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THE SCAWFELL ACCIDENT.

Monday, September 21st, 1903, was a black day for our Club. On that day, four of our most skilful climbers lost their lives in essaying the ascent of the North Face of Scawfell Pinnacle.

About 9:40 a.m., Messrs. R. W. Broadrick, A. E. W. Garrett, S. Ridsdale and H. L. Jupp, left Wastdale Hotel, intending to climb Scawfell Pinnacle from Deep Gill. A few minutes later, Messrs. Lucas and Marples followed in their steps, and about 10:5, Messrs. Webb, Slade and Williamson set out for Scawfell with the intention of prospecting one of the cracks running up the face of Scawfell to the West of Collier's Climb.

The first party disappeared over the top of Brown Tongue, and were seen no more by the others until 1:35, when they lunched with Messrs. Webb, Slade and Williamson near the foot of Collier's Climb. They had accomplished the ascent of the Pinnacle by the difficult route which starts immediately from the top of the second pitch in Deep Gill, and were all very much elated by their success. Mr. Slade commented upon the short time it had taken them to climb the Pinnacle, and they laughingly referred to their being in good condition. After lunch, Mr. Webb's party, quite unaware that the others intended further serious climbing, left them sitting on Rakes Progress, and climbed up the crack to the right of Collier's Climb, prospecting hereabouts for some time, and subsequently climbing down and up Collier's Chimney in Moss Gill. On the Broad Stand side of Scawfell a heavy wind was blowing from the S.E., but the face of Scawfell was in a dead calm, and they found the rocks warm, dry and in perfect condition for climbing. It was now about 5 o'clock, so they descended

Broad Stand to Mickledore, and here Mr. Webb announced his intention of going along Rakes Progress to the spot at which they had lunched, in order to get his rucksack.

Messrs. Slade and Williamson accompanied him, and whilst they were sitting eating chocolate and chatting, they heard a shout in the distance. It seemed to come from the direction of Pikes Crag, and thinking it might be from Messrs. Marples and Lucas in difficulties there, Mr. Slade went a little way along Rakes Progress to get a better view of the gullies. Seeing nothing, he looked down into Hollow Stones, thinking they might be there, as the shout had been very faint. In working further along Rakes Progress, Mr. Slade came in sight of Lord's Rake, and at the entrance of it saw four figures stretched out on the screes, and lying quite still. In a disconnected way he thought at first they were asleep, then what a peculiar place it was to fall asleep in, and then suddenly the awful reality flashed upon him. He ran along the Progress calling to the others, and found only Mr. Ridsdale still alive. His first words were, "I've been shouting for hours ; I'm afraid the others are all gone, but look after them, and don't mind me." As he feared, they were past human aid, and death had evidently visited them with merciful swiftness, for their bodies were already cold. At what time the accident happened we shall never know, for the two watches they had with them were still going, and Mr. Ridsdale was so badly wounded that he had lost all estimate of the time. It was now 5:40 by Mr. Broadrick's watch, and with commendable thoughtfulness, Messrs. Webb and Slade at once despatched Mr. Williamson (a much younger man than they) to Wastdale for help.

From that time until nearly ten o'clock they did all that lay in their power to alleviate the sufferings of poor Ridsdale, who was in great pain. It got dark before 7, and their lonely vigil, with the wind howling in the summit crags above their heads, their three friends lying around them, and poor Ridsdale moaning and but semi-conscious most of the time, must have been a dreadful experience.

Poor Ridsdale's heroic appeal to them to tend the others before him, and, afterwards, Messrs. Webb and Slade's manly efforts to help and sustain their dying comrade through the long hours of waiting, are two of the brightest spots in this terrible affair, and to them we must always look back with a feeling of pride and satisfaction.

In the meantime, Mr. Williamson had raced down to Wastdale in slightly over half an hour, arriving in such an exhausted state that he could hardly speak.

He soon faltered out his news, however, and ere long the valley was roused, and he, with Dr. Fearnhead of Lytham and Mr. Marples (who had returned from Scawfell sometime before, knowing nothing of the accident), was soon breasting the shoulder of Lingmell, and making for the scene of the disaster.

Dr. Norman Mead of Bradford soon followed, and after came Mr. Whiting with the hotel visitors, accompanied by dalesmen carrying two hurdles and a lantern.

It was now quite dark, and the going was necessarily slow, but shortly after nine the two medical men, guided by Messrs. Williamson and Marples, arrived at the foot of Lord's Rake and attended to Ridsdale's injuries. Soon after, a contingent of the main party arrived, but they had left their hurdle at the foot of the screes, thinking to carry Mr. Ridsdale down to it. This was found to be impracticable, however, so they had to return for it and bring it up. After a heavy struggle they did so, and in spite of the heavy wind that was blowing, and in spite of the bitter cold, willing hands were soon padding it with their coats. By about eleven o'clock a start was made for Wastdale. The screes leading down to Hollow Stones are steep and rough at the best of times, but with a heavy hurdle, bearing the weight of poor Ridsdale, and a lantern the only means of light, the journey was fatiguing and trying in the extreme.

After what seemed interminable stumbling and slipping down the screes to Hollow Stones, followed by a long weary grind down Brown Tongue, at the foot of which the wall had to be levelled, they at length came in sight of the hotel lights.

At this point they were much cheered and encouraged by the knowledge that their burden was still living, and that their arduous efforts seemed assured of a fitting reward. Great was their sorrow and disappointment an hour or so later, when they reached the hotel, to find they were too late, and that Mr. Ridsdale had expired before gaining its shelter.

The descent from Lord's Rake had occupied them from 11 p.m. till 3.30 a.m.—four hours and a half of strenuous labour and wearing suspense. I should like to take this opportunity of marking our appreciation of the efforts of all those who went out on to Scawfell that bitter dark night, to succour their unfortunate fellow-men, and in this I am sure that I but voice the heartfelt thanks and appreciation of our entire club.

After waiting for daylight, others set out and brought down the three remaining bodies, reaching the hotel about 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon.

Such is the plain account of this most terrible accident, and of how the visitors and dalesmen generously hurried to the aid of our four unfortunate club-mates.

After the inquest—the verdict of which was “accidental death”—Mr. Broadrick's body was conveyed to Windermere for burial, and Messrs. Ridsdale, Garrett and Jupp—companions on many a jolly climbing expedition—were laid to rest in the S.E. corner of the little church-yard at Wastdale, almost in sight of the magnificent face of rock which had afforded them so much sport and pleasure, and which at last cost them so dear.

Many causes have been produced to account for the accident. After a most careful sifting of them all in the light of the evidence that we have been able to glean, it cannot be denied that the real and only cause was the terrible and elementary one of the leader slipping (how or why we shall never know) and pulling down the rest of the party. So much was gathered from Mr. Ridsdale while they were awaiting the rescue party. This, and the fact that when they started the climb Mr. Broadrick was leading, and that he subsequently gave way to Mr. Garrett on the rope.

It seemed at one time that this was a mistake, and that when Mr. Broadrick could not manage it the party should have turned back, but Messrs. Marples and Lucas saw them change places practically at the foot of the climb. Also, Mr. Garrett was quite justified in taking over the lead, because Mr. Broadrick had cut his hands badly a few days before in a cycling accident. Further, Mr. Garrett was not only in most excellent training, but was a man of wide and long experience as regards rock-climbing.

The conditions were most suitable for climbing ; there was not a weak or inexperienced member in the party ; the face of rock upon which they were climbing was entirely sheltered from the wind ; all were in excellent training, and it is safe to say that all had done climbing of as great severity as they had accomplished when the slip occurred. It is quite true that three or two would have formed as strong a party as four for this particular climb, but in this case the inclusion of the third or fourth man would seem to have had no bearing on the actual slip made by the leader.

It has been mentioned to me that the party were unwise to attempt such a difficult climb after already having once ascended the Pinnacle. Most men, in my humble opinion, climb their best after an hour or two of fairly hard exercise. We have also the precedent of the only other party who have accomplished this face. It was after four o'clock when Messrs. Jones and Walker started up it, and they had both been climbing hard all day.

I have the assurance of Mr. H. C. Broadrick, that he and his brother had inspected the face beforehand, so we cannot urge that the ill-fated attempt was the outcome of a hasty decision.

I am glad that it is in my power to believe that this accident was an accident pure and simple, that it is questionable if any of the canons of our sport were violated, and that no blame can be rightly attached to our late friends.

A recent inspection from below and from above on a rope, leads me to the conclusion that they were not trying the

climb made by Messrs. Jones and Walker in 1898, but that they were essaying the ascent of the Pinnacle direct from its foot. Their scratches were obvious, leading up from the grass ledge at the base of the Pinnacle between Deep Gill and Steep Gill. They followed Mr. Jones' route only for about 50 feet. Here his climb trends to the left (looking up), and finishes at a point about 60 feet below the Slingsby Chimney, on the ordinary route up the Pinnacle from Steep Gill. Mr. Broadrick knew of the existence of a route up the "nose" of the Pinnacle (*vide* Jones' "Rock Climbing," 2nd edition, page 87), and I know that he was anxious to find a suitable party with which to try it.

About 50 feet below Hopkinson's Cairn, and about 250 feet above the entrance to Lord's Rake, is a long ledge, fairly wide at the right hand extremity, and narrowing away to nothing as it approaches the crack at the foot of the Slingsby Chimney. This ledge was scored with new nail marks, and, as all the previous recent parties on this face have climbed in stockinged feet, it is safe to assume that, as the scratches suddenly ceased here, it was from this point the party fell. At the right hand end of the ledge the rock was much scratched, and it looked as though an attempt had been made to climb straight up from here.

Then the scratches (not so numerous, and as though made by one man) led along the ledge to where it got narrower, as though the party had given up the direct ascent and were attempting to join the crack below the Slingsby Chimney. The scratches could be traced to within 25 feet of the crack (and safety) when they suddenly ceased. From this ledge it would have been an easy matter for one of them to have climbed down on the rope to the start, and so round to the foot of the Slingsby Chimney, where he could have helped the others with the rope from above. Probably they were not *in extremis*, however, and it is most likely that, out there on one of our finest rock faces, with all the conditions most favourable to the accomplishment of a new ascent, the thought of disaster was far from them, and that it came with a suddenness that left them no time in which to realize it.

Before leaving the sad story of this tragedy and the consideration of its causes, and turning to other matters, it may be as well to mention that Mr. Broadrick's boots were missing when the party was found. It cannot be inferred, without doubt, from this that he was climbing in his stockinged feet. It is possible, even probable, that they came off as he fell, as he was not partial to climbing without his boots. His position as second man on the rope would hardly lead him to try the experiment, as it would rather diminish his power of holding the leader than otherwise.

Such is a brief review of the leading points that have been ventilated as causes conducive to the accident.

It would seem that our sport was such an integral part of our late members' lives, that an account of their last climb would be incomplete without some further reference to their previous climbing records and modes of life.

Wilfred Broadrick was a fine type of all that an Englishman should be. Topping six feet in height, he was broad, muscular and well-built in proportion. Somewhat quiet and reserved with those he did not know intimately, his was one of those strong personalities that leave a lasting impression on those with whom they come in contact. Born in 1872, he was educated at Haileybury and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a 2nd class in the Moral Science Tripos of 1894. Having studied modern languages in both France and Germany, he returned to England, and occupied a post as assistant-master at Bedford Grammar School. From there he went to Fettes College, Edinburgh, and was a master there at the time of his death.

While at Cambridge he was a distinguished oar, and was very well known in musical circles. He was President of the University Musical Society, took a leading interest in its welfare, and, according to Mr. Gerard F. Cobb, "sang charmingly."

Always fond of athletics, he ultimately took to fell-walking and climbing, almost to the entire exclusion of other sports. He was a member of the Alpine and Yorkshire Ramblers

Clubs, and was keenly enthusiastic about all matters pertaining to the mountains.

He did much good climbing in Switzerland, and with Mr. A. E. Field, in 1902, made the first traverse of the Aiguilles sans Nom and Verte in one day—one of the finest expeditions ever accomplished in the Mont Blanc district. He also, amongst other things that year, climbed the Ecrins (traverse), Meije (traverse), Southern Aiguille d'Arves, Col and Pic du Clot des Cavales, Pic d'Olan, Aiguille du Plat (traverse) and the Dent du Requin.

His great physical strength and marvellous staying powers rendered him a first-class man in the Alps, while his athletic training and great knack as a rock-climber enabled him to undertake, with safety, rock-climbs that most of us are content to read about.

He had climbed almost all our Cumberland climbs, and, to his credit stand some of our most difficult first ascents—notably, two of the most formidable of the Dow Crag Gullies. The mountaineering feat he was proudest of, however, was his huge fell-walk.

Starting at Rosthwaite he climbed in the following order Great Gable, The Pillar, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw, returning to Rosthwaite 28 minutes inside the 24 hours. And this in spite of being lost for more than an hour in the mist and darkness of Skiddaw Forest! With this, however, he was not satisfied, and the last time I saw him, a few days before he went to Wastdale for the last time, he told me he would not rest until he had done the same walk within 21 hours.

And such were his powers on a fell-side, that, had he been spared, I feel convinced he would have succeeded.

As a climber and as a man he will be long and deeply regretted, not only by those who had the privilege of his friendship, but also by those who admire a manly man, and to whom his powers as a climber and his charming personality were but hearsay.

Messrs. A. E. W. Garrett, S. Ridsdale and H. L. Jupp had never climbed in Switzerland, but were rock specialists of a very high order. They, with Mr. Broadrick, were types of Englishmen that we as a club were proud of, and with him they shared a love of the mountains that was truly a "ruling passion."

Mr. Garrett started serious climbing so long since as June, 1895. On a walking tour in North Wales he, with Mr. J. V. Brett, met the late Mr. O. G. Jones at Capel Curig, and were so infected by his enthusiasm that they accepted his friendly offer to take them for a climb. They climbed the North Gully on Tryfaen, descending by the South Gully, and enjoyed themselves immensely. Little did that merry party dream, that ere ten years had elapsed, the mountains would have claimed two of their number, or that these two would meet their fate in such a peculiarly similar manner.

The following year found Mr. Garrett at Wastdale Head, accompanied by Messrs. Jupp and Brett, and since that time these three friends have climbed together, spending a part of all their holidays amongst the fells of Cumberland and North Wales, and gaining such an all-round knowledge of the rocks and rock-climbing as is equalled by very few of our members. In perusing a list of their climbs, one is struck by the correctness of their methods, and by the fact that in the early days they chose only those climbs that were suitable for beginners, working up later, as they gained experience, to the more difficult courses. How unlike some of the present day visitors to Wastdale, who, on arriving there for the first time, ask for the most difficult and dangerous climb, and straightway go and climb it! It is a strange irony of fate that these latter men should go "Scot free," and our four late club-mates—skilful, careful and modest—should be chosen.

Probably the best climb they did together was the Slanting Gully on Lliwedd, in June, 1902. Mark the date. Not until they had been climbing for seven years did they try it. This they made the third ascent of, Mr. Jupp leading. In a letter to my brother at the time, he said that it was due to Mr.

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THE CHURCH, WASTDALE.
From a drawing by C. E. Ross

Garrett's courtesy that he had had the honour, and that Mr. Garrett could have led up it comfortably. Such was the generous spirit that marked their intercourse.

Mr. Ridsdale joined the party some four years ago, but what he lacked in experience he made up for by extra athleticism.

He was above the average in most sports, but especially excelled as a swimmer and lacrosse player. Indeed, as a lacrosse player he was quite famous, and played for the West London Club.

He finished his education with Mr. Garrett, at Ouchy, in Switzerland, and it is more than likely that their first love of the mountains was inspired by the sight of the Dent du Midi and the serrated peaks which form the back-ground of the beautiful Lake of Geneva.

Mr. Jupp was educated at the Whitgift Grammar School, and took a leading part in the Old Boys' Gym. and Cricket Club.

I cannot say more in honour of their memories than their old friend Brett says in a letter to me: "This thing I can say for them, and surely it embraces all, that no man could have wished for better friends or truer comrades than these."

ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM.