



NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING COMMITTEE

1916 Sunderland Place N. W. Washington 6, D. C.

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COMING EVENTS

MEETING: Tuesday, 26 March

8:00 PM at the home of Sterling Hendricks, 1118 Dale Drive, Silver Spring, Md. Pete Peterson will show pictures and talk about the trip that he, Don Hubbard and Sterling took to the Northern Selkirks this past summer. Turn on Colesville Road at Mrs. Kay's Toll House Tavern and go north two blocks on Dale Drive. JU-9-4603

March 30-31 Hermitage weekend - Call Chuck Wettling by the 27th of March to be included in group commissary. WA-7-4356

April 7 - Carderock - Belay practice with Oscar

April 14 - Sugar Loaf

April 21 - Boucher and Eagle Rocks, Va.

April 27-28, Old Rag

Thanks to Pete Peterson and his sister Margaret Wright for their hospitality at the February 26 meeting. We enjoyed an account of the 1956 Alaskan Expedition with slides by Jane Showacre, Earl Mossburg, and John Reed.

Dr. France Avcin showed his pictures of the Swiss, Italian and Julian Alps March 11 to a very appreciative audience crowded into PATC Headquarters. The Julian Alps are in Slovenia, the northwesternmost region of Yugoslavia. The scenery is very diverse and we enjoyed seeing pictures of the Adriatic, the caves in Karst, the villages and the people, and finally the mountains themselves with their lakes, streams and waterfalls.

"The Pittsburgh Grotto of the NSS has announced to climbers and cavers of the Seneca area that a collapsable stretcher, blankets, and complete first aid kit are available in case of accident at its Field House. The key to the house may be obtained from C.E. Smith at Seneca Caverns." The Explorer, Feb. 1957.

The Mountaineering issue of the PATC Bulletin is now available at club headquarters for .25¢ a copy.

CLIMBING IN SCOTLAND

Most Scottish climbers take to the rocks only after serving an apprenticeship in hill-walking, and, indeed, all our climbing groups go under the name of mountaineering clubs, rather than of rock-climbing clubs. The principal reason is that few rocks worth climbing are reached without an ascent of at least 2000 feet and, as a rule, a longish walk. The result is that the pleasures of hill-walking are encountered before those of rock-climbing. A second reason is that the Scottish mountains - and mountains they certainly are in character, though only six exceed 4000 feet in height - are generally trackless, and, like Mt. Washington, are liable to sudden and unexpected changes in weather - a blizzard in midsummer is not unusual. Every climber is therefore well-advised to be adept in the use of map and compass, and acquainted with the ways of the hills before he tries himself out on the rocks.

For much of the year, our best climbing is on snow and ice, and the heavily glaciated (Ice Age) slopes of many of the mountains provide fine corries and gullies which, while in summer are often filled with loose unclimbable scree, in winter provide long steep snow-slopes, often interspersed with ice-pitches and topped by large cornices, so that for four months of the average year, rock-climbing is in abeyance, and ice axes abound.

In the summer, the hills are often wet and boggy, since July and August are usually our wettest months, and most rock-climbing is done in spring or autumn. Few of our good climbing areas are within easy reach of the bigger cities, at least to the average climber, who does not possess a car, and most climbing excursions involve a weekend trip, while the more inaccessible parts of Scotland are generally only reached at vacation time. A trip to the island of Skye, where the Cuillin, our finest range of rocky mountains is to be found, involves a good day's journey from Glasgow or Edinburgh. A good many of my own club, the Glasgow University Mountain Club, travel mostly by thumb, which, besides being the most economical, is also the most interesting way to travel. A walk of five miles or more with kit is not uncommon at the end of the journey, to reach the bothy or camp which is our centre from which to climb. Yet these hard facts are seldom enough to prevent at least one of the group from bringing along his guitar to accompany the "ballads, blood and blues" which the club invariably sings at its meets.

Perhaps our techniques are not all that might be desired by American standards, and to my knowledge, only three or four of the G.U.M.C. has ever had occasion to use a piton. Yet the Club has never had a fatal accident, and indeed, in recent years, I can recollect only one such that has happened in actual rock-climbing in Scotland. This is not to say that climbing accidents are uncommon, but almost invariably they are the result of some inexperience or carelessness. Many climbers, particularly from south of the border, underestimate the Scottish hills, by reason of their very smallness, and it is all too easy for an unwary climber to slip into an involuntary glissade, or stumble over the edge of a cliff in the thick mist which frequently descends. To such causes must be attributed the majority of our climbing accidents.

Our techniques are not always as wild as they sound in some of the articles that have been written about them, though certainly it is not our practice for the leader to hammer in a piton every few feet. The leader, however, is almost invariably belayed from below, feeble safeguard though this may seem; he will generally give himself a cross-belay before attempting a traverse, and will tie himself on before

belaying up his second man. Only in very recent years has the waist belay, as opposed to the shoulder belay, been in evidence, but it is fast replacing the more traditional method.

Our rock, perhaps, lends itself better to this type of climbing. We use more balance-work and less muscle than I have seen used over here, and our climbs are more often on steeply sloping rock than on overhangs. The rock itself is of mica-schist or granite, though some climbing is on quartzite, and the gabbro of Skye is made more interesting by dykes of basalt which intersect it. Most climbs lend themselves to division into pitches with good stances and belaying points, though a pitch of fifty feet is common, and a lead of upwards of ninety feet not unknown.

Fewer married people climb - perhaps that is one reason why we pay somewhat less regard to our safety - less responsibility. Our standards, however, are fairly high, and on pure climbing technique, I would be prepared to pit John Cunningham of the 'Gracag-Dubh Mountaineering Club, or Joe Brown, of Kanchenjunga fame, against the worlds finest.

Our climbers are, in general, a carefree crowd who do it as a relief from the tensions and restrictions of the daily routine, who are willing at the end of a hard day's climbing to form part of a rescue party to search for a missing climber, who will cheerfully shout rude remarks at a friend teetering on a difficult pitch; and after supper, will sing, over their warm British Beer - "We scraped him off the rock-face like a splosh of strawberry jam, And he ain't gonna climb no more."

John Crowder

G.U.M.C. Glasgow, Scotland

GRUNTS AND GROANS

10 February, Thurmont, Md.

Lowell Bennett
Don Bennett
Barbara Bennett
John Crowder

Jackie Dupont
Betty Johnson
Betty Kauffman
(and friends)

John & Moira Rowland
Bob Spindler
Jim Stengle
Alan Talbert
Chuck Wettling

After late arrivals forbore breakfast to be on the way we ambled out to Thurmont and eventually convened at Chimney Rock. Chuck found a very nice climb on which he was glad to belay anyone. When he tired of riding would-be climbers down, he demonstrated how it should be done. In the meantime, Beeey, Alan and John C. found a nice overhang and labored on it until lunch. After lunch, it was finally conquered. Late in the afternoon we transferred our operations to Wolf Rock and almost everyone did several climbs before sundown. The dishards accepted no ultimatums from belayers and the shadows were long before we made our way to Frederick for supper and finally home.

JLD

17 February 1957, Bull Run Mountain, Va.

Bob Adams and family
Joan Broomfield
Betty Johnson
Tommie Marshall

Bob Murphy
Ted Schad
Bob Spindler
Chuck Wettling

A wintry wind from the west made even the easiest of climbs a struggle to keep chilled blood flowing to icicle like fingers. Despite the frigid blast, Bobs Adams and Spindler and Tommy Marshall climbed the Overhang, and numerous ascents of the nearby climbs were made. After lunch, we moved up to the Little Quartz Slab and looked for a sheltered place to bask in the sun.

T.S.

SUBSCRIBER LIST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Corrections

Bennett, Lowell
De Saussure, Ray, San Francisco 16
Gottscho, Oscar A., 4909 30th Street
Kemper, Dr. and Mrs. William A., Naval Proving Ground, Dahlgren, Va. North,
3-2501 x-271
MacNabb, Alexander
Ostergaard, Jimmy, 4601 No. 35th St.
Soler, Anton, 9109 Sudbury Road

Additions

Smith, Phillip, 316 West Parkwood Ave., Springfield, Ohio

Changes

Christian, John F., 900 25th St., N.W., City - FE-3-5508
Petrukhin, Victor, 608 Van Buren St., N.W., City

VISITING WESTERNERS

Herb and Jan Conn were back for a short visit. Though very busy, they managed to get in a couple days climbing at Carderock and Great Falls, Md.

BARNSTORMING CLIMBER

Jimmy Shipley, veteran climber and Senior in Brooklyn Park High School has been giving illustrated lectures on rock-climbing to high school; grade school, and church audiences in his community. These lectures were dramatized by a demonstration of rappelling and Prussiking right in the hall! With caving also in his repertoire, Jimmy is very much in demand.

UP ROPE, published by the Mountaineering Committee of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1916 Sunderland Place, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

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