

## ULULA ACCOUNTS OF TREKKING 1919 – 1929

### 1919 TREK - NORTH WALES

F. E. HARRISON, C. vi.

This comes as rather a belated memory of the trek, called forth by the desire to put on record its great doings.

We left the School on July 29th, a gallant band of thirty, and trekking from Penmaenmawr struck south, and made Trefriw on the third day, thence after a few days to Capel Curig, where we camped in pouring rain. From there we went on through Bethesda, Llanberis, and Beddgelert, so encircling Snowdon.

Then finally leaving the mountains we struck south and reached Criccieth in glorious weather. There we revelled in sea bathing. Then in a single day's march north we crossed the Peninsula to Clynog, whence through Caernarvon and Bangor we came back to Penmaenmawr.

Among many great days, one stands alone, the famous day on which we climbed Snowdon. We climbed up past cold Glaslyn and Lidaw, overhung by the grim precipice of Llewedd, swathed in dank mist, nor could any sun break through. But just before we began the downward climb a breeze sprang up and blew away the mists from around us, and the sun broke through, and all around us just below our feet there stretched to the farthest horizon a vast billowy snow-white sea of clouds, while through rifts here and there could be seen for a moment lakes which gleamed blue, set in the green hills far below.

Then the mist closed round us as before. After that came the long tramp home through the evening, with the three jagged peaks of Snowdon behind us showing purple against the dying light, and as we neared Capel, the yellow moon reflected in the lake.

The other famous thing was "short cuts." May they haunt Kenyon and the other infamous perpetrators!

We are grateful to Mr. Green and the other masters who ran the camp so well, and not least to the brothers Griffith for their aid.

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The chain of continental treks so cruelly snapped some years ago was caught up again, and caught up splendidly, by the Brittany trekkers. The spiritual values of a trek consist of such lovely but impalpable things that I will immediately deliver myself of the mere vulgar figures.

Our party of twenty-six, under the quite unsurpassable leadership of Messrs. Green, Heathcote and Lob, arrived at St. Malo (Leach a little lighter than he had left Southampton) on August 5th. Thence by ferry along to Dinard, and thereafter we pursued the line of Breton promontories to the sound of Atlantic surges along Finisterre, our furthest west being the St. Pol-de-Leon peninsula. On foot we covered nearly two hundred miles in three weeks (though Beal, our stalwart medicine man, has more precise figures on view).

We had every variety of camping-site—from woody and watery wastes to a sort of penny-a-time spectacle at Guingamp. Three sites we remember vividly—our camp against the estuary which washes the ancient and gabled city of Treguier (where, whilst Scragg danced in architectural rapture, MacMahon and Biggs had patisserie competitions—Biggs a winner by two eclairs at the third eat); our camp at the mairie of Plouisy—which was less officious than it sounds, for we were the guests of a delightful old Breton farmer and his wife, who gave us milk and tartines and cider in the warm glooms of their kitchen, and, on Mr. Green's earnest recommendation, added to their own dietary the unknown vegetable called "celery."

And did not Madame le maire present Bowden with an egg—but I will not recall that unhappy day to Bowden, who, like the rest of the "threepenny brigade," Messrs. Biggs, Crook, and a certain "Johnnie," walked like Trojans, leaving poor Mr. Green and Mr. Golding scornfully in the rear. Then finally our camp outside Dinant, where we were in the shadow of a great beech avenue where once the French aristocrats rode gaily to that chateau whose ruins still stand among the orchards and the haystacks.

We walked, we sang, we bathed in rivers and among rocks whose magic outlines brought back to our minds how this was the country where much of the Arthurian legend grew. But we did more. We trekked. Which means that there was always ready service: and fine spirits and laughter, even when the way was long and the stubble hard.

Here was Mr. Green's last trek as a master at MGS. What shall be said of him and his resource and his stodes and his film-packs and his corrugated sole and all his kindness? Prince of trekkers, we bow silent and grateful heads! Could there have been a more trusty guiding-star than Mr. Heathcote? It is hard to forget how he crossed the Morlaix stream by the trunk of an overhanging tree, with all the dignity of a doge. There was the inexhaustible Mr. Lob, of whom it is rumoured by the Baconians (who attribute to Bacon not only Shakespeare, but Spenser, Marlowe, Jonson, etc.) that he wrote not only Gilbert and Sullivan, but Mark Twain, Jerome, and W. W. Jacobs. It is a bagatelle to Mr. Lob, he proved, simultaneously to play blindfold chess, peel the potatoes, keep the bank and sing "Tit-willow."

What could we lack with such henchmen as Kirsop (who does not dislike butter) and Mills (who attends to fires) and the erudite Coulouris, and the ever-ready Mitchell?

If Brittany is richer by the pair of shoes Mr. Green confided to her care with due solemnity, we are richer by a host of happy memories, of ourselves, of sleepy market places, of the long white road, and the sea.

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We, the hiking party from the Row Camp, five strong, left for our ten days' hike through the Highlands, amidst the expressed awe of the rest and the open scepticism of the Major in the matter of our return.

Airily as we set off, our aerial feelings were soon brought to earth by our 30lb packs, and before we had climbed over to Loch Lomond we felt like throwing the lot into the loch. However, after numerous incidents, we arrived in Balloch where we were to provision—only to find that it was early closing day!! (This error was rectified on the steamer, where we nearly ate them out of food.) We did the magnificent 24-mile steamer trip up the loch that night and camped near Ardlui—really in the Highlands at last—on an ideal site (several trillion midges seeming to hold this same view on the position).

Words are inadequate to express our delight in the beautiful glen-scenery of the Falloch with its waterfalls, or in the beauties and grandeur of Glen Dochart with its lochs and huge mountains towering straight up from the roadside. Mention must be made, though, of our campsite in the glen, where the greatest hospitality was shown to us by our Yorkshire hosts, who not only gave us an excellent site and took a real interest in us, but also provided us with a dinner of grouse followed by pastry and scones, and dried our clothes for us when we arrived back out of the clouds on the top of Ben More, which we ascended on the next day.

Our next move was to Killin on Loch Tay, where on Sunday we had a delightful bathe, a washing-fag of "necker" and handkerchiefs, and a day in a rowing-boat on the loch, during which we rowed twelve miles and achieved such perfection that the whole hotel turned out to watch us fly up the river on our return journey.

Space is too short to describe all the merry incidents and the friends we picked up; how we managed (with a rush) to finish our breakfast and meet Mr. Rivers at Killin Station at 1-10 p.m.; and to tell of our journey through wild Glen Ogle—"the Khyber Pass" of Scotland—to our next site 800 feet up above Balquidder. Here we had a thick heather bed, and in the morning such an exhilarating temperature that the tent was frozen solid. We managed to break this sufficiently to fold the same and tramped to Strathyre, where we had a letter-fag, sitting in front of the principal hotel, and walked on to Callander by beautiful Loch Lubnaig and the Pass of Leny.

At Callander we provisioned in for two days and "proceeded" to Brig o'Turk, where we camped down; and next morning after a splendid bathe climbed Ben Ledi, after which in the teeming rain we went on to the shooting mansion of the Grahams of Achray on the banks of Loch Achray. Volumes could be written on the occurrences at this noteworthy site (where we slept in a loft), of the rabbit-stew made with a rabbit which we had acquired near Loch Lubnaig and skinned and eviscerated en route, and of the trapping "gadgets" hanging in our sleeping apartment.

The next day was dull, but we passed through the beautifully wooded Trossachs, sailed down Loch Katrine with its pretty islands, and passed over to Loch Lomond and thence to Loch Long. During the afternoon it began to clear, and we had the magnificent spectacle of the mountains bathed in sunshine and with silvery belt of cloud, the summits towering above.

Our last night, alas, saw us at Arrochar, whence we took a motor-boat (made possible by an old Manchester clergyman who believed in the tipping system) and walked into camp in fine style, our packs having seemingly shrunk to featherweights.

Long will it be before we forget the merry time we spent together, the never-failing hospitality of everybody in Scotland, the American on the Loch Katrine steamer, with whom we have a standing bet that we will walk up from the boat to the biggest New York hotel—in shorts; the sayings of "The Haggis," and most of all the glorious loch scenery. All that now remains to be done is to arrange our next year's hike.

## 1921 FOREIGN TREK - FRANCE

Mr. Jadhava's French Trek.

July 27th to September 7th, 1921.

BOCK

On the morning of Wednesday, July 27th, the Central Station was invaded by a swarm of those misguided people known as "parents," who are always seen to cluster round a train which carries young Owls to camp. Mr. Jadhava's party was safely stowed away in the train, and after a few minutes entirely given up to parental advice and filial ridicule the engine uttered its first deep-chested puff, and the great French trek had started!

All arrived safely at St. Pancras except Dean, who was pursuing other people's business at the bookstall at Derby. The interval in London before the departure of the boat-train was spent in riding round in a charabanc, giving the Londoners a good time. The midnight boat from Southampton took the whole merry party to its warm bosom and carried us comfortably and safely to that busy, noisome seaport, Le Havre.

We were not slow to lower our feet on French soil and raise our voices on French air. Our first day was spent in trekking out to St. Romain, where we camped for one night—just long enough to make the acquaintance of French apples, restaurant dinners, and citron, an acquaintance which ripened rapidly as the trek progressed. No tongue could tell all the glories of that trek, and certainly no pen can even attempt the description of all that we saw and all that we did.

We visited the chateaux of France's long-dead royalty; we saw the halls where they dined and where they listened to the wit of Molière; at Chambord we even camped in one of the long "allées" where François 1er once led the gay cavalcade to the hunt; we saw the churches where the great monarchs now lie at rest, and we have gazed at the skull of Louis XI. in the vaults of Cléry and at the humble tomb of William the Conqueror in the Église St. Etienne at Caen.

We have examined and appreciated the beauties of the country, and "a thing .of beauty is a joy for ever." Thus the camp had its joys. It also had its sorrows. Who can think without pain of Dean's introduction into the camp at Chartres of a family of hornets, who came attended by a businesslike mob of wasp acquaintances? Who will ever be able to recall to mind, without a blush of shame mantling his cheek, the unscoutlike behaviour of the M.O., at the Hotel de la Gare, Le Goulet, when he executed a little private plumbing to improve the flavour of the water supply ? What shall we all think of Meadley's zeal for photography, and of a certain officer's shamelessness in providing the photographer with suitable subjects? And Dean's hat . . ? No, we dare not think of Dean's hat!!

We dare think, and shall often think, however, of the kindness of M. and Mme. Latham at Saint Wandrille, of our indefatigable imitator and animal impersonator at Vernon, and of the splendid welcome afforded us by Mlle. Chéradam at St. Pryvé. Long will it be, too, before we forget Chunda Lal, Fo-Hi, and Zara-el-Khala, who did their best to wile away many an idle moment.

We could go on remembering for ever, but, like the trek itself, this account must have an end. At 5-0 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7th, the party dispersed in the Gym, and the trek was over.

To Mr. Jadhava we owe it all. It was the last thing which he could do for us before leaving England for ever, and he did it well. Our thanks go to him, and our best wishes for his future happiness and success, wherever he may be.

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## 1922 SUMMER CAMPS AND TREKS

“Humida solstitia orate, agricolae” The gods have granted that request this year—with interest. But what care the nurslings of the Owl? The enjoyment of their summer holidays cannot be spoilt because of such trifling misfortunes. They carried on their camps as usual during the month of August, there being eight camps held in all.

The Scouts had two camps. Troop III accompanied Mr. Rivers to Scotland on a trek, while Mr. Elsdon was with Troop II at Dyffryn, where a very enjoyable time was spent with favourable weather. Mr. Madden was at Lake Side, Mr. Collinge at Stratford and later in France, and Mr. Stafford at Llanfairfechan.

A Scotch trek was conducted by Messrs. Green, Lob, Heathcote, Smith and Radford. Yet another camp was held at Disley under the High Master. Mr. Hulme, before taking up his position as a member of the Staff, led a trek with great success through Devonshire.

The contingent under Mr. Stafford followed the usual custom of Welsh campers and climbed Snowdon. They also visited Beaumaris and introduced the rather original item of playing the Asylum at cricket and being defeated. The Disley campers also made themselves conspicuous by the time-honoured game, and after receiving a severe defeat at the hands of the local team, played a return match with more favourable results, though the unfortunate villagers were compelled to play the closing portion of the match in the gloomy shades of evening. Unkempt and unshaven were many of the campers, but “Beaver” had not yet found its way to northern climes.

The hut at Disley was improved greatly by the visit of this year’s campers, for it received a good coating of tar. Mr. Collinge’s party had a very interesting time in Shakespeare’s famous town. They attended a number of performances of the New Shakespeare Company under the direction of W. Bridge Adams. Many places of interest were visited, including Anne Hathaway’s Cottage and Warwick.

Immediately after the Matriculation the campers had a great time. The twelve boys who accompanied Mr. Collinge to Paris enjoyed themselves in a hostel within a few minutes’ walk of the Bois de Boulogne. Visits were paid to Sèvres, St. Cloud, Versailles, Rheims, and the battlefields of the war. The boys soon became proud of their understanding of the French people, enough at any rate to buy “goodies.”

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## 1923 MGS ABROAD

A school which sets out to give its pupils the widest and fullest education possible, cannot neglect the value of foreign travel. The small boy who has been abroad does at least realise that there are other countries besides England and that their ways are not our ways. The late war unfortunately interrupted this side of the School's activities, but now that parts of the Continent are not so troubled as they were, we have been able to send an increasing number of boys abroad each year for the last three years. This summer has constituted something of a record. There have been camps and treks to Norway, France, and Italy, and all have passed off in the best manner possible.

The Norwegian campers spent six weeks amongst the mountains and fjords under the able guidance of Mr. Madden. Though not exactly a trek, the camping site was moved several times and the wild beauty of the Norwegian scenery could be fully appreciated. The crossing was made from Hull to Christiania, where they received a welcome, as they did in other places, from Boy Scouts. After a stay of two days in the capital they left for Sandefjord, where a very enjoyable fortnight was passed. The inhabitants were very kind, and the campers were able to bathe, fish and play football.

From Sandefjord they travelled to Sundvolden, where a site was found on an island in the Tyrifjord. Here again the Norwegians were extremely friendly, and did all they could to help. It speaks volumes for MGS when one of its camps is held up as a model of good conduct and brotherly love in the local paper! The six weeks passed thus in travelling from place to place, and with the aid of a Norwegian Boy Scout as interpreter everything passed off without hitch.

The Italian trek passed off with equal success. To give a list alone of the places visited conveys some idea of the impressions gathered during this crowded holiday. Paris, the Little St. Bernard Pass, Mt. Blanc, Aosta, Monte Rosa, Turin, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Milan, Lake Maggiore, Thun, Interlaken and Berne—all these seen within a month!

Piacenza, for instance, instead of being a mere historical place-name where mediaeval councils were held, becomes much more vivid as the place where the railway coach was set on fire at 4-30 in the morning. Florence becomes doubly interesting at the thought of the number of "caffè lattes" drunk within sight of Giotto's Campanile. The Peak District, too, seems very far away when, from the summit of a pass, Monte Rosa can be seen, glistening with fresh snow against a deep blue sky, fifteen kilometres away.

These wonders were made possible by the untiring hard work of Mr. Lob, who spent months, writing and writing again to stationmasters, railway companies and mayors, in his endeavour to obtain travelling facilities and campsites. We must also thank Mr. Green, Mr. Smith, Mr. McEachran (the invaluable interpreter), Mr. Cunliffe, and Mr. B. D. Taylor (O. M. ) (our artist) for the way in which they made the trek the achievement it was. Italy has not seen the last of MGS

Under the leadership of Mr. Hulme, twenty-five Scouts from the School troops crossed from Southampton to Le Havre on August 1st. Like the Italian trekkers, the party passed a few days, sight-seeing, in Paris. From Paris they journeyed to Chartres, where the trek started in earnest. On leaving Chartres the full force of the French heat-wave was encountered, and it became so hot that it was not possible to walk in the middle of the day.

Consequently, the hard walking had to be done in the early morning. In this way Nogent-le-Rotrou was reached, where the train was taken to Falaise—the birthplace of William I. From Falaise the trekkers travelled on to Caen and Colombelles, where they were entertained by the local Scouts. The sea was now close at hand, and after a night on the beach at Franceville-Plage, Trouville, the last stage of the trek, was reached. From here the crossing to Le Havre was made and so back to Manchester again. The sincerest thanks for the excellent way in which the trek was conducted are due to Mr. Hulme, the commanding officer, and to Mr. Allen, the second in command.

It will be seen from these descriptions that there have been no untoward incidents on the three expeditions into "foreign parts." All have been conducted admirably, and their success augurs well for a repetition next summer.

## 1924 FOREIGN TREK - SPAIN

Before Sir Arthur Conan Doyle took to Spiritism he wrote a romance called "The Lost World," in which he imagines a plateau, accidentally cut off from the rest of the world, where progress has been infinitely retarded, and where life continues in a prehistoric condition. Spain is something like that. Like a dam the Pyrenees have checked the flow of normal European civilisation, and the country lies like a quiet pool, a gentle stream running through it, to stop the water becoming entirely stagnant.

Such a condition of necessity implies great contrasts, and many did we discover in our month's trekking there. We remember together all the international display of affluence at San Sebastian, and the miserable little village of Ontòn whose lone carabinero implored us to go away lest we be smitten with the curse of his village. Side by side in our memories stand the recollections of the blood in the bull-ring and the urgent vitality of a band of wandering Spanish gypsies, poised for a moment in their onward flight, beneath a crumbling Saracen arch, brilliant in the Castilian sun.

Unlike the rest of Europe, too, was the weather we enjoyed. Hot it was, in all truth. Spain alone seemed to enjoy the privilege, for the three days immediately following our return into France were accompanied by torrential rain. Hour after hour we spent in our tents listening to the eternal drumming of rain upon canvas, thinking of that torrid day in Burgos, when we stood by the ancient castle, looking down on the fretted spires of the cathedral and the welter of grey roofs, languid and lifeless in the midday heat.

Undoubtedly the dominating impression we received was one of hospitality. Wherever we went we were met with the same unfailing kindness and the same readiness to listen to our wants, however preposterous they might seem. Particularly do we remember Santander and Puente Viesgo for the warmth of the welcome extended to us. Ragged and dirty-looking as we were, the gentle Spaniards were not in the least disconcerted. All that they could do they did, till their kindness became almost embarrassing.

The heat of Spain brought hard work with it—but enough of that has been said already. A sunset glory has spread over the camp now. Gone are harsh recollections of labours endured during hard and tiring marches— gone the discomfort of cold, damp dawns. Only the glory of achievement remains. We have brought back to England with us enthusiastic memories of Spain and the Spaniards; and we may only hope that they can think equally well of the forty-seven strange creatures who straggled into their villages with the evening, made it their own for a night, and departed with the dawn.

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The announcement in the early days of May of a proposed trek in the Black Forest was received, as was only natural, in a spirit of the greatest enthusiasm, for the prospects of seeing for ourselves a people who, though so much akin to us in many ways, were yet entirely unknown save through the channels of war propaganda, were very alluring. And it is very high praise indeed, to say that the trek did not in any way disappoint our expectations.

The German trek was remarkable for the variety of the scenery we passed through, and the many different types of people with whom we came into contact, from the Black Forest villagers, who everywhere treated us with the greatest hospitality, to the somewhat refractory chauffeur of the car which carried our equipment, of whom we retain memories anything but tender.

We can compare our impression of an old-world town like Bruges, with its sleepy canal, with the bustle and turmoil of a modern city like Cologne, where our visit was especially noteworthy for the excellence with which Major Tatlow entertained us at the canteen of the British Army of Occupation.

Amongst the finest of our experiences was one which anybody might covet, a sail up the Rhine from Coblenz to Mainz. Towering upon a steep crag above the river, dominating the little village of Braubach, stands the Marksburg, an embodiment of all that was most brutal in the Medieval Age, recalling to our minds the almost mythical tales we had heard of the Rhineland robber barons. Yet, within a short distance of the Marksburg rises the famous Loreley Rock, connected, not with tales of cruelty and vice, but with romance, and with a song that is certainly among the most beautiful of all German folklore—

“Die schönste Jungfrau sitzt dort oben wunderbar,  
Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet, sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar:  
Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme und singt ein Lied dabei  
Das hat eine wundersame gewaltige Melodei.”

It was an unpleasant surprise to be greeted as we passed the rock, not by the strange melody which lured sailors to their doom, but by a ringing cheer from a party of enthusiastic tourists.

Mr. Louis Golding was unjust to the romantic solitude of the Black Forest, when he wrote, in a recent article to the Daily Dispatch, that one feels everywhere the presiding influence of the Fatherland watching over one's movements. In spite of the frequent signals, the Schwarzwald, particularly round about Triberg, is still an eerie place, and in winter could easily become dangerous.

We had the advantage of German guides, and consequently had little difficulty in finding our way in the intricate maze of narrow forest paths. Herr Alberts will long remain in our memories as the man who, by his artistic singing, accompanied on the guitar, first taught us to know and to love German folk songs; whilst Herr Waldov, though more silent, and reminiscent rather of German prewar militarism, also proved himself at once valuable and obliging. Assisted as we were by our guides, and unencumbered with camp equipment which has formerly been carried on other and less luxurious treks, we found the Black Forest trek devoid of that great physical strain which in previous years has done much to mitigate the enjoyment of the holiday.

Any notice of the trek would be incomplete without expressing our deepest regrets that in future years we shall be without Mr. Green, who has left Sale High School to take up the Headmastership of Widnes Grammar School, and without also paying a great tribute to Mr. Lob, who undertook once again the arduous task of organising a holiday for our benefit. Those who had some insight into the character of our chauffeur, for example, will realise in some measure the acute mental strain to which Mr. Lob was subjected both before and during the trek. The members of the 1925 German trek tender him their sincerest thanks for his great services on their behalf.

Once more Mr. Lob has led safely across Europe, through France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy, a band of happy trekkers. And though now we are all absolutely certain that this has been his most interesting and enjoyable trek, we shall be equally positive next year that his latest trek has been easily the best. The thought of visiting so many countries at once, especially Italy, about which we had read and dreamed so much, naturally aroused our enthusiasm, but only those who were lucky enough to be chosen were permitted to see its sunny mountains. And certainly nothing could be grander or more magnificent than the Dolomites.

As we passed through Switzerland, pausing at Zurich, on our way to Austria, we were struck by the order and cleanliness of everything—a great contrast to the dusty Italian cities which we afterwards visited. After leaving Innsbruck we crossed the Brenner, and great was the excitement as we gained our first view of the torn and jagged Dolomites glowing like dying embers in the setting sun.

Then in the early light of the next morning we set forth on our first trek into the mountains. For a fortnight we trekked gradually eastwards, making excursions up among rugged peaks, where by some strange miracle in the midst of a blazing heat the snow managed still to exist, and through wooded valleys where the trees lent a kindly shade to our sun-scorched heads.

Sometimes we would chance, even on the mountain-tops, upon the old entrenchments of the Austrian and Italian armies, reminding us of the terrible struggle which must have taken place among these very mountains. Sometimes we would pass through a deserted village, where only the half-ruined walls were left standing. And then only a few miles away we would find a sleepy little Italian town (although, indeed, for centuries it had been Austrian, and all its inhabitants spoke German more easily than Italian) which for the last hundred years had seen very little change.

At last, on a very hot day, dusty and tired, we tramped into Bolzano. We had descended from the mountains into the broad valley of the Adige, the road in the past for armies passing between Italy and Austria. The best part of the trek had been left behind us.

On leaving the station at Venice we were conveyed down the Grand Canal, not by gondolas but by a small steamer. Then through a maze of narrow alleys and steep bridges we were led to our lodging. After we had spent three weeks under canvas, it was a pleasant surprise for us, when we had ascended a marble staircase, to see down either side of a long hall supported by many pillars a row of neat little white beds. Some thought that it must be a school; others that it might be an old palace. It was not until the next morning that we discovered that we had slept in the workhouse.

Venice, on the whole, was a little disappointing; the motor-boats were bad substitutes for gondolas, at least to the tourist, who naturally expects gondolas; and it was quite impossible to escape from the foul smell which rose from the stagnant waters of the canals. Therefore it was with pleasure that we left Venice for Florence. But here, too, discomfort met us in the shape of dust and heat, although indeed the privilege of actually seeing the ancient palaces and art galleries of Florence amply repaid us for our inconvenience.

A short distance from Florence is the old town of Fiesole, whose colonists founded Florence long before the time of Augustus. Here there are the remains of an ancient Roman amphitheatre and baths, which were of great interest to the Classical members of the party. But at last, all too soon, our holiday drew to a close, and we had again to turn northwards and to France and England.

Before we close our notice of the trek, our thanks must be given to Mr. Doughty and Mr. Coates, who led us so ably through the mountains, and arranged the most interesting and enjoyable excursions, although at times the shortness of their short cuts might be questioned. However, they lent very valuable aid to Mr. Lob, who is, of course, always overworked. We shall only realise later in life, when we are unable to have such holidays, the real enjoyment we obtained on these treks, and we shall long to be once again a Grammar School boy. Therefore we give our very best thanks to Mr. Lob, although, indeed, this is but a poor return for the work he has done for us. We also hope that once more we may have the pleasure of joining with Mr. Green and his Widnes boys.

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## 1927 TREK - DEVON AND DORSET

C. A. B.

Troop 1 held its annual three weeks' trek in South Devon and Dorset. The start was made in rough weather from Whimble, of cider fame, and until we left Honiton behind, wind and rain alternately did their worst. Afterwards, for the really hilly marches through Axminster, Lyme Regis, Seaton and Sidmouth the sun shone with noticeable warmth.

The whole of that fortnight on the coast was delightful, and the scenery such that even the least appreciative did appreciate it. At Exmouth and Lyme, where our tents were high up on the cliffs that swept on to Portland Bill we seemed to bathe the whole day long, and it was at Seaton where we first added putting to our camp games. It would be unfitting not to mention Devonshire cream and cider. For was it not the former that inspired the production of that memorable Trifle à la Crème de Devon? And were there not those who paid homage to the spirit of the cider apple? A visit was made to Exeter, and Hugh Oldham's tomb and chantry in the cathedral were seen. Our thanks are due to Mr. Simkins for the planning and carrying out of a most successful camp.

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## 1927 TREK - NORTHUMBERLAND

A party from the 4th (Fallowfield) Scout Troop spent a fortnight "hiking" in Northumberland. The country covered included the north Tyne valley, moorland, miles of links, and finally the Cheviot country. Campsites varied from a "bungalow" (ex-L.N.E.R.) beside the Roman Wall to the bailey of Dunstanburgh Castle, and spectacles included a shipwreck and a village apparently engaged in a rehearsal of a bull-fight: in true tourist fashion, Chesters, Hexham Abbey and Newcastle were "done." Northumberland lived up to its traditional generosity and kindness was shown by all, from the peer who threw open his castle to the agricultural labourer who delivered a dissertation on Scott. Good weather, excellent country, with a mass of historical associations, and a generous people ensured a very happy time.

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## 1927 FOREIGN TREK - ALSACE

Leaving a land of gloom and rain, a jolly party of twenty-nine set out on July 28th, under the leadership of Mr. Hulme and Mr. Kennelly, to look for sunshine on the continent—and found it! Saturday afternoon discovered them boiling alive in the midst of an unusually intense heat-wave in Strasbourg.

Here they remained until the following Tuesday morning, partly to see the sights and get their lungs clear of Manchester before assailing the steep tracks of the Vosges, but principally, as they discovered, to become accustomed to spending baking nights, panting for breath and wooing an elusive sleep, themselves meanwhile very successfully wooed by legions of over-attentive mosquitoes. However, still alive, but showing only too plainly the scars of many a losing battle with their small but by no means contemptible enemies, all the band shook the dust of Strasbourg from their feet on the Tuesday morning and set off to begin their holiday proper, and that day began a month of thoroughly happy days, trekking among the mighty hills and tiny villages of Alsace.

As the days wound by, the trek passed on through such old-world beauty-spots as Hautkoenigsbourg and Kaisersberg, and such imposing sites of natural grandeur as the Schlucht, to thriving holiday resorts like Gérardmer. Though the weather was not entirely unbroken, the fair days far outnumbered the foul, and it was with regret that one and all retraced their steps—all too soon—to Paris and the homeland.

We thank all the many people, both of Alsace and of the party, who helped so materially to give a jolly party of folk a very splendid holiday.

## 1927 THE SCOTTISH TREK.

“For the rain it raineth every day. . .”

We have memories of sombre skies, of mist-driven mountains, of long stretches of mournful waters: and we have memories of trudging along the road accompanied by the regular squelch of mud and water in our boots. When the rain was not falling, then we found ourselves well-nigh bitten to death, and ever and anon arose the sad sound of lamentation and the fell voice of them that cried down wrath on the heads of their tormentors. But the gnat and his bite are things ephemeral, and of rain much good can be said—nay, it is a theme which has driven men of a poetic imagination to rhapsodise.

We were not without adventures. At Killin on Loch Tay our tents had been pitched only ten minutes when a record thunderstorm converted our hill-side into a raging flood. A scene ensued to which only a Tacitus could do justice. Everywhere were feverish workers, some hastily removing impedimenta out of the reach of the flood, others working with every available implement at the construction of dams, channels, and reserve channels, in the hope of diverting the flood and saving some of the tents. In the end success rewarded us. Again the sight of Mr. Lob, in the flimsiest of negligees, chasing a horde of invading cows at midnight is one not readily to be forgotten. Moreover, it was symbolic. It was fitting that, while the rest of the camp slept peacefully, Mr. Lob, with our safety and well-being foremost in his mind as ever, should be averting danger from our blissfully unconscious selves.

The trek was not a very strenuous one. Two of our most enjoyable days’ “trekking” were spent largely on the water—once five miles down Loch Lomond on a steamer, once around Loch Katrine in a motor-boat. Altogether we accomplished about ninety miles trekking proper. In addition we did some fifty miles of excursions. To our shame we climbed one mountain only—Ben Ledi.

This year we have had a change from the usual continental trek, but it has been quite an agreeable change. We have to thank Mr. Lob for the good time we have had. The enjoyment he reaps out of a trek must be of a severely altruistic kind. We thank also all the other officers who gave us the first fortnight of the holidays. As for the mob—we cry with one accord. “May we live to see yet another trek”.

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## 1928 FOREIGN TREK - SAVOY

Last year we had a tale to tell of sombre skies and rain and wind. This year our song is different. From cerulean skies a pitiless sun has beaten down on us. At Chamonix we had a summer storm. It was night, and now and again a momentary flare would light the peaks of the Mont Blanc range.

We started the trek at Moutiers and first made our way to Champagny le Haut. Here wood had to be bought. With considerable alacrity a native gave us permission to carry away some that we saw stacked up nearby. We had not borne much away before the real owner came to us to voice his protest. Negotiations were again commenced. During the whole of the business the women in the background provided a wailing chorus. We learnt afterwards that while the money went into the pocket of the master it was the women who carried the wood from the forest on the hill! The next evening, to avoid the sun, we went on for two and a half hours, carrying with us our food and our all. We camped on the mountain side.

Here two small goatherds milked their goats into our mugs and we had warm goat's milk to drink. The next morning we climbed to the Col, where we had bully beef to eat and snow to drink. Here indeed a cold wind arose and lashed our sunburnt knees. From the Col we descended to Val d'Isère. There for some time we stayed, putting in our time at the Café André—for at the Café André grenadine was only one franc and there was a gramophone, too, which played "Deux parties de tout petit pattons" (or words to that effect—we are not scholars of French).

From Val d'Isère we went by lorry thirty miles or more to Les Chapieux—a French military station five miles from the Franco-Italian frontier. Thence we made our way over the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme and the Col du Bonhomme to Les Contamines, and thence again to Les Houches and Chamonix.

At Chamonix we made an excursion on to the Mer de Glace—one of the biggest glaciers in Europe. There we wore socks on our boots and threw stones down crevasses and in general did the things tourists are expected to do. Yet withal it was impossible not to be genuinely excited.

From Chamonix we proceeded across the frontier into Switzerland. We stopped in Trient, camped a night on the Col de Forclaz and then went on to Les Champex. Here the Swiss army serenaded us with a massed orchestra of delicate wind instruments known I believe as Kazoos. Our last excursion was up the Grand St. Bernard in motors. The pass itself was a disappointment. The monks keep an hotel for Americans and others, and the dogs are fat, lazy beasts. We returned to Martigny. There we entrained for Paris and London.

In many ways the trek was one of the most successful we have had. We climbed to a height of 9,000 feet and there gathered edelweiss. We bathed in glacier streams without ill effect. We did not trek so much as sometimes we have done, but what we did was strenuous. We thank Mr. Lob very much. Dr. Hyslop also and the other masters deserve our thanks. Perhaps the best way to do this is to say that we all enjoyed ourselves thoroughly.

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## **1929 TREK - KENT - TROOP 1**

A party of some two dozen present and past members of Troop 1 spent the last month of the summer holidays trekking in Kent. The route chosen led from Tonbridge via Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst to Dymchurch on the south coast, and subsequently northwards to Ashford.

Except for a thunderstorm the first night and one showery morning, there was nothing deserving the name of rain. Brilliant red sunsets were too common to excite attention. The bathing and the miniature railway at Dymchurch would be difficult to parallel, and the visit to Canterbury will certainly be long remembered.

The country was found to be surprisingly deserted considering its proximity to London, and it contained some, but not much, fine scenery. Great interest was taken in the old churches that are so numerous here, and the sight of Bodiam Castle will have had an educational value. Taken as a whole, the trek lacked conspicuous incident and acted rather as a rest-cure and opportunity for training than as a provider of novelties.

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## **1929 FOREIGN TREK - JURA**

A small but very select party boarded the Continental Boat Express at Central Station on August 1st—fourteen boys, Mr. Hulme, Mr. Allen and Dr. Parker. The French boat was reached the same evening, and Paris at noon the next day. After a rest of a few hours the journey was resumed to Pontarlier.

We encamped for the week-end at Malbuisson, some distance from Pontarlier, on the shores of the beautiful Lac Saint Point. From here, on Monday, August 5th, we set off into the heart of the Jura and day by day steadily advanced through that most picturesque region, touching, turn by turn, such beauty spots as Les Brenets, Le Saut du Doubs, Saint Imier and Mont Soleil, and Biel and its peaceful lake, until we reached the furthest point of our itinerary—Solothurn.

Here we made what will be to us a very memorable ascent of the lofty Weissenstein, leaving camp at 2-15 a.m., and finding our way up the mountain by the uncertain beams of Bradbury's electric torch. The ascent was negotiated under the leadership of Doctor Buchmann, who came over specially from Zurich to meet us at Solothurn, and, as a result of his most capable guidance, when day dawned, we found ourselves on the summit of a mighty mountain—some miles away from the Weissenstein! The object of the climb had been to see the Alps at dawn, but a heavy sea of mist robbed us of our view, and we had to descend to a long-delayed breakfast, after eating a "gendarme" sausage, which Doctor Buchmann had thoughtfully brought for his own consumption.

After three days at Solothurn we bade farewell to Doctor Buchmann and began our return journey, passing through Neuchâtel. The authorities of this town extended their hospitality to us with lavish hands, and we were given a beautiful campsite near the lake, complete with water, electric light and police protection! Monsieur Rousse, the managing director of Suchard's, of chocolate fame, kindly invited us to inspect the factory, and we came away loaded with happy memories—and with some excellent chocolate.

From this point we worked our way back to Malbuisson, through some of the wildest parts of the Jura—the Gorges de l'Areuse, and the Creux du Van—and, after three days in Paris, we reached Long Millgate again on Wednesday, August 29th.

Throughout the tour we were welcomed and helped by everyone, and our most sincere thanks are due to very many people, but especially to the Swiss Consul and his staff in Manchester, to all the Swiss authorities who took so much trouble to make our way pleasant, to Mr. Allen for his untiring help, to Doctor Parker for his industry and skill in keeping us all fit and healthy, and to Mr. Hulme for making the whole thing possible.

To set off full of beans, to sail into the very teeth of a north-easterly gale, to have a month's journey amidst fjords and fells (with only one whole fine day)—this is the outline of the 1929 trek in Norway. Yet all are unanimous that the sixth camp in Norway was a huge success.

The outward voyage defied the most elaborate precautions, for, once across the Tyne bar, Mothersill was quoted below par and rumour has it that a certain anti-seasick belt only served for "surplus baggage." Even those few stoics who defied Father Neptune's cradling were not decidedly comfortable at heart. Once in Bergen harbour, we felt we were once more amongst familiar surroundings and old friends. Greetings were exchanged hurriedly as we changed to another vessel, and just before midnight we were steering towards the south, with Stavanger as our objective. To mention Stavanger, the names of such delightful hosts as Rektor Olden and Herr Berentsen at once link up with our memories.

Much could be written of the boat journey up the Lyse fjord with its sheer barren rocks towering up 2,000 feet, of the shrill Norwegian singing on board, and our counter-attack, of the gale and its influence on our vocal efforts; but we must push on to the Bratlansdal, one of the finest places for scenery that one could wish for. Its roaring waterfall, its road tunnelled through the most forbidding rocks, and the volumes of rain that swelled both fall and road; of such a nature was Bratlansdal, and the tramp through it to Briefonn.

After a stay of two days, we commenced our journey northwards towards the Hardanger fjord. Odda was our next resting-place, and though the town, with its wretched chemical works, did not claim us in the least, the trek from Seljestad down to Odda was magnificent. The Latefoss thunders down in one part of the valley, and the Esplendefoss dashes down a little farther south, two of the finest falls imaginable. Here we also had our first journey, up to the Falgefond glacier.

Seven hours steaming from Odda, and we disembarked at midnight at Norheimsund, in a veritable deluge. However, we settled down comfortably, and had a standing camp here for several days. It was here that we experienced the only really hot day of the trek, and good use was made of it, by all except the unfortunate "fags" who prepared rissoles and other delicacies for the bathers.

Here several Old Mancunians in the party left us, and after their departure we left Norheimsund and walked (almost swam) to Trengereid. It was here that four drenched members of the party changed their clothes, and with the aid of a Primus made coffee for themselves in the station waiting-room. One dry, and consequently superior, gentleman observed that he liked their "cheek," and would like to see them do it in Exchange or Victoria

Eventually we got to Voss, and old friends. We had an excellent time in Voss, visiting Stalheim and Ulvik. We motored to Ulvik in a 1912 Fiat which persisted in back-firing, and gassed the occupants rather unpleasantly. From Voss to Bergen. Bergen was wet, but we had many kind friends there, too numerous to mention; but every one of them has our most sincere thanks for their exceptional kindness.

It was a rain-washed crowd that boarded the "Leda," and cheered to friends (firm friends, for MGS has known them for many years now) who had come to see us off. But it was to Old England that we had to turn to join in praise of "Old Sol." To say that we had a very fine trek, although the elements were absolutely opposed to comfort, was only due to a very happy crowd, and is indicative of the able leadership and careful organisation of Mr. Madden.

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## 1929 TREK - THE LAKE DISTRICT

This year, following the regular alternation between treks at home and abroad, Mr. Lob took his party into the English Lake District—a trekker's paradise of walks and climbs, but so concentrated and narrowly confined that it is difficult to make out a three-weeks itinerary there without covering the same ground twice. The trek, therefore, was a very gentle one and provided a good training opportunity for many "microbes" new to the game, so that our party at full strength numbered some sixty all told.

The weather was particularly unkind to us—spitefully so, it seemed, for in every newspaper we managed to get hold of in our first week we read of "record droughts" and "phenomenal heat," yet never a break did we see in the dull grey mists above us. Still more annoying was the persistent way in which our letters from home expressed the kindly and confident hope that it was "keeping fine" for us; and whenever we climbed a hill we could see the Pennines and the Lancashire Plain, or the Isle of Man and the Scottish hills, all bathed in glowing sunshine, while lowering clouds hung sullenly over our heads. But we had only one thunderstorm worthy of the name, and our light, new tents stood the strain very creditably. It was not really a wet trek, as all will agree who acquired their sense of proportion in such matters at Killin two years ago. After all, there were times when some of us were almost dry.

Entomologically, on the other hand, we were exceptionally lucky. Apart from the wasps and a generous share in the prevalent plague of daddy-longlegs ("daddies-long-legs" is considered pedantic in the best circles) we were practically free from undesirable visitors.

Briefly, our route for the first week was from Ambleside to Mickleden, over the Stake Pass to Borrowdale, down the shore of Derwentwater to Keswick, where we invaded the fish-and-chip shop in force, and thence to Troutbeck, where our second party joined us and were accorded a right royal reception. Then we pushed on to Ullswater, and camped for several days at Deepdale, where Mr. Field's party enjoyed such a perfect holiday at Whitsuntide. Next we crossed the Grisedale Pass to Grasmere, and so over Greenup Gap to our previous site in Borrowdale. From there we took the Honister Pass to Buttermere and on by Scarf Gap and Black Sail Pass to Wasdale Head.

From Mickleden there was an excursion up the Langdale Pikes and High Whitestones, where Mr. Doughty took a small party of enthusiasts rock climbing, and another by way of Russet Gill and Esk House up Scafell Pike, from whose summit, after an arduous climb through pelting rain and driving mist, we could enjoy a view of perhaps ten yards in extent on every side. Later on we climbed Scafell again from Wasdale, this time by Lord's Rake and Deep Ghyll, under the experienced leadership of Mr. Kelly, the rock-climber. On that occasion our view extended at intervals some fifty yards further, but the tales our leader told us of the various rock-climbs we passed on the way up made the outing the most interesting of the trek, and a privileged few of us—O.M.s and officers—climbed with him, roped together, down Broad Stand.

Among other excursions was one which most of us will remember as the wettest and windiest of our lives, from Deepdale by Hayes Water and Kidsty Pike to Mardale, where we ate our squosh in the stable of the Dun gull Inn, soon to be submerged in the Manchester Water Works Haweswater scheme, and back by Long Stile and High Street, where we caught a fleeting glimpse of some of the few remaining wild deer in the Lake District. From Deepdale also we climbed Helvellyn by Hart Crag, Fairfield, and Dollywaggon Pike, returning by way of Striding Edge.

At Borrowdale someone discovered that "Cumberland Teas" could be obtained at several places. That is to say, for eighteenpence down unlimited quantities of bread, rum-butter, jams, scones, cakes of all kinds and tea were provided. This was accepted by most of us as a challenge, and the calculations of the cook-fags were sadly upset in consequence. In fact, so demoralised did we become that before the end of the trek tasty kippers and pickles were part of our regular menu.

Such degeneracy was the less excusable since we had with us the two pressure cookers which had been tried out at Alderley. They were reputed to perform such miracles as cooking carrots in three minutes instead of the usual three hours or so, and they whistled to inform us when the job was done—until the whistle broke. They were usually called (from their appearance) the Mills Bombs; what they were called by those who carried them full of food up steep and rocky paths it would be a waste of time to mention, for the Editor would blue-pencil it at sight.

Recreations were many and various. In spite of the weather, bathing was usually enjoyable, and we managed to lose a podex ball in every river we camped by, and when outdoor games were impossible there was always bridge. At every available moment of the day or night, in camp, on trains, at wayside rest-fags, the bidding was brisk and high. A lonely traveller gazing in silence at the wild beauty of Wastwater in the moonlight would have his romantic reverie suddenly and jarringly dissipated by the exultant cries of "Seven No-Trumps!" "Double!!" "Re-double!!!" that echoed across the valley.

Our gratitude is due to Dr. Hyslop, the omnipresent, the untiring, the ever-cheerful, dauntlessly cinematographing everything in defiance of clouds and gloom, for his help in ordering stores and generally making our way smooth and for his camp-fire songs; to all the officers, and particularly to Mr. Field and Dr. Somerford for their brilliant exposition in song-and-dance duet of the virtues of trekking as an aid to beauty; and to Mr. Richmond, who let us overload and generally knock to pieces his Rover car, which gallantly bore the weight of our stores, most of our less portable impedimenta—and Dr. Hyslop.

Lastly, we all join in thanking Mr. Lob for all the treks he has taken us in the past, for this one in particular, and for the next one in anticipation.

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