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LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN
OCTOBER, 1952



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THE LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN

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OCTOBER, 1952

EDITORIAL

A GREAT honour has been paid to British ski-ing by the conferring in the Queen's Birthday Honours of a knighthood upon Mr. Arnold Lunn. This is the first time that such an honour has been given "for services to British ski-ing and Anglo-Swiss relations," and it marks the first official recognition of the fact that ski-ing really is a British sport. But we wonder whether the confusion over the intricacies of our British titles which worries some of our friends abroad may not become worse confounded. Sir Lunn? Or even Lord Lunn? Anyway, we offer our warmest congratulations to the "Sinister Father of the Ladies' Ski Club."

This year again we have tragedy to record. The death of Jimmy Palmer-Tomkinson in a ski-ing accident at Klosters in January has shocked and saddened skiers all over the world. It seems to have been one of those unaccountable accidents which has no adequate explanation, the more unaccountable when it happens, in clear weather, to a skier of Jimmy's calibre. He had been engaged in setting the course for the British Men's Championships with a party of other racers, putting in controls as the course was very rocky owing to lack of snow. Immediately afterwards he went down to practise part of the course, and apparently ran off his line into a concealed hollow filled with thinly-covered boulders, among which he crashed. He died shortly afterwards while being lifted on to the *schlitten*. To Doris, his wife, who was with him when the accident occurred, and to their four children, we offer our deepest sympathy.

We also have to record with great regret the death last winter of Lois Close-Brooks, who has been a member of the L.S.C. since 1931. We offer our most sincere sympathy to her mother.

Appreciations will be found on another page.

The main event from the racing point of view last season was of course the Olympic Games, which took place in Norway in February. We congratulate the five selected for the team: Sheena Mackintosh, Hilary Laing, Vora Mackintosh, Sheila Daniell, and Fiona Campbell. Unfortunately Sheila Daniell broke her leg in Mürren while practising for the L.S.C. Meeting, so only four finally went to Oslo. In the Giant Slalom Hilary Laing was 24th, Sheena

Mackintosh 28th, Fiona Campbell 36th, and Vora Mackintosh 38th, out of 45 starters. In the Downhill Sheena and Fiona were 26th and 33rd respectively, also out of 45 starters.

Our members have distinguished themselves in other races during the season. Sheena Mackintosh won the British Ladies' Championships from Sheila Daniell, and the Women's Giant Slalom at St. Moritz. She was 3rd in the Alpine Ski (the oldest slalom race in the world) at Mürren, also winning the Lady Mabel Lunn Slalom in the same race, in which Vora Mackintosh was 2nd and Adeline Pryor 3rd. Sheena was also best British in the S.D.S. Meeting at Grindelwald. In the Lowlanders Championships Claudia de Reya was 2nd in the Combined after winning the Downhill. Gillian Rickards was 2nd in the Lowlanders Slalom, and 2nd in the Golden Ski at Wengen. Sonia Furlong was 3rd in the Lowlanders Slalom and 6th in the Wasserngrat Derby at Gstaad. The *Sunday Times* No-Fall at Wengen was won by Angela Stormonth-Darling against a strong entry from the S.D.S.; Morag Campbell was 3rd and Kini Maillart 4th. The Duchess of Kent Downhill Race was not held.

The winner of the L.S.C. Championship was Adeline Pryor, with Dina Guinness 2nd. Daphne Martin won the L.S.C. Junior Championship (a new experiment) with Zandra Nowell 2nd. Accounts of these races will be found on another page.

Congratulations to the following members on their marriage:—

Miss A. Saul to the Hon. Kenneth Lamb, April 16th, 1952.

Miss Sheena Mackintosh to Mr. Ruairaidh Hilleary, June 14th.

Miss Morag Campbell to Lord Stafford, June 16th.

Miss Sonia Furlong to Mr. Neil Kennedy-Cochran-Patrick, July 5th.

Mrs. D. Forster to Mr. Duncan Kessler, July 12th.

We would also like to offer our congratulations to Miss Rosemary Croxton on her marriage to Mr. Stephen Tennant. As Secretary of the Ski Club of Great Britain Rosemary has been a guest of honour at several of our A.G.M. Cocktail Parties, and it gives us great pleasure to wish them both every happiness in the future.

The following babies have been born during the past year:—

To Mrs. Pixley (*née* Steedman), a son, November 25th, 1951.

To Mrs. G. D. Greenland (*née* Stockwell), a son.

To Mrs. Garret (*née* Tulloch), twin sons of whom only one survived, April 6th, 1952.

To Mrs. Pearcy (*née* E. Hewetson), a second daughter, April, 1952.

To Mrs. T. Kemsley (*née* FitzGerald), a second daughter, May 25th.

We are glad to welcome sixteen new members into the Club:—Mrs. Brisby, Mrs. Spencer Copeland, Miss Joan Cowen, Miss A. K. Dixon, Miss Alicia Forster, Mrs. Hartley, Mrs. Jackman, Miss Daphne Martin, Miss M. A. Nowell, Miss B. L. Palmer, Mrs. Reichwald,

Miss Gillian Rickards, Miss Averil Sainter, Mrs. Sangster, Miss Angela Stormonth-Darling, Miss Susan Swinburne.

Mrs. Hamlyn (*née* Taber), Miss J. B. Seaton, Mrs. Todd (*née* Napier-Clavering), and Mrs. Young (*née* FitzGerald), have resigned, and Mrs. Field (*née* Barrow) has resigned by order of the Committee.

Cecilia O'Rorke writes from Christchurch, N.Z., asking for a copy of the rules and constitution of the L.S.C., as there is a scheme to start a New Zealand Ladies' Ski Club. We hope that something will come of this idea, as there is already a flourishing Australian Women's Ski Club. We wish this new venture every success.

We thank the Editors of the *American Ski Annual* and the *Ladies' Alpine Club Bulletin* for very kindly sending us their publications. We thank also the Norway Travel Association in Oslo for a series of leaflets on "Travel News from Norway." These, apart from their interest, were of great assistance, in Olympic year, in checking names of places and other details.

Our thanks are due, in fact we may say that they are overdue, to our Auditors, Messrs. Peacock & Goddard, and in particular to Mr. Charles Elliott, for their work in ordering our finances. We congratulate the firm on their return to a rebuilt office in Gray's Inn.

The L.S.C. Meeting will be held at Champéry on January 29th, 1953.

We would like to draw the attention of our members to the "For Sale and Wanted" column on page 398. Although there are no entries in the column this year, it remains a simple and inexpensive way of advertising *anything*, not necessarily to do with ski-ing.

The Editor is always glad to consider any articles of interest, especially accounts of "foreign" (*i.e.* other than Swiss) ski-ing, unusual tours, etc., whether serious, comic, or even poetic. Articles should be typed if possible, in double spacing and on one side of the paper. Photographs are particularly welcome; these should preferably be glossy prints. The Editor would like to have all contributions sent in at latest by the month of JUNE; though it is doubtful whether this plea will have any more effect in the future than it has had in the past.

Members are reminded that it is essential that the BULLETIN should be mentioned when making enquiries of advertisers.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November, 1951

THE Annual General Meeting was held at 115, Cranmer Court on Monday, November 19th, 1951, and was followed by a cocktail party at which over fifty members and their friends were present.

The chair was taken by Mrs. Oddie. The new officers and committee members were elected; President, Mrs. W. R. Tomkinson; Vice-President, Lady Chamier. Lady Blane, Miss Doreen Elliott, and Miss P. Harrison were re-elected as Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and Hon. Editor respectively. Mrs. Hubert Hadow, Miss Hilary Laing, and Mrs. Wyatt were elected to the committee.

The President, Mrs. Oddie, started her report by thanking the members for her term of office, and told them how much she had enjoyed it. This was chiefly due, she said, to the efficiency of the Hon. Secretary. She pointed out that it was not until she worked closely with Lady Blane that she had realised how much work this post entailed, and she hoped that members would show their appreciation by joining her in a vote of thanks to Lady Blane, both for her work as Hon. Secretary and for allowing her room to be used to-night.

Mrs. Oddie then reported that the 1950/51 Championships had been successfully held at Zermatt despite influenza and avalanches, and she welcomed by name the fifteen new members elected during the year.

She then turned to the blow which had just fallen—the announcement that the currency allowance had been cut from £100 to £50, and informed members of a good bit of news that she had just heard, which was that *abonnements* were to be allowed over and above this allowance.

She told members that the Club Championship had been made one of the selection races for the Olympics, and that it had been arranged to hold it at Mürren on January 23rd/24th, that all national bodies had been informed of this date, that Mürren was giving excellent terms, and that she hoped that there would be a large entry.

Mrs. Oddie then proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Harrison for the BULLETIN which was about to appear, and before presenting the prizes of the Championships informed members that their Committee had just voted the sum of £5 to be donated to the Olympic Ski Teams Fund.

Cups were presented to Miss Vora Mackintosh and Miss Adeline Pryor.

The question of unpaid subscriptions was brought up and it was decided that those who had not paid for two years should no longer be members. Mrs. Field was therefore taken out of the Members' List.

Two new members were elected, Miss A. K. Dixon and Mrs. Jackman.

J. A. PALMER-TOMKINSON

By H.M.T.

It was a terrible blow to all the ski-ing world to hear of Jimmy Palmer-Tomkinson's death on the ski-ing slopes. None of us could really believe it was true.

I always think of Jimmy taking everything possible straight, and almost invariably holding it. But if he could not he never minded how he fell; the main thing was to go as fast as he could and as straight as possible.

His racing record, both pre-war and post-war, was quite phenomenal, and one always knew he would be well-placed in any race he went in for. At the time of his death he was still about the best English racer.

We shall miss his valuable judgement on the British Ski Teams Committee and the Council of the S.C.G.B. His loss to British ski-ing is quite irreparable.

We do as a Club want to render our sincerest sympathies to Doris and all the family.

LOIS CLOSE-BROOKS

By E. LEVERSON

It is with great sadness that I write these few words about Lois Close-Brooks, who died on January 29th, 1952.

I first knew Lois when she was a small frail little girl of about sixteen at Villars in the '30's. She was a very keen and courageous skier, with very good technique, only her health prevented her from being in the first flight of her day.

She raced for the Villars Visitors Ski Club in the Rhone Valley Shield against the Dôle Ski Club and the Corbeau Ski Club, and also won several cups for Slalom racing.

When the War started, in spite of her indifferent health, she worked hard at her home in Suffolk for the W.V.S. canteen for the troops, and also organised the St. John Ambulance first aid. She later joined the American Red Cross and worked for them in England, Belgium and Germany.

Although Lois was not able to ski after the War, we, her friends, all hoped that her health would improve and that she would be with us on the snow again. Alas that was not to be, and we have only the memory of her as a very charming and courageous little person.

OLYMPIC GAMES, 1952

By HILARY LAING

THERE was a certain air of excitement on Basle station one cold evening last winter as the British Olympic teams, complete with thirty-two pairs of ski and almost double that number of suitcases, boarded the train for Oslo. We were on our way at last, on the two-night journey through Germany, Denmark and Sweden.

Our arrival is something that I shall always remember, and especially the first feeling of Scandinavian cold; it seemed to go right through us as we stood on Oslo station at 9 o'clock in the morning. Peter Waddell, the Team Manager, and his wife Bunch were there to meet us. We were anxious to hear all the news, and whether the rumours we had heard in Switzerland about the lack of snow in Norway were true. We soon learnt that they were, and that Peter had arranged for us to continue our journey further on to a place called Voss to keep in training until the actual Games took place, or till more snow came.

Unfortunately I was not able to go on to Voss as I had something wrong with my ears, so I stayed in Oslo and spent a week in bed in the flat of a charming girl who worked in the Embassy. At Voss the others met the Canadian and Norwegian teams for the first time. The other teams had not yet arrived.

After ten days we all congregated in Oslo again and prepared to go to Norefjell, even though rumour had it that there was only about four feet of snow. However, as we boarded the buses for the three-hour journey from Oslo, we at last began to feel that this was the Olympic Games. We caught glimpses of the teams from Iceland and America, and on our bus the Australians and Canadians kept the conversation rolling fast and furious until our arrival.

The talk was all about the ensuing races, the prospects of more snow and where we were all staying at Norefjell. Our "little hut" as we called it turned out to be the most cosy place; one large sitting-room with a lovely open fireplace, four bedrooms and a kitchen. The open fire proved a great success when one teatime we packed the entire Norwegian, New Zealand, Australian and Swiss teams round it for a party all done on the wine brought by Max, our trainer.

The next day we had our first view of the Downhill course, and it was not a very encouraging one. The course itself if there had been adequate snow would have been excellent, though not very long; a descent between trees, fairly steep all the way and with hardly a place to relax and give the legs a rest. But there really could not have been more than three feet of snow; roots and the tops of tree stumps were sticking through everywhere.

Near-chaos reigned amongst the organisers. The French and Italian managers threatened to take their teams home, refusing to allow them to race under such conditions. The poor Norwegians had not bargained for so little snow, but after dozens of meetings and discussions the army was put on the job of preparing the course. In the end they made quite a good job of it, shovelling snow from

the sides on to the middle, but leaving bare earth and tree stumps for any runner who for a moment got out of control and left the centre of the piste.

However, the first race was held according to plan, the Giant Slalom. I find the feeling of excitement before a race almost impossible to put into words, and the first race of an Olympic Games is just a bit more agitating than any other. I even managed to take the second gate from the wrong side after watching about twenty people take it before me. The results of this race were perhaps our best effort of the Games as we managed to beat all but one of the Swiss team, which was very encouraging.

The next day was the Men's Downhill which was one of the most spectacular races I have ever watched. Never have I seen such wonderful ski-ing—the course was a mass of bumps and turns and difficult situations and I think everyone who took part was extremely brave. It was a real test of skill, no uncontrolled dash could win a race on such a course and Zeno Colò skied magnificently to win.

The day after that was our Downhill which was on the same course as the Giant Slalom but with fewer gates. It was really a steep narrow zigzag, and I must say it was a very tough course.

Then back to Oslo for the Slalom proper. This time we stayed in the Olympic Village that we had heard so much about. It consisted of blocks of flats built in a semi-circle round a kind of quadrangle; each country had its own flat with its own flag outside. The Slalom course itself was at Rødkleiva, a few miles out of Oslo, and it has to be seen to be believed. It was quite the steepest thing I have ever laid eyes on, so steep in fact that they had to use gallons of water every night to keep what snow there was from sliding off altogether. This of course made it like an ice wall and quite terrifying. If one fell at the top of the thing, one slid at a phenomenal speed to the bottom! However, the authorities were kind enough to roughen the surface by scratching it with rakes the day before the race.

The Men's Slalom was most exciting as there were so many of them who were the same standard. The crowds that turned out to see this race were amazing and their enthusiastic cries encouraged the racers. For the girls, the course was a bit easier but none the less terrifying, and Andy Mead put up a magnificent show to win another Gold Medal for the States.

So ended the Olympic Games of 1952, and the various teams split up and went their several ways. Some of us were lucky enough to go back to Switzerland for more ski-ing, but most of our team had to return to England. No other race can be quite like the Games, and there was also the new experience for me of visiting Norway and meeting the people. If only we could have brought home a Gold Medal as well!

THE LADIES' SKI CLUB MEETING

It was not possible to hold the Meeting on the advertised date as the Women's Training was still going on at Wolfgang, so the meeting had to be postponed until they arrived at Mürren and it eventually took place on January 24th.

The snow conditions were good and during the Downhill Race, which was held in the morning, the sun shone at its best for the benefit alike of racers and officials.

Unfortunately, a cloud had been cast over the event when Sheila Daniell broke her leg the previous day while practising down the course and was, consequently, debarred from representing Great Britain in the Olympic Games at Oslo.

In view of this disaster, Sheena and Vora Mackintosh and Hilary Laing decided not to take further risks and scratched from the Downhill Race, the two former competing only in the Lady Mabel Lunn Slalom which was held in conjunction with that of the L.S.C.

Fiona Campbell, despite an old injury, ran in the Downhill Race, which she won by a comfortable margin. This made it all the more sad that her bad ankle precluded her taking part in the Slalom.

Addie Pryor was second, followed by Dina Guinness, and won the Slalom by a handsome margin from Sonia Furlong. Addie thus won both the closed and open cups.

The Championship perforce lost much of its interest by the withdrawal of these good runners, but everyone considered that the decision was a wise one.

Sheena did magnificently in the Lady Mabel Lunn Slalom which she won from her sister.

RESULT

Downhill Race: 1, Miss F. Campbell, 2' 38.3"; 2, Miss A. Pryor, 2' 47"; 3, Miss D. Guinness, 2' 56.4"; 4, Miss S. Furlong, 3' 1.1"; 5, Mrs. Hensman, 3' 7.3"; 6, Mrs. Raynsford, 3' 8.1"; 7, Miss C. de Reya, 3' 9.3". (Seven starters.)

Slalom: 1, Miss Pryor, 89.4"; 2, Miss Furlong, 99.1"; 3, Miss Guinness, 102"; 4, Miss de Reya, 104"; 5, Mrs. Raynsford, 113.2"; 6, Mrs. Hensman, 118.3".

Combined: 1, Miss Pryor, 5.29; 2, Miss Guinness, 19.49; 3, Miss Furlong, 20.4; 4, Miss de Reya; 5, Mrs. Raynsford; 6, Mrs. Hensman.

L.S.C. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

LAST January as an experiment an L.S.C. Junior Championship was held at Mürren, in connection with the S.C.G.B. Junior Training. The race was organised by Soss Roe, who very kindly presented a miniature to the winner. There were only four entries, but three of them qualified for membership of the L.S.C. The winner was Daphne Martin, who was 1st in the Downhill and 2nd in the Slalom. Zandra Nowell was 2nd in the Combined, winning the Slalom and being 2nd in the Downhill. Susan Swinburne was 3rd.

RECEIPT FOR SLIMMING

By E. R. CHAMIER

WE had continuous snow throughout January and February, almost every day a fresh fall, with no visibility. Blind ski-ing became a habit, and we moaned for the sun. When it did come out at the end of February it brought out the Italians, the French, the Germans, the Argentines and the Greeks and was not an unmixed blessing. The appalling queues on the Parsennbahn before, during and after the Derby added fuel to my nostalgia for the high mountains, and having ascertained from two days' tour on the Grialetsch that I could still stagger under a heavy rucksack, I eagerly accepted the opportunity of doing a tour from the Jungfrauoch. This was suggested by Soss Roe, and a car was offered to make the journey to Interlaken by one of the party of four—two young men, "D." and "M.", and two young women, "P." and "J."—who were proposing to accompany us. The four were, in our opinion, definitely sub-standard, but we had been shepherding them through the S.C.G.B. tests and the car weighted the scales in their favour. Soss procured a jolly good guide from Mürren—Alfred S. by name—and we set off for the Oberland. I was in rather poor shape with laryngitis acquired from "P." in the Grialetsch Hut, but this enabled me to get away with an out-of-date pass on the Rhätischebahn as far as Klosters, where we picked up the car. "D." and "J." went by train with their impedimenta—the rest of us piled in the new Sunbeam-Talbot with everything in the luggage carrier on the roof. Bowling along merrily just short of Flums we had occasion to brake suddenly, when the luggage carrier promptly left the car by the shortest route and deposited everything in the road in front of us. This necessitated considerable rearrangement and thought, but in the end we got to Flums Station, where ski and suitcases were sent on by train to Scheidegg and we proceeded to Interlaken, leaving the car at Spiez with the extra luggage.

Our first day's effort was to be the Eismeer. Alfred appeared on the 10 a.m. train and the day proved fine and sunny. It was many years since my last trip down this marvellous *gletscher* and then it was with Bill Bracken's racing class. The pace was very different and I had all the time in the world to regard the scenery, as our two young men must have been overcome with the grandeur of the scene and were even more sub-s. than usual. As we came off the Grindelwald *gletscher* the old man who sits on the top of the mountain on the left, spitting at you and throwing stones, was especially malevolent and required a lot of dodging. I didn't remember climbing off the moraine with the aid of a wire rope before; I think the thing must have shrunk since my last trip there. Avalanches were thundering down on both sides during the first part of the run and one especially big one sent Alfred scurrying off in case the enveloping cloud of snow-mist caught up with us.

Soss and I stopped off at Grindelwald to buy our food for the next three days as the idea was to start at 8 a.m. for the Jungfrauoch,

run down to the Concordia Hut, where we were to stay two nights and climb nearby peaks, then go up the Lötschenlücke and down to Goppenstein on the third day. All food had to be carried with us as the huts are not stocked. This plan miscarried as the weather deteriorated and we were late in getting away from the Joch, our party seeming to think that time was made for slaves. It was necessary, of course, to go through the Eispalace, but the S-S's were hard to round up and wanted nourishment. Finally we started, but the snow was heavy and when we got down the Aletsch, off Concordia, Alfred decided we would climb up to the Hollandia Hut on the Lötschenlücke and make our headquarters there, doing the Ebnefluh that afternoon. However, the party were too slow on the climb and when we got to the Hut visibility was bad and no further ski-ing was done. We consolidated our position in the Hut in case of late-comers—this consisted in pinching all the blankets possible and the best beds, and washing all the dishes and pans which had been left in a very doubtful state. Alfred proved a jolly good cook, and poker and piquet provided amusement in the evening. The morning didn't break awfully well and we had to wait a bit for the weather to clear before starting to climb the Ebnefluh about 11 a.m. The sun shone slightly but the wind was very strong and gusty. The final climb to the top was not easy as the surface was icy and the S-S's were even worse at kick-turns on that sort of thing. Alas, the view on top was almost obscured by what had become a blizz, and we could only see the Jungfrau in a haze. We hastily de-skinned and, frozen to the core, started down. Alfred's pace signified a desire to get back before worse befell, but "M." stopped and pleaded for raisins—"he was peckish." Greeted with loud cries of "don't be silly," we hustled him on and just arrived at the last ice-fall when the snow started in earnest.

Morning, after a night of tempest, was in the same strain. We were due to leave, but Alfred, with a look at the S-S's, said, "No, he wouldn't," and Soss and I looked despairingly at each other—I had a plane, and she had a car, at Basle, to take us back to England on Saturday morning. Unless we could get away by night all would be lost. IT WAS. We stayed in bed very late to husband warmth and food. The next day proved a duplicate, except that the food problem began to loom still larger. Cold was intense and we went to bed with every mortal thing on that we possessed, and averaging three blankets underneath and eight or nine on top. Soss even put her wind-jacket hood up as snow sifted in along the beams on to our mattress. "P.", who still had her snorter, had been ostracized to a corner where she must have been wellnigh frozen. I can recommend Soss as a good adjunct to a hot water bottle. We stayed *perdue* till noon to save food and had two very small meals of rice left by the Swiss Army and a very tired old piece of sausage from the same source. This, I may say, tasted like ambrosia, and our approval of Alfred's cooking rose to towering heights. This was the first time in my life I had ever been *really* hungry. Poker and piquet while wrapped in double blankets passed that day, while depression increased.

But next morning, although the wind continued to howl, we could see faint shadows of nearby rocks in the gloom and when Alfred reported with a great shout that the *choughs* had reappeared, followed by the welcome words, "we go," pandemonium broke loose and we threw ourselves into preparations for departure. Coffee had been carefully saved for this occasion, and a little butter with the heel of a stale loaf, so we had a heartening breakfast before the start. Two hundred feet below the Hut the mist started to clear and we could see where to go. Alfred roped himself to Soss, and she led to his directions to avoid the icefalls and crevasses, followed by our little lot and "sweep up" by me. Twelve hundred feet down it became gruelling hot and I found my woollen pyjamas over woollen underwear, plus four sweaters and a wind-jacket, a bit of a bind. We were met outside the village of Bläten where they had been watching us through a telescope and had reported us to the Jungfrau Station, where five Mürren guides had arrived that morning as a rescue party. Alfred's wife had become a bit fidgety when he didn't turn up at the proper time. We had an enormous meal at Bläten and I got rid of most of my excessive clothing, from which I could have wrung the perspiration. The snow gave out here and we walked two hours to Goppenstein, but allowed the ski and rucksacks to come by mule. We caught the train in good time, and in due course went our separate ways. I was loth to part with "M." at Spietz. He had become my banker and my one financial hope, but he was going to Geneva with the car and I went on to Basle to throw myself on the mercy of Swissair as the Charter Planes had ceased to function. I was sent back C.O.D. (they call it F.O.M.E.). A very expensive trip, but I did loose a lot of weight, and most slimming cures are expensive, one way or another.

SOME THOUGHTS ON MODERN EQUIPMENT

By D. G.

THE precise nature of any particular item of ski-ing equipment will, of course, depend upon a number of variable factors, such as past experience, appearance, purpose of holiday, sex, and personal preference. The following notes will, it is hoped, help members to make an intelligent choice over a number of indispensable items.

Dark Glasses (female). These should be big enough, and dark enough for use out of doors if required. Elliptically-shaped sunglasses are fashionable, creating, as they do, a faintly mongoloid appearance which is usually worth another look.

Ditto (male). A pair of disused Army or Air Force goggles worn steamed up on the forehead is still popular.

Gloves. Gammy gloves are the best and most expensive. They are made in various models of which one is greatly to be preferred; it may be spotted by usually being out of stock except in France, lost with greater regularity, and wearing better.

Trousers. The "hosepipe" modification of the Continental "vorlage" trouser continues to be popular with British visitors.

Ski Socks. These should be worn outside, and should be of white unwashed wool. If washed they shrink and lose their ability to gather balls of snow ("powder, look!"). If worn inside they expose the wearer to the danger of being mistaken for a foreigner.

Boots. These are still essential. They should, if possible, lace up in at least three different ways. They now provide one of the most valuable indices of the success of summer training. If, for instance, they can be done up

- (a) in time to catch a train,
- (b) at all after a meal,

overtaining should be suspected. If they can be undone (to let some blood through to the toes) and done up again in the train before it arrives, then something else is probably wrong.

Boots should be cut low in front to allow *vorlage* which, though out of date (being slower than *rücklage*) is still indulged in by most before setting off to ensure that

- (a) the heel of the boot cannot be lifted from the ski,
- (b) one's S.C.G.B. safety device is working correctly,
- (c) one is indeed as stiff as one thought.

Sticks. These are definitely getting longer. The reason for this is not apparent. It is possibly a device on the part of sports shop managers to get rid of old stock; it also helps to encourage the extraordinary delusion that sticks really are of some use.

Ski. These, on the other hand, are getting shorter, probably because they always were too long anyway. Though it makes no difference, it is customary to examine a few ski before choosing a pair either to hire or buy. The following two manœuvres are widely used.

I. Pull the tips and press the heels in the usual way, then place the tips of both ski under a partially open door, so that their long axes make an angle of approximately 45 degrees with the floor. Let go of both simultaneously, and watch the effect critically if possible with a stop watch. They will swing up and down gracefully for a considerable time. If both behave in the same way, it means that their pendulum activity is similar. This property has not yet been correlated with snow-worthiness or anything else, but ski-ing is still an art, not a science, and so is the choosing of ski.

II. Stand on one leg looking down the running surface from tip to heel; at the same time place the other foot on top of the upper surface and press firmly downwards. Continental skiers of the highest class frequently do this to impress on others the virtues of their own ski. It is believed to be a test of speed and balance.

Waxing. Space does not permit justice to be done to this important means of saving money in the evenings. Anyone especially interested should read "The Science of Waxing" (as yet unpublished) in which both the theory and practice of this important art are fully discussed.

OSLO
FEBRUARY, 1952



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FIONA CAMPBELL ON THE DERBY SCHUSS

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SPRING SKI-ING IN THE GRAMPIANS

[E. Sangster



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STERLING SKI-ING

By MRS. SANGSTER

TWENTY-FIVE pounds do not go far if you want to ski in Europe, but you may have heard rumours of ski-ing in the Scottish Highlands. For *detailed* information, ask the Scottish Ski Club, which has the experts. The purpose of this article is to give a Sassenach's impression of ski-ing in the Grampians in Spring. There are several hotels in the Spey Valley which cater for skiers and provide such necessities as packet lunches and drying facilities. I do not touch on the more accessible winter slopes near Killin, or on touring, as I have experienced neither.

Although the trains to the Highlands are adequate, the advantages of a car are considerable. In fact road transport of some sort is essential as the bottoms of many runs are several miles from the various hotels, by road, and buses are few and far between.

Normally after a large breakfast and a heated argument as to which run will be best, the party sets off in cars and parks as near to the snow as possible. Often no snow is visible from the road, but do not be discouraged by this. Unless there has been a recent heavy fall there is generally a walk of a mile or two before the real climb begins. If conditions are good most of this can be done on skins, but sometimes conditions are not good and you have to walk all the way to the top, through bog and heather, carrying ski and everything else. On these occasions boots feel as if they weigh a ton and the ski cause painful grooves in the shoulders unless the latter are well padded.

The snow can generally be relied upon in the corries, into which it is blown all winter and packs hard, sometimes lasting for months. The season has been known to last from December to July 29th. By April the snow is often in long narrow streaks down the mountains, and if the slope faces north and is fairly steep, will remain in perfect Spring condition in spite of warm sunny weather and rain. It is interesting to note that if the strip is narrow and all control is lost, running on to the heather is no check at all and some of the turns executed on it are not less remarkable for being unintentional.

Lower down the strip of snow tapers off till it eventually becomes a burn, so if you hear loud gurgling under the snow, beware, as where the covering is thin skiers have been known to fall through. This hazard makes it well worth lunching near the end of the run, in view of any possible entertainment. It is also likely to be more sheltered from the wind. While talking of lunch, I would like to mention that this can be a cold, wet business and it is a good idea to take a light waterproof cape and some extra woollies. Climbing keeps you warm in the coldest weather and too many clothes are a mistake, but when you sit down you very soon feel frozen. Garments which are both wind- and waterproof in Switzerland have little hope against a Highland downpour. On the other hand, equipment must be kept as light as possible, as the ski must so often be carried.

The weather plays a leading part and can do practically anything, changing rapidly. It is therefore very unwise to go up the mountains unless there is someone in the party who knows the district and could find the way down in spite of mist or blizzard. I believe that the early months can be desperately cold, but by March and April it can be really beautiful, and sometimes shirt-sleeve weather lasts for two or three days. Given a fine, clear day, the view from the mountain-tops alone would be worth the climb. There is also plenty of unusual bird and animal life; ptarmigan and skiers regard each other with equal curiosity.

In the evenings when there is a good gathering of kindred spirits, ski-ing is talked about incessantly and the atmosphere becomes quite Alpine. The native skiers are most kind and helpful to the stranger, but are difficult to keep in sight when going uphill.

The big event of the year is the Scottish Kandahar, which generally takes place during Easter week-end either in the Cairngorms or near Dalwhinnie. The latter is an excellent centre. Lately this race had attracted over a hundred entries and a mass of spectators; this year the entries closed about two weeks before the race.

There is a considerable variety of runs and members of the Scottish Ski Club usually know which will be in good condition. These do not compare in length with runs in Europe and vary from half-a-mile to a mile long, at the time of year I speak of. Earlier they are probably longer. However, as who goes down must climb up again, it makes little difference to the day's total descent if the run is long or short, but unless you are very fit it is less tiring to do a lot of short climbs than two or three very long ones. It has been suggested that all this climbing and walking makes the legs so strong that they become almost unbreakable, and certainly accidents are rare.

On the last run of the day the party collects the haversacks from the lunch site and skis down to the last limit of the snow. In places it may be only a yard-wide ridge beside the burn with patches of heather coming through, so this must be done carefully or you may get a cold bath before the hot one you are anticipating back at the hotel. To spoilt skiers all this may sound rather an odd form of amusement, but so long as you are prepared to climb and sometimes get wet it is the greatest fun, and there are few people who have tried it once, who are not keen to go again.

I, personally, would never choose ski-ing in the Highlands instead of in Europe, if one had the choice, but I would heartily recommend it as an extra. If all else fails us, Scottish ski-ing has great possibilities.

BOOK REVIEW

THE STORY OF SKI-ING. By ARNOLD LUNN. Eyre and Spottiswoode (The New Alpine Library). Price 21s., or 15s. to members of the S.C.G.B.

THERE can be few people better qualified to write the story of ski-ing than Sir Arnold Lunn, who not only invented the Slalom, and has been called the "Father of Downhill Racing," but has made a considerable study of the earlier history of the sport. [His previous *History of Ski-ing* (1927) is now out of print.]

Ski-ing in its earliest days was of course not a sport at all, but a means of hunting, getting about the countryside, and waging war in winters of deep snow, chiefly in the Scandinavian countries. It was not until the very end of the Nineteenth Century that ski were first introduced into the Alps, and Downhill ski-ing, as distinct from Langlauf, began to be practised. The Ski Club of Great Britain was founded in 1903, and is thus about to celebrate its golden jubilee. In the 'twenties the Downhill race, the Slalom as we know it to-day, and the idea of a Combined result on the times of both together, were evolved, and have spread with extraordinary rapidity all over the world.

The author has played a leading part in these later developments, and has succeeded in making ski-racing not only an international sport but a national one as well. Naturally enough in this book racing takes pride of place, but there are chapters on many other aspects of the sport such as ski-mountaineering and jumping, and on ski-ing in Norway and other parts of Europe, in the U.S.A., and in the British Dominions.

At the end of the book there is a "Digest of Ski-ing History" which will be of considerable value to all future writers on the sport. As well as the general history of ski-ing, from the Hoting Ski, which dates from the Stone Age, to the award to the author of the first knighthood ever given "for services to British Ski-ing and Anglo-Swiss relations," in 1952, there are summaries of the ski exploration of the High Alps; ski-ing in Scotland; and the results of the major competitions from 1924 to the present day.

One hesitates to accuse the "Ski Pope" of fallibility, or even his Ski-Legates of allowing errors to slip past them, but there are one or two inaccuracies which should be rectified in future editions.

The year of the first Anglo-Norwegian meet is given on page 81 as 1946; this must surely be a misprint for 1937 (it is given as 1937 in the "Digest"). On the same page a British team is said to have gone to Norway for a Slalom in 1936, instead of 1946. Bunty Walker was 2nd in the *Slalom* (page 128), and the event was the Galdhøpiggen Race which took place some time after the "West of Norway" race, in which there was no ladies' entry in 1938. On page 119 Christopher Mackintosh only fell once on a Jumping hill; on page 104 he *never* fell once. There are three variations in the spelling of Angela Stormonth-Darling's name; only that in the "Digest" is correct. Would it not be a Dutch historian of *cricket* who would enlarge on such an achievement as forcing the M.C.C. to

change its rules? (Page vii.) And is the Hoting Ski 4,500 or 2,500 years old? (Pages v and 173.) There are also mistakes in page references and page headings, and misprints too numerous to mention, though these are not perhaps excessive by post-war standards.

An intriguing phrase on page 128, referring to the end of the "Golden Age" of ski-racing, begins "and no wall that remains . . ." This puzzled the present reviewer completely for a moment; was it some obscure classical allusion to which even years of study of the B.S.Y.B. afforded no clue? It was not; it was merely a printers' error for "and now all that remains . . ."

But these are minor points. Sir Arnold is as always extremely readable, and this book should find its way on to the shelves of every skier, whether a racer or not. As a reference-book for ski-journalists and other writers on the subject, this volume will fill a real need.

PHILIPPA HARRISON.

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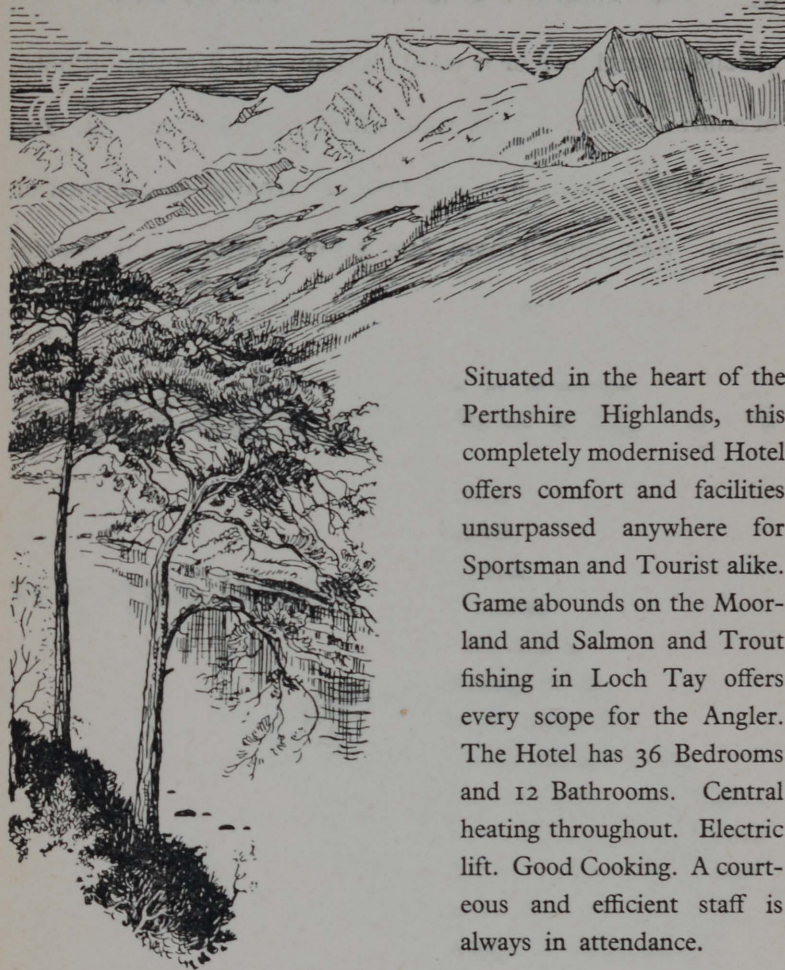
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