

but was sensational (for me, I mean). It was rather a let down when a farmer told us that the local lads sometimes did it.

Remembering pictures of *Fünf Finger Spitze* in magnesian limestone, we suggest a suitable name for this one in carboniferous limestone would be 'Bawd Troed Ysbig' (The big toe spike).

A magnificent day was then brought to a happy conclusion when we met Muriel, and all saw the Everest film in Rhyl.

Next morning Peter woke me to point out that without leaving the bed I could see the whole range of the Carneddts from Tal y Fan to Llewelyn, followed by other items like The Very Tip of Snowdon, Moel Siabod, and other priceless matters. We set out four strong (five, including Judy the hound), took bus to Prestatyn, thence onto the shore, where the sight of two young girls bathing in the sea, without any appearance of hurry to get out, so shamed us that we went paddling. We thought that the brilliant sun which was shining on the sea would have warmed the water; but it hadn't.

At Gronant we took to footgear and the hills by divers lanes, roads, paths, sheep tracks, rabbit runs, and so forth, by way of Llanasa to Newmarket. As we left here the sunset of a lifetime was working up over the Carneddts. Its blaze of glory gently faded into a cloudless sky. It seemed strange still to see Arcturus, which I thought would be in hiding till next summer. Jupiter, Capella, Vega, Beetlejuice, and their companions studded a sky good enough for the Queen of Sheba.

The heavens got nearer and nearer to perfection till about 11.00; when Sirius was up we felt that life had nothing more to offer but bed; so we had that.

The exceptional clearness of the day and night seemed to threaten the worst possible meteorological atrocities; but when Monday had gone by without anything unusual, we began to breathe freely once more; and decided that here was another unexpected feature of a record autumn. Heather and ling grow freely on limestone in these parts. Those who speak with authority tell us that acid soil from the Arenig district was glacier borne and dropped promiscuously around, thus allowing plants like heather to become established.

And so back to tame doings at Knutsford, where the highlight of the year was the new bacon slicer at the Co-op.

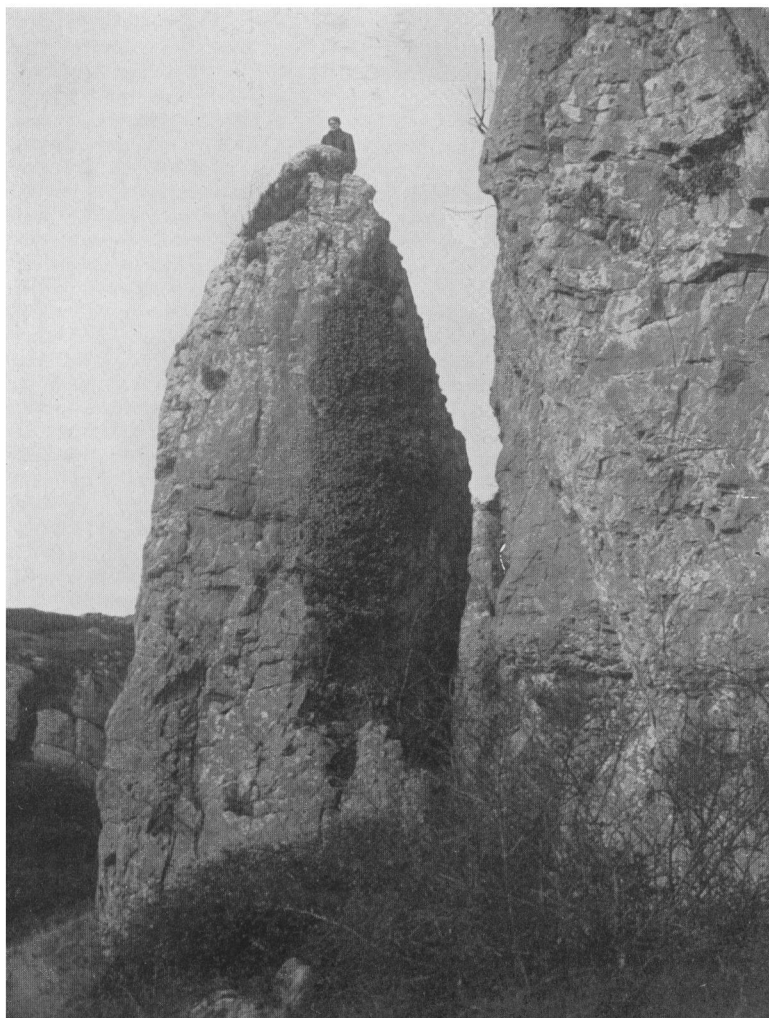
S. F. Forrester

Tan Hill Again

Neil Mather and I did not take kindly to our respective defeats on the first Tan Hill walk*. As soon as our wounds had healed we made a private pact to attempt the walk again next Whitsun (1953). In order that the survivor should have company if one of us again fell by the wayside we later co-opted Ted Dance.

Planning was simplified to the extent that we had the previous year's times to go on. There was still however the problem of putting the second night where it could do us the least mischief. On the pioneer occasion Ted Courtenay had consigned it in his plan to somewhere between Marsden and Edale, but in the event it had got quite out of hand and had insisted on transferring itself to a position between the White House and the George. Our own plan was to secure it firmly between Todmorden and Marsden and post-date last year's

* See 1953 *Journal*, page 121.



Bawd Troed Ysbig

Peter Wild

times by a couple of hours so that by leaving Todmorden at midnight we should reach Wessenden Lodge just not too early for normal breakfast. We sighed to think that this time there would be no Blake Lea open for us for 3 a.m. first breakfast during the second night.

It was not to be expected that last year's helpers would rally round to anything like the same noble extent, there being now no novelty in the venture and the Club's reputation not being in jeopardy. Yet when we broached the matter delicately to them we found that their enthusiasm was in no wise diminished and in the end we received from all of them—from Bill Pickstone (the *deus ex machina* of the first expedition), Roy Horsman, and Alfred Williamson with transport, and from Fred and Mrs Heardman with hospitality at Edale—every ounce of the devoted help and encouragement that was accorded to the pioneers. A similar response came from at least two of our last year's hostesses—Mrs Calverley of Grassington House and Mrs Archer of Mankinholes Youth Hostel, Todmorden—both of whom rapturously agreed to oblige us again by supplying refreshment and shelter at almost any hour we should want them.

I spent some time trying to evolve a more direct route between Hawes and Skipton; but much cogitation and scrutiny of maps only revealed more clearly the excellence of Ted Courtenay's bold original route down the chain of hills east of the Wharfe to Grassington and then to Skipton over Rylstone Fell.

As Whitsun again drew near I became anxious lest my two fleet-footed companions should find my senile pace too slow for them in the later stages of the walk, supposing I lasted that far. On hearing of this, Frank Williamson—one of last year's victors—immediately volunteered to join the party on the last day, fairly early, to keep me company and let Neil and Ted take a faster pace if they wanted to. By doing this, Frank, together with our transport helpers, forfeited all chance of a long week-end away in country more appropriate to a Whitsun holiday.

The event took place at the Trinity week-end, 29th-31st May. The President—John Wilding—came to see us off in person. I don't think he had any doubts as to the chances of Neil and Ted, but as we started off I saw (on glancing back) his eyes resting on my own fragile figure with something of the proud and apprehensive expression with which a fond parent might watch the departure of the son and heir to the wars, or to his first Marsden-Edale.

At a very early stage the expedition was nearly wrecked, as that of Ulysses nearly was, on the Siren's Rock. For our two hostesses at Hawes became so affected by the manly charms of my two companions that . . . well, it was all I could do to drag them forth—my companions, that is—to the more ascetic embraces of the night. Very ascetic those embraces were, too, for wind and rain chivied us whole-heartedly from midnight throughout the remaining hours of darkness. With the dawn came a brighter sky and a drier wind. The weather then remained fair and cool for the rest of the walk.

Successfully we evaded the (perhaps imaginary) guardians of Rylstone Fell by a patent route of my own which brings one up to the moor by way of a delicate belly-wriggle under the last, and very high, wall. Dodging off at the far end, in accordance with a route kindly supplied by Len Kiernan, was exciting too. Then came elevenses at Skipton in the shape of ice-cream and tea.

The heartening vision of Alfred Williamson, peering balefully northwards through his spectacles from the precincts of the Black Bull at Cowling, showed that our collaborators were in residence. Here Bill, Frank, and Alfred lunched with us on this the second day. Bill and Frank, after spending the afternoon escorting Alfred up Pendle Hill whilst the expedition proper traversed the

rather depressing moors bisected by the Widdop Valley, met us again for late supper at Todmorden. During this they divulged the heroic resolution, come to earlier by Roy Horsman, that we should have a comfortable place for first breakfast (as a substitute for the pioneer party's Blake Lea), and with replenished thermos flasks they and Roy met us with the cars on the road by the White House at 2.40 a.m. I could hardly recognise in the Roy who so sympathetically plied me with coffee the odious tyrant who had once decoyed me onto a severe variation on the North East Buttress of Ben Nevis.

Instead of going home, Bill and Frank then drove round to Wessenden Lodge, where they dozed in the car for an hour or so before sharing our second breakfast at 7.30. Frank now joined the walking party, as arranged. For the rest of this last day he seconded me assiduously with encouragement and comfits, not to mention sundry gate-openings in the later more cultivated stages of the walk. From Bleaklow onwards Neil and Ted were well in the van.

At Edale the enthusiastic welcome and refreshment of Fred and Mrs Heardman was supplemented by a new amenity in the shape of treatment from an expert physio-therapist—the future Mrs Bill Pickstone—whose skilful fingers soothed the aches of foot and knee inflicted by the past 101 miles.

The remaining score of miles went without incident—except that the advance party of Neil and Ted got lost near Combs, otherwise they might have improved on Vin Desmond's time of 54 hours 10 minutes instead of approximately equalling it. (Tan Hill dep. 4.15 p.m. 29th May; Cat and Fiddle arr. 10.25 p.m. 31st May.) My own arrival at the Cat, in the torchlit blackness of what was now our third night, was just half an hour later.

P. E. Brockbank

Hebden Bridge—Edale. 14th June.

I had often heard of the Hebden Bridge—Edale walk when listening to reminiscences of the great days of walking. These references were of the vague sort calculated to inspire rather than to frighten one, and they made me keen enough to choose this route when I was asked to lead a walk for the M.U.M.C.

Of course I soon heard the truth of the matter: the walk, I was told, could not be done on a Sunday at all, since the first train to Hebden Bridge allowed less than eleven hours for catching the last train from Edale, and the distance was nearly forty miles. Nevertheless, I decided to see if I could manage it. I was encouraged to find, on measuring the route, that the distance was less than I had been told, but this boost to my morale was offset by my missing the 8.10 at Victoria over a cup of tea. The next train was late, too, and as I walked down the platform at Hebden Bridge I heard ten o'clock strike.

I left the station to step into a steady drizzle. I was wearing pumps and my feet were sopping even before I had begun to strike up into the clouds that hid the valley sides. At first I was in no frame of mind to enjoy myself; but the horrible process of getting wet was soon over and the frustration of being tied to lanes that seemed always to lead the wrong way left me on the open hillside. There was seldom more than thirty or forty yards of wet grass and peat visible; I was in a world of my own and it seemed rather that the moors changed round me than that I passed over them. I was to see no other walker—indeed no-one at all out of doors—till I reached Edale.