

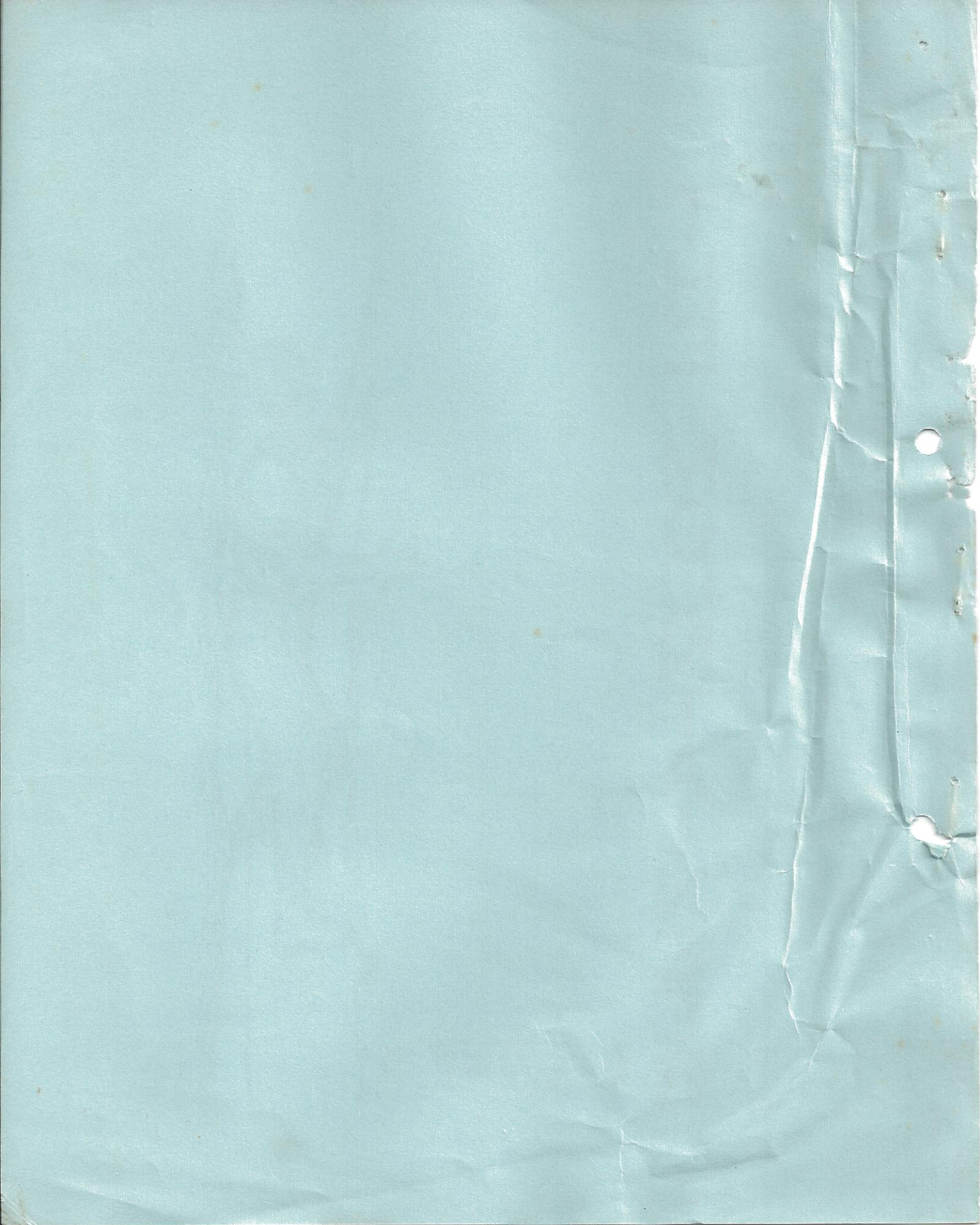
THE MOUNTAINEER

No 196



Official Journal of the Melbourne
University Mountaineering Club
Registered at GPO Melb. for
transmission by post as a periodical





THE MOUNTAINEER.

Official Journal of M.U.M.C. Registered at G.P.O.; Melbourne for transmission through the post as a periodical.
All correspondence addressed to Union House, University of Melbourne, Parkville.

No. 5 1964

Price 6d.

Recently there has been much news in the Press on mountaineering with the first woman, Daisy Voog, to climb the North Face of the Eiger and a South Australian University Expedition to climb the unconquered Himalayan Peak of Langtang Lering (23,770 ft.). It seems women have taken some of the limelight here too, as there are two women in this party.

oOo

It is with mixed feelings that we confirm that the club President, Max Corry has resigned from his position as he is going to Mawson in December as a surveyor. We would like to express our appreciation of the work Max has done in this and previous years for the Club, and take this opportunity to wish him all the best in his new venture.

Actually, Max won't be the only club member down at Mawson, as Greg Martin, John Bennett, Don Allison and Dr. Scott Martin, make a total of five club members going to Mawson. Lt. ...

-oOo-

The Outward Bound School had a display in the Union this term. It is of interest to us as the photography of rock climbing and caving is very good. Photos of climbing in Britain and the Hawkesbury Valley in N.S.W. are clear and interesting.

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TRIPS PROGRAMME:

Nov 6th- 8th Mt Juliet - Mt Donna Buang - Warburton. Leader Dave Hogg.

Standard Medium-hard. Bus leaves 6.30 pm. from Whight's Tourist Bureau. Fares: Bus 11/- . Trips (from Warburton)

10/-.

Nov 13th- 15th Wilson's Promontory (various Trips). Probably private transport. A van will be hired only if sufficient bookings have been received by Friday, Nov. 6th. Fare (if van) £1/15/- to £2/15/-

Nov. 13th-15th.

POST EXAM WEEKEND. Red Point, Phillip Island,
Leader: Susan Quilford. Van leaves front of Union
6:30 pm. Fare £1/2/- to £1/13/-. Cancellation fee
11/-. Climbing at Cape Woolamai, day walks swimming
surfing, sunbathing, ect. Private transport may be
taken if desired.

Nov. 27th-28th

(i) Howqua Hills- The Governors- Mitchells Falls
- Jamieson River. Standard-Hard.

(ii) Howqua Hills - Mitchells - Jamieson River.

Standard-Medium. Leader Bob. Chappell.

Phone 348986 Fare £1/18/- to £2/17/-. Cancellation
fee 19/-. Van leaves front of Union at 6.30. pm.
the last van trip of the year.

Dates to be arranged. Buchan Caves trip. Leader: Nick White. Phone:
85 9033. Private transport. Contact Nick if interested.

Smaller trips (by private transport or public transport) will probably be
organised at various times during the vac. and will be advertised on the
club notice board. Anyone interested in leading such a trip, please contact
the Trips Sec. Dave Hogg (87 1630).

BOOKINGS FOR CLUB TRIPS MUST BE MADE EITHER:-

- (1) At Aikman's Rd any lunch time,
- or (2) By phoning Dave Hogg (87 1630).

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GOING TO TASMANIA AT CHRISTMAS ?

If you are flying to Hobart on Boxing Day (Dec 26th), you will be able to
benefit from club concession air fares. Anyone interested should contact
Dave Hogg as soon as possible so that a definite plane booking can be
made. Likewise, any other club parties of 15 or more persons can obtain
this concession. Note:- the whole party does not have to be returning
together to Melbourne.

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INSURANCE ON CHRISTMAS TRIPS AND TRIP CONTRACTS.

Sports Union insurance for vacation trips is available to all club members
paying SPORTSUNION fees, provided that a trip list is forwarded to the
Sports Union before the trip. Official club trip forms are available from
the Trip's Sec. or at "Aikman's Rd".

Contacts for trips over the vacation can also be arranged if desired.
Contact the Trip's Sec. if interested.

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BOGONG HIGH PLAINS: WINTER 1964

Party: Russell Judge, John McClean, Don Thomas, Mark Tweedale, Nick White.

Date: 8 - 16 August.

Dibbins hut was our first objective after having a look at the summit of Hotham in near blizzard conditions. The snow pole line was in reasonable order, but disappeared for about 1/4 mile around Mt. Loch. The descent into Dibbins hut was sheer joy, ploughing through the snow in our snow shoes which had already proved essential.

By noon the following day we were on the High Plains but after some forty minutes it was obvious that too many snow poles were either missing, buried or obscured in the very poor visibility. Consequently we camped just below the tree line to be greeted in the morning by frozen boots and collapsed tents. Wallaces hut was found to be under deep snow and as we had wet sleeping bags, the scout hut was a better proposition.

Next morning was fine and warm and with high spirits we headed around Rocky Valley through Longford Gap over ^Welse to Ropers Hut. By the time we reached the vicinity of Ropers a thick white - out descended, which made the top of the chimney when found a most welcome sight. Our smallest member climbed down the chimney and procured a shovel and about one and a half hours later we were able to open the door.

Next morning we had glimpses of Bogong, but by tea time we had reached Tims Lookout the weather had deteriorated sufficiently to force us to return to Ropers. The following day was worse, so after two days in Dibbins Hut with time expiring and food running low we regretfully decided to return to Rocky Valley.

Snow shoes proved a great success, without them reasonable progress would have been impossible. Plastic bags between pairs of socks proved very satisfactory for Australian snow conditions, and a woolen shirt essential. Ice axes useful as a walking stick, no doubt would have been essential on the Quartz Nob. Maps: M.B.W. reliable, but does not show snow pole numbers as does the SCV map. The snow pole line is generally in good condition - no doubt some which we could not find were buried in the deepest snow for ten years.

A trip to be recommended, but not without a fit party with some knowledge of the High Plains and the general snow and weather conditions likely to be encountered.

D.T.

P.S. For a full trip report see Ropers Hut Log Book!

THE JOYS OF MOUNTAINEERING

It was not many hours since the last of them had returned from painting the town (Harrietville), after two days and nights up the mountain. Not long ago since the last candle had been extinguished when somewhere within the bounds of the camp an alarm rang.

"Go back to sleep"

"Ow! Shut up"

"Time to get up"

"Come on, out of that green sleeping bag"

"Enormous" "Tremendous"

"What time is it?"

"2.45"

"Shut up!" (Hutton).

"Where's breakfast"

"Coming"

"Hot milo and sausage"

"At 30'clock in the morning"

"We must be nuts or sumthin"

"Hurry up and stitch up that hole in your boot"

"Groan"

"Come on Corry what's keeping you?"

"Right ... right ... right ... Let's go" -

and the rhythmic click of ice axes on the gravel road fades into the distance.

5.30 We had been climbing steadily by torch light since 4.30 and dawn found us well up the mountain (Feathertop that is). We pushed on up the track making very good time in the fresh powder snow. We reached the hut at 7.30. However our dream of waiting hot coffee from hut-bound V.M.T.C. members was not fulfilled.

After rest and refreshments (sultanas and chocolate) we pushed on up the mountain leaving behind us a magnificent structure in snow and ice (i.e. igloo) still standing after Saturday night. The weather was improving (we thought) and we had high hopes for a successful summit attempt. We reached the signpost at 8.15 and roped up. After a short trek on fairly hard ice we reached the cross. The wind was blowing stronger now. As we moved on up the ridge the visibility decreased to 10 - 15 ft. making it very important to be careful of cornices. As our ice axes bit into the sides of the summit ridge we forgot the icy wind blowing around us.

9.30 As Peter stood on the side of the ridge gazing into the whiteness for a glimpse of the summit pole, a sound no louder than a snowball dropping in the snow accompanied a gentle tug on the ice axe planted between his feet. When he looked down, a crack no less than thirty yards long and rapidly widening swallowed up his "staff of life" as several tons of ice and snow peeled off thirty feet from the edge and quietly slipped down the East side of Feathertop.

Our ice axes firmly planted in the ice we watched as Peter gazed over a 40' sheer drop searching in vain for a sign of his ice axe.

As we descended the mountain we contemplated the day's alpine experiences and thought about the hot coffee and good food awaiting us down in the valley which we reached at 1.45.

After hurriedly (you're not kidding) packing we boarded the van for Melbourne. Reclining comfortable in the lap of a fellow mountaineer (female) and drinking a toast en route to FEATHERTOP at the Seymour pub a pleasant journey home rounded off a perfect day.

Ah! The joys of mountaineering.

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CLASSIFIED ADD:

ONE FEDERATION MODEL A FRAME PACK IN GOOD ORDER. FRAME, LEATHER STRAPS, CANVAS AND BUCKLES ALL O.K. COST £5 OR REASONABLE OFFER. CONTACT DON ALLISON 10 DENMAN ST., BRUNSWICK, N.10. PHONE: 36 3221 (home) 51 0271 (Ext. 24)(Bus.).

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LENT AT EASTER AND NOT RETURNED:

2 man Paddy A tent, in green Japara bag, with a leather pouch of pegs.

If you have it or know where it is, or who has, please contact the Secretary, at 10 Dalston Rd., Oakleigh. S.E.12.

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TYPIST:

The club is now minus a typist as Marie Sykes has left for an overseas trip. IF ANYONE knows of someone who could take on this position, PLEASE contact the Editor, Sue Quilford via the club box! URGENT!!

-oOo-

The Ropes' Officer is also off for parts unknown. Phil Willy is going to New Guinea for about 21 months in November.

-oOo-

Reprinted from
The New Zealand Alpine Journal (in which it was reprinted
from "Cambridge Mountaineering." 1961) No. 49 1962.

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

EDWARD: The rain beads glisten on my shoulders as I stand hunched beneath the overhang. I say nothing, I do not even move or turn towards you; my boredom soaks up your remarks like blotting-paper.

TARQUIN: How I resent your misery and boredom; resent too the determination rising with the steam from your shoulders, until I almost inhale its stale breath.

The water sluices down, washing away the impulsion and the will. My hair pricks into my eyes, my clothes cling damply to my skin. I have persuaded myself - was it even this? - that I shall fail.

EDWARD: But have you convinced me down here?

TARQUIN: Exuding enthusiasm like a smoke screen, which I would like to blast aside, and shake you by the shoulders, and make you understand.... If one can ever convince the priest; if one who cannot manage even his own mind can speak to the man for whom there are only patterns of holds to manipulate.... Your confidence is touching, damn you: I watched you this summer, stepping up so confidently, if I can give the name of confidence to something which you never noticed, so confidently on those delicate holds -

EDWARD: exquisitely delicate holds -

TARQUIN: while with black despair, with exasperation, almost with tears in my eyes I tried to force myself up those few moves, like stomaching unpalatable food.

EDWARD: But you handed on the lead.

TARQUIN: I would not have believed that I could resent, let alone hate, beauty and talent, till I felt it welling up forcing the other emotions out, as you tiptoed with exquisite grace up those few moves which had beaten me. And it was I, not you, who felt the exposure lying heavy in my stomach, the exposure which might have been to you only a wide smile of appreciation beneath your feet.

But then you were not with me last July.

CHARLES: The rimaye was lower and wider - even the slabs by which it can be avoided were remote above a skirt of overhanging rock pleated, as it were, in but one place, into which I waved you.

TARQUIN: a repellent fold of damp rock, choked with loose sticks of granite. I fingered my way up and there I was standing quite innocently, with doubt wrinkling my forehead, leaning in as I squinted upwards, hopeful that the passage might really be too hard...but I must have leaned too far, for the next moment I was on my back at the bottom of the rimaye.

My body soon forgot its pain -

CHARLES: yes, with what verve you led that glorious slab of tawny granite, cresting into the luminous blue of a summer sky with its melting, melding, mingling watery clouds! A day for heroes with that cloud-sky moving majestically across a homeric canvas strident with colour, bold chiaroscuro and the flamboyant sculpture of spires and tilted planes -

TARQUIN: but the chronic wounds mature deep in the heart, and strange lasting processes evolve out of the sunlight, acquiring their own colour and flavour.

CHARLES: In the cold light of morning we stood, one week later, beneath the great diedre which cleaves the west face of our mountain, roping up and weaving ourselves into cocoons of cord. Once again you manoeuvred half-heartedly, slipping me into the lead, with hints and subtle gestures; weaving vales of transparent artifice, more attractive than naked refusal, since they cloaked it. But all this silky raiment - slashed through - "Off you go, Tarquin."

TARQUIN: The corner was dark with a remembered repellence; I, naked, with the memory like ice on my heart, scraping and shifting, a man feeling his way down a black tunnel, waiting for the floor to drop away beneath his feet, hardly trusting their feel upon the stone, while the hollow tread echoes the knocking in his heart, thumping harder, louder, till he turns and runs, driven by his fear, back, back, to confess that he just can't, in floods of unexplained reasons and unwept tears, wringing his hands and spreading them out in resignation.

And yet how easy they look from ground level again, the moves and combinations.

EDWARD: No, I was not there in July.

TARQUIN: And you cannot know how cruel you are.

EDWARD: But you it was who brought us here this November to a north-facing crag -

TARQUIN: imagining it would be dry; for why else would I come? Yet when I commented on its wetness, went up not just once or twice to feel the grease on the rock, and to half-make a move or

two, you, for you were not there in July, you gave me the two ends of the rope -

EDWARD: and offered to carry the sack -

TARQUIN: you were too quick on the draw; and caught between you and me, what was I to do but go some way up the rock, somewhere between you and my fear, and act out a pretence until it was decent to come down again?

Why is it that laymen think the climber needs courage? If I ever conquer these moves it will be from fear of you.

EDWARD: For were I not here, you would already have come back.

TARQUIN: And if not, if you are invited up here, though the others applaud the boldness of your lead, I, silent, feeling a moistness welling into the corner of my eyes, I shall know that you showed no courage, and the resentment will burn in my cheeks. For how can one be courageous ignorantly, any more than one can seduce a woman negligently?

In many ways I envy your ignorance, your natural detachment. For me the difficulties are not really physical: I snuffle along tenuous lines of thought, I boggle at emotional obstacles.

EDWARD: And I?

TARQUIN: You climb like a man going through life asleep, preserved from the convolutions of doubt and hesitation; but barred also from the exquisite bitter-sweet taste of hot lemon tea sipped from a bowl in cupped hands; from the joy sharpened with pain, from the moment when the effort and the striving burst into abandoned release, and joy flows out in triumphant streams, and the soul leaps wildly up and away... the guitars throb in the darkness, the firelight flickers, the voice rises pure, estatic, wild, soars away into the dark and the empty places.

But let us return to the other realities of this November day.

EDWARD: We have played out the elaborate ritual: changed our footwear, pulled on our sweaters and draped ourselves with tackle, in unhurried preparation.

TARQUIN: But my heart is not in it; and the reasons we came here?

EDWARD: That you can lead one climb that I have not done, harder than any I have done, and in grim conditions? For we were novices together, cast the rope behind together; how can we climb in a vacuum, without measuring ourselves against our friends? There has been ambition for so long, even in the boy who ranged on long legs beneath the chalk and pastel of an August sky, far across the wide perspective of the moors; who would spend long hours gazing out over the quietness and the tranquility, just absorbing it, as he has often since watched the waves breaking on the shore, or sat silent in wonder at dusk reddening in the west.

TARQUIN: Sometimes I too go up into the hills alone. My heart loses the emptiness which aches within it, and the autumn boughs are gay in young leaves.

EDWARD: Often in the black velvet of night, wrapped in the comforting warmth of silence as in a blanket, I would sit for long hours, soaking up the atmosphere of my rooms. Outside I would distinguish the pale spires of King's rising over the far wall of our exquisite court; about me lay that holy silence of utter calm, on the rows of books around me, on the pictures, and in the dark corners which my lamp did not illumine; in tranquillity I would sit, happy that I was alone, but not lonely. So too in climbing, Tarquin, we find a home and a faith.

TARQUIN: There are legendary heroes to revere and to emulate; a mass of oral tradition to absorb and in our turn transmit; a hierarchy to mount and in which we have our place secure -

EDWARD: yes - it would be pleasant, Tarquin, when the mists veil the dank colours of the hills, and the sky becomes rich with blue, to make own way down among the boulders in a circle of torchlight, finally to crunch across the gravel to the hut, and after stripping off boots and anoraks to join our companions. You could wait for a suitable pause in the recital of the day's exploits, Tarquin, in which to cast your own success, and there would be another pause, a silence growing out of the name as heads turned -

TARQUIN: and I would describe it in suitably quiet and British tones, the dryness of my voice contrasting with the vision of the words... broadening my shoulders and my accent, to become a preist of the mountain hierarchy, in the game which we all play; for too often, Edward, the heroic feats are not so much legendary as utterly mythical; and inhuman moves may be recounted as pleasant, exposed, interesting, but never desperate; and lesser climbers may be promising - such is the condescension of the critic who reveals that better climbers have used a secret aid on the pitch which has defeated him. What faith is this?

EDWARD: That even without ambition and the desire for status, there is something which draws me back to the mountains, where I find the serenity which comforts me in my rooms.

TARQUIN: Yes - some plunge into marriage, or just into romance (taking them no further than the drinking of the wine); or innocently, so insidious is the need, into the academic life, or the mountains; all pursuing echoes of the same voice. But I return to them, not just for the friendship and the beauty and the adventure I find there, but for something which I experience in the exhilaration of speed or the rhythm of the dance, but even more keenly in those moments of fierce content high on a rock face.

It really is a miserable day.

EDWARD: Such are your feelings and performance.

TARQUIN: I have tried to re-create the mood. I am saying nothing of the rock about me, or of how I overcome it. Another would no doubt climb it in a different way, and I am not interested in the bones, the moves themselves, any more than I am interested in the mere steps of a dance. But I have blown up for you the germs of ideas which are lurking, whether I am conscious of them or

not, inside me as I play the reluctant yo-yo up here, wet and bedraggled, with my hands stuffed into this gutter crack, and water running down my sleeves and trickling out of my breeches, my hands stuffed in as deeply as possible, abjectly, an animal with its head in a hole. I could start the first moves by layback, so I move up with my hands as deep in the crack as possible -

EDWARD: sheer cussedness, for after craning for a moment or two you have to come down again.

TARQUIN: And there are always runners to adjust, and hands -

EDWARD: as cold as your feet -

TARQUIN: to put in my mouth and blow on, though the mud tastes awful. And all the while you are standing silent in the background, like Clytaemnestra, silent and sinister.

EDWARD: My presence keeps you up there, either because you won't let me take your place, in case it is I who succeed, or perhaps even because, having brought me here, you feel bound to make a serious attempt, or at least a protracted one.

TARQUIN: So I am growing familiar with the rock, coming almost to like the moves I have been shuttling up and down, and to believe that I can manage the few moves beyond. Gradually the difficulties of the rock are solved, and with them the mental and the emotional, until quite suddenly, for no reason I can discover, I launch myself, and it is as though all those minutes of doubt and fear never existed... as though the clouds are swept away, the heavens now luminous blue, and the raindrops sparkle in the sun... as though all the discordant notes explode into harmony and the orchestra swells, with woodwind and horn and golden trumpets, thunderous chords and glittering arpeggios in a crescendo of overpowering triumph.

One June - I shall not name the climb, for I want you to see it through my eyes, not through your own - we met in grass-floored corner high on a cliff.

JOHN: We were leading through, Tarquin and myself, and this recess was one of the stances, comfortable trysts for a cliff which is really vertical, and whose lower walls we had already climbed.

TARQUIN: We met briefly, and John belayed me as I moved onto the next wall.

JOHN: Out onto the wall, and a few gymnastics up the crack; a runner, and then no more, although you were perched at the crux, now some way above.

TARQUIN: Your ledge was far enough below to appear very small.

JOHN: You balanced up, stepping onto the wainscot of the upper wall, left hand stuck out awkwardly behind for balance, poked behind a loose flakelet.

TARQUIN: But I could not, strain as I might, hook a hand over a sort of pillar in relief, which seemed to offer the only hold on the impending wall.

JOHN: You rest; time and again you cling below the move, resting and looking. Then at last you balance and strain and stretch over the pillar -

TARQUIN: But the top is rounded -

JOHN: no retreat, no rest, nor pause, hardly a pause but at full stretch bridging, piston-thrusting up and on and over -

CHARLES: as not twelve months before, high in the Alps, high on a pitch above the last runner when the holds were suddenly round and fingers numb for pause or retreat, on and on -

TARQUIN: though had I been able to pause or retreat I would never have forced up those rounded holds -

CHARLES: on and up, until you tumbled over onto the ledge above -

TARQUIN: though we climb safely, I tell my parents and my parents' friends, no we never make a move that we are not absolutely certain of, yet time after time I find myself making moves that I apparently do not even weigh up -

CHARLES: through fear -

TARQUIN: though my parents and their friends always assure me that I must be courageous -

JOHN: you, who spend so long balanced on a wall -

EDWARD: or wedged into a wet crack until the moves are worked out to boredom and all hazard are lulled from the mind, and move impulsively only when to pause or retreat would be to fall - is this courage?

TARQUIN: Yet in these moments, as perhaps in no others, I am a man of action, living entirely in the present rather than browsing on memories or hopes; living, not yearning; expressing myself, as others in music or verse, or on canvas; living those intense, vibrant moments which artists strive so hard to preserve.

EDWARD: One summer I was a clerk in a London office, and even to fight up the tree-shadowed slimewalls of Kent was joy, to return exhausted beyond hunger with the skin stripped from the back of my hands and the dust thick in my hair, to sprawl on the floor with the guide, ticking the day's successes in pencil and the next week's in my mind...during those gray weeks I gave many a backward and a forward glance, switching from hopes to memories, this way and that, until the present blurred into a kaleidoscope of remembered and longed-for experiences.

TARQUIN: You were clutching at the shadows of a moment which you could not embrace. And is your life still drawn out in their twilight? Do you clutch at insubstantial forms, feel the caress of bloodless arms, strain at the twitter of voiceless mouths? Why pursue endlessly the shadows of a sensation which you cannot enlarge to satisfy a lifetime?

EDWARD: Yet the vibrations of those moments quicken my heart. I sit among bright lights, the music is gay; yet my eyes blur, I see only cool mountains and clear skies. I must live in something, must express myself, fulfil myself -

TARQUIN: or perhaps lose yourself, as though you threw your arms round a girl's waist and buried your head in her breast, clutching her in until you became part of her, completely immersed in her warmth and softness, as kittens in the fur of their mother; as though you pressed into her lips squeezing and pressing and mouthing, squeezing out all thought and hope and memory, all self, swallowing all being into one absolute cavern, where there is no self, but only absolute sensation.

For there are voices which murmur to us insistently; and yet will we trace them, however high we climb, however deeply we bury ourselves in warmth and softness? Perhaps we merely silence them for a time in those moments of vibrant, pulsing life; perhaps we can keep them silent if most of what we do offers those rich moments, whether the savage triumph of a hard move or the milder pleasures of a day high in the Alps, whether the exhilaration of speed or the sharing of rhythmic movement. Yet I suspect that they are no more than echoes of a single voice, and that we can never really silence them until we find something which exists not in the triumph of a pitch or in the cloistered calm of a court, nor yet in the fervour of a kiss or the thrill of speed, but only in ourselves.

--oOo--

ROPES FOR MOUNTAINEERING

A climbing rope should be strong, light easy to grip and handle wet, dry or frozen, run freely through karabines and not stretch too much under load. This combination of properties is not to be found in any rope made today. The particular rope selected will be a compromise depending on its intended use. In particular, the true climber is interested in strength under shock load conditions, the artificial climber does not want too much stretch and the snow climber, who is unlikely to fall free may well choose a lighter rope.

The main factors influencing the properties of rope are the type of fibre, the rope diameter and the construction of the rope. My aim in this article is to present a brief survey of the properties of ropes in use today.

Nylon is the strongest fibre currently used. This and its other durable properties make it the material in almost universal use. It is a little stronger than Terylene and about twice as strong as the best natural fibres. Man-made fibres can be made very long and, in fact, run the full length of the rope, whereas natural fibre ropes rely for their strength on the friction between fibres. Fairly recently polypropylene has been used for ropes. This fibre has a very low density for its strength, making for a light and fairly large rope for a given strength (it will float in water). It is much used by fishermen and boatmen but unfortunately for the mountaineer it loses most of its strength in cold conditions, making it dangerous for a climbing rope.

Thickness in ropes of a given fibre implies strength, but it also implies "gripability". The friction belay relies on the climber being able to exert a certain on the rope and this means that regardless of strength, the rope must not be too thin. At present, strength considerations result in fairly convenient sizes, but the advent of better fibres may well lead to some thought on this matter.

It is difficult to put a figure on the strength required for a climbing rope. The case where one end is fixed to the rock may be analysed and represents the extreme case, but all belaying technique is aimed at avoiding this situation and, in theory at least, it should never occur. The figure usually quoted for ropes are static breaking strains, but it is the dynamic where a climber falls on a rope which is initially slack and suddenly becomes taut that is of real interest. In 1959 the British Standards Institution set up an expert committee to draw up a climbing rope standard. Advised by a number of interested bodies including manufacturers of nylon yarns and the British Mountaineering Council they produced B.S.3104 which represents the highest quality attainable at present. Four sizes are listed for various purposes, but of three, only size No. 4, with a breaking strain of 4,200 lb., is recommended for rock climbing when a single rope is used. Various experienced climbers use lighter ropes and seem to base their choice on the fact that they have climbed with this rope for x years and have never had one break. This is probably due more to their skill than the soundness of their judgement, so unless you have information which was not available to the B.S.I. in 1959 it would seem reasonable to follow their recommendations.

The ability of a rope to absorb the energy of a falling climber comes from its elasticity. The more elastic the rope is (for a given static breaking strain) the more able it is to withstand shock loads. A conventional three strand (laid) nylon rope is very elastic and will stretch by about 36% of its original length before breaking. This property makes it about five times as strong as hemp rope of the same circumference under shock load conditions although it is only twice as strong on a static test. Calculations show that a No. 3 rope would offer a 10 stone person about the same degree of safety in a given situation as a No. 4 would a 12 stone climber, but the larger rope has a much greater safety margin against abrasion and mechanical damage which is the usual cause of rope failure.

Braided ropes are becoming increasingly popular in Europe. These have a plaited outer sheath containing parallel longitudinal fibres. Their smooth surface and round cross-section make them run freely through karabines. This together with their low stretch and resistance to kinking make them ideal for artificial work but inferior to laid ropes for free climbing. Braided climbing ropes are not made in Australia nor, as far as I know, in England, although a Sydney firm is an agent for a Swiss-made rope. Braided Terylene (or Dacron - the fibre is identical) would seem to be the best material for . It is less stretchy than nylon, does not kink like laid rope or rot like hemp or linen. It is readily available from ships' chandlers or yachting shops.

The strength of all ropes is reduced by knots, and nylon is no exception. The Tarbuck is reputed to be the strongest and my tests indicate that it reduces strength by 20%. The bowline is said to make a 50% reduction. Because nylon is slippery, care should be taken to work the knot up tight and lock it with half-hitches. The butterfly knot would seem to be the best for the middle of a rope - it avoids the acute bend where the rope leaves the knot that is the drawback of the simpler overhand loop.

A leader should never advance the full length of the rope, because if he falls the second has no rope for a "sliding arrest" and he comes on to a direct belay and will probably break the rope. It can be shown (Wexler, American Alpine Journal, No. 4, 1950) that if a second can apply the force of 600 lbs. to the rope it will take a length of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the rope out to arrest a falling leader of 150 lb. The rope will stand a lot more than 600 lb. so there is no need to demand that the leader be stationary when the rope comes taut, so the example is, perhaps, a little extreme, but 600 lb. is a large force to exert with the hands and friction around the body. It is a matter for speculation how most girls would fare under these circumstances.

Ropes should be handled and stored carefully. Never tread on a rope or subject it to unnecessary abrasion. Nylon is not affected by water but is damaged by exposure to the elements, particularly sunlight, so store in a cool, dark place. After an exposure test of six months in a sub-tropical climate nylon lost 71% of its strength, but showed no loss after 21 months of storage in a ship's hold.

It is difficult to draw conclusions in an inherently vague subject, but it is probably quite fair to say that a No. 4 laid nylon rope is easily the soundest choice for rock climbing with a single rope with perhaps a pair of

lighter braided ropes for artificial work. Kenneth Tarbuck, in his little book "Nylon Rope and Climbing Safety" says that No. 2 nylon is thoroughly safe for abseiling and snow climbing. Little attempt has been made to include numerical data in this article, but merely to draw some conclusions from the data available. Some work was done last year on rope tests and developing a simpler theory of rope stretching under dynamic load for the rather artificial case of a rigid belay. This was outlined in "The Mountaineer". Recently the University computer has been put to good use analysing many more combinations of rope size, weight and distance than would have been possible by hand.

John Retchford.

-cOo-

Mountain Climbing, by Godfrey Francis (English Universities Press)

This is described as a popular and authoritative guide- and it deserves this epithet - and it is published under the sponsorship of the British Mountaineering Council. There are chapters on equipment 'first steps', hill-walking, rock climbing, snow and ice, and mountain rescue, and there is a small but well chosen bibliography for further reading. It is written for Britishers aiming to walk and climb on their own mountains and in the Alps. Everything that is said is sound, and there is a wonderful cover for 190 small pages. The principles will be applicable for mountaineering in Australia, but many of the details are hardly applicable for our special problems in equipment, route-finding, weight-carrying, etc.

-oOo-

SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTION.

Additions to 1964 Call Up List.

Priority A

Joseph Lamb, Geoff Smith, Don Thomas.

Further enquiries are welcome. Please contact either of the following:

Delegate: John Cole 83 8150

or Observer: Ross Smith 50 6784.

- oOo-

DEATHS FROM EXPOSURE ON FOUR INNS WALKING
COMPETITION, MARCH 14-15, 1964.

Report to Medical Commission on Accident Prevention -

L.G.C. Pugh, M.A., B.M.Oxon.

[From the Division of Human Physiology, National Institute for
Medical Research, Hampstead, London, N.W.3.]

This report is based on evidence heard at the inquest held at Glossop on April 8, and on the written reports of members of the Glossop District Rover Crew Mountain Rescue Team.

ORGANISATION

The Four Inns walking competition has been held annually for the last seven years and is organised by the 51st Derby (St. Luke's) California Rover Crew. It is very popular in the Scouting movement. This year 80 3-man teams started; a further 40 teams applied to enter but were turned down for lack of accommodation. The age-range of the participants is from 17½ to 24 years. There are both team and individual trophies. The course involves a forty-five mile walk over the moors at altitudes ranging from 650ft. to 2000ft. and a total ascent and descent of about 4500 ft. The record time is 7½ hours. However, competitors usually take from 9½ to 22 hours. I understand that up to a third of the competitors give up, most of them after the toughest sections, either at Snake Inn (sixteen miles) or Edale (twenty-four miles). There have been cases of fatigue but no accidents or fatalities.

PRECAUTIONS

Preliminary and final information sheets are circulated which contain details of the course, the system of tallies, the kit required, and so on. A pamphlet containing advice about clothing is also issued. There are check-points at intervals of three to eight miles along the route and a rescue team is on call. From reading the information sheets it is clear that the organisers have taken great care to safeguard the participants. They also follow the weather forecasts for several days before the race. The reason given for holding the competition so early in the year is that March is the most convenient month from the point of view of school and university examinations.

THE 1964 EVENT

The 80 3-men teams started at 2-minute intervals beginning at 06.00 hours. The weather forecast that morning was that there would be showers with fine intervals. Actually there was drizzle and a light wind at the start, and the weather deteriorated all day with heavy rain and strong winds. During the night there was sleet and snow (from 04.30 hours). Temperatures recorded by four meteorological stations in the area (supplied by the

He did not say much, but when he did speak his voice was normal. When he could go no further they sat down, and Wilby, who was the fittest, went to reconnoitre. When he returned, Kydd went to fetch help while Welby stayed with Butterfield. Kydd met a rescue party and was assisted down to Alport Farm, suffering from exposure. Two parties searched for Welby and Butterfield but failed to find them.

It is thought that Welby may have stayed with Butterfield until he died, and started back perhaps in the dark, when his torch may have given out. Their bodies were found 2 days later. Butterfield's body was in a stream bed, partly in the water. Welby's body was lying covered with snow about a mile to the west.

Necropsy - The findings were essentially similar to the findings on Withers, except that the organs were less congested.

D. Rhead

Sometime between 15.30 and 16.00 hours this competitor was found sheltering under the wall of a sheep pen. Rescuer Davies stated he was semiconscious. He was carried down on a stretcher to Snake Inn and later admitted to Glossop Hospital where he recovered.

R. Kydd

Kydd was the third member of the team to which Butterfield and Welby belonged. When Rescuer Simm met him on the way to the Snake Inn he was exhausted. To quote Rescuer Simm: "He was able to inform me that he had had to leave two of his team mates up the valley...but due to his condition he could not give me the exact location." Kydd was accompanied down to the Snake Inn by two rescuers. There he recovered, and later he was transported to Buxton base camp.

COMMENTS

Weather

Weather conditions were severe but not exceptional. The official forecast was wrong. Temperatures on the moors would have been between + 1°C and + 4°C, which, in the presence of strong winds and rain, is a typical wet-cold situation. It would clearly be safe to postpone the annual race until later in the season when the weather is warmer and the days longer.

Clothing

The clothing of the dead boys was produced in court. Each outfit consisted of:

1. An anorak: two were of poor quality and one satisfactory.
2. A jersey: one light-weight, others medium.
3. A shirt and singlet.
4. Trousers: one jeans, one 33% terylene-wool mixture; one corduroy.
5. Socks: two to three pairs each.
6. Climbing boots of good quality.

The trousers afforded little protection against wind and rain. Anoraks, however good, will not keep a man dry for more than 2-3 hours; for, to avoid condensation, they have to be made of permeable cloth. Witnesses did not seem to appreciate this. All competitors who gave evidence said they were wet through and very cold. A patrol warden for the Peaks National Park said he always wore an oilskin on the moors in wet weather.

Public attention needs to be called to the dangers of the wet-cold environment. These boys would have been all right if they had not been wet through. They were lightly clad because it was a race. The organisers might consider making it compulsory to carry spare clothing and a plastic rainproof coat.

Food

All the witnesses said they had enough food with them in the form of chocolate and raisins, and coffee and soup was issued at the check-points. I should not expect a calorie intake of more than 1000-1500 kcal. on an exercise of this kind, although the total energy expenditure may be over 6000 kcal.

Heat Balance

The oxygen consumption of men walking in mountains at a pace they can maintain over many hours has been measured in various parts of the world and is generally about 2.0 litres per minute for a 75 kg. man in good training. The record-holders on the Four Inns Walk have been long-distance runners and can probably maintain an oxygen consumption of at least 3.0 litres per minute.

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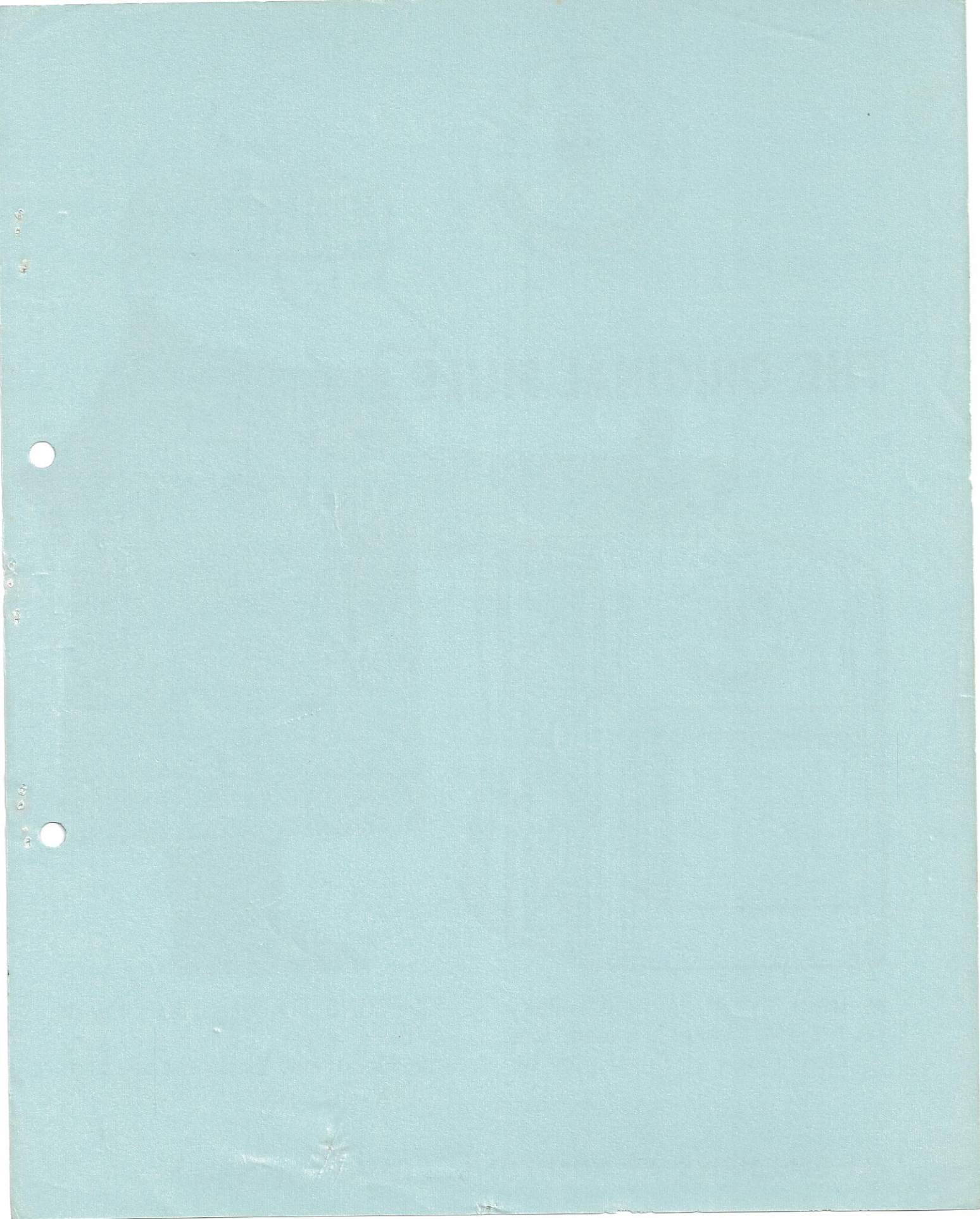
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SUMMARY

1. The 8th Annual Four Inns Walking Competition (forty-five miles) took place in wet-cold conditions, the air temperatures on the moors being 2-3°C. There was heavy rain most of the day, and a strong wind. The official weather report was misleading.
2. From the fifth hour some competitors began to get into difficulties. Three Scouts lost their lives and at least four others had narrow escapes.
3. The clothing of the dead men were not waterproof, and the trousers were not windproof.
4. The cause of death was given as exposure to prolonged cold. In one of three cases a severe attack of influenza three weeks previously was thought to have been contributory. There were no significant necropsy findings other than terminal congestion.
5. Symptoms of exposure, in order of development, were: (a) slowing of the rate of progress, clumsiness, and stumbling; (b) repeated falling; (c) inability to continue; (d) incoherence, impairment of consciousness; (e) unconsciousness, extreme pallor, and in one case what appears to have been a convulsion. In these cases mental symptoms were late in appearance.
6. Only about 2 hours elapsed between first symptoms and collapse.
7. Evacuation of one of the fatal cases took 5 hours.
8. Mild cases recovered with rest and warmth.
9. The race was well organised and all recognised safety precautions were taken.

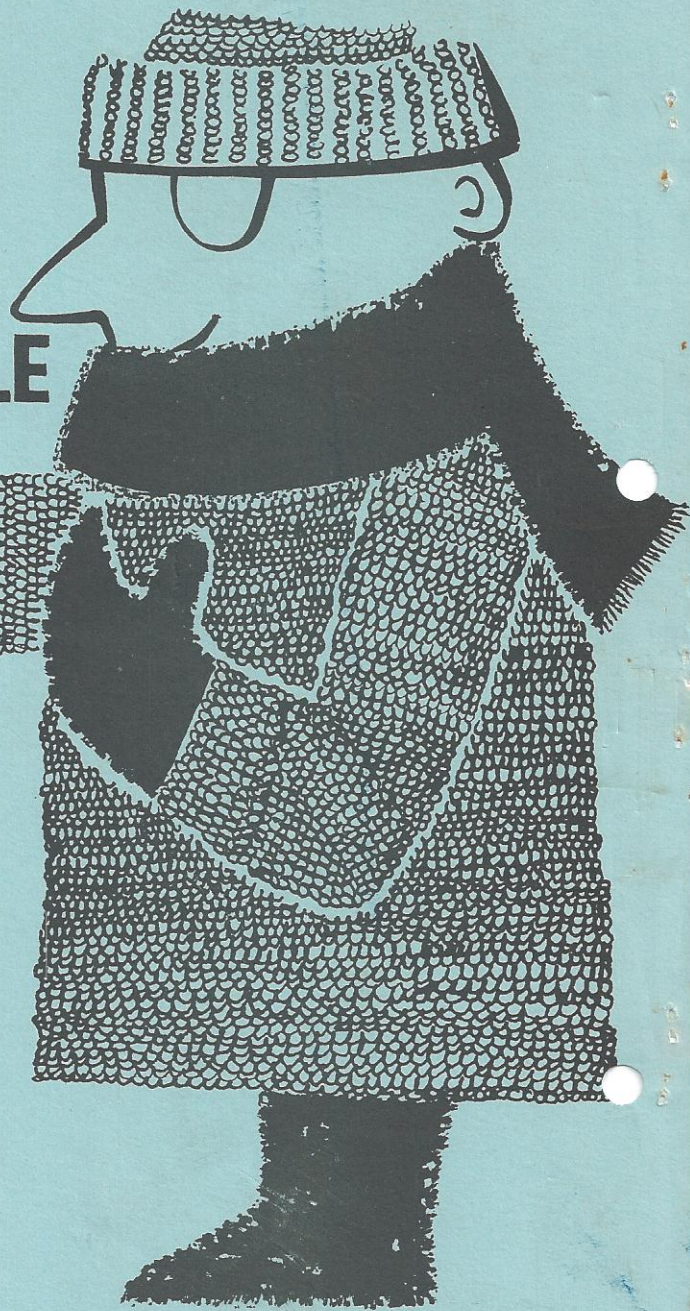
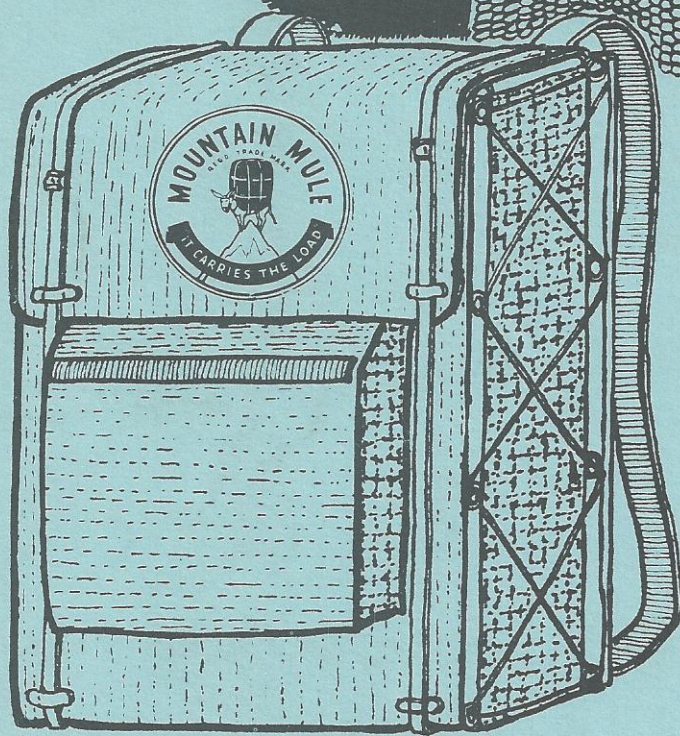
CURRY

1. The 8th Annual Curry Time Festival (October 1950) took place in wet-weather conditions, but the temperatures on the morning of 1-10. There was heavy rain most of the day and a strong wind. The official weather report was misleading.
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