

ALPINE NOTES

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	Year of Election.
Clarke, A. E.	1907
Eberli, J. J.	1908
Burr, Allston	1911
Lawford, B.	1911
Mettrier, Henri (Hon. Member)	1921
Wakefield, A. W.	1921
Provis, Rev. G. S.	1925
Gausden, J. G. S.	1928
Mathews, A. G.	1933
Roberts, Michael	1936

THE FRONTISPIECE.—This is a reproduction of an old print in the possession of Mr. R. W. Lloyd, who has not only given permission to reproduce it, but has generously provided the blocks at his own expense.

Professor G. R. de Beer has sent us the following description of the subject of the print :—

The scene represents the Army of the Federal Party at the gates of Berne on 18th September, 1802, the date of the capitulation of the Helvetic Republic in Berne.

The Helvetic Republic was the technical name for the unified, centralized constitution imposed by the French in 1798. Supporters of Cantonal authority on a Federal basis eventually overthrew the Helvetic Republic.

The motto—*Sic abiit ad Astra*—refers to the end of the Helvetic Republic, which was replaced in the following year by Napoleon's Act of Mediation.

THE LATE H. E. G. TYNDALE.—In a letter to Mr. R. L. G. Irving, Mr. A. P. Harper writes, from New Zealand : ' I should very much like a note in the ALPINE JOURNAL to say that A.C. members out here had a great admiration for the way in which Tyndale carried on his difficult work during the war. I know that I often marvelled at the good Journals he produced in the circumstances, and I think we all appreciated his efforts.'

DR. RAYMOND PRIESTLEY.—The Club offers its congratulations to Dr. R. E. Priestley, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, on the honour of knighthood conferred at the New Year. He has the rare distinction of having made an ascent within the Antarctic Circle, having been the leader of the party that made the second ascent (by a new route) of Mt. Erebus on Ross Island, whilst he was serving in Captain Scott's expedition of 1910-1913.

He was also on the *Terra Nova* when they found Amundsen established in the Bay of Whales ; and no student of the Antarctic will need to be reminded that he was one of the indomitable party, under Lieut. Campbell, which spent a terrible winter in an ice-cave in South Victoria Land.

He had earlier served in Shackleton's Antarctic expedition of 1907-9.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP.—We have pleasure in recording the award of Honorary Membership of the Alpine Club to Mr. Claude A. Macdonald.

L. R. WAGER.—We congratulate Professor L. R. Wager, of Durham University, on receiving the Spendiarov Prize at the International Geological Congress, in recognition of his researches in Greenland and the Himalaya. It is interesting to note that the suggestion of this award emanated from Russian sources.

DEATH.—The death was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 29, 1948) of Jean Baptiste Macquinaz, in Aosta, at the age of 86. In 1882 he was one of the party to make the first ascent of the Aig. du Géant (*A. J.* II. 72). He accompanied Captain Farrar on his memorable traverse of the Péteret arête of Mont Blanc in 1893, and was severely frostbitten (*A. J.* 33. 50-60).

GIFTS TO THE CLUB.—The late Mr. R. S. Morrish presented to the Club a collection of his Alpine slides ; also several pictures (including that of the Aig. de Bionnassay from the Tête Rousse, which was one of the outstanding exhibits in the Photographic Exhibition of 1920 (*A. J.* 33. 456, 457), and a large number of books which were for sale (and have been sold) to Members. The late Mr. J. J. Eberli's Alpine books have also been presented to the Club by his son, Major F. H. Eberli.

A welcome gift to the Club has been an original ' Spy ' painting of Bishop Forrest Browne, President of the Alpine Club in the Jubilee year of 1907. This was presented by his daughter, Miss Isobel E. W. Browne, to whom the Club tenders its thanks.

In connection with the article in *A. J.* 56. 43-47, by Sir A. M. Carr-Saunders, on ' An Alpine Artist : Francis Unwin,' an anonymous donor has given the Club a copy of Unwin's etching of the Disgrazia, which is not referred to in the article in question. It is of this picture, however, that a former Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford is reputed to have said that it was the finest etching of a mountain that he had ever seen, and it would certainly appear to bear comparison with any of the others reproduced in Sir A. M. Carr-Saunders' article.

Mrs. Gausden, widow of the late J. T. S. Gausden, has presented five Japanese maps, mounted on silk and printed in Japanese characters.

CLIMBING ACCIDENTS.—Mr. R. P. Mears (Lytchett, The Clears, Reigate, Surrey) would be glad to receive information from any members who know of accidents connected with snap-links caused by (a) lack of strength, (b) opening of the keeper.

EVEREST.—The return to India of the American Scientific Expedition to Nepal under Dr. Dillon Ripley was reported in *The Times* of March 22nd, which reproduced a remarkable telephotograph of Everest, Lhotse and Makalu taken from the Nepal foothills at Mangalbare. The expedition seems to have collected much valuable information concerning gradual changes which are taking place in the flora and fauna of the foothills under the spreading influence of man.

In a less serious vein we may allude to the remarkable statement of a Swiss contemporary to the effect that, after the early failures on Everest: 'only C. G. Bruce did not abandon the project. He made a solitary attempt on the supreme peak, but it is not known whether he reached the summit, because he never returned' (!). The same journal also gives information about the project of an Italian ski instructor who hopes to organise an expedition, the food and equipment for which will be dropped by parachute; but it adds with some justice that, despite the careful precautions which are to be taken, experts do not think that success can be absolutely guaranteed.

THE SEASON OF 1948 IN THE ALPS.—Until the middle of August the climbing season of 1948 was one of the worst known in the Western Alps, but, according to an interesting note in *Alpinisme*, the weather thereafter gradually improved until it reached its best in the second half of September. There were only six ascents of the Aiguille Verte; the ordinary traverse of the Grépon was made only five times at most; the traverses of the two Drus and of the Aigs. du Diable were not made at all. It was reputed in Courmayeur that Mont Blanc had not been reached that season from the S. up to the middle of August, but three ascents of the great routes later on in the season are reported by *Alpinisme*. On September 9 and 10, two Austrians, Herr Spannraft and another, ascended the Innominata face, on which they were forced to bivouac at the high level of 4,500 m., or thereabout; on September 19, Mme K. Gurekian climbed the old Brenva route with two porters; and on September 23, Monsieur H. Oertli made the eleventh ascent of Route Major on the Brenva face with the Courmayeur guide, Arthur Ottoz. The brilliant weather of the latter part of the season allowed some fine ascents to be made on the lower rock peaks. Thus the South arête of the Aiguille Noire de Péteret was climbed by four parties, the last of them making the ascent in October; Ryan's route on the Aiguille du Plan was climbed twice; and there were two ascents of the North face of the Grands Charmoz.

GRADES OF DIFFICULTY.—Opinions may be divided as to the wisdom or unwisdom of officially recognising classes of difficulty, but since grading was begun in the case of British rock climbs at or about the beginning of the century, the custom has spread. The Iowa Mountaineers have now adopted the rating system developed by the Sierra Club in North America, which is, as it were, a purely functional one, and not an empirical order like the prototype. Thus, if the

hands are not used, the grade is 'Easy' (Class I); if the hands have to be used occasionally, the climbing is 'Moderate' (Class II); if a rope has to be carried and may have to be used for protection, the grade is 'Difficult' (Class III); if the rope has to be used almost continuously, the grade is 'Very Difficult' (Class IV); if pitons and karabiners are used for safety, the grade is 'Severe' (Class V); and if these same implements are used for 'direct aid,' the grade is 'Very Severe' (Class VI). It is difficult to see how such a system can have a universal application. Under it, the ascent of Mont Blanc by the ordinary route *direct* from Chamonix, which is a severe undertaking, would rank as 'easy' (Class I), whilst the employment of pitons at any one step on the ordinary ascent of the Aiguille de l'M would cause that expedition to be ranked as 'severe' (Class V)!

THE PRESIDENT has drawn our attention to an article on Soviet Mountaineering in *Fels und Firn*, a club journal published in the Russian occupied part of Austria. The author is E. Damberg, who informs us that the Soviet authorities, having evidently given thought to the less desirable features of mountaineering, consider that individual leadership is out of date; and he describes the modern Soviet technique of assault in mass under wireless direction and control from the base camp. Competition within the mass is not, however, suppressed, and there are titular gradations which may be attained by suitable candidates—such as that of 'Climber of the Soviet Union,' and (we presume) that of 'Climber-hero of the Soviet Union.' But it is all a little ideologically confusing.

THE SKI-ING ACCIDENT AT SAAS-FEE.—We are indebted to Dr. C. F. Fothergill for drawing our attention to the account of this accident published in the magazine of the Camps and Tours Union, vol. 22.

On January 8, a guide and two ladies were ski-ing roped together down the Fee glacier, the guide being last, when the first lady found herself on a snow bridge, and foolishly stopped. The guide shouted to her to go on, but in the meantime the second lady reached the first and broke through the bridge. The guide was able to secure the rope and to get the first lady into safety across the crevasse, after which he tried to pull the victim up but could not manage it single-handed. He therefore made a loop of rope, and let it down to the victim, who was hanging suspended on the rope but could now stand in the loop. Having fixed the ropes, and having secured the first lady in a safe position, the guide then went alone on his skis to the Lange Fluh hut (where he found that the telephone was out of order) and thence down to Saas-Fee, which he reached in twenty minutes after descending 3,447 ft.—a fine effort. A rescue party was collected as quickly as possible, and the guide returned with it and the local doctor. But the former by this time was exhausted, and had to stop halfway whilst the doctor and the party went on. On arrival at the scene of the accident at 5.30 P.M. (the time of the accident itself is not given), the rescue party found that the victim had already been frozen to death, although

efforts to restore her were continued for three hours. The other lady was only just alive, but she responded to treatment and made a complete recovery.

We agree with Dr. Fothergill's opinion in a private letter, that the guide may have been ill-advised to take two ladies who were evidently novices on the glacier, or at least without a second guide ; but that his subsequent cool, intelligent, and gallant behaviour is worthy of high praise. His name is not mentioned in the account, but it may be recorded worthily here : he was Ambrose Supersaxo, one of the sons of Theodore Supersaxo, owner of the Hotel du Glacier at Saas-Fee.

There seems to have been another recent instance in which a single guide took no less than six novices on the same glacier—not one of the six had been on a glacier before ! A slight mishap had no serious result, and the guide's excuse for his rashness was that he was over-persuaded by the novices ; but this sort of moral weakness on the parts of guides who must know better will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of ski-ing accidents, and the appropriate authorities should let it be known that a guide who does not withstand such pressure may lay himself open to severe blame, if not to worse consequences.

THE USE OF SNOW CAVES IN THE NEW ZEALAND ALPS.—There is an interesting article by Mr. A. J. Scott in the *Christchurch Press* of January 10, which has been kindly forwarded to us by Mr. Scott-Russell. Mr. Scott, who has had a long experience of climbing in the Hermitage district, proposed to attempt Mount Cook from the rock out-crop called the 'Upper Cook Bivouac,' on the Hooker glacier, although the place has a bad record for stormy weather. The site, at an elevation of 8,000 ft., is however an excellent and (apart from storms) a safe base for sound routes up Mounts Cook, Dampier and La Perouse. Messrs. A. J. Scott and G. C. N. Johnson accordingly proposed to use this site and to circumvent the danger of storms by digging a snow cave. This they accordingly did, and four hours' work spread over two consecutive days resulted in a comfortable cave which they made their base after bringing up a week's provisions. That evening a wind storm broke and lasted for two days with such violence that it was clear why the place had a bad reputation as a tent site. This was succeeded by a severe thunderstorm with so heavy a fall of hail that it took an hour's hard work to re-open the buried entrance passage. As there was now no prospect of climbing for at least a week, the two climbers retreated by way of the Hooker hut, well satisfied with their experiment as far as it had enabled them to outride a storm which would, so they supposed, have destroyed any tents.

As a matter of fact, small and strong tents of 'Antarctic' type will stand up to almost anything if well dug into snow, and one such tent stood up to a severe and long blizzard in a very exposed position on Mount Foraker in 1934. The usefulness of snow caves was well known in Alaska, and, on the same expedition, Carl Andersen made an excellent one at the lowest camp on the mountain itself—a passage

about 5 ft. high and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide was cut into a bank of very hard snow for about 16 ft. or so. At the far end a sleeping place was excavated at right angles to the passage, and two similar places were excavated in the walls of the passage itself. An important feature was a ventilation shaft, and this should never be forgotten, as the entrance is likely to be drifted up in a snowstorm.

A 'HIGH-ALP' MOUSE?—Seated on the summit of the Piz Surlej (10,470 ft.) my son and I were surprised to see a mouse emerge from the summit rocks and run about looking for any scraps from us. Now I am well aware of the danger of stating that one has seen a mouse where no mouse could possibly be, so I hasten to forestall cynical remarks by saying that both of us saw it, that it was quite an ordinary mouse, no diabolic attributes or exotic colouring, and that it proved its material presence by running off with a large piece of apple-peel. But how did it get there? The Piz Surlej has no easy path of ascent; the approach to it is over a full kilometre of the most horrible scree and some steep couloirs; also, how does the mouse survive the long winter at 10,000 ft.? Can a mouse hibernate, or is there an Alpine variety that can? One theorist suggested that an eagle may have picked it up, a rodent Ganymede, and accidentally dropped it on the Piz while en route for the eyrie. Good enough! Another, who began saying 'Parturiunt montes . . .', was rudely silenced. A third would have it that it came up, an involuntary stowaway in our rucksack. Definitely ruled out; we had not opened the sack when it first appeared. I invite suggestions from climbers. (Communicated by Mr. K. C. P. Struve.)

CORRECTION.—*A.J.* 56. 396, has a remark by Mr. G. Winthrop Young concerning Lord Desborough's long membership of the A.C.: 'sixty-eight years—surely another record?'

The Editor's footnote states: 'Not quite a record; D. W. Freshfield was a member for two years longer—1864–1934.'

This is correct, so far as it goes; but it might have been added that Freshfield was an Honorary Member for the last ten years of his life, and as an Ordinary Member Lord Desborough's record appears to stand.

Other long-lived members of the Club in late years, whose records bear comparison with those of Freshfield and Lord Desborough are:—
T. G. Bonney. Ordinary Member for 64 years.

C. A. Heurtley. Ordinary Member for 64 years and Hon. Member for 4 years; total 68.

(It is regrettable to record that no obituary notice ever appeared for this veteran member.)

O. W. Holmes. Ordinary Member for 66 years and Hon. Member for 3 years; total 69.

A. O. Prickard. Ordinary Member for 66 years and Hon. Member for 7 years; total 73!

It is pleasant to note that our senior Member, Mr. G. P. Baker, is holding his own with the foregoing.

THE ABOMINABLE SNOW-MAN AGAIN.—Listeners to the wireless programmes on January 26 will have heard a characteristic contribution from Mr. H. W. Tilman on this vexed question.

CAMEROONS.—It is reported ('West Africa,' January 8, 1949) that the Mindif summit of Maroua, near Yaounde, French Cameroons, has been climbed by three French climbers, MM. Tagand, Latour and Marchand. The last lap of the climb is said to have been extremely difficult.

A NEW MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.—Among recent climbing clubs formed in England is, we understand, the Carlisle Mountaineering Club. They have a hut in Borrowdale. Anyone interested should write to Mr. L. Taylor, c/o Warwick Farm, Warwick, near Carlisle.

LECTURES TO SCHOOLBOYS ON MOUNTAINEERING.—A series of lantern lectures for schoolboys was given last January at the Alpine Club. The lecturers were :—

- January 4 : Mr. J. L. Longland on 'Adventure in the Mountains.'
- „ 6 : Lord Schuster on 'The Exploration of the Alps.'
- „ 11 : Mr. G. F. Peaker on 'British Rock Climbing.'
- „ 13 : Mr. F. S. Smythe on 'Attempts to Climb Mount Everest.'

MR. LEHMANN.—We congratulate Mr. C. T. Lehmann, Past President (and for many years the Hon. Treasurer) of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, on the unusual distinction of being made an Honorary Member of a Section (Diablerets) of the S.A.C.

HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEMES FOR NORTH WALES.—Of the six suggested schemes two, those for Plinlimmon and Blaenau Ffestiniog, are outside the proposed National Park area, two others involve the upper waters of the Conway and Mawddach and the valleys below them, while the two last are a special threat to the attractions we associate with Ogwen and Snowdon. There will be a reservoir over two miles long in Nant Ffrancon, a power station just below Ogwen ; a new reservoir in Cwm Dyli, and a new and bigger power station below it.

Llyn Cwm Ffynnon behind Pen-y-pass will become a reservoir. Other power stations will be built near the Gladstone rock in Cwm y Llan, at Gwynant Lake, at Dinas Lake, and at Pont Aberglaslyn. There will be miles of leats, tunnels and pipes to divert the waters from their natural course. The effect of the huge spoil heaps, the dams and the desolation of the old lake shores in dry weather is not pleasant to imagine.

The last two schemes are estimated to save about 120,000 tons of coal a year—about 1/1700th part of our coal output, at present many million tons less than it might be. It is to be hoped that the powers which have just given us a Bill for 'preserving and enhancing natural beauty,' will not let these schemes materialize, at any rate in this unique bit of Welsh country.

R. L. G. I.

ALPINE CLUB PENSIONS FUND APPEAL

Since the publication of the second list of subscribers in the ALPINE JOURNAL, No. 227, Vol. 56 (Nov. 1948), the following subscriptions have been received:—

THIRD LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

A = Donations.

B = Annual Subscriptions.

C = Promises to execute a Seven Years' Covenant.

	A.			B.			C.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Alpine Club	300	0	0						
Anonymous	50	0	0				10	0	0
Ashby, R. C., Esq.	3	0	0						
Baker, G. P., Esq. (2nd donation)				10	10	0			
Bathurst, The Hon. B. L.	1	1	0						
Bennett, C. F., Esq.							1	0	0
Brettell, F. G., Esq.	1	1	0						
Brocklehurst, Prof. R. J.	5	5	0						
Busk, D. L., Esq.	20	0	0						
Carr-Saunders, Sir A. M.	1	1	0						
Corning, H. K., Esq.	10	0	0						
Fowler, T. G. W., Esq.	5	0	0						
Hogg, The Hon. Quintin	1	1	0						
Hood, Dr. N. L. (the late)	1	1	0						
Hutton, H. L., Esq.	1	0	0						
Jeffrey, R., Esq.							4	0	0
Lloyd, Peter, Esq.							2	0	0
Lloyd, R. W., Esq. (2nd donation)	240	0	0						
Longland, J. L., Esq.	1	1	0						
Macdonald, Claude A., Esq.	21	0	0						
Mengel, E. C., Esq.	5	5	0						
Merriman, S. de V., Esq.	2	0	0						
Morrison-Bell, Sir A. Clive	5	0	0						
Mounsey, W. A., Esq.	10	0	0						
Odell, Dr. N. E.	3	0	0						
Palmer, G. E. H., Esq.	10	10	0						
Pilkington, Major E. F.	10	0	0						
Poole, John, Esq.							2	2	0
Provis, Rev. G. S. (the late)				1	0	0			
Roger-Smith, Dr. H. R.	1	1	0						
Russell, R. Scott, Esq.	4	4	0						

	A.			B.			C.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Schuster, Rt. Hon. Lord.	.	.	.				10	0	0
Sedgwick, W., Esq. (2nd)	.	5	0	0					
Slingsby, F. H., Esq.	.	.	.				1	0	0
Spranger, J. A., Esq.	.	2	2	0					
Starkey, G., Esq.	.	1	1	0					
Thomas, Eustace, Esq.	.	.	.				5	0	0
Wager, Prof. L. R.	.	.	.				1	0	0
Wells, Rev. E. G.	.	1	0	0					
West, Dr. Ranyard	.	1	1	0					
Western, A. E., Esq.	.	.	.				2	0	0
Wheeler, Brig. Sir Oliver	.	1	0	0					
Workman, Major Robert	.	.	.				2	2	0
Young, G. Winthrop, Esq.	.	5	0	0					
Totals on November 11, 1948 :	£728	15	0	£11	10	0	£40	4	0
	£1,545	7	0	42	6	0	159	18	0
Totals on March 8, 1949 :	£2,274	2	0	£53	16	0	£200	2	0

In addition to the above, Mr. R. W. Lloyd has handed to the Trustees of the Fund 500 Bleachers Ordinary Shares.

The foregoing figures represent the sums promised, but will not quite correspond with the sums paid, as the Club has had to record the deaths of one or two contributors since the lists were opened.

I would beg any Member who has not yet subscribed to let me have a donation, as we have still a good way to go before we attain our objective.

R. W. LLOYD,
Hon. Treasurer Pensions Fund.