

# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Australian Rock .. .. JOHN BÉCHERVAISE	4
The Second Ascent of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey .. BERNARD PIERRE	10
The Coast of Pembrokeshire.. .. A. W. ANDREWS	18
Two Climbs from the Schönbühl .. P. W. W. NOCK	28
Some Snow Climbs .. .. G. F. PEAKER	35
Experience .. .. P. R. J. HARDING	43
Crime in the Coire .. .. J. N. MILLS	47
The Outlying Crags of Wales .. .. E. C. PYATT	51
Opening of the R. W. Lloyd Hut .. ..	78
Editorial Notes .. ..	79
In Memoriam ' .. ..	81
New Climbs and Notes .. .. P. R. J. HARDING	93
Reviews.. ..	101
Officers of the Club .. ..	112

CIMON DELLA PALA

*W. Strath*

THE  
CLIMBERS' CLUB  
JOURNAL

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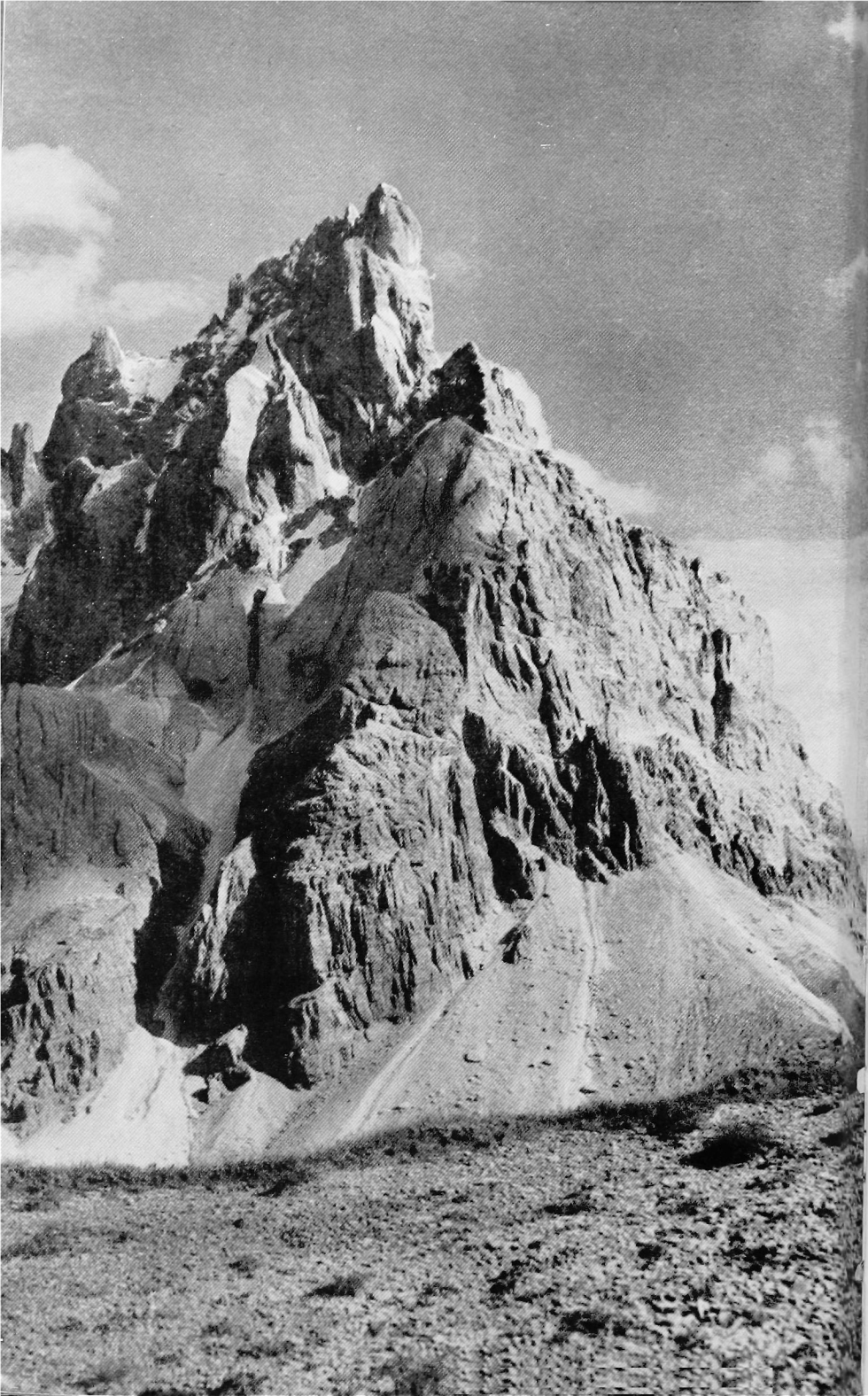
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F. H. KEENLYSIDE

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# AUSTRALIAN ROCK

JOHN BÉCHERVAISE

**B**Y no stretch of imagination could Australia, as a whole, be described as a mountainous land. From any planetary perspective which might reveal the continent in map-like proportions, the folds and creases must be diminished to thin coastal smudges, isolated inland scars, but slightly disturbing the seemingly infinite plain. Such is the truth and fiction revealed by the ordinary atlas and most of us, though quite capable of assessing geographical fact, continue to be swayed by the comparisons that exist between the charts of Britain and Australia—or anywhere else—both contained by the same-sized atlas leaf, and probably indelibly impressed in childhood.

A purposive study of larger scale maps will, of course, correct many general misconceptions. It will reveal that the major Australian mountain chain is rather longer than the Himalaya, that the highest peak, Kosciusko, rises a little more than 7,000 feet ; that in Tasmania, almost the size of Ireland, one is seldom out of sight of mountains higher than Ben Nevis or Scafell. Quite accurately, the more geographically minded will probably infer, from considerations of latitude and altitude, that the winter snows cover areas of several thousand square miles. But, still, there are no maps and surprisingly little description, which can satisfy the topographical demands of the mountaineer. The reason for this is not difficult to discover. From a mountaineering point of view, in the European sense, the greater part of the continent is *terra incognita* and, although more than one climbing club exists in the universities, the sport is in its infancy.

On the ancient weathered massifs of the southern Australian Alps, flanked by endless miles of valleys and ridges bearing primordial forest, ski-ing in winter is a most popular pastime. Many lonely plateaux are regularly traversed by touring skiers, camping in tents or the summer huts of the cattlemen who possess grazing rights. Hospices and chalets, such as exist on Mt. Buffalo and Mt. Hotham, form centres for winter sports, whilst the Victorian Ski Club has an ambitious plan for con-



structing a snow "village" on the summit ridge of the magnificent Mt. Buller.

It has been my fortune to test, during the last four years, the rock-climbing in selected places over half the continent. Its quality leaves little to be desired but the centres are, at present, almost incredibly remote and difficult of access. It is necessary to traverse very imperfectly mapped terrain, often to spend weeks on a journey and to carry supplies in a variety of somewhat arduous ways. The variations of topography, over 2,000 miles, present extraordinary contrasts and call for expeditions of quite specialized organisation. Nevertheless, each year tracks are pushed farther and the time will come when Australia's finest mountains will be readily accessible.

After much planning, in September last, I was able to visit the huge red "tors" of the central desert. This involved, as preliminaries, 1,500 miles of road and rail before setting out westwards across the red opalescent plains of the Centre. From the rail-halt at Finke, 600 miles, mainly beyond roads of any kind, was covered in a four-wheel drive "blitz" truck. There had been no rain for seven months; the natural pools which had accumulated in shaded clefts of Ayers Rock, one of the most impressive aggregations in the world, comprised the only reliable water in an area as large as Southern England. Equipped with radio, we maintained contact with Alice Springs, the nearest township, 250 miles away. On a previous attempt, after driving two "blitz" vehicles all the way from Melbourne, spending weeks *en route*, my party had been hopelessly bogged down in phenomenal tropical rains only 50 miles from our objective. Such are the climatic contrasts of Australia!

Ayers Rock, "without seam or cleavage," rises as a gigantic russet boulder of six miles perimeter and 1,100 feet high, from an infinite plain of red sand and the remarkably interesting inland flora that inhabits it. The cliffs, of wind-polished arkose grit, are steep and smooth on all sides. Belays are unknown. There is only one line of attack that does not contain suicidal elements. Here only the continuous exposure and the impossibility of checking a slip give the climb its outstanding character. The summit view is superb, with 10,000 square miles of colourful desert one's reward. Twenty miles away, seeming a stone's throw, rise the incredible domes of Mount

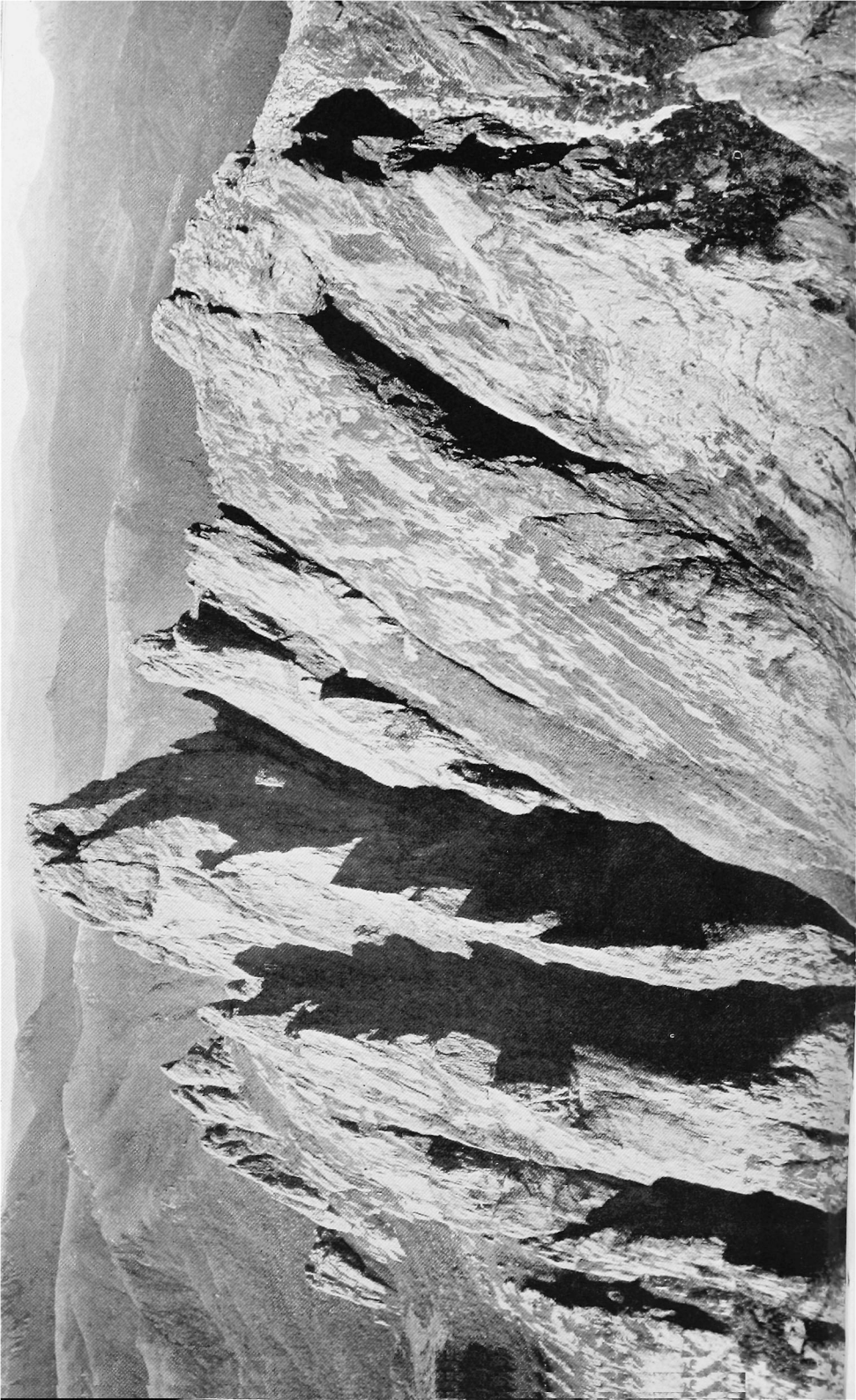
Olga. Of more obviously conglomerate formation, this confused and puzzling group juts 1,500 feet above the high desert and occupies 25 square miles. Only twice has the highest point been reached up the only line of approach, another featureless wall. Both have been solo climbs and both were regretted during certain minutes of the operation ; however, in retrospect, as always, these things are forgotten.

Mt. Conner, 70 miles to the east, presents a uniformly fine cliff, averaging 500 feet above a scree of equal height, for a distance of several miles. The quartzite of this splendid *mesa* permits innumerable climbs employing orthodox technique. Only one attempt of four, on the face, was successful. However, we spent but three days there. Some of the overhangs are most impressive.

Central Australia contains enough first quality rock to provide the rock-climbers of the world with a lifetime of activity. Sometimes the rock is too hot (summer temperatures, for weeks, are well over the century !) ; most of the best mountains are in inaccessible, partly explored desert and the chief problems are water and long supply lines. The only safe method of approach has been, until very recent times, with teams of camels. Now the " blitz buggy " and jeep with two-way radio, save in mid-summer, seem likely to remove most major difficulties. Planes can drop supplies and make emergency landings over much of the area. The so-called desert differs from the general conception of such by supporting more than 600 species of *flora* and a varied *fauna*, ranging from innumerable insects and spiders, many so far neither described nor classified, to the great red kangaroo. Its mineral wealth, also, has never adequately been assessed.

It would be hard to conceive more different travelling than that of South-West Tasmania, where stand, 20 degrees southwards, some most enchanting rock-peaks. What they lack in altitude (the highest just above the 5,000 feet mark), they possess in ruggedness. Here, again, is a very inadequately explored area, cloaked by some of the densest vegetation known in the world. Here, in parts, every yard of the journey must be contested with axe or slasher and progress may be limited to a mile or two in a day. It is not possible to avoid these places. A particularly infamous species of scrub, known as " Horizon-





tal," fills many of the valleys with a tormenting tangle of moss-covered boughs, so impenetrable that the only movement possible is over and through the upper foliage, perhaps 20 or 30 feet above the ground.

Water is here all too plentiful ; broad torrents, even in summer, are likely to hold up a party for days and the dripping forests provide the epitome of discomfort. It is isolated, beautiful country, dipping well into the Roaring Forties, the nearest mountains for neighbours, save in a northerly arc, being in Antarctica, New Zealand and South America.

In this area, good fortune recently made it possible for my party to make the first ascent of the last major Tasmanian mountain, Federation Peak. We were 18 days in the "bush"—a long carry, considering the transport, on our backs, of every necessary item including 300 feet of rope. Lack of maps was compensated by splendid aerial survey and photography, both vertical and oblique. Without this, the practicable routes to the mountain might have remained undiscovered for years. Previous expeditions, organized in Hobart, had done sterling work in route-finding but weather, rock and scrub had conspired against their success.

Our expedition, after an initial setback of 48 hours at the flooded Picton River, made firm progress through indifferent weather until the final valley, leading directly to the mountain, was reached. Here, after more than a week of low mists, rain and sleet, the sun appeared and, for three crucial days, shone brilliantly. The long direct ridge, rising westwards, deterred us for two of these but by then we had reached a small plateau beneath the final rock pinnacle. We had gambled on this being the climbable face, as any effort to reach another aspect could not have been effected in time.

For 500 feet, the rock—a beautifully grained, firm quartzite schist—was comparatively easy and still possessed some tough *richea* vegetation. This led to a large, glacially formed terrace, possessing a wealth of exquisite mountain flora, including the lovely black lily (*Hewardia*). Ultimately rose a solid, chisel-shaped mass, quite free of growth, for 600 feet. Somewhat travel-worn, we lay by our tents in the plateau sunlight, contemplating every possible route and praying for a fine day on the morrow.

It came and our route went, barely "severe" but interesting on account, once more, of being the easiest possible approach. A shapely cairn now decorates the mountain. Never shall we forget that rare day of sunshine on the edge of the world, the ocean visible beyond an infinity of jagged peaks and shining, unvisited lakes—where a hand held at arm's-length could cover a long day's toil.

Many Tasmanian mountains are already known to the rock-climber. Between Cradle Mountain and Lake St. Clair, through the heart of the Central country, runs a narrow bridle path negotiable in about a week, save when it is bedded in winter snow. This trail is flanked by magnificent hills, nearly all possessing vast buttresses, few of which have been attempted. The South-West country, surrounding Federation Peak, is even wilder and possesses no tracks of any kind. To explore all its delights with the thoroughness that has been displayed amongst our British mountains, may take about two centuries.

A third expedition, briefly recounted, may be of interest. This time it is a granite island called Rodondo, rising precipitously from Bass Strait. For 20,000 years, it is said, the cone has been separated from the mainland. My desire to make a landing was as much out of biological curiosity as love of mountains, for the same forces which converted a mountain into an island had effectively isolated almost all life. Bleached granite cliffs surround the entire coastline of perhaps two miles, dropping into water nowhere, as far as is known, less than 40 fathoms in depth. From a distance the rock is strongly reminiscent of Ailsa Craig.

The absolute necessity for an attempt is a dead calm. This condition occurs occasionally in summer and autumn, but, as the weather is fickle, it is wise to convey provisions for not less than three months. On one occasion we waited a week in mid-summer for a calm day and finally abandoned the effort. In January, 1947, fortune favoured us and, from a small ketch, it was possible to make several journeys in a stout dinghy. Our selected route again proved possible and a camp was established 400 feet above the sea. For nine halcyon days we explored the island's untouched beauty. Dense forests cover the crest and cease suddenly where the red granite plunges to the sea. Apart from insects and spiders, the only animal life is lizards and birds,



the latter including the rare Cape Barren Goose and thousands of shearwaters which make their nesting burrows at the top of the cliffs. Our most interesting discoveries were botanical, the astonishing fact being that the principal tree on the island (*Melaleuca armillaris*) is found nowhere nearby on the mainland, less than a dozen miles distant. Incidentally, from that mainland, have flown blackbirds and thrushes, late lineal descendants of original British stock, whose song remains unaltered to shake the hearts and memories of humans.

Within the limitations of granite, the climbing was excellent, steep and exposed. The way from the landing rock to the camp constituted a half-mile rising traverse, turning each great buttress at its most convenient point.

This brief account inevitably screens splendour, labour and delight. It skims across a vast area, touching down at almost random points matched by an immensely greater number undescribed or yet to be visited. I regret that the passing moment has so long delayed the fulfilment of promises made gladly enough by a Helyg fire.

# THE SECOND ASCENT OF THE WEST FACE OF THE AIGUILLE NOIRE DE PEUTEREY

Ratti Route, 6th, 7th July 1949

BERNARD PIERRE

**W**E were so much looking forward to that ascent. After our Badile adventure<sup>1</sup>, this plan was a foregone conclusion : the Cassin Route . . . the Ratti Route . . . an obvious progression.

Was it because we were fascinated by the climbs opened by the " Roccatore di Lecco " ?

Perhaps so . . . yet I believe that there was some deeper and more personal feeling in it : the eager wish to be tied to the same rope once more and to undergo the ordeal and bliss of a major climb.

We were not in such good form as the preceding year.

Winter had been late in coming, later still in going and all our plans at Easter had been frustrated. I was very sorry as I love climbing under winter conditions. The Whitsuntide holidays would have held another failure in store : the snow was still too thick on the Alps.

There was but one way left : the Calanques, those younger sisters of the Dolomites. In the interval between two sunny scrambles over dry limestone, we planned our next venture. I made up my mind to take my holidays in two instalments, in order to enjoy the long July days to the full ; and our other plans were shelved for the time.

We plodded up towards the Requin hut. What bliss there is in contrasts ! Yesterday was filled with the bustle of Paris life—so often meaningless—and now, silence solitude and quiet contemplation of the Mer de Glace were mine. . . .

Sunset seen from the hut was pleasant, but the traverse of the Vallée Blanche séracs, at daybreak was going to be much less

<sup>1</sup> With Gaston Rebuffat.

so and we did not reach Courmayeur before 10. There, we were told that the Gamba hut was not open yet ; so we had to wait for the next day to go up with the hutkeeper who agreed to carry part of our equipment and food.

As we were mounting among the rhododendrons, the Noire de Peuterey loomed up slowly out of the group of peaks which seemed but one mass when seen from the Val Veni. Its architecture became more and more distinct and all its towers, the outlines of which had been lost through foreshortening, took back their right places. On the left, the west face, lit up by the setting sun, shot up. Three spots of snow clung to it.

The sky was peaceful and the breeze with us. Would the weather, that unpredictable neutral power, keep its promise ?

We both felt as restless as last year when we had been silently going up the grass slopes of Sass Fura in the dark. The re-opening of a big route after several years, conjures up an atmosphere of mystery which is both delightful and impressive. We knew what ordeals were in store for us. I both longed for, and dreaded them. An easy climb gives me intense and immediate pleasure . . . later on it gets fainter. A hard climb makes me suffer but its memory never dies.

Late in the afternoon we reached the Gamba hut, lost in so much splendour and history. I was impressed by its resistless power. On the left, Mont Blanc over which the sun was setting—an always moving sight—showed up the big routes opened by the great mountaineers. On the right, the Noire de Peuterey displayed its protruding towers which have been the stake of international competition. Between both masses, a frail link : the delicate and graceful Dames Anglaises.

It was too late to go and reconnoitre. Tomorrow, we should have to leave by lantern light and this universe would be but a narrow circle of a dim gleam.

On Sunday morning, when we went up the first rope length, it was already eight. Our hard winding progress across the seracs of the Fresnay Glacier had taken much longer than expected.

We immediately ran into difficulties.

After having gone along a ledge and then scrambled up a sort of step, we came to a narrow chimney topped by a block. We had to go deep into it, come out on the right and go up another

shorter one, but its sides widened out. The climb was stiff. Whilst hauling himself on to the ledge at the top, Gaston, breathless, shouted to me: "It is as hard as the Knübel chimney!" I came up to him, not without some trouble.

The rock was cold and dreary: the sun had not yet lit up the face. We were happy neither in mind nor body.

A few metres higher, we found an old rope ring at the foot of a big couloir which was still full of snow; we climbed it moving together to save time. The snow was hard and never gave way, so we progressed quickly. We went up three rope lengths and came to a sort of terrace which was quite easy to get over. Then a wall of slabs led us to the top of the buttress where Ratti and Vitali had bivouacked.

At last the sun met us; a feeling of physical fitness and well-being came over us. It was two o'clock, and we decided to stop for a few minutes. This was our first rest since Gamba. We anxiously peered at the sky: it was cloudless. Our morale was excellent but we were not unduly optimistic, as we knew that the worst pitches were still ahead.

An hour later, we started again.

Now we went up mechanically, one behind the other along a snow shoulder. After a hundred metres or so, we left this easy ground to traverse to the left. We had to do it with extreme caution: the holds were few and not good. We then came to the foot of a chimney blocked by an overhang. The chimney, at once, opened up into a *dièdre*<sup>1</sup>; it slanted a little to the left whilst the right side was slightly overhanging. Yet we managed to get over it without undue exertion.

From a narrow ledge on which we were huddled up, one against the other, we were able to perceive our route. It was not necessary to study our technical notes to realize that we were now faced with the first major difficulty: two *dièdres*, the one above the other, broken off by an overhang. About 30 metres higher, another overhang, which looked even more impressive than the first one, crowned the whole. We were in for artificial climbing. Out of my rucksack, I produced the equipment. Gaston armed himself with pitons, tested the springs of a few karabiners, tied the stirrups over his shoulders, seized the hammer and attacked.

<sup>1</sup> *Dièdre*: an open corner, a groove.







Automatically, I looked at my watch : it was five.

He went first to the right, then into the *dièdre*. Classical symphony : the clear hard clatter of the hammer over the steel peg, the dry " ping " of the opening and shutting spring, the panting breath of the leader !

Gaston was now right underneath the first overhang. He had to hammer in a few pitons to get over it. His stirrups were dangling clear from the wall.

When he got his feet into them and began hauling himself up, his body swung into space.

A few ounces of metal and a string of nylon, 8 millimetres thick : how light the life of a climber is !

A pull on the rope enabled Gaston to swing over the overhang. Then a pause.

This time, he climbed straight up for about two metres inside the corner, afterwards out of it, on the left side. Clinging on to the rock, his head bent under the overhang, he took a moment's rest. He started again, driving in a first and then a second piton. One more metre to the good. His body curved round the overhang which kept pushing him out above the precipice. He tried hard to drive in a third piton. From below, I was watching him struggling. I tightly grasped the ropes which enabled the leader to keep some sort of balance. I saw him groping over the rock, flooded in sunlight. To the right and left his fingers were searching but found no cracks.

At last, after several anxious moments, he succeeded in wedging in a piton. He shouted to me : " It's madness to try such things ! " He hauled himself up to the top platform and stood there, silent for a time ; then he called out to me, quite coolly as if it were a matter of a simple exercise : " Now, you come up."

When I was again with him, the sun had disappeared. Tearing out the pitons had also compelled me to work very hard, but I was belayed. Frequently, when driving out pitons or unhooking karabiners, I flew into the air like an awkward jackdaw, not knowing where to land.

When we had collected our equipment, we traversed to the left. A little water was trickling over the rocks : a delightful oasis, the more so because we had hoped for it all day long.

This rope length seemed a pleasant walk and was over but too

GASTON REBUFFAT AT THE TOP OF THE  
DIEDRE OF SUFFERING. THE ROPE ACROSS  
THE SKY IS THAT USED FOR HAULING THE  
RUCKSACKS.

B. Pierre

soon. We had come face to face with the key passage of the Ratti Route : a big *dièdre* which as it got higher moved outwards. It was topped by a roof. On the right an exit was hard to detect. We stayed there, silently staring upwards. Indeed, *it was* a formidable obstacle. This *dièdre*, so far from man's proportion, was just terrifying. Dusk was already lurking there, adding to the sinister aspect of the black granite.

Reconnoitring the adversary was out of the question. We had to bivouac on the ledge on which we were standing, caught between the faces of the *dièdre*. Yet it was conveniently broad and long ; we might even be able to lie down. While Gaston swept the place, throwing down rocks which crashed with a dull sound on the Fresnay Glacier, I hammered in a belay piton, straightened out the ropes, lighted the stove and got the food out of the sacks, slowly, without hurrying, to eke out time. . . .

The watch began.

Every hour, we brewed hot lemonade, and slumbered for a few minutes, waking up almost at once. Sleep was quite impossible. We were obsessed by the ordeal ahead.

At last, day dawned and freed us. All around the summits were soon bathed in light. But we were still captives of the cold and darkness.

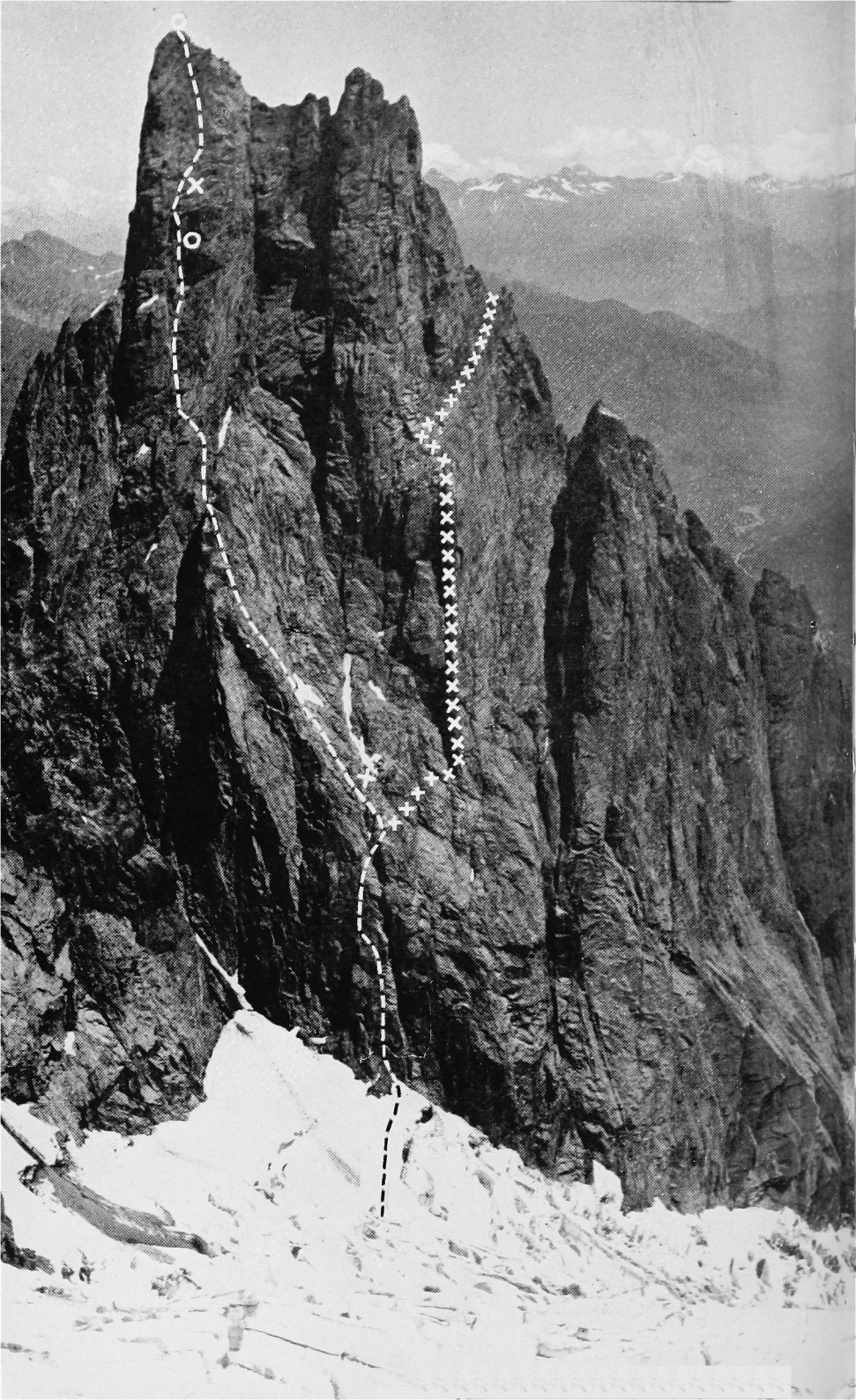
The roof crushed us.

It was seven when the clear tapping over the head of the first piton echoed. Gaston wedged himself into a crack a little on the right of the *dièdre*, hammered in three pitons and came back to the ledge : it was still too cold. He kept blowing on his benumbed fingers : a reminder of the north face of the Matterhorn. He crunched a few lumps of sugar and went up again. He got up to the third piton and then into another crack further on the left.

His progress was very slow ; he stopped, looked intently at the route and said : " I shan't have enough pitons. I must go back and take out the first ones." He had to go down again. Rope manoeuvres, plucking out pitons and a climb back followed. Time was flying.

Back to the highest pitch he had reached, he crept into the corner and then thought he descried two pitons left there by the Italians. He was right. He tested them, hooked up a stirrup for his left foot and leaning with the right one against the face of the *dièdre*, he drove in three more pitons.





Before going up the next lap, he rested for a while, his stirrups under his thighs, hanging over sheer space. The third rope, which we used to haul up our rucksacks was clear of the wall. It was dangling behind me, five or six metres away.

Then Gaston called out to me: "Bernard, I am off. You pull *that* rope." He drove in the 20th, the 21st and the 22nd pitons. Pitons, karabiners and rope pulls: the roof was, at last, mastered. It was almost 12. Over that dreadful pitch, the leader had had to fight for over five hours to get up 25 metres.

Tearing out the pitons was hard work. Of the four stirrups, there was but one I could use and the gaps between the pitons were much too long. The first ones were easy to recover, but things became more complicated and I had to drive in pitons, to be able to pull the others out. The ropes were going through half-a-dozen karabiners; it was difficult to pull them and they kept getting wedged. Badly belayed, I often lost my balance and revolved round and round. The ropes became more and more entangled. I was stifled. High above me, feeling extremely uncomfortable on his narrow slanting ledge, Gaston was getting restless. With cramped fingers, I reached the roof, awkwardly dropping a piton. I felt an overwhelming longing to get out of that frightful *dièdre*, over the three metres left and back to Gaston. Then, like the runner in a relay race who hands his baton to the next man, I would give him what I had torn from the rugged granite.

At last I reached the top ledge. I was exhausted and remained there for several minutes, silent and with closed eyes. "Gaston," I said, "we will call this pitch the *Dièdre of Suffering*."

It was 3 p.m. and we decided to go on and look for a more hospitable resting place. We left what had been the Italians' bivouac. A ledge a few metres long enabled us to reach an ice-glazed crack topped by a narrow terrace. There was a second crack above and it looked uncompromisingly difficult. Our arms ached so terribly! We avoided it and traversed on the right, across a much exposed slab lit up by the last rays of the sun. Then, going left, we found a succession of cracks which led us back into the Italians' route.

A terrace had an engaging aspect and we rested there and relaxed.

W. FACE, OF THE AIG. NOIRE DE PEUTEREY

— — — *Vitali-Ratti's Route.*

x x x x *Bocalatte's Route.*

O *Our bivouacs.*

X *Ratti's bivouacs.*

PH. A. DE CHATELLUS

The last bad pitch was a *dièdre* topped by an overhang, but one piton was enough to get over it. We looked at our technical note : there were but a few 10 metres more to climb ; one more traverse, one more chimney. . . .

It was 7 p.m. when we got out on to the top.

On the next day, the descent was interminable and we only reached the valley in the afternoon.

It looked unreal and mysterious to me. In spite of the blinding glare, the village of P  teret was lifeless and sad.

We were walking like machines on the moss-covered ground of the pine forest, dragging along our dead-tired limbs. Our sun-dazed eyes were half closed. Free from the haunting nightmare of perpendicular drops, overhangs and unbelievably exposed positions, we were gliding like shadows, silent as in a dream, back to a surprisingly verdant landscape.

We spent the night in Courmayeur and then went over the Col du G  ant, the Vall  e Blanche, the Mer de Glace and Montanvers to Chamonix which seemed overcrowded and noisy. It was indeed a return to earth.

Travelling back to Paris, I gazed at Mont Blanc through the carriage window. I was happy : the richer for a glorious souvenir. I was going to treasure this store of adventure. But while the snowy peaks were fading away in the distance, I wondered whether the rapture of being on a mountain was not to be found elsewhere but on the borders of the unfeasible.

#### AIGUILLE NOIRE DE PEUTEREY

##### WEST FACE

##### TECHNICAL NOTES

##### DIRECT ROUTE RATTI-VITALI

The west face can be divided into two parts :

The lower part, a buttress with couloirs right and left.

The upper part which is the difficult one.

*The buttress.*—Begin by route 333 (Guide Vallot), slightly to the left of the right-hand couloir. Leave this route when it is about to traverse the couloir. Instead, follow a succession of terraces to the left and then climb the precipice of slabs sloping up to the top of the buttress. In early summer, it is covered with snow (IV).

Go up the snow slope at the top of the buttress until the latter abuts to the face at the foot of a couloir slanting to the right which ends at the gap south of the summit.

*The top part.*—Leave the snow slope to traverse to the left towards a couloir or chimney (easy slope). Then climb it by getting over a small overhang (V). Above it, the chimney opens into a *di  dre* slanting slightly to the right, the left side of it overhanging (Sup. IV). One reaches a small platform to the left and at the top of that pitch. Here begins the difficult part of the climb. Up to that platform, the rock is not quite reliable and the difficulty of the pitch (Sup. IV and V) comes from the exceedingly small number of good holds.



The first open corner overtops the platform. Begin the climb on its right side, over a broken slab (Sup. V). Go right at the back of the corner and over an overhang (VI and A I). Climb again into the inverted angle of the *dièdre* then get on the left side (VI and then V). Return to the back part of the corner to get out of it (Sup. V). The whole pitch is a little under 30 m. high.

Traverse to the left to a good resting place (our first bivouac-site). Above it opens a *dièdre* which overhangs up to its top and lead up to a rounded protruding rock ; the whole pitch is 20 or 25 m. high ; artificial climbing is required all through. Begin through a crack on the right at the back of the corner (A I), then along another crack at the back (A 2), then along the crack between the overhanging knob and the right face (A 3). The five last pitons, which are extremely difficult to drive in, have been left in the rock.

Above that pitch, traverse to the right (about 5 m.) crack (Sup. IV), about 12 m. high and full of ice.

The original route went up a second crack right on top of the first. Ratti-Vitali prized it at VI and it looks as if it were as bad as that.

We avoided that crack by traversing almost horizontally to the right for about 20 m., across a very exposed slab (Sup. V). Get up a low wall (V) to reach a succession of cracks and broken slabs which bring you back to the left, to a succession of terraces above the Ratti-Vitali crack. The precipice is less steep but the rocks are not so reliable as lower down. Go straight up a *dièdre*, come out of it on the left by climbing over an overhang (V), climb up a rock rib (IV) up to 15 m. below the summit, then traverse for about 3 m. to the right to reach a chimney (Sup. IV) which opens up in a gap a few metres to the south of the summit.

*Times.*—4th July—Left Gamba hut : 4.30—Began the climb : 8.30—Bivouac on the platform between the two *dièdres* : 20.

5th July : Left bivouac : 7—The second man at the top of the *dièdre* : 15—Summit : 19—second bivouac on the summit.

Twenty-five pitons hammered in, five found. Our party left 10 pitons on the rocks. Stirrups for the second *dièdre*. We made the climb in Vibram-soled shoes.

Crampons and ice-axes are unnecessary (one ice-axe or crampons may be useful to traverse the Fresnay Glacier).

There are several excellent bivouac-sites :

Almost everywhere on the bottom buttress ;

In the upper part : at the bottom of the first and of the second *dièdre* ;

In the terraces where our route to the right come back to the original Ratti-Vitali route.

# THE COAST OF PEMBROKESHIRE

A. W. ANDREWS

THE coast of Pembrokeshire has not, so far as I know, been described in any climbing journal, and an account may be of interest to our members. I shall only deal with three main areas in detail: the country near Tenby, the extreme south-west headland opposite Skomer Island and the St. David's peninsula. The first is easily accessible and well known. There is one of the finest limestone exposures on cliffs in the British Isles and some unusual sandstone. If you walk along the cliff to Old Castle Head and go down to the shore at Lydstep Haven you can explore the caves, some of which can only be reached at low tide. There are fine natural arches where the rock has been undercut by marine denudation with the help of chemical action. In one of them there is a large doorway, like the gate of a castle, that has made the mouth of a cave.

In the illustration, Page 21, the joints converge, like the feathers of a fan on a face of about 170 feet high. The cracks are deep in the lower part but shallow near the top. It might be climbable, with the safeguard of a rope, but much of this limestone is friable, like the Cheddar Cliffs, and never reaches the toughness of dolomite.

There are caves of considerable interest a little inland. At Hoyle's mouth, for instance, on the 50 foot contour and overlooking the Ritec which runs down to Tenby, a neolithic or bronze age canoe was found, which suggests that at one time the cave was near sea level. The changes of level in geological times on the coast of Pembrokeshire have been considerable and account for many puzzling features.

An ecclesiastical document of the eleventh century states that the Ritec was then an open estuary so far as St. Florence, a village about five miles from Tenby. Even in 1643 it was wide enough to check the Parliamentary forces. Bones of the Irish elk and the cave bear have been found. There is a museum at Tenby where these and other discoveries are shown and all the literature on the subject is available.

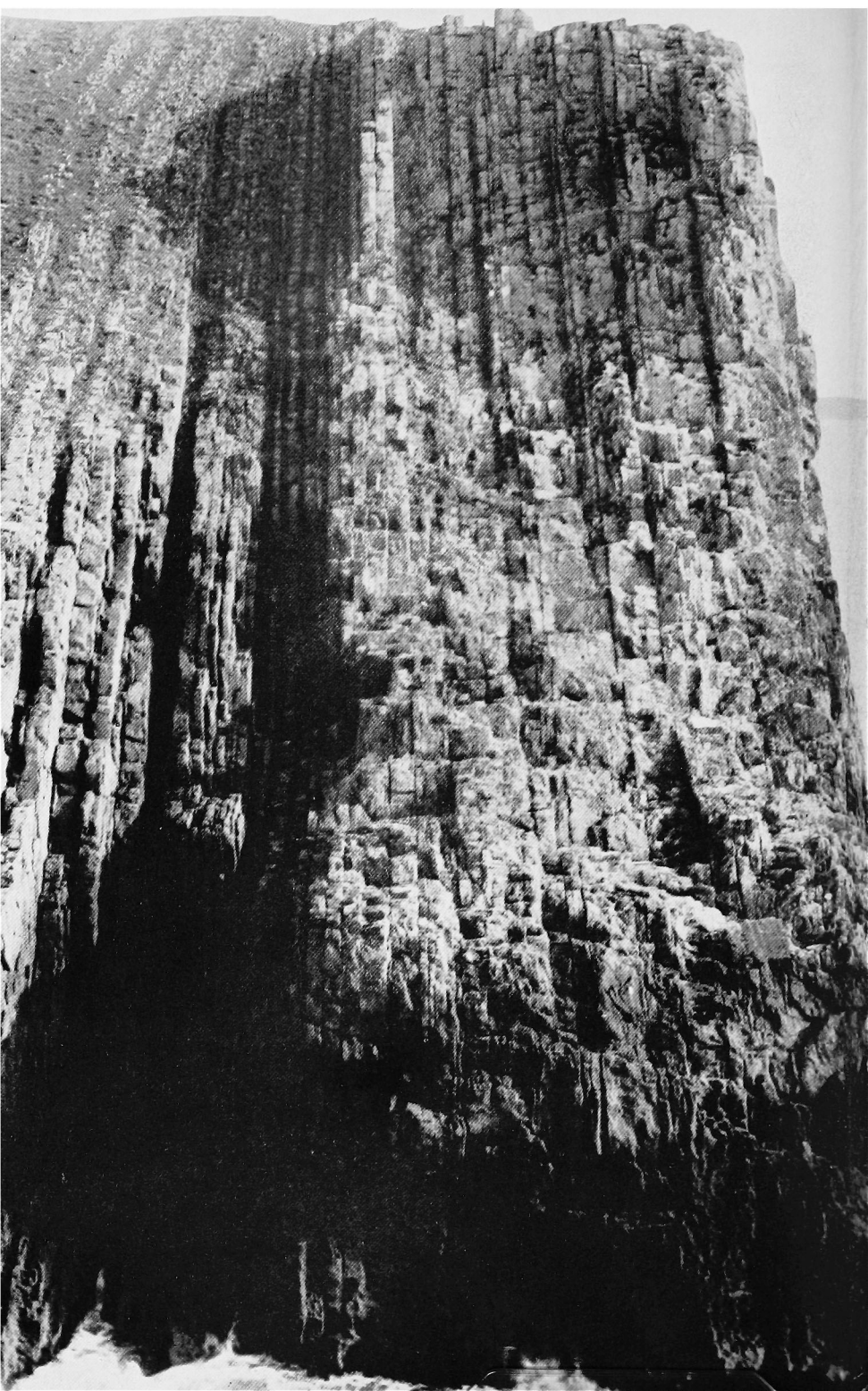
Anyone who comes to Tenby should walk along the cliffs or the shore from Saundersfoot. There are interesting sandstone cliffs, in the coal measures at Monkstone Point, which are harder than the shales. The rocks are highly contorted. From here to Tenby there is an exposure of Millstone Grit but I warn specialists who prick up their ears that grit is like the curate's egg.

An easy means of access to the region between Tenby and Milford Haven is the Ridgeway, a hog's back which rises to 300 feet and is nearly level, from which there are extensive views to Mynedd Prescelly in the north and Grassholm in the south. It is formed of Old Red Sandstone which was deposited below the Carboniferous Limestone and has stood out above the less resistant plain. At Skrinkle Haven the sandstone begins on the cliff. This is by far the most picturesque part of this section of the coast. There are stacks on the shore, like the Wicca Pillar and about the same height. On one of these there is an interesting crack climb. I showed a view of this to an audience at Pembroke Dock where I was lecturing but, as I expected, no one had ever seen it. The joints and cracks are often nearly vertical. As there is little calcareous matter solution plays a negligible part. The fissures are due to the erosion of marl between hard sandstone beds. I took a colour photograph which shows well the deep red of the sandstone with strips of greyish green, and makes a fine contrast with the bright green of grass above, the masses of red campion and the gold of ripening corn. The extraordinary symmetry of these faces is remarkable. Tier after tier of buttresses with cracks at exactly the same angle rise behind each other with narrow terraces between. Close by there is a cove that looks like an artificial dock, quite rectangular with walls like breakwaters. At Castle Head the sandstone seems to be harder than in many other places. It is possibly of a finer grain. The top consists of square steps, nearly smooth and more like limestone than sandstone. There is one fairly wide and deeply cut crack on the west side that is as clean as if it had been made by a mason. It is about 80 foot high and is, so far as I could tell, safe for climbing. My experience of sandstone is not great but I vividly remember one pinnacle in an amphitheatre of red sandstone south of Cape Wrath. It "came away in my hand," but luckily I was near the

bottom. As close an adherence to the surface as possible seems desirable on these climbs, in fact a wormlike progress and pressure holds distributing weight.

As there will no doubt be a mass emigration from Harrison Rocks as soon as this article appears I will leave specialists to report on the possibilities. Sometimes the colour of sandstone is a flame red. Of this colour were the spires near Ponferrada in North Spain which have been described by Rickmers in the *Alpine Journal*. They stand out like furze fires at night and can be seen from some way off. Near Castle Head there is a fissure, 100 feet deep and 3 feet wide, that runs some way inland. Similar clefts, on a larger scale, will be described later on. There are not quite so many holes of this kind as there are old mine shafts in Cornwall but the consequences of careless walking might be just as awkward. Old Castle Head was probably an old cliff castle like many of the headlands on the west coast of this county. Little exploration has been done and their age is uncertain. There is a fine cromlech close by, the only one in this southern area, though they are numerous in the St. David's peninsula and Prescelly, where there are also many stone circles and monoliths. Manorbier Castle has famous ruins and should be visited. Others I might mention are Carew, Pembroke, Haverfordwest and St. David's (the old Episcopal palace). There are also many very interesting old churches in the county and, of course, St. David's Cathedral. From here to Freshwater East the coast is low and it is probably best to go inland by the head of the Stackpole estuary. There is a fine view of this and Broad Haven, the mouth of the inlet from the St. Gowan's Head side. There are considerable accumulations of sand here and over Stackpole Warren. Dunes are most extensive on this south coast especially at Freshwater West, Freshwater East, Manorbier and Lydstep. Here the limestone cliffs take quite a different shape. They are flat-topped and steep, some being nearly 150 feet, and there are many overhangs. The gullies provide almost the only ways up or down and they are often filled with a rubble consisting of red clay. Descent is not easy. One well-known gap is at St. Gowan's Chapel near the Head. Where the tide uncovers the coast there are often huge square blocks strewn along the shore which are the result of cliff falls. Near the sea the limestone is much harder, as all loose matter





has been washed away and all that is easily soluble dissolved. Some climbing and traversing is possible. Occasionally it is feasible to get along one of the wide ledges that run horizontally about half-way up the cliff, though it usually happens that they turn out to be only cul-de-sacs.

There are pigeon holes on the cliffs which form a line of recessed pockets in some places. One of these extends for quite a hundred yards and would make a fine hand traverse. I have only examined the ends but the holds seem good. The top of the cliff is covered with a short grass and dwarf gorse and heather like parts of the south coast of West Penwith. There is a good deal of thyme and the flowers that like limestone do well there. The bee orchid has, I believe, been found. A car can be driven over much of the smooth surface.

The Stack Rocks are detached pinnacles which reach nearly to the top of the cliffs. The vertical joints which probably are the cause of their steepness are shown very clearly on the stacks at Eligug (guillemot) Point to the west. I have not been on any one of them but they look undesirably loose. Razorbills and guillemots in vast numbers nest on them in spring. Being on or near a migration route there are many sea birds on this coast. I have seen the manx shearwater, though it apparently does not breed here and is probably a straggler from Skokholm where Lockley has done so much bird observation and ringing. The birds of prey of the rarer kind such as buzzards, ravens and falcons are usually seen in more isolated areas such as St. David's Head. I remember a chough here long after the date when it was last reported in West Penwith.

There is a fine natural arch here called "The Green Bridge." This is really a half-finished stack where a ridge jutting out to sea has been undercut. It should be noted that many of the features of the cliffs, especially the pinnacles and gullies, are the result of erosion acting on a rock honeycombed by water rills, now dry, and formed by sub-aerial denudation. What impressed me more than anything else were the sinks and fissures. There was one with vertical walls, about 130 feet deep, with a window looking out to sea as mysterious as the Third Window in Chesterton's St. Barbara. The kittiwakes crowded the dark ledges when I was there. You can walk round the narrow rim but the chasm is too loose to climb down into. It reminded me of the sinks

in France in the Devoluy and the Causses, though there the sea was absent. Most impressive of all are the fissures. The Huntsman's Leap is well known. It is narrow near the sea but the finest rift is much larger and is like a miniature canyon, 40 feet across with steep sides. In these fissures erosion probably widened a natural line of fault or joint.

The next region is less easy of access. There is a ferry across Milford Haven but the railway does not reach the south-west corner. The estuary of Milford Haven is an example of a drowned river of the "ria" type. A winding channel navigable to Haverfordwest runs through scenery of quite a different type to that of the rest of the county. Woods and marsh skirt the banks and there are birds and plants that belong especially to river conditions. It is most interesting to follow the course in a boat which is the only way in which it can be seen, as there are no parallel roads or tracks along its course.

It is necessary to go to Haverfordwest and drive about 12 miles to Marloes where lodgings can be obtained opposite the post office. There is a bus to Dale on the St. Anne's peninsula but that is still some way off. At Marloes you will find two interesting areas, Marloes Sands and the headland called the Deer Park. In the first there is a stretch of exceptionally firm sand, about two miles long and quite wide at low tide. It is one of the most beautiful and secluded beaches in Wales and is safe for bathing near the shore, though doubtful under some conditions farther out. The cliff is generally sandstone as at St. Anne's Head but there are patches of mudstone and quartzite which are more resistant. I think it is due to these intrusions that the pinnacles on the shore make such a fine boulder playground. They are up to 50 feet high and are little like gritstone and there are many ledges and cracks, horizontal and vertical, and smooth slabs and overhangs. On the west is Gateholm, a half island with a narrow neck joining it to the mainland. This seems to be entirely greensand and is more massive than the rocks mentioned above but it is easy to reach the 100-foot top. It extends about half-a-mile out to sea and is a fine viewpoint. From here to the south-west corner of the Deer Park there is a broken cliff. Along the cliffs the headland is a mile or so long from the Anvil to Wooltack Point. The top of the neck is more or less flat and covered with dwarf gorse and heather. There are no habitations



except an old coastguard look-out post. The cliffs are sloping at the top and not high but wonderfully twisted and contorted. An old rock, Pre Cambrian, has been subjected to heat and pressure and seamed by igneous intrusions but in many cases the old lines of stratification are still quite sharp and help climbers, though some curved cracks almost require a special technique. The rock is generally good and trustworthy but some patches, as in North Wales, are of more friable rock, especially in the lavas. In one picture I took of what I have called "The Lost Cove" there is a face of about 80 feet with ledges sloping slightly downwards. Standards difficult to severe. The easiest way into the cove is through a cave, only possible at low tide. I remember a ledge on the wall which I followed. There may be other ways. When you reach the cove you cannot get into the interior except by traversing smooth slabs which are usually rather slippery and rise above a swirl of rough water that comes in through small openings from the strait outside. Inside there is a pebble beach and an attractive cave above high water mark. A fine place for a hermit but awkward for coming home late at night.

At the south-west of the headland there is a lava ridge with its quite unmistakable form. It stands alone as a masterpiece does and is not mixed up with any of nature's architectural improvements. It drops to the sea in a series of steps with a sharp edge on the right and a slab on the left and is firm and good for climbing, though rubbers are desirable. I have found lava quite good in small masses though liable to split off in large blocks. My widest experience was on the Peak of Teneriffe, where the scale is much greater and the rock forms fantastic. A traverse on a ledge on a rough textured face leads to the next cove on the north. To describe the climbs here would need a new climber's guide and I must leave it to some future generation, or the spirit of the poet who declared that he would never give up climbing until the mountains were level with the plain.

"You were my earliest passion, and when shall my fealty falter ?

Ah, when Helvellyn is low ! Ah, when Winander is dry ! "

Even then there may be cliffs left, the same sea but bigger and better cliffs.

When I first visited this region I never realized what splendid

climbs there were, any more than I did in Cornwall or even on Lliwedd which I saw first in 1889. I had bicycled from Broadway where I was with a reading party and had two days to spare to explore Snowdonia where I had heard rumours of climbing. I am afraid I was thinking in terms of Alpine space and did not appreciate the charm of small faces, though I went over most of the top half and prospected descents. The sea adds a good deal to the attraction of cliffs. The race of troubled waters between the headland and Skomer Island, which pours through Jack Sound almost like a waterfall, is always moving, and you have the whole landscape to yourself.

Here is an attempt to express my feelings :

“ It was a sanctuary of the wild,  
Where rare birds harboured in despite  
Of man's encroachment, undefiled,  
And shy beasts came out into light  
That were elsewhere well hid till night ;  
An ancient Deer Park where the soil  
Had not been found worth human toil.  
No camper broke its peace, the few  
Who paid a visit did not stay,  
For there was nothing there to do  
But watch the gulls and watch the spray ;  
They could not waste the whole day  
Upon a narrow neck of land,  
With not a single beach of sand  
To bathe on, and no sight to see  
But rugged cliffs, unscalable,  
And tides that raced incessantly  
Through caverns inaccessible  
To all but those who held the spell  
That fell on you and fell on me  
To let us in to Faerie.”

Why the headland was called the Deer Park I have never discovered but the high wall round it, now partly broken, was evidently put there to make an enclosure. On the ordnance map there is the word RATH, an Irish term for a prehistoric settlement. This is written on many headlands of the west coast. There are no traces here, however, of anything of the kind on the surface and, so far as I know, no digging has been done.

From North Haven, the small harbour in the deep gap between the neck and the mainland, the cliffs are mainly sandstone till well into St. Bride's Bay. Except at Musselwick Sands and at St. Bride's Haven there is little foreshore and the cliffs are inconvenient for scrambling on. Very steep roads lead down to the coast. I remember one that I tried on a motor-cycle and gave up when it seemed to turn over. I do not remember anything like it even in the limestone region of the Causses in South France. Near Ticklas Point and Borough Head there is a Cambrian intrusive mass of harder rocks which has some climbing on it. The stacks, which I have not got on to, are of the same formation. If time allows this section of the coast is well worth walking along as it is wild and almost unvisited.

Rounding the lower cliffs of St. Bride's Bay, carved out of the relatively soft Carboniferous rocks, we come to steep cliffs again past Newgale Sands. In Steer's book, mentioned below, there is a good account of the coast from here to Strumble Head with a very clear geological sketch map. To deal with all the details properly would be too technical and long but the main points are that there is an unique exposure of almost every kind of igneous and old sedimentary rocks on this coast, headland, bay and inlet respectively. The length is very much more than that of West Penwith and I do not know it in detail like the Deer Park but have only taken samples just as geologists do. It is not quite true to say that all the headlands are good for climbing and all the bays indifferent but it may pass as a statement of the general conditions.

The cliffs beyond Newgale are nearly 200 feet and Dinas Mawr rises to 224. The coast is a little like the Lizard east of Kynance, with promontories and reefs leading up to a ridge and a hill slope. There are many stacks on the shore. Part of the cliffs here are of what are called volcanic tuffs, with intrusions of igneous rock into these and the old sedimentary strata. Quite good to climb on for the most part. At Solva a drowned river valley involves a move inland. From here to the south of St. David's there are some picturesque cliffs covered with vegetation and lichen clad, and occasional climbing on the stacks and round the caves and on some faces and ribs. The bays of St. Nons, Caerfai and Caer Bwdy are well known. There is a good deal of very fine-grained sandstone and a reddish conglomerate with

some quartzite. The cliffs are steep and the colours range from purple to yellows and greys. Looking at one of my photographs just beyond Porth Lysky, which shows the cliff and Ramsey Island, I was struck by the colour contrast between the lighter upper cliff and the dark rocks above the beach. The coast here is rather like that between the Land's End and Sennen and rib and cove succeed each other in quick succession. The rock is mostly good and there is excellent traversing on the lower cliffs.

At Porth Stinian, opposite Ramsey Island, is the lifeboat station. When I was there in 1900 with O. K. Williamson and R. W. Lloyd we persuaded the captain of the lifeboat, a man over 60, to take us to the island in a small boat. His only assistant was a small boy of 11. We went up stream, if that is the right expression, to miss the Horse, an unpleasant rock in mid-channel, and were carried down close to the coast of Ramsey to escape the Bitches and their fangs. The south-west corner of Ramsey was especially interesting with fine cliffs of igneous rock on which there would certainly be some climbs. The seals were said to be so tame as to come round the fishing boats without fear. On returning we did not pull far enough up stream and were almost carried out to sea. Amateur helpers were enrolled and we eventually got home after a great struggle which I reminded Lloyd of the other day. I was pleased to find that he still had a vivid recollection of the incident and the discomfort it caused then and subsequently. We did, however, recover our self respect when we found that our Alpine rope was the sole tie capable of drawing the boat up out of the reach of the waves on a causeway rather like that at Porthgwarra in West Penwith.

The most impressive cliffs in this region are at St. David's Head. A number of short ribs like the irregular teeth of a broken saw project into the sea and the general aspect is like that of the cliffs of South Devon near Salcombe. The cliffs slope up above to nearly 200 feet and there are terraces along it. Behind it is the dolerite (igneous) hill of Carn Lidi, nearly 600 feet that stands out so prominently from St. David's across the planed levels. Another "monadnock," as it is called, is Pen Bery with 200 feet of coastal cliff on the north. Carn Lidi has many interesting prehistoric remains. The whole of the coast here is worth traversing. It is impossible in the space I have

left to deal with it in detail but the headlands of Pen Clegyr, Aber Dinas, Trwyn Castell and the two Castell Cochs should be specially noted. The bays are of softer rock, Abereiddy and Traeth Llyfn of dark shales. The contrast between the dark sand and shingle ridge in Abereiddy Bay and the fine light coloured sand in Traeth Llyfn is very striking. There is a fine field for exploration and climbing on all this coast. Strumble Head has Pencaer, of igneous rock, with a few short climbs.

Pembrokeshire is a large county and it is difficult to get to the out of the way places without a car or bicycle. If possible a visit should be paid to Mynedd Prescelly, a bleak high moorland of grit and hard shales with only a thin and poor soil. Uncultivated and sparsely occupied. It is 1,700 feet and the view is impressive, extending to North Devon and Ireland in clear weather. The bluestones of Stonehenge are said to have come from here.

I have had many talks with Odell on the climbing possibilities of Pembrokeshire and we had planned a visit and perhaps a guide to the cliffs but circumstances prevented.

For the walker and climber the half-inch map of Bartholemew is adequate, though the One Inch Ordnance sheets have more detail. Guide books are poor on the coast that climbers want to visit though Ward and Lock, South Wales, may be of some use in the better known districts. The geological memoir, the British Regional Geography of South Wales, is invaluable but rather technical. The most interesting book of all is *The Coast Line of England and Wales*, J. A. Steers. It is rather expensive to buy but should be available in any good public library. Some photographs of the coast can be obtained from the Geological Museum at South Kensington. I shall be pleased, so far as I can, to let climbers have copies from my large collection of views and to give them any information I can. Anyone who comes to Bosigran and will call on me could see my colour photographs and any literature I have. I shall naturally be much interested in any account of climbs that may be sent me.

## TWO CLIMBS FROM THE SCHÖNBÜHL

P. W. W. NOCK

FOR our final climbs of the season Mary Hingley and I had decided on the Dent Blanche and the Ober Gabelhorn, and so it was with these objects in view that on one especially blazing hot afternoon we made our way to the Schönbühl hut. Our original plan had been an ascent of the Viereselgrat, but this was now modified to the Ferpècle Arête, as local guides gave the opinion that this was a more interesting route and, though long, quite feasible from the Schönbühl. Earlier in the morning we had somewhat vaguely discussed the question of going from Zermatt straight to the Rossier hut, but this idea had to be finally abandoned when our departure from Zermatt was delayed until 3 p.m.

The following morning we started at 2-30 and got a short lead on the other parties going to the Wandfluh, who were then presumably making for the normal South ridge. I say presumably because although we saw a number of lanterns behind us on the glacier, once we had reached the rocks and put away our lanterns we saw no further sign of these parties, even though we took quite a long rest at the “ ‘ official ’ frühstückplatz ” at the top of the Wandfluh. From this point we followed the ordinary route almost to the top of a little rise, which in the guide books is marked as P.3912 and on the Landeskarte as P.3882. Then we sloped off to the left along some broken rocks which form a small ridge supporting the unnamed glacier that sweeps down from P.3882. The going so far had all been very easy, but it was not long before we had the first interesting section of the day. This involved cutting down a short but steep ice slope off the little ridge and crossing a bergschrund to reach the glacier. The total height was something less than 100 feet, but for me at any rate, cutting steps down a steep slope is a wearing and back-breaking process. The upper part of this glacier was uncrevassed, but at the point where it falls

over a small fault to its lower section there were a number of large crevasses which involved us in a few detours. Shortly after negotiating this part, and while only about 10 minutes away from the bergschrund, which we had to cross in order to reach the Ferpècle Arête, we heard the unpleasant noise of falling stones and were disconcerted to see that these had fallen across the 'schrund at the point where we intended crossing it. These stones, we decided, certainly weren't playing fair, as it was still early, very cold and the sun had not yet reached any part of the West face. However, as this was the only reasonable crossing point, we carried on with all speed and didn't slacken our pace until we were across the obstacle and safely out of range on the left.

I believe that from here most parties go up the broken rocks and join the ridge above the first tower, but we agreed that it would be safer and undoubtedly more pleasant to walk along the easy shelf, almost immediately above the bergschrund, and get on to the edge as soon as possible. The one factor we hadn't considered was that of time, and as we found considerable technical difficulty on this first tower, we must have lost half an hour—perhaps more. The difficulty arose near the top where the crest of the ridge became impossible and a traverse to the right didn't appear to be a particularly inviting one. The main reasons for a traverse to the left were, first, an easy ledge leading on to the face, and second, that as we could not see a great deal of the face there was always a hope that it might be easy. The ledge was a solid fact, but the hope of an easy way up from it sheer imagination and wishful thinking. The lower part was pleasant, consisting of a steep wall with small but solid holds, but the last run out was exactly the reverse, as it involved a rather rotten chimney in which all the good holds seemed to be verglaced. Perhaps without the verglance they too would have been rotten.

Once on the ridge the climbing was again easy, though always interesting, and we moved together, without noting any special places of interest, up to a steep little wall about 20 feet high. (The place at which, it is believed, the accident occurred to O. G. Jones and party in 1899.) There is now a piton in the lower part of the wall, which is one of the few I have ever seen and regarded as superfluous, there being an excellent belay

with good stance only a few feet away. All the same, with the piton in position it seemed a pity not to use it, and with this as an added security we climbed the little pitch. (Good V.D.)

After this there followed another section of ridge without any memorable points up to the foot of the Grand Gendarme. As a gendarme it certainly blocked the ridge direct, but this rather lost its point as an easy shelf permitted us to walk most of the way round and then only gave a short stretch of slabs as the means of regaining the crest. From this point on, the ridge rapidly degenerates, as the rocks are for the most part loose, and the angle gradually lessens until finally, for the last few hundred feet, it is little more than a walk up scree or patches of snow, over a wide and shapeless hog's back. It is, in fact, rather a disappointing ending to a ridge which is for the most part solid and has many fine situations.

It was during a short halt in this rather monotonous final slope that Mary suddenly suggested descending the Viereselgrat. This came as rather a rude shock to me, as up to this moment I had considered nothing more enterprising than the ordinary route for the descent. When I found her reason for this whim was simply that she had done the south ridge a year or two previously I was not especially enthusiastic. The matter was then allowed to drop for a little while, but after eating and before having forty winks on the summit, Mary's parting remark was to repeat her suggestion of the Viereselgrat. For my part I was not inclined to sleep, so having unroped and fished out the guide book, I went along to the top of the ridge to inspect the snow and study the book. The snow was in bad condition right enough, but the ridge was almost uncorniced and the distance down to the rocks did not appear very great. With the weather perfect the only remaining factor to be considered was that of time. It was then nearly two o'clock, which gave a full six six hours daylight to reach the glacier, and after that we should no doubt cope with a lantern. My awakening of Mary was not received especially enthusiastically, and even after the explanation that time was pressing if we were to descend the Viereselgrat, I still had to be persistent to rouse her to action. Our collection of the scattered food and repacking of sacks, etc., took some time, and it was only at 2-30 that we actually started down the top part of the ridge.







The condition of the snow was every bit as bad as one might expect at this time of day, with minor avalanches going down the Schönbühl face at the slightest provocation. Although the progress was slow it was not half as dangerous as it must have been in a normal year with a greater volume of snow on the ridge, because of the numerous outcrops of rock on which one of us could usually remain well belayed. Here and there we met a few very small cornices hanging over the Mountet face, most of which I managed to collapse with a few smacks of the flat of the axe, and lower down there were several places where we could walk along a rock shelf 10-15 feet below the crest of the ridge on the Mountet face. The only real excitement came with one of the last lengths of the snow ridge, where a true full-blooded cornice extended over the N. side for fully 15 feet. The idea of walking over the cornice was quite unthinkable, and to traverse the slope on the Schönbühl face would have taken a great deal of time, with the necessity of removing the top two feet of mush before cutting steps beneath. Again, to remove the cornice wholesale might have been a very lengthy job if it turned out more solid than it appeared. Fortunately none of these unpleasant alternatives had to be put to the test, as in this hour of need the narrow rock shelf on the Mountet face again offered its assistance. The ledge so formed was for the most part about five feet below the actual cornice, so that we had to shuffle along it in a crouching position. This passage was only 60 feet long, permitting us to belay in turn at either end, but during my hunch-backed movement along the shelf I could not help but wonder what the effect would be if several tons of cornice suddenly broke away pushing me down the face before them! No such misfortune occurred however, and shortly after this we were both on the rocky ridge leaving behind us a snow crest clear of all cornices except the last large one.

It wasn't long before we appreciated and heartily agreed with the guides' recommendation of the Ferpècle Arête in preference to the one we were now on. The outstanding remembrance of the remainder of this climb was the appalling rottenness of the rock. At only one point before the division of the two ridges did we encounter a serious pitch in the form of a chimney on the Mountet face, and in this the rock was fortunately only

moderate instead of crumbling. Two and a half hours saw us to the fork of the ridge, and after a quick snack, to finish off all unconsumed food, we proceeded down the N.E. ridge towards the Col de Zinal. The first few feet were a little more interesting as we had to stick to a well defined edge, but after this the remainder of the descent consisted mainly of scree sliding, with an occasional patch of scrambling. The great tower, several hundred feet high, at about half height, makes a very impressive sight, but as regards a climbing obstacle its value is zero since it can be turned on the N. side over piles of strange, miraculously balanced blocks. And so, in a further two and a half hours, we reached the Col de Zinal at 7 p.m. From here, with the last hour of daylight, we managed to get clear of the glacier, and then with the aid of lanterns, down a path over the moraine to the hut.

It was 9-30 when we finally reached the Schönbühl, and so hardly surprising that we felt a little tired after 19 hours exercise, with a minimum of time spent in halts. The original plan had been to do the Ober Gabelhorn next day, but this scheme gradually changed, during the course of supper, into voting the next day for a rest at the hut.

For our day of rest the weather was, as might be expected, perfect, but when on the following morning we arose at 12-30, it had taken a very decided turn for the worse. When at 1-30 we were prepared to start, it began to drizzle, and so to keep in step with the other parties (mostly guided) we postponed our departure one hour. At 2-30 things looked a little better, as the fine rain had stopped, but there was still a large amount of cloud obscuring the Matterhorn and most of the peaks to the East. General opinion now seemed to favour a start, and as we had about five hours of walking before us to reach the foot of the South face of the Gabelhorn the weather should have plenty of time to decide which way it was going to jump. For the first one and a half hours down the path towards Zermatt it deteriorated, and as soon as we turned off the main path to go up the large combe, the fine rain again commenced. This was depressing, and although it now began to appear fairly conclusive, we decided that no matter what the weather we would at least go to the foot of the face, and so not risk missing a good day should it improve. Soon after this, there was an improvement

and the weather, evidently having seen that we were not to be too easily discouraged, gradually cleared so that after an extensive halt at the foot of the face we were able to start climbing at 9-30 with promise of a perfect day.

There are no well defined features on the face—only a shallow depression, barely a couloir, in the centre, with two feeble attempts at buttresses on either side. We decided on the left-hand one, and roped up at full length on a 100-foot rope. The first 200-300 feet were steep, though quite easy, but being in a cautious mood we climbed singly and, leading through, made rapid progress. Then the angle eased off a little and for the next 1,000 feet, approximately, we mostly moved together only having to move singly again on two or three steep little steps. One of these, at about half height, sticks in mind as here we had to negotiate a small sharp overhang. Mary, having watched my efforts, evidently decided that my route was not the best for crossing this lip ; but when her turn came I was inclined to think that perhaps mine wasn't such a bad place after all.

After one and a half hours we landed on a wide ledge not more than 100 feet below the Grand Gendarme of the Arbengrat. We studied the guide book again, and were perhaps a little sceptical of its forecast of two and a half hours for the final 100 metres, which it describes as “très difficile.” Next came an easy walk along the ledge to the right until it ended in a shallow couloir. This looked an unpleasant place, being steep, rather polished and having no sign of any belays, so that I was very pleased when, after a short distance we could move out to the right on to the rougher, though almost vertical retaining wall. There followed several fine pitches on this solid edge before it petered out on another long, but this time, narrow ledge. Here we were some 150 feet below the summit, and it was not difficult to pick out the final chimney, 75 feet above, which forms the crux of the climb. From half way along the ledge on which we stood there was a finger crack up the wall almost as far as the next shelf, but exactly how to manage the last 20 feet of wall above a small bulge, into which this crack disappeared, was not quite clear from below. At this point Mary found a good, or at least moderate, bunch of belays, and with a semi-layback I was soon up to the bulge. Then followed a delicate movement out to the left and a mantelshelf on to a nice flat stance about

one foot square. It was here that the fact gradually dawned on me that this was certainly not the route from the lower ledge to the upper. There was no sign of a belay, and the next 20 feet were rather like a miniature Botterills, sloping to the right, and almost holdless. I advanced a couple of feet and then rapidly retreated to review the situation further. Certainly there was no belay and I didn't particularly fancy returning round the bulge and down again to seek an alternative on the right. The answer was a piton, and fortunately there was a perfect crack at the side of the stance, into which one could be driven vertically downwards. Having dug out the necessary piton and hammer from the bottom of the sack, I managed to drive in the spike right up to the ring, in a most comforting manner, and then with the moral support of a running belay went up the "Botterills." It was not easy, even in Vibram, so, as Mary was in nails, I advised her in the strongest possible terms, to put on rubbers before starting the crack. With the advantage of plimsoles Mary rapidly came up to join me, but having taken one look at the piton, declined my suggestion of trying to recover it.

From this upper ledge we at once saw the error of our ways in making the direct ascent, as only a short distance to the right, round a small nose, there was a much easier way up the wall. Still, that was of no consequence ; our one interest now being in the next two pitches. The first of these was most amusing, as it involved a crawl (quite literally) along a slab which sloped upwards and outwards. The crawl was necessary because of a large overhang immediately overhead, and even this was made more difficult by the repeated catching on the "roof" of the ice-axe shafts which were protruding from the sacks. At the end of this traverse we landed on an excellent stance, well provided with a rock belay and piton. The final open chimney ahead looked interesting, to say the least, being exposed and slightly over the vertical for the first 15 feet ; but to my great delight it contained three well-placed pitons. By bridging and a certain amount of brute force I clambered up the overhang and then scrambled up the easy gully ahead to the ridge. Here Mary joined me with her usual speed, and after a few minutes on the broken ridge we reached the summit.

Our time for the final section of the face had been three hours, but I feel sure that it is rather more than 100 metres.

# SOME SNOW CLIMBS

G. F. PEAKER

FROM its perch on the northern buttress of the Mönch the Guggi hut surveys the green pastures of the Oberland. On the six occasions I have visited it no other party has spent the night there. Considered in isolation this fact indicates no more than that the 95 per cent. confidence limits\* for such a success are 100 and 54 per cent. But probability, as the late Lord Keynes used to say, is relevant rather to a state of knowledge than a state of fact, and a cursory scrutiny of the hut book raises the lower confidence limit to about 90 per cent. I will forbear, with reluctance, to enlarge further on the nature of statistical inference, fascinating though that topic must be to all right thinking persons, and content myself with remarking that not the least of the attractions of the north side of the main Oberland Chain is the prospect of spending the night before a climb in a quiet and well-ventilated hut.

For about a dozen miles, from the lower Grindelwald Glacier to the Tschingel pass, there is no breach in the mountain wall which is wholly easy to surmount, and none which fails to combine the aesthetic satisfaction of crossing a pass with the cruder physical pleasure of a first-rate climbing day. Decidedly the most attractive, in the mixed delights it promises, is the Guggi route, which is named, perhaps, on the converse of the Euxine principle. Starting from the hut of that ilk, the Guggi route makes an upward traverse across the whole northern face of the Jungfrau to the Silberlücke, then swings back left and mounts direct to the summit. The obstacles are all concentrated in the lower half of the climb: from the Silberlücke onwards the way is little harder, though somewhat longer, than the ascent from the Jungfrauoch. The climb is almost entirely on snow, and one need never deplore the wasting of the precious minutes of an Alpine fortnight in a form of pleasure which could be equally well indulged on Scafell, or on Lliwedd.

\*This statement means that either a rare event has occurred in the sampling or the probability lies within the named limits. Cf. MARX (GROUCHO not KARL) 'Either this man's dead, or my watch has stopped.'

Three main glaciers, the Guggi, the Kuhlauenen, and the Giessen, stream down the northern side of the Jungfrau, and these have to be crossed in succession. Like the slabs on Clogwyn du'r Arddu, and in the same sense, they overlap. The Kuhlauenen throws down a subsidiary ice wall to the Guggi, and the Giessen to the Kuhlauenen: these ice walls constitute the first two obstacles, while the third is a similar ice wall between an upper and a lower branch of the Giessen glacier.

In 1947 Hilary Sinclair and I arrived at the hut in the early afternoon, and spent a busy time until nightfall collecting water from a snowpatch separated from the hut by a longish stretch of slabs, reconnoitring the way down to the glacier, making a sketch of the first big ice fall, gazing at the Oberland, and at the weather, and cooking our supper. The book gives half an hour for the descent to the glacier, but I hazard the opinion that most amateur parties will find this a considerable underestimate. The way takes a descending traverse over smoothish slabs sparsely covered with scree at about the angle of repose. We cairned it carefully in the afternoon, but even so had occasional perplexities in the morning. The glacier had shrunk considerably and left a small overhang of 15-20 feet as the final step. (This can easily be turned, in case of retreat, by an upward detour.)

Warned by our afternoon reconnaissance we left the hut in time to set foot on the glacier while it was yet dark. It was not very cold, and the surface was softish, but one is very low at this point, and we adopted the optimistic (and subsequently justified) view that it would be harder higher up. At the crack of dawn we put on claws at the foot of the first big ice face.

On Hilary's excellent drawing of this we had sketched in two possible routes, each including a rather long question mark where a vital link might or might not exist but was in any case invisible from the hut. Both these routes lay well to the right. From the point we had now attained it looked easier than from the hut to move directly upwards for some hundreds of feet to the foot of a large ice cliff which, if enigmatic in the half light, was no more so than the invisible bits of our projected routes. The claws were holding well and we mounted quickly in the growing light. A nearer view revealed a remarkable piece of



luck. The great cliff was split by the emerging end of a vast longitudinal crevasse, and the lowest point of the V then presented to us was by no means inaccessible. A very steep but short ascent took us into the bed of the crevasse and we were delighted to find that this bed sloped steeply upwards and vanished behind a corner after a few easy pitches. Rounding the corner we were again gratified to see that from a point a little farther on a sort of rake ran steeply backwards up the left-hand wall, and that it was quite possible to cut up this and emerge again on the surface of the upper world, with the great cliff now behind us. Not only so, but when we did emerge we found that we were separated from the level part of the Kuhlauenen glacier by no more than an easy slope and a moderate *schrund*. The first step had gone unexpectedly well, and we crossed the Kuhlauenen glacier with an easy mind.

These upper plateaux of the Jungfrau glacier are charming places. On the left a stretch of level ice leads to the foot of the great snow-covered cliffs of the mountain, in shadow but rimmed with the morning light. Ahead lie the snows one has yet to traverse, behind one is the Eiger glacier, while to the right the foreground drops away abruptly as the glaciers descend towards the Trümletenthal, and the lakes and pastures of the Oberland fill in the view in pleasing contrast to the white world in which one moves.

The Giessen Glacier lies between two lateral spurs of the Jungfrau. The upper parts of these spurs are almost horizontal, and terminate in the Schneehorn and Klein Silberhorn respectively before plunging steeply downwards to the Trümletenthal. Between the Schneehorn and the Jungfrau the Giessen Glacier escapes over the spur in a steep ice fall, and similarly an upper branch of it escapes over the Klein Silberhorn spur and descends to the main branch. Neither the Schneehorn nor the Klein Silberhorn rises appreciably above its proper plateau, but whereas the latter is completely snowbound the former belies its name by revealing a rock face below its summit, and to the right of its ice fall. The ice fall can thus be turned on these rocks, which are about 500 feet high and offer no particular difficulty. After crossing the next plateau one can reach the upper basin either by climbing the steep snow ridge of the Klein Silberhorn, or by taking the ice face direct if it looks

practicable, as it did on this occasion. From the upper basin a similar choice confronts one between a direct assault, this time on the Silberlücke, and a turning movement to the right up the ridge of the Silberhorn. Unlike its little brother the Silberhorn proper is a distinct eminence, and its ascent involves a redescent to the pass. Wishing to avoid this loss of height (which we found next year on traversing the Silberhorn to be quite trivial—as indeed we saw from the breach on this occasion) we mounted direct to the pass. This involved some hard cutting, and was perhaps a mistake: the ridge might well have proved easier. However this may be, it was certainly a mistake to quit the ice slope a few feet below the breach to gain the rocks at their lowest point. These rocks are exceedingly loose and should be avoided. Once established on the pass we enjoyed a long rest in perfect conditions. The abyss of the Silberlautobel beneath us was wreathed in a light mist in which its crags vanished and appeared again: beyond lay the pastures of Obersteinberg and the cliffs of the Gspaltenhorn. To the right the Silberhorn, to the left the Jungfrau, and behind us the thin line of our track across the snow fields. After a halt marred only by the thought of its too early conclusion we turned left up the rock ridge which soon becomes snow and eventually merges in the slopes of the Hochfirn about an hour and a half above the pass. The snow ridge is fairly steep and as it was now full afternoon a certain amount of care was needed. The ascent of the Hochfirn and of the final pyramid offered no difficulties beyond those due to the fact that it occurred late in a long day, and early in a short holiday, but I, for one, was not wholly sorry, despite its great charm, when we reached the end of it and gained the summit at what may elastically be called teatime.

The contrast between the abrupt cliffs of the northern side and the relatively gentle slopes to the south of the main chain is pleasing, and afforded an ample excuse for an even more prolonged halt on the summit, and the snow was hardening again before we began the journey to the Joch. This is of a soothing and mellow character, disposing to peaceful meditation and the enjoyment of scenery, save for one thing. After descending into the upper basin of the Jungfraufirn one is confronted by a short ascent to the nearer (but higher) entrance to the catacombs, an ascent moreover up snow which has been exposed all day

to the full force of the sun. The foreknowledge of the number and depths of the strides needed to overcome this trifling rise added an astringent touch to the concluding enjoyments of a perfect day.

The Silberhorn route coincides with the Guggi route from the Silberlücke to the summit, but reaches the Silberhorn from the new hut on the Rotbrettlucke. I have described an ascent by this route in A. J., LVII (May, 1949) and will not repeat the account here, save to remark that to get from the Scheidegg to the hut is not quite so simple as might be supposed.

This climb is decidedly easier than the Guggi. On the other hand, the third member of this trinity, the ascent of the Mönch from the Scheidegg side, is considerably harder. For this expedition one again starts from the Guggi hut, which, as has been said above, lies on the great northern buttress of the Mönch. The climb goes straight up this buttress or ridge, and would be a simple matter, though long, were it not for the Nollen. The Nollen is a sort of ice nose which interrupts the otherwise quite easy ridge at a point when it has already risen high above the Eiger and Guggi Glaciers, which it separates. This nose must be overcome by a prolonged piece of step cutting (the book gives two to five hours according to the hardness of the ice) at about as steep an angle as can be managed without hand holds (and sometimes a bit steeper). There is no objective danger: the angle is much too steep to tempt anyone to take liberties with a snow covering, should one exist, and provided one can carry on cutting for the necessary length of time the whole thing is quite safe. But it would be unwise to embark on it unless one was quite confident one could finish it out. To make the steps close enough together to provide an easy retreat would, of course, prejudice the prospect of success by adding greatly to the labour. In 1948 we found it worth while to keep fairly close to the left-hand (Eiger) edge where anchorage could twice be obtained by thrusting the shaft of the axe into tiny incipient crevasses. This enabled the lead to be changed without cutting extra steps. The best number is two. With a party of four or more it is preferable for a rope of two to do the cutting while the others wait in comfort for the ladder to be completed, since otherwise they will get uncommonly cold in the course of two or three hours, the Nollen being exposed in

more than one sense. Above the steepest part of the nose gradually gives back, in Roman fashion, and finally merges into a snow slope, from which the south-east ridge and the summit can be quickly gained (barring thunderstorms—as to which see the article in A. J., LVII mentioned above).

On the day of the Nollen climb we returned to the Scheidegg by the Eigerjoch. The Southern Eigerjoch is easily reached from the Jungfrauoch by passing through the Obermönchjoch, crossing the Fieschergrat near point 3687 and steering in a north-easterly direction across the upper bay of the Grindelwald Fiescherfirn. The rock ridge from the southern to the northern Eigerjoch is an easy but enjoyable rock climb. From the northern pass there is a simple descent to the upper levels of the Eiger glacier. One can get a general notion of the way through the lower ice fall from the ridge: in 1948 it did not present any special difficulties. This route can be commended as a practicable alternative to returning to the Scheidegg by the railway, which is expensive considering that one is supplying energy gratis to the company.

It is curious to reflect that on the occasion of the first crossing of the Eigerjoch in 1859, by Stephen and the Mathews, with Lauener, J. B. Croz and M. Charlet as guides, the party on reaching the northern col decided that it was better to descend again to the Eiger Glacier and face the formidable climb to the southern pass, rather than to attempt the traverse of the ridge between them. The ridge, however, is described as “a long ridge of snow, sharp as the blade of a knife, and playfully alternated with great rocky teeth sticking up through their icy covering like the edge of a saw.” The teeth are still there, but the snow is less conspicuous today. This bears out what we know from other sources, that the glaciation of the Alps was at a maximum in the golden age of mountaineering, a fact that goes a long way, I think, to explain the extraordinary difference in estimates of relative difficulty between those times and the present. For example, Mont Blanc was first climbed by the Brenva in the same year as the Matterhorn by the Swiss ridge, and with far less *réclame*. Whympers devotes much less space in “Scrambles” to the ascent of the Col de Pilatte, or of his eponymous Couloir on the Verte than to what is today the very simple business of descending the Ecrins ridge. The Ober-

gabelhorn was climbed by its north ridge in 1865 (by Lord Francis Douglas immediately before the ascent of the Matterhorn). The easy rock ridge of the Arbengrat had to wait till 1874. Leslie Stephen himself, one may infer from the "Playground," regarded the ascent of the Rothhorn as comparable in difficulty with that of the Fiescherjoch, or the Jungfrauojoch. Today an excellent three days' expedition from Zermatt consists in crossing the Trifthorn to the Mountet, ascending the Obergabelhorn by the north ridge and descending by the Arbengrat, and returning over the Rothhorn to Zermatt. But the chef d'oeuvre of this expedition is the north ridge of the Obergabelhorn. The traverse of the Rothhorn, charming though it is, is chiefly delightful for the views it gives of the superb snow slopes of its neighbour, which makes one of the loveliest spectacles in the Alps. There are few ridges so wholly satisfying both to climb and to gaze upon.

In all these cases the rock climbs appear today to be of a much lower order of difficulty than the snow routes, whereas in the 'sixties they seemed more formidable. No doubt this is partly because a snow climb changes from year to year. And something must be allowed for the fact that the men of old climbed with guides, so that long hours of step cutting must have appeared as seasons of relative ease and recuperation to the amateur members of a party. But I think there is more to it than this. It is a matter of common experience today that snow climbs are generally at their easiest, and rock climbs at their most difficult early in the season after a snowy winter, while late in a dry season the opposite is true. Now we know that the glaciers have shrunk considerably since the 'sixties, and it is a fair inference that in those days there was usually as much snow as is found at the present epoch only after a quite exceptional winter. This would tend to make snow ascents easier, and rock climbs harder, and I think some parts of the difference in standards may be due to this cause.

There has been some speculation in the press of late about whether the change which has caused the glaciers to shrink is likely to persist, or is to be reversed, and hopes have been expressed that the climate of Europe will become warmer, and even sub-tropical. If this happened I, for one, should deplore it. For my part I would prefer more snow rather than less.

But it would surprise me to learn that there were any sound grounds for expecting the one event rather than the other, the analysis of time series being notoriously a tricky business, and the data, in this case, scanty. In any event we may console ourselves with two reflections—first, that the snow mountains will last our time, and secondly that, should they unfortunately be liquidated in the relatively remote future, our descendants will no doubt have discovered other methods of enjoying themselves, and we shall not be there to mar their pleasures by praising the greater glories of times past.

# EXPERIENCE

P. R. J. HARDING

THE day started in the evening. It was a fine evening and the mountain was still. The rocks were still warm from the sun. Stars twinkled in the sky. The moon painted the sharp outlines of rock in stark relief, filling the cracks and gullies with impenetrable darkness. The day started on such a night. Why shouldn't one climb on such a night? We climbed on wet and dismal days, on days when mist blotted out all save a few feet of rope and an arm's length. We would climb that night. Night had given an added touch of magnificence to the crag; limbs moved easily; nails found unseen holds noiselessly in the half-light and we climbed. On and on, higher and higher, without effort, with rhythm, without a care, with confidence. Crack and slab, groove and grass, the day was going well.

Then the rocks steepened. A jagged line of black against the blue above showed overhangs. They had not been obvious at the start of our route: suddenly they had appeared as some obstacle placed by unseen hand.

What were they like? Would there be a weakness? Belays? We moved on, together, with confidence. I had confidence; in myself, in my companions and in the rope. Confidence in the rope which was so much more than a patterned array of fibres, a length of hempen cord. More than that; a bond between climber and climber. That was our rope. As strong as the loyalty of friends, no mere material safeguard; a lay of spirit and mutual confidence, unbreakable save by the climbers themselves. Thus I mused on rope and confidence, poised below the out-jutting fierceness of the mountain. A rope is as strong as friends will it to be, our rope was strong. I felt strangely happy and at ease up there, I laughed and smiled down towards my companions. The buttresses rang with laughter, my own happy laughter. I could not see my fellows, the rope went from my waist to them, somewhere below, but they were with me. I could depend on them.

The day had darkened. The moon filtered through a wisp of shadowy cloud and I looked up at the overhangs for a weakness. Below, the rope disappeared into a confused mosaic of rock and grass, shadow and light. I rested again and thought of the rope, the link. It was a good link, strengthened through many days and events in the hills. With that refreshing thought I rose once more to tackle the hiatus. I could see no weakness, nor did I look for one. I was confident and climbed as the mood dictated. This was just another overhang.

What would the holds turn out like? What lay above? I did not ask myself these questions. Overhangs! I had little to learn about overhangs; no overhang was too tough for me. I swung up easily into a groove above. It was a greasy groove, but still, with confidence I moved on and the rope slithered, comforting, behind. The holds were tiny, my fingers slipped on the muddy holds. This was difficult. I had expected things to ease after the overhang. I had not bargained for this. Suddenly, without warning, the sling around my waist tightened for an instant and then became slack again. I balanced there tensely in case the rope should become tight again. Beads of cold moisture made themselves sensed on my face, my hands became clammy, finger-tips sweaty. I noticed the cold, the minuteness of the holds, the unrelenting steepness of the groove, the exposure of my position. I felt alone. The rope had always been limitless, what had happened now? What were they doing down there? Like a spinning line taking a false strike, so with unsuspecting suddenness, the rope had become taut and slack again. What was the matter? Frantically I shouted into the void to receive no answer save one of echo; everything was still.

The moon had disappeared now, behind a bank of cloud. Past my poised feet, the fellside was still silvered with reflected light, above was only darkness. Darkness and what else? I pulled at the loose rope gently but there was no life, no answering movement. Furiously I tugged it. Despairingly I shouted again and again. My legs began to dither uncontrollably, my fingers were numb and I began to sway, just slightly, on the holds. With horror and incredulity I looked down, all was dark now and quiet save for the pounding in my ears. Nothing could have happened I told myself. I was being a fool, getting panicky over nothing. My companions were there



down below, waiting for me to go on, and yet, something felt strange, something seemed to tell me that all was not well. I knew I could not stay on such small holds: "Keep going!" "Upwards! Upwards!" the words kept repeating in my head, but I had no heart, no guts, to force that awful groove, no heart, no guts to climb. Each time I looked, the corner seemed more steep, a greasy, holdless gut fading into inky blackness. It was impossible, I could not go on. Swaying backwards and forwards I began to think. Why had I not surveyed the route beforehand? I had gone into this with my eyes open yet unseeing, a blind fool of a climber.

Now I must bear the consequences, I must pay for my folly. I should have studied the route, examined the rope, lots of things I ought to have done or not done. Such things are always obvious afterwards, when the hour is late. Still I must not panic now: I could descend if necessary, they must still be there below, waiting. Of course, I was being foolish. It would be well, as many times before: the joyous "Right ho!" when I reached the stance, the answering shout of "That's me, take it in!" when I pulled in the line. I must move on, still have confidence. Lips set, body tensed, I stepped up.

The mountain had vanished with that step. Everything was bright and I was cycling in the Lancashire Pennines, walking in a Derbyshire Dale, swimming, motor-cycling; doing my first climb. All the places I had ever been, all the climbs I had ever done, all my friends, climbing, laughing, singing, they were all there. I could see all these things superimposed, ever-changing, and behind it all, a body falling through space, turning over and over. A severed rope, the strands just snapped, as if by inhuman strength, my companions laughing, then the picture faded and all went black.

Slowly, a red mist took place of darkness, a swirling mist of bright red. With an effort I parted the crimson curtain and looked up into a bright blue sky. The air was fresh, clouds scudded across, beneath the blue. Where was I? On a narrow ledge in the middle of the mountainside. Had I really fallen off? I wasn't injured. Where were my companions? I was alone. I surveyed the position. Below was overhung, with sheer walls sweeping down to the scree. Above, immediately above, was a vertical corner, green with slime, holdless, im-

possible. I looked to the right of the groove, there was a staircase of rock, grassy ledges, rough jug-handled rock, and slabs stretching up into the distance towards the summit.

Then I realised something. I had been a blind fool of a climber, and a lucky one. Now I could see the way ahead and I studied the route. Looking back I became sick at the thought of what had happened, what might have happened. I could see it all so clearly. But I had learnt a lesson. I was still on the mountain, shaken but unhurt. Unhurt? I turned away and climbed on feeling strong, with rough firm rock beneath my grasp.

# CRIME IN THE COIRE

J. N. MILLS

**H**AD it not been for the cairn, it might all never have happened: the buttress might have remained unsullied with ironmongery, and we should never have spent three nights up in the coire.

It all started three years ago, when we thought from the old guide that the South Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochan was still virgin. So it might be, we thought, as we approached along the floor of the coire, and admired the great vertical flutings of basalt, broken here and there by a little overhang. As we got closer, though, and started to climb the scree, we picked out a line which seemed just a little less steep and appeared to be diversified with a few holds which sloped in the right direction. The closer we approached, the more definitely did this seem to be the only line of attack on an intimidating cliff, and we were almost optimistic as we uncoiled the rope and got out our rubbers. Then we saw it—a small but clearly fabricated cairn, just at the point where we intended to start.

There was nothing for it, if we wanted a new route we must try somewhere else, so we walked a few yards to the right, where an obvious line of weakness started up the cliff, and a black recess above offered at any rate one secure resting place on the way. The start went easily enough, very steep but well supplied with ledges and square-cut holds. We reached a stance, and there, 25 feet above, was the floor of our recess. Just below it was a brief 10-foot stretch of smooth and vertical wall. We tried a little to the right, which went well enough for a time until the holds completely ceased; but a small belay up here allowed a running thread for the leader. A traverse out on the wall to the left towards the recess equally ended holdlessly, a few feet before a tantalisingly obvious line continued into the recess. Down came the leader to the stance, and tried again.

Above the stance was a mantelshelf, which was attained with difficulty and was even harder to stay on, as the wall above pushed one out and the necessary handhold was low down and

barely admitted the tips of the fingers ; but as the wall above could obviously not be climbed, there was no need to remain long. An overhanging chimney on the left, which led nowhere, was examined as a last resort before we admitted defeat, and consoled ourselves with a good clean abseil. Our camp was near Kingshouse and the autumn days were none too long, so we departed with all haste.

My next visit was three years later, with a different companion. This time we went in mid-summer, and after a week on Ben Nevis to get into training we carried tent and supplies up to Coire nan Lochan so that we should have abundant time for the climbing. The rocks were dry as one seldom sees them. The whole coire indeed was dry, we counted some half-dozen dry lochans as well as four with water, and water to drink was not easy to find. We were awakened at 7 in the morning by sun streaming into the tent, and after a brief swim and a protracted breakfast all seemed propitious for a successful assault.

There was no doubt about our criminal intentions, for the leader was festooned with odd lengths of rope from which hung pitons and carabiners. The mantelshelf had got no easier with the lapse of time, indeed several attempts were needed before a precarious balance was attained ; but no longer was the smooth wall above regarded with blank dismay, for it held a thin vertical crack which would just admit the point of a piton. No easy feat it was, however, to hammer in a piton with one hand whilst out of balance and holding oneself in on diminutive holds with the other. The first one, though hammered right home, looked loose, and another was driven in higher up, just at the limit of reach ; on being cautiously pulled, it seemed firm. Arms were now aching, and a few large drops of rain made a good excuse to postpone the attempt, for what troubles might we not find ahead ?

We roped off, and went up Plackett's route above the offending cairn, of which we had now read. This gave a chance to examine the topography of the face, and it turned out to be easy to scramble down to the black recess, just above where we retreated. Moreover, there was an obvious line to continue up above, on the right-hand edge of the great wall climbed by Plackett's party on a rope from above. To console ourselves, we made a direct finish to Plackett's route by keeping more to the right,

and a long final pitch up a vertical corner followed by a groove exhausted our residual energy. We could do no more but go across to the Church Door Buttress and crawl about in the crypt.

The rain never came to anything, and we felt a little ashamed of ourselves as we set out again next morning to retrieve our laurels. We even tried to exonerate ourselves by getting up the pitch cleanly, by the traverse from the right, where however much one might wish for a piton there was nowhere to insert one. The position was exhilarating, but it led nowhere, so once again the mantelshelf was climbed, a move which always seemed hard, even though moss had been kicked off to uncover some useful footholds.

Now the full extent of our criminal intention became apparent. A piton was already securely fixed in the face, and there was no pretence that this was only to safeguard the leader. A carabiner and rope sling were fixed to it, a foot inserted into the only suggestion of a foothold on the wall, and with a powerful pull on the rope loop the leader moved one step up the wall and found above an invisible but very welcome recessed hold.

This was not enough, though ; the wall bulged out and put one out of balance, every available hold was already in use, and there seemed no possibility of moving up farther, although 5 feet higher one would have been secure in the recess. An attempt was made to get another piton in, where it might be of some use as a foothold, in place of yesterday's loose one which had come out all too easily. Another piton was sent up on the rope ; but this went in so easily and so far that there was nothing left projecting for the toes. The same move up onto the wall was repeated several times, until we both agreed that further progress was not just hard, but physically impossible.

Sadly, we roped off for the last time, abandoning one piton on the scene of the crime. The muscles of the right arm, which had for so long held the leader in balance on the mantelshelf, were now aching hard, so positions were reversed and the erstwhile leader was unceremoniously bundled up the Summit Buttress. Then, for the first time in 10 days of climbing, we lay down for an hour and admired the view.

Whether the rocks have become easier in the rosy light of retrospect I do not know, nor whether timidity played a bigger

part than one would care to admit ; but I am sure that there is still room for a route to be made by a bold leader on the South Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochan.



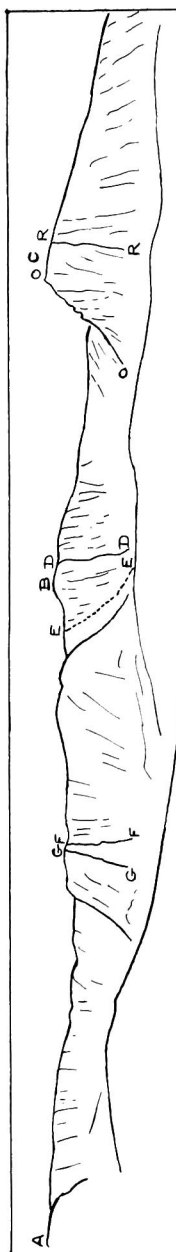


Fig. 1. Cader Idris from the North.

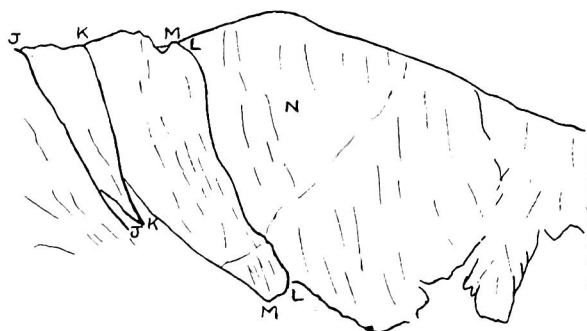


Fig. 2. Craig Cau.

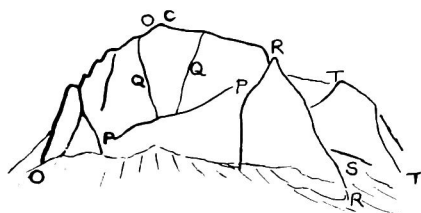


Fig. 3. Cyfrwy.

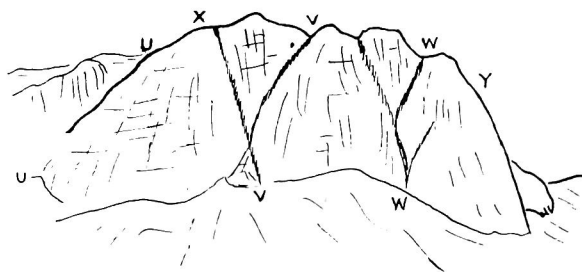


Fig. 4. Craig Cowarch.



# THE OUTLYING CRAGS OF WALES

E. C. PYATT

FIG. 1. CADER IDRIS FROM THE  
NORTH

- A—Mynydd Moel.
- B—Pen y Gader.
- C—Cyfrwy.
- D—Central Gully, Pen y Gader.
- E—Fox's Path.
- F—Twr Du, West Gully.
- G—Twr Du, East Gully.

FIG. 2. CRAIG CAU

- J—Little Gully.
- K—East Gully.
- L—Great Gully.
- M—Pencoe Pillar.
- N—Great Buttress.

FIG. 3. CYFRWY

- O—East Arête.
- P—Easy terrace.
- Q—Routes above terrace.
- R—North Arête.
- S—Scree Gully.
- T—Stone Chute Pinnacle.

FIG. 4. CRAIG COWARCH

- U—Little Gully.
- V—Great Gully.
- W—North Gully. (Identification not absolutely certain.)
- X—South Buttress.
- Y—North-East Buttress.

## GUIDE-BOOK EDITOR'S NOTE

This interim Guide-Book in the Climbers' Club series has one main purpose. There are a large number of secondary crags and outcrops outside the main mountain area of Snowdonia which have been visited but not fully explored. Nowhere has a stage been reached which would justify a final comprehensive volume on the lines of the earlier volumes in the Climbers' Club series. But it was felt that the publication of an interim Guide Book would stimulate interest in these outlying regions and might lead to more exhaustive guide work in a few years' time. After this Guide had been begun, it was found that the Manchester University Mountaineering Club was already engaged on a Guide to the Quellyn area and had done considerable original work towards it. This covered some of the outlying crags: Cwm Du, Craig y Bera, Cwm Silin, Trum y Ddysgl, Y Garn, Llechog and Moel Hebog. There was no point in duplicating this book, which would serve admirably the very purpose we had envisaged. Therefore E. C. Pyatt, who had already begun the outlying crags for the Climbers' Club, placed at their disposal all the material which he had collected dealing with that area.

The remainder of his work is published herewith. It covers the country roughly outside the rectangle Caernarvon—Dolbenmaen—Bettws y Coed—Conway. As it was subsequently decided to publish the Guide Book in the Journal, the work has had to be advanced rapidly and it has not been possible for the author to give the extensive local checking from which it might have benefited. However, the Club has every reason to be grateful to him for his energy, and for throwing open to everybody the possibility of joining in the co-ordination, checking and further exploration.

To make a final success of the plan it is important that all discoveries be communicated in some form to the Climbers' Club, either by notes in Journals or by direct contact with E. C. Pyatt, 96, Priory Gardens, London, N.6. Guide-Books as well as Journals depend upon the co-operation of their readers.

C.W.F.N.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This Guide-Book is a scrap-book of what has gone before and in no way claims to be a complete survey of the area it covers. It is hoped that the gathering together of this material and its presentation in this form will stimulate interest in the more remote parts of Wales and open up new climbing grounds outside the Snowdon area. The various sections are not co-ordinated to the extent that a uniform style of presentation or uniform grading of difficulty exists throughout, indeed the accounts still exhibit the individual styles of their original authors. It would not be possible to achieve this uniformity for such a wide area unless considerably more time was devoted to the task. This feature has therefore been sacrificed to the rapid production of a summary of what has already been done.

Most of the routes have not often been climbed and their standards are either not known or are extremely tentative, so that the ascent of even an old one is still to some extent an adventure and not the usual orderly following of a well-established catalogue. In fact the guide is more in the tradition of W. P. Haskett-Smith's famous little book, which it now somewhat belatedly supercedes, than in that of the volumes of the present Climbers' Club series. Complete and exhaustive works in the latter style can follow in later years.

Because of the diversity of rock types and formations it is not possible to write any general introductory remarks to cover them all. It remains therefore to mention one or two points of method. Normal National Grid References, as explained inside the covers of the New Popular Edition of the 1 in. O.S. Maps are extensively used to locate physical features. Copies of the appropriate maps are therefore indispensable in reading what follows. The point reference given in the case of extensive crags is not intended to locate the exact situation of the climbing, but serves only to fix the whereabouts of the crag itself on the map. Spelling follows the 1 in. O.S. Map wherever possible.

The author's acknowledgments are due to :—

George Abraham, for permission to quote from *Rock Climbing in North Wales*, the accounts of the East Arête of Cyfrwy and the Central Gully of Pen y Gader.

E. H. Lane, for information on Radnor and Brecon.

Showell Styles, for notes on the Rhinogs, the Moelwyn-Cnicht Group, the Ffestiniog district and Moel y Gest.

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And Messrs. R. W. Beard, J. M. Edwards, E. L. Evans, K. Ingold, H. L. Roberts, N. R. Sales, R. Sharman and L. J. Symonds for notes and advice on smaller points.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE CLIMBING COUNTIES (Caernarvon and Merioneth)	
Lleyn Peninsula .. .. .	54
Moel y Dyniewyd Group .. .. .	55
Moelwyn—Cnicht Group .. .. .	57
Moel Siabod Group .. .. .	58
Bettws y Coed District .. .. .	58
Migneint .. .. .	60
Arenig Fawr—Rhobell Fawr Group .. .. .	61
Rhinog Group .. .. .	61
Cader Idris Group .. .. .	63
Aran Group .. .. .	69
Taren y Gesail—Maen Du Group .. .. .	71
THE OTHER COUNTIES	
Anglesey .. .. .	72
Denbigh .. .. .	72
Flint .. .. .	72
Montgomery .. .. .	73
Cardigan .. .. .	74
Radnor .. .. .	74
Brecon .. .. .	75
Pembroke .. .. .	76
Carmarthen .. .. .	76
Glamorgan .. .. .	76

## THE LLEYN PENINSULA (O.S. Sheet 115)

The Lleyn Peninsula is that part of Caernarvonshire which lies west of the main block of high mountains, i.e., west of the Caernarvon—Pen y Groes—Dolbenmaen—Portmadoc road. The Rivals are the best known hill group; rising to 1849 feet at the highest point. Farther east the hills rise to 1712 feet at Cym Ddu, while south of Morfa Nevin is the isolated Carn Fadryn, 1217 feet. There are some fine cliffs at the extreme westerly tip.

**THE RIVALS.** One climb has been reported on the seaward side of Point 1458 in the Rivals. This is approached through the village of Trevor, past an absolutely delightful camp-site very close to the seashore. Farther on, a tip of unwanted stone thrown out from the quarries high above stretches right down to the path and at times of blasting a notorious alpine danger can also be experienced here. Past this a pleasant cliff section is entered and the Holly Tree Buttress is quickly reached, immediately above a ruinous sheep pen. It is the second buttress from the scree at the north end of the crags.

“Starting at the lowest point of the rocks there are two pitches up a steep wall; a traverse of 50 feet to the right along a broad grassy ledge leads to a belay beneath and left of a steep slab in the corner. This slab is climbed and a rising traverse to the right is followed round two awkward corners, the second above an overhang, to a holly tree at the foot of an overhanging chimney (90 foot run-out). An excellent chockstone belay 6 feet above the holly tree protects the leader on the final pitch, which may be taken direct up the chimney, or up the rib forming the left-hand wall of the chimney, or up vertical heather left of the rib. (50 foot run-out.)”

The rock is granite. First ascent by J. E. Q. Barford and R. B. Kembell-Cook. July, 1936. (C.M. and Helyg Log Book.)

There is little doubt that plenty of fine climbing is waiting to be done in this area. It is surprising that no climber (except the above party, who were driven here because it rained too hard in Cwm Silin) has ever been curious enough to investigate why the Rivals appear to drop so steeply into the sea. The outline of these crags is conspicuous from many parts of Snowdonia. Presumably, too, the weather here is even better than at Cwm Silin, which has long had the reputation of being better than at Ogwen.

**MOEL Y GEST.** Some short climbs have been made on the sound rough dolerite of Moel y Gest, one mile west of Portmadoc. The highest point of this at the western end (861 feet) is called Mainmast Hill [549389]; the other end of the ridge (743 feet) is called Foremast Hill [556386]. All the worthwhile crags are on the south side of the hill. All these climbs have been made during the last few years by Showell Styles, who has placed at my disposal his small private guide-book to them, from which the notes below have been compiled.

Some moderate routes have been made on the face of Foremast Hill above Tyddyn Llwyn.

The main crag is farther west below the ridge connecting the two hills. There are four main buttresses separated by gullies. The right-hand buttress, narrow and heathery, is distinguished by a curious ledged flake which rests against the buttress nose a few feet from the base. This is the Signal Bridge, which gives a 110-foot route (V.D.). The gully on its left—the Gangway—is steep and narrow 70 feet (D.). The next buttress—the Bridge—has a heathery platform just above half height—the Monkey's Island. There are two routes, the Direct running up from the lowest point of the buttress is 130 feet (V.D.), the Ordinary which starts right of a chimney on the left side of the buttress and keeps left of the Direct all the way is 110 feet (M.D.). These routes can be interconnected at the Monkey's Island. The next feature to the left is Wardroom Gully ; then follows the broad buttress called the Mainmast, which has a heathery platform like that of the Bridge. The Crow's Nest Route runs straight up the right-hand edge of the buttress, with an airy traverse above the ledge—140 feet (M.). Farther round on the left a large triangular flake is the start of the Catwalk—70 feet (D.). On again is the Mizzen Gully and beyond it the fourth buttress—the Mizzen—which has a 90-foot route, Mizzen Shrouds, of D. standard.

On the west face of Mainmast Hill are other short climbs and problems.

**BRAICH Y PWLL.** A number of short climbs and girdle traverses are to be found on good rock on this headland, which is the most westerly point of the Peninsula. The cliffs of Braich y Noddfa immediately north-east are also promising. The possibilities of the remaining cliffs in this area and on Bardsey Island are as yet untried.

**MOEL Y DYNIEWYD GROUP** (O.S. Sheets 107 or 116)

This hill group, lying between Nant Gwynant, Nant Mor and the Pass of Aberglaslyn, has no very outstanding summits and covers only a small area. It has, however, a number of small but worthy crags, which are all within a short distance of Beddgelert.

**CRAIG DYNIEWYD**

**SITUATION.** On the east and south sides of Moel y Dyniewyd (1245 feet) [612478].

**APPROACHES.** From Beddgelert by leaving the Gwynant road at Mill Bridge and circling above Sygun Bach farm to Bwlch Sygun. Up a little hollow to the old boundary fence which is followed for threequarters of a mile along the ridge towards Moel y Dyniewyd. At the foot of the final rise to the latter, contour right until the crags develop above on the left.

**DESCRIPTION.** After a third of a mile a grass crowned tower marks the corner separating the south from the east aspect of the crag. Short of the corner is a sheep pen below the pasture wall on the right. From the scree above this pen rises a buttress of fine rock. On its left is an open gully with an oak tree half way up and to its left again. The buttress is bounded on its right by a deep chimney, very steep at its top. Farther right still is a pinnacle. This buttress is :—

**CHRISTMAS BUTTRESS.** (First Ascent 25th December, 1947. P. O. Work and E. S. Trickett. V.D.)

Start : At the foot of the buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Up a groove slanting right to a bollard and stance. (This point can be reached by a walk from the right.)

(2) 30 feet. Up left of the arête above by a thin crack for 10 feet to a bollard below the overhang ; traverse left across the wall to the far side of a hanging slab.

(3) 50 feet. Steep cracks above and to the left for 30 feet, then up the vertical wall on the right to the crest of the buttress.

**CHIMNEY AND FACE CLIMB.** (First Ascent, Whitsun, 1948. P. O. Work. Severe.) Up chimney right of the buttress for 50 feet, then traverse right for some 20 feet and continue up a steep face of loose rock to the top.

On the East Face of the crag there are no routes of any length, but some scrambling is possible. If contouring is continued low rocks outcrop at intervals until the hump-backed hill, which withholds the little lake is passed. Then a fresh line of crags is visible beyond and at a higher level :—

**UPPER ROCKS—MYNYDD LLYNDY.** Their central part is crowned with a quartzzy forehead and a route might go direct up and over it. Continuing right to near the end of the outcrop a deep groove gives an interesting, though short, climb. The arête on the right also provides a climb. Both about D.

Lower down the hillside between the Upper Rocks and the disused slate working in Nant Mor are the Lower Rocks at about the 750-foot contour. There are a number of short problems.

## GRAVESTONE BUTTRESS

**SITUATION.** On Craig Llan [597475] the hill which rises immediately south-east of Beddgelert. The buttress is on the west face above the Fisherman's Path and can be located from the fact that it is in line with Gelert's Grave and the nearest point of the Glaslyn where there used to be a bridge.

**APPROACHES.** Readily from the Fisherman's Path.

**DESCRIPTION.** From a wide fan of heathery slabs the outcrop develops upwards into a steep and well-defined final tower. The lowest point of the fan (cairn) is not the lowest point of the Final Tower rib which is higher to the left. The two routes below both start at the lowest point of the fan but move across to the main rib at different levels.

**ORDINARY ROUTE.** (First Ascent 8th January, 1950. D. E. Pullin, P. O. Work and J. Derry. Standard—D.)

Start : At a cairn near some dwarf trees.

(1) 50 feet. A steep pillar capped by a small cannon stone rises above the start. Take the slabs on the right of it to a belay above and to the right of the cannon.

(2) 60 feet. Up the broken rib behind the stance for 20 feet, then move along left and up to a stance below a heathery groove formed by a small wall abutting on the main rib.

(3) 70 feet. Traverse left and up more slabs which form the left side of the main rib. Pass the base of a quartz chute, which offers a way off up to the left, and make for a recess among blocks directly below the final tower.

(4) 60 feet. Go up the groove and behind a finger stone, then up a break in the left side of the tower, keeping several yards away from the steep edge on the right.

DIRECT ROUTE. (First Ascent 15th January, 1950. P. O. Work, G. W. Staunton. V.D.)

Start : As for Ordinary Route.

(1) 45 feet. Take the steep pillar direct on its left side to the cannon stone.

(2) 40 feet. Walk a yard or two left and climb slabs to the second stance of the Ordinary Route.

(3) 65 feet. Take the short wall direct up its right side on thin holds. Move left and commence the main rib direct. Up this all the way to the recess stance on the Ordinary Route.

(4) 65 feet. Use the groove to gain a standing position on the five-inch ledge above, then traverse round the corner of the rib on the right. Use the crack beyond for 2 feet of upward progress, then cross back up the left wall on to a broad mantelshelf on the main rib again. Go directly up to another ledge using some blocks jammed in a fault to overcome the vertical last bit. Move a few feet left, then cross upwards and to the right to the edge again where the holds are larger. Pull up the last few feet to the screes above.

There are climbing possibilities also in the well-known Aberglaslyn Pass [595465]. On the east side are several towers which might provide steep routes. There is some loose rock.

#### THE MOELWYN AND CNICHT GROUP (O.S. Sheet 107 or 116)

This group is bounded by Nant Mor, the Vale of Ffestiniog, the Ffestiniog—Blaenau Ffestiniog—Dolwyddelan road, the Ceunant Ty'n y ddal and the Bwlch Ehediad. It is a block of mountainous country, the west side of which is divided by the valley of Croesor running up into it in a north-easterly direction.

The principal peaks are Moelwyn Bach (2334 feet) [660437], Moelwyn Mawr (2527 feet) [658449] and Cnicht (2265 feet) [646466]. The latter, which is a long ridge running north-east to south-west, is said to resemble the Matterhorn when viewed end-on.

The majority of the climbing consists of scrambling and short pitches but there are one or two very fine short rock climbs in places on Moelwyn, well worthy of serious attention. The crags are detailed overleaf :—

YR ARDDU [627462]. There are numerous short steep pitches 20-50 feet on this rocky hill one mile west of Cnicht.

SOUTH FLANK OF MOELWYN BACH. Very steep buttresses and chimneys, 50 feet.

EAST FLANK OF MOELWYN BACH. At the 1500-foot level running north-east from Llyn Stwlan [665445] is a line of rock faces which appear sound and attractive. C. F. Kirkus and G. H. Kirkus made a route here in 1929. "At a point where the crag is about 200 feet high a large cave is seen, the route goes through this and finishes up a long arête. (V.D.)" (C.C.J., N.S., 1929.)

MOEL YR HYDD [672455]. There is a craggy face on the south-east side of the spur of Moelwyn Mawr. Two routes were made here by C. F. Kirkus and E. H. Weld, in 1929 :—

"(1) In the centre of the face a Gimmer-like arête. 100 feet of climbing. V.D.

(2) In a gully on the right is a small pinnacle ; right of this is a steep nose which offers decidedly severe face climbing."

(C.C.J., N.S., 1929). This is another promising crag.

MOEL MEIRCH [662504]. Carr reports fine short climbs and scrambles here on sound rock.

CRAIG LLYN LLAGI. There is a broken rock face above Llyn Llagi [650482]. Scrambles (Ref. Carr.).

ABOVE HAFOD BRITHION [645495]. Small problems round about the 1000-foot contour.

CWM GELLI IAG [637478]. Short crags on the west side of the stream.

### MOEL SIABOD GROUP (O.S. Sheet 107)

Bounded by the Afon Glaslyn, Nant y Gwryd, Afon Llugwy, River Conway, Afon Lledr, Ceunant Ty'n y ddal and Bwlch Ehediad, this group comprises one very extensive mountain (2860 feet) [705546].

There is little to interest the climber.

Carr reports scrambling possibilities on Clogwyn Bwlch y Maen [675545] and along Y Cribau.

Carr and Lister mentions scrambles on the crags above Llyn y Foel [714548]. C.C.J. N.S. (1940) reports a 200 foot route of D standard—Lone Buttress—on these crags and hints at further possibilities.

The Giant's Forehead above the Lledr Valley is dealt with under Bettws y Coed.

### BETTWS Y COED DISTRICT (O.S. Sheet 107)

Bettws y Coed is a well-known tourist village situated where the Afon Llugwy enters the River Conway [795565]. There are three small crags in the neighbourhood of interest to the passing traveller or to climbers staying in the Ogwen Valley, who may find it worthwhile to make the short trip out here when the weather in the high mountains makes climbing intolerable.



## GIANT'S FOREHEAD

SITUATION [790543]. A few minutes up the Lledr Valley on the right 200 feet above the road.

DESCRIPTION. The crag has a main forehead, a lower layer to this and a limiting arête from top to bottom on the left. Trees, moss, etc. The present routes were made in October, 1934, by B. McKenna and J. M. Edwards. (Reference—Helyg Log Book.)

"FOREHEAD OLD ROUTE. The lower layer is taken up the right angle farthest right—before the separate and rather higher layer beyond the main part.

(1) 30 feet. Traverse into it from the left, up the corner on rock and make a turning traverse to a large oak tree up on the left.

(2) 15 feet. Traverse along a ledge to the left below the main upper tier and stop in a corner with a belay, the last large one on the ledge.

(3) 80 feet. Straight up the crack into a resting place (20 feet). Up and out on the left wall and so to a small oak tree and a heather clump perched out on the face 20 feet below the top of the steepest and most outstanding buttress of the cliff, very visible from the road. Up to the right into an easy chimney to the top.

TWO FOREHEAD SLABS. Start up the left-hand corner up the first layer, which lies more or less up the centre and is steep in two sections. It is surmounted with the aid of an oak tree, 20 feet and 20 feet. Landing on the same ledge farther left below the main upper layer. There is a crack leading up to an obvious rock scoop or cubby-hole again 20-30 feet below the summit of the main buttress and left of and below the heather patch. Now keep back and traverse back left to finish."

## CLOGWYN CYRAU

SITUATION [791571]. Above Pont y Pair.

APPROACHES. Cross the bridge and follow track to the left.

HISTORY. The present routes were made by P. W. Nock and party in 1947. (Reference—Helyg Log Book.)

The best climbs are on the left of the crag :—

"LADY'S CORNER. A steep chimney goes up 60 feet to a comfortable platform on the right. Traverse left 12 feet to a ledge on the extreme left-hand corner of the crag. Straight up above ledge to top, keeping right at first then moving left to edge 40 feet. Steep. V.D.

BOMBER'S WALL. 10 feet right of the chimney the cliff protrudes slightly in an indefinite nose. Straight up this and the steep wall above ; at about 45 feet the angle eases and 20 feet farther on a good ledge below a good belay is reached. Above and to the right two parallel weaknesses provide routes to the top, both go. Just S.

20 yards farther to the right where the cliff is again broken, three routes of D. standard were made.

## CRAIG DINAS

SITUATION [808539]. Above the main road close to Conway Falls Hotel.

**DESCRIPTION.** A steep buttress of 170 feet, the centre of which is unclimbable. On its right a great nose of rock leans against the parent cliff; the line of junction is marked on the left by a fine 50-foot crack. To the right round a corner the nose is arched against the main cliff forming a cavern below. These climbs were made in October, 1930, by R. O. F. Wynne and W. Jones (*C.C.B. N.S.*, No. 25. March, 1931).

There are three routes up the nose :—

**GULL'S NEST CRACK.** A right-angled crack of considerable interest. Half-way up the second wedges into a narrow cave while the leader steps outside.

**OUTSIDE ROUTE.** A few feet up the crack, then stride on to the nose itself. Up this on good rock to finish by clasping a holly tree near the top.

**CAVERN ROUTE.** The interior of the chasm at back of nose is climbed back and knee.

It has not yet been found possible to continue from here to the top of the cliff. The direct way is barred by an overhang. A blunt rib of rock beneath the overhang has been crossed by a delicate traverse to the right bringing the climber to a point where the overhang is considerably diminished. Here it could possibly be surmounted but for the fact that the vital hold is carried by a large block which is dangerously loose. Above this difficulty 70 feet of steep rock is known to be climbable to the summit.

Set back some way right of the nose a short, open groove chocked with grass slants up to the large overhang. Two routes spring from under this overhang—left and right.

**GROOVE TRAVERSE.** Stepping out of the head of the groove on to the slab on the left, the leader worms his way up well under the overhang till a big stretch lands him on a narrow ledge. Traversing horizontally as far as possible he is soon forced to make an upward move. Another short traverse left and an upward move follow. Climb ends on a green lawn near top of the crag. 80-foot runout.

**GROOVE SLAB.** Ascends right of the overhang. The overhang ceases abruptly immediately right of the groove head and the climber has to wriggle out from under it to a thin ledge. Loose rocks. The ledge is followed upwards for 2 yards and then, keeping in towards the left, there follows a 50-foot slab to the top.

Other difficult routes (rubbers) could be forced more to the right where the slab rounds off into the steep nose of a buttress.

#### THE MIGNEINT, etc. (O.S. Sheets 107 or 116)

This extensive area consisting mainly of high uplands is bounded by the Afon Lledr, River Conway, Afon Merddwr, River Dee, Afon Tryweryn, Afon Prysor and the Trawsfynydd—Ffestiniog—Blaenau Ffestiniog—Dolwyddelan road.

The principal summits are Gylchedd (2194 feet) [871446], Arenig Fach (2300 feet) [820416] and Manod Mawr (2166 feet) [725446].

The following crags are of interest. All were discovered and explored by F. Showell Styles.

CRAIG GOCH [752445]. A half mile line of crags resembling a gritstone edge in height but not in soundness. Steep and in a fine position. Some moderate scrambles including a miniature Needle and the Half-Crown Slab at the north end.

CAREG Y FOEL GRON [745427]. A small crag of excellent rock, steep and clean. Four moderately difficult routes were made here early in 1950 by Showell Styles and P. O. Work—a pinnacle, a chimney, a slab, and a buttress. Other climbs 50 to 100 feet could be made.

CAREG Y FRAN [735450] and other small but striking crags in the immediate neighbourhood show promise of sport.

### THE ARENIG FAWR—RHOBELL FAWR GROUP

(O.S. Sheet 116)

Another comparatively featureless block of high country bounded by the Afon Dyfrdwy, Afon Wnion, Afon Mawddach, Afon Eden, Afon Prysor, and Afon Tryweryn; or the roads Bala—Llanuwchllyn—Dolgelley—Trawsfynydd, the track Trawsfynydd—Arenig Station and the road Arenig Station—Bala.

The highest points of the area are Arenig Fawr (2800 feet) [827369]—prominent in the southward view from many of the Snowdonian peaks, Rhobell Fawr (2408 feet) [787257] and Moel Llyfnant (2461 feet) [808352].

There is little in the group to interest the climber. Climbing has been done on some short crags on Arenig Fawr above Llyn Arenig Fawr [847380] but I have not been able to get any details of it.

### THE RHINOGS (O.S. Sheet 116)

This group is a ridge running from north to south parallel to the coast of Merioneth. It is bounded on the other sides by the Vale of Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd Reservoir, Afon Eden and Afon Mawddach.

The principal peaks are Rhinog Fawr (2362 feet) [658290], Rhinog Fach (2333 feet) [665271], Y Llethr (2475 feet) [661258] and Diphwys (2462 feet) [661235]. Two well-known passes cross the range—the Bwlch Drws Ardudwy between the two Rhinogs, and the Bwlch Tyddiad to which the eastern approach is by the celebrated Roman Steps from Llyn Cwm Bychan, north of Rhinog Fawr.

Climbing has been done, or is possible, in the following places :—

MOEL YSGYFARNOGOD [658345]. Several crags in the neighbourhood provide short pitches on rock walls 15 to 30 feet high, but no longer climbs.

CLIP [653328]. The face of this peak above Llyn Cwm Bychan rises in a series of steep walls and terraces. The walls vary from 40 to 70 feet and provide some entertaining climbs. The largest wall has an overhanging corner conspicuous on the skyline, and the most difficult routes are those which keep as close as possible to the overhang on either side ; farther to the left are several easier routes. A smaller

wall immediately above has three cracks of considerable interest, connected half-way up by a delicate traverse. The other walls above and below would repay exploration. (J. N. Mills and M. D. H. Rosenthal. O.M., 1937.)

A fairly continuous route can be made up the succession of terraces on the south-west corner for several hundred feet ; standard D. to V.D., if selected correctly.

NEAR THE ROMAN STEPS [655302] are numerous 50-foot problems on sound rock.

RHINOG FAWR. The south face descending to Bwlch Drws Arduwy carries many short buttresses separated by scree. Nothing continuous.

RHINOG FACH. On the south side of this peak a long broken ridge descends to the scree above Llyn Hywel [663266]. This, the Hywel Ridge, "gives the most interesting mountaineering route between Snowdon and Cader Idris." The ridge is followed from its lowest point, keeping on the right edge. It gives 400 feet of climbing of moderate to difficult standard with pleasant positions. (First ascent by Showell Styles and G. E. J. W. Garrard, December, 1935.)

The Hywel Slab, sloping into the Llyn has an amusing traverse, which is nail scratched.

BODLYN CRAG. This rises above Llyn Bodlyn [648240]. It is not marked on the O.S. Map. The crags which are marked on Y Llethr and Diphwys are merely shale slopes. Explored by members of the Rucksack Club at Easter, 1909, and again at Easter, 1912. The following notes, taken from the *R.C.ŷ.*, 1913, describe the only route which has been made so far—Double Gully. The crag is some 150 feet high and is steep, wet and vegetated.

"Immediately west of the point where the foot of the crag approaches nearest to the shore of the lake are two gullies with a narrow buttress or ridge between. A small cave pitch at the foot of the left-hand gully was unsuccessfully attempted ; scramble up steep and loose rock on the right-hand side of the buttress. Next pitch similar but much steeper and more difficult leads to a good belay. From this point the leader went up the left-hand side of the ridge to a sharp shoulder ; the second who took the other side up a vegetated crack had to finish up the rope.

Ahead the buttress is impossible so traverse right into the gully. Back up under a waterfall, then climb on to the scree above using slimy knobs on the left wall. From this point the gully steepens and looks impracticable. To the right a slippery slab leads to a broad ledge giving an easy exit from the climb.

The route now crosses the buttress to the left-hand gully, which is here a chimney. The upper part of this cannot be climbed. It is passed by climbing to a narrow and steep strip of grass on the left wall. 15 feet above this is a delicate traverse leading to a point in the chimney above the difficulty. Above this point, however, the direct chimney is again impossible. The route, therefore, follows a crack on the east wall starting from a grass patch a little above and well left of the traverse.

30 feet of straightforward climbing leads to a split chockstone and on to a quartz ledge. Scramble to the top."

CRAIG Y CAE [709236]. This is an impressive crag which might give very steep routes of 300 feet, broken half way by steep heather. No recorded routes yet.

#### CADER IDRIS (O.S. Sheet 116)

Cader Idris is the name given to a long ridge of peaks south of the Mawddach Estuary. On the south side it is separated from the Taren y Gesail-Maen Du Group by the Afon Dysynni and the Tal y Llyn-Cross Foxes-Dolgelley road.

The principal summits are Mynydd Moel (2804 feet) [728136], Pen y Gader (2927 feet) [711131], Cyfrwy (2600 feet) [703133] and Tyrau Mawr (2167 feet) (677135). The whole forms something like 8 miles of continuous ridge of which the north side is almost everywhere precipitous. The climbing faces on Mynydd Moel, Pen y Gader, Twr Du and Cyfrwy are all on this side. A branch ridge which runs south from Pen y Gader to Mynydd Pencoed encloses on its east side the very fine Cwm Cau, with Craig Cau at its head. These are the only considerable rocks on the south face of the mountain.

O. G. Jones climbed in this district in the early part of his career and came to know it so well that W. P. Haskett-Smith called on him to produce the Cader Idris section in *Rock Climbing in the British Isles*. When O. G. Jones came on the scene the Central Gully of Pen y Gader had already been climbed (possibly by F. H. Bowring) some years previously. Jones contributed much scrambling on Mynydd Moel and the East Arête of Cyfrwy solo in 1888. Then in 1895 with W. P. Haskett-Smith (one of the few times that these pioneer author climbers climbed together and strangely enough W.P.H-S. seems to have led) the Great Gully and the East Gully of Craig Cau were climbed. The North Arête of Cyfrwy, though very easy, was not climbed until 1900 by T. K. and F. W. Rose. In 1902, S. Ridsdale, H. Jupp and J. Phillips added the Twr Du Gullies and the following year H. and M. Dalton made a circuitous route on Pencoed Pillar—leaving however, no detailed record of it. This was the state of development at the time of the appearance of G. Abraham's *Rock Climbing in North Wales*, in 1906.

There has been little new work since. The East Arête of Cyfrwy and the Great Gully of Craig Cau have always been the most popular routes, but not many climbers have troubled to make the long journey from Snowdonia, where climbing and opportunities for new routes are more plentiful. In 1942, E. L. Furness and J. S. H. Gillham made two new routes on Cyfrwy showing that there is still room for new work. At Easter, 1949, Pencoed Pillar was again climbed and a full account written.

I have heard that during 1948 a climber named Ken. Mascary made a large number of new climbs on all parts of the range. I have not been able to get into touch with him and in consequence his explorations are not included here.

I hope that the appearance of these accounts will persuade him to come forward and make them out of date.

#### TWR DU

SITUATION [715134]. On the north face of the ridge between Mynydd Moel and Pen y Gader.

APPROACHES. From Dolgelley by the Fox's Path, which leaves the road near Llyn Gwernan [706161], diverging eastwards in the neighbourhood of Llyn y Gafr.

There are two routes. The accounts are from C.C.ȳ. O.S., 1903.

"EAST GULLY. This gully appears as a long narrow crack on the left side of the middle buttress of Twr Du. The first 100 feet is an easy staircase on good rock. The first difficulty—a jammed rock—is passed on the right. The crux follows. The left side is wet and mossy with a small ledge half way up. The right wall impinges on this and overhangs a steep crack also wet and mossy. This pitch was turned on the left. The third pitch is a chimney of 25 feet with a big block at the top. The fourth continues as a smaller chimney crowned with a heart-shaped rock. The next pitch in the gully is straightforward and the climb finishes up a splendid ridge left of the direct route. (Standard D. to V.D.)

WEST GULLY. Easy scrambling leads to an interesting crack. Above this the gully opens out and may be taken straight up or by rocks on the right. Two narrow ledges are reached. The next pitch is a steep mossy crack with smooth rock on the right and overhanging rock on the left. This was avoided by an alternative route well to the right up a short ridge of black-looking rock. A traverse leads back into the gully. The third pitch continues up the crack without much difficulty. An awkward chockstone pitch follows. The gully now divides. Start up the right branch, then step across left into a crack, which is straightforward until a large overhanging leaf of rock is reached. Care is needed to pass this, then the crack can be followed to the top. A traverse over some smooth slabs on the right finishes the climb (Standard D. to V.D.)"

#### PEN Y GADER CRAG

SITUATION [708131]. On the north face of the ridge below Pen y Gader.

APPROACHES. From Dolgelley by the Fox's Path.

The Central Gully is a well-known and straightforward climb. The account below is taken from *Rock Climbing in North Wales*.

The face is divided into three distinct sections by two wide terraces. The Central Gully is obvious.

CENTRAL GULLY. "The first pitch consists of the steep gully bed, which narrows at the top before the first terrace intersects it. The climbing for the first 30 feet is right of the waterfall, but at this height the rock steepens and a traverse has to be made across to the water, beneath which are the best footholds. With care the left side is gained and easy rocks lead to the first terrace. (A 70-foot pitch.)







be seen from here the left side of the arête is formed by a groove and shallow chimney. (Standard S.)

Start : Scramble 40 feet to the foot of the arête.

(1) 15 feet. Climb on good holds diagonally right to a large pointed flake.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse upwards to the left delicately until the edge of the arête is reached. Up on good holds to a small stance. The prominent flake on the left is loose, but a belay can be made on the platform above.

(3) 45 feet. Climb on to the platform above. Traverse 6 feet into and up the chimney on the left awkwardly. From a slanting foothold in the chimney a return can be made to a 2-foot wide ledge on the slab. Proceed up and slightly right to a ledge 1-foot wide lying between a good ledge on the left at chest height and a V scoop on the right. Climb on to the ledge on the left and from there on good holds to a terrace.

(4) 30 feet. Climb the vertical wall above to a wide rocky recess."

BETWEEN NORTH AND EAST ARÊTES. A terrace rising from left to right across the face can be easily reached from the screes. There are two climbs from it—a gully up to the left leading out on to East Arête and a more open gully running straight up to the summit ridge.

NORTH ARÊTE (C.C.ȝ. O.S., 1900). "The way lies straight up for the first 130 feet without much difficulty. Then the arête becomes sharper and more defined and turns left to avoid grass slopes. Easy scrambling for 100 feet. Passing the top of a gully on the left the arête again turns and leads straight upwards to the summit of the pinnacle (300 feet from start). Descend 10 feet to gap. The next 50 feet are more difficult and were avoided on the first ascent by a detour on the right. Onwards is straightforward." (Standard M.)

STONE CHUTE PINNACLE (C.C.ȝ. N.S., 1943). "The climb lies on the buttress right of the scree gully. Standard D. Harder if led direct throughout. Start 150 feet up the scree gully at a grass recess 20 feet above the floor of the gully on the right wall. This recess can be seen just after turning a corner of the gully. There is a vertical shallow chimney immediately above the recess and the edge of the arête on the right. The climb is commenced on the arête.

(1) 70 feet. Easy rocks to a grass terrace sloping down to the right below a steep wall.

(2) 80 feet. Traverse 15 feet left then back and up on the arête to a large grass terrace.

(3) 40 feet. From the right-hand end of the terrace to a stance below a steep sloping chimney.

(4) 20 feet. Climb the chimney to a small ledge below the final vertical wall.

(5) 90 feet. Traverse left 20 feet, the last part a strenuous hand traverse to a steep shallow gully which needs gardening. Climb the gully to the summit."

## CRAIG CAU

SITUATION [710125]. Below Mynydd Pencoed on the east side of a ridge running southwards from Pen y Gader.

APPROACHES. From the Tal y Llyn Valley by a footpath up the west side of the Nant Gader into Cwm Cau or from Dolgelley across the summit of Pen y Gader, descending into Cwm Cau from the col between Pen y Gader and Mynydd Pencoed.

A broad crag falls from the summit of Mynydd Pencoed into the cwm. Pencoed Pillar rises steeply on its left separated from it by the obvious cleft of the Great Gully. Farther left East Gully and Little Gully cleave less sheer and more indeterminate rocks.

LITTLE GULLY. This has two pitches and is of no particular interest.

EAST GULLY (O. G. Jones in Haskett-Smith). "We begin with oblique slabs of rock inclined to be wet. Then the direct route lies over a block of rock with uncertain holds, but a cleft to the left promises much better, and a traverse at the top leads back easily into the gully again. The scrambling is very pleasant where the right wall begins to overhang, and remains interesting till the gully divides. From here screes lead up each part to the crest of the ridge, but a small rock arête separating the two branches gives us climbing all the way."

PENCOED PILLAR (communicated). "The climb is vegetated and on variable rock. It is the easiest way up this part of the cliff and is a mountaineering route. Length 800 feet.

Start : 10 yards left of the entrance to Great Gully.

(1) 200 feet. Foothill Slabs. Grassy scrambling to a terrace which runs across the Pillar and enters Great Gully above the third pitch (see Great Butress below).

(2) 50 feet. Ascend an easy crack in the middle of a buttress above, a little to the left of Great Gully. Traverse left along a ledge and up a dirty crack. Stance 20 feet higher.

(3) 250 feet. Up steep grass slopes for 180 feet. Bearing slightly left a broad 10-foot chimney is reached. A low wall above affords a cockpit stance behind it. A short crack on the left leads to a grassy terrace. This is followed to a stance at the base of a crack on the left.

(4) 50 feet. Ascend the crack. Traverse left along a grass ledge on to a grass lozenge in a steeply inclined plane. Doubtful belays on the left.

(5) 80 feet. Ascend the grassy corner on the right. At 50 feet a good bollard is passed on the right suitable for a running belay. Continue straight up for 10 feet and traverse right beneath a slight overhang. Go straight up until a large belay is seen 12 feet to the left. Traverse to it.

(6) 80 feet. Ascend the crack just above the stance on to a narrow ramp running to the left. Climb the ramp to a small belay at the top of it.

(7) 40 feet. Traverse left to a clean crack of good rock.

(8) 30 feet. Up the crack and traverse into a neighbour.

(9) 20 feet. Either walk off left or finish up a capacious overhanging chimney on the right."

(Standard—Hard V.D. First Ascent by H. and M. Dalton, 1903. Ascent by the route described—N. R. Sales and J. Hammond leading through, Easter, 1949.)

**GREAT GULLY** (O. G. Jones in Haskett-Smith). "The climbing starts within 200 feet of the llyn with a 12-foot pitch. The second pitch begins almost immediately and must be taken direct, the roof of the cave in its upper portion is approached by a serpentine squirm after the cave is entered, up the thin crack on the right. A large cavern follows. This is penetrated as far as possible on the left, and then, with back to the hanging rock and feet on a hold invisible from below, a passage may be effected towards firm holds in the open. Soon after this we approach a long narrow 35-foot chimney close to the left wall of the gully. This is awkward near the top. The interest then ceases for a while, as 130 feet of scree and smooth rocky slabs are easily climbed."

(In the original account there followed a complicated description of what was then a very fine gully pitch of some complexity—the original fifth pitch. Unfortunately this was destroyed by a rock fall in March, 1919 (*R.C.ȳ*, 4, p. 53). A steep and uncertain slope of loose stones and mud remains—of no climbing interest.)

"The three remaining pitches are short and near together, the last one finishing a few feet below the summit of the ridge, 850 feet above the lake." (Standard V.D.)

It is probable that all pitches could be avoided by alternative routes on the walls on either side. In spite of this, before the fall of the great fifth pitch this ranked as one of the great gully climbs of Wales, comparable for example with the Great Gully of Craig yr Ysfa.

**GREAT BUTTRESS.** Right of the Great Gully the main face has been climbed by a route, mainly on vegetation. This started at the foot of East Gully, followed a rising traverse across the foot of Pencoed Pillar and across Great Gully and then turned upwards to the top parallel to Great Gully. From the account this hardly seems to be a rock climb.

There are other crags of lesser importance on the mountain, on which scrambling has been done or which appear to offer promise :—

**MYNYDD MOEL.** There are numerous short pitches, scrambles and easy climbs on the north face of this mountain above Llyn Aran [734139] and also on its north-west face (see O. G. Jones in Haskett-Smith).

**CRAIG CWM RHWYDDFOR** [735125]. *R.C.R.*, No. 2, mentions an attempted climb here.

**LION ROCK** above Crogenen Lakes [662142] is a 100-foot rock face which defeated explorers in 1911 (*C.C.B.* O.S., 1, p. 26).

**ABOVE FAIRBOURNE.** A 150-foot crag on the hillside above the coast road has yielded six routes in recent years. (Communicated.)





## THE ARAN GROUP (O.S. Sheets 116 and 117)

The chief feature of this group is a ridge running south-west to north-east parallel to the Afon Wnion—Afon Dyfrdwy (Upper Dee Valley). It is bounded by this valley, Bwlch Oerddrws, the Afon Dyfi (Upper Dovey Valley) and Cwm Cynllwyd ; or the roads Dolgelley—Dinas Mawddwy (Bwlch Oerddrws), Dinas Mawddwy—Llanuwchllyn (Bwlch y Groes) and Llanuwchllyn—Dolgelley.

The principal summits which are one and a half miles apart on the main ridge are Aran Mawddwy (2970 feet) [863224]—the highest mountain in Wales outside Snowdonia—and Aran Benllyn (2901 feet) [867243]. There are a number of subsidiary summits above 2000 feet both within the group and in the stretch of moorland, which connects it with the Berwyn Group farther north-east.

Unlike Cader Idris the Arans present their most promising aspect towards their least popular side for all the crags are to be found on the south-eastern slopes. O. G. Jones walked and scrambled extensively in the Arans in the early part of his career before he ever visited the Lake District. In consequence when W. P. Haskett-Smith came to write his book, he left entirely to Jones the task of describing them. His admirably detailed accounts leave one notable exception—Craig Cowarch. This would seem to be by far the most promising rock face anywhere in the group and its omission is probably accounted for by the fact that Jones was based on the railway, which follows the Afon Wnion—Afon Dyfrdwy, while Dinas Mawddwy was in his time relatively inaccessible from the north. It was left to members of the Rucksack Club to discover and explore Craig Cowarch—described in their Journal in 1908.

Apart from this the remainder of the climbing possibilities of these mountains are probably best summed up in Jones' words :—" Climbers are often asked, where can a man start practice rock work ? The Arans are first-rate for this. Whatever the difficulty on the mountain a few minutes' traversing will generally take him out of it."

## CRAIG COWARCH

SITUATION [847194]. On the east side of Point 2557 facing east across the head of Cwm Cowarch up Hengwm to Dyrygol.

APPROACHES. From Dinas Mawddwy via Aber Cowarch and Cwm Cowarch. Cart tracks exist on either side of the valley—a car could be taken up the eastern side to the flat ground at the valley head.

The crag was explored by the Easter Meet of the Rucksack Club in 1907, when all the present routes were climbed. The Club also visited the area for its October Meet in 1915 but nothing new was added. There has been no subsequent record. The accounts below are condensed from *R.C.*, 1908.

"The crag is a fine buttress of rock over a mile in length facing east for the most part, then north-east. There are three gullies in the east face all of which offer climbs. At the south end is Little Gully (Bramley, Minor and Pickstone), which contains a good 80-foot pitch at the

CRAIG COWARCH

*W. A. Poucher*

lower end but is disappointing above, though the rock scenery is fine. A large gully in the centre of the face—Great Gully—was also found to be easy with only short pitches. Between these two gullies is South Buttress the direct ascent of which was twice unsuccessfully attempted. The lower part is very steep and, though the rock is firm, there are very few holds. 80 feet up the direct line becomes almost impossible. Both parties were forced to the right where good ledges offered an easy way round. Unfortunately it was impossible to get back to the centre of the buttress and the climb had to be finished not far from Great Gully. Probably a detailed exploration of the lower 200 feet would reveal a route, especially if superfluous vegetation was cleared away.

**NORTH GULLY.** The best climbing on the crag was found in North Gully (800 feet high). There is a choice of routes at the foot, but after the second pitch no deviation is possible and interest increases all the way.

(1) 20 feet. A cave ascended by its left wall leads to an amphitheatre. A gentle slope leads to :—

(2) 25 feet. Another cave, climbed by the wet and holdless chimney between the left wall of the gully and a chockstone.

Now 100 feet of easy scrambling to

(3) A double cave. On the right the wall overhangs and is impossible and with no through route available the left wall must again be used. Up a grassy chimney and stride across into the first cave. The direct ascent of the upper cave was too difficult and the leader was again forced left to a small platform whence an arm-pull finished the pitch.

The gully now narrows and steepens considerably.

(4) 120 feet. A wet gutter—not really difficult.

(5) 45 feet. The Tombstone Pitch. The walls of the gully close in at the top to within 3 feet of one another. The left wall was ascended to a tiny ledge just below the chockstone ; then a traverse into the centre enabled the leader to finish the pitch direct.

(6) 25 feet. The most difficult pitch as the rock is undercut at the bottom.

(First Ascent led by S. Houghton.)

Two further possibilities are noted both starting from the foot of the third pitch. A branch gully leading right probably merges into the North-East Buttress 200 feet below the summit ; a well-defined arête starting 30 feet below the foot of the third pitch runs up to the summit keeping close to the gully all the way.

The portion of the crag which faces north-east was explored by two parties but proved disappointing. Several short deep-cut chimneys were tried but the rocks were smooth and only one proved feasible. Plenty of scrambling."

Haskett-Smith (O. G. Jones) is almost our only authority for the rest of the group.

**CRAGS ABOVE LLYN LLIWBRAN** [876255]. There are numerous scrambles and short pitches here. *R.C.ȝ.* describes a climb up a gully visible on the left of the lake and marked by a tree 80 feet up. There are four pitches of 30, 50, 15 and 20 feet.

**RIDGE BETWEEN ARAN BENLLYN AND ARAN MAWDDWY.** On the left side is an overhanging mass of rock undercut in a remarkable fashion.

**CRAGS ABOVE CRAIGLYN DYFI** [868226]. Approached by a terrace across the face which starts at a wall close to the lowest point on the ridge between Aran Benlllyn and Aran Mawddwy before the final rise to the latter. Numerous pitches and scrambles.

**AT THE HEAD OF LLAETHNANT** left of the preceding. An arête provides scrambling.

### THE TAREN Y GESAIL—MAEN DU GROUP

(O.S. Sheets 116 and 127)

This group is a block of comparatively featureless hills bounded by the Afon Dysynni, the Tal y Llyn—Cross Foxes road, Bwlch Oerddrws and the Afon Dyfi (Lower Dovey Valley). The Afon Dulas which flows southwards into the Dyfi almost divides the block into two ; Taren y Gesail (2187 feet) [710059] is the highest hill to the west, Maen Du (2213 feet) [822152] the highest to the east.

Little climbing has been done so far, though the Bird Rock appears promising :—

**CRAIG MAES GLASE** [825145]. This was mentioned in *R.C.ȝ.*, 1908, as a promising possibility. A recent close inspection by the writer reveals that in spite of being as steep as the average rock face it is completely clothed in heather and there is very little rock visible.

**CRAIG Y LLAM** [750130]. *R.C.R.*, No. 2, reports the ascent of a small pinnacle here.

**CRAIG YR ADEYRN** (Bird Rock) [644068]. This crag of imposing appearance is set at a relatively low altitude. O. G. Jones wrote :—“ It can be ascended with different degrees of ease,” but it is not clear whether this refers to actual rock climbing routes or to walking to the top round the sides. One definite climb on the Rock has been described in *C.M.*, 1938 :—

“ **NORTH FACE.** The cliff shows several buttresses, which serve as landmarks. The left-hand buttress ends in an obvious pinnacle and is easy to identify. It is to the right of the next buttress that the climb begins. Between the foot of this and the buttress to its right there is a marked cleft in which the route starts. The cleft is just above a tree by which it can be easily recognised. To reach the foot of the climb it is necessary to gain the grassy ledge that runs across the bottom of the cliff at this point.

(1) 30 feet. The route goes up to the right of the crack and then traverses across on to the outer of two obvious ledges that run diagonally up the buttress from right to left.

(2) 50 feet. Continue straight up on good holds to the top of the ledge. Exposed.



(3) 35 feet. A mantelshelf and then a move to the right round the big block brings one on to an easy scramble for a few feet, towards the obvious large detached block.

(4) and (5) 70 feet. Step across from the block on to the cliff, which is steep but has good holds. There is a belay half way if required."

(Standard—Good D. First Ascent by J. A. B. Gray, R. R. V. Bradford and W. B. Young, 1937.)

### ANGLESEY (O.S. Sheet 106)

Anglesey is mainly flat and unlikely to offer much sport to the climber. The highest point on the island is Holyhead Mountain (719 feet).

There may be some odd short climbs and scrambles on the sea-cliffs in some places. These reach their greatest height in the North and South Stacks beyond Holyhead. Inland at Llangefni some climbing has been done on a 50-foot outcrop of limestone. This is situated on the north side of a hill, which carries a ruined windmill.

### DENBIGHSHIRE (O.S. Sheets 107, 108 and 117)

There are several hill groups within the county. The Hiraethog—highest point 1742 feet—is an upland area stretching between the Conway and Clwyd Valleys north of the Corwen—Bettws y Coed road. East of the Vale of Clwyd are the Clwydian Hills rising to 1820 feet at Moel Fammau. A southward continuation of this group reaches 1897 feet at Moel y Gamelin, above the Dee Valley north-west of Llangollen. South-west of Llangollen is the extensive Berwyn Group from which the high ground is continuous to the Arans (q.v.) many miles to the south-west. The principal peaks, Moel Fferna (2071 feet) [118398], Cader Bronwen (2572 feet) [077347], Cader Berwyn (2712 feet) [072327], Moel Sych (2713 feet) [066319] and Cynriau Nod (2185 feet) [988280], all lie close to the Denbigh-Merioneth and Denbigh-Montgomery borders. Part of the Migneint Group of hills (q.v.) also lies within Denbighshire.

The rocks of Craig Dinas at Bettws y Coed, which are actually in Denbighshire, are described in the Bettws y Coed section. Limestone outcrops in various places, e.g., on the Great Orme at Llandudno and the Eglwyseg Rocks at Llangollen and may provide a few scrambles with the usual restrictions that apply to limestone everywhere.

### FLINT (O.S. Sheet 108)

There are no very considerable mountains or climbing crags in the county. One or two minor hill groups are shared with Denbighshire. This is the part of Wales closest to the industrial towns of Cheshire and south Lancashire and for this reason is used for short day walking expeditions. W.J. reports a little scrambling on Hope Mountain and at Nant y Ffrith.

## MONTGOMERY (O.S. Sheets 117, 127 and 128)

Montgomery shares the Berwyn Group with Denbigh and the Plynlimon Group with Cardigan. Much of the remainder of the county is hilly rising to 1700-1800 feet in many places.

There are no extensive rocks. Haskett-Smith notes that "the rocks at Llangynog would be remarkably good if they had not fallen a prey to the spoilers in the form of quarrymen." Some routes were made round about 1934 in a quarry on Breidden Hill close to the England border. O.M. describes this as follows :—

"There is a very large quarry on the west of the hill and climbs have been made by members of the Birmingham U.M.C. on the rocks both to the north and south of this. The best climbing is to be had to the right of the quarry, i.e., on the north-west side of the hill, in the vicinity of a very large vertical slab which is quite unmistakable.

NORTH-WEST FACE CLIMB (R. A. Hodgkin and A. D. M. Cox). V.D. ; exposed. 80 feet of rope. Rock fairly sound. Boots.

The climb starts directly below the great slab, and for the first three pitches follows the line of least resistance immediately under it and tending to the right. There are in all six fairly long pitches, of which four are decidedly difficult and two of these possibly severe. The ascent is broken by two easy traverses, one to the right and one to the left, so that the final portion of the climb is practically above the initial pitch.

There are two variations of the first pitch, both leading to the 'Loose Block Ledge.' The Birmingham variation leads over shelving and grassy holds straight up to the elder tree at the right-hand end of Loose Block Ledge. Though probably harder, this is a less pleasant climb than the Oxford variation, which starts about 20 feet to the left on shelving holds, which lead in about 25 feet to a sloping stance below a narrow crack. There are few holds on the crack until a fan-shaped wedge can be grasped at the top. A short struggle then brings the loose blocks within reach. The next pitch is short and necessitates a struggle through the above-mentioned elder tree.

There being nothing above but the continuation of the great overhanging slab, an easy traverse is now made up and along Angel Pavement, which leads in about 60 feet to the Tree of Life (nearly all others on this face are dead).

An exhilarating and exposed pitch follows. The tree is ascended until it is possible to step off it on to good holds on the rock face. About 10 feet above the tree, these holds peter out, and the last 6 feet to a small cave can be completed by moving left and either climbing a groove or crossing it and ascending on its left. An easy traverse is then made along a grass ledge to the left, where one reaches the third important tree, which forms a good belay for the final part of the climb. A groove on the right is ascended for 20 feet. At the top of this it is necessary to traverse outwards to the right round 'Dangerous Corner.' This is best done in a semi-crouching position to avoid an overhang.

A very hard upward move follows, then easier climbing leads to the top of the crags in a few feet.

The same party did another climb, partly new, starting on a little buttress some 40 yards farther to the right, and exactly opposite some cottages. This buttress, which gave a severe vertical pitch of 35 feet, ends on easy rocks, which interrupt the continuity of the climb. After some walking, however, a finish is to be had up an obvious line slanting across the upper slabs to the right."

#### CARDIGAN (O.S. Sheets 127, 139 and 140)

The highest ground in the county is Pen Plynlimon Fawr (2468 feet) [790869]—the culminating point of an extensive and featureless upland area, which extends across into Montgomery. Farther south the moors east of Tregaron form one of the wildest and most remote parts of Wales. They continue across the county border into west Radnorshire and north Breconshire where the highest summits in the area are found. 25 miles of trackless moorland separate Tregaron from Newbridge-on-Wye—one of the most continuous stretches of wild country south of the Scottish Highlands.

Cardigan offers little to the climber. The only reference in climbing literature is to the sea cliffs north of Aberystwyth, which Haskett-Smith reports as offering a climb or two.

#### RADNOR (O.S. Sheets 128 and 141)

The only hill group entirely within the county boundary is Radnor Forest, of which the principal peaks are Great Rhos (2166 feet) [182639], Black Mixen [2135 feet] [197644] and Great Creigiau (2100 feet) [198635].

The climbing possibilities of the county—though there are no very long routes—would seem to be most promising:—

LLANDEGLEY ROCKS [133616]. There are outcrops of sound volcanic rock here which have provided a number of short but interesting routes up to 50 feet. There are other possible outcrops along the ridge towards Builth Wells.

NORTH OF RHAYADER. Cerig Gwalch [935705] resembles the Gallt-yr-Ogof in the Nant Ffrancon but is more broken and vegetated. Scrambling and short climbs are abundant.

Cerig Cochion [937723] and Lletty Hywel [960731] in the same area are also likely to be of interest.

ELAN VALLEY LAKES. There are a number of promising-looking crags on the hillsides above the lakes. Those most likely to provide sport though still comparatively unexplored are Craig y Foel [920644] (some good short pitches on sound rock have already been discovered here), a crag on the flank of Pen Cwm yr Hafod above Pen y Careg Reservoir [903678], Craig y Bwch [900621] and Craig Cwm Clyd [890624]. The rocks of Craig Dol Faenog [918667] are loose and slaty and only offer short scrambles.

Stanner Rocks and Aberedw Rocks mentioned by Haskett-Smith are not considered to be worth a visit.

### BRECON (O.S. Sheets 128, 140 and 141)

This county has the finest mountains in South Wales but they are of interest to the walker rather than to the climber. They are steep enough, however, to provide step cutting under winter conditions.

The Brecon Beacons and Fforest Fawr Groups form a continuous ridge of high country immediately south of the Usk Valley. The principal peaks in the Beacons are Bryn Teg (2608 feet) [024213], Pen y Fan (2906 feet) [012216] and Corn Du (2863 feet) [008212]. They throw down steep but very unstable precipices into the heads of their north-facing cwms. The Brecon-Merthyr road crossing a pass of 1440 feet separates them from Fforest Fawr of which the principal peaks are Fan Fawr (2409 feet) [970193], Fan Gihirych (2831 feet) [882191] and Banau Brycheiniog (2632 feet) [824220]. The final peaks of the Group Banau Sir Garr, etc., are across the border in Carmarthen (q.v.).

The Black Mountains are a compact group lying between the rivers Usk and Wye. Their northern boundary is formed by a ridge running north-east to south-west having a steep scarp slope on the north-westerly side. From this ridge a series of four parallel ridges projects south-eastwards with the steep-sided valleys of Grwyne Fechan, Grwyne Fawr and Honddu between. The principal peaks are Waun Fach (2660 feet) [216300] and Pen y Gader Fawr (2624 feet) [229288].

A traverse of all the Brecon peaks above 2600 feet offers an expedition of some 35 miles comparable in some ways with the traverse of the 3000-foot peaks of Snowdonia or the round of the Lakeland Fells. This walk was done at Whitsun, 1947, by E. L. Evans, from Banau Brycheiniog via the summits of the Beacons to Pen y Gader Fawr in 12 hours, 12 minutes. The long road walk of 10 miles between the Beacons and the Black Mountains detracts somewhat from the pleasures of this as a mountaineering expedition.

West of the River Wye between Builth Wells and Boughrood is the Mynydd Eppynt, a moorland area rising to 1554 feet at Drum ddu.

Farther north the extreme tip of the county shares the huge moorland tract above the Elan Valley Lakes with Radnor and Cardigan. The principal peaks of this area, Drygarn Fawr (2115 feet) [863583] and Gorllwyn (2009 feet) [917590], are within the Brecon borders.

In a recent book by R. G. Sandeman (1948) there appeared a chapter on rock-climbing in the county. Most of the rocks are of geologically newer types not normally attacked by climbers. Some short routes have been made on outcrops of limestone on Llangattock Mountain south-west of Crickhowell. One very vegetated route has been done on Craig Cerig Glasiad on the west side of the Brecon-Merthyr road. The scarp slope of the Brecon Beacons consists of a mixture of steep vegetation, short vertical rock walls of great instability and slopes of loose shale and fragments. It is hopeless terrain for the rock climber

but has provided good sport under extreme winter conditions. The Central Gully on Pen y Gader, the face immediately left of it and another gully still farther left have all been climbed under these conditions by R. G. Sandeman and A. Davies. Other snow climbs have been made in other parts of this group and in the Black Mountains.

#### PEMBROKE (O.S. Sheets 138 and 151)

Pembroke is noted for its fine cliff scenery though the inland hills rise to 1760 feet at Foel Cwm Cerwyn the highest point of Mynydd Prescelly. The scenery is reminiscent of West Penwith, the extreme west of Cornwall, though the ruins of former industrialisation are absent here. Strenuous efforts have been made to preserve the wild life.

The climbing possibilities are unknown at present. Inland the Treffgarne Rocks and others are of rhyolite, the material of the finest crags of North Wales. While the most obvious outcrop at Treffgarne takes the form of a tor on a hill-top and would seem to offer only scrambling, there may be some longer routes in the neighbourhood.

The cliffs everywhere south of Milford Haven are of limestone or sandstone and likely to be of only limited utility to the climber. The finest cliff scenery is found at Lydstep Haven and Skrinkle Haven close to Manorbier and farther west at St. Govans, the Huntsman's Leap, etc.

Immediately north of Milford Haven there are fine cliffs at Marloes Bay and again north of Talbenny. The flat sands of Newgale follow. From Solva onwards right round the northern coast to Fishguard the cliffs are everywhere fairly high and are formed of a rapid succession of different strata, mostly of rocks of older types. There are outcrops of rhyolite in some places. This stretch is perhaps the most promising for the climber.

Stacks and off-shore islands are plentiful all round the coast, but access to sea level from the cliff top is difficult in many places.

Between Fishguard and Cardigan the cliffs are higher still, up to 400 feet, but of slaty rock less likely to be of interest.

(See, generally, A. W. Andrews' article, *C.C.J.*, No. 75, 1950.)

#### CARMARTHEN (O.S. Sheets 139, 140, 152 and 153)

The Fforest Fawr Group of hills extends across the border from Brecon into Carmarthen rising to 2460 feet at Banau Sir Garr [812218]. The name Carmarthen Van seems at present to be applied collectively to this peak and to Banau Brycheiniog (2632 feet), which lies just inside Brecon. In an early guide-book Banau Sir Garr is called the Carmarthen Van and Banau Brycheiniog the Brecknock Van. This would seem to agree more nearly with the Welsh names and to be more logical.

The country has no climbing rocks.

#### GLAMORGAN (O.S. Sheets 152, 153 and 154)

Much of the hilly part of the county has been disfigured by industry and will not interest the mountaineer.

The *C.C.J.* (December, 1900), carries a description of some climbing in a limestone quarry at Taff's Well a few miles north of Cardiff. A 100-foot pinnacle, the Taff's Well Matterhorn, was the main interest, but some other pinnacles were also ascended. This quarry still exists and may even today provide some sport within the usual limitations imposed by the rock.

The Gower Peninsula beyond Swansea provides some fine cliff scenery but again unfortunately in limestone. The whole of the south coast from Mumbles Head to Worms Head is of interest to the walker. There are impressive rock exposures at Three Cliffs Bay, which is on the east side of Oxwich Bay, and at Mewslade Bay, south of Rhosily. There are also numerous caves to explore.

*C.C.J. O.S. Vol. 7*, draw attention to the climbing possibilities of Dinas, a hill in the Upper Towy Valley near Capel Ystrad-ffin. This, too, is presumably limestone.

## OPENING OF THE R. W. LLOYD HUT

No special mobilisation had been ordered and no official guests had been invited, but about 50 members attended the ceremonies at the official opening of the R. W. Lloyd Hut, Ynys Ettws, on 20th May, 1950. The day was warm, overcast and without a breath of wind. This allowed the proceedings to be carried out with due dignity, but prevented there being anything so inappropriate to the Welsh tradition as a hot sun. The admirable stone bridge was first dedicated by the Rev. J. E. Grosvenor to the memory of those members of the Club who lost their lives in the late war, and a brief memorial service was held around the stone inscription. The gathering then moved to the hut itself and R. W. Lloyd formally declared it open. After a detailed inspection of the interior of the hut the assembly came out again to be photographed. Those present appeared to be drawn from every generation of the Club's members, and they were dressed in every variety of clothing from business suits to the climbing costume of the 1890's.

The exterior appearance of the hut is in every way suitable to the valley, and the architect, S. McLachlan, received many congratulations. Inside it is heavily mechanized and very spacious. The general opinion of those present seemed to be very favourable, and while this view may have been aided by the champagne which was liberally handed around by the Hon. Custodian, there can be no doubt that the hut is worthy of the Club and of the years of hard work put into its planning and construction. Some conservatives pined for the sunlit lavatory of Helyg, and all viewed the palatial electric drying room with a profound suspicion, which was deepened by the fact that it had short circuited the better part of North Wales on the previous evening ; but among the innovations the shelves in the dormitory, the bath of normal shape, and the large kitchen with its fine fireplace were particularly admired. The bunks are comfortable. The hut has nothing that can quite compare with Helyg's view of Tryfan, but the green pasture in front is a charming feature, and there is a promising bathing place in the stream.

In the evening the same members reappeared in ties for the dinner at P.Y.G., where they were entertained by speeches from G. S. Summers, the President and R. W. Lloyd himself who graced the occasion with a felicitous exposition of his own views on climbing and climbers.

R.M.V.







## EDITORIAL

It may be expected of a new editor that he should make some statement of editorial policy. My first aim is to maintain the very high standards set by my predecessors. An editor, however, is only a collector of other men's wares and the standard of the *Journal* is ultimately the standard of the articles and illustrations provided by the members. The *Journal* is the record and the shop window of the Club ; the climbing, literary and photographic standard of the Club must be high and the co-operation of members with the editor must be whole-hearted.

I have also a minor aim in that I hope within two or three years to bring the date of publication forward to June. Publication in the latter part of the year means that many articles reflect the climbing season before last. Publication in June would generally enable accounts relating to the previous year to appear before members departed for their holidays. This minor objective will also depend on the prompt co-operation of contributors, as well as requiring great efforts from the editor and printers.

The most important event in the Club year has been the opening of the R. W. Lloyd Hut, of which a report and illustrations appear elsewhere in this *Journal*. The uprush of prices, unfortunately, outstripped our calculations, and even Mr. Lloyd's great generosity has not wholly saved the Club from a financial problem which will be reflected in the figures submitted to the next annual general meeting.

The hydro-electric threat still hangs heavily over N. Wales, and until the issue is decided we cannot assess the value of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The fear, to which many examples hold up their bleeding hands in witness, is that the legislation will "protect" the national parklands from the petty offender but will merely give official sanction to the major desecrations of Government Departments and Nationalised Boards. Let Doctor Dalton turn his attention from high finance and foreign affairs, and show us that the national parks are to be a reality.

H.M. Stationery Office have published a fair and well-illustrated booklet\* which sets out the history of this legislation and the machinery established under it. As long ago as 1865 a Committee reported to Parliament that "there is no Open Space within 15 miles of London which can be spared," yet the L.C.C. are still allowed to eat up the Green Belt with their building schemes. The booklet rightly points out that the working of the Act depends "in particular upon those who will be responsible for working the administrative machinery which has been devised. This machinery ensures that . . . the defacement of the countryside can be prevented unless there are overriding reasons to the contrary." We can be fairly confident that the reasons

\*National Parks and Access to the Countryside. H.M.S.O. 6d.

produced by the proprietor of a wayside teashop will not be overriding, but a request from a Ministerial colleague may be found to override, with or without reasons. The protection we need is protection from Planners to whom the Plan is an unholy grail.

H. W. Tilman, Emllyn Jones and K. Berrill are, at the time of writing, in various parts of the Himalaya and W. H. Ward is in Baffinland ; we hope their experiences will grace our next number. J. M. Hartog and J. L. Olsen were with the Oxford University North-East Land Expedition last year. Hartog reports that 200 miles of ice-cap were traversed on ski manhauling a sledge in July and August ; there was no opportunity for rock-climbing but plenty of glacier work. Other members have probably been equally far afield. We shall be grateful if members undertaking expeditions beyond the usual range would keep the Editor informed.

Finally we have the happy duty of congratulating the Swiss Alpine Club on the silver jubilee of *Les Alpes-Die Alpen* as a monthly publication. A. W. Andrews used to produce a quarterly journal for the C.C. ; he and other editors of C.C.J. will realise the effort that has to go into a monthly production. The regular arrival of *Les Alpes* does much to cheer us up, particularly during the gloomier months of the year when the Alps seem very far away from most of us. We are grateful to the S.A.C. and wish them a long continuance of their successful enterprise.

J. E. GROSVENOR UNVEILING  
THE WAR MEMORIAL TABLET  
R. J. Collinson





# IN MEMORIAM

HUGH BULLOCK

Hugh Bullock, who was killed in the accident on Pollux in July, 1949, was not widely known in the club which he had only recently joined. But those who have had the privilege of his acquaintance know how much we have lost. He was the kind of man who adds strength to any party by his unfailing zest and quiet humour, no less than by his general competence and willingness to do whatever had to be done. He was a very strong goer ; his lean frame and length of leg gave him a tireless pace that seemed to have no limits. One picture stands out. During a crossing of the Fiescherjoch from the Strahlegg in 1948, in breaking weather, Hugh took over the lead where the ground eases between the steep lower ice fall and the upper rib. On the rib he was faintly visible from time to time through the fierce gusts and whirling snow, kicking steps about four feet apart with unrelenting rhythm, and driving a vast ancestral axe for anchorage. At the top he turned, his eyes and teeth gleaming through the snow plaster, and said quietly, "That was very good fun." So it was, and so was anything undertaken in his company. He will be sadly missed.

G. F. Peaker.

## J. M. DAVIDSON

It is nearly 25 years since I first met J. M. Davidson in the company of his great friends C. W. Marshall and Robertson Lamb. Although then well over 50 years of age he was very active and a particularly sound mountaineer in every way, careful on rock and always most helpful and encouraging to beginners. As a walker on the hills he was unique in my experience, moving very quickly without any appearance of effort and capable of long distances without slackening of pace.

J. M. Davidson had been a member of the C.C. for nearly a quarter of a century but throughout his life as a climber, was more closely associated with the Alpine, Wayfarers' and Yorkshire Ramblers' Clubs. At the time of his death, he was the oldest Wayfarers' member, having joined as early as 1907,

and having been elected to the Committee in 1909. He became Secretary in the following year and held office till 1918. After a period of two years as Vice-President he was made President for the years 1925-26. A similar honour was conferred on him by the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, 1936-38.

Although he climbed extensively in Scotland, the Lake District and Wales for many years, there is no doubt that his greatest successes were in the Alps. Mr. E. E. Roberts, Honorary Editor of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, has kindly permitted me to use his notes on Davidson's Alpine career, and these are subjoined.

Davidson spent his business life at the Head Office of Lloyds' Bank, Liverpool, of which he was Manager for several years before holding similar positions in the branches at Cologne and Milan. His command of the French, German and Italian languages helped him greatly.

After his retirement he devoted himself to the hobbies of gardening, photography, etc., but never lost his interest in mountaineering. He continued to visit the Alps, whenever possible and took every opportunity of walking in the Lake District or Wales. When well over 60 he enjoyed a number of pot-holing expeditions in Yorkshire.

At the Annual Dinners of the Wayfarers' Club he was a regular attender and on the walks that followed the next day. The last of these was on 4th December, 1949, and Davidson then 78 years of age, decided to join in the party on the Clwydian Hills, though the weather was very bad. The effort was too much for him and he passed away as I think he would have wished, among the friends and hills he loved.

E. S. CHANTRELL.

I first met Davidson on Lausaune Station in 1908, when I was the last joined member of the A.C. and Y.R.C. Fred Botterell who had brought us together did not get out, but Davidson brought E. A. Baker of whom I afterwards saw so much.

Davidson had climbed at Kandersteg with the Ogis, and had done an unusual traverse of the Blumlisalphorn. I had had four seasons and some guideless experience. With Fritz Ogi and another guide much snow drove us from Saas over the Alphubeljoch, to do the Rimpfischhorn from the Adler, to cross the Rothorn and back over the Ober Gabelhorn, and we finished

guideless over Col de Valpelline, Otemma Glacier and from Champex over Col de Chardonnet, heavy going all of it.

Owing to some injury, Davidson had only a short holiday in 1909, but with Oppenheimer and Fox, we crossed Mont Blanc from Courmayeur and climbed Aig. du Géant, escaping death by lightning only because we were completely covered with wet snow. The Charmoz we treated too lightly and had magnificent climbing on the wrong route but did not complete it. By this time I had realised that he was a fine athlete all round and his watchword was cautious daring.

1910 was our most successful season. With Lamb and young Crawford, both new to the Alps, we went round Dauphiné in July, from La Grave making first ascents of the season, Pelvoux Plateau with Crawford, next day La Meije with Lamb, a superb expedition, Davidson climbing magnificently on the Great Wall, down to the Brèche Zsigmondy without using the pitons and up from it. The weather had been such as before unknown in Dauphiné. Two days later two parties made the only other traverse of the season, finished in a storm and one party died near where the Rocher de l'Aigle hut now stands.

We cleared the ice slope at 5 p.m. and were in La Grave before 8. Davidson wrote the story of this lucky (or well-judged) expedition in Lloyds' Bank Magazine. We were all in magnificent form and the presence of a third man in Lamb who knew no fear and never tired made us push on relentlessly.

We did eight or nine peaks and a new route. Of the Ecrins we were disappointed, but Davidson and Lamb made a bold decision and to close their holiday in comfort forced their way back over the Brèche de la Meije in cloud and snow.

In 1911 the two went to the Graians and did among others Dent Parrachée, Grand Casse and Mont Pourri. On Col du Géant, Hazard and I met them and we traversed the Rochfort Ridge to Mont Mallet. Lamb had picked up a throat infection and by an effort of will got down to the Montenvers with me, while the other two did the Géant.

The following week of good weather, the fit three traversed the Charmoz and Grepon, Davidson leading the Mummery Crack. Also we climbed the Grand Dru.

1912, Davidson with Hazard began with the Tödi and via many peaks arrived at Rosenlaui down the icefall edge and did



several Engelhörner, which so charmed them that in 1913 with Oppenheimer we did more limestone peaks and an amusing ascent of the Wetterhorn in dense cloud from an unusual direction.

In 1914, in the Bregaglia, he only did the Zocca and a few other peaks. We had no luck with the weather, the Ago di Sciora had a narrow escape but the war smashed our programme and our plans for the future. Gone were the Brenva and the Peuteret, etc. !

Davidson's professional stations in Cologne and Milan and the incidence of leave never allowed us to climb in the Alps together again, but he had been drawn into the Y.R.C. in 1910 (President, 1936-8) and we were in some good pot-hole expeditions, the descent of Gaping Gill Flood Entrance with a strong novice, 1936, when both well over 60, the final day in Lost Johns' 1937 when we went alone down the ladders and far along the Master Cave before beginning the withdrawal, the very slick descent of the difficult Juniper Gulf 1938, and the completed exploration of Pollnagollum of the Boats (Enniskillen).

E. E. ROBERTS.

### RICHARD ALBERT HULL

I met him just at the end of the war. The first summer of peace led me back to Helyg after an interval of five years but I found myself without a companion and my short leave slipping away fast. Then someone told me that there was an Oxford don at Pen-y-Pass who also was alone. I was not used to dons whom I regarded, with all a sailor's ignorance of university ways, as belonging to a race of elevated pedagogues breathing a rarified atmosphere in scholarly seclusion. It was with some surprise that I presently met a stocky individual whose thick spectacles and close cropped sandy hair gave him almost a teutonic appearance.

It was soon apparent that he knew much more than I about climbing and about Wales in particular. One of his great qualities stood out from the start and I realised that I was fortunate to have him as companion. He lived to give and not to get. He was at once at his most natural and his finest when with someone whose knowledge was less than his own and whom he could help. Whether it was in the hills or in college, he had

a genius for finding out what you lacked and helping you to acquire it. It was not so much that he taught you out of his greater knowledge, as that he put you in the way of yourself acquiring the experience. This is perhaps the highest form of teaching and the essence of the university life to which he so ardently subscribed.

He soon discovered that I knew few of the more *recherché* Welsh climbs and took my education in hand. I can remember that during the next few days we visited Holly Tree Wall and Terrace Wall and that through him I learned a little of the *finesse* of a thoroughbred climb. Under his guidance I even achieved a V.S. which certainly could not have been done without him. He had an inimitable talent for getting the best out of his companions however unpromising the material. He possessed that gift for instilling confidence in oneself which can only spring from a completely unselfish character.

If I have dwelt overmuch on those first few days of our acquaintance it is because their memory is both fond and vivid. Looking back they seem to point to what was one of his outstanding qualities as a mountaineer. He was the ideal second ; yet he was seldom really the second. He was usually the leader although he often preferred to do the leading from the second's place. In later years I was often to appreciate this fact in the Alps. I think he was too genuinely modest to regard himself as being the leader of the small party of friends which assembled there each summer. Yet we all drew heavily on his sound judgment and our achievements as well as our pleasures would have been immeasurably the poorer without him.

As a physicist he had a first class analytical brain. He carried with him from the laboratory the clear light of reason in his approach to mountaineering problems. When planning a climb one might deceive oneself about the prospects of success by one's own enthusiasm but not so Richard. He would carefully collect the data and sift and weigh its value. He was at pains to draw on the experience of the guides and wardens he met in the hills. Steadily he would amass the available information. Once he had set out he rarely made a mistake in route finding. If his more volatile companions occasionally regarded his studying of the guide book as being a little too assiduous, we were

usually ready enough to listen to his reasoning when the clouds came down and the way was in doubt.

The mind goes back to a hot afternoon in August. Four of us with heavy packs were walking up from Taesch to the Dom hut. The sky was cloudless and the air drowsy and we all sweated profusely. The murmur of bees mingled pleasantly with the voice of a small torrent which tumbled out of the woods. The path we were following was alleged to lead to the hut. It wound upwards through green alps into the sweet smelling shade of the firs. There were wild raspberries and the way was too delightful for anyone to pay much attention to where it was going. Presently it became apparent that the path had not for some time been leading the way we had expected and had now all but disappeared. Clearly we had made a mistake and out came the map and guide book. Richard was as near being really cross as I have ever seen him. The mistake was trifling and the rest of us were not in the least put out. But in his own eyes he had been guilty of allowing the pleasures of the moment to dim his perception of facts. The lapse from reasoned conduct irritated his precise mind. It is the only mistake in route finding that I ever knew him to make.

For an acute brain he was wonderfully tolerant with those who were less gifted. I never knew him to lose patience with the most maladroit novice in the hills. It was this as much as anything which made him such a popular instructor. He had a very real affection for young men and he spent much of his climbing time in teaching them the rudiments of the art. He gave his services freely, reaching in this way beyond the immediate circle of his own friends. There must be many a young mountaineer today who owes his enlightenment to Richard's generous encouragement.

During the three seasons that I had the privilege of climbing with him in the Alps he had a distinguished record. Apart from club meets, with which he was always ready to lend a hand, he dispensed with the services of professional guides. His first essay at guideless leading included the traverses of the Taeschhorn Dom, Zinal Rothhorn, Obergabelhorn, and the Zmutt ridge of the Matterhorn. Last summer he climbed the Dent Blanche by the Viereselgrat, the frontier ridge of Mont Maudit and Moore's Arête of the Brenva. The latter climb starting

from the perched refuge on the Col de la Fourche, traversing Mont Blanc and descending by the Col de Bionnassay to the Val Veni was his finest and his last mountaineering achievement. That night at the Cantine de la Visaille, dog tired and full of chianti and contentment, he had mercifully no presentiment of approaching tragedy.

His death was as improbable as it is tragic for he was the most careful and reliable of climbers. It all happened high on the Brouillard Arête above the Col Émile Rey. He was leading at the time and in a shallow rock couloir when a hold appeared to break away and he fell headlong, striking his skull and being killed instantly. The suddenness and completeness of the tragedy must have been overwhelming for his companion before whose agonised eyes it took place. The manner in which he held and recovered the body and his subsequent descent alone of a long and difficult climb are beyond all praise.

The tragedy is the more complete because he leaves behind him a small daughter whose mother died early in the war. Her welfare was never far from his thoughts and he had a high sense of his responsibilities as a father. On more than one occasion, when I was inclined to be incautious, I have felt his restraining hand and honoured the right motive behind it. One cannot but feel that out of the four friends who climbed together each summer he was the most prudent and the one of us least deserving of such an accident. Mercifully his child is now with old friends and her welfare is assured.

His loss is felt far beyond the circle of his family and immediate friends, for whose sadness members will extend their keen sympathy. The club has lost a loyal and unselfish character and a most conscientious teacher of the young. There are many who might have climbed who may never do so now that Richard Hull has gone.

C. J. W. Simpson.

#### H. C. LOWEN

I joined the Climbers' Club in 1901, after meeting William and Henry Dalton in Wasdale the previous year. Lowen joined the Club the same year. For the next few years we spent our holidays climbing and camping in the Zermatt and Arolla valleys and, to a less extent, in the Oberland. Although our list of peaks was a long one I only recall two or three incidents as

outstanding. On the Matterhorn, a young Swiss sent down a stone which cut clean through the rope between Lowen and the next man, leaving each with an end. On what we had expected to be a nice snow traverse of the Lyskamm we spent seven and a half hours cutting steps in hard, blue ice, and towards the end very willingly surrendered the lead to an Italian party, where they had to cut right through the enormous cornice. We also spent two or three weeks at the head of Coruisk among the marvellous ridges of the Coolins. On two evenings running we saw the Brocken spectre most beautifully. During these years we met and grew greatly to like and admire Alexander Burgener, his gruffness as well as his skill and kindness. We wanted to work with one guide and no porter. Alexander fell in with our plans and we prepared an ambitious programme for Montanvers for the following summer. When the time came, however, Alexander reviewed his memories and decided to exclude the Grepon from his list. This was a sad blow for us as we were particularly keen on the Grepon. Burgener, however, had not been there since he made the first ascent with Mummery and he had never made the traverse.

However, after a few expeditions, including a marvellous 24 hours on Mont Blanc, he changed his mind again and said he was ready to take the three of us (Lowen, T. Salter and me) over the Grepon on the condition that Lowen should lead. This from Burgener was a remarkable tribute to Lowen's outstanding rock climbing standard.

Lowen, as always, led faultlessly. I followed as it was thought well to have ample strength above Alexander, who was now well over 60 and a heavy man. Salter brought up the rear. It was a most lovely day and everything was going most successfully. We traversed the summit as usual, noticing, however, a certain hesitancy when we came to the drop at the big fault. Alexander decided to leave a double length of half-strength rope here but gave no very convincing reason. Lowen was to lead down but was unable to obtain instructions or advice as to where the start was. Indeed, it was two or three hours before we found the route down (Lowen found it). We moved as quickly as we could over loose rocks and used the last of the light. The beauty was very great and the cold very hard to endure. Finally we had to lie on a slab until the sun was up again.

Events now broke up our party, very regrettably, as I think, since a combination of such rock climbers as Alexander Burgener and Horace Lowen will not often be found.

All this was boot and nail work ; the rubber shoe and scarpetti period was a good deal later.

Later on we climbed with an able Italian guide named Rizzi in the Vigo di Fasso Valley. Some of the climbs hereabouts are, of course, extremely sensational.

Lowen always felt devoted to the Club which cannot spare such members. The personal loss to the writer is great. It is good that his two sons continue the family connection with the Club.

W. ZIMMERMAN.

It was thought that Lowen was the first amateur to *lead* the traverse of the Grepon throughout. Historically-minded members may care to check this.

J. G. Lowen writes that during the benightment on the Grepon, Burgener craved the comfort of tobacco but none of the party could find a match. "On reaching warmer parts next day my father stripped off some of his outer garments and to his embarrassment discovered a box of matches. Burgener was furious and hardly spoke to my father for several days."

### JOHN SARJANT

John Sarjant was fatally injured in a road accident, on Boxing Day, 1949.

Looking back on the years one knew him, it is difficult to accept his death as something irreversible, for John had a vitality and zest for life possessed by few others. One still expects to find him driving round Sheffield in a rattletrap Austin, sitting in the bar in the Union or, most typically, striding at an immense pace over his beloved Derbyshire moors.

He was never a great climber, and never considered himself as rising above the average, but he had in him the twin virtues of steadiness and reliability. As a leader, he preferred not to take risks ; as a second, his silent encouragement from behind helped many an inexperienced leader at a *mauvais pas*. Of his attitude to mountains he said little : one gained the impression that he climbed because he liked climbing, and because he liked mountains ; he refused to make of it a physical or spiritual

immolation. He was as ready as the next man to spend a lazy day in the hut, smoking an enormous pipe, making outrageous statements and arguing just for the fun of it.

John was, none the less, a very competent draughtsman, and some of his mountain sketches are excellent, while his results with a " VPK " camera would put to shame many obtained with much more expensive apparatus.

He was a delight to walk or climb with. He never seemed bored by the most familiar surroundings and, no matter how irritated one felt, at an early start or a blistered foot, his infectious good humour soon communicated itself. This was not without occasional effort on his part, as he suffered severe attacks of migraine, but one never found him at a loss and, if things became too bad, he unobtrusively disappeared.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe a man in a few short lines. Friendship involves such a number of tenuous, yet intimate, links that in the summing up, the whole may seem less than the part. In John's case this applies, and those who never knew him will never be able to appreciate his unaffected warmth and sincerity. Those of us who did will remember both on and off the hills, those very great qualities, and that will be a comfort.

E. J. Clegg.

#### W. J. WILLIAMS

On 10th August, 1949, Mr. William Jones Williams died at his home, Cae Ffynnon, Llangystenin, North Wales. His death at the age of 86 years has brought to a close a brilliant career.

Born in 1863, he was educated at Manchester Grammar School and afterwards joined the Exchequer and Audit Department of the Civil Service, later leaving to become Secretary of Kodak Limited, which position he retained until 1928.

During this period of business activity (1880-1928) Williams made himself into an expert Accountant ; took the degrees of B.A. and Ll.B., externally in the University of London, by private study ; made himself at home in half a dozen European languages (including Russian) ; become a member of the Middle Temple and qualified as a Barrister, though he was not formally called to the Bar ; read widely and deeply and formed a considerable library, rich in Welsh Books and particularly so in

accounts of early tours in Wales and in mountaineering books in many languages. He travelled extensively in Europe and went to Egypt and South Africa largely on Kodak business. In his early years in London he was active in Welsh affairs in London and—a sign of another interest—he was an early member of the Fabian Society.

In 1921 he fulfilled his ambition to live in Wales and went to reside in Llangystenin but he did not fully retire from business until 1928. An idle retirement had no attraction for him ; and the direction of his activities for a further 20 years was dictated by his passion for Wales. In 1927 at the invitation of Dr. Thomas Jones, C.H., then Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, W. J. Williams became the first Hon. Treasurer of Coleg Harlech, the residential College for adult education, then in course of foundation at Harlech in the former house of his old friend, Mr. George Davison. He continued as an energetic Treasurer until 1948. Another movement which caught his enthusiasm was the movement for Welsh boys and girls founded and led by the inspiration of Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards, and known throughout Wales as “Yr Urdd.” W. J. Williams’ administrative and legal experience was of service to this movement, now very large. He played a considerable part in the foundation of a company to give it legal standing and acted as its first Treasurer from 1931 to 1942. The great amount of detailed work which he did for these two bodies did not prevent him from acting regularly as a Justice of the Peace in Caernarvonshire, acting as a joint local Secretary for the Cambrian Archaeological Association conducting a W.E.A. Class in Welsh literature at Conway for eight years, interesting himself in a number of Welsh and other societies and in purely local affairs, and from reading his 60-year accumulation of books. He was an original member of the Climbers’ Club in which he took a great interest.

Though built on a small scale he was exceedingly agile and tough. His early climbing was with his close friend, Owen Glynne Jones, with whom he shared lodgings in London for a time before the year 1889. He climbed with O. G. Jones both in this country and in the Alps. He assisted in some first ascents on Welsh rocks, recorded in the Climbers’ Club Guides, and he was the last survivor of what is described in the Preface to a recent edition of one of those Guides as the “party of



mighty length and famous strength," to whom the Angular Chimney on the Gribin Facet fell in 1898. The party included O. G. Jones, R. Williams, J. M. A. Thomson and H. V. Reade. He climbed with most of the early pioneers of British rock-climbing and he figures (anonymously) in some of the well known climbing photographs of the Messrs. G. D. and A. P. Abraham. He joined the Alpine Club in 1903 with a somewhat impressive list of climbs to his credit. His proposers were Roderick Williams and W. P. Haskett-Smith. After the death of O. G. Jones on the Dent Blanche in 1899, W. J. Williams went to the Alps every year until 1914 with a guideless party, which included Roderick Williams and J. M. Archer Thomson. They went occasionally to Switzerland, but most often to Tyrol. After the first World War, he went back to the Alps in 1922, climbed in Tyrol again in 1923 and 1924 (in 1924 again with Roderick Williams, the latter's last season in the Alps), at Chamonix in 1925 and with the Climbers' Club meet at Arolla in 1928. He was then 65 years of age. He did not visit the Alps again, but for many years he continued to walk vigorously in Wales and the Lake District.

In 1903 he married Mary Williams of London (formerly of Ruthin) who shared all his interests and joined with him in all his climbing from 1903 onwards. She died in 1942. They had one son, Dr. Gwyn Williams, a distinguished scientist, who shares his Father's interests in climbing and his love for his own home land.

I had seen a great deal of Williams during the last 15 years and nothing gave me more pleasure than to have a chat with my old friend, recounting our climbing experiences and remembering the men who had shared in them over a period of many years.

I never met a more kindly and lovable man than W. J. Williams. His passing deprives his friends and the many organisations he was interested in of a true friend who was always willing to give assistance out of his vast wealth of experience and ability.

W. E. Corlett.

We also regret to report the deaths of G. T. H. Crawford, R. Cyriax, Niel Hanson, J. Donald Hunter and Arthur Wells. It is hoped to publish notices in the next number.

# NEW CLIMBS & NOTES

P. R. J. HARDING

## GALLT YR OGOF. (UPPER CLIFF)

DANDELION WALL. 130 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 2nd July, 1949.

Party : N. P. Campbell, J. M. Edwards.

Start : At the first break in the overhang at the base of the cliff ; to the right of Slab Climb.

(1) 50 feet. Up a shallow vertical crack for 20 feet, then diagonally left to a belay beneath the overhang.

(2) 70 feet. Traverse right, across the wall to a small heather ledge and thence diagonally again to the left to easier ground.

THE LEDGES : ROUTE I. 130 feet. Very difficult perhaps, not quite in rubbers. Rock excellent where necessary.

First Ascent : 4th July, 1949.

Party : J. M. Edwards, L. W. Bennett, J. O. Hibling.

Start : 100 feet right of the start of Table Climb. A broad gangway slopes easily up to the left ending 30 feet away in a corner against the main wall.

(1) 30 feet. Up the gangway, some loose rock.

(2) 25 feet. Step round onto the ledge, descend and cross onto good incuts. Then soon to a crevassed ledge with belays.

(3) 20 feet. Past an ash tree to the corner bounding the black wall. Up the short, steep edge of this to the next ledge.

(4) 50 feet. Scramble off up to the left or go to the right-hand end of the ledge and up just beyond it by a wide shallow groove letting onto minor ledges which proceed up to the left and off the cliff.

THE LEDGES : ROUTE II. 130 feet. Very difficult.

First Ascent : 11th July, 1949.

Party : J. M. Edwards, R. W. Beard.

Start : Halfway between the Table Climb and the 1st Ledges Route. At the foot of the groove that bounds the right-hand end of the area in which the ledges lie.

(1) 30 feet. Up the groove.

(2) 30 feet. Up the continuation groove keeping to the left and climbing over its top onto the left edge. So to the ledge area, and a belay on the right by an ash tree.

(3) 25 feet. Traverse in a half circle to the right and back onto the upper ledge.

(4) 50 feet. Walk off to the left or take the last pitch of Route I.

## IDWAL. (UPPER CLIFFS OF GLYDER FAWR)

GREY WALL, VARIATION. 80 feet. Very severe.

First Ascent : 8th July, 1949.

Party : M. P. Ward, J. M. Edwards.

Start : As for Procrastination Cracks. Climb the wall on the left of the cracks to a small stance near the left edge. Mantelshelf up nearer the centre than up to the right. Traverse into the crack and continue on the original route.

### GLYDER FACH. DOLMEN BUTTRESS

DRUID ROUTE. 160 feet. Severe (Mild).

First Ascent : 21st August, 1949.

Party : G. C. Norman, I. C. Bennett.

Start : In the centre of the Buttress between Routes I and II.

(1) 60 feet. Ascend the edge of a grassy gully for 10 feet then cross to a bunch of spillikins on the right. Make a slightly descending traverse below a steep wall into a groove. Ascend this on good holds until a step round to the left can be made. Scramble up to a large platform on the edge of a square recess.

(2) 15 feet. Climb the left-hand corner of the recess to a poor stance with a good belay.

(3) 25 feet. Climb the strenuous crack above to another ledge.

(4) 20 feet. Another small crack, easier than the previous one.

(5) 40 feet. Ascend over large blocks to a ledge. From the right-hand end, step onto the edge to finish level with the top of Route I.

### CASTEL-Y-GWYNT

BRAB SLAB. 150 feet. Just Severe.

First Ascent : 19th August, 1949.

Party : G. C. Norman, I. C. Bennett.

Start : Just left and 60 feet above the start of Frosts' Climb. A slab makes a corner with the wall of a rib.

(1) 70 feet. Diagonally upwards for 20 feet to a grassy crack. Continue past a spike to a prominent stance on the left skyline.

(2) 60 feet. The left edge of the slab to end on grass.

(3) 20 feet. Walk to the right and climb a small, narrow slab.

### CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU (WEST BUTTRESS)

LONGLANDS DIRECT FINISH. 90 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 9th July, 1949.

Party : M. P. Ward, J. M. Edwards, L. W. Bennett, J. O. Hibling.

From the balcony below the final overhang, traverse left into the continuation of the main line and climb straight up on the left wall with occasional help from the crack. Very pretty, very exposed ; rather harder than the usual way.

### TRYFAN EAST FACE

OPUS ONE. 125 feet. Mild Severe.

First Ascent : 1st October, 1949.

Party : K. Norcross, A. G. N. Flew.

Start : Immediately right of Nor " Nor " Gully. The climb lies up the Nor " Nor " Buttress.

(1) 50 feet. Easy rocks to a grass ledge just beneath a steep scoop. Climb the scoop to a stance, etc., above on the left.

(2) 40 feet. Avoiding the more obvious line above, go round to a steep slab on the right. Traverse again to the right into a corner.

(3) 25 feet. The right hand of two cracks is followed to easy ground.

The whole route is really a variation on Nor " Nor " Buttress.

ENIGMA VARIATION. 50 feet. A variation on a variation. Very Severe perhaps.

First Ascent : 1st October, 1949.

Party : T. D. Bourdillon, K. Norcross.

Start : Immediately right of Opus One. Take the left hand of two grooves to the overhang. From here a difficult move is made to the right onto a small ledge.

### CLOGWYN-Y-GROCHAN

FATHA. 250 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 7th July, 1949.

Party : A. J. J. Moulam, D. Thomas.

Start : 20 feet left of the gully which bounds the cliff on its right.

(1) 40 feet. Ascend a steep wall diagonally by a rib and groove.

(2) 80 feet. Step down and traverse right to a small slab. Up this and round the corner where a line of flakes leads to the rib above. Follow the rib to vegetation beyond.

(3) 70 feet. The vegetable groove is quitted by a mantelshelf and the wall climbed to some rotten flakes. A belay may be found beneath the overhang some 20 feet to the right.

(4) 60 feet. Traverse back to the flakes, gain the groove above and cross to its left wall. All difficulty is now over.

This route makes the best of a rather uninteresting piece of ground. The line is very indefinite but one may find it interesting enough, when fed up with the other routes round here.

BABEL. 250 feet. Just Very Severe.

First Ascent : 27th July, 1949.

Party : C. M. G. Smith, J. H. Swallow.

Start : On the left of Central Gully. Between this and Kaisergebirge Wall.

(1) 90 feet. From the foot of the Central Gully ascend leftwards over two large blocks. Traverse a slab into a groove on the left then up again and diagonally right to finish on

(2) 30 feet. The wall ahead is steep. Ascend by a vee-chimney and exit on the left.

(3) 40 feet. The chimney continues as a crack. Climb the wall on its left.

(4) 90 feet. Easily up a short corner at the back of a broad ledge. Finish pleasantly up the crest by a tree.

## DINAS MOT

THE LECTERN. 240 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 17th July, 1949.

Party : P. R. Hodgkinson, R. W. Beard.

Start : 300 feet to the right of Twin Groove.

(1) 40 feet. Up the wall to a lectern-shaped rock.

(2) 50 feet. Traverse into a grassy groove and then out onto the face by an obvious traverse.

(3) 50 feet. Move round the rib on the left, hand traverse onto the face, then up to a large recess.

(4) 60 feet. Four grooves now confront the climber, take the farthest right.

(5) 40 feet. Easily to the top.

## CRAIG-Y-BERE

THE PRIMROSE PATH. 500 feet. Severe, occasionally.

First Ascent : 27th July, 1949.

Party : P. R. Hodgkinson, J. Genelli.

Start : Right of Sentries Ridge, the second groove behind the stone wall at the lowest point of the cliff.

(1) 80 feet. Up the groove on indifferent rock.

(2) 80 feet. Continue in the same line. The groove steepens into a slab.

(3) 40 feet. Follow the line of weakness to the right to a grass ledge.

(4) 25 feet. Climb to a cave with a good belay.

(5) 50 feet. The groove is now blocked by a large overhang. Climb the wall on the left, which is steep and loose.

(6) 40 feet. Go diagonally right.

(7 and 8) 200 feet. Keep to the right on loose rock, no difficulty.

## CLOGWYN-Y-GAREG

This is the cliff to the right of Craig-y-Bere, lower down the hillside.

THE KESTREL. 100 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 15th July, 1949.

Party : P. R. Hodgkinson, J. Genelli.

Start : At the foot of a steep groove just right of the stone wall.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the groove on sloping holds.

(2) 50 feet. More left out of the groove which has become uncomfortably steep. Up the wall on good holds then return to the groove finishing with an easy mantelshelf.

## CRAIG DDU (LLANBERIS VALLEY)

RIFT WALL. 280 feet. Just Severe.

First Ascent : 27th July, 1949.

Party : J. M. Edwards, K. N. Davies, F. J. Monkhouse.

Start : On the right of the main gully of Garlic Groove. About 20 feet right of the fence, where the overhang changes to a black groove. A quartz rib slopes to the left over the overhang then straight up.

(1) 80 feet. Up the rib to pull over steeply onto a ledge with dwarf oak and holly trees. More round to the left and up easily by large ledges to a bower with ivy, trees, etc.

(2) 30 feet. Back along the ledges for a few feet, then go up the line of steps diagonally to the right to the foot of a groove. Half Way House.

(3) 40 feet. Continue up the slabs and pull into the Vee—rather awkward. Up the slab (as for the Black Belt) to belay some yards farther.

(4) 90 feet. Up the steep crack at the back, over a perched block ("Traveller treat this jug with care, for other Travellers travelling here") and steeply, but on good holds, over the top.

Up the subsequent slab easily for 60 feet to where it becomes a sheer edge. Belay (or below).

(5) 30 feet. Now an exit up and over the left wall.

Up onto ledges at the top left corner and reach the left edge for a pull over with excellent holds. 70 feet farther for a belay.

### ESGAIR FFYNNON

The cliff on the skyline looking from Cwm Glas Cottage, just right of the upper of Dinas Cromlech.

J. M. Edwards visited this cliff on the 4th August, 1949, and made a route of difficult to very difficult standard up the centre.

### CWM GLAS FACET

Above Cwm Glas Cottage, rather to the west, a very broken face gives many opportunities.

INNOCULATION WALL. 300 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 26th July, 1949.

Party : F. A. Smith, P. R. Hodgkinson.

Start : At the centre of the cliff, near a crevasse in the ground. To the right of a steep and usually wet wall.

(1) 50 feet. Up the Wall and then up steep slabs bearing right to a ledge.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the corner on steep holds, past perched blocks to the foot of a chimney.

(3) 50 feet. Up the chimney.

(4) 100 feet. Climb the wall to the right of two chimneys.

(5) 80 feet. Another chimney to finish.

### CARREG WASTAD

OVERLAPPING WALL DIRECT. Very Severe (hard).

First Ascent : 17th June, 1949.

Party : P. R. J. Harding (solo).

The second ascent was led on the following day by P. R. J. Harding and F. A. Smith.

The original route was described in last year's journal. The direct pitch takes the overhanging chimney of the second pitch direct.

The Llanberris Pass routes here described are those which do not appear in the new Llanberis Guide Book. Other climbs in this area which are described in the guide are listed as follows :—

**CRAIG DDU**

The Black Belt.

Severe. 14th July, 1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, B. L. Blake,  
C. M. G. Smith.**CLOGWYN-Y-GROCHAN**

Goats Gully.

Just Very Severe. 15th July, 1949.

C. M. G. Smith, B. L. Blake.

Central Gully.

Severe. 23rd August, 1949.

J. M. Edwards, R. W. Beard.

**CARREG WASTAD**

The Lion.

Very Severe (hard). 25th June,  
1949.P. R. J. Harding, A. J. J.  
Moulam.

A. J. J. Moulam's work on the Carneddws has produced quite a spate of new climbs which are listed briefly below :—

**CRAIG BY LLECH DDU**

Low Wall.

Severe. 30th August, 1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, A. R. Chapman.

**BLACK LADDERS (YSGOLION DVON)**

Central Gully Wall (Jumo).

Very Difficult. 3rd September,  
1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, A. R. Chapman.

Jupiter.

Very Difficult. 12th September,  
1949.A. J. J. Moulam, Miss P. J.  
Fearon, K. V. Ingold.**CRAIG-YR-YSFA****RIGHT WALL OF AVALANCHE GULLY**

Troglodyte.

Very Difficult. 15th September,  
1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, T. P. Snell.

Sigma.

Difficult. 15th September, 1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, T. P. Snell,  
G. A. Horridge.

Enigma.

Very Difficult. 18th September,  
1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, T. P. Snell.

The Bannister.

Severe. 23rd September, 1949.

A. J. J. Moulam, B. L. Blake.

## CRAIGIAU GLEISION

Sheep Pen Buttress.

Severe. 21st September, 1949.  
A. J. J. Moulam, B. L. Blake.

## BEN NEVIS—NORTH WALL OF CARN DEARG

CATERPILLAR CRAWL : 300 feet. Very Severe

The following route was made in an unsuccessful attempt to find Route I.

First Ascent : Summer, 1949.

Party : Miss Brenda Ritchie, J. N. Mills, C. J. Pattinson and Miss Rosalind Hill.

Start : As for Route I.

(1) As for Route I.

(2) 70 feet. Traverse right and then left to a steep crack in a corner and ascend to a grass stance just above some loose blocks.

(3) 50 feet. Descend a few feet and leave the crack by a stomach traverse on the right, the caterpillar crawl. Continue traversing, delicately in parts, to a commodious stance.

(4) 25 feet. The short steep wall above is tackled a few yards right of the stance ; then follow an obvious line of sloping ledges up to the left to a fine stance behind a block. A green gallery runs horizontally to the left.

(5) 15 feet. A few delicate steps from the top of the block lead soon to a recess with belay.

(6) 50 feet. Traverse a few feet left below the overhanging base of a groove and round the nose to a little face which is ascended until it is possible to step back into the groove above the overhang. Finish up the groove.

## SKYE; SGURR DEARG-SOUTH FACE

## LAGAN ROUTE

The following description was taken from the Sligachan climbers' log book and sent in by D. Thomas.

Towards the eastern corner of the southern buttress of Sgurr Dearg is an overhanging inverted flake above a horizontal overhang. 15 yards to the right of this flake and 12 yards to the left of a cave is a well-defined crack running up the wall for approximately 60 feet.

(1) 60 feet. Ascend the crack for 20 feet until forced to traverse across the wall to the right to easier slabs. Belay at the foot of a vee-shaped chimney.

(2) 30 feet. Climb the chimney easily—loose blocks.

(3) 60 feet. Traverse a few feet left to a perched block. Step off the block and climb slabs above (to the left of an inverted flake with undercut holds) to a grassy recess.

(4) 130 feet. Start up groove above the belay, bear right and climb slabs delicately.

The standard is about Severe.

First Ascent : 27th August, 1947.

Party : Miss G. Goddard, D. Thomas.



## GENERAL

1949 was an extremely active year especially in the field of new and difficult climbs. An exceptional summer saw Clogwyn Du'r Arddu in perfect condition and all the existing routes were repeated a number of times.

In the Llanberis Pass many of the "once only" routes were repeated. M. G. Hughes led a second ascent of The Spectre which must be rated as one of the most difficult and precarious leads in the district.

J. Menlove Edwards and C. M. G. Smith proved once again that to climb the "impossible" requires only better weather than usual—The Clogwyn-y-Grochan Gullies were notable exploits.

Not only has the quest for adventure been confined to these islands—M. G. Hughes led his own small expedition to the Atlas Mountains in September, 1949, resulting in a number of new mountain routes.

P. R. J. HARDING.

NOTE.—The standards given in all the descriptions are the opinions of the First Ascent parties.

## REVIEWS

TWO MOUNTAINS AND A RIVER. By H. W. Tilman. (Cambridge University Press. 21/-)

It is always a pleasure to receive a new book by Tilman. In this latest work the Tilman qualities of tersely dramatic narrative, of trenchant humour and of a pervasive "Weltanschauung" over the mountain scene are more clearly present than ever.

*Two Mountains and a River*, is the account of a man who has fallen once under the spell of the Himalayas, and who, so soon as the war-time barriers are half-lifted, gives his everything to scramble back underneath them. The ethics of so scrambling are candidly discussed in the first chapter. The conclusion, for which we admire him, is that: "I argued, as Falstaff did about stealing, it was my vocation, 'and 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.'" Such frank confession of the desirability of Himalayan travel as an end, for himself, is refreshing to those of us who stand casting round for reasons to buttress inclination. As to the means, there lay the difficulty and the delays. After some hesitation and considerable wrestling with red tape, Tilman accepted the offer of the Swiss to accompany an official attempt on Rakaposhi (25,550 feet). The attempt failed, chiefly owing to the extreme difficulty and considerable danger of the lower ridges. The party did, however, do a useful piece of exploration on the Kukuay Glacier, before Tilman turned north to meet Eric Shipton for an attempt on Muztagh Ata in Sinkiang (24,388 feet), south-west of Kashgar.

It was a grim climb, described with dramatic brevity. The party started the final bid too low, struggled upwards in bitter cold and was defeated by time. But it is so told that when we read: "By this time we were all pretty well on our knees," or of Shipton's frost-bitten feet, we are startled by the sudden seriousness of their situation. They got down safely, however, and reached Kashgar, whence Tilman returned by a route of his own, crossing a corner of Afghan territory. His arrest and confinement form the most amusing episode of the story.

Tilman's humour, which bites its way, often with Voltairean neatness, into every paragraph, does not succeed in concealing a high seriousness of purpose. There are the two poles in his mind: the mountains which draw him, and at the other end miserable man with his absurd antics among them. The juxtaposition of these elements supplies much of the best humour. His own antics are not spared, on the occasion, for instance, when he is taken out to Davos to learn ski-ing for expedition purposes:

"To Gyr and Kappeler, whose minds no doubt were casting forward to the execution of linked 'Christianias' on the slopes of Rakaposhi, the sight of their future companion's antics must have been equally depressing. Whilst I committed all the known mistakes and a few I had thought out for myself, they would circle round with encouraging cries. To a distant observer they must have appeared like hawks striking at a heron with a broken wing."

The skis got no farther than Gilgit. But there are many other victims of his pen : the Shifty Scholar, the villainous Police Agent, the luckless Yusuf, or the crowds going up by train, " breathing cigarette smoke into each other's faces." Behind this foreground of comedy we seem to see Tilman clinging in a desperate hope to those snowy peaks, which endure and which mock the tawdry code practised by the " thousand thousand slimy things " that lived on after the last world war.

There are many lessons, not only in the absorbing narrative, but in an amazingly apt set of quotations, some of them from authorities we know, some from Chinese sages we do not know and perhaps never shall. To facilitate the geography lesson the book has six very adequate maps, and to link the photographs frequent references are given in the text. It might conceivably have been more beautiful to have had fewer and larger photographs ; but it would be ungracious to cavil at such a feast, especially considering the circumstances under which some of them were taken. They go to assist the author in the task he skilfully accomplishes—that of setting his reader sympathetically with him on the Himalayan stage.

WILFRID NOYCE.

BERGE DER WELT, IV. Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschungen, Zurich.

Edited by Marcel Kurz with the co-operation of Hans Roelli, the fourth volume of *Berge der Welt*, published by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Exploration, is worthy of its predecessors—and that is high praise. The series fall in design between an encyclopaedia and a set of periodicals and the range covered in the present volume is immense. We have in the brief compass of 240 pages full length stories of the 1947 Swiss Karakorum expedition and of the 1948 expedition to Tibesti led by Dr. Wyss-Dunant, who has thus added to his already wide experience of African travel. There are briefer notes on the 1948 Cordillera Blanca expedition and on Amnyi Machen, the lamentable Reynolds expedition to which is discreetly discussed. The next volume should contain a note on the even more fantastic expedition last year which culminated in the murder, after the return to civilisation, of one American member by the other. The remaining long contribution is an admirable translation by Dr. Hoek of Geoffrey Young's notes on V. J. E. Ryan which appeared in the last number of the *C.C.ȝ*. To this rich feast are added a sympathetic obituary of Colonel Strutt and a touching note from the pen of the late M. Charles Gos on the young artist and mountaineer Philippa de Courten who was killed on the Engelhörner. It is a noble tribute to youth from one of the best beloved of the older climbers, who must have known as he struggled to write in the hospital at Martigny that the shades were drawing fast around him, too. The volume concludes with a review of the 1948 season in the Alps, in which the Alpine Club meet is given prominence, and some notes on Russian mountaineering. The latter are of the greatest interest and should be compared with Tilman's somewhat

more caustic comments in the last number of the *Alpine Journal*. We have suspected for years that progress in mountaineering was fast in Russia and that notable climbs had been made in the Caucasus, Alai and Tien Shan. Here for the first time some details are available to western readers. They are probably far from complete and as far as the Caucasus goes a little disappointing. Climbs seem to have been rather of the do or die variety (e.g., a traverse of Ushba involving a 14-day bivouac in bad weather on the 4,000 metre col to the north). On the other hand the exploration has been notable, though it is permissible to share Tilman's doubts about the discovery of a peak 400 metres higher than and only 10 miles from Khan Tengri, hitherto believed to be the highest mountain in the Tien Shan. Possibly the fact that Khan Tengri fails by 5 metres to reach the mystic 7,000 metres has something to do with it. 7,000 metres may hold for Russian mountaineers the fascination exercised by 8,000 metres on some continental climbers (cf., the publicity for the projected French expedition to the Himalayas).

Photographs and sketch maps are a proper accompaniment to the text. Of high quality they are admirably reproduced.

In some ways more important than the contents of this volume is the attitude of mind behind it. An honest attempt is made to "internationalise" mountaineering. One could not guess the nationality of the writers and there is a notable lack of personal pettiness. One could wish that the editors of other alpine publications maintained the same high standard. Great though the provocation was, all recrimination with Soviet publications has been avoided and on no page can I recall a single unfair comment. This is not only a tribute to the editors, but to their correspondents in different parts of the Alps, who might easily have allowed local pride or prejudice to run away with them. The tone is set by Herr Roelli's lines at the beginning and end of the volume :

*Das ist die wahre königliche Kraft :  
Der Berg, der uns leichthin zertrümmern könnte,  
lächelt in seinem Blau  
ins Grau des Lebens und der Täler  
und ermuntert uns,  
ihn zu gewinnen.*

and

*Ob er es wahrhaben will oder nicht :  
jeder Bergsteiger steigt Gott entgegen.*

Old-fashioned sentiments perhaps, but not unworthy.

D. L. BUSK.

THE EARLY ALPINE GUIDES. By Ronald Clark. (Phoenix House, London. 15/-.)

To the older mountaineer this is a most interesting book ; it is probably even more interesting and instructive to the younger climber. On the whole it is well written, it makes fascinating reading and must

be the result of considerable research. It is illustrated by portraits, generally photographs, of the guides written about, but also by some of Whymper's engravings and by some of the older Alpine maps. The following very apt sentence is taken from Lord Schuster's introduction : " They began in a world without maps, with few paths above the high pastures, with no Alpine huts, and they had to invent and perfect the technique of mountaineering."

After a chapter on the general conditions when climbing first started he commences with a short biography of Auguste Balmat, who accompanied Professor J. D. Forbes, the father of glaciology, and who was a great nephew of Jacques Balmat of Mont Blanc fame. Apart from his skill as a guide, Balmat had an intense interest in natural phenomena, which made him an ideal assistant and observer for Forbes. It is just such details of character, which makes the book so interesting. And so he describes all the important guides of the Golden Age. This period is generally reckoned from 1842 until the early 1880s. The last guide mentioned is Francois Devouassoud, who was born in 1831 and who climbed for so many years with Douglas Freshfield and went to so many parts of the world with him. Several of these guides were born much later, the last described being Ulrich Almer who was born in 1849 and lived until 1941. Guideless climbing did not start until the latter part of this period and one of the characteristics of a great guide is that he is always willing to help guideless climbers in every way ; this is mentioned in at least one of the biographies.

In some cases the guides are described in groups, either from their region of origin or from some special characteristics. Auguste Balmat and Melchior Anderegg have chapters to themselves and Christian Almer has two chapters.

One must criticise the large number of mistakes in German names and words ; for instance, the Austrian village of Vent becomes Fend. Some of these are not misprints, for they occur in several places, such as Monch instead of Moench or Mönch. The " Zumtaugwalders " of Zermatt is probably a portmanteau word for the " Zumtaugwalds " and the " Taugwalders," unless there has been some sort of fission of the name. An amusing one is Peter Bohren's nickname, which becomes "*Die Gletscher-Wolf*."

The bad Chamonix system of allotting the next guide on the list to a climber, regardless of the expedition to be attempted and the capability of the particular guide, is spoken of as a thing of the past, but it still existed in 1939, though more easily circumvented than in the early days.

There are two appendices, one on short biographical notes of early English climbers and another on the principal ascents of *some* of the guides described. There is also a bibliography and an index.

It is certainly an eminently readable book.

N. S. FINZI.

SNOWDONIA. By F. J. North, Bruce Campbell and Richenda Scott. (Collins. 21/-.)

The correct attitude of the mountaineer towards science was a highly controversial moral issue to an earlier generation ; today it troubles only the organiser of expeditions to distant regions yet any climber directly and at all times is a close observer of natural history. When he climbs the nature of the rock, if he rests the softness of the turf are matters equally important, and should he seek a fuller understanding of these questions as they affect the British hills he will be able to occupy several winter evenings or long train journeys with *Snowdonia*. It is, however, doubtful whether the book will hold his attention so well as the *Mountains of Snowdonia* which deals with much the same field.

The 469 pages are divided into three main sections : Geology, Natural History and the Historical Background, a separate author being responsible for each.

The writing of popular science was always difficult and it has been made increasingly so by the high standard a few exceptionally gifted people have lately achieved. It is natural, though perhaps unfair to Dr. North, to compare his treatment of the geology of Snowdonia with Stamp's *British Structure and Scenery*, in the same series. Professor Stamp one sometimes feels would have been capable of firing the imagination of a long deceased maiden aunt with an enthusiasm for topography. Dr. North would have been less successful. He presents a mass of data but with no real cohesion, and the reader who is not a geologist is likely to be left with a blurred impression. As an example take his treatment of glacial erosion. A diagram by Davies and passages in the text convey the impression of glaciers functioning like great rasps or smoothing planes wearing the country down by their weight. Turn a few pages and erosion during the ice age is suggested, both by diagram and in words, to be largely a matter of frost shattering, the glaciers conveying the debris. In such a subject no single explanation may be adequate but in popular scientific writing such seeming if not actual contradiction is calculated to mislead. The fourth chapter on the personality of the mountains encouraged one to expect a higher note but any real impression of the individuality of the peaks was again dimmed and one regretted here particularly that Dr. North is not John Tyndall.

The choice of Dr. Bruce Campbell to write on the Natural History of Snowdonia was surprising. He has apparently made but few visits to Snowdonia—the earliest, three years before the book was written. His facts come largely from other authorities and are sometimes inaccurate ; his descriptions appear shallow to the reader familiar with Snowdonia ; but the most serious fault of this section is its general structure. The introductory chapters lead up to the treatment of the region in a number of altitudinal zones. Birds, beasts, flowers and incidents on Dr. Campbell's walks are mingled together ; the country itself—its appearance, its feeling and the factors of soil and climate which mould the vegetation are almost ignored, yet they and they alone

can provide the foundation for the description Dr. Campbell attempted to prepare. Sometimes it seems he had difficulty in filling his pages and this perhaps explains the lengthy and not very well digested excerpts from the "Survey of the Agricultural and Waste Lands of Wales."

It is with relief that we turn to Dr. Richenda Scott. She possesses what is elsewhere lacking, a real enthusiasm which is happily wedded to a wide view of her subject. One hundred pages is a meagre allowance of space in which to recount the invasions of four thousand years—from the New Stone Age to the modern tourist but this Dr. Scott has happily contrived to do. The experts alone can say if it is good history. The general reader is, however, in no doubt that it is good writing, that the past lives and with it the present is revealed more vividly than in the preceding pages.

The book is illustrated with many photographs ; those in black and white are almost without exception of high quality but the colour plates vary from excellent to execrable, the latter type predominating. Maps are numerous. Part of the Ordnance Survey is well reproduced in colour but the Geological and Botanical maps are poor in draughtsmanship, poorer still in content. Good maps on these topics must combine topographic with specialist information if they are to be valuable for the general reader. Expense militates against their preparation but the publishers could have done the reader a double service, and not increased their outlay, by omitting a couple of dozen of the colour plates and commissioning good maps in colour.

R. SCOTT RUSSELL.

THE WILL AND THE WAY. By J. M. Scott. (Hodder and Stoughton. 9/6.)

This is a cheerful tale of a treasure hunt. The scenery, costumes, flora, food and wines of the Italian valleys of Monte Rosa occupy much of the book which might have been specially written for John Watson. If Dornford Yates had been a member of this Club he would probably have written a novel like this.

F.H.K.

A GUIDE TO THE BLACK ROCKS AND CRATCLIFFE TOR. By P. R. J. Harding and A. J. J. Moulam. (Climbers' Club Guide, 1949. 3/6.)

The Guidebook Editor records in his prefatory note that in this production the Club has only acted midwife to a baby of the Stonnis Mountaineering Club—a midwife without territorial ambitions, it might be added, since there is no intention that this healthy infant should be the eldest of a brood of foster-brothers to the Welsh guides which are the Club's own offspring.

The authors of the guide are undoubtedly the two people qualified above all others to have written it ; and, although I am not as familiar with these two outcrops as I should like to be, I find it difficult to believe that what they have written will ever have to be substantially

modified. Most guidebooks, however good, carry the seeds of their own undoing in that they point the way to the climbs which have not yet been done, and so become rapidly out of date. But on cliffs of the size and character of Black Rocks and Cratcliffe, a point must come at which everything which can be climbed has been climbed ; and if this point has not now been reached it is clearly not the fault of Harding and Moulam. Nor are the gaps which they have filled in mere pointless variations for the sake of completeness ; they include some of the hardest and, I imagine, the finest routes on gritstone, such as the Promontory Girdle on Black Rocks and Suicide Wall at Cratcliffe.

If it may be assumed that this guide cannot profitably be added to, it is at least equally safe to say that the descriptions of the climbs will not need to be done again. They are written briefly, clearly and accurately, and with a touch which minimises the unavoidable austerity of accounts of very short climbs. Harding's line drawings are excellent, and do not attempt to show too much. The photographs catch the spirit of gritstone climbing, though one or two were taken in imperfect light. The list of the more important First Ascents contains information as well as bald fact. The guide also deals with the various outlyers of the two main outcrops, including Brassington and Harborough Rocks. The binding and the layout are very similar to those of the Club's temporary guidebooks published during the war.

A. D. M. Cox.

THE ALPINE JOURNAL, November, 1949.

THE RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1949.

THE LADIES ALPINE CLUB JOURNAL, 1949.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL, May, 1949.

THE M.A.M. JOURNAL, 1949.

"Base is the slave that pays," said Pistol, and editors of journals are bound to act on this dictum and ignore the wiser counsel of Dr. Johnson, who held that the man who wrote except for money was a blockhead. Still, even blockheads have their degrees, and perhaps it is part of the duty of editors, particularly of new journals, to distinguish these degrees, and to postpone, or even to forgo, publication if :

"The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees

Is left this vault to brag of."

Perhaps there are vaults—vast potholes of bathos, measureless caverns of ineptitude whose exploration should be left to the intrepid speleologists charged with the conduct of school magazines. Above all should editors beware of the life and soul of the party, the good fellow fully persuaded by the Christian duty of keeping our spirits up and trying to be funny. "For this overdone, or come tardy off, though it may make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in his allowance o'erweigh a whole readership of others." No names, no pack-drill as the soldier said. Let us turn to other matters.

The November number of the *Alpine Journal* contains many good things. These include an account of some mountaineering in the



Antarctic by A. R. C. Butson, historical articles by Courtauld, Graham Brown, de Beer and Mille. Engel, a vivid story of a storm on the Teufelsgrat by Emlyn Jones, and news from Tartary extracted from Russian publications and served up unhashed (lest "some of its refreshingly immodest flavour should be lost"), by Tilman, who points out, however, that Soviet mountaineers are not the only ones to suffer at the hands of the Press. Nor, one might add, is Karl Marx the only inappropriate name to be bestowed upon a peak. "Two days on Mont Pourri," a first-rate account of the deceptively lengthy traverse of that peak, and a high bivouac on the descent, and a poem, "Tignes, 1946," remind us how much we have lost by the untimely death of Michael Roberts.

"Manners Maketh Man," and in reading the Journal of the Rucksack Club the connoisseur will turn first to the Proceedings of the Club, where the astringent, not to say gritty flavour of that great institution is generally to be found in its purest essence. This year some insidious emollient has been at work. A drowsy numbness seems to have oppressed that blithe spirit of acerbity. Can the salt have lost its savour? Fortunately two photographs—a portrait of the President, by Milner, and a remarkable picture of the interior of an Irish pothole (*with figure to show the scale*) give ground for hope that the answer may be in the negative. Ireland is not the only strange ground visited by members. There is an account of some African hills, by Dillon, and Ivan Waller describes the girdle traverse of Iona—"This being in the nature of a game, rules have to be devised, and the first is that the route shall keep as close to the sea as is reasonably possible." An article by Lawton describes some alarming experiences in Wales, and a new classification—"Very Severe (Rubbers)"—makes its appearance among the new climbs.

The Rucksackers are not the only travellers; the *L.A.C. Journal* is mainly devoted to Natal and Kilimanjaro. The S.M.C., on the other hand, seem to have stuck pretty firmly to the Alps and Scotland, and in their situation they are surely wise. "New Climbs in the North West," by Bell, New Climbs in Rum, Skye, the Cairngorms, Glencoe, Arrachar and Arran, Camping and Climbing in Lewis and Harris, and crossing Sutherland—with all this to hand the Scots may well ask us: "Do you never yearn" and we can only give the classic reply: "We earn our living"—and in less delectable places.

G. F. PEAKER.

#### THE RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1950.

This, like *Oxford Mountaineering* reviewed below, unfortunately appeared too late for inclusion in Gilbert Peaker's review of the "Home" journals. A high standard is maintained; accounts of climbs, the Caïman, the Engelhörner, the Dolomites, the Pyrenees, the Jungfrau, the Zmutt and Peter Harding's girdle on the west buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu; historical summaries, Mittellegi ridge, Scafell Central Buttress; belles-lettres. There are no less than 17 full page photo-

graphs, most of them excellent. Apparently the Treasurer does not exercise the same pressure on the Editor as in some other clubs.

A third of a plate is devoted to a portrait of Emlyn Jones ; the text gives no clue to account for this so it must be accepted as a pure exercise in aesthetics by Milner. The telephoto of the Mittellegi is ascribed on its face to Milner, but on page 244 thanks are offered to "the mute inglorious Poucher who took the photograph." Often the non-member feels that he is intruding on a private joke in reading the journal of this, the most intimately knit of kindred clubs.

F.H.K.

OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING, 1950.

O.U.M.C. continues to display a proper and cheerful vitality ; one expression of this is the welcome reappearance of *Oxford Mountaineering* with all the coy charm of a periodical without a period. It is not clear which of the Viney's was editor ; on the title page the credit is given to Elliott but the editorial notes are signed R.M.V. We have, however, since been officially informed that R.M. was in fact in charge. The backbone, as it should be, is accounts of expeditions in various ranges from Scotland to New Zealand, but there is also humour, history and even sailing, as well as the usual club notes. I should like a few more photographs, but doubt if this would be possible within the price of 5/-.  
F.H.K.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. VII, Nos. 2-3, January and September 1949.

CANADIAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. XXXII, 1949.

NEW ZEALAND ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. XIII, June, 1949.

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, Vol. XXXIV, No. 6, June, 1949.

BULLETIN OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF KENYA, Nos. 10-12, March-September, 1949.

How to start ? How to extract the pith from 750 pages of kindred clubmanship ? What do members of this club really expect from a review of other journals ? I have no idea nor, I think, has the Editor ; however, assuming that eager multitudes are waiting on the Librarian's doorstep, what do they want to know ?

Firstly, I suppose : "Are they readable ?" To which the answer is "well, yes and no." Physically some are repulsive, badly laid out on unnecessarily bulky paper and with deplorably grey illustrations : New Zealand hits a new low in this respect with Canada not far off. Kenya, where printing resources may well be less ample, does well enough and the *Sierra Bulletin* is always a joy to handle. This is not a minor point, for even the stodgiest article may be just tolerable if it is easy to read and good plates "marry" well with the text.

Secondly—uplift ? What do they add to the total sum of "Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation" ? Here America easily leads with learned contributions on Glaciology, Ice Temperatures of Swiss Bergschrunds, much mapping of new territories and a monograph on

Dirt Bands : this sort of contribution is surely one of the duties of any national Alpine Club and one that is not overdone by our own *A.J.* From Canada and New Zealand there are no contributions quite of this sort, but as the fortunate mountaineers of these countries still have ranges that are both accessible and not fully explored, there are many articles that do add something to the total sum of mountaineering knowledge. Of mountain adventure there is plenty and pride of place must go to Ray Garner's first ascent of Brussels Peak, which appears in both the American and Canadian journals, closely followed by another great ascent (which also appears in both), an account of the second party to climb Mount Alberta ; both these involved route-finding, snow, ice and severe rock work and stormy weather. Canada and New Zealand supply many short papers on climbs of Alpine standard but America has some rock-and-ironmongery work which is very definitely in the Severe classification brackets.

Thirdly—entertainment ? What is slightly disheartening about them all is the lack of variety in method and presentation : solid, straightforward narratives follow hard on each other, doggedly factual, unselective and whilst cheerfulness will keep breaking in, imagination does not. Surely a test of any good journal is that at least a sprinkling of articles are intelligible, even entertaining, to the non-climbing reader. Here, except for some of the *Sierra Bulletin* (which does not in any case cater wholly for climbers), there is nothing that the lay editor would look at twice. If it comes to that would Keenlyside himself look at this thrilling paragraph on Contraction Bolts.

" We have  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch star drills, cut down to 5 inches in length, fitted into a  $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch octagonal sleeve. A set screw allows easy changing of drills. The bolt is  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch in diameter and 3 inches long. Two saw cuts at right angles, are made at one end. These  $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cuts taper in width from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch, making the bolt diameter  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch at one end, tapering to  $\frac{9}{16}$ -inch. The other end is flattened to  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch and has a welded ring for karabiners or slings. A bolt can be put in hard granite in 13 minutes, supporting over 2,000 lb. Inserted completely, it cannot be removed and can serve as an excellent belay point in the absence of piton cracks. To support one's weight on a flawless pitch, one can drill a shorter hole, taking from five to eight minutes. . . . I do not believe in blacksmithing a route up a cement wall—that is not climbing—but . . . " etc.

This paragraph is headed " Of General Interest."

But the American offering should not be judged wholly by such : one article in particular should be read, " Antarctic Interlude,"\* by William Latady, which is fresh from every point of view—location, approach, and illustrations. Some idea of the conditions experienced by this expedition can be realised when one reads that a member of the party fell into an Antarctic crevasse and remained in it, wedged a

\* EDITOR'S NOTE.—See also Walton's article, *C.C.J.*, IX, I, p. 66. Butson also lectured to the Club on this subject last year ; the substance of his lecture <sub>s</sub> printed in *A.J.*, No. 279.

hundred feet down between two ice walls, for 11 hours, alone throughout the night, to be rescued unhurt in the morning because ". . . it had been comparatively warm down there in the crevasse ; only 32 degrees, with no wind."

One article in the *Canadian Journal* deserves a mention, "The Wife He Leaves Below," by Lynda Woods, which is original and rather touching. New Zealand contains much fresh matter but would be improved by a more drastic editing. There is a good sense of Club in it—indeed almost every member must have contributed something—but so much consists of immense catalogues of names which are enough to make a fellow dizzy :

"At the head of the Strauchon, Baker Saddle (which is 1,000 feet lower than Copland Pass) provides what is apparently a straightforward route to the Hooker Glacier and Gardiner Hut. If only the Copland Range could be crossed from the Strauchon to Gulch Creek Glacier, here was the easy route to La Perouse Glacier. From the Gardiner Hut *via* Baker Saddle, or from Douglas Rock Hut, it would be an easy half-day to the bivvy rock at Gulch Creek, and the wearisome bush journey up the Cook River or the high crossing of Harper Saddle and the crevasses of the Upper Hooker would be avoided. (The route from the Copland River would be completed by a cage over the river at the Strauchon Junction.) However, the snag is to get down the cliffs of the Copland on the Gulch Creek side. . . ."

To balance this, some contributions are not only in words of one syllable, but very nearly paragraphs, too.

The June number of the *Kenya Bulletin* announces that the Mountain Club of East Africa has dissolved into three independent sections, of which Kenya is one. It cannot be easy for a fairly small club to produce four bulletins a year, but these are lively and pleasantly uninhibited.

The *Sierra Bulletin* is not a climbing journal at all : if we ever attain National Parks in this country and the appropriate Ministry's P.R.O. has to launch something, here is his model. It contains so much good sense about "planning," amenities, and other kindred matters that I can only advise others to get hold of it and enjoy, as I have done, its 150 elegantly produced pages. There is, however, one puzzle, a most beautiful colour frontispiece captioned ALBI-CAULIS DETAIL—EKTACHROME BY WILLIAM HALL, which might be a mountain range from 30,000 feet, a tree-trunk, or the entrails of a goat : anyway it obviously calls for an erudite footnote from our Editor. (His erudition fails—Editor.)

ELLIOTT VINEY.

The Club also gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following, some of which it is hoped to review in the next number : *Alpine Journal*, May, 1950 ; *American Alpine Journal*, 1950 ; *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1949 ; *Ladies' Alpine Club*, 1950 ; *The Living Wilderness*, No. 31 ; *Mountain Club of Kenya, Bulletin* : December, 1949 ; April, 1950 ; *Climbers' Testament*, by W. K. Richmond ; *Mountaineering Handbook*, A.B.M.S.A.C. ; *Scholar Mountaineers*, by Wilfred Noyce.

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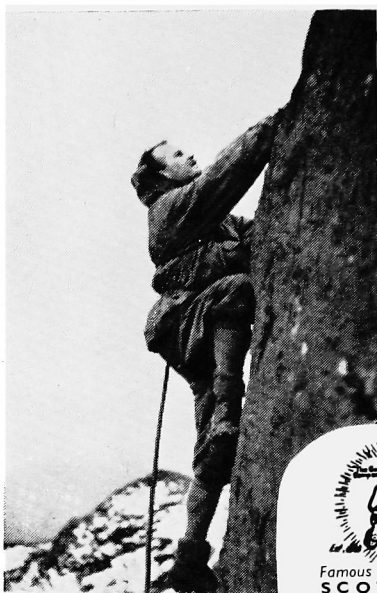
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The second rise is now well in sight and is remarkable by reason of its right wall, which is composed of up-ended, columnar rocks, rounded into a great semi-circle. The pitch is a narrow 50-foot chimney. The route lies up the chimney for a short distance, when one is forced off to the right to a subsidiary scoop ; this is climbed to the second terrace.

Straightforward climbing up the upper part of the gully to the top. (Standard M. to D.)

Some distance farther west on the same face are three short gullies. They were found to be earth-covered and grassy and hardly merit further attention."

Alternative lines can be made up the rocks beside the Central Gully, all very much the same standard.

#### CYFRWY

SITUATION [704135]. On the north face of the ridge below the peak of Cyfrwy.

APPROACHES. From Dolgelley by the Fox's Path diverging westwards in the neighbourhood of Llyn y Gader.

This crag shows two prominent arêtes. The East Arête running down towards Llyn y Gader is marked by a truncated tower some way up. The North Arête farther right has a similar pinnacle of smaller dimensions. The rock between has provided one or two indefinite routes. Beyond North Arête is a scree gully with one pitch near the top, bounded on its right by Stone Chute Pinnacle.

EAST ARÊTE. (The account is from *Rock Climbing in North Wales*.) "About midway up the arête is a truncated tower—the Table. Most people traverse into the gap on the upper side of this, beginning the climb from there. Another route is to attain this gap from the north-west, but it is unpleasant, involving the ascent of a grassy gully. Immediately left of this gully is a small pinnacle, above which a narrow and well-defined arête runs up to merge into the wall of the Table. Traverse slightly right to the top. Viewed from here the ridge presents a steep face of rock, the direct ascent of which would seem impossible. The descent into the gap is easy ; at a point a few feet down the gully towards Pen y Gader, the angle of the rock eases somewhat and good holds suggest an upward route. A few feet higher the arête proper is abandoned and a step taken round the corner into a wide grassy gully behind. This leads directly upwards ; after a steep pull to the top, one is in a position to look down the vertical face on to the top of the Table.

"An easy buttress now occurs above and gives access to the foot of a narrow crack, the best bit of climbing on Cyfrwy. It is only 15 feet high but is difficult. Above the ridge is straightforward to the top of Cyfrwy." (Standard M. to D.)

STERIC SLAB (C.C.ŷ. N.S., 1943). "At the foot of the Table lies a curious high and narrow rock screen. Standing at the left end of this screen and almost at the lowest point of the crag one can see 40 feet above and slightly left a fine steep edge of which the right-hand side is formed by a smooth, steep slab (Steric Slab). Although it cannot

PEN Y GADER

*Geological Survey and Museum*

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