

ALPINE NOTES

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.—The long succession of first ascents, so characteristic of the 'sixties, had scarcely commenced in 1857, and few peaks of importance were climbed during the summer. Future members of the Alpine Club, however, took part in the first ascents of the Mönch (Porges), Klein Schreckhorn (Anderson), Wildstrubel Central Peak (Hinchliff and E. B. Smith), while John Ball claimed the Pelmo, first of the great Dolomite peaks to be climbed, and the lowest summit of the Trugberg.

One of the most important ascents of the summer was the fifth and first British ascent of the Finsteraarhorn on August 13 by W. and St. J. Mathews, E. S. Kennedy, J. F. Hardy, and J. C. W. Ellis, who, alone of the party, never became a member of the Club. During this expedition, as is well known, the formation of the Alpine Club was decided upon, and 'it is not too much to say that the infant's cradle was rocked by Kennedy on the summit of the Finsteraarhorn'.¹

Our forefathers, like climbers of every generation, were much troubled by the vagaries of the weather and had some hard things to say about it. The Finsteraarhorn party was imprisoned by rain and snow at the Eggishorn for three days before the ascent and were lucky to get their peak; on the day after their return the weather broke up again. Several contemporary writers refer to the bad weather that summer and give the impression that it was not a good season.

William Mathews, passing a depressing Sunday in the Hotel de la Poste at Sion but 'cheered by the enlivening sound of heavy rain pattering against the window-panes', was aroused by the entrance of his guide with the news that the Graffeneire had been climbed. In spite of the unsettled weather, Mathews set off next morning, and a few days later made the second ascent of the lower peak of the Grand Combin, now known as the Aiguille du Croissant. The conditions were so bad that Auguste Simond was quite knocked up as a result of his exertions on the expedition and was ill for several weeks. Sir Alfred Wills, in a letter to his wife,² describes how he went to visit Simond the day after he got back to Chamonix and found him looking very ill. Mathews' appearance, even though he was in excellent health, seems also to have disturbed Wills: 'Met Mathews', he wrote, 'just coming away from the sick man. He insisted on going back with us, greatly to my disgust. I never saw such a dirty devil as he has made himself. He has not touched a razor for a month nor, apparently, a hair brush, and he looks dirty and unpleasant beyond description . . . he was so very dirty that

¹ *A.J.* 19. 154.² A.C. Archives.

I got out of the carriage before we reached Chamonix and sent him in alone. I was ashamed to go in with him.'

A few days later Wills records another visit to Simond, who 'appears to have exerted himself with Mathews more than flesh and blood could stand and he complained to me sadly of Mr. M. who, instead of saying "Reposez-vous un instant", was always urging him on and crying "Courage, Simond" . . . I am glad to say that Simond was going to take medical advice, but I shd. be by no means astonished were this to kill him.'

T. W. Hinchliff, in his ascent of Mont Blanc, reopened the Ancien Passage, a route that had not been used since the fatal accident to Dr. Hamel's party in 1820. Elsewhere in the Alps the Ciamarella, Bessanese (lower peak), Croce Rossa, and the East peak of the Levanna were all climbed for the first time.

Eustace Anderson, evidently a contrast to William Mathews, has left us a delightful description of the clothing he wore for his ascent of the Klein Schreckhorn: 'My costume consisted of white flannel cricketing trowsers, a jacket of the same material, with sleeves, a white linen coat, flannel shirt, white felt wideawake hat, a pair of merino stockings, with a pair of the thickest worsted socks drawn over them, and double soled blucher boots, specially made for the purpose in London, the soles, of course, well studded with nails. I also took with me a pair of long cloth gaiters to put on at night.'

Science was not neglected: Tyndall studied the colour of the Lake of Geneva, spent some days in making observations of the structure and movements of the Mer de Glace, and exploded tubes of gunpowder upon the summit of Mont Blanc.

Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, visited Chamonix, Grindelwald, and the Great St. Bernard, presenting a piano to the Hospice.

In Valtournanche the boldest spirits had begun to consider the possibility of ascending the Matterhorn and two attempts were made in the course of the summer: J.-A. and J.-J. Carrel, with the Abbé Gorret, succeeded in reaching the summit of the Tête du Lion.

Three men who subsequently became distinguished members of the Club were born in 1857: Captain J. P. Farrar (President, 1917-20), Sir George Morse (President, 1926-29), and M. E. Boileau de Castelnau, who made the first ascent of the Grand Pic de la Meije in 1877.

WINTER ASCENTS.—The first winter ascent of the South face of the Meije was made on March 17 by M. Pierre Girod with Serge Coupé.

On January 20 the guide Franco Garda and the porter Sergio Gionetto effected the first winter ascent of the North-west face of the Grand Paradis. The party followed the Cretier-Bon-Chabod route of 1930.³

³ See *A.J.* 43. 170.

MM. Jean Couzy and René Desmaison made the seventh and first winter ascent of the West face of the Petit Dru, descending by the same route (March 10–14). The weather was fine throughout, without wind.⁴

COLOMBIA.—Signor Piero Ghiglione visited the Andes of Colombia in the course of last winter. He arrived at Barranquilla on December 29 and flew to Valledupar, from where he made a south–north crossing of the range.

On January 6 he made a solitary ascent of Tairona Peak (*c.* 5,000 m.) by the very narrow West ridge, possibly a new route. Four days later he ascended Cristobal Colon (5,775 m.) by the South face, also a new route.

On January 15 Signor Ghiglione made a new ascent from the south-east of El Guardian (5,295 m.). He was accompanied by Jesus Zapata, the expedition's mule-driver, who had been equipped with boots, crampons, and ice-axe and proved himself a good rock-climber. Finally, on January 20, the same party climbed Pic Ojeda (5,494 m.) by the South ridge. We congratulate Signor Ghiglione on carrying out these ascents in his seventy-fifth year and regret that through an oversight this note of his doings was not included in our last issue.

A Cambridge expedition left England in June for the Sierra Nevada of El Cocuy in the Andes of Eastern Colombia. The expedition plans to climb and explore the peaks of Alto Ritacuva (18,020 ft.), Pichacho (17,560 ft.), Concavo (17,130 ft.), and other summits. Botanical work will also be carried out and the party is due to return to Cambridge in October.

THE YETI.—It is satisfactory to record that measures have been taken by the Government of Nepal to protect both the Abominable Snowman and the Government revenue. A fee of five thousand rupees will have to be paid for permission to search for the Yeti. It must not be killed, or shot at, except in self-defence, and if caught, alive or dead, must be handed over to the Government.

A ST. GOTTHARD ANNIVERSARY.—Seventy-five years ago, on June 1, 1882, the first trains running to a regular time-table passed through the St. Gotthard tunnel. Between twenty and thirty trains used the tunnel each day: today the average figure is nearly one hundred and thirty, and in times of peak traffic as many as one hundred and seventy-five trains may pass through in a single day. In 1882 the fastest train took nearly ten hours to make the run from Basle to Chiasso. Today, four hours forty-two minutes suffice for the journey.

HIMALAYA.—M. Guido Magnone is organising a reconnaissance of Jannu this autumn.

⁴ See *La Montagne*, June, 1957, p. 73.

WELSH CENTENARY MEET, MAY 1957.—This, the first of our centenary celebrations, was an occasion to be approached ritually and not by the customary rush through darkness to midnight arrival. So we travelled gently through England on a May morning and a minimum of main roads. We lunched in a Shropshire meadow by a wood with pheasants feeding and a curlew calling and strutting. The Holyhead road across North Wales is straighter and faster; the first outline of Snowdon and Tryfan ahead slowed us again until hidden behind the less distinguished bulk of Siabod.

The first figures at Pen-y-Gwryd were Eleanor and Geoffrey Young, a Captain of the Old Guard of the Club and of climbing in Wales, whose first visit to Pen-y-Gwryd was in 1887. During the evening and throughout the night motor-cars were converging on the Climbers' Club huts at Ynys Ettws and Cwm Glas Mawr, on Llanberis and Pen-y-Gwryd. One member took 3 hours 20 minutes from Hyde Park Corner; the next morning another arrived in a time of 3 hours 9 minutes and 45 seconds. Standards are changing in all fields.

On Saturday, May 25, parties were out on most of the neighbouring cliffs, but the biggest gathering was in Cwm Idwal, where, thirty-eight years after his first ascent, N. E. Odell followed Alan Blackshaw up Tennis-Shoe, a well-marked highway now but acquiring a new character as the holds are ground down. Another party renewed their respect for their seniors by struggling up Hawk's Nest Buttress (Abrahams, 1906). The sun shone, but a cold wind proved once more that there is no lee-side to a Welsh mountain. Only on the very summit of Tryfan (we were informed by a six-year-old prospective member) was the air still, an odd phenomenon also noted one February many years ago.

In the evening, some seventy-five sat down to dine at the Royal Victoria, Llanberis. Geoffrey Bartrum, who had wrenched a knee, was carried in by a stalwart crew, Ken Irvine loyally assisting with one finger and an air of stress. Much talk but no speeches, except an appeal by the President that members pay up the price of their dinners since Herbert Carr had undertaken to make good any defaults to the hotel; this caused a spontaneous outburst of 'For he's a jolly good fellow' which boded ill for Herbert's pocket. After this happy informal occasion, we set off late up the Pass, assured that Archer Thomson, Eckenstein, Mallory, Kirkus, Kretschmer, Barford and many others had been with us at the feast. It was past three o'clock before Chris Briggs could clear his bar at Pen-y-Gwryd.

The company at Pen-y-Gwryd each evening this week-end was a remarkable representation of the Welsh and alpine generations, not omitting the Lakes, the Himalayas (two pre-war Everesters and three of the winning team, Kangchenjunga, K2, Rakaposhi, Muztagh Tower, and many other expeditions), Andes (two from Huagaruncho), Green-

land, Alaska, South Georgia. The greater part of the Ski Club of Great Britain, the (second) sage of Grindelwald, was present in person, discussing mechanical aids with Joe Brown, drinking with an Olympic gold-medallist, and giving his cold to an ex-President. Conversation was more general than in South Audley Street, characters more varied and beer more plentiful.

On Sunday there were parties on Clogwyn du'r Arrdu, the Three Cliffs, Cynr Las, Idwal, Glyder Fach, and no doubt elsewhere. Most workers had left by Monday, but the less-industrious survivors accompanied the B.B.C. to watch Joe Brown climb Suicide Wall. This proved not only an impressive lesson in technique, but a genuine aesthetic experience, more balletic than gymnastic.

We left Wales, not only deeply grateful to Herbert Carr for his initiative and hard work, but convinced that the success would lead to regular A.C. meets in our own hills.

There were present at the dinner :

Members

The President	P. S. Nelson
C. E. Arnison	Prof. N. E. Odell
G. C. Band	G. F. Peaker
G. L. Bartrum	P. Picard
L. C. Baume	John Poole
A. Blackshaw	A. K. Rawlinson
E. Noel Bowman	P. Russell
C. W. Brasher	A. D. B. Side
D. C. Bull	Commander C. J. W. Simpson
H. R. C. Carr	M. H. Slater
Dr. E. J. Clegg	H. L. Stemberidge
G. F. Dixon	Capt. H. R. A. Streater
Basil R. Goodfellow	Sir Geoffrey Summers
R. S. Hargreaves	David Thomas
Dr. K. N. Irvine	T. A. Thorpe
J. A. Jackson	Dr. M. P. Ward
J. H. Emlyn Jones	J. A. F. Watson
F. H. Keenlyside	M. H. Westmacott
A. C. Kerr	Lt.-Col. H. Westmorland
Walter Kirstein	C. G. Wickham
D. G. Lambley	J. R. Willis
Sir Arnold Lunn	Michael H. Wilson
G. Graham Macphee	E. A. Wrangham
Capt. E. J. E. Mills	G. Winthrop Young
C. Douglas Milner	

(J. L. Longland and Dr. J. F. Mawe joined the Meet next day.)

Non-Members

Roy Beard
 C. Briggs
 F. Collier
 Capt. Deacock
 J. Denton
 J. I. Disley
 A. B. Hargreaves
 M. Harris
 H. K. Hartley

B. A. Jillot
 P. Millington
 Mr. Mortlock
 J. Neill
 D. Penlington
 Prof. H. D. Springall
 A. Stobart
 G. Sutton
 Mr. Temple

APPARITION ON THE MATTERHORN.—In view of the doubts cast upon Whymper's three crosses in the sky (see, for example, *A. J.* 61. 492 and 500), it is interesting to find in *Les Alpes* (1957, no. 2, p. 81) an article by L. G. Vallette which provides a scientific explanation for the phenomena observed.

HERMANN BUHL.—It is with very great regret that we learn of the death of Hermann Buhl, one of the most outstanding climbers of our time. He was a member of the Austrian party which had climbed Broad Peak, and fell in an attempt on the unclimbed Chogolisa in the Baltoro region, on June 27.

EVARISTO CROUX.—One of the best guides of his generation at Courmayeur, Evaristo Croux died at Aosta in November last after an operation. He was sixty-two.

Croux was licensed as a porter in 1920 and three years later made the first ascent of the Grandes Jorasses by the Pra Sec arête and the Tronchey face with F. Ravelli and G. A. Rivetti. In 1925 he made a winter ascent of the Grandes Jorasses and became a guide the same year.

In 1927–8 he made some notable expeditions with Rand Herron (who was killed by a fall from the Great Pyramid in 1932) including the first ascent by the Tronchey face of the Grandes Jorasses; of this expedition Herron wrote in Croux's *libretto di guida*: 'I do not believe, it appears to me impossible, that there is any other man with whom I could have succeeded in this great and audacious undertaking.'

He won high praise from Piero Zanetti for his part in an attempt on the then unclimbed North face of the Grandes Jorasses, Armand Charlet being the leading guide.

In 1929 Croux was one of the guides with the Italian Karakoram Expedition led by the Duke of Spoleto and he had visited the Patagonian Andes with one of de Agostini's expeditions.

He also had to his credit two variations on Mont Blanc, in 1947 and 1949, Piero Ghiglione being on both occasions a member of the party.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE.—The events surrounding and following upon the disaster that overtook Vincendon and Henry on Mt. Blanc last December are still debated. *Revue Alpin* has published the opinion of the Committee of the Lyons Section of the C.A.F. as follows :

‘ Nous reconnaissons que le sauvetage en montagne n’est pas un droit pour l’accidenté. Nous admettons que c’est le droit le plus strict des “ professionnels ” de refuser de partir en course ou en caravane de secours. Mais à l’inverse nous estimons qu’il serait inadmissible dans ce cas qu’eux ou d’autres s’arrogent le monopole de l’organisation des secours, abusent de leur prestige et se targuent d’une prétendue infaillibilité technique tout en continuant à se faire tresser des lauriers pour leur dévouement sans limite. Nous trouvons stupéfiant qu’un sauveteur ait eu le sang-froid de prendre “ la photo du siècle ” et scandaleux que celle-ci n’ait pas été remise directement et uniquement aux familles . . . ’

QUNGUR.—As this mountain, mentioned on an earlier page as being climbed by a Russo-Chinese Expedition last year, is no doubt unfamiliar to many readers, we would refer them to an article and photographs by Sir Clarmont Skrine in the *Geographical Journal*, LXVI, No. 5. The mountain consists of a very long ridge with Qungur I (25,146 ft.) in the middle and Qungur II at the end. The distance between these two peaks is 7 miles. Qungur II is now known to be the higher peak, probably at least 25,200 ft. Qungur II is, in fact, the highest peak in the Pamirs and as such the figure II is misleading; Sir Clarmont points out that it would be much more appropriate if it had a separate name; he suggests ‘ Shiwakte ’.