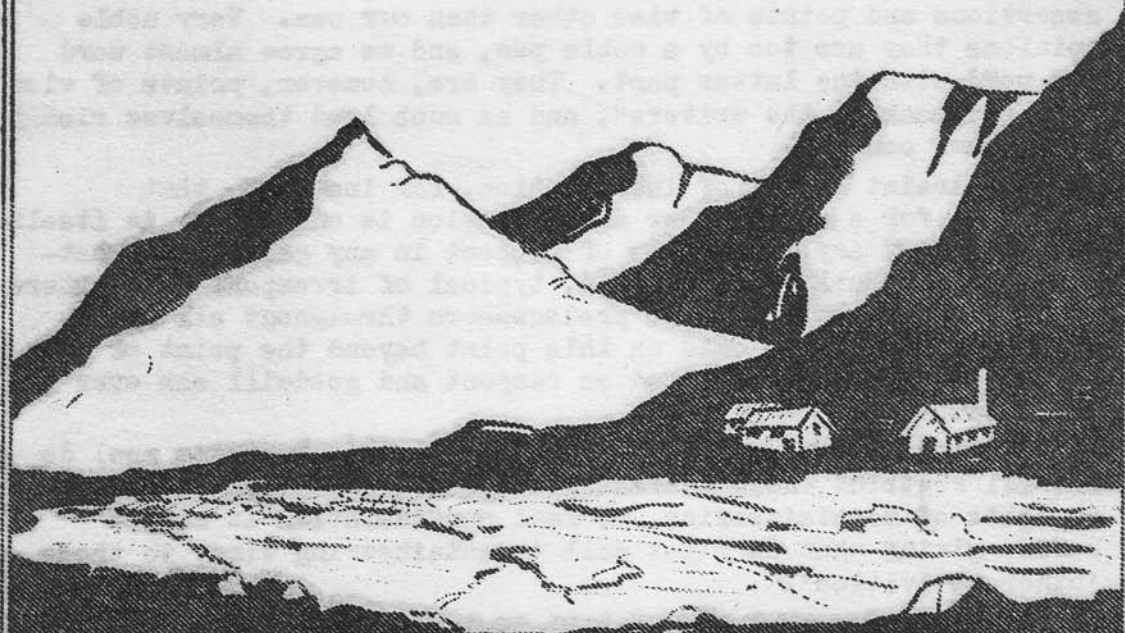


The Ceunant

MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



NEWS
LETTER

A.G.M. NUMBER

FEBRUARY, 1960

EDITORIAL

The Annual General Meeting for the year has taken place and its significance has been not only in the satisfactory attendance but in the attitude and interest of those who contrived to be there.

Once again we can claim a vigorous membership of mountain people interested in each other and in a proper civil club spirit for the benefit of all their friends.

May this vigour be as apparent in the field of climbing mountains in the coming season of 'summer' climbing.

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Elsewhere in this issue we have at long last, some assertions and points of view other than our own. Very noble opinions they are too by a noble pen, and we agree almost word for word with the latter part. They are, however, points of view "not necessarily the writers", and as such lend themselves richly to further comment.

To insist by way of introduction, for instance, that 'respect for a club dinner as a function is outdated', is itself a flouting of any principals of respect in any generality whatsoever, apparently, we are told, typical of irresponsible members of one generation for their predecessors throughout all time. Nothing more need be said on this point beyond the point of principal that nothing based on respect and goodwill can ever be outdated.

Whilst we appreciate that members (particularising now) do not all restrict their recreation time to mountaineering and thoughts of mountaineering, we feel consideration is needed before giving what we might call 'mountaineering time' to these 'other activities'.

After all a club of any sort is largely run by its most active members, those most interested, and surely it is not unreasonable to base a Mountaineering Clubs activities and use of time devoted to its activities and functions to doing mountaineering, and to talking about mountaineering, and to speeches about mountaineering and mountain people, for the entertainment, elevation, interest and education of the mountaineers in the club. Particularly may this be said for the retention of certain traditions which cost nothing to retain and which maintain a respect for persons associated with the mountains and whose

performances, let the superior ones remember, was quite as good as our average today, and in cases better.

To have a club social evening and dance is, on its own, an idea worthy of serious consideration, but it has nothing whatsoever to do with a clubs annual function, and can only undermine the clubs purpose, which is to cater only for people with an interest in the particular sport. What they do in addition is entirely their own affair.

It is nonsense to foresee 'danger' in a mountaineering club putting the sport before all else. Why ever not? We doubt if this club involves even one thirtieth part of a members time in an active week, never mind any other week, and it is not unreasonable for a keen member paying his subscription to expect the club to exist solely for the sport which is the object of his joining.

Although appreciation of our retiring Chairman is ably written elsewhere in this issue, the Editor would like to have his opportunity of wholeheartedly endorsing every comment made by Colin Coleman - both here and at the A.G.M.

We do not accept that the influences of a chairman are small as modestly claimed by John Knight, for the able figure-head (be he active or not!) can guide without bombast and undue deliberation. Johns' effect on the club, manifest not only by example but possibly by intuitive conduct with people and on committee, is entirely responsible for the rapidity of the clubs progress through its period of convalescence to vigorous health.

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The Editor wishes to express his thanks and appreciation for those now engaged in assisting publication and distribution.

It is necessary to stress that this journal is not an official organ of the Club Committee. Unless otherwise stated all and every opinion and statement are entirely those of the Editor and not those of the committee, necessarily.

M. KING,
3/61, Leamington Road,
BIRMINGHAM. 12

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It is an unfortunate custom to set on record only successes. It is more often in defeat that some of the most serious and memorable incidents of our climbing lives are played out, and it is often a greater achievement to have gone as far as we have and retreated in the face of good judgement in bad conditions, than to have succeeded in good.

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CLIMBING NOTES

There has been no snow and ice worthy of serious attention as yet this winter in the lower latitudes. The season may well pass us by without any, though at the time of writing we are 'sweating' on conditions being to our liking for the Langdale Meet.

A group is endeavouring to make up a suitable party for a quick drive to Ben Nevis for a long week-end. Members able to take a Monday free from responsibility in March or April are asked to contact the Editor.

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In the decade 1950 - 1960 it is interesting to be reminded that Annapurna, Mount Everest, Nanga Parbat, K2, Cho Oyu, Makalu, Kanchenjunga, Manaslu and Lhotse, Gasherbrum and Broad Peak of the worlds greatest, have been climbed for the first time. Of the worlds ten highest, only Dhaulagiri remains and the Swiss should make sure of that if competence is any guide.

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The Rock and Ice are again re-formed as a club.

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TONY DAFFERN REPORTS. Incessant rain and high winds prohibited any serious climbing during the Christmas holidays. A few parties were brave enough to venture out on Snowdon and over the Glyders, but only one returned dry. (? Ed.) The Dolbadarn gave the party an excellent meal on Boxing Day, and much to our surprise, said they would be pleased to see us again. They seemed to be very tolerant and did not object when their pictures were decorated with boiled potatoes. We had obviously several guests from the Cave and Crag, who, after leaving half of their 6/6 supply of peas on the floor of Tynlon, proceeded to

leave the other half at the Dolbadarn. (Apparantly pea-shooters, air guns and aqua equipment are an essential part of the modern rock climbers gear. Ed.)

The club meet to Llanberis was blessed with fine weather. The attendance was good and Tynlon was filled to overflowing. A club party went down in the Gwynant valley where Bovril was climbed, and Oxo and Gallup Step attempted. Gallop Step, a route put up by Disley and graded Severe, proved to be very hard, and had to be abandoned half way. J. Brown and H. Smith did the second ascent of this route a week later and also found it very hard. Some people motored round to Ogwen where one party climbed the Milestone rocks by way of Pulpit and Ivy Chimney and continued round to the East Face. They found Terrace Wall with a covering of light snow and some verglas.

Sunday was bitterly cold and all the streams high in the Pass were frozen up. However, the weather was fine, and some members had a most enjoyable day's climbing in the Great Gully of Cyrn Las. This climb, graded VD, though exposed in places, is not technically hard. If desired, a party could traverse round and finish up the superb last pitch of Main Wall. Two people found Slanting Gully on Lliwedd choked with water ice, and having only a peg hammer which did little besides make the ice change colour when trying to break it, they climbed down again (with difficulty!), and climbed a combination of the Far West String Climb and the Ridge Route. It was very cold and the top rocks of the mountain were decorated with ice.

The following weekend was very wet. On Sunday, a party went to find the Pillar of Elidyr in pouring rain. A vague looking pinnacle was found high up on the North face of the Elidyr, but did not seem to resemble the drawing in Moulams' guide book (! Ed.)

The week-end of the 23rd January was again a wet one. Several members walked from Idwal Cottage over the Glyders and became soaked in the process. The remainder put half a ton of cement in the outhouse wall as a "get fit" exercise. Another party at Pen Ceunant spent most of Saturday swimming up the West Face of Tryfaen by way of the V and Notch Aretes. The descent by the North ridge was led by a brilliant member who lost the way, not that it mattered. They spent the evening removing a film of mould from Pen Ceunant furniture and throwing away festering foodstuffs. It is hoped that some people will use this hut occasionally if only to keep it aired.

On the Sunday of this weekend, some walkers from Tynlon accompanied by the "exhausted" get fit experts ventured as far as the Gwynant crags, and with full photographic support proceeded to climb - if climb is the right word - up, or through or whatever it is, Lockwoods Chimney. One of the photographic party was brave enough to join in, and left his companion to fight his way down with a vast amount of equipment. He was finally rescued by kindly passers-by.

The Pen Ceunant crew, meanwhile, were on Snowdon kicking themselves for not having brought any gear up with them, on finding the North face of the mountain iced up quite heavily and with snow in the gullies. Mist was fairly thick and a very good serious day's sport could well have been enjoyed. Conditions can be exasperatingly unpredictable. However, all are not stupid for a Manchester party consisting of Joe Brown, Harry Smith and C.T.J. spent the day fighting their way up PIGGOTS ROUTE ON CLOGGY and did not return until after dark.

The following weekend was yet again wet, and very few people were in Wales.

The weather, however, held fair for the coach meet with the Stoats to Kinder Scout on February 7th. Most people walked from Edale, though a few amused themselves on the small outcrops nearby. Some others were in North Wales and reported the Great Gully of Craig yr Ysfa was iced up and would require a strong party to climb it.

It was attempted the following week-end, but there was a great deal of soft snow.

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The snow specialist, the cragsman and the hill-walker have chosen to devote themselves to one branch of mountaineering. But the beginner should avoid this trap into which they have fallen; for theirs is not the freedom of the hills, which can be earned only by a true mountaineer. To earn the freedom of the mountains one must be able to climb on both rock and snow. Those who hold Bach to be the greatest composer do not for that reason refuse to hear Beethoven. Likewise, the hill-walker should not deny himself the pleasure of rock climbing, nor the cragsman of snow climbing. Should they do so, one of the best parts of the mountain world must remain to them unknown.

'Rocks and Realities'

W.M. Murray.

LET BATTLE COMMENCE

by Alan Green

In the past several News Letters we have been treated to the somewhat provocative effusions of our Editor. It is, of course, one of the purposes of an Editor to be provocative in the hope that some will be stirred out of their supposed lethargy and others will be stung into defending their own points of view.

The insistence on the sanctity of a club dinner is surely rather outdated. At most functions of this nature we are given the choice of spending the latter part of the evening talking and drinking or just talking. Since a certain proportion of those present are wives or friends with little first-hand knowledge of mountaineering is it not reasonable to provide an alternative avenue of escape such as dancing? (Help! Ed.) Not all our members restrict their recreation to climbing; we have a number of keen dancers in our midst including at least one gold and two silver medallists. To cater for those who neither drink, talk nor dance, how about a session of Housey Housey or Crown and Anchor? The club funds would undoubtedly benefit. It is all very well to put mountaineering before all else but there is a danger that we may become narrow-minded.

We climb because it gives us pleasure, either at the time or when shooting a line about it in the pub, (with the Editor's permission of course.) For some, the enjoyment is lost unless the day is hard but there may well be others who are happiest at their chosen standard. It is a good deal easier to follow than to lead most climbs but running belays can narrow the gap. This is not necessarily a good thing and can promote a slap-happy attitude of mind. "The leader must not fall" used to be the guiding principle but there are those today who talk of their runner-protected falls with pride, instead of slinking away into a corner and thinking how lucky they are to be in one piece.

There is a tendency to reduce the number of pegs used on a hard climb, often resulting eventually in a 'clean lead', but we find the opposite is true of runners on far easier routes. Could it be that those who stick at, perhaps V.Diff are maintaining their standard while those who progress with the aid of runners are merely sidestepping the challenge of the harder routes?

(the opinions expressed above are not necessarily my own. They are just points of view.)

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"Put your climbing days behind you?"

"Don't", says FRANCE NUYEN. "Hauling up your own weight is fine for developing a firm, pretty bosom."

(prospective members please
note)

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EQUIPMENT NOTES. City Camp and Sports have some desperate looking short ice picks cum piton hammers of the 'North Wall' Variety. We are forced to say, however, that a slaters hammer is by far and away the best tool ever made for this job. They can be purchased for a few shillings.

Frank Davies, Old Post Office, Ambleside, has some Egger boots, La Dolomite, of an all purpose variety with a much thicker sole than the strictly climbing boot. They are a fine looking boot well worth the money.

There is a karabiner now marketed which will stand a load of approximately 4,000 lbs. It is an alloy unit by Pierre Allain and is at the moment available from Frank Davies.

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NOTES ON THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The meeting was held in the Friends Institute, Moseley Road, on 10th February and was well attended.

The retiring Chairman in his opening remarks, dwelt first on the number of new members to the club during the period and welcomed them to our ranks. In general the major asset of the club at the present time was the enthusiastic membership, and though the older membership had been a little thinned of late by marriage and babies and sundry responsibilities, the club was much more active than last year, and this was largely due to the new members. The attracting of the new members was an important feature of the year's progress and was due in the main to the publicity given to the club in many ways, and by the approach of present members to acquaintances. The fine poster by Dan Davis and that by Mike Kerby, posted respectively in City Camp and Sports and Sutton Library, were commented on.

Attendance at outdoor meets has been good and has shown an active core of people keen enough to accept the need for the hiring of the small 'buses for meets in addition to the members' own transport. The people responsible for the hire of these

vehicles are greatly appreciated by those who have the advantage of their use. That these activities have been largely influenced by the weekly meets at the Cambridge was stressed by the Chairman, who went on to give thanks to Tony Daffern for promoting the idea in his capacity as Indoor Meets Secretary.

At this point, John Knight commented on the lectures that Tony had organised for us at the Institute which themselves had been also well attended, and gave thanks to the guest speakers. He also commented on the car rally with profound thanks to Tony Hammond and a mounting respect for rallyists!

The pattern of outdoor meets in the past year was mentioned with emphasis on the new areas visited.

As for Tynlon, its opening may well have influenced the number of people who stay in Wales than were attracted by Pen Ceunant, and the plunge of taking on those premises was surely justified. The legal quibbles arising from the purchase of the cottage had dragged on until September before we could dig a trench and make use of the drainage facilities, and, at this juncture, a formal vote of thanks was taken to Mr. Coleman, Senr., for his legal work on our behalf.

Whilst appreciating the fine response to the digging parties and the tremendous amount of work already carried out, the Chairman begged to remind people that there was still much to be done.

That the present Editor had been bullied into continuing in office was noted, and the greatest encouragement which could be given would be a flood of manuscripts; controversial ones especially!

John Knight closed by stating the commitments which prevented him from standing for office again, although he hoped that these would not stop him from remaining reasonably active. He gave thanks to all who had given him so much encouragement in the years of office.

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The club secretary began by saying how much she had enjoyed her duties and particularly the many enquiries which she had handled from the outside.

In this respect enquiries for membership had taken precedence and the subsequent introductions were greatly eased by the informal atmosphere at the Cambridge, allowing the new-comer to more quickly get to know people than was ever possible

in the short time previously available after lectures.

The committee had been well supported throughout the year; M. King had represented the Club at the Annual meeting of the B.M.C. at the Alpine Club, John Daffern at the Ramblers Association, and we were now affiliated to the Peak Committee of the B.M.C., to which we had offered members services for wardening. The B.M.C. appeal for a Memorial hut at Glen Brittle, Skye, had been donated £5 by the funds and members had been circularised separately.

Many of our members had attended the high quality lectures by the M.A.M.

The News Letter had proved extremely useful for putting over committee decisions and 'propaganda' to the members.

As for new ventures, the annual dinner in Llanberis was commented on and the reaction of members was being observed, as it was always difficult to estimate general opinion on any new departure. There was no desire deliberately to cut out married members who found it impossible to pair off.

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The Hon. Treasurer, M. Kerby, spoke of a very successful year for the club's finances. The excess of income over expenditure on the General and Hut funds amounting to £77. 1. 10.

Once again, however, he had a deficit on coaches to report, and the customary remark that the coming year would bring an improvement in this situation was received with the usual laughter.

Enlarging on the General Fund income, Mike Kerby pointed out how much this had increased from last year, mainly due to the raising of the subscription from 10/6 to 15/- though there have been 12 new members during the year. Room collections had increased slightly because of the meetings now held every week. In so far as the hut fund was concerned, the treasurer reminded us that Mr. Hughes had reduced the rent of Pen Ceunant in recognition of the improvements, though expenditure on fuel and cleaning materials had increased considerably as we now have both cottages in use. This figure includes both Calor Gas supplies. Reduction in repairs expenditure was because maintenance at Pen Ceunant was at a minimum with all the work being carried out at the new cottage.

Income on the Hut fund had been most satisfactory, amounting to nearly £3 per week in the year, and the assembly was pleased to be informed that most of the repairs and renovations

to Tyn Lon had been covered by this income.

Amongst liabilities on the Balance Sheet was an increase of £30 in members loans. The treasurer thought it would be possible to start repaying the loans during 1960. Creditors were also higher than usual as a large number of building material accounts for Tyn Lon had not been paid prior to the New Year.

The total expenditure on renovations during the year of £32.17.7. was treated as Capital Expenditure, and therefore the cost of Tyn Lon was now £342.6.3. The heavy item for fixtures and fittings relates to all the bedding and Calor gas for Tyn Lon.

Tribute was paid to the auditors, if only for the amount of money which they had to handle!

A certain amount of discussion followed, largely based on the repayment of loans. The Chair, however, sensibly pointed out that loans were originally intended for much longer than the present time, and though members had every right to express their views, decisions for repayments were the responsibility of the committee as originally laid down.

Colin Coleman raised the important matter of the hut records, and the meeting was advised that a triplicate hut book was being considered.

Stan Storey proposed a vote of thanks to Mike Kerby who had served us so well in his office as Treasurer, and expressed a regret that there was no Champion hut dweller, a regret that is not, we are sure, shared by many who were pleased to pass over this unnecessary factor.

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Tony Daffern, retiring Indoor Meets Secretary, expressed great interest in the effect as noted by others, of the meets at the Cambridge. All were agreed that this had been a most successful venue.

Of the lectures, a good 30% had attended, of the total membership. About 10% of members were never seen.

There had been 9 outside speakers, one or two of them very good, though some talks had not turned out to be what was required or anticipated.

Perhaps the highlight of the year's activities apart from the actual climbing had been the Car Rally. Widely publicised, this had attracted several from the Cave and Crag and the B.A.I., a good turnout. It was perhaps unfortunate that the first two winners were Ceunant drivers and crews!

Enlarging on the Cambridge meets, Tony emphasised that, after a slow start, we had graduated from the small room to a larger one and filled that most weeks. That this get-together with plenty of time to talk had had a big effect on week-end activities, was undoubtedly true, and Tony Hammond proposed thanks to Tony Daffern for the idea and its successful outcome.

In general comment, another Rally was mentioned, and Colin Coleman suggested evening meets to local rocks. John Irwin suggested ski lectures particularly as ski mountaineering seemed to be increasing in popularity, and Tony Hammond reminded us that Eric Shipton had agreed in principle to lecture.

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Dan Davies who was retiring from the committee after a most successful year, reported good support for his meets during his term of office. He felt sure that everyone had enjoyed themselves. There had certainly been few failures due to the weather in 1959, though there were some failures due possibly to an unpopular venue. The Wasdale meet had been a flop, attended by Ray Reeves, to whom Dan publically gave thanks for this fine effort.

There had been a loss in shared coach meets of £4.

The meets secretary was careful to emphasise that he was elected to serve the club and any ideas for meets would have been most welcome from any source, and though he was able to experiment with new venues, there was still much to be done.

Private transport had proved a mixed blessing, the onus being on the meet leader who had all the sorting to do with so many factors in mind. The mini-buses had been good and it was stimulating to think how willing the drivers are to accept the work and responsibility of hiring these vehicles for the use of us all. Insurance was being gone into, and although there were many drivers willing, few were adept! Future use of these vehicles was, of course, up to the members. If the present rate of activity continues, the club could shortly fill a coach.

Dan had much to say against separate walking meets or rambles, as these would serve only to divide the club into two separate forms of activity. Those feeling less adventurous can make their own arrangements but organised activity should, naturally enough, be based on mountaineering. He advised the new secretary to try some more ambitious undertakings, a week-end expedition or even a map reading 'test', and to persevere with meets to the Lakes and even Scotland. Dan pointed out that the

club had never had a meet to Scotland, except for those extraordinary mortals who seem to be able to have a holiday whenever they like.

In comment, Tony Hammond reminded us that, so far as more ambitious 'walks' were concerned, there had in the past, and in the days of Brian Ruston, been an event known as the "Berwyn Bash" requiring quite exceptional endurance! This was greeted with laughter, but is a pointer for the future.

There was some general discussion, promoted by the Secretary, on the joint meets with the Birmingham University climbers and it was reasonably decided that the principle of whether this was a personal matter or one for the club to handle, should remain with the new committee.

John Irwin, hut warden, blessed the letting of Pen Ceunant as a great financial venture and, although he was unable to give us an accurate figure of exactly how many guests had used the premises, the money was rolling in.

He begged to remind us that there were still plenty of keys available for the cottages and would like to be relieved of a few. The money helped to keep us in house and home.

Once more John pointed out the necessity for all persons to advise him if they were using the huts and also not to lend the keys out to non-members. All use of the huts by non-members must be done through the hut warden.

Alan Green spoke of the state in which Pen Ceunant had been found after being unused for three weeks. There had been about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of mould on the furniture and the floor had been more than damp. It was suggested that during a slack period of letting, some people might be prevailed upon to use the cottage to air it a little. Tony Hammond pointed out that Mr. Hughes had 'lost' his key, and that it had been his practice to light a fire on the Friday of each week in case anyone was coming up for the week-end.

The amendment to Clause 7A of the constitution was passed without any discussion. It relates to the constitution of the committee naming the Publications Editor an Officer of the committee, there being now two ordinary committee members.

There was considerable discussion however, about the amendment to Clause 14 which attempts to safeguard the Club against responsibility for members losing equipment or being involved in accident. It was finally decided that the original clause was

largely superfluous anyway. Stan Storey, who seemed to be the most knowledgeable on these matters, present, also remarked with reference to hut insurance, that this might be fully comprehensive.

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ELECTION of the New Committee then followed. The Chairman again commented on the 'old' committee's invidious position of having to work out the 'new' committee itself, to twist arms where necessary and apply tact where all else failed!

The NEW COMMITTEE is as follows:

Chairman:	COLIN COLEMAN.	Secretary:	JEAN BURWELL.
Vice Chairman:	ALAN GREEN.	Outdoor Meets	
Publications		Secretary:	TONY DAFFERN.
Editor:	MICHAEL KING.	Indoor Meets	
Hut Wardens:	JOHN URWIN.	Secretary:	MARY KAHN.
	JOHN KNIGHT. RON BEARMAN.		
Librarian:	JOHN BUCKMASTER.	Auditors:	EDMUND WEBSTER & STAN STOREY.

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JOHN KNIGHT

The two years during which John Knight has been Chairman can rightly be described as vintage years in the history of the Club. The purchase and renovation of Tyn Lon has been the outstanding event, but there have been many other smaller matters where his enthusiasm and energy have rallied those of us who from time to time have felt discouraged at the turn of events. When John took office, the Club was not in a very healthy state, many of the keener members of the earlier days unavoidably having become no longer active. It is no secret that the committee meetings at that time were something of an ordeal for those who had to attend. It is very noticeable to those of us who can recall the events of two years ago how the atmosphere within the Club has improved during John's chairmanship. There is now a new wave of enthusiasm for all our activities, and a warm spirit of friendship amongst all the members. Much of the credit for this must be given to the chairman who by his personal example has set a very high standard for us all to follow.

However it is for his work at Tyn Lon that John will be remembered. Indeed much of this will outlast the frailties of human memory! Once again, John took over in an hour of need as co-ordinator of the renovation work. Few of us realised at the time

that the holder of this post would not only have to direct the official working parties but also do a considerable part of the work himself. Thus most weekends last Winter we saw John steadily working away, sometimes with many helpers, sometimes with a few, and sometimes alone. When, last Whitsun, Tyn Lon came into general use, we started to enjoy the benefit of this work. It is now comforting to reflect as one lies in the bunks at Tyn Lon that they have been designed and constructed by the application of sound engineering principles.

As John leaves the chair, it may be said with confidence not only that his successor will be unable to do more for the Club but also that it will be difficult for him to do as much. We therefore all thank John for what he has done for the Club during his chairmanship and wish him many enjoyable days of climbing in the future.

C. R. Coleman.

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COMMITTEE NOTES AND CLUB NEWS.

It has been decided to point out how difficult it is to accept provisional bookings for private transport meets. Great difficulty is involved in arranging transport to the best advantage and it is only fair to expect people to be in a position to attend the meet having once offered their names.

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People are requested NOT to make private arrangements for private transport meets without informing the meet leader.

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Anyone with ideas for lectures and indoor activities generally is asked to contact the Indoor Meets Secretary, Mary Kahn. Slides are particularly required of which there seems to be a big shortage of climbing pictures and those of the more documentary subjects.

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Once again, the committee wishes to remind members that under no circumstances whatsoever must hut keys be lent out to non-members, nor must arrangements for non-members to use the huts be made by anyone except the hut warden. The hut warden must be advised of a member's intention to use the huts at all times. With the increased membership and activity, this is becoming more important than ever.

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It would seem that the water-main tap at Tyn Lon is not being turned off after use. It is most important that this is done.

PAGE SIXTEEN

The tap is located against the outside wall of the outhouse on the road side, and is normally covered by a slate.

The first people to arrive at the Cambridge on Wednesday evenings are respectfully requested to set up the Notice Board.

John Buckmaster, Librarian, wishes members to know that he can accept orders for any books required, with discount for members. Particularly, will people requiring Guide Books let him know at once as he wishes to place a bulk order in the near future.

We are happy to congratulate Pete Willans and Joan, who were successfully married at St. James' Church, Shirley, on Saturday, 27th February. John Knight, the Messrs. Urwin, Pete Ratcliffe and Tony Hammond were present. A Guard of Honour with ice axes being provided.

The happy pair 'left' in Pete's automobile for Weston-super-Mare.

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.

The new meets programme from May onwards has been reviewed by the Committee and may be published before this News Letter.

It is proposed this year to hold a club meet based on Llanberis devoted to traversing the fourteen Welsh mountains over 3,000 feet in height. The proposed date is June 10th; the week-end after Whitsun. This week-end has been chosen for two reasons, firstly because members will be able to train over the Whitsun holiday, and secondly because there is a full moon that night.

Colin Coleman, our "Three Thousander" expert is leading the meet and will gladly give advice to those requiring it. It has been suggested that starts be made from both Foel Fras and Snowdon. Anyone who is interested please contact Colin, and even if you do not wish to take part in the expedition, your help as a support party will be invaluable.

It is not intended that this is in any way whatsoever to be a race, and anyone who makes it so is defeating the whole object of the meet.

Although this traverse was lauded with much hyperbole in the past when the time taken was being reduced from 14 hours to less than half that time, it is well within the capabilities of

the average person to complete the traverse without sleep or long rest. The total distance covered is about thirty miles, total ascents are 8,500 feet and descents 9,000 feet, summit to summit. Down hill all the way! With support from people in the valleys, a great deal of the seriousness can be reduced and the walk can be split nicely into three distinct and classical traverses of three mountain ranges, with good rests in between.

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LANGDALE MEET. February 19th. Transport for the meet consisted of a Mini-bus and four cars.

There had been three cancellations but the remainder sallied forth despite gloomy reports of road conditions in the Lakes. Everyone made good time and the snow, although troublesome to anyone unfortunate enough to become stationary, was not at all bad. The Vice-Chairman was seen proceeding crabwise near Ambleside but fought to regain control. The Mini-bus was pushed quite a lot by the energetic passengers as so was Tony Fowlers' automobile by ONE of the passengers! The Achille Ratti had placed their fine establishment at our disposal and we had no difficulty in accommodating those who required it.

Several 'hard' men camped in the snow, but it was noted that some had moved within the hut precincts for Saturday night.

The snow conditions were best described as NOT. Deep soft, wet snow covered the mountains and although the views and general characters of the hills were glorious, getting up them was something of an ordeal! A great many people seem to have ascended Harrison-Stickle though the meet leader and six others became involved in the mis-named little Gully on Pavey Ark. John D., the Vice-Chairman and his friends, Tony Fowler, Anne Walton and D. Williams endeavouring to climb in three parties. Unfortunately, the chockstones in the R/H branch permitted of only one person performing, and yours truly was so slow at beating down the snow that the 'spectators' became frozen fixtures, each in their little hollow in the snow. Hail which kept pouring down the gully bringing with it minor avalanches and heavy gusts of wind which seemed to come from everywhere and no-where at the same time, brought about a retreat.

On Sunday, which turned out to be a beautiful sun drenched day until two o'clock, most people seemed to want to climb rocks and the availability of Scout Crag and Raven Crag were taken advantage of. Tony Daffern with Stan Jones, Mike White and John Buckmaster appear to have climbed a series of Severe pitches

on Raven Crag whilst most of the others climbed on Scout Crag by one way or another. The day was, in my opinion, ideal for high level work and a traverse of the Langdale Pikes with one of the guests was perfect, though tame, despite the occasional high winds and the shocking snow conditions. Alan and Jean, re-inforced by Colin Coleman, I believe, forced a way up White Ghyll, whilst John Daffern and party, after climbing on Scout Crag, proceeded up Harrison Stickle (about the twentieth ascent by the Club that week-end), with a sitting glissade by way of descent.

The meet had been excellent, with everyone active, most comfortable accommodation and, though the out-going journey took a little longer due to the snow, the slowest time on the return journey was $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The mini-bus took just a little over 5 hours including a stop for a meal. Any doubt as to the availability of the Lakes for a week-end meet should by this be dispelled.

I am most grateful to everyone who attended and provided transport and particularly to Tony Daffern who had to drive the Mini-bus without any relief.

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Surprisingly enough, a number of people have enquired about the name Achille Ratti. I can find very little about the actual climbing carried out by the Abee Achille Ratti apart from his important variation of the South Face of Monte Rosa. He was a prominent member of the Italian Alpine Club of course, and the significant thing is that he later became Pope Pious XI.

M.KING. Meet Leader.

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BOOK REVIEWS by A.M. Daffern.

AN ECCENTRIC IN THE ALPS. by R.W. Clarke. This is the biography of the Reverend W.A. Coolidge, one of the most famous of the Victorian mountaineers. Coolidge, an American by birth, in the course of his long Alpine career made a number of first ascents, his special area being the Dauphine. In spite of not being very strong physically, he always made a great number of expeditions each year.

In his early years he was accompanied on most of his travels by his Aunt, Miss Brevoort and his dog, Torchingol. His guides were Christian Almer and later his son. Coolidge was one of the greatest ever-experts of mountaineering history, and, being a great believer in historical accuracy, made a habit of picking

quarrels - some lasting for many years - with anyone who opposed him. A great correspondent, he kept up a continual flow of letters to friends and adversaries. He was at one time Editor of the Alpine Club Journal, and became an honorary member of that club, and many others. He died in Grindelwald at the age of 75 in 1926.

This book by R.W. Clarke is well written, amusing and well worth reading. Having read the book one is left wondering what would be Coolidges' reaction were he to have read it.

Published by Museum Bros. - Price 35/-.
(B'ham Library Ref: 796.52.C57).

THE WHITE SPIDER by Heinrich Harrer. This long overdue book telling the story of the North East face of the Eiger, the notorious Eigerwand, is written by one of the members of the first successful party in 1938. Harrer is well known for his book "Seven Years in Tibet", and writes in the same lively style. It appears that he has two main aims in writing this book. One is to justify the climbing of such a dangerous face. With this in mind, he stresses throughout the book that an ascent of any route comparable with this one can only be made by a very strong party with a great deal of preparation and the best of equipment. It is interesting to note that none of the successful parties show any inclination to repeat the climb.

His second object is to stamp out the rumours that sprang up during the early attempts to climb the face, that the climbers had been sent out on a nationalistic basis on "do or die" attempts by their governments.

He also attempts to explain some of the mystery surrounding the 1957 tragedy when three from a party of four were killed.

Published by Rupert Hart Davis - Price 30/-
(B'ham Library Ref. 949.409.H16).

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Further to the above, the Editor is tempted to comment himself, if he may be allowed.

The White Spider has had a profound effect on me, bearing in mind that I have always been led to believe in the futility of undertakings of this kind by the people who have, in earlier years particularly, influenced my thoughts of greater mountaineering. It is without doubt, the most interesting climbing book I have ever read, in-as-much as the, what might be termed, 'human' aspect has been given a proper consideration. The writer has shown himself a human being, and not an 'automaton' as we have been led to believe, and we may assume that his outlook was

similar in 1938 despite his younger years. Apart from being a brilliant climber, he was one of us with a fond love of the mountains and all they can mean to perceptive people.

The North East face of the Eiger is divided from the North West face by a prominent steep arete. The ascent of this arete, then, is the logical way up the North side of the Eiger, in fact it is the most Northerly point, and the Lauper route, though very hard and almost wholly on ice, is classical and safe from objective danger. However, the Eigerwand is a separate face, very high, very complex and itself a challenge. It was accepted and persevered with, despite the fatalities.

Described as "hollowed like a sick man's chest", the Eigerwand makes its own weather. We have photographic confirmation of this, if it were ever needed, showing the basin of the face filled with bad weather cloud in late afternoon and the entire remaining mountain completely clear. It is this weather which constitutes the main objective danger which can trap the unsuited climber in this mountain crucible as readily as the face traps the storms amongst its crags. The face is nearly 6,000 feet high and the route complex. One third of the whole climb consists of traverses, and practically the entire width of the face is crossed from right to left with very little gain in height, then up and back for nearly half that distance and up left to finish in the top left hand corner. The climb then is a long one, and though it has been brilliantly done without a bivouac, no one would dream of attempting the route without preparation for one or more. With these long, long hours to be spent on the mountain, the danger from weather is increased ten-fold. To be as safe as justifiably possible on this climb then, a man has to be able to climb in any and the very worst conditions which could possibly prevail at the time. He must know this and must have proved it on escapable routes of comparable difficulty in the very worst weather he could pick. Climbers of this calibre and experience and toughness are very few and far between, but I hold the view now that for these people there is every justification for gaining the satisfaction of a successful ascent. For the others there is no claim; their attempts are idiocy and they deserve to be left on the face without any attempt at rescue as has been threatened on more than one occasion. In addition to this I was most impressed by the description of the stone falls, the effect of which is now considerably lessened by the accepted practice of wearing protective helmets on routes of this nature, by the snow avalanches and the astonishing account of the first party actually timing them and climbing in between, and most particularly by description of the face 'a continuous water-fall' during wet weather. If ever there was a challenge to the complete mountaineer, the North East Wall of the Eiger is it. To quote Hermann Buhl: 'Notoriety Hunters'; but one doesn't risk ones life for the sake of notoriety. And, shades of Mallory, every mountain we climb, every route we do - we do because it is there! There need be no other explanation.