

THE  
CLIMBERS' CLUB  
JOURNAL

1976





# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Edited by  
KEN WILSON and BILL O'CONNOR

1976  
THE CLIMBERS' CLUB, LONDON

This is the ninety-eighth issue of the  
**CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL**

Copies of the journal may be obtained  
by C.C. Members from Mrs. M. F.  
Walker, 22 Asmunds Hill, London  
N.W.11.

Trade enquiries to:  
Cordee, 249 Knighton Church Road,  
Leicester. Tel. 709353.

Published by the Climbers' Club in  
1976 and printed by Mayoh Press Ltd.  
Preston Street, Carnforth, Lancs.

Set in Linotype Times 10pt. & 8pt.  
Photos and adverts in off-set litho.

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Pat Littlejohn leading on the first ascent of Spacewalk on Lundy's Devil's Chimney Cliff. Easter, 1974. *Photo: Ken Wilson*





# GO WEST YOUNG MAN

DAVE PEARCE

We boarded the Greyhound bus to hear a southern drawl as the driver repeated Federal regulations, "Smoking only in the back four rows. Cigarettes only, no pipes, cigars, marijuana or any other kind of funny stuff" So far we had been in California about two hours and it was living up to expectations. We had flown into the LA smog, been driven through the neon jungle, past drive-in movies and bought gas to the accompaniment of Kojak sirens. Like two wide-eyed kids. In all, Friday was 32 hours long and we slept for none.

By Saturday lunchtime we had reached Yosemite, pitched the tent and had recommendations for an afternoon quickie. More expectations were met on Glacier Point Apron. It's as hard as Etive but longer, and with as many Geordies.

Come Sunday we got our first surprise. Pitch black it was and us in the middle of the woods en route for Half Dome. Failure on a route is one thing, but to fail on the walk up! Pride was duly swallowed and we bivied in the woods, worrying about our lack of an ice-axe. For the bears you know.

Now I was The Big Wall Climber of the team, having a long string of failures in Norway to my name. Malcolm Howells was more the Expedition sort. Next morning on the col I learnt the relative merits of our qualifications when he left me the haul bag to carry down to the foot of the face. The haul bag is a good example of evolution, superbly adapted to ferrying loads up steep rock, but on a steep, brush covered slope it's like a fish out of water. I seem to remember descending most of the way on my head.

Malcolm Howells near the top of Half Dome's North-West Face.  
*Photo: Dave Pearce*

By mid-afternoon our master sportplan was just about back on schedule. Malc had learnt the gentle arts of "juggin' up" (Jumaring) and hauling and it looked as if we might make the bivi ledge, despite our late start and an accidental attempt at a new route. As we settled in our nest for the night we took stock — halfway up the N.W. face of Half Dome, cantaloups and corned beef for tea, a good ledge and weather warm enough to sit out in shorts. The only ingredient missing was pain.

That came the next morning: a 5.9 squeeze chimney, in fact the Robbins Chimney, the crux of the route, and straight after breakfast. But this is the Best of All Possible Worlds, ergo Malcolm's lead. In all we met five squeeze chimneys on our trip, all of them on top of breakfast, all Malcolm's leads. Come home Leibnitz, all is forgiven.

The first half of the route had been undistinguished, but the second was magnificent. The Robbins Chimney was the first pitch of a system of cracks and chimneys offering nearly a thousand feet of really good, varied climbing. Jam cracks, chimneys, underclings, laybacks, all at the HVS, XS borderline. This section leads to Big Sandy. Not, as you might expect, some giant, fair-headed Park Ranger, but the ideal bivi ledge; big and flat and sandy. Too bad it was so early in the afternoon. I now nurse a desire to go back for the Direct Route which is normally done with a bivi on Big Sandy.

So far the wall had been vertical, but above Big Sandy it got steep. An impending wall leads towards a huge rock cornice that overhangs the whole route. Half Dome deserves its name: its as though a giant hemisphere had been split in twain by the great Kung Fu fighter in the skies. These days, tourists climb iron gangways up the sides of the dome, crawl to the edge and peer over. They find themselves above the roof, 25 feet beyond the main face and 2,000 feet above the screes. They are generally impressed. We had been watching a succession of startled faces appear throughout the day. We gave the traditional greeting. Now, as we followed cracks towards the roof, it seemed as though the joke was on us. Then it became clear why the first ascent party christened



the next feature Thank God Ledge: it avoids the summit overhang. We followed the ledge and its admonition, but we did not thank Dave Nicol. His topo showed Fourth Class (i.e. scrambling) to the top; instead we found a steep aid pitch complete with an in situ, badly rusted, RURP. But the Best of All Possible Worlds, ergo Malcolm's Lead. Good old Leibnitz. Then came the fourth class. Way over to the left, up a bit then back right. No runners so as to make the top in one pitch. Belay on the lip of the overhang to give Malc the opportunity to view the route, from space. Far Out. We made it.

The same walk down with the same surprise — pitch black in the middle of the woods. We got within a mile of the valley, lost the trail and had to backtrack. Five miles later we reached the road then the bar.

For me, the attraction of Yosemite is the big walls. I don't feel the need to travel 6,000 miles to do short desperates, we have plenty of those at home. So having warmed up on America's first grade VI, our sportplan took us on to the big daddy, El Capitan. But first the preparations. There was an evening when the beer talked and we all listened. Next morning we were three — Al Harris was to join us on the Salathé. As hangovers cleared it seemed an excellent idea, partly because with the Yosemite system three move faster than two, but mainly because Al is good company. The sort of good company that every father warns his daughter against. A brilliant climber, he was a founding father of the Llanberis and Deiniolen ghettos. He gave up climbing in favour of parties, pop music, alcohol and other delights of the flesh. When he sold Wendy's Cafe, the proceeds were devoted to a prolonged Stateside holiday for himself and his partner Troyd. In the couple of weeks before we arrived, Al's old climbing spark had been rekindled and he was fanning it with his usual enthusiasm.

We collected equipment and supplies. Ten gallons of water, sardines, oranges, boiled sweets, biscuits; sixty karabiners, forty pegs, innumerable nuts. The climbing equipment is hung on a bandolier worn across the chest. The Americans call this a Rack, presumably because of the pain of wearing it. We spent a day

packing haul bags, fixing ropes on the first three pitches and hydrating ourselves. There is a local theory that if vast quantities of water are drunk the day before a climb then the body will retain some. However, that night we gatecrashed a dance, Al making a 5.9 move through the kitchen skylight to land amongst the cooks. Since the dance provided free beer we eventually started the climb hung-over, lacking sleep and very dehydrated. Traditional, you might say.

We juggled up the fixed ropes and hauled the bags. Next step was to throw half of our rack down as we had far too much. A very satisfying noise it made too. The next pitch was mine. Aid on small wires and a skyhook to reach a fixed bashee. Then a thin slab. Try it free. Back to the bashee, tail between the legs. Try it on hooks. One, OK. Two, breath gently. A long reach, still can't make the hold. It begins to look like Leibnitz was wrong as the hook starts to walk. Now it's off and so am I. Down twenty feet and maybe it's not such a bad world as the bashee holds. Back again. One hook, this time a RURP, tension, the jug! Mantel, a couple of bolts, more tension, another hook, some free and then the stance. Hard it was, A4, and more's the shame as it has been climbed free.

The next few days were just plain good fun. Good climbing, good company, good bivouac ledges, good food. Hot in the day, but a breeze to help the water last. Breakfast in bed and watch the swifts below catch theirs on the wing. Climb through the day dragging our homes like snails, while flying crickets float effortlessly past, a full 2,000 feet up. Supper in the dark, as blind as bats whilst bats circle by, seeing. A simple, elegant world, devoid of choice. We watch the world below, full of people who will choose what they do today, tonight, tomorrow; while we live out our choice, made at the start.

The logistics of three men, four ropes and two haulbags defeated us. Day 1: the second man hauled whilst number three removed aid. Day 2: the third man hauled whilst number one lead. We knew that three should be faster than two. Each day we were slower. Why? By El Cap Spire we had the answer. We were one

rope short for the American system. Maybe next time? Meanwhile our system had its compensations — company on the stances; conversation flowed free. Increasingly about one subject. The Headwall, the last main feature of the route and a fitting climax. By repute it is 95°, 250 feet high with a single, perfect crack, above a 15 foot roof too.

For the second man, on jumars, such a pitch is a series of short sharp swings as each aid point is removed — always out of control for with both hands to remove the aid, there are none to hold the jumars. We did not have three hands, but our team was three hands and number three would have no runners on the rope above. For him it would not be several short sharp swings. Just one big swing. One very big swing.

But all this is yet to come. Right now we have the pleasure of anticipation. Who will it be? As the lead rotates, so do our loyalties. By Sous le Toit Ledge the outcome is certain. Al will be the hero. Malcolm fixes one pitch below the roof and we dine in the evening light. Bivi number four and the only uncomfortable ledge of the trip. Just room for three backsides, legs dangling above half a mile of air. We talk for most of the night, of that which is gone, and that which is to come. We have great confidence in Al. Having survived a fall from the top of Tremadoc, unroped, he obviously has a charmed life. If the rope breaks, he will land on a passing plane.

Next morning we jug up Malc's pitch and I set off for the roof. Hard it is, and slow I am. Past the normal belay and round the roof, to give Al a good start to his swing. The roof is tiered, a braver man than I might even free climb it. I belay in slings twenty feet up the Headwall. Malc cleans the pitch and sets off up the next: even if the belay will stand three people and two haul bags, our nerves will not.

Al wishes the haul bags luck and launches them. Finally, after four hours of anticipation, he leaves the stance in style. I swear he went 50 feet into space, all arms and legs and lungs, spinning wildly. The rope runs back and forth across the lips of the overhang. I am powerless to help, but there's no force in it anyway. Al

jumars at the speed of light to a packet of cigarettes and me worrying about the rope, blown over a spike thirty feet away. We untie in a tangle of ropes, bags and nerves and it pulls free.

When Al, the bags and the runners had gone it was my turn to swing. A mere fifteen footer. Malc's pitch looked excellent, a full run out, entirely on nuts for aid with immense exposure. By the time I rejoined the rock, Al was nearing Thank God Ledges. Here, opinions differed. I said the top could be made, they said not. I said we must try. They said the ledge was comfy and should be savoured. I was humoured, but they were right because darkness was on their side. Next morning we lay in bed, ropes reaching within sixty feet of the horizontal. Our sweets and the ledge lasted till lunchtime, then back to the world of choice and complexity.

Our sportplan dictated three walls in four weeks. So far we had used less than two weeks. What was more, the South Face of Mount Watkins was next on the list and this has a gruelling walk in. Clearly our plan needed revision. Our advisors were the Stonemasters, a sort of Californian Creag Dhu or Rock and Ice. They analysed our efforts and pronounced the verdict. We obviously knew how to do the routes, but we didn't know how to enjoy them. They explained. Yosemite's walls have lost their aura of mystery and have become a non-stop party from bottom to top. You should prepare accordingly. Before the first ascent of the Pacific Ocean (the latest and greatest on El Cap), Bridwell was seen preening his moustache, "Looks real good. I'm really ready for this route".

Having developed a taste for El Capitan, we decided to try the Nose in the approved style. Fred East took us under his wing. "A-ho Man! I'm taking the Limeys up the Nostril". Now Fred has a remarkable likeness to Baloo from the Walt Disney cartoon of the Jungle Book. In fact Fred once had a vacation job at Disneyland as a mock alpinist climbing a huge papier mâché Matterhorn. I suspect he was the source of Disney's inspiration for the character. We spent much time collecting cassette recorders and other items to remedy deficiencies in our Big Wall rack.

The weather had other ideas. For ten days it either stormed or

threatened to storm. We tried some short climbs, but not with much enthusiasm. Many American climbers spent the time training on the boulders, ropes, parallel bars and rings around Camp IV. Few sports centres in Britain have as many items of Olympic Gymnastic equipment. A typical evening conversation:

Yank: "Have you worked out today?"

Limey: "Worked what out?"

The Stonemasters continued our schooling in enjoyment. Fortunately the storm came to an end before our finances.

By Sunday our sportplan was in jeopardy. The Nose usually takes three or four days, plus one day on the initial pitches. Allow one day to reach Los Angeles in time for Friday's plane. The equation only balances if we start today. Fred was hunting an elusive employment cheque, so Malc and I packed for a two man ascent. Fortunately the forecast was good, so we ignored the torrential rain and hauled our bags to Sickle Ledge. We returned to Camp IV drenched.

Next morning rain dripping on the tent had us fooled but eventually the penny dropped. Above the trees was blue sky. We left camp, with Troyd in charge of Friday's transport arrangements.

On earlier climbs we had been struck by the number of redundant pitons; particularly on Half Dome where they were often next to perfect nut placements. On the Nose there were none. The Nose may not have the variety of the Salathé and it certainly does not have the same choice of bivi ledges. But the Nose has elegance. A system of clean, parallel-sided cracks interspersed with pendulums and a sprinkling of ledges that make three and a half thousand feet of the perfect rock climb. It has been climbed in a day. It is still occasionally done as a pure artificial climb. Use nuts and you make it the standard of your choice, without affecting others. The pitches I remember most vividly are the uncompromising, parallel-sided cracks — the agony of choice: to free climb or to fit a nut, knowing you do not have the strength for both — the Stoveleg Cracks, the right side of Boot Flake, the pitch above Camp VI. Ask Malcolm and he will give you a different, equally fine selection. For we each jumared half the climb. Perhaps he would list the

pendulums, the swing into the Stovelegs followed by seventy feet of HVS jamming before he could place a runner, the King Swing, that giant double pendulum from the top of Boot Flake, or possibly the in-situ peg below the Great Roof that dropped him twenty feet upside down. Quick thinking stopped him dropping the complete rack. That peg is now cold welded to the roof.

We made the top by Thursday, and the plane by minutes. Don't let anyone deprecate Yosemite to you, it is every bit as good as it's cracked up to be. But beware. It's a helluva walk up to Half Dome.



**Photos from the Archives.** Above: Tryfan revellers c.1900. Below: Ogwen Cottage — base the explorations of O. G. Jones, the Abrahams and others at the turn of the century  
*Photos: Abraham Brothers*





**Scruffy Rock and Ice Yobbos c.1950**, featuring from left to right (seated) Les Wright, Don Roscoe, Morty Smith and Doug Verity; (standing) Freddie Gough, Ronnie Cummerford, Joe Brown and Dennis Gray. *Photo: Don Whillans*

**Dapper clean-cut young men — Paine Expedition 1962**. L to r. Barry Page, Derek Walker, Vic Bray, Don Whillans, Chris Bonington and Ian Clough.

*Photo: Bonington collection*





# BON APPÉTIT

KEVIN FITZGERALD

Centuries ago I was able to afford a couple of nights in that famous Avignon hotel where they serve a pudding called Saint Bénézet. It is a quite exceptionally good pudding and, as I was not then a member of the Climbers' Club, I ordered it. It was a beautiful summer night and we dined outside. A Dutchman with his daughter, eating at a nearby table saw my pudding arriving and promptly ordered it for themselves; but an American lady, all bosom and blue rinse, walked across to my table and stood looking over my shoulder at the chef's masterpiece. As I took up my spoon and fork she spoke. "Dear Gard", she said, "Are you gonna *eat* that"?

Two or three years later I was elected to the Climbers' Club and began my long apprenticeship to what I can only describe as 'survival eating'. Almost at once I made the discovery that there not only existed an artifact called a cheese and onion sandwich but that persons existed eager to consume it and even to ask for more. That was only a beginning.

It is a very long time since I wrote in this Journal of Mr. Hargreaves taking from the worn out haversack he still carries a fragment of semi-decayed mutton, encrusted with old raisins and bits of chocolate, and offering it to me with the words, "You don't eat enough, Fitzgerald; have a bit of this". Every time I meet my friend Mr. Hargreaves I re-call that incident, which I suppose is the reason he usually regards me as 'looking white and sickly'.

Now, Hr. Hargreaves is the man from whose magical pen flowed "Return to Arfon", perhaps the best thing ever written about climbing in North Wales. I ought to have known that there was

worse to come than anything that might be proffered from the haversack of that kindly man. There was indeed.

I was perhaps an unfortunate new member. Somewhere in the Club in my early days there must have been one or two 'soft men' like myself. I never seemed to meet any of them; without exception all my new friends were the hardest of 'hard men'. And it cannot be too widely spread abroad that the real 'hard men' of the climbing world not only can but do eat anything, and with a 'gusto' quite horrible to witness. I once had a set meal in Helyg over which an infinity of trouble had been taken. Sometimes I wake up in the night and remember it.

Now it is known that in order to remain on the fringes of what I believe is described in educational circles as the 'climbing upsurge' I became and have remained a total abstainer. This deliberate choice of mine, regarded by senior medical opinion as coming too late in any event, brought unexpected perils with it. The genuine 'hard men' among climbers are nearly all soft centred, ready to burst into tears if they hear Tom Jones bawling out some rubbish about the 'green green grass of home' and actually bursting into them if some climbing Amazon smiles at them from under lashes three inches long set in a wild tangle of hair. But they are men of action, strong as horses, firm in their convictions. Their hands once given in friendship are never withdrawn and they happen to be, in my view, the salt of the earth. So, in practically every bar in North Wales, at some time or another over the years, I have had my glass of dry ginger ale snatched from my hand and poured over some inoffensive plant. "Not while I'm breathing", they say, taking my empty glass over to the bar and asking for it to be filled with dry ginger ale. On walks, or silly little rock climbs made out of pure kindness, they produce teetotal drinks from enormous rucksacks. The bottles have words like 'rhubarb' and 'burdock' printed on their labels. I have drunk their contents and it would not be difficult to suggest other ingredients.

Dining with the Climbers' Club is what used to be called 'something else again'. For obvious reasons, and for many years before the present time of inflation, Club dinners have had to be

reasonably priced and of that tasteless glutinous variety which can be multiplied indefinitely into, 'so many meals at such and such cost', by the food mechanics operating in the kitchens of inferior restaurants. In the twenty-eight years, three of them as a non-member in which I have been dining with the Club I have never succeeded in eating more than a mouthful or two, murmuring to my neighbours lying phrases like, 'On a diet, you know', 'Have to watch my weight a bit these days', and even 'I'm forbidden to eat more than once a day'. But ALWAYS I have come away from these affairs maybe starving but happier than when I arrived. Dining with climbers is always a privilege.

I have some wonderful memories of climbing dinners. Never shall I forget the face of Sir John Hunt, as he then was, as he flinched from a waiter pouring sparkling burgundy into his glass. He saw me watching this ghastly procedure and said, "I think you don't drink this stuff, Kevin?" "No", I said, "I don't". The great Man of Everest gave a little sigh — yes, he did; I saw and heard it. "You can have no idea how lucky you are", he said.

In the last year of Sir John's Presidency a kindly, almost saintly looking man, from Scotland replied for The Guests. That put a stop to all speeches at any Club dinner for the best part of three years. When this man sat down, in total silence, after an interminable twenty minutes, four-fifths of that all male gathering were sitting with heads buried in their hands. It was as bad as that. When the years of silence were broken, at a Welsh Dinner, and by the star speaker of the Club, Mr. Emlyn Jones (who has the enviable power of turning any dining night into a special gala night), it was noticeable that he spoke mainly in Serbo-Croat.

Somewhere in his book, 'The Comedians', Mr. Grahame Greene observes that the whole of a writer's experience is packed into his first twenty years. After that, and for the remainder of his time on earth, he becomes an observer. My own climbing life began as most people were finishing theirs, and I had to pack my twenty years of experience very tightly into a densely confined space. But I have, most mercifully, been granted time for observation and there can, I think, be no member of the Club who has looked at

his fellows more closely or with greater pleasure, happiness and enjoyment.

A climber in love, for example, is a Coronation Procession in himself or, even more gaudily, herself. Ordinary men and women in love are permitted moon-faced expressions, absences of mind, even breakings out into the poetry of, say, Mr. Swinburne. But in addition to all that male climbers have more important matters to think about. How will she re-act to a honeymoon in Chamonix? Will she make some kind of scene if left in a tent for a day or two while something important, like the Brenva Route, is attempted? Of course she doesn't mind now, but will she want to exchange my Whillans Box for a bedroom in a hotel when we are married? Am I going to be cluttered up for the rest of my life with sand shoes and deck chairs and picnics on beaches? Do I, in fact, really LOVE this woman?

I've been through all that at second hand. I've even held weeping *brides* in my arms and said, 'There, There', just like a man in a book. And often enough I've had to say, "Look, dear, he's doing Brant; he can't possibly be back until six or seven o'clock. Now stop crying and I'll run you down for tea in Beddgelert at the Goat". There was a short but heavily congested period when I was quite well known in the Goat, an elderly man in climbing regalia sitting about with attractive young women in floods of tears. It's years now since I dared enter the place.

An aunt used to tell me that I was born an old man. I was only twenty-four when I heard a first confession of unrequited love poured into my most unwilling ear. And what is more although I had never met a climber, or thought about meeting one, let alone trying to become one, it was in the Bernese Oberland. No one believes it, naturally, but in the long exhausting days of soft snow, skins, ten feet long skis and jingling sleigh bells (intermingled with occasional nights of dinner jacketed opulence), I was acquainted with misery, ice, and height. And in a tiny hay chalet, high up on the lower slopes of something ending in 'Horn', she told me of her love for some Englishman or other who seemed incapable of getting beyond, "Er". We were interrupted at an

interesting point in her narrative by the Farmer. "Is grave danger of fire", he said, perhaps with rather more truth than he may have surmised. I had the right answer and, due to long residence in England, the right way of putting it together. "Risk of Fire, Non", I said, "Am son of Irish farmer, much ploughing, much hay-making". "Irlandais", I said, adding for good measure something dredged out of Kennedy's Latin Grammar some years earlier, "Agricola", I said. He went away.

That experience came in handy a quarter of a century later as twice I watched engagement rings being torn from third fingers of left hands and flung to those winds which rage ever about the Pinnacle Club. And once, with a cry of "Never, never never", (which proved to me that nothing in 'King Lear' is exaggerated), I watched a wedding ring hurtling through the rain, and irretrievably over that stone wall on the Lower Road. I like to think that it was a spurious ring made from brass by an unscrupulous non-climber in a Birmingham side street. I know they got married in the end because the husband said to me a year or so back, "I knew marriage would affect my standard: Now my son has to lead anything above severe".

Happily I never had any standards to affect. Since I was elected to this 'Club of all the Talents' I have learned how to sit about soaking wet, bitterly cold, and to pick with some appearance of relish at bits of burnt sausage, something called 'sandwich spread' and once, but only by accident, at cold pork and pickle inside a doughy roll. I know now not to look for, expect, anything which might be construed as comfort within twenty miles of anything climbable anywhere in the British Isles. Climbers are rather like Discalced Friars; they find actual beds uncomfortable, a pandering to something unworthy, an admission that deep within them there might be an unsuspected weakness. I'm getting like that myself, but not of my own volition.

Before my election to the Club you could say that I was a pleasantly normal man, always reasonably unhappy, reasonably unfit, totally unfulfilled. And what have I got now to put into Life's 'Kitty'? A bust back, a detached retina, a right leg without feeling

or ligaments, and, never once in twenty-five years, not for a single month, have I possessed a full set of toenails. But you could add to that, complete fulfilment, total happiness, and a moderate degree of physical fitness. Then you have what I am, a member of the Climbers' Club and proud of it.

Good gracious; I nearly forgot the whole point of these ramblings. I sleep in a special 'medical' bed, I wear something called 'An Appliance' and, like a member of the Tonton Macoute in Haiti, I am always in black glasses. Yesterday, just before I began to type this, the doctor said, "You'll have to rest for a bit, take things easily, don't stoop, don't pick up anything". "After all", the doctor said, "you really must try and remember your age". Well, you wouldn't think, would you, that you could pull a stomach muscle walking up an outlying pimple on a small Brecon Beacon? It seems that you can. Mr. Bonington should take me with him next time, but not, I beg and pray, with chicken-flavoured crisps in my sixty pound load.

# THE MOST AMAZING MOVE IN THE WORLD

ALEC SHARP

Rock-climbing can provide many experiences and sensations, from utter terror to intense happiness, from miserable wet days to sun-baked rock. The one I have always found the most satisfying is the feeling of pure and intense joy which I have sometimes felt after a certain route, or even a particular pitch on a route. It is a rare feeling, more powerful by far than the feeling one gets after a good day's climbing; a feeling of sheer elation and exhilaration when the whole of one's body is filled with excitement and one feels completely alive.

I have had the same feeling on other occasions besides climbing: great acceleration and power in a car produces it — while being driven in the Porsche of a friend I just wanted to laugh all the time I felt so happy. But in a car the feeling is in existence only while there is motion. Stop, and the feeling disappears shortly. In climbing on the other hand the sensation only really starts on the completion of the pitch or route, when the nervous energy drains away and you can relax, and it can achieve an intensity greater than can be provided by a stimulus such as a car, although much less frequently.

There are three main criteria for enjoyment while climbing: good weather, interesting climbing, and competence.

There are no more satisfying conditions for climbing in than calm, sunny days, with not a cloud in the sky, and warm dry rock underfoot. As well as being the giver of life, the sun is also a giver of happiness, and immediately puts one in a more relaxed and cheerful frame of mind. I spent my Whitsun holidays in Wales four years ago climbing with Dave Midlane, when we did many of

the short classic hard routes such as Erosion Direct and Suicide Wall and throughout the holiday we had gorgeously sunny weather and dry rock and the whole atmosphere was one of calm and peace. We were able to just bask in the sun while the other was climbing and everything felt so relaxed. I still regard that time as the best climbing days I have had. The sun can make the difference between a climb feeling very serious and just being pure enjoyment. On a stance on Flying Buttress on Dinas Cromlech in poor weather I felt miserable and the whole situation seemed dangerous, and the belay unsafe, but suddenly the sun broke through the clouds and the danger disappeared, leaving only enjoyment, and the belay now appeared really solid, able to take any fall. Or soloing the easier routes at Tremadoc on such a day can be truly exhilarating.

The climbing itself is extremely important, and this covers the state and nature of the rock, the protection available, the type and style of climbing, and the position of the route or pitches. Loose or brittle rock such as one finds on, say, Red Wall has its place but I don't think anyone could honestly say that it makes a climb more enjoyable. More serious or more of an achievement, yes, but not more enjoyable. Similarly with wet or greasy rock. Good runners, but not too many of them, help, as a lack of runners can raise the level of nervous tension high enough to detract from the appreciation of a route, while too many placements and one starts feeling unhappy whenever there is a longer interval between them. And of course varied climbing and technically interesting moves, preferably many of them, draw concentration from the climber, with the result that having had to put more into the climb in the way of working out a complex series of moves, he gets more out of it.

This is why the Tremadoc cliffs are so popular; not just because the weather is generally good, but also because the rock, protection, and style of climbing is exactly that which does help to make the climbs very enjoyable. Routes like Stromboli, Tensor, Grasper or Vector are excellent examples of this. Many people dismiss Tremadoc as being of an outcrop nature and too short but, while



I agree that the routes are short and lack seriousness, I would also say that the actual climbing there is the best in Wales.

Nearly everyone experiences times when they cannot climb properly or lack the confidence to make the next move. Similarly there are times when everyone falls into place and nothing seems hard, and one just drifts up a climb with no real effort. The first experience can be very depressing while the second gives a superb feeling of confidence and competence. To climb fast and find no moves desperate is immensely satisfying and thus to do many routes in a day can be tremendously satisfying, whether it be soloing easy routes at Stanage or climbing three or four Extremes on Cloggy. Of course the way in which one's partner is climbing is very relevant too, there being few more infuriating times on a climb than when the partner cannot lead a pitch or make a sequence of moves, and you know that you could, or you want to do several more routes that day. But when both are climbing well and nothing takes long there's no stopping one's dreams.

The relationship one has with one's partner can make or break a climb, and there are some people who I enjoy climbing with far more than with most others, and from my point of view there exists a strong bond between us. At times such as these the climbing can take on a secondary rôle, and the day can be enjoyable, without doing any inspiring routes. The most powerful rapport I have experienced was with Hank Pasquill, one hot day in the summer on Anglesey. We did Transatlantic Crossing and Powerit, and while I took pleasure from the climbing, the routes themselves were unimportant compared with just being on the route and climbing with Hank. We shared everything that way, even down to a fall each, Hank's on the hard groove on Transatlantic Crossing (due to loose rock), which we eventually got up after several attempts between us, and mine while attempting a new route. But the fact that we did two routes, or that we failed on the third was meaningless because the enjoyment had come from just sharing the rope and rock with Hank.

But while all these factors produce very enjoyable climbing,

something extra is needed for the rare feeling of exhilaration which accompanies a very small number of routes. The above factors, in various combinations, can provide unforgettable days, the lazy, hazy days that one remembers with fondness, but will not give the ecstasy which is attained on some routes.

This extra spark nearly always comes from doing a pitch or a climb which one has dreamed of doing, and where there is a doubt about getting up although one hopes and feels that it should be possible, especially when it accompanies a rise in standard. The presence of several, or of all of the above factors is necessary as a basis upon which to build to achieve this feeling, and without the basis one rarely gets the elation.

The first time I did Cenotaph Corner I felt superb and deliriously happy, as I did after a free ascent of Tensor, or after the first pitch of Tyrannosaurus Rex, while Vector remains the best climb I have done. Every single factor was present, and sitting in the cave stance I felt completely alive. I felt like shouting and singing, I wanted to stay there for ever, I couldn't stop smiling, and it remains one of the great experiences of my life.

On the other hand though, Skull did not provide this feeling. The dream and the rise in standard were there, but too many of the basic factors were missing.

More recently a move on a new route I did with Steve Humphries gave me the same rare sensation. What follows is an attempt at a description of that move and of the events which led up to it.

The route, The Creeping Lemma, is situated on the Yellow Wall on Anglesey, and I will first say something about the area. The Anglesey cliffs are the most important major cliffs in Britain, in two ways. Firstly they are probably the most important cliffs in the history of rock climbing, because of the change in attitudes they represent. It was on Anglesey that people started to realise that it was possible to climb rock which was overhanging for long sections, and that loose and brittle rock was not so much of an obstacle as was previously thought. Climbs which used to be

thought steep or loose are now considered reasonable by Anglesey standards. The second way in which the cliffs are so important is in the matter of quality. The climbs there are almost invariably good and large numbers of them are in the top rank of quality. In Wales, Cloggy is the only cliff which can compete with Anglesey for the quality of the routes and even it drops behind.

Yellow Wall is one of the more impressive cliffs on Anglesey, which is saying something, and from below all you see is a bristling mass of overhangs. From above it is possible to make out lines but to imagine climbing there is mind-blowing. The first time I heard of Yellow Wall it was described as a crumbling horror but it is not nearly as bad as that — the rock is not as good as Gogarth main cliff, but is a lot better than that in Mousetrap Zawn or on Red Wall.

The first view I had of it was last summer when I did Drummond's route, The Moon, with Brian Hall. Previous to this route, all the existing ones had taken lines up the sides of the face proper, but Drummond met the challenge, and in a masterpiece of route-finding he produced a truly impressive climb. It was a very powerful first ascent concept, climbing into difficulties without knowing of a sure way out. On the second stance I looked to see how one could escape, and the only way I could see was to tie both ropes together and abseil, leaving the ropes behind! Drummond wrote the route up in a classic description, overblowing the difficulties a bit, but accurately describing the position — "The situations are strictly spacewalking". I took part in a rescue some time later of someone who had fallen off the second pitch — he was hanging at least twenty feet away from the rock!

There were obviously more possibilities for routes so I came back with Steve Humphries to do Sind, to become better acquainted with the cliff. The route turned out to be excellent climbing and while we were there I found THE line. From below it is the most obvious line on the face, taking a belt of red slabs diagonally from right to left, to finish up Castell Helen Girdle. Looking at it from Sind there were obviously two short hard sections and one of them looked simply incredible.

Anyway we came back one afternoon and climbed a long preliminary pitch, not hard but worrying in places, not least because of its length. It was 160 feet long, plus the stretch in a very taut rope! When Steve reached the stance the sun was going down so I decided to do likewise. Steve however wanted to finish up Pterodactyl so, ever ready to oblige, I started up it but after fifteen reluctant feet decided that it was impossible. Steve must have realised my heart wasn't in it as he let me come down. Steve is one of the keenest climbers I have ever met. No sooner is one route done than we're starting on the next. At least we get a lot of routes done!

So next weekend saw us back at our high point which we reached up an easy grass ramp, but the next section was where we had to commit ourselves to the main face. An easy angled ramp led up over a large loose slab of rock into a corner. The position here was the most impressive I have ever been in. On the left was a short slab, easy angled and about six feet across and two and a half wide. The staggering thing about it was that the wall above it overhung about thirty-five degrees, and it was undercut by a similar angle! Visions of the whole lot crumbling under my weight floated before my eyes and gingerly I moved left onto it and put in a peg for protection which reduced my state of trepidation somewhat. There was now a gap before the ramp continued again, parallel to the one I had just climbed, and looking down at the drop was mind-blowing. I discovered later that Ray Evans and Hank Pasquill had climbed the easy ramp to here but had been too impressed by the position to continue.

The only way I could visualise getting across was to reach a detached looking block and swing across on it. The only problem was, it was split in half and half of it was definitely loose. After some minutes getting into position I was able to just touch it with my peg hammer and after throwing the hammer at the block, and a few prods, the only thing left to do was to trust it. The crack had a slight wedge effect on the loose part so provided not too much weight was put on it, it should be alright. To get into a position from where I could touch the block took ages to work out — the only handhold was right beside the only useful foothold,

Alec Sharp probes on Creeping Lemma  
*Photo: Steve Humphries*









Rowland Edwards  
tentative on Oceanside  
(left) and assertive on  
New Dimension, two  
recent routes on Little  
and Great Orme.

*Photos: Nigel Metcalfe*





which was on the very edge of the slab, and with that amount of exposure I do things very cautiously. Anyway, by leaning and stretching I could just curl my fingers over the loose part and with a gentle pull the solid (I hoped) part was in reach. A strenuous swing followed and fortunately it held. A few feet round the corner was the super-safe peg belay of the Moon. A beautiful feeling of elation followed and I felt superbly happy. What a move! Difficult, and in one of the most incredible positions you could hope to come across. I had been doubtful as to its possibility from looking at it but now I had done it. The most amazing move in the world.

Steve followed and kicked the loose slab off the ramp — Yellow Wall is in the shape of an amphitheatre and I was very impressed by the resonance of the boom we heard as the slab hit the bottom, but failed to consider it as any sort of omen. Unhappily Steve trusted the loose side of the block too implicitly, with the result that it is now lying on the bottom, and Steve got a sore knee and a nasty shock. Great, I thought, now no one will be able to repeat the route. From here I reversed the Moon along the slabs, which was slightly easier than doing it the normal way, as I could miss out the celebrated, but very awkward, traversing almost on hands and knees. From this point the slabs continued along to, and under, some small roofs, but I didn't. The next moves looked desperate, and the general situation suggested to me that I try again some other time, so back along the traverse to the stance. Unfortunately the only ways off were either abseil on 300 feet of rope or up the last pitch of the Moon. It seemed harder this time. A few days later an abseil provided the means to place two protection pegs under the roof and so another visit was called for.

The next Saturday we were again back at the start of the second pitch. This time some friends were doing the Sind and as I went up the ramp, the leader was directly below me. Suddenly another slab of rock started to move as I stood on it so I moved up, but the slab moved down, narrowly missing the ropes, and plummeted straight for the climber but fortunately the rock was so steep that

Kilimanjaro, with the Kersten Glacier route marked (article on page 23).  
*Photo: John Cleare*

it passed about five feet outside him.

The short slab had lost none of its impressiveness in the meantime, and again it took a long while to get into a position from which I could progress. This time though, the block was well out of reach, even leaning as much as I dared, so I started rocking back and forth until a controlled lunge enabled fingers to hook over it and the stance to be attained. I was pleased at having done it but there was no elation or total joy this time. Just a desire to get across the next pitch before it started raining. The next pitch went without incident and the protection pegs gave confidence enough to make very hard moves under the roof to gain the Girdle. Here the rain started and continued until after Steve had arrived at the top.

At last it was over and we could climb somewhere else for a change! But what a route. Having done both Creeping Lemma and Moon I think that both are spoiled by the proximity of the other, but do only one and you have a superb route. The Moon is more sustained and a more powerful first ascent, but the Creeping Lemma has by far the better line. Apart from two hard but well-protected moves it is a fair bit easier and has even more magnificent positions, and could well become a modern classic. So if you want truly impressive situations and interesting climbing of a reasonable standard, go and climb The Creeping Lemma, a route with the most amazing move in the world.

# KERSTEN GLACIER DIRECT

BILL O'CONNOR

From Kibo, the main peak of Kilimanjaro, we descended snow covered volcanic ash into the crater and down beneath the strange icebergs of the Fürtwangler Glacier. Even a descent of a few hundred feet seemed to relieve the lungs a little, or perhaps it was just the going downhill that made things seem easier. Carelessly we trooped over the soft volcanic ash and searched for the way down the Western Breach. Both John and Pin had been down before, and spoke of a gruelling descent on loose rock and tiring scree. Happy with our climb we raced, hoping to get down to the Barranco Hut before nightfall.

As it happened, I was aware, as in a slow motion dream, of it happening; my foot wedged between two firm rocks on a slope of loose scree, and a searing pain as I toppled forward and my knee ligaments twisted and stretched. The others silently shared my load and I stumbled on, straight-legged, unable to bend the fast swelling knee. Inevitably, another bivouac at 18,000ft., below still another 13,000ft. of descent over moorland and through dense tangled jungle.

Lying on the steep floor of the cave we had hollowed out of the soft, unconsolidated volcanic rock, the pain and throbbing of my knee made sleep impossible. I lay, reliving the past six days and the climb that had brought us here.

Two days before, John Cleare and I had levelled a platform beneath an overhang of bubbly lava, whilst Ian (Pin) Howell brewed. Above us was the Kersten Glacier and above that Kibo's summit; the roof of Africa. Below us, paradoxically, was dense jungle and beyond that, hazy and red in the evening sun, the arid

semi-desert of Africa's plains. It had taken us three days' hard jungle-bashing, ridge walking and toiling over moorland and screes from the Catholic Mission at Umbwe to reach this spot below Kili's southern glaciers.

The Kersten is the steepest and most chaotic hanging glacier on the mountain, a tumbling heap of ice with three great barriers of seracs. Unlike the Heim, the Kersten no longer reaches the screes at the base of the mountain, but as the result of ablation, it hangs, suspended 800ft. or so above them. Only narrow ice gullies and free-standing icicles remain of what once must have been a sizeable glacier.

Two Austrians made the first and only ascent of the glacier over a three day period in the 60's. Their route, having gained the glacier by a devious line out to the left, made a series of traverses and connected with the ice-slopes between the seracs and so made a very indirect, but still the most difficult and serious, route on the mountain.

Despite our rocky bed and the altitude we slept well. Dawn, as had been the pattern over the last few days was perfect; clear skies, no colourful Alpine dawn, just clear light with mist hanging in the jungle canopy below.

Feeling wretched, I found the sight of John and Pin breakfasting nauseating. With the content of my stomach undigested and volcanic I excused myself, like a latter day Oates, and searched for privacy. Relieved, I returned and packed.

From the bivi a snow cone led into the bottom of a steepening gully. Unroped, we front-pointed up the hard snow, pock-marked by fallen lava pebbles, until the way ahead was stopped by a rock wall, glazed with ice. Pin cut a bollard whilst I roped up and led out left across the gully. Above, the way was barred, only huge columns of ice hanging down the wall. Out left, slabs, thinly coated with ice, looked possible. Balancing gingerly on front points, and barely hooking my 'terrors' in the ice, I edged my way across. Two pegs driven vertically down into the ice gave a belay. I brought John and Pin over. Pin led through up a weakness in

the tottering, pebble-dashed rock to another terrace.

Above, the rock was impossible, whilst back right the continuation of our couloir, which we hoped would lead to the Kersten Glacier proper, was marked by a line of vertical, free-standing icicles, a frozen waterfall hanging down the couloir's headwall. I traversed back right, along a snow terrace and placed a long sling around the base of the icicle. In Scotland or Wales the thought of climbing crystal clear columns of water ice would have thrilled, here on Kili at 17,000ft. it seemed ridiculous. With Pin belayed to a short axe half pushed into shallow snow and John as ever belayed to his cameras, I gingerly placed my terrors high above my head, not wishing to fracture the ice and destroy our only link with the continuation of our route. Standing in an aider attached to my axe I placed a tube peg, and repeated the movements. More confident now, with a peg and the sure knowledge that this was the only way. Twenty, perhaps thirty feet of aided climbing up the icicle landed me on a snow terrace at a more realistic angle. I tensioned right and rapidly front-pointed up good, steep snow to below a rock overhang. Self-satisfied with the lead below, I belayed and called the others on. John followed, puffing and blowing. "A good lead that", was all I needed to satisfy my demanding ego. He hauled the sacks whilst I gloated.

The pattern of the morning weather was true to form. As Pin joined us, thick mist enveloped us, blotted out the seracs above our heads, and with them went our fears. 'Out of sight, out of mind'. With no plan, other than to climb the glacier by a new, direct line, the mist now, unwittingly kept us to it. Pin led through and front-pointed up the concave ice ahead. Steep and technically demanding, the route was taking shape. We swung leads up the now not-so-steep snow, which now overlaid glacial ice, unable to keep visual contact, we kept the line straight, waiting to see what would come next. When it did show we were all taken aback; as I led up the steepening snow, the mist parted in a fashion that would have done credit to Hammer Films, and displayed the route of our fears. A huge wall of seracs, vertical and overhanging, loomed above us.

I went ahead prospecting for a route. John joined me at a nest of pegs, driven into the ice. I was hoping for advice or another clearing in the weather, but neither came. I traversed right to where a serac wall formed a slight ramp, and hooked upwards, clearing the mushy surface ice to get at the hard blue-green stuff beneath. John followed, but no swung leads here. We spaced out on separate belays. I continued front-pointing and clearing the way ahead, traversing back slightly left, aiming at a point where the seracs were lowest. Still in dense mist it was impossible to pick out the best line. On the third pitch through this first barrier of seracs, John took a stance below a vertical wall. I climbed it for a few feet, placed a peg and took tension as I moved out right to gain a slight lessening of angle, several tense moves and we were through the seracs. At an altitude of nearly 18,000ft. the climbing had been technical and strenuous.

The weather pattern continued, the late morning cloud brought light afternoon showers, which at this altitude meant snow. Soon the now broad snow slope between the lower two serac barriers was a hissing sheet of moving snow. In complete white-out we climbed upwards, well aware that it was getting late and we would soon need to cut a platform in the snow for a bivouac. As Pin led through we were all too well aware of another band of vertical ice above us; grey and looming through the mist. Two more rope lengths and Pin led up to their base where a huge icicle curtain hung down like gaping 'jaws'. Great whoops of delight issued from above, where Pin had, apparently, been consumed. We joined him and found the cause of his delight. Behind the huge curtain of teeth like icicles was a spacious flat floored cave. Hardly able to believe our luck, we laughed and brewed and brewed.

With evening came the clearing, far below the mists clung to the jungle canopy and far out over the plains of Africa the sun glowed red. For the first time that day we were able to appreciate the magnificence of our position, alone at 18,000ft. on a huge ice face on Africa's highest. Below us a day's hard climbing and three days' jungle bashing and above us? Well that could wait until tomorrow.

It was strangely frightening and amazingly beautiful in the ice cave. Laying down on foam pads, looking up at huge icicles dripping down above our heads like Swords of Damocles. Once the warmth of the brew, and the excitement of the day had worn off, the ice-cold of the cave penetrated everything, and the long drawn out misery of the Equatorial night had to be endured. During the night spindrift blown from above filled the cave and covered us. By dawn we were immobile with deep cold, and robot like prepared for the day whilst Pin brewed.

Out right the sun on the snow beckoned with promised warmth. In the clear morning period I traversed diagonally right, avoiding the vertical and direct challenge of the ice above and gained the broad snow slope known as the Silver Saddle between the second and third serac barriers. By the time we gained the Silver Saddle we were in the full glare of the sun and sweating in cold weather gear. Making the most of the fine weather we raced upwards, occasionally moving together on easier pitches.

Of all the places on the mountain this was for me the most beautiful. The broad crevassed slope was suspended between huge seracs, far below the green jungle gave way to steep ice, and above us the overhangs of the blue green final seracs were sharp against the deep blue of the sky. Around us glistening points of light radiated from untouched snow.

Only too aware of the altitude we led out rope length after rope length, up steepening ground beneath the final ice wall. The cloud closed in earlier than on previous days, huge cumuli rising from the jungle growing upwards, finally enveloping everything. Hoping we could find the weakness spotted from below, we climbed upwards. Pin led up steep ice and belayed. Both John and I joined him, so that he should have enough pegs for the next lead. Tired with altitude, hard work and the debilitating effects of the sun, Pin climbed the very steep ice; another full run out. When we joined him the slope above had eased back, and, as if to prolong our struggle, the clouds cleared, and the intense heat of the sun drained what little strength was left.

Floundering in the soft snow, the final slopes seemed never ending. John, who's frame is big at base, now seemed huge against the sky. Every few paces I collapsed into the snow, feeling weak and sick, while John ploughed a furrow up front. Humiliated by my own weakness, I imagined the other's strength, and wallowed in self pity.

The long, uniformly boring, snow slope gave way to the final rocks where we brewed some melt water. Then we coiled the ropes and struggled on, upwards over the loose lava to the summit.



# “DENN BLEIBEN IST NIRGENDS ”\*

JIM PERRIN

They say the male menopause occurs in about one's thirtieth year; and thus I feel worried, for here I am, entering my thirtieth year in a hot flush of new-found enthusiasm for climbing. I seem to have spent years in a fruitless attempt to give it up — for as long as I've been climbing almost I've been trying to give it up — yet here I am at the supposed changing point of a man's life, and the old symptoms back with me more strongly than ever. I sit by my fire in the evenings and visions of pieces of rock float past my mind; or I'll leaf idly through old copies of *Wilson's Wonderful World*, and a picture, even just a name will cause my palms to sweat, my fingers to flex and unflex at the touch of each tiny imagined flake.

Yet believe me, I've tried very hard to give it up. Oh yes, so very, very hard. And this stern moral overseer whom I call my malefactor, implanted in me during a Catholic childhood, he whispers to me continually, 'you must choose not to climb, it is mere hedonism, wilful, the self-destructive portion of man, the sin of Lucifer, Godless, and too much on a Sunday'. And if it's not him it's soft-spoken Belial whispering, counselling, tempting with visions of Sunday mornings spent in slothful ease, toast and marmalade, the Sunday papers, a warm bed and a voluptuous woman, and believe me, that is a style of life which I would not affect to despise.

But still I want to climb these rocks.

Now as my best friends will tell you, I have little consistency, and for this reason I try to give my slightest inference the weight of a moral pronouncement — as with a certain heaviness one learns to spell, thus it is on one's Odyssey. I think almost I do

\*From The Duino Elegies of Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated it means "For Staying is Nowhere"

not trust consistency; we look for life's essence in its fix or flow, and I would rather, in my own self, live in the flow. I love movement, especially movement on rock; not only my own, though this especially, but also that of others. Have you noticed to what degree you can tell a man's character from the way he moves on rock? Study it, and there it is in essence. Boysen for example; a languorous aesthete possessed of the most devastating polish of phrase — a sort of climbing Oscar Wilde, beauty for its own sake in his every move, and effortless as glass. Or Crew, so quick to grasp the essentials of a situation, yet with such a tenuous hold on them, such an infinite capacity for falling off. And then there's Wilson, muscle-bound and galumphing, the rock shuddering to his touch and a Rock-Ola jukebox on every stance. You could make a speculative science of it, like palmistry but more liberal. But this is to digress: I wanted to tell you how it came about that I couldn't give climbing up.

You see there are bad Catholics, like Joe Brown, Paul Nunn, and myself, and ours is the climb up to Hell; and there are good Catholics like Achille Ratti — theirs the kingdom of Heaven. So much is self-obvious; our solemn devils say to us 'you must suffer' and therefore suffer we must, and devilish hard we find it. Joe Brown explained to me once that the routes you did were directly proportionate to the size of your rat, the bigger the rat, the harder the route. I said to him 'in my church there were no rats, only an Irish priest.' I must tell you here that both he and I come from the poor areas of Manchester, he from Ancoats and I from Hulme; it's a moot point between us which area was the worst, but either way both were bad. Paul Nunn comes from Macclesfield and Cheshire rats are relatively tame; to eat cheese makes one melancholy is a likely explanation. But to come back to rats, he began to explain — 'The rat is in your belly and it gnaws you into doing the routes.' 'Is it like a wife?' I asked him, but he replied 'No, because you're the rat who fills her belly and then she nags you not to do the routes.'

I knew what he meant, but it wouldn't do for me; you see Brown's always been rather bellicose, and I've always had this

secret desire for the soft and voluptuous life, peppered by the cerebral. Now this is where we tread the path to Heaven, strait is the gate and all that. One of my new climbs in Pembroke I called the Strait Gate, and a very good climb it is too, but of course they began to call it the Straight Gate, which made me irate, so that I had no reply but a string of witless puns. The Strait Gate? Oh yes; well one day it occurred to this implanted advisor, this malefactor of mine, that climbing was something I actually enjoyed. As soon as he knew this he took pains to conceal it from me, and would have it that I was a scared and jaded non-combatant, which like all unfair criticism contained the germ of truth. So he would have me give it up, and deprived me of that sensuous touch of rock, that gross bodily awareness, that awful surrender to movement.

I had to creep back undercover.

On a winter's day I took myself down to Cader Idris and found myself, by chance as it were, beneath the Cyfrwy Arete. Oh shades of Arnold Lunn, the Pearly Gates on ski, package tours to Heaven; there's no getting away from the Malefactor. If you're cursed with a memory like mine it will open up to you its files and memoranda at the most awkward possible moments. 'You and the rock both in body are unsound' it told me, and proceeded to recount to me in loving detail the fall of that good Catholic, until finally it tailed off into incoherent ramblings about states of grace.

And I, I wanted the heights and the naked edges and the great plunge of rib and groove, the splintered rock, wind-whistled and myself upon it. So up I went on that shattered hillside in company with a certain fear. It was so beautiful, I was lost. There were pinnacles and great drops; there were moves to be made and lakes far below, mauve horizons and I was unutterably alone; and the mountain did not shake me off, for I am not hubristic. It led me on like the eyes of a woman moving to her recline, and I could not but follow to the green slopes and grey-bouldered crown where I ate my sandwiches and drank my coffee, for I had come well-prepared, and watched ravens in the cold air above me. And do you know, those dark birds enjoyed their flights; Oh how they revelled on the wind, upturned and playing, and I thought, it is

not a rat has brought me here but a joy, and I shall not listen to you, malefactor, no more shall I listen to you. He replied, of course; told me that my well-being was due to nothing more than the absence of positive ions in the high atmosphere. But I am not a scientist and could give him no credence.

And so I began to climb again, though my muscles ached and it was hard. I called it an epiphany and I was very happy, though climbs which had once seemed easy now seemed hard. There is nothing hard about the average extreme, I told myself, doubtful at the moment of speech, and committed myself to one. I had not remembered that holds could be so exiguous, nor that overhangs could loom so; I struggled, and the muscles twanged across the frets of my bones, the music of pain. But I did not mind, for afterwards I was alive and surely practice will make it easy once more. Where strength has been, strength shall be again, and I shall go to the boulders assiduously.

It chanced one day that I was musing in the sun on top of a crag after the perfect execution of a climb down memory lane when, on a bald wall before me appeared a lithe figure ascending. I'd seen all the best climbers of my years and here was their better. Easy power, and elastic movement; in the years I had been away, climbing had made one of its periodic advances. Note this well, ye elders, an advance has been made. So I went to a climb of this nature, though much shorter, and well-hidden by trees, and tried to emulate this style, though my lax muscles could not cope without the help of the high runner and taut rope. And then to a wall, where I trained most assiduously. Very good. What man has done, men will try to do; we live up to examples, their peaks fire our imagination, and the upward trek goes on.

# THE SOUTH-WEST FACE CLIMB

NICK ESTCOURT

“Christ it’s hot” The seracs were reflecting the sub-tropical sun like giant mirrors. The snow was knee deep and wet and the altitude of nearly 20,000 feet was beginning to tell. Pete Boardman and I were nearing the top of the Khumbu Icefall. We had been at base camp for three or four days and it seemed that today we might reach the Western Cwm. The Icefall was easier than usual, being clogged with the Monsoon snow, and earlier today we had broken through the treacherous “egg shell” section about half way up. Above this the angle had eased and Pete and I were able to walk for several hundred yards up a smooth snow slope formed by debris from one of the huge avalanches that sweep off the flanks of Everest’s West Ridge. We did wonder if this was safe but in the end were tempted by the easy going. Just a few hundred feet from the top of the Icefall we moved out right and were confronted by a small ice cliff, perhaps thirty feet high and vertical for some of the way. I belayed in some shade, while Pete started up it. Fresh from Glenmore Lodge he was using two axes and front points — no steps — for to mis-quote “The hand that can cut a step in ice could shoot a fox” Anyhow he arrived fairly quickly at the steepest section, managed to get an axe well in, dithered for a minute or two and then, with a clanking of iron ware, fell off. Competitive to the last I insisted on next try and eventually found myself at Pete’s axe. Having no qualms about shooting foxes I cut a few steps and panting almost uncontrollably arrived on the slope above. We were now in an undulating area of snow, honey-combed with crevasses and perhaps two hundred feet from the

top. However, it was ten o'clock and, in the end, the sun won. We ran most of the way down until we were on the dry glacier near base camp. Here we heard a dull roar behind us and turning round watched as, incredibly slowly, a huge avalanche engulfed all the top part of our route. Hardly before this one had died away another swept right across the lip of the Western Cwm from the flanks of Everest almost to the foot of Nuptse. Obviously climbing in the latter part of the monsoon would have its problems.

The next day Doug and Dougal found a different way, further to the right, that cleared the avalanche zone for longer than ours. Avalanches on the icefall and the Western Cwm were an ever present threat and for much of the next fortnight everyone became semi-nocturnal in their habits. In 1972 we were beaten by the extreme cold and high winds of the Himalayas in mid-November. To beat these threats we had come a month earlier, leaving Britain on 29th July and arriving at Base Camp on 21st August. From the first, fate had seemed to smile on us. The weather on the walk-in was mostly fine and even the dreaded Nepalese leech not quite so thirsty. Our gear had been flown out before the Monsoon and stored in a barn at Kunde and we arrived to find it dry and intact. Up to now the only problems had been a flu virus, that attacked several members, and sunburn. The Sherpas seemed happy and confident from the start and somehow we all began to feel that, this time, we would succeed.

Once on the mountain, things continued just as smoothly. Twenty-eight days after arriving at Base Camp, Camp V at 24,800 feet was occupied. In 1972 this had taken us nine extra days. Why? It's hard to say but several factors obviously contributed. The main one was how well the Sherpas worked. This has been said so often that it has become a platitude, but this time it really was true. I don't know the reason, many of them were the same people as in 1972. Clearly Pertemba, the Sirdar, and Mike Cheney must take some of the credit. Another factor was the siting of Camp IV rather lower and protected from avalanches by a small ridge. This meant we could eliminate Camp III all together. And, of course, there was the weather. The tents too were a great improvement. A

new design by Hamish MacInnes of the famous Whillans box, known as the MacInnes box (re-named Guinness boxes on one customs manifest), had a built-in platform floor, and many other small improvements, that made life on the Face more comfortable. The logistical planning also was very well managed. I never failed to be impressed when Chris Bonington arrived, knackered, at a camp site only to start planning the next day's loads. Chris obviously finds this sort of thing fascinating and had dabbled with computers back in England. Even on the mountain he had a small calculator. I must say I tend, to my shame, to feel sleepy whenever logistics are mentioned.

Ronnie Richards and Chris Bonington were the first to occupy Camp V. They spent the next two or three days running a line of fixed-rope across the steep ice slopes leading up to the left-hand end of the Rock Bank. In 1972 we had followed the well-trodden route up to the right. This was really the only route that any of the other expeditions had attempted. The main attraction was a fine camp site at about 27,200 feet at the foot of the Rock Band below a gully. It was this gully that had defeated all attempts, and although Dougal swears there was snow in it on the International expedition it looked very steep to me. In fact when I first saw it close up in 1972 I simply dismissed it as unclimbable and assumed Dougal had meant another gully somewhere else. From the foot of this gully, however, one had a fine view of the opposite end of the Rock Band. Here the Band is at its shortest and we had thought that it would be possible to site a camp on some ice slopes just above it. Leading deep into the Rock Band at this point is a superb cleft, reminiscent of the Devil's Kitchen. Although no one could see the back of this cleft we all hoped it might lead right through the Band. It was on this gamble that the whole £100,000 expedition depended. If the route through the Rock Band proved impossible then we would all return home with very pink faces.

On their final day Chris and Ronnie were joined by Doug Scott and Mick Burke. Mick was doing cine-filming. That day they reached a point perhaps three hundred feet below the entrance to

the gully. Tut and I arrived at Camp V as they returned. We were to have first go at the Rock Band on the following day. We were all very anxious to know just what was at the back of the gully. Doug was cheerful, "the next bit looks a piece of piss", he said.

Tut and I were up and away by 6 o'clock next morning. Chris and Mick were up to follow later, Chris with extra ropes and iron ware, Mick to film. It was a fine morning and, with oxygen, we both felt very fit and eager to get to grips with the problem. The two or three hours it took to reach Doug's high point seemed to pass in a flash. I remember recognising Ama Dablam seen over the top of Nuptse and smugly thinking how small it looked. Tut arrived at the high point first, and I belayed while he led off across a traverse round into the snowfield immediately below the gully. Most of the time he was out of sight and his progress seemed very slow. I got impatient but when my turn came to second him I saw why he had taken so long. To reach the snow field we had to cross about fifty feet of 60° snow badly consolidated and only a foot or so thick. Below was rock. In two places Tut had fixed pitons and done little tension traverses. As I came up to him he made some remark about Doug's ability to judge difficulty, and I had to apologise for the impatience I had shown. We had a strange mumbled conversation into our oxygen masks and then I carried on up the snow to the entrance to the gully. Suddenly I felt incredibly weary. The steps kept collapsing, the sun seemed hot and all my enthusiasm earlier had evaporated. I also desperately needed a piss. I decided to belay and took my rucksack off. Only then did I notice the pressure gauge on the oxygen was down to zero. My oxygen had run out. I could have cried I was so angry, after all the effort and expectation to get literally to within ten feet of the Rock Band and have it snatched from you. Tut came on up, going well, and started up the gully. Thirty feet above me he arrived below the first real problem, a chockstone covered in ice and involving an awkward move over it. He overcame this very elegantly with the aid of a piton and continued up the gully to a rock peg belay well above. Without oxygen, but also without any heavy oxygen bottles, I jumared up to him and belayed while he carried on.



The gully was deep and enclosed. We could still see very little above us. The others below shouted up to ask what we could see, but still the Rock Band was holding onto its secrets. Eighty feet above me Tut climbed out right, up a very steep little subsidiary gully, to arrive at the foot of a small amphitheatre. He was ominously silent. The rope was fixed and I started to jumar once again. Tut shouted down that the belay was bad and that he had run out of oxygen. Bad news, but then the good news: "I can see a ramp running up right, the route's going to go". I felt elated and, probably pulling far too hard on the rope, surged (as much as anyone surges at 27,000 feet) past Tut and up the headwall of the amphitheatre where I got a superb rock peg in. It was true, from where I stood a ramp led up rightwards for perhaps two hundred feet to a large snowy shoulder. So large, in fact, that it had to be the top of the Band.

Tut had done most of the leading so far, so it was my turn now. The ramp didn't look too hard from below, but appearances were very deceptive. Above was a smooth, slightly impending, rock wall. Below there was an almost vertical band of loose rock plastered with insecure snow. The ramp itself was really only a rotten diagonal crack, with a wind hardened boss of snow on its lower edge. I edged up cautiously holding on with my arm round the boss of snow praying for it not to break. Sometimes I got fist or hand jams in the back. After about thirty feet I reached a short vertical section. I dithered, it seemed impossible to get any secure foot holds and there weren't any hand holds until I had made several feet. Above it looked easier. It crossed my mind to back-off and let Tut have a go, but then I knew I would curse myself, probably for the rest of my life. Chris shouted up impatiently for me to hurry up. I was much too gripped to reply and I knew how anxious we all were to get up the Band today. Then I found the solution. In the back of the crack was a loose flake I managed to get an angle in beside it and very gently, using this as a side pull, straightened up on a poor foot hold. I was now able to reach better hand holds and lurch up to the snow above and collapse, face downwards, panting. The vital peg pulled out with the tension on the rope, but I was soon able to fix a better runner and move on

to a stance. Tut followed up, it made an awkward diagonal jumar, and then I led another short pitch up to the foot of the easy snow running up to the shoulder. It was late, the other two had left, Tut and then I soon followed. Exhausted but happy we were all back in Camp V before dark.

Next morning we had a lie-in at V and Dougal appeared from below while we were still in bed. After a lot of discussion it was decided that Doug and Dougal would move up and occupy a Camp VI somewhere just above our high point, and then go for the summit. A second party consisting of Mick, Peter Boardman, Pertemba and Martin Boysen would follow two days later and then Tut and I with Ronnie Richards and another sherpa, Ang Phurpa, two days after that. Tut and I were disappointed it seemed a bit unfair as we both felt very strong and fit. We didn't object to Doug and Dougal but to have to wait for a third attempt meant going down to Camp II and feeling rather out of things. Anyhow we acquiesced and went off down.

The next day Doug, Dougal, Chris, Mick, Mike Thompson and three sherpas climbed the Band and established a camp a few hundred feet above our high point. Doug and Dougal were left there, actually above the Rock Band, and for the first time in six expeditions someone really looked like climbing the face. All next day we watched anxiously from Camp II as two tiny dots moved across the slopes leading to the gully coming down from the south summit. They were fixing ropes ready for a bid next day.

The morning of 24th September was fine and clear. Through binoculars we watched again as the same two dots crossed the slopes and, at 10 a.m., disappeared into the South Summit Gully. For the next six hours they were out of sight, but we were quietly confident that they would get up and back down that day. Then, at about 4 p.m. one of the sherpas gave a shout and we all watched as, first one, then another, figure appeared on the ridge between the South Summit and the top. But they were still going up. It seemed impossible that the gully had taken six hours but obviously it had. For the next hour or so we watched as they moved, quite quickly, along the ridge and up the Hillary step. After

this they were out of sight again and it soon began to get dark.

Early next day Tut and I left Camp II for our attempt and when we arrived at Camp IV we got the story over the radio. The delay in the gully had been caused by very deep soft snow. It had taken nearly six hours to climb the seven hundred feet of 50° snow, with one difficult little step. They had arrived at the top as the sun set and just made it back down to the Col below the South Summit. There they bivouaced in a hole cut in the cornice and had what must be the highest night out in mountaineering history. Next morning they had descended quickly back to Camp VI. Later that afternoon Doug and Dougal passed through to Camp IV on their way down. They seemed tired but not excessively so. Doug left an oxygen set for us to use next day. They had a brew and then went on. The oxygen sets were becoming something of a problem. Out of the original sixteen sets, only about six were now working and that night as we fell into our sleeping bags we prayed that enough sets would still be working in three days time when we made our bid.

I was up and away by 3 a.m. as my oxygen set had also to be used by others on the run from V to VI that day. I left on my own, Tut was going to follow a few hours later. As I was plodding up a few hundred feet above the camp I had an eiry feeling that someone was following me. I turned round and in the bright moonlight I could see a figure 150 feet or so below me. I wondered if it might be Tut chasing after me with something left behind or perhaps Ang Phurpa making a midnight dash from Camp II to Camp V. Anyway whoever it was he made no attempt to call me and I decided to carry on. I looked back a few more times and he was still there coming along behind, going a bit slower than me. Then, just as I reached the old site of Camp IV, I turned again and the slope below was quite empty. Later that day I was able to check up with other people and I now know that no-one was there. It was a very odd and inexplicable experience.

I arrived in Camp V to be met with a hot brew. I handed my oxygen set over to Lakpa who, with Dorje, was going to carry the

gear for our bid up to the top camp today. Lakpa was one of the strongest sherpas on the trip and did three carries up the Rock Band on three successive days. At midday they were back with the news that the others were already at the south summit. Doug and Dougal's track obviously made a huge difference. Unfortunately one of Martin's crampons had come off and been dropped so he had had to return. Two more oxygen sets had also failed. Late in the morning the weather worsened and by lunchtime it was snowing. At 5 p.m. on the radio, we heard from Martin that the summit team had not returned but we didn't feel particularly anxious. By 6 p.m. it was dark and we were worried. An hour later, when we had our last radio call, we were very worried indeed. The weather was far worse than it had been for Doug and Dougal and, anyway, if they were on the South Summit at eleven in the morning, where were they now?

We got the story over the radio next morning. When Martin had come back, Mick, who was with him, had decided to carry on alone hoping to catch up Pete and Pertemba who were farther ahead. There was nothing foolhardy in this as there was fixed rope on all difficult sections and anyway, since 1924 climbing alone on Everest has been, if not commonplace, certainly not unusual. The other two, unaware of Mick following them, had climbed fast and reached the summit in the early afternoon. The weather was obviously closing in so they took the usual photographs and then set off back. They were very surprised when, after descending for fifteen minutes, they met Mick still on his way up. They tried to persuade him to come down with them. He tried to persuade them to go back up with him; he was very keen to get some cine-film from the top. Both failed, but Pete agreed to wait for Mick at the top of the gully. They parted and Mick was never seen again. Pete and Pertemba waited at the top of the gully for nearly two hours, putting their own safety in jeopardy, before carrying on and arriving back at camp nearly two hours after dark. In fact most of this descent was accomplished in a white-out and the disaster could have been worse. No one will ever know what happened to Mick. He could have fallen through a cornice or never woken up from a terrible bivouac in a storm at nearly 29,000 feet.

All that day the storm continued and desperate anxiety over Mick's fate changed gradually to certainty. For the third time in a row one of Chris' expeditions had been struck by tragedy in its final days and we had lost a close and irreplaceable companion. At the time it seemed partly unreal and the true facts only came home after we had returned.

Next day the remaining summiters joined us at Camp V and, with heavy hearts, we all descended back into the Western Cwm and on to home.

# ANGLESEY-A PERSONAL VIEW

MALCOLM HOWELLS

I first went to the Anglesey cliffs in early 1966 when the second phase of exploration was just starting. At that time there were only about a dozen routes on Gogarth and none on the other cliffs. The whole place was rather frightening; there was no proper path down to sea level and you could get quite gripped just going down the hillside; no-one was very sure about whether you could retreat when you wanted to and the loose rock tended to be equated with poor protection. It was some while before the penny dropped that the protection was really very good. On this visit we made a feeble, uninspired attempt on Emulator; we were not really prepared to try hard in such an unfamiliar and threatening place.

Shortly after this I was staying at Pete Crew's cottage and asking him about the routes. He simply said:

"Why bother about existing routes when there are new lines everywhere?"

I had just not thought of doing a new route on Gogarth until then but that same day Barry Whybrow and I went along the sea-level traverse, a little beyond the furthest route and discovered The Hustler. It was easy pickings even for novice explorers like ourselves, but tremendously exciting. From then on we were hooked; the lure of new rock plus the sea, the birds, the sun, the feeling of remoteness made up an irresistible atmosphere that kept us going back for more, all that year and the next. It was a fascinating period in Welsh climbing. Of course everyone was in some haste to find and climb the best lines before someone else did thus introducing an element of urgency which only served to heighten the atmosphere of excitement. There was no acrimony and nobody

felt disgruntled because there were always plenty more lines to do. Everyone was simply having a great time.

Although Barry and I were on the crag quite a lot during this period we did not achieve a great deal in terms of completed new routes. We spent a lot of time locked in desperate struggles with possible routes with much heart-searching about whether or not to put pegs in. More often than not we would return home beaten by our own ethics or just plain beaten. No doubt if we had been better climbers or better informed about the available lines we would have had more successes but it didn't matter because nothing could destroy the attraction of the climbing. The point was, and still is, that a lot of the pleasure of climbing lies in struggling with something that feels hard. That's what it's all about; and for me, this is spoilt only if I've cheated or not tried hard enough; it is not spoilt by an honest failure.

As the years have passed since Anglesey was first developed I have returned many times and become a devotee of the place. The whole scene is now much more familiar and well-trodden and the climbs are getting correspondingly harder: recently it has become fashionable to try and do the hard routes with less and less aid although all along, of course, it has been possible to go to Anglesey, have an exciting day and come away feeling that you have tested yourself as much as you wanted to. For me, 1975 had many exciting moments, some of which I shall try to describe.

The battle was joined early in the year when Paul Trower and I went to Yellow Wall to try The Moon. From the foot we worked out the line. It looked everything the description said it was, which was a lot — Drummond had gone to town — a whole page of 'New Climbs' full of superlatives. We enjoyed reading it and were not taken in, at least not completely, but we must have been worried because we talked ourselves out of it and opted for a recent new route by Alec Sharp called Creeping Lemma. This follows a line that slants diagonally leftward across the same buttress that The Moon slants rightward across. Naturally the two meet for a few feet in the middle.

My turn to start. Paul waits on some of the worst anchors I've

seen. The description gives a 160 ft. pitch here but there's a good stance and nut belays just short of the junction with Sind. Paul continues up Sind to the belay below the big slab pitch. (Sind is a fine route with a rather unique top pitch; a slab; the whole crag seems to beetle with overhangs but it is definitely a slab and there is a fist crack on the left. You make slab moves, trying to keep the fist jam in for security, for 130ft.; the standard is nowhere excessive but there is not much protection and most people are relieved to get up.) Creeping Lemma continues left to join The Moon, follows it fairly uneventfully for a while then breaks left again. At this point the route suddenly erupts into life — wild exposure, extortionate technical difficulty, brutal strain on your arms, all come at once. Paul is in front now and weathers the storm. The protection is good; two in situ pegs. He clips in and fights the rock with cool determination. It's all over in 20ft.

The route crosses some very impressive walls completely free and deserves to be popular. However, the difficulties are very uneven and I can't help feeling that many people will pull on the two protection pegs bringing the route down to a more uniform 5a/b standard.

From Creeping Lemma one can see The Moon quite well and so, with my appetite whetted, I was keener than ever to have a go at it. A weekend with Dave Pearce provided the opportunity. The description includes eleven pegs — three for aid, one for rest, seven for protection — but we knew that it had been done free more than once and so this was our aim.

The first pitch is no great problem and this falls to Dave. I launch up the second. Three pegs — two for aid, one for rest — have to be overcome. I can imagine that attempting new rock at this angle must have been pretty gripping and the protection pegs would have been reassuring. However, with modern protection pegs the knowledge that the route goes, most of the protection pegs are not needed and now only about seven of the eleven are in. The first aid peg is not too bad, the strain feels no greater as I go past it. But then I'm fresh. I carry on with no respite for some way.

Malcolm Howells leans on Sind.  
*Photo: Paul Trower*





NATHORTS  
LAND



It's the problem of enduring the strain and economising on precious power. I get to the rest peg needing a runner badly, which it provides. Not much further. Can I do it without the rest? I know Creeping Lemma is near, so I press on, arms screaming. It's still hard, I try to relax, move smoothly, can't afford a cock-up. Suddenly I'm there, a perfect resting ledge — not very big but exactly what was needed. I gasp for breath and stay for ages. What follows is familiar and not so strenuous, up to the belay perch. Dave follows rapidly, gets ready and disappears almost immediately amongst the huge overhangs above. The pitch is most improbable to look at but once you're on it, surprisingly possible. A unique, laying rest position arrives just when needed and although the moves are hard the pressure is relieved from time to time. We finally get to the top, savouring that moment of release from the crag's influence, then flake out in the cafe.

Next followed Syringe and Citadel, both routes which have been subject to aid reductions — Syringe down to nothing, Citadel to four and maybe less still.

Paul and I take both one scorching weekend in July. Syringe free is not as hard as some of the latest stuff but it's no pushover. I get the first pitch where the biggest problem is a sort of bulge in the main groove. I struggle for quite a while, fighting with poor holds above and a strenuous narrow bridge position that makes you push outwards hard with your legs. There are no thank-god holds above. I reflect as I squirm and strain how eight years earlier I wouldn't have dreamt of attacking it like this. Even if a moment of recklessness had got me up there, committed, I would still have failed or worse. I can do it now because other people are doing it and I get dragged along by the general improvement. Funny business really, like people always running the mile faster than the previous people. Paul's pitch on this route is a dirty, strenuous crack with everything at the wrong angle. I am glad it isn't mine although he seems quite pleased with it. There's no accounting for taste.

Citadel though is a different matter. I know now that it has been done at least twice with four points of aid. The first pitch is the

Map of Staunings traverse — see article on page 50.

one to get and the toss-up gave it to me. It is fairly easy to reduce the aid below the five points given in the guide book but to get the total down to four, you must get up the first pitch with only one. This is hard. I fail immediately by using one near the bottom. Some desperate moves follow, leaving me snuggling up under the slanting line of overhangs that are the route's main feature seen from below. I am desperately tired again and eventually have to rest on a sling only to discover that there is a good shoulder jam under the overhang — very annoying; still the pitch goes on; undercut hand-jams lead across a mind-bending traverse way out above the sea; a good rest then finally a stretch up, a peg and a pull up something like the inside of a pitched roof, finishing jugs and the stance. I defy anyone to free that bit. Rather an unsatisfactory ascent maybe but I have given it everything I had and feel unashamedly triumphant. You don't have to win to enjoy the game. However, for all its fine qualities, the first pitch pales in comparison with the second. This goes up a ragged crack, continuously overhanging for about a hundred feet, with mostly quite poor holds. The individual moves are feasible but the angle is such that most people can only operate for a few minutes without a rest. It is this problem that makes an ascent with three points of aid such a difficult task and such a fine achievement. Paul struggles manfully, the temperature is in the nineties, I doze on the stance. He does not manage it with three but he is very close — a good piece of work. Getting up at all isn't easy.

Pat Littlejohn's route Pagan on Left hand Red Wall was next. It goes completely free up just about the blankest and most exposed wall on South Stack. There is no doubt about its quality; the disadvantages are that it looks hard and is inside the area affected by the bird conservation rules. This means that to do it you need to be in Wales and on form in August or later in the year. Only the West country climber, Ed Hart, had done the route in the three years since the first ascent.

Dave and I go for it early in August. Dave does the first pitch, no problem. I set off up the second; steep, powdery climbing; a little worrying; soon there is an awkward rest and a protection peg is permitted, worth having too. Above is a small overhang that

pushes you outwards and above that, blankness — nothing that looks like a good hold for 20ft. It can't go up there! Try to the left, five or six goes, no joy, just getting gripped. Further right there's something — maybe you follow the line rightwards then break back left and up. I set off; it's one of those strata lines with big, flaky holds, undercut below. Strenuous. I keep going — twenty feet, thirty feet from the peg, no sign of a break going left. I'm not sure whether I'm on route or going nowhere. Strength's ebbing fast. Screw the right way; time for evasive action. A peg or nut would be tricky, but better still would be a ledge. Ten more feet and I'm in balance. I construct a network of runners as best I can but they are not good and I'm still feeling nervy. More attempts at progress towards where we know we are making for. It's hopeless. I'm getting nowhere and getting more gripped. I bale out down to Dave. My ledge is on a fairly prominent line going up and right; we decide that this is Deygo and I've blown it completely. Half our gear is on Deygo so Dave has no choice; up Deygo he goes; a loose, awkward pitch with poor anchors at the top. I continue with the loose pitch — an improved solution to this pitch would be worth having but I'm too psyched out even to look properly; I manage it in the standard way and we're up. I keep thinking about Pagan. What a nightmare if it went up that blank bit! We go home, licking our wounds. The day has not been boring and the battle is not over.

We can't wait to renew the struggle next weekend. Same routine; Dave up the first pitch; I start the second, arrive at the blank part, try a few times over on left where I tried before — definitely not on, not for me anyway. Wait a minute — right up the middle of the blankest part there's a fingertip crack for seven or eight feet and then some possible holds above. I am immediately sure this is the way; a few moments fingering the crack, then go. I'm committed more or less immediately then totally involved. It's hard for 20ft. or so, a poor runner on the way, quite technical; gradually it eases and the hanging stance arrives. A memorable pitch for only sixty feet. Really the main problem is the decision to go. Even more of a problem for Littlejohn of course. The day, how-

ever, is not over; the next development is unexpected — it pours with rain for half an hour. We're soaked, so is the crag. Depression. Retreat seems the only way out but it is a hideous prospect — probably two diagonal abseils down an overhanging wall. We discuss it academically for some while. There is no need to hurry. The anchors are hopeless for abseiling, far too spread out. We ramble on and start to get ready to go. An hour passes. Suddenly Dave notices the rock is nearly dry again. With what must have been a considerable effort of will he faces up to leading the top pitch once more. He sets off and takes ages. I'm not cold and I don't mind, as long as he does it. He does, and we are up. This pitch does not stay in my mind like the other one, although it probably does in Dave's. It is very sustained and technical, somewhat circuitous and very exposed. The total adds up to the best route I've done on Anglesey. This is a personal view but there is no doubt it is among the top few. It left us feeling embattled but content in a vigorous sort of way. We went home with colour in our cheeks.

After Pagan we felt ready for anything. Anything on Anglesey in 1975 meant Positron. This is Alan Rouse's creation between Rat Race and Dinosaur which follows a daring line right up the most overhanging part of the main cliff. There are three main pitches, two short ones totalling 100ft. to the Rat Race stance and the long crux pitch at the end. It was agreed that I would do the first two leaving the real nasty for Dave. This suited me well. I looked forward to 100ft. of routine Anglesey hard climbing then a long doze in the sun. What a shock I was in for. The first two supposedly reasonable pitches were desperate — much harder than Pagan or indeed any other route on Anglesey that I know about. I did them in the same style as the first ascent although this has been improved on by one or two people. There are mind-blowing moves on both pitches: on the first you move steeply out onto the point of the arete where a highly uncomfortable rest is possible. From this point there are overhangs in all directions and apparently no holds — at least, only one, which you move up on, although there don't seem to be any more, you grope around and, yes,

there is one more in a most unpromising place; up again, strain and you can reach the ledge, a poor one and you have to pull like hell to get on it but once you've got it you're there. The next pitch is O.K. until you have to move down left and round the corner into a groove. These moves are appalling, they stick in the mind as a horror that could come to you sometime when you did not have a good runner some way above; this last feature is the saving grace; I make about a dozen sorties trying the move round — one of them ends in the basic swinging movement. Finally I teeter round. There are (believe me) no good holds to go for and it takes a while to get established. Once this is done it's all over to the Rat Race stance.

Dave's turn to work. I sit exhausted and a bit shell-shocked while he goes to it — easily to an arete, then he sits uncomfortably on a sort of spike and makes some runners. This is obviously the last rest before a hundred feet or so of overhanging rock. He is in good spirits, looking forward to the battle ahead. A dangle of the arms, a shake of the fingers and he is away. The rope goes out — a pause — and then comes rapidly back. He reappears looking amazed and slightly nettled that the crag could do this to him. Everything is apparently even nastier than expected — sustained desperate climbing with no possibility of rest. Dave's power, which usually makes even hardened Frodsham men blanch a little, seems to be wilting. He goes back, tries again, fixes higher runners, has about five or six goes. But I sense he is beaten from the start, shocked by the strength of the enemy's defences, caught slightly off guard. We go down, we have lost this battle but we'll be back and we won't be caught off guard again. This is our last weekend in Wales for a long while and we drive back jubilant about the sport we've had and satisfied that it had a worthy climax.

Goodbye Holy Island for a few months, but first, for Anglesey lovers everywhere, something small to play with, something they can mess around with, like a dog plays with a bone . . .

# TRAVERSE OF THE STAUNINGS

KEITH MILLER

I remembered the day long ago when I climbed the wrong ridge below the Dome du Goûter, and the moment when both feet and both hands swayed on large loose blocks. Then there was only myself to worry about. But now the four members of this light-weight expedition to Greenland were in a more serious situation. Chris was down a crevasse, of that there was no doubt. John was just getting out of one; probably the same one. Jim did not dare move forward any further or put tension on the rope since he could so very easily have loosened the fragile snow bridge on which he was stranded between the now opened crevasse, and the one I knew was below my own feet. Not daring to poke about with ice axes and with great attention to the synchronised movements of everyone on the rope, we gingerly inched, and then crawled, and eventually slowly shuffled away. These polar crevasses are big; I know since one put me into an Iceland hospital for several days in 1968 and now here on the Oxford Glacier it was impossible to judge the direction, width and depth of the numerous crevasses to the east of the upper rognon. Never before have I moved at the snail's pace of twelve inches per step and twelve steps per minute. During the next 30 minutes I thought of Mawson's terrible journey in Antarctica and realised we were lucky in so far that we could at least see uncovered glacier ice ahead and we knew that within this day the worst of the journey would be over and the prize ours; the first ever north-to-south traverse of the Staunings Alps. We had started the journey on July 28th at Kap Petersen in the knowledge that before us lay the whole of the northern, central and southern Alps bare of other human souls. A whole Alpine range to ourselves.



These arctic mountains are situated approximately at latitude 72 degrees on the north-east coast of Greenland. They constitute an exciting and different form of Alpine challenge since not only are they remote and difficult of access but they contain features of Himalayan proportions: long and wide glaciers prone to periodic surges, large melt streams and chasms, and extensive unstable moraines. Furthermore, the natural beauty of the area is not diluted by tracks, bridges or inns and since there are no porters to carry expedition equipment, the mountaineer is at once alone and as free as the indigenous animals.

The journey would involve at least 170 miles of mountain travel before we reached Syd Kap and then a return journey of approximately 100 miles. Unfortunately it is impossible to show detail the entire range on a one page map (could you get the European Alps on one page with sufficient detail to satisfy the mountaineer) and so readers are requested to consult 3 maps published by the Danish Geodetic Institute, namely: (1) Kong Oscars Fjord (72 o 2) for the northern Alps, (2) Staunings Alper (71 o 2) for the central and southern Alps, and (3) Carlsberg Fjord (71 o 2) which shows the Arcturus and Mellem glacier sections of the east central Alps. However, these 1:250000 maps contain a few errors and discontinuities will be noted along the common latitude of 72°N.

Fortunately, I had taken other parties to these Alps in previous years and was therefore aware of some of the problems ahead. The problem of least concern was the selection of a strong and compatible team. Jim Bishop had just returned from more than two years in Antarctica and had been one of the hardest workers during the 1970 scientific expedition to the Roslin glacier in the central Staunings. In 1971 he led a mountaineering expedition to the Hindu Kush. Chris Padfield was also with me in 1970 and proved to be an amazing blend of charm, wit, intelligence and strength. His mountaineering skills were rapidly acquired. John Thorogood joined my 1972 venture to the Roslin where he had set himself many tasks and proved that conditions never affected an efficient and comprehensive performance.

A party of four was judged to be the optimum number for the journey, less would create problems in the event of a rescue operation, whilst more than four men would reduce mobility and increase food and fuel requirements as well as overall costs.

The three major problems confronting us were the weather, the action to be taken in case of an accident and finally both the details and the technicalities of the route. Two minor worries were the condition of old dumps of food and fuel and the weight to be carried continually on our backs. Obviously, all of these problems were interconnected. Thus I judged we had only a limited chance of success, especially as a prolonged period of bad weather at Mestersvig in mid-July delayed our departure from Reykjavik. The weather patterns in the Staunings can be stable for periods of several days but we could not afford to be in crucial areas when bad weather descended. We all hoped that the weather patterns of the 1969, 1973 and 1974 seasons would not be repeated. In 1974, for example, one group was able to climb only one peak during the month they were in the northern Staunings.

In the event of an accident in such a vast, wild and lonely area, several serious problems can arise. Rescue operations in polar regions can be expensive affairs and a rescue party would have to travel rapidly over dangerous terrain. In the present circumstances, our lines of communication were far too long for comfort. It is precisely because of such uncertain conditions that the Danish Government insist on extensive insurance and the carrying of radio equipment for all expeditions to the Staunings. However, long-range transceivers are very heavy and bulky. Furthermore, in 1972 we found that radio communications with Mestersvig were not possible in certain zones. It was therefore with mixed feelings that we discovered that our radio equipment was broken on arrival in Greenland and had to be abandoned.

In order to reduce the possibility that we would encounter unknown and excessive technical difficulties, aerial photos of a possible route were studied intently at the Geodetic Institute in Copenhagen. However, we discovered later that this method did not always indicate the best solution. At the outset three parts of

the route caused concern: the ascent of Col Major at the head of the Bersaerkerbrae, steep snow or ice depending on conditions; the descent of Gully Glacier avoiding chasms which appeared to traverse the entire width of our proposed route; and finally the ascent and descent of a new pass leading out of an unexplored glacial system in the central Staunings. We were not to know of the difficulties to be overcome on the last two glaciers of the traverse — the Mercurius and Oxford Glaciers.

Jim, on a basis of his southern polar experiences and Greenland 1970, quietly and correctly insisted on taking snow shoes to assist travelling in soft snow. These, plus body harnesses, crampons, safety helmets, ice axes, jumars, karabiners and slings, two 50 metre ropes and eight pitons comprised our "technical" baggage.

The logistics of food and fuel requirements were worked out before we started. Supplies had fortunately been left by my previous expeditions at the snout of the Bersaerkerbrae, on the Lang and Roslin Glaciers and at Holger Danskes Briller. However, the food dumps were not always sufficiently comprehensive to permit us to sit out prolonged periods of bad weather.

In such a short article as this it is not possible to tell the entire story of the three hundred mile, twenty-five day journey; that will be told in a forthcoming book. However, the apprehensive descent down the Oxford was only one of several interesting episodes. The first was the finding of a new col linking the Skjoldungerbrae and Harlech Glaciers on the second day south, thereby permitting us access into the Bersaerkerbrae system. The second was the good weather conditions for climbing the 1,600ft. Col Major gully, which was very tiring if only due to the 66 lb. packs. In between these parts of the journey five days of snow and/or minimal visibility allowed us to repair broken kit, tend to blistered feet and to bring up the last food to a higher camp in order to take immediate advantage of weather improvements.

The 'new' glacier system in the Central Staunings, which has yet to be named, was probably a major key to our success. We found a winding route through its second icefall, and then a long snow and ice gully gave us access to the Dalmore Glacier. This gully was

slightly shorter than the Col Major gully, but it was steeper in ascent and more delicate on the descent to the Dalmore. Lady luck visited us again during that gruelling fourteen hour day as the weather stayed good until the descent was completed. We eventually stopped on the Roslin Glacier, where we simply lay down on the moraines and slept. We needed food but we were exhausted.

The journey south involved fifteen camps (including nine bivouacs), eight snow or ice passes and climbing amongst the great peaks of the whole range. The traverse was almost completed when we descended the tundra slopes above Holger Danskes Briller towards Syd Kap. Arctic fox, Musk Oxen, alpine flowers, arctic hare and geese brought a totally different environment to that we had experienced during the previous seventeen days. In true arctic fashion we stopped at the Greenlanders hut on August 16 and celebrated with the assistance of a half bottle of whisky and only on the next day did we quietly and contentedly stroll, without packs the last few yards to Syd Kap, a rock promontory that was washed by the waves of the disintegrating icebergs floating in North-West Fjord of Scoresby Sund.

The journey back north was little more than an arduous walk. Nevertheless, the crossing of large glacial rivers is no easy task and again I reflected on the time I was washed down the Lang river (1970), almost sank in the quick sands of the Bjornbo river (1973), and of the near loss of one member in 1968 who was washed down a glacial melt stream for 1,200 yards, was rescued unconscious only a few metres from a moulin. After five days we climbed over the Mellem pass and down towards Mestersvig and realised how lucky we had been since all the sea clouds had been contained in King Oscars Fjord. The last day and a half was spent walking through the mists until, only 200 yards from Mestersvig, we saw the radio mast.

I envy those who will repeat this mountaineering journey but pray that they too will find the true peace of the mountains in this large alpine territory. They will need, as we did, the support of many others, good luck and weather, reliable snow shoes, small stomachs, no serious accidents, and fine companions.

# OBITUARY

PETER BIVEN

1935 - 1976

Peter Biven died on Friday, June 4th, 1976, following a fall from Giants Cave Buttress in the Avon Gorge.

Pete began serious climbing at the age of ten on the roof of Smiths' department store, Leicester. Smiths' is a pretentious five storey Victorian building, topped by a copper dome and a crumbling life-size statue of Britannia. To get there he had led me out of our attic window, up a dusty slate roof and over a high level traverse of rotting stonework. With an emphatic grin he sat on Britannia's lap savouring the trespass. We were spotted, however, by a patrolling bobby who recognized us and called at our home. Our father was firmly told that although the war had just ended there were safer and more acceptable ways of celebrating.

As brothers we had shared many sports and pastimes, but it was clear to me then, as an envious eight year old, that Pete had found an activity at which he excelled. In his school note books he drew up plans to climb all the tall buildings in Leicester. He sent me on reconnaissance missions around the town in the belief that a small boy in short pants, gazing up at the aeroplanes, would not arouse suspicion. Ultimately, the Clock Tower, the War Memorial and many other buildings all yielded to his courage and skill.

We then began to explore the Leicester countryside and found a mass of small outcrops and some intimidating disused quarries. We knew little of the climbing world beyond. Pete's exceptional ability showed as he found countless thin routes under curtains of ivy and dry moss. We did not have the equipment to rope

down these faces to clear vegetation and assess a route. Perhaps, Peter would not have used gear if we had had it. He loved to churn up a climb, gardening as he went, and it was my task to follow up this furrow brushing off the holds as I went. His joy was not so much in the finished product of his pioneering but the act of creation. His keen eye for a route and the tension of the climb as he sought to match his mental photograph of the route, were at the core of his passion for climbing. He gave the rock another dimension; he made it pliable and supple in his hands. So much so that when I followed I seemed to be involved in another activity. It gave him affectionate enjoyment to see me struggling.

By the time Pete was fifteen we had moved away from the sullen unrelenting Leicester granite and on to the Derbyshire Grit. We did most of the routes at Cratcliffe, Cromford and Brassington before moving north to the Peak. Each Sunday we hitched to Stanage or Froggatt or Gardom's until we met Trevor Peck in his white Rolls Royce one wet weekend. This meeting welded a team that survived for nearly twenty years until Trevor's tragic death.

For years we scabbed our knuckles and wrenched our arms working methodically along each edge. Pete forced some new routes on the way; Congo Corner, Ferryboat Highway, Easter Rib, The Flange, and B.P. Super at Stanage; The Eye of Faith, Hearse Arête and Moyer's Buttress on Gardom's Edge; and numerous aid routes on Lawrencefield and Millstone. He found time to make the first ascent of High Tor prior to National Service in the R.A.F. Our ritual Sunday trips had ended, but he was busy putting up more routes on the Whin Sill cliffs of Northumberland. A year later, in 1954, he was elected to the Climbers' Club and soon after the Alpine Club. Later still he served on the Committee of the Climbers' Club.

During an extended leave in the summer of 1955 we all paid a visit to Cornwall where we were astonished to find so much glorious rock. Pete was inspired. He found a new strength and boldness as the next few years were to testify. It is a story of energetic and sustained rock pioneering of the highest standard.

His routes were always exposed and daring, following obvious but previously unacceptable lines. Much of the main face of Bosigran was covered in a thick carpet of ivy and had to be gardened on the sharp end of a rope. Pete's ability at this time can be measured by anyone who cares to reverse the traverse pitch on Suicide Wall, wearing plimsols and without protection; a move he had to make on the first attempt! It was a golden era. His companions were nonchalant about new routes and they always seemed to be on a thin stance paying out the rope in an incessant and rhythmical stream. Pete seemed to have little need for deliberation. He used to laugh at my bent knees and limp semaphore across the rock as I attempted to force a new route.

His love of Devon and Cornwall and our friendship with Cliff Fishwick brought him to Exeter in 1961, just three years after the first ascent of Malham Cove. Trevor and I had pressed him to join us, as he was no enthusiast of artificial climbing. Finally, criticism from 'admired contemporaries' caused us all to abandon aid-climbing as a central part of our climbing repertoire. In Exeter he managed to pursue his academic career, first as a teacher, later as the Social Education Advisor to Devon County. An interest in young people inevitably led to weekend climbing trips with young novices. Some of the talents he nurtured are among the most respected names in sea-cliff climbing. Cannings, Littlejohn, Darbyshire and Chadwick all accompanied him on a wave of exploration of the Devon and Cornish coasts. More fine routes followed with a few brief trips to the Alps. But he was never really happy there. His Alpine tantrums are legendary but have not always been understood. A childhood ear infection caused him pounding headaches and altitude sickness. In the valleys he became moody and irritable, a temperament out of keeping with the carefree English rock expeditions.

In recent years he had put up ferocious routes on Berry Head, Baggy Point, Lundy and numerous other cliffs in the south west. He occasionally strayed further afield to Pembrokeshire, Anglesey and Little Ormes Head. He also joined the BBC team for the Old Man of Hoy climb, taking a camera to the summit.

During the late sixties he collaborated on three guide books, the C.C. guide to Cornwall (1), the West Col guide to South Devon and a duplicated version to Chudleigh. The guides, his numerous articles and his climbs have been a tremendous contribution to British rock-climbing.

Early this year he was appointed Research Fellow at Bristol University and looked forward to explorations in the Avon Gorge. It is shocking and incomprehensible that he has gone forever.

He will be greatly missed, particularly by old friends like Cliff Fishwick, Al Alvarez, John Cleare and Ian Howell. They will miss a safe climbing companion and a good humoured and generous friend. We will all miss the fast drives to the sea strapped in some wreck of a car being blitzed by Beethoven and Brahms. We will miss the security of the Biven barometer. Whenever his right hand wagged by his side, as if rejigging some power to his fingertips, we knew we had better look sharp.

Barrie Biven

Pat Littlejohn writes:

Throughout the 'sixties and early 'seventies Peter exerted a strong influence on South West climbing. As well as making countless first ascents himself, many of which have become regional classics (e.g. Moonraker), he helped to mold the ideas and attitudes of many promising climbers in the Exeter area (among them Frank Cannings, Keith Darbyshire and myself) by the force of his own personality. His approach to climbing was the antithesis of the arid, gymnastic activity it has become for some people. At the core of his approach to climbing was a thirst for adventure, and the greater the variety of demands a climbing day made on his skill, ingenuity and courage, the more he enjoyed it. He particularly loved sea cliffs and was a master of coastal traversing. Sometimes this gave expeditions comparable to alpine mountaineering in length, seriousness and arduous nature.



Pete's climbing code certainly influenced the way in which many very difficult modern climbs in the South West were tackled. For Keith and I, abseil approaches to new routes were taboo if there was any possibility of approaching them aidlessly. Sometimes this involved a level of commitment bordering on foolhardy, and meant weeks of waiting for the right tides and sea conditions. At the height of his powers this was Pete's way to maximise the elements of a climb so as to bring it nearer to the big mountain experience. It is also a means by which many British sea cliff climbs can transcend their outcrop stature.

### MERRICK THOMAS SORRELL

1928 - 1975

On Tuesday, 4th November, 1975, this club, and the climbing world closed ranks once again, when it lost one of its best loved members, Slim Sorrell, murdered by a close range shot from a sawn-off shot-gun at Cardiff College of Technology.

He was out of the 'pop' scene of British rock climbing for several years, and whilst still active was comparatively unknown to moderns. But to all that knew him, there are the rare memories. For to have had Slim as a companion in the hills was to have experienced a rare combination of friendship and hardship. In his time Slim has instructed, encouraged, shattered, amused, cursed and tricked some of the best.

He was of course one of Joe Brown's earliest climbing partners. His first recollection of Joe in 1947 was on the Downfall, "I was watching a youth pratt about with what appeared to be his mother's clothes line, I pointed out to the embryonic Joe the inadequacy of both his gear and style, later he ate my butties". From such meetings heroes are born. To do a pitch that had resisted his efforts, would earn little praise; only a thump in the ear! Although Slim led many fine first ascents, you can imagine what he did to

the Baron Brown at the top of Octo, Seconds Retreat, Diglyph and Sorrell's Sorrow.

Everyone played second fiddle to Slim, in the important fields:- bridge building, practical jokes, eating contests, wrestling, romance and a game of rugby — usually with your loaf of bread. Hard nights and rainy days would always turn him on. A rope across a swollen river, a quick whizz on a crab and sling. Pete Biven was soaked on a Sorrell river crossing. Slim ran a Rock and Ice bus trip to Glencoe in 1952. He took the sixteen stone coach driver up the Buachaille and then kept the proceeds. We chucked him out of the Rock and Ice for that and then had a whip round to pay for the bus! Slim packed up plumbing and joined Stockport police becoming a star bobby. He left in 1966 and became an instructor at Ullswater and Ashburton Outward Bound Centres, and was, until his death, Deputy Head of Dinas Powis Remand Centre.

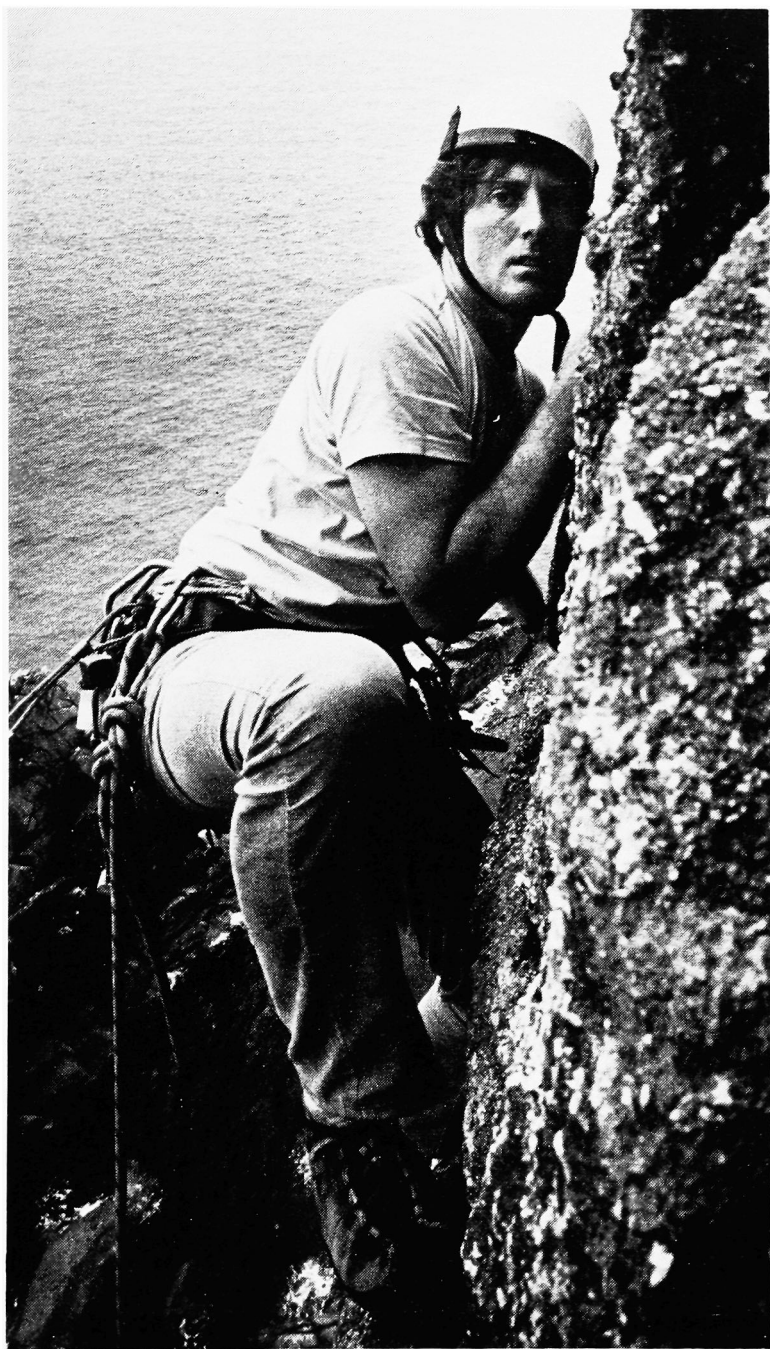
Slim was also important in his early climbing years for his part in influencing the breakthrough of the social barrier. This seemed to him, and many other poor boys, something that had to be broken, so the hills and crags and peaks of this country and abroad would no longer be the preserve of the keeper, the landowner and the well off.

Nat Allen

### CAPTAIN T. D. THOMPSON, R.M.

1938 - 1976

Terry Thompson was a man who made mountaineering both his profession and his vocation. Soon after he joined the Royal Marines Commandos he specialised as a climbing and snow warfare instructor and thus gained his entree to the high places and cold regions of the world where he was to find his inspiration.



PETER BIVEN



TERRY THOMPSON

As his skill and experience developed he kept a sharp eye open for expedition opportunities and, at the same time, became a keen club climber, at first in the RN and RM Mountaineering Club and later in the Climbers' Club.

His first break came when he went to South Georgia as a member of the 1964/65 British Joint Services Expedition. There he made several first ascents, the most notable being Sugartop; he also named, which was later officially recognised, another unclimbed mountain — Neil Peak — after his young son.

In 1967 he joined an Army expedition to the Sukkertoppen area of East Greenland where he made five first ascents. Again with an Army expedition, he visited the Kulu region of the Himalayas in 1973 where he climbed Menthosa (6444m) and Duphao Jot (6099m). Now armed with considerable expedition experience he raised a naval expedition which was to have attempted Nanda Devi in 1975. Much to his chagrin, the project was cancelled through the irresolution of the naval headquarters staff servicing the venture. But you cannot keep a good expedition man down and the following year Terry joined the Army Everest Expedition where he met his tragic death in a crevasse accident in the Western Cwm.

Within the club Terry used his intimate knowledge of the Cornish cliffs to co-edit the current edition of the guide to Chair Ladder and the South Coast.

Terry was not only a powerful climber and a natural leader but a man of great charm. He will be sadly missed, not only in the club, but perhaps even more so within the small circle of his fellow climbers in the Royal Marines Commandos. He leaves a widow and young family to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

Mike Banks

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# EDITORIAL

The past year has been a notable one for the Climbers' Club with members involved in six major expeditions. The Everest success dominated everything with Bonington, Estcourt, Scott, Braithwaite and Thompson all playing important roles. Various projects in the Karakoram involved Barker, Brown, McNaught-Davis, Potts, Scott, Rowland, Morrison, Alcock, Cheesemond, Walsh and Vincent. Only minor successes were achieved in 1975 but experience was gained, and as we went to press we heard that Trango Tower had been climbed this year by a team that included Howells and Brown. Elsewhere Myhill took part in a major first ascent in Greenland, Millar made an epic traverse of the Staunings Alps, and Howell, O'Connor and Cleare were involved with a new route on Kilimanjaro.

News of the Army's success on Everest by the South Col Route also came in as we were completing this journal. Members involved include Streather, Peacock, Fleming, Day and Thompson but the ascent was marred by the tragic death of Terry Thompson in a crevasse accident. Nevertheless few clubs in the world can boast that its members have been involved in two successful Everest expeditions in the same year, a fact that says much for the depth of experience and talent in the C.C.

In Yosemite, Howells, Pearce, Vallance and Meads all made important ascents, and in the Alps, Braithwaite and the Burgess twins had good seasons. It is interesting to note that virtually all these climbers belong to an aging generation and there was a definite absence of activity by younger members, a fact made explicable by the clear failure to recruit the younger activists in any numbers over the past few years. This defect has recently been spotted and energetic attempts have been made to put it right. Sharp and Fawcett are two of the new recruits who have joined Edwards and Littlejohn to strengthen our home activity, and the new climbs listed at the end of this journal reflect a healthy position.

The club has also been active in other spheres. Four successful guide-books have been published during the year as a result of the efforts of the authors and also Nicol and Moulton in their overseeing capacity. A useful programme of renovation is underway in the Club's huts — masterminded by Siddall.

Thus in 1976 the Climbers' Club appears to be stirring with renewed vigour after the fractional struggles and disillusionments of recent times. Hopefully the journal, which returns to its traditional format after a break of several years, will reflect some of this new spirit. The Climbers' Club must regain the centre of the stage. It should be rippling with life, controversy, and above all fun and good fellowship. It should always seek to be a club that the young and active climber will feel encouraged to join. The Journal has a major role to play in reflecting this character. We hope that this year's offering will match up to that responsibility.

Ken Wilson and Bill O'Connor

# REVIEWS

## **Medical Care for Mountain Climbers** by Peter Steele. Heinemann £3.50

Peter Steele has produced a book which weighs only 9 oz. and which is only marginally larger than the standard rock climbing guide book in use today. His claim that it can and should be carried in the rucksack for ready reference in emergency, and not left at home, is a valid one. In this small compass is packed a tremendous amount of accurate information on the subject of First Aid, and continuing aid in the mountains. This is a book which will cover not only the mountain accident in Great Britain on a small crag 100 yards from the main road, but also the very different situation in the Himalayas, where it may take several days or weeks to get the injured person to the nearest hospital.

Unlike so many old First Aid books with their pressure points and tourniquets, Dr. Steele is completely up to date, and in accordance with modern medical anaesthetic practice, and at times quite detailed.

There are a number of clear diagrams. The style is lucid, easy and jargon free: it is after all intended for mountaineers and not just doctors.

The final chapters on foreign travel and medical supplies will be found useful by expedition doctors.

The overall impression of this manual is first class. It is a pleasure to read, quite funny at times, and it leaves little out. If anything it can sometimes say too much, and it should be stressed that certain manoeuvres such as supra-pubic puncture of the bladder for retention of urine, rarely come the way of a doctor in practice. Cigarettes are too expensive to be used to burn off the leeches. They can be taken by surprise with a quick flick of the finger.

Hamish Nicol

## **Chair Ladder and the South Coast** by R. D. Moulton and T. Thompson Climbers' Club £2.70

This guide is the first to be published by the club in a new format, slightly taller than existing guide books but still happily fitting into a jeans back pocket. It retains the durable plastic covers, fitted in this instance with excellent photographs taken by Ken Wilson. It replaces the 1976 Cornwall II guidebook which has been out of print for a number of years.

The guide covers all the coastal cliffs from Sennan Cove to Lamorna including Chair Ladder, Lands End, Pordenack Point, Carn Lês Boel and



some newly developed cliffs including St. Loy Crag. Location and access are clearly given in the introduction to each crag.

There are descriptions of 268 routes, 80 of which have been done since the previous guide was published. The routes fall roughly into 52 of HVS and above, 152 of S to VS and 64 of Mod to V Diff standard. Gradings of the climbs have been revised where necessary and the old anomalies sorted out. Generally pitches on climbs of severe and above have been given a numerical grade in addition to the overall adjectival grade. The guide introduces the Hard Extremely Severe standard to the area on one route, The Baldest (6a) St. Loy Crag.

The introduction includes a list of recommended climbs at differing standards on all the major cliffs in the area. It is followed by a concise historical note by Frank Cannings. The usual lists of first ascents are included along with 15 useful maps and diagrams by Cliff Fishwick. There are minor errors and omissions. Who did the first ascent of Shawangunk? On the Chair Ladder diagrams the S.E. Face and the S.E. Butte are the same cliff! However, none of these are anywhere serious enough to give cause for concern. And nowhere are you, as in the recent Constable/Nunn Derbyshire guide, sent rightwards across a blank wall instead of leftwards along a ledge!

As befits a guide to a 'fun' climbing area, a lot of smaller cliffs are mentioned in the text without full details of the routes on them. This should not stop anybody enjoying these places where it is not possible to step on somebody else's considered opinion.

In general guide book writing is a thankless task and it is good to note in the acknowledgements that thanks is given to Roger Gook and Mike White for their interim guide to the area.

This is a competently written guide to an entertaining climbing area. Its use and perusal will give pleasure to a great many of us for some years to come.

Pip Hopkinson

### **Rock Climbs in Lancashire and the North West by Les Ainsworth**

Cicerone Press £2.00

As an exercise in guide book efficiency this slim volume is probably unrivalled by any other British guide. As a club involved in guide book production we should sit up and take notice of what could well become the format of the future.

Using Les Ainsworth's system of line diagrams which all but replace the route descriptions and cutting out all the technical preamble, geological notes and the like, the C.C. could probably have combined the Northern and Southern Derbyshire Limestone Guides into one far cheaper volume.

Do I hear cries of horror?

"What, exchange our solid readable information for this slim and soulless tract, never!"

However, the choice may not exist, the pressure of modern day economics will almost certainly revise our opinions of what is desirable in a guide book. I personally would hate to see the history section go, but what guides are all about is giving an indication of where the routes go, and these other items are far better covered in other publications.

Having said all the above, what does this guide have to offer? Well it's clear and concise — I personally have had not trouble locating any of the climbs from the guide book despite using it on crags I had never visited before. By the simple well tried and tested star system it indicates a few of the better climbs each crag has to offer and this will be of use to visiting climbers encroaching on the, up till now, all too insular Lancashire scene.

The guide gives an indication of the diversity and quality of the climbing that the area has to offer. Many of the crags compare favourably with those of the nearby Peak District and are deserving of a visit from considerable distances.

The usual quibbles can be made about the grading of various climbs, but the only really dodgy one I have found is Partnership, graded Hard Severe, at Houghton Quarry. If there is a touch of damp about, this becomes a very serious climb indeed and I feel it should have been upgraded for that reason alone.

The one really serious criticism of the guide is not concerned with its content, but rather with what it has left out. Chapel Head Scar is by far the best limestone crag in the area, a guide was prepared and ready for inclusion. Then an access problem developed, Ainsworth was all for including it anyhow and explaining the access situation in the text, the publisher however refused to put it in. In my opinion this was a serious mistake and an unfortunate precedent. Up till now guide book policy has been to include all major climbed-on crags whatever their access situation e.g. Rivelin Edge, and this move was a severe capitulation for climbers. The other point is that now the situation is improving and when the access is granted climbers will be without a guide. A sad flaw in an excellent little guide.

Al Evans

**Cwm Idwal** by Ken Wilson and Tom Leppert.

Climbers' Club £2.00

This is the latest edition of one of Wales's popular guide books. In an area such as this most of the users will be climbing in the standards up to

VS so it is vital that the authors remember that the main requirements will not be the latest XS variant but accurate, readable descriptions of popular routes, good clear diagrams and dependable standards which equate well with those in other guides. In all these respects this is an excellent guide book.

It is difficult to fault the route introductions, detailed pitch descriptions, the diagrams by Brian Evans or the standards. Numerical pitch gradings are included but unfortunately put in a separate section and not attached to the actual pitch. This shows a sad lack of conviction for this method of supplementing verbal information. However it is good to find guide book writers who are willing to admit that old classics can get harder. Lazarus, Zig-Zag and Original Route have all been recognised as being harder and one hopes that their new grades will reduce accidents on these routes.

Various new routes have been included, some very hard and well worth a visit from modern hard men, whilst the historical section has been brought up to date and provides a series of fascinating foot notes to the details of first ascents.

Perhaps my only real criticism is related to the star system. Here I tend to side with editor Trevor Jones and wish that stars would reflect only the routes intrinsic worth and so leave the climber to decide if it is worth the walk.

Ron James

**Clogwyn du'r Arddu** by Alec Sharp

Climbers' Club £2.00

Guide books like the best climbers are getting thinner, and in both cases it's probably a very good thing though less fun: Slim volumes fit the pocket and can convey more information, which implies an indictment of past indulgence.

Alec Sharp and his editor have done a good job in producing another cameo guide to Wales' best cliff. The covers as ever purvey atmosphere. For the third time Cloggy itself on the front, a small climber somewhere very steep and fashionable on the back, in this case Alec himself.

Once inside it is a very matter of fact work, relatively small print, lots of routes to the page, scrupulously accurate and terse, with little publication lag since the writing. Geologies, flora and bacteria have all been axed, though a little history, economical and straight, survives. One senses the distrust of tradition that can be a deadweight and prior to publication many a 'fifty-niner' and oldster winced in anticipation of the relegation of his favourite Cloggy X.S. or H.V.S. No doubt the guides' sales will be boosted when it is realized that the purge is very mild, very selective, highly justified. The juicy Black Cleft keeps its XS and nobody is going to

quibble about the 'mild' and the legitimacy of Llithrig and White Slab's bits of aid is not destroyed despite all sorts of purist antics. On the other hand very clear statements of how much aid appear, and the now traditional numerical grading attempts to put the routes into a broad technical perspective, while stars are employed for the first time in a situation where probably a good proportion of the new finds do not deserve any accolade while others (Leech, Jelly Roll) most likely do. At another level the author, speaking of technical grading states . . . "it may be found that the slab routes are easier propositions for their grade". This is almost certainly true of White Slab or Slanting Slab but more dubious if applied to some of the VS slab routes — Sheaf, Narrow Slab or Longlands.

People attempting to find their way around are given more explicit instruction in this guide than Pete Crew would ever have deigned to provide. The Evans diagrams are continued and placed together at the end which is a little awkward with no reference in the text. The darker corners — The Steep Band, the Bloody Slab area among others, have new diagrams, which is all to the good, though the dark and complex seams and overlaps of the Mynedd area remain beyond the margins of the two West Buttress illustrations. The Far West gets its routes, but no diagram. Perhaps like North West Scotland a little is being left to the imagination though it is admitted that the routes are hard to find.

Finally the notes on accidents include timely advice on how to deal with newshawks and helicopters which appear to be roosting on Cloggy these days — ignore the one and don't try to ignore the other — in practice the latter does appear pretty difficult. It is all useful stuff for when the statutory limit of 100 pages approaches there is still ample space (eight pages) to write in all the new routes to come, which means about another twenty to thirty climbs. It's another very fine little book made just a little sacred by its subject and by the fact that at last Great Wall goes free.

Paul Nunn

### **Carneddau** by Les Holliwel

Climbers' Club £2.70

This is the second guide book to appear in the new C.C. housestyle. It has been generally well received by other reviewers, so it might be instructive in our journal to cast a critical eye over some of the more detailed strengths and weaknesses of the book.

On the editorial side, Holliwel had a difficult task. He took on a very diverse area. Apart from the many excellent routes on Llech Ddu and the Amphitheatre Wall, he was faced with the daunting task of rationalising the scores of overgrown routes on largely uninspiring cliffs — the more typical fare of the Carneddau. These were not particularly suited to modern tastes, and to have used up too much space in describing them, would have

been unwise. Holliwell, to his credit, took the trouble to climb all these routes and cut down their descriptions to more frugal lengths. Thus Craig Yr Ysfa, which consumed forty-seven pages in the last guide, has now been reduced to twenty-eight pages. Admittedly the new housestyle assists this (with more words to the page), but the saving has been largely achieved by re-writing.

Nevertheless Holliwell could probably have been even more brutal, and climbs of doubtful worth still take up a large proportion of the guide. There may well be a case in future guides for despatching several crags into virtual limbo, giving only the briefest of mentions to their routes. Re-incarnation could be discouraged by that marvellous phrase, much cherished by guidebook writers: "the climber is best left to wander at will . . . on this delightful cliff"; a weapon lovingly preserved for the final humiliation of poxy crags. Holliwell has in fact developed a new version of this time honoured phrase "It is surely foolish to burden posterity . . . with esoteric germs best left for the ardent masochist to rediscover". The irony that his original polite text, which referred to gems rather than germs, was converted and overlooked at the proof stage, could be regarded as a signal from on high that even more savagery is called for.

A particular success in this guide is Ginger Cain's marvellous collection of route diagrams. These presented certain technical problems with overlaying the route lines, but these have been solved effectively and the result is most pleasing. The diagrams for Llech Ddu and the Lower Amphitheatre Wall are among the finest ever to be published in C.C. Guides. Unfortunately the points amassed for this success have been more than squandered in the typesetting. The new series of guides have, from a typographical standpoint the dubious merit of all looking different, when they should have looked the same. This is because three completely different typesetting methods have been used. *Carneddau* has been printed in the particularly ugly I.B.M. sans serif method, a version usually reserved for the cheapest and most unimportant publications. The result is lamentable. The authority and credibility of our guides will rely, to some extent, on getting these technical matters sorted out and developing a smooth a repetetive style to run through the whole series. We should, in all our publications, try to decide on a sensible standard and then stick to it. We should not be tempted by short-term, seductively cheap printing methods, which result in erratic publishing that conveys the impression (often an accurate one) of disorganisation and lack of resolve on the part of the publishers. (N.B. These comments are equally valid for the Journal).

Thankfully this weakness does not appear to indicate any particular flabbiness in the present C.C. Guidebook leadership, and hopefully will turn out to be a teething problem as the new series gets underway.

Ken Wilson

# NEW CLIMBS & NOTES

## **Yorkshire Karakoram Expedition to The Ogre, with ascents of Razaqi, Pamshe and Pajo**

Pat Fearnough, Peter Jennings, Ted Howard, Alan Burke, John Minors and I climbed three peaks in the Biafo Glacier area in June '75, happy consolation for not reaching the main objective of our trip, the Ogre (Baintha Brakk) 23,900 ft. We met in hot, humid Rawalpindi early in May after completing the usual preliminaries necessary to climbing in Baltistan.

Flights to Skardu take place once per day, when days are clear. The inevitable queue was not the traditional variety, being composed of American, German, Austrian, Italian, Japanese and Polish teams. We joined in, our own British queueing expertise standing us in good stead when the Japanese team were not quite ready to take their turn, we were. Before we departed I was informed that there were twenty more expeditions yet to arrive in Rawalpindi.

A road from Rawalpindi to Skardu is at present being built but its completion is not expected until 1978. Future expeditions may care to consider this fact when estimating time needed.

We stayed only one night in Skardu where we purchased paraffin, dahl, salt ghee and atta, porter food sufficient for the ninety mile walk which was preceded by a fifty mile jeep drive to Dusso, the village which terminates the Shigar valley. Before we departed we visited Bob Downes' grave.

In temperatures around 90°F we recruited and assembled our porters for the long march in. The Polish women's team, encamped at the end of the road, were attempting to gather together some four hundred porters (against our thirty) not without difficulty.

Our three day walk to Askole, the last village en route, made warm work. Here we paid off those porters who wished to return to Shigar and hired local porters to make up the required number. Great difficulty was encountered at this point due to porter shortage caused by several large expeditions ahead of us and stripping the valleys of the best men.

Leaving Askole we picked our way up the Biafo Glacier taking three days to reach Ho Bluk which lay under a fresh cover of snow at 13,500 ft. That day we had issued boots and goggles to our porters as agreed. During the evening these worthy gentlemen entered into a very lengthy discussion

amongst themselves culminating in a visit to us by the head-porter. Communicating through our Liaison Officer he laid down their demands:—double pay and an issue to all porters of socks, sweaters and anoraks before going further. Impossible! Having completed the easiest part of the journey they now wanted to return to the valley and fleece another expedition.

It was obvious that the head-porter had talked the rest into his idea. They had little choice as the head-porter was also brother to the Head man of Askole on whom they relied for employment throughout the remainder of the year.

After extracting a promise from the porters to return when sent for we paid them off and fell to sorting out our 1,000 lbs. of gear. The next day was spent in ferrying the 40 lb. loads up the glacier, at the end of that day one point had become crystal clear: we would not be able to carry the necessary equipment to Base Camp and have sufficient time to enable a serious attempt on Ogre. The following morning a council of war produced a resolution to retreat to Ho Bluk on the Western side of the Biafo glacier and attempt, alpine style, some of the peaks in the vicinity.

Fortune smiled and the weather held, a great relief for those members of our team who had less than a week before departure home date. After setting up a Base Camp we split into pairs to tackle three separate peaks.

Alan Burke and Peter Jennings made the second ascent of Razaqi. 18,290 ft. Southwest of the Ho Bluk camp site, (first ascended by the Yorkshire Himalayan Expedition 1971). They completed the ascent and descent in the day by the original East flank route.

Pat Fearnough and John Minors attempted Tongo 19,370 ft. immediately South of Razaqi. After a long haul up the heavily crevassed glacier leading to Tongo John retired, suffering from the effects of a too recent bout of pneumonia. Settling on a small col he had to watch Pat attempt the summit section solo. When eventually reaching a subsidiary peak at around 18,400 ft. it became obvious to Pat that a bivouac would be necessary to gain the summit. He had no alternative but to descend and accompany John back to camp, thus avoiding a night out. This subsidiary summit was provisionally named Pajo.

Meanwhile Ted Howard and myself had embarked on our chosen peak, Northwest of Ho Bluk. We had followed Pat and John up the Tongo glacier for a short distance before turning North across the glacier to reach the base of our peak in about two hours. At last we were climbing with relish, the Southern side of the mountain. Approximately ten hours later, after some very pleasant mixed climbing and a grade six knight's move we attained the summit ridge. With the weather still good we made a bivouac and crawled in. Most people seem to hate early rising and we were no exceptions however, once on our way at about 2-30 a.m. we

revelled in the good weather and enjoyable climbing. The initially interesting ridge sections became, later in the morning, a dull slow slog leading us up what transpired to be an exceedingly long narrow ridge, heavily corniced, to the summit. We estimated this to be something over 20,000 ft. This second long day ended with a descent to our bivouac for another night in fine condition.

On the following day, whilst descending the Southern face in a runnel that had recently avalanched, I, while dreaming of food and things, caught my crampon in a loose bootlace which shot me down the runnel, almost taking Ted with me, but he didn't want to come and I eventually braked before coming onto the rope having lost a quick hundred feet and gaining in the process one speared thigh with a crampon point. I didn't think much about food and things for quite some time after that episode.

Our return to civilisation was uneventful apart from washed out roads from melting snows and the sad sight of oncoming expeditions, struggling to obtain porters to assist their entry into the promised land.

### **The Trango Tower Attempt, 1975**

The Trango Tower, near the Baltoro Glacier in the Karakoram, is an incredible rock peak about 3,000 ft. from base to summit, with the summit at over 21,000 ft. It is so completely inaccessible on all sides, and the granite is so compact and steep that if it was about a tenth as high and removed to a Scottish sea-shore, it might well cause the greatest climbers in the world to ask for double-time to climb it!

People had been trying to obtain permission for the Tower for years without success until at last a permit was granted, amazingly enough, to Chris Bonington. This however would have clashed with the annual Everest meet and so, after much horse trading in the corridors of power, that fateful buff envelope landed on Mo's doorstep in Nant Peris. This was not entirely the end of the story; as some weeks later when Mo and Pod were actually driving to Pakistan we got a telegram in Wales saying that our permit had been cancelled in favour of an American team. This turned out to be their idea of a joke, fortunately we did not meet any of these people in Pakistan as our sense of humour might have proved inadequate. One of the unfortunate results of our receiving final permission about a week before the expedition left was that we were unable to gain any sponsorship whatsoever and it thus became very expensive for the members themselves.

The rest of the team, namely myself, Joe Brown, Martin Boysen and Ian McNaught Davis finally caught up with the advance guard of Mo



Anthoine and Dave Potts in Rawalpindi and we started to play the "catch a plane to Skardu" game. This scheduled daily flight actually flies about once a fortnight although the record is nearly five weeks. We were lucky and only had to wait a fortnight for the backlog of expeditions ahead of us in the queue to move out. The flight to Skardu is very impressive, flying close under Nanga Parbat and over passes with very little height to spare. The airfield at Skardu is miles from anywhere and you have to drive into the town in a hired jeep, this gives you a foretaste of the rapacity of the Balti tribesman which would make a secondhand car salesman seem a model of open-handed fair dealing. Trying to organize an expedition in Skardu is the sort of memory that makes a man wake up at night in a cold sweat, but, at last, all was arranged; porters, food for porters, boy for porters food and a dog to carry the boys food, etc., etc.

Having left Skardu the first fifty miles were by tractor, to a place called Dhusso where we would begin the walk. Here we met the main team of porters and spent many happy hours discussing wage rates, weights of loads and length of daily marches. I think I can speak for the rest of the team when I say that these two days laid the foundations of the corrosive loathing I will always feel for the inhabitants of that desolate place. The journey up the Braldu river gorge reads like the diary of a Leyland shop steward, with strikes and sit-ins and a permanent go-slow. Our Pakistan Liaison officer Captain Ayaz, had to be restrained from time to time, from impaling the head porter on the pick of his ice axe. Captain Ayaz was the best liaison officer I have ever seen, or have heard of, and became an indispensable member of the expedition. It took nine days to walk to base camp which was half way up the Trango Glacier, a tributary of the Baltoro. The mountain scenery here must be amongst the grandest in the world. The skyline is just one vast array of unclimbed granite peaks and spires and in the background the great snow peaks leading up to K2. The Tower is on a col on the ridge on the right bank of the glacier and it first revealed itself out of the mist looking remote and inaccessible. The weather was poor for a few days after we had set up our base camp. This had one advantage in that we were able to pay our porters in the teeth of a howling gale which somewhat diminished the inevitable protests at being paid by Barclaycard!

The route to the foot of the tower lay up a steep gully which itself led up to the ridge and so we started carrying loads to establish a camp at the foot of the tower. From this camp the route seemed obvious enough, an ice gully led, via a series of snow ramps, on to the snow field on the front of the face. Here we hoped to be able to establish another camp. Above this a crack line appeared to lead directly to the summit. After about three days carrying loads we were ready to start on the ice gully. This was quite hard as were the snow ramps, as everything became very unstable in the heat of the day. We were able to dig out a snow cave at the top of the snow field and set up house. There were to be the three of us, Martin, Mo

and I living here for the next week and working on the route. The climbing above the cave was tremendous, steep red granite at about 5 sup/A1. We were fixing ropes and descending every night to the cave with the pleasant prospect of jumaring up the iced ropes the next morning. We were climbing in pairs so that each person had a day off every third day. The days' off were much worse than the climbing days as there are few things more boring than sitting on a small ledge all day, either burning in the sun or freezing in the shade. About midday the snow melt would begin to pour down and wash the ledge away. This would not freeze until midnight so that we were always soaking wet. As we climbed higher the view opened up all around and presently we were level with the main peak of the Trango group so that the tower must be at least 21,000 ft. The height of the face as we climbed it being around 3,000 ft., say 1,000 ft. up to the snow field and then we must have been 1,500 ft. above that at our high point. Anywhere on the route above the snow cave a stone would fall clear to the snow, so that the angle was quite respectable.

So life went on, day after day in that curious mixture of fear and boredom with the odd stab of sensation so typical of high mountains.

On the last day it happened to be my day off, and so Mo and Martin set off at the crack of noon hoping to be able to get above the major difficulties and on to easier ground. Martin led some very hard and impressive pitches slanting right on overhanging rock and into the final chimney line. About three in the afternoon I noticed that the sound level had risen considerably and tearing myself away from my thumb-twiddling I looked up to see Martin, motionless, in a overhanging crack and shouting for help. What had happened was that he had got a knee jammed in the crack which was so good that he could not get it out, and was well and truly stuck. Mo sent up some bongs so that he could get a fix and pull himself out but they would not fit and as he was getting tired he dropped them. Mo then sent up the bolts but as he was even more tired by now the drill soon came whistling down to join the growing heap of gear on the snowfield. This pantomime had taken about two hours and it was now about six in the evening and things were not looking too good. The prospect of a night out at 21,000 ft. hanging by a knee jam requires a robust sense of humour. Mo then decided to tie off the ropes and abseil back to the cave and send me up with duvets and food etc. Luckily, however, Martin with one last effort managed to cut his breeches open with a blade peg and wriggle out of the crack just as Mo had set off down. They both arrived back at the cave with Martin, understandably, a bit hysterical at having got a bit too near the edge.

That night the weather was not too good and neither was our morale. We were running out of food, and we had no more rope left. So we decided to go back down to base camp to fatten up and relax. When we

got back down, late the next day, we found that the expedition morale was also very poor. Our time had just about run out, assuming we still wanted wives and jobs to go home to. So we decided to pack up and go home although I am sure we all felt we had blown it and we should have finished the job. Anyway, hindsight does not climb mountains and ten days later we were back in Skardu and another ten took us to Rawalpindi. Incidentally, of the ten weeks of the expedition, more than four were spent just waiting for transport. We were so psyched out by the final wait in Skardu for the plane out that we drove non-stop, back to England, in ten days and this included a three day break-down in Iran — but that's another story.

Will Barker

### **North West Karakoram Expedition 1975: Sherpi Kangri (attempt), Chota Kangri and Pyramid Peak**

The original aim of the expedition was to climb Batura Mustagh in the North West Karakoram, but as a result of political trouble the expedition settled on Sherpi Kangri, an unclimbed 24,000 ft. peak in the North East Karakoram.

A year of preparation and scores of letters were needed for research to gain permission and to raise food and money for the trip. We needed £8,000 in all. Our first break came when I won a Churchill Fellowship Award, following upon this the expedition was supported by the MEF and the British Mountaineering Council. The rest of the money was found by individual members. We also owe a great deal to Lord Hunt, our Patron.

There were many setbacks in the twelve months leading up to our departure. The troubles and disappointments made it seem to us that we would never actually leave the U.K. When at last our one and a half tons of food and equipment was packed and had left the country a month before us, and overland to Rawalpindi, we really felt we were on our way. The 6th July dawned on our excited group at Heathrow as we boarded a plane for Pakistan. Many changes had taken place in its composition but the final party consisted of:- John Cheesemond (deputy leader), Alan Hunt (treasurer), Bob Smith (equipment officer), Nev Crowther (medical officer), all lecturers in Outdoor Education in Edinburgh, Dennis Kemp (photographer), a lecturer in Audio Visual Aids, Dave Walsh (food officer) and John Vincent.

The journey was both uncomfortable and uneventful and Rawalpindi smelly and hot. Assigned to the expedition as Liaison Officer was Captain Ifti Khan, who did a grand job as interpreter and trouble shooter. Exhausted, frustrated and exasperated by an enforced twelve day delay waiting for a flight out to Skardu and away from the 110° heat and squalor. We eventually got this, what must be the most dangerous schedule flight-path in the world, flying directly below the glistening giant

peak of Nanga Parbat. From Skardu three tightly packed jeeps bumped us to Kapalu. From there, only walking, once we had crossed the mile wide, icy grey waters of the Shyok River, a two day epic on goatskins blown up and tied off at various dubious orafices. From the Shyok we began an eight day trek with our forty-three porters, which was to take us to base-camp.

The approach to these massive mountains was fascinating. Taking us through village after village of poor, curious peasants. Our porters, a colourful happy bunch, sang and danced at every halt. Awed by the magnificent, breath-taking scenery we finally arrived at base-camp and July 28th at the foot of the Sherpi Kangri Glacier, at 13,000 ft. a mere fourteen days behind schedule leaving only a disappointing three weeks climbing time before us.

Leaving behind a huge mound of equipment our porters left for their villages. We sorted the dump into managable loads and prepared ourselves for the labour of lugging loads up the mountain. We established Camp 1 at 15,000 ft. and returned to base for more loads. Camp 2 was made at 16,000 ft. and Camp 3 a 1,000 ft. higher at the head of the Sherpi Kangri glacier in a large and perfect snow basin, surrounded by incredibly beautiful snow peaks, towering thousands of feet above us. Camp 3 was thirteen miles up the glacier from the base and became our advanced base.

From the moment we saw the mountain we were impressed by its technical and natural hazards. Soon after establishing camp three, Ned Crowther and I tried to reach the West Ridge by a snow couloir. Although the couloir was not difficult, the altitude (19,900 ft.) was making itself felt. At the top of the couloir we noticed the West Ridge was avalanching and thought a turn about was in order. We had hoped that once on the ridge we would have reached the summit at 24,000 ft. fairly quickly. Disappointed we returned to the others with our news. All the alternatives seemed far harder after a further three days scanning the South and East faces of Sherpi Kangri. With only six days left on the mountain the harder alternatives were eliminated. Finally we decided to cut our losses and attempt two smaller peaks. We set up Camp IV a few miles East of Sherpi Kangri in a perfect position to attempt an unnamed peak of 21,300 ft. and another called Pyramid Peak, 21,200 ft.

John Vincent and I crept out of our warm sleeping bags at midnight, after a restless night and were moving away from camp at one. It was a crystal clear starry night, intensely cold, but still. We moved together not wanting to stop in the bitter cold. The climbing was not difficult. The final ice slope appeared 700 ft. long and 50° angled ice at an altitude of 21,000 ft. We found the going hard and decided to wait a few minutes for the dawn and a better view. It was 7-00 a.m. when we finally reached the summit and looked triumphantly over into China, which was still swathed in grey light, and looked forbidding and mysterious. Our cameras clicked



Looking back to Sherpi Kangri from the camp below Chota Kangri.

The routes taken up Pyramid Peak and Chota Kangri. Sherpi Kangri is just off the picture to the left. *Photos: Dave Alcock*





away at an horizon of unclimbed peaks. That half hour on the summit made all the sweat, toil and letter writing worth every effort. The weather started deteriorating and we arrived back at Camp IV in worsening weather. Pleased with our efforts the others were saddened that the weather had spoilt their chance at Pyramid Peak. A few days later however the weather had improved and we were back again at the high camp. In a day of perfect weather, John Cheesmond, Bob Smith, Alan Hunt and Dave Walsh climbed Pyramid Peak.

Dave Alcock

### **British East Greenland Expedition 1975: Ingolfssjeld South Face**

The existence of a large spectacular peak in the South Steenstups first became known from the explorations of Amdrup and Bocher. It was named Ingolfssjeld, after an old Scandinavian King, Ingolf.

After our defeat in 1971, it had been the intention of Tony Mercer and myself to return with a stronger party to make another attempt to climb this fine face. Over the summer of 1974 the threads of the team were put together. Keith Myhill had been interested in the face ever since I had shown his slides from our 1971 visit. His climbing ability and 'big-wall' experience were to prove crucial to our success.

The final team was made up of Steve Chadwick, Jim Davenport, Henry Mares, Keith McDowell, Tony Mercer, Keith Myhill, Morag Chadwick and Elizabeth Drabble. Areas of responsibility were allocated and slowly the ball began to roll. We were almost defeated before getting to Greenland, but, owing to a lot of luck and great deal of help and advice from many sources, we eventually got it together.

The climb: Turned back by a storm on our first attempt and by our complete underestimation of the difficulties and length of climb on our second. Our plans underwent a complete revision for our final fling!

With time for only one more attempt at the route we opted for a party of three rather than six, feeling this would increase speed and be safer on the loose sections of the route. We had no preconceived goals for each day's climbing, but thought of it as a steady push, overcoming each day's problems as they arose.

Keith Myhill, Tony Mercer and Jim Davenport were the three best equipped to go, whilst Henry Marks, Keith McDowell and myself acted as back-up team.

Henry and I carried the bulk of the climbing equipment to the foot of the face and the following morning Keith Myhill and Tony refixed the ropes on the lower wall, having taken them off on our second retreat.

Keith Myhill leading on the lower section of Ingolfssjeld's South Face  
*Photo: Steve Chadwick*



The next day Myhill, Mercer and Davenport climbed the ropes up the difficult 700 ft. lower wall and retraced the now familiar route to the Eldon Tower bivouac. At 5 a.m. the next day they climbed towards the Central Chimney a fine grade 5+ pitch and quickly reached the previous high point.

The Central Buttress now lay back and formed a ridge with many steep buttresses along its spine. It took a full days climbing to reach a bivvi below the Upper Towers. The following day the climbers moved right, Keith still in the lead, trying to find a way around the 1,000 ft. Upper Tower. Hard climbing up two steep crack pitches leading to a difficult groove. The way back left to the ridge appeared impossible so that they were forced onto the walls that formed the back of the Central Couloir. Later that evening Jim was hit on the hip by stonefall which required pain killing injections and was diagnosed as a possible cracked pelvis. Rather than go down they decided to push on without a bivouac.

Despite Jim's injury, good progress was made up the final 1,200 ft. wall. The Central Diedre although it looked hard was chosen as it led directly to the summit. Free and precarious aid climbing around a large and tottering roof formed the entry and led to a fine crack and groove system which allowed good progress until a hanging bivouac on pitch 56 was forced. Most of the spare food was dropped here and a change in the weather brought light snowfall.

Climbing the next day began at 3 a.m. Keith was cold and thought to be suffering from exposure. Jim was in considerable pain from his hip. Tony had a fall whilst attempting an icy chimney. Keith took over the lead again. Stripping down to PA's he forced two very hard pitches giving access to easy grooves which led to the summit block. Tony led the final two pitches and the summit was reached at 4-30 p.m.

After a foodless bivvi a long descent down the original East Ridge Route led to another bivvi two pitches above a food cache left by the support team. Later the whole group was reunited and returned to base.

Ingolfssjeld's South Face resulted in a 6,200 ft. ED 6+ route.

Steve Chadwick (non-member)



### **An East African Trip**

During December and January 1975/6 John Cleare and I joined Ian (Pin) Howell in Nairobi and spent several active weeks climbing on the crags and mountains of East Africa. In the company of Pin we received fantastic hospitality from MCK members and other ex-patriots in Kenya. At the end of the day the total was several major new routes, several fine repeats, a twisted knee and memories of really good climbing and adventure.

O'Connor and Cleare left Heathrow early in the morning and were dining with Pin in Nairobi the same evening. The next day John and I were out cragging on Lukenya, Nairobi's nearest rock-climbing. The next few days were spent walking up volcanos acclimatising and letting John take a few 'snaps'.

From Kenya we left for Tanzania and Kilimanjaro's forbidden southern glaciers. Three days of amazing walking from the Catholic Mission at Umbwe through the dense mountain jungle led us to the base of the Kersten Glacier. There followed two days technical ice climbing to the 19,340 ft. summit of Kibo (see article on page 50).

After Kili, John left with several MKC members on the long drive for Uganda and the Ruwenzori. In what is apparently good weather for the area they climbed most of the major summits and completed several long traverses. Other noteworthy climbs included the first ascent of Albert by the north face (D+). The first ascent of the Moebius Glacier, the complete traverse of Mt. Baker and a host of classic Ruwenzori routes. John felt they were very Scottish in scale but Alpine in altitude. But one must be a masochist to get into a position to enjoy the climbing.

Whilst John was up to his knees in bog and giant heather, Pin and I were enjoying the sun and surf north and south of Mombasa over the New Year; very traditional; lots of tall dark strangers for first footing.

After an enjoyable respite we returned to Mt. Kenya where we were avalanched on in the Diamond Couloir and climbed the Diamond's Ice Window route, an amazing climb up the narrow hidden ice couloir right of the Diamond Couloir.

At Hells Gate O'Connor made a free ascent of Olympian with Iain Allen and John Cleare, John Temple and O'Connor climbed a new route, Compensation HVS on Fischers Tower at the Gate.

Since our return from Kenya, Ian Howell, with various MCK members, has been responsible for two major new routes on Mt. Kenya and a host of hard new rock climbs at Hells Gate.

Bill O'Connor

### Alpine Activity by C.C. Members in the 1975 Season

With summer and winter alpinism, and the penchant that some members have for ski traverses the Alpine season now appears to last for 365 days. The North American scene has also become the summer venue for an increasing number of the club members. Along with new hard routes in Greenland, Africa and just about everywhere else where the grounds not flat, last year was, in every respect, noteworthy.

Winter 1974/5 saw many folk heroes, who also happen to be members, preparing for Everest on the Aiguille. Nick Estcourt with Ronnie Richards, Martin Boysen and MacInnes climbed the Gervasutti Couloir on Mt. Blanc du Tacul. Later the same team, joined by Doug Scott, who had been ascending the South Face of the Midi with Tut Braithwaite, climbed the Couturier Couloir on the Aiguille Verte. In the meantime Chris Bonington, in the company of Haston, made a fine ascent of the Direct Route (1967) on the North Face of the Aig du Triolet.

The summer of 1975 caught quite a few people out. Those that went out early had good conditions, especially on the ice and mixed routes. The fine conditions combined with the increasing use of Rog Withers type Terror tools and curved gear meant that all and sundry were pounding up steep ice in very good times.

Tut Braithwaite, sparing a little time before going off to Everest (I promise not to mention it again), made a series of fine hard ascents. On the Grandes Jorasses he made the second British ascent of the Shroud, the steep ice slope to the left of the Walker Spur. This makes his third route on this side of the mountain, the others being the Walker and Croz Spurs. On the Eckpfeiler he made the second ascent of the Bonatti/Zapelli, a route that has long had a reputation for danger and difficulty. Both these routes were completed in a day, separate ones of course! The Burgess Twins, Alan and Adrian also made an ascent of the Bonatti/Zapelli and later what is possibly a third ascent of the Couzy/Desmaison route on the Jorasses. The twins, accompanied by Bob Shaw, also made the second ascent of the short, but very difficult rock climb, called the Forgotten Pillar on the Aiguille d'Argentiere.

The Mt Blanc Range as always saw a lot of traffic during the early fine weather, but August was the poorest month for many years. During the 'beau temps', Lindsay Griffin had a good season, and seems full recovered from his frost bite injuries. On the South face of Mont Maudit he put up a new route, left of the Bonatti line. He also made an ascent of the Dubost/Gevril route on the North Face of Mt. Dolent and later a solo ascent of the Mayerl/Messner Route on the Aiguille d'Argentiere. Also in the range he climbed the South Face of the Fou.

In and around the Oberland various things of note were done. Bob Dearman, despite advancing years, climbed the Eigerwand in far from perfect conditions. Majorie Allen climbed the Nollen on the Mönch. Bill O'Connor and John Cleare opened up their season with an ascent of the North Face of the Doldenhorn, making a more direct finish through the rock band, which seemed much more sensible than the devious line described in the book. In the meantime Pete Biven and John Fowler with wife and friend were peak bagging just about everything in sight.

Those that couldn't get out before August had to put up with very mixed weather, as a result members in their search for 'good conditions' spread far and wide and discovered the lesser gems. The North East Wall on the Kingspitz and the Grauwand on the Gletschhorn had ascents from members including Bob and Majorie Allen, Trev Jones and Derek Walker.

Ron and Barbara James did several fine ascents on the more eastern rock ranges. In the Wetterstein they climbed the Schusselkarspitze by its South East Wall and the Scharnitzspitz, South Face Direct. Whilst in the Kaiser they climbed the Bühl route on the West Face of the Mauk.

In the Pennine Alps, Peter Newman, Harry Sales and Mike Burt climbed the Zinal Rothorn before Harry left for the fleshpots of Sass. Pete and Mike went on to climb the Obergabelhorn, the South Ridge of Pointe Zinal, to retreat from near the top of Castor's North Face and finally to climb Petit Mt. Collon by its steep North Face. Lindsay Griffin and partner were also busy in this area ascending the North Face of the Blanche de Perroc, the North Face of Mt. Blanc du Cheilon and the North Face of Mont Brûlé.

By now everyone, bar Robin Prager must have made an ascent of the Cassin on the Badile. Last summer, Bob Dearman climbed it having just struggled up the de-pegged Comici Route on the Cima Grande. Bill O'Connor and John Cleare and Martin Harris and John Wilkinson also climbed the route. Trying to fit something in between storms, O'Connor and Cleare turned to Bergell's Ice and climbed the North Face of the Cima di Cantone in poor conditions, and O'Connor also climbed the North Face of the Cima Rosso by the direct route.

In the Dauphiné, John Brailsford made the second solo and the first British ascent of the Couloir de Diable on Le Grande Ruine whilst Lindsay Griffin and Steve Venables climbed the North Face of the Grande Casse in the Graian Alps.

Getting completely away from it all, Chris Fitzhugh went out to East Africa, where he made an ascent of the Heim Glacier on the Southern Glaciers Face of Kilimanjaro, one of the finest mountaineering routes in

Africa. Chris also climbed the South Face Route on Mt. Kenya.

In the United States many hard and new routes were climbed by members, primarily in Yosemite. On Washington Column, Mark Vallance with Ray Jardine climbed two new lines: Energy Crisis (5.10 D) and Power Failure (5.10 D) both about 500 ft. and both having two 5.10 pitches. Mark also climbed The Central Pillar of Frenzy and the East Buttress of Middle Cathedral Rock and two routes on Arch Rock. He also climbed Cookie Left Side, Waverley Wafer and Catchy on The Cookie. Amongst many other routes he also attempted the Nose but retreated in extreme heat. Also in the Valley, Malcolm Howells and Dave Pearce, on their first visit climbed the North West Face of Half Dome, Salathé Wall and The Nose on El Cap. Pete Meads climbed The Triple Direct, also on El Cap.

Bill O'Connor

### North Wales Notes

Over the last two or three years the Lake District has benefitted immensely from the sudden rise in the standard of climbing in Yorkshire, and has left Wales far behind with respect to both the difficulty of the new routes and the amount of high standard climbing going on. Wales has received a few hard new routes, mainly from Pete Livesey, and a few of the climbers resident in Wales. These remain isolated events however, mainly because the lack of competition and a cohesive climbing scene enables climbers to leave unclimbed lines, until later, fairly secure in the knowledge that they will still be unclimbed when they return. Also the new routes are put up by a very small group of climbers, each having a favourite area, and there is little communication or competition between them. As elsewhere, there has been a concentration on free-climbing old aided routes and also upon climbing new routes with no aid, creating some extremely hard problems.

Perhaps the most difficult climb in Wales at present is Livesey's Right Wall of Cenotaph Corner, which he climbed in 1974, and which gives sustained climbing up a smooth wall using small pockets, invisible until reached. Alec Sharp and Chris Dale attempted the second ascent but were repulsed and this was made by Ron Fawcett and Chris Gibb. In 1975 Rowland Edwards added a new climb to the Corner's Left Wall. The route was made even harder when Livesey made a second ascent with no aid. (The free version of the old Left Wall route is now a fairly popular climb, and is one of the best pitches in Wales). Elsewhere in the Llanberis Pass, Sharp and Dale made the second free ascent of Skull, the first having been made by Hank Pasquill and Ray Evans in 1971.

On Cloggy there have been a large number of routes put up by various parties, including new lines on the Far East and the Steep Band. The most important new routes were four on the East Buttress. Three of these were

the work of Rowland Edwards, the most significant being Medi which he did with Tim Jepson. This gave some very hard and poorly protected climbing up thin cracks between Vember and Curving Crack. With Nigel Metcalf, Rowland added Silhouette, which takes a difficult and direct line up the wall of Scorpio, and Sweeper which gives a well protected climb up a thin crack on the left of Chimney Route. The other major new route was Blanchmange Sandwich, so named to complement the nearby Jelly Roll. It takes the steep left hand groove above Great Wall and gives some thin and difficult climbing; the route was put up by Alec Sharp and Steve Humphries. The most important among the free climbing of aided routes on Cloggy was undoubtedly the ascent of Great Wall by John Allen. It had previously been led twice with only the top peg for aid, but by eliminating this, Allen gave the cliff its hardest and perhaps its finest route. Two other free ascents were prominent, that of Woubits Left Hand by Sharp, and the second ascent of Capricorn by Sharp and Dale, who managed to free climb the crux pitch, a thin crack on the left of the final corners of Pigott's, which had used three pegs for aid on the first ascent. Also on the cliff, Pasquill's and Evans' route Leech had its second and third ascents and was found to be easier than its reputation had suggested.

Elsewhere in Snowdonia, Pete Livesey climbed Drummond's Great Arête on Llech Ddu. This had seen few ascents and no one had led it with less than two of the original points of aid, but Livesey achieved a notable success by climbing it entirely free, to give Llech Ddu its hardest route.

At Tremadoc, Livesey was again active. In 1974 he succeeded in climbing the top pitch of Zukar free, giving a highly technical problem which ranks with the hardest routes at Tremadoc. In 1975, with Jill Lawrence, he managed to climb the very steep finger crack in the wall between Barbarian and Silly Arête, almost free, with two yoyos, to give Fingerlicker, perhaps Wales' answer to Butterballs, it gives some very strenuous finger jamming. Alec Sharp and Chris Dale climbed Vulture, which follows the even steeper crack in the wall between Gurreagle and Merlin. Although short, it gives some sensational and extremely difficult climbing. Rowland Edwards put a new route up the right hand side of the Vector Buttress named The Void, the final pitch, which follows an overhanging crack, is particularly impressive. The last route of note to be put up at Tremadoc was Cliff Phillips' Extraction, taking a line between Striptease and Fang.

At the opposite end of the climbing arena, Edwards kept plugging away at the limestone cliffs of the Ormes and came up with several good routes, and one phenomenal one, New Dimensions, which he climbed with Tim Jepson. Situated on the Great Orme, it takes a stupendous line up a fiercely overhanging arête and is very hard. Also in this area, Pete Livesey managed to climb the old A3 aid route, Great Wall at Craig-y-Forwyn, almost free, with only two yoyos!

The sea cliffs of Gogarth received attention from Alec Sharp, Chris Dale and Steve Humphries amongst others. Sharp and Dale climbed The Ordinary Route, which takes a rising traverse line across the walls of Rat Race, Mammoth and Citadel, giving some phenomenal climbing in very impressive situations. The route went entirely free and they considered it to be the hardest and most sustained climb they had done at Gogarth. Sharp and Humphries forced a climb up the steep wall to the right of Ormuzd, but had to resort to a peg for aid. The route is called Annihilator. They also climbed one of the McCallum bogus routes, a steep corner crack to the left of Fail Safe, also straightening out the described line to give The Eternal Optimist. A few other routes were climbed on these cliffs including a peg route across the Big Roof.

Looking at North Wales as a whole over the last year or two one is immediately struck by the amazing steepness of the harder new routes, and by the lack of aid needed on them. Great finger stamina and a change in attitude have provided the key to a new concept in feasibility and Wales is now beginning to share in this new world.

Alec Sharp

### Peak District Notes

A period of near stagnation in the development of Peak District climbing has drawn to a most abrupt close. The most dyed in the wool conservative could not deny the significance of the great spurt of new climbs sprouting everywhere, flaunting wire brush and chalk marks but not very much else in terms of artificial aid or holds. Indeed one could argue that the Peak has been re-established beyond doubt as *the* major outcrop area in Britain, a position justified by the difficulty of the climbs in the new wave but even more than that by their quality and by the expectation which is now universal that there are many more to come.

What is the nature of this 'advance'? The numbers of new climbs since John Allen's and Ed Drummond's routes at Stanage a couple of years ago are really quite startling. There are dozen upon dozen of them on gritstone, especially on the eastern edges. But new routes have always kept on appearing in this area. The next point might be that a good proportion of them are very hard and getting harder all the time, but that would not be sufficient in itself were they not also excellent in quality, with a good proportion taking the boldest obvious features, the smoother buttresses, the blanker slabs of Millstone, Barbage or Froggatt, the least free-climbable but most impressive cracks.

On Limestone too numbers of routes could be used as the index of change, with some good climbs or free climbing of the old artificial routes just about everywhere. In Chee and Miller's Dale over forty such climbs

have appeared in a year or so, with activity by Brian Griffiths in Chee in Spring 75 and a gathering swell of enthusiasm as Tom Proctor, Geoff Birtles, Pete Livesey and Ron Fawcett made near weekly obeisances to Behemoth, and then picked off most of the other old aid routes in the valley. Yet again the numbers of climbs are important, but their quality even more so. Even the two or three hundred routes done would mean little, if most were mediocre, in an area with so much good climbing. But this is no marginal addition. A sufficient proportion of the climbs combine the highest quality in terms of rock features, with the very highest order of difficulty, to differentiate them quite sharply from past developments in the area. This is true of both great numbers of the new gritstone climbs and of many recent routes on limestone. Thus the Great Arête (Millstone), most of the thin peg cracks in the London Wall idiom at Millstone and Lawrencefield, the routes on Great Slab at Froggatt, Silent Spring at Burbage South, Behemoth and a number of adjacent climbs done free in Water-cum-Jolly, Mortlock's Arête and the route to its right at Chee Tor, the additional pitches on Plum Buttress and the free ascents of Bastille, John Brown (Bastion Wall), A Dream of Brown Donkeys and recently Castellan, these are ascents of some of the most obvious pieces of rock in the region and some of the best, and as such the climbs cannot but remain great test pieces long after they have been superseded in difficulty.

Thus the new wave combines difficulty with intrinsic rock finesse. It is in this way that the emphasis upon relative fitness and good style has become self-evidently justified as a means of matching performance to very formidable challenges. The elation and dynamism developed in this way has become widespread among a good number of younger climbers who are now active at or near to the leading standards. It is tempting to claim that many climbers are now climbing at a higher standard than was achieved even by the few a decade or more ago, but once one leaves the totally unprotected climbs or solo performances this historical comparison is very hazardous. Given protection and chalk, it seems likely that, in performance terms, relatively few climbers still exceed the best performances of the last two decades, but some undoubtedly do. And this is a sufficient basis for the new elation, for to exceed those standards has been a very difficult barrier to overcome. Now it has been there seems a whole new dimension possible for the future, with a general improvement in hard rock-climbing standards in its train.

There are those who attribute all of this to climbing walls or to the influence of one or two individuals. It is true that competition between relatively few people has produced a good proportion of the best new climbs, and speeded their production. The stab of Livesey roused Tom Proctor and Geoff Birtles and perhaps others. Nor can the photographic

book produced by myself and Tony Riley be ignored, for its publication coincided with the new wave. But it is hard to believe that these factors had much to do with John Allen's and Steve Bancroft's *initial* emergence though they may have stimulated them later. And despite the apparent domination of a few names the movement appears wider than that. Training on walls or crags or in other ways combined with great asceticism and concentrated efforts has become a way of life, for a very considerable number of climbers. An ever growing crop of brilliant performances and more good new climbs must be the consequence in the Peak and elsewhere.

Paul Nunn

### South-West England Notes

In the past year more talented climbers visited the South-West than ever before, and made considerable impact. Only the most inaccessible and esoteric climbs (like America at St. Agnes, and The Adversary at Zawn Duel) remain unrepeatable, whilst repeats of certain other climbs left them free of aid and among the best and hardest anywhere.

The Avon Gorge has undergone some structural changes to its Sea Walls, where blasting done to stabilise the area has decapitated Unknown Buttress and left the cliffs in a chossy state. The extent to which climbs have been altered is not fully known as yet. Elsewhere in the gorge however, many notable developments took place. Arnis Strapcans' attempts to free climb Main Wall Eliminate were finally rewarded and the pitch was given a 6a rating, along with Willmotts 'Central Wall'. In the process of filling in the last gaps on Main Wall, Nipper Harrison climbed a line of quality and difficulty between Pink Wali Direct and Drang. Oceans of Taboo (XS, 5c) is on excellent rock but very thin and with only token protection. Yet another rising traverse of Main Wall fell to Strapcans and Steve Berry when they followed the cream-coloured band from Mercavity's cave to the top of The Lich, to give Cumming Round the Mountain (400 ft. XS, 5c). Strapcans and Graham Desroy set the ball rolling on Suspension Bridge Buttress with Devil Gate Drive (360 ft. HVS, 4c) which traverses the obvious band above that taken by Clan Union. Despite disconcerting setbacks of a long fall and nearby suicide, Pat Littlejohn and Dick Broomhead completed a very fine route near Earl of Perth. It climbs an overhanging groove above the first Hell Gates traverse, then moves left crossing Earl of Perth to a crack system in the upper part of the buttress (Oblivion, 200 ft. XS, 5c). Strapcans further reduced the aid on G.T. Special to 1 rest point, rendering it as good and hard a route as any on the buttress.

The main efforts of Bristol climbers were absorbed (like rain on a desert) by Cheddar Gorge. Acres of new rock were exposed by gardening



and many fine ascents resulted, of which only the most important are described here. After falling off the top pitch, Littlejohn completed his route *Madrugada* (260 ft. XS, 5c) on the forbidding wall above *Horseshoe Bend*. The climb has subsequently repulsed many strong parties and awaits a second ascent. The most substantial route on the North side of the gorge — *Sentinel* — had its aid reduced to 1 point by Littlejohn. With Richard Broomhead he also stripped the tower-like *Priest Rock* of its ivy mantle, and made a free ascent of Bob Bennett's mixed route *Big Tower* (now 370 ft. XS, 5b), as well as adding a sister climb — *Hallowed Ground* (330 ft. HVS, 5a) which is sustained at a reasonable standard. The same day Strapcans was active on *Great Rock* adding a 200 ft. independent start to his route *Siberia* (400 ft. XS, 5c) which climbs the impressive left flank of the buttress and now ranks among the most arduous of Cheddar climbs.

Explorations by Broomhead in the amphitheatre tucked away to the left of *High Rock* led to a series of fine ascents by himself and others. Nipper Harrison led a useful entry pitch (*Poon*, 140 ft. HVS, 5b) into the amphitheatre then Broomhead climbed a big leaning corner to give *Nero* (150 ft. HS) and an obvious chimney to its left (*Gaul*, 120 ft. VS). An impressive groove just left of the latter gave Littlejohn *Gladiator* (120 ft. HVS, 1a). Harrison climbed the arête between the two (*Legionnaire*, 110 ft. HVS, 5a), and the wall to the right of *Nero* (*Forum*, 150 ft. XS, 5b). Of the amphitheatre climbs, pride of place perhaps goes to *Caesar* (140 ft. XS, 5c) which ascends the wall of superb white limestone forming the left side of the amphitheatre. This was climbed by Littlejohn and Broomhead. The same pair also made a virtual free ascent (1 aid peg) of the great arête recorded by Dearman as *Satori* (330 ft. VS, A2). On the first pitch, which is immaculate (140 ft. 5c) they made a new entry, beginning further right than the original.

Other Dearman peg routes were also assaulted. On *Acid Rock*, *Ahimsa* (previously A2), was free-climbed by Harrison and an excellent pitch resulted (XS, 5c). And on the aid-man's preserve of *Sunset Buttress*, Arnis Strapcans and Chris King made a bold attempt at a free climb beginning up *Paradise Regained*, then traversing along *Sunshine Sutra*; they managed without aid until the final bolting section. Their creation was christened *Future Legend* (250 ft. XS, 5c). On the dizzy tower left of *Sceptre's* final corner, Dearman's mixed pitch, *Crown of Creation*, was climbed free by Littlejohn, who also added a direct approach up the buttress beneath, making a bee-line up to and beyond the layback crack of *Twilight*. The result is a major route of (340 ft. XS, 5c).

The past year has seen the emergence of *Brean Down* as an area of some status. These short limestone sea-cliffs provide climbs which are deceptively steep and sustained. Routes discovered (or rediscovered) by Littlejohn and Broomhead, include *Great Corner* (110 ft. HVS) which is excellent and obvious, and *Bones Chimney* (100 ft. XS) a demanding route up

the fissure to its right. Right of this is a break then the cliffs form another buttress with a crack line on its left side — Pressure Drop, 75 ft. HVS. The face of the Buttress gives Pretty Boy Floyd 90 ft. Mild VS, and the right edge is taken by Be-Bop Arête, 120 ft. VS. Landward of Cyclops Cave is a fierce wall whose central groove line has survived two attempts, while the left edge of this wall eases to give Idiot Wind (75 ft. HVS). Details of other climbs were published long ago in the guide 'Limestone Climbs in South West England', now a collectors piece.

In Torbay the emphasis was on second ascents, with Ed Hart repeating such esoteric gems as The Quaker, The Pinch, Paranoid and Crocodile, and nearly making it up Black Ice opting for a top rope on the final layback edge). New developments include a boost to Daddyhole Upper Cliff by Littlejohn with three good climbs. The best of these is Sometimes Break the Rules (80 ft. HVS) which follows a rising crack up the wall right of Loose Knickers, then uses a peg to break over a roof into a hanging groove. At Anstey's Cove, Littlejohn climbed Cocytus free, and made an interesting route to the left of Acheron — Groove and Slab, 130 ft. HVS. However the most important discovery would seem to be a rising traverse of the main wall of the Babbacombe Crags by Littlejohn and Dave Garner: Fear of Flying (190 ft. XS, 5c) takes an obvious fault just below the rim of the cliff and gives some very steep climbing in exciting situations.

Without the impetus of Keith Darbyshire, exploration on the North Coast was at its lowest ebb for years. At Baggy Point some worthwhile infilling took place on Promontory Slab. Littlejohn and Pete Thexton climbed a new route (Undercracker, 140 ft. HVS, 5b) in mistake for Twinkletoes, and Nipper Harrison and John Fyffesdale climbed the long crack right of Shangri-la to give Wee Beastie (160 ft. VS) a fine route. Harder things appeared in the form of Terrapin (150 ft. XS, 5b) a devious line on the blank-looking slab left of Last Horizon, led by Littlejohn and followed by Garner and Paul Buttrick it gave a serious and sustained pitch with doubtful rock and poor protection.

The sole addition to Blackchurch this year was Antichrist (300 ft. MXS, 5a) a loose and serious climb taking the arête left of the Verger. Climbed by Littlejohn, Garner and Buttrick it would be both better and easier with more gardening. Other exorations by Devon-based climbers produced a sprinkling of shorter routes on the Hartland-Bude coast, most notably at Menachurch Point. It is rumoured that the arête of Earth-rim-roamer, at Dyer's Lookout, collapsed last year in a storm, obliterating the best route in North Devon since 1972.

No post guidebook boom resulted from recent visits to Lundy, though development was naturally not static. Ed Hart had a fiendishly active week repeating most of the Deep Zawn climbs and many others, whilst on an

ascent of Stone Tape, Nipper Harrison took advantage of exceptionally dry conditions to dispense with the aid on pitch two. A visit by Arnis Strapcans and Frank Cannings resulted in one climb of great significance on the sheer side of the Devil's Limekiln The Exorcist, (180 ft. XS, 5b). Unfortunately the route starts 100 ft. up the wall from a point reached by abseil.

The cliffs of North Cornwall remained in a state of equilibrium apart from flurries of activity at Pentire centred around Darkinbad the Bright-dayer. Pete Livesey climbed the route using one aid point, plus chalk. Ron Fawcett bettered this by using chalk alone. Having made an ascent in the past utilising all the aid points, Ed Hart, not a habitual chalk user, found a chalk bag at the top of the crag and proceeded to put it to use. Finding it made a "phenomenal difference" he was able to reduce his aid quota to three points. Since chalk is not an accepted form of 'assistance' among the South-West based climbers, (not being used on any of the climbs so far mentioned in this item), the validity of these as free ascents is open to question. Livesey's Cobra and Last Leviathan, both climbed with Jill Lawrence, are notable additions to this fine cliff.

In spite of its tremendous reserves of unclimbed rock, Carn Gowla remained unexploited apart from one very fine ascent by Rowland Perryman and Dick Broomhead. Their route—The Tomb (260 ft. XS, 5a)—weaves through ribs and steep slabs to the left of The Vault, before crossing that climb and finishing up an eaposed ramp. In the far west, at Bosigran, the big events were free ascents (with chalk) of West Face and Liberator by Pete Livesey and Ron Fawcett respectively. These impressive feats have probably rendered these climbs the best and hardest extremes on Cornish granite. Both are unrepeatd. Livesey also added some bold and difficult eliminate lines to Bosigran main cliff and Chair Ladder, but still tastier plums were picked by Tom Proctor and Geoff Birtles at Lands End. A much eyed-up chimney line to the right of Longship's Wall gave them Buffalo Gorge (120 ft. MXS), while an impressive face crack to its left proved more strenuous and finer (Yankee Doodle 120 ft. XS). Getting away from first ascents, it is sad to see so many free climbs being ascended with chalk and in some cases (e.g. Ghost at Bosigran) becoming really caked. While it's use may be defensible on such way-out innovations as Liberator free (until a chalkless ascent that is), plastering it on to existing free climbs shows, at the very least, contempt for the traditions and current practice in the area.

Pat Littlejohn

### **A Note on Guide Book Policy**

After a period of some instability a few years ago, the club's guide book activities settled down with a steady stream of books appearing in the familiar "FRCC" format. So why change a successful formula? The most

obvious answer is inflation and the ever increasing cost of printing guide books; it is a basic principle that the club's guide books should be self-financing. The ever present threat of competition from rival, commercial guide book publishers, more damaging perhaps to our colleagues in the Peak and Lake Districts, is another factor. Finally there is the desire to provide the climbing public (which includes our members) with value for money in the guides that we produce.

The new guide book format, established with "Chair Ladder" (previously titled "Cornwall Volume II"), "Carneddau" and "Clogwyn du'r Arddu", gives a clean modern appearance. However, its primary aim is to save space and thus to reduce the number of pages; the saving when compared to the "old" format is over 30 %. Further savings may well be implemented in future guides; for example if the diagram keys were printed in the same pages as the diagrams themselves, a further ten pages or so would be saved in each guide with little or no inconvenience to the user.

A careful study of what goes into the guides has also been made. Working on the principle that what matters is the climbing, anything not devoted to this end is a luxury. Thus Geological, Natural History sections and the like have been axed; a pity perhaps since they added character and interest to our guides but on the other hand few will mourn the passing of the Editor's Prefaces! Also out are the sometimes copious explanations and justifications of the grading system, the asterisk for quality system and the free climbing principles adopted; all of which are now standard policy for C.C. guides. It is interesting to note (without comment) that we have now brought our "contents" very closely in line with the F.R.C.C. guides.

First Ascent Lists, however, do remain a problem; accepted as a necessary part of the guide book (for the historical record and for the information that they impart), the space that they occupy still continues to be inordinate.

A general policy of reducing descriptions to the reasonable minimum and omitting, or giving merely the briefest mention to poor and obviously worthless climbs is also being followed, although not to the extent of excluding the introductory comments as to the quality and the nature of a climb. However, we have drawn the line at the use of abbreviations adopted in some guides (o/h for overhang, L and R for left and right etc), preferring a more readable style. The general result is intended to be a tight, readily understood but by no means colourless text. Such dictates are not intended to cramp our author's styles; rather that they should provide a framework to work within.

To take advantage of these actions, a critical eye has been cast on the areas covered by our Welsh guidebooks. The result, despite the ever increasing numbers of new climbs (a trend which is expected to continue),

has been the elimination of three titles from our future plans. The first manifestation of this policy will be a new guide to cover both sides of the Llanberis Pass; subsequently the Tryfan and Cwm Idwal guides will also be combined into one. The other area for streamlining is that covered by the Snowdon South, East and West (Cwm Silyn) guides, which should easily fit into two volumes. Some of these guides, particularly the Tryfan/Idwal volume, will be big books — although slimmer than many of our past publications due to the deliberate choice of paper that we now use; consequently they should provide very good value for money. On the other end of the scale, the new Cloggy guide (which so far has defied any attempts to merge it with other areas-) despite a 33 % increase in the number of routes described is probably the slimmest C.C. guide ever.

The choice of authors is, of course, of crucial importance; the right combination of climbing ability and/or experience, literary ability, and the will and the time to apply such skills is hard to come by. Current and future authors are being chosen with care for two reasons. We want our guides to reflect and anticipate contemporary thinking — for example the new Cloggy guide with its controversial “free” descriptions of Great Wall and Shrike. But also because we have a fine C.C. guide book tradition to maintain — from the pre-war years to the present day our writers have produced a varied and colourful set of guides. We intend to preserve and, we hope, better their high standards.

Bob Moulton (Editor of Climbers' Club Guides)

### **The Mountaineering Conference Game**

On Saturday, 27th March the B.M.C. held its Buxton meet in order to play the Conference Game. McNaught Davis, the referee, had no trouble from players though it is rumoured that P.I.M.P., the association of Professional Instructors, Mountaineers and equipment Purveyors, objected to some of his decisions.

The Chairman of the Sports Council, Sir Robin Brook, opened the proceedings by telling us to be proud of our sport; even with members of the Everest team involved on the fringes of the game; and that climbing Everest was better than winning Olympic Gold, which puts ace big-wall climber Scott one better than ice skater Curry.

Pete Livesey gave a talk entitled “Chalk gets Everywhere” about hard rock and the people who climb it. It seems that British players are better than the continentals but have yet to win away from home in the U.S.A.

Though flattered by impresario Dennis Gray's assumption that all climbers could understand “forin”, and despite its good climbing photography, at nearly two hours the film “Mort d'un Guide” was too long. One or two ‘shorts’ selected from the Trento Cup Winners Cup would have been more appropriate.

Outside the ground Leo Dickinson's peep show was a big attraction and the Peak National Park's sound and slide programmes were well received. The Army, with their fibre-glass climbing wall demonstrated by their belaying that they were trained to kill, and the trade showed us a wide variety of gear at a high variety of prices.

Chris Bonington kicked off in the second half, talking at great length about 'The Expedition Scene' and reminding his uniformed audience that (quote) "Everest is the highest mountain in the world"; and was heavily penalized for his blatant foul, "it doesn't matter whether you have sherpas or not". Chris did however suggest that we play a new game on big mountains which he would call the 'Capsule Ascent', presumably played entirely within the confines of a Whillans Box.

Bill Tilman played a blinder as testified by the roar of the crowd and brought us back to the main stream of the sport, the Small Expedition. Tilman told us how 1936 was his lucky year as he was left out of the Everest party and, with a small group climbed Nanda Devi. There was some discussion of the definition of a 'small' expedition but Bill's I think will win the day: "If you can't get the logistics on the back of an envelope then things are getting out of hand". (If the editor can get hold of the article from Punch that Bill quoted from, I'm sure his readers would be gratified).

Wynford Vaughan Thomas indulged in some controversial play regarding the Conservation of the hills and suggested limiting access to the hills of his native Wales, but though a competent player, he failed to score.

International star Peter Habeler gave a dazzling performance, re-living his and Messner's triumph on Hidden Peak. Though the conference did not run into extra time, as the last one did two years ago, the audience retired to the bar wondering where the "Edge of the Possible" had got to, and the game came to, as Habeler would say, a 'still stand'.

Mark Vallance

Chris Dale surges on Positron during the first ascent of Ordinary Route  
(also see photo overleaf). *Photos: Alec Sharp*









## CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

# NEW CLIMBS 1976

### NORTH WALES, PEMBROKE, CORNWALL

The last New Climbs Bulletin that was published by The Climbers' Club, appeared in 1969. By that time the burden of organising, printing and distributing a fat publication, covering new route activity in many far-flung areas, had become too great for the club to handle. New Climbs for the years 1971, 1972 and 1973 were organised by the B.M.C. but eventually they also found the project too arduous. The 1974 New Climbs was published privately and since then no steps seem to have been taken to continue the publication.

It therefore seems sensible for The Climbers' Club to return to its traditional policy by printing route descriptions from its own guidebook areas. Other areas that might reasonably be included, are those without a continuous guidebook structure and where club members have been particularly active (e.g. North Cornwall, Devon, Pembroke and the Ormes).

This year we have gathered these route descriptions into one sixteen page section of the Journal so that extra copies can be printed for the wider climbing public. The B.M.C. and other organisations printing route descriptions, might consider printing similar supplements to their areas, so that all could be combined into a yearly set for the general convenience of the climbing world.

**NORTH WALES****CRAIG GOGARTH****Annihilator** 100 feet. Extremely Severe.

Follows a series of cracks up the very steep wall right of Ormuzd.

Start: On the ledge at the start of Exit Chimney.

- (1) 100 feet. 5c Pull over the bulge on the left and climb up to gain the main crack just below where it really overhangs. Move right and, using a peg for aid, climb the wall. Step left, climb a groove, then follow easier ground leftwards to a belay.  
First ascent: March 1975. A. Sharp, S. Humphries.

**Horse Above Water** 170 feet Mild Extremely Severe

Climbs the obvious flake chimney just left of Heroin. Once the chimney is gained the climbing eases to VS.

Start: below the Chimney.

- (1) 100 feet. 5b Climb the groove and enter the chimney. Climb this and the crack to a nut belay but no stance.  
(2) 85 feet. 4b Climb the crack and the corner to the top.  
First ascent: June 1975. A. Sharp, C. Dale.

**Graduation Ceremony** 240 feet Extremely Severe

A difficult and sustained climb up the wall to the left of Citadel.

Start: Just left of Citadel, below small overhangs.

- (1) 130 feet. 5c Climb up to the small overhangs and go over these into the small corner. Climb this for a few feet then swing left and move up to a ledge. Climb the overhanging corner and continue up to the ledge of Big Groove. Move right to the end end of the ledge and belay below the quartz corner.  
(2) 110 feet. 5c Climb the corner and move up right onto the wall to gain a thin crack. Climb this and the wide crack above to reach a ledge. Continue over several bulges to a slab and move right to belay as for Citadel.  
First ascent: A. Sharp and R. Toomer. June 1976.  
Pitch one was originally climbed in June 1971 by A. Rouse and M. Geddes as a direct start to Big Groove.

**Ordinary Route** 400 feet Hard Extremely Severe.

A magnificent route that takes a high line across the steepest part of the main cliff. Very difficult and sustained.

Start: At the beginning of Pitch 2 of Rat Race.

- (1) 90 feet. 6a Follow Rat Race for 25 ft. to a small ledge. Climb directly up the groove above the ledges. Climb up left across the short, steep wall to gain the slabby groove leading up to the stance on Rat Race.

- (2) 70 feet. 6a As for Positron: Move left to the arete (protection peg) and follow the holds diagonally left to below the obvious small overhang. Climb over this and move up and left into Dinosaur. Descend to a belay that is level with the small overhang, just climbed.
- (3) 40 feet. 5b Move left, along ledges, to gain Mammoth. Follow this, over the bulge, to a peg belay on small ledges.
- (4) 90 feet. 5c Traverse left, along the obvious line, to gain Citadel. Climb this to a ledge on the left. Move left along the ledge and then climb the small corner. Move round the arete onto a slab and belay below the obvious pod. Peg belays.
- (5) 100 feet. 5c Traverse left to the arete and climb the steep groove to easier ground. Continue to the obvious overhanging cracks and take the right-hand one to reach the top.  
First ascent: November 1975. A. Sharp, C. Dale. Pitch one had been climbed previously by Sharp and J. Whittle.

### SOUTH STACK — YELLOW WALL

**The Cow** 220 feet Extremely Severe (1pt. aid).

A strenuous route climbing directly to the stance at the end of pitch 2 of The Moon and finishing up the overhanging nose above.

Start: As for The Moon.

- (1) 120 feet. From the bay on the right climb up to the obvious steep crack above (rest taken on a sling below the roof). Enter the crack with difficulty and follow it until it is possible to rest, awkwardly, at its top end. Climb the continuation groove to a traverse line leading to a broad corner. Move round the arête on the right and climb directly up to gain the stance.
- (2) 100 feet. Climb the overhang, directly above the stance, to a good resting position (protection peg). The next overhang is strenuous and leads to a second protection peg. Use a knifeblade (removed) to enter the groove above, and follow this to a slab and the top of the cliff.

First Ascent: 26th June and 10th July, 1976.

D. Pearce, P. Trower.

**Dogs of War** 230 feet. Extremely Severe.

A companion route to Sind, somewhat harder and more exposed.

Start: Just right of the start of The Moon.

- (1) 90 feet. 5a Follow the obvious diagonal break to the right. An excursion to higher level solves the first difficulty, and easier ground leads to a steepening just below the traverse line of Creeping Lemma which is gained by an awkward move.
- (2) 70 feet. 5b. Continue in the same line (loose and poorly pro-

tected) until it is necessary to step right on white flakey rock (poor protection peg on left). Move right with difficulty to gain a bottomless niche under a large roof. Stance in slings.

- (3) 70 feet. 5b. Step right on to a steep wall and move up using a poor peg for aid (since climbed free) to gain the ledges on the right. Continue directly up the steep wall above to gain the top.  
First ascent: May, 1976. M. Howells, P. Trower (varied leads)

## DINAS CROMLECH

**Resurrection** 145 feet Hard Extremely Severe

A fierce wall route between Left Wall and Cenotaph Corner.

Start: Just left of Cenotaph Corner.

- (1) 145 feet. 5c Ascend leftwards for about fifteen feet and then go straight up to a small natural thread runner, and then continue to join the girdle. Move right to an ill-defined pillar then straight up to a protection peg (used for aid on the first ascent). Continue up to reach Left Wall at the base of a thin crack. Follow the crack, which moves off to the right, until it closes two thirds of the way along (protection peg). A little further the crack closes completely, just past a good spike and nut runners. Tension left (now free) to reach a small shallow pillar with hand holds at it's base. Follow this pillar to the top, by a large chimney.

First ascent: 1975. R. Edwards, N. Metcalfe.

P. Livesey climbed the route free on the second ascent, but avoided the tension move by a direct line from the crack. R. Fawcett followed the original route, without aid, on the third ascent. All commented favourably on the route's quality.

## Crucifix

P. Livesey and R. Fawcett have added a direct start to this route, with climbing harder than anything on the original line.

**Memory Lane.** 150 feet. Extremely Severe.

A good route linking the start of Spiral Stairs with Epitaph.

- (1) 150 feet. Move up a crack to a ledge on the arête. Move onto the left wall and climb straight up to the ledge on Epitaph which is followed to the top.  
First ascent: July, 1976. P. Livesey, Miss J. Lawrence, Miss G. Price.

**Foil.** 100 feet. Extremely Severe.

A hard crack line between Epitaph and Sabre Cut.

Start: As for Epitaph.

- (1) 100 feet. Move up Epitaph until it is possible to continue up the steep thin crack to the top. It is unfortunately possible to throw

oneself into Sabre Cute at fifty feet when the going gets tough, but thereafter the final section is unescapable.

First ascent: July, 1976. P. Livesey (seconds did not follow).

### CLOGWYN Y GROCHAN

**Stroll On** 130 feet. Extremely Severe.

A direct variation to Roll On.

Start: As for Hangover, Roll On etc.

- (1) 130 feet. Follow Roll On to the roof, climb directly over this, and follow the continuation crack to the top. Sustained and superb climbing.

### CYRN LAS

**Lubyanka** 360 feet. Extremely Severe.

An excellent and varied route, with pitches that are inescapable once embarked upon. The climb initially follows a series of grooves and corners left of The Skull before breaking out onto the headwall above the top pitch of The Skull.

Start: As for Subsidiary Grooves.

- (1) 60 feet. As for Subsidiary Grooves.
- (2) 50 feet. As for Subsidiary Grooves to the crevasse stance at the start of The Skull.
- (3) 60 feet. 5c. Above the stance is an obvious groove. Enter this, with difficulty, from the left and continue to a bulge at the top. Exit left and continue to a large bay. Piton belays.
- (4) 50 feet. 5a/b. Climb the corner behind the belay and pull out to the right and descend a slab for a few feet to a spike and peg belays.
- (5) 70 feet. 5b. Climb directly up the slabs, over an overlap and enter a short open corner. Exit left at the top of this and continue up the short slab to a small ledge. Peg belays.
- (6) 70 feet. 5c. An exposed pitch. Hand-traverse to the right along the quartz band above the roof, until it is possible to attain a standing position on the band. Climb the groove on the left until it curves round to form a roof. Layback boldly through the roof and continue easily up the slab to nut and spike belays.

First ascent: August, 1976. E. Cleasby, J. Eastham, R. Matheson (varied leads).

### CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU

**Grovel** 100 feet. Extremely Severe

Awkward climbing up the obvious roof crack above the second pitch of Bloody Slab, just left of Syncope.

Start: As for Bloody Slab—the stance at the top of the first pitch.

- (1) 100 feet. 5c Move up left, as for Bloody Slab, and climb the thin crack up to the roof. Jam across the flared roof-crack and continue up the easier ground above to a belay.  
First ascent: June 1976. A. Sharp, S. Humphries.

## TREMADOC

**Fingerlicker** 170 feet. Extremely Severe.

Two superb, contrasting pitches up the wall between Silly Arête and Barbarian\*

Start: At the foot of Barbarian's corner.

- (1) 65 feet. Climb the pod on the left wall to gain a fine finger crack. Climb this to a roof and layback up the corner above to a ledge. Wriggle down to the right to a stance on Barbarian.  
(2) 105 feet. Follow Barbarian for ten feet, then climb diagonally leftwards across the wall to a peg on the arête.  
Climb easily up Silly Arête to the top.

First ascent: Summer 1975. P. Livesey, Miss J. Lawrence

\*This route is close to Victimisation and the relationship and validity of each route will be sorted out in the forthcoming guidebook.

**Extraction** 160 feet. Extremely Severe.

A good route giving Vector style climbing. Start below Fang.

- (1) 60 feet. Climb the thin crack between Fang and Striptease to the stance of Fang.  
(2) 100 feet. 5c Go right across the wall to a foothold on the arete. Move up to a niche and then left, across the overhang with difficulty, to the slab of Fang. Climb the right side of the slab to the top.

First ascent: July 16th, 1975. C. Phillips, M. Crook.

**The Snake** 100 feet. Hard Very Severe.

An interesting and exposed pitch that takes a rising traverse line across the steep wall at the top of Vector Buttress.

Start: From the last stance of Grim Wall.

- (1) 100 feet. Climb left into the gully and climb this to a good ledge by the obvious pod. Move left into the pod, climb it and exit left at the top, and follow the obvious traverse line to the left.  
First ascent: June, 1975. A. Sharp, C. Dale.

**Cream** 250 feet. Extremely Severe.

A very hard eliminate route taking a direct line up Vector Buttress.

Start: Just left of Vector.

- (1) 50 feet. Easily up to the first stance of Vector.  
(2) 80 feet. Move up directly from the belay to cracked blocks level with Ochre Slab (nut runners). Move left with difficulty on to the obvious overhanging fang and climb up to the peg on

Nimbus. Move left to a slab and climb this to gain a roof. Traverse right to the cave belay of Vector.

- (3) 90 feet. Follow Nimbus for fifteen feet, then break out up the wall above passing a spike and follow the crack (originally Tiros) to the top.

First ascent: May, 1976. P. Livesey and R. Fawcett.

### **Croaker**

This has been climbed free by Fawcett and Chris Gibb.

**Void** 225 feet. Extremely Severe.

A fine route up the right side of Vector Buttress.

Start: Thirty feet right of Vector, below a steep groove left of a gully.

- (1) 65 feet. 5b Climb the groove direct to a belay just below Vector's Ochre Slab.
- (2) 85 feet. 5b Move up to the Ochre Slab (as for Vector) and follow it to the overhang. Move right, under a roof, and round a corner, to gain a small ledge. Climb the crack on the right to a large ledge on the side of Shadrach Gully.
- (3) 75 feet. 5c Climbing the obvious overhanging groove until it is possible to step left and climb the steep wall to a protection peg (used for aid on the first ascent). Move up and right to a crack which is followed to the top.

First ascent: 1975 R. Edwards, I Pomfret.

### **Leg Slip Eliminate**

A route has been made up the Direct Start of Leg Slip (free), across to First Slip and through the big overhang above the initial Leg/First Slip groove. Leg Slip is followed to a finish up the leg-break finish to First Slip.

First ascent: May, 1976. R. Fawcett and P. Livesey.

**Vulture** 125 feet Extremely Severe

A sensational and strenuous pitch up the thin crack just left of Gurreagle.

- (1) 25 feet. As for Merlin, to the tree.
- (2) 100 feet 6a Climb up to the thin crack and climb this to the ledge of Gurreagle (protection peg). Move left to the arete, as for Gurreagle, and climb the slab to a tree belay.

First ascent: February, 1975. A. Sharp, C. Dale.

### **GRIBIN FACET**

**Trouble with Lichin** 160 feet. Hard Very Severe.

Takes the steep tower between Monolith Crack and Angular Chimney.

The first pitch is rather artificial but good practice for the main pitch which takes the obvious zig-zag crack line. This pitch is strenuous but well protected.

- (1) 70 feet. Climb the right front of a large pinnacle via a mantle shelf. Traverse right, past a crack, and up to a flake runner below monolith. Move back left and climb the crack to a grass ledge. Follow the corner above and move left to a corner below the main pitch.
  - (2) 75 feet. Layback the crack above to a rising crack line. Make a difficult pull right on to a poor foothold and continue to a piton (in-situ) which is used to gain a vertical crack on the right. Follow this to a ledge and ancient peg. Continue more easily up the groove above to gain the slab.
- First ascent: 24th July, 1976. J. C. Peart, J. Holt.

### LLECH DDU

**Marathon** 350 feet. Extremely Severe.

The route follows a line to the left of The Groove, moving left at the top to join the penultimate pitch of Scarface.

Start: At a grassy bay below a rightward curving groove, between the starts of Scarface and The Groove.

- (1) 80 feet. 5c. Climb to the groove and follow it until a traverse right can be made to reach a crack leading to a small ledge. Step left and climb steep rock to reach a grassy bank. Peg belay below right-slanting ramp, just right of the large bulging overhang.
  - (2) 70 feet. 5a/b. Climb the ramp and move up, and left to gain a groove which is followed to the peg at the end of the traverse of The Groove. Move left for twenty feet to grassy stance and peg belay below a faint depression.
  - (3) 70 feet. 5a. Climb the depression for twenty feet, and move left to the arête which is followed to a ledge. Traverse left for fifteen feet to a grassy stance and peg belay.
  - (4) 120 feet. 5a. Climb the steep wall on the left to join pitch 3 of Scarface. Follow Scarface to the top.
- First ascent: July, 1976. R. Evans and B. Wyvill.

### PEMBROKE/SOUTH

#### STACKPOLE HEAD

**Puritan** 110 feet. Extremely Severe.

A difficult, strenuous and very fine route.

Start: A short distance to the left of Stackpole Groove is a smooth wall which is split by a straight crack line towards its



left side. This is the line—easily visible even from Mowing Word. There is a peg belay in place beneath the crack.

- (1) 110 feet. 5b/c. Climb steeply, on good holds, to a smooth narrow groove. This gives trouble but leads to good holds in a perfect face crack. Climb to the horizontal break, move right along this for ten feet, then bear diagonally left across a steep wall to gain shallow grooves that lead to the top.

First ascent: March, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, C. A. G. Morton

## MOWING WORD

**Chimes of Freedom** 140 feet. Hard Very Severe.

A superb route taking the most obvious line on the wall to the left of Diedré Sud.

Start: Midway up the wall is an overhang which is continuous from the left until a break occurs at a discontinuous groove line. Start beneath this.

- (1) 140 feet. 5a. Climb the slabby wall into the groove beneath the first roof. Pull over the left side of the roof to reach a horizontal crack, then swing up right past a second roof using a prominent hold. Climb the leaning groove above to reach a discontinuous face crack, which is followed to the top in a fine position.

First ascent: May, 1976. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

## LYDSTEP/MOTHER CAREY'S KITCHEN

**Strait Gate—Direct Finish** Mild Extremely Severe

Climb directly up the wall instead of traversing left to broken ground. This provides a far superior finish.

First ascent: May, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

**Oz** 160 feet. Hard Very Severe.

Climbs the wall to the left of Joyous God, finishing up an obvious open corner in the buttress. A pleasant climb but has a sting in its tail.

Start: Beneath the left side of the wall, at an obvious weakness leading diagonally right to a series of grooves and cracks.

- (1) 120 feet. 4c. Move rightwards into the cracks and follow these to some small caves. Continue up the obvious line to a large sloping stance below a corner. Peg belays.

- (2) 40 feet. 5a. Climb the right wall of the corner and move into it on a line of good holds. Move up the corner, until a series of flat holds on the left wall, lead to the top.

First ascent: September, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Hardy.

**Rock Idol** 140 feet Mild Extremely Severe

An exhilarating route with spectacular climbing on excellent rock.

Start: At the big corner to the left of Joyous God.

- (1) 140 feet. 5a. Climb to a sloping ledge and thread (belay here if

high tide approaches). Climb the wall just right of the corner and move around the overhang to good layback holds. Climb the steep cracks until an obvious line leads off to the right, past a thread around a small pillar, to ledges beneath a final crack. Follow the crack and mantelshelf on to a ledge. Easier ground leads to the top.

First ascent: May, 1976. P. R. Littlejohn, R. Harrison.

**Herod** 120 feet. Hard Very Severe

A steep and well-positioned route which takes the arête of the buttress forming the large "thro' cave"

Start: Beneath the arête.

- (1) 50 feet. 5a. Move up into a scoop, then up left to the start of an obvious crack. Continue until it is possible to move right to gain some ledges. Huge thread belay.
- (2) 70 feet. 5a. Climb just left of the arête until holds lead naturally to the arête itself after about forty feet. Continue on better holds, bearing slightly left to gain the top.

First ascent: May, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

**Deep Space** 150 feet. Extremely Severe

A superb climb; serious, strenuous and spectacular. It breaks out of the huge cleft at the east end of the Kitchen formed by the large "thro' cave". Pegs are not required.

Start: Beneath a small groove in the landward wall of the cleft.

- (1) 70 feet. 5b. Climb for about twenty feet until it is possible to gain a crack in the wall on the left. Follow the crack then bear right to gain a small hole beneath the overhangs. Restricted stance and thread belays.
- (2) 45 feet. 5b. Step up to gain a projecting flat handhold on the left then swing leftwards across the overhang and pull up to bridge the cleft. Climb the outside edge of the cleft (sensational position) to a stance on the left. Peg belay in place.
- (3) 35 feet. 4c. Climb the chimney and corner to the top.

First ascent: May, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

**LYDSTEP/FRONTIER ZAWN**

This is situated at the west end of the Lydstep cliffs. It is the zawn immediately beneath the border of the military zone. The climbs are approached by abseiling into the zawn from the fence pole (140 feet). Most routes are accessible between half and low tide.

**Grand Junction** 130 feet. Very Severe.

The dominant feature on the west wall of the zawn is a large corner facing the sea. Its base is accessible from half to low tide. A magnificent pitch — potentially a classic.

- (1) 130 feet. 4c. Move up into the corner and follow it to a small

ledge where it ends (formed by detached blocks). Climb the cracks and the short chimney in the wall above. Belay on spike belays on the left, or take the rope back to one the fence posts.

First ascent: May, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

**Gunner** 120 feet Mild Extremely Severe

This takes the obvious twin crack system splitting the upper half of the face left of Grand Junction. Steep, exhilarating climbing, mainly on good holds.

Start: Somewhat to the left of the cracks, at the obvious entry.

- (1) 40 feet. Climb the left side of the Chimney then step right and climb a rib to a stance.
- (2) 80 feet. Move right and climb a steep slab. Then move left and go up to the start of the impending cracks which are followed to the top.

First ascent: March, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, C. A. G. Morton.

**Navarone** 130 feet. Mild Extremely Severe.

A good varied climb to the left of Gunner. Steep in places and exposed near the top.

Start: At low tide it is possible to reach a chimney line just right of a conspicuous box-like recess towards the left side of the wall.

- (1) 130 feet. 5a/b. Climb into the chimney and break out over the roof onto the steep wall. Climb direct up cracks until the angle eases and climbing of a more technical nature gains more good cracks. Move right into a groove from a good hold (just before the rock becomes vegetated). Move up and pull round an overhang to gain well-positioned grooves that lead to the top.

First ascent: May, 1976. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

**The Breech** 120 feet. Very Severe.

This is an interesting climb on the east side of the zawn. It takes a conspicuous vertical crack (the one with a wider slot-like section) in the cleanest area of the wall.

Start: Beneath the thin lower continuation of the crack.

- (1) 120 feet. 4c. Climb to an overhang. Pull over it on the right and climb a line of small ledges and flakes, bearing slightly left, to the base of the deep slot. Follow the slot and crack above to the top. Belay, well back, among bushes.

First ascent: May, 1975. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Garner.

## PEMBROKE/NORTH

### PENBWCHDY HEAD

This is a headland just west of Fishguard and south-west of Strumble Head. The north side of the headland presents a very extensive and complex set of cliffs. At the eastern end, the first rock of interest is a

slabby wall beside a grassy spur which protrudes to form a slight zawn (and a spectacular cavern). The rusting hulk of a wrecked ship lies on the zawn bed, and this facilitates the crossing of the zawn at low tide to approach the climbs. The spur gives a descent involving climbing of Very Difficult standard, with tricky route-finding. It may be preferable to abseil if a suitable anchorage can be found. The routes are reached by a traverse which is only possible for about one hour on either side of low tide. Because of this the climbs have an extra element of seriousness which is taken into account in the grading.

**Sargasso Wall**      310 feet.      Hard Very Severe.

A fine route. The difficulties are short and the upper reaches of the route are very pleasant. The route centres on a conspicuous groove, then follows a wide cleaned swathe through the higher vegetation.

Start: Near the beginning of the traverse at a diagonal crack rising to the right.

- (1)      60 feet.    4c. Climb the crack to an overhang, pull over this and continue rightwards to a stance and nut belays.
- (2)      60 feet.    5a. Continue up the crack for some twenty feet, then traverse left, and down on obvious footholds above the overhang to a protection peg. Move up on small holds to beneath the left hand side of another overhang, then move left and up to a stance. Peg belays.
- (3)      100 feet.    4a. Follow the obvious line up a groove and cracks to a large ledge.
- (4)      90 feet.    Move up left, then step right to avoid vegetation, and take the cleanest line over short walls, finishing by a wide crack in the topmost block.

First ascent: May, 1974. K. Darbyshire and P. R. Littlejohn.

**Nautilus**      260 feet.      Hard Very Severe

An excellent first pitch and pleasant throughout. The route takes the vertical crackline about 100 feet along the traverse.

Start: On the sea level ledges below the crack.

- (1)      120 feet.    4c/5a. Climb the crack to where it steepens. Some difficult moves lead to flake cracks which are followed to a turf ledge. Move up and right to another ledge with peg belays.
- (2)      70 feet.    4c. Climb to a chockstone runner, then step left and take a central line up the face, until near the top. Place a runner on the right and pull over to a large ledge.
- (3)      70 feet.    4a. Walls and ledges lead to the top.

First ascent: May, 1974. K. Darbyshire, P. R. Littlejohn.

**Warhead**      280 feet.      Mild Extremely Severe.

A fine route up a groove leading to a prominent ledge, then the narrow face and the tower above.

Start: Opposite the stack, four hundred feet along the traverse beneath a steep black wall just before a slanting cleft.

- (1) 120 feet. 5b. Climb the wall by a thin crack and continue up a diagonal crack for about forty feet. The crack gets vegetated and it is possible to traverse right to join the groove. Climb the groove with increasing difficulty to a stance. Peg belay.
- (2) 70 feet. 5a. Climb the shallow groove to a ledge, then follow steep cracks in the face to turf ledges. Continue to a belay below the final tower.
- (3) 90 feet. 4a. Climb bearing right to a groove, then move right and climb the centre of the face, finishing by the right edge of the summit block.

First ascent: May, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, K. Darbyshire.

Below the highest point of the headland is a bay with very steep, blank walls, with a shapely ninety foot stack at their base. Beside these walls (to the east), steep grassy slopes allow a tricky descent to sea level, from where it is possible (at very low tide) to traverse west for some distance. The next route takes the wall above the point from where this traverse becomes impossible.

**Terranova** 200 feet. Hard Very Severe.

An interesting route that takes an undulating groove to the right of a slender pinnacle high on the face.

Start: At an obvious line leading diagonally rightwards.

- (1) 50 feet. 4b. Traverse right then move up to a horizontal crack beneath a bulge. Go right again to a stance and peg belays.
- (2) 150 feet. 5a. Climb the wall above to gain a sloping ledge (peg runner), move left and go up to a thin flake (peg runner). Traverse left to the foot of the pinnacle crack. Quit this after five feet and traverse back right into a groove which leads to the top with steep climbing on good holds.

First ascent: May, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, C. A. G. Mortan.

The bay of steep cliffs containing the stack can be reached via a glacia descending at their east end. Beneath this is a short crag of solid rock, with sea-level ledges running into it from the right.

**Little Arthur.** 100 feet. Hard Severe.

The leftward slanting break reached when the sea level ledges end. The crux is the thin looking wall forming the last ten feet.

First ascent: May, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn (solo).

## THE PEOPLE'S CLIFF

Half a mile south of Penbwhdy Head are sets of slabs reminiscent of Baggy Point. The best of these is a narrow promontory known as The People's Cliff. This has yielded three fine climbs on excellent quartzite. Proletarian is an obvious groove on the left side. Humanity takes the steep groove in the centre and Pacifist takes the slab and shallow groove bounding the central mass on the right.

**Proletarian.** 140 feet. Very Severe.

A fine route with a powerful line.

Start: At the left end of the ledges.

- (1) 140 feet. 4c. Move left and climb the obvious line of cracks leading up into the groove. The groove is climbed, first on small holds, but then, when it steepens, on larger holds. Peg belay in left wall just below the top.  
First ascent: October, 1974. S. B. Jones, D. Garner.

**Humanity.** 130 feet. Hard Very Severe.

Technically interesting with exposed climbing.

Start: Beneath the central, overhang-capped groove, at a line of holds rising to the left.

- (1) 130 feet. 5b. Move up and left into a crack. Continue until it is possible to bear right on a line of good holds. These lead to small roofs and an excellent thread beneath the main groove. Enter the groove with difficulty and continue up to, and over the overhangs to good holds on the final wall. Belay through a rabbit hole.  
First ascent: October, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, A. McFarlane.

**Pacifist** 130 feet. Hard Very Severe.

This looks hard, but the holds unfold delightfully. An excellent pitch.

Start: Below and to the right of the shallow groove, at a thin crack.

- (1) 130 feet. 5a. Climb the crack, then move up left into the line of weakness leading up into the groove. Follow this line and enter the groove which leads to the top by pleasant and interesting climbing. Iron stake belay.  
First ascent: October, 1974. P. R. Littlejohn, D. Hope.

**CORNWALL WEST PENWITH****BOSIGRAN****Thick Wall Special** 200 feet Extremely Severe.

A steep slab route between Little Brown Jug and Visions of Joanna

Start: Twenty feet left of Visions of Joanna, at the foot of a steep slab.

- (1) 80 feet. 5c. Climb, more or less directly, to a small overlap in the centre of the slab. Move round this with difficulty and then take a line trending slightly left, to gain the top of the slab. Move down right to a large ledge.  
(2) 120 feet. 4c. Climb the corner above the belay until it is possible to move right to the foot of an obvious flying arete. Pull on to this and follow it until level with the finishing ramp of Little Brown Jug. Either ascent the arete and crack direct, or step left

to the ramp and climb up to a horizontal crack and move back along this to the top.

First ascent: April, 1976. P. Livesey, A. Evans,  
Miss J. Lawrence.

**Lurch** 100 feet. Hard Very Severe.

This route takes a line up the middle of the wall left of Beaker and is said to be very good.

First ascent: April, 1976. P. Livesey (solo)

## GREAT ZAWN

**Liberator.** 220 feet. Extremely Severe.

This route has now been climbed free and involves a number of variations from the original line. We are therefore publishing a new description.

Start: A few feet left of West Face.

- (1) 130 feet. Climb diagonally leftwards to gain a large foothold below a roof (or approach more directly via a ragged vertical crack). Peg runner. Move left, and down to gain a short groove. Climb this and move out left at the top (peg runner on wall above). Climb diagonally left to gain a ledge close to the arête. Now move right, passing an undercut hold, to gain a second undercut. Step up, move right for five feet and up for five feet, then back left horizontally, passing twin peg runners, to gain a stance on the arête.
  - (2) 90 feet. Go straight up the corner above for twenty feet, move right on an undercling, and climb the diagonal layback crack, and the wider continuation crack, to the top.
- First ascent: April, 1976. R. Fawcett, P. Livesey.

## Dream.

This route is now climbed without aid.

First free ascent: June, 1976. P. Livesey, H. Barber.

**West Face Route.** 180 feet. Extremely Severe.

This route has now been climbed virtually free and is described as a stupendous route, probably the hardest climb in the South West.

Start: Directly below the fine layback crack at the foot of the West Face grooves.

- (1) 70 feet. Climb the blank wall past a protection peg, swing right to the foot of the crack and layback up it until it is possible to break out right and move up to a ledge.
- (2) 80 feet. Traverse left and climb the groove above (thin) until it begins to overhang (two peg runners, top one used for a handhold in desperation). Pass the roof and move into a restricted corner on the right (peg runner). Move right under a roof and

up into a second corner (peg runner). Follow the crack up rightwards to a cave belay.

- (3) 30 feet. Climb easily up the crack above.

Summer, 1975. P. Livesey, Miss J. Lawrence.

## LANDS END

**Yankee Doodle** 120 feet Extremely Severe.

This magnificent route follows the obvious zig-zag crack line up the wall to the right of Longships Wall.

First ascent: April, 1977. T. Proctor, G. Birtles

**Buffalo Gorge** 120 feet Mild Extremely Severe

A chimney just to the right of Yankee Doodle provides eighty feet of American style chimneying followed by a forty foot corner of "weeta-bix" (hard to start).

First ascent: April, 1976. T. Proctor, G. Birtles

## CHAIR LADDER

**The Red Tower** 100 feet Extremely Severe

Climbs the front face of the obvious red tower left of Excelsior Buttress.

Start: Directly below the tower.

- (1) 50 feet 4b Climb grooves and corners to a good ledge at the foot of the tower.

- (2) 50 feet 5c Climb the right side of the front face of the tower to a thread. Move up, then left, into the centre of the face and then continue directly to the top of the tower.

An excellent continuation can be had by traversing right from the top of the tower, to gain the crack of Central Climb (5a) which is followed to the top.

First ascent: April, 1976. P. Livesey, A. Evans

**The Steeple** 200 feet Extremely Severe

A hard route up the remaining rock between The Spire and Diocese.

Start: Just left of The Spire.

- (1) 130 feet 5c Climb the steep arete just left of The Spire (a runner was placed in the crack on the left to protect a difficult move at half height) to the stance of The Spire. Follow The Spire for one move, then break out left and traverse along the lip of the Diocese overhang for fifteen feet to gain a superb crack which is followed to a good ledge.

- (2) 70 feet 4a Corners and cracks lead to the top of the cliff.

First ascent: April, 1976. P. Livesey, A. Evans

## The Spire

Pete Livesey has climbed this without the peg runner on the first pitch.



## TATER-DU

**Twat in a cliff-top cottage** Hard Very Severe

This links Martell Slab with Lamorna Wall by a traverse across a break in the overhangs to join Lamorna Wall at a good belay ledge on the arete.

First ascent: April, 1976. R. Fawcett and party

**Lamorna Wall**

Pete Livesey and party climbed this route free. The standard is now HVS.

## PENTIRE HEAD

**Cobra.** 130 feet. Extremely Severe.

Interesting climbing up a crack line on the left of the Eroica Wall.

Start: At the foot of the left-slanting crack twenty feet left of Eroica.

- (1) 130 feet. Climb the groove to an overhang. Cross this with difficulty and continue to an obvious flake-crack slanting right. Follow the crack until it steepens, then under-cling to the left to gain a short broken corner which is followed to the top.

First ascent: Easter, 1975. P. Livesey, Miss J. Lawrence.

**Last Leviathan.** 230 feet. Extremely Severe.

This accepts the challenge of the great left-leaning diedre to the right of Darkinbad.

Start: A few feet left of the ominous black corner that rises from the sea at the right of the crag.

- (1) 130 feet. Climb diagonally into the corner and follow it to a poor ledge. Continue past an in-situ nut, over a flake and up a further corner to good ledge on the right.
- (2) 100 feet. Climb cracks diagonally leftwards to gain the foot of a steep corner with an overhanging flake on the right wall. Climb the corner and the flake until it is possible to gain the right rib. Straight up the rib to the top.

First ascent: Easter, 1975. P. Livesey, Miss J. Lawrence.



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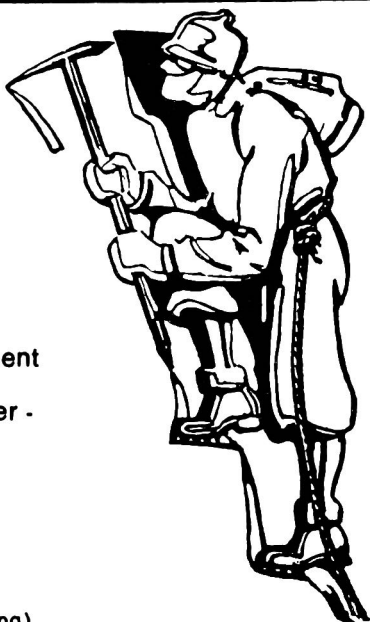
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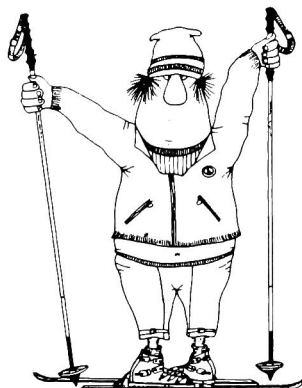
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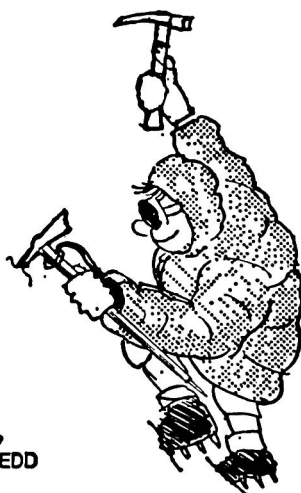
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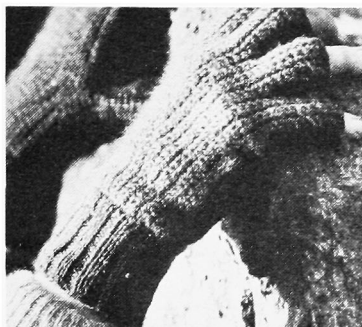


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