

THE  
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A. K. RAWLINSON

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RAKAPOSHI—Climbing the Couloir

*R. R. E. Chorley*

# THE CASE AGAINST "LARGE EXPEDITIONS" IN THE HIMALAYA

ERIC SHIPTON

TO define the difference between "Large" and "Small" expeditions is not a straightforward matter, for it is concerned as much with the manner of approach, the attitude of mind towards mountaineering expeditions in general, as with mere numbers. Indeed, I find anything like an exact definition impossible. Broadly speaking, however, I would define a "Small Expedition" as one which is inspired, organized and conducted privately with limited resources; and a "Large Expedition" as one which is initiated and financed by some public or semi-public body and furnished with resources, which if not literally unlimited, are at least sufficient to be beyond the concern of the individual members of the party. To take as a prototype of the former the expedition which climbed Nanda Devi in 1936 should sufficiently illustrate my point.

I have always believed that Large Expeditions inevitably promote international and personal rivalry and lead to unbalanced and somewhat hysterical publicity. At the same time they tend to stifle freedom of enterprise, to make Success more coveted than Experience, so upsetting the delicate balance of values upon which mountaineering is founded, and to destroy the fundamental simplicity of the game.

On this question of values, for example, let me quote one instance. Soon after returning from the Himalaya in 1952 I received a visit from a Continental climber who had evidently come all the way to England to persuade me to take him to Everest the following year. He informed me that he was prepared to become a naturalized British Subject if British citizenship were a necessary qualification. He was also prepared to make a substantial contribution to the funds of the

expedition. Some months later I met the leader of a Continental expedition to another great Himalayan peak who told me that this same climber had offered him fifteen thousand Swiss francs to take him on the expedition. For such a sum of money he could have had at least three first-rate seasons in the Himalaya, or better still, spent, say, a couple of years exploring and climbing in that range. Given the time and money, both of which he evidently had, it is no more difficult to travel and climb in Kulu or Garhwal than to organize a climbing holiday in the Alps; indeed in the crowded season the latter probably calls for a good deal more forethought. But our friend was apparently not interested in climbing and travel in the Himalaya. He seems rather to have seen himself as the Conqueror of some mighty Himalayan peak, though anxious to avoid the tiresome business of first gaining experience in that field. This attitude is by no means uncommon, nor perhaps is it unnatural. But it is not, surely, one to be encouraged.

The last few years have provided so many examples of international rivalry in the Himalaya that it seems hardly necessary to stress the point here ; moreover it would hardly be tactful to quote examples. Nor surely do I need to enlarge upon the necessity of travelling reasonably simply if one wishes to achieve any real contact with the country, or the extent to which a large, elaborate organization divorces one from such contact.

Perhaps the most serious charge against Large Expeditions, particularly for those who still hope to enjoy the Himalaya, is the extent to which they ruin the valleys through which they pass. Here again, I will confine myself to one example among the many I could quote. When we visited Namchi Bazar in the autumn of 1951 we found it a charming, totally unspoilt village. Its people, despite their long established habit of wide travel, were unsophisticated ; they derived a lot of interest and amusement from their guests, but their hospitality was genuine and open-hearted. Hillary, who had been with me in 1951, came to visit me immediately after his return from Everest in July, 1953. I asked him how things were in Namchi ; he replied with some heat : " I never want to see that bloody place again." In little more than a year a series of Large Expeditions had apparently wrecked the place from the human

standpoint. It seems that we are spoiling even this large Playground at an alarming rate.

There is, too, the little matter of price inflation, of some concern to those who visit the Himalaya for pleasure. Even in the 'thirties, I remember having a good deal of trouble in places where a year or so before some harassed transport officer of a great expedition, facing the hopeless task of shifting his tons of baggage, had been willing to pay the earth for anything on legs. Fortunately Large Expeditions were then sufficiently rare for one to be able to convince the local inhabitants that another was not likely to come. I would strongly advise any private climbing party to avoid any area which has recently suffered several such visitations. In pre-war days it was not unknown for serious famine to result from the visit of a Large Expedition; the entire able-bodied population having been induced to neglect their crops by the temptation of high wages. However, I suppose enough Large Expeditions would avoid this danger by keeping the people fed on canned food.

During the nineteen-thirties, there was among mountaineers a wide-spread feeling with regard to Everest which I often used to hear expressed: "For Heaven's sake climb the wretched thing and let's get back to real mountaineering." What could that sentiment mean except a general revulsion against the concept of the Large Expeditions and the distortion of values that resulted? Only those, and they were comparatively few, who had travelled in the Himalaya are likely to have considered such evils as the spoiling of the country. Well, Everest has been climbed and yet the cult of the Large Expedition persists. If there is still a desire among the majority of British climbers "to get back to real mountaineering," if, as I maintain, Large Expeditions exercise a corrupting influence upon the sport, if, as can hardly be denied, they spoil the country and render it difficult if not impossible for private parties to follow in their wake, then surely we should do our best to put a stop to them.

One often hears this argument advanced: "I grant that small expeditions may be more fun than large ones, that exploration and travel and the ascent of peaks of moderate size may be the most rewarding kind of Himalayan mountaineering and that for this kind of work small expeditions are best. But if your aim is the ascent of one of the great peaks—Everest, Kangchenjunga



or Makalu—then a large expedition has more chance of success.” Let us for the moment allow this contention. Is success on any one of these peaks so important that you are prepared to accept the evils that result? Is the ascent of Kangchenjunga so vital that you would be prepared to upset the rural economy and the cultural atmosphere of the valleys leading to it? Can you not curb your impatience to see Dhaulagiri “conquered” for, say, 10 years, when it may be climbed by a small party of climbers, lightly equipped but endowed with gradually acquired experience; or would you rather see it fall next year to a Large Expedition, advancing with an army of porters to blast its way to the top?

Some 18 years ago, Dr. Longstaff, with his usual robust honesty, discussing with me the recent first ascent of Nanda Devi, described the event as a tragedy. Don't most of us feel some slight pang of regret when we hear that one of the great peaks of the Himalaya has been climbed? However we may strive to climb them do we not, in our hearts, like to think of them as inviolate? I for one look forward to a world that much poorer when all its summits have been reached. The argument that Large Expeditions are more likely to succeed seems, then, to have little to recommend it, at least to mountaineers as a whole. The Norwegian sportsman may be desperately keen to shoot his elk, yet in his wisdom he supports the law for forbidding him to hunt the animal for more than five days in a year.

I believe that the case against the Large Expedition can rest here. If these contentions are valid, if we wish to preserve in mountaineering its fundamental simplicity, the spirit of individual enterprise and a wider and more lasting field for its gradual development, if we deplore the distortion of values and the spoiling of the country, then surely we should set ourselves resolutely to oppose the sending of Large Expeditions to the Himalaya, whatever the arguments in their favour on grounds of expediency.

Let us, however, examine the contention that Large Expeditions are more likely to succeed on great mountains than small parties. What is the evidence? The most formidable, of course, is provided by the success achieved by the 1953 Expedition on Everest. Nothing I say is intended to belittle this great achievement; the organization and conduct from which

it resulted can indeed stand the closest scrutiny. But if we are to retain a sense of proportion we must be allowed to examine it objectively. This Expedition, then, as lavishly furnished with equipment and resources, as competently organized and as ably led as any that has been to the Himalaya, succeeded in mounting two attempts upon the summit. From talks I have had with those who took part in these attempts it is clear that a third could not have been mounted without first retreating to Camp IV in the Cwm for a considerable period of rest and reorganization. Previous experience on Everest suggests that a second series of attempts after the pick of the party had been high is not likely to get far, quite apart from the probable intervention of the monsoon. If then the second attempt had not been favoured with good weather, if, for example, Hillary and Tenzing had been detained by a storm at their high camp for a single day, not an unusual occurrence on Everest, it is more than probable that the expedition would have resulted in another failure.

Surveying a wider field I find that, during the last two or three decades, the practical evidence, far from proving the ascendancy of the Large Expedition over the Small, tends in fact to favour the latter. Indeed by the end of the nineteen-thirties, it seemed to me that the weight of this evidence was such that, on practical grounds, let alone for the far more important ethical considerations, the case for the Small Expedition was proved. Nanda Devi, the highest summit hitherto reached, had been climbed by a party provided with the slenderest resources in terms of money and equipment ; moreover virtually all the carrying on the mountain itself had been done by the climbers themselves. The Bavarian attempt on Kangchenjunga in 1929 was essentially a Small Expedition ; a party of friends coming out to seek mountaineering adventure in the Himalaya, they did not even decide upon their objective until they arrived in the field. In 1938 Charles Houston made the first serious attempt to climb K2 and very nearly succeeded with a lightly equipped party whose passage did not greatly disturb the tranquillity of the Askoli valley. I submit that the achievements of these parties and several more one could quote compare favourably with those of any of the great expeditions of the period. A more recent example is the party which in 1954 climbed Cho Oyu and which I understand was composed of three climbers.

The 1938 Everest Expedition, though run by the Everest Committee, was in every other sense a Small Expedition ; it was lightly equipped and cost a quarter of the sum that had previously been spent on each of the attempts to climb the mountain. This was not because the money was not available, but because it was hoped to demonstrate once more that a huge, expensive organization was not required for the attempt upon a great Himalayan peak. The monsoon broke on 2nd May, some six weeks earlier than was expected. To avoid the risk of snow avalanches on the eastern slopes of the North Col a new route had to be forced up the opposite side. The whole party was established on the col with enough equipment and provisions for three attempts on the summit. Despite very bad snow conditions which greatly hampered the carrying parties, Camp VI was established at the foot of the Yellow Band at 27,200 feet. In reasonable conditions it could have been taken a great deal higher. Only the impossible condition of the slabs forming the upper part of the mountain prevented further progress.

It should be remembered, too, that the Small Expedition benefits as much as the Large from the great advances that have been made in recent years in equipment, high altitude diet and from the less tangible advantages of past experience.

Sum up the evidence how you will, it can hardly be denied that the Small Expedition stands at least a good sporting chance of success on the great peaks. It is enough. This discussion is not really concerned with the relative strength of the two types of expedition.

Many of us had hoped that once Everest had been climbed the huge sums required for Large Expeditions would no longer be available owing to lack of public interest ; as a result, we believed, international rivalry would subside and mountaineers would rediscover that, on great mountains as well as small, it is in the simplicity of their approach, and not in the glamour of success, that they find the true enjoyment of their endeavour.

We were, it seems, too optimistic. Only a full realization by climbers as a whole of the implications of the present trends, coupled with a determination to check them, can restore the balance of values upon which mountaineering was based. I believe that action by climbers in this country can have a decisive influence upon the issue.

# A WELSH DECADE

A. J. J. MOULAM

**M**Y first non-outcrop climbing was done in the Lake District. Sunny days on Dow Crag and the various Langdale cliffs are vivid in my memory, but the details of that holiday are gone. However, I was not wholly satisfied with this too perfect rock. I wanted the challenge to judgment of doubtful holds and vegetation, and so it is not surprising that my first visit to Wales, a little later, convinced me that there were the best climbs.

Peter Harding and I, both very young and inexperienced, had decided on a short holiday in Capel Curig. We did many climbs together and, rather to my surprise, I found that we could do supposedly quite difficult ones, almost with ease. The Munich climb in two hours, finishing in the dark, was probably the best route we did, and at the end of the week we smiled quietly to one another in the train as some fellow-travellers started talking of climbs, unnecessarily loudly. It appeared that the Munich had only been done three or four times, although it was not as hard as Lot's Groove—the hardest climb in Wales. This and much more amused us secretly to our change of train, but the names of climbs we had never before heard were memorised ; we would find them out and do them all.

Thus we had been convinced which was the most difficult climb in Wales. It was not so, but little was known of the routes in the area covered by the present Llanberis guide. Not very many of them had even been repeated and generally people kept away from these steep places, recently frequented by Menlove Edwards. They hardly ever mentioned the much more terrifying cliffs round Cwm Brwynog, where Colin Kirkus and his friends had gone for their sport.

Lot's Groove, in the revised guide, has been relegated to the very severe category, with no qualification. It seems to me opportune to look back, and to try to see what has gone on to

bring about this quick decline. The early climbers started with Snowdon. Lliwedd was the ideal place for them, and a fine cliff it is. In those days climbing was done from hotels and Pen-y-Pass and Pen-y-Gwryd enjoyed popularity alternately. There exist many photographs entitled "A group at —, 18—," varying only in the name of the hotel, the date and the luxuriance of the beards portrayed! The club eventually in this era published three guide-books describing the routes to be found in the whole of North Wales. One of these dealt with Lliwedd, which indicates the importance of that cliff to the first guide-book equipped mountaineers.

Development went on slowly; the doldrums came when the Lakes held the most difficult and better climbs. But soon new blood was infused as poorer and less leisured classes took up the sport. First they camped and then built their huts in the Nant Ffrancon. The pendulum swung and climbs were made on cliffs on the easily accessible flanks of this valley. Ogwen thus became the hub, the nucleus, of the popular climbing world, until and through the second war, when I came in. From Helyg, Youth Hostels and camps, the post-war climbers practised their craft, and the last of the army mountain training school pushed up the limits, culminating in Preston's Suicide Wall.

Four guide-books were now needed to contain the climbs, and sketches of cliffs were covered with dotted lines. Three paper-backed interim guides supplemented the main four, to give details of the routes in other areas, as yet of minor importance. There were no likely openings for new routes, but as climbers multiplied alarmingly the valleys and hills became full. The existing routes were not hard enough, not steep enough or just . . . not enough. The craggy sides of the cruel Llanberis valley were revisited and found worthy. Besides, one did not have to walk very far, which suited the mountain-shy modern. True the rocks here were steeper and the ways more strenuous, but the holds were good. Nylon rope had been produced and the embryo technique of thin slings for running belays appeared. Here was the first moral laxity: no longer did a man need the courage of Kirkus to run out a hundred or more feet of rope. A cunning leader could often protect himself on a pitch as, or even before, the difficulties occurred.

Harding, to whom most of the credit for runners must go, came into Llanberis to write the guide-book. His experience on gritstone and elsewhere in Wales had made him by now the Club's best rock climber. He was certainly the only man enough interested and able to do all the climbs in this most developed area. *Three Cliffs in Llanberis*, the cloth-covered booklet, pointed the way. Dives was the first climb we did but soon Harding led Brant in nailed boots, whilst it was raining. It must be remembered that at this time it still ranked as "the hardest climb in the valley" (Barford) and had not been done half a dozen times. All the other climbs on this side of the Glyders were soon done, and besides them Harding succeeded in filling two of the three gaps left by Barford for posterity. The Trilon and Ivy Sepulchre both were done with a minimum of artificial aid and took the first step on the road to the routes of today. The second ascents differed. On the Trilon large parties soon followed and pooh-poohed the classification; but have any of them thought of the difficulty of first placing that peg? Excitement came on Ivy Sepulchre as the second leader fell off, holding the finishing holds in his hands. He was saved by Griffin and the peg, and climbed back up and completed the pitch. The piton that served Birch so well has been removed and another put in above the difficulty where it is not really of much use.

Harding next originated the Spectre, and the party thought it was in for an easy time! A casual glance at the Goat's Buttress had not revealed its steep smoothness and only with a shock were the difficulties found and faced. A finger placed piton was used to "safeguard" the crux, directly above a knife-edged flake which may or may not have cut John Lawton's rope on his second attempt to lead the climb. Earlier he had done the pitch and retreated from the next. The second ascent was eventually made by Mervyn Hughes with Harding as his second at Easter, 1949. Two years had passed since its first ascent, but now it has been done many times and variations have been made, so that it is possible to climb straight on over the overhang. The climb soon became popular before breakfast; but now it has taken its rightful place as a gauge. Leaders test themselves on it to see if they are ready to tackle the harder routes; it is the "final" of the undergraduate rock climber.

CRACKSTONE RIB—A Classic  
Climb of the Three Cliffs  
C. M. Dixon







Kaisergebirge Wall was climbed just over a year after the Spectre ; pitons, slings and superlative climbing by the leader made it possible. He then abseiled off and came up last to remove the pegs that the third man had left. This set the seal of approval on artificially protected routes though it has been led clean. Ribstone Crack, Bole Way, Phantom Rib and Babel together with one or two other routes were added in odd corners, and left the cliffs ready for the modern phase.

Before this truly came there was a rare dry summer, and the two usually wet gullies on Clogwyn-y-Grochan, Goats' and Central, were climbed. Cym Smith did the first, together with even more variations on the Spectre, and Menlove Edwards made a come-back for the other. As usual he thought it a climb of just Very Difficult standard and lamented the fact that they had not taken the line direct but had been forced out onto the right wall. It seemed that good weather was the only requirement for the impossible to become possible and the extreme to be made easy !

In all this time there was much less development on Cloggy, probably because the gap between the old and the possible new was wider, and certainly more terrifying, than elsewhere. The Sheaf and Central Rib were the last two ordinary (though for such a cliff *that* adjective is unusual) climbs done here, together with Dwyer's new entry to the Bow Shaped Slab. No one seemed able to do that as Menlove had, and even now it is usual to take the new line.

A motor accident prevented me from attempting to write a Snowdon guide and so Harding threw his boundary round this best of cliffs. He became the first man to have done all the Clogwyn du'r Arddu climbs, and then Geoff Pigott and I joined the short list by a third ascent of Central Rib. Harding spoilt it all, and regained his place as the only one, by girdling the West Buttress. This was probably his best contribution to Welsh rocks and must certainly rank as the most arduous free climb in the district, taking, as it does, the cruces of all the climbs on the buttress. Nor was it an easy matter for the second ; Gordon Dyke must have been hard pressed to keep up with Harding on his best of form. Drama came even when the climbing was almost finished. Only the comparatively easy crossing of the rocks to the right of Central Rib was left to be

made when a rock fell and cut the line on which the climb was being done. The two men were luckily able to re-establish contact, and finished this magnificent expedition together.

A route up Cynr Las on the opposite side to Main Wall, a girdle traverse of it, scratching in the grass on Dinas Mot, and odds and ends in one or two places were the only other things done in the Llanberis valley in this phase. Elsewhere little new was found. The Carneddau guide was padded with some short climbs of doubtful merit (and standard !), but after it was published the first of the three great unclimbed faces in North Wales was led. By doing this the writer was able to put his guide out of date before anyone else had chance ! The Lower Amphitheatre Wall had been mentioned by Alan Hargreaves as a possibility and it flaunted its challenge across the scree to anyone on Amphitheatre Buttress. I had looked at it longingly for three years and had developed the habit of packing all my pitons, slings and karabiners each week-end. An abortive attempt when no one got off the ground was made only about a week before the successful one. Snow provided a poor take-off platform, and the party was watched by a large one in the misty amphitheatre. Slowness on the part of the leader robbed Emlyn Jones of his place on the rope but he was consoled by being allowed to name it *Mur-y-Niwl*, the wall of mists. Johnny Churchill, the charming American so tragically killed later in the year, was my very impressed second, and we all reached Helyg at midnight, just as a party of festive Scotsmen arrived to rescue us.

In the area covered by the forthcoming *Snowdon, South and West*, the M.U.M.C. and others had been hard at work. Mallory's Central Arête of the Nantlle-y-Garn was re-discovered after its one ascent just after the death of Anton Stoop had given the cliff an unwarranted reputation for bad rock. Paul Work, based locally, unearthed climbs of mixed quality. But the two major events in this area were the discovery of the Tremadoc cliffs and the ascent of the second unclimbed face.

During the war Dave Thomas had seen the lines of dolerite cliffs from a bomber, and maybe that is sufficient fact to give rise to a legend, similar to the discovery of Great Gully from Scafell, that they were discovered from the air ! It is an interesting point ; and at any rate it was through Dave's insistence

PINNACLE RIDGE—A detail filler on the Carneddau

C. M. Dixon





that visits were eventually made to these cliffs, where it never rained and almost as often as a climb was done it seemed to be "probably the best on the cliff." Suffice it to say that they are all very steep and vegetated, and that the interim guide will point to the best. These are climbs different from anything else in the country, which alone is a good reason for visiting them.

I must return to Ogof Direct. This buttress had been sieged for years, and a very nice little ridge led to the bluebell and rush floored "cave." Above it the rocks assumed a different aspect. Geoff Pigott and I first visited this part of the cliff with a large and ill-suited party. It was very cold and after half-hearted attempts to quit it we left a peg at the top of the first groove ; we would come back and do it later. Two years afterwards we did ; another large party invaded Cwm Silyn but eventually Geoff and I were left in peace on the ledge, except for Bill. Geoff tried for a long time and finally abseiled off from another peg below a smooth bit. I went for a try but decided it was impossible until Geoff said the magic formula : "Put another peg in five feet up." That seemed to do the trick. I landed safely on the ledge and brought up the others. It struck me as the most difficult pitch I had ever led, but the rest of the route deteriorated. Only another severe pitch barred us from easy rocks and a lot of scrambling to the top. Somewhere on the climb a hammer was left, so if anyone wants one . . .

Other quieter developments took place on the Moelwyns. On one day alone 12 new routes were made on cliffs near Blaenau Ffestiniog—Moel yr Hydd. The interest in these of Showell Styles and the M.A.M. was unknown to us at the time, and the C.C. party took the easier plums. Gradually further routes, none very hard, were added, keeping up the tradition of the short, difficult to distinguish name : Chic, Slick, Slack and Bent, to quote a few.

Farther afield yet, on the sea cliffs near Nevin, Geoff Pigott tried the third of the three great faces. His Eiffel Tower took a line up the edge of this terrific buttress and later on he led two of us up the main part of the face. This Avernus proved, whatever it looked like, to be a climb similar to Main Wall on Cyrn Las, in that it was only severe technically but in a place and of a nature that demanded V.S. experience in the leader. During the pioneering we were entertained by shags, seals and

porpoises, besides a boat which passed and from which we heard : " Eh ! Jim, look at them up there ! "

Now back to more serious things and places. The generations in this article are differentiated more by achievement than by age or chronology and the following climbs are all in the " modern " class. They demand a different approach from the classical ones : " If you think about retreat, you're beat," to quote one of the moderns. It is always a little unbelievable to see how far these leaders can go, apparently safely, although they do rely to some extent on broader outlooks on artificial aid. This use, unthinkable only a few years ago, contributes a lot to the increase in virtuosity, but on top of that is the general build-up of experience through the generations. Each one contributes a little to the general fund, and new climbers step off old ones' shoulders, nowadays, so often straight onto a Very Severe !

The development of hard new climbs has taken place only in two locations, the Llanberis valley and on Clogwyn du'r Arddu. Perhaps this is because there *are* no more attractive possibilities elsewhere. In fact Joe Brown, the leader of these neo-tigers, has recently said he knows of only five more possibilities. This, if so, seems a pity ; but always hitherto new climbers have been able to see lines for new climbs on worked-out cliffs. They seem to be in the eye of the beholder, and there is no reason why we should have reached the end, even yet.

Rather naturally, to a group trained on gritstone, the Three Cliffs made their bold appeal. They are *all* steep, but Dinas Cromlech is particularly so and is certainly the most impressive, standing as it does high above the valley. It has holds of one sort or another all over it, and as only the main lines had been followed a little increase in strength and stamina was sufficient to open up different ways. Cobweb Crack and Noah's Warning, with the variations on Pharoah's Wall are similar to that parent climb, and not much more difficult. The challenge of Cenotaph Corner, now Joe Brown's most difficult climb, belongs to this cliff ; it is its central feature and has attracted climbers for some time. Preston got some way up it, to where the crack disappears, and then descended. Peter Harding abseiled down it and pronounced it impossible, but opined that there was scope for a route on the arête beside it. This he never tried but if he

had, in his prime, who knows what he might have called Cemetery Gates, which eventually let through Joe Brown and Don Whillans? This climb has been summed up by Ron Mosely, who has led it twice, with "not difficult at all; it's only the angle that makes it hard."

Clogwyn-y-Grochan is the largest of the trio and it is not surprising that many of the new climbs are there. Hangover was the first one, taking substantially the line of Eric, the old problem that had seemed about to yield for so long as climber after climber had got a little farther up the groove. Aimless Wall, from which we abseiled after reaching the top of the flake, has been finished. It provides the Sickle, ending high up in Goat's Gully, making use of a large area of hitherto blank rock. In Sunset Boulevard the cliff has a new girdle on its steep section below, and yet a cut above, the Bluebell Traverse. The latest thing is the third wet place, Broad Walk, which proved to be just an ordinary climb; but Surplomb, straight up the very overhanging groove to the right of Brant and Slape, seems to head the list for difficulty hereabouts, although even it has been repeated once. On this cliff I have climbed parts of Ochre Grooves and a direct start to Long Tree Gate. The pitches were steep but had adequate holds, although a few were not above suspicion. A new mental outlook is perhaps necessary, plus the conviction that the new climbs are not done by supermen, to enable many of the V.S. leaders of today to regraduate in this more advanced school.

The smallest crag, Carreg Wastad, has not been neglected. It is compact and in some ways perhaps the sternest of these cliffs. The Red Rock has been climbed, and proved as rotten as it looks. The Skylon is new and the Gryphon and Erosion Grooves are hard routes recently done on the cliff, which also has another girdle. Now there seems nowhere left for other routes, but perhaps another could be made up the centre of the main scoop. Its present route goes up the right-hand side and Bole Way bounds it on the left. We must wait and see.

Elsewhere in Llanberis the overhanging chimney on the nose of Dinas Mot has been climbed. It demands stirrups hung on artificial chock stones, but this technique is nothing new, only an extension of Morley Wood's idea on Pigott's climb. The steep red wall of Craig Rhaiadr provides a route and two more

have been put up on Cynr Las. Perhaps the most surprising developments are on Clogwyn du'r Arddu, still by the same group of climbers. Routes have been completed in places where one had always thought they should go, like Vember, the Boulder and the Black Cleft. Joe Brown and his friends have made the "worked-out" idea seem altogether wrong, and these were but a start. Almost every week-end one heard of a new climb, up places which no one had even considered. Apparently inaccessible, hair-raisingly exposed parts of the Pinnacle have been put under the climbers' foot, and soon the many determined attempts on the White Slab must bear fruit.

Here it is perhaps wise to take a larger view. In all the British climbing districts young men are experimenting with new techniques, and gradually raising the standard of the top-class climbers. It is gratifying to record that British climbing is in such a state as more and more regular X.S. leaders appear. Alongside their feats in this country the Alpine standard rises, and in recent years British parties have had first-class routes to their credit, culminating in the ascents of the West Face of the Dru and a new climb on the Blaitière, both led by Joe Brown.

This is an historical survey, necessarily more detailed where I have been involved, and less so where I merely report. I will have missed names which perhaps ought to have been included ; for these omissions I make apology, and leave things as they are. It is useless to attempt to forecast what will happen next. Certainly the tide of people coming to the hills does not diminish, and plans such as that for the C.C.P.R. hostel at Capel Curig are calculated to keep our playground overrun. This is a pity, but perhaps one or two of the pupils will find it all worth while, and the others will drop away. Let us hope so.



# THE MUSICAL MOUNTAINS

M. E. B. BANKS

“**Y**OU can always get some good climbing down by Lake Como,” Hermann, the guide, told us ; and we ignored him, preferring to stay in the High Alps alternately getting drenched by rainstorms and flogging knee-deep through soft snow, just managing to climb easy mountains.

“ Why don’t you go to Lake Como ? I will show you on the map,” said the guide, Noli, and by this time we’d had enough and listened to him. It wasn’t really Lake Como that we were to go to but its branch, Lake Lecco, and the mountains were the Grigne.

“ Stay at the Rifugio Porta,” Noli added, “ and remember me to my old friend Signor Giudici, the guardian.”

We therefore took Noli’s advice and left the Bregaglia and its stormy weather and travelled the 50 miles or so to the sunny foothills of Italy. A 15-minute stroll from the bus terminus at Piani Resinelli, above Lecco, brought us to the Rifugio Albergo Carlo Porta (Porta was a Milanese poet), where Signor Giudici gave us an effusive welcome into his commodious establishment which was much nearer to being a country house than a climbing hut.

After a night of un-Alpine comfort we agreed to engage Giudici’s son, Cesare, as a guide and indeed after we had got away to a gentlemanly start well after dawn next morning and followed the ample path which led us into a maze of Dolomitic spires we realised that he was going to be a near necessity, particularly as we were unable easily to translate the Italian guide-book.

Eventually we arrived under the impressively steep wall of a monolith called the Angelina, where Cesare pointed out the route. He then handed me several pounds of ironmongery with which, I imagined, he did not want to encumber himself while leading. To my embarrassment he then invited me to lead which, in my foolishness, I did. I got nicely stuck after about

20 feet, whacked in a piton, and mentioned to Cesare that, as he was getting paid for it, he might as well lead—which he did with such nonchalant ease as to make me feel thoroughly ashamed of myself.

The Angelina was a very pleasant climb and typical of what was to follow during the next four days. The pitches were unremittingly steep and, on that first day, impressed us more than a little. I will not bore my readers with pitch by pitch descriptions of climbs which were strikingly similar—nearly all of them exposed face climbs ; I will give instead some general impressions.

The weather was almost too perfect : utterly windless and very hot, so much so that on the fourth peerless morning Giudici called to us as we walked up the path : “ Vous avez signé un contrat avec le Bon Dieu.” The climbing was on irreproachable Dolomitic rock and by British or High Alpine standards was frighteningly steep and, until one became accustomed to the fact that a nicely incut hand-hold was bound to arrive (it had to !), it was disconcerting. The local route finding, particularly if one could only cope imperfectly with the Italian guide-book, tended to be baffling. When Cesare swarmed up over some impossible looking overhang or disappeared round some unlikely looking corner we were very thankful we had him with us. Usually we climbed on two separate ropes so that the rear pair could follow through, enjoying the thrill of the exposure without doubts about the route. *Scarpetti* were *de rigueur* and we in our vibrams with two pairs of socks felt our feet unduly clumsy compared with our nimble-footed guide.

In such profusion did the pinnacles spring out of the mountainside that a very full day's rock-climbing was easily obtained and, in fact, if we got away by 6.30 a.m., by 2 p.m. the combination of sun, exercise and the knowledge that Signora Giudici would have an excellent *pasta* ready for us was quite enough to lure us back to the commodious Rifugio Porta.

For the most part there was no easy way down from the summit platforms of the various needles of rock and an ascent which felt A.P. was followed by a free abseil which sometimes landed the climber on a piton belay. At one juncture I seem to remember four of us, with the rope “ spaghetti,” clinging onto

GRIGNE CLIMBING

“ The holds arrived—they had to ! ”

A. B. Erskine





one perilous ledge furnished with one piton. My rappel *brevet*, or stirrup, came in for a lot of wear.

One day stands out in my memory more vividly than the others ; it was a Sunday and, for once, mist was lazing through the upper rocks. We were approaching the *passagino* or step-across between two of the towers of the Magnaghi. There were three ropes containing eight Italians just ahead of us. The first rope had made the difficult pitch and the middle man of the second rope therefore had a large and interested audience. I remember his face well ; it was the visage of a man of hardly 20, yet his hair was grizzled grey giving him a clownish appearance of incompatibility. He was not a very good climber and became hopelessly stuck on the difficult move. Directly this happened he was subjected to a torrent of screamed advice from his seven companions, which he treated with Olympian indifference, and somehow shambled his way up.

Breasting the tower of the second Magnaghi a little later we saw the sheer rampart known as the Lecco Face. Some half a dozen climbers were adhering to it like flies on a wall. They were moving carefully and the upper rocks were obviously giving stern climbing. We were impressed but not tempted to follow the Italians. Suddenly a song rang across the tranquil air ; another voice picked up the refrain, and then another, until the whole incredible mountain face burst into song. When this had subsided, from the mist enshrouded summit again came music, the chant of the Roman church. A mountain top mass was being conducted. Later we saw the lean, athletic priest, his feet shod in heavy vibrams, his cassock tucked into his breeches. Even the horns of the local bus had been synchronised to sound like a yodel. Truly we had discovered the Musical Mountains. (I will stop just short of panegyrising on the beautiful note the piton makes when it is struck fair and square !)

Eventually we climbed the Lecco Face and another aiguille, the Sigaro (Cigar) which was even steeper. These were both of Grade IV which, translated from the guide-book, was "very difficult when artificial means of assurance are essential and a rappel needed for descent." Where pitons were needed on these climbs they were already in position. Occasionally one used a piton as a "Thank God" hold and it was not until a few moments later, when the holds had improved, that one

pondered how on earth the piton had been hammered in. We tactfully avoided the Grade VI's after reading that they were "extremely difficult : where the maximum difficulties are found overcome only by the fewest of the finest climbers !"

These rocks are, in fact, the playground of the Milanese tigers. Cassin, famous for his first ascents of the north faces of such formidable peaks as the Grandes Jorasses, Piz Badile and Cima Ovest di Lavaredo, is the presiding spirit over the Grigne. He also keeps a sports shop in Lecco which sells a wide range of excellent and inexpensive pitons. It is a wonderful area to learn the art of "pitonry" or, perhaps, to visit at Easter and practise one's technique for big things in Chamonix or the Dolomites in the coming summer. This spring, for instance, the snow had disappeared and difficult rock-climbing was feasible from February onwards. You could then perhaps do your grade VI in the morning, sleep off your *pasta* and *vino* in the afternoon and go to La Scala, Milan, in the evening.

Distant views of the Piz Badile and four days of perfect weather tempted us back to the higher, snowy Bregaglia—where we again got drenched !

If a moral can be drawn it is this : when, after a week in the High Alps, the weather has prevented you doing anything and the Epicureans of the party start muttering about Paris or Venice, spare a thought for the Grigne and you might be pleasantly surprised, particularly if you have an ear for song.







## THE SUMMIT

*Retrospectively in England*

There the wind has been a long time calling ;  
There the ice glints blue from the banished snow ;  
There, ten thousand years before there were voices  
From hill forms growing crazy as mushrooms grow.  
Ten thousand years from now there will be thunder  
Over the rock steep, groaning to snow-drift tears ;  
Ten thousand years from now grey cliffs will shudder  
At avalanche rage roaring in ice-wind's spears.  
Here a May morning all the blasts were weary,  
Took their rest in a breeze, and men, the small,  
Cut their fine path in the huge breast of mountains,  
Timid turned back, went home with their tale to tell.  
Soon the winds wipe the slate clean of man-marks ;  
Soon their etching, not his, imprints the snow.  
They were proud, who once climbed the mountain ;  
They went away, ten thousand years ago.

WILFRID NOYCE

# THE FRONTIER RIDGE

M. J. BALL

**A**FTER Hillary's unfortunate illness had caused our party to abandon the attempt to reach the col between Makalu I and II, Charles Evans took over the job of looking after the invalids, and I joined Norman Hardie and Brian Wilkins on a trip to the head of the Barun valley. Charles was quite glad of a rest ; and with one patient at Camp I, and the other, Jim MacFarlane, at Base Camp, an hour and a half down the valley, he had a reasonable amount of exercise. He described this week as " a rural practice in congenial surroundings."

Our instructions were to climb Pethangtse and anything else we felt like. Norman was determined to force a pass direct from the Barun to the Imja, particularly as the more experienced members of the party said it would not go. After Brian and I had left him, he succeeded in this formidable task, with three heavily-laden Sherpas to escort down a steep ice-wall. After cutting steps for a rope's length, he had to come up again to safeguard their descent, before himself redescending. Towards the bottom they were forced to abseil over a large crevasse, without being quite certain that the remainder of the way down was clear.

As Norman was to investigate this side of the Barun valley anyhow, we decided to concentrate on the frontier peaks farther East ; but the first job was Pethangtse. We left Camp I in fine weather, and moved up to the terraces on the East side of the glacier, and then easily and pleasantly along to where the head of the valley opens out. On the opposite side of the glacier, the long South ridge of Baruntse wound up to the summit, the face on our side delicately fluted and hopelessly steep. We placed our camp at the foot of a moraine, the focal point in the cirque of peaks around us. As usual in the upper part of the valley, it had clouded over in the afternoon, but there had been no snow. To the South of Makalu at Base Camp and right up to its West ridge at Camp I there was usually snow in the afternoon, but to the North it was clearer.

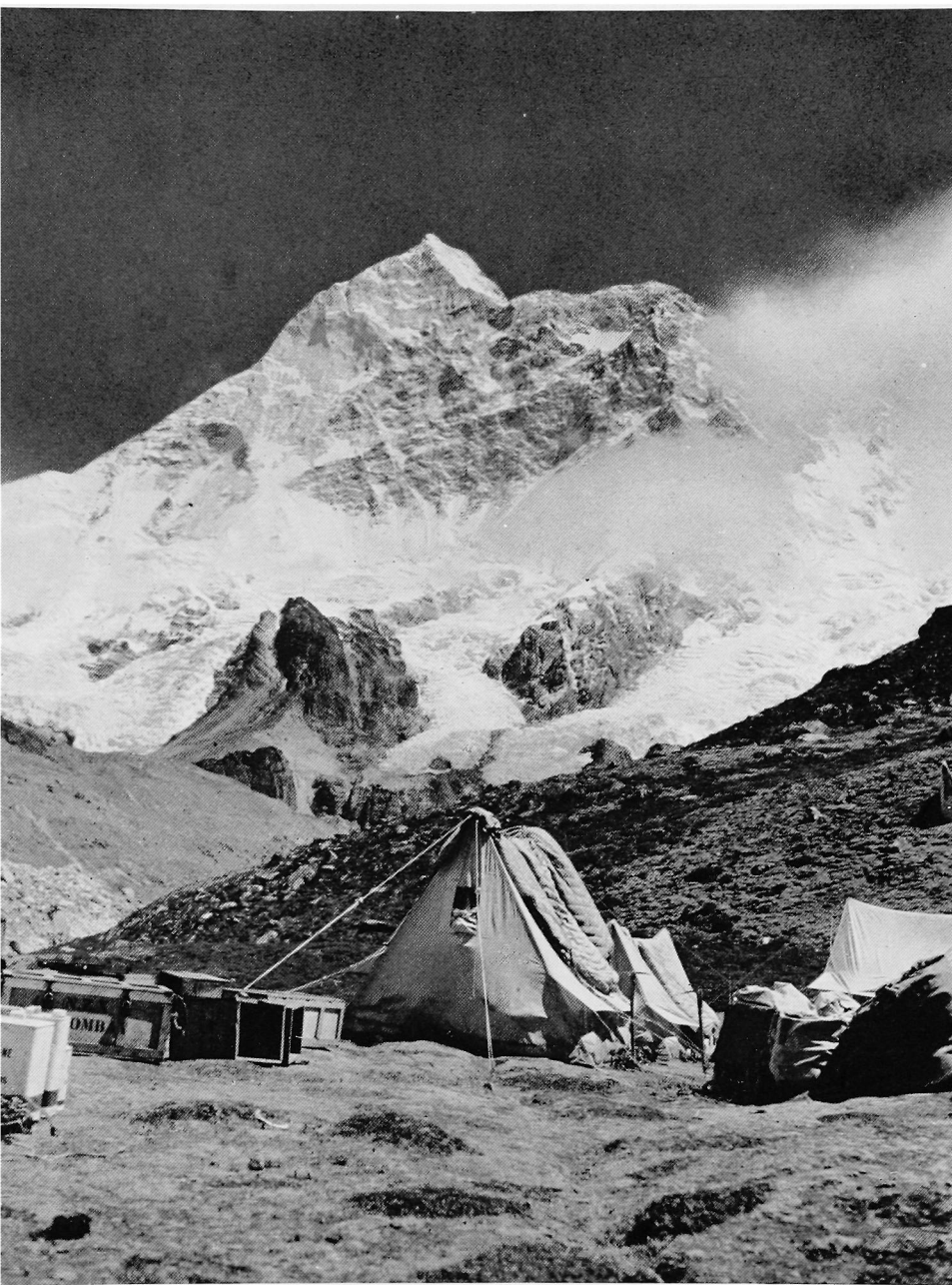
The next morning we moved up the moraine to its summit at 20,300 feet, with the heavily-laden Sherpas feeling the altitude a bit. The upper basin of the glacier is snow-covered and relatively free of crevasses, and we crossed it heading straight for the rocky base of the South ridge of Pethangtse. Viewed from the South, this rocky base is in the shape of a triangle, and we hoped to place our camp at its apex. Above this the snowy ridge wound up to join the West ridge shortly before the summit.

As we approached the rock buttress, it appeared more and more forbidding and nobody offered any comment on it. However, a possible line appeared towards the right, and when we tried it, yielded easily enough without the necessity of roping up. The camp was ideal, just below the curving top of the ridge, which protected us from the wind. To the East, Makalu and Chomolonzon stood out red in the sunset. Above us, Pethangtse rose in easy slopes to the summit. It seemed that little could stop us, and so it turned out. Two hours and forty minutes of steady walking saw us at the top. On the way up, we had views of the South col of Everest surprisingly near. The final ridge of Everest looked deceptively short and easy. The vast proportions of the mountain deceived the eye. It was only when the icefall of the Kangshung face came fitfully into view through the clouds that the real scale could be appreciated. We did not stay on the flat summit for long, as the clouds soon obscured all view. I had a look down the North ridge, which plunged steeply into the clouds towards the valley and Thibet. The frontier passes through the summit, and I was achieving a private ambition to stand in that country. It took us only 40 minutes to get back to camp, where we had a brief meal, packed up, and moved off down the rock buttress to the East, where we camped at the foot of twin 21,500-foot peaks also on the frontier and lying on the other side of Howard Bury's col.

The next day we set out to traverse these peaks. In order to get to the ridge on their right, we had to cut up a short ice-slope. I was climbing with Norman, and could admire the faultless New Zealand ice technique that took him swiftly towards the ridge, though being a chilly audience I did not give much indication of my admiration at the time. Brian had chosen a different route to keep himself warm and now rejoined us. We rose easily over loose rock and finally a gentle snow slope, to the

summit of the first of the two peaks. After a brief halt, we started down the ridge to the col between the peaks. It was fairly steep, but allowed continuous movement in crampons without step-cutting. The opposite side of the col was rock and the snow on our side ended in a curious scoop facing the rock. The New Zealanders seemed put off at the prospect of climbing this pleasant-looking bit, so I put my nose round the left of the rock to discover a long ice-slope, which deterred even their spirits. However, by passing through the floor of the scoop, we found a gentle snow slope leading up the other side of the ridge above the rocks, and I had to defer the pleasures of rock-climbing. After several minor ups and downs, we arrived below the summit, to find another scoop of ice facing us, a formidable barrier, which only came back to our level about 200 feet down the slope to the left. Another and longer spell of step-cutting was necessary and again Norman went at it, round the corner and up the edge of the scoop, his red jersey standing out against the blue sky and pale blue-white of the ice. After about 250 feet the ice gave place to snow and a short walk took us to the summit. We had a slightly better view here, but Thibet was still veiled in cloud. To the South the broad shoulders of Chamlang stood out above a mass of slender spires. A lammergeier hovered over the mountains at the head of the valley, the only sign of life in a frozen world.

We went straight down to camp along a ridge of the second summit, an uneventful route until Ang Dawa slipped off the edge of the ridge and I put a leg into a crevasse and went headlong a few minutes later. Brian now left us and went back to Base Camp the next day via a 20,600-foot snow summit. Norman and I moved camp farther East again below the col between the next two mountains on the frontier, a snow summit of about 21,000 feet, and a fine rock and snow peak of 22,590 feet. Norman wanted to cross this col and go round the peaks we had climbed the day before, returning via Howard Bury's col. I still wanted to do a bit of rock climbing and decided to attempt 22,590 feet, since named Chagö. Norman and George Lowe had reached a minor summit of 22,000 feet on the East ridge of this mountain during the Makalu col attempt, but had not had time to finish the ascent, although they had overcome all the major difficulties.



MAKALU I from New Zealand Himalayan Expedition Base Camp, May 1954



The North ridge, which was my only possible line of attack, looked very attractive, a sweeping granite ridge with a sharp crest, rising in a series of steps, and ending in a thin rib of snow just before the main E.-W. ridge of the mountain. The lower part of the ridge was easy, but three of the steps especially the middle and last of these, looked difficult. Both Brian and Norman were very doubtful of my chances, but as New Zealanders are suspicious of rock anyhow, I was not put off too much !

We all four left camp at 7 a.m. and reached the col below the ridge half an hour later, by an easy snow slope. From here we had our first real view over Thibet, a complete contrast to our surroundings of the last few days. The nearer hills were rounded and snow covered, and the colour gradually deepened into the distance where three purple flat-topped midgets were silhouetted on the horizon. An improbable finger of rock pierced the sky round the shoulder of Chomolonzo. Here Norman and Passang Dawa left us, descending an easy scree shute into Thibet. Urkien and I started up the ridge.

It had been a peculiar dawn. There was high grey cloud all over, quite different from the usual clear blue sky. All the peaks, including Everest and Lhotse, were clear-cut but dull white in colour. To the South the sky got darker and here there were high white clouds, which rapidly came North. Norman and I had thought this was most suspicious weather, but there was no wind and we had both agreed to carry on until something happened. At first our ridge was easy, broad and at a gentle angle. Soon after the start, we found a place that would have made an ideal camp site. The rock was mainly granite. There is a whole line of granite running right through this part of the range, which includes Chomolonzo and both the Makalus. On this peak the bottom two-thirds were granite and the upper third a black slaty stuff, much looser and more unpleasant to climb on. The granite is rough and on the whole firm. You can always see when a block is loose.

After a bit the ridge narrowed, and then beyond a 10-foot gap was the first of the three real problems, a vertical step of about 50 feet. I had seen this as the beginning of the difficulties from below, and had been a bit apprehensive about it, but luckily an easy traverse left led to an incipient chimney, which took us

back to the ridge above the step. After this the ridge led up at an easy angle for 750 feet. There were several minor steps, which we climbed direct or turned on the right, none difficult.

The main problem of the climb was a big step about 200 feet high, the middle of the three difficult ones. This was caused by our ridge abutting against a rib, which, arising out of the Tibetan face about 200-300 feet to our left, gradually closed with our ridge, and finally asserting itself, ran above the top of our ridge to become the main ridge of the mountain. I had thought of traversing to this rib lower down, to avoid the step, but this was not possible, and we had been forced to carry on as we were. The final approach to the step was barred by the crest becoming knife-edged and broken, but it could be turned on the left by delightful slabs, finishing up a short wide chimney to the ridge at its termination. At about this time Urkien's condition began to worry me. It was his first rock climb and he was going very slowly and complained of a headache. Also he kept saying : " Urkien go up, but how he come down ? " Knowing that for a beginner this is a real problem added to the difficulties of the situation. However, it was only 10.15 a.m. and there was still plenty of time. Besides, being a Himalayan peak, the easy bits would go about four times as fast in the descent. I fixed a provisional limit of 12.30 p.m. for about turn and we carried slowly on. I had little real hope of reaching the top, but I thought we might go on as far as possible if only to see if the route was feasible.

The step was now upon us. Through the clouds it had seemed broad and broken, which gave some hope, and now I could see that a traverse left would lead to the crest of the rib and so back above the step, but the crest here looked very sharp and unless the far side was easy would probably stop us. A route straight up the step would avoid this bit, but was difficult in itself. To the right a possible way lay under the vertical right side of the step up and across to the snowfield on the upper part of the mountain, but with visibility poor I could not see the whole way, and did not feel justified in attempting it.

The left side of our ridge had always been fairly easy angled, so I decided on the traverse to the left. First we had to move up a little rock pitch to the right to get to the level of the traverse and then across and up. It was rather loose here, but since the



leader was never above the second man, quite safe. Round the corner, I was delighted to find the rocks lay at an even easier angle than lower down. The difficult part of the ridge was sliding down behind us, but not fast enough to give me much confidence. It was now 11 o'clock and we were still going very slowly. After another half-hour or more on the left of the crest, we reached the first of two snow patches. From below we had seen that these heralded an easing of the angle of the ridge. Above this was the final problem, the last of the three big rock steps, which from below appeared to have a vertical bottom. It had seemed possible to avoid this by traversing right on to steep snow which led up to the ridge, but I feared a lot of step-cutting.

Urkien had been carrying a few pitons, but their weight was a handicap and as we would not have had time to use them anyhow, we left them here, and I took the rucksack. In a few minutes more we reached the flatter part of the ridge and moved along its crest, part snow, part rock. As we topped the last of the rocks, the final step appeared through the clouds. It was 12.15 p.m.

All along I had been doubtful whether we could reach the top. For the last two or three hours, I had not allowed myself to think that we might succeed, but had concentrated on the problem at hand, and been prepared for impossibility with each twist of the ridge. Now I could see that the final step lay back at a much easier angle than I had expected. A traverse from the right led to easy ground above the vertical part of the buttress and beyond all the difficulties. For the first time I knew we were going to climb the mountain. When I told Urkien this he cheered up a bit and moved if anything a little faster. I put my provisional turn-about on to one o'clock. I was determined that nothing should stop us now.

At the top of the rocks we put on crampons and moved up the snow rib leading to the summit ridge. The rib approached the angle at which crampons can be used without step-cutting. Elsewhere the snow on this face was too steep and steps would have been necessary. If I had had to avoid the rock step, I would not have had time for this and we would have been defeated. The last link needed for success was present.

Our ridge ran into the main E.-W. ridge at a right angle, and the summit lay just to the East. As I put my head over the top, I was met by a terrific wind. However, we had only about four rope-lengths to go, so we set off. The far side of the ridge was much steeper and soon the near side became so too. Moving one at a time, we soon reached a first summit, but decided one a little farther on was higher. I chipped steps along the Nepalese side of the ridge for the length of the rope, then sat astride with the right boot in Thibet, and the left in Nepal, while Urkien came along. He would sit facing me, while we changed belays, perched on the roof of the mountain, and then I'd go off again. A second summit was still not the highest, but a third and last was only 150-feet away and at one o'clock we sat facing one another on the top, the highest mountain then climbed by the expedition, though this record was only to last for two days. Urkien was very excited at being on this magnificent view-point, and insisted on being photographed standing, axe in hand, on the summit. For a first rock climb he had done very well.

The whole view to the South lay before us. We were above all but a few peaks on the other side of the valley. Only Baruntse and Chamlang were above us that we could see. Nearer at hand the dominating tower of Makalu filled the view to the South-East. The whole route up to the col was visible and Urkien pointed out the various camp sites to me, and the highest point reached, some 700-800 feet below the ridge. Directly below, the site of Camp 3 was a dirty smudge on the smooth glacier, 2,000 feet below. In a cheerfully anoxic state I reeled off all the rest of my colour film. Urkien pointed out Ama Dablama and the other mountains above Namche. He could see how near we were and how quickly Norman's proposed pass would take him home. To the West, beyond Namche, the giants stood out, Gyachung Kang, Cho Oyu, it was impossible for me to identify them certainly. Nearer at hand Everest and Lhotse hid obstinately in the clouds, and I only had a short glimpse of the summit through a brief gap. Tomorrow was the anniversary of its first ascent.

As we climbed down the first part of the ridge, Norman and Passang Dawa appeared, heading for the summit of the 21,000-foot peak on the other side of the pass they had crossed. They had clearly failed in their attempted circuit and were climbing

PEAK 22,590' (CHAGÖ), FROM PEAK 21,300'  
The ridge climbed is in the main feature  
in the centre of the photograph

*N. Hardie : N.Z. Alpine Club Expedition*





this as a consolation prize. They had seen us reach the summit of our mountain, two specks silhouetted on the crest of the ridge, and we exchanged shouts, faintly heard in the now still air. The ridge appeared to lengthen out as we descended, the need for caution increasing our weariness. We stopped for a rest just above the col, and for a last look at Thibet, and then plodded down to camp. We packed up and started off down the glacier on the first stage home. It was a treacherous place and in spite of his care Norman went through twice. In the halts while he prodded, I caught Urkien several times looking over his shoulder at our ridge, with a faint grin on his face. As we left the glacier the shadows were beginning to engulf it, and by the time we reached camp it was lost in the darkness.

# SNOWDON RANGER

JOHN HILLS

“**I** AM the Snowdon Ranger,” said the elderly man to George Borrow, just 100 years ago. “He is generally termed the Snowdon Ranger,” explained his son-in-law, “because he is a tip-top guide, and he has named the house after him, ‘The Snowdon Ranger’.” No guide has since claimed the title, but the name has lived on, first as a comfortable little fishing hotel and now as a youth hostel. But no one has ever explained why he chose this unusual name. The first Ordnance maps mark *Snowdon Guide*, where the house stands, and other early travellers speak of guides at Llanberis, Capel Curig and Beddgelert. Why did he call himself the Ranger?

His path up Snowdon, which he claimed with some justice to be wonderful, fell into disuse as the Beddgelert and Pig Tracks provided more excitement. But the youth hostel has brought it back into favour, particularly with those traversing the mountain on their way from one hostel to another. It was and is a broad track, built at considerable expense, with a careful eye to easy gradients and a superb view of Snowdon summit all the way. It runs above Clogwyn du'r Arddu cliffs and reaches the ridge close to the spring, where the Llanberis and Capel Curig tracks converge on the railway. No humble innkeeper could possibly have engineered such a track, however much he might call himself the Ranger.

So here were two unanswered questions: Why the title and why the trackway?

Some months ago a friend lent me a copy of Thomas Compton's *North Cambrian Mountains*, a rare and attractive book. The author, who was an artist and described himself as “of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich,” toured North Wales in the year of Waterloo and made 30 admirable water-colour drawings. These were engraved by Daniel Harell and published in book form in 1817. Compton's descriptions are extremely accurate and include notes on geology as well as scenery. They

also have some account of his journey. He had intended climbing Snowdon from Beddgelert, but "as the clouds had thickened on the mountains . . . we determined to proceed to *Snowdon ranges*." Here he found "coarse fare and two indifferent beds." The next morning he made the ascent "by a sledge road which leads to some copper mines on the other side of the mountain." Like a true mountaineer he preferred the crest of Clogwyn Du to the easy zig-zag gradients of the sledge way; and in due course he reached the spring of water "which from its great elevation, more than 3,200 feet above the sea, is excessively cold." At Bwlch Glas "which overlooks a very deep hollow, Cwm Glas Llyn . . . a zig-zag path, formed on the face of a precipice all but perpendicular, leads to the copper mines . . . men carry the ore on their backs up to the top, where it is loaded on sledges to convey it to the Carnarvon Road, near Lake Cwellyn."

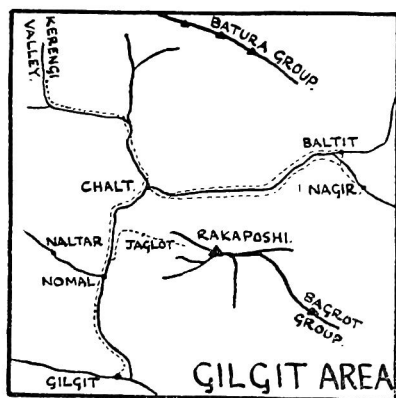
So it was the copper mine which built the Pig Track zig-zags; and we know the miners built the rest of that track as a short cut home to Capel Curig. In due course the mine changed hands and new owners built road and causeway by Llyn Llydaw and carried the ore down to the road at Pen-y-Pass.

And it seems that Borrow's elderly friend had only to change one letter, Ranges to Ranger, to provide himself with his proud title. The sledge way gave him a ready-made path. Today the farmer who lives behind the hostel sometimes carries his hay or rushes on a sledge, no unusual thing in North Wales. But his sledge, with its heavy iron-shod runners and iron tie rods, was never made for farm work.

# RAKAPOSHI 1954

D. R. FISHER

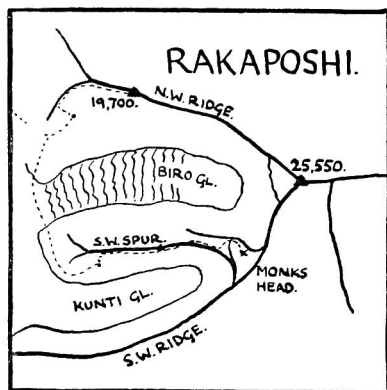
OUR scheduled meeting day in Rawalpindi was 15th June. On 9th June at about midday, Ted Wrangham, Roger Chorley and I drove into 'Pindi after a 44-day overland trip from England. On the following Monday Alfred Tissières turned up from Karachi, having flown out. Shortly afterwards George Band and George Fraser arrived also. We wanted to arrange for a Pakistani to come with us as a liaison Officer. General Hayaud Din, the Chief of General Staff, decided to come with us himself. We later got to know him as Gunga, the name he had acquired at Sandhurst. On 21st June we all flew to Gilgit.



From there we went to Chalt, and thence to the Karengi valley for 10 days' acclimatisation. Soon after leaving Chalt we saw for the first time the summit of Rakaposhi, our ultimate aim, just clear of cloud. The white summit cone looked impossibly steep, and the North Wall, rising nearly 20,000 feet from the valley, appeared even higher because of the band of cloud half way up it. Back in Chalt a fortnight later after our acclimatisation trip, we met the members of the German



Expedition who had just returned from the Batura Range. We tried to find out why they had abandoned their attempt to climb Rakaposhi after a three-weeks' reconnaissance all round the mountain. We formed the opinion that they had done so because of the technical difficulties and the dangers.



Our Base Camp for Rakaposhi we set up on 12th July between the end of the North-West ridge and the Biro glacier, on a perfect grass pasture crossed by a stream and surrounded by birch trees. We were unable to find a higher site ; indeed this appears to be a problem throughout most of the Karakoram. From this camp the height to the summit was over 13,000 feet.

As it was nearest to our present base, Alfred and George Fraser had had a look at the North-West ridge and had decided that the only safe and practical way on to the ridge was by a long spur ascending towards the 19,700-foot peak climbed by Campbell Secord and Vyvyan in 1938. To get on to the ridge proper we should have to climb over this peak and descend steeply about 1,500 feet.

The alternative routes to the summit were by the South-West spur, which some people favoured, and a route up the Biro glacier between the North-West ridge and the Spur. This second route would join the South-West spur above the prominent ice nose known by Tilman and Campbell Secord as the Monk's Head. While we were discussing the alternatives there was a tremendous roar, and looking up the glacier we saw a vast

avalanche of ice sweep right down from the edge of the plateau high up under the summit across to the South-West spur. We ruled out the glacier approach! Next day we decided to try and reach the North-West ridge by way of the 19,700-foot peak, and with 25 coolies we moved off up a long grassy slope before turning on to the ridge. Higher up the ridge became narrower and more rocky until eventually Camp I was established at 16,500 feet, just on the snow line. Next day Camp II was established at 17,800 feet, at the foot of the 19,700-foot peak, and George Band and Alfred remained there.

Two days later they both came down to Camp I while we were having breakfast, and told us of their ascent of the peak and of the difficulties beyond. They had set out up the ridge above Camp II and about half way up had tried to traverse round on the south side of the peak. Steep slopes of bare ice with little security had forced them back on to the ridge. They reached the summit and looked down the other side into space; this was clearly no route for laden porters. The long knife edge of ice far below and running up to the snowy plateau under the summit gave no possibility of a camp site. We accepted their judgment and descended to Base Camp again.

The South-West spur was now the only other possible route left for us to try. Alfred and Ted set off in advance to find a new base camp site and to reconnoitre the route beyond.

The South-West spur could only be ascended from its southern side so we had to descend about 1,000 feet on to the Biro glacier, pass round the end of the spur and then climb up the edge of the Kunti glacier which descends along the south side of the spur. Our new Base Camp was placed on the last patch of grass high up on the moraine, at 14,000 feet. Alfred and Ted found and ascended the Tilman-Secord couloir, which was out of sight from Base Camp, and reached the crest of the spur at 17,300 feet. They returned full of hope but felt that a few fixed ropes in the couloir would make the ascent safer for loaded porters. Roger and George Fraser fixed these ropes next day. Camp I was established at the bottom of the couloir (15,400 feet). On 28th July we all occupied Camp II at 17,300 feet at the top of the couloir.

Directly above us a snow slope led up to broken rocks; following these rocks and crossing small snow patches in

between we reached the foot of an ice slope 800 feet above the camp. The slope was about 500 feet long and at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , so the next job was to cut steps up this to reach the more level part of the ridge and then to look for a site for Camp III.

The cutting on the ice slope took two days. Alfred, George Band and Roger on reaching the top descended a short way and found a small but possible site for the next camp. Load carrying began again and on the 31st July Camp III, consisting of two tents, was set up at 18,600 feet and occupied by Alfred, Ted, George Fraser and myself. Gunga, who had been with us up to now, and had done very well to reach this point, decided to return to Base Camp ; so he set off down with Roger, George Band and the porters.

Our plan was to push on next day along the ridge as far as we could and then return to the same camp. Meanwhile George Band and Roger, who had returned to Camp II, were having a well-deserved rest.

On 1st August, Alfred, Ted, George Fraser and I set out from Camp III. About a mile ahead along the ridge was the rocky gendarme, the farthest point reached by Tilman and Secord in 1947. All along on our left huge cornices overhung the Biro glacier 6,000 feet below. At first we descended some way, then climbed steeply again and after about two hours reached a level site suitable for Camp IV. The gendarme was now immediately above us, so after a short rest we set off again. Climbing very steeply up and on to the crest of the gendarme we traversed along the edge, cutting huge steps in the  $55^{\circ}$  slope. Soon we reached some steep and broken rocks and shortly afterwards the summit of the gendarme. Heavy clouds were about us, but now about a mile away and looking very steep and forbidding we could see the Monk's Head through the mist. In the distance we heard thunder, and not wishing to be caught on this rocky spire we turned round and returned to Camp III.

Two days later, when the weather had cleared a bit, George Band, Roger, and our two best porters, Ali Dad and Ali Jahar came up and joined us. After some discussion it was decided that Alfred, the Georges, Roger, Ted and the two porters should go on and establish Camp IV below the gendarme and that George Fraser should then return with the two porters to me at Camp III. The party worked its way along the ridge towards

the proposed site and had reached a point about 500 feet below it, when a section of the cornice suddenly gave way and Ted and Ali Dad shot over the edge into space. George Band rolled down the opposite face to counteract the weight, the rope held, and a serious accident was avoided. Ali Dad, carrying the tents for Camp IV, had in his panic thrown away his load, which luckily came to rest on a small projection 300 feet down. George Fraser came back to Camp III to tell me what had happened. I crawled out of my tent and while George collected more rope I loaded up two small tents, as it had been decided not to attempt to recover the other tents until next day. We climbed quickly and found the rescue in progress. Soon the party was all together again, and fortunately no damage other than mild shock had been sustained. I took the porters back to Camp III, and George Fraser helped the others to establish Camp IV at 19,000 feet before returning to join me.

Next day, on the way down to Camp III, Roger climbed over the edge of the broken cornice and succeeded in rescuing the two tents. George Band, Alfred and Roger then ferried a load upwards while George Fraser and I helped Ted and the porters down the ice slope to Camp II. The steps we had cut previously had all vanished and George Fraser did an excellent piece of downhill cutting. We said good-bye to Ted and the porters who were going to Base for a few days' rest and then set off upwards again.

Several days of bad weather followed, but the three at Camp IV succeeded in reaching the foot of the Monk's Head. George Fraser and I had now been in Camp III for nearly a week, and this enforced stay together with bad weather conditions was beginning to have its effect. However the move up to Camp IV and the company of the others completely restored our morale.

Load carrying over the gendarme began, and on 11th August we had a perfect day. The five of us set off well loaded, reaching the col at the foot of the Monk's Head at about 3 p.m. Alfred, George Band and I here established and occupied Camp V at 19,200 feet while Roger and George Fraser returned to Camp IV. I now took over the cooking from George Band, who had done a long stretch at Camp IV in a most capable manner. Next morning I awoke at 6 a.m. and cooked breakfast. We were now in a position to attack the Monk's Head, the

RAKAPOSHI : Looking back along the South-West  
Spur from the Gendarme (Camp IV Below)

*R. R. E. Chorley*





formidable icy dome which must be climbed direct. The morning was perfect and at 9 a.m. the three of us set off with ice pitons and ropes for fixing. We descended 200 feet and made our way to the left-hand edge where we hoped the angle would be less and we should be clear of the ice cliffs above. We crossed the bergschrund with Alfred in the lead and soon reached the edge ; the going was excellent and we kicked steps for some distance. Alfred now started cutting steps in harder snow ice while I enlarged them. The position was superb and we were gaining height rapidly. Half way up we halted and had a rest ; Nanga Parbat towered up 35 miles away, and close at hand were vertical ice cliffs. On the other side of the glacier we could see the narrow North-West ridge. A large avalanche crashed down below us and a cloud of ice particles spread over the Biro glacier.

We set off again with George in the lead, and climbed steeply up a short corridor between two ice cliffs. After more step kicking we reached a large crevasse.

An attempt to cross it by an insecure bridge near the edge failed, so George set off cutting up a bare ice slope 150 feet long farther to the right. The ice was very hard and he did a wonderful job. We levelled out on to snow again and plodded up another few hundred feet on to the crest. We had now reached the top of the Monk's Head at about 21,000 feet, and looked around us. The summit appeared very close and we felt that nothing now could stop us. Camp VI would be pitched where we were sitting. The time was 3.15 p.m. and after a little sustenance we set off down. By 6 p.m. we were back at Camp V and found Roger and George Fraser ready with hot drinks. That evening we decided to carry up loads next day, and on the following day the five of us would move up to establish and occupy Camp VI at the top of the Monk's Head. Ted and the two porters had not come up, so all load carrying would fall on ourselves. From there on three of us would carry for the two who were to go for the top. Perhaps four days would see us up.

But next day the weather turned against us and there were high winds and dense cloud. As the snow deepened around us we began to wonder whether all our efforts were to be wasted. Every evening, to raise our hopes, the sky would clear. On the fourth day we had almost exhausted the food not set aside for

the higher camps. The way back would even now be difficult and we reluctantly decided that we must descend. Carrying heavy loads we set off in a snow storm. Progress was slow and tiring, but we eventually reached Camp III for the night. Next morning we were back at the ice slope, and leaving our heavy loads we started re-cutting the steps. Alfred, Roger and George Fraser cut downwards, while George Band and I descended on crampons and cut upwards to join them. We then returned for our loads and got down to Camp II at the top of the couloir. Here we thankfully dumped the gear we would not need at Base Camp, as the porters could come up without us to fetch it, and at 6 p.m. we were being welcomed back at Base.

Two days later Gunga appeared and told us that Ted had tried to get up again, but was unable to do so and they had gone back to Gilgit where he was X-rayed and put into hospital. We were all thankful to hear that he was all right, and only needed a rest. On 20th August we packed up and set off down to Gilgit, arriving very tired at about 11 p.m.

Looking back we are all of the opinion that the route by the South-West spur is climbable. As far as we could see the upper part, above the Monk's Head and on to the summit, looked fairly straightforward ; but who can tell ? I hope that a small but strong British expedition will eventually be able to bring back the answer.



# HASKETT SMITH

EDWARD C. PYATT

**W**ALTER PARRY HASKETT SMITH was born at Goudhurst in Kent in 1860. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford, where he made his mark as a classical scholar and an all-round athlete, excelling particularly in the long jump. His first visit to British mountains took place in 1880, when he "read hard and walked hard" with a University party in Snowdonia. The following year there were two separate reading parties, one of which he had to organize. "None of us had ever been to the Lakes or heard the very name of Wastdale Head; but we procured the map of Cumberland, found that there was on it a sombre region thronged with portentous shadows, found out that there was an inn at a spot which seemed the centre of all this gloom and finally engaged rooms at Dan Tyson's for a month. Then the other party veered round and pitched on the same spot, so that it came about that my first visit to Wastdale lasted over two months." At this time Will Ritson, who had opened the inn in 1856 to cater for the occasional traveller, had just given way to Tyson, while "Dame" Tyson kept the nearby farmhouse of Rawhead. Their first month was at Rawhead and here they fell in with a veteran hill lover named F. H. Bowring . . . "in whose mind we found an exhaustive catalogue of every rock and every gully in the county. For eight hours every day we absorbed Aristotle and Plato, for six or seven we scoured the surrounding fells and climbed furiously."

Bowring was not an alpinist, but he knew the hill districts of England and Wales from a lifetime of exploring them. "His favourite hills were Great Gable, which he had climbed over a hundred times, the Glyders and every square yard of Dartmoor. His chosen haunts were Chagford, Pen-y-Gwryd and Wastdale Head. He was then not far short of sixty, but he still walked with a splendid swing, and climbed with great vigour and precision. His long legs were clad in thick trousers; his fine

head was covered with a felt hat, the wide brim of which had been reduced to limpness by his habit of securing it in windy weather by means of an immense blue kerchief tied under his chin. The 'Norfolk' jacket was too modern for him and his usual coat bore somewhat bunchy tails with huge pockets, which contained, as a minimum, maps, compass, string, field glasses, sandwiches, the aforesaid blue bandana, gloves, a large grey woollen comforter, and several books, besides abundant materials for smoking. In his hand was a stout 6 foot fell-pole with a forked spike, which he thought less liable to slip on rocks." He, too, had been a noteworthy long jumper in his college days.

The chance meeting of these two men at Wastdale Head marks the beginning of the sport of rock climbing in this country. Great though Bowring's experience of mountains undoubtedly was, he himself never got beyond scrambling, otherwise he would certainly have been credited with some of the first ascents in later years. His significance to the development lies therefore, not in his personal contribution, but in his influence on his young and imaginative companion. The "gullies" of the first year were scrambles, such as Skew Ghyll on Great End, pointed out by Bowring, which he himself had done. It was not until the following year that Haskett Smith began his exploration of those gullies, which did involve something more than walking or scrambling, and Deep Ghyll (Scafell), Central and South East Gullies (Great End), North Gully (Bowfell), North West Gully (Gimmer) and Great Gully (Pavey Ark) all fell to him.

In his earliest days Haskett Smith was preoccupied with the climbing of gullies. "It is one great merit of a climb if it clearly defines itself. When A makes a climb, he wants B, C and D to have the benefit of every single obstacle with which he himself met, while B, C and D are equally anxious to say that they followed the exact line that Mr. A found so difficult, and thought it perfectly easy. And this is why so many of our climbs are ghylls. If you climb just to amuse yourself you can wander vaguely over a face of rock ; but if you want to describe your climb to others, it saves a lot of time if you can say — 'There that's our gully ! Stick to it all the way up !' " The sport made an unsatisfactory start, therefore, in ignoring

cleaner and more open rock to seek ways of ascending the damp and vegetation-filled clefts in between, but the climber felt safer in the enclosing walls, while the line of the climb was clearly defined.

Up to now the Lakeland fells had presented to the walker two problems which needed rock climbing for their surmounting—the inaccessible-looking Pillar Rock, offering the challenge of a minor summit, and the wall of Scafell above Mickledore, which forced a considerable detour on the pedestrian unwilling to climb. Both these were first done about 1826. During the next fifty years three alternative ways were made on Pillar and numerous people, including well-known Alpine climbers like Leslie Stephen, made the ascent ; three alternative ways were also found on the wall above Mickledore. In the whole of this period, however, no rock climbing was done in any other place ; the Alpine trained climbers came mainly in the winter months for snow and ice practice and the sport of climbing rocks under summer conditions certainly did not originate with them. They walked over the snow-covered hills and cut steps in wide couloirs—not the gullies which were to provide the rock climbs of the next era, but the more open places, which are only walks in the summer, such as the scree shoot south of Bowfell Buttress. Now Haskett Smith was no Alpine climber—he did not join the Alpine Club until 1890—and at this stage (1882) he was in no way influenced by the alpinists. His very substantial contribution to the development of British rock climbing was made entirely on his own initiative, after the original impetus had been given by Bowring. As all his early climbing was done solo his role as founder is unchallengeable.

In 1882, also, Haskett Smith made two further new ways to the top of Pillar Rock in the established tradition. He also attacked the same crag on the long side facing the valley—one of the earliest instances of the deliberate seeking out of a longer and harder route on a rock face where a shorter and easier one was readily available. (Actually the Pilkington brothers had attempted this and failed some years before). On this occasion Haskett Smith, too, was accompanied by his brother ; the full account of their near approach to disaster was not told till years afterwards. They were on their way down after having been repulsed by the difficulties of the upper part, when W.P.

attempted to slide down the outside of a large block resting in a corner. As his weight came on the block it slowly tipped outwards carrying him with it. Luckily he had retained some handhold on the back wall and by a tremendous heave was able to free himself from the monster, which thundered off down the mountain, leaving him there breathless and shaken and, according to his own account, mumbling in Greek !

He was back again in 1884 for another long holiday in Wastdale. Scafell Pinnacle, which had attracted his attention during his climbs in Deep Ghyll in previous years, was climbed by the short side. As early as 1869 the Pinnacle had been discovered to be structurally similar to the Ennerdale Pillar, but no attempt had been made to climb it until now. Then he met J. W. Robinson of Lorton, one of the most active of the local mountain lovers, who had, however, so far only done the traditional ascents of the Pillar and the crags above Mickledore. Now they joined forces and under Haskett Smith's inspiration Scafell Pinnacle was climbed from the foot by way of Steep Ghyll. This was very much in keeping with the 1882 attempt on the long side of the Pillar ; it seemed as though the very existence of a separate summit to these "pinnacles" gave them an individuality which attracted him in the first instance in preference to similar crags situated on accessible hill-sides. The latter were however the next logical extension. The same year Haskett Smith and Robinson contoured below the Napes face of Great Gable and examined Napes Needle, as yet unclimbed. They went on by climbing some way up Needle Ridge—the climbing of open rock for its own sake at last !

Another two years elapsed. Then in 1886 occurred one of the outstanding events in British climbing history, when Haskett Smith scaled the striking looking and apparently inaccessible Napes Needle. He came over the summit of Great Gable late one afternoon and descended the full length of Needle Ridge to the foot of the Pinnacle. "... the Needle itself had an attractive look about it. The main trouble lay in the cracks and crevices which were tightly packed with small stones flush with the surface of the slabs and thatched with slippery grass. The prospect from the shoulder was not encouraging. The Lingmell face of the top block was covered with a brown brittle lichen, which concealed whatever holds

there might be, and if the top of the block were rounded, things looked hopeless. The only test of this was to throw up a stone and, if it stayed there, it would be a proof that the top was fairly flat. Diligent search revealed only two stones on the shoulder, one the size of a snuffbox the other nearly as big as a brick. The little one bounded off and was lost ; but the big one behaved better and encouraged me to follow it. There was no means of recording my visit except a small boss near the North edge of the stone round which my handkerchief was tied with my brick on top of it to keep it from being blown away . . . In the descent hanging by the hands from the top and feeling with the toes for the protuberance provided an anxious moment, but the rest went easily enough, though it must be confessed that it was an undoubted satisfaction to stand once more on solid ground below and look up at my handkerchief fluttering in the breeze."

The ascent of the Needle with its ferocious appearance of inaccessibility was a landmark and its association with Haskett Smith confirms and commemorates his responsibility for the very beginnings. The pinnacle was later (1890) described in a national magazine—*the Pall Mall Budget*—and this article did much to attract would-be climbers to the fells. Haskett Smith's own account was not published until nearly thirty years later.

The new ascents contributed by climbers with established Alpine reputations are all found to post-date Haskett Smith's first exploratory work. Deep Ghyll was climbed throughout in 1886 by a party led by G. Hastings and including W. C. Slingsby, who afterwards claimed it as a first ascent in a paper read to the Alpine Club. A remarkable attack was made on the front face of Scafell Pinnacle in December, 1887 by a party led by Charles Hopkinson. They climbed some way up the shallow furrow, now known as Hopkinson's Gully, before being stopped by ice on the rocks. In 1888 Slingsby made his Chimney route on Scafell Pinnacle with Haskett Smith, E. Hopkinson and Hastings, while Hastings led the Great Gully of Dow Crag with Haskett Smith again in the party. J. N. Collie made no original contributions until 1892. The Pilkingtons had tried the long face of the Pillar in the earliest days, but in fact they never made a first ascent on any crag.

Within the next few years the local enthusiasts and the Alpine climbers, who came now in ever increasing numbers, gathered together regularly at Easter, Whitsun and Christmas at the Hotel at Wastdale Head ; the pattern of the development slowly began to emerge. This fusing of the views of the two groups was now very necessary for progress. In 1886 during the course of the paper already mentioned Slingsby said :—" Do not let us be beaten on our own fells by outsiders, some of whom consider ice axes and ropes to be illegitimate." The principal " outsider " was Haskett Smith, who in his account of the ascent of Scafell Pinnacle by the short side had written in the Hotel Book—" Of course no ropes or other illegitimate means were resorted to." Contact with the alpinists was soon to convert him. In later years he summarized :—" In those days we were heretical in our attitude towards the use of the rope. Not having one ourselves, we were inclined to scoff at those who had ; and in the gall of bitterness we classed ropes with spikes and ladders, as a means by which bad climbers were enabled to go where none but the best climbers had any business to be. The real truth is that, till you are hardened to it, it requires much more nerve to climb with a rope than without it."

The use of the rope for safeguarding the members of a party was by now an established technique of mountaineering in the Alps, but the same principles were not completely adequate on British rock. Home climbing demanded, and did evolve within the next few years, its own particular methods of systematic belaying and rope handling. By 1887 this evolution of rope work had already begun, as witnessed by a note by Robinson in the Hotel Book—" A rope was used as a precaution on Deep Ghyll Pillar, but the climbing was fairly done."

Even in Britain the alpinists always took an ice axe on their climbing holidays ; for them the principal attraction of the fells had always been the practice for snow and ice work, for which the axe was indispensable. It continued to be popular on the new summer climbs where it was used for a foothold or for the removal of unwanted vegetation (also on at least one occasion to fashion a foothold in the rock). The vogue for the axe continued well on into the next century—Botterill took one on the first ascent of his famous Slab, but fortunately he dropped it before the difficulties became really serious ! On the other hand

the local climbers carried the so-called fell-pole, similar to the continental alpenstock, six or seven feet long, used as a staff uphill and as an aid to balance downhill. A more dangerous weapon to carry on a rock climb it would be hard to imagine.

If the alpinist could introduce to the local enthusiast the use of the rope and the axe and the traditions of Alpine mountaineering, the latter had much to offer in return—not only a knowledge of the hills and what had already been done, but also the whole principle of a new sport, which, while it had something in common with Alpine mountaineering, was now essentially self-sufficient. Records of climbs began to appear frequently in the *Wastdale Book*, though not without some opposition from those nature lovers who feared this new invasion of the wildness of the Lakeland hills. One of them went so far as to write in the same book :—" Messrs. Haskett Smith and Co's notes appear to the native climbers pure, unadulterated brag." He was, of course, referring to the original meaning of the word " climber," but now it was beginning to acquire a new and specialised significance.

Thus was the foundation laid and now, to begin to build, British climbing needed someone with the ability to advance the technical standards and the personality to determine the course of the development. The required genius was not far away. A young London schoolmaster, named Owen Glynne Jones, made his first visit to the Lake District at Easter, 1890 ; the real advances of the next decade belong more properly to his story.

Haskett Smith and the locals, now in close association with the alpinists, continued to make new routes on the various crags. In 1891 the North Face of the Pillar fell at last to Haskett Smith, Hastings and Slingsby—the former leading. This climb did not follow a major line of weakness like a gully, or the well defined line of an arête, but rather a series of independent lines which were linked together to form the route. The separate parts soon took on distinctive names—the Stomach Traverse, the Split Blocks, the Strid and the Nose. This was Haskett Smith's last big contribution ; thereafter, with few exceptions, he left the new explorations to others. He had reached the limits of his ability and could never have led the types of climb which Jones, Collier and others did within the next few years.

In 1894 appeared the first book on British mountaineering—*Rock Climbing in the British Isles, England* by W. P. Haskett Smith—the first of a projected three volume series. Here the complete topography of the Lakeland crags was set down for the first time by the person who had done so much to explore them. But the Cumbrian story was only a part of the whole, the remainder was devoted to an assessment of the climbing possibilities of many widely scattered parts of England not normally associated with climbing, and chalk, gritstone, limestone and granite also found their way into print as climbers' rocks. The making of climbs on rock outcrops and sea cliffs was, of course, carrying rock climbing one stage farther away from mountaineering to a point where the mountains themselves were no longer needed even as a background—the next logical extension of a sport based on climbing rocks for their own sakes. For some districts this little volume remained the most up-to-date climbing information for the next fifty years. It has, perhaps, two faults. It is clear from close study that Haskett Smith knew very little about some of the places he mentions, but has included them either from quite casual observation or even from hearsay. He is prone to considerable excursions into trivialities, so that the facts have to be sought out from much verbiage. In this he contrasts markedly with Jones, whose *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District* completely superseded him as far as Cumberland was concerned three years later. Jones's book is packed with facts and stories about climbs and climbing and there is little that is redundant.

Some time in 1894 Haskett Smith was introduced by Robinson, who knew everyone, to Jones, now beginning to make a name for himself. Jones had done his first climbs on the Cader and Aran ranges in Central Wales and Haskett Smith asked him to do sections on these for his second volume, dealing with Wales and Ireland. This appeared in 1895. During the course of the explorations they went to Cader Idris and made first ascents of the Great and East Gullies of Craig-y-Cae—the only time they climbed together. Jones, of course, led. The Welsh volume is noteworthy for its morbid preoccupation with accidents on the hills, the accounts of which add nothing to the text. It is as though he wished to create an impression of a gloomy North Wales, dread and dangerous by comparison with



Lakeland. The verbosity of the first volume is certainly to be preferred to the morbidity of the second.

The third volume—on Scotland—never appeared.

It has been necessary in this article to confine ourselves to Haskett Smith and British climbing. In fact he travelled widely at various times in the Alps, the Pyrenees, North Africa, Greece, the Balkans, the Rockies and the Andes. He was president of the Climbers' Club from 1901-03 and of the Fell and Rock from 1913-17. Throughout his life he contributed articles of reminiscences to various club journals, which have done much to illuminate the picture of climbing in those early days and to sketch in for us the details of the leading characters. In 1936 at the age of 76 and on the fiftieth anniversary of his first ascent of the Needle he climbed it again with G. R. Speaker and R. S. T. Chorley—a lifelong association between climb and climber having few parallels in climbing history. He died at Parkstone in Dorset in 1946.

Our debt to him is considerable. British climbing as a sport in its own right was his inspiration at the beginning and he was the driving force behind each step in the evolution of the idea. Climbing today, more than half a century later, still has the same basic concepts. Only one climb is actually named after him—Haskett Gully on Scoat Fell (derived, he said, from "Hay" and "Scoat"). The North Climb on the Pillar stands as a monument to his perseverance. Above all it is singularly appropriate that the first ascent of Napes Needle—outstanding and typical British rock problem—should fall to one who can so obviously be regarded as the founder of the sport.

# THE WEST FACE OF THE DRU

J. BROWN, D. WHILLANS and A.K.R.

“IT’S the angle that makes it a serious climb,” said Joe. “Definitely a terrific climb. Nothing in England like the 90-metre dièdre.”

The west face of the Dru was not really in their plans for the summer. But in Chamonix they heard of the second ascent. The successful party they had met earlier on another climb. “We thought, if they can do it, why shouldn’t we have a bash?”

They looked up photographs with the route marked. Snell in the sports shop gave them a technical note. They waited for the weather to settle.

“And did it?”

“Well, it was a fine morning when we started,” said Joe. “Don and I took the 10.30 train to Montenvers. We walked across the Mer de Glace and over the moraine to the foot of the face. The technical note said there was a pitch of V on leaving the glacier but we didn’t find it; perhaps the glacier was higher this year. What we did find was a lot of loose rock. You begin up a 1,000-foot couloir. This was rock at first, mostly easy but steep and very loose. After 600 feet the rock ended. The rest of the couloir was ice. We had to go up and across it. The ice was thin, with bits of icicles sliding down the middle, where falling ice and stones had made a groove. We roped and I led off. I ran out the full 150 feet, hoping to get to a belay before Don had to start, but I couldn’t. So we had to move together up the ice, cutting steps and hoping nothing would hit us. It was dicey. Eventually we were up and across, and arrived on the ‘terraces inferieures.’

During the afternoon it had been clouding up. The sun had gone in, and as we got to the terraces, about four o’clock, it started to rain. Then we heard thunder. It was quite a storm. We decided to stop where we were, so as to be able to get back if things didn’t improve. We might have gone straight back then, but the idea of going down the icy part of the couloir was

so nasty that we thought we'd better stay for a bit to see if we could go on up later. We started to clear a bivouac place. It was raining hard now, with thunder every few seconds, and lightning flashing round the top of the Dru. There was ice over the bivouac ledge. We had one axe-hammer and one piton hammer between us. We started chopping the ice away with them. Then the axe broke. It was no good as a hammer any more, but we kept the head, which might be useful for step cutting. We sat down on the ledge. The storm slackened and about eight o'clock it stopped raining. We cooked a bit and settled down for the night. It wasn't a very good ledge. You couldn't lie down on it. But we could sit with legs out straight and managed to sleep a bit now and then. It didn't rain again during the night, though the clouds chased over. The morning was fine. We had some bacon and boiled eggs and brewed some tea. We moved off about 5.30.

We traversed left about 300 feet, and then began to move up from ledge to ledge. This was the area below the landslide and everywhere was littered with loose shattered rocks. There was a pitch of IV Sup. but not difficult, then a chimney of V with a peg in it. We came to the 'terraces superieures' and began to feel a long way up the face. The terraces shelved away in steps for 100 feet or so ; then there was the big drop of 1,000 feet vertically to the glacier. Immediately above was the giant flake with behind it the long vertical corner. This is the line of the middle and most difficult part of the route, with the long artificial pitches. We knew we were at the start of the big difficulties. We put on the doubled rope and began to lead through.

Two or three pitches led to the fissure Vignes. We had been told this was the crux. It is really not one, but a series of cracks : you go up each one and then step into the next. The whole pitch is about 75 feet. It was Don's turn to lead. He went up and didn't seem to find it difficult. I followed. It wasn't more than normal V.S. standard. If that's the crux, we thought, we're in for an easy climb. There were three pitons in it, but it wasn't really necessary to use them.

Another pitch and we were under an overhang on the right. Ahead an obvious crack went straight up, but there was a line of pitons to the right underneath the overhang so we thought

we'd better follow them. We went across under the overhang on *étriers* and hand traversed back to the crack above. This brought us to the next big pitch, the 40-metre crack, all overhangs and vertical. I was glad it was Don's turn to lead, but he was crafty. He went up 20 feet, found a stance and stopped ; so I had to go on past him. But the crack seemed quite reasonable. It was rather like the first pitch of Curving Crack on Cloggy, but longer and the crack narrower and overhanging. There were wooden wedges in place all the way up, and I climbed on these. This wasn't too easy : most of the slings in the wedges were rotten so I had to use the wedges themselves. At the top I banged in a wedge myself for a belay, the first one we had put in. Don didn't use the wedges at all, but lay-backed all the way up.

On the ledge just above the second party had bivouacked. We saw empty milk tubes lying about. The crack went on, with more lay-backs and jamming. Then it broadened into a gully, with overhangs all round. The slab below them was running with snow-water. Again it was Don's turn to lead. It looked very hard, but Don found some holds and with a piton got up. This was the half-moon shaped slab, leading into a couloir. The couloir was all ice, but you could bridge across it. Then it steepened to vertical and the ice spread outwards from the back over the walls. We had to cut holds in the ice to get up into the cave underneath the overhang.

It was Don's lead. He got a wooden wedge into a crack under the overhang, and hung an *étrier* on it. He stepped out on the *étrier* and swung into space. It was difficult to keep steady to put in the next piton, but after a bit he managed it and got another *étrier* hung on that. It was more and more awkward, and the *étriers* seemed to swing always in the wrong direction. Don went up and back to rest, and up and back and rested again. And then at last he forced out over the edge and up. This was the hardest bit of the climb, harder than the Vignes. It was 5 p.m. We were at the top of the great flake and at the foot of the 90-metre *dièdre*.

It had been clouding up. Now there was mist all round. We sat down for a rest before going up to the *dièdre*, and brewed some tea. It was cold sitting down and Don put on his duvet.

The dièdre ahead went straight up, smooth and vertical, with a tilt to the right. Don led a free pitch to start, then it was my turn to lead the artificial. There were lots of pegs and wedges in place. Mostly I used these, but I had to put in some more of my own. Half-way up I stopped, standing in étriers, and brought up Don. Then I went on to the top of the dièdre and began to traverse right. Here I had to put in more pitons myself and I wished I had more karabiners. Every few feet I had to go down to bring up the lowest ones to clip into the next pegs. It started to snow. We were sheltered in the corner because of the tilt, but the rock was wet and I began to feel cold. I wished I had put on my duvet when Don had. Now I had to stop to put it on in the middle of the dièdre, one foot on the vertical wall, the other in an étrier. I could only move four or five inches in either way, and it was awkward getting the duvet out of the rucksack. When I moved on, all the rock was running with water and cold and wet and slippery. Hand-jamming up the crack was difficult.

The dièdre ended. It was an impressive place, high above the flake with a vertical drop over the edge to the glacier. We caught glimpses of this now and again through the driving snow. We found the knotted rope left by the first party. On the left was the smooth wall where they made their fantastic traverse in from the north face ; we saw their line of expansion bolts. But our way was to the right, down the knotted rope diagonally to a ledge 80 feet below and 40 feet to the right. The knotted rope was tied to a piton at the top, and it hung in a great curve, the other end fixed on the ledge below. It didn't look very safe, so Don belayed my rope through the piton at the top while I went down. The fixed rope creaked and strained and it was slippery with snow, but I got down safely to the bottom of the curve. I climbed up to the ledge, and found two wooden wedges holding the lower end of the rope. We left our own long line running through the top piton so that I could safeguard Don from the ledge while he followed down the fixed rope.

By the time we were both down it was eight o'clock and getting dark. We decided to stop for the night. The ledge was deep in snow, but we cleared it. It was quite a good ledge, about nine feet by three, but there was a big block so you couldn't lie down. We just sat crouched : I had a cagoule and Don a

pakamac, and we had the duvets underneath. It was snowing hard, and went on snowing all night. We couldn't sleep.

At last it began to get light. I could hardly see Don: he was covered with snow, with just the ridges of his pakamac showing black. The dawn was grey and misty and it was still snowing, but not so hard. We ate a bit. Soon the snowfall slackened and became patchy, stopping and starting again; occasionally we even caught a glimpse of the valley. We got going about 5.30. We left the ledge by a crack, a pitch of V with two pegs in it. Then down a crack of IV, and up two more cracks, supposed to be V but easy. Then a couloir with four pitons, all running with water. So to the pitch of VI. This was not too bad, but the rocks were pouring with melting snow, and by now we were soaked through, and the duvets were sopping.

All across the upper part of the face is a line of overhangs, but in the middle there is just one weakness. This is the route. First up the edge of a flake, then a crack with a wedge in it. All the way we were knocking down snow and ice off the holds. This brought us above the overhang. We were not sure where to go next. One false cast and then we saw a line of pegs. They led to easier climbing, but on peculiar rock, like stiff mud. And then suddenly we came to a wire ladder. It must have been left by the second party. I pulled: was it secure at the top? It creaked but didn't give way, so Don belayed and I went up. The ladder led to an edge, and over it. It was the edge of the north face. The last pitch. We were up. Only a few hundred feet of the ordinary north face route between us and the top. It must have been about 10.30.

But all the rocks were covered with snow and ice and pouring with water. We lost the route and had some hard pitches. In the end we came out at the brèche between the Petit and the Grand Dru. We climbed up the *passage en Z* to the Grand Dru. It was four o'clock.

Descent was straightforward. We did eight abseils on the 300-foot rope. It was dark when we got to the glacier, but there was a bit of moon. We felt tired. We started across the glacier. Some glacier! It seemed as steep as the Idwal Slabs. Don tried to cross a big crevasse and fell in three times, making impressive pendulum swings on the rope. 'This is fun but monotonous.' We heard avalanches coming down the Dru

behind us. There was a terrific one. It seemed to be coming right at us. We dug in the stump of the broken axe and ducked. Snow and ice fragments hissed round us. Then silence.

About 9.30 we decided to stop. We sat down. There was no food left. A long, hungry night. In the morning we found we were only a quarter of an hour from the Charpoua Hut. On down the path and across the glacier. Montenvers. Down the path to Chamonix. Near the bottom was Hamish Nicol to meet us. Excitement and congratulations. On again, down to the camping place. It had been wet here, too. Don was flooded out of his tent."

## ANYTHING GOES !

*(Acknowledgments to Mr. Cole Porter)*

In olden days steel karabiners  
Were looked on as something heinous,  
But now, Lord knows, anything goes !  
Good climbers, too, who once knew better, do  
Frequently climb in kletterschuhe  
Or bare toes—  
Anything goes !  
Perhaps it's iron pegs you use—  
Wooden legs you use—  
Nylon slings you use—  
Abseil rings you use—  
Etriers you use—  
A psyche belay you use—  
Nobody will oppose  
And every night the sets of smarties  
Go climbing in moonlight parties  
On Dinas' Nose  
And anything goes !

DAVID YEOMAN



# CLIMBING IN DEVONSHIRE

K. M. LAWDER

WHEN I started climbing early in 1948, at an age when a good many people are thinking of giving it up, I was at Devonport and wanted to get out as much as I could. There seemed to be a general impression that nothing nearer than North Wales was any good, but some of us determined to see what we could find within reach of an afternoon trip, and so began to work systematically on the Dartmoor Tors. We had no previous reports to go on, but E. C. Pyatt has since kindly supplied me with a number of references.

Haskett-Smith in *Climbing in the British Isles—England*, 1894, referred to Dartmoor as “a high upland moor, forming a vast reservoir from which most Devon rivers are fed. Curious rather than beautiful: more interesting to the geologist, the antiquary or the fisherman, rather than to the mountaineer. Yet instructive even to him, for the frequency of rain and mist and the paucity of landmarks which can be seen more than a couple of yards off, render it one of the easiest places to lose one’s way in any but the finest weather. There are no true hills but here and there a gradual rise of the ground is seen with a lump or two of granite grotesquely planted on top of it. These are the Tors. As a rule they are small but often present problems to the climber and are seldom without interest of some sort.” He then gives a list of the “more interesting” Tors, but most of those mentioned have recently been checked over and found to have little on them but short problems.

A. R. Thomson in the *Rucksack Club Journal*, 1916, described a few climbs on Hay Tor, Hound Tor, Vixen Tor and Bowerman’s Nose.

A. D. M. Cox in *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1935, said: “As regards climbing possibilities, Dartmoor may be said to provide almost unlimited climbing of a strictly limited type. That is to say, it possesses a great quantity of rock scattered at random over nearly its whole area, particularly on the summits of its

hills, but this rock is only in very rare cases concentrated in cliffs of as much as 100 feet, and in those cases the steepness and peculiar formation of the rock do not encourage ascents. Climbing is mostly of boulder type, but some routes reach the standard of the full-blooded one pitch climb. Dartmoor granite is of an irreproachable quality and extremely rough in texture. Every mass of rock tends to be formed in bulging layers, each resting on the one below in the manner of the right-hand profile of the letter 'B' and it will easily be understood that the climber who has attained a standing position on the lower curve is likely, particularly if he himself tends to bulge, to find his balance disturbed by the thrust of the upper layer in the pit of his stomach, and as a rule he will find no handhold over the top to assist equilibrium. Roundedness, in fact, is the besetting vice of the Dartmoor rock."

Sheep's Tor (Grid Ref. 565683) is visible from the main road Plymouth to Yelverton and looked rocky, so a start was made there. It is approached by a road round the big Burrator reservoir and through Sheepstor village, which soon turns into a narrow winding lane and ends on the moor a few hundred yards below the Tor. As is the case on many of the Tors, the rocks when reached are found to be disappointing as they are by no means so big as they appear to be. The greater part of Sheep's Tor is a mass of boulders without anything worth climbing, but on the eastern face there is a more or less vertical wall 30 or 40 feet high and a couple of hundred feet long which has 15 or 20 routes on it. These are nearly all cracks of varying difficulty on which a good many people will prefer to have a top rope. It is perhaps unfortunate that on fine week-ends in summer there are likely to be plenty of spectators, as the Tor is a good picnic spot.

We had heard of the Dewerstone (Grid Ref. 538638) so were looking for this at the same time ; but the map is confusing as it seems to indicate that the Rock is on the top of the hill, though in fact when one gets there it is invisible. The Rock is on the true right bank of the River Plym, 10 minutes' walk upstream from Shaugh Bridge. Crossing the river may be a job if there has been much rain recently as it consists of boulder hopping and sooner or later most people go in. Sometimes there are ropes which have been rigged by the Royal Marine Commando

UPPER TWO-THIRDS OF MAIN FACE OF  
DEWERSTONE FROM OPPOSITE HILL SIDE

*Eric Hemery*





School at Bickleigh, a couple of miles away, and these are useful when the river is in spate. Otherwise a crossing can usually be made a quarter of a mile or so up the River Meavy which meets the Plym just above Shaugh Bridge. The Dewerstone as a whole is a curious formation, being a series of buttresses projecting from the western side of the steep and thickly-wooded valley of the River Plym, the tops of the buttresses being in the woods and well below the level of the hill top. It is sometimes called The Devil's Rock, but this is probably incorrect as its name seems to be derived from the Celtic "dwr" meaning "water," though a possible derivation is from the Anglo-Saxon "duua" meaning "pigeons." The main face rises close to the edge of the river for 170 feet and is almost vertical, and there are two subsidiary buttresses to the left of it. Higher up the hill there are two other smaller buttresses to the right and an area with smaller outcrops of rock to the left. Curiously enough the Dewerstone was not referred to by Haskett Smith or Thomson, but Cox reported in *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1935, that it "did not look likely to be climbed." As so often happens, on further investigation this proved to be an over-statement and in *C.C.J.*, 1937, he stated that the main face gave two good climbs of great character with good rock and fine situations all the way. Recently another route has been made by C. J. W. Simpson up the left side of the main face.

During the winter of 1948/49 Lieutenant R. G. Higgins, R.N., and I concentrated on the Dewerstone. We found the main face quite clean, but all the rest was overgrown with brambles and vegetation of all sorts. A great amount of loose earth was dug out, usually on a top rope, but the rock was found on the whole to be surprisingly sound.

To the right of the main face a good route starts on the broken rock and zig-zags to the top, the last pitch being on the actual corner and having considerable exposure. There is, however, a sturdy oak tree which acts as a long stop about 30 feet down and a couple of years ago this was proved to be effective (not by me!).

The left of the main face has two subsidiary buttresses which meet near the top, and they and the gullies between them provide many routes of "Diff." standard with variations up to "Severe." There are so many cracks and ledges that it is possible to climb or traverse in almost any direction, and there

is still scope for considerable gardening. At the top of the wide gully which separates these buttresses from the main massif there is a mass of huge jammed boulders, with a tunnel route through them which gives access from the top to several routes on the wall of the right side of the gully. These routes lead out eventually to the summit of the main face.

The upper buttresses to the right each have one good route, but the rest of the rock is weathered in such a way that it seems to be unclimbable—much as one is chary of saying that about anything—as it exhibits the “ B ” formation referred to by Cox. The route on the left upper buttress has two short pitches and a third of 70 feet which can be taken by itself if preferred and has three alternative finishes of different standards. The route on the right upper buttress has one pitch, with a traverse across a steep slab under an overhang at the back of which Nature has kindly provided three separate finger-holds. To the right of this route the rock looks as if it should “ go ” but so far attempts on it have all failed. If desired the traverse can be avoided by keeping left over an ivy-covered ledge and up a steep wall which has two routes on it.

Between these two upper buttresses there are rocks with a narrow and a wide chimney, about 15 feet each. When Higgins made the first ascent of the wide chimney he rashly put his back against a patch of moss, which he found to his cost was holding about half a gallon of icy water. This has now been removed.

The area of outcrops to the left of the top of the main buttress (Penny Bay) has a 50-foot slab route with a delicate finish and in the centre a mass of jammed boulders with a 10-foot “ Severe ” up the outside and a tunnel route on the inside. Coming down the tunnel I found it was too tight a squeeze for me, so worked my way up again till the top of my trousers caught on a spike and held me. It was too narrow to get a hand down to clear myself so someone else had to come down head first and cut my braces on the shoulders, thus allowing me to climb out of the trousers. Luckily this occurred in the summer. Still further to the left is a Monolith Crack on a small scale which I have not been able to get through.

On the nose of land between the Plym and the Meavy are many remains of medieval tin smelting works and above these is a small area of rock with a few easy routes and some problems.

On the whole the Dewerstone is the best climbing area in Devon.

Vixen Tor (Grid Ref. 543743) is unique in that it is the only one the top of which cannot be reached except by climbing (admittedly of an easy standard) and where the descent has to follow the same route. It is a huge square mass of rock about 60 feet high on the north side and twice as much on the south where the ground falls away, and it is split right through from top to bottom by a wide cleft. Haskett Smith said that "the struggles of generations of climbers are said to have communicated a high degree of polish to the surface of the cleft," but this is not so as it is a "Mod." climb and the holds are hardly scratched at all. A local man I met there told me that there have been occasions when visitors have got to the top and have been stuck there until ropes were brought from the quarry at Merrivale a mile away. There is a long and complicated legend about a witch who used to live on top and who was eventually liquidated by a knight, and I can quite see that the Tor would be difficult to climb in armour with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. On top are several rock basins which in the early 1800's were assumed to have been made by the Druids for sacrificial purposes, but this also would have been hard to organise. Basins like these are quite common on the Moor and are now known to have been formed naturally. As far as is known the only climb on the main block is up the cleft, any breaks in the four faces being very rounded. There are smaller blocks to the east and west of the main one on which there are climbs, particularly on the latter.

Hay Tor (Grid Ref. 758771) is similar to Vixen Tor in being an isolated block, but the top can be reached by steps cut during the early part of the last century, at which time there was a quarry near by from which stone was taken to a canal at Teigngrace by wagons which ran the whole way on grooved blocks of granite used as rails. This stone was used for the arches of London Bridge and the columns of the library in the British Museum. A Dr. Croker, writing in 1851, referred to "the unsightly stair steps to enable the enervated and pinguitudinous scions of humanity of this wonderful 19th century to gain its summit." The original iron hand rail is pretty decrepit by now, but enough remains for use as an anchor when the slab routes

on the eastern face are being climbed. There is nothing on the south face, but the other sides have about 20 routes on them, mostly of "Diff." standard, and they are nearly all one pitch climbs of about 50 feet. Just to the west is another group of rocks, the westerly face of which protrudes from the fall of the hillside. The cliff is steep and the rock has been weathered smooth, and the only route known to have been climbed goes up a wide groove near the left end. A main road runs close to Hay Tor and it is a favourite stopping place for charabancs and cars, so there will always be plenty of spectators if any climbing is done on a week-end in summer.

Hound Tor is one and a half miles north-west of Hay Tor and by no means so trippery, though a good many people do go there. It consists of a number of blocks round about 40 feet high with numerous routes of all standards up to "Severe." The tops can all be reached by walking round, and the area has been found very good for starting off novices as they can move so easily from one grade to the next, and whatever the direction of the wind there is usually a sheltered face to be found.

What I may call the minor Tors, those with short climbs and problems of 15 feet or so, are Great Links Tor (Grid Ref. 551867), Great Mis Tor (Grid Ref. 563770), Staple Tors (Grid Ref. 540756), Leather Tor (Grid Ref. 563700), Combshead Tor (Grid Ref. 587688), and Fur Tor (Grid Ref. 587831).

Three miles south-west of Tavistock are Morwell Rocks (Grid Ref. 442705), overlooking the River Tamar. These are shale outcrops in the steep hillside and there is a good deal of loose stuff in them. I have only been there once so cannot say much about them, but they are worth a visit.

I do not know of any good rock elsewhere in Devon, and the Cliff Assault Wing of the Royal Marine Commandos tell me there is none on either coast though there are steep loose cliffs in several places.







# CWM SILYN AND TREMADOC

AN INTERIM GUIDE

J. NEILL

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**I**T is several years now since the idea of a guide to "Snowdon South and West" germinated. This was the one big area remaining to be covered; and as the idea grew, so the range of climbs widened to include the Moelwyns and Moel-y-Gest, Moel Hebog and Tremadoc, Cwm Silyn and Craig-y-Bera and Llechog. Meanwhile a valuable draft guide to Cwm Silyn was produced by G. Eglinton and E. W. Dance of the Manchester University Mountaineering Club, based on H. R. C. Carr's 1926 guide and original accounts of climbs since then, as well as new material. Then came an account of Moel-y-Gest by Showell Styles, and an enterprising guide to the Beddgelert area by Paul Work.

With so much material to hand, and with new climbs being done monthly in an increasingly popular area, the work involved in "Snowdon South and West" has become enormous. It is clearly advisable therefore to bring out a guide-book article, to appear both in the Journal and as an off-print after the manner of Three Cliffs, in advance of the final product. Thus climbers will have at hand long overdue information about at least two of the major crags waiting to be covered.

Space has been very limited and the competition for admittance keen. Cwm Silyn goes without saying, for the finest and longest mountaineering routes of the area lie here. Tremadoc was chosen after a great deal of thought, for reasons which will become obvious to the reader. A number of opinions were sought before this faintly revolutionary step was taken. But it was felt that routes of such merit technically are in the same category as those of the Three Cliffs, which are none the less worthy of description because very few climbers go on from them to the top of the Glyder.

Readers will allow for the interim nature of this guide, realising that gaps and even inconsistencies may need to be ironed out in the final product. The Club is indebted to the work of Dance and Eglinton in Cwm Silyn, but above all to the patience and efficiency of John Neill which have made this present production possible, as also to the fine leading of M. J. Harris on very many of the climbs. Neill has had the herculean task of assembling an infinity of increasing detail over a wide area\* and reducing it to order. To his skilful tenacity this very valuable contribution is due.

C. W. F. NOYCE.

## PREFACE

An interim guide clearly has to cover Cwm Silyn, the area where the climbing most resembles that on the finer crags of central Snowdonia. Cwm Silyn was dealt with in H. R. C. Carr's Snowdon guide of 1926, but many of the best climbs were made after that date, while Carr's guide is out of print and copies are hard to come by. The choice of material to put to best use the limited space remaining has been a difficult one ; there are several crags in the region for which a claim to the remaining space could be made, such as Llechog, Craig-y-Cwm-du, Craig-y-Bera, Moel Hebog, and the crags above Tan-y-Grisiau on the Moelwyns, particularly Craig Dyn. We are aware that our final decision, on Tremadoc, will not be universally popular, as climbing at Tremadoc has little connection with mountaineering ; however, there is to be found there a greater concentration of rock climbing of higher technical merit than anywhere else in the region, and many parties are deterred from visits there only by the present lack of information about it. Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc, too, are the two most repaying areas to visit when the weather is bad in central Snowdonia.

The grading of the climbs will in the Cwm Silyn section be found to correspond roughly to that in the Llanberis and Carneddau guides. The grading in the Tremadoc section is based throughout on the use of Vibram-soled boots and on dry conditions ; the use of nailed boots or rubbers makes little difference to the standard of most of the climbs, except that when the rocks are wet the climbs will often be found easiest in

\* In the case of Tremadoc he is the sole author.

nails. Because of the uniformity of the steepness and exposure of the harder pitches these characteristics have to some extent been disregarded in the grading, which has largely been decided on the purely technical difficulty of the climbs ; thus a climb graded as " Very Difficult " may well prove a more formidable undertaking than one of similar grade in central Snowdonia.

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## CRAIG CWM SILYN

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Cwm Silyn lies on the north side of the ridge of hills separating the Nantlle and Pennant valleys. It is lined impressively by a great arc of cliffs, nearly a mile in length, above the Llynau Cwm Silyn. The broad crest of the ridge is not far behind the top of the cliffs and its highest point (2,408 feet), marked by a great cairn (Carnedd Silyn), is about 200 yards from Craig Fawr.

The twin Llynau are separated only by a narrow neck of stony ground ; to the west of the inner one is a small pool cut off by an old moraine. The waters of the pool are tempting to swimmers as they are comparatively shallow and often much warmer than is usual in mountain lakes. On the north-east side is a low col in which are two marshy lakelets.

The cliffs are the finest in the Snowdon South and West area, towering impressively above the lakes when seen from the floor of the Cwm. They divide themselves into four sections, Trwyn-y-Graig, Craig Fawr, Craig-yr-Ogof, and a stretch of more broken cliffs which lines the west wing of the Cwm.

Craig Fawr is the highest of the crags ; from a viewpoint in the Cwm its top can be seen breaking the skyline. It is rather broken and hence gives less satisfying climbing than do the other two main crags, though the rock, as everywhere here, is rough and splendid for climbing so that excellent individual pitches may be found.

Trwyn-y-Graig is a small and rather inconspicuous crag standing above the two lakelets on the col to the east of the Cwm and below Carnedd Silyn ; the outline of the ridge connecting it with the summit plateau can be traced from the Cwm. Though the crag is not high and is in part somewhat broken up by heather ledges, the climbs on it are mostly quite worthy, Overhanging Chimneys in particular being one of the better climbs of hard V.D. standard in North Wales.

Craig-yr-Ogof is the finest of the crags both in appearance and in the climbing it offers. It stands immediately above the inner lake, well buttressed on each side, and with the front face (marked by its eponymous cave) defiant in its air of inaccessibility. On the right-hand side of the crag, facing the western cliffs and not clearly visible from the floor of the Cwm, is the Great Slab, around which most of the climbing lies. On this cliff are excellent climbs of all grades of difficulty, perhaps the best being Kirkus's Route, a splendid route of amiable V.S. standard, and fit to be classed with the most brilliant of Colin Kirkus's inventions. The rainfall in this area is less than half that in the central parts of Snowdonia ; at times when rain and mist shroud the crags at Ogwen or in the Llanberis valley a visit to Cwm Silyn may often be rewarded by finding dry, warm rock on Kirkus's Route and its neighbours.

Craig-yr-Ogof is separated by the Great Stone Shoot from the western cliffs, which curve round on the west arm of the Cwm.



## HISTORY

The first visit of a climbing party to Cwm Silyn was that of G. H. L. Mallory and R. Todhunter in 1912 in the course of their work on the Snowdon guide-book, when they ascended Four Pitch Gully in the western cliffs and made a preliminary exploration somewhere on the main crags. The next year they revisited the Cwm and climbed Sunset Rib, a worthy beginning to the climbing on Craig-yr-Ogof. After Todhunter's death on the Rosetta and Mallory's disappearance on Everest the work on the guide-book was completed by H. R. C. Carr, and in 1925 and 1926, accompanied by W. McNaught, E. Downes, G. A. Lister and D. Hewitt, Carr made most of the present routes. The ordinary route on the Great Slab, the most popular climb in the whole Snowdon South and West area, fell at the same time to D. R. Pye, W. R. Reade, C. A. Elliott and N. E. Odell. In 1926 Carr brought out the Snowdon guide-book, which has remained until today the only generally accessible source of information on these cliffs.

The leap forward in Welsh climbing in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties was not without its effect in Cwm Silyn; in 1931 Kirkus produced two worthy additions in his Right Hand Route (now called Kirkus's Route) and the Upper Slab Route, while J. M. Edwards added the easier Outside Edge Route. Since then the new climbs made have been of a lesser order, with the challenge of the direct ascent of the front of Craig-yr-Ogof bringing forth many strong parties to its attack, without success. Not until 1952 and with artificial aid did Ogof Direct finally fall, to A. J. J. Moulam and G. W. S. Pigott.

## THE APPROACHES

The Cwm can be reached by road. When coming from the Rhyd-ddu direction take the road to Llanllyfni branching off the main Pen-y-Groes road through some narrow slate cuttings between Nantlle and Tal-y-Sarn, and turn up the first road to the left past Tan-yr-Allt (at 481,521). This finishes after about a mile and a half at the farm of Bryn-Gwyn; cars can be left here, but there is a grass track to the fishermen's hut beside the outer of the two lakes in the Cwm. When coming from the Llanberis valley it is quickest to go via Caernarvon and Llanllyfni to Bryn-Gwyn.

Those coming on foot can take the Nantlle bus from Caernarvon or Pen-y-Groes, alight at Gwernor farm and strike up the hillside toward the cliffs. From Rhyd-ddu follow the Nantlle road to Simdde-Dylluan copper mine below Drws-y-Coed at the foot of the hill, and follow the road past Tal-y-Mignedd farm. There is an old track up the hillside beyond, which is easier to see at a distance and which leads into the valley of the Afon Craig Las. Near the head of this, bear up the slopes to the right and over into the Cwm by the col below Trwyn-y-Graig. A good walk for the return to Rhyd-ddu follows the ridge to Y Garn and gives good scrambling in places. The direction taken from Carnedd Silyn is north-east.

## TRWYN-Y-GRAIG

This small crag stands about 300 yards left of Craig Fawr, above the marshy lakelets on the low col to the north of the Cwm. The summit plateau, marked by a tower-like cairn, is about 250 feet above the top of the crag.

A broad heather terrace (the Heather Belt) runs across the crag about 50 feet up. There is a shallow gully (the Recess) in the centre just right of an overhanging wall of whitish rock. On the right near the top is a fine nose which gives the crag its name.

## DEEP CHIMNEY

150 feet. Difficult. A deep-cut chimney between vertical walls is conspicuous just above the Heather Belt on the extreme left of the crag. An unsatisfactory route, being a succession of avoidable pitches.

Start: Below the chimney at the foot of the crag in an alcove guarded by a detached column.

(1) 40 feet. The Heather Belt is reached by a crack and an easy rib.

(2) 50 feet. Climb to the foot of the chimney.

(3) 45 feet. The chimney lands one on the broad ridge which surmounts the crag.

150 feet of pleasant scrambling remain en route for the summit tower.

First Ascent: 12th April, 1925. H. R. C. Carr, W. K. McMillan, and W. McNaught.

## GARDENER'S GULLY

220 feet. Very Difficult. This route lies up the Recess, which Recess Route leaves near the bottom. A damp climb.

Start: From the Heather Belt at the bottom of the Recess, a moist enclosure below two damp chimneys.

(1) 70 feet. Straight up the gully, easily at first, then with two difficult chimneys to a belay.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse right to a rush-covered platform at the foot of a 12-foot crack.

(3) 60 feet. Climb the crack (leading to the top of the Closet) and bear left up two short cracks to the summit. Or enter the Closet by the side entrance from the rush-covered platform (as pitch 3 of Recess Route) and make an exit from the top to the top of the crack.

*Variation:*

(2) Traverse left to a belay at an isolated block below a 30-foot gully, grassy at the bottom.

(3) Climb either by the rib on the left of the gully, or by the rocks on the right and out at the top.

First Ascent: 5th June, 1949. R. G. Folkard and A. J. Hyde.

## THE RECESS ROUTE

200 feet. Difficult. This climb avoids the Recess and takes to its right wall. The pitch into the Closet on the original route is much harder than the rest of the climb and is given as a variation.

Start : Below the gully.

(1) 50 feet. Climb a little rib and cross the Heather Belt to the back of the Recess.

(2) 60 feet. After 20 feet of easy climbing take the right wall to a grassy ledge.

Traverse left to the rush covered platform of the second pitch of Gardener's Gully.

*Alternative—Severe*

Originally the route went up right from the grass ledge to a second ledge. The Closet was entered on the stomach after climbing a little crack in a steep wall.

(3) 25 feet. The Closet is entered by a side entrance. There is a stance above.

(4) 50 feet. Climb a short crack with wedged blocks, then trend right and finish up a slanting chimney to the tip of the Nose with scrambling to the top.

First Ascent : April, 1925. E. Downes, H. R. C. Carr, E. Hewitt, W. McNaught, and W. K. McMillan.

## TERROR INFIRMER

140 feet. Possibly Severe. Quite a good short route, rather strenuous and insecure. The climb lies between Overhanging Chimneys and Recess Route, on the right-hand corner of the crag.

Start : At the ledge at the foot of the main Overhanging Chimney pitch of Overhanging Chimneys, but round to the left from that route.

(1) 20 feet. Steep but quite simple chimney. Large bollard belay.

(2) 50 feet. Layback up the infirm flake in the chimney above, move left delicately along a ledge and climb a smooth V groove to another ledge.

(3) About 70 feet of simple climbing remain.

First Ascent : 13th April, 1952. A. J. J. Moulam, J. H. Longland, F. Mayo, J. L. Longland.

## OVERHANGING CHIMNEYS

300 feet. Very Difficult. A clean climb of great character and variety—the best on Trwyn-y-Graig.

Start : At the foot of the first tier of the crag, a little right of the Nose.

(1) 60 feet. Climb to a leaning flake (belay), then up the wall. Cross the Heather Belt to the foot of the wall beyond.

(2) 60 feet. A slab on small holds leads to a steep and delicate crack, Maurice's Crack, up the wall. A short traverse left to a hidden platform. Or, instead of climbing the crack, walk round

the corner on the left of the wall, climb a chimney, and traverse right (moderate) to the hidden ledge. Or walk round the wall on the right.

(3) 40 feet. The first overhanging chimney ; this is short but sweet and brings one to a broad ledge.

(4) 45 feet. A crack in a steep wall leads to some open face work.

(5) 30 feet. The second chimney runs up to a finely-placed ledge at the base of the Nose.

(6) 30 feet. The lower part of the Nose is climbed on its right side to a sloping stance on a vertical wall.

(7) 25 feet. The third chimney is reached by swinging out to the right.

(8) 20 feet. The top can be reached by a steep crack or an easy chimney.

First Ascent : 10th April, 1925. E. Downes, H. R. C. Carr and W. McNaught.

Maurice's Crack : 25th August, 1925. M. W. Guinness, M. S. Gotch, H. R. C. Carr, W. K. McMillan.

#### TOWER CHIMNEY

200 feet. Difficult. At the right end of the cliff ; a broken climb.

(1) 80 feet. Climb easy rocks near the right end of the cliff to the Heather Belt.

(2) 30 feet. A tall pillar is climbed laboriously by the cleft behind it.

(3) 100 feet of easy climbing follow to a chimney and crack near the top of Overhanging Chimney.

First Ascent : Not known.

#### THE SCARF

Very Difficult. A girdle of the crag above the Heather Belt. Excellent rock. Steep and delicate.

Start : At the extreme right of the crag, at the foot of Tower Chimney.

(1) Climb the chimney and step onto the vertical wall. A shallow chimney is ascended for 6 feet.

(2) Traverse left near the top of the wall and continue beneath a rock canopy to a corner and a capstan. Walk to a belay at the top of pitch (2) of Overhanging Chimneys.

(3) Follow that climb to the beginning of pitch (4) when by a short upward scramble to the left Recess Route is reached.

(4) Descend the right wall of the Recess and cross it to the other wall about 25 feet up.

(5) Climb a shallow chimney for 20 feet (running belay) to a stance. A big step up and a careful move left lead to splendid belays a few feet up.

(6) 40 feet. Round a sharp rib and the difficulties are over.

First Ascent : 28th August, 1928. E. Downes, H. R. C. Carr, E. D. Ritchie, and B. H. Bathurst.

## CRAIG FAWR

Craig Fawr is from all points of view the highest of the Silyn cliffs and its top stands out on the skyline when approaching the Cwm. The rock is good but broken by ledges and gullies and the difficulties can generally be turned. Rather like a Tryfan buttress.

## NON-ENGINEER'S CLIMB

350 feet. Difficult.

Start : 100 feet above and to the left of the start of Engineers' Climb.

(1) The rib is climbed in 150 feet to where it terminates in a prominent square-cut tower.

(2) Crawl round the corner below the tower to a nest of bollards (not above suspicion) and a large belay. A prominent crack on the left leads to the top of the tower.

(3) Up the easy section above, right then left.

(4) 50 feet of attractive climbing finishing with a wall.

First Ascent : Whitsun, 1931. R. D. Graham and G. W. Anson.

## ENGINEERS' CLIMB

400 feet. Difficult. Craig Fawr is bounded on the left by a grassy gully which slants up leftward from the foot of the rocks.

Start : About 150 feet up this gully where the rocks first rise to a wall on the right (cairn).

(1) 70 feet. Climb a short groove and onto the wall and continue to a broad ledge (which can easily be reached from the gully).

(2) 70 feet. Starting 15 feet from the gully end, a short crack near the edge about 30 feet up is reached after which a return right leads by a groove to the next grass ledge.

(3) 60 feet. Two towers can be seen above ; the left one immediately above. Climb into the corner on its right.

(4) 20 feet. The tower is climbed by a crack in its side.

(5) 70 feet. A short slab just to the right is followed by scrambling to the foot of the final rocks.

(6) 50 feet. Climb to the foot of a massive square-cut tower above.

(7) 60 feet. A cleft on the corner is reached by a short traverse right. Step onto the wall above the cleft round the corner ; up the wall by slanting cracks. From the top of the tower there remains about 200 feet of easy scrambling to the top of the cliff.

First Ascent : 10th April, 1925. E. Downes and G. A. Lister.

## BANKERS BUTTRESS

160 feet. Severe. This face lies on the west wall of Craig Fawr near the top of the gully left of L.M.H.

Start : A few yards right of a green terrace about 150 feet from the top of the gully.

(1) 25 feet. Step out left, then up to a belay.

(2) 40 feet. Up the wall ahead to a small ledge with a knob for a belay.

(3) 35 feet. Continue to a fault sloping right which leads to a narrow green ledge. Line belay.

(4) 15 feet. Move to the right and climb to a narrow slab leading up to the corner. The landing is on a large ledge with a thread belay in the corner.

(5) 35 feet. Straight up a difficult slab, then by an easier slab to the top.

First Ascent : May, 1939. J. E. Byrom and J. Lomas.

L.M.H.

400 feet. Moderately Difficult. A distinct rib lies to the right of Craig Fawr and is separated from it by a narrow grassy cleft. The rib affords a very pleasant climb with interesting stretches. It was first climbed by a party of the Oxford University Women's Mountaineering Club, presumably from Lady Margaret Hall.

### CRAIG-YR-OGOF

Craig-yr-Ogof is separated by a wide couloir from Craig Fawr. This fine crag is one of the most spectacular in Wales. It is marked by a large overhang which gives the crag its name, and under this is a grass and bilberry terrace which cuts the face in two. Its right wall is formed by the magnificent sweep of the Great Slab, unseen from the lake, and it is buttressed on the left by two ribs (on which lie Nirvana Wall and Heather Rib) separated by two gullies, the Green and Black Gullies. To the right is a narrow gully, Amphitheatre Gully, separating the ribs and grooves beside the Slab from the Amphitheatre Buttress. A spur of rock runs down to the lake :

#### THE INTRODUCTORY BUTTRESS

This spur has two or three pleasant bits of climbing. A conspicuous 50-foot glaciated slab about 100 feet above the Llyn offers interesting problems in balance with a 15-foot problem above. The Luncheon Stone on the way up gives stiff rubber problems.

#### HEATHER RIB

Moderate. Lies on the extreme left of the crag. It is hardly a rock climb ; much of it is heather rambling ; but it might be useful to a large party of inexperienced climbers on a cold day.

#### SUNSET RIB

250 feet. Difficult. The sharply defined rib between Heather Rib and Black Gully. An attractive natural route.

Start : At the toe of the rib.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the slabs.

(2) 20 feet. Over an awkward nose to reach a large heather ledge.

(3) 40 feet. Up the obvious line several feet along the ledge to the right to a sitting belay on the crest of the ridge.

(4) 35 feet. Up the rib—a delicate pitch.

(5) 100 feet. Pleasant climbing up the knife-edged ridge.

First Ascent : 1913. R. Todhunter, G. L. Keynes and R. Muhlberg.

*Variation :*

Pitch (3) has been climbed direct to the niche in the ridge (severe).

**BLACK GULLY**

160 feet. Hard Difficult. The dark cleft between Sunset Rib and Nirvana Wall gives a good, though short, climb.

Start : At the foot of the gully.

(1) 15 feet. A short pitch, climbed by the groove or the wall on its right.

(2) 35 feet. Into the cave below the chimney.

(3) 40 feet. A fine narrow cleft ; the exit loose and grassy.

(4) 25 feet. The gully divides for a short way and may be climbed on either side, the right branch being the easier.

(5) 40 feet. A grassy groove climbed straight up, with another loose finish.

First Ascent : 6th September, 1933. G. G. Cruikshank.

**NIRVANA WALL**

280 feet. Difficult. This route is on the buttress, to the right of Black Gully, which is divided from the main cliff by Green Gully. Both this climb and Sunset Rib finish near the start of Artist's Climb, and by following with the latter route nearly 500 feet of varied climbing can be enjoyed.

Start : At the foot of the buttress.

(1) 80 feet. Heather and slabs to a sloping crack in the middle of the face.

(2) 40 feet. On the left of a pillar above, a 12-foot mantelshelf problem leads to a grass ledge by which Black Gully can be reached, above the cave.

(3) 30 feet. Up the steep wall to the right over an insecurely wedged block to a stance and belay under an overhang.

(4) 50 feet. Climb the overhang by a V-shaped recess. There is a narrow ledge above and 20 feet beyond this is a broad bilberry terrace.

(5) 40 feet. The final pitch is taken on the right side. 80 feet of scrambling and Artist's Climb is reached.

First Ascent : 22nd August, 1925. H. R. C. Carr and W. K. McMillan.

**ARTIST'S CLIMB**

200 feet. Moderately Difficult. The two buttresses below finish on a sloping terrace 200 feet from the summit rocks. The Artist's Climb runs from this terrace up the left flank and onto the backbone of the main crag.

Start : A few yards right of the top of Sunset Rib.

(1) 55 feet. Climb the crack behind a pinnacle in a sheltered bay (20 feet) and on over easy rocks to a V-shaped chimney.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the chimney.

(3) 100 feet. Three charming pitches to the summit.

First Ascent: April, 1925. H. R. C. Carr and D. Hewitt.

#### THE OGOF DIRECT

380 feet. Very Severe (Hard). The challenge of this awe-inspiring face was taken up by many before the successful ascent. Most of those who failed finished up the upper part of Green Gully. Eight pitons were used on the first ascent and several are essential. At least one *étrier* has been found useful.

Two routes to the bilberry terrace below the cave are described, both Very Difficult.

##### (a) *Direct Approach*

Above Introductory Buttress a heather ledge runs across the ridge up to the Ogof.

Start: At a small crack slightly left of a nose about 20 feet up.

(1) 25 feet. Up a steep wall to a spike diagonally left to a ledge left of the nose. Belay to the left.

(2) 80 feet. On to the nose and up to a corner. 20 feet above a flake belay can be used.

(3) 30 feet. On to the edge again and up to the terrace.

##### (b) *Oblique Approach*

Start: Below the Ogof at a rib consisting of two large leaning blocks.

(1A) 70 feet. Up the rib to where it dies out in an outcrop of loose shaley rock. Thread belay.

(2A) 70 feet. Traverse 20 feet left across a shallow gully to a quartz platform. Climb up, first by a groove, then moving right on to slabs, to the terrace.

The main face is started to the left of the cave, at the foot of a steep groove. No good belay (a piton belay can be used).

(4) 75 feet. Climb the groove to a ledge and a piton. A difficult mantelshelf follows onto a sloping ledge on the right. A diagonal line steeply up to the right (piton at 10 feet) leads with consecutive hard moves to another large grass ledge beneath the second overhang. Belays.

(5) 50 feet. Move right and pull up and across under the overhang. A long step right and pleasant slabs lead to a stance at the level of the chimney on the Great Slab ordinary route.

(6) 120 feet. The rest is simple—straight up to the summit ridge with belays on the way.

First Ascent: 5th July, 1952. A. J. J. Moulam and G. W. S. Pigott, and W. Bowman.



## THE GREAT SLAB

This magnificent sheet of rock sweeps 400 feet up the right side of Craig-yr-Ogof, the whole height of the cliff. Upper Slab is superimposed on the top right corner. The rock is at a steep angle but is clean and sound. All the routes have great merit.

## THE ORDINARY ROUTE

350 feet. Difficult. A fine route following the line of weakness up the Slab. Numerous belays. Goes well in all weathers.

Start : At the foot of the Slab, about 40 feet from the right corner.

(1) 20 feet. Straight up.

(2) 100 feet. As ascending traverse left is made along ledges and up short chimneys and slabs.

(3) 100 feet. *Either* (a) Continue in the same line to a large grass ledge above the overhanging nose of the cliff (shared with Outside Edge Route). The other alternative is rejoined by way of a 25-foot open chimney just right of a kennel-sized cave, *or* (b) Move more steeply up the slab to the foot of a little slab.

(4) 170 feet. The slab is climbed (12 feet) and after some easy climbing up the ridge the rope can be taken off.

First Ascent : 4th April, 1926. D. R. Pye, W. R. Reade, C. A. Elliott, and N. E. Odell.

*Variation :*

Very Difficult. From the foot of the little slab near the top of the climb, follow for a few feet the traverse which starts Direct Route, to a steep crack up the cliff.

100 feet. The crack is climbed straight up, crossing to the left when the angle eases. A fine exposed pitch.

First Ascent : 8th September, 1935. J. B. Joyce.

## OUTSIDE EDGE ROUTE

250 feet. Very Difficult. An attractive route, steep, clean and exposed ; it keeps left of the Ordinary Route. Belays and stances are small but good. Pitches 4 and 5 are very seldom climbed, and hardly scratched, but are well worth doing.

Start : 20 feet right of the extreme left edge of the Slab, and immediately below a large semi-detached block.

(1) 60 feet. Take a groove tending right to just below the block which is climbed by its right edge. The top of the block can also be reached by its left edge, starting by the corner of the Slab. The belay is on a ledge 8 feet higher.

(2) 40 feet. Escape up the left-hand wall round an awkward bulge. Continue up and left, keeping near the edge, to a rock stance and belay.

(3) 40 feet. Straight up near the edge to the grass ledge of the lower variation of the Ordinary Route.

(4) 50 feet. 15 steps left of the chimney taken on the Ordinary Route up a short grass spit is a belay. Cross the first rib to the

next on the left and climb up to a second grass ledge. Belay 10 feet up in the middle of the ledge.

(5) 60 feet. Traverse up from right to left to the foot of a grassy crack.

Follow the crack and its continuation finishing on the left edge and up steep rocks. Here the climbing becomes easier where the Artist's Climb is joined.

First Ascent: 14th July, 1931. J. M. Edwards and C. H. S. R. Palmer.

#### DIRECT ROUTE

250 feet. Very Difficult. This route crosses the upper part of the Slab from the Ordinary Route to finish on the Upper Slab.

Start: From the point where the two variations of the Ordinary Route reunite, just below the final slab.

(1) 30 feet. Follow the obvious traverse to the right to a large belay.

(2) 45 feet. Climb two diagonal grooves taking to the upper one. Belay under a small overhang marked with black lichen.

(3) 30 feet. A move up and to the left is followed by a return to a grass ledge on the right.

(4) 100 feet. Two stretches of a grass groove divided by a 6-foot corner are followed to a heather pulpit shared with Upper Slab Route. (From here the top can be reached by climbing the extreme right corner of the Great Slab.)

(5) 45 feet. Across a small slab to the right and the climb is finished nearly straight up on good rock.

First Ascent: 1927.

#### CENTRAL ROUTE

Very Severe. 50 feet above the ground, on the Ordinary Route, two grassy breaks point off up to the right, parallel and about 50 feet apart from each other. The lower break is reached and used by Kirkus's Route. The Central Route uses the upper break. Perhaps the best climb on the Slab.

Start: As for Ordinary Route.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the Ordinary Route for 50 feet, and when the Upper Break is reached, turn into it.

(2) 70 feet. Continue up the break for say 30 feet until it steepens. Small spike runner. Continuing up the break would lead to Kirkus's Route, so instead traverse left above the line of small overhangs, and then diagonally up left until a ledge is reached (delicate, medium very severe).

(3) 60 feet. Directly above, a big line of overhangs crossing the slab, going from bottom right to top left. Climb straight up for 30 feet, and then traverse up and left below the line of overhangs until it is possible to cross it at an obvious place. Good ledge.

(4) Go up to a large hold on the left above the overhang, and from it climb straight up a slab, on minute holds. Straight on obviously to the top.

First Ascent: 13th April, 1952. G. C. Band, E. A. Wrangham.

The top pitch may in part coincide with McPhee's finish to Kirkus's Route.

It is rumoured that C. Preston made a route hereabouts, *c.* 1945.

#### KIRKUS'S ROUTE

310 feet. Very Severe. (Also known as the Right-Hand Route.) Near the water-worn groove by which the Great Slab is bounded on the right three grass ledges can be seen, roughly dividing the height into four. The highest, followed by the Direct Route, runs down from the grassy finish of the groove, the middle one is detached, and the lowest is at the top of a staircase from the left. The route passes about 20 feet right of the lowest and touches the other two. The whole climb is exposed and sensational—a very fine route. The stances and holds are small but adequate and the rock is clean and sound.

Start: 15 feet from the right corner of the slab.

(1) 70 feet. A short wet slab with an overhang at the top is followed by a 15-foot leftward traverse, when some delicate climbing enables a slanting crack above to be gained. A right-hand branch is followed and a step around the corner on the right lands the climber in a sentry-box with a good belay.

The left-hand end of the 15-foot traverse is often reached from pitch 1 of the Ordinary Route, but the above method is to be preferred.

(2) 60 feet. The chimney is climbed to some large blocks on the left, at the level of the lowest of the grass ledges. A step across to a groove on the left is followed by some delicate climbing bearing right. A steep staircase leads to a little stance on the left—spike belay.

(3) 20 feet. From the top of the belay, a long step across a groove and slab on the left lead to the middle grass ledge.

(4) 70 feet. From just right of the belay bear left to a smooth-looking slab surmounted by a small overhang above which is the lowest part of the upper grass ledge.

(5) 50 feet. The arête on the left of the roof ahead was climbed with some difficulty by the second man on the first ascent, but the route traverses right onto mossy rock near the corner. This point may also be reached direct up the grass, avoiding the traverse right, and an escape from it to the top up grass may easily be made, but these frequently used soft options are much inferior to the proper route. A high traverse returns across two grassy grooves and continues, after a downward step, across a fearsome looking wall. However, good holds lead up and left to a small stance with a spike belay.

(6) 40 feet. A diagonal crack to the right is followed to an intriguing corner, where a pleasing little crack leads to the top of the crag. There is a shorter and easier alternative to the left.

First Ascent : 31st May, 1931. C. F. Kirkus and G. G. Macphee.  
Variation start (by Ordinary Route): 2nd August, 1931. J. M. Edwards, G. H. D. Edwards.

#### THE UPPER SLAB

370 feet. Severe. The Upper Slab lies superimposed on the top corner of the main Slab and is separated from it by a continuous little overhanging wall. The route reaches the slab by way of the buttresses on the right. This is a fine and varied route and the Upper Slab itself is a wonderful pitch, though not the hardest.

Start : At the foot of a grassy groove about 40 feet from the Great Slab, and immediately right of a conspicuous double overhang.

(1) 30 feet. The groove is difficult to start but leads to a sentry-box (belay small).

(2) 40 feet. The left wall widens into a mossy slab. Ascend this until the upper part of the groove can be climbed to a large grass ledge.

(3) 60 feet. Climb a damp corner for 20 feet. Move left a little to a large block and climb the slab above to an excavated stance below an overhang.

(4) 60 feet. Traverse left then follow the narrowing slab to a grass terrace with a belay on the left.

(5) 50 feet. Descend a grassy rake to the left to a large grassy recess where the groove below the Upper Slab is wider and less steep (belay on a flaky plate). Up the groove a little, then kicking up steep grass to the left the irresolute green ledge above is reached. Belay up to the right.

(6) 100 feet. Descend a little to a narrow ledge on the slab above the overhang. Traverse out to near the edge then pick a way up to the big grass saddle, shared as a stance with the Direct Route. An exposed pitch.

(7) 40 feet (hard). Follow the steep mossy corner of the arête above and to the left for about 25 feet then step out on to the arête on the right and finish to the ridge.

First Ascent : 14th July, 1931. C. F. Kirkus, A. B. Hargreaves and A. W. Bridge.

#### RIB AND TOWER

350 feet. Difficult. The route goes up the prominent buttress of rock immediately right of the Great Slab. It suffers from the disadvantage that it is continually pushed off the interesting part of the cliff.

Start : Up the central one of three parallel chimneys to the right of the start of Upper Slab.

(1) Up the chimney (25 feet) and then up the rib on the right on adequate holds to a grass platform.

(2) Up the wide chimney above to a second platform.

(3) Follow the rib to the right of this platform to a grassy terrace. The situations attained are quite airy, the steep rock wall leaning down into Amphitheatre Gully on the right.

(4) The grassy terrace is followed for about 90 feet to two conspicuous ribs rising to the base of the final tower.

(5) The right rib is climbed to the foot of the tower.

(6) Up steep rocks (avoidable on the left) to the summit.

First Ascent : 22nd July, 1936. J. E. Q. Barford and R. B. Kemball-Cook.

To the right of the Great Slab, and separated from it by a narrow gully, Amphitheatre Gully, is Amphitheatre Buttress. The sharp rib on the left of Amphitheatre Gully is Fay Cee Rib.

#### FAY CEE RIB

400 feet. Difficult. The first section is clean and distinct but beyond that the route is indefinite and the climber takes his own line.

(1) From the toe of the rib, the arête is climbed in about 200 feet to a knife-edged finish.

(2) The slab above is avoided on the right.

First Ascent : 8th July, 1945. B. Wright.

#### AMPHITHEATRE BUTTRESS

400 feet. Difficult. The route up the buttress keeps up its left side near Amphitheatre Gully. For the first 150 feet the rocks are fairly steep, then the buttress narrows and a knife-edged arête provides some interest. There is a fair amount of loose rock.

First Ascent : April, 1925. M. G. Bradley and B. F. K. O'Malley.

#### THE GREAT STONE SHOOT

On the right of Amphitheatre Buttress and dividing it from the Western Cliffs is the Great Stone Shoot. This is a broad couloir, the right-hand part of which is scree strewn and provides a quick and easy descent. In descending, start from the west side of the wire fence at the top of the gully and keep true left.

The left-hand part of the Stone Shoot (looking from below) is a gully in its own right. On the left, about 250 feet below the top of this gully, is a steep wall on the side of Amphitheatre Buttress. A short chimney leads to a grass platform at the foot of the wall.

#### JERICHO

190 feet. Difficult. A climb which avoids the steep wall. Poor rock.

Start : In the gully at the foot of the chimney.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the chimney. There is a belay to the left.

(2) 100 feet. Return below the wall and slant up right to a belay on top of a pyramid of blocks.

(3) 60 feet. Climb to a ledge above, then move round the corner to the right and ascend consecutive cracks to the top.

First Ascent : 4th June, 1949. R. G. Folkard and P. Wilkinson.

## WESTERN CLIFFS

The Western Cliffs of Cwm Silyn sweep round from the Great Stone Shoot and contain four well-marked gullies.

## FOUR PITCH GULLY

320 feet. Difficult. The left-most of the four gullies in the west wall of the Cwm. It is directly opposite the Great Slab, from which it is a conspicuous feature, but it is almost invisible from the Cwm. There is a lot of loose scree in the bed of the gully.

Start : Below the gully, a little right of its line of descent.

(1) 50 feet. Up a little chimney and above a block, then up a steep grass ledge to a belay on the left wall.

(2) 90 feet. A scree scramble to the impressive cave.

(3) 90 feet. A window high up makes a tight squeeze. The left wall is followed by more scrambling to a belay below a loose wall.

(4) 80 feet. After the wall, broken ground leads to the final steep and vegetated wall.

First Ascent : September, 1912. R. Todhunter and G. H. L. Mallory.

## LITTLE KITCHEN

The next gully to the right of Four Pitch Gully and the left one of the two obvious from the Cwm. It slants leftward into the cliff from the apex of a scree shoot and divides into two about a third of the way up. The left branch is grassy with an easy 15-foot wall not far up. It comes out near the top of Four Pitch Gully and affords an easy route for descent. The right branch has a pitch of piled boulders which are climbed over, round, and behind. Some are loose.

The earliest recorded ascent of the right-hand branch was by J. M. Edwards on 19th April, 1935 (probably done before).

## SWEEP WALL

Lies up the arête to the left of Bedrock Gully. An initial flat tower is climbed easily up its grassy left-hand edge. At the top a short wall is ascended, a little to the right. The rest is scrambling.

First Ascent : 26th March, 1933. J. M. Edwards.

## BEDROCK GULLY

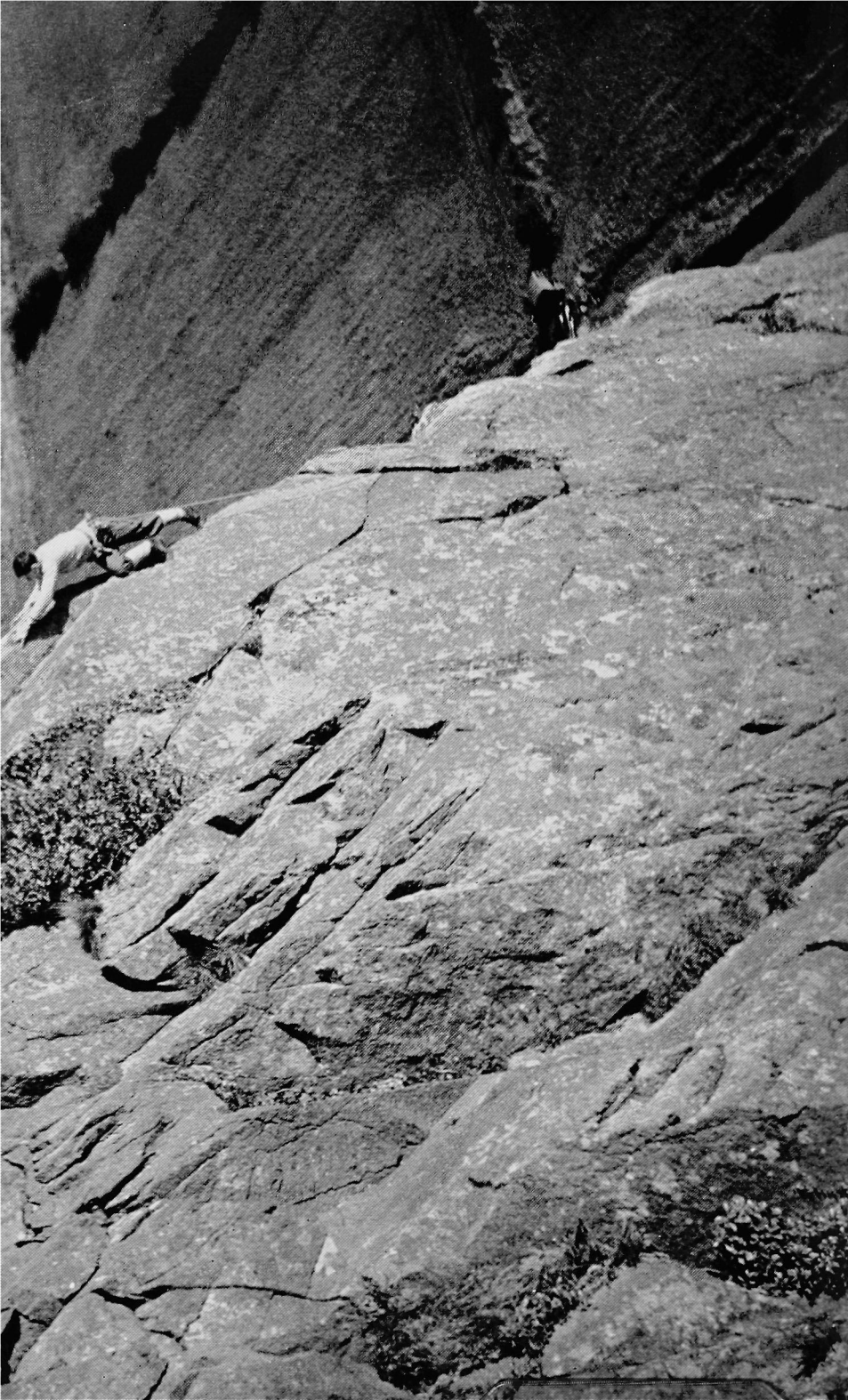
Very Difficult. A very conspicuous dark gully forming a narrow V, standing down to the right about 200 feet from Little Kitchen, and flanked by well-marked buttresses on each side.

The route lies up the main (right-hand) cleft. It is wet and contains much loose stuff, but gets steadily steeper and harder, and is quite interesting. Belays are not frequent.

First Ascent : 26th March, 1933. J. M. Edwards.

The left-hand fork, starting a few hundred feet up, looks as if it might go but there is no record of an ascent.







## COLIN'S GULLY

A rather less distinct gully towards the right-hand end of the cliff. The gully proper starts from a heather terrace above a 30-foot wall streaked with wet, which is ascended first.

Start : Where the wall is lowest, just left of a small dark cave.

- (1) 60 feet. Reach the terrace by a diagonal traverse above the cave. There is no belay but stances can be found. Walk 100 feet right, to the start of the gully.
- (2) 60 feet. Easy climbing to the bottom of a wet groove.
- (3) 45 feet. Up the groove, loose at the top.
- (4) 40 feet. Traverse 15 feet right and climb a small bulging slab.

The serious climbing is now over, the rest of the gully giving scrambling only.

First Ascent : 7th June, 1951. C. B. Wilson, E. A. Wrangham, J. F. Adams, A. Wailes-Fairbairn.

The routes described do not exhaust the possibilities of the western cliffs ; indeed, they may be scrambled over in many places.

## TREMADOC ROCKS

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Tremadoc Rocks lie to the north of the roads leading into Tremadoc Village from the east and west. They are disposed in two lines. The first line, east of Tremadoc, extends from Portreuddyn Castle to above Tan-yr-Allt ; it is in two sections, the first, Craig Bwlch-y-Moch, to the east of Bwlch-y-Moch farm, separated by Bwlch-y-Moch itself from the second, Craig Pant-Ifan, to the west. The second line, yr Allt-Wen, starts behind Tremadoc Village and extends to beyond Penmorfa ; it also is in two sections, Craig-y-Dref above Tremadoc Village and another section further west, for which the name Craig-y-Gesail may be proper.

The foot of the crags is only a few feet above sea-level at the east end, but the strata lie at a slight angle to the horizontal, the foot rising to several hundred feet above sea-level at the west end. The lines of crags also recede from the roads as one goes from east to west. The main rock is a crystal-based dolerite, lying on a substratum of shale. Due to the inclination of the strata, more shale is exposed under the dolerite at the west end than at the east. The dolerite is an excellent climbing rock, firm and rough, though some holds are not above suspicion—the number of these is dwindling as the climbs become more used, but at present some care is still necessary in handling the holds on certain sections of some of the climbs. The shale is fissile, sometimes being fairly solid and often extremely shaky. Great care is needed in dealing with it. On the more westerly climbs, where the routes tend to start on shale, the junction between the dolerite and the shale usually forms a line of overhangs which may be difficult to pass.

CHRISTMAS CURRY, CRAIG  
BWLCH-Y-MOCH—MICAHA FINISH

*D. Thomas*

This affords a source of instability of the dolerite and there is some tendency for large blocks immediately above the junction to break away. A major incident of this sort occurred during the Second World War, when many tons of rock broke away from the buttress to the right of Scratch, huge blocks sweeping right down the hillside through the trees to the road and even across it into the fields on the other side.

Though the true mountain atmosphere is almost wholly absent, climbing at Tremadoc has its own special attractions. The rainfall is even lower than in Cwm Silyn—indeed, rain seems rather a rare event there—and the rocks face south, so that they receive a great deal of sunshine, while their low level reduces the amount of wind experienced. These favourable climatic conditions induce an unusual exuberance of fauna and flora. The normal approach to the climbs is over bouldery slopes clad in dense wood and thickets of thorn, rich in flowers and infested with adders and other beasts. The lower parts of the rocks are mostly concealed by the trees and are often heavily overgrown with brambles and creepers, and populated with spiders and woodlice. Birds too are plentiful, the most noticeable being wood pigeons and ravens. The upper parts of the cliffs are however mostly free from vegetation and are very steep, so that on emerging from the lower jungles one finishes up splendid last pitches of beautiful clean rock, very exposed and sensational but not excessively difficult. The views from these last pitches are fine, extending over the Traeth Mawr to the Moelwyns, Arenig and the Rhinogs and south along the coast past Harlech. From the eastern cliffs the foreground is marred by Portmadoc; this is not true of the western cliffs where because of the higher position the views are more extensive, an added element being the coast stretching away from Criccieth towards the tip of the Lleyn peninsula.

When one tires of climbing, Black Rock Sands (Craig Ddu), which give perhaps the finest sea bathing in North Wales, are within easy reach.

## HISTORY

The history of the cliffs is brief. The Hound's Head Pinnacle was probably ascended some years ago by its short side. The first known visit by a climbing party was in 1935 by J. M. Edwards; some climbing was attempted but nothing was finished. The first climb to be completed was the Hound's Head Buttress, by A. J. J. Moulam and G. J. Sutton in 1951. In the next few months several climbs were made on Craig Bwlch-y-Moch, Craig Pant-Ifan and Craig-y-Dref, the chief instigators being A. J. J. Moulam, P. Vaughan and D. Thomas. Of the climbs made, Shadrach, Valerie's Rib, Creag Dhu Wall, Belshazzar and Rienetta, the first two and the last, together with the Hound's Head Buttress, have since become fairly well known and are the most frequently climbed routes on the cliffs. The first visit to Craig-y-Gesail by a climbing party was made by D. Thomas and M. J. Ridges on 12th April, 1953, when several routes were climbed but top

ropes were used for parts of all. Since December, 1953, many more parties have visited the crags and the number of climbs has been more than trebled. Most of the obvious lines have now been taken, though there is still scope for exploration.

### APPROACHES AND DESCENTS

The three eastern cliffs are immediately accessible from the road. For Craig-y-Gesail turn off the main road at Penmorfa into the by-road leading to Carreg-frech ; cars may be left just before Ty'n-y-Grisiau, at the point where the track of the old mineral railway to the mines and quarries in Pennant crosses the road, and the crags reached across the fields, direct, or a path leading to the farm of Tyddyn-dicwm-isaf beneath the crag may be used. The best descent from the east end of Craig Bwlch-y-Moch is on the north side to a disused quarry and the pig farm of Portreuddyn ; from the west end a faint track may be used which descends steeply through the trees from Bwlch-y-Moch to the farm of the same name. This path is also useful for the east end of Craig Pant-Ifan. From the middle part of this crag descend to the gap behind the Hound's Head Pinnacle then down the Hound's Head Gully. From the west end use a path, marked by stone steps and a railing at the top, which descends the valley from Llyn Cwm-bach and strikes the road going west from Tan-yr-Allt.

### CRAIG BWLCH-Y-MOCH

This crag starts at the east end as a low line of rocks behind Portreuddyn Castle at the bend in the road. The first landmark is a big boulder by the roadside, opposite a stile on the south side of the road leading to a footpath on a dike through the fields. The crags here are still quite low. Some yards farther on is the first big buttress, with a large expanse of slabs at an easy angle and intersected by heather ledges, the Far East Slabs, on its left flank. It is separated by a tree-choked gully, Rienetta Gully, from another large buttress, Belshazzar Buttress, opposite the first gateway on the south side of the road after the bend, with stone-built gateposts. This buttress starts with two wings which converge to join near the top. To the left is another tree-choked gully, Belshazzar Gully, then a series of smaller and more overgrown buttresses before the next main one, Shadrach Buttress. This is opposite the second gateway on the other side of the road, with cemented gateposts. The buttress has a grassy rake of broken ground slanting up from left to right to end in overhangs near the top. To the left of the rake the face is steep and slabby, lined by a continuous overhanging cornice near the top. A deep overhung gully, Shadrach Gully, separates this from Milestone and Micah Buttresses, the next two main buttresses, above the first milestone from Tremadoc. The left flank of Milestone Buttress is broad and slabby near the top ; it is separated by minor ribs from Micah Buttress, marked by a prominent trapezoidal overhang and a thin flake-pinnacle on its crest. Then comes Milestone Gully, filled with trees, and Dotheboys Buttress, heavily overgrown

with creepers, before the crag ends with Valerie's Rib, a clean rib starting just above Bwlch-y-Moch farm.

#### FAR EAST SLABS

About 150 feet. Moderate. Can be ascended almost anywhere by moderate scrambling with varying trust in the adherence of the grass and heather tufts filling the cracks. The angle steepens slightly near the top

Descended : 23rd July, 1951, by P. Vaughan and K. U. Ingold.

#### RIENETTA GULLY

Easy. Trees and vegetation with a little easy scrambling. Can be used for descent.

#### RIENETTA

200 feet. Hard Severe. Starts up the right wing of Belshazzar Buttress, moves over into the corner between the converging wings and finishes up this. An interesting climb with a superb last pitch.

Start : The buttress wing comes down to within a few feet of the road.

Start at its foot, at a chimney-corner rather on the right.

(1) 40 feet. Up the cracked chimney to the recess at the back. Make an exit on the left to a tree.

(2) 80 feet. Easy slabs, bearing up slightly right to a gnarled oak and a holly.

(3) 30 feet. Crux (hard in nails). Make a difficult mantelshelf up left onto a grassy ledge, with aid from a sling round the (re-inserted) chockstone. Then further left to a good ledge with two trees, below the final corner.

(4) 45 feet. Start up the corner, step round into the left-hand groove and finish up this. Steep, good holds.

Scrambling beyond.

For alternative finish see Belshazzar.

First Ascent : 8th March, 1952. A. J. J. Moulam, D. Thomas.

#### BELSHAZZAR

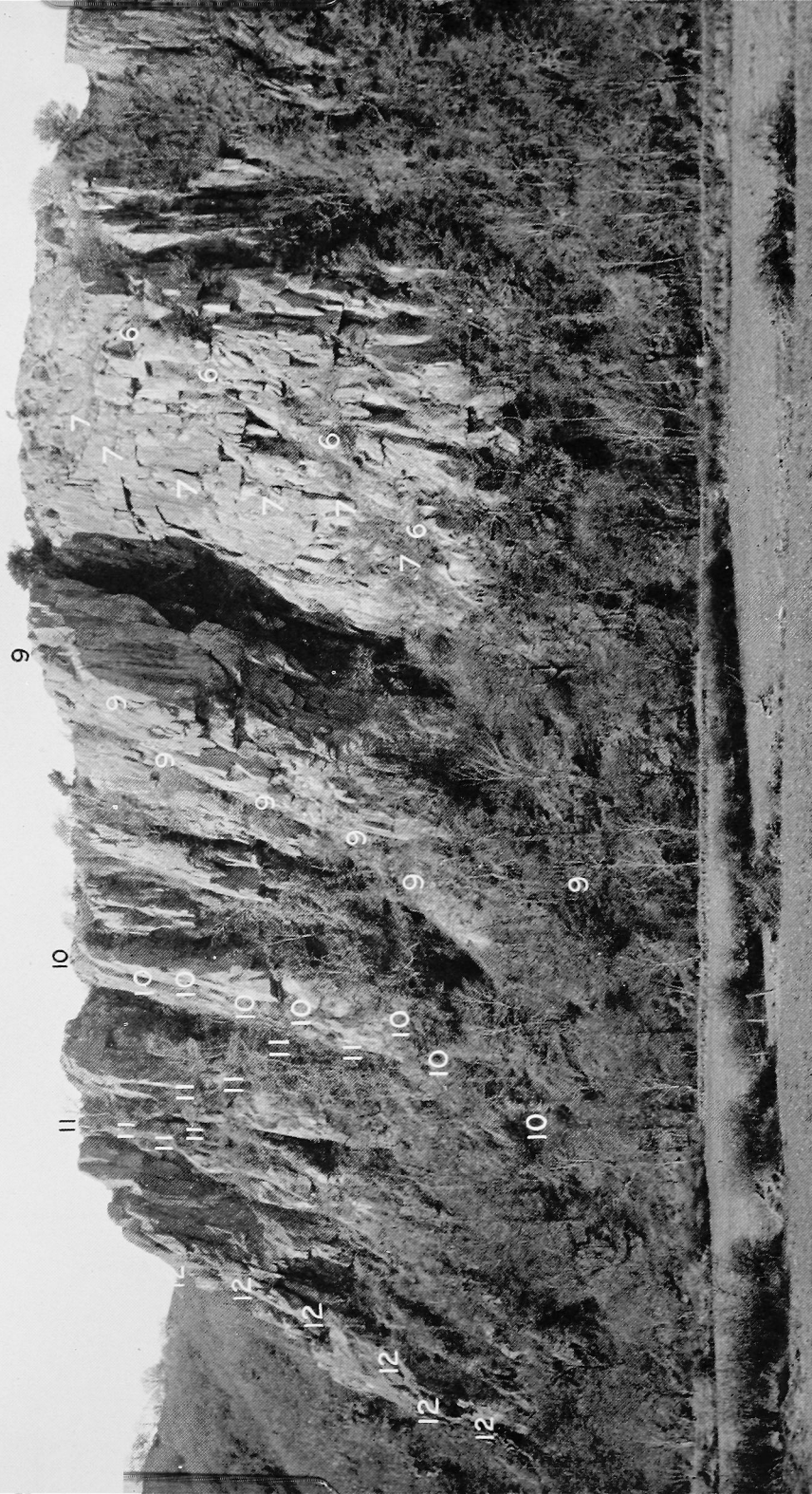
200 feet. Very Severe. Takes a zig-zag course up the left wing of the buttress and its right wall to reach the last pitch of Rienetta. An artificial climb, deliberately seeking difficulty ; but the pitches thus found are of considerable technical interest.

Start : At the foot of the crack in the middle of the wall forming the base of the left-hand wing, reached with difficulty through the brambles.

(1) 30 feet. Work up the crack and pull out over the bulge above with the aid of tree branches (care needed, but safer than it seems). Tree belay.

(2) 40 feet. Traverse right for 15 feet until the overhang above can be penetrated by a weakness leading to a grass ledge. Walk up left to rock belay.

(3) 40 feet. Return to the right-hand end of the ledge, move round to the right of the crest with difficulty, and climb the corner right of the crest for 30 feet to a belay on the crest.





(4) 45 feet. Step round to the right onto the right-hand face of the wing, and traverse more or less at this level to the stance at the top of pitch (3) of Rienetta.

(5) 45 feet. Either the last pitch of Rienetta, or, harder, climb the wall right of the cracks to a point 15 feet right of the top of the corner.

First Ascent : 23rd July, 1951. P. Vaughan, K. U. Ingold.

#### TEKEL

175 feet. Very Difficult. Takes an easier line up the left-hand wing. Somewhat less artificial than Belshazzar, but easy ground always lies just to the left ; not very worthy.

Start : As for Belshazzar.

(1) 30 feet. Up left to the edge of the wall, and so up the right-hand edge of the slabs above the wall to the trees of Belshazzar.

(2) 40 feet. Turn the wall above on the left ; higher up swing onto a rib leading on the right to a grass ledge and belay (stance after pitch (2), Belshazzar).

(3) 40 feet. Work up diagonally right on grass ledges to a corner at the right-hand end of the wall above, and up this to stance after pitch (3), Belshazzar.

(4) 30 feet. Continue up the line of the buttress by a little corner.

(5) 20 feet. Easy climbing then 15 feet of scrambling to the top.

First Ascent : 7th August, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

#### YGDRASSL

230 feet. Just Very Severe. Follows the diagonal rake up Shadrach Buttress and breaks through the overhang above. Not a very worthwhile climb ; except for the break through the overhangs the standard is about Difficult.

(1) 160 feet. Ascend the rake on grass and ledges to an oak tree near its end.

(2) 20 feet. Up the obvious crack behind the tree to the skyline.

(3) 50 feet. An easy slab leads to the top.

First Ascent : 5th September, 1953. D. R. Fisher, E. A. Wrangham ; A. Tissières, the Hon. R. R. E. Chorley.

#### SHADRACH

180 feet. Very Severe. Takes a line up the middle of the steep left-hand face of Shadrach Buttress. An excellent and varied climb on exceptionally steep rock.

Start : Penetrate 200-300 feet through the jungle towards Shadrach Gully, then traverse right to a good tree beneath a curving chimney at the bottom of the face proper.

(1) 60 feet. Climb up to the chimney and squirm up inside it to a block belay at the top. Large men must climb outside the chimney—strenuous. Or work up to the left of the overhang on the left and traverse right to the belay.

(2) 50 feet. Move up left and over a mantelshelf, then follow steep slabs to a rotten oak and a huge perched block. Piton belay.

(3) 70 feet. Follow the line of weakness through the overhangs directly above, finishing out on the right. Or go up to the right of the above line, after stepping off the block.

First Ascent : 13th May, 1951. A. J. J. Moulam, G. W. S. Pigott, D. Thomas.

Pitch (1) left-hand route : 4th April, 1953. M. J. Harris, D. Thomas, C. W. Brasher.

Pitch (3) right-hand route : 23rd July, 1951. P. Vaughan (on top rope).

#### HAM ROUTE

An unsatisfactory alternative to Shadrach.

After the first pitch of Shadrach take an easy line over vegetation on the left-hand side of the buttress. Finish up a 30-foot crack above a cluster of trees, overhanging and hard, with a small sentry-box below the top and a sapling to assist progress.

First Ascent : 5th September, 1951. J. N. Mather, J. B. Lawton, M. Hartley.

#### HAIL BEBE

220 feet. Hard Very Difficult. Takes the easiest line up Milestone Buttress, over much vegetation on the left-hand side of the buttress in the lower part then moving right onto better things above.

Start : At a rickety-looking corner just left of steep ivy-covered slabs, rather on the right beneath the steep face.

(1) 25 feet. Up the twin trees and land on a third. Go behind it.

(2) 45 feet. Traverse left, on grass then rock round to a large field ; up to trees.

(3) 40 feet. Continue up, on grass at first, then rock in the middle of the face. A difficult mantelshelf leads to an unsatisfactory crack and another tree.

(4) 50 feet. The short crack above lands on very steep grass. Up to another tree.

(5) 45 feet. A very good pitch. Gain the slab on the right and go up until a foot-traverse leads right, and a step or two (exposed) up to a large platform.

(6) 15 feet. Up the crack in the little upper tier.

First Ascent : 28th March, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam and J. I. Disley.

#### CHRISTMAS CURRY

250 feet. Very Difficult (Severe by Micah Variations). On Micah Buttress. Useful because by the ordinary finish it is easier than most Tremadoc routes. Micah Finish is harder and an excellent pitch, much the best on the climb.

Start : At the foot of the buttress, at an ivy chimney rather on the right.



(1) 40 feet. The chimney, more awkward than difficult, to a tree.

(2) 90 feet. Gain the buttress on the left. The steep wall above has an awkward move at 20 feet (avoidable by fighting with brambles on the right) and another higher up leading into a recess with heather and loose blocks. Up the back right wall onto the slab above, left into a crack and pull over to the left onto a large ledge (with trees) with the aid of a large block.

*Variation—Micah Start :*

Start rather on the left about 20 feet higher than the ordinary start, at a tree and block belay at the foot of the slabs on the left-hand side of the buttress, reached from Milestone Gully.

90 feet. Diagonally left up the slab to the foot of the steep wall above. Up this just left of a tiny tree and gain the recess of pitch (2) of the ordinary start. More interesting than the ordinary way.

(3) 60 feet. Up the slab behind the tree a few feet and step onto the wall to the left above a sharp-edged overhang. Up steeply on good holds past a rotten tree to another large ledge with trees.

At about 40 feet one can step right into a groove leading to the edge of the buttress, but the only exit is back left by a corner to the large ledge with trees.

(4) 60 feet. Up to the left is a corner full of creeper. Start to the right of it, cross it after a few feet and pull over the left edge, traversing beyond to a runnel of loose boulders. An awkward move up the wall above leads into a groove ; up the rocks right of the groove to the top.

*Variation—Micah Finish*

70 feet. Climb the slabs right of the creeper-filled corner. At about 15 feet traverse delicately right to the crest of the buttress, and finish up this—very exposed, good holds.

First Ascent : 25th December, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, J. M. Barr.

Micah Start : 7th March, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

Right-hand variation, pitch 3 : 28th March, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

Micah Finish : 28th March, 1954. M. J. Harris.

**DOTHEBOYS**

Severe vegetation—hardly a climb. Dotheboys Buttress is festooned with creepers and brambles, preventing any access to the lowest rocks. The wall overlooking Milestone Gully can be surmounted by going some way up the gully, climbing a tree and stepping off the upper branches onto the top of the wall. The rocks then disappear beneath brambles ; work up through these, trending left, to the foot of a creeper-filled chimney in the top tier of the buttress. Traverse left under the wall until one can pull up on creepers round the corner. Some way higher, ascending a short open chimney, rocks appear for a

few feet, leading to the higher part of the buttress crest. The last few feet of this are again bare rock.

A route to be avoided until a forest-fire can be arranged.

First Ascent : 10th October, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

#### VALERIE'S RIB

250 feet. Severe. The lower part, the Rib proper, gives interesting climbing ; the upper part is rather vegetated.

Start : Directly above the cowshed of Bwlch-y-Moch farm, at the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 20 feet. Up onto the buttress from its left-hand side.

(2) 120 feet. Up the centre of the rib, on the right-hand side when possible. Belay in forest above.

(3) 50 feet of scrambling to the right-hand edge leads to a steep wall with large blocks, apparently loose.

(4) 60 feet. Up a steep layback crack, with thread belay on a tree. Then fight through the tree to the wall above. After a further battle with brambles, up the wall to the top.

First Ascent : 12th July, 1951. P. Vaughan, W. Smith, J. Cunningham.

#### CRAIG PANT-IFAN

The first feature of the east end of this crag is a long wall of rock, Hogmanay Buttress, with a very shattered shaly lower part at the right-hand end, and steep dolerite above, a smooth vertical light-coloured zone in the centre, and steep shattered dolerite at the left-hand end. The only climbing here is at the right-hand end ; the central zone is too steep and smooth, while the left-hand end is so fissile as to be dangerous, and should be avoided. Beyond a subsidiary slabby buttress, Avalanche Buttress (the source of the war-time rock-fall), is another long buttress, Peuterey Buttress, slabby in the lower parts with a line of overhangs along the top. The right-hand lower part of the buttress consists of three great smooth overlapping slabs, with square-cut walls and overhangs between. The left-hand lower part is of vegetated slabs, delimited by a flying buttress at the left-hand end and capped by great shattered overhangs. Then come two broken buttresses, deep in the trees, followed by the Hound's Head Buttress surmounted by the Hound's Head Pinnacle with its characteristic outline. Beyond the tree-filled Hound's Head Gully on the left is another rather broken buttress. A wide tree-filled opening separates this from Verdant Buttress, extensive but broken and vegetated. An annexe on the left, Two-face Buttress, is clean and slabby, being separated from Verdant Buttress by Two-face Gully ; it is marked by two Erewhon-like profiles as seen from the road. Next is the smaller Badger's Buttress, then another short clean buttress with a big overhang on it at the top. The cliff ends with a short stretch of low rocks before the path down to Tan-yr-Allt, with its gate through the wall at the top, is reached. Lying behind the last section of the crag is an upper tier

consisting of a lower wall of rock which gives interesting short single pitches.

#### HOGMANAY HANGOVER

185 feet. Hard Severe. Up the eastern terminal rib of the crag, on Hogmanay Buttress. The lower parts are on shale and vegetation and demand great care, while the middle section involves fighting with trees, but the exit gives an interesting pitch. The variation start gives a line wholly on rock, so is perhaps preferable.

Start : At a large block below overhangs of fissile rock at the right-hand end of the buttress. There is a creeper-hung cave just below to the right.

(1) 40 feet. Up to the right of the overhang above the block into a jungly area to the right of the crest of the rib.

(2) 20 feet. Up the wall at the back of the jungly area, by a little ivy-clad chimney, to a heather area overhung 15 feet above by the junction of the shale and dolerite.

(3) 75 feet. Traverse left over shelving slabs to a ledge round on the crest of the rib. Gain a tree at the junction of the shale and dolerite, starting either by bridging the chimney on the left or, perilously, straight up left of the rib. Then a fierce tussle with trees in the groove slanting up left to a tree at the foot of the final dièdre.

#### *Variation Start :*

On the left of the original start, a slabby recess left of the main rib. Up the corner, working up right to a crack through the overhang. Surmount the overhang on the left and go up a groove leading to the ledge on the crest of the rib on pitch (3).

(4) 50 feet. Up the corner to the level of a sloping slab below the final wall. Traverse right across this (thin, hard when wet) to the edge of the rib, and easily up to the top.

First Ascent : 2nd January, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

Variation Start : 19th June, 1954. S. G. Moore, C. T. Jones, G. A. P. Knapp, K. I. Clarke.

#### SCRATCH

275 feet. Very Severe. Takes the easiest line up the top right-hand slab of the three clean ones on Peuterey Buttress. A fine route though somewhat dirty in places. Only the crux is hard, but it is inescapable.

Start : At a vegetated couloir coming down below the middle slab of the three, by a little rib of rock.

(1) 70 feet. Up the grass and brambles to the old oak at the foot of the middle slab.

(2) 25 feet. Up and bear right on the slab, via grass ledges, to a stance (two small line belays).

(3) 30 feet. Follow the grooved weakness up right to the tree on the skyline, overlooking the right-hand slab. An earthy move to a small square ledge is difficult.

(4) 30 feet. Step back left on to the middle slab and climb a crack filled with loose blocks, to a tree stance on the left of the right-hand slab.

(5) 100 feet. Crux. Climb the crack in the corner, by a dirty layback (the aid of pitons may be needed if the rocks are greasy). Higher up small holds on the slab give a delicate move or two to a resting place in the vegetated corner above (piton here for running belay at present). Move across right and down to a good hold, then up a groove and swing out right onto good holds on the face. Traverse right and a final mantelshelf leads to a tree.

(6) 20 feet. Up the ridge to the top.

First Ascent : 19th December, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, W. R. Craster.

#### POOR MAN'S PEUTEREY

255 feet. Just Severe. (The Crack Start is Hard Severe). Gains the vegetated slab left of the three right-hand slabs high up. Some fine pitches, very exposed in the upper parts ; a vegetated middle section.

Start : At a broken rib about half-way between Scratch and the flying buttress, with a steep grassy groove containing two hollies on the right.

(1) 55 feet. Start in the corner left of the rib and gain this rib a few feet up. Up the rib to the trees above.

Or, preferably, ascend trees and grass in the corner right of the rib to a big ledge with a large block (belays). Climb the crack on the left to the trees above—a fine, strenuous pitch.

(2) 40 feet. Up to the bottom of the twin green dièdre in the line of the right-hand corner. The easiest method here is to start up the left-hand one and finish up the right-hand one. Then straight on to a stout tree.

Or, climb the rocks directly above the trees, to the left of the above, starting with tree-climbing.

(3) 40 feet. Traverse horizontally right through brushwood to saplings and a small cave just below the skyline.

(4) 100 feet. Step right onto the bridge of the nose (very exposed), so to a ledge at the foot of the upper slab. Climb cracks in the slab until a long step right can be made to a niche (belay). Continue straight up to a good grassy ledge.

(5) 20 feet. There is an easy way off here ; but, better, move left over a large block and climb the short vertical chimney on big holds.

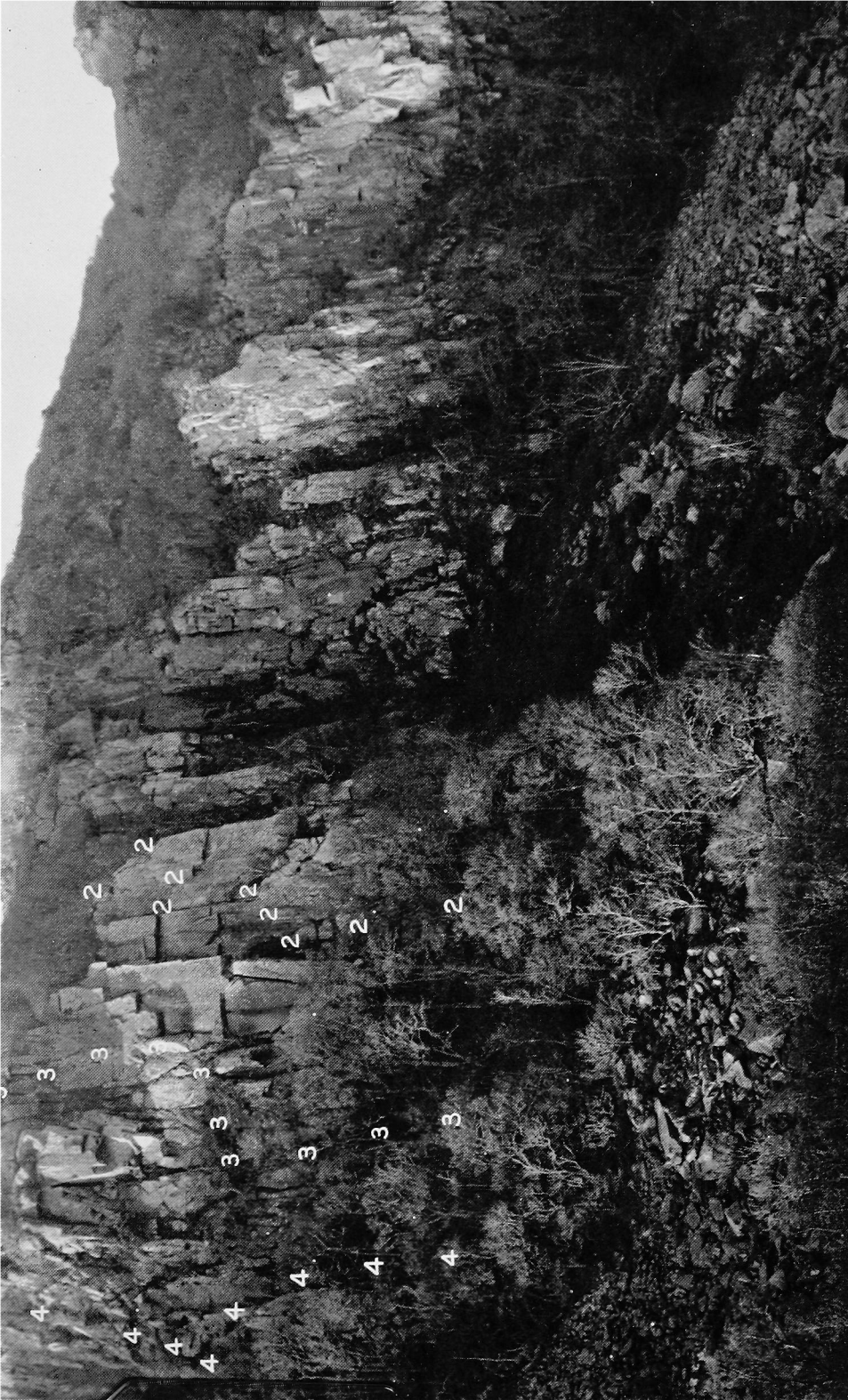
First Ascent : 20th December, 1953. G. J. Sutton and J. Gaukroger, by Crack Start.

Left-hand start : 4th July, 1954. C. Bramfitt, J. Neill.

Pitch (2) left-hand route : 1954. G. D. Roberts, W. A. Trench, A. J. J. Moulam.

CRAIG PANT-IFAN, WESTERN HALF  
For key to numbers see Index

*E. W. Dance*





## AVE ATQUE VALE

250 feet. Very Difficult. Works up the left-hand side of the left-hand slabs of Peuterey Buttress, to the bridge of the flying buttress, then up the upper rocks left of the shattered overhangs. Some rather unstable grass and heather, the removal of which might make the climb much harder.

Start : At the foot of the vegetated corner between the slabs and the flying buttress.

(1) 80 feet. Ascend a sort of rib of boulders just right of the corner, to a tree, then up and left to another tree. Step left into the corner, and go up it on unstable vegetation until a small tree on the left wall can be used as belay.

(2) 70 feet. Pull out to the left behind the tree and climb a heather-filled groove to the bridge of the flying buttress. Climb the slabs above by their left edge to a tree below a square overhang.

(3) 60 feet. Emerge by the crack left of the overhang onto slabs above ; up these to a tree below a thicket in the final rock tier.

(4) 40 feet. To avoid the thicket traverse right to gain rock ; up this pleasantly to the top.

First Ascent : 4th April, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

## HOUND'S HEAD PINNACLE

(Easy Way). 15 feet. Moderate. The gap behind the pinnacle is easily reached from Hound's Head Gully. A crack up the wall then leads to the top of the pinnacle. The rocks from the gap up to the summit of the crag give simple scrambling.

## HOUND'S HEAD BUTTRESS

195 feet. Just Severe. Reaches the pinnacle by the rocks in front of it. The lower parts are rather artificial but give some pretty climbing. The Black Block Crack up the final face is a splendid pitch, extremely exposed and sensational but not more than Very Difficult. Rapidly becoming classical—the "Poor Man's Ryan-Lochmatter."

Start : Among the trees at the very lowest point of the rocks, where a flake leans against the rocks.

(1) 60 feet. Up the crack on the right-hand side of the flake ; pull up from the top and ascend diagonally left over vegetation to a gangway with an ivy-covered boulder at its right-hand end. (The earlier ascents reached this point by walking a little way up Hound's Head Gully.)

(2) 15 feet. A short crack leads to a platform and another ivy-covered boulder.

(3) 35 feet. The crack above the left-hand end of the platform. The top may also be reached by a walk from Hound's Head Gully.

Or—Thomas's Variation : Work up right from the platform into an ivy-decorated chimney, and up this to trees and easy ground leading to the holly tree at the end of pitch (5).

(4) 30 feet. Two cracks, sloping left and right respectively, lie above. Up the left-hand crack to a pinnacle belay above on the left. This may also be reached by a scramble from Hound's Head Gully.

Or—Take the right-hand crack, leading to easy ground and the holly tree at the end of pitch (5).

(5) 15 feet. Traverse right at either of two levels to a holly tree in the middle of the face.

(6) 40 feet. Above lies the Black Block Crack ; reach its foot by going up from the tree for a few feet then right (preferable), or by traversing right from the tree and moving up from the right. Then up the crack to the top of the pinnacle, finishing on large holds.

Or—the thin crack up the face directly above pitch (5). Very hard.

First Ascent : 28th March, 1951. A. J. J. Moulam, G. J. Sutton.

Pitch (1) added 22nd May, 1954. M. J. Harris, T. R. M. Creighton.

Thomas's Variation : 1954. D. Thomas *et al.*

Variation final crack : 10th July, 1951. P. Vaughan, on top rope.

#### HOUND'S HEAD GULLY

Easy. Mostly a walk through trees, up grass, stones and mud. There is a simple cave pitch deep in the trees above the level of the Pinnacle.

*Verdant Buttress* has had three lines on it described, none particularly interesting or difficult.

#### THE LAMP THAT FAILED

About 200 feet. Difficult.

Start : At the low right-hand end of the buttress.

(1) 80 feet. Up an overgrown groove above a tree, stepping right at the top. Belays behind a tree.

(2) 60 feet. Up over the belays to a ledge (way off here). Traverse left then climb the groove behind detached blocks forming a pinnacle, then scramble up left through trees. 40 feet of scrambling lead to an obvious corner.

(3) 25 feet. The corner.

Or—the Slab Finish. Up the right-hand wall of a smaller corner on the left. Severe, an excellent pitch.

First Ascent : 1st January, 1954. G. J. Sutton, J. H. Longland.

#### THE LINK THAT FAILED

About 200 feet. Difficult. Starts 20 yards left of the Lamp that Failed and takes a direct line up a rib.

(1) 60 feet. Up the rib, with help from trees.

(2) 20 feet. Scramble up to the right to the foot of a wall.

(3) 50 feet. Up the wall, traversing 5 feet left at 20 feet.

(4) 40 feet. Walk up to the left to a small corner (with the Slab Finish of the Lamp that Failed on its right-hand wall).



(5) 25 feet. Step to the left round the corner and up the wall above, or take the Slab Finish of the Lamp that Failed.

First Ascent : 1st January, 1954. G. C. Band, Miss P. Denton.

#### HAS BEENS' HOLIDAY

Difficult. Start by a big slab corner on the left.

(1) Traverse to gain a square-cut chimney full of trees some way right of Two-face Gully.

(2) Up the chimney, then traverse left under steep rocks.

(3) Up a steep corner onto heather.

(4) Traverse left again and finish up Two-face Gully.

First Ascent : 28th March, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam, B. Hilton-Jones.

#### OLYMPIC SLAB CLIMB

165 feet. Very Severe. On Two-face Buttress. Turns the big overhang at the top of the buttress by the steep slab on the left, which gives a fine pitch.

Start : At the very bottom of the buttress.

(1) 35 feet. Up overgrown ledges to a tall tree.

(2) 45 feet. Up the left-hand corner behind the tree, cross to the right-hand one at 10 feet and up for 15 feet, then scramble over vegetation to a small bay.

(3) 30 feet. Move to the left-hand end up over a rib then up rock to the next ledge.

(4) 20 feet. Up on the left to a sheltered rock ledge below the slab.

(5) 35 feet. The crux. Right to start then straight up to the layback corner. Thin. Up the chimney above, easier.

Or—Up the buttress left of the layback corner, considerably harder.

First Ascent : 4th January, 1954. J. I. Disley, Miss S. Cheeseman.

Variation finish : 28th March, 1954. J. I. Disley.

#### BADGER'S BUTTRESS

130 feet. Very Difficult. Steep, quite good while it lasts.

Start : At the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 90 feet. Up the exact edge to an alcove and tree belay on the right.

(2) 40 feet. Into the upper alcove then up the steep cracked wall above, with an awkward prickly finish.

Or—From the upper alcove step out onto the edge on the right, and climb the slab above.

First Ascent : 3rd January, 1954. G. J. Sutton, G. C. Band.

#### CRAIG-Y-DREF

The most prominent feature on this crag is a steep nose surrounded by slabby faces, immediately behind the more westerly parts of Tremadoc village. This gives the only climb made so far on this crag.

## CREAG DHU WALL

Severe.

(1) To the slab via a corner.

(2) Round the corner and climb the slab (110-foot run-out) with a hard finish on mantelshelves.

First Ascent: 12th July, 1951. J. Cunningham, W. Smith, P. Vaughan.

## CRAIG-Y-GESAIL

A principal landmark on this crag is a large area of slabs low down in the centre of the cliff. These slabs, of shale, are capped by the usual dolerite overhangs, above which is a main buttress, Princess Buttress, with a subsidiary buttress to its left. This area is separated by the grassy Backstairs Gully from Sheerline Buttress on the left, which is marked by a flake-pinnacle against the steep wall of the buttress high up. To the left again is Bramble Buttress, an overgrown rib which reaches lowest of all these left-hand buttresses, and then the Castle, an impressive rock tower overhanging on the left and with a steep slab face on the right. After a short stretch of rocks is West End Gully, open and grassy, marking the end of the dolerite; beyond is a shaly buttress then a slanting grassy opening with an intermittent stream and a fence, giving a convenient route of descent.

The right-hand end of the crag is steeper, shorter and obscured by trees; the only place visited has been a prominent spiky pinnacle, the Gallt Wen Pinnacle.

## GALLT WEN PINNACLE

This was ascended by its short side by G. J. Sutton and C.U.M.C. party, December, 1953.

## LOWER SLABS

Although these slabs are of shale, they are fairly sound for climbing. The principal landmark here is a creeper-clad overhanging recess at the foot, rather to the right of the middle. A few feet to the left is a slightly-defined rake sloping up to the left to the foot of a short chimney-corner leading to a jungly area above the slabs, with a prominent nose on its left. To the right of the recess is a line of weakness inclining up to the left to the jungly area.

## GAMMA

Moderate. Up the line of weakness to the right of the recess. Convenient as a means of descent from the jungly area.

First Ascent: December, 1953. C.U.M.C. party.

## BETA

Difficult.

Start: A few feet left of the recess, and just right of the slight rake.

(1) 40 feet. Up to a large ledge in the middle of the slab, either by a green groove just below and to the right of the ledge, or, better, straight up the rock.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse left and up to the short chimney-corner.

(3) 20 feet. Up the corner into the jungle.

(4) The first party escaped from here by forcing a way up through the jungle and going across the subsidiary buttress up on the left to reach Backstairs Gully.

First Ascent : December, 1953. P. F. Holmes, R. W. Hey.

#### ALPHA

Difficult. Up the rocks bordering the slight rake on the left.

First Ascent : December, 1953. C.U.M.C. party.

#### PRINCESS

280 feet. Hard Severe. Goes up the centre of the Lower Slabs, forces a way through the overhangs above and finishes up the main buttress. Some pretty climbing if rock rather than jungle lines are taken where there is a choice ; the jungle lines are *not* easy alternatives.

Start : As for Beta.

(1) 40 feet. As pitch (1) on Beta.

(2) 40 feet. Go right for 30 feet into the corner beyond the slab, then up for 10 feet to a belay in the corner.

(3) 20 feet. Up the corner to a stance below the overhanging junction of the shale and the dolerite.

Alternative to pitches (2) and (3)—more interesting :

35 feet. Go up 15 feet to 10 feet below the overhangs, then traverse right for 20 feet (delicate) to the stance after pitch (3).

(4) 50 feet. Up the break in the overhangs above to the jungle.

(5) 30 feet. Up the rock above on the right, gaining a spike on the edge by a groove on the left. Step right for 5 feet to a crack, go up this and mantelshelf left over the edge to a stance and large boulder belay.

Or, fight up through the jungle, first left then right.

(6) 40 feet. Up to the right for 20 feet to the foot of two parallel cracks, and up the left-hand one to a stance below a holly tree.

(7) 60 feet. Traverse right for 15 feet to the edge (delicate), mantelshelf up into a corner and so up this.

Or, fight with the holly tree in the crack above the stance.

First Ascent : 19th December, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

Another line taken in this neighbourhood, starting up the left-hand side of the Lower Slabs, has not yet been completely led.

#### BACKSTAIRS GULLY

Easy. Steep grass, and some scrambling near the top. An easy way down.

#### BACKSTAIRS

105 feet. Very Difficult. Starts from half-way up Backstairs Gully, traverses onto the summit of the flake-pinnacle on Sheerline Buttress and finishes up the buttress. Very airy.

Start : At an obvious weakness in the left (west) wall of the gully.

(1) 15 feet. The backstairs (the weakness) lead up left to a thorny platform on the crest of the buttress.

(2) 70 feet. Diagonally left up a gangway to the summit of the flake-pinnacle (exposed stance).

(3) 20 feet. Up the final steep wall above, taking it rather on the left.

First Ascent : 13th December, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

#### SHEERLINE

130 feet. Very Severe. Up the front of the flake-pinnacle. Steep and exciting.

Start : At the trees on the right at the foot of Sheerline Buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Up through the ivy to the top of the block above. Then up left through brambles to a large green platform.

Or—Go up the rocks at the extreme right of the buttress for a few feet, then make a very hard traverse left to the top of the block.

(2) 10 feet. To the top of the flake on the right.

(3) 70 feet. Up the face to the top of the flake-pinnacle.

(4) 20 feet. As Backstairs pitch (3).

First Ascent : 20th December, 1953. D. R. Bell, D. Thomas.

Right-hand start : 13th December, 1953. M. J. Harris.

#### CLUTCH

130 feet. Hard Very Severe. Follows the groove separating the flake-pinnacle from the main face on the left. Four pitons required as climbing aids.

Start : Go up the tree-filled gully on the left of Sheerline Buttress to the foot of a pitch covered in ivy and brambles. The groove is above this.

(1) 25 feet. Traverse up right through undergrowth, with an awkward pull, to the green platform after pitch (1) of Sheerline.

(2) 25 feet. Step round left onto a gangway (awkward) and go up to the foot of the cracks in the main groove.

(3) 60 feet. Climb the cracks and a little overhang. The groove above is steep but yields to pitons, leading to the top of the flake-pinnacle.

(4) 20 feet. As Backstairs pitch (3).

First Ascent : 20th December, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, W. R. Craster, J. F. Mawe.

#### BRAMBLE BUTTRESS

190 feet. Very Difficult. The route lies up the rib the whole way. Much better than might seem and steadily improves to an excellent last pitch.

(1) 30 feet. Up a series of little walls just left of the crest of the rib, with thorny ledges between.

(2) 20 feet. Up a little corner and swing right onto the crest of the rib, to a stance below a pinnacle completely concealed by creeper.

(3) 20 feet. Swarm up the creepers to the gap behind the pinnacle.

(4) 30 feet. Step left into a groove and swing back onto the edge, then up this with aid from a tree root.

(5) 30 feet. Easily up through the trees and creepers to the foot of the final tower.

(6) 60 feet. The final tower, started on the left. A very pleasant pitch.

First Ascent : 13th December, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

#### THE CASTLE

140 feet. Hard Very Severe. The route reaches the top slab on the right-hand side of the Castle by means of the grassy gully on the right, marked by a large tree below an overhung recess at the top. The tree is gained by using rock as much as possible to avoid the unpleasantness of the gully. The lower parts are undistinguished but the climb is worth doing for the top slab—a fine pitch, steep and exposed.

Start : Walk up the grass of the gully among the trees until rock emerges through the vegetation on the left.

(1) 20 feet. Up the creeper-clad rock to grass ledge.

(2) 50 feet. Continue up the shattered rock to the steep final wall of the buttress, then traverse right, rising slightly into the gully. Up this unpleasantly to the large tree, then 10 feet higher to a large block in the overhung recess.

(3) 70 feet. Up the corner above and pull into the upper left-hand corner. Emerge up to the left on good spikes at the edge of the top slab. Step up (hard) and left to good footholds at the edge of the slab. Go straight up this to the top ; hard at first but can be protected by a piton.

A 30-foot pitch can be added artificially by going up the steep little wall above the top of the buttress, about V.D. in the direct line.

First Ascent : 4th September, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

#### WEST END GULLY

Easy. Grass, with a few feet of scrambling at the bottom.

#### ADDENDA

##### (1) CWM SILYN

The fishermen's hut in the Cwm no longer exists, having been blown away in recent gales.

##### (2) TREMADOC

Pant Ifan, the cottage on the ridge above Craig Pant-Ifan opposite Hound's Head Gully, has been taken over by the Birmingham Cave and Crag Club as a climbing hut.

#### HOUND'S HEAD BUTTRESS

The first pitch is now almost entirely on rock.

## UPPER TIER, CRAIG PANT-IFAN

Five short routes have been made here by members of the Birmingham Cave and Crag Club.

(a) Ivy Crack. 80 feet. Just severe in boots. The prominent crack running up the right-hand side of the Ivy Buttress, an ivy-covered buttress at the left-hand end of the upper tier. Reached from a point 20 feet to the right of the buttress, or more easily from directly beneath the crack.

First Ascent : 18th August, 1954. C. T. Jones, S. G. Moore.

(b) Central Arête. 80 feet. Difficult. The prominent rib separating two gullies in the centre of the upper tier, reached by the wall beneath starting on the right and traversing left.

First Ascent : 8th August, 1954. T. J. Baugh, Mrs. P. Baugh, D. J. Williams.

(c) Bramble Gully. 75 feet. Very Difficult. The gully to the right of Central Arête.

First Ascent : 27th December, 1954. J. Adderley, S. G. Moore, G. A. P. Knapp.

(d) Bulging Wall. 80 feet. Very Difficult. Up the left-hand end of the steep wall to the right of Bramble Gully.

First Ascent : 8th August, 1954. T. J. Baugh and Mrs. P. Baugh, D. J. Williams.

(e) Quatre Fois. 80 feet. Severe. Ascends the lower cracked wall at the extreme right-hand end of the face, traverses for 20 feet left on a narrow ledge to a sentry box, and finishes up twin cracks.

First Ascent : 25th August, 1954. C. T. Jones, F. Davies.

NOTE.—The Upper Tier had been climbed on before the above ascents.

# NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

## I. SNOWDONIA

J. NEILL

### GENERAL

The weather during 1954 has been almost uniformly bad in North Wales, and less climbing than usual has been done. Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu has been climbed on much less frequently than of recent years, as the conditions on this cliff have seldom been encouraging for the average party. The details of new climbs given below will show that the activities in North Wales of J. Brown and his group have been limited, owing to the weather and perhaps also to dwindling possibilities for new climbs. They have, however, recompensed themselves with an ascent of Kilnsey Crag in Wharfedale, involving artificial climbing of a high order of difficulty to surmount the formidable overhangs of this limestone crag.

During the last year several of the new climbs made in Wales by this group have been repeated by other leaders : C. J. S. Bonnington, and P. H. Biven, both recently elected to membership of the Club, and H. I. Banner of the University of Bristol Mountaineering Club. The climbs concerned were Hangover (all three leaders), the Sickie (Bonnington and Banner) and Surplomb (Bonnington), all on Clogwyn-y-Grochan, and Noah's Warning (Bonnington) on Dinas-y-Gromlech.

Details of the Ffestiniog pumped storage hydro-electric scheme have now been published. It is not yet clear whether access to the climbing on the Moelwyns will be interfered with ; Craig Stwlan is the crag most likely to be affected.

### A. TRYFAN AND GLYDER FACH

#### TRYFAN EAST FACE

MEA BUTTRESS. About 200 feet. Very Difficult. The right-hand edge of Yew Buttress.

Start up a 30-foot crack, then go across a corner to the right and climb in succession a 30-foot crack, a 10-foot wall, a 50-foot slab then a 50-foot wall to the left.

First Ascent : 10th October, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam, R. M. Viney, C. W. Brasher, E. A. Wrangham.

#### CRAIG NANT-YR-OGOF

YEOMAN SERVICE. 150 feet. Severe.

Start on the left of the cliff at a pillar, and climb a pitch up to a sort of cave. Climb a groove on the right then a crack, a groove and a ridge. Turn right and traverse, and finish up a ridge.

First Ascent : 24th July, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam, W. R. Craster.

## B. CARNEDDAU

## LLECH DU

Wit. 300 feet. Hard Severe.

Takes a fairly direct line between Central Slabs and Y Chimney. Not artificial ; will provide a hard finish to Central Route (via Pillar Traverse) or a consolation to parties washed off Central Route.

Start : Pillar Traverse is followed to a point about 50 feet right of the base of Pillar Chimney.

(1) 50 feet. A steep grass and rock rib on the right is followed to a stance and belay.

(2) 30 feet. The narrow corner ahead is climbed by bridging and grass bulges. Flake belay on the right.

(3) 60 feet. Crux. Bridge up the wet slab and corner (running belay) to the chockstone in the corner crack on the right at 30 feet. Now face right and ascend the overhang ; despite a jughandle on the right wall and holds in the crack this remains hard. Belay after 20 feet at the base of the flake.

(4) 70 feet. From the top of the flake swing up onto the wall then right and up onto the grass.

(5) 90 feet. The gentle slab ahead is followed, to end at the right of the triangular overhang of Central Slab Route.

There remains only scrambling ; or the wall on the left is interesting.

First Ascent : Whit Sunday, 1953. C. Bonnington, Geoffrey Francis.

## HUMOUR. 300 feet. Very Severe.

Follows a natural line up the cliff ; less fierce than Central Route.

Start : At an obvious jamming crack in the slab about 50 feet left of V Chimney.

(1) 70 feet. The crack, then 10 feet of grass. Belay on left.

(2) 30 feet. Squirm up the groove above to a belay.

(3) 80 feet. Semi-circle right into the crack above, to a flake at 40 feet. Go leftwards (loose rock) over a spike then up a beautiful crack to a belay.

(4) 80 feet. Crux. Traverse easily 20 feet right. Then go round into a groove and up this until a move out right is possible. A ledge leads to a belay.

(5) 40 feet. Up anywhere, preferably on the left in the line of the groove. Scramble to the top, meeting Central Slab.

First Ascent : 2nd August, 1953. A. Kopczynski, Geoffrey Francis.

## CRAIG LLOER

## MOONRISE. 220 feet. Mild Severe.

On the East Buttress. Not as good as Kirkus's Route, but worth doing ; better in position than any of the West Buttress routes.

Start : A steep wall with a huge flake pinnacle on its front rises half way up the broken East Buttress, about 200 feet above the screes



and easily seen from the gully. Start on the terrace below and to the right of the pinnacle.

(1) 50 feet. Up a moss-covered wall to the foot of the left-hand of two cracks. Up this. Belay on the top of the pinnacle. The right-hand crack may also be climbed.

(2) 30 feet. Up on to the pinnacle and step delicately round the right-hand corner. Up the ensuing groove for a few feet to a belay.

(3) 40 feet. Climb the crack in the left-hand wall then the overhanging step above to a ledge and belays beneath a steep wall.

(4) 40 feet. Round again right and up easier ground to a belay rather on the right.

(5) 60 feet. Probably the most difficult—rock not too sound. Go up the rib, keeping as far left as possible, to the top.

First Ascent : 17th April, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam, C. M. Dixon.

#### PEN LLITHRIG-Y-WRACH

PUFFIN. 110 feet. Very Difficult.

On the cliff mentioned in the guide. The cliff is shorter than the guide indicates. The route takes the scoop near the right-hand edge, starting below its left-hand branch.

First Ascent : 12th June, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam, H. L. Richardson, Mrs. E. Upton.

#### C. LLANBERIS

I am indebted to D. Belshaw of the Rock and Ice Club for details of new climbs made by members of that club in this area.

#### DINAS-Y-GROMLECH

NOAH'S WARNING—DIRECT FINISH. Probably harder than anything on the rest of the climb.

(3) 80 feet. Follow pitch 3 up the chimney to the overhanging flake which the original route avoids along a good traverse line to the right. Move round the overhanging flake up to the right, then straight up and left to a thin crack. At the top make an exit on the left with difficulty.

First Ascent : 20th July, 1954. C. Bonnington, Geoffrey Francis.

#### PHARAOH'S PASSAGE—ALTERNATIVE FINISH.

(2) 80 feet. Climb up the wall behind the first holly tree, then traverse right from its top to the skyline (loose) and up the rib. The top few feet in the groove are quite delicate.

First Ascent : 20th July, 1954. C. Bonnington, Geoffrey Francis.

#### TWISTERS' TRAVERSE. 210 feet. Very Severe.

This girdles the left-hand part of the crag, starting up the wall behind the rowan tree on the left-hand side of Cenotaph Corner. It appears to include known ground.

First Ascent : 11th July, 1953. R. Hope and P. Walsh.

## CARREG WASTAD

BOLE WAY. 380 feet. Very Severe.

This climb is now quite safe, loose material having been cleaned up. It is a fine route, probably the longest up the Three Cliffs. No account of it has as yet appeared in this Journal, so details are given now.

The line goes direct up Carreg Wastad where the cliff is highest, to the left of Main Scoop.

Start : At twin grooves to the right of the start of Trilon and 30 feet left of the start of Main Scoop.

(1) 45 feet. Up the grooves until one can swing up onto the rib on the left, so to a stance by a hawthorn.

(2) 45 feet. Traverse right, awkwardly, onto a slanting rake, and ascend the rake, then up again to the lowest of the hollies above.

(3) 100 feet. Up the wall behind the forest with a trend to the right to the upper traverse of Dead Entrance. Follow this route up to the large block beneath the overhang and descend on the far side to a stance by the large ash tree (the First Bole).

(4) 55 feet. Follow the steep groove directly above to the large holly (the Second Bole).

(5) 85 feet. From the holly directly above traverse right below the overhang. Follow the rock rake to a spinney. This traverse is finely situated.

(6) 50 feet. Slant left and to the top via other hollies.

A direct finish from the Second Bole can be made but has not yet been led.

First Ascent : 12th May, 1951. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam, A. J. Hyde.

## RIBSTONE CRACK—VARIATION, PITCH 3.

Instead of the squirm up the chimney on pitch 3 take the wall on the right and regain the holds above the chimney by a leftward step.

First Ascent : 29th June, 1953. H. I. Banner, R. W. G. Miles.

## THE GRYPHON. 210 feet. Hard Very Severe. (Extremely Severe on pitch 2.)

Start : At a pedestal about 20 feet left of Unicorn, below a prominent overhanging corner.

(1) 35 feet. Step on to the gangway on the left and follow it leftwards for about 15 feet, when a direct ascent can be made followed by a step right on to the sloping floor of the corner. Small spike belays.

(2) 60 feet. Climb the crack in the corner to the top of the flake on the right (piton left), very strenuous. Move left from the piton to the top of the corner by very trying moves. Continue to the holly tree in the corner above.

(3) 35 feet. Go diagonally right to a stance and large spike belay on a rib adjacent to Unicorn.

(4) 80 feet. Climb up above the belay and ascend diagonally right for a few feet up the Wrinkled Slab. Move back leftwards making for a mossy break in the overhangs above and pass it on doubtful holds,

stepping across left to a heathery caterpillar. Scrambling over steep rock and heather leads to the top of the cliff.

First Ascent : 5th August, 1954. A. C. Cain, C. Bonnington, S. Lane.

#### UNICORN.

An alternative start, perhaps new, was made on 3rd May, 1953, by H. I. Banner, A. K. Coverdale and P. H. Hill. Very Severe ; no details.

#### CLOGWYN-Y-GROCHAN

SLAPE—DIRECT START. 60 feet. Extremely Severe.

Takes a gently impending crack 15 feet to the left of Brant start.

(1) 60 feet. Enter the crack from the right on side holds, awkward, and ascend it to a small quartz ledge on the right (running belay). Move delicately upwards to a piton (left in) and pull over strenuously on a small finger jam until good holds lead to the little ledge with large flake of Brant. Follow Brant to the large ledge with yew and holly trees.

First Ascent : 23rd September, 1954. M. W. Harvey, D. J. Abbott.

OCHRE GROOVES. 190 feet. Very Severe (Hard).

Start : 20 feet right of the nose of Long Tree Gate, where a V-chimney breaks the line of cliff.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the V-chimney. The middle section is hard (a piton at 12 feet was used for direct aid on the first ascent). Move out right under the overhang to a ledge. The pitch can be split here. Move up and traverse left to the grass ledge. Across the grass to block belays (as for Long Tree Gate).

(2) 90 feet. Climb up just to the right on to a ledge below a vertical V-groove. Climb the groove, which is in two sections, the second protected by a piton. Climb the continuation of the groove, slightly leftwards, to finish at a large detached spike ; or continue 10 feet to tree belay on Long Tree Gate.

(3) 30 feet. The final pitch of Long Tree Gate.

First Ascent : 16th May, 1954. H. I. Banner, G. W. Wilson, starting with the first pitch of Long Tree Gate.

The first pitch described above was added by P. H. Hill, M. W. Harvey and P. C. Henry on the same date.

BROAD WALK. 215 feet. Very Severe.

Start at the foot of the obvious corner of Broad Walk.

(1) 65 feet. Climb the corner to a sloping ledge on the right. Traverse right and climb a groove to stance and belay.

(2) 35 feet. Climb the tree until it is possible to reach holds. Continue up the corner then step left and climb the left wall to stance and belay.

(3) 45 feet. Go up the corner for 25 feet then step right and climb a grass rake.

(4) 40 feet. Traverse left and climb a groove to a large grass ledge.

(5) 50 feet. Climb the groove above on large but doubtful holds to the top.

First Ascent : 7th November, 1954. D. Whillans and J. Brown.

SUNSET BOULEVARD. 585 feet. Exceptionally Severe. Makes a low-level traverse of the crag.

Start : As for Kaisergebirge Wall.

(1) 100 feet. Pitch 1 of Kaisergebirge Wall, continuing the traverse to a poor stance and badly situated belay (piton) at the foot of the final groove on pitch 3 of Hangover.

(2) 30 feet. Stride across the groove (piton used for protection), traverse round into a V-chimney and climb to a yew-tree belay.

(3) 40 feet. Go round the block on the left and ascend to grass, then go across to the block belay on pitch 5 of Slape.

(4) 50 feet. Descend pitch 5 of Slape.

(5) 20 feet. Descend pitch 4 of Slape.

(6) 40 feet. Go across to the foot of the V-chimney on Brant and step down left, continuing the traverse under the overhang on awkward undercut holds (hard). Ascend to the niche and small flake belay above the loose blocks on Sickle pitch 3.

(7) 60 feet. Follow the remainder of pitch 3 of Sickle, crossing the wall beneath the overhangs until it is possible to turn them on the left, then work back right to a stance and belay on a grassy slab.

(8) 40 feet. Go diagonally left up the slab to a flake on the edge of Goat's Gully. Descend a chimney 10 feet to the holly tree in the gully.

(9) 25 feet. Go round the corner left from the tree, and swing across the groove using a piton placed beneath the overhang. Ascend left to the flake below pitch 5 of Spectre.

(10) 30 feet. Pitch 5 of Spectre.

(11) 110 feet. From below the perched blocks traverse across the wall on the left, with an awkward step round the corner. Then go diagonally left across part of pitch 4 of Phantom Rib, to the forest below the final pitch of Hazel Groove.

(12) 50 feet. The last pitch of Hazel Groove.

First Ascent : 22nd July, 1954. C. Bonnington, A. C. Cain, Geoffrey Francis.

#### CRAIG DDU

THE BLACK WALL. 210 feet. Very Severe (Hard).

Start : At the foot of the obvious pinnacle to the left of the gully.

(1) 45 feet. From the foot of the crack on the right side of the pinnacle, traverse left and climb the arête to the top (stance and belay).

(2) 50 feet. Climb the short steep wall above into the scoop. A rising traverse to the left leads to a small stance (good belays) below an overhanging crack.

(3) 80 feet. Up the crack to the overhang and swing out to the left. Continue direct for 20 feet then traverse right to a thin crack, climb this for 10 feet with the aid of a piton, step left and climb a shallow groove to the overhangs. Traverse left across the slab to stance and belay.

(4) 35 feet. Climb direct to the top of the cliff.

First Ascent : August, 1954. D. Whillans, J. Brown.

OZYMANDIAS. 100 feet. Very Severe.

Reaches the top of the Pedestal and continues up the overhanging crack behind.

First Ascent : 19th April, 1954. H. G. Nicol, E. A. Wrangham, M. P. Ward.

DINAS MOT

THE LINK. 80 feet. Very Severe (Hard).

(1) 30 feet. From the top of the first pitch of West Rib, climb direct into the foot of the overhanging groove.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the groove by the crack in the back. Slings threaded round chockstones are necessary for direct aid for the first 30 feet. Continue as for the Diagonal Route.

First Ascent : 22nd August, 1954. J. Brown, E. Price, D. Roscoe.

CYRN LAS BACH

Two routes have recently been described on this crag, which lies on the face of the ridge bounding lower Cwm Glas on the west, at about the level of the foot of Cynr Las itself.

TIERCEL. 275 feet. Very Difficult.

Follows a line up the left-hand end of the crag starting about 30 feet right of a grassy gully slanting gently leftwards.

First Ascent : 30th May, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, J. M. Barr.

IMPROMPTU BUTTRESS. 270 feet. Difficult.

Follows a diagonal groove splitting the steepest buttress from right to left, immediately left of a deep gully, and to the right of a clearly marked col. The start is a few feet to the right of the groove and almost at the lowest point of the buttress.

First Ascent : 8th September, 1954, C. Fishwick, D. J. Hewitt.

The relationship of the two routes is not known at present. Some climbing was done here in the 'twenties (see the Snowdon guide, 1926, pp. 103-4).

LLECHOG (Cwm Glas-bach)

Not to be confused with the Llechog in Cwm Clogwyn. This Llechog forms the western bounding ridge of Cwm Glas-bach. The ridge is very steep and rocky high up. The flank of this section facing the cwm appears very broken but two routes have been made on it which are surprisingly continuous—reminiscent of Tryfan East Face.

JUG HANDLE. 430 feet. Very Difficult.

Best approached up the ridge to where it steepens. On the left is a large grass rake. The route is approximately centrally placed, starting from a large pointed block.

First Ascent : 19th September, 1954. F. A. Smith, R. Summers.

SLAB AND TOWER. 295 feet. Severe.

Starting at a pinnacle at the foot of a large steep quartzzy slab, bounded on the left by a dirty groove, the climb makes for a very obvious tower which can be seen against the sky from the ledge at the foot of the crag.

First Ascent : 19th September, 1954. R. Summers, F. A. Smith.

CLOGWYN PEN-LLECHEN

LITTLE AUDREY. 200 feet. Severe (two moves are very severe).

The climb takes the diagonal gangway running up the left edge of the steep wall which is the most prominent feature of the cliff.

First Ascent : 22nd August, 1953. M. H. Westmacott, A. Alvarez. (Pitch 3 not led.)

CLOGWYN-DU'R-ARDDU

THE LEFT EDGE. 300 feet. Extremely Severe.

Follows closely the arête up the left edge of the steep, solid bastion left of Longland's Climb.

Start : As for the Boulder.

(1) 45 feet. Up on large holds for a few feet, then step right on to the main face and ascend direct to a small stance and belay.

(2) 130 feet. Step round the arête on to the left wall and go straight up for about 40 feet, keeping near the arête. From a good resting place step back on to the front face and ascend this on small holds, until better holds lead back left again to the foot of a grassy groove slanting up to the right. Up this to grass terrace and large pedestal belay.

(3) 125 feet. Take any line up the easy ridge to the top.

First Ascent : 17th April, 1954. R. Moseley.

EAST GULLY WALL : VARIATION. 125 feet. Very Severe.

(1) 55 feet. From the stance at the top of pitch 2, follow the original route up to the arête on the left. Step round this and down to loose ledges. Cross these to the foot of a large flake, up this and across to a grass stance and very poor belay in the corner.

(2) 70 feet. Climb the crack in the corner. The first 20 feet are climbed mainly on holds until the crack widens and provides good jamming to the top.

First Ascent : 16th April, 1954. R. Moseley, P. White, T. Waghorn.

## D. SNOWDON SOUTH AND WEST

Details of new climbs in this area have not been given in recent Journals as they are to be published in the forthcoming guide-book. In view of the delay in the publication of this guide-book it is necessary to modify this policy to some extent. New climbs at Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc are included in the interim guide-book article published in this number of the Journal. It is hoped to publish the remainder of the material prepared by the Manchester University Mountaineering Club, covering Llechog (Cwm Clogwyn), Cwm Du, Castell Cidwm,

Craig-y-Bera, Y Garn (Rhyd Ddu), Trum-y-Ddysgl and Cwm Dulyn, in the forthcoming number of the *M.U.M.C. Journal*, including a number of new climbs on these crags. Off-prints of this would then be sold separately in pamphlet form.

Unfortunately limitations of space forbid complete retrospective treatment of the rest of the area to bring it up to date. Climbs made before the autumn of 1953 are only included when information about them is not fairly easily available elsewhere. Mention is made below of the sources of such information, where relevant.

(i) MOEL HEOG

Climbs made up to 1953 have already been mentioned in the Journal. Full details will be found in the Beddgelert log-book (kept at Sygyn Fawr) ; they are much too long to be reproduced here. It is hoped to incorporate them in the guide-book article appearing in the *M.U.M.C. Journal*.

SUMMIT CLIFFS

MAY RIB. Hard Difficult.

An isolated rib on the right-hand edge of Ladder Buttress, formed by a series of short walls and topped by a broad steep wall.

First Ascent : 2nd May, 1954. T. W. Hughes, W. Wynn.

CRAIG ISALLT

This crag lies low down in the Pennant valley (on the west side of Moel Hebog), about half-way up the valley near Llanfihangel-y-Pennant. It lies on the south side of a spur which projects into the valley and appears from the south to wall it off completely. The rock is the same as at Tremadoc and the crag is steep, but is much broken up by large grassy areas and overgrown with trees. Two routes of moderate interest have been made.

OWL. 195 feet. Difficult on the first two pitches, hard, vegetated and messy, severe, on the last pitch.

In the middle of the crag is a large field with overhangs above. This is reached by a sharp arête below, and left by a line breaking out through the overhangs to the right.

First Ascent : 26th June, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

SLOE PASSAGE. 155 feet. Very Difficult.

Takes the second buttress to the right of Owl, above a large fallen dead tree. A nice slab at the top.

First Ascent : 26th June, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, W. R. Craster.

CRAIG CWM-TRWSGL

This cliff lies on the Pennant side of the northerly part of Moel Lefn. It may be reached either from Pennant via the track of the old railway leading to the Prince of Wales quarry, or through the Forestry Commission plantations on the Beddgelert side and across Bwlch Cwm-Trwsgl.

It was inspected in the early days and thought unpromising. Recent visits have partly confirmed this, the crag being broken in the lower parts and walled off by great overhangs at the top. Three routes have, however, been made. Two of these are poor but the third is quite interesting, though not of the first rank. The rock is the same as at Tremadoc, but much less overgrown, because of its position high up on Moel Lefn.

The part of the cliff visited is the northern section of the westward facing part, bounded at the north-west corner by a prominent nose or buttress opposite the disused quarry workings (the rocks continue round the corner, towards Bwlch Cwm-Trwsgl). To the south of the corner the rocks are continuous for some way, capped by a line of overhangs, until a large gully is reached. A little beyond the gully is another steep but broken buttress.

TU TIN TUT. 330 feet. Severe.

This route lies up the north-west corner. Rather artificial, but some pleasant climbing.

First Ascent : 9th May, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill, D. Thomas.

PASTURES NEW.

Half-way along the cliff between the north-west corner and the gully is a vague rib-line (there are others nearer the gully also). Take this line, most of the rock being avoided on vegetation, then break through the overhangs above by, quite arbitrarily, an interesting slab. Quite artificial and unworthy.

First Ascent : 26th June, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, W. R. Craster.

FRESH WOODS. 190 feet. Very Difficult.

The steep broken buttress beyond the gully. A very poor climb.

First Ascent : 26th June, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

(ii) GWYNANT

CLOGWYN-Y-WENALLT (also called "Gwynant North Crag")

This lies a little way up the hillside of Gallt-y-Wenallt overlooking the north end of Llyn Gwynant. From a distance it is dwarfed by the great hillside in which it lies, but at close quarters it proves to be of appreciable size. It is very steep, with good rock, and gives some excellent climbs. Details are available so far of two of these.

Oxo. 220 feet. Mild Very Severe.

From below the cliff is seen to consist of a clean grey buttress with green ivy corners at its left-hand end. The climb wanders up the centre of this left-hand face.

Start : At the left end of the lowest wall, by a black recess.

(1) 100 feet. Traverse 25 feet horizontally right to a black mantelshelf. Continue right beneath a pinnacle, apparently loose, to a grass-topped pillar. Up this delicately and straight up the vertical wall to a gangway. Up this to the right to a small oak on a large grass ledge.

(2) 30 feet. Easily up a slab on the left to a tall tree at the foot of a crack.



(3) 30 feet. Up the crack (very steep), finishing with a layback. Belays on bushes up the gangway on the left.

(4) 60 feet. Step across the top of the crack to a good ledge round the corner on the right. Continue right and up the wall diagonally, crossing a small groove, to finish straight up on good holds.

First Ascent : 12th April, 1953. J. R. Lees, W. A. Trench, G. D. Roberts.

SHAKE. 170 feet. Medium Very Severe.

Takes a line of cracks in the front of the buttress on the right.

Start : 20 feet right of the large boulder at the foot.

(1) 20 feet. Up to a stout ash tree.

(2) 40 feet. Straight up to the steep wall then traverse left, up a corner and across a small slab to the back of a big corner (piton belay).

(3) 30 feet. Move back to the crack then up to a large ledge.

(4) 30 feet. Continue up the fault, which becomes a groove, to a good tree.

(5) 50 feet. Intricate and interesting. Go on to the rib on the right, then left into the groove and back again to the rib. Move right then up to a slab, with belays at the top.

First Ascent : 12th June, 1954. G. D. Roberts, W. A. Trench.

CRAIG-Y-LLYN (also known by the coined name "Craig Dinas")

HONEYSUCKLE WALL. 460 feet. Severe.

Up the lowest steep left-hand wall of the crag. The first 160 feet are rather steep and exposed, and give a good climb ; the rest is heathery scrambling.

Start : Below a large flake with honeysuckle behind, at the crack on the left of the flake.

(1) 80 feet. Up the flake. Step off its summit leftwards on to the wall and work up slightly left, then step right and go straight up to ledges when the angle eases somewhat. Move up right under the wall above, pass round a corner and diagonally right to an ash tree at the foot of a slanting grass rake.

(2) 80 feet. Move obliquely left up the exposed rock wall on the left of the slanting rake, passing a rocky ledge, to two wedged flakes at the top of the rake. Or, go up the rake, easier. Then traverse left for a few feet and continue directly up to a good block belay.

(3) 120 feet. Keeping to the rocky edge on the right, move up to a large block belay with stance behind.

(4) 60 feet. Easy going to a large pulpit. Flake belay in the wall behind.

(5) 120 feet. Up easy slabs to the finish.

First Ascent : 12th June, 1953. D. H. Haworth, Miss J. Tester.

(iii) BEDDGELERT

ABERGLASLYN

GAM BAY. 250 feet. Just Severe.

On the next mass of rock to the north of the buttress on which lies Tunnel Rib. The first two pitches are good, the rest much easier.

Start : Left of the wall running up to the crag. An easy-angled ridge flanks the line of cliffs on the left. To the right of a heather re-entrant here is a steep wall, started up a semi-detached block.

(1) 60 feet. Up on to the block, then step over on to the wall above. Bear right, beneath the overhang, and then back left to a stance by a large belay.

(2) 70 feet. Up a foot or two, then traverse right as the grooves and overhangs above look unpromising. A steep wall leads by a poor finish to a terrace.

(3) 30 feet. Up the groove ahead to a stance on a ledge.

(4) 30 feet. Bear over towards the clean rib on the right. Belay on the ivy-covered wall.

(5) 30 feet. Straight up the rib.

(6) 30 feet. Scrambling up three more little walls.

First Ascent : 11th June, 1954. A. J. J. Moulam, Mrs. E. Upton.

#### (iv) TREMADOC

See the interim guide elsewhere in this Journal.

#### (v) LLEYN PENINSULA

##### YR EIFL

The nomenclature here was explained in the 1953 Journal. Holly Tree Buttress lies on No. 1 Buttress. Diagonal Gully (scrambling) separates this from No. 2 Buttress, on which is West Rib. To the right of this is a gully ending in overhangs, with beyond it a subsidiary part of the buttress.

##### WRONG RIB. Moderate.

Follows a long heathery rib slanting up from right to left on the subsidiary buttress. Occasional scrambling pitches (which can be made harder if desired) are separated by long walks. A short pitch near the top is moderate, and another has hard corners in the direct line but can be climbed easily on the right-hand side.

First Ascent : 3rd April, 1954. M. J. Harris and J. Neill.

Immediately beyond is Pinnacle Gully (walking only), marked by a very spiky pinnacle rising out of the heather on its south-west flank just below the top. The rocks to its right are very disjointed, with various isolated masses, before the next main gully is reached. This is Central Gully (walking only) ; it opens out into a large heathery amphitheatre at the top. To its right is No. 3 Buttress.

##### SKULK. Difficult.

On No. 3 Buttress. A scrappy route of no significance. A series of walls separated by heather walks in the lower part ; the main tower above was dodged.

First Ascent : 28th September, 1953. M. J. Harris, E. A. Wrangham, C. R. Simpson, A. Wailes-Fairbairn.

ARACHNE. Very Difficult.

Takes a circuitous route on Nos. 3 and 4 Buttresses, dodging difficulties. There may be some good pitches to be done here by a straightener-out.

First Ascent: 6th August, 1951. J. G. Thompson, Miss P. M. Thornton.

GREEN GULLY. Difficult. Much vegetation. Lies between Nos. 4 and 5 Buttresses.

First Ascent: 23rd May, 1953. M. J. Harris, D. Thomas, G. E. Humphries.

AVERNUS. 805 feet. Hard Severe.

Goes up the front of No. 5 Buttress. A splendid route of unusual character, exceedingly steep and exposed with the sea directly below. Some of the rock is poor, and there is a good deal of vegetation. The rock is heavily and universally coated with lichen, so that an ascent in bad conditions might not be too easy.

The first party used pitons for belays in many places but rock belays which are just adequate can be found.

Start: In the front of the buttress is a sort of grassy rake leading up from right to left to a break on the crest, above which the buttress appears to overhang hopelessly. Start at the foot of the grassy rake about 150 feet above the lowest point of the buttress. This gives an easy line.

(1) 60 feet. Traverse slightly upwards to a stance and several loose belays, mainly on grass.

(2) 60 feet. A long step, then up a groove to a long grassy ledge.

(3) 40 feet. Walk left along the ledge to the edge of beyond, beneath a short wall with a loose flake.

(4) 40 feet. Mantelshelf on to the flake then mantelshelf again up to the right and go up to a stance beneath the overhangs.

(5) 75 feet. Traverse left to the very edge of the buttress. Climb the groove slightly round the corner and the overhang at the top. Then up and right to an awkward stance and poor belays by a niche.

(6) 80 feet. Straight up above the belays to a niche, or start on the left and traverse right to the same line. Both ways are difficult.

(7) 30 feet. Move up right on sloping holds to a grass ledge at the foot of a steep grassy section.

(8) 80 feet. Traverse right, very exposed, for 30 feet. Then up a very steep groove to a small ledge.

(9) 75 feet. Straight up by an embryo chimney and a honeysuckle slab to a wobbly belay.

(10) 60 feet. Step left and up the incipient groove to easier ground.

(11) 100 feet. Easy ground trending right.

(12) 80 feet. Up a groove on sloping holds for a short way then traverse right. Up again by another groove to a belay.

(13) 25 feet. Scrambling to the top.

NOTE.—The pitch lengths given here are in some cases probably over-estimates.

First Ascent : 25th July, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam, W. R. Craster.

EIFL TOWER. 495 feet. Severe.

Takes the right-hand flank of No. 5 Buttress, converging on Avernus near the top.

A very good route, though not as good as Avernus ; it has the same characteristics as the latter climb, partly in lesser degree.

Start : In the right-hand flank of the buttress is a vegetated gully, with the steep nose of the buttress to its left. Start at the foot of the rocks left of the gully, reached up heather.

(1) 80 feet. Climb the rocks near the gully to a small cave near easy ground.

(2) 60 feet. Go up above and slightly left of the cave by an open chimney to ledges and a poor belay.

(3) 100 feet. Scramble to a belay at the foot of a block, and the steep wall.

(4) 45 feet. Up the vegetated chimney rather on the left to a tree belay beneath the wall.

(5) 60 feet. A fine pitch, very exposed. Traverse left a short distance until it is possible to ascend the wall and slab above to a ledge and belays.

(6) 30 feet. Scramble leftwards towards the rib on the skyline. Avernus is just to the left.

(7) 120 feet. Follow the easy airy ridge to the top.

First Ascent : 5th July, 1953. G. W. S. Pigott and J. N. Mather, H. G. Nicol and D. Thomas.

#### STONESHOOT GULLY.

To the right of No. 5 Buttress. An unpleasant scramble up gravel and loose rock ; dangerous during quarry working hours.

#### (vi) MOELWYNS

A first draft of the Moelwyn section of the Snowdon South and West Guide is available at the R. W. Lloyd Hut, giving details of 28 climbs. Climbs mentioned here must be confined to those made since this first draft was compiled (in 1953).

#### CARREG FLAEN-LLYM

This is split by a deep gully, Green Gully, on the right of the big broken front face.

#### GREEN GULLY

Perhaps Very Difficult, but not very nice. Three pitches, very vegetated and slimy, with dirty scrambles between. The second pitch, a chockstone, was taken by a slimy groove and vertical heather to the left. The third pitch was taken up the main branch to the left at the top.

First Ascent : 12th December, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

GULLY RIB. 150 feet. Moderately Difficult.

The rib to the right (north) of the gully, with three 50-foot pitches, steep, loose and rather pointless.

First Ascent : 24th May, 1953. S. Styles, A. Hughes, Miss H. Norris.

SUMMIT CRAG, MOELWYN BACH

The obvious crag above Carreg Flaen-llym, immediately under the summit of Moelwyn Bach.

On this is AGM RIB. 160 feet. Just Difficult.

A playful climb of no great moment.

First Ascent : 23rd August, 1953. Four members of the Feat Club.

CRAIG STWLAN

Two new routes have been made, of little significance, which appear to cover some of the same ground :

POCKED WALL. 105 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 12th December, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

BRASSINGTON WALL. 90 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 25th April, 1953. R. Ainsley, P. Barratt.

CRAIG DYN

DOCTOR'S DILEMMA.

The right-hand crack on pitch 6, done on a top rope on the first ascent, was led by D. P. Davis on 13th June, 1953. Severe, strenuous.

BLOCK. 165 feet. Severe.

A pretty little climb.

Start : Just right of Suave Start, beneath a small tree.

(1) 45 feet. Step up then right. An awkward move round a corner then up a slab and back left to a stance.

(2) 30 feet. Step off the belay to the right and up a pleasant slab to a loose block belay beneath a steep wall.

(3) 90 feet. Up steeply above the belay. The surmounting of a combined heather and gorse ledge is difficult. Then on up the steep slab, on small holds, as far right as possible.

First Ascent : 19th July, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, J. L. Longland, J. V. Rusher.

CHIC—DIRECT ROUTE. Hard Very Difficult.

Can perhaps best be used as a continuation of Block.

Start : From the huge grass corner at the top of pitch 4 of Chic ordinary route.

(5) 75 feet. Instead of traversing right make for the grove of bollards high above the corner.

(6) 25 feet. Climb the slab and crack to the upper and narrower grass rake.

(7) 60 feet. Traverse to the right on to the narrow grass rake, leading to the top of pitch 8 of the ordinary route. Finish up the latter.

First Ascent : 13th June, 1953. C. Bramfitt and party.

**BANDOLIER TRAVERSE.** About 500 feet. Hard Difficult.

Traverses the cliff from low left to high right. Other traversing lines are possible ; this climb tries to make an easy non-artificial route while avoiding the larger ledges as much as possible. Pleasant climbing and interesting rock scenery. Variations are possible on most pitches.

Start : As for Suave Start.

(1) As pitch 1 of Suave Start to the top of the pinnacle.

(2) 30 feet. Diagonally right and up to a ledge (large block belay).

(3) 60 feet. Up the heathery nose and neat climbing on the slab above to a large ledge with grass and blocks (end of pitch 3, Kirkus's Route).

(4) Walk to the far end of the ledge (belay).

(5) 70 feet. Traverse round the corner up an obvious slanting line and a short steep crack, arriving beside a mass of huge interlocking boulders. Over these to the ledge on the far side.

(6) 60 feet. Traverse horizontally to a good sloping ledge (thread belay).

(7) 100 feet of climbing. Up the ledge for a few feet then traverse on sloping holds to a thin crevasse behind a flake, about 4 feet wide. Follow this then swing down to a sapling at the foot of a steep groove choked with heather. Up the groove, occasionally on rock, to a grassy recess (belay on pinnacle above).

(8) 40 feet. On to the pinnacle then over a large detached boulder and climb to a ledge above. Some distance beyond is a big detached slab leaning against a wall (belay and stance beside it).

(9) 50 feet. Climb the crack separating the column from the face, round on the left, and step on to the top of the crag.

First Ascent : 16th December, 1953. G. J. Sutton, M. J. Bailey.

#### CRAIG TRI

Four routes have been described on this crag :

**Y DRAFEL.** 255 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 2nd June, 1953. D. H. Jones, G. Williams.

**MOUTON.** 230 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 12th December, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, G. J. Sutton.

**Y GELYNEN.** 280 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 27th July, 1953. R. Davies, G. Williams.

**TAITH-Y-PERERIN.** 350 feet. Hard Difficult.

First Ascent : 2nd June, 1953. G. Williams, D. H. Jones.

Some of the above routes may overlap in part. Detailed notes will be found at the R. W. Lloyd Hut.

#### CRAIG NYTH-Y-GIGFRAN

This crag is on the opposite side of the Cwm Orthin gap to the main crags in this district. The climbing is on its south-west spur, which has a south-west facet overlooking the quarry workings in the Cwm Orthin gap, and a longer south-east facet overlooking Tan-y-Grisiau.

To the left of the south-west facet is a grassy funnel with a small buttress to its left. A pleasant short scramble is to traverse into the chimney behind the large block at the toe of the buttress, back up on to the top of the block and step off on to the main slab behind ; this has been called PHYSICIST'S PLEASANCE. 90 feet. Moderately Difficult.

First Ascent : 16th May, 1953. G. C. Curtis, M. J. Harris.

The south-west facet has a shallow depression up its centre bordered by very low-relief buttresses on either hand.

TARRY. 150 feet. Difficult.

This lies up the left-hand "buttress," turning the main smooth section by a little crack round the corner facing north-west. Not of great consequence.

First Ascent : 16th August, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill.

BETIMES. 155 feet. Mild Difficult (the variant to pitch 2 is Very Difficult).

A pleasant short route. Uses the central depression.

Start : Below the depression.

(1) 20 feet. Scramble up foot rocks to the steep chimney forming the bottom part of the depression.

(2) 45 feet. Up a corner just left of the chimney then a slabby staircase to heathery ledges. Variation : Ascend the chimney for 15 feet to a belay and poor stance where it steepens. Pull over the overhanging wall at the top on the left to land on the heathery ledges.

(3) 35 feet. Up the heathery ledges, left of the crack in the bed of the depression, and pull over a large block on to a platform shut off by vertical walls.

(4) 55 feet. Escape over the left wall and traverse 25 feet left over slabs to a corner, then straight up, joining the line of Tarry.

First Ascent : 16th May, 1953. G. C. Curtis, J. Neill, M. J. Harris.

Variant to pitch 2 : 16th August, 1953. M. J. Harris.

THIN WALL SPECIAL. 130 feet. Just Very Severe.

Takes the right-hand buttress. Steep and exposed.

(1) 20 feet. Pitch 1 of Betimes.

(2) 15 feet. Variant to pitch 2 of Betimes as far as the belay and poor stance. Best to lead straight on.

(3) 55 feet. Horizontally to the right for 10 feet then work upwards, tending to the right near the top, to a stance on the crest of the buttress.

(4) 25 feet. The crest of the buttress, on good holds.

(5) 15 feet. Easier rocks to the top, preferably by the large flake on the left.

First Ascent : 6th September, 1953. C. Bonnington, C. W. Brasher.

The south-east facet starts with a vegetated chimney just round the corner from Thin Wall Special. After a broken belt comes a very large quartz slab with several small trees and much lichen, with two parallel cracks on the left leading to the rib of its left-hand crest. Farther to the right the face is hopelessly vertical until a vegetated chimney is reached. A tapering slab lies between this and another

vegetated corner converging on it, bounded on the right by a sharp overhanging rib terminating the face.

WHILES. 115 feet. Probably Difficult only, when dry.

Lies up the vegetated chimney at the left-hand end of the face. A poor and messy route.

First Ascent : 6th September, 1953. E. A. Wrangham, J. Neill.

AFRICA RIB. 220 feet. Very Difficult.

The left-hand crest of the big quartzzy slab. Quite an interesting route, though easier ground lies always to the left.

Start : Below the block pinnacle walling the left hand of the two parallel cracks leading to the rib, at two iron stakes driven into a slab.

(1) 80 feet. Step off above the stakes on to the lower part of the pinnacle and enter the crack, gaining the top by the pinnacle edge. Reach, awkwardly, the right-hand end of the steep face straddling across the way above, traverse right and up with a heathery grovel on to a large ledge with a rowan tree ; or use a crack at the left-hand end of the steep face to pull up to the left and so reach the rowan tree ledge.

(2) 70 feet. From the left-hand end of the ledge climb the rib to a quartz platform. Climb the rib above direct to a platform with a large block ; or reach this by a groove round the corner to the left of the rib.

(3) 45 feet. Up the crack above the platform, then the rib to a large heathery ledge.

(4) 25 feet. Climb the steep wall behind the ledge, slightly left of centre ; or, easier, step round the corner to the left and pull up on to the top.

First Ascent : 16th August, 1953. R. Buckland, J. Neill. (For previous ascent of pitches 2-4 see Usher's Dilemma.)

USHER'S DILEMMA. 220 feet. Severe.

Up the big quartzzy slab, deviating on to Africa Rib to find stances. A good route.

Start : About a third of the way along the slab from its left-hand end, at a small pedestal.

(1) 80 feet. From the pedestal step up on small holds, keeping to the left-hand part of the slab. At 40 feet there is a sentry-box with an awkward exit. When level with the rowan tree ledge on Africa Rib, traverse to it.

(2) 70 feet. Up diagonally right, under the overhang behind the tree, to small ledges at 20 feet. Then back diagonally left to directly above the tree. Straight up on tiny holds, delicate, to reach the platform with large block on Africa Rib ; or, easier, traverse left to the rib and up it to the platform.

(3) 45 feet. Regain the slab by grass ledges on the right. The overhangs soon compel one to return to the rib and climb it to the large heathery platform of Africa Rib.



(4) 25 feet. Step to the right on to the last narrow reach of slab, and up it on wonderfully rough rock to the top.

First Ascent : (Pitch 1 only, finishing by pitches 2, 3 and 4 of Africa Rib) 16th May, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. Neill, G. C. Curtis. Pitches 2, 3 and 4 added 16th August, 1953. R. Buckland, J. Neill.

DOUBLE CRISS. 125 feet. Just Very Severe.

Goes up between the two vegetated chimneys at the right-hand end to reach the conspicuous short crack at the top of the crag. A good short route ; very strenuous on the last pitch.

Start : Just right of the toe of the rib forming the left-hand edge of the tapering slab.

(1) 70 feet. Go up to a niche-ledge 10 feet up the crest of the rib. Then up the slab right of the rib, by pulling up a slight overhang, to reach the crest higher (the hardest move of the climb). Then up the rib to a large ledge with trees.

Or, from the ledge 10 feet up work left almost horizontally into the left-hand chimney. Higher up step right into the crack running up the face between the chimney and rib, and climb the crack to a pinnacle on the crest of the rib, where the other route is joined.

(2) 30 feet. Up the upper part of the slab, here very narrow, to a large grass ledge below the top crack.

(3) 25 feet. Up the crack by jamming.

First Ascent : 6th September, 1953. C. Bonnington, C. W. Brasher.

Variation Start : 6th August, 1953. M. J. Harris, J. V. Rusher (during an attempt on the climb).

#### (vii) LLEDR VALLEY

##### CARREG ALLTREM

This is the crag referred to in the 1952 Journal, at the entrance to Cwm Penamnen. Two routes have been made :

(1) Climb up just right of the main crack. Two nice pitches to gain the easy-angled slab.

12th December, 1953. A. J. J. Moulam, G. J. Sutton.

(2) Go straight to the holly tree half-way up.

12th December, 1953. G. W. S. Pigott, J. M. Barr.

(viii) LLECHOG (Cwm Clogwyn) } See forthcoming guide-book article  
(ix) MYNYDD MAWR } published by M.U.M.C.

(x) CWM SILYN, Etc.

See guide-book article in this Journal, except for outlying crags covered by guide-book article to be published by M.U.M.C.

## II. THE OUTLYING CRAGS OF NORTH WALES

EDWARD C. PYATT

I am indebted to R. E. Lambe and E. H. Lane for notes for this section.

### ARAN GROUP

#### CRAIG COWARCH

The main details of this crag are given in *C.C.J.*, 1950, p. 69 (see also photograph facing p. 69 and sketch facing p. 51). The rock mass left of the South Buttress is now named Far South Buttress. A crag called Tap yr Gigfran still farther south has been noted as a new possibility. As the extremely steep North Buttress is still untouched, this appears to be a good area for development.

DIAGONAL ARETE, South Buttress. 285 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 17th May, 1953. R. E. Lambe and S. H. G. Taylor (leading through).

A prominent feature of the South Buttress is a shallow gully which runs diagonally from right to left. It starts about 100 feet up the cliff, its line beneath this point being continued by the chimney and cave of Pitch 4 of Central Route (*C.C.J.*, 1953, p. 251).

Start : As for Central Route.

(1) 105 feet. The first four pitches of Central Route.

(2) 180 feet. Easily up the arête on the right of the gully.

OREAD, South Buttress. 340 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 26th September, 1953. E. Marshall, K. A. Wright and R. Simpson.

Start : The left half of the buttress below the terrace is a large triangular slab. At the lowest point of the left-hand edge of the slab is an easy-angled rib starting by a tree. Start on the left wall of the rib.

(1) 25 feet. Step across the wall to the edge, and up vegetation to a stance.

(2) 25 feet. Up the steep corner behind the belay to a stance, etc., below a small overhang.

(3) 30 feet. The overhang is climbed by a wide diagonal crack—awkward ; up a little, then traverse the slab to the right on grassy holds to a small belay.

(4) 110 feet. Up the wall above the belay (running belay at 15 feet). Then traverse delicately to the right into a groove and climb this to a small grass ledge. Continue to a small overhang and traverse left towards a tree. It is better to keep high until a short descent can be made on to a grass ledge by a tree.

(5) 30 feet. Step left and round the arête, which is then climbed to a steep slope of bilberries. Scramble up this to another tree.

(6) 120 feet. Stride on to a rock ledge on the right, and traverse right to the foot of a prominent buttress ; up a slightly overhanging corner on the right until a step can be made round on to the face ; up this until it relents, then scramble up grass to a belay.

Scramble to the terrace across the upper part of the buttress.

#### THE OLD MAN OF COWARCH

This strangely shaped obelisk, which stands on steeply sloping ground at the foot of the Far South Buttress, is some 25 feet high on its front face. The short side is easy. A route has also been made at the front—the Nose, 25 feet, Very Difficult, first ascent by R. E. Lambe, 28th June, 1953.

#### NODWYDD COWARCH

This fine pinnacle lies about threequarters of a mile due west of the farmhouse of Cae Peris, in a gully on the southern side of Nant Tyn-y-fedw. Viewed across the valley from Tap yr Gigfran its form is apparent as an upstanding spire, possibly 80-100 feet along its sloping front arête and 20 feet on the short back face. The western side slopes at a fair angle, but is practically devoid of holds, whereas the vertical eastern face is well supplied. The original route which makes its way up this wall, is Steilweg, 60 feet, Severe, first ascent by R. E. Lambe and R. O. L. Clarke, 13th June, 1953.

The short back face gives Kurzweg, 20 feet, Difficult, first ascent by R. E. Lambe, 13th June, 1953.

#### RADNOR

In order not to disappoint intending visitors it is perhaps advisable to point out that there are no crags in Radnor to compare with Clogwyn du'r Arddu or even with Clogwyn y Grochan. Climbers in search of the more difficult types of first ascent should look farther north in the cwms of Cader Idris, the Arans or the Rhinogs. The major possibilities of Radnor have now been worked out and even the hardest places offer only quite an amiable standard.

#### CRAIG Y FOEL

GREMLIN RIB. 160 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 23rd August, 1954. D. Binns and E. H. Lane.

Start : This climb is on the last prominent buttress at the south-west end of Craig y Foel. Start at the foot of the rib on the left side of the buttress and from the back of an Ash tree.

- (1) 40 feet. Easy rocks to a stance, etc.
- (2) 30 feet. Up the slab edge to where the rib steepens.
- (3) 30 feet. Traverse left round the foot of the rib and then straight up the edge to a stance, etc., on a rock platform.
- (4) 25 feet. Climb the broken rib ahead to a stance, etc., on a grass ledge.
- (5) 35 feet. Climb the wall on the right of the ledge then up the edge to the top of the buttress (some loose rock).

BOFFIN'S BULGE. 80 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 23rd August, 1954. D. Binns and E. H. Lane.

Start : Level with the top of pitch one of Tree Creeper and at the foot of a bulging slab flanked on its left side by a large Ash tree.

(1) 15 feet. The slab just right of the Ash tree.

(2) 25 feet. The slab straight ahead.

Walk 20 feet right to below a prominent buttress.

(3) 40 feet. Climb the buttress up its right side and finish out to the top by an overhanging crack.

CAREG DDU

CAIN. 80 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 4th April, 1954. E. H. Lane.

Just to the left of the gully that divides Central and South Buttresses is a steep rib with a slabby front face and a clean cut right edge.

Start : At the foot of the rib at its right edge.

(1) Go up a few steps and then cross the slab on the left for a few feet. Traverse back to the edge and up to a tuft of heather on a narrow ledge (poor stance).

(2) Follow the edge to the top.

CHIMNEY ROUTES 1 AND 2. Both 60 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 17th April, 1954. E. H. Lane.

On a detached buttress to the left of Adam.

CRAIG Y BWCH

DUSTY BUTTRESS. 125 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 5th June, 1954. D. Binns and E. H. Lane (sharing leads). A broken buttress between Abbot's Buttress and Solo Slabs.

SOLO SLABS. 60 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 16th April, 1954. E. H. Lane.

A sweep of slabs with a clean cut right wall, level with the top of Abbot's Buttress and well to the right of it.

LLANDEGLEY ROCKS

PINNACLE ROUTE. 45 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 22nd August, 1954. E. H. Lane and D. Binns.

### III. CORNWALL

EDWARD C. PYATT

BOSIGRAN PINNACLE

SPIDER'S CLIMB. 105 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 16th April, 1954. J. A. E. Hasell and R. Bruce.

Start : As for Central Climb.

(1) 40 feet. Follow the first part of the Central Climb to the Guillemot Ledge.

(2) 15 feet. Instead of traversing left along the ledge, go straight up cleft above to good belay on top of block.

(3) 50 feet. Step across left and traverse diagonally up a crack using underhand holds to the left below a slightly overhanging bulge, until an exposed wall is reached. Up this on small holds to a ledge. Then easily to the top of the Pinnacle.

#### PORTHGWARRA BUTTRESS

BRACE ROUTE. 130 feet. Mild Severe.

First Ascent : I. Richardson, B. Richardson and J. Davies.

Start : Right of a break going down the centre of the buttress is a large perched boulder. To the left of the break is a triangular platform below a smooth slab.

(1) 30 feet. Up the middle of the slab, bearing left to a deep crack below the prominent overhang.

(2) 50 feet. A descending traverse left for 10 feet, round the corner and up a crack to a small overhang. Layback over this and continue up thin crack to grassy platform.

(3) 50 feet. Traverse right on to slabs above a prominent overhang, bear right and up to the top.

(This route probably coincides in part with the climbs made here by C. F. Kirkus, which are described in the Guide-book.)

## IV. LYNGEN

J. C. H. DAVIS

### BLAAVANDSHORN

#### SOUTH RIDGE

This is the ridge leading from the col between Blaavandshorn and Vagastind. The ridge was reached by a gully to the left of that leading from the Vagastind glacier to the col. The gully is loose but often provides alternative routes of moderate standard on firm rock. The ridge is easy. First Ascent : 13th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, Gillian E. Northfield, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett. (NOTE : This is believed to be also the first ascent of the mountain. On reaching the top of the gully on the way down the party met R. G. Pettigrew and J. Allen who were attempting the first ascent by the same route. This coincidence, on almost the last major peak to be climbed in Lyngen, is a strange echo of the meeting between Elizabeth Main and G. Hastings in 1899 on Durmaalstind, which was one of the first.)

#### NORTH WEST RIDGE

A good, interesting and direct route to the top from Blaavand. Easy climbing leads to a 120-foot wall half-way up the ridge. This is the main difficulty, the easiest line appearing to be a diagonal crack to the right (standard : difficult). The ridge ends on good rock over a series of pinnacles which are interesting and very exposed on one side. First Ascent : 15th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, Gillian E. Northfield, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

**BRETIND (GLACIER PEAK)****EAST RIDGE**

A loose, but mainly easy ridge leading from the Spissthorn glacier. It steepens near the top. Here the party traversed right round a tottering pinnacle and up to a large sloping platform (standard: difficult). The steep wall ahead can be avoided easily to the right and behind. The route ends with a series of pinnacles most of which can be climbed direct in spite of appearances. First Ascent: 24th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

(NOTE: This is believed to be the first ascent of the peak. No cairn was found, but the actual top is too sharp to hold a stable one.)

**NORTH RIDGE**

An interesting ridge of moderate difficulty leading from the col between Bretind and Ruthtind. The rock is good and of brightly varied colours. The col may be reached easily either up a snow gully from the Spissthorn glacier or by a gentle boulder slope from Rodtindsdal. First Descent 24th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

**KLOFTTIND****SOUTH EAST RIDGE**

The left-hand skyline ridge as seen from the top of Blaavand. It rises in a series of steep steps whose faces show few lines of weakness. The route followed was on the north side of the ridge, where the angle is continuously steep but where there are many possible lines. The rock is rough and mainly firm, but there is loose debris on the ledges. The difficulty is mainly in route finding. Passages of difficult standard were found. The buttress levels finally into an interesting and airy ridge. First Ascent: 16th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, Gillian E. Northfield, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

**NORTH RIDGE**

The lower part of the ridge is an uninteresting boulder slope facing N.E. onto Blaavand. Higher up a col is reached from which the ridge appears to be composed of unclimbable slabs. In fact they provide excellent climbing of only difficult standard. Surprisingly, they appear much easier when descending. First Descent: 16th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, Gillian E. Northfield, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

**RUTHTIND****SOUTH RIDGE FROM EAST SUMMIT**

An easy and quick climb from the col between this summit and Bretind. First Ascent: 24th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

**EAST RIDGE FROM EAST SUMMIT**

The ridge proper can be gained up an uninteresting boulder slope from the snout of the Spissthorn glacier. Later it becomes narrower

and more interesting, but always easy. First Descent 24th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

## SPISSSTHORN

### EAST RIDGE

A straightforward ridge. All difficulties can be avoided easily. First Ascent: 20th August, 1954. Rosemary Baker, Gillian E. Northfield, J. C. H. Davis, P. M. Hewlett.

### FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE BLAAVAND REGION

The rock in this area is generally very rough and only occasionally greasy on the mountains. Contrary to the report of a previous party we found it ideal for vibrams.

Crampons are unnecessary on most expeditions, even for those who normally wear them.

We arrived at Lyngseidet on 4th August and were hardly troubled by the famed "mygg," rarely bothering to use anti-midge ointment. We felt that our departure date, 29th August, may have been a week too late, as the weather was bad and snow fell above 3,000 feet. The first half of August may be the most pleasant climbing period.

A camp site by Blaavand is an excellent centre for climbing but lacks wood fuel. We used petrol primuses and found them wholly satisfactory.

## EDITORIAL

The new Editor's first and pleasant duty is to congratulate his predecessor, Francis Keenlyside, on his deserved promotion to the *Alpine Journal*. Members of the Climbers' Club well know his qualities as an editor : *si monumentum requiris, respice*. We thank him for the five numbers of the *C.C. J.* for which he has been responsible, and wish him success in South Audley Street. He has already made his mark there as the man who cut the pages. Our business editor has also changed. Derek Bull, having increased the income from advertisements to a level which puts his predecessor to shame, has handed over to A. A. Bertram. Both earn the thanks, and sympathy, of the Club as a whole no less than of the Editor personally, in this dreariest of jobs.

In the wider mountaineering world, the event of the year was the ascent of K2. We salute the Italian success. But within the Climbers' Club, after the excitements and celebrations of 1953, the last year has seemed quite tame in its return to normality. Not that distinctions have been lacking. The award in the New Year honours list of the C.B.E. to Eric Shipton, our honorary member, gave fellow members of the Club almost as much pleasure as it gave, we hope, the recipient. We congratulate him. We also congratulate two other eminent honorary members on attaining new distinctions of another kind, namely in birthdays. Dr. Karl Blodig has scored 95, and Dr. Tom Longstaff 80. We offer our respectful and affectionate greetings to them both. In reply to a letter of congratulation from our President, Dr. Blodig has written from his home at Bregenz : "There are no barriers nor frontiers between men who feel the lure of the summits, of ice and snow, of the storms and the struggle . . . Two friends from your Club whom I shall never forget were my companions in the course of my life, Compton and Eckenstein ; and the beautiful days which I spent in Wales will for ever shine in my memory. I am most grateful for the friendship and friendliness your Club has shown to me, and I am proud to belong to you." As a token of greeting from the Club the President has sent him a copy of Wilfrid Noyce's *South Col*, signed by the author, and by members of the Everest party and other leading members of the Club.

Younger members have been climbing when the weather was fine (rarely), and often when it was not. An innovation in 1954 has been the arrangement of a programme of Club Meets in various centres at home, as well as the usual Alpine meet. The home meets have been fun ; we are going to have more of them. New climbs done in this country are recorded in the New Climbs section and in the interim guide to Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc, which is also being published separately as a pamphlet, on the model of the war-time pamphlet



guides. In the Alps, 1954 was a poor season and most parties returned with a lean harvest, with one notable exception, J. Brown and D. Whillans, whose ascents of the west face of the Dru and of a new route on the Blaitière mark a new stride forward in the renaissance of British Alpinism. Although not members of the Club, they are well known in North Wales, and have kindly collaborated in the account of their Dru climb which appears in this journal. Climbs done in the Alps by members included: Aiguille d'Argentière, north face (Nicol, Tyson; Blackshaw, Cunnington); Col du Pain du Sucre, north face (Blackshaw, Cunnington, second ascent); Aiguille du Peigne, Chamonix face and south-west ridge (Nicol, Clegg, Swallow, and Leys and Peacock, non-members); Aiguille de l'M, Ménégaux route (Nicol, Brown, Marshall, non-members); Aiguille de la Brenva, east face, route Boccalatte 1935 (Harris, Neill); Aiguille Croux, south-east face, and Aiguilles de Pra Sec, south ridge (Bourdillon, Viney, Rawlinson).

Meanwhile, Evans and Ball were with the New Zealand expedition to the Barun glacier. Chorley, Band, Fisher, Fraser and Wrangham constituted five-sixths of the Cambridge expedition to Rakaposhi. Davidson led an Oxford expedition to West Nepal which climbed two peaks over 20,000 feet and reached 21,000 feet on another, and collected geological and botanical specimens, butterflies, earwigs, lizards and mice. Godfrey Francis, on his honeymoon, made the first ascent of an 18,000-foot peak in Peru. Chaworth-Musters climbed Erciyas (Ergaeus Mons) in Turkey in February (1954). Simpson, Banks and Brooke returned from three years in Greenland. Gaukroger has been in Crete and Pullinger in British Colombia. Caukwell made the first ascent of the west face—a "last problem"—of Mount Kenya; unhappily his companion was killed on the descent. This year Evans is leader, and Band, Clegg and Mather members, of the Kanchenjunga expedition. Caukwell is going with the Kenya expedition to Himal Chuli.

Domestically, the Club has again been considering the problem of its continually increasing membership. Increasing size must gradually change the character of the Club, for a large club cannot have the intimacy and fellowship of a small one, which the majority of our members probably prefer. But the problem of numbers in the Club is but a symptom of the larger problem of numbers on the hills. In one way one welcomes the popularization of climbing; one likes to see more people enjoying a good thing. And yet each would enjoy it more if other climbers were fewer. But welcome or not, and perhaps it is selfish not to welcome it, popularization is a fact. And it brings a dilemma to our Club. Either the Club continues to multiply, gradually losing its character; or it limits its membership. But this can only be done by such drastic restriction of recruitment as would change the Club's character much more radically and, to most of us, distastefully, than size alone. A waiting list would keep out young climbers in their most active years and sever our traditional links with the University

and similar clubs. A formal qualification of climbing achievement would have to be stiff to be an effective sieve, and would keep out many for whom the Club has traditionally found room, who make up in enthusiasm what they may lack in rock climbing technique and who are often among our most loyal and best loved members. The Committee's policy is therefore to continue expansion at a limited rate, maintaining the traditional criteria for membership but keeping our door open to recruits known to fulfil them. Of two discomfortables oedema is preferable to hara-kiri.

We have heard with regret of the loss on Mount Cook in New Zealand of a party of three, including our member J. E. Young. Also in this party was John Hammond, not a member of the Club but known to many. He was in his early thirties, a civil servant. Not until after leaving Oxford did he take up climbing, but he became a brilliant rock-climber and a fine Alpinist. Until he left for a two-year tour of duty in Australia he was Secretary of the Alpine Climbing Group. He is a loss to British mountaineering.

Another loss, in a different category, is *Alpinisme*, the organ of the Groupe de Haute Montagne, which ceased separate publication last December, being amalgamated with the French Alpine Club journal, *La Montagne*. For full, accurate and up-to-date information about mountaineering activity, especially in the Alps, *Alpinisme* has been unrivalled. The last issue carried an admirable article by Sutton on climbing in Britain, which may open a French eye or two.

The British Mountaineering Council's Equipment Sub-Committee has published in the current *Mountaineering* a note on weak karabiners. Recent tests of random samples show that the ex-service karabiners widely sold and used in this country are of uncertain quality and often poor. At a load of only 500 lb. some have distorted beyond further use, and 1,000 lb. has been enough to pull them right open; only occasional specimens withstand  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton. Few will think this good enough for running belays, or even abseils, still less for linking climbing rope with separate waist loop. Tests of some foreign types sold in this country gave better results, although one cannot be sure that all karabiners of the types named are as good as the very few sampled. The figures were: Stubai, oval,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  oz.: 5,400 lb. (one tested); Stubai, oval,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  oz.: 1,700-3,300 lb. (nine tested); Austrian, pear shaped, 4 oz.: 1,700-3,300 lb. (three tested); <sup>M</sup>W PAT, Austrian,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  oz.: 2,800 lb. (one tested, without failure); Asmu,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  oz.: 2,240 lb. (one tested); Allain, aluminium alloy,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  oz.: 1,100-1,700 lb. (two tested).

It has been suggested that posterity would like a key to the photograph of the Everest week-end party which faced page 365 in *C.C.J.* 1954. Readers may like to annotate the picture, or to insert a reference forward to this page. The names were (left to right): Michael Ward, Lady Hillary, George Lowe, George Band, Anthony Rawlinson, Sir

John Hunt, Tom Bourdillon, Sir Edmund Hillary, Alfred Gregory, Hamish Nicol, Emlyn Jones, Charles Wylie, Tom Stobart.

The Editor acknowledges his thanks to those who have helped to produce this Journal, to all contributors and photographers, and particularly to the New Zealand Alpine Club for permission to publish an article and photographs relating to the N.Z.A.C. Himalayan Expedition 1954, and to Eric Hemery, the Dartmoor guide, for the photograph of Dewerstone.

## CLUB MEETS

### ALPINE MEET 1954

THE summer Alpine Meet was held in Löttschental from August 8th to 20th. Fewer members attended than hitherto, a total of nine being present together with one non-member. This limited number has the advantage that the party is more intimate, but the disadvantage that members tend to do the same things. The weather conditions emphasised this latter feature, as at any one time the number of feasible expeditions was extremely limited.

The weather indeed is in retrospect the main feature of the Meet. We started out up to the Löttschenlucke in an afternoon drizzle strongly reminiscent of Wales (this temerity aroused considerable local admiration), and on the last day 10 inches of wet new snow at 10,000 feet, together with thick mist, were equally reminiscent of late spring in Scotland. In the intervening period the whole party froze on the Ebene Fluhe, wallowed in the slush of the Konkordiaplatz, sampled the new téléferique from Blatten (Brig) to Belalp, played chess and, incidentally, did some climbing.

Undoubtedly the best ascent was a guideless one of the Jungfrau in very indifferent weather, followed by a marathon march back to Blatten. Meanwhile Keenlyside, with a guide, had ascended the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, which a week later, covered in new snow, defeated a strong guideless party. Other peaks ascended included the Tschingelhorn, Gspaltenhorn and Grosse Hockenhorn, this last from a new privately-owned hut on the Löttschenpass. Those who spent the night there felt it could not be recommended to those having a regard for cleanliness and hygiene. The only pass of note traversed was the Beichpass, which was interesting in mist and new snow, especially on the Löttschental side.

Had the weather been better there is no doubt that many more peaks would have been climbed. As a centre for such a function as a Club Meet, the situation seems almost ideal, with not only climbs of very varying degrees of difficulty surrounding

the valley itself, but easy passes leading to other areas equally rich in accessible peaks. Further, Lötschental appears to be visited by few English tourists, and those who feel that a Continental holiday is the better for hearing foreign languages spoken can get their fill of the local dialect—provided they can understand it. Prices are high, of course, but no more so than elsewhere in Switzerland, and the Pension Breithorn in Blatten seems an excellent pied-à-terre for climbers.

Members present were Richard Bartlett, John Clegg, Michael Dowler, Frank Fitzgerald, George Freeman, Francis Keenlyside, Terence Kermode, Louis Sancha and Adrian Struvé, while Hal Taylor, who has since been elected to membership, also attended.

E. J. CLEGG

## HOME MEETS

### WELSH WEEK-END, 27th/28th March

The lack of confidence in the popularity of meets shown by some of their oldest and strongest supporters or, it is rumoured, the fact that the Hon. Custodians were not on speaking terms about this time and had lost one another's addresses, led to a breakdown in the pre-organisation of this meet and 20 members had to be turned away because half the Hut space had been let to an outside body. Nevertheless the 24 members who did attend had a successful time in good weather.

The party divided into three groups, on both days. Two groups led vocally, if not physically, by Viney and Moulton-Barrett kept to the High Hills with expeditions on Cwm Silyn's Outside Edge and Western Gully on Ysgolion Duon. The third and largest group followed the sun down to Yr Eifl, where three ropes made the third, fourth, and fifth ascent of the 600-foot sea cliff. The climb is called the Eifl Tower, and is described in detail elsewhere in the Journal, and is well worth the 50-mile round trip. The car race back from the cliff was perhaps the most exacting part of the day's outing. On the Sunday the same party avoided the hail found by the Viney party, and sweated in shirt-sleeves on the Tremadoc Cliffs. There at least six V.S. ascents were done, a great deal of time being spent on the crux of Reinetta. Moulam and Disley found

a new route with a fine top pitch and called it Hail Be Be on account of previous entry in the Log Book.

#### EASTER MEET : KINGSHOUSE, GLENCOE, 16th/19th April

This daring and revolutionary project—a Climbers' Club meet in Scotland—was an astonishing success thanks to the rugged genius of the organiser. The weather was superb and 19 members and friends attended, to all of whom this was indeed a memorable meet—not even excepting the dirty and furious face which occasionally appeared from under the bonnet of a certain fast and magnificent motor-car.

Much good climbing was done on the Buachaille, and Clachaig Gully was climbed by a strong party, but the day which stands out in the memory was the day of the expedition to Garbh Bheinn in Ardgour, where the Great Ridge was climbed by 12 of the meet on one of those perfect West Highland days which are never to be forgotten by those who live them. A thousand feet of superb climbing of standard difficulty leading to and finishing on the very summit of the mountain. A part of the meet finished up with a fine climb on hard snow on Ben Nevis.

#### WHITSUN : SKYE, 5th/7th June

Nine members and friends attended this meet and their effort in making the long journey was well rewarded by perfect weather and good climbing. Part of the meet traversed the Main Ridge and such classical routes as Mallory's Slab and Groove and Cioch Direct were done in perfect conditions ; some new climbs were done on the Coruisk side of Sgurr Mhic Coinnich. Altogether this meet was a remarkable success and seems to be worth repeating.

#### WELSH 3,000's, 3rd/4th July

This was probably the least successful of the meets as its particular objective appeared to have only a limited appeal. Nineteen members and friends attended but some came only to climb and others had little serious intention of doing all the 3,000's. Still the round of the 3,000's was done by some of the party and done in astonishingly good time too ; and others no doubt enjoyed their climbing or other activities. It does seem,

however, that this meet, like the meet on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Ascent of the East Peak of Lliwedd, was a relative failure in that members of this Club do not like being brought to the hills for a specific purpose and insist on retaining their own freedom of action when they get there.

BRACKENCLOSE, 25th/26th September

This meet was memorable perhaps only for the quite appalling weather ; but some climbing was done on the Napes on the Saturday in a furious gale, and on the Sunday one large party will not for a long time forget Slingsby's route on Scafell in torrential rain with a gale blowing as well. Ten members attended.

J. A. F. WATSON

# CORRESPONDENCE

## EVEREST MEMORIAL AT HELYG

*To the Editor, "Climbers' Club Journal."*

DEAR SIR,

The part that members of the Club had played in the assaults of Everest deserved, I felt, some permanent memorial and the Committee agreed that the walls of Helyg might most fittingly display it. When approached, my handicraft master, Mr. Eric Saunders, accepted the job with enthusiasm, and his finished work is seen on the opposite page. The board is of fumed oak and the carving is copied from the air photograph which was printed in the Journal of the R.G.S. Our intention was to follow the chronological order of the expeditions from the top to the bottom of the board but unfortunately my original list was incomplete and it was necessary to add the names of Kempson, Wood-Johnson and Finch after the other names had been carved: the error in the spelling of Wood-Johnson (due to reliance upon the index in W. H. Murray's "Story of Everest") has now been corrected: as has also the omission of a year in Shipton's long sequence and of a second year for Warren. Mr. Saunders has shown the greatest patience and skill in making these amendments. I hope the board will be of interest to those who "come after." I believe that during these 32 years, between 60 and 70 Europeans (including the solitary eccentrics), shared in the great adventure, so that the Club has a record of which it may well be proud.

Yours sincerely,

H.R.C.C.

Harrogate Grammar School.  
20th December, 1954.

## MEMORIES OF LLIWEDD

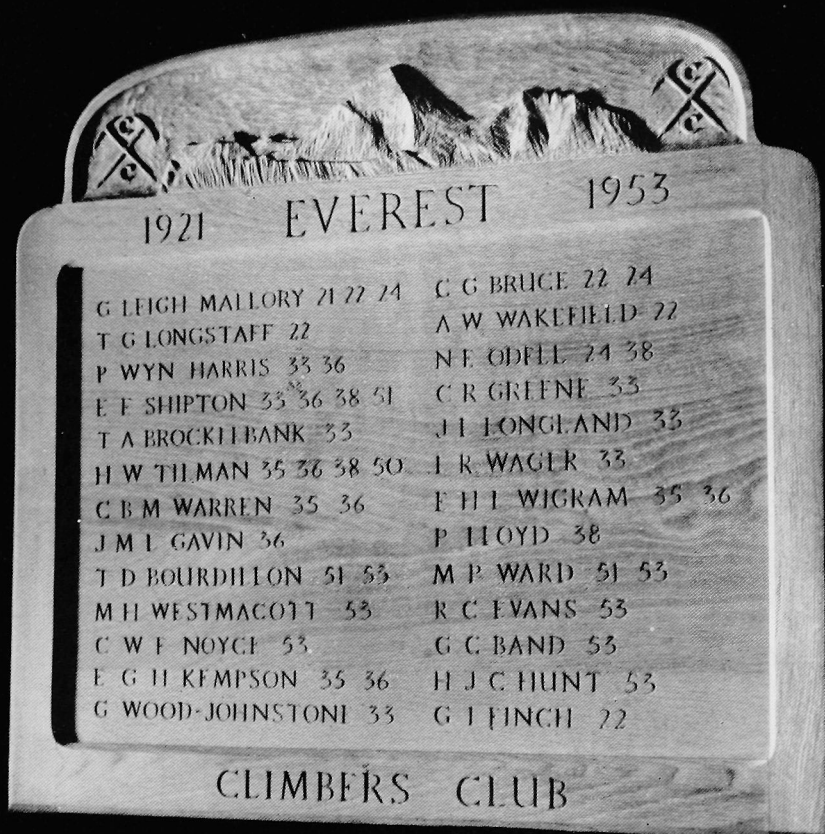
*To the Editor, "Climbers' Club Journal."*

DEAR EDITOR,

The recollections by A.W.A. in your last Journal, describing his pre-historic explorations on Lliwedd, have been most welcome; and may we hope that they are the forerunner of the book so long awaited from the originator of Cornish climbing and a pioneer on Welsh cliffs?

In this hope, may I reassure him beforehand upon a few points of doubt, raised in his article? Was it not a "Girdle" of the whole buttresses, and not the "Garter" of the east buttress, which he climbed with such rapidity, and with H. O. Jones? H.O. was killed in





EVEREST PLAQUE AT HELYG

*K. A. Crowther*



1912, and the Garter was first climbed in 1919 ; nor could the Garter traverse, with our then technique, have been taken " touch and pass."

The Slab, to which his name was attached, was in fact climbed by George Mallory to recover his pipe ; and the new Lliwedd guide is in error in calling it a " fable." The feat was entirely in the Mallory vein ; but it was not so accidental as it may sound. Many of us were concerned with that large unclimbed facet, and while lunching on the terrace above it during a climbing day, we had been looking down and discussing it. In the evening, George—only an occasional smoker—remembered leaving his pipe on the ledge. Next morning, in the first sunshine, when the rest of the Shack ran up to bathe in the little lake, George ran up the opposite way, on to Lliwedd, and up the Slab, down by an easier way, and back in time for our (traditionally) late breakfast at Pen-y-Pass. On the next day a large party of us repeated the climb.

The " Thank-god " hold on Route II. This name was not " invented " in the first Lliwedd guide-book. The name would have had no point but for its origin, and for the comic value of the repetition of the same exclamation, in turn, by a succession of relieved climbers. The incident is related in Carr and Lister's *Snowdonia*, on p. 84 in the new edition. The name was current with my parties by 1907, and had become almost a generic term for this type of surprise hold by the time we issued A.W.A.'s Lliwedd guide-book, in 1909. The author's wording in the earliest edition of the guide indicates that he had, then, the incident in mind.

Lliwedd assuredly will never cease to be haunted, and attractively, by the sturdy figure with blond hair, spectacles and rubbers, which used to wander alone among its high recesses, and look down blandly from surprising niches upon our struggles up " unclimbed " cracks.

G.W.Y.

## SPELLING OF CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU

*To the Editor, " Climbers' Club Journal,"*

DEAR SIR,

I should like to draw attention to a remarkable and continued error in British climbing literature, concerning the spelling of that most famous of crags—Clogwyn du'r Arddu. This frequently appears in print as Clogwyn d'ur Arddu or sometimes as Clogwyn dur Arddu. Now the words are quite obviously Welsh—Clogwyn du meaning " Black cliff "—and are equally obviously not of French origin. When this is borne in mind the correct spelling presents no difficulty.

It is particularly necessary to remove the impression, which the Club's Llanberis guide-book so definitely gives, that we do not know how to spell the name of the finest crag in our own guide-writing area. I should perhaps add that this Journal invariably employs the correct version.

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD C. PYATT.

# IN MEMORIAM

G. E. HUMPHRIES

George Edwin Humphries was killed on Good Friday, 1954, in a fall while leading Hiatus on Gimmer Crag. It was his twenty-fourth birthday.

George's capable enthusiasm had crammed successes and adventures into his short life. Boyhood reading of the mountaineering classics led him, by way of walking and cycling tours, to his first climbing and camping expeditions in the Cuillin and the Grampians while still at school. Head boy of his preparatory school, he became head of Abbey House at Sherbourne, where he obtained his rugger colours, became Company Sergeant-Major in the J.T.C. and scored a "possible" at Bisley in the Ashburton Competition at 200 yards. He left Sherbourne in 1948 with his H.S.C., all set to enter Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

National Service intervened ; first in the Welsh Guards, then at the O.T.S. at Eaton Hall, Chester, where as Senior Under Officer he received the belt of honour. "The proudest moment of my life," he once remarked. With the East Surreys he saw Athens and Italian Somaliland. In the event, when he left the army, his father's flour milling firm at Weybridge rather than the university claimed him, and in two years he had become an outstanding personality in the industry, qualified in technology and commerce and well meriting his directorship.

His mountaineering enthusiasm, perhaps enhanced by the unavoidable absence from the hills, could be allowed full expression on his return to private life. He went to the Pyrenees in 1950, and the following summer had his first experience of the high Alps in the Mont Blanc massif with a party under the tuition of Jean-Paul Charlet, climbing the Aiguille d' Argentière, les Courtes and Mont Blanc. Week-ends in Wales followed, and during the winter of 1951 and spring of 1952 he ran through the whole gamut of available climbing: Sussex sandstone, Midland grit, the Cairngorms at Christmas, and Easter at

Bosigran, with every few weeks the Friday night run from London to North Wales on his motor-cycle. So his climbing skill and experience grew.

His second Alpine season was at Zermatt, where in spite of bad weather he climbed the Rothorn, Obergabelhorn and Weisshorn with a small party of friends. It was typical of his prudence that he turned back when quite near the summit of his coveted Matterhorn rather than force the issue in adverse circumstances.

In the winter of 1952/53 he saw more British climbing, adding the Lake District to his acquaintance. By this time he had his eye on the "grandes courses" of the Alps for which his strength and ability well qualified him. Nevertheless, loyalty to his job circumscribed his holiday period and he was well content to spend one of his two precious weeks helping to lead a party of absolute novices on minor peaks in the Valais before joining his peers in the Bregalia. Bad weather dogged them, but an ascent of the North Ridge of the Badile seemed to mark the threshold of a great Alpine career. Instead it was his final climb of any note.

George Humphries had a great gift for liking people—and inevitably people of most diverse characters liked him. Liked is not a strong enough word; one felt drawn into close friendship with him at the first stage of one's acquaintance. His strong upright bearing, firm features and ever-present smile, would have instantly inspired confidence anywhere, and justifiably, since however more thoroughly one came to know him, one never found him wanting. His integrity and cheerfulness were there for all the world to see and he never failed to live up to that initial favourable impression.

Climbing was the ideal outlet for his super-abundant energy. He enjoyed every aspect of it, and although he aimed high, if circumstances forbade him he would extract equal pleasure from any possible alternative. His love was for the mountains themselves as much as for the opportunities they gave him, and he would describe a Scottish winter sunset as enthusiastically as he would a fine rock pitch which attracted him. Yet even though climbing filled such a large part of his life, he always found time to remember obligations to his parents, his friends at Sherbourne, and his work.

We know what an asset he was to the climbing world, although that was but one of the circles in which he moved, and which gained from contact with his character. We mourn that we can no longer delight in his company, but rejoice that he was so magnanimous with himself while he was here. The influence and example of George's sterling character will remain an inspiration to a great many people for a very long time.

Our sincere condolences go to his parents.

J. S. BROWNSORT.

### PETER DRUMMOND SMITH

Peter Drummond Smith and David Monro were lost on Ben Nevis during Easter, 1953. It appears that they were climbing South Castle Gully when they were swept down by an avalanche.

Peter was a quiet person with a self-effacing manner, almost shy ; but he had great determination and strength of will, making him an ideal companion on a climbing holiday. He started his climbing in the British Isles, but as soon as he could he made for the Alps, joining the Alpine Club meet in 1948 and following this with visits in 1951, 1952 and 1953. By 1952 he was leading such climbs as the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon (including the Knubel Crack) and the North Face of the Aiguille d'Argentiére. His technique was impeccable, but perhaps his judgment had not had the experience to keep pace with his climbing ability. Peter favoured the classic climbs, and although he was a most beautiful mover on rock, his preference was for snow routes, to give himself experience that he could employ in the future on other great ranges of the world.

His adventurous spirit, his self sufficiency and his keen appreciation of the beauty of things, shaped his way of life. Architecture (he had nearly completed his training), mountaineering, ski-ing, flying—this was his life ; one in which he was happy, and for which he would impose a rigid self discipline.

We have lost one of a sort all too rare ; but he will be remembered by his friends for courage, endurance, modesty, laughter ; and for his friendship.

C. W. BRASHER.

## ALEC EDWIN STORR—1899-1954

The sudden death of Alec Storr last December has brought sorrow to all his many friends.

Alec was born in Bedford, and spent almost his whole life, as schoolboy, undergraduate, and schoolmaster, in the level lands of Bedford and Cambridge. Shortly before coming up from Bedford Modern School to Queens' in 1919, he did a tour of North Wales, including some rock climbing, with a schoolmaster friend and a donkey; the donkey's rock climbing was confined to the precarious traversing of screes. From then on most of his holidays contained some climbing, for he had a natural love of mountains, he moved easily in any hill country and was always happy there.

In the early 'twenties the C.U.M.C. was becoming active again, and Alec took a share in this, being elected Secretary. His first tour abroad was to the Pyrenees in 1921, when he led an inexperienced party along the middle third of the range, camping on the Spanish side, and climbing Pic d'Aneto and other peaks. In the following year he went with C. M. Sleeman to the Alps (Graians, traverse of Matterhorn, Oberland), and during the 1920's he covered a lot of mountain country—many districts of the Alps, Pyrenees, Corsica and the Balkans. In 1926 he was in a party of four travelling through the Balkans and climbing Mus Allah in the Rhodope, Olympus and Ljubetin.

In 1930 Alec found that he was suffering from diabetes and thereafter his climbing was in this country. He was last at Helyg in April 1954, when his leading was limited to what his second could follow—not without help.

To me—and, I believe, to all who climbed with him—Alec was an ideal companion in the hills, calm, considerate, competent and full of interest. He played a big part in Perse School for over 20 years, being Housemaster for most of that time, and in command of the Cadet Force.

Alec was most happy in his home life, and his friends feel deep sympathy for his wife, daughter and son in their still greater loss.

M. H. SLATER.

We also record with regret the deaths of Lt. Col. C. B. Baxter, the Rev. C. S. Howard, B. C. Farthing, F. M. Murdoch, J. E. Young.

## REVIEWS

SOUTH COL. By Wilfrid Noyce. (Heinemann. 21/-.)

THE PICTURE OF EVEREST. Photographic reproductions chosen and explained by Alfred Gregory. (Hodder and Stoughton. 42/-.)

"Some day I hope that we shall be able to read the product of all that he wrote in that tent, or behind some bush while breakfast was brewing." *The Ascent of Everest* gave us this hint that *South Col* might be on the way, and it was intriguing to speculate what kind of book it would be. The possibilities were exciting, for a Himalayan expedition has not often been described by a writer of Wilfrid Noyce's calibre or, to put it in the phrase of John Hunt's foreword to the book, viewed for us "through the eyes of one who is not only a great mountaineer, but whose attitude to mountains is that of a poet." But what would this mean in terms of a book about the climbing of Everest? The subject seems to demand the form of narrative. *Mountains and Men* showed Wilfrid Noyce to be a master of evocative prose, but its emphasis was on mood and motive rather than on action or achievement; it was more essay than narrative. Moreover it was a "literary" book, and narrative does not need to be literary in order to be brilliantly successful. The tested ingredients of Himalayan narrative are restraint, clarity, vigour and humour; and these, one might think, are not the qualities for which one would look first to the man of letters or the poet. Yet that a poet may give the best narrative of all, setting the full excitement of action against a background of the feelings which are as real as the excitement but far harder to articulate, we know to be true for the Alps from the writing of Geoffrey Young.

It would be stupid, of course, to say that *South Col* is a better, or a worse, account of the expedition than *The Ascent*. The two books are naturally entirely different in purpose, let alone in treatment. *South Col* is a personal story, which one might therefore expect to stand in the same relation to *The Ascent* as does *Camp Six* to Hugh Ruttledge's account of the expedition of 1933. Its aim is to give an intimate description of one man's experience, and so to convey, as the collective account hardly can, something of what it was like to be a member of the expedition. This sounds a deceptively modest undertaking: "Usually I am left, however good the book, with a myriad trifling but persistent questions in my head. What does it feel like waking up? Did he ever change his underpants? What did he actually say to the Sherpas when they gave up, and could they understand? Just what did he think of when he was trying to get to sleep in that high wind?" It does not seem to need a very gifted writer to tell us the answers to these questions. A little later in the preface, however, we come to the second reason for writing the book: "I needed to grind into words



something of the emotion that was holding me ; not only at the beauty of slope and cliff and cloud and pinnacle, but also at the sense of common endeavour. . . . When we were exploring the country south and west of Everest in April, from every height the huge black pyramid dominated a complete circle of princely peaks, just as it dominated our common thought. It stood there like a presence summoning us, hemming our every view. Now we have trodden upon it in company and climbed it. The desire to record this fact artistically is as natural as would be the urge to describe a Miserere in the Sistine Chapel." This is not the language, or the mood, of a book which is going to be commonplace.

The two passages from the preface, however, suggest a danger : are not the two aims going to be a difficult pair to run in harness ? One may write of changing underpants, or one may write an artistic record ; but can one, in the same book, do both ? The attempt might be thought likely to result in a sort of literary see-saw, on which the reader is now comfortably grounded, now suspended thrillingly aloft, but cannot enjoy either of these situations because of having to adjust himself to the abrupt switches between them. In fact the result is nothing of the kind. The reason is difficult to explain, although it may also be the reason why *South Col* is not only another fine account of Everest, but also quite different from anything yet written about the Himalaya. The language of the book perhaps gives the clue. Some of the writing is so simple that we may tend to overlook how careful is the choice of words throughout. Whether the description is of the initial telephone call from London or of the moment of arrival on the Col itself, the sole reason for which language is used is to convey a true effect. This, of course, is what words are for ; "fine" writing is valueless and tiresome unless it is real. Most good climbing books do not attempt fine writing because their writers, being modest literary technicians, know the dangers of it and prefer the safer medium of straight-forward narrative. When well done, this can be eminently satisfying, but it inevitably leaves important parts of the picture only sketched in, since the writing has to be concentrated upon events. The vividness which it achieves is that of action and of endeavour. *South Col* is narrative of a different kind. It is nothing if not vivid—not least in its descriptions of the climbing—but it does not rely upon the dramatic interest of events to give it this quality. It achieves it seemingly without effort, as an incidental consequence of its purpose of putting into words the undistorted picture of what it felt like to be there. This purpose is brilliantly effected ; whether the language is moving or everyday, it reads equally true. Even if the author were a less sensitive observer, there would be more than technical artistry in being able to employ words so effectively. So the two aims which Wilfrid Noyce had in mind do not after all turn out to be opposites, though a less skilful writer might have made them so. As he handles them, they do not even appear distinct. The result is a book which in a quite distinctive way is as good as anything in mountain literature.

I hope this does not make it sound a formidable book, or as if it were some sort of intellectual exercise to read it. There are many pleasing incidentals : George Band and *The Hunt Manual of Man Management* ; Michael Ward's prescription, "Try this, it's no bloody good" ; Charles Wylie eating grape-nuts off a spanner—"he seemed to get very few in each time." Considering how familiar the story of the climbing of Everest now is, one is surprised to find oneself as much absorbed, reading it from a new angle, as if one were reading it for the first time. Being only one man's story, *South Col* does not have to find space for as much as did *The Ascent*, and can therefore afford to be a more leisurely book, spreading itself on detail. The roles of very few of the climbers overlapped for long at a time, so that the accounts of any of them would add to our first-hand knowledge of how the mountain was climbed. Wilfrid Noyce perhaps spent more time above Advanced Base in the critical last fortnight than any other climber ; he pioneered the upper part of the route to the Col, went there a second time with a load and without oxygen, was in support at Camp VII when the first assault party came down and at Camp VIII when the summit pair returned there on the day of the final climb. He gives us much new detail of these exciting phases, as well as of some of the less dramatic events lower down.

Good maps, a large selection of photographs, with four in colour, a number of black and white drawings by A. J. Veilhan and also end-paper portrait sketches illustrate and add to the entertainment of the book. Another form of illustration is provided by the few poems, written on the expedition, which are printed at the end. These also deserve more than one reading.

Not being a serious photographer and knowing still less of the technical difficulties of reproducing coloured photographs, I can only write of Alfred Gregory's book, *The Picture of Everest*, from a layman's point of view. The volume, which is sumptuously produced even down to its wrapper, consists of about 50 photographs, all of them in colour and mostly occupying a whole page, 11 inches by 8½. Facing each photographic page is a clear, non-photographic commentary, technical information being kept to a single line for each picture and a few notes on High Altitude Photography at the end of the book. The final endpaper, which might easily be overlooked, rather unexpectedly gives us a beautifully worked out chart, in the form of a graph, showing the movements of all members of the expedition during the whole period on the mountain.

A decision of policy must have had to be faced at the outset : whether to produce the book as we have it, at a cost of two guineas, or whether to do it more cheaply and so to produce something quite different. To have done it more cheaply would presumably have meant monochrome instead of colour. I imagine that it is easier to achieve technical perfection in monochrome and that, at 10 or 15 shillings less, we could have had a good many more pictures. The decision to disregard these considerations was a bold one, though it

cannot have been easy to resist in view of the quantity of first-rate coloured material available. The result is certainly not to be regretted by a reviewer who has had the advantage of seeing a free copy. Unless the colour is really bad, there can be no doubt of its superiority to monochrome, as is shown by the coloured plates in *The Ascent* and *South Col*. Admittedly it is noticeable that the shades of colour in *The Picture of Everest* are not always faithfully captured; Charles Evans, for example, appears dressed in mauve on the South Summit, but in blue on his return to the Col. Whether infidelities of this kind are due to film and exposure or to reproduction I do not know. The important point is that even with these imperfections the colour adds enormously to the beauty of the pictures; there is not one of them which it is not a great pleasure to look at. Some of the approach march scenes are particularly striking. Almost any one of these might be singled out for special mention, but for a contrast between two very different types of brilliant effect obtainable with colour film I should choose the pictures headed "A Camp on the March" and "A Valley in Nepal." The most effective glacier scenes are those in which the snow and ice do not appear too blue, for example "Approaching Base Camp" or "The Western Cwm."

On the upper part of the mountain, the Lhotse face is a little hardly treated; only two of the pictures included were taken on this 4,000-foot stretch, and neither of these shows the nature of the climbing. This is the only point of selection of which one could complain. The pictures taken on the South Col and above it are a wonderful series, with the emphasis on action rather than on panorama. It is interesting to compare the coloured picture of the summit ridge which appears at page 204 of *The Ascent* with *The Picture's* view taken from the same spot about four hours later, on the descent. In the latter the sun has moved round to the opposite side of the ridge, and there is the vital difference of a single line of steps running up the snow. It is also worth comparing the famous summit picture as it appears in the two books. The frontispiece of *The Ascent* does not seem an unworthy reproduction, but in *The Picture* it has a sharp and brilliant quality which makes the other appear almost flat by comparison. We are reminded that, although there may still be an unpredictable element in attempting reproduction in colour, the pictures in this book make a superb collection which puts us still further in the debt of those who were in charge of the photographic side of the expedition.

A. D. M. Cox.

OUR EVEREST ADVENTURE. By Brigadier Sir John Hunt. (Brockhampton Press. 12/6.)

*The Ascent of Everest* has already been reviewed in these pages. Now we have in convenient and attractive form, and at a most reasonable price, a picture book containing over 150 of the best expedition photographs. It is a friendly, informal book, and in its own way as

worthy a record as its weightier (and more expensive) predecessor. The descriptive text consists of extracts carefully selected from this book. The continuity of the story has been skilfully preserved, although the compilers have allowed a few gratuitous errors of fact and grammar to creep into the narrative.

The selection of the photographs has been an outstanding success. They make us feel personally involved in the adventure—far more than do the prints in the lush continental picture books. “Band demonstrates the portable radio to Hunt,” and we are immediately beside them on the meadows of Thyangboche. There is one exceptionally beautiful scene of Base Camp after a snowfall (p. 39). Then we follow the tortuous route through the ice-fall, the various techniques employed to overcome this obstacle being particularly well illustrated. From the top of it there is a spectacular view back to Lingtren (p. 67), while the colossal scale of the surroundings is conveyed vividly by two superb pictures of the Western Cwm (pp. 69-70). As we take part in the establishment of the high camps, the tension builds up towards its climax. The drama of the first assault is captured in the glimpse of two distant figures returning from the South Peak. What story will they have to tell? The final push to the summit is lavishly illustrated with more than a dozen photographs, and the last few in the book are sheer delight.

J. B. TYSON.

EVEREST. THE SWISS EVEREST EXPEDITIONS. (Hodder and Stoughton. 42/-)

The spate of books on Everest continues; is it 10, 11 or 12 in the last three years? Luckily a good proportion of them are worth not only reading but even possessing. Even at 42/- *Everest*, the book of photographs of the two Swiss expeditions, falls definitely in this latter category. Every stage in the production of this book from the dust-cover and binding to the actual reproduction of the photographs stamps it as Swiss craftsmanship at its best. And indeed the gravure blocks by Conzett and Hüber of Zürich are, I think without exception, the best I have ever seen. The blockmakers have succeeded in the mountain pictures in reproducing all the subtlest tone variations in the snow highlights without losing anything at the other end of the scale, and in some of the portraits the modelling is exceptional.

Of course fine blockmaking is of little use without fine cameramen. The photographs were taken by most of the members of the two expeditions, and there is a marked variation both in the technical and the artistic standard. At least 20 of the 144 photos would not have been missed. The best are however quite outstanding and there are few sets of Himalayan photographs that can stand comparison. Sella, as always of course, a few of Smythe's, and some (in smaller format and of only average reproduction) from Bechtold's Nanga Parbat Adventure come immediately to mind.

There are several fine shots of the approach march, while Namche Bazaar and Thyangboche are treated with disappointing brevity. On the mountain itself No. 52-3, a double page spread of the ice-fall camp with Pumori towering behind, is outstanding. On the higher parts of the mountain the standard falls off and there is some dead wood. The last section of the book is devoted to portraits of Sahibs and Sherpas photographed by Dyrenfurth and Roch. They set for portraits an altogether new standard. Two deserve special mention : No. 142, of a young Sherpani of breath-taking beauty, has all the quality of a high-class studio portrait ; No. 143 is of Dawa Tondup and little inferior to the other. There are few close-up action shots, but anyone who has tried his hand at this in the Himalayas knows the almost insuperable difficulties and will forgive them.

There are several points of interest to the photographer. Because of the precision of these high-quality blocks it is possible to compare the performances of what seem to be half-plate and 35 mm. negatives. Only when perfection has been achieved at each stage of processing and a large proportion of the negative has been used for the final print does 35 mm. begin to compare with the larger size. There are many photos here where the grain is appalling and definition bad. But the larger camera only just penetrates into the Cwm and so beyond the smaller camera comes into its own. This is of course *the* argument for the small camera : it can be taken to and used in places where the larger size cannot. But it is also an argument for taking both large and small cameras on an expedition. It would be interesting too to know whether Lambert's pictures taken on and around the South Col are black and whites taken from colour transparencies.

The book is completed by a useful and concise narrative, maps, excellent little engravings to show the route, and eight large colour plates which, for colour, are commendable. All in all it is a fine production.

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

FORERUNNERS TO EVEREST. By René Dittert, Gabriel Chevalley, and Raymond Lambert. Translated by Malcolm Barnes. (Allen and Unwin. 15/-).

It does not seem to me that many people will read this book. There have now been published in English at least seventeen books about expeditions to Mt. Everest, and there may be others I do not know about. There are two more threatened. In time no doubt the Everest library will rival that of books written about Napoleon and his wars, of which there are said to be 7,000. It is true that there are non-mountaineers like my local book-seller who apparently read almost every mountaineering book that is published, and for these this book will form an essential chapter in the story of Everest. For others it is likely to remain a book that was produced too late, and without sufficient intrinsic merit to justify its lack of topicality. I fear it is

destined to be bought to complete sets of official Everest expedition books, and so to remain on the shelf, well bound and unread.

It is however a somewhat unusual book. After a mere four pages one has left Katmandu en route for the mountain, a wholly praiseworthy economy in baggage descriptions. Thereafter the entire book is in journal form, the blown-up diaries of Dittert for the spring attempt, Chevalley for the autumn attempt, with inserts from Lambert describing his high climbing on both expeditions. This form can only be justified if there is no one in the party capable of writing in a more literary and less disjointed way, and if the story recorded is of outstanding topical interest. But of course events passed it by, and it is the misfortune rather than the fault of the authors that the English version came out only some months after Hunt's record of the successful ascent. An additional disadvantage of this form is that it has led to duplication ; one is given for instance no less than three descriptions of the travel between Katmandu and the Base Camp, two out and one back.

Perhaps the greatest advantage this book possesses is that it is an account of the only significant non-British Everest expedition. Thus it tends to show things from a slightly different angle. The Swiss are famous as a systematic people : " We changed tent partners every evening and so avoided the possibility of cliques and maintained a general camaraderie." Dittert is a realist and writes with candour : " As soon as I am rested, I forget all my weariness, all my anxieties, all my desire to be down again as quickly as possible and, as soon as I get back to Geneva, certain that I am absolutely truthful, I will tell my friends about our first reconnaissance of the South Col as if it were a pleasure party in which it was a pity they did not take part." Dittert shows that he can write well up to his theme, as when he first sees Everest and writes : " . . . that it reaches to the forbidden gates and to the very limits of life." Lambert also although inclined to remain down to earth produces on occasion a striking phrase ; during the account of his and Tenzing's astonishing bivouac above the South Col we come across : " In the sky the stars were so brilliant that they filled me with fear." On the whole these men keep their pens under strict control, though " We marched in a bluish void extending both to the distances and the depths, impregnating all things within it with infinity," rather misses the mark.

The translation is good. The book almost reads as if it were originally written in English. " Wadded jackets " for duvets sounds rather curiously ; and it might have been well to have checked the accuracy of the remarks on page 120 about the Yellow Band, and then changed or omitted them. To state that the Yellow Band was the place " where all the attempts on the north side had broken " is manifestly incorrect. The photographs are well below the standard one has come to expect from modern climbing and travel books, and do not approach the quality of those illustrating the books of the German Himalayan expeditions of the 1930's.

Finally, a great deal of play is made with the phrase "No victory for pioneers." The Swiss have no need to make excuses for not having reached the top. Their mountaineering calibre is too well known for it to be necessary to introduce pettiness of this sort. Moreover the moral is clear without it having to be underlined, and the reader is left marvelling at the toughness of the men whose deeds this book records.

E. A. WRANGHAM.

ALONE TO EVEREST. By Earl Denman. (Collins. 16/-.)

For his attempts to reach the summit of Everest, Mr. Denman had two assets: one was an obsessive desire to climb the mountain and the other was a firm grasp of inessentials. In his writing of this book he reveals also an admirable lack of self-consciousness and a lack of any sense of humour that could be applied to his own actions. (One need look no farther than the appalling portrait of the frontispiece for evidence of this. Most climbers would go to great lengths to destroy such a photograph of themselves.)

He has written an honest and straightforward account of his expedition to the Virunga mountains in Central Africa, and of his attempt on Everest via the North col in 1946, interpolating into these accounts observations on such subjects as the habits of gorilla and the political situation in Sikkim, and explanations of his motives for climbing. These last do not satisfy the present reviewer, but are perhaps no worse than most efforts of the kind. The log of his travels is interesting and on the whole well written, but is of little practical use to anyone wishing to follow in his footsteps. Mr. Denman is a traveller who considers any non-essential article an encumbrance (p. 23) but takes a set of chest expanders with him on mountains (p. 39). On the summit of Mikenno he insists on noting that he had "no thoughts of colour or social standing" (p. 71). This glorious irrelevance extends to more important matters, "... I was in fine fettle, my face bearded, the soles of my feet hardened. Only a constant gnawing pain in my stomach gave rise to any suspicion of trouble" (p. 80).

On Everest Mr. Denman again proved, to others if not to himself, that single-mindedness and sheer obstinacy are no substitute for the "ordeal by planning" and the ordinary mountaineering skills. When all is said and done, however, he did make his way to the North col, or very near it, with amazingly little in the way of material resources to back his attempt. One may feel that those resources would have been better used for a less ambitious expedition and one may think Mr. Denman lucky to have returned unharmed, but the fact remains. "Alone to Everest" is no misnomer.

M. H. WESTMACOTT.

NANGA PARBAT. By Karl M. Herrligkoffer. (Elek Books, pp. 254. 21/-.)

This is the official account by its organiser and doctor of the 1953 Austro-Bavarian ascent of Nanga Parbat, to which is added a lengthy

description by the translators, Eleanor Brockett and Anton Ehrenzweig, of the earlier expeditions to the mountain. The unofficial accounts have raged, contradictory and embittered, in the Bavarian newspapers and law-courts. One is faced, therefore, with the task of assessing the book in the knowledge that members of the expedition have denied statements included in it. Herrligkoffer says that of the nine members of the party, six have remained his friends ; it is probably a tribute to his fairness that the reader cannot identify with certainty all the three with whom he broke. Hermann Buhl, who reached the summit alone, was certainly one, and Herrligkoffer wisely allows the story of Buhl's two days above the top camp to be told in his own words and those of his companion, Kempter.

This tension, of which the most innocent reader would be aware, for unmentioned accusations are constantly being refuted, is depressing ; the performance of the climbers deserved a better spirit. Buhl, in particular, is obviously as fine a mountaineer as any in the world and his solo performance is without parallel.

The climbers were favoured by amazing and dramatic good luck. They established Base Camp at 13,000 feet on May 23rd and by June 18th they had set up Camp IV at 22,000 feet and had pushed on beyond it and traversed the flank of the Rakhiot Peak, the chief climbing difficulty. After a brief recoil, forced by bad health and snowfalls, the assault began on June 27th. But on June 28th bad ice conditions and further heavy snowfalls drove them back, and it appeared that the monsoon had begun and they were defeated. Then, on June 30th, the weather improved almost miraculously ; it was to hold for a fortnight. In a dash for the summit they got porters across the Rakhiot ice wall on July 2nd and placed Camp V, the highest, at 22,640 feet. The summit was 4,000 feet above them, beyond a drop of 300 feet, and several miles away. The next morning Buhl set off before his companion, Kempter, and outdistanced him. He reached the summit just before dark and was forced to bivouac, standing, about 450 feet below the top. So as to travel light he had left his rucksack at the foot of the Fore-Summit and he had neither food nor drink, no tent-sack, no spare clothing and was wearing one thin pullover. The night was windless and he says that he suffered rather little ; certainly his feet were much less frostbitten than might have been expected. He spent the whole of the next day struggling down to Camp V, where two other climbers had joined Kempter. They informed Herrligkoffer by radio that, until oxygen arrived, there was no point in going in search of Buhl and they spent their day fixing a memorial plaque to the victims of the 1934 disaster. Buhl, who was almost literally dying for a cup of tea, arrived as the plaque was in place.

The translation appears to be sound and competent, though there are occasional oddities of phrasing which suggest unfamiliarity with mountains and mountaineering, and the translators have clearly had difficulties with some rather Wagnerian phraseology. Most of the



numerous photographs are good, some are superb, and the artistically inferior ones are topographically interesting. The summary of previous expeditions, too, deserves praise. It is particularly interesting to have a full account of Mummery's attempt with photographs showing his route. One reader at least had never before realised the magnitude of his achievement on a route which is much harder than that chosen by subsequent parties.

DOUGLAS HEWITT.

ANG THARKAY. *Mémoires d'un Sherpa*. Recueillis par Basil P. Norton. (Amiot Dumont, Paris.)

Ever since General Bruce introduced Sherpas as high altitude porters on the early Everest expeditions, they have steadily won for themselves a pre-eminent position in Himalayan travel and in many cases they have been an indispensable factor in the success of an expedition. The relationship that has grown up with the best of them is reminiscent of the old client-guide relationship of a hundred years ago (although it would be silly to press this analogy too far), and nearly every account of Himalayan expeditions speaks of the Sahibs' admiration and affection for them. So it is not surprising that a biography of Angtharkay (the reviewer prefers the more familiar form), second only to Tenzing in fame, should now appear. These memoirs come by a circuitous route: they have been put together by a Mr. Basil P. Norton from interpreted conversations with Angtharkay in Darjeeling, and subsequently translated into French. And so there is an unevenness about this book: in places an engagingly simple and effective narrative comes through; in others the work of Mr. Norton is rather evident. Perhaps, however, this was inevitable.

Like most autobiographies it begins "I was born in the year . . .", in this case the year Tak-Lak-Te, the year of the Monkey or 1907. And born apparently of a romantic marriage. His mother, who came from a village near Shekar Dzong, was forced to flee Tibet because of the attentions of the village headman, and sought refuge at his grandparents' house near Thyangboche. The first part of the book is reminiscences of life as the eldest son of parents poor even for those parts. There follows an account of life and customs in Sola Khumbu. As he grows older he accompanies his father on travels to trade in Tibet and to the South. They are great wanderers, the Sherpas; in 1933 he happens to run into his father near Camp 1.

At the age of 20 he meets a friend who has just returned from an expedition, and forthwith resolves to become a porter. The account of his journey to Darjeeling to join an expedition (to discover that it has just left), of being down and out in Darjeeling, and finally of being accepted for the 1933 Everest expedition, is the best part of the book. As a "new boy" on the expedition he is much teased, and his anxious enthusiasm both to do well and for this new life contrasts delightfully with the blasé attitude of the old hands. However, he does do well and

joins the select company of "Tigers." His name is now known, and soon to become a cook, and later a sirdar, he is on many of the major expeditions: Everest again in 1935, 1936, 1938 and 1951; Nanda Devi in 1934; the Karakoram in 1937 and 1939; Annapurna in 1950; not to mention many lesser trips. A formidable record.

His accounts of expeditions are mainly of the approach marches, of the difficulties of life on the march for the Sherpa and of the trials of the job of sirdar. But over the years there is increasing contact with the Sahibs, and the lot of the Sherpa seems to become easier. Ang-tharkay obviously prefers the more free and easy ways of the small expedition; of his autumn visit to the Nanda Devi sanctuary with Shipton in 1935, we read: "Cette fois c'étaient des vacances."

The few photographs in the book are badly chosen and reproduced. There are several errors of fact, in particular in regard to Sherpa fatalities, which give an unnecessarily pessimistic view of their expectation of life and which the editors should have checked. But these details apart, it is a pleasant picture of an attractive and famous personality.

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

THE MOUNTAIN WORLD FOR 1954. Edited by Marcel Kurz. (Allen and Unwin, 25/-.)

*The Mountain World for 1954*, which is the second of the post-war English translations of *Berge der Welt*, might be described aphoristically as the Annual Himalayan Digest. Like any digest it has to present, concisely, the facts, but unlike a mere book of reference the narratives are embellished here and there by pleasant descriptive passages or personal, human touches.

The bulk of the book rightly deals with the recent expeditions to such mammoth peaks as Everest, K2, Nanga Parbat, Manaslu, Dhaulagiri and Nun. Being restricted for space the accounts are necessarily factual but, none the less, the authors in varying degrees have been (fortunately) unable quite to exclude the moods and emotions of their adventures. Nanga Parbat is narrated with Teutonic thoroughness and humourlessness; the American expedition to K2 positively exudes the team spirit, schoolboyish but obviously sincere; Everest by Noyce is written very competently and the account, which will be widely read in several languages, will do ample justice to this fine British achievement.

The Japanese account of their attempt on Manaslu serves to remind us that Japan is a country of mountains and mountaineers. They are charmingly and disarmingly honest about their reasons for failing to attain the summit; they could have blamed equipment or technical obstacles, but instead they bluntly admit that "it was our total lack of experience which let us down just below the top." One cannot help feeling and hoping that in such an attitude of rigorous self-criticism lie the seeds of future success. The French and Swiss stories are told

with a graphic force and gusto which the others would do well to emulate. A final and useful chapter is contributed by the Editor, Marcel Kurz, which sums up and fits neatly into chronology for us recent expeditions.

Perhaps because I have recently returned from Greenland the several Arctic chapters failed to impress me. They give accounts of much man-packing but little climbing—so often the lot of the unhappy Arctic climbing aspirant. The two technical treatises on seismology and botany are out of place in a climbing book and would better have been relegated to the relevant scientific journal.

The volume is lavishly illustrated and, for 25/-, represents excellent value. For those who are prepared to wait a little and then accept a "digest," it is an economical, pleasant and efficient means of keeping abreast of mondial climbing expeditions. It is to be hoped that the English translation of this annual is now with us to stay.

M. E. B. BANKS.

HIGH MOUNTAINS. By Charles Meade. (136 pp., 11 illustrations. Harvill Press, 15/-)

Many recall with gratitude Mr. Meade's excellent *Approach to the Hills* which brightened that crepuscular year, 1940. The present work is an expansion of two paragraphs on page 190 of that book, but while the earlier was a record of mountain adventure, the later is didactic.

The author sets out to explain the peculiar characteristics of the feeling for mountain scenery, a task well worth undertaking. Unfortunately he limits his enquiry to one direction. He starts out by assuming that "nature mysticism" is conducive to religious mysticism and that the latter can supply a direct approach to absolute truth. By selections from the writings of mountaineers, he seeks to show that they were all mystics. If he does not quite succeed in this, he does show that there is something about mountain scenery which is sufficiently unusual to betray the most dogmatic materialists, such as Tyndall, into unguarded admissions.

Mr. Meade states (on page 11) his intention "to show that mountains are symbols of reality, that is to say, of a higher kind of truth," and also (on the next page) his intention to show that the mountaineers quoted "are nature-mystics and that their nature-mysticism, like all mysticism, derives its essential significance from its relation to religious feeling." These are bold ambitions and it is not surprising that the author fails to "show" the truth of either of these complicated propositions.

The first proposition makes two immense assumptions, neither of which he discusses or seems to have noticed. He assumes that mountains are unreal (for he cannot have meant that they were auto-symbolic); Dr. Johnson would not agree. He also assumes that the relation of appearance to reality is the relation of symbol to thing symbolised. This view involves great difficulties which we can hardly

discuss in the compass of this review ; it is cavalier of the author to side-step these complexities. Your reviewer can only conclude that, if mountains are symbols, they can only be so in some arbitrary personal code in which the author has decided to write " mountains " as shorthand for " higher kind of truth," whatever that may be. (We may well ask " what is truth ? " if there are all sorts of different kinds of it.) On many occasions we find Mr. Meade mesmerised by the word " higher " into a fine confusion between altitude and moral value.

Turning to the second of the propositions, we may concede that most mountain lovers are nature-mystics, if that means that they suffer feelings which they cannot explain. But to be mystified is not to be a mystic. To a religious man all things " derive their essential significance " from their relation to religion ; so to a religious man the feelings aroused by mountains would not, in this respect, be different from any other feelings. This is not the point Mr. Meade wishes to establish.

It is odd that Mr. Meade does not consider a simpler explanation of delight in mountain scenery, namely that the pleasure is aesthetic. " It is true " he writes " that aesthetes have seldom appreciated the beauty of the high Alps at close quarters, for the aesthetes do not often get there." (The " at close quarters " is put in to exclude Ruskin.) It goes without saying that many of the passages selected for quotation in this book are obviously written by aesthetes. Geoffrey Young, for example, is as constantly approved as he is misquoted. The reader cannot resist the suspicion that Mr. Meade thinks of aesthetes in terms of " Patience," and regards the classes of aesthete and athlete as mutually exclusive. This youthful hangover may unconsciously be the reason for the rejection of any aesthetic explanation of the feelings under discussion. For our part we see no reason to suppose that the beauty of mountains excites pleasure for any different reasons than does the beauty of, say, good pictures or architecture.

Indeed architecture supplies a very close analogy, since it consists in the harmonious disposal of three-dimensional forms to a functional end. In mountain scenery the functional end is absent, but nowhere else in the realms of nature or art is there such magnificent exploitation of visible arrangement in three dimensions, so fine an exhibition of spatial potentialities.

To carry conviction in his thesis, Mr. Meade should convince the reader that he is an expert on mysticism ; this he fails to do. He may have read widely and thought deeply on the subject, but this is not apparent in the book, which leaves the impression that the extracts from the mystics have been culled second-hand, i.e. from books on mysticism rather than from books by mystics.

Mr. Aldous Huxley is one of those quoted with approval, presumably before the appearance of his recent work in which it is pointed out that mystical experiences can be produced by administering the appropriate drug. This is hardly consonant with Mr. Meade's views on the nature

of these phenomena, which he treats as revelations of the God of Western Christianity. This is a narrow view ; such experiences occur not to Christians only, but to Moslems, Buddhists, monotheists, polytheists, pantheists, Voodooists, witchdoctors, probably to Satanists, and even it seems to takers of certain drugs irrespective of religious belief. There is no ground at all for treating mysticism as primarily Christian, and little ground for assuming it to be exclusively religious in nature.

Mr. Meade ascribes the alleged pre-eminence of the Roman Church as a nursery of mystics to its members being "relieved from the burden of speculation." For our part we were frequently exasperated by his claiming this relief for himself when the task he had set himself was essentially speculative.

To love something necessarily implies that the beloved is regarded as having value in itself. Mr. Meade thinks not ; "what is essential . . . is the disinterested love of mountains regarded as a means to one end." This may be the view of some official theologians ; it is not the view of most mountaineers. And in what logic or language can a love be "disinterested" which is regarded as a means to something else ?

Again, on page 119, Mr. Meade regards great bulk as "symbolising" infinity. No size or number can "symbolise" infinity better or worse than another. To regard size as having independent value is rather the mystique of business than the business of a mystic. The true mystic takes the view clean contrary :

" To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour."

We have criticised the book's argument because the author declared his intention to "show" various propositions, and in this we believe him to have failed. If the book be taken, as perhaps it should, as a statement of the personal faith of a distinguished mountaineer, criticism lapses. The reactions and feelings of a man whose name is stamped on mountaineering all the way from Meade's Col to wherever Meade tents may be used, will always command respect ; because they are his, not because they are founded on a chain of impeccable logic.

F. H. KEENLYSIDE.

ÉTOILES ET TEMPÊTES. By Gaston Rébuffat. (Arthaud.)

This is the first major book by the great Chamonix guide Gaston Rébuffat, and in it he has confined himself to writing of seven routes on six of the great north faces of the Alps. Much of what he says is taken from earlier articles in *Alpinisme*, but the book is not a mere reprint of disconnected articles ; the author has gone to some trouble to give shape and form to the book as a whole. The book itself is excellently

written, and though not up to the standard of production of contemporary Swiss mountaineering books, is better than some recent French ones. Much trouble has been taken with the photographs and diagrams ; each of the routes described is plotted in detail on a diagram drawn directly from one of the photographs printed in the text. This enables the reader to follow the activities described much more easily than usual. Moreover, Rébuffat sets his scene with more care than most French authors, who so often annoy the uninitiated reader by starting in mid-story and using only Christian names and the historic present.

The climbs described all have considerable cachet. No light weights have been admitted and only one north-east face is allowed to sully the OK standards of a wholly *face nord* book. It starts with the best : the Walker and Croz routes on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses. In his early youth Rébuffat achieved the second ascent of the Walker Route and many will consider this his finest achievement. At that time it was indeed a remarkable one, and his verdict on the route, now more and more confirmed by others, is "elle est difficile et surtout elle est belle." The neglected Croz route, now generally considered dangerous but not very difficult, was done in a day with a course of *guides aspirants*. A fine piece of fast climbing was only marred by a tragic accident in the subsequent bivouac. The climb itself remains a closed book to me as we get instead of the hoped for description, a purple passage on the glories of being a guide.

The next climb described is the north-east face of the Badile. Once again this was a second ascent of one of Cassin's great routes and readers of this Journal will recall from Bernard Pierre's description of the same ascent that the French pair had great difficulties in bad conditions. Subsequent performances on this route have shown that in good conditions it can be climbed very fast by a strong party, but it is well to remember that even a second ascent of a major artificial route is liable to be much harder than subsequent doddles up a ladder of inserted pitons. Rébuffat prints a well-known horror photograph of himself "après le second bivouac," which only makes this reviewer admire the more the pertinacity with which the author advances one of his favourite theories, that bivouacs *en face* are worthy objects in themselves and not merely as means to great climbs. . . .

The ascents of the north face of the Dru and of the Cima Grande di Lavaredo were slighter affairs by comparison. The Dru ascent added to the Rébuffat legend, for the party did it after catching the first train of the day up to Montenvers. He advances serious reasons for doing this, but one can't help feeling that it was purely for the joy of the stunt ; and who is to blame him ? The Cima Grande was chiefly notable for the fact that Rébuffat for once was not in the lead.

He next describes the ascent of the Matterhorn. It is interesting that he appears to have followed the theory of the Schmids on the original ascent and climbed under heavily snowed conditions. This

is contrary to present custom whereby parties put all their money on speed and dry conditions. Despite the conditions they managed to reach the summit by 9.00 p.m.

Finally there is a long and fascinating description of the mass ascent of the Eigerwand in 1952. This got off to a good start when the four Frenchmen were greeted on arrival by the hut *gardien* with the gloomy and wholly accurate remark: "Si vous allez à l'Eigerwand le temps va se gâter. C'est une tradition." There followed three days of climbing, waiting and bivouacking, largely in a blizzard. The face was alive, and very nearly dead, with innumerable climbers, for in addition to the very strong French party there were four Germans led by the redoubtable Buhl. All appear to have ended on the same rope, but the account, though most exciting, differs from the German descriptions of the same climb.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this book is how it illustrates the period in which the climbs were done. Gaston Rébuffat is probably the most successful Alpine climber of the post-war years. In this book he is describing what one supposes to be seven of his very finest routes, yet not one of them is a first ascent. There can be very few other periods in climbing history when one of the leading Alpine mountaineers of his generation can achieve new routes only on minor faces. All that he writes goes to prove what has recently become more and more obvious, that the 'thirties really did represent an advance in the standard of major Alpine climbs, and that the standard has not risen since the war. It is a long time since anyone has climbed a route in the Alps which his contemporaries do not expect to be able to climb also. Many more people are doing the great routes described in this volume, but this does not represent a rise of the standard of Alpine climbing, merely a broadening of the top of the pyramid.

R. M. VINEY.

UNE MONTAGNE NOMMÉE NUN KUN. By Bernard Pierre. (Amiot Dumont.)

It might seem impossible to make a whole book out of the ascent of a twenty-three thousander. From Pauhunri or Trisul to Mukut Parbat or Baruntsex, a chapter in a book, an article in a Journal, these have been the allotted span. When, after the ascent of Salcantay, Bernard Pierre turned his eyes to the Himalaya in search of an unclimbed *sept mille mètres*, they lit upon the summit of Nun, highest point of the Nun Kun massif in Kashmir. Kun (23,219 feet) had been climbed in 1913, but her sister Nun (23,410 feet) had so far resisted every advance. The mountain was climbed and this book has resulted.

Pierre has set about the task of giving movement and substance to his book with great skill. It moves with the *élan bien français* which John Hunt has very justly attributed to the expedition. The preparations, party and journey out are given in the first three chapters; the last of these being a vivid account of the 150-mile march to the

mountain from Doda. Two of the excitements related are a strike of porters and an arrival at a river, to find the bridge destroyed. A dynamic headman of the village puts things to rights by the powerful if simple expedient of collecting his men and building a new bridge on the spot.

On July 30th Base Camp was set at the foot of the mountain. The route from this side had been reconnoitred the year previously by Pierre Vittoz, member of the party and a missionary at Leh. He had decided that the only line lay up the West Ridge. But the icefall route to this was shown by a reconnaissance to be dangerous ; only by a great rock tower, of some difficulty but not dangerous, could they reach the crest. As early as August 2nd Vittoz and Ang Tharkay, of whom the book gives a very full and sympathetic picture, returned announcing Nun to be *dans la poche*.

But the weather turned ; indeed throughout the climb the weather is the great enemy. Only after a retreat to Base were Vittoz and Madame Claude Kogan able to solve the tower, and on August 10th Camp II was set at 19,200 feet. A temporary Camp III housed the party one night before all were once more driven to Base by the weather.

It is here that Pierre's skill in filling out the narrative is called upon. For there is a hold-up, both in climb and story, while the snowflakes fall. Vittoz, who can speak the language, is heard to question the Sherpas on their customs, private lives and ideas. The answers are most interesting ; as is the voice of Pierre, his doubts and self-questioning about the dwindling chances of the climb.

The action continues, still interspersed with much dialogue, over the next attempt. On August 19th five climbers, with Ang Tharkay, were at Camp III, but again they were forced to return. On the way down occurred the avalanche whose description is in some ways the vivid and exciting climax of the book. Madame Kogan, Vittoz and Jean Guillemin were carried down 150 feet only. But Pierre, Ang Tharkay and Michel Désorbay had a slide of 1,000 feet, and were indeed lucky to escape with bruises and slight concussion. Here the method of internal dialogue, bringing out the sensations that one has during such a slide, is extremely effective. The battered party made its way once again back to Base Camp.

On the final attempt Pierre must have known at heart that with his injuries he could not himself reach the summit. But the agonising ascent to Camp III, and the uncomfortable night there, gave food for writing ; and for a vivid and very French account of the altercation that took place when the party found that the old Camp III had been virtually obliterated by an avalanche. Should they stay all the same ?

" Nous pardons le contrôle de nos nerfs. Nous nous lançons à la figure toutes sortes de vérités ; nous allons même jusqu'à échanger des injures."



That is engagingly honest ; and frank, too, is the account of the miserable night and the painful start at 7-30 a.m. on August 28th. But despite a tremendous effort Pierre was forced to return at about 22,000 feet. And the summit account is given in the words of Pierre Vittoz. The book ends, rightly, with the summit—the achievement of a fine expedition.

WILFRID NOYCE.

LA CONQUETE DU SALCANTAY, GEANT DES ANDES. By Bernard Pierre. (Amiot-Dumont, Paris, 1953.)

In a period when not only mountaineers, but a large number of the public are very well informed on Himalayan mountaineering, it is refreshing to find a book on a much less chronicled mountain region. Bernard Pierre's book contains so much information on the Peruvian Andes that for this alone it is worth reading. It contains, in addition, the account of a notable first ascent of which he has given us a condensed account in this Journal for 1953.

In 1952 there joined forces an American party of six climbers and a French one of three for an attempt on the Nevado de Salcantay (20,664 ft.). This fine ice pyramid is the highest point of the Cordillera Vilcabamba in South Peru. The expedition, assembling by air from America and France, were not on the scene early in the season. They were anticipated by two Swiss climbers, Felix Marx and Markus Broenimann, who made a most spirited attempt on the mountain shortly before the arrival of the Franco-American party. The Swiss reached the summit plateau (20,336 ft.) on 26th June at midday. Most unfortunately they did not climb a snow point just over 300 ft. higher, that lay at the far end of the summit plateau. Why they did not climb this point is not stated in the book, or elsewhere, to my knowledge. We may guess that the lateness of the hour and the effects of cold and tiredness ruled out the final point.

On their approach to Salcantay the Franco-Americans met Marx returning on foot from the mountain. At this meeting Marx claimed categorically to have climbed the peak. The second-comers did not credit this story and decided to continue with their own attempt.

After a persistent siege, prolonged by bad weather, they reached the summit plateau and from it, the summit on 5th August. Two American ropes of two climbers each and one French party comprising Mme. Claude Kogan and Bernard Pierre reached the summit. They bivouacked in a crevasse on the summit plateau and descended on the following day. On their return journey they met Broenimann who told them that he and Marx had only reached the summit plateau and not the pointed snow cone.

Pierre obviously felt very strongly about his encounter with Marx. He delivers himself of some extremely pointed remarks about the Swiss (and his Austrian friend Dr. Spann). This reader, at any rate, had the embarrassed feeling of intruding on a private quarrel. The

affair created a considerable stir in Peru, which has not entirely died down. Letters in varying degrees of disinterestedness were written to the national press in support of each side.

In the strict letter of logic the case of the Franco-Americans is unassailable. There are numerous analogies, of which one is that of the Grandes Jorasses. Its conquest is credited to Walker and not Whymper, although the latter reached the second summit before Walker reached the highest summit, there being but a few feet difference in height between the two.

Pierre does not pass by the country surrounding his peak without mention. His descriptions of Cusco and the ruined Inca city of Machu Picchu are both vivid and accurate. In a few pages also, he gives an admirable summary of the Inca civilisation, which I found an excellent starting point and an incentive to deeper reading on the subject.

The account of the expedition is written with such conciseness that Pierre has been able to include a second part to the book covering many aspects of climbing expeditions in Peru. There is thus a section on the Cordillera Vilcabamba giving valuable notes on topography, climate, history of exploration and organisation of an expedition. A similar, but smaller section deals with all the other climbing massifs of Peru. Later sections contain a list of recommended food and clothing, and a French-Spanish-Quechua glossary. Another reviewer has remarked on the toleration of a publisher who permitted the printing of these notes, "*d'une aridité totale*," for the general reader. As a reader about to visit Peru I found them otherwise. The first sections are most helpful. Adequate food and clothing can, however, be planned on a less sumptuous scale than that of the Franco-Americans, nor is the glossary of prime importance. Spanish can equally well be tackled, at first with a phrase book, and later by speaking to Peruvians. Quechua, in my opinion, is not worth attempting for a stay of only a few months. One usually meets someone who speaks Spanish, and studying time is better spent on this (by far the easier) language.

Peruvian mountain exploration has progressed rapidly since the book was written but succeeding events can be found in recent numbers of *Alpinisme*. Pierre's book should be read by all who want to climb in Peru, and will be of interest to many others.

G. H. FRANCIS.

THE ASCENT OF ALPAMAYO. Georges Kogan and Nicole Leininger. (Harrap. 15/-.)

One is apt to remark, in sententious moments, that too many books are written nowadays, especially climbing books. Already there is an average of more than one per major expedition: even a single Alpine climb has been considered sufficient excuse to dash into print, and one waits with a sense of delicious apprehension for the first slim but significant volume to appear devoted to the approach march to and ascent of the Slab Direct at Harrisons Rocks—complete with potted

philosophy, remarks about the Munich School and a note on the local savages. Most of these books come to be written not from any inner compulsion, but with the wholly human and acceptable aim of earning renown, or money, or both, for their authors.

Most of them, let's face it, are redundant, repetitive, and a bit flat. If you have paid a fancy price for a bottle of cider you are naturally furious if it turns out to be flat or immature. But if it is good cider you enjoy it, and it would be pointless to spoil your pleasure by reflecting that it is not 1934 Lafitte.

*The Ascent of Alpamayo* is good cider. We already knew from his other writing the lucid and cultured pen of Georges Kogan. That most of this peculiarly happy book comes from that pen gives it an especial poignancy. It is the record of how a few friends of mixed nationalities, limited means but exceptional talents, were fired by the desire to climb "the most beautiful mountain in the world," and how they achieved their aim. The work runs a kind of summer's day course, an atmosphere lent by the sympathetic character of the friends themselves: the sunrise of enthusiasm, the bright noon of difficulty, action and achievement, and the afterglow of sadness: Georges Kogan died soon afterwards, following an operation.

To make a good expedition book two things are necessary: good climbing and good writing. Both are here in abundance. I have a tendency to skip over chapters dealing with approach marches and travel; one knows beforehand all the leaches and landslips and rope bridges that will infallibly be encountered, and pleasure begins for the armchair climber just where it is apt to end for the man on the spot, at base camp. French writers of the better sort have a kind of humanity, however, that can make these marches interesting as a time of introduction: these are not the sixth-former saints (each a noble blank with a name, who might as well be represented by a number or a conventional sign) to which our own climbing books have accustomed us, but individuals with real live faults who can get pretty cross and discouraged at times. This really makes them much more approachable and absorbing. The Andean country also has a freshness to us, who are apt to view the world through Himalayan-tinted spectacles, and Georges Kogan is the most charming of guides. When a party of such famous strength gets to the mountain we expect action and we get it. The mountain is climbed, and a bivouac is made at 20,000 feet. One is struck throughout by the sane approach, the very greatest determination balanced by judgment and humour: and no untrained philosophics.

The second part of the book, dealing with the ascent of another mountain and the return, is written by Nicole Leininger. It is a pleasant feature of this party that the wives are as distinguished climbers as their men. But one cannot in honesty say that the same applies to their writing. At the outset the authoress seems intimidated by the solemnity of her task, and in trying to rise to it without turgidity has

turned the purple robe inside out, and fallen into a kind of interrupted, "leaving worlds unsaid" manner which is unfortunately frequent in modern French journalese. Thus :

"We had all followed in their steps that morning, heavily laden, admiring the easy grace of the porters on these lower slopes of sharp grasses and piled stones.

Such is the narrow way to paradise, they tell me.

And suddenly we were all there, all nine of us, face to face with Alpamayo.

At first we stood in silence.

It is easy to have one's breath taken away at 20,000 feet. But it was not only the height, there was Alpamayo too.

In the same manner, when one morning I caught sight of Chartres, I stood still in silence."

And so on, for two or three pages. Well good, one feels, your sentiments do you credit, but must you write the passage as though you had dictated it on the spot at 20,000 feet, stopping to puff and pant after each sentence? When anybody says grasses when they mean grass you always know they are going to huff and puff and make a tight red balloon out of their emotions, just like those fish that distend themselves when they are surprised. Fortunately Mme. Leininger soon gets acclimatised to the altitude, the sentences begin to flow naturally again, and the rest of the book is quite pleasant and adequate. Not many unofficial parties of friends have climbed three new and difficult peaks of over 7,000 metres in the course of their summer holidays at their first visit to a strange region : the achievement behind the book should be underlined.

The production is good, the photographs adequate to the text though perhaps not quite complete. The maps are unusually clear. The translation by Mr. Peter Thompson, always fluent and natural, deserves special commendation. The friends were prepared to take any difficulty in their stride, but they wanted to climb Alpamayo because to them it was the most beautiful mountain in the world. Such a conception is almost a guarantee of an agreeable book : and it is, uncommonly so, and deserving of a place in any Alpine library whether it pretends to completeness or not.

G. J. SUTTON.

MOUNTAINS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN. By Showell Styles. (Hurst and Blackett. 18/-.)

Anyone travelling on the express coastal steamers running between Bergen and Kirkenes will in fine weather see many impressive and attractive arrays of rocky peaks. Some are gabbro and rise sheer from the sea. Others are set inland. In the winter these hills are covered by snow and ice, but in the summer they are bare except for relict glaciers ; in Norway north of Narvik these glaciers are all of small dimensions.

If one talks to Norwegian or Swedish climbers, they may likely mention Lyngen, not far from Tromsø, which is one of the better known mountain areas. *Mountains of the Midnight Sun* is a pretentious book, describing "an Expedition" to this unsophisticated and attractive peninsula in excessive detail. Even if relatively undocumented in English, Lyngen is by no means so unknown, unclimbed or unmapped as Mr. Styles would have us believe. It is unfortunate that his party had such bad weather and the photographs suffer in consequence. Any serious scientist visiting the region would do well to start his preliminary literature searches in the academic institutes of Norway, while for historical mountaineering one must consult Dr. Per Zappfe's records.

British climbing parties intending to visit N. Norway will pick up more idea of the country and its present-day possibilities, three shillings cheaper, from T. Weir's *Camps and Climbs in Arctic Norway*, which appeared in 1953.

J. M. HARTOG.

MOUNTAINEERING. By T. A. H. Peacocke. Third Edition, 1953. (A. and C. Black. 8/6.)

There have been many indications recently of a great advance in mountaineering, and not least in British mountaineering, during the post-war years. In Britain, in the Alps and in the Himalayas there has been improvement in technique and equipment as well as in the enterprise and skill with which the equipment is used. It is perhaps unnecessary to dwell on this, but the subject is a pleasant one. Two examples, both concerning British parties, stand out from the many which spring to mind. The West face of the Drus is one of the most difficult climbs in the Alps, if in fact it is not the most difficult; yet last year's ascent of it in very bad conditions was made in a time which showed it to be well within the party's powers.

As remarkable was the first ascent of Mount Everest the year before, not so much because the party did get up—the pre-war attempts came very near success—as because it got up so easily. The summit pair started from a well-found camp only 1,100 feet below the top, and after an enjoyable climb returned in such good condition as to make it clear that they could have gone farther had that been necessary.

This rapid progress is clearly seen on reading the third edition of *Mountaineering*. When first published, in 1941, the book was about Alpine climbing techniques of the 'thirties. It has now been revised, but the references to recent changes of spirit and method are incomplete, and sometimes seem but unhealthy grafts on the original.

Thus Mr. Peacocke does not mention down clothing, descendeurs, the use of the double or treble rope in ascent or the use of étriers, on which much of present Alpine climbing may be said to depend. Vibrams are given a qualified approval only, and the learner is strongly recommended to start climbing in nails. The description of earlier

methods of tying on to the rope is admirably clear, but the now preferred method of coupling a separate waist loop to the main rope by a karabiner is omitted. More surprising, the account of artificial climbing is compressed into three derogatory paragraphs ; happily it bears no resemblance at all to any artificial pitch known to the reviewer, though it does serve to explain Mr. Peacocke's low opinion of the art. These things emphasise how fast the techniques of movement over mixed ground and on pure rock have developed in recent years.

On the other hand the chapters on pure snow and ice climbing, in which there has been much less change, are very good and will be of value to the experienced climber as well as to the novice. They could only have been written by a mountaineer of Mr. Peacocke's calibre, and give merit to the book.

As with technique and equipment, so with the attitude to climbing. The book has still the leisurely approach of the 'thirties. For example, in the midst of much sound advice Mr. Peacocke suggests not wearing crampons until one's third season. Again, he describes the East Arête of the Plan as an extremely difficult climb, and argues the folly of those who do it in their first season.

The years are all too few, and most people will not want to spend as long over the initial stages of courtship with the Alps as Mr. Peacocke proposes. Nor is it necessary. Many British climbers are competent on rock before ever they go to the Alps. Such people will normally be entirely at home with crampons by the end of their first season, and, given a leader capable of looking after his party on crevassed glacier, may be enjoying climbs less easy than the East Arête of the Plan.

*Mountaineering* is written by a climber of great experience. It goes only part way to meet the present need for an authoritative text on Alpinism, but it is a valuable and very welcome book.

T. D. BOURDILLON.

ALPINE CLIMBING ON FOOT AND WITH SKI. By. E. A. M. Wedderburn, revised by C. Douglas Milner. (Countrygoer Books, 1954. 12/6.)

This is a short text book on Alpine climbing. It is meant for beginners, and is admirable so far as it goes. By limiting themselves to elementary treatment of elementary topics, with which alone beginners are concerned, the authors have avoided the danger of giving disproportionate emphasis to advanced embellishments of technique. The danger is a real one, because many advanced topics are more susceptible of written exposition than the fundamentals. But conversely, because there is not much to say about the fundamentals alone, a book confined to them, and brief at that, is apt to seem slight. In saying that the present book is admirable so far as it goes, one cannot altogether suppress the wish that it had gone a little farther.

Milner has brought Wedderburn's book effectively up to date. Modern developments in equipment are suitably discussed—the Vibram or similar sole (Milner recommends Pirelli), nylon rope, the

short axe ; and it is good to see a picture of an étrier in a British text-book, although the book's limited scale and purpose permits only brief treatment of piton technique. Milner is in touch with the atmosphere and conditions under which most young beginners go to the Alps to-day, and his remarks on differences between Alpine and British climbing are sensible, though again brief.

A few points provoke comment. On certain topics—maps and guidebooks, the different types of huts, weather signs, bivouacs—more might usefully have been included without disturbing the book's elementary scope or proportions. Among the methods of extracting a fallen man from a crevasse should have been included the pulley method, where the elevating rope runs as if through a pulley through a karabiner attached to the fallen man. This is better than any of the methods described and practicable as often as most of them. In discussing roping arrangements where a karabiner joins the main climbing rope to a separate waist loop, it would be worth directing attention to the strength of the karabiner. And the reviewer distrusts in particular such arrangement illustrated on p. 18, where a single karabiner links the end of the climbing rope and the two loops of a spliced sling worn double as a waist-loop. This is dangerous because the karabiner may slip, so that the pull comes against the long side, against the keeper, where it is not designed to take a load. The karabiner holding the climbing rope should be independent of any karabiner used to fasten the waist-loop.

But I repeat : my main complaint about this book is that there is not more of it. But this is scarcely a criticism. To regret that there is not more is rather a tribute to the excellence of what there is.

A.K.R.

#### SELECTED CLIMBS IN THE RANGE OF MONT BLANC. (The Alpine Climbing Group. Two Vols., 5/- each.)

The Alpine Climbing Group's loose-leaf guide to the Mont Blanc area has been completed by the issue of a second collection of climbs. It does not aim to be comprehensive, but, as the title implies, is a selection of the best routes of all standards of difficulty except the very hardest. The text is avowedly based on Vallot, from which much is a more or less literal translation. It will be useful most to those whose French or whose finances are unequal to Vallot, but not only to them : others also may find the loose leaves handier than a whole book for reference on the mountain, and will be interested in the general comments on each route. These often reflect a judgment independent of Vallot ; their value would be enhanced if they were not anonymous.

Partly no doubt because of its composite authorship, the collection is uneven. The translation is in places crudely literal ; some of the diagrams are poor ; and the roneoed typescript is unattractive. But in general this is competent and useful work, although one would not read it for pleasure.

Certain comments reflect the authors' fierce climbing standards (and indifferent logic): "The technical difficulty is not great. In the present state of 'pitonnage' the two hardest pitches cannot be considered to exceed the fifth grade." But in general there is no exaggerated bias towards extreme difficulty. The choice of climbs recommended is enterprising, but not more so than is warranted by the current resurgence of British Alpinism, to which the issue of this guide-book is welcome testimony.

A.K.R.

CLIMBERS' GUIDE TO BEN NEVIS. By G. Graham Macphee, M.D.  
(Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1954., 7/6.)

The old edition of Dr. Macphee's Ben Nevis guide has been a trusty friend. But besides being out of print, it had two defects for current use: it was too large in format, and it was out of date, for many new routes have been done on Ben Nevis since it was written. In this new edition both defects are remedied. The book is now pocket size, matching Murray's *Glencoe*, and it includes climbs of recent years.

For the older routes the text follows the earlier edition. J. H. B. Bell contributes a new section on the Orion routes. Many of the other newer climbs, especially those of the late B. P. Kellett, are described in quoted notes by the originators. This is a departure from the habit of British guide-book writers, who have usually given their own independent description and assessment of all, or almost all, the routes. In his introduction Dr. Macphee himself proclaims this as the ideal, from which he has been precluded by time and distance. But is any apology necessary? For the standard routes no doubt uniformity of style and judgment is an advantage. But this we already have, in the material repeated from the earlier edition. For the rest Dr. Macphee's quotations preserve some of the mountain's deserved mystery which is destroyed by too rigid codification; and at least one—Kellett's note on Gardyloo Buttress—gives an excitingly direct glimpse of a daring first ascent.

The illustrations are all diagrams. They look perhaps over-simplified. But if in practice people find them good enough to indicate the general line of a climb, that is all that the book, rightly, sets out to do.

All who go to Ben Nevis will be grateful for Dr. Macphee's authoritative and now portable guidance, a worthy ornament of his S.M.C. presidency.

A.K.R.

OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING, 1954.  
CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1954.

The first duty of an editor of a club journal is to extract articles from club members by whatever means are open to him. He is to be considered lucky if the articles which emerge as a result of this treatment are readable and interesting to the club; but even more so, if they



prove to be of general interest and worthy of a wide reading public. Mr. H. G. Nicol for Oxford and Mr. Geoffrey Hodges for Cambridge both fall into this latter happy category.

The climbs described come largely from the Alpine season of 1953 and include several which take their place in the chapter of extended British climbing in the Alps which has developed during the past five years.

Inevitably, the two journals overlap, not only in the Alps, and it is interesting to note the parallel lines along which they run in many of their pages. For example, Noyce for Cambridge and Westmacott for Oxford each describe a personal chapter in the Everest story, whilst Nicol for Oxford and Wrangham for Cambridge describe their combined ascent of the North-West ridge of the Charmoz—in marked contrast to the leisured luxury of the Himalayan sleeping-bag.

Sutton in the Cambridge Journal writes a vivid account of the West face of the Pointe Albert and other climbs, whilst Oxford, not to be out-done, produces an item by Rawlinson on the Tronchey arête of the Grandes Jorasses, which does much to clarify the mysteries which hitherto have shrouded this great route.

In the Oxford Journal there are further Alpine articles on the Old Brenva route and the Ryan-Lochmatter on the Plan, together with a description of the South face of the Aiguille Dibona in the Dauphiné. From this country comes a description of a circuit of the Lakeland Three Thousanders and various climbs on Ben Nevis. A reminiscent article on the 1920's is contributed by our President, and this, with a technical note on pot-holing and one or two other minor parochial items, completes the bag.

Cambridge provide two articles by members who describe their first seasons in and around Saas and a traverse of the Meije with bivouac in the Dauphiné. Here we have the Welsh Three Thousanders and climbs in Glencoe together with two excursions on Clogwyn du'r Arddu. The historical article is by Gaukroger, and takes us farther back, to Albert Smith's book on Mont Blanc, published in 1853. It is a scholarly and well-documented contribution. Here, too, is the technical note, this time on artificial climbing, but not content with this, the Cambridge editor gives us further articles on climbs in the Sierra mountains of the United States, an ascent of a mountain which, on careful reading, proves to be Mount St. Elias, and an interesting account of some expeditions in Norway.

Of the 74 pages in *Cambridge Mountaineering*, it is interesting to note that 64 are taken up with articles, whereas of Oxford's 66 pages, only 42 ; the balance is largely made up of a list of members, which has a limited literary appeal.

The climbs described are generally of a high order, and the writing is, on the whole, worthy of it. But are the long cherished distinctions between the two Universities dying out ? The net is cast very wide by both, but very much the same sort of fish are landed, and the reader

will notice that members of one University climb with apparent abandon with members of the other. The Cambridge article on artificial climbing—a study in applied science—is perhaps in character, but Oxford supplies no complementary “Why do we do it?” To me, the contents of the two journals are interchangeable. And neither University can spell Garhwal.

J. H. EMLYN JONES.

ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. LIX, Nos. 288 and 289.

CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL, 1954.

JOURNAL OF THE FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB, 1954.

JOURNAL OF THE IRISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, 1953-1954.

LADIES' ALPINE CLUB JOURNAL, 1954.

MOUNTAINEERING (published by the British Mountaineering Council), Vol. II, Nos. 5 and 6.

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, Vol. I, No. 10 to Vol. 2, No. 7.

RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1954.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL, 1954.

YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS CLUB JOURNAL, 1954.

These journals, when melted down, produce 85 articles in 800 pages of print, and must finally give the lie to that old myth which portrayed the climber as essentially a silent man.

In the May volume (No. 288) of the *Alpine Journal* the Everest series is completed in articles by Sir Edmund Hillary on “The Last Lap” and by the Bourdillons and Harris on the Oxygen Apparatus. The second of these is new. Although ostensibly this is a scientific treatise, complete with references in code, diagrams and quantities, there shines through the soda-lime canisters and reducing valves a new facet of the Everest story—new at any rate to those not addicted to appendices. These *Alpine Journals* cover the world: Busk on Ruwenzori, Roch on Dhaulagiri, Pierre on Salcantay are all in the same volume; one opens it not knowing where to begin. The only criticism, more a regret, is that the Alps, far from playing second fiddle, are somewhere in the gloom with the unmentionables, say the triangles and castanets. Indeed of three Alpine articles in No. 288, two are frankly historical, and the third, on the Tronchey arête of the Grandes Jorasses, is an account “qui est en passe de devenir historique par de nombreuses répétitions,” as the Vallot Guide might put it.

The November number (No. 289) gives us Frauenberger and Buhl on Nanga Parbat, Streather on the Third American Expedition to K2, and Mackinnon, Tyson and Kempe on their own Himalayan expeditions.

The *Cairngorm Club Journal* jogs along pleasantly enough within a circle of smaller radius, whose centre is nearer Braemar. However, excursions are made farther afield, to the Arctic, to the New Zealand Alps, and to the Island of Arran, a “Scotland in miniature,” “Mecca

for the Rock Expert " where " seen from the Ayrshire Coast on a clear day, the serrated peaks of grey granite stand out in bewildering array." Climbers may look deprecatingly at their efforts, as through the wrong end of a telescope and be near enough the truth. But the chaps who get the fun out of it are at Mount Palomar. The home journals are dismissed efficiently in less space than it takes to write their titles, and a grievance is aired : that the Climbers' Club have unjustly usurped the abbreviation C.C. which should rightly belong to the senior club. A case for arbitration ?

The *Ascent of Everest* has had some brickbats from the French reviewers, who have spoken of this " gros livre officiel, trop complet, trop impersonnel." Whatever the truth of that, the " Letters from Everest," by Sir John Hunt, in the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal* are both direct and personal. They please with a freshness which may in some measure have departed from later and more studied accounts. In other articles Spilsbury tells how the entire Fell and Rock rallied round to build the Salving House in Borrowdale ; Coleridge becomes the inventor of the tricouni nail in an historical sketch by Rossiter ; Nancy Smith slashes a carefree way up the icy cornices of Helvellyn with a penknife ; and Desmond Stevens when, forgetting himself, he falls into direct speech, can paint an exciting picture : " ' Lower the damned rope,' I howled, ' I'm choking,' " is worth any amount of circumlocution.

The *Journal of the Irish Mountaineering Club*, formerly cyclostyled, now appears in print. It is brief, yet contains much of interest to intending visitors to Ireland (topographical and historical surveys) and finally one gem of more catholic interest still : " Mountain Bathing, Advice to Lady Mountaineers," examines the problems, of dress and of deployment, which are posed by fine weather, mixed parties and mountain pools. The solution, for chic and portability, is to carry two woollen scarves. But we didn't quite get this bit : " one merely takes hold of the end of the hypotenuse and folds it down towards the right angle of the triangle, until the angle is covered—simple." On the whole we thought that a bikini might have been simpler and as light.

The members of the *Ladies' Alpine Club*, in a number of well-written articles, are not to be side-tracked in this way. Micheline Morin does, it is true, take four and a half pages to reach her hut, exclaiming, " c'est la première fois de ma vie que je mets douze heures et que je fais trois rappels pour monter à un refuge," but the climb itself, when it does arrive, is dismissed in one and a half hours. And her colleagues are every bit as business-like. P. M. Roberts skis down the Mer de Glace to Montenvers on six inches of powder snow, and Eileen Wilks in a different vein researches into the use of the word " classique " in climbing parlance, with manifold quotation from the Vallot Guide. In her review of the home journals P.M.R. is bamboozled, or perhaps merely amused, by the paraphernalia of modern artificial climbing, so that an article in the March edition of *Mountaineering* comes aptly to

enlighten her. In this Sutton describes succinctly the equipment necessary for this increasingly popular sport, starting appropriately, that none be disheartened, at Square One with this: "the basic item of kit for all branches of climbing is the rope."

The *Oread Mountaineering Club*, on a bank balance only just in two figures, continue to astonish us with their enterprise. The monthly Newsletter, which varies from 7 to 20 cyclostyled pages, is an uninhibited report on their doings in all parts of the world, from gritstone outcrops to South Georgia. Articles, "sowning in morale virtue," point the way to the one particular beauteous star of mountain bliss, and the reader cannot but agree what a jolly good thing it is to be alive with the hills and open spaces of this earth.

Less didactic is the *Rucksack Club Journal*, which reaches a high literary standard this year. Goodfellow in his "Reflections on Everest" breaks down the expedition into its component parts, team, equipment and organisation, and explains how each contributed to the general success. Pigott has passages of lyrical beauty amidst the jangling pitons and raw boned granite of Chamonix, but how can he pretend that Aiguilles ever resemble "benign duchesses"?

As before, *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* is tied to speak only of Scotland, with one exception in this volume, namely Weir's very readable account of his expedition to the Nepal Himalaya in 1952. The Scottish mountains themselves inspire a report on meteorology as it affects the climber, in which we are told that a rock climb may refuse to yield when the holds are smothered in snow and ice, and an article entitled, "Climbing Munros Makes You Fit." The New Climbs section testifies to the active exploration being carried out by members in the north, but once across the Channel there is no hope for them. Their doings are relegated to a few dry lines in "the S.M.C. abroad." How much we should like to see these expanded.

The *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* completes our alphabetical list. The Ramblers, as everyone knows, like Professor Piccard go up and down, and they write always entertainingly. They probe the bowels of Eire (Stembridge) and of France and their own native Dales. Meanwhile Fox is climbing and recording industriously in the Alps (the Mer de Glace Face of the Grépon and, yes, the East Ridge of the Plan), and Griffin squelches damply through the bogs of Northern Scotland with a dry Northern humour. Spenceley voices fears about the future of climbing in its new role as a popular activity. May the enormous influx of new recruits to mountaineering, many with no real love for the mountains, and no tradition of behaviour handed down to them, bring discredit to the sport? If so, the problem faces and must be solved by each one of us.

H. G. NICOL.

*The British Ski Year Book*, 1954, came too late for inclusion in this review. It has the full record of ski-ing events, ski-ing articles, and a review by Sir Arnold Lunn of the Everest books which has developed with a full-length article on Everest 1922-1953.

HIMALAYAN JOURNAL, 1954.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL, 1954.

APPALACHIA, 1954.

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, MARCH-OCTOBER, 1954.

CANADIAN ALPINE JOURNAL, 1954.

NEW ZEALAND ALPINE JOURNAL, 1954.

MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA JOURNAL, 1953.

MOUNTAIN CLUB OF KENYA BULLETIN, DECEMBER, 1953.

DIE ALPEN, MAY-DECEMBER, 1954.

JOURNAL OF THE SWISS FOUNDATION FOR ALPINE RESEARCH, 1954.

This mixed assortment of journals and bulletins ranges from the magnificently illustrated June number of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* to the typewritten 21st Anniversary *Bulletin of the Mountain Club of Kenya*.

One is struck by the amount of space devoted to Everest, some of interest, but much repetition of articles already published. The *Himalayan Journal* can claim pride of place for interest, but it wastes 25 pages on previously published Everest articles. However, an excellent article by James Morris, on "The Press on Everest," makes worthwhile reading. And there are other interesting accounts of diverse expeditions in the Himalayas, spoilt only by the slowness in bringing them to press; many are of 1952 expeditions. The *American Alpine Journal* includes an excellent article by Robert Bates on the 1953 American expedition to K2. Both this journal and the *Himalayan Journal* are well produced with some very readable articles. This is more than can be said for some of the other journals under review.

The *Canadian Alpine Journal* starts with a long treatise by the retiring President, which contains this: "Above all there is very fine climbing in the Alps—no new peaks, but plenty of new routes for those ambitious enough to undertake them." Please, Mr. Wheeler, come and show us. The rest of this fat volume is a series of badly written articles on some interesting peaks of Alaska and the Canadian Rockies.

*Appalachia* and the *Sierra Club Bulletins* are well written, with much of interest to "lovers of the wilderness" as well as to climbers. The Sierra Club seems to be carrying out some excellent work against the encroachment into the mountains of industry and power projects. *Appalachia* records a Rock Climbing Safety Conference at Mt. Carmel, Connecticut, which resulted in the death of one of the Princeton members. There must be a moral somewhere here. Indeed one is struck by the multitude of conferences and committees that make up the American mountaineering scene. The *American Alpine Journal* devotes 14 pages to a report entitled "To use or not to use oxygen," by the American Alpine Club Research Committee, headed by Christine L. Orcutt. Mrs. Orcutt writes a magnificent letter, dated February 14th, 1954, to the Chief of Staff U.S.A.F., Washington, asking where oxygen apparatus can be obtained for the Californian

Makalu Expedition due to leave San Francisco on February 20th (also 1954). The oxygen controversy seems to be very much alive in many of these journals, largely fanned by letters and articles from Professor N. E. Odell writing from New Zealand.

The *Mountain Club of South Africa Journal* contains little of interest to those outside South Africa. An article on abseil technique suggests that the properties of nylon rope are not fully understood on this Continent. The use of a "friction" knot in abseiling is certainly open to question. The *Mountain Club of Kenya Bulletin* has an appeal for its own members only, but it is good to see it produced at small cost, yet with care.

The *Journal of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research* contains notes of the year from the various Alpine centres as well as from Peru, Kashmir, the Rockies and New Zealand. It is pleasant to see mentioned so many major routes climbed by British parties, and also a small tribute to "jeunes grimpeurs anglais" in the Chamonix area by Jean Couzy and Lucien Devies. In Die Alpen the full story of the Argentinian attempt on Dhaulagiri is especially noteworthy.

Excellent photographs, readable articles and generally good presentation are the keynote of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, which is only to be expected. There are numerous accounts of first ascents in New Zealand. The published extracts from Hillary's diary are interesting, and there is a fine article on the New Zealand Himalayan Expedition in 1953, a very ambitious small party which achieved remarkable results, although overshadowed by Everest.

Finally, one brief note from the *American Alpine Journal*. The Yale Mountaineering Club announces a new Climbers' Guide to Mt. Carmel: "This guide will list and describe 84 known routes on the main face, many of which are yet unclimbed." Mr. Noyce to note and purchase one crystal ball, please.

C. W. BRASHER.

R. F. JONES.

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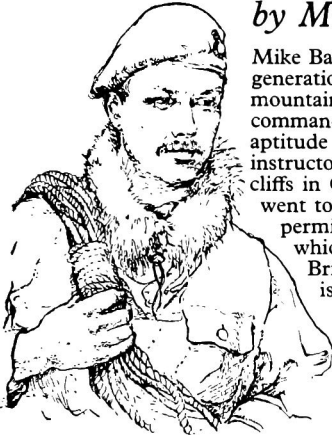
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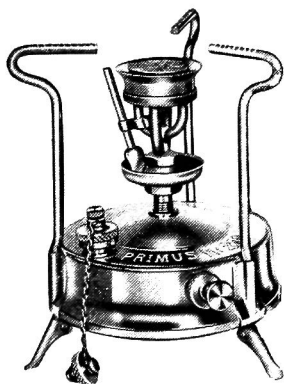
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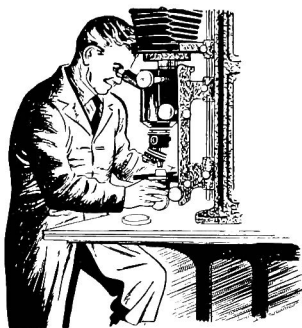
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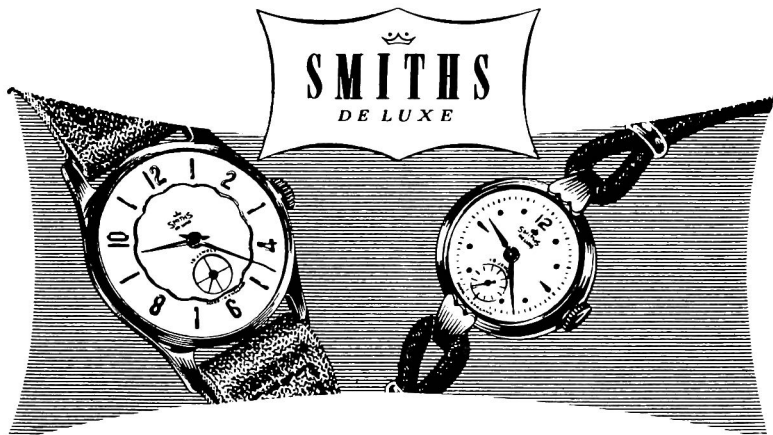
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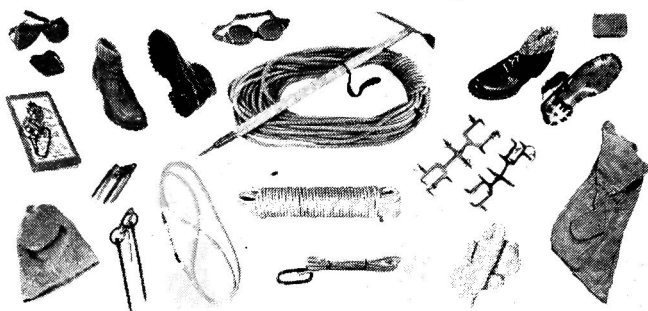
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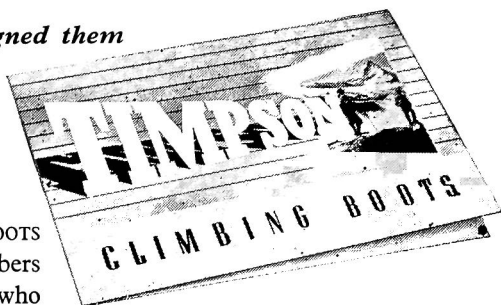
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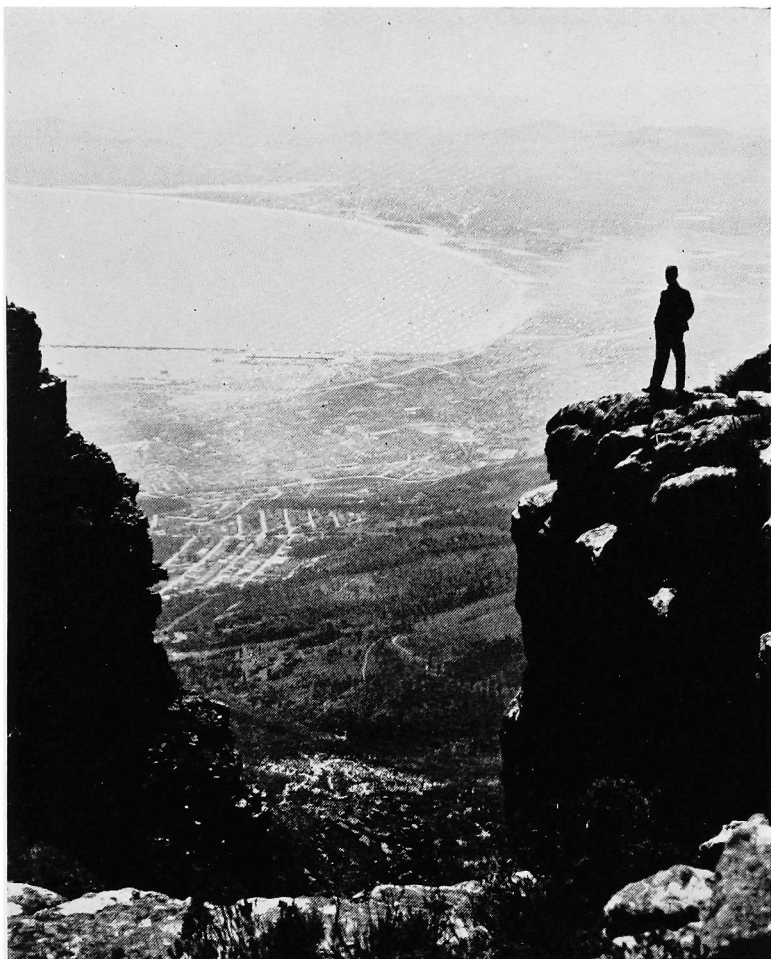
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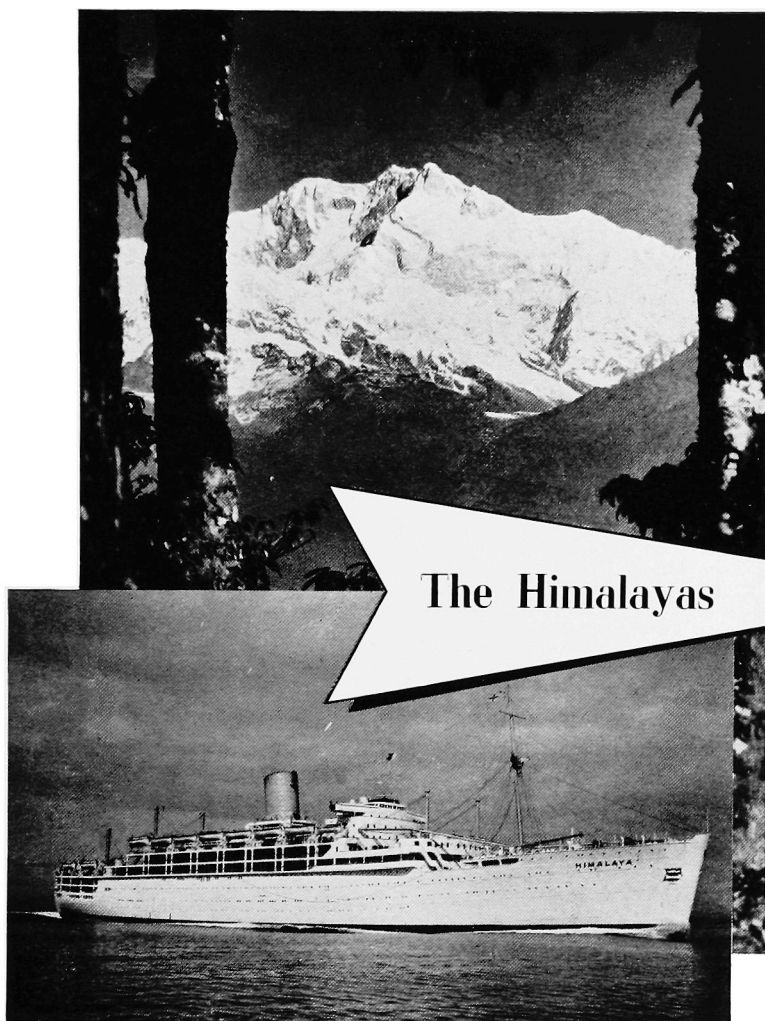
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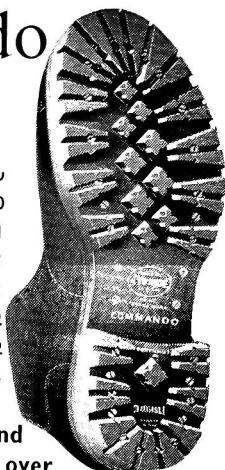
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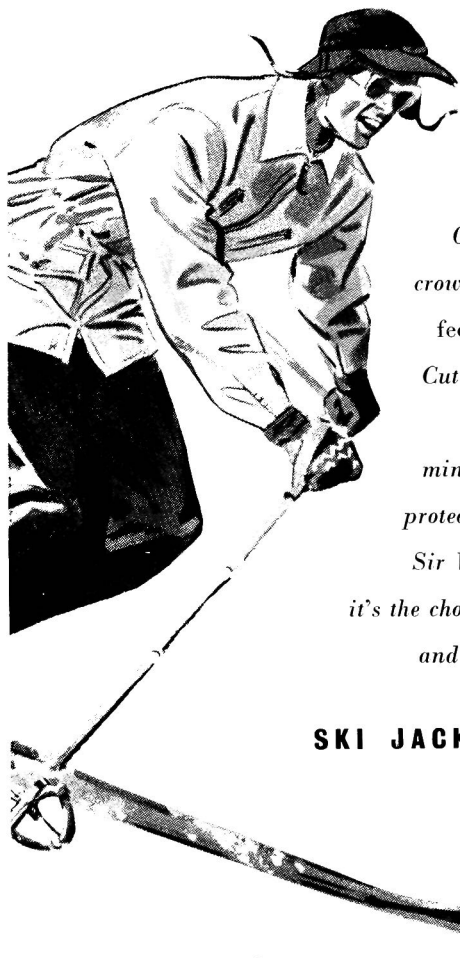
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