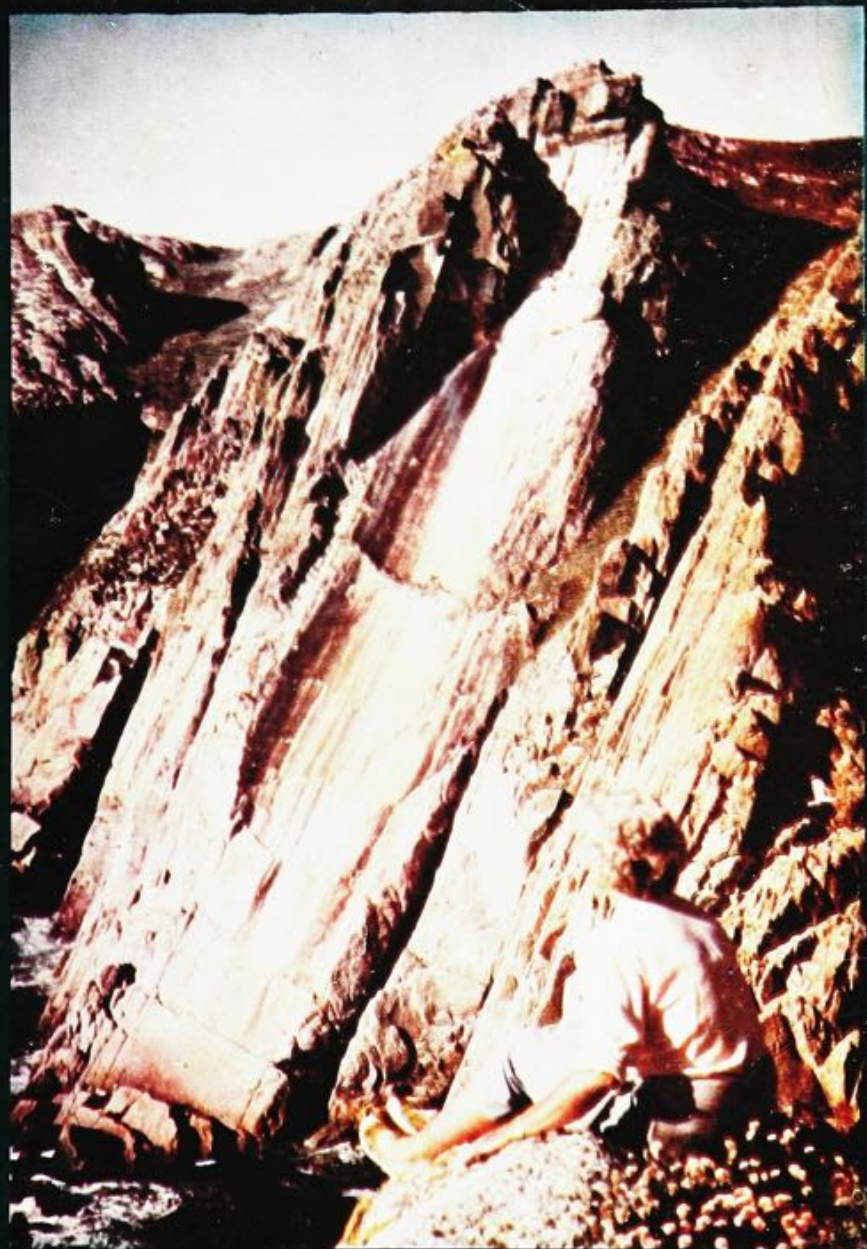


THE CLIMBERS' CLUB



JOURNAL 1970-1971

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY
T. I. M. LEWIS

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Snowdon and Cwm Idwal from Pen Yr Olewen, Snowdonia.
(photo W.A. Poucher FRPS.)



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Editorial

The club has reached an interesting point in its career. Symptomised, unfortunately, by the sad state of the Journal, momentum seems to be lacking. Always a decentralised organisation there have been distinct signs of schism in the 'arguings' over admitting women to the club and also the dealings over the publication of guide books. In the former case many of the younger and active members felt that the club was dragging its heels and that its continued practice of holding major meetings in London was a sign of the undue influence of non - climbing members. This latter has been ostensibly changed. It is hoped that the club will pander to the age of 'Women's Lib' with at least the intelligence to realise that they are a different sex but not a different species i.e. let them in now and stop being anachronistic. Over the matter of guide books it is the club's amateur tradition that has been at fault. Several of the members of the newly formed publications sub-committee are successful businessmen in their private lives. It is to be hoped that they run their businesses better than they run the club's. The age of small time publication is past and the club, as a senior and august body, has a high duty to the climbing community to publish guide books of an authoritative nature as it always has done.

In the modern economic climate of inflation this is an expensive business. A grant from the Sports Council to the Climber's Club to publish guides would be a start. It would have to be through the British Mountaineering Council, and here we can see the path that we have to tread. The B.M.C. has been a paper tiger for years: In fact as long as it remained a bastion of the amateur. The age of the amateur is now dead in British climbing, there are too many people involved now for the 'Old School Tie' league to work any longer. The B.M.C. have seen this, they have appointed a full time National Officer. The Climber's Club too had better look to its methods before it becomes a museum piece. If the members of this club do not want this, as some committee members allege, they are kicking against the pricks.

Now is the time to introduce the other strand of my argument. This malaise which affects the club is to be found in a more general form in Britain, with the salient exception of Scotland. There is a general feeling that what we have in this country is nothing but training for the Alps and the Himalaya. We grew out of that theory in the late nineteenth century but it's returned. It has come back because of the spurious 'cool' that climbers affect: No self respecting 'hard man' can be impressed by what goes on in this country any more. Partly this is

true because there are so many people climbing at a high standard, but the achievements are still there. What we have in this country is more climbing and climbers to the square inch than anywhere else in the world. Couple this with our purer ethic and high standards and what is there to be ashamed of?

The sense that only the Alps matter and that we cannot take anything on the island too seriously is at the root of the clubs difficulties in organising itself. The club ought to make a point of leading the Renaissance of pride in British mountaineering that is long overdue.

If this club, which is the sum of its members, does not look to its own house and get back to the forefront by such twentieth century moves as recognising female members and such 'Seventies' moves as becoming the guide book collator for the country it will become an even bigger laughing stock than it is now.

Your club is dying. Help save it. It goes hard with the English to be enthusiastic, but get that way soon or you will loose your planet to pollution and your country to the Common Market as well as your club to the dogs.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

by B.K. HARRIS

This article is the result of a coincidence. Shortly after professional retirement, though happily not from the hills, I read the Editor's plea in a recent News Letter. A year ago this would have fallen on deaf ears: but here I was actually thinking of writing up some climbing memoirs for strictly selfish reasons and private circulation which were to be based on my climbing diary. This diary is a record of climbing and ski-mountaineering in the British Isles and the Alps over the last fifty two years. There is though, the thread of Snowdonia running right through the entries: the diary appropriately opening with an ascent of Snowdon in 1919. Bangor was my home for about the first thirty years of my life and since then I have returned to Snowdonia year after years, each year usually containing several visits. There was something here. Would it be possible to write about it as it was in the beginning and compare it with what it is today? 1919 was not the beginning but it was near enough to that time for us to be advised by the written and spoken word of those who first trod the promised land with climbing developments in view. The Editor seemed to think that the idea was in line with his own so the more personal memoirs must wait though the article must, of its nature, be an expression of personal activities and opinions.

In the University City of Bangor, circa 1920, there was very little interest in the Snowdon range which stands out so clearly on one side of the town. A number of people, including my parents, were interested in fairly gentle mountain walking. Tryfan would be quite a feat - and there was one acknowledged rock climber. I had heard of three climbs. The Milestone, Idwal Slabs, and Devil's Kitchen. The Kitchen being a

death trap to be avoided at all costs. Years later my wife and I climbed it together. My father when he was informed of the 'escapade' was furious, although mention of rather harder climbs such as the Direct on Glyder Fach or Tennis Shoe had been accepted without protest.

By about 1926 my brother and I using a motor bike for transport had walked over most of the main Welsh peaks the Horse Shoe being our most ambitious undertaking. The urge to rock climb had been created by Abraham's 'Rock Climbing in North Wales', a copy of which was amongst my father's books. The next step was difficult which is where a keen beginner of today has the advantage. Even on our walks and scrambles we met few people; perhaps over the Horse Shoe one might meet no-one except on Snowdon itself where the railway was already doing a good business. We had never seen a climbing rope or a climbing party at work. We had climbing boots (our first pair were probably nailed with a mixture of clinkers and hobs but the tricouni soon took over) - and quoting directly from the diary, 'We managed to get hold of a rope, little better than a clothes line but still strong enough to bear our weight. This was 'kept from view in the ruc-sac and was only called for when stiff bits loomed ahead'. (Please take into account how long ago this was written). There was also the problem of Abraham's guide book which at over three pounds in weight was inconvenient in the ruc-sac. We relied on pre-reading and memory with the result that we sometimes failed to find our chosen climb. Gullies were still in fashion and easier to find so it is not surprising to find recorded S. Gully Tryfan, Great Gully Snowdon, Bending Gully Craig-y-Ysfa; climbs almost unknown today.

Instruction was the next step and at that time I was fortunate to obtain it so easily. As a Cambridge undergraduate I joined the C.U.M.C. and attended their Wasdale spring meet as a beginner. I owe a considerable debt to this club which must have been one of the few to undertake instruction in rock climbing. If it was a bit hit and miss at times with the climb chosen to suit the leader rather than the beginner, this was not so in my case. I shall always be grateful to Peter Bicknell who taught me the elements of rock climbing during that memorable

week at Wasdale and to Jack Longland then president of the club who led me in my first Alpine season. The inclination to overstretch the beginner once resulted in one of our party being absent from breakfast. The previous day on a wet windy Kern-Knotts Buttress had been too much for him and he had walked off to the nearest railway station at first light. For me the week yielded good dividends as it enabled my brother and I to climb in Wales, starting by leading the easier climbs and soon working up the standard.

Today things would have been different. For example at one school a boy could go to a general course at Plas-y-Brenin and then the following year he would be eligible to join a more advanced course for a small number of boys mainly in rock climbing. In both years this would have been done instead of the normal summer C.C.F. camp. Lucky boy, for he should be equipped to start leading together with a companion of much the same same experience, which is what matters.

The Welsh hills have a great variety of activities to offer which is a distinguishing feature I have tried to use to the full in the course of the years. There is the normal walking and rock climbing which takes on a fresh pattern in the snow and ice of winter. Then there is the ski-ing which is usually hard and not for the beginner except on exceptional small home slopes. Although the climb on skins up, say the Carneddau is straightforward, the running down needs experience of changing snow conditions and the avoidance of obstacles. The skating can be out of this world and I shall never forget a session I had with my wife on the tarn on the slopes of Glyder Fach which looks across to the East Face of Tryfan. It was bright sunshine and still air but during the night the water in our bedroom froze solid. Then there was the occasion when we donned our skates at the east end of Llyn Ogwen in a gale to arrive shortly afterwards at Ogwen Cottage without any effort. Finally, there is the coast which can make the off days so pleasant and offers a swim in the sea at the end of a day in the hills.

In the course of time the single minded rock climber has become more and more separated from both the all-round mountaineer and the walker. The expert on rock today may care little

about map reading and compass work and often dislikes walking up hill. His interest may be entirely in the rock face which need have nothing to do with a mountain (and indeed rise out of the sea) and in his techniques. This is a fact and not in any way a criticism for the essential thing is enjoyment. In any case the all-round mountaineer can be very competent indeed on rock.

What about the mountain scene during the years. Out of the windows of a Capel Curig Hotel the background of Siabod is much as it was it is the transient scene that has changed. The traffic passes ceaselessly and colourfully dressed young people walk past almost as frequently. They are all attired for the hills so it comes as a surprise that so many of them turn up at the bar even in the middle of the day. Further up the road the post-office area has become an urban shopping centre with a mountaineering slant. It is hardly surprising that one of its founders is moving out of this noisy centre which he has done so much to create. We must be fair, for in doing so he has helped to bring a higher living standard to the villagers and a service to its visitors. Higher up the road to Ogwen there are not many more buildings to be seen but winter and summer one sees the rather picturesque scene of the multi-coloured tents in the fields. Some landmarks have changed: Ogwen Cottage, (or is it Idwal now?) and the famous Pen - y - Pas have lost their atmosphere. The former has taken on a professional, institutionalised appearance while the latter is a Youth Hostel. Continuity is still preserved by the Pen-y-Pass car park which is still owned by the Owen family. 'Young Mr. Owen' (older than me) takes your money and has seen fit to keep it at 1s throughout the years until very recently.

Although exploration between the wars led to the opening up of new centres of rock climbing such as Cloggy, and Llanberis Pass (Tremadoc and the Moelwyns came later) the population explosion did not take place until after the last war and it has left its mark on the popular routes in the hills. Luckily there are many good walks and climbs that do not qualify for the top ten. Every possible foothold has been unearthed on Crib Goch and somehow or other a path has come into being a few feet below the ridge. Look at the photograph of the Lliwedd ridge as seen

from Snowdon 50 years ago and then at a modern one. The passage of many feet shows up as a white path. But the biggest change on the Horseshoe is in the long final slope leading down to Llyn Llydaw what a wonderful run down on soft springy grass it once was and what an untidy mess is the broad sweep of mud and rock that it has become today. The popular climbs too show changes. There must be climbers like myself who have used the tree once to be found in the Holly Tree chimney for a belay, and remember the pleasant grass and heather patches dotted all over the Slabs, Gribin and Milestone. I was on the Milestone when that exhilarating 'hand traverse' above the cave was first led and we came over it shortly afterwards. It really was a hand traverse then with all the present foot holds filled in with earth and moss. At the end of the pitch the awkward stance has been replaced by a convenient flat slab which is unlikely to have got there by chance, and which enables the leader to survey and instruct the novice below.

Climbing habits have of course changed. In Archer Thomson's Guide to the Ogwen district, which I obtained when I joined the Climber's Club in 1927 the North Gully on Tryfan is described as the best known climb in Wales. It is rightly dismissed today except as a possible snow and ice climb: but why does one find Lliwedd so deserted? The face holds a number of excellent, long mountaineering routes; Avalanche followed by Red Wall, Central Chimneys, the Girdle Traverse and others which gave steep and exposed climbing. Perhaps Lliwedd is in the too distant shade or perhaps Edward's guide book with its levelling to the V.D standard makes it more difficult to attain a severe here than elsewhere. Craig-y-Ysfa climbs such as Great Gully and Amphitheatre Buttress seem to have faded into the distance though the combination of these two, one up and one down makes for a good day's mountaineering. What really surprises me is that there has been little if any increase in numbers to be found on the East face of Tryfan where there are so many good standard climbs which seem to belong to a mountain rather than a cliff. Maybe they are too long and too broken up for the modern taste. The reason given to me by one experienced climber was that the increase of population on the ridge brought a danger

of falling stones, which I can understand on Lliwedd (having experienced it) but rather doubt on Tryfan's more broken terrain. Incidentally the Heather Terrace is visible in an Abraham's photograph though certainly not as the great white sash it is today.

Most of the despoilation (if this is not too harsh a word) of Snowdonia is due to the climbers and walkers who use it, and it simply cannot be prevented. I do feel though that we are on rather tricky ground logically when we inveigh against the pylons, the dams and the new roads. I dislike them but doubt if they cause as much disfigurement as we do, while on the credit side they add to our national wealth without any serious detriment to our climbing.

Much used climbs have a kind of life cycle. The first two pitches of the Milestone Direct which I have climbed regularly for over forty years started by getting gradually easier as hand and footholds revealed themselves when the vegetation disappeared. At the end of the nails era the very high degree of polish they had taken definitely made it harder in nails. The coming of vibrams meant that the polish made little difference to the diffi- and no further wear has been apparent to me. It remains a straight-forward ascent.

There is one adverse change which could be avoided and this is the large increase of litter. The top of Tryfan, once a pleasant place to linger, now contains a remarkable concentration of litter in the form of cardboard cartons, cans, paper, orange and banana peel. The main ways up the mountain can almost be followed by the ubiquitous metal rings which come off when canned drinks are opened. Only the seagull benefits, for why else should it leave the sea for mountain ways in recent years? How many of us have eaten a guarded lunch on the mountain side watched greedily by a group of gulls perched on the rocks a few yards away? Litter to some extent has always existed. I remember during an ascent of the Great Gully on Snowdon many years ago under winter conditions hooking something large with my axe under the snow. When surfaced it turned out to be one complete upright end of an iron bedstead.

Guide books have come and gone. I believe that the

Abraham's brothers produced the first one with an attempt to list the climbs in order of difficulty. Their sections of Easy, Moderate, Difficult and Exceptionally Severe may well have been the origin of our present system. The last climbs listed and therefore the hardest in the district according to the authors are Monolith Crack and Twll Ddu, with a footnote which states that the Crack is more difficult than the Kitchen but not quite so dangerous.

The Abraham's book was published in 1906 to be followed in 1909 by the first of a series of three produced by the Climbers' Club. I think that the Club has been in charge ever since. The three books covered the Ogwen district, Lliwedd (a book to itself) and the Snowdon district. Any climber who read them would recognise them as the prototype of the modern guide. The Abraham's made a story of their ascent of the climb whilst these guides impart functional information. They differ from a current guide only because the writers cannot resist being imaginative now and then. No longer would you find such advice as is given for the cave pitch in Great Gully, Craig-y-Ysfa as, 'A novel expedient is to lay the palm of the right hand on the block, and using the arm as a pivot, perform a pirouette to the south: the climber thus lands in a sitting posture, with one leg thrust upwards to the roof to maintain equilibrium' and it ends, 'any Gallo, however, will complacently demand a shoulder'. We were nourished on these guides which, with such climbs as Tennis Shoe and the Direct on Glyder Fach at the high end of the grading we found within our scope. All the time, of course such climbers as Menlove Edwards and Colin Kirkus were pushing up the standard and naturally when the next series were produced by such men we had to be more choosy in our selection. There is no need to go further for the guide books of today are in the hands of true climbers. I wish though that I could remember more of the early days at Helyg. The only clear ones that remain are of fetching the water we needed from a stream in a bucket, and Menlove Edwards cooking the largest steak I had ever seen.

There has been a terrific escalation in the quantity of equipment used since the days when a pair of boots, a rope and an ice-axe were the lot. The change from nails to vibrams for walker

and climber alike is on the whole an advantage, though there have been many occasions when I would have preferred nails wet mossy rock, steep grass, especially when frozen, and packed snow. The wear and tear on the climbs has been reduced and the difficulty in attaining any particular grade lessened. They have led to the use of crampons under winter conditions in this country even for the walker, but they are rather a nuisance and so far I have only used them in the Alps. The waterproof trousers and anorak are a useful addition though they have a tendency only to reverse the process of getting ones clothes wet. This takes place from the inside outwards, a hot bath being preferable to a cold one. The additions to the rock climbers's hardware have increased steadily since the war slings, snap links, spuds, crash helmets to mention a few. Pitons came rather earlier. Some of the climbers of today seem so loaded up that walking must become a burden. Not long ago I bought a pair of Robert Lawrie's version of the P.A., meant for the expert on exceptionally hard climbs, and used by me to make life easier on straightforward rock. I recommend the investment to any other old age pensioners looking for support.

The burden of gadgets of course, has enabled the aces to put up the level of ultimate attainment, the general safety factor to be increased and some of the strain of leading to be removed. A less accomplished natural climber can perform safely using his technique at a grade he would otherwise find hazardous. On the other hand the climbing is so slow, which is fair enough provided it is realised that these methods alone simply won't work in the Alps. I also feel that comparative beginners spend more on equipment than is essential, partly to keep up with the Jones' on the next buttress.

I recently descended quickly a moderate route (why is it that one sees so little downward climbing except practice in roping down?) to find a party at the bottom getting ready for an ascent. They had the lot even harnesses from which it all dangled. One felt that surely this simple climb scarcely deserved such V.I.P. treatment. On the other hand, if the party enjoyed it this way then fair enough, and no comment from us until we were out of earshot.

A development which seems to have affected N.Wales

more than any other equivalent district is the rise of professionalism, by which is meant the increase from almost nil of the number of persons who earn or add to their living by climbing. If you total the numbers from Plas-y-Brenin, the other instructional centres and the free-lance guides you will find it quite considerable. Economically there is good reason for this. The farmers get their living from the grass, the water power boards from the water why shouldn't a living be obtained from the rocks? The professional standards are high. Since the thirties I have run boys' climbing parties and of recent years I have been helped by a qualiguide who is engaged to take a couple of boys out for a day's climbing. Without exception the boys have enjoyed the climbing and the companionship of the guide; climbs of the right standard have been chosen and the instruction has been good. The accent on safety has to be very big because the institution simply cannot afford an accident. I think though that some would agree that authentic adventure, and adventure is what it is all about, must have a modicum of real risk in place of simulated risk. This is not a serious criticism, safety must be the paramount consideration if these courses are to exist. One other point I have noticed is the very large numbers sometimes found on one rope say six beginners and a leader, with only one moving at a time. A slow and rather dull business I should have thought with a climb like the Milestone Pulpit just about filling in the day. My reasons for being anti rather than pro are really rather selfish ones. There is a tendency for it all to become a business, taped and exact, with some of the freedom and fun missing.

I feel uncomfortable under the stern eye of the guide watching me from the next climb; perhaps it's my belay that is wrong or is it my P.A.s which are being used on a climb designed for vibrams? It may be imagination but the feeling is that of a fellow who has turned up in a dinner jacket when lounge suits are the order of the day. Not very long ago my daughter, a friend, and myself were just starting up the East face of Tryfan on an easy ascent and were in fact traversing across the rocks at the bottom of N. Gully in order to

were roped up but moving more than one at a time as one does on easy rock, and there was conversation and laughter too. In

fact, we were enjoying ourselves when a climber in charge of two girls descending Heather Terrace, stopped to watch. For a minute or two nothing was said than loud and clear we heard 'Move on girls, this is disgraceful' or words to that effect. What worries me is that we might have been meant to hear. It is good to see the unorthodox as I did when an elderly figure in gymshoes emerged from the top chimney of the Rowan Route, took up his stance and hauled in the rope. When the lower end appeared there was no-one attached to it. He just enjoyed his solos this way.

It was enjoyable at the beginning and it is enjoyable today even after a hundred or so ascents and descents on the old Milestone. The Horseshoe is still an inviting prospect and careful timing will still avoid the queue at the bottom of Crib Goch and the congestion on the ridge above which can be likened to a car journey from Bettws to Shrewsbury on a summer Sunday evening. The empty places are still to be found, whether it be on cliff or on gentle mountain side, and, if at the end of the day ones satisfaction is a little curbed, then it is probably due to the limitations of age rather than those imposed by the changing environment.

METEOROLOGY AND CLIMBING

BASIC INTRODUCTION *by P. Davies*

'To the climber in North Wales in the summer' the only aspect of the weather of any interest is the likelihood and duration of rainfall.

Being a coastal mountain area in a South-westerly airstream we can say that rain will fall frequently and for long periods. It is a well known fact that it rains more often on the high cliffs than on the low cliffs and that when it rains in Llanberis it is frequently dry on Anglesey and at Tremadoc. This is about as much as it is necessary to know in summer when the wind and temperature seldom keep the real enthusiast from the rock. However, in winter when considering snow and ice climbs, length of day, snow surface, depth and type of snow and likelihood of overnight freezing are factors of the utmost importance. The climber who understands them is far less likely to be disappointed by finding that his ice climb is either not there or is covered in feet of new powdered snow.

'In this introduction to the weather of the area it is the intention firstly to describe the effect of the different airstreams and weather systems and secondly to explain phenomena such as rain, snow and ice with reference to their effect on the climber. This is not a technical treatise and the trained meteorologist will note many generalisations. For a more accurate and detailed explanation of the weather phenomena the reader can refer to a more comprehensive text book.

The origin of the prevailing airstream is of paramount importance in forecasting the weather. It is useful therefore that the climber be able to read a synoptic weather chart of the type printed in the national newspapers.

The climate of the British Isles is mild and noticeably changeable. The main features of the weather systems affecting us are the middle latitude depressions (Cyclones) which we generally associate with bad unsettled weather, and the high pressure area (Anticyclones) which we associate with more settled weather

long dry spells in summer and winter. Depressions are areas of low pressure which form in the North Atlantic. The wind circulation around these depressions is anticlockwise in the northern hemisphere and slightly in towards the centre. Around Northern hemisphere high pressure areas the wind circulation is clockwise and the wind blows slightly outwards. Areas of equal pressure are joined by lines known as isobars - black lines circling the high or low pressure areas.

A low pressure area over Iceland as indicated in diagram(1) would result in a S.Westerly airstream over the U.K. and a high pressure area over Iceland diagram (2) would result in a north-easterly airstream over the country. Obviously these high and low pressure areas could be in positions other than those illustrated and it would be a relatively easy matter to determine the resulting direction of the airstream.

The following table of the properties of the various airstreams gives a fairly reliable guide to general conditions in North Wales.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Artic maritime. Northerly. | Very cold air coming across the Arctic Sea brings snow to North Wales high ground which remains until a change in the airstream over the area occurs. Snow on south facing slopes will possibly melt in the afternoon sun but almost certainly refreeze during the characteristically cold frosty nights. |
| 2. Polar Maritime West to North-West. | Similar to Arctic maritime more moist having come over the sea for longer and at a lower latitude. Warmer for the same reason, there- |

Diagram 1

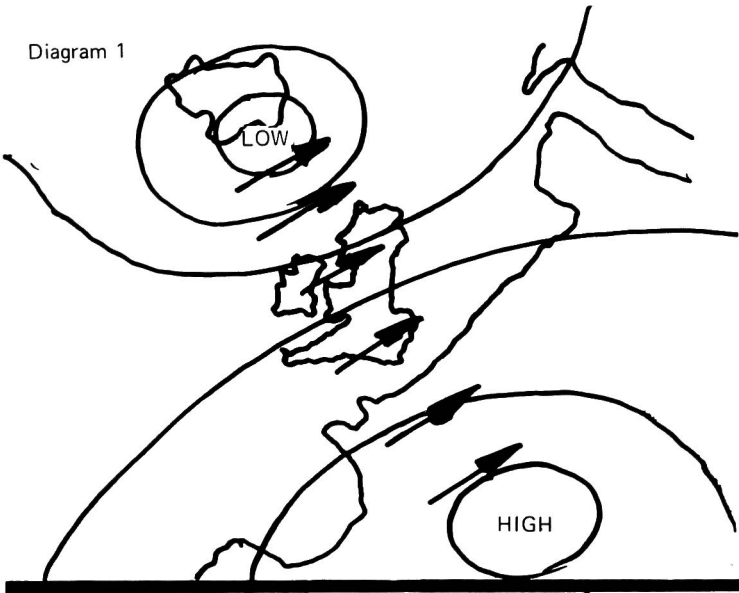
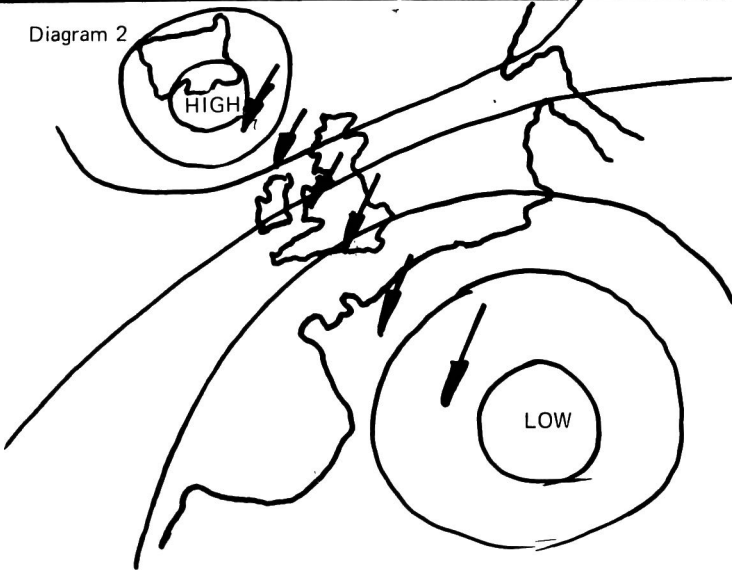
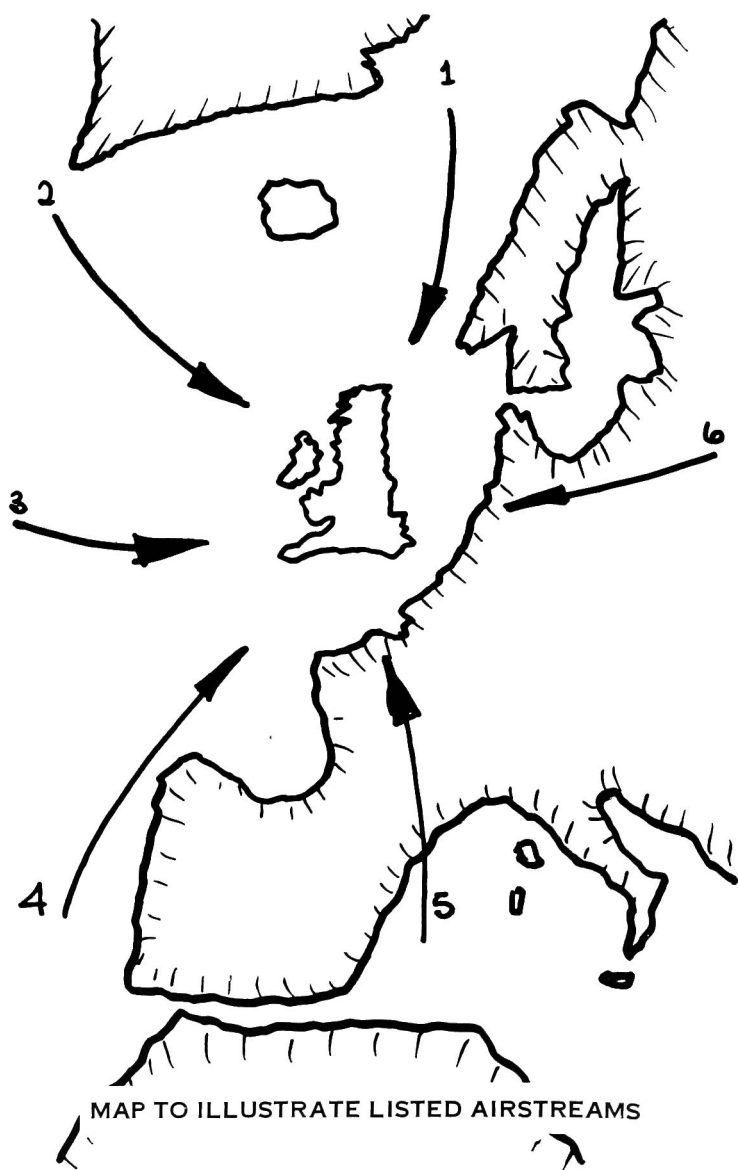


Diagram 2

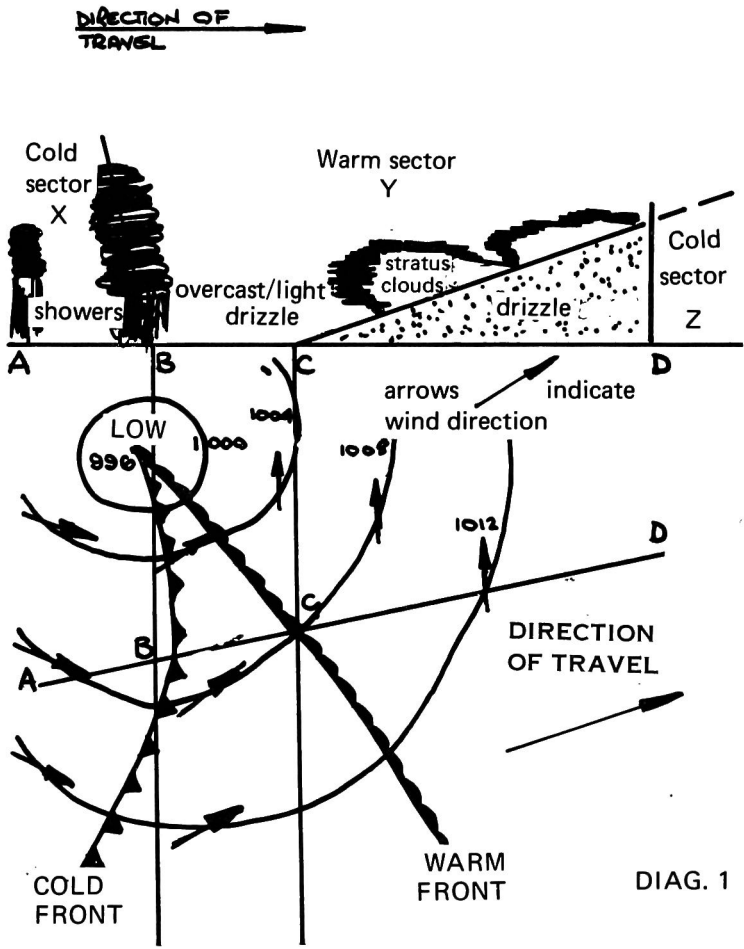




- | | |
|---|---|
| | fore more snow and more tendency to melt during the day, although generally the nights are cold enough to freeze the snow. |
| 3 Returning Polar. Maritime South-West to Westerly. | Comparatively moist warm air bringing almost certain rain to high ground of the continuous drizzle type
Snow is not likely to fall under conditions. |
| 4 Tropical Maritime. South-West | As the name implies, warm moist air from low latitudes bringing over-cast skies with drizzle, fog and mist in coastal areas. |
| 6 Continental Polar. Easterly. | Cold unusually dry air from the Continent. Some snow on high ground in the West, but dry and sunny - which would melt snows on the south facing slopes but these would freeze during the night. |
| 5 Continental Tropical. Southerly. | Similar to the continental polar but milder; less snow and warmer nights. |

In the diagram above is illustrated in meteorological symbols a depression with associated warm and cold fronts. The warm front is indicated by the line edged with half circles and the cold front by the line edged with cones; an occluded front occurs when the warm sector is lifted off the ground by the cold sectors and is represented by a line edged alternatively with cones and not always associated with depressions but the weather experienced during the passage of the various fronts is the same wherever they occur. A cross-section through the depression along the line ABCD gives the view (2), which shows that the depression comprises three sectors of air, two cold and one warm. In our diagram the depression is moving in a North-Easterly direction (1) and from left to right in (2). Sector X is the coldest

CROSS SECTION THROUGH NORTHERN HEMISPHERE DEPRESSION



and is moving faster than the sector Y which is the warm sector, this results in the warm air being forced to rise up the shallow gradient of the warm front. The increase in altitude of this air is gradual and the moisture which condenses out of it falls steadily as drizzle, increasing as the warm front approaches. Haze and mist will reduce visibility to a maximum of about six miles: Holyhead Island would be obscured from Snowdon.

The main feature of the passage of the warm front is a virtual stoppage of the rain and an increase in temperature.

In the warm sector the sky is likely to be overcast with slight drizzle. As the cold front approaches, the temperature falls and the wind increases in force, the front may be observed visually as the clouds associated with it are towering cumulus, giving very showery rain.

From the diagram (2) we can see that the slope between the sectors X & Y is steep and as X is moving faster than Y the air in the warm sector is forced to rise quickly which is why the clouds have great vertical development unlike those of the warm-front. It is very fast drop in temperature due to the rapid ascent of air at this front which causes so much rain to fall in the showers.

At the front itself the wind suddenly changes direction to the right (as much as 45°) the temperature drops suddenly, visibility improves except in showers and it should be possible to see past Holyhead Island, altitude permitting.

Rainfall in North Wales is one of three types:

(A) Cyclonic rain, which is rain caused by the passage of warm and cold fronts such as are found in depressions.

(B) Relief rain which is caused as the name suggests by the relief characteristics of the local area, i.e. the mountains.

(C) Convectional rain caused by local heating.

When Cyclonic rain conditions exist rainfall will be noticeably widespread and the coast will also be affected.

Relief rain is formed when dry air mass is forced to rise

above the condensation level by mountain ranges such as Cwm Silyn, Snowdon, etc. In this case the coast may well be dry, if not fine and clear.

Convictional rain is responsible for afternoon showers on hot days and is due to local heating above towns or sheltered valleys where the air adjacent to the ground is heated by direct contact and rises, cooling all the time until the temperature falls below the dew point and condensed moisture falls as rain.

WHY RAIN FALLS ON THE PEAKS.

A mass of air can contain a certain amount of water vapour at a given temperature. If this temperature is either decreased or increased the ability of the air to contain water vapour is affected. Warm air can absorb more moisture than cold air.

The water vapour referred to is invisible and it is only possible to tell how much moisture is present by accurate measurement with instruments.

The ratio of the maximum amount of water vapour an air mass can contain to the actual amount contained is known as the relative humidity. When the relative humidity is 100% it means that the air at that temperature is unable to hold any more water vapour and is said to be saturated. Should the temperature be further lowered excess water vapour will condense into water droplets forming clouds. The level at which this occurs varies and is known as the condensation level, easily identifiable as this is the cloud base.

Dry air, that is to say air that is not saturated, falls in temperature at the rate of approximately $5\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ per 1,000 feet. Saturated air falls in temperature at the rate of approximately 3° per 1,000 feet. (*fahrenheit*)

These rates of fall of temperature are important to the climber as it will be necessary for him to know what the temperature will be at whatever height he wishes to climb.

These temperature changes with height are known as the lapse rates and vary between the two figures given for different air masses.

An observer in a valley notes that the air temperature is 45° F assuming that the dew point is around 40° F, the cloud

base could be expected to be 1,000 feet above him (in mountains), the air temperature having dropped at about $5\frac{1}{2}/1,000$ feet of altitude. Beyond this point the air is saturated and moisture has condensed and remains in suspension as minute droplets. Ascending further the temperature of the air drops at the rate of about $3^{\circ}/1,000$ feet and we can normally predict that, after a further 3,000 the temperature is expected to have dropped below freezing. Here condensed moisture either freezes forming ice crystals which fall as snow or remain as supercooled water droplets.

Water has the property of being able to remain in a liquid state below its freezing point provided the droplet in suspension is not brought into contact with any foreign body. Such moisture can remain in a liquid state when its temperature is up to twenty degrees below its freezing point under normal circumstances. When this occurs the drops are said to be supercooled and when deposited or brought into contact with any foreign body - such as the side of the mountain - they will immediately freeze solid.

The speed with which this change of state takes place is so great that air is trapped in the ice giving it a distinctive white appearance.

This type of ice is formed when freezing fog from a cold airstream is in contact with the mountain side. The mountain surface does not have to be below freezing for this to occur but does for it to remain. If the ground is below freezing any moist air passing over it will be cooled below its dew point and moisture deposited.

As the surface is below freezing point this moisture will gradually turn to ice as its temperature is lowered by direct contact with the surface this results in black ice being formed. Known to climbers as verglas. This ice is extremely hard and difficult to see and can make an easy way off as difficult as a hard climb. The conditions most favourable to the forming of this kind of ice are clear nights allowing great loss of heat due to the earth's radiation, or North facing cliffs which receive no direct sunshine.

SNOW

Generally speaking the lower the temperature during a snowfall the less dense will be the snow, on a cold day it would be quite usual to sink up to the waist in the fresh fall. This is due to the fact that the ice crystals forming the snow due to their irregular shape are packing badly, their spines preventing the forming of a compact mass. After the fall has ended ice evaporation commences which very soon results in the spines and other irregularities of the crystal melting which allows the crystals to pack tighter. The water vapour from the evaporated spines refreezes on the main part of the crystal and adjacent crystals thus binding the whole mass of snow. This process is known as 'firnification' and takes place in nearly all snow; the rate depending on the temperature, speed and moisture content of the prevailing wind at the time.

The direct effect of the sun's rays on snow slopes may accelerate the firnification process as the rays cause the surface snow to melt during the day. If the night temperature is sufficiently low to refreeze this then a good climbing surface will result.

Rain, provided that it is not too heavy, would, if frozen at night, accelerate the consolidation of the snow slope.

WIND PACKING

This occurs on both windward and leeward slopes resulting in the formation of wind slabs and wind crusts.

Only with a moisture laden wind will the snow surface harden. A dry wind merely accelerates evaporation into the atmosphere and does not contribute to a good climbing surface.

On windward slopes moist winds driving onto the snow surface deposit moisture which immediately freezes on contact with the surface cementing the top layer of snow. The important point to note is that the crust is bound onto the slope and is safe to climb.

Wind slab is formed generally on the leeward or less exposed slopes where the wind has less force and tends to deposit more moisture. A thick crust is formed but there is no force

driving the crust onto the snow beneath and this shrinks gradually away due to firnification. The result of this is that a slab of frozen moisture is formed which covers the snow surface but is not bound to it. Attempts at step cutting on wind slab could easily result in the whole slab avalanching with the characteristic pistol crack warning beforehand.

SAFETY

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on this aspect of winter climbing in this country. The familiar paths and ridges walked in the summer by tourists are hardly recognisable when covered by snow and ice. Days are short and the climber who starts a route after the lunchtime 'session' may well be committed to a descent in the dark. Never a good idea at any time in winter with ice in the gullies, it has in the past proved fatal.

The surface of the earth is heated almost entirely by the direct action of the sun, therefore when the sun falls below the horizon in the late afternoon, the surface radiates heat it has stored during the day and the temperature falls.

A cloudy sky will contain this heat in the lower levels of atmosphere and the heat loss and fall in temperature will be reduced. A clear sky provides no moderating effect and the temperature falls dramatically reaching a minimum shortly before dawn.

It is these very low night temperatures that the winter climber must prepare for when deciding upon his choice of equipment. Food, extra clothing, a torch, whistle and map are necessities and the climber who thinks otherwise would do well to remember that people have died in North Wales due to a night on the hills as a result of a twisted ankle.

Before leaving for a route in winter tell some responsible person where you are going and how long you expect to be. In the summer you may survive after breaking a limb in a fall; in winter if nobody knows where you are, you will not.

Winter comes and the tourists drive south; of the climbers left in the area only a proportion are enthusiastic enough to visit the more distant crags. Climbers are likely to be the only people within miles of the crags. It is therefore essential that you are not

the only rope on the cliff. Two ropes of two climbers should be the minimum under these circumstances.

All this emphasis on safety and the reminders of the severity of the winter may seem unnecessary but the casualty figures speak for themselves. Meteorologists have referred to certain bad weather periods as being Arctic conditions. Every winter this occurs, even in Wales, Concentration on care and safety on an Alpine level are required.

WIND CHILL EFFECT TABLE

Windspeed in M.P.H.	Actual air temperature in °F					
	50	40	30	20	10	0
5	48	36	27	17	-5	-5
10	40	29	18	5	-8	-20
20	32	18	4	-10	-23	-34
30	28	13	-5	-18	-33	-44
40	26	10	-7	-21	-37	-52
50	25	8	-9	-23	-40	-55

ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER*

by C.E. Davies

The scene across Llyn Padarn when viewed from the Llanberis Pass Road is such as to create an impression of complete desecration. Hundreds of feet of piled up slate debris appear, at first glance, to completely engulf the side of Elidyr Fawr, the source of all the debris apparently confined to an area adjacent to the lake side.

A closer investigation, now that the whole of the workings have ceased to be productive, will enlighten and most certainly provide considerable interest and entertainment to anyone exploring the area, particularly in the upper and generally older workings. These basically consist of a series of deep excavations through the slate, with inter-communicating tunnels, walkways and inclines, all of which can provide view-points for some fantastic rock scenery, which accesss allowing, could well become a future playground for the rock climber as the supply of new lines on naturally exposed rock runs out.

In early 1970 after walking over Elidyr Fawr, I descended with John Woodhead into the upper workings of the quarry, and as well as the other very interesting areas, was immediately extremely impressed with the North Side of the Twll Mawr, (meaning the big hole). This wall some 600 ft. in height does not appear to have been worked for many years, debris being noticeably absent from the ledges. Also, vegetation in the form of a few trees and gorse bushes added to the impression that this area could well provide a new outlet for interesting routes of impressive length and exposure, on basically stable rock.

It appeared from the first viewing, that accesss to the base of the wall would have to be by means of three abseils down the South Side wall with the complication of having to leave in position fixed ropes for prussiking back, in the likely event of retreat being necessary. Discussions at the time with Joe revealed scepticism on his behalf at the reliability of the rock and the

* With acknowledgement to Alistair Borthwick.

idea was not pursued for another twelve months, and even then only a fortuitous set of circumstances led to the two of us one afternoon at Easter 1971, finding ourselves examining Twll Mawr, with the aid of binoculars. We were both immediately not only greatly impressed but also greatly inspired.

This more detailed examination of the walls revealed the basically sound nature of the rock, as well as a continuity of certainly one prominent line in the centre of the North Side Wall. It also revealed that the hole contained a tunnel giving access to a terrace in the South Wall approximately 200 ft. above the very lowest part of the whole and some 120 ft. above the lowest terrace. The problem was firstly to find the other end of the tunnel amongst the piles of slate debris lower down the mountain side overlooking Llyn Padarn.

We descended the debris, eventually finding, after some hazardous moments, a hidden terrace with a tunnel apparently leading in the right direction. With more than a little trepidation we set off into the darkening tunnel, eventually ending upon all fours following for guidance the old railway lines, the steady drip of water and total darkness ahead causing considerable doubts in both our minds as to the advisability of pressing on. Unwisely, neither of us had given any intimation to anybody else as to where we were going, which conjured up visions of us being lost for ever in the depths of the quarry, if anything should happen.

It soon became clear that the reason for the lack of light at the far end was partly due to a wooden doorway, and most disturbing, that the end was practically blocked. We eventually arrived at a shaft of light amongst an enormous pile of blocks. We were at the end of the tunnel where it had originally entered the very base of Twll Mawr, and were actually some 200 ft. lower than intended.

It seemed probable that an attempt had been made to block off this tunnel by means of a man-made avalanche, and the first impression was that this had been achieved.

Fortunately, there was a way, though dangerous, through the piled up boulders above our heads, and after some debate we gingerly threaded our way through to arrive standing on the debris, below the towering walls. The scene was staggering, 700 ft. above

our heads was the rim of Twll Mawr on the North Side. To the West, smooth yellow walls rose for over 400 ft. with only the terrace some 100 ft. above our heads to break the sweep of rock. On the South Side, although twice terraced, the wall was still impressive in its verticality and basic smoothness. Our immediate impression when standing beneath the North Side wall was that we were looking up an alpine face, this impression being added to by a fairly constant clatter of stone fall down the obvious tunnels in the slate debris on the East Side, the source of the avalanche blocking the tunnel and the cries of the disturbed resident Chough now circling the walls.

We spent an hour or so in the lower reaches of Twll Mawr, examining and generally considering the feasibility of various lines on the walls above, before deciding to try and extricate ourselves by means other than descending into the dangerous lower tunnel.

Devoid of any equipment of any type, we managed to climb a very steep smooth corner amongst the avalanche tunnels in the east Face, giving access to a debris filled Ledge, which with some exposure, and one awkward step, led to the terrace in the South Wall which contains the original tunnel that we had seen from the rim above. In some doubt as to the other end of this tunnel being blocked on the other side we hurried across the terrace and to our relief found that this tunnel was only some 100 yards long, leading out on to a small terrace hidden amongst the walls and debris on the side overlooking Llyn Padarn. This was obviously the most simple safest and convenient way for future access.

Next day we were back, Joe Smith (Morty) coming along as third man, with John Woodhead taking photographs from the tunnel and the rim.

From the end of the access tunnel in the South West corner, a rusty steel ladder descends the face below for 40 ft leaving a further 80 ft. to the lower terrace. Climbing down and abseiling off the end gave a fitting entry to Twll Mawr. The North Side wall, actually facing South, was bathed in sunshine and the 'line of the wall' a prominent slanting crack and groove running the full height appeared tremendously impressive. A

start was made at a point where the terrace abutted the wall, Joe leading a steep 120 ft. pitch on good sound rock, giving access to a large grass ledge below the junction of the wall with the West Side.

The line lay over to the right necessitating a traverse of 80 ft. on rather friable rock. Joe took a rather low line which led to the foot of a corner below the base of the crack line. He was not impressed, the rock just in this zone was appalling, being shattered and very friable as well as overhanging. After a few very tentative attempts he decided to come back to our commodious, comfortable sun trap complete with sandwiches and beer.

Morty suggested having a look at a line on the left, where the angle for a considerable distance appeared more amenable before merging into a very steep zone at the junction with the smooth yellow West wall. From below, it was impossible to determine whether or not there was a continuance of the line either at the steepening or above it. Nor could John Woodhead, over the rim, further enlighten us.

Traversing left across a short steep wall, Joe managed to gain a series of cracks and grooves in a slanting line running up to the foot of the yellow wall. Four pitches of enjoyable climbing on sound and exposed rock brought us to the Mauvais Pas. To our relief, a perfect width crack for hand-jamming, which was completely invisible from below, led in 70 ft. to a good stance on a pillar in the West wall. As easy traversing pitch to the right brought us back into the upper reaches of the North Side wall, at which point we could see the route was ours. Two further pleasant pitches composed of short steep walls in between small ledges brought us to the summit, at a point at the end of the originally attempted line. We discovered that we were, in fact, on a dividing ridge between Twll Mawr and another quarry hole beyond. An unusually complicated descent, until we realised the necessity for continuing upwards first across a zone of debris and slate, brought us eventually back to the quarry road via an old incline.

We had completed what we all agreed was a most enjoyable route, continuously interesting at about Severe standard, with one slightly harder pitch other than the first (later avoided by Peter Crew and Ian McNaught-Davis making a second ascent a

few days later). The length of approximately 600 ft. together with the position, rock scenery and continuity, gives all the ingredients for a very popular route. We called it Opening Gambit, to represent the first moves in the development of a new crag.

Our failure on the 'line of the wall' obviously played on Joe's mind. Next day, abandoning our original plan to do an Anglesey sea level girdle, we were back in Tŵll Mawr equipped with a full range of modern aids, including a jingling, cardboard, box of unspecified contents.

Four of us were soon back on the comfortable stance, at the top of the first pitch, the sun once again bathing the walls in shimmering light. We had been joined for the attempt by John Woodhead, again complete with camera. Joe decided on a slightly different line to reach the crack. Instead of travelling to the foot of the corner, he climbed diagonally upwards on steeper rock to arrive directly beneath the crack and above the loose corner. A convenient ledge over to the right provided a stance which I moved over to. The angle of the wall above was most deceptive. From below, we had estimated it at around 75 degrees. It was now apparent that for an initial section at least the crack was overhanging and would need aid. Unfortunately, the rock in the crack was as in the corner below, very shattered. Loose blocks and a friable veneer did not inspire any confidence in the supporting qualities of the three pegs which Joe managed to place in the first 15 ft. Wisely, he retreated back to the stance and the contents of the cardboard box were revealed. A bolting kit complete with alloy angles was soon being put to use. Two bolts in the firm rock just to the right of the crack, eliminated the necessity for the loose pegs and relieved some of the tension. The installation of the bolts, due in part to difficulties experienced with the bolt holder, took over an hour, and it became obvious for the route to be complete in the day-light hours remaining, only two of us ought to continue. Morty and John Woodhead behind on the first stance, decided to abseil off and retreat via the bottom tunnel.

Above the bolts, Joe continued in the crack line which provided free climbing as well as a considerable amount of gardening, until he reached after a further 60 ft. a small stance.

Having suitably reinforced this with two peg belays he brought me up. The bolts were left in position complete with their alloy angles for further parties. The crack line continued, and two further long difficult pitches gave exhilarating climbing in the most exposed position. Below, the base of Twll Mawr was now in deep shadow, the sun having dropped below the rim, whilst above us, the crack line still bathed in sunshine, appeared most unpleasant and difficult. The unpleasantness was mainly due to the existence of a large and extremely prickly gorse bush effectively blocking the landing at the top of an overhanging section. After struggling with this, and eventually successfully climbing through Joe was confronted by several more spaced out in the continuation of the crack line. He decided that the more open area to our left would be more reasonable, and after a trying move, leading to a good ledge he was able to take a stance which I moved up to. A further pitch up a zone of short steep walls, interspersed with small ledges, brought us to a junction with Opening Gambit close to the top of the crag. We were soon standing on the summit, it was seven hours since we had entered the access tunnel. We called the route Hamadryad, a particularly fierce and large snake.

The two routes which we had now completed not enroached upon the steeper and more impressive section of the North side wall of Twll Mawr. To the right of Hamadryad the wall contains a series of imposing overhangs with no continuity of lines except at the far right hand end, close to the avalanche debris of the East side. However, just to the right of Hamadryad an impressing crack line, petering out at about third height in one of the overhanging sections appeared to be a possibility which we next turned our attentions to.

A week later we were once again in Twll Mawr, approaching the foot of the wall via the abseil and the avalanche debris of the East side. An easy angled zone of grooves and slabs brought us to a ledge after 150 ft. Above the ledge the angle steepened and a short crack gave access to another ledge below the main crack line of the intended route.

Joe moved into the crack but was soon forced to move out

due to the large loose flakes which dominate the upper and most overhanging section. Two bolts fixed in the blank 10 ft. above the ledge allowed a tentative perusal of the zone above which from below had appeared to fall back slightly. Joe's first impression was not very encouraging and we decided to abandon the first attempt for another day.

During the mid-week Joe made a further attempt with Peter Crew, managing to move right from his previous highest position until an easy traverse for 30 feet right led to a superb hidden stance in a slabby zone. The next 120 ft. provided enjoyable slab climbing until another zone of overhanging rock was reached where once again the line petered out. Retreat from this position necessitated three very long abseils back into the base of Twll Mawr.

A further mid-week visit by Joe and Alan Hunt resulted in another retreat from the fourth stance, this time in heavy rain.

The route had now become more than an ordinary challenge in view of the number of hours spent on it. Weekend found us once more on the face, Joe quickly with familiarity moving out to the stance at the end of the traverse on the third pitch. It was my onerous task to climb the route complete with rucksack, containing a spare 150 ft. rope, spare slings, pegs, etc, and cans of beer. I found the move up from the second bolt more than slightly awkward, seriously contemplating sack hauling for the rest of the route. However the next pitch restored my confidence and the previous high point was reached. The weather had been gradually deteriorating whilst we had been engrossed in the pitches below and it was now obvious that if Joe could not solve the problem of the next section in half an hour retreat would again be necessary.

Following the earlier attempts Joe had given a lot of thought to the next section and the spare rope I was carrying was the result. He climbed quickly up the steep section above to a point where at 40 ft. he was able to fix a good tape runner through which he threaded the spare rope. Using this for aid he was able to pendulum across leftwards around the arete enabling a shallow corner line, slanting up towards the top, to be gained. This led with some difficulty to a good stance 120 ft. higher. My

turn arrived as the thunderstorm broke and it quickly became apparent that the nature of the rock is such that climbing in the rain is virtually impossible. I reverted to using my knees as much as possible with, together with a comforting rope from above, enabled me to reach Joe, saturated but now content, on a ledge with easier rock above. Even the easy rock which we now had to climb to reach the summit ridge proved tricky in the conditions and it was sometime before we eventually arrived back in the lower workings. This route we called the Razor's Edge, in view of the dangerous nature of the arete on the rope move on the critical fifth pitch.

At the time of writing, further lines, not only Twll Mawr, are being investigated and only the future will reveal to what extent this new climbing area will fit into the climbing scene.

MEDICINE ON MOUNT EVEREST 1971

PETER STEELE

Southmead Hospital, Bristol

MANY misfortunes befell the International Himalayan Expedition (I.H.E.'71) to Mount Everest; not least was the high rate of illness among members and Sherpas alike.

The march-in from Kathmandu to Base Camp (17,800 ft.) in Solu Khumbu, the region where Mount Everest lies and where the sherpas live, was almost problem-free and pure pleasure. The Icefall, 2000 ft. high, where the Khumbu Glacier spills over "like a crushed meringue" from the Western Cwm or Valley of Silence, is a mass of tottering ice walls, pinnacled seracs, and deep, tangled crevasses walled in by avalanche slopes. This year the Icefall was in a particularly difficult and dangerous condition, and we took nearly two weeks to find a way through and make it safe for the passage of men and the transport of stores and equipment through to the Advance Base Camp II, lying under the steep South-West Face, from which the climbing really began.

Bad weather started in mid-April and blizzard conditions continued for two weeks unabated at a season that usually has clear and stable weather. Kathmandu was then having monsoon-like rains and the worst weather in living memory.

Our Indian member, Harsh Bahuguna, died of exposure at 23,500 ft. while descending from Camp III on the West Ridge route in a storm. A rescue was attempted, but it was too late to be of use. The rescue party itself narrowly avoided having to stay out in the appalling wind and cold for the night, which

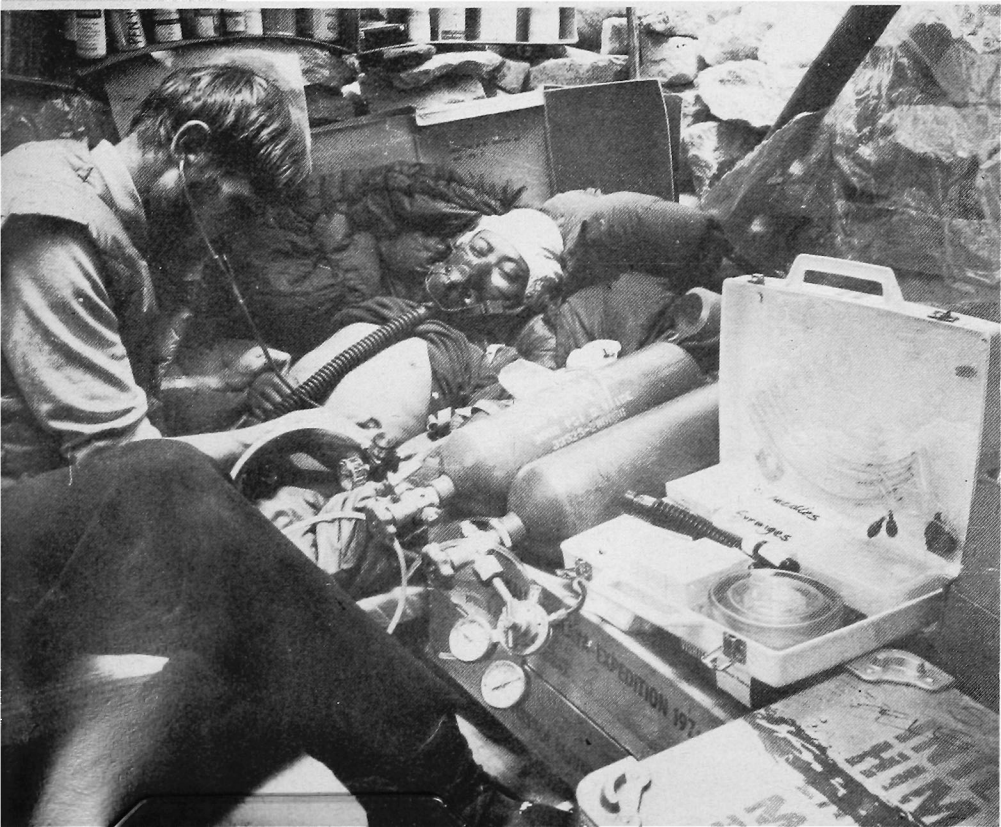
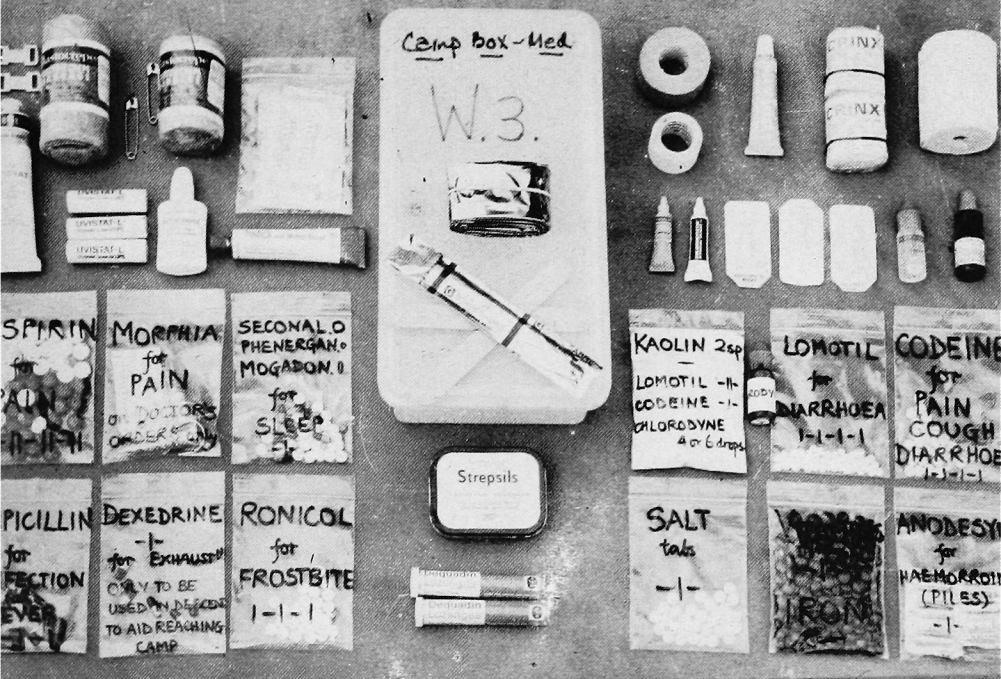
Individual medical box.

they would not have survived. The effect of this tragedy on morale was catastrophic, and, after being stormbound in our tents under near-starvation conditions at Camp II for a fortnight when no food could be brought through the Cwm from Camp I because of continual snow and high winds, the physical condition of the climbers who were there became severely lowered.

After the storm passed it was decided to abandon the West Ridge route and to concentrate all efforts on the Face Diretissima route because we were a month behind schedule and short of essential supplies at Camp II, and snow conditions on the West Ridge were bad. Some European members saw their own personal summit prospects fading after this decision. They sadly decided to quit the expedition, which up till then had been remarkable for its spirit of international friendship.

At Camp II sickness first hit the expedition on May 1. 4 cases of pneumonia and 1 of phlebitis had to be evacuated. I decided to move all medical work down to Base Camp, where facilities were adequate, leaving Dr. David Peterson (U.S.A.) at Camp II, from which he would pass on anyone who was sick. (The criterion of sickness was inability to perform a full day's work on the mountain.) In an emergency a patient could have been brought down to base in six hours on the toboggan-stretcher kept at Camp II.

Soon afterwards a glandular-fever-like epidemic started, so that at the end of May, owing to illness and departures, only 4 of the original team of 22 climbers (there were also 9 members of a B.B.C. team) were left to climb the mountain. These 4 were the only members of the expedition to have clean medical record cards. 2 Japanese climbers spent three weeks maintaining





2 Britons out in front, although their own chances of going to the summit were negligible. These 4 spent twenty-three days at 25,000–27,500 ft. This is an unequalled record of altitude endurance made possible by true internationalism. Was this failure ?

PRELIMINARIES

Because members of the expedition came from thirteen different countries scattered across the world (Austria, France, India, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, U.S.A., West Germany, Australia) it was not possible to have a preliminary medical examination, and so a questionnaire was sent to each member: (1) blood-group and hæmoglobin estimation (one member had to sign away his heart and lungs as a potential donor before he could get this done); chest X-ray for pre- and post-expedition comparison; Mantoux testing and B.C.G. if necessary; inoculations (smallpox, cholera, T.A.B., tetanus, poliomyelitis); urine analysis; dental overhaul; hæmorrhoid check; relevant past history, especially whether appendicectomy had been performed and whether there was any drug sensitivity. One reply summarised the situation succinctly: "My body is O.K."

Medical supplies were all gathered in England and given free by the generosity of a large number of companies. They totalled twelve 60 lb. loads (about the same weight of beer was carried in 1200 cans). Everything left over at the end of the expedition was given to Sir Edmund Hillary's hospital at Kunde, run for the benefit of the sherpas—a small thank-offering for their excellent service. Medicines were left at camps in boxes, and also put in boxes for each

individual member of the expedition to tide him over until he reached a camp, as follows:

Camp box.—Marker pen; 'Elastocrepe' 4 in. (1), 3 in. (1); 'Crinx' 1 in. (2); 'Micropore' 1 in. (1); 'Elastoplast' 3 in. (1), 1 in. (1); dressings assorted; safety-pins (2); bandage clips (2); space blanket (1); scalpel disposable (1); spatulae (2); 'Uvistat' sun cream (1), lip cream (3); 'Iodex' with methyl salicylate cream (1); 'Savlon' antiseptic cream (1); 'Otosporin' ear-drops (1); 'Otrivine-Antistin' nose-spray (1); 'Strepsils' (1 tin); 'Dequadin' (2 tubes); 'Chloromycetin' eye ointment (1); 'Betnesol N' eye ointment (1); 'Brolene' eye-drops (1); 'Ampins' amethocaine and homatropine 2%; 'Ampins' neomycin; morphine ('Omnoyon') (2); aspirin; 'Seconal'; 'Phenergan'; 'Mogadon'; kaolin powder; 'Lomotil'; codeine phosphate; chlorodyne drops; ampicillin; 'Dexedrine'; 'Ronicol'; salt; vitamins and iron; 'Anodesyn' suppositories.

Individual box (fig. 1).—Crinx 1 in. (1); elastoplast dressings; savlon cream; space blanket; uvistat sun cream, lip cream; otrivine-antistin nose-spray; dequadin; betnesol N eye-ointment; amethocaine eye-drops; aspirin; codeine phosphate; lomotil; seconal; mogadon; phenergan; ronicol; anodesyn suppositories.

Medical records were kept in a card-index file, and where possible every visit was noted (see table).

Medical problems are divided into (a) those during the march-in from Kathmandu to Base Camp from Feb. 28 to March 23, and (b) those on the Hill from March 24 to May 21.

THE MARCH-IN

This was a period of gentle ambling through beautiful foothills among the finest mountain scenery in the world. The route crosses the geographical grain of the country between valleys at 4000 ft. and passes of 12,000 ft.—in all, about 200 miles distance. The final stage of acclimatisation rises steadily to Base Camp at 17,800 ft. The illnesses we encountered are discussed in order of their frequency of occurrence. Throughout we had the help of an excellent Sherpa, Ang Tsering

Namche, who had no previous medical training. He was taught to do injections (fig. 2), dressing, and treatments. We are trying to arrange for him to go for training as a male nurse.

Gastrointestinal Tract

Diarrhœa of a non-specific, usually non-infective nature occurred in 14 members, of whom 6 had two or more attacks. These caused inconvenience and distress on the march. Much encouragement was needed to persuade people to drink sufficient fluid (5-7 litres per day) to compensate for their large losses in stool added to their unusual sweat loss from taking heavy exercise while not yet being in good physical training.

A "blunderbuss cocktail" rarely failed to cure the diarrhœa with one dose: kaolin 2 tablespoons, 'Lomotil' 2-4 tablets, codeine phosphate 30 mg., tincture of morphine 4 drops by day or 6 drops at night. The patient was always warned that it might make him sleepy (one member, who should have known better, took a nap on the first pitch of an ice gulley climb near acclimatisation camp and had to be lowered off). If the diarrhœa did not cease on this regimen, after worms and amœbæ had been excluded by stool inspection, and if fever was present, an infective cause was presumed and 'Streptotriad' or lomotil with neomycin was then added to the cocktail in full doses.

National characteristics began to emerge in members' preoccupation with the state of their bowels. The Americans wished everyone, and myself in particular, to be interested in their intestinal function and expected to know the state of everyone else's. The Continentals were particularly concerned with their regularity and adopted the morning greeting "gute Reise, gute Scheise".

Pruritus ani occurred in 3 persons with severe diarrhœa, owing possibly to the coarseness of expedition issue toilet-paper, and improved with 'Anodesyn' ointment.

Intestinal parasites.—Round and pin worms were found in 2 sherpas and were cured with 'Alcopar' (bephenium hydroxynaphthoate). Amœbic dysentery, with blood and mucus in the stool, occurred in 1 porter and responded to 'Flagyl' (metronidazole). No members suffered from intestinal parasites. In 1922, Bruce took farewell of Smythe, who was going to Everest, thus: "Good luck, look after yourself, and don't forget to worm your porters."

Muscles and Joints

During the first weeks vague aches and pains afflicted the less fit and overweight members of the party, who carried little more than their umbrellas (expedition-type, bright red, short-handled, predisposing to frozen shoulder, and better suited to a shopping outing in Knightsbridge). Similar discomforts were a common complaint of the porters (many of them women and boys), who carried loads of 80 lb. and more. 'Iodex' with methyl salicylate was a much-liked inunction (*malish*), its colour and smell playing a major part in therapy because of the length of time of rubbing necessary to remove the black stain.

Blisters

Blisters, if unbroken, were burst with a sterile needle, the redundant skin removed, and the area sprayed with compound tincture of benzoin. An elastic adhesive dressing ('Elastoplast') or an orthopædic felt corn pad was then applied.

E.N.T. and Respiratory System

Colds were common and in 2 cases went on to sinusitis. Running noses caused some bother. No

serious chest illnesses occurred until Base Camp.

Ears.—One member had mild otitis media that cleared on 'Otosporin' drops. The only female member had inflamed aural polypi coincident with her menstrual period. One member suffered from vertigo and dizziness that he had had on several occasions since adolescence.

This always became worse at altitude and had troubled him a lot during the first weeks on an expedition to Annapurna in 1970. He had never been investigated and it appeared to be Ménière's disease, as he tended to fall towards the affected left ear during an attack, was deaf in that ear, and was forced to lie down. Antihistamines controlled the attacks, which ceased after two weeks' acclimatisation and fortunately did not recur on the face of the mountain.

Tongue.—Mild glossitis and cracking responded to gentian-violet paint. Vitamin C was also given as our diet was very low in fresh food.

Lips.—Sunburnt lips caused much discomfort; crusting with ulceration becoming much worse above the snow line, and took a long time to heal.

Urinary System

One member (female) had an attack of cystitis that cleared quickly on treatment with nitrofurantoin.

One sherpa had bilateral pyelonephritis with rigors. He responded to ampicillin therapy and was sent down the valley.

Renal colic attacked one member. The attack was preceded by three days of burning dysuria and pain in the tip of the penis that was thought to be due to a small meatal ulcer. Before leaving home he had had premonitory symptoms of left loin pain that he had not reported. Morphine 15 mg. relieved his pain and he had no further symptoms.

Miscellaneous

Lice (pubic) irritated 3 members and disappeared with 'Lorexane' (gamma benzene hexachloride) shampoo and dicophane (D.D.T.) powder applied to clean clothing. They were only a problem at lower altitudes.

Sun affected several members who were not wearing protective headwear. Sunburn was soothed with a calamine-antihistamine cream.

Split fingers.—Cracking of the end of the fingers occurred in 3 members and was incapacitatingly painful. Protection was given with dry 'Anchor' dressings changed daily.

Allergy.—One member shed his skin after two doses of 'Septrin' and was nearly driven mad by irritation.

Sherpas and Porters.—Daily clinics were held on reaching camp exclusively for our 350 porters. No attempt was made to administer to the local population as medical facilities are now reasonably spaced throughout Nepal. Not only does peripatetic medicine, as commonly meted out by expeditions, do little lasting good, but it makes the job much more difficult for the permanent doctors, who are waging war against suspicion, superstition, and quack medical practice on their own doorstep.

The most common complaints were cough, aggravated by excessive smoking of noxious herbal mixtures, and a variety of aches in muscles and feet engendered by carrying excessive loads. Placebo medicines were used without conscience along with multivitamin tablets. Paints were made up from crystals of gentian-violet, brilliant-green, and mercurochrome, and these gained a reputation as a potent virility rejuvenator.

Sorting malingerers from the truly sick was made easier by my speaking their language, having worked among them before. 4 cases of tuberculosis were found—one in a child with large neck glands.

A yak grazing on the hillside above our camp one night dislodged a boulder that crashed into some sleeping sherpanis only three yards from my tent. One woman sustained five fractured ribs.

ON THE HILL

Base Camp was set up on March 23 at 17,800 ft. on the Khumbu Glacier moraine, aptly named "the rectum of the universe". Grey boulders scattered at random on the creaking ice gave the appearance of the aftermath of a nuclear explosion, and from the walls of Pumori above us avalanches thundered down so often in the night it was like sleeping on Paddington station. In the course of a morning the sherpas built a dry-stone-walled hospital 18×10 ft., roofed with bonded polyethylene sheeting, stretched over a log brought up for bridging crevasses. It had two beds, a desk of oxygen-bottle cases that could serve as an operating-table, and cardboard boxes placed on their sides as medicine cupboards.

By this time all the members were acclimatised except one, who was unable to take the altitude and after one attempt at going high had to come down and return home. Now began an assault on the mountain that lasted for the next eight weeks. The illnesses encountered during this period were as follows:

Respiratory Tract

The breathing of dry cold air lay at the root of all problems from the nostrils to the terminal alveoli. Members were encouraged to inhale steam whenever the opportunity presented, and thereby found much

relief. Five minutes under a plastic bag over a tea brew is good prophylaxis for respiratory ailments at altitude. I regretted not having a proper inhaler pot and some menthol or compound benzoin tincture.

Dry frontal sinusitis, sore throat, and sore tongue were treated symptomatically. Gargling with gentian-violet was found effective among sherpas; but members were squeamish over the discoloration left in the mouth, so aspirin gargle was used instead.

Cough.—Dry, unproductive, hacking cough is a plague of altitude. Steam inhalations helped greatly; cough sweets were in steady demand, and we wished we had more in quantity and variety. Codeine phosphate 30 mg. at night helped to prevent disturbed sleep.

Bronchopneumonia with fever, basal crepitations, and production of thick yellow sputum occurred in 4 members and 11 sherpas. The sherpas nearly all caught it during the time of making the route through the Icefall into the Western Cwm, and responded to daily intramuscular penicillin. Most members had chest troubles later on and were given oral tetracycline as they could be relied on not to trade or sell their tablets to friends. (Long-acting tetracyclines were not used because of photosensitivity in the intense ultraviolet light.)

Lobar pneumonia with high fever, lobar collapse, and subsequent consolidation affected 4 members and 8 sherpas. Penicillin treatment, both oral and intramuscular, was used. During the acute illness members were treated intensively at Base Camp with drugs and thrice-daily sessions of steam inhalations and chest thumping (physiotherapy would be too grand a term to apply to this unsophisticated form of massage). As soon as they were better, members

were sent down to the valley (below 12,000 ft.) to convalesce, as people recover more slowly from any illness, especially a respiratory one, at height.

Complications of Respiratory Problems

Cough fracture.—2 members and 1 sherpa had cough fractures occurring in the midaxillary line of the 7th or 8th rib; 1 member had a chostochondral separation fracture. These occurred after severe bouts of coughing, caused acute local tenderness and pain on breathing, and then settled. 2 men were given long-acting local-anæsthetic intercostal blocks for pain relief. This incidence of cough fractures in young men seems remarkably high.

Gastrointestinal Tract

Diarrhæa that bothered us on the approach eased somewhat on the mountain. However, the mechanics of defæcation in a blizzard were complicated. I quote directly from a letter to my wife describing life at Camp II (21,700 ft.):

“Now comes the moment of truth—the morning crap. Outside the wind is howling and snow is swirling round the camp. You can just see the lower part of the Face through breaks in the cloud. The shitting area is behind a little hillock a few yards only from the camp and already quite foul, but for a few days gratefully covered by new snow fall—the only thing we thank it for. First I undo my heavy overtrousers and my fingers stick to the metal zip, it is so cold; then my purple jeans and long johns; then squat. My arse becomes insensible and a fine layer of spin drift fills my pants. What joy to pull them up after the deed is done and try to restore sensation to frozen cheeks. Even this performance takes the breath out of me and I stagger back to camp . . .”

Indigestion was common among the sherpas, as it is among a high proportion of young men in Nepal due

to their eating much chilli to spice their monotonous diet of rice and potatoes, and their disposition to drink large quantities of rough home-brewed spirit—*arak*. 3 high-altitude sherpas—some of the strongest men on the mountain—had to be brought down suffering from acute peptic ulceration with severe epigastric pain and tenderness that caused nausea and anorexia. They responded to rest, dried-milk drinks, and antacids. One sherpa *sirdar* had acute dyspepsia followed by a brisk one-litre hæmatemesis after a heavy drinking bout on the way to base and had to be relieved of his duties.

Flatus was a persistent antisocial problem worsened by a high intake of dehydrated food.

Hæmorrhoids are a well-recognised complication of altitude, probably due to increased abdominal pressure from overbreathing and carrying heavy loads. We were fortunate in having the opportunity for any member who had a suspicion of piles to be examined before the march-in by a London surgeon who was on holiday in Kathmandu. The only person recommended to sit on the needle was myself. Despite this precaution, 4 members had prolapsed piles, without bleeding, but requiring manual replacement.

“*Glandular Fever*”

An outbreak of a presumed virus disease that was diagnosed clinically as infectious mononucleosis occurred in May. During the month 12 members had the illness.

Initially 4 men succumbed. All had sore throats that were infected, with no pus or membrane but worse than those commonly present at altitude. Fever ranging from 99 to 102°F was present. Chains of small shotty glands were found in the posterior

Dinas Mot



Dinas Mot West Wing (photo Ken Wilson)

triangles of their necks and all had axillary and inguinal glands, the largest being 1-2 cm. in diameter. 2 men had mouth ulcers—one on the anterior pillar of the tonsillar fauces and one on the frenum of the tongue; both of them had a mucopurulent conjunctivitis. Another man complained of pain under the left subcostal margin and a spleen tip was felt. None was jaundiced.

One of these members, our leader, was much iller than the rest. He had been diagnosed as having Hashimoto's autoimmune thyroiditis by needle biopsy four days before leaving Europe. In view of this I restarted his prednisolone 5 mg. thrice daily and suggested he return home as the expedition was in its closing stages.

Subsequently, more members went down with the illness, some having it in a mild form with enlarged glands but no systemic effects. All suffered malaise and were sent down to a lower altitude (below 12,000 ft.) to recuperate. On their return to Base Camp several still felt lethargic and, as the expedition was nearly over, they did not return to the mountain, except 1 member who went up to Camp III.

At Shanta Bhawan hospital in Kathmandu, serological tests (not Paul-Bunnell) and blood-smears for atypical mononuclear cells were done on 4 convalescent members and proved negative. The rather rapid partial recovery did not seem in keeping with true glandular fever. Further serum samples have been requested from all members who suffered from the illness, to be tested in the Public Health Laboratory in Bristol.

No definite contacts were established, but 1 member had two weeks previously walked for half a day down the valley with a group of three long-haired "world-travellers", of whom several visited base camp.

Trauma

This was surprisingly uncommon considering the many dangers in the icefall and on the mountain.

Minor cuts were cleaned with antiseptic soap or 'Phisohex' (hexachlorophane), painted with mercuriochrome solution made up from crystals, sprayed with 'Polybactrin' aerosol and covered with melolin dressings. Healing at altitude was extremely slow, and meticulous care had to be taken to prevent sepsis. If this occurred, antibiotic cover was given, and 'Sofra-Tulle' gauze dressings were used.

Dislocation of the thumb of 1 member and of the middle finger of a visitor occurred, both by falling forward on to rock. 2 people injured their knee cartilages by falls. There were no bone fractures.

The only *surgery* performed was dental—of a rather primitive but effective nature.

High-altitude Illnesses

Phlebitis.—A member who had had a bilateral sympathectomy for frostbite in 1964 complained of pain in the left calf while at Camp II.

He had taken severe exercise on three days in the previous two weeks, the rest of the time being confined to his tent by a blizzard. He noticed the pain worst while front-pointing on his crampons; it disappeared on rest, and he himself felt sure the pain was not muscular. A 4 in. length of the popliteal vein was acutely tender. His temperature was normal and calf diameters were equal. His hæmatocrit had increased by 36% to 57 since it was measured in Kathmandu (expedition average increase=23%). With the serious possible complication of thrombosis in mind, I escorted him down to Base Camp. Anticoagulant therapy was considered but not used, no laboratory control being possible. His leg symptoms disappeared after a week on bed rest.

Snowblindness occurred in 3 sherpas, due to removing their goggles in the icefall. They had fluorescein staining of the cornea with severe pain, chemosis, and blepharophimosis. The lesions healed quickly on twice-daily 2% homatropine eye drops and 'Chloromycetin' (chloramphenicol) eye ointment. The sherpas were taught to make protective shields out of cardboard with horizontal slits after the Eskimo fashion (fig. 3). These were used on several occasions when goggles were dropped or mislaid and proved effective in an emergency. Amethocaine 'Minims' were put in the individual first-aid packs to enable a snow-blind climber to see enough to reach camp.

Frostbite.—3 members suffered mild frostbite.

The 1st man came down from Camp II with the ends of both great toes dusky, loss of sensation in all toes, and blistering of his fingers. He had always suffered from chilblains and poor circulation. His left great toe will probably lose some skin and the nail, but his remaining toes had recovered two weeks later. He was treated with dry melolin dressings to both feet, and 'Ronicol' 1 tablet thrice daily.

The 2nd man lost sensation in his left great toe and will probably lose the nail only.

The 3rd man had a mental lapse after spending six weeks at Camp II and late one afternoon set off to reach Camp III. He had hallucinations typical of altitude, and did the last part of the climb without gloves. During the night he jumped out of the tent, which was pitched on a precipice, and was caught in the fixed ropes. He was brought down to Camp II and his hands and feet were rapidly rewarmed in water. His fingers and toes were without sensation. After a week all had recovered except his right index finger, which was forming a demarcating line on the pulp.

Our high-altitude boots were of poor quality and were heavy, bulky, and clumsy.

Exposure.—One member died of exposure descending from Camp III West late one afternoon in a blizzard. He was alive when the rescue party arrived, but his life was nearly extinguished and resuscitation was not possible.

Retinal hæmorrhages and papilloedema appeared in one member who had been a chronic cougher, hawker, and spitter since leaving Kathmandu. On April 23 he complained of blurred vision associated with frontal-sinus pain, which seemed to be the cause of his problem as no abnormality was found in his fundus. In May, during his recuperation from pneumonia down the valley, he had further blurred vision and paracentral scotomata. His visual acuity was not reduced. On ophthalmoscopy with dilatation of his pupils under homatropine 2% the retinal veins were found dilated and the disc margins blurred, in keeping with an early papilloedema. Hæmorrhages were seen on a branch of the superior temporal vessel in the left eye and inferior temporal vessel in the right, both near the macula. I thought it safer to advise him to return home to San Francisco Medical Center for full ophthalmological and neurological investigation. Retinal hæmorrhages are described as occurring at altitude.¹

Altitude headache and insomnia occurred from 12,000 ft. upwards but were commoner in the early days at Base Camp, wearing off as people became acclimatised. Headaches were a feature of those who acclimatised slowly, and 1 member never adjusted to altitude and had to go down early. Insomnia was a recurrent problem, did not improve with acclimatisation, and got worse with altitude. Most people were

1. Frayser, R., et al. *New Engl. J. Med.* 1970, **282**, 1183.

controlled on mild hypnotics, some had to have short-acting barbiturates. The headache of acute mountain sickness was more severe, usually occipital, and very refractory to treatment.

Acute mountain sickness (high-altitude œdema)—2 cases occurred in visitors to Base Camp, who were not members of the Expedition.

Case 1

A Spanish climber, aged 28, on a solo reconnaissance for a projected attempt on Mt. Everest, had flown from Kathmandu to an airstrip at Lukla (9200 ft.) in the Solu Khumbu region. He took six days of gentle walking to reach Base Camp (17,800 ft.), a journey done in two days by a mail-runner. He passed the day asking advice of I.H.E. leaders, and at 3.30 p.m. complained of severe headache and was advised to visit the hospital. Dr. Duane Blume, PH.D., our physiologist and designer of the climbing oxygen system, and I were checking the medical oxygen cylinders and masks. On observing the ashen-mauve colour of the Spaniard, we immediately put one on his face (fig. 4). He was cyanosed, with pallor and dusky blue lips, and had some mental confusion and slurring of speech (but this may have been a Basque's interpretation of Pyrenean French). His colour improved rapidly on pure oxygen, his headache eased, and he felt better. A climbing oxygen mask and helmet were fitted to him and the regulator setting of the diluter demand valve set at $1 = P_{O_2}$ adjusted to sea-level. A sleeping oxygen mask was insufficient to prevent the return of cyanosis. At 4.30 p.m. his temperature was 98.4°F , blood-pressure 145/90 mm. Hg, heart-sounds normal, no peripheral œdema. He was shivering and had cold extremities. Respirations 30 per minute; chest clear; no crepitations. No drug therapy was given except an analgesic (aspirin) and a mild sedative.

When he felt better he gave a brief history, which had to be frequently interrupted for him to take the oxygen mask. He had suffered no illness in the past. On an expedition to the Caucasus mountains in 1969 he was

prevented from going higher than 5000 metres by shortness of breath and headache. On Mont Blanc in 1970 he felt unwell at the summit (15,400 ft.) with similar symptoms. On the present occasion he was walking strongly until he reached Lobuje (16,400 ft.) on March 26. He was short of breath and vomited; he had no cough.

A further examination at 6.30 P.M. showed a normal temperature, but crepitations were heard scattered throughout both lungs and he coughed up some blood-flecked sputum.

High-altitude pulmonary oedema (H.A.P.E.) complicating acute mountain sickness was diagnosed and a decision was taken to summon a helicopter from Kathmandu the following morning.

During the night the patient maintained a good colour provided he wore the oxygen mask continuously. He was sedated with Spanish bolero music and a tape-recording of olés at a bullfight. No drugs were given and 'Lasix' (frusemide) was intentionally withheld as he was holding his own on oxygen and I had frightening memories of causing an anaphylactic shock when treating a Swiss nurse with intravenous frusemide for a similar condition two years before. His respiratory rate remained between 16 and 22 per minute, his temperature remained normal, and he passed about 0.5 litre of urine. The helicopter made a record altitude landing for Nepal and took on the patient and myself as escort. Because the thin air prevented the pilot from gaining height he had to weave a course in and out between the giant ice tower seracs of Phantom Alley on the Khumbu moraine. On descending to the level of Tengboche Monastery (12,000 ft.) the patient had perked up and on arrival at Kathmandu shed his mask, jumped out looking fit and well, and announced to the Press it was all a fuss about nothing. His escort was in some distress, having incurred a fracture of the chostochondral junction of the right eighth rib after a coughing fit, while running across to the oxygen tent to change the valve set in the middle of the night with the air-temperature at -20°C .

Three weeks later the Spaniard was examined in London by two physicians and every investigation proved normal.

They both confirmed the diagnosis on the history.

Case 2

The wife of one of our climbers, a nurse aged 29, had trekked for three weeks from Kathmandu to meet her husband at Base Camp. On arrival her lower eyelids appeared rather puffy for a young woman and before going to bed she complained of headache, for which I gave her an analgesic.

The following morning, after a sleepless night, she complained of a "balloon-like feeling" over the back of her head, pain down her neck, and slight photophobia. She was expecting her menstrual period. The lid-swelling of the previous evening was worse and she had a tinge of cyanosis round her lips. I took her into the hospital and gave her oxygen; her colour improved and her headache lessened, but both symptoms recurred if the oxygen was discontinued.

Her eyelids and face were œdematous. Wedding-ring tight and mild swelling of the feet. Mentally alert. Temperature 98.4°F; pulse-rate 100; blood-pressure 85/65 mm. Hg; no palpable glands, neck stiffness, or papilloœdema; heart-sounds normal; chest clear, respirations 20 per minute. Weight 113 lb. with pyjamas; normal weight 94 lb. unclothed.

I diagnosed high-altitude œdema and gave her frusemide 40 mg. by mouth at 9 A.M.

During the following twenty-four hours (she had not passed urine since 7 P.M. the previous evening) she passed 3050 ml. of urine and her weight the following morning was 98 lb.

The second morning (the day the climb was abandoned) she was again given frusemide 40 mg., but less of a diuresis was produced: urine volume of 1200 ml. in twenty-four hours. Her fluid intake was 1 litre on the first day and 2 litres on the second.

Her husband descended from 27,500 ft. to 17,800 ft. in ten hours, and the following day, taking an oxygen set with us, I escorted them down the valley for fear of complications,

as an Englishwoman had died of this disease two years previously at 12,000 ft. on the descent, having been ill at 18,000 ft. As she descended she felt progressively better and passed a good night at Pheriche (14,000 ft.). She made a complete trouble-free recovery.

In April a South Korean climber on Lhotse Shar had been brought down unconscious and with papill-œdema to Kunde Hospital. After six weeks of acute mental confusion in hospital in Kathmandu he recovered enough to return home. He was diagnosed as having high-altitude cerebral œdema, similar to a Japanese girl who had been in the hospital two years before.

High-altitude œdema is a fascinating, ill-understood, but dangerous illness. Anyone going to altitudes above 15,000 ft. is at risk and in my opinion should have ready access to oxygen. The disease can be, and has been, rapidly fatal.

Hypochondria

Undoubtedly there were occasional hypochondriacal incidents, but the entry 'Hy.' appears remarkably seldom on members' medical record cards. Suggestions in the Press that a "wave of mass hypochondria" developed, contributing to the ultimate unsuccess of the climb, are unjust and ill-informed. During May 12 members were evacuated to Base Camp with a variety of illnesses. With intensive treatment and adequate convalescence 7 were returned to Camp II, the remaining 5 being considered unfit to risk ascending to altitude again. No member was ever sent or ordered to go down; when illness had occurred the situation was fully discussed and the final decision left to the patient himself.

Libido

Discussion, thought, and opportunity for expression of sex were remarkably absent at altitude. People began to notice what they had been missing only below 12,000 ft. on the way home.

Diet

9500 kg. of food was shipped from Europe. In a country where the potato is king we ate powdered sauté mash; where rice and flour are abundant we had pumpernickel and zweiback; where yaks produce good butter we had synthetic fat; where goats and sheep can be bought on the hoof we had tinned weaners and herrings in white sauce; where curry and spices are plentiful we ate pickled gherkins; where many fresh vegetables are grown we lived on dehydrated foods; where there is a cheese factory nearby we ate camembert from tins and cheddar from plastic packets.

At Namche, a quick walking day from Base Camp, most staple foods can be bought at the weekly bazaar, at a price. But I doubt if the expense would be more than that of food freely donated in Europe after it has been transported by sea, road, and man to the foot of Mt. Everest. In late May fresh food started to appear in Base Camp; it may have been expensive but its importance—at any price—cannot be overemphasised and no amount of vitamin supplements can compensate for its lack. On the approach the iron tablets were cleared away from the supper table by some over-zealous sherpa. One health fanatic, seeing his hope of acclimatising thereby vanish, had apoplexy when offered a rusty nail to chew on.

Weight-loss

Weight-loss of 15–30 lb. occurred in at least 12 members.

CONCLUSION

Everest is for the birds (Goraks scavenged Camp VI at 27,000 ft. and Lammergeier vultures hovered daily over Base Camp, no doubt having heard the Lama of Khumjung's forecast that 17 people would be killed on our expedition). It is too large, too ugly, too dangerous, and mounting an expedition to climb it is too costly and too unwieldy. The ratio of pleasure to misery is disproportionate. "C'est pas l'alpinisme, c'est la guerre." But I enjoyed it—I must be a masochist at heart.

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ON CLIMBING HISTORY

D. D. Gray.

'A history is a distillation of rumour'. Thomas Carlyle.

Let me report immediately that I am writing about an important book* a veritable milestone in the history of British rock climbing. Though friends 'North of the Border' might say that this was rubbish: certainly a history of climbing on Ben Nevis, with its summer and winter activities, would be of greater importance, but, surely no crag in the British Isles can match 'Cloggy' in history and legend? This statement is amply illustrated in the 'Black Cliff'. Yet, to the reviewer, this book is typical of everything that is good and bad about the present state and the recent past of the Welsh climbing scene. Brightness, enthusiasm, the skilful use of aids, and ability to convince the beholder that everything is bigger, better, faster, longer than it really is, or you ever guessed it was: they are all here. Beneath the surface, though there is a lack of depth, a brashness, narcissism and even a cheapness that leaves one in a troubled state about the whole future of rock climbing in this country.

The book has a photographic impact: it must rank ahead of anything yet produced in this country as a collection of climbing photographs. Graphically the pictures unfold the story, the more recent ones are better, by and large in quality. On this score alone the book is worthy of its subject. Unfortunately the accompanying text and the quality of the reproduction leave

* THE BLACK CLIFF. CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU.

The history of climbing on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu by Jack Soper. Ken Wilson and Peter Crew based on the original research of Rodney Wilson.

KAYE - WARD & CO.. LONDON. £2.50.

so much to be desired that they jeopardise informed opinion as to the overall merit of the work. Almost universally 'Photo-offset' has established itself as the major printing process during the last decade: not because of quality, but because of simple economics. If you compare the soft, half-tone plates of the 'Black Cliff' (not the dust jacket, which is letterpress) with a reproduction in Kaye-Ward's own Rebuffat Series (On Ice and Snow and Rock etc), printed in the fuller, three-quarter tone of photo-gravure, even the undiscerning eye will notice a difference in quality. Gravure, is, of course, more expensive but eminently more suitable for a specialist reproduction such as 'Black Cliff'. It may have doubled the price but looking at the flatness of many of the plates it would have been worth it.

A history of this kind is bound to hang on some overall design. The story moves rapidly by short chapters which are hung onto the main characters and events. It was with the earliest explorations, the true opening salvo of Piggot's Longlands' and Great Slab, that my doubts of the worth of what had been written were aroused. It started when I came across that hoary old chestnut, 'The majority of leading British rock climbers are trained on griststone'. What about John Cunningham, Robin Smith and Pat Walsh? Such a brash statement is later backed up by, 'Relatively few sandstone experts have been able to make the adjustments to the exposure of Wales'. Funny, I always understood that Kirkus, Linnell, Edwards, Carsten, Banner, Gordon, Boysen, Holliwell etc. were the products of 'the stone'?

Chapters Four and Five on the 1930's are not very kind to Menlove Edwards. It is true that he only produced two climbs on Cloggy, but those who led his climbs and met and climbed with him are in no doubt as to who was the greatest rock climber of that period. We read (on P.34) that 'Linnell was Kirkus' only peer. Edwards led C.B. Direct, on sight, in 1931 and in the same year soloed the Final Flake on Glyder Fach Direct. Kirkus is on record in 1936 as stating that Edwards was ahead of himself. When one looks at the record - Brant, Slape, Central Gully Direct - on Lliwedd and twelve new routes in a month on that cliff, the virtually single handed discovery of the Three Cliffs, whatever else is apparent, Edwards is the giant figure of the period. His

Bow Shaped Slab was considered the hardest lead on the cliff when I started to climb, and so it remained for almost a decade.

The book gives a very wrong impression of Edward's guide book work, for we read (page 130) 'half a guide would be filled with the writer's humorous rambling'. The 1942 Cloggy guide was published under duress and is not typical, the earlier guides though Idwal, Tryfan, and Lliwedd - were master works. It was he who invented the modern style of guide books and the present Clogwyn du'r Arddu guide is based directly on his pattern. There is much more to the accounting than first ascents when assessing a man's place in climbing history. The young blue-jeaned habitue of today is much more the descent of Edwards than of the others in his era. He revolutionised the way we look at loose rock, protection, the worth of the climb for the climb's sake, guide book style and so forth.

In chapter six, Peter Harding and the postwar years is much of historical interest. It is a pity, though, that Dolphin's attempt on White Slab is omitted, for he made quite some distance. Peter Greenwood's first free lead of the rope swing pitch is also a sad omission.

Once into the 'Magic Times', -Joe Brown, Don Whillans, The Rock and Ice and the 1950's - the task of sorting fact from myth has totally outdistanced the writers. Mistakes are rife and only a quick scan produced the following:- on page 90 we read that the only repetitions of major Rock and Ice climbs in the 1950's were Pat Vaughan's ascent of Hangover in 1952 and Bob Downes' ascent of Octo in 1955. Peter Greenwood led Hangover literally within weeks of the first ascent by Brown, and Bob Downes led Octo in 1956. Hugh Banner did not make the third ascent of Cenotaph Corner, Ronnie Moseley did, nor did Metcalfe and Fuller make the second ascent of Black Cleft (page 99). Brown and Moseley made the first repetition. Trevor Jones did not rediscover Brwynog Chimmey, Nat Allen did and it was he too who had already prepared the ground and accompanied Jones in his ascent. (page 95) Charlie Vignano is not Glaswegian/Italian for his roots are nearer the Left Bank (page 107)...etc.etc. It is not in such pedantic trifles that I found the story wanting.

Though it is obvious that a little care could have removed most of them the errors had, in fact, been pointed out to one of the authors, Mr. Kenneth Wilson, who placed the blame for them onto the other Mr. Wilson (Rodney not Harold) but typically he did not seem unduly concerned. Strange? No. It is in the interpretation of events, emphasis, generalisations and above all the inability to sort the apocryphal

from the truly apocryphal that the 'Black Cliff' disappointed me.

The interpretation of events in chapter 11. 'Hugh Banner and the late Fifties' is a long way from my personal recollection of the state of play. We read that Banner was the only challenger to the Rock and Ice. In only two visits to Wales in 1956 Eric Metcalfe led, amongst others, Gargoyle, the Corner, Octo, the Left Edge, East Gully Wall and, of course, Cenotaph Corner. There were others... John Ramsden climbed Gargoyle, Black Wall, Sickie etc. Only Clogwyn du'r Arddu knows the full story. I had better pass on into the 1960's regretting that my favourite, true, Whillans' story has yet to appear in print. It's the one about the time our hero was involved in a punch-up in the Stockport Road, Manchester. It involves a fight against a fully loaded double-decker bus full of people. Uncle Don had to break the Queensberry Rules and grab the bus driver's testicles to save himself from a terrible beating. It ends, happily, with rescue from a most unlikely quarter the law. But that's another history.

The arrival on the scene of Crew, Ingle, Soper and Boyesen heralds in the start of a new era. The great step into the unknown was aided by the simultaneous acceptance of the use of nuts as a means of protection. They had been known about for a long time before but their use had been frowned upon as unsporting by the old climbing elite. It was a long time before climbers such as Brown became reconciled and utilised them. The chapter on Crew and Ingle, leading up to the ascent of the Pinnacle Girdle, is full of cliches. I am sick of reading of certain climbers having 'faceless efficiency' 'sheer efficiency', of their being 'technocrats' and 'having the dedication of professional sportsmen'. On that last point, such persons as write that can never have been involved with such a man as an Olympic ath-

lete. The dedication such performance involves no beer, early to bed, no women, a special diet, training, training, training. The leering faces seen at the Padarn Lake on a Saturday night bear no resemblance, except perhaps that they do have the wind! As for efficiency, any climbers...well I ask you. I am beginning to suspect that the ancient public relations work of the Poet Alvarez via his Observer articles was actually believed and the recipients were seduced by his images..... fantastic.

The affair of the Great Wall is told boldly and without false modesty: but surely it is easier to put a piton in than to take one out? Perhaps I am wrong. The back slapping over the production of the Cloggy guide is not too jarring. Who normally thanks guide book writers? (As we have already noted with reference to Edwards work in this respect). The statement that all agreed on Crew's bolt being justified (page 133) on his lead of Boldest, is not true. Amongst others, your own shoe champion, Alan Austin, nearly choked on his Yorkshire pudding when he heard the news. Thankfully there are those who will speak out against such mistakes. Youthful West Riding climbers have led the route and spat on the bolt in passing and a Liverpoolian has soloed the unjustified move. (So the brash youngster becomes an old master, revered and criticised). As a further illustration of bad judgement by the authors, it is perhaps unfortunate that as an example of Peter Crew's great knowledge of the Black Cliff the following statement is printed on page 124:-

'Curving Crack Arete... can't be done, only two jugs. It would need four pegs'.

This climb has, of course, subsequently been done.... completely free.

This book finishes with Roland Edwards' amazing series of first ascents in 1966 and a final postscript. This latter is strictly for the plebs, but the preceding chapter is impressive but worrying. The use of bolts by Edwards was, to my mind, a large step and a big mistake: to continue along such lines would be the end. Happily a new generation of climbers, teenagers, now here on the scene are not blinded by such performance. They can see where the greats of yesteryear made mistakes, Brown on November,

Crew on Boldest etc. Always it was aid that spoilt and was the core of the miscalculation. The new hard men can lead these climbs free, and any route that is forced with aid has no place on Cloggy, for it is put up for 'the Bubble Glory' and no other reason. Only by climbing in a better free style does climbing progress.

The 'Black Cliff' is a must for all those who have never climbed on the cliff, it is possible to identify sympathetically with the story. One can imagine the faculties of the four authors attempting to combine on the task and the end result shows this only too well. Perhaps a single, independent mind might have brought a clearer sight and a better historical perspective to the task. All four writers do have a personal stake in the story, albeit one or two more than the others. It is difficult to write history with characters still alive, let alone still involved - as the curious list of people included in the dramatic personae shows. All in all the final verdict could have been brought up from fairly good to excellent.



TSUNAMI (photo S. KNOTT)

The POISONED GLEN revisited

A. J. Maxfield.

It was a perfect day as we walked up the valley. You could see the hills, but not in any detail. The pale milky haze was the kind that back in Manchester would have prompted you to say unkind things about the local factories' lack of consideration for pollution.

'That's as far as we got Max', Harold Drasdo broke into my thoughts.

'Yes. We took your route for two pitches and then forced our way right through the small overhang and up the rock above until we reached the Central Tower. It was on the Tower that the weather made us retreat'.

No excuse for a retreat today - more's the pity, I thought.

'What do you think?' Harold asked.

'I think that we could get very brown sitting in the sun here. Up there it's as dark as Hell and twice as nasty. I'm personally going to be very frightened for at least two or three hours - I'm deadly unfit' I said.

'Oh' Jim Williams replied. 'It was just brave talk that we heard last night coming from behind that big pint of beer'. He finished marshalling the troops and handed me an end of rope - the attack was on.

A direct route up the middle of Bearnas Buttress in the Poisoned Glen, Donegal, has been a preoccupation of ours for many years, in fact, as Harold pointed out, the climb has the doubtful distinction, which might even gain an entry in the Guinness Book of Records, of taking over twelve years from start to completion. There are a large number of routes which make criss-cross patterns up the face but nothing really takes a line from bottom to top with any singleness of purpose - mainly

caused by a long band of overhangs at threequarter height which has few weaknesses. The Central Tower is possibly the most impressive feature which pushes it's way through the overhangs and was our main interest for the holiday.

After abseils and death-defying grass climbing we had made the foot of the Tower but at the cost of a great deal of time. It was already 2.30. and we had at least 300 ft. of unknown climbing ahead of us. Jim made the first attack and after a long and determined onslaught returned to our ledge saying.

'Bloody lettuce leaves and chickweed. Come on Max You're the expert on filth - it's your kind of country'.

I found the climbing quite exacting but Jim had left some cunningly engineered protection which made life a reasonable place. I soon came to Jim's agricultural interests which I passed only after becoming the first man to layback on a lettuce stalk. Above, an exposed wall had to be climbed and I put in a poor peg, while I finished the pitch duelling with some form of Irish rhubarb. I was now on a ledge and the Tower was ours. Another short pitch and we were able to escape to the left by the use of a climb called Route Major. This was not the end of the story as Harold and Jim returned four days later and added two more pitches to straighten out the top. The route must now be somewhere in the region of 800 ft. to 900 ft. and incorporates a wide variety of problems.

The next day Chris Bonington and Nick Estcourt arrived. They soon picked out, in a most professional way, one of the best remaining lines to be climbed and I was most impressed to see Nick moving in comfort where two years before I had been hard pressed and forced to retreat.

The holiday quickly drew to a close. It was only as I sat in the lounge of the boat back to England that I experienced mixed feelings of success at the completion of a long-considered problem and an emptiness that little remained to invite me to return to climb in the Glen.

I was to return however, two months later, when I decided to take our annual College camp to the Poisoned Glen.

We arrived only to find that the mountains were continuously in a violent demonstrative mood, offering dramatic electrical

storms followed by what the Irish call 'a fine soft day', and in England is termed unrelenting heavy rain.

The camp rapidly deteriorated into sessions of lusty exercise of the vocal chords down in the village pub, and the drinking of local gut-rot firewater called 'Crested Ten' whiskey. On one of the few fine days, Malcolm Rittman and I returned to Bearnas Buttress and tried the buttress next to the route climbed by Bonington and Estcourt which they called 'Obituary Column'.

I made very slow progress up the first pitch owing to heavy vegetation which had to be at first gardened. I finally abseiled off leaving us a rope to prussik up next day. Luck was on our side as the weather was reasonable when we returned and we soon made our high point of the previous day.

A wet crack and an exposed wall were climbed to reach one of the belays on 'Obituary Column'. From here I looked down into the fine crack next to the column which Chris had led and could not help remembering some of the enormous slabs of 'dunlopillow' type vegetation which he jettisoned down the face. We crossed 'Obituary Column' and climbed a crack and slab to finish the route.

The next morning the weather was again back to 'fine soft days' and gave us few chances to climb, but we did manage to put up another route. I had noticed a 200 ft. wall on the right hand side of the Castles which was unclimbed and we made a fairly direct line up the middle.

Unfortunately, the Poisoned Glen, like most of the cliffs on the West Coast of Ireland, has an abundance of heavy vegetation which clings to the rock at some of the most unbelievably steep angles. A whole army of McAlpine's workmen could be kept busy for a century without making much of an effect. This does spoil the continuity of the climbs.

I doubt that the Glen will ever become a major climbing area owing to the difficulty of access, the unpredictability of the weather and the ever present battle with vegetation. In spite of this one can find an aesthetically existing landscape which persists in haunting one's thoughts over the years.

EDITORIAL FEATURE

BRITISH CLIMBING: FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

By C. S. ASCHERSON and H. V. READE.

(Reprinted from Vol IV., No. 13. September, 1901.)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE Editor has asked us to write an introduction to this reprint. In one of us, the request aroused a wild and hopeless desire to produce something after the fashion of those wonderful dissertations which Henry James prefixed to many of his novels, in their definitive editions. Those who have learnt to love that great master will recall especially, perhaps, the preface to "The Ambassadors," in which he tells how the central idea of the book first came to him, indicates the scenes where it is most fully expressed, discusses problems of technique, and incidentally reveals some of the principles which he held to be fundamental in the art of fiction. But to attempt emulation with that achievement were to struggle with the bow of Odysseus. And, indeed, we find nothing in our article which needs explanation or apology. Not because, like the Byronic hero of 'Arms and the Man,' we never withdraw and never apologise, but because the main thesis seems to us as sound as when we first put it forward.

The thing dates, of course. One can imagine the diligent textual critic, guided solely by internal evidence, noting that it was written when motor-cars were still in their youth, and when bridge was but gradually displacing whist. Turning to more technical points, he would observe that British climbing seemed to centre in Wasdale, Wales not being so much as mentioned, and was still in the epoch when most of the routes followed gullies, chimneys, and cracks, rather than slabs and faces. Thus he would clearly demonstrate that the article must have appeared quite at the beginning of the twentieth century.

British rock-climbing has become far more popular in the last twenty-five years. By the thorough exploration of rock-faces, many new and very difficult routes have been discovered, and with the increasing number of climbers there are naturally more who are safe leaders for the "exceptionally severe." The use of tennis-shoes—or the systematic discarding of boots—has slightly extended the range of the possible. But it may well be doubted whether there has been any real advance in technique, or whether the men of to-day are better than their predecessors—even as one may doubt whether there has yet been a greater cricketer than "W.G.," or greater lawn-tennis players than the Dohertys.

Be that as it may, the principles of mountaineering have not altered, and the fundamental differences between British rock-climbing and mountaineering proper remain as they were. Our article merely emphasised points which are familiar to every experienced mountaineer. The emphasis—which, we believe, was much resented by some British climbers—seemed to us to be needed, because there had been a marked tendency to ignore those differences, and to maintain that a party which had worked together on British rocks could look after themselves in the Alps.

Those who have read the earlier numbers of the *Climbers' Club Journal*, when it appeared quarterly, more or less, will find some of the happy-go-lucky expeditions of such parties narrated by their own members, cheerfully unconscious that they are recording a series of blunders which certainly ought to have ended in disaster. The *Alpine Journal* itself is not innocent of such narratives. If guideless parties, with no Alpine experience, have the sense to begin on small things, and are lucky, they may gradually learn their business without coming to grief. But it remains true that the "method of trial and error" is not a safe one in this field.

We see no reason, therefore, to modify the conclusions stated in the last four sentences of our article. It might be added, of course, that a good amateur may be even a better teacher than a guide; and that in mountaineering, as in other sports, there appears from time to time the "born genius" who seems to find himself at home in the Alps as soon as he arrives there,

and learns more in a few weeks than the ordinary man in half a dozen seasons. How much the mere climber has to learn in order to become an all-round mountaineer has been shown, more thoroughly than ever before, by Mr. Winthrop Young's "Mountain Craft."

October, 1926.

C. S. A.

H. V. R.

EVERY sport or pastime may be said to pass through three stages. At first it is practised in secrecy, as a kind of forbidden joy, by a few enthusiasts. Then comes the proselytising and controversial stage, when the original devotees endeavour to justify themselves, and to communicate their enthusiasm to others. Finally, the new thing is recognised by the world at large, and finds its place in the list of orthodox recreations. Among amusements which have illustrated this law of progress in recent years may be mentioned golf (south of the Tweed), bicycling, and the study of the poet Browning. Those who pursue any one of these pleasures no longer feel either that they are eccentrics or that they must proclaim on all occasions that it is incomparably superior to anything else. The latter tendency, characteristic of the second stage, may be noticed just now among the players of Bridge, many of whom still think it necessary to impress upon one that neither whist, nor picquet, nor any other card game is fit to be mentioned in the same breath with it. Also among those who ride in motor cars. But when any recreation attains the third stage, among the signs of the happy event is the withdrawal of the extravagant claims that were previously put forward on its behalf.

That the sport of climbing in the British Isles has passed through the first two stages, and is now permanently established, readers of this *Journal* will hardly be disposed to deny. But in this case, as in others, it was inevitable that some of its advocates, in their anxiety to glorify it, should have claimed much more than, now that the battle is over, we, their followers, can think it wise to maintain. Their line of argument naturally was to show how many elements of Swiss

climbing—which had long been recognised as one of our national pursuits—could be found in Great Britain. If the authors of the present article venture to suggest that the time has come when it may be useful, and even necessary; to dwell upon the other side of the question, let it be inferred, not that they wish in any way to disparage British climbing (to which both of them are devoted), but that they consider it to have attained a position when one should endeavour to see "the thing in itself as it really is." We propose, then, to point out what a very small part of real mountaineering is represented by the climbing that can be had, either in summer or winter, at Wasdale and other British centres, and how radical are the differences between the two. . .

Why should not the young climber take his preliminary training in his own country? is the question asked in the introduction to *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District*. It would be absurd to suggest that so expert a mountaineer as Owen Glynne Jones did not know the true relation of British to Swiss climbing, but the words themselves may easily be misinterpreted. The author's enthusiasm for his subject led him, in fact, both there and in an article published in this *Journal* (Vol. I., p. 29), to write as though the two things differed only in scale. That this view recommends itself to many of those who have to be contented with what they can find in their own country is amusingly shown by the kind of conversation that goes on at their favourite resorts. "Is So-and-so a good climber?" is asked, and the answer comes, "He ought to be: he has a wonderfully long reach," and if a third speaker can add "He certainly is, for he led up Kern Knotts Crack the other day," the reputation is made. Talk of this kind does not merely mean that an entirely erroneous idea of what constitutes "good climbing" is established. There is a real and serious danger involved, that those who, after a few visits to Wasdale or elsewhere, find themselves capable of mastering all the difficulties there presented to them, and qualified, according to the standard there set up, as "good climbers," may consider that they have only to practise in the Alps what they have already learnt. When they are able to get out to Switzerland, they scorn expeditions "suitable for

a beginner," and persuade their guides to conduct them to the difficult rock-climbs. In some cases their disillusionment will be rapid. But if they meet with a succession of those days when the mountains are in perfect condition, and everything goes like clockwork, their good opinion of their own ability may only be confirmed, and they may soon decide that professionals are a needless encumbrance, and start climbing without them. That such a sequence of events is not altogether imaginary, a study of Alpine accidents will show. Hitherto, indeed, it has been chiefly in the case of foreign climbers that guideless expeditions, undertaken on the strength of success in minor rock-scrambles, have led to disaster. But it is not only foreign climbers who have become notorious from exploits based on a disregard of all sound mountaineering principles.

To regard foolhardiness in the Alps as the natural result of extravagant talk in the Wasdale smoking-room may be considered far-fetched. But that an exaggerated estimate of the value of British climbing in the education of the mountaineer is prevalent, must have been observed by many. Let us consider, then, what British climbing does, and what it does not offer. Taking the summer conditions, when snow and ice are absent, the climbs may be said to consist of well-marked routes, occasionally on arêtes or faces in part, but chiefly leading up fissures, which vary in width from a gully to a crack, and in length from 60 or 80 feet to 1,000 or 1,500. In the shorter ones the climbing may be continuous, the longer ones generally consist of a series of "pitches," separated by places where little or no climbing is required. It is almost always the case that the difficult places can be taken—and are in fact taken, since time is no object—by each member of a party singly, the others being in a position of such absolute security that a slip, except on the part of the leader, is merely an amusing episode, while even the leader would certainly be stopped if he fell. Each member of every party will, as a rule, use exactly the same handholds and footholds. The rocks are for the most part sound, rotten stuff and loose stones being removed after the first few ascents have been made. Almost all the rock met with at any given centre is of the same general formation and character. Among minor points it may be mentioned

that the more important climbs are almost invariably taken upwards, the "easy way," which is usually to be found, being utilised for the descent, and that, on the other hand, several of the most difficult ascents were only rendered possible by a preliminary exploration from above on a rope !

Now this is all very well. Everyone knows that, despite these limitations, British climbing gives splendid sport, and that the standard of difficulty is very high. But how far it is from reproducing the real thing ! There is a story—if not true it is at least *ben trovato*—of a man who, on the strength of what he had done in the English Lakes, was invited by two experienced mountaineers to join them for a series of guideless climbs in the Alps. The result was that after a week that party broke up in confusion. Where, even among the pure rock-climbs of the Alps (we are not speaking of the Dolomites) is anything of the kind to be found ? Gullies, chimneys and cracks are the exception ; the climbs lie chiefly on faces or arêtes, where no two parties may take exactly the same route ; the formation and character of the rocks vary indefinitely ; rotten rocks and loose stones may be met with for hours together, and often constitute the chief difficulty of the climb. In the more formidable climbs there will be many places where each member of the party must look after himself, and a bad slip simply must not occur. This is especially the case if an arête is too broken to follow, and it is necessary to make a long traverse across the face of rocks just below it, a state of things which is often found in the Alps, but not in this country. Many of the expeditions would never be finished if the party moved one at a time throughout in the deliberate way which is adopted on British rocks. The mere matter of scale amounts to a difference in kind rather than in degree. Feats which are possible on a boulder cannot be performed on, say, the north face of the Pillar Rock, and as the boulder is to a Wasdale climb so is that to a Swiss expedition. In point of technical difficulty there may be little to choose between the Kern Knotts crack and the Grépon crack, but it does not in the least follow that a man who can do the one may safely attempt the other. The fact that the Grépon crack is only reached after some hours' hard work, and is followed by many more hours of

climbing as difficult or more so—not to mention that a fall from it for the leader would certainly be fatal—makes the comparison fallacious. No doubt there are rock climbs in the Alps, each section of which could be paralleled by something that is to be found at Wasdale or elsewhere in this country. Owen Glynn Jones has shown this very amusingly in the article referred to above. But none the less the Swiss climb as a whole is something very much greater than the sum of the parts so described, as the author's own practice testified. At Wasdale he was always ready to conduct all manner of people up the stiffest climbs, knowing that with a competent leader they could be safely accomplished. But he knew equally well that in the Alps it was not so, and failing to find companions who were his equals in skill and experience and could share the responsibility of guideless climbing, he entirely gave it up.

These are considerable differences to begin with. But much more important is the obvious consideration that, in the Alps, rock-climbing is almost always mixed with snow and ice work which demand quite other methods. Now, there are snow and ice in Wasdale (for instance) at Christmas, and some enthusiasts have maintained that the rudiments, at any rate of snow-craft, may be acquired there. But a little reflection will make it evident that the climbing which one gets on British hills in their winter condition is a kind of thing that is not done in the Alps at all—except under the compulsion of a sudden snowstorm. One amuses oneself in Wasdale by attacking rocks which are in such a state that, on a Swiss mountain, no sane climber would touch them. The surface is glazed, the holds filled with snow or ice, the “pitches” would often be impossible if one did not know the exact places which must be cleared out, and what is in summer an easy twenty minutes becomes a laborious three hours. As for the snow and ice, taken by themselves, they bear very little resemblance to what one has to deal with in Switzerland. Such step-cutting as there is probably has to be done in gullies three or four feet wide, which is a very different thing from cutting up, down or across a big slope. To make the right kind of step with the fewest possible strokes of the axe, in constantly varying material, to put each in the right place, to continue cutting indefinitely without fatigue—none of

these things can be learnt under the conditions. But apart from the leader's business, the ability to walk steadily and confidently on steep slopes of snow or ice cannot be acquired without far more experience than British conditions afford. To name a particular point, few things are more essential for a mountaineer to learn than how to deal with slopes where a layer of softened snow rests on hard snow or ice, and the thickness of the surface snow and its degree of attachment to what is underneath may change every few yards. But such conditions are rarely if ever to be found in this country. Indeed, that all-important factor in mountaineering, "the condition of the snow," has not to be considered at all. It is needless to enlarge upon this side of the matter, for there is scarcely a feature of Alpine snow and ice work which can be found in Great Britain.

To turn to more general matters, the admirable chapter on British Climbing in the Badminton volume dwells especially on the art of finding one's way in mist, by map and compass, as one of the valuable elements of mountaineering that may be learnt on our own hills. But, as a matter of fact, this is a thing to which most climbers (in Wasdale, at any rate) appear to pay no attention. It is only natural that when one has but a few days to spend at one's centre one should grudge every hour that is not devoted to actual climbing. If mist prevails, one thankfully accepts the guidance of some old hand who knows every yard of ground or, failing that, makes for any climb which one thinks one is safe not to miss. Still more welcome is the local man if the climb is done and one finds oneself befogged on such a trackless wilderness as the top of Great End. To depend on one's own faculties, and scorn assistance from the leader, is all very well when it is a question of mastering a difficult pitch, but it is quite another affair when there is no glory to be won and the possibility of afternoon tea hangs in the balance. In the other branches of route-finding, such as discovering for oneself a practicable way up a mountain, or even up a big rock-face or a crevassed glacier, it need hardly be said that home training is of little or no assistance.

Again, true mountaineering consists to a great extent in avoiding the dangers of the sport. These may be roughly

divided into three classes : the danger of a slip ; the danger of falling stones, snow or ice ; and the dangers arising from exhaustion or exposure, if a party is overtaken by bad weather or benighted. The first class is naturally the most prominent, being ever present to the mind of the climber whether in England or the Alps, but the others are, in reality, of far greater importance in mountaineering proper. British climbing may teach one to be sure-footed and a safe man even on rocks too difficult for one to manage unassisted, but on British hills, with very few exceptions, there is practically no danger of stones falling spontaneously. Consequently, the climber attacks cheerfully any rocks that come in his way and, in particular, finds much of his best work in gullies, which often, as on Scafell, form the only or the chief routes up the cliffs. In the Alps, on the other hand, to act on this principle could only result in disaster. There, too, gullies abound, but the mountaineer knows that, instead of being the high-roads that they appear, they are the natural channels for anything that falls on the mountain. When he is looking for a route he will note them only to avoid them, and in many cases he will decline to attempt a climb at all if he sees that he will be driven to use such a gully even for a small part of the way. For instance, the long ridge descending westwards from the Little Dru is seamed by a dozen Deep Ghylls running down to the glacier, many of which it might be possible to climb. But the risk of falling stones so far outweighs the attractions of finding a new route that no one thinks of attempting them. In this respect, then, British training is worse than useless. It is not only in gullies, however, that stones fall, and the capacity of judging when and where they are to be looked for is one of the most valuable accomplishments of the mountaineer. But it is one that can only be acquired in the high mountains. And if the dangers of falling stones cannot be studied in our own hills, still less can the dangers of falling snow or ice.

So, too, with the dangers arising from exhaustion or exposure ; they are practically non-existent for the British climber. Solitary men have, indeed, perished in snowstorms on British mountains, but they have not been climbers, and there are no climbs, probably, in this country from which a

party could not extricate itself, in the worst of weather, without serious danger. To be benighted is not unknown, but the consequences are rarely more unpleasant than the descent of a rough hillside in the dark. The results of this, in a British trained climber, are likely to be a certain carelessness about the weather in which expeditions are attempted and about the time which should be allowed. It is not easy for a man who has been accustomed to starting at 10 or 10.30 (half an hour, or more, later than he intended, perhaps), and after taking enough rests to suit the laziest member of the party, arriving in comfortable time for dinner, to realise that a start at 3 instead of 2 a.m., and halts unduly prolonged, may mean either the failure of the expedition or a night on the mountain. To turn back, either early in the day or when the peak is almost attained, merely because the weather is threatening, is one of the hardest things for the climber to bring himself to do. It is all the less likely that he will see the necessity of doing it if he is accustomed to snatch his climbs in the teeth of the weather, knowing that a wetting is the worst that can befall him. In England, again, he puts a few sandwiches into his pocket and starts, on the first fine day, for the "biggest thing" in the neighbourhood. In the Alps he must learn to get into good training before he attempts anything big, and to see that plenty of suitable provisions are taken, or his expeditions may end in an ignominious collapse, if nothing worse.

It may be argued that, even if a novitiate of purely British climbing is likely to cause the beginner in real mountaineering to ignore some of its most serious dangers, he will not have much chance of going wrong in practice, as the responsibility will rest with his guides. This is true if he is wise or lucky enough to secure a really good guide. But some of the third-rate men are more anxious to make themselves pleasant to their employer than to correct any evil tendencies he may display in such matters. There is many a guide who, if urged by his Herr, will allow the party to run unjustifiable risks, and will persevere in bad weather to the last possible moment, rather than abandon an expedition which the Herr is keen to accomplish. Indifferent to the discomforts of being benighted, and accustomed to exist on a little of the coarsest food, he will consent to a late

start and halts long and frequent, and will not trouble much about the provisions; almost always in condition himself, he will never enquire how long a day the amateur is fit for. And it may be hinted that the man who comes to the Alps after a course of British climbing has sometimes been known to prefer an inferior guide, with whom he can do pretty much as he pleases, to a first-rate man who will speak with an authority not to be gainsaid, and make his employer feel that he has gone to school again.

If anyone thinks that we have spoken too strongly, let him consider a few words of wisdom from the recognised authorities, which might have served as texts for part at least of our discourse. "Of a truth many of our most prized little climbs in Cumberland are but slightly better than boulder problems. Taken singly, they cannot be reckoned for much Alpine practice, nor can our ability to surmount them justify us in assuming airs of superiority over men of general elementary experience abroad" (O. G. Jones in *Climbers' Club Journal*, Vol. I., p. 36). "Most of these fancy bits of rock-work are not mountaineering proper" (Mr. C. Pilkington, *Badminton* volume on Mountaineering, p. 336 of 1st edition). It is true that the same high authority says also (*loc. cit.*) that "British hills form a training ground where men may learn and practise nearly all that is necessary in the art of mountaineering." But we have ventured to lay the emphasis on the words "may" and "nearly," and to point out that, of the many things which might be learnt, under the guidance of a trained mountaineer, on our own hills (even as the history of the earth may be illustrated by a lump of chalk in the hands of a Huxley), very few are, in fact, attended to or cared about by the majority of those that climb there. Climbing, as it is practised in Great Britain, forms a small sub-division of rock-climbing proper, and consequently a very small section of mountaineering in the full sense of the word. All that is commonly taught by it is the capacity to do a particular kind of short climb, which tends to develop rock-gymnasts rather than cragsmen. And, conversely, a man may be a thoroughly good all-round mountaineer without being able to perform some of these gymnastic feats. Real mountaineering is only to be learnt in an Alpine country by working for several seasons under good guides.

Considered from an ALPINE STANDPOINT

A GOOD series of Cumberland climbing photographs were lately at the Schwarzsee, and under the shadow of the noble old Matterhorn, a party of German cragsmen were ridiculing the idea that anything good in their line of sport could be found in England. Whereupon a patriot rose and brought them the photographs. "Ach Gott! these men are terrible; they attempt the impossible!" and they, with strenuous verbal effort, decided that Englishmen at home must be madder than when abroad.

Nevertheless, the method of our madness interested them not a little, and they were at any rate convinced that we were not without our training-ground for heavier work in the Alps—our *polytechnik*—where correct principles could be learnt and inwardly digested by the aid of suitable practice.

We cannot ignore the fact that our polytechnic is small and incomplete. Ten years ago, our athletes were few and the Cumberland fells were large enough for all. But with this terribly rapid growth of the "tooth-and-nail" industry there has arisen the corresponding demand for technical training in that special subject, and we find that additional space is required for the use of fresh students of mountaineering, and new work of an advanced character for those who have graduated in the ordinary courses. So far as the English school is concerned, we must be prepared to admit without much qualification that there is no more room, and that there are not many problems remaining unsolved.

When these zealous students gather together on high days and holidays, the hotels are crowded and the outhouses filled to overflowing. The popular gullies are thronged with visitors. It becomes almost necessary to issue numbered tickets to the waiting throng at the foot of the Gable Needle. Orders for the ascent of Kern Knotts may be received two days in advance; this is a fact in my own experience. In ascending Deep Ghyll, parties are expected to adhere strictly to the rule of the road for the convenience of the general public. An unexpected jamming in a tight chimney stops the traffic several yards away; and, as in our London streets when a similar suspension of traffic occurs, there is a general discharge of expletives along the impatient line and a hoarse cry of " 'igher up, there ! "

But, in spite of all this, the work goes on merrily enough, and I daresay it loses little in efficiency. Apart from the orthodox holiday seasons—such as Easter and Whitsuntide—there are times when single parties can have the fells to themselves. They are available practically the whole year round; they are rarely barred for long by adverse conditions of ice, snow, or general bad weather; and for tyro or expert alike they supply all that is needful for a thorough relaxation of his workaday strain and a complete recuperation of his physical strength.

It would be beside the mark to dwell on the possibilities of the future in the direction of the removal of those disadvantages under which climbers in England may now be said to labour. No doubt accelerated train services to the north may be expected before long to take us in a reasonable time to the unexplored mountain recesses of bonnie Scotland, which, if we accept the utterances of our northern neighbours, offers plenty of magnificent exploratory work for generations to come; though, for the present, we in the south feel that the expense of time and money had better be incurred in carrying us to Switzerland instead. Leaving that question altogether, it may be reasonably contended that we have quite as much as is good for us in our own country. Those who can fairly claim to have exhausted English climbing—if there are any such—are not in the least likely to be contented with a whole England full of dolomitic or granite crags, and are bound to take the opportunity to try conclusions with the hardest problems abroad. These men are beyond the schools; they have taken their education into their own hands, and we can only look on and admire—or deplore. He who must ever be bent on achieving something new is not to be envied. Mummery used to hold that that which gave the acutest pleasure in a climb was the element of uncertainty; and, writing without reference to the particular passage in his noble book, I believe he claims that it was only in fresh exploration that he could get a thoroughly satisfying amount of this uncertainty. This, with all deference, is a little too much. It may for a first-class mountaineer detract something from his pleasure to feel that he is certain to get up because someone else has already managed the ascent before him; but for most of us there are glorious uncertainties in plenty on routes not altogether new, and even when convinced of our ultimate success we can get our fill of pleasure from other elements in the day's sport, the variety of which Mummery himself was most emphatic in describing.

It was as good as a day's scrambling to meet our President recently at Chamonix on his arrival one afternoon from Courmayeur by way of Mont Blanc. He had been up goodness knows how many times—I am ashamed for not knowing the exact number—and his enjoyment was as great as ever. He

was none the less a true mountaineer for revelling in the expedition, or for neglecting to think of the hundreds who had been up there before him, and of the grand uncertainties of the game. He obtained his day's exhilarating exercise, his fresh views of familiar old peaks, his recollections of former climbs and probably his anticipations of future ones. Then in the evening he entertained us with talk of past days at Pen-y-Gwryd, where year after year the same party used to assemble at Christmastide and have a rare good time. They did the same climbs again and again—they and the weather supplied the variety—and for over twenty years the place was big enough for their pleasure. Let us, therefore, make up our minds that England will do for ours.

The note of warning is even now sounded for us. Since penning the last sentence news comes from the Tyrol of the death of Mr. L. Norman-Neruda, one of the most skilful and daring of the modern school of rock climbers. His was the first ascent of the Fünffingerspitze by the north side, a climb that he characterised as the hardest he had ever attempted. Since that time he has explored that particular peak as no other amateur has done, and many of us may recall with interest his well-written and well-illustrated article that appeared three years ago in the *Zeitschrift*, on the Fünffingerspitze *als Typus eines Modeberges*, as the type of fashionable rock climb—fashionable because of its extreme difficulty. With a daring that few would care to emulate he climbed his favourite peak entirely alone, by all its routes, in the same day. Familiarity did not breed contempt, perhaps, but neither did it ensure a certainty of success, for it was on the south route up this same Fünffingerspitze that the accident happened which caused his death. With all our fondness for familiar climbs, let us therefore relax in no wise that caution which their difficulties demand of us. It is by no means paradoxical to assert that the more seriously we take to our work the more we shall be able to rejoice in it.

On the threshold of a new departure, we first members of the English Climbers' Club have good reason to pause and contemplate our responsibilities. The formation of a club, if it does not mean a pledge to justify our pursuit to the outer world, at any rate implies a conviction in us that adverse critics could

be silenced with fuller knowledge of what we risk and what we gain. The outer world have every right to enquire into the cause of misadventure that happens to us, every right to blame severely those whose folly or negligence has taken bad luck by the hand and courted disaster. We may be too proud or too indifferent to answer their adverse judgments, but it is well-nigh impossible for even an inveterate climber to remain entirely unaffected by the opinions of his friends and relatives. The experience of the Alpine Club is at our disposal ; its champions in dialectic are fortunately ours of necessity, and it remains to act up to our convictions and theirs. Accidents to novices will always set the world barking at our heels ; accidents to our tried mountaineers, rare though they must assuredly be, turn our best arguments against us.

All this moralising is very well, but it is not exactly what the Editor required of me. He has let me take the lead in a new climb and, under the pretence of prospecting, I have run out on an unconscionable length of rope before beginning the actual business of the day. And yet here again is a sign of the times ; our climbing literature, as well as our districts, is becoming exhausted. The usual narration of a modern mountaineering achievement suggests an aimless circling round and round in aerial flight, with an apparent forgetfulness of time and object, and then a sudden pounce on the unfortunate little, half-hidden *motif*. It is kept out of sight in the preliminary pages and then bolted in a paragraph. The veterans with axe and pen are a little hard on all this. They actually expect us to please them as much as they please us ! They have used up all the little climbing jokes ; they bar our reference to the pleasures and penalties of nights out, to damp or otherwise unrestful beds, to the matchless excellences of our leaders, to the glories of Alpine sunrises and sunsets, to every type of incident that used to supply them with so much copy. They were frequently inaccurate in matters of climbing detail, probably deeming accuracy incompatible with artistic treatment of their subject. Yet they laugh at our " times," and profess to despise the details that are nowadays so fully and generously offered them. No wonder the sensitive scribe is tempted to compact his matter into the smallest possible space and write on other subjects for

the rest of his article. We may well envy the pioneers their opportunities, but at the same time we may console ourselves with the reflection that they did much for us. It would be unbecoming to appear thankless. Any more information on English climbing they perhaps think it is impossible to supply, now that nearly every gully and ridge and pinnacle has been written up *in extenso*. It was a fine sarcasm in a recent paper before the Alpine Club with its allusion to our luckless literary efforts. The author could not, or would not, remember the details of his own climbing expedition, and amusingly contrasted it with the accounts of ascents in England or Wales, or the Coolins of Skye, where it was deemed necessary to know, on starting out from the hotel, which foot to put foremost, and where detail was so elaborate that a stonefall in a gully might call for a new edition. But this same author, in the rôle of scientific exponent of the principles of mountaineering, also studies the subject with microscopic minuteness. His directions to the would-be climber are innumerable. There may be thirty-seven things for an oarsman to think about in each stroke, but a cragsman has a thousand and one. Nor are these directions supplied with examples. We read in his instructive pages of the various aids to stability : how to place our hands, our feet and the other portions of our anatomy that can be temporarily used as limbs ; but we do not know where we are. We have to imagine the situations, or draw on our past experiences. Only those with a past can appreciate the ingenious analysis ; those without must wait.

To write realistically about rock climbing is one of the hardest things in the world ; and to understand what the writer is striving to explain, when he is narrating the overcoming or circumvention of difficulties, is often almost impossible even with the work of the most gifted authors. Perhaps one of the most explicit, and at the same time most enjoyable, narratives of the kind ever written is Mummery's chapter on the Grépon, but until the reader has traversed this peak he will never realise the description sufficiently well to understand the nature of its general design and of its chief difficulties. This journal must be persuaded to tolerate it, but incomprehensible to all but Cumberland climbers will be the following account of a famous

foreign rock climb, illustrated by references to similar passages in our own district.

It was my great pleasure to be taken across the Dent du Requin last August. Its preliminaries were of the ordinary character—easy glacier for two hours, intermittent steep moraine and ice for an hour, much-crevassed glacier for an hour. Then the rock-work began with an hour of the easy parts of the Ennerdale face of Great Gable, minus all vestiges of grass or other vegetation. All members of the party could move together, even when the scrambling was varied by the passage of the Slab and Notch Route. This brought us to a shoulder on the main east ridge of the mountain, and in a situation such as the top of the first part of the (old) West Climb on the Pillar Rock, we sat and lunched, and examined the remaining work before us. The highest point was about a hundred and fifty feet above our heads, separated off by a wide and very Savage Gully that descended steeply 1,500 feet to the glacier below. The ridge on which we were seated curved up on our left like the upper portion of the Needle Ridge, and fifty feet above us it wound across directly towards the final tower, like the horizontal ridge finish of the Shamrock Chimney.

The first party to reach the summit of the Requin descended 400 feet of the Savage Gully, and, bearing across to more broken ground on the other side of the peak, they forced a route up the north face. Our own party adopted a course that involved no long descent. Looking across at the final tower, we could see that it was seamed by a vertical chimney starting from the level of the Shamrock ridge on our left, and extending upwards for 100 feet to an elevated notch on the left side of the tower, close to the highest point. This chimney, an erected "Oblique" Chimney, was divided into two equal portions, of which perhaps only the upper half could be climbed without a fixed rope. At any rate, the lower part had been occasionally attempted, but never achieved. Our route followed the ridge up to the great tower, and skirted the foot of the Oblique Chimney by an easy hand traverse. It then descended the Savage Gully by a crack thirty feet long, to a small resting-place for three, such as that below the pinnacle on the Keswick Brothers' Climb. Thence a

Pendlebury Traverse led across nearly to the other side of the Savage Gully, and a steep but easy first pitch of the *A Pike's Crag* Gully brought us to a secondary buttress that marked the limit of our traversing. Then a succession of chimneys and ledges, gradually turning the tower, brought us to the elevated notch at the head of the *Oblique Chimney*. It must suffice to say that the series started with the outside route up the *Needle*, a rather wide *Doctor's Chimney*, and the direct finish of the great *Ennerdale Gully* on *Gable Crag*. Nothing harder was encountered. From the notch there remained a few feet of easy cleft and a finish up the *Y-Boulder* of *Mosedale*. The ascent from our breakfasting-place, and the return by means of a doubled rope twice used in the *Oblique Chimney*, occupied only two hours exclusive of halts—quite a *Cumberland* time. We had left the hotel at 2 a.m. (unusual for *Wasdale*!) and were back again at 3.30 p.m. Another party on the mountain, unaccustomed to these importations of English ascents into French territory, decided somewhat early in the day to give up the *Requin*, and left it to us.

Though the few guides who have climbed the *Requin* are asking for it a tariff of 300 francs, it does not demand greater skill or strength in its individual pitches, separately considered, than are needed in the English climbs enumerated in the above description. Some may ask why was it that the first party, all men of the highest attainments in mountaineering, took 20 hours from bivouac to summit and back? The answer is simple: they were tired after the long journey out from England, they had to design a route up, and they had the experiences of but a few previous explorers on the mountain. Their second ascent would have been accomplished in half the time; its narration would not have been half so thrilling. Dr. Clinton Dent, in reviewing Mummery's book for the *Alpine Journal*, remarked that such climbs as the *Dent du Requin* and the "crack" on the *Grépon* are impossible for men who have not been schooled in the ways of guides of the stamp of Alexander Burgener. We can sympathise with his strong partisanship for the guide that led him ultimately to victory in that long-protracted struggle with the almost unconquerable *Grand Dru*, but we do not altogether agree with his remark. He should be persuaded to join our Club and take part in some of our guideless meets: for the particular

tours de force that he quotes, he might learn that a training-school nearer home can be found where no Burgeners are wanted.

While thus running counter to the well-known opinion of an expert, let me venture even a step further. Everybody knows of the Aiguille du Géant and of the fixed ropes all the way up the interesting finish. Also most climbers will remember that Mr. Leslie Stephen, examining it from Mont Mallet in 1871, remarked that nobody would ever climb it by fair means. So far, indeed, he is right, in that various engineering methods were employed by the first party to mount it, and all succeeding visitors have benefited by the ropes and stanchions they left behind. Yet I am convinced that a party of two men could climb the Aiguille without these aids. The lower crack on the Burgener platten, usually reckoned the stiffest piece on the rock, is less difficult than the direct ascent to the Slingsby Chimney on Scawfell Pinnacle, from the first pitch in Deep Ghyll. The slightly overhanging chimney on the main ridge above the platten, taken by two men, is equalled in severity by many a short English pitch. The higher pinnacle of Robin Hood's Stride in Derbyshire is a match for it.

We must bear in mind, in making these comparisons, that a climber can reach the hard cragwork of our country in a brief time from his starting-point, and without initial fatigue he can start on the severest work of the day; whereas abroad it is the usual thing to spend a restless night and several hours of tiring, monotonous grind before the real troubles begin. Such a handicap as this would, with the average man, put many English climbs out of the question. The accident to Mr. Alfred Evans on Snowdon ten years ago, is generally attributed to the fatigue consequent on his climbing for a few hours before starting the ascent of Lliwedd, on which the slip occurred. A weak or untrained individual in Switzerland cannot even reach the crux of a long expedition. Everything is magnified out there; preliminaries may last half a day or more, and the *mauvais quart d'heure*, in which the climber's technical skill is taxed to the utmost, may last two or three hours! Hence it is that endurance is frequently of more importance than skill, and the foolishness of comparing the Gable Needle with the Aiguille du Géant as a climb is manifest. So we must tolerate the scornful contempt of the first-rate guides

for the difficult problems on the Shohorn boulder at Zermatt—which, maybe, they cannot solve for themselves—in humble consideration of what they can do in the way of practical gymnastics after twelve hours of the severe trials of leadership. Of a truth many of our most prized little climbs in Cumberland are but slightly better than boulder problems. Taken singly, they cannot be reckoned for much Alpine practice, nor can our ability to surmount them justify us in assuming airs of superiority over men of general elementary experience abroad.

Always recognising these limitations, it is precisely because the English work is shorter, but at the same time, pitch for pitch, equally difficult, that we should value our home mountaineering. The grouping of the crags is so excellent that our much-enduring wanderers can always put in more exercise, if a single gully or ridge is found to have absorbed too little of their available energy. It generally suffices for them. The Cambrian or Cumbrian air is magnificent, but there is some further fine quality in the atmosphere of the great Alps, which makes a Swiss climbing day of fourteen hours about as easy to undertake as an eight-hours' day on the fells. The labour involved in a walk down Wasdale, an ascent of one of the Screes gullies, and a return along the ridge and home by Burnmoor, is as much as we are usually willing to incur in a day. The responsibilities of leadership for a man accustomed to professional guidance add a few hours to the effective length of his course, and no amount of experience as leader should diminish the extra effort that his position demands.

Sometimes a series of "events" are run through with great rapidity. One fine afternoon in April, a party of three men, all well acquainted with the rocks, and in perfect form, rattled up the Eagle's Nest Ridge by the ordinary route, down the Arrowhead, up the Needle Ridge and down the Needle Gully, the whole set taking but an hour and three-quarters. This is very fast going, and more careful parties would prefer to take twice as long. Yet it shows how the crags shrink under practised and daring hands. The same thing, of course, occurs abroad, and induces us occasionally to believe that the great Swiss climbs are a bagatelle. The irreducible minimum of time for the Grépon was almost touched lately by a party threatened with a lightning storm all the while they were on the rocks. They were only

10½ hours out from the Montenvers, and less than half of this time was spent in crag climbing ! It is no unusual thing for ten hours to be so spent. To judge the work on the Grépon by the minimum would be to estimate it as a moderately severe Cumberland day ; whereas the effort involved in the traverse is quite as much as that in the ascent twice over of all the Napes ridges. Further comparisons, rough though they may be, will perhaps prove interesting. We will take the longer English climbs and the shorter Swiss ones, estimating their relation chiefly by the times taken by the same individual. The Pillar Rock by the North Climb gives about as much rock work as the Portiengrat traverse, the Zinal ridge of the Rothhorn, or the Wandfluh ridge of the Dent Blanche. The passage from the Dom to the Täschhorn in the most perfect state of the ridge, when the time spent in step-cutting and in careful negotiation of cornices is almost negligible, is as a descent of Gable by way of the Westmorland Craggs and the Needle Ridge, and a subsequent ascent of the Ennerdale face by the traverse and the Bottle-shaped Pinnacle ridge. Some of the Chamonix aiguilles offer little but snow and ice. The Aiguille du Plan gives no more rock on the ordinary route than we find on the Penrith climb of Scawfell, and the Aiguille du Midi rocks are matched in time and quality by those from the Low Man to the summit of the Pillar. The Blaitière, if free from ice, is equal to the West Pillar route, up to the snow col ; and its last part has an approximate equivalent in the ascent of the Scawfell Pisgah from the Rake's Progress by the new climb from the Tennis Court. The Little Dru—ah, well, it is the finest climb out there ; splendid quality of work, and plenty of it. I think rather too well of the rocks of the Little Dru to build it up of bits of England, but half a dozen of our best and longest courses on end would scarcely match it. Many readers with experience of the Alpine peaks will be inclined to take exception to these comparisons. But it must be remembered that no attempt is here made to describe the greater climbs by home analogies ; we are only discussing the relative amounts and quality of rock exercise involved in the parallel cases. It is an infliction to be possessed of an acute recollection of their details when making these analogies, for the variety is infinite, and no two pitches are alike in the wide world. Those who have not climbed in the

Alps will more readily pardon deficiencies. The comparisons are certainly made chiefly for their interest. They read of great doings abroad, and are at a loss to connect them up with their own experiences at home.

The opportunities of fresh exploration in England are nearly exhausted; that fact we were sadly compelled to admit at the outset. But new work of considerable interest is continually being done, and will go on for a few years to come. Routes unexceptionable in both quality and safety are found for us in the most unexpected quarters. Who would have thought, at the time of the first ascent of Moss Ghyll, that the great cliff between that magnificent gully and the Mickledore could have offered two such splendid climbs as those named after Dr. Collier and the Keswick brothers? It is true that the former route was tabooed by the careful for some years after the first ascent, as being both difficult and dangerous. But it has lately been shown that its initial thirty feet—the only doubtful portion—can be safely negotiated with a looped rope, or still more safely turned on the right. Nobody can take exception to the second of the above pair, which, with care and moderate skill, is as reliable a route as any to be found on Scawfell. Then again the gully in Borrowdale that yielded to the attack of Mr. W. Cecil Slingsby's party last year was a surprise to nearly everybody, even to those whose wandering gaze had occasionally rested on the dark vertical line that divides Blea Crag so suggestively. We have in the Alps the Adlerjoch, named in remembrance of the eagle's wing picked up there by the first party; the Col de l'Abeille, from the "vagrant bee perplexed" that tried to cross the pass and, halting on the snow, became a victim to frost-bite, and all but succumbed to the intense cold; the Col des Hirondelles, from the poor dead swallows that Leslie Stephen came too late to save. But here in Borrowdale Mr. Slingsby strikes a new departure. He has aptly christened his climb "Mouse Ghyll," for he passed a veritable *ridiculus mus* clearing the great pitch at a single leap. Apparently it suffered no harm, but it must have ached next day, and one hopes that it will live long enough to learn of the honour bestowed upon it for making the first recorded descent of the Blea Crag gully. From all accounts the Ghyll must have points of decided merit. Its position is very convenient for sojourners

at Rothwaite or Seatoller, and there is a most attractive outlook from its crest. Moreover, a variation at the finish offers a "crack" climb comparable with those on Kern Knotts. Less interesting as a whole, but well worth a visit from Keswick or Grasmere, is the Iron Crag that yielded to the assault of Messrs. Abrahams' party. The route is up a steep and forbidding-looking chimney, out of sight from the main road from Keswick to Wythburn. There is some trouble with bad rock, but the great pitch is sufficiently difficult to tempt the most experienced and enterprising.

Passing over to Coniston, we may truly endorse Mr. Haskett Smith's opinion of Doe Crag—that the climbing here is second to none in the district. Not only are there five splendid gullies, all of which have now been proved surmountable, but it is almost a certainty that each of the separating ridges will offer a route to the crest of the great precipice. In a previous article on Doe Crag I have referred to five gullies. These, viewed from Goatswater, and taken from left to right, were named: The Easy Gully, Great Gully, Central Chimney, Intermediate Gully and the North Gully. Since writing the article, a visit to the spot has shown the existence of a magnificent cleft between the Intermediate and the North Gullies. As the two ascents already made of this Cleft were accomplished on Easter Day (1895 and 1898) we may christen it the Easter Gully. There are thus six gullies in all, but the first is devoid of interest after the others. It was probably the North Gully that Messrs. Robinson and Haskett Smith visited in 1886. The Great Gully was climbed in 1888 by Messrs. Hastings, Haskett Smith, and E. Hopkinson. On Easter Day, 1895, the Intermediate Gully was successfully tackled by Messrs. Campbell, Edward, Albert, and J. H. Hopkinson; the "Easter" Gully by Messrs. Otto Koecher and Charles Hopkinson; a third party took the North Gully again, and above the chief difficulty, they managed to traverse into the upper portion of the Easter Gully. Two years later, in April, 1897, Mr. Godfrey Ellis and I made the first ascent of the Central Chimney, under the impression that it was one of the 1895 climbs. Finally, at Easter, 1898, Mr. W. J. Williams and I, still puzzled with cases of mistaken identity, resolved to take the whole set and make notes of their many details. Our plan was fairly well worked out, but in the Easter Gully we

made a new route up the great pitch, instead of taking it in a straightforward manner. This move was forced upon us by reason of the heavy rain.

The Intermediate and the North Gullies went fairly well, though we thought both were severe. I was certainly wrong in calling the latter easy in my published account, and Mr. Robinson lost no time in rising to uphold the honour of his 1886 climb. The former is far more troublesome. It may conceivably be taken direct over every pitch; but it is safer, drier and more expeditious to turn the two worst constrictions of the long cleft by traversing out to the right, as the first party did. The extreme slenderness of the whole gully for three hundred feet, and its uniform steepness, are sufficient to sustain the interest until the upper screes are reached. Even then the scrambling is not finished, but it becomes possible for the members of the party to advance simultaneously to the highest point of Doe Crags.

The Easter Gully was quite out of the question so far as the direct route was concerned, for water was streaming down the vertical chimney in great quantity. The holds are too small to be safely employed when wet. Messrs. Brett and Garrett made a determined attempt on this chimney a year before, but they were not quite sure whether it was the place to which I had directed their attention, and conditions were unfavourable. We were quite willing at the first glance to take it for granted that the chimney would go, without risking our limbs to prove the point. But a secondary chimney on the left of the other, reached after the great boulder near the bottom had been passed, was quite dry and feasible. It certainly took us in the wrong direction, but we ventured to start in it on the chance of finding some means of rejoining the main route higher up. Where our cleft became dangerous by reason of the great spikes of rock that formed a *chevaux de frise* to block our passage, we deflected off to the right, and with infinite trouble succeeded in clambering up the wall to a grass platform that dominated the first 80 feet of the direct chimney. Even then we could not manage the remaining 15 feet of waterfall on the main route, but were compelled to stride across to a minute ledge on the other side, traverse a few yards outwards in a horribly exposed

situation, and then, by following the ridge, raise ourselves to the level of the top of the chimney. The difficulties of this passage impressed us deeply; though for this, the cold and wet rocks, the intermittent rain and the swirling mist around us, were largely responsible. Above the chimney the gully divided, each branch giving excellent work till the short scree near the summit-ridge was attained. A cairn now marks the head of the Easter Gully.

The descent of the Great Gully makes a convenient finish of a moderately easy kind, after the severe labour of an ascent by the Central Chimney, the Intermediate or the Easter Gully. But the loose stones are rather unpleasant, and the route is becoming hackneyed. It is much more interesting to descend by the North Gully. There is a considerable amount of scree at the commencement of the downward course—perhaps 150 feet—and then a ledge or two is passed before we arrive at the level of the highest of the three great stones that together make the chief pitch. Working steadily downwards to the right, there follows some amusing, crawling round a corner into a low-roofed cavern, where a suitable spike may be found for a doubled rope to steady the last man down the next twenty feet of wall-climbing. Below this the gully is steep but easy, resembling the lower part of the Pavey Ark Great Gully.

It is to be hoped that before long good account can be rendered of the Doe Crag ridges. For the present let us turn to that favoured spot, the Scawfell face. Some eighteen months ago Messrs. George and Ashley Abraham suggested to me that the ridge between Moss Ghyll and Steep Ghyll should be made to supply a route to Pisgah from the Tennis Court Ledge. * We were able during the fine weather of last April to try conclusions with the ridge. Examination of the great buttress in question from the north side of the Pinnacle showed a well-broken portion at the level of the head of the Slingsby Chimney, up to which we were fairly confident of forcing a way from Moss Ghyll. But from that point the ridge was uncompromisingly vertical, and for forty feet the route was questionable. Operations began on the Tennis Court, with an awkward crack at its furthest corner, which called for combined operations on the part of all three. Twelve feet higher a second ledge

was reached, scarcely big enough for a Fives' Court. Then a steep chimney led in thirty feet directly to the ridge. Just before reaching it, a tempting by-way to the left drew the leader away from the true course, but the fearful quivering of a huge block that barred his way drove him back. This was exceedingly fortunate, for the chimney ascent with which he would have presently been involved was of a dangerous character. When the three of us were well placed on the sharp edge of the buttress a council of war was held. A movement to the right would have exposed us to the critical suggestions of another party on the Low Man, and would have been very hard. The rocks in front were vertical and unreliable. Those on the left were not altogether firm, but were no worse than those we had already encountered. Taking to these, the leader worked cautiously round, and before the others moved onwards he reached a spot on the ridge where all real difficulty terminated. All arrived there, we unroped, and taking the remaining rocks in a go-as-you-please style, we hurried off in search of our respective cameras, which had been left below by reason of their supposed inexperience.

On the same day another suggestion was carried out that had been made to me long before by Dr. Collier. This was to climb Scawfell Pinnacle from the foot of Professor's Chimney. The first part overhung considerably and the footholds—such as they were—sloped the wrong way. But the rocks were dry and warm, in the best possible condition, and finger tips could find an abundance of encouraging little roughnesses on the slabs. Scarcely two minutes of uncertainty, and the route was assured. An upward traverse to the left, away from the forbidding buttress that figures so prominently in the best views of the pinnacle, led to a slight chimney that conducted me easily to the Low Man ridge in ten minutes from Deep Ghyll. An equal interval sufficed to allow a traverse of the pinnacle and a descent by the Professor's Chimney to the starting-point.

Finally, let me mention that, apart from the Deep Ghyll routes up Scawfell Pinnacle, there is now a soul-satisfying climb on to the Low Man, from the Lord's Rake, that does not touch Steep Ghyll. It was climbed one evening in May, 1898, by Mr. G. T. Walker and myself. The problem before us was

not new—that of reaching Slingsby's Chimney from below by the Deep Ghyll ridge. We struck it this at its base by the Deep Ghyll first pitch, and followed it till it began to overhang. This took us up about 100 feet. Then we bore up to the left by a movement wonderfully similar to that described in the preceding paragraph. Twice the leader ran out fifty feet before the second could follow in safety. At last, after a good deal of open traverse over steeply-sloping rocks, we reached a flat-floored recess that I recognised. It was roofed by the great block fifty feet high, from the top of which starts the awkward step up to the foot of Slingsby's Chimney. Our cave might possibly be reached from below by a long gully in the face, instead of our ridge and traverse. The latter was certainly difficult. We used stockinged feet as an improvised substitute for *kletterschuhe*, and found the roughness of the outward-sloping slabs charmingly adapted to our needs. From the cave we had to twist ourselves out at the right-hand top corner and manœuvre on to a narrow ledge. This was just good enough for the toes, and had to be traversed to the right without handhold of any sort. In ten feet we reached the Low Man wall and entered the cleft that separates off the great block. A few yards of chimney climbing, with our precious boots tied round our necks, and the ordinary "outside" route up the pinnacle was joined. There ended our little exploration, and we were glad to hurry home.

Messrs. Reade and McCulloch have lately climbed the West Jordan gully on the Pillar, and Mr. John Robinson writes to say that there is another fine route now open on Scawfell! In former times, one new good climb per annum was all they expected; now we claim much more. This almost monthly record of new expeditions is surely a sign of anything but exhaustion; and we live in hope that it will last.

'NOTHING NEW REMAINS: IN FACT LITTLE HAS REMAINED FOR YEARS PAST. OF IMPOSSIBILITIES - OR FUTILITIES I SHALL NOT SPEAK'.

(Valedictory address to the Alpine Club, as the retiring President, by Col. E. L. Strutt).

A SUPERIORITY COMPLEX?

We yield to no-one in our admiration for the German overseas parties...the modesty of these parties has been excelled only by their skill. But, for the present day German mountaineer in the Alps wonder replaces admiration. There is no lack of skill on rock at any rate but judgement and an elementary knowledge of the ethics of mountaineering are conspicuously absent. In these pages it has been too frequently our task to relate some unjustifiable exploit and, in the same number, to record the inevitable disaster accruing to the perpetrators.

So much for the actors: but for those apostles appointed as propagandists and chroniclers, not to say financiers, of youthful German scrambling our feelings are very different. The symptoms of the disease existing in the German press show no signs of diminution. The most recent and unhealthy example will be found in the D. & O. A. E. V. 'Mitteilungen' of June last (2)....'Our German mountaineers have in recent times been successful beyond compare...their exploits, contrasted with those of other nations, stand without question on an over-whelming pinnacle'.

It is not merely self-glorification carried to an absurd pitch, but it is also far beyond the bounds of actual fact. We brush aside the question of good taste.

Excepting the unjustifiable but wonderful conquest of the Matterhorn's North Face and foolish variations on the Dent d'Herens and Dent Blanche by guideless if misguided amateurs, Germany...has played the smallest part.

The northern faces of Finsteraarhorn, Fiescherwand, Eiger, Monch, and Jungfrau fell to Swiss parties (5).

One more specimen of propaganda

'It is an ancient English custom to climb in the Alps with professional guides: the German mountaineer finds as a rule his own way, he cuts his own steps and trudges through deep snow relying on his own steam. Owing to these traditions we are still more prepared than the English for the struggle with the Eight thousanders'.

Yet, in the struggle for the said eight thousander 'Peaks' German mountaineers have not hesitated - in some cases ruthlessly to avail themselves of the devoted services of British Empire porters to 'trudge through the deep snow'.

This is what a nation that has played some part in Mountaineering history, that was the pioneer of guideless climbing, that despises gladiatorial displays, but that still possesses some sense of proportion and of the ludicrous, is called upon to smile at but endure.

ALPINE CLUB JOURNAL.

VOLUME 46 1934. pps. 374 ff.

(2) A document considered worthy of presentation in a recent state festivity held in Stuttgart. As for the author, he has, Alas! paid the supreme penalty on Nanga Parbat.

(5) 'Der Bergsteiger'....finds it necessary to publish portraits of some German mountaineers, two of whom have since been killed. The accompanying 'dossier' describes each one as being, 'the very best of all ice or rock craftsmen'!

GUIDE VALLOT. VOLUME 11. P 314

CAPUCIN DE TACUL. 3130 METRES

R. Barbier and C. Fontaine, 1st September 1934. A superb monolith 50 metres in height. It has been climbed by extraordinary manoeuvres which took several days.

It is necessary to construct a 'V' shape in wire around the Capucin on both sides. Each branch of the 'V' measures 500 metres. The point of the 'V' is fixed on the downstream (relative to the glacier) side, 150 metres from the Capucin and the extremities are fixed 300 metres up stream. Place a third wire perpendicular to the 'V' and fix one of its extremities a little up stream and at the height of the Capucin. Using this third wire pull the 'V' up the crest of the Capucin into a nick situated 8 metres from the summit below and to the North East. This third wire will now hang down the South face. Replace the third wire successively by string, a line and then a rope. Moor (Literal) this rope at both of its ends, one on the arete upstream of the Capucin and at the same height as it and the other at the foot of the South face. Climb the rope by prussiks for its length, 42 metres, to the nick. Near this is a platform. Fix a second rope down the South face to piton placed in the nick and with the aid of a companion situated on the arete upstream of the Capucin encircle the Capucin at a higher level with the first rope, after having attached a third rope to it. By means of this third rope ascend 2 metres up the North East arete. Return to the first rope and ascend to the left (2 pitons) and then to the right (2 pitons). Throw a fourth rope over a nick one metre from the summit and climb to the top. (THEY JUST DON'T MAKE THEM LIKE THAT ANY MORE).

The End of the MOUNTAINS

G. A. G. Jones.

Living in a large city I accept overcrowding as part of the grim price of today, but recently overcrowding has begun to annoy me where one would least expect it: in the mountains. For me the quality of the mountain experience is deteriorating as the quantity of climbers increases. This is nothing new, for our large and affluent population decreases the availability of beaches, clean air, unspoilt country and tranquility, to name but a few. But, somehow one had a naive faith that this would never happen in the relatively inhospitable mountains.

Some years ago surfers were a small group of enthusiasts, surfing a common bond and an escape from the oppressive sterility of Los Angeles. Now it is hard to see the ocean for surfboards, and a number of former surfers have told me that it is not worth the effort any more. What surfing meant to them has long since gone.

Downhill skiing is similarly becoming absurd, as more and more people crowd into skiing areas that cannot expand fast enough to fulfil the promise of their own over-promotion. When skiing this year I have been struck by the way we tolerate long lift lines and overcrowded slopes — weekend skiing is a slow torture. Now the ski promoters are aiming to invade the National Parks and game refuges, notably at Mineral King, in their unending expansion: and no end is in sight.

Both surfing and skiing have changed from the activity of a dedicated few to become a mass recreation for millions. The reasons, as with most successful business ventures, is highly, sophisticated marketing and promotion. Some activities can absorb huge followings, they can take place almost anywhere, but others are totally dependent on a finite number of locations.

Raft float trips through the Grand Canyon have become a victim of their own success, so that instead of being able to enjoy the experience with a few one has to share it with a crowd. Here massive promotion was not needed, there is only one Grand Canyon.

The Mont Blanc area has probably the finest mountaineering in Europe, and is so heavily used that to have a classic route to oneself, let alone a mountain, is almost unknown. For example, while climbing the Route Major on Mont Blanc last summer we had three parties ahead of us, and other ropes on all the adjacent routes. The Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses, one of the great Alpine Climbs, had a reported dozen parties on it at the same time, sharing the stances and the frustrations. We had a number of discussions on the future of alpinism in Europe, and many agreed that Europe was played out: the future was in the great ranges. The number of worthwhile new climbs in the Alps is insignificant. Yet how many mountaineers have the time or the money to make expeditions to Nepal or or Alaska-what they need now, and in the future, is an authentic, mountain experience within a reasonable distance.

The United Kingdom, it seems to me, is also suffering from too many climbers, for the available mountains are clearly defined, and becoming rapidly worked out. Climbing during the early sixties I remember how remote and wild North Wales and

The Lake District were. Here a real sense of solitude and adventure was possible, Clogwyn du'r Arddu the epitomy of all the mysteries that made us climb. Our first visits to the Black Cliff are life in the raw - we were alone and insignificant, the cliff's legends a mental barrier, its difficulties overwhelming. It was our crag. How many young climbers today have Cloggy to themselves?

When I first climbed in the Avon Gorge the Main Wall's cliffs had had very few ascents. If there was a party on Main Wall one invariably knew them, and the ascent was the event of the week. The unknown was the key factor, the feeling of entering a new dimension. Today there are commonly three or four parties on Main Wall at the same time. The technical demands of the rock are the same, but is the total experience? While it may be true that unclimbed rock is there in parts of Scotland, that is of no consequence to the Londoner. Overcrowded during the week, he is now hemmed in at the weekend. What of the future? From a recent mountain rescue Committee we learn, 'Outdoor training centres can now be numbered in hundreds - in Snowdonia they seem to be going up in rows like terraced houses'.

Powerful external forces are at work promoting the mountains as a battlefield, as a panacea of man's ills with such heavily loaded phrases as 'Character building', leadership, and self-reliance. Indeed Dr. Kurt Hahn, founder of the Outward-Bound, said, 'In peace we have still to discover the moral equivalent of war'. A frightening credo from which to launch a crusade of building men.

In an article in the 1970 Alpine Journal, 'Margins of Safety', Harold Drasdo remarks on the effect of the mass media in exaggerating the sensational in mountaineering. He goes on to say, 'We ought to moderate our language, begging the character builders not to use the word 'courage' in talking to young people about climbing; this word is best saved for situations which have not been entered for fun, and in a climbing situation 'persistence' may be more appropriate'. My concern is that mountaineering is being deliberately promoted for aims other than the activity itself; namely to 'Make a man out of you', and by the media as if it were an auto race.

In North America we are some way from these conditions, yet they are coming. Both the Shawangunks and Yosemite attract more climbers every year. In all the mountains of the world, there is only one El Capitan, and when it is too common-place what is left? Will it be a mere technical exercise to tomorrow's climbers? - Traditionally apolitical and unregimented the very number of mountaineers has forced us to be regulated in the Tetons, where camping is soon to be replaced by the formality of hut accommodation. Even the Bugaboos have been desecrated by the Alpine Club of Canada, who chopped down trees and replaced them with outrageous fibreglass igloos; all under the pressure of progress and numbers.

This is just the beginning, for the United States has a vast industry almost unknown elsewhere - recreation. With a large and affluent population amazing fads have been launched. The snowmobile shatters the winter quiet, ranging at will over the untracked wilderness, and the dune buggy is turning the Southern California desert into a 16,000,000 - acre garbage dump. Ski-ing, powerboats, surfing, water ski-ing, trail bikes - why not rock climbing? Play up the daring, excitement and the sex appeal and it could take off. Climbing involves travel, accommodation and a vast array of gadgetry and clothing. Already in Yosemite the concessionaire is marketing climbing. 'Climb Yosemite' posters are all over California (and all over the East for all I know), while they sell rock climbing just like horse treks and picture postcards. To them it is a business like any other.

Today's climbers in North America are, in general, what I would call inner-directed - they have consciously chosen their minority activity for personal reasons. Tomorrow's may well be outer-directed, influenced by advertising and external forces to try the new thing. We can be sure that the real nature of climbing will not be stressed; the attention to detail, the hard work, fatigue, cold and determination. Rather it will be superficial another kick in the endless pursuit of fun.

Probably unconsciously many of today's climbers, including myself regrettably, are sowing the seeds for this congested future. Writing in popular magazines, film making, lecturing aren't we pushing climbing and often playing up the heroic and

flashy, giving a false picture of mountaineering? As chuck Pratt remarked, when reviewing an instruction book, 'Climbing, contrary to Mr. Rossit's contention, is not something that everyone can, or should do, immediately.'

I am not trying to deny mountaineering to those whose inclinations would lead them to it, but the experience of Europe, and the potential of aggressively selling it here, suggest that more is not better. My feeling is that those drawn into ski-ing by the advertisers derive less value from the ski-ing and more from the trappings, which may well be the promoter's aim. For this genuine skiers have virtually sacrificed their sport, while the shame is that the externals could just as well take place anywhere.

In countless ways we are learning that continual growth, the American Dream, is turning against us. Californian campsites are so crowded that Governor Reagan has announced a state-wide computer reservation system, and ironically enough this is defined as progress. To mountaineers, this is the antithesis of progress, it is another freedom lost. Too late we discover that growth is like a cancer, our great cities are strangling to death, our cars are destroying the air, our pesticides destroying life, our very numbers the greatest crisis mankind faces. All as a result of the blind acceptance of growth.

Should we not, as climbers, take a hard look at where we are going, and where the promoters could push us? What are the implications in ten years, in fifty? Will our children have unknown mountains nearby, or will they all be minutely detailed?

By all means let us climb, and introduce others to climbing, but beware the wholesale character builders, sensation seeking media and promoters who would turn mountaineers into another vast business. Man's hand lies heavy on the land, his capacity to over-exploit and destroy is phenomenal. Are we the instruments of our own destruction.

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With thanks to the author and editor

GREENLAND 1971

H. B. Sales.

To hell with literary form. There is not the time, nor the space. Lets start with a grandiloquent title 'Greenland 1971'. Sounds good for something that was billed as a 'mini expedition', which was a laugh for a start. It was the mini expedition that had everything. To begin with it was international, three English, three Scots. Then besides the climbing, there was the flying bit, the ski-ing bit and of course the exploration bit. Then too, at least down at the tundra level there were the birds, the plants, the animals and the people.

So far the dramatis personae. The English, Peter Mould, Jack Derry and Harry Sales, were very English, i.e. keen types and Climbers Club members. Peter was the Stakhonivite of the party carried a movie camera besides his share of the load and cooked for the English as well. The Scots, Malcolm Slessor, Peter Cromer and Stuart Kermack were thoroughly Scottish: two even piped at home and, deprived in Greenland, whistled pibroch or whatever. The English took great pleasure in their rustic charm and relaxed attitude and spent any available free time in the larger and untidier Scottish tent observing and commenting on their quaint customs and thought processes. But to the English life was earnest and there were mountains to be climbed.

Next for the plans - there seemed to be hundreds of them and we had to play it by ear in the end. The original ideal was the Staunings Alps but the Danish Authorities clamped down on climbing expeditions there. Malcolm, organiser and lover of Greenland had seen and liked the look of the Roscoe Bjerger from the Liverpool Coast from the air so we decided to go there. Nobody else seems to have bothered to explore it. Don't know why not - although the peaks are more Scottish than Alpine in height, they are of perfect Alpine nature - steepish rock straight from the glaciers. So that was our objective. The three English were going to climb, the Scots were going to come with us for part of the time, and then follow an old sledge route from the north end of the Hurry Fjord right up to Mestervi, a hundred and thirtyfive miles further north. This trip was thwarted by the combined effect of the cajoling of the English and the devastating attacks of the mosquitoes at the tundra level, particularly on Stuart, so we stayed as a party of six nearly all the time. They were well out of the trudge: no self respecting Greenlander would have gone on it except in the winter with a sledge.

First to get there. For the record, and it is an interesting journey, scheduled flight from Glasgow to Keflavik (south west Iceland), bus to Reykjavik, and then schedule flight to Insa fjord - hur in the north west, then a hop across to north east Greenland, in a little Piper Apache, taking us in relays to an airstrip on the tundra a few miles from Scoresbysund. 'Us' included a scientific expedition and a botanical expedition and the pilot was flying non stop for twentyone hours. He went where we wanted him to, up the glaciers, over the cols, wings seeming to touch the rocks on either side, prospecting our route and a place for an air drop. In fact neither the air drop nor a helicopter drop, planned later, materialised. We ended up doing everything the hard way, cutting down on the food and our figures.

So there we were in our first Arctic camp, near the airstrip: we had got used to camping on airfields and airstrips a thing looked on with disfavour at Heathrow. The next day the intrepid English trudged for three or four hours over the tundra and delta rivers to Kap Hope, a community of sixty Greenlanders (they don't like being called Eskimos) to fix up a boat. We used

this to ferry food up the Hurry Inlet to the mouth of the river in Södal. In the process the English had a couple of journeys in the boat, which was small, open, with an outboard and exciting when the wind got up and the iceflows got in the way. We nearly froze at one stage but arrived well ahead of the Scots, who followed on foot across rough country. We flogged up Södal and set up a base camp a mile below the snout of the glacier and the next day knocked off our first peak, a miserable slab heap, sticking up from Bjerring Pedersens Glacier. Rotten rock cascaded down so we chose a better route for descent. In general we found the steeper the better. Back to camp and next day down to the coast to find the Scots, who were late. Thank God they arrived, we would not have been without them. Back to the base camp. Next day up early (there were twentyfour hours of daylight, but it was colder at night time and better for moving on the snow, so we ignored the clock when we had the sense and energy), up on the glacier where we put on our skis for the first time, and they actually worked. The English had new Swedish Langlauf skis, nice and light but not much use for turns. We made a camp at a place we had spotted from the air high up on the glacier. Next day, while two of the Scots went down again. Malcolm and the three English tackled the first worthwhile peak, un-named, from which we got a splendid view of the adjoining peaks. As always scree was loose and unpleasant, if not positively dangerous the ridges and rock faces are better, although along the ridges there is a great deal of loose rock to be chucked overboard.

At this stage we had to go down for the rest of our stuff at the base camp and at the coast. The helicopter had brought nothing in, so we decided to make do with what we'd got to complete the circle back to the airstrip by the glacier system. If necessary somebody could go on ahead towards the end to get more food. Our camp, now called 'Campian Island', on the glacier became our home for a week, we could get melt water at the right time of day, we could ski from it in all directions (careful of crevasses) and there were quite a few routes to do from it. Malcolm and Peter Mould knocked off one of the best, which they christened 'Noycestinde'. It is near to and could be confused with 'Korsberg' marked on the map. Next the three Scots and

Harry climbed 'Korsbjerg' by a magnificent spiralling glacier route. There are two fine rock pillars on the top giving some nice climbing for the finish. This is a customary arrangement in these parts, giving the summits and some of the ridges a coxcomb appearance.

From there we moved camp along the Age Nielsens glacier and via the 'Slingsby' glacier to 'Camp Jordan' on a col with views in all directions, including down to the sea at Lillefjord to the South East. The first mountain we climbed from there we christened 'Kirkustinde'. All these names need the ratification of the Danish authorities. Towards the bottom of the climb Malcolm positive as always in thought and deed, managed decisively to pull out a jug and hit the deck. He scraped the back of his fingers going down and this was the only real injury of the whole trip. It did not stop him getting to the top and again the summit was crowned by two magnificent blocks, one giving about two hundred feet of good severe climbing. Next was one of the best ascents of the lot, 'Tvillingerne', which we tackled by a long series of glaciers connected up by cols, descending one of which made us put on crampons for the first time. Again the final rock ascent was crowned by a marvellous seventy foot summit block which looked most impressive, but proved to be only difficult. Perfect views from the top, the highest summit in the region: a worthy peak, thoroughly recommended.

Next, whilst four of us climbed another slag heap mountain, above the camp, worthwhile only for the view and for reconnoitring our way back, Malcolm and Peter Mould climbed something more worthwhile behind the camp, which we named 'Cloughtnde'. They chose a very good route which involved a little artificial climbing. The exciting thing though, was that it had been climbed before. Although the other nine peaks we climbed were apparently virgin, there was a pencil note on this recording that Michael Perez (Geneva) and Pierre Drach (Paris) climbed it on the 24th July 1934. We found later that they were members of Charcot's 1934 expedition. Charcot was a famous French explorer who lost his life the following year when his boat went down with all hands. Presumably they had seen this peak from the sea at Lillefjord from where it stands out as the

most prominent peak of the area.

The two non-skiers decided to return via Lillefjord and then across what in the winter is a sledging route to Scoresbysund. Two of us went down with them as far as Lillefjord. The return to sea level was a pleasant promise of things to come. Feathered birds, insects, plants, rubbish bones and desolation around the Fangshytte, (hunters' hut), a poor little shed though prominently marked, like all such, on the 1/25,000 mp. Meanwhile Peter Mould and Jack climbed another good peak, 'Mummery Sulen', access to which they obtain from a cirque which we called 'the Sanctuary.

Back to camp. We had rationed ourselves well enough to be able to make the round trip back without sending down for more food. So everything goes on our backs and up a series of glaciers, over a couple of Cols and we can see our way down by the long glacier leading to Joettedal and the airstrip. But before the descent from the higher col we decided to knock off one last mountain, Koempehojen, by a long ridge, with masses of loose rock to begin with but getting better towards the end. A somewhat dicey descent from the col onto the glacier, but once there a beautiful ski run for four or five miles. When I say beautiful, this means beautiful by Greenland standards, the surface varying all the time from snow, to thin snow, to ice, to rough ice and we managed to take about an eighth of an inch of wood off our langlauf skis. Jack, who had not learned to stop himself going downhill on skis except by falling, didn't enjoy it so much. For the rest, this completed a rather good haute route on ski, which we can thoroughly recommend. In general light skis are an asset in the area.

The final descent to the airstrip from the end of the glacier seemed endless, but the two Scots were there with a brew of tea. Equally important all the food was there, including the food which should have been helicoptered for us. Apparently the Geological Survey helicopter had picked up, and failed to return, the food belonging to the Waterstons (well known bird folk who had come out with the flower people). In consequence they had had to trudge into Scoresbysund to buy what food they could, and were rightly annoyed. We gorged ourselves and the next day

the English made their first visit to Scoresbysund and judged it rather a dump compared with Kap Hope. There are more people there: about 300, including a lot of Danes and a few odds and ends. Being more people there is more muck and more smell, neither of which we found appetising after our pure life on the glacier. The weather at this stage clamped down after three weeks of almost continual sunshine: the low cloud made it quite impossible for the Piper to land for a day or so, and we thought we would be stuck there indefinitely. Soon a wind got up though, the cloud cleared, in he came and of we went hopping direct back to Reykjavik and making up for lost time.

So much for the bare bones of the journey, what of the ancillaries? There was the food, plenty of soups, meat bars, ships biscuits and porridge. Malcolm was a dab hand at semolina pancakes. There were the birds, in both Iceland and at the tundra level in Greenland. All the obvious ones. Artic Turns, bunting Glaucous Gulls, Red-Throated Phalaropes, Ringed Plovers and Dunlin. There were the flowers in the tundra in an amazing variety, some of which the Greenland children at Kap Hope showed us how to eat. The only wild life we saw apart from husky dogs were seal and musk ox, both of which are hunted, the former legally and the latter illegally. If you see a lot of big brown rocks moving, they are musk ox. The only polar bear we saw was in the form of a coat worn by Joshua the Greenlander with whom we negotiated the boat, and a baby bear kept as a pet by the doctor at Scoresbysund. My favourite form of life though were the Eskimo children at Kap Hope. Every time we appeared on the scene they fastened themselves to us in great numbers. We each had our regular faithful attenders and mine were beautiful.

Shambles in the ALPS

Trevor Jones.

I have this trouble communicating with people you see and feel the need to make my mark by climbing big mountains. By some fluke or oversight I happen to be in the ALPINE climbing Group which is composed of fierce young men hewn from single blocks of granite, who only become animated in the summer months when they solo up and down the climbs that I could never do, or thought very hard when I did them in my youth fifty years ago.

They have this qualification thing that you must keep on doing routes of 'Tres Difficile' standard every year to stay in the scene. So, I decided to gather together three good men and true around me to try and tug me up one of the hard things in the Dauphine. Firstly there was Ian Roper, 'Sherpa' as he is known to everyone, he is a big thing in the Lake District and young too. Then there was Derek Walker who was the last supporter of the British Empire and who had been in South America for the last few years doing something to the Incas. Finally there was Bob Allen who is in carpets, and who was relied upon to produce one of the flying variety if we got pressed. The weather was good so we had no alternative but to get straight into the mountains. I was staggered to see that there were still women staying in the huts in the Alps. No self respecting Climbers Club reactionary should stay in such mixed surroundings. They might start copulating or some such thing and how would I defend myself to my aged 'crinkly' friends? Well, it was a bivouac if I didn't so I closed my eyes and ears tightly in the dortoir and thought of YNYS ETTWS.

It was only a training climb and we were back in the

campsite the next day for a rest. I washed my clothes and hung them out to dry. A damned little Swiss white poodle seized my underpants and rushed off with them providing everyone with free amusement for half an hour. It's just the sort of thing we can expect of course if we join the common market.

The climb that I had my eye on was the S.S.E. ridge of the Pic Gaspard. Although it sounds like a cigarette advertisement, it was first climbed by the redoubtable Gervasutti before the war (I remember that), and had not had a British ascent. It was over three thousand feet long and I had first noticed its existence during a long reading of the Dauphine guide in the lavatory the winter before.

I knew that I would have to get fit for the bloody thing, and dressed only in shorts and boots had puffed up and down the slopes of Alderley Edge (a local beauty Spot) in an effort to remove a little lard from my middle. (No comment), It's good fun if you're young and happen to come across a red-faced, sweating, middle-aged man staggering up and down a hillside. I would like to tell you what the courting couple were doing in a clump of bushes which I burst into for a second or two, but it might lower the tone of our journal.

When we had recovered from our training climb, we set off in slightly different directions at slightly different heights. Everybody was trying to look to the front, but all were eyeing each other and increasing their respective speeds so that they could say that their way was the best.

Hours later we got to the hut, soaked with sweat and with mouths like the back of Tarzan's loincloth. The proper hut had been swept away by a landslide so our residence was taken up in one of the workmen's huts. It may have been a poor thing but it was all our own and we were glad of it. We lay on the wooden benches inside groaning and wondered why on earth we came to the Alps when we could have been drinking somewhere and I could have listened to them shouting the odds, because I am like that.

We got up next morning and left the hut as one usually does in the Alps. I immediately stepped into an icy little stream which made me gulp for air and caused a slight pause before I

could get all the four letter words out which are appropriate to such occasions. The ridge had dozens of gendarmes, some of them, formidable some of them friendly and one of them which had to be climbed by an ice gully. While Bob Allen was leading the ice he knocked off a large block which rattled down the ice, bounced obliquely and hit Derek on the helmet. Paint and fibreglass fell off it and Derek uttered a groan, which is not the sort of thing that, one expects from a Climbers' Club man. He was alright but a bit shaken and rambled on for sometime afterwards, about the fact that he didn't really enjoy the Alps and anyway he had many family responsibilities. We didn't bother listening because we weren't talking.

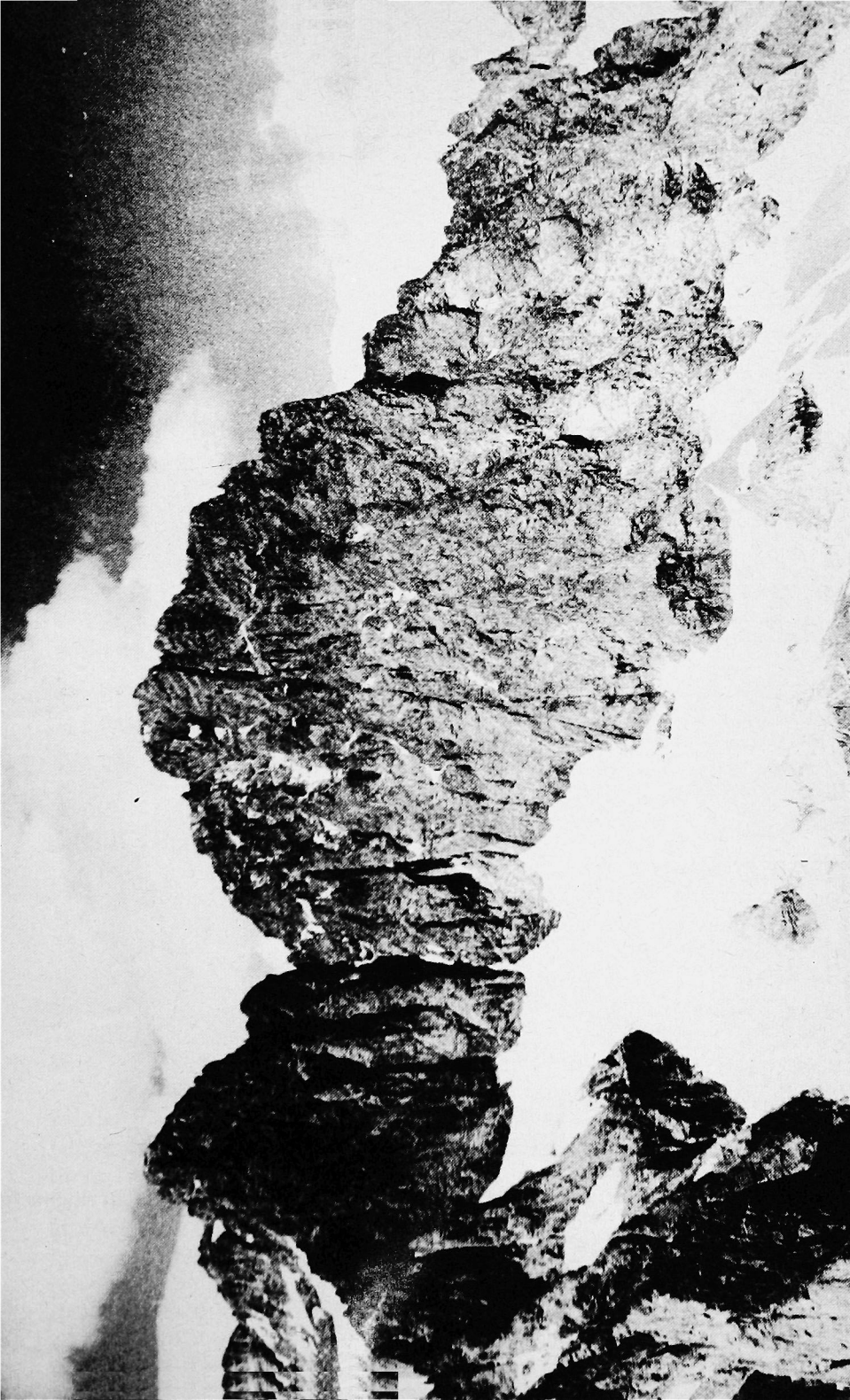
We went on for rope length after rope length just like everyone else writes about in all the other climbing articles about Alpine climbs. Sherpa did the crux and then, clunk, and it was dark. Fierce argument raged about whose fault this was, but as the culprit is a non-member we fell to bickering about bivouac spots instead and fell asleep on this uncomfortable rocky ledge. The others complained that I snored all night and wouldn't believe when I told them it was just an imitation to put them in the mood for sleep. Selflessness, that's what I always try for with everyone.

Dawn broke and I looked, and felt, like a turkey brought out of the deep freeze for Christmas.

On the way down we had to abseil over the bergschrund. I had to stand with my back to the others and mutter, 'Rope over right shoulder, left hand up? Or was it rope over left shoulder right hand up? I never know or remember about bloody abseils, but have kept quiet about it all these years and no-one will ever know, will they?

We got back to La Berarde and drank gallons of red plonk until there was a continuous rivulet right down and up again in an arc out of the bog windows after the eighth glass. I let the others do all the shouting to the other English people while I sat in the corner smiling quietly and ogled the bird of the bloke who had won the arse-over-tit award for the longest fall of the year.

Enough of this nonsense.



PIC GASPARD showing profile of S.S.E. Ridge on right skyline from
Pic Nord de Cavales. (photo Bob Allen)

Groans on the GASPARD

R. F. Allen.

You may never have even heard of the Pic Gaspard but: 'This is a splendid ridge climb, about 3000ft. high, long and exposed; in fact worthy of its creator': thus John Brailsford, in his 'Selected Climbs in the Dauphine and the Vercors', taking about Gervasutti's route on the S.S.E. ridge of the Pic Gaspard.

Gervasutti put the route up way back in 1935, with Lucien Devies. It seemed almost too good to be true that, right up to 1971, apparently no British party had made the ascent. That is until we looked at the map and began to appreciate what was involved in getting to the bottom of the ridge let alone the top. It looked definitely like a two-bivouac job - at the start and finish of the route - unless we were either very lucky or very fast.

Actually we did have one advantage: Trevor Jones had set foot on the route some years earlier, but his companion had felt unwell soon after starting the climb and the party had retired. Trevor had certainly been impressed then and the seed had been planted. When I then purchased the Brailsford Guide late in 1970 and mentioned to Trevor that amongst other routes I fancied the Gervasutti on the Gaspard, he of course immediately told me of his earlier experience and of his belief that the route still awaited a British ascent.

Throughout the following months, at the Welsh Dinner, in the Padarn Lake, in Pubs and on crags all over the country, we listened with growing trepidation to the stories of all the hard men who, apparently for their 1971 Alpine season were planning to forsake Cham and the Dolies and knock off a few routes in the Dauphine for a change.

Naturally we were going to Courmayeur, to Grindelwald, Zermatt, Timbuctoo....

We took comfort in the thought that all those who were talking of going were wittering about the South face of the Meije or about things like Ghastly Rubberface routes on the Pave. We most definitely did not mention the Gaspard ourselves and we thought of the very inaccessibility of the Gaspard - but inevitably began to suspect devious game as ourselves, in order to disguise their true intention. 'A splendid climb...worthy of its creator', surely that phrase must be sticking out as plain as a pikestaff to every climber just even glancing through the guidebook!

In La Berarde careful enquiry at the Bureau des Guides about various routes in the area, including of course 'our' route, had produced the information that a refuge, the Refuge du Pave, had actually been built the previous summer under the west face of the Gaspard - but that it had been completely destroyed by avalanche the following winter. It looked as though the two-bivouac epic was what we were definitely in for. But, to our pleasure, on peering over the summit of the Pic Nord de Cavales which was our second training climb, we saw what appeared to be two green huts nestling together at the edge of a high glacier lake. We concluded that it was possible that these were the huts that the workmen had used while the actual refuge, now destroyed, was being built, and our conjecture was reinforced by a French climber whom we consulted later in La Berarde. Perhaps the huts were open, or we could get a key from somewhere? They offered the prospect of shelter and a roof infinitely more comfort than we had anticipated if we could get inside them.

At this stage, just as we were getting really acclimatised and fit, just as were getting down to planning the final details of our attack, the very thing that we dreaded most almost happened twice! Derek Walker came back to camp after a trip to the

village with the news that Mike and Sally Westmacott had been camping down the road, and that very afternoon were driving round to La Grave and the Romanche Valley. They were fit and off to try something different. This was bad news. Even worse news came when Mike Mortimer, who was on the same site as ourselves with his wife and various other assorted and delightful girls announced that Hugh Brown and he had been looking at the guide book, and 'what was this interesting looking route on the Pic Gaspard?'.....

We held a hurried council and decided that we would have to tell Mike of our plans and rely on his good nature to keep off for the time being. Fortunately Mike can be quite a gentleman, sometimes, and this was one of them. He agreed to keep away.

It was a bloody awful long way in, and when we left the car at the Col de Lauteret in the hot sunshine we were still expecting to have a 'bivouac' in the workmen's Nissen huts under the Pave, assuming we could get inside them. Calling at the Alpe hut, about an hour's walk from the Col de Lauteret, however, we learnt that there was a refuge, that it was was 'gardé' and that it consisted of the very tin huts which we had hoped to sleep in.

We gratefully dumped our sleeping bags in the Alpe Hut, sweated along the beautiful Romanche Valley and up the boulder slopes and moraine ridge to reach, with a last scramble up steep slabs beside a torrent, the Refuge du Pave.

At 3.0.a.m. the night was clear and starry, and just before dawn we were away, stumbling along the gently rising traverse line that was to lead up round to the lowest point of the Claire glacier and the start of our ridge.

We moved quickly but even so it was 6.0.a.m. by the time we had moved up onto the steep rocks where the route really starts.

The description was accurate: steep rocks, making for a patch of black-coloured rock which presented the first real difficulty, but where the route-finding was helped by the discovery of an odd peg here and there. Trevor and myself, as the 'original team', climbed together, leading through, with Derek Walker and Sherpa making up the other pair, and we fairly rapidly reached the point where the ridge, after its initial steep

upthrust, levelled out for some distance, but the innumerable gendarmes to negotiate. We did in fact count them and the figure was something like 28 or 38 but I have forgotten which. At one point, turning a particularly awkward gendarme on its east side we found ourselves traversing more and more difficult ground and actually losing height and had to force a rather awkward pitch to regain the crest. Along this section, which was a great deal further than it appeared to be, the rock was not very sound but the difficulties were nowhere great until, as we neared the end of this stretch the ridge reared up again with three gendarmes larger than the earlier ones, and beyond them the high yellow step that obviously preceded the Grey Tower, where we expected the most technical climbing.

We climbed the first of these gendarmes by the 'elegant crack'. As per the book, but it was then not so obvious what to do: Going up the next one looked as if it would involve a tricky descent or an abseil from its summit; turning it on its west side looked more hopeful: a steep couloir with snow or ice in its upper portion looked as if it would enable us to get round to the high yellow step and promised a few drips of water as well. So Trevor had a go at it while I crouched under a little overhang with my little plastic tube sucking sips of water from drips above. Derek joined me, but then as the rubble from above increased in volume the swearing and cursing rate rose beyond even the normal Jones frequency, and a great rock shipped a lump out of Derek's helmet, so he rapidly retreated to comparative safety. After a few more minutes of this Trevor announced that he was climbing back down, and the wittering rate became even more abnormal as he did so. It wouldn't go, he announced, adding that the runner he had left up above was mine. Derek had an exploratory look further round to the west side but found himself getting out onto a very exposed face, and so he returned.

The thought of my runner being abandoned was too much for me, and taking my hammer axe I went aloft myself. I could soon see why Trevor had been shouting the odds so much, but where the holds ran out the ice began and I could chop my way up until I could escape on the left wall.

The traverse right along ledges on the east side of the high

step which followed was easy, and the 'great chimney', damp and smooth did not hold us up for long either: and we were soon back on the crest of the ridge and approaching the obvious difficulties of the Grey Tower.

Sherpa had been doing a lot of groaning about the pain on his sunburnt shoulders and we were unanimously of the opinion that here and now was the opportunity for him to take off his rucksack and at the same time enjoy one of his finest hours by getting us up the overhang. This he proceeded to do in style - and it was an exhausting pitch after 9 or 10 hours uninterrupted work already - and then ensconced himself on a small ledge and worked twice as hard again to drag his sack up, announcing that he was now knackered. Almost at the same time there was a dull thud and a fantastic screech of pain from Trevor followed by a howl of anguish and much clutching of his shoulder. Derek and myself were frightened to death: a broken shoulder? Rescue parties? Helicopters? However the groans fairly quickly subsided, Trevor decided that, to his own and our amazement, there were no bones broken and that his great screech had been caused more by fright than injury.

Anyway, after a few minutes he too tackled the overhang, and forced the pitch above as well. Derek and I were impressed - and I was very impressed a few moments later when I unwisely found myself dangling in slings from the two pegs in the overhang instead of bridging wide.

Time was running out for us now. The Grey Tower had held us up for a good hour or more and we moved as fast as we could along the crest again, with occasional difficult little bits, to a sudden breche, above which the ridge again reared up steeply.

The light was beginning to fail and we debated whether we ought to stop. The trouble was that the breche was knife-edge, and there were no suitable bivouac sites we had passed since leaving the Grey Tower. We had a bit of an argument about our next move (Trevor said later that he'd 'have thumped me if I hadn't been such a big bastard'), but I felt certain that if we got up the next 100 ft. or so we would be above all the difficulties and only have the last, level, part of the ridge to do.

I was wrong about being able to get up the tower in one

pitch which I rushed at with a last burst of furious energy but half way up it there was at least a bivouac site of sorts that would have been quite comfortable for two. Since we were four it wasn't exactly five star comfort but we tied ourselves onto pegs and nuts, put our duvets on, got into our Bivi-bags and waited the interminable wait until dawn. For me personally the night was memorable for the superb views as the sun finally disappeared, and the fact that I managed somehow to spend eight hours with only one cheek actually resting on something.

Trevor declared he didn't sleep a wink, but both Derek and I unquestionably heard him snoring gently some time in the small hours.

We took a long time to get moving after the sun rose and the pitch immediately above us was no doddle - indeed, unlike all other steep pitches where the rock had been sound, climbing up this one was rather like climbing a stack of books: one lifted out a hold and popped it back into place again before it dropped out of one's hand. Fortunately it was soon over and we ambled along the last long, but fairly level, stretch of the ridge taking photographs and feeling rather haggard.

The last pull to the summit of 100 ft. or so was a heap of rubble and when we realised that we were at the top of a couloir that led directly onto the Claire glacier without much difficulty we didn't suffer any purist pangs of conscience; we had had enough of Gervasutti's ridge now, all we wanted to do was get down to water, food and sleep.

We glissaded two thousand feet in about twenty minutes. Now it was all over - and we had pulled it off after all. After our return to England we heard and we confess with delight that we had beaten Brailsford to it by three days!

Three Pleasure Routes

J. C. Wilkinson.

Three routes I have done in the last couple of seasons have given me particular pleasure. It is hard to say exactly why this should be. I had never given particular thought to any of them before I did them so they certainly weren't great ambitions. Anyhow ambitions tend to be painful rather than pleasurable in their execution, in my case. With these three routes the pleasure was not retrospective, I enjoyed the actual process of climbing them. Yet enjoyment is an inadequate word for I have enjoyed many routes. I enjoyed the Obergabelhorn traverse as much as any route I have done in the Alps but it was a little too easily won to join these three. I have enjoyed several Dolomite climbs but here pleasure has been tempered by their not being 'real mountains'. The Old Brenva was a real mountain alright, but in this case enjoyment was slightly marred by its being a consolation prize for a failure on the Major. When I was a beginner. I gained tremendous enjoyment from the Diables Areté; yet looking back at it now the fact that I did it with a guide has retrospectively toned down the pleasure stupid, perhaps, but there it is.

These three routes were 'real mountain', sufficiently big to give me a sense of achievement, but not too big so I had that suppressed disquiet which makes me wish it was all over and done with. If you had asked me at the time whether I could think of anywhere else I would rather be the answer would have been within a pitch or two of where I was. I did them with people with whom I enjoyed climbing and I took my fair share of leading. This perhaps accounts for the fact that they were all snow and ice routes but the fact that they all happen to feature in Vanis' 'Im steilen Eis', does indicate that my pleasure was in part due to the sheer quality of the climbs.

The Mont Blanc Massif is the greatest in the Alps, but it does one good to get away to a new area now and then, and there are certainly times when Chamonix can be downright depressing. This was one of them. My climbing partner had wrecked his knee and Alan's brother had put a nail through his foot so we were both feeling frustrated and glad enough to team up for a route. Why we eventually chose the North Face of the Gran Paradiso I'm not quite sure, but the pleasure of the route for me started the moment I got out of Chamonix. The drive up was a delight and even the hut slog bearable. Two o'clock in the morning saw us away and although we had to pick our way through parts of half a dozen routes in the English guide to reach the face it was all a lot simpler than it had seemed trying to piece it together in the hut the night before. The face itself was not quite so easy. It was not that there was any doubt about where to go, that was obvious enough, it was the how. In good conditions it must all be quite straightforward but now the whole of the lower face was very bare ice. The only alternative to retreating was to get on with it. The great thing was not to succumb to the temptation of cutting a step, for the security of something more than the precarious contact of front points was liable to lead to a bout of frenzied hacking. However, because the leader was expected to do his full stint and run out a proper rope length, the self-indulgent desire for security soon led to a more controlled use of energy; the buckets became reduced to nicks and the first pitches were completed by teetering along on front points. Soon we began to get more assured and confident in each other and as the slope began to steepen up

it became a matter of pride not to cut steps at all, except when putting in an ice-screw. Twelve rope lengths from the bergschrund we reached the rock rib in the middle of the face. At last our screaming calf muscles began to relax, and as the sun began to touch the face, and our hitherto crabwise progress gave way to more direct means of gaining altitude, life suddenly felt very good. Eventually the rock began to peter out again into ice ribs finally to merge into the upper ice slope. In the event the dreaded crux was very straightforward and a veneer of snow over the ice gave a somewhat false sense of security that we had missed down below.

There was, however, to be a sting in the tail. 'Follow the ridge to the summit (¼ hr)' stated the guide book succinctly. There were two related inexactitudes contained in this statement. The first was the word ridge. At first sight this might seem to be an obvious feature; on one side was a face of loose powder, on the other a steep ice slope smeared with treacherous slush. The whorl which garlanded this intersection might reasonably be presumed to be the ridge which one was exhorted to follow. Yet if you did so the situation was liable to be reversed and it to follow you down one side or the other. Hence inexactitude number two '(¼ hr)'. As with life so with ridges, two-faced compromise gets one to the top. Now the guide book is rather patronising about the summit of the Gran Paradiso. I rather like a madonna and chimes on top of my four thousanders and I certainly like an easy descent route. Too often the pleasure of the ascent evaporates in the face of a wearisome descent which demands care, time and bruised toes. The descent off the Gran Paradiso offers no problems. True when we did it, a storm was brewing, the snow revolting and there was a long way to go but at least we could take the rope off and get on with it. All in all the Gran Paradiso did its best for the way down as it had for the way up, and we drove off down the valley that evening and caught a glimpse of the face in the last light. Not too big and not too small, it had given us the route of the area and a fine day's climbing.

The second route is the north face of the Blumlisalphorn. Since we were on the summit in 4¼ hours from leaving the hut

and it was a good bit lower than 4,000, I find myself wondering why I have grouped it with the other two routes. I suppose the reason is that 'it defends itself well' and certainly makes up in quality what it misses in quantity. Furthermore we snatched it, a factor which always adds to satisfaction.

When I first saw the picture of the face in Vanis' book I wondered where on earth the route went but presumed there must be some secret passage which the photo failed to reveal. Having done it I still wonder where on earth the route goes, and I firmly believe that had it not sucked us into its maze before we had even realised what was happening I don't think we would ever have done it. The guardian woke us at two and as we put our heads outside into a howling gale and saw the cloud-covered sky we thought he must be playing a joke in rather dubious taste on us 'Vee old guides, vee start, vee see' was the chilling reply to our enquiry to his view on conditions. Nothing could have got me back to bed after such a challenge and in the end two pairs left the hut that morning both for the 'Nordwand' (why does Wand always sound more impressive than face?). So we started, but still we did not see, for on the way up the afternoon before the face had been in cloud and now it was dark. Fortunately there were tracks. The two Swiss laddies who formed the other rope had been dragging their heels a bit on the approach and were quite clearly waiting to see how we got along. More impetuously we plunged along the line of the beckoning traces. Disregarding the large stance our unknown predecessors had taken we pressed on still unroped. Suddenly it was very, very, steep. I suppose it couldn't have been 90° but it felt like it. Martin who was ahead was the first to crack. 'Are you sure you want to solo this?'. No reply was necessary; in 'media res' we roped up and as I led through the next pitch it suddenly became quite clear we were committed. Now the burning question was did the tracks lead to the top or did they plunge, Gadarene like, into some abyss. Doubt turned to alarm as we saw their desperate searchings finally disappear over a precipice. Fortunately they had found the key and after some distinctly interesting ice work we worked through the lower wall onto the slopes of the middle of the face. This was fairly easy ground, broken only by

little bulges. The Swiss in the meantime had started and caught us up at the bergschrund leading to the summit slope, Vanis' crux. A little chopping of steps and we were on the final slope, steepish but in excellent condition and we pulled away to the summit in fine form. The weather still looked claggy but it had held. On the way down it suddenly made up its mind and turned into a fine day (typical 1971 conditions). Half an hour from the hut we passed a couple who had belatedly decided to salvage the 'voie normale' as a sop to not having 'started and seen'.

The Lyskamm is a very big mountain. The summit is very high and the hut very low. Fortunately the further up the glacier you go the less face there is. Nevertheless even when you have made 1,000m up the Grenzletscher and crossed the bergschrund there is still some 700 or so metres left to reach the summit at over 4,500m. When Anne, Jean-Claude, Afa and myself suddenly decided it would make a good route to finish the season I was prepared for an epic but not a pleasure route. After a hot summer there seemed little chance of finding an ice route in reasonable condition and even the Brenva face had become virtually impossible. At least we hoped the rock rib would be passable but we were quite expecting a bare ice slope to get up to it.

We left the hut in bright moonlight and extinguished our torches. The result was that the two parties drifted apart and Jean-Claude and Anne got onto the wrong line through the ice fall. We could see they were alright but reckoned they were going to abandon the route as they had lost too much time and it was already late enough, (thanks to a new guardian in the Monte Rosa hut who was not the slightest interested in anything else except making money out of the 'voie normalers' on the Monte Rosa and locked and bolted the hut until it was their reveille time). Furthermore Anne's morale had not been too high and our discussions about the conditions we expected to find, and a recital of the gruesome accident on the notorious doubled cornices of the descent route had done little to reassure her. Afa and I therefore decided to get on with it and leave Anne in Jean-Claude's more than competent hands. The rib looked very nasty and the Welzenbach variation gleamed ominously. But the

lower slope appeared reasonable and the great face on the right, of the rib about which the English guide book says nothing could be passable. Our encounter with the soft snow below the bergschrund was far from reassuring and we plodded on in a very uncertain frame of mind. The bergschrund itself was difficult, but with the help of directions from Jean-Claude who was now watching from down below we found a passage through it. Surprise, surprise. The slope above was really quite good and we could kick steps in it. When we were some seven or eight hundred feet up it Jean-Claude and Anne appeared inleisurely fashion above the bergschrund. Since we were making tracks for them we saw no need to wait. Our last contact with them was rather unfortunate and was a contributory factor in Jean-Claude's deciding not to follow our line. We were aiming well over to the right of the rock rib and the slope was getting icy. Just at the moment Jean-Claude yelled up asking what the snow was like a flurry of fine powder slid down on top of us. 'Foireuse', (lousy) Afa yelled back. I could see Afa was weakening from our original decision and was being mesmerised by that horrid rock rib, dripping with ice. I, on the other hand, was determined to keep on that snow slope as long as possible. To do so would need guide. Since it was about 300 ft. across to the rib and about the same distance to some rather vague bits of rock above which appeared to join the rib it was fairly easy to persuade Afa that we could get onto it there. As we neared the rock I grabbed the lead. The slope was distinctly nasty but I was fairly sure it would be better above. Relentlessly I struck away from the rock ignoring Afa's imprecations.

'The snow's better here than anything we've had so far', I lied. Every time Afa got anywhere near me I just started off again and suddenly the snow did improve. I breathed a sigh, of relief; the crisis was past. By this time the situation was distinctly impressive - ice cliffs to the right and ourselves in the middle of a huge slope that fell directly down to the glacier nearly half a mile below. Onward and upwards, perhaps a little monotonous, but fine climbing in a great position. From time to time the slope had sounded a bit hollow and this had been my main worry, for if it did go it would be impressive and we would-

n't live to tell the tale. Now it began to creak ominously. It was time to get off it. The next hour was not pleasure. Suddenly we were out of the sun and in the wind; hands and toes froze. Little bits of rock poked through the thin carapace of ice and protection was impossible. We got onto the crest of the rib as it ended. Above lay the summit slope, bare ice one moment floundering snow the next. But the angle lay back and we were out, six hours after getting through the bergschrund.

As we descended the east ridge we anxiously scanned the face for the others of whom we had had neither sight nor sound for a long time. Eventually Afa saw them, still only half way up and right in the middle of that horrid verglassed rock rib. 'Ca va' we yelled. It was just as well the wind did not bring back Anne's pathetic reply. 'No come and get us off'. Such a lack of confidence was too much even for the patient Jean-Claude, and Anne was brusquely told to shut up and get on with it. They made it to the summit with an hour of daylight to spare, but it was after mid-night that they got to the hut. We all slept through the mass departure for the Monte Rosa. I hope they got as much pleasure out of it as we had received from the Lyskamm.

EXPERIENCED BEGINNERS

Malcolm Howells.

Both John Galloway and myself have been climbing for about ten years. Both of us have put in an appearance or two on the harder Welsh routes; however, bad weather, domestic and financial circumstances, and injuries had conspired to restrict our Alpine experience to something like nothing-at-all. As every mathematician will tell you something like nothing-at-all is zero. I was slightly better off, with a little British winter experience and a few fair routes in the Dolomites, but neither of us had done anything to speak of in the 'Snowy Alps'. I am writing this account of our Alpine season this year so that experienced Alpinists can enjoy a few knowing chuckles at our expense and also in the hope that the fairly large number of other climbers in our position might learn from our mistakes.

Our basic problem was that we were both bad at the same things: namely walking, route finding and climbing the white stuff. Some would say that 'Alpinism' consists of little other than these very skills, but we felt sure that our 'British rock climbing ability', would come in useful somewhere. Anyway, we studied the relevant parts of 'Blackshaw' with the same due reverence that the Mummery era accorded to the 'All England and

Badminton'. Then we loaded up with far too much gear and set off with John Kingston and Rob (Cairngorm Rob) Ford towards our first route. We toyed with the idea of taking a copy of 'Blackshaw' with us for reference or in case someone fell in a crevasse, but settled for a hefty insurance policy instead.

The first lucky route chosen to fall to our razor sharp crampons was the Chamonix face of the Peigne. Rob had done the North Ridge previously and he suggested that we solo up to the final tower, where the only worthwhile climbing was to be found. Apart from one short roped pitch this was what we did. I arrived about half an hour after the others in a state of near collapse wishing that I'd kept my promise and done the Welsh three thousanders before going out. The seeds of our first cods-up were planted at this early stage. Because Rob knew the way neither of us paid much attention to where we were going bad route finding like I said. We blindly followed the others up the half dozen good rock pitches that were the main attraction of the route. The only bits I really enjoyed were the rests on the stances; then there we were on the summit. At about this time a thick mist enveloped the area. We set off down unconcerned because 'Rob knew the way'. An abseil or two and some climbing led back to the foot of the Tower. Somewhere about this point we messed about at an awkward little wall deciding whether or not to put the rope on and we lost contact with our human guide book. We carried on down to a place where we had to choose between two couloirs and chose the wrong one. In the dense mist this soon began to get uncomfortably steep and wet - a sense of error crept into proceedings. To conquer it we climbed the sidewall of our couloir (Two pitches of steady H.V.S. the best climbing of the day) and shouted rather forlornly at where we presumed our friends to be. To my surprise they shouted back from quite close. We were thus let off from the consequences of our carelessness.

We arrived at the Plan de l'Aiguille long after the last telepherique had gone and, finding nothing in 'Blackshaw' about this, trusted to sound mountaineering judgement and began to walk down for ever. It was a gruesome walk through the 'Mer de Grass' and we made the mistake of taking little 'direttissimas'

cutting off the bends until eventually we took one that never came back. We slithered, exhausted and swearing, down the hillside to the welcoming arms of the boozier.

After we had recovered from and learnt from this training route (?) John and Rob were so encouraged by their comparative success that they went off to do the Old Brenva but that's another epic. We set off to do the Aiguille de Chardonnet, North face where we learnt some more about the Alps, mainly to do with the perils of slowness and where to take cramp-ons off.

Our first mistake was to be last on the route with dozens of others on the route in front of us. We had to wait for them to do the awkward section at the bottom and then they left us standing while we happily thrashed about on it. We plodded on up a dozen or so pitches of snowy mixed climbing, finding it easy but not having the fitness to run up it. Then a somewhat more difficult icy section led to a rocky patch where we duly closed the gap on the parties in front. At the top of these rocks we rounded a corner to see the final snowfield in front us. We were appalled. 500 ft. of snow with only a single rock in the middle and the sun beating down, as it had been for some hours. (Blackshaw doesn't mention that some North faces aren't in perpetual Eiger-like gloom). Worse still there were about a dozen Frenchmen, who, as every schoolboy knows, are better on snow than we are, strung out across this slope plainly gripped out of their minds. Five were standing side by side and frantically enlarging bucket steps to bivouac in we presumed until night froze the ice again. One, who appeared to have cracked under the strain, was being restrained by his two companions on the solitary rock. At the time we attributed these scenes of mass hysteria to the terrifying condition of the snow, which gave only a thin covering of slushy powder to the underlying ice. On reflection it seems more likely that we were behind another team of our standard who were putting on this terrifying exhibition because of the difficulty they were having with their psychological casualty.

The alternatives precluded themselves and we arrived at the summit more or less by the snowfield. The descent was well

marked by the tracks of the 'Hot Club de France' so we relaxed on the summit and took off our crampons. We had only been going down for a few minutes over snow when our error brought itself to our attention. John flashed off and I was jerked downwards. I got my axe in and we ground to a halt. (I'd always wondered whether or not reflex would take over at this point, it does). No sooner had we stopped when the same big jerk pulled me down again (Intentional pun). I could never have stopped us this time but fortunately it was John's turn to play at being 'Blackshaw', and he duly did the honours. Ashamed of our stupidity we put our crampons on again. Further down there was a section of rock where we found the Frenchmen in the act of abseiling. British cunning got us down on their rope. Of course we took off our crampons for the abseil. John belayed and I set off down the slope without crampons; this was the action of a lunatic. Sure enough I flashed off but John was ready for me. We put the crampons on again and set off down in short and careful pitches. To round off the day it was obvious that, someone was going to have to fall into a crevasse. As the French had long since disappeared into the mist, showing wisdom if not skill, it was up to one of us: a quarter of a mile (400 metres) from the Albert Premiere but it happened. Our cup of happiness overflowed, we had the set.

Monty Python's tumbling circus next went into action on the East ridge of the Crocodile. We set off again, rather late, from the Envers hut and climbed the rather arduous glacier to the foot of the route. I had thought that after two routes I would be fairly fit. No. As soon as we started on the rocks I found every pace a monstrous effort. The feeling of depression created by this unfortunate circumstance was not helped by the fact that, the climbing was a mongrel cross between Mam Tor and the walk up to the Gromlęch. After 1,200 ft. of this rubbish we reached harder ground where things improved because of the longer rests. We led a grade five chimney each and hauled the sacks and we began to feel a little better. Then the guidebook told us to traverse left. Our unprintable reply to this ludicrous suggestion led to indecision overcoming the team. We settled on the obvious way but ended by pegging up a rather virgin looking crack. (The

Fissure Fool). This had but one merit it got us back on route. Soon we were faced with further problems. It appeared that the guide book writer had gone mad for the route description suddenly switched to another mountain. After following a number of blind alleys we put the book away and left our fate to that great British characteristic - muddling through. Miraculously this worked, the Gods were friendly and we reached the summit with no further ado. As it was nearly night time we were forced to do something silly. We left the obvious bivouac place and descended in search of one we had heard about in the valley. When we reached the snow, where it was supposed to be, there were no ledges of any kind to be seen; in fact there was little of anything to be seen as it was full night. We hacked a platform in the snow, crept into our gear and awaited our fate.

During the night we came to the conclusion that Alpine climbing as a sport shows lying on a bed of nails a thing or two, likewise rowing the Atlantic and other forms of voluntary torture. In fact, John announced that this was to be his last Alpine route as climbing obviously wasn't his sport. I agreed on no more routes for us this year and dreamt of the flesh pots of Chamonix that Blackshaw doesn't mention either.

In the morning everything seemed to get much better. We flicked the rope free - its jamming was a regular feature of all our abseiling - crossed to the Plan and set off as we had always intended to traverse to the Midi. This we accomplished uneventfully and slowly. It was a beautiful day and our spirits improved; the stunning blue beauty of the mountains around us gradually won over the depression of the night before.

There is little else to tell. After making most of the mistakes in the book we began to learn. The cynical might say that all that happened was that our bad luck gave out, or that God gave up trying. Our last route was the North Face of the Dru and we managed to avoid serious cods-up for the whole of the climb. It was an enjoyable and epic free ascent of a fine route in good conditions: a fitting conclusion to our apprenticeship. We came home feeling that we had probably learnt quite a few lessons in just the same way as everyone else learns them. You won't find that in Blackshaw either.

DRUMANIA

P. Gordon.

The intricate route finding started when we left the Mer de Glace. Mark considered entering his variation on the approach to the Dru in the annals of Alpine pioneering. It was certainly desperate enough, vertical crumbling moraines followed by vertical crumbling vegetation. Since that day any route finding suggestions put forward by Mark have been treated with considerable scepticism. Fortunately the time taken from the Monteners to the Rognon eludes me but I do remember blanching at the idea of doing it before breakfast.

The scene on the Rognon was disturbing. Every little cave and hole we looked in contained climbers, most of whom had plans that coincided with ours, a most upsetting state of affairs. A couple of parties had muttered something about 'Face Ouest' but a look up that ghastly couloir dispelled any envious thoughts. We finally found a grubby one star cave reminiscent of the Cromlech boulders. The view was across a patch of snow to the most barren slab of grey granite imaginable, a huge shapeless glacier-polished buttress on which the whole of the West Face appears to sit. A dismal scene in the cold light of early evening made more so by the sound of rocks crashing down the couloir.

We had a sumptuous supper of cold chicken, salad and delicious if somewhat deformed French bread and laid our cunning plans for a predawn start that would give us a commanding lead over our new found rivals. They were no doubt having the same cunning schemes. After a monstrous brew we climbed into our respective bivvy year. Mark into his sumptuous fluffy box-quilted duvet and I into my gear. This was an ancient featherfilled affair, a high percentage of quills I suspect, a garment which when held up to the light was translucent in all too many places. Over this I

pulled a waistcoat made of lightweight space blanket and Sello-tape X. Either garment was fairly useless on its own: the combination proved to be equally useless. This garment turned out to be our secret weapon - at 3.a.m. I was anxious to be off if only to stop the uncontrollable shivering. Mark from the cosiness of his feather bed agreed, rather grudgingly I thought.

We went without breakfast and tiptoed up the Rognon not daring even to whisper for fear of waking the other potential Face Norders. Our arrival on the snow at last afforded a chance to kick vigorously into the already substantial steps and get my blood moving again. It was also an opportunity to give vent to our mirth at the outwitting of our continental rivals. He who laughs last laughs longest and we were undoubtedly laughing first.

We reached the bergschrund in that grey light which precedes dawn and groped our way up the first pitch in semi-darkness. But light arrives swiftly in the mountains and by the second pitch we were climbing in day light. The going was easy and the terraces quickly reached where, to our surprise we found two English lads enjoying a leisurely breakfast having spent the night there. This was no time to hang around however for below us we could hear the familiar sound of strident foreign voices. The next few hundred feet were a desperate race to maintain our lead, never had we climbed so fast. As it was his first season Mark enquired whether Alpine climbing was always so frantic. It is that typical grade III to IV type of Chamonix climbing - bloody strenuous. Our limbs and lungs were aching from the effort, our lead was being maintained but only just. The guide books description of a 50ft crack being strenuous turned out to be an understatement - I removed my sack for the second attempt. The fissure Lambert turned out to be no problem but above it a horrible sight met our eyes, overhanging blocks held together after a fashion by melting ice. I started up but soon retreated. Not only was there a possibility of part of the mountain and myself descending rapidly together but the now fearful, but quietly stoic, Mark was in the line of fire. The only alternative, short of retreat, was some hard looking cracks to the right. I found these the most exciting part of the climb. The climbing was harder than anything else on the route and there was the uncertainty of out-

come to add to the interest. For a brief while I could sense the thrill of being on new ground on a big face. The angle relented after two pitches and another two put us back on route. We followed this up with some caution due to the verglas, then cut across the niche to a ledge overlooking the W. face, not as it turned out the one mentioned in the guide book.

Our variation had given us a substantial lead at last. There was time to stretch out and enjoy a belated breakfast of bread, cheese and raisins. Time to lie back, calculate our time of arrival in Chamonix that evening. How wrong can one be? How often do these calculations go wildly astray. We were reminded of our pursuers by shouts from the ice field below time to move on. But where? The rock before us did not conform to the guides description. We roundly cursed the writer and translator (apologies in retrospect) and started climbing hither and thither. This was most depressing. Numerous parties caught us up and also started probing around. We watched aghast at an attempted manslaughter by one continental party on another helpless on the icefield. My trade in very poor French left the stone throwing climber unmoved. The fact that he was a Czech perhaps accounted for this.

Now the climbing took a new form. We were the middle rope of many. A total of many hours was spent reclining on various belays dozing or dodging missiles, watching pathetically poor climbers fart around above us. The cry of 'un autre etrier' and 'tirez, tirez' became catch phrases. We were amazed as climbers set off up grade IV and V pitches laden with etriers and at the sound of pegs being hammered in and painfully hammered out again. Parties were trying desperately to overtake one another. On one pitch whilst leading I looked back to see another leader following me and clipping into my runners! Once again my pidgin French was called into play, establishing first that the offender was in fact French, it cut no ice. Mark, with a few well chosen anglo-saxon words, put forward his point of view. Message received. The universality of some English words is remarkable! After this the said party would await Mark's permission before starting up a pitch.

For me much of the charm of the climb went with the

hordes around us. How I wished to have the face to ourselves, it seemed indecent that so many should be sharing this elegant route. The weather was fine, the climbing excellent. I should have been sublimely happy but I was not. There was something artificial about the situation, my independence was lost.

The broken ground was reached late in the day and further skullduggery attempted as parties vied with one another to lead this multi-national group. The early evening was lovely. We settled into our bivouac under the summit blocks and watched Chamonix disappear in low cloud while we remained in the clear night air, I donned my duvet and waistcoat, casting envious glances at Mark, and settled down to another cold night after our supper of half a bar of chocolate and two boiled sweets. Despite the cold knifing into me, I must have dozed for the night passed quickly enough. The romance of the situation made up for the discomfort. To be perched on the summit of a mountain that I have longed to climb since boyhood gave an internal glow that even the cold of a frosty Alpine night could not extinguish.

Dawn was welcome however, so after a breakfast of nothing we set off. The other ropes were all descending the Petit Dru. We opted for the traverse party, just to climb the Grand-Dru but principally to get away from the crowd and regain our independence.

The 'Z' pitch woke us up - not the climbing but the mental gymnastics of following the guide book's description. 7.a.m. found us sitting on the summit of the Grand Dru, our feet dangling in space, the whole of the Mont Blanc massif spread out before us. A memorable half-hour was spent there, basking in the early morning sun absorbing the beauty of the scene, delighted with our new found solitude. The peace and stillness could be felt. Only hunger drove us on but that too could be felt - very noticeably.

The tricky route down was negotiated with surprising ease and a superman type leap took us over the bergschrund onto the Charpoua glacier. We lolloped clumsily down the steep snow, Mark slipped, and to my everlasting shame as last man I was whipped off my feet. Mark stopped and watched me shoot by out of control, a clashing of crampons and foul language in a flurry of snow. I landed up in a shallow crevasse, emerging an apparent

albino. Much laughter but a warning to take care and a lesson well learnt I hope.

We passed the Charpou hut where the residents were enjoying lunch. We indulged in a drink of water and drooled at the sight of food being eaten. Mark confided afterwards that he had even considered picking up the ham fat that was being discarded such were his hunger pangs. The long trek down to the Mer de Glace caused me to make a mental note never to do this trip in reverse, self advice that will doubtless be ignored should the occasion arise.

Finally from the Montenvers we gazed back at the Dru in wonderment. Surely it was not possible that I had climbed that and slept up there?

Just back from the 'HIMS'

John Gregory.

'Where have you been this year, - abroad? 'Yes, just back from the Hims in fact', came the reply.

This could be typical of a conversation with someone who had just returned from the Himalayas. 'Just back from the Hims', conjures up in the mind a range of peaks that is no more than a dream for most mountaineers, the highest, largest, most spectacular and most demanding range of mountains in the world.

For the people who have been there, they know of the problems, the hardships, the rewards and the pleasures that are to be endured and gained. But for those who have not, and to whom the term 'Just back from the Hims' generates a certain amount of envy, then stay a while and read about a group from Sheffield who visited the Karakoram this year to attempt an unclimbed peak called 'The Ogre'.

Dealing with the Pakistan authorities is a slow deliberate business and planning for permission must start well in advance, approximately 18 months before departure. From that time to setting off all the food, equipment, medical supplies, transportation, general logistics and money raising have to be sorted out: a hard, time consuming and worrying period, particularly the financial aspect. In an effort to raise money we were even driven to climbing up a house side amidst a galaxy of cameras, lights and microphones looking like a troop of monkeys clad in duvets and P.A.s.



THE OGRE viewed from the Northern side looking down the SIM
GANG GLACIER. The ridge on the left hand sky line looked to be the
most obvious line. (photo John Gregory)

Work accelerates at an ever increasing rate as departure date approaches. We were beset with endless problems including the postal strike, shortage of money and no permission. Three weeks before we left we heard that we could climb 'The Ogre' (23,900 feet). This had been our fifth choice so we had to rush around finding out about a peak that all of us had only heard about: no one had attempted it before and from all accounts it was meant to be a hard nut to crack. With people rushing around the country collecting food, clothing, visas, spare tyres, bandages and all manner of items and then trying to pack everything away into boxes in a church hall that looked as though a bomb had just hit, the final week was conducted in a real shambolic fashion - true to the British style of planning for Himalayan expeditions.

We had elected to go overland in a three ton ex-army lorry, the cheapest way of transporting eight of us and all our food and equipment to Pakistan. The team consisted of the following: Don Morrison, leader, Dr. Hidayat Ullah deputy leader, Clive Rowland, Dave Marshall, Trev Wright, John Rousseau, Gordon Hibberd and myself. All from Sheffield except for Dr. Hidayat Ullah, called Bill for short, a Pakistani doctor who had been working in this country for four years.

We left Sheffield on 1st May in good spirits, mainly due to the high level of alcohol flowing through our veins. These were soon quelled as we were towed into a service station on the M1. with a collapsed water pump. We also had to replace the dynamo before we were mobile again. The lorry had a bad tendency to backfire when slowing down. Driving through Dover at 3.0.a.m. the noise was terrific and our arrival cannot have gone unnoticed.

We were not too far behind schedule and hoped to be across the Channel by midday, but as we were about to pass through the customs the starter motor packed up, and being Sunday it was no easy job to find a replacement. With another 6,000 miles to go we were beginning to wonder if we would have a completely new lorry on our hands, due to replacements by the time we arrived in Pakistan.

Fortunately the gods were with us and despite some ominous sounds coming from the back axle and gear box, we arrived in Pakistan two weeks later having driven practically

none stop day and night. We were all very tired and within a few hours, four of us were down ill, flat out on our beds. The heat, humidity, change of water and general weakening of the journey had begun to take its toll. During the next ten days and in between the bouts of illness, we had to re-sort and weigh our gear and goods before having it flown in to Skardu, meet the Government and Captain Rasaqui our liason officer. These were busy, tiring days and dealing with the countless jobs that had to be completed required patience and diplomacy: we were just beginning to learn the intricacies of the Eastern mind. The days were active and the nights were no less as you lay under the fan incessantly scratching at the mosquitos bites and bed bugs that kept you company as you tossed and turned in an effort to escape the heat and slip away into a blissful sleep.

Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan: a developing city, well organised, containing the Embassies, government offices and diplomatic residences. The British High Commission Club is here, a haven for those seeking beer, steak and chips and English films on a Saturday night: as long as you can stand the colonial attitudes of some of our foreign diplomats.

Rawalpind, just down the road, is a complete contrast, a sprawling conglomeration of houses and people. Some parts are most attractive and well kept, but in the old city where the streets are narrow and the air is full of smells of open sewers, you fully realise that you are a long way from home and England doesn't appear such a bad place after all. At the time you wish you could be back in a world you are used to and can understand and accept, but this is life the way they live it and you must be thankful for seeing it first hand.

It was with some relief, but anxiety, that we left Rawalpindi on 28th May for Skardu, for the Pindi-Skardu airflight is the most dangerous scheduled air flight in the world. It is only 120 miles but passes over and through some most imposing peaks and is very much subject to the vagrancies of the weather. The highlight of the trip was the view of Nanga Parbat, a menacing mountain, bringing to mind all the tragedies and triumphs that have been enacted upon its slopes.

At Skardu we were booked in at the government rest house. From here we were able to organise jeeps for the next part of the journey, set on a Sirdar, called Rasul, buy food for the porters and organise our postal communications. Rasul, a wiry-man in his forties had been on 16 previous expeditions, and basically his job was to look after and organise our porters, but obviously his local knowledge and experience were going to be extremely useful. Within two days all was ready and we set off early on 28th May, ourselves in jeeps and our belongings on two tractors and trailers. The driver of our jeep soon earned himself the name of Fangio as he hurled his machine along the narrow sandy track taking great delight in making our heads hit the roof as we went over the worst of the bumps.

Our first port of call was Shigar, where we stopped for some light refreshment. There is a police post at Shigar and we were assigned a policeman to look after our safety as we moved further up the valley. It soon became clear that Sam, as he was called due to his remarkable resemblance to Sam Costa, had not been assigned but had assigned himself and was coming along to see what he could get out of us.

Forty miles from Skardu the road came to a sudden halt at a place called Uno, and from here there was no alternative but to walk. The following day was spent setting on eighty odd porters. Each 60 lb porter load had to be carefully weighed and we soon began to realise that our cardboard boxes, which had been steel banded, were going to suffer somewhat during the course of the approach march. This resulted in hours of repacking every time we stopped at night. Just one of several tiresome tasks that had to be done during both the walk in and out of the mountains. We followed the Braldu river for four days passing through Dusso, Chokpiong, Chongo before arriving at Askole – attainable only by walking. Civilisation has made no impression on these people especially in Askole, their lives now are the same as they have been for hundreds of years. They dress in homespun sack cloth, live in mud huts with the chickens and animals and eek a meagre existence off the land. Their basic diet is bread and water with the occasional luxury of eggs and perhaps a little meat. If they want tea, sugar, milk, salt or anything they

can't produce themselves, they must walk 50 miles to the road head. Not surprisingly items such as old tins and polythene bags thrown away by us became their prize possessions. We were a poor expedition managing to run on a shoe string, but despite this we must have appeared wealthy to them, especially as we were paying each of the porters 65p per day.

At Askole we split up into two parties, having paid off the porters. Rowland, Marshall, Hibbard, Capt. Rasaqi and myself were to press on up the Biafo glacier to make a recce of 'The Ogre' from the southern side, whilst the others remained at Askole. The idea being that if we found a possible route from the southern side we would save ourselves four extra days walk around to the north, considerably reduce the amount of porters and porter food required, which in turn would save us a great deal of money. We were to keep in touch by radio and give daily reports of our progress, and findings of the southern face.

We left Askole on 3rd June. The track from the village leads over a very hot and flat plain on the snout of the Biafo glacier. The terminal moraine is a huge jumble of boulders and rocks of all sizes, ice and crevasses. A thoroughly dangerous place, mainly due to the unstable nature of some of the larger boulders rock slips are a common occurrence. The walk up the Biafo took three days and the first day and half were spent getting through the terminal moraine, slipping and sliding as we slowly gained height. The Biafo is some twenty eight miles long and about four miles wide, the Ogre is about two thirds of the way up. The nights were spent off the glacier at conveniently spaced clearings with fresh water and an ample amount of wood for the porters to cook their food. On the fourth day we went for a closer look at the southern side, approaching up a subsidiary glacier at the foot of the face. It soon became obvious that this side of the mountain was out of the question. It presented a 5,000 ft. wall with no obvious line of weakness. At the top was a large col containing huge seracs which leaned out over the wall below. 5,000 ft. higher and well over to the right lay the summit. The route would have been long, very difficult and dangerous. It would also have required far more fixed rope than we possessed to have done it with some safety.

Only one choice now remained, to press on round to the northern side. Radio communications with the others had not materialised and Rowland and Marshall volunteered to walk all the way back down to Askole, some twenty five miles through the interminable moraine, to inform the others of the position.

Four days later on 19th June we all met up again at a spot called Ho Bluk, a flat grassy place by the side of the Biafo. We made a camp here and on 12th June the main party set off for the northern side. By this time I was too ill to continue due to chronic diarrhoea and general lassitude. Capt Rasaki was also suffering, his symptoms were diagnosed at the beginnings of pneumonia and he was immediately confined to bed. Rousseau remained behind to administer any medical assistance that may have been required. We kept in radio contact with the main party but communications were so bad due to static that conversations often had to be repeated several times.

The day after they left the monsoon arrived. At Ho Bluk it was raining but above 15,000 ft. the rain turned to snow. Two days walking brought them to the junction of the Biafo and Sim Gang glaciers in the area known as Snow Lake. It was here that the porters refused to go any further, fresh deep snow and numerous crevasses were the main cause of the trouble. As they were wearing only moccasins and their sack cloth the prospect of spending another three days out in the open in most unpleasant conditions cannot have looked too inviting. Had we been in the position of offering to them leather boots we may have persuaded them to have gone on. We were caught in a difficult situation as we had 4,000 lbs of equipment and food to move 10 miles to our intended base camp at the head of the Sim Gang glacier and only six fit people to do the carrying. It would have taken at least two days to have completed the return trip to the base camp, and to have moved everything would have taken at least three weeks, leaving us with very little time and energy to have done any climbing. We also had to allow time to ferry equipment back to the corner for the porters to pick up on the way back. 'The Ogre' from the northern side looked a better proposition but was still difficult and would have required all the climbing time we had allowed ourselves, about six weeks, to have had a fair chance of success. As

the weather was far from good and our likelihood of success practically nil it was agreed that to press on further would be impractical and would only result in additional expense. It was felt that we should return to Ho Bluk and utilise the porters that we still had with us to take our equipment back to Askole.

Several attempts were made to explore up the Sim Gang, to look at the northern approaches from closer range in order to take photographs of any feasible lines. Due to the thigh deep snow and repeated tumbles into crevasses progress was by no means easy, for the porters it would have been extremely hazardous. Eventually Morrison and Rousseau climbed to above 17,000 ft. and were able to photograph what appeared to be a possible line, a snow ridge leading up to steep rocks that would probably have to be avoided by traversing round to the left in order to reach the summit.

Everyone returned to Ho Bluk thoroughly disappointed with the turn of events. The Pakistan government had given us permission for only 'The Ogre' and we were unable to turn our attention to any other mountain; otherwise we could have turned our failure into success on one of several unclimbed peaks of around 20,000 ft. that were within striking distance of Ho Bluk. Our liaison officer allowed us to climb a small unclimbed peak, 18,320 ft. which we named Rasaqi, in order to complete our reconnaissance of 'The Ogre', as it was directly opposite, and to provide us with some consolation for our efforts. The peak was climbed in a day from Ho Bluk.

On 22 June we left Ho Bluk and returned to Askole. Instead of returning to Skardu along the Braldu river we made our exit over the Skoro La pass 16,000 ft. The track down the Braldu had been washed away in several places by the monsoon rains and the route was closed. An old bridge made of twigs crosses the Braldu just below Askole and with some trepidation we went across, the bridge swaying and twisting 70 ft. above the bubbling torrent below. Two or three people fall off the bridge each year and their bodies have never been found. It was a hard grind to the top of the pass taking two days. The weather was foul, raining and cold and the cloud level right down. The night after we had crossed over a storm broke and the Skoro La

became alive as lightning and thunder surrounded it in an angry fury.

We were back to Skardu on 27th June and were lucky enough to enjoy a break in the weather that allowed us to fly out to Rawalpindi on 30th June. A week of debriefing and waiting for our gear to be flown out from Skardu followed before four of the party flew back to England. The other four left a few days later in the lorry, taking three weeks over an interesting but rather tiring, hot and dusty trip.

We returned to this country subdued and a little disillusioned by our experience, the culmination of two years hard work with not a lot to show for it. From the climbing angle the expedition cannot be deemed a success as we failed to even establish ourselves on the mountain, although the causes were very much beyond our control. The over-riding problem, being one of finance, caused problems and difficulties all the time. We failed also because of the unusually early monsoon, five to six weeks before normal, and the refusal of the porters to take us the final ten miles to establish our base camp. Our problem here was how long to keep the porters at £70 a day in case there was an improvement in the weather and conditions that would have allowed us to continue. The prevailing weather together with the depressing weather forecast helped in making our decision. To have gone on under those circumstances would have resulted in little further progress and certainly would not have been worth all the additional expense and effort.

Looking from the positive side, we had completed an overland journey of 12,000 miles, visited a mountain region that few mountaineers have set eyes upon, climbed a small peak and carried out a photographic survey that should provide useful details for future expeditions.

Three months have since passed and time has begun to mellow the feelings. Memories of the intense heat, the exhausting walks, the polluted water, the flies and mosquitoes, the sickness, and the many troublesome jobs that had to be done have begun to fade and you tend to remember the more pleasant aspects and even think in terms of going out there again.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

The Biafo and Snow Lake areas offer a tremendous scope for future expeditions. 'The Ogre' remains the plum of the unclimbed peaks, presenting an Alpine type challenge but on an Himalayan scale. It will be a very difficult mountain to climb, but typical of the climbing in that area where the rock is granite of varying quality, generally very good on the enormous faces and long ridges, presenting high technical difficulties at a high altitude.

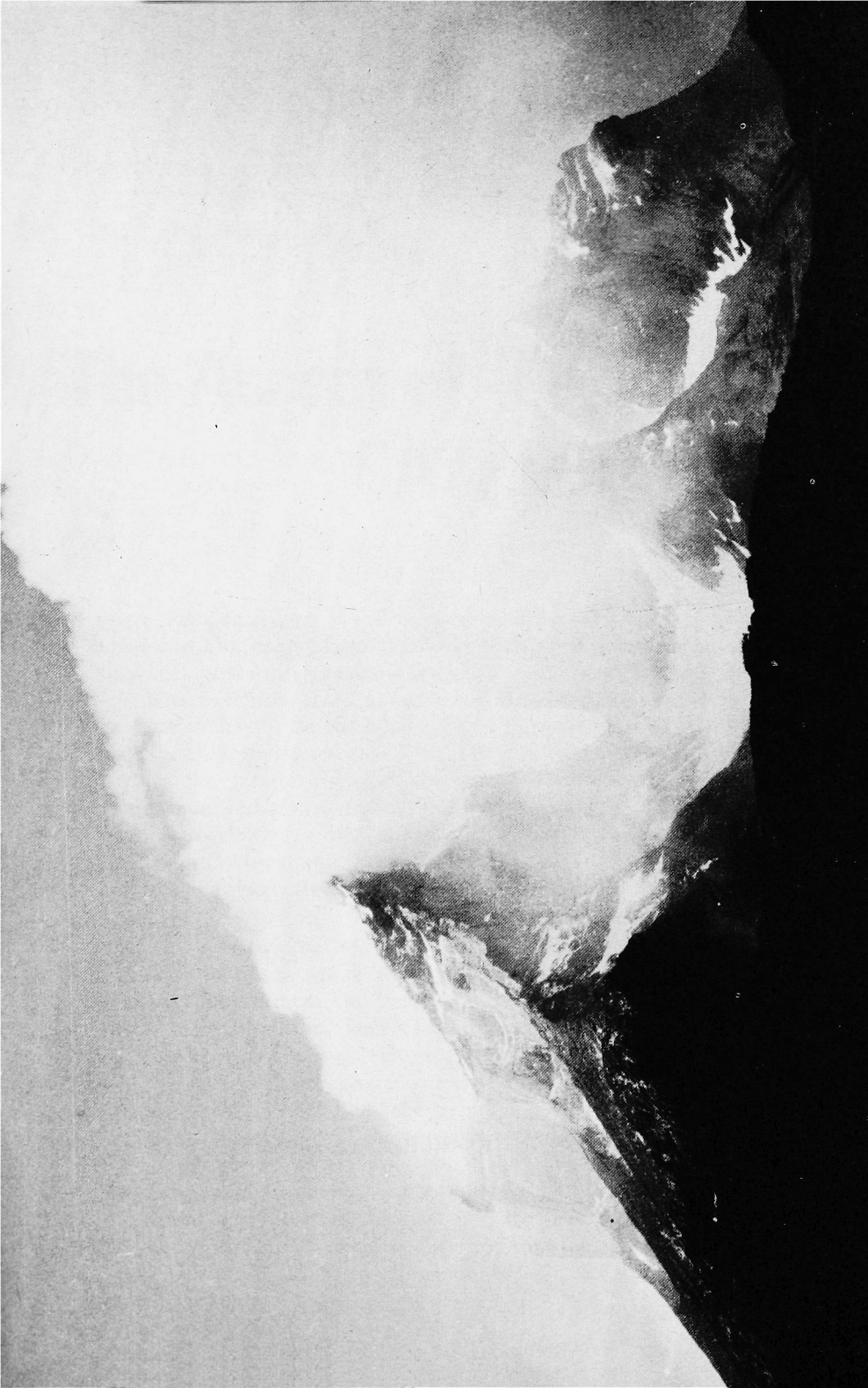
Behind the Ogre lay the Latok Mountains where there are three peaks of around 23,000 ft. The rock peaks of the West Biafo Wall are 19,617 ft. 19,360 ft. and 19,901 ft. and rise 5,000 feet vertically from Snow Lake. 'Sosban Brakk' 21,040 ft. is a most challenging mountain, the last 6,000 ft. rising very steeply from the Biafo glacier.

This is most definitely an area for the future and those that come to climb must be prepared for difficulties normally only experienced on Alpine and Patagonian type mountains. It is not a question of looking for difficult lines, as on most of these peaks there is just no easy way to the top and the easiest lines will be much harder than the easiest routes found on most of the Himalayan routes already climbed. The weather can generally be trusted to be good during June and the early part of July; the monsoon can be expected mid way through July. It would appear that expeditions climb in the Karakoram from the beginning of May through to the end of August and sometimes even later. The affect of the monsoon is not as marked as in Nepal and generally it is possible to climb through it. Rather like our own seasons some summers are worse than others, this year was one of the bad ones.

CONCLUSION

This article may provide some useful information for a Himalayan aspirant, but the next time you hear of someone who has 'just come back from the 'Hims', don't turn green with envy because he has probably had to suffer all manner of hardships and deprivations and is, more than likely, only too happy to be home again.

NB. Apologies are made for the lack of photographs but unfortunately the expedition is still waiting for their films to be returned by the Pakistan Government.



PATAGONIAN SUMMER. (photo C. Jackson)

The Ascent of the CATHEDRAL

C. Jackson.

Patagonia, land of yellow granite and brown pampas, green forest and blue lakes, land of storm. Early arrival at the end of November could not guarantee a spell of settled weather and the New Year found the six of us entombed in our tiny ice cave below the West Face of the Cathedral. Outside, endless seas of grey cloud poured moisture-laden from the Pacific to unleash their fury on the granite blades of the Paine. The Cathedral, when visible, appeared almost unreal, rearing above the Olguin glacier, glistening with new snow, its crest decorated with enormous ice 'mushrooms'. We sat and waited.

Until this point in time, Guy and myself had managed to snatch an exploration of the first 7,000 ft. of the North West ridge, the only feasible line of the whole peak. This we found was a knife-edged ridge which threatened a nightmare retreat in the event of bad weather. The freak calm spell which had permitted this initial exploration fizzled out early in the morning and a 300 ft. abseil down the West side of the ridge allowed retreat onto the steep ice below to join the others who had been watching and wondering, aware of the rapidly deteriorating weather conditions. We returned to the cave and waited again.

January 9th this had to be it. Extended stays at the ice cave had almost exhausted our supplies of lightweight food, and an apparent settling of the weather prepared us for the big push. Dave and Bob Smith had set out the previous evening to bivouac at the high point reached by Guy and myself, the rest of us left before first light.

It was incredibly cold, and a thin wind gusted clouds of spindrift at us as we shivered our way up the ice below the West Face to begin traversing to the base of the ridge. The Cathedral towered above us, its great wedge silhouetted against the brightness of the stars. To the East was the first hint of the approaching day.

The ridge, which had not been easy on first acquaintance, proved even more difficult on second. Frozen fingers, ice filled cracks and the confusion caused by the first grey light of dawn all added to the difficulties. Two pitches of about V, a IV and then another V brought us to our previous high point. We could hear Dave and Bob up ahead. We continued, more steep slabs and cracks filled with ice, fortunately Dave had left plenty of hardware in the rock. As we climbed we left fixed ropes to aid retreat, and slowly our packs grew lighter. A vicious ice-glazed crack led to a sharp arete and above I could see Dave on the overhanging wall of a feature we had named 'The Wart', which blocked the ridge at this point. The pegs rang in hollowly, an expanding flake pitch, and suddenly one expanded completely flinging Dave out over the immense drop of the East Face. The next second a curse, the lonely pinging of a dropped peg from 2000 ft. below disappearing into its own echoes, then once again slowly upwards. We sat and shivered in the cold black shadow of the early morning, and watched fascinated as a small patch of sunlight crept too slowly towards our tiny stances. Suddenly a shout from above, he'd finished the pitch, we creaked into action again, up and into the brilliant sunshine. An icy slab brings us to a narrow ledge below the expanding flake pitch, then up the fixed rope to the top of 'The Wart', and our first view of the upper parts of the ridge. One more difficult pitch then an easier looking section followed by a strange leaning tower which completely blocked the ridge. It appeared possible, however, to skirt this on its left.

It was about at this time that someone looked to the horizon and noticed that the 'weather' was returning. A thick band of black cloud was already obscuring the distant peaks on the ice cap, above us thin feathery cirrus heralded the approach, of the next front. If we retreated now before the storm arrived, as

it surely would within the next few hours, we would not get another chance at the peak, we were running out of food and time, it had to be today. We continued upwards.

The traverse round the tower did not prove to be too difficult. (III,IV,IV sup), but after 500 ft. progress was halted by an enormous wall of thinly cracked granite. Artificial again and time was running out. The sun disappeared and a wind started up again, moaning over the ridge below us. Bob and Dave in front hammered away. One pitch, two pitches, and still artificial, then a steep short chimney partially blocked by snow mushrooms. Bob disappeared from sight - a silence followed, then a shout of 'We're up - That's it'. Sighs of relief and amongst the first snow flakes, we continue to the top.

Even as we took the ritual summit photographs, the wind increased and mist and snow blotted out the view. 'Time to go home' said someone.

We abseiled from the summit as we reckoned on four hours of daylight left. The storm rapidly increased in strength and 500 ft. down the ridge, as we rounded the edge of the leaning tower, the full force of the wind hit us. It was a fight and without help of the ropes we would probably still be there. It was impossible to stand and we lay clinging to the ropes half blinded our nose and ears filled with the gritty hard flung snow. We clawed our way down the ropes which were rapidly icing up. Abseil followed abseil. By ten o'clock, Dave and Bon, who were in the front had reached the bivouac ledge and were preparing to abseil down the side of the ridge to the glacier below. By this time the light was failing and it was a complete white out. Great sheets of snow and spindrift hammered us into the rock. The descent from this point is a confused memory of abseiling down ice plastered ropes and crazy angles, continually fighting the wind and snow, groping and sliding down the glacier to the haven of the ice cave.

Eleven thirty, and the last traces of daylight disappear. Above us, the Cathedral, its privacy raped for the first time since creation shrieked its abuse at us. We crawl into the perfect quiet of the ice cave, save for the purring of the primus, preparing a much needed brew.

SUMMARY

Patagonian Andes (Paine Group), the Cathedral approx. 8000 ft.

First ascent by the N.W. Ridge, 8th/9th January 1971.

D. Nicol (leader), B. Smith, G. Lee, C. Jackson, B. Shaw, R. Whewell.

Sharp arete which steepened towards the summit 2,600 ft.

itches V, V sup, and A2



Ridge below 'WART'. Jackson or Lee climbing.

A Soft Fall

Andrew Griffith.

Have you ever wondered what has happened to some of the people you used to see in the Pass, who have just faded from sight, with only an occasional sighting to say they were still alive? Those 'has beens', whoever they really were, whose height of achievement was to lead Brant on a warm windless afternoon when there was not too much traffic noise from the motorway below to distract a nervous concentration. Some must have found the force of gravity gaining in strength with the years, and others have found that there are just too many cars on the miles between London and PYG, or maybe taken to other sports, at the behest of family or friends. But most of them will still hope to get to mountains at some time of the year, even if it is in a different plane that they take their sport.

A combination of factors stopped me from climbing on a regular basis some time ago. I lived for seven years first in West Africa and then in Ceylon. I never managed to get off the ground in Ghana, but did manage several climbs in Ceylon with Roger Holmes. Several gritlike rocks near Colombo provided very warming diversion. The sport was enlivened by a virulent red ant which appeared in their thousands, much to the great amusement of the local Sinhalese audience, who appeared to think that the possibility of a bite-induced fall was worth waiting for. We never rewarded their patience with a 'Plop', but I learnt that 'dimia' is Sinhalese for red ant. I had several leaves from abroad, and managed to spend time in the Alps, but have not climbed much in the past few years. Perhaps marriage has something to do with it.

I first went ski-ing in early 1965, and have been able to spend at least a fortnight every year since. Like every tyro I spent a few trying days when it seemed that the ski had minds of their own, and when I wondered how I had ever had balance enough to totter up Idwal Slabs. Like most I persevered through that period, and you can now recognise in me a medium standard skier. I must admit that the chief recognition point will be the fact that my feet are always planted well apart, and the more observant will occasionally note a deep sitzmark wrecking even further the elegance of the track.

Having skied for some seasons in Wengen, I joined the Downhill Only Ski Club, not with any intention of racing, but because I enjoy ski-ing with its members. Local knowledge is useful in any form of mountaineering, and this is certainly so in ski-ing. Some members have been to Wengen many times and, ski-ing with an experienced habitue normally means you will quickly learn where to find the best conditions. I have had good days when others less fortunate have only found crust or porridge, and have descended to the village to other pleasures.

Shortly after joining my wife Judy and I were led into the deep snow, and the learning (and falling) process began all over again. In an area like Wengen/Grindlewald, the process can be made quite painless, as Piste and off piste can be mixed to taste. I am still a long way from proficient, but the whole scene goes a long way to satisfy my desire to be in the mountains.

Each spring the D.H.O. runs a ski tour, usually about the first week of May or late April, and I have been on the last two. On neither of these two tours has the weather been good, but it has not impaired the pleasure beyond being an irritant.

1970 saw a party of 10 walk up the Diablerets in near gale conditions only to remain hut bound for two days before attempting the crossing of the Arpelistock from the Diablerets hut to the Geltenhutte. This should have been an easy and pleasant day, from a windy summit in mist and gathering gloom. We spent another day hut bound at the Geltenhutte. This was made more than bearable by the discovery of many litres of dole, left in the hut by the summer guardian. We repaid him later and told him that he had been toasted in absentia. The following day we

had an uneventful but pleasant ski out to Lauenen.

Again this year I was lucky enough to be able to take a week off and motored out to the Alps for the second time in two months. I had had a fortnight in Wengen earlier in the year. Our party met up in Locarno, and we went up the Valle Maggia, with our eventual destination being the Albergho Robei. This was a very comfortable base from which to ski, and we were lucky that it was, as the weather was far too warm, producing a great many wet snow avalanches. We avoided these, but unfortunately were not able to climb the Basadino, which was our main reason for being in this area. We were advised by the frontier guard that it would be foolish to try our next project of crossing over to the Corno Hut and so had to spend a day sampling the Swiss railways. Only five miles as the crow flies took 9½ hours and innumerable changes of trains and bus. The two hour hut bash from some way past All' Acqua to the Corno hut was a tedious end to a day instead of the fine run we should have had if the weather had been kinder. It is a hut of the more traditional kind with lots of character, and we were very comfortable in it for three nights.

The weather cleared up and we were rewarded with two good days ski-ing. The first saw us cross the Corno Pass, and then up the long gentle slope of the Griesgletscher to the Blinnenhorn on skis. The way back was splendid ski-ing. We cut off towards the Italian frontier to avoid a steep climb up and, met the frontier guard who had earlier warned about poor snow conditions. I would like to be able to run up hill on broad ski with his agility.

The next day we went only a short distance up to the Corno pass on skis and then up a steep slope to the Griespass. We waited in the hot spring sun, and were rewarded by a magnificent descent in near perfect snow conditions. We wondered if a visit from a Swiss Army helicopter in the afternoon was merely curiosity on the part of the pilot, or if he was checking on national security. Our one regret was that he had forgotten to bring any beer with him.

The last day of our weeks tour should have seen us cross the Hinterer Sulzluke, and we crossed the Corno pass once again with this aim. Unfortunately, the extreme heat of the two pre-

vicious days had so softened the snow that we had to make a long detour and this delayed us so that it would have been foolish to continue. We returned to the Corno hut for a bite to eat before getting out to All' Acqua on semi-liquid snow. We then had the job of getting to Brigue on the Sunday morning, followed by a long drive back to England in a vain attempt to get to the office by Monday morning.

This type of touring is a long way from the type of climbing practised by most members of the C.C. The two tours I have been on have not been distinguished by any special events, and we seem to have had more than our share of bad weather. But it is another dimension of being in the mountains, and I am very ready to take the opportunity whenever I can to slip off for more touring. If climbing regularly has not been possible, an annual tour goes some way towards making up the gap in one's life, even if it is a soft option as opposed to the more strenuous days of a few years ago.

Climbing in BORNEO

CLIMBING IN BORNEO.

Extract from letter from Capt. G.J.Yeoman RBMR of 22.11.70.
.....ended in my getting away from Brunei...to do some climbing.

This came about by my being allowed to join a party of Ghurkas who were on an Adventure Training Expedition to Mount Kinabaru. This is the highest mountain in S.E. Asia at 13,455 ft. and is in Sabah in the Northern part of Borneo. We stayed in a hut called Sayat Sayat at 12,500 ft. and climbed from there for 7 days.

It was simply marvellous and I thoroughly enjoyed it all. The climate was similar to England and although during the day in the sun it was quite warm, at night I needed a track suit and two jerseys as well as my sleeping bag to keep warm; the bag was superb. I felt fresh and comfortable all the time and although the atmosphere is slightly rarified at that height I felt no ill effects, other than being slightly breathless, and after a few days I began to feel really fit which was super.

As you know I have done very little climbing since joining the Service because of the opportunities to go sailing instead: but I have never forgotten what you taught me, or indeed my very real love of the hills. To be given this chance was quite splendid and I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it. The Ghurkas were led by a British Ghurka officer who asked me to teach 2 or 3 men every day whilst he and the other leader taught the others in the party. This was a very good experience for me and I found the Ghurka soldiers to be exceptionally bright and quick at picking things up and superbly good climbers. The soldiers were all beginners except for one chap called Narbur who was a Sherpa by birth and had already portered to 23,000 ft. on Everest - an exceptionally good man.

We got up early every morning to make the best use of the daylight and good weather as the cloud generally closed in between 11 and 12 o'clock. The mountain is entirely rock above around 11,000 ft. except for the odd patch of stunted bush, heather, lichens etc. in the sheltered spots in the gullies. It is truly mountain-like in its ruggedness, if you know what I mean, and is very awe-inspiring. The rock is granite and incredibly rough and there is every sort of climbing from Difficult to Ex.S. and, of course, artificial if you feel like it.

The idea was to teach the Ghurkas to climb and lead to V.Difficult which of course was just up my street. I found I could cope well enough with this: the only problem was the incredible exposure because the mountain is so sheer for the last 3,000 ft. or so. However, on the top it is an enormous undulating plateau with the knobs of the various peaks sticking up from it, and provided one climbs on the inside of the peaks (if you see what I mean) the exposure is not too bad. just bad enough!

It was the most perfect week, and I hope that the morning that I went to the highest point to see the sunrise will produce some good photographs. It is, of course, the highest peak I have ever been up as it caps the peak I climbed on the Tinbridge Trek by rather more than 1,500 ft. If you ever get the opportunity I recommend it as well worth while.

BLACKFACE and other routes

W. F. Dowlen.

Currockbilly, Bibbenluke, Hoddle's Castle - these are some of the Northern Budawangs of New South Wales. Flat-topped steep sided remnants of a sandstone plateau, scarcely touched by climbers, they offer many opportunities of new routes of all standards.

The Budawangs are only 100 miles from Canberra and access is easy. On our first visit, a weekend in June, we camped by Style's Creek: reached in just over an hours walk from the road's end or, to be more accurate, the point on the road where my nerve failed. The last five miles which even the locals regard as 'quite rough' had taken us nearly half an hour to drive.

Our campsite was just over the 2000 ft. mark (The peaks go up to 3,700 ft) and overnight we had 10 degrees of frost. Once the sun rose, however, the temperature shot up and for the rest of the day it was almost shirtsleeves weather.

We set off, after breakfast, for the nearest cliffs, Pagoda Rocks, an easy 20 miles walk. We had explored these rocks the evening before and seen a large groove which started about 200 ft. up the face and led directly to the top. The question was whether the groove could be reached from below. Ian, Ann and I attacked at the easiest looking place directly below the groove while Tony and John began more adventurously some yards to our left.

Fifty feet of steep, straightforward, climbing brought us to a big ledge above which were two obvious possibilities - a chimney on the right and an open groove on the left. Tony and John had joined us, after being forced to traverse, so to avoid crossing lines they started up the groove leaving the chimney to us. It looked easy, about a Diff we agreed, but my first casual attempt soon convinced me of our mistake. Half way up the chimney was a small tree blackened by a bush fire which had recently swept the area. At first I tried to avoid this tree but after half an hour

of upward explorations and retreats it had become a friend and welcome resting place. By this time I was so covered with carbon that our climb's name followed naturally from my appearance. The key hold, the cause of all my hesitation, was one of those stuck-on pebbles often found on coarse sandstone. Once I had the courage to stand on it the worst was over, protection appeared, confidence increased, and though the rest of the pitch was steep and strenuous it did not depend on doubtful holds.

We climbed easier rocks through a fire-scorched area to a large terrace and here we lost Ian. Peter arriving at the cliff some time after us, had soloed up to the terrace from a point well to the right and he suggested to Ian that they team up to explore a finish of this rightward line. They traversed under an overhanging nose and disappeared from our view. From the terrace one pitch up easy slabs brought us to the bottom of our big groove and this we followed to the top. It was more chimney than groove and the climbing was mostly straightforward. The one harder section was an exhilarating chockstone pitch—rather Dolomitic in flavour. We had to layback out along the bottom edge of the chock before being able to swing over to bridge up the chimney above.

The others completed their routes, Pilgrim's Progress and Scarface, shortly afterwards without special incident, a satisfactory day's bag of three new 400 ft. routes. Blackface being the easiest of the trio. Most areas in Australia are using numerical grading systems with numbers from 1 to the low twenties. Canberra climbers, the majority of whom are Poms, still cling to word standards but the words are applied to harder routes than in Britain. We graded Blackface Mild Severe it is probably about the same standard as Hazel Groove or Main Scoop in the Pass.

The descent from the top of the Big Pagoda was mostly scrambling once we had located the best route. At the bottom we abseiled over a steep section but this probably could have been climbed down using a narrow chimney.

Next day, after a warmer night, the party divided. Peter and Ian went to explore Quilty's Mountain while the rest of us chose to look at Hoddle's Castle Hill (2950). The northern end of Hoddle's is a continuous line of overhangs jutting out as much





Climbing in Australia. (photo W.F. Dowlen)

as 30 ft. in a height of 200 ft. We agreed that it was a bolters paradise and, being boltless, wandered on in search of easier things. Where the overhangs ended there seemed to be a possibility but for no good reason we left it 'for the next time'. Eventually we reached a rock tower separated from the maincliff and here we did a route which was christened Hoddle's Doddle 190 ft. Mild V. Diff. On the top of the tower John, the only Aussie in the party, maintained tradition by lighting a fire even though we had no billy to boil on it.

It was not until October that we returned to the Budawang. In the interval Peter had gone to Canada and Tony was on leave in England. This time the drive in was less of an adventure as we were using Ian's Landrover which made short work of some muddy and rutted places which had alarmed me before. We were able to drive a couple of miles further along the track and camped by the vehicle. In June Peter and Ian had not been able to force an impressive line on Quilty's Mountain and Ian was keen to have another attempt. However, somewhere along the way our plan was altered and we went instead to Hoddle's to see whether the route beyond the overhangs was a reality. Much to my relief when we reached the place it was still there. A triangle of steep slabs led up to the bottom of a deep chimney, almost to the bottom of the chimney for entry was guarded by an overhang and we guessed that this would be the crux of the route.

Three hours later we were on the top enthusing about the climb and trying to decide on a worthy name. It had been every bit as good as we had hoped. Sustained, interesting and, apart from the first 20 ft, offering no chance of variation. Our guess had been correct, the overhang was the crux. It needed a semi-layback pull out onto the wall of the chimney and 10 ft. of thrutching to reach the deeper, easier part of the chimney. Ian leading this pitch was sufficiently impressed to stop for a smoke once he was up this section. Ann too found this by far the hardest place but for my much longer reach it was very little harder than some of the moves lower down the climb.

Eventually we called it Anvil Crack and graded it Severe. There must be hundreds more like it waiting to be done in the Budawang.

THREE EXPEDITIONS TO GREENLAND.

London Graduate Mountaineering Club 1969

Derek Fordham (Leader), Michael Tuson, John Ashburner, Arthur Clarke, Dennis Kemp, David Morgan and Don Roscoe.

The expedition went to the Kristians Glacier of Kong Christian den IX's Land in the east of Greenland. The climbing activities were severely restricted because of a change of route on the way in. On July 26th they managed to climb the most westerly peak in the range dividing the Kristians Glacier from the Champs Elysee Glacier and the next peak to it on the East. Both climbs have good cramponing and poor rock. The most memorable part of the expedition was, perhaps, their inability to leave, due to the pack ice blocking access from the sea. Food was dropped to them by the Royal Danish Air Force and their eventual rescue was by the U.S. Coast Guard Command helicopter.

Inner London Education Authority Expedition 1970

The aim of this expedition was to put senior schoolboys into a genuine expedition situation. In addition they were to do a project connected with their sixth form work. The base was at Kungmuir in the Angmagssalik area. The expedition canoed through the coastal fjords to Sermiligae and the Tinctiqilaq and, also to the airstrip. The total distance covered was three hundred miles in polar waters and pack ice. There were no epics, attacks by polar bears etc. The most notable success was the demonstration of Eskimo rolling given at each village. This went down very well because it appears that there is only one man in the Angmagssalik area who can still do this manoeuvre.

The Cambridge Staunings Expedition 1970

Dr. Keith Miller (Leader), Les Davis, Jim Bishop, John Danby, Mike Hall, John Halliday, Peter Mackeith, Christ Padfield, John Thompson and David Young.

The primary point of the expedition was scientific work. Radio measurements of the depth of the ice and analysis of its quality, movement and contents. The main action was on the Ivar Baardson Glacier (Roslin Glacier formerly) after an attempt

to reach the Mellom Glacier directly had failed. No mountain climbing was attempted but much work was done on the glaciers. A detailed report of this expedition is available from Dr. Miller at Trinity College, Cambridge. It is worth having if only for the study of how to build a reliable sledge to work on the glaciers and for the details of good and gear used and how they stood up to the test.

IN MEMORIAM

J. L. ANDREWS	1914-1968
DR. G. BARLOW	1907-1969 (HONORARY MEMBER)
L. W. BENNET	1937-1970
A. BRIDGE	FORMER MEMBER
J. F. G. CLARKE	1960-1970
A. M. D. HEATH	1931-1970
N. S. FINZI	1948-1970
M. S. GOTCH	1925-1968
F. W. T. HUGHES	1933-1969
J. R. S. HOLMES	1956-1971
D. D. MARPLES	1956-1970
DR. T. W. PATEY	1959-1970
H. T. H. PECK	1958-1969
J. V. ROB	1938-1971
D. P. STANFIELD	1945-1971
C. H. W. THOMPSON	1953-1971

ROGER HOLMES.

Good friends that are made in one's early days seem to last well. When these friends go, they leave a void which is empty for the rest of life. I suppose it's because of the type of experience you shared when young, you know, later, can never occur again. I felt the gap when Mike Harris died and now it has occurred again with the death, in Geneva of Roger Holmes. We met in 1948 in the Army, in the same age group in the same Unit, and quickly learnt how to use the resources of the Crown to further our climbing activities.

Between then and 1951 we climbed together a great deal. Our activities on and off the crags seem wild now, but in retrospect we really did a great deal in a very short time. Roger was an excellent man on rock, then. Perhaps by today's standards very good average, but you can't make these comparisons. He had all the attributes of a really first rate all round mountaineer.

He went to Bangor University (he was a good botanist) and we continued to climb all over Britain. Unfortunately the University took a less-than-liberal view of his climbing and he parted company with them. He went to Hong Kong with the Chartered Bank, and then to Ceylon, India, Malaya and finally Bhutan. We wrote regularly about our climbing; climbed in the Alps. We met occasionally, and this year I looked forward to seeing him again. He was a great companion in climbing.

RFJ

15.10.71.

DENNIS PERCIVAL STANFIELD M.B.E. F.L.S. 1903-1971.

Dennis Stanfield, born a Yorkshireman, chose to devote his entire life to the service of Nigeria. Firstly as a District Officer, in which role he completed the full career span of twenty years, and then as a botanist with the Nigerian forest service and the University of Ibadan, where he worked until his death. For his services to his country, Dennis was awarded the M.B.E. and to honour his contributions to tropical botany a Stanfield Award has been founded of which Club members have already received details.

The outstanding topographic features of the Nigerian savannah are massive volcanic extrusions great bare granite bosses rising to impressive heights above both plains and tropical rain forest. Regularly washed by torrential rain, but never shattered by frost, they offer smooth, steep unbroken climbing on minute holds with small stances without belays. Their prominence and inaccessibility naturally enshrine them in the religions and folk lore of the country, but, more importantly to Dennis, offer a protected environment to rare plants. His explorations, involving enormous energy often on quite literally hack work, opened up routes to the more imposing rocks. Accompanied by his unsuspecting cook, Dennis made the first ascent of Ashumonoga, one of the most spectacular peaks of the Idanre complex - a climb since repeated with some trepidation by climbers of Himalayan experience.

In an atmosphere of shimmering heat, Dennis would pick a line differing only insignificantly from the acres of smooth slab on either side and casually flow up the rock with enviable economy of movement. This proved to be not only sheer perfectionism the rock often became too hot to hold more than momentarily. After a few extended leads up such steep slabs at the limit of adhesion the consequences of a slip would become appallingly clear. In the absence of belays it was typical of Dennis to use the rope as a means of pooling the ability and confidence of the party, to which he was by far the greatest contributor. His nonchalance during the most exacting moments of the climb would be excelled only by his casual production on the summit plateaux of some treat, such as a secluded rock bathing pool or the previously secreted requirements for brewing tea.

Understandably, Dennis was not as widely known within the Club as would undoubtedly have been the case had he lived in this country, but those who were privileged to tour and climb with him in his chosen miles can sadly testify how much Africa's gain was the Club's loss. We offer our deepest sympathy to Nancy, his wife and partner in so many of his enterprises.

M.G.W.

DR. GUY BARLOW. 1878-1969

Famous these days for 'Barlow's Chimney' on Skye and for his association with E.W.Steeple, the rest of his climbing-career is worth recording. Though a member of this club and resident in North Wales at his death it is with Scotland that his name is usually linked. He was responsible for a great deal of amateur survey work in the mountains, for settling the exact height of a number of Munro's and a number of arguments as to the intervisibility of mountain area. This was though an application of this work as a lecturer in Physics at Birmingham University. In this field too his career was distinguished. At his death he was almost the last of a long past generation of pioneers he and Steeple were among the first to climb in Norway. For a more detailed biography members should consult 'The Cuillin of Skye' or the 1970 issue of the S.M.C. Journal.

J.F.G. CLARKE. (GUNN CLARKE).

Under his nickname Gunn was best known as a member of the first British rope to climb the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses. He died tragically, as with all accidents, in an avalanche in Glencoe.

A full obituary appears in the Alpine Journal for 1970 and there is a further comment on the exact circumstances of his death in the same Journal the following year.

A. W. BRIDGE.

Though not a member of this club at the time of his death, he had resigned over a personal matter some years previously, Alf Bridge was well known to many members of the Club. Accordingly a full appreciation of his position and his life will be published in the next issue.

C. H. W. THOMSON (1953-1971).

Dr. D. A. Spence writes:-

Wing Commander Charles (Tommy) Thomson was born in Taranaki, New Zealand, in 1914, and learnt to climb on Mount Egmont, 8,000 ft. close to his home. He joined the Royal Air

force in March 1939, serving in Coastal Command and later as a specialist navigator in Canada, during which posting he took part in the first transatlantic glider flight, and at New Delhi. From there he and his wife made trips into the Himalayan foothills. Later they flew themselves to New Zealand, returning to England in 1947 he came a keen rock climber in Wales, and spent many of his summers in the Alps, A memorable spring was spent glacier ski-ing in the Oetztal. Returning from the air force in 1957, he climbed for a season in New Zealand and stopped on the way back at Jackson Hole and the Tetons, before taking up fruit farming in East Anglia, an occupation not inconsistent with ski-ing in winter and a good long summer in the Alps while the crop ripened. but tragically cut short by illness in 1969. He leaves a widow and three boys.

DR. T. W. PATEY. 1932-1970.

Tom Patey died, 'Comme tous les chefs de guides, en rappel', whilst exploring the sea cliffs on the North Coast of Scotland. Internationally famous as a climber in the Alps and Himalayas, his extensive exploration in Scotland are less well known. He was a prolific eliminator of possibilities in each area of Scotland he lived in. First in the Cairngorms and later in the North and West.

It is often said of the dead that their departure leaves a gap that no man can fill: this is too small a statement for Patey. His death diminishes mankind.

Full obituaries are available in the Alpine Journal 1971 and also in the introduction to his posthumously published writings, 'One Man's Mountains'. If anything had to stand as a gravestone for the man then that book of writings is the best possible epitaph.

NOTE: A large number of the members who have died recently remain without an obituary because the Editor is unable to trace persons who knew them well enough to write about them. If any member or any other person, feels that there has been a serious omission in this respect will he please contact the Editor who will be only too pleased to remedy the deficiency.

THE CLUB

1970-1971

THE CLUB 1970-1971.

The following remarks are short because it has ceased to be the tradition of members of the Club to inform the Editor of their activities unless the said gentleman has their arms between their shoulder blades at any time. This is to be regretted.

Many of the members' achievements are outlined elsewhere in the issue and I will leave you to search them out there in their own writings. Perhaps I could start the review with a historical comment. 1971 saw the sixtieth anniversary of the ascent by L. G. Shadbolt and A. Maclaren of the Cuillin Ridge of Skye in its entirety: their's was, of course the first ascent in this manner. Since last a review of this nature was done Sir John Hunt and Jack Longland have both moved a further rung up the ladder of honour: the former to a Peerage and the latter to a Knighthood. It seems unnecessary to point this out as the events are already receding into the past but the club ought to congratulate them in print.

Climbing's own aristocracy, the Himalayan men, has received a few new recruits from the club. Gregory has written his report in this issue but Don Morrison and Clive Rowland were also on the trip. Barry Whybrow and Les Holiwell were on an expedition to the Hindu Kush in 1969. As well as Dr. Peter Steele, the Everest expedition in 1971 had another club member in the shape of John Cleare who took many of the excellent photographs in the B.B.C. film of the climb. Nearly, but not quite, have I forgotten the Annupurna expedition which was lead by Bonington and also Nick Estcourt and Mike Thompson among its climbing members. Paul Nunn and Machardie went to the Caucasus in 1970.

Elsewhere in the world Brown added to his laurels in Peru in the company of Barker and Alcock: their attempt on the unclimbed El Toro ended in a draw two hundred feet from the top.

Chris Jackson has been twice to the Towers of Paine the Fortress and the Cathedral. C.A.G. Jones was present on two major first ascents in South America the Amazon Face of Yerupaja and the South West Buttress of Fitzroy. On both these climbs he was with American companions: not really surprising as he now lives in California. His ascents in Yosemite are too numerous to detail, but he has also climbed new routes in Canada; the North faces of Mt. Edith Cavell and Mt. Assinboine being the most recent. Peter Rowat has had his activities in Canada written up in *The Alpine Journal* by Ted Maden with whom he has climbed on at least that occasion. Bonington too has been to those areas of the world with his attempt on the Mooses Tooth in 1971.

In the Alps the activities are, thank your lucky stars, too numerous to mention or the *Journal* would be twice as thick. Many members have now done such climbs as the Walker Spur and the Brenva Face routes in keeping with the general British trend to get about a bit more. Brailsford keeps up activities in the Dauphine, of which he must by now be almost an honorary resident. Amongst those who have informed me of their Alpine climbing, A. Edwards climbed the Gervasutti Pillar on Mont Blanc de Tacul, and R.C. Withers traversed the Meije in 1970 and climbed the South face in 1971.

Meanwhile the club has been as dormant as the rest in

the British Isles, in other words its usual active self. The Holiwell brothers are climbing in Wales and will soon have done every climb between them is this a record? For, as Laurie continues to do new climbs Les is covering the Carneddau with the finest of tooth combs. Alcock was with Boysen when the latter, in the words of another member and editor, exploded all over Suicide Wall, Alcock, as the new climbs section shows, has done some exploding on his own account. James Perrin and Colin Mortlock continue their enigmatic wanderings in Pembrokeshire. It goes without saying that Brown has climbed somewhere where 'no man has hitherto trod' on more than one occasion. It is perhaps to be noted that he admits that J.M.Edwards 'Route of Knobs' gave him a moment the young laird salutes an old master? Crew continues to milk the Welsh scene of much that is good.

In the Peak District Nat Allen, Paul Nunn, Chris Jackson and Ed Ward-Drummond, among many have continued to push the already high standards and wide flung nets higher and wider. In the Lake District Ian Roper, Nigel Rogers, Hugh Banner, Dave Cook and Alan Austin, again amongst others, have been responsible for new climbs and repeats of the existing hard ones.

In Scotland Paul Nunn and the late Tom Patey were engaged in major explorations in the Foinaven area and the North in general. Details of much that they had done are available in the New Climbs section of the 1970 S.M.C. Journal.

One weird trend whose leading exponent we can number among us is 'Sea Stacking'. The principal performer in this sphere is John Cleare: his activities stretch literally from Lands End to the Orkney Islands, often they stretch on a Tyrolean traverse. He is shortly to produce a book on his exploits.

Also among the members of the club is one of the new climbing meritocracy, the magazine/media, men Kenneth Wilson the editor of 'Mountain'. In the short term of his editorship he has built the magazine from its old form as 'Mountaincraft', into one of the premier magazines in its sphere in the world. In particular the photographic and graphic appeal of the magazine are now almost as great as Playboy no mean achievement. On that suitably 'modern' note the review of the club ends. Any omission is not insult but ignorance.

regional notes

WALES 1970 - 1971.

DECLINE AND FALL?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that its all up with the old country, but things ain't what they used to be. Social matters seem to have taken over in the Llanberis area at least. I suppose that the main reason for this is the increasing number of people who regularly week-end there or actually own cottages. The week-end pilgrimage is no longer to the hills but to the little grey homes; and the only sense of adventure is whose pad is the scene at, not which hill do we have an epic on. Other, less amusing, trends are to be found. The Americanisation of British Climbing has not stopped at chrome-molly, several 'swingers' have adopted the American infants' dummy - grass. How cool, fool. It's now something to do with a native, or a white settler.

For all the numbers who go there very little is done. The three main originators - excluding the eternal Brown - are Rouse, Boysen and Holiwell (Laurie). For that sweeping generalisation I make no apologies. Others have done new things, most notably the solo climbers Minks, Phillips and Jones; their achievements are remarkable but are strictly for them alone, they give nothing to other climbers.

Rouse too has done his share of going it alone, but he has also put up two lines of some interest: 'Gemini', a true boulder direct, and a route between 'Mammoth' and 'Rat Race'. Boysen's main achievements were in September 1971 when with Dave Alcock he proved one of the old adages 'You can climb anywhere on it at extreme' - to be true of the unlikely Suicide Wall area at Idwal. 'The Garrotte', their girdle of the cliff, must be a stalwart undertaking. Finally, Holiwell. Now that the brothers are no longer a team Les has taken to the undergrowth of the Carneddau in an attempt to sort out our revered President's guide to the area. He is to be congratulated for some of the stuff there is not fit for a dog. His climbing standard on unknown and



Dave Alcock and Martin Boysen on the first ascent of THE GAROTTE
(The Girdle of Suicide Wall) (photo Ken Wilson)

nasty ground belies his retirement from 'the hard' stuff. Laurie mostly with Barry Whybrow, continues to eliminate possibilities on Anglesey and provide a high standard of climb at the same time: something that others appear to be unable to do.

There are others at work too. On Anglesey, Chris Jackson from Sheffield has drawn the odd nasty from the bag to add to his reputation started in the Lley. In Mid Wales the North Staffordshire climbers continue to exploit Craig Cowarch, 'Fritz' Summer was prominent here. I say was because he fell victim to a large stonefall on the Walker Spur and the three day wait for rescue must have been a gruelling do. The injuries have cramped his style, but he and his companions will undoubtedly keep going. On Cader Idris several new routes have been climbed. Nat Allen waved the Rock and Ice banner to good effect on what must be one of the best, 'Slanting Gully Grooves' (300 ft. H.V.S.), climbed with an 'immortal' - Derek Burgess.

I would like to finish on a note of hope, The amazingly large number of hard climbers who were active in North Wales can take consolation from the fact that although they do little new they do much that is old in better style and more often. A number of myths have been exploded. Two are worth particular mention. A party from Manchester did Boulder Direct, Scorpio and Great Wall in the day, unfortunately they were forced to stop for lunch, a sad dropping off! The other worthy action was Ray Evans' ascent of Curving Crack Arete, without aid, which goes a long way towards undoing the insidious damage of the Roland Edwards aid era. Ray has also been active on other crags in the area, notably those in Snowdon West where he was a member of Mike Yates' circus along with Jim Perrin, Nick Estcourt and Mike's wife Judy. Other than the pleasantness of the parties concerned the most salient feature of the team is Ray's tendency to climb in old R.A.F. boots. He and 'Hank' Pasquil along with the late lamented 'Burnley Lads' continue an old tradition of the North of 'doing em and saying nowt'. The air of mystery is a bonus to Wales.

Final note to this rather peevish commentary is, that with a few exceptions Alcock and Hunt's route on Cloggy 'Gormod' being one (Why should a team that can straighten out Great Slab

lower themselves to recording this artificial climb?), the Lake District disease of 'up-at-all-costs' is not yet in Wales. Perhaps the greater numbers and competition and the false sense of being the hub account for this, if so it is their only good point. Anyway, despite the large numbers present there the Welsh hills themselves aren't changing and the climbs are still there in great numbers and quality.

MORAL: Avoid the ballyhoo and live.

LAKE DISTRICT NOTES 1970 - 1971.

IAN ROPER.

A directive from the Hon. Editor, apparently written on the way to the bog: '1,500 words or so on recent Lake District developments by the end of October'. Alas, all of my material was with the editor of a rival publication. The notes, or rather the results of the same were rather late in appearing. So was this article. Having used 50 of the allotted 1,500 words I had better, as H.R.H. once said, get my finger out. Hereinafter the 1972 edition of 'Roper's Ramblings'. With apologies to P. L. Fearnhough.

The past two years activities in the Lakes have been very difficult to evaluate, a large number of very hard climbs have been put up, there is no denying the difficulty. The quality is rather more questionable. Almost without exception the major new lines have required aid on a scale more in line with the Borrowdale routes of the Fifties than with Scafell and Langdale routes of later years. The watchword of the Seventies seems to be, 'If I don't do it someone else will'. This philosophy begs the question. Face climbing standards are rising all the time. Why should our generation batter into subjugation lines which in all probability will be done free in a rock-climbing generation or two? Our successors will have as good a laugh at these tactics as we do at the 'shoulders' used on Piggott's or C.B. The variety of means of cheating has increased too. A peg is an honest villain, it proclaims its use not only by the sound of its insertion but also by the indelible scars that it leaves on the crag. Wire slings with nuts on increase the reach of a climber by six inches. Why stop there? Why not two feet, or even six? With good protection technique modern leaders

need never 'risk a fall'.

'The rope must precede the leader at all times' or 'I never lead a move' used to be comments of scorn used by a group of us when watching a leader 'lacing' his way up 'Phoenix' or 'Cenotaph Corner'. Now this is standard practice. Hammered nuts are also becoming widespread. The only difference between these and a peg is that they leave fewer marks. With the developments outlined above it is not surprising that many improbable lines have been done in the Lakes. I am far from saying that all the climbs mentioned in this article were climbed dishonestly. I am pointing out that a leader going onto them had better be prepared for anything to happen and take a full armoury of 'modern gear' with him, micro nuts on wire slings etc. As if this was not enough, the distinction between aid and protection has also blurred. A leader held in tension for a rest, or even pulled up by his second is now deemed to be 'Free climbing' so long as he himself does not pull himself up or stand on or in the sling.

Bonington's and Estcourt's 'White Wizard' on Scafell epitomises the period. It is a route of extreme difficulty, an unlikely line up an impressive piece of rock. People had been plotting a route on it for years, but it was obvious that aid would be required too much aid in the prevailing climate of the Sixties. Eventually the line fell but only after six points of aid had been used. A week before his ascent of 'White Wizard' Bonington had done a fine new 'Girdle Traverse of the Central Buttress'. This route takes a high line across the crag, roughly level with the top of the main pitch of 'Botterill's Slab', and it is a great improvement on the 'Old Girdle' which takes an inferior line across the ledges below the Flake Crack.

Across Moss Ghyll, on Pisgah Buttress, Rodney Valentine, 'pointed' by F & R. C. C. president John Wilkinson, has done two steep H.V.S. routes: 'Pisgah Ya Bas' and 'The Gripe'. The former is a very good line taking the left, steep side of the buttress by a line of shallow grooves and a large flake overlooking Moss Ghyll. 'The Gripe' is a short route parallel to steep Ghyll Grooves. Neither the rock nor the protection are good.

Over on the East side of Scafell, Tony Barley and Pete Long forced a route between 'Overhanging Wall' and 'The Mino-

taur': it is called 'Doomwatch'. Unlike the neighbouring climbs - its principle pitch requires several points of aid, including two pegs to leave the ground. It would possibly be best to ignore this start and start via 'Overhanging Wall'.

Little else of importance has been done on Scafell itself except by Hugh Banner who keeps soldiering on in the region of 'Narrow Stand'. With Pete Hatton he has put at least one route up in this area; length and quality, like the name, are as yet unavailable.

The satellites, however, have seen a considerable amount of activity. The most important activity has been on Cam Spout Crag, where instructors from the O.B.M.S. have done several routes. Some of them are apparently very hard; but the descriptions are not yet available. (See F & R.C.C. Journal 1971 Ed). On Esk Buttress Rob Matheson did a Direct Finish to 'Frustration', linking the chimney of that climb to the red wall on the 'Girdle Traverse'.

Dow Crag has seen a few surprises. 'Silence', climbed by Read and Lake in 1969, has turned back a few strong parties. It gives strenuous and technical climbing in a very serious and exposed position. Combined with 'Isengard' it makes a magnificent route comparable with 'Sidewalk'. Rob Matheson has also done three new routes here. 'Holocaust' takes a slightly artificial line to the right of 'Nomrod', it is 200ft long and X.S. 'Snibbo' and 'Birdcage' take the grooves on 'D' Buttress close to 'Intermediate Gully'.

As might be expected Langdale has seen much filling in of detail. Perhaps the ultimate expression, for a mountain crag, is a creation of Pete Livesey's, 'Longhair' between 'Laugh Not' and 'Man of Straw'. Only matched by a creation of Ray Evans' between, 'Gordian Knot' and 'Haste Not Direct Start', 'White Ghyll Eliminate'. There have been harder and better routes done in the area though. 'Paladin', a companion route to 'Chimney Variant' and even harder, was done by Rob Matheson and repeated by Valentine. On Pavey Ark the groove between 'Cascade' and 'Astra' was pegged by a Yorkshire team some years ago. The guide book writer, in his stand against artificial aids, refused to acknowledge it though. One wonders if the same fate will befall a Barley/Long creation entitled 'The Sun' which is a series of variations on 'Cascade' finishing up a groove in a direct line above the crux of that route. Austin

does not take kindly to pegging in 'his valley', and he and I had to abandon this route after using one peg. The first ascensionists had used at least two more pegs to beat that pitch into submission. Other major additions to the Pavey area are centred on Stony Butress; 'Ragman's Trumpet' and 'Sally free and easy' are their names and they were done by Valentine/Austin and Livesey respectively. They both lie to the right of the 'Hobbit' (Fullalove) and share its characteristics of loose rock and extreme seriousness combined with the minimum of enjoyment. One other route has been made in the area by the eternal Austin: 'Brackenclock' a series of technological variations on 'Stoat's Crack'.

LAKE DISTRICT NOTES CONTD.

In the Eastern Fells Soper and Allinson continue to unearth the odd gem. The most important route though is the 'Girdle Traverse of Dove Crag' done by Read and Adams. Because of its structure Dove does not lend itself to a girdle. If there must be one then one must accept this at the best attempt at giving Dove a girdle in keeping with the quality of its other climbs. The principal feature of the climb is a long aid section going rightwards from the crux of 'Hangover' to join Chris Woodall's 'North Buttress' route, up which it finishes.

Borrowdale seems to have become McHaffie's kingdom. The Jaws of Borrowdale himself still digs beneath the fallen leaves and verdant pastures. Like Soper and Allinson's efforts in the Eastern Fells, his routes will need traffic to improve them. Two routes on Green Crag, however, are worthwhile, as they stand: 'Ibis' and 'Green Cormorant'.

Gable Crag is one of John Wilkinson's stamping grounds and here he has pointed his young F. & R. C. C. proteges with great effect. Rod Valentine has bagged 'The Jabberwock' and 'Trundle Ridge' and David Miller has done 'The Bandersnatch' and 'Potheen' all of these with their President. Take me to your leader! Colin Read also paid a visit here and added 'The Serpent', to the right of 'Mallory's Right Hand Route' which is a steep X.S. on the very good rock common to all the routes here.

St. Bees Head has, amazingly enough been developed as a climbing area. The crag is sandstone, gives routes from 150ft. to

500 ft. in length and is being hailed as the Lakes' answer to Gogarth. The crag is rapidly being cleaned up, in the strict physical sense, and has a number of worthwhile routes that should be 'on the list of any competent visiting party' as the saying goes. - 'Gypsy' a 450 ft V.S. is good and 'Bedford Jump' has one of the more original features on a British climb in the shape of a jammed lorry. There are some fifty routes on the cliff now. An interim guide has been issued.

Buttermere is the only other area with any notable recent developments. Not surprisingly Green Crag has been girdled by Soper and Allinson. It includes the crux pitch of a route as yet unnamed which takes a line through the overhangs between 'Saraband' and 'Paper Tiger'. The pitch, 'the first X.S. in Buttermere, according to Soper, was lead by Allinson. It is long and unprotected and a fall would result in a monster pendulum.

On Eagle Crag Dave Cook and Greg Tough ascended a line somewhat to the left and below 'The Gurner'. It follows a line of grooves, is called 'Visions of Julie' and is reported as being better and harder than 'Carnival'. Harder maybe, but how a 210 ft route on a loose wall can be better than 500 ft route on sound, clean rock is hard to comprehend.

A secret crag in the area, said to be a gully wall on Haystacks, has yielded two new routes: 'Seraph' and 'Straw Dog' both H.V.S. and nearly three hundred feet long. The first route goes up a corner in two long pitches and the second climbs a steep arete split by an impending groove. (From the lack of author and the glowing terms I presume that these are the note writers' own climbs Ed).

This completes the review of the last two years activity. Lack of time and space has prevented me from mentioning every new climb. Many worthy, if minor routes, have perforce been omitted. My main concern has been to mention those climbs which are likely to have an influence on future developments. In particular I am concerned with the increased use of artificial aids and secondly with mentioning those routes which are worth the attention of the climber whose visits to the Lake District are rare. Within those terms of reference I have omitted little of importance.

PEAK DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS.

P. J. Nunn.

Good climbs continue to be discovered in large numbers in the Peak District, though decreasing numbers of them appear in grades below Very Severe.

On the natural edges worthwhile discoveries have become few, and ones that are made sometimes resort to tactics eschewed before the 1960's. The 60 foot buttress left of the Unconquerables on Stanage sports a new climb of great difficulty, attempted at least once by good climbers more than a decade ago. 'Calvary' contains Stanage's second piton. (X.S. M. Simkins, J. Gosling). Less exceptionable to traditionalists is 'The Flute of Hope', on Higgor Tor, which merely uses one (vintage) sling. (65 ft. X.S. E. Ward Drummond). To the South West of the district the same problems had already emerged with 'The Swan' on the Roches Lower Tier (ACJ 1971. X.S.) On the same crag John Yates' route up the overhang right of Jeffcoat's Chimney uses a piton for protection, but ascends some impressive rock. (Ruby Tuesday XS). By Way of compensation he also discovered 'Death Knell' a relatively short but starkly unprotected route next to 'Rhodren' (40ft XS).

Quarried grit routes have been more numerous. People keep finding more and more mystery holes in the ground which reek with possibilities! A few additional climbs have been discovered in the Ripley Quarries, at Stancliffe near Rowsley, and Burycliffe near Elton, but more significant and numerous routes have appeared at Stanton Moor Quarry, where T. Proctor and C. Jackson did 9 climbs, several of which were over 100 ft. and on Rivelin Quarry, where repeated assaults by Alpha parties have produced about a dozen climbs of VS/HVS and a Girdle Traverse. (C. Rowlands B. Griffiths HVS) Other good climbs have appeared on Millstone Edge, Lawrencefield and Dovestones Quarry and M. Frith and D. McKinnell produced a spate of climbs in their pre-guide efforts at Hollington Quarries, several of which are VS/HVS and above 100 feet, several climbs of lower standard have been unearthed also.

Parts of Kinder lie between the two categories, notably, the rock fall scars which appear more frequently there than else-

where. The wall where Nether Tor Crack once stood gave 'Forgery' to J. Gosling and Coyne late in 1970 (70 ft. HVS). All of these climbs are of quite high quality but they are generally difficult, as Extreme leaders used to milder areas frequently complain.

On limestone new climbs were exclusively VS and over, with the exception of a few climbs in the less developed Dovedale and Manifold areas, where R. Dearman discovered 'Buss' below the grass on the wall left of 'West Wall Climb' at Beeston, but only then as an afterthought to 'White Room' (both over 100 ft. Hard Severe and Very Severe). Other climbs in Manifold were more difficult, including an escape rightwards from 'West Window Groove' and the two once pegged cracks left of that route (T. Proctor led Tower Direct, 120 feet HVS.) It is believed K. Myhill did the other probably at a similar grade.

In Dovedale those terrible old men Nat Allen, Burgess and D. Carnell excavated new rock in disgust at the new popularity of their cliffs, producing twelve climbs, including some good quality lower standard routes. It is not known to what extent their 'Nut Cracker' (Tissington Spires South Gully area) coincides with 'Amoeba'. (K. Jones, C. Boulton) as they lie close together and are of the same standard, being done within weeks of one another. Further up the valley a new traverse on Bailey Buttress was done by T. Bolger.

Near Matlock two new routes of quality at Willersley ('Sumerian and Mr. McHenry' both over 100 feet HVS) are worthy additions, and several people claimed the same first ascent on Tiger Buttress. But most significant were the routes at High Tor J. Clarke did a free climb at the right extremity of the main cliff (Weezy Wonks) (140 ft. HVS) and E. Ward Drummond's much publicized promises to solo the Girdle seems to have resulted instead in the eventual production of a future classic free route, taking the line of the now redundant 'Darius'. ('Darius XS or for more mystical and obscurantist times 'The Burning Icicle' 160 ft.)

To the north some quite good climbs have been found again at Great Rocks Dale Quarry and in the main Chee Valley, 'Boo Boo Pongo' VS 70 ft. Barker and Phillips and 'Orchrist' 120 ft; VS Moving Buttress) and a few have appeared at Ravensdale, on

the neglected wall between the main buttress and the archway, and on Stoney Middleton. R. Dearman did the 'Morgue' (120 ft HVS) and a sister route left of Mortuary Steps and Al Evans led a devious but difficult series of variations on 'Our Father'. 'The Menopause' 85 ft XS. Most notable of all, were the numerous climbs discovered in a second production year at Chee Tor some of which look as if they par with the free Darius in difficulty and quality. Half a dozen were done by various parties, including a possible reduction of aid on 'The Last Laugh' (just left of 'Grinning Chimney') John Yates did 'Necrophila' HVS just left of 'Rape', and, Tom Proctor and Chris Jackson found the bulk of these climbs. - Most difficult appears to be 'Queer Street' a free climbed version of the peg route 'Wailing Wall,' pegged on the day of the birth of one of the climbers children (T. Proctor, C. Jackson 85 ft. XS). There may be a moral somewhere! Other climbers remove the need for a piton on a cleaner, 'Koroblin' and did a new climb to its left ('Nebro' 60 ft. VS. J. Wilkinson and C. Craggs). The other climbs, discovered by Proctor and Jackson are likely to be of high quality though, as usual at Chee, the rake cuts them off.

Overall the quality of new routes is high and the difficulty of them exceptional. It is accompanied by increased numbers of repetitions of climbs like 'Our Father' and the routes on Raven Crag in Dovedale 'Central Wall' and 'Aquarius'. There are not so many free climbable peg routes left. Few new ones have appeared - the exception being the route between 'Laurin' and 'Fortress Wall' by the inveterate and irrepressible Bryan Moore.

In the meantime obvious problems have arisen on routes done using pegs from originally artificial ascents for vital aid. Adjudicator Wall (Dovedale XS) has turned back (in differing ways) two able potential leaders because a piton, in place from an earlier artificial route, had disappeared. This points to a fundamental weakness in the idea that if a piton is placed which can then be reached on subsequent ascents, either by abseil or by using other aid, the climb should be described as using only that sacrificed piton (or sling). This approach can work, but pitons erode and myths (and myth manufacturers) abound. There is a need for a new honesty and humility in declaring both exactly what aid was used (even if the others don't subsequently need it because the Block/sod, has

gone or the jug appeared) and how it was placed. The same applies to protection pegs which often sprout from now free routes without mention despite obvious ancience. Without it descriptions are hypocrises, falsifications to the danger of naive newcomers, and to the ultimate discredit of all who identify with climbing in the area.

DIURNAL DABBLING IN DOVEDALE.

D. Carnell.

At last a Guide to Dovedale! To those of us who have, in the past, had the pleasure of quiet weekends in the Dales of Derbyshire, the words have a deadly ring about them. Already the horde, despite our attempts to price them out, are gathering: the first vanguard of nutter-bedecked 'Guidos' nervously twisting their plastic covered guidebooks have arrived. Their presence over the last few weeks has led to a certain amount of feverish activity amongst the Grass Tugging Devotees, Soil Scramblers, and Machete Weilding Boulder Bouncers who, have without exception, been lurking, albeit not quietly, amongst the rock spires of our section of the 'Lower British Hills'.

'Get dug in' and 'You dig that, Man?' have taken on a wealth of new meaning lately, and the Last Great Problems have, literally been unearthed from their covering mantles.

Secrecy has been intense Nat Allen has been observed Covering Up partly excavated rock to keep it from the prying eyes, and once, to avoid drawing attention to the area being worked, several members of the G.T.D.S.S. and M.W.B.B. were seen catching the rocks as Burgess threw them off.....!

As 'local experts' we have been able to deflect the first initial assault on the area by means of various subterfuge and recommendation 'Have you done so-and-so?' 'There's a great climb on the next buttress down'. 'You should be able to get up such and such'. (All these climbs are usually miles away, or very hard). But, with the advent of about Sixty Quids' worth of Guidebooks milling about the scene, time is running out for the Veterans.

We did contemplate stringing nets across the gullies to prevent the rocks rolling down on the path, and also to prevent

the rich guidebook owners from ascending, but we were out-flanked before we could complete 'the Plan'.

Already our first line of defence is breached. We have surrendered such fortifications as Campanile Pinnacle, the Col de Turd, Silicon, John Peel and Simeon. The pristine whiteness of these areas reverberates with shouts and the clink of alien gear. Foreign hands clutch at unworn holds, Moacs bite at sharp-edged cracks, rucsacs cluster together for safety, and equipment lies in bright-hued heaps. We are forced higher and higher into uncharted country in our search for seclusion.

With aching hearts we turn to the areas that are left us - green, mossy walls, slimy cracks, and shattered rock. Were all those other routes once like THIS before we came? We scramble on seeking, to excavate a niche for ourselves mindlessly, but with an awareness of the others far below, we hack and hew and dig and pray, seeking our own individuality; seeking to carve from the jungle a route worthy to be done by the future generations of 'Guidos' seeking to finish before we are overwhelmed by time and the inexorable pressure from below.

Hanging from a rose bush by one hand, and with a grass sod in the other, spitting out soil dislodged from above and twisting sideways to avoid the limestone block that is about to fall on your knee, you shake your head sadly, and promptly fill your eyes with dirt from your hair. Centipedes scurry across the back of your hand, and a snail drops from nowhere down your neck. 'Could do with a helmet if only to keep off the soil,' you think, and then your spirits soar as the rock (which missed your knee) lands with a crash on to the spare coils of your rope far below, breaks into several lethal chunks, and smashes on to your second's shin-bone! Good job you'd got him tied to that tree - he might have been able to get out of the way otherwise!

You shake the tears (caused by the laughter and the soil) from your eyes, and make another despairing move up. Out comes the rose bush and you're back where you started-holding Sweet-Fanny Adams and gazing myopically at the runner flake.

Down below, your second is wearing an agonised expression and the rose bush. He suggests you leave the route for posterity. Talking of that portion of your anatomy reminds you how much

load you've got on the runner, so you descend, 'dusting off' the ledges and holds.

'It'll be alright when I reach the big dead tree', you mutter cheerfully to your second, and get a fleeting vision of him wearing that. Figures appear on the ridge above, creeping silently along like Indians. The Burgess/Allen team have ripped another way through. Other figures appear far below clutching Guidebooks, and we melt quickly into the undergrowth in case they see us. 'Come back next week' we say to each other 'and finish 'em all off then.' We collect our gear and race down the gully to the river path, wash off the worst of the black soil, and mingle with the day trippers out sight-seeing. Numerous 'Guido's' eye us suspiciously but we brazen it out. 'This area's about played out for us'. says one of our number. 'We'll have to go back to.....' censoredDC

Never mind we've at least made the New Guide book obsolete.....!

THE SOUTH WEST.

F. E. R. Cannings.

During the last two years these are some of the activities in the Devon/Cornwall/Dorset/Somerset area. The most recent, and arguably the most important, development has been on the island of Lundy. Action here began in the summer of 1970 when Peter Biven and Ian Howell climbed 'Ulysees Factor' (350 ft VS) and 'Devil's Lime Kiln' (380 ft. VS). In April 1971 F.E.R.Cannings and K.J.Wilson did 'Magnificat' (XS) and 'Performance' (HVS) on the steep slabs to the north of the Devil's Slide. At the same time Pat Littlejohn and Martin Chambers climbed 'Albacore' (HVS) & 'Juggernaut' (XS) both of which are good climbs on the cliff below the lighthouse, the first routes to be done on this cliff in point of fact. The next visit to the island was by Biven, this time with John Cleare, and they climbed two routes on Constable Rock: 'The Summons' (80 ft. HVS) allegedly delicate and strenuous' and 'Evenin' All' (60 ft. Mild VS). Keith Derbyshire climbed the rib between 'Devil's Spine' and 'Albion'. 'Shark' (200 ft. XS). In the summer the most notable event was, perhaps, the accident to

Frank Cannings as a result of which the R.A.F. were called to take him to hospital on the mainland and were themselves in turn the victims of an accident when the helicopter fell into the sea! After Cannings premature departure Wilson and a nameless character he picked up on the island climbed 'The Seventh Seal' (VS) a very impressive looking line near the Devil's Slide. Biven and John Cleare, separately, put up two new routes on the Castle at about HVS.

Meanwhile back in the old stamping ground, Cornwall, from mid-1970 the Great Zawn at Bosigran saw renewed activity. 'Liberator' put up at this time (Cannings and Littlejohn XS). still has not had a second ascent. Of Biven and Howell's efforts at this time 'Captivator' is reckoned to be especially worth remembering. In summer 1971 Pat Littlejohn, continuing the tradition of reducing bogey on the aid routes at Bosigran, climbed 'Grendel' free - a fine lead. Littlejohn, a local ace if ever there was one, also has to his credit a new route on Pentir Head, in North Cornwall, 'Eroica' (300 ft XS) and is undoubtedly one of the major innovators and myth exploders in the area as well as being the author of the guide to South Devon.

The situation in South Devon. The Old Redoubt, Berry Head, Meadfoot, Daddyhole, are now subjected to climbing restriction because of the danger of bird life always one of the attractions of the South West scene. Climbers now need a permit which has to be obtained from L. Womersley the town clerk for Torbay council the early bird gets the Womersley! They are in fact freely granted and the difficulty is not great.

At the eastern extremity of the area there has been much activity in the Cheddar and Avon Gorges. At Cheddar the main events were in the winter of 1970 when much was done. Dearman Littlejohn and Nunn have had their activities documented in Dearman's own guide to the area which is obtainable locally. Later on Littlejohn did 'Crow' the crux pitch of which he graded 6A technically - as no-one else has done it, a feature of his harder climbs, this is not disputed. Again this is basically line of an old peg route. 'West route' another feature of many of Littlejohn's routes is their aidlessness.

At the Avon Gorge a guide has appeared written by

Brian Wyville, which contains a more seasoned assessment of Ward-Drummond's climbs as well as the other new climbs done there. A.C. Willmott has climbed there recently on a prolonged jag of possibility eliminating which has put many climbs to his name but not much glory. The hardest climbs are now reckoned to be 'Pink Link' climbed free and the longest hard route is undoubtedly 'Equator' the new girdle traverse. 'Earl of Perth' and 'Hell Gates' on the Suspension ridge Buttress are increasingly popular, both are fine routes.

There have been two other innovatory developments. The first of these is the Wye Valley. In February to March 1970 there was a 'complete development' of the Wynd Cliffe in the Lower Wye Valley by Cannings, Littlejohn, Clive Horsfield and Phil Watkin. This has now become a popular crag. Since then Nottingham climbers have visited the upper valley area and by reputation some good stuff has emerged. Parties from Birmingham and Hereford have also earmarked new crags in this area. The second major innovation has been in North Devon, near Barnstaple, where Baggy Point has been developed by members of the North London Mountaineering Club and the inevitable Littlejohn. The crag is large, slabby and near to a brilliant beach and could well become a family holiday rival to Cornwall for the jaded hard man. The routes are slightly overgraded as regards standard but certainly not as regards quality. With names such as 'Sexilegs', 'Kinkyboots' and, 'Chouinard's Yard' there is something there for all tastes apparently.

Last, but by no means least, mention must be made of the activities at Swanage. Though a guide book has been available for two years only Richard Crewe and 'Winkie' Winksworth have taken to the crag with very good effect. They are reputed to have about one hundred new climbs to their credit, with some help from the Derby and Rock and Ice teams, and are well advanced with a guide book of their own. Some of the climbs are short, some are loose, but the overall effect of their activity has been to put the crag well up on the list of major climbing areas rather than leaving it in the ranks of also rans.

PEMBROKE 1970/71.**J. Perrin.**

There has been a great deal of development in South Pembroke since my article in the last C.C. Journal. Lydstep, perhaps, has been the major focus of attention.

Mortlock and myself began the 1970 season here with a traverse from Lydstep Point to Lydstep Pinnacle at sea-level which gave about 1,200 ft. of good VS. climbing on a section of cliff which is little use in the vertical direction. The same day Mortlock pointed me at a crack which he had previously inspected on the East face of the Pinnacle. It appeared to be about V.Diff. but its air of amiability soon vanished to leave me with a grinning crack and an impending wall. A few teeth fell out of its smile, almost hitting Mortlock, and this seemed to appease it. We called it 'Arcady' (160 ft. VS). In June a further weeks exploration in the area brought us some good routes. We concentrated first on Lystep Pinnacle and Prow Bay, just to its west. The North side of the pinnacle gave us a good route, just to the right of the right-hand cave leading through to Prow Bay: 'Titus Oates' (100 ft. HVS) a steep shallow groove which greatly increased by dislike of laybacking. A short corner to its right looked impossible and gave us 'The Arc' (50 ft. V. Diff). a pleasant surprise.

Confidence growing, we crept through the cave into Prow Bay and climbed the first break in the West Wall of the Pinnacle: This gave us 'Atlantic Chimney' (200 ft. VS). which we enjoyed. We then moved to the back wall of Prow Bay and climbed 'Absalom' (150 ft. HVS) which felt hard and serious, but Mortlock saw fit to deposit half the cliff hereabouts into the sea so things may have changed. Moving westwards we found a little zawn with two square corners: we climbed the right hand one first, 'Lazy Sunday Crack' (100 ft. HVS). The climbing to a ledge at 60 ft. is as for the crux of 'Winking Crack'. The hardest section is a bulge below the ledge and not a runner to be seen: it commands respect. The left hand corner was more amenable and gave a fine technical pitch with much protection. 'Friendly Neighbour' (100 ft. HVS).

We climbed three more routes left of here and moved on to Lydstep Head. An attempt at the 'Narrow Buttress' of the head itself produced 'Poisedon' (310 ft. HVS) The first pitch had a stride across a zawn which made me wish for Mortlock's wish bone anatomy. The top pitch traversed up to the edge of the seaward face and, with seventy feet of dragging rope and virtually no protection, it traversed an overhung/undercut slab (5B/C) to finish up a groove on the far side.

On the old favourite White Tower we climbed the main central groove, which was truly 'Anathema' (170 ft. VS), a very loose climb without much character. Mother Carey's Kitchen also saw some important development: the first route climbed was 'Entropy' (150 ft. HVS) on the west wall which was very good, and steep, on rock similar to the South Stack cliffs. Then we traversed to the Great Wall, probably the finest wall in Pembroke, and investigated its central crack line. This rose as a narrowing face crack from the apex of a 60 ft. cave. Chimneying out into the face cramped between green, flaring walls proved very impressive. The crack was beautiful: perfect position, sound rock, too good to be true. Sixty feet higher it ended and I climbed diagonally up a wall to the left on friable pockets to reach a stance. We called the route 'The Strait Gate' (220 ft. XS). a magnificent line and completely free all the way. Later that summer, with Robin Pearce, I climbed the bulging grooves on the left to produce 'Joyous Gard' (200 ft. HVS) a fine line in its own right, but rather overshadowed by its neighbour.

Stackpole and Mowing Word saw no further development in 1970 as we concentrated our attention further west around Flemiston Bay. Mortlock's memory led us to the bow shaped slab, tucked away in a corner, where he and Sean Williams had climbed the classic 'Bow Shaped Corner' in 1967.

We climbed directly up the centre of the concave slab to produce 'Bow Shaped Slab' (150 ft. VS). a perfect and very satisfying slab pitch. To the left a short slab with a smoother area above provided 'Inset Slab' (150 ft. VS). The unexploded bombs washing around in the waves at this point added an air of hazard, emphasised by the indemnity chits that we had to sign for the military. In the same corner of Flemiston Bay was a little red diedre

we called 'Big Pink' (150 ft. VS). Moving west, hidden behind a flying buttress, we found a long diedre. The first pitch was no more than 'Diff', and landed us beneath a thirty foot groove, capped flared and very overhanging. It gave a strenuous 5C pitch so we called it 'Scorpion' (200 ft. HVS).

The only other exploration of 1970 was the climbing of the 'Elygyg Stacks' by a battalion under the command of Generalissimo Cleare and including Cannings, Howell, Biven and myself. They both gave VS routes and proved to have a fine sense of atmosphere.

In 1971 the only area to have received attention has been Mowing Word, on which I did four new routes in August with John Greenland. The first two are short routes on the South Face. 'Pilgrim's Chorus' (70 ft. VS) takes the face crack in the wall, left of 'Square Chimney' and 'Fanatic' (80 ft. HVS) is overhanging groove line above zawn right of 'Logos'. The latter is a very impressive free pitch with a large overhang at half height.

The West face received two major new routes of high quality. 'New Morning' (210 ft. HVS) starts just right of 'Diedre Sud' and climbs a shallow groove with a very technical bulge at 30 ft. and at the top of this traverse right to join 'Razorbill'. The climb then moves right to gain the top of a tottering pinnacle and climbs the thin face crack which is one of Mowing Word's more obvious features. This gives the finest piece of jamming I have ever done, perfectly positioned hanging out high over the sea and moving joyfully on steep rock.

The main pitch of the other climb 'Heart of Darkness' (325 ft. HVS) is its antitheses: the climb is a girdle of the steep central section from 'Cormorant Flake' to 'Diedre Sud'. It gives exciting climbing across an overhanging wall beneath a large roof and above a great cave on shaly corrugations with the rope swinging free across a great corner. We did the climb on a day when the surf surged into the cave with a mighty crash and rained dripped from the roofs. Everything was sombre and forbidding, the rock dank and shadowed, soaked to the skin our elation on reaching the top was beyond bounds. There may be many more such routes to do.

reviews

ENCYCLOPAEDIC DICTIONARY OF MOUNTAINEERING:

P. Crew.

Constable & Co. £1.50.

'ENCYCLOPAEDIA'. 'Book giving information on all branches of knowledge on one subject'. O.E.D.

'DICTIONARY'. 'Book dealing with the words of a language or of some special subject'. O.E.D.

'TAUTOLOGY'. 'Saying of the same thing twice over in different words'. O.E.D.

'INSIGNIFICANT'. 'Unimportant, trifling, contemptible, meaningless'. O.E.D.

Bad luck Mr. Crew, bad luck Constable. This book is not well produced nor is its journey really necessary. It has some good photographs, some poor line drawings and not nearly enough descriptions. It may well be time that Collomb's similar work was updated but this book does not do it. When you compare this book to the Rebuffat series of books, or to the Italian classics on 'Mountains of the World' or to Blackshaw's Penguin volume its inadequacies are immediately apparent.

I am sorry, for Mr. Crew is, without doubt, excellently qualified to write a book such as this might have been but is not. Messrs. Constable have, in other works on climbing, shown themselves to be adept at producing the type of book that climbers want; but this one is redundant. There are no mistakes, but many omissions.

By all means buy it, it is not without interest; but it is not a monumental work of reference that is going to stand the test of time.

ROCK CLIMBING IN WALES. Ron James.

Constable & Co. £1.50.

This is an excellent work. Useful for those to whom North Wales is not a second home. It describes not only the climbing to be had but also the location of the major auxiliary services in each area. (Camp-sites, police, rescue, doctors, shops and ale-houses etc.).

The routes are described more or less in the way they are in the Climbers' Club series of guides. There is, however, the occasional useful addition of a point that is not mentioned in the book. Examples are the method of conquering 'Ivy Sepulchre' without tears and the technique for ascending the 'Direct Route' on Glyder Fach when it cuts up ugly.

There are some two hundred routes in this selection: it would of course be possible to niggle over the choice, but as most of them feature in my own personal 'Top Two Hundred' I don't see much point in carping. For my money there is only one drawback, and that is the publisher's fault not James'. The book is 9 inches by 4 inches in size: too big for a climber's pocket and too small to be a fat volume. Perhaps the others in what is obviously going to be a series will be put out in a more convenient shape.

Perhaps I ought to mention the photographs, of which there are many, some used for beauty but most for instruction. They have been well chosen, if poorly reproduced, and add a great deal to the book.

Another reviewer has said that he would like to own this book, but cannot think why. I know why you should own it, its a good book and a useful one.

SCOTTISH CLIMBS. Hamish MacInnes.

Constable & Co. 2 Vols. £1.75. each.

This is a companion work to Ron James' volume on Wales. In view of the centre of activities of this club it is likely that this is the more important publication. The James' volume was presented by Constable in a shape that made it seem as if it had come through a mangle. These volumes are almost the same size as the

average climbing guide book: slightly, but not much, larger with a waterproof cover lurking under the dust jacket. Well done Constable for responding to a climber's needs.

There is little to criticise in MacInnes' choice of routes. perhaps there is more to comment on in the choice exercised in the allocation of the by now familiar 'star' system of measuring the quality of routes. On the familiar Etive slabs, is 'Swastika' a worse route than 'The Pause' and 'The Long Walk' is surely worth a star of some sort? The big thing about these books is that alert the English climber to some lesser crags and help to define his choice of routes for the few fine days that the Scots summer affords.

Only one major thing is wrong. We all know that Scotsmen are intensely proud, rightly so, of their climbs and that they have some curious national customs getting drunk on small drinks not pints, the wearing of the Haggis and the eating of the Pibroch etc. but, why the perverse grades issued in this book? All the rock climbs are graded on the continental numerical system and all the snow and ice routes described by the normal British adjectival method. Come off it MacInnes: this is just being different for the sake of being awkward. A young man could come to harm if he is not careful with this grading system: perhaps its revenge for Culloden and all that? Whatever it is, it mars an otherwise excellent work.

SHORT NOTICES.

A CLIMBER IN LAKELAND. Frank Monkhouse and Joe Williams. David and Charles. £2.85.

One of the authors is a Professor of Geography. The geographical chapters are fair. As for the rest the editor quotes his reviewer:

'How to find a kind word? One dives deep and comes up clutching a straw. If you suffer from insomnia keep it at your bedside, open it at random and ere a page is read you will be pushing a long string of Z's from the Land of Nod'.

A workmanlike book in old-fashioned style.

TEACH YOURSELF MOUNTAIN CLIMBING: Godfrey Francis. English Universities Press....£0.45.(Still marked as 8/6d).

Amazingly enough this collector's item appears to be still in print. Rush now and get your copy before they all disappear. This is an unrepeatable chance to pick up on your mountaineering history.

FINDING WILD FLOWERS: R. S. R. Fitter.

Collins & Co. £2.00.

One of the volumes in the famous 'Collins pocket guide' series which also includes British Birds, Nests and Eggs, the Sea Shore, Mushrooms and Toadstools, Archaeology, Birds of Europe and the Stars and Planets. These volumes are the cheapest and most authoritative works of reference available in their fields and are to be thoroughly recommended to anyone who takes more than a passing interest in the world about him. It might even help in the climbing on Anglesey to know a little more about the habits of the residents - and I don't mean the Welsh. It would certainly be a good thing if the club as a group and climbers as a whole became more preservation conscious. This book and its companion volumes are a great start.

MOUNTAINEERING: Alan Blackshaw.

Penguin Books. £1.25.

As an index of inflation the price of this volume is interesting it cost 18/6 when it first appeared in 1963. The third edition is some eleven pages longer than its predecessors: not enough we could do with much more from the author. Not that he misses anything, its just a pleasure to read and browse through; I just wish there were more. Anyway, the book is now up to date and it constitutes the basic manual of climbing as we practise it in this country. Excellent value perhaps a hard back edition with better quality plates would be a possibility? Such a book would certainly be worth keeping.

CLIMBING AND WALKING IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND:

Edward C. Pyatt.

David and Charles £2.10.

This is matching volume to the author's work on the West Country. Naturally enough there is little that the author can say about the area that is not already known. The historical comments including a photograph of Tom Patey on Beachy Head, are certainly worth reading. This is in fact the book's strong suit: that the author contrives to make the history of the area add to the interest. It is, I suppose, intended as a guide book but it makes excellent fireside reading for the armchair mountaineer. I for one will approach Harrison's Rocks with more interest for knowing a little of the past of the place.

Another thoroughly researched and well written volume from the indefatigably informative Mr. Pyatt.

GUIDE BOOKS.**FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB.**

BUTTERMERE by N. J. Soper and N. Allinson £0.87:

Fills a twenty one year gap in production to an area which is well known but badly documented until now. Once again the excellence of Heaton-Cooper's line drawings add to the clarity.

PILLAR GROUP. By A. C. Cram. £0.87.

The previous guide to the area was in 1952 so this book was as long overdue as our review of it. By now this book itself has been rendered obsolescent by yet further developments. The younger members of the F & R. C. C. are obviously as capable as their elders of producing a good guide.

BORROWDALE by P. J. Nunn and O. Woolcock. £1.05.

Once again this guide fills a fifteen year gap. Probably more activity has occurred in this valley than anywhere else in the Lakes. There was a 'pirate guide' published in 1966 but this is in the stern F & R.C.C. tradition of the writer doing all the routes. A thorough and reliable guide.

LUNDY: R. D. Moulton. £0.30.

Royal Navy Mountaineering Club.

A fifty two page interim production listing over fifty climbs on the island nearly all of them in the lower categories. The recent exploration of the Island (See New Climbs) has concentrated on producing climbs in the higher grades. It has rendered this doubtless excellent product out of date. Plans are afoot for the club to incorporate Lundy into the South West area.

FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB.

EASTERN CRAGS. By H. Drasdo and N. J. Soper £1.05.

This was the most modern of the old series of Lake District guides and has now been brought up to date with the inclusion of, many of the modern climbs. (See Soper's comments on developments in the Lakes). A worthy product.

CLIMBERS CLUB.

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND. By E. C. Pyatt.

A replacement for the old guide book and a counter measure to the somewhat chauvinistic production published by one of the local acs recently. The old grades are retained - i.e. numerically up to 6A without incorporating too many of the toproped nasties and without grading the routes purely for the steely fingered habitues. I doubt though that even the plastic cover will guard this book against the ravages of the dirt and masses at Harrison's!

CWM SILYN AND CWELLYN By M. Yates and J. Perrin.

Not just Cwm Silyn, which has long required a guide, but also Castell Cidwm and Llechog. The former was the scene of much development and the latter apparently is. Over two hundred climbs of all grades are listed. Both the first and the last routes listed are on the Craig-y-Bere area: the first is by Haskett-Smith and is now impossible owing to gunfire, the last is an unknown quantity. The guide book writers are very keen on the outlying crags in their area. Their enthusiasm is not generally shared. Perhaps this guide will prove them right.

CORNWALL VOLUME 1. NORTHCOAST OF WEST PENWITH.
By P. H. Biven and M. B. McDermott.

Another gem of the guide book writers art that was almost as long in the appearance as its review. An unaccountably thick volume: only 182 pages but it seems much more. There has been criticism that too many of the climbs there are ascribed to the guide book authors because they couldn't or wouldn't find out otherwise. We will dismiss these remarks as irrelevant, all the climbs are here and who else could have produced the book than Mr. Devon and Mr. Cornwall? The coloured photographs on the covers (or should it be in the covers?) are excellent.

ALPINE CLUB GUIDE BOOKS.

DOLOMITES EAST AND DOLOMITES WEST. By J. Brailsford.
£2.10. each.

A long over-due extension of the rather inadequate selection previously available. There is something about the Dolomites that makes them hard work for the guide book writer. It is probably a function of the large number of peaks, the high level of activity and the featurelessness of the crags: even the Italians have great difficulty. Mr. Brailsford is to be congratulated on cutting away the mass of conflicting evidence and providing us with a work in English to this area which is as good as that in any other language. Nearly eighty mountains are described and over three hundred ascents and descents: a considerable increase over the earlier guide. The accuracy of the work, in view of the

experiences with the old work, has been carefully checked. Hand-somely produced in imitation of tooled leather these books are pretty as well as good-fine qualities.

JOURNALS RECEIVED.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL - 1968. The remarkable winter ascent of Mt. McKinley is recorded in this issue by Greg Blomberg. The best, and most literate, article is by John R. Hudson on the first ascent of the North Face of Mt. Geikie. The route was done with 'Royal' and the account is written chiefly as a series of acknowledged quotations to previous mountaineering authors. There is the compulsory gem from 'Royal' himself:-

'She's got everything she needs:
She's an artist she don't look back'. (Bob Dylan).

'Chouinard don't look back. He's an artist of life.
He delights even in the stray bits of wickedness which flit
through his soul'.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL 1970. As well as the article re-printed elsewhere in this issue there is the by now celebrated article by Royal Robbins on 'Tis-sa-sack' in which he states that he did not get on with his companions on this six day route-rare honesty. There is also the account of the tragic Dhaulagiri expedition which was wiped out by an avalanche. The survivors write graphically and movingly.

ALPINE CLUB JOURNAL 1969 Technical articles, such as Michael Ward's 'Man and the Mountain Environment' are always worth reading - this one deals with the physiology of acclimatisation. (Cf. Peter Steele in this issue). On the 'reason why' there is Fred Hoyle, scientist and science-fictionist, who is short, sweet and to the point. Then there is Harold Drasdo: he writes on the subject of 'Margins of Safety' and whilst interesting comes up with nothing new and much that is confusing. James T. Lester's article on the psychological type of climbers and the conflicts on the American Everest expedition is one long model of interest, and clarity. A rare thing from a 'head shrinker', they usually

attempt to baffle. Recommended reading.

ALPINE CLUB JOURNAL 1971. Charles Evans' valedictory address as President is worth the read. Michael Ward adds to his useful series of articles with one on frostbite. The rest is good, with only the amazing international glory list at the back being exceptional. The Alpine Journal sets itself, and maintains for itself, a very high standard in this department.

ALPINE CLIMBING CLUB BULLENTIN. 1971. the A.C.G.brings out a publication that reflects its composition: worthy endeavour, great details of the recesses of the Alps, much derring-do but little sense that they are in any way abnormal or over-enthusiastic. Nevertheless, the Bulletin is always full of indispensable information for the Alpine climber who or however he may be. It is to be hoped that the Alpine Club and the M.E.F. continue their support for this essential service publication.

Other foreign Alpine Club Journals received include the New Zealand, Canadian, Appalachian, South African and Swiss 'Die Alpen'. All contain a wealth of material much too great to be detailed here, the Editor will willingly supply these to any member who wishes to read them.

FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB. 1970.

The articles in this issue are interesting without being exciting. Only the anonymous article on a mountain accident rises above the usual. The moral drawn is worth repeating.

'Frequently now I find myself insisting on improving the leader's belay so that I too regard it as inadequate'.

THE only other matter worthy of comment is the waspish standard of the book reviews which have inspired your editor: on the grounds that anything the Fell and Rock can do badly the Climbers' Club can do worse.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL. 1970.

Always unprepossessing in appearance the S.M.C. Journal is always full of 'the good stuff'. There is a cooperation between all the climbers in Scotland and the S.M.C. which, if it is as real as it appears from the massive amount of information that is recounted in this Journal, is to be envied by us South of the border. No new development appears to escape the club's eagle eye: unlike our own bleary gaze. An article and a song from Patey are almost the literary highspots of the magazine, and are his last works, but the prize is, fortunately for honour, carried off by a Sassenach Alan Austin. A splendidly ironic and understated article called 'A guided tour' summing up the English versus the Scots thing.

PINNACLE CLUB JOURNAL JUBILEE JOURNAL(1921-1971).

'Women's Lib'. whatever that might be, has invaded the Pinnacle Club. The pick of the bunch is the literate Miss Fuller on male climbing partners - very perceptive. There are two articles giving an insight into female climbing history; Dorothy Pilley Richards is particularly interesting - even the female climbers fear the gritstone trained tiger, or should it be lioness? Lastly it always amuses me to see the other side of a coin and so the list of births and marriages takes on a new slant. Perhaps the time will come when the Pinnacle Club is liberated enough to include divorces among this list?

technical notes

THE ROPE CONTROVERSY - Dave Pearce.

In 1970 the BMC were faced with a disturbing laboratory report. This showed a considerable loss in tensile strength in a few climbing ropes as compared with new. What made it disturbing was not the fact of deterioration but its extent, for the ropes in question would be regarded by most climbers as perfectly serviceable. Did this report therefore, bear the startling revelation that many climbers throughout the country were placing a mistaken trust in ropes that would in fact fail them in their hour of need? A serious issue that clearly demanded careful and immediate study.

What so far has been the outcome of the BMC deliberations? Two circulars have been issued so far. The first, a recommendation that ropes should be thrown away after 50 days use or two years, whichever is the shorter. Now 50 days use is something between six months to a years climbing for a keen climber. So what happened? Was there a mad rush to Brigham's and Brown's - stopping only to put our old ropes in the dustbin? Well, not exactly: A new topic of conversation in the pubs, a few sacrificed a couple of feet of their rope to be tested, and all kept a wary eye open for the next BMC pronouncement, all the while adding more days use to a three, four or five year old rope.

When it did appear the second circular saw the BMC making somewhat of a retreat. We are now recommended to wait not 50 days, but 100. And climbers' attitudes now? 'Well I never did believe it anyway'. Certainly the third circular on the subject will be awaited far less eagerly than the second. Most climbers, I would suggest, now regard the whole issue as a storm in a teacup and their practice with regard to their ropes will not have been moderated one iota by the BMC procrastinations. Let's face it, the BMC have produced no positive evidence to date to show that our current practices are unsatisfactory.

So what went wrong? The first circular seemed to put our lives in jeopardy but the second has put the credibility of the BMC in equal danger. There are several important issues at stake here and it is well worth looking at what actually happened in

order to learn what lessons we can from the whole episode.

Let's look first of all at the laboratory evidence on which the whole thing is based. The tests were measurements of tensile strength of a small number of ropes: they were found to show a loss in tensile strength of up to 50% as compared with new. Now tensile strength is not really the factor of relevance in a climbing rope. The relevant factor to a climber is the rope's capacity to absorb energy, i.e. its capacity to stop a falling weight. Unfortunately there is not direct relationship between the two properties. A climbing rope starts its life with a tensile strength in the region of 4,000 lbs. a loss of 50% means that the rope can still support a stationary weight of nearly a ton. But can it absorb 13 stone when it falls 30, 40, or 50 feet? Tensile strength has become the yardstick for climbing ropes purely because it is easily measured in laboratories and not because it is at all meaningful to the climber.

What other information was available at the time? The US Army had made several tests on hawser-laid nylon ropes that had been used for periods ranging from a few days to fifteen years. The most noticeable feature of their results was their wide scatter.

Here then was the BMC's problem. Laboratory results that were disturbing; that were based on but a few samples yet were known to be subject to wide scatter; which might or might not be related to the ropes capacity to hold a fall. Worse, still nothing was known of the causes. Should they then initiate a research program designed to collect more statistics and unearth the causes in order to make an authoritative statement as soon as possible? But such a programme would be expensive and would take a long time, especially as it would in any case rely on voluntary labour. The National Engineering Laboratory were in the process of constructing a dynamic testing rig that would obviously produce results of relevance. But what if someone should be killed in the meantime, leaving the BMC working silently in their laboratories?

Clearly, some sort of immediate warning was necessary, hence BMC Circular 604. In issuing a warning on such evidence they were acting with great responsibility. Unfortunately the wording of the circular based on the available evidence, such as it was, inevitably led to the situation we have now.

The circular was described by one committee member as 'carefully drafted to avoid saying too much'. But where it did commit itself to saying anything, it said too much. Where it should have explained, it did not. The net result was merely to create confusion. The evidence, as we have seen, was inconclusive to say the least. It could not therefore support a firm recommendation as to after exactly how many days a rope should be discarded especially where this figure is at variance with the large body of experience built up over the years by climbers on the crags. Where it's for real.

Inevitably the reader asked why? Why should I throw away my rope? What evidence? And here the BMC did not go far enough. The basic problem was that of poor diplomacy. Insufficient room was left to manoeuvre leading inevitably to the back-tracking of the second circular. All that was required was a description of the evidence they had so far collected, what it was based on and what they intended to do next.

In going beyond this they erred on the side of caution, an insidious danger in dealing with climbing equipment. Let us remind ourselves that climbing is a dangerous sport, that even perfect equipment and perfect advice can never make perfectly safe climbing and this is part and parcel of why we do it.

More disturbing is the degree of faith they displayed in laboratory testing even where the tests at best bore a tenuous relation to the situation they were supposed to represent. I am not knocking the value of scientific method applied to climbing problems per se, but it must be relevant and one must not lose sight of the fact that climbing realities are complex, not idealised models. It is the failure to remember this which leads to standards for climbing helmets that are so heavy as to give you a headache, and karabiners that are so bulky as to be unmanageable.

The BMC has a responsibility to warn us of potential dangers in the equipment we use. But it has other responsibilities which it should not lose sight of. The responsibility not to fritter away its credibility. A responsibility to communicate, and above all a responsibility to relate to the realities of climbing, not to those of laboratory testing.

**FACILIS DESCENSUS AVERNI
SED REVOCARE GRADUM SUPERASQUE AD AURAS
HOC OPUS, HIC LABOR EST.**

*The road to Hell is easy,
But to climb back up and escape to fresh air,
Is hard - blacksmith's work.*

REV. F. L. JENKINS.

It should not have happened, of course. For our first expedition of the season we had traversed the SW rock ridge of L' Eveque, after navigating round Petit Mont Collon in thick mist to the Col, and had descended by the 'voie normale' - the NE Ridge. We had practically finished the descent on the Glacier du Mont Collon, and I was still third man, when in spite of a tight rope, it happened, and I found myself suspended twenty feet down: unhurt in good order, holding my axe, but hanging. The rope of suspension was clipped by Karabiner to my waist line, and the spare coils were over my shoulder. The thigh loop was clipped to my waist line, but had no direct connection with the rope of suspension, and was therefore, too slack to reduce pressure on my chest. The prussik loops of the morning glacier trek had been removed for the rock climbing and not replaced for the descent. A sling attached by Karabiner to my waist line was used as a foot loop, and I swung comfortably. All this I timed as three minutes after falling in, and was surprised that, also in that time, I had admired and wondered at the eerie green scenery. The bottom or narrowing of the crevasse was another twenty feet down. There was a sort of ledge on which I could put my elbow, and I tried to cut steps in the wall, but kept swinging out - I was not wearing crampons. I pushed the spare coils over my head for greater comfort, and rational conversation began with the two on the surface. Eventually the spare end of the rope, lengthened by a sling, managed to reach me and I clipped on. With combined

efforts, pulling on alternate ropes, they brought me within four feet of the surface. I raised my axe, and George took hold of it but then I preferred to retain it. Both ropes by this time were firmly embedded in the lip of the crevasse, which was undercut. An hour had gone by, and I remember deciding quite clearly at the time that a third rope to me and more heaving, or the etriers, which were in the valley, and ice-screws, in my sack were the only means of surmounting the bulge.

Then two soldiers of the Swiss Army arrived from the Vignettes Hut. With some extra pulling power they raised me slightly. I unclipped the second rope, extended by sling and Karabiner, as it was jamming more than the original rope in the lip. They each seized one of my hands and pulled my face into the snow-ice, almost suffocating me, and quite preventing me from making them use the wrist grip, which, I think, would have pulled me out. They were forced to give up, warned and let go. Something went wrong with the anchor, as I was now on the original rope only, and down I went to twenty-five feet or so, lower than I had been before, and too deep for any rope we had spare on the surface.

There ensued a long wait. They wirelessly for reinforcements from the hut. I knelt in my loop with spread knees this time as it seemed impossible to get a foot into the twisted loop. I asked repeatedly to be lowered, so that I could put on crampons and clothes. I was in shirt sleeves but wisely they would not and could not do this. After what seemed an interminable time, six more men arrived and after knocking a lot more snow down onto my head - my helmet was in the rucksack on my back - down came a man on a rope with a flask of tea. I got into a lowered rope, and we swung gently drinking the tea. We were then pulled up his rope on a Karabiner pulley suspended directly over the crevasse, while mine ran over a rucksack placed at the lip. At the exit bulge overhang we had a struggle. He fixed an ice-screw with Karabiner for handhold. I climbed up my rope, which had jammed on the lip, stood on his shoulders, and then transferred to two hand loops, and was pulled out - four hours after initial entry. Two days rest after walking to Arolla down next day were indicated but the weather extended this to four days, at which I

was secretly glad.

It would seem that the accepted methods of rescue work as far as up to the exit. The problem is to get over the lip, even if there is no appreciable undercut. Ropes jam even over rucksacks placed as near as possible to the crevasse. On practice rescue drill one has always used a crevasse one can get into, i.e. with no overhang, I am convinced that etriers are normally essential for the exit, either lowered from above, or used on ice-screws by the ascending climber.

TECHNICAL NOTE ON N.W. RIDGE OF MONTE VISO.

H. G. Nicol.

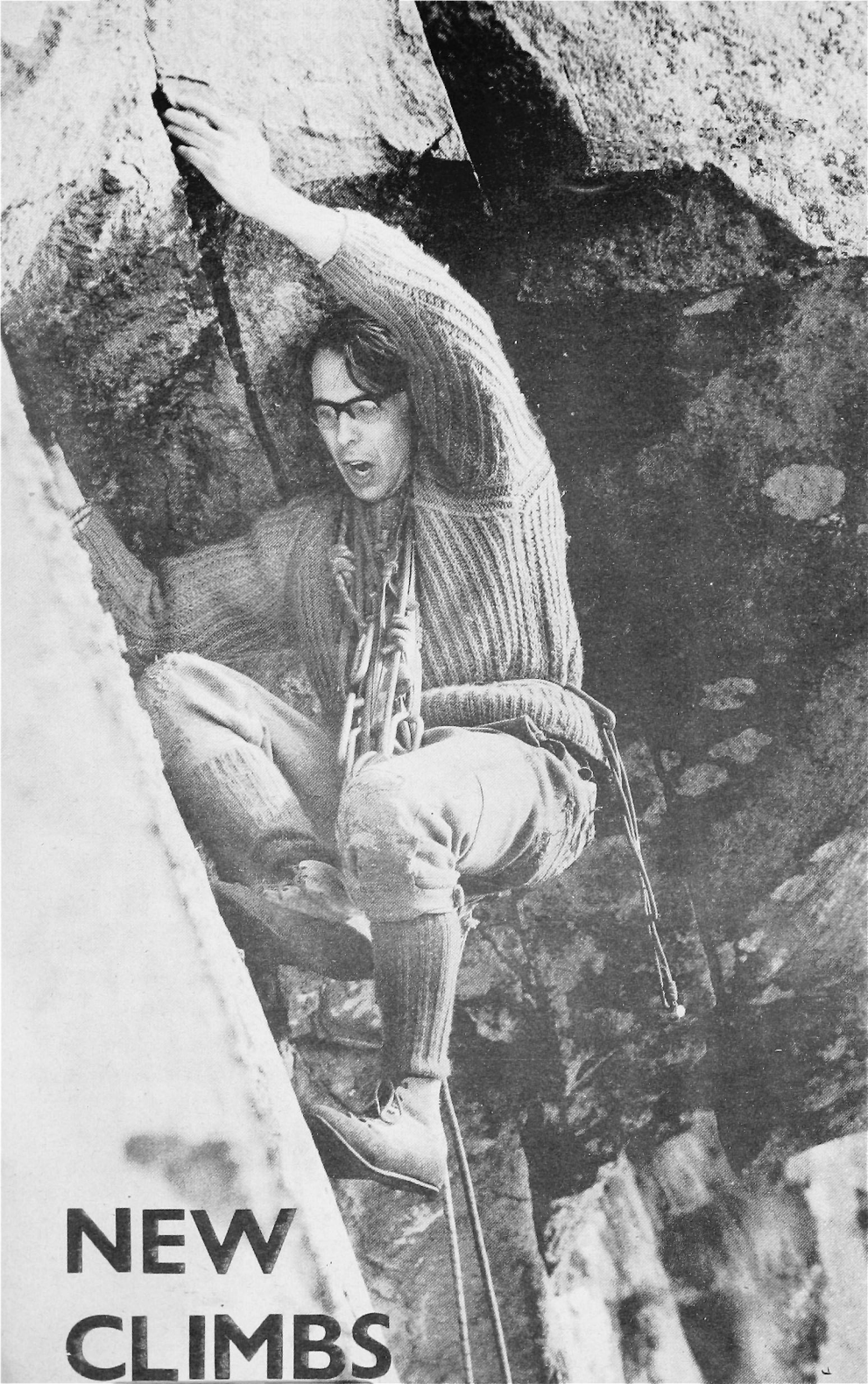
Some details about the traverse of Monte Viso which Robin Prager and I did on the 29th July 1971. The mountain is difficult of access unless you are Italian i.e. most people will approach from the French side up the long Val de Guil. This valley starts at Guillestre near Embrun and points south east straight at Monte Viso. The area near Embrun is a splendid one for family holidays as there are many splendid lakes to swim in e.g. Lac de Serre Poncon, a reservoir 20 miles long at Embrun. The drive up the Val de Guil takes about two hours and you leave the car at the car park which is known as the Belvedere de Monte Viso. Before getting as far as this you should have bought the 1/50,000 French map of Monte Viso called 'Aiguilles' and the Italian guide book called 'Guida del Monviso'. The West-col guide to the area is unsatisfactory. The map can be bought at Stamford's Ltd. Longacre, London and the Italian guide book from Gastons. (The Italian guide contains a large number of excellent detailed maps, so perhaps the 1/50,000 sheet is not essential).

Back to the O.K. Corrale. From the car park an easy and pleasant walk (3 hours) takes you to the Refuge Gagliardone, via the col Vallente. The hut is in Italy but takes French money - at a price. The guardian, Mr. S. Pons, is very helpful. He told us we were the first English party to visit his hut. (Don't they all Ed). The climb we did was 'The North West Ridge of Monte Viso' and is on page 80 of the Italian guide book. It was first ascended in 1955. There are no guide book grades in the book, but we would put it about D. Superior.

From the refuge an easy walk up screes and snow leads to the Colle Sud Delle Cadreghe 3130m (1 hour 30) From the Col the route of the N.W. Ridge can be easily seen. A further hours walk takes one to the foot of the obvious buttress of red rock where the major difficulties begin. (I was hoping that the walking would continue.) The buttress is some 400 ft. high: it is

very steep but the rock is excellent. You start up an obvious crack, 100 ft. high on the left hand side of the buttress. The crack is six inches to a foot wide, grade 4. From the top of the crack you follow more or less the crest of the buttress, except for one point where a steep section is avoided by a crack on the right, west, side of the buttress. Seven to eight pitches for the buttress, consistent 4 to 4 superior. You arrive at a snowy col, which is in fact a branch of the Coolidge glacier. From this col one further steep, awkward pitch leads to the end of the rock difficulties. (Grade 4).

From this point the ridge becomes gentler in angle and consists of a snow/ice slope which it is easy to crampon up. The snow slopes merges imperceptibly with the snow covered summit rocks. Departure from the hut 3.00.a.m. summit 10.45.a.m., including 1½ hours of halts. The description in the Italian guide book of the steep, rocky section is almost incomprehensible but does give a general topographical idea of the route. The descent is down the Normal, South Face route. It would help to have done this before. We did not have this advantage and it was foggy. The descent, a horror story of deviation over scree and rock, accordingly took us six hours. A little excessive. It leads to the Quintino Sella hut which is very well equipped like a hotel. From the Quintino Sella a 7½ hour walk of great beauty leads back to the car park; there are magnificent views of the N. Face of Monte Viso.



**NEW
CLIMBS**

Holliwell will even looked gripped if you ask him niceley
TENSOR TREMADOC. (photo Ken Wilson)

Wales

CARNEDDAU.

The Pinnacle crag of Cwm Cwyion.

THE CHICKEN RUN. 240 ft. Very Severe.

Takes a direct line up the steep central buttress.

Start. About 10 ft. left of Central Face (called Little Woodhead in James's book).

- 1) 80 ft. Climb a short wall to a grass ledge which leads to the foot of Coronation Groove. Up this to a large ledge.
- 2) 70 ft. Reach the slab above from the right or the left and climb it with the aid of a peg to the overhang. Pull round the overhang and enter the steep groove above. Climb this for about 15 ft. to where it steepens. A swing around the arete on the left leads to a stance.
- 3) 50 ft. Climb the crack above which leads to the chimney of Central Face. Up this until a traverse right can be made round the rib to a stance at the foot of a steep groove.
- 4) 40 ft. Lay-back up the groove until better holds appear. Continue more easily to the top.

1st ascent D.G. Peers. M. Holloway. 10th October 1970.

Clogwyn Cyrau

CURRY WALL 100 ft. V.S.

Climbs directly up through the overhangs to the right of Bomer's Wall. Starts 20 ft. right of Long Climb at the foot of the obvious groove.

- 1) 70 ft. Climb the groove, then across Long Climb trending left along the weakness to the bottom of a short wall. Climb this to a good ledge.
- 2) 30 ft. From the belay traverse out left to the arete and then easily to the top, or directly up from the belay - harder.

*1st ascent: 13th December 1969. D. G. Peers and J. E. Brittain.
(alternate leads).*

Clogwyn Yr Eryr - Crafnant Valley.**SNOWDROP 160 ft. Extremely Severe**

The route takes a direct line up the middle of a great leaning Wall in the centre of the crag. Start as for Astoroth.

- 1) 60 ft. (5b) Climb Astoroth over two overhangs to the foot of the final groove. Move left onto the arete and belay in slings.
- 2) 100 ft. (5c) Climb the smooth groove on the left with difficulty (peg runner), until it is possible to swing right onto a slab. Climb straight up this until it begins to overhang gently. Use a nut and peg for aid and then free climb strenuously to the top.

1st ascent: P. D. Boardman, M. A. Reeves, A. Oliver 12th April 1970.

Llech Ddu.**THE BLADE 200 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

A steep route with varied climbing in a good position.

Start as for Commuter's Crack, and take the steep arete between this and Y Chimney.

- 1) 70 ft. Steeply up the wall to the foot of Commuter's Crack. Pull around the arete on the right and up to a grass gangway.
- 2) 70 ft. From the bottom of the gangway, traverse left onto the crest, then straight up in a fine position, moving over a loose pinnacle at the top into a niche on the right. Peg belay.
- 3) 60 ft. Bridge up the steep chimney in the overhanging arete above. Easier climbing to the top.

*1st ascent: R. Llewellyn. R. Newcombe
(alternate leads). 20th June 1970.*

Carreg Mianog.**PECTORAL WALL. 100 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

- 1) 30 ft. Start possibly as for Temper a few feet left of Biceps wall. Climb the steep wall between the two cracks, moving right after 20 ft. Up to join the terrace.
Move along the terrace for above 30 ft. until directly below a large perched block on the steep wall above.
- 2) 70 ft. Climb the shallow groove and move up right to the overhang. Climb this using a tablet of rock in the overhang and

trend right to climb a crack in the right of the block to the top.

1st Ascent: 14th April 1971. J. Whittle. D. G. Peers.

Tryfan East Face.

CENTRAL BUTTRESS

GORBALLS. Hard Severe 175 ft.

A rather wandering route on the upper slabs of South Gully opposite Munich Climb.

Start 30 ft. of Yellow Slab on Pinnacle Rib.

- 1) 35 ft. Climb the wall to a rock cannon (as for Central By-Pass).
- 2) 70 ft. Walk along a grassy terrace for 30 ft. to a small groove with a greasy crack, climb this, then trend left across mossy slabs to a pinnacle.
- 3) 70 ft. A hard direct route up the groove appears possible. This can be turned on the right. Traverse up and right on shelves to a corner. An unstable grassy ledge prevents escape to the right, so move up left with a long reach and regain the groove. Cross it to gain a rib on the left. Climb over an overlap, traverse left and bridge up delicately over a loose block and climb through the final overhang (crux).

THE WALL *forms a convenient and exhilarating finish at similar standard.*

1st ascent: April 18th 1970. K. Wilson and D. Griffiths.

Clogwyn Du Ymhen Glyder

SERENDIPITY 300 ft. Hard Very Severe.

A superb route up the main face. Start about a third of the way up Clogwyn Du Gully, at a leftwards standing groove.

- 1) 100 ft. Climb the groove leading into the lower part of the the face to a small ledge. Climb the steep wall above and pull over the bulge (peg for aid), then move left and go up on good holds to a resting place. Move right for a few feet, then back left to the foot of a crack. Up this to a grass ledge and peg belays.
- 2) 100 ft. From the belay traverse right to the foot of a shallow groove. Climb this on good hold to where it steepens

below two short grooves. Climb onto a large block in the right hand groove and pull onto the slab above. Traverse left to a grass ledge and peg belays.

3) 100 ft. A superb pitch with tremendous exposure. Traverse back right to the foot of the slab and pull round the corner onto the wall. Climb this on large holds to the top.

1st ascent: D. G. Peers. M. D. Swaine. 30th May 1970.

Idwal Buttress

HOMICIDE WALL 240 ft. Extremely Severe.

Follows an obvious line of pockets up the steep face above Introductory Gully finishing on the slabs above.

Start:- About 20 ft. left of Pocket Wall at the toe of the buttress.

1) 80 ft. Climb straight up the line of large pockets until they end at about 30 ft. Make an awkward move diagonally left to a ledge. Follow the obvious traverse up and left to a good stance and belay overhanging Introductory Gully.

2) 60 ft. (crux) The wall above is very steep. Move left for a few feet along a quartz hand until it is possible to reach a huge pocket jug. Pull up on this, step right then up to below a bulge. Using a sling for aid (in place) pull left round the bulge and climb strenuously up. (peg in place for resting). Straight up, getting easier, into the groove above moving out right to the top.

3) 100 ft. The pleasant slabs above.

1st ascent: 2nd May 1971. D. G. Peers. J. Whittle.

Pitch 1 D. G. Peers. J. Witcombe August 1970.

Suicide Wall Area

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 160 ft. Extremely Severe.

Start as for Suicide Wall Route 2.

1) 20 ft. (5a) As for Route 2 to a peg belay.

2) 80 ft. (6a) Move up onto a steep triangular shaped slab and climb this with difficulty to below a shallow groove. At this point it is possible to fix two poor slings and two poor pegs. Using the top peg for aid, climb into the groove and up to a thread on the right wall. Continue up steeply on good holds to the ledge. Peg



LOOSE GIRTH at Lands End. (Death Rattle Gulch on the left. Mark Springett climbing) (photo Ken Wilson)

belay.

3) 60 ft. (5c) Move to the left of the ledge and climb the steep ramp to join Suicide Wall Route 1. Follow this to the top.

1st ascent: D. E. Alcock, M. Boysen. Varied Leads.

11th September 1971.

SUSPENDED SENTENCE. 90 ft. Extremely Severe.

1) 90 ft. (6a) Climb easily up the slab parallel to Suicide Groove to a peg in place under the small triangular overhang to the left of the overhang on Suicide Groove. Move up with difficulty and this piton and continue diagonally right to the top of Suicide Groove with increasing difficulty.

1st ascent: M. Boysen. D. Alcock 12th September 1971.

GARROTTE. (Girdle Traverse). 290 ft. Extremely Severe.

1) 100 ft. (5b) Up Suicide Groove to the top.

2) 70 ft. (5b) Traverse horizontally left to reach the ledge belay for Capital Punishment.

3) 50 ft. (5a) Continue to the left-hand end of the ledge. Using a sling descend until it is possible to traverse onto the belay of Suicide Wall Route 1. Belay.

4) 70 ft. (6a) Descend for 15 ft. and traverse left with difficulty using a peg for aid. Continue left and up to the obvious groove. Climb this with a peg and a sling, in place, to reach the top.

1st ascent: M. Boysen. D. E. Alcock. Alternate Leads.

12th September 1971.

NOTE: The final groove of Garrotte was climbed as an independent route by the same party on the same day, but they do not consider it worthy of recording as a separate climb.

Clogwyn Y Geifr.

SATAN 250 ft. Hard Very Severe.

START: *At the bottom of the reddish groove on the right hand side of the pillar which is to the right of Devil's Staircase.*

1) 70 ft. Climb the groove, with a peg for aid at the top, to belay on the grass ledge.

2) 50 ft. Climb the steep wall behind the belay and then traverse right into Devil's Appendix. Peg belay.

3) 130 ft. Move out right onto the arete, very exposed, and continue up the arete to the top.

1st Ascent: D. Yates. D. E. Alcock. Alternate Leads.

18th September 1971.

PLUTO Hard Very Severe 190 ft.

A very good climb, although technical difficulty is not too great, the climbing is very open and quite serious.

START: About 40 ft. to the left of the obvious crack running down the centre of the cliff, below a steep rib.

1) 20 ft. Climb the broken rocks to a large ledge. Peg belay.

2) 90 ft. Step down to the right and make a move up onto the rib proper. Continue up the rib bearing first left then right to a small ledge below a bottomless groove. With a peg for aid, pull up into this and continue until a move right can be made to a small ledge. Peg belay.

3) 30 ft. Climb the wall above the belay to a shattered block. Swing down to the right and make an exposed traverse across the wall to a small ledge.

4) 50ft. climb the loose groove on the left for a few feet then move right onto the top of the belay block. Pull up onto the slab above and climb this moving left at the top, into a grassy groove. Up this and belay on the right in a short corner.

5) 100 ft. Climb the steep grassy rocks to the top.

1st ascent: K. G. Hipkiss. A. Houghton (Alternate Leads).

15th May 1971.

INFERNO 190 ft. Very Severe.

Start at the foot of the overhanging grooves 40 ft. left of the start of North Slabs.

1) 100 ft. Climb the groove to an overhang of shattered blocks. Move right to a smooth groove. Climb this, then up to a small ledge below overhangs.

2) 90 ft. Follow the ragged crack to the right below a diagonal line of overhangs. Finish up a short chimney. The best finish is 150 ft. up the chimney on the right (easy after 40 ft).

1st ascent: Z. Leppert. K. G. Hipkiss (alternate leads).

14th June, 1970.

TRANQUILITY 480 ft. Hard Very Severe.

A girdle of the cliff at half height, on sound rock in a good position. Start 60 ft. up East Gully, where the right wall steepens.

- 1) 130 ft. Swing onto the wall using a flake, then traverse right to a short but obvious crack. Move right to a series of ledges leading to a ramp then descend this to a good grass ledge.
- 2) 80 ft. From the right of the ledge descend a groove then diagonally right to a slab. Up this moving right to belay pegs (part of pitch 2 Devil's Nordwand in reverse).
- 3) 120 ft. Continue right across the top of a groove, then move round an arete to a heather ledge. Follow this to its end at a large bottomless groove. Peg belay.
- 4) 150 ft. Step across the groove and move up the arete to a thread runner. Bridge across the corner on the right and then straight up to a ledge. Finish as for pitches 2 and 3 of Inferno.

1st ascent: K. G. Hipkiss. Z. Leppert (alternate leads). 21st June, 1970.

Clogwyn Du'r Arddu**GORMOD 220 ft. Extremely Severe.**
(Welsh for 'Too Much').

Start, approximately 50 feet left of Little Crapper, below a shattered groove. The route is good, but the rock is too smooth.

- 1) Climb up until it is possible to traverse left along a grass gangway then back right across a slab into the groove. Continue up to below the overhang, peg for protection, and move right and up to a ledge. Piton belay.
- 2) 90 ft. Traverse left on the obvious line to reach a groove. Climb this with a peg, in place. Move left on a good hold, then up with a peg for aid to below the overhang. Move left using a sling for aid then up to the bottom of the overhanging groove. Climb this, sling for aid, to a belay ledge. Peg belay.
- 3) 60 ft. Move right and climb the grassy grooves to the top.

*1st ascent: D. E. Alcock, A. S. Hunt. (Varied Leads).
4th June, 1971.*

SYTH 580 ft. Extremely Severe.

(Welsh for 'Stiff and straight').

Start as for Great Slab. The route follows a straight line up the middle of the slab to the top. Though the middle section is artificial in line the rest is completely independent and inescapable and involves some good climbing.

1) 100 ft. Climb to the overhang and over it at its right hand side, continue to below a second overhang. Fix a sling on the slab above. Use it for aid and gain a protection peg which is in place on the right of the slab above. Move left and up using side-pulls and continue up until it is possible to move right onto large grass ledges below an obvious groove. Piton belay.

2) 120 ft. Climb the groove above to reach the end of the travers of Great Slab. Reverse the traverse and belay as for Bow-Shaped Slab.

3) 150 ft. Climb up the 'top traverse' of Great Slab. From half way along this climb straight up via some grass patches to reach the upper slab belay of Great Slab.

4) 230 ft. Climb straight up the slab above the belay with a peg for protection at 35 feet. Belay on pitons at some shattered blocks. Poorly protected.

5) 80 ft. Move slightly right from the belay and go straight up to where a grass traverse line is followed left to reach the top.

Pitches: 1, 2, 3. D. E. Alcock. M. Boysen (alt. Leads). 22.5.71. D. Jones., A. S. Hunt.

Pitches: 3, 4. D. E. Alcock. A. S. Hunt. 26.5.71.

GEMINI 250 ft. Extremely Severe.

1) 110 ft. (5b) Climb a shallow groove. 20 ft. left of the Boldest to a small ledge. Traverse left with difficulty and ascend directly to a shallow groove. Protection peg on small ledge. Step left and ascend with difficulty to reach the Boulder traverse. Belay on the right.

2) 140 ft. (5c) Ascend for a few feet to a protection peg (in place) and continue to a small ledge underneath a small roof. Traverse left with increasing difficulty until the groove is reached, which is then followed more easily to the top. (Protection peg at foot of groove).

1st ascent: A. Rouse 1970.

SYNCOPE 300 ft. Extreme.

Takes the first pitch of Bloody Slab and then takes its large overhangs direct. Fine climbing in a good position.

- 1) 100 ft. As for the first pitch of Bloody Slab.
- 2) 140 ft. From the stance climb delicately left and go to a small ledge. Left again to a crack in the slab. Up this to the roof. On the right is a groove in the roof, swing up into this on friable looking jugs to a peg in the groove. Use this and a nut to gain the slab above. Step left and then up to a small ledge. Climb up and then right to the corner and the ledge above, belay and pegs.
- 3) 60 ft. Step left onto the fan slab and up to its top. (60ft). Scrambling remains to the top of the crag.

1st ascent: R. Edwards. K. Tones.

July 17th 1971.

FLINTSTONE WALL 170 ft. Hard Very Severe. (+ scrambling 150 ft).

This is on the steep left hand face of the Boulder which overlooks Eastern Terrace. Start just left of the start of the left edge.

- 1) 70 ft. Follow an ascending traverse line, leftwards onto the steep face for 20 ft. or so, until one comes to vague crack line. Climb the crack, bearing back rightwards after 20 ft. to climb the crux of the left edge. Piton belay.
- 2) 100 ft. Traverse leftwards, along ledges to a fine groove. Climb this stepping right at loose ledge to belay.
- 3) Scrambling to the top.

1st ascent: July 1970 G. J. Gilbert & A. S. Cole.

Llanberis Pass - Dinas Mot**WILD GRASS 150 ft. Very Severe.**

100 yards to the right of Garrd is a grassy couloir up on the right in the couloir is a steep pillar. Start a little way up the gully on the left underneath a long grass ledge.

- 1) 60 ft. Traverse along the grass ledge to massive flakes, step round the flakes to a groove, follow the groove to a heather terrace.

2) 90 ft. Climb the steep crack in the centre of the pillar and follow the short wall behind trending leftwards.

1st ascent: 13th June 1971. D. Keeling and G. Young.

Clogwyn y D dysgl (Llanberis South).

GENESIS 375 ft. Extremely Severe.

The climb takes a fairly direct line up the centre of the cliff, starting at the first pitch gully of Black Gates.

1) 130 ft. Climb Black Gates for 30 ft. then break right up the wall at a leaning block. Follow a system of corners and end with a short crack onto a good belay at the foot of an 80 ft. crack/chimney.

2) 80 ft. Ascend the crack strenuously (difficult at 30 ft). At 60 ft enter the chimney and follow it to the top.

3) 75 ft. Step right across the top of the chimney and climb a groove to a ledge. Step right and ascend a short layback crack to a good belay below twin water-worn cracks on the summit block.

4) 90 ft. Ascend the left hand crack on friable rock for 20 ft. Continue steeply on good jams to an awkward exit into a continuation crack/groove (good runner). Ascend this for a few feet, swing up right and back into the crack then up to a good resting place. Step across to the right hand crack and make a difficult move up to surmount a bulge (crux) and then swing back into the left hand crack and continue to the top.

1st ascent: B. Cooper. E. Lawther. 29th August 1970.

RUSSET 170 ft. Extremely Severe.

Towards the right hand end of the crag is a well defined and steep red groove. This is the route: it is good but short.

1) 140 ft. Climb the overhanging groove with two slings for aid at the start. Continue up the groove and past the overhang. Belay at the first opportunity.

2) 30 ft. Scramble easily to the top.

1st ascent: J. Brown. D. E. Alcock. 19th September 1971.
(The weekend after the Suicide Wall Climbs).

Snowdon West**Moel Hebog: Y Diffwys****REDOG 190 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

Towards the right-hand end of the central section of the North Cliff and about 100 ft. left of the Maidan, is a reddish-coloured slab capped by a huge overhang. The route gains the foot of the slab from the right and then continues up the left edge of the slab passing the overhang on that side. A good climb on excellent rock, the main pitch being continuously intriguing.

Start about 30 feet left of Chinaman and 20 feet right of pair of steep shallow grooves which run straight up to the bottom right-hand corner of the slab (these grooves might provide a better start when dry, but are usually repulsively wet).

1) 80 ft. Surmount the bulge (harder than it looks) then climb straight up for about 15 feet before taking a rising traverse left into the upper part of the right-hand groove. Up this or its left rib to grass ledges. Move left and up to the highest ledge in the left-hand groove. Piton and nut belays. (A much easier but inferior start commences up Chinaman and follows the continuation of its leftward traverse).

2) 110 ft. Traverse out to a grass ledge on the left edge of the slab; Climb up near the edge, move right over the bulge then step back left and up to a ledge close to the arete (60 feet). Enter the groove above with difficulty (peg for protection), and climb it to a small triangular overhang. Step right into a crack and up this and the wall above to grass ledges. Frail natural thread belay and piton belay about 10 feet up left.

The rest of the buttress now gives as usual about 300 feet of easy mixed rock and grass climbing to the summit ridge.

1st ascent: May 21st 1971. M. Yates. Judy Yates.

Snowdon South.**Clogwyn-y-Bustach.****PARANOIA 200 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

The route is on the black wall of Maelstrom and crosses this route obliquely from left to right.

Start: Belay on a large tree to the left of the wall.

1) 120 ft. From the tree climb straight up for 30 ft. Traverse right with difficulty to a small ledge in the centre of the wall. Continue diagonally right to cross Maelstrom and climb straight up to a small holly tree. Climb the wall above moving right to an arete, junction with side entry. Peg belay on arete.

2) 80 ft. Up the arete to step off the top of a pinnacle onto a steep wall above. Climb the wall, passing a small tree and moving left to finish.

*1st ascent: Clifford Phillips and Terry Taylor.
(Alternate Leads). 27.9.70.*

FOXTROT. 160 ft. Very Severe.

Climbs the slab and overhang above the second pitch of Gallop Step. Reasonable climbing with an airy finish.

Start: At a block 50 ft. right of Anniversary Waltz.

1) 70 ft. Above is a small leftwards sloping ramp, usually wet. Climb this then up to a large spike on Gallop Step. Climb the overhang to two small trees. Take a stance behind them.

2) 90 ft. Traverse left then climb diagonally up the slab to its highest point at the roof. Surmount this with a nut and sling for aid. Up to a tree.

1st ascent: Z. Leppert. J. Blears. 14th April 1971.

THE DECEIVER Hard Very Severe 270 ft.

A magnificent route taking the obvious line of grooves left of PEACHPLA, start as for Peachpla.

1) 120 ft. Follow Peachpla until 15 ft. below the obvious roof on the left. Swing left and move up to a downward pointing fang of rock. Layback round this into a groove which is climbed to a ledge on the right. (2 protection pegs). Continue up the groove above to a flake ledge (peg belay). (This pitch was split where it leaves Peachpla, on the first ascent, poor stance).

2) Traverse left into a groove and climb this to its top (peg for aid and protection on 1st move in groove, can be done without). Move left to the obvious layback flake and up this to a small ledge (sling used for gardening.) Traverse right (peg) and belay below a steep corner.

3) 60 ft. Last pitch of Peachpla.

*1st ascent: August 6th 1971.
Graham Rigby. Keith Bentham.*

Tremadoc.**Craig Bwlch y Moch****RIENETTA'S RESURRECTION 200 ft. Hard Severe.**

Start as for the original Rienetta.

1 & 2 120 ft. As for Rienetta (original route).

3) 30 ft. Cross the slab on the left into a V chimney, move up this and swing out left to a ledge. Climb the steep crack above to a tree belay.

4) 50 ft. Climb the corner and crack above, moving left to finish.

1st ascent: C. Phillips, 28th February 1970.

KNELL FOR A JACKDAW. Variation. 150 ft. Severe

1) 60 ft. As for Knell for a Jackdaw.

2) 50ft. Climb a narrow slab behind the stance to a small ledge on arete. Pull over an overhanging block to a niche below the tree. Using good holds under a dead branch step right and pull over the bulge above. A short slab leads to the third stance of Knell for a Jackdaw.

3) 40 ft. The final wall of Knell for a Jackdaw.

1st ascent: P. Seaman. G. Duddin. Miss. J. Cooper.

LAST SLIP 120 ft. Hard Very Severe.

The route lies on the buttress to the right of Leg Slip, and requires a fight through brambles to reach the bottom.

Start about 10 ft. left of an obvious groove, at a steep corner wall with a bulge at the top.

1) 90 ft. Layback up the corner and surmount the bulge using a large nut for aid. Then move up for a few feet and trend right to reach a crack which splits the wall above. Jam up this crack and continue to a tree belay.

2) 30 ft. Climb the broken groove above, then step right and trend back left to the top.

1st ascent: D. G. Peers. K. Martin (alternate leads) 23.11.1969

OEDIPUS 170 ft. Just Very Severe.

Start about 15 ft. right of Belshazar at a large pinnacle flake.

- 1) 120 ft. Climb easily up the wall behind the flake to join Pitch 2. of Belshazar. Follow this part the small tree and up the groove on the edge with increasing difficulty, until a good nut runner is reached at the top. Use this nut to swing right across the wall and groove and struggle up behind the tree (possible belay, but makes things awkward for the second). Step left across the wall (loose blocks) and climb pleasantly up the slab to a good flake belay.
- 2) 50 ft. Walk along the ledge to the right and step around onto the exposed right wall. Climb up the left easily to the top. Or, from the top of pitch 1 walk into the descent gully.

1st ascent: D. Ellis. A. Watts (alternate leads). G. Barr.

Snowdon East

Moelwyns.

HOT PANTS 370 ft. Very Severe.

Starting at the lowest point of the crag is a huge overhanging boulder to the right of Taith-y-Pererin.

- 1) 50 ft. Climb the overhang directly via a large flake runner at about 12 ft. and continue above to grass ledge.
- 2) 130 ft. Move up left across a slab for 15 ft. to a grass ledge and flake projecting beneath the overhanging wall. Climb the wall following the main fault line via a ledge, (end of Pitch 3 Taith-y-Pererin) which continues up the long green corner. Exit through the gap and follow the crack in the overhang to a nook (end of Pitch 5 Taith-y-Pererin).
- 3) 130 ft. Traverse right on obvious line across the wall and up the arete to the foot of a concave slab. Climb the crack to a heathery ledge, traverse left along this to the corner of Pitch 4 of Dorcon, cross it and climb up and diagonally left via a crack (loose block inside) on the very steep wall, to the belay.
- 4) 60 ft. Climb the ramp on the left overlooking Y Borfa to the corner, climb this to a short layback and big holds to the top.

1st ascent: 18th April 1971. J. R. Lambertsen & R. Carrick.

MID WALES.**Cader Idris****SLANTING GULLY GROOVES 300 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

The climb follows the steep green slab, which is to the left of 'Hyrib' (C.C. New climbs 1967) and above the steep right wall of the upper section of 'Slanting Gully'.

Start at a point approximately 100 ft. up the upper section of 'Slanting Gully' from the start of 'Hyrib'. Gaining a subsidiary groove left of the main slab.

- 1) 70 ft. climb the groove grassy at first, then a good crack to an obvious move out right, to a stance and peg belay, below the slab.
- 2) 110 ft. Move up and out onto the left edge to a cutaway, using the slab and holds round the edge (piton runner in situ) gain a small ledge. Well spaced holds in the inset slab above lead to a step left into a grassy corner. Move up to a piton belay at a small pedestal.
- 3) 120 ft. Climb the groove above pleasantly to a steep section, thenc continue up an awkward corner to stance on the ridge.

1st ascent: 30th August 1970.

Derek Burgess and Nat Allen.

Barmouth Quarries.**SUPA DUREK 200 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

Takes the best and most direct free line up the cliff, finishing at the highest point of the crag. The rock is brittle and protection is poor.

- 1) 60 ft. Start at the foot of the prominent narrow black slab near the top of the scree. Climb the slab on the right corner to reach a peg under the overhang at 30 ft. With a long sling lassoo another peg on the left edge of the slab using this for direct aid make a tension traverse left to an awkward stance on the arete. Move up using the peg as a foothold and diagonally left over the arete on good jugs to a comfortable stance and good belays (peg for protection on the last move.)
- 2) 110 ft. climb the narrow white slab above the stance (hard) and continue in the same line on easier ground to a huge flake belay at

the foot of the final crack.

3) 40 ft. Climb the crack direct to the top. Good belay well back.

1st ascent: A. Hughes. H. Boswell. 23.10.71.

SHITENSTRASSA 180 ft. Hard Very Severe.

This route starts on the field and takes the obvious line up the wide black slab. Start at the foot of the Crack just left of the boulders.

1) 120 ft. Climb the crack, easily to start, until the angle steepens. Move slightly right and then diagonally left to regain the crack. Harder moves on poor rock leads to the ramp at 60 ft. Peg for protection. Traverse left to the arete and up easily to the flake belay and stance (same as for Supa Durek).

2) 60 ft. Traverse right to regain the slab, easily climbing leads to the big rock belay at the top.

1st ascent: A. Hughes and H. Boswell. 28th October 1971.

North Wales Sea Cliffs.

Cliff on Seaward side of Penmaenbach. Ref. 785746

This is the black cliff on the left visible from the Conway side of the Tunnel.

Start The base of the cliff is gained by walking behind the two stone walls on the hillside on the Conway side of the tunnel. A line of iron fence posts end at the base of the cliff.

Climb starts about 20 feet higher up at the base of an obvious ramp with reddish lower section.

THE WALRUS Hard Very Severe 200 ft.

1) 60 ft. Climb up the crack in the ramp to a ledge, peg belay.

2) 80 ft. Step out right on to a sloping block, below a small overhang, traverse with difficulty to the edge, go round the corner to a shallow groove, up this groove utilising two precariously balanced large blocks on the left. When the 2nd block is reached and the groove is partially blocked by a small overhang an obvious hand traverse right leads to a 'thank God hand jam' and a narrow grass rake, up this rake to a belay peg.

3) 50 ft. Scramble left onto a wide grass rake which leads to the top.

1st ascent: 8th July 1968.

J. F. Kerry. G. Arnold. (Alternate leads).

Penmaenmawr.**LEYSTAD Very Severe 70 ft.**

This climb starts from the old road to the outside of Penmaenmawr Tunnel Ref. 785746.

On the left hand side of this cliff is a very steep white slab with sharp overhangs at its base. The climb starts in the middle.

1) 70 ft. Climb into the obvious groove with a large roof, exit left onto the slab. Traverse delicately right along the base of this slab to a metal ring on the right hand side. Climb the loose arete above to the top.

1st ascent: 8th July 1968.

J. F. Kerry. G. Arnold.

LEYSTAD DIRECT START. Very Severe 55 feet.

Start 30 feet right of groove of the original route, directly below the arete of the final half of the climb.

1) 55 ft. Climb the overhangs direct, trending left after 20 ft. to join the arete of the original route.

1st ascent: 30th August 1968. J. F. Kerry.

Craig Gogarth (Anglesey).**WALL OF HORRORS 150 ft. Extremely Severe.**

In the zawn below North Stack fog station. Start 30 ft. right of the Whip where an arete comes down below the left hand side of the Big Overhang.

Climb the arete then move right onto the face. Climb up to a small ledge below a prominent yellow groove and climb this (3 pegs for aid) to some loose flakes in the centre of the wall. Climb the overhanging crack above (sling for aid) and the difficult following groove, to an exit onto a slab. Cross this leftwards to a niche, swing left on flakes and finish up the last few feet of the Whip.

1st ascent: C. Phillips. N. Horne. May 2nd 1970.

**FIFTEEN MEN ON A DEAD MAN'S CHEST.
YO-HO-HO-AND A BOTTLE OF RUM
DRINK AND THE DEVIL HAVE DONE FOR THE REST.
YO-HO-HO- AND A BOTTLE OF RUM.**

240 ft. Extremely Severe.

Start: to the left of Blind pew is a steep wall with a line of pockets. The route follows this line.

- 1) 30 ft. Climb the crack. Piton belay,
- 2) 80 ft. Move onto the steep wall to the left and up to the first pocket with difficulty. Continue up the wall, with a peg for protection, move right at the first opportunity to a ledge and belay below a large pinnacle.
- 3) 90 ft. Climb the pinnacle with caution to the top. From the peg in the wall lean across right on a steep wall and do a difficult move to gain easier ground. Continue up as for Blind Pew and belay at the first opportunity.
- 4) 40 ft. Continue easily to the top.

1st ascent: M. Boysen. D. E. Alcock. D. Jones. May 1971.

TOO COLD FOR COMFORT. 180 ft. Hard Very Severe (and how)

*In the same zawn as A Groove, Another Groove and Amphibian.
To the N. of N. Stack Lighthouse.*

*Start: at the back left hand side of the zawn below a ledge
30 ft. up the wall.*

- 1) 80 ft. Ascend the slabs for 20 ft. until it is possible to traverse right on 3 poor pegs to reach a bottomless groove. Climb this with two pegs for aid and belay in slings when the angle eases.
- 2) 100 ft. Ascend for a few feet, then traverse left under the prong of rock onto the slabs. Climb the thin slab which splits them to easier ground and block belays.

1st ascent: R. Conway. C. Jackson. 9th October..1971.

TSUNAMI 330 ft. Extremely Severe.

This route is in the zawn north of North Stack Lighthouse. It takes a long diagonal line from left to right, staring up the slabby grooves right of Another Groove, and finishing through the prominent gash at the right hand end of the face. An interesting route

presenting some exciting positions and situations. The start is accessible at all but the highest states of the tide.

Start - from a rock pedestal below a bulging wall to the right of 'Another Groove'.

1) 80 ft. Traverse right to a groove which cuts up through some small roofs. Up this trending right to the brown slab and up this to a belay in slings to the left of an overhung corner.

2) 60 ft. Move into the corner under the roof, up this then right to more slabs. Peg belay on a pile of loose blocks.

3) 80 ft. Continue traversing right, towards the overhangs. Step down under a sharp prong of rock and continue traversing at this level. Peg runner. Cross the hanging slab, and using a peg and tension from the rop, cross into the groove. Peg belays needed

4) 110 ft. The back of the groove contains an overhanging gravel bank. Up this using three pegs knocked directly into the 'rock' until it is possible to move right onto a ledge. Using a peg (situ) step right and make a long rising traverse to the right and up the overhanging heather to belays well back.

Several peg runners were used on this pitch to the first ascent due to benightment, but it is possible that natural protection can be arranged in the light.

1st ascent: C. Jackson. M. Myhill. 14th November 1971.

Peak District

Great Rocks Dale.

BON-BON 125 ft. Hard Severe.

Well right of Shaken Not Stirred is a prominent white pedestal on a large smooth wall. The route starts right of this at the top of a brown scree fan. Peg belay in place at the top of the fan. A route of more interest and exposure than at first apparent.

From the belay make an ascending traverse leftwards to a slabby groove, then up this until stopped by a loose bulge. Step left into a nice position on the wall and continue up over the overlap. Climb the wall above via two cracks until a small ledge is reached. Move right along the ledge and hence to the top. Peg belays

1st ascent: P. Hayward. R. Treglown: June 1970.

Great Rocks Dale Quarry (Northern Limestone)

THE MERGER 105 ft. Very Severe.

Start beneath the hanging corner on the extreme left of the big roof of Double O, at a grey streak running down the crag.

- 1) 30 ft. ascend the steep wall to a thin crack. With a nut for aid place a peg above for tension for the move up and right to small footholds. Peg belay.
- 2) 35 ft. Pull out left above the overhang and reach round to a steep hanging crack. Ascend this strenuously on good finger jams with nuts for resting, to twin horizontal cracks. Traverse these left to small grassy footholds and a peg belay.
- 3) 40 ft. As for the final pitch of Samedi.

1st ascent: P. Seddon. A. Howard. (alternate)

4th May 1970.

ALDERY CLIFF. Earl Sterndale.

THE STRIDE. 60 ft. Hard A1.

Five feet left of Cooper's Peg Route is a corner. The right wall is narrow and bulges at 15 ft. ascend to bulge and make a long reach around the corner to place apeg on the main face. Make an ascending traverse to join Cooper's Peg Route. Belay on ledge. Free climb to top.

Ravensdale

MYOPIA 240 ft. Very Severe

Starts at a shallow groove 15 ft. left of Solitaire.

- 1) 40 ft. The groove direct to the block belay of Conclusor
- 2) 100 ft. Easily for 30 ft. to the foot of an obvious pillar left of Conclusor. Climb this (1 peg for protection plus 1 peg for aid) to the bulge. Finish up the groove above.

1st ascent: D. Riley. R. S. Dearman. 30th May 1970.

PURPLE HAZE 210 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Start as for Ply.

- 1) 90 ft. The wall directly behind a small hawthorn tree to a

bedding place. Climb the overhanging loose flakes (1 peg) then layback into the groove above. Continue up this until a traverse left can be made to a prominent flake crack. Chock belay.

2) 90 ft. Struggle through the tree and traverse 10 ft. right onto a grass ledge. Climb the wall above trending left into a small corner. Up the blank wall above (1 peg runner) to gain access to a groove. Step right at the top via a good jamming crack to a yew tree.

1st ascent: R. S. Dearman, D. Riley 6th June 1970.

First 30 ft. has been done before by North Staffs M.C).

THURSTINE 80 ft.

Very Severe.

Start 20 ft. to the right of the Wick, in behind a hawthorne bush.

1) 80 ft. Climb the wall, then trend right to a shallow groove (Protection very poor). Mantleshelf over a detached block to the foot of the obvious groove, which starts halfway up the wall. Move up the left (peg removed) to a flake, move right to a detached flake, step left and finish up the last few feet on 'The Wick'.

1st ascent: W. Hepplewhite and P. Bettthey. 7.2.71.

Chee Dale

THOR'S HAMMER 90 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Ascend Dangleberry to the overhang, then step right to an obvious steep jamming crack formed by a large flake. Ascend this until it ends and a good hold enables the steep wall above to be gained.

Traverse diagonally and delicately to the top right hand edge (peg runner halfway).

1st ascent: W. Tweedale: J. Greenwood. 17th May 1970.

Chee Tor.

THE LAST LAUGH 150 ft. Very Severe.

The route takes a line midway between Grinning Chimney and Wailing Wall, where there is a bulge about 12 ft up with a small ledge below it. Gain the ledge and then surmount the bulge using 2 nuts for aid, then climb a short groove to a good ledge. Ascend the crack on the left for a few feet, then move right onto the

wall and good holds. Climb the wall to the horizontal fault, then move right to belay as for Grinning Chimney. Finish up pitch 2 of Grinning Chimney.

1st ascent: A. Sanderson. K. Bassindale. 9th August 1970.

NECROPHILIA Hard Very Severe. 80 ft.

Start as for Rape to the first groove. Move out left onto the rib and climb a flakey groove to a stance in the girdle. Thread belay.

42nd STREET 230 ft. Hard Very Severe (and how).

The route starts 30 ft. left of Grinning Chimney below a shallow groove which peters out at 20 ft. The main difficulties will be found on the upper wall. A good selection of small nuts will be found useful.

1) 130 ft. Ascend the shallow groove to reach a break leading left. Hand traverse this for 10 ft. to a sapling at the base of a thin crack which is followed onto the white wall above. Continue strenuously on small holds starting a little to the right and trending slightly left to meet the rake above. Traverse right to the trees.

1st ascent: T. Proctor. C. Jackson 1.8.71.

TIGON 70 ft. Just Hard Very Severe.

The route starts thirty feet right of Grinning Chimney. Start below a shallow corner which ends in a bulge at 30 ft.

1) 70 ft. Climb the cracks to the bulge and surmount this on its right. Follow the groove above moving leftwards into the trees above.

1st ascent: T. Proctor. C. Jackson 7.8.71.

QUEER STREET 85 ft. Extremely Severe

A thin and strenuous route which takes the shallow groove 20 ft. left of the start of 42nd Street.

1) 85 ft. Climb the groove direct, making difficult moves to reach the edge of a steep slab. Cross this diagonally leftwards to reach a thin finger flake, up this and left on better holds to the rake. Belay in yew tree.

1st ascent: T. Proctor. C. Jackson. 7.8.71

SHAKE 80 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Start 20 ft. right of Great Central Route, below a long ragged flake which finishes twenty feet up.

1) 80 ft. Climb diagonally rightwards to join the bottom of the flake, then follow it until it is possible to reach better ledges on the right. Straight up to belay on thread in the rake.

1st ascent: C. Jackson T. Proctor. 7.8.71.

Stoney Middleton.**THE MORGUE 120 ft. Hard Very Severe.**

Starts as for 'Mortuary Steps'.

1) 80 ft. Take the first pitch of 'Mortuary Steps' to the belay. Move 20 ft. left to another stance and peg belay.

2) 40 ft. Climb directly over the bulge (peg in situ) and make a difficult layback move to gain another peg. The wall above is technical and strenuous, but well protected. The finish is at a small blank groove 10 ft. right of 'Mortuary Steps'.

1st ascent: R. S. Dearman. A. Evans and Dave? 10.4.71.

MENOPAUSE 85 ft. Extremely Severe.

Technically more difficult than 'Our Father' though neither as fine or as serious.

Start 15 ft. Right of 'Our Father' where an inverted V groove leaves the right hand side of the cave:-

1) 50 ft. Difficult moves around the overhang lead to a situ peg which is used as aid. Step right and climb the wall to the bulge. Traverse left and ascend as far as 'Our Father' to the cave belay.

2) 35 ft. Step left and use a poor nut (very high) to reach a better one and a situ. threaded sling as aid. Free climb the groove to the top.

1st ascent: August 1971.

Al Evans - Various Belayers. Rope Climbers.

Including Z. Dyslewicz. B. Chisholm and a few more.

Matlock High Tor.**HOOK CROOK WALL. Extremely Severe 5C 140 ft.**

This ascent, which climbs some new rock that was not previously climbed by Flakey Wall, uses three points of aid, two of which are sky hooks and one of which is a sling which was left in place but for which, if it is missing, one can use a further sky hook. In the first half of the route protection is poor and difficult to arrange and the rock is fragile. No pegs at all were used although there are three in place in the second half of the route which serve as useful protection.

Begin at the tree as for Debauchery and Original Route.

It is best to do this route as one run out.

Climb Original Route until level with prominent curving flake crack to the right and after about twenty feet. Move strenuously across and use a small sling in place under the flake to rest. Before moving up and right with extreme difficulty on a small foothold to a poor resting place on a small flake. Right and up again with difficulty to a difficult resting place at the foot of a shallow groove. Up the groove with great difficulty to use a poor foothold and very high handhold on the right, and maintain balance below an old and useless peg. Now place a very high sky hook and use this to gain a much height as possible before moving up to a poor resting place and a slight easing in the angle. (There are some old protection pegs in place here.) Now follow the flakes away diagonally right past two old protection pegs until the crack ends. Up with further difficulty and place a high sky hook. Exit using this passing a protection peg to the right and over loose bulges to a tree belay.

Ed. Ward Drummond, and G. Birtles. October 1969. (This ascent I used four points of aid. But when I repeated the route in last 1970 I used just three points.

THE BURNING ICICLE Extremely Severe. 5C 135 ft.

Formerly Darius an A2 artificial route. Only one point of aid is used and protection is on nuts alone except for one protection peg, in place, in the first 20 ft.

Begin twenty feet left to the start of original route and about twenty feet lower, at the foot of a steep thin crack. Layback up with difficulty to enter the crack and continue laybacking until it is possible to rest just above the protection peg that one passes. Make a difficult exit to the right and then continue straight up on bigger holds until one can get on top of a large loose spike. Up until one is underneath the bulge. (This is where Delicatessen crosses from the belay ledge half way up Debauchery). then move slightly right (joining Perseus for a move) and straight up to a resting place. Now back left and enter the awkward crack with difficulty. Climb this strenuously and make a difficult move up and out to the right and get onto a good resting ledge. Use the bolt above for aid and with fingery difficulty, climb straight up to the grass ledges.

1st ascent: Ed. Ward-Drummond and Tom Proctor 1.1.71.

WEEZY WONKS. 140 ft. Very Severe

A good exposed route taking the obvious line up the large buttress to the right of the Pillar. Care should be taken on the loose rock which should disappear with use. Start from the right hand side of the buttress in the middle of the wall 20 ft. left on easy descent route (Arrow in rock cairn).

- 1) 40 ft. Straight up to a grass ledge at 20 ft. From the right hand end of the ledge climb up through horizontal strata into a shallow groove to a larger grass ledge. Yew tree belay on right.
- 2) 15 ft. Continue up trending right through jungle to another tree belay.
- 3) 60 ft. Traverse left to the base of a series of large 'detached' flakes running leftwards up the buttress (peg protection). An awkward move gives access to the crack behind the first flake. Continue up to line of flakes to a path (hand rail belay) .
- 4) 25 ft. Climb the obvious leftward starting groove to the top of the cliff. (Bench belay).

1st ascent: J. Clarke.

Willersley Castle**SUMERIAN'S WALL 140 ft. Hard Very Severe**

The route takes a line up the right wall of Babylon Groove. The rock should improve with traffic, Start 10 ft. right of Babylon Groove.

- 1) Climb straight up the thin crack, passing a small overhang and using one nut for aid at about 20 ft. Traverse left to a belay in the groove.
- 2) Return back right to some large blocks, then climb straight up the wall above to reach some detached blocks on the level of the girdle. Continue up loose rock and grass (1 peg runner) to a short corner crack. Up this and then step right to finish by a dead tree.

1st ascent: G. Clark, M. Clark. April 11th 1970.

MISTER MACHENRY 130 ft. Hard Very Severe

Starts at the same point as 'Gethsemane Grooves' and takes a fairly direct line to the top of the crag. Better than it looks; it should be greatly improved by traffic.

- 1) 130 ft. Climb straight up to an obvious horizontal tree. Step left and climb the wall to a bulge. Traverse a few feet to the right and ascend the shallow groove to a sapling. (Junction with Girdle Traverse'). Climb up and slightly left to a prominent, undercut groove. Up this and exit left at the top. Traverse left for several feet and climb an arete, past a tree to finish.

1st ascent: V. King and A. Rhodes. 13th September 1970.

Dovedale**Tissington Spires. Chelsea Buttress Area.**

A few yards upstream from the ruined pumphouse path leads up a narrow valley. Go up this path for about 50 yards, then fork right up a scree slope to reach the obvious buttress. CHELSEA BUTTRESS split by a large converging chimney. The same spot may also be reached from the back of the Campanile Pinnacle by moving up leftwards over a grassy knoll, and down the grass gully at the side of the buttress wall capped by an obvious overhang (Slime Traverse and Roaring Forties go over this overhang). The climbs are described starting from the Chimney.

VETERAN'S CHIMNEY 60 ft. Severe

Climb the converging chimney (seldom dry) facing right. Pull over the top on good holds and climb to the ridge. Tree belay on the ridge higher up.

1st ascent: D. Carnell and L. Peel. 3.4.71.

The right bounding front of the buttress provides the next climb. Start at the large tree to the right of the front of the buttress.

THUNDER RIB 75 ft. Very Severe

Climb up to a crack on the right flank of the buttress. Climb this and the flake above to a ledge. Layback the crack above and move left to a steep finish on good holds. Stance and tree belay on the ridge.

1st ascent: D. Burgess and J. R. (N). Allen. 21.3.71.

PENSIONER'S GROOVE 70 ft. Very Severe

Just right of the last climb is a groove. Climb into this and ascend direct, moving slightly left above a sapling to an easier finish.

1st ascent: D. Burgess and J. R. (N). Allen, 3.4.71.

Higher up the gully, the clean wall is capped by a sickle shaped overhang. At the lowest left hand end of the wall is an obvious depression with a swallett hole at about 15 feet gives the line of the next climb.

ROARING FORTIES 45 ft. Very Severe.

Using the pockets in the depression, climb up into the hole. Standing in the hole, a thread runner (in situ) up on the left can be reached. Continue up the line to the roof (large thread) and surmount the overhang using the peg in place for aid. Finish up past the tree.

1st ascent: B. Metcalf and H. Harrison. 21.3.71.

SLIME TRAVERSE 70 ft. Very Severe

Start from the top of the gully at the right hand end of the curving scar: Climb pleasantly up to the fault line (thread) and traverse left past a thread in situ. With aid from the peg in place, climb to the tree on 'Roaring Forties' Finish as for that climb.

1st ascent: D. Burgess and J. R. (N). Allen. 3.4.71.

Tissington Spires, The Sentinel and the Keep Area

Climb up North Gully past the campanile pinnacle and the rock wall of 'Fetish'. Straight ahead the gully narrows and passes between the twin buttress of the KEEP on the right, and the SENTINEL on the left. Obvious landmarks are a wide crack on the Keep, close to the gully, and an old brown Yew (deceased) over half way up the face on the Sentinel.

Access is also possible from Chelsea Buttress Area by going over the grassy cols on either side of that buttress, and descending into North Gully above the Campanile Pinnacle.

SENTINEL BUTTRESS

Start at the lowest point of the buttress, about ten feet to the right of the big ash tree.

62A TOPSY TURVY 100 feet. Very Difficult.

Climb the wall and move right above a small tree to a break in the bulge above. This leads to a flake with a small sapling behind it, from where a traverse left can be made to the old Yew tree. The wall behind the yew leads directly to the summit and tree belay.

1st ascent: D; Carnell and L. Peel. 3.4.71.

62B SENTINEL CRACK 50 feet. Very Difficult.

Ten feet left of the ash tree, and twenty feet left of the last route, is a crack leading up to a small bay level with the old Yew. Climb this crack to the bay, move left into the corner and climb this on excellent holds to the ridge above a tree belay.

ALTERNATE STARTS.

The curving overhung crack 15 ft. left, and the clean wall between give shorter, but harder starts. The centre of the wall is the hardest at about Severe and leads straight up to the finishing corner of Sentinel Crack. It is also possible to traverse to the Yew Tree from the bay.

1st ascent: D. Carnell. A. Oakden (Alternate). L. Peel.

KEEP BUTTRESS

Start below the obvious crack a few feet right of the big tree in the gully bed.

62C KEEPERS' CRACK 50 ft. Very Difficult.

Climb the awkward groove to a grassy ledge, (it is possible to traverse in from the left to here). Climb the wide crack and the slabby rocks above it to finish at the tree.

1st ascent: J. R. (N). Allen and D. Burgess. 1965.

62D Boomerang: 100 ft. Hard Severe.

Start as for the last climb, step up the awkward groove then traverse right across the slab to a tree stump on the corner. Climb up the slabs on the right to the foot of the corner crack. Climb this on good holds to the top, or swing left just under the top for an exposed finish.

1st ascent: J. R. (N) Allen and A. Oakden. 17.4.71.

Tissington Spires. South Gully Area.

To the right of 'Stanley Wall' on the First Pinnacle is a broken line with a couple of caves at its' foot. Start right

of the caves at a tree.

71A NUTCRACKER 110 - Very Severe.

1) 40 ft. Climb the crack above past a small tree until a clean slab can be crossed to the left into a cave. Stance and belay.

2) 70 feet. Move back down and traverse left on to the break, (small tree runner). Ascend the wall leftwards to a recess, with a steep crack. Climb the first part of this crack with the aid of nut runners, and free climb the upper section until a move to the right can be made on to a grassy rake. Stance or scramble to the ridge.

1st ascent: D; Burgess. & J. R. Allen. 21.3.71.

1(A) 40 ft. Wet Start. Begin as pitch (1) but move left to the edge of the lowest cave, move up and leftwards in to the crack line which is climbed to the stance and belay in the upper cave. A harder start.

1st ascent: D. Burgess and J. R. Allen. 3.4.71.

43a. THE FILTER. Hard Severe 75 ft.

To the left of the Baley Chimney a curving scar rises leftwards. The route climbs these slabs. Start: at the prominent tree.

1) 75 ft. Move left then climb direct for a few feet until it is possible to move right to good holds. (Steep). Up to a sloping groove, ascend the groove and slab to a second slab. Move left and up a tree belay.

1st ascent: N. Allen. H. Harrison. 6th November 1971.

59B HELL PEEL Hard Severe 120 ft.

Above the isolated ridge which crosses the arch of Reynards Cave and to the left of the gully which runs up the back of this ridge is a broad buttress with a scar at half height.

Start: at the left hand of this buttress, just right of another gully, at a tree.

1) 85 ft. Move right and climb a shattered crack. Climb a slab rightwards to gain the scar at a semi-cave. Move onto the steep rib on the right and ascend direct to the grass ledge and yew tree. Belay.

2) 35 ft. Scramble up the ridge on grassy rock. Belay well back.

1st ascent: N. Allen. L. Peel. 5th June 1971.

THE EXTRACTED DIGIT 120 ft. Very Severe

The buttress immediately behind the buttress that contains Simeon and Hortus.

80 ft. Start left of the toe of the buttress. Up a short slab and steep groove. Step right and traverse the slab between the first and second overhangs to a sapling (hard).

Up various cracks and overhung corners to corner with piton belay on right (in situ).

40 ft. Up to corner step left at the ivy. Hard moves on the arete soon bring the top and good belays.

1st ascent. T. Moon. and D. Bolger. March 1971.

AMOEBA Very Severe 135 ft.

Climbs the large wall to the right of Dr Livingstone. Start at the right of Dr. Livingstone behind an obvious large tree.

- 1) 75 ft. Climb the crack line behind the tree then traverse diagonally right to grassy ledge. Climb up for 10 feet then diagonally left to a small grass ledge and peg belay.
- 2) 60 ft. Climb strenuously the obvious steep crack slightly right of the belay (excellent nut runners) until it becomes more difficult and a parallel crack comes into reach. Use a nut runner as a handhold (or HVS without this point of aid) and continue up crack until it disappears. Move delicately right to the edge of the wall and then climb up easy ledges to top of arete.

THOR'S CAVE

A steep strenuous rout. Pitch 2 is continuously overhanging and strong fingers are an asset.

TOWER DIRECT 120 ft. HVS.

- 1) 15 ft. Start in the bed of West Window Gully and climb up to the small ledge on the right (facing out).
- 2) 60 ft. Start the steep wall above on the left, moving back right via a large flake to the crack proper. Ascend this for 20ft to an old peg. Traverse left into another crack and continue up to the large ledges above (peg runner).
- 3) 45 ft. Cross the ledges to the right and ascend the short crack above to the top.

OLYMPUS 120 ft. Very Severe 4C

Start as for West Window Groove. Climb the steep groove on the right wall passing 3 old pegs for protection until forced right. Follow the narrow ramp until it peters out. Up the steep wall on good holds to a short steep crack which can be jammed... or laybacked. Exit left and belay as for West Window Groove.

Beeston Tor**WHITE ROOM 190 ft. Very Severe**

- 1) 50 ft. as for West Wall Climb

2) 80 ft. Cross the slab on the left to gain a groove and climb this until it ends at a steep wall. Up this (peg runner in place) to a junction with the girdle. Peg belay.

3) 60 ft. The ramp leading right to a small overhang, then over this (1 peg) to a grassy finish.

1st ascent: R. S. Dearman and D. Riley. March 1970.

BUZZ 160 ft. Hard Severe

Start left of West Wall Climb 20 ft. right of a small cave.

1) 80 ft. up the slabs trending right to a tree belay.

2) 50 ft. Step left, then straight up to the big tree on the girdle.

3) 30 ft. Straight up the wall on the right to the finish.

1st ascent: D. Riley. R. S. Dearman March 1970.

GRITSTONE AND ALLIED SUBSTANCES.

Dovestones.

DIRECT ROUTE 90 ft. Very Severe

From the bottom left hand corner of Aimless Slab, ascend the corner and steep cracks to the belay, then the thin crack above, moving left to finish.

1st ascent: B. Roase, Sawacki and Carey.

TRAF 200 ft. Very Severe

A new girdle, traversing the crag from right to left. More enjoyable than serious.

Start as for Ultima Ratio (16).

1) 80 ft. Ascend Ultima Ratio for a few feet until it is possible to traverse left to Tottering Groove. Continue to traverse left down the sloping ramp, then make an awkward move round the corner to reach Finger Flake and a belay.

2) 50 ft. Carry on traversing left, then descend slightly to a good foothold on the arete.

Step onto the steep slab and belay on Cave and Traverse.

3) 70 ft. Up the two cracks above until it is possible to step left to a ledge. Then step up and left, and continue along a tiny footledge. Climb the small groove at the end of the ledge, then step left again and over loose rock to the top.

1st ascent: B. Whitaker. R. Treglown. (Varied leads).

M. McKenna 7th June 1970.

BOLLINGTON NORTH QUARRY**DIRECT ENTRY 60 ft. Hard Severe**

Start a few feet right of Psycho and climb the bulging wall trending right until it is possible to join Flue Wall at mid-height. Finish up this.

1st ascent: D. McKinnell and M. Frith. 18.10.70.

15 ft. left of Psycho is a groove which continues almost to the top of the crag this gives.

TRAUMA SUTRA 65 ft. Very Severe

The first 20 feet are without difficulty. The next section up to the overhang is strenuous but well protected. At the overhang a move right onto the wall enables a large ledge to be reached and so to a grassy finish.

1st ascent: D. McKinnell and M. Frith 18.10.70.

15 feet left of Prospero Arete is a slab capped by an overhang covered in bird lime this is:-

XERXES 45 feet Hard Very Severe

Climb the slab delicately to where it steepens. Move slightly left to gain the crack above the overhang and follow this strenuously to the top.

1st ascent: M. Frith and D. McKinnell 18.10.70.

THE LINK 75 ft. Hard Severe

About 6 feet of Ariel is a shallow break in the vertical wall. Climb this for 10 feet and move left to gain the obvious traverse line, follow this leftwards to where it is possible to climb up and reach the large ledge on Caliban.

M. Frith and D. McKinnell 11.10.70.

ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE 45 ft. Hard Very Severe

Climb the crack to a shallow niche. A long reach round the overhang is made and the short wall above climbed with difficulty to a large ledge. Move left and finish up the loose break to a tree belay on the right.

1st ascent: D. McKinnell and M. Frith, 8.11.70.

PROBLEM WALL 35 ft. Very Severe

Start about 40 ft. from Beginners Chimney between two small saplings. Using a high right hand hold gain the small ledges above using some doubtful holds. Move right to finish up the loose break.

1st ascent: M. Frith and D. McKinnell. 18.19.710.

Nether Tor (Kinder).

FORGERY 60 ft. Hard Very Severe

This worthwhile route has been unmasked by the recent collapse of the large tower which formed the right wall of Nether Tor Crack. Start about 15 ft. right of Snooker Route at a crack containing a large chockstone. Climb the crack and move right under an overhang. Continue up the wall passing a detached block to a ledge on the edge of the buttress. Move up and right on goodholds to the base of an obvious wide crack. Pull into the crack with difficulty and continue more easily up and rightwards to the top.

1st ascent: J. A. Gosling, K. Coyne.

15th November 1970.

Rivelin Edge.

WOBBLY WALL. Extremely Severe 5B

Twenty feet to the right of the Brush Off is a small wall (the arete of this wall is already climbed by an awkward VS but I do not know the name of this). Climb the wall with difficulty up the centre of it until the edge of the shallow crack can be reached. Up then with less difficulty.

1st ascent: Ed. Ward - Drummond 1971

Burbage North.

BANANA FINGER Extremely Severe 5C 20 ft.

Left of the Overhang Buttress is a small face protected underneath it by a long narrow overhang. Where the overhang fades out to the right use a poor edge to reach a small and poor finger hold away to the left. Change hands on this (hard) and fidget slightly left. Up with some difficulty to reach better hand holds and then up to a

good resting place. Straight up easily now.

1st ascent: Ed. Ward- Drummond June 1971.

Lawrencefield

UNAMED 30 ft. Very Severe

The red stained corner to the right of the start of Jughandle.

1st ascent: R. Clater, P. Tilley.

Higgar Tor.

THE FLUTE OF HOPE. Extremely Severe. 5C 65 ft.

This route, which is a little harder than the Rasp, crosses the leaning block of Higgar Tor from the extreme bottom right hand corner, to the extreme top left hand corner (finishing along the prominent horizontal crack at the top left).

Begin just at the left of the foot of the File and climb up to the horizontal crack. Follow this left onto the front face of the leaning block and with difficulty and no protection climb down until it possible to move up onto a most awkward (steep) resting place at the foot of the crack. Up this and onto good jams in the continuation crack above. There is a sling in place here which is used first to rest and then to begin the next move. Using the sling make a very long and difficult reach away left and place a nut in a hidden crack and use this to begin a strenuous and difficult move onto the middle of the Rasp' it is possible to rest on jams here. Up slightly as for the Rasp until one reaches the small niche just below the top. Now move left following the overhanging horizontal crack to its close after about twenty feet. Then move up to the sloping summit more easily.

1st ascent: Ed. Ward-Drummond and Hamish Armitage.

July 4th 1971.

Stanage

CALVARY 55ft. Extreme

This route remains the central face of the buttress on the left of the Unconquerables and ranks as one of the hardest routes of its kind on gritstone.

Start about 15 ft. of Cleft Wall, Route 1 at the base of a steep crack.

Climb the crack to a good thread at its top and hand traverse left for 5 ft. Move up with difficulty on to obvious flake (nut in place). From the top of the flake move left and climb a shallow scoop (crux) to a resting place. Using a peg on the left (in place) move up the wall and climb the groove on the left edge of the buttress to the top.

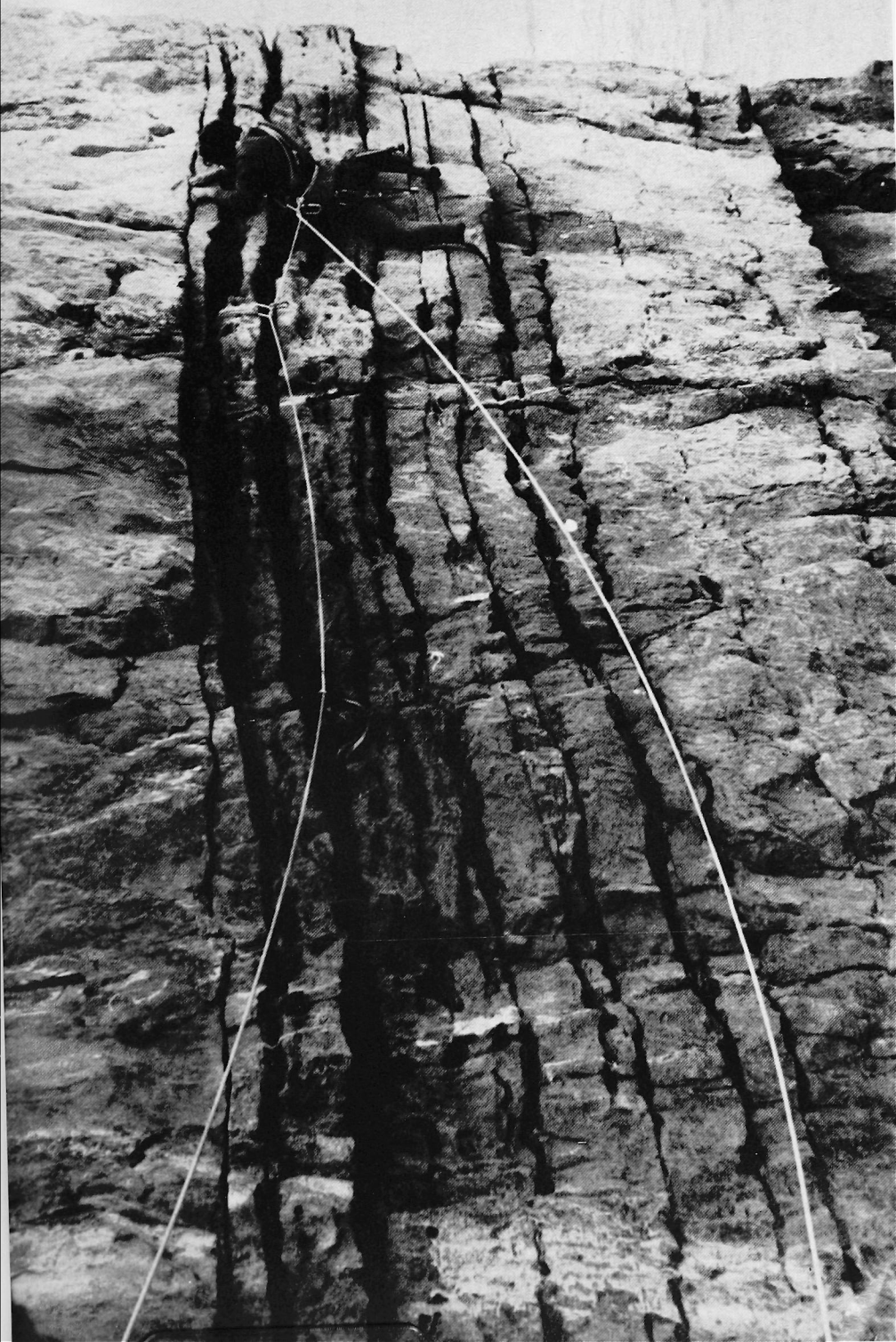
*1st ascent: M. Simpkins. J. A. Gosling.
June 1970.*

THE GUILLOTINE. Extremely Severe 5C 40 ft.

This climbs the prominent overhanging, undercut buttress just to the left of Verandah Buttress.

Start in the centre of the buttress and up onto a small ledge with a suspect flake above it. Move left for a few feet then with long and difficult moves slightly right and up, reach a good ledge and swing out on this and up over the bulge to a resting place. Now climb 15 ft horizontally left with difficulty beneath the roof and place a large angle (1½") below the prow of the roof. Using a sling on this make a long and awkward move out under the roof to a thin crack and climb out sensationally over the roof to easier ground above. The route is protected by nuts alone except for the one peg which was removed.

*1st ascent: Ed. Ward- Drummond and Hamish Green-Armitage
September 1971.*



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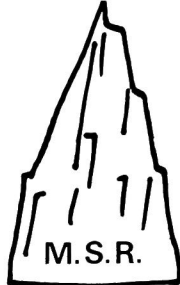




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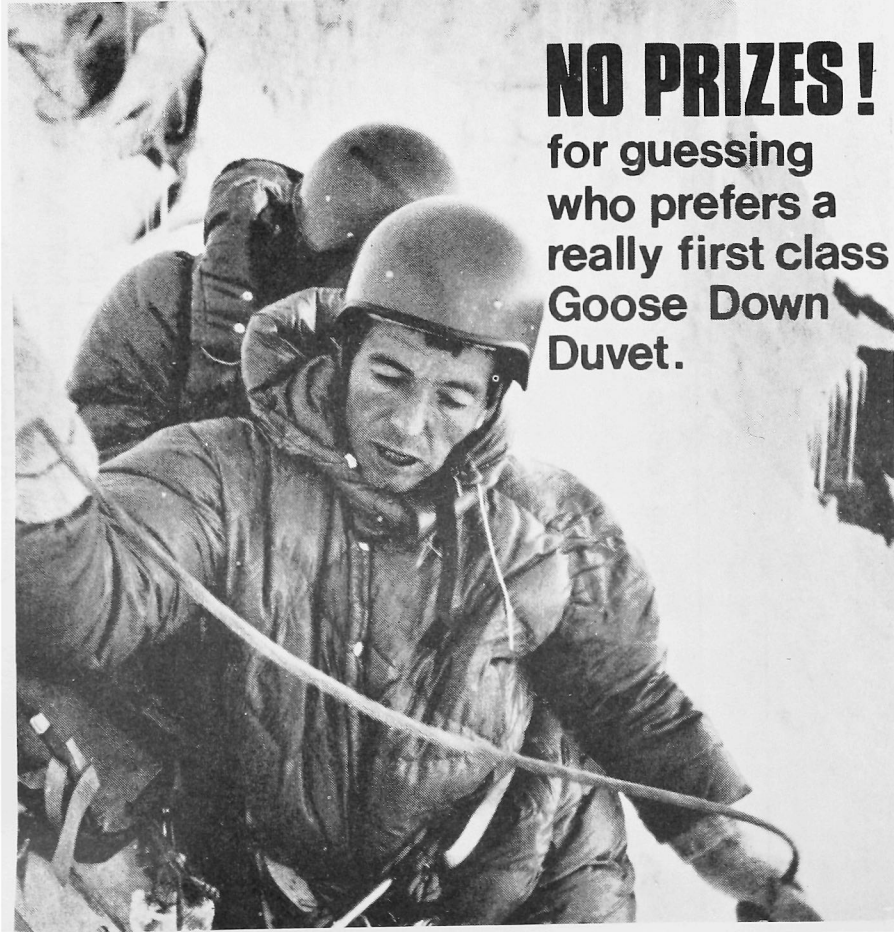
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