



LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN
NOVEMBER, 1958

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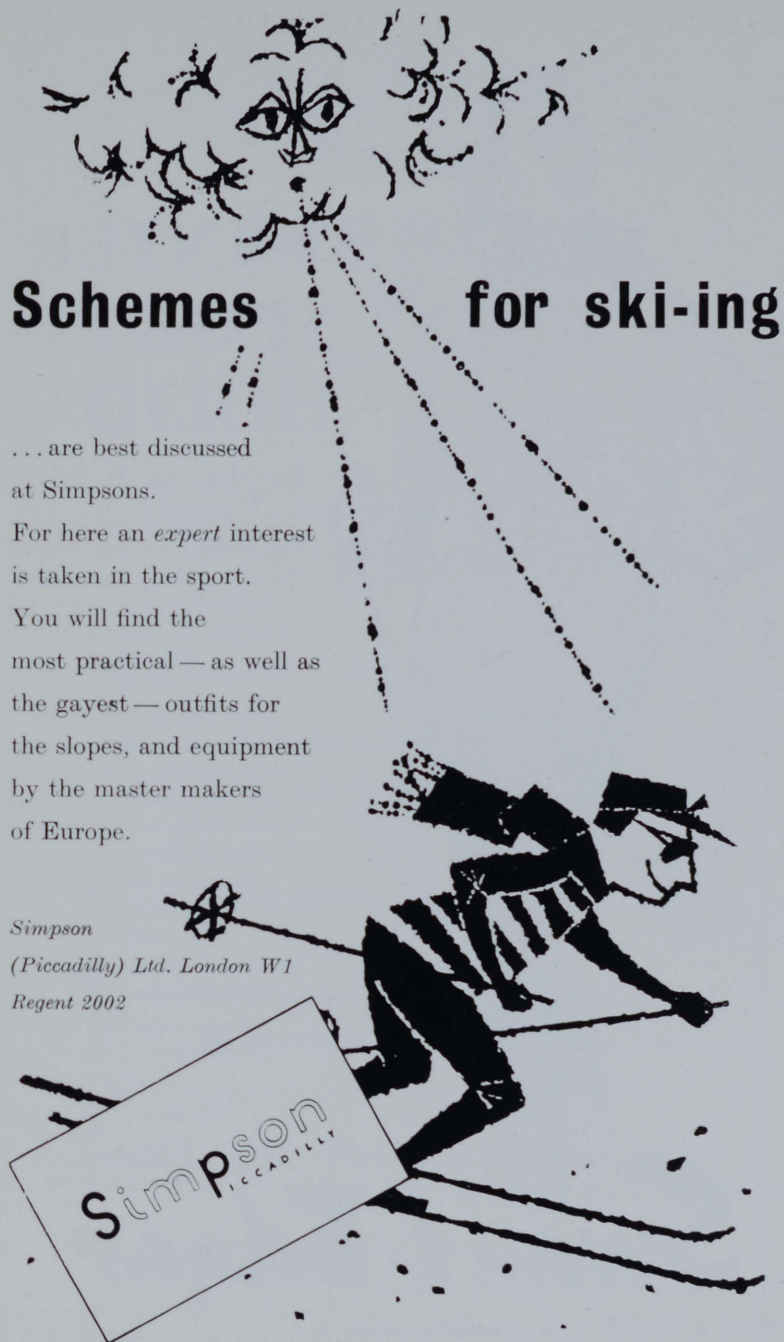
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THE LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN

No. 28

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NOVEMBER, 1958

EDITORIAL

THE weather of our past winter season seems to have begun with a complete "Flop." There just wasn't any snow anywhere. (Sorry, St. Moritz, the sole exception, I believe, specialised in it.)

The Parsenn was bare as your hand, the Bernese Oberland little better, and most Austrian resorts followed suit. It was almost the middle of January before any appreciable falls of snow arrived. There was considerable difficulty in getting the Racing Fixtures safely over. The following interesting Report on the L.S.C. Spoon Race held in Wengen by the D.H.O. has been sent in and I publish it verbatim:—

"The Ladies' Ski Club Spoon given to the D.H.O. to award last winter was competed for on December 27th, 1957. It was given for girls under 19 years competing in the Wengen Golden Ski (Ladies) and was won by Elspeth Whitley. Lucinda Mackay was second and Susan Proctor third—there were nine starters. I did not actually see them race as I had 'flu, but it is obvious that Elspeth did a very good time. She was second to Caroline Sims and fifth in the general result, which included twenty men. Last year's holder, Julie Galpin, did not compete as she is training in Switzerland as a Physical Training instructress. The snow was very thin in December and the Standard Course was shortened and carefully controlled, but the *piste* itself was fast and true, according to the *D.H.O. Journal* account of the race.

"Elspeth and Lucinda are born racers, by which I mean that they almost invariably do better in a race than during training. They are both from Chatelard School, Les Avants, from which so many of the D.H.O. racing girls have come. They were both training in Wengen at the time of the race. Elspeth also passed her S.C.G.B. First Class Soft-Snow Test this season. She is a beautiful soft-snow skier now. . . . Lucinda is only 16 years old and this is her first season's racing, so she should do well next year.

"*Ladies' Ski Club Spoon*: 1, E. Whitley, 2' 52"; 2, L. Mackay, 3' 48"; 3, S. Proctor, 3' 54.2"; 4, S. Jamieson, 4' 2"; 5, A. Asheshov, 4' 4"; 6, V. Jamieson, 4' 5.2"; 7, M. Irvine-Fortiscue, 4' 7"; 8, C. Petre, 4' 23.4"; 9, F. Strong, 4' 49.4". (9 starters.)"

I was unable to get out to Switzerland until much later than usual, and had to cancel my reservation in Davos, much to my dismay—but it proved a blessing in disguise as there was no snow. I finally

arrived in Wengen in time to click watches for the Duchess of Kent Race, in which I was ably assisted by Sheila Hensman. The race was held on the Lauberhorn Course on January 26th and was a Giant Slalom with 30 gates. Very good conditions prevailed. Two Swiss, two Spanish, six British and two Austrian ladies competed—and times were as follows:—

1, Caroline Sims (British), 2' 3.7"; 2, Jacqueline Vuille (Swiss), 2' 10.5"; 3, Joan Shearing (British), 2' 16.4".

It was some years since I had been in the Wengen area, and I enjoyed myself so much that I came back for an extra week after doing a fortnight at Mürren at the old game of "repping." By that time the snow was wearing away, and umbrellas were in vogue when I got to Gstaad in mid-February, intending to stay a week. Fortunately I could not get a seat on the aeroplane and the extra week involved coincided with copious falls of snow and a wonderful week "Off-the-Piste." I went home quite happy.

There seems to be a dearth of news about weddings and births. We congratulate Lady Garthwaite (Pat d'Ambrumenil) on a son, born January 9th. Mrs. Cochran-Patrick is to be congratulated on twins, Nigel and John, born on June 13th, 1957. Miss Jill Fitzgerald is now Mrs. R. Collier—herewith our best wishes.

Our Sinister Father has celebrated his 70th Birthday with the birth of a new Brain Child—*The Bernese Oberland*. It is a charming book wherein you can find your favourite spot, and browse in it to your heart's content.

The following new members have been elected: Miss Susan Martin, Miss Frances MacRobert, Mrs. Worthy, Miss Valerie Griffith, Mrs. Fielding, Miss Sarah Knight, Miss Elizabeth Fulton, Miss Tania Heald, Miss Wendy Farrington, Miss Cynthia Petre and Miss Anna Asheshow. Miss Fulton has nobly consented to make herself responsible for all the advertisements in this edition.

The Ladies' Ski Club Race was run at Adelboden in conjunction with the British Women's Championships. The Open Cup was won by Frieda Dänzer in the good time of 1' 52.3", with Sue Holmes only 3.4" behind. Sue wins the closed event.

It has been decided that the Ladies' Ski Club Race for next year will be a Slalom, and part of the Women's Racing Week. It will be held on Saturday, January 24th, at Mürren. This should get us an international entry as the Duchess of Kent Giant Slalom will be on January 25th at Mürren. The British Ladies' Ski Championships will be held on January 21st and 22nd at Wengen. The L.S.C. Race is to be followed by a Cocktail Party for competitors, and we will be holding a Raffle at the Autumn Cocktail Party to raise funds for the "L.S.C. Championship Party," when we shall be entertaining competitors and others. Gifts to be sent to Lady Blane.

The L.S.C. Junior Championship is to be a permanent fixture and a Cup which originally belonged to Châteaux d'Oex Ski Club has been presented. It will be run as a Slalom at the same resort as the Junior Championship a few days before.

The Annual General Meeting and Cocktail Party will be held on Wednesday, November 26th, at the Ski Club of Great Britain.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

December 4th, 1957

THE Annual General Meeting was held at the Ski Club of Great Britain, 118, Eaton Square, on Wednesday, December 4th, followed by a Cocktail Party. Both the meeting and the party were well attended, although owing to bad fog several members and friends were unable to be present. The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were passed and signed, and the accounts also were approved and passed.

The result of the election of officers was as follows:—

President: Miss I. Roe.

Vice-President: Mrs. P. Hepworth.

Members of Committee: Mrs. Raynsford and Miss A. Carr.

Lady Blane was re-elected as Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Oddie as Hon. Treasurer. Miss P. Farquharson retires from office as Hon. Editor and no-one offered to take on the post. (Later this was taken on for a year by Lady Chamier.)

It was decided to make the Life Membership a £4 subscription.

The retiring President, in her report, said it seemed only the other day that she rose to give her first report of '54-'55 and now she was about to give her farewell one. She said the time had gone very quickly and she had enjoyed very much the compliment that the Club had paid her. Now she passed it on to Isobel Roe.

The President went on to say: "Last winter was a highly unsatisfactory one as regards snow, especially in the early part of the season, and due to the weather conditions and the lack of underpinning we had some very grave avalanche casualties. Reading the racing results one gets the impression that Straight Racing turned itself into Giant Slaloms, and Slaloms were held wherever enough snow could be found for a Course.

"The Duchess of Kent Race, January 7th, at Grindelwald, was incorporated with the Slalom Géant of the S.D.S., and our L.S.C. girls, Carolyn Doran-Webb and Caroline Sims, took fourth and 6th places.

"The British Ladies' Championship, January 15th, at Wengen, was apparently lucky in its weather and snow, more of the latter being available than in most Alpine resorts. Sue Holmes and Sandra Nowell were first and second, and these two girls were the only ones entered for the whole S.D.S. Meeting.

"Our L.S.C. Race was run at Villars in conjunction with the Trophée de Villars. The L.S.C. Cup goes to Sue Holmes and the non-international Cup to Carolyn Doran-Webb. The International Cup was won by Mlle. Fernade Pagent of France. This year we hope

to hold the L.S.C. Championship at Adelboden in conjunction with the British Women's Championship.

"We are pleased to welcome to our Club the following new members: Mrs. Kendall, Miss V. Pritchard, Miss Elspeth Nicoll, Mrs. Keitlen and Miss Baring Gould.

"I seem to have no report on Brides and Babies. You will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Hamill, *née* Findlater, who was a member of the Club since 1924, one of our oldest members almost since the inception of the Club, has died.

"Our usual heartfelt thanks are due and offered to our Hon. Auditors, Mr. Kenneth Smith and Mr. Eric Lewns, for dealing with our accounts, to our Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Editor—the last has been forced to retire."

Mrs. Tomkinson was only able to give a very short talk on her time at Dubrovnik with the FIS Congress, as the meeting had already overstepped its time, but she told of a very interesting time, how lovely Dubrovnik was and the bathing and how much she enjoyed it—the work as well as the play.

The Cups were unable to be presented as neither Sue Holmes or Carolyn Doran-Webb were able to attend the meeting. Meeting closed and the cocktail party commenced "with a loud roar!"

MARRIAGE

MAJOR R. C. COLLIER AND MISS G. E. FITZGERALD

The marriage took place on Saturday, 7th December, 1957, at the church of St. John the Baptist, Great Gaddesden, of Major Robin Cameron Herne Collier, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, only son of Major-General and Mrs. Angus Collier, of Glassburn, by Beauly, Inverness-shire, and Miss Gillian Elspeth Fitzgerald, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. R. S. J. Fitzgerald, of Oamaru, New Zealand. The Rev. A. B. Speed officiated.

The bride, who was given away by Captain Sir Thomas Halsey, wore a gown of parchment brocade with a veil of old Brussels lace, held in place by a diamond tiara, and carried a bouquet of cream and pink roses and freesias. She was attended by Miss Adeline Pryor, who wore dark red velvet and carried a bouquet of cream freesias, and by two pages, Jeremy and Adrian Underwood, who wore the kilt. Mr. Robert Findlay was best man. A reception was held at Gaddesden Place (lent by Mrs. T. S. Pryor).

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.

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 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.

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

By AMY BLANE

THE Junior Championships had been fixed for January 10th and 11th at Villars, and I went out early to start the ball rolling and get the preliminaries fixed. On my arrival I found rather a shortage of snow, but enough at Bretaye for a course, and one hoped for a fresh fall of snow before the event. The week before the competitors were due to arrive the snow got less and less, everyone was very worried, and Helen Tomkinson spent her time looking for alternatives. Finally on D Day, the Sunday before the arrival of competitors, assisted by male help and starting out at 9.15 a.m., they returned triumphantly at 7 p.m., having found a suitable course.

The next day, Monday, a large party of us were going over to Gstaad for the Geneva Cup, but owing to the difficulties of arranging the Championship Course, several had to be left behind to work out the details, Helen among them, and I started off with fifty others, over thirty being competitors. We went in two buses over the Col-de-Moss. On arrival at Gstaad a very strong wind nearly resulted in the race being cancelled—but not quite. The prizes were presented at the Hotel in Gstaad and we had a much appreciated tea; it was now raining hard and everyone was cold and damp. We climbed back into our buses, plus a few more who wished a lift to the Championships, and found that it was even raining on the Col-de-Moss. We arrived at Villars after 9 p.m. to find those left behind had got on well with the preparations, and that night it snowed, and snowed, and snowed.

A great deal of stamping had to be done to prepare the Standard Course for the race on account of the constant snow-falls, but Mr. Chable (head of the Villars Ski School), with his "*pisters*" and other helpers, did a really magnificent piece of work and deserves a sincere vote of thanks.

The morning of the Downhill Race was perfect, good snow, and brilliant sun. The course chosen was our Standard Course but starting a field lower down. Of forty-five starters, seventeen girls and twenty-eight boys, all finished except two and there were no accidents. Tania Heald was first of the girls in 1' 34.4"; second Elspeth Nicoll (1' 46.1"); and third, Wendy Farrington (1' 46.4"). John Rigby was first of the boys in 1' 22.3", John Pirquet second (1' 35.1"), and Alexander Sykes third (1' 40").

On the following day for the Slalom two courses had been set by two different guides, Gysin and Stump. The day was not good—very cold and snowing—and in spite of Ovomaltine freely given, brandy had to be sent up to the two Starters, who would not leave their posts for either of the two Slaloms and were in danger of becoming two blocks of ice. Timekeepers also had a cold time of it, but under the direction of Mlle. Brunner stuck to their guns—or watches. In spite of all this, it was a very successful Slalom, Tania Heald again winning the girls' event with a total of 2' 10.3" for the two courses; second, Cynthia Petre (2' 13.3"); 3rd, Wendy Farrington (2' 23").

For the boys: first, John Rigby (1' 56.2"); second, John Tulloch (2' 11.1"); third, Simon Hodgson (2' 12.4"). The Combined result was: Girls—Tania Heald, first; Wendy Farrington, second; Elspeth Nicoll, third. Boys—John Rigby, first; Simon Hodgson, second; John Pirquet, third. Tania was second to John Rigby both in the Straight Race and Slalom, a very fine performance for a girl of fourteen.

The Prize-giving took place at the Palace at 4.30 p.m. Unfortunately the President of the S.C.G.B., Air Chief Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane, who was to have given away the prizes, was ill in bed with 'flu and unable to do so, but his letter was read by the President of the Villars Visitors' Ski Club, Dr. Holmes-Walker, who then made a very good speech, after which Mr. Genillard, of the Palace, presented

the prizes. Many nice prizes were given by the Touriste Department Villars, as well as by "Ausoni Sports," "Chable Sports" and "Mme. Wantz." Later in the evening there was an S.C.G.B. Dance for the competitors and friends—further thanks to Mr. Genillard.

The following day continual trips were made to the Station to say good-bye to the leaving competitors, their parents and friends, all of whom we were very sorry to see go.

We, the Villars Visitors' Ski Club, were very proud to have been allotted the Championship, and only hope that those who competed, and those who came to help and watch, enjoyed it as much as we did.

GLORIOUS GLENCOE

BY BETTY ARTHUR

"YOU'LL no be needing those things," said the porter, as he helped us and our ski out of the London-Glasgow train on Maundy Thursday. The sun was indeed shining, and it seemed more than likely that he would be right. However, breakfasting half an hour later in the Station Hotel, we noticed violent flurries of snow driving through the streets to the accompaniment of a cruel east wind.

We were collected by the organiser of our party, a member of the Scottish Ski Club, and set off for Glencoe. The weather was revolting and unbelievably cold. We found the farm where we were to stay, and a warm welcome, and then motored up to the glen. We had heard a lot about the horrors of the steep climb through the heather to the bottom of the ski-lift, and wondered what we were in for. The climb might have been worse, but the weather not possibly! Having staggered up the slope for about an hour, and reached cloud levels still far below the lift, we decided to chuck it, and leaving our ski in the heather we turned round to walk down. The blizzard by this time was full scale, frozen snow whipping our faces in the familiar manner. Friday and Saturday the weather was much kinder and we had some excellent running from the top of the mountain. Whereas on Thursday we had been virtually alone, now the hillside was like Piccadilly.

On Sunday, the S.S.C. held an informal Slalom on Central Gully Neall o'Bhuiridh (the run beside the lift). The course of 400 feet descent was set by Louis Drysdale and had 40 gates. There were 37 starters. The race was run instead of the Kandahar and the Lillywhite Cup, as the snow was not lying low enough for the long races. The field was a strong one, and the conditions were fast. The second run was icy owing to the cold wind. The sun came out at intervals and with skiers and spectators there must have been between eight and nine hundred people on the mountain.

The winner was Lars Eie (K) in the fast time of 1' 29". He won the Scottish Kandahar two years ago. P. W. Brock (Montreal) was second with 1' 40.8", David Banks (S.S.C.), third with 1' 47", Tor Ottersen (G.U.S.C.) fourth with 1' 47.4" and Gavin Ogilvie (S.S.C.), fifth with 1' 47.8". Alan Crompton had an excellent first run with 47.4" (against Eie's 44" and 45") but lost a ski the second time down. A very great pity. Andy Scott (S.S.C.) was sixth with 1' 50.4", Robin Watson (K) seventh with 1' 53.4" and Robert Blenkinsop (Marden's) eighth with 1' 53.8".

Zandra Nowell (S.C.G.B.) came 18th and first of the girls with 2' 1.4", with Sheila Jamieson (D.S.C.), 19th with 2' 11.2". Elspeth Nicoll (Marden's) came 21st with 2' 14.2". She had very bad luck as a female spectator skied right across her bows on her first run. This lady seemed quite unrepentant and skied on undaunted despite the howls from the crowd. Elspeth Whitley (S.C.G.B.) was 24th with 2' 18.2". Ann Hunter (K) was disqualified owing to a fall.

With Mark Pattinson timekeeping and Marden members competing, one might hardly have left Klosters!

On Saturday night a dance was held at Ballahulish which our party enjoyed greatly, but I am not sure that the peak moment of the week-end wasn't the breakfast at our farm.

This was no continental affair, but a truly splendid meal starting with porridge and cream, and steaming steadily through eggs and bacon to unlimited toast and marmalade. I must say that one needed all of this, for quite apart from fortifying oneself against the elements, there was no time for lunch. With so many ardent skiers, the queue for the lift meant a wait of about fifteen minutes, and thus one couldn't possibly drop out of the queue, and miss one's turn for a mere meal. So, leaving the rucksack in the path of the queue, we dived for a sandwich each time we came round. On Monday, with no race, we managed to get in twelve runs of the 900-foot descent—on a splendid and very fast *piste*) a good day by any standards. Motoring back to Helensburgh by way of Glen Douglas, that evening, we felt on top of the world.

Having never skied in Scotland before, we were enchanted by the friendliness of the S.S.C., the excellent running and, of course, the real beauty of the countryside. Shrouded at first as all self-respecting mountains when one first goes to see them, when they eventually appeared, their summits gleaming with new snow, the peaks looked magnificent. Rannock Moor below us, brown and desolate, was dotted here and there with the bluest of little blue lochs. Returning to England, we found all our friends depressed beyond words at the Easter weather. With aching legs and weather-beaten faces we knew *we* couldn't have had more fun.

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

Now that we have joined the ranks of parents we are faced with the problem of what to do with our nannyless two-year-old daughter when we go ski-ing. There are, of course, the usual farming-out solutions, but they are more or less unsatisfactory as they involve either great expense or demand the maximum of tolerance and sense of responsibility on the part of relations or friends.

In March this year I had to take Paula to Glion, Switzerland, for three weeks' convalescence. During this time there was a fall of snow and I could not resist the temptation of getting a pair of baby ski and trying her on one of the local slopes. As I had hoped but had not expected she absolutely adored every minute of it and we repeated the experiment several times and left for England with her clamouring for more. Incidentally, like many other children of her age, she suffers from a chronic cold and catarrh in the winter, and after two days of clean mountain air, she threw them off completely.

All this persuaded us that the only satisfactory solution (giving up ski-ing holidays is unthinkable) is to take the child along as well. Once this has been considered possible the mind goes round in circles trying to foresee all the arrangements which are essential so that it would not, like "holidays" by the sea, simply mean the same old de-glamourising chores, but in different surroundings and at vastly increased cost. After all, there is not much to be said for being a busman, even in ski pants, especially if you cannot go on strike to get what you want.

We think we have found an ideal ski resort for children; Flims-Waldhaus in the Grisons. Flims is geographically related to the Arosa, St. Moritz, Davos country and is easily reached by train (most trans-European expresses go through Chur, the valley terminal) or by aeroplane to Zürich. The journey from Chur to Flims takes three-quarters of an hour in one of those vast yellow post-buses which lollop along at incredible speed, sending their arpeggios echoing across the valleys.

I do not propose to give a general description of Flims as a ski-ing resort because the best possible is to be found in James Riddell's admirable book, *The Ski Runs of Switzerland*. All I wish to do is to pass on the favourable impressions registered through the eyes of a "young Mum," along with one or two items of essential information.

There is no doubt that Flims gives an immediate impression of being a resort for children. Perhaps it is because since the war we have grown used to the high altitude resorts—bleak and craggy above the tree-line. The if-there's-no-snow-here-there's-no-snow-anywhere fever caused by the series of disappointing winters of recent years seems to have driven the woodland resorts out of our minds. Flims is a step back into a world of Christmas card scenery. A walk down the village street is not a walk down an alpine Bond Street, with glittering shops and flashing neon lights, terribly smart unski people eyeing one another's outfits, dissipating the mountain air with expensive scent and the unsettling feel of cosmopolitan fleshpots.

Somehow the relaxed calm of the summer is carried over into the ski-ing season and babies are quietly but not in the least furtively pushed along the village street in their sledge-prams.

One of the main attractions is, I think, the restaurant at Foppa, a few minutes' walk from the terminal of the first leg of the chair-lift, just below the tree-line on one of the vast warm south slopes that overlook Flims. Because Flims is so situated that it takes every ray the sun sends out between rising and setting, Foppa presents a delightful picture at any time of day. The restaurant is basically a real old "Alpenbauernhaus" partly converted, with a large sun terrace and rows of chaise-longues. There are always children playing around, having rides on Ciocco, the donkey, feeding the gorgeous slobbering St. Bernard dogs, and watching the marmosets, rabbits and chickens while parents relax comfortably in between runs, sipping the usual ski chalet drinks, eating their picnic lunches, or tucking into surprisingly sophisticated meals. Although it seems that only English children need to rest in the afternoon, I have been assured that this can easily be arranged.

There is a toboggan run that passes all the way through the great pine forests from Foppa back to Flims. An occasional squirrel jumps through the branches and there are many mysterious footprints to excite a child's imagination.

In the Ski School there are classes for children which are held twice daily and cost 18 francs for six half-days and 30 francs for twelve half-days. There is, of course, also a skating rink.

By next summer, if all goes well, a nursery will be built. It will be primarily for local *kinde*r but it is intended that visitors' children should be catered for as well.

Most hotels have arrangements for children. Cots and high chairs are available and baby sitters as well. There is always someone near at hand at night and the chambermaids are very capable and willing to help and may be relied upon to fetch the parents if necessary. With regard to prices, a 50% reduction is usually given for children aged 1-6 years, and 30% for children from 6-12 years. There would be a considerable reduction for children under one year. In the high season, however, if a child has a room on its own, *i.e.* occupies adult accommodation, full rates would be charged.

It is possible that the family snapshot album may show a tell-tale gap between next year's ski-ing and the time when Paula reaches the age of reason, but we shall certainly give it a try despite the gloomy forecasts of well-meaning and experienced friends. Can they, by the way, advise any antidote to an overdose of paraffin wax?

CLAUDIA BOYAGIS.

A PENSIONER'S HOLIDAY

By D.A.E.

THIS was to be my first carefree ski-ing holiday after having made several farewell appearances as a representative. Therefore, I was delighted when Colleen Norman invited me to come as a passenger in her car. Though I had flown and gone by train I had never motored to Switzerland before and I was pleased to have the opportunity of being passenger to a first-class driver, my own driving being of third-class standard.

We discovered that our day of departure coincided with the start of the Monte Carlo Rally, when deep snow paralysed the roads of Great Britain. Optimistically, we thought that splendid clearances would have been made on the Folkestone road. In fact, the snow-ploughs were all stuck in drifts and half-hearted attempts were being made to dig them out.

A double-decker 'bus skidded sideways-on and barred the road until, with a dying gasp, it slid forward into a ditch, and we were able to slip past. The worst was yet to come with the steep Folkestone Hill blocked by stationary vans and cars. I nipped out so as to give the car a better chance without my weight. With superb driving Colleen reached the top at the third attempt, having first been foiled by an incompetent policeman, and we caught the ferry with four minutes to spare.

The French and the Swiss have a far better conception of how to deal with winter conditions, but even so the going was slow and after a night in Rheims, made hideous by the popping of Lambrettas, we had a tricky drive before the haven of the Du Lac Hotel at Interlaken Ost.

Not being England, bound rigidly by the Catering Wages Act, we were welcomed and served with the dinner of our choice and fell into boiling hot baths and that especial brand of comfortable bed of which you are always sure in Switzerland.

Our destination was the Eiger Hotel in Mürren, where we found many friends and where the sun shone over that incomparable panorama of the Alps. And talking of panoramas reminds me of the arrival of Richard Dimbleby and his attendant satellites on the heels of one of the worst *foebns* which ever spoilt the games of curler and skater. The skier, on the other hand, was not pond-bound.

Rumour had it that Mr. Dimbleby had already reached Mürren "from the other side," as several of us had been engulfed in the largest *pot-hole* in history. Rumour was false, but there was never any explanation as to the origin of that pit.

A large body of skiers were eventually marshalled to the top of the Schiltgrat at lunch-time and was kept for some hours, fortunately in bright sunshine, while hefty volunteers brought up the cameras and the non-ski-ing cameramen.

We were finally awoken from our siesta and given our appointed positions behind George Stewart, on whose back the camera was strapped. We mutinied against being asked to ski with gay abandon

down a steep traverse in figures of eight, and opted for "controlled turns" behind George's sagging back.

There was a tricky moment at the start when a curiously dressed man covered in a close patchwork of badges *and* wearing his socks outside his boots, was relegated to the rear instead of hogging the camera. He turned out to be a complete novice and it was later reported that he now holds the record for the longest descent in time down the Schiltgrat. Perhaps he will still live to feature in Mr. Dimpleby's television feature, which, I believe, is to be called "Passport to Adventure." Certainly, none of us who took part in the experiment will appear, for the ski-ing demonstration ended in a complete shambles when George collapsed under the heavy camera and we piled up round him.

The next event of interest was the annual competition between Swiss schoolboy teams sponsored by Field Marshal Montgomery. It was discovered at the last moment that the hope of the Mürren side was something like three weeks too old, according to the racing rules. The Field Marshal had to break the news to the boy's mother, a formidable woman whom everyone treated with great respect.

Her rage and disappointment knew no bounds and the F.M. retreated hastily, completely routed, before her physical and oral onslaught. He remarked afterwards that he was accustomed to victory and that defeat was a new sensation.

Ski-ing in the January hole is entirely enjoyable with no crowds pelting down the slopes. With some chosen friends we left the beaten track and found perfect and untouched powder snow with very little effort. These leisurely days were all the more enjoyable for not being bound by office hours, and struggling with accounts which never came out right for me. There was time to loaf and, best of all, no feeling of responsibility for the vagaries of the weather and snow. Retirement was indeed pleasant.

EN TRAIN

By E.B.S.

THIS year I had the pleasure of escorting my son across Switzerland to take part in the Junior Championships.

Unfortunately, we travelled on a "Holiday," in fact the end day of the Schools Holiday, and the trains were more packed and jammed than anything I have ever met before. As we had a ten-hour journey with six changes, I expect we were lucky to have only one such incident as the following:—

"Yes, this looks like our station. Hordes are getting out here. Come on, out we get. I'll take your ski. Ouch! Sorry, *ich parle kein German*. Yes, of course I've got everything, ski, sticks, my case, your case, the rucksack . . . you've got the tickets and the timetable. Good. My ski hat? Mummy, have you got my ski hat?"



Photo by]

PRESIDENT AT JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, VILLARS, JANUARY TENTH AND ELETH, 1958. [Sport Ed. Poir, Villars (Suisse)



Photo by

TANIA HEALD RECEIVING JUNIOR CHAMPION'S CUP AT VILLARS, JANUARY 10TH AND 11TH, 1958.

[Sport Ed. Pôt, Villars (Suisse)]



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Of course, it must be still in the train, the train is over there . . . oh, the train *was* over there. Oh. . . .

"*Wo ist der Zug nach Bern? Wo? What? But we have just got off that one! Definitely. Yes, the porter wrote it down for us. Aarau? O . . . Oh, help. Come on, we must catch a taxi. Taxi, taxi . . . Wo ist ein taxi? Yes, tell him to telephone ahead and hold the train at Olten for us. What? Oh, well, never mind.*

"Taxi! Ah! *Wie viel kostet nach Olten? How much? Ruinous! Come on, do hurry. Now the ski. No, no, they'll never go in that way. Never! This way. Oh, dash. Why can't we get a bigger car? Come on. Schnell, ja, viel schnell bitte.*

"Well, at least he drives jolly well. How far is it? How much did you say he is charging? When is it scheduled to leave? *Ja, nach den Bahnhof. So schnell wie möglich! I say, my 'O' level German's coming back to me! Here it is at last. Dienst! Dienst! DIENST! Ja, der Zug nach Bern. Come on. NACH BERN! VERSTEH BERN!* Come on, Mummy. He's moronic. Let's get on the nearest. It says Bern. *Billiete? Tickets? Ah, thank goodness, here they are. Wo geht dies? What, it really does go to Bern? Mille danken. . . ."*

MÉRIBEL-LES-ALLUES/COURCHEVEL DISTRICT

BY FRANCES MACROBERT

WE visited Méribel-les-Allues for a week this year from March 7th to 14th, and I have been asked to give a few details about the district which might help other people going there for the first time.

We went by car from Switzerland—a very easy journey, as Méribel is only about 90 miles from Geneva. To get there by train is more difficult as the cross-country journey from Geneva takes half a day. From Paris one can get a night train straight through to Moutier, which is in the valley about 11 miles from Méribel, or alternatively Swissair run a coach service from Geneva to Moutier, Courchevel and Val d'Isère connecting with their flights to Geneva one or two days a week.

Méribel (1,600 m.) is a scattered village, spread over the eastern slopes of the valley, running up south from Moutier. Courchevel lies in the next valley to the east and consists of two separate villages, Courchevel (1,550 m.) and Courchevel (1,850 m.). If one stays at Méribel one can do all the Courchevel runs and *vice versa*, as the two places are linked up by *téléférriques*. From Méribel a ski-lift takes you up about 500 metres to the bottom station of a *télébenne* (a new *télébenne* is under construction to replace this ski-lift). The present *télébenne* goes up to a point on the ridge dividing the Méribel and Courchevel valleys (la Saulire, 2,708 m.), which is also the top station

of a *téléférique* from Courchevel. On the Courchevel side you can also go up a ski-lift further along the ridge to the north and come down to Méribel from there. On the western side of the Méribel valley there is a "gondolabahn" under construction which should open out a tremendously wide area of east-and north-facing slopes at present inaccessible except by climbing.

All the ski-ing is very open and fairly easy, though there are some very steep slopes for those who want them down the first 500 feet or so from the top of the Courchevel *téléférique*. Most of it is above the tree-line. We were lucky in the snow conditions as we had perfect powder snow for the first four days we were there. We found that the French rarely skied off the *piste*, with the result that we had miles and miles of untracked snow and could go literally anywhere safely, practically all the while being within sight of a *piste* and having a ski-lift waiting somewhere at the bottom to take us up again to a different point. Some of the Courchevel runs go down below Courchevel (1,550 m.) to Le Praz (1,300 m.) and various other villages—but we didn't have time to do half of them. The runs back to Méribel are very pleasant and there is quite a big variety—from the "Rabbits' Run," which is a gentle "promenade" of about 2,000 feet from the top of the ski-lift, to the open fields from the top of the *télébenne* and some quite interesting birds' nesting through the woods above Méribel. The runs from the top of the *télébenne* give about 3,500 feet of running. The *pistes* are well kept and not steep; they are also free of the enormous troughs and bumps found on many of the more popular *pistes* elsewhere. Both Méribel and Courchevel gets lots of sun, neither place being at all "shut in." There are so many lifts (mostly ski-lifts and *télébennes*) that even on a Sunday there was practically no queuing. The only place we ever queued was the ski-lift at Méribel, where it is best to avoid the times when the Ski School is going up (usually 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.). This should be better when the "gondolabahn" on the other side of the valley gets going.

Both Méribel and Courchevel have several *télébennes* which are a form of transport we had not met before and don't particularly want to meet again. They are open cages for two people, consisting of a platform with a waist-high rail round three sides, the back being open so that you can step in. This is done while the cage is moving, with the result that the second person in finds himself running half-way up the hill after it desperately trying to jump on. Your ski are put in by the attendant while you are trying to leap on, and on one occasion in our party the ski were the only things that *did* get in! Our main complaint about these devices was the cold. The Méribel one takes you up to nearly 9,000 feet, and the journey lasts for about twenty minutes, which was not at all pleasant in the cold weather we had, and positively dangerous in wind or snow. Luckily there is a restaurant on top of La Saulire, where you can revive on cognac and coffee. The *téléférique* on the Courchevel side is excellent—it holds thirty or forty people and goes up about the same distance in about five minutes. It is also more expensive.

We skied fairly gently (we were roughly 2nd class skiers) and found we were spending £1 a day on lifts in unsettled weather. In fine weather a good skier who was energetic we estimated would spend anything from £2 to £3 a day. We believe that season tickets with photographs were available at Courchevel but unfortunately cannot remember the cost. They would probably be more economical for the expert skier. We bought books of 10 tickets valid for Méribel or Courchevel costing 500 frs. per book. It is important to take an S.C.G.B. membership card, as this allows you to buy the book for 500 frs. instead of 550 frs. Examples of the costs of the lifts are: Méribel ski-lift, two tickets; Méribel *télébenne*, four tickets; Courchevel *téléférique*, six tickets.

The hotels are expensive for what they are. We were paying about £2 a day for a double room in the attic of an annexe (with running water and a private lavatory). The room was very sparsely furnished (no table, chairs, dressing table, or wardrobe) but the beds were comfortable and the water was really hot. The food was excellent and the dining-room/lounge comfortable. There is a bed-and-breakfast only hotel, which is said to be very good, but it costs £1 a day and an evening meal would cost at least £1. Courchevel is considerably more expensive, and the season there lasts until the end of March, whereas we were paying out-of-season prices at Méribel. We thought Méribel had a nicer "atmosphere" than Courchevel—a French woman we met said that she did not like the latter so much as the people there were not *sportifs*! On the other hand, until Méribel's new "gondolabahn" starts, the better ski-ing is on the Courchevel side and (if expense is no object) it is probably more convenient to be there. There appeared to be very little night life in Méribel, but it may be gayer in the season.

The ski-ing compares favourably with all the places (including the Parsenn) we have been to in Switzerland, although it is of course very easy, but the standard of comfort for price paid in the hotels is away below the Swiss.

"OFF THE PISTE"

THE "Off the *Piste* Period" in Gstaad—organised by Isobel Roe, and assisted by Liz Fulton and Robert Hillyer—deserves Honourable Mention, and in spite of all the weather could do, was a big success with all those who took part in it.

I arrived in Gstaad on February 16th from Wengen with the rain sheeting down and what snow there was rapidly disappearing until there was literally none left. Two days later it started to snow, invariably changing its mind and thawing by the afternoon and ending in rain. We took advantage of the new snow in the mornings as it fell, and capitulated later in the day to the *foehn* in full blast. "Off the

Piste” was rather in abeyance. However, with the new week things changed drastically and I can truthfully say that it is a long time since I have had such perfect soft-snow ski-ing. An early trip up the Kaltenbrunner and down to Oeschseite, a climb above the top of the Rinderberg Station along the ridge and down to Stuckli, First Class Soft Snow Tests on the Rinderberg and on Schonreid, and down the yellow or black run to Gstaad—everywhere the *schusses* were “out of this world.”

The new Gondelbahn has opened up this lovely mountain—the Rinderberg. It runs in two stages, 3,000 feet from Sweizimmen to the top; the running is either over steep open fields or through wooded areas, and with feet together one can *schuss* fast and furiously and be sure of a good run out at the bottom before the next one starts. The slopes are north-facing and the deep powder snow and lovely sun made one forget the depressing days of rain and thaw—only remembering the good days one finished with.

It is something to know that you can arrive in Gstaad and have deep snow runs and tours always arranged, with always somebody, competent to ski with, and to accompany and lead you down the little known runs in almost untracked snow.

May we have more of it.

E.R.C.

“THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING IN THE MOUNTAINS”

BY SHEILA HENSMAN

“MUNSTER, Westphalen, Germany”—that was to be our next posting so the Army told us. Well, to my mind it could have been worse; at least we were nearer to the Swiss Alps and ski-ing. We arrived in Germany in the late autumn and planned to go to Switzerland for the Easter holidays, taking the family with us for the first time, March 21st being the precious leave day.

Munster is a pleasant old religious town, with fourteen churches, good shops and the odd eating house, but apart from that it has nothing to offer. The country is flat, and our Garrison surroundings are typically Army. It was a cold, bleak winter that went on and on, therefore with much excitement we looked forward to the First Day of Spring—our leave—and our hopes of hot sun and spring snow. As so often happens in the Army these days, important things cropped up and the question arose—“should we”—“could we” really go? We were determined to stick to our plans, and so at 7 a.m. on March 21st we were off, and as fast as possible we left the dull rolling plains of Westphalia behind and were moving in the right direction. We managed over 300 miles before lunch—always expecting Spring round the corner, but instead icy winds and snow on most high ground. Tension grew as we moved through Basle and Customs—snow, snow and more snow but no sign of Spring. The

roads were now well and truly covered as we started our climb up the Engelberg Valley. Feet now of snow and we plodded on; we arrived at 6.45 p.m., our 500 miles done, and as we turned our last corner we came to a grinding halt—we were well and truly stuck in a drift of snow! Had we made a mistake? No, the first day of Spring is as unpredicable in the mountains as it is the world over—but what did it matter, we had snow, snow and glorious snow!

SKIS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

BY JOAN SHEARING

My parents were keen skaters, and as a child I only remember trying to ski with my father when there was so much snow that the skating was either bad or impossible. Consequently I skied always in deep snow. I couldn't ski at all, and I remember falling most of the time. I never seemed to hurt myself, due, I presume, to the old Alpina binding, which let one's whole foot come up from the ski.

When I left school and stayed in Switzerland for a longer period each year I joined the D.H.O. and then bought a pair of hickory ski with steel up to just beyond the foot-plate, and some form of composition (milk we called it) from there to the tips. The ski were chosen for softness and pliability, and I was told that they would be too stiff with steel to the tips! They were very nice in soft snow and I learnt to cope much better; I skied a lot off the *piste* with Tom Fox, who was then S.C.G.B. representative in Wengen.

Tom had the idea to send me to Davos to join the British ladies' team then training with Bill Bracken, as a possible “young hope.”

I had never seen *pistes* like those in Davos. I don't know what sort of ski the others had, but I seemed to go even faster sideways than forwards and to have no grip at all. I was frankly frightened and soon told Bill I did not feel up to the standard.

In those days there always seemed to be lots of soft snow to be found and I went back to ski-ing happily with the “Rep” of the time in Davos, Jack Hall. He, like Tom, could always find some good snow.

One more season of soft snow and touring, and only going on the *piste* if one had to, and then came the war.

After the war Donald Gomme produced the Gomme ski. I was told this was good on ice, but, unlike the Swiss wooden ski, good on soft snow, too, so I bought a pair. They were wonderful on the *piste* compared to my old ski and I skied happily on two successive pairs until two years ago. They did not get soft and the edges didn't stay sharp long, but I began to dislike the *piste* much less while still preferring soft snow. I had a pair of Swiss laminated ski, too, about this time, but found them much more difficult to turn on than the Gommies, they seemed so stiff and rigid.

One day while going fast I had a bad fall on some ice and the guide I was with said, “Those ski are finished.” I hadn't really thought of it until then. Next year I bought a pair of Attenhoffer Metallic ski. They were wonderful on the *piste* after the Gommies and

gave me a great feeling of confidence but they were also nearly as easy on soft snow. I used them in the British Championships at Wengen that year and they seemed to hold well in the Downhill though not so well on the patches of ice in the Slalom. The Downhill was on beaten powder snow—a perfect *piste*. I thought I had at last found a pair of first-class all-round ski, but they did get softer and gradually did not seem to hold so well. Last year the guide who was teaching us slalom suggested that if I bought a pair of Kneissel combi ski I might find it easier to slalom. I was dubious, remembering my laminated ski, but in the end I bought a pair. The first morning I had them, from being five or six seconds behind Caroline and Angela on the icy practice slope at Lauterbrunnen, I was only one or two. The feeling of grip and control was amazing and they turned just as easily as my metallic ski. I used them after this for all racing and at last and for the first time felt as much in control on a hard *piste* as in soft snow. I should like to add that these ski are so supple that with care they turn quite well in soft snow.

This perhaps should end the subject of ski and terrain, but I think one more experience at the end of last season is worth mentioning.

There was a ski school slalom race on the nursery slopes; the conditions (January in March) very cold with a very little soft snow on hard ice. I took my Kneissel ski but did not have the edges sharpened. The competitors were mixed, men and women with different ski, mainly wooden ones or Metallic or Head. The race, to every one's surprise, was won by a girl from a class lower than the top class who stem-Christied through the gates. She had a pair of sharp slalom ski belonging to a Swiss racer and while we all lost seconds slipping sideways she did not.

Finally, I had no idea how much easier it was to keep one's feet together until I had a pair of rigid modern boots, or how impossible it was to even attempt to *Wedel* with short sticks until I lent my long ones to someone and tried using their short ones!

Next season if you suddenly feel your control and confidence going, before you blame that late night, ask yourself if perhaps the conditions have changed and if perhaps a different pair of ski might make things easier. Golf would be rather difficult with only one type of club and in the same way I think you need more than one type of ski to get good results on all types of snow.

WINTER IN THE GERMAN MOUNTAINS

THE following information from the German Tourist Bureau may prove of interest to some of our readers.

For highest altitudes, headquarters should be made in the Schneeferner Hotel on the Zugspitze. There one is some 8,500 feet nearer the sun than in the lowlands, and for nine months in the year skiers predominate. At altitudes of 1,650 feet there are excellent snow conditions at German winter sports resorts from mid-December to beginning of March. At most resorts there are ropeways up to

the summits and points of vantage. Most of these are in the Alps, but there are others in the Hartz and the Black Forest leading up to sunny heights. All the magic of forest-clad mountains is revealed in a trip from Freiburg to Schauinsland Mt. (4,210 ft.), one of the finest vantage points in the Black Forest. Ski-lifts are increasing every year, the majority of them being in the Bavarian Alps, but there are also many in the medium altitude mountains. One of the highest and most impressive is that on the Nebelhorn in the Allgaeu Alps, rising to a height of 6,500 feet. There are infinite opportunities for strenuous ascents such as the Alpspitze (8,615 ft.) near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, or easy climbs in medium altitude mountains such as from Schauinsland to Feldberg Mt. (4,900 ft.), the highest peak in the Black Forest.

Express trains run through the Black Forest and ascend to the Alpine valleys to a height of 3,300 ft. Secondary railways and an excellent system of bus services open up all the more remote villages and high altitude winter sports hotels. German Post Office buses climb up to the heights of the Rossfeld near Berchtesgaden (4,920 ft.), whilst the main roads in the Black Forest rise to an altitude of some 4,000 ft.

Prices are comparatively low. In the more popular resorts *pension* rates average DM 9.— to DM 15.— (15s. 6d. to 26s.) and in less frequented localities about DM 6.— to DM 10.— (10s. 6d. to 17s.). In addition to ski-ing there are ample facilities for other sports—curling, skating, ice-hockey and tobogganing. International competitions and splendid ice-revues take place in the Olympic Stadium at Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Ski-ing instructors are available at some fifty resorts to initiate beginners and to train the more advanced to become experts. Regular competitions are held for visitors. There is a renowned ski-jump at Oberstdorf in the Allgaeu, where jumps of up to 460 feet are made.

There is no necessity to buy expensive equipment before you leave this country. In most resorts ski with sticks can be hired for DM 1.50 (2s. 8d.) per day and/or ski boots at the same cost. Skates with boots are offered for the day at DM 2.— (3s. 6d.) at most of the more well-known places.

DOWNFALL OF AN OFFICIAL

BY HELEN TOMKINSON

WITH great excitement, I arrived in Bad Gastein for the World Championships, thoroughly looking forward to being an *Official*, and really having a front view of all the races. I got all my badges and passes, and felt very grand as I was issued with two armbands, one with the magic words "Slalom Jury" on it, and the other, in white and gold, with "FIS Damen Committee"!

I arrived on Tuesday morning, skied on Tuesday afternoon, on Wednesday spent the morning going over the Women's Course, and in the afternoon did a fine run. I really felt I was ski-ing again—in fact, nearly as well as Toni Sailer. Alas! 10 o'clock Thursday

morning found me lying prone, in the Doctor's house, pride certainly having gone before a fall. Inspecting the Women's Course that morning my Safety Binding came undone in transit and I tipped forward. Not only my pride but my Achilles tendon went, and I found myself gazing at a blank wall in the hospital in Salzburg, instead of sitting in state watching the FIS.

FIRST L.S.C. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP SLALOM

THE practice for the last two years has been to hold a Slalom Race two days before the Junior Championships and this year it was suggested that it would be nice to turn this into the L.S.C. Junior Championships Slalom.

It was held at Villars on January 8th, with an entry of fifteen and was run down the Chaux Ronde in conjunction with an Open Slalom. Unfortunately, owing to the new snow the course was not as hard as it should have been, and did not prove easy. There were many falls but a lot of enthusiasm was shown and it was definitely a popular race.

The winner was Wendy Farrington; second, Elspeth Nicoll; third, Tania Heald and Patricia Hodgson (tied).

This will now become a regular event of the Ladies' Ski Club.

H.T.



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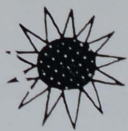
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