

ULULA ACCOUNTS OF TREKKING 1930 – 1939

1930 FOREIGN TREK - BAVARIA

When the High Master and a party of about sixty officers and boys left London Road Station en route for Bavaria and the Austrian Tyrol under the guidance of Mr. Lob, we were in high hopes of leaving the weeks of August drizzle behind us with the grime and sooty air; but the fates have been unkind to our party of recent years (with the notable exception of Savoy in 1928), and the first half of our holiday found us under the same grey mists and pouring rain as were damping the spirits of our less favoured school fellows at Blackpool. This was the more unfortunate because our trek had been so planned that the more interesting and strenuous part should be covered in outings without kit from a base camp, while the actual hiking was gentle and taken in easy stages; thus the varying capacities of our unusual numerous personnel might the more easily be catered for.

But as some of our excursions in the earlier stages had to be curtailed or even cut out altogether on account of the weather, which made many climbs impossible, the trek did not come up to the standard of real success, whose first condition is that there shall have been at least one occasion on which every member of the party devoutly wished he had never been born.

Our route lay from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, near Oberammergau, to Mittenwald; thence to Innsbruck and Kitzbühel by train (except for a detour by bus round the place where the recent rains had sent a landslide across the railway), and by short treks eastwards to Salzburg by way of St. Johann, Hochfilzen, Ober Weissbach, Hintersee and Königsee.

Among our excursions were visits to the Partnachklamm and the Höllentalklamm near Garmisch. These are limestone gorges between two and four hundred feet deep and not more than twenty feet wide, through which the glacier streams, swollen by the rains to the volume of big rivers, pour their greenish waters in a swirling flood, while over the sheer sides of the chasms come small streams that fall in long cascades into the pent-up torrent boiling angrily in the narrows below, and drench the visitor on the narrow path hewn out of the solid rock at the bottom of the gorge.

Other outings included a short climb from St. Johann, a woodland walk up the Wimbachtal, a trip up Königsee to Obersee by steam launch, and best of all, the ascent of the Karwendelspitz (7,500 feet) from the beautiful little town of Mittenwald. The day had dawned hot and cloudless over a perfect campsite, so it was decided to postpone our journey to Innsbruck and make hay while the sun shone. Accordingly a select party set off up the winding woodland path to a hut 2,500 feet up in heat so intense that most of us were stripped to the waist before the first rest-fag.

After lunching at the hut we pressed on along a path ingeniously made across the bare steep face of the limestone crag and eventually reached an altitude where the snow was still unmelted. By this time a mist had gathered over the peaks, and little was to be seen of the magnificent view promised when we reached the top; instead the rumble of distant thunder greeted us as we signed our names in the "Visitors' Book" kept in a metal box on the summit.

We began the descent almost immediately, but within a few minutes we were all drenched to the skin by a downpour such as is seldom experienced in England, even in the Lake District. Lightning glared through the mist, and the peaks re-echoed with peal after peal of thunder crashing right above us. On the way down we found that watercourses, dry and unnoticed on our way up, had been turned into raging torrents, through which we had to wade or jump as they crossed our somewhat precarious footpath. The last stage of the descent from the hut down the graded path we did at a jog-trot to prevent any ill-effects; no one was any the worse for it, but many of us were in sore straits for dry clothing afterwards.

Much of our time was spent in the many beautiful cities on our route. Visits of from a few hours to two days' duration were made to Köln, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Vienna, Munich and Brussels, and many enjoyable, if not always very purposeful, sight-seeing expeditions were arranged among the interesting buildings, ancient and modern, of these cities. We found the German system of Jugendherberge, or Youth Hostels, where good meals and sleeping accommodation may be obtained at very little expense by young holiday makers, a great convenience on these occasions.

Free time was spent in many ways. Bridge (among the more intellectual cliques-contract) enlivened many hours of gloomy weather, and podex sticks and Rugby balls were brought out when the sun was hot and the ground solid. At night we visited the local "Gasthof" and drank chocolate crowned with the thick cream as we watched the Bavarian peasants in their national costumes dancing weird clog-dances, or carried on a broken but vivacious conversation with them, exchanging song for song.

We all look back on a holiday full of interest and happiness, in spite of its unnecessary dampness, thanks to the organising power and devoted work, often under great difficulties, of our leader, Mr. Lob, and his associate officers—and forward to a still more enjoyable time next year.

1930 FOREIGN TREK - SWISS ALPS AND GERMAN RHINE

On July 31st a party of boys, under the care of Mr. Hulme and Mr. Simkins, left Central Station to the accompaniment of the tears of anxious mothers, the blessings of relieved fathers, and the magnesium explosions of a swarm of uninvited, but persistent, Press photographers. The object of the expedition was to see the sunshine and the sights of the Swiss Alps, followed by the less majestic, but equally interesting, places along the banks of the Rhine.

The realisation of the first part of the programme was rendered quite impossible by the alarming weather conditions, for, until the end of the first fortnight of the month's tour, the rain poured down almost incessantly, blotting out nearly every notable feature of what should have been a thrilling and awe-inspiring panorama.

Making their way, undaunted, through Basel, Bern, Thun, Interlaken and Brienz to Meiringen, the party gradually dripped and squelched along towards the foot of the valley, which was to lead them steadily upwards to the heights of the Grimsel Pass. As the altitude increased, the thermometer fell in proportion, and the rain began to turn to snow, and the cool winds to change to piercing blizzards. At Guttannen, when the weather had reached its worst, Mr. Simkins left the party in order to return to England and run another trek in that country. It is only fair to him to say that his departure had been arranged for that date long in advance, before the state of the weather had been discovered.

The tramp from Guttannen, over the Grimsel Pass in a mixture of snow and torrential, icy rain, can only be described as a pure feat of endurance— and one which might have had unpleasant consequences, but for the extreme kindness of the proprietors of the hotel at Gletsch, who went out of their way to provide the half-frozen party with every possible comfort.

The passage from Gletsch to Realp on the following day, over the Furka Pass, with the Rhone Glacier gleaming spectrally through the driving snow, was achieved in even worse conditions than those of the previous day. But the weather was about to change. After one final night of storm and snow the sun made its first real appearance, and for the rest of the tour the days were delightful.

There is no space to describe all that the party did and saw. Such experiences as the "Tellspiel" at Altdorf, the burgling of a hostel (with the connivance of a youthful and not too courageous member of the German police), the glorious waits and delays of our delightfully unpunctual old cargo-boat, which took us all the way from Mannheim to Rotterdam, and the other multitudinous adventures with which we met, individually and collectively, will dwell long in our minds. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly!

And for this enjoyment we are indebted to many people—the numerous officials and other inhabitants of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland, who all did their very best to assist us; to Doctor Sandiford, O.M., who so faithfully watched over our physical well-being in the intervals of giving us his brass band recitals and airing his great linguistic gifts; to Mr. Simkins for his untiring energy in the service of us all, and to Mr. Hulme for making it all possible.

1931 FOREIGN TREK - NORWAY - TROOP 4

On July 25th we set out for a two days' hike in Cheshire as a preliminary to our Norway visit. On July 29th a party of twenty-nine sailed to Norway. Here they were joined by two Norwegian Scouts, "Elo" and "Egil," whose friendly help was an important cause of the success of the expedition. Our first port of call was Stavanger; then followed two days in Bergen. After a train journey to Dale we set out for the highlands, and after climbing to about 2,500 feet came to Fiksensund two days later—here we had our first contact with the inland fiords under the most perfect conditions.

Motor boats took us to Porsmur and from there we walked to Noreimsund, where we camped by a lake and spent a day bathing, boating, fishing and getting sunburnt. The next day we walked through the wild ravine of the Tokagelet to Kvamshaug, and from there returned to camp. Our longest trip on the fiords, from Noreimsund to Ulvik, was spoilt by rain—a day was spent at Ulvik and the surrounding mountains explored.

A short boat journey took us to Eidfiord and from there we went up the gloomy Maabodalen Gorge to Fossli, where we camped above the roaring Voringfoss. Although snow fell during the night we set out next morning with a guide, and after an unpleasant journey across peat bogs we got on to rock, and after crossing snow and glacier reached the Demmevasshytta, a mountaineer's hut within a few yards of the glacier— it was good that there was a plentiful supply of fuel for the stoves.

On the following day a journey over glacier, rock, and the huge snowfield of the Hardangerjokelen ended at Finse, a railway station in an area of bare rock and snow. After a short railway journey we slept in the waiting room at Hallingskeid, where the railway is completely enclosed by snow sheds. A walk down the Grondal, famed for the wealth and variety of its flowers, took us to the top of the Flaam Valley—we descended the zig-zag paths at its head and camped in a wood at the base of the cliff. A short road walk brought us to the Aurlandsfiord, beside which we camped.

We spent the greater part of next day on the Sognefiord and reached Balholm, the gem of all the Norwegian villages. We camped again at the edge of a fiord, caught mackerel, feasted on raspberries, explored the district and watched the aurora borealis flickering behind the snow at the head of the Ese fiord.

At Balholm we met with generous hospitality; we visited the studio of Professor Dahl; we were taken across the fiord to see the gigantic statue of Frithjof; we spent an afternoon on the "Carinthia"; the owner of Kvikne's Hotel placed his bathing station at our disposal; and the English Church arranged a special service for us.

After five hours on a steamer we entered the Naerofiord, perhaps the grandest of them all, the precipitous sides of which rise 5,000 feet sheer out of the sea. We camped on an island near Gudvangen, and from there set out to climb to Stalheim and walk to Voss, which we reached two days later. At Voss our hike ended, and its end was unexpectedly celebrated by an invitation to dinner given by Mr. Simons. This, however, did not prevent a party from climbing the Hondalsunt on the following day—a rather difficult climb of 5,000 feet.

We left Bergen on August 22nd and reached Manchester on August 24th. We had had an excellent time—weather had been surprisingly good; on no occasion did we walk in rain. And throughout we had been given valuable help by all kinds of friends in Norway—to them all we offer our thanks.

1932 TREK - COTSWOLDS

R. M. S.

In spite of the assertions of certain Manchester papers, this trek did not take place until the second half of the holidays. The party consisted of twenty-one present members of the School (mainly members of the 1st School Scout Group), under the charge of Mr. Simkins, and was supplemented for the middle fortnight by seven Rovers belonging to the same Group.

The route chosen does not suggest itself as an ambitious one, if mere distance is considered, but a longer one was thought inadvisable in view of the tender years of some of the trekkers. In the Cotswolds, however, it is not hard to find gradients of incredible steepness, and even one Rover, who can "ramble" his twenty miles on a Sunday, was contented with one march of 32 miles down and up two precipices! Roughly, the route was a circular one, beginning about six miles S.E. of Cheltenham at a more salubrious Withington, running via Birdlip and Painswick (from which a trip was made to Gloucester) to the famous Minchinhampton Common, and then turning east towards Cirencester, and north via Chedworth to the starting point.

The country is peaceful and charming, rather than magnificent. It is rich in gloriously cool water, in wasps and in stinging nettles. The coldest water of all flows from the Seven Springs (one of the sources of the Thames and far preferable to a rival source near Cirencester where a perfectly dry-looking ash tree inscribed with the letters T.H. (Thames Head) leaves one incredulous), and as we camped one mile from it during a heat wave, it became a moot point whether the cooling draught compensated for the hot return to camp. The stinging nettles proved serious only when a Scout authority from Headquarters (who sacrificed much of his time and money in showing some of the party round the neighbouring counties in a motor-car, and who appeared to exude efficiency and "Scoutismus" from every pore) conducted a Scouting game in the midst of nettles and then rubbed neat lysol on the skin of his victims. Similarly, the guillotine doubtless cured many cases of violent toothache.

The weather was good on the whole, but there were some heavy thunderstorms. Most of the tents had been carefully painted with a mysterious compound called Roomak, and not a drop of rain penetrated except in the Rovers' tents, where the old scheme of sitting on one's having-been-covered-with-a-groundsheets-kit, and vigorously brushing the tent with a hair-brush, had to be indulged in.

The short marches left energy for various pursuits, varying from watching the Cheltenham Flier achieving a possible thirty miles an hour on a gradient, to beating the Troop record of a walk of 31 miles in the day. Whatever the activities of the individual, it is certain that the whole trip was an appreciated success.

1933 TREK - LAKES

G. D. M.

This year Mr. King and party opened their Whit. campaign with a trek from Kendal to Underbarrow, accompanied by a typical Lakeland drizzle, which nearly necessitated a retreat into winter quarters. Gloomy doubts were soon dissipated, however, by the blazing sunshine under which we tramped next day to Esthwaite. Here, two days were spent luxuriously in expeditions of various types, attended by bathing, boating and fishing.

On Whit-Tuesday we folded our tents and sped swiftly away, entrusting our kit to Mr. King's "Morris," a chariot of venerable mien, but trusty disposition. Coniston was left behind, and taking a long run-up we essayed a daring ascent of Walna Scar without ropes, chains or alpenstocks. After a length of time, which can be explained only by assuming that most of the party had more than one shot at surmounting the obstacle, camp was pitched at Hall Dunnerdale, a site for which a single rest day seemed quite inadequate.

Thursday saw us off for Eskdale, where we were greeted by thunder and the first rain for nearly a week. Next day we set off for Scafell Pike where Drapkin finally gave up his attempt, hitherto unnoticed by the Press, to run up most of the Lakes' peaks. In the evening we were the guests of Mr. Poskitt and his scouts, whom we must thank for a delightful entertainment whereat the process of "catharsis" was stimulated by the activities of easily the most inspiring set of midges ever roused. Next morning we walked to Dalegarth, where we took passage for Ravenglass and thence home.

In conclusion, reference must be made to Bamber who, in spite of occasionally missing his turnings, and on one occasion not missing a motor cycle, drove the car with an unfailing punctuality which quite compensated for his pullover à la Picasso. No such blemishes marked Mr. King's leadership, and to him alone do we owe the most enjoyable camp of many School careers.

1933 TREK - DEVON

On Friday, July 28th, the party, numbering twenty-four, including four from Mr. Green's school at Widnes, left London Road at 9-25 a.m., and arrived at Brushford (Somerset) about 5-15 p.m. A road trek of about two miles brought us to our first site at Dulverton, which is very prettily situated in the Barle Valley.

Next morning trekking proper began, and by the time hill and dale and open moorland had been negotiated all were ready to settle down at Exford for the weekend. The spiritual welfare of the troops was not neglected, for our members formed a third of the congregation at Sunday morning service. In the afternoon there was a walk to Dunkery Beacon; the weather was excellent, so that the view over Porlock and the Bristol Channel left nothing to be desired. Sustenance for this excursion was not lacking for there was quite a plethora of winberries, wild raspberries and strawberries.

On Monday, July 31st, we left Exford and made a halt at Withypool Here party enjoyed a taste of real cider—one glass per person being the ration—and saw the ancient game of Shove Ha'penny as it should be played, with polished board duly marked out. The route from this point was not particularly well defined, but we eventually arrived at Winstitchen Farm, near Simonsbath, which was our objective. Even the open moorland is not without its dangers for, on this trek, one of our members was almost trampled under foot by a horseman and an adder reared up and hissed at us as we passed.

From Simonsbath we pressed on by way of Pinkworthy Pond to Yelland Bridge; the day was very hot, and owing to absence of paths many obstacles had to be surmounted, so that a really arduous day had been spent by the time we encamped. The name describes the place completely, and the assembling of supplies was not of the easiest.

On Wednesday, August 2nd, we passed on to what was certainly our finest camp site, at Martinhoe Mill Farm, near Hunter's Inn. Here it was that tickling for trout came into vogue, Challiner and Callan showing pronounced skill in this sport. Excursions were made to Combe Martin on the Thursday and to Lynton and Lynmouth on the Friday, and sea-bathing was very popular.

On Saturday, August 5th, after a strenuous trek 'neath a torrid sun, we arrived at Brendon, a site offered to us by the kindness of Mr. Woodcock—one-time member of MGS. Staff. Here Challiner and Ferguson started the craze for equestrian exercise. Late at night the former walked back into camp some distance behind his steed. We should like to know whether he suffered a fall or whether his mount merely walked from beneath him.

Though we had intended to stay the week-end here, we found it so difficult to retain a grip on Scob Hill during the night that we moved off on Sunday morning to a delectable spot—Southern Wood, near Malmesmead. In the evening Badgeworthy Water and the Doone Valley were stirred to life by ponies in full career.

From Southern Wood we passed through Oare to Allerford; the route over Porlock was very pleasant, particularly in retrospect. Whilst encamped at Allerford we did an excursion to Minehead, and returned by the delightful moorland path to Selworthy.

On Wednesday, August 9th, we trekked by way of Wootten Courtney to Wheddon Cross (Cutcombe). Here we had a distinguished visitor in the person of Mr. McGuire, who slept—or rather stayed—the night under canvas with us. Next day we did our final trek via Winsford to Dulverton, and entrained for Manchester on Friday, August 11th.

The success of the trek was due to the wonderful weather which prevailed throughout, to the kindness and hospitality of everyone whom we met and, in particular, to the excellent spirit of willingness and comradeship which animated our little party.

To revisit the scene of a former tour is to risk disillusionment, and those of us who had been on the Dolomite Trek of 1926 wondered if the mountains would be so grand, the evening lights so lovely, the people so kind and the skies so blue as all seemed in retrospect.

Actually we had nothing to fear. Perhaps to the older members of the party the hills seemed a little steeper than of yore; but it was sunshine all the way, and we carried through our programme without a serious hitch. That programme carried us to eight camp sites, of which the lowest was seventeen hundred and the highest six thousand feet above sea level, over some of the most interesting passes, and up a few of the easier peaks, the culminating point being the Piz di Boè (10,350 ft.).

A detailed account of our wanderings is out of the question here: enough to say that they led us through the heart of some of the loveliest country in Europe; and that the quaint little villages in the valleys, the wealth of alpine flowers on the uplands, and the staggering vistas of jewelled peaks in their sombre settings of fir and pine, will be treasured memories as long as memory lasts.

We noticed a few changes since our previous visit. The district has become much more popular as a holiday resort; but that did not affect us greatly, except by bringing more curious strangers round the galley whenever we camped near a village. We found out after a few days that we were supposed to report to the police wherever we stopped, but we generally left it to them to report to us, and that seemed to work all right. They wished to know our numbers, time of stay, future destination and so on. At Nova Levante they were more curious and demanded the nature of our strange congregation. It was an awkward question, but Mr. McEachran's inspired reply that we were a party of philosophers was accepted with great good humour.

There was some difficulty in finding suitable campsites, but less in getting permission to use them. Once we feared the worst when an irate gentleman appeared in camp and explained that the land on which the mayor had given us permission to camp belonged to himself. But his idea of asserting his rights was to insist that we should not leave the next day as we had promised the mayor, but should stay for the rest of the week.

The principal change was that due to our depreciated currency. Such items as tea at fifteen shillings a pound were rather serious. Mr. Lob's attack of financial indigestion set in earlier than usual, and reached such a crisis at Plan di Gralba that the entire corps of officers turned itself into a Geddes committee. It was decided that we must live more on the food of the country, and spaghetti au gratin figured as the chef d'oeuvre of our next day's dinner.

We never understood exactly what went wrong with that spaghetti. As nourishment it was a failure, and although its efficacy as a short way with mendicants earned it the name of Beggar's Bane, it left our economic problem still unsolved. Luckily, Mr. Lob discovered that he had made a mistake in arithmetic, and there was once more Corn in Egypt (figure of speech for Stew in the Bomb).

Our passages to and from Italy were made much pleasanter by the good offices of two Old Mancunians, Messrs. Green and Booth, now resident in Paris and Milan. To them, and to Signor Bonvincini, head of the Italian Tourist Service in Bolzano, our heartiest thanks are due; not forgetting Mr. Lob, the fount of all these blessings!

[By the courtesy of the Editor I am allowed to write an epilogue to Mr. Doughty's account of our tour. Whilst fully appreciating his graceful reference to my merits, I claim no greater share in the success of the trek than any other officer. Each of us had his own special job, in addition to the general one of supervising a tent, and if mine was, perhaps, more strenuous before the actual trek, others had a thinner time once we got going.

May one extend the vote of thanks to cover also Mr. A. Hyslop and Mr. Simkins for their interest and valued assistance, Dr. Brockbank for help with the medical department, and our good friends at Cook's, Mr. Rudd and Mr. Kirk, for the admirable arrangements they made for our comfort en route. **H.L.]**

Those members of Troops III and IV who left the mingled mediocrity of Manchester to spend the first four weeks of their holiday amid the variety and contrast of the Austrian Alps, must remember their trek not so much as a continuous whole in which some dominant feature, an aspect of the landscape, an unchanging mode of life, subdues the differences and fuses them into a unity, but rather as a series of scenes unrelated and distinct. For into those days was crowded all that is typical of Austria and her people.

The first two weeks were spent in the mountainous region of the Zillertal and Hohe-Tauern Alps, and the country which we encountered as we went from Innsbruck to Mayrhofen, from Mayrhofen to Krimml, and thence by Rudolf's Hut and Glockner-Haus to Zell-am-See, was amazingly diverse.

We walked through valleys which were alive with insects and studded with many-coloured flowers, where men were harvesting and goats were grazing; we climbed up paths beneath a blazing sun; we shivered on passes 10,000 ft. high; armed with crampons, ropes and ice-axes we spent days on glaciers and snowfields; we slept in huts and camped in villages where we mistrustfully examined the ingenious counterfeits of Baroque architecture or visited the shops to buy apricots and Himbeerwasser; we watched the traditional dances, and we heard the mountain songs; and finally a party got up at 3-30, and after seeing an Alpine sunrise, climbed the Gross-Glockner (12,460 ft.) by the Hofmanns Weg.

With this, the first stage ended, and after visiting Heiligenblut to see the Holy Blood, we crossed our last pass and went down to Zell, where we indulged in the leisurely pleasures of that cosmopolitan resort.

After a day of boating and bathing we left for the Salzkammergut. Here, amid the Austrian lakes with their wooded valleys and gentle hills, the trek underwent a change of spirit; we left the land of the mountains and entered an atmosphere of country walks and musical comedy. We went more slowly and gesticulated more amicably to incomprehensible strangers; we picked wild strawberries and drank at each stream; we saw the White Horse Inn and watched the Deutschmeister band sail into St. Wolfgang playing their march to an enthusiastic crowd headed by the Burgermaster and supported by the local musicians.

At Bad-Ischl we camped on the front lawn of the Countess Starhemberg, to whose generosity we owe the two best breakfasts and the only laundry that we met in Austria. We spent four days in this district and then went by boat down the Danube to Vienna.

We saw it all, its parks and palaces, decaying and unkempt, the somewhat graceless efficiency of its workmen's flats, the fire station and the royal library, the gaiety of the beer-gardens and its Romanesque cathedral, gloomy and devout. And if it seemed a little sombre beside the golden mellowness of Innsbruck, a little sordid beside the piety of Salzburg, perhaps it was the rain and the results of H.S.C. At Vienna we left the last of our guides, to whose efforts and energy, together with those of Mr. Poskitt and Mr. Storey, the entire success of the trek is due.

1934 TREK - DEVON AND CORNWALL

In order to link up our trek with that of last summer, when we explored a section of Somerset and the North Devon coast, we decided to start from Bideford and trek as far as Bodmin, keeping to the coast route wherever practicable.

The train journey during the night of July 27th was probably more grim than we anticipated, and beauty sleep was out of the question, but when we eventually arrived at Bideford at mid-day on the 28th the weather was very auspicious and, without delay, we set out for Parkham. This eight mile road trek, after a sleepless night, had its effect on the troops and, when appetites had been satisfied, only healthy snores broke the silence until Sunday morning was well advanced. Breakfast was over just in time for church parade—the Rector had been kind enough to grant the campsite— and we were welcomed most heartily. In the afternoon an excursion was made to Peppercombe, a delightful bathing spot, even for Atkin, though the tide did deprive him of his footwear.

On Monday, July 30th, the trek proceeded by the cliffs to Bucks Mills, where the finest view of Lundy Island is obtained. Since the tide was out we were able to proceed over the shingle and boulders to Clovelly. After a halt for lunch we left this fascinating village and continued through Clovelly Court and Brownsham to Stoke Barton beyond Hartland. A short trek on Tuesday took us to Welcombe; the site was unsatisfactory, and by the time we had secured provisions and a site less prolific in thistles, the day was well advanced, though a bathing fag was contrived between late lunch and dinner. Here it was that the results of incautious sunbathing became apparent.

The coast trek to Bude on the Wednesday was rather arduous; the heavens opened to welcome us, and it was a bedraggled and well-soaked party that arrived at Rodd's Bridge about 6 p.m. The following day was a rest day; the interrupted anticyclone resumed sway; boating and bathing were popular and, lest Challiner and Callan should be disappointed in their piscatory efforts, a dace finally offered itself up as a martyr to the cause.

On the next day's trek to St. Gennys we came to Widemouth Bay with its spacious sands, and it was impossible to resist an appeal for a bathe. The combs which followed were rather severe, and Erbrich's trousers showed their disapproval of his manner of descending same. The site at Crackington Haven-St. Gennys was one of our best, the haven with cliffs towering on each side is truly impressive.

From St. Gennys our route led through Boscastle, with its picturesque valley and fascinating harbour, to Trevalga. Since this place was devoid of shops there was a well-patronised, though voluntary, trek to Boscastle in the evening. The next day—Sunday, August 5th—was our second wet day. No excursions were possible, save to church and in quest of wood, but the gale had spent its force ere morning.

On Monday we passed through Rocky Valley, tarried at Bossiney Cove—the finest bathing spot we encountered, and went on to view Tintagel, where we halted for lunch. Rain came on for our afternoon trek through Delabole to St. Teath, but the morale of the party was still good, and Nuttall was known to decline a proffered lift. St. Teath itself is rather uninteresting and, by reason of the slate-quarrying, resembles some Welsh mining village.

The trek to Port Gaverne—for Port Isaac—was only short, so we were able to spend some time viewing this quaint fishing village with its narrow winding streets; bathing was indulged in, but it savoured more of a mud bath. At this point we reluctantly bade farewell to the sea and turned inland to St. Mabyn, passing through St. Kew with its homely hostelry and refreshing cider. Most welcome on our arrival at St. Mabyn was the overdue mail, but parents had risen to the occasion, and the monetary crisis was at an end. The campsite here was excellent, and the view stretched right away over well-wooded glens.

On our last trek—to Bodmin—we passed through the pleasant glades of Dunmore Wood and arrived at our final site in time for the party to arrange for a camp feast, worthy of Lucullus, to conclude a most enjoyable trek.

The lure of such scenery, with its attractive combes, its weather-beaten cliffs and enchanting coves, is truly irresistible, and our one regret is that a fortnight's trek can do so little towards satisfying one's "wanderlust."

The object of trekking is not solely the enjoyment of scenery; it is also to enable one to form comparisons between one stretch of country and another. In so far as this latter was concerned, the route for the party in Wales this year was admirably chosen.

Roughly speaking, it lay between Rhayader and Aber. The small valleys, closely wooded at the bottom, surrounded by rather boldly outlined hills, were a pleasant contrast to the coastal scenery which we met at the end of the first week. At Cader Idris, our nearest point to the sea, the entire absence of trees, and continuance of the grass-line on to the very peaks themselves, gave the country that peculiar, rolling effect typical of Welsh coastal scenery.

From Cader and Dolgelly we turned inland and met with country similar to the Rhayader district, but on a much greater scale. After Snowdon we had the most remarkable change of all; we trekked into the Ogwen valley and, from a purely scenic point of view, this was by far the finest campsite of the trek. There was an air of wildness and spaciousness which adequately compensated for any lack of height, precipice and so-called grandeur. The grouping and colouring of Trifan, the Glyders and the Carneddts at the seaward end of the valley, were magnificent. Such a sequence dispelled any illusion we may have entertained that Welsh scenery is all alike.

From other standpoints the trek was not so fortunate. Rain was consistently troublesome. Any one of the "wet-fags" which we endured, would, on a trek blessed with decent weather, have become historic: with us they were the trivial incidents of daily routine. Mr. Toft and his stalwarts were the chief sufferers: may the grateful appetites of the rain-soaked crew who came down Snowdon to find a whistling bomb and rattling fine stew, and their prompt dispatch of the same, be their reward.

We were, literally and figuratively, rained out of the Ogwen valley: many, who had, on the first evening, learnedly commented on the Wagnerian qualities of the landscape, awoke in the middle of the following night to find that the abstract had become concrete, and that they were at the bottom of the Rhine. Those whose tents were not flooded, were conscious of confused shouting, the flapping of wet canvas, and then someone, very wet and very irate came and demanded sympathy and accommodation for the rest of the night. As there seemed no likelihood of the weather clearing up, we moved down to the coast and camped at Aber. Here the weather cleared up amazingly, and the last four days were spent in excursions to Anglesey and Penmaenmawr and other private trips to the neighbouring towns.

The trek illustrated two things very clearly: firstly, that rain does not affect a camp spirit in the same way as it does a camp fire. Beyond wishing that it would clear up no one cared two hoots for the rain. The picture of morose individuals cowering in tents and swearing in hoarse whispers at each other was certainly not true in our case. The other was a remarkable example of modern journalistic method or else Welsh imagination. According to either of these one of our party performed the unparalleled feat of having one foot in the grave one day and "rejoining his party" the next. Had they but known it, he transcended even this record by eating a hearty meal in between.

It remains but to thank the gentlemen who made such a holiday possible. Though their shirts might so arouse our political passions as to be torn asunder in the ensuing fight; though their problems with matches were enough to drive even so sober a company as ourselves to swear; though their chess matches cleft the camp and gave the two political factions (we won't mention their names) an excuse for a fight: in spite of all this, we say, each played his part nobly and all worked to make everything run smoothly from beginning to end.

This year we continued our last trek by setting out from Bodmin, but instead of keeping to the coast throughout, we went round in a large circle, touching both the north and south coasts of Cornwall.

The train left London Road Station at 7-15 p.m. on Speech Day and after a sleepless journey, including a quick change at Bristol in the small hours and an early morning walk at Liskeard, where we had to await the arrival of the local slow, we reached Bodmin Road about 7 a.m.

Here refreshment was gratefully consumed, and we set out on our twenty mile jaunt (!) to S. Columb Major. Weather was very hot, roads were trying, and we staggered into our first site late in the afternoon. In the evening we raised a cricket team to play the local team on the village green. It was not surprising that certain of the team did not exactly leap about the greensward, and Mr Maugham's hurricane deliveries didn't possess their wonted devil. None the less we were able to declare, and the shades of night just achieved a draw for us.

The next day we trekked to the little village of St. Columb Minor, near Newquay, where we stayed the week-end. The evening was spent in Newquay and at a local flower show, followed by a floral dance, which caused us much amusement

Sunday was a nice peaceful day, the morning was spent in church and the afternoon in bathing, followed by a podex match which all but turned to water polo, since the tide came in quickly and there was a hurried scramble for clothes.

The next day's trek took us to Perranporth—a pretty little spot—where we were able to indulge in bathing, surf-riding, tennis and boating. On Tuesday we left the north coast and passed through Methian to Kea near Truro. From there we passed on to Restronguet Point, ferried across to Falmouth and pitched at Swanpool, quite close to the beach. Here we had a rest day and were able to indulge in bathing, boating and sightseeing.

On Friday we rose early—a painful procedure after the previous day's luxury—and managed to catch the 10 a.m. ferry to St. Mawes—in spite of having to hunt through the town for Pearson. During the crossing we passed the "Cutty Sark" as she lay at anchor in the Fal estuary. During the trek from St. Mawes to Veryan one tent pole disappeared and since Tent I. were unlucky in the general mêlée that followed, they had to finish the trek using as tent pole a baulk of wood which approached the dimensions of a railway sleeper

From Veryan we turned towards the coast, got into trouble about a right of way over the cliffs, had an excellent bathe at Portholland and lunched at St. Goran. It was estimated that there were only two or three miles to traverse to Mevagissey where we were to stay the week-end, but owing to the fact that the campsite was, as usual, a mile or so beyond the town, and because most of the party became entangled in a wood, it was about 6 p.m. when we arrived at the site. Here an anxiously awaited mail was distributed, resulting in the usual great rejoicings or blank despair.

On Sunday we were able to attend service and then turn to bathing and general recreation. Monday, August Bank Holiday, dawned bright; the route was more congested, but we had a glorious bathe at Porthpean, lunch at Charlestown, and arrived at St. Blazey to find that Pearson, who was supposed to be well in the rear, was calmly awaiting our arrival, entertaining the vicar's daughter the while. As the next day's trek, by direct route, was only short, a fast pack set off early and had what was probably the best trek—over the cliffs by Par Sands to Fowey. The views were excellent, particularly of the fine natural harbour of Fowey. After a belated lunch we proceeded up the Fowey Valley—with its welcome shade—to Lostwithiel, where the rest had pitched camp, and had still one more bathe.

The last trek from Lostwithiel to Bodmin was also short, but very pretty, and we arrived at our last year's site in ample time to collect the mail—parents had played—or paid up—very well indeed, and to arrange for a grand feast to crown one of the best treks we have had. The weather was excellent throughout, and so was the cider.

1935 TREK - SOMERSET - TROOP 1 SCOUTS

This year it was decided to revisit the scene of a trek of no few years ago, on the supposition that, as Somerset had stood certain of Troop 1 before, it might well stand a new generation and others, too. Anyway, it didn't look much worse for our visit, and it certainly looked interesting when we arrived. But perhaps that was due to the weather.

One glorious week of blistering sunshine, driving us to scour the countryside for bathes, and never in vain, if the "sewer" fags may by courtesy be called bathing fags—we might have guessed what was to come.

It did. It rained when we visited Bath, so we patronised both baths, Roman and public. The Somerset rain is less depressing, but more impetuous and certainly more cunning, than the Mancunian species—ask our would-be fifty miles per day record-breaking walkers, but do so at your own risk. After that, we descended upon Wookey and shivered our timbers in the cave.

Then came Wells, and, for the energetic, Glastonbury, then Cheddar, which to be believed must be seen, alas, with an intrepid eye. We found the caves of Messrs. Gough and Cox (no, not Owen W.—but we tried to diddle him all the same) much nicer from inside, but our own discovery at Burrington—no "illuminations," much slime—was by far the most deserving cause.

And so to Wrington, where we ended trek as we began it, with a bathe and sunshine, and still another lapse of memory. But what can one expect after Bath, Wookey and Cheddar? As great a trek as ever, thanks to the energy and skill of our long-suffering leaders, Mr. Simkins and "G. S. E.," and one that will bear repeating a third time—but not with those tents!

1935 FOREIGN TREK - TOUR DU MONT BLANC

B. H. P. Mod. 6.

The trek this year took us into France, Italy and Switzerland, but as we were only touching on the outskirts of these countries the French language, as spoken by MGS., pulled us through every time. This language usually degenerated into a nod or a shake of the head, interspersed with lurid remarks on the ignorance of the Latins for anything but their own tongue. The scenery, common to all three countries, graduated from luscious valleys to grass hills, and then on to snow-covered peaks of black, brown and even red rock. The relative merits of looking at a mountain from the valley, and a valley from the mountain have long been open to discussion. This, however, did not worry us, as we rang the changes at least four times every day. Perhaps next year's trek will be in Norfolk—or perhaps not.

A detailed account of the route is unnecessary here; let it suffice to say that we completed a circular tour of the Mont Blanc massif in an anticlockwise direction, our chief camping sites being Les Contamines, Courmayeur (Italy), Lac Champex (Switzerland) and Chamonix. The route usually lay along mountain paths, and the majority of it was always uphill, so that the last trek, along a flattish road to Chamonix, seemed like Old Hall Lane, and we polished off the eighteen miles at just under hundred yards' speed.

As camping is half of the trek, a few samples should be recorded. The site we chose at Les Contamines seemed to be the only flat ground in the valley. We wondered at its being so level: we found out it was an ice hockey rink: we then realised why it flooded so easily after an hour or so's rain. The ground was an intricate mosaic of large, and larger, angular stones arranged in designs most guaranteed to hinder the sleeper's comfort. It was surprising how little sleep one needed at Les Contamines. But these little inconveniences were compensated by the wonderful view we obtained of the south-west shoulder of Mont Blanc which, when it was not obliterated by clouds, gave us some fine examples of the Alpine after-glow.

Courmayeur was the next spot worthy of note. After endeavouring to dump us at the mouth of a sewer, the authorities compelled us to squeeze into field too small for a goat, let alone sixty Mancunians. The overcrowding was unusually bad. Opening the tent flap meant completely deranging the rest of the housing estate. Again, a perfect view, when we could see round Tents 1-10, made up in some measure for our restricted breathing. Mont Maudit and the Aiguille Noire de Pétéret stood at the head of the Brenva glacier, which ran down to the edge of the little village of Entrèves, which is a perfect example of medieval building, so perfect indeed that we lost ourselves in the labyrinth of passages, all of which seemed to be culs-de-sac.

From Courmayeur we trekked in the evening to La Vachey along the Val Ferret. The moon lit up the mountains until they gleamed like silver. Just after we had pitched our tents on remarkably flat ground, some herdsmen came down from the heights and informed us that we were on the verge of ruining a day's pasture for forty cows. We explained to them that even though we may have looked like pirate cows, we were not going to eat their grass. But apparently this was not good enough, and it was only after paying a fabulous sum of money and assuring them that we would lie very gently on their grass, that they allowed us to remain there.

Lac Champex was perhaps the best site, taken all round. It was flat, with neither of the two apparently inevitable snags, viz., stones and cows: there was water and wood on tap: there was one fair-sized village, lake, tennis court and, later, podex pitch all laid on; and to complete this, there was a magnificent view of the Grand Combin, very often wreathed in orange coloured clouds. It was here that the inhabitants told us, in excellent French, that the temperature fell to 0° Centigrade at night, and that when it rained, our field would be the first to flood. We grinned and said vacantly, "English," the invariable reply to unanswerable remarks.

The great achievements of any trek must always be classed in two categories: those performed complete with kit and load, and those done without either. The achievements while actually trekking all fell into one division— "col-climbing," the greatest of these being the Col de la Croix-du-Bonhomme. It was not the highest, but rather the lengthiest, including really two cols: the Col du Bonhomme and then the extra "Croix" section. This was accomplished first in the blazing sun and then in driving rain. We crossed it from Nant Borrant to Les Chapieux.

The Col Ferret (8,300 feet) was the highest trek and entailed steep climbing with nothing much to see when we reached the top; and then a long drag down to La Fouly, lessened, however, in its unpleasantness by the sight of a party going up in the opposite direction. The Col de la Seigne was notable for three things: firstly, it afforded us a perfect view of the south face of Mont Blanc; secondly, a game of football was played at the top on a plot of land that would have put Maine Road to shame; and thirdly, a fierce snowball fight raged under the lee of the Italian Customs house, whilst the officials looked on, amazed at the maturity of the young English gentleman.

Without kit, we visited the Brenva glacier, and the Mer de Glace, as well as some mountains of lesser and greater height. An Italian professor living at Entrèves very kindly conducted us over the Brenva, and we were extremely lucky to see two medium-sized avalanches and four chamois. The Mer de Glace was curious. Viewed from afar, it was more beautiful than seen at close quarters. It appeared to be a great white road sweeping round the base of the mountains, but when we were actually crossing, its beauty ceased, and instead we became interested in the great waves of ice, stretching across it for half a mile.

From the camp at Chamonix we climbed to La Flégère, and then up to the Brévent, from where we had a complete view of the Mont Blanc range. We were joined every few minutes by people arriving by the aerial railway from Chamonix. There were some interesting calculations, as to how far the occupants of the cab would drop, just supposing the cables did break. The highest climb was up to the Pointe d'Orny (10,800 feet). This was performed from Lac Champex, and included some enjoyable scrambles both at the beginning and end of the climb, as well as beautiful snow scenes.

After such a successful trek as this one wonders how long it took to arrange? Who did all the unpleasant work? Why was there never a hitch? The answer invariably boils down to this: Mr. Lob, ably supported by the officers, can perform wonders, as nobody else can, in the way of taking a crowd of boys for a holiday at home or abroad. I am sure I voice the opinion of the rest of the party when I say that without Mr. Lob trekking would lose half its attraction.

[It is hoped to hold the Trek Reunion on Saturday, December 7th, tea at 5-30 p.m. All members of our previous treks will be welcome, but are requested to let Mr. Lob know by December 1st whether they will be coming to tea. Will all members of the present trek who took photographs please send copies of their prints to Mr. Field, so that he may select for the Reunion Lecture?]

In a summer which has grudgingly withheld its pleasing aspects, we have to congratulate ourselves that, at any rate, the bulk of the rainfall reserved itself for our rest days; only on two occasions were we noticeably interfered with when actually trekking.

The section covered this year—to complete our first series of treks embracing the coastline of Devon and Cornwall—had Exeter as its fulcrum, so to speak. This was singularly appropriate, since it afforded opportunity to some at the outset, and to others at the close of the trek, to visit the Cathedral and, in particular, the tomb of Hugh Oldham with its rich carvings.

From Exeter we passed through Moreton Hampstead, over the fringe of Dartmoor to Widdecombe and Ashburton and down through Ivybridge and Kingsbridge to the sea at Torcross. From this point we worked round by the coast and were able to assess the merit of such resorts as Brixham, Paignton, Torquay, Teignmouth and Dawlish.

The scenery was very varied but extremely interesting: the tors and undulating moorland; the peaceful narrow lanes and wooded glades, odorous with every species of wild flower; Widdecombe, with its majestic church tower, and a Tom Copley in the flesh, to lend “verisimilitude to an otherwise” In contrast we had Dartmouth with its marvellous harbour, Torquay in its rocky fastness, and the seascape with its irresistible appeal.

We managed to indulge our passion for sea-bathing at such places as Blackpool Sands, Man Sands, St. Mary’s Bay, Holcombe and Dawlish Warren. The sea was invigorating rather than warm, the “sands,” save at the last-named place, consisted either of pebbles, boulders or black shingle, and could scarce vie with such places as Porth and Bossiney Cove in Cornwall or with the many attractive bathing spots in North Devon.

There was the usual crop of blisters, and these were dealt with very expeditiously by Mr. Hodge; but since it is an open secret that our M.O. did lose a couple of surgical instruments, we are apprehensive lest they should still be reposing in some patient’s wound. The health of the party was good; Collins did hoist the flag of alarm by producing a scarf and doleful headgear, but the scare passed—we rather imagine his tent took him in hand. Appetites were invariably excellent and happily “the barrel of meal wasted not.”

No more fitting encomium of the personnel could be made than that contained in a conversation between two residents, overheard by the officers. After comparing our boys with those of the local school—to our decided advantage—they discussed the size of schools, and finally the prominent resident concluded: “Well, they are very well-mannered, but then, they are well trained; they must have some fine masters.”

1936 TREK - DORSET AND WILTSHIRE - SCOUTS (Troop 1)

This trek, occupying the last three weeks of the holidays, was fortunate enough this year to include the summer which lasted for a fortnight in south-west England. In fact the weather was only bad for about two days, though bad enough then to necessitate the omission of one march and the hiring of buses to enable a second one to be made.

The district covered—not a large one, for many of the trekkers were small and no one raised any serious objection to marches of great shortness—was the area south-west and north-east of Blandford. The country is hilly, well wooded, thinly populated and rich in ancient remains. The chalk soil caused bathing places to be scanty but removed all risk of mud. The number of “free” camping sites suggested that not many campers had visited the region, which was as attractive as any that had been touched in the past.

The “agenda” included a visit to Salisbury, two cricket matches, a football match and a bathe in a lake large enough to suggest the Lake District. Individual efforts varied from long walks and the inspection of ancient villages to yo-yo contests and the penetrating of a clean sewer to win a bet. No misfortunes occurred except the leaving behind of items of the equipment, various wasp stings, slight sunstroke on the part of some of the older people, and a constant failure of almost all to eat their share of the food that had been ordered.

Rather regrettable features were that the usual punctuality of meals was less observed because of the unsatisfactory fuel that was at times collected, the excessive pocket money that some boys received, and the failure of some parents to send parcels to the place of arrival. But these were very trivial contrasts to the general run of things. Thanks to the weather and the good comradeship that prevailed, this was one of the most enjoyable treks that Mr. Simkins has arranged.

1936 FOREIGN TREK - AUSTRIA

Our trek in the Tirol lay along three valleys—the Lechtal, Ötztal and Stubaital. These valleys were extensively cultivated, and not a blade of grass was left standing on which a weary trekker might have been so rash as to place a tricounied boot or a mosquito-bitten body. This absence of public grassland meant trekking along hard, dusty roads, and camping in bug-infested forests or on uneven stubble-land. After soaking and re-soaking us for nearly a week, until we marvelled at the superiority of Austria to Manchester, the weather improved and proceeded to dry us, perhaps rather too forcibly, for the rest of the trek.

It was at St. Anton that we received our baptism. This was our first camping ground after travelling for nearly three days across Europe, and though our camping ideals were rather damped by the rain, we obtained a satisfying glimpse of Alpine scenery. We visited the Konstanzer hut, at the head of the Ferwelltal, the Leutkircher hut, and, in the evenings, the railway cafe.

From St. Anton we trekked over the Arlberg, and the Flexen Pass, the latter being a splendid example of Austrian road-engineering. The route was carved out of the rock, so that when confronted by an oncoming vehicle, as often as not your only way of escape was to hang over the stone parapet or to burrow still further into the rock face. However, we were rewarded for these discomforts by the magnificent view of the road winding up from Stuben, over a thousand feet below us, dotted here and there with perspiring trekkers, coupled together, for good or bad, by tent poles on which were slung their loads.

Once over the top we shot down through Zürs, the skiing centre, to Lech, where we were to stay some days. We were given accommodation by a farmer's wife, who, ten minutes later, when our tents were pitched, was sent packing by her husband with the parting shot, "Das grund ist mein." But, after some persuasion, he condescended to choose the sites for our tents. As he had a taste for variety and an obscure sense of humour, many of these sites were located up trees, on anthills, in bogs, or on the thoroughfare for cows. Here we perceived the cunning of the rain, which, by reason of its damping nature, both floods your tent and compels you to sit in it.

From Lech we passed further down the Lechtal to Steeg, where our arrival was greeted with "fanfare and tucket", and Sunday clothes too. As it happened, it was not we who were the belles of the ball, but a certain gentleman called St. Oswald. However, we soon rectified our inopportune arrival by initiating the farmer's children into the mysteries of camp cooking and eating. Our short stay at Steeg was spent in an endless game of podex by the banks of the stream.

Having been ravaged day and night by horse-flies, we were not sorry to start on an evening trek to Kaisers. It was a pleasant change to walk in the cool of the evening instead of the frizzling heat at midday. We caught glimpses of the golden after-glow on the mountain peaks as the sun went down. Then, blocking the end of the valley and towering high above us, appeared the Kaiserjoch. We were now at a height of over five thousand feet, and the deep valley soon grew icy cold, so that hot lemon-tea, drunk round a roaring fire, made an agreeable night-cap. Going to bed consisted in donning every available piece of clothing, not excluding handkerchiefs and belts, and by this means we managed to ward off the frost which had formed on the tents as soon as they were pitched. An early breakfast at 5-30 allowed us to climb the Kaiserjoch before the sun had risen to a height sufficient to penetrate the valley. The ascent was "arduous, but attractive" in that we obtained a clear view down the length of the Kaisertal.

Once on top of the "joch" we looked down into Pettneu, four thousand feet below us. Behind it loomed an imposing background of mountains, amongst which the Hohe Riffler was conspicuous. Our campsite at Pettneu lay on the banks of the Rosanna, a stream that had already tasted our washing-soap at St. Anton. We were entertained that afternoon by an impressive thunderstorm directly over Pettneu, during which clouds could be seen rolling down the mountain sides like a Brobdingnagian gas attack. Next morning we took a train down the Stanzer Valley to Ötztal, from where we were to trek up the valley of the same name. We passed through Ötz and Umhausen, with its famous Stuiben Falls, and arrived at Ober-Längenfeld late in the afternoon.

From here we climbed the Gamskogel (9,325 feet), and, on the summit, were again treated to a thunderstorm in such close proximity as to produce electrical discharges from the ends of a wooden crucifix standing there, and to make the hair of one member of the party stand on end. We made a rapid descent in sheeting rain, refreshed on the way by an attractive concoction of snow and jam.

We trekked further up the valley to Sölden, where the avidity of the stream for our newly acquired podex balls, and the frequent visits of the young supporters of the Vaterländische Front caused us no little concern. An excursion was made to the head of the Ötztal where Obergurgl is situated, the highest parish in Austria, being at an altitude of over six thousand feet.

Owing to recent falls of snow and unsettled weather conditions, we were unable to enter the Stubaital by means of the connecting Bildstockljoch, and were forced to return down the Ötztal. Stopping once again at Ober-Längenfeld, a small party climbed up to the Hauersee hut, which overlooks a sapphire lake, and then continued across the snow-covered Hauerferner glacier to the Loibisjoch. Caution and foot-holds were flung to the winds, in our descent, as we glissaded down the glacier on two heels and a perfectly good pair of trousers. That evening we were the guests of honour at a "Liederabend" at the local Kurbad.

Our trek back to Ötztal was interrupted by the arrival of a large car. Whilst contemplating this extraordinary addition to our party, we were stripped of our loads, not without some resistance, and these were then packed into the car and driven away. Not content with this deprivation, the trek authorities now chartered a pantechicon, and further denuded us by removing our rucksacks, unwillingly, mind you, and we proceeded in this "uncommonly shrunk" state to Ötztal, where we eagerly resumed our loads for the last hundred yards into the campsite.

We entrained at Ötztal and went to Kematen, six miles west of Innsbruck, in order that we might enter the Stubaital from the lower end. This was our third journey on Austrian trains and station officials were growing accustomed to seeing rucksacks, boots and dixies falling in cascades from the carriage windows as the train slowed down. For they had bluffed us into believing that the train stopped for only thirty seconds at each station. Nevertheless, they were very careful not to take us past our destination.

We trekked from Kematen to Fulpmes via Mutters, at which dread spot the price of chocolate rose steadily as the stream of trekkers trickled through, so that the stragglers were under the impression that there had been a financial crisis and that Austria was experiencing the joys of inflation. From Fulpmes we climbed the Hohe Burgstall (8,570 feet) and were rewarded by the unusual sight of an equally high peak occupied by flocks of black birds. The descent, incidentally, included the best scree-riding of the trek.

Our galley here was by no means infrequently visited by some young priests from the neighbouring St. Bonifatius Institute. Though they invariably made their appearance whilst meals were being prepared, and invariably left immediately meals were over, it is generally agreed that they did not come for a bite, so insistent were they on impeding the fags' progress, either by allowing dixies to cool by removing the lids or by suffocating the fire with unnecessary wood. However, we returned their compliments by showing them, at the Institute, how chess and table-tennis should be played, though we had to play our international games to a background of incidental intoning.

We visited the theatre at Fulpmes and saw a Tirolese comedy, the most attractive part of which was the exhibition of Schuhplattler dancing. An excursion was made to Neustift, a neighbouring village, from where we obtained a magnificent view of the Habicht and also of the mountain range which forms the frontier between Austria and Italy.

Our last camp was in the woods above Innsbruck, woods whose hospitality will surely never be forgotten, for they were pleased to house in ten square yards not only thirty odd English boys, but also a nest of very hearty sting-you-on-the-back wasps who were accompanied by unnecessarily large numbers of merry mosquitoes. In the daytime we visited Innsbruck for the purpose of sightseeing, present and, more important, Flit-buying. After two days here we returned to England, after breaking our journey for twelve hours at Brussels.

To Mr. Lob and the officers go the unanimous and whole-hearted thanks of all those who have been fortunate enough to accompany him on his Austrian trek.

There are three criteria by which every trekker in the south-west assesses the quality of his holiday. The first is the surroundings, the second the weather, and the third, and by no means the last, the cider: and in all these, this year's trek excelled itself.

We left London Road on the customary evening train, arrived at Taunton at the usually phenomenally early hour of the morning, and took the local slow out to Dulverton—our trek centre. From there onwards the variety of scenery was marvellous to behold.

There was first the "huntin', shootin' and fishin'" country which lies on the south side of Exmoor. Swift rivers running through steep wooded combs, with open moorland on the hilltops, which swarmed with rabbits. The villages were small but always contained tremendous inns and stables where the hunt met twice a year. We followed the River Exe up to its source with great satisfaction and then, after a remarkable piece of pioneering by one of the O. M.s over a wilderness of moorland—it was generally agreed that the man must have had second sight—we gained the safety of Challacombe.

Here, incidentally, the camp was pitched, by necessity, close to a small stream where there was a greater proportion of vicious insects to the cubic foot than had hitherto been thought possible. The result was that everyone reached for his anti-midge, till the air reeked with spike, oil of lavender, and similarly subtle combinations which drove even the nearby cows to another field.

From Challacombe we trekked chiefly through a land of quiet lanes and high hedges to the coast, which was reached near Lynton, then westward through the Lorna Doone country. In Malmsmead, at the head of the Doone valley, we discovered a specially attractive spot. Pine woods nearby provided excellent firewood; there were ponies to be hired from the farm; there was the church where Lorna Doone was shot—we paraded there on the Sunday; and finally, the river swarmed with trout, which caused many of our members to display a capacity for "tickling" which would have surprised even John Ridd. The victims were afterwards cleaned and boiled under the direction of Wolstenholme, and eaten with Bacchanalian, if somewhat primitive, zest.

From Malmsmead we climbed up to the cliffs of the coast, descended the notorious Porlock hill and reached the pretty village of Allerford, near Minehead. Minehead ran to a dance-band, a new swimming-pool and a super cinema, and as town dwellers we rejoiced to return to such manifest civilisation after spending a whole week in the wildernesses. From Minehead we once again turned inland and followed the Exe back to Dulverton.

On the weather we are to be congratulated on choosing the only two weeks of the year which could sustain the dignity of summer. It rained but twice, and on neither occasion very heavily.

As the trek took us from Somerset into Devon and back into Somerset again, connoisseurs of that excellent wine, cider, had an opportunity for speculation as to its merit. Cider in Somerset tended to be "rough," in Devon sweet and heavy.

Of the thousand and one minor incidents which go to make up a trek we can say nothing: but among other things we recall the Dulverton spaniel that manifested a strong desire to return to Manchester; and the swift nemesis which overtook Raffle's tent after a particularly gaudy night..

This summer Mr. Lob added to his long list of successful treks when he led a party, some three dozen strong, through the many picturesque dales of the Yorkshire Pennines. This region, so near home, proved to be an excellent training ground for the many inexperienced newcomers, who, we hope, will form the nucleus of future treks in other lands. Though it may seem extraordinary to old trekkers, the organisation surpassed that of former years as, throughout our three weeks wandering, we enjoyed glorious weather.

Early on, some of us thought that this spell was too good to be true and that the usual trek weather would soon set in. However, we were disappointed, and we were homeward bound when we learned how it could rain in those parts.

As might be expected it was a gentle trek. We are unable to boast of having carried the bomb and other impedimenta over cols and jochs of unbelievable heights. We were assisted on some "treks" by a motor transport department which, as well as acting as ambulances for the blistered ones, deprived us of the trekker's joy of carrying loads heavy enough to make any tent pole creak. On one notable occasion it also proved to be a very efficient flying squad. Our thanks go to Messrs. Somerford, Parkinson and Richardson. We were very lucky in that six perfect campsites had been booked for us by those responsible for the smooth running tour. We thus avoided the usual site quarrels and, at the same time, slept on grass which most foreign farmers would keep in a glass frame.

Our route included camps at Keld, Countersett, Litton, Malham, Clapham and Dent, and climbs to the Nine Standards, Penyghent and Ingleborough. Caves were an added attraction. There was Ingleborough Cave, Yordas Cave in Kingsdale, and Brow Ghyll Cave, near Ribbleshead. This last had an added thrill since it was not commercialised, was wet, and of such dimensions that at least one member of the party, had he been present, would not have been able to get very far. We also went to see some caves near Hawes but, unfortunately, they had been blocked by the owner of a dwindling flock of sheep. Many waterfalls of differing types were seen. Hardraw Force (which can only be approached by passing through the Green Dragon Inn) and several in the glens at Ingleton earn our greatest admiration.

Being in the limestone uplands of England, aided by lessons in geology from Mr. Green (I dare say he would concoct a savoury meal from limestone if this were the Stone Age), we came across many of the wonders which have been worked by water in the past ages. These included several water-babies pavements, pot-holes, scars and, what is most astonishing, disappearing streams. At Litton we camped by the bed of the river Skirfare. I have said the bed because, what is to me, the essential part of a river vanished into the rock about a mile and a half upstream and reappeared suddenly the same distance downstream. On our way up Ingleborough we lunched by Gaping Ghyll, a pot-hole, whose depth we could hardly believe exceeded by a hundred feet the height of Malham Cove, from the top of which we had dropped a home-made parachute a few days earlier to settle some dispute involving the law of gravity.

Of the many incidents of trek which stand out in my mind there are two I must mention. On an excursion we disturbed the peaceful slumbers of a vagrant youth, who seemed trustworthy when half asleep, but who later proved to be the opposite when awake. He was sleeping by a beck-side, or by the kem of a beck (using a word for edge coined for crossword purposes by Dr. Somerford), in a tent which we had missed on our arrival at Keld. When a promise to return the tent was not fulfilled the flying squad was called upon. After brilliant work they followed a trail of lies and found their quarry using a "borrowed" fishing line.

Malham Moor, a wild spot, was the scene of another exciting event which resulted in the award of five well deserved marks to Tent 3 in the Tent Championship. During our after lunch siesta in brilliant sunshine our right to be there was challenged by a fearsome bull. It was kept at bay by Mr. Green single-handed (or should I say with a single tent pole) and the troops advanced speedily with an armed rearguard.

We had all the usual camp life in its fullest with podex, bathing, fagging, sing-songs, arguments, reading, crosswords, bridge and other games. As a novelty a Tent Championship was introduced, and marks were awarded for such noble deeds as chevying cows from the galley. Since Mr. Lob had the mark book, there was only one tent with even a chance of winning the trophy, but nevertheless it caused not a little amusement.

Once again we have to thank Mr. Lob and his faithful colleagues for making such an enjoyable and interesting holiday possible.

This trek had at least one great virtue; it conducted forty-eight youths to a section of the earth's surface where there was a respite from war preparations. The peaceful countryside, the amiable peasant-folk and the pleasing, but occasionally too ardent, sunshine, all contrived to make the trip thoroughly enjoyable.

Our admiration was first aroused by the incredible skill of the packers employed by the Southern Railway. These men, having gained their knowledge at a "Skippers' Factory" practise their arts at Southampton, persuading would-be passengers that, if they look carefully, they can find room on deck. How successful was their persuasion cannot be judged, save that for the second time this year the steamer could not enter St. Malo harbour, as there was not enough water to float her.

The interest aroused in St. Malo by our appearance was profound. It is true that the lady who asked if we were the French Army was English. Equally profound was our interest in the walled town of St. Malo. Its streets are narrow and steep—a real nightmare for the motorist—and perhaps its sanitation leaves much to be desired, but it boasts a fine old cathedral, wherein Cartier was blessed before he left on his voyages of discovery, and the historic ramparts whence one obtains excellent views of this interesting and picturesque fastness.

After a breakfast consisting of the Cafe de la Duchesse Anne's closest approximation to the English "ham and eggs," it was judged advisable to create a good impression by walking for the first day at least. There were twenty-six kilometres to be covered to Plancoët, and it seemed quite negotiable, but good resolutions had to go by the board, for the crossing of the Rance in an antiquated motor-boat was not merely adventurous, for it took 12 hours to transport our party, though the "bac" worked at full pressure. Consequently, by the time Ploubalay was reached, it was realised that, willy-nilly, we should have to resort to some form of transport, so we made the acquaintance of the "autobus" (or car) and of "le petit train" (or tram).

Both are objects of considerable interest. The former emits fierce groans from its horn at the slightest provocation; the driver seems to use this instrument to express both his wrath and his joie de vivre and to hail his many acquaintances en route. The "petit train" is even more peculiar; it carries some twenty-five passengers, is drawn by a Diesel engine, wanders all over the map, and announces its progress continuously by a quaint combination of siren and hooter. By reason of these peculiar idiosyncrasies the autobus and petit train seemed to have a certain fascination for some members of the trek.

Finally, all arrived at Plancoët, and having found a campsite after conferences as grave as those at Berchtesgaden, we searched for eatables, negotiated barbed-wire, amused the inhabitants and served evening meal at 10 p.m.

From Plancoët we decided to proceed to Lamballe by way of the ruins of the "Chateau de la Hunaudaye." It was a distance of thirty kilometres and though some found the petit train once more and others accepted the offer of a lift on a mineral-water lorry, quite a good number could boast that, by dint of stopping for a refreshing drink occasionally, they had accomplished the hard trek. Hard it was, for when the Frenchman wants to travel from A to B, he makes a road from A to B, in marked contrast to the old English custom of diverging, on the way, to C, where there is good fishing.

Consequently there was much road walking, quiet perhaps, but none the less uncommonly hot and rough. So many blisters were acquired that the senior medico lost interest in them; and at the end of the fortnight, his eye had lost that gleam of satisfaction which used to light up his face at the sight of a ripe blister; no longer did he murmur, "Lovely! Lovely!"—his ardour, like his needle, was blunted.

At Lamballe we were allowed to camp on a plateau right by the Cathedral; once more we were late; we had a good assembly of townsfolk who took keen interest in our cooking. When we were settling down for the night the air was rent by a wail of anguish; a fellow who had been taking too close an interest in our tents fell down the edge of the plateau.

There followed the usual gesticulating and pandemonium until we suggested they should get a doctor instead of standing there. We had feared a broken leg at least but the verdict was—a sprain. At Lamballe there was also revelry in anticipation of the races on the following day, and some of our "bright sparks" joined in the merry game of "Chantez, dansez, embrassez qui vous voulez," and were very ready to sing our National Anthem when invited to do so. Naturally all this proved a great stimulus to our desire to speed up our French.

St.Brieuc was our next site—a larger but badly planned town—the site was on common land, the ground was like concrete, the ants were more numerous, so we were not sorry to pass on next morning. An official train journey took us to Plouaret and from there we walked to St. Efflam— pleasantly situated on the coast.

Here we had a rest day and on the following morning, inconceivable though it may seem, nearly all the members went off for a swim before breakfast. After a day of sunbathing we set off across the sands next morning, through Tredrez, where a few of us saw one of the old “lit clos” or cupboard beds still in use, and on to Lannion. From here we had already chartered a bus to take us to Tréguier. The cathedral here proved a great attraction; the interest waned somewhat when it was realised that one had to pay at each shrine and cloister. Here it was that we saw the first signs of a circus which thereafter haunted our steps. We here learnt also that gravity can be resisted by efficient use of tent pegs.

From Tréguier to Paimpol was pleasant. In spite of the fact that we had been refused a campsite here, we got a pleasant spot and gave the inhabitants a treat by pitching our camp in Roman style. We bathed here in a “wet” dry dock, much to the disgust of certain small crabs who, finding our feet already sufficiently lacerated, were forced to withdraw. Some twenty-one miles separate Paimpol from Etables, so it was deemed essential to charter more buses. The proprietor and his wife transported us thither in about an hour—some of us were glad that it took no longer, for it seemed as if the back axle of the smaller vehicle would cave in at any moment.

At Etables we chose our own site, with a fine prospect on to the sea, which is simply dotted with little islands and reefs. Here we had another bathe, complete with bathing raft. It was at Etables that a certain section of the trek decided the time had come when they should be a little more energetic and on the next morning, very soon after dawn, two Old Mancunians were perceived to be making preparations to walk.

However, a hill near Binic caused their reconversion to the cult of the autobus. On this trek we met a peasant wedding, a small procession making its way to the Mairie, resembling rather a funeral procession—pretty but very solemn. Instead of staying at St. Brieuc we passed on to Yffiniak to shorten the following day’s trek. From Yffiniak a hard and rather monotonous road took us to Pléneuf. It rained slightly on the way and our campsite was not only hard but boasted a good crop of Colorado beetles. Here the troops were treated to a free cinema show in the public square.

The site which had been reserved for us at Matignon was called “La Place du Champ”; we had our misgivings before we arrived so we were not exactly surprised to find that it consisted of an avenue of trees, a public walk, but not a blade of grass. We decided to camp on the stubble of a nearby cornfield.

Ploubalay was our last campsite, and to satisfy the wishes of most members of the party it was decided to get to Dinard early by bus. But Dinard was over-civilized and over-Anglicised for us—too much like Blackpool or Brighton in its cosmopolitanism. St. Malo, across the estuary, looked much more interesting and we soon crossed on vedettes, small steam launches. The remaining few hours were spent in collecting and concealing a few more presents and enjoying a little dinner *à l’Anglaise* at the Duchesse Anne.

It was an enjoyable trek, if not an energetic one for a few seniors; the hands at the tiller were unobtrusively efficient, for which our thanks are due to Messrs. Hodge and Lund.

Our trek this year took us into the Dauphiné Alps, a magnificent collection of mountains lying thirty miles south-east of Grenoble, and including the famous Pelvoux massif. We started from Grenoble, taking a train down the Isère valley to Goncelin where we disembarked and assembled our kit in the blazing sun. This was our first trek, so that it was with eagerness that we took up our loads and strode off in the direction of Alleverd, our campsite. However, as the road grew steeper and the sun hotter, there was soon a fine procession of be-butter-muslined trekkers wending their way north, some whistling in a slightly forced manner, most cursing gently, and a few falling with surprising regularity by the wayside. But all good things come to an end, even bad ones, and Alleverd was presently sighted. The situation was a pleasant one if you successfully ignore the ants and horseflies, and our first night under canvas was notable for yet another of Mr. McEachran's midnight meals.

The Brame-Farine was climbed the following day, again in glorious sunshine—sunshine, incidentally, which was to remain with us nearly the whole time of the trek. Next morning saw an early start for our journey to Le Curtillard, a tiny village sheltering under the Sept Laux massif. The route lay along hard, white roads, and we arrived at our destination dusty and thirsty, so that a site by a river was more than usually acceptable. The afternoon was spent in settling the thirst problem, swatting the various winged pests and avoiding the sun.

Le Curtillard, despite its 3,000 feet situation, was, nevertheless, in the valley, and we, or at least the majority of us, were eager to push off into the height. Others took one look at those heights and promptly contracted all manner of ailments; this would necessitate their going round in a bus, in Mr. Owen's bus, Mr. Owen being very partial to buses. We trekked through the woods in the evening cool as far as the "humble chalets of Le Gleyzin-de-la-Ferrière." Here we found a small plateau, pitched our tents and, after sipping some meat extract, went to sleep in all our clothes. Halfway through the night, or so it seemed, we were told it was tomorrow and another early start, so we packed up and after a hasty breakfast, left our blasted heath to scale its mountainous walls. So timely was our start that the first of the Sept Laux was reached before the sun grew really warm.

These seven lakes, at a height of 7,000 feet, lie along a col some two miles in length, and are used as reservoirs or for the generation of electricity. From this col we obtained a wonderful view of the Belledonne and Grandes Rousses ranges towering away into the distance. Then began a one in one-and-a-bit descent to the road below. Cornering on the tortuous paths became quite an art, and overtaking a passport to Valhalla; but at various speeds the descent was finally negotiated by everyone, if not without a headache. A weary drag uphill for two or three miles brought us to our site.

St. Jean d'Arves was our next goal and to reach it we had to climb two cols, this time on the road. We set off at a cracking pace and singing lustily, but as time went on the pace grew less lusty and the singing decidedly cracked. Help, however, was not far off, and at the Col du Glaudon, we found the necessary refreshment. After a short "rest fag," we followed the road up to the Col de la Croix de Fer (6,765 feet) and there admired this fine panorama of mountains. On our right lay the Grandes Rousses, on our left the Aiguilles d'Arves, and straight ahead, wreathed in clouds, the 13,000 feet Meije.

We soon made our way down into the Arvan valley and swung along the road, anxious to reach St. Jean d'Arves and select our site. We were met by Mr. Owen, the sick list, and some dusky, husky gentlemen who belonged to the French army. These were soon joined by a large number of Chasseurs Alpains, such a large number in fact, that it was decided to leave them to eat up St. Jean d'Arves, while we would do the same to the next village.

It was pitch dark when we set off for that next village, and it was only by a stroke of luck that we are not still walking to that next village. However, Entraigues, for that was its name, was eventually unearthed; we felt grass beneath our feet and our tents were erected. When morning brought its enlightenment, our site resembled nothing so much as a slum, so congested were the tents. Many occupants were unable to leave their homes, the doors being barred by a close network of other people's guy-ropes. Others had slept with head in one tent, feet in another, and stomach exposed to the midnight air. But the campsite was one of the prettiest of the whole trek.

After two rest days spent basking in the sun, we were ready to tackle our next col. It was decided to dispense with the evening trek and bivouac to the base, to send the kit by bus and to attempt the distance at one blow. Mr. Owen again led his stalwarts with great skill, the remainder following Mr. Cunliffe's lead up the Défilé du Patère, a barren valley shut in by "precipitous rocks, curiously stratified."

At the head of the valley we struck off to the right and shuffled through thick woods to the upper slopes of the Col de l'Infernet (8,826 feet). The col itself was a desolate waste of grey slopes, but it afforded a magnificent view of the Meije and the Mont de Lans with their numerous glaciers. Our descent was again somewhat abrupt, but after riding the screes with varying degrees of success, we reached the grass slopes which roll down into la Grave, our destination.

La Grave proved to be a pleasant spot, sheltering beneath the huge Meije massif. To look out of the tents was to be confronted with a glittering mass of ice and snow hanging in suspense nine thousand feet above. From this site two excursions were made, one to the Col du Lautaret (6,752 feet), open for only three months in the year, and the other up the Aiguille du Goléon (11,242 feet). The first took us into the heart of the French Alpine manoeuvres, and after eating a chilly lunch at Le Lautaret, we left the road to walk along the "Sentier des Crevasses," a path cut out of the crumbling slopes of the Pics de Combeynot. The second excursion to the Goléon was frustrated by the weather when the party had only another five hundred feet to climb. Clouds and snow made further progress inadvisable and the party returned, only two of them having completed the ascent.

After a gargantuan mid-day meal cooked by Mr. Green, and a short pause to allow the above to settle, we started on an evening trek down the Romanche valley to Le Freney. The road passes between impending precipices over which waterfalls plunge and glaciers protrude their snouts. Part of the valley has been converted into a vast reservoir and we found Le Freney lying behind the dam, which holds back the water.

We pitched our tents on very uneven ground and after a short sleep were once more on the road, making for the desolate Vénéon valley and St. Christophe. This trek was a long one over dusty roads and the last four miles, a steady drag uphill, but the site was such as to compensate fully for our labours. Perched on a small plateau, five thousand feet up, we were yet unable to see the valley bed, so steep and narrow were its sides, but directly before us soared the snow peaks of the Roche de la Muzelle and the Crête de L'Auranoure.

We found St. Christophe a cold and misty place, but an excursion further up the valley to La Bélarde restored the sun to us. From La Bélarde a small party scrambled up the Tête de la Maye (8,258 feet) and was rewarded with views of the south wall of the Meije and the numerous peaks and glaciers of the Ecrins group. The following day an attempt was made to climb the Gendry via the Lac Noir (11,218 feet), but mist drove us back and we had to rest contented with a light luncheon of garlic-garnished salad and goat's milk obtained at a nearby farm.

We left St. Christophe to return down the valley to Le Bourg d'Oisans, a small market town. This was the first place of any size that we had yet visited and its cafés and shops were consequently well patronised. Our arrival coincided with their annual wakes week-end and we were treated to a fine display of fireworks in the evening, although the small fair seemed entirely dependent on the financial resources of our party.

A rest day here provided us with an interminable game of podex played on an unusually natural pitch, and the next day we had a pleasant excursion on the far side of the valley. We were then to travel by rail from Bourg d'Oisans to Séchilienne, and from there to trek to Uriage. But either the train was too small and uncertain, or Mr. Owen would not countenance such a vehicle— at all events, the whole party finally went by bus.

We arrived at Séchilienne having thoroughly enjoyed our unusual means of procedure and were now loath to resume our loads. The sun was beating down, and our trek over the Col de Prémol will long be remembered as one of the most arduous of its kind. However, a lunch fag in the pines, and unlimited varieties of wild berries soon revived us, and we made good time down into Uriage.

Our site here was situated in an orchard above the town, and windfalls were plentiful. In the daytime we lay about in the sun, waiting for the fruit to drop into our mouths; in the evening we strolled along the one and only boulevard, lending colour and interest to the somewhat decorous crowds from the hotels. After two days in this delightful spot we struck our tents for the last time, cleaned the dixies and packed up everything in readiness for our return to civilisation. A lethargic tram transported us to Grenoble, where we spent the day accustoming ourselves gradually to the delights and restraints of civilised man, before leaving for Paris, London and home.

The Dauphiné Trek Reunion will take place on Friday, December 9th, Tea at 6 p.m.

The 4th Scout Troop spent the first three weeks of the Summer holiday camping in Connemara. The trip was planned in spite of Jeremiahs who said that the weather was notoriously bad there, and distances were so great that it couldn't be managed on foot. We should, therefore, find food difficult to obtain. Even more alarming was the information that the natives were likely to be unfriendly to us, and might even attack us with stones. However, Canon Nash of Galway assured us that all would be well and that we should have a grand trip if the weather was good, and would have no difficulty with supplies if we made our camps at Maam, Leenane, Kylemore or Letterfrack and Clifden. This was in the best Connemara country, and so the journey was fixed up.

The Canon proved to be right. We had glorious weather. All our supplies, which had been ordered in advance, turned up as arranged, and the human inhabitants were of the friendliest possible nature, their great regret being that more visitors from England did not visit their district. One has to stress the human inhabitants, because the midges and horseflies were particularly belligerent.

The party consisted of twenty-three, and was in charge of two members of the staff and two Old Boys. The ages ranged from nineteen to thirteen, and we carried all our camping equipment. We crossed from Liverpool to Dublin, and following a train journey to Galway, we arrived to find we had missed a vital train-bus connection. The bus company would do nothing to help us, until two of the smallest members of the party, looking woefully depressed (grand acting this!) were introduced to him, and he was informed that as things stood they would not arrive at the campsite until 10 p.m. and would then have to pitch tents and cook a meal in the pouring rain.

This affected him visibly and he duly produced a bus, and in the course of time we arrived at Maam Cross at 3 p.m. to start our trek in the rain. The journey to Maam was four and a half miles in length, but by the time we arrived it was fine and even sunny, and we found we had been allotted the fair-ground as our campsite. This was raised above the road, and had a superb view of the Maamturk mountains, and there we were due to remain for five nights while we visited the various mountain tops.

It was a lovely valley—typical of the district. Very English and very satisfying, yet quite unlike any English landscape we have ever seen. The greens and the greys of the hills and the greens and the browns of the bogs were restful to the eyes, and wherever we might be there was always some water in the picture, river or bog or lake or sea. In the afternoon the more distant hills would change to a deep and very definite blue, and in the evening at sunset they would turn a luscious pink, and we saw them like that on our very first evening.

After one glorious day among the hills we were assailed by the same storm that united Windermere and Rydal Water, and the mixture of wind and rain caused us to strike camp and go for shelter into a neighbouring empty house. The storm lasted thirty-six hours, and was followed by a spell of fine, hot weather. We visited St. Patrick's Well at Maameen on the last Sunday in July, the day of the Annual Pilgrimage, and there we got our first view of the wonderful range known as the Twelve Pins.

We trekked from Maam to Aasleagh, near Leenane, where we camped in the Rectory garden, right at the head of Killary harbour, a curious strip of the Atlantic, which reaches eleven miles inland, and is comparable only to the Norwegian fjords. There was excellent sandy sea-bathing, several mountains to be climbed, and the shops at Leenane to be visited, and we stayed, enduring the midges, for five nights.

At length the time came for us to get once more upon our travels, and to leave this midge-ridden fastness behind. The journey from Aasleagh to Kylemore was made by bus, and here we had a piece of land an acre in extent—all that separated two of the Twelve Pins. But, alas, the midges here were far more obnoxious than they had ever been at Aasleagh, and on the first evening drove everyone out of the camp. Once again there were diverse things to be done.

The views of the Atlantic coast from the Pins were superb, but the first sight of Rinvyle on the coast will probably live longest in our memories. It was a perfect day, and the sea was as blue as the Mediterranean at its best. It was studded with rocky islands, and the hills seemed to rise direct from the sea. The sandy coves were of the type that one dreams about, and the bathing was perfectly safe. It was indeed an entrancing spot, calling for the skill of a master to reproduce in watercolours.

The last three days were spent on Clifden racecourse, and from there we went to Mannin Bay. At first sight this has a glorious sandy beach but if the sand is examined it is found to be composed almost entirely of a branching, coral-like substance. It is in fact a calcareous seaweed, Lithothamnion, which lives at the bottom of the bay under a few fathoms of water, and is broken off and thrown up on the shore by the sea.

During the trek our botanists set out to compare in some measure the various ecological associations visited in Ireland with similar ones in England. Their work, as yet, is uncompleted. Enough has been done, however, to note that there are interesting species whose only station in the British Isles is in Ireland, and they are particularly abundant in Connemara.

An instance of this is the beautiful *Menziesia Dolifolia* (St. Dabeoc's Heath), an unusually large-belled heather. Other rarities included *Ericaulon Septulangare* (Pipe-wort), which, as far as is known, is found only in North America, Skye and Connemara, also the sea scurvy grass *Cochlearia Anglica*. In addition to this, we were able to confirm the work of W. H. Pearson, who, in 1935, discovered *Hydisla Verticillata* in the waters of Rinvyle Lough. This plant up to then had only been found in Esthwaite Water. The isolation of its Irish station, however, confirmed the belief that it is a native of the British Isles rather than an escape from an unknown source.

The journey home began quite eventfully, for the 28-seater motor-bus in which we travelled nearly fifty miles to Galway contained fifty-one persons, each with a bulky travelling package. There were two bicycles in addition. But we reached Galway safely and to time, and nothing more of note occurred.

It was a glorious holiday, full of amusing incidents, but probably the most pleasing features of all were the pictures of Connemara life that we saw. The donkeys carrying peat in their panniers, the barefooted men, women and children, the peat fires in the cottages, the quaint old Post Office at Maam, the roads lined by dense fuchsia hedgerows, the jaunting cars, and above all else the cheery "Good days" and "Grand days" that everybody gave us as we passed. Without any doubt whatever Connemara is the ideal place for a holiday, whether on foot or in a car. It must be one of the loveliest places in these islands that is still natural and completely unspoiled.

On a distant and relatively peaceful morning towards the end of last July, a party of thirty-six past and present members of MGS. left Manchester for Devon, complete with clean kit and many white knees, and yet, no gas masks. The journey through the West Country, the Severn Tunnel and Bristol, with its huge aeroplane factory, provided interest for that day. At last we reached Bideford which was to be the starting-point of the trek. A meal in a café, a stroll round the quiet town and then we "turned in," in preparation for our first day of trek.

On the next day (Saturday) we walked from Bideford through mud and rain to Parkham, which as far as we could see, was composed of a church and a "pub" where the local cider could be sampled. Being of catholic tastes, many of the party visited both, as well as making an excursion to the beach, during Sunday, a rest-day. On Monday the real business of the trek began. In the morning we walked to Clovelly; some of us reached our destination by crossing three miles of rocky Devon beach, others favoured a longer but gentler route inland. The whole party assembled on the beach at Clovelly where lunch was eaten and enjoyed by all, except, perhaps, by the smartly-dressed sightseers who had come to pay homage to the extraordinary main street and to buy conscientiously their picture post-cards. During the afternoon we went from Clovelly to Hartland, where a weary party arrived in the early evening.

The next day we set out with renewed vigour for Morwenstow, crossing en route a stream which marks the boundary between Devon and Cornwall. At Morwenstow we were entertained by the efforts of an anti-aircraft battery to destroy a "sausage" towed behind a 'plane. Let us hope that now the gunners have had much more practice and are more skilled in their craft! On Wednesday we trekked to Bude. During the walk some of the party met difficulties in the descent of a cliff-face. Even the coastguard was called out and the party afterwards won fame by being mentioned at the foot of a column in a local newspaper. Before the coastguard or coils of rope arrived, however, all the party were once more on terra firma and able to continue the journey.

We eventually arrived in Bude, where our march through the town seemed to surprise the more conventional and respectable holiday-makers. Thursday was a rest-day, spent in swimming and rowing on Bude canal. In the evening many of the party took part in a bobbing and jostling procession, brass-band at the head, through the streets. We discovered afterwards that the famous "Furry Dance" had been adopted by the local hospital, which organised one each week to raise funds. We were not taking part in some ancient, annual rite.

On Friday we climbed up and slithered down the coombs between Bude and Crackington Haven. The sea at our feet was undoubtedly beautiful, but the gradients left us little time to admire it. When at last we reached Crackington Haven a "bathing fag" was generally enjoyed. The next day we spent in walking to Boscastle, along more cliffs. Sunday was the last rest-day; Church parade, visits to the remarkable harbour and waiting for meals occupied the time well enough.

On Monday morning the party walked to Tintagel, stopping en route at Bossiney Cove to bathe. The green cliffs, blue sky and still bluer foam flecked sea must have impressed the least sensitive, despite blisters and wounds inflicted by the rocks. At Tintagel we entered the land of "King Arthur's Tea Shoppe." Few of the party succumbed to the temptations and paid their sixpences to inspect "King Arthur's Castle." Lunch offered many more attractions. From

Tintagel we walked over miles of hard, main roads to Camelford. The approach to the town and the rain which fell steadily during the evening were hardly perfect inducements to us to pay just tribute to the reputed centre of Arthur's country. On Tuesday we walked over more hard roads to St. Mabyn, where we camped in a mown hay-field and where we saw our first, and last, summer evening of the trek. That night most of the party had warm and comfortable mattresses. The next day was our last day of trekking and we walked to Bodmin, over more hard roads and over more coombs. When we reached Bodmin the Old Mancunians imposingly prepared our last dinner while others raided the town for Cornish cream. In the evening most of the camp visited the single cinema of the town.

The next day we packed up our kit in pouring rain and "trekked" to the station. From there we passed, in the train, through thickly-wooded hills and valleys and by red cliffs of South Devon to Plymouth and Exeter. Again the Severn Tunnel; again the West Country brought us to the smoke and dullness of Manchester and news about what Hitler has said, is saying, and will be saying.

The thanks of all the party will go to Messrs. Hodge and Lund for a most enjoyable trek in such interesting country.