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JOURNAL OF
**THE ACHILLE RATTI
CLIMBING CLUB**

No. 5.

1950.

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EDITORIAL

IT may have escaped some of the members that beyond the climbing prowess and the vague spiritual uplift implied in our august title A.R.C.C., a certain amount of ecclesiastical preferment is not altogether without precedent. If so, they will now at least be aware of the closer connexion of the Purple with the Club in the person of their well-beloved President. His zeal and enterprise in the founding and development of the Club, his indefatigable devotion to the sub-mystique of conquering the hills, are gifts which will undoubtedly find great scope in a wider field of vision. We are proud of him as we are also of his fellow A.R.C.C., member Bishop Halsall ; both of them are now indisputably graded as belonging to the V.S., stalwarts in a spiritual sense what-ever their mere material climbing accomplishments. Our only regret is that their disporting on rock and fell has been somewhat limited. Thus in offering to Dr. Pearson our sincere congratulations on following in the footsteps of Dr. Halsall, we may also profer our heartfelt condolence on this unfortunate by-product of ecclesiastical eminence.

Despite the difficulties of extracting contributions we have managed to struggle again into the next edition. We try above all to secure accounts of interesting rock climbs, but lest would-be members should have their modest ambitions quenched by too rarified an atmosphere, we do not wish to neglect the more general effusions of mountain and fell climbing. Again we appeal for any literary efforts that our members can be spurred to submit.

The success of the A.R.C.C., Mountaineering Courses has prompted the President to suggest some system or organize them for the greater part of the year as possible. During August the huts are in much demand and many of those who could take part in a course cannot manage it at that time. It is suggested that prospective leaders be canvassed for beginners, intermediate or advanced climbers, and asked where and when they

would like to come and what classified climbs they had in view. A ratio of six or eight to a leader for a beginners' course is recommended, and a ratio of four to a leader for an intermediate and advance course. The leader would be responsible with the assistance of his party for catering and cooking, and his expenses would be defrayed. If the Club could raise a profit of some five pounds above these expenses, well organised courses could be a valuable assistance as source of income.

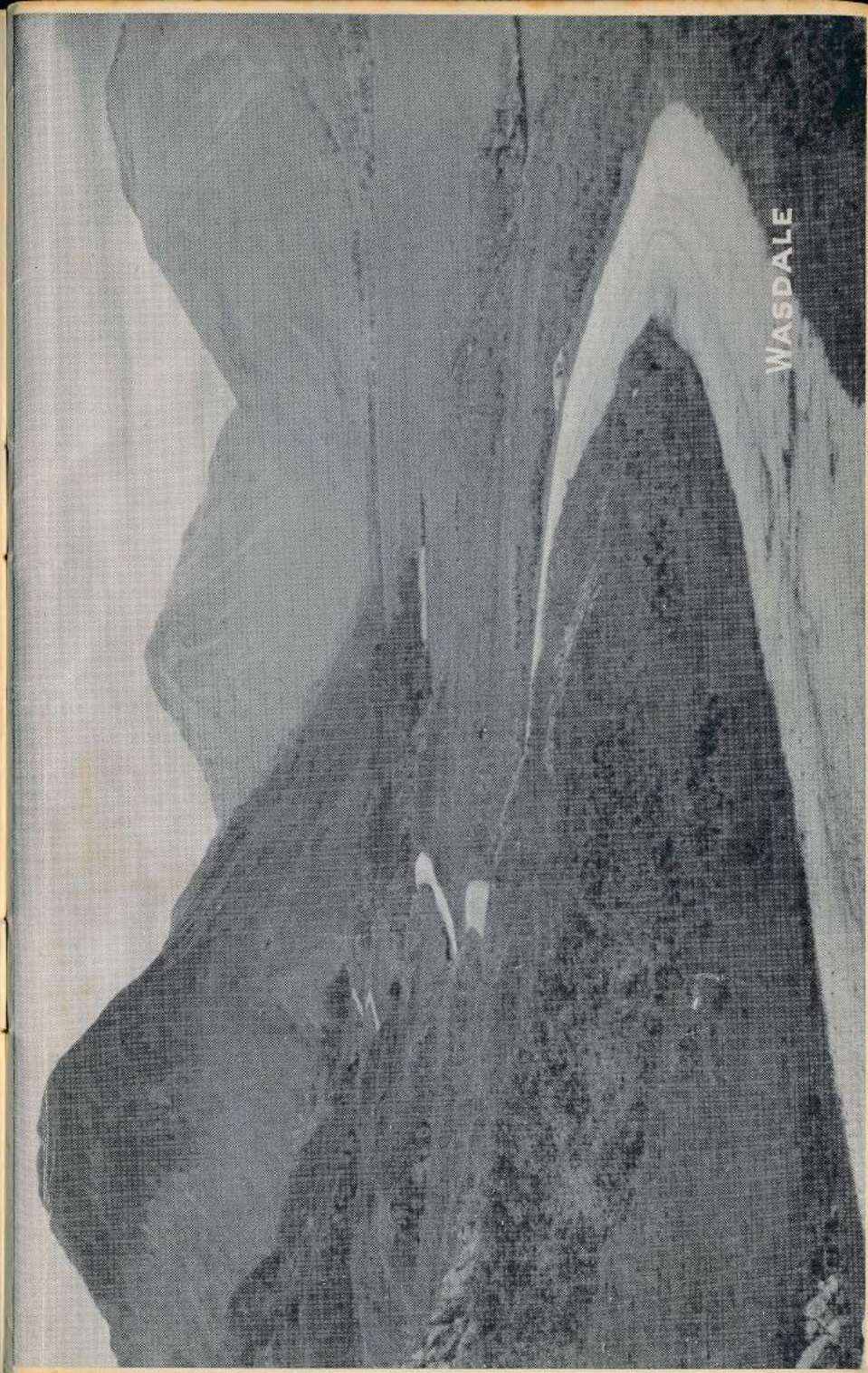
There are probably several more, but from his own acquaintance the President suggests that the following would be capable of leading courses, if they were willing.

Advanced Courses : George Partridge, Ronnie Smith, R. Melling, N. Harrison, A. Brown. Intermediate : Fr. McDonald, H. Jupp, H. Fay, C. Sellars, F. Murphy, J. Prince, D. Flessati, M. Nicholls, J. Ramsay, D. Hughes, R. Rimmer, T. Littledale, A. Chapman, Fr. Atkinson, J. Mangan, D. Bailey, C. Lawrence, D. Parkinson. Beginners ; Fr. J. Pearson, A. Higgins, J. Underwood, J. Welsh, B. Statter, E. Grime, D. Quin. It would be useful if the scheme could begin by September so that any offers will be gratefully considered.

Avondale, Kingussie,
Inverness-shire.

In Memoriam.

It is with deep and lasting regret that we record the death of John Slade on August 24th 1949. John Slade had been in the A.R.C.C. since 1945 and was held in the highest esteem and love by all. Year after year he had sacrificed his holidays to help with the hard work of organising the Club's Mountaineering Courses in the Lake District. This spirit of helpfulness and self-sacrifice was typical of his whole life and character for he was generous to a fault. We offer our deepest sympathies to Mr. and Mrs. Slade and we assure them that both they and John will be ever remembered in the prayers of all the Club Members.



CLUB NOTES.

ELSEWHERE in this Journal will be found a description of the activities of a party of A.R.C.C. members in North Wales. Vague accounts are also heard of visits by Members to Scotland, Derbyshire, Harrison Rocks (Sussex), Helsby, the Swiss and Italian Alps, the Dolomites and the Pyrenees. All this is a healthy indication of the quest for widening horizons and broadening experiences that should be a quality of the good mountaineer who is essentially a wanderer. It is earnestly hoped that those Members who have ventured abroad will not succumb to coyness and the spirit of silence. The Editor is most anxious to have for the Journal even the briefest accounts of such activities.

By courtesy of the Manchester University Mountaineering Club, Members of the A.R.C.C. are offered the use of their Hut in North Wales. The Hut (Tyn-y-Wierglodd) is situated in the Quellyn Valley.

In the Lake District, the log books indicate progressive work on a double level — with Training Courses, and among the regular Club Members. There is a special article on the summer Training Courses and mention need be made here only of the climbs done. The camp at Dow enabled many members engaged on the Course to explore that crag more leisurely than heretofore. Fifteen different climbs are recorded and most of them were done several times. Among the severe climbs were Raven Route, Southern Slabs, Murray's Route (B Buttress), and Central Chimney. At the Langdale and Wasdale Huts a great variety of the regular climbs are mentioned as forming part of the Course ; these were mostly of Difficult standard.

The Blackpool C.B.A. Mountaineering School had a successful training Meet at Wasdale in October 1948, and another at Dunmail in January 1950. In spite of rain and mist, that was

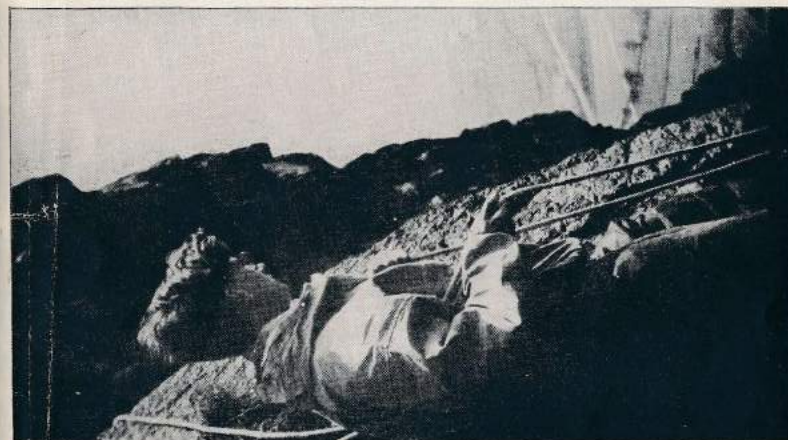
heavy, cold and almost continuous, an energetic programme was pursued. In addition to local sallies, expeditions to Patterdale (via Striding Edge), Buckbarrow via Borrowdale and the return via Rosset, and a very wintry ascent of Scouts give evidence of a strenuous week. It is to be hoped that these winter and summer Training Courses will long be a feature of the Club's activities for it is upon the well-trained younger members who follow such Courses that the future of the Club largely depends. During the coming summer, a Course for beginners will be held at Langdale and a Course for climbers with some experience will be held at Wasdale.

Among the regular members, ascents have been many and varied, with every now and then a really outstanding climb like a spark shooting from a wood fire. New climbs are recorded on Overbeck (Yewbarrow) and on Sergeants Crag (Langstrath). Kern Knotts West Chimney, The Flake Climb, Kern Knotts Buttress and the Central Climb on the south face of the same crag appear this year for the first time in the Wasdale log book. Also we find the first Club ascent of the Great Eastern Route on the East Buttress of Scafell (a very, very wet climb) and the entire Scafell Girdle including Botterill's Slab, a magnificent expedition of some 1600 feet that took the two climbers nearly three and three quarters of an hour to complete. It is with considerable admiration and pleasure that we receive news of one Club member who ascended the Central Buttress on Scafell last July. His description of the manoeuvres on the Great Flake and the exposure therefrom set up an almost irresistible tingle in the feet of the keen, but appal the nervous.

The Langdale log book shows quite a fair amount of activity. Climbs on Gimmer and Bowfell that rarely appeared three years ago are now listed as part of a day's casual outing, a reasonably sure sign of progress. Members who have not had the chance of visiting Langdale recently will be interested to know that "Scouts" no longer consists merely of the Traverse and the Nose. Between Routes I and II, there is now a "1.5"



C. ROUTE
GIMMER CRAG
(REV. BRO. JOSEPH)



ROUTE 2
WHITE GHYLL SLABS
(PARTRIDGE)



DIPHTHONG
GIMMER CRAG
(MELLING)

which has some moves definitely more difficult than either of the original routes. There is also a "Zero" climb and a "Girdle" although both these climbs are somewhat indefinite.

Harristickorner, Stoa's Crack (Pavey Ark) and Gimmer Crack have mention for the first time and the White Ghyll Slabs have been made the object of considerable research. The Gordian Knot, Grey Slab and White Ghyll Wall have been climbed and as these routes are not to be found in the present edition of the Fell and Rock Guide the following descriptions might be interesting.

Gordian Knot. This route provides airy and sensational climbing in an excellent position on the cliff. Though only 205 feet, the climb is broken into 4 pitches. The route begins with fairly delicate slab climbing for 70 feet to a cave under the overhang. The rock here appears loose but good and sound belays are available. Care should be taken in the choice. A horizontal traverse for 20 feet leads to a jutting nose of overhang and this is the crux of the climb. In a position of extreme exposure some 100 feet above the bed of the Ghyll a delicate step on the edge of the nose has to be made and this leads to good holds. At the top of a difficult 12 foot crack there is a belay and after this easier climbing lands on a grass rake beneath the final 40 foot wall that leads to the summit.

Standard : Very Severe. Rubbers.

Grey Slab. White Ghyll. This climb lies on the same area of the crag as the two slab routes (Routes I and II). Some 20 feet to the left of the line of Route II an arete runs down the cliff and it overhangs about 40 feet up. On its immediate left and about 25 feet above the base of the wall is a rectangular slab some 30 feet high and about 12 feet in width. It is broken by shallow cracks from left to right but is smooth in its centre. The route begins about 30 feet higher up the Ghyll from Route II in a corner slightly to the right of the slab cairn.

Pitch I. 55 feet. Climb the corner for about three feet and move left, then straight up to a small ledge at the base of the slab. Commence on the slab in its centre, climb diagonally left to the edge, then back with a long reach to the right ; climb

straight up for 8 feet to a small grass ledge with a spike belay.

Pitch 2. 75 feet. Climb onto and above the belay and continue until stopped by the overhang. Traverse horizontally right for some 8 feet and climb straight up into the groove above. Continue with no great difficulty to the top belay about 10 feet back.

Standard ; Medium severe in rubbers but considerably harder in boots.

White Ghyll Wall. A peculiar feature about this climb is that it looks easy even on close inspection, but is exasperatingly awkward and delicate especially on the second pitch. The start is a little lower down the Ghyll from the Gordian Knot and the first pitch is a straightforward ascent of some 60 feet followed by a traverse to the right for some 20 feet.

Monumental belay. The next pitch is rather awkward to start and somewhat strenuous. Progress is made on narrowing holds into a right-angled corner. A delicate balance move is necessary to reach holds on the left hand containing wall of the angle and after 15 feet a tolerable but very exposed stance and belay is reached. At this point the rope between the first and second man passes through the air at an angle of about 45 degrees from one arm of the right angle to the other. Needless to say it is of little help. One now moves to the left for some 8 feet on minute holds on the vertical wall protruding outwards over the ghyll. The route then goes straight up and the angle eases considerably. A belay is reached after 20 feet, and a wall of some 18 feet with no great difficulties finishes this excellent climb. Standard : Very Severe. Rubbers.

One will probably be both commended and criticised for not mentioning the names of the climbers but let not the anonymous nature of these notes be misconstrued. The Club appreciates the efforts of each of its members from the enormous satisfaction of the V.S. Leader as his nails rasp over the final crux, to the palpitating thrill that replaces the wedge of suspense in the heart of one finishing his first lead on a Mod. Diff. The concern of the Club is that the climbs done should be well

within the ability of those engaged on them ; they should be safe and enjoyable for each member of the team. These are simple qualifications but they are the essence of sound climbing. To the climber, maybe more than to others, can be applied the ancient wisdom contained in the simple phrase *Te nosce*.

Bro. Joseph.

THE ACHILLE RATTI MOUNTAINEERING

COURSES 1949.

THE lorry gave one final splutter and stopped. Nobody could expect it to perform greater miracles than it had already done along the mountain track humorously referred to on the O.S. Map as the "Walna Scar Road." For nearly an hour it had bumped, bounced, lurched, swayed and all but capsized along the Coniston Fells that lead to Dow Crag but round about the 1000 foot contour it had craved for mercy, and mercy was duly granted. The six pioneers jumped out, unloaded the equipment and supplies (nearly 5 cwt. in all), bade cheerio to the driver and generously piled packs on each other to a degree that would have won the admiration of the toughest Sherpa porter. A trek of some two miles winding up to 1700 feet lay ahead of us, but about half way we came to a perfect camping site and as the gloaming was already upon us we used that as a justifiable excuse for pitching the tents and staying there for the night. It was an occasion not easily forgotten ; the summer sky brilliant with stars and moonlight, the smell of food and tobacco, the mountain stillness broken only by the cheery chatter and laughter of friends ; this above all was memorable for in the absence of friends, such places when revisited do not, unfortunately, revive the fine careless rapture of one's first experience. One leader's compass knowledge was seriously catechised when he mistook the distant lights of Morecambe due south for the setting sun !

By noon on the following day we had struggled up to the south end of Goat's Water and had just managed to peg down the tents and store the supplies when the heavens opened and down came the rain. This rain and mist reduced visibility to only a few feet for the rest of the day. It was under these conditions that half the party set out at 4 p.m. over the tops for Langdale and they proved their worth by gaining their objective in good time although the trek was over ground completely new to them and indeed often invisible. The three

of us who were left at Dow got thoroughly wet and cold doing the odd chores and as soon as possible we took off our wet clothes, crept into our sleeping bags and drank large quantities of hot, sweet, thick, strong tea. Tea . . . ! Fortifier of human frailty ; reviver of spent spirits ; strengthener of languishing limbs ; nature's improvement over nectar ; science's supreme gift to man. Tea . . . !

That night a raging storm deprived us of our due measure of sleep. The tent rattled like machine gun fire, coughed, clapped, flapped, hissed, whined, whirred and all but took off in the gale. We must have camped in a wind funnel and it was obvious that a new site would have to be found. We spent the next day groping round in the mist and the rain looking for a more sheltered spot and finally decided on a sheep-fold at the north end of Goat's Water and by 5 p.m. had carried the last load of equipment to the new site and had arranged everything as snugly as could be expected in a mountain encampment. Two of us then set off for Langdale leaving only one in charge of the camp to wait for the incoming party who were expected any minute. The members of this party did not, in fact, arrive until after midnight. They left Langdale at 2 p.m. and on account of the bad visibility mistook Laver's Water for Goat's Water, an error that caused them to make a wide detour via Coniston and brought them finally to the south end of Goat's Water where the camp had originally been fixed and where they thought it still to be. They were soon to realise how mockingly Fate was playing with them ! It was now dark, misty and wet and it was in all truth a difficult job to find the original camp site. This was at length discovered and their dismay and disappointment at finding no camp there can well be imagined. A large notice attracted their attention but they were unable to read it in the dark, they had no torch, and matches were of no avail because of the wind. They did, however, have another bivvy in their rucksacks and so, with mounting apprehension lest they had been deserted, they unpacked the rucksack, set up the bivvy, crawled into the shelter of the tent and read the note. It gave instructions how

to reach the new site. With endless patience and leaden limbs they set off for the north end of Goat's Water. Meanwhile, about midnight, the lonely guardian of the new camp site set off for the fourteenth time along the lake calling and looking for them. So the two parties met

The Courses now began and there were a series of three, each one lasting a week. Every Saturday 12 new recruits (or "Coursees") appeared at Langdale and there was a permanent team of 12 leaders to teach them fell and rock work, use of map and compass, manila and nylon rope technique, mountain camping and mountain rescue. Each member on the Courses spent two nights at Langdale, two at Buckbarrow (Wasdale), and two at Dow Camp, thus obtaining a fair knowledge of a large section of the Lake District. The trek from Langdale to Buckbarrow is well known to all in the A.R.C.C. but the territory between Dow and Buckbarrow was completely new and many were the stories of weary endurance related about this journey. The first party to embark on this Odyssey left Dow in the afternoon and were benighted in Eskdale! Fortunately they found hospitality and were gathered into the Buckbarrow fold the following day. Another party that travelled by Birker Moor did the journey in the record time of six and a half hours. Other parties from Buckbarrow to Dow sensibly resolved to enjoy the expedition and made frequent calls at the various hostelries en route (and maybe not quite en route) — the Bower House, the King's Head, the Woolpack. They also used the narrow gauge railway to take them up the Eskdale Valley to Boot. Generally the journey averaged 9 hours and provided good practice for precise map and compass reading, identification of landmarks and other useful items of training. On arrival at Dow, no matter how late at night they plodded wearily home, all parties found the faithful custodians of the camp waiting for them with a meal prepared. The work of the culinary experts was greatly facilitated by the presence of a pressure cooker and a useful sort of affair that combined the offices of teapot and kettle. It became known as a "Teakle."

The work on the crags was kept to climbs of a Difficult

standard and abundant practice was given at Dow, Langdale, Great Gable and Yewbarrow. Harder climbs were done with some members of the Courses who showed sufficient ability to tackle them. Special demonstrations were given by leaders on such climbs as Botterill Slab, Scafell Girdle, the Innominate Crack etc. The one aim of the Course as far as rock Climbing was concerned was to teach the learners how to climb correctly not to test the limit of their strength or gymnastic ability. At the end of their training many of those taking the Courses did show considerable progress and some of them have joined the A.R.C.C. They are very welcome and they can be assured that they will always find friendly helpers among the Club Members.

The leaders of the Courses most certainly deserve a special word of appreciation for their generous and continuous and expert help. For three weeks they criss-crossed the Lake District in blazing heat and rain or mist; they often had to do the same climbs over and again patiently and expertly with each new set of learners; they cooked meals endlessly; they carried packs cheerfully; they urged the weary, restrained the rash, encouraged the nervous. Of necessity they were frequently separated from other leaders with whom they would have liked to spend their holiday; in fact the only occasion when all the leaders assembled together was for a farewell dinner on the last night of the Courses when Bishop Pearson was a most welcome guest. They showed a service and ability of which the A.R.C.C. is very, very proud.

PRAETEREA NIHIL.

THERE are a few tenuous advantages in being forbidden to climb. For one thing I am still alive, undamaged by snow, ice or rock. For another, I have a little peace at last from that awful inward struggle in which the climber shouts 'On MacDuff' and the fearful laggard 'Hold Enough'. One can savour the past without that strange compulsion which marks out the next ascent, while the hazards of the last are barely overcome.

This preamble is, of course, only an excuse to start rambling without incurring the stigma of premature old age. The incidents which occur to me spontaneously are, curiously enough, not the carefully prepared excursions that I might flatter myself as worthy of record. They are rather those that any mountain lover can count by the dozen, and chiefly from the green years when the deliberate tackling of rock for its own sake seemed a preserve of the superman.

There was that wonderful mountain pass between the tiny hamlets of Asco and Corscia in the wild interior of Corsica. According to the innkeeper at Asco it was a 'promenade tres facile.' He was a pompous little Frenchman with a pointed beard, and what was easy to him must surely have been so, despite the ominous compactness of the contour lines on the map. He could, of course, derange himself and accompany us for a hundred francs. That was about as much as we proposed to spend in three days, so we declined, wondering on what principle such an easy traverse could have merited so much. So it was that with gay hearts, (which was all to the good), and light sacks, (which was a grievous error) we started on our journey.

The gorge we entered narrowed as we ascended, and the torrid heat gave way to that fragrant coolness which accompanies a headlong foaming torrent. The old mule track was shelved into one wall of the gorge, and from it the height of the opposite wall looked quite fantastic. I have never seen anything like the rocks we saw that day. Such oddities as Ash-Tree Ledge on Gimmer are familiar enough to the Lake-

lander, but let him imagine in place of some puny isolated tree, massive pines scattered liberally all over the rock face with no apparant ledge from which to spring. The effect was all the more impressive as the rock itself was of infinitely varying hues of green with occasional touches of a Dolomitic red. Quite appropriately the gorge eventually brought us out into an arena that could only be described by a Delius or a Debussy. The thinning water of the torrent was gathered into a large pool, overhung by a great majestic arch of green rock. The air sparkled like cut diamonds and every pace brought warm aromatic gusts of pine. It was midday and the atmosphere savoured almost too much of the pasteboard mystique of Shangri-La to be true. We disturbed the afternoon of the fauns by bathing in the pool and smoking the comforter which the French aptly call Job. We dared not eat as yet, because our supplies were small and we did not know how long they would have to last.

The real scramble began from here. I read in my diary that we climbed strenuously for hours over boulders until we reached two steep gullies hemmed in by towering rocks. I expect my ideas of 'towering rocks' have changed somewhat since those days of climbing in low shoes, but there can be no doubt that the gulleys belonged to that unspeakable species of climb technically known as 'moderate'; in other words, a series of hauls and heaves on loose rock and vegetation. The vegetation in this case was the ubiquitous Corsican maquis. It had the advantage that nothing could uproot it, with the corresponding drawback of being almost impenetrable when you had pulled yourself into it. It is not surprising that, as my diary somewhat pompously but tersely records, 'the exertion was considerable.' We were now all in different gulleys, our only communication being the resounding cannonade of displaced boulders, which in that lonely wilderness powerfully impressed me unhampered by any professional etiquette. It was a typical nightmare of the clean rock lover, but intoxicated by the calf love of the tyro, I felt that life had nothing more to give. We were too busy, and if the truth were

known, a little too anxious to stand and stare; but the great coloured rocks, casting their jet shadows over the blinding scree, and the exotic scents that we crushed out of the maquis into the soft Mediterranean air, were all the more pervading for being only half-apprehended. The top came at last and with it the exultation that crowns a climb. Who has not known it? That supreme moment when we first become aware of the union of bodily vigour and achievement with a heightened alertness to the beauty of colour and form. For me, still unspoilt by long custom, it was not the end of a day but the end of a short life on another planet.

That night we had to spend out à la belle étoile under a chestnut tree. We lit a fire and ate our carefully hoarded rations. I would like to be able to add that we slept peacefully under the big Mediterranean stars, but unfortunately fallen chestnuts have large penetrating spikes and they are not easy to disengage once they become affectionate.

Obtruding itself on my rambling memories is another traverse from Scanno to Pescasseroli in the Abruzzi mountains of Italy. This time we were a larger party of six and had new toys to play with, snowshoes. I suppose there must be some reason for manufacturing snowshoes but we never discovered it. Skis would have been ideal if we had been affluent enough to possess them, and what is more important, known at that time how to use them; but the snowshoes would not sieve the heavy snow they accumulated and restricted our circulation severely. As it was, we found the long trek up to the Col very laborious. It was early spring and the lovely narrow glen was full of drifts of soft deep snow. Ploughing through it was not a gratifying form of exertion, and one of the party preferred to turn back and make the enormous detour by rail and bus to join us at Monte Cassino. I do not blame him, for even now when I read of the gruelling deep snow of the Everest expeditions, I sink a little more leisurely into the chair and think of Scanno. Whenever we stopped for a rest we could find nothing else to sit on but the branches of partially submerged trees,

which made us look like a race of web-footed monkeys. When eventually we did reach the saddle of the Col, we were met by a piercing gale that came racing over wave after wave of snow-covered mountains that stretched as far as the eye could reach. There was none of that brilliant sparkle that usually accompanies the snow on the heights. The panorama lay leaden-white, as vast and uniform as the sea under an angry sky, an immensely impressive and powerful study in monotone. I wondered if any self-respecting artist could reconcile inspiration with the acute discomfort with which we made our temporary encampment on the only fragment of solid earth that we had encountered. The wind had blown the spot clear and was continuing to do so, including in its sweep various items of our menu. In one of its more malicious gusts it tore our map into shreds as we were plotting our next move.

This was a most unexpected disaster. We were faced with a whole series of possible descents into the different sectors of the folded earth beneath us. All but the one that contained the hamlet of Pescasseroli led into another eternity of snow. Had it been left to my sense of direction, we should have added another five to the forty martyrs of Sebaste. Fortunately one of the party had that enviable knack of sensing the right course, and like sheep we followed him, though it was long before our apprehensions were removed. We were soon again among the trees, though by this time the snow had hardened somewhat, so that it was relatively easy going....

Then a curious thing happened that taught me a very useful lesson. My mind had been dwelling in a somewhat morbid fashion on the bottle of brandy that we had been carrying against emergencies. To my great satisfaction I found that it had also been providing points of meditation for the others. There was obviously nothing else for it but to take it out and finish it. The effect was instantaneous. For twenty minutes the valley rang with the merriment of revived spirits, and then suddenly we all experienced a feeling of great exhaustion. It needed that experience to convince me of the inadvisability

of taking spirits under strenuous conditions until the end is well in sight.

It is with diffidence that I recall a little interlude in that frolicsome twenty minutes. In spite of the subsequent railing we had to endure, it is a solemn fact that the two of us who were walking together saw a couple of *brown bears* clambering up the mountain side. This is not as outrageous as it may sound, for there are bears in the Abruzzi, but unfortunately by the time we had summoned the stragglers to share our experience, they had gone to roost or whatever bears go to. It might have been more prudent to have kept the matter to ourselves in view of the brandy, but we were later supported by the villagers of Pescasseroli who confirmed their existence and added in the charming Italian idiom 'ma non dicono niente' ('But they don't say anything.')

At long last we saw a solitary light shining in the distance from the far corner of the plain just below us. The ten hours of soft snow, wet snow, icy snow, were forgotten in an instant, and with it that numb mechanical reaction that succeeds the phase of fatigue. Had it not been for the stimulating vision of wine, spaghetti, and an Abbruzzi bed warmed with charcoal pans, I shudder to think of what the next ordeal would have meant for us. Between us and the road on the far side of the plain lay a river in full spate. It has since acquired notoriety in military history, for it was no other than the Sangro. The only bridge was many miles away, so there was nothing for it but to take the plunge. We chose the least ferocious beat we could find and waded up to our waists in the snow-laden swirl. To this day when I take out my Easter breviary I read the words 'post transitum maris rubri' through the actual stains of the waters of the Sangro.

The rest of the journey was lightened by the twinkling lights of the village and it was not long before the startled villagers had us in dry peasant clothes and seated round an old-time chimney. The bitter bread of labour was sweetened by retrospect and we all felt the satisfaction of a tour-de-force brought to completion.

No doubt even my rock-climbing friends will mutter something about 'fools' and ask what fun there was in that. I suppose the only answer is the honest one that we were fools. But how I wish I could do it again !

W. Park.

TWO CLIMBS.

CLOGWYN Du'r Arddu or just "Cloggy" as it is affectionately known to climbers had long fascinated me, but accounts of the exposure (and Cloggy exposure hits a high spot in superlatives), the severity of the routes themselves and the impossibility of escape other than up or down (the latter involuntarily of course) had all tended to induce me to follow the policy of the Cat in the adage. Well-meaning but tactless acquaintances used to look hard in my direction as they said that Cloggy was no place for the rock gymnast and that only the most experienced "mountaineers" should go there. One person, however, by giving me a true and reasoned account of the chief difficulties involved did succeed in fanning to life the flame of my almost extinct ardour, but it was not until the beginning of October that I managed to find my way to the Hills again after a prolonged absence of at least three weeks. This lengthy separation from the mountains was due to the fact that I had now joined the ranks of the Nation's workers and fortunately had not yet accepted the theory of "*labor ipse voluptas*." I was lucky in obtaining the luxury of free travel to and from Llanberis by car. Over eggs, toast and tea in a local hostelry the proprietor informed us that a party had spent the night on Clogwyn earlier in the week and we later learned that they had in fact been on Longlands. They had been benighted and had amused themselves through the long hours of darkness by singing! Next morning they managed to finish the climb without any aid and seemed none the worse for their venture.

I retired to the Youth Hostel where I discovered my climbing companion Bob O'Mahoney who was making a close study of the Clogwyn du'r Arddu Guide Book. At an early hour we went to bed in order to obtain the maximum rest in preparation for the morrow praying hard for good weather. The Sunday dawned brightly enough but the sky was full of large, billowing and menacing clouds. Determined, however, not to be defeated without a struggle we agreed that the best policy was to get

on to the climb and then let the weather do its worst. We rushed off up the railway and reached the cliff after only a short stay at the Half-way House.

Clogwyn du'r Arddu must surely possess the finest rock scenery in England or Wales. I doubt if it is as fine to look down from as is the face of Scafell, as it lacks the distant view of the blue sea and the purple islands and the vista of peak upon peak to the north and east. Nevertheless, the immediate prospect of sheer walls and the black llyn beneath one's heels has a charm which is peculiar to Clogwyn and seems to be reflected in the character of the climbs themselves, sombre and serious. We became very conscious of how small we were as we stood examining the walls of the East Buttress and the long tilting slabs of the West Buttress that seemed to soar up to the very heavens through the mist which was now hanging heavy and humid on the crags.

Longland's Climb begins up the Middle Rock immediately under the left corner of the West Buttress. The first pitch is a 70 foot groove and on this day it was running with water which may have been the reason why I ignored it for so long. I spent some 20 minutes searching for a route on its left before finally attacking the groove itself. The pitch was quite easy but very wet so Bob decided to climb the wall on the left and he spent nearly 45 minutes forcing a way up the Middle Rock and much to my surprise he succeeded, solo! On later inspection it was discovered that he had climbed directly up the Middle Rock half-way between the Birthday Crack and the initial pitch of Longlands, the whole length being about 140 feet.

We now proceeded to the foot of the second pitch which is on the West Buttress. The original first ascent was begun at this point when T. L. Longland and F. S. Smythe had combined with A. S. Pigott, W. Eversden and Morley Wood. We ascended to the foot of the Faith and Friction Slab Section where there was a small stance and an inserted chockstone. Morley Wood was the originator of the jammed chockstone technique and we wondered if this particular stone happened to be the original one inserted on the first ascent. Although it appeared quite

sound I put only a running belay on it. Above this belay the wall impends and an awkward move is necessary ("The Difficult Step") high on to a narrow ledge on the right. Faith and Friction Slab is now on the left and this leads to a constricted stance and a second inserted chockstone. In order to safeguard this stance a piton had been used by the pioneers. From above this pitch a section of about 140 feet leads to another impending wall and it is necessary to walk some 20 feet to the right before the wall is vulnerable. Even at this point the wall overhangs considerably for nearly 15 feet and I found the first move most trying, requiring nothing short of a gymnastic leap affording me a momentum which enabled me to reach good holds. I might add in justification of my gymnastic performance that the pitch is well safeguarded by large belays. The final pitch was an easy 30 foot chimney and above this a scramble led to the summit of the cliff.

It was unfortunate that conditions were not conducive to dawdling, for being naturally lazy, I enjoy basking in the warm sunshine after a climb, smoking the second's cigarettes. Even this latter moiety was denied me for Bob does not smoke and consequently did not have any cigarettes. Dank mist swirling in chilly gusts around us put an end to further regrets and we scrambled round to the foot of the rocks to collect our boots and capes. As we made our way back to Llanberis with many a backward glance at Cloggy, we felt it a pity that such a fine cliff should go to waste (as far as we were concerned) while we were in some distant city earning enough money to visit once more the spot we were leaving.

GIMMER CRACK.

This route begins in a right-angled corner about half way up the North West Gully. The initial pitch, apparently once grass-filled, is now white and scoured clean rather like Soap Gut on Tryfan. It ends on a very small stance beneath a bulging wall and progress directly ahead is barred by the overhang. To turn this section a traverse across the left wall is necessary. I found this went easiest as a hand swing somewhat in the nature

of the entry into the Innominate Crack from Sepulchre. After a rest on a large stance with a good belay, I continued up and reached the top of the next pitch after a bit of business with a tricky little mantleshelf. It is now possible to scramble down to the Upper North West Gully but a pleasant 30 foot traverse rising diagonally right leads to the Crack again. The problem after this traverse was to force an entry into the Bower which problem was tackled by a sort of semi lay-back which was not really hard. I then climbed to the overhang where there is a belay on a very small chockstone but the stance is a one toe and hang on the rope affair, so clipping a sling and karabiner on to a running belay I took stock of the position.

It was necessary at this point to face out towards Mickleden and although this position affords a remarkably fine view of Bowfell, it also reminds one of the distance to the bed of the Gully a long, long way below. In short the exposure is very considerable. Once committed to the overhang, however, such trivialities are forgotten in the search for holds. The movement consists of jamming yourself securely (but not too securely) in the crack and making use of some small holds outside on the right; you then force a way up until the left hand can grasp a welcome jug handle. This enables you to turn round and face inwards. The angle now relents and holds abound until the top of the crag is reached after some 30 feet.

Two such magnificent climbs as Longlands and Gimmer Crack inevitably call for some sort of comparison, but it is hard to give a definite answer. Weather conditions, personal form and many other factors have to be considered. Gimmer Crack seemed the harder climb but it contained nothing so strenuous as the final overhang on Longlands.

George Partridge.

LANGDALE MEMORIES.

SPRING was well under way, bluebells laid an azure carpet beneath the blossoming trees and the evening sun was still a way above the horizon as I pushed my bike over the brow of the hill.

I was a little tired so I sat down on the grass. Where was I? Well, I was on the Bleasdale moors on a lovely May evening, having dashed home from work, quickly finished my tea and set out on my bike for an evening spin. How many times I have come this way I don't know, through Broughton, up by Brock, Bleasdale, Oakenclough and up on to the moors overlooking Morecambe Bay. There, across the Bay, cloud-capped and looking just as I always remembered them, lay the mountains of Lakeland. That was what I had come to see and there I lay in the evening sun looking and thinking

"M. poked his face cheerily round the corner and belayed alongside me. Off I went, my nails clinking on the rock, up the warm grey slabs ahead of me. The rock rose into a pale blue sky and tapering up it was a narrow crack — the sort that makes one's pulse race with the exhilaration. It was a delightful climb and ended abruptly as all Gimmer climbs do on a balcony. Another climb on Gimmer . . . It seemed so long ago that four timid youths armed with a guide book and an old rope nervously set off up Crescent on Pavey Ark. I shall never forget that climb; the rope was hopelessly short and no-one knew how to belay properly. Providence certainly watched over us that day"

Gosh! 8-30 and all the way back to Preston to go before dark.

M. and I were soon back in Langdale aloft on Gimmer and after a pleasant day we sat discussing the grand times we had in Langdale and the debt we owed to the Achille Ratti Climbing Club. The early days in the hut in Langdale, those hard wooden

