

THE
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JOURNAL

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EXEQUY

(For R.O.D., G.J.F., and all the others)

The old knights are not dead
but their thoughts, flying
like burning birds over their graves
echo their voices into our quiet lives
rocking our cradles with their restless crying:
and the new knights spring up
armed with the old bright swords
dimmed at the edge with our own blood
as its spring tide urges upward to the flood
dragged by the ghost hand of the moon, and words,
gale of words sends in a tumult
wave upon wave, horse upon horse,
spirit after spirit to the trumpet calling
with the voice of courage, of honour, spirits falling
spent on the long flatness of our mortal shores.
And over, the cold stars shine
in the whelming, unfathomed dark.
But the young knights charging on their stallion senses
strike from death's windmills with their living lances
like a spark dying, their sign.

G.J.S.

DISASTER ON AMA DABLAM

E. A. WRANGHAM

“TED SAHIB!” URKIEN’S excited cry brought me out of our tent at Camp III at eight o’clock on the morning of May 21st; above in the harsh early morning light stretched the pinnaced ice ridge that is Ama Dablam’s final defence, and clearly visible against the ice high on the final pinnacle was a blue figure. While we watched, it was joined by a green figure, and in the space of half an hour both figures disappeared from our view over the top: a scant seven or eight hundred feet from the summit, the main difficulties behind, and the whole day ahead. It’s in the bag, we thought.

Only Alf Gregory’s party had tried Ama Dablam before, when Cunningham had reached about 20,000 feet on the S. ridge; but interviewed back in Kathmandu, Gregory was rash enough to let himself be recorded as saying the mountain was impossible. Was ever an invitation more attractive? — and when Emlyn asked me to join his party, it was already a foregone conclusion that we would have to put Gregory’s assertion to the test. So it was that after twenty-four hours’ flying, a day or two circumventing minor officials in Bombay and Delhi, a further trip by train or plane into Kathmandu, and nineteen days’ walk along the Everest route, we found ourselves camped at Dingboche, near the outflow of the Imja Glacier. Dawa Tensing (Sirdar), Annullu, Urkien, Pemba Tensing, Nima Dorje, and little Pineri had come with us from Kathmandu. We had dismissed the lowland porters and taken on local Sherpas at Changjerma (Dawa’s yak pasture below Kumjung) to carry our kit to Base Camp. Our party of Emlyn Jones, Nea Morin, Mike Harris, George Fraser, Dr. Fred Jackson and myself had been augmented by the addition as liaison officer of Lt. Gadoul Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, a most likeable and energetic young Nepalese army officer. The preliminaries were over, and our first job was to select a Base Camp.

The look of the S. ridge, seen *en face* from Thyangboche monastery, offered so little encouragement that even had so distinguished

a mountaineer as Cunningham not retreated from it, we would have been tempted to seek an alternative. The eye of faith seated comfortably in an armchair at home had suggested a possible line up the N. ridge, which drops to a col (c. 17,000 feet) before ending in the small peak of Ambu Gyabjen (c. 18,500 feet). It seemed that the easiest access to the col was from its E. side, so the party now moved sluggishly (sahibs from altitude, Sherpas from hangovers contracted at the chang shop in Dingboche) across the scree of the lower Imja glacier to turn Ambu Gyabjen and seek a possible site round the corner. We were lucky: a little ablation valley provided a delightful avenue between the N. ridge and the small side glacier dropping from the N.E. flank of Ama Dablam. Moreover, right at its head, and directly under the N. col, was a level piece of ground with a small lake close by as a water supply. It was at about 16,000 feet, quite protected from avalanches, and right at the foot of the mountain. We arrived on April 17th, and since the monsoon does not usually break until well into June, we had about six weeks in which to climb to the 22,500 feet summit of our peak. A thousand feet a week seemed slow enough for even a Himalayan mountaineer.

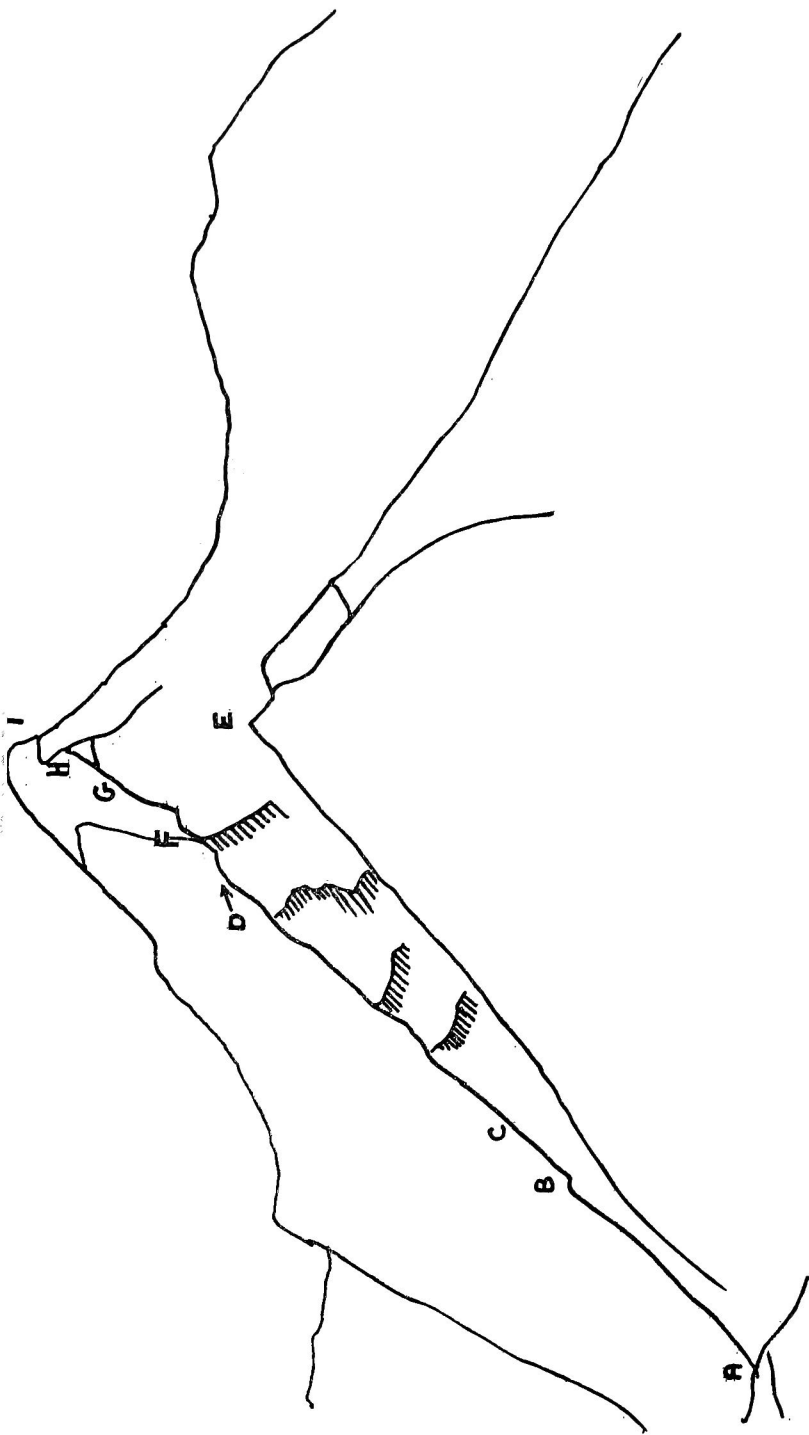
This sense of having plenty of time in hand is not always a good thing. It is noticeable that a short week-end trip to Wales or the Lakes is as productive of climbs as a week's visit: the shorter stay induces a sense of urgency resulting in an outburst of energy. Certainly in the week following our arrival at Base Camp we did very little. Mountain sickness with the usual headaches affected most of the party. Gadoul had the most effective remedy: covering his evening meal with a blistering layer of chillies, where a pinch or two would blast our feeble European insides; not the least remarkable thing about this remedy was its complete success. Two days after our arrival we tottered up the unstable scree to the N. col, or rather to the ridge a little above it on the Ambu Gyabjen side. Our problem was to decide on a route to the shoulder of the N. ridge where (at about 19,000 feet) it divides, the continuation of the N. ridge dropping to the N. col, the other spur dropping more to the N.E. to just above our Base Camp. The N. ridge itself looked most uncompromising below the shoulder, although it was not absolutely impossible; the immense triangle of blank grey slabs between the two ridges however quite clearly was, leaving us after this brief reconnaissance with only one tolerable possibility from the N. side of the mountain: to climb the N.E. spur for 3,000 feet to the shoulder,

and then the main N. ridge another 3,500 feet to the summit.

But it all looked most problematical. The first thousand feet or so to a well marked notch on the N.E. spur looked reasonable enough. But then there was a steep smooth-looking wall, topped by a grey corner where the rock looked bad, topped in turn by a section of black verticality. Altitude sickness was perhaps artificially increased by a hesitation in getting to grips with what promised to be really tough climbing. Whatever the subconscious cause, headaches drove George and myself down to a lower alp near Chukkung, where in a day or so we were joined by Fred and Nea who had been starting medical research into the incidence of heart disease among the Sherpas, using a newly developed portable electrocardiograph; they had also been taking some blood samples, a gory business according to Nea until Fred got into practice at finding the vein. Nea and I went a little way up the main Imja glacier to get some general photographs of the mountain from the N., and then we all repaired back to Base Camp to find that Ambu Gyabjen had been climbed by Emlyn, Mike and Dawa (its third ascent), and that Emlyn and Mike had that day climbed to the previously noticed Notch on the N.E. spur.

But they had not found it a walk. They had apparently climbed some severe slabs, and it had all been rather harder than it looked, which was a sobering thought considering that this looked the easy section. However, subsequent investigation revealed that at the cost of a short crossing of a possibly stonefall-dangerous gully (we had no trouble in practice), the Notch could be reached with no more than an 150 feet V.Diff. pitch. A rope was draped down this, to obviate having to climb roped at such an early stage, and we quickly became used to panting up and running down it, which we had to do many times in the ensuing weeks.

Having now become a bit used to the altitude, and having all made the excursion up Ambu Gyabjen (except George who objected to it in principle as a waste of time and/or energy), we were ready to get down to it seriously. While some of the party continued with the work of getting food, fuel, tents and equipment to a dump at the Notch, Mike and George tackled the wall above, the objective being another notch 400 feet higher where we hoped to put Camp I. Rather than attempt the apparently impractical overlapping slabs on the ridge itself, they moved round to the right and climbed with considerable difficulty the nasty mixture of bad rock, snow and ice



A. Base Camp. B. The Notch. C. Camp I. D. Camp II. E. Summit of Ambu Gyabjen.
 F. Camp III. G. Camp IV. H. Top of 45° Ridge. I. Ice Pyramid.

AMA DABLAM: Showing the route of ascent.





they found there, ending up a short artificial pitch back on to the ridge itself about 300 feet above the First Notch and within easy reach of the Second Notch. They then abseiled straight down, leaving their rope down the lower 200 feet of the overlapping slabs. It was clear to them that their route of ascent was not one that could be made reasonably safe for men carrying loads, whether Sherpas or sahibs. An alternative had to be found.

The only possibility seemed to be to use the overlapping slabs themselves, down which was now stretched the 200 feet of rope. George thought that a fixed rope on them, pegged at fairly frequent intervals, would enable us to walk up the slabs leaning outwards on the fixed rope to counteract the deficiency of holds. So he climbed back up the slabs, using the abseil rope, and with a prusik on it as a sliding runner, then descended using it this time as an abseil and pegging another rope to the rock as he went. This equipped the first 200 feet, to the nick, and later another 200 feet of rope was fixed from there to the site of Camp I.

An unforeseen difficulty now appeared. The Sherpas were not used to rock peaks, and had never before made an abseil, so that it would be difficult to get them up to Camp I and even more difficult to get them down again; moreover there were murmurings about the overlapping slabs section, despite the presence of the fixed rope. There was little doubt that more would have to be done to equip it, the decision being reinforced when we discovered that not more than half the sahibs were prepared to lead the final 400 feet to Camp I. One of these difficulties was overcome, in part at least, by teaching the Sherpas to abseil, although only Urkien ever did so with any real conviction; Dawa evidently considered the whole thing as beneath his dignity, although this mattered little since he never went further than the First Notch in any case.

The problem of getting the Sherpas and loads (the former if possible carrying the latter) up the last 400 feet to Camp I was less easy. Pemba, Annullu and Urkien were coaxed with difficulty up the fixed ropes, and we hauled a certain number of loads up the first 200 feet to the Nick but it was a desperate business; the loads invariably got stuck under each overlap, and the process of throwing the rope down again after each load caused a lot of fun and games, particularly in a wind; also it proved exhaustingly hard work. Then Mike had the idea of a rope ladder. So wood was fetched and cut, and using another 200 feet of rope Mike constructed a rope ladder

about 60 feet long; this was hauled up and one end fixed at the Nick though not without a good deal of commotion, Mike dancing up and down the fixed rope guiding the ladder away from the overlaps, and all the rest of the party shouting contrary instructions or curses at each other, while a few unfortunates pulled like fury at the top. Another brainwave resulted in the construction of an aerial ropeway from the Nick to Camp I, to avoid having to carry loads up the upper 200 feet. Thus equipped, sahibs could lead up with light loads, and Sherpas could follow with the standard 40 lb. loads to the Nick, from where the loads could take the ropeway to Camp I. The camp itself had to be constructed out of a scree slope of large boulders, precariously balanced. Annullu took one look at it, and assented quite cheerfully when asked if it would be possible to make platforms for two tents. The Sherpas were in their element at this job, and in a surprisingly short time the platforms were made. By May 2nd Camp I was firmly established, and the party was getting used to the idea of swinging up and down the fixed ropes.

Now, while some of the party superintended the ferrying of loads along the three stages to Camp I, others set about the next section. After a short initial snow slope, the ridge rose with increasing steepness into a stretch of shattered grey granite that we came to know as the Grey Corner. Apart from a certain amount of debris, it was less dangerously loose than it looked, but climbing it always called for care, and its steady V.Diff.-Mild Severe standard meant that the only Sherpas we could take were Urkien, Annullu and Pemba, and they had to be escorted. After a few hundred feet the rock changed abruptly into a black schist which was a good deal less friable; but the steepness increased and the climbing remained continuous till a strenuous left traverse (which had to be equipped with a fixed rope) led to the start of an easier section of rock walls alternating with scree slopes. We fixed ropes up most of the Grey Corner and the Black Tower above it, principally for use as abseil ropes; and later some of the upper rock walls were also roped. The final section up to Camp II, placed on the Shoulder at about 19,100 feet, consisted of a snow slope gradually steepening and narrowing into a little icy chimney (another fixed rope), topped by a slope of disagreeably loose rock. This ended abruptly on the Shoulder, here a ridge capped with ice. We found that the tilt of the rock gave a small ledge on our side (E.) of the ridge, and we could enlarge it by cutting away part of the ice to provide just enough room for two tents.

It was an airy perch. It was not safe to move outside the tent without being roped, but certain other problems were eased: for instance the water supply was pressed hard up against one wall of the tent, and refuse disposal was simple since a hand stretched out of the tent could drop any waste over the 3,000 foot precipice on the E. side (the drop on the other side of the ice capping being if anything greater). Mike and George moved into this delectable abode and started to investigate the way ahead, while the rest of the party struggled on with the work of conveying what food and equipment we could as far up the mountain as possible.

It was May 5th, and the next day Urkien and I installed ourselves in a second tent at Camp II, after chopping away a good bit of the ice to make room for it. Meanwhile Mike and George had found a possible site for the next camp at the foot of the 45° Ridge. This was only about 700 feet above Camp II, but it was doubtful whether it would be possible to find another site at all for some considerable distance higher. Also the ground from Camp II to the proposed site of Camp III was by no means a doddle, as I found the following day when Urkien and I went up to support Mike and George in establishing Camp III. For a short way above Camp II the ridge ran almost level and was easy, although garnished with some astonishing ice scenery; then it rose into the first and highest of three rock towers. This first tower presented a steep buttress of broken-looking rock, yellow and black in colour. The most obvious line was a rake on its left (E.) side, leaving the front of the buttress at about one-third height and slanting steeply up to about the level of the gap between the first and second towers. Mike and George, who had climbed this the previous day, went ahead, and as soon as Urkien and I followed we understood why they had appeared to be going so slowly. The rock was vile, frightening: a series of blocks delicately balanced on top of one another; on most of it there was no question of gardening, since, as Urkien put it (with a graphic gesture), it gave the feeling that if one block was removed the whole side of the tower would disintegrate. It was no place for a clumsy climber, and I blessed my luck in having a companion as careful and competent as Urkien. In spite of his carrying 30 - 40 lbs. he never put a foot wrong.

Our progress would have made Agag appear to rival the policemen in the Pirates of Penzance, and only after what seemed like hours did we turn the corner at the top of the first tower. A traverse

across the flank of the second had been chosen by Mike and George in preference to going straight over it as they had done the first time. Care was still needed, particularly in negotiating the rotting lumps of ice slapped haphazardly on to the unstable slope; we never saw them come off, but they certainly inspired very little confidence. After turning the second tower by a somewhat delicate step, a fairly straightforward climb led to the foot of the third tower.

The climb up this proved to be short but fierce. The way lay up a slab, round a corner on the left, across a horizontal 10-foot traverse, and finally up easier (but again rotten) rocks to the site of Camp III. In the course of their first ascent of this pitch, Mike and George had fixed a thin nylon rope across the traverse. With this as handhold the standard was reduced to Severe, but it must have been a superb first lead by Mike. In order to encourage Urkien, George now followed up the pitch carrying one of our 40 lb. food boxes; but the effort was in vain: Urkien had decided that this standard of climbing was not for him, so after I had struggled up, we hauled up the remaining provisions and set about making camp.

I came to know this particular camp rather well later, and it merits description. It was placed above the third and highest rock tower, at the exact foot of the 45° Ridge, at about 19,800 feet. The ridge at this point is about six inches wide at the crest, dropping steeply for over 3,000 feet on the E. side and 4,000 feet on the W. However, just below the crest on the E. side is stuck a large bulge of ice, perhaps 15 feet across and extending downwards for about 40 feet. Why it remained attached to the steep side of the ridge was never entirely clear, more especially when two great notches had been cut out for the tents. One of the difficulties was to find a satisfactory way of anchoring the guy ropes, the method adopted in the end with some of the outside ones being to tie them round a rock and let them dangle over the edge. Even more than at Camp II one felt the need to be roped whenever making a sortie out of the tent. Despite the grandeur of the views in every direction: Everest to the N., Makalu and Baruntse to the E., and a host of peaks including Cho Oyo and Gyachung Kang to the W., I was not altogether sorry to return to Urkien, and so with him down the semi-compacted debris of the route over the towers back to Camp II.

The following day, while Mike and George were pushing on again, Urkien and I spent our time fetching some stuff which had been dumped on one of the earlier trips just below the snow couloir,

a few hundred feet below Camp II. Activity was also continuing lower down: more supplies being ferried up to Camp I, and that day Annullu and Pemba brought loads up to Camp II. They also brought a note from Fred, asking what in particular was needed higher up. Now it was becoming clear that if there was to be a chance of reaching the summit, more support would be needed at Camps II and III, as well as more supplies; so an urgent request went back with Annullu for more sahibs to come up, plus at least one more Sherpa. This would enable two of the party to move on to Camp III, on the assumption that Mike and George would be setting up another camp somewhere near the top of the 45° Ridge. At no time was their position as the spearhead of the party in any doubt.

After assisting Annullu and Pemba up the little icy chimney, Urkien and I returned to camp to find that one of the choughs which were frequent visitors had carried out a raid, flying off with a bag of atta weighing 3 or 4 lbs., and distributing a packet of precious Meta fuel over the cliff. This latter was rescued by Urkien, on a rope from above, from the almost vertical rocks beneath the tent. That evening as we were preparing to seal ourselves up in the tent for the night, Urkien pointed in some excitement to a dip in the ridge of mountains to our S.E., where there was obviously a very large snow capped mountain a long way off. We came to the conclusion that it could only be Kangchenjunga, which set Urkien off on a series of reminiscences about the different parties he had been with, the language difficulty being largely overcome by his vivid gestures; we even managed to share a few carefully manufactured jokes, including one about a grand-piano (originated by Mike) which we continued to find funny day after day.

Next morning we set off up to Camp III with supplies, in support of Mike and George, who we thought might by then have found a site for Camp IV; having reluctantly renewed our acquaintance with the tottering blocks of the first tower, and slid cautiously round the second, we saw with rather mixed feelings that Mike and George were on their way down towards us from Camp III. It appeared that they had the previous day climbed almost to the top of the 45° Ridge without finding any real possibility of a camp site, although they thought it might be possible to construct something sufficient for the little assault tent rather beyond their furthest point. The climb had taken the whole day and was very continuous, though

without any really hard pitches. But in the morning George had started to feel unwell, and they decided that now we had a measure of what we were up against, it would be best to return to Base Camp, rest, re-equip and re-organize in preparation for a determined go at the summit.

So we turned back down the towers, with George obviously out of sorts, to Camp II; and after a rest there continued on down towards the ice couloir, where we met Fred and the Sherpas on their way up to occupy Camp II. With little real regret, they joined our downward march, and the augmented party poured down the fixed ropes of the Black Tower and the Grey Corner, moving together almost the whole way, Mike safeguarding Fred and George, and myself with the Sherpas. Camp I came and went with little pause, except that Fred and Annullu stopped off there for the night. The rest of us continued down the familiar fixed ropes of the overlapping slabs, and so back to Base Camp to feast on the delights of low-altitude food instead of the evil-tasting meat bars of the higher camps. Only George was unable to make the most of our return, retiring to bed with sickness and a temperature.

We arrived back on May 9th, and it was not until May 13th that the weather (which had broken on our descent) and George were sufficiently recovered for another go at the mountain. On that day Mike, Urkien, Annullu and I started back up by easy stages, leaving George and any of the others who were fit enough to come on a day or so later. Emlyn had not been in very good form, and Nea (who had had considerable trouble with her knee) reckoned that she could neither carry enough nor climb fast enough, while Fred as doctor could hardly be expected to take part in the final assault, so it was not altogether certain who would accompany George; but someone would surely rise to the occasion.

Two days later on May 15th, Mike and I settled in at Camp III, supported by Urkien and Annullu who returned to Camp II. We put a great deal of trust in these two, feeling that now that they were familiar with the fixed-rope route to Camp II, they could safely travel as a pair from there to Camp I and back. We wanted them to bring supplies from Camp I, and the following day (or whenever he arrived) accompany George's party up to Camp III. Meanwhile Mike and I climbed some way up the 45° Ridge (for perhaps 600 feet), and fixed another 200 foot abseil rope to assist descent in bad weather. I was impressed, as Mike and George had been, with the

continuity of V.Diff.-Severe climbing; in the section we climbed that day there was only one decent stance, although belays were no problem. The quality of the rock was however much improved, typically rough granitic crack climbing (as at Chamonix), the only unfamiliar feature being the mushrooms of ice which gave the ridge a wedding cake appearance. Some of these improbable looking excrescences were very large, one in particular just above the 45° Ridge having an overhang of probably at least 40 feet. The ridge in this first 600 feet was nowhere more than 10-15 feet wide, and this added to the continuity of the climbing to give a feeling of great exposure. We also spent many hours on this day and the next cutting out another platform against the time when we would need two tents at the camp. We were busy with this on May 17th, when George's caravan arrived, he and Urkien joining us at Camp III, the rest returning to Camp II.

Mike had done some marathon climbs in the Caucasus the previous summer which had impressed him with the technique adopted there of as small a party as two going off on their own with a light tent and other light equipment, pitching the tent each evening, and pushing on again the next day. He and George planned to tackle Ama Dablam in much the same way, starting from Camp III as an advanced Base. We were now convinced in any event that this would provide the only hope of getting up the mountain. The route was getting beyond the scope of the Sherpas, nor was there sufficient time to establish two or three more camps, even supposing we had had enough rope to equip the route (we already had 2,000 feet fixed on the mountain). They reckoned it would take two camps above Camp III, with a day for the final assault, and a day more in descent: a total of four days. They therefore took food and fuel to last five, or at a pinch six, days, a light tent, a sheet of foam rubber as mattress (encased in a polythene bag), meta cooker and fuel, sleeping bags and duvet. Their sacks with all this in weighed about 25-30 lbs. each.

On Whit Monday, the 18th May, Mike and George left Camp III at about nine o'clock. By eleven o'clock they were disappearing from the sight of Urkien and myself into dead ground almost half-way up the 45° Ridge. This was quick going and encouraging to those of us forming the support party at Camp III, which was augmented later in the day by the arrival of Emlyn and Annullu. The latter had previously jibbed at the hard little pitch just below the camp,

but managed it now aided by a better fixed rope, and a rope from above. Emlyn brought news that Fred and Pemba had intended to remain in support at Camp II, where Fred had brought his electrocardiograph. Unfortunately Fred's own electrocardiogram, taken by Emlyn, showed such an alarming result (which displayed the signs of an imminent heart attack) that Fred and Pemba had hastily returned to Base Camp.

On the day following Mike and George's departure, we did not see them until four o'clock, when they suddenly came into view not far from the point where the 45° Ridge abuts on to the Ice Ridge; moving quickly up and left across a rock wall under the gigantic ice mushroom already referred to, they climbed to a nick in the Ice Ridge, and disappeared over the far side (W.). Presumably the upper part of the 45° Ridge had presented considerable difficulties, so that they would now have to manufacture a tent platform on the W. side of the Ice Ridge. The following day they again remained invisible until about eleven o'clock, when they appeared on the snow slopes below the Ice Pyramid that marks the upper end of the Ice Ridge, where it merges into the summit dome. They now spent some hours in trying to find a route round the Pyramid, the chitter-chat involved in this being quite audible to us though it was not easy to distinguish individual words; failing in this, they climbed up behind the big ice flake that hides from below the base of the Pyramid, and then climbed the steep face of the Pyramid itself. They had completed this by about three o'clock, and went out of our sight over the top. A quarter of an hour later they re-appeared and descended the Pyramid, taking care to enlarge their steps as they went. It seemed obvious to us that they had seen their way clear from the top of the Pyramid, but had not had time to climb the remaining 700 or 800 feet and return to their tent that day. This view seemed to be borne out when Urkien's cry roused us the following morning to see them at the top of the Pyramid at eight o'clock. They were climbing fast, obviously all out for the summit.

And there the story ends, with the veil of the advancing monsoon clouds wisping across the upper slopes. We did not see Mike or George again. A brief clearing on the 22nd showed us nothing, nor did we hear any sound after the morning of the 21st. By mid-day on the 22nd Emlyn voiced our still unbelieving fear, "I'm afraid we've lost those boys": I can still hear him saying it, and see clearly his





exact position sitting in the tent, with the chess set between us, and the monocular lying by the open tent flap.

The monsoon broke the next day, the 23rd, at half past ten. We left at eleven o'clock, knowing that there must have been an accident, and knowing that the storm would not admit of any consideration of the possibility of trying to investigate. We left a tent, primus, food — but more really because we did not want to overload ourselves with it, than in any hope it might be used. The return was no fun. After nearly a week of inactivity, and with our hearts empty, the descent of the towers in the snow storm was a penance which it seemed would never end. Urkien safeguarded Annullu most of the way (until we made a rope of four), while I took Emlyn who was having trouble with a touch of frostbite in his hands, and once again we were thankful for Urkien's accomplished mountain craft. What had taken only $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours up, now took $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours in descent. Camp II on its airy perch was hailed thankfully; there the wonderful Sherpas pitched the other tent which we had brought down with us, and in a remarkably short time Urkien was handing in hot mugs of tea, while Annullu had stripped Emlyn and was massaging his fingers and toes.

It snowed the following day, but on the 25th we took advantage of a reasonable morning, and made our unsteady way down the snow-sheathed mountain to Base Camp. Snow continued to fall on the next six days, preventing any search party; only on the morning that we left Base Camp did Nea and I get a chance to walk round to the other side of Ambu Gyabjen and search the avalanche covered slopes below the N.W. face. We found nothing.

Shall we ever know whether or not Ama Dablam was climbed on May 21st 1959? I suppose not, though for what it is worth I personally believe that Mike and George climbed to the top on that day, and had an accident in the hurry of a descent in face of the growing threat of the monsoon. We left a plaque inscribed with Mike's and George's names in a cairn at the foot of the N.E. spur, but their true memorial is in the hearts of their friends, and perhaps in the fact that, whether it has been followed or not, there is now a route to the summit of Ama Dablam.

"DISASTER ON AMA DABLAM"

TECHNICAL NOTE

1. *Timetable*

April	17th	Base Camp reached.
	24th	First Notch reached.
May	1st	Camp I occupied.
	5th	Camp II occupied.
	7th	Camp III occupied.
	9th	Return to Base Camp.
	13th	Re-ascent started.
	18th	Assault party left Camp III.
	21st	Attempt on summit.
	23rd	Monsoon broke.
	25th	Return to Base Camp.
	30th	Evacuation of Base Camp.

2. *Route*

Note that the heights and standards are provisional.

Start from Base Camp at 16,000 ft. at foot of N.E. spur.

- (a) To Camp I at 17,800 ft.:
 - 1,400 ft. to First Notch, scrambling with 120 ft. III-IV.
 - 400 ft. overlapping slabs, original route VI and A.1, route with ropes fixed III-IV.
- (b) To Camp II at 19,100 ft. on the shoulder at the intersection of the N.E. spur and N. ridge:
 - 200 ft. snow slope and scrambling.
 - 250 ft. the Grey Corner, pitches of IV, some bad rock.
 - 250 ft. left traverse to Black Tower IV/V, then III.
 - 600 ft. snow couloir IV sup. at top, otherwise III and scrambling, bad rock.
- (c) To Camp III at 19,800 ft., at foot of 45° Ridge:
 - 100 ft. easily along ridge.
 - 250 ft. 1st tower, III/IV, bad rock.
 - 250 ft. round second tower, messy scrambling and III.
 - 100 ft. 3rd tower, originally VI and IV.
- (d) The 45° Ridge to 21,000 ft.:
 - 600 ft. IV/IV sup. continuous, good rock, few stances.
 - 600 ft. probably harder.

- (e) The Ice Ridge to 21,700 ft.:
Start on the E. side, crossing at a nick one-third of the way along, ending up Ice Pyramid: 60 ft. of steep ice.
- (f) Summit dome to 22,500 ft.:
Appears to be relatively straightforward snow/ice slope, easing in angle; may start with ice wall of 30-40 ft.

DIRETTISSIMA

CHRISTIAN BONINGTON

“THIS IS WHERE they usually fall off,” one of the German experts announced. A couple of seconds later the leading climber, far above, a black dot on the smooth yellow wall, dropped off. He fell twenty feet, before his piton runner held him. He rested for a few minutes and then resumed the climb, soon reaching the point from which he had fallen. A long pause, the faint thudding of a piton hammer, and he was up.

Gunn Clarke and myself were sitting with a group of Austrian and German climbers at the foot of the North Wall of the Grosse Zinne,* watching two parties make the thirteenth and fourteenth ascents of the Diretta. It was a highly critical audience. Three of its members had already done the climb, and several more were interested in attempting it. We talked to them in a mixture of French, German and English, learning as much as possible about the route. We had heard every kind of tale about it and were anxious to make an attempt ourselves. At the same time, we were rather apprehensive.

The North Wall of the Grosse Zinne is 1,800 ft. high. The first thousand feet are either vertical or overhanging, unbroken by any major fault. The original route was made in 1933 by Comici and the brothers Dimai, up its right hand side. The rock here was more climbable, yielding a series of good cracks and holds, with relatively few overhangs. This route has now been climbed many hundreds of times, and can be regarded as a classic Grade VI. The remainder of the wall presented a real challenge — a thousand feet of smooth, featureless yellow rock, roofed by some prodigious overhangs.

In 1957 four German climbers attempted a route up the centre of the face. They planned to use expansion bolts, and spend at least a week on the climb. To solve the supply problem, they had obtained a thousand foot length of line, which they were going to use to haul up their food, drink and extra pitons, each day. The face is so steep that it is possible to lower a line directly to the bottom from any

*Or Cima Grande di Lavaredo. [Ed.]

point on it. In their first attempt they succeeded in climbing the first four hundred feet, before being turned back by the weather. Throughout the summer they sat in the Rifugio Locatelli playing cards, waiting for the weather to improve. The following year they returned and succeeded in completing the route, taking five days to do it.

It was a truly magnificent achievement. The pitonage was nowhere easy, there being a marked scarcity of good cracks. They were also forced to use a number of expansion bolts. They left all of these and their pitons in place. The climb was repeated by several parties that same year. In 1959 it was the most popular hard climb in the Dolomites, and practically every German who thought he was capable headed for the Drei Zinnen. On the thirteenth attempt, however, the leader fell off when approaching the first bivouac, and pulled out two expansion bolts. He attempted to cross without these to assist him, but was unable to do so, and the party was forced to make a hair-raising retreat.

It was at this stage that we arrived in Cortina. We spent a week, camping at the end of the mountain road at the foot of the South Face of the Kleine Zinne, waiting for the weather to improve. During this period we were told every kind of tale about the great North Wall, and were shown various pieces of apparatus with which prospective climbers hoped to conquer it. We had neither expansion bolts, nor any other specialized equipment. We therefore decided to wait for another party to attempt the traverse in its de-pegged state. We were much relieved, therefore, to see the two German parties reach the first bivouac.

Three days later we had screwed up our courage and were all set to start. The previous night had been cloudy and we had given up all hope. As a result, we spent a late night in the refuge drinking and playing cards. We did not wake up until six o'clock, to find a clear sky and a fair wind. What was more, our neighbours were just setting off for the Diretta. We promptly decided to follow suit.

One can adopt two plans of campaign in attempting the route. The climb can be split into three sections. The first is up the blank yellow wall to the foot of the big overhangs. The pitches in this section are alternately free and artificial, the latter being essentially delicate, with long reaches and poorly placed pitons. At the start of the overhangs is a good bivouac ledge. Above this are four continuously overhanging pitches with two stances in etriers. This leads to

the second bivouac ledges, above which the difficulty relents for the last seven hundred feet.

As we were late in starting, we could only hope to reach the first bivouac ledge. With a dawn start, one should be able to reach the second. We hoped to complete the climb in two days, but took enough food for three. One of the major problems was that of water, there being none on the face. We carried about two pints. In addition we took:

1	300 ft. rope	3	wooden wedges
1	125 ft. rope	7	etriers
40	karabiners	1	duvet (each)
	assorted slings	1	perlon bivouac sack
15	pitons	1	Tommy cooker

Once we had draped ourselves with the ironmongery, the sacks were fairly light. On the first day I hauled my own sack up after me, but on the overhangs and the upper stretch found it less effort to carry it.

We arrived at the foot of the face at about eight o'clock. To approach it, we walked up to the head of the pass between the Kleinste Zinne and the Patternkofel. There, the great North Walls came to view in an upwards surge of grey and yellow rock. It was difficult to believe that anyone could climb them, let alone ourselves. We could see the Germans perched a hundred feet above us. They had made good progress.

We prepared our ropes and looked up at the face, which was to be our world for the next three days. Once embarked on the first holds our horizon would contract to a few feet of rock in front, to the next piton, to the roof above. Only occasionally would we glance at the screes below, and then objectively. The minute figures of our audience sprawled on the rocks, or the dots slowly moving along the path, or the Refuge on the other side of the valley, would all be remote and unattainable.

Starting the Diretta is rather like plunging into a torrent. One moment one is standing on the bank, warm and dry, and then suddenly, one is embraced by the cold, rushing water. In our case we were standing on a well-worn path, and then, with the first move on to the rock, were off balance, working our way up an awkward, finger-jamming crack, with the first piton twenty feet above. The standard was mild V.S. Two more pitches followed quickly up a series of shattered flakes. This brought us to the start of the smooth

part of the wall. The real difficulties were about to begin. The Germans were now only one pitch above us, climbing an impressive roof, which jutted out horizontally for about three feet. At a glance, the wall seemed vertical and holdless. What was still more disconcerting, I could only see two or three pitons between myself and the overhang. On closer inspection, however, there were small but adequate holds. The climbing was comparatively straightforward. The most worrying factor was the strain on my arms, since I was always off balance. The stance below the overhang was surprisingly good, a small ledge, invisible from below, on which one could stand. The roof itself gave us our first taste of A₃ climbing, involving complicated acrobatics on etriers attached to pitons of decidedly dubious security. Another pitch of thin but enjoyable free climbing and we were below the open groove, where so many of our predecessors had fallen. Indeed, as I approached the stance, there was a yell from above and as I looked up, I saw the leader of the German party hanging ten feet below his piton. With hardly a pause he climbed back up, stepped cautiously into the top rung of his etrier and, precariously balanced, hammered in a piton above his head. The dull thud of his hammer inspired little confidence, but he clipped in his etrier and was soon standing on the ledge above. His second followed up quickly, and, all too soon, it was my turn to start. The first fifty feet gave delicate free climbing, protected by only a few pitons. The line was not obvious, and I had to reverse moves several times, stepping now to the right and then to the left. This finally led to the smooth open groove. There were no natural holds, and the pitons, interspersed with two expansion bolts, were at extreme reach. Clipping a karabiner into each piton was hard enough. Climbing it in the first place had indeed been an achievement.

After another twenty feet, I had reached the point where the German had fallen, and clipped into an expansion bolt. A good eight feet above was the piton he had placed, a minute Cassin peg hammered into a hole. I cautiously climbed the etrier, until I was standing on the top rung, my left foot bridged out on a barely distinguishable hold on the wall, my hands spreadeagled to keep me in balance. The piton was still out of reach. I tried to stand on tip toe on the etrier rung. The rung slipped to one side, and I was off. Before I had time to think, I found myself hanging a few feet below the expansion bolt, which had bent over in a graceful curve. I felt no sensation of shock or fear. My entire concentration was devoted

to that piton, only eight feet above, yet seemingly out of reach. I went up again, and this time placed my foot more carefully on the rung. I stretched as far as I could. I was losing my balance. My finger tips brushed the ring of the piton. Another effort; the top joints of two fingers curled around it. My foot on the etrier scuffed round. I was hanging with all my weight on the two fingers. I could not let go, and therefore clipped a karabiner over the top of my fingers. I had to take my weight on the karabiner with my left hand, and somehow extract the fingers of my right, which were now trapped and extremely painful. My hands were tiring. All that existed in the world was a piton, a karabiner, and a few feet of rock. A last struggle, I was free and able to clip in my other etrier. My difficulties were not yet over. The next piton was closer than the last, but I had used up my etriers and most of my strength. A pull up, an awkward mantelshelf, and I was lying panting on a narrow ledge.

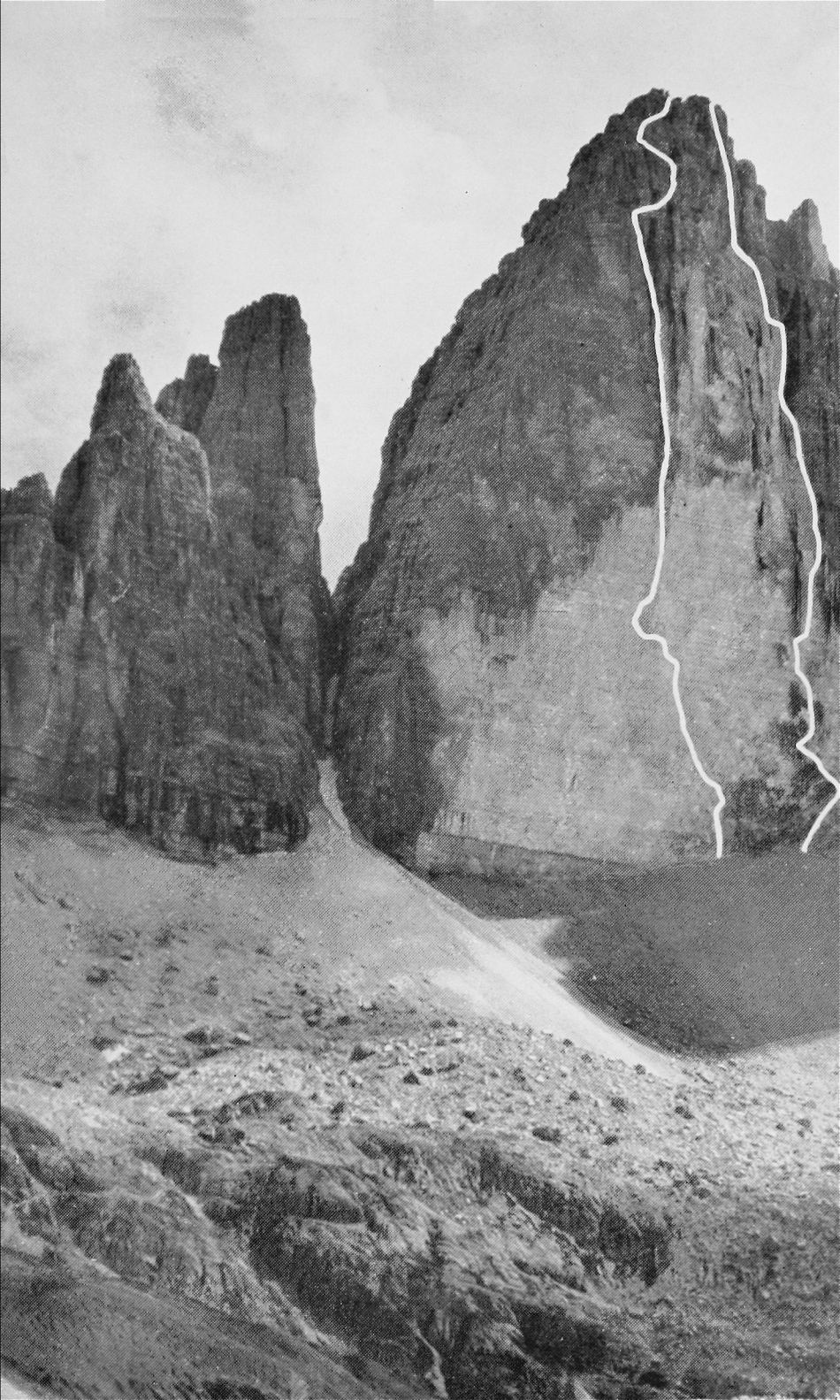
Gunn followed up quickly, and a further pitch of free climbing led to the final trial of the day. This was the traverse, where two expansion bolts were missing. The first twenty feet gave straight-forward climbing from peg to peg, and I began to think our troubles were over. The line of pitons came to an end, however. The last was a long channel peg resting loosely in a crumbling hole. It held, when pulled sideways, but could be plucked straight out with a direct pull. A few feet further to the left, and at a lower level, was an expansion bolt, which had been plugged into its hole with a piece of paper. Several feet higher and further still to the left, was another small ring peg, jammed in the hole left by a missing bolt. The nature of the traverse made me unpleasantly aware of the exposure. I had to lean down, hanging on the long channel peg, to place an etrier on the paper covered bolt. I could not help glancing down at the screes six hundred feet below. Stepping on the top rung of the etrier, my "mare's tail" threaded through the channel peg, I slowly reached across to the next peg, clipped in an etrier, and gently stood on it. A few more feet, and I was at the stance. We had overcome the thinnest part of the Diretta. Another easy pitch, and we reached the bivouac ledge.

Here we had a delightful surprise. The Germans were already established, but there was plenty of room for us. There were two ledges, each about two feet wide. We would even be able to lie down for the night. Gunn and I immediately set to work, hammering in pitons, and hurling rubble to the screes below. The Germans,

THE NORTH FACE OF THE GROSSE ZINNE

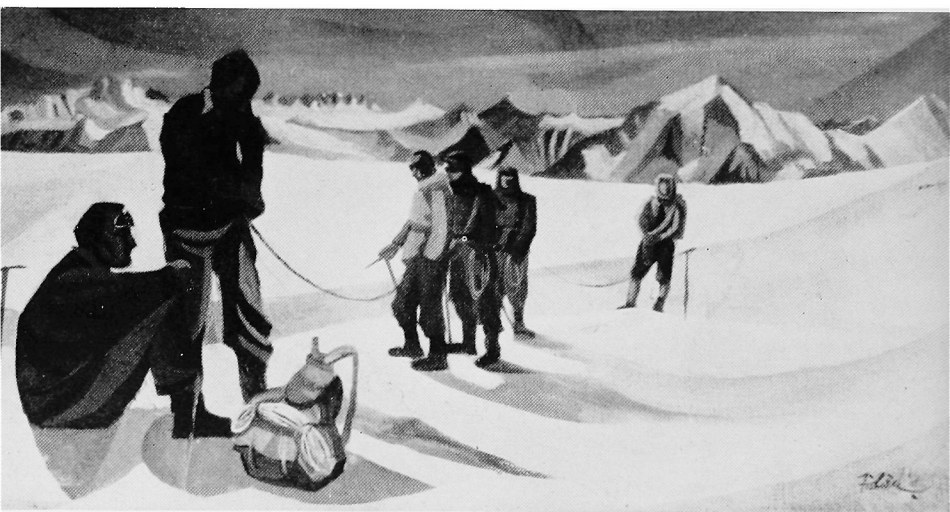
Left: The direct route.

Right: The Comici route.





CHALÊTS, SAVOY (48×17 ins.)
C. Fishwick



SECOND BREAKFAST (24×12 ins.)
C. Fishwick

having organized their bivouac, had discovered some light entertainment, to help pass the afternoon. They were bombarding a group of spectators, who had been watching the climb. They soon departed. The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent in eating, brewing some coffee and erecting a complicated system of belays to avoid rolling off the ledge during the night. That night I had the first bivouac I ever enjoyed, sleeping solidly throughout.

Our ledge was so comfortable that it was an effort to get up the following morning. We felt thoroughly refreshed, and were full of enthusiasm, feeling that the main difficulties were now behind us. Our view above was constricted by the huge roofs towering over us. The experts had assured us that this section was very strenuous, but straightforward. We sat on the ledge, watching the Germans at work above us. Most of the time they were swinging clear of the rock in their etriers. Below, we could see two tiny figures at the start of the climb. The German leader ran out a hundred feet of rope, and took a stance hanging in etriers, immediately below the huge roof. His second followed up with amazing speed, and, passing the stance, soon disappeared over the roof. We could hear him calling down, somewhere out of sight, but the rope moved slowly, and the pitch was obviously difficult.

Eventually, I became impatient, and started up the pitch. It was all vertical or slightly overhanging, broken by a couple of horizontal roofs, which were particularly awkward to pull over. I arrived below the German, and made myself a cradle of ropes to sit in. I had to stay there for a further hour, immediately above me the German's backside, below — space. I pulled loose a stone. It dropped, without touching anything, to the ground eight hundred feet below.

At last the German moved on, and I was able to bring Gunn up to my belay. Changing stances was an irksome business, and we soon found ourselves in a tangle of ropes and etriers. It called upon all our powers of patience to get organized without losing our tempers. This type of high standard, artificial climbing was something neither of us had met before. It demanded a machine-like, methodical approach. One mistake could cause disaster. The pitches were long, meandering through the jumble of overhangs. The ropes were threaded through anything up to forty karabiners. As a result, we had to concentrate the whole time, on which rope to use, how to thread it through the karabiner, whether it was likely to cross the

other or get jammed in a crack. At the same time the pitons were often far apart, demanding a move or two of free climbing, and many of them looked frighteningly loose.

After traversing a few feet to the right, away from Gunn's stance, I had to pull up over the first roof. My view was immediately constricted to a few feet of rock. Below I could only see the scree; the entire face was cut off by the overhang. Only three feet above, the rock jutted out once again, hiding the sky. Another struggle, swinging in my etriers, my feet well clear of the rock, and I was in an overhanging V chimney. I was already running short of karabiners, the rope was beginning to drag, and there was still no sign of a stance, or even a piton on which one would dare belay. To save karabiners, and reduce the friction on the rope, I only clipped in on every third or fourth peg. One did not dare think what would happen if one came out.

"Tight red, slack on white;" clip in a karabiner; clip on etrier; step in etrier; reach down and take off the etrier below; hang, panting and exhausted, and then repeat the process all over again. At last I reached the stance, a foot-hold, and three expansion bolts. I had no karabiners left, and had to thread the rope directly through the holes in the bolts. Gunn now had to follow up. The rope was dragging badly, and he was able to get no support from it. If a piton were to come out, he would swing well away from the rock. At last, he reached my stance. It was now well into the afternoon. We had taken a long time. The two climbers who had started that morning were already sitting on the bivouac ledge, two hundred feet below.

The next pitch looked a bit easier, but we were soon disillusioned. The pitons were further apart, and there were several stretches of hard free climbing. At last we reached a minute ledge where we could actually stand in balance. We did not know what time it was, for Gunn had dropped our alarm clock from our first bivouac. It was obviously getting late. We knew we had one more artificial pitch, and we were not sure how much further above that was the bivouac, so we decided to stay where we were. Gunn proved his worth as an ex-geologist by directing quarrying operations, to enlarge our resting place. When we had finished, we were able to sit down, quite comfortably, our legs dangling, the wall behind preventing us from leaning back. Our chief worry, at this stage, was thirst. We

had only half a water bottle left and this did not even begin to satisfy us.

The night dragged on interminably. We spent most of it trying to find a comfortable position, or holding out our mess tin, in hope of catching a drop of water falling from the overhangs above. As dawn came, we had no temptation to linger, but set about the wearisome business of organizing our equipment and unravelling the rope. It was a great relief to be able to start climbing. The pitch was not as hard as the two previous ones and I quickly reached the end of the difficulties. Above stretched a groove of fine grey rock. At last we were above the yellow wall. A pitch of exposed, but straightforward, free climbing led to the bivouac ledge. On it, we found the route book, kept in a lead case. We could not help feeling some pride, as we added our names to the list.

We did not linger for long. We were tired, parched with thirst, and longing for our sleeping bags. Above the ledge was a chimney, bristling with overhangs, but the rock was grey and firm, with a profusion of good hand jamming cracks and other holds. We put away the etriers, and started to climb. It was a fine sensation handling rock once more, obeying the natural instincts of our muscles, instead of the complex rope engineering we had carried out on the previous day. Pitch followed pitch, bridging and hand-jamming over overhangs, or stepping delicately up grooves. The standard for the most part was Severe, with short sections of Hard VS. Only once did we have to use our etriers. At last the angle began to relent and a couple of long, loose pitches led to the Ring Band which girdles the summit block. The climb was ours.

GIRDLE OF THE EAST BUTTRESS OF CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU

C. T. JONES

THE EAST BUTTRESS is a big chunky lump of rock and gives the impression of smoothness and strength of character. It has a collection of classical cracks and chimneys and these have all been connected together to give a wonderful girdle traverse.

So, one fine June day, four of us stood underneath the Sunset Crack and untangled the hundreds of feet of multi-coloured rope. Hugh Banner and Jim O'Neill were the first party, Mike Harris and I leading through on the second.

The first pitch of Llithrig was very hard and steep. From the only running belay the ropes hung down in long coils in preparation for the diagonal abseil; they reached comfortably near the ground. I slid down and Mike pulled me into the groove just below the ledge.

Smoothness, insecurity, fear and enjoyment filled my thoughts at that moment, but all difficulty relents after a time. Cruel Llithrig was left. A comfortable little ledge went all the way across into Pigott's.

Delicate traversing of the P.A.'s together, apart, together, apart, stop. The rock bulged out stubbornly into my stomach. Hugh had managed it perfectly, but excessive girth was against me, so a scrabbling hand traverse was necessary.

Pigott's felt like a gully climb after the smoothness, so we went round the corner on to the Wall Finish. It seemed quite difficult, but the holds edged their way sideways to the Rickety Innards and tautened muscles relaxed, like the difficulty.

It had been dry for some time now. But the rock around these innards oozed water and slime and green rock glistened. Both my feet shot off, but I stayed in position. Mike just smiled. So afterwards he went round the next corner into Diglyph. More difficulty.

The rope quivered slightly, slid down the rib and then rasped up the rock confidently as Mike laybacked up the shallow crack.

Round ribs and across corners all the time. Peace and quiet and loneliness. But the best was yet to come — the Central Wall itself.

A tiny crack. No footholds. But that was the way to a microscopic ledge an inch in width and six inches long. All the hopes and ambitions had led to this spot. Forty thousand square feet of smooth rock with one person at its centre. But there was a groove straight in front from the ledge where the holds were grudging and flat. There was a grass ledge supreme in its remoteness where we sat and ate our raisins and chocolate.

Hugh and Jim were laughingly climbing Curving Crack. It was Jim's first visit to Cloggy, he climbed well, a powerful performance indeed.

Just around the corner on a thin pinnacle an abseil sling flapped slightly. The flake creaked and sounded hollow when it was tapped, but when our weight was brought on it, it stayed firm as all good flakes should do.

It was a long abseil; over one hundred feet down to the grass ledge which built its way out of the drainpipe recesses of Vember.

Another gully pitch and then we broke out into the sunshine near the top of the crag. Yet another abseil. After eight hours I was very tired and every muscle ached. Only one more pitch, but unfortunately this was the Corner. It was my turn to lead, too. Cramp then seized my right leg. A shout to the top and a rope slid down. Half an hour later we were both on top and all four of us lay down in the enjoyment of bodily fatigue. Mike and I had both led Cenotaph Corner the previous day but it seemed puny beside the girdle.

No cars, no binoculars, no coaches. Llyn du'r Arddu and down below the smoke curled out of Mrs. Williams' chimney at Half Way House of the sharp lemon drink.

Nothing but the exquisite quiet and then sleep.

THE ATTEMPT ON SARAGHRAR

W. G. ROBERTS

IN THE HINDU KUSH there are four peaks of over 24,000 feet: Tirich Mir, Istor-o-nal, Noshag, and Saraghrar. Only the first two have been climbed: Tirich Mir by the Norwegians in 1951, and Istor-o-nal by a two-man party from Princeton University in 1955. The area is thus relatively unknown. It has other advantages, the main one being that as it is at the far north-west end of the Himalayas it is unaffected by the monsoon and can be climbed in during the normal holiday months of August and September. We also gathered that it was a less difficult area than the Karakoram, and also of a more reasonable altitude, suitable in fact for Himalayan novices; in this presumption we were partly wrong. We chose Saraghrar rather than Noshag because little or nothing was known about the valley from which it rose, the Rosh Gol. The expedition had five members, Peter Nelson, Eric Plumpton, Nigel Rogers and myself (all C.C. members), and Ted Norrish (O.U.M.C.), the organiser.

Our liaison officer was bubbling with bright schemes for the ascent of the mountain. He spotted a dotted red line going over the summit on the map — actually a district boundary — and proudly pointed it out as a footpath. However, as he found the rigours even of Base Camp too much for him after a few days, we felt that he had not examined the position very closely. In fact the approaches were formidable. The west side of the mountain was dominated by the West Wall, 7,000 feet of vertical rock. This was flanked by two ridges, neither of which was found to be possible. The only way seemed to be by an outflanking movement to the north via a glacier which went up behind the north-west ridge. This glacier we named the Northern Cwm. The glacier went up to almost 19,000 feet, where it ended against a rock wall which hemmed in the head of the Cwm. This rock wall was three to four thousand feet high. Once through it we would be on the summit ridge with an easy gradient, so far as

could be seen, up to the summit. There appeared one way through the rock, by a steep snow couloir.

Most of this route was visible from Tao Zom, a rock peak of 18,800 feet which Peter Nelson and I set off to climb one day as part of our acclimatisation programme. We got on to the rock at about eleven in the morning and then had three delightful hours leading through up slabs which eventually steepened into a wall. Peter was splendidly fit and moved confidently, steadily, and neatly. It was a wonderful experience, all the wonder of the Himalayas plus the pleasures of the Alps, a combination which I imagine does not often occur. At 2.30 we were still some hundred feet from the summit and the climbing had become Severe. Thin flurries of snow occasionally blew across. It hardly seemed worth a bivouac (we were not prepared for one and were expected back anyway) and so we rappelled down. Crossing the moraine I thought once or twice of the snow leopards which prey in this country and move at 80 m.p.h., so they say. However, I remember this day as a day of sheer pleasure, and because I learnt something from Peter's skill and caution. Succeeding days seemed rather like a protracted military manoeuvre.

Our main objective in the succeeding days was to achieve a build-up of supplies at the head of the Northern Cwm. The glacier had three icefalls, above each of which we established a camp. The naming of the camps, however, was as confusing as the numbering of Dvorak's symphonies. Somewhat illogically we called the third camp Camp 2 (the two preceding camps being Lower and Upper Camp 1). As Charles Houston says in a useful article in the *Himalayan Journal*, precision bombing of supplies from the air is difficult in the Himalayas, and so we laboriously went to and fro over ground which if you looked at it (and you had to) was not very beautiful. I think I date the degeneration of my language from these days of turning turtle on the moraine. Camp 2, the end of the trail for these portering expeditions, was an exciting place. The rock wall round it was a lesson in geological decay: to put it bluntly, pieces kept falling off. Every now and then there would be a whine as of a shell and some rocky fragment would come bounding on to the snow. One night Nigel and I awoke to a colossal roar, the sort of noise the Albert Hall would make if it were to fall down, and by the light of the stars we saw from the tent door a terrifying rock avalanche come crashing down lower in the Cwm. Fortunately nothing ever came near the tents and one was probably quite safe; it was just that it did not feel it and I was always

glad to get away from it. Base Camp in comparison was a delightful place. The cows were a bit of a nuisance, but it was so pleasant to be able to camp on grass at 14,000 feet that we did not mind sharing it. A brook babbled and colourful birds sang and the cirque of mountains roundabout was majestic: had we been possessed of Scandinavian fancifulness like the Norwegian Tirich Mir expedition we might have named our Base Camp, as they did theirs, "Idyllen". The cook, Ali Morad Khan, contributed to making life at Base Camp even more pleasant. His outstanding virtues were a flair for omelettes, an ability to make cricket bats out of firewood, and the fact that he was on our side against the Liaison Officer. Like Morad, our four porters were local Chitralis. They seemed able to live on codeine tablets and chupattis at high altitude but they worked hard and were a cheerful crew.

By Monday, August 25th, everything was ready. We hoped to dash up to the summit from Camp 2 and down again in two relays, separated from each other by a day. We knew it would go as far as Camp 3 half way up the couloir. Everything depended on the ground between Camp 3 and Camp 4-to-be on the summit ridge. We had high hopes. The cook had a great smile on his face as he rigged up a stick to take our two flags: the Union Jack and the Horned Moon of Pakistan.

On Wednesday, August 27th, Nigel, Ted and I watched Peter and Eric through binoculars from Camp 2. Peter and Eric were the first assault party and they set out carrying kit for three days from Camp 3 early in the morning. The camp was on the left side of the couloir as viewed from below. After climbing up the couloir for a while they crossed it and went on to the rocks on the right hand side. They climbed upwards, diagonally rightwards, to a height of about 21,700 feet. Then they decided that this route was unsafe because of falling rocks and would never do for carrying loads over. They decided to retreat in order to let us try the left hand side of the couloir. At about 1 p.m. we saw them re-appear on the snow again at the point where they had traversed the couloir earlier in the day. Eric stayed on the rock to watch for, and warn of, falling stones, and Peter set off to cross the couloir. He did not rope because the couloir was more than a rope's length across and a belay on an ice piton would have been unpleasant in the middle of a chute of stones. In any case he had been over the ground already and he had an axe. After a few steps he dropped his axe in changing it from one hand to the other.

In seeking to retrieve it he stumbled and fell. Without his axe he was soon out of control and he fell for over a thousand feet. From his injuries it was clear that he was killed instantly.

Others can speak better than I can of what a great loss Peter Nelson's death is, to his family, the club, and his many friends. I know the happiness of our expedition was largely due to his sense of humour and to his wisdom. What seems so tragic is that such a momentary slip could lead to such appalling consequences.

After the accident for various reasons the attempt on Saraghrar was given up. To have gone on, even if we had felt like it, would have meant starting all over again and there simply wasn't time. On the march out it was tantalising to catch glimpses of peaks, passes and glaciers which, with better fortune, we might have had time to visit. So many might-have-beens! Saraghrar will be a tough nut for any expedition but there are thousands of other peaks, less in height but not in worthiness, with wonderful names like Kunotok and Madaglasht. Chimborazo and Cotopaxi can scarcely be more appealing than these. An Italian expedition is visiting the area in 1959.*

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the expedition travelled out through Russia, perhaps being the first and almost certainly being the last to do so. The theory was that as the tourist rate of exchange was 150% better than the ordinary rate fares in Russia would be cheap. Unfortunately the Russians cottoned on to this loop-hole and nullified it by adding a 150% surcharge to all air fares. So instead of paying about £60 for a return air fare from Moscow to Kabul we paid about £70 for a single to Kabul (and limped home by more conventional routes with an £800 overdraft). However, we did have the opportunity of meeting two prominent Russian mountaineers in Moscow. They were obviously very fit and had earned the title of Merited Master of Sport. Their first question to us was whether we believed in the Abominable Snowman. One could not but be envious of the terrific mountaineering opportunities in the Pamirs and the Caucasus and many other parts of the Socialist Sixth of the world, from most of which we seem to be cut off by political differences which seem so unimportant when one meets the Russian people themselves.

**Editor's note: Saraghrar was climbed by this Italian expedition.*

PASSES, BUKITS and JEBELS

WARWICK DEACOCK

FOR LOTUS READ APRICOTS — certainly John Sims and I consumed our fair share of these, sitting by the village of Jaglot. With our toes trailing in the glacial stream and our first air mail arrived by inconsistent Dak runner we mentally turned our back on Rakaposhi and her antiseptic ice and allowed our minds to travel to Delhi. Report had it that our wives had arrived there by Land Rover en route to the Lahoul Himalaya. Time hung heavy and a diet of apricots could not go on for ever; we moved.

A Bristol Freighter hitched us out of Gilgit diminutively under Nanga Parbat and along the Indus valley to set us down at Lahore. Here we picked up the wives' trail, and, dumping kit, made our way using all possible means, like a couple of weekend Snowdon hitchhikers, to Dalhousie. This drew blank, for, characteristically, the ladies had changed their minds and had gone to Manali instead. Three days later, the worse for wear from dysentery, we picked more clues, and knew that we were only a matter of three days behind the memsahibs; but by now they should have crossed that rubicon of the Himalayan explorer the Inner Line — having seen Nehru in person whilst in Delhi and charmed the permission out of him. Whether indeed we should catch them up or not the opportunity to visit new mountains and meet new people should not be missed.

Over the Rotang La and stumble-bump along the 46 miles of the good trade road to Kyleang took us 36 hours. The journey was enlivened by the number of travellers that we met, and our senses appreciated the greenness of the Chandra and Bagra valleys after the desert landscapes of the Karakoram foothills. As we went North the head-dresses of the passers-by revealed our approach to Ladakh and Tibet. An occasional spangle paper revealed that we were on the right track; we did ruminate upon the possibility of these having been the relics of the winter abominable McInnes expedition but a hockey boot print belonging to my wife's down-at-heel 'Harrison's Schuhe' clinched this detection!

We discovered our wives riding out a rain storm in a rest house, and after a lot of one-upmanship chit-chat we swapped meat bars for bully and helped them to consume their medical comforts to celebrate their slowness and our speed.

The BLW (Brave Little Women) expedition was very well run. Travel, feeding, research and general expedition efficiency were given proper time for thought by the daily eleven o'clock starts. As John and I tripped alongside the cortege we had the breath to put the world pretty straight during long and, we liked to think, erudite conversations. We were suffered gladly!

Four miles the wrong side of the inner line, which isn't marked anyway, we remembered our bus date and with a gay wave headed the 63 miles back to Manali. Declining the old dusty route we crossed a twig bridge at Tinnu and hot on the heels of a Guddy shepherd with a Sam Costa moustache, vicious turn of heels and a vocabulary consisting of the two words 'Cardiff' and 'Liverpool' sped for the top of a glaciated pass that we hoped would serve as a short cut. By almost dead reckoning our arrival at last light on the summit had us at 15,000 feet. Our Karakoram haemogoblins had rather died away by now, and this conquest made on a couple of Patey Pep Pills and with two stripped-down bazaar umbrellas rather pleased us. The next morning we peered from under the rock bivouac at a dawn of breathtaking beauty that settled in our memories as a fitting farewell to that year's Himalayan holiday. We just caught the bus!

The peak followed by a pass proved just too much for the inner man and my next visit was to Millbank hospital in London where a gentleman who, I gathered, 'Knew his Indiah!', sent me on my way with the injunction to "Keep off curry, hot tea and beer". I pondered this as I sat on a plane the next day en route to a Malayan jungle where life consisted of a diet of the former two forbidden items, interspersed with dreams of the latter to be saved for inter-operational leave.

I soon found that ascending 'bukits' in the ulus of Perak held little comparison with Snowdonia. Seven thousand feet of battling upwards through the various grades of jungle to a summit of moon forest, with a rucksack that invited the retarding hooks of atap, was only an exercise in compassing and sweat. Sometimes a "window" of felled trees at an infrequent trig point would reveal the vastness of it all, the sea of trees three hundred feet high.

One happy day, I struck gold in the shape of a volcanic ridge that led confidently through the jungle. To get my safari of men and aboriginal porters along this took some patience, for it was a new element for the little natives with their bare feet. At the first opportunity I set off on a patrol conveniently shaped around the area of the ridge, which was unmapped.

Some of the cliffs may have been a hundred feet high and presented all grades, but the exposure was spoilt by the dense growth of trees below, and in the best Tarzan fashion one could "get off" the easy way by using creepers as aids. It was a strange climbing meet with the party consisting of my scout, his pointer dog, my Chinese liaison officer and me. Our ropes were parachute container ropes and rifle slings, our boots were issue jungle wear, and the verbal drill had to be carried out in whispers, for one does not advertise one's position in jungle operations.

The complete traverse took a couple of hours, finishing with a crux descent of V.Diff. standard. Our fun was spoilt only by the look of pity of the dog, who always took the easy route, arrived first and wagged his tail with annoying condescension.

I told Charles Wylie in Singapore of the cliff and its map reference, relishing the thought of a future enterprising meet requiring a three-day uncharted jungle bash to reach the 'Perak Milestone'! Perhaps we should have sent an abo' guide or Chota but before we could consider this the wave of a magic War Office cloak took us from humidity to an Arabian Night Fantasy.

In ten days we traded bashas for bivouacs, jungle for jebel and at nearly ten thousand feet lived a life reminiscent of Welsh days in the spring. The game of Kiplingish war appealed to a mountaineer as we froze at night whilst patrolling by a moon that allowed a book to be read. Our Arab rebel enemy knew their hills and the gaunt limestone cut by deep waddies confused direction finding; some of the ridges were often similar to Crib Goch — for a reason not disclosed nobody ever came to harm there. The danger was more real from the rebel bullets, whether the conventional type or the 'whooper' Martini Henry slugs that appeared to turn end over end on their journeyings — but an Arab could hit a running gazelle at seven hundred paces.

After the battle was won, a series of patrols offered the mountaineer or geographer unlimited interest. The plateau on the Jebel Akhdar had not been visited since the Darian conquest in 950 A.D.;

the villagers had not seen white man and were known as 'the Persians' by the plains people. In their way of life and even features one could discern some similarity with Hunza and even the Guddies of Punjab. The books are vague and little is known here, but the advance of Alexander's armies to the Indus seems a likely source of these similarities.

Sport had of necessity to be military; whether the juggernauting of the military in mountains can be compared in efficiency with a Shipton/Tilman mobile pemmican party I leave to PYG discussions — I prefer the latter type. Patrols had a distressing habit of creeping up the waddies — 'waddie bottom creeping' I christened this — it made one's hackles rise, and the natural development was to try and ascend some of the enclosing limestone cliffs and get high. This natural challenge rather lost its savour, however, when, having abandoned men, FN rifle and my proper calling to enjoy a V.Diff. limestone problem, I dragged myself over a ridge to note with some alarm a sangarred cave on the not far distant cliff opposite. Feeling quite lonely I shouted "Cooey" and ducked — no one was home!

The greatest peak of the Jebel at 9,900 feet held my attention for some time and I determined that we could not deem to have properly investigated the massif if this remained unvisited. A small and interesting expedition was fashioned over a tin of beer or two, and with some purloined Arab rice and dates we set off for the two days' truck drive round the base of the mountains to the village of Hamra. The Sheik was informed that the Conquerors required a mule, a muleteer — and a shikari; after a long and tiring orgy of coffee and molasses, taken in a squatting position that left most of us paralysed, the requirements were forthcoming. We planned a conventional military expedition; our blunderbuss already fashioned, we made a two-phase assault on the stratified mountain. At night we found that our shikaris had feet of clay and had to make them their chupattis — so much for the dominant Mahommedan! Scree slopes gave way to basalt-like slabs that harboured some pools of perennial water around which thousands of butterflies fluttered. As we ascended the air grew cooler and walking enjoyable. At some points short climbs could be made up the thirty-foot steps that barred the way, until at about seven thousand feet we came to a five-hundred-foot belt of fossils. Later reading informed me that we were in the midst of squashed Lamellibranches and giant ammonites. This is the sort of information one should have before going to such a place, as I feel

sure we should have kept a ready finger on the trigger in anticipation of such horrors. Above this belt grew the most abundant collection of alpine flora, a fact that might have provided a clue to the climate in the days when the army were under the general impression that we were fighting in the glaring desert ! . . .

The summit was worth the effort. The Jebel Akhdar stretched away to the mists of the plains before us, each battle area seemingly a dot on a relief map. We brewed coffee in the shade of an old Persian look-out sangar.

That sensation behind, I determined, with my tracker who was picking up the rudiments of this ubiquitous mountaineering first introduced to him in the jungle, to capture a rock climber's prize. We pinched a lift on a plane from Muscat to Nizwa where, rising at 03.00, we traversed the Jebel Firq, left a suitable mark on the summit and, abandoning our rope made of two marquee guy ropes, caught an armoured car home. The main reason for that climb was the remark of a moribund major behind a can of beer: "My dear chap, you'll never get up there; and who wants to, anyway?"

Whether it was pass, bukit or jebel, the sensation never varied. It was always nice to be up and just as nice to meet the people that signpost the routes to and from these places.

THREE CLIMBS AT ZERMATT

COLIN MORTLOCK

North Face, Dent d'Herens — Welzenbach Route

From the Schönbiel hut this 1,000 metre route looked superb. Jack Sadler and Wilf Noyce had chosen this as my first ice route. My pleas of inexperience and the slowness of a party of three were rejected rather decisively. So was the guardian's warning that the face was out of condition and had been all summer! Hence we left at 1.30 a.m. one morning, stumbled over interminable moraines, crossed the bergschrund easily, and soloed up the initial 150-metre ice slope. Soon I woke up to find myself shooting down the slope. Desperation drove my axe in. We continued with an alert third man.

300 metres of shattered rock cone, topped by an easy snow slope, brought the first difficulty within reach, a 90-metre wall of ice below the first snow plateau. Jack led a delicate ice traverse beneath yawning ice pinnacles and then a bottomless ice chimney, superb fun, as pegs made our passage safe. The small plateau disappeared into another overhanging ice wall so we traversed right, under the overhanging lip, through a maze of icicles. After two ropes lengths we reached the lowest point of the wall. Only 10 metres to the plateau above. Unfortunately it overhung convincingly. I volunteered to lead, since problems were preferable to the long slopes ahead. It was fun, if hectic: pegs came out unexpectedly, slings for standing in were too short or too long. After a long hour I made it. The others followed by rope climbing as our three pegs were out of their reach.

At last we could relax — or so I thought. The summit seemed near. It wasn't; the next 300 metres took us six hours. The long and steep final slope sneered at us. Snow-ice changed to ice, then to ice-glazed rock, endorsing the guardian's remarks. It was cutting all the way, with precarious or non-existent belays on the final two hundred metres. Jack led brilliantly but tension mounted. There were no ledges to relieve the unremitting exposure of a night up here. Gradually we were forced to the right; the ice and powder snow holds had generally collapsed by the time I moved up so I climbed

more by faith than by friction. At 9.30 p.m. we reached the summit. The bivouac there, tied to slings on a shattered face, seemed trivial.

Matterhorn — The Furggen Ridge

The Hörnli hut refuse dump provided a comfortable bivouac. At 3 a.m. Wilf. and I left the site, stumbled across the foot of the stone-ridden East face and arrived at the foot of the Furggen. To my surprise the ridge gave three hours of easy scrambling on loose rock. Moving together we gained height rapidly. Beneath the shoulder the dangerous traverse across the snow couloir on the East face gave us cause for thought.

The small pebbles from above, however, indicated luck was with us. We crossed without mishap, and so to second breakfast beneath the steep and crumbly final pillar. As it was only 9.30 a.m. we decided to try the "direttissima", though we were a little hesitant about the guide-book's remark of 43 pegs required. A couple of pitches of IV, half an hour route-finding, and we arrived below an obviously difficult 10-metre wall. I tried going up from some old pegs and found it unpleasant, so made an awkward traverse left to the edge of the void. A couple of pegs for safety, a fervent prayer that the rock would prove sound and I was up, two difficult mantel-shelves solving the problem. The copious platform above suggested the last pitch had been the crux. A delicate pitch of VI and long pitches on loose ice-glazed rock brought us to easy rock. 11.30 a.m. and the climb was ours. We were lucky: the storm broke at 1 p.m. making the descent of the Hörnli ridge interesting.

Monte Rosa — Macugnaga Face — Lagarde/Devies Route

The Italian village of Macugnaga; beautiful girls helping us to enjoy ourselves. ("Excuse please are you Hillary?"!). Armchair mountaineering at its best, with the whole of Monte Rosa East face to climb, over our coffee. Oh hell, the weather looks fine, and that wretched guidebook describes our route as one of the longest (2,000 metres), most difficult and dangerous ice climbs in the Western Alps. No other source of information to deny or confirm this. Better lose the guide-book at the bottom of the sack! Off we go.

The initial 1,000 metres reminded me of a giant Hampton Court maze — a bizarre world of intricate crevasses and old avalanches. Nothing difficult, but obvious avalanche dangers. By evening we were off the lower glacier slopes. An unstable rock ledge provided a comfortable bivouac. What a view! The moonlit slopes of glistening

ice around us seemed to put even the Brenva face to shame; a hundred miles away the lights of Milan twinkled; below us a fire-work display celebrating August 1st.

At 2 a.m. the need for action shattered my dreams. Back to the ice — a few awkward moves over the bergschrund and we were on the big slope — 500 metres of concave ice. At first the angle allowed us to move together, until the last 100 metres. Then steeper and harder ice forced us to use peg belays. No time to cut steps so try and climb like continental experts, safe and fast. The dawn was superb. I was more worried about exposure and difficulty. Finally Wilf. reached rock at the top of the slope; at last we could have a comfortable breakfast.

The rock ahead looked easy: what a delusion. It was shattered and covered with snow and ice. For five hours we moved precariously upward, the rock steepening as we neared the ridge. It was too steep so we moved right, aiming for a snow crest. Hours drifted by; morning changed to late afternoon; spindrift blinded and impeded us; a 20-metre vertical traverse over mixed terrain seemed near the limits of feasibility. Finally some difficult moves over the ice crest and we were in sight of the Margherita hut bathed in icy evening sunlight. The guide-book seemed to have exaggerated difficulties and dangers but perhaps the fine weather and Wilf's magnificent leading clouded my judgment.

“I’M A SICK MAN, FITZGERALD”

A stroll with Alan Hargreaves

KEVIN FITZGERALD

IN THE EARLY SPRING of 1951, or it may have been 1952, my doctors thought I needed a rest. “Go to a place where you can potter about on your own,” they said. “But nothing strenuous, mind: take a book into the open air and sit down often if you go for a walk.” I knew just the place for all that and I sent a telegram to Mr. Christopher Briggs. He met me at Colwyn Bay, smiled grimly at the hundred feet of alpine hemp Lorimer Richardson had asked me to carry up for him, and put me into a room labelled “Tryfan”.

I was having a drink after dinner with Tony Moulam, at that time theoretically engaged in a one-man reading party for his degree, when there was a minor disturbance in the hall. “That will be Alan,” Tony said. “I don’t think you’ve met him?”

I was introduced to Mr. Hargreaves who thought he could manage half a pint. “I must be careful,” he said. “My days for all that drinking and larking about are very much over. I’m a sick man, Fitzgerald.”

I took a close look at this famous character. I had heard him called ‘The Little Man’, and that was what we had called the chief cowpoke in our outfit in Western Canada in 1926/7. I remembered that our little man had dealt rather more than adequately one afternoon with fourteen and a half stone of angry Red Indian called Bulling George. I also remembered a night in Devonshire in 1921 when half a dozen six-footers like me had failed to control a young man who, when sober, rather liked his nickname of ‘Tiny Mac’. Finally, as I looked at Mr. Hargreaves I recalled a dreadful affair in a Derbyshire public house in 1930. The police reserves from Sheffield arrived too late to save the bar from my friend ‘Little Jimmy’ and it took eight of them to get him into their van.

It is clear then that I had met some other little men in my time, but one is never too old to refuse to learn. I could easily have run away but instead I talked happily with Mr. Hargreaves as the night brought various wet unshaven persons in from the surrounding countryside. I observed that he knew them all. "No," he said to each individual greeting. "I'm afraid not. I'm a pretty sick man; only here for twenty-four hours or so to get a breather. I simply must rest." He said much the same thing while we were washing up about two in the morning. He had just demonstrated to an unbeliever that it was quite easy, given what he called 'some general sense of balance', to eat a cheese and onion sandwich while standing on one's head in the middle of a room. "Damn silly, really," he remarked as we said good-night. "Shouldn't do that kind of thing when I'm as ill as this. May see you tomorrow if I feel better."

About ten o'clock next day I was sitting outside on the little white bench and wondering if I could perhaps get as far as the causeway and back before dark when Mr. Hargreaves stood before me. "What about a stroll?" he asked. I told him that I was not well enough for more than the gentlest exercise and he laughed. "Look at me," he said. "I don't think I could get a mile from this hotel if I tried. I'm not just off-colour like you, FitzGerald, I'm a sick man. Get your boots on and let's see what we can do. I've asked young Moulam to come along; we need someone fit to take care of us."

I got very wet crossing the river. It was full and the stones were a foot or so under water. "You want to remember what I was saying last night about balance," Hargreaves said as he and Tony pulled me out. "It's never any use blundering about at random. Always leads to trouble sooner or later."

I caught up with them about an hour later. Moulam was on something he called a 'problem crack' and Hargreaves was about six feet up on a large boulder nearby. As I lay down he climbed with extreme care to the heather and joined me. He pointed with a piece of meat from his haversack at some long scratches in a slate outcrop at the foot of the boulder. "See those," he said. "Some ignorant fool must have jumped off. I bet he hit the mountain twenty or thirty feet down after that." I remembered a day with Hilton-Jones and his happy cry of "Your first real fall; are you all right?" "Yes," I said to Hargreaves. "He was an ignorant fool, that's for sure."

They were waiting for me and looking at a wild goat when I had found my way off that wet plateau at the top of the miners' track and

had begun stumbling about on the screes at the other side. "You make a lot of noise with your feet, FitzGerald," Hargreaves said, getting up as I sat down. "I'm afraid we haven't time to hang about if we're to get to the top."

"Top of what?" I asked. "I shan't be able to go much further; I'm all in now."

"Top of Tryfan," Hargreaves said. "It's no distance from here and a pity to come as far as this and do nothing." He looked down at me as I lay at his feet. "I don't believe you eat enough," he said. He put his hand into his haversack and dredged out a bit of cold bacon. I can still see it. There were raisins adhering to it and it was smeared with chocolate. "Have a bit of this," he said.

It was as Dr. Bridges aptly observed in his 'Testament of Beauty': "Late in my long journey when I had clomb to where the path was narrowing and the company few." Three feet above me stood Hargreaves and Moulam. I lay in a little trough of rock. "Look," Hargreaves said. "That's the summit forty feet from here. You can ease out of there and walk up, you know you can." He moved a foot to his left and stood looking down at something. "Just get to where I am, FitzGerald, and you can hang over the finest precipice in Wales." I went on clinging to the sides of my trough.

About ten minutes later I heard boots on rock and two men, strangers to me, joined Moulam and Hargreaves. The committee of four stood at the head of my trough and considered my situation. One of the newcomers offered a solution. He smiled and waved. "Don't think about anything," he said. "Make your mind a blank and flow up to me." The proprieties had been outraged. "I don't think you've met, have you?" Hargreaves said. "Mr. Geoffrey Sutton, Mr. Kevin FitzGerald."

"How do you do" I said.

Time passed and I made my proposition. "If I move out of here and go to the top will you promise I can sit down. Will you promise that?"

Hargreaves seemed astonished. "Good Lord, Yes. As long as you like. Need a rest myself. Not at all fit."

On the summit we looked for mice and put sardine tins out of sight. I declined an invitation to try the jump from Adam to Eve. I also declined to sit on top of either. I thought that in perhaps an hour I might be able to think about another move.

"Good thing you had that rest in that little trough," Hargreaves said. "We don't want to be up here in the dark."

We started on down, as the mountaineering books say, and that was something I could do in those days. The hope of perhaps crashing to unconsciousness lent wings to my feet, and I was still with the party when we arrived back at the path across the screes.

I saw them, every now and again, until we reached the top of the miners' track. It was dark then and cold. I had not been able to breathe properly for some time. They were sitting waiting for me.

"Well, here we are," Hargreaves said, getting up as I arrived. "Safely back after a nice quiet day. Just keep to the wall and you can't go wrong." He peered at his watch. "Tony," he said, "they're open. I'll race you down." They crashed into the dark.

They beat me to the hotel, but dinner had only just finished when I arrived. It was not having anyone to pull me out of the river which really delayed me. I fell in three times before I got the sense to wade about feeling with my hands for a place where I could cross and drag out on my own.

Mr. Briggs was kind to me in the morning and put me into the fresh air with some brandy while breakfast was being served. He had ordered a car and asked Blodwen to pack for me as soon as I came down. I don't think I can have looked half as ill as I felt all the same.

Hargreaves came to say good-bye about half past ten. He looked relaxed in a dark suit and a rather nice hat. "You want to keep away from places like this, FitzGerald," he said. "You really aren't fit enough for it."

I was allowed to get up two or three weeks later and I came back to P.-y.-G. to finish my convalescence. The first evening someone said: "The Little Man was here ten days ago. He was asking for you, Kevin. He was sorry to hear you were ill again and said to tell you that he still wasn't awfully fit himself."

Y GARN

She sits in splendour, great against the sky
And broods upon the little ways of men
Her mighty knees reach down to meet the road
Where men and horses, sheep and barking dogs
Pass every day without a thought for her
Who hides in the wide lap they cannot see
A secret tarn like the dim eye of God
Wet with the sorrows of the world He made
And spilling tears all down the mountain side
White frothing tears for thirsty ones to taste

EMILY DANIELL

A NEW CLIFF CLIMBING AREA IN THE WEST COUNTRY

K. M. LAWDER and E. C. PYATT

IN 1956 WE BEGAN an investigation of the climbing possibilities of all Cornwall to decide for ourselves whether West Penwith did indeed offer the only worthy climbing in the county. We have since explored sea cliffs and inland rocks, beach pinnacles, stacks and islands, some woefully rotten, some offering intriguing but isolated short problems. Only in one area have we found sufficient in the way of climbs and prospects of climbs to be able to claim the discovery of a new climbing ground.

In the fifteen miles between Hartland Point (Ptolemy's "Promontory of Hercules") in North Devonshire and Widemouth Bay in North Cornwall lie the highest and most impressive sea cliffs in the West Country. Haskett Smith, first to notice the climbing potential of so many places, wrote of them in 1894 — "much of the coast from Clovelly right away to Bude in Cornwall is remarkably fine", but it was half a century later before anyone tackled actual climbing problems here. Then at last in 1945 E. M. Hazelton in the *Fell and Rock Journal* described some routes he had made during the previous two years on the cliffs of Compass Point at Bude and the beach pinnacles of Sandy Mouth and Northcott Mouth. But this was an isolated effort, Hazelton himself never returned and nothing further was done until we came on the scene.

At Hartland Point the coastline turns through a right angle and the stretch which we are describing runs almost due south from here facing directly into the Atlantic rollers. The view is bounded in the north by Lundy Island, the visibility or otherwise of which is said to give infallible indication of forthcoming weather to one who knows the formula. Southwards the coast curves round, with the heights of Bodmin Moor above and beyond, to the distant headlands of Pentire and Trevoise. Before the days of steam this was a dangerous coast for shipping. When the wind was westerly any sailing

vessel driven inside the line from Hartland to Pentire faced certain disaster on these shelterless shores.

The only major break in the cliff line is at Bude. Elsewhere the cliffs rise to 400 feet and more in a variety of rock types, mostly sandstones and shales of the Culm Measures. The strata are violently contorted, lying at all angles up to the vertical; synclines, anticlines, twists and folds occur in great profusion. The more resistant rocks run out across the beaches in reefs, showing the same folded pattern, and sometimes form promontories and beach pinnacles. The stratigraphy is so complex as to deter serious study.

The physiography of the district, too, is of considerable interest. The watershed of the country lies only a few miles inland and beyond it the streams drain to the Torridge or the Tamar. The west flowing streams are short and, as they drain such a small area, are moreover meagre. Their power to cut down their beds cannot match the tremendous power of the sea cutting back their mouths and, in consequence, almost every one ends in a waterfall over the cliff edge. In places where a stream valley formerly ran parallel to the sea, the cutting back of the cliff edge has diverted the stream from its former mouth leaving a dry valley with no watercourse. This aspect of the district is fully covered by E. A. N. Arber in *The Coast Scenery of North Devon* (Dent, 1911), which makes fascinating reading.

There are no large towns. Bude, the only seaside resort, has fine beaches but no promenades or amusement arcades. There are sands also for the family climber at Widemouth, Northcott, Sandy Mouth, Duckpool, Stanbury and Welcombe; further north the beaches are stony. The main road runs parallel to the sea, two or three miles inland, though the ubiquitous motorist does penetrate to the smaller coves and in places to the cliff tops down narrow bye-lanes. In between, the cliffs are completely deserted and, except close to Bude, we have never met anyone walking from place to place along their tops. For the walker there is access at frequent intervals and the cliff path is reasonably good and continuous. The T.A. Anti-Aircraft School at Cleave between Coombe and Morwenstow, which gives occasional noisy reminder of our precarious existence, does not bar access, as far as we can gather, to any worthwhile rocks.

Of the very large amount of rock exposed along the cliff line only a small proportion is actually climbable. If the great cliffs, such as Henna Cliff at Morwenstow or Efford Beacon beyond Bude, were of

sound material this would be one of the major climbing centres of the British Isles. There is plenty enough, nevertheless, to make a visit very worthwhile.

The rocks are sedimentary and do not provide quite the variety of climbing and of routes found on the igneous rocks of mountain crags. On the other hand there is a greater variety of rock types and the situations are second to none. Four distinct types of crag can be distinguished as follows:

Type A. South facing sheets of slabs or walls on a promontory. The north side is often broken and at easier angle. Infrequently the same formation is found facing the other way.

Type B. Overlapping slabs (akin to Botterill's Slab or Clogwyn du'r Arddu West Buttress) facing south on the cliff face. These are always found at the landward end of *Type A* promontories and frequently alone also.

Type C. Beach pinnacles, upright survivors of more resistant strata.

Type D. Clean-cut chimneys formed by the erosion of a soft stratum from between two harder.

Very good climbs sometimes finish with a short wall of loose earth and boulders at the cliff top and this should, if possible, be examined and broken down from the top before beginning the climb. The authors once turned back eight feet from the cliff top when faced with this sort of problem; a cut-down ice axe or slater's pick would have made all the difference here. As is frequently found in the early days of a climbing history, there is still some loose material and this may tend to disappear as the climbs are more frequently done. Nevertheless, some care with the rock will always be necessary. There are few belays and pitons are useful to supply the lack.

For convenience of description we have divided the coastline into arbitrary divisions, moving from north to south.

HARTLAND POINT TO DYER'S LOOKOUT

No climbs so far. Cow and Calf is a pinnacle, not of special interest. Upright Cliff is steep, smooth and impressive.

DYER'S LOOKOUT TO HARTLAND QUAY

In the second cove north of Hartland Quay is the unique *Victory Pinnacle*, consisting of two almost parallel vertical strata formed into a chimney by the disappearance of a softer stratum between (*Types C and D*). Standing isolated on the beach, it is about 70 feet high and unclimbed. The upper part of the chimney appears

to offer 30 to 40 feet of knee and foot wedging between smooth, ledgeless walls.

Between *Victory Pinnacle* and the main cliff is *Consolation Pinnacle* (Just Diff.—K.M.L., E.C.P. 1959), which is lower and has a much easier chimney.

On the north side of this cove *Disappointment Slabs (Type B)* have almost provided a climb (V.Diff. — K.M.L., E.C.P. 1959 retreated 8 feet from the cliff top, unable to surmount a near-vertical earth and stone bank). A little advance preparation at the top would soon convert this to an orthodox climb; the slab pitches are quite delightful. The left edge of this slab is bounded by a rock rib which is peculiarly rounded on its north side. Though startling to look at it does not seem to provide anything useful to the climber. There are other small pinnacles around also unclimbed.

HARTLAND QUAY TO SPEKE'S MILL MOUTH

At Screda Point immediately south of Hartland Quay are two prominent pinnacles — clean and sound on the north, broken and vegetation-covered on the south. Both are isolated only at high tide. *Screda Inner Pinnacle* gives a 50 foot route at its N.E. corner (Mild S. — T. W. Patey 1959). *Screda Outer Pinnacle* has a slender pinnacle, *The Needle*, on its north face. *The Needle* gives an 80 foot climb (V.S. — T. W. Patey 1959) up the right hand edge. The chimney between *The Needle* and the main pinnacle, *The Needle's Eye*, could probably be climbed. Nearer to the Quay is a knife-edged blade of rock — *The Cleaver* — which gives some 80 feet of climbing along the edge (Mod. Diff. — T. W. Patey, V. N. Stevenson 1959).

Between here and Speke's Mill Mouth, St. Catherine's Tor is a striking example of marine erosion. At Speke's Mill Mouth is one of the more unusual of the cliff waterfalls.

SPEKE'S MILL MOUTH TO MARSLAND MOUTH (DEVON-CORNWALL BORDER)

Nothing so far.

MARSLAND MOUTH TO HENNA CLIFF (MORWENSTOW)

South of Marsland Mouth is the promontory of Gull Rock — a *Type A* crag with no climbs yet. The Gull Rock itself is only accessible at very low water and looks tricky on the landward side; it must be possible because there is a cairn on it.

In the cove to the south is a high coast waterfall.





Beneath Cornakey Cliff on the north side of Yeol Mouth lies one of the finest crags in the district (*Type B*). At the end remote from the sea is the long, narrow *Wreckers' Slab* (V.S. — T. W. Patey, J. H. Deacon, through leads, and K.M.L. 1959), which gives the longest climb so far in the West Country, more than 300 feet. There are three long pitches and pitons are used for belays. It has been described as an outstanding example of the need to keep pressure on all holds straight down, with no outwards thrust.

The third slab from the sea, *Smugglers' Slab*, gave a 200 foot route to the same party with two very long pitches (again V.S. and harder than the above).

There is a traverse across the smooth slabs of the nose on the immediate left of *Smugglers' Slab*. The end of the nose, *i.e.* the left edge of the slabby face is climbed to complete the route of 160 feet (V.Diff. — T. W. Patey 1959).

HENNA CLIFF TO HIGHER SHARPNOSE

Close to the small valley south of the gigantic Henna Cliff, St. Morwenna's Well is on the cliff edge. Higher up the valley is the well-known church of Morwenstow, far too large it would seem for the scattered community of farmhouses which it serves. Here, during the mid-part of last century, the incumbent was the Rev. R. S. Hawker, a "character", whose name has survived even though he was never an important churchman. His writings, prolific but dull, were largely composed in his look-out which still survives on the Vicarage Cliff. Hollowed out of the earth, solidly roofed and fitted with seats and a stout door, this now looks out over one of our finest climbing crags.

This is close to the words "Lucky Hole" on the 1-inch O.S. Map and is a *Type A* promontory with *Type B* slabs at the landward end. Halfway along the promontory on the south side a tower leans against the face. *Vicarage Tower Climb* (V.Diff.—K.M.L., E.C.P. 1957) follows the wall beside the tower, traverses sensationally along the top of the promontory and then goes up a rib edge to the cliff top. The most prominent slab at the landward end of the crag is approached by descending easy grass slopes to its foot, a hundred feet above the cliff base; this is *Hawker's Slab*. The climb (V.Diff.—K.M.L., E.C.P. 1957) runs up the left edge of the slab in a fine exposed situation above the lower slabs to the left. It is some 200 feet long. Halfway between these two climbs another rather scrappy

slab climb runs from the beach up two pitches to easier scrambling ground.

A few hundred yards farther south is the striking Higher Sharpnose. This has some fine crags facing west and south-west on the seaward side. There is one climb so far and some prospects of more. *The Quarter Deck* gives nearly 300 feet of climbing on the largest of these slab faces (V.Diff.—T. W. Patey 1959). There are three pitches of 110, 100 and 90 feet, but the angle eases after the first 80 feet. Start just left of a vegetation filled weakness and go up to a stance on the left edge of the slab. The other pitches follow the left edge to the top.

HIGHER SHARPNOSE TO DUCKPOOL

No climbs so far and apparently few prospects. In the valley of Stowe, which runs up from Duckpool towards Kilkhampton, was the house and estate of the famous Sir Bevill Grenville who won the Battle of Stamford Hill above Bude for King Charles and fell at last in the royal cause at Lansdowne. His 7 ft. 4 in. henchman, Anthony Payne, "the Cornish giant", who was born nearby at Stratton and long survived him, would have been useful surely in a climbing party.

DUCKPOOL TO SANDY MOUTH

From just south of Duckpool one can walk below half-tide on sands all the way to Bude.

Immediately north of Sandy Mouth are two fine big pinnacles on the shore. The seaward one, *The Square Block*, has three routes—an *Easy Way* on the north side, a *South Face* of 60 feet and a *South-West Corner* (all by E. M. Hazelton *et al* 1943-44). The landward pinnacle, *The Flame*, is close on 100 feet high and gives a useful climb on the *South-East Corner* (E. M. Hazelton *et al* 1943-44). There appear to be other prospects here.

A few hundred yards further north is *Ship Ashore*, a 35-40 foot pinnacle which gives a climb on the landward arête (Diff.—K.M.L., E.C.P., P. Whitehead 1959). On the cliff behind is a magnificent unclimbed *Type D* chimney, rather wide and in need of gardening at the exits to its pitches.

Further north still are several smaller pinnacles (unclimbed) and one higher, close under the cliff, which is very rotten (K.M.L. 1959, as near the top as is safe). Beyond this is a *Type B* slab which has been climbed to half height.

SANDY MOUTH TO NORTHCOTT MOUTH

Some minor slabby prospects.

NORTHCOTT MOUTH TO CROOKLETS BEACH (BUDE)

Towards the south end of the beach at Northcott Mouth is a pinnacle of some 30-40 feet, the *Unshore Rock*. There is an easy route on the seaward side and a steeper one on the east face (E. M. Hazelton *et al* 1943-44).

The south end of the beach is bounded by a rock wall, which faces (unusually) north. This has a 50-60 foot chimney towards the seaward end (E. M. Hazelton *et al* 1943-44); the rest looks impossible.

Round the corner now is Maer Cliff, the most photographed syncline in the country, which appears in every other geology book as "folded rocks near Bude". Then comes Landslip, where the strata dip outwards towards the sea, followed shortly by two more pinnacles. The most northerly, *The Horn of Plenty*, is a perfect example of the profusion of holds produced by weathering in some sandstones. The seaward arête gives a climb (Easy V.Diff.—K.M.L., E.C.P. 1959). The other pinnacle, *Easy Street* (E.C.P., K.M.L., 1959), is only Moderate by the sea arête.

Close to Crooklets Beach at Wrangle Point is another fine *Type B* slab (unclimbed), which will need cleaning at the top beforehand.

Among other things, Bude is "Britain's Bondi" with beach life-savers and so on; we are informed, though we have no personal confirmatory experience, that the members of the local Life-Saving Club also include the rescue of cliff climbers among their activities.

COMPASS POINT

This, the south headland of Bude Haven, is a fine *Type A* promontory. E. M. Hazelton, who made three routes here in 1943-44, describes the crag as consisting of "vertical sheets, like four mammoth playing cards standing on edge, each 6 or 8 feet thick". The *Arête* follows the seaward edge and is 75 feet, the *Face* on the same rock sheet is 70 feet and the *South Climb*, on the most southerly (and the most easterly) sheet is 90 feet and very steep and hard looking. There seem to be other prospects here.

COMPASS POINT TO WIDEMOUTH BAY

No climbs have been done so far on this stretch of the coast. Efford Beacon, like Henna Cliff, is steep and high but useless to the climber.

There are several *Type A* pinnacles. Two of close on 100 feet near Higher Longbeak seem a little too rotten to be of interest; it is in fact a puzzle how they have survived at all. There are others lesser and possibly more worthy.

There are numerous *Type B* slabs, not yet by any means exhaustively explored, though not one of them seemed an obvious prospect at first glance.

This is a coast to which we shall hope to return again and again. If this article does inspire anyone else to climb there, we should be most interested to hear the results.

CLIMBING AROUND MONTREAL

MICHAEL WARD

MUCH OF THE SKI-ING and climbing in Eastern Canada takes place north of Montreal, in the Laurentians. These mountains—amongst some of the oldest in the world — stretch from about 70 miles north of the St. Lawrence to the southern tip of Hudson Bay, and farther north into the hinterland of Quebec Province. They are comparatively small, being about 3,000 – 4,000 ft. in height and tree covered. Val David, probably the main climbing centre of the Laurentians, is about 60 miles north of Montreal. The focal point is an hotel—La Sapinière. In the summer, a lake provides good bathing and boating; in the winter there are two ski slopes, the main one being on Mt. Plante. These slopes, although steep, are short by Alpine standards. The runs have all been artificially made — cut out of the trees on the hillside. There are many other ski developments in the Laurentians: those at St. Sauveur — very cold and windy, and Mt. Gabrielle are well known. The most northerly of them all, at Mt. Tremblant, is internationally famous. In addition to these very commercialised developments, there are still a considerable number of trails which, in the past, have been cut by enthusiastic members of various Canadian ski clubs for the purpose of touring. Touring gives a certain purgatorial satisfaction. The snow is often over 4 ft. deep, and the trails, frequently overgrown, can be exceedingly difficult to follow. Skis tend to catch on every available shrub and tree. It is, however, a great pleasure to get away from the Coca-Cola stands, the jazz-blaring juke boxes and general mayhem of the crowded ski slopes.

Ski-ing in Canada is a very cold sport. In Montreal last year the temperature stayed below 32° F. for five months. When ski-ing, long thick wool pants and a number of sweaters are needed. Temperatures of –30°F., with a steady wind, are not uncommon.

After the snow has left the ground there are a few weeks when the trees are bare, and climbing is pleasant. This is before the flies, midges, no sec'ums and mosquitoes become really voracious. In the summer proper, the insect life is ferocious. The fall is another good time for rock climbing, and the hills look magnificent as the trees become brilliant reds and yellows, quite unlike anything I have seen.

In the winter some ice climbing can be had on sundry waterfalls which have frozen. By and large, however, ski-ing holds the day.

Within Val David there are three cliffs upon which most of the climbing is being done:

MT. CONDORE : The main feature of this cliff is a fine pinnacle about 100 ft. high. There are numerous routes up the initial 70 ft., which ends in a horizontal rift. From here the normal route goes straight up (Severe). The right-hand route has been climbed by Claude Lavallée and appears mildly desperate. The left-hand edge is also extremely hard. The main cliff, about the same height, is steep and has three routes, an amiable layback on the left and a buttress route on its right-hand edge. To this last route there is a direct finish, which John Turner climbed after first seeing it on a rope from above. He considered this was the hardest few feet in the valley. To the right is a shallow gully with an overhanging start. This, Claude Lavallée and I climbed last summer for the first time.

MT. CAESARE : This is a small cliff and provides four or five good routes, without a great deal of individuality.

MT. KING : About one hour away, through the woods, is without doubt the best of the three cliffs. It is 300 ft. high and a quarter of a mile long. On its left is a natural amphitheatre, topped by a fine horizontal block of rock overhanging the steep face by about 20 ft. To the right the cliff becomes overhanging. An impressive "toit" here gives a good artificial climb. The central part of the cliff is vertical with a slab in its centre. The lower portion has been climbed by a crack, *the Imperial Route*. Two pitons are needed. This gains the slab at its left-hand edge and joins another route, *the Traverse*, which crosses the slab horizontally. The upper part of its central portion is extremely steep and has not yet been climbed. Farther right is a relatively isolated buttress. *The Staircase* is the original route. On the left edge of this buttress is a nasty looking "weakness", first climbed by John Turner and called *the Bastard*. Further to the right I climbed a less desperate spot and called it *the Loved One*.



The best climb on the cliff is *the Amphitheatre Route*, first climbed by Ben Poisson and Claude Lavallée. The route is not at all obvious, and the exposure considerable. The initial pitches are slabs, often wet; then the overhanging back wall of the amphitheatre is reached. A series of crab-like movements up and to the right brings one to the top of a large block stuck in the middle of the face. The movement to the top of the block, across a steep holdless slab, is distinctly interesting. On the top of this block there was, on the first ascent, no belay. The originators started banging in a piton here. However, it appeared that if they continued with this both they and the block might well have descended to the bottom of the cliff, so they desisted and put in a wooden wedge instead. This is reasonably safe, although the sling attached to the wedge is gradually rotting and another wedge will soon be needed. From here, another good move is made out of balance and to the right. Everything then looks rather impossible. However, a sort of hand traverse, with very little for one's feet, is made into a corner, and here it is possible to wedge oneself in a sitting position. As this spot is at the top of an overhang, the vertical downward view is most impressive. On the first ascent, Claude, with typical Gallic aplomb, fortified himself for the next pitch with a cigarette. The next pitch overhangs in its initial stages, and ends in a seemingly rotten vertical wall, rather reminiscent of the last pitch of the Overhanging Wall on Carreg Wastad. My main feelings on this climb, both leading and seconding it, were of exposure rather than technical difficulty. It is probably the best free climbing route in the Laurentians, although not the hardest.

A few miles south of Montreal lies the village of St. Hilaire. Near this village is a small hill with an epileptic colony at its base. Just above the colony there is a cliff about half a mile in length and rather broken; some portions of it, however, are up to 300 ft. in height. This is the nearest climbing to Montreal and many good routes have been made here.

Some miles south-east of Montreal, over the frontier, are the Adirondack mountains and also the White and Green mountains. These hills are mainly tree covered and rise up to about 5,000 ft. The two best areas that I visited were Poka-Moonshine in the Adirondacks and Cathedral Ledges, a cliff near Mt. Washington.

CATHEDRAL LEDGES: This is one of two cliffs situated about three miles outside North Conway in New Hampshire. Cathedral Ledges itself is an extremely fine cliff — over 500 ft. high and very steep.

It is divided into two buttresses — an east and west — by a steep tree-filled gully whose lower portion gives out on to steep and open slabs. The whole cliff is about a quarter of a mile in length and so far only four routes have been completed — they are all of some character. The rock is sound and there are a few trees, with surprisingly fragile roots, planted in inaccessible spots.

The west buttress is a very steep piece of rock whose right edge overlooks the gully. A route *Recompense* follows a tenuous line of weakness close to this right edge. On the far side of the gully the rock is not so steep and a line of holds traverses to the main weakness of this buttress, a chimney, the line of the ordinary route. Below this line of holds lies a fine overhanging layback crack about sixty feet in length. Above the line of holds there is a series of overhangs with an obvious tree. To the right of the ordinary route the cliff steepens and becomes very fierce. Here a long chimney crack, whose exit is plugged by a capstone, marks the line of *Repentance*.

I spent a fine and long week-end climbing on this cliff. We started by traversing from the foot of the gully along the line of small holds and then ascended to the tree in the middle of the series of overhangs. This tree proved the key to the overhangs and above the climbing remained pleasant and airy. The temptation to make a direct start to this roof by means of the overhanging layback crack proved too strong. We returned to the foot of the cliff and John Turner led the first rope with Dick Morden, whilst Claude Lavallée and I were on the second rope.

I had the doubtful pleasure of leading this crack after John had made what appeared to be reasonably short work of it. Half way up I misplaced my toe when in a layback position, and skidded a little — this proved rather shaking for the few spectators; it also made me distinctly nervous as I was suspended from my hands on inadequate handholds for a few seconds. However, after the excitement subsided I continued up the crack but reckoned that I was getting too old for this sort of thing.

Later Claude and I looked at *Repentance*. John had climbed this the year before and thought that it was his hardest climb to date in Eastern America. Claude led the first pitch, which appeared fairly reasonable. The second pitch looked so horrifying that we descended. A rickety piton followed by about twenty feet of holdless crack topped by an overhang appeared to be too much of a good thing.

We then turned our attention to the west buttress. Both John and I thought that there might be a way up near the right edge. The first two pitches went reasonably easily. The cliff then showed its teeth and we climbed a very difficult little wall, about Hard V.S. in standard. This was followed by two very steep but rather easier pitches. We were now at a tree below the final part of the cliff. This tree lay at the foot of the left hand of two parallel grooves. The foot of the right-hand groove overhung the gully between the two buttresses. The rock here was yellow and, to start with, was solid. The first twenty feet were reasonable. We then got to a sloping ledge. A seemingly detached flake lay against the cliff and this rang rather hollow when used. Above, the enclosing left wall overhung and the crack in the bottom of the dièdre was rather unsatisfactory. First John went up to have a look and retreated. I followed. Our decision was unanimous — it would be necessary to have wooden wedges to safeguard this pitch and it was conceivable that they would have to be used for direct aid. We roped down quickly.

Unfortunately the next day I felt off-colour and John joined up with another climber from Montreal (I have forgotten his name). I watched the whole route being climbed from below and it was most impressive. One wooden wedge at our highest point of the day before served as a reasonable runner and this enabled John to climb the difficult ten feet to a small tree. Above, the overhang continued, and from below the next thirty feet appeared most sensational. In fact John climbed this pitch very quickly and I thought that this was because it was easy — in fact speed appeared to be the main safety factor. Evidently the layback crack disappeared until only the top joint of the fingers could be used as handholds. At the vital point the footholds gave out too. A small ledge with a belay was then reached. The continuation of the groove appeared extremely difficult so a traverse with what appeared to be sensational exposure was made to the right into the foot of the second, bottomless, dièdre. From then on to the top was comparatively straightforward climbing. John reckoned this climb was a free VI. There can be few better routes near Montreal.

POKA-MOONSHINE: This is almost certainly a corruption of the original Red Indian name. The cliff lies on Route 9 to New York and is about 20 miles south of Plattsburg. There are two cliffs — the main cliff faces the road and is separated from it by a belt of trees in which a permanent camp site is situated. The impression that this

cliff gives is one of sheer impossibility; smooth boiler plated slabs lead vertically without a break for 300 feet. A few cracks can be seen and these, in fact, are the lines of weakness that the routes follow.

I climbed only one route on this cliff. This lies to the right of a prominent nose. The whole route is steep and was very reminiscent of the east buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu. A steep ribbed groove is followed by a crack up which one climbs with some difficulty until a good square ledge, invisible from below, is reached. The wall above is climbed for ten feet and then a delicate traverse is made to the left across the wall and around a rib. This last movement is extremely delicate. Claude led this with great verve — I am afraid that I used a sling for the last piece of the traverse. From here the route followed the only possible line of weakness and wound up the cliff traversing a few feet to the right and to the left. There was no relaxation in the angle which was very steep, there were no care-free moments, each foot and handhold had to be carefully and thoughtfully used. They appeared to be just inadequate! A stance in a fine position was reached eventually and this broke the tension. A slab followed and by means of this we traversed to the right underneath a prominent overhang. Even this pitch proved difficult. The final pitch was a crack covered with moss and turf which went to the right of the overhang. Whilst climbing this my eyes became filled with dirt and moss and a little wall of ten feet which was climbed on minute holds at the top appeared to be perhaps more difficult than it should have been. On surmounting this wall after the first ascent (ours was the second), the leader is reputed to have said, "Well, — me". We approved of this remark. Unfortunately, such climbing terminology does not find its way into guide-books and, therefore, in accordance with the American craze for psychiatry, this climb was named *Trauma*.

The second cliff lies half a mile down the road and is set back 200 yds. from it. This cliff provided a most delightful climb, as it is composed of a more or less continuous slab set at or just below the limit of friction. The upper part of the cliff is steeper and a few essential holds appear. These are adequate but are not always convenient. The topmost pitch, about 130 ft., is one of the most enjoyable that I did in America. A steep wall with just adequate holds forms the start. This is followed by an upward and leftward traverse along a thin crack which is used surprisingly little. At ninety feet the

whole pitch steepens considerably and to follow the crack is impossible. Two rather rotten holds and a bold serpentine and continuous movement upwards to another line solve this difficulty. The exposure here is considerable and the protection is poor. At the end of this pitch a good piton is found. This climb has been called *Catharsis*, although I think it deserves a more attractive name.

This short article gives a very sketchy account of the climbing and ski-ing facilities that there are within reasonable distance of Montréal. In winter from my lodgings on Mountain Street I could ski on Mont Real, strapping my skis on within ten minutes of leaving.

The rock climbing standard is high and in Canada, at least, the emphasis appears to be more on free climbing although a number of artificial routes have been done.

There are, in addition, around Montreal at any rate, a considerable number of new cliffs to be opened up and new climbs to be done.

THE MOELWYNION IN THE 'THIRTIES

R. ELFYN HUGHES

AFTER A BRIEF apprenticeship on the Milestone with Emyr Pentir Williams and Glyn Williams, I arrived in Blaenau Ffestiniog early in April 1932. All school holidays were spent there with my grandfather. My addiction to Ffestiniog afforded much amusement to my friends, which was heightened when they realised that it was my birthplace. There were the usual comments about rain and slate quarries! Previous to this, I had only climbed in hobs, but before setting out I had bought some clinker nails. The first or perhaps first two days of my visit were spent nailing a pair of boots. If by now I can only remember incidents of this period rather vaguely, the first trying experience of nailing my boots can be recalled very vividly. Shafts bent all shapes, my fingers often being mistaken for their heads. The end product was far from being that of a craftsman, but my vocabulary was much improved!

The boots and their nails, however, seemed to work. They were tried out on the rough easy slabs on the eastern flank of Clogwyn Holland*. The rocks were wet as is usual in this district — I cannot recall a fine day during my stay for the first half of April. The first reaction to the new nails was that of the increased sense of security they gave. In retrospect, it is possible that this was an important factor at this early stage of rock climbing, particularly as I was climbing alone. I could not find a companion, and, in any case, I did not have a rope.

During the next fortnight my activities at Ffestiniog set the pattern for the following few years. It was a mixture of hill-walking, fishing, fly-tying, botanising and rock-climbing. I returned quickly to Clogwyn Holland to explore the possibility of a direct way up the cliff. It was a joy to find a rock which was quite unscratched,

**Editor's note:* See "New Climbs and Notes", later in this number, for some remarks on the names of crags in this area.

lichened and mossy. A route emerged, which I now call Septentrionale. This was the easiest way up the cliff to the immediate left of the over-hanging flying buttress near its centre. It was a reasonably safe route with several grass ledges. The only problem was the flanking of the steep wall (it might be called Septentrionale Wall) near the top of the cliff. It was done in two ways. First, to the right, making a short but exposed traverse on to a pock-marked slab. This presented a problem, in that the hollows were filled with lichen and a black greasy humus and there was no certain break to a fall off the slab. The start of the variation to the left of the wall was marked by a diminutive oak tree, which does not seem to have made any growth in twenty-eight years. The quartz-flecked slabs of this path are an easier alternative to the first. The Septentrionale Wall itself should give an interesting problem. It is split by a crack, the exit from which on to the slab above is the main difficulty to be solved.

A visit was next paid to the buttress known locally as Clogwyn yr Oen, on the lower slopes of Moel yr Hydd. I did not know until recently that Colin Kirkus had made a route here in the late 'twenties; this followed essentially the western edge of the buttress. I walked to Clogwyn yr Oen from Blaenau Ffestiniog on a wet and misty day, and chose the first obvious break in the cliff as a means of ascent. This was the shallow heather and grass-filled gully about the centre of the cliff, which was followed up to where it ends, about a third of the way up the cliff, beneath a wall capped with a fallen block. This was turned on the right by following the mossy quartz-flecked slab, then on to a large grass ledge, which gave an exit to the top of the cliff. A day or two later this first reconnaissance on Clogwyn yr Oen was sorted out into the Central Slab Route, which runs up the centre of the slab to the right of the shallow gully, and past the fallen block, then following a series of slabs to the highest point of Clogwyn yr Oen. It gives a clear-cut route up the buttress. It was not until August 1957 that the fallen block and the wall beneath it were climbed with Dick and Clive West. This diversifies the route and adds to its interest.

During this early visit the first two pitches (the cave and the slab beyond) of Kirkus's Climb were ascended, but I rightly retreated from the final section. I believe it was on the same day that I went up what has been called by John Neill the Green Gully, in Carreg Flaen Llym. A kind of cave pitch provided the only climbing — it

was awkward. The top of the fallen boulder was covered with scree material. I can well remember searching for something stable to get hold of. This may account for the gully not being visited again for twenty-six years. It is of interest that now the scree has been largely grassed over. Has this been the result of recolonization by plants of newly formed scree over a period of nearly thirty years, or perhaps it followed a slight shift in climate? An apparent increase in the mossiness of certain slabs on Clogwyn yr Oen might be due to a similar cause, or can it be due to the disappearance of the flock of goats which frequented Moelwyn and traversed the slabs of Clogwyn yr Oen with ease?

April 1932, and the subsequent years during which I climbed in the Ffestiniog district, were of significance in that it was not possible to find a climbing partner. Consequently, if any climbing was to be done, it was to be alone. I grew to like it, and often climbed alone in Snowdonia proper. Solo climbing had the appeal of enabling one to be able to cover the ground quickly, several routes could be covered in a day, but clearly, it set a limit on the standard that could be attained. Retreat had also to be accepted when this need not have been necessary if a second was present.

I was in Ffestiniog again in late August and early September, 1932. I cannot recall breaking any new ground, except variations on the original Septentrionale, and probably a short route up a small cliff to the south of Llechwedd Slate Quarry. I must have fished more at that period!

Perhaps September 1933 was the most enjoyable climbing holiday I had in the Ffestiniog district. The weather was fine, the rocks dry and often festooned with spiders' webs. I spent most of my time on Clogwyn yr Oen and the upper cliffs of the Moel yr Hydd. With regard to the latter, its face is so broken that I cannot now remember the exact ways that were followed. The cliffs are almost continuous at their western and eastern ends, and gave the best climbing. On the former buttress I did a lot of miscellaneous climbing, not following any definite route, but merely getting up anything that was within my ability and limits of safety. Much of the detail of this I have forgotten, and that which I remember need not be entered into here. During this fine weather, Kirkus's Route was repeated. I took it as a new one, not knowing then of his earlier activities, but variations were, however, made on the start of the climb. One a variation on the right of the little wall near the cave,

following the slabs ahead. These were traversed either near their left edge and nearer their centre by a large distinct pinkish-coloured patch. It now looks more pink than it used to.

On the extreme right of the cliff there is a distinct groove (usually wet) subtended by a flying buttress on its right. There is now a small ash sapling at the base of the groove. This Ash Groove ends beneath a slight overhang which was turned by traversing it on to the flying buttress on to a small ledge, then up a small slab, finally emerging by a small chimney at the crest of the cliff.

Craig y Fran lies between Ffestiniog and Penmachno. I saw it at an early age while fishing and searching for Sarn Helen, which passes near it. It was visited on a fine Sunday afternoon in September 1933. Relations who lived not far away had invited me to tea. I turned up in a pair of gym shoes. After tea, I paid my first climbing visit to Craig y Fran. At its south there is a distinct slab of about 90 to 100 feet in length. As far as I can recollect this was climbed by starting at about mid-point along its base, then moving diagonally right to join a bilberry-filled crack, which was followed to near its top. On the same day, the rather broken wall to the right of the slab was climbed; again, I cannot remember the exact route, but I believe Dick and Clive West and I went over approximately the same ground in September 1957. This was then christened the "Slipped Disc", since a sizeable slab of rock slipped from beneath me when moving across a short traverse. It was pleasant to manage two other routes on this cliff during 1957.

During September 1934, I turned my attention again to Clogwyn Holland. On its northern flank are three distinct narrow chimneys which suggest obvious routes up the cliff. They are approached by an extent of rather broken grassy slabs. The middle chimney could not be climbed, as it has a small oak tree stack at its base which is impenetrable. The left chimney is the most difficult and interesting; facing south, it is rather strenuous to enter. Both this chimney and that on the right converge on a "crow's nest" of rock, and beyond to a narrow humped slab. The negotiation of the upper section to this was rather an amusing problem for a person of my size, since one had to move a few feet without a definite handhold.

To the right, and above the three chimneys, is a secondary buttress, and about two-thirds of the way up it is a distinct beak formed by a detached block. This formed the focus for several ways up the buttress.

During the same September, some time was spent on Craig Clipiau, which is probably the most imposing extent of rock in the district. The steep sweep of its quartz slab is its most distinctive feature. A solo ascent up this was out of the question, as has been confirmed by the difficulty of the routes made there recently. The left edge of this slab was, however, an obvious possibility and this was followed, and approximates to the present Africa Rib, though the start was more direct. A depression to the right of the Rib provided two parallel lines of ascent, together with a chimney; these were not of any difficulty. The west face of the buttress beyond the sharp edge of the west wing was also climbed by a series of shallow grooves or chimneys which slope leftwards across the face.

Craig Wrysgan (below Wrysgan Quarry) was another cliff visited during September 1934, but I had to retreat halfway up the route I had chosen. My recollection of this period is of high winds and some rain, and due to this I remember feeling quite disconcerted on one or two occasions on Craig Wrysgan and Craig Clipiau.

About this time I had taken to climbing in shoes. I preferred them for the lightness and flexibility they gave. The pattern of nailing was three No. 1 Tricouni on the toe, and much smaller ones, referred to as "ladies' tricounis", elsewhere. I do not think the latter are available now. I still climb on occasions in No. 1 Tricouni nails and prefer them to the large edge forms. The day of the nail in Wales should not, as some predict, be at an end when a mean annual rainfall of between 100 in. and 150 in. prevails over the main climbing centres. We have contributed virtually nothing to the evolution of the climbing nails. It can be argued that the present large edge tricouni is of greater psychological than mechanical significance, and its weight is quite out of proportion to what it does. What is required is a smaller, much lighter nail, of larger frictional area, and giving a better balance when in contact with rock, particularly when used with shoes or lightweight boots. The emphasis should be on lightness. Some research into the design of nails is essential, since the present-day rubber sole is not the final answer to all-the-year-round climbing in Wales and elsewhere in Britain.

In September 1935 I turned again to Clogwyn Holland. About the centre of the cliff is a prominent flying buttress which overhangs at about half its height. This overhang is approached by two successive walls. The first rises from the west end of the easy slabs

which flank the right of the buttress, and can be surmounted by a crack to the right or directly up the wall. When it was first climbed the top of this wall was covered with bilberries, which allowed an easy, if precarious, exit. This precious bilberry has now been burnt, which should make the exit more difficult. The second wall leading to the overhang was much more difficult and took several attempts to climb. For the first few feet, which were steep, one had to rely mainly on one's fingers. Since my return to climbing in this district, I have not been able to repeat this wall, and I cannot recall exactly how the final section to the overhang was tackled. However, direct upward progress beyond the overhang was not possible, but an interesting problem is left for others to resolve.

My pre-war period of exploration on the Moelwynion ended in 1935, though I continued to climb there on occasions up to the outbreak of war. I little thought then that I was not to return for virtually twenty years. A lone visit again to Septentrionale in the summer of 1955 was pleasant indeed. What nail scratches I had made twenty years before had disappeared beneath fresh growth of moss and lichen. The dwarf oak tree was the same, so perhaps was that at the base of one of the three chimneys. But the visit was not without its sadness; a friendly and social community in the intervening years had shrunk to half its size, accompanied by the inevitable scars of dereliction. What other changes have occurred I do not know — some one prefers to ignore. Is it still a haven into which one could retreat and there hear and speak only Welsh for a month or more? The mountains and their rocks are essentially the same, subject only to the near imperceptible fluctuations of nature, as are vistas of the Vale of Ffestiniog, its oaks in autumn and the distant sea. The sunsets behind the Moelwyn are infinite in their range of colour, both of sky and mountains. Viewed from across the Vale they give an impression of vastness hardly equalled elsewhere in Snowdonia. These are unchanging threads of continuity, which are always worth returning to.

THE ASCENT OF SHIPROCK

A. ALVAREZ

Prefatory note: I apologize for the ghastly chattiness in the tone of what follows. The piece was originally written as a Home Service talk to fill in that gap between "Lift Up Your Hearts" and the Morning Service. Consequently, I found it impossible, without completely rewriting the thing, to get the B.B.C. snuffle out of my voice. — A.A.

I SUPPOSE the first sight of a mountain is always the best. Later, when you are waiting to start, you may grow to hate the brute, because you are afraid. And when, finally, you are climbing, you are never aware of the mountain as a mountain: it is merely so many little areas of rock to be worked out in terms of hand-holds, foot-holds and effort, like so many chess problems. But when you first see it in the distance, remote and beautiful and unknown, then there seems some reason for climbing. That, perhaps, is what Mallory meant by his "Because it's there".

I first saw Shiprock on midsummer day of 1958. I was exhausted, having driven the two-and-a-half thousand miles from New Jersey to New Mexico in relatively few days. Moreover, I was unfit; I had not climbed for several weeks and I looked forward without much pleasure to what would probably be thirty-six hours on a vertical face. Finally, I had that morning left my wife and baby son in Taos; and going off for a climb is always a wretched business: it leaves you tense and sick at heart. I think now that serious climbs are for bachelors; they become so much more difficult when you leave anything behind.

I was feeling, in short, just a bit sorry for myself as I drove across the rolling Apache country and into the wastes of the Navajo reservation. The area set aside by the U.S. Government for the Navajo Indians is the most desolate land in the world, flat, dried-up, harsh, stony. But, recently, oil and uranium have been found and a little wealth is beginning to creep in. In places the desolation seems almost busy — though no less desolate. It was a few miles south of one of these little centres, a new boom town called Farmington, that I first saw Shiprock. I had come out, imperceptibly, on top of a huge flat hill. To the north and west the desert dropped away to a lower

level. A long way north rose the blue tiers of the Mesa Verde, where the prehistoric cave cities are. Sweeping round to the south, the desert was ringed with smaller mesas, the queer, flat-topped hills, looking like bits of plain set up on vertical cliffs. But in the west, about fifty miles away, below the sinking sun where the desert seemed blank and endless, was Shiprock. Its bluish, hazy mass rose sheer out of the desert, rising eighteen hundred feet to the huge twin east and south towers. Between them peered the north tower, farther away and seeming smaller: then the bulk of the mountain bending a little towards the western desert.

I had never even seen a photograph of it before. Perhaps that is why I had agreed to join the climbing party. But in the late afternoon sun it looked very beautiful. No wonder it is the sacred mountain of the Navajos. It dominates the whole landscape continuously and effortlessly. As I drove towards it, it was hidden at times by corners and edges of sandstone, but it controlled, always, my whole sense of direction. According to the picture post-cards, Shiprock got its name because at sunset it looks like a large ship floating forwards across the desert. Perhaps it does. But in Navajo myth it stretches towards heaven and the souls of men descend to earth from it. It dominates their cosmology as it dominates the landscape.

There is a tiny Indian town of Shiprock, about twenty miles from the mountain. I had arranged to meet my Princeton climbing companions there. "O, we'll meet at the main restaurant," we had said. "If we're not there, we'll be camping under the climb." It was vague, of course, but then none of us knew what the town — or the mountain, for that matter — would be like. Mercifully, there were only a couple of restaurants, a couple of gas stations, a school and a couple of trading posts. There were mule carts in the street, which made it look more like Mexico than I had ever seen before in the States, and Indians were cramming into the usual pick-up trucks to return to their villages for the night. The men, small, thickish and rather saturnine, wore the regulation denims, except for a few wrapped in their blankets like dark, heavy Della Robbia infants. But the women were splendid, skirted to their feet and shawled in vivid reds, purples and oranges. In the huge golden sunset they looked oddly unreal — or at least, unexpected — as if I'd walked into the middle of some vast play, and didn't know the plot.

There is a big motel and restaurant run by the Navajos. One of the Princeton cars was outside it, but there was no sign of my friends in

the cafe. They had left half an hour before, the proprietress told me. They would be under the mountain. It was almost dark now, so, with nothing to lose, I ordered a meal. If we were to climb the next day, heaven knew when I'd next eat properly.

Then I set about finding my way out to the rock. The directions were simple enough: go south on the main road until the gravelled turn-off to Lukachukai. Follow that for eight miles over the desert. When you come to the ridge, go right on a track straight towards the mountain. It was quite dark by the time I started, but the full moon was up, my headlights were good and the others would probably have lit a fire. I wasn't worried.

At first, the driving was easy enough. But it was darker than I thought and the eight miles bumping along the gravel road across the desert seemed long and slow. Finally, a great black wall of rock loomed up on either side of the road: the ridge. My headlights made strange, impertinent shadows on it. There was a track off to the right just before the ridge, but it seemed improbably vague. So I went past the thing and saw another. There seemed nothing to do but take it. As I swung the car off the road, it was like walking unexpectedly into the deep-end of a swimming pool. The car jerked and heaved and wallowed. The track was hardish sand, full of pot-holes and strewn with rocks. Sometimes it wound round the little dunes, sometimes it went over them. Then I usually had to back the car and take a run at the rise, careering over the top, headlights flailing in the air, not knowing if the track went straight on over or turned on the top.

It took me about an hour to drive two miles. Finally, of course, I went wrong. I found myself with the car stuck in the sand on the top of a dune, the track entirely vanished and what appeared to be a vertical drop on three sides. The only way off was to back down the steep slope I had just come up. Without a reversing light, it seemed impossible. The great black ridge rose sheer above me, its darkness jagged and menacing against the sky. I could just make out the peak of Shiprock heaving up darkly behind it. There was no sign of the others' fire, only that great black, menacing ridge looming up in front, and the desert, eerie and shimmering and vague under the moon. The wind blew soft but insistent sand into my eyes and mouth. I began to shout in the hope that the others were just the far side of the ridge. My yells echoed back to me and faded away. So I gave up and went back to the car. Being outside in the moonlit desert made

me feel terribly exposed and isolated. The place is too vast and indifferent to be bearable at night. I stretched out in the back of the car, drank some whiskey and settled down to sleep. A huge grasshopper which had settled on the ledge of the rear window creaked heavily from time to time, like a pair of ancient corsets. The great moon shone in on me and all around was the vast, rustling silence of the desert. Oddly enough, I slept very well.

At dawn, I climbed the ridge, one of three thin, curving tentacles spreading out from Shiprock. The path I should have taken ran, quite distinct, along the other side. At the end of it, tiny against the desert, was the other car and my friends lying around it in their sleeping bags.

The rest of that day was like a bad dream. We had three things to do: find the start of the route; get some more food and liquid from the town; wait for the fifth member of the party to arrive. We were to be in all four Englishmen and an American, all from Princeton. One Englishman was still missing. Simple enough. But what happened in fact was that we were systematically demoralised. First, there was the rock itself: the bulk of the mountain is sheer sandstone, whilst the back is shattered basalt. All of it is utterly rotten. It came away as you touched it, hardly waiting to be pulled. Most of the ordinary holds were useless; the only safe ones were cracks to jam your toes and fingers into. Second, there was the thirst. All day the wind blew steadily; our mouths and eyes and ears were full of sand; we were parched whenever we were not actually drinking. It was a permanent condition, like the beating of your blood, or the pain of someone with cancer. It seemed impossible that we should ever have enough to drink again. Third, was the heat. Shiprock had never been climbed later than May. This was the end of June. To move into the sun was like swinging open some great furnace door. The whole landscape shimmered and swayed and faded in the heat. The rocks became almost too hot to touch. In the village the temperature was about 110° in the shade. Heaven alone knows what it was out in the desert. Fourth, was the Accident. On the last ascent a man had been killed. When we went in to get our stores in the village, we heard of nothing else. "He was a young guy, just like you-all. Say," one would turn to the other, "he looked just like this guy, didn't he?" "Sure. And he bought the same candies. You should have seen him when they brought him in. Gee." And so on. We fled from the place as soon as we could. But by the time we drove back across the desert we were

sick to death of the whole miserable business: the rotten rock, the thirst, the heat, the shopkeepers gloating over that poor wretch's death, and the mountain looming there impassively against another unbelievable sunset. It seemed a silly, pointless way of getting oneself killed.

Dick Sykes, the missing Englishman, had still not arrived, so we decided to go up without him. We had our excuses, of course: I had to get back to my family; the others were expected in the Tetons in two days; and so on. But the truth was none of us could bear the thought of another day of tension, heat and waiting like this one. If we didn't climb the mountain the next day, we wouldn't climb it at all. So we loaded ourselves up, like so many mules, with climbing equipment, food, drink and sleeping bags, and groped in the fading light painfully up to the start of the climb.

The west wall of Shiprock is basalt. It drops down to a huge, curving overhang. The climb begins on the left side of this, where the lip of the rock sticks out less angrily. Underneath the overhang is a shallow, level, sandy cave shaped like a scimitar. We built a fire, heated some of the precious water for tea and lay down to sleep in the cave. Again I slept surprisingly well, but I was woken a couple of times by faint rustlings. For such a dead lunar landscape, the place seemed strangely unquiet.

I suppose it goes without saying that the climb, after all the horrors of thinking about it, was perfectly straightforward. We were up before the sun, had a miserable breakfast of cornflakes and tepid baked beans, and were off. It is a violent beginning. You go straight from the ground onto etriers on the overhang. But this is mercifully short; four heaves, a little awkward straddling with the feet and we were up. And most important, once we began to climb all the worries and fears and tensions left us. Fear is always a matter of the future tense; the present is too blessedly factual.

You come over the overhang into a vast amphitheatre of shattered basalt. At the back of it the head-wall goes up a thousand feet in four giant steps. At the bottom, facing you as you pull over the lip, is a plaque to mark the spot where the poor devil had landed last year. He had fallen on the way back from the second ascent of the north tower. Still, we had our own work to do. We started to climb the head-wall.

It was surprisingly easy, just another rock climb, most of it not more than about V.Diff. And provided you jammed in the cracks

instead of pulling on the crumbling face, it was quite safe. Towards the top of the head-wall the climbing was harder for a little; but climbing, doing something, was such a blessed relief from thinking about it, that we were going well and quickly. John Wharton, the young leader of the climb, and myself were at the top of the head-wall in a couple of hours.

The others were still two hundred feet down when there was a shout from below. It was Dick Sykes. He had arrived late in the night and like me had got stuck in the desert. Now he was angry, roaring at us from far below because we hadn't waited for him. Urged by his annoyance, he climbed the overhang and the first eight hundred feet of the head-wall on his own and unroped. But he had said his say and tied on to a rope before the real difficulties began.

Once we got to the top of the head-wall we lost the route. There were two ways on: the Ordinary Route and the North Tower which went up vertically in front of us. The latter had been climbed only twice before and was technically harder than the Ordinary Route, but also much shorter. As for the Ordinary: according to the description we had unearthed, we were supposed to rope down a smooth, vertical hundred-and-twenty-foot wall to a ledge, leaving the rope in position for the return. From the ledge the crux of the climb began: a hundred-and-twenty-foot friction traverse. Wharton had seen some horrifying photographs of it at the American Alpine Club. Mercifully, he had not shown the rest of us. After the traverse, there were only two small overhangs between you and the summit of the south tower. From where we perched we could see plenty of smooth, vertical walls, but no ledges at the bottom of them. It took a long time to find the right one. It was far below and strewn with cans as though too many people had waited there far too long a time. But there was no way of fixing a rope to get down there. The walls were quite smooth, without the smallest crack for a piton. Finally we found two little holes drilled in the rock, where the bolts, of which the Americans are so fond, had been screwed. But being four Englishmen to one American, it had never occurred to us to bring bolts. Only Wharton, in fact, had ever used them. So there we were. It was the North Tower or nothing.

It was, of course, the North Tower. The route goes straight up from the platform at the top of the Head Wall in two pitches of VI. It is not strenuous, but very thin and very rotten. It took a great deal of juggling with stirrups and pitons. But Wharton and Sykes led it

beautifully between them. There was never any question but that we would get up. Only in the last fifty feet did the rottenness of the rock reach a point of lunacy. You could stick your fingers into the stuff, almost like mud. But the Colorado guide who had first climbed it must have known a great deal about rock structure; there was a string of pitons going straight up this putty, and they were as solid as the rock should have been. We had to climb from one to the other, ignoring the face itself contemptuously.

We sat on the summit and took the usual photographs. We opened the little steel canister bolted to the top and added our names to the list; we were the third party to get there. Then, since we knew we wouldn't be spending the night on the mountain after all, we passed our water-bottles round with wanton generosity. But the sun was high and the wind still blew parchingly. We could see trees and the San Juan River glinting twenty miles away in the town of Shiprock. Way to the north the Mesa Verde rose cool and blue. So we didn't stay long on the summit. We began to rope down the rotten vertical face at four p.m. By six-thirty we were back at our camp under the overhang, thirteen hours after we had left it.

And that was that. The climb had been hard and was a brilliant lead by Wharton, who was, incidentally, only eighteen. But it was just a climb. It was not, oddly enough, the climbing that made the ascent of Shiprock so difficult. It was the place itself; the eerie, untouched lunar desert, the almost unbearable thirst and heat, the strange sense of threat in its continual rustling sounds. I understood better now why to the Navajos the mountain is sacred. You are often scared climbing, but scare is local; a move out of balance, a loose hold, too much exposure. You climb better when you are scared. But fear is generalised, like superstition. It clings to a place like its shadow. And it is when you have to sit still under the shadow, wait and do nothing, that fear goes over you.

But it could have been worse. The following day I was in one of the trading posts buying a Navajo rug. The shopkeeper had asked me about the climb. Then, just as I was leaving, he added casually: "Say, how many rattlers did you see?" "Rattlers?" I asked. "Sure, rattlers. Rattlesnakes. The place is full of them." And I thought of that rustling, empty cave where we had slept and the deep cracks in the rocks we had so carefully climbed in. Full of rattlesnakes. But, mercifully, we had never known.

THE GIRDLE TRAVERSE OF BEN NEVIS IN WINTER

TOM PATEY

THE WINTER of 1958/9 was a momentous one on Ben Nevis. A deep cloud of shame had hung over the Ben since the days when Brown and Whillans scored a triumph as notable as Flodden itself — the double ascent of Sassenach and Centurion on the Great Buttress of Carn Dearg. Those were dark days in the Allt a' Mhuilinn and the memory still rankled in the breast of many a tartan patriot. It was as if the pibroch had sounded "Lochaber no more" . . .

The "Hammer of the Scots", Joe Brown, contributed indirectly to the resurgence. He and his followers were violently repulsed by Point Five Gully, fortunately without serious injury. Nevertheless the incident was reported among the Faithful with thinly concealed jubilation. Ice pitons were forged, axe heads sharpened and the lost tribes returned again to their old hunting grounds . . .

Zero Gully was the first to fall. The icy lower ramparts yielded to McInnes and the mighty Message, a weapon which knows no equal in its own sphere of conflict.

Point Five Gully put up a sterner resistance. Attempts by Creag Dhu, Aberdeen and Edinburgh climbers were all to no avail. Yet, when the first snows of the winter returned to the Allt a' Mhuilinn in November, 1958, the days of Point Five were numbered. Hoards of "eager beavers" descended upon the C.I.C. Hut every week-end waiting to seize the vital opportunity.

Meanwhile, exiled in Darkest England, I was not idle. I wrote to almost everyone I knew to have a proprietary interest in Point Five Gully suggesting a rendezvous in mid-January, at the same time hinting, hopefully, that any earlier attempt was doomed to failure.

At the end of December a letter from Hamish brought sad news. Point Five Gully had surrendered to the machine-like efficiency of the men from R.A.F. Kinloss, piloted by Ian Clough. It was the first seven-day climb in the history of British mountaineering. On the

lower ice fall they had advanced at the rate of 150 feet a day establishing fixed ropes as they climbed, and retreating each night to recuperate at the C.I.C. Hut. Hamish added that he wasn't sure whether this should count as a first ascent; coming from Hamish, who had been the first to advocate these tactics, it was sadly ironic.

Nevertheless, there was still the Orion Face. An expert Lifeman meets a situation like this by reverting to the Next Great Problem Gambit. It is only necessary to resurrect some forgotten horror, preferably Very Severe in Rubbers, and to suggest that it might provide fine sport for crampons, given a liberal plastering of ice — "Certainly The Last Great Problem". In this case, the Orion Face qualified with honours. Unfortunately, Robin Smith's mind worked along similar lines, and, one week after Point Five, the Orion Face also became a back number.

None the less it soon transpired that Jimmy Marshall, George Ritchie and I would not be the sole occupants of the C.I.C. Hut that week-end. A car load of Teutonic Tigers pursued us from Edinburgh to Fort William, and, when we reached the Distillery, it was only to find that the Aberdeen contingent (Messrs. Brooker, Taylor, Sellars and Jerry Smith) were ahead of us on the path to the Hut.

Next morning the order of precedence was reversed, with the Tigers and Robin Smith away first, closely followed by Marshall and myself. We had no set plan of action and followed them into Observatory Gully, mainly out of curiosity. As soon as they spotted us the pace of both parties accelerated dramatically. Marshall, supremely fit as ever, soon narrowed the gap to within hailing distance.

"What's on the programme today?" he bellowed encouragingly.

"None of your bloody business," came the immediate reply.

Jimmy beamed with delight. "Great wee boys," he observed. "Never without a sense of humour. We'll try again."

"We're heading for Gardyloo Buttress," he yelled, "so you'd better come away down immediately." A stream of oaths left us in no doubt that this was their objective. We had, naturally, no intentions of spoiling their fun: Gardyloo Buttress has only been climbed three times in summer and is said to require dry conditions and a 120-foot lead out at the crux. On face value it seemed a worthy opponent: it was plastered with two feet of powder snow adhering to verglased rock and promised to give the lads an excellent day's sport.

Jimmy harried them to the foot of the climb and might have pursued matters further had I not called him off. "Stop wasting time," I shouted preemptorily. "We've more important work to do." I had abandoned the Gully and traversed with a purposeful air on to the edge of Observatory Buttress.

No sooner were our true intentions revealed than this became the signal for prolonged booing and catcalls. "My God, wid ye believe it? — the Girdle Traverse . . . Conducted tours for the not so young, did ye say?"

Secretly, I was rather put out. I had played my trump card; the conception of a winter girdle of the North Face, cutting through all the established routes at mid-height, should have been acclaimed as a master stroke of genius.

"Don't give a damn," Jimmy consoled me. "They're only mad that they never thought of it themselves."

The route we proposed to follow had been discovered by J. H. B. Bell when he made the first summer traverse of the Nevis cliffs. I knew of no repetition of his route, but this was not really surprising. Only on the section appertaining to the North Face does it follow a natural non-artificial line and it was this section that we intended to tackle. Starting from Observatory Gully we would retrace Bell's steps as far as the North-East Buttress, crossing consecutively Observatory Buttress, Point Five Gully, Observatory Ridge, Zero Gully and the Orion Face. It promised us three thousand feet of interesting climbing on excellent snow ledges without undue strain on the blood pressure. As I wore tricounis and Jimmy crampons, I took it upon myself to lead if only to ensure that an adequate number of steps was cut. It was hot work and I was soon perspiring freely. Marshall trotted along at my heels festooned with loose coils of rope and grinning happily.

"Aye, they're a great thing, the crampons," he observed when I stopped for a rest. "Well worth the money."

I swore under my breath. "Perhaps you'd like to take over."

"Not at all," he replied. "Just you keep up the good work. There soon winnae be any snow left."

When introduced to James, your initial impression is that of a mild, rather reserved young fellow. You would be mistaken. There is no more confident master of the quick-fire repartee or the subtle innuendo. The gleam in his eye bodes ill for the pretentious upstart, as many have discovered to their cost. Add to this an almost un-

paralleled experience of Scottish winter mountaineering and it becomes obvious that Marshall is happiest when in the lead. His temperament is too unsympathetic for a supporting role.

Meantime, our erstwhile rivals were still at grips with the first pitch of the Gardyloo Buttress.

"Wasting their time," I affirmed. I gathered that Jimmy regarded himself as their elder counsellor, and said this deliberately to provoke him.

"You'd better watch what you're saying," he commented drily. "These wee boys knock off an X.S. before their breakfasts." Ribald shouts bade us farewell as we rounded the corner of the Buttress.

Above the lower tier which is Rubicon Wall the angle of Observatory Buttress eases off, and there are many pleasant ledges and platforms. We had failed to take preliminary bearings and now paid the penalty of going too high. Eventually our lofty balcony petered out on the brink of a large empty gulf overlooking Point Five Gully, and we were faced with the prospect of retracing our steps, or making a long abseil to regain the correct terrace. We chose the abseil and wedged a large ice piton into a nearby crack. I went first, calling for a tight rope, in order to test the piton; I was the heavier load and therefore entitled to the privilege. All went well, however, and the new terrace proved to be the only key to the maze.

The last corner before Point Five Gully was a more difficult hurdle. A single plaque of ice adhering to a shallow recess, between two tiers of overhangs, offered a frail link with the bed of the gully. Here we trod delicately, our heels projecting over the abyss. By the time I had finished, much of the brittle trellis-work of ice had slid off the slab: consequently, it was heartwarming to hear Bergführer Marshall scraping desperately for holds, where none existed. I lay back on the rope and heaved encouragingly.

We stepped off the ledge into my private Never-Never Land — the recess above the great lower icefall of Point Five Gully. But for me the spell was broken; "Dangle" Clough and his merry men had shattered it for ever, and only disillusionment remained.

I awoke from my reverie with a start, and wheeled round to see a succession of half crowns spinning down the ice and out into the void. I remembered then I had a hole in my trouser pocket. Disillusionment was complete. Point Five had proved false to the bitter end.

From our comfortable eyrie we looked out across the thinnest strand of the Girdle. This was the belt of high angle slabs on the near

flank of Observatory Ridge: here Bell had removed his boots, climbing in socks for maximum friction. Now only a few plaques of ice clung to the glazed rock but it seemed just possible to connect these into a plausible route. The exposure was positively indecent. Jimmy led out 80 feet, climbing with great care and precision where a less cautious climber might have shattered the delicate thread of ice upon which our salvation depended. Finally, he edged up a few feet and perched himself on a small ledge, driving in a piton for security. "Just the job for tricounis — this next bit. You'll really enjoy yourself."

I guessed from this that a particularly foul section lay ahead; nor was I mistaken. The slab below and beyond his belay stance was devoid of holds and as smooth as a baby's bottom. I looked down into the gulf below and shuddered involuntarily. Looking up, I met the cold impassive gaze of Bergführer Marshall: it was, if anything, even less reassuring.

Then I hit upon an ingenious subterfuge. Why not a "rappel-pendule"?

I broached the proposition delicately to James.

He appeared mildly incredulous. "Ye mean it's too difficult? Well, well, it's for you to decide. Still, Ah'm no' makin' any promises about the piton — it'll maybe come out."

Unmoved by this threat I arranged the rope in the abseil position and leaning well out started a crab-like crawl across the slabs, using trouser knees for extra purchase from the slippery veneer of "verglas." In fact, the tension traverse was only 12 feet, although it seemed a lot further; the fixed rope came down at an awkward angle, threatening to pluck me off backwards. Thankfully, I gained a small niche, cut two handholds and relaxed a minute before moving on. However, the worst was now past, and I soon linked up with a higher terrace of firm "névé" where I cut a fine sentry box, and prepared to assist Jimmy over the traverse; the Apostle of free climbing reconciled himself to the fixed rope with commendable alacrity, even accepting an additional pull on the active rope.

The more broken terrain ahead encouraged us to move together for greater speed. A shallow gully alongside Observatory Ridge was noted down for future consideration. (Indeed we returned the very next day with Bill Brooker and duly climbed it, naming the route Hadrian's Wall — the corollary to Rubicon Wall on the opposite side of Point Five Gully.)

The crest of Observatory Ridge gave us an easy opportunity to lose height, as it was essential we should hit off the correct line of traverse to the Basin. We entered Zero Gully at the point where the angle of the gully recedes above the lower ice wall. Below our feet yawned the great ice pitch which had given Graeme Nicol, Hamish McInnes and myself a two-hour fight on our successful ascent of the Gully in 1957. We passed on into the shadow of the Orion Face. There is a grim majesty about this, the greatest cliff in Scotland. Bell's network of routes leading to and from the Basin is now seldom without summer traffic but the winter aspect is bleak and forbidding. Robin Smith's successful ascent had been a remarkable "tour-de-force," yet, in barely two months' time, Jimmy Marshall was to equal the feat with his brilliant lead of Minus-Two Gully, perhaps the hardest ice climbing yet attempted on Nevis.

No such heroics were required of us on this occasion. Easy ledges led to the upper limit of the Basin whence a steeply slanting shelf cut up to the crest of the North East Buttress. Here the steps of the Orion Face party were still clearly defined although a week had elapsed since their visit. Our girdle appeared to be the only easy traverse on the entire face. I was overjoyed at our good fortune; Jimmy rather resented the anti-climax.

We gained the crest of the North-East Buttress with several hours of daylight to spare. In the circumstances the Man Trap seemed a rather tame finish so we pursued the Girdle onto the Corrie Leis face of the buttress, exploring a maze of small gullies, and pulling out on to the summit slopes only when it seemed pointless to create further difficulties.

The Winter Girdle of the North Face had taken us five hours. Aesthetically, it rates among the finest winter courses in Scotland. It is, of course, nowhere very demanding, but the situations throughout are quite magnificent, and the climbing never lacks interest.

I said so in so many words to my Bergkamerad but he only shook his head, and muttered in a dreamy monotone, "Up Green Gully, down Comb Gully, up Glover's Chimney, so into Tower Gully . . ."

Marshall was already toying with the idea of the Greater Girdle. I told him what he could do with it.

NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

I. SNOWDONIA

C. T. JONES

GENERAL

1959 was an exceptional year in North Wales. The good weather caused the repetition of most of the outstanding existing climbs. The list below gives those which I know to have been done this year, with the names of those leading them; only the very hardest climbs are mentioned as some of those hitherto considered in this category (e.g. Cenotaph Corner) are now *voies normales*.

WOUBITS:	H. I. Banner, C. J. S. Bonington, H. Smith.
THE MOSTEST:	Banner, Bonington.
THE SHRIKE:	Banner.
THE TROACH:	Banner (first ascent)
WHITE SLAB:	Banner, H. Smith and two others.
BLACK CLEFT:	Banner, J. ("Mortimer") Smith.
SLANTING SLAB:	H. Smith.
RED SLAB:	J. Brown, J. McLean, P. Walsh.
GIRDLE OF EAST BUTTRESS, CLOGWYN-DU'R-ARDDU:	J. Smith.
VENBER:	Bonington, P. Gordon, McLean, H. Smith, Walsh and one ascent by a 17 year old in the rain.

All the routes of lesser calibre have been repeated. Only two climbs await a second ascent, Taurus and J. Brown's new route to the left of Woubits.

The girdle of Dinas-y-Gromlech has only been completed twice, by J. Brown and D. Whillans and by Whillans and J. Cunningham, so awaits a non-Rock and Ice Club traverse.

Four leaders have fallen off Cenotaph Corner — a grim trend.

It is significant that hardly anything of importance concerning new climbs has been reported this year from the Llanberis Pass. A welcome feature, however, is that Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu is still yielding new routes on all its buttresses. As the originator of the present attitude and high climbing standard, J. Brown fittingly still takes a leading part in present-day exploration.

In the last *Journal* a graded list was given of some of the harder climbs in North Wales. After heavy but good-natured criticism from all sides, the writer of these notes will now maintain a prudent silence.

There is a strong possibility that the first permanent guide-book volume for the Snowdon South and West area will be completed in the early part

of 1960. It will cover the Gwynant Valley, the Aberglaslyn Pass and the Tremadoc cliffs ("Snowdon South"). The crags here are nearly all low-lying and relatively rain-free.

It seems necessary to mention a vexed point. The practice of climbing new routes with the aid or protection of pitons is now accepted, but to omit mentioning them in detailed descriptions of the climbs can only be described as immoral. Unfortunately this type of forgetfulness is increasing.

It has now been possible to give more details of recent Rock and Ice Club routes, which until now have lacked detailed descriptions.

A. CARNEDDAU

CRAIG-YR-YSFA

AGRIPPA. 280 feet. Extremely Severe.

Comparable with Mur-y-Niwl, but considerably harder and lacking in natural belays.

Start: Directly below the pedestal of Mur-y-Niwl a series of ledges leads up to the left. Begin 50 feet to the right of Mur-y-Niwl.

(1) 50 feet. Awkwardly up over bulges to the leftwards - leading ledge. Along this to the steep wall with a shallow groove leading to a grass ledge (piton in groove). Climb the wall for 10 feet until it is possible to reach a finger hold and swing into the groove, so reaching the ledge (piton belay).

(2) 50 feet. Traverse right to the end of the ledge then climb the wall on fine holds to a ledge (piton belay).

(3) 50 feet. Climb the vertical wall on small holds for 20 feet to a small ledge in the corner above the second overhang (piton). Up the corner and make an ascending hand traverse along a crack for 15 feet to a stance (piton belay).

(4) 70 feet. Descend 5 feet and traverse right across the bottomless groove to a perch on the nose. Up left over two sloping gangways and lay-back over a block on to the wall, which is climbed on large holds. Belay round detached block.

(5) 60 feet. Follow the ledge left to the final wall and crack of Mur-y-Niwl.

First ascent: 15th July, 1959. J. Wharton, D. Isles.

CRAIG BRAICH TY-DU

The first buttress along the hillside from Pont Pen-y-Benglog Buttress: the large 50-foot diédre at the toe of this buttress, followed by the slab above, has been climbed.

CARREG MIANOG

FUNNY BONE. 120 feet. Very Severe.

On a steep area of rock right of Biceps Wall, with two obvious faults.

Start: At an easy groove right of Biceps Wall.

(1) 30 feet. Easily up the groove and slab.

(2) 30 feet. Above and to the left is a sloping ledge. The route reaches this by first moving up right and then hand-traversing right until an awkward mantelshelf leads on to the ledge (belay on cannon).

(3) 30 feet. From the sloping ledge mantelshelf into a grassy nest, then step round into a steep groove which is climbed on good holds to a stance.

(4) 30 feet. Layback into the crack, which leads to the top.

First ascent: 1959. R. James, R. L. Roberts.

KNEE CAP. 130 feet. Very Severe.

Start: 20 feet right of Funny Bone, at the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 45 feet. Up the wall steeply then left to a rib; scrambling to a stance.

(2) 45 feet. Above is a V-chimney above an overhang. Climb to the overhang and move with difficulty on to a ledge on its left, so into the V-chimney. Bridge up this until a good hold can be reached to pull on to a stance.

(3) 40 feet. Follow the large pinnacle-flake above up to the right to reach a ledge on the face. Climb the wall to the top.

First ascent: 1959. R. James, R. L. Roberts.

B. CWM IDWAL

UPPER CLIFF, GLYDER FAWR

GREY ARÊTE. 290 feet. Hard Very Severe.

The route follows the arête between Grey Slab and Grey Wall.

Start: On a grass ledge below and to the left of the arête, as for Grey Slab.

(1) 120 feet. Step into a scoop and follow this by semi-layback for 15 feet until it is possible to step right onto the slab itself. Back onto this and up it, getting easier, to the horizontal grass ledge (belay at foot of Grey Wall or on arête itself).

(2) 60 feet. Up the middle of the pock-marked wall until a move left leads to a small rock stance (chock belay).

(3) 80 feet. Up the steep crack above by layback until a hard move leads on to a grass ledge. Continue to layback up left until the crack leans right back. Step awkwardly into it and follow it to the grass ledge above (belay well on right).

(4) 30 feet. The easier wall above the crack provides a pleasant finish.

First ascent: 16th August, 1959. R. James, P. Benson.

CLOGWYN-Y-GEIFR

DEVIL'S NORDWAND. 380 feet. Very Severe (hard).

On the north cliff, taking a fairly direct line from its lowest to the highest point. A good steep route on good rock with little vegetation.

Start: Directly below an obvious 15-foot square niche about 60 feet up.

(1) 60 feet. Climb the face of the indefinite pedestal until forced into the grassy crack on the left. Climb this easily to the top.

(2) 100 feet. Ascend a thin crack for 10 feet until it is possible to move out left to a traversing line into the square niche. Cross the niche, leave it by the top left corner, step left then go diagonally right to a small grass ledge. From the right hand end of this step up a crack then traverse diagonally right up a thin slab to a stance (peg belay).

(3) 100 feet. Descend the previous pitch to above the grass ledge then make a hard traverse left to a heather ledge. Then either (a) go up to the

heather ledge above, step down and traverse right to an open chimney, or (b) climb direct to the foot of the chimney. Climb the chimney to a sloping slab (piton belay).

(4) 40 feet. Easily up the wall to the left.

(5) 80 feet. Up steeply on good holds until one can step right to a grass ledge. Up right then back left to the top.

First ascent: 2nd October, 1959. R. James, J. Anthoine.

CLOGWYN-Y-BUSTACH

PLAYTIME. 110 feet. Severe.

To the left of Angular Chimney there is a prominent pinnacle, with a clean sweep of buttress just to the left.

Start: At the foot of the buttress.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the arête to a tree belay.

(2) 30 feet. Make a hand or toe traverse into the crack on the right (good spike), to a small grass ledge on the right.

(3) 30 feet. Jam the strenuous crack on the left until it is possible to face left.

First ascent: June 1959. R. James and C.T. Jones.

C. TRYFAN & GLYDER FACH

GALLT-YR-OGOF

MARIA. 160 feet. Hard Very Severe.

This climb takes a line from the prominent dark cave on the Upper Cliff — a very natural line which is always wet. The originator thought it was similar in difficulty and dampness to the Black Cleft on Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu.

Start: At the foot of slabby rocks below the cave.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the slabby rocks to a stance on the left under the huge overhang.

(2) 50 feet. Go down for a few feet, then climb the right-hand wall on widely-spaced holds to a ledge. Traverse left back into the corner and up to an earthy stance (thread belay).

(3) 70 feet. Step left, and climb the greasy crack, facing right, to the top.

First ascent: 21st May, 1959. J. Brown, C. T. Jones.

TRYFAN EAST FACE

CRACKERJACK. 490 feet. Severe.

Start: Just left of the grassy groove about 15 feet left of Gashed Crag.

(1) 60 feet. Up the steep arête until either it is possible to traverse delicately right to layback the sharp overhanging crack, or one can go out on the left face on good holds.

(2) 40 feet. The thin crack ahead to join Gashed Crag route.

(3) 60 feet. Walk up and tackle the angular V-chimney ahead. Traverse round to the right from the top and join the grassy slope.

(4) 80 feet. At the top of the slope in the corner is a thin chimney. Climb this (belay on large block on second ledge). Usually wet.

(5) 50 feet. Continue up the narrowing chimney for 10 feet, then traverse right onto the face. (Belay above and to the left of huge overhanging block.)

(6) 40 feet. The obvious crack in the blocks ahead.

(7) 60 feet. The wall ahead and slightly left. Make an ascending traverse to the right into a crack.

(8) 50 feet. Walk 25 feet left and mount the shattered blocks. Go round to the right and up a corner.

(9) 50 feet. Start just left of the crack in the wall and go over the overhangs on small holds. Traverse right into the crack and go up to the top on good holds.

First ascent: 11th July, 1959. J. M. Outhwaite, K. Towne.

MILESTONE BUTTRESS

VAE. 180 feet. Severe (hard).

Start: At the foot of the obvious corner 10 feet right of the start of Canopy.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the crack by bridging and jamming to a stance. Strenuous.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse right along a ledge, then go up a steep crack. Scramble 10 feet to a tree.

(3) 30 feet. Climb nail-scratched rocks on the right of the grassy bay to a cave.

(4) 70 feet. Up over the overhang on the left of the cave to a ledge, and from here up the overhanging crack with a rowan tree in it (inserted chockstone used).

First ascent: 13th August, 1959. R. F. G. Wrottesley.

GLYDER FACH

The prominent corner to the right of Gibson's Chimney was climbed by J. Brown in August, 1959.

D. LLANBERIS NORTH

CLOGWYN-Y-GROCHAN

STRAPPIOMBO. 165 feet. Hard Very Severe.

(1) 50 feet. First pitch of Goat's Gully.

(2) 70 feet. Move left and climb the crack to the overhang, where it is possible to fix a sling. Hand-traverse on small holds until it is possible to pull out onto a good ledge. Go straight up to a stance on Spectre.

(3) 45 feet. Traverse right into the gully.

First ascent: June 1957. J. Smith, J. Brown.

SURPLOMB.

The disappearance of the rock flake just out of the chimney on pitch (3) will make the move here much harder.

DINAS-Y-GROMLECH

THE THING. 110 feet. Extremely Severe.

Details are now available. The route follows the slanting break left of Parchment Passage.

(1) 85 feet. Climb the slanting corner by the thin crack until it is possible to swing out right and mantelshelf to gain the obvious break. Continue up the obvious line to a stance on the right edge.

(2) 35 feet. Move left and climb direct to the top.

First ascent: J. Brown, D. Whillans.

E. LLANBERIS SOUTH

DINAS MOT (Western Wing)

A route by C. J. Mortlock and party on the sweep of slabs right of Boulder Buttress was first climbed by J. Brown, D. Whillans some years ago.

CRAIG-Y-RHAEADR

THE WALL. 360 feet. Hard Very Severe.

Start: Roughly halfway between Cwm Glas Pinnacle and Red Wall, below a big smooth wall.

(1) 150 feet. Go steeply up right on an obvious rising traverse, then back left along another traverse to the smooth wall itself. Climb this for 20 feet (crux), then trend steeply right to the left lip of an obvious overhang. Over this to a good ledge (piton belay).

(2) 150 feet. Traverse 30 feet left, then go straight up into a shallow V-chimney, to a good ledge.

(3) 60 feet. Climb the awkward corner from the ledge then go straight to the top.

First ascent: 31st August, 1959. J. Brown, A. C. Cain, C. T. Jones.

CHEQUERED WALL. 400 feet. Very Severe.

Goes more or less straight up the centre of the crag from the top of the enormous pedestal at its foot.

(1) 70 feet. There is an obvious groove rather on the left of the base of the pedestal. Get into this, awkwardly, and climb to a big grass ledge.

(2) 30 feet. Climb the obvious crack on the left of the flake in front.

(3) 120 feet. Go up the wet wall for 20 feet, then get into the obvious groove trending left. Go up this to an awkward corner, over this then 20 feet up and to the left to a stance (peg belay).

(4) 80 feet. Traverse left along the ledge for 15 feet, then go up into a steep shallow groove (crux) and on to a tiny ledge with a rickety block. There are some overhangs above. Climb delicately up to a tiny grass ledge at the right-hand end of the overhang (awkward thread belay).

(5) 100 feet. Go round the rib on the right and traverse for 30 feet to the foot of a white slab. Climb this to the top. OR

(4a) 60 feet. From the stance stride across and then go steeply up right to a grass ledge at the edge of the enormous overhangs.

(5a) 100 feet. Go left and then straight up the white slabs.

First ascent: 7th September, 1959. C. T. Jones and A. C. Cain.

F. CLOGWYN-DU'R-ARDDU

THE BOOMERANG. 180 feet. Hard Very Severe.

Lies on the most easterly of the buttresses lying below and to the left of the Far Eastern Gully. This buttress is characterised by several prominent

overhangs and is footed by a narrow greenish-coloured slab slanting to the left.

Start: At the foot of the slab.

(1) 90 feet. Climb the slab direct until it becomes possible to climb the groove on the right edge (piton used). Carry on up the corner, which presently steepens until one is forced left onto the slab, to finish on good holds. Large stance on the left of the buttress.

(2) 90 feet. Step round onto the front of the buttress and cross the overhang on good holds. Zigzag to take the easiest line thence to the top of the cliff, the last moves being quite hard.

First ascent: 24th May, 1959. J. Brown, D. Verity.

ROUTE LEFT OF WOUBITS. 235 feet. Very Severe.

(1) 120 feet. Pitch (1) of Woubits.

(2) 65 feet. From the stance traverse left and climb the crack. Surmount the overhang on the left. Step left to a stance.

(3) 50 feet. Climb the corner for 20 feet until it is possible to insert a thread belay. With the aid of this one can place a peg a few feet higher. After one more peg, climb direct to the top.

First ascent: September, 1959. J. Brown, M. Brown.

THE MOSTEST. 315 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

Details are now available.

Start: At the bottom of East Gully, at the point where it fades into vertical rock (belay on large spike).

(1) 70 feet. Climb the slab by twin cracks, then swing over to the left, and continue up to a grass rake. Traverse off to the left to the foot of a chimney groove.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the chimney to a large grassy stance.

(3) 150 feet. Go up the crack left of the stance to the top of a pinnacle. Step off right and climb the slab until it is possible to move right over the overhangs, continuing right into the foot of a steep groove. Climb the groove direct to the overhang. Go over this to the top (two running belays used for direct aid, with a piton to start the moves over the overhang and another at the edge). Climb direct to a stance.

(4) 45 feet. Climb the cracked slab to the top.

First ascent: 9th April, 1957. J. Brown (rest of party unable to follow).

DIRECT START. 200 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

Directly below the Far East Gully on a small ridge.

(1) 150 feet. Go up the little ridge then traverse right to a large sloping mantelshelf. Climb the crack above until the angle eases (100 feet). Traverse left and climb a slab to a grassy terrace.

(2) 50 feet. Scramble up the grass.

THE SHRIKE. 185 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

Takes the East Gully Wall direct.

(1) 65 feet. Pitch (1), East Gully Wall.

(2) 120 feet. Climb the thin groove above the stance to an overhang at 20 feet. Pass this with aid from a piton and a sling from a thread above the

point of the bulge (three slings in all were used for direct aid in the first 30 feet). A short difficult wall now leads to better holds on the left of the crack. The crack is regained about 10 feet higher and climbed past a bulging section (good spike runner) to a ledge on its immediate right. Traverse left to the edge of the wall and climb the square arête until a ledge on the wall may be reached about 12 feet below the top. Good holds arrive for the finish.

First ascent: 25th October, 1958. J. Brown, H. Smith, J. Smith.

EAST GULLY GROOVES—DIRECT START. 65 feet.

Climb the crack by good hand-jams. Climb the overhang by a layback. Just above this the crack is dirty and strenuous. A few feet higher the normal route is joined.

NOVEMBER. 400 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

Full details of this are:

Takes the crack throughout.

(1) 130 feet. As Vember pitch (1).

(2) 150 feet. Descend the grass rake of Vember to the foot of the crack proper. Climb the groove until it ends, and continue up the crack to the foot of a shallow chimney at 100 feet. About eight threaded slings and one piton may be used for direct aid on this section of 40 feet. Enter the chimney with difficulty and climb it and its easier continuation to a large grass ledge (thread belay at the back).

(3) 120 feet. Climb the corner crack, difficult at 40 feet, to a good ledge. Up the easier continuation break to the top.

First ascent: 14th June, 1957. J. Brown, J. Smith.

THE TROACH. 210 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

Takes the wall between Curving and Pedestal Cracks.

(1) 35 feet. As Curving Crack pitch (1).

(2) 120 feet. From the right-hand end of the stance swing onto the wall by means of a sling on a small spike. Move up to the right, then by thin cracks to a piton (in place), 60 feet. Continue in the same line to another piton (in place) below a small overhang. Step right and climb the wall above with difficulty, until better holds lead right to the foot of an obvious break. Up this to a poor stance (good belay).

(3) 55 feet. Climb the wall above the stance until ledges lead up to the left. Follow these to a junction with the final arête of Curving Crack 20 feet from the top.

First ascent: 4th October, 1959. H. I. Banner, R. G. Wilson.

GHECKO GROOVE. 220 feet. Extremely Severe.

The groove between Longland's and the White Slab.

(1) 60 feet. As Narrow Slab pitch (1).

(2) 90 feet. Directly above the stance is the start of the groove, but, as this appears to be difficult, climb up below its left wall until entry may be made using a sling on a good spike on the edge. Climb the narrow slab ahead (piton runner at 70 feet) to a stance on the White Slab.

(3) 70 feet. Climb the corner of the slab, past an ancient piton at 20 feet, to the left edge of the slab, which is climbed to the stance above Faith and Friction on Longland's.

First ascent: 17th May, 1959. H. I. Banner, R. Beesley.

COMA GROOVES. 330 feet. Very Severe.

On Far West Buttress. The first pitch is very strenuous; the other two pitches give excellent slab climbing, but offer no running belays whatsoever.

Start: As Deep Chimney Route.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the crack above to reach an awkward groove, climbed by a painful hand-jam in the crack. Above is another groove (piton runner used) climbed by a semi-layback and hand-jam. Escape from the groove above by a rising traverse on the right to a belay.

Make a grassy traverse for 25 feet to a spike belay.

(2) 130 feet. Climb the first weakness in the slab direct for 110 feet. Make a thin rising traverse to the right to a small flake belay on Deep Chimney Route.

(3) 130 feet. Traverse delicately left for 5 feet and climb the delicate rib above direct. From the top the summit of the crag is reached by easy grassy scrambling.

First ascent: 28th March, 1959. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas.

G. SNOWDON WEST

The Snowdon South and West guide-book is now being divided into three parts, Snowdon West covering the Cwellyn area, Cwn Silyn and the Rivals, Snowdon South covering Nantgwynant, the Glaslyn Valley and Tremadoc and Snowdon East covering the Moelwynion and the Lledr valley.

CASTELL CIDWM

The part of the cliff facing left rising out of the stream, left of the main face and largely overhanging, is now being exploited by J. Brown, R. Handley and others. It is hoped to give details next year.

H. SNOWDON SOUTH

(a) *Nantgwynant*

CLOGWYN-Y-WENALLT

TORERO. 140 feet. Hard Very Severe.

(1) 50 feet. Vaughan's Crack, the prominent corner between Carol and Oxo.

(2) 90 feet. From the foot of the easier groove swing right into a scoop. Ascend to the right (sling for aid) then slightly left and up the obvious corner to the top.

First ascent: May 1959. J. Brown, D. Whillans.

J. Brown has also climbed an overhang to the right of Shake.

(b) *Tremadoc*

CRAIG BWLCH-Y-MOCH

THE BASTION. 220 feet. Very Severe + A1.

To the right of the wall containing Shadrach is a projecting system of grooves and overhangs at its right-hand side.

(1) 40 feet. The chimney, to a good stance.

(2) 60 feet. Take the overhang (just behind the small tree) direct with the aid of a piton. Step out right into the groove and continue up to the large grass ledge beneath the overhang.

(3) 50 feet. From the right-hand end of the ledge go up with the aid of several pitons until it is possible to step left to a small stance in a prominent position (peg belay).

(4) 30 feet. Traverse left and go up the slabs onto the grass ledge below the final crack of Yggdrasil.

(5) 40 feet. As Yggdrasil last pitch.

First ascent: 1959. C. E. Davies, B. D. Wright.

NIFL-HEIM

The crucial oak branch on the third pitch has snapped off, causing a leader to fall. Further investigation shows that this pitch might not now be possible.

CRAIG PANT-IFAN

AGRIPPA. 170 feet. Very Severe.

Start: 20 feet to the left of Hogmanay Hangover.

(1) 80 feet. Work up through the sharp overhangs moving to the right. Thin and strenuous.

(2) 10 feet. Traverse right beneath the overhangs to a stance below a tree.

(3) 50 feet. Pull up onto a spike at the right-hand end of the ledge. Traverse about 20 feet delicately right; good footholds and loose flakes for handholds. Go straight up more easily to a stance below the final chimney.

(4) 30 feet. The chimney (an alternative finish to Hogmanay Hangover).

First ascent: 4th April, 1959. H. Smith, Miss S. Thomas.

ROCK'N'ROLL. 90 feet. Severe (Hard).

The climb lies on the second buttress to the right of Hound's Head Pinnacle and about 150-200 feet away from it. A good route, so here are full details:

Start: Descend a gully on the left-hand side of the buttress. Start beneath a wide vegetated chimney.

(1) 30 feet. Move diagonally right up a corner to a tree. Climb the tree and make a bold swing onto a small ledge.

(2) 40 feet. Step round left into a chimney and climb this to a small stance beneath a chimney with a large jammed block.

(3) 20 feet. The chimney.

First ascent: 8th December, 1956. C. Pryke, N. Knight.

OAK TREE WALL. 170 feet. Very Severe.

Originally called Anything Goes. The next buttress along from Rock'n' Roll Buttress and about 50 feet away from it.

Start: at the left-hand end of the buttress.

(1) 70 feet. Start at the foot of a small corner and climb 15 feet, then move right onto a sloping ledge and go right into another corner. Go up this for a

few feet and move left (two pitons) onto a gangway. Climb the crack at the end of the gangway and over perched blocks to an oak tree.

(2) 40 feet. Move from the ledge on the right-hand end and awkwardly to the left, straight up the corner.

(3) 60 feet. Up the wall on good holds then left and along the ridge to the top.

First ascent: 1st June, 1958. C. Pryke, A. Fisher, R. Yates.

I. SNOWDON EAST

(a) *Moelwynion*

Editor's note on nomenclature

R. Elfyn Hughes has walked round the various cliffs with the main grazier of the area, and found that the names given previously by local farmers had not in every case been attached to the correct cliffs. Unfortunately, therefore, the amended names given in last year's *Journal* will have to be altered again. It is hoped that some finality has now been reached.

The Pinacl of last year's *Journal* is correctly called Clogwyn-yr-Oen. The true Pinacl lies between this and the Wrysgan quarry incline, i.e., is probably the cliff previously called Craig Dau. The Clogwyn-y-Ci of last year's *Journal* is in fact called Craig Wrysgan; Clogwyn-y-Ci is slightly lower down but its exact location is uncertain.

The main (south) crag of Craig Nyth-y-Gigfran is called Craig Clipiau. The central crag is called Clogwyn Holland, after an early pioneer of slate-quarrying in this area; this name may in fact refer to the whole east face of these crags.

CRAIG WRYSGAN

ROMULUS and RIB CLIMB

Contrary to the statement in last year's *Journal* these two climbs are not absolutely identical. The main pitch in both is the rib left of Babylon, which is divided into three parallel riblets; the two routes take different riblets, so that Rib Climb is really a variation on Romulus.

(b) *Lledr Valley*

CARREG ALLTREM

LIGHTNING VISIT. 120 feet. Very Severe.

To the left of Penamnen Groove in the centre of the cliff is another obvious line.

The climb takes this, steep and interesting.

Start: At the foot of the wall left of the corner forming the first pitch of Penamnen Groove.

(1) 50 feet. Steeply up the wall until forced to step left, onto a ledge (large boulder belay).

(2) 70 feet. Climb up into a curved V-chimney. Bridge up past a rickety pinnacle and then climb a V-chimney to the top.

First ascent: June 1959. R. James, C. T. Jones.

II. CORNWALL

A. LAND'S END

THE WAVE of exploration which hit the Cornish cliffs in the early 1950's was concentrated on the Bosigran Face, Chair Ladder and Pordennack Point, most of the resultant climbs being recorded in the *Cornwall Guide Supplement*. Strange as it may seem, the steep cliffs which stretch between Land's End Point and Hotel Buttress had been overlooked or avoided. This was probably due to the impression they give the would-be climber, of vertical and friable rock, with no apparent access to the cliff base.

Until the beginning of 1959 the only recorded routes in the area were World's End, Cormorant Slab, Johnstone's Route and Zawn Face Route, all fine routes which have had approximately five or six ascents with the exception of World's End which has had two known ascents.

During the Spring and Summer of 1959 a concentrated attack by McDermott, Stevenson and Deacon was launched on the area, producing a further 18 routes of various grades. Once all the routes to the cliff base have been located and a reference made to the Tide-table (half ebb is the ideal period), the way lies open to some very interesting climbing on steep rock which offers magnificent situations, exposed and often over a pounding sea.

On the whole, the granite is sound, deteriorating near the top on some routes, but this is not hazardous and will eventually clean up with further ascents. As there is a scarcity of natural belays on some routes, pitons should be carried and used where they have not been left in place. The cliffs are cut by steep zawns, making it impossible to traverse the area at sea level, so access to the climbs has to be made at four different points:

- A. A gully, just S.E. of the east wall of the second zawn from Land's End Point.
- B. An abseil pitch down the steep wall facing the N. side of Dollar Rock.
- C. Dingo (Difficult). West of Longships Wall, the cliffs sweep down to probably the lowest section in the area. The route follows a series of ledges down to a platform at sea level.
- D. Escape Route (Difficult). A groove which leads down from the end of the promontory formed by Longships Wall. This can easily be recognised when looking westward from Hotel



6. World's End	X.S.	17. Longships Crack	H.V.S.
7. Zawn Face Route	V.S. (mild)	18. Rory	V. Diff.
8. Parasite	X.S. & A.3.	19. Escape Route	Diff.
9. Initiation	H.V.S.	20. Imagination	S.
10. Deception	S.	21. Longships Wall	A.3.
11. Piton Route	S.		
12. Death Rattle Gulch	X.S.	EASY ROUTES TO CLIFF BASE	
13. Loose Girth	V.S.	A. GULLY	
14. Fair Dinkum	S.	B. ABSEIL PITCH	
15. Dingo	Diff.	C. RORY. (DIFF.)	
16. Longships Chimney	V. Diff.	D. ESCAPE ROUTE. (DIFF.)	

Buttress — a steep, black quartzite-looking wall rising 100 feet from sea level.

From point 'A' the climber has access to the second zawn eastward of Land's End Point, at the back of which is a large cavern. Of the routes on the west wall of the zawn, Oliver Twist and Tide Race provide the more interesting climbing.

CORMORANT SLAB. 80 feet. Mild Severe.

First ascent: 1957. D. M. Holroyd, A. Blackshaw, J. H. Deacon.

Start: At sea level, from the rocks at the foot of the buttress which separates the first and second zawns east of Land's End Point.

(1) 40 feet. From the left hand side of the rocks climb to a small ledge and corner, then make a delicate step to the face on the right. Move up left to gain a stance and block belay.

(2) 40 feet. Move right from the belay and ascend cracks to the top of the slab. Belay on balanced boulders.

JOHNSTONE'S ROUTE. 90 feet. Very Difficult.

First ascent: 1957. J. H. Deacon and M. B. McDermott.

Start: In the second zawn east of Land's End Point. The route takes a line on the east side of the Promontory on which Cormorant Slab forms the seaward point. 30 feet to the left of Tide Race, which takes a line almost in the corner of the zawn, there is a black and red mottled wall.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the wall on good holds to a series of ledges which are ascended to a corner stance and belay.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the crack in the corner until it is possible to gain a ledge on the left-hand wall; from the extreme left of the ledge climb a narrow chimney to the top of the pinnacle.

OLIVER TWIST. 100 feet. Hard Very Severe (possibly harder).

First ascent: July 1959. J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson.

Start: A few feet left of Tide Race there is an obvious greasy chimney which is the first pitch of the climb.

(1) 60 feet. Enter the chimney with difficulty and climb this until forced out to the left (strenuous). It is then possible to step into a scoop which is climbed to an obvious stance.

(2) 40 feet. Climb the corner behind the stance and make a difficult long step to the ledge on the left. Continue up and slightly left to gain another small ledge. Ascend the wall above on small holds, avoiding the rotten crack on the right.

TIDE RACE. 90 feet. Severe.

First ascent: April 1959. J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson.

Start: Left of the cavern at the back of the second zawn there is a dirty-looking corner. The climb starts at the steep groove a few feet to the left.

(1) 50 feet. From the boulders climb a few feet to gain a small ledge at the start of the steep groove. Ascend the groove for about 10 feet, until it is possible to traverse left to another groove with loose flakes at the top. Climb the groove, then swing out right to gain a stance in the corner; piton belay in position.

(2) 40 feet. To the left and above the piton there is a short steep crack. Climb this and then move diagonally left towards overhangs. Step right, angling through the overhangs to the top.

WORLD'S END. 85 feet. Extremely Severe. A strenuous route; four pitons in place.

First ascent: 1957. J. H. Deacon, D. Holroyd, A. G. Day.

Start: On the opposite side of the zawn to Initiation there is a large platform which can be gained by a fairly easy climb down a gully to the west of the zawn (point 'A').

(1) 35 feet. Climb the steep wall for 10 feet then traverse left to clear the overhang (piton runner). Move round the corner and follow a line of cracks which runs diagonally across the wall to a prominent fault. Ascend directly up the fault to a small ledge and stance.

(2) 25 feet. Continue up the fault to a stance and belay.

ZAWN FACE ROUTE. 70 feet. Mild Very Severe.

First ascent: 1959. M. B. McDermott and J. H. Deacon.

Start: On the big platform, as for World's End.

(1) 60 feet. Crawl under the overhang formed by the steep start to World's End until it is just possible to stand on a small ledge on the side of the zawn. Climb the corner into a niche and angle seaward across the face, keeping a series of overhangs on the right until a good stance and belay are gained.

(2) 20 feet. Traverse left from the belay a few feet and then climb a wide crack to finish.

POINT "B" (Abseil pitch). This gives access to the third zawn east of Land's End and to the climbs on the east wall. (N.B.—Once one is committed, a climb of Severe standard is necessary to regain the cliff top).

INITIATION. 90 feet. Hard Very Severe.

First ascent: March 1959. M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon.

Start: From a triangular-shaped ledge on the edge of the zawn, the climb takes the line of a steep groove, with a steep wall on its right on which there is a prominent overhanging nose.

(1) 60 feet. From the triangular ledge, traverse a few feet left over the sea on small holds and pull up to another ledge. This is the foot of the groove. A long step to the right leads to a series of step-like ledges, above which there is a large sloping ledge. Ascend these and pull up to large ledge (piton runner in place).

From the sloping ledge, traverse left with difficulty to gain the groove, which is climbed to a stance on the left wall.

(2) 30 feet. Continue up the groove and make a difficult exit at the top.

DECEPTION. 100 feet. Severe.

First ascent: March 1959. M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon.

Start: 20 feet right of Initiation there is another groove formed by a semi-detached pillar.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the obvious groove to a ledge on the right-hand wall, piton belay.

(2) 60 feet. Leave the groove which becomes friable, traverse right along the ledge and around the corner to a chimney which is climbed to the top of the pillar.

Continue up the corner a few feet, then angle right passing below an overhanging nose. Continue up a slab past some loose blocks to the top.

FAIR DINKUM. 45 feet. Mild Severe.

First ascent: 1959. J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott.

Start: East of Dollar Rock there is a large sloping sea-washed platform with, at its eastern edge, a small zawn. This can be gained by climbing down Dingo (Diff.).

Start at sea level, from a prominent corner on the edge of the zawn.

(1) 25 feet. Climb the crack in the corner, by jamming, to a stance and belay.

(2) 20 feet. From the ledge the route takes the rather damp corner to a mantelshelf, then up easily to a belay.

LONGSHIPS CHIMNEY. 45 feet. Very Difficult.

First ascent: 1959. J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott.

Start: A few yards east of Dingo.

(1) 45 feet. This prominent chimney can be climbed in one lead, or split at a stance on the outside edge half-way up.

LONGSHIPS CRACK. 70 feet. Very Severe (Hard).

First ascent: 1959. J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott.

Start: 20 feet to the right of Longships Chimney a prominent oblique crack, leading up to an overhang, starts the route.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the crack by jamming the left foot and thrutching up with the right foot dangling, to gain the niche below the overhang. Climb the overhang by using the right shoulder in the crack (a peg runner may be used to protect this move) and pull up to a sloping ledge on the right. Stance.

(2) 20 feet. From the ledge the climb continues up the obvious fault to the cliff top.

LONGSHIPS WALL. 100 feet. A.3.

First ascent: 1959. J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott.

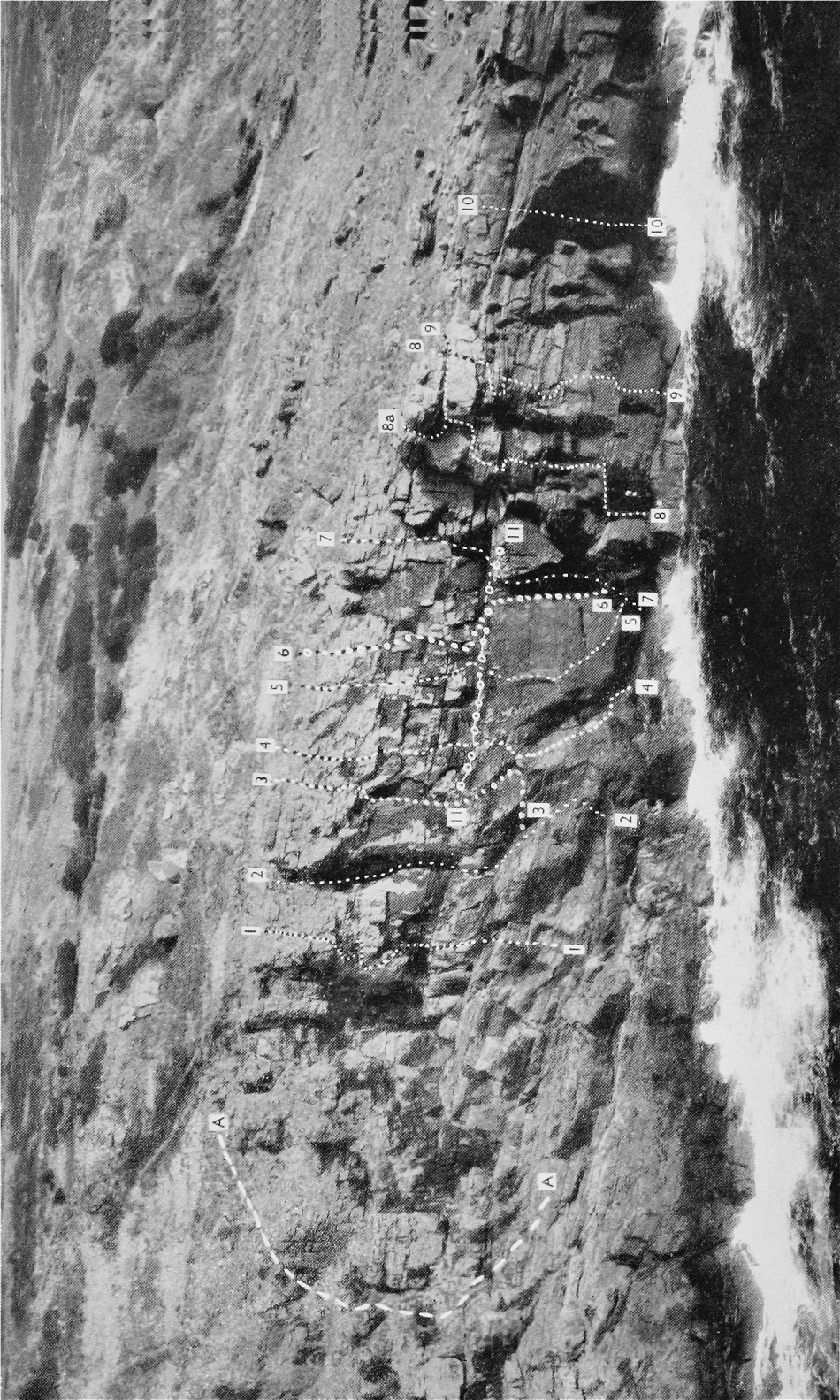
This is a black quartzite-looking wall and can easily be recognised when looking westward from Hotel Buttress. The base can be reached by an abseil down the seaward end of the promontory, or by climbing down Escape Route. The route is purely artificial except for the last six feet and is steep and strenuous. About 16 pitons required.

(1) 100 feet. Take the line offered by the main fault in the centre of the wall.

As this area is difficult to describe and written descriptions hard to follow, it is hoped that detailed photographs of Land's End will be displayed at the Count House by April. One of these marked photographs is reproduced here, to accompany these notes, also one of Sennen and one of Tater Du.

The routes listed below follow from Land's End Point to Hotel Buttress.

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------|---|
| 1. Hors d'oeuvre | V.S. | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| 2. Cormorant Slab | S. | A. Blackshaw, J. H. Deacon. |
| 3. Johnstone's Route | H.V. | J. H. Deacon, D. Holroyd. |
| | Diff. | |
| 4. Oliver Twist | H.V.S. | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| 5. Tide Race | S. | J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott. |
| 6. World's End | X.S. | J. H. Deacon, A. G. Day,
D. Holroyd. |



1. Knight's Pillar			
2. Gully Route			
3. Commando Special			
4. Martell Slab			
5. Lamorna Wall			
6. The Veil			
	V.S.	Eric's Route	V. Diff. (Hard)
	Mild S.	8. Bus Route	V. Diff. & a H.V.S.
	Hard S.	9. Sentry Box Climb	S.
	V.S.	10. Dorna	S.
	V.S. & A.3	11. Western National	Mod. Diff.
	H.V.S.	A. Easy Route down.	

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| 7. Zawn Face Route | V.S. | D. Holroyd, J. H. Deacon. |
| | (Mild) | |
| 8. Parasite | X.S. & | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| | A.3. | |
| 9. Initiation | H.V.S. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 10. Deception | S. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 11. Piton Route | S. | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| 12. Death Rattle Gulch | X.S. | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| 13. Loose Girth | V.S. | J. H. Deacon, V. N. Stevenson. |
| 14. Fair Dinkum | S. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 15. Dingo | Diff. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 16. Longships Chimney | V.D. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 17. Longships Crack | H.V.S. | J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott. |
| 18. Rory | V.Diff. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 19. Escape Route | Diff. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 20. Imagination | S. | M. B. McDermott, J. H. Deacon. |
| 21. Longships Wall | A.3. | J. H. Deacon, M. B. McDermott. |

B. BOSIGRAN

On the Bosigran Face, to the right of Ledge Climb, the Bivens' team have put up Andrew, an interesting V. Diff. Another addition was the climbing of Beaker Route direct. Instead of traversing left the route continues up the crack to the left of the overlap and is reported to be of Hard V.S. standard.

Broadstairs, Hard V.S., with an artificial section on the wall to the right of the crux of Zig-Zag, was climbed by S. R. Jarvis and J. H. Deacon. This route takes an almost direct line between Zig-Zag and Autumn Flakes starting from sea level.

C. SENNEN

Green Beret, Hard V.S., a girdle of Pedn-men-du (Sennen), starting from the top of Demo Route and traversing the cliff at mid height, has been completed by McDermott and Deacon.

D. LAMORNA

At Lamorna (Tater Du), the Cliff Assault Wing, Royal Marines, have worked out eleven definite routes and many interesting variations.

The rock is a faulted mass of Hornblende Schist with granite cliffs on either side. It is mostly sound but all the ledges and holds slope downwards, so the climbs have been graded for Vibrams. Owing to the nature of the rock there are very few natural belays, so pitons have been left in place where necessary.

The more attractive routes on this face are Commando Special (Hard Severe), Martell Slab (V.S.), Lamorna Wall (A.3 & V.S.), and The Veil (Hard V.S.).

Below are the routes in order from left to right:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| 1. Knight's Pillar | ... | ... | V.S. |
| 2. Gully Route | ... | ... | S. |
| 3. Commando Special | ... | ... | Hard S. |
| 4. Martell Slab | ... | ... | V.S. |
| 5. Lamorna Wall | ... | ... | V.S. & A.3. |
| 6. The Veil | ... | ... | Hard V.S. |
| 7. Eric's Route | ... | ... | V. Diff. |
| 8. Bus Route | ... | ... | V. Diff. |
| 9. Sentry Box Climb | ... | ... | S. |
| 10. Dorna | ... | ... | S. |

COMMANDO SPECIAL. 100 feet. Hard Severe.

First ascent: Cliff Assault Wing.

Start: Below Gully Route and to the left of the main face, there is a small pool at the lower end of the sloping ledges.

(1) 45 feet. From the Pool, climb the short wall on the right to gain an easy-angled slab which sweeps up towards the Gully Route. Climb this to a piton on the right-hand wall and pull out right to the first stance of Martell Slab.

(2) 20 feet. Move out diagonally left and up to a small stance.

(3) 35 feet. Ascend the wall above and make an exit at the right-hand corner of the overhang.

MARTELL SLAB. 100 feet. Severe.

First ascent: Cliff Assault Wing.

Start: Below the highest part of the main face there is a flat platform just above sea-level. In the right-hand corner there is a small pool.

(1) 45 feet. From the left-hand corner of the platform climb the steep slab to the left. After an awkward start and a long step to the left climb to a piton runner above. Continue up the slab to a piton belay.

(2) 20 feet. From the stance move up and slightly right to a chimney and belay.

(3) 35 feet. Climb the chimney (runner) and then move slightly right and then left to ascend the top overhang.

LAMORNA WALL. 105 feet. A.3 and Very Severe.

First ascent: 1959. M. B. McDermott and J. H. Deacon.

Start: On the ledge by the chimney in the corner to the right of Martell Slab.

(1) 45 feet. Ascend the wall diagonally left over the pool until it is possible to start pegging. Eight pitons are required to get clear of the overhang where the climber gets some respite on a small ledge. Continue straight up the easier-angled wall for 15 feet to a stance.

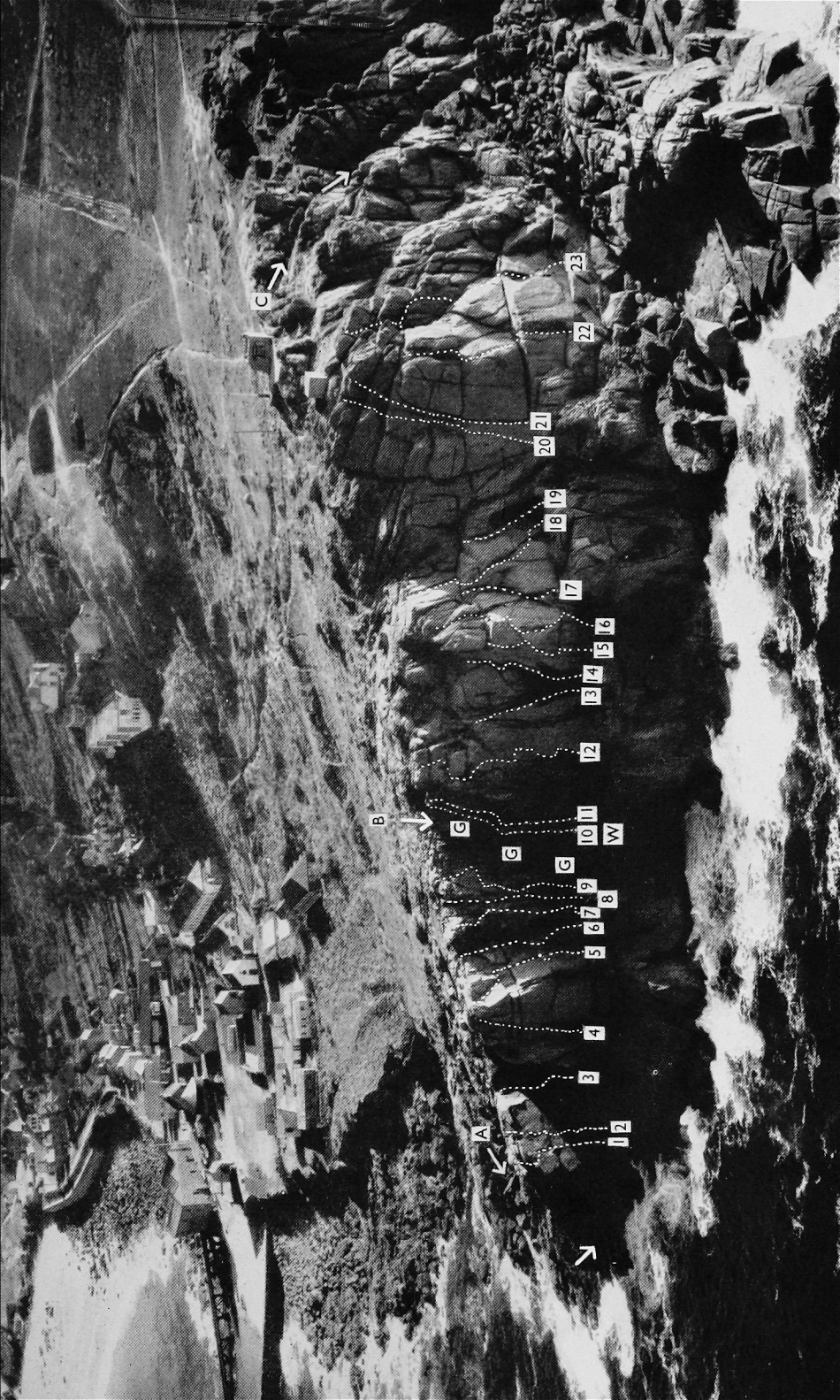
(2) 15 feet. Climb the wall directly above the stance to a piton belay at the foot of a chimney.

(3) 45 feet. From the piton move left and ascend the wall to a ledge, then continue up a steep lichen covered face to the finish.

J. H. DEACON

PEDN-MEN-DU CLIFF (SENNEN)

Royal Naval Photograph



A, B, C. Easy Approaches

1. Delilah	A.2	14. Overhanging Corner	V.S.
2. Zig Zag	V.S.	15. Double Overhang	S.
3. Norge Corner	S.	16. Dexter Route	S.
4. Genges Groove	V.S.	17. Sinners Route	Diff.
5. Demo Route	S.	18. Church Door	Hard V. Diff.
6. Corner Climb	Diff.	19. Altar Route	V.S.
7. Civvie Route	V. Diff.	20. Monday Face	Hard V. Diff.
8. Main Groove	V. Diff.	21. Vertical Crack	S.
9. Letter Box	V. Diff.	22. Dolphin Cracks	Mild V.S.
10. Main Wall (1)	Diff.	23. Hayloft	S.
11. Main Wall (2)	Diff.	G. Griptight Gully	Mod.
12. Banana Flake	V. Diff.	W. Exit of Water Spout Chimney	S.
13. Staircase	Diff.	Slippery Chute	V.S. $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in recess to} \\ \text{the right of} \end{array} \right.$
		Slippery Slab	V.S. $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{in recess to} \\ \text{the right of} \end{array} \right.$
			<i>Norge Corner</i>

III. IRELAND

EDITOR'S NOTE—I am indebted to S. Rothery (I.M.C.) for the following valuable report on Irish climbing in 1959, and to B. MacCall (I.M.C.) for some additional information. Last year I visited Connemara to sample the splendid climbing at Gleninagh, in the Twelve Bens, which deserves more attention from Climbers' Club parties. Rothery's remarks about midges have my emphatic corroboration, but this disadvantage is amply compensated for by the magnificent hospitality of the local inhabitants.

The magnificent summer saw tremendous activity on most of the popular crags and a definite increase in the number of new rock climbers. The long expected "invasion" of British climbers eager for new routes has still not begun, and only a handful of visitors appeared but as usual left their mark in a number of excellent climbs. At Glendalough a surprising number of new climbs were found and ferocious activity on the cliffs saw all the old routes repeated. Spillikin Ridge had four ascents and Scimitar was climbed almost weekly for a while. The new route Cornish Rhapsody, which is one of the hardest climbs in Wicklow, was repeated by an Irish party, who fully confirmed the grading. The magnificent route Spearhead at Luggala was also repeated. The Poisoned Glen in Donegal continues to yield new climbs of a high standard and attracts some of the best British parties. The new climbs of 1959 included:

GLENDALOUGH

On Camaderry, visitors, J. H. Deacon (C.C.) and V. N. Stevenson did a magnificent 360-foot Hard V.S. (maybe X.S.) on the upper cliffs — *Cornish Rhapsody*. This is at least as hard as Spillikin Ridge and is a most exacting balance climb. Betty Healy, Frank Winder and Sean Rothery did a variation to Little Eiger — *Kinderstoiser*, Severe. The same party did *Uisge Beatha* (Water of Life), a 200-foot Severe beside the waterfall — definitely a dry weather route !

LUGGALA

In the early summer the Main Face was opened up at last by Betty Healy and Frank Winder, who made the first complete traverse at the half-way level. This was followed later in the summer by *Spearhead*, 250-foot, V.S., by J. H. Deacon (C.C.), V. N. Stevenson and Frank Winder. This follows a beautiful diagonal line up to

the topmost roof on the face and has a tricky and strenuous exit to the upper slabs. Several attempts were made at the main face direct but all proved to be artificial and the supply of cracks and pegs soon ran out.

THE COMERAGHS

Only one new climb is reported, This was made by Emmet Goulding and Barry O'Flynn on Ariel Buttress in Coomshingaun — a 200-foot Severe.

KERRY

The Trinity College Climbing Club reports a number of new climbs in the Brandon area. No details are available of these as yet and considerable work needs to be done to sort out and list the many routes of dozens of scattered crags and sea cliffs in the Kingdom.

CONNEMARA

This area was visited by a number of British and Irish parties and many of the fine 1000-foot routes were climbed. No new climbs were recorded in 1959 but it should be noted that Connemara, for last summer at least, is rapidly acquiring a reputation for midges equal to that of Skye! 1958 produced a fine new climb, *Mona Lisa*, 1,100 feet, V.S. on the face of Ben Corr. This was made by Peter Kenny (C.C.), Noel Brown, E. Bottomley and Miss M. Monahan in an effort to find and repeat Great Central.

DONEGAL

Poisoned Glen. After a quiet and very wet 1958, which only produced one worthwhile climb, Dubliners, a 700-foot Hard Severe up the middle of the Castle by Betty Healy, Frank Winder and Brian MacCall, 1959 produced better things. At Easter, Sean Rothery and Frank Winder did three new climbs. *Rafiki*, Severe, 200 feet, followed the right-hand edge of the big gully at the top of the Castle. The other two climbs, *Cobra Cracks* and *Rattlesnake Rib*, were on the new small buttress opposite the great West Buttress. This was followed by a visit from the G.O.M. of the Poisoned Glen, H. Drasdo, with G. J. Sutton (C.C.), E. D. G. Langmuir (C.C.) and A. J. Maxfield (C.C.). Their best climb seems to be *Route Major* on Bearnas Buttress, starting some way to the right of and below Slanting Grooves. "We had the rope on for 1,000 feet, the first half was mainly on grass but with one pitch mainly on pegs

and some fine situations higher up". Also by the same party were two smaller climbs, the principal one on Craignabreac, starting between Tio Pepe and Ectomorph and finishing with them. Later in the summer a Staffordshire Mountaineering club party did a new Hard Severe on a small cliff at the top of the glen.

DONEGAL

Lough Barra. At Easter one new climb was added to the dozen existing climbs on these wonderfully textured, south facing cliffs. This was *Goats Alley*, 410 feet, Hard Severe, by Sam Payne and Liam Smith. The climb is well to the right of the Delta face on the main cliff. At least two strenuous attempts were made by Paddy O'Leary and Bob Lawlor to gain the Delta face directly as an alternative to the ramp start. In Glen Veagh a new climb is recorded by H. Drasdo and E. D. G. Langmuir (C.C.).

MOURNE MOUNTAINS

A number of new routes are reported by Irish and English parties on the scattered granite cliffs in this area, but no information has so far leaked out from the log book at the climbing hut near Annalong.

SEAN ROTHERY.

EDITORIAL

The first task of the new Editor is to thank his predecessor for the help given to him on taking over and for the splendid example set him in the numbers of the Journal for the last five years. Numerous members, too, have given encouragement and help, particularly those who produced contributions unsolicited. In particular C. T. Jones must be thanked for taking over the tedious job of compiling *New Climbs and Notes*.

In the present number will be found three contributions from persons who are not members of the Club. If apology be needed, some explanation will be found appended to those by Sean Rothery and G. H. Townend. The third such contributor, the late Mrs. Daniell, will be known at least by reputation to many members; she was a very active climber in North Wales four or five decades ago, and took part in pioneering new routes, particularly in Cwm Idwal, with such climbers as I. A. Richards and our member the late R. B. Henderson. The poem which is printed in this number is typical of her mountain verse. It was in the possession of Henderson after her death; we are grateful to H. R. C. Carr for bringing it to our attention and to Henderson's nephew John Henderson and to our former Hon. Secretary M. S. Gotch (Henderson's literary executor) for permission to print it.

Considerable changes have taken place in the Club's officers since last year. Alan Hargreaves, as our new President, follows in the footsteps of Slingsby and Haskett-Smith in having filled the Presidential chair in both the Climbers' Club and the Fell and Rock Club. The new Vice-Presidents are Maurice Guinness and Admiral Lawder; Guinness returns to a part in the management of Club affairs after an absence of thirty years. Other new officers are Berrill as Treasurer and McNaught-Davis as Librarian. J. P. Nelson has taken over from Beard as Custodian of the R. W. Lloyd Hut; Beard's services to the Club not only as Custodian for many years but also in the planning and building of the hut, and in his advice and help with the other Welsh huts, have been commemorated by the presentation to him of a pair of inscribed tankards. Kretschmer has been appointed to the new post of Booking Secretary for Welsh huts, an experiment which seems to have been successful.

The year has again seen heavy losses among members of the Club, all particularly severe to us as they concerned some of our most distinguished members. A. W. Andrews took an active part in the affairs of the Club throughout a membership of fifty-eight years, and filled many offices; he

was an Honorary Member. To most he will be remembered for his pioneering work on Lliwedd and in Cornwall, and for his invention of climbing in rubbers. An Editor may perhaps be pardoned for recalling that Andrews produced more numbers of the Journal than any other Editor throughout the Club's history. The inexplicable tragedy on Cnicht when Brian McKenna died lost us a recent Vice-President and one of our most-loved elder members, whose work is largely responsible for the present huts in the Llanberis valley. Gerard Cruickshank was not so widely known but was a man of exceptional qualities.

It must be a matter for concern that all the four younger members who have died, Fraser, M. J. Harris, Mayo and Jeremy Smith, were killed in the mountains. All of them, too, were in the higher ranks of active British climbers.

We have recently learnt of the deaths of A. D. Carroll-Leahy and A. W. Southall (who died in 1957). Southall was an Original Member and latterly an Honorary Member; his death leaves only two surviving Original Members.

In the Himalayas 1959 was not a particularly successful year, and was marred by at least eleven deaths. Still uppermost in our minds is the tragic outcome of the Ama Dablam expedition, after a brilliant beginning. We must also mourn the death of Dr. Keith Warburton of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club (who was well-known to many members) with two other Englishmen and two Germans on the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club expedition to the Batura Mustagh. The Army expedition to the Karakoram led by Streather, was however successful and climbed a number of peaks. G. H. Francis and Clark climbed in the Andes.

The Alpine season of 1959 was the best for some years, the chief event being, at last, the ascent of the Walker Spur of the Grands Jorasses by three British parties. One of these parties included G. J. Streetly. From Trinidad Streetly has promised to send some notes on this expedition; publication of this number of the Journal has been delayed awaiting these notes. However, they have still not arrived and very belatedly the Journal must now be sent to Press.

Elsewhere in the Alps, Bonington had a very successful season in the Dolomites, his climbs including the North Face Direct of the Cima Grande (described in this Journal), the North Face of the Cima Ovest and the Egger route on the Cima Piccola. Roscoe, with J. Brown, while filming in the Dolomites climbed the Spigolo Giallo on the Cima Piccola and most of the old Dimai route on the North Face of the Cima Grande. Mortlock, in a remarkable first season in the Alps climbing with Hutchinson, C. W. F. Noyce and others, did the East Face of the Grand Capucin, the Furggen ridge direct on the Matterhorn, the Welzenbach route on the North Face of the Dent d'Heréns, and the Lagarde-Devies route on the East Face of the Signalkuppe.

The fine summer in Wales produced intensive climbing of the harder routes; full reports on this, and on events in Cornwall and Ireland, will be found in *New Climbs and Notes*.

In fields outside climbing members have received a number of honours, chief among them being the appointment of A. E. Marples as Minister of Transport and the award of a Nobel Prize to Noel-Baker. Busk (K.C.M.G.) and Strath (K.C.B.) have been knighted, Peaker has received the C.B.E. and Winthrop Young the O.B.E.

The British Standards Institution, as a result of work by the B.M.C., the A.S.C.C., manufacturers and others, has issued B.S. 3104 on nylon mountaineering ropes. This recommends only the size now described as No. 4 ("extra full weight") for climbing. It is perhaps not fully apparent from the standard and from circulars issued by the various organisations that this recommendation applies only when a single rope is used. It is understood that the B.M.C. hope in the near future to investigate the use of double ropes for climbing, as is practised by so many parties nowadays on the harder climbs.

The Rucksack Club has recently issued "Climbing Songs", by John Hirst. Copies, price 12/6, are obtainable from C. R. Upton, 31 Highfield Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire; proceeds will be devoted to a most worthy cause, the improvement of the sanitary arrangements at Beudy Mawr.

It remains to thank all those who have helped with this number of the Journal: our contributors, particularly C. Fishwick for advice on artistic matters as well as contributions; J. N. Slee-Smith for advice on lay-out, and typographical questions as well as his work on the circulation; and J. Cole for an energetic performance in cajoling advertisers. And not least the printers, the Cloister Press Ltd., for their patience with a new Editor.

IN MEMORIAM

ARTHUR WESTLAKE ANDREWS

Arthur Westlake Andrews, who died at Zennor on November 22nd last, was an outstanding Climbers' Clubman, having served at various times as Editor, Vice-President, President, Hut Custodian and Guidebook Writer. He was born at Hastings on December 12th, 1868 and was thus a mere 12 months younger than Owen Glynne Jones. His childhood was spent at Teffont Evias in Wiltshire, where his father was rector. Here he developed his future climbing abilities by climbing trees and by playing tennis.

Tennis became, in fact, one of his life's interests. Between 1887 and 1914 he frequently played at Wimbledon, once reaching the semi-final of the men's singles. After 1923 he represented Cornwall on several occasions; in later years he figured prominently in veteran's tournaments particularly at Eastbourne and in the local tennis circles at St. Ives. I am told that he played with a large racquet like a fishing net, with which he could make very foxy drop shots.

He was a scholar of Charterhouse and Senior Exhibitioner of Magdalen College, Oxford. Though he had read *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* in his youth, his first contact with the world of mountaineering came at the University where he had rooms below that redoubtable alpinist the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge. They became friends and young Andrews enjoyed access to the finest mountaineering library in the country. In his final year he was picked for the University tennis team but was unable to play, but he did represent Oxford at the high jump (reaching 5 ft. 8 in.) and the cross-country. Afterwards he went to Germany to learn the language, helped to introduce association football there and finally won a gold medal in the mile in the European championships in Berlin in 1893.

He thought at first of taking up law but settled eventually for geography, his interest inspired by his own travels and the reading

of travel books. He wrote text books and taught the subject at various public schools for the next two decades.

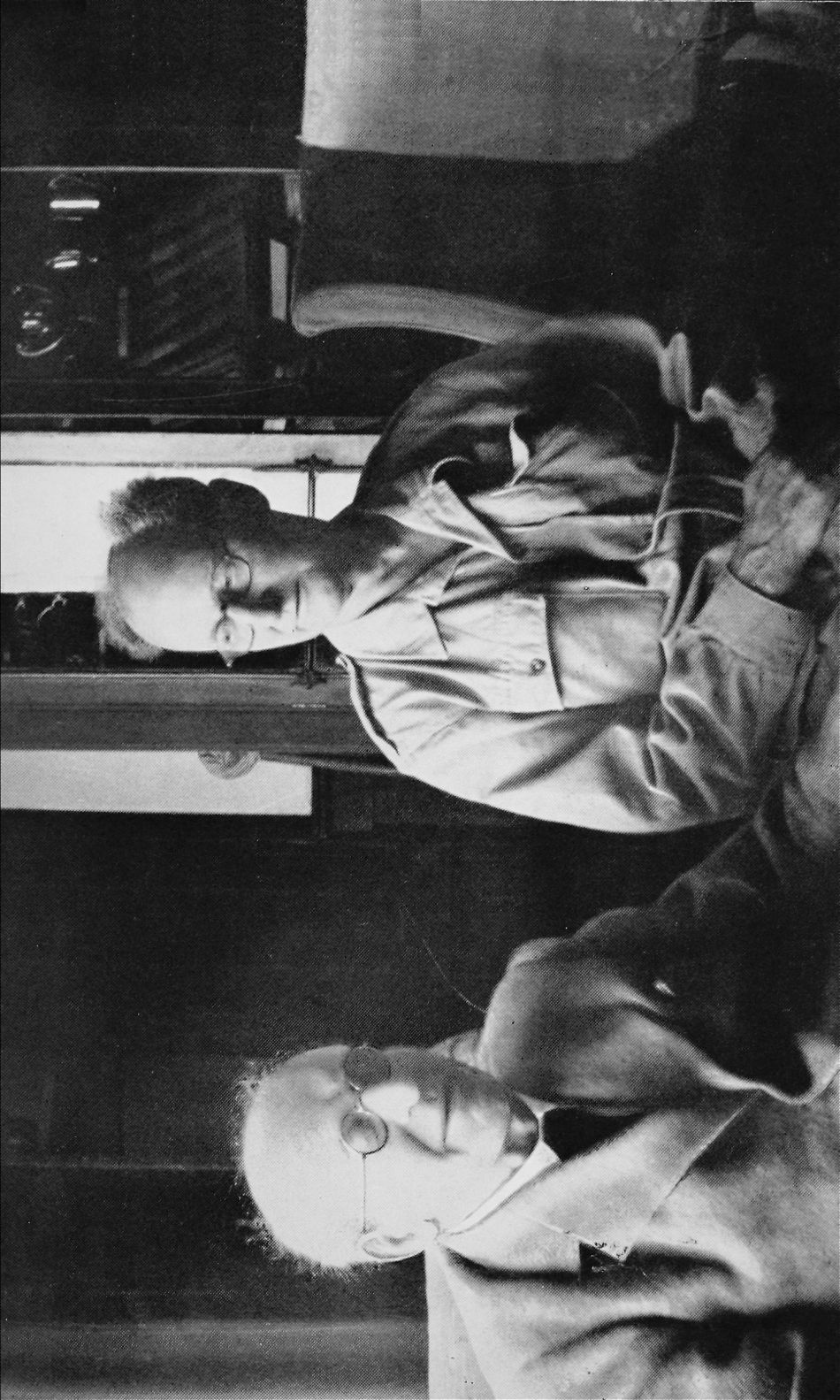
Andrews made his first visit to North Wales in 1890 at a time when there was still only a handful of climbs on the local crags. After cycling up from Broadway in two days he stayed with the Owens at Pen y Gwryd and scrambled on Lliwedd, Tryfan and the Glyders. He did not go again for more than ten years.

His mountaineering career had begun the year before when Alexander Burgener led him up the Zinal Rothorn. Thereafter he did several seasons with O. K. Williamson, led by J. B. Lochmatter or Jean Maître, followed by other seasons guideless with various companions. An outstanding expedition was a traverse of the Meije in 1906 with J. B. Farmer.

In Norway in 1891 he made the first ascent of the East Riingstind in the Horunger. Subsequently visits to Norway were interspersed with Alpine seasons. He joined the Alpine Club in 1899 and this Club in 1901.

When he next went to Wales in 1901 he found the exploration of the crags in full swing and he soon fell in with J. M. A. Thomson, the leading climber of the day. Andrews came to know Lliwedd particularly well, mostly by solitary wanderings up, down and across. In those days of heavily nailed boots he was one of the first to climb in plimsolls on mountain rocks. This was a most important step forward in British climbing development and one for which he must have at least part, if not all, the credit. His collaboration with Thomson produced the first Welsh climbers' guidebook — *The Climbs on Lliwedd* — published by this Club in 1909. Thomson always gets the credit for the startling literary style of this work, but Andrews must certainly have influenced it.

In spite of his long association with climbing in North Wales and abroad, we of the present period will remember him best for his very great contributions to climbing on the Cornish sea cliffs. His uncle, John Westlake, bought a house at Zennor in 1873 and the very young Andrews soon began to go there for holidays. He does not seem to have realized the rock climbing possibilities until about 1902, when he began to record actual climbing routes at Bosigran, Wicca and so on. One of his early ambitions was 'to make a complete traverse of the shore of the British Isles between high and low tide marks' and this he began along the north coast of West Penwith in the



same year. Thus originated the famous traverses. In 1905 he described his discoveries in this Journal.

He fought in France in the 1914-18 War, returning in 1922 to live at Tregerthen at Zennor, where all climbers visiting West Penwith have since been made so wonderfully welcome. Few new climbs were made however in these years between the Wars. The 1934 Journal printed the first pictures of the south coast, the 1937 and 1938 Journals contained guidebook accounts of all the north coast climbs. Then in 1938 he persuaded the Club to take over Bosigran Count House as a hut. Climbers came in increasing numbers to see what it was all about and Andrews was there to welcome them all. For years he had made all the routes, now he began to provide the continuity of the story for the coming generations.

My own first visit to Bosigran took place at Easter, 1945. Andrews, then 77, came down, as he did for everyone, to see that everything was satisfactory in the hut and to discover whether we were good enough to tackle any of his pet problems. We were not, but we were grateful for his solicitude. When solitary climbers went to Bosigran he took them out, manipulating the rope from above on some fearful problem climb or tramping the cliff tops to point out the local amenities — climbs, birds or flowers. He foresaw, as many of us did not, the network of routes that was to come one day on Bosigran Face and he alone championed the possibilities of the wall of the Great Zawn, which has since fallen to the experts.

In 1948 I had the very great privilege of collaborating with him in the Club's Cornwall guidebook. With nearly fifty years difference in age we were a strangely assorted team and it is a great tribute to Andrews that a joint effort with someone so much younger came to a successful conclusion. In fact, the only major error in the book was entirely my responsibility.

In the course of this work, and in his 80th year, he directed operations while I descended the face of Chair Ladder on a top rope manipulated by my wife. Later we went out in a boat from Porthgarra (with a boatman aged 75) to photograph this crag from the sea. We were terrified when Andrews stood up in the bows, rocking as he peered into the viewfinder of his ancient camera, but there were no accidents and we got some good pictures. The same year he took us to the top of Zennor Tor and all over the cliff tops by Boswednack. At this time his agility was amazing and he still came up to London each year for the Club Dinner.

While in the last few years he had given up this sort of thing, he would still welcome any climbing party at Tregarthen with a cream tea and all the latest climbing news. This visit became a regular item on every holiday programme and it was a pleasure that many will sorely miss in the years to come.

During the Second World War, while, as a special constable, he waited 'for unexploded bombs that did not go off and parachutists that did not drop', he began to write poetry. The first volume of his verse, published locally in 1957, was enthusiastically received throughout the mountaineering world and by the local press and public. The pleasure that this gave to us sharpened our regret that he wrote so little about mountaineering in his climbing lifetime. He had, as he told us,

"the seaman's vision given to the wise

Who hold the far horizon in their eyes."

It is a pity that this could not have illumed the whole course of home climbing history for us.

EDWARD C. PYATT

BRIAN McKENNA

Brian joined the Club in 1929, but it was not till March of the next year that he ventured to stay in Helyg. He feared a mass of Rules and Regulations with a Custodian who would order him about. In his army life in both wars he hated the restrictions and the routine, but he found the kind of life we enjoyed at Helyg what he liked and soon he became a regular visitor.

During the ten years prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 there was a strong section of the Club from the Liverpool district, and it was unusual not to find half a dozen of them in Helyg at week-ends. These were, of course, the years when rock-climbing in North Wales was developing so rapidly, led by Colin Kirkus and Menlove Edwards. Brian very quickly made many friends, his unfailing good humour being quite infectious, and he was invariably the leader in any kind of "rag". The only occasion when I saw the least sign of temper was when he and Menlove playfully began a wrestling match in the bedroom and each was astonished to find the other equally strong. It seemed, for a few minutes, that things might become serious, and I had to calm them down. Needless to say, both of them were bitterly ashamed of themselves.

B. McKENNA.
E. S. Chantrell





Brian's strength was very evident in his climbing. Without professing to be a "tiger", he was a very sound leader on climbs of V.Diff. standard and always ready to help and encourage beginners or those in difficulty. Much as he loved the Welsh mountains, he always longed for the Cuillin of Skye, to which for some years he and I organized a party. Such wild country particularly appealed to him, though he was a true countryman and happy to be on lesser hills, particularly when well-wooded. Trees he loved, and it was a matter of regret that he had never gone in for forestry. Instead, he earned his living as a landscape gardener, his speciality being the making of rock-gardens and growing the plants for them. At his home in Anglesey he has left a perfect example of his art, the object of constant admiration of the summer visitors. In many other parts of the country could be found similar examples, in themselves fitting memorials to a man who put so much of himself into them. He greatly enriched the natural beauty of Helyg with the trees and shrubs he planted, and which never ceased to be his constant care.

His work for the Club was not confined to Helyg and it is not generally known that we owe to him the finding of Cwm Glas Mawr and the original Ynys Ettws. From 1948 to 1951, moreover, he undertook the Custodianship of Cwm Glas cottage, then a very primitive abode indeed.

In 1954 the Club elected him a Vice-President, an honour which was richly deserved.

Why Brian should lose his life as he did will always remain a mystery to his friends, who knew him as being extremely careful and sure footed on dangerous slopes, and it can only be thought that he suffered some form of black-out. It is surely ironical that, at the time he was considering retirement to live in his favourite district of Nantmor, it was here that he should meet his end.

E. S. CHANTRELL

GEORGE FRASER

"I'LL BURN HIM OFF AT THE FINISH," I thought to myself as we pounded our way through the outskirts of Cambridge, our running shoes slapping in unison on the wet shiny road. It was not to be. Those sinewy mud-spattered legs gradually forged ahead and left me disconsolate, plodding behind. We were rivals, George and I, for the

last place in the Varsity cross country team. A unique introduction, perhaps, to a companion of many a climb and one I will not easily forget.

How can one write an obituary to a dear friend when the memories crowd in, jostling each other out of perspective? The things that are precious and real are the very ones which appear so insignificant on paper — the smile, the laugh, the turn of phrase, an act of kindness, an act of courage. How can one clinically examine the life of a friend? Those who knew George know the value of what they have lost.

There is something to be said for the cold formality of *The Times*. Let us get it over with. George Fraser was the son of Brig. S. Fraser of Castle Douglas. Educated at Winchester, he gained a major scholarship to King's, Cambridge, where he took an Honours degree in Engineering. His speciality was Dam construction and his firm intended to send him to Malaya immediately after his fateful journey to the Himalayas. His mountaineering achievements cover a wide field. Brought up on the hills of Galloway, he had a special regard for his native Scottish Highlands, and it was in the Carnmore area of Wester Ross that he made some of his finest climbs: Fionn Buttress and Dragon to mention but two. Whilst still an undergraduate he took part in two major expeditions abroad, in 1953 to the Hoggar mountains of the Sahara and in 1954 to Rakaposhi in the Himalayas. In spite of atrocious bad luck with the weather he made several fine ascents in the Alps, including the famous Bügeleisen, the N.N.W. ridge of the Pizzi Gemelli in the Bregaglia and the east face of the Grand Capucin. Although based in London he made frequent weekend trips to North Wales and shortly before his departure for Ama Dablam was leading many of the hardest routes.

The circumstances of his death were tragic indeed, reminiscent of that ill-fated attempt by Mallory and Irving to reach the summit of Everest. In this case the mountain was Ama Dablam, one of the most fantastic and beautiful spires in the Himalayas, many times labelled "impossible" by well-known authorities. George Fraser and Mike Harris were last seen through swirling mists moving strongly toward the summit, having apparently overcome the last difficult steps. They were not seen again . . .

Well there it is, a dry factual Curriculum Vitae which hides the man. I like to think that he got to the top, that he achieved his burning ambition. I suppose this is a natural mountaineer's folly, but

there is no doubt that George climbed to get up. He was not foolhardy, indeed he was liberally endowed with all those qualities that are popularly ascribed to the Scot — and not always with justice. But he did possess that special drive which is granted to the few. Though he had many interests, both physical and cultural, his spiritual inspiration came from mountains. He lived for them and he died for them. Yes — I like to think of him on the top.

E. D. G. LANGMUIR

M. J. HARRIS

Mike Harris started his climbing career with solitary boyhood walks and gritstone scrambles in the Pennines and Wales. After leaving college he fell in with Gordon Townend and Geoffrey Curtis of the Fell and Rock, who were responsible for the opening up of Arran as an important climbing ground during the war. These two took him on more serious gritstone climbs and to North Wales and the Lakes, then to the Alps for three or four seasons doing the standard peaks in the Valais and at Chamonix; their most ambitious undertaking at this time was the Zmutt.

I met him first in 1950, when he joined Geoffrey Curtis, Sydney Fry and myself for Easter at Pen-y-Gwryd. He came with us for one or two more weekends in Wales, but it soon became apparent that he and I were both so enthusiastic about climbing and strenuous hill-walking that we wished to spend much more time in the hills than did any of our friends, so the two of us decided to join up for weekends independently of the others. I put him up for membership of the Climbers' Club, and thereafter we usually spent every second weekend climbing throughout the year, averaging 25 to 30 weekends per year, normally in North Wales, but occasionally in the Lakes or Scotland or on gritstone, and sometimes hill-walking in Central or South Wales, the Pennines or the Cheviots. Mike lived in Wolverhampton while at first I was in London, so on Friday evenings I travelled to Wolverhampton by train and we went on in Mike's car. In 1953 I moved to Wolverhampton and acquired my own car. Mike taught me to drive, his instructing methods being brutal but most effective, so that it became possible to share transport on a more equal basis.

Mike was notoriously not an organiser, so he left all the arrangements to me — not only the fixing of dates and the co-ordination of

travel, but the drawing up of a climbing programme, of which he was usually a forthright critic. It was always clear that he was the stronger rock-climber, but in the early days, when we confined ourselves to the standard climbs, not going beyond Severes, I was made to share the leading equally with him — he insisted that this was good for me. In due course we became more ambitious, and on the harder climbs we turned to, Mike automatically went into the lead. We also became interested in exploration, and after doing a few second ascents of other people's new climbs started making new routes ourselves, in the *Snowdon South and West* guide-book area, since this gave the most scope for exploring new ground. As a consequence we became involved in the work on the guide-book, the first fruits of this being the interim guide to Cwm Silyn and Tremadoc, which in the Tremadoc section came into being largely through Mike's leading on the climbs we did.

From 1952 onwards we spent our Alpine seasons together, often in the company also of John Mawe, Dave Thomas, Chris Brasher and others. We had ambitious plans, which rarely came to very much because of the weather — we always seemed to be unlucky in our timing — so most of our climbing was on harder climbs on the lesser rock peaks. Among the climbs which Mike made, mostly with me but sometimes with others, were the Tronchey Arête of the Grands Jorasses, the south ridge of the Salbitschijen, the east face of the Aiguille de la Brenva (Boccalatte route), the south face direct of the Meije (as far as the Glacier Carré), the south ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, the Younggrat on the Breithorn, the north ridge of the Piz Badile. Once again when Mike and I were together he left the organisation, the climbing programme, and the leading on easier rock and on snow and ice to me, but he inevitably came into the lead on the harder rock.

He was a very fine driver and car mechanic, and I accompanied him on a number of national and international rallies, when we had some successes. This activity, however, always came second to climbing.

In his early years he was of a shy and nervous disposition, and this could be a cause of some embarrassment. His success in his work, his driving and particularly his climbing, and the discovery that others thought highly of him gradually increased his confidence in himself. He had a very pleasant and equable temperament; in fact I only remember one occasion in all our association when we

had slightly heated words, when we were returning from the Alps and were both feeling upset by our repeated ill-luck with the weather.

In 1958 he came to the conclusion that the hardest climbs in Wales lay within his abilities, and early in the year climbed Cenotaph Corner, the Girdle of Clogwyn du'r Arddu East Buttress, and Erosion Grooves, so going well outside my capabilities. Then came the expedition to the Caucasus, which had been a long-standing ambition of both of us. Mike played a leading part in the climbing carried out by the expedition, in particular in the third ascent of the north rib of Shkhara and the first ascent of the south buttress of Dykh-tau east peak. Later in the year came further hard ascents in Wales. For this last year he also served on the Club committee. And then early this year the Ama Dablam expedition.

Mike's climbing technique was of a delicate rather than a strenuous kind. Unlike others in the first rank in Welsh climbing he was a slab rather than a crack climber, and was fond of pointing out that really hard slab climbs had not yet been done. He will be missed for many things; among them we shall have to look to others to point the way to these climbs.

J. NEILL

GERARD CRUICKSHANK

IT IS USELESS trying to analyse why we make friends; all we can say is that towards some people we feel great kindness. I do not understand the chemistry of it. It certainly has nothing to do with common interests or background. Gerard Cruickshank defied analysis more flamboyantly than any other friend I have had. He was a man of mystery and I am sure he enjoyed the role. Haileybury, Magdalene and universities in Germany and France left him with one firm intention — never to work in an office. It was a disappointment to his banker father, after this education, when he went to sea before the mast in a coasting collier. It was always difficult to reconstruct any kind of a loaf from the few crumbs he let drop, but one gathered that seafaring was succeeded by a period in hotel and department-store management. But comfort meant little to him except as a contrast, and he valued money only for its best purchase, freedom. When war came he joined the navy, was commissioned, and served on an experimental weapons ship. Some time after this he became engaged in

government service of a secret nature which caused him to travel widely and in which he remained until 1958, when he retired, aged 47, for reasons characteristically obscure. He was as little in awe of life as of death, and took work shifting scenery in a London theatre. In the spring he made a cycling tour of Britain looking for a cottage where he could write, and we were unfortunate in just missing joint ownership of Hafod Owen, a cottage in the Moelwyns which had belonged to Colin Kirkus, and where Menlove Edwards once lived. He was to the forefront in action and to the rear in publicity in the Castleton tragedy, though he had never been in a cave before. Then he threw off a painful illness just in time for a strenuous Alpine season with Lionel Terray. After various climbs including the Rebuffat route on the Midi, the Diables and the south ridge of the Noire (intended as training) they were crossing the Fresnay Glacier to the Punta Gugliermina when a great wall of ice fell on them and Gerard was killed.

One of a close and fated group of friends, he had started Bob Downes on his climbing career. He adjusted his way up crags rather than climbed them. Not many men of his age are able to climb routes like the Peapod, Three Pebble Slab, Pedestal and many others with less apparent effort than the majority of 20 year-olds; or solo Cynr Las Main Wall before breakfast, climb again all morning, then motor down and traverse Cader Idris almost at running pace.

Years before I met Gerard I had a letter from a then young and penniless friend staying at Helyg. He had been a good deal unsettled by a lean man of indeterminate age who ate his porridge hot out of one bowl and his milk cold out of another. This quaint individual upset him further later in the day, when he was leading the Lots climbs on Glyder Fach, by clambering alone all over the crag and peering at him from below, above, one side and then the other. Two days later he received £50 in the post with an unsigned note saying that youngsters like him should be encouraged, and would he please have an Alpine holiday on the enclosed. The name in the hut book was Cruickshank.

It is a cliché, and I think usually untrue, to say of men killed climbing that they died as they would have wished. I don't propose to say it of Gerard, but this I would say, that he was more indifferent to death than anyone I have known. So far as I could discover he believed nothing and desired nothing, and so was free. It gave him a curious agelessness. He was a connoisseur of life who found interest in

everyone and everything but shunned all entanglement — “gently dip, but not too deep”. Behind the gently smiling mask of his lean, elegant face with its grey eyes it was impossible to guess his thoughts, but he was the most thoughtful of men in doing kindness, going to fantastic lengths of anonymous personal inconvenience to give small pleasures even to complete strangers. Steel glinted through the silk of his almost effeminate manners and lackadaisical humour. Mourning, that he would certainly have deprecated, seems inappropriate: he had it all weighed up and made the most of his life. It is impossible to fix in words the sunlight and ice of him burnt on memory like a picture taken against the light, the quaint glamour of his presence, or his plain niceness. I knew that Lionel had been touched by it when I heard his voice over the telephone muffled with regret: “C’était pour moi un homme vraiment exceptionnel: un type merveilleux: je l’aimais beaucoup . . . beaucoup”.

G. J. SUTTON.

P. W. F. MAYO

ON August 10th 1959, Peter Mayo, with his companion John Spottiswoode, disappeared on a traverse of the Dom and Täschhorn. The guardian of the Dom Hut watched the pair reach the summit of the Täschhorn a little after midday. The figures passed from his view in cloud as they turned to descend; they were not seen again. The Cambridge Club lost perhaps its outstanding climbing partnership; in Peter, newly-elected President, its most notable personality.

Coming from a climbing family — his father was Secretary of the C.U.M.C. — he was attracted to the mountains early. With John Longland, he was taken out to Gritstone by Alf Bridge while still at the Dragon School, and — also with John — was leading through alone in Wales at the age of twelve. Having continued climbing steadily through schooldays at Rugby, and during his National Service with the Royal Marines (he was at Suez), he came up to Cambridge in 1957. He was by then already a member of the Climbers' Club, being elected in 1955.

As a rock-climber, he was sound and safe as a leader up to Very Severe, but I do not believe that he had much ambition in this sphere. Rather, his inclination lay towards Ben Nevis, where he had a very successful Easter in 1959, which included an ascent of Comb Gully; to the Alps, where his 1958 season took in most of the Zermatt

cirque; and beyond, for he was planning, with John Spottiswoode, to join Harry Carslake and Nigel Peacock in the Andes in 1960. New ideas, new places, appealed to his enthusiasm and sense of adventure. Travel and exploration, including, not included in, mountaineering, found in him a strong and promising exponent.

As a climbing companion, witty and uncomplaining, generous and honest and utterly reliable, he was the ideal partner in any venture. But more than most, Peter as mountaineer was extremely hard to separate from Peter as many other things, in which his qualities showed just the same. His interests were very wide. And in the memory, it is a man who, principally, but amongst other things, was a climber, that holds the stage. And how can one even approach a picture of this man, who of all at Cambridge seemed to me the best, loved not for the catalogue of achievement, but for what he was as a friend? How recapture the essence of that slight figure in the cotton windcheater, playing the guitar in his room or in a climbing hut; telling that tremendous joke in the Trient Hut dortoir the night I came back after my fall; talking motor cycles, discussing prusik loops, or just listening, with his whimsical smile; the almost cynical chuckle, and then the quiet mischievous remark which submerged the conversation in laughter.

Superficially, his career at Rugby was one of traditional Public School brilliance: head of the school, he played for it at cricket and rugby, was an outstanding athlete, and took a Classical Scholarship to Cambridge. Yet it is significant that those likely to react strongly against this kind of success story were most drawn to Peter when once they had met him. Possessing considerable intellectual and sporting distinction, his simplicity and human diffidence were remarkable, and somehow immediately communicated. I do not think that anyone who spent even a few hours in his company could readily forget him.

Though not particularly easy to get to know, nor unusually impressive at first sight, he had the ability to make others at ease. His own direct and honest approach was able to evoke the same in them, an experience as unforgettable as it is rare. His humour was never far beneath the surface, whether in his writing or conversation: a gently spoken, sidelong comment, with the wry smile that seemed to reflect his constant delight in the cursed absurdity of things. He would have gone any distance in any field he chose, writing or exploration amongst them. He had great achievements behind him, and the

promise of greater ahead. But he wore his past and future very lightly himself, and in this sadly inadequate tribute neither seem as important as the man from whom they stemmed. The elusive power of his personality will surely live for a long time in the minds of all who knew him, climbers and many more besides: to his parents and family they offer the deepest sympathy.

S. G. McH. CLARK

JEREMY SMITH

THE UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT on the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey last summer robbed the Scottish climbing fraternity of one of its most prominent and popular members.

It is difficult to pay an adequate tribute to the climbs of Jerry Smith, owing to lack of full details. He had many interests, but mountaineering was always his ruling passion. His career as a Geologist and Soil Scientist gave him the opportunities he wanted and he seldom failed to take advantage of them. There were indeed few British climbing grounds he had not thoroughly explored — Wales, the Lakes, Gritstone, Limestone and Cornwall had all at some time been his regular weekend venue. Before I first met him he had taken part in an expedition to North East Land, Spitzbergen, and followed this up with a successful first Alpine season at Chamonix, when most of the classics were included despite bad weather. In 1955 he was again at Chamonix on more exacting routes — the N.W. Face of the M, Arête des Papillons and Chamonix Face of the Peigne and the Grütter arête of the Pèlerins.

He was always an unobtrusive climber. When he entered the Aberdeen climbing arena, an unheralded Sassenach, sometime in 1955, it was several months before we realised that a meteor had dropped from the firmament. By this time Jerry, often climbing alone, had quietly and efficiently accounted for most of the hardest routes on Lochnagar. Hastily we formed an alliance and he was enrolled forthwith into the Etchachan Club, where he quickly became "one of the boys," despite the handicap of a marked Southern accent. He rejoiced in the title of Bluefoot Smith, from his practice of wearing a battered pair of rope-soled boots, in which he glided smoothly up many a holdless slab and wall. Tall, lean and lithe, his performance on rock was that of a well-oiled machine.

In December 1955 he disappeared for a month, joining T. Fletcher on what was perhaps the most successful short campaign on record in the Ruwenzori. They were favoured by exceptional weather and climbed every day. Their best climb was the first ascent of the north east ridge of Albert, but numerous other notable routes were recorded, including the second ascent of the German route on the north face of Mount Stanley and the ascent of the last unclimbed peak in Ruwenzori, which they named the Great Tooth (further details *A.J.*, 61.384).

On his return he rapidly became as proficient on ice as he already was on rock and took a leading part in the first winter ascents of Parallel Buttress and the Black Spout Pinnacle on Lochnagar — both among the hardest ice routes in Scotland at that time.

He was now at the peak of his climbing form, but the wanderlust took charge again and he departed in November 1956 for Antarctica as a member of the F.I.D.S. Team, spending two years in Graham Land and South Georgia.

I met him only once after his return, on a week-end visit to Nevis, when he showed he had lost none of his old form with two outstanding winter routes on South Trident and Raeburn's Buttresses. Perhaps his finest winter route was his last one, the 900 foot Labyrinth on Creag an Dubh Loch, a very severe rock climb which had resisted numerous winter attempts.

Jerry did nothing for effect. His explorations extended to many climbing areas, but few of his climbs were recorded and then only by more conscientious companions. He made friends easily wherever his roving commission took him, but it was only after his death that we in Aberdeen realized how little we really knew of him, despite our many climbs together. He walked alone, but those of us he met along the wayside will remember him with affection.

TOM PATEY



THE CORUIISK MEMORIAL HUT

David Munro and Peter Drummond Smith, both members of the Club, were killed on Ben Nevis at Easter 1953. Later that year their parents resolved to establish a climbers' hut in Scotland as a memorial and generously set up and endowed a trust for this purpose.

The intention was that the new hut should meet a real need by providing accommodation where none existed, perhaps opening new country to climbers. Attention naturally turned to the remote hills of north-west Scotland, which at that time was being re-discovered as a climbing area.

Suggestions came from many friends familiar with the Northern Highlands. All were considered and many were tried, but at all the most desirable sites inquiries were met with firm refusals and two years of exploration ended in failure to find a suitable building or a site for a permanent hut.

The next proposal was Skye where the idea of a hut in the Coruisk basin was obviously attractive. The local proprietors were anxious to help and eventually all agreed on a site by Loch Scavaig where a fishing lodge had stood many years before.

All preliminaries were completed in the summer of 1957 and building began at once. Due to bad weather and minor misfortunes the structure was not finished until August the next year when working parties completed the painting and fitting out.

The opening ceremony took place on 23rd May 1959 on a brilliant day and was attended by about 40 people. The occasion was marred only by the absence of Mr. Munro who was prevented by illness from travelling. Mrs. Munro gave an account of the history and purpose of the memorial and the hut door was unlocked by Mrs. Drummond Smith.

The Coruisk Memorial Hut remains the property of the Trustees and is managed by Glasgow section of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland who deal with all bookings and administration. The hut can be used by all mountaineers, regardless of club affiliation, and has bunks for nine persons.

Support during the 1959 season has been very encouraging, and the Trustees hope that the new hut will go some way to providing the accommodation for climbers which has long been needed in Skye. They wish also to thank all those who have helped in various ways to realise this memorial.

DAVID WHITHAM

1959 MEETS

NOW THAT the Club's membership exceeds 700, it is important that members should have frequent opportunities of meeting in the mountains. The meets programme fulfils this purpose, and was well supported in 1959. In addition to the four Welsh meets, Wilkinson led a Gritstone meet at Stanage, partly to support the B.M.C. Peak District Committee's campaign there. Admiral Lawder's Whitsun meet at Bosigran was again very popular, and the Welsh Dinner, organised by Neill, was particularly enjoyable as we had the pleasure of the company of Chris Briggs and Sid Cross as Guests of Honour. The Club's thanks are due to all the organisers and particularly to Peacocke for leading the Alpine Meet, on which he reports opposite.

A. BLACKSHAW

ALPINE MEET

A COMBINED MEET of the A.C. and C.C. took place at La Bérarde from August 17th to 29th, 1959. The following were present for all or part of the time: H. K. Goodger, A. T. Griffith, 2/Lt. R. Langford, Major E. H. Marriott, Captain N. J. Monk, Carl Nater, Ian Ogilvie, T. A. H. Peacocke, Dr. Roland Rodda (N.Z.A.C.), Commander C. J. M. Simpson, M. J. K. Vyvyan, D. St. J. R. Wagstaff, Dr. C. B. M. Warren, and two non-members, C. Gorrie and C. A. Park.

The weather, which had been brilliantly fine before the party arrived, deteriorated after the first two days and the fifth, sixth and seventh days were bad with continuous rain setting in on the fifth day. In the second week the weather improved steadily and there were two brilliantly fine days, but the big peaks — Meije, Écrins and Ailefroide — had been heavily plastered and were out of condition. This considerably restricted the scale of operations. The following climbs were accomplished: Pic Nord des Cavales (2 parties), Tête de la Gondolière, Les Bans (2 parties), Pic Coolidge (2 parties), Aig. Dibona (5 parties — one by the south ridge), Aig. Centrale de Soreiller, Aig. Orientale de Soreiller, Pic du Vallon des Etages from La Bérarde with descent to La Lavey, north peak of Aig. d'Arves and Grande Ruisse.

La Bérarde itself is not now an attractive place, but the surrounding huts are very well equipped and many of them are provisioned. The climbing is quite first class and when the big peaks are out of condition the lower peaks offer very fine climbing of all shades of difficulty. As the area is very popular with the French younger generation, the huts tend to be crowded in the first three weeks of August. For those who require hotel accommodation the best hotel is the Hotel des Glaciers, run by the famous guide Casimir Rodier, but there are very few bedrooms. The Maison des Campeurs (opposite) offers simple and quite cheap bedrooms and also has a "dortoir".

T. A. H. PEACOCKE

REVIEWS

CLIMBERS' GUIDE TO GLENCOE AND ARDGOUR. Vol. I. By L. S. Lovat.
(Scottish Mountaineering Club, 7/6.)

Ten years ago the S.M.C. published its first rock-climbing guide. It was by W. H. Murray and contained all the climbs in Glencoe, and, to make the book a suitable size, included Ardgour. Now the new edition is split into two, the first volume covering only Buachaille Etive Mor but listing nearly twice as many climbs as Murray's did in the same section. A good measure of the activity in the area which has led to the cliffs being as enmeshed in routes as many further south!

Little improvement could be made on the original descriptions, and wisely Lovat has used the same approach as his predecessor. Some rationalisation and re-drawing of the diagrams has made them more useful; indeed, the text could almost be dispensed with. Without actually using a guide one cannot decide whether it is really as good as it seems, but the general impression from reading it reinforces memory, which is almost as important.

The pocket size of the book is ideal and it will certainly stand up to hard wear. Whilst supplementing the information given in the S.M.C. mountain guides the rock climbing section is adequate alone, or at least when used with a map.

A. J. J. MOULAM

THE LAST BLUE MOUNTAIN. By Ralph Barker. (Chatto & Windus, 21/-.)

Two men died on the Oxford Expedition to Haramosh (24,270 feet) in 1957. Maybe all would have perished if it had not been for the experience and courage of the leader, Captain Tony Streather. The whole drama is superbly told by non-mountaineer Ralph Barker. As narrative the chapters concerning the accident to Jillott and Emery are almost brilliantly written. The reader is held by a series of events which one usually associates with mountains like the Eiger.

Narrative however is only a part of mountain writing. To understand the story of the conquest of Everest, *South Col* must be read as well as *The Ascent of Everest*. The former book is accepted because Wilfrid Noyce was a member of the expedition. Ralph Barker was not on Haramosh. Hence he fails, as must any writer who tries to fit words and thoughts to an event in which he did not participate — especially an event which draws men together against the fear of death as on Haramosh.

The author did not know Jillott or Cuthbert. His psycho-analysis of the former is distorted — not surprisingly, for Jillott was an extremely difficult person to know well. Barker seems to have been carried away by his obviously extensive research into the members and records of the expedition. This must

be the principal explanation for his undue emphasis on "direct speech". How, for instance, did he know Jillott at Base Camp "remembered now the thrill of pleasure" at the M.E.F. grant? There are many other examples.

Further, the author obviously avoided the acute conflicts between members of the expedition. Discord may not have been rife but it was certainly much deeper than Barker would have us believe.

Two important factors emerge from this book. Barker accurately describes the first — the tremendous odds against which Streather fought magnificently after the accident. The second, the decided lack of experience of the rest of the party, he largely ignores. This is very understandable but nevertheless should have been stressed, for upon such experiences lessons are learnt for the future.

As narrative the book is excellent, but the author should have avoided any attempts at assessing the thoughts and feelings of those he never met. This is not to disparage Barker, but only a member of the expedition — ideally Streather himself — could have written the complete story.

C. J. MORTLOCK

AN ECCENTRIC IN THE ALPS. By Ronald Clark. (Museum Press, 35/-.)

Almost in his own lifetime W. A. B. Coolidge, the subject of Ronald Clark's new biography, had become a legend. He was unique in three respects. He did nearly all his early climbs with his aunt, and many of them with his dog; he was in a class by himself for pure cantankerousness; and he possessed a knowledge of Switzerland and the Alps which was quite unrivalled both for its range and for its formidably pedantic accuracy. These attributes constitute his claim to be regarded as something out of the usual run of prominent Victorian mountaineers. In other respects he was very typical of his generation: wealthy enough to climb regularly with two first class guides, able to spend many weeks each year in the Alps, and in a position to pick up a large number of lesser first ascents during a climbing career extending over the last third of the nineteenth century. He was an assiduous rather than a great climber, nor does great climbing seem to have impressed him. His championing of Mummery's candidature for the A.C. was probably motivated less by admiration for Mummery than by hostility to Sir Edward Davidson, and it is revealing that the names of Geoffrey Young and V. J. E. Ryan (whose impact on the field of Alpine exploration occurred when Coolidge was by no means an old man) do not even appear in the present work. On the other hand, he had two claims to fame as an Alpine pioneer to which less than justice is usually done. He was very early in the field of winter mountaineering, and he was remarkable, for his period, in his readiness to risk an unprepared bivouac.

Mr. Clark has had access to a considerable amount of new material, particularly Coolidge's own letters, and he has made characteristic use of it; that is to say, he has written a book which is very readable and at the same time scholarly — though not in the pejorative sense in which that term is often applied to Coolidge's own writings. The picture which he draws of Coolidge is a perfectly fair one. He resists the temptation to caricature; he eschews psychoanalysis. No one, except perhaps Sir Arnold Lunn (who writes a

foreword), could have done better; and this is praise. Yet, discounting an initial shudder at the book's price, one is still left a little dissatisfied. There is new illustrative fact and anecdote; but substantially not much is added to the good chapter on Coolidge which Mr. Clark gave us some years ago in *The Victorian Mountaineers*. And this is, surely, for the excellent reason that, short of an exact attempt to assess Coolidge's mountaineering achievement and contribution to Alpine learning — which would be very arid, and can be done by anyone for himself if he is prepared to digest Coolidge's own extensive published work — there is really little that is new to be said about him. His eccentricities, which mostly boil down to a love of quarrelling, can be as well depicted in 20 pages as in 200; his career as a whole is only of distinction in one very specialised sphere and is not really able to sustain a full length biography.

This, at any rate, is the feeling with which one is left. The shortcomings of *An Eccentric in the Alps* are not the fault of its author, who had battled valiantly with a difficult task. But in choosing Coolidge as his subject he was probably condemning himself to write a book which, in view of what is already available in print in one form or another, could hardly be more than a slight, if pleasant, contribution to Alpine literature.

A. D. M. COX

ROCK CLIMBS IN ARRAN. By J. M. Johnstone. (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 3/6.)

Editor's note: I am indebted to Gordon Townend (Fell and Rock) for the review which is given below. As Townend was one of the two climbers who were responsible for the thorough exploration of Arran as a climbing ground during the war, his views on this guidebook are of particular value.

Even though the S.M.C. Islands guide is a most interesting volume, I am sure climbers will welcome this pocket guide to the rock climbing in Arran. The guide gives clear descriptions of the climbs, but more than that it indicates the pleasanter routes. This is very necessary in Arran: the good routes are very good, the bad ones abominable. The advice given agrees well with my own impressions of Arran climbing and the South Face of Cir Mhor receives well-merited praise. All the more important faces are illustrated with diagrams by W. C. Harrison. They are clear and the routes are well indicated. This is all the more praiseworthy as these faces are difficult to draw.

If this guide encourages more people to sample Arran's particular brand of climbing it will serve to repay the many hours Mr. Johnstone must have spent preparing it. The conscientious guide-book writer in Arran has a considerable number of obnoxious gullies to negotiate before he can attempt to dissuade others from visiting them.

G. H. TOWNEND

RAKAPOSHI. By Mike Banks. (Secker and Warburg, 25/-.)

"... but this is not just another expedition book." How often has one read the phrase? This is another expedition book, indeed a book recording the two expeditions led by the author to Rakaposhi, the second of which was successful. It is written entertainingly, partly owing to the unabashed egoism

of the author which, rather than the balanced and tactful records so often written, makes for good reading; partly its quality comes from Banks's ability to find the striking phrase. For instance, snow climbing in cloud is likened to being inside a "gargantuan ping-pong ball"; elsewhere Himalayan climbing is described as being a "snow treadmill", a telling phrase although one may quarrel with such a generalisation: what price the Muztagh Tower or Ama Dablam, or even Rakaposhi whose technical standard is elsewhere in the book rated as higher than Kangchenjunga?

A trend in Himalayan mountaineering that is demonstrated in the book is the increasing use of large amounts of fixed rope, thereby enabling porters to move about unescorted and reducing the number of occasions that it is necessary for parties to climb roped together. Banks mentions that they used 4000 feet of fixed rope on his second expedition, and could have done with more. The Italians used over twice that amount on K2, the French last year ran out of rope after having fixed over 7000 feet on Jannu, and we had not nearly enough with 2000 feet fixed on Ama Dablam. The modern Himalayan climber needs hard hands to withstand the constant pulling on ropes, in the same way that the modern alpinist has to contend with the continual jaggling of the sharp edges of snap-links in artificial climbing. While considering equipment, it is curious to note that the expedition was equipped with tents weighing only 11 lbs., yet their air-mattresses weighed as much as 6 lbs. each.

Analysing my reaction to this book, which as a member of a previous party on the mountain I had of course approached with suspicion, I find that to my surprise I enjoyed reading it. This brings some melancholy to the thought that, despite the great achievement recorded, despite the high backing and the hands-across-the-ocean element, and despite the illumination of Banks's wit, the book is doomed to be remaindered along with the rest of present-day expedition books. It will be read only by those curious mortals who apparently read all mountaineering books, and perhaps by those who had previously visited the mountain; I cannot believe it will be read by anyone else. One last thought: Rakaposhi was Tom Patey's second Karakoram trip. On the first he reached the summit of the Muztagh Tower, on the second the summit of Rakaposhi. What comes next?

E. A. WRANGHAM

THE WHITE SPIDER. By Heinrich Harrer. (Rupert Hart-Davis, 30/-.)

I enjoyed *The White Spider* far more than any other climbing book I have read in recent years. It is not written specifically for climbers, but suffers little or nothing from that, and certainly fills in a lot of detail about the remarkable Heinrich Harrer. He was first introduced to a wide public by *Seven Years in Tibet*, where he mentioned the motives behind his participation in the first ascent of the Eigerwand. It would be pleasant to think that everyone who has read the earlier work will read this — it is well worth while.

Harrer sets out to explain why men desire to climb the north face of the Eiger, a task almost as impossible as the wall itself appeared to the early mountaineers. And yet he succeeds and presents an answer surprisingly far

from the self-glory often attributed to the Munich school. The men portrayed in *The White Spider* are not devil-may-care monomaniacs but mountaineers who, besides being superlatively good, had weighed the risks very carefully and prepared their attempts meticulously.

The sober and sometimes frightening history shows that the men who lost their lives did so sometimes by bad luck, sometimes by miscalculation and sometimes by a combination of both. Development of technique and knowledge of the face enabled Rebitsch and Vorg to retreat in good order from the mountain at its most savage the year before the successful attempt. The account of the first ascent is perhaps naturally the best part of the book but the occasion where Buhl and Rebuffat shared a rope is presented in a more balanced way than either of them did it. Such is the merit of detachment.

The mystery surrounding the tragedy of 1957 is not resolved, but then it is not likely to be. It is best to concentrate on the experience of Hellepart, told in his own words, as he was lowered over the edge of the sheer 6000-foot face to rescue Corti. A thin steel cable his sole support, and contact with the rescue team on the Eiger summit by radio certainly being a rare delight!

The collection of photographs illustrating the book can only be described as magnificent. Photographs taken on the early ascents show the parties clad in what one to-day feels to be totally inadequate. Dizzy views down to Alpigen and men pressing close to overhanging rocks to keep a semblance of equilibrium complete the picture. Yes, the north face of the Eiger will always fascinate and at the same time repel.

Merrick's version lacks to a great extent the typical un-English phrases and constructions that often mar an otherwise good translation. Terms alien to the climber occasionally appear, but once again the book is not only aimed at that select clique, and we can accept them. In bringing this book within reach of the English-speaking world he has done a good service.

A. J. J. MOULAM

BECAUSE IT IS THERE. By George Lowe. (Cassell, 21/-.)

George Lowe's book has evidently been in great demand, as the publishers were unable to supply us with a review copy, and the Editor had great difficulty in obtaining his personal copy — which was used for this notice.

The first quarter of the book is devoted to climbing, covering New Zealand, Mukut Parbat, Cho Oyu, Everest and Makalu, more briefly than might have been wished — though slightly more extended with Everest than the others — with the Lowe enthusiasm and humour bubbling through. The rest of the book is devoted to the Trans-Antarctic expedition, giving an impression of the living and working conditions and of the personalities involved of which little can be gathered from the official Fuchs account. Particularly interesting is the comparison of Hillary, Hunt and Fuchs as leaders.

J.N.

TACKLE CLIMBING THIS WAY. By John Disley. (Stanley Paul, 10/6.)

The title of this book may perhaps mislead. Rock-climbing is hardly dealt with; the book leads novices to mountains the only right way, by a thorough graduation in hill-walking. Disley's primer on how to find one's way about in the hills, in fair weather and foul, summer and winter, is thorough

and first-rate. His paragraphs on the art of hitch-hiking may be found interesting by most of us — and useful by some.

J.N.

ROCK-CLIMBING GUIDES TO THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT: EASTERN CRAGS. By Harold Drasdo. (Fell and Rock Climbing Club.)

This volume completes the new series of Fell and Rock guide books, and covers Thirlmere, Grisedale, Deepdale and Dovedale, (in all of which much new climbing has been done in recent years), and scattered areas such as Carrock Fell and Longsleddale. It is particularly useful to have up-to-date details of the climbs on the Castle Rock of Triermain readily available. Drasdo has done an excellent job within the limitations of the Fell and Rock method, and has strayed outside these to a certain extent to give subjective opinions on the merits of some of the climbs. He can not be blamed for the unwieldiness of the Severe and Very Severe sections, in particular, in the graded list of climbs, and of the list of first ascents—though this is not so extreme as in the Langdale guide.

An appendix gives details copied from the *Fell and Rock Journal* of new climbs to supplement the other volumes of the series.

J.N.

CLIMBING GUIDES TO THE SNOWDON DISTRICT: CWM IDWAL.

By A. J. J. Moulam. (Climbers' Club.)

The last of Moulam's trilogy on the Ogwen crags, being a rewriting and condensation of the previous guides; the old guide area is extended from Y Garn at one side to Clogwyn-y-Bustach on the Cribin (the "Facet of the Gribin") on the other, and a small number of climbs done since the old edition are included — especially those on Clogwyn Du.

A competent job by a practised hand, though there are those who disagree with his grading of the hardest climbs. The diagrams, by the author's wife, are an improvement on Moulam's own efforts in previous guides. But in none of the post-war Welsh guides have we maintained the standards set by French's diagrams in the old Glyder Fach guide, or reached those of the guide-books of other clubs reviewed above. The diagrams in the two new SMC guides, in particular, show what should be aimed at.

J.N.

SHADOW BUTTRESS. By Showell Styles. (Faber.)

A review copy of this book was received, but was lost by the member to whom it was handed for review. It can be said, however, that the book is a light romantic novel with a climbing background; well-written but mere women's magazine stuff.

J.N.

CLUB JOURNALS, 1959.

Due to various changes of Club officials, there has been great difficulty in collecting together the exchange copies of publications of kindred clubs (some of the following remarks are based on the use of the Editor's private copies), and it has not been possible to give the usual comprehensive review. Here instead are brief notes on the more interesting items in the journals available.

Alpine Journal 1959-1 has one Alpine article (on the S.W. pillar of the Dru), two on the Haimalaya, two on the Andes, three from the Caucasus expedition, one on Alaska, and a map of Ruwenzori. From the other side of the Iron Curtain come articles on the Pik Pobeda (Tien Shan), and Muztagh Ata.

1959-2 has three Alpine articles (one on the Walker), three Himalayan, one Andean, one on Norway and two from Africa. *Himalayan Journal* 1958 has accounts of 6 major first ascents in the Himalaya, with numerous minor ones, attempts and reconnaissances. *American Alpine Journal* 1959 has articles on the ascent of Hidden Peak, on the Andes and on numerous American mountains, including El Capitan (the ascent of the 2900-foot face of this took 45 days spread over a period of 18 months, and 675 pitons and 125 expansion bolts, 90 per cent of which were for direct aid). The number includes a series of magnificent photographs of the Alps from the air at close range. An appended booklet gives a report on American climbing accidents in 1958.

Canadian Alpine Journal 1959 is almost entirely devoted to the mountains of Canada and Alaska.

Sierra Club Bulletins for 1959 are largely concerned with amenities and illustrated by excellent photographs of U.S. national parks. All are in pamphlet form except the October 1959 number, which is in traditional climbing journal format and has some notes on climbing.

Mountain Club of Kenya Bulletin, December 1958, edited by our member Caukwell and in duplicated form, has information on climbing on Mt. Kenya and Ruwenzori and the local practice cliff at Lukenia.

Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa 1958 concerns itself with Table Mountain, Cape Province, Drakensberg, Mt. Kenya and Antarctica, plus some hints for South African climbers visiting Britain.

Journal of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, 15.4.59, covers the Andes, Patagonia (by E. H. Marriott), Rockies, Hoggar, Ruwenzori, the U.S.S.R. and New Zealand.

Rucksack Journal 1959 and *Fell and Rock Journal* 1959 both give the place of honour to articles on the British Caucasus Expedition (indeed the former seems overpoweringly Thomas!).

The S.M.C. Journal 1959 relegates the Caucasus to its small print section; its longer articles deal with Greenland, Nevis and Rakaposhi.

The M.A.M. Journal 1959, *Oxford Mountaineering* 1959 and *Cambridge Mountaineering* 1959 all range widely across different countries.

The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal 1958 is on the contrary completely devoted to the Y.R.C. Himalayan Expedition 1957 which ended in disaster.

Other journals received:

Mountaineering, 31st March, 1959 and 30th September, 1959.

Die Alpen, all monthly and quarterly numbers for 1959.

Mitteilungen des DAV, all numbers for 1959.

Jugend am Berg (DAV), all numbers for 1959.

British Ski Year Book, 1959.

Ski Notes and Queries, April, October and December 1959.

S.C.G.B. Notices, Spring, Autumn and Winter 1959.

J.N.



CORRIGENDUM

C.C.J. for 1958 page 26 (Re J. M. Edwards) para. 2.

A. W. Bridge has written to point out that ascents of Curving Crack on Clogwyn du'r Arddu and Upper Slab Climb, Cwm Silyn, referred to, were not the *second* ascents for those were done by him earlier. Apologies for the *lapsus memoriae*!

A. B. HARGREAVES

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Editor

A. K. RAWLINSON

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB, LONDON

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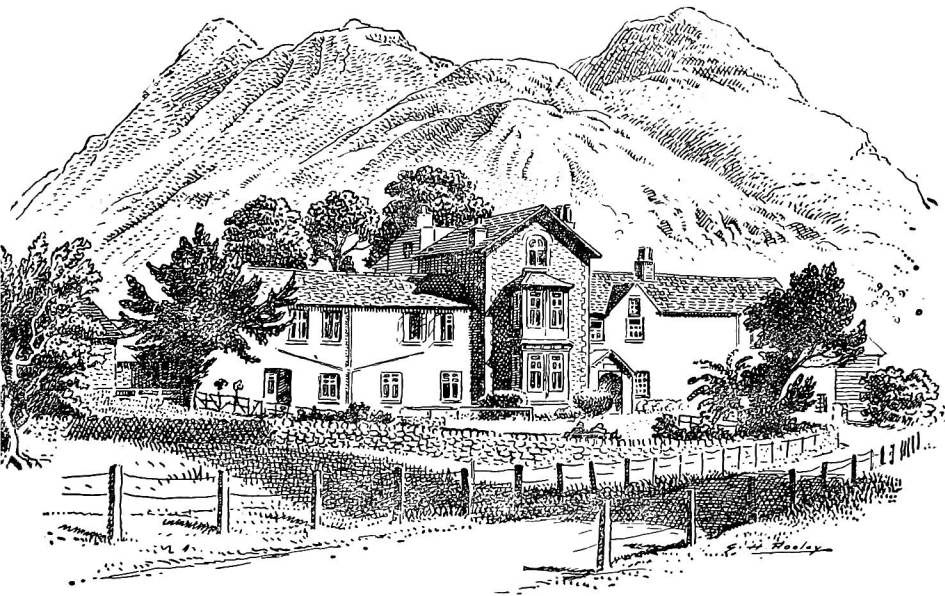
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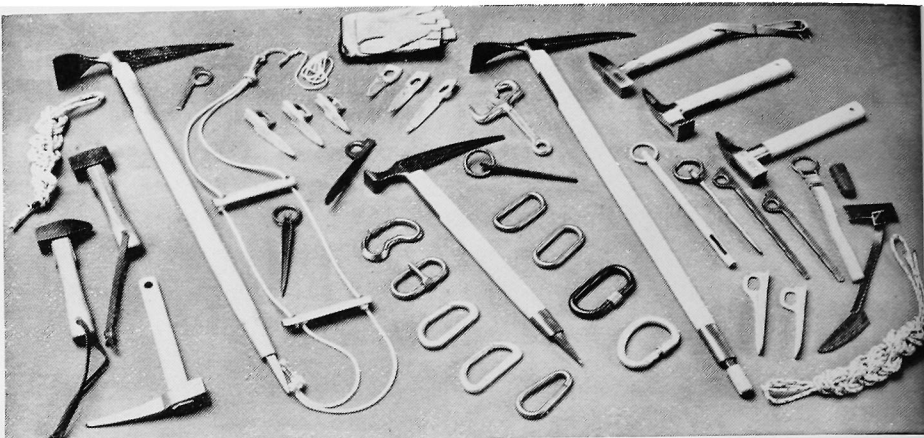
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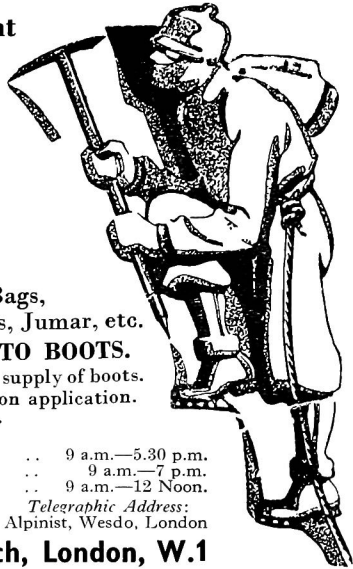
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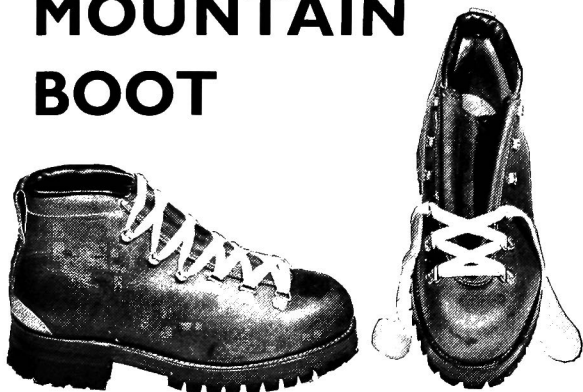
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