

hoped to be, above a deep notch in the ridge, and to this we descended. In the notch were two small lakes, one draining W. to the Lamia and the other E. to the Rutara stream and the Mobuku. We were probably at the highest of the Lamia's many sources and were above a prominent waterfall which descends the E. face.

Haddow had seen these small lakes in January but had not actually visited them. From the notch we had no difficulty in scrambling up easy rocks to Kihuma, the highest point of the Portal range. Again the mist came down, again we waited for a chance of the northward view, but were disappointed; it seems, however, that the ridge widens considerably in this direction, gradually flattening out. The descent was made without difficulty.

A final word with regard to the Bakonjo porters. By travelling as lightly as possible we were enabled to select a small number of experienced men and get to know them personally. They were willing, cheerful and magnificent carriers, never showing the slightest reluctance to accompany us anywhere below the snow line, whatever the conditions, and genuinely interested in our doings.

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## THE ALPINE ARCHIVES AT RIED

By C. E. ENGEL

We are much indebted to Mlle Engel for her kindness in sending this interesting summary.—EDITOR.

**T**HE little Nesthorn-Bietschhorn Hotel at Ried is well known to mountaineers who tramp from Goppenstein to Fafleralp. As a village, Ried is not as lovely as Kippel or Kühmatt, but it provides a rather surprising view on the Bietschhorn which, towering above the steep slopes covered first with larches, then with scree and glaciers, assumes from there an abnormally squat shape. The hotel is a small white block, at once inn, post office, *pinte* and grazing ground for postal mules going up to or down from Fafleralp. The place was an important mountaineering centre when the Bietschhorn hut or the hotel at Fafleralp were not yet built. Now, it is too low a starting point for the big climbs on either side of the valley.

The hotel was founded in 1865 by the Schröter-Mooser family, who still own it. The striking thing about the place is that the owners have kept their guest books from 1868 onwards. Here is an almost unique record of Alpine climbing. I do not think it has ever been thoroughly investigated. I spent several hours last summer making notes at Ried; I got thoroughly drenched when hurrying down to Goppenstein to catch a train back to Kandersteg, but it was worth the soaking.

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The very first entries, in the 1868 guest book, are all by Englishmen. They record long snow expeditions which were hard climbs for the



*Photo, E. Gyger, Adelboden.]*

IN UPPER LÖTSCHENTAL.

period. On July 18, 1868, S. L. Howard and E. P. Foster write that they have come 'from the Eggishorn over the West Joch in one day. Going to Lauterbrunnen by the Wetterlücke.' On August 4, T. P. Price and J. H. D. Mathews go to the Eggishorn. The following year, an English party of four members, W. M. Crowe, W. and H. Arnold, and E. H. Mannering, pass Ried on their way from Gampel to Kandersteg, 'everything very nice and comfortable.' A few days later you find the first French name, that of the Vicomte de Virel, going from Schmadribach to Zermatt. There are but two other French people passing through Ried during those early climbing years, Maurice Sabatier and Gustave Lacon, two Parisian lawyers who crossed from Breitlawinen to Loèche-les Bains on August 5, 1870.

There are a few American climbers. Stephen W. Early, from Brooklyn, and an English friend, Ed. Th. Meynell, both coming from Macugnaga via the Eggishorn, leave to cross the Petersgrat to Interlaken on September 4, 1869. The next year, on September 9, Ulrich Lauener leads over the Petersgrat to Ried an American gentleman, Franklyn Taylor, and his three young sons. Such are the usual climbs done by Alpine novices: they already testify to a rather extensive knowledge of the higher mountains.

There are much more interesting names to come. Under the date of August 29, 1869, I have found the name of the first Alpine Club member to come to Ried—Th. Murray Browne: 'While at the Eggishorn, made the first ascent of Ebnefluh Spitze. The ascent was effected from the side of the Lötschenlücke and was very easy. It would make a fine expedition from this place.' He had done the Ebnefluh on the 27th with Peter Bohren and Peter Schlegel.<sup>1</sup>

The striking interest of the Ried guest book is the fact that, on practically every page, you find recorded a climb done by some of the greatest Alpine pioneers. On August 23, 1870, A. Adams Reilly and C. E. Mathews give a short summary of their Alpine season: 'On the 20th August, ascended the Aletsch Glacier to Bel Alp; on the 21st from the Bel Alp by the Aletsch Glacier to the hut on the Faulberg which is provisioned for three days; on the 22nd ascended the Finsteraarhorn and back to the Faulberg; on the 23rd ascended the Mönch and reached this place by the Lötschenlücke. Weather superb. Guides: Melchior Anderegg and Michel Ducroz. We are much pleased with this hotel.'

On June 9, 1870, two first class Alpine teams meet in Ried: Frank Walker and his daughter Lucy arrive from Bel Alp by the Beichfluh, Horace Walker with A. W. Moore and C. C. Tucker come from the Eggishorn over the Lötschenlücke. Horace Walker was thirty-two and his sister thirty-four. The Walkers had done the Lauteraarjoch and the Jungfraujoeh earlier in the season. From Ried, with Moore, they were to do the Baltschiederjoch.<sup>2</sup> On July 23, Miss Straton is in Ried, coming from the Eggishorn: 'Much pleased with the inn,

<sup>1</sup> Studer, *Über Eis und Schnee*, Nordalpen, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Mumm, *A.C. Register*, I. 356.

the landlord much obliging.' The day after, Nettleship, who is still an undergraduate at Balliol College, arrives from Mürren. On the 28th, A. Adams Reilly, H. W. Parkis and William Mathews, 'greatly pleased,' visit Ried on their way from Bel Alp to Kandersteg over the Beichfluh and the Lötschen Pass.

Two days earlier, two other great pioneers had called at Ried: Leslie Stephen and F. A. Wallroth, on their way to Schmadribach. When Leslie Stephen had made the first ascent of the Bietschhorn, on August 13, 1859, the little inn was not yet built and he had slept at Kippel.

The next year—1871—the Walkers come back on July 1, Frank Walker, Lucy and J. E. Blackstone having crossed from Trachsellauenen over the Wetterlücke, H. Walker and A. W. Moore from Kandersteg over the Lötschberg. A few days later, while ascending Monte Leone, Horace Walker was to break his arm, and this was the end of his climbing season for 1871. The same year, on August 23, C. T. Dent, who is then 21 and an undergraduate at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, comes to Ried on his way to the Eggishorn.

On September 18, a very formidable team arrives at the little inn: Miss M. C. Brevoort (New York, U.S.A.) and W. A. B. Coolidge (New York, U.S.A., and Exeter College, Oxon.). 'On the 20th inst. we made the third recorded ascent of the Bietschhorn (the first by a lady). Starting from a lofty bivouac near the Nest Glacier, we ascended by the northern arête and descended by couloirs and ridges to the western arête. The difficulty of the ascent consisted mainly in the extreme looseness of the rocks.

Guides: Christian Almer,  
Ulrich Lauener.

From Zermatt to Bel Alp. We found the accommodation, food and attendance at the hotel excellent for the place. I must add that we planted a red flag on the first stone man and left our names in a bottle on the second.'

This is the first of Coolidge's several entries. They are always very much to the point and sometimes slightly aggressive. Here are the others: '6-8 August 1882. Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge, Oxford.—Trachsellauenen by Petersgrat. With Ch. Almer (Vater u. Sohn). Delighted to find that my pleasant recollections of my first visit in 1871 were not quite imagination. Charming little inn.' 15-17 August 1882. (Same party.)

'On August 8 I ascended the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn (3774 m.); much snow on the ridge;

9.—On the way over the Beichfluh to the Bel Alp, I went up the Lötschentaler Breithorn (3795 m.—third ascent).

11.—From the Bel Alp I ascended the Schienhorn (3852 m.—second ascent). The two last-named peaks are both visible from the inn and a full account of their ascent will be found in the 6th volume of the S.A.C. *Jahrbuch*. Many thanks.'

' 6-7 August, 1886.

Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge—from Martigny to Grindelwald with young Christian Almer.

This little inn is a delightful change after five weeks in French auberges. Travellers are strongly advised *not to yield* to the exorbitant demands of the bad men for crossing the easy snow passes in the valley.'

After reading this burst of anger, an anonymous and exasperated mountaineer has added the following note: 'This is not very practical advice as the travellers in question will probably not have "young Chr. Almer" with them and will be compelled to take what they can get.'

Let us go back to 1872. On August 5, G. A. Passingham (Cambridge) arrives from Schmadribach over the Petersgrat in  $10\frac{3}{4}$  hrs.; he is going to Zermatt. Two days later, with Franz Andermatten and Peter Siegen, he makes 'the fourth recorded ascent of the Bietschhorn by the northern arête. I started from the hotel at 2.10 A.M. and reached the summit at 11.30 A.M. and returned by the same way. Arrived here at 6.30 P.M. Weather very bad, much wind, snow and hail. The rocks being covered with fresh snow, the descent was very difficult.'

On August 16, C. and L. Pilkington arrive at Ried on their way from Trachsellaenen to Bel Alp. This is the first of Charles Pilkington's many passages through Ried, either alone with guides or with F. Gardiner, his brother-in-law, and sometimes with both Gardiner and his wife.

Later in August, on the 19th, Leslie Stephen, F. Morshead, H. Schutz-Wilson and C. E. Mathews, with Melchior Anderegg and Chr. Lauener, come over from Lauterbrunnen. On the following day, without Schutz-Wilson and Lauener, they climb the Bietschhorn. I do not think I have ever seen a record of this second ascent of the mountain done by Leslie Stephen. It was a rather grievous breach of his promise to his wife, never to climb any big mountain again!

Five days later, the first outstanding non-English name occurs in the guest book: Paul Güssfeldt, from the Gasterntal to Bel Alp.

On July 6, 1873, A. Fairbanks (Clare College, Cambridge) arrives over the Petersgrat; H. S. Verschoyle and C. J. Ord, on the same day, mention the fact they are going to cross the same pass in the other direction. Ord comes back on July 8 with the Rev. S. Mayhew, B. W. Marshall and A. G. Girdlestone 'over the Petersgrat with our guides.' On July 25, Maurice de Déchy, the Hungarian climber, signs his name.

No interesting climb is mentioned until June 30, 1874, when Colonel the Hon. W. E. Sackville West, A. F. Leach, A. O. Prickard and L. S. Meynell give the following description of their traverse of the Gross Nesthorn and subsequent failure on the Bietschhorn:

'Returned here from Bel Alp on July 13 over the top of the Gross Nesthorn, descended by the rocks between two arms of the Distel Gletscher. Rocks very loose and stones falling. The ascent from Ried could be more practicable. Stayed till July 15 for Bietschhorn

but had to return from a bivouac above the Nest Glacier owing to a change in the weather.'

When very young, Colonel Sackville West had climbed Mont Blanc with Albert Smith in 1851.

Utterson Kelso comes to Ried on his way to Loèche on September 1, 1875. Dr. Dübi signs his name for the first time on July 20, 1876. Three days later, Felix Schuster passes the village on his way from Trachsellauenen to Zermatt. On the 27th, C. J. C. Price and H. G. Willink go up to Bel Alp. On August 7, 1876, C. H. Hawkins gives the following advice to travellers :

'If you do not go over the Beichfluh, it is quite worth while to go to the top and descend on the other side of the stream. There is a small lake excellent for bathing.'

On the same day, the Misses Pigeon arrive from Bel Alp via the Gross Nesthorn. Their second entry is written at 2 o'clock in the morning on the 9th, when leaving for the Bietschhorn which they are to traverse to the Bietschjoch, then down to Visp. Their guides were J. J. Maquignaz and Johann Siegen. They just failed to meet the Rev. F. T. Wethered, who arrived later in the day with his guide Laurent Proment, of Courmayeur. He recorded his former climbs : 'From Saas over the summit of Täschrhorn (on August 7, *first ascent from Saas*) to Randa and thence to Ried via Visp and Gampel. I recommend mountaineers to try the Täschrhorn from the Saas valley. We ascended right up the eastern face by the rocks. Ascended Bietschhorn on August 10. Time : 8½ hrs. from the hotel to the summit. Mountain in capital order.'

This year 1876 is one of the most important in the Ried annals. A few days later, on August 10, W. Penhall arrived, with H. E. Burgess. Penhall was to meet with a fatal accident six years later on the Wetterhorn. On the 13th, Pilkington reaches Ried with the brothers Kaufmann, over the Baltschiederjoch. They failed to climb the Bietschhorn owing to 'bad weather and new snow.' It seems the weather had taken a turn for the worse, for, on August 25, J. H. Pratt mentions a similar failure for the same reason. Then, 'waited here two days for the Bietschhorn but driven over the Petersgrat by hopeless bad weather. Or rather attempted to cross but after wandering for three hours on the glacier in thick mist, driving snow and bitter wind, we found ourselves again at the rocks above Ried, from which we had started. So driven over the Gemmi.'

An ever growing number of ascents of the Bietschhorn are mentioned. On August 6 and 7, 1877, C. Pilkington and F. Gardiner do it 'in a furious east wind.' On the 12th, Paul Montandon comes to Ried.

On the 13th, three brothers Parsons arrive and write on the following day :

'Ascended the Bietschhorn with Alexander Burgener of Saas and Zumstein of Visp as guides. Left the hotel at 1.30 A.M. Bad weather set in on the rocks and we completed the ascent in mist and snowstorm with strong wind. Reached summit at 10.30 and returned to the

hotel. But for Burgener's strength and determination we should not have succeeded in reaching the summit. Zumstein was no use and refused to go to the highest point.'

Now, in another handwriting, across the margin of the book: 'These gentlemen did *not* ascend the B. at all but stopped at a point some way from the top, as was discovered by the Misses Hartley who saw their tracks on the mountain.' This is one of the historical Alpine quarrels picked by exasperated climbers whose nerves had probably been frayed by going up too long moraines.

The first interesting names in 1878 are those of Miss H. Green and Captain and Mrs. Marshall Hall (July 3) going from Zinal to Bel Alp. On the 10th, James Brebner and Montague Cannon pass Ried on their way from Chamonix to Grindelwald. On August 23, J. Oakley Maund and C. T. Dent write: 'Ascended Bietschhorn by the S.E. arête and E. face and descending by ordinary route. The S.E. arête would be very difficult and dangerous to descend in the opinion of the guides J. Jaun and A. Maurer.' Dent was to make the first ascent of the Dru three weeks later.

The day after the coming of Dent's party, J. H. Wicks, Edgar Oliver and E. W. Reeves cross the Petersgrat. On September 9, W. C. Slingsby and A. G. Girdlestone come from 'Bel Alp to Beichfluh without guides.'

No interesting signature is added to the list until 1881. On August 4 of this year, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Gardiner, Charles and Lawrence Pilkington come from Lauterbrunnen over the Petersgrat. They had just done a guideless ascent of the Jungfrau by the Guggi route. On the 25th the first well known French climbers sign their names: P. and A. Puiseux.

1882 is marked by Coolidge's stay, which I have already mentioned. On August 18, Donkin arrives over the Petersgrat. On September 2, Felix Schuster pays a second visit to Ried, going from Bel Alp to Chamonix.

In 1883, the only interesting signature is that of Utterson Kelso (August 24). He climbed the Bietschhorn with Adolf Andermatten of Saas and J. Rubin of Ried.

In 1884, Eugène Rambert calls at the inn on June 4. On September 3, the brothers E. and O. Zsigmondy and L. Purtscheller climb the Bietschhorn. So do C. S. Roy and W. E. Davidson with Gilgian Ogi, on September 18.

No interesting entry occurs until 1889, when C. Cannan and A. D. Godley sign their names on August 18, and A. G. Girdlestone on September 12. Girdlestone came once more, on July 31, 1890, with C. J. Ord, over the Lötschen Pass.

In this year 1890, A. L. Ormerod (New College, Oxford) stays at Ried from August 15 to 26 with Mr. and Mrs. Stallard. He gives the following list of climbs:

- ' 16 : ascended Hockenhorn.
- 18 : Lauterbrunnen Breithorn.

19 : over Beichgrät to the new Oberaletsch hut.

20 : Aletschhorn.

21 : Nesthorn and back to Ried.

23 : Grosshorn. Left Ried 1.20 A.M., top 8.45. Ried (return) 4.5 P.M. Easy walking. Snow in excellent condition. This appears to be the first ascent by English climbers of the Grosshorn.'

In 1891, Horace Walker comes to Ried for the last time. He is with Ellis Carr (July 31). Later in the summer, they were to go to the Silvretta mountains. They spend a few days in Ried and, on August 2, they are joined by Godfrey Solly, a great friend of the Walker family.

E. H. F. Bradby arrives on July 30, 1892, and gives his list of climbs : the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, the Bietschhorn, the Schmadrijoeh, the Wetterlücke, and the Tschingelhorn, with J. Rubin and J. Kalbermatten. In September, three ladies, the Misses Higgins, Rouse and Wills, make a long statement in the hotel book :

'Misses Higgins, Rouse and Wills.—We have spent five delightful weeks in this hotel. . . . Ascents made : Bietschhorn by Miss Rouse, being the first time by a lady, Grosshorn by Misses Rouse and Higgins, first time by ladies and for the first time this year, three ascents only having been previously made. Schaffer Glacier attempted but frustrated by a sudden storm. Petersgrat also, but much fresh snow having fallen, it was considered dangerous to proceed. On each occasion, guides : J. Rubin and Th. Kalbermatten. Miss Wills accompanied her friends on each of the two last-named excursions.'

An anonymous specialist of Alpine history found fault with this text and added two uncomplimentary notes : '(1) Miss Brevoort made the ascent (of the B.) in 1871. Also the Misses Pigeon and probably others as well. (2) At least four ascents (the Grosshorn), two from the Schmadrijoeh, two via the route recorded.' The handwriting somewhat resembles that of Coolidge.

On September 20, 1892, C. A. Aude, T. C. Kirkpatrick and W. B. Dive sleep in the hotel.

The next year, a party of two schoolboys, the brothers Stallard (Rugby), and A. Ormerod, still a New College undergraduate, climb the Wetterlücke, the Schmadrijoeh, the Adlerspitze and the Sackhorn. The view keeps very fine for the whole time. On September 15, Mr. Sydney Spencer passes Ried on his way from Zermatt to Grindelwald. Did he meet J. P. Farrar, who climbed the Bietschhorn on that very same day by an unusual route ?

' J. P. Farrar, A.C.

Guide : Daniel Maquignaz of Val Tournanche.

' From a bivouac in " Im Rämi " at head of Bietschtal, climbed the S. face of Bietschhorn. A difficult climb ; second ascent. Left bivouac at 4.35. Got on at foot after looking about for a possible place for 1½ hr., 7.40, and reached the S. summit at 2.7 and highest point at 2.11 P.M. Left summit at 2.40 P.M. Descended by W. arête, passing hut 6.15 and losing our way in the forest 35 minutes above the village,

where we found a hut for the night, when some very amiable and energetic guides from here who had seen our light disturbed our slumber and brought us down in triumph.'

In 1893, the most striking entry is on July 15 : ' W. M. Conway and E. A. FitzGerald, with J. B. Aymonod, Louis Carrel and two Gurkhas. From Zermatt to the Grimsel.' It was part of *The Alps from End to End*.

In 1895 (September 21), W. E. Davidson mentions his climb of the Schmadrijoeh, Bietschhorn and Lötschen Pass with Chr. Almer (father), R. Almer (son) and Christian Klucker.

On July 11, 1896, Miss A. Peck sleeps at Ried, on her way to Kandersteg.

The oldest hotel book goes as far as 1898, but the last two years have no interesting records. The second book goes from 1899 to 1912. It is not so well preserved as the first : several pages have been soiled, plenty of others have been torn off, possibly by autograph hunters. Yet many well known names are still recorded there. In 1900, from July 31 to August 6, a large climbing party stays in Ried : T. L. and Mrs. Kesteven, E. H. F. Bradby, J. H. Wicks, Miss Overton, Dr. and Mrs. Claude Wilson.

On July 13, 1902 : H. Somerset Bullock.

On August 12, 1904 : Geoffrey Winthrop Young and R. J. G. Mayor.

On August 12, 1907 : R. L. G. Irving, H. E. G. Tyndale, G. H. Bullock. Mr. Tyndale relates their traverse of the Breitlauhorn and the Lötschentaler Breithorn : ' Always difficult. This climb compares favourably with, and in many places strongly resembles, the Zinal Rothorn.'

The last volume, from 1912 to the present day, is far less interesting. Ried is a starting point no longer.

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The books are free from most of the blemishes found in similar texts. There are no ornate attempts at lyrical descriptions, no edifying sentences : Ried was too far from the valleys to allow the ' lesser breeds without the law ' to reach the place and deface it. There is just one sentimental note : on September 12, 1895, an unknown traveller writes down the whole of *Libre Helvétie*. The date is surprising : such bursts of enthusiasm would have been more appropriate on August 1. The inn is thought good and satisfactory. Someone states curtly, in 1871 : ' Coffee needs improvement.' It *did* improve. It was quite good during the fifth war summer.

Another striking detail : no accidents are recorded in those books—nothing worse than climbs under bad conditions, failures to reach the top of the Bietschhorn on account of a thick fog or a blizzard—a rather satisfying record in a district of big climbs on rotten rocks. The few technical quarrels were unavoidable in a place where Coolidge was in the habit of coming. They give a lively aspect to an already fascinating book in which seventy-five years of mountaineering are summarised.