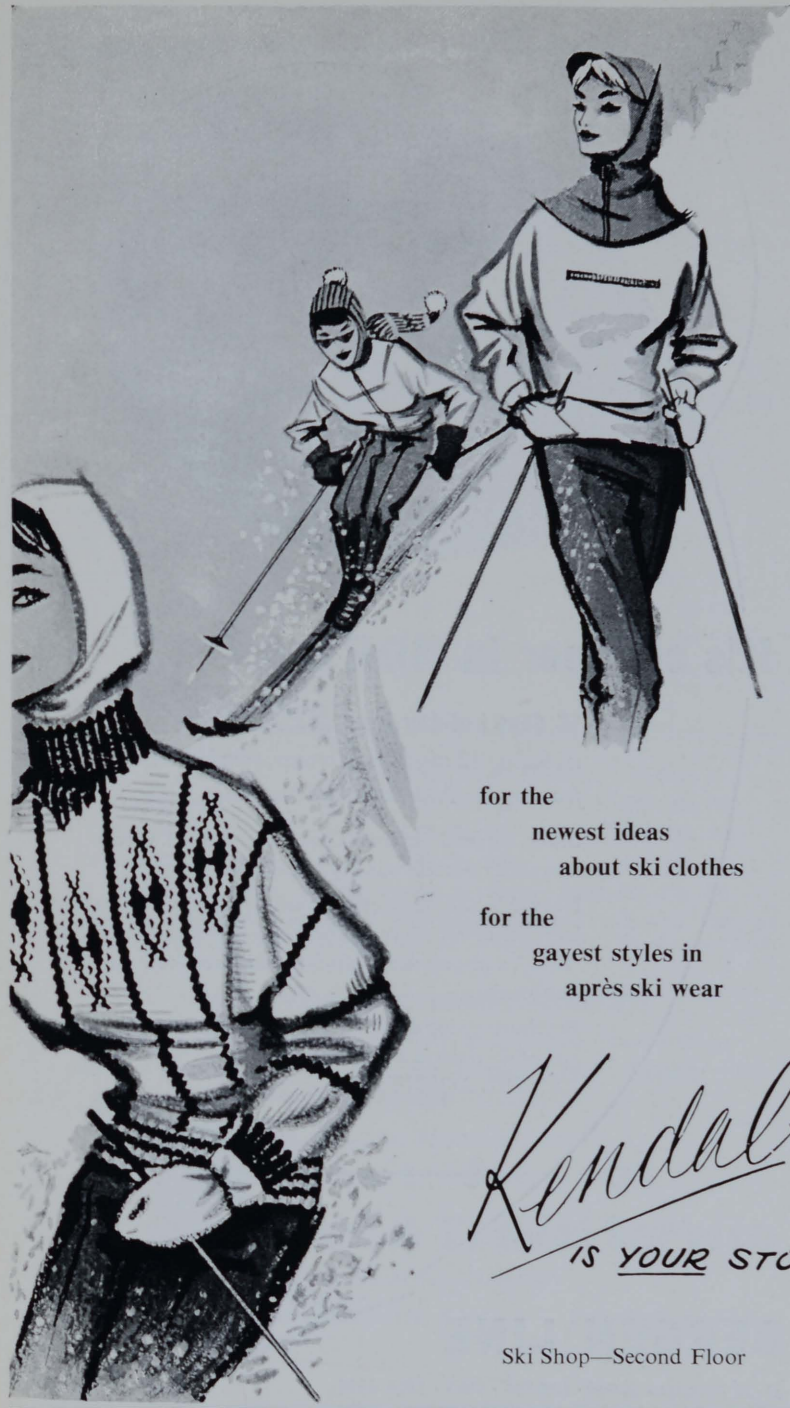




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NOVEMBER, 1957



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27/6

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THE LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN

No. 27

Vol. II. Pt. 19

NOVEMBER, 1957

EDITORIAL

THE weather last season upset all normal calculations, and resulted in some disappointment at the lower resorts and hideous overcrowding at the higher ones.

Despite the curious conditions there were far fewer accidents, and reference to Mrs. Hepworth's article on page 562 is very interesting in this connection.

Wedding congratulations to:—

Miss P. d'Ambrunnil, now Lady Garthwaite.

Miss C. Hinde, now Viscountess Emlyn.

Miss M. Gold, now Mrs. P. Spira.

And congratulations also to the Stork Club:—

The Lady Stafford (*née* Morag Campbell), a daughter, October 13th, 1956.

Mrs. Alan Tyser (formerly Gunn), a son, November 10th, 1956.

Mrs. Simon Kimmins, a daughter, January 7th, 1957.

Mrs. J. de C. Ashe (*née* Gillian Rickards), a son, January 19th, 1957.

Mrs. Kenneth Gray (*née* Fiona Campbell), a son, February 20th, 1957.

Mrs. M. de Klee (*née* Stormonth-Darling), a son, September 22nd, 1957.

Lady Blane writes: "After the article, 'I Ski though Blind,' in last year's L.S.C. BULLETIN, it was particularly interesting to me to meet Mrs. Thelma Keitlen in Villars last season (and now to welcome her as a new L.S.C. member).

"Mrs. Keitlen had been blind for eighteen months. Having come over from the United States alone with her guide dog she was met on arrival in Switzerland and brought up to Villars. The following day we had an S.C.G.B. cocktail party at the Villars Palace. I went to her room and fetched her and her dog, and I am glad to say she made many friends at the party, which I think made all the difference to her stay.

"One of the guides who spoke good English took her out, first of all on the nursery slopes and then up to Bretaye, where she eventually did all the runs. The guide went first, and would say 'Turn,'

or 'We are coming to a bump,' and so on. It was marvellous to see her come down the runs, and the guide said that her memory for any ground he had taken her over before was wonderful, and she was fantastically quick at following his directions.

"She told us that she had enjoyed her stay so much and hoped to return another year with her daughter, who is twelve.

"She had skied before she became blind, but *what* courage!"
(See photograph on page 566.)

We are particularly glad to welcome Mrs. Keitlen to the Club, as well as the four other new members, Miss S. L. Baring-Gould, Mrs. Kendal, Miss E. Nicoll, Miss N. Pritchard.

Miss Baring-Gould is entirely responsible for their being any advertisements in this year's BULLETIN! She did a magnificent job in deciphering the illegible scrawls of the Hon. Ed., sending off letters to advertisers and chasing the replies, and we should all be heart-broken that, having gone off to college in America, she can't be run in for it again. Heartfelt thanks, Lally!

The Annual General Meeting and cocktail party will be held at the Ski Club of Great Britain on Wednesday, December 4th, 1957.

The L.S.C. meeting will be run at Adelboden, at the same time as the British Women's Championships.

Please remember to quote the BULLETIN when making enquiries of advertisers.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5th December, 1956

THE Annual General Meeting was held at the Ski Club of Great Britain on December 5th, and was followed by a well-attended cocktail party.

The President, Lady Chamier, was in the chair; she was also, unfortunately, in plaster, having obviously mislaid the safety binding on her skates.

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

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

The following Officers and Members of the Committee were elected:—

President: Lady Chamier.

Vice-Presidents: Mrs. J. Palmer-Tomkinson and Miss Addie Pryor, on the retirement of Mrs. K. C. Smith.

Hon. Secretary: Lady Blane re-elected.

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. Oddie re-elected.

Hon. Editor: Miss Farquharson re-elected.

Committee: Miss Nowell and Mrs. H. Spence, on the retirement of Mrs. Hadow and Miss MacLeod.

The President, in her report on the year, said:—

"I feel I should apologise for appearing before you in this manner. It is perhaps in questionable taste to anticipate the possible horrors of the season, but I must claim the President's privilege in getting in first with my plaster cast! In extenuation, I acquired it at the Ice Rink, as a result of a *sitzmark*—and at a standstill. International racing seems to be infinitely safer than the perils of the rink!

"I have been let off easily in the matter of my report, since everything has been adequately covered in the BULLETIN, and I should like on your behalf to congratulate our new Hon. Editor on her first effort. Since Mrs. Tomkinson is going to talk to you about the Olympics at Cortina, this again lets me out, and I am left to give you a brief résumé of the weather, which was the coldest in living memory. The intense discomfort of the first thousand feet of each descent was incredible, and with the horrid thought always present of how easily bones break on ice, the problem remained of how on earth to get the body down without freezing where it stood. The cold made for heavenly powder snow at most altitudes, but led to exceptional avalanche danger, and there were a number of grim events.

"The L.S.C. Championships were held at Mürren concurrently with the British Ladies' Championship. The whole affair seemed to be so shrouded in mystery that we began to wonder if our cups were competed for at all; however, reliable information eventually came to light that the races had in fact taken place. The Championship Cup was won by Mrs. Sue Holmes, and the Non-International by Miss Carolyn Doran-Webb. I must also mention the very stout performance by Addie Pryor in the S.D.S. Race, when she came 5.7" behind the winner, E. Lanig, and only 4.7" behind Madeleine Berthod.

"Since this year's L.S.C. races will be held at Villars in conjunction with the *Quatre Pistes*, our Hon. Secretary will be on the spot and we should be very well informed.

"We are pleased to welcome the seven new members. If they are present, will they please rise and let us have a look at them. Our Club thrives, and we now have 236 distinguished members.

"In closing, I must give our thanks to our Hon. Auditors for giving their time so generously to auditing our accounts, and say how deeply this generosity is appreciated. Our thanks also to our more than Hon. Secretary, Lady Blane, for all her work in the past year and for her willingness to carry on; to our Hon. Treasurer, a wizard with the balance sheet; and to our new Hon. Editor, who I think has put out quite a super-BULLETIN and apparently still retains her friends, which is quite a feat!

"I'm sure you are all aching to hear Helen Tomkinson talk about Cortina. I certainly am, so I will close by wishing you all the best of seasons, and to the racers—elastic bones!"

Mrs. Tomkinson then gave an extremely interesting talk on her visit to Cortina for the Olympic Games.

Details of the L.S.C. Meeting were announced, followed by the presentation of the cups won by Mrs. Holmes and Miss Doran-Webb.

LE HAUT VILLAGE

BY ELLA MAILLART

D'ABORD il y a le silence, dense et si durable qu'on l'écoute encore et encore avant de pouvoir y croire, avant de s'y abandonner sans crainte d'une rupture, blessante surprise. Disparus les impératifs et si impatients klaxons; finie l'impersonnelle sonnerie téléphonique, mécanique, impérative, indiscreète; oubliés les appareils de radio des voisins débitant le chant de cantatrices indésirables; disparu, enfin, l'infatigable ascenseur, mouvement perpétuel des habitations citadines trop proches parentes des casernes!

Pour celui qui l'a désiré avec impatience, le silence est convalescence, délectation, résurrection: on s'y laisse glisser comme dans un velours profond. Grâce à cette durée du silence, des pensées lentes à la mesure de l'homme ont enfin le temps de naître. Encouragés par le silence, l'émerveillement et l'amour vont palpiter à nouveau.

Après l'immense importance du silence, c'est l'étendue qui là-haut, s'impose comme un miracle naturel . . . cette étendue qu'il faut "fonder" comme dit St. Exupéry, "l'étendue est pour l'esprit, non pour les yeux." Étendue de deux vastes vallées très différentes, creusées près du centre de l'Europe axée sur l'immuable Cervin: l'une qui, de toute la platitude de son fond, s'étire vers l'épanouissement du large lac annonciateur de la grande mer horizontale . . . l'autre vallée, entaille profonde aux flancs verts, du vert léger des mélèzes nourris de rocher, descend grandiosément des premiers âges du monde, de cette neige constante et pure, lumineux symbole d'une perfection incorruptible. Immaculé, ce joyau nacré irradie, enchâssé dans le vert périssable de la changeante nature. Et l'on aimerait mettre genou à terre pour remercier ce parfait contraste d'exister.

Cette double étendue, celle qui glisse vers la Mer-du-Milieu et celle qui grimpe vers les blancheurs inhumaines, frémit de toute sa distance enrichie de profondeurs en abîme. Le géranium du balcon chante sur la lointaine poudre d'ombre bleue d'un versant qui termine sa chute, là-bas, tout au fond, où de petites fermes ne sont plus que des points de suspension.

Oui, le silence, l'étendue . . . mais encore et surtout c'est la lumière qui surprend, cette lumière si proche du ciel qu'elle rend virginal tout ce qu'elle effleure. Le rouge du géranium est comme un miracle devant l'or du mélèze généreux où chaque aiguille rend au monde tout l'or reçu du soleil pendant l'été crépitant de chaleur résineuse.

Parfois, brutal émissaire, le sourd et lourd ronronnement d'un avion nous rappelle l'existence du monde d'en bas, ce monde élaboré regorgeant de subtils et coûteux raffinements: les puissants "chevaux" de l'automobile soumis à la pointe du pied . . . les magiques harmonies d'un concert offertes au cœur, la teinte rare des jades, la rose orangée gloire des horticulteurs, ou encore la pierre sculptée des cathédrales invraisemblables. Oui, il y a ce monde d'en bas, multiple et

compliqué. Mais j'ai choisi le monde d'en haut, là où des joies simples s'offrent sans lasser jamais, car toujours nouvelles, elles coulent sans cesse comme la sève de l'arbre.

Le carillon mineur des monotones sonnailles occupe parfois un coin du silence, sonnailles qui chantent la lente patience des vaches soumises, qui chantent le pacte unissant terre, bétail et hommes dans une ronde réglée constante et inchangeante comme le grand sommet vertical au centre de mon horizon. Dans cette vie bien humaine, que nous sont ces avions, vampires en cyclone, qui déchirent et violent la soie bleue de l'air? C'est l'heure de la seconde traite et les clarines sont muettes. C'est l'heure où les brumes montent des fonds avant de les combler, où elles se trainent et s'étirent sur les plus hauts pâturages, où elles rendent tout irréel . . . sauf cette perception de l'irréel; seule à émerger du brouillard, ma maison flotte et son angle brun fait de madriers centenaires, est une étrave orientée vers l'ouest illimité; je la sens fendre l'éther à la vitesse de la rotation de la terre.

Ici tout est à la fois petit et incommensurable, comme l'homme et l'on ne peut lever les yeux sans que le regard embrasse l'immense vallée du Rhône. Ici, c'est le haut village où j'ai fait halte, le haut village valaisan sur son promontoire couronné de mélèzes clairsemés où le seigle a peine à mûrir, où les hommes sont libres parcequ'ils ont accepté les lois de leur vie. Et là, comme pour s'unir au ciel, les montagnards lancent à toute volée vers le soleil l'airain des cloches, métal humanisé, suc de la terre dont les vibrations iront jusqu'à l'origine de toutes choses.

RESULT OF THE LADIES' SKI CLUB SPOON FOR JUNIORS

Wengen, 27th December, 1956

Course: Top of Lauberhorn Shoulder to Scheidegg.

Conditions: Light powder on a fast piste.

JULIE GALPIN, 1' 7.4"; Elspeth Whitley, 1' 37.8"; Carolyn Doran-Webb, 1' 40"; Susan Procter, 1' 40.2"; Sally Fleming, 1' 45"; Frances Strong, 1' 53.8"; Sheila Jamieson, 1' 58.4"; Valerie Jamieson, 2' 11.8". (8 starters.)

This year the Ladies' Ski Club gave permission to raise the age limit for the Junior Spoon to 19, in order to include those just over Junior Championship age. The winner was Julie Galpin, one of last year's D.H.O. juniors, who learnt to ski in Austria. Julie is normally better at slalom, and the short course necessitated by the lack of snow on the lower slopes suited her well. She skied with style and dash to beat both Elspeth Whitley and Carolyn Doran-Webb, winners of the Hew Trophy in the 1956 and 1957 British Ladies' Championships.

BRITISH LADIES' SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wengen, 15th January, 1957

By SUE HOLMES

AFTER Grindelwald and the S.D.S., where we had done depressingly badly, Zandra Nowell and I arrived at Wengen for the British Championships and were in time to watch the Lauberhorn races. The downhill was especially interesting to us as we were going to race over roughly the same course, starting at the Wasser Station and finishing at Saw Mills. We had only one day on the course before the race—and that after having danced half the night at the Lauberhorn prizegiving. It was spent rushing madly to catch trains, but we managed to do five runs down the course; there was a little new snow and it was rather cold. We retired to bed early that night, after having given our ski the final once over in preparation for the waxing.

Our first look on waking next morning was at the weather—it had snowed quite heavily that night and clouds hung heavily over the mountains. Zandra, Elspeth Nicoll and I were staying in the Palace Hotel, so we combined forces on the waxing. I mixed the "brew" and there were frequent cries of "Now Sue, no sabotage!" while I was painting the ski. At last everything was done and we set off, loaded with packed lunches, downhill and slalom ski. The weather brightened just a little before our start at eleven o'clock; there were even a few furtive glimpses of sunshine as we look off. I was number one to go, after one *vorlauffer*, and was just a little worried about the course, but lots of stampers had been down and everything was in excellent condition. When I got to the finish I spent agonised minutes until all of the ten competitors had reached the finish, when I found I was the winner with three seconds in hand on Zandra, and Mrs. Shearing third. The course was not terribly difficult, but rather long; it took nearly three minutes to complete.

We then dashed quickly down to Wengen to pick up our slalom ski before catching the next train up to Wengern Alp, eating our packed lunches in the station waiting room. By the time we got to the slalom course—the one which had been used for the Lauberhorn slalom—it was beginning to snow a little. The course was long but very well set; there were 54 gates over a length of 450 metres and a vertical drop of 150 metres. I did 80.2 seconds and 81.9. Verity Lawrence was lying a close second in the first run with 82.5 seconds, but she dropped back in the second run. Elspeth Whitley caught up and finished second, while Zandra was third, Verity fourth.

It was getting on for five o'clock, and snowing quite hard again, when we finally skied down into Wengen. There was no prize-giving as such, because the cups for the Championships are handed out at the Annual Ski Club Ball, but the D.H.O. Club gave us all lovely nylon stockings and we had delicious hot cups of Ovomaltine in the station buffet with Mrs. Hepworth, who together with Mr. Ernst Gertsch of the Wengen Ski Club and the members of the D.H.O. Club had helped to make these races such a success.

"SKI-ING WITH WINGS"

By J.T.M.D.

NORMALLY during the last fortnight in March one can rely on being able to ski down to about 4,000 feet, except perhaps on south slopes. This year, as in these islands, the winter had been unusually mild in the Alps and, after ski-ing at Villars for the first few days I was still not finally decided in which direction to proceed for my second week when a chance remark settled the question. A few years ago I had heard and read of the renowned mountain airman, Geiger. Now the opportunity of flying with him and landing on some high glacier, previously no more than a faint hope, presented itself and was not to be missed. I telephoned him and it was agreed that, weather permitting, we should fly next day to the Theodul glacier above Zermatt. I was up early that morning and as one was swept up the Rhône valley in the train it was difficult to believe that it could really be so hot in March. Past the great windbreaks of tall poplars, planted across the waist of the valley to protect the cultivation from the destructive *foehn*, the fruit trees were in fragrant blossom and all over the plain husbandmen were busy caring for their crops. At Sion, my destination, Swiss citizen soldiers poured out of the train and piled into taxis to rejoin their unit for their annual military service. It was with some difficulty that I obtained one for myself to drive out to the Sion Flying Club, on the military aerodrome, from which Geiger operates.

Geiger was out on a flip round the mountains with an American party and a ciné camera in a four-seater plane. I strolled over to the two Piper Cubs, the little two-seaters Geiger uses for landing on glaciers, and watched two assistants waxing the short broad skids attached to the wheels, just as one does for ski. In the hangar were a helicopter with which Geiger is gaining more experience for use in the mountains and, along one wall, various stores which he delivers to Alpine huts and hamlets, hydro-electric construction works and other out-of-the-way places. I noticed barrels of paraffin and oil, sacks of cement, foodstuffs and a box of explosives. Supply in this manner, as can be imagined, is an important part of Geiger's regular work and provides the basis for his vast experience of flying and rescue work in the Alps, a province he has made pre-eminently his own since he started flying twenty-five years ago.

I sat down next door in the little café, which serves as a club room, to eat an early picnic lunch. Soon, Geiger and his party landed and I was able to have a very few words with him before we set off in the little Piper Cub, which had just sufficient space for ski and rucksack beside ourselves. Geiger is a cheerful Valaisan, seemingly in his early forties, with all the modest bearing and steady-fast features of the real mountaineer. We were soon making height steeply by circling over Sion before heading southwards towards the huge hydro-electric barrage of the Grande Dixence and, having

skirted the intervening shoulder, we flew up the Val d'Hérens, over Evolène and Les Haudères which I knew so well, climbing all the time in the direction of the glistening Dent Blanche. The noise of the engine made it practically impossible to talk; Geiger, in any case, by long training and by instinct was concentrated on the navigation of the tiny aircraft. We circled again above the glacier beside the Dent Blanche and Wandfluh and, in the strong sunshine, it was impossible to remain unimpressed by the gaping, fanged crevasses immediately below and by the unlikely lilac shade penetrating the covering of snow on the icefall. Where this was broken away the cold pale green colour of the heavy ice was revealed. After some minutes Geiger was able to carry the Piper over the Col d'Hérens (11,600 ft.), and we passed close by the north ice-wall of the Dent d'Hérens on our right.

Suddenly the Matterhorn in all its glory was ahead and I was looking round eagerly to take in as much as I could. Behind to the west was the conspicuous summit of the Grand Combin and, further away, floating above a wreath of clouds the glaciers and pinnacles of the Mont Blanc *massif*. Below a rope of two skiers from the Schonbühl Hut was slowly wending its way up the glacier to the Col we had just passed over. In the meantime the Piper had crossed the Alpine divide and we were flying past the overwhelming precipices of the Matterhorn's south face. In front again appeared the mighty bastion of Monte Rosa supporting a dog-leg in the main Alpine escarpment, sheering away steeply towards the open valley of the Po. Too soon we were back over the ridge into Switzerland heading up the Theodul Glacier to land without more ado in the soft snow of the Plateau Rosa (11,600 ft.) under the Breithorn, thirty minutes after taking off. A few parting words and Geiger was away, swinging down the Zermatt valley past the Weisshorn. At the end of the week he was back again to take off some badly frost-bitten skiers, whose party had met with fatality on the Breithorn.

At the Plateau Rosa, where Geiger had already been depositing skiers since the beginning of spring, there is the terminal station of the Breuil aerial cable car. Another connects with the summit of the Furggen, on the ridge below the Matterhorn, from which the view is quite glorious. I made good use of these two cable railways in the next three days, particularly as there was quite enough snow all the way down to Breuil, at about 6,600 feet. This small resort, rechristened Cervinia since the war, is developing in an enterprising manner, as well it deserves. It is unmistakably Mediterranean if for no other reason than for the brightly coloured and fashionable ski clothes in which the Italians so delight. It lies at the head of a valley surrounded by a punch-bowl of mountains right round from the Château des Dames to the Cime Bianche, the whole dominated by the Cervino. In its southern aspect this most famous mountain presents an impression quite different from the lonely spiral peak, with its crystal-like facets, as seen from the Zermatt region. It becomes rather a rugged citadel supporting a blunt tower buttressed by the south-west summit, known as the Pic Tyndall. Ski-ing down

to Zermatt one passes Professor Tyndall's simple summer chalet at the Schwarzsee and it is still in the possession of his relatives.

In Breuil I recognised with pleasure a famous name over a smart sports shop. It was the great Leo Gasperl who, twenty-four years ago, for the good of his soul and the encouragement of young aspirant university racers at their breakfast, was wont to *schuss* in a straight line down Monte Sises. There used to be keen speculation about the snow conditions and, the run started and the apricot marmalade put aside, everyone would watch the outcome intently, almost fearful of the dreadful gremlins that attacked everyone racing down Monte Sises—except, but not invariably, Gasperl. A year before the war he swooped with a winged cloak down the precipitous snow fields of the Grossglockner and cracked at the speed record over the flying kilometre at St. Moritz. Gasperl discovered Breuil and its possibilities in 1935 and quite clearly he is king there now, as elegant on ski as ever. For him, as he told me, it is ideal for, as a private instructor and guide, he can ski up on the glaciers from early morning and return midday for most of the summer, with golf in the valley in the afternoon.

I had to return homewards on the Friday and had arranged to climb the Breithorn with a guide and ski down to Zermatt for my train connections on that day. The early morning was sunny but a great plume of cloud was waving from the summit of the Matterhorn in the eye of the *bise*, and gusty snow clouds were being raised on the crests of the surrounding lower mountains. The cable car took us to the junction at Plan Maison and then after one of those cold and trying waits it was announced that the car on Plateau Rosa could not leave its bay at the top due to the high wind. Quite clearly the splendid Breithorn excursion was off, but how long could I afford to wait before finally deciding to put skins on my ski to climb up to the Pass and then run down the Theodul Glacier to Zermatt? There was no other way home for me, but those who love glacier tours in the spring will agree that there is no greater bind than having to climb up a downhill *piste* because the funicular will not go. Into the bargain there was that very domestic rucksack to be humped along, which would have been left in the *refuge* for the Breithorn trip.

Sheltered from the north wind one could only guess its force by looking up at the disturbance it was creating on the ridges of the Alps. It could go on for two, maybe three, days without abating. So I said good-bye to my guide and set off on what proved to be a most chastening three-hour climb. At the Theodul Refuge I crowded into the little warm kitchen with a party that had climbed up from Zermatt, and revived myself with basins of soup and tea. The wind was blowing strongly as I started the run down to Zermatt. Looking gloomily up at the Breithorn, on which a necklace of clouds was beginning to settle, I could not really believe that the party I saw climbing there intended to go higher than the first traverse. Arrived in Zermatt by the aerial cable car from the half-way station of the new Schwarzsee lift, I found the place as charming as ever, crowded,

although there was no snow below Riffelberg, with signs of great activity, attractive new buildings and better ski-ing facilities. At the station I ran into Jeannette Oddie and Jimmie Riddell, cheerful and sunburnt as ever, on the last leg of their tour to write up the Swiss ski-ing centres. Their book is one I really look forward to.

The quite delightful flight with Geiger, which was the exciting highlight of my ski-ing holiday this year, comes back to me repeatedly. So much so that I intend to do another trip with him to some other glacier when the opportunity next presents itself.

SAFETY AT LAST

BY H. R. HEPWORTH

SINCE I started to ski many years ago I have had my share of mishaps, including a broken leg, two broken heel tendons, a sprained foot, a broken thumb, two twisted knees and a row of stitches in my thigh.

Now I want to tell the glad news that in spite of being rather an accident-prone type I have had a clean slate for the last three seasons, thanks to a combination of two release bindings, Ski-Free and Tyrolia Frontal. This arrangement is not as complicated as it sounds, and the complete safety resulting from their correct adjustment, which only takes a few days of careful experiment, makes for light-hearted ski-ing and peace of mind. I can now lace my boots as tightly as I like and hook my heels down as firmly as I wish, in spite of the old injuries; indeed it is better to hook the heels firmly down in order that the release mechanism can operate efficiently. For people who are used to ski-ing with a good deal of movement in the heel this may feel wrong at first, but they will soon get used to it and enjoy the improvement in their ski-ing—and the lack of holes in their socks! It is, however, not easy to wear release bindings with old boots, nor is it possible to fit them to some types of old ski, which is the reason why ski shops cannot always supply them on hired ski. For climbing on skins there is an aluminium footplate made by Marker, which hooks on and is easy and satisfactory to use.

There are many release bindings now being sold. The best ones are out of their teething troubles, and I think people are crazy not to use them, even if they cost the equivalent of a day or two of their holiday. Take for instance the statistics of one doctor in the Bernese Oberland who treated 165 accidents, not *one* of whom had been using release bindings. It is true that you occasionally hear of accidents caused by release bindings, but this can be prevented by testing them every time they are put on, and by having them oiled by an expert about once a fortnight.

MOUNT ETNA

BY SUE HOLMES

FOR our last race of the season we went south—to Sicily. We broke our journey twice *en route*, in Genoa and Rome, to do some sight-seeing, which was most interesting, but after three days—mostly nights—spent in trains going right through Italy we were pretty exhausted when we finally arrived in Catania.

We had come well armed with bathing suits and sun lotion only to be greeted by the most horrible weather, storm and cold rain. To make matters worse, all the girls who had come for the race—there were about thirty-five of us—were accommodated in a bleak, uncomfortable hotel almost at the top of Mount Etna with no lights and no heating; everything had broken down because of the storm. The drive through orange groves and lava fields would have been quite nice if only the sun had been shining! The bad weather, which continued the next day, made ski-ing quite impossible. We were up in the clouds, about 600 feet above sea level, and could see nothing at all. We took a trip down to Catania in the afternoon, after a weary morning writing the customary postcards from “Sunny Sicily.”

Saturday morning dawned breathtakingly beautiful. We had the most marvellous view of nearly the whole of the island, spread out beneath us like a sand-table model—the incredibly blue sea, the lava fields, the little craters dotting the slopes and, most beautiful of all, the majestic crater of Etna, towering above us smoking heavily. We set off in high spirits to explore the ski-ing grounds and look at the course. A bus took us to the edge of the snow and then we started climbing, carrying ski. We started off gaily enough, but soon found our ski getting heavier and heavier and the sun hotter. The summit seemed terribly remote and we were pretty exhausted by the time we finally reached the start, which was on a smaller side crater. Thick smoke poured continually from the main crater and we all felt a little uneasy, to put it mildly! Unfortunately we were too tired to climb for another hour or so, but it would have been interesting to peer down into the broiling abyss.

The snow was absolute bliss—the most wonderful spring snow—and the course was very well set. We all had one practice run alongside the gates, and were eagerly looking forward to the race itself, which was to take place next day. The evening the pungent smell of boiling (and in some cases burning) wax poured out of every room. Everybody was busy preparing their ski for the race. That evening a Sicilian band came up and sang and played local folk songs and dances, which was very amusing as they used all sorts of ingenious and strange instruments.

The next morning again dawned beautifully and our hopes for the race ran high, however, we took our anoraks and sweaters with us just in case. How wise we were, for no sooner had we started off on our long climb than the clouds started coming up, either formed or attracted by the sulphur smoke pouring out of Etna. In

addition, a horribly cold wind had sprung up, which simply whipped across the open slopes, and we got terribly cold despite the strenuous climb. By the time we reached the start we were absolutely congealed, and hopped about madly trying to keep the circulation going, but with little effect. One Italian girl actually fainted with cold! Fortunately we did not have to wait long, and soon we were off. Then we discovered that our beautiful wax, our special mixture for spring snow, did not run at all on the ice, in fact it acted as a powerful brake, and the wind was so strong that one could hardly run downhill at all. Our ski did not grip at all well, and the wind kept blowing one off the course, but everybody had to encounter the same difficulties! Crowds of Italians, braving the adverse conditions, had climbed for hours to see us race and cheered madly as each competitor battled her way down, which was most encouraging. The best thing about the whole race was the liberal dose of brandy which was poured into us at the finish, together with juicy oranges—such a delightful change from the usual Ovomaltine! Slightly revived, we tackled the descent to the road through narrow gullies of snow between mounds of lava. I guess we should have had the brandy at the top! There were 34 competitors from eight nations and two French girls, Suzanne Thiolliere and Daniele Tellinge, tied for 1st place. We came 15th, 16th and 24th.

The prizegiving that evening was in the Town Hall at Catania; every competitor got an enormous document and the best of each nation a huge cup. The next two days we spent on the island, sightseeing at Syracuse and Taormina, which was delightful and, as the weather improved again, we even swam in the sea—we had not brought our bathing suits in vain!

About ten days later we read with awe that Etna had just erupted—a pity we missed it?

THE REALISATION OF AN AMBITION

BY AUDREY BARRIE BROWN

THE many dramas in the Alps this summer have brought into sharp relief the memory of happier and sunnier days. In the spring and early summer of 1955 I was fortunate to have some weeks ski-ing around and above Zermatt, in spite of a broken leg at the end of February. On May 8th I set out for Fluhalp with Karl Fux. It was a perfect sunny afternoon, and the snowline lay far above us, as we started our week's tour from the Blauherd chair-lift. We were able to use our skins before reaching Fluhalp, which is almost luxurious in comparison with many Alpine huts. Other climbers were already there and the guides cooked an excellent meal, part of the well-balanced diet that was to help so much to give us energy for the climbs ahead.

The next morning we started before 6 a.m. for the Rimpfischhorn, and saw on the rocky ridges above us, towards the Fluhhorn, several

chamois moving freely. The first part of the route lay through rocky gullies then, after a steeper section, opened out to broad fields of snow and ice that had been whipped by the wind into waves and hillocks of snow. We passed round the edge of a strange bowl that gleamed icily under the rising sun, and after glancing down the valley that leads to Täsch we turned towards the lovely fluted peak of the Rimpfischhorn, lying between the Allalinpass and the Adlerpass. We left our ski at the foot of the final cone, a steep ice slope flanked by rock ridges. We found we had only one pair of crampons, which Karl insisted on my using. He then displayed amazing skill in step-cutting on the very steep gradient, securing me at the same time. Soon we were on the 13,790-foot summit, enjoying the wonderful view of the mountain's northern ridges. The way back lay over one of the rock ribs, and then we found the sun had softened the snow just sufficiently for a good run back.

On May 10th the objective was Cima di Jazzi. By comparison with the Rimpfischhorn the climb is rather uneventful. The wind got up coldly as we left our ski to climb (roped) the last forty-five minutes to the top. This generally provides such a good view of Macugnaga, but there were ominous cracks in the cornice that overhangs Italy, so that we had to be content to stand back and see as much as possible on tip-toe. Then we turned and had a very gentle run down the Gornergletscher to the Monte Rosa Hutte, where it was extremely hot.

The next day was spent training on the Plattje, towards the main heights of Monte Rosa, which had previously eluded me so often. It was again very hot, but this expedition was invaluable as this is really the steepest part of the climb. Back at the hut, we were entertained by marmots on the rocks below. Then the weather broke, and all the evening it worsened to a blizzard, and we gave up all hope of a climb next day. None of the usual preparations were made for the trip. The thirty-odd people in the hut retired to bed rather depressed; but a miracle occurred; the gale died down, leaving a glistening morning. Karl and I were the last to get away at 6 a.m., rather ashamed at the lateness. With consummate ease he lead, first through the small rocky slopes leading to the really steep one, out on to the open more gentle gradients, passing a party of climbers here and there. Four hours we kept going on snowfields that led ever upward and over snow-covered glaciers, with their hidden crevasses. At 10 a.m. we carefully dug our ski into the snow, and prepared for the final climb up Dufourspitze. The wind grew stronger, and the way was glazed, yet sometimes the surface broke under the crampons. We passed the last party of climbers, who had shared the hut the night before. Soon afterwards we came to rock steps and ridges that lead precipitously to the 15,217-foot summit. The rocks were concealed under four or five inches of fresh snow, and the hand- and foot-holds were often very difficult to find. The exposure is great in places, but at noon we reached the top, where there was just room for two people to sit. The view of the surrounding peaks is breathtaking, and the Margherita Hutte lay



LADY BLANE,
MRS. HOLMES-WALKER,
MRS. KEITLEN AND
FRIEND.

(Below)
MRS. KEITLEN AND HER
GUIDE SKI-ING AT
VILLARS.



SISTERS DEAD-HEAT SECOND
ISABEL (AGED 6) AND BRIDGET (AGED 7) MABEY AFTER WINNING S.C.G.B. MUGS
IN A SLALOM AT MÜRREN.

THE JOTUNHEIMEN MOUNTAIN RANGES IN NORWAY.



[Courtesy of Norway Travel Association

below us across what appeared to be a knife edge. The descent of the rocks seemed very much easier as there was now a beaten track made by the ascending climbers. We regained our ski and the run back was unbelievably glorious, through four inches of virgin powder snow. We linked turns all the way down to the Monte Rosa Hutte, except where in two or three places Karl called out "Keep in my track; don't come too close, there are crevasses." We reached the hut at 2 p.m. and had been so quick that one or two people thought at first that we had not been to the top! Karl told me afterwards that never in his experience had the conditions on Monte Rosa been so perfect all the way down.

On the Friday, we went over the Theodule Pass to Breuil, hoping to go the Breithorn from Testa Grigia the following morning. Unfortunately the weather broke finally, and we came back over the pass in thick mist and blizzard, and near to Zermatt we carried our ski down through the meadows with gentians springing up under our feet. It was raining hard, but nothing would spoil the memory of that superb run down from Monte Rosa.

EINSTEIGEN, BITTE!

By N.M.S.

THE pistol held at my head by our Hon. Editor to support her vehement demands for an article on ski-ing presented a major problem. Apart from being in the throes of drying out one daughter after a Pony Club camp and a second, equally damp and even more wind swept, after a fortnight camping on Sark, I only skied for eight days last winter and so felt more than usually unqualified to burst into print; but as those eight days were spent in Zermatt (at the time of the Gornergrat Derby) perhaps I can provide an appendix to Bradshaw on the latest developments to the local railway system.

The race was hardly conducive to speedy progress uphill—in fact a wait of an hour and a half was considered a mere nothing on the Gornergratbahn. However, once up at the top the new system offers untold opportunities.

There is now a cable railway from the level of the Gornergrat Hotel to the Hohthaligrat ridge; last winter there was only one car in operation, which involved a wait until it had completed the double journey, but next year, when there should be two cars alternating there will be a very little waiting.

This railway opens up some magnificent ski-ing, once one has completed the twenty-minute walk from the station to the start, along the ridge—a narrow and precipitous path with a 3,000-foot drop to the Gorner glacier on the right. When we were there it was hot and slushy, but I imagine it would be a nasty little ice run in cold weather.

The first slope on the Findelen side is about 2,000 feet, and in powder snow should be the answer to any skier's prayer. There

is talk of continuing this railway to the Stockhorn, which will open up the whole Findelen glacier, and make Cima di Jazzi (on the Gorner glacier side) an easy one-day trip, besides bringing the Rote Nase into the system.

This run ends at Grünsee, and there is a scheme afoot for a cable car back to Hohthaligrat, so that it will be possible to go on doing the run all day—or until exhaustion supervenes!—but none of these ideas will really answer until something is done about the bottleneck of the Zermatt-Gornergrat section.

From the Findelen crossing, just below Grünsee, a quite enchanting little chairlift goes up to Sunegga, on the Blauherd side. Chairs, gaily painted blue, green, yellow and red, sway gently above the valley, and it is quite the most peaceful means of gaining altitude after a long run which I have met for a long time.

The Schwartzsee cable railway only opened in July. It is alleged to be going to run, eventually, to the Theodule pass, so perhaps I still have a chance of ski-ing down to Breuil! I know I shall never get myself up this long, long glacier unaided!

The Blauherd chairlift, from Zermatt's nursery slopes to Sunegga and on by ski-lift to Blauherd, offers a variety of routes which are an excellent alternative to the normal Gornergrat runs, and in spring the south slopes to Findelen are sheer heaven.

Of the Derby races down Gornergrat and Blauherd, I can only say that I was aghast at the speed and steepness of the courses. As to the falls, of which mercifully there were few, it is nothing short of a miracle that the racers emerge in one piece.

Once the race is over, bedlam is let loose, as every small boy in Zermatt imagines himself an international racer and hurls himself down the course at breakneck speed. I found this highly disconcerting, as I also wished to ski down the course but at my own speed. However, there in nothing like a gang of children at your heels to improve your speed, and I found myself, however reluctantly, fairly skittling down, pursued, it seemed, by every Giles tot in the Alps.

MY FRIEND BENNO

By HELEN FAIRCLOUGH

BENNO belonged to a guide living in the Swiss mountain village which has been my home for the past ten years. The guide came to me for English lessons and eventually I found him a temporary job in England so that he could learn the quick and easy way, by ear. He left me his dog, a fine sturdy Alsatian with upstanding ears and tremendous intelligence. He had previously been trained as a police dog and had learnt all commands in Swiss-German so I continued to speak to him in the local dialect. When his master returned I was allowed to keep Benno, as he made it quite clear that he approved of his new home.

As Alpine villagers never think of exercising their dogs, the first time I took Benno for a walk he was mystified. He kept sitting down, casting a wistful backward glance towards the village, where he used to spend his days rootling through the garbage cans and picking up bones and offal around the slaughterhouse. But he soon forgot those doubtful pleasures and began to enjoy and ask for his walks like any normal dog.

My village was a well-known winter sports and climbing centre, and I spent five months of the year on ski, usually accompanied by Benno. He would sit beside me in the chair-lift, leaping out when we reached the top and waiting impatiently for me to strap on ski and start the downward swoop. At first he was astonished to find I could travel faster than he, and I believe felt quite offended that I had to keep waiting for him to catch me up. Once he nearly met with disaster; when flying down behind me, a lovely plume of powdery snow in his wake, he failed to take a corner and shot over the edge of the track, landing up to his neck in deep snow amongst the trees. It took some time to locate him and dig him out again.

After the snow had melted I turned to summer pastimes and used to climb on the local practice rocks in order to train for more serious climbing later in the season. Benno learnt to sit patiently beside my rucksack for hours on end until I returned. One day I took Benno to a neighbouring valley to climb a mountain there. When we reached the rocks where the real climbing began I ordered Benno to stay by the rucksacks as usual, but he evidently did not like these strange surroundings and decided to investigate what we were doing. In vain I bellowed at him to go back, but he settled himself firmly upon his haunches for a ringside view of our performance. When, however, our climb took us over a ridge and out of his sight he must have decided to try his luck as a rock-climber. On our return we whistled for him and then heard an agonised yelp and a clatter of falling stones. Benno came flying down in awful leaps and bounds, mostly airborne when not striking the projecting rocks with sickening thuds. He must have fallen about 150 feet, and lay still at the bottom. I pictured him a broken and bleeding body, not dead but unable to move, and of course we had no means of putting him out of his agony. Slowly he picked himself up and limped towards us, blood pouring from his head and mouth and one paw badly mutilated. He gallantly achieved the long, steep descent to the valley, but this reached he collapsed, exhausted by pain. Luck came our way in the form of a passing jeep, whose driver gave us a lift to the nearest vet., who gave Benno an injection, staunching his wounds and assured us that his injuries were not unduly serious. After lying for a week almost immobile under the table he gradually recovered his health and strength and we began our walks and climbs again.

His last adventure with me was climbing a 13,000-foot snow mountain, which I did on ski in August. I felt a little anxious for him as we descended the first steep slopes of the glacier as I knew that under the snow surface there were many crevasses into which he might disappear for ever. Luckily, all went well, and as the

glacier flattened out he treated himself to a few good rolls, especially selecting for this exercise the snow-bridges over the crevasses where the snow felt deliciously soft compared with the harder and crustier snow elsewhere! I implored him to give up this dangerous pastime and wished I could explain what gaping chasms lay beneath him, but the fates were kind and none of the bridges collapsed. We both equally enjoyed the exhilarating dash through frost-laden air and brilliant sunshine, and as we ate our meal that evening in the mountain hut I am sure we shared a pleasant sense of weary contentment. Soon we were sleeping peacefully, I in my bunk and he on the floor beside me.

Then I had to return to England, and obviously life for Benno in London, preceded by a six months' quarantine confinement, would not do. He had one grave fault against his countless virtues, he loved to fight. No less than six local dogs knew too well the feel of his teeth; for some amazing reason they all still live to remember it and tell their friends. No one in the village would agree to take him, even as a gift, and so with heavy heart I knew I must have my dearest friend and climbing partner destroyed. I led him with dragging footsteps to a vet. in the nearest town, feeling like a would-be murderer. How great was my relief when the vet. told me of a farmer-friend who had asked him to find a good dog for him, how gladly I accepted this eleventh-hour reprieve! I have since had regular bulletins of Benno's progress and welfare and can think of him now with no pain or uneasy conscience. There is no doubt that after the first sad days of parting, when he refused all nourishment, he settled down happily to his new life and surroundings; he has even learnt a new language as he is now in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and he obeys commands now given in French instead of German. I only wonder whether he sometimes misses the mountains and the crevasses!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Unlike most other clubs, our subscription is still only 5s. and has not been raised. Some members are making a voluntary donation to the racing fund of an additional 5s. yearly and it would be very much appreciated if more members could manage to do this. Anyone who is able to do so should write to their bank, instructing them to increase the sum to 10s. and at the same time send a postcard to the Hon. Treasurer, notifying her of their intention.

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. It would be much appreciated if members would send cash with order.

AFTERMATH

BY SHEENA HILLEARY

THE operation was over and he lay with his leg raised above his head in the clean, bright hospital room. It seemed incredible that at this time yesterday he had been ski-ing and now here he was with his poor broken bone wired in four different places. He was still slightly dopey, but much more comfortable than he had been on that dreadful journey down the mountain and later in the ambulance to the hospital.

The doctor came in. "Now you can fly home in a week, then you will spend two weeks in bed. After that, six weeks on crutches followed by six weeks in a walking plaster." My heart sank. How would my restless and energetic husband ever endure that time?

A week later, with his leg in plaster from thigh to ankle, we arrived home. Our room was filled with flowers, there were hot-water bottles in his bed, new sheets and a dozen pillows. "I hate all this fuss," he said angrily, as he got into bed. Old Nanny had contrived a cradle to keep the bed clothes from his leg from the folding dog's bed, round which she had sewn an old sheet.

Soon the wireless was blaring away beside the bed. I gave him a selection of books and the newspapers to read and left him. Presently I heard his bell ring. "Would you bring me some writing paper and envelopes?" was his request. By the end of the day he had written twenty-six letters.

I had dinner with him in his room and we drank a bottle of wine. He complained of crumbs in the bed.

The following day he read; the one after he said he was bored with reading. Then bored with writing. He did not like cards or games so, thinking he might improve his French while lying in bed, I borrowed a Linguaphone. But he played the first record and got bored with that, too.

I asked people to come in and see him, but he complained when they had filled the bedroom with smoke or irritated him by asking about his leg. (I had made a vow never to refer to his broken bone, and did so only in the night when he turned over and the weight of the plaster cracked across my shin bone!)

After ten days the weather was warm and still, so we got him downstairs to lie out in the sun on a divan. From then on it was impossible to keep him in bed. He wanted to see the chickens, the garden, the horses. I managed to get hold of a wheelchair and, with some planks, constructed a rest for his leg; then the fun began. It was a pretty rickety contraption, and when I had pushed his fifteen stone over the pebbly drive a few times, it was quite evident that the whole thing was going to collapse. I returned it hastily. Then his mother—bless her—sent a new chromium-plated job from London which he could even work himself—my sigh of relief must have been heard for miles. Now he was able to trundle himself out to wash the eggs ready for the packing station, see the kitchen garden being planted up, get to the telephone and reach the fridge (which he raided

at all times of the day, completely upsetting my housekeeping calculations).

One day I had been mowing the lawn, and had left the machine for a moment or two, to answer the door. When I returned he had wheeled the chair to the machine and was holding the handles. I knew exactly what he was proposing to do, and before I could even attempt to dissuade him he put the mower in gear and with a roar it set off across the lawn, dragging the wheelchair behind it in a crazy weaving pattern. As I rushed forward, the mower swerved one way, as the chair hit a bump and slowly tipped up, spilling my husband in a heap. He was laughing when I got to him, so I set out after the mower which was making for a stone wall.

A week later I was shopping when the local vicar's wife rushed up to me. "I am most awfully sorry to hear of your poor husband's new accident." As I looked puzzled she continued, "I have only just heard that he is back in hospital having broken his other leg trying to mow the lawn." To her amazement I burst into peals of laughter.

Once he could get about on his crutches he insisted on going up to the office. At first I drove him to London in the car, but one morning I found him sitting gleefully in the driver's seat, beaming like a bad, small boy when caught doing something mischievous. "Watch," he said, "I can drive with one foot." He put the car into gear and drove up and down the drive.

After that I was not allowed near the driving seat. He would take himself to London, park the car (making certain there was no policeman watching to have him up for driving with too few limbs), heave himself out of the car and hop away quickly on his crutches. Several times when he returned a copper would be hovering in the vicinity and he would have to wait in some alley until the law moved on, and he could climb in and make an unseen getaway, driving with only one leg.

As the weeks went by he experimented constantly to see what he could do. I found him pole-vaulting a two-foot wire fence with his crutches and one leg one morning; he climbed up a narrow, thirty-foot iron ladder to the top of a water windmill just to prove that he could; he chased the children round the garden on his crutches, making neat little round holes all over our lawn; he went upstairs backwards because it was easier, and downstairs two at a time because it was quicker. He fell over frequently on slippery paths, or through not looking where he was going, but it was as much as my life was worth to ask him what had happened when I found him lying grunting with pain on the sofa.

At last the day arrived when he was allowed to put his foot to the ground. This was a lot more painful than he had expected, and it was several days before he was back to his old tricks, which included doing a Scottish country dance from start to finish, and a valiant attempt to rock n' roll.

"I have never known anyone break his plaster so often," said the doctor as he patched it up for the seventh time. (If he only

knew what went on behind his back, I did not think he would find it so surprising!) "Well, can't you take the damn thing off and let me get at it and have a good scratch?" said my husband, hopefully. But the doctor just laughed and refused.

Almost worst of all was the torture caused by not being able to scratch his leg. We had contrived a "scratcher" by plaiting wire until it looked like a long thin carpet beater. This he would insert at the top of the plaster, and for an hour every evening would lie on the bed and scratch the agonising itches. He got so expert that in the end he could reach any part of his leg.

Finally, when the plaster was taken off, the doctor remarked that the leg had progressed much more rapidly than most. "Do you think I will be able to parachute in September?" asked my husband.

"Well, at this rate I see no reason why not," he replied. I could slay that doctor willingly.

SKI-ING FOR THE YOUNG ENTRY

THE problem of organising ski-ing for children is frequently acute, either because parents can afford to send the child but can't manage to go themselves or because they can't bear to go in the school holidays instead of in the spring. Members and their friends may, therefore, be glad to hear of some of the parties which are being organised this year.

One of our members, Mrs. A. T. O. Liddell, with her husband, is organising a party for children from 10 to 17 years old, at Leysin. The children will be met in London and taken by Swissair to Geneva on December 27th, returning on January 12th. Ski teachers have been booked, and a nursing sister from Westminster Hospital will go with the party. Enquiries to Thomas Cook's.

The Wayfarers' Travel Agency arrange special reductions for children in their parties to Zermatt. If unaccompanied they are taken care of by Mrs. Hardman. (See L.S.C.B., 1956, page 533.) This Agency also runs parties to most Swiss and Austrian centres, and also to Norway.

Mr. Calle Mathiesen, a well-known ski instructor in Norway, opened a chalet in Norway expressly to cater for children between seven and twelve years old. Callebu Chalet is at Voss, where there is a ski-lift. A stay of ten days is only £10 inclusive of bed, board and ski instruction. Ski and boots can be hired for an extra 35s. Details from Mr. Mathiesen.

A major difficulty seems to be arranging a holiday for the teenage boy or girl who is already quite a good skier without necessarily being a potential racer. Anyone who could face taking a chalet during the Christmas holidays for this purpose would, I imagine, be swamped with applicants, and be able to manage a free holiday for themselves. Any travel agency would undertake the correspondence and advertising necessary.

EXPERT ADVICE

BY ANON.

I AM employed as "an expert" in the sports department of a big store, and my customers vary in age from two to eighty. The younger ones do not have much say about the choice of equipment and the older ones have a very good idea of what they want. Between these two widely separated age groups there are many who come to seek advice or give theirs; others view the entire stock and promptly demand to see the makes which they are pretty sure you do not stock.

One sometimes gets involved in the "going one better" game. On being asked whether you have ever played such and such a game yourself you reply, rather glumly, "Yes, for thirty years." Without batting an eyelid they promptly "snap" that one with, "I've played for thirty-five years and I make many times the competition"—all this usually in rather broken English.

Fashions in equipment and clothing are constantly changing and the customer who knows everything sometimes exposes his ignorance by condemning as old-fashioned certain items of equipment which have made the complete cycle and are now once again the height of fashion. Some equipment is displayed only partially ready for use, as customers like to choose a particular gut in the case of a tennis racket or a binding for their ski. A display of these rackets or ski quite often brings forth the question, "Please do tell me how these work?" Another hazard is the danger of confusing customers and staff. Girls drifting about in jeans, flatties and horses' tails are not always "display girls", therefore when one is seen carrying the most extraordinary shopping bag, it is as well to refrain from a ringing cry of "What a ghastly bag! What will we be stocking next?"

The sadder side of shop assisting occurs when one has to deal with customers who are convinced that their aged items of equipment are of great value. Having studied current prices and catalogues, these customers unearth their belongings and bring them many miles, often at considerable cost, in order to make a sale. It breaks the customer's heart to be informed that the present day value is nil. They protest that the gear is in perfect condition, bought just before the war, only used once and it has been carefully stored at the dry end of a well-built barn.

Sometimes one has to masquerade as "the Manager." This happens when the manager is at lunch or busy elsewhere. A customer and an assistant have words which end with a demand to see the Manager. With the arrival of a third party ("The Manager"), the atmosphere changes at once. "The Manager" sympathises with the customer and agrees that the assistant has behaved disgracefully; assurances are given of possible dismissal of assistant and customer departs all puffed up with pride and a feeling that he has done a service to mankind. The problem of tips is awkward. One should not be tipped really, but to refuse would be rather pointedly telling the customer than he is very non-U.

One's fellow staff are interesting. We have a Mr. Brown who has been with us some time—at least, I think he is Mr. Brown, but as he has a habit of taking on aliases, such as Jones or Smith, it's rather confusing. He uses his aliases when he arrives late for work and the doorman asks his name. Another of his tricks is to make his entry via "dispatch" or "goods inwards," if he thinks he is getting too well known on the door.

When discussing with one's friends the expense of meals and the consequent drain on one's meagre pittance, they often say, "Of course, you are lucky, you have a canteen." In the canteen we are all dears. If they like you it's "Yes dear," if they don't it's "No dear." I am not very popular.

Perhaps the most interesting part of working in a shop is the fact that you never know whom you will serve next. It may be anybody from Royalty to a private detective who checks up to see if you put the money in your pocket or the till. I spent a long time recently explaining to a customer, in simple and intelligible language, the merits of a wonder chemical which has revolutionised the manufacture of equipment. My customer listened patiently with apparently absorbed interest and then quietly said, "Thank you, I am the scientist who invented P——." In fact, an expert too!

FOOTNOTE

But I, despite expert advice,
Keep doing things I think are nice;
And though to good I never come,
Inseparable my nose and thumb.

DOROTHY PARKER.

MURREN 1956 - 57

BY VOURNEEN BLAGDEN

THE season was a little late in starting this year owing to many visitors having been delayed in England by the worst fog for years. There was a general scarcity of snow, but Murren had a fall on December 22nd which, with keen frost at night and brilliant sunshine by day, combined to give perfect conditions.

The Junior Kandahar Championships and the Lady Mabel Lunn and Lady Denman Challenge Cups were run concurrently on January 4th and attracted a large entry from across the valley. The Lady Mabel (Slalom) was won by Miss Verity Lawrence, with Mrs. S. Holmes second, and Miss C. Doran-Webb third; and the first three in the Lady Denman (Downhill) were Miss C. Sims, Miss E. Whitley and Miss J. Galpin. Mrs. Holmes and Miss A. Carr "pranged" and did not finish the downhill course, but the former was skiing under a disadvantage with her right thumb in plaster following a dislocation.

There had been a light snowfall in the morning which improved the conditions enormously, and once again Peter Spaul won the

Junior Kandahar Championships with J. Rigby second and A. Denton third. Although he had a badly torn knee ligament, Walter von Allmen managed to limp to the finish in Martha's Meadow to do the time-keeping, and there were some tense moments when an aged farmer appeared on the course with a sledge-load of hay and, in spite of shouts and threats, proceeded to his cowhouse near the finish. Fortunately there was a gap in the competitors at that very moment and no harm was done, though Walter's language was said to have been completely unprintable. The Referee, Mrs. Hepworth, gave a sigh of relief when all the competitors reassembled without a single injury and, after a hasty prize-giving at the Palace, the trophies were proudly borne off to Wengen.

L.S.C. CHAMPIONSHIP

ON JANUARY 18TH-20TH

BY LADY BLANE

THE L.S.C. Championship was held at Villars in conjunction with the *Trophée de Villars*. Owing to snow conditions both races had to be Slaloms, one a Giant Slalom. There was a good entry, as all the women who were competing in the Villars Trophy entered; the International Cup was won by Mlle. Fernande Pagent, of France, with Mlle. Anita Kern, of Switzerland, second, and Mrs. Sue Holmes, of Great Britain, third. The combined points were:—

Mlle. Pagent	0-	1-	1.20
Mlle. Kern	2.96	0.32	3.30
Mrs. Holmes	2.80	0.60	3.40

Mrs. Sue Holmes wins the L.S.C. Championship Cup, with Miss C. Doran-Webb second and Miss E. Nicoll third. Miss Doran-Webb wins the Non-International Cup.

The standard of the competitors was quite high, and our people showed up very well, all completing the three courses for the *Trophée de Villars*, which several of those who entered failed to do. There were 18 entries in the Giant Slalom on the Chamossaire. Sue Holmes came in third, the winner doing the course in 1' 39", the second 1' 39.4", and Sue 1' 39.7". In the Slalom, with 17 starters, she was second, the winner's time being 1' 42.3", and Sue's 1' 45.7".

The prizes were presented by Lady Blane at the Villars Palace in the evening.

BULLETIN

As members already know, the BULLETIN is paid for, wholly or in part, by the advertisements. A certain number of firms, mostly based in London, advertise in Club publications annually, but there are many more, both in the British Isles and abroad, who would do

so if approached. It would be a very great help to the Club—not to say to the Hon. Ed.—if members would help to get some new advertisements. This help can take two forms: for choice, an approach by members themselves to firms or centres during their ski-ing holiday or in their home districts or, alternatively, a letter to the Hon. Ed. suggesting the name, address and product of any firm which might be susceptible to such an approach.

Since a great many members, as the mothers of growing families, arrange the clothes, hobbies and holidays of their children, there is no necessity for the ads to deal exclusively with ski-ing.

Mechanical requirements and prices will be supplied with alacrity to anyone who thinks they might be able to help.

Do please remember that the number of articles must be governed by the number of advertisements, since they constitute our only revenue.

Moreover, members responding to this *cri du coeur* may well evade the shower of angry postcards imploring them for articles—and *may* is the operative word here.

Contributions, if need be in letter form, and photographs IN JUNE, PLEASE, OR EARLIER. Preferably (a) typed in double spacing, and (b) glossy prints.



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