

ALPINE NOTES

Year of
Election.

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :

De Cessole, Le Chevalier Victor Spitalieri, Hon.

Member	1918
Godefroy, M. le Colonel R., Hon. Member	1918
Ellis, Sir William H.	1905
Stevens, E. H.	1905
Gait, J. C.	1907
Jardine, His Honour Judge J. W.	1908
Forbes, J. W. F.	1908
Davies, W. L.	1913
Bujak, J. Z.	1942

HONOURS.—We congratulate our President on being created a Companion of Honour. We congratulate also the Rt. Hon. Sir Halford Mackinder, P.C., on receiving the first Royal Geographical Society award since the outbreak of war of the Patron's Medal 'for his eminent services to geography, including the first ascent of Mt. Kenya in 1899, and his long and distinguished service in the advancement of science.'

Further, we have received the welcome news that Major H. W. Tilman, M.C., has been created a Citizen of Belluno, an honour hitherto held by three persons only, the first of whom was Garibaldi. We offer him our congratulations; his article in this number gives evidence enough of the reason for this honour.

A MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE.—We publish the following letters exchanged between the Alpine Club and the American Alpine Club.

DEAR MR. CASE,—May I, on behalf of the Alpine Club, convey to our friends and colleagues of the American Alpine Club our sincere sympathy at the great loss which not only America, but the world, have sustained in the death of President Roosevelt. Like all great men his career inevitably created often bitter incidental controversies, but in the light of history they will figure but little as compared with his outstanding services.

Yours sincerely,

L. S. AMERY.

The President,
American Alpine Club.

26 Broadway
New York 4, N.Y.
May 11, 1945.

DEAR MR. AMERY,—It is a pleasure to express, on behalf of the American Alpine Club, our appreciation of your kind note of sympathy on the occasion of the death of President Roosevelt. There can be no difference of opinion

about the greatness of President Roosevelt's services to America and to the world in awakening this country to a realisation of the Fascist menace and in organising our national strength for the fight. It is sad that he could not have lived to see final victory.

I believe we will come to recognise in the course of a few years that his leadership has brought us through a time of great domestic crisis and of social change without the loss of any fundamental part of what we consider the American way of life.

Sincerely,
JOHN C. CASE,
President.

The Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P., President,
Alpine Club.

A. R. HINKS, C.B.E., F.R.S.—Arthur Hinks, who died last spring, was Secretary and Editor of publications to the Royal Geographical Society for thirty years and in that capacity has been brought in contact with many members of our Club, especially through the Everest expeditions.

From 1895 to 1913 he was on the staff of the Observatory at Cambridge and for ten of these years was Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society. His approach to geography was therefore mathematical. Ultimately he became the leading authority on map projections, a most abstruse subject. This naturally induced in him a mental intolerance towards the rough and inexact methods of pioneers endeavouring to chart new ground, an attitude which he was not always able to conceal. It seems that only the genuine explorer realises that the very conditions of his work involve the certainty of error and that it is indeed a very poorly equipped traveller who cannot improve and correct the first survey that has been made of any piece of country. But in spite of this want of intellectual sympathy it can be said that there is hardly a British traveller of the present generation whom Hinks has not materially helped. Equally there is no doubt that to his erudition and remorselessly forceful editorship is due the unchallenged position of the *Geographical Journal*. Qualities of a very high and rare order are needed to hold the balance between scientific exactitude and the popular appeal which is essential to the working of an association dependent for success on a membership of five thousand persons drawn from the general community.

Before the present war he was due to retire on pension, and longed to do so. But on its outbreak his sense of duty prevented him from taking that rest which he had so well earned. Despite failing health he continued his duties under increasing difficulties. During the worst times he insisted on doing his turn of duty as a fire watcher with the younger members of a depleted staff by sleeping on the premises of the Society. Throughout his last fatal illness he battled with undaunted courage to complete his book on map projections and cartography and so pass on his unique knowledge and skill to his successors.

T. G. LONGSTAFF.

DEATH.—We learn with regret of the death on October 2 of Mrs. Claude Wilson, widow of our former President, and offer our sincerest sympathy to her family.

ALPINE CLUB MEET IN NORTH WALES.—The fifth wartime meet was held at Pen y Gwryd from June 16 to 30, 1945, and was attended by the following :

Messrs. I. G. Aitchison, R. S. Dadson, B. Donkin, J. Donkin, Dr. N. S. Finzi, Major J. H. Emlyn Jones, Dr. J. W. Healey, Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Markbreiter, Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Mears, Col. and Mrs. H. C. Westmorland and Mr. and Mrs. H. Booth. Also Dr. D. Ward, who was staying at Capel Curig, joined in two expeditions.

While the second Club meet in North Wales did not enjoy the perfect weather experienced at the previous one in this area, in the light of subsequent knowledge it did enjoy good weather by this year's standards, and with the return of a basic petrol ration the Club was able to make proper and varied use of the not too settled weather. It must be recorded, however, that the basic petrol ration was also used for a purpose hardly in keeping with the best traditions of mountaineering, the male members of the party being apparently incapable of reaching Pen y Pass except by car.

Following the usual custom, the Club's activities were started on the opening day by a party who had travelled overnight ; on Sunday, June 17, the whole party visited Tryfan, ascents and descents being made of the N. and Central Buttresses, including the Terrace Wall Variant. Next day, in cloudy weather, various climbs on the Milestone Buttress and Idwal Slabs were done, and finally two members climbed the Monolith Crack.

On Tuesday, the 18th, which was fine, the party divided, some members going to Clogwyn dur Arddu, but the majority were persuaded with some difficulty by Dadson to visit Glyder Fach, and were well satisfied that they had yielded to his persuasion. At this point mention should be made of the Nylon rope which, in the interests of scientific research, Mears had brought to the meet. The reports given on this rope each evening had hitherto been highly uncomplimentary, the general feeling expressed being that while a piece of ' string ' with the strength of an Alpine Club rope was an interesting scientific curiosity, it was of little practical use to the mountaineer. The first climb done on Glyder Fach was Delta on the Alphabet Slab, and the Nylon rope, properly handled for the first time, gave complete satisfaction. A lighter, thinner rope has obvious advantages, but if the climber lets it lie about anyhow, the Nylon rope, due to its small diameter, is more liable to tie itself in knots and get caught on spikes of rock. The party then continued up the Main Gully Arête after a delay while certain misguided individuals, who had left their sacks at the foot of the slab, went down and collected them ; on subsequent expeditions these members were careful never to leave their sacks behind.

That night the weather forecast predicted thunderstorms next afternoon, and in the morning in spite of a clear sky the sound of the regular daily battle at Gwynant was mistaken for thunder, and the majority displayed no desire to set out. The few sensible members got off promptly for Tryfan and climbed the S. Buttress by the Gashed Crag and arrived back in good time. Eventually the remainder of the party decided to go to Lliwedd. A first suggestion that the whole party should ascend Mallory's Slab on one rope was discarded and finally a party of three did this climb and the Great Chimney, while the remaining four ascended the Craig yr Aderyn New Route. At 5.45 P.M. this party reached the summit of the W. Peak, to be greeted by the thunderstorm for once correctly predicted by the meteorologist. On the way down in drenching rain the physicist of the party edified his companions with a dissertation on thunderstorms; they were encouraged to learn that lightning is much less dangerous in the mountains than in level country. The E. Peak party arrived back even wetter shortly afterwards.

The next two days were wet and nothing special could be done. On Saturday, June 23, the only expedition recorded was to Tryfan, where the Central Buttress was ascended and the N. Buttress descended. One of the complaints voiced against the Nylon rope was that it was too elastic, and this elasticity might be rather upsetting to novices if they happened to slip and come on the rope. On arrival at the Pinnacle Slab on this occasion, the second man, encouraged by the ease with which his leader made the ascent in rubbers without a sack, was persuaded to essay the ascent in boots. After two attempts, during which the leader had been roundly cursed for not holding the rope tight (it was in fact immovably belayed round several spikes of rock), it was decided that sufficient research had been done on the behaviour of a Nylon rope under a sudden load, and the slab was then climbed in stockinged feet.

On Sunday 24th, a second visit was paid to Lliwedd and the ascent of the E. Peak by Route II and the Terminal Arête accomplished in reasonable time, while another party climbed the S. Buttress on Tryfan by the S. Arête. This climb was well reported on, so that two members visited it next day, when the Parson's Nose and Crib Goch Buttress were also climbed.

After three days of poor weather, the whole party, on Friday 29th, fortified by a weather forecast predicting fairer conditions, decided to visit Craig yr Ysfa, reaching Helyg rather more rapidly than was done by the party that did this at the 1943 meet. Two parties ascended the Amphitheatre Buttress and another the Great Gully; as no member had a copy of the guide to Craig yr Ysfa, published in a recent number of the *Climbers' Club Journal*, and as the members of the party who had visited the crag before kept well in the background, the first buttress party had the stimulating experience of not knowing what was coming next or knowing in advance how best to tackle each pitch. On the way down rain started, but only did so in earnest after most of the

party had reached Helyg. The rain continued for the rest of the meet, though in a lull on Saturday 30th, a further visit was paid to Ogwen. The majority decided on the W. face of Tryfan, and climbed the Wrinkled Slab in steadily increasing rain, feeling that a further visit under better conditions to this face would be well worth while. The remainder of the party climbed the Zig Zag climb on the Gribin.

On Sunday, July 1, after the meet had officially ended, a party made the ascent of Snowdon by the Pig Track in sleet and rain, sustained by the information that the summit hotel was again open, as they felt that it was wrong for the whole meet to elapse without one ascent of Snowdon being made. They were rewarded by improving weather and even sunshine on the descent.

H. BOOTH.

LINKS WITH THE PAST.—Mrs. M. A. Barron, of St. Albans, has most kindly presented to the Club two boxes containing the identical lantern slides used by Edward Whymper for illustrating his lectures 'My Scrambles amongst the Alps.' One box has the full complement of 50 slides, views in the Zermatt district, the other, 43 slides illustrating his climbs in the Mont Blanc district. All are most carefully indexed and in correct order. The Club offers its warm thanks to Mrs. Barron for this most interesting gift.

FROM SWITZERLAND.—We have received with sincere gratitude the following letters, in accordance with Mr. de Bruyn's annual and most welcome custom, dated from Zermatt July 24 and August 6, 1945.

July 24.

The winter was a cold one and brought heavy snowfall. Avalanches were numerous and Zermatt didn't escape them. The bridge leading to Winkel-matten at the southern end of the village had already been swept away in the autumn when the lake in the Gorner Glacier broke through. A temporary bridge is now in use and a new one will appear next year. But the spring brought more serious damage. Where the path to the Gorner gorge branches off from the main track to Schwarzsee a large avalanche coming down from Hohlicht covered the meadows for a width of half a mile, bringing down many trees, destroying some huts and killing 28 sheep, whose bodies were recovered on the bank of the Visp. On the path to the Schönbühl hut, some twenty minutes beyond the Zmutt waterfall, there were several big avalanches, unnoticed before, and one of them is even now some twenty feet thick.

The railway to Visp suffered terribly. Between St. Niklaus and Kalpetran a big fall of snow and stones swept one of its bridges into the river and filled the stream with boulders as big as a house. Of course the work of blowing them to pieces was started right away, but the spring came early and before the task was finished the melting of the snow had set in, and the rising river made the work impossible. The result was that the river level remained unduly high, and with the continuous hot weather of this month the stream rose so high that part of the road bed was washed away and cannot be repaired before the autumn. So the railway connexion is broken again, as it was broken in spring for six weeks, all baggage and freight has to be carried by hand over a distance taking sometimes ten minutes and the trains are an hour late.

But a wave of optimism has swept over Zermatt now that the war is over, and never have I seen it so busy. Building is going on everywhere. A new tea room, a very attractive one, has been opened opposite the Wega shop, the

Zermatterhof has modernised its dining and sitting rooms at a cost of 200,000 francs, following the example of the Mont Cervin, the half-finished house near the Schweizerhof is to be turned into a clinic, and half a dozen new shops may be counted. Of course the season will be a good one now that the anxiety caused by the war is over and the army has been sent home, while the weather is as perfect as can be. The spring brought little snow and much sunshine, so that the mountains were very early in perfect condition. This week the Matterhorn-Dent d'Hérens ridge was traversed twice. Otto Furrer, who is quite right again, with his brother-in-law the professor-priest Gentinetta and Frl. Mittelholzer as tourist, started from Schönbühl and via the Tiefenmattenjoch and Dent d'Hérens reached the Italian hut of the Matterhorn at 8 P.M. Next day they reached the summit via the Carrel gallery and descended the Zmutt arête to the Schönbühl. Alexander Taugwalder also started from this hut and via the Col Tournanche brought his party of four—one of them a boy of sixteen—to the summit of the Dent d'Hérens at 2 P.M. They descended to the Tiefenmattenjoch, but finding this entirely iced, had to go down to the Aosta hut and returned via the Col de Valpelline, reaching Schönbühl at midnight.

The Dent Blanche was traversed from Viereselgrat to the Ferpècle ridge, the Matterhorn was climbed from Schönbühl via the Col Tournanche and the Italian hut, all proofs of the exceptional condition of the ridges. It is difficult to discover a patch of snow on the Matterhorn's E. face, and the shoulder has a zigzag path.

Zermatt is slowly making headway as a winter sport place, thanks also to the ski lift. Now in summer this is used for passengers, and every morning it brings to the Findelen slopes an array of grandmothers and those who later will reach that state of dignity, who travel up to expose their limbs, with whose colour they are not satisfied, to the rays of the burning sun and to the Cervin.

You may know that Switzerland will have no coal this winter and very little wood, so that the use of electricity for heating and cooking is spreading rapidly. The Zermatt works are therefore laying an additional water pipe from the Gorner Visp across the meadows of Furri and Zum See to the bridge above Zmutt in order to strengthen their supply of electricity for the winter. Another water pipe has been laid from the bridge below Findelen through the Findelen forest to upper Ried, to irrigate its meadows, whose crop fails in dry years. As this is a covered *bisse* it furnishes a walking path from Ried to Findelen, a beautiful walk through the woods, slowly mounting and giving splendid views of the Matterhorn. Those who find the old path to Riffelalp too steep can now reach this hotel via the main path to Ried, then by the *bisse* path, and from the Findelen bridge by the well known path through the woods. This walk takes three hours and has no steep sections.

August 6.

The fine weather continues and the potato crop is a failure. Huts are constantly overcrowded so that the guides get no sleep. The Furggengrat of the Matterhorn has been climbed by Alexander Taugwalder three times (Graven climbed it twice last year). The first time his party took 15 hours to the summit; the other two climbs were made on successive days and, the ice having gone and the way being known, the last party reached the summit at 1 P.M., taking only two hours from the shoulder to the top. As they arrived there so early they descended by the Italian ridge. Days when sixty people are on the Matterhorn are not exceptional.

Alexander Graven with Frau Lohner made the fifth ascent of the Finsteraarhorn by the E. face. Many stones fell, one knocking the lantern from his hand.

A remarkably quick climb was made by Hermann Lochmatter, Knubel's pupil, with Herr Kappeler on the N. face of the Lyskamm. Leaving Bétemps at 5 A.M. in uncertain weather, they were soon enveloped in clouds and, the weather becoming worse, they hurried as much as possible, cutting only small steps. The summit was reached at 10 A.M., the Bétemps via the Lysjoch at 12.45 P.M., and by 2.20 they were in the train at Rotenboden.

The Jungfrau was climbed direct from the N. by the two guides von Allmen and Schlunegger. Starting from the Jungfrauoch, they reached the Wengen

Jungfrau via the K hlauenen Glacier at 2 P.M., using only one *Mauerhaken*. The N. face of the Gletscherhorn has been climbed again. Lauper and Z rcher's route on the Eiger N. face has been repeated twice, the first time by Graven and Taugwalder, the second by Fritz and Hermann Steuri.

A new S.A.C. hut will be opened next month, 1½ hours above T schalp, bringing Teufelsgrat and Alphubel within easier reach. And the Zermatt guides are discussing the building of a hut on Eseltshuggen, the breakfast place on the way to the Zinal Rothorn, to be available only for guided parties.

You will be glad to know how much Mr. Hasler enjoyed meeting Frau Lohner, the first and the latest explorers of the Finsteraarhorn face.

I. DE BRUYN.

A FEDERATION OF CLUBS IN NEW ZEALAND.—Mr. A. P. Harper writes :

I was interested in the correspondence concerning the Committee's action in the formation of the British Mountaineering Council.

When we formed the N.Z.A.C. in 1891, our policy was to follow the A.C. traditions and ideals as closely as possible, which were individualism and (to quote Claude Wilson, *A. J.* 44. 12) to 'avoid outside entanglements and responsibilities.'

After the last war, during my first term as President, it was obvious that the N.Z.A.C. must take some responsibility and act in the public interest in certain matters, such as the licensing of guides, access and use and the *right* of clubs *to a share in the control of National Parks*. When I was in London in 1923, Farrar asked me why the club was doing this, and when I explained that these problems arose from the fact that our fields of operations were in our own country and that most districts were under Government control, he agreed that the club was right in taking these matters up.

In the following years local climbing, tramping and winter sports clubs came into existence and rapidly increased in number—some had a larger membership than the N.Z.A.C. because of our strict qualification. Thus by 1930 I realised that, though we were the oldest and the leading club interested in work in the mountains, the reforms we were advocating materially affected the activities of these other clubs, and that owing to misunderstanding some of them were inclined to oppose, and to show (perhaps pardonably) some resentment at the N.Z.A.C. advocating reforms affecting them, without consultation.

In all matters in which Government is concerned it is essential to have not only numbers but unanimity, if one wants to get things done ; so I asked the N.Z.A.C. to allow me to call the clubs together and try to arrange for combined action in matters of common interest affecting our mountain areas—but leaving every club absolutely free from any external control. Thus in 1930 a Federation of Mountain Clubs was formed, which now consists of over thirty clubs with some 4000 members.

When this Federation was formed the other clubs felt that the N.Z.A.C. was on a different footing—it was Dominion-wide and had many overseas members, while they were purely local clubs. So we agreed to stand aside and work in close cooperation with the Federation.

However, the first year proved that unless we joined the scheme it would not be a success, so, at the request of the Federation we became a member and it has proved to be the most useful combination, and successful in every way.

The general policy and line of action to be taken on matters of common interest are discussed and decided upon at our annual conference, and a strong executive works along those lines.

The B.M.C. seems to be on much the same basis, and no doubt the A.C. will have strong representation through its own nominees, as well as through its members who may be the nominees of other clubs. As a matter of fact it has turned out that way here—for the majority of the executive are also members of the N.Z.A.C. though nominated by other clubs. But on the executive we sink club interests entirely and only look to the common interest and the welfare of the game. There is no jealousy or evidence of one club pulling against another, but only a genuine wish to further the common interest.

We are only a small country, but our club has adopted a policy, in one or two things, which was necessary under local conditions. It is most interesting to see the old Club following the same 'new route' that we took fifteen years ago.

ALA DAĞ.—Mr. L. H. Hurst has sent us the following note on his expedition of this year:

A. R. Humphreys and I again visited the Ala Dağ this summer, 1945, accompanied by J. Naylor, whose initiation to mountaineering it was. Mehmed, a more energetic brother of the Ali of 1944, and his companion managed to get our two pack horses up the Yalak Dere (July 3) and we were thus enabled to camp in the snow dappled Yedi Göl basin for eight nights. On our way over the Yalak saddle, Humphreys ascended the Hisar Dağ, probably the third ascent, and certainly the first British. The way along ledges and up short rock walls is tricky rather than difficult, but this was nevertheless a good performance.

The next day Humphreys and I followed in the footsteps of Peck and Brander of the preceding year to Hinge Peak and the first Paschinger summit. The main interest of the day, to me, lay in the view it afforded of a graceful peak which rose in a symmetrical curve on the southern fringes of the range beyond and between a series of rock walls which seemed to ring it in like a miniature Nanda Devi. A justifiable hope that its relative remoteness might have saved it from the industrious activities of the 1938 German expedition led me to call it 'Sleeping Beauty' (possible height: 3,500 m.).

On July 6 Humphreys and I set off for a topographical walk. A face of scree and rubble brought us from the upper Yedi Göl basin to the Paschinger-Künne ridge S.W. of Peck's sixth summit. Continuing S.W., we were soon on a first pyramidal scree summit (Pyramid I, *ca.* 3435 m.). From here we struck off along a scree ridge running S., and in a few minutes were on a second summit (Pyramid II, *ca.*

3450 m.). To our left was the broad head of a valley which descends parallel with that of the Yedi Göl, from which it is separated by the Paschinger-Künne ridge; to our right a narrow valley ran down in a more southerly direction. Just across the latter a fine sweep of cliff fell from a summit which, well seen in 1944 from the slopes of Kaldi and Ludut, I had called 'Wavecrest.' In a short hour from Pyramid II we were on yet a third pyramidal scree summit (Pyramid III, *ca.* 3420 m.). I was here nearly opposite the little peak from which I had first, the previous year, peered into this new valley (*A. J.* 55. 52). Beyond this peaklet, the ridge across rose steeply to a fine double-headed rock summit ('The Bastion'), crowned, as my Zeiss revealed, with a cairn. It is the highest and finest point in the Turasan angle of the chain, and may exceed 3550 m. (The Bastion is well seen in the photograph opposite *A. J.* 55. 49; in front is the ridge which I followed on this topographical walk connecting Pyramid III with Pyramid II, the latter on the right). We returned the same way.

On July 8 Humphreys and I ascended a peak ('Boilerplate,' *ca.* 3450 m.) on the northerly perimeter of the Yedi Göl basin. From the climbing standpoint, it was our pleasantest day, and the ridge just before the summit became so narrow and smooth, with sweeps of slab on either side, that we had to take it astride. The summit had already a cairn. The wedge of Demirkazik, close at hand to N. across a valley head where there was a small lake, was impressive in its steepness and isolation.

The following day we shifted our camp a couple of miles. Hitherto it had been beside a purling stream and gentian-starred meadows; now we set up our tents on dandelion flowers and wild garlic.

Our last expedition was on July 10. All three of us went towards the Yalak saddle and walked up easy screes and rock to the peak ('Emli Başı') which flanks the saddle on the N. side. It is a fine viewpoint of probably about 3490 m. (Peck's estimate of the height of the saddle, *ca.* 3550 m., *A. J.* 55. 48, if not a misprint, is obviously greatly overestimated. I would put it at 3250-3300 m.).

A point to be borne in mind by anybody who may follow us to the Yedi Göl basin is that no fuel is to be found there; we used tommy cookers.

FROM SAAS FEE.—Contrary to June and July, August was a disappointing one for mountaineers. Unsettled weather for weeks, much snow, wind and low temperatures resulted in a month of little climbing. Only the last week brought fine weather and two days ago Furgengrat of the Matterhorn was climbed for the fourth time this summer.

Our member Zürcher, guided again by Knubel and Lochmatter, was in Zermatt for four weeks and only bagged five climbs. Saas Fee was sold out; there were days of 1500 guests and the old postmaster Imseng had a busier season than in any pre-war year. It is to be hoped that next year the Swiss will be able to enjoy their holiday

outside their own country, otherwise foreigners will find it difficult to get accommodation.

Contrary to Zermatt, there is no building going on here, but the Dom and Beausite hotels were opened again. The guides had a good season, but to a certain extent it is a pity that they earn a hundred francs a day by climbing the Allalin from Lange Fluh and, after returning, conducting parties to the Britannia. This flourishing business—60 people on the Allalin was no exception—makes them neglect the more attractive and difficult climbs.

I. DE BRUÏN.

THE FIRST ASCENT OF MONTE ROSA.—In his article in *A. J.* 16. 45 *sqq.*, 'The early attempts on Monte Rosa from the Zermatt side,' the Rev. F. T. Wethered states that the first ascent of the Dufourspitze was made on August 1, 1855. In *A. J.* 17. 365, he corrects the date to July 31, and this date is quoted by most authorities. (Studer, Vol. II, p. 86. Conway, *Eastern Pennine Guide*, p. 54. Ball, *Western Alps*, p. 504).

Whymper, however, quotes on p. 170 of *Zermatt and the Matterhorn*, an extract from a letter from Canon Smyth dated August 9, 1855. Referring to the ascent Canon Smyth wrote: 'Accordingly we were called at 11 P.M.!! on Tuesday, July 31, breakfasted about $\frac{1}{4}$ to 12 and started (5 of us with 4 guides) at $\frac{1}{4}$ past 12.'

This would seem to establish definitely that the original date given by Mr. Wethered was correct, and that the first ascent of the Dufourspitze was actually effected on Wednesday, August 1, 1855.

D. F. O. DANGAR.

FROM SOUTH AFRICA.—Mr. William C. West, of Cape Town, writes under date May 22, 1945:

The Mountain Club of South Africa gave a luncheon to H.E. Dr. P. C. Visser, A.C., the recently appointed Netherlands Minister to South Africa at the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, on April 30 last. Those present included the President, Professor R. H. Compton, the Vice-Presidents, Mr. H. A. Eastman, Mr. E. S. Field, and Mr. W. C. West, A.C., Sir Evelyn Baring, High Commissioner, General Sir Roger Wilson, A.C., Mr. G. F. Travers-Jackson, A.C., Mr. K. Cameron, A.C., Mr. Justice van de Sandt Centlivres, and Dr. R. Muir. Dr. Visser is taking an active interest in mountaineering in South Africa and has already been elected a member of the Mountain Club.

THE ALPINE CLUB IN ITALY.—A formal dinner of the Alpine Club was held at the Mountain School, Italy, on Saturday, February 17, 1945, by kind permission of Lt.-Col. J. M. Scott and the P.M.C. Major H. R. Herbert, M.C., took the chair. The following members attended in addition: Capt. P. M. Aitchison, Capt. A. M. Greenwood, M.C., Major J. B. Joyce, Major T. A. H. Peacocke. Major M. G. Meade-King was unfortunately absent owing to indisposition.

Guests were invited to represent the following clubs: R.G.S., Climbers' Club, S.A.C., C.A.F., C.A.I., American Alpine Club and New Zealand Alpine Club.

The menu consisted of:—

Hors d'œuvres variés à la Grépon

Consommée de la Brenva

Beef steak Cervin

Pommes Purées Combin de Corbassière

Carrots Aiguilles Rouges

Choux Chambéry

Gâteau Bergli

Dessert Diablerets

Café Noir de Péteret

A certain amount of noisy interruption was attempted by certain members of the D.A.V., who had not been invited. Prior to the start of the dinner they decorated the table with pitons and other artificial aids, hoping thereby to outrage the feelings of the Alpine Club.

The chairman proposed the health of the Alpine Club in traditional style. Major T. A. H. Peacocke proposed the health of the guests and 1st Lieut. H. B. Benton, U.S. Army, replied in a witty speech. Capt. A. M. Greenwood, M.C., then proposed the health of the Mountain School, and Lt.-Col. J. M. Scott replied. The proceedings, assisted with a liberal supply of Italian champagne, continued to a late hour.

T. A. H. PEACOCKE.

A NEW CLIMBER'S GUIDE.—We congratulate Capt. C. W. F. Noyce on the production, in collaboration with others and under the auspices of the Himalayan Club, of *A Climber's Guide to Sonamarg*, which embodies the experience of instructors at the Aircrew Mountain Course at Sonamarg in 1944 (cf. *A.J.* 55. 74 *sqq.*).

CORRIGENDUM.—In *A.J.* 55. 74, the title of Capt. Noyce's paper is wrongly given. The word 'Aircrew' should be substituted for 'Aircraft.' We apologise for the error.

DEATHS OF TWO DISTINGUISHED GUIDES.—We learn with regret that Alois Pollinger, brother of Josef, has recently died after a long illness. A notice will appear in our issue of May 1946. Grindelwald has lost Christian Burgener, a much travelled guide whose book contains a warm tribute for the year 1894 from our late Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill.

EXPEDITIONS.—The following expeditions have been recorded: E. face of Rothorn, by MM. André Roch, R. Gréloz and R. Schmid; N. face of Aiguille de Triolet, by a party led by Georges Charlet,

nephew of Armand Charlet ; several ascents of the Furggen ridge of the Matterhorn ; N. face of Jungfrau by two Wengen guides, Karl Schlunegger and Otto von Allmen ; N. face of Gletscherhorn, and N.E. face of Wetterhorn. We hope to give some details in our next issue.

ACCIDENTS.—We regret to record the deaths by accident of the Chamonix guides Jean and Gilbert Ravanel on the Grépon, of René Ravanel on the Aiguille Verte, and of Léon Balmat on La Nonne.

FROM THE CHAMONIX VALLEY.—We learn with pleasure that Armand Charlet has been appointed Mayor of Argentière and President of the Chamonix Guides' Society, with Marcel Bozon as Vice-President.

SWITZERLAND REVISITED.—In July of this year I was a guest at the dinner in the Mont Cervin hotel at which the eightieth anniversary of the Matterhorn conquest was celebrated. I was not officially representing the Club, but as the only English member of the Club in Zermatt I made a few remarks at the dinner. M. D'Arcis writes: 'Will you tell our friends of the A.C. how much the people of Zermatt appreciate what they owe to the initiative and efforts of the early British pioneers.'

One swallow does not make a summer, but the first swallow, as I discovered, is none the less welcomed with a fervour quite overwhelming. The British have been missed not only for economic reasons but also because the Swiss is a genuine cosmopolitan and he soon gets bored by a clientèle composed exclusively of one country, even where that country is his own. The great ski meetings, for instance, such as Parsenn Derby, have been very dull without the British, and, of course, the Monte Rosa at Zermatt and the Riffelalp hotel are desolate without the traditional A.C. clientèle.

I spent a pleasant afternoon with Joseph Knubel. He is as fit as ever. At the age of 64 he crossed the Weisshorn twice on two consecutive days, by the four classic routes: the usual route, Schalligrat, Young's route from Zinal, and north ridge.

The weather, apart from a short bad spell in August, was superb and some new climbs were made, including a new and sensational route up the Scheidegg Wetterhorn.

It is a thousand pities that no adequate attempt has been made to collect the romantic stories of all those British officers and other ranks who escaped from Italy via the more difficult glacier passes, such as the Sesiajoch. Even at this late date if the Editor of this JOURNAL (I always like making work for other people) got into touch with the War Office, something might yet be done to preserve for posterity the facts of what surely belongs to Alpine history. The guides at the Riffelalp kept their telescopes trained on these passes and set out at once to rescue survivors. Two Australians with no mountain experience got into difficulties on the glaciers on the Italian side of the range. One of them fell into a crevasse. The other went for help

and was never seen again, but his companion after six hours' step-cutting with a sheath knife reached the surface and arrived next day in Zermatt.

Whereas in the first world war the Swiss stayed at home and decided to postpone their holidays until peace returned, the Swiss in this world war felt that it was best to spend their money while they had it, and there was a regular travel boom. It was quite as difficult to get a room at Zermatt in the high season as in peace time. The hotel industry was helped by the fact that the Swiss could not leave their own country.

The training of mountain troops has brought many new recruits to the mountains. One result is what Christian Rubi of Wengen described to me as 'collective mountaineering.' He led a party of 150 officers and men from Rosenlauri over the Rosenhorn to Grindelwald and back over the Scheidegg *the same day*, 10,000 ft. of ascent and 10,000 of descent. Not one man fell out.

There is an odd impression in England that Switzerland is a land flowing with milk and honey. Actually the rations in private families are slightly lower than over here. The food in the hotels is, on the balance, distinctly better, though there are three meatless days, but in view of the fact that Swiss neutrality has been an immeasurable boon to Europe, it is ungracious to resent the fact that in some ways they are more comfortably off than we are. One cannot expect the glory which is the reward of our resistance in 1940 *and* the greater comforts of a neutral state. The prestige of this country was never higher in Switzerland than it is today, and it is not the fault of the Swiss that we are, in effect, allowing others to capture the Swiss market. For further details may I refer the reader to the current issue of the *British Ski Year Book*, a copy of which will be found in the Club Library.

Readers may be interested to learn that Contessa Esther Bonacossa, who is three quarters British by race, and whose mountaineering achievements were the subject of a laudatory reference in Colonel Strutt's Valedictory Address, was known as 'the Mother of the Partisans' in Lombardy. She was one of the great heroines of the Resistance.

ARNOLD LUNN.

REVIEWS

Escape to Switzerland. By G. R. de Beer, F.R.S. Pp. 159. Penguin Books, 1945. Price 9d.

THIS book is an interesting collection of essays, some of which were published previously and now appear in enlarged form. The subjects cover a wide field, dealing not merely with British visits in early days