

WE TOOK THE HELI

By ISOBEL ROE

STRICT upbringing was responsible for my ski-ing for ten years before being allowed to use uphill transport. I have since made up for lost time and now for once, perhaps, am ahead of my time as I have been ski-ing from a helicopter. The trip was planned and organised by Nancye and Kenneth Smith, the latter being Chairman of the Touring Committee, and in spite of my strict upbringing, I was quick to be persuaded by so eminent a tourer that the Heli was all right.

We decided to go to the Vidamanette, and the party consisted of Liz Fulton, Kenneth Smith and Robin Brock Hollinshead, who went ahead on skins and planned to form a reception party. Nancye Smith, Cherry Davyes, Eric Lewns and I followed in the Heli, which takes two passengers at a time. Nancye and I were the first to embark. Conditions were not ideal as a fairly strong cross wind was blowing, but in spite of this there was no bumping, and in ten minutes we were circling above the heads of the reception party. The pilot was new to the district and did two circles round, "feeling" the wind before finally putting us down on a small platform on the ridge. These round trips slightly unnerved the two passengers, who made frequent helpful suggestions to the pilot that, should he think it safer, "to just land us where you like!" and that we had not set our hearts on that particular postage stamp platform on the ridge. However, he either could not or would not hear us, and on the postage stamp we duly landed. The second party were landed without any circling about and took roughly eight minutes for the trip.

Lunch on the grassy part of the ridge was most enjoyable, and the Heli had brought plenty of liquid refreshment for the thirsty climbers. One member of the party had reason to be particularly grateful for a winter with little snow, as when it came to putting on ski, the batch of A-15's did not quite go round—there was in fact one short! All the ski had been firmly stuck in the snow, tails down, but a blast of wind from the Heli must have caught this ski, which had completely vanished. There was a happy outcome to the story as the ski had run to a steep south-facing slope, which was quite bare of snow, and instead of hurtling 1,000 feet to the valley below, it came to rest after only a few yards.

After lunch was over we set off, and ran in the Flendruz direction, at the end branching off for Rougemont. It was remarkably good, despite *foehn* conditions. This run is advertised as "*pour les skieurs avancées*," a fair description, I think. An interesting observation on this run is that in March, in a snowless winter, it was possible to ski to Rougemont (1,000 metres) with snow to the bottom, when at over 2,000 metres there were vast expanses of grass. This perhaps is a good illustration of the importance of north-facing slopes rather than height when considering possible snow conditions.

The day finished with a walk along the road and a visit to the Rougemont Chateau, where Brock was a guest. A very pleasant ending to a spring day on ski.



PRESENT AND FUTURE CHAMPIONS!

Mrs. Joan Shearing, British Ladies' Downhill Champion, and her daughter, Patricia Murphy, at Wengenalp



PIONEERS OF YESTERDAY
MURREN, 1912



PIONEERS OF TO-DAY
Mr. Eric Lewns, Mrs. Nancy Smith, and Miss I. Roe about to embark



MISS ELSPETH NICOLL (Villars)



MRS. SUE HOLMES AT CORTINA



WENGEN—COMPETITORS IN THE BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP
Left to right—Wendy Farrington, Zandra Nowell, Jo Gibbs, Sue Holmes, Elspeth Nicoll and Caroline Sims



GSTAAD—COMPETITORS FROM ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL
including games mistress Miss Marjorie Coombes

BREUIL-CERVINIA

By ELIZABETH LINDESAY-BETHUNE

BREUIL-CERVINIA is probably now known by name to a great many skiers, and to some of these personally, by way of a fleeting visit over the Theodul Pass from Zermatt; but it is not until one has spent some time in this village lying at the foot of the south side of the Matterhorn, that one comes to appreciate the vast area of skiing terrain, or gets to know a very charming people.

From the Funivie Station (2,024 m.) one is carried to Plan Maison (2,600 m.) and from there one can either branch left to Furggen (3,500 m.) or right to Cime Bianche and thence to Plateau Rosa (3,500 m.). The descent from Furggen to the village by the standard *piste* can easily be managed by skiers of medium standard. There are some interesting variations of this run, especially later in the season, when one can find spring snow in many of the gullies. The run from Plateau Rosa down to Plan Maison, and beyond to Cervinia, presents no difficulties even for the novice, except perhaps in the length of the run, which is some six miles. Even so, I would not advise this run to be attempted by anyone whose first contact with a pair of ski is putting them on at the top station and who then expects to reach the village before dark. I witnessed this exact scene one day, when, at about four o'clock, I overtook two very dejected figures walking, each carrying one ski, still a mile from Plan Maison. She looked as if she had had her first and last experience of the joys of skiing, and he looked as if he had lost his girl-friend for ever—let it be a warning! Another excellent run from Plateau Rosa is Ventina, which runs over the glacier more to the east, coming down into the village near the Chapelle ski-lift. This ski-lift was put up by Signor Luigi Gallia, the owner of the Grand Hotel. Here one can find many different ways down through the trees, and the narrow *pistes* can provide very good practice for the slalom-lover.

Cervinia, owing to its height, is a naturally good centre for late skiing and for touring. There are also a number of half-day tours one can do which do not involve a climb. One of the best of these is to go over the Col Cime Bianche and down to Valtournanche, a fascinating village, especially to anyone interested in mountaineering. It was from here that Whymper set out on his early attempts to climb the Matterhorn, and there are plaques up in the square to the memory of many of the famous guides who contributed so much to the history of this great mountain.

As to Cervinia itself—one can find accommodation to suit every taste and pocket, from the smaller *pensions* to the wonderful luxury of the Grand Hotel. The food is good everywhere, but especially to be recommended is the restaurant of the Grand Hotel, and anyone with a weakness for Pizza is well advised to try it in Rolando Zanni's Al Piolet. The shops are well equipped with all the skier's needs, and ski can be hired with safety bindings. The variety of gorgeous Italian ski clothes are a great temptation, the best

way to acquire them being, if one is lucky, by a profitable evening spent in the Casino at St. Vincent, only an hour down the valley.

To those who have not yet met it, an Italian Sunday is a day worth knowing about. From nine o'clock onwards, outsize buses, mostly resembling a herd of elephants, roll into the village, depositing skiers of every age, shape and standard. These people have but one idea in their heads, and that is to get themselves to the top of Plateau Rosa and down again in the least possible time—and woe betide anyone who gets in the way! I made this mistake only once, when I became so entangled with one of these creatures that it took more than five minutes and several of his amazed friends to get us out of the octopus-like position in which we had ended up. Thanks to a faithful pair of Markers I am still the lucky possessor of two legs.

Several of the guides are now learning English, their lessons being given them by an Italian who spent some time at Aberdeen University. The results of their labours should be interesting to hear, and already, after five weeks, I noticed a marked improvement in their efforts, with a strong influence of the Granite City.

I think Cervinia is a place which will become very popular in the future, and deservedly so. The length of the runs and the variety of ski-ing make it attractive to all standards of skiers, and improvements to ski-lifts and hotels are being made all the time. To anyone who does not know it I would say—go and see for yourself.

SKI-ING FASHIONS FOR 1960

By HILARY LAING

LUCKILY ski-ing fashions do not change as radically from season to season as do our everyday clothes, so we don't have to buy a complete new outfit every winter. Just before the war baggy ski-pants became streamlined, but since then there has been little change in style. Gaberdine for pants has now been replaced by the wonderful elasticised material that stands up to any amount of hard treatment and yet retains its shape. But things have not stood still with regard to fabrics and design.

Having given up racing for the fun of running a ski shop, one has the privilege of seeing and knowing all that goes on in the fashion world of winter sports. Practically all our clothes are imported from abroad, for our own manufacturers have not had much experience in the making of ski clothes, as until now there has not been the demand. In the spring the top winter sports houses in Europe send their travellers over to this country with their collections for the following season and each year they seem to get more exciting. Italy supplies the most exotic fashions, glorious colours and materials. Poplin and nylon are not the only fabrics for anoraks; this season proofed silk is the thing, for fair weather ski-ing only, but they are

light yet warm and the heavenly patterns are teamed with ski-pants in the predominant colour. Austria and Sweden are going ahead in leaps and bounds and this season some of the more practical yet at the same time original jackets have come from these countries; quilted ones for really cold weather, and fur-lined reversible coats for *après-ski-ing*.

From a buyer's angle, now that ski-ing is within the range of everyone, there are a million and one tastes to cater for. We have our own resorts in Scotland and much money is being spent on developing more, but what is chic in St. Moritz would not be practical on the Cairngorms.

Après-ski clothes are as important as those worn in the day time and here our own manufacturers come into their own. The collections this year are more exciting than ever. Apart from a varied selection of *après-ski* sweaters there are enormous gay skirts in every material imaginable from Paisley-patterned velvet with matching silk shirts to gold and black brocades. Spain has entered the market, too—I saw the most fabulous collection from a small firm who has just entered the business, slacks in black antelope skin that fit like a dream, and shirts made of the same material in white, with a feel as soft as satin.

The day has really passed when the English male or female can get away with wearing the same wind-jacket for ski-ing that they have been using for hiking and playing golf in the rain. Many of the things I have mentioned may be a little expensive, but on the whole most shops maintain a very reasonable balance with regard to price.

A winter sports wardrobe needs as much planning as a trip abroad in the summer, and it is certainly just as much fun, but I wonder how many people do it. There is no reason why English girls can't be extremely smart both on the slopes and off, for all that is best in Europe can now be found here in our own shops.

SAAS-FEE

By ELIZABETH LINDESAY-BETHUNE

FOR all the hundreds of people who arrive in Brig or Visp, getting into the little red mountain train means going to Zermatt. If, instead they got out at Stalden, into the waiting Post Bus, and could survive the hour or so of unbelievable road up the wild and narrow Saastal, they would arrive in Saas-Fee, a village of unique charm, surrounded by some of the most spectacular scenery in the Alps.

The great character of this completely unspoilt village is the way in which the new has blended with the old. From Saas-Grund, the road, only quite recently built, is beautifully graded for the last few miles, all traffic stopping at the edge of the village. Thus Saas-Fee is free from such horrors as cars and buses zooming through it, and one can wander around knowing that, at the worst, one is only going to meet a horse-drawn *luge*, or an old peasant with his load of hay. The remoteness of Saas-Fee, and indeed the whole of the Saastal, has

meant that many of the older people have had very little contact with the outside world, and old and young alike wear their traditional costume every day. Exploring the village one comes across many old and typical Valaisian chalets, and a walk down the famous Kapellenweg is well worth taking. Mixed in with the old are the new hotels and *pensions*, all of which are good, whether you choose the simplicity of Heinrich Imseng's Pension Bergfreude, or the much more sophisticated Hotel Walliserhof.

Even those to whom mountains mean very little could hardly remain in Saas-Fee long without being acutely aware of the tremendous world of snow and ice by which it is surrounded. Lying right at the head of the valley, Saas is guarded by the great Fee Gletscher to the south, by the towering Dom and Taeschhorn to the west, and its eastern side is flanked by yet more giants. Looking up at the chaos of ice-falls and *séracs* on the Fee Gletscher, it seems impossible that one can ski on that side at all, without undertaking a major tour. However, in eighteen minutes the Seilbahn deposits the skier at Spielboden (8,058 ft.), where there is an attractive little restaurant. On the way up one can see very easily where the tongue of the Glacier used to reach almost to the village, well within the memory of many of the guides. Now it has receded a long way, leaving only the wall of the moraine to mark its original route. From Spielboden there is an amusing *piste* down, steep in places, and difficult for anyone not of medium standard. After a good fall the steep north slopes and gullies provide some wonderful powder-snow runs. The nursery slopes surrounding the village are ideal for beginners, and four ski-lifts provide good practice runs varying from very easy open slopes to more interesting wood runs. The ski school takes a genuine interest in all standards, and often in the afternoon the lower classes, not up to managing Spielboden, are taken off on a promenade, either through the woods towards Saas-Grund, or up around the moraine.

Saas-Fee has, of course, long been famous for climbing. Now many of the guides bear the names of their well-known guiding ancestors. One finds amongst these people a true love of the mountains, and it is with the greatest ease that you can persuade any one of them up the nearest *viertausender*. (I am quite prepared to follow provided this does not turn out to be the Dom Ostwand or the Teufelsgrat on the Taeschhorn!) The possibilities of ski-touring in the area are immense, and even early in the season it is possible to do day tours, some of which only involve a short climb, and a run down that beginners can cope with. In the later season, many of the surrounding mountains can be climbed with ski, the easiest of which, the Allalinhorn, is a very enjoyable climb. A lot of the tours are started from the Langefluh Hut (9,416 ft.). Next year the Seilbahn will extend up to this hut, greatly increasing the area of downhill ski-ing, and opening up a superb run over the Fee Gletscher. This run will have to be very carefully marked for crevasses before a lot of people can be let loose on it, otherwise numbers returning to the village are going to be sadly depleted! To the east is the route up to

the Britannia Hut *via* the Egginerjoch, by which one would pass if going over the Adler Pass to Zermatt, or beyond, over the Haute Route to Chamonix.

The combination of great mountains, the fascination of the village, and the very welcoming and charming people who greet you there, not to mention its romantic name and associations, all add up to making Saas-Fee well worth a visit.

FROM SKIS TO GEES

By E. S. MACFIE

THERE COMES a time for most of us when the practice of a much loved sport no longer has the same allure; in fact if we are honest we may have to admit that it has no lure at all. *Anno domini*, with its attendant rusty creakings, increasing responsibilities, and the absence of old friends, certainly contribute to the general malaise, but alone these things cannot wholly account for it. There still remains the hard fact that our chosen sport holds no more surprises for us. We can no longer astonish ourselves. We can measure our limitations exactly, and willy-nilly dull caution intervenes.

Unless one is to become a vegetable something must be done. It can be done. All that is necessary is to venture something with an element of the unknown about it. I know, because I have just done it. I have become "horsey."

It all started at Badminton this year when I visited the Horse Trials. A tyro on strange ground, I looked about me till I saw a distant notice which said "Start." I made for it, thinking it might be as good a place as any to make a beginning. The spot was inaccessible by direct route owing to a wide expanse of water between it and me. Eventually reaching my objective by a circuitous route, I found it no longer said "Start." It said "Finish." In my beginning is my end, I thought, and proceeded to walk the course in a direction now presumably widdershins. This made little difference, however, as there was not a horse to be seen, just countless people all walking purposefully as if they knew exactly where they were going. As nobody was walking in the same direction as anybody else, I did rather wonder where they all seemed so certain they were going.

All this time a loud voice from somebody hidden in a nearby tree kept telling me that "Airs and Graces" was just coming up to The Quarry, or that some other horse was coming down, or going out, or into some other place, and still, as far as I was concerned, not a horse heaved into sight. Then quite suddenly I saw one! It was coming straight towards me but it was riderless. Loud shouts, this time from visible human agents, called all around me, "Catch it! Catch It!" "What, Me!" I thought, paralysed with fright. But it was me and the honour of the Ladies' Ski Club, the Kandahar, the Eagle, not to

mention the Ski Club of Great Britain, were at stake, so towards the creature I began to run. I ran very fast, wishing all the time that I had a broken leg and could only hobble, for I was making on it—not surprising, as it was still coming towards me. What should I do if we actually met!

At home I have a book called "What Every Scout Should Know." It tells one how to do all sorts of things, from how to make a rat's skin into a muff for grandma, to how to stop a runaway horse in a milk-float in a crowded street. As I ran bravely on I remembered every detail of grandma's muff making, but not a thing about the runaway horse. Anyway, my problem animal had no milk-float, so the book wouldn't have helped much.

Nearer and nearer! If only I could trip or get bogged down in some lovely mud! Then, horror or horrors, another horse! this time chasing me from behind! It thundered past, flinging up great clods of earth all over me, and when I could eventually see again—behold, I was saved! This horse had a rider on top, and the two of them neatly gathered in the runaway, and that was that.

After this unnerving adventure, I felt I should take cover, so crawled off to a dank and dripping wood, as far as I could possibly get from where I had started. Here the course wandered over many fearsome hazards, and I thought surely here I shall see something. I did. Having just picked myself up after falling flat on my face on the slippery muddy path. I stepped aside to allow a small but surer-footed lady to pass me. It was the Queen!

After so eventful an introduction to the horse world, it was to be expected that the urge to progress remained strong. On returning home I immediately rummaged in the loft and wrested my old jodhpurs from the jaws of two disappointed moths. With the help of pulleys I was able to squeeze into them, and even to zip the zipper. An ancient bowler completed the picture. All that was missing was the horse, and this was soon remedied, as my nearest neighbour has a fat and kindly pony called Jenny.

On the strength of my apparently successful equestrian disguise, I was allowed to borrow dear Jenny, so, dismounted, we set forth to find a quiet grassy lane suitable for our maiden voyage. There is just such a lane close by the village bus-stop, and not unnaturally when Jenny and I arrived there was a small gathering waiting for the bus. Better not look pusillanimous, I thought, and at once attempted to mount. It was impossible. I had forgotten that the already tightly stretched jodhpurs would not allow for any bending of the limbs whatever. Perhaps just as well I thought, but was not to get away with it as easily as that. Two gallant members of the bus queue moved forward, both trying to outspeed the other in their eagerness to help. It was a dead-heat, so the leg-up was of double volition. I went clean over the top.

My collar bone is knitting nicely now, thank you, and they tell me it is an essential for every aspiring horsewoman sooner or later, so progress has been made.

AMONG THE PEAKS OF THE STUBAI ALPS

By SUSAN MARTIN

THE S.C.G.B. chose this year to take its Touring Party to the Stubai Alps, which lie south of Innsbruck, between the Oetzal and the Brenner, where many of the peaks and passes form part of the Austro-Italian frontier. This article does not set out to describe in detail the tours completed and the terrain which we came to know so well during our fortnight's glacier touring; these facts have already been admirably recorded in Ski Club publications. Nor does it have any pretensions to be the report of a seasoned tourer. Its aim is rather to sketch some of the impressions of a raw but intensely enthusiastic recruit to ski-mountaineeing.

The Stubaital contains no highly developed ski resorts, which explains why it is less well-known to British skiers than the neighbouring valley of the Oetz. There are, however, a number of delightful, unsophisticated villages such as Neustift, with its large church, where we disembarked from our bus on March 9th and did some last-minute shopping in preparation for the trek up to the Franz Senn Hut. Here some of the party bought maps of the district and, to persuade themselves that the holiday had really begun, sent the first postcards back to England. Franz Steindl, from the Zillertal, who has for many years guided S.C.G.B. touring parties in Austria, had already joined us in Innsbruck, and here in Neustift the party was completed by Sepp Salchner, who was to be our second guide. The climb up to our first base entailed a walk of three hours on foot, followed by about an hour and a half on skins. I was thankful now for having spent the previous night in Innsbruck; for most of those who had alighted that morning from the Snowsports Special the trek ended not a moment too soon. No "breaking-in" to this sort of holiday, I soon realised, and prior fitness was obviously essential to survival!

The Franz Senn Hut, named after the founder of the German and Austrian Alpenvereine, is large and well-equipped, but we would certainly have appreciated it more had we been given the sleeping accommodation which we had booked. As it was, the hut was crowded to about twice its capacity, and the girls were given any available *matratzen*, while most of the men had to spend the first few nights camping in the corridors. The position, however, was accepted cheerfully and we managed to install ourselves at a table in the kitchen, where some revived themselves with strong drinks while others began the daily ritual of ordering several litres of steaming *tee* and proceeding to brew the tea which they had wisely brought out from home. Now for the first time we could take stock of one another: seven girls and nine men plus the two guides. This number included two members of the L.S.C.; one of them an Australian spending several months in Europe.

No time was lost in buckling down to a splendid programme of tours and on most mornings a start was made some time between seven and nine o'clock. On days when our destination was a pass,

the chief excitement lay in the run down and the gauging of the snow conditions on the different slopes, but on the eight occasions when we made attacks on summits the real thrill came on taking our ski off some way below the top, wedging them firmly into the snow and roping up for the final ascent. Our most magnificent peaks, the Schrankogel and the Zuckerhüt, both entailed climbs up ridges, steep and exposed in places, so we were glad of the rope at times. Once the summit was reached we would tramp round in the available space, greet one another with "Berg Heil!" and shake hands all round until the ropes were so knitted up that it was hard to untangle them to start down again!

It was on the Gipfel descents that Franz's qualities as a psychologist were most in evidence and he would keep up a running commentary to encourage the nervous. "*Das ist nur ein Kuhweg*," he would announce gaily, whereupon someone would remark that some cows were more easily driven than others. One girl with tight trousers caused great mirth when Franz, seeing her slip on a rock, suggested that the Dame needed crampons on her bo-bo! He was obviously in his element on the rocks and his tremendous love for the mountains became most apparent and infectious when we were on or near a summit, and during the runs down over the glaciers his great experience enabled him to spot the slopes with the best snow and to choose a line suitable for the varying members of the party. His humour did not fail even towards the end of a tiring day, and those within earshot were amused when, on seeing one of the girls fall over, he turned and said to her cheerfully, "*Macht nichts, gut gepolstert!*" Franz and Sepp knew only a few words of English and very rarely used them.

We were incredibly lucky with the weather. Each time an early start for a major tour had been planned we were blessed with a day of cloudless skies and views of intense beauty and clarity. Landmarks could be picked out as far distant as the Grossglockner in the east and the Bernina group in the south-west. But the weather was not so settled as to prevent us from seeing the mountains in their many moods. On cold and windy days when they were partly obscured by clouds they seemed wild and savage; quite different beings from the serene and peaceful ones one knew spread out beneath blue and sunlit skies. One day the clouds descended suddenly when we were high above the hut and the mountains took on a more frightening aspect as we made our way slowly down, following the tracks in which we had previously climbed. It is disappointing to be deprived of a good run down after climbing for many hours, but one does not set out for a touring holiday expecting to have as much downhill running as during a holiday spent ski-ing on or near the *piste*. The compensations, however, are innumerable. It is possible to recall almost every moment of a perfect day; every slope climbed and each turn on the way down; no mob to bar the view of the mountains on the way up; no lunatics hurtling down regardless of their own or others' safety. Climbing on skins also has its own peculiar fascination.

During the first few days I have to admit that it was chiefly will-power which drew me to the top, but acclimatisation soon had its effect. This, and the indication of some of the finer points of technique—breathing, stick-work, and distancing—which all play their part in establishing rhythm, transferred a dull slog into hours of joy demanding relatively little physical effort and having a strange and agreeable brain-washing effect.

During the twelve days' ski-ing we experienced almost every conceivable condition, ranging from sun and wind crust through wet new snow to spring snow and perfect powder in which one could either turn or *schuss*, happy in the belief that one could ski well. Disillusionment came with the first patch of crust, but this was forgotten again in the joy of finding another slope where powder remained. I had reason to be most grateful for experience gained during the past two seasons in "off-the-*piste*" ski-ing with S.C.G.B. representatives. We attempted, of course, to ski as correctly as possible, and indeed no one was anxious to rush on down over the wonderful wide snow-fields at break-neck speed, carrying, as we were on some days, a heavy rucksack, and particularly after having spent several hours working our way up. One was glad to have time on the descent as well as during the climb to turn and admire a hanging glacier or the sun's rays shining through the translucent green *séracs* of an impressive ice-fall. On the many sunny days our several expert photographers were in their element and the camera buttons rarely stopped clicking, even during the most hazardous portages when it seemed that both hands were already fully occupied carrying ski and sticks and hanging on to ropes.

Snow-craft and the mysteries of the mountains were not all that was unfolded by Franz, Sepp, and Kenneth Smith, our experienced leader. One morning it was snowing hard so we remained in the cellar of the hut, learning various knots and practising the construction of rescue luges from the barest essentials; one pair of ski and sticks and a length of avalanche cord. The difficulties involved in this operation even inside the hut made us realise the importance of ski-ing with the utmost care in the high mountains. In the evening Franz would impart all sorts of useful information and we learnt that the most important foodstuffs in the mountain were sugar, for energy, and fats, for warmth. Most of us were generally tired enough to be glad to hit the hay (or rather *matratzen*) soon after the evening meal, but there was no lack of conversation among a party with such widely differing jobs and interests. Sooner or later, of course, the talk would always turn once again to the joy which absorbed us all and we would discuss the relative merits of resort ski-ing and touring.

Unlike most ski-ing holidays, the magic does not vanish immediately one leaves the heights. After almost a fortnight spent among rocks, snow and ice, it was a joy to descend into the welcoming valley, to see the softer colours and the early spring flowers, and to hear the sound of running water again. During the hour's bus ride down to Innsbruck we turned in our seats for glimpses of the snow-

capped mountains which we had left, rising above the green and friendly valley. The buildings of the town had a strange air, and we looked with astonishment at people wearing unfamiliar garments such as skirts or ties, while they gazed back at our faces, dark from the sun of the glaciers.

Every day of this holiday was so full that the time slipped by in a flash, but in experience it might have covered a span of many weeks. I have no hesitation in describing it as the best holiday I have ever spent and could not have wished for a finer introduction to ski-mountaineering. What I have written is with no intention of implying that ski-resorts are overrated; far from it. Ski-ing from resorts is the greatest fun, but is hard to compare with touring. No article or description had managed to give me any real idea of what to expect, so I was prepared both for the best and for the worst; however, I was confidently expecting the best and was in no way disappointed. I shall always be grateful to all the party which endured so patiently the exuberance of its youngest member! While hesitating to offer suggestions to such an experienced body as the members of the L.S.C., I would urge anyone who has not yet spent a touring holiday to try this most rewarding type of ski-ing.

DO YOU ENJOY YOUR SKI-ING?

By LOTTI SMITH

I HAVE been asked, nay blackmailed, into writing an article for the L.S.C. BULLETIN, but one cannot refuse the Editor of your magazine any request she might make, and so here I am penned to the writing table in the midst of a broiling hot summer trying to appease her.

Usually if I do write articles on ski-ing, the main theme is always "Do's" and "Don'ts," and have this but not that, but I have promised myself that this time I shall do nothing of the sort. If I have to write, I might just as well enjoy myself, too.

First of all I am going to ask you a question: "Do you enjoy your ski-ing holiday? Do you really enjoy ski-ing?" It is not such a silly question as it might at first seem to be. Let me analyse it.

I know so many friends and acquaintances of mine who torture themselves miserably if they have a day's unsuccessful ski-ing. How can one have a day's unsuccessful ski-ing? By their standard it could be that they had not yet achieved the art of *Wedeln* to the perfection of a Toni Sailer, that, in trying to learn this new technique, they have completely forgotten that ski-ing is not really an art they must master at all costs, but primarily a sport to enjoy, a sport in which to relax and completely forget the cares of the world, no matter what the standard of their ski-ing might be. There are others of my friends whose day's ski-ing could be spoiled because someone else was ski-ing so much better than they did . . . and why, oh why, could they not

do it as well? Endless discussions and post-mortems all during tea time, continuing into cocktail time, and still going on throughout dinner, on the various aspects of one's failings . . . so boring and so tedious over what should be so utterly carefree.

Whilst I admit straight away that it is good and proper that one should always try to improve one's standard in any sport, it should not be to the cost of entirely forgetting why one goes in for sport, *i.e.*, relaxation and enjoyment. All else comes afterwards. No matter what the standard of your ski-ing might be, whether you are a beginner, a mediocre or an expert skier, you should always bless the day that started you on this sport. There is no finer soul restorer than a day on your ski. If the day is fine and the sun shines and the snow is perfect . . . one could want no more in life than that . . . so enjoy it, enjoy every minute of it, and if you fall a hundred times on the way down, go on enjoying it—it's worth it. The glorious relaxed physical tiredness in the evening, the things seen and felt during the day, the good comradeship of your fellow skiers, all these things make up for pure enjoyment of the sport.

If you stand on top of a mountain on a good, golden day, the whole wide mountain world at your feet, miles of glistening slopes waiting to be taken by you, what does it matter whether you can *wedel* down in great style, or approach it more timidly in your old familiar style, so long as you can enjoy every minute of such a God-given day?

And so I exhort you, if you do take up ski and sticks, take them up with a light heart, and a care free mind, and let nothing, nothing, deter you from enjoying every minute of your ski-ing days . . . not even the fact that you cannot *wedel*. It's not worth it.

SKI-ING IN SELVA

By MRS. E. MACASSEY

HAVING spent a fortnight at Selva in the Italian Dolomites, my husband and I think it deserves to be better known to British skiers. Selva (5,000 ft.) is in the Val Gardena, which is part of the German-speaking South Tyrol, and is reached from Innsbruck *via* the Brenner Pass to Chiusa, where one changes into a *trenino*, a sort of Emmet train. Alternatively, one can go up by road. The train, though slower, is rewarding for its revelations of the early days of steam transport, and for the lovely scenery.

We were there from January 27th to February 9th and, in common with most centres last winter, had perfect weather. The sun was hotter than I have ever known it in high altitudes at that time of

year, but owing to very hard night frosts the snow remained good. The enormous variety of runs face in all directions except due south. There are really two main ski-ing areas, each with its main hoist. The Ciampinoi lift of continuous buckets, each holding two persons (technique as for getting on and off a moving bus), takes one up 2,000 feet on the south side of the valley. From the top there are a variety of descents, all north facing or thereabouts, though the race-course straight down to Selva is the only one really steep and difficult run. From Ciampinoi, by "Snakes and Ladders" progression (downhill ski and uphill chairlifts), a wide area to the east can be reached all the way to the Sella Pass. The ski-ing is open and easy with superb views, and dotted around the slopes are three *Rifugios*, really small hotels, where we ate lunch in deck chairs in the sun. The runs to the west finish at villages below Selva, and are unpisted. We did one of eight kilometres, and had it entirely to ourselves.

To the north of Selva, the chair-lift to Danteceppies rises another 2,300 feet. From the top one can ski down the far side to the Gardena Pass, where there is another excellent *Rifugio*, and on down easy slopes for about 2,000 feet. Returning by ski and chair-lifts to the top of Danteceppies, there is a steepish run back to Selva, the second part down a glade of varying width. This is best done in the afternoon.

Around Selva there are at least a dozen ski-lifts, four chair-lifts and the bucket, prices ranging from 300 lira for Danteceppies and Ciampinoi, to 50 lira for the shorter lifts—we got about 1,780 lira to the pound. Unfortunately there are at present no punch tickets or combined *abonnements*, though in some cases books of tickets can be bought for individual hoists. To remove gloves and fiddle with paper money could be a bit of a nuisance in bad weather.

The ski school appeared to be good and well organised, though I doubt if many of the teachers spoke English. During the carnival all the ski teachers, about forty strong, skied down the mountain in the evening in "follow my leader" turns, each holding aloft a flaming torch, a most impressive sight.

We stayed in a very comfortable grade A hotel-pension, and had a good room with private bath, south balcony and excellent food, for £2 a day each. There is at present no night life. The one big hotel did not open until February. It is too far down the valley to get any sun in winter and looked rather depressing.

For the area covered, Selva would be hard to beat; furthermore, as the peaks are perpendicular rock rising from relatively low contours, avalanche trouble is negligible.

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