

THE  
CLIMBERS' CLUB  
JOURNAL

1956





THE  
CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL  
1956

EDITED BY  
A. K. RAWLINSON

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB, LONDON

This is the eighty-first issue of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL (Vol. XI, No. 2, New Series), edited by A. K. RAWLINSON. Copies are obtainable, price TWELVE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE, from A. A. BERTRAM, 11 Elm Park Road, London, S.W.3. Published by the Club in 1956, printed and bound by THE CLOISTER PRESS LTD., Heaton Mersey, Stockport.





# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. XI. No. 2

No. 81

1956

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
First and Second .. .. . A. J. J. MOULAM	176
Kanchenjunga Assault .. .. . GEORGE BAND	180
Early Days in Skye . . . . . L. G. SHADBOLT	190
Accent on Snow .. .. . E. A. WRANGHAM	197
Roof Climbing. . . . . H. G. NICOL	203
Circumambient Air . . . . . J. H. EMLYN JONES	216
The West Face of Mt. Kenya .. . R. A. CAUKWELL	223
On Yr Eifl .. . . . G. W. S. PIGOTT	230
Recent Developments in Scotland .. . D. D. STEWART	234
Icy Aiguilles .. .. . A. BLACKSHAW	240
Commandos and Cornwall .. . . . MIKE BANKS	247
Ruwenzori Impression .. . I. G. McNAUGHT-DAVIS	251
Cassin Classic .. .. . R. O. DOWNES	257
Northern Limestone .. .. . D. T. ROSCOE	264
New Climbs and Notes .. . . . J. NEILL and others	272
Editorial .. .. .	306
Club Meets .. .. .	310
In Memoriam: Leo S. Amery . . . . .	311
A. K. Bartlett . . . . .	313
J. E. Young .. .. .	313
Wilson H. Hey .. .. .	315
Patrick Lloyd .. .. .	318
George Wood-Johnson .. .	318
Reviews .. .. .	321
Officers of the Club .. .. .	355

"A man in sound condition ..... His body at rest instinctively assumes the right balance for a given position of hand and foot."

Geoffrey Winthrop Young, *Mountain Craft* (1945 edition), page 109.  
*John Audy*

## FIRST AND SECOND

A. J. J. MOULAM

**R**ECENTLY I made my second ascent of Mur y Niwhl this time at the other end of the rope. It was a pleasant ascent, with time to enjoy the route, the knowledge that it had been climbed before leaving my mind free to wander ; and so it did, back to the days when I first desired to climb this face.

Alan Hargreaves was really to blame ; he had mentioned the wall as a magnificent possibility in his article, " More of Arfon," which reviewed the future of Welsh climbing. For some reason, although I had not seen this amphitheatre wall, the idea stayed with me. Later, every time I climbed Amphitheatre Buttress I saw the wall, boldly present over the screes. Somehow no opportunity came as I did the field work for the Carneddau guide, possibly because that was schemed to do the existing routes, and new ones were made only incidentally. Mur y Niwhl was an undertaking not to be approached in that light-hearted way.

Three years passed, and I looked at the wall many times. At first it seemed impossible that a way could be found up it, but each view added a little to my knowledge of its topography. The grass pedestal, the steep wall to the foot of the V-groove were obvious enough ; but then, where ? Perhaps a traverse ; there seemed to be a line, over to the right. Anyway, the eye can ignore obstacles, and there seemed to be enough holds at least to justify a try. Three years were long enough to wait for the fulfilment of such a wish as mine. I was fit, after a series of week-ends in Wales and the Lakes and so, arbitrarily, a day was chosen.

John Disley, Alan Francis, and I walked over to Craig yr Ysfa, laden down with ropes, slings, pitons and other paraphernalia. We must have looked a determined party, but we passed others on the path who accepted our statement that we were going to do Amphitheatre Buttress without comment. Perhaps they thought

that this was the modern way ! There was a tongue of old snow up to my projected start, and none of us seemed keen, or able, to leave it. It started to spit with rain, so I hid my disappointment and agreed to the others' suggestion that we climb Great Gully. Never had I found it easier ; encumbered though we were, we completed the climb in under an hour, and returned to P.y.G. Sitting in the bar there my determination returned. Might our default have been cowardly, just due to nerves ? The threatened rain had not materialised ; the next time I would not so easily be dissuaded.

Not so long after, and before the snow had gone, another large party sat in the Amphitheatre. We delayed setting off as long as we could, by eating sandwiches and looking at the great wall. I felt small and frightened as I looked up at it, at the line I intended to take curving out over space, up into the sky. Eventually no more excuses could be found and Johnny Churchill and I moved reluctantly over to the side of the gully, below my wall. This was it ; my prolonged wait was maybe about to be rewarded. My theories, and incidentally Johnny and myself, were to be put to the test.

The still present snow was quite an obstacle in rubbers, and the wall beyond was immediately steep. There were good small holds though, and I climbed quickly up to a horizontal crack with an unsatisfying edge. I chose the lower of two possible ways to reach the long grass-topped pedestal on my right and made a landing on the ledge with aching arms. As I brought Johnny up, I scanned the rocks above ; we had at least made a start, but things looked uncompromising now. Our traverse had presented us with quite a lot of exposure but now we had to go up. Three times I tried the wall before I gained a niche about 20 feet higher, which a loose rock flake shared with me. Clutching it with one hand, as much to keep it in place as anything, I searched over the overhang with the other, and found a good hold. Warning Johnny of the flake I pulled myself up, stepped out onto the right wall and followed grassy holds to the foot of the big V-groove. Immediately I was disappointed ; it seemed unclimbable. Gloom : there seemed nothing to do but descend. I did not wish to withdraw so soon, and idly pulled some turf off a ledge, and then some more. I stepped onto the revealed hold, and the turf hit the ground with a thump.



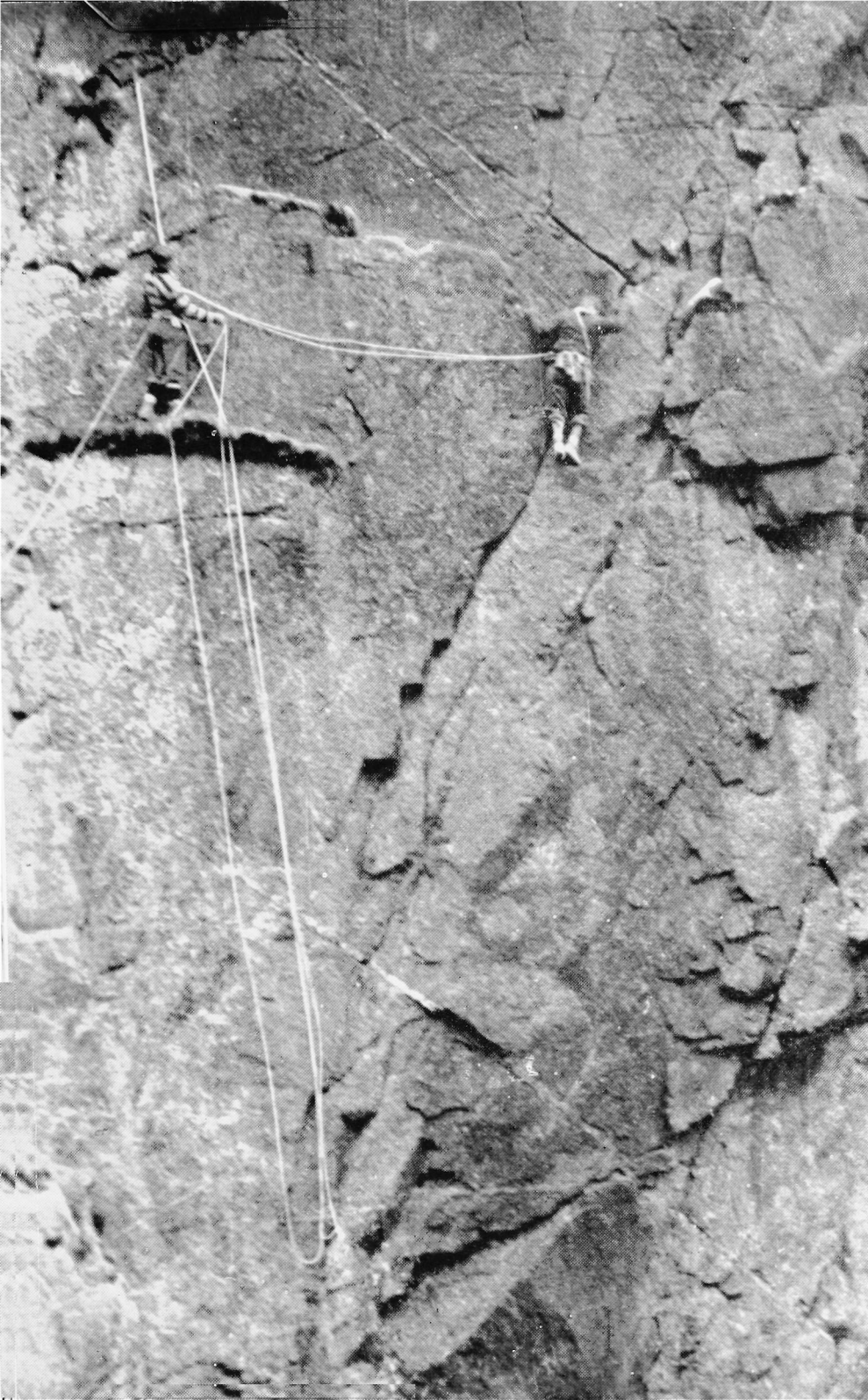
Suddenly I realised what a fine position I was in, standing above a tremendous drop, in the middle of a rough bare rock face. Looking down to enjoy the exposure before retreat, I noticed a small hold, and beyond it the scree. Then the up-turned faces of Fred and Emlyn brought my mind back to the problem that faced me. I had decided to go on.

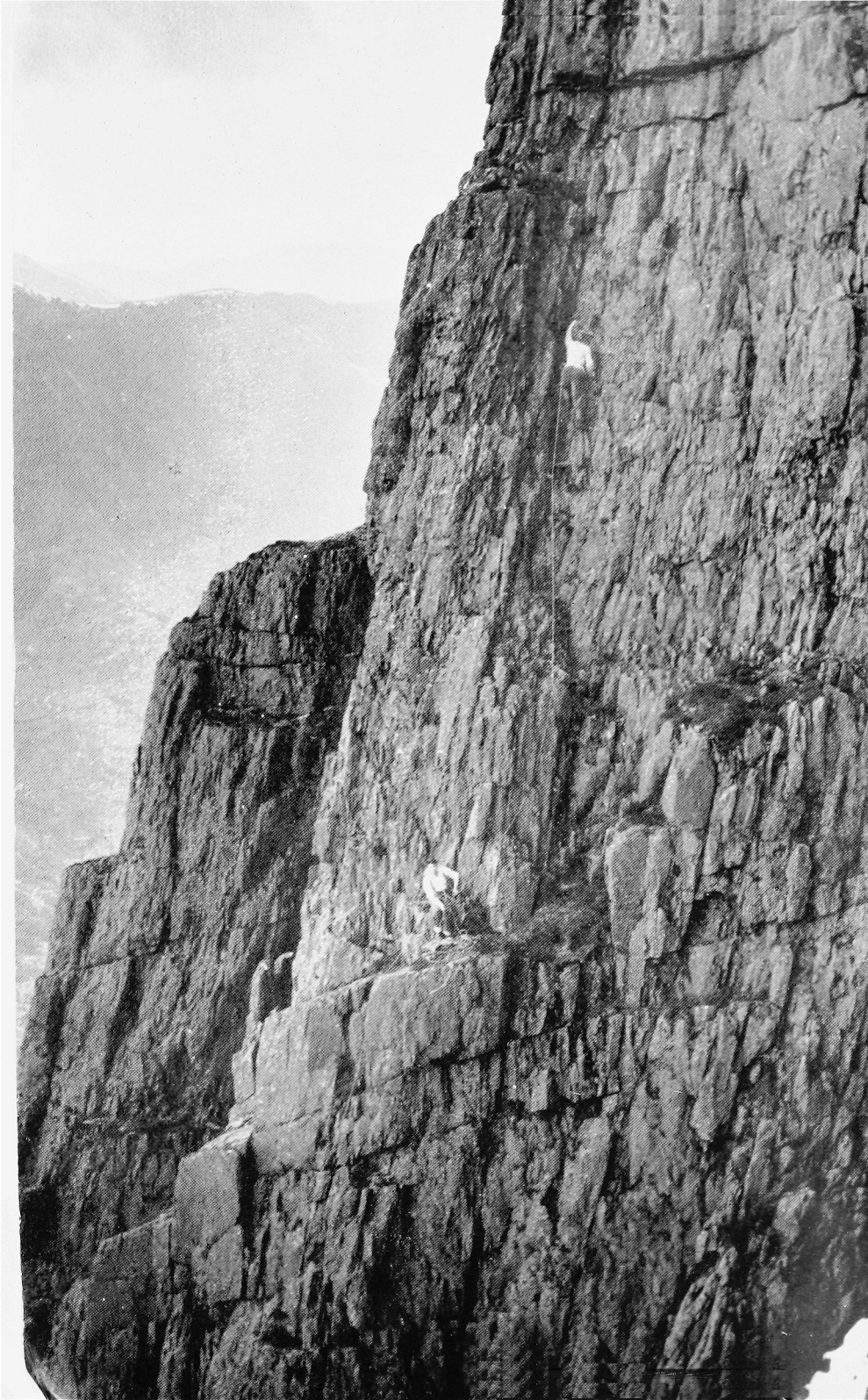
Plucking up courage, from myself and the presence of my friends, I made a complicated move down from the red edge of my ledge, and hanging at arm's length my foot just touched the hold. I relaxed again now, the die was cast, I could go on . . . to what? Little quartz holds led over to an open groove of steps, on the edge of all things. Nothing mattered but the odd few feet of rock around me, as the groove "went," not too hard, and I tied myself on as well as possible when I reached the stance. Johnny came up with a few pulls on the rope and a lot of encouragement. "How do you expect to get out of *this* place?" he asked as he arrived, looking rather frightened, but I didn't answer as I didn't know!

*This* place was an awe-inspiring one, a sort of rock pulpit with a sounding board formed by the overhanging roof, a place to heckle climbers congregated on the opposite buttress or in the hollow beneath! Mist had descended. It filled the cwm and swirled around the top of the cliffs forming picturesque wreaths, perhaps for us! Emlyn shouted up that he wouldn't come, it was getting late; and all the time my confidence and courage were going. The nervous energy expended had left me weak, and now it seemed the real test was yet to come.

A thin crack led out right beneath the overhang. I hoped I looked confident as I tried to swing out on my hands, along its now greasy edge, but I had to move back to the perch for a moment's rest. Again I tried, and found myself at the far end, held above the abyss by my fingers. A last desperate pull and I stood up shakily on the tiny ledge beyond. Even now the outlook was uncertain and I knew that we should fail if there were any pitches more difficult than the last.

Johnny found the hand traverse quite difficult to start, but easy to finish. We followed slabs and a steep groove to a grassy glacié and a ledge only 15 feet below Emlyn's smiling face. He had walked round to the top and told me that the finishing holds were good.





And now, back to the present. Again I stood beneath that final wall. The thin white rope went up, and disappeared over the edge to David. Something seemed wrong, there were no holds—or was I being stupid? Before, I had found the final wall easy, but now it took me three attempts before I joined the others on the bilberry terrace. The climb is still the best I've done in Wales, and all I want is a future supply of leaders to take me up, on the end of their ropes, Mur y Niwhl.

# KANCHENJUNGA ASSAULT

Pages from my Diary

GEORGE BAND

*This diary was written during the climb and completed at Base Camp immediately afterwards. It has been altered as little as possible in order to preserve, for better or for worse, the freshness of first impressions. G.C.B.*

14th May, 1955. Base Camp (18,100 feet). Overnight minimum temperature 8°F.

Charles Evans and Norman Hardie are returning from their lightning reconnaissance to 25,300 feet on the Great Shelf. Back in time for lunch. "—— tunny again," expostulates John Clegg. Charles is very thin about the face. Suddenly, without any preliminaries and with a mug of tea in his hands, he gave out the Assault plans: Tom Mackinnon and John Jackson ("Jacko") leave tomorrow with 10 Sherpas and carry stores to Camp V (25,300 feet). The day after go Joe Brown and I, the first assault pair, supported by Neil Mather, Charles himself, Dawa Tensing and three other Sherpas. They will get us to Camp VI—our last one. Norman Hardie and Tony Streather will form a second assault pair, supported by two Sherpas, following up a day behind us while Tom and Jacko do a second carry to V. Very good and economical, with nobody spending long at high camps consuming laboriously carried stores. First Assault timed for 22nd May. We agree to suppress names of possible climbers for a while and therefore not to disclose assault plans in our letters home.

After lunch, paid off Ghunza men who have brought *atta*, *tsampa* and potatoes, and then cleaned camera; Tom dishes out more film; Charles has typed out detailed plans and we discuss these in the big tent. John lends me his *Oxford Book of English Verse* to take up high; the "other place" ought to be

represented somehow on our bids for the summit. A fine day, clouds come up about 1 p.m., fair weather forecast but winds 50-60 knots at 25,000 feet. Thondup, the cook, excels for supper: tomato and chicken noodle soup, rissoles (yak?), roast potatoes and peas, pineapple and custard, then Ovaltine and, to celebrate our last supper together, hot lemon punch or Mummery's blood (rum and black treacle). Charles has ordered more rum from Darjeeling. We listen to the dance music and commercials on Radio Ceylon and have a riotous evening; Tom, slightly tipsy, swears hard in his campaign to moderate Joe's language. Took some flash photos of Tom gloating over the last bottle of rum. He might be a pirate from "Peter Pan" with his thick red beard, ribbed jersey and scarlet night-cap.

Very starry night. Identified Corvus with my planisphere; the Southern Cross is just hidden behind Talung Peak.

Didn't sleep at all well; either excitement or the effects of the rum.

### 15th May.

. . . Tony and Neil, who are the only two Sahibs not at Base, finished preparing the route to Camp IV (23,500 feet) and with their Sherpas got the last loads up. . . .

### 18th May. Camp III (21,800 feet). On our way up.

. . . My inside is misbehaving. I say to Neil: "We two are the only ones who haven't been sick on the expedition yet." Two minutes later the statement is untrue.

### 19th May. The Day of the carry to V (25,300 feet).

First assault party at Camp III. Tea at 5.30 a.m.—objectionably sweet and milky as usual—but we didn't really stir until after 7 a.m. except for one or two to relieve themselves and for Charles to vomit just outside the tent. Cut out porridge for breakfast, having a sort of scrambled egg instead (rumble-tumble is the Sherpa's word for it) but could hardly face this. We are poor breakfast eaters on this trip. Off after 9 a.m. We use oxygen on the assault from now on; a set with a 1,600-litre cylinder weighs 24 lb. With our personal kit tied on the back it must weigh 43 lb. altogether. We climb on two litres/minute

but could do with less when escorting the Sherpas without oxygen. My goggles tend to fog up with the slightest leak from the mask but otherwise O<sub>2</sub> is very enjoyable.

We soon enter the sunshine, then steeply up, resting about every 20 minutes above each fixed rope. To the west, Chamlang comes into view on the right of Jannu whose north face is a sheer rock wall. Then Makalu and later Lhotse and Everest—it must be, although a lot of rock on the Kangshung face.

Charles films us coming up a steep little wall and we rest on top. Photogenic ice walls above. While waiting in the nook below the final fixed rope, one of my windproof gloves blows away. I should have tied it with string.

We reach IV at 1 p.m. ; two pairs of Meade tents there ; two Sahibs and two Sherpas will sleep in each pair. We imagine the carry will be completed by now, but no. An hour later we see six dots approaching the site of V. Not too good. In the tent we fill out oxygen questionnaires (climbing rate 570 feet/hr. excluding rests) and, with Joe present, Charles asks me, "because of my white hairs," to take charge of our first assault if tricky decisions are needed. About 4.30, the first Sherpas including Anullu and Changjup return with Jacko who is snowblind. Last of all, about 5.30, Tom shepherds in the exhausted Pemba Dorje who had just fallen into a crevasse and Tom had hauled him out. The last three named were either too tired or too late to descend to III so they crawled in with us for a cramped night and we heard their accounts :—

### *Jacko's Story.*

On the way up to IV the previous day his goggles had also misted up and he'd occasionally tried to do without. He was O.K. that evening but on going to bed his eyes became terribly sore and he spent a sleepless night in agony with snowblindness. "I felt as though powdered glass were beneath my eyelids." In the morning he insisted on going and was roped between two Sherpas whom he could at least encourage even though he couldn't see where they were going.

\* \* \*

Terrific show considering, I thought.



*Tom's Story.*

The wind, which blew throughout the night, ceased about 8 a.m. and the sun came out. There was some shilly-shallying about making up the loads so they were not off until 10. Then the Sherpas went well but slowly carrying 40-45 lb. each. "It was a snail's crawl," said Tom, "over five hours for less than 2,000 feet—12 steps and a rest." He led the first rope with Anullu who was heading the Sherpas ; Jacko was on the second rope and Changjup led the third. They got through the séracs bordering the Great Shelf uneventfully except for Changjup who unfortunately dropped his load—a cooker and a Sherpa ration box—while crossing a crevasse. The cooker was rescued. There was some changing about on the ropes. Anullu had too heavy a load so he followed at his own speed and Changjup brought up the rear, alone and very upset. At 2.45 Tom, whose oxygen had given out below the steep bit, with Da Tsering and Gyalgen reached the camp V site and at 3 p.m. Anullu, Lakpa Sona and Phu Chitar arrived. Jacko, unable to see, stopped at the foot of the final slope, where Anullu cut a seat for him, and left the blue cylinders there. Tom waited at V. He put up a tent, anchoring it well, and left a walkie-talkie inside. 4.30 p.m. was the deadline for turning back, he considered, so Ang Dawa, Mingma, Pasang Sona and Pemba Dorje had to dump their loads 30 yards short of V. They had all done extremely well considering the weight they were carrying.

\* \* \*

A hoosh of meat, soup and **army biscuits** for supper followed by Ovaltine. I had to drink mine very slowly to avoid being sick. The wind blows in great gusts (around 40 m.p.h.?) raising clouds of spindrift. Jacko shares the tent with Charles and me ; his li-lo just fits in between ours. We two share sleeping oxygen from 7.45 p.m. to 5.30 a.m. It has an amazing effect ; my feet warm up immediately. I was very crushed along the side of the tent and could only lie in one position but slept throughout except for waking momentarily at 10.30. The soft rubber B.O.A.C. mask is very comfortable.

*20th May.* Camp IV (23,500 feet).

. . . Much wind-driven snow but turned out to be a blizzard so we stay put. Radio calls at eight and nine ; very weak. The

forecast last night was "cloudy with snow-showers and wind from S.W. to W." Direction unusual. Ominous? . . . Snow continues. It is too bad for Tom, Jacko and Pemba Dorje to go down. . . . Reading Tennyson to each other and snoozing. Didn't go out all day. Filled four and a quarter cans (1 lb. tin) in the morning. This is worse than Rakaposhi. . . .

Hot and stuffy inside the tent; hardly slept until about 4 a.m. No sleeping oxygen to spare for tonight. Took two chloral hydrate sleeping tablets—the only time on the expedition—but no use. Vivid dreams; wanted to burst out of the tent and couldn't relax. Very dry so found Joe's water-bottle in corner of tent and gradually melted mouthfuls of orange by holding it against my body.

*21st May.* Camp IV (23,500 feet).

. . . Tom, Jacko and Pemba Dorje packing up. Kabru visible so slight improvement but still no sun. Joe and I saw them down over the steep bit. Windy, snowy and cold; moustache and beard iced up; goggles freezing up too. Cold on fingers even with mittens, woollens and overgloves on. Back about 1 p.m. Everything in tents getting very damp. A shaft of sunlight broke through at 5.30 p.m.—the first for two days.

*22nd May.* To Camp V (25,300 feet).

Darjeeling, Makalu and Everest visible. Hurrah! We can start. We pack up and discover a climbing rope is snowed over and lost. So Charles, Joe, Ang Temba and Tashi leave at 10.15 while Dawa and Ang Norbu go down and chop a length off the last manila fixed rope to use instead. Neil and I finally leave with them at 11. We imagine it will take about four hours. I have 1,700 lb./sq. in. O<sub>2</sub> pressure—should be lashings. Route goes up over an icy whaleback, then through crevasse system out onto the Great Shelf and then a long gradual plug. Charles is putting in marker flags ahead but his steps are immediately filled in. Neil leads to save me effort—very generous—but I take a short middle spell. Some great wind gusts and stinging snow against which we just bow our heads. Slow going. It appears that the store dump has been avalanched and swept over an ice-cliff. First party retrieving things, adding to loads. Their oxygen runs out an hour before camp and so does ours.

Quite dramatic. Dawa picks up a Meade tent and must be carrying 60 lb. Into camp at 5.30. We try to peg out the tents but the wind lifts them right up. Stores and O<sub>2</sub> cylinders are all snowed over. We poke and dig feverishly for them. Eventually order restored. Two Sherpas and Sahibs, each in a pair of Meades. Share tent with Neil. He seems done in. My li-lo chooses this occasion to be punctured and I fail to patch it so lay it on the manila rope—not too bad. Soup, tea and biscuits for supper. Disorganised, so lights not out until 10.30 p.m. Did not have to strain myself today—except for those last few paces into camp—so not done in. A blue bottle for sleeping oxygen—midnight until 4.30 a.m. Vivid fantastic-like images with it at first and my feet warm up. Quite a day. My highest yet and the highest ever on Kanch. 25,300 feet.

*23rd May.* Delayed at Camp V (25,300 feet).

. . . Still tired and disorganised, so Charles decides to delay a day. . . . We all squash into one tent and talk about the climbs on Dinas Mot! . . . It warms up and the wind drops. Pleasant afternoon sitting out watching the ever-changing clouds. Weather improving gradually. The wind returns to N.W. which is a good thing, but the forecast relayed by John Clegg at Base states that “conditions are favourable for spread of monsoon to Eastern Himalayas within the next three days.” Fantastic! Hope it's not true. Am wearing eiderdown jacket and trousers permanently now under my windproofs. Also my boots when in bed as an experiment.

*24th May.*

The Final Carry to VI (26,900 feet).

A cold morning and we are in shadow here until 10. Warmed the valves of our O<sub>2</sub> cylinders with a plastic bag full of urine, a resourceful expedient, but less clever when wandering around doing jobs wearing tattered silk gloves. I collected mild frostbite of the finger tips as a result, without realising at the time. What a fool!

Charles, Neil, Dawa and Ang Norbu on first rope; Joe, Tashi, Ang Temba and self on second. All of us using oxygen. We leave at 9.15. Straightforward snowslopes with step-cutting. I take plenty of photos and seem to be only one doing

so. Rests each hour, when we switch off to conserve oxygen. First rest in a snow hollow. Next section took us up steep snow between rocks onto the Gangway. Helped Tashi retie his load (what a crisis if some fell off!) and changed a film.

Up the Gangway, Dawa did much of the leading, cutting steps inexhaustibly. Angle  $30^\circ$  at first, steepening to a steady  $45^\circ$ . Next stop will have to be at a camp site and before  $O_2$  runs out. A suitable rock outcrop above, but will we reach it in time? Charles' and Dawa's  $O_2$  finishes, then all ours some minutes before we reach the rocks. No camp site here. We must cut ledge out of the  $45^\circ$  névé. Not much energy for it! Then I discover Tashi still has 1,000 lb./sq. in.  $O_2$  in his set. He must have forgotten to turn it on again after a rest and never realised. Incredible! So I put it on and work at 6 litres/minute on the platform. Others lying around. We hit rock at back, but ledge almost wide enough so we put up tent. 4 p.m. Farewells and they descend. They've done tremendously to get us so high. Joe and I are left alone.

A very pleasant evening. We are tied to a rock spike in case the tent rolls off. Supper: "lemji," tea, asparagus soup, tongue and pom, drinking chocolate. Joe photographs sunset on Jannu through tent sleeve. We talk about the play of luck and chance in being chosen for Himalayan trips—others with much the same experience have to be disappointed—and of our respective ways of life. I try to convince Joe that University undergraduates aren't all rich men! Get sleeping oxygen ready and change a film clumsily, after pricking two frost-bite blisters. In bed by eight. I lose by drawing the shorter matchstick so take the outside berth. (Wearing everything including boots inside one sleeping bag.) Intermittent flickers of lightning. Rustles of wind and the occasional snow pellets which skip down the slope and flick against the tent canvas suggest a snowfall. However, weather remains perfect. I don't sleep much at first— $O_2$  dreams, but in monochrome now or, at most, a mild sepia toning.

### *25th May. The First Assault.*

$O_2$  finished 5 a.m. One wakes automatically. Joe cooked while I prepared  $O_2$  sets. Two pints of tea each and a biscuit or two. We leave at 8.15—still in shade—and out into Gangway.

Left our canvas overboots behind as there may be some rock climbing. Leading at first ; too steep for cramponning easily, so we cut steps. We intend to climb across the S.W. face, starting at a series of snow patches and then join the W. ridge above its worst section. We go onto the snow patch we think is right and spend an abortive hour there before realising we are wrong, so return, onto the Gangway. We must conserve  $O_2$  now, and whenever possible use the minimum of 2 litres/minute—half the normal climbing rate. We lead through, zig-zagging up the Gangway. Joe takes the zigs, cutting steps very efficiently, and I zag. Near the top Joe is leading. We take to the rocks and stop to remove our crampons. The serrated micro-cellular rubber soles seem a little slippery. Mixed climbing with a rotten snow patch above. Joe inserts a piton and a tricky rock pitch follows. "Come on, George, it's not more than 'difficult'." Above are two ice-pitches, perhaps  $60^\circ$ , with a rocky stance between giving a real feeling of exposure. I'm tired. This low rate of  $O_2$  doesn't suit me. I curse the cumbersome coils of rope and, on the rocky pitches, ice-axe, gloves and delicate finger-tips are an irritating hindrance. Joe has a wrist-sling on his axe which is handy for the rock work and mixed climbing. He offers to stay in the lead and I accept gladly. A curious corkscrew pitch and we come out onto the subsidiary snow ridge leading back to the main west ridge. Hurrah! Summit pyramid visible and the way seems clear for a good distance. Getting very thirsty and want a drink at least, if not a rest. A horrid phlegm forms on the roof of one's mouth. The bridge of my nose is sore with the oxygen mask, but one must try and keep a tight seal there otherwise one's goggles fog-up. I warn Joe several times about snow-blindness when I see him pushing his up and momentarily doing without them. At 1.50 we join the West ridge and have our first rest of the day in a hollow on the ridge crest. Looked over and down onto N.W. face. Switched off  $O_2$ . Lemonade, glucose, treacle toffee and mint cake. After 10 minutes we carry on. Only two hours'  $O_2$  left. We should turn back by 3 p.m. at the latest. Easier now. Joe surges ahead so I am nearly a rope-length behind. We keep to right of crest and skirt beneath a final rocky bluff. Some good scrambling. Now there is a red-brown rock wall above. Joe chooses a vertical broken 20-foot crack

with an overhanging bulge in it—the hardest part of the whole climb—“very difficult” even at sea level we thought. So I follow up. He persuades me to leave my ice-axe behind in a rock niche half way up because we are there. . . . 2.45 p.m.

On top is a gently sloping hard snow cover rising highest to the N.E. where it is about 5 feet higher than the rocks on which we stand. We cross to a little rocky promontory on the S. side about 20 feet away from the summit. Joe pushes me so my back is towards the summit and says: “Let’s get this photo business over.” I repeat with him and then take a complete panorama of photographs—except to the N.E. where the horizon is obscured by the summit. I forget to use my lens hood.

The view is impressive. A cloud sea covers all beneath 20,000 feet. To the west beyond the sharp wedge of the West Peak are Makalu, Lhotse and Everest. We cross in turn to the northern edge, keeping our distance from the summit, and I photograph. There is the top of the Bavarians’ N.E. spur and, through rents in the cloud, the grey snake of the Kanchenjunga Glacier. Thirteen miles away lies Tibet—smooth rounded hills half in cloud and only capped with snow. My film is finished.

After 15 minutes we set off down. I just remember to pocket a rock souvenir—a large flake of grey banded gneiss which can be chopped up afterwards. Many metamorphosed rock types here—even bands of dark pelitic schist—but no room for more. I lead down the crack. Joe leaves thread belay for Norman and Tony. Finish off lemonade at our rest place and leave the bottle. Carry on down quickly. Joe’s oxygen gives out at 4.10 and mine 20 minutes later when I’m half-way down the upper ice pitch. We discard the sets; I leave mine balanced on the eyrie. Feeling pretty tired and resting often. Once I slip in poor snow but regain control and stop in five feet. “It makes me breathless to watch,” said Joe. Crampons again, and into the shade of the Gangway just as the sun is gilding the crags above most wonderfully. There are shouts. We respond and are guided in by their sound—into Camp VI at 7 p.m. Hardy and Streather are in occupation ready for their attempt. But it is too late for Joe and me to try to descend to V. We must stay. Norman and Tony are wonderful hosts. Crouching outside, we drink lemji, tea and then crawl in for soup.

A horrid night. Norman and Tony have the two sleeping bags and a little oxygen as they still want to have a crack at the summit tomorrow. Joe and I squeeze in. We lie diagonally. I overhang space but am on a li-lo. Joe is in the icy gap between the two li-los and is in great pain with snowblindness. We aren't belayed to the rock-spike at all tonight, although I'm still roped. Not a wink of sleep, it seems.

"It was more exacting than the Dru," says Joe quietly and I am gratified.

### *26th May.*

. . . Joe and I set off down at 7.45. . . . Charles and Dawa meet us at V. . . . Charles radios John at Base to send off the impatient mail-runner with the bizarre code message of success for *The Times*: "PLEASE PASS MOTHER BIRTHDAY GREETINGS 25 MAY STOP FIVE FEET SHORT." . . . Down to IV at noon with Urkien carrying all our stuff. Tom greets us and Anullu prepares more tea. Jacko arrives with cocaine to relieve Joe's eyes. . . . We slide into III at 4 p.m. with Tom carrying for us this time. Neil welcomes us. . . . Joe falls asleep and misses supper and a victory tot of Drambuie. I can hardly keep my eyes open but sound sleep follows.

### *27th May.*

. . . At II we find a tin of blackcurrants and eat them with an ice piton between mouthfuls of salted peanuts. . . . We by-pass Camp I and go straight on down. Into Base about 4 p.m. where John has been holding the fort. Ram chikor for supper. Now for a rest.



## EARLY DAYS IN SKYE

L. G. SHADBOLT

THIS story really starts at Wasdale. An article in the *Strand Magazine* in the spring of 1903 on Rock Climbing in the Lakes, written by one of the Abrahams, came as a revelation in that it made me realise that other people beside myself climbed rocks for fun. I therefore went to Keswick and called on the famous brothers, who told me to get a pair of climbing boots and go to Wasdale. A day or two later, equipped with a splendid pair of well-clinkered boots and a small brown paper parcel containing a few necessities, I walked over Styhead and arrived at Wasdale Head, to be followed an hour and a half later by Alastair who was cycling back to Scotland from North Wales. His map had shown the route from Seathwaite to Wasdale as a passable road and so he had carried his bicycle all the way, always I suppose hoping that the alleged road would materialise. A Dr. Kirby of Liverpool was staying at the hotel and knew something of the recognised climbing routes. Being of an optimistic nature he showed us many of these and accompanied us upon them.

Thus began a long and happy association with Alastair McLaren, and for several years we climbed together in the Highlands. Inevitably we soon found ourselves at Sligachan where John Campbell was the young manager, and where the bachelors were housed in the corrugated iron annexe, later to become the imposing south wing of the hotel. Sometimes alone or sometimes with my brother and sister, we went there several times in the first decade of this century. On our first visit, having read something of King's Cave route on the Bhasteir Tooth, we thought it obvious from a photograph that the route must be up what is now known as the North Chimney. The difficulty of the first pitch and the subsequent somewhat complicated manoeuvres among the passages above did nothing to dispel our illusions, but there was certainly something odd about the exit. However, we remembered we had read that it

was somewhat restricted, and there was certainly a small area of daylight above. My brother, the smallest member of the party, managed after a great struggle to get through this, but all efforts on my part failed and indeed I was thankful to retreat after getting completely stuck and having to be dislodged by being stamped upon from above and pulled from below. Obviously something had gone wrong with this exit or King and his party must have been very small men. The scree floor of our cave next claimed attention and Alastair and I took turns at scooping out the small stones with our hands. We were pleased to find that these came away fairly easily leaving a solid looking roof above. However, it took about three hours' hard work before we were able to reach the outer air lying flat on our backs and wriggling like snakes. Here we were greeted by a lovely cameo of MacLeod's Maidens and a piece of sea cliff beyond, sunlit in the dissolving mist at sunset. My brother came last down Naismith's crack, which looked most alarming in the evening light.

It must have been on a later visit when, driven back by bad weather from Sgurr Alasdair, we met Collie and Colin Philip who were living at Glen Brittle Lodge. We were hospitably entertained and shown the famous photograph disclosing the existence of the Cioch, which Collie had just climbed for the first time. The long walk back to Sligachan made us realise the importance of having an advanced base at Glen Brittle and thereafter we always took a rucksack over at the beginning of our holiday and so were able to finish the day at either side of the range. Accommodation was limited to Mrs Chisholm's, the Post Office Cottage, and to Nicholson's—the gamekeeper's house. On one occasion we were in some difficulty as, arriving unexpectedly, we found both places full up. Glen Brittle Lodge was unoccupied at the time and the party at the gamekeeper's was (we hoped) somewhat mystified next morning when the small sitting-room had to accommodate two extra at breakfast.

Earlier that year I had been greatly impressed, when walking up Ludgate Hill, by the sight of goldfish swimming in a tank formed by a suspended length of cloth. I could not resist such an imperviously waterproof material and forthwith was fitted with a complete suit in a very fetching shade of green. No crucial test came until a very wet day when we were descending

the slabs of the Dubhs on the way back to Sligachan. My companion was wet through but I was warm and dry. We forded the stream at the head of Loch Coruisk, waist deep. The rain persisted, and it then transpired that the buttons of my wonderful suit were soluble in water. Supplies of string and safety-pins were inadequate and climbing rope was found to be a poor substitute for non-existent buttons. Our return to Sligachan was slow and undignified.

In these early days we got to know the Coolin well but there were large sections of the ridge we had not explored. At Whitsuntide in 1911 we had 10 days' climbing, and towards the end of that time we thought we might try the traverse of all the peaks, an expedition about which there had been a good deal of speculation. We started at 3.30 a.m. from Glen Brittle, with plenty of food but with only one wine bottle of water. We reached the top of Garsbheinn at six o'clock, which seems to be about the time taken by later parties. After that we lost some time in mist and were rather slow along the rest of the ridge, being unsure of the best pace to go and fearing we might tire before the end. We also suffered a good deal from thirst until we reached the spring just below the ridge on Bruach na Frithe. Subsequently we missed the way coming down the tourist route of Sgurr nan Gilleann, and came out much too far up Glen Sligachan, so that it was not until 8.30 p.m. that we reached the hotel. A great day.

Later that year we were back again and were joined by Archer Thomson and H. O. Jones, fresh from his triumphs in the Alps. Jones's sister Bronwen and E. S. Reynolds were also of the party. We climbed together in various combinations and the many first ascents which were made were very largely due to Archer Thomson, whose eye for new routes and whose persistence in following an undeviating line often led to the accomplishment of some hitherto neglected variations, as well as to some entirely new climbs. The Slanting Gully was ascended by four of the party on two ropes, but Thomson would have none of the traverse to the right below the final pitch and not only climbed it direct but insisted on walking across the Upper Rake and finishing up the obvious continuation of the gully beyond. In spite of these additions to the original climb, Thomson compared it somewhat unfavourably with the Great

Gully of Craig yr Ysfa, both for difficulty and length, perhaps because the continuity of the Slanting Gully is so obviously broken by the Foxes' Rake and then by the Upper Rake. The two great pitches, first the cave pitch in the lower section and then the Cracks pitch immediately above the Foxes' Rake, are indeed hard to match. On another day the same four made two separate ascents on the Castles. Thomson and Jones had a fine climb up the Central Buttress, while McLaren and I went up the buttress to the left (south) of the Central Gully.

We had to ascend the first stretch of the gully until a vertical corner beside its great pitch enabled us to break out on to the buttress which overhung below. The corner was overcome with some difficulty and then a horizontal ledge was followed until it was possible to mount the steep and exposed slabs above. A long series of slabs led upwards without great difficulty, and where overhanging walls were encountered, it was necessary to traverse usually towards the Central Gully until a line of weakness allowed of further upward progress. The buttress gradually narrowed as height was gained and towards the top merged into a narrow arête. The final pitch was up a 30-foot chimney gained by crossing the top of the gully. The whole climb was about 1,200 feet—very exposed and with hardly any belays. A delightful expedition, without any great difficulty but requiring care throughout. The start, immediately above what appeared to be a great overhang, at once emphasised the airy nature of the whole climb.

Between the Slanting Gully and the Deep Gash Gully rises the great face of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. The scale is magnificent and early accounts describe these cliffs as "sheer and looking quite inaccessible." On our way over to Glen Brittle, Archer Thomson, Jones and I went to look at this face while the rest of the party went up the Slanting Gully. From a point about half-way between the two gullies we climbed easily up to a small platform where we roped up, Thomson leading. The first pitch of 80 feet was, I thought, very difficult, but Thomson led it with great confidence. After another 30 feet to a platform, the angle eased off a little and we moved together up a broken line of basalt followed by a difficult 20-foot pitch with a good belay at the top. Here followed a series of moves which I always think of as the crux of the climb. A traverse to the right

and upwards, along which Jones followed the leader, looked straight down to the start of the climb. Above this there were two low vertical walls set at right angles, and in the angle thus formed was a smooth square stool of basalt sloping outwards, also with vertical sides. Though only three or four feet high it was a matter of great delicacy to get on to this stool and then to stand upright upon it, when the top of the retaining walls could be reached. Soon after we were able to foregather in a pale green cave. Here we were at a point where we thought it might be impossible to proceed, as from below there seemed to be an unbroken overhanging belt of considerable height. Things looked hardly more hopeful from our cave. However, we climbed a very steep leaf of rock on our left, and then a short chimney led to a sharp edge which was reached by a long stride. Round the corner appeared a line of holds leading upwards and at last clear of the overhang. Soon after this we came to another cave and climbing the right wall traversed a basalt dyke horizontally, finally emerging under a low roof of spikes. Steep slabs followed until we were forced by lack of hold into a yellow dyke. This soon became so steep and rotten that it had to be abandoned, and a long stride to the right, a long lean outwards and downwards to two handholds, and a pendulum swing, brought one leg comfortably into a groove. Above this a line of holds gradually improved and we went quickly up a long stretch of slabs until stopped by a steep 40-foot pitch. This was the last real obstacle and we soon reached the top, at a point where the Foxes' Rake merges into the summit rocks. Looking back over the years I always remember this climb as the finest I ever did in Skye. I realise how much the technique of rock climbing has advanced since those days, and I often wonder how it is considered by modern climbers. On consulting a young friend who recently took his wife up it, I was somewhat relieved to know that in his opinion this climb cannot yet be classed as "an easy day for a lady." It was about my limit for difficulty, but not out of my class, although I could never have led it as I would never have been able to work out such an intricate route, or had the initiative to go on, not knowing what was coming next. Thomson's judgment was superb and his route-finding ability displayed at its best. The uncertainty of the outcome enhanced the value

of every situation and the standard of difficulty remained constant almost throughout.

The next day we made two new routes on the face of Sron Na Ciche, both starting from the centre of the lower part of the face. The Zig-Zag route started up a trap recess followed by a basalt dyke, a long run out of about 90 feet ; thereafter a rather indefinite series of moves eventually led to a steep arête above an overhang. A cairn was found near this point but it appeared that the arête had been reached by some other line of approach. Thomson, Jones and his sister made a route, the Chimney and Crack route, up the centre of the face. This proved to be very severe. This face had no great attractions for me as there were so many possible routes, but this fact made no difference to Thomson who would always choose a line, however difficult, and stick to it regardless of much easier alternatives on either hand. Indeed such concentration is necessary if the meticulous and detailed exploration of, for instance, the East Peak of Lliwedd is to be carried out. Here, as we all know, great care has to be taken when doing one climb not to use any hand-holds on another. It used to be said even in those days that

“ The climber goes to scale the cliffs of Lliwedd  
Where many feet before his oft have trod,  
But which of all the many routes he diwedd  
Is only known to Thomson—and to God.”

The next day the whole party went up the Cioch by the ordinary route and after trying to shelter from the rain for a while, two of us went to look at the buttress which rises above the Cioch to the summit of the mountain. From near the top of the Cioch gully it was found that a ledge ran steeply up to the right and after going along this for 60 feet or so, we felt sufficiently hopeful to return and rope up with the rest of the party. No great difficulties were encountered but the whole climb was very exposed and the view downwards most impressive. At the skyline a shelf was found where the whole party could foregather. We were now close to and almost level with the Crack of Doom, which had not at that time, so to speak, been born or thought of. From this point a sharp and nearly vertical edge ran upwards. One or two delicate and sensational moves up this brought us to the end of the climb proper, and another 250 feet up a glaxis took us to the top of the mountain. We had

rain on each day of this holiday and the morning of our last day was not promising, so we thought to obtain some shelter and took Thomson and Jones up the North Chimney of the Bhasteir Tooth. I think we all enjoyed the climb but Thomson was a little uncomplimentary about the amount of shelter it afforded. He wrote afterwards that although he could see nothing of the upper part of the climb, he never failed to feel

“ How Bhasteir's blessed river ran  
In culverts through the clothes of man  
Down to the sunless scree ! ”

We descended by Naismith's crack and so ended a memorable and delightful holiday. As far as I was concerned it was the end of exploration in the Coolin before the bow and arrow war. We little thought that both Thomson and Jones would be gone before two years had passed. Alastair McLaren was badly wounded in 1917 and never climbed again, although he was able to walk the hills with a stiff leg.



# ACCENT ON SNOW

E. A. WRANGHAM

THE Peuterey has been written about before, so that one feels that there is not much else of interest to be said about it. It is, of course, fashionable to explain that a snow climb is different each year ; rather as in any phase of sport—athletics, football, ski-ing, golf, bowls, or even chess—where the conditions of ground, weather, and state of mind are never the same. Whatever they say, the area of activity, and the rules governing it, do not vary. What varies is the ease or difficulty of the ascent (in the case of a snow climb) and that is compounded of the competence of the party as against the conditions prevailing ; it is a subjective difference. And so with the Peuterey ; the stretches of ridge are the same : the Fresnay Glacier remains contorted, the Aiguille Blanche must be ascended, its tricky descent to the Col de Peuterey must still be negotiated, and the final arêtes are never other than fatiguing. The stage is set ; the only thing to be written about, after the first account of any climb, is the party's reactions to their own particular day's climbing.

In the case of Roger Chorley and myself, our approach to the Peuterey was conditioned by many influences. We knew the Peuterey to be a " Great " (i.e. long and tiring) snow route up Mont Blanc. In the 28 years since its first ascent (from the Gamba side) it has achieved a considerable reputation, so that many leading Alpinists have classed it as the finest route up the highest mountain in Europe. We had come to the Alps hoping, as one always does every summer, to get in some of the really big hard routes ; instead we had pottered about, largely because of the unstable weather, on short rock, and shorter ice, climbs. Then thinking to take advantage of its lower altitude, we had gone off to try and climb the north-east face of the Badile, but were met with continuous storms. So we arrived back from the Italian Lakes having done nothing for far too long. In addition

the day we arrived back, 4th August, was not too bad, and the next day was fine. Despite advice in Courmayeur that at least four days would be required to settle the new snow, delay was unthinkable : fine weather in 1955 was all too rare to be missed. So we got food, packed rucksacks, and started off.

We hadn't decided whether or not to stay the night at the Gamba ; but the sight of the crowds of people milling around the hut, together with our knowledge of its limited accommodation, impressed us forcibly. Also the early start necessary from the Gamba involves crossing the Col de l'Innominata in the dark, which is no fun ; and I remembered the delights of the bivouac under the south face of the Punta Gugliermina. We continued.

On the way up to the Col, I devised an interesting but foolish variation via the rocks of the Aiguille Croux, which I am afraid that Roger did not entirely appreciate though he was very patient. It involved the traverse of several grooves, rather like the west face section of the Pillar girdle. A little later, when the difficulty was over, we put on the rope. From the Col one has a fine view of the Fresnay Glacier, and we could see traces of old footsteps leading across it, probably those of Sutton's party of about a week before. So we slithered down the mixture of ice and rubble to the glacier, and trustingly followed the steps. They led, almost, to the other side, to where the glacier had evidently altered a little. I recall being urged by Roger along to the tip of a fragile-looking blade of ice, on the theory that there ought to be a route down over the end of it. There wasn't. There was 20 feet of air and then a crevasse. However, as the reader may suppose, we then devised another route which led satisfactorily over some rotten debris more or less bridging a large crevasse to the start of Route 297 (*Vallot*, Vol. 1), the system of ledges slanting up to the south-east ridge of the Aiguille Blanche which it meets some way above the Brèche Nord des Dames Anglaises. Here, almost directly under the Punta Gugliermina, we arrived at our bivouac site.

I have now spent three nights in this particular spot and recommend it. Two people can lie full length in some comfort, on a bed of nice small grit, sheltered by the steep wall above, with a water supply to hand, and with the incomparable view of the Fresnay Glacier framed by the Noire and the Croux.

On this occasion the water supply was just a shade too plentiful, and ditching and draining was necessary to get our bed dry. Then, in our *duvet* jackets and *duvets courts*, we settled down to the sort of repose one does have on a fine Alpine night : wakeful, but far from unpleasant. We took breakfast in bed at about 2.30, and left at 3.45, spurred on by the sight of lights crossing the glacier from the Col de l'Innominata.

I had had a strong feeling ever since we left the valley the day before that something would happen to prevent us completing the climb, that we would not in fact get up. I don't think that I was any more apprehensive than usual before a big climb, just that all our efforts were futile, a waste of energy ; perhaps it was a result of the many disappointments of the 1955 season. But I was certainly rather ashamed at it, the more so because of the way in which Roger plodded steadily on, appearing to consider success as a foregone conclusion. " Rather a dull snow plod," he appeared to be thinking, " still, we ought to bash on up since we've bothered to come this far." The ledges up to the south-east ridge of the Blanche had quite a bit of ice on them, which reduced our speed by increasing the sense of insecurity already created by darkness. All the while, and even after dawn, I kept the sense of futility for I felt sure we would have to turn back before long. The couloirs that one has to cross on the way up the Blanche were all snow and ice. It seemed to take ages as we cut across each one, and scrambled up the snowy rocks in between. We must have taken all of six hours from our bivouac to the top of the first summit of the Blanche, six hours of pretty steady movement, with no rests.

It was about half-way between the twin summits of the Blanche that I woke up suddenly to two facts : one was that the day was fine, and our chances of success really not bad ; the other that we were on a quite exciting slope of recent north-face powder snow lying on ice. It required a good deal of attention, and I was quite definitely relieved to have as companion such a fine ice-man as Roger. He tends to drift across such places with an air of protest that it should be necessary to cut steps instead of merely cramponning over. I always feel a bit frightened ; since I have never been on a slope that has avalanched, I do not know for certain which slope will and which will not. Then of course there was the ever present view of the Brenva Glacier, so near

horizontally, and so far vertically. I know it seemed to me that this traverse called for greater mountaineering skill and technique than any other part of the route.

In due course we arrived on the farther point of the Blanche, and looked down towards the Col de Peuterey. We had been led to expect that this descent would be the crux of the climb. And indeed it looked steep, as descents have a habit of doing. Ribbons of ice separated by rock partly encrusted with snow and ice led down to the rimaye. We dithered about a bit looking for a good line, partly through hesitation because it looked so uninviting. However, when once attacked, the descent turned out to be less ferocious than it looked. Still wearing our crampons, we climbed down in pitches, using the ice gullies as much as the rock. I enjoyed it more than any of the rest of the route ; it was less effort and more entertaining. Neither the rimaye nor the slope below it gave any difficulty, and we arrived on the Col with the nagging consciousness that we had taken four hours or so from the first summit of the Blanche, whereas the best time is supposed to be 45 minutes. The time was 1.30 p.m.

The Col de Peuterey is rather a pleasant place, or so it seemed to me, since I was now feeling as unreasonably optimistic as I had earlier felt pessimistic. The feeling was enhanced by a good halt and some food, during which we agreed that our slow rate of progress thus far must be made up for by a determined burst of speed. So we set off again, probably too fast, floundering up out of the soft snow of the Col towards the rimaye under the Grand Pilier de l'Angle. We did not propose to go the long way round via the right-hand edge of the slope, but took the more direct route which arrives on the crest of the ridge above the Grand Pilier, immediately below the final arêtes. The first half was straightforward going up a mixture of snow, a little ice, and snowy rocks. Then we left the topmost rocks, and for a few hundred feet had to cut up snow-covered ice ; so much for our resolutions about speed. We used an ice-piton in one place where a long lead-out seemed the safest plan ; moreover the ice was so ideally suited to it that it would have been a pity to have missed the opportunity. So up we plodded to the foot of the final ridge.

These final snow arêtes that lead from the top of the Grand Pilier de l'Angle to Mont Blanc de Courmayeur have, I suspect,

been a nasty shock to more than one party. We looked up and felt relieved, since we were feeling tired, at the closeness of the summit cornice (300-400 feet, we thought). The fact that the distance was really some 1,600 feet had somehow escaped me when reading the account of the climb. We got our first shock from how long it took to reach a rock on which we wanted to rest and eat. Eventually we sat in the snow where we were and had some dried fruit. By now the sun had left our side of the mountain, and it was beginning to get cold ; also fatigue was really starting to make itself felt. Roger was clearly far from fresh, though he still had enough *volonté* to take a photograph or two ; I had got to the stage of counting steps. Not that the conditions were as bad as they can be ; we did not have to cut. But with the departure of the sun a crust had formed which had to be broken through, three or four stamps being necessary to each step. On one of the spells when I was making the track I got cramp in the thigh muscles, and felt an instant of despair with the fear that I might not be able to make the top. Although clearly very tired, Roger took over again, and with magnificent courage and determination continued in the lead to the top.

It was now almost dark, and the cornice loomed blackly overhead. Roger found a way through, and in turn we mantelshelved onto the top, still just illuminated by the last rays of the sunset. My feet were feeling (and later Roger told me his, too) a bit cold, but it was late and anyway the prospect of more rapid movement quieted any fears I might have had. It was 8.30.

I have often been relieved to reach a summit, and grateful for having been led there ; but I don't recall ever being more impressed with those feelings than I was at the moment of mantelshelving through the cornice. The night was fine, and all we had to do was plod steadily to the summit of Mont Blanc and down the moonlit Dromedary's humps to the Vallot. Of course in the event it took longer (and seemed longer still) than anticipated to reach the Vallot, and we stumbled in there eventually at 10 o'clock. Worse, we had a shock to come : on removing our boots, we noticed some well-known symptoms ; we neither had any sensation in our toes, and Roger's were a slightly greenish tint. Yet so insidious is the onset of frostbite that our first reaction was surprise—it had not seemed all that cold, nor had we had the least warning of anything so sinister. But we

were lucky ; the results were not at all serious. True, I did have the hell of a night with continuous pain ; and Roger, who felt nothing that night, had later considerable blisters which cut short his holiday. But neither of us lost so much as a toe nail.

We descended next day, chased away from a sunbath at the Vallot by the end of the two-day fine spell ; still, we felt rather satisfied than otherwise as we descended through snow and rain to the valley. At least we had not wasted that fine weather. We both felt, I think, that the Peuterey was a magnificent route, photogenic and scenic ; but we also felt that it was rather hard work for not much technical reward. I recall that at the time our comment in the Hôtel de Chamonix was : “ A long snow plod.”

## ROOF CLIMBING

H. G. NICOL

FOR four days in Chamonix, it rained. The hollows of the ground outside our tent became puddles, the puddles discharged into those convenient little ditches with which boy scouts and French campers delight to surround their tents, and soon a fairly sizeable brown river was making its way complacently downhill through the trees, carrying with it copies of *France-Soir*, and labels from packets of Maggi soup. Even the tireless Italian-French woman in the tent next to ours was silent. She had woken us up at 6 a.m. nearly every morning, making her breakfast and beating her two wretched children, who seemed to be a little bored by it all. It rained, and she was silent. Perhaps she would even go away. . . .

The brown river ran slowly downhill towards the Chalet Biolay, where at any time of the day dejected climbers could be found discussing sunny days in Wales or Fontainbleau. Some tactlessly would read out extracts from letters from home. "Here it has not rained for four weeks." "Here there is an official drought." "Here"—ultimate criterion—"we have had to water the garden." One Frenchman was heard to remark darkly, as he strapped yet another bunch of pitons on to his motor-cycle, that he was off to climb at Monte Carlo, and the only cheerful faces belonged to the people who were smugly departing home, whose cry, "back to the heat wave," had become a popular slogan.

And still it rained. The tents around us, bedraggled, fly-sheets awry, departed one by one in search of better weather. Presently we were alone.

"I say, Hamish, what sort of bird in seven letters ends in OGLT?" Tom was sitting placidly through it all, doing *The Times* crossword puzzle. He sat hunched up on his lilo, an enormous sleeping bag pulled up over his ears, and deftly avoided the drips which fell through the roof. It was a splendid tent. It was certainly older than he was, Tom said proudly,

and his mother had used it on her honeymoon. It was fixed to the ground, more or less, by twigs instead of tent pegs, and by one rusty piton which I had extracted from the VI pitch on the Ratti-Vitali, and for which decent burial had seemed to be the only way of combining business with the leisure appropriate to its old age and former position.

Sooner or later every day, we were driven to the Chalet Biolay to prepare a meal, smoke reasonably dry cigarettes, or perhaps even buttress our morale with a bottle of wine. After this, the expedition of the day into town, in which, between cloud bursts, we dashed about for more food, another copy of *The Times*, and ended up in front of the civic barometer. The barometer was always surrounded by people who made clicking noises with their tongues, or shrugged their shoulders. They did not understand it, because perversely it would go up in proportion as the rain fell harder. Tom would assure me wisely that it could not help doing this, and then despairing at my lack of scientific knowledge, he might suggest: "What about an ice-cream?" We ate far more ice-cream when it was raining than when it was fine, an interesting fact statistically, and we did so always at a little shop beside one of those big brass telescopes for vicarious mountaineers. From the telescope hung a sign which said emphatically "A ce moment des personnes sont visibles sur le Mont Blanc", and the sign and the telescope were both enveloped in a large black mackintosh, glistening with rain. The little man with the black beret, who on fine days sat there, was away in some more congenial spot, the telescope was firmly locked, and the madmen on Mont Blanc, grape-nuts heroes with balaclavas down over their eyes, as one imagined them, had it all to themselves.

On the fifth day it cleared. We had an inkling of this the night before, when for the first time at dusk, stars became visible in the sky. We had gone for a walk through the town, had played a thrilling Oxford versus Cambridge game of bar football at the Café Nationale, with Cambridge the winners by six goals to three, and had gone to bed early, not daring to say: "Tomorrow it may be fine; tomorrow we may be off on something really big: tomorrow this wait may pay off."

And the next day was fine. We took the 8.30 train to Montnvers. Our sacks contained food for three days, bivouac



equipment, 35 pitons, wooden wedges, 370 feet of rope, for the east face of the Grand Capucin. Our equipment had been the subject of much discussion over the previous days. The climb was a hard one, but we did not want to turn it into a misery of sack hauling, by taking too much gear. Over the controversial matter of pitons, their number and their size, it was decided eventually to take 35, of which 15 were channel pitons, and 20 divided more or less evenly between thin and thick bladed leaf pitons. With this burden on our backs we stepped off the train at Montenvers, and two hours later were enjoying a second breakfast at the Requin Hut. The weather was still fine, and we sat in the sun on the terrace outside the hut, watching the gardien's daughter flirting with four virile mountaineers, who were sprawling on the ground beside us. They wore badges of every description on their red shirts, and on their green Tyrolean hats, and their clothes had clearly never been soiled by anything as sordid as contact with granite. Fortunately we had brought up with us a large quantity of bread (against Tom's will, who claimed never to eat the stuff), and were able to make a good meal without breaking into our iron rations, as the significance of the various badges was explained. After some more water, and a Gaulois or two, the séracs du Géant began to look almost human.

Tom swung his sack on his back, I followed, having asked the gardien to expect us in two or three days, and as we scrambled down the path to the glacier, it was about 2 p.m. For the first hour the Col du Géant track was a well-beaten path, in spite of the recent snow. Presently it became necessary to bear right, and with a sigh, and a reluctant glance backward at the swathe of footsteps which zig-zagged up to the Torino Hut on our left, we plunged ankle and sometimes knee deep into the soft new snow of the upper Glacier du Géant. The next few hours were hell, and the east face of the Capucin itself did not materialise until about 6 p.m., so slow was our progress. However, we were determined to bivouac on the easy descending ledges at the foot of the climb, and there might just be time to get there. Our description told us to climb the snowy couloir to the south of the Capucin for 400 feet or so, until a descending traverse to the right became obvious along ledges near the bottom of the east face. The rimaye, it added in brackets, was "parfois difficile à

franchir." We laboured up to our waists in soft wet avalanche debris, and were forced to agree with the authorities. The couloir above was not much better, and it was quite a relief to get on to the appallingly loose rocks of the left bank. Here we left our axes and crampons, and after a short halt Tom led off in search of the traverse which should take us to the right. After some messing about we found an ice-choked chimney which led to the descending ledges, and these in turn brought us to a good bivouac site within 50 feet of the first pitch of VI. It was 8.30 p.m. and in half an hour it would be dark. The ledge was covered with two feet of soft snow, and we had nothing to remove it with except our piton hammers and feet.

"Oh for a shovel!"

"Or even a tin tray."

The result was an area nine feet by three, with a gravel bottom, much better than we had expected. I sat down on a coiled rope, and watched Tom doing the same. Then we had a cigarette. It was now 9.15 and quite dark. Seven hours to kill. Behind my back the east wall of the Capucin ran straight upwards, interrupted not by ledges but by overhangs. In front a pale moonlit Glacier du Géant stretched out, apron-like, to the mountains of the Italian frontier. The moon dodged behind a nearby pinnacle, and after a desultory discussion on which way the moon ought to revolve anyway, in which I was firmly trounced by Tom the physicist, it became obvious that the only space for cooking lay beside my right elbow, and that consequently I should have to prepare the dinner.

Tom lit the petrol stove. I cut a few lumps of ice from the cornice behind me, tipped 20 hard-boiled eggs out of the saucepan in which they had travelled protected, and started the soup. An egg or two, washed down by some of our super-calorific condensed milk and sugar toddy, and some bread and cheese completed the meal. We stretched out and waited for the freeze up.

Tom was able to sleep for short periods, broken by bouts of paroxysmal shivering. I shivered on and off all night, sat with my knees in my chin, and contemplated the folly of bivouacs. Imaginative writers have descanted here, on the joys of a sense of isolation, on the beauty of the firmament of stars above, on the glittering ice peaks around; but in fact you are far too

miserable to entertain any philosophical reflections on the nature of life, or any artistic ones on the perfection of the surrounding scene. There is a cold patch over your knees where the rucksack holding your feet fails to overlap your duvet jacket pulled down as far as it will go. There is a cold piece of rock in your thigh which no amount of wriggling will budge, and it is these things which dominate your universe.

At 3.30 a.m. next morning, I was looking unhopefully for signs of dawn, as I had done every half-hour regularly through the night, when I saw two little lights on the glacier coming towards us. Competitors! The Capucin is the only climb always in condition in a bad season, and we had expected company. Still it was a nuisance, and getting up before light to make breakfast is no joke. The stove will not light: it is too cold. We waved our torches about looking for things, and as we did so *they* caught sight of us, were confused, conferred, and hurried on in our direction.

It was a race to get on to the climb first, and we fully expected to be beaten to it. But by 6 a.m. when the first sun had thawed us sufficiently to make climbing possible, they still had not appeared. We roped, descended the last 50 easy feet of the terraces, Tom belayed, and I set off across the pitch of VI. It was a slab at a high angle with tiny wrinkled holds for the feet and hands. A small overhang lay between me and its upper part, which in turn lay below an overhang. Two rather awkward moves brought me to a minute stance.

"What's it like?"

"Just like Narrow Slab. Sacks up."

I hauled the rucksacks across on our spare 130-foot rope, and Tom quickly joined me. He then climbed down a horrid-looking chimney abseiling the last 20 feet to save time, and we found ourselves on a ledge which appeared to lead across the cliff to the right.

At this point the two French parties appeared, and we exchanged greetings. "Bonjour Messieurs. Ça va?" And then, pointedly, "Qui êtes vous?" We told them our names. They seemed to be trying to decide how much we should hold them back.

The note told us to traverse right and climb the "third dièdre." However only two cracks were visible, of which the

first was pitonable but hard, and the second was a wide crack filled with earth and flowers. Tom tried the second—it appeared to lead in the right direction—and came down again. His widest and longest channels worked loose under his 15 stones weight, and the crack was too narrow to admit wedges. But by this time the first of the Frenchmen had arrived, and he confirmed that we were on the correct route. My lighter weight was instructed to attempt the pitch, and eventually I got to the top having planted five pitons, each of which Tom had no difficulty in lifting straight out with his fingers. We met on a narrow stance, and by some clumsiness managed to tangle the ropes. With 240 feet in red and white nylon, and 130 feet in blue and white, the result is knitting on a formidable scale.

The Frenchmen below looked at the weather, at their watches, and at us in our red, white and blue disorder. “*Quelle patriotisme,*” observed one briefly. The weather was looking unsettled, and they went into a conference. Then : “*Nous allons partir. Bonne chance*”, and we had the Capucin to ourselves. A short free pitch of V sup, with quite a thin traverse movement, brought us to a solid flake from which the serious artificial difficulties begin.

One or two pitons could be seen in place in an overhanging dièdre topped by a great roof, and Tom went off in their direction. Below the roof he found a ledge, along which he was able to crawl on hands and knees to the left. Our rate of progress was 50 feet an hour on this, and on the next three pitches. Each was on overhanging rock ; each required 10 to 15 pitons or wedges, most of which had to be put in and removed afterwards. Passing Tom, I thrust my head and shoulders into a Monolith-type crack, panted freely, and wriggled upwards. It went easily enough, and from the flat-topped pinnacle above I launched into a long strenuous dièdre, A2, some 60 feet high. The first two or three pitons went in grudgingly, and it was with some relief that I caught hold of a wooden wedge, firmly placed, and tied my rope to it. The crack widened. Two more wedges went in, and as I was putting in a third, it escaped from my hand, fell at once, brushed an out-jutting piece of rock just below me, and then made off for the glacier in one gigantic bound of 500 feet. I remembered what a Frenchman had once







said about the route, that from any part of it "on peut cracher sur le glacier." He was right, but we were too thirsty to try.

Very soon the first bivouac Bonatti could be seen, a square-cut ledge some 100 feet up. At its level, and stretching across the cliff for quite a distance above our heads was a colossal black overhang, and Tom's next pitch brought us to a point on a smooth slab within 30 feet of its under surface. A traverse to the right had become essential, but there was some debate as to the exact line to take. Tom tried one without great success, then retired to a sketchy stance on pitons and étriers and told me to have a shot a bit lower. This new line went well and after a diverting little passage which involved the crossing of a holdless corner of rock not unlike the popular Biolay traverse, I found myself in another dièdre not far from the ledge. Unlike its predecessors this dièdre was well supplied with wedges and pitons, and thanks to them and to some entertaining free climbing I soon found myself tucking my neck down and crouching in étriers under the overhang, with only a couple of moves between me and our first commodious resting place. The book advised a "rétablissement" which I was prepared to have a shot at free, in spite of a marked absence of holds and the *rébarbatif* look of everything around me, but Tom ordered that an étrier be used and a piton inserted, and he proved to be right.

Some minutes later we were both on the bivouac ledge, eating. It was just big enough for two people to sit side by side. We had some sugar out of our ration of two kilos, some chocolate and some prunes, and spat the stones on to the glacier, breaking no doubt all the records for this particular field event. We took stock of our store of pitons, and finding that there were still 29, decided to push on to the second Bonatti bivouac in the six hours of daylight which were left to us. Half an hour later Tom led off into the clouds, as it seemed to me sitting comfortably on the ledge in a postprandial doze. He was going up a dièdre with a big overhang at the top, and as he crossed this from left to right the rucksack rope fell down to me clear of the rock, twisting lazily to and fro.

"Wake up! Let's have the sacks." This time both sacks had to be hauled up together, because Tom could not have thrown the free end back to me: it would have landed in mid-air. He

bent himself to this formidable task, and I watched them going up, two feet in a jerk, and then one foot down, like goods on a loose conveyor belt.

In this way we went on very slowly, putting in and taking out pitons, clipping and unclipping our stirrups over the increasing depth beneath our heels. The route was never much in doubt : it consisted of taking the least improbable way, and the choice of alternatives was never great. The Frenchmen had been up and down the Petit Capucin during this time, and they watched our progress from the glacier for a few minutes before leaving. They must have felt pretty frustrated because the day was now fine.

At 4.15 p.m. we reached a ledge and had another short rest. The 40-metre dièdre alone separated us from the second bivouac Bonatti : it looked as if we were almost there and we wondered how we would pass away the rest of the evening—such a pity to have time to waste ! With an effective climbing length of 36 metres on our red and white rope, it was necessary to break the pitch, so I led off first, because as Tom pointed out, he had already spent one and a half hours on étriers and this was an experience I could not afford to miss. There was a suitable place to make a stance 25 feet up where the wall was only vertical, and I made for it, passing a small overhang *en route*. Then I placed two pitons for my étriers, and a third for the sacks, and from a swaying perch invited Tom to pass me. This was not easy. The rucksacks would have made a good handhold, but I was not confident that their piton attachment was strong enough to hold Tom's weight as well. Eventually he struggled over me somehow and reached a position in the crack beyond. For 30 feet the pegging looked difficult and loose. Our predecessors had been wedging two and even three pitons against each other, but for the most part Tom ignored their efforts and inserted thin-bladed pitons into any place which would accept them. While this was going on, I began to realise that my stance was in the direct line of fire from a water drip coming off the second bivouac Bonatti. The drops detached themselves languidly but with unerring aim from the tip of an overhang 80 feet up, and hit me either in the face or splashed off the rucksacks. Under this Chinese torture, I waited for two and a half hours on étriers as Tom slowly disappeared from view past



the major overhang. It was now late ; the sun was setting ; the drops froze to ice as they fell. My hair turned prematurely white, and the sacks became sheeted in verglas. It was bitterly cold, and it was all I could do to maintain my balance in the face of violent bouts of shivering, and still pay out the rope.

"Aren't you there *yet* ?" I pleaded with Tom to get a move on, and wondered if it would be worth wrestling with the frozen sacks to get my duvet out.

"All right. I'm up. Come on." I cheered with relief, and started to beat my hands together in preparation for the responsible business of attaching the sacks. Below two figures on the glacier heard us and looked up. They were Moseley and Roscoe on the way to tackle the climb the next day.

"What's it like ?"

"Not too bad. Damned cold."

It was surprising how good the acoustics were, even at this distance.

I concentrated on the problem of attaching the sacks. The ropes had tied themselves in a knot, and in order to undo this, I had first to untie the rucksack rope from my waist loop, and pull it through the climbing rope. Then I put the end in a safe place, and unkinked the main rope. While this was going on the sack rope must have detached itself, because it was now dangling in free air, out of reach. Tom heard an oath from me and said "what's happening ?" as he always did when I was being peculiarly inefficient. "Give me slack, damn you. I've lost the bloody thing."

This made possible a sort of horizontal rappel into space, leaning against the pull of a high piton, and presently order was restored.

Tom placidly heaved up both sacks—he was getting good at this by now—and I was on my way taking out as much of the ironmongery as would come. It was very nearly eight o'clock, and as Tom shouted down to me that he had still not seen the ledge, and was in some doubt about the route, we were both worried. When I reached him, he was crouching on a pitiful stance with an overhang in the nape of his neck : two cracks went on from there, and either might have been the route. Not a piton was in sight to help us. Tom waved me into the right-hand crack and it proved to be the way. The angle eased after

the fifth piton, and at 8.30 p.m. I kicked my way through snow on to the largest ledge we had seen that day.

"Damn good value that, for 40 metres."

Again we had only half an hour to clear the bivouac and make it habitable. First we put on all our clothing, and after the vigorous exercise which sweeping off three feet of snow involves, began to feel almost warm for the first time in three hours. A cave was the result of our efforts, backed with snow, and bottomed in wet sand. It was just big enough for the two of us to sit down but not stretch out. A cigarette was called for in celebration of our arrival, after which Tom found himself geographically obliged to cook the dinner, as I had been the previous night. He started to collect snow in potfuls from a convenient source behind his left shoulder, in a wide swinging movement pleasing to watch, and the resulting soup was no less satisfactory. The meal spun itself out until almost 10.30, and both the food and the gentle exercise of preparing it kept us warm. An hour later I could just see Tom's enormous figure snoring happily. I had a cigarette, and waited for dawn, chin on knee.

Next morning no particularly urgent business demanded an early start, and it was about 4.30 a.m. before the stove was lit. Two hours later we had had three rounds of boiled eggs, three of soup, and were on to the sixth nauseating round of super milk concentrate, and still there was no sign of the sun. Classical literature relates the astronomical doubts of early pioneers in these circumstances, but in 1955 there was something more plausible than a fortuitous stoppage of the universe to blame: we were in thick cloud, which boiled out of Italy like minestrone. It was still too cold to take gloves off. Either we waited or we climbed in full bivouac equipment.

"Let's give it half an hour."

It was not unpleasant waiting, with nothing much to do. The summit, which was visible above us, looked ridiculously close, but the intervening rock showed not a hold, not a suggestion of a route. More a geometrical figure than a mountain, it sneered in long smooth ridges at our miserable presence, and the lip of the sneer was an overhang.

At 7.15, we moved off as we were, stuffing everything roughly into the sacks except a piece of bread, and three worthless

Italian coins which would not be of much use to us in the next 12 hours anyway. The description called for a traverse to the left along a ledge. The ledge petered out and an awkward move round a bulge disclosed the "sinuous dièdre" behind it. I banged in the first piton with a dullish note, and warned Tom that all was not 100 per cent. secure. It moved slightly under my weight, and so did the next two, which were insinuated between the wall of the crack and some loose chock stones in its centre. The fourth went in singingly, and I felt better. Fifteen pitons and an hour later I arrived at a good stance with two footholds, and Tom came up slowly behind me, hammering them all out again—all except one, which came out with a loud ping as soon as his weight came on it. He slithered down five feet, barked his knuckles on the rock, but politely refrained from any comment except "I suppose I *do* weigh more than you do, but. . . ." The next roof was the biggest on the climb, and Tom had no difficulty in surmounting it textbook fashion, body held well away from the rock . . .

A good ledge would have made a welcome stopping place, but the third bivouac Bonatti was so small, when we came to it, that it was only by standing on one leg, the other held well out in space that I could let Tom past. He had a drink from my water bottle, and pushed on still wearing his duvet, which was a pity because the sun had decided at last to come out. But completely to rearrange our clothing was out of the question on this section of the climb, where the ledges were only inches wide.

"Poor old Bonatti, what a night!" said Tom as he swung about on a trapeze of étriers under the next roof. The pitons were driven in strictly vertically, but it was not particularly difficult, in fact less so than the dièdre round the corner, where Tom spent a lot of time, ending up with a miserable stance on étriers. We had ceased to worry about these now. The next bit went very quickly on pegs and wedges all well and truly in place: in fact I was so pleased with my progress that I decided to run the next two pitches into one, and save time. Tom agreed, and on I went into the overhanging dièdre, (A 2), now quite a distance above him. It was steep, and for some odd reason, difficult to peg. After an exasperating half hour trying to put a sling round a wedge jammed firmly across the crack

with no space behind it, I traversed out of the dièdre in a vile temper, which was not improved by the drag on the rope. Eventually this forced me to a standstill in the middle of the pitch.

“Can’t budge an inch. Come on.” I was on étriers in a holdless groove, separated by only 20 feet from what looked like a good ledge.

“Not far to go now.” The characteristic summital overhang of the Capucin was a rope length away, and from its black under-surface great icicles hung, like teeth. We had to pass this overhang somehow, and on the next pitch but one, I was wondering how. Jonah-like, my head was in its maw, the icicle teeth glittered about me, and the only possibility looked like a traverse to the right underneath it. No pitons, and no cracks! In this unusual situation it became necessary to *climb* for a short distance, which on the Capucin is something of a surprise.

Four more easy pitches, and we were on top of the mountain. It was after five, so no time to stay. The descent was a bit confusing from our description, the more so as the piece of paper on which it was written was by now torn and unreadable. However we felt a bit better after descending 100 feet of easy rocks in the direction of the Brèche du Grand Capucin, where a large piton on a ledge with old slings round it told that others had been there before. A couple of rappels broken impressively by a stance on pitons and étriers in the middle of a smooth wall of rock took us to the brèche. To the left, a steep snow couloir, which turned out to be the right branch of the Couloir des Aiguillettes, indicated the general direction of our descent because the ice-axes were somewhere there, and not on the north side where the guide-book route lay. The left bank of the couloir was easy rock, plastered in ice and snow, too dangerous to attempt to climb down. The only chance was to rappel, and bivouac again if necessary. At eight o’clock Tom made some remarks about the hour, and the good ledge on which we then were, but in spite of this we pushed on. Six rappels landed us in better snow in the Couloir des Aiguillettes proper, where it was possible to face in and kick steps downwards. Just in time before it became completely dark I sighted the axes on their ledge, and with more confidence now, we pushed and slithered

down over the rimaye to the glacier. It was quite dark. A storm was coming up, and it had begun to rain and snow gently.

I had no intention now of spending another night out, so off we went down the tracks of two days ago, in the direction of the Requin Hut. We were tired : every so often somebody would stumble, collapse into the snow, and unable to get up would proclaim a general period of rest.

At half-past midnight we reached the hut. Inside in a typical fug of closed windows we had to tear off our duvets or die of heat. We had worn them all day.

# CIRCUMAMBIENT AIR

J. H. EMLYN JONES

IT was Saturday the 25th April, 1953. We had come to Wales to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first breach on the East Peak of Lliwedd by J. M. Archer Thomson and Oscar Eckenstein. The whole atmosphere reeked of old associations and quotations from the prophets were freely exchanged as I led a party of three up Route I on a typically grey Lliwedd day.

"In a revolutionary age" Thomson had written, "when the words of the wise are on every climber's tongue and the intention to obey them in a few climbers' minds it's refreshing to record a striking instance of strict adherence to one of the cardinal canons of orthodox mountaineering. We have been advised that before we try to climb a mountain we should look at it, and in the present case this unquestionable advice had been conscientiously followed. We had looked at the east buttress of Lliwedd for twenty years."

In a revolutionary age, we thought. 1903 . . . hmm.

That evening at Pen-y-Gwryd we toasted the great names and messages from Geoffrey Young and A. W. Andrews were received with acclamation, they at the last minute prevented from joining us by *verglas* on Northumbrian and Cornish roads. At the end of the evening the party broke up, last good nights, and out I went for the drive back to Ynys Ettws, the last to leave and alone. It was a cold night, crisp and clear, and a nearly full moon riding high. My car started at a touch and I set off up the pass in pursuit of the last disappearing rear light.

And then it happened—mysteriously and for no reason.

A little before the right-angled bend on the road to Pen-y-Pass my engine cut out. I tried all the usual tests ; plenty of petrol, ignition on, not too much choke, but the engine was dead, quite dead. First I tried the starter, then the handle, then I backed the car downwards across the road and turned her nose

so that with a push I was able to turn her down the hill. I slipped her into gear and coasted downwards trying in a series of unavailing jerks to bring the car back to life. Finally, beaten, I steered her silently into the forecourt of the now darkened Pen-y-Gwryd and set off along the road to walk the three miles to Ynys Ettws.

It promised well enough. The moon and stars shed a friendly light. My breath sailed away in a little cloud but I was warm and comfortable from an evening spent among friends, when the talk had ranged across the years and over the crags of Wales. My mind went back thirty years to my first scrambles over these same hills with my father, and to the tales that he had to tell of the climbs he had done years before that with the great Archer Thomson himself. Thomson, my first mountaineer hero, long before Whymper, Mummery and the rest. Wasn't one of my proudest possessions an original copy of "Climbing in the Ogwen District" inscribed on the front page in a neat black hand "With the author's best wishes, 30.vii.1910.", and underneath

"Where the mists are rolling round about the cwm,  
Where the sunny pinnacles lighten thro' the gloom,  
Where the cliffs of Glyder Fach rugged rise and black,  
Where the Tryfan cataracts trickle down your back."

As true and evocative today, I thought, as it had been then.

There came a sudden silence as I stopped to light my pipe and the sound of my footsteps died away. There below the road loomed the squat shape of the Eckenstein boulder, and as I looked two shadowy figures moved out from its darkness and came up towards the road. I stopped and waited for them. The first was a slightly built man with a wispy mass of greying hair, wearing a belted Norfolk jacket, knee-breeches and stockings, the second a great ox of a man with a black beard and a dark cap, which would have been equally at home on the head of a yachtsman or an engine driver, being not exactly right for either.

"Good evening" said the bearded one. He spoke with a certain gruffness and I should have said that he was of foreign origin.

"Good evening" I replied, and the grey figure murmured a similar greeting.

"Are you walking far? Would you do us the pleasure of allowing us to accompany you?"

I readily agreed and explained that I was walking over to Ynys Ettws where I hoped to spend the night.

The two men fell in beside me and we continued up the road towards the top of the pass. The conversations which followed stamped themselves clearly on my mind, not perhaps because what was said was in any way remarkable in itself but rather from a growing sense of mystery with which this strange meeting was surrounded. I can't pretend that I am able to recall all that was said in its exact form but the essence of it is there and the passage of time can do nothing to efface it from my memory.

The bearded one was the first to speak. He knew of Ynys Ettws and indeed it soon became apparent that my two companions were both climbers of experience who knew the mountains well and had at some time or another climbed on most of the cliffs. When I mentioned the climbs we had done that day they talked freely of the old days with a familiarity which their apparent age belied. I found myself carried back to another age, to the days of the early pioneers when cracks were filled with stones, hand and foot-holds buried in earth and belays hidden by vegetation, when on most cliffs the way ahead was unknown and when every foot climbed might also have to be descended. And so, inevitably I suppose, we came to a comparison between yesterday and today.

"Climbing today is a very different affair" said the bearded one, "I count it your misfortune that so many of the old routes are now much easier and that in order to open up new routes you have to content yourselves on the whole with shorter climbs and less natural lines. On the other hand the limits of safe climbing have been extended far beyond the slab climbs of our day and new ground is opened up for you which was quite beyond our reach."

I suggested that we owed a lot to the development of our equipment.

"That's certainly true" he replied "the vibram sole, the piton, the karabiner and the *étrier* have all given rise in their turn to new techniques, and in their own way facilitated this general advance."



"But" I said, "their development has not been without opposition." We had reached the top of the pass and my companion looked across at the corrugated iron shacks set back from the road.

"Opposition, pah!" he roared, and from the depths of the hotel a dog howled. "We had the same trouble in my day with the introduction of the tricouni nail and the crampon. Some climbers will always oppose technical aids which enable a younger generation to repeat their achievements with greater ease and safety. They choose to forget that equipment is always being improved and that they themselves employed artificial aids, be it only the clinker nail, which were unknown to their fathers. After all a piton belay performs in rock precisely the same function as an ice axe belay in snow and no one suggests that the use of the axe in this way is unethical."

At this point we had started the descent on the northern side of the pass. The moon was sinking in the west and about a quarter of a mile down the road the enormous black shadow of Crib Goch was thrown across the valley and up on to the flank of Esgair Felen on the opposite side. Here the grey figure took up the argument. He spoke quietly with a sense of authority and we listened.

"There are really two quite distinct propositions" he began, "First let us consider the use of equipment as it affects the personal relationship existing between the individual climber and the climb. There is a balance to be found—in the one scale man and his purpose augmented by his ability, in the other the mountain protected by difficulties of terrain and by the law of gravity. Different climbers will strike this balance at different levels, and as ability increases the mountain is matched, with the same margin of safety, at higher standards of difficulty. The determination of this level is essentially a matter for the individual to decide for himself. When he reaches a stage where his own unaided efforts can take him no farther he may fall back on these technical aids to which you refer, and since the true purist will climb only *in puris naturalibus*, this is a step which we all have taken in some degree. If this is so then, where a climber of moderate ability succeeds on a difficult climb solely from the assistance obtained from the use of artificial aids, the only offence is against the *amour propre* of

those who can do the climb without them. And although the excessive use of artificiality may in the minds of some take the activity outside the realms of mountaineering as we know it, their use must remain a matter for the conscience of the individual."

The speaker paused. "You must be right, Sir," I found myself replying. "Not to think so would be to condemn every second man who by relying on the greatest artificial aid of all, the climbing rope, has followed where he could not lead."

He fixed me with his eye as if about to take me up on what I had said, then seemed to change his mind, and continued, "There remains, however, a second consideration. Let us pass from the question of the individual and his own relationships and consider whether the use of artificial aids can affect the enjoyment of others. The best example is probably the piton, which is often abandoned in position, and the user lays himself open to the charge of malicious wounding of the rock with a view to causing permanent disfigurement. Now in the first instance mis-use of pitons is no argument against their use any more than the orange peel on the summit of Snowdon is an argument against the eating of oranges. There is no doubt that a small colony of abandoned pitons detracts from the pleasures of a climb, but their acceptance is another instance of one of the many paradoxes of mountaineering.

*'Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.'*

We love the solitude of the mountains and so invite our friends to share it, thereby destroying it. We find danger in the mountains and do our best to avoid it. We seek difficulty but take all the steps we can to minimise it. We enjoy the satisfaction of pioneering new routes and are then prevailed upon to publish the details, thereby denying to our successors that same satisfaction which they most desire. There is nothing new about discarded equipment. From De Saussure and his ladders on Mont Blanc to your friends who will shortly be preparing to abandon tents and bottles of oxygen on the South Col of Mount Everest, mountaineers have always had occasion to leave their marks behind. We cannot leave the hills completely unchanged by our passage. We leave behind the scratchings of our boot nails and of our pens. All we can ask of others is that they

should exercise a due moderation, and remember that many others will follow in their footsteps."

As he finished speaking I looked up at the dark outlines of Dinas Mot and Dinas Cromlech. There they stood, those twin bastions of living rock, cold and indifferent, and in the eerie half-light, it seemed that man by his own unaided efforts could hardly penetrate their defences.

We continued in silence for there seemed little more to say, but as we turned over Pont-y-Cromlech the grey figure began again.

"There is one more thing to be said," he began, and I felt a note of urgency in his words as if time were running against him. "You have remarked on the advance in climbing techniques since our day. We have talked of improved equipment but that is not the only reason. The spirit of man is turning ever to fresh fields and wider horizons. In following this urge, the modern climber has called on reserves of whose existence we were completely unaware. It cannot be said that your leading rock climbers today are better climbers, essentially, than those of fifty years ago. The human body is basically the same, as is the strength of human will. But whether we like to admit it or not there is a healthy spirit of competition in most forms of human activity and mountaineering is no exception. Those who try to argue the contrary are prompted by a mistaken belief that there is something unworthy in this idea. The same young man who will run a mile in four minutes next year could not have beaten four minutes fifteen seconds in 1903. He runs faster today only because the competition is keener. In climbing the position is the same ; the climber in his attempt to break away from the beaten track is always extending his range and each advance gives confidence for consolidation and still further advance. At whatever speed the mile is run it is hard to say that the man cannot be found to run it a fraction of a second faster, and as long as there are mountains to climb and men to climb them it is impossible to set a limit to what the spirit of man may achieve."

And so we came to the Ynys Ettws gateway. The time had passed quickly, thanks to my company and to the conversation they had provided. It seemed too soon to end our acquaintance, and so I turned to invite my two companions to join me in the

hut. But they had both vanished into the circumambient air. Was it my imagination, or did I hear a voice saying "What about having a look at Cenotaph Corner, Oscar?"

This is not quite the end of the story. The following morning I returned to my abandoned car. I turned on the ignition, pressed the self starter, and the engine at once purred gently into life. If you find this difficult to believe, you may ask the landlord of Pen-y-Gwryd and he will vouch for me—and I don't mean Harry Owen either.

# THE WEST FACE OF MT. KENYA

R. A. CAUKWELL

WHEN I first saw Mt. Kenya in January, 1952, all the main faces and ridges with the exception of the west face, and an ill-defined facet on the north-east side, had been climbed. Three of the finest routes were made by the late Arthur Firmin with various partners, between 1944 and 1950.

Seen from the Mountain Club of Kenya's hut at Two Tarn col, the great sweep of the west face dominates the view, rising as it does from the Tyndal glacier and reaching up in a smooth unrelenting face for 2,500 feet, to the sharp point of Batian at 17,141 feet. Once having seen it I couldn't keep my eyes off it, and spent hours with binoculars making armchair routes up it.

Stuck precariously on to the face like cotton wool Christmas decorations are two hanging glaciers, called the Heim and the Forrel. Nobody seems to know who named them, or which is which. They are always lumped together like the name of a music-hall act, and achieve individuality only as the upper and lower glacier. The lower glacier offered what appears to be the only feasible start to a route up the face.

In August, 1952, I again visited the mountain, and from the top of Point Pigott, a subsidiary peak at the end of the west ridge, had an opportunity to study and photograph the west face in detail. From here it was obvious that the first problem was to gain a footing on the face at all, as the lower parts are guarded by vertical or overhanging cliffs leading directly into the rotten and unstable faces of the two glaciers. There seemed to be two ways of overcoming these obstacles. One way would ascend the south-west ridge to a point level with the top of the lower glacier, and then traverse on to the face. The other, more direct and more desirable, would ascend a slender column of ice falling from the lower glacier on to the Tyndal. In August, 1952, this column was broken by a formidable bergschrund, which would have taken far too long to climb direct, and which

could not have been turned. As the column is formed partly by the run off from the lower glacier, and partly by debris falling from the face of the upper glacier, it is not a place to linger in, and would be useless as a line of retreat later in the day.

In October, 1952, a state of emergency was declared in Kenya, and the dense forests surrounding the mountain being one of the principal refuges of Mau Mau terrorists, the whole mountain was proclaimed a prohibited area, and closed to all except security forces. Kenya climbers had to go farther afield, to Kilimanjaro and Ruwenzori, to pursue their sport.

However, towards the end of 1954 it seemed that permission might be obtained to visit the mountain again if the right people were contacted. The open moorlands above the 11,000-foot contour offer large gangs little concealment from the frequent patrols of the R.A.F. and the Kenya Police Reserve Air Wing. Although both of the Mountain Club's huts on the mountain have been stripped and damaged by Mau Mau, they are in such cold and inhospitable areas that they are not used as permanent hide-outs by large gangs. That leaves only the 4,000 feet of dense forest below the moorlands as a serious danger area. By fitting in with a military patrol going up one of the jeep tracks in the forest, a climbing party could enjoy an escort to within a mile or two of the open moors, leaving a relatively small chance of being molested.

At the end of November a party of six was organised with the west face as its principal aim. But by the time we were ready in early January, 1955, the party had whittled itself down, as parties arranged during the emergency always do, to two, Gerald Rose, a South African civil engineer, and myself.

The blessing of the local military was obtained, and we linked in with a Royal Engineers' working party going up to an abandoned met. station at 10,000 feet on the western slopes of the mountain. Here we arranged a rendezvous for six days later, and shouldering our heavy packs set off for Two Tarn hut. We ran into no trouble, and after a night in a hut in the Teliki valley we reached Two Tarn at midday on Tuesday, 4th January.

From below the weather had not looked promising, but now we found that the hut, sitting by its little tarn at 14,600 feet, was well above the clouds and rain, and in bright sunshine.







On Wednesday we made a reconnaissance up the Tyndal glacier, and were pleased to find the ice column intact, and without a bergschrund. There was a great deal more snow on the peaks than is usual at this time of year, and the entire west face was iced up. The photograph was taken two months after the ascent, and much of the snow had gone by then. There was, for example, no rock showing between the two hanging glaciers, which was to our advantage as the long stretches of smooth slab might well have proved impracticable.

Next morning a snow storm prevented an early start, but when the day turned out delightfully sunny we climbed Midget Peak by the south-west gully route as a consolation prize. Midget is a 15,300-foot subsidiary peak of the Kenya massif, commanding a fine view of the south face of the mountain. From its summit we could see an enormous ice cornice in the Gate of the Mists—the gap between Batian and Nelion, the twin peaks of Mt. Kenya. The normal route to Batian lies over the top of Nelion and across the gap. We had intended using it to descend after climbing the west face, but the cornice looked so formidable that we decided to descend by Mackinder's original route across the Diamond glacier, and avoid the Gate of the Mists and Nelion entirely. With so much snow about we hoped we would not need to repeat Mackinder's more than three hours' step-cutting to cross the Diamond.

The following day my alarm clock froze, and we failed to wake up until far too late to think about the west face, so we passed the day in walking up to Point Lenana, the third highest peak of the massif, and back by way of Top Hut. The damage done by Mau Mau to this hut is fortunately less than at Two Tarn, probably because of its altitude, 15,700 feet. It has been stripped of all food, utensils, stoves, medical outfit and canvas bunks, but has suffered no structural damage as has Two Tarn hut, where in addition to ransacking much of the floor and interior woodwork has been burnt.

Saturday morning was clear and frosty, and with the aid of a near full moon we crossed the spur separating the hut from the Tyndal glacier, and reached the foot of the ice column at 6-30 a.m. With Gerald belayed on the lower lip of an incipient bergschrund, I cut steps up the column. Here we received our first true impression of the scale of things. From right under

the face with the foreshortening at its most exaggerated, I had estimated the height of the column as about 150 feet. We now found that it was nearly twice that far before the angle eased from a steady 70°-75°, and after three warming bouts of cutting for me, and three chilling waits under fire for Gerald, we were able to stand on the rounded top of the lower hanging glacier.

Being clear now of the danger of debris falling from the upper glacier we enjoyed a short rest, and watched the morning mists dispersing from the valleys of the Aberdare Mountains, and from the plains around Nairobi, 60 miles away to the south. Having removed our crampons we continued up what appeared to be a rock face. After a short distance it gave out, and we realized that we were seeing only the undersides of rocks whose tops supported sheets of ice. As you look down from nearer the summit no rock shows at all, and the face appears to be one continuous sheet of ice. We reverted to crampons, and did not remove them until we were a couple of rope lengths from the summit.

All day we cut and kicked steps in the steep ice. By keeping to the north side of each rib in the fluting I found snow soft enough to kick steps in, which saved a lot of time, but mainly it was a case of cutting in hard ice.

Although we thought we were going at a great pace, mainly in an effort to get as high as possible before the sun reached the face, our progress measured against the wall of Point Pigott across the Tyndal glacier seemed barely perceptible. The sun caught us a little above the level of the upper glacier, and stayed with us without a vestige of cloud until it set while we stood on the summit.

We kicked and cut, cut and kicked in the full force of the sun, until my arms ached and my tongue felt like a wood rasp filling my mouth. Then the angle decided to steepen, and the helpful snow to disappear entirely. For several rope lengths I was cutting handholds as well as steps.

About here a way through the cliffs at the top of the face began to show itself, and removed our anxiety on that score. We had been looking more closely at our "escape routes" onto the containing ridges of the face, and had realized that to reach the west ridge would involve a long iced-up ledge, which, although continuous and obviously practicable, would take a

good deal of effort, and not be very pleasant ; while to reach the south-west ridge would require a long bout of step cutting, and involve a nasty little wall at the end. With a route now possible above us, it was both shorter and easier to continue straight up.

At this point when the ice was at its steepest, I was cutting myself another handhold when suddenly a step broke under my foot and sent me rapidly down the face. I braked with my axe in a short distance but found myself hanging on a barely embedded pick in the middle of an ice sheet too steep for me to use my crampons. My axe was fully occupied, leaving nothing to cut steps with even had I had a hand to spare. There was no way out but to continue the involuntary descent, until I either came on the rope, or reached a kinder slope. It is a great deal harder to fall off on purpose than accidentally. Warning Gerald, I let go, and happily when I braked again it was on a slope gentle enough to take my crampons while I cut back to my original steps. My principal feeling was annoyance at having lost 30 feet of hard-earned height. Gerald hoped it wasn't habit forming and we climbed on.

Eventually we reached the rock rib that hangs down from the final wall right in the middle of the face. To my horror it overhung, and was coated with a thin layer of clear ice, behind which trickled a continuous stream of water. Very severe rock on top of a long day's climbing at nearly 17,000 feet struck me as overdoing it a bit, and having climbed a thin crack chipping off ice *en route*, we found a way back as quickly as possible on to the ice slope.

The mixture of steep bad rock, ice, and patches of snow that followed, made the next two or three hundred feet some of the hardest of the entire ascent, but eventually we were able to traverse into a snow gully, and kick steps easily up to a large dry ledge, a hundred feet or so below the summit. We took off crampons, rested, and opened a tin of sardines, but my throat was so dry I found I couldn't swallow them, and finally had to spit them out, looking like elderly Bombay duck.

As we sat we could hear the wind roaring up the north face, although our side of the ridge was absolutely still. Failing to take warning I lost my hat as soon as I put my head over the

crest, and watched it cavorting down the face, taking a few minutes to descend where we had climbed for hours.

A small chimney, a little snow, a thin crack, and then at 6-45 p.m. we stood on the summit of Batian.

We had been climbing with only short rests for twelve and a quarter hours. The standard of climbing had been unrelentingly severe, with some substantial stretches of very severe. The weather had been very kind, if a little too hot.

Stopping only long enough to scribble our names and the date—the wrong date—in the old De Reske tin in the summit cairn, and to notice the shadow of our peak reaching across the Mackinder valley and the moorlands towards Ithanguni Hill, we roped down the face of Batian and on to the Diamond glacier hanging between the twin peaks, as night fell with tropical suddenness. Daylight had hardly gone when the full moon threw a bright, but softer, light on to the scene. We had intended to use the moon for the descent, although we had expected to be rather farther than the summit when the day ended.

The thin snow cover on the Diamond was just right and as it froze again was acquiring a fine crispness, into which our crampons bit with a very comforting sound. At this point the glacier is steep, and funnels down into an almost vertical slender thread of ice on to the Darwin glacier below. We took no chances, and belayed every rope length across the glacier and down the rock and ice rib that separates it from the large snowfield in an amphitheatre below Nelion. The snow was in beautiful condition, and not more than a dozen steps had to be cut during the entire descent.

On the far side of the amphitheatre we sat and rested on a large comfortable ledge before going over the crest of the south-east ridge into the full force of the wind again. By now it was freezing hard, and my wet trouser-legs froze into a new ice cylinder every time I changed position. The pleasure of resting was soon overcome by the cold, so we went on over the crest to join the normal route on the face of the south-east ridge. We abseiled 50 feet on to a large ledge and pulled the rope down after us. While looking for another belay point to continue abseiling from, Gerald took a pace or two along the ledge, and suddenly without warning it split away from the mountain and threw him down the face in a large shower of

debris. The split was between us as we stood, and I was left standing helpless on the small portion that had remained firm. Gerald fell two or three hundred feet, inextricably mixed with a ton or so of rock, and eventually came to rest on the edge of a huge precipice, some five hundred feet above the Lewis glacier.

I climbed down to where he lay unconscious on a tiny ledge, but it was apparent that he was beyond my help. Among other severe injuries his back was broken. In case he should regain consciousness I stayed with him for a couple of hours, before completing the descent to the Lewis glacier and back to Two Tarn Hut, where I arrived almost exactly 24 hours after leaving it to start the climb.

As there was no quicker way of summoning help than by keeping the R V with the Royal Engineers' patrol, I slept until it was time to go and then hurried down the mountain.

A rescue party was organized, but when it reached the scene of the accident my partner was dead. It is doubtful whether he survived the night with injuries so severe, and exposed to an icy wind and freezing temperature.

He was buried where he lay, as it would have been extremely dangerous to have recovered his body.

So in tragedy ended the first ascent of the west face of Mt. Kenya.

## ON YR EIFL

G. W. S. PIGOTT

**I** WRITE on a misty November day. Autumn is on her deathbed ; the still, dripping branches and their last few scattered leaves, silhouetted against the grey background of sky, seem symbolic decorations of her grave. And yet these eloquent heralds of winter speak of the summer that is over and stir as though they too shared restless memories of the warm days of their prime, July days, when the heather holds its first hint of bloom and the bilberries are in flower, when the fever of spring has subsided and the lambs make strange contrast with their shorn mothers. It is of these days that the memories whisper, and as I listen, their wandering voices begin, piece by piece, to tell their story of crags and sunshine and the sea.

We are driving southwards from Caernarvon along the coast towards Yr Eifl. David has talked much of its sea-cliff during the past weeks, of its height and steepness and possibilities, but now we talk of other things and it seems just a coincidence that the car is filled with many ropes and some unmentionable mechanical accessories. The conversation continues its wayward trends and almost by chance we arrive above Nant Gwtheyrn and the quarry, and descend on foot towards the sea.

A few hundred feet above the sea a steep, broken strip of pasture goes back to the north-east, a no-man's land between the grey water below and the grey rock above, blemished only by two gullies filled with man-made scree from the quarry. Quite suddenly the cliff comes into view, huge, steep, vegetative and uncompromising. Below it the pasture steepens, so that it too seems to have sided with the mountain, and the whole face sweeps in an integrated line to the sea.

As we studied this scene I think that each of us secretly thought that no route would lie there, certainly on the great main buttress which made the farther sky-line. But as we looked, the edge of the cliff nearest to us, where the real crag

started just beyond a broad gully-line, became broken and at an easier angle than the remainder. An attempt here would be a feeble enterprise compared with an attack on the solid ramparts beyond, but even here the chances of success seemed small. We must, however, have at least an armed reconnaissance, and so after a thoughtful lunch we tied on, on two ropes.

Perhaps we had been overawed by the grandeur of the scene, for when we came to grips with the rock we found that far from being holdless, the first eighty feet were hardly more than a scramble ; we assembled under the roof of a little cave in a far more confident mood. Here an increase of angle marked the beginning of a section of unstable rock. As I climbed, slowly, over a series of loose blocks Neil Mather tended the rope from the shelter of his cave ; David Thomas and Hamish Nicol too were with him, out of sight. Soon the quality of the rock began to improve, and as the angle eased the pitch ended at the lower end of half an acre of grass and heather. Belays here, and elsewhere on the cliff, were unsatisfactory so that when all else failed we had to invoke Vulcan as an accessory.

Mather came up and led on ; Nicol and Thomas followed on their rope, and we found ourselves together again beneath a high upreared and abutting front of crag. Its first weakness lay in a chimney, its second indicated a traverse left on to the face proper ; still the holds were good ; the rock was sound ; an arc of space fell to the sea ; above was a blue sky and leading to it a sweep of lichen-covered rock, over which our route found its way, intricately and intimately, until the cliff began to lean back and there appeared to our left a curving bow of two hundred feet of airy ridge to provide a gentle, flawless finish. Eiff Tower was built.

I thought often of that day during the months that followed and wondered if the buzzard and seals who had watched us climb would be there again, for another visit to that wild and lovely place had become inevitable. A year passed and again the scene unfolded itself. The great buttress still swept in a straight, grey line to the sea. Anglesey slept, hazy behind the silver and gold of Newborough Warren. Still the seals fished lazily below, and now a dozen cormorants preened themselves on a rock by the water's edge. The buzzard had gone : perhaps he felt that his sanctuary had been violated.

On the sky-line a challenge was etched, clear and defiant. Low down, the perfect symmetry of form was broken momentarily by a tiny ledge ; here was at least a spring-board for our hopes, from where a close examination of the buttress would be possible, and, beyond a grassy bay, a line of weakness ran upwards to the left towards our ledge a hundred and fifty feet above.

This time we were three : Tony Moulam, with whom I have climbed much, today took the second's place and formed a staunch middle link ; Roger Craster was to give us both his strong support from the rear. The attack began diffidently on wet, green rock ; as before, we felt subdued by the great proportions of this sea-cliff, so that we approached it with great deference and little real hope of success. But as Eiff Tower had surprised us with its shower of favours, so this buttress, no doubt confident of its security so well protected by the steepness and extent of its upper defences, let us reach our ledge with no more than a gesture of defiance.

Quite suddenly we seemed to be in the middle of the face. Below, only the sea was visible ; to the left the ledge ended in nothingness ; perhaps fifty feet above us a line of overhangs interrupted upward vision. We smoked and looked for a way to the overhangs until a line of weakness eventually revealed itself.

Moulam tied himself to a piton and I became absorbed in the problem of upward movement which involved the gentlest of caresses to a large, loose flake. The rock was covered by a particularly well-developed species of lichen, suggestive of heavier suns and mightier skies ; fortunately it was dry and offered little real hindrance. The removal of a hundredweight or so of turf eventually revealed a line of holds which led, surprisingly without any great difficulty, to the overhangs. Seen at close quarters these more than fulfilled their earlier promise, and the next move held little more hope than that of a single red king surrounded by a hostile train of ivory pageantry. We assembled again, decided to explore leftwards and found, quite unexpectedly, a steep square-cut groove on the very edge of the buttress ; we climbed this and traversed back above the overhangs to a stance vertically above the previous one.



A sixty-foot pitch of sustained interest, followed by another in the same line at an easier angle, brought us, by a series of slabs and grooves, over ground that was more broken but nowhere easy, to another ledge. Above, a slightly overhanging wall again barred our vision, and again the issue seemed to be in doubt ; the rock here was more friable and at this high angle held little appeal to my rather conservative nature ; consequently my attempts on it were half-hearted and it had begun to seem that a serious and really determined effort would have to be made when Moulam suggested a traverse right. It was an exhilarating and delightful traverse far above the sea and the cormorants, who were suddenly and dangerously disturbed by the arrival of a large piece of rock in their midst. It ended at an incipient chimney which offered no difficulty sufficient to justify the ring of steel which echoed with the vociferous complaints of the cormorants across the wide amphitheatre of cliff. The piton, which we were unable to remove, became the legitimate and scorned spoil of John Neill and Michael Harris when eventually they followed us. After a little more climbing a delightful rocky eyrie was suddenly revealed ; a remote and secret place, splendid in the minute detail of its rock, so that the eye saw for the first time all the intimate colouring that made it, and then, turning, leaped over the grey sea to the wide sweep of the horizon.

Soon the angle lessened again and a lichened groove and slab were topped by a long, slanting rake, carpeted luxuriously with honeysuckle, and by this scented pathway we came to another short wall. At its crest the cliff fell back until it was no more than a steep, rocky meadow, but the grass ended as abruptly as it had begun at a final step of rock, perhaps eighty feet high, a gentle place of benevolent aspect, a friendly last gesture of goodwill from the mountain. It had been a day of surprises and this was the last, for instead of climbing to the top together triumphant, we finished Avernus as we had started, diffident and humble. Perhaps a little wisdom had been gleaned, strangely, from the stony ground ; certainly the wealth of memories will endure.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SCOTLAND

D. D. STEWART

THE second world war interrupted the development of climbing to a greater degree in Scotland than in England or Wales. There always have been, and still are, far fewer climbers, particularly rock climbers, in Scotland than south of the border, and this, coupled with the fact that most Scottish centres were hard to reach during the war years, meant that the solid progress made in the thirties by Bell, Allan, Mackenzie, Murray and several others was brought to a standstill. Only on Nevis did development continue, where Kellett's work has still to be fully appreciated.

After the war the senior Clubs took some time to regain their former momentum and it was left to the Creag Dhu Club of Glasgow to blaze the trail with a remarkable burst of activity in Glencoe. Week-end climbing had shown signs of becoming popular before 1939 and now the eighty miles from Glasgow by Loch Lomond and the Moor of Rannoch were regularly covered by bus and motor-cycle. Accommodation presented something of a problem, for the faithful seldom chose to use the Youth Hostel at the foot of the Glen, Lagangarbh belonged to the S.M.C., and few violated the delicate precincts of Black Rock. But Coupal Bridge offered a grand camp site and the Great Shepherd also stood sentinel over a famous howff a mile farther up the river. The Downies at mid-glen were always hospitable and farther down, beyond Clachaig, the woods of Torran provided uneasy shelter. Even today there is a shortage of beds in Glencoe, for not many use the excellent caves on the lip of the Lost Valley.

It was on the greater Buchaille Etive that the Creag Dhu did most of their climbing, much of it audacious face work which will maintain its standard in the V.S. category for many years to come. The leaders here were Cunningham, Smith, Paul and

others. With the departure of these leaders for the Himalaya and New Zealand in 1951 the tempo of their Club's activity decreased. The younger school, the precocious "gnomies," remained, but National Service made its call and it was left largely to the colourful McInnes, assisted sporadically by Walsh and Rowney, to carry on the work which the "heid yins" had begun and carried so far throughout the glen. To the pre-war climbs on the overrated Rannoch Wall Cunningham's group added several difficult routes, and on the neighbouring North Buttress left even greater testimony to their skill with Gallows and Guerdon Grooves. They were also active elsewhere in the glen.

The publication in 1949 of Murray's Guide to Glencoe, the first in the S.M.C.'s series of pocket rock-climbing guides, was an important event. It opened new possibilities for many who had formerly to confine themselves to well-worn routes. The higher gradings were inaccurate in some cases, but Murray achieved his object in producing quickly a dependable guide to the main body of Glencoe climbs. A revision is now in the capable hands of Lovat, and the additions are proving numerous.

Since 1949 the Creag Dhu's particular contribution has been a daring series of winter ascents. Shortly before the departure for the Antipodes the Club had had a not entirely successful session in Raven's Gully, which was inadequately iced at the time. McInnes, seconded by Bonnington, led it vigorously at his second attempt in February 1953. Rowney's Peasants' Passage is an elegant addition on the tall upper half of Rannoch Wall, and the line of Walsh's Slime Wall, next to the unrepeatable Guerdon Grooves on the west face of North Buttress, is as bold and as steep as most would wish.

The cliffs of Garbh Bheinn in Ardgour offer an interesting change for a long week-end, but few parties have spent longer than that on the mountain and the small, steep south face of the Great Ridge just below the summit still holds only two routes, though its position is magnificent.

The work on Nevis of the late B. P. Kellett has already been mentioned. His records of climbs on this greatest of Scottish mountains during the war have formed a welcome basis for another of the S.M.C.'s pocket guide-books. Edited by the veteran Macphee, this guide lists a surprising number of routes,

but the enthusiast would do well to use it with greater care than the normal guide-book, for the courses described have practically all been the result of patient research by experienced parties, and are not to be stuffed into the bag some clear evening after tea. Nevis takes swift toll of the careless and its humidity seems to have coated the rock with a lichen very trying to the moulded rubber sole. Since the war new routes on Nevis have been done, Gardyloo Buttress has been repeated and the Orion face scaled in winter ; and the Sassenachs have thrust their vertical way up the Great Buttress of Carn Dearg. But Nevis gives sparingly and slowly, and more noticeable has been a general rise in the calibre of winter ascents on the Ben. Conditions govern difficulty as always, but the ways up the great ridges are well known under snow and ice and the steeper, shorter ways are often climbed as well. But there is still much new ground to be covered in winter ; Zero and Point Five Gullies head the challenge.

The third, and last so far, of the new Scottish pocket guides covers the Cobbler area, not far from Glasgow. A leading Scottish climber of the younger school recently expressed the opinion that the Cobbler offered the best rock climbing north of the border. The writer is not in a position to discuss the matter fully, but there is no smoke without fire, and here again the Creag Dhu have been responsible for many excellent routes of high standard. As in Glencoe the occasional artificial pitch is now encountered on Ben A'an, and the accessibility of the routes has ensured high popularity. The rock is a little unusual, but sound, and is happily less affected by the heavy rainfall of Argyllshire than some surfaces.

In the islands, notably Skye, Rhum and Arran, progress has been steady but not spectacular. Devotees of Skye may differ here, but when width of scope is considered most other British centres have undergone rather greater relative development. Only the few who return long and often manage to till fresh ground in the Cuillin. Dixon's work on MhicCoinnich is probably the best example of this. Patey has followed him here and, earlier, Haworth had added several elegant routes on Sron na Ciche. In Skye, however, the outstanding feature has been the way in which a climber, usually from England, has made one excellent contribution and then retired from the scene. The

Cuillin have not, since the war, encouraged the prolific creation achieved by the patriarchs of some other areas, probably because the visitor desires to pay homage to the classics during his modicum of climbable weather. The time for the main ridge traverse is slowly being pared down: one wonders how far this process can be carried, as technical difficulty excludes the pure cross-country runner. The possibilities in Skye are still legion and the future will probably produce the same steady crop of new routes, with the accent on quality rather than quantity.

Permission to climb in Rhum is not easy to obtain, but the post-war years have seen big advances on the cliffs there and a general lack of length in the routes is compensated by the almost unbelievably prehensile texture of the peridotite. Unfortunately some of the best climbs have been ignored in the latest edition of the S.M.C.'s "Islands" guide-book. Of these one can recommend Central Rib on Trallval. There is something very attractive about the island—the rock is clean and firm, the vegetation is flourishing and remarkably varied and the weather is better than in the Cuillin.

As a climbing centre Arran probably holds a slight lead over Rhum on account of the work of Curtis and Townend. The rounded granite holds do not inspire confidence at first, particularly if wet, but a day's experience remedies this and the newer climbs on and around the Rosa Pinnacle of Cir Mhor are in some ways unique. As in Skye and Rhum there are no climbs of extreme difficulty, but interest and position more than outweigh this dubious failing.

More and more mountaineers have been turning to the large area of Scottish mainland north and west of the Caledonian Canal in their search for new cliffs and most have been fortunate. The middle west, south of the Inverness to Skye railway, is scant of rock but north of this several very interesting areas have yielded climbs of high quality. In fact, practically every main group has recently offered a route worth noting—Marshall's on Fuar Tholl, Patey's in Applecross, those of several parties in the famous Coire Mhic Fhearchair of Beinn Eighe and in that fertile but well guarded ground between Lochs Maree and Broom. Further north the edge of the Fiddler of Coigach remains unclimbed, but the establishment of an excellent

memorial hut under the rocks of Stac Polly has probably numbered the days of this problem. The west arête of Suilven offers a good route and even farther north the promising Creag Dionard has been visited by Weir and others. Representing as it does an advance from virtually nothing this progress is most encouraging and there must be many more developments to come. Distances and deer-stalking are among the difficulties in the north-west.

Of the main areas it now remains to comment only upon the Cairngorms. Here the technical advances since the war have been as pronounced as anywhere in Scotland. Formerly regarded as the preserve of the hill walker, the Cairngorm group has recently yielded routes on a large number of excellent cliffs and winter climbing on Lochnagar has been raised to a high level. This activity has been due mainly to Aberdeen climbers, Brooker, Sutherland, Patey, Taylor and others, who have been untiring in their efforts to open up new ways on the crags of Lochnagar and Beinn a' Bhuid and on the great cliffs beyond the head of Loch Muick.

It would be wrong to omit reference to ski-ing in a post-war review, for many climbers have taken to ski when conditions allow. The main ski-ing grounds are Ben Lawers, Meall a' Bhuidh (Glencoe), Glen Shee and the northern and western Cairngorms, and the sport is being increasingly developed both privately and commercially. Numerous types of training courses are organised and a few Scots climbers have taken ski abroad with them on exploratory mountaineering expeditions.

The territorial survey of recent development in Scotland is thus complete. What general observations can be made?

One may note a wider departure from the parochial and the insular in Scottish climbing. Scots are visiting the Alps in increasing numbers and Scottish parties have been in the Himalaya and other great foreign ranges. The senior Scottish Club, the S.M.C., is slowly widening its outlook and policy and has in the past few years received a considerable infusion of young and active blood. Huts are being opened here and there. The week-end bus is possibly less popular than it was not long ago, but this may be a temporary decline.

On the other hand the majority of Scots climbers show very much less interest in English and Welsh climbing than do southerners in Scottish crags. This may be because Scots feel that the best of all things mountainous in Britain is north of the border, so that there is no need to go to the Lakes or North Wales. In this they are wrong. Width of experience is always desirable and a Scot returns from Langdale or Ogwen with a clearer appreciation of both the merits and the shortcomings of his own crags.

It is risky but interesting to debate upon comparative standards. Grade for grade, the Scottish routes generally hold their own : indeed, there are " Diffs " in Skye and some " V. Diffs " in Glencoe which offer as good value as any in Britain. But in the south there is a great deal more traffic over the harder climbs. The hardest climbs in North Wales and, to a lesser degree, in the Lake District must be much harder than their counterparts in Scotland, always excepting Brown's Sassenach. It would be interesting to know how many " X.S.s " Moulam would grant in Scotland ; probably not more than half a dozen. The greater length of climbs in Scotland is sometimes said to compensate for lack of technical difficulty but this is not a valid argument. Only on Nevis does the climber feel that he is working in a higher class, in a grade of mountaineering altogether more serious than he can find elsewhere in Britain. There must be the occasional exception to this, but not often.

Yet the fact remains that climbing in Scotland is generally regarded as being closer to " greater mountaineering " than climbing in England and Wales. The reason for this is fairly simple. Numerous factors combine to give a crag, mountain or area its own particular " ambiance " : amongst others, the length and steepness of the route, the degree of objective danger, the possible consequences of worsening weather, the degree of isolation from assistance and the conditions of the day. A comparative analysis of these factors taken individually would reveal Scottish courses to be no more formidable than other British climbs, but in Scotland the combination of factors generally produces a more serious total proposition than in the south. That is why Scottish climbing still offers a short but useful step forward across the gap between British and Alpine climbing. On Ben Nevis the step is not so short.

# ICY AIGUILLES : THE NORTH FACES OF THE COL DU PAIN DE SUCRE AND THE AIGUILLE DE TRIOLET

A. BLACKSHAW

THE view from the Argentière hut is superb ; it is the sort of view which would make anyone feel like climbing, for there is nothing but magnificent ice faces for several miles. Over on the right, the Aiguille Verte is supreme ; the twin north faces of the Droites and the Courtes make a fine centre piece ; while on the left is the most dramatic of them all—the incredibly steep north face of the Triolet.

I had first seen this view in 1954 ; Mike Cunningham and I had just done the north face of the Aiguille d'Argentière, and we were waiting to complete the trip with the Aiguille Verte. But the clouds were low, and the wind was fierce, (didn't a guide mention 'vent du 150 km p h' in the log ?) ; and the mountains really were not by any stretch of the imagination the place for us. So we took advantage of the bad weather to move down to Chamonix, and up to Envers des Aiguilles to see if a little plan of ours was really as good as it had seemed from an armchair in Oxford. But we did not leave without studying the Triolet ; although so hostile, it had a strange attraction, and I felt then that I would have to accept its invitation—but not yet !

Our plan was to have a look at the north-east face of the Col du Pain de Sucre, which the Vallot guide describes as "*une magnifique course de glace, très difficile et très délicate.*" It had been attempted in the 1920s by Smythe and Blakeney, who unfortunately had bad weather, and were forced to retreat ; the first ascent was eventually made by Mme. P. Dalmais and P. Dalmais with George and Marcel Charlet, on the very same day in 1931 that Gréloz and Marullaz did the first ascent of the north face of the Pain de Sucre itself, which lies just to its



left. Since then it had apparently never been visited. Was this because it wasn't worth it?—or because it was too hard? We didn't know, but we couldn't resist going to find out.

Next morning, we left the hut very early, for I had seen this route bombarded by stones when I'd done the east ridge of the Crocodile the year before, and it was not a happy memory. We soon reached the triple rimayes which bar entry to the Plan-Crocodile climbs, and thanks to a little ice wall on the right, it wasn't long before we found ourselves on the lower ice slope of the Pain de Sucre-Plan couloir. This was good snow-ice, lying at a reasonable angle, so we cramponned up it as quickly as we could. Our lack of fitness slowed us down, but it was only three and a quarter hours after leaving the hut, that we reached the top of the main slope. From here, the Gréloz-Marullaz route went up the face on the left; but the Col lay round the corner to the right. Dared we risk it?

For the moment, we deferred the decision, for dawn was just breaking on the Zermatt peaks. The sky was imperceptibly lightening; but all below was darkness. We had the impression of being suspended over a bottomless pit, which was black and sinister; through the darkness we could just discern the glacier way below, criss-crossed by wicked thin lines, which we knew in reality to be sizeable bergschrunds. Suddenly, a minute light appeared in the distance; it must have been a party setting out from the Couvercle. We wondered for a moment if they could see our torch—it wouldn't help us if they could, but at least, we wouldn't feel quite so isolated! The silence was intense, almost oppressive; it was not at all friendly.

Moreover, it was very cold; we were both shivering, though we had halted for no more than a few minutes. It was time to move. As it was only 4 a.m., we decided it would do no harm to try the Col. Thereupon, an overwhelming desire for speed quite gained control of the party, for Mike had seen falling stones too, when he'd done the Ryan-Lochmatter of the Plan the year before. Within minutes, we had crossed over to the narrow couloir, which was our objective. There was no more than 800 feet between us and the Col; but what would it be like?

The first section, which was all we could see, was a thin ribbon of ice, enclosed by steep walls, and giving onto iced rock; we cramponned and cut up the ice and over the iced rock,

which while it was not too steep, was near the maximum angle for safe cramponning. There were no belays, so we pressed on as fast as we could up the ice slope which ensued. It was not very hard, and we both enjoyed it, though we were out of breath with the effort. Then we saw the rest of the couloir ; it was blue ice, which was too steep to crampon. However, it was not nearly as steep as we had feared ; we had expected to find something comparable to a hard Nevis gully. With this realisation, the tension eased, for there was nothing but a long bout of step-cutting ahead.

Fortunately, we discovered just then that there was a thin crack between the ice and the right hand wall of the couloir. All we needed to do was to jam the right foot in this crack, and then, with the left foot on the ice, and hands on the vertical rock wall, we could climb rapidly enough by an exhilarating back and foot movement, which while distinctly airy, was also moderately secure ; Mike and I hurried on, thankful for the temporary reprieve from the labours of step-cutting. But it was not for long ; the crack gave out, and the ice steepened for the final four hundred feet to the Col ; there was nothing for it but to cut our way out.

By now we were out of danger of falling stones, and with that, the remaining tension (and speed) disappeared. The sunlight was touching the Pain de Sucre itself, way above our heads ; and as we watched it creeping down the wall of ice fluted-granite, we felt this was the silence before the storm. Then the first snow moved ; it trickled down the rock, and gathering momentum, disintegrated in a cloud of dust. The mountain was awakening, and we were best out of the way ; so we cut at the hard ice, until at last, at 9.15 a.m., we emerged at the Col.

We had a wonderful sense of achievement, for it had been a fine climb, which was satisfying in every way. The view was magnificent, and the climbing superb. Furthermore we felt that we had penetrated one of the innermost recesses of the Aiguilles. It was with a great deal of pleasure that we took off our frozen crampons, just nine hours after putting them on, and in between sleeping, ate oranges and chocolate, which we had quite forgotten in the excitement.

Last year it was with Bob Downes that I walked up once more to the Argentière hut. It was the end of the season, and we were

both fit from a lot of climbing ; moreover, morale was at its highest, for we had done both the south face of the Pointe Gugliermine, and the north-east face of the Piz Badile during the past ten days. After these two climbs, we wanted a fitting climax to the season, something which would if possible be even more memorable ; and what could be better than the north face of the Triolet ? Lionel Terray had done it a week before in the remarkable time of seven and a quarter hours from the refuge ; but since then there had been three days of very bad weather, and everything was plastered with powder snow. On an ice climb, this snow could be a great help, provided we could get it in a frozen condition ; on the other hand, once the air warmed it, it would be a serious hindrance, and on the north face of the Triolet a positive danger, for it is very steep to hold powder snow.

When we were close to the hut, we could see the face quite clearly : directly beneath the summit was the huge wall of icy rock which Jean-Paul Charlet and Etienne Livacic had climbed in 1945 ; on the right, this changed into a wall of ice, extremely steep in appearance, and cut half way up by bulging, blue tinted séracs. This was the line of our route, which had first been climbed, one very cold September day in 1931, by André Roch and Robert Gréloz. We had read\* that the face presents three serious problems, so we took the opportunity of studying each one in turn. First there is the lower ice slope, which appeared to be steep, and to get ever steeper. Then there are the séracs themselves ; sometimes these are impracticable, but we knew that they would go because of Terray's ascent, and therefore we were spared the prospect of being compelled either to retreat down the lower ice slope (as Arsandaux's party had done), or else force our way out by the extreme Lachenal-Contamine couloir, which avoids the séracs on the left. Thirdly, there is the final ice slope, which, though not particularly steep, we knew could take a very long time in bad conditions such as we were likely to encounter. To get this final slope in the best possible condition, we resolved to leave very early, and climb the lower slope by torchlight.

\* 1. André Roch, *Climbs of My Youth*, Chapter XIII.  
2. A. Contamine, *Alpinisme* 1948, p. 7.

We were soon confirmed in this decision, though in an entirely unexpected way ; for when we reached the hut, we discovered that there was a party on the face at that very moment, 17 hours after leaving the hut ; this was a considerable coincidence to say the least, for until then it had been climbed only nine times in twenty-four years, and very rarely more than once in a season. Obviously, the face was in bad condition, for it was impressed upon us (innocent English) that both members of the French party were very good ice climbers. Accordingly, we had breakfast almost as soon as we had finished supper, much to the amusement of the guides ; but as none of them had ever been near the climb, we didn't consider their opinions necessarily to be gospel. Then we roped up, with 60 feet between us, and 60 feet in the sack for emergencies, (we recollected that Couzy and Vialatte had resorted to a *rappel pendulaire* on the traverse to the séracs), and stepped outside. The cold hit us ; but we were glad, for there was every indication that we would not have a storm at least until noon. The sky was a canopy of stars ; and there was a weak moon, which while it did not touch the north face of the Triolet, illuminated the encircling peaks.

For an hour or so, we hurried up the glacier. Then the ice slope which we had set out to climb reared up just ahead of us, immensely steep and cold ; it seemed to be infinitely long, for its top was merely a faintly white line, glinting in the moonlight, thousands of feet above us, and silhouetted against the brilliant stars. It was an exciting moment—the excitement of anticipation ; at last we were face to face with the difficulties we had so eagerly awaited, but we still did not know quite what they were.

Where should we start ? It was quite a question, for our way was blocked by a huge bergschrund, whose upper lip was almost continuously overhanging. There was no apparent break, so we decided to try our luck on the cone of avalanche débris, which lay directly beneath the séracs ; you didn't have to be a wise man to see that it was no place to linger. Much to our relief, it was only a step from its apex onto the wall of ice, where the Triolet itself began. Hurriedly we fastened on our crampons, adjusted torches, and sorted out our hammers and ice pegs. It was an impressive situation ; a few feet away was the very steep wall which is the Triolet ; a thousand feet above





our heads was a line of huge séracs, which although invisible in the night, did not leave their presence unfelt ; while at our feet was a huge crevasse, its depths an impenetrable blackness which the torches could not dissolve.

I stepped onto the wall in the very centre of the narrow avalanche gully. " Hmm, this is steep", I mused, " too steep for crampons. But if we start cutting now, we'll never get up. After all, this *is* the Triolet !" So I cramponned up, an ice peg in my left hand, the ice axe in my right. " Shall I come up ? " " Err, no, not just at the moment "—I was in a particularly delicate position. After 60 feet, I came on snow on the right of the gully, so I brought Bob up. This was steep snow, lying on ice, so we gathered up our coils, and set off moving together, in the general direction of a snow rib on the left. We were climbing very quickly now, and could feel ourselves rising, though all around was blackness. It was a wonderfully invigorating form of climbing ; we trusted each other, and therefore we could cut down our security in the interests of time. This surely is the greatest joy of mountaineering : security in a position of danger, security brought about by the exercise of technique and safe reliance on someone else.

I was just reflecting to myself that there was no chance now if we slipped, when my crampon rebounded. " We've run into ice, Bob!" " Let's try further left". The peg went in with six blows ; then I cramponned up. If we let our morale crack now, we would be faced with 2000 ft. of step cutting ; Bob cut out the peg, as I put in the next one ; then he led through. We were almost at the snow rib ; it was no more than a thin fluting of snow, adhering to the ice ; but it went up into the night, and it was to prove to be the escalator we badly needed. This is the technique of the face : find yourself a snow rib (the face is everywhere grooved and fluted by snow avalanching from the rock above) and climb it ; when it gives out, cut across a groove to the next one. It is rather like a game of snakes and ladders, except that in this particular game, the snakes are more than ever to be avoided.

We halted for a few minutes, to change torch batteries and munch chocolate ; we were both tired by the speed of our climb, but we felt ourselves fit enough to keep it up, and we were elated at the height we had gained. Once at the arête,



we found that we could climb up together just as fast as our lungs would allow. It was a wonderful feeling, to be advancing so rapidly on such a steep face. Soon, the ice became very steep indeed, and we saw that we would have to make a traverse back to the séracs, sixty yards or so away on the right. This is where we benefited from the French party, for we found steps across this remarkably steep ice, which although they all needed re-cutting, saved us valuable time. The first peg sounded very insecure, so I put in another, but that didn't sound at all good either ; by the time I had run out 60ft., there were five pegs in, but they didn't give any sort of guarantee of security. Then Bob found that three of the pegs had broken, so it began to look as though it just was not the place to slip.

This was a most magnificent position ; above, the near vertical ice ran into ice-sheathed rock ; below, there was nothing but space and mercilessly steep ice, only partly obscured by the inky blackness ; we were stuck like flies on a wall of ice which was about 70° ; away on the right, the séracs looked incredibly steep in the weak light of our torches, which threw grotesque shadows upon them. " This is what I call steep ice!" " You're right there." " It'd make a terrific photograph if only it weren't still dark." " Pity we didn't bring a flash bulb!"

Eventually we reached the séracs. Bob led round a corner, which, surprisingly, gave an easy route onto the upper ice slope. This was at a much easier angle, so we moved together for hundreds upon hundreds of feet. Then a large crevasse barred the way ; fortunately we found a place where the upper lip was vertical only for a few feet, so we forced it quickly. Bob cut a step at the limit of his reach ; a quick shoulder and he was up ; with a tight rope and a mantleshef move, I was up too. Now there were no more obstacles ; the final slope was still moderately steep, but it was ideal for crampons in its frozen condition. Only half an hour or so after switching out our torches, we emerged at the small col between the Petites Aiguilles de Triolet.

The north face of the Triolet was ours ! We really couldn't quite believe that we had done it. What a supreme conclusion to the season ! We voted it there and then to be the best climb so far. And who wouldn't have done ? For the north face of the Triolet is quite an inspiring place !



# COMMANDOS AND CORNWALL

MIKE BANKS

**D**URING the war, and ever since, members of the club have been closely associated with the Commando climbers and now, after a decade of peace, it might be of interest to see how this small but individualistic band of men is faring. St Ives, in Cornwall, had long been the stronghold of the climbing Commandos, but in 1949, for administrative reasons, the unit was incorporated in the main Commando training unit, which by then had settled on the fringe of Dartmoor. The ten years of peace have enabled the Cliff Assault Wing, as the sub-unit is now called, to settle into a steady annual routine.

Every Royal Marine Commando (and this amounts to hundreds of men yearly) is taught the elements of amphibious raiding. This is carried out in Plymouth Sound and includes jumping out of small boats in the darkness and shinning up and down a 100-ft cliff. Descent is made by the Geneva method of rappel. The main effort of the Wing, however, is concentrated on training rock climbers, and to this end we have a small hutted camp near Land's End. Tricounis are still used in preference to vibrams for two reasons: they are far superior on the slippery, seaweedy foreshore; and they are better for teaching a neat initial technique. Vibrams are **worn** occasionally during the course.

In the spring, or more accurately from January to March, the Wing gives itself over to running the Corps Cold Weather Warfare training. Novices are taken to the snowy Cairngorm plateaux and the advanced students (men who have done the Cairngorm course) undergo a further course in Norway, run by our own instructors but helped immensely by the friendly Norwegians. Individual officers find their way to the Norwegian, Canadian and Swiss Armies for specialised snow training. The next major item on the programme is the annual

"Exercise Run Aground" when we storm the 300-ft Culver Cliff in the Isle of Wight before a large audience of senior N.A.T.O. officers. Finally, about one year in three, we put on a display at the Royal Tournament, when a steep sixty-foot artificial cliff (cunningly furnished with just the right jug-handles) is stormed from the arena and the subsequent cliff top battle won with ruthless military certainty. And then we return to Cornwall for eight months or so of dull old climbing!

We cannot be otherwise than closely in touch with developments in Cornish climbing, and I would like to sketch the more important work that has recently been done. In the Wing we were lucky enough to have as a N.S. Second Lieutenant our club member Rawdon Goodier. Working in perfect harmony with Cpl. Deacon, one of our most talented instructors, he did fine work developing the Pordennack and Carn Barra areas, which now abound with fine climbs. This pair also played a prominent part in the tracing of new routes on the Bosigran Face which has been going on with such remarkable vigour during this last year. Broadly, there had hitherto been only three climbs on the face: the Ledge, which was a rather scrappy VD, the Doorway, which was a very steep and neat VD, and the Zig-Zag, an inelegant VS with one stiff pitch. When I say that there are nine new climbs, most of them VS or harder, it will be appreciated that Bosigran has had its face lifted! The Biven brothers, Hamish Nicol, but principally Goodier and Deacon, are responsible for this pioneering. Particularly worthy of mention is Goodier and Deacon's "String of Pearls," a girdle traverse of the complete Bosigran Face that sustains its difficulty over most of its 700 ft and must surely be the longest and hardest route in Cornwall. It takes about six hours. Even "artificial" has reared its ugly head and, admittedly for demonstration and instructional purposes, Rawdon and I clanged our way up an A2 overhanging crack on the west side of Commando Ridge. I also added the distinctive Zig-Zag Crack to the Sennen climbs—an appropriately short and sweet route for a semi-staff officer!

Rawdon has left us to chastise tse-tse flies in some swampy area, but to compensate Alan Blackshaw has arrived as a N.S. Second Lieutenant. We hope Peter Mayo will be following. I

asked, Alan on joining the Wing, and before he became an old sweat, to record his first impressions. He writes :—

“First let me tell you about the senior cliff leaders' course which I have just completed. We spent the first month in Cornwall where we climbed almost every day, or practised hauling equipment up cliffs, for a soldier is useless without his supplies. Then we went to Wales for a fortnight, where we greatly benefited from the use of Ynys. Half of this time was spent hill walking and the remainder rock-climbing ; this was a sound policy, because it was experience of mountains of any sort that students most lacked. A fortnight of canoeing completed the curriculum and raised me to the status of instructor.

Needless to say, this mode of passing National Service is most gratifying to a mountaineer, the more so when it is realized that one's mountaineering experience is of real benefit to the Service. Apart from this, since I entered the Wing I have learned a lot about nail technique, for the instructors are among the best nail climbers in the country and there are probably not many climbers who would not gain something from their acquaintance. The instructors are not only very competent in their personal climbing but they have developed a high standard of instruction that produces results which are more than satisfactory. After all, it is quite something to train all novices on a course to lead up to Difficult or Very Difficult in ten days. These novices will not only climb up to standard, but they will climb with a very neat style which is an excellent basis for the Severe climbing they will do later. Furthermore the standard of safety is very high indeed, due to the continuous exercise of good technique.

The role of the Wing is very wide and one cannot fail to be impressed by its competence in fulfilling that role. At the same time it is not, and does not aspire to be, a mountaineering club ; it is a military organisation and as such has inevitable limitations. The climbing is strictly governed by the needs of training and few of the instructors (with certain brilliant exceptions) have fully developed their own potential. Consequently they have not done the very hard Welsh routes, but those Very Severs which they do climb, they lead with notable ease. Similarly although most of them have skied and instructed in snow warfare, few of them have done any hard snow or ice climbs, which are not military requirements. Several of the brighter

sparks have their eyes on the Alps and it will be interesting to see how they make out. In the meantime I am not finding National Service too hard to bear ! ”

# RUWENZORI IMPRESSION

I. G. McNAUGHT-DAVIS

SINCE my arrival in East Africa at the beginning of 1954, it had been constantly in my mind that a mere 1,500 miles away there lay what must be one of the most fantastic ranges of mountains in the world—Ruwenzori, the Mountains of the Moon. They lie on the western side of one of the great rift valleys of East Africa and form a natural boundary between the fertile plains of Uganda and the steaming Ituri forests of the Belgian Congo. Unfortunately, it was not until I had been on the coast some 18 months that the opportunity arose to spend a few days on their slopes. The obvious method of approach seemed to be by car, and at the beginning of August, 1955, I departed from Dar es Salaam with the feeling strong that I was once again *en route* for the Alps.

It is difficult to remember when I first realised that this was not to be a normal Alpine holiday, but I think it was when we met the elephants. Throughout the 1,500 miles from the humid coastal plains of Tanganyika, through the game-studded Masai reserve, through the green "White Highlands" of Kenya, and finally through the cultivated countryside of Uganda, it had not been difficult to imagine at the end some familiar hut or peak. The first disillusionment was at Ibande, which instead of being the unfrequented base for Ruwenzori expeditions turned out to be the scene of some hydro-electric scheme for the Kilembe copper mines, filling the valley with alien metallic noise and an abundance of unexpected Europeans. Through the District Commissioner at Fort Portal and the local chief, porters had been arranged and were awaiting our arrival and inspection. These appeared to be small, disgruntled chaps, and it was only after long debates that we finally got away into the gentle pastures of elephant grass. We walked in silence, the porters occasionally breaking the still, hot air with cries or laughter. All was well ; we were away from the hot plains, from the dust, mosquitoes and ever present stench. Suddenly a cry ! Then

14 porters, as fast as the eye could follow, shot past down the elephant-made tracks, loads falling away in all directions. "Tembo," the cry went up, "Tembo." What nonsense ; elephants are an anachronism, found only in zoos. "I refuse to believe in elephants," and I walked timidly on, gripping the ice-axe a little firmer. Then they came, like a train crashing through a pile of wooden boxes. The roar, the hiss, the crashing confusion, all were there. We fled. These must have escaped from captivity. The incident was repeated despite whistles and shrieks from the porters and solid disbelief from us, and it was with some relief that we eventually arrived at the first hut, Nyinabitaba, aluminium, empty and very welcome.

Three days is normal from the roadhead to the upper hut at Bujuko Lake, three days of soul destroying fight through thick bush, through the incredible Ruwenzori bogs which at times seem to form on almost vertical ground, of the exciting run on isolated tufts some three feet above bog level, where a slip is enjoyed by all who happen to be watching. Bujuko Lake, though so picturesque from up the valley, seemed merely a dilution in the bog, stagnant and mirroring the broken north face of Mt. Baker. Surrounding this scene of swamp and tangled vegetation lay the three great snow-covered peaks of the Ruwenzori, Mt. Stanley, Mt. Baker and Mt. Speke, close now, easy of access yet invisible in the thick boiling mist. Giant groundsel, lobelias, helychrysum, words synonymous with Ruwenzori, had established themselves in actuality. Thriving on the waterlogged ground and the ever-present mist, they grew everywhere.

We had met an Austrian party, who were descending from Bujuko. They had told us of difficulties with their porters, and after our own initial troubles we had been expecting the worst. In actual fact throughout the whole journey ours were excellent. They were hard working, uncomplaining and strong. We could only attribute the difference to the fact that all of our party could speak Swahili to some extent, a language which most of the porters could understand. Although we took a headman, who again was quite efficient, we regarded this in the light of experience as a luxury, as long as the party could speak to the porters in their own tongue, or one which they can readily understand. Even with their 50 lb. load and small stature they

could usually outpace us across rough country unless we made a very special effort.

Two days were spent getting accustomed to the altitude, one in an aimless wander in thick mist on Mt. Speke, the other in finding a route from the hut direct on to the main Mt. Johnston ridge, avoiding the Stuhlmann pass. This route was considered to be better than the route via the Stuhlmann pass, which at that time of year was coated with thick mud right up to the glacier. It lies straight up the gully behind Bujuko Hut, and although vegetated is not half as unpleasant as it might look.

The date was 10th August, and I had six more days before I had to start down the valley ; the others had less. After some discussion three of us set out with three porters for the Elena bivouac ; the skies were overcast and a general air of depression filled the valley. We had yet to see the high peaks through the mists. To Elena Hut is another Ruwenzori battle, combining in the short distance all the essentials : the bridge of tussocks over the bog, the swamp, the mud and the thick wet overlayer of moss hanging on any rock. The ridge camp was reached in two hours and as we stepped out of the valley on to the clean dry rock of the ridge it was like entering another world. Above was the glacier, a dazzling apron of snow and higher still, vaguely threatening through the mist, Savoia, Elena and the Tooth. We were in climbers' country.

Next morning found another member of the party sick, so it was two of us who set out to attempt to find in the thick mist the highest peak of Mt. Stanley and the Ruwenzori—Margherita. An easy, exhilarating climb up the glacier brought us to the huge flat expanse of Stanley plateau, lying at almost exactly 16,000 feet, extending out of sight into the mist. A study of our postcard size map seemed to indicate that we should march due north, bypass the huge bulk of Alexandra to the east, descend into the gully between this and Margherita, then go straight up the ridge to the summit. Simple. Confidently we stepped out across the uncrevassed plain of snow, every feature being hidden behind an impenetrable wall of mist. We crossed the plain, and as the angle increased bore away to the right, only to find ourselves looking down serious ice cliffs. We stumbled around in the mist for some time until there seemed to be only two ways out of the dilemma, to return or to ascend

the peak we were already on. We chose the latter, and although the climbing was straightforward, without any sign of difficulty, it was nerve racking to see something lying ahead in the mist and then find it to be a huge ice cliff composed of giant icicles hanging above our heads. After several detours the summit was reached after about an hour ; Margherita was only a few hundred yards away across the col but as always completely obscured. The mists had won the day. We turned our backs on the peaks and scuttled back to the Elena Hut. We had been away five hours. Bujuko was reached two hours later.

Next day I bade farewell to my companions from the Mountain Club of Kenya, who were descending to Fort Portal, and joined forces with a party consisting of two Argentinians and an Indian who had arrived at the hut before we left for our attempt. We had three days left, so once again we covered the slimy track to Elena Hut, arriving covered impressively with thick black mud.

In the Alps the following morning would have indicated a rest day. A warm, thick overcast spread over the sky, thunder rumbled and the occasional flash of lightning lit the surrounding peaks, giving them a peculiar ghostly appearance. At last we could see them, if only the sun would come up. We were again troubled with sickness, and only two of us set out with some diffidence up the glacier. Our arrival at the Stanley plateau coincided with the arrival of the sun and for the first time we saw the two culminant points of the Ruwenzori, Alexandra and Margherita, defended by ice cliffs like row upon row of giant organ pipes. The sun broke through the mists over the summits of Mt. Speke and with one accord we ran across the plateau, before the elusive image had chance to vanish, this time perhaps for good. The route was straightforward and we could see no reason why we had not been able to find it on the previous attempt. We were soon looking down into the gully leading to the col between the two peaks and across at the route we must take up Margherita. "Up the ridge, through the cravasses there, there and there, through the ice cliffs and up the easy ridge to the summit." A quick decision, and the peak vanished into the mist ; the glimpse had been enough. A glissade into the gully, quickly on to the ridge and we were into the crevassed area. This proved to be straightforward, and with glee we



rushed towards our now visible goal. Suddenly we were confronted with a vertical ice cliff falling away at our feet and completely invisible from our previous viewpoint. This was our first climbing setback and after wasting some time trying to evade the issue we cut a horizontal traverse across it into the gully beneath the final snow ridge.

The final step was rock. As I prepared to tackle the first pitch Mario turned to me and in his unique English said, "I am not familiar with the rock climbing." Although he had climbed Aconcagua several times and had spent several seasons in the Antarctic with Argentinian expeditions, he had never done any rock climbing. This seemed to be as good a place as any to learn, so I reassured him that I was familiar with the rock climbing and we set off up the fairly easy rocks. The rock was dry and clean, and it seemed no time at all before we were performing continental formalities on the summit. This time I was excused from singing the National Anthem. The descent was made in mist, but we climbed Moebius, another summit of Mt. Stanley, *en route*.

One day remained, and the so-called Devil's Tooth was still unclimbed. Otto, the other Argentinian, was enthusiastic, athletic and inexperienced. Festooned with the unaccustomed armour of pitons and hammers we forged up on to the plateau once again.

Directly above the Elena Hut lie three peaks, Savoia, Elena and sandwiched between them the unclimbed Devil's Tooth. We considered that this should be climbed if for no other reason than to change its name. The side visible from the glacier was uncompromisingly steep; it did not look completely hopeless, but unfortunately nearer the summit, huge unstable mushrooms of ice adhered to the cliff, giving the peak a rather frightening aspect. From a previous scrutiny the most feasible route seemed to be a traverse across the face from the col between Elena and the Tooth, then straight up; and unless the other side had something better to offer, this was the route we were to attempt. Sadly, during the night there had been a heavy fall of snow and the attempt on Elena was foredoomed to failure. After an ascent of only some 200 feet, the mists finally closed in and as the snow began to fall again we roped off, put our tails between our legs and fled. The holiday was over.

We plodded down through the overgrown morass in two days, through the elephant grass (the elephants had either been captured or had been figments of the imagination, for we saw no sign of them) to the cars at Ibande. The final pleasure was the entrance into the Mountains of the Moon hotel in Fort Portal ; to appear unshaven, unwashed and unsavoury as we were, was very definitely not the done thing apparently. However, after some words of explanation we were given every consideration and the pleasure of the first bath was only excelled by the first-class food.

I have deliberately not given details of costs, organisation of stores and equipment ; any details of these can be found in an extremely useful pamphlet published by the Mountain Club of Uganda. The only item of equipment not normally found on any Alpine climber's list was my umbrella, which served me admirably right up to Bujuko Hut despite rude remarks from my damp companions.

# CASSIN CLASSIC

R. O. DOWNES

“ Well, it looks in condition, except the top part.” Dubious, we craned through the windscreen to look up at the Badile, its north-east face a shadow plummeting behind the pinewoods above Promontogno.

All next afternoon we walked in sun up the Val Bondasca to the Sciora, mixing photography and bathing on what must be one of the most varied and beautiful hut-paths in the Alps. While the *gardiens* cooked, we tried to guess, as one always does, who else had the same ideas. “ The French pair—why else would they be here ? ” suggested Geoff with a practised eye. Not only that, but it seemed that they had *recce'd* the route also. This rather dashed us, for it meant six on the face next day. Any illusions we had of being first away collapsed when their alarm went off just after one o'clock, anticipating ours. Feeling slightly glum we followed the French downstairs. We wished them well : then before our fascinated eyes the larger of the two strapped on a gleaming white crash helmet and stalked through the door, the perfect embodiment of the forcing second.

Geoff led us across a mile-wide waste of rubble and moraine. One hour became two. At last the *névé*, and a delicate trudge up this, nicking steps with a hammer brought us unquestionably to the *dalle d'attaque*. It was still very cold, the sun under the Bregaglia horizon. Dawn clouds mocked, forming and vanishing, but there was still that cottonwool welling over the Badile from Italy. We all changed into rubber P.A.s—except for Blackshaw, in whose OUMC and AC breast there still lingered some respect for traditional techniques. At 5.30 he and Geoff were away and ten minutes later Eric and I followed. The *névé* must have been high this year, for the slab was nothing and soon we could move together along ledges and chimneys running diagonally rightward ; so we were out of breath when we caught up the other two, with Alan already halfway up the

first *dièdre*. We had seen the photo of Rébuffat climbing this, the classic book-shaped corner, perhaps seventy feet.

Sunlight! Its impact was almost physical, yet we hadn't noticed its arrival. Back into the corner shadow, a chilling lay-back ending in a low wall. The pull-out brought one back into the sun and to a fresh system of ledges and cracks leading back to the left. And full stop. We had telescoped into the front pair, now about 400 feet directly above our attack and at the foot of the "great difficulties". Alan arranged his stirrups and slings while Geoff sorted out his tummy—the aftermath of our bitter bivouac on the Aiguille Blanche four days before. I had looked forward to seeing my first "ascending overhang" but in fact it was an exact description of the rock above; the overlaps remained as stub-ends of whole planes of slab that had been exfoliated. The route followed the underside of the stubs—awkward, yet climbing still at a slab angle. Three or four pegs, then a hard move round the riser. The crack above was like a pin cushion with pitons, of every size and nationality. Perhaps two are needed for aid on this pitch, yet there must have been five times that number. Eric pulled out a crumpled notebook to consult the route. "No, no, don't read it out—it's too frightening!" I remembered only too well that on all this section characters and numerals flowed thick across the page, strange jargon of difficulty. Hastily I moved past, up a short steep crack and once more on to slabs, flanked on the right by a larger, lowering overlap. Now the granite perfect, the holds appearing, the climbing fast, urgent. I reached a platform as Geoff left it. "That's the first bivouac Cassin." "Already?"

Our route now waved out to the left and for three or four hundred feet we enjoyed fine, open slab climbing, guided at long intervals by a piton. Never hard but very sustained, it reminded us both of Kellett's superb climb on Carn Dearg. Soon we were able to see into the area of broken ledges, the mid-face Niche (in fact only just over a third of the way up). We scrambled together up these. I flung a large piece of Alpine experience past Eric's head before we arrived panting beside the others. It was quarter past nine. While we sat down to eat near the little patch of *névé*, Geoff made some further adjustments to his stomach. We were perhaps 1,200 feet up the climb. but now the slabs reared abruptly into a smooth and solid

bastion, the crucial *ressaut* of the face. On the steepest part of the wall we saw the French pair for the first time, that white topee glinting in the sunlight. To the west arms of cloud stretched warily into green valleys, but overhead a conflict of weather was going on, an unfelt wind slowly halting, finally thrusting back the high cloud from the south. We decided to go on and Geoff took over the lead. Greedy for warmth, Eric and I sat down beside the *névé* to wait, content. Too content ; the tension relaxed, the spring in the clockwork ran down and we dozed into stupor in that marvellous heat.

\* \* \*

I blinked, woke up with a start. "Hell's bells, look at the time!" It was twenty to eleven. "What the dickens is going on up there?" At last Alan gave a shout for us to follow and Eric weighed into a pitch rather like Pedestal Crack, in a vertical corner. This was fiercer than anything we had met on the Peigne, with no real rest for 110 feet, and a fine lead without a stirrup. Surprisingly, it held only four or five pitons. I arrived to find Eric bridged on the only foothold in view ; the *dièdre* above led only to a monstrous overhang, so I moved unbelievably across the wall on the right by a delicate step, to discover an easy ledge rising and Alan at the far end of it. Snatches of indignant conversation floated down to us from Geoff, talking plaintively to himself as he danced about in an *étrier* eighty feet above. All one could see of the route was this pitch, of steep, shallow grooves, and the Niche below. The lower part of the face, now hidden, arched over in a single bound to the glacier. It must have been a brilliant piece of route finding : difficult to tell from below that this was the only weakness in the wall. We were flanked on either side by unbroken slab planes, tawny granite that smiled and smiled. One began to understand the vehemence of the young Italian in the Gamba hut : "*Ah, Cassin : il est ffformidable !*"

Again it was Eric's lead ; the bulging grooves were partly wet, and Geoff had found only about two pitons in place to protect a long pitch, about the standard of Lot's Groove. I followed up slowly, extracting our pitons, trying to pretend not to notice the position. In England one would have savoured it, slyly called it magnificent. Here we were in a hurry, the sun had gone in and exposure was part of the background one must see but not

notice. "Nice work, Eric. See what Geoff was ticking about!" The angle eased for a rope's length but we were soon faced with the pitch at which our notes went into a paroxysm of excitement. "No wonder Rébuffat thought that was A3 if he used étriers on it!" For it was easier to traverse the slab on small holds, with a finger locked on the reversed pitons under the overhang, than to bother clipping stirrups on and off. Another long crack followed, easier than the one below, but ridiculously overpegged. The little red book still burred its message of V sup. & A2 and I remembered the next section had been described as a key passage on the second ascent. It turned out to be a straight-forward mantelshelf on to a crack line which was delicately traversed to easier ground; the difficulty not great enough to prevent continuous movement and pleasure in it. Scrambling easily for a little way, I arrived on a platform fronted by a parapet: Cassin's second bivouac. It was 3.30 and at last we were above the crux.

The climb had entered another phase, for as fast as we climbed one section another sprang into view, like five Cloggys banked on top of each other. Gradually we had drawn level with the great hanging couloir on our left, a quarter-mile-wide bowl narrowing to a repulsive funnel which dived 1,500 feet to the glacier. But a thousand feet of difficult climbing still remained, and with the added prospect of descending the far side, a night on the mountain seemed more and more certain. Perhaps, on this face, the thought of Molteni and Valsecchi jabbed in an odd corner of the mind.

After another two rope-lengths of delightful slab we entered the diagonal chimney—*dièdre*. Widening and steepening at the top, one could not call it hard, yet it gave pitch after pitch of strenuous, 'thrutchy' climbing and was sluicing with icy meltwater from the summit. We caught them up just below the steepening: on Geoff's advice I pulled a pair of socks over my rubbers and was glad of them. Even using the étriers which Alan left on, the cold water put the pitch in the category of nasty moments. It was a relief to leave that disgusting chimney and step out to the left on to dry ledges. Eric passed through, disappeared round the corner. We needed something to cheer us up, but when I joined them at Rébuffat's bivouac ledge I found no stance with dancing girls; merely Sutton lugub-

riously lacing up his boots. Half past five : we had climbed continuously since mid-morning, so someone produced a tin of tunny. We stood on the ledge, scooping the delicious stuff into our mouths with fingers. Chilled and suddenly clumsy in boots we found the last difficult pitch, an open traverse of V, one of the most trying on the climb.

Probably one could force a direct finish to the face but the intuitive Cassin, with two men dying on his rope, had found the quickest finish from here by rappelling down and across into the terminal couloir. Eric and I followed down on Alan's double rope, a long raking abseil of 120 feet. Voices : four or five hundred feet above were the French, figures seen dimly under the cloud which hung along the summit ridge. To save time we took the lead, up a rocky spine of loosely poised flakes and blocks plastered in recent snow. We moved together fast, up and across this dangerous ground, really fighting now to avoid a bivouac. To my astonishment I realized, as I looked down onto a new corner of Italy, that there was no more to climb. A hundred yards to the east the aluminium Madonna marked the summit ; behind us the setting sun filtered yellow through a watery scud.

"There's the hut." The roof of the Gianetti looked like a toy dot on the scree, separated from us by the popular mile of air. Simultaneously the descent route appeared and we shot off down this as fast as we dared ; but dusk was already blurring judgment when we reached the top of a steep gully. Impossible to gauge how far down this cataract of dark to the *névé* beneath, leering palely at our disappointment. I groped mournfully around.

"Christmas, here's the abseil peg!" Delighted at this fantastic piece of luck, we joined five hundred feet of ropes and the luckless Eric dropped experimentally. Minutes passed ; at last a distant hail. I had gone down thirty feet when a ledge collapsed, sending boulders thundering and sparking down the couloir. But Eric was well clear, to judge by the reassuring howl of imprecations that drifted up. At the bottom we looked across to a faint pin-prick of light, and for the second time that day we stepped into moonlight. It was almost eleven when inside the hut we sat blinking while faces chattered and stared,

a few hands reached out to touch us, as if we were travellers from another world. I forget how much we took off before we fell asleep : and then slept.

\* \* \*

One had heard tales of people strolling back in scarpetti, over the Passo di Bondo and down the glacier to the Sciora ; but our return journey had, as they say, its technical charm. When Alan and myself went back for the ropes, leaving the others to go on with our gear, three Italian *imbecili* were descending the couloir, showering one another with stones and abuse. On reaching the *névé* they shot off on their behinds, hooting straight into the 240 foot rope on which we were now tied. Blackshaw vanished down the rimaye faster than I had ever seen Blackshaw move before and the jerk almost catapulted me off the ledges. I let fly oaths, but they must have been used to invective : for they paused doubtfully, then ran chortling on their way.

After an absorbing hour of rope tricks we started the long grind up to the Bondo col with the sky growing suddenly dark. A mutter of thunder. As we descended a steep outcrop a rock bounced improbably round two corners before cuffing me on the head. By now storm-wrack was racing over the valley, drawing grey rain-veils in its train. What with no track showing, hail pouring, head bleeding, tummies grumbling, thunder rumbling, sometimes cracking, we were beginning to feel a little distempered by the time the col was reached. Or what we hoped was the col. From its rock crest we could see only steep snow, a gaping bergschrund and at our feet a significant pile of clay. A cry of triumph—or was it a wave of sympathy ?

“ Geoff has been here at any rate ! ”

“ Very natural reaction with a prospect like that . . . ”

“ Well, I’m not going down that lot without an axe.” And remembering Cym Smith’s trouble, I had a despairing vision of a whole line of Falso Passos. We fidgeted there for half an hour, growing colder in mist and thickly falling snow before, miraculously, it cleared in a swirl of wind. The bergschrund shrank to half its size ; beyond a furrow of tracks sloped gently down a snowfield. A grateful rappel took us beneath the ’schrund, where I had a quick faint to celebrate our release.



In places the glacier was quite alarming, but we were soon back in the Sciora hut, cooking the first square meal for forty hours. For a moment the clouds parted from the Badile, revealing the north face : it was white. A star or two gleamed between dark rags as we set off for the valley. The Val Bondasca was quiet, black and quiet as we swung down it ; but the inn at Promontogno was mellow with lights, Marlon Brandos and gay dance music from a gramophone. The tunes are forgotten, but it was the music of our mood, no sound sweeter to our ears.

# NORTHERN LIMESTONE

D. T. ROSCOE

WE stood by the side of the road which skirts Kilnsey Crag, Wharfedale, and endeavoured to find a line of weakness which would provide the key to the unclimbed main face. About six feet above the ground a small overhang ran the full length of the face, above which the walls rose smooth and steadily overhanging until they butted against a large overhang which jutted out a full 35 feet. Above, the wall became dome shaped and gradually merged into the hillside.

The only loophole in this impressive defence was where a side wall on the right formed a vertical groove with a small overhang at about 80 feet. At 120 feet there appeared to be a space from which we could attack the large overhang. If we failed, it seemed possible to climb the groove continuation which ran, apparently less than vertical, to the top of the crag.

Having chosen our route we climbed the short grass slope which led to the foot of the cliff. Joe tied onto the ends of two ropes, each of 150 feet, and clipping to his waist loop an assortment of channel, leaf and dural pegs, and a few wooden wedges, he started up the groove. The initial overhang was easily overcome on good holds and he continued to ascend steadily to a bulge at 30 feet where he hammered in a wedge for a running belay. The bulge was surmounted by hand jams and bridging tactics and once above he was able to wedge his body and rest.

Just above him it became necessary to peg up the right wall to within a few feet of the small overhang where it was again possible to climb free. On reaching the overhang he planted a channel peg at the base and, held on the ropes, leaned back and hammered in another vertically. As the climb was proving very strenuous he decided to descend for a rest. Telling us to hold his weight he released his holds and "parachuted" to the ground, landing 15 feet from the foot of the crag. So much for our vertical groove!





He untied and Don took his place. Climbing up to the overhang using the pegs that Joe had placed, he succeeded in planting another at the lip. The groove above was blocked by a small sapling to which he attached an étrier (three-rung rope ladder) by means of a sling. Standing up in this he was able to put in a leaf peg and establish himself in the groove. The angle now relented to vertical and after a few more artificial moves he was able to climb free to the stance, where he belayed to a peg.

I tied onto the ends of the ropes, and also to a third rope which was all we had between the second and third men. Don took in the slack and I began to climb. Holds were plentiful at first, and despite the angle I made good progress to the bulge where the difficulty began. Hand jams were good, however, and I pulled over into the groove above, where the climbing became artificial but, as the pegs were all in situ, presented little difficulty. The rock immediately below the overhang appeared unstable, and I stepped up as carefully as possible. As I moved out Joe shouted up to ask what I thought of the position. On both sides overhanging walls plunged to the ground in one great sweep of unbroken rock and the exposure was hair-raising. With a somewhat dry throat I shouted back "Terrific," and turned my attention to the overhang. It proved very strenuous to pass, but once above, the difficulty decreased and I was quickly able to join Don on the ledge.

As he took in Joe's rope I surveyed the huge overhang above our heads. It was divided into two distinct levels by a vertical step which, commencing a few feet to our left, ran diagonally to within a few feet of the tip. The first level resembled a dry stone wall, whereas the second was absolutely smooth and unbroken. It looked as though the step would provide a peg crack, but owing to its diagonal nature it would mean at least 60 feet of climbing under the overhang, with the possibility of the last few feet being unclimbable. Sweat trickled down my back as I vividly imagined all the various calamities which could befall the climber on a pitch such as this.

With growing dread I awaited Joe's words as he climbed onto the ledge. He looked at the overhang, grinned, and said: "Your lead." I declined on the grounds of cowardice, coupled with an earnest desire to live! After a few minutes' study we

agreed unanimously to abandon the attempt on the overhang and turned our attention to the groove continuation.

Don led off, and managed to insert a peg at full stretch. He stepped up in an *étrier* and immediately swung clear of the rock. The groove was practically unbroken and he encountered great difficulty in placing his second and third pegs. The going was extremely strenuous and the pegs far apart. Exhausted by his efforts he descended and handed over the lead.

Joe took one of my ropes so that he could lead on two and attacked the groove. He reached Don's highest peg with difficulty, gasping from his exertions and, after a hard struggle, placed another and disappeared from view over the bulge. The wall above remained at such an angle that he was still swinging free with his weight continually on the rope, which restricted his breathing considerably. The rope was moving very slowly, remaining absolutely stationary for long periods, and as we listened to his struggles the tension became electric. His position was becoming more and more precarious with each insecure peg and the exposure was appalling. About 15 feet short of the top he was brought to a halt by a block weighing several tons which the slightest touch would dislodge. To the sides and above the wall was blank and appeared to be fused, as though it had been subjected to great heat. The situation was hopeless and reluctantly he began the slow retreat. Removing, as he descended, the pegs which had taken so much time and energy to place, he eventually rejoined us. At the highest point reached he had overhung the base of the cliff by 40 feet.

We were now faced with a long free abseil to escape from our eyrie. The abseil peg was not above suspicion, so Joe and I, being the heavier members of the party, abseiled first and second respectively with a safety rope to test its stability. It proved to be quite firm and Don quickly joined us on *terra firma*. Then down to the tents to ease our dry throats with gallons of tea. . . .

Until recent years little limestone climbing was done in this country. The only routes were on easy angled faces, where the pioneers encountered profuse vegetation and loose rock. Consequently limestone was left alone, being regarded as loose, dangerous and entirely unsuitable for rock climbing.

It has become increasingly obvious, however, with the growing number of major Alpine routes requiring artificial aid, that if the standard of the English Alpinist is to improve he must master the methods of the "steeplejack climbers." But where? The usual climbing grounds are neither desirable nor suitable. English climbers have brought the technique of "free climbing" to an extremely high standard. If artificial aid were to be brought into use on a large scale, even on virgin rock, it would quickly spread to the routes which have already been done without such aids. Indeed there are already such climbers who, under the excuse of being modernistic and not hide-bound with tradition, attempt routes far beyond their capabilities, using pitons and étriers at every sign of difficulty. It would be disastrous to English standards if such people were to be encouraged by the introduction of totally artificial routes to granite.

Apart from the ethics of the matter the rock does not lend itself readily to the use of pitons, suitable fissures not being forthcoming and problems similar to those met in the Alps being very few. It was with these problems in mind that northern climbers turned their attention to the limestone Dales of Derbyshire and Yorkshire, and they were quick to realise that here they had the perfect solution.

In describing the preceding climb I have tried to show the nature of a typical limestone route and the types of problems which are likely to be encountered. The rock is carboniferous or, as it is sometimes called, mountain limestone. All but the steepest faces are grassy and loose and the final few feet of each route tend to be broken and unstable as the angle relents.

Buxton Spa, famous for the healing qualities of its spring water, makes an excellent centre for the Derbyshire crags which lie to the south and east and are easily accessible by bus or car. Approximately 12 miles south of Buxton is the Manifold Valley, actually just inside the county of Staffordshire. The main crag is Thor's Cave and is easily reached by a walk down the valley from either Warslow or Hulme End. A huge cave, the great entrance of which is in the region of 70 feet high, forms the main feature of the crag. There are two routes, both on the sidewalls of a smaller entrance to the cave. On the right wall an obvious chimney is gained and followed to the top. The



route is nearly 200 feet in length, and about 25 pitons are needed to overcome its steep walls and two overhangs. An obvious route on the left wall sets a different problem. There are no block overhangs, but the wall itself overhangs continuously at about 15 degrees beyond the vertical.

Three miles east of Thor's Cave, as the crow flies, the River Dove cuts deeply into the hillside to form Dovedale. This picturesque dale, where Isaac Walton loved to ply his nimble rod, is the newcomer's finest introduction to limestone. It is best entered from the road at Milldale, near Alstonfield, whence a short walk brings the climber to Raven's Tor, above the right bank of the river. There are two routes, both of which follow vertical cracks. One in the centre and the second, very prominent, at the right-hand end of the face. They are vegetated at the start and consist mainly of free climbing at a high standard of difficulty with one or two artificial moves.

Continuing, the dale now becomes less open and steep, heavily wooded hillsides replace the open grassy slopes. The river rounds a series of caves known as Doveholes, and flows silently between frowning pinnacles, Ilam Rock on the west bank, a huge hollow tooth of limestone, and on the east bank, Pickering's Tor, a flame-like needle over 150 feet high on the riverside.

The north face of Ilam Rock is less than vertical and very grassy. It gives a free climb of Very Difficult standard, which follows a prominent vertical break to the summit. The west face is the shortest on the pinnacle and boasts two routes. In the centre is an impending crack requiring 12 pitons. Six feet to the right is a shallow groove, the first half of which is artificial (six pitons), and the second free climbing. On the south face is the only limestone route which has yet been christened, the White Edge, which forces its way up the right-hand edge of the steadily overhanging face. The technical difficulty is very great and the angle allows no rest. There is only one pitch of 120 feet, requiring 25 pitons and one wooden wedge. As the pinnacle is wedge shaped, the east face is merely a blunt rib, dropping steeply to the river. From the summit descent is by abseil down the short west face.

There are three routes on Pickering's Tor. The easiest traverses the easy angled east face from left to right, gaining the



north ridge which is followed to the top. The standard is Very Difficult, and no pitons are needed. At the foot of the north ridge is a small cave. The overhang formed by the roof is surmounted at the right-hand side, and the wall above climbed to the ridge. The third and finest route on the crag lies up a shallow groove at the right-hand end of the west face. Above a small overhang the groove peters out and a traverse left leads to the upper section of the north ridge. Descent is by abseil over the short, overhanging south face.

Half a mile farther down the Dale, on the hillside which forms the east bank, are a series of outcrops known as the Tissington Spires, and in another quarter of a mile, on the west bank, are a group of pinnacles, the Twelve Apostles. Neither of these groups has had any exploration whatever, but a visiting party would, I feel sure, be rewarded with some very fine, steep face climbing.

Roughly midway between Chapel-en-le-Frith and Chesterfield the A623 road runs through Middleton Dale and the village of Stoney Middleton. One or two routes have been done on the crags hereabouts but they lack continuity and have not achieved much popularity.

The only other major crag in the Buxton area is High Tor. This magnificent crag is situated just outside Matlock overlooking the Derby road. The only route on the main face follows a centrally situated, shallow groove which peters out 15 feet from the top. A 20-foot traverse to the right leads to a line of weakness which enables the top section to be overcome. About one third of the route is delightful free climbing on sound, steep and very exposed slabs. On reaching the top the climber enters High Tor gardens and is promptly charged 4d. entry fee by a vigilant keeper. Situated on a buttress about 100 yards to the left of the main face is an obvious groove, capped by a block overhang. The climbing is entirely free, pitons being used for protection only, and the overhang is avoided by traversing across the left wall.

There has also been some climbing in Yorkshire. The best centre for the crags so far explored is Skipton, situated on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors. From here three crags have been visited.

A track from Malham village follows the west bank of the River Aire upstream to its source where it emerges from the foot of the cliffs which form Malham Cove. The face, which is very steep and presents no weaknesses, appears to be unclimbable by any means except Rowlbolting. I should like to say at this juncture that there are limits even to artificial techniques, and that Rowlbolts are definitely beyond the pale. Apart from arguments on the principle, the amount of equipment and time needed to surmount a 200-foot wall would be out of all proportion to the length of route and therefore makes their use in the Alps impracticable.

One mile east of Malham Cove is Gordale Scar. This unique gorge is the remains of a pot-hole, the roof of which has long since fallen in, except for one small arch which still spans the gorge. The walls offer a few possibilities, but none has yet been attempted. The only thing done is a rope traverse from one wall to the other across the top of the gorge, a passage of great exposure.

Kilnsey, the main crag of the area, might well be called the limestone climber's "Cloggy." Situated about three miles north-west of the village of Threshfield, it overhangs the B6160 which runs through Wharfedale. It is about 200 feet high and is divided into three buttresses by a gully and a huge vertical corner. The only routes attempted have been on the left-hand buttress and none has succeeded in reaching the top. The upper section is defended by a 35-foot block overhang for most of its length and overhanging walls for the remainder. The two attempts on the overhang, one of which I have described, failed because of technical difficulty. The third attempt to the right of the overhang was abandoned because of the dangerous condition of the upper part. The central buttress is vertical and appears to be rather loose but the right-hand corner should make a fine route with a fair amount of free climbing. The right-hand buttress is an amazing 40° overhanging wall of peculiar fused rock. No cracks or lines of weakness are apparent until the angle relents at about 70 feet.

I give no detailed account of artificial methods of climbing because there is already a large selection of literature available. But a few points applicable in particular to limestone may have escaped general notice.

The harder British rock climbs are usually done in gym shoes, but on limestone routes boots are advisable because of the strain imposed on the feet by long periods of standing in étriers. The étriers themselves should have knots below the rungs only, so that they are free to slide upwards. This enables the climber to squat on one foot in his étrier with his bent leg in the space provided by the movable rungs, a very useful resting position.

All types of pitons are used from time to time, but the most useful are channel and short, thick, duralumin pegs, which will hold with as little as a quarter of an inch "biting" the rock.

While climbing overhanging rock a man dislodges a constant shower of minute pieces which eventually cover him with a white powder. A hat will be found very useful for keeping this limestone dust out of the hair and will also go a little way towards keeping larger blocks, which may fall, out of the head!

When bad weather curtails normal climbing, limestone is hardly affected; the overhanging faces remain dry in heavy rain or snow. Winter is, in fact, the best period for limestone because the crags are all situated in beauty spots and tend to be very congested with tourists in the summer months. The routes are all of a strenuous nature and the climber is kept warm by his struggles. The only sufferer is the second who is frequently called upon to manipulate ropes in atrocious weather.

All crags, villages and place names I have mentioned are clearly marked on the 1 in. Ordnance Survey maps. There is much scope for new routes on the crags already visited and there are many yet to be discovered, particularly in Yorkshire. Limestone climbers are still comparatively few and those who visit these crags can at least be sure of not having to queue to sample the delights of this new and fascinating aspect of the sport.

(Further photographs illustrative of these climbs will be found in the *Alpine Journal*, Vol. LX, No. 290 (May, 1955), facing pages 41, 44, 45.—*Editor*.)

# NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

## I. SNOWDONIA

JOHN NEILL

### GENERAL

In contrast to last year, 1955 has been marked by one of the finest summers for some time. While most of us were sitting in huts and tents in the Alps watching the snow-line come ever lower, those who were wise enough to stay at home enjoyed a long period of perfect climbing conditions. As a result most of the harder traditional climbs in the Llanberis valley and on Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu have received heavy traffic, as have Ogof Direct (Cwm Silyn) and Mur-y-Niwl (Craig-yr-Ysfa), and many of the routes pioneered by J. Brown and other members of the Rock and Ice Club have been repeated by leaders from the Climbers' and other clubs. I have heard of ascents by such leaders of the following climbs :

Clogwyn-y-Grochan : Hangover, the Sickie, Surplomb, N'Gombo.

Dinas-y-Gromlech : Cemetery Gate, Cobweb Crack, Jericho Wall.

Carreg Wastad : Erosion Groove.

Craig Ddu : Black Wall.

Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu : The Corner, East Gully Grooves, East Gully Wall. (None of Brown's major routes on this crag has, however, yet been repeated by C.C. parties.)

Leaders, and those sharing the lead, on the above ascents were H. I. Banner, P. H. Biven, C. J. S. Bonnington, D. C. Bull, R. R. E. Chorley, R. O. Downes, G. J. Streetly and J. M. Turner, all members of the Climbers' Club, A. Stead (Wallasey M.C.) and G. G. Francis. D. T. Roscoe, who has taken part, often as leader, in many of the first ascents made by Rock and Ice Club parties, was of course recently elected to Climbers' Club membership.

Second and third ascents of Suicide Wall, by Rock and Ice Club leaders, should be recorded. Streetly was present on the third ascent, and led the second ascent of Suicide Groove. Red Slab has been repeated by several Rock and Ice parties.

New routes of major importance in the central area become ever fewer, and most new routes made there have been of lesser significance. This year's crop has mostly been gathered on outlying crags, such as Tremadoc Rocks and the Rivals.

At Tremadoc an important development is that Capt. Livingstone-Learmonth, owner of Tan-yr-Allt, has decided to hand over control of a large section of his property, including Craig Bwlch-y-Moch and Craig Pant-Ifan, to the Nature Conservancy to constitute a nature

reserve. Negotiations are at present going on between Capt. Livingstone-Learmonth, the Nature Conservancy and the Birmingham Cave and Crag Club (as tenants of Pant Ifan) to agree on conditions under which climbing will be allowed. It is likely that this will be under the control of the Cave and Crag Club and will be restricted to some extent as to both routes of access and possible new routes. In the meantime it is desirable to avoid excessive gardening activities or indiscriminate wandering in the woods.

Outside Wales a major event has been the first ascent of the Old Man of Storr, in Skye, by a party including G. J. Sutton. Climbers' Club parties have been looking at this pinnacle for many years.

To save space the convention is adopted in these notes of indicating sharing of leads by insertion of the word "and" instead of a comma, between the names of members of a party. In some cases the numerical system for grading artificial pitches has been used ; since these have become commoner in Welsh climbing it has become impossible to avoid this system.

## A. TRYFAN AND GLYDER FACH

### GALLT-YR-OGOF

NETTS. About 250 feet. Difficult.

On the rocky hillside east of Skyline Buttress. A pleasant enough climb, giving variations on one slab theme. One of the easiest climbs on the cliff.

Start : About 100 feet left of a tree near the right-hand edge of the rocks, below a groove cutting the bulge at 40 feet.

(1) 90 feet. Climb up a few feet left of the lower continuation of the groove, then step over into it. Go up to the bulge then climb over it to a ledge on the right. Keep on bearing slightly right to a heather ledge. Small spike belay on the left.

(2) 90 feet. Continue straight up over a loose angular boulder. After about 30 feet trend slightly right to gain a smooth easy-angled slab running up to an overhanging wall. From the middle of the slab move left delicately and finish up to another heather ledge (minute belay). Walk 50 feet left to a belay above a tree and below a white groove.

(3) 20 feet. The ridge on the right of the groove.

(4) 100 feet. Go up above the belay for a few feet, then move to the left edge. Follow this, though close to easy ground, but finish up the steep edge of the final block. Another 40 feet of grass to a belay.

First ascent : 19th March, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, Miss P. D. Chapman.

### GLYDER FACH—MAIN CLIFF

LOWER DOLMEN RIB. 70 feet. Difficult.

A useful prelude to Dolmen Buttress. Its combination with one of the Buttress routes and the continuation ridge and tower gives quite a long climb of easy standard. About 80 feet below the toe of the Buttress

a rib of rock extends from the left (east) side of West Gully. The route follows the next rib to the left. Cairn at the foot.

(1) 25 feet. Climb the rib by its right-hand corner to a ledge and belay.

(2) 45 feet. Traverse the rib to its left-hand corner and climb this, finishing up the crest where the rib narrows at the top. 20 feet ahead is the start of Dolmen Buttress.

First ascent : 8th April, 1955. J. W. B. Barnes, D. Clutterbuck.

#### CASTELL-Y-GWYNT

HARD FROST. 310 feet. Difficult.

Just left of Frost's Climb is a large slab, Crab Slab (given incorrectly as Brab Slab in C.C.J. 1950), and to the left again is the main north buttress of Castell-y-Gwynt, which starts lower down. The route follows a line of weakness at the right-hand edge of this solid buttress, tailing off into broken ground higher up. The upper pitches are interesting but easily avoidable.

Start : At the extreme bottom of the buttress, at the right edge or centre of a steep little wall.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the wall to a grassy ledge (belay at right-hand edge).

(2) 80 feet. Climb a short wall, go right for 15 feet then up steep slabs, gaining the arête on the left as soon as possible (small stance and belay). A more direct line may be taken (Very Difficult—Severe).

(3) 60 feet. Go up to a large grassy platform and climb the left edge of the slab, airy, to a large belay on the crest just below the next ledge.

(4) 70 feet. Go right for 20 feet to a steep corner, tricky. Cross a wide ledge, where the main buttress becomes broken, and follow a crack from right to left up the main block ahead. Walk on for belay.

(5) 50 feet. Go 3 yards left and climb a steep wall on large holds to a belay below the final chimney facing west.

(6) 20 feet. The chimney, with an overhanging chockstone, gives an interesting finish.

First ascent : 2nd August, 1955. P. M. Hutchinson, P. R. Williams.

NOTE.—Much climbing was done around this cwm, mostly new at the time, by military parties during the Second World War. No details are available, but it is at least possible that Crab Slab and Hard Frost are not entirely novel.

#### B. GLYDER FAWR AND IDWAL

##### GRIBIN FACET

LLYN. 100 feet. Severe (hard).

On the east wing, left of the Slab Routes.

Start : At the first obvious break left of the Slab, leading to a steep V-chimney.

(1) 30 feet. An easy upward traverse to the right leading to a vegetated crack, which is climbed by bridging on good holds, to a chockstone belay in the corner above.

(2) 40 feet. Layback up until a step can be made onto the rib on the right, from which the chimney can be reached by an awkward step. Go up the chimney on good holds to a rowan tree (belay).

(3) 30 feet. Traverse left onto a rib and up this on good holds to a stance on Slab Route.

First ascent: 28th July, 1955. D. Llewellyn, R. James, D. Fildes. Perhaps not new.

### C. CARNEDDAU

#### LLECH DU

#### HUMOUR—LAUGHING FINISH

Instead of traversing right with pitch 4 of Humour original route, go straight up above the belay for 20 feet to the top of the pinnacle. Step off the pinnacle on to the steep wall above; after two moves the angle eases and the climb finishes in another 30—40 feet. Probably easier than the original, but more direct.

First ascent: 10th July, 1955. E. A. Wrangham, A. Alvarez, D. C. Bull.

#### CRAIG-YR-YSFA

DOVER ROAD. About 150 feet. Very Severe + A2.

On the left (south) wall of the Amphitheatre, up the centre of the first large wall on this side of the gully, perhaps 200 feet below and across from Mur-y-Niwl. The wall is easily identified by the pronounced overhang with a deeply cut groove below. Largely artificial climbing, with a pleasing variety of technique.

(1) A sloping grass ledge leads to a short chimney choked with blocks. Stance on top of the blocks (thread or piton belay).

(2) The deep groove above. Start up the crack on the right-hand side, then across to the left and up to the toit. The next 10 feet are the crux. Traverse out to the left corner of the toit and go up until a delicate move can be made onto the small ledge above the overhangs. A good situation and interesting climbing, well protected. Follow the ledge up to the right to a pleasant stance above the right hand corner of the toit (piton belay).

(3) Step back left and climb the groove above, which leads to a large ledge and excellent belay on Amphitheatre Buttress.

First ascent: 26th November, 1955. T. D. Bourdillon, M. P. Ward. LIMAX. 330 feet. Very Difficult.

On the end of the Lower Amphitheatre Wall facing Cwm Eigiau. The Wall ends downhill in a steep "nose," after which it turns to face the cwm, and is separated by a vegetated area from the rocks of the main Great Buttress beyond. Near the top of the area is an aged tree, just below the "gully" into which it leads. The route approaches the steep end of the Wall, then avoids this issue by turning right across vegetation to finish up the gully above the tree. Much vegetation, steep and nasty.

Start: 30—40 yards below Mur-y-Niwl, where there is a grass-crowned pillar below the nose at the end of the wall.

(1) 40 feet. Go by the rocks left of the right-hand crack behind the pillar to its top, then traverse to the crack left of the pillar and climb this, with two awkward moves.

(2) 80 feet. Traverse down right on grass under the wall and up the corner beyond. Up on the right is another grass-crowned pillar. Reach a block belay on the right-hand skyline about 30 feet below the top of this, by various lines involving a series of mantelshelves.

(3) 80 feet. Traverse right over awkward vegetation to the vegetated area; the aged tree is not far away. Then go up a sort of gully of vegetation to a grass platform below the steep main wall.

(4) 80 feet. Ascend the crack slanting up on the right onto grass, and climb the steep grassy gully above, awkward, to a cave.

(5) 50 feet. Work up onto the jammed blocks forming the cave, then, to get some rock, climb the rib left of the gully.

Ascended 2nd July, 1955. M. J. Harris, J. Neill. This area of the crag has been visited before, during the work on the Carneddau guide-book.

#### CRAIG LLOER

CENTRAL RIDGE. 230 feet. Severe.

On the Western Buttress, the stepped ridge on the left of Grooved Ridge. A natural route. In its lower parts the ridge curves downwards slightly to the left and reaches the bottom of the crag among some large blocks on the left of a steep wall. The steep V-groove of pitch 6 and the grassy ledge below it can be seen from the bottom. Pitches 5 and 6 are hardest, but well protected.

Start: About halfway between the starts of the original route and Grooved Ridge, at a break between the steep lower rock faces about 50 paces right of the start of the original route.

(1) 25 feet. Scramble over the blocks to the foot of a 10-foot crack in a steep V-groove.

(2) 35 feet. Ascend the crack, awkward, and step right onto the ridge which leads to a terrace below the first step.

(3) 35 feet. Climb for 10 feet the V-groove left of the ridge proper, then step right into a crack which leads back to the edge. Go straight up a wall on good holds to a ledge with large belays below the final step.

(4) 35 feet. Climb the edge of the ridge for 20 feet then traverse left along a ledge and go up right to a small sitting stance astride the ridge, facing in, below a small overhanging block (large flake belay).

(5) 15 feet. Traverse delicately left into a crack to avoid the block. Leave the crack and traverse up and right into the grassy corner below the final V-groove (belay on right).

(6) 25 feet. Climb the V-groove, hard to enter, and traverse out of it to the left near the top to reach the top of the last step.

(7) 60 feet. Pleasant scrambling at an easier angle up bubbly rocks to the top.

Ascended 3rd August, 1953. I. Clayton and B. Cooke. Lines roughly corresponding to this have been taken several times before, for



example during the work on the Carneddau guide-book, but not recorded.

#### CRAIG BRAICH TY-DU

DECAMERON RIB. 210 feet. Very Severe.

About a third of a mile down the valley from Ogwen (on E. Buttress ?) is a prominent corner capped by a large overhang. The route takes the rib to the left of the grass-filled crack. The rock is clean and good except for a short vegetated stretch, and there is a continual sense of exposure. Cairn at start.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the crack splitting the rib, to a small tree. Move left to another tree, then go straight up the crack again to a belay on the corner left of the large overhang.

(2) 110 feet. Traverse delicately right under the overhang, then make a very exposed step round the corner onto a tree below a bottomless chimney. Climb the chimney past a doubtful block. Continue the line of the crack up through trees and vegetation. Once clear of these make a hard move into a crack on the right. Follow the crack for about 15 feet, then make a gingerly escape to the left by a large flake. Take a steep slab to a belay.

(3) 20 feet. Go left, then easily straight up to the prominent pinnacle. Move left to finish.

First ascent : 15th September, 1955. S. M. Lane, F. A. Boydell.

An ascent of a flake and chimney, from the scree on the right of H. Buttress, on 29th July, 1955, is recorded by someone with undecipherable initials.

#### D. LLANBERIS

I am indebted to D. Belshaw of the Rock and Ice Club for supplying information for this section.

#### CLOGWYN-Y-GROCHAN

N'GOMBO. 170 feet. Very Severe (hard).

The route takes a diagonal line from right to left up the steep wall between Central Gully and Ochre Grooves.

Start : Just to the right of Central Gully.

(1) 50 feet. Climb a short corner and the vegetated groove above until it is possible to traverse right to a stance and belay below pitch 2 of Ochre Grooves. This is probably an alternative start to Long Tree Gate.

(2) 120 feet. Go up the groove for 6 feet then traverse left and climb the arête onto a ledge. Traverse left and continue up the overhanging groove to another ledge. Make a rising traverse to the left behind some dangerous-looking blocks, to a good resting place. Step up the blocks to the left and go up the arête to the overhang. Traverse right for a few feet then climb direct to the top.

First ascent : 22nd July, 1955. J. Brown, D. Whillans.

## OCHRE GROOVES

A. J. J. Moulam's party have traversed right at the top of pitch 1 of this to join the crack of Long Tree Gate. They continued by a route between the upper pitches of Ochre Grooves and Long Tree Gate, which has not been recorded before.

## CARREG WASTAD

## PHANTOM RIB

A direct finish is recorded by P. H. Biven and H. T. M. Peck, on 29th May, 1955. No details.

## TRILON

A variation to pitch 2, possibly new, about Mild Severe, is recorded. It gives pleasant climbing in a fine position, and is perhaps a better way to the crux.

70 feet. Traverse right for a few feet, then go up the wall and through the tree branches (the pitch can be split here by using a belay on the right). Move left onto the edge of the rib, and up this on good holds until a shallow groove leads slightly right to the stance and belay 10 feet below the first piton.

Ascended 24th August, 1955, by J. H. R. Lee, R. Inglesby.

The grassy crack tending right from the bottom edge was also done, but is not recommended.

## EROSION GROOVE—DIRECT FINISH. 65 feet.

Harder than anything on the original route.

From the stance at the top of pitch 2, step right then go straight up the groove.

First ascent : 17th August, 1955. D. Whillans, J. Brown.

## CARREG WASTAD FACH

This is the yellow crag left of the gully used as an easy way down from Carreg Wastad.

## THE QUESTION MARK. 160 feet. Very Severe.

Start : From the large grass ledge at the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Straight up the rib on good holds to a large stance and belays.

(2) 50 feet. Traverse horizontally right on small sloping ledges, keeping under the overhangs, to a stance and spike belay (piton used for protection on the traverse).

(3) 35 feet. Crux. Step right onto the slab and go up on small holds around the overhang to large detached blocks (poor belay).

(4) 45 feet. Continue up for 10 feet then step back left to continue on a similar slab with a short overhang. Finish up a heathery rib.

First ascent : 28th May, 1955. P. H. Biven, H. T. M. Peck.

## DINAS-Y-GROMLECH

## PARCHMENT PASSAGE

The following variation start has been recorded : Go up the crack 10 feet right of the ordinary start, to the tree ; go up the wall above for 10 feet then traverse left to the normal route.

7th November, 1954. A. Lylton, D. Tidmarsh, C. P. Roberts, M. I. Reeve.

#### PHARAOH'S WALL AND NOAH'S WARNING

It appears that practically all of Noah's Warning had been ascended before J. Brown's ascent, as a series of variations on Pharaoh's Wall. On 26th March, 1946, M. G. Hughes and party ascended pitch 2 as a direct finish to Pharaoh's Wall, returning to the top of the latter from the large ledge. Pitch 1 was later ascended by R. E. Meyer, if indeed it had not been done by Hughes. Pitches 2 and 3 were ascended by J. S. Huddart and G. C. Band on 16th June, 1950; this party finished by returning to the line of the crack of pitch 3 and ascending direct to the top—a way preferable to Brown's finish. Bonnington and Francis (20th July, 1954) repeated Huddart and Band's line, except that they did not go out to the right for a stance and belay at the top of the crack of pitch 3, but led right through to the top. Thus neither Brown's ascent of Noah's Warning (except for the exit, which seems inferior to the direct exit), nor Bonnington's direct exit, were really new.

This history illustrates one aspect of the situation which has developed on the Three Cliffs that so many variations have now been made that many routes are losing their separate identity. It seems necessary either to call a halt to this process or to abandon detailed guide-books and the description of separate routes.

#### CRAIG DDU

It is regretted that it has not been possible so far to persuade Brown and Whillans to name the climbs described below, or others on Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu.

(A) 215 feet. Very Severe.

Start: As for Black Wall.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the crack on the right-hand side of the pinnacle to a stance and belay.

(2) 55 feet. Step off the pinnacle and climb the short overhanging crack to the right. Continue up the arête above for 15 feet then traverse right to a good tree belay.

(3) 50 feet. Go up the steep crack behind the tree. Continue up the groove to an overhang. Surmount this then traverse left and climb a short wall to a stance and belay below an overhanging crack.

(4) 65 feet. Climb the crack above and continue direct to the top.

First ascent: 17th July, 1955. J. Brown and D. Whillans.

(B) 110 feet. Very Severe.

Takes a direct line up the steep yellow wall to the right of Anthropology.

Start: Climb up by easy ledges to a large block belay.

(1) 110 feet. Climb the shallow groove above the large block to an overhang, and traverse right to a ledge at the foot of a clean-cut groove. Go up this and the wall above.

First ascent: 17th July, 1955. J. Brown, D. Whillans.

## DINAS MOT

TROGLODYTE WALL. 295 feet. Just Very Severe.

On the East Wing.

First ascent : 5th May, 1955. R. Moseley, D. T. Roscoe.

See the appendix in the 1955 reprint of the Llanberis guide-book.

CROSSTIE. 250 feet. Mild Very Severe.

Start : As West Rib.

(1) 60 feet. Starting up West Rib trend left to the stance after pitch 2, Diagonal Route.

(2) 90 feet. Follow Diagonal Route to the slot level with and about 3 feet left of the large overhang. Instead of traversing right, step up and traverse left to reach a point half way up the long groove of Nose Direct. Follow this to a stance on the Girdle Traverse.

(3) 40 feet. Take the variation of Nose Direct up the corner left of the "hand traverse," to a ledge 7 feet below the foot of the final cracks of Nose Direct.

(4) 60 feet. Pleasing mantelshelves lead up the slab on the left until the corner crack is reached. This leads to the narrow ledge below the final mantelshelf of the Cracks. Finish up this.

First ascent : 1st October, 1955. H. I. Banner, P. H. Hill.

DOLERITE DUMP—DIRECT START. Severe.

Twenty feet after pitch 1 climb the short overhanging crack, then go up to join pitch 3. Very loose chockstones ; probably not worthwhile.

First ascent : August, 1955. A. D. Baker, A. W. Killingback.

## DINAS BACH

SLANTING BUTTRESS. 140 feet. Very Difficult (pitches 3 and 4 Very Severe).

Up the vegetated buttress which slopes diagonally, left of the slab on the West Wing. Interesting but artificial.

Start : From the foot of the buttress scramble over loose blocks to a grass platform.

(1) 20 feet. Up easily over loose rock and heather to a large block.

(2) 20 feet. Go left to a light-coloured slab, leading to trees.

(3) 35 feet. Climb, with difficulty, the undercut chimney on the right to a bilberry ledge. Piton used for direct aid and protection.

(4) 45 feet. Go left over blocks to a layback crack leading to a large ledge and pinnacle belay.

(5) 20 feet. Up the rib to the top.

First ascent : 3rd August, 1955. A. D. Baker, A. W. Killingback.

## CRAIG CWM BEUDY MAWR

MORTUARY SLAB. 380 feet. Very Severe.

Slightly right of Phoenix Buttress and considerably harder.

Start : At a cairn some 100 feet left of Dodo Gully, marking the site of the accident to T. Bowen.

(1) 120 feet. Climb the overhanging groove to the left of the cairn, pulling out on loose blocks. Make a long easy traverse to the right

over slabs to a heathery ledge and large belay. Or (original start) climb the heathery chimney above and to the right of the cairn.

(2) 100 feet. Climb the steep yellowish slab above to a small ledge at 40 feet. Make an awkward step down under the bulge on the right (piton) and a semi-hand traverse to a tiny ledge on the slab ; exposed. Climb the short overhanging chimney above to a large stance (no good belays).

(3) 100 feet. Climb the slab above, bearing away from the gully, until it is possible to break out onto an arête.

(4) 60 feet. Traverse left up a gangway overlooking a slabby groove, then go back to the arête and easily to the top.

First ascent : 5th August, 1955. A. W. Killingback, A. D. Baker.

**BURNT OUT BUTTRESS.** 185 feet. Very Difficult.

An interesting exercise on poor rock and steep grass.

Start : At the lowest point of a broken-looking buttress left of an unpleasant-looking gully some way up the scree from Ashes Route.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the short steep wall at the foot with curious white markings, to heather and a steep chimney.

(2) 35 feet. Climb the chimney to heather and a spike belay. Loose and interesting.

(3) 70 feet. Move right behind a large pinnacle and go up until it is possible to traverse out over the gully. Climb into the bed of the gully on very doubtful rock, and pull up to grass over detached spikes ; or traverse right into the other branch of the gully, over steep grass (both are exposed). Easily up the gully to grassy stance.

(4) 50 feet. Pleasant slabs.

First ascent : 10th August, 1955. A. W. Killingback and A. D. Baker.

**CLINKER.** 160 feet. Severe (hard).

Much farther up the scree from Burnt Out Buttress is a large, rounded pinnacle (best seen from left of crag). About 80 feet left of this is a light coloured slab, surmounted by a grass rake and a reddish, subsidiary slab.

Start : In the middle of the slab.

(1) 35 feet. Climb the slab bearing left until a corner chimney leads to a grass ledge. Or go directly up the slab.

(2) 45 feet. Traverse right over a little slab into a corner crack forming a pinnacle. Climb this to a stance and belay on the pinnacle.

(3) 80 feet. Traverse right over easy slabs, round a corner and up a difficult crack.

First ascent : 10th August, 1955. A. D. Baker, A. W. Killingback.

**CRAIG FACH**

This is a small clean-cut crag to the left of and higher up than Dinas Bach, just to the left of the stream in Cwm Beudy Mawr, and immediately above the track from Pen-y-Pass to Cwm Glas. The main distinguishing feature of the crag is the large "hanging flake."

The following short routes have been described on this crag, which has almost certainly been climbed on previously. They are listed from left to right.

**RUDDY GROOVE.** 45 feet. Difficult. 10th August 1955. A. W. Killingback, A. D. Baker.

**PRELIMINARY GROOVE.** 45 feet. Severe. 10th August, 1955. A. D. Baker, A. W. Killingback.

**STAIRCASE GROOVE.** 80 feet. Very Difficult. 3rd January, 1955. A. W. Killingback, B. Summers.

Goes up to the left of the Hanging Flake. Also a variation, 4th August, 1955. A. D. Baker, A. W. Killingback.

**THE GANGWAY.** 90 feet. Very Difficult. July, 1955. A. W. Killingback.

Takes a diagonal line under the Hanging Flake to join Staircase Groove.

**HANGING FLAKE ROUTE.** 100 feet. Very Severe. 24th December, 1955. A. W. Killingback.

Takes a line immediately right of the Flake itself. Some mechanical aid used.

**MUR-Y-FFESTWR.** 110 feet. Severe. 10th August, 1955. A. D. Baker and A. W. Killingback.

#### CRAIG-Y-RHAEADR

The following routes are given in the appendix to the Llanberis guide-book :

**VERGLAS SLAB.** 245 feet. Just Very Severe.

First ascent : 19th March, 1955. D. T. Roscoe, T. Waghorn.

**BOTANY SLAB.** 290 feet. Just Very Severe.

First ascent : 19th March 1955. R. Moseley, Miss D. E. Shortall.

**GROOVED SLAB.** 335 feet. Severe.

First ascent : 19th March, 1955. D. T. Roscoe and T. Waghorn.

On 10th June, 1953, P. F. Holmes took a line just above and to the left of Cwm Glas Pinnacle, working diagonally right, a good route, exposed, on good rock. About 120—150 feet. Perhaps Hard Very Difficult.

#### CYRN LAS FACH

The following routes are given in the appendix to the Llanberis guide-book :

**OCHRE BUTTRESS.** 275 feet. Just Severe.

**ASPHODEL.** 275 feet. Severe.

First ascents of both climbs : 7th May, 1954. G. W. S. Pigott, K. K. Hartley, M. Hartley.

#### CWM GLAS FACET

In addition to Inoculation Wall the following routes have been made on this crag :

FOXGLOVE. 135 feet. Severe.

First ascent: 10th July, 1949. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam, J. Walmsley.

THE BAND OF HOPE. About 250 feet. Hard Difficult—Very Difficult.

First ascent: 10th November, 1951. A. J. J. Moulam, A. Francis.

DOLDRUM. 300 feet. Very Difficult.

First ascent: 26th June, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, Miss P. D. Chapman.

Details of all these will be found in the logbook at Cwm Glas Mawr Cottage. A subterranean flake and chimney climb, with variations, in the upper part of the crag has not been recorded before but has received traffic for 5 or 6 years.

#### CLOGWYN PEN-LLECHEN

LICHEN ARETE. 120 feet. Very Difficult.

A somewhat artificial route on the extreme right of the east face, up mossy slabs, heather, a short wall and a grooved arête.

First ascent: 11th August, 1955. A. W. Killingback and A. D. Baker.

#### CLOGWYN-DU'R-ARDDU

A ROUTE on West Buttress. 450 feet. Extremely Severe.

Start: At a fairly large spike of rock on the Western Terrace, underneath the overhang just left of Red Slab, where the overhang is smallest.

(1) 120 feet. Climb the overhang, moving leftwards from the pinnacle, onto a small white slab, with the aid of two pitons and étriers. Traverse delicately left to a patch of grass. Continue traversing, again delicately, across the slab on the left making for a grassy rake. Stance and belay half way up the rake.

(2) 180 feet. Climb the grass rake and gain the foot of a large slab. Climb this by the flake crack to the overhang. Cross the slab to the left edge, then climb a small slab to a second overhang. Traverse right underneath it, and pull into a groove above. Go straight up the groove to a stance and belay.

(3) 150 feet. Scramble up the gully above to the top.

First ascent: 9th July, 1955. D. Whillans, V. Betts.

CAMUS. 360 feet.

On the Far East Buttress. The line of the climb is easily seen from Maen-du'r-Arddu as a deep, slightly curving chimney splitting the buttress left of East Gully. Although it takes a fine natural line and is exposed the climbing is of poor quality and not to be recommended.

Start: In the amphitheatre in East Gully, about 100 feet left of the gully itself, at a small cairn below a grooved wall.

First ascent: 5th June, 1955. G. J. Sutton, Mrs. Sutton.

ANOTHER ROUTE on the Far East Buttress. 310 feet. Extremely Severe.

Takes a large bulging buttress above and to the right of the terrace at the left-hand side of the Far East Buttress similar to the Eastern Terrace.

Start : At the lower right hand side of the bulging buttress.

(1) 120 feet. Climb a smooth overhang into a groove, move up a few feet then traverse left into a similar groove. Go up this, keeping in a direct line, to the foot of a thin crack. Climb the crack and traverse right to a stance and belay on the arête.

(2) 120 feet. The route lies up two grooves, both overhanging, above and to the left. Follow the right-hand one, keeping mainly on the left wall. At 60 feet it is necessary to move out to the left to gain a large flake. From this mantelshelf onto the ledge above, then traverse back into the groove and climb it by a good crack to an awkward stance in a little chimney.

(3) 70 feet. Straight up the groove.

First ascent : 20th August, 1955. D. Whillans, J. Brown.

## E. SNOWDON SOUTH AND WEST

I am indebted to T. J. Baugh of the Cave and Crag Club and D. Penlington and B. Cooke of the Oread M.C. for some of the information used in this section.

### (a) MOEL HEBOG AND PENNANT

#### CRAIG ISALLT

SLAB ROUTE. 250 feet. Hard Very Difficult.

On the left-hand end of the cliff. Starts at the foot of a short slab below a prominent dead tree and goes via the dead tree, another slab, a large field and a slab above it.

First ascent : 24th December, 1955. F. J. Fisher, Miss B. N. Bird, D. Penlington, Miss B. Goodwin.

It is understood that the Oread M.C. have made other climbs on this cliff, with much gardening, and have added a direct finish to Owl from the stance at the top of the field (Very Severe).

#### CRAIG CWM-TRWSGL

A CLIMB on the central part of the cliff. 185 feet. Hard Severe.

Goes up the left-hand sides of the two prominent ribs, just left of the large steep gully.

First ascent : August, 1955. F. J. Fisher, Miss B. N. Bird.

Oread M.C. parties have done other routes here also, apparently including Tu Tin Tut with variations to finish.

#### CRAIG LAS

This crag lies at the top of the large scree on the east side of Y Garnedd Goch. One climb has been described :

220 feet. Hard Very Difficult.



Ascends the buttress on the right of the crag, starting up ribs from near a small indefinite cave.

First ascent : July, 1955. E. C. Webb, J. Adderley.

Two other climbs have been made by Oread M.C. parties on the left-hand part of the crag, of lesser importance.

#### CRAIG-Y-LLAN

This crag rises above the village of Dolbenmaen, and is larger than it looks from the road.

MISTY WALL. 130 feet. Hard Very Difficult.

Starts at the foot of the large left-hand buttress and goes up to the left-hand end of a large heather terrace then up the interesting 70-foot wall above.

First ascent : 1955. B. Cooke, E. C. Webb.

#### (b) GWYNANT AND BEDDGELERT

About 1935 P. L. Roberts made a number of climbs on Clogwyn-y-Wenallt and Craig-y-Llyn. Details have not yet been obtained of these.

#### CLOGWYN-Y-WENALLT.

Only vague details are available so far of climbs made on this cliff, other than Oxo and Shake.

#### WANEY EDGE.

At the right-hand side of the cliff, starting just left of a vegetated area and trees and higher up following the right-hand edge of a large inclined slab and the wall above.

First ascent : May, 1953. G. D. Roberts, W. A. Trench.

#### CAROL. Very Severe.

Takes the crack with a tree near the top, left of the start of Oxo, to the big ledge left of the top of pitch 2 of Oxo, then up left to an enormous vegetated shelf and from there more or less direct to the top.

First ascent : November, 1953. G. D. Roberts, J. Lines.

#### VAUGHAN'S CRACK. Hard. Very Severe.

A variation start to Carol, going direct from the start of Oxo to the big ledge.

First ascent : Early 1954. P. Vaughan.

#### TREASURER'S WALL. Severe.

Another variation start to Carol, going from the gangway above the grass-topped pillar on pitch 1 of Oxo to the large blocks of Vaughan's Crack, and finishing up the crack.

First ascent : 23rd May, 1954. P. Hampson, W. V. Lamb, E. Siddall.

#### Oxo—variations.

From the traverse right on pitch 1 go up left to a stance in a crack with a loose spike. The crack leads to the big ledge at a point near the foot of pitch 3.

From the bushes at the end of pitch 3 step round the corner on the left and traverse 30 feet to large grass ledges, so to the top.

Both these ascended 13th June, 1954. D. McKelvey, S. Wiseman.

BOVRIL. Very Severe.

Starts at a right-angled crack with a tree at the top and has a hard finishing crack. This climb appears to be on the extreme left wing of the crag and to be short and broken into by large ledges.

First ascent: 1st August, 1954. D. McKelvey, S. Wiseman, another.

Another climb has not been identified at all:

ARETE CLIMB. 1st August, 1954. D. McKelvey, L. Rogerson.

#### CRAIG-Y-LLYN

Of the eight routes now existing on this cliff, most are rather broken, vegetated and uninteresting. Honeysuckle Wall (or Jane?) and Aquila, however, are very good climbs and to be recommended strongly.

CALLUNACY. 150 feet. Very Difficult.

Some 50—100 yards left of Honeysuckle Wall an open gully forms the first major break in the cliff (it gives an easy descent). Just right of the gully are intermittent ribs separated by heather areas. The route takes these ribs, which give pleasant rock, but the heather, gorse and thorns are abominable and also make the route very artificial.

Start: At the first rib right of the gully, where a ruined wall runs up to it.

First ascent: 25th September, 1955. D. Thomas, J. Neill, M. J. Harris.

JANE. Severe.

The following description has been given. The route has not been identified but appears to be in the neighbourhood of Honeysuckle Wall.

Starts at the lowest point beneath a large flake to the left of the crag and takes a line more or less directly to the obvious rib above.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the flake, stepping right from the top, and continue diagonally left up the steep rib until a tree behind a flake is reached.

(2) 50 feet. Continue to the right of the tree and up a groove to another tree.

(3) 70 feet. Climb the obvious groove to the left for about 30 feet until it gives out. Continue straight up the wall on small holds, to a grass ledge.

(4) Scramble to the top.

Variation to pitches 3 and 4. 100 feet. Very Severe.

Move left of the belay over large loose blocks and climb the steep wall above on small and sometimes doubtful holds.

Ascended: 24th April, 1955. D. E. Fielding, S. Wiseman.

AQUILA. 260 feet, and 100 feet of scrambling. Very Severe (hard).

This climb only escapes an A grading by virtue of the use of inserted pebbles and slings where pitons and étriers would be more comfortable!

The most prominent feature of the wall of the main left-hand buttress overlooking the big central gully is a very steep section high up over the gully, split down the centre by a crack with two successive square-cut overhangs across it. The route takes the easiest line up this part of the wall, going up on the left to the foot of the steep section, traversing under it and finishing on the right near the gully. An interesting and varied route.

Start : As for North Escape Route.

(1) 65 feet. As pitch 1 of North Escape Route—messy scrambling into the Sanctuary.

(2) 100 feet. A steep corner-groove leads up to the left-hand end of the steepest section of the wall, with on its left a rib. Starting below the corner-groove, step left onto the rib and climb this (hard moves in the lower part) to the upper reaches of the corner-groove. Go up a crack in the left-hand part of this to a block belay below the steep wall, with a stance round left behind it.

(3) 30 feet. Traverse right on grass ledges, awkward to start, under the steep wall, rising a little at the end to a huge block belay overlooking the big central gully.

(4) 30 feet. Crux. Two successive short walls above the block lead, by an awkward landing into a buzzard's deserted nest, to a big ledge just right of the steep face.

(5) 25 feet. The pleasant corner-chimney rising from the back of the ledge, on the left, to another good ledge.

(6) 15 feet. Jam up the crack on the left, or use the looser and more vegetated alternative on the right.

(7) Scrambling up the ridge, as for Honeysuckle Wall.

First ascent : 27th August, 1955. H. I. Banner, J. Neill.

VERTI-VEG. Severe.

On the right of the gully, an obvious corner-crack. Climb 15 feet to a tree. Continue, using the undercut edge, until the jungle appears. Climb for 15 feet on grass jug-handles.

Ascended : 1st June, 1955. D. McKelvey, S. Wiseman, B. Wright, Miss B. Warbrick.

UMBALA

Round on the right of the crag, a square buttress with a block overhang, in the right-hand corner. Climb to an ash and a holly, go up and traverse across the perched block, exciting.

First ascent : 1st June, 1955. A. Cowburn, L. Rogerson.

CRAIG-Y-GELLI (Previously erroneously called Craig Pont-yr-Oer—for Pant-drw-Oer)

POTHOOK. 145 feet. Hard Severe.

Start : At the right-hand end of the main left-hand face, to the right of a woody chimney and about 20 feet from the corner of the crag and foot of the wide gully. Takes a zig-zag line up this part of the face. Not of much merit.

First ascent : 14th May, 1955. G. W. S. Pigott and the Hon. R. R. E. Chorley.

The two vegetated grooves just left of Pothook, on either side of the line of overhangs, were both climbed on 14th May, 1955 by D. H. Briggs and E. W. Dance. Very little climbing.

### (c) TREMADOC ROCKS

Two misprints occurred in the interim guide : the marked photographs were of Craig Bwlch-y-Moch, western part, and Craig Pant-Ifan, eastern half, and not as indicated in the captions.

The interim guide-book did not give much help to those visiting Tremadoc for the first time in choosing worthwhile routes. Perhaps it would be useful to single out one climb in each of some of the grades of difficulty of interest to the average climber. The following climbs are all excellent routes, on clean and good rock throughout, with no vegetation or undergrowth on the pitches.

Hard Very Difficult—Easy Severe : Hound's Head Buttress.

Medium Severe : Creag Dhu Wall.

Just Very Severe : Shadrach.

Hard Very Severe : Helsinki Wall.

There are no major routes of easier standard fitting the above description.

### CRAIG BWLCH-Y-MOCH

OBERON. About 200 feet. Just Severe.

On Belshazzar Buttress, lying mostly to the right of the steep edge of the buttress right of Rienetta. A mixed climb ; the finish is good.

Start : At the foot of a subsidiary slab about 10 yards right of the start of Rienetta, sloping up right under the steep front wall of the buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Diagonally right across the slab to a stance on its right-hand edge.

(2) 70 feet. Move left then follow the edge to an oak-leaf scree. Tree belay at the foot of a deciduous chimney.

(3) 30 feet. Climb the chimney, which seems safe. Can be avoided on the right up more oak-leaf scree.

(4) 65 feet. A fine pitch. Climb the continuation of the chimney for a few feet, then go up directly to a sapling in the wall. A high step left then a somewhat trying move left onto the edge lead to a slab on the front of the buttress and a decaying oak.

(5) 15 feet. The crack above the tree.

First ascent : 20th November, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, J. Neill, J. B. Gass, Miss P. D. Chapman.

The corner directly above the chimney of pitch 3 was also climbed as a variation finish on the same date by Moulam and Neill on a top rope. Very vegetated and unpleasant.

**BELSHAZZAR.**

This is considered to be Extremely Severe. The length is about 250 feet. After pitch 3 there is another pitch, omitted in the description in the interim guide, up the crest of the buttress for about 50 feet, or, harder, along under the crest on the right. The hard finish takes a roughly diagonal line from bottom left to top right. The climb is a fine one in spite of its artificiality.

**BELSHAZZAR GULLY.**

Easy rambling and scrambling ; useful for descent.

Between Belshazzar Gully and Shadrach Buttress are three buttresses deep in the trees, Oakover Buttress, Ivy Buttress and Breeze Buttress, the first two being separated at the top by Blind Gully.

**OAKOVER. 165 feet. Very Severe.**

The main feature of Oakover Buttress is a large area of slab with the buttress crest curving over from the left. Oakover takes the slab, giving two good hard pitches.

Start : In the corner at the left-hand side of the foot of the slab.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the chimney-corner, past a loose block forming part of the left wall, until a little oak is reached ; belay on a little tree above, just left of the corner.

(2) 85 feet. Traverse out right onto the slab and go up awkwardly a little to a poor briar ledge. Go down across the edge and right again, then up to a small grassy corner (difficult). Take the groove round to the right via an oak root to an oak on the right-hand edge of the slab. Up again, with a trend left, to a higher oak.

(3) 40 feet. Scramble to the top.

First ascent : 5th June, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, G. W. S. Pigott.

**KNELL FOR A JACKDAW. 150 feet. Severe.**

Takes the crest of the buttress above the slab of Oakover. The upper section can be avoided by walking up Blind Gully, but the climbing is interesting throughout and the beginning is good.

Start : At a corner-groove just left of the start of Oakover.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the steep corner-groove, with a trend right in the upper part, and layback to finish awkwardly on a dead oak stump which is sounder than one fears.

(2) 30 feet. Step up left into a corner with large blocks and climb to the trees above.

(3) 20 feet. Eschewing Blind Gully, take the buttress edge on the right to a tree below the final wall.

(4) 40 feet. An interesting crack up the wall.

First ascent : 5th June, 1955. G. R. Robson, J. Neill, G. W. S. Pigott.

**GLADE WAY. 165 feet. Just Very Severe.**

On Ivy Buttress, which stands out prominently clear of the trees as a narrow arched ivy-covered ridge. Gains, by a line rather on the right-hand side, a large ledge on the crest of the buttress where it

becomes clear of ivy, and follows the crest to the top. A fine steep starting pitch, but the rest is easier and can be left at many points.

Start: About 25 feet lower than and to the left of Knell for a Jackdaw at the foot of the main face of the buttress, at a steep little corner groove near its right hand side where there is a clearing upwards through the ivy.

(1) 85 feet. The corner-groove leads to a high step right. Climb past an unstable block in the groove above to a little ledge, then work out, up and left awkwardly to the prominent ledge on the crest (belays high up).

(2) 30 feet. The slabs above.

(3) 50 feet. The ridge to the top.

First ascent: 5th June, 1955. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam, G. R. Robson, J. Neill.

**BREEZE BUTTRESS.** 130 feet. Just Very Difficult.

Up the right-hand face of the buttress. Much vegetation.

Start: Penetrate the vegetation to where this steepens, with a little rock groove, and a hawthorn on the left.

(1) 15 feet. Go up the groove and move left over vegetation to a large tree.

(2) 15 feet. Go right along a gangway under the impending wall to another large tree.

(3) 40 feet. Climb the crack on the left behind a detached pinnacle, to and up slabs, and through various trees to a large tree on a ledge below a steep groove.

(4) 60 feet. Climb the groove on the right (interesting, straightforward, though dubious), past a tree, finishing in a fine position.

First ascent: 27th December, 1955. J. H. Longland, A. J. J. Moulam.

**NIFL-HEIM.** 210 feet. Very Severe.

Takes a direct line up the steep right wing of Shadrach Buttress to about one-third height, whence a left-hand traverse and a 40-foot ascent lead to the oak tree of Yggdrasil (Note: This, not the version given in the interim guide, is the correct spelling). A much better start to Yggdrasil than the original way.

Start: The photograph in the interim guide shows two V-grooves directly below the finish of Yggdrasil. The left-hand one is smooth and difficult. The right-hand one is vegetated at about 25 feet; this is the start.

(1) 30 feet. The groove, awkward to start, to a tree.

(2) 20 feet. The groove above is capped by an overhang, so cross the left-hand wall to a good ledge. Traverse on under the overhang, arriving at an oak tree on a slabby rake.

(3) 90 feet. As the continuation of the rake is broken by overhangs and is loose, ascend an overhang then traverse left by an oak branch to the main tree (two pitons used for protection). Ascend direct to the foot of pitch 2 of Yggdrasil.

$\left. \begin{matrix} (4) \\ (5) \end{matrix} \right\}$  70 feet. The two final pitches of Yggdrasil.

First ascent: 27th September, 1955. H. I. Banner, Miss E. M. Baldwin.

STRANGEWAYS. 130 feet. Very Severe.

On the left-hand end of Hogmanay Buttress. Difficult to reach and leave because of the thick brambles.

Start: At an oak tree on the left-hand side of the left-hand arête of the buttress.

(1) 40 feet. Traverse diagonally right to the prominent pinnacle on the arête and cross the groove beyond to a stance and awkwardly situated belays.

(2) 60 feet. Climb the slab above the overhang, difficult, and move over the perched blocks above into the bramble-filled gully. Move up this to a good ledge.

(3) 30 feet. Up the easy corner to the summit.

First ascent: 28th December, 1955. H. Drasdo, H. Smith.

Direct start:

(1) 50 feet. From the foot of the arête, reached with great difficulty through the brambles, ascend more or less direct to a stance in a gap in the arête. Much vegetation.

(2) 40 feet. Continue up, trending left, to join pitch 1 of the ordinary route near the pinnacle.

First ascent: 28th March, 1954. M. J. Harris, J. Neill. (This party retreated from near the point of junction with the ordinary route because of fears about the stability of the whole upper part of the cliff here.)

LUCRETIA. 285 feet. Severe + A2.

On Avalanche Buttress. Reaches the cracked slab in the centre by an artificial traverse from the left. An interesting route.

Start: At the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 70 feet. Up the slabs bearing slightly right then left.

(2) 40 feet. Move left then up to a ledge below a long heather-filled corner (piton belay).

(3) 45 feet. Traverse 25 feet onto the slab and across to a small tree in the crack (three pitons and one étrier used on the traverse). Climb the crack for 20 feet to a boulder stance.

(4) 130 feet. Continue straight up by short walls and an ivy-covered arête.

First ascent: 6th February, 1955. The Hon. R. R. E. Chorley, M. J. Harris, D. C. Bull.

Variation start:

80 feet. From the left-hand end of the foot of the buttress take a slanting line up right over poor rock and vegetation to join the ordinary start. The latter is pleasanter. 8th October, 1955. J. Neill.

Variation to pitch 3 (Very Severe):

Climb the heather-filled corner for about 30 feet then traverse across the slab into the corner on the right. Large overhangs prevent a direct exit, but with one piton in a crack running out to the right a pull-up onto the front of the buttress can be made, reaching the easy ground after pitch 3 almost immediately.

First ascent : 28th December, 1955. H. Smith, S. G. Moore.

Two new finishes to Poor Man's Peuterey have been made :

STRAPIOMBO. About 200 feet. Hard Severe.

Impressive and strenuous. Takes the overhanging chimney above the lower parts of Poor Man's Peuterey.

- (1) 55 feet. } As for Poor Man's Peuterey.
- (2) 40 feet. }
- (3) 50 feet. Continue straight up through vegetation to a V-chimney, and up this to a tree at the foot of the overhanging chimney.
- (4) 50 feet. Climb the chimney, facing left, then the crack above.

First ascent : 21st May, 1955. D. Whillans, G. J. Sutton.

PEAR TREE VARIATION. Very Severe.

- (1) 55 feet. }
- (2) 40 feet. } As for Strapiombo.
- (3) 50 feet. }
- (4) 40 feet. Descend a little, traverse horizontally left for about 30 feet then go up to a tree on the rib.
- (5) 40 feet. Climb up into a recess on the left and then up the groove in the right-hand corner until a step right onto the arête is possible. Move up to a poor and exposed stance (piton belay).
- (6) Move into the chimney on the left and up this.

First ascent : 25th December, 1955. H. Smith and H. Drasdo, F. Davies.

PORKER'S GULLY. Easy.

This is the tree-filled opening to the left of the Flying Buttress which terminates Peuterey Buttress on the left. Gives an easy descent by a well-worn path.

NOS CALAN RIB. 150 feet. Very Difficult.

On the buttress two to the right of the Hound's Head Pinnacle and a little way left of Porker's Gully, with a sharp arête at its top.

Start : On the right at the lowest point of the buttress, 10 feet left of a detached flake.

- (1) 80 feet. Go up a mossy slab to where the rock steepens, right through a gorse overhang, and up a corner with a gnarled oak in it, to a stance on the crest with an oak-tree.
- (2) 50 feet. Go up the steep nose of the rib, left a move and up the crest to a stance behind a spike.
- (3) 20 feet. Scramble easily along the crest to the top.

First ascent : 31st December, 1955. J. H. Longland, P. Gordon.



**WORKERS' PLAYTIME.** Very Difficult.

It has so far not been possible to identify this route, so the description is given without comment.

Start : About 15—20 feet to the right of the Hound's Head Pinnacle and about 15 feet lower.

(1) 20—30 feet. Ascent 6 feet and traverse left, climbing straight up the wall.

(2) 10 feet. The groove above.

(3) 15 feet. Up the wall and groove to the right of the arête.

(4) 30 feet. Up to a wide sloping ledge, pleasantly exposed, then

(a) slope off right up the obvious slab (Moderate) ;  
or (b) ascend the left-hand side of the arête and traverse upwards to the saddle between the pinnacle and the main cliff (exposed, Very Difficult).

First ascent : 7th May, 1955. W. H. Little, S. Bodsworth, Miss M. Boughton.

**HOUND'S HEAD BUTTRESS—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.** Probably Hard Very Severe.

Of the route described under the above title, only the last pitch is new : a variation finish to the Buttress.

From the stance after pitch 5 of the ordinary Buttress route traverse 20 feet down to a little rocky bay and step round the corner onto a narrow slab, very difficult in the middle section where one has to move onto the arête 5 feet to the right.

Ascended on top rope 17th April, 1955, by some of C. T. Jones, B. Hogan, R. Morgan, R. Yates.

**LIMPOPO.** 150 feet. Very Difficult.

On the left-hand side of Verdant Buttress. Very vegetated ; not advised. Starts 100 feet right of Olympic Slab, in a corner right of a bulging wall, and goes up the corner and by a variety of undergrowth, rockeries, trees and a monolithic crack to join Has-beens' Holiday for the trees of Two-Face Gully.

First ascent : 4th January, 1956. J. H. Longland, H. B. Carslake, P. Gordon, R. E. Kendall.

**HELSINKI WALL.** 140 feet. Hard Very Severe.

A magnificent route in spite of its shortness, steep and very exposed, on clean rock throughout. A fine initial lead and excellent route-finding. Takes the left-hand wall of Two-Face Buttress, left of Olympic Slab.

Start : At the steepening of the gully left of Two-Face Buttress, about 30 yards round from Olympic Slab, on a yellow-coloured greasy slab with a thorn bush at its foot.

(1) 60 feet. Traverse right across the slab to a ledge and up and farther right to a niche. Then break back left on ledges of bad rock to a niche at about 30 feet. Traverse right to a heather-filled crack, hard, and up the arête to the oak-tree half way up pitch 4 of Olympic Slab.

(2) 25 feet. Descend onto the line of pitch 1 to traverse below a small overhang, then step up onto the roof of the big overhang of the wall to reach a turf stance, just past a perched flake.

(3) 55 feet. Climb the slab behind the stance for 15 feet, with aid from a piton on the way to a large clump of heather, then traverse left to small footholds and a small ledge (hard—hand-inserted piton). Then climb a series of cracks to 6 feet from the top, step right and mantelshelf into or round a thorn-bush.

First ascent: 27th September, 1955. J. H. Longland, B. E. H. Maden.

The following route appears to be in the region of Badger's Buttress :  
Very Difficult.

Start: At the foot of the subsidiary rib about 40 yards from the stone wall running up to the foot of the crag.

(1) Easily up the rib to a ledge (belay on tree).

(2) The rib above, on good holds, to a ledge (belay on old oak-tree).

(3) Climb the groove in the corner then traverse left along the steep wall to the left-hand corner, so to the top.

Ascended: 16th April, 1955. S. G. Moore, Miss M. C. Harrison.

UPPER TIER—MARATH. 85 feet. Very Difficult.

Uses the vegetated crack 20 feet to the right of Ivy Crack, finishing up a wall reached by a 5-foot traverse.

First ascent: Between 11th and 27th August, 1955. Party not known.

RAMMER'S ROUTE. 75 feet. Very Severe.

Starting 15 feet to the right of Ivy Crack start, takes the line of least resistance up the cracked wall and so to a grassy ledge, finishing up the wall on the right.

First ascent: 24th September, 1955. G. F. Williams, A. H. Vereker.

CENTRAL ARÊTE.

This was first climbed by D. Thomas and others about 1951, starting by the easy line up the gully left of the now usual start.

QUATRE FOIS. Direct start. Hard Severe.

Takes the thin crack up the lower wall directly below the twin cracks and a few feet right of the trees at the start of Bulging Wall.

First ascent: 10th December, 1955. P. Steele.

CRAIG-Y-CASTELL

This is the crag previously referred to as Craig-y-Dref. I apologise for causing this confusion; my previous usage was based on a conversation with a local poacher who told me that all these crags were known as Craig-y-Dref. However, it seems more logical, and also more convenient, to follow the Ordnance Survey and restrict the name Craig-y-Dref to the slabby face rising above the back gardens of the houses in the main street of the village, using Craig-y-Castell for the crag behind the schoolyard. The Castell itself appears to be the

forward-standing slabby buttress up the front of which Creag Dhu Wall route runs, in the centre of the crag. To the right of this is a big corner, with formidable overhangs above, the right-hand side of the corner being formed by a huge slab sloping up right. To the right of the slab is a steep chimney with very steep rocks to the right again, becoming lower farther on until they end beyond a short vegetated gully. To the left of the Castell is a rectangle of jungle at half height on the cliff, extending horizontally for some way, and bounded on the left by a buttress marked by a short knife-edge arête standing clear of the trees two-thirds of the way up.

WHITTINGTON. 220 feet. Severe.

Starts below the big corner and traverses right at the foot of the face looking for a relatively easy line up it—which is found only at the right-hand end. Some interesting pitches, but much rambling in vegetation also, and artificial in that the traverse line is not far above the ground, from which it could be reached at many points—but only by a painful penetration of the thorny jungle.

Start at the foot of the big corner.

(1) 30 feet. Go 10 feet up the slab then traverse right to a stance before and below the overhang on the right-hand flank.

(2) 20 feet. An interesting descending traverse below the overhang to the grassy corner at the foot of the steep chimney right of the slab. Block belay concealed in vegetation.

(3) 30 feet. Traverse right and climb a short quartz chimney to large blocks on the crest on the right. Or use pitch 3 of Niobe.

(4) 40 feet. Descend the farther side of the blocks and traverse across vegetation to a stance at the farther end of the bay beyond, below the steep face.

(5) 40 feet. Go a few feet up the honeysuckle rake up right, and then the rib on its right to its top. Up the slabs above to the foot of the steep wall.

(6) 60 feet. Go up to the right for 15 feet to near the vegetated gully, and traverse left under the steep part of the face to a small bush below the overhanging chimney formed by the big pillar against the face on the left. Make a strenuous move up to the foot of the chimney then pull up onto the top of the pillar. Easy ground is just above. From here 200—250 feet of rambling and scrambling lead to the top of the crag, but 110 feet more of interesting climbing can be obtained by going 40 feet up and left to reach pitches 6 and 7 of Niobe.

First ascent: 11th June, 1955. J. I. Disley and J. Neill.

NIOBE. 310 feet. Very Severe + A1.

This takes the steep chimney right of the huge slab. Quite a good route.

Start: As Whittington.

(1) 30 feet. } As Whittington, pitches 1 and 2.  
(2) 20 feet. }

(2) 30 feet. Climb the corner and its right flank for 15 feet, then

traverse right to the large blocks after Whittington pitch 3 (or the latter pitch may be climbed).

(4) 80 feet. Traverse back into the corner and ascend it. The lower overhang is made easier by use of an *étrier* (and one piton for protection), and the upper one by a piton for direct aid (and another for protection). Emerge on the left at the top onto easier slabs ; go up these for 25 feet to a large belay by an oak-tree.

(5) 40 feet. Ascend the groove behind the tree, and the edge to the right, to emerge onto easy ground above.

(6) 70 feet. Climb the steep slabs above and slightly left—a pleasant pitch.

(7) 40 feet. A final slab wall.

Then 150—200 feet of rambling and scrambling to the top.

First ascent : 26th June, 1955. G. R. Robson, D. H. Briggs, J. Neill.

TANTALUS. 245 feet. Very Severe.

Takes the big slab to join Niobe at the top.

Start : As Whittington.

(1) 60 feet. Start up near the corner and move out right until one can climb easily up to an overlap. Traverse left and reach a small stance and poor belay (under the overhangs above) by a mantelshelf movement.

(2) 35 feet. Traverse the slab on the right below the large overhang to a grassy crack (crux). Climb the crack and its continuation in a green caterpillar to the oak-tree above pitch 4, Niobe.

(3) 40 feet.  
(4) 70 feet.  
(5) 40 feet. } As Niobe, pitches 5—7.

Then 150—200 feet of easy ground to the top.

First ascent : 3rd July, 1955. H. I. Banner, A. T. Griffith.

Variation to pitches 1 and 2: 110 feet. Instead of going to the stance after pitch (1), climb the grassy crack direct.

Ascended 6th December, 1955. R. O. Downes, A. J. J. Moulam, B. A. Jillott, A.D.M.Cox.

CREAG DHU WALL. 200 feet. Severe.

A very good climb, one of the best at Tremadoc ; no vegetation anywhere on the pitches.

The description given in the interim guide was insufficient to identify the climb. Here is a better one :

The slabby nose of the Castell ends at the bottom in overhangs, with between them and the big corner a prominent dièdre.

Start : In the jungle below a corner between the overhangs and the dièdre.

(1) 20 feet. Scramble up through vegetation to a tree at the foot of the corner.

(2) 40 feet. Up the corner, with two steep sections. Stance on the edge to the right.

(3) 30 feet. Traverse downwards across the slab on the right to the crack beyond (the top of the dièdre) and go up this to a stance before the forest up on the right ; or continue to the forest.

(4) 80 feet. Traverse back left to the edge by a wriggle along a fissure (large men hand-traverse here) then up the steep slabs beyond by delightful climbing. Block belay and stance to the right of the overhang at the top.

(5) 30 feet. An awkward corner-groove up left leads to the top. Then the usual easy ground to the top of the crag.

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

MIMSY. 175 feet. Hard Very Difficult.

Takes the buttress left of the rectangle of jungle. The line described evades the issue at pitches 3 and 4 ; the route awaits straightening out.

Start : Among the trees below the buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Scrambling up vegetated rocks to a grass ledge below a low line of heathery wall (tree belay on the right).

(2) 30 feet. Up the wall, at a weakness on the left, to a vegetated area below the first step of clean rock on the buttress (tree belay on the right of this).

(3) 20 feet. Leaf-scrée up the line of weakness right of the buttress to a tree below a short mossy corner.

(4) 30 feet. Up the corner to a grass area between the knife-edge arête and another ridge of clean rock on the right.

(5) 35 feet. Up the knife-edge arête. A pleasant pitch, with two mantelshelf moves.

(6) 30 feet. Take the final wall above on the left. Then 200 feet of scrambling to the top.

First ascent : 30th January, 1955. G. D. Roberts and J. Neill.

(d) LLEYN PENINSULA

YR EIFL

THRUMS. 430 feet. Severe.

On No. 2 Buttress. An excellent first pitch. The rest is easier, though quite steep, is broken into by grass terraces in the middle and has some scrambling sections ; but pleasant for all that.

The foot of the front face to the left of West Rib has a right-angled recess in the middle with big overhangs to the right.

Start : About half way along the left-hand side of the recess.

(1) 100 feet. Up the steep slabby wall left of the angle of the recess, by mantelshelves and other interesting moves, to a recess high up with a tree. Leave the recess by the crack slanting up left, to reach the top of the buttress on the left.

(2) 80 feet. Two short overhanging walls above can be walked round (if necessary), up left then back right above along a big heather ledge.

(3) 40 feet. Pull up to the right into the foot of a corner with a small tree, then pull up again onto the rock on its left. Continue up ledges, etc. to a grass ledge (poor belays).

(4) 20 feet. Step up round to the left and go up to a big grass ledge running out to the right to the edge of the buttress, with a shallow cave just before the edge.

(5) 30 feet. Climb the vegetated chimney left of the cave then insecure vegetation to easy ground.

(6) 40 feet. Walk up left up grass, etc. to below and left of the Window on West Rib.

(7) 20 feet. Scramble up to block belays below the next short wall.

(8) 40 feet. Cross sloping slabs to the right onto a grassy area below the final wall. The top crack of West Rib is at the top right hand corner of this.

(9) 30 feet. The undercut crack (with a chockstone) about a third of the way along from the left-hand end of the wall.

(10) 20 feet. Easily up left onto easy ground.

Then about 200 feet of walking and scrambling to the top.

First ascent: 22nd May, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, J. Neill, Miss P. D. Chapman, A. Blackshaw.

**AVERNUS.** Direct start. Perhaps Severe in places.

Start: 20 feet right of the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 100 feet. Straight up to an obvious groove. Go up this and bear left to a stance by a small cave (piton belay).

(2) 100 feet. Move right, then up to and over a small overhang. Follow a steep dièdre to the right, then scramble left to a pedestal on the ordinary route.

First ascent: 28th May, 1955. J. M. Turner, J. Davis.

**THE THEFT.** About 800 feet. Severe.

A fairly straight line up No. 5 Buttress, a steep one, possibly as good as Avernus and even more uniformly exposed and directly above the sea. One can go almost anywhere on this buttress at Severe standard.

Takes the groove through the prominent line of overhangs which Avernus turns on pitch 4, near the right-hand end, and then a direct line up the cliff.

Start: At the left-hand end of the lowest rocks.

(1) 60 feet. Up, trending right, onto a rake (start of Avernus?).

(2) 60 feet. Climb the wall from the left-hand end of the rake, then traverse up to the sloping ledge on the right.

(3) 50 feet. Straight up, mostly on steep vegetation, finishing up a nose to the ledge of pitch 3 of Avernus. Pitches 2 and 3 are probably in the general line of Avernus.

(4) 50 feet. Go up the slabby wall for a few feet, step into a subsidiary groove on the right and go up past a large flake to a bluebell ledge below the overhang.

(5) 20 feet. Up across the wall to the right into the groove through the overhangs.

(6) 50 feet. Start up the groove, then move onto an obvious flake on the right. From the top of the flake, in an exposed position, climb the short wall.

(7) 40 feet. Go up the groove left of the rib and swing up left onto a traversing line. Continue left until one can step up, and traverse right until one can enter an overhanging nook fenced with hollies (good seaward exposure ; one piton left).

(8) 60 feet. Go up from the left-hand end of the ledge and traverse up right to the foot of an obvious chimney ; climb this.

(9) 80 feet. Wander up left, on much vegetation, up the slabby ridge to a good belay.

(10) 50 feet. Go up the wall diagonally to the right, finishing on vegetation.

Then about 200—300 feet of easy going over slabs ahead, by the finishes of Avernus and Eifl Tower.

First ascent : 28th May, 1955. G. J. Fraser, A. B. Clegg.

FORSAKEN GARDEN. 555 feet. Severe.

Starts to the left of Eifl Tower and crosses it near the crux to take a more direct line.

Start : At the foot of the buttress about 100 feet left of Eifl Tower start.

(1) 100 feet. Follow the corner, and go up with a trend left. Higher the corner is loose ; move left up a wall and traverse right horizontally to a ledge on the edge of the buttress (poor belay).

(2) 80 feet. Follow the line of weakness leftwards above the overhang, and take the steep wall on good holds to a briar ledge (poor belay).

(3) 75 feet. Go right for 10 feet then straight up to belays below the Fox's Ledge (at top of pitch 2, Eifl Tower).

(4) 50 feet. Scramble up to the rock above.

(5) 35 feet. Take the chimney in the tower to the right of the corner of pitch 4, Eifl Tower, keeping to the left wall. Poor belays in the corner.

(6) 45 feet. Traverse right for 10 feet and go up the edge of the buttress.

(7) 50 feet. Scramble leftwards to the top rib of Eifl Tower.

(8) and (9) 120 feet. As Eifl Tower pitch 7.

First ascent : 28th May, 1955. G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam.

#### CARREG-Y-LLAM

The next headland to the south-west of Yr Eifl, by Carreg-y-llam quarries, has very spectacular cliffs falling straight into the sea, over 300 feet high. Unfortunately they appear inaccessible on foot, and the sea-bird population would make climbing inadvisable. Llech Lydan, a rocky island to the south-west, gives interesting scrambling.

#### (e) MOELWYNS

##### CRAIG YSTAC

##### SOUTH CHIMNEYS

Pitch 3 has now been straightened out :

(3) 30 feet. Take the mossy chimney in the main line of chimneys to a further grass ledge. Interesting and worth doing.

4th June, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, J. Neill, Miss P. D. Chapman.  
Variant to pitch 6 :

Climb the rib just to the right of the Tallboy, pleasant.

4th June, 1955. J. Neill.

The original pitch 3 has had a beginning and end added, to make a separate climb :

**FORK.** 175 feet. Difficult.

Follows a less definite line of chimneys to the left of South Chimneys. Rather artificial.

Start : At a large cairn 15 feet left of South Chimneys.

(1) 40 feet. Up into a grassy recess left of the Hearthstone, then up slanting left onto the rib above, and up this, avoiding grass, to the large grassy ledge stance after South Chimneys pitch 2.

(2) 15 feet. Step left into a large recess, the Tool Chest.

(3) 30 feet. Up the crack at the back, pleasantly, to another large ledge, the Potting Shed.

(4) 40 feet. Step left across the top of the crack to a grassy recess and ascend a short chimney at the back, to a belay below another short chimney a little higher.

(5) 30 feet. Up the chimney and onto the rib above.

(6) 20 feet. Up the rib (end of pitch 5, Floating Rib).

First complete ascent : 4th June, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, J. Neill, Miss P. D. Chapman.

**FLAKE WALL.** 120 feet. Severe.

This is the very steep wall, with a large detached flake at its foot, forming the main face between South Chimneys and Creeper, which has been looked at on several occasions in the last few years.

Start : At the flake.

(1) 30 feet. The left edge of the flake, to its top.

(2) 35 feet. Step left off the flake and climb steeply to the top of a corner (piton belay).

(3) 25 feet. Traverse left and slightly up to the edge of the buttress.

(4) 30 feet. Go directly up, steep at first.

First ascent : 21st September, 1955. D. D. Stewart, T. Kellett.

**CRAIG DYN**

**ONE FOR THE ROAD.**

Variant to pitch 2 : Step onto the rib at the bottom, just above its overhanging nose, and climb the rib. To be preferred by those who like rock-climbing.

18th June, 1955. J. Neill.

Two further pitches have been added, of the same standard as the rest of the climb. The connection is slightly artificial but the climb gains considerably thereby :

(5) 20 feet of climbing. Walk up slightly right to the foot of the final face. Go up a gangway sloping left to a stance beneath a crack formed by a flake slanting up left.



(6) 80 feet. Go up the crack, then right, and finish up the centre of the face.

Added 18th June, 1955. J. Neill and A. T. Griffith.

#### CRAIG DAU

WEEP. 250 feet. Hard Very Difficult.

The crag forms a broad rib with a steep right scarp wall, out of which grows a largish tree. Takes this rib, approaching it artificially and finishing up a steep upper face. All the first section is artificial.

Start : As near as possible to the right of a bottomless crack with a steep face on its right, in the lowest of the walls.

Tier I : (1) 90 feet in 3 steps. Climb as far left as possible for steepness and difficulty (the little walls are easier on the right). Then grass to a belay at the foot of the rib.

Tier II : (2) 30 feet. Go up above the belay and move right. A mossy slab soon leads up to a narrow grass ledge.

(3) 35 feet. Up on the left again to the foot of a thin crack. From here traverse diagonally up right until the centre of the buttress can be regained.

(4) 15 feet. Straight up to another grass expanse. Walk a little left to a pillar standing out from the top wall.

Tier III : (5) 20 feet. Climb the pillar, finishing over an overhang to a large upholstered ledge.

(6) 20 feet. The large insecure-looking flakes lead up to another ledge.

(7) 30 feet. Now on the left edge, a difficult move or two leads up to a stance on the arête, followed to the top.

First ascent : 16th April, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, Miss P. D. Chapman.

#### CRAIG NYTH-Y-GIGFRAN

##### AFRICA RIB

Variant to pitch 3, keeping it completely separate from Usher's Dilemma except for stances :

Traverse from the platform on the rib into the corner on the left and climb the crack at the back, by a layback then jamming. An interesting pitch.

19th November, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam.

#### (f) LLECHOG (Cwm Clogwyn)

##### MAIN CLIFF

ARROW SLAB. 390 feet. Very Difficult.

On the South Cliff, about a third of the way along from the left end.

Start : At a small cairn at the back of a slight bay say 50 yards left of Central Rib. Arrows and the words " Arrow Slab " are scratched on the slab above the cairn.

(1) 60 feet. Go up the slab for 25 feet, traversing right, under the grooves. Take the right-hand groove. After 20 feet traverse left by an awkward step round, to a poor stance in a niche.

(2) 55 feet. Traverse right from the niche for about 10 feet then go straight up ribby rock to a small overhang, and left to a grassy ledge at the foot of a slab.

(3) 115 feet. Go up the slabs on small but adequate holds for about 100 feet, crossing a grassy rake on the way, then move left into a recess.

(4) 60 feet. Traverse diagonally right over ribs.

(5) 100 feet. Straight up over open but interesting ground to the top.

First ascent : 6th July, 1955. J. O'Sullivan, T. Williams.

CROSS SLAB AND ARETE. 355 feet. Hard Very Difficult.

This route has not yet been identified, so the original description is reproduced without comment.

Situated on the left of the buttress left of the central gully. Marked by crosses. The arête is Difficult only.

(1) 80 feet. Traverse from the centre of the slab to the groove on the left, and go up this groove for 40 feet. Belay in grassy groove on the left.

(2) 60 feet. Up the arête to shattered bollards. 30 feet of this pitch can be climbed on the slab—artificial and considerably harder than pitch 1.

(3) 65 feet. Up the wall on the left for 20 feet then traverse to the right along a rake.

(4) 120 feet. Up a steep groove, then on up good interesting ground to the foot of the final arête.

(5) 30 feet. Up the arête on rather shattered rock.

First ascent : 6th July, 1955. J. O'Sullivan, T. Williams.

#### (g) MYNYDD MAWR

##### CRAIG-Y-BERA

##### PRIMROSE PATH—PERDITION FINISH

Another nice pitch and a nasty one added. Technically no more than Very Difficult, but the danger on the last pitch is Very Severe.

(6) 70 feet. From the top of pitch 5 go to the left edge of the buttress and follow it to a rock ledge (inserted chockstone belay). Nice exposed climbing.

(7) 70 feet. Above everything is horrid. Up and left a bit to the edge ; climb over rattling rocks here and finish up the vertical scree.

Added 30th May, 1955. A. J. J. Moulam, Miss P. D. Chapman.

#### (h) CWM SILYN

The following misprints in the interim guide should be noted :

On the diagram "Craig Cwm Silyn" for "Black Gully" read "Green Gully." The letters marking Green Gully and Great Stone Shoot are a, b, not A, B. Acknowledgment should have been made to R. B. Clayton for this diagram.

## CRAIG-YR-OGOF

## CENTRAL ROUTE

This route is reported to be certainly not Very Severe, but perhaps Severe. Kirkus's Route is much finer, though Central Route is quite good.

BREAKFAST IN BED. 130 feet. Very Difficult.

Start: 150 feet below the fence and wall at the top of the Great Stone Shoot, below an obvious weakness in the steep left-hand wall of the gully (the west wall of Amphitheatre Buttress). Scramble up from the bed of the gully to the cracked wall on the left of a yellow patch caused by a recent rock-fall from the slab.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the cracked wall immediately below the steep crack to a small but good sentry-box (belay low on the right).

(2) 40 feet. Climb the wall on the right of the crack for 5 feet then traverse right across the steep wall and up the edge to a crack round the corner, until a pull over the sound blocks leads to a traverse left back to the foot of the chimney (chockstone belay). Steep and exhilarating.

(3) 50 feet. Go directly up the narrow chimney facing right, with the aid of the chockstones and holds on the right wall, to a platform and easing to the top.

First ascent: 3rd September, 1955. M. F. W. Holland and I. C. Bennett.

## CRAIG CWM-DULYN

This crag was unfortunately omitted from the M.U.M.C.'s interim guide to the Cwellyn area. The following climbs have been made:

QUEST FOR CORBEAU. 270 feet. Very Severe. First ascent: 22nd March, 1952. A. J. J. Moulam, J. M. Barr.

THE IRISH MAIL. 220 feet. Difficult. First ascent: 31st December, 1953. G. C. Band, G. J. Sutton.

LOOSENARD. 200 feet. Severe. First ascent: 22nd March, 1952. A. J. J. Moulam, J. M. Barr.

Full details of these climbs will be found in the locked book at Pen-y-Gwryd.

## II. OUTLYING CRAGS OF WALES

## ARAN GROUP

More routes have been done by members of the Mountain Club in the Cowarch Valley. Details are available from R. G. Lambe, 22 Eastlands Grove, Stafford, or E. C. Pyatt, 113 Burton's Road, Hampton Hill, Middlesex. An article will appear in the next C.C.ŷ.

The Cowarch valley lies immediately to the north of Dinas Mawddwy in Merionethshire. The hills on both sides are very steep and over a mile of crags blocks the head of the valley. The principal crags face

generally north-east and south-west, although some buttresses face due south. The National Grid reference of the crags is SH.845190. For general remarks and a picture see *C.C.J.* 1950, p. 69 ; see also *C.C.J.* 1955, p. 120.

### III. CORNWALL

Many new climbs have been made in Cornwall this year, notably on Carn Barra and Bosigran Face. It is proposed to describe all these, along with all other new routes and discoveries made since 1950, in a supplement to the guidebook to be issued in due course.

### IV. NEAR EAST

#### VISIT TO SOUTHERN TURKEY—1955.

During July 1955 a visit was paid to the Ala Dag by J. R. G. Finch, F. L. Jenkins (Alpine Club), with E. M. Warwick.

The following were climbed: Alaca Basi, Karanfil Dag, Kaldi Dag, and Demir Kazik.

The main problems were the inaccuracy of existing maps and the complexity of the lower ridges. A good general guide to the layout of the area is given in *Die Alpen*, April 1950, pages 135-144 (M.M. Blumenthal).

There is, apparently, only one route up Kaldi Dag, which involves a very circuitous approach march. The final short length of the ridge is thoroughly rotten with scree lying on slabs, altogether most unattractive.

Demir Kazik was best of the peaks visited. The east ridge is the common line of ascent and provides plenty of slab climbing. Owing to its position on the edge of the range, the summit provides a fine viewpoint. There is a possibility of a traverse up the west face and down the east ridge. It appears from the *Gipfelbuch* to have been climbed 23 times in the past ten years. Ours was probably the third British ascent, and the first recorded in the *Gipfelbuch*.

The weather was dry; little snow remained at this time of year. Springs for bivouacs were not always easy to find. The sun at the middle of the day was strong and some of the lower valleys exceedingly hot. It is thought June would be a pleasanter month to visit the area.

Approach was made from Pozanti with pack horse. Forestry roads are being developed in the area and used by Jeeps and three ton trucks. Use of a vehicle after the first ten miles leads to trouble with the irrigation system which crosses and recrosses the track. However a, week-end shooting party from Ankara brought a Landrover within five miles of the foot of Demir Kazik while we were there.

### CYPRUS: PENTADACTYLOS

The complete traverse of the ridge from East to West was made on 30th May, 1955, by J. R. G. Finch, G. G. Crookshank, F. L. Jenkins, E. M. Warrick, J. D. A. Arundel, H. C. Tanton, R. Shaw.

Most of the ridge consists of rock scrambling. There are four sections of interest.

(1) The East Ridge of the Thumb. The Red Wall at the top of this was climbed by traversing left along the shelf into a crack, and ascending this to an inverted flake. Mild Severe, somewhat exposed.

(2) The West side of the Thumb—Clock Tower gap. One pitch up an open chimney, not more than Very Difficult.

(3) The direct ascent of the Index Finger from the Clocktower—Index gap. Two routes were made. One up the steep slab on the left, the second diagonally to the right, crossing two cracks. Both are exposed, the former is the more severe. Both routes start from a detached flake.

(4) The Vargipfel Slab. A steep slab with several possible routes on small holds. Very Difficult.

There is one absurd pitch where one shuffles across using two branches of a tree bridging a forty foot chasm, near the summit of Central Finger.

The end of May was found rather hot for this expedition. The temperature at Nicosia was 95°F.

J. R. G. FINCH.

## EDITORIAL

The ascent of Kanchenjunga was a brilliant achievement of mountaineering, to be appreciated by mountaineers. We congratulate the whole party, and especially Charles Evans the leader, and the other three members of our Club, Band, Mather and Clegg. Our celebratory dinner in October at Llanberis must have been the largest the Club has ever held. We were especially happy to have with us Dawa Tensing, the Sirdar, and Chang Yu, another of the Sherpas, who did us the honour of appearing in their best clothes (and hats) for the dinner. A photograph of Dawa Tensing taken during this visit to North Wales is reproduced in this Journal. One detail of the ascent which appeals to British rock-climbers is that the technique of the running belay has now been carried to over 28,000 feet. Several leaders found the same technique beneficial on Clogwyn y Grochan the day after the dinner.

The French success on Makalu was also a remarkable achievement, especially in that the whole party reached the summit. Our warm congratulations go to Jean Franco and his party. Other Himalayan parties included members of the Club. Caukwell went with the Mountain Club of Kenya's expedition to Himal Chuli. They were hampered by bad weather, and then a trivial accident cost the life of the leader, the very great Kenya mountaineer Arthur Firmin. Meanwhile, Smythe, Stewart, Lees and Sims were with the R.A.F. Himalayan Expedition, and Roberts with the Welsh Expedition; unlike some of his companions, he avoided imprisonment by the Chinese. Béchervaise led the Australian party in the Antarctic, where they climbed some new mountains. On the other side of the continent, Lowe was with Fuchs in the *Theron*. McNaught-Davis and, separately, J. Smith and Fletcher, have been to Ruwenzori. Fisher is reported to have been climbing in Alaska.

In the Alps in 1955 the weather was again disappointing. Bonatti was lucky to hit on six reasonably fine days in succession for his ascent of the South-West Pillar of the Drus. This *tour de force* of endurance and single-handed pitonnage was the event of the season. Meanwhile British climbers, mostly members of the Club, had some notable successes. Bourdillon and Nicol climbed the north ridge of the Peigne, the east ridge of the Crocodile, the west face of the Aiguille Noire (Ratti-Vitali route), and the east face of the Grand Capucin. This climb was quite fashionable in 1955, being too steep to hold snow. It is none the less of a very advanced technical standard. It is pleasant to record the first British ascent, by the same party whose ascent of the north face of the Dru in 1950 opened the eyes of British-trained rock-



— ۲۵۰/۱۲ —  
۱۳۰۱/۱۲







climbers to what they might do and inaugurated the current renaissance of British Alpine climbing. We congratulate Nicol on succeeding Bourdillon as president of the Alpine Climbing Group.

Four members, Blackshaw, Downes, Langmuir and Sutton, stayed for a month at the Ecole Nationale du Ski et de l'Alpinisme at Chamonix. Downes writes: "*Les stagiaires anglais* soon gained a reputation for the consumption of wine, and we were particularly impressed by the comforts, superb food and friendly welcome at the Ecole. We were able to meet and talk with Berardini and Paragot, Bron and Asper, and with several of the guides at the Ecole, notably André Contamine and Pierre Julien, who both encouraged us with our climbs. Conversations with these people were as stimulating to our climbing as the hot showers and five course meals; we are extremely grateful to the Ecole's authorities and to the Club Alpin Français for making possible our visit." The stimulation was effective. All four climbed the north ridge of the Peigne, the south face of the Gugliermine, the south face of the Aiguille Dibona, and the famous north-east face of the Badile. Of the last Downes writes that they found no pitch of artificial or of VI. Sutton and Downes did the Gervasutti couloir on Mont Blanc de Tacul, which was also climbed later by R. Johnson, Emery and J. Hobhouse. Blackshaw and Downes did the north face of the Triolet. Thus, British parties are now doing some of the great modern ice routes, as well as their more familiar rock. Other fine snow and ice climbs in 1955 were the couloir Coutourier of the Aiguille Verte (Noyce, Brook, Sutton), Col du Pain de Sucre (J. Hobhouse, Emery), north face of Aiguille d'Argentière (Banks, Brook; J. Hobhouse, Emery, Johnson), north face of the Tour Ronde (Chorley, Wrangham). On Mont Blanc the Sentinel Route was done by Noyce, Hunt, Cox and Ward, and again later by J. Hobhouse, Emery and Johnson; and the Peuteret ridge by Chorley and Wrangham. Cunningham and Goodier were another party on the north ridge of the Peigne and Fraser and Banks did the west face of the Albert. Harris and Mawe did the south ridge of the Aiguille Noire.

Several parties were in Dauphine. The Aiguille Dibona was popular. Besides the south face already mentioned, the south-west ridge was done by Chorley and Wrangham and the west face by Harris, Neill and Mawe. These three and Thomas did the south face of the Meije as far as the Glacier Carré, where they were stopped by a storm. J. Hartog and R. Hobhouse did the north-west couloir of the Pic sans Nom and the Ecrins by the Barre Noire. Chorley, Wrangham, Westmacott, Rawlinson and Bull did the south face of the Pavé and found it, like many modern climbs, less formidable than its reputation.

A member of the Club represented Britain in an inter-Parliamentary ski race against Switzerland. Some less formal international racing, on foot, took place on the Matterhorn. The Bicknells' youthful Italian guide started a race with his middle-aged employers from the Breuiljoch down to Breuil. He lost.

To the many climbs done at home reference is made in New Climbs and Notes. As well as on the Old Man of Storr members of the Club did some important climbing on Ben Nevis : in particular Downes and Langmuir made what is believed to be the second ascent of Kellett's Gardyloo Buttress.

Notes on the official club meets appear elsewhere in the Journal. In addition we revived the summer Ladies' dinner, at the Hurlingham Club in June. The evening was cold, so that the lawns of Hurlingham were less seductive than we hoped ; but the dinner was made memorable by the single speech, from Geoffrey Winthrop Young. In the course of it he complained of the unreadability of so many modern mountaineering journals, with their lack of the romantic and arid emphasis on technique. The editor took note ; and he hoped his contributors did too. But it is not easy to well write about climbing, and it becomes harder as mountain history lengthens and the sum of collective experience, and literature, grows.

The " In Memoriam " section bears witness to the losses the Club has sustained by death during the year. We should also record the death of Lord Mackay, doyen of Scottish judges, distinguished alike in academic and legal learning, and in lawn tennis. He was one of the pioneers of British climbing, a companion of Geoffrey Young in the early days. Two leading mountaineers from other countries died on the mountains. Eric Gauchat, fleetest of youthful Genevese, was killed in the Himalaya. In November Louis Lachenal fell into a crevasse while descending on ski from the Aiguille du Midi. With Maurice Herzog he reached the summit of Annapurna and his record of Alpine climbs, often in partnership with Lionel Terray, was formidable. Though not a native of Chamonix, he was a member of the Chamonix corps of guides and one of the most distinguished of French mountaineers.

Mrs. Harvey, mother of Philip Harvey who was killed in Wales a few years ago (see " In Memoriam," *C.C.J.* 1951, p. 65) has promised to bequeath £1,000 to the Club on her death, to be used for improvements at Helyg in memory of her son. We acknowledge with deep gratitude this most generous promise.

The interim guide to Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc which appeared in last year's Journal has been published as a separate pamphlet. The Club has also published a new edition of the Llanberis guide, with an appendix on new routes by Roscoe, who has recently joined the Club ; and the new guide to South-East England.

We congratulate our former vice-president, Sir John Hunt, on his election as president of the Alpine Club, with the prospect of holding that office during the A.C. Centenary year of 1957. We also wish him well in the new youth work which it has been announced he is to direct in connexion with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. We understand that mountaineering will play a part in this and that there are likely to

be opportunities for members to show their interest and good will in more practical ways than by mere expressions of good wishes.

Once again the Editor acknowledges his thanks to all who have contributed to this number ; and to Tony Bertram, who has again undertaken the tiresome and laborious duties of Business Editor.

## CLUB MEETS, 1955

**J**OHAN DISLEY opened the year with a meet at Ynys in January ; everyone enjoyed himself ; most sought foxes, without success. At Helyg, in March, Tony Moulam was the host ; there was a lot of snow, and some ascended the North Gully of Tryfan. However, "rather too much food was provided, and the evening was spent by most people happily at Pen y Gwryd. On Sunday, the meet leader had a tour of Snowdonia by car looking for television sites." For Easter, we visited the Kinghouse Hotel, Glencoe ; the weather was miserable, and there was no climbing. It was interesting to see that even in Scotland, the enthusiasts still climb "in the other valley" ; this involved a trip to the Cairngorms. The President ran a very enjoyable meet at the Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale in May. We distinguished ourselves at Whit by having two meets at the greatest possible distance from each other. Skye abounded with members of the Club, but curiously enough, only four and two guests came to Mike Harris's meet ; a rival, and larger, party preferred the luxuries of Sligachan to a camp by the sea. The weather was perfect, but a fair amount of climbing was done. At Bosigran, Admiral Lawder had full house : the climbing was so good that the meet seems to have lingered on for at least a week. Very unhappily, a climber from a party camping nearby lost his life while bathing alone in Portmoina Cove on the Saturday evening. John Neill's meet at Ynys in June was a considerable success ; the party was supplemented by members and guests who seem to have stayed at every hut in the area.

The Alpine meet is a mystery. No one knows if it took place. A new departure was Alf Bridge's meet at Kinder Downfall in July. "We moved over to Fairbrook, where Tony Hyde led Jack Longland up Fairbrook Buttress ; but Pavlova, some 75 yards away, remained, to the secret joy of the meet leader, quite aloof from all attempts, and the comforting trough of loose earth at the foot of the climb can still be useful." Alan Hargreaves' meet, this time at the Salving House, Rosthwaite, was as successful as ever. The Welsh Dinner was held at the Royal Victoria Hotel, Llanberis. We enjoyed the company of the members of the successful Kanchenjunga Expedition as our main guests ; and thanks to this, and the very hard work done by John Watson, it was an excellent week-end. Finally, John Neill was good enough to run a meet at short notice at Ynys in November.

Altogether, a good year ! Many thanks to the organisers, and to the Clubs who kindly lent us their huts.

ALAN BLACKSHAW

# IN MEMORIAM

LEO S. AMERY

Statesman, scholar, linguist, historian, orator, writer, athlete, Leo Amery was above all a great-hearted patriot ; who devoted a long life to combining the moral and the economic forces of Britain and the Commonwealth into one unit of power, for good in the world. He held successively great Offices of State, over many years, and he used each of them to extend his immense knowledge of races and human beings, no less than of affairs. A short, square, powerful figure, his dynamic energy was reinforced by a selflessness and modesty of character, a humanity, and an absolute independence of judgment, which if it may have been the cause in the end of his never holding the highest office of all, earned him in later years a unique position as wise counsellor and trusted elder statesman.

He will be remembered in the history of our country for his call across the floor of the House to "Speak for England!", a summons which could have come with such force from no other man ; and again his quotation from Cromwell—"In the name of God, go!", in the hour of crisis.

Probably his happiest work was done in New Zealand and Canada, during his Secretaryships for the Colonies and the Dominions. He captured their peoples not only by his exceptionally profound and sympathetic study of their problems, but by his love for their scenery and—a unique qualification in such a position—his exploration and climbing of their mountains. It was his regret that his great work in preparing the final solution of the Indian problem came too late to let him also climb in the Himalaya.

Behind, and within, his great abilities and his notable career lay this deep-rooted and romantic love of mountains and of climbing them. It formed the poetic background of a personality as valiant and almost ruthlessly purposeful as it was humane, and youthful, in quick humour and responsive sym-

pathy. Even when in the War years he was Secretary for India, and personally shadowed by the most terrible tragedy that could befall any man, I remember that he continued with imperturbable courage, and discretion, to direct the business of the Alpine Club and guide its liberalising policy. His witty and often weighty speeches at mountain club meetings and dinners will not soon be forgotten.

In youth he had climbed the Matterhorn on the same day as Mummery ; and he mountaineered to the last. He was in Zermatt again only shortly before his death, in his eighty-second year. He was a particularly good friend and adviser to the Swiss Cantons and to the guides. It was characteristic that when Josef Knubel was finally prevented from the great peaks by a knee injury, in his seventieth year, Amery should have sent him a charming poem of consolation translated into German : a much prized and unusual act of understanding, as between mountaineers. His large library in London was always the meeting place for many races and professions, seeking advice, and meeting the welcome of his gifted and remarkable wife.

His political memoirs are part of the story of our times ; and in his two volumes, *Days of Fresh Air* and *In the Rain and the Sun*, he recorded the adventures on mountain and river of the romantic and artistic aspect of his multiple personality. Every mountaineer, and every good mountaineering cause, loses in him a ready, understanding, and powerful friend.

G.W.Y.

\* \* \*

The death of Leo Amery has deprived the Club of its most distinguished member. Joining us 11 years ago, he was known personally to few, though many of us have met him in his books. He once wrote that he found mountaineering and public life much alike. " They need determination and endurance, judgment of what lies ahead, skill in dealing with each problem as you come to it ; not least a steady head on the exposed summits." In every corner of the world there are many in our Commonwealth who know how well he was equipped to succeed in both spheres.

We are glad that he wanted to be one of us. He reached a number of life's splendid peaks ; he had too, at times, to go down into its darkest valleys, but, whether in the rain or the

sun, he kept his face upward towards the Delectable Mountains. A long, eventful journey ; and now a rest well earned.

H.R.C.C.

### A. K. BARTLETT

Tony Bartlett was killed on 28th July, 1955, in the Bregaglia Alps of Switzerland. He was walking up to the North Ridge of the Badile on a steeply sloping path. He slipped on the wet grass, and fell 200 feet down steep rocks to his death.

Tony was a student at St. Thomas' Hospital, where he had just passed his second M.B. examination, and had entered the Clinical School. Although on the whole a quiet, unassuming person, he took an active part in the life of the hospital. He was a keen Rugby player, yachtsman, photographer, and what was more important to him, mountaineer. He was already an experienced climber on British rocks, and this was his second season in the Alps. He had just joined the C.C.

In all his activities he displayed qualities of sincerity, humility, unselfishness, and above all of enthusiasm, which endeared him to his many friends. Those who knew him will remember him always for these ; and for the infectious grin of pure delight which was his characteristic reaction to a difficult rock pitch or to a peculiarly horrible scrummage on the rugger field. He enjoyed life, and his buoyant attitude seemed to help others to do so.

He was buried in the churchyard of the village of Bondo, within sight of the mountains, as I am sure he would have wished.

H. G. NICOL.

### J. E. YOUNG

John Edward Young was born in Derby and educated at Derby School. He graduated in mechanical engineering in 1945 while an apprentice with International Combustion Ltd., and in that year was awarded a Whitworth Scholarship which took him, as a research student, to Christ's College, Cambridge.

At Cambridge he became interested in mountaineering, and from that time was walking and climbing in the hills at home, in Europe and recently in Australia and New Zealand at every opportunity.

The remote mountains of north-west Scotland attracted him greatly, and a remarkable amount of his free time was spent in exploration there. He found it hard to forgo these visits in order to gain two seasons' Alpine experience, and it was typical that he should justify this sacrifice on grounds of extension of his knowledge and technique. In all that he did John was a craftsman, and could never be satisfied with less than complete mastery.

He was treasurer of C.U.M.C. in 1949-50 and completed his researches in the latter year. Early in 1951 he left for Melbourne to continue his work in the Tribophysics Department of C.S.I.R.O. and there at once joined the University Mountaineering Club. His arrival gave a new impetus to rock climbing in Australia and he was a founder member of the Victoria Mountaineering Club, serving as a committee member for two years and becoming President in 1953.

Two major expeditions outside Australia were notably successful. Eight weeks of exploration in the Arthur Ranges of south-west Tasmania again indicate his taste for remote and little-known places, and in his first visit to New Zealand he made the second ascent of the Coxcomb Ridge on Mount Aspiring. It was in January 1955, during a second visit to the Southern Alps, after climbing extensively in the Mount Aspiring area and the Olivine ice plateau that John Young was lost, with two others, on Mount Cook.

For John's friends at home his four years' absence can in no way lessen the sense of loss. He was a first-class mountaineering companion and leader, of inexhaustible patience, humour and resourcefulness. In most adverse conditions his judgment was always well considered, and always he was ready to take upon himself the heaviest burden, in his quiet manner that permitted no denial.

Beyond this John Young was a man of uncommon worth, of profound human sympathies and moral courage. Fearless of criticism he strove always to maintain the high standards he set himself, but would never hesitate to acknowledge error, rarely made. All who knew him are diminished by his death, and to all we commend his memory.

D. E. WHITHAM.  
ALAN PARKER.



## WILSON HAROLD HEY

Wilson Hey died on January 15th at the age of seventy-three. He qualified in 1905 and began his distinguished career by winning the Tom Jones Surgical Research Scholarship. At one time he was assistant to Joseph Collier, the senior honorary surgeon at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and president of the Rucksack Club and in due course succeeded Collier in both these offices. After a succession of appointments he became a member of the honorary surgical staff at the M.R.I. in 1914 and the Christie Hospital and Holt Radium Institute in 1919. During the First World War he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps and could speak touchingly of his work in the cellars of Ypres and on other battlefields. For a time he was attached to the French medical service and was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He came back a very competent surgical technician, deft, swift and gentle, with an unusual gift of diagnosis, and rapidly built up an extensive practice, which he had started before the war at the age of twenty-nine. He brought many new ideas into his work and was one of the pioneers in the use of radium, and later, of hormones, in the treatment of cancer, particularly cancer in the breast. Probably his greatest contribution to surgical knowledge was in prostatectomy where he revolutionised the older methods, made the treatment safe and considerably lessened the discomfort of the patient and period of convalescence. Men came to him from many parts of the world to undergo the operation that bears his name. He was a noted clinical teacher and examiner.

Perhaps it was his early association with Joseph Collier that developed his love for the mountains but the seed was already there: when only four, he had been taken up Pendle Hill by his father and had done much wandering over the lonely Lancashire and Yorkshire moors in his boyhood. He joined the Alpine Club in 1929. A year before, he had founded The Manchester University Mountaineering Club and became its only Honorary Life Vice-President. He was an honorary member of the Rucksack Club, and he was made an honorary member of the Climbers' Club in 1949.

For most of the inter-war seasons he was in the Alps and in 1928 began to climb with that fine guide and companion, Alexander Taugwalder, a partnership that was to last with few interruptions for eleven years, and a friendship that ended only with Alexander's untimely death in 1952. Many of their days together are recorded in Alexander's *Führerbuch*: they cover all parts of the Valais, with visits also to Chamonix, the Oberland and Dauphiné.

Wilson Hey seemed to climb rock more from a feeling of completeness in his mountain life than from special interest in the fascinating problems that were being worked out in his active years; perhaps he had started too late, but he could climb it well enough when he wished and delicacy of movement appealed to him. Thus, he would handle the loose holds in the Screes' gullies or Welsh grass with an obvious air of disapproval but insisted on climbing the Kern Knotts Crack each time we passed by and liked the ordered sequence and use of holds on the little traverse, which has been the orthodox means of entry since Siegfried Herford capriciously removed the chockstone. He liked too climbing the older routes which satisfied his well developed historic sense. On ice he was always happy with the air of easy mastery that became him so well, or on long walks over our own hills when he would set his companions fantastic problems in route finding and correct their miscalculations with boyish glee. This flair for pathfinding became famous: it would be in 1932 when his party left the Schönbühl hut in atrocious weather to cover a stage of their journey towards Chamonix. He guided them through the mist and snow showers mostly by dead reckoning over the cols de Valpelline, Mont Brulé, Collon and Evêque, ground new to them all. Alexander, solicitous as always for the safety of his friends, was heard to murmur "we should not be here"; but they each had implicit confidence in the other's powers and finally reached the Chanrion hut, where they were weatherbound for two days. On another occasion, rising from wet blankets in the Promontoire hut, they found the Meije plastered with new snow and the clouds well down; instead of beating a prudent retreat to La Bérarde, they groped their way without map down the Glacier de la Meije to La Grave and turned an early promise of failure into an exciting day.

Wilson Hey was a member of the *ad hoc* committee set up in 1932 by the Rucksack Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club for the purpose of devising new equipment and better methods of dealing with accidents in the hills. His fertile mind and his high standing as a surgeon and mountaineer were of immense value to this hard-working group which later developed into the present Mountain Rescue Committee, of which he was Chairman from 1939 until his death. To him must be given the main credit for the rapid expansion in the number of rescue posts, the good relationship established with the Ministry of Health and the R.A.F., and the Committee's change of status into a charitable trust. From the first, on his own responsibility, he insisted on supplying morphia to kits in the then new tubunic ampoules. His attempt to get official permission for its use by the rescue parties ended in the prosecution in 1949. It was a time of strain and anxiety. He lost the case and suffered a nominal fine of ten pounds and costs, but the need of morphia for alleviating pain on the mountains had been firmly established and it was soon possible to come to happier terms with the authorities ; the fight had not been in vain. It is typical of the man that he insisted on refunding the substantial costs of the action to the Mountain Rescue Committee.

Hey was a pioneer not only in his profession but in nearly everything he undertook. His restless, questing mind sometimes imposed severe burdens on his colleagues when they had to translate his enthusiasms into sober practical measures, but in the end they worked and he repaid them all a hundredfold by his loyalty, friendliness and generosity.

He is buried on a wind swept hillside near Colne where he was born. He lies with his father, a freeman of the town, on whose stone is inscribed *pro bono publico diu laboravit*. The son too worked much for the common weal and one's life is richer for having known him at work and play.<sup>1</sup>

A. S. PIGOTT.

<sup>1</sup> This notice, written for the *Alpine Journal*, is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of the *A.J.*—*Editor*.

## PATRICK LLOYD

Lt. Col. Patrick Lloyd, nephew of our honorary member R. W. Lloyd, joined the Club in 1954. He was killed during the rioting in El Zarka, Jordan, on 8th January, 1956.

Born in 1913, he was educated at Winchester, where he distinguished himself in gymnastics and won the King's Silver Medal for English Speech. Having passed through the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, he was commissioned in the Royal Artillery in 1933. The next six years of his service were in India, but he returned to England in 1939 and at once went out to France. He was in the Dunkirk evacuation (where he was mentioned in despatches), and later helped to train the 1st Air-Landing Battery. Soon after the invasion of Italy he was struck down by poly-arthritis. He was five months in hospital, but in time made a remarkable recovery: within five years he was fit for all forms of military duty and had taken up cross-country running. In 1950 he went to the Far East for three years. In 1954 he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, and seconded to the Arab Legion.

Glubb Pasha, commander of the Arab Legion, wrote to his mother: "I have had personal knowledge of your son during his year of service in the Arab Legion, and have regarded him as possessing a quiet steadfastness of character which was exceptional. His manner and personal qualities earned him the affection and respect of all ranks, and he will be deeply missed by both his British and his Arab colleagues."

We send our deepest sympathy to his family and especially to his mother.

A.K.R.

## GEORGE WOOD-JOHNSON

George Wood-Johnson whose tough cheerfulness concealed from his friends the very serious illness of his last years, was so strong in physique and character that it was difficult to accept the fact of his early death. I think that he was more single-mindedly devoted to climbing, and that for a longer period, than any mountaineer I have known. And towards the end of his life he became more than ever concerned to try and pass on to other youngsters the skill and love of mountains which had

inspired his own life since boyhood. But for illness, he would have been the First Warden of the training centre at Plas-y-Brenin, the old Royal Hotel, Capel Curig: and he wanted desperately to take charge of one of the Outward Bound Mountain Schools.

George began walking and camping on the Fells at the age of nine, first in the Trough of Bowland, where he learnt to walk at night at an age when most boys are safely tucked up in bed. In his 'teens he took to climbing on gritstone and limestone, and explored small pot-holes, but he first met those whom he considered real climbers when he turned up on top of Great Gable at Whitsuntide 1924, for the unveiling of the war memorial. The Lakeland climbers took him to their hearts and taught him safety on bigger crags, H. M. Kelly in particular keeping a fatherly eye on him and encouraging his obvious rock-climbing talent. In 1926 George and Astley-Cooper joined Kelly on the second ascent of Moss Ghyll Grooves, and that same day the two young climbers did every single Scafell Very Severe, bar Central Buttress. All during the middle twenties, George Wood-Johnson climbed almost every week end, bicycling to the Lakes from Blackpool, till Astley-Cooper and he could buy an ancient motor-bike. He became known as a safe leader of the hardest routes of the time, but more particularly for feats that evidenced his toughness, the climbing Great Gully, Pavey Ark on a dark night, or coming down Eagle's Nest Buttress last man, in boots and rain.

George Wood-Johnson regarded all his British climbing, good though he was at it, merely as preparation for the Himalayas in general, and Everest in particular. His pertinacity and the friendship of E. O. Shebbeare rewarded him with the job of assistant manager of a tea-estate near Darjeeling, and from then on Everest filled his horizon. In 1928 he ran his own small expedition to the Guichaha, and had a look at Pandim and Kanchenjunga. In 1930 he was invited to join and be transport officer to the international expedition to Kanchenjunga, and then in 1933 his great ambition was fulfilled, and he became a member of the Everest party of that year. I found him, as we all did, a good and kindly travelling companion. As assistant transport officer to Shebbeare, on that cold late-winter journey across Tibet, he was always first up in the mornings, and last to

come in during the chilly evenings from seeing our mountains of stores safely disposed. He showed no care for his own health, consumed as he was by the one desire of seeing that his party got to the top of Everest. His fanatical devotion to the party's success was comically embarrassing at times, since we were a light-hearted and iconoclastic group, and George must sometimes have despaired at our lack of high seriousness. But it was a very bad blow to all of us, as well as the worst personal tragedy of George's own life, when gastric ulcers knocked him out at Camp III, at the head of the Rongbuk Glacier. A less fabulously tough man would not have survived either the illness or the disappointment, and I have a vivid memory of his drawn face and utter wretchedness as he was escorted down the line to safer altitudes. But he had recovered enough to give us a wonderful welcome when we returned, a bit dejected ourselves, to Darjeeling.

George Wood-Johnson never had the chance to go high again, and he came back to England in 1938. He still climbed as much as he could, helping to train Commandos in the war, and turning himself also into a spare time glider pilot and pilot officer. He was, I believe, a very sound engineer, but I always felt he wanted in his last years a job which would actively express and justify his passion for the mountains. Instead, he gave all his spare time to teaching his own children and many other youngsters to climb. George asked a great deal from the mountains, and received much from them. Many young climbers have cause to be grateful for the way in which he tried to repay his debt.

J. L. LONGLAND<sup>1</sup>

We also record with regret the death of Prof. Gwyn Williams.

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted to C. J. Astley-Cooper for notes on Wood-Johnson's early career.—J.L.L.

## REVIEWS

HIGH ADVENTURE. By Edmund Hillary. Hodder and Stoughton, 1955. 16/-. (*L'Aventure est sur les Cimes*. Amiot-Dumont.)

This book is best described as Hillary's description of his experiences on three expeditions to the Nepalese Himalaya ; the Everest Reconnaissance, 1951, Cho Oyu, 1952, and Everest, 1953. As a personal narrative of travelling and mountaineering it is obviously successful, with most absorbing sections on the 1952 Cho Oyu trip, which received less publicity than the others at the time. But for readers who are looking for more than a narrative of his climbs in this short period, there may be disappointments. First, we are told very little of the author's early climbing background (he gets us to Nepal in seven short pages), and secondly, he never discusses directly his own formula for success on the world's highest peaks. Yet, for those who look carefully, this day to day narrative can tell us a lot on this second point.

To this reviewer, the first lesson which seems to stand out might be called " the advantage of being a New Zealander." Generally speaking, British climbers are trained on rock and remain, fundamentally, rock men all their lives. Their snow and ice technique is a veneer gained from their annual two-week visit to the Alps. In New Zealand things seem almost reversed. The climbs are mainly snow and ice, huts are few and the climbers spend days humping heavy packs through rough country and then snatching at any break in the uncertain weather to push on to the summit. The value of this experience of rough travelling and of snow and ice craft for Himalayan conditions hardly needs to be stressed. The New Zealanders' fondness for ice routes appears again and again in the narrative. They seemed to be able to pick out a line of weakness and crampon and cut their way up with a speed and skill which the British could hardly equal. Naturally, when it came to rock problems, the reverse applied. This difference of background is perhaps one reason why the New Zealanders appear as a team within a team. Hillary and Lowe climbed together whenever they could, and Hillary admits that he had a feeling of safety with Lowe behind him which he gets with no one else. And what a magnificent team this pair make, both terribly strong and fit, Hillary the pusher, always trying to snatch at any possibility, Lowe perhaps more sluggish, though in every way the ideal complement.

The next lesson which can be read from this text is the importance of physical fitness. There can hardly have ever been a climber in the Himalaya as fit as Hillary was in the summer of 1953. From 1948 to 1950 he spent three intensive seasons in New Zealand, climbing the most difficult routes and opening new ones. In the summer of 1950 he

came to Europe for his only season in the Alps. In 1951 he started in the Himalaya, first on the remarkable New Zealand expedition to Garhwal which ascended a large batch of major peaks. Then when the party got back to Ranikhet they found waiting for them Shipton's wholly unexpected telegram inviting two of them to join the Everest Reconnaissance, and Hillary went straight over to Nepal. In 1952 he was in Nepal again for Cho Oyu and the crossing of the Nup La. So by the time he went to Everest in 1953 Hillary had spent every summer for the last five years doing little else but the most intensive mountaineering of the snow and ice, camping and pack-carrying sort. Physically he could hardly have been better prepared.

The third lesson is more controversial. It deals with the determination to succeed, with the willingness to snatch at opportunities and to push on when things look doubtful. In this book Hillary's temperament on these matters comes out clearest in the passages on the Cho Oyu expedition. He describes an ascent with Lowe of a 21,500-foot peak which required the utmost of persistence in the face of unpleasant conditions. Even more revealing is the description of their crossing with three Sherpas of the Nup La. The hazards which this small party faced for days among a mass of hidden crevasses makes most impressive reading, yet they pushed on even though they knew they would have to make a return traverse over the same horrible ground. To many people, the object of all this danger would seem to be hardly adequate. Besides making a new pass, it was only to allow Hillary and Lowe to have a look at the classic Everest assault area on the East Rongbuk Glacier and perhaps climb up to the North Col.

Finally from this narrative there is a small lesson which is perhaps more important than it at first appears. Unlike most of us, Hillary seems capable of thought and action in a cold tent in the small hours of the morning. The narrative is punctuated by "At 3 a.m. I roused the Sherpas and soon the primus was roaring." What a priceless asset that inhuman capacity can be to an Himalayan expedition.

It should be emphasised once again that this book has been written as a diary and not as analysis and on that level it should be judged as highly successful, even if much of the ground is familiar. Even the 1953 Everest story, on which we have all read so much, gives us many new side-lights. We put the book down with the last chapters on the approach to the summit fresh in our minds and there stands up vividly the description of life on the South Col ; the utter exhaustion of Tom Bourdillon the day after the first attempt on the Summit, falling over on his face twice in a few yards as he started to descend ; the pathetic party of Hunt, Bourdillon, Evans and Ang Temba starting to leave the Col with only Evans really fit enough to get down safely ; then on the ridge above, the wonderful effort of Gregory climbing and carrying far beyond the apparent capacity of his small frame ; and Lowe, by now far the fittest man on the upper mountain aside from the Summit team of Hillary and Tenzing, and apparently capable of going on to the top. Yes, this volume can certainly be recommended for the climber's



bookshelf. Even by the crude measure of bulk for money it is very good value. Over 200 pages of text and 30 pages of photographs are a very full measure for 16/- these days.

KENNETH BERRILL.

MAN OF EVEREST. The autobiography of Tenzing told to James Ramsey Ullman. (Harrap. 18/-)

James Thurber once explored the interesting possibility that a heroic flight on the Lindbergh pattern might be achieved, not by a gent. of the traditional type, but by a howling cad. The outcome was most awkward for everybody. Fortunately Tenzing, who now joins the ranks of the suddenly great, is undoubtedly a gentleman and a most charming person. *Man of Everest* is good in several ways. James Ramsey Ullman has told the story excellently. He gets inside Tenzing and largely, though not entirely, he keeps his own, occidental viewpoint out of the book. This is an autobiography and not journalism.

For climbers the book is surprisingly good value as a record of several minor but most interesting expeditions which have not been extensively written up: the account of Thornley's extraordinary fling at Nanga Parbat, of Denman's dash to Everest, of the Bandar Panch expeditions, of the French tragedy on Nanda Devi and of Frey's accident on Kang peak, all are well told.

There will be controversy about some of Tenzing's judgments. He likes the British, but he likes the Swiss better and he is devoted to Raymond Lambert. Some people think he should have kept all this under his hat, but, as almost all his personal remarks are tempered with humour and good nature, they are salty, not bitter, to my taste. The book would in fact be poorer without Tenzing's prejudices.

It is a pity that Fame highlights all the wrong things—who got there first, who put what under the summit stones, who got whom wrong about what on the march out. The qualities, the close-grained characters of all the actors in such a story to easily slip into the shadows. Tenzing has tried to avoid this, and plenty of fine people come into the limelight apart from the author, but the greatest interest of the book undoubtedly lies in the character of this little man who got to the top.

What made Tenzing stand out above most of the other Sherpas? What made him able to shape and retain a robust, sane, devout and humorous philosophy through all those ups and downs, and especially through the last great leap of dazzling fortune? It is easy to be sentimental and say it was the beneficent influence of the hills. But that is nonsense. Brave, simple men of the desert or the hills can easily be spoilt when civilization gets hold. On the other hand the specialised craft of mountaineering, or more accurately of *Sherpa-ing*, must be given quite a lot of credit.

If a man of inborn ability learns one craft thoroughly, the hard way, he is *made* in a sense for life. It is easy for the city to turn the farmer's boy, be he never so gifted, into a spiv; but tourism and all the powers of modern publicity will fail to spoil the shepherd who has really lived

his job. This perhaps explains why Tenzing will probably never really crumple, and it suggests why Thurber's fantasy is unlikely to be often realised. It also suggests why Tenzing and Lambert fell into such deep, harmonious friendship. Most European mountaineers grow to a complex pattern, with climbing as one thread twisted into their career, their culture and their articulated beliefs. Tenzing and Lambert had scarcely a word in common, but they shared something more important. They had grown with a single, uncomplicated and deeply woven experience of mountaineering as *livelihood*, not as recreation. Tenzing's uninhibited, observant record of a whole life in the mountains is a unique and valuable addition to mountain literature.

ROBIN A. HODGKIN.

K2, THE SAVAGE MOUNTAIN. By Charles Houston and Robert Bates. (pp. 192. Collins, 1955.)

Like *The Worst Journey in the World*, this book is the story of an heroic failure, and, like the older tale, it shows how great is the influence of chance on human affairs. In each case the cause of failure was unforeseen and unforeseeable; in each case the response to disaster was magnificent. And only a final ironical spin of the wheel prevented the whole of Houston's party sharing the fate of Scott's.

In the weeks of 1953 that followed the ascent of Everest the third American Karakoram Expedition—Houston, Bates, Bell, Craig, Gilkey, Molenaar, Schoening and our compatriot Streather—effected a lodgment on the upper slopes of K2. But fortune was less kind. Camp VIII was established at 25,500 feet on August 1st. From August 3rd to 9th the entire party was storm bound at that camp. On August 7th Gilkey was found to have developed thrombophlebitis. Blood clots had formed in the veins of his left calf, cutting off the circulation and jeopardising the leg. The fair prospect of the summit was changed by that stroke to a forlorn hope of regaining the base, as Houston the doctor knew at once. But for two days the party hung on hoping for the weather to improve for the retreat, and in a short lull on the first of these days Schoening and Craig climbed a further 400 feet up steep new snow in dense mist. The storm returned. It lasted throughout the 9th. The 10th was another day of storm but the sick man had developed a pulmonary embolism and the very slight chance of successful retreat through the storm had to be weighed against the certainty of Gilkey's death if the party stayed longer in the high camp. They had already endured eight days, without oxygen, at 25,500 feet.

The retreat began down a moderate snow slope which gradually steepened to a groove between a rock ridge and a steep ice slope on the left. The ascent had been made up the ice slope, but new snow had rendered it impossible as a descending line. Below the ice slope the ground eased to 45°, before a further and tremendous plunge. The sick man was lowered down the groove with hand signals relayed through the blizzard to the belay. A snow avalanche almost dislodged his nearest companion, Craig, who had unroped to maintain the relay

of signals, but by a desperate effort he held on to Gilkey's rope. The grim descent continued. At the foot of the groove Craig and Molenaar crossed the ice slope where it eased to the site of Camp VII, a tiny platform hacked out by Schoening and Gilkey in the ascent. Craig unroped again to enlarge the platform, and Molenaar went back to tie on to Gilkey as a preliminary to swinging him across. Schoening held Gilkey from an axe that was driven into a wedge of snow behind a boulder frozen to the slope. Bell and Streather on one rope and Houston and Bates on another began to cross above Gilkey and Molenaar to help in the swinging process. In the savage wind Bell slipped and pulled off Streather who in turn dislodged Houston and Bates. The rope from Gilkey to Molenaar was below them and Molenaar was swept from his stance. All five were plunging towards the gulf when fortune momentarily relented. Streather and Bates became entangled in the rope from Gilkey to Molenaar and Schoening held five men who had slid distances of between 150 and 300 feet on a 45° slope, besides the static weight of a helpless sixth. All were more or less damaged by the fall; Houston most seriously. He had bad concussion and a haemorrhage that affected his right eye, and for some time he was completely bewildered and could make no effort to reascend. It was beyond the diminished strength of the rest to pull him up. "Charlie," said Bates, remembering the names of Houston's wife and daughter, "if you ever want to see Dorcas and Penny again, climb up there right now." It was an inspired remark that penetrated for a moment the fog of delirium, and experience and instinct did the rest. When all five had gained the ledge of Camp VII, and two tents had been precariously secured to pitons, Houston and Bell (whose gloves had been torn off in the fall) were left in shelter in the care of Molenaar. Meanwhile Craig had recrossed to secure Gilkey to a new anchor and release Schoening. When the latter had reached the tents, exhausted after his great efforts, Streather, Craig, and Bell returned for Gilkey who had been left, secured to two well-driven axes, on the ice 150 feet away, within shouting distance in the lulls but hidden by a low rib of rock. As the party reached the rock rib there was a brief lull, and they could see that the windswept ice was bare. A new groove showed where an avalanche had swept away the sick man and his anchorage since his last shout a few minutes earlier. The slope vanished into the storm below.

The survivors' position was desperate enough. In their two tents tethered to an ice slope at 24,500 feet, one was delirious with concussion, one had badly frostbitten hands and feet and had lost the spectacles without which he could not see properly, one had a broken rib, and one a very bad chest. Craig and Streather had suffered least, and when dawn came and the wind rose again they added a little cooking to the tea-making that had kept the party going through the night. Below lay Camp VI at 23,300 feet. For the most part the snow and ice covered slabs offered no belays, but fixed ropes had been left on the very steep sections of bare rock, for which claws had to be removed

with numbed fingers. By a signal effort of will and endurance the party reached Camp VI in safety.

Next day the weather was worse, but Streather and Schoening took advantage of a lull to descend to Camp V since food and fuel were short at VI. On the 13th the weather relented slightly, and the whole party reached Camp IV, below the very steep rock where House's Chimney forms the most technically difficult part of the route. They were going well now, notwithstanding injuries, frostbite, exhaustion and shock, and in two more days they reached the base. Seldom in the history of mountaineering can a party have extricated itself from so desperate a situation.

The book is well written (mostly by Bates and Houston, but Craig and Bell have contributed chapters). The situations are lucidly described; the general features of the route and the sequence of events during the accident are illustrated by admirably clear drawings. The reader will not be deceived by the modest and simple style of the narrative. Only skill, resolution, and devotion of the highest order could have carried through this terrible retreat without total disaster.

G. F. PEAKER.

KANCHENJUNGA. By John Tucker. (Elek Books, London, 21/-)

It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that in current Himalayan literature the personal stories of the Hillarys, the Tenzings, are more widely read than the accounts of small expeditions, which may, in the long run, be of greater intrinsic interest. This book is doubly unfortunate in that it was published shortly after the successful attempt on the mountain this year.

Nevertheless, it makes interesting reading. The 1954 Kanchenjunga Reconnaissance was a vital link in the chain of events, starting in 1899 with Freshfield's circumambulation, continuing with the great expeditions to the North and North-East faces of the mountain between 1929 and 1931, and culminating on May 25th, 1955. Great credit is due to Kempe and Lewis for their temerity in taking a party to a face of the mountain which had already cost five lives, on which the greatest height reached had been less than 22,000 feet, and which had been dismissed as unjustifiable (on inadequate grounds, it is true) by the late F. S. Smythe.

The party had appalling weather on the way out to the mountain, although it would not appear to be much worse than that experienced by Dyrenfurth's party in crossing the Kang La in 1930. The Northern end of the Singalila Ridge would seem to be a place to avoid until at least the end of April, and the low level route suggested by Lewis and taken by this year's expedition was much more satisfactory, although scenically less interesting.

Despite a shortage of food during the greater part of the expedition, Kempe's party did a great deal of valuable exploration. One wonders what more would have been achieved had the time spent in the exploration of the Talung Cwm been employed elsewhere. The Cwm

is so inhospitable, and (this year at least) so continually swept by avalanches that it is surprising that so much time was spent in it, magnificent as the feat of entering it was. Wholly admirable, however, was the way in which, once the Talung Cwm route had been abandoned, the assault on the Lower Icefall was carried out and brought to a very nearly successful conclusion.

One or two criticisms may be levelled against the book. It is untrue to say (p. 216) that the route up the Pache's Grave slopes, used in 1955, is only a slight alteration to that suggested by Kempe's party. Its adoption entailed moving Base Camp about half a mile, and the almost complete by-passing of the Lower Icefall. In this connection it is interesting to note that the upper illustration facing p. 177 shows the key to the Pache's Grave route, the prominent snow gully descending from the "Hump" to the upper part of the Lower Icefall, and, considering the obvious accessibility of the slopes above Pache's Grave, one is surprised that this particular possibility is not really discussed at all. Further, the route up the Upper Icefall recommended appeared this year to be exposed to avalanches, and a route was taken much nearer the centre of the fall.

Mr. Tucker's style is pleasing on the whole, but occasionally he strives too much after effect. On p. 106 his imagination appears to have run away with him. Excursions into spiritualism have no place in Himalayan mountaineering. He also degenerates not infrequently into what one might call a *Wide World* style, with its pipes, enormous meals, yarns spun round the camp fire, and the heavy facetiousness that goes with it—jokes about not washing, absent table manners, etcetera.

The photographs vary in quality. A few are good, most mediocre, and the rest bad. The author cannot be blamed for this state of affairs, which appears to be endemic among mountaineering books produced in Great Britain. The captions of two of the illustrations are incorrect. The upper one facing p. 113 shows, not White Wave, but the two peaks of Jannu, and the lower of the two facing p. 193 shows two of the peaks, about 21,000 feet, which bound the Tso Glacier on the north east.

Once opened, this book proved difficult to put down. One has the impression of a well led, resolute, and above all, a happy party. It is an essential part of the story of the attempt on Kanchenjunga, and is a welcome change from the spate of books on Everest.

E. J. CLEGG.

TO THE THIRD POLE. By G. O. Dyrenfurth. Translated by Hugh Merrick. (Werner Laurie, 30/-)

Professor Dyrenfurth brings the whole apparatus of scholarship, research and bibliography to bear in this very worthy, but heavy, compilation on "the Battle for the World's Greatest Peaks," the eight-thousanders of the Himalaya and Karakoram. "Nothing but the truth," he writes, "is my solemn aim." He achieves it solemnly.

As a compilation, the work is painstaking and careful ; and therefore accurate beyond my power to detect error—I found only one mistake, and that in the initial of a climber. Dyrenfurth is comprehensive, and packs an immense amount of information about expeditions into less than 250 pages. Nearly all the relevant facts for assessment are here ; though sometimes it is not made clear whether oxygen was used, which is unjust, e.g. to Buhl on Nanga Parbat. In spite of some earnest pronouncements (e.g. on Annapurna “ there were no actual scientists ; the absence of a topographer, geographer, or geologist being particularly regrettable ”), his judgments are those of a distinguished Himalayan veteran, and nearly always convince as fair-minded and sound. He enlivens his chronicle with occasional first-hand experiences from his own expeditions ; and provides beautiful photographs and clear sketch maps of the mountains of “ the Third Pole ” in a finely-produced book.

He disdains mere readability. In notes on Nomenclature and Doubtful Altitude, he tackles decisively (except where he recommends the unpromising “ double name ”: “ Mount Everest or Chomo Lungma ”) the names and heights of the mountains ; and closes usually with a geological note.

In short, an admirable compendium and work of reference. As such, its chief defect is not the fault of the author but of events which have been a great trouble to him. The book appeared in German in 1952, when only one of his 14 “ eight thousanders ” had been climbed. By redoubtable efforts of additional writing and revision, author and translator have included the events of 1953 (Everest, Nanga Parbat) in the text of this edition ; and of 1954 (K2, Cho Oyu) in a supplement. But Kanchenjunga and Makalu still escape the author's efforts to catch up. Although this gives the reader the wicked pleasure of hindsight in reading a condemnation of all the faces of Kanchenjunga, a better history of any “ battle ” can be written after, not before its climax.

But we should then have missed some of the interesting notes on Future Possibilities, e.g. the excitement of reading of Lhotse : “ The recommended route is the North Ridge.”

Such a sentence, as it might be out of a C.C. or Alpine guide-book, reminds us of the world of our own individual adventure and sport. It is perhaps unfair to Professor Dyhrenfurth's academic labours of love to express misgivings that, in this self-conscious and historically-minded age, our sport has increasingly to bear the weight of so much chronicle, tabulation, and annotation.

DAVID BRYSON.

THE MOUNTAIN WORLD, 1955. (Allen and Unwin, 25/-)

The scope of this annual has been somewhat extended and this year includes stories of expeditions in the Andes, New Zealand, the Karakoram, Turkey, the Sahara and Abyssinia. Interspersed in the descriptive articles are others on such subjects as Midget Aircraft,

Sherpa Training, Flying over Everest and one piece of very tough meat called "Remains of Old Ice Sheets constituting Plateau Glaciation in the Tropics." On the whole articles written by members of this club are among the best, but the whole effect is bewildering, and I cannot help feeling that some of the general articles would be better omitted.

This, needless to say, does not apply to the first essay in the book—Geoffrey Winthrop Young on "Courage, and Mountain Writing"; this is a piercing analysis of the present-day mountain book and the wise advice of the last paragraph should be taken as a text by everyone who climbs and wants (or is compelled) to write. Briefly, what he says is that you have to tell three stories at once (what you saw, what you did, and what you thought), but if you master the technique of doing this your book will be read and re-read.

The account of the 1954 German-Austrian Karakoram expedition is rather dull. There is a very short and ultra-modest account by Tissières of the Cambridge Rakaposhi reconnaissance; a full account of the Italian success on K2, a well-told story of a full and well-equipped expedition (a caption mentions tubular-steel furniture and a fitted carpet at the Base Camp). Tichy has contributed a spirited account of Cho Oyu, although he uses a maddening flash-back technique, a great pity in a story that is in itself highly dramatic. Lowe's article on the 1954 Barun Valley expedition is straightforward and very well illustrated. Once again there is a charming Japanese piece (called "Uprising of the Faithful") which describes their repulse, by hostile villagers, from Manaslu, and their subsequent "wanderings" in the Ganesh Himal. Marcel Kurz's comprehensive 1954 chronicle deals with Makalu, the Kanchenjunga reconnaissance, Gaurisankar, Dhaulagiri and the disastrous Ghiglione attempt on Api.

Fog descended on "Midget Aircraft on Mountain Giants"—I couldn't understand it. Pugh's article on the scientific background to Everest is good, if belated. There is a confusing and disappointing survey of mountaineering in Turkey which will not help intending visitors; Busk's Abyssinian survey, however, is admirable—clear, complete, amusing and encouraging. The 1954 Austrian Alpine Club expedition to the Cordillera Huayhuash is well described, but the best descriptive article in the book is John Pascoe's "Beyond the Arawata."

This is a grand story of a three-week holiday trek by a party of four across the New Zealand Southern Alps—they call it swagging—involving every problem of bush, gorge, river and icefall, in wholly deserted and largely unexplored country. There is nothing sensational, but the narrative is vivid and absorbing, giving a wonderful picture of this fascinating region and its unique and charming explorers.

NIGEL VINEY.

COMMANDO CLIMBER. By Mike Banks, Captain, Royal Marines.  
(Dent, 18/-)

Mike Banks, a regular Marine Officer, started to climb immediately after the war, when returning from the Third Commando Brigade in

Burma and finding life in barracks not to his taste, he went on a course at the Commando Cliff Assault Centre at St. Ives. As a peace-time service establishment it was, while it lasted, unique. Of course it could not last and, in 1950, although climbing training continued, the economy cuts got St. Ives. By this time, however, Banks had had several years there as an instructor and a short period of detachment to the Mediterranean to teach climbing. Then he went on to the Glasgow R.M.F.V.R. as regular adjutant, and took his volunteer reservists climbing at Glencoe and on Ben Nevis. Meanwhile he was spending his leaves in the classic centres of British rock climbing and in the Alps. In the summer of 1951, he visited Greenland with a reconnaissance party of the British North Greenland Expedition and, a year later, went with the main expedition and spent two years on the ice cap. He used the enforced immobility of the Arctic winter to write this book, which tells his story of climbing and exploration. It ends with a description of his climb with Richard Brooke in 1951 of the Route Major on Brenva by moonlight, a dramatic climax to a colourful and varied story.

One is bound to pick up a book with a title like this with mixed feelings. The story is very well worth telling, but it could easily be just another line-shoot about supermen. Yet too flat an account, apart from being dull and unreadable, would not be a true picture of a life which has a great deal of activity and adventure in it. Dull or boastful it is certainly not. Banks writes without self-consciousness. When the mountains impress him or he admires his companions, he says so. Sometimes he gushes a little, but must we always look over our shoulder for the cynic? He resembles the Victorian mountaineers in the unsophistication of his approach. Like them, he is interested in the people he meets, and like them he can laugh. Like them, in fact, he can be himself. His approach to his fellows is not that of the Victorian British upper middle class, nor his jokes, need it be said, about bottles of Bouvier. Just as he is not a Victorian, so he is not of the post-World War I generation, with its distrust of enthusiasm and its carefully guarded speech. His is the generation of the subalterns and company commanders of World War II. Idealism and a ready sense of the laughable, in themselves and others, were the characteristic of many of that generation, and these are evident here. Now that generation in turn is ageing, and one wonders how the next will express itself. Mountaineers are, however, conservative and tend to model their writing on that of their predecessors, so one welcomes a book which naturally and engagingly expresses the personality and the period of its author.

There are those who view with suspicion climbing as part of military training. If it were a question, as it is not, of forcing unwilling conscripts up rock faces, it would, of course, be deplorable. The best sort of military training is alive and cheerful. It sets out to appeal to the idealism, which lies beneath the superficial apathy of youths in their late 'teens and to help them make themselves the sort of men who



would be good in a tight corner. With that aim, you naturally reject the idea of military training as a dreary, apathetic grind, just as you reject the bogus toughness that the inimitable Charles Vaughan, the war-time commando trainer, christened café gangsterism. So, inevitably, you turn to the sea and the mountains. Banks gives a picture of what can be done and, far more important, the spirit in which it has been done. Most people, however, will not worry too much about military training. To them, one can say that this book is a colourful and engaging personal story about climbing and Arctic exploration.

The photographs are rather disappointing ; the reproductions of Banks' excellent colour slides appear flat in black and white. Lillias Stirling's drawings are almost all successful, but one must regret the choice of dust cover and frontispiece, which is neither flattering nor realistic. A short foreword by Brigadier Sir John Hunt signifies his sympathy with the spirit in which the book is written.

J. L. MOULTON.

THE ISLAND HILLS. By Campbell Steven. (Hurst and Blackett, 18/-)

This book consists of a series of accounts of the author's visits to some of the islands off the west coast of Scotland. These remote places are, with the exception of Skye and Arran, probably no more than rather attractive-sounding names to most English climbers, and are likely to remain so. Mr. Steven, however, lives in Glasgow : a positional advantage that, coupled with very considerable determination and ingenuity, has enabled him to reach in a week-end as far afield as Handa, an island not far south of Cape Wrath. Whether it is really worthwhile to travel 540 miles to spend only nine hours there is answered by the author in his Introduction : "The shortest island sojourn is always infinitely worthwhile, if the alternative is never to be there at all." Once this premise is accepted considerable merit can be found in the demonstration of dexterity whereby even the most formidable objections (not least the vigours of Sabbath observance in the far north and west) can be overcome. The lessons to be drawn can in theory be applied wherever one lives, but the logistics of Mr. Steven's lightning swoops are valid only north of the Border, in particular for Glasgow, whence, with such a wealth of mountain country so readily available close at hand, it seems unlikely that many enthusiasts will be found to follow in his footsteps.

The title is something of a misnomer ; it is the islands, and the difficulties of reaching them, that give the common theme, not the hills which in many cases are almost non-existent. The book may attract fewer readers than it deserves because of a style sometimes forced and sometimes pedestrian, especially in the middle chapters. The photographs, although plentiful enough, could perhaps have been better and fewer.

J. A. BATTERSBY.

A PICTORIAL GUIDE TO THE LAKELAND FELLS. By A. Wainwright.  
(Henry Marshall, Kentmere, 12/6)

The publishers state in their blurb that this book is "quite out of the ordinary," and they are not far wrong. The author too is very anxious to make his own position clear: "This book is one man's way of expressing his devotion to Lakeland's friendly hills. It was conceived, and is born, after many years of inarticulate worship at their shrines. It is, in truth, a love letter." However, one must not be put off too easily, because the book contains some good things.

Mr. Wainwright takes each of the three dozen or so fells of the Helvellyn-Fairfield range alphabetically by turn, and describes them in some four to 10 pages of text, maps, diagrams and line drawings. The text is pedestrian in more senses than one, but includes some quite reasonable advice as to which are the more agreeable ways for the walker. The author is however a little overawed by cloudy conditions, and not infrequently warns us, "Not safe in mist," with on one occasion the intriguing variant, "Not quite safe in mist."

The sketch-maps and the drawings are very good. The maps appear to be accurate and give a far more complete survey of paths and crags than is available on any of the standard maps. As each fell is treated separately the maps cover only quite small areas and the adjoining sheet is often hidden many pages away; it is a pity that all the information was not displayed on one sheet. The frequent indicator "circle diagrams" to identify the views from a peak are of doubtful value; if the walker cannot read a map he will hardly fare better with these somewhat mathematical diagrams.

Finally there are the line drawings, which are excellent. Although quite simple, they combine accurate topographical detail with a delightful freshness of approach. The book is nicely produced, is hand printed, and is the first of a series of seven volumes planned to cover the whole Lake District.

JOHN WILKS.

BELOW SCAPELL. By Dudley Hoys. Oxford University Press  
(London: Geoffrey Cumberlege), 10/6.

This is about a sheep farm in Eskdale. It has nothing about climbing, and not much about hill walking, beyond a chapter of anecdotes about searches for the lost. But mountaineers are not the only people who use, and enjoy, Lakeland or Welsh hills. There are also the farmers, and most of us are shamefully ignorant about them. This is a short book; it gives no more than a few glimpses of the farmer's life; and Mr. Hoys is not quite a typical farmer or he would not be writing this book. But the glimpses take us momentarily into the peaceful, introspective world of sheep and sunshine and wind and rain that we ourselves see so closely, from just the other side of the stone wall, but which remains obstinately private and oddly remote, Shangri-La in the next field.

A.K.R.

A TREASURY OF MOUNTAINEERING STORIES. Edited by Daniel Talbot.  
(Peter Davies. 279 pages. 15/- net)

Mr. Talbot writes in his preface to these 19 stories that he has seen no mountains other than the Alleghenies and that he has never attempted to climb one. I trust that on his first serious ascent, say Moel Siabod from P.y.G., he is more suitably accompanied than most of the characters in this collection. For consider. William and Alfred go for a walk ("The Stream") and Alfred, as well he might, gets on William's nerves. In the result Alfred is pushed over a small cliff by William and breaks his legs. The next day William returns to the spot with a rucksack full of stones and bashes in Alfred's skull as a preparatory move in his own suicide plan. Climb alone would seem to be the moral of this rather dreary little tale.

Mr. Ullman's well-known "Top man" is here, in which, having caused the death of his leader, a young American mountaineer, Osborn, produces a trick ending to the story by a combination of valour and understatement which would have been out of place in the *Boy's Own Paper* of the 'nineties. But Mr. Talbot must not go climbing with that fictional Osborn.

These stories create in the mind of the reader a strong impression that women invariably cause trouble in the hills. They fall in love with guides ("Maiden, Maiden") and tragic consequences ensue, they venture on great mountains with bounders and witness porters left to die for the sake of the peak ("A Splendid Fellow"), and they thrill into full womanhood ("The Ascent") when after a piece of sheer stupidity they feel the "subdued purr of his breath" against their cheeks, and something about "slender artist's fingers" pressing their arms. Mr. Talbot must at all costs seek male company. He doesn't want to find himself looking down in the direction of Capel only to discover that his companion has gone nuts about him and generally nuts as well. That kind of thing complicates any walk.

But Mummery is in this collection (full of Bouvier and *bonhomie*) and so is Miss Knowlton with her delicious "Petite Première in the Mont Blanc Massif." No fictional characters these. C. E. Montague is here but represented by, as I think, his rather poor story, "Action." A most beautiful little tale, "Their Kingdom," by R. Frison Roche, seems to me to possess all the smell and feel of mountains, and there is a strange story by St. John Ervine, "The Mountain," which I liked very much indeed.

Finally there are two comic tales. The classic, "Little Mother up the Mörderberg," by H. G. Wells and, for all that I think death out of place in humorous stories, a magnificent skit on artificial climbing, "The Great Match," by Etienne Bruhl. For anyone who has ever sat in a bar in hill country when the climbers arrive for beer and reminiscence, this story is worth the whole price of admission.

KEVIN FITZGERALD.

MOUNTAINEERING. By Janet Adam Smith. (National Book League Readers' Guide.) Cambridge University Press, 1955. 2/6.

This is a personal selection by Miss Janet Adam Smith of just over one hundred mountaineering books past and present. The list is limited to books in English, published in this country. It is divided into sections by subject and is long enough to include almost all the obvious books on each topic, and some not so obvious. Here and there one could make a case for adding one or two more, or for omitting one or two that are included. But anyone who read everything in the list would be well read in mountain literature. It would be interesting to know how many members of the Climbers' Club have done so. The reviewer is not among them. A.K.R.

INTRODUCTION TO MOUNTAINEERING. The Beaufort Library, Vol. IV. By Showell Styles. (Seeley Service, 1954. 15/-)

The publication of yet another mountaineering textbook perhaps appears unjustified since, to anyone who has read many of the existing texts, the whole subject is already worn threadbare. It only remains to skim the pages casually, to see which of the points of accepted technique in Geoffrey Winthrop Young's definitive "Mountain Craft" have been retained and which, through limitations of space and terms of reference, have been omitted, to judge the quality of the illustrations, and to see if any innovations of climbing technique or moves have been included.

However easy it may be to approach such a book in this way, it is, to my mind, undoubtedly wrong, for it is not written to be analysed by someone familiar with all its predecessors. It is written for the beginner who unearths it in a bookshop, glad at last to find written guidance on a sport which has previously been only exciting but obscure hearsay. Judged by these standards, repetitiveness is not a fault but an advantage. The book must be sure to repeat the accepted maxims briefly but clearly. Limitations in its scope are also an advantage. The definitive textbook, as I have said, has already appeared, and for an author (or publisher) to plan a book on only a part of mountaineering, will lighten its style and weight.

*Introduction to Mountaineering* succeeds in both these directions. Its message is direct and includes an adequate amount of basic lore, clearly stated. By limiting his subject to an introduction only, Showell Styles has been able to preserve a light anecdotal vein, which is also much to the book's good. For further stages in climbing it is quite conveniently supplemented by Wedderburn's *Alpine Climbing on Foot and with Ski*, recently revised by C. Douglas Milner (C.C.£., 1955, p. 162).

Styles has found room to include chapters on "Manners and Traditions" and on the "Future of Mountaineering," both of which are useful. By giving only an introduction to the sport, he has, correctly I think, omitted peg climbing techniques. This does not, however, entitle him to pass them by with a condescending sniff (p. 35). What, incidentally, are swivel-rings? I believe they may be used by fire-brigades, but not by pegophiles.

The illustrations are a little uneven, the action photographs being better than the line drawings. A few points seem to me rather less than the best advice. Firstly, to advocate a shoulder belay at this stage seems retrograde. The habit of the waist belay is easily adopted, and anyone who has listened to Ken Tarbuck's remarks on the subject is likely to prefer it. Having held a leader on a waist belay after a 25-foot free fall three weeks before writing this review, I am no doubt prejudiced. To my surprise, the sliding arrest brought him to a dead stop with only bruises, and did not burn my ungloved hands. Styles is not correct to suggest that in the waist belay the shock absorber is "the spring of a human body"; it is, of course, gradually applied friction. Moreover, if, as he says, the waist belay is preferable in "rock climbing of high standard," why should it not also be preferable at lower standards? Secondly, I agree that the belay round the pick of an axe driven into steep ice (figure 14) is insecure and at best "psychological," but here again surely the waist belay on firm foothold in ice steps is superior to the shoulder belay in the same situation. The real answer is doubtless an ice peg. Thirdly, there is a point on crevasse rescue (a fascinating and theoretical subject in which there are a great deal more extraction drills than people who have had to use them in earnest). It seems to me that if the rope Y in Styles' method (figure 17) was fixed at one end to an axe, and pulled by two men from that side only, its mechanical advantage as a snatch-block would remain good, whereas pulled from opposite sides of the crevasse, as in his diagram, the angle at K will become so open as to prevent further raising of the fallen man by the two above.

Finally, there are two small points of interest to the club. It seems odd to mention *Snowdon South*, which is far from being published, whilst omitting *The Carneddau*, published five years ago, in a list of the club's guide-books; and please may we have Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, not d'ur Arddu?

These minor cavils do not in any serious way detract from what will surely be found a useful introductory work.

G. H. FRANCIS.

THE TECHNIQUE OF MOUNTAINEERING. By J. E. B. Wright. (Nicholas Kaye, 10/6)

This might have been an important book. A manual of technique by Mr. Wright, creator of the Mountaineering Association and now its director of training, might have had a wide influence, for many are now being introduced to climbing through the Association, whose official *imprimatur* appears on the cover. But even disciples may be disappointed in this, if only because it is so unexpectedly less informative than other existing textbooks.

It would perhaps be too much to expect literary grace, but more trouble ought to have been taken to achieve at least coherence. We are told the book took five years to write, but despite that, or perhaps because of too many afterthoughts, it reads not like a finished book

but like notes for a book, a series of disconnected paragraphs, many of which have got into the wrong place. Not less odd than the arrangement is the selection and balance of topics. "The desire is to place at the reader's disposal a review of essential information and in doing this the greatest difficulty has been one of compression consistent with appropriate emphasis" (page 52). Mr. Wright acknowledges that the choice of topics will cause controversy. He has 13 pages on map reading, including intervisibility, and less than three for the whole of Part III, to cover camping, huts, food and clothing; seven pages on advanced Alpine rescue technique with wire ropes and portable capstans, but only five lines for avalanches, falling stones, falling ice, and cornices. There is a four-page chapter headed "High Altitude Climbing," of which two pages are taken up with a polemic against large expeditions to the Himalaya, but the Alps come in only incidentally, in a sketchy and staccato chapter on snow and ice climbing; winter climbing in Britain is not discussed at all.

Mr. Wright's style is oracular. His prejudices, few of which are shared by the reviewer, are stated with confident dogmatism. His views on technique, so far as they appear, are mostly orthodox and conservative, but he shows little acquaintance with current practice. In the rock-climbing chapter he makes the good point that some of the discussion of the theories of Tarbuck and Wexler has blurred the truth that a leader's best safeguard against falls is to refrain from falling. But to make this point it is not necessary, nor in a textbook excusable, to dismiss further safeguarding technique and to suggest that a leader should ask no more of the second man than to see that the leader's rope runs out freely. This may be the view of a professional guide. It is not a doctrine to be accepted in a responsible party.

On food Mr. Wright agrees with the Bourdillon dictum, that there should be some. He quotes with approval the following load carried by four guideless climbers for a stay of seven days "at one of the highest huts in the Bernese Oberland": 6 lb. of fresh butter, 7 lb. of cheese, 7 lb. of macaroni, 10 lb. of sugar, 3 lb. of tea, 13 lb. of milk powder and tinned milk, 120 fresh eggs (one was broken), 10 lb. of fresh beefsteak, 4 lb. of bacon, 7 lb. of jam, 7 lb. of marmalade, 36 lb. of new potatoes, 14 lb. of spinach, 14 lb. of cabbage, 14 lb. of dried apricots, 2 lb. of soup powder, 28 lb. of white bread and 14 lb. of oatmeal. "Each climber had 15 lb. of spare clothing and equipment, but all the food supplies were in lightweight containers. Each rucksack with individual possessions weighed nearly 60 lb. . . . It was an arduous journey which took nine hours." Their determination was better than Mr. Wright's arithmetic.

Mr. Wright's object was "to make available to all a pocket-sized book at a modest price which could be carried about and studied at odd moments." This may explain its shoddy appearance. The print is cramped, the drawings too small and grubby. There are several good photographs.

It cannot be too widely known that the statement on page 134, "At most mountain huts a warden will do the chores," does not apply to Climbers' Club huts.

A.K.R.

MONT BLANC AND THE AIGUILLES. By C. Douglas Milner. (Robert Hale Ltd.)

Douglas Milner seems to be moving from the camera to the pen. His early books were primarily photographic ; his "Dolomites" was a well-balanced mixture ; in this book the photographs occupy a secondary position and it is in the role of historian that he now appears.

The first two thirds of this book are an orderly historical progression from Windham and Pocock's visit to Chamonix in 1741 (" . . . after climbing with great Labour for four Hours and three Quarters we got to the top of the Mountain ", the Mountain being the Montanvert) to Allain's "l'alpinisme, jeu ardent et dangereux des derniers chevaliers de l'aventure". This is no survey potted from the standard histories ; Milner has obviously read widely and gone back to original accounts. Often his researches have led him down fascinating back streets of Alpine history, and in the main avenues his commentary has a stimulating freshness, for his conclusions are by no means always in accordance with traditional judgments. It seems to me that the reasons for this are twofold : he has been able to keep his perspective right, and at the same time to project himself back to the particular times. Thus, he is able, for example, to dismiss quite plausibly the famous judgment that "the death of Hudson held back for a full generation the tide of Alpine exploration." The early and middle sections are very good, but the last sections, the Stone Age 1875-1914 and the Iron Age 1919-1939, are regrettably compressed ; the manner of evolution is sketched in but the reasons for it and the fundamentally influential ascents and persons are not so apparent.

This is a pity for obvious reasons, and especially because this is the first English book to treat the inter-war period in an objective fashion. To the present generation of British climbers this period is more fascinating and enigmatic than any other. Why, except for a few isolated examples, was British mountaineering in the Alps at its nadir ? How much was the result of the pull of the Himalayas, or how much to the bias of *Alpine Journal* editors fighting a skilful rearguard action ? (They were brilliant at selecting the right quotation, and at devastatingly effective comment by use of the word *sic*.) Or were these symptoms and not causes ? The complex interplay of emotive forces and facts here would make a fascinating analysis. This book attempts it briefly, but objectively and with sufficient research. There is, too, a balanced discussion on the related but in this country still vexed problem, the piton. It is a pity that there is no account of another interesting phenomenon, the renaissance of British Alpine mountaineering, significantly in the Mont Blanc area, since 1950.

The last third of the book is essentially a guide to centres and expeditions. After the first two thirds this seems out of place and neither amplifies or substitutes for the Vallot. The 70 illustrations are all the author's, a remarkable feat for they cover the whole area from end to end. Most, but not all, are of the standard you would expect. It is difficult to single out particular ones for mention, but there are some striking telephotographs of the Aiguille Noire, and by no means least, two photographs of the Biolay which will surely in years to come be looked back on by the inhabitants of the early '50s with the same sentimental nostalgia as the pioneers looked back on the flea and hay loft. There are four excellent sketch maps.

The greatest fault of this book is not the author's: it costs 30/-. For, to ascend the pulpit, the people who ought to buy and digest it "to broaden their minds" are the impecunious of the Biolay.

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

THE UNTRODDEN ANDES. C. G. Egeler in co-operation with T. de Booy. Translated from the Dutch by W. E. James. (Faber and Faber, 25/-)

At first sight, there is little to distinguish this book from all the other expedition books, except that it is unusually well produced and that the photographs are good. The obviously over-written blurb on the dust jacket makes one fear the worst, and the opening page seems to promise more information about the spiritual development of the senior author than about climbing. It turns out, however, that this is a very good book. Egeler has something to say, and he says it simply, directly and with obvious enjoyment. After some initial hesitation with the origins of the expedition, the narrative gathers pace and the reader's attention is held as the story unfolds.

Egeler and de Booy went to Peru both to climb and to do some geological research. After a month of geology, during which time, incidentally, they acquired some useful acclimatisation, they started to carry out their climbing plans. They made the first ascent of a peak in the Pongos massif which they christened the Nevado Queshque, and then they retired to the valley to extend their scientific investigations and to await the third member of the party.

The third man was the formidable Lionel Terray, and the impact of his personality is at once apparent to the reader. On his arrival, although he had been in France only five days before, he immediately took over the lead, and in two days of hard climbing led Egeler and de Booy to the top of the Nevado Pongos. This is the principal peak of the massif and rises to 18,700 feet.

The party was now ready to attack their chief objective, the Nevado Huantsan which, at nearly 21,000 feet, was then the highest unclimbed peak of the Cordillera Blanca. Their first attempt was on the north ridge and nearly ended in disaster. After turning back with only two hours of daylight to spare, Terray decided to rope down the steep side of the ridge to the glacier below. De Booy missed his footing at the



end of the first *rappel* and, after a breathless minute with his foot caught in the end of the rope, fell 300 feet to the glacier. Miraculously, he escaped with nothing worse than bruising and shock. Egeler and Terray, who had himself slipped 40 feet while attempting to save de Booy, rejoined their companion on the glacier and the three of them spent a cold night out at 18,000 feet. Next morning, even the iron Terray confessed that he could hardly keep upright, but the party managed at last to reach base camp and safety.

A fortnight later, after a blizzard had imposed a longer delay than they had planned, they began their successful assault on the north-west ridge. Three Indian porters helped them to carry Camp II, at 18,000 feet, but from there the Europeans were on their own. In three days, they were on the summit, having overcome considerable technical difficulties on ice and snow, as well as carrying heavy loads to over 20,000 feet. An impression of unshakeable determination and sheer hard work remains with the reader. He forgets for a while, as they must have forgotten, the danger to which they were exposed, isolated on a difficult ridge two days from easy ground, with but one tent and no reserves of food or fuel.

This, then, is a most enjoyable book about a most interesting expedition. It was clearly a very happy and well knit party. The telling of the story could hardly be bettered.

The book could have been improved in a few details. The climbing reader would have welcomed some information about costs and some more about equipment. The Annapurna Expedition was not the first to reach 8,000 metres. Every book of this kind ought to have an index. The price is somewhat high.

M. H. WESTMACOTT.

THE DESCENT OF PIERRE SAINT MARTIN. By Norbert Casteret.  
Translated by J. Warrington. (Dent, 18/-)

M. Castaret is a writer and cave-explorer of the greatest experience. This book is divided into two parts ; the first, as the title indicates, tells of the exploration of that now notorious cave system in the Pyrenees. The expeditions described are strikingly similar in essence to their Himalayan counterpart—the challenge and conquest of unknown difficulties, the supreme problems of equipment and organisation, the disaster of serious accident, and above all the constant monument of human courage and endeavour. Not even the weather can be discounted, for, we are told, nothing is so fatally fascinating to lightning as a pot-hole with a steel cable in it. M. Casteret, a protagonist in all the expeditions, writes of them in a simple and factual style set off by a lively report of dialogue and personal detail that combine together to give us a vivid picture of all aspects of their adventure. Particularly commendable is his refusal to be morbidly sensational in what is a very sensitive account of the central event of the book, Loubens' accident and its aftermath.

The second and shorter part of the book deals with some of the delights that can be found in caves : the most mysterious of mammals, the bat ; primitive cave-drawings executed with wonderful artistry ; and the geological creations that are the flowers of Hades.

M. Casteret is continually aware of the close connection between his sport and mountaineering ; indeed he opens his book with the words : " Climbers and speleologists will long remember 1953. In that year man reached the summit of earth's highest mountain and the bottom of earth's deepest chasm." This book finally demonstrates for me that these sports are the two sides, albeit opposite sides, of the same medal ; and as such it is to be recommended to all interested in mountaineering.

J. S. HOBHOUSE.

#### CLUB JOURNALS

The *Alpine Journal* is rather like *The Times*. It is authoritative, comprehensive and weighty. It is indulgent to elder statesmen, yet up, panting a little, with the *avant-garde* : George Band writes on Kanchenjunga and Professor Desio on K2. It is strong in obituaries, yet not above a jest : H. W. Tilman has a fourth leader on Himalayan Apery. It is the self-appointed guardian of whatsoever things are pure, lovely and of good report, and yet evil is faced : E. A. Wrangham writes on artificial climbing. Moreover it is hard to be critical and indeed rather pointless, for no one is ever persuaded to read or not to read publications like *The Times* and the *A.J.* : you are either an incorrigible addict or a total abstainer. Nevertheless it is still remarkable how few articles in the *A.J.* concern the Alps. To qualify it seems as if a climb must either be E.D. 1954 or P.D. 1860 ; anything that is at once contemporary, familiar and comparatively easy-going is automatically ruled out. When it comes to leadership Mr. Keenlyside is certainly no Plaza Toro.

The *American Alpine Journal* may or may not be like the *New York Times* or any other American newspaper but it has an editorial board consisting of an editor, an assistant editor, a business manager and 11 members ; and the journal itself is correspondingly fat and impressive. It contains to begin with a cheerful account of the Californian expedition to Makalu, the party consisting of nine married men and " a survival instructor." Other articles deal with expeditions to the Andes and Alaska, and one in particular describes the first traverse of Mt. McKinley. There are two Alpine articles, one about a holiday in the Bregaglia which culminated in the north ridge of the Badile, and the other about an accident on the Cresta Rey of Monte Rosa. Nearly all the articles end rather pompously with a " summary of statistics " : these contain enough information to prevent you wondering what on earth the article was about but few if any statistics. Of the reviews, one by Francis P. Farquhar is especially interesting. He marks each of " A Treasury of Mountaineering Stories " out of 20, giving 10 for literary quality (a) and 10 for mountaineering interest (b). On (a) Frison-Roche scores more than Mummery and Montague more than

de Maupassant but this is only mildly provocative ; what makes one really uneasy is to find that someone bluntly called Young gets no more than five on (a) and only one on (b). Mr. Farquhar should walk more delicately than this, for though inquiry kills the qualm we have still had a nasty shock.

The *Canadian Alpine Journal* has several accounts of expeditions both to the Rockies and the Andes but by comparison with Isaac Rosenfeld's article "Your Climbing: Sport or Religion?", they are sorry, superficial stuff. This article has been reprinted from the *New York Times Book Review* and it would be wrong not to tell British climbers at least the gist of what he has to say on so important a subject. "As an American," he admits at the outset, "I have taken my image of sport from baseball: I think of DiMaggio in center loping off at the crack of a bat to shag a fly. . . ." Climbing, Mr. Rosenfeld decides, is not like that ; therefore it is not a sport. Not content, however, with so negative a conclusion he goes on to discover that Mallory's "Because it is there" is exactly equivalent in meaning to God's "I am that I am"; therefore climbing is a religion. Mr. Rosenfeld concludes: "I am not dismayed by the fact that Sir Edmund Hillary, on returning from Everest, spoke of having admired the 'grand view'." Would it, one wonders, have dismayed Mr. Rosenfeld to hear the unholy terms in which Sir Edmund broke the news to his companions?

It is difficult for an English reader to get very excited about the *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, particularly the parts in Afrikaans. And even the articles in English often have forbidding titles like "The Wemmershoek Tafelberg—a new climb," and "Kou Bokkeweld Sneekop Frontal Ascent." However, R. Buckland writes about Scottish winter climbing and pays tribute to "the kind auspices of the hospitable Climbers' Club with its distinguished membership," so we mustn't be churlish. If members of the C.C. went to South Africa I'm sure they'd have as many praises for the Drakensberg as C. C. Turpin has for the English Lakes. (Habitués of Harrison's rocks will be consoled to see from the footnote to p. 29 that it's the same the whole world over: "Natives are especially offended if Europeans walk through their lands even though there is a well-trodden path used by themselves.")

To return to home journals, it is good to see the *Wayfarers'* reappear, pleasingly edited by C. Douglas Milner. R. C. Evans describes the first ascent of the South Peak of Everest and some fine Alpine expeditions are recounted by A. Blackshaw, Dennis Davis and F. A. Smith. It is a pity the accounts of selected meets 1951-54 are so schoolboyish.

The *Rucksack Club Journal* is also attractively produced. V. T. Dillon's article on the W.N.W. face of the Dent d'Hérens elegantly describes and excitingly illustrates a notable expedition. Herbert Hartley has some mellow reminiscences and Allen Stainsby enthuses over Alpine fauna. A summary is provided of all the speeches made

at the annual dinner and near the end in small print room is found to recall a climb on the Salbitschine by a predominantly C.C. party.

The monthly newsletters of the *Oread Mountaineering Club* call for more general treatment. They all have an air of unabashed heartiness. Like Mr. Wilfrid Pickles they are outspoken, intimate and uproariously facetious. But life itself with the Oreads is presumably just as hilarious; the camaraderie of the letters is surely not just a piece of journalistic vamping? But whatever it is, not everyone will like it; and some clubs of course—partly perhaps from fear of it—have none. However, it obviously suits the Oreads, and we can only applaud the vivid way in which the letters both express and foster their own particular brand of *esprit de corps*.

The *Ladies' Alpine Club* comes out in very posh paper. Lady Chorley describes the girdle of Mont Blanc and Eileen Gregory two stirring climbs on the Aiguilles—the “Voie Ryan du Plan” and the west face of the Point Albert; pitches of A2 elicit neither apology nor bravado. Mary Barber quotes from her diary to tell how the 1914 war started in the middle of her Alpine holiday. One entry alone dates her account: “16 August. I played the harmonium in church. Wet day.” Is even “Wet day. I played the harmonium in church” conceivable today? Mabel Burton's portentous Alpine Problem turns out to be what shall we do with a drunken leader.

The *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* is frankly disappointing. The club has decided that its main concern shall be “our own Scottish mountains” and though this policy was slightly amended at the last A.G.M. the editor has since declared that he will admit only “a few outstanding articles” on anything else. This of course is deliberate parochialism but parish magazines need not necessarily be bad. It is obvious however, that the present incumbent has been starved of copy, and like a keen boy scout bent on winning his bushman's thong, he has had to struggle for proficiency badges in such dreary subjects as photography, meteorology and, as a last straw, first aid. It is by way of introduction to this latter subject that A. I. L. Maitland produces a prize platitude. “An accident,” he solemnly informs us, “is an unfortunate event which takes place without one's foresight or expectation.”

By contrast, the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* has no self-imposed limitations to force an unlucky editor into ill-concealed irrelevance. A wife in Wasdale is rightly regarded as no reason at all for neglecting mistresses in Italy or even Nepal, and members of the Fell and Rock entirely succeed in remaining faithful to their own mountains while climbing everyone else's. If only they would bring back as good photographs as the Americans even the S.M.C. might be tempted to commit adultery.

Finally the following sentences taken exclusively from the 1954 *European Outing Report of the Iowa Mountaineers* will give members a few criteria by which they may judge the success of their own Alpine holidays:—

"1. The outing personnel was very talented and members were aware of the wonderful adventure and priceless fellowship they were enjoying.

2. The entire trip was based on a well-planned round-trip transportation schedule worked out in each area by an intelligent group discussion and usually a majority vote decision.

3. Every member climbed at every opportunity.

4. Bad weather had little effect on the morale of personnel: our determination to climb was great enough to overcome the unfavourable weather.

5. The group (which comfortably filled three buses) was the right size for the hut accommodations: we were amazed at the lack of climbers in these famous climbing regions.

6. Each dinner and supper was the equivalent of a banquet and each meal was the occasion for singing and general merriment.

7. Members always obtained adequate sleep.

8. We received price concessions because of our intelligent and courteous inquiries."

P. S. NELSON.

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1955.

OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING, 1955.

These slim volumes reflect the widespread activities of their respective clubs. That there is less outstanding activity in some years than in others is natural enough and anyway the greatest achievements often go unsung. However, there is much to read and enjoy. Wrangham's *Cambridge on Ice* takes us into the Valley of the Shadow of Death on the glistening slopes of Rakaposhi. Bob Downes scatters a careless trail of worn-out socks over climbs which I hardly dare to mention in case he invites me up one, and discovers yet another (good) reason for putting a piton in. Chambers and his party persevered and did really climb a mountain, the Piz Bernina, and must be congratulated in these days of not actually getting to the top. Langmuir successfully uses the "No, let me lead" ploy on Ben Nevis. Nevis seems to have a chastening effect on Sassenachs, which is perhaps just as well, for in winter the Ben can be a different kettle of fish and a dangerous one. Hodges account of the south face of the Obergabelhorn interested me because it seemed to describe much of our own route down from the Arbengrat, when following Brasher's detailed (and erroneous) instructions we left the ridge too soon (admittedly it was snowing, night was approaching, and Mawe was complaining of being struck by lightning). John Longland surveys Iceland—well, some of it—and learns some new swear words.

Both Cambridge and Oxford seem slightly uneasy at the resurgence of sister clubs, but accept them with mixed approval. J. A. B. Denton, the Oxford president, even associates the formation of the O.U.W.M.C. with the danger of an increase in the element of competition in climbing: first up the Napes Needle gets the damsel (not

really) in distress on the top ! Oxford, too, is not afraid to call a spade a spade, if you will pardon the expression : it is the Oxford University Women's M.C. but at Cambridge they are Ladies (like the distinction between an officer and a gentleman ?).

Oxford's dark blue volume seems to me the more enjoyably amateur. Mike Holland and J. A. G. Emery both learn the hazards of winter climbing the hard way. I suppose the Buachaille in winter is as good a place as any to learn that discretion is often the better part of valour. J. White is angry because he feels his club is not fulfilling its task of introducing beginners to the hills. But is this the main function of a University climbing club ? The person who really wants to climb will learn how, willy-nilly, to his own satisfaction. The outstanding climber should be encouraged to give of his best while he can, for his time may well be short enough. As a hut-custodian is reported to have said, "I suppose we must accept the odd footprint on the ceiling if it is to be the only impression left by the meteoric passing of a great climber."

J. R. Johnson takes us in an interesting way up one of the less interesting summits in the Alps, the Tsantaleina. W. G. Roberts discovers for himself the wild and beautiful wastes of the North-West Highlands, a land surely unknown to 95 per cent. of the population of Britain. I am still intrigued by a photo titled modestly "Frontispiece," but I cannot guess where it is. Can we have the answer next year ? I can in honesty say, however, that I enjoyed these journals and that I shall find them interesting when I take them out of my bookshelves in years to come.

D. THOMAS.

THE MOATED MOUNTAIN. By Showell Styles. (Hurst and Blackett, 1955. 18/-)

The Moated Mountain is Bhauda, 21,000 feet, in Nepal, and the book recounts a small private expedition which reconnoitred but did not climb it in 1954. Any such expedition is enterprising, but among its now numerous peers this one had no special significance and little mountaineering achievement. Some may feel that it hardly justifies a book, and that parts ape the jargon of more important expeditions rather pretentiously. But we need not be blasé. Mr. Styles enjoyed his expedition and others will enjoy reading about it. Mr. Styles is a competent writer and this is a readable and pleasant book.

A.K.R.

ASCENT OF K2. By Professor Ardito Desio. (Elek Books. 21/-)

At present very little is known about climbing at really high altitudes. Above 27,000 feet there have been but four successful ascents—Everest, Kanchenjunga, K2 and Makalu—and published data on the problems of extreme altitude are very limited indeed. It follows that in writing the official record of the ascent of K2, Professor Desio has taken on a considerable responsibility. He has not been wholly successful in discharging it.

It is notoriously difficult to get precise or detailed information from hypoxic subjects, but the lacunae here are unnecessarily extensive. Thus, to take the summit day of Campagnoni and Lacedelli, Professor Desio does not say how long the climb took, or at what height they began (they went down an unspecified distance from Camp IX to collect oxygen apparatus before starting), what oxygen flow ratio they used, how long they climbed with extra oxygen before the supply gave out, or how far they climbed without it after it had given out. The picture at intermediate altitudes is better, but still inadequate. And no serious attempt has been made to describe the expedition's equipment. It is a measure of Professor Desio's great achievements as an expedition leader that the omissions of his book should be so disappointing. He suffered a truly formidable handicap in being unable to call on any climber with Himalayan experience, yet his equipment and methods were good enough to overcome the difficulties of K2. A more comprehensive account would have been very valuable.

One of the few facts that has emerged from the blurred world of very high altitudes is that men tend to go better in their second or third seasons than in their first. Professor Desio was without this help, and without the benefit of past high climbing record in choosing his team. In the circumstances his selection was extraordinarily successful. It is a pity that he is not able to say more about the properties demanded of candidates both in the initial recommendations of the Italian Alpine Club and in the subsequent rigorous medical examination. Here, as with the equipment, a specialist appendix would have been of great interest and would not have interrupted the narrative.

Not all Professor Desio's readers will be concerned about the technical adequacy of the account, provided that they have a well written narrative. This in the main there is, though it suffers slightly from the fact that apart from one brief visit to Camp II, Professor Desio led the expedition largely from the base camp, and his account of the struggle going on above is inevitably at times rather remote. It is however redeemed by the chapter on the final assault, phrased in the words of the summit pair, and very refreshing.

The final part of the book is concerned with the work of the expedition in fields other than mountaineering—geography, geology, geophysics, zoology and ethnography. It is interesting to the lay reader, and tantalisingly brief—in particular one would like to know more about the Stak valley glacier which advanced eight miles in three months. Happily it appears from the penultimate sentence of the text that Professor Desio (who in his not overlong life has written 300 scientific papers !) is more at home in these matters, and regards this section of the book as no more than a trivial preamble. "Only when the fruits of our labours are enshrined in the five volumes scheduled for eventual publication. . . ."

Translation and photographs are alike indifferent. The translator could with advantage have been more familiar with the normal British

climbing vocabulary and the book would have been improved by one or two good reproductions of Sella's original photographs.

Finally, and for this one can forgive him much, Professor Desio, who is undoubtedly very patriotic and uninhibited in letting this appear, is also scrupulous in acknowledging debts to the Himalayan experience of other nations. In the whole of the book the reviewer noticed no phrase belittling their efforts. Some nationalism is hard to avoid at the moment, but if it were all in as pleasant an atmosphere as this it could hardly do much harm.

T. D. BOURDILLON.

ZERMATT AND THE VALAIS. By Arnold Lunn. (Hollis and Carter, 1955. 13/6)

It's not a guide book, nor a history book, nor a geography book, it's just Lunn. It bobs about from snatches of *Highways and Byways* description—"and beyond the church there is another fine château, completed in 1789"—to a dissertation on the rights and wrongs of the Matterhorn accident; from personal prejudice and reminiscence to fascinating accounts of the war-time escapes to Zermatt. It has no particular pattern. Although it is arranged more or less topographically there are chapters devoted to Otto Furrer, Rilke, Cardinal Schiner, Napoleon and St. Maurice. It gives the author an opportunity of having a series of brief and exhilarating canters on a whole stable of familiar hobby horses. But whatever it is or is not, it is above all a delightful, informed, stimulating companion. I had it with me in the Alps this summer and it greatly increased my enjoyment.

"The *raison d'être* of a book such as this" says the author, "is summed up in the quotation from Leonardo da Vinci on the title page 'Love is the daughter of knowledge and the profounder the knowledge the greater the love'." Sir Arnold's love and knowledge shine from every page.

PETER BICKNELL.

MOUNTAIN PANORAMA. Edited by Max Robertson. (Max Parrish, 15/6).

This is a mountain Bedside Book, with articles mainly by a selection of mountain knights and B.B.C. notables. It has six mountaineering articles, five skiing, one skating, and one comic. It is by no means as bad as one might expect from its breezy "popular" presentation. Sir Arnold Lunn treads delicately among the pitfalls of the intellectual and spiritual background to mountaineering, then slides off onto his own hobby-horse of *piste*, as opposed to natural snow, skiing. Douglas Connor gives a comprehensive and enthusiastic account of the Cresta run. Sir Stanley Rous and Peter Waddell between them given the official picture of the coming Winter Olympics at Cortina. Two of the longer articles tip the balance of the book rather heavily towards Sir John Hunt. A remarkable combination of Elizabeth Coxhead and Jack Longland cover climbing in Britain: the former naive and



"Come on girls"; the latter inclined to be mesmerized by the aura round Joe Brown. Isabel Roe describes *piste* skiing, and as a foil Robert Readhead takes us with a wealth of unsuspected information through the history of army skiing. There is an article advertising the Gerschwiler family as skating instructors, and two lighter articles: Wynford Vaughan Thomas being most amusing among the New Zealand peaks; and W. E. Bowman rather painful in the difficult activity of being facetious about mountaineering literature. All in all, this is an entertaining book, with an excellent and unusual selection of photographs.

E. A. WRANGHAM.

THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN ADVENTURE. By Ralph Izzard. (Hodder & Stoughton. 16s.)

(*Sur la Piste de l'Abominable Homme des Neiges*. Translated from the English by Henri Thies and Micheline Morin. Amiot-Dumont, Paris.)

For the general British public the initial introduction to the Abominable Snowman may well have been the photographs of footprints brought back by Eric Shipton's Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. The daily newspapers were not slow to discover that this mysterious biped was news, and while the Snowman and its existence provoked discussion at all levels, the Daily Mail financed an expedition to look for him. *The Abominable Snowman Adventure* is Mr. Izzard's personal account of his impressions and experiences with the expedition.

The story is neatly divided into two parts:

"The Case" devotes itself to an intensive survey of the reports on the Yeti already to hand; reports which apparently have steadily, and of recent years in increasing numbers, been filtering back to the world outside the Himalaya. These early chapters are sufficiently well presented to persuade even the more incredulous mountaineer that the many rumours and travellers' tales are not without foundation.

Thus, with a lively anticipation, one embarks on "The Chase"—to be disappointed. Not so much by the fact that the Snowmen remained tantalisingly elusive but because the narrative fails to capture the imagination. Certainly it is refreshing to read an account of mountain travel by one who describes himself as "not an ardent climber" but with the tide of mountaineering literature still increasing, it is doubtful whether this book will have a universal appeal.

The fifty or so photographs provide ample illustration, though some have suffered at the hands of the block-makers; this is unfortunate because a few, particularly the plate of Ama Dablam (facing p. 224), are very pleasing.

At the end of the book are found various appendices and relegated to the end papers is a map by John Jackson showing the area covered by the expedition; one feels that further examples of Mr. Jackson's talents would have enhanced the second half of the story.

The production and appearance of *Sur la Piste de l'Abominable Homme des Neiges* neither matches that of its English counterpart nor the excellent translation from Mr. Izzard's original text. Unfortunately, in the copy received for review, Chapters IV and V were duplicated at the expense of all but three pages of Chapter VI. Perhaps in the interests of economy, the publishers have seen fit to exclude all but seven of the original illustrations and although none of these is irrelevant, neither are they the best. In this country at any rate the attraction of this version must remain purely academic.

J. D. C. PEACOCK.

ROAD TO RAKAPOSHI. By George Band. (Hodder and Stoughton. 16/-)

Seven thousand six hundred miles were covered in 44 days by Roger Chorley, David Fisher and Ted Wrangham in a Dormobile. Driving overland from England to Peshawar was a bold start to an expedition, but according to Ted Wrangham, who writes this part of the book, it was carried off with a gay nonchalance which belies the look of that never-ending dotted line across the map. On the long journey through France, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Iraq and Persia they suffered only the minor hazards of a smashed windscreen and burnt-out plugs.

At this point George Band (arriving with Alfred Tissières, the leader, and George Fraser from Cambridge) takes up the narrative with the flight to Gilgit and an account of what it is nowadays fashionable to call the "acclimatisation period." Here is a half-chapter by Roger Chorley which is all too short.

It is a truism that the journey and the people provide the greater part of the fun of Himalayan expeditions. Band gives us many interesting sidelights on the life and customs of the natives both of Kashmir and of Cambridge, till three-quarters of the way through the book we reach Base Camp.

Two routes are attempted, both of which had been tried by small parties previously. On the first of these, the north-west ridge, they made no advance, but on the other, the south-west spur, where Secord had wished to press home his attack in 1947 (see *A.J.* 277, p. 337), they gained about half a mile and 1,300 feet. However, their achievement was much greater than these figures suggest for much of the climbing was both difficult and dangerous, and the Monk's Head, which they reached, will perhaps turn out to be the hardest technical obstacle on the ascent. As Band says: "We had proved that the climb was possible to the top of the Monk's Head, and beyond that seemed reasonably easy terrain. Before us, the mountain had almost come to be considered as impossible, but now we felt we had opened a possible route to the summit. . . . Perhaps more than any other, the first mountaineer to reach a hard-won summit realises the debt he owes to his countless colleagues and friends."

It remains only to say that the photographs are excellent, the diagram of the mountain and the maps useful, and the price reasonable.

J. B. TYSON.

THE WEST FACE. By Guido Magnone. (Museum Press. 18/-)

It has been remarked that in criticising a mountaineering book there are two separate considerations to take into account: the writing and the climbing. When either is exceptional, regardless of the other we have a book worth buying. When they are united we would expect a classic. Yet it is not always so. Through a fault of sincerity or objectivity books which should on the face of it be in the top class do sometimes fail. Of the two insincerity is by far the greater sin.

If *The West Face* has a fault, it is the other one. The events which it relates were in a way the final product of a movement which caused a storm of controversy—the introduction of artificial aids. Magnone has written in the defensive mood caused by the criticism which the attempts on the west face of the Dru provoked. He is too close to the event to remember his emotion in tranquillity, and the result is a too strong perspective.

I have heard the opinion expressed that it is a bad principle to write a book about one climb; but why? Something to do with modesty, perhaps. Modesty is not the point. *The West Face* has the unity of one drama, and enough history and excitement to sustain interest through every paragraph of its 166 pages. The reader continually has the feeling that it demanded to be written, almost that it wrote itself. We are very far from the bored financial necessity of the popular Himalayan pot-boiler.

M. Magnone sees himself and his friends as a small band, bearing on the torch of the future of climbing against the Philistines and false prophets. False modesty is not among the virtues of the Paris school: the author and M. Herzog in his introduction claim that their technique "attains such a level as to mark a difference in nature rather than a difference in degree compared to what had been achieved up to that time in mountaineering" (1952). This statement is not borne out by history, and it is a pity that the truly great achievement related in the text should be cheapened by this sort of foolish conceit. Many mountaineers who think of themselves as modern in their technique will not be pleased by the attitude which M. Magnone defines as theirs. The violent partisanship of the book is however its strength, for its white-hot sincerity is unmistakable, and perhaps there is no reason to be sorry for its lack of balance. The author's professions may be taken as evidence of a most interesting attitude to his sport by a prominent present-day climber, but let there be no mistake—he does not speak for all, but for the vital school of young climbers centred on Paris, swearing only by the *étrier* and the *Saussois*, whose achievements have been so remarkable in recent years.

In one statement few would disagree with him : " Poetry is borne within oneself ; one has it or one has it not ; and nobody should presume to mete it out or claim to recognize it in anyone else. For I believe that ultimately, be it with ice-axe or alpenstock, whether he wears nails or vibram soles, the Alpinist of every age, before even dreaming of conquering the mountain, is in love with all that it has to offer—its harshness, its poetry, and its adventure.

" As for mystery, if for many of us that has been banished from the Alps forever, whose fault is that ? A minutely explored desert cannot any longer conceal old legends. But in facing up to the sheerest walls, those most protected from any contact whatsoever, one is still in search of that mystery." I think that is a good answer to those who question our pitons and bivouacs and ethics. The statement is worth analysis. It reveals its author as a man with a strong but partial sense of poetry. That the mystery of a great mountain wall is lost for him when it is climbed shows a limitation : if something which is still there is lost for a man it may only be a way of saying it is lost on him. Magnone's poetry is the strong poetry of action and sense. This he evokes powerfully and in detail : the tingling in the toes when sitting in an *étrier*, the acrid fragrance of rock, the pain and doubt of frozen fingers and rope when rappelling, monotony of danger, motion and sensation. Thus : " Thirst and the fatigue of our bad night brought on an overwhelming torpor. Not a breath of wind ; nothing troubled the stillness of the leaden sky ; the smell of the stone numbed me irresistibly. . . . From time to time a brusque order for some manoeuvre, a few blows of the hammer on a nail, or the soft slithering of ropes, broke the astonishing silence." The muscularity of the prose can be felt—even through the clown's clothing of this translation.

In charity this can only be called unfortunate. The book deserved something better than a translator who appears totally ignorant of climbing terms. Thus, in the book, *clou* = nail, *passage* = passage, *courte échelle* = short ladder (one could go on endlessly) instead of peg, pitch, giving a shoulder. Even more alarming are definitions like : " Tyrolean (doing a) : passing on a rope stretched as a telfer between two summits." Or this (*Cwm Glas* cooks cease reading here) : " Soup: Heavy waterlogged snow caused by melting." It is testimony to the originality of the book that it comes through this fractured French almost unscathed in its power to maintain suspense.

The production of the book is good, and the photographs better selected and better printed than in the French edition. The publisher is to be praised for producing this important work in English, and one hopes that he will choose others with equal perspicacity. The reviewer's own feeling is that, despite inequalities, this book will withstand the passage of time. The arguments, the equipment, the technique, will soon be dated. But the drama and tenseness of the story and the honesty of its telling will not collect the dust, will make this reader glad to take it down from its shelf in 40 years' time.

G. J. SUTTON.

A SELECTION OF SOME 900 BRITISH AND IRISH MOUNTAIN TOPS, compiled and arranged by William McKnight Docharty. Privately printed at the Darien Press Ltd., Edinburgh. pp. 124, frontispiece and nine panoramic photographs.

The author has been so good as to present the Club with a copy of this work, wherein he has marshalled the mountains of Britain and Ireland, all of them that rise between the 2,500 and 3,000 foot contours, rank beyond rank, a host previously unnumbered and unknowable if not, perhaps, unknown. Here they all are with their lovely unpronounceable names—each neatly arranged and tabulated with heights and map references, should we ever be able to out-Munro the Munros. Perhaps our young men in years to come will live so long and being as full of vigour as of years, will have time to visit them all. Then they will learn that there is a mountain in the Cairngorms called Brown Cow Hill, which seems a little out of place among the Creags and the Carns of that great deer forest ; does it, perhaps, commemorate the spot where Landseer painted the Monarch of the Glen ?

In a charming introduction Mr. Docharty tells us of his own pilgrimage and the great labour it has been his pleasure to perform. The photographs, taken by the author, do justice to the book, the panoramas being printed with full details, so that each feature is readily identified.

Our copy is No. 94.

H. R. C. CARR

ABODE OF SNOW. By Kenneth Mason. (Hart-Davis.)

This is one of the more serious contributions to the literature of mountaineering. The title of the book is perhaps unfortunate. "Abode of Snow"—it sounds like a Hollywood film title ! In fact it is the first authoritative history of Himalayan exploration and mountaineering. One wishes therefore that Professor Kenneth Mason had chosen better.

The book opens with a general description of the Himalaya, and its division into six main mountain regions. As the author says, such "a systematic arrangement is essential for any clear thinking about the Himalaya as a whole, in visualizing its similarities and contrasts, its physical and political problems, and in planning a journey to its great peaks." In the chapters which follow each of these regions is dealt with separately. From the Punjab Himalaya in the west to the Assam Himalaya in the east the main topographical and other important features are revealed with the aid of some useful sketch maps. Then this first section of the book closes with a short but rather superficial account of the weather in the Himalaya.

It is not surprising that many of the earlier mountaineers in a complicated region like the Himalaya have been surveyors. The important part played by the officers of the Survey of India, both Europeans and Indian Pandits, in the earlier history of Himalayan exploration is well brought out in the sections which follow. These are perhaps the most interesting parts of the book. Here the author pays tribute to the work

of Sir George Everest while he was Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey and reminds us that the significance of Everest's work is often forgotten. Here too we can read about the amazing journeys made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by those intrepid travellers the Jesuit missionaries : men like Antonio de Andrade, Manuel Marques, Francisco de Azevedo, Johann Grueber, Albert d'Orville and Ippolito Desideri. Would that the author had told us a little more about these great men and their romantic journeys. But he has given us some references, so that if we wish to do so, we can find out more about them at the cost of a little trouble.

The rest of the book is taken up by more recent mountaineering history, mainly that of the last half century. Every major expedition to the Himalaya has been described and is discussed there, and most of the minor ones too. Really very little has been left out. All the accounts are remarkably accurate, and the author's comments are fair and sound. Everything is seen in perspective. So we find that the work of the pioneers like Longstaff, Shipton and Tilman is given the credit it deserves and is not forgotten amidst the glories of recent conquests.

Not the least interesting pages in this book are in the appendices : appendix A, for example, in which the heights and positions of all peaks over 25,000 feet have been listed in order of altitude ; and appendix C which is a chronological summary of explorations and ascents of peaks. There is a useful bibliography and a good index. In a book with such an academic flavour, however, one feels that the bibliography might with advantage have been expanded to include a classic on Himalayan travel and culture like Marco Pallis' " Peaks and Lamas."

Of the twenty-one photographs which illustrate the text the one between pages 44 and 45 is indeed impressive ; but most of the others have no special merit.

This is a book which anyone now contemplating a visit to the Himalaya will have to consult because it is a work which must be regarded as the classic text book on its subject. It is to be hoped that Professor Kenneth Mason will soon be asked to compile a new and enlarged edition, and that when that happens the publishers will back him up by producing the book with better illustrations and at least one good map.

CHARLES WARREN

A HISTORY OF BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING. By R. L. G. Irving.  
(Batsford 25/-.)

There are no surprises in this book. It reviews its subject at no very great length, covering the activities of British mountaineers in all mountain areas of the world. Apart from a few minor diversions it deals entirely with British climbers and climbing. The history consists largely of lengthy selections from the original accounts of particular ascents taken as typical of the period and area being described. This

on the whole works very well. Those who know Mr. Irving's previous books will recognise all the usual virtues and mannerisms in his works. His story of mountaineering, despite the breadth of his learning is highly subjective. His own views and prejudices are always in strong evidence. Indeed there is nothing middle of the road about Mr. Irving ; he appears to have moved straight from his position as the chief target of the Old Guard to being their leader—if indeed it was he that moved—and in each position he is very readable. There is as usual a lengthy (and I think new) description of a climb by the author with Mallory—a description quite out of place in a general history, but also one which makes most interesting reading in itself. There are nuggets of fascinating information (the Ryan-Lochmatter rope was the first to do the Old Brenva for the Torino and did it in  $9\frac{1}{4}$  hours) and there are opinions infuriating in their perverse determination to misunderstand the point of view of climbers other than himself.

The book is complete up to 1953, but it is weak on British post-war Alpine climbing. The author's only source here appears to be the *Alpine Journal*, which has only recently taken cognisance again of British activities in the Alps. The available matter has therefore to be spread pretty thinly to fill the chapter, which results in yet more attention being given to one already overpublicised climb. Among the photographs "Modern Methods" are represented by a photograph of Alan Blackshaw. However Mr. Irving is in some ways very much in touch and it is only fair to record that on p. 177 he scores a devastating back-hander at the Editor of this Journal.

After 220 pages of narrative Mr. Irving fairly lets himself go with a final chapter on "Reflections." Here he advances his views in detail. These would appear to be largely the following: competition is between man and mountain not climber and climber ; difficulty is not definable in accurate classes applicable to all ; first easy climb can give a greater thrill than later severe ones. No one would dispute these views as such but Mr. Irving appears to deduce from them that the climbing of routes harder than those of his own generation is competitive between man and man ; that all attempts to define the difficulty and detail of a route in a guide book are wrong ; and that one should not attempt the hardest climbs in one's prime if they will not give a pristine thrill. Such phrases as "What Nature has tried to make unclimbable" or "With the helps Nature and the local boot-maker had given them" show much of his position. He is a climber who enjoys his mountains more than the climb and beauty more than difficulty. There are many such but they have no prior claim to mountaineering. Those who in their prime are attracted chiefly by difficulty do not grudge Mr. Irving his *voie ordinaire* ; why then should he grudge them their *face nord* ? There is room in the mountains for both (at the moment anyhow).

One could argue for hours with Mr. Irving. He is nothing if not arousing, but few can have shown in print a deeper love of mountains or wider knowledge of their history than the author of this book.

R. M. VINEY.

THE ASCENT OF RUM DOODLE. By W. E. Bowman. (Max Parrish. 10/6.)

A skit on the Himalayan books, funniest when closest to the original. Much of the farce seemed, to this reviewer, too exaggerated ; but one acute observation on acclimatization must be quoted : " First, a man must spend some time high before he is able to work effectively. Second, if he stays high too long he deteriorates. The effect of being high is thus very similar to that of being in a sleeping-bag."

A.K.R.

THE ASCENT OF EVEREST and THROUGH NEPAL TO EVEREST. Filmstrips published by Educational Productions Ltd., East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorks. 25/- each, including Notes.

These two colour filmstrips, of 40 and 49 frames respectively, are compiled from photographs of the 1953 Expedition. They are accompanied by lecture notes by Wilfrid Noyce. Both strips deal with the climbing of the mountain, but in the second more of the pictures are of the approach through Nepal. The pictures are a sound selection, well produced, and the Notes, naturally, competent and authoritative. They are obtainable from the publishers and should be very useful in schools and places where they lecture.

A.K.R.



# OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

## *President :*

H. R. C. CARR

## *Vice-Presidents :*

B. McKENNA

A. D. M. COX

## *Hon. Treasurer :*

E. R. MOULTON-BARRETT

## *Hon. Editor :*

A. K. RAWLINSON

## *Hon. Secretary :*

R. M. VINEY

## *Hon. Guide-Book Editor :*

C. W. F. NOYCE

## *Assistant Hon. Secretary :*

A. BLACKSHAW

## *Hon. Librarian :*

D. C. BULL

## *Hon. Custodians :*

E. S. CHANTRELL (Helyg)

R. W. BEARD (R. W. Lloyd Hut)

D. THOMAS (Cwm Glas Mawr)

K. M. LAWDER (Bosigran)

## *Assistant Hon. Custodians :*

A. W. ANDREWS (Bosigran)

J. A. F. WATSON (Welsh Huts)

## *Committee :*

K. BERRILL

C. W. BRASHER

J. W. DENTON

J. I. DISLEY

R. C. EVANS

A. J. J. MOULAM

J. NEILL

G. D. ROBERTS

G. J. SUTTON



=====P.Y.G.=====

# PEN-Y-GWRYD HOTEL

NANTGWYNANT — SNOWDONIA

The home of British Mountaineering,  
catering particularly for climbers. At  
the foot of the Glyders and close to  
Snowdon.

All modern comforts. Hot and cold  
water in bedrooms. Spring mattresses.  
Drying Room, Boot Room and  
Billiard Room. Packed lunches.  
Electric light.

TELEPHONE : LLANBERIS 211      A.A. & R.A.C.  
STATION · BETTWS-Y-COED      FULLY LICENSED

=====P.Y.G.=====



**VIKING**  
*nylon rope*  
from all good  
**Sports Outfitters**



By Appointment  
to H.M. the Queen Tent and Flag Makers

**The world's most famous Mountaineering Tents**

**MEADE — WHYMPER — MUMMERY**

*together with a full range of climbing equipment  
Sleeping Bags — Stoves — Boots — Ropes, etc.  
makes a call on "Ben Edge" imperative before  
buying new gear.*

Send today for free Illustrated Catalogue.

**BENJAMIN EDGINGTON**

*(SILVER & EDGINGTON LTD.)*

**69 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.2**

*Phone : Holborn 6070*

**18 LLOYD STREET, ALBERT SQUARE, MANCHESTER 2. Phone : Deansgate 4540**

**2A EASTCHEAP, LONDON, E.C.3 Phone : MAN 0814**

**18 ARWENACK STREET, FALMOUTH, CORNWALL. Phone : Falmouth 1134**



"STAIRCASE" ROUTE ON TABLE MOUNTAIN, CAPE TOWN.  
THE CLIMBER IS NEGOTIATING THE LONG TRAVERSE  
ON THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE ROUTE.

★For advice on how to reach the most suitable climbing  
areas in **SOUTH AND EAST AFRICA**, apply:

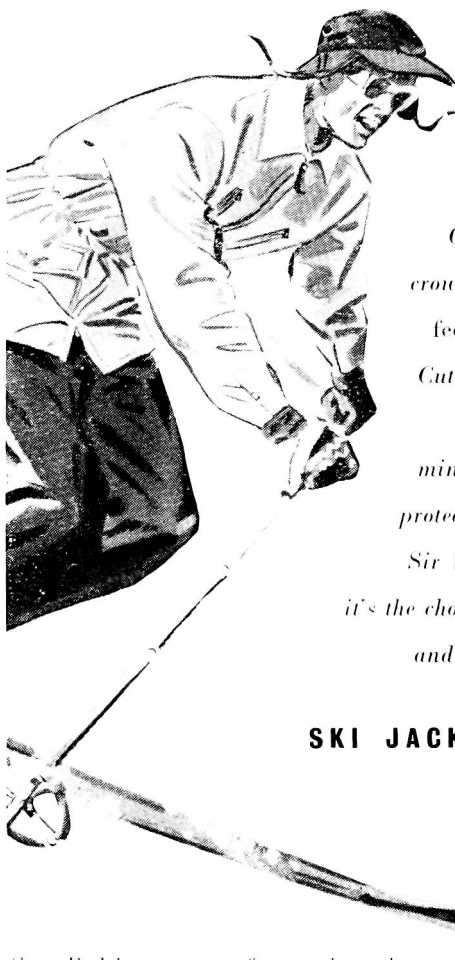
# **UNION-CASTLE**

**Head Office : 3 FENCHURCH STREET, LONDON, E.C.3**

---

ADVERTISEMENTS

*easily* ***DISTINGUISHED***  
*in a* **GRENFELL**



*There's something about a Grenfell that stands out in the crowd. It looks distinguished and feels outstandingly comfortable. Cut for freedom in action from a unique cloth, it combines minimum weight with maximum protection. Originally designed for Sir Wilfred Grenfell of Labrador, it's the choice of distinguished explorers and sportsmen all over the world.*

**SKI JACKETS   RAINCOATS**  
**SPORTSWEAR**



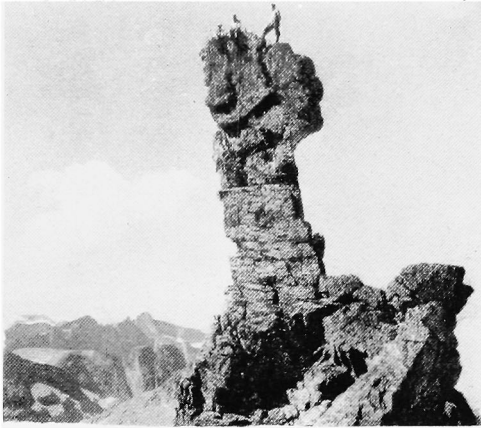
*Supplied in a range of attractive colours.*

*If any difficulty, write for name of local stockist to:*

**HAYTHORNTHWAITE & SONS LTD., Lodge Mill, Burnley, Lancs**

---

## **NORWAY—Nature's Wonderland**



There are still unclimbed peaks in Norway. First ascents are made every year. Many fine walls and ridges which will provide first-rate sport, have never been climbed. Ask for free circular on recent climbs and details of six climbing guides.

## **NORWAY TRAVEL ASSOCIATION**

**21-24 COCKSPUR STREET, LONDON, S.W.1**

---

## **Thomas J. Gaston** *Booksellers*

*Specialise in*

## **ALPINE BOOKS**

S.A.C. Guide-books, Maps, etc.

*Large stocks always on view*

Catalogues issued — Books bought

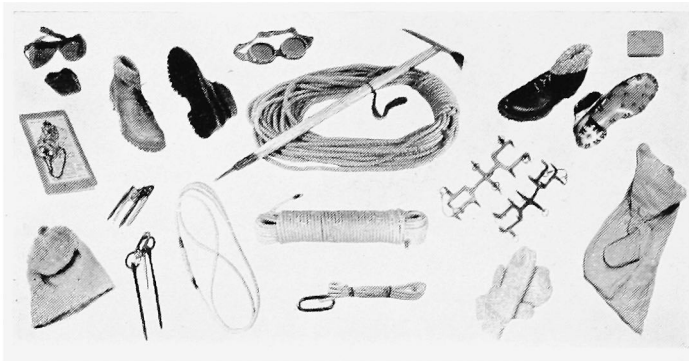
---

*Write to* **27 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2**

TEMPLE BAR 8861

# ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Individual or expeditionary requirements are given individual attention. We bring to your service the combined experience of our Directors and Staff as practising mountaineers, walkers, skiers, cavers and campers. For your information, we give below a small selection, at reasonable prices, culled from our latest catalogue, of equipment essential to good mountaineering.



	£	s.	d.
Anoraks, from .. .. .	2	17	6
Breeches, Bedford cord .. .. .	3	3	0
Balaclava Helmets .. .. .		8	9
Convertible breeches cum slacks in Bedford Cord .. .. .	3	3	0
Climbing Ropes, Hemp 100 ft. .. .. .	2	12	6
Full weight Nylon 100 ft. .. .. .	4	19	0
Waist Line, Nylon 20 ft. $\times \frac{3}{8}$ in. circ. .. .. .		6	6
Hemp 20 ft. $\times \frac{3}{8}$ in. circ. .. .. .		5	0
Belay Lengths, Nylon 8 ft. $\times \frac{3}{8}$ in. circ. .. .. .		5	0
10 ft. $\times \frac{3}{8}$ in. circ. .. .. .		6	6
Spliced Slings, Nylon $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. .. .. .		9	9
Prussik Loops, Nylon 9ft. perimetry length .. .. .		6	6
Karabiners, Stubbai } as recommended by .. .. .		8	6
Screw type } B.M.C. .. .. .		12	6
Ice Axes, Austrian, Gents .. .. .	3	7	6
Ladies .. .. .	3	5	0

CATALOGUES FREE ON APPLICATION  
 a 48 page Camping catalogue  
 8 page Mountaineering supplement  
 4 page Hire List  
 Leaflet on Caving Equipment



Specialists in  
 Mountaineering, Rambling, Camping and Ski Equipment  
**22-25 BURY PLACE, LONDON, W.C.1**  
 (Opposite British Museum)

Tel. CHAncery 6996/7

Late closing, Friday, 7 p.m.



ENGLISH LAKES  
**FISH HOTEL**  
BUTTERMERE

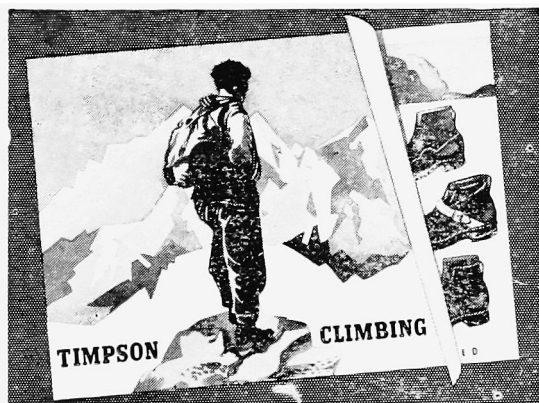
IDEAL CENTRE FOR  
THE MOUNTAINEER  
AND ROCK CLIMBER

THIS HOTEL IS FULLY  
LICENSED AND THE  
NEEDS OF CLIMBERS  
FULLY UNDERSTOOD

Telegrams:  
Fish Buttermere, Keswick.

Telephone:  
Buttermere 203

Postal Address  
BUTTERMERE, VIA COCKERMOUTH.



**Boots**  
that  
you can  
trust

Write for this FREE  
illustrated BOOK to:

**Wm. Timpson Ltd.**

Great Ducie St.,  
MANCHESTER 3

OFFICIAL CHOICE for Climbers and Sherpas of the 1955 Welsh Himalayan Expedition, Timpson Climbing boots are designed by climbers and made by skilled and highly responsible craftsmen who have been making climbing boots for years. Prices: Men's 55/9 to 115/- Ladies' 62/9 to 100/-. Nailing extra.

REPAIRS & RE-NAILING to any design at any Timpson Shoe Shop. Address of nearest shop sent on request.

## ONLY THE BEST . . .

is good enough for those who really wish to enjoy their mountaineering. Good equipment reduces the hazards and discomforts. Leading mountaineers use Black's equipment

and, at the right, is shown a Black's Mountain Tent on the shores of Loch Affric. This Tent belongs to Mr. Tom Weir — noted Scots climber, explorer, writer and photographer.



## THOS. BLACK & SONS (GREENOCK) LTD.

SCOTTISH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, PORT GLASGOW,  
RENFREWSHIRE.

22, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1  
Phone : HOLborn 5494

Phone : Port Glasgow 41315  
126, Hope Street, Glasgow, C.2.  
Phone : CENTral 4007



## GLACIER CREAM

A protective cream for mountaineers, skiers and those exposed to strong ultra-violet rays, either direct from the sun or reflected off snow

NORMAL, non-greasy, for altitudes up to 6,000 feet, 2/9 a tube.  
HIGH ALTITUDE, greasy, for use over 6,000 feet,  
and also in severe conditions: 3/10 a tube.

*From all Chemists or direct (postage 6d. extra) from*

**SAVORY & MOORE LIMITED**

**143, New Bond Street, London, W.1**

By Appointment



To H.M. The Queen  
Chemists



# 'Polar Time' will be



Time . . . insistent, vital, challenging time . . . will be kept solely by Smiths de Luxe watches throughout the *greatest* expedition of all time—the Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Only the *proved* dependability of these outstanding watches dictated their exclusive use. For *your* timekeeping, too, you can make no wiser choice. Unconditionally guaranteed for one year, Smiths de Luxe watches are sold by Jewellers everywhere from £8.19.6 to £70. Write for free illustrated brochure and details of convenient Personal Payment Plan.

**A.454** 17 jewel, waterproof watch in chrome case with stainless steel back. £11.17.6.

**B.451** Lady's 17 jewel, waterproof watch in chrome case with stainless steel back. £10.15.0.

A 'SMITHS OF ENGLAND' PRODUCT

SMITHS CLOCKS & WATCHES LTD., SECTRIC HOUSE, LONDON N.W.  
A Division of S. Smith & Sons (England) Ltd

## ROBERT LAWRIE LIMITED

— Alpine and Polar Equipment Specialists —

### CLIMBING & SKI-ING BOOTS,

from stock or made to measure.

Genuine Vibrams available

### CLIMBING CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT.

Crampons, Ice Axes, Sleeping Bags, Rucksacks, Jackets, Socks, etc.

### REPAIRS AND RE-NAILINGS TO BOOTS.

Gleated rubber soles and heels available.

Orders by Post.

Illustrated Catalogue on application.

Business Hours: Daily 9 a.m.—6 p.m.

Sats. 9 a.m.—12 noon

Telephone:

Telegraphic Address:

Paddington 5252

Alpinist, Wesdo, London

*Bootmakers and Suppliers*

*to the successful British Mt Everest Expedition 1953, etc.*

**54 Seymour St., Marble Arch, London, W.1**



## Starlight and Storm

The Ascent of Six Great North Faces of the Alps

*by Gaston Rebuffat*

Translated by WILFRID NOYCE and SIR JOHN HUNT

Foreword by SIR JOHN HUNT

A vivid record, by one of the great Alpine mountain guides of all time, of the ascent of the six great north faces of the Alps: the Grandes Jorasses near Mont Blanc, 4,000 feet of soaring, sweeping rock and ice; the severe north-east face of the Piz Badile in a thunderstorm; the Matterhorn; the north face of the Drus; the Cima Grande di Lavaredo in the Dolomites, beginning with 750 feet of overhanging wall; the sinister north face death trap of the Eiger in the Bernese Oberland.

*With 40 pages of photographs and maps  
and diagrams in the text* 18s.

OBTAINABLE AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

*Prospectus post free from DENTS' Bedford St., London WC2*

# THE AUSTRIAN ALPINE CLUB

FOR INDEPENDENT OR ESCORTED WALKING  
AND CLIMBING HOLIDAYS IN AUSTRIA.



The Austrian Alpine Club (Oesterreichischer Alpenverein) was formed in 1945/46 as the successor organization to the dissolved pre-war German and Austrian Alpine Club (DOEAV) which traced its foundation back to the late 1860's. The Club's main function is to provide members with such reasonable facilities as will help in developing mountain walking, climbing and ski-mountaineering ; these include the construction and upkeep of chalets, the maintenance of marked routes, the provision of reduced rate transport to alpine centres, the organizing of mountaineering courses and tours, the general training, supervision and control of the professional mountain guides, etc.

The Club now owns over 500 chalets throughout the higher parts of the Austrian Alps. The average chalet takes 30-40 people. Meals and accommodation can easily be covered with 15/- to 20/- a day. Anybody may stay at these chalets, but members have first call on accommodation and pay less than half fees for sleeping quarters (about 6/- a bed or 2/6 in the dormitory).

A United Kingdom branch of the Club was formed in the Autumn of 1948 to help people here in planning and arranging holidays in Austria. For the Summer, the U.K. branch arranges reduced rate transport to Austria, walking tours from hut to hut, as well as from alpine centres, also rock and ice-training courses and expeditions, and itineraries for independent touring.

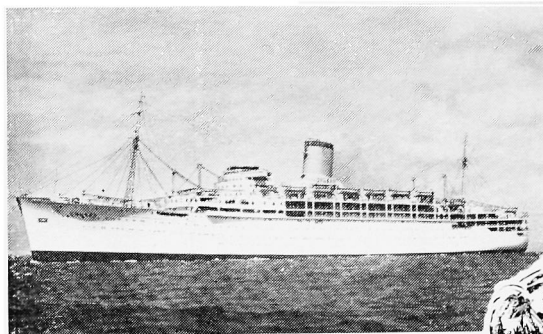
*Full details of membership and the current programme of activities  
will be sent on request*

## AUSTRIAN ALPINE CLUB

143 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

(Dept. 4)

Telephone : MAYfair 9885



## PRELUDE TO ATTACK

Sailing in a P & O ship has been the wise prelude to many a successful mountaineering expedition in the Himalayas and elsewhere.

A P & O voyage offers healthy relaxation amid comfortable surroundings, good food, the chance to acclimatize gradually and to rest one's strength for trials to come.

*Recent expeditions to travel East by P & O are these :—*

<b>EVEREST EXPEDITION (part)</b>	...	...	...	<b>1953</b>
<b>OXFORD UNIVERSITY HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION</b>	...	...	...	<b>1954</b>
<b>DAILY MAIL HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION</b>	...	...	...	<b>1954</b>
<b>EDMUND HILARY EXPEDITION TO NEPAL</b>	...	...	...	<b>1954</b>
<b>'Avenger' HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION (part, with equipment)</b>	...	...	...	<b>1956</b>



**COMFORTABLE VOYAGING TO**

EGYPT, INDIA, PAKISTAN, CEYLON, MALAYA, CHINA,  
JAPAN and AUSTRALIA

14, 16 Cockspur St., S.W.1.

122 Leadenhall St., E.C.3.

## **ARVON'S**

*for your*

### **MOUNTAINEERING EQUIPMENT**

*Best quality at the right prices*

Now available ARVON'S own brand specially designed Climbing Boots, Zug double protection uppers fitted with original Italian Vibram soles price £5-19-6, with Tricounie nails £6-5-0—also available with "D" Ring Lacing.

*Available in half-sizes—will send boot on appro.*

**Also a limited amount of Continental equipment including Ice Axes, Crampons, Abseil rings, Ice Karabiners, Soft Leather Uppers and Vibram Soles, Kletterschue, Pitons (Ice and Rock)**

ORDERS EXECUTED BY POST. WRITE TO

**47 HIGH STREET, BETHESDA, NORTH WALES**

Telephone: Bethesda 401



## **THE CLOISTER PRESS LIMITED**

**LETTERPRESS AND COLOUR PRINTERS**

**HEATON MERSEY  
STOCKPORT**

TELEPHONE NOS. HEA 2251-2-3

# CLIMBING GUIDES

PUBLISHED BY

## THE CLIMBERS' CLUB

(Editor : C. W. F. Noyce)

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| I. CWM IDWAL by J. M. Edwards. New Edition,<br>1946. Reprinted 1955 .. .. .                              | 7/- |
| II. TRYFAN by J. M. Edwards and C. W. F. Noyce.<br>Reprinted, 1953 .. .. .                               | 6/6 |
| III. GLYDER FACH by C. F. Kirkus. Reprinted, 1949  | 6/6 |
| IV. LLIWEDD by C. W. F. Noyce and J. M.<br>Edwards. Reprinted, 1955 .. .. .                              | 8/- |
| V. CORNWALL by A. W. Andrews and E. C. Pyatt.<br>1950 .. .. .  | 5/- |
| VI. LLANBERIS PASS by P. R. J. Harding. 1951..<br>Reprint with supplement by R. Moseley,<br>1955 .. .. . | 9/6 |
| VII. THE CARNEDDAU by A. J. J. Moulam. 1952  | 8/- |
| VIII. SOUTH EAST ENGLAND by E. C. Pyatt.<br>Now available . . . . .                                      | 6/- |
| CWM SILYN AND TREMADOC by J. Neill,<br>1955 .. .. .  | 3/6 |

All the above are obtainable from The Cloister Press,  
Ltd., Heaton Mersey, Stockport.

---

Obtainable from Trinity Press, Worcester Road,  
Malvern, Worcs. :

GUIDE TO BLACK ROCKS AND CRATCLIFFE TOR  
by P. R. J. Harding and A. J. J. Moulam 3/6



ADVERTISEMENTS

Partners : S. H. Cross, A. M. Cross, R. E. Hargreaves

**O. D. G.**  
**DUNGEON GHYLL HOTEL**  
(OLD HOTEL)

**LANGDALE — AMBLESIDE**

Telephone : Langdale 272.

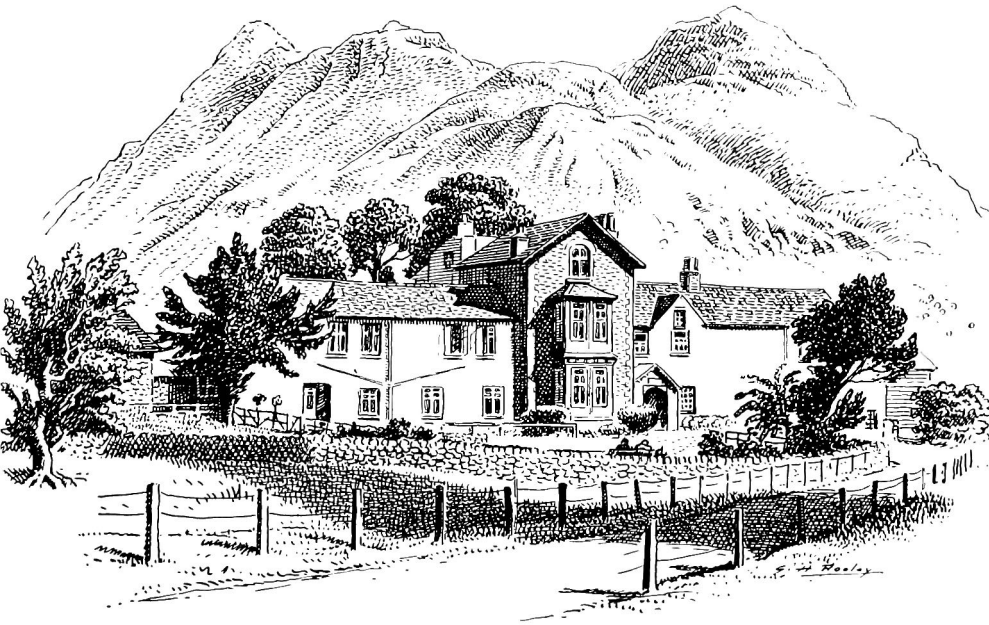
Station : Windermere, B.R.

Car by Arrangement.

Ribble Service to door.

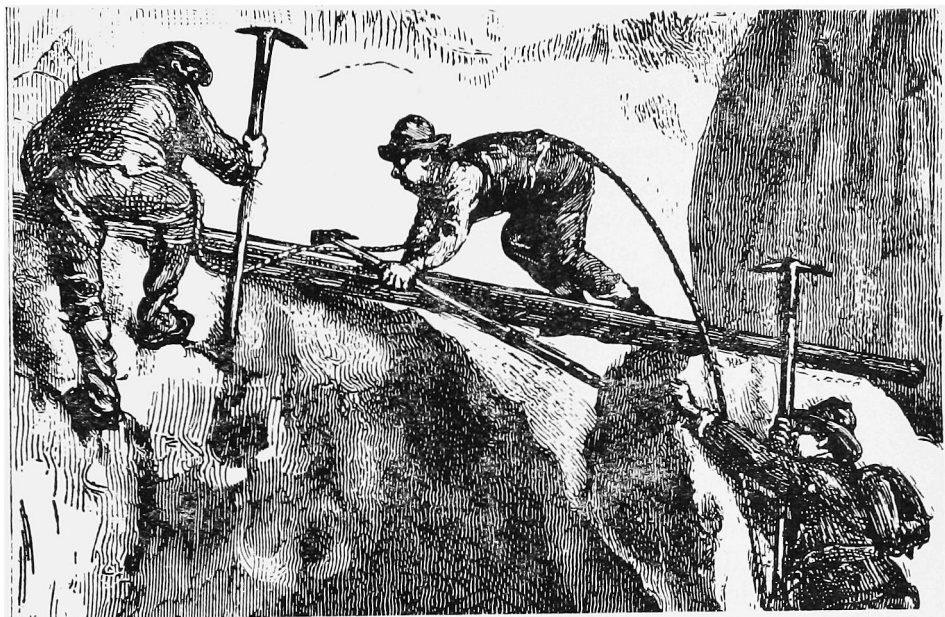
MR. & MRS. S. H. CROSS

*LANGDALE : The home of the Climber*



HOT AND COLD IN ALL BEDROOMS  
SPRING INTERIOR BEDS  
HOME COOKING · FARM PRODUCE  
CLIMBERS AND WALKERS WELCOME  
DRYING ROOM · ELECTRIC LIGHT  
FULLY LICENSED





# ***The Ascent of Rum Doodle***

*W. E. BOWMAN*

Everest? Pish! Kangchenjunga? Child's play. With due respect to any previous mountaineering epic, we proudly present the greatest of them all – the conquest of that ruthless giant, that mighty queen of the snows, Rum Doodle. Discovered by allied airmen during the war, its height estimated from the average of various triangulations at some 40,000 ft., Rum Doodle was first reconnoitred in 1947 by Totter's expedition. Totter's report described the mountain as difficult, severe even, but he said it would go. And in the first full-scale assault, thanks to inspired though modest

leadership, and in spite of the worst that Pong, the expedition cook, could do, it went. It was a pity that Jungle, the route-finder (who joined the expedition in the foothills after having gone to Buenos Aires by mistake), forgot to release the catch on his compass. It was a pity, too, that Shute the photographer let the light get at his exposed films (though in the book we have been able to show something of the magnificent terrain and the hardships and dangers the expedition had to go through). Be all that as it may, this is not just one more story of men who have been high. There is this deep and epic difference, which writes seven names for ever in the pages of history: it is the tallest story yet of the highest mountain ever, *and no man can now go higher.*

Illustrated with 16pp. of engravings and photographs of mountaineering scenes, originally serious, in 1956 very funny indeed and most apt to this book.

Large Crown 8vo. 144pp. From all booksellers. Net 10s.6d.

---

---

Complete this ORDER FORM and return it to your bookseller

Please send me.....copy/ies of THE ASCENT OF RUM DOODLE  
by W. E. Bowman, at 11s. net (including postage)  
for which I enclose £       :   s.   d.

Name .....

BLOCK CAPS PLEASE

Address .....

.....

.....

.....

*Published by* Max Parrish & Co Ltd.,  
55 Queen Anne St., London W1, England



*The Cloister Press Ltd.,  
Heaton Mersey,  
Stockport.*