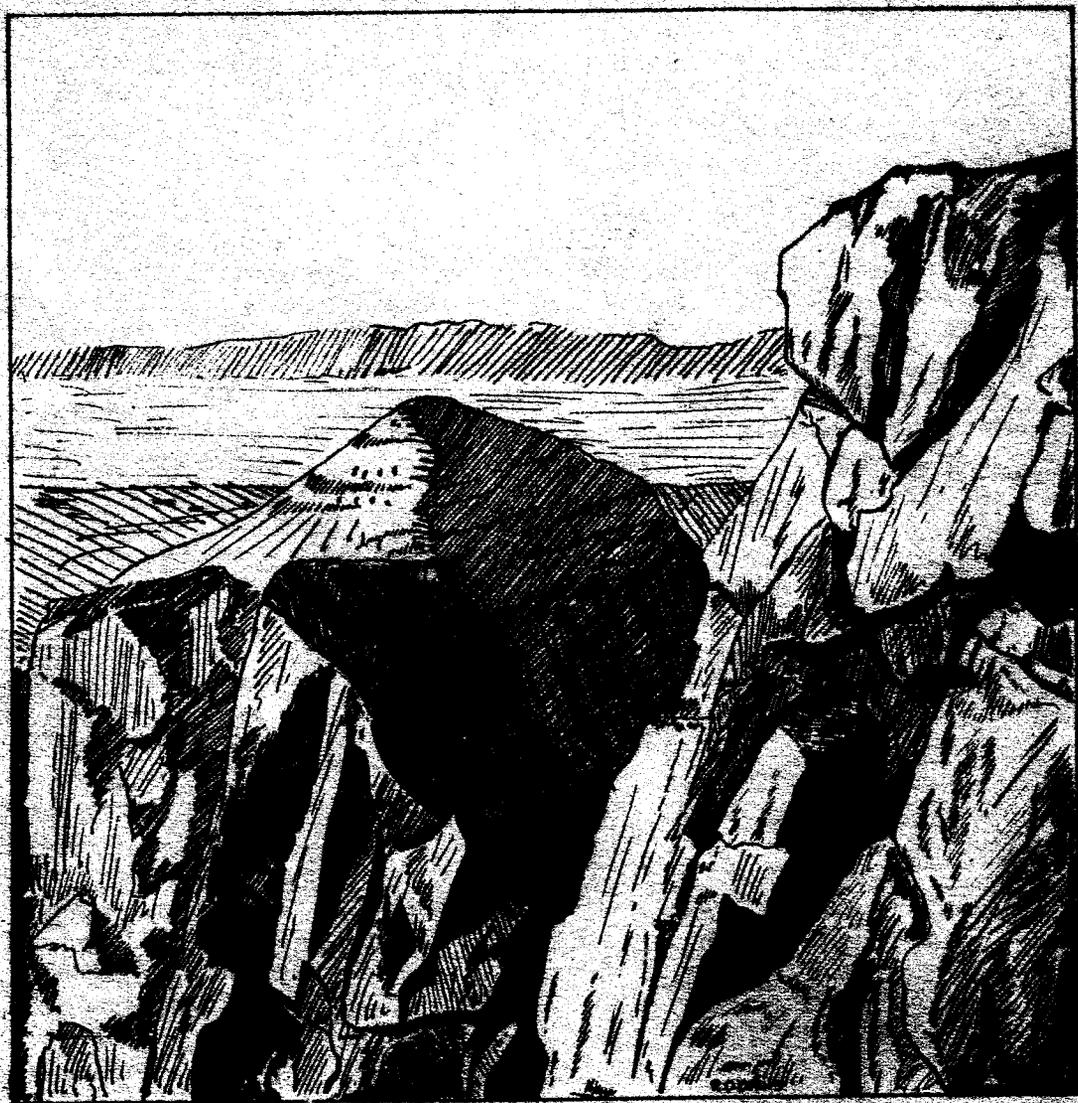


THE CEUNANT

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



CHRISTMAS
1960

News Letter

Again winter time is upon us and it is our duty to wish all members very best seasonal greetings, good snow and ice conditions in the New Year period with safe and successful ascents.

At a comparable time last year, we launched into a tirade on what we austerely termed the "primary purpose of the club", to be precise "Mountaineering". We had our 'nails' chewed as a result in no uncertain fashion by more than one stalwart, but we still feel it our duty to call attention at this festive time for the need to retain the impression of having the sport of climbing mountains in the forefront of our thoughts and activities, however limited by circumstances they may actually be.

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When one thinks about 'fanatics' amongst mountaineers, the name of Hermann Buhl immediately springs to mind. This amazing man was all mountaineer. From head to toe, eating, sleeping, thinking and working only for mountaineering he overcame physical limitations to become, without doubt, the most remarkable figure in mountaineering history. His very fanaticism gave him an endurance which was almost unnatural; and we would not dare to comment further in this vein.

As an extremist his outlook was not, however, restricted as one might suppose to the few feet of rock or ice in front of his nose. Accommodated in a barn near the Matterhorn on the occasion of one of his few visits to the Western Alps, Buhl came across an elderly man with his eyes fixed upon the mountain, who spoke with sadness of his inability to undertake the ascent. Only the previous day a weak heart had forced him from the Hornli route to a wearisome descent. Of him Buhl said, "surely this man is a mountaineer."

From Buhl to ourselves, keen, adept, but lacking the opportunity, there is a gulf as large as that which exists between British and Himalayan mountaineering. To us, outrageously regarded by the uninitiated as seeking escapism, the following of our mountain way is done as fully as circumstances will allow. Respecting the opportunists, we cannot help but admire them and envy them, for they are what we would be, and as we read of their exploits, their skills and their bivouacs, we objectively compare and the comparisons

are significant. There is one certainty - the regard for mountains is the same. We seek the difficulties too, by our own proportions and our desire is to overcome the hardest of which we are capable and to enjoy the adventure that the finer aspects of the mountains can offer in providing routes. To argue that we are escaping from reality, or seeking reality from the abstractions of daily life, or suffering from inferiority complexes or any other complex is little more than an excuse for words.

We climb because we like to.

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The alarming increases in accidents to young and inexperienced people is giving grave concern to responsible bodies in mountaineering circles.

A letter on this subject is quoted verbatim elsewhere in this issue.

In the Editor's opinion all clubs have a duty to aspiring mountaineers, and as the bulk of our prospective members these days seem to be outright beginners, it is up to all of us to help them on their way. It should be remembered that ability is not, at the time of writing, necessary for membership to this club, and anyway, we all had to start some time!

Mike King.

Next year sees the retirement from Pen-y-Pass of Mr. and Mrs. Rawson Owen.

In the history of the Gorphwysfa Hotel, Pen-y-Pass, can be traced the history of mountaineering in Snowdonia. Under the guiding hand of Mr. Owen for the past fifty seven years, it has attracted within its walls some of the most famous names in British Mountaineering. Here, in the early days of rock-climbing, came the pioneers who opened up the crags; Eckenstein, Andrews, and Archer-Thompson, and in another generation George Leigh Mallory, possibly the first man to reach the summit of the earth's surface.

Here too came Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, whose name will be linked with Snowdonia and with Pen-y-Pass as long as there are mountains, the pioneer of pioneers and poet of the high hills. It was fitting that, at Easter this year, a small memorial

service was held at Pen-y-Pass on the occasion of the unveiling of a plaque to 'Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, Mountaineer and Poet'. It was particularly unfortunate that Mr. Owen was seriously ill at that time, the same illness which is now forcing his retirement from the hotel.

In recent years, with the increasing popularity of mountaineering and the rise of numerous climbing and mountaineering clubs, the lead in mountaineering development has shifted to the club hut and the camp site. But Pen-y-Pass remains, guardian of the traditions which it has fostered, one of the few havens of peace in this noisy world. At the highest point on the Llanberis pass, it is surrounded by an unparalleled panorama stretching from the pyramid of Crib Goch to the south-west, past the profile of Gallt-y-Wenallt, and round the slopes of Moel Siabod to the Glyders.

From the first time one enters the front door there can be no doubts as to the nature of the place and the people who stay there. The climbing boots laid neatly side by side under the table, the rope draped over a chair back, the ancient photographs of Crib Goch ridge and the Devil's Kitchen, and the much more recent paintings by Mrs. Owen herself on the bar counter, all give atmosphere of mountains. In the comfortable lounge one may relax, free of the cares of the outside world. Nobody enquires about ones trade, profession or vocation, the talk is only of mountains and the men who climb them. There is no wireless or television set to disturb the peace with horrible twentieth-century clamour.

Oddly enough, Mr. Owen has never been an active mountaineer, and claims to have been out on the Snowdon ridges only once. His hobby is antique collecting, and evidence of this may be seen in the dining room, where one can sample the excellent cuisine surrounded by a welter of silverware, copperware and old clocks (most of which do not seem to work).

Mrs. Owen is a charming and kindly hostess. Many evenings after the wind and rain have howled over the pass all day, the enormous kitchen range has been bedecked with camping equipment brought in from the hills to dry while its owners relax in the warm comfort of the house, and the writer remembers an occasion three years ago when he caught asian 'flu, being carefully nursed for two days, with all the medicinal contents of the bar and the medicine chest liberally applied, and all at no extra charge.

No spot on earth can be more magnificent early on a fine summer morning. The road down the pass is deserted, the car park empty. Crib Goch, its rusty aretes lit by sunlight and backed with blue sky, soars into the heavens. Far below, the Nant Gwynant lies silent, still in the shadow of the dawn.

As the sun climbs higher, the morning activity commences at Pen-y-Pass; the cavernous barking of Monty can be heard (the only Old English Sheepdog who only understands Welsh!); the clamour of the breakfast gong; the bustle of preparing sandwiches; and then, with the clash of nailed boots on the road outside, another mountaineering day has started.

This has been the way of Pen-y-Pass throughout its history, and we always knew that while the Owens were there it would never change.

It is greatly to be hoped that the traditions which have made Pen-y-Pass what it is will be carried on by the new owners. In the meantime, we all join in wishing Mr. and Mrs. Owen a long and very happy retirement in their new home in the Conway Valley.

I.D. Corbett.

CLUB NOTES

Annual Dinner

As the annual dinner was such a success this year, we are again arranging to hold it at the Dolbadarn Hotel, Llanberis. The date is Saturday 11th March, and circulars giving details will be sent out in due course.

Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Wednesday 8th February at 7.0 p.m., probably at the Cambridge.

Hut Bookings

Tyn Lon and Pen Ceunant will not both be let to an outside club for the same weekend. Members can therefore be sure of accommodation, but they are reminded that they should let the Hut Warden know when they wish to stay at either cottage.

New Members

September. William Martin, 110 Alexander Road, 27.
Christopher Wilkinson, 'Longmynd', 28 Fairmead
Rise, 30.
Valerie P. Yardley, 256 Trittiford Road, 14.
Basil Jones, 114 Dagger Lane, W. Bromwich.

Oddments

Mike White is now at Sheffield University and his address is 23 Conduit Road, Sheffield 10.

On 2nd October, to Joan and John Urwin, a son, Richard.

Midland Association of Mountaineers

The M.A.M. again extends a very cordial invitation to Ceunant members to attend their lecture meetings, which are held in the Birmingham Medical Institute, 36 Harborne Road, Edgbaston. The lecture hall is very pleasant, and they have arranged a most interesting programme, as follows:

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|---|
| Thursday | 8th December | Women's expedition to Cho Oyu, 1959
Countess Gravina |
| Thursday | 12th January | M.A.M. Alpine meet, 1960
F.H. Robinson |
| Tuesday | 24th January | St. Andrew's University South
Greenland Expedition, 1960
R.H. Wallis |
| Thursday | 9th February | Films 'Climbs in Britain' and
'Some of our wild birds'.
F.H. Restall. |
| Thursday | 9th March | The Trans-Antarctic Expedition,
1955-58.
George Lowe |
| Tuesday | 28th March | Fort William meet, 1960
Kintail meet, 1960
D.G. Smith and T.C. Savage |

Progress at Tyn Lon

Since the large Autumn Working Party, of which a report will be found elsewhere, further improvements have been carried out by small parties and solo efforts. Details are given below of recent work and plans for the future. Some of this work will be tackled by small specialized working parties but a good deal can be done by members on days or half-days when they find the weather unfit for other activities. For the guidance of those who find themselves in this position more detailed information will be put on a notice board at Tyn Lon.

Most of the outstanding jobs are on the older half of

the building and the outhouse:-

Kitchen

A sink and cold water supply have already been fitted in the second kitchen; two benches have been made and will be faced with sheet metal and one of them fitted with gas rings. Shelves will be suspended from the ceiling.

Front Room The old paintwork has been partly stripped but the plasterwork needs some repair before the room is decorated, and the store will require a false chimney of asbestos pipe.

Upstairs Unfortunately the roof timbers in this older area are unsound, but it is intended to proceed with some repair of the walls and ceiling in the bedroom on the assumption that the roof wont fall in in the immediate future if we are careful! Construction of more bunks for this room will considerably ease the overcrowding elsewhere.

Outhouse The framework for the drying-room is completed and a start has been made on the showers. The drying room will be panelled with hardboard and the showers and washbasins partitioned with plastic curtain material. The source of heat for the drying room is undecided at the time of writing but several possibilities are under consideration. A solid fuel store which would also provide hot water; a fan heater or convector for drying and an immersion heater or 'Ascot' type water heater running either on Calor gas or electricity. Members experiences and opinions on this subject (or any other for that matter) would be welcomed.

Exterior This is not really the best season for any outside work other than trying to pinpoint the various leaks in the roof. Should the weather improve and a member find himself cottage-bound by a broken leg or some other minor injury, the downpipes, gutters and window frames need painting and the end and rear of the building need two coats of Snowcem.

After a long search the main stopcock was recently rediscovered lurking beneath the outhouse window and a small monument has been erected over it. I do urge members to shut off the water supply before leaving Tyn Lon otherwise yet another mountaineering club may have to form an underwater-swimming section.

Alan Green.

LIBRARY

The following books are available to members from the club library. It is hoped to be able to extend this list considerably if more members will come forward and offer the temporary loan of their own books. The librarian is also able to obtain certain second hand books, especially those of earlier mountaineers, at a small discount.

GUIDE BOOKS

F.R.C.C. Guides: Great Gable, etc.
Great Langdale.
S.M.C. Guides: Isle of Skye.
E.C. Pyatt Where to Climb in the British Isles.
Alpine Climbing Selected Climbs in the Range of
Group Mont Blanc.
National Forest Park Snowdonia
Guide:
and other guides available on loan.

TRAINING

Barford, J.E.Q. Climbing in Britain
Bell, J.H.B. A Progress in Mountaineering.
Francis, G. Mountain Climbing.
Mountaineering Assn. Elementary Mountaineering.
Tarbuck, K. Safety Methods with Nylon Rope.
Wexler, A. Theory of Belaying.
Wright, J.E.B. Technique of Mountaineering.
Young, G.W. Mountain Craft.

GENERAL

Azema M.A. Conquest of Fitzroy.
Bicknell P. British Hills and Mountains.
Buhl, H. Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage.
Busk D. Delectable Mountains.
Coolidge W.A.B. Alpine Studies.
Harrer H. The White Spider.
Herrligkoffer K. Nanga Parbat.
Herzog M. Annapurna.
Hillary E. High Adventure.
Hunt J. Ascent of Everest.
Irving R.L.G. The Mountain Way.
Lunn A. Mountain Jubilee.

Magnone G.	The West Face.
Met. Office.	Your Weather Service.
Milner C.D.	Rock for Climbing.
Palmer W.T.	Odd Corners in the English Lakeland.
Pyatt & Noyce.	British Crags and Climbers.
Rebuffat G.	Mont Blanc to Everest.
	Starlight and Storm.
Roch A.	On Rock and Ice.
Roche F.	First on the Rope.
Rowland E.G.	Hill Walking in Snowdonia.
Smythe F.	British Mountaineers.
	Climbs in the Canadian Rockies.
Sutton & Noyce.	Samson. Biography of Menlove Edwards.
Ullman J.R.	The Age of Mountaineering.
Weir T.	Camps and Climbs in Arctic Norway.
	The Ultimate Mountains.
Wright J.E.B.	Rock Climbing in Britain.
Young, Sutton, Noyce.	Snowdon Biography.
Ullman, J.R.	Man of Everest.
Young, G.W.	On High Hills.

MAPS

Ordnance Survey 1" to the mile;
 Ben Nevis and Fort William 1947.
 Keswick.
 Birmingham Area.
 other maps available on loan.

Bartholomews:

Lake District. 1" to the mile.
 North Wales. 1/2" to the mile.
 and old copies of most 1/2" sheets available.

MAGAZINES

Mountaincraft: Nos. 1-16 & 20-28.
 & Autumn 1955 onwards.
 Mountaineering: Volume 2 Nos. 7 & 8.
 Volume 3 All Nos.
 La Montagne et Alpinisme: from June 1959.

John Daffern, Librarian.

Book Review

Where to climb in the British Isles - Edward C. Pyatt 20/-

This little book must be the result of a great deal of work by the author and covers all the principal mountain crags, sea cliffs, and other rock outcrops in the British Isles.

It is not a guide book, but just a list, arranged in counties or areas and with an Ordnance Survey grid reference to each point. The distance from nearest town or local landmark is also given.

For those who travel about a good deal and wish to know what climbing is available in any particular area it will be a most useful book, though I feel it is more suited to a club library, for reference purposes, than to a climber's own personal collection.

CLIMBING NOTES by Mike King.

I don't think anyone would argue if these notes were limited to 'No climbing due to adverse weather conditions'!

Anyway, despite the tendency to rain, hail, thunder and even snow amongst the home mountains, people have been climbing routes.

For instance, there is a new 'hammer and nail' brigade in the club. The Michaels Connolly and Manser having sculptured their way up Pincushion at Tremadoc, to arrive with battered fingers due to errors of judgement with the hammer. The same pair also climbed Main Wall, Cynr Llas in poor conditions. They noted some difficulty!

There are rumours of another club epic on Spectre, but details are lacking.

Club members amongst them Stan Jones, Tony Daffern and John Buckmaster have been involved in new routes on a craig near Dolwyddelan. This, incidently, is quite a good little crag about the size of the Wastad but of better material. It will be included in the South Snowdonia Guide, which we understand to be ready for the printers. As we have mentioned before, this guide covers Tremadoc, the Glaslyn and the Moelwyns.

It is very difficult to persuade members to notify us of their exploits, though their friends are ready enough to tell us about their difficulties! Anyhow, we understand that Lion and Unicorn, Phantom Rib, The Mot Direct have come in for their share of attention, together with Scars, 'good old Munich' and

North Side Route (V.Diff we are told by the experts) on Tryfan. We also understand that a party looked at Suicide Groove and are believed to have touched Suicide Wall.

If anyone takes exception to the sparcity of this information they are quite at liberty to write down their adventures, in fact we jolly well wish they would! Save us a lot of trouble.

Mr. Brown, we understand, has climbed without aid, a route originally climbed by an originator who shall remain nameless, and who utilised TEN pitons. An up and coming lad this Brown.

A route has been put up on the overhanging part of the Far West Buttress of Cloggy. There are more new routes on the Pinnacle thereabouts.

There is a fantastically steep 1,000 foot route on Carn Dearg, Ben Nevis, called The Bat - V.S. A Craig Ddu party were noisily doing this route whilst a club party were 'messing' on the Douglas Boulder in June and we have learned since that another pair, trying to emulate them, became suspended consecutively, from the same piton. Apparently, they finished up close together and started to punch each other, the one for allowing himself to fall off, the other for allowing himself to be pulled up from his belay. To cap the story, they are reckoned to have been rescued by an S.M.C. party in tweed 'bowlers' using rocket lines (?). Then one never could believe half these Scottish club stories.

We welcome an account of an ascent by club members of Chasm, Buchaille Etive. In fact we have not had any holiday stories yet.

We don't believe that a visit to Clogwyn Ddu (Glyder Fawr) has been recorded. There is a very exposed route called Manx Wall on this crag which must have one of the most sensational finishes in Wales. It starts very high up the cliff, at the foot of Pillar Chimney proper actually, and goes up the steep wall to finish fantastically over the overhangs. (Severe).

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

Drive for Safety on the Hills

Below is the text of a letter sent recently to the national and provincial press by the Council. They would like club members to know the line taken on this, particularly

the last sentence.

We are concerned by the numerous instances in recent months of young people undertaking expeditions in our British mountain districts without sufficient training and experience, inadequately clothed and equipped. As a result, injuries and loss of life have occurred recently. It is clear that many young people have no idea of the dangers of mountain travel even in our own small mountains, especially in bad weather.

We strongly commend youthful enterprise and hope that it will continue to be displayed through the mountain activity but enterprise alone is not enough, particularly in this field.

May we therefore appeal to all adults who are responsible for boys and girls - as parents, youth leaders, teachers and in firms - to seek the advice and help of those who are experienced in mountain travel when junior expeditions are being planned, so that would-be mountaineers may prepare adequately for their enterprises.

Solo outings in the mountains are to be discouraged.

We also urge adults themselves, when arranging junior groups in the hills, not to attempt tasks which they cannot safely accomplish. In easy mountain terrain, it is not possible for one experienced adult to supervise more than ten novices; where the grade is more difficult, the maximum ratio may be as small as one leader to three novices.

The basic weakness in this great field of adventure is lack of knowledge and this in turn is partly due to the fact that available adult experience has not been sought or offered. Moreover, despite such instructions as are given, it does not reach many of those most in need of it. We hope that more adults will play their part in developing the "know-how" of young people in the realm of mountain activities, so that the risk may be adequately countered by experience, equipment and skill.

Glen Brittle Memorial Hut

At a meeting held on 3rd October, it was stated that the general design and plans of the hut had been accepted by the committee. It was estimated that, in view of the high cost of building on Skye, an initial outlay of £6000 would be required, and it was agreed that loans totalling £2000 would

have to be raised, from individual mountaineers if possible. It was thought that the income from the hut, when running, would be sufficient to pay off these loans quite soon.

It was decided that a Scottish trust would be set up to hold the property, with four trustees, three who were office holders of the B.M.C. and one nominee of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

Equipment Sub-Committee

Articles for 'Mountaineering' are being prepared on:-
Fiffi Hauken etrier hooks which had failed under low loads (subject to permission).

Karabiners - Recent tests suggested that weakness in Cassin karabiners tested may have been due to faulty heat treatment.

Dual ropes - The advisability of using BSI Standard No. 3 ropes. Further remedial action is being sought on the following:-

War-surplus karabiners. Benjamin Edginton refused to discontinue sale. A formal letter would go from the Sub-Committee to the B.M.C. so that B.M.C. might consider further action.

Ex-Commando slings sold by Ellis Brigham.

A Birmingham firm has been persuaded to make a trial order of 1000 oval karabiners which had so far done well under test. These might retail at 15/- or less.

'Mountaineering'

It was agreed that a photographic competition, with small prizes, be held by 'Mountaineering', the results to be published in the magazine.

North Wales Committee

A Committee has been formed by the British Mountaineering Council to deal with access, camping, litter and other problems arising in North Wales.

At the first meeting, which consisted of B.M.C. member clubs interested in the area, it was decided that the committee should comprise the following:-

Chairman - Mr. J. Poole

Secretary- Mr. F. Barker

Six others, representing: The Climbers Club, Rock and Ice Club, Pinnacle Club, Yeti Club, The Wayfarers, and the North Wales C.C.

MEET REPORTS

ERIC SHIPTON LECTURE

On September 14th the club was honoured by a visit from Eric Shipton, who gave an illustrated talk on 'The Karakoram'.

In the course of a distinguished career Eric Shipton has become one of the greatest men in Himalayan Mountaineering, and, as we anticipated, his lecture was of absorbing interest. He spoke of his experiences in the Karakoram both as a mountaineer and as a Government official, and gave us some idea of the nature of the country and of the people who live there. During question time after the lecture, he gave some advice to those wishing to attempt mountaineering in the Himalayas, and also commented upon the vexed question of the size of Himalayan expeditions.

For this special occasion the club hired the hall of the Medical Institute. The evening was an outstanding success with an attendance of 193 including members of The Midland Association of Mountaineers, Birmingham Athletic Institute M.C., Holiday Fellowship Rambling Club, C.H.A. Rambling Club, Wolverhampton M.C., N.Stafford M.C., Oread M.C., W.Bromwich M.C., and the Rucksack Club.

AUTUMN WORKING PARTY by Alan Green.

The working party held on 24/25 September was supported by 22 people. A small detachment tackled the jungle which the garden of Pen Ceunant had become and removed the usual coating of mould from the interior woodwork. The main effort, however, was concentrated on Tyn Lon, and as a result the outside walls received about one and a half hundredweights of 'Snowcem'; the electrical wiring was completed; the front bedroom in the older part of the building was partly renovated; the dining room ceiling was replaced and the floor sealed; the front garden was cleared; and the outlines of a drying room took shape. Our carpenter produced three table tops and several wall benches. I should like to thank members and guests for their efforts, particularly those who took on the soul-destroying jobs - filling in gaps in the stonework and burning off old paint seem to go on for ever.

The weekend was not without its minor tragedies. The leader of the snowcem party produced a brush of enormous

proportions (an old family heirloom we understand), dipped it into the mixture and withdrew it minus bristles! Under the direction of the Secretary a mysterious 'goo' was concocted for filling gaps in the bedroom floor only for it to be found that the English summer had eliminated the gaps.

If anyone would care to make an offer for 39 assorted pieces of window glass - mostly triangular in shape - we should be most happy.

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Members may also have noted, in the field alongside the cottage, a small area of slate, rubble and ash leading up to the gate. This was laid by Ian Mason and the acting editor and is the beginning of what we hope will become the Tyn Lon car park. Some sort of hardstanding is badly needed here, as anyone knows who has tried to get a car out after a wet night, and it is our intention to add to it as the opportunity arises. The main difficulty at the time was to prevent members from pinching chunks of it to fill up holes in the cottage walls, but now these have all been dealt with we have no doubt that such a surface, made up of a few hundredweights of slate chippings, will bed down well enough to give adequate support for motor vehicles.

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What is Tony Daffern up to?

A masterpiece of wood, rock, old drainpipes and string is taking shape in the outhouse. It is rumoured that, finding little support for his shower scheme, Tony is taking matters into his own hands and will present the club with a fait accompli.

RHINOGS 7-9th October by Jean Burwell.

In a minibus, a Jag. and a van an assorted party successfully navigated themselves to the Inter-Varsity club hut above Barmouth. Another car load less successfully navigated itself into the wild interior and had a wet night out somewhere or other. Apparently they had spent the day looking for the hut but had left the bit of paper with the directions at home on the piano. So they said.

The Inter-Varsity hut is certainly in a secluded spot, and

in fine weather a very attractive one, overlooking Barmouth bay. On this occasion the weather was not fine and the approach was by a lane which had become a muddy rivulet. However, the hut was cheerful and welcoming, and it was evident that a good deal of work had been put in on it. (One acquires an eye for these things!).

Saturday dawned wet and even cups of tea all round did not get people out of bed very early. Eventually, a few went off to find some climbs which a farmer thought were in the vicinity, and the rest of the party took a walk over the tops. The Rhinogs were too far away for this time of year, but they made quite a good round of the lower ridges. During the course of it the rain stopped and the wind dried them out. The climbers did not find the climbs, and ended up by walking much the same route as the others.

Saturday night we ventured into the wild night life of Barmouth, and having enquired from a native which pub might not throw us out on sight, we partook of modest beers and temperate conversation at the hostelry he recommended.

Sunday was rather worse as to weather, for it didn't stop raining all day. Some outcrops were found above Barmouth; they were not particularly inviting, but some of the party had a go at them. Others walked along the cliff tops and looked down on the town lying grey and sabbath-bound below. Signposts to the Panorama Walk invited a following and led to a cunningly placed shelter which would have been delightful on a sunny day. On the way back two of the more cultured members were discovered listening to the Sunday concert in the well-equipped van of a well-known third party, who was busy falling off a wet slab at the time.

Back at the hut a gentleman with knight errant tendencies was immersed in the engine of a car belonging to a female I.V. club member. He managed to mend whatever it was that had gone wrong and earned a lift home with the owner, while the rest of the party returned as they had come.

BORROWDALE November 4-6th by Mike King.

Fourteen members and guests travelled to this venue which we believe to be the farthest-from-home meet yet run by the club.

By current standards the weather was kind, the Saturday

having only a little rain, though the crags were wet, whilst Sunday was brilliantly sunny.

The camp site at Hollows Farm, Grange, was excellent and the party pitched tents in a cosy group on a knoll near trees and a choice of streams. This was accomplished by 2 a.m. despite having to recover the transport from a bog into which it had been efficiently driven.

On Saturday everyone climbed on Sheperds Crag, doing Chamonix, Donkeys Ears and others. There was a gay abandon amongst the members, spectators were everywhere, people being helped up, jammed legs all over the place, and all in all a good time was had by everyone.

On Sunday most people motored and trudged to Sergeants Crag where an 'epic' took place. After looking into The Gully and expressing admiration for Mr. O.G. Jones, we gathered at the foot of a portion of steep, wet crag nominated The Great Wall. Upon this Wall Mike Connolly set foot and climbed for some distance up the edge of a slight fold upon a variety of loose knoblets, hanging the odd sling on some of the larger ones which managed to bear the weight of the karabiners. Whilst this was taking place the meet leader shinned a short way up a CHIMNEY called Two-Way Traffic Chimney, presumably on account of it lending itself as a rapid means of descent. Having formed an opinion of the place, room was made for others and an avoiding action taken some distance to the right.

This chimney, incidentally, formed part of a standard Difficult route made by a Mr. B. Beethan whose name figured largely at the rear of the guide book.

Before very long the new aspirant in the Chimney became a fixture, and as he was rapidly chilling, it was thought advisable to assist his removal with a rope from the top. By this time, the Great Wall party were likewise on the retreat and everyone gathered in the sun near the top of the crag which became the subject of some criticism!

However, a brief sunbathe, punctuated by chocolate and other refreshments on the summit soon restored confidence and the party fell asleep. Not for long, however, for the air soon lost its warmth, and a brisk walk to the valley was enjoyed.

Camp was demolished and the majority were off by 5 p.m.

Unless they are all being polite, everyone enjoyed the 'furthest' meet so far.

ROACHES - Sunday 13th November. by J. Daffern.

A well attended meet, sixteen members and three guests being present. Most of the party stopped in Ashbourne on the way and arrived at the Roaches about 11.30. Very soon afterwards a game keeper put in an appearance and stung as many as he could half a crown climbing fee. One group, including of course the treasurer, the cunning swine, talked to the keeper for about twenty minutes and were among the lucky few to escape.

The weather turned on us and by 1.0 p.m. it was pouring with rain, and the cafe in Ashbourne had more trade. The meet finished in Birmingham at Dan's house with a short slide show. Short, because the Hon. Treasurer put his foot in it, or rather on it (the projector) and left Pete Hay still not having seen his slides on the screen.

SLEDGING by Tony Daffern

How I envy the powerful Husky dog, whose one joy in life is to be out in the snow and freezing cold pulling a sledge, and how I admire men like Nansen in the Arctic, and Scott and his companions on their way to the south pole, who have pulled sledges, day after day, in all kinds of weather, for hundreds of miles. They were tough determined men.

We found sledging hard tedious work; plodding on hour after hour, mile after mile, crevasse after crevasse, the incessant tugging of the harness round our waists, our hip bones sore, our legs weary, and our minds blank.

The first day is always the worst, and we started off badly, the sledge turning over in the first few yards. We had made our own sledge, the ones we had ordered not having arrived in time. Fortunately we had two pairs of experimental plastic skis with us, and by scraping and scrounging on our way to Magdalena Bay, procured screws, nails, and a few iron bars, which, together with driftwood and packing cases was enough to make two sledges. The greatest difficulty was fixing the sledges to the skis, and every time it turned over we prayed that the fastenings would hold. When once we got moving it wasn't too bad, and provided we kept the sledge pointing up hill as much as possible it wouldn't turn over.

Half way up the glacier we met the first obstacle, a melt stream 5 or 6 feet deep, and on the average 4 feet wide, which carried a rushing torrent of icy blue melt water

down to the bay. For several yards on either side of the stream we had to paddle over an area of slush, up to a foot deep. After much hauling and lifting, balancing precariously a few feet above the icy water, we got the sledge across, to find our way barred by more melt streams, and larger areas of slush.

Eventually after pulling for several hours we had fought our way, step by step, up the last steep slopes of the glacier. The ice field was spread before us, a vast shimmering whiteness, ringed by distant peaks of rotten red rock protruding from the snow like so many decaying fangs. Far away on the horizon our second objective, a high col between two rock pinnacles, was barely visible.

We had stopped to adjust the load, which being the first day was at its heaviest, and, as we had not yet formed a proper routine, badly packed. We found it essential to put the load as far back on the sledge as possible, to minimise the chances of the runners digging into soft patches of snow. The best method of packing was to use three or four weatherproof boxes, in which all the loose articles were packed. The whole load could then be easily secured by a few turns of a rope.

Back to the traces, head down, lean forward, heave, and we were away again. The sky was cloudless, and the sun, peeping over the mountains on our right, crept slowly behind us until our shadows stretched way out ahead, providing the only relief from the glassy snow. The snow was firm and even, the sledge moved with very little effort on our part, and on we plodded, each lost in thought, the silence only broken by the crisp crunch of snow under our boots as we crept nearer and nearer the col.

It was difficult to keep our minds on one subject. We thought of food; (we were always thinking of food;) of warm dry feet, of where we were going next year, and how pleasant it would be to get into our sleeping bags that night. Looking up, the Col seemed no nearer than it had been half an hour ago, so once more we would lose ourselves in thought. Finally our minds went blank, our feet moved automatically, and we plodded on in silence. Distances were very deceptive in the clear air and for a long time we seemed to get no nearer the Col, then all of a sudden we found ourselves on

the top.

By this time we were beginning to feel the effects of the first day's pulling. The tightness of the belts produced an empty, hungry feeling in our stomachs, and the metal adjusters at the sides cut into our hip bones leaving them bruised and sore. From the Col we could see below us a large, bare looking glacier forcing its way towards the distant bay, its surface gashed by waves of enormous crevasses. Near the bay the crevasses were exposed to view and many were filled with turquoise blue melt water. Higher up the glacier they became more and more snow covered until they disappeared, hidden from view by a large flat expanse of snow.

At first we made good progress from the Col towards the main glacier. The snow was good, and two of us were holding the sledge back, while one in the front kept it on course. Unfortunately the easy going did not last for very long and as we neared the glacier we began to run into trouble. One moment I was walking on firm snow, the next I was waist deep in a crevasse, my legs waving frantically in the void below. There had been no sign at all of any crevasses in the area, and as ours appeared to be a large one we spent a considerable time poking and prodding with our ice axes to find its exact line. Afterwards we were very careful and took every precaution.

The only way to cross the hidden crevasses safely was to probe every step of our route with the axe. The leader had a very long trace stretching about fifty feet from the sledge and did all the probing with the largest axe, while the other two, on traces of different lengths, pulled the sledge. It was backbreaking work probing, and many times we regretted not having brought some long probing rods.

Normally the axe would sink only a few inches into the surface of the snow before meeting resistance, but when poked into a crevasse it would plunge unexpectedly through the thin crust, almost throwing the prober off balance. Sometimes this would happen every few yards and each time we had to find the exact position of the crevasse before crossing it.

To add to our troubles the snow began to get softer and the sledge bogged down frequently. A powerful jerk would

bring us to a halt, the webbing belts cutting into our waists, all rhythm of walking broken. There would be a pause while one of us tramped slowly back to lift the runners clear, a good heave to get it moving, and away again. Occasionally it would bog down on a snow bridge over a crevasse and there would be anxious moments before it was freed.

Finally we reached the main glacier, over which a thin wreath of mist was floating, and started to find our way across. So absorbed were we in avoiding crevasses that we didn't notice the mist thicken until, less than half an hour after we had started to cross the glacier visibility was down to a few yards. Safe navigation in mist in such an area is practically impossible. Everything is white, there is no contrast at all, and it is very difficult to make out the faint lines of hidden crevasses.

We tried steering by compass, but to obtain any accuracy had to double back on our tracks after each detour round a crevasse a procedure which meant walking two or three hundred yards to go forward twenty. In the end we decided to camp and, pitching our tents in a suitable area, waited three days for the mist to lift.

SUCCESSFUL ROCK-CLIMBING PHOTOGRAPHS

To take successful action shots of rock climbers it is essential to be an extremely good climber, a good companion, lucky, or a combination of all three.

The very good climber is capable of getting into difficult situations so that he can obtain the best angle without too much trouble. He can do this with a partner or solo, but the latter is not recommended, as a 'second' is useful for hanging spare gear on besides being 'a la text book'.

A good companion will enjoy the tolerance of a friend who is a better climber, and be dragged up to the good viewpoints. The friend will normally tolerate the continual stops for 'shots' even if he is near to freezing.

There is, of course, another way of getting good rock-climbing pictures. My present scheme is to buy a camera with a 240 m.m. telephoto lens so that I can sit on the road wall

in the Llanberis Pass and take action shots of climbers on those horrifyingly steep cliffs away from the road!

'Old and past it'.

INTRODUCTION TO SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING by Ian Mason.

Some years ago, when I was living on a boat in the flattest part of Britain I was induced, by someone whom I shall always remember with gratitude, to visit the mountains of Torridon, in the Western Highlands. I had beginner's luck with the weather, setting out in one of the finest Septembers on record, pushing my old shooting brake to speeds for which it was never intended, so that I made my first stop at Glencoe with some daylight to spare.

In the morning I gave a lift to an Israeli student, on a walking tour which he intended to finish at Inverness. Untruthfully informing him that it was just another big city, I persuaded him instead to come on to Torridon with me, to see the real Scotland. We were lucky enough to get our first glimpse of Loch Maree and of Loch Torridon in the early and late stages respectively of a spectacular sunset, so that he could only repeat in astonishment, "It's like fairyland, -- like another world." Even I made a trifle blase by seagoing sunsets had never seen anything like it, and haven't seen anything like it since. (This is probably due to the fact that the sun has rarely been seen in any position by anybody in this country since).

In search of the youth hostel at Inver Alligin I put the old Austin at a series of hairpin bends on the side of Ben Alligin which to my anxious eyes appeared to grow progressively nearer the vertical with each one attempted, ending with a descent which made me hope the brakes were still in good order. The view, however, was worth all the misgivings I had suffered.

Inver Alligin lies on the North shore of the inner loch, with the rounded slope of Ben Alligin behind it. The immense bulk of the Liathach ridge is masked by the south shoulder of the range but is impressive even from this angle. Across the loch, Beinn Shildaig, Beinn Damla and Beinn Eaglaise look equally magnificent, though the highest of them falls short of

the three thousand mark. But the true beauty of this place to my mind is the way in which Beinn Alligin and Liathach rise straight up out of the loch. One can begin the steep walk up at once; the rock climbers have to go a long way round to the North faces for any real climbs, and most of them camp on the Glen road within sight of Beinn Eighe. Yochi, the Israeli, was so attracted to the camp site that he accepted the loan of my tent, for I had intended anyway to sleep in the van, as I had done in Glencoe. No great self sacrifice on my part was needed, as the tent in question was decrepit and lacked a ground sheet. However the weather was so fine that I considered he only needed the tent for moral support, and could safely rely on my U.S.A. forces surplus sleeping bag, which looks and feels like a flexible coffin and is about as convenient to carry, though it IS waterproof. He gratefully accepted the loan of this also, in blissful ignorance of the fact that the unwary user of this contrivance frequently becomes unconscious from sheer exhaustion before he (or she) has completed the operation of doing up the various zips, studs and clips with which it is plentifully equipped. Yochi, however, coped with it nobly, and in record time was as snug as an Egyptian mummy or a man in a strait jacket. I spent a comfortable night in the van on my Dunlopillo.

Yochi was up early, and proved his independence by releasing himself from the sleeping bag without outside assistance, which made me suspect he must be related to Houdini. The sky was cloudless and it was quite obviously going to be a sweltering hot day if we stayed at sea level. However, this was not our intention, and bursting with enthusiasm and an early breakfast of tinned sausages, we gazed at the mildly deceptive slope of Beinn Alligin immediately North of the camp site.

"How about walking up this one first?" I suggested. "Beinn Alligin" I added, consulting the map. My companion surveyed the mountain with rather less enthusiasm, and (as I later realized) with rather more knowledge of mountaineering.

"Yes" he agreed "It'll be nice and cool up on the top. I haven't been on top of a British mountain, and ours aren't nearly so high. But I've only got leather soled walking shoes."

"Borrow my spare boots" I urged, for someone had impressed on me that for mountain walking in Scotland late in the year one should have both nailed and rubber soled boots. I had duly provided myself with these but thriftily had coddged both pair up from old R.A.F. tropical boots. These were in fact unsuited for walking even before I had interfered with them by fitting Woolworth rubber soles and heels on one pair, and hob nails from the same emporium on the other.

He glanced at them, shuddered, and declined with emphatic politeness. "I'll manage" he said "Shall we walk along to the west end of the ridge and start up there?"

"Oh no," I said "Surely that's a long way round. Let's go up the grass at the side of that gully in the centre. We can start up the mountain at once then."

He gave me a strange look, then after a prolonged pause agreed, and we set off up the steep grassy slope. There had been no rain for a fortnight and everything was bone dry. The slope grew steeper and steeper and though I had thought I was in good physical shape I was reduced to a glacier like crawl and my breathing sounded like a worn out B.R. loco.

However, by creeping on all fours like an aged baboon, I still felt I was making progress and that it could not be very long before we completed the three thousand two hundred feet odd to the top. My self satisfaction was then rudely shattered by Yochi, who gave a wild cry in Yiddish and slithered suddenly down the bone dry grass slope on top of me so that we then both slid backwards for twenty or thirty feet till the grip of my hob nails and a patch of rough rock on the seats of our pants brought us to a halt. We had a rest and a bar of chocolate each and started off again, Yochi with extreme caution.

When he had slid back on top of me for the fifth time I suggested we return to get my spare boots. He replied with a short speech in Yiddish, which I am sure from the tone of his voice would not have been suitable for translation, and proceeded to take off his shoes and socks. He stuffed the socks into the shoes, tied the laces together, then slung them round his neck.

"Come on" he said, starting up the slope at about five miles an hour. I struggled up after him, and at frequent intervals he waited to allow me to catch him up, while he admired the scenery. At every stop I expected to see his feet

dripping with blood, but he must have been born with ingrowing tricounis, for he appeared to have forgotten that he was barefoot. I took more photographs than I need have done to allow myself time to get my breath back. I swore I'd never smoke another cigarette, (a vow which by and large I've kept).

We finally reached the meandering, stony, double top of Beinn Alligin, and he was struck by its similarity to the stony mountain tops of Palestine, (of which he later sent me photographs). We had lunch by the summit cairn and were intrigued by the very much steeper angle of the easterly side of the mountain, which drops away suddenly just behind the cairn as though a giant had scooped a piece out with a huge apple corer. Seen from the village of Annat at the head of the inner loch this mountain looks hollow.

Yochi once again discarded his shoes, and we descended on the western side; the route he chose consisting mainly of large scree. In some places it appeared to be nearly vertical to my untutored eyes, but I was not going to be put to shame by a man in bare feet. We arrived without incident at a level where he could once more put on his shoes, and returned to our camp site as the light was failing, to be greeted with an enormous camp fire, about nine feet in diameter, built by some medical university types who had elected to camp there. We were immediately served with hot soup, which I considered to be a pretty good gesture, and after a sing song round the camp fire retired contentedly to our sleeping bags, or in my case, to a pukka bed in the back of the van.

Next morning we went our various ways, and though I have been back to Torridon several times since, and done more extensive explorations of its mountains by myself, I never seem quite to have recaptured the glamour of that first ascent or met such interesting characters.

The lower section of the Ötztal Valley is a flat, mile-wide plain, out of the sides of which rise sheer walls of rock, the foothills of the Pitztal and the Stubai Alps. Nestling under the eastern cliffs is the village of Längenfeld, a place of frescoed houses and flower bedecked chalots, with an air of pastoral calm far removed from the jangling mechanical bustle of the 20th century.

We had come to Längenfeld, after consulting various authorities on Alpine Walking, with the express intention of climbing Schrankogl in the Stubai. So far as mountaineering was concerned, this holiday had not been an outstanding success, notwithstanding the appreciation of a group of American tourists who took a film of us roping down a snow-slope on the Pitztalerjoch, and who thought us very expert. They obviously knew no more about roping down snow-slopes than we did. We had, it is true, got up to 10,000 feet twice in the Ötztal, (with the aid of a chairlift on each occasion), but it had nearly killed us. So now, under the impression that we were acclimatized, and with only a few days left before starting back anyway, we were determined to 'do' something, and Schrankogl was nominated.

The way to the Schrankogl lies up the beautiful Sulztal Valley, and the following morning in blazing sunshine we set off along the winding woodland track. Our intention was to spend that night at the D.O.A.V. Amberger Hut at the head of the valley and make our attempt at the Schrankogl the next day. We soon discovered how hot a Tyrolean summer day can be, and as we trudged along the track, to the sound of rushing waters and jangling cow-bells, one layer of clothing after another went into the rucksacks. At the village of Gries, where we stopped for liquid refreshment, we met the first check to our ambitions. Opposite the little church was a cafe, with cheerful coloured sunshades on the verandah tables, and in we went. After a hilarious interlude of trying to order three lemonades in pidgin German from a waitress with no knowledge of English, the proprietor appeared. He turned out to be the local priest from the

church across the way, and was dressed in his clerical attire with an apron over it. He was bald headed, smiled the whole time, and looked rather like Alistair Sim on location for a comedy film. He spoke English quite well, and after chatting for ten minutes about holidays, England, and the weather, we told him we were hoping to climb the Schrankogl. This obviously shook him, and he immediately started questioning us about our experience in Alpine climbing, snow and ice work, etc. Our answers obviously did nothing to reassure him, nor probably did the sight of our brand new, unmarked ice-axes. He did not stop smiling, but looked as if he was mentally calling out the mountain rescue service in advance. As we left, he suggested that we consulted the hut warden as to the advisability of making the climb at this time of year. Since he also told us that the hut warden did not speak English, this was not a very helpful suggestion.

We toiled on along the steadily rising path. At the head of the Sulztal the path swings to the right, and round a hummock of rock, at the foot of a wide hanging glacial valley, lies the Amberger Hut. At 9000 feet, surrounded by snowfields and glaciers, it is a most desolate spot, and after scorching heat of the lower Sulztal we were now piling our clothing back on again as the wind off the snows hit us.

The warden did indeed not speak English, and another dumb show ensued, at the end of which we got settled in quite well. The only other inmate was a German piano-tuner from Nürnberg named Gerhard. He didn't think much of climbing the Schrankogl either, but insisted that if we were determined to go, he would accompany us. He was very interested in improving his English (which was in great need of improvement) and we spent the evening round the futuristic shaped fire grate in the common room carrying on a very slow conversation with much hand waving and constant use of the phrase book.

Next morning we rose early and ventured outside. The temperature was about ten degrees below freezing, there had been a light fall of snow and every rock in sight was covered with verglas.

'Schrankogl no good' commented Gerhard, as we shivered in the common room. It was obvious that he was right, but we were not inclined to give up immediately. We announced

our intention to make a start and see how far we got. With Gerhard tagging along, we made our way across the valley floor and up the lateral moraine of the Schwarzenberger glacier which flanks the Schrankogl. This was a particularly messy moraine heap, and ran like a railway embankment for about two miles up the mountain side.

When we were about one hour out from the hut, we discovered that Gerhard had diplomatically left his ice-axe behind, and had therefore no intention of going above the snowline. By this time, with the sun still lurking behind low clouds, the temperature still below freezing point and all the rocks coated with ice, we were forced to agree that the Schrankogl was indeed 'no good'. We messed about a bit on the upper reaches of the glacier, and then returned to the hut.

Later in the day, when the sky had cleared, we sat by the hut gazing at the sunlit slopes, still white with snow, and backed with the blue sky. We still thought it a jolly good mountain to climb. Maybe we will climb it one day....

This issue of 'Newsletter' was edited and produced by Ivor Corbett.

We are indebted to Dan Davies for the work on the cover of this issue.

STOP PRESS

To Dan Davies. A Daughter Jane Allison, 2nd December 1960.