bishop Rock, and the unfortunate native is forced to capitulate.

The final picture that we paint is of a big man, coloured by the open spaces, with a beldering laugh which shakes the walls, as good as any and better than most to be with on the hills; coupled with two small figures and a good lady sitting on the dry banks of a swalleted stream in the gathering gloom, and plaintively singing "Don't go down the Mine, Laddy".



Editorial (continued from front page)

Rawbolts, or whatever their up-to-date equivalents will be called, will be just as respectable as pitons are today. And the Three Cliffs will be nursery slopes. Meanwhile, I'll go on believing that Very Difficult is the upper limit of possibility.

D.C.C.