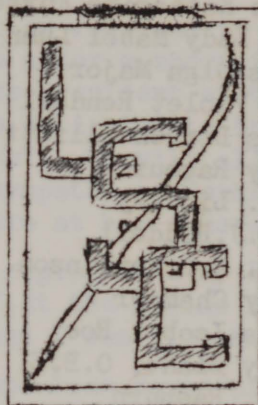




LADIES' SKI CLUB BULLETIN

1978



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THE LADIES' SKI CLUB 1977-78

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Lady Lunn Mrs.K.Smith

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1924-26 The Lady Denman, C.B.E.  
1926-29 Dame Katherine Furse, G.B.E.  
1929-31 The Lady Mabel Lunn  
1931-33 Miss Olga Major  
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1935-38 Miss Doreen Elliott  
1938-45 Lady Raeburn  
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1948-51 Mrs.J.Riddell  
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1968-72 The Hon. Mrs. Raynsford  
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Miss S.Stops  
Tripps End  
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Lady Elizabeth Greenacre

Committee (including date of election)

Mrs. G. Adam	1977	Miss E.Leverson.M.B.E.	1975
Mrs. G. Buckwell	1975	Mrs.J.Moncrieff	1975
Miss J.Gladstone	1975	Mrs.J.Pettifer	1976
Mrs.T.Hartley	1977	Miss S.Richards	1977
Mrs.M.Hayward	1977	(co-opted Member for Villars Races: Miss F.Balme)	

THE LADIES' SKI CLUB

1978

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I don't think I am very good at writing a report and, in fact, with all thanks to those who have sent in material for this Bulletin, most of the Club's activities have been covered elsewhere, so this can be blissfully short.

Firstly, though, I am very sad to record that Nancye Smith died in June after a short illness. Nancye had been elected a Vice-President at the last A.G.M. and in her own words "was delighted to be asked and to get back to helping the Club". We will all miss her very much and send all our sympathy to Geraldine, Sue and Penny. Several members were at her funeral.

The Club has been represented by Elizabeth Hussey, Anne Drummond or myself at the Alpine Racing Clubs Electoral College meetings and I went to the N.S.F. A.G.M.

Elizabeth Murray and Joan Raynsford gave invaluable assistance at the Lowlanders' in Val d'Isere. The Arnold Lunn Trophy was won by Lody Pieters (Dutch); Fenella Balme (now Lees) once again did a great job at Villars, and my thanks to Fenella and her husband David for all they do at the Schoolgirls' Races.

The Ski Kit Mart made £213. We will hold it again this year as it does provide a very useful service and is also an invaluable source of revenue for us to continue to support racing.

The Federation was in urgent need of cash during the past year in order to carry on with the racing programme so we donated £100 outright and loaned them £200. This sum can be recalled at any time by us if we need to. As well as this, we were able to continue our support to the Girls team and also to the Schoolgirls' races, and we shall do so again this coming season.

It was fun to have the Lunch at home on the 10th June, and despite temperatures more usually met at the top of the Schilthorn everyone had a good time. I think Beryl Spence is the undisputed Putting Champion despite appalling hazards such as Jemma Riddell removing her ball, a good dog fight taking place in the middle and swarms of children generally getting in the way. The Junior K's played the Junior LSC's at cricket (result a Draw and no windows broken). Although the Kandahar were supreme at Ping Pong, Jimmy declared a truce. Nat Garrett's super present of two table tennis bats were raffled and won by two of the younger participants. Our thanks to Nat for his generosity, and we were able to put the proceeds, nearly £8.00, towards the Racing Fund.

My thanks to Mrs. Stannard for once again producing this Bulletin for the Club and for all the time and work it involves.

My thanks also to all the Officers and Committee for their work throughout the year, and especially to Marion Park for taking on the job of Hon. Secretary.

Finally, I would just like to say how much I have enjoyed being your President during the past three years.



## CLUB NOTICES

### Dates to Note

- |                      |                                                                                                                |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tues. 24th Oct. 1978 | A.G.M. and Cocktail Party with Raffle: 5.30 p.m. at 118, Eaton Square.                                         |
| 11th-19th Nov. 1978  | Daily Mail Ski Exhibition.                                                                                     |
| Wed. 8th Nov. 1978   | Ski Kit Mart at the Ski Club 12 noon - 7 p.m.                                                                  |
| 2nd-4th Feb. 1979    | British Schoolgirls' Races - Villars.                                                                          |
| Sun. 24th June 1979  | Picnic Lunch at Norton Court, Teynham, Kent, by very kind invitation of Mrs. J. Pettifer (see notice overleaf) |

### SKI KIT MART

Could you please note the following:-

1. Goods to be brought to the Club on the day only. It is not possible for the Club to receive skis or boots before that.
2. Goods worth £5 or more will be sold on commission (25% to the Club). Please come with a tie-on label giving price required for sale, name, address and tel. No. and a stamped-addressed envelope.

We must make a rigid rule about skis and boots:

Adult Boots - Clip boots only.

Children's Boots - any - in reasonable condition.

Skis - not over 200 cms. It is a waste of time to bring and then have to collect them as they simply do not sell !

3. Unsold articles, boots and skis worth over £5 will be kept for ten days at the Ski Club c/o

Elizabeth Hussey (235.4711).

Any other articles taken in on a non-commission basis, and not sold, will be disposed of.

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L.S.C. LUNCH - SUNDAY, 24th JUNE, 1979

Pat Pettifer has very kindly invited the LSC to her home, for which we thank her very much. Everyone welcome, from 11 a.m. onwards bringing your own lunch or barbecue, and drink. Pat will provide tea. Be prepared for anything and everything from squash and tennis to volley-ball in the swimming pool.

We'll cease to challenge the Kandahar, as they invariably win, but K members are very welcome that day.

Directions from London - by car:-

over Westminster Bridge or by the South Circular Road to the A2 (to Rochester). After 25 miles the A2 becomes the M2. Continue down the M2 for another 25 miles. Take exit 6 to Faversham. Turn left at main road. DO NOT go into Faversham. Go through Ospringe. After about 3 miles ignore the first sign to Provender and Norton. Take the next sign left near the Esso garage.

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BADGE AND SWEATER

These are priced at £1.25 and £5.00 respectively and can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer - Miss S. Stops, Tripps End, Twyford, Hants.

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SKI CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Ski Club of Great Britain is again organising Young People's Parties, Family Parties etc. These parties are immensely popular. For further details contact Fenella Lees (Balme) at the Ski Club.

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MEMBERS' NEWS

We congratulate

Tess Hampton, on the birth of a son  
Gina Sopwith, on the birth of a daughter

Best wishes on Marriage to

Fenella Balme now Mrs. David Lees  
Suzannah Hensman now Mrs. William Ian Simpson  
Penny Hobson now Mrs. Vincent Hedley-Lewis  
Gilda Saw now Mrs. Jeremy Buckwell

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Mrs. Skotzen has resigned.

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Two years ago we said in the Bulletin that the Members list would be published every three years, so this is just a reminder that there will be an up-to-date list published with the Bulletin next year.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ros Hepworth died last year on the day the Bulletin went to press. Many members were at her Memorial Service and a close friend writes:-

"St. Peter's, Eaton Square, was full for the memorial service for Ros on 13th October, 1977. The number of young people present paid tribute to her friendship for all, regardless of age.

Ros's life was the D.H.O. and she took endless trouble to help in training young racers. She had open house in Caversham Street, where the happy atmosphere was largely due to her great sense of humour.

Towards the end of her life Ros looked after her two elderly sisters, hastening the deterioration of her own health. She will be

- 5 -

warmly remembered by all who knew her, and future skiers will hear of her as a legend through the bequest she left for their training".

M.M.

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Nancye Smith, Ken's widow, died suddenly on July 2nd.

"In the ski-ing world she worked devotedly - always insisting on remaining in the back-ground - for the SCGB, the DHO and the Kandahar schoolgirl races. For us, she must have done more, and done it for longer, particularly for the Ski Kit Mart, than almost anyone else.

Her election as Vice-President was to her a totally unexpected honour, which gave her tremendous pleasure.

For those of us who have known, skied with, laughed with and loved her for over 40 years, an enormous gap yawns in our lives. Our love and sympathy goes out to her daughters, Penny, Geraldine and Sue.

Her most fitting epitaph would seem to be. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do that with all thy might and leave the issues calmly to God"

PMF

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The A.G.M. last year was quite well attended and many more members, guests and friends, arrived for the Cocktail Party. The Raffle always helps to swell the racing fund and goes to the girls' team, so I hope as many of you as possible will be able to come again this year.

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"And this chap clearly wondered just what he'd wandered into"-

A recently joined member of the Ski Club wandered into the clubhouse one evening -

"Have I come into the wrong building? There seems to be a gathering of female O.A.P's" Strangely though, the conversation did touch on skiing -

"Did you say they are skiers? Surely you mean they were skiers "

"Some of them take their grand-children skiing; a few have given up due to arthritis or old injuries, but quite a few still ski (and keep up) with young men like you ! "

M.M.



.....AND THE SKIING NEWS.....

Pauline Sitwell skied with an Eagle party in Zweisimmen and writes -

"With the Eagles we skied from the 14th of January - our first week in Zweisimmen and then a mini-bus down to Chantemerle via Grenoble and fabulous Col de Cauteret looking like the Himalayas, all brand new snow and we were lucky to get through.

The skiing is super open country 'larch trees' again like Sansicario last year, varied and interesting above an historic valley.....the Saracens were 'halted' at Briancon just down the road, and the old farms still show the early fortified look, while one of the village churches had a facade of an early Roman "piscina" with the central pillar of the three entrance arches set in a Balbek-like carved animal.....the church itself being about 12th century.....lots of ancient history had one had the time to forage.

Returning was quite an experience. The plane couldn't land at Turin so we belted through the snow down to Pisa - an amazing journey travelling through the night on that famous tunnelled road."

.....Madeliene Marx had a lovely day in Mâiren having come over with a DHO party from Wengen.....

"Did I tell you we skied from Schilt-horn to Kiental, starting by walking along a dizzy ridge for about an hour? Ski boots are not the best equipment to walk in, carrying heavy skis, with a sheer drop on either side. It reminded me a bit of the former walk from Hohtaligrat to Rote Nase above Zermatt!"

.....Mary Mackenzie went farther afield -

"SKIING IN MOSCOW"

"Sitting in front of a typewriter in the middle of June it is difficult to write about skiing anywhere, particularly in a country left a few months ago, but I cast my mind back to what seems like another world to

give a description of skiing in Moscow which may give some idea of what it was like.

The land around Moscow is very flat, the only hills the Lenin Hills, which by downhill skiers' standards are mere pimples on the horizon. They are about 15 minutes drive from the centre of Moscow: there exists a somewhat nerve-racking tow - you hook your S shaped piece of metal on the moving wire and hang on for dear life. This was not usually working though when I went skiing in the lunch hour on fine days, so it meant skiing down the short slope - all of 45 seconds - and then plodding up again! Very good for the figure and lovely to be out of Moscow and having some exercise! The majority of people who ski though are cross country skiers. At week-ends one can see many Soviet families out on skis, but as the land is so flat it is not really skiing, more a form of fast walking and an excellent way of keeping warm in very cold temperatures!

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Many congratulations to Paula Boyagis for achieving B.A.S.I. 3.

B.A.S.I.

by Paula Boyagis

B.A.S.I., the "British Association of Ski Instructors" hold several qualifying courses a year both in the Alps and in Aviemore, Scotland. To become a Basi 1 - a top ski instructor with international recognition - one has to work through Basi 3 and Basi 2, which I can assure you, is no easy task.

Basi 3 can be attempted without any previous instructing experience, though this is of course valuable. Before taking Basi 2 one must instruct for a minimum of nine weeks with a ski school, followed by at least a season before Basi 1.

I don't think anyone would dispute the fact that Basi, quite rightly, set their standards high. Their teaching

method has been internationally accepted, and is kept up to date. In 1964, the association was invited to become a member of the International Ski Instructors Association, since which time they have sent delegates and demonstration teams to technical meetings and congresses.

At the end of this April I attended a Basi course in Scotland, and thankfully finished up on the first rung of the ladder, with a Basi 3 qualification. The course lasted a fortnight with the day spent on the snow, followed by a lecture in the evening, all of which was well organised and enjoyable. (Certainly, in my experience, despite the unreliability of weather conditions, Scotland being Scotland, always promises a good time!) Despite the considerable failure rate it is a worthwhile course because one learns so much about skiing, snow craft and safety. Not only does one learn how to teach, but one learns the basic principles behind ski technique.

It is surprising how, after years of skiing experience you can suddenly discover just how far you are from being the perfect skier, and what a long road you have to travel before you get there!

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## AN APPRECIATION

We are extremely lucky in the club to have so many helpful people with such varied talents and I should like to express my thanks to just two of them.

For various clubs, ages and standards, they have not only heightened people's enjoyment of skiing during their holidays - they have made them. Whether it is with children, families, middle-aged or the elderly they have the knack and skill to make each one ski a little better and therefore enjoy themselves more.

They teach, they lead, they organise races, skating, tobogganning, indoor games and parties, always keeping the individual's wishes in mind, and on top of this they often drive them around in difficult weather conditions as well, never forgetting the smallest detail or finding others problems too much trouble for them to sort out, to say nothing of their ability to find the best snow available in the area at any time.....

GUESS WHO ? ? ? ?

SOSS and LIZ of course

(I wholeheartedly agree with this.....)

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BRITISH SCHOOLGIRLS RACES

4th Feb. 1978

Despite the dramas leading up to the races caused by the incessant snow, after much persuasion succeeded in getting a piste made on the Stade. Saturday proved to be cold with clear skies which helped the snow conditions. The courses had to be set early Saturday with the Parallel in the morning with 18 teams and the Ladies Ski Club Cup again won by Aiglou College. The Slalom Special for the Atalanta Cup, Viper and Lillywhites had 55 entries. The Curling Hotel kindly presented a Salver which was awarded to the First overall.

Bedaes from Rtersfield sent a team out for the week-end as did one from St.Albans H.S. who all stayed at the Hotel Curling where we were well looked after and managed 3 full days skiing. On the Friday they all had an afternoon's training, unfortunately due to continuous snow this was not possible in the morning.

Michel Datwyler set very good courses and was extremely helpful under difficult conditions.

I would like to thank everybody who gave us so much help in organising the races and it was very good to have Lady Elizabeth Greenacre, President of Ladies Ski Club, in Villars. We are very grateful to Aiglou College for all their help and support in organising the races.

Fenella Lees (nee Balme)

David Lees

RESULTS

Alsen, N	(St.George's)	1st Atlanta - Lillywhites - (Best British) (Best British under 15)
		Curling Salver (overall winner)
Slack, D	(Bedaes)	2nd Atlanta

Tribelhome, J	(Monte Rosa)	1st Viper Trophy (Best foreign student)
Pulsford, F	(Villar Visitors SC K Junior)	3rd Atlanta - 2nd Lillywhites
Schell, S	(Monte Rosa)	2nd Viper
Solomon, L	(St.George's)	Novices Cup (Best student who has not skied before in a competition)
Mendenhall, J	(Brillomont)	2nd year Cup (Best student who has not skied before Winter 1976/77)

Aiglou College won the Ladies Ski Club Cup (team must have at least two British students) with

Ecole Internationale 1V runners up.

The SCGB Trophy for the 1st Foreign Team went to Brillomont 1.

I would like to add my thanks to Fenella and David for organising such a splendid week-end, and for the entire organisation of the races. Also to the Barillon family at the Curling Hotel who looked after us all so well. I would like to thank especially Madame Barillon for presenting the Curling Salver, a new award in the races, to be won by the best overall student, foreign or British.

I would also like to say how much we appreciated Bedales School coming out from England and also Fiona Pulsford who very nobly came out without a school team. We were delighted that Diana Slack from Bedales and Fiona did so well.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

This is to introduce myself as your new, but still "not quite sorted out" Treasurer.

I am grateful to Jill Coke for handing over the books in such good order, and will try to maintain her standard.

Our total reserves are down on last year by only £62.00, but we have lent the Federation £200, as you will read elsewhere. Our finances are very dependant on the Ski Kit Mart, so please continue your support for this function.

My thanks to Johnny Coke for becoming the Club's new auditor, I shall appreciate keeping the family's connection.

Sylvia Stops

EASTER 1978 - HOLIDAY ?

by Betty Arthur

Having skied at Aviemore six times, and on returning home having vowed never to repeat the horror, owing to the unspeakable weather, I found myself again this year taking my three grandchildren,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  and 11, plus two other boys of 12/13 for their second season, because the cost of going abroad seemed prohibitive.

We started well, by train, as owing to kind Kellogg-Cornflakes and his child-free travel, the four of us arrived in Aviemore for the price of one adult. (I am an OAP). For the second year we booked at the Freedom Inn, where all the children and I cooked and slept and had our being. The squalor was quite remarkable.

As this was Eastertime, the crowds were appalling and the queuing endless, made so largely because the tempest caused the White Lady and Corrie-na Ciste chairlifts to be un-useable. So, frozen in the queue, when one did eventually reach the top, one had the pleasure of skiing down against the wind (quite hard to move at times!) in nought visibility, and of course, the runs are too short to warm one up. I thought it was murder but our five children and the thousands of other skiers appeared at the end of the day with (almost all) happy smiling faces.

In addition to battling with nature, there was George  $8\frac{1}{2}$ . He skied like a bomb, a tiny crouching gnome-like figure but seemed totally unable to have all his gear about him. He also had a happy knack of when I called "Ski to me" charging into me like a bull and knocking me down. One day I saw him struggling with boots and ski, and on going to help, found his boots were on the wrong feet. (This is in the best tradition as

I well remember Jeremy Palmer Tompkinson as a small boy in Klosters, falling out of his boots on a run as he had failed to lace them up.)

After six days of blizzard the weather suddenly turned to Alpine glory. Not a cloud in the sky, frost at night and hot sun by day. We had five days of this and were burnt to a frazzle. Our totally blissful five flying figures completed every run on the map, and achieved their silver badges. I dragged them reluctantly up to the top of Cairngorm - so very seldom visible - as I felt they should get there. The mist came down and as the rest of the party set off down the hill, there was George skis on and his jacket still on the summit. (I wonder who fetched it?). We eventually found the others after a good deal of hefty shouting.

During these last days we had been lucky enough to stay in a lovely house on the Spey. (The only snag being that the OAP cooked for 8 instead of 4). Our last evening with a full moon we had a barbecue by a heavenly loch roasting the fish caught after skiing, by the boys. We broke our car trip home by staying with friends in Northumberland. I had carefully packed the children's tidy clothes in one suitcase which flew off the top of my car unnoticed, (since recovered intact), and we thus appeared feeling and looking like refugees. We were rather surprised to find that our hostess had not arrived. She, with the two older boys and a much faster car, had passed us a long way back. It transpired that she had felt sleepy and had taken a quiet snooze under the Forth Bridge.

Leaving Northumberland a day later we had one of the nastiest drives to London one could imagine. Snow blizzard all the way. We cut the first tracks down my home road at 7.30 p.m. and the next morning our ski were found frozen onto the roof of the car.

N.B. Advice to other OAP's. Unless you wish to ski all day; cook and shop, with the additional roles of pack mule, dresser, retriever of missing garments,

etc. DON'T - One compensation: OAP's go up the lifts on a child's ticket !

For me, my next effort at FREEDOM will be to ski on my own.....

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### THE BRITISH SKI CLUB FOR THE DISABLED

by Joan Sturges

"Scuse Signora, but he does not understand" the Italian Ski Instructor waved his stick towards one of his class sprawled in the snow. The Instructor was apologising for one of his pupils who had just been knocked over by a blind skier from a combined party of the British Ski Club for the Disabled and St. Dunstons who spent two weeks in January in San Martino di Castrozza, a delightful small town in the Dolomites.

Choosing a suitable resort for the Club is difficult. Our first concern is the price, then the need to be as near as possible to an easy, open nursery slope with a gentle ski lift, not too far from the village centre, and some runs for the intermediate skiers with uphill transport that our disabled members can manage.

Most French resorts are out as, apart from the cost, they nearly all use self-service high speed button lifts, which, for us are rather difficult. An amputee has his outrigger crutches to carry and needs enough of a stump to be able to get a grip. An arm amputee can't hold the button and work the release mechanism and a blind person needs the button to travel directly in line below the cable, otherwise his skis wander. He is also happier without posts, sharp corners and bridges which have drops beside the tracks. With experience however the blind can master all these provided his Guide is right behind him to talk him up, and that there is a safe run-out at the top.

I think Supertravel viewed our impending stay with considerable alarm; "I don't know if its quite the right place for you" murmured the L.S.C.'s most recent past-President, which thought I kept to myself so as not to cause alarm in the B.S.C.D. The Chalet girls smiled nervously at us as we arrived and hoped we didn't drink too much wine as the bill hadn't arrived yet for the last clients and they didn't know if they'd overspent. Yes, we did drink wine, but the blind are very good dryer-uppers once a tea towel is pressed into their hands, so Virginia, Caroline and Penny cheered up and looked after us very well. We were in the Supertravel block of four adjoining apartments whilst St. Dunstons were in the Colfosco Hotel.

We spent two days on the nursery slope learning the difference between the feel of snow and artificial slopes and mastering the button lift, whilst our leg amputee explored all the runs on more difficult terrain. Then we were ready for Malga Ces, a chairlift leading up to two parallel buttons as well as other lifts too steep for us. The lift men stopped the chairs for each skier wearing a yellow dossard with black stripe across front and back. They were very good to us, helped us on and off, they worried if someone went up without a hat on, and they offered the warmth of their little hut in which to rest and recover strength. Owing to the intense concentration required the blind tire more quickly than others and the Guides find their voices suffered from talking their companion up the lifts as well as down the pistes.

After a couple of days the men didn't have to even slow the chairs down but we always took the precaution of sending a Guide with a red and black striped dossard up first ready to help with the disembarkation. We still fell off buttons now and then, specially if the Guide allowed his attention to wander, so we all became adept at finding our way to the restaurant via deep snow and the car park.

When we moved to the next ski area we had the distinct impression that the lift men were expecting

us and indeed would have felt insulted had we failed to visit their chairlift. On this piste was a short Mogul field which blind skiers found pretty confusing, as did some of their Guides. You could then take a button up again or a wood run with plenty of room and interesting variety down to the top of the nursery slope where we would meet our less capable members who were bravely struggling to gain confidence.

At the end of two weeks we felt everyone had progressed more than ordinary first year skiers for several reasons: they had all learnt the basics at home on artificial slopes; they had individual tuition changing Instructors daily, and they all had the most tremendous determination to learn to conquer this new challenge.

Snow conditions were perfect, the natives friendly and so we voted it the best B.S.C.D. holiday yet.

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#### SEEDS OF SKI-ING SOWN IN THE FIFTIES.

For two or three years a pair of simple Ash skis stood in the garage of my parents' home in the North Riding of Yorkshire. My brother had bought these skis in Austria, shortly after the war, for the price of 40 cigarettes and I had been the proud possessor since the London/North Eastern Railway delivered them to Darlington station.

In 1952 the chance to try the skis out, presented itself in the form of snow in Teesdale but the roads sufficiently clear to drive there. After climbing to the highest part of what was deemed to be a suitable field, my brother yelled instructions from behind as I descended the slope with beginners luck. The safety binding in those days was a simple strap, designed by the SCGB, attached to the heel cable, which in theory pulled the latter off the boot heel in the event of falling too far forward! On reflection, amusingly

primitive by comparison with the sophisticated release bindings now in use.

Previously, as a recent school leaver abroad for the first time, a minute ski-ing seed had been sown whilst on a trip to the top of Jungfrauoch. On a beautiful day in April I had chatted with a Swiss Skier, about to descend from the top of the mountain, and before he set off he offered to take me with him in his rucksack. Little did I know that Wengen would become the resort where I should learn to ski, encouraged so magnificently by an LSC member and her super husband, when returning battered to the Hotel Silberhorn after a day on Manlichen, when (with me on them) my skis ran away. Readers who knew that area in the fifties will recall once the top of Manlichen was left, there was no turning back until Grund. With stemming as my only technique, the eight miles was very touch on the leg muscles!

Before the joys of holidays in Wengen began, a tribute should be paid to the late Mr. Hugh Ross, a pioneer to Scottish ski-ing in so much as he had the courage to open his Hotel, the Nethybridge, near Aviemore, in the month of April, to accommodate a Central Council of Physical Recreation Party which, for future initiation to the sport, included myself. By strange coincidence I had formed a friendship with Mr. Ross and his wife in 1950 whilst on holiday in Bournemouth. Each morning a bus collected the would be skiers for the drive to Aviemore Lodge, from where a daily wet and very long climb on foot to Jean's Hut commenced. The hut which stood then was very small compared to the one now standing. Mr. Kerr Hunter and the late Doctor Peter Shaw (so tragically killed soon afterwards in an avalanche abroad), contributed so much to the organisation, and the fun to be had at the Nethybridge Hotel ceillidhs was tremendous, "who can play the big trombone?" being the current rage. Following that wonderful week I became "hooked" on ski-ing.

Now I am old (and almost grey), but still with a yearning to wander uphill and downdale on skis, even

if more sedately, I shall be eternally grateful for the true friendships made on the slopes through the sport of ski-ing.

Anon. 1978

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"Just in case we've all forgotten the arctic conditions last February in the West Country, the following two articles make for fascinating reading.

The first account is by Sue Nash who lives in Somerset.....

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"A metre of snow fell during the night". These words are magic to those of us who are powder hounds and enough to make us rush our croissants and delicious black coffee in order to be the first up the mountain and (hopefully) leave a trail of knitting through the virgin snow. However, when this happens in Somerset the reaction is somewhat different - an overwhelming desire to turn over and go to sleep until the messy process of a thaw has been completed. If one happens to be married to a farmer and living in Somerset or Devon in February 1978 one has to knuckle to and get on with the digging.....

Snow started falling on Saturday 18th February and we were due out to dinner some 15 miles away. I muttered a few feeble protests about the snow drifting across the main road and perhaps we should cancel out; however, being married to an ex-bobsleigher who has travelled many thousands of miles across Europe in sometimes appalling conditions, the state of the English weather served more as a challenge than a hazard. We duly changed into our finery and set off in the Landrover. Fortunately, some four miles from home discretion became the better part of valour and we returned home. A little silent and myself distinctly relieved - we were not to know that the worst conditions

for the last thirty years were to continue throughout the night.

We awoke on Sunday morning to an amazing and unbelievable sight. The high winds and continuous snowfall had rendered us totally and utterly isolated and dependant entirely upon our own resources.

It was an interesting study in human behaviour to see how people coped in a crisis; some simply sat back and awaited help. Indeed a near neighbour thought she qualified for a helicopter drop as she had exhausted her supply of cigarettes and coal. When are the 'needy' really needy ???

There were, of course, a tremendous number of genuine hardship cases. We were fortunate enough to have electricity and water, others were not. A neighbour, some five miles distant, had to make a bonfire and melt the snow in buckets in order to obtain water. That's no joke if you have thirsty cattle. A tremendous number of us had the soul-destroying task of throwing what milk we couldn't give away, down the drain. To those farmers who, because of lack of electricity, had to milk by hand and then throw it away, it must have been heart breaking. Also amongst the hardest hit were the sheep farmers on the hills with terrific ten metre drifts of snow and sheep appearing from them alive up to two weeks later. We had only a comparatively few sheep and the only way up to them was to dig the ex-Badminton Thoroughbred horse I've had the good fortune to be given, out of his stable, balance a bale of hay across his withers, and head towards the hill - its amazing how accommodating even the most professional animals can become.....

There were also some amusing stories of human ingenuity. An acquaintance of mine had anticipated the snow (as had the weather forecaster, only we hadn't listened), and set too to make himself a pair of skis. Never having had the good fortune to have skied before, his knowledge and materials were somewhat limited. However, after a few hours at the workbench, a pair (well almost), of skis emerged. Ash tops, araldite no

doubt in the middle, and formica soles - quite a remarkable combination you must agree. The bindings were distinctly original too and consisted of an extra large tin of dog meat (empty) nailed to the ski and a simple leather strap round the heel....Perhaps Marker may not have approved but it served the purpose well. When encountered by a fellow enthusiast on an elderly, but conventional, pair of skis, the conversation went as follows - "Gosh, nice to see a fellow skier up here on the Quantocks, but I say, your skis look even older than mine". "Rubbish", retorted my friend, "I only made them yesterday!".

I would like to finish by saying what a marvellous time we had down here in the '78 snow, but it's only wishful thinking. With no traffic moving for those who did have the time to spend on leisure, the only way up the hill was on skis and somehow, if its only the Blackdowns or the Quantocks, the downhill isn't quite as exciting as putting on skins and breaking trail to be met at the top by a never-ending sea of powder, that wonderful feeling of elation and a few litres of Hugelwein as you await the next train.....!"

---oOo---

"The second account is written by Daphne Buxton who is not a member but who has many friends in the Club, and who responded very nobly to my plea for her version of coping in Devon....."

-oOo-

#### ALPINE CONDITIONS IN DEVON

This is a story of almost total failure. However I make an account of it partly because the circumstances were so unusual and partly in case our ineptitudes might be of use should the same sort of thing happen again.

Spreyton is a tiny village 17 miles west of Exeter, 3 miles North of the A.30. and some 700 feet above sea

level. Our weather comes from Dartmoor and can, as a rule, be seen coming for quite some time. It is relevant to my tale that our cows are milked a mile away on a separate farm called Falkedon. The cowman Eric lives at St. Cherries between the two,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from Falkedon.

The week of 13th February snow fell and it turned bitterly cold. Snipe flew around calling and looking for open ground without success. We beat what snow we could off the garden trees, it was frozen on and very heavy. By the evening of Saturday, dark yellowish cloud built up over the moor and it began to blow fiercely. The glass dropped dramatically. Snow fell in increasing quantities. At 5 o'clock, the relief cowman Norman telephoned to announce that his tractor was snowed in and that he was unable to face the weather home on foot. Breathing a sigh of relief that, just 24 hours before, my ten holiday tenants with two babies had managed to leave the old Farm House at the dairy unit, we instructed him to cross the lane and stay with the neighbouring Farmer until we had worked something out. The weather was now such that we insisted he should telephone to confirm he had arrived safely. Within half an hour his two sons and the foreman Ray came in covered in snow and volunteered to make their way to the farmhouse and bring him back, digging out the tractor if possible. He was retrieved by 7 p.m. but the tractor was a non starter and Ray, an unexcitable character, said he'd never seen the like. It was still snowing heavily with a fierce North Easterly gale.

In the morning, the front and back doors were snowed in to the height of three or four feet, the third yard door was more sheltered and egress was possible. Telephone calls to Falkedon elicited no reply so we concluded that Eric the cowman had failed to reach there and was probably stuck at St. Cherries. We decided to attempt to reach St. Cherries on skis as the other men had bullocks and sheep to attend to before any help could be accorded to Falkedon.

Our skis are ancient Heads dating from the 1950's with modern boots and bindings; they are long and unwieldy but of course easy to manouver in soft snow. We set off through the yard with some success. It is in fact slightly up-hill, but so much snow had fallen and drifted into the road that there did not seem to be much gradient. On reaching the last house it was a different story. Visibility became practically nil and the still falling snow drove in our faces with steady venom. Without goggles we would not have been able to see at all. Our principal mistake was in sticking to the road, skiing along the top of the hedge was fine until we reached a gateway where freaks of wind and drift had scooped the snow out nearly down to the tarmac and piled it up to heights difficult to believe in retrospect; these 10ft. drifts were curled into overhangs and very difficult to negotiate owing to the heavy softness of the snow. After the third or fourth of these clammers I began to feel really tired and very wet. It still did not occur to either of us to leave the road because the visibility was so bad. We had travelled just over half the distance when we were caught up by Ray and Norman's two sons who were unable to get to work and helped us till the road was clear. They reported that the snow had blown off the fields to a large extent so walking was possible, though no gates could be opened and there would have to be a search for missing sheep as soon as possible. They also said that the power was off. By this time it was obvious that we should go back, the men were going to be more use at Falkedon, I was exhausted and the power being off entailed all kinds of chores to keep heat and light in the house.

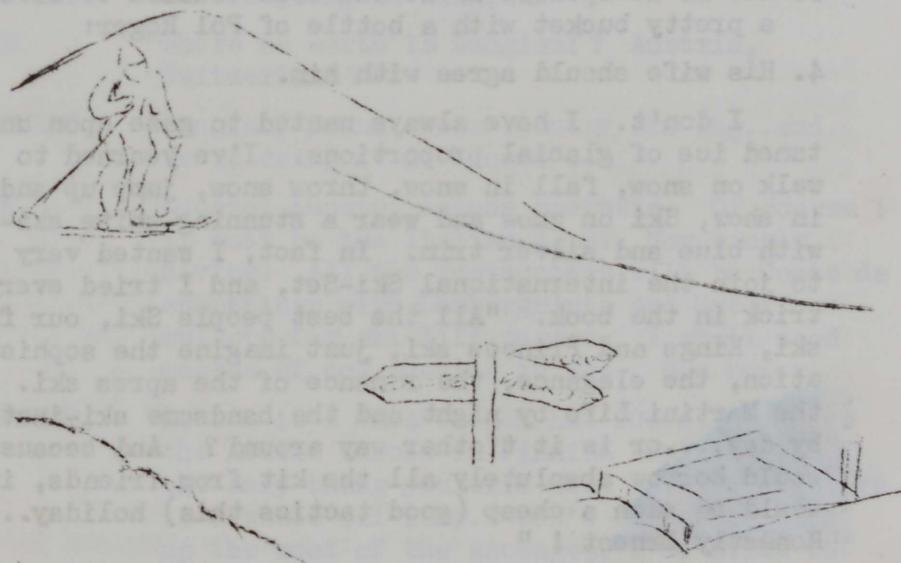
The return journey was totally different. Our tracks had disappeared but by keeping to the top of the hedge as far as possible, we made good progress; at one point I stood still on the hedge-top and was moved forward by the power of the wind alone. It continued to snow and blow for the rest of the day. Monday we had power again, and the search for the 11 missing sheep

was first priority. We decided to make another attempt to reach Falkedon on skis and bring back milk, taking in the field where the sheep were on the way. We travelled very easily over the fields though the snow was now slightly slushy. The wind though still unpleasant and strong had lost the previous day's fury. We crossed several hedges making use of the most thickly drifted spots. We carried spades tied to our backs in case of need. We had to take off skis where a lane entrance, the road, and various gates had led to an enormous drift in the road and you can not climb a gate on skis. Modern boots were good for both walking and skiing provided the top clips were left undone. Side slips and an occasional stem-christie came in useful. The 10 acre field, where the sheep were, had blown virtually clear of snow, with the exception of an immense drift the whole length of one hedgerow. Three men were working with long handled shovels and two dead sheep and several live ones had been retrieved. The men were digging into the snow bank about two feet above the ground and were well below the level of the top of the drift. The snow had begun to melt and was immensely soft and heavy.

My husband abandoned his skis to walk down to Falkedon to fetch milk for the household (along with everyone else we were pouring away hundreds of gallons of milk for a whole week until the road was clear). He told me afterwards that the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile walk was more exhausting than treble the amount of skiing and added that we should have carried far more chocolate on all occasions. I remained with the digging party. I was virtually useless actually digging, from lack of physical strength, but I could search the top of the drift for any trace of discolourisation that might mean buried sheep, without packing the snow down on them and causing further deaths. One of the places proved fruitful and we were all disproportionately cheered to see first dirt, then wool, and finally a ewe appear, bright eyed and apparently none the worse. A further ewe was pulled

out from behind her alive but very numb. We urged her onto her feet taking large handfulls of fleece in both hands and I was interested to notice that the rest of the flock called out to her to join them by the hay.

This was the end of the skiing as far as I and my husband were concerned, when we returned home together to find the power had once more collapsed, this time for 48 hours and I had to attend to domestic matters. Two things remain to be said - a pair of young men from Okehampton skied across very wild moorland country first to Belstone with insulin for a small child and then on to Sticklepath with further medicaments. Any study of a contour map will reveal this to be no mean piece of cross country running. This story was in the local papers but I would like to mention it here. The final point is that we concluded that with more experience we could have skied much more effectively had there been another day of heavy snow, only those on skis would have been able to move at all.





"Finally, another very good friend was press-ganged to write, what was meant to be, a very serious account of Langlaufing, 300 miles inside the Arctic Circle (may I add that neither she nor her husband or small son have ever put skis on in their lives).....Well, the serious account didn't quite turn out that way....."

---oOo---

"WHERE ON EARTH IS LANGLAUF.....?"

By Guelda Waller.

"My husband has always adhered to four basic principles:

1. Good money invested in holidays must yield warm sun, sea, sand and bikinis;
2. Snow should stay on other peoples postcards:
3. Ice is acceptable if it has been trained to live in a pretty bucket with a bottle of Pol Roger:
4. His wife should agree with him.

I don't. I have always wanted to gaze upon untamed ice of glacial proportions. I've yearned to walk on snow, fall in snow, throw snow, jump up and down in snow, Ski on snow and wear a stunning white ski-suit with blue and silver trim. In fact, I wanted very badly to join the international Ski-Set, and I tried every trick in the book. "All the best people Ski, our friends ski, Kings and Princes ski, just imagine the sophistication, the elegance, the romance of the apres ski. It's the Martini Life by night and the handsome ski-instructors by day....or is it t'other way around? And because we would borrow absolutely all the kit from friends, it would be such a cheap (good tactics this) holiday...." Honestly Ernest ! "

I even played the well-known trump-card "It would be such a marvellous experience for the child". But every July I'd be packing the same old box of Enterovioform for the Costa Brava. Until.....

MONDAY

I was cosily frying sausages when Ernest arrived home from a business trip; No sooner had he unpacked the duty-free than I heard him saying that we'd been invited to join a ski-ing party, and that he had accepted, was that O.K. ?

In a state of shock, I dropped a sausage, which, of course, rolled way under the cooker, (I stake my life that it was a man who invented mobile food), and as I tunneled through the dust of history to retrieve it, I was re-arranging tomorrow so that I could zoom up to Harrods for a stunning white ski-suit with blue and silver trim.

"Where are we going? I screamed. (The sausage was still hot)

ERNEST. "We are going to Langlauf"

ME. "Where on earth is Langlauf? Austria, Switzerland?"

ERNEST. "Langlauf means cross-country ski-ing, and we're doing it at Luosto".

ME. "Luosto, Luosto, sounds operatic. Of course ! it must be the Italian Alps. How simply divine. All the instructors will be Comte de somethings with Lamborghinis and Gucci wallets for ski-lift passes. I shall need masses of new evening things. How super.

ERNEST. "Luosto is a rude wooden hut 200 miles above the Arctic Circle in Finnish Lapland, and the only thing you will need for the evenings is a whale-oil lamp. Don't bother to pick up the rest of the sausages, I'll stick to cheese".

TUESDAY

Dashed over to Best Friend, who is an authority on all things ski-ish. "I'M GOING TO SKI IN LAPLAND" I said casually as soon as she opened the door. "Can you lend me absolutely all the kit for Langlaufing?". "Good grief, is that wise? You positively squeak with fright if you stray two streets north of the Bayswater Road", she said, "and I haven't any Langlauf stuff, but I will see what I can do."

WEDNESDAY

Met Best Friend who had spent all day gathering useful information for me from the Ski Club and sports shops etc. She was absolutely whacked so I rewarded her with a double brandy. She told me that Langlauf had become so trendy that only one shop had a complete stock. "Which Shop? tell me, tell me" I trilled, "Harrods, Hartnell, St. Laurent, Hardy Amies?".... "The Youth Hostel Association" she replied. I finished her brandy in one swig.

THURSDAY

Blizzard conditions, but by super-human effort, our bodies braced against the bitter wind and traffic-wardens Ernest and I made a successful traverse of Southampton Row and reached the basement-camp of the Y.H.A..... a labyrinthine store of vibrant orange tents, yellow cycling capes and those funny hook-things you throw over the north face of the Eiger. The clientele were enormous mountain-men wearing seven-league boots, rucksacks, and kettles. They were happily hammering pitons into the carpet with their bare fists, testing the crampons by biting chunks out of them and chortling into their beards that Everest "is much more fun without the oxygen".

I hid my copy of Vogue and told the knee-caps of a passing giant that we needed a beginners Langlauf kit

for Arctic Lapland. "ARCTIC Lapland" thundered the Giant, "You've got to be joking". I converted by Laura Ashley into an impromptu parka, and looked serious. The Giant's disbelief was starting to ricochet. "Arctic, Arctic, are you quite sure you want to go to the Arctic?" He roared. "Y E P" I snarled back, pretending to chew tobacco.

With unremitting scepticism, the Giant built a clothes cairn. Each layer of woollie sock, knickerbocker and boot was punctuated by me chirruping "Have you got it in white with blue and silver trim?" and his sotto voce hisses of exasperation. The summit was eventually reached at approx. £200 past second mortgage. To create a diversion while Ernest picked himself up from his faint, I asked the Giant if they stocked false eye-lash glue that wouldn't congeal in 30 degrees of frost. The Giant clung to Ernest, sobbing, "I beseech you Sir, take Madam on a nice cruise. I've been to the Alaskan Arctic and it's a tough place, it's hell, sheer hell".

I slipped my vertebrae a couple of notches into a Robert Mitcham tilt, "Sonny, my family was coping with adversity before Alaska was even baked. My Grandpa was a brave frontiersman fighting for survival against the privations of the desolate wastelands of the Frozen North".

"I thought he was a ticket collector at Ealing Broadway" said Ernest. "Exactly" I tried in triumph, he who langlaufs loud laughs longest.

FRIDAY

Ernest and I read an excellent "Teach Yourself to Ski" book. The first chapter was a piece of cake, and we taught ourselves to ski down the hall before breakfast. The rest of the book, dealing with technical data proved somewhat daunting e.g. If body-heat loss to calorie-intake ratio is divided by 5 two-thirds cubic fahrenheit-capacity, and multiplied my 10 mph, the result is terminal frostbite. But with the aid of a slide rule we came to the conclusion that this whole skiing

business is a walk-over, provided you have a degree in Quantum Mechanics, Differential Calculus and the knowledge that if you standstill at the north pole, you will freeze to death.

We held a full dress rehearsal. We had, 2 vests, longjohns, 3 jumpers, knickerbockers, 4 long socks, 2 short socks, anorak, scarf, extraordinary spade-shaped boots, sun-glasses and Wally Herbert hats... each.

"Do I look like Capucine in "The Pink Panther?" I asked tearfully.

"More like Daffy Duck in frogman's flippers" said Ern, who bore a striking resemblance to a pregnant mallard.

#### THE NINE DAYS WONDER

We had nine days of wonder, enchantment and fun in Lapland. It was the holiday of our lives and I did ski.... but why is it, that at home I am perfectly aware of which foot is which, and automatically move them in the correct sequence for walking, whilst in the Arctic, I was totally incapable of guessing which ski had crossed over which, and most of my energy and patience was exhausted trying to lift the ski that was stubbornly pinned underneath.....perhaps it's a phenomena of the polar magnetic field. I must go to Murren to see if the same conditions exist there.

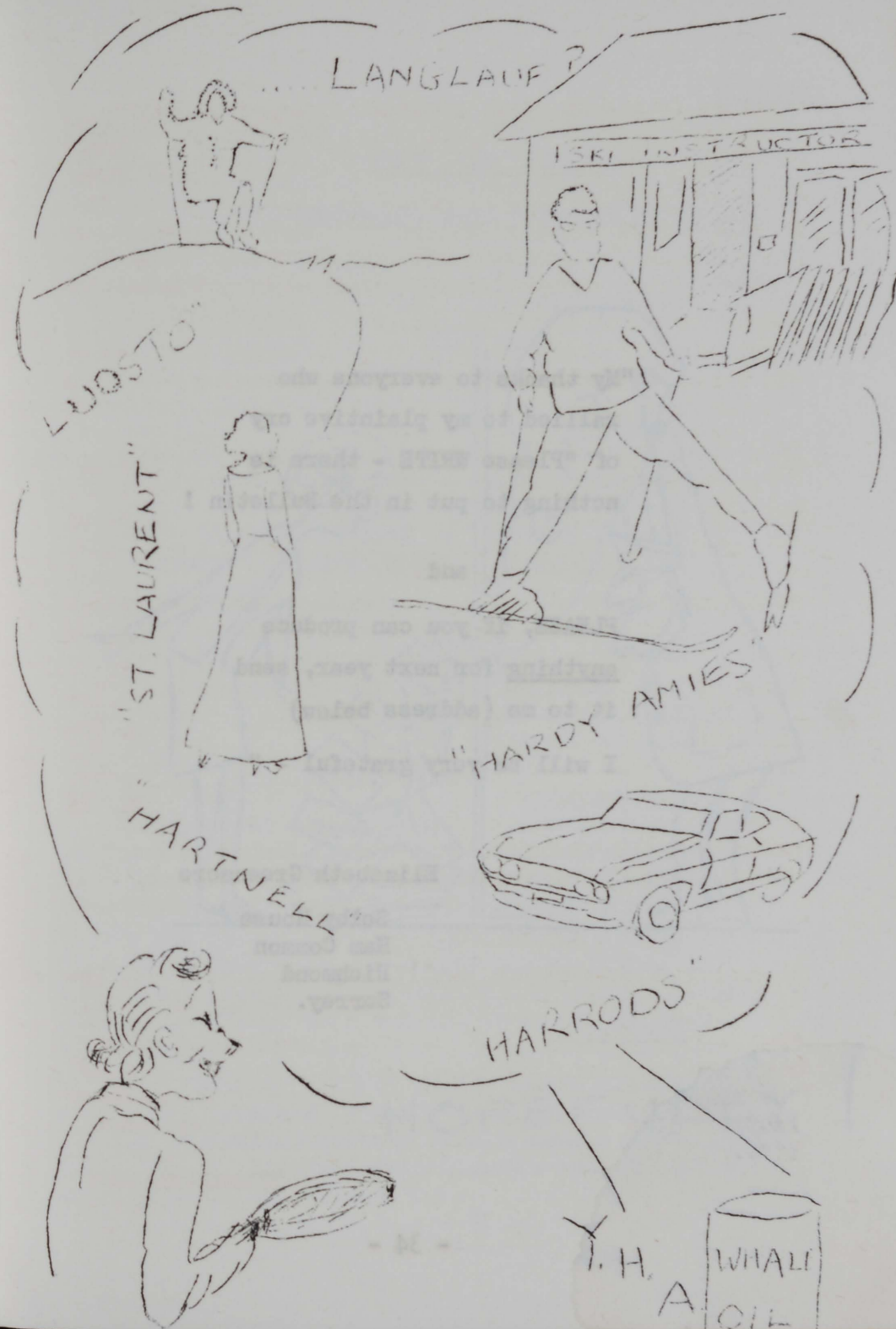
#### THE RETURN

I was now a ski-setter, one of the cognoscenti and the taxi-driver gave me my first opportunity to show off.

"Had a nice holiday love". "Yes, marvellous, we've been ski-ing, Langlauf actually....".

"Oh Yes, Langlauf, Langlauf, very nice. I know Langlauf.....it's just off the A.29 near Prestwick isn't it".....

FINNISH-ed



"My thanks to everyone who  
rallied to my plaintive cry  
of "Please WRITE - there is  
nothing to put in the Bulletin !

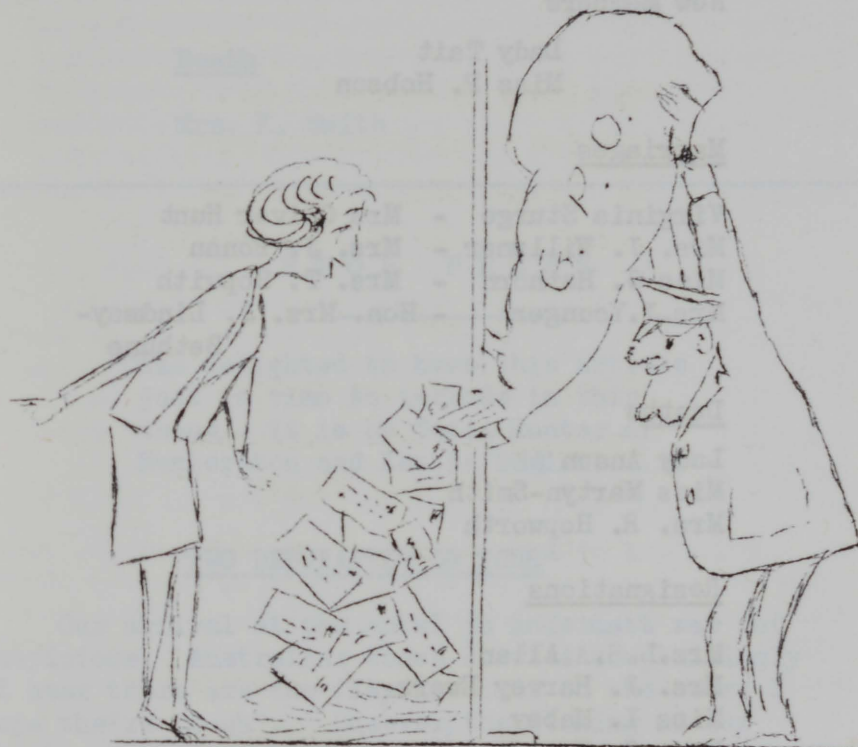
and

PLEASE, if you can produce  
anything for next year, send  
it to me (address below)

I will be very grateful - "

Elizabeth Greenacre

Selby House  
Ham Common  
Richmond  
Surrey.



HOPEFULLY !

APPENDIX

LADIES' SKI CLUB

Changes in Members' List since 1976:

1977

New Members

Lady Tait  
Miss P. Hobson

Marriages

Virginia Sturge - Mrs Oliver Hunt  
Mrs. J. Willsmer - Mrs. J. Ronan  
Miss G. Hathorn - Mrs. T. Sopwith  
Mrs. J. Younger - Hon. Mrs. J. Lindsay-  
Bethune

Deaths

Lady Anson  
Miss Martyn-Smith  
Mrs. R. Hepworth

Resignations

Mrs. L. S. A. Allan  
Mrs. J. Harvey Ewers  
Miss I. Mabey  
Mrs. C. Norman

1978

Marriages

Fenella Balme - Mrs. D. Lees  
Suzannah Hensman - Mrs. W. Simpson  
Fenny Hobson - Mrs. V. Hedley Lewis  
Gilda Saw - Mrs. Jeremy Buckwell

Resignation

Mrs. Skotzen

Death

Mrs. K. Smith

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S T O P P R E S S

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"Was delighted to have this article just in time to include in this issue - it is by Sonia Hunter of Hunterston and Xanthe Dalish....."

"TWO DEBUTANTES ON TOUR"

Our arrival at the hotel in Andermatt was not auspicious. Australian tones drawled complainingly "I hear there are two flaymin wimin on the tour: I hope the're tough". However, the sinking of our hearts was halted by encouragement from our good friends in Andermatt and we set off on Monday to Hospental. Avalanches prevented our planned train journey to Realp, so a six Km. langlauf lay ahead of us instead.

The journey produced a fine crop of blisters, which were carefully coddled in moleskin, and the hot tea downed with relish at this very welcome stop fortified us against what we hoped would be a five hour climb to the Rotondo Hut.

The first hut that appeared before our grateful eyes deceived us into thinking the end of our journey was at hand, but Alios's fierce assertions to the contrary and constant urgings made us realise the full extent of what we had undertaken. Our progress became slower and slower, and it was as much by virtue of silent prayer as physical effort that we eventually reached the hut seven hours later. Martin Epp had a wonderful fire going, and Arthur from Australia, who, with Martin from Scotland, had kindly carried our lunches for the five days ahead, gave us a rousing cheer along with the rest of the party as we collapsed into the hut. Kindness and hot food revived us.

Avalanche drill was the order of the next day and it was practised in rather poor weather under Martin's careful guidance. Each member of our party was equipped with Vox avalanche beepers which were strapped on leaving the hut and switched off on entering. We did a short climb on Tuesday to the Leckihorn but deteriorating weather prevented an ascent to the pass, forcing us home for an early tea.

Wednesday dawned glorious: an early start, and, with revived spirits at the prospect of the day ahead, we set off for the Witenwasserstock. A four hour climb took us to the ridge, and the rest of the party went on to the Pesciora Peak and the Rotondo Peak. We decided to return to the hut and had a glorious ski down in perfect powder escorted by our many guide Alios, then a picnic outside the hut in the sun - of such stuff dreams are made! We had a quick wash - a luxury as we had the hut to ourselves.

Thursday: again an early start with a four hour climb to the Lucendro Peak. Sadly, low cloud came and went, so we could not see the marvellous view. Then, shedding our skis, we climbed to the peak and found the snow flushed with yellow - no, not an effect of the sun - the men had left their mark! An

ecstatic run down, then a climb in the sun to the hut concluded another enjoyable day.

Friday was a white-out. There was no hope of moving out of the hut. Some brave souls rushed to fill the churn with snow for our water needs, and Martin, after making his usual 'phone call, came in looking like the abominable snowman. However, our time was not wasted, as we made candles from all the butt ends in a saucepan. Barbara showed us how she made them as Christmas presents. Then, after a hot welcome picnic lunch, we made a schlitten (Toboggan out of skis) on the table, in case of injury. Father Oswald bravely elected to be strapped in while we watched and then a long and useful discussion followed about equipment.

In spite of Arthur's marvellous and constant fire, the temperature in the hut that day was below freezing and we moved around in six to eight layers of clothing, with heavy blankets wrapped around like sarongs. We had a cheerful sing song after supper, with Xanthe managing all the verses of Clementine. Father Oswald was disappointed that our singing training had been choral - he said he was on holiday! A list of international songs would be a great asset on the tour, though we did find spirituals filled the bill. Then the stories started, the cleaner of Father Oswald's being translated for our benefit..... good rugger examples from Arthur and some splendid tales from Martin followed. We then plunged into the icy bedroom for what was to be our last night, to find the pillows frozen to the walls! However, the heat from eleven bodies and the two snorers soon thawed the room out.

Breaking camp early on Saturday we set off for Realp. One note struck for Women's Lib was the request, as the dirty washing-up water was handed to a male member of the party not noted for doing many chores during the week, "Toiletten, bitte schon", and meekly he descended to give the loo its final clean!

It was a disappointing run down in deteriorating weather, but with a great sense of achievement we returned to the Cafe in Realp, and hot tea and wine. Then followed speeches of thanks to Martin Epp and Alios for so patiently and ably looking after us. Martin has been awarded the Cordon Rouge for his cooking by two L.S.C. members, and Arthur received big kisses for keeping the fire going through the night, all week, for the 'two flaymin wimin'.

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Xanthe DalGLISH

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