

**LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN**  
**NOVEMBER, 1956**

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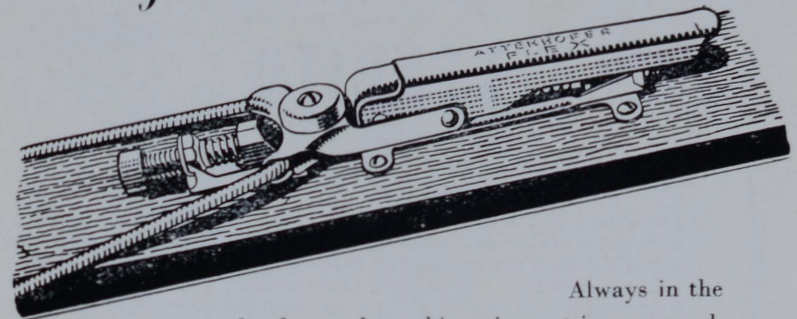
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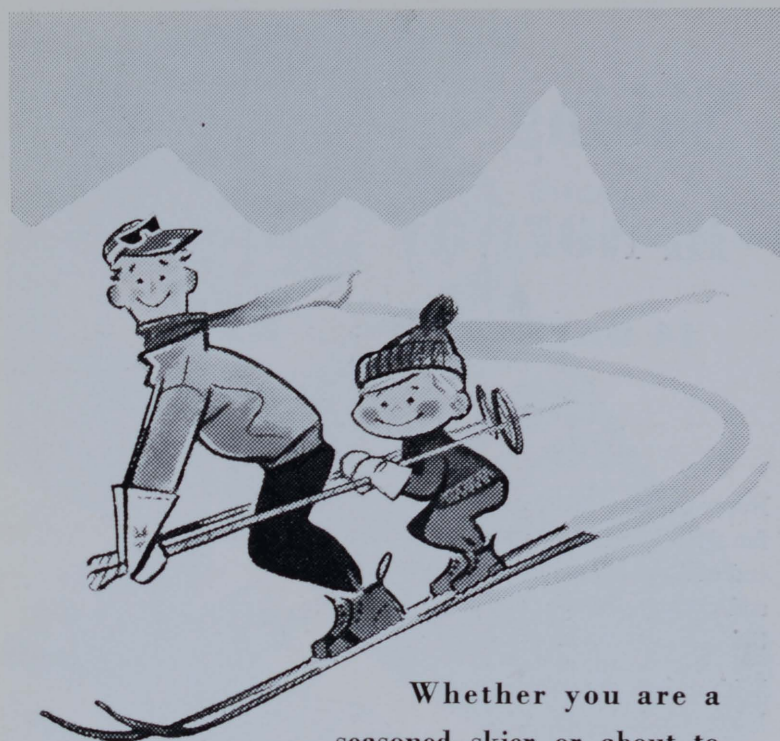
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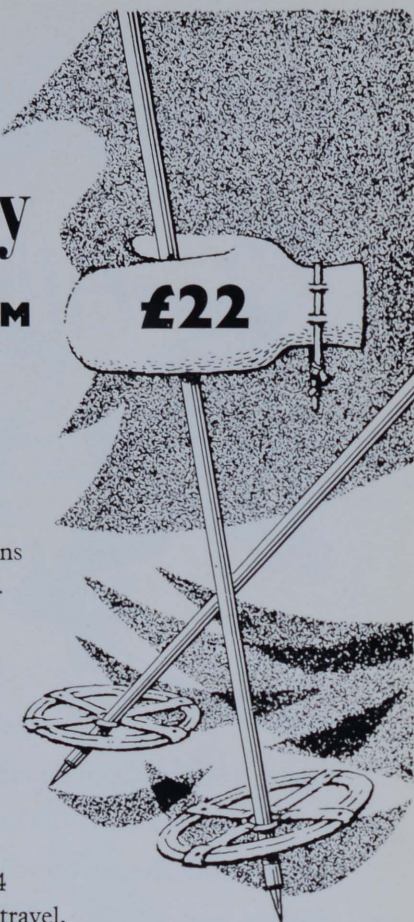
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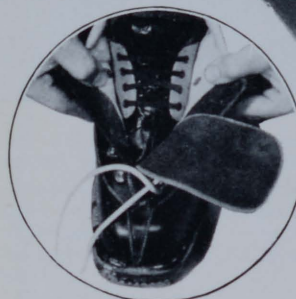
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# THE LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN

No. 26

Vol. II. Pt. 18

NOVEMBER, 1956

## EDITORIAL

THE major event last winter was, of course, the Olympic Winter Games. Congratulations to our members who were selected for places in the team. They were: Addie Pryor (Captain), Zandra Nowell, Sue Holmes, Jocelyn Wardrop Moore and Jean Stanford. The trainees also included Sheila Gracie, Angela Carr and Margaret Torrens.

Addie's accident at Cortina was a disaster; she had been running superbly, and, since the downhill is really "her" race, it was the worst possible luck to be injured in the slalom the day before. The other casualty was Sheila Gracie, who broke her leg in training.

The L.S.C. grant to help a racer went to Zandra Nowell.

Congratulations to the following members on their marriage:—

Miss S. Swinburn, now Mrs. H. R. Elliott.  
 Miss D. Russell Wood, now Mrs. D. R. R. Mills.  
 Miss J. Geidt, now Mrs. Phillips.  
 Miss G. Rickards, now Mrs. J. Ashe.  
 Miss G. L. Guinness, now Mrs. M. Essayan.  
 Mrs. J. Carter, now Mrs. Lawrence.

And to the following on new arrivals during the past year:—

To Mrs. Mabey (*née* P. Peck), a daughter, October 29th, 1955.  
 To Mrs. Cochran-Patrick (*née* S. Furlong), a son, November 10th, 1955.  
 To Mrs. Dalglish (*née* X. Ryder), a daughter, February 2nd, 1956.  
 To Mrs. John Boyagis (*née* C. de Reya), a daughter, February 18th, 1956.  
 To Mrs. Shaw Stewart (*née* V. Mackintosh), a son, July 25th, 1956.  
 To Mrs. Murray de Klee (*née* A. Stormonth-Darling), a son, August 18th, 1956.

We welcome ten new members to the Club, Miss Caroline Arthur, Miss Patricia Hanafin, Mrs. Sue Holmes, Miss Christine Davy (Australia), Miss Jill Fitzgerald (New Zealand), Miss J. Harvey, Mrs. Simon Kimmins, Mrs. Lovell, Mrs. Richardson and Miss J. Scott-Brown.

Elizabeth Davy, whose article, "Olympic Onlooker," appears on page 505, is the N.S.W. State President of the Australian Women's

Ski Club, who were so extremely generous in sending food parcels to L.S.C. members during the war. The "close relation" to whom she refers is her daughter, Christine, one of our new members who, in her second season in European ski-ing, raced extremely well. She came twenty-first in the Combined at Cortina, and we are glad to welcome her to the Club. The cracked wrist, with which she returned to Sydney, doesn't rate the casualty column, since it was acquired falling off the escalator at Harrods!

Another A.W.S.C. President, Mrs. Venn Wesche (to whom many members wrote "thank-you" letters for their parcels), has just suffered the tragic loss of her only daughter, who was killed when an avalanche on the Main Range, Kosciusko, swept away the hut in which she was sleeping. This is the more bitter since avalanches have hitherto been unknown in Australia.

Mrs. Marjorie Greenland writes from Cyprus: "I am afraid I have no ski-ing news for you as I have not been up to Tröodos this season. There has been a lot of snow and conditions good; both Army and R.A.F. are making good use of it and some private people too, but many do not like the long drive passing through hostile villages where you may get stones flung at you, if nothing worse! There was so much snow on Tröodos this year, and such excessive cold, that two soldiers who had become separated from their fellows were frozen to death up there. Fancy that happening in a Mediterranean island!—and as if we had not lost enough murdered and shot in the back without that happening. Cyprus is no longer the Paradise island it used to be—in fact it smells rather of the other place! But my little school manages to carry on happily nevertheless, as we have moved temporarily to a beautiful place between the sea and mountains, and away from the trouble spots."

Mrs. Greenland received an M.B.E. in the New Year Honours List, for services to the blind, and we send her our best congratulations. Through her we received the article on page 523, "I Ski Though Blind," a record of fabulous courage which deserves the widest possible circulation.

The Annual General Meeting and cocktail party will be held at the Ski Club of Great Britain on Wednesday, December 5th, 1956.

The L.S.C. meeting will be at Villars, in conjunction with the Quatre Pistes, on January 18–22nd, 1957.

Your rookie Editor, having spent the summer with the occupational conviction that this was to be the "Snark" edition—"a perfect and absolute blank"—would like to award the L.S.C. Halo to those members who have so nobly responded to her constant naggings. Articles are welcomed with avidity, whether or not in letter form. Those most welcome (Gold Halo) are typed in double spacing on one side of the paper, with wide margins. Photographs should, for choice, be glossy prints, but matt prints or negatives can be used. Contributions should arrive IN JUNE, PLEASE, AT LATEST.

Members are reminded that it is essential to mention the BULLETIN when making enquiries of advertisers. Reference to page 533 will show some of the advantages to be gained thereby.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30th November, 1955

THE Annual General Meeting was held at the Ski Club of Great Britain on November 30th, and was followed by a cocktail party.

The meeting was well attended; the President, Lady Chamier, was in the Chair.

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were read and passed.

Mrs. Oddie, the Hon. Treasurer, presented the accounts, which were approved and passed.

Then followed the election of Officers and Members of the Committee:—

President: Lady Chamier.

Vice-Presidents: Mrs. K. C. Smith and Mrs. J. Palmer-Tomkinson.

Hon. Secretary: Lady Blane re-elected.

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. Oddie re-elected.

Hon. Editor: Miss P. M. Farquharson, on the retirement of Miss P. Harrison.

Committee: Miss E. S. Macfie and Mrs. W. R. Tomkinson on the retirement of Mrs. Wyatt and Miss Laing.

The President, giving her report, said: "It is with some trepidation that I rise to give you my first Presidential Report, covering the season of 1954–55, first because there does not seem a very great deal to report, and what there is is not very good as far as the well-being of our racing girls was concerned, as we had a very unlucky season. I hope I shall have better things to report next year, when we shall have weathered the Olympics.

"The winter season started off well with plenty of snow everywhere over the Christmas holidays. This lasted until the British Women's Championships were staged at Grindelwald, when a heavy thaw set in and it rained steadily for a week. Owing to the conditions, it was only possible to run the Slalom, and of the L.S.C. girls Anne Spaul was the winner, with Lesley Thomson in third place.

"After the great thaw we began to recover our weather, and from the end of January onwards, snow was plentiful and conditions excellent. March saw further large snow falls, so that touring improved towards the end of the season.

"The Ladies' Ski Club race was organised by Marden's Club, Klosters, and was run as a Giant Slalom in conjunction with one of the Parsenn Races down the Dorfthali at Davos. I notice that in the account of this race in *Marden's Bulletin* there is no mention whatsoever that the L.S.C. race was run in conjunction with it! Anne Spaul won the L.S.C. non-International Cup; she is in Canada, so her cup cannot be presented. Jean Stanford, who has now become a member, won the Open Cup, and this was presented in Davos.\*

\*For other results and disasters see Editorial, 1955, Bulletin.

"For the Arlberg-Kandahar our Club elected Lesley Thomson as its representative. Her accident while training, the day before the race, was indeed a tragedy, and she has our greatest sympathy. We hope that her recovery will be 100%, and that she will continue her racing career. Casualties among our lady racers last winter were very high, and literally no one was left whole at the end of the season.

"The Club is well represented for the coming winter Olympic Games. Addie Pryor, captain of the team, Angela Carr, Jocelyn Wardrop-Moore, Jean Stanford, Sue Holmes and Zandra Nowell are in the running for selection. The chosen ones will train at Val d'Isère. Our former President, Helen Tomkinson, who is British Representative on the Women's Committee of the F.I.S., and on the Jury for the Downhill and Slalom, will be at Cortina, and able and willing to help with the team as required. She will also be in Gstaad in January, in charge of the Juniors competing in the British Junior Championships on the 12th. The L.S.C. is giving a donation of £15 towards the training.

"We are pleased to welcome to our Club nine new members. . . .

"A word about the Scottish Kandahar, held on Easter Sunday on the Corrie Cas side of Cairngorm. Jean Stanford, 9th in order, was first for the Lillywhite Cup, with Zandra Nowell second. Angela Carr and Penny Nowell also competed.

"Please note that, this winter, each centre with a Racing Club will have a supply of L.S.C. spoons, which can be given in the case of L.S.C. competitors.

"Before closing I would like to say a few 'Thank you's' on your behalf. First, to Mr. Kenneth Smith and Mr. Eric Lewns for so kindly auditing our accounts. It is a most generous and kindly act on their part, and all the time and trouble they have taken is greatly appreciated. Our Hon. Secretary, Lady Blane, not only deserves our most sincere thanks for all her work, but also a Halo, Gold, 1st Class, and it is high time one was wrought for her. Our Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Oddie, has looked after our funds in no mean manner, and it would seem that 'Sundry Debtors' have become things of the past. Our Hon. Editor, Pip Harrison, is retiring after long and arduous service. We want to express our appreciation of what she has done, and I am sure it will be a relief to her to have a rest. My remembrances of being an Editor was that it clouded the whole of the ski-ing season, and in fact the whole year—first the anticipation of what you had to do, and then the fact itself. We welcome Pat Farquharson to the job, and hope that as a new broom she will take the sweeping light-heartedly.

"Well, ladies, I think that is all I have to say. I wish you all a first-class season, and to our team in the Olympic Games, every possible good fortune."

It was announced that the L.S.C. Meeting would be held at Mürren, in conjunction with the British Ladies' Championships on January 14th, 1956.

The meeting closed, and was followed by a cocktail party.

## OLYMPIC ONLOOKER

By ELIZABETH DAVY

WHAT a lot of people there are walking about in this ski-ing village. Hundreds of magnificent young men and women and people of all ages and shapes. There is something strange about this crowd though. Why is it so serious? Why has everyone a look of care and responsibility? Now I come to think about it there was something strange about last night too. Why wasn't I wakened during the night by the usual ski revellers' laughter and song, etc., in the street.

It is January 24th. The village is Cortina d'Ampezzo on the eve of the VII Olympic Games. Flags of 32 nations hang in the streets, hotels and houses. Even the lovely Dolomites are decorated. Across the mighty face of Cristallo flicker the words "Welcome to Cortina" in three languages. Great searchlights shine on the mountains and seem to linger on the downhill courses, making them look even more formidable than by daylight. There is a typical serious-looking face coming towards me in the crowd. The face is my own reflected in a window. I have a close relation racing in the ladies' Alpine events.

The opening ceremony is at 11.30 a.m. A. and I are there early. We have no seats but find a good standing place with a rail to lean on and I amuse myself by watching the crowd and the clothes. I wish I were young and dashing enough to wear the pale pink ski-ing suit standing near by. It is something like a boiler suit, made to fit perfectly a very shapely figure. Batwing sleeves and a narrow belt of the same colour. I have never seen one of these suits actually ski-ing but they look very fine just standing about. There are some splendid fur coats from shaggy animals and lovely short coats of the duffel coat family.

I find it hard to describe the ceremony. A parade of young people, each team proudly following its flag. Greece leads, then Australia, Austria and so on in alphabetical order. The uniforms are interesting. Norwegians, about fifty of them, in blue overcoats look workmanlike. Russians also in blue coats but they wear fur caps. Are they sable? There is a large team from Ruritania: they wear white duffel coats with red buttons, red gloves, red socks and ("bello, bello" murmur the Italians) red plush caps. I am sorry, someone has just told me they are not Ruritaniens.

I like the white coats of the English girls.

The President of the Organising Committee makes a speech. The Torch is lit. Then the standard bearers of every country form a half-circle with their flags and a young Italian girl follows the Italian flag to the centre and recites the Olympic oath on behalf of the competitors. She speaks in a language I do not understand but her voice is crystal clear and youthful. The great crowd is silent and I am glad I have come 12,000 miles to be here at this minute.



#### THE WOMEN'S GIANT SLALOM

From the opposite side of the valley the slope for the women's giant slalom and downhill on the Canalone course can be seen. It swoops down the mountainside in a great crescent and disappears into the trees in a vertical descent of 1,500 ft. with 59 controls. It looks terrifying. "Is it dangerous?" "No! not at all. It is in splendid condition. Last night it was well watered with great hoses." "Doesn't that mean it is solid ice from start to finish?" "Yes! nice and hard. It will not cut up." "Indeed! Can I have a sip of brandy?"

We have very expensive tickets to watch the race but by crawling under a fence, walking up a steep path, having a small brush with an official and climbing on to a rock, we find we can see most of the course. If ants are allowed to criticise I would say that it is a dull course with very regular snake-like wiggles down two-thirds of the way and the high standard of the skiers makes it look almost easy. The best skiers are just slightly faster than the others, picking up a second or so here and there. There are very few falls. Here comes Madeleine Berthod, though, and she does have some mishap high up on the mountain. Now we do see something spectacular as she dashes down the course in a marvellous effort to make up time and to finish fourth. A very spectacular and gallant effort.

#### THE MEN'S GIANT SLALOM

To say that we are seeing this race would be a gross exaggeration. From where we sit at the finish I suppose we can see one-twentieth of it. The lovely fir trees soar up around us and we are sheltered from any wind. Two thousand feet above us we can catch a glimpse of near the start but we do not see the skiers till their serious troubles are over. The race starts at 11 a.m. At 11.3.15 the first runner is through the finish, at 11.4.17 the second. Then there is a long gap. "Italians! How can one expect them to run anything to time" says an irate English voice. Then over the loudspeaker, "A small avalanche has fallen across the course. There will be a delay of 20 minutes."

Although we cannot see much of the course it is exciting to watch the minute hand in the big stop watch opposite our stand. The best run so far is 3 minutes 6 seconds. Toni Sailer, the favourite, is No. 18. No. 17 is just taking the last *schuss* when there is a roar of excitement up the course. Toni flashes into view. We can hardly believe our eyes when he is through the finish to win by a margin of 6 seconds.

#### THE WOMEN'S SLALOM

The stand we are to watch from is about half way up the Col Druscie slalom course. To get there we follow a steep path up through the fir trees. It is covered by about 4 inches of powder snow but under this is solid, slippery ice. Very difficult indeed, but when we reach our stand and have fought our way on to it I realise

that spectators' troubles are nothing, and I look at the slalom as it wiggles down the steep icy slope with a cold sinking feeling in my chest. There are two courses set side by side, one for the first run, one for the second. It is hard to judge from where we stand which is the more difficult. They both have a descent of 544 feet but the first run has 41 gates and the second has 45.

Men are walking up and down near the stands selling what I hope is hot coffee out of thermoses. Just what I need. But it is not coffee, it is hot vermouth. Can I drink hot vermouth at 10.30 a.m.? Yes! I can. To me the *elite* of the world's skiers are incredible people and it is in the slalom that they astonish me with their skill more than anywhere else. These girls, all so slim and young, dashing down this steep icy slope. The best of them do not check at all, rather they seem to be urging their ski to go faster and faster. Jumping, poling, using every muscle in their bodies, shaving the flags by a hair's breadth. The best twelve or so did not fall. Then come those who go very fast but have one fall that is lucky and they are soon up, and those that do not fall but check slightly at the gates; then those that fall and struggle on. These get a special cheer from the crowd. All nationalities admire a gallant effort. I was glad to see that not one girl gave up unless she had to; there were many that had to. A fall anywhere on this course could mean a broken limb and almost certainly a long slither, maybe over a rock or two. I was sorry to see Adeline Pryor fall and stretcher bearers go to her. She had done very well to come twenty-first in the Giant Slalom and had been ski-ing with such strength and dash that she had a good chance of doing even better.

#### THE MEN'S SLALOM

Here I am again beside the Col Druscie course. I have, however, walked up the icy path a little more slowly than yesterday and have lost the fight into the stand. I watch with interest a man spectator wriggle on his stomach under a wire fence and stand beside the course. This manoeuvre is not a success. He has a noisy scuffle with a soldier official and is back again before I can say "knife." I walk down a bit and by using a little cunning am allowed to stand just inside a gate. What a day it is! Freezingly cold, absolutely still, every fir tree snow white with frost, the lovely mountains towering above us. But I am supposed to be watching a race. 790 feet descent; 80 gates in the first run and 94 in the second. As is usual in every sport the best performers make everything look easy, but in this difficult race the gap between the best and others widens quickly. Only 10 men break  $3\frac{1}{2}$  minutes for the combined run; only 24 out of 95 starters break 4 minutes; 48 break 5 minutes and 31 do not finish. Toni Sailer, the winner of the Giant Slalom, has drawn 15th. He is the only competitor who really gives me the impression that the course is not so terribly difficult after all, that he is not straining every muscle. He does not even appear to me to be going very fast and I am almost surprised when the loudspeaker announces he is three seconds faster than anyone else in the first run and one second faster

in the second. Igaya, on the other hand, takes my breath away as he swoops down with terrific speed and precision to finish second.

In these races the competitors are seeded into three groups, the "lowland" countries forming the last group with one or two of their best runners in the second. It is rather hard on the weaker competitors that they always have to contend with the most difficult conditions but there seems to be no way of avoiding this.

#### THE WOMEN'S DOWNHILL

We have tickets for a stand near the finish. The "stand" turns out to be a fenced-off place on a very steep mountain-side but although it is not exactly the height of comfort, we get a wonderful view of the race; the competitors only disappear from sight into the trees for about 15 seconds before we see them again on the last *schuss*. The race is very similar to the Giant Slalom except that in this there are only 20 gates instead of 59. Snake-like wiggles on the top part, a good *schuss* in the middle, a wood path and a *schuss* to finish. The *schuss* in the middle ends with a turn into the trees. This is a danger point and some who take it from slightly the wrong angle have very nasty falls. Just before my close relation is due to start I hear the ambulance clanging up the mountain. "Quick! Some hot vermouth, hot compari, hot champagne, hot anything." She does the top wiggles very nicely. She takes the *schuss*. She disappears into the trees. This is the longest 15 seconds of my life. Then there is the glorious sound of a bugle call announcing that there is a racer in sight. She flashes into view and takes the last *schuss*. What matter that she is 21 seconds behind the winner. My troubles are over.

#### THE MEN'S DOWNHILL

My chief feeling before this race is one of great thankfulness that I have no close relation racing today. Soon after the start the course dives between two great crags in the most terrifying 500-foot *schuss*. This would seem possible to me if it had a smooth outrun but the outrun has great waving bumps and then a U-shaped dip.

Very soon then, before the racer has time to collect himself, there is what looks to me like a cliff about 40 feet high, then some difficult wood running, open *schusses*, fairly flat woods and a last easy *schuss* to the finish, a total descent of 2,858 feet. Unfortunately, I have to watch the race from the finish and cannot see any spectacular places. We take up our position with our eyes glued to the large timing hand and wait. No. 1 comes in. Time 3.22. No. 4, No. 7, 9 and 11 come, but where are the others? I don't know what the officials are thinking but I have the uneasy feeling that this race is becoming rather a fiasco. Igaya has not finished. Seven out of 13 of the *élite* have not finished. Word goes up to the top that the course is even more difficult than it seemed when training on it. Some begin to take it more carefully. Toni Sailer is No. 14. He finishes all right. His time is 2.52.2, three seconds faster than anyone else. He pulls up with a lovely effortless swing and stands relaxed,

not a hair out of place. The race goes on. Towards the end I train my glasses onto a *schuss* about two-thirds down the course. It is strange to see some of the world's best skiers take this in a wide snow-plough position. They have had bad falls higher up and are struggling gallantly on. At last it is over. A triumph for some, but 28 skiers have fallen by the wayside.

#### THE CLOSING CEREMONY

A. and I make a serious mistake in thinking that most people have left Cortina and there will be no crowd. We arrive rather late at our stand to find we can't get in. We resort to "a pitiful tale" at the gate of a more expensive stand and find ourselves with seats. A nice surprise. First we see exhibitions of skating and then, just as darkness falls, the closing ceremony. Each country is represented by one man carrying a flag. They stand in a half-circle. The Olympic standard is taken to the centre and very carefully folded away for other years. Guns boom out and when I glance towards the Olympic Torch which has flamed for two weeks, it is out. Lights go out all over the stand and we rather sadly prepare to leave. Then a splendid thing happens. Soaring up into the night sky go a glorious burst of fireworks. I have seen in my lifetime several lovely displays of fireworks but always before three thoughts have crossed my mind. "I wish they would send more up together," "I wish I were nearer," "this is going on too long." Now right above me are more rockets, more star shells, more catherine wheels than I have ever seen before. A lovely exciting sight ending after a few minutes with one last tremendous burst. I know I give a yell of delight. I think I clap my hands. Then as the last rocket dies away, the only sounds are the rumbling echoes from the mountains towering above us in the darkness. They seem to be shouting with mighty voices one last challenge. Then there is silence.

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#### JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, 1956

BY HELEN TOMKINSON

THE Junior Championships were held at Gstaad in early January. Forty-five boys and girls assembled for three days' training, followed by the race. The keenness among these juniors is terrific, and if only we can continue the Junior Training, I think one day we shall have some first-class racers. The scheme whereby they train first with their own affiliated Club is excellent, because when they all come together for the Championship there is just that amount of rivalry between the Clubs to spur the racers on to finer efforts.

There was not an abundance of snow at Gstaad, but there was enough on the Eggli for a very good Championship. We held two practice slaloms before the event, both of them timed, and the Juniors

were divided into several classes for training on the course. Timed slaloms are of great value, as continual slalom practice is essential.

Owing to weather conditions on the day of the race, we had to alter the Slalom to the morning, with the Straight Race in the afternoon. Robert Skepper, who is in a class by himself among the Juniors, won both Slalom and Downhill. Among the girls it was a very close fight between the two Elspeths, Elspeth Whitley just getting the Combined by .05 of a point, Elspeth Nicoll being second in everything. Both these girls have the right approach to racing, and I am sure we shall see them going well in Senior events in the next few years.

The essential thing for all Juniors is to concentrate on their technique. Speed will come later but it is useless to try and go too fast without technique, as that means that technique is lost.

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### CITIZENS' DERBY - SESTRIERE

January 21/22, 1956

By SUE HOLMES

FROM Mürren, where we had competed in the British Ladies' Championships, we started off in two cars—heading for Sestriere and the Citizens' Derby, which was to be our last try-out before the Olympics. We were five girls, Jean Stanford, Zandra Nowell, Jocelyn Wardrop Moore, Angela Carr and I, together with our trainer, Alan Crompton. The nervous strain which had hung over us during the S.D.S. Meeting at Grindelwald and our own championships, because final selection for the Olympic team was based on these races, had been lifted and we were keen to race in a more happy frame of mind. We arrived safely in Sestriere to find the men's team already installed, whom we were all glad to see again.

The weather on the first day of training was pretty miserable, but on the next day the proverbial "Sestriere Sun" got out and remained with us for the rest of the week. The downhill course was down the "Banchetta," a fast, and, in the woods, tricky and icy course. We trained hard, and for many of us it was the first bit of really fast downhill running of the season.

Our results in the Derby were very good; we won the cup for the best ladies' team, which achievement has to be attributed mainly to Jean's excellent time and fifth place, and Zandra's sixth. I was eleventh, Jocelyn eighteenth, and Angela twentieth. There were twenty-six competitors, mainly French and Italians, and the race was won individually by Danielle Telling, France, who had also won the previous year.

A special slalom was held early the next morning, but, unfortunately, Zandra and Jocelyn could not compete, owing to attacks of 'flu. There was only a comparatively small entry and Angela Carr

and myself were representing our colours. The course was well set alongside one of the many ski-lifts on good hard *piste*. Arlette Grosso, France, won the slalom in 99.7 seconds for two runs. I came fourth with 110.8 and Angela Carr was sixth, having had a rather time-consuming fall in the first run, but making it up in the second with only 9 seconds behind the winner's time for that run.

After a quick lunch we packed our bags, loaded the cars, and were soon speeding towards Cortina and the Olympic Games.

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### S.D.S.

By HELEN TOMKINSON

I do not think I have ever seen a more impressive array of women racers at any meeting. Every country had at least six strong runners, from whom were to be picked the Olympic teams, so the competition was terrific. Unfortunately, the snow was not, and Grindelwald was having the greatest difficulty in getting the courses in order at all.

The Giant Slalom was held first, from Egg to Bort on the First Mountain. It was a very good course, fast with a lot of gates. I stood in one place the whole race and it was very interesting to see how one could pick out the good times at once, even here at the top. There was certainly a marked difference in the top class of racer and the second class. I received the biggest thrill I have had in women's racing since the war, when I saw Addie Pryor go down. There was no question about it, Addie was definitely in the top class of racers in the way she attacked the course and in her skiing generally, and we were all delighted to hear that her time was excellent and that she was well up with the Kannonen, in fact beating a lot of them.

The Duchess of Kent Race was run in conjunction with the S.D.S. Giant Slalom (and now always will be so run). I consider this a very good race to give young racers their first experience of an International event, and I was very pleased to see the way in which some of our Juniors attacked the course.

Owing to snow conditions, the Slalom had to be run above Egg. As is now usual in international races, two different slaloms were set for the two runs. The first run was a very difficult, niggly Slalom, very icy and hard; the second, run when the snow was soft, was flowing and nice.

This was the first appearance of the Russian women in Downhill and Slalom events, and we were all very interested to see them. They had one very fine slalomer who, after the first run, was leading the field; their other girls all showed marked promise and in a few years they are going to be a really strong team. It was very bad luck for them that one of their team had the most unfortunate accident in falling on a slalom pole which broke and pierced her leg, pinning her to the hill. I am glad to say that I now hear she has fully recovered.

A very nice Polish girl won, and she well deserved her victory. There was a hot duel between those old rivals, Madeleine Berthod and Andy Mead-Lawrence, for third place, and I wish all young racers

could have seen their second runs, which were a wonderful education in how a slalom should be fought through from first flag to last. It is no good just prettily slaloming through an international race, one has to fight it through. I was really pleased to see the magnificent way Zandra Nowell fought down the course; as a result she was very well placed.

Again, owing to snow conditions, the Straight Race was delayed and delayed in starting, but in the end it was run successfully and to our great joy Addie was eighth, a truly magnificent performance, proving that she really is in the top category of women world racers.

We have to thank the S.D.S. and Grindelwald again for a really wonderfully organised and enjoyable race meeting. We all know what enormous odds they had to contend with in the lack of snow, but, in spite of these difficulties, the meeting was carried through superbly.

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## THE WHITE RIBBAND

ST. MORITZ, FEBRUARY 17TH-19TH, 1956

BY SUE HOLMES

THE British team converged on St. Moritz from various directions whence they had fled to recuperate from Cortina. Jean Stanford's relaxation had been more racing at Chamonix in the Grand Prix, where she had done well, against very tough competition. Jocelyn Wardrop Moore and Zandra Nowell had been in Kitzbühel and the Arlberg, enjoying the abundance of snow; Angela Carr and I had spent an enjoyable week with the Army skiers at Bad Gastein.

The weather at St. Moritz was extremely cold, though fine and sunny. The training was very well organised, with each competitor wearing a training number and policemen guarding the crossings of runs and keeping the race track clear. On the evening before the Slalom all racers were invited by Mr. Embericos, a Greek of the "Onassis Set," to a cocktail party at the Chesa Veglia. Free drinks all round and delicious eats were enjoyed by everyone, though, unfortunately, we could not indulge too freely in consideration of the race the next day. The Slalom was set down either side of the lift on Alp Giop, one course by Rominger and one by Reinhalter. The girls started on one run and the men on the other at the same time. At half-time we changed courses, and our second course was consequently a little rutty. Frieda Daenzer, Switzerland, won by the very small margin of 1/10th second from Muriel Lip, France.

The Downhill course went from the Alpina Ski Hut down the Standard to Oberalpina, a fast and enjoyable course. The weather was excellent and the *piste* in good condition. A young American girl, Penny Pitou, won by 3 seconds, from Frieda Daenzer.

After the race all competitors who had raced in the Olympics

were invited to the Corviglia Club to a champagne luncheon, a great help to training on the Giant Slalom course that afternoon! We enjoyed Mr. Onassis' hospitality that evening, when he invited all competitors to a dinner dance in the Chesa Veglia. We all had a good time, although we had to disappear rather early, leaving our hosts to enjoy the rest of the party.

Sunday morning, the day for the Giant Slalom, dawned dull and overcast. The weather did not improve at all, if anything it got worse. We managed only one tour of inspection on the course before the race, owing to the usual crush on the railway. This time Frieda Daenzer won, by a second, from Therese Leduc, France. After the race we were again the guests of the Corviglia Club to a most sumptuous buffet luncheon, which we could at last enjoy to the utmost, having no more racing in front of us, except the descent down to St. Moritz. The prize giving was in the Palace Hotel that afternoon, and on the next morning we departed.

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## THE OLYMPIC GAMES - CORTINA, 1956

BY HELEN TOMKINSON

ALL the way through the Arlberg and at Innsbruck we looked in vain for snow, but none could be seen except right up at the top of the mountains. Up and over the Brenner, still no snow; but on the Italian side there was a marked improvement, in fact we were running between snow banks and our hopes rose. I had no idea Cortina was so far from the Brenner. We had to change twice (getting all muddled up with the Finnish Speed Skating Team) but finally we arrived and were very pleased to be met and taken up to the British Chalet. This proved to be one of the oldest chalets in Cortina, with some lovely old furniture and painted walls and ceilings.

The Dolomites really are breath-taking; our first view of Cortina next morning was quite unforgettable, their wonderful rosy colour gleaming in the sun and coming straight up out of the snow—for there *was* snow, not a lot but enough.

Because of this shortage of snow the Olympic Downhill courses were only opened for practice for a very short time, and not always every day. We, the Juries, would decide each night which courses were to be opened, and for how long. This was extremely necessary, as after, say, sixty people had trained down a course three or four times the course was ruined and the Army had to start getting it in order again. It was absolutely marvellous how they did it; snow would be shot down by chutes from right up high on each side, and then a whole regiment to each course would stamp it on foot, spray it, stamp again and then stroke it with ski on. The final result was excellent, and I do compliment the Italians on this, as they had to contend with very difficult conditions.

The competitors were never allowed to ski on the Slalom courses except for the actual race, only to walk up beside them on foot and have a look. This was right in the circumstances.

I considered the women's courses were excellent and just what they should be, fast, fluent, not too long and nothing really dangerous. It was very interesting to watch the various teams training down the courses. One always picked them out by their style and clothes, and it was fascinating to stand at the bottom of the long ravine and see them all shooting by. As a whole team I was most impressed by the Germans, as they all looked exactly alike ski-ing down. Watching Madeleine Berthod train one has the impression of enormous strength, that she can stand any number of bumps. In training she was always ably followed by the very young Swiss hope, Anne-Marie Weser, who only had her sixteenth birthday in Cortina, and came fourteenth in the Giant Slalom. She should be a great hope for the future for Switzerland. Renée Colliard, who won the Slalom for Switzerland, is a quite outstanding slalomer. I was thrilled by the way she tackled those intensely difficult slaloms, never looking like falling and always taking the flags just right. She is a specialist and does nothing but slalom and in one season has brought herself from just a good University skier to an Olympic champion. What an example she is to the young racer of real hard work and determination.

The Giant Slalom, which was the first women's race, was, to my mind, a very nice one. I was on the Jury and was extremely nervous, as this was my first big international as an official, but the whole procedure was fascinating. The Jury inspected the course several times in the days before the race and tried to get it in perfect condition. I had quite a lot of difficulty making the Italian soldiers understand where we wanted bumps smoothed out, and there was one turn before the finish where I had enormous trouble in explaining that snow must be shovelled after each competitor.

I was a Jury member at the finish, which meant I saw very little of the race, but my great moment came when Christine Davy, the Australian, fell just before the finish and I had to decide whether she was through or not, when she was all tied up with the timing and the finishing post. The results in the Giant Slalom were incredibly close; the first twenty-one were within  $6\frac{1}{2}$  seconds, so high is the competition.

The two Slaloms set for the women were long and very difficult, and the snow conditions were anything but ideal. I was amazed to see people like Madeleine Berthod and Andy Mead-Lawrence falling about; I think very few people got through without a fall. It was a tragedy to us that Addie hurt herself on this course, for undoubtedly she would have done well in the Straight Race, it was just her course.

The Straight Race proved a great triumph for Switzerland, who got the first two places.

The organisation of the whole meeting was first class. The transport to and from the various races was a little difficult, but otherwise it was superb. The Italians were extremely fierce and allowed no one on the course except Jury members, which was absolutely right.

To me it was unforgettable, and I thoroughly enjoyed my first experience as an Olympic official.

## CHANTEMERLE, HAUTES ALPES

BY ISOBEL ROE

If people say things often enough one is apt to believe them, especially if it's to one's own advantage. "It must be awfully hard work Repping in the Parsenn. You always seem to be working. Do you ever get any time to ski for yourself?" I was easily convinced by these remarks and got up a small party (including Jane Scott-Brown, Klosters Rep.) to investigate some of the French *stations de ski*.

We set off early in February for Chantemerle, via St. Moritz, Tirano, Sondrino, Milano, Turino and Ulzio where we were met, with a car, by Hubert Beddington, Chantemerle's unofficial Ski Club Representative. In under an hour, after rapid frontier formalities, we arrived at Chantemerle which is about four miles from the garrison town of Briançon. We received a cheerful welcome at *Le Clos Hotel*, which was busy celebrating the Proprietor's, Olivier Bergmann's, birthday. I am inclined to think that he celebrates the event on a number of occasions each year.

We were made members of the French Ski Association and this entitled us to tickets at a reduced rate on the *téléférique*, which rises over 3,500 feet and runs in two sections. From Serre Ratier, the middle station, the *téléférique* continues to Serre Chevalier. At Serre Ratier there are two ski lifts, a short one alongside an excellent slalom slope and a longer one which is exceedingly fast. One rushes up hill nearly as fast as one comes down, and it is very difficult to resist the temptation to do little jumps and slaloms on the way up—needless to say both are *défendue*.

The *pistes* are kept in excellent condition and are mainly wide cuttings amongst the larch trees; there is also plenty of open running above the tree line. The *téléférique* side of the valley is north facing and in normal conditions the soft snow runs amongst the open larches should be very good. Our visit coincided with the intense cold and also followed a period of wind. We explored some of the off-the-*piste* runs but seldom repeated them as conditions really were tricky owing to the recent storms. To keep warm we took to wearing most of our clothes. The French all wore quilted jackets and looked rather like mobile eiderdowns.

Sestriere is under an hour's drive from Chantemerle and Hubert Beddington very kindly drove us over on our last day before taking us to catch the train at Ulzio. There was less snow at Sestriere and it was still very cold and had started to blow again. We braved the elements and had a very enjoyable run on the Rio Nero to Molliere, at the same time as Sheena Hilleary and her large party. We left Ulzio about 5 p.m. *en route* for Méribel-les Allues\* where we had four very enjoyable days, staying at L'Ermitage which is jointly run by Madame Aubert and English-born Madame Fontaine.

Hubert Beddington and his wife are Chantemerle habitues and anybody visiting Chantemerle in February or early March would probably find them there. They were both tremendously kind and helpful and made quite certain that we fully enjoyed our visit.

\*See page 516.

## MÉRIBEL-LES ALLUES

By PAT FARQUHARSON

CERTAIN ecstatic articles about Les Trois Vallées, of which Méribel-Les Allues is the centre, had intrigued me for some time. Just before Easter this year the striking parallel between my favourite centre and Holborn underground at the rush hour gave the final impetus—and Méribel was a revelation.

The direct route from England is an easy overnight journey, *via* Paris, to Moutiers and thence by bus or taxi. From Switzerland by train it is a maze of changes. I believe a bus runs direct from Geneva once a week, but since no Swiss *verkehrsverein* will admit the existence of any foreign centre we didn't find it in time. There is, however, a French Tourist Office in Geneva station which is helpful, unlike the one in London which could hardly know less about access if Méribel were in the Sahara instead of in Savoy.

The three valleys, Courchevel, Méribel and St. Martin-de-Belleville, run roughly parallel, north and south. St. Martin, on the west, is not developed at all; Méribel is being developed by a private syndicate, largely English; the Courchevel valley is being hugely promoted by the *Département*, resulting in a dire cross between Blackpool and an unfinished film set. (There are two Courchevels, 1550 and 1850; the former which, being lower, is cheaper, is connected to the latter by so slow a *télébenne* that only acute penury could make it worthwhile.) Courchevel 1850 is set on a shelf; the terrain above it is also flattish until the lower station of the *téléférique* de la Saulire, and, although well provided with a spider's web of lifts, the *pistes* are chiefly interesting to novices.

The Saulire, however, is a horse of quite another colour. The *téléférique* seems even faster than the Männlichen; it rises 1,936 feet in, I believe, 3½ minutes, connecting on the top of the ridge with the *télébenne* from Méribel. The main run which it serves, La Vizelle, is wonderful, a superb sort of poor man's Findelenkeller, longer, blessedly wider, slightly flattened and north facing—to my mind absolute heaven.

Here I should perhaps qualify my rhapsodies about the district; the ski-ing is paradise for the good second-class runner, and for those who enjoy finding their own line in comparative solitude. The international downhiller and/or Bradshaw-basher might find it less interesting, because most of the country is open, but I don't, repeat don't, come in that category, and I found it glorious, a cross between the top of the Männlichen and Findelen.

Cervinia is probably the nearest parallel to Méribel itself; they have both been created solely as resorts, instead of growing as centres of population. The "village" extends over 800 feet and probably two miles or more; a car is a great advantage, at any rate in spring, and it is imperative to see that your party is all booked into the same, or at least adjacent hotels. The present ski-lift from river level is being replaced, this summer, by a *télébenne* which will join the existing one which leads to the head of La Vizelle. The ridge where these

meet is also the starting point for innumerable runs on the Méribel side. Leading north is the Pas du Lac, inevitably called the Parsenn of Savoie, since it covers 10 or 12 kilometres; leading south the ridge, La Rosière, stretches for five kilometres, from any point on which you can ski down to the river 4,000 feet below. We did this three times, by a different route each time; owing to the formation of the country you can find north or south slopes at will. The nearest comparison I can find is the Blauherd-Findelen face at Zermatt; La Rosière, while less steep, is if possible emptier, since the bulk of the population is busy funnelling itself into the well-kept *pistes* nearer the *télébenne*.

We were in Méribel for ten days over Easter, quite the worst time of a peculiarly bad season, but with grass and porridge on the lower *pistes* we had three miraculous days on La Rosière, the snow varying only between hard-packed powder and spring. Rather more than half the area is above the treeline and the wood running, with certain notable exceptions, is in widish glades. There is glacier running at the head of the valley and some excellent two-day tours; among others, it is possible to ski to Val d'Isère.

The other side of the valley, La Tougnete, which leads to St. Martin, will be opened up this year by the *télébenne* now under construction, and should provide some terrific running, long and open. The weather was too bad to allow us to sample any of these runs but normally one could ski for seasons without retracing one's tracks. I was much encouraged to find that the famous French style, though highly thought of, was rarely if ever practised. Brash young men would dash off the "tee" with tremendous *éclat*, but appeared incapable of achieving two, let alone a series, of consecutive turns. English near-rabbits need anticipate no shame on these *pistes*, and will undoubtedly shine off them. This probably does not apply earlier in the season.

The "smart" time at Méribel is February or early March; Easter is the children's season. There is a baby tow for their classes, which seem admirably run with very pleasant and patient instructors. Adult classes, also well organised, get some priority on lifts, which is sensible.

The *après-ski* life is gay, informal—strictly slacks—and fun. Each hotel has its own bar or *boite* with dancing. The food is good and the drinks reasonably cheap. There is only one place where one can get bed-and-breakfast, and at present a great lack of single rooms—the French apparently enjoy having to share with five total strangers on their hols.—but this, I understand, is being remedied in the new hotels now being built. One great advantage is that the quoted *en pension* price does in fact include all taxes, tips and *showers*, no extras at all.

To sum up, this is not a centre for those who don't care to notice they're abroad; it is far from a British colony and very definitely French. Those who find this an advantage will find enormous fun, beautiful country, glorious ski-ing and a faint tinge of the satisfaction of pioneers.

## BERWANG IN TYROL

BY PEARL BOYD

I WENT to Berwang last winter wondering what I had let myself in for. My son Simon was with me for his Christmas holidays and I had asked for somewhere "small."

We got out of the train at Imst and waited two hours for a bus which was to take two hours over the journey. I have since found out it is well worth 150 Sch: for a taxi taking 45 minutes. There was not a speck of snow to be seen anywhere and if you know Imst Station you will understand that the lowest depression ever recorded was centred over Pearl Boyd. However, the bus came along and it was a very pleasant drive over the Fernpass; there was snow on top and hopes rose, only to descend into ski boots as we went down. Someone in the bus said that there was too little snow to ski down the Zugspitze (2,963 m.)! Then we changed into a little bus at Bichlbach and up and up we went; snow appeared and got deep and white in the moonlight, and then we came round the last corner—there was Berwang, a perfect little village in a perfect setting, surrounded by a skyline of skiable tops gleaming before us. The chalets were lit up, and looking into them you could feel the warmth and atmosphere of Tyrol's welcome. Spirits soared and we were set down by a giant Christmas tree outside the Kreuz Hotel.

There was snow at Berwang this year when everywhere else was very short. I should call it an ideal place for family parties. The ski-ing is easy, there are two ski-lifts and many runs for a short climb, for beginners it could not be better. For the expert there is not enough downhill unless they will climb for it; if you do climb, the runs down can be steep enough to satisfy even the most sadistic first-class soft-snow judge. The evenings are very gay and there are a lot of young people, as travel agencies make up young people's parties.

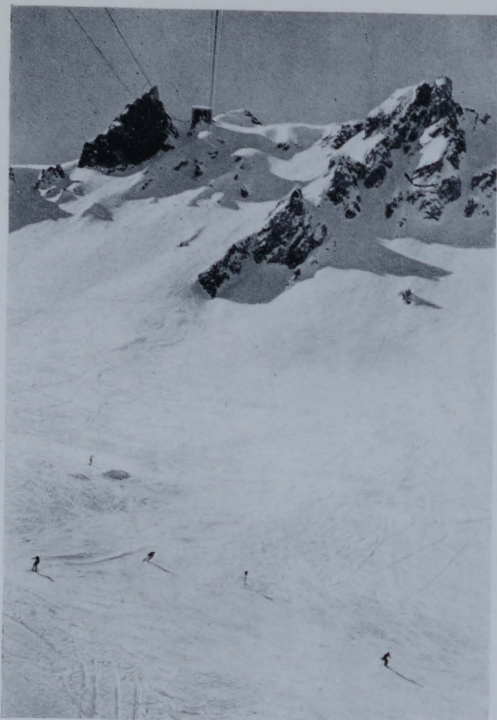
The locals are out of the ordinary nice. Don't let them think you understand any German, they love to pretend they do not speak English and let you make the most awful complicated statement in dreadful German without blinking an eye, or smiling a smile. Then you see them talking to a Dutchman in English! Altogether a charming place and great fun.

## BADGES

L.S.C. badges can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. R. Oddie, 23, St. Leonard's Terrace, S.W.3. Prices: Metal 8s. 6d., cloth 5s. od. It would be much appreciated if members would send cash with order.



Before applying for JOB as  
SCGB Representative ask yourself:-  
AM I KIND TO beginners? !!!

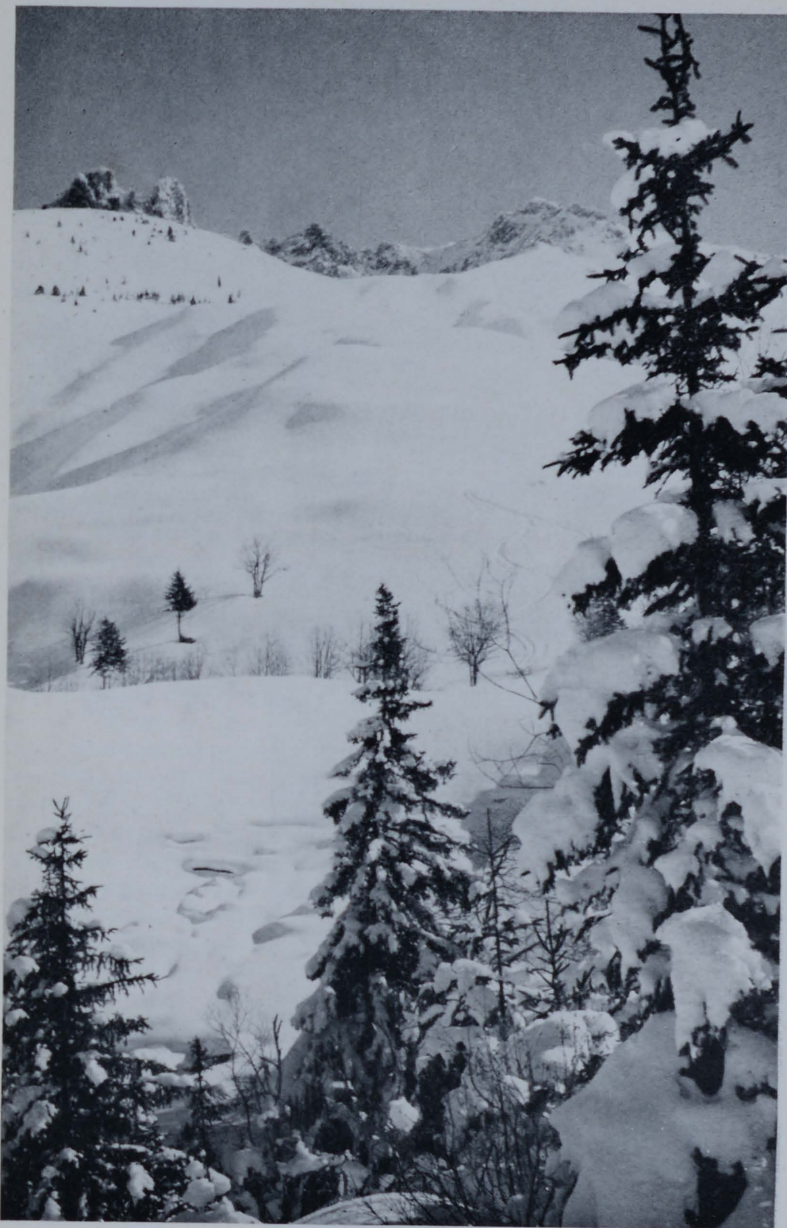


LA VIZELLE—COURCHEVEL

*Photo M. Serrailier*

(Below)  
CHANTEMERLE-  
SERRE CHEVALIER

SUMMIT OF THE TÉLÉFÉRI-  
QUE, THE START OF THE RUNS  
DOWN FOR BEGINNERS 1950.  
SEEN FROM THE PISTE DU  
VALLON.



MÉRIBEL LA ROSIÈRE

*[Photo M. Serrailier]*