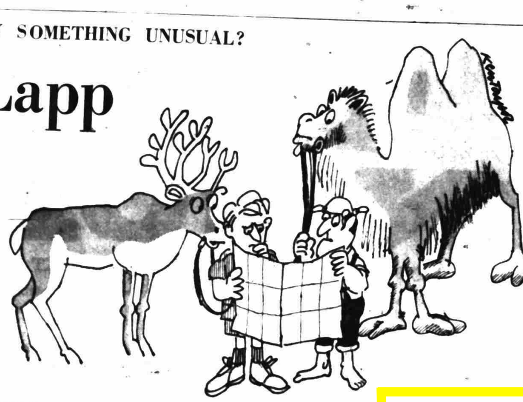
NEXT YEAR WHY NOT TRY SOMETHING UNUSUAL?

Live like a Lapp or catch a coach to Khatmandu



says ANGUS McGILL

MR. KENNETH FITZSIMONS and Mr. Herbert Sylge wish it to be known that they are once again organising an expedition to Lapland.

Those considering a holiday in April should bear this in mind. "Lapland," says Mr. FitzSimons, persuasively, "has absolutely nothing."

Mr. FitzSimons and Mr. Sylge belong to a new breed of tour operators—or perhaps it is the original breed reborn. They are known as overlanders. To the overlander the journey is all. To travel adventurously is better than to arrive—indeed some of them tell you bluntly that arrival is not guaranteed!

Let other travel agents promise luxury, relaxation an dall mod. cons. Promises made by overlanders stop just short of blood, sweat and tears.

But some of the holidays that result are extraordinary. Consider, for example, this trip to Lapland.

The idea is to join the annual migration of the reindeer herds from their winter pastures to the summer grazing grounds in Finland, a natural phenomenon every bit as remarkable as the annual migration of the urban Briton from his cold, grey homeland to his summer grazing grounds on the Costa Brava.

BILLET

Minitrek, the outfit run by Sylge and FitzSimons, takes 10 people at the most and billets them on the Lapp families that follow the reindeer herds.

These 10 live, eat and sleep with the families and it is as well if you do not confuse Lapps with Eskimos.

It is the Eskimo who politely offers his wife to guests. The Lapp does not.

Lapp reindeer farmers are dour and silent. After a month with them you are likely to be dour and silent, too. They don't much want you around but as you are there they expect you to do a full share of the day's work, rounding up reindeer, striking tents, loading sledges. And they charge Minitrek £50 a week per person for the pleasure of your company. No simple peasants they!

The landscape is barren beyond belief, the cold is intense and the reindeer are as morose as the Lapps and with good reason. Every spring flies lay eggs under their skin, which is unpleasant. In the summer the eggs hatch out, which is worse.

SAHARA

In the winter they suffer extreme privations of hunger and cold and in the spring their antlers fall off. Then the flies start biting again.

It is not, I must confess, my kind of holiday. But for 10 people somewhere it will be a remarkable experience.

Minitrek says it loses money on Lapland. Still, it recoups on its bread and butter expeditions to Turkey and Russia and places like that. It also does well with its major expeditions to the Sahara.

One such costs £384 a head and involves a double crossing of the world's greatest desert by Land-Rover and camel. You reach remote areas that few Europeans have seen and expeditions to even remoter parts are now being planned.

In February, for instance there will be one to the sand sea north of Germa to visit the worm eaters. This is a tribe of Negroes who live several days' camel march into the dunes. Hardly anyone has ever seen the worm eaters. I hope they'll be pleased to see you.

Safari, a company based in Brighton, also specialises in expeditions to North Africa. Its two founders, both in their early twenties, were clearly born for the travel business. One is called David Northeast, the other Edwin Brazil.

"We do not run luxury coach trips," declares their brochure. "Our safaris can be tough . . ."

And, of a six-week, 10,000-mile journey by desert truck, Land-Rover and mini-bus that leaves on November 1: "We do not try to hide the fact that it will be a hard journey, often hot, dusty and uncomfortable . . ."

Safari knows its market. Hot, dusty and uncomfortable—these are hard selling words to the overlander.

Still, at least Safari promises to get you there and bring you safely back. Encounter Overland doesn't even do that.

TOUGH

The tough, young company, based in Shefford, Bedfordshire, is now recruiting travellers for an attempt to drive by truck from London to Capetown at the end of January.

There are some overland tour operators who say this journey can't be done any more. Too many frontiers are now closed in Africa. But Anthony Lindsay Jones, of Encounter Overland, sounds confident enough.

"We warn everyone that we haven't done this trip before," he says. "Nearly half the route is unknown to us. We may not get through. But it has been done in recent months and I'm sure we can do it."

The proposed route will take the expedition over the Atlas Mountains, across the Sahara, through Nigeria, the Cameroons, Chad, the Central African Republic, across what was the Belgian Congo into Zambia. Then into Rhodesia and at last to South Africa.

It is a staggering journey—but then Lindsay Jones goes in for staggering journeys. He sends regular expeditions out to India and Nepal — 10 weeks tough travelling in 1½-ton trucks for £178 a head. (The African trip costs £248 each).

And for another £128 Lindsay Jones will soon be offering an eight-week extension into South-East Asia—Malaya, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, then back down the Malayan peninsular to Singapore.

You end up in Singapore, too, if you go with Penn Overland. Here you travel in greater comfort by air conditioned coach and stay at hotels en route. (It's tents and sleeping bags all the way with Encounter Overland.)

WARS

The Penn tour costs £181. This gets you to Katmandu. Thai International will then fly you the rest of the way to Singapore at extra cost—or I suppose the bus will take you back to London again for another £181.

These are the sort of great journeys men made before jet airliners shrunk the world and they are getting more popular every year.

Every year, too, new journeys are added and the expedition operators are now casting longing eyes on South America. They mean to be driving their Land-Rovers and trucks across the Andes before they are much older.

Meanwhile they keep a sharp eye on the little wars that close frontiers, on the progress of bandits in Afghanistan and religious fanatics in Persia. Even the toughest overlander is prepared to make a small detour to avoid a bandit.

I will be making quite a wide detour to avoid bandits in Afghanistan next year. I'm going to Capri.

Scotch all the rubbish about the Highlands

WHO is kidding whom? I think Eric Forster is kidding the readers that he has been to the Highlands of Scotland. He must be easily kidded if he believed that all the Scots wore kilts and the shepherds play bagpipes all day.

I think he has mistaken the suburbs of Glasgow for the Highlands. I would say that the Highlands of Scotland are in the top ten as far as scenery goes, if not the No. 1 spot.

To compare them with West Durham is utter rubbish. I have been living in the North of England for the past four years and have never seen any scenery to compare with the Highlands.

As for not speaking correctly would you say that the Geordies have command of the Queen's English?

I am sure thousands of people South of the border will agree with me when I rate the Scots as one of the world's friendliest people. — JOHN McLEOD, Beech Street, Jarrow.

Sour grapes

I MUST protest about Eric Forster's article on the Highlands of Scotland. It is all sour grapes. Like many Englishmen, he is envious of the vast areas of magnificent, unspoilt scenery to be found over the Border, scenery that is lacking in England, a country that is rapidly becoming one vast industrial estate.

Mr. Forster is childish in his comparison of West Durham with the Highlands. As for the Derwent reservoir, this is not a natural stretch of water but man made, like so many of the so-called attractions of the North-East.

I fancy Mr. Forster should be appointed chairman of the North-East Tourist Association, where he could sing his praises.

I am sure he could "con" a lot of unsuspecting holiday-makers to Tyneside, where they could perhaps enjoy walks in Jesmond Dene, by the banks of the fragrant Ouseburn, or have a trip down the aromatic Tyne (gas masks provided), or a day out in beautiful Blyth, followed by a secure night in a caravan by the banks of the River Wansbeck.

Mr. Forster wants to have a good look around his own door-

LETTERS

step before he starts criticising. The North-East is no paradise. —HOMESICK SCOT.

Two cinemas

THE views of P. E. Jones and his comments on our appeal for subsidies are to be respected, as everybody is entitled to their own point of view—but has he really done his homework?

The facts are that during the 18 months of our existence we have catered for a large part of the community and not, as he puts it, for the specialised few. As well as a tribute to Newcastle United Football Club (in conjunction with the Variety Club of Great Britain) we have shown programmes on railways, local history, as well as films not normally shown in a commercial cinema. Also, following the success of our schools programme we have put forward to all the educational authorities in the North-East a scheme to turn one of our theatres, four afternoons a week, into a classroom, and on film will be subjects which will benefit the pupils. This has also been brought to the attention of the Minister of Education for his support.

The chairman of our advisory committee has also connections with the Tyneside Film Society so it is obvious that we welcome and work with such societies but it must be obvious that such an honorary society is confined to its members only and restricted to the number of performances they give, whereas we are open 364 days a year, which no film society, however enthusiastic could manage.

Surely Mr. Jones is wrong when he suggests that such film societies could give the same services as our two cinemas.—R. G. CAMPBELL, General Manager, Tyneside Film Theatre.

Exhausted

I EXPECT it is a decision by male shop managers that customer chairs have disappeared from shop floors.

By the time we have tramped round the shops with long waits for service, heavy bags to carry, crowds to contend with and queues for buses, we arrive home exhausted.

A few chairs would be a godsend. Let us have them back.—LEG WEARY, Chester-le-Street.

PLEA TO FIRMS TO EMPLOY DISABLED

MORE than 650 Tyneside firms are to be urged to consider employing disabled workers, in a bid to cut down the high level of unemployment among registered disabled people.

Letters are being sent to firms in Gateshead, Felling, Birtley, Prudhoe, Washington and Blaydon by Mr. F. A. Kelly, chairman of the Gateshead Disablement Advisory Committee.

Mr. Kelly points out that this year marks the 25th anniversary of the Disabled Persons Employment Act, which laid down that employers with 20 or more workers shoud employ a quota of at least three per cent registered disabled people.

Facilities were also provided to help people, handicapped by injury or deformity, to return to work.

Twice as high

"In spite of all these efforts, the level of unemployment among registered disabled persons remains twice as high as that for their more fortunate able-bodied fellows."

He adds: "I am making this personal plea to you to consider employing even one more disabled worker.

"Given the opportunity, they can be good workers, and although in some cases special arrangements or adaptations have to be made to facilitate their employment, the effort is worthwhile and rewarding."

He's been at university for 20 years

MR. HARRY SMITH knows just how much beer really is consumed by Newcastle University students in their union—as well as a lot of other things—because he has been accountant-steward of the Union Society for the past 20 years.

But on Tuesday he retires and is "sad to make the break with university life.

"Although beer consumption has increased, I wouldn't say students drink more heavily, for over the past 20 years student population has increased from about 2,400 to more than 5,500.

Mr. Smith has helped to organise almost every type of party or meeting for the 90 student organisations in the university. And he has a very high opinion of the Newcastle students' attitudes—"They tend to set fashion trends and they can often be seen emulated outside the university."

Retirement will be spent cultivating the large garden of his cottage at Dyke Neuk.

THE NEW BOOKS

Dr. Peter's level of incompetence

"The Mask Behind the Mask: A life of Peter Sellars," by Peter Evans (Leslie Frewin, 30s.).—Another of those "what-makes-the-great-star-tick?" books. A fairly penetrating study of Sellars's life: his rise from "Goon Show" character to superstar; the break-up of his first marriage; his infatuations; his second marriage to Swedish actress Britt Ekland; and his near-death in 1964.

SUREFIRE recipe for a best-seller: take a handful of observations of human behaviour, shape into an impressive-looking dogma, ad da scattering of implausible case-histories and cover with a sauce of pseudo-scientific jargon.

Stephen Potter did it first and most successfully, with his successive "discoveries" of gamesmanship, lifemanship and one-upmanship. His later imitators have won equal fame for mere variations on the theme, and less skilfully performed at that.

Perhaps the best-known of them is C. Northcote Parkinson, who on the strength of one moderately witty observation ("Work expands to fill the available time") has achieved veneration as an oracle on all things political, from economics to immigration.

Grain of truth

After Potter and Parkinson comes Peter—Dr. Laurence J. Peter, a Canadian-born educationist whose book, "The Peter Principle," was a best-seller in America and has now been published in this country (price 30s.) by Souvenir Press.

The Peter Principle, to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, states: "In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence."

The supporting argument can be stated almost as briefly. It is that, whatever the occupation, so long as there is a system of promotion, the tendency will be for an employee to move upwards from a level at which he is competent to one at which he is incompetent.

Since he will then cease to be promoted, it follows, say Dr. Peter and his co-author, Raymond Hull, that the inevitable outcome is incompetence at all levels.

There is an undeniable grain of truth in this—enough, perhaps, to produce some such small pearl as an amusingly satirical article in Punch.

As material for a full-length book, however, it has to be padded out with a mixture of unconvincing corollaries and case histories, too many of which fail to survive the voyage across the Atlantic, anyway.

Mention of Punch does remind me that the book has one saving grace—its illustrations which are period cartoons from Punch, shorn of their original captions but marrying felicitously with the contemporary text.

Geoff Whitten.

A 'Few' statistics

IN all the flood of new books and re-publications timed to coincide with the 39th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, but more especially, perhaps, with the release of the epic film, there is no more remarkable work than "Battle Over Britain."

This book by Francis K. Mason is published at 84s. by McWhirter Twins Ltd., of 24 Upper Brook Street, London, W.1., and it is no surprise that the author includes in his acknowledgements words of gratitude for "the particular genius of Norris and Ross McWhirter," a genius that has had its best-known result in such publications as "The Guinness Book of Records."

Into its 600-odd beautifully printed pages "Battle Over Britain" packs every conceivable fact, statistic and analysis about the dramatic events of those few weeks in the late summer of 1940.

Every raid, big and small, is described; every aircraft on either side shot down or damaged is listed with full details; every aircrew member who made one or more operational sorties during the Battle—more than 3,000 names on the Allied side alone—has an entry with relevant details; all known Luftwaffe participants are also listed.

There is even, in the appendix, a table to show which British public schools supplied the most Battle of Britain aircrew (Eton, with 22, tops the list).

Facts and statistics aside, this is a scholarly yet eminently readable book. And top marks for the illustrations, too.

paperbacks

"The Thinking Reed," by Rebecca West (Pan, 8s.).—Isabelle is young, beautiful and rich. She lives in the glittering world of high society. Isabelle has everything that women dream of—but when it comes to love, she is prey to conflicting desires. An enthralling study of the heart and mind of a woman.

"The Sour Lemon Score," by Richard Stark (Coronet, 3s. 6d.). — Another story about Parker, that ultimate in anti-heroes, the private eye who is in fact an out-and-out crook. Good racy stuff by an author who really seems to get inside the criminal mind.

TANTALISER

The Loch Ness Monsters

FOR this little problem may all Scottish readers forgive me, especially Nessie!

The hunt for the monster has never reached such heights and it has stirred so much interest that I was intrigued to the point of looking up some old records of the sightings.

The earliest I could find was that of Angus McTweedie, who reported having seen four monsters with no right eyes. Miss Burns, the landlady at a local pub, said Angus was drunk again; she had seen them quite clearly, there had been four, but they were without left eyes.

However, there does seem to be some confusion as to dates and the books record eight monsters sighted.

A year or so later a crofter reported that he had seen four monsters who all had right eyes and were green in colour. This report brought Prof. Smith, the famous zoologist, up to see for himself: these people are not trained to observe scientifically, he said; there are four monsters and they have no eyes and are dark blue in colour.

His colleague, Prof. Brown, disagreed: "I saw four monsters and they had two eyes like anyone else."

Three years later, Jock McTosh, the oldest local inhabitant, said quite firmly: "four, with left eyes."

Then, of course, there is little Susan Bonnie, who said she had seen one with a long tail.

Well, assuming all these worthy people were right, the tally now reads 25 monsters sighted. It was a wee while before that was put right, and the number reduced to the minimum possibilities.

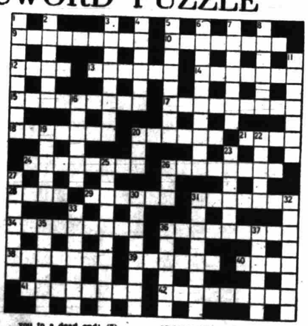
Can you work it out?—T. H. CLARKE.

Solution next Saturday.

The Schloss Adler Problem (Solution)

● There was a clue. Do you remember the question: Can you find WHICH IS THE RIGHT ROUTE? Starting at W, to H, to I, to C, to H, to I, to S, and so on. Easy, isn't it.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

9 No petrol's needed, since it runs on snow (3-6)
10 Weakened, but immune from toothache? (8)
12 Dash of peel and spice! (4)
13 The growth of the Belgian capital (6)
14 The high spirits of a relative who has lost his head? (7)
15 Possibly indict Eva—and justify it? (9)
17 With no equal—and no lighter (9)
18 Make good or steer, perhaps (7)
20 In industry, it comes as a blow (6)
21 Has one the heart to throw it away? (4)
24 A fighting description of the church (8)
26 A small portion of something soft? (8)
28 Not a well behaved fellow in the garden (4)
29 Unable to distinguish between good and bad? (6)
31 I take to crime as a Manxman, perhaps (7)
34 Getting it to cheer can never be practical (9)
36 Made plans that actually went forward? (9)
38 Able to thank you twice for the musical performance! (7)
39 He may be revealed by his black eyes (6)
40 The road from "12 Across" (4)
41 The city has some prices for perfumes (8)
42 Caused to be serviceable? (9)

DOWN

1 Seeing what's going on, he may look after the old boys (8)
2 Get on a bit, perhaps (6)
3 Emil's cap may be put in the wrong hands (8)
4 Select nothing more than what may have been picked (6)
5 It's perhaps better to refuse to serve an ugly one (8)
6 Does he take it upon himself do the job? (10)
7 Failing to do this might bring you to a dead end! (7)
8 Possibly the desire to live (6)
11 A sweet flavour (7)
16 Such remarks can hit one hard (6)
19 A certain amount of "22" (5)
20 A fixed taxi! (3)
22 Nearly cooked and lubricated (5)
23 Finish the last note (6)
25 It could get one in free of charge (10)
26 A friendly type from the big house (3)
27 Look after a letter to a professional detective? (7)
30 To be so is rash, so don't care so much! (8)
31 Make yourself scarce! (5, 3)
32 Thought it over again and got it back? (8)
33 Made to look smart or slovenly (7)
35 He sounds as if he means business (6)
36 He may be after fruit and flowers (6)
37 It's not in the least bit funny (6)

Solution on Monday

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1, Pond. 4, Cracks. 8, Nil. 10, Chip. 13, Gardener. 14, Killing. 15, B-all-et. 17, Octagonal. 21, Hat. 22, Ma-b. 23, Roc. 26, Separated. 27, Afghan (hound). 28, Decimal. 32, Shell out. 34, Dire. 35, Och. 36, Re-now-n. 37, Lent.

DOWN: 1, Puck. 2, (finger) Nail. 3, Sign. 5, Radial. 6, Can. 7, Sprite. 9, Lag. 11, H-it-ch. 12, Pleat. 15, B-A-B-A. 16, Loot. 18, Ta-N-G. 19, Omen. 20, Nap. 22, Rap-id. 24, Cedar. 25, Hawser. 26, S-all-ow. 28, Duo. 29, Etch. 30, Mike. 31, Left. 33, E'en.

YOUR STARS by Katina

Here is my forecast for Monday:

CAPRICORN (Dec. 21-Jan. 19).—Equally good day for starting up anything new in business or reviving anything which has been flagging; a time when you can cash in on the past. A day which favours lovers.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).—Exercise your brain to its fullest extent today; good time for hatching new ideas, for grappling with theoretical matters; for anything academic. Right day for communicating with people abroad.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).—The morning is the time to do business, especially if you are doing it by word of mouth; discussion on terms will be amicable then. Other than this a day for routine work.

ARIES (March 21-April 20).—Tackle the heavier tasks on your agenda today, as you will find them easier to perform than expected. Specially good day for buying things for yourself or for the home. Afternoon best time for business calls.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20).—You start the working week in a cool and collected way and find it all the easier because of this to concentrate on essentials. Someone who works alongside you passes on information which cheers you a lot this afternoon. Slow-moving romance gets ahead a little faster now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20).—Things you are doing on the side will probably produce more results now than major concerns. But this is also a good day for starting in on activities which you have been holding back on. Good day for making up your mind about matters to do with romance.

CANCER (June 21-July 21).—Readers whose working activities are connected with the building, catering or domestic-consumer trades and industries fare specially well today; so do those acting as go-betweens and all who are trying to get group activities in motion.

LEO (July 22-Aug. 21). — You will be able to strengthen your hand in dealings with those in authority today; people who have been difficult to contact become accessible now, too. Your morning mail is an exceptionally heavy one.

VIRGO (Aug. 22-Sept. 21).—A day when you feel ready and able to take on responsibilities which might normally daunt you; specially good for long-range planning. Those who have interests abroad can expect good news about them.

LIBRA (Sept. 22-Oct. 22).—Specially busy start to the working week; you will be dabbling with quite a variety of different interests today for the first time. Very suspicious day for self-projection.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21).—A day when mental effort counts more than manual toil; good for research purposes, for confidential talks, for behind-the-scenes planning. On the personal side, a friend does much for you now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 20).—Day when it pays you to take extra time in order to do jobs especially thoroughly; very good time for rectifying past mistakes in work, too. You will be delighted to find that something you expect to be a tedious duty turns out to be a pleasure.

MONDAY'S BIRTHDAYS.—During the next 12 months you will feel especially secure in all that you do, and you will get especially substantial rewards for your efforts. It will be a crowded year, and you will travel a good deal more than usual; there will be gains through family sources in addition to earnings, and partnerships, old or new, fare well.

Children's crossword answers

ACROSS: 1, School; 5, Oven; 8, Furniture; 10, Veil; 11, Spider. DOWN: 2, Cheque; 3, Lobster; 4, Ink; 6, Sandals; 7, Cradle; 9, Eve.

BUNION

FREDDY

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