

**THE  
CLIMBERS' CLUB  
JOURNAL**

**1982**





# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Edited by

GEOFF MILBURN



CYFRWY ARÊTES

1982  
THE CLIMBERS' CLUB



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‘There has been an interval of a year since the last issue of the Club Bulletin. This has been the fault of the Hon. Editor. To put the matter in a nutshell, he spent too much Club money in 1926 . . . It could not go on. The worm, in the very proper person of our Hon. Treasurer, was bound to turn. The financial crisis came in March. The Hon. Editor had by that time withdrawn himself into a timely obscurity in the Midlands. The Committee said just what they thought about him (though this part of the proceedings has not been recorded in the minutes) . . . the Committee breathed again, and with returning breath told the Hon. Editor not to publish anything until further orders.

C.C. Bulletin, Nov. 1927.

‘In these days it seems that a well-developed Club Journal ought to ‘weigh’ about fifteen articles and measure between a hundred and a hundred and twenty pages from cover to cover. The Editor has at present four or five articles only. It follows that ten or eleven members have got to take their pens and sit down quickly and write. A determined effort will be made to seek out a sufficient number of scribes, and, when they are found, they will be kept to their tasks with remorseless vigilance. Too long has the Club been without the conventional emblem of vigorous life. Too long has the Editor been content to lay about him with whips; he will now, if necessary, resort to scorpions.’

C.C. Bulletin, July 1926.

# THE VOYAGE

PAUL WILLIAMS

A wet evening in July. More like a stormy night in November. After a superb Spring, the Welsh weather took perverse delight in washing the chalk marks of a myriad of climbers from the rocky crags and heights all over Snowdonia. What to do after a couple of weeks of this non-stop deluge?—even Tremadoc and Gogarth must be wet.

That was the problem facing Steve and me as we sat round the log fire in a small, white cottage in Deiniolen listening to the rain hammering incessantly upon the slate roof. The talk moved from free to aid climbing. Suddenly I found myself agreeing to attempt the Big Overhang the following weekend. Up to this time, the only aid climbing I had done was pulling on the odd peg or sling when in extremis (who hasn't?) so naturally I was rather apprehensive. Steve, who had pegged at least a couple of routes before assured me that there was nothing to it. "Any bumbly can do it"—cheers pal!

Saturday saw us lugging two huge sacks full of gear over to base camp overlooking the steep-sided zawn by the North Stack fog warning station. A further half hour saw us abseiling from a telegraph pole to the zawn bed where we got our first real view of the route.

The back of the zawn is comprised of the massive Parliament House Cave, fully 150 feet wide and 100 feet high and capped by a hundred-foot roof. The Big Overhang takes this roof at its widest point starting from a 40-foot pedestal at the back of the cave which is completely isolated at high tide. Thus this outing requires a high degree of commitment—a real adventure.

We both walked across the pebbles on the floor of the zawn to our starting point at the base of the pedestal; or perhaps I should say, I walked while Steve staggered almost bow-legged under the weight of slings, krabs and pegs which completely obscured his torso.

It had already been decided that I should lead the first pitch, a wet and slimy crack leading up to a pile of rubble. I consulted the guidebook which informed me that this pitch went free. Not in these conditions—no way! Fifteen feet up, where the crack overhung and

became generally obnoxious I threaded a sling round a pebble and stood in it. My hands groped around on the rubble ledge at the crack's termination as a constant barrage of small stones rained down. Steve prudently stood back while a crumbly placement for a 'Friend' was excavated. Pulling on this and simultaneously releasing the pent-up pressure in my lower intestine (a common complaint amongst climbers under stress) the ledge was gained. A 20-foot pile of soaking rubble now lay between me and the stance. Two tentative steps up and I reached an impasse as my left foothold disappeared. Warning Steve for the umpteenth time to "watch me" another move gained a large block which immediately became detached. "Christ, what a gripper." Anyway, in the end, I made it to a shattered stance, dripping with sweat and covered in soil and bird muck. The belay didn't inspire confidence, one rusty peg and an old bolt—you know, one of those belays you don't trust your weight on to start with, but end up swinging on as 'E.B. toe' develops.

Steve joined me with much tight, not surprising as the gear must have weighed close to 100lb. After ten minutes he was ready to go and moved up to a piece of 'tat' dangling from a rusty peg. He pulled on it and it held. Quickly clipping the next two bits of 'kit' (a macho term we aid-men use for gear) he reached a blank section and spent an hour trying to place a good peg in a band of rotten rock. Another move up, the peg unzipped (another macho term for 'comes out') and Steve hurtled down. "Well fielded youth." Down to the stance, another inspection, till a hidden peg was spotted lurking behind a bulge—the key! Back up to the roof went Steve. Crash, bang, wallop: loose rock in abundance cascaded down reminding me of Cloggy on a sunny summer afternoon. Another one and a half hours elapsed and fifteen feet of precarious pegging gave access to the 'hidden' peg. A 'bomber' I was informed. Progress now became more rapid as the rock improved and Steve lay horizontally as he swung from peg to peg under the saturated overhang.

A late start from Deiniolen and a false start on the route meant that it was 3.00 p.m. and we had only progressed 30 feet—at this rate, a midnight epic seemed certain. Reluctantly (that's my story and I'm sticking to it) I lowered Steve to the cave floor and abseiled off the stance leaving a fixed rope. The tide was coming in as we boulder hopped past the cannon and rusty lawnmower which live on the zawn bottom, to the foot of our 11mm rope hanging from the telegraph pole

and escape to the Llanberis fleshpots.

Next day at 8.00 a.m. we were already 'jugging the line' (prussiking up the ropes to you free-climbing peasants) up to the first stance. By 9.30 a.m. Steve had reached the previous day's high point. He continued slowly and methodically occasionally shouting down how 'wild' the position was. Passing a prominent in situ thread he soon reached a newish bolt just past the halfway mark.

Meanwhile I'd bought a Sunday paper to relieve the monotony of belaying. Steve didn't seem to be progressing very quickly now. In fact he seemed to be stationary near the lip of the overhang. I glanced down at the paper; a headline caught my eye:— 'Man who called to repair T.V. set was no repair man'. It was indeed a suburban drama about an attractive divorcee who gave a bogus T.V. engineer about three hours to get his hand off her knee—at least that's his story . . .

I looked up again. Steve appeared static, a dark silhouette against a grey blue sky. Jeepers Creepers, my feet were getting cold. Back to the paper; another scoop:— 'M.P.'s pet gerbil run over by war veteran in invalid carriage'. Proceedings being taken—reckless driving etc. What codswallop! Where do these stories originate?

Another look up and Steve still hadn't moved. I wondered what the problem was. What the hell; I turned the page:— 'England soccer stars want more money'. Do they now? If they did an honest week's graft for an average wage, they would realise how lucky they are. All that pooftering and kissing, prancing round the pitch like a bunch of nancies—it must be paradise. . .

Steve in situ, the human limpet. Would he ever move? I finished the paper and wedged it under a rock so that the next party would know the date of the previous ascent. From above the sound of hammering drifted down as Steve drove a peg in. He clipped it. "Arrrrgh", the peg pulled and he shot down from on high coming to rest twenty feet lower. For the next five minutes he raved about how good the fall was before climbing hand over hand up one rope while I took in the slack on the other (Aren't aid men butch?!).

After getting re-established under the roof 'our hero' now took a different line, the correct one this time, and rapidly moved across to a hanging stance at the lip. "Taking in": the moment of truth. Was I tough enough to be an aid climber? (I occasionally walk round the Padarn on a Saturday night with sweaty armpits talking of desperate routes. I can also spit and swear with the best—all part of a hard



image, you know). But could I conquer this horizontal monster, this 120-foot brute?

A few deep breaths and I started up trying to remember some advice from my mates . . . 'Carry two cow's-tails, one short and one variable (apparently this is normal practice on all aid climbing initiation ceremonies) the length being adjusted by a clogger. Saves much effort'. So there I was, fifteen feet along the roof, no turning back, arms pumped, heart beating fifty to the dozen, bloody knuckles and the bloody variable cow's-tail wrapped round the ropes like a Gordian knot—a great advice lads! However, brute force and the short cow's-tail—two feet too long—enabled me to progress quite quickly from sling to sling. Now I was getting a rhythm going . . . Shake, gibber, twitch. Shake, gibber, twitch—I mean, stirrup (for us 'Riders in the Sky') cow's-tail, grunt, stirrup, kit, stirrup, cow's-tail, grunt, stirrup, kit, plus a few more grunts for good measure. Nothing to it until I reached a point where the ropes were clipped in to every other peg. Steve had been running low on krabs. As my cow's-tail (the short one) reached up to chin level, several mortifying contortions coupled with nifty ropework (advanced frigging—as practised in France?) were necessary to reach the 'haven' of the hanging stance below a crashing sea. Our ropes twisted and swirled as a rising wind caught the slack dangling down below—get on that belay, Gwen, you'll know what 'space between you're feet' is all about then, lass!

Seven pegs in two vertical cracks connected by a web of ropes seemed fairly safe to me. "Tried to get another peg in, but the cracks started opening" said Steve, who can make King Lear look like the Eternal Optimist at times. "It's your lead next, up that slab. A piece of duff!"

My face turned ashen as a gust of wind clutched at my goolies and I got quite gripped thinking about our 'death belay'. The wall above was certainly no slab and I'd never pegged before. Well, the only way out was up. Steve hammered an angle into a vertical crack. It bottomed after half an inch so he backed it up with its twin brother. Clambering over him I stood in my stirrups and immediately spotted a superb 'Friend' slot. Phew! Two more pegs enabled me to clip into a rusty kingpin. Now what? The cracks ran out and another rusty peg leered down at me from a break ten feet above. It then dawned on me that encumbered as I was by all the kit from the roof (well nearly all) plus loads of pegs that the next moves were to be free moves onto a tiny

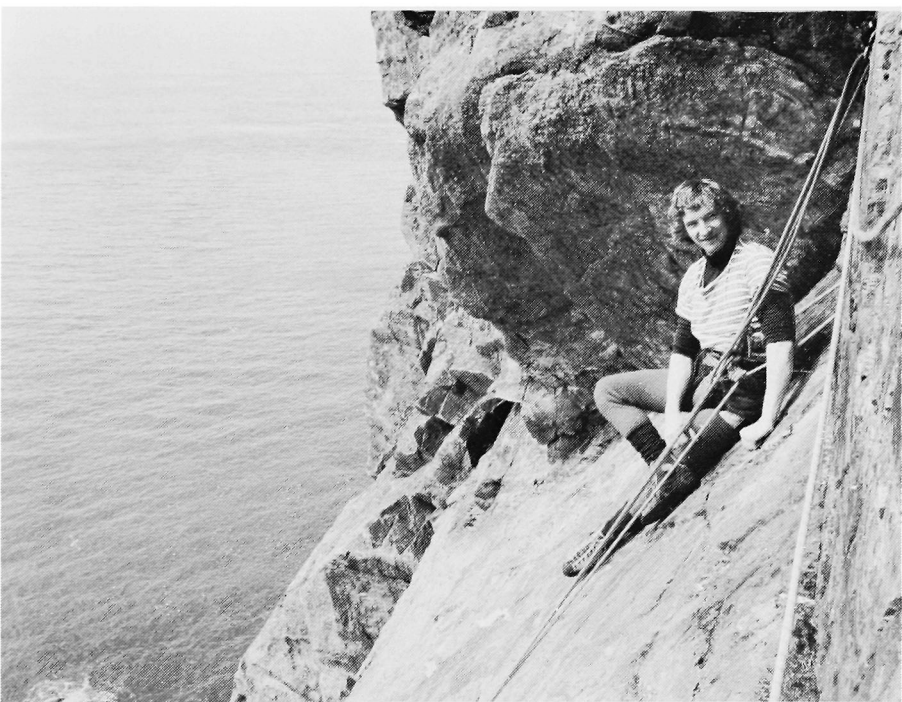


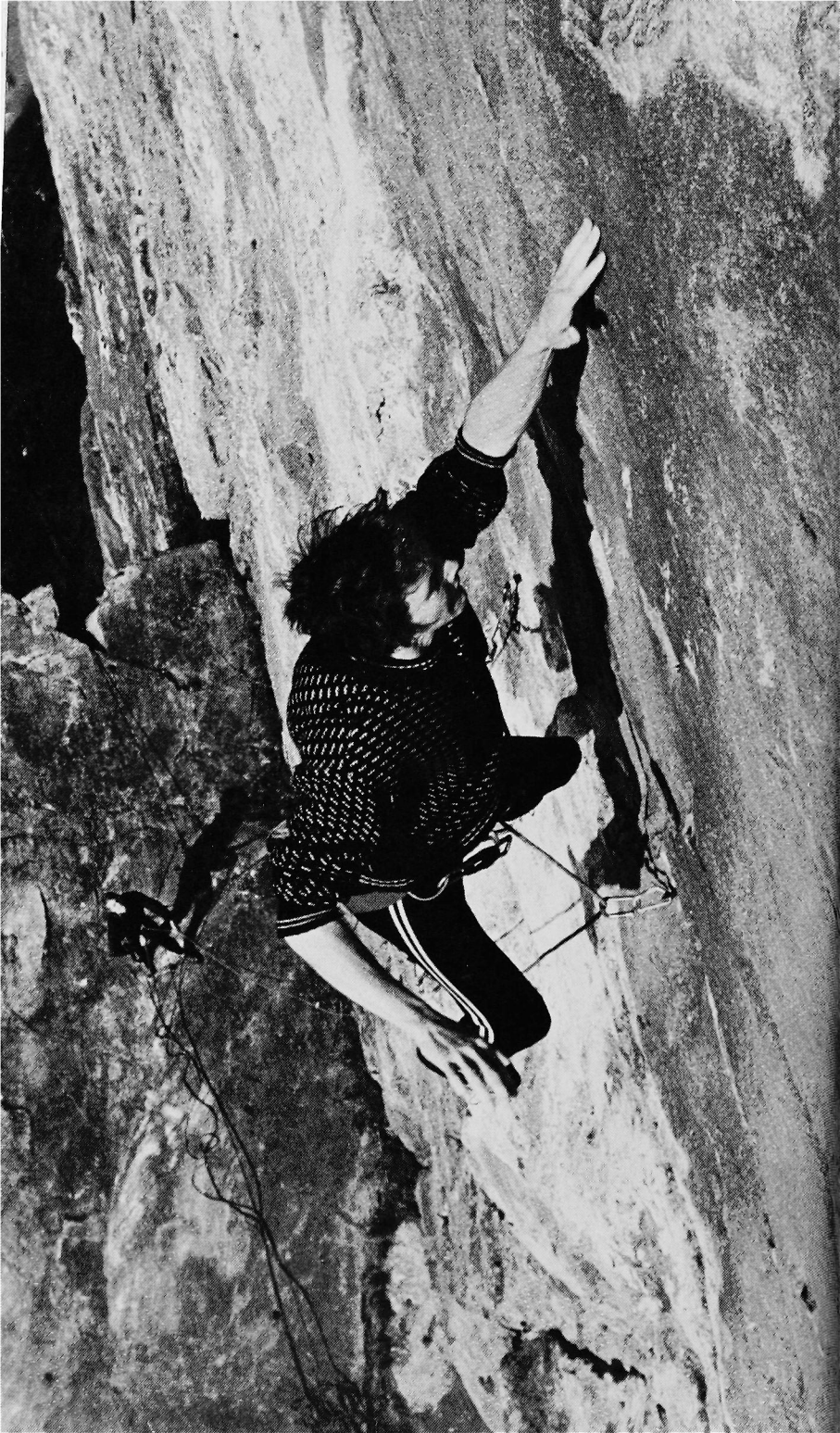
*Above: Steve Haston crossing The Big Overhang, Gogarth.*

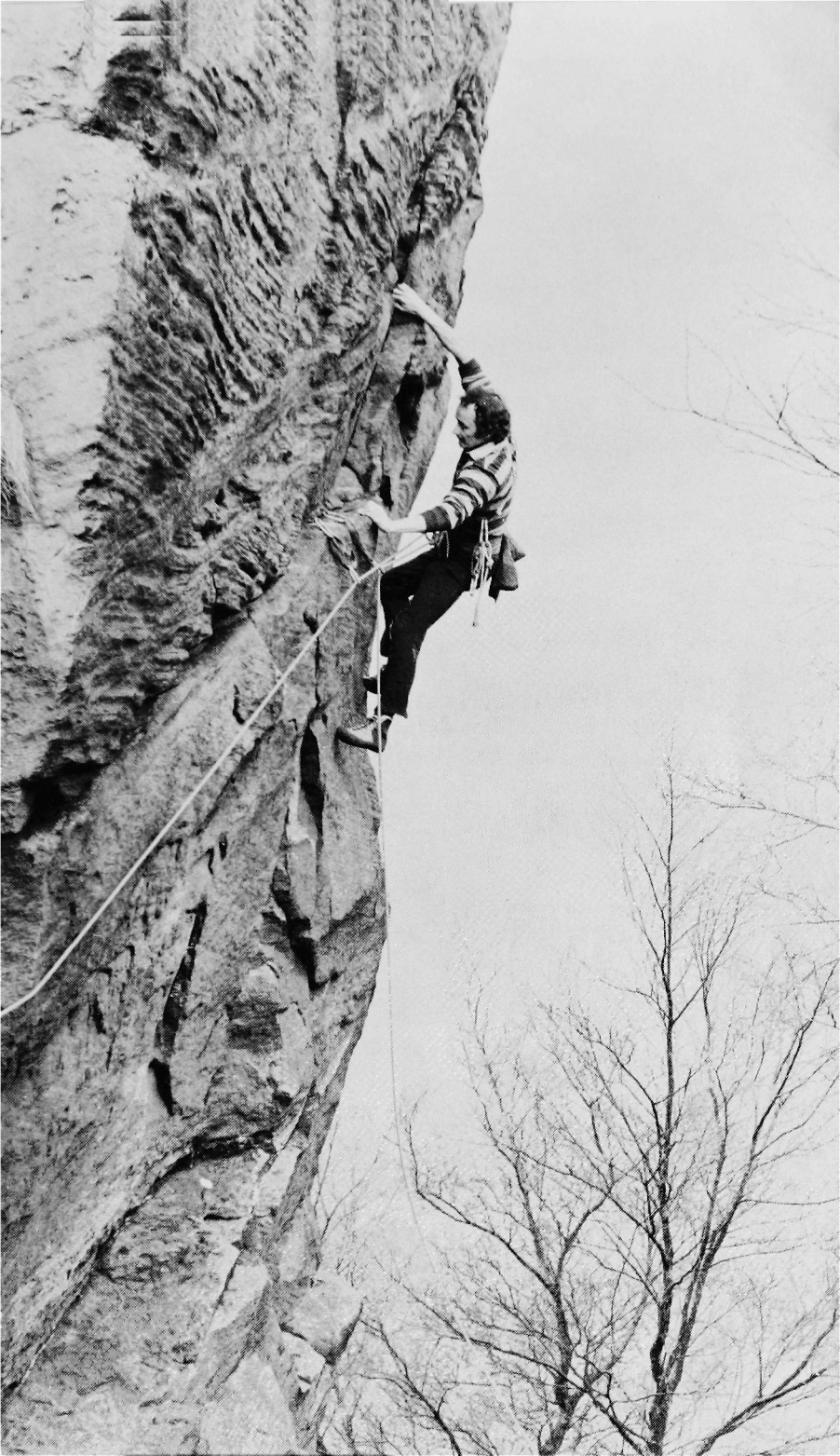
*Photo: P. Williams.*

*Below: Dick Swindon at South Stack, Gogarth.*

*Photo: Bob Enwright.*











ledge on the left. Leaving a sling and one stirrup on a quartzite boss I balanced up shaking onto a small overhung ledge. Another gust of wind caught me and an undercut hold snapped off and sailed down into the void below.

The sweat was really pouring out now but I managed to get a grip of myself (figuratively speaking) and clipped that leering peg. Horizontal cracks appeared and I gained another six feet on three pegs, all thumped in up to the hilt. Attempting a leftward exit one rope jammed and my handholds started crumbling. "Slack!" . . . not so much a request to Steve but a scream from a tormented soul in purgatory. No good, I couldn't move, so back to the top peg, mouth dry and totally gripped. What to do? I couldn't stay here—P. Williams, Resident Gargoyle—what an epitaph! If only I had known that it was normal practice to leave a rope hanging down the last pitch to allow an escape! It was only later that I discovered what I had been conned into. With a mate like Steve who needs enemies?

Suddenly (well after about twenty minutes) I spotted a hairline crack leading right to where the rock leant back to form a groove. A knife blade went in and I hung on it. As I reached back to unclip the other stirrup, the peg came out with it (all gripping stuff). Another peg went in and from this I balanced onto a lichenous ledge. The wind got up again and buffeted me as a small 'Friend' sank into a narrow slot. The top beckoned; two more moves and I'd cracked it. Brushing the lichen off two small holds, a quick layback, feet up and the finishing jug. I pulled up mantelling free of the yawning drop. We'd done it!

I belayed, took the ropes in and Steve came up, blue with cold. "You went a bit wild with the pegs", he says, "a couple are virtually buried. Eight runers in the first fifteen feet means you don't want to die I suppose." Dead right mate!

*Centre Right: Chris Jackson on Impending Doom, Harston Rock. Photo: Ian Smith.*

*Opp. Left: Dick Swindon on the crux of North West Passage, Gogarth.  
Photo: Bob Enwright.*

*Opp. Right: Rick Johnson emerging from Hombre, Gogarth. Photo: Bob Enwright.*

# ERIC . . . OR LITTLE BY LITTLE

PETER HARDING

In August 1948 I spent a couple of weeks working on my Llanberis guidebook with Tony Moulam. During the first ten days, often climbing with Dave Thomas, Peter Hodgkinson or John Disley, we checked descriptions and measured pitch lengths of more than fifty routes on the Snowdon side of the Pass, all painstaking stuff, mostly in wet conditions.

Staying at Beudy Mawr, Tony, Dis and I banded together as a troupe of club hut entertainers; a trio of evening acrobats, (coached by Disley of course). Inspired by the writings of Beachcomber, whose satirical pen evolved bizarre characters such as Dr. Strabismus of Utrecht (whom God preserve), a number of them portrayed in recent times by Spike Milligan, we dubbed ourselves 'The Three Phoenicians' after the style of Beachcomber's 'Three Persians' who were purported to be authors of some outrageously funny letters. (Ho! Yes!) So one of the attractions of Nant Peris nightlife became Dis, Moulam and me, clad in track suits, flinging ourselves about, jumping to remain balanced on the narrowest of hut mantelshelves; on one occasion, much to the amusement of an audience of Rucksackers and the dismay of their Hut Warden, breaking a floor board on take off, causing Moulam to end up, almost head first in the fire-place. The act invariably ended with a sequence of co-ordinated rolling and leaping over each other, back and forth across the floor, known in gymnastic circles as 'The Flying Dolphins'. This became firstly 'The Flying Persians' and then, 'The Flying Phoenicians', eventually settling to a less aerobatic form when Moulam emerged from the ashes.

During daylight it was a different game; track suits off, climbing boots on, out on the crags following existing routes and, occasionally, doing a new one, always with the light-hearted, satirical approach of the evening acrobats. One such climb, The Ring, was a 'take-off' of an earlier route, The Clasp, which Dis and I failed to find. Another new route, not preconceived but spontaneously executed, was a common 'send-up' of opposite bands of the British Mountaineering spectrum. I

must take responsibility for it, even though my role was mainly that of animated puppet star whilst it was my two companions who pulled the strings. It proved to be a climb which was to have far reaching consequences for British rock climbing.

A beautiful, dry day at the end of the month tempted us away from guide book chores in the upper cwms to walk but a few hundred paces up the Pass in plimsolls to Clogwyn-y-Grochan. The steep wall on the immediate left of its Central Gully was known to some of the 'Three Cliffs fraternity' as Eric. It seemed just the place for any wandering Phoenicians to perform some 'Munich School' machinations which would surely raise the blood pressures of the worst, and sorely add to the amusement of the best, of all the Climbers' Club mandarins. At the same time they would satire the antics of some young tearaways who, with seeming disinclination to cut their teeth on classic routes, were bent on laying siege to the virginity of certain features of 'Three Cliffs' topography; even if it did mean using implements of aid to make up for any lack of experience. I suppose I had already sown seeds with Spectre and successive aided ascents of Ivy Sepulchre; younger generations watched and waited, envious perhaps, cherishing ambitions of making it and their own reputations with the girl next door.

Could it be that the best way of reversing a started trend was to ridicule it? Earlier I had evolved a diabolical plan for doing the 'Corner', using a block of wood, a fishing rod and a beach ball, but this was not the occasion for that even if we had such gear to hand. 'The Three Phoenicians', sat at the foot of Eric, doubled the 200 feet of three-quarter hemp rope in which Tony Moulam and I had half shares; I tied on to its sharp ends and set off, amply laden with slings, karabiners, pitons and hammer. Traversing leftwards I was soon at grips with difficulties which clearly called for the use of a peg yet presented a problem of selecting one from the formidable array of ironmongery which hung from my waist loops. Amongst all those Simmonds, Alf Bhends and Stubais, there really wasn't a single piton which suited the situation. (Unfortunately it was long before the days of the R.U.R.P. and Leeper). Nevertheless, with a little determination, a slender-bladed Alf Bhend was poked into a likely looking crack and given a few taps with 'The Message' (My trusty Fulpmes peg hammer).

Boink-cloink-doink-oink, and it was in. Actually it wasn't in all that



far and needed tying off, but as this technique had not been invented, I decided not to do it, attached a karabiner and clipped in with the rope. When I pulled, the peg moved. Then I spied a better crack, hiding itself under the fingers of my left hand, masquerading as a hold. The only problems were, a) removing fingers from it, b) choosing another peg whilst c) not falling off. There are many things to be said for mechanical climbing; you need to be intelligent, able to make decisions, and bloody strong to hang on whilst doing so! I decided that a lot of it might well improve ones standard providing you could wean yourself away from an induced reluctance to make any move without such aid or protection. However, a short, grey, rust-proof Simmond seemed to fit the bill, but, despite efficient looks and beautifully striking tones, it didn't suit the crack too well; something I didn't discover until I had boinked it in to the toink stage. Fortunately I found that by connecting the two pegs together with a sling they braced one another and a rapid appraisal of the system of forces told me that I might tension across to continue upward progress. The same applied mathematics and a quick glance at the steep rugged scree below advised against any falling off at, or beyond this point. Clipping another rope into the krab I leaned from it, stretching to the left, (just like the Hinterstoisser). Looking back I could see my two Phoenician friends were suitably impressed: at least they acted as if they were, for with each half of the rope now through a karabiner they both had a comforting grasp of it. Should either of them overbalance whilst lolling on the scree slope they could easily prevent any serious tumble. Thus re-assured, I leaned still further, tentatively exploring an attractive looking finger crack, then quickly crabbed across and up, climbing on to a sloping ledge. Here some psychosomatic protection could be contrived with the aid of a thin, nylon, sling-knot wedged in a crack: with foresight I might have recognised this as a 'knut', forerunner of the ubiquitous nut. A few more feet of upward traversing and I managed yet another natty knot jam; it was easier than pegging, quieter too! With all this fantastic aid, double ropes tracing polygons across the wall as they stretched from krab to krab, I was soon high up and then some, peering into a vee groove. I recognised it as one which Ernie Phillips and I had tickled with tricounis the year before, thinking it might be an easy start to Slape. Retracing a step or two I made some exploratory finger pulls up a shallow, cracked depression in the wall above. This felt like the hard

part and high time for the sound of the Message to ring out once more across the Pass, to strike fear and foreboding into the hearts of any purists who may have been in earshot, but more particularly to wake up any sun-dazed Phoenicians who might have nodded off.

I had just the right peg for the job, a thick, chunky Stubai; if only I could find the right width of crack to knock it into. The timbre of this stolid Austrian was stronger than that of the dapper French Simmond. Bunk-dunk-gunk-nunk-punk-tunk-wunk-yunk, it went as I banged away. Those echoing octaves couldn't fail to reach the ears of any young tearaways who chanced to be covertly creeping up the columnar corners of The Cromlech; they even roused Dave Thomas from his off-day siesta in the shade of Cwm Glas Cottage. Attaching another Krab I clipped in with Dis and heaved some slack in Mo. (Dis and Mo . . . the twin ropes). I took a good handful of krab and pulled up. Not that there weren't any good holds, but they were tiny, painful ones and, anyway, when you've just banged in the best bloody peg on the whole wall you don't mess about. Not 90 feet up; near the top of Eric! Waisting up to peg level I shouted, "Dis!", and when there's a Welsh 3 A's champion and future Olympic medallist at the other end of a piece of hemp you stay put—no sagging back like there's some down-chinned fairy holding you on a length of nylon knicker elastic. I reached up in comfort and calmly squeezed another bunch of sling knots into the widened crack, hooked on a krab and clipped Mo into it.

With Moulam on the end of a good bit of hemp you barely need to yell anything to get hoisted up to waist level. It was a sort of alternate leads by proxy: a few more inches of proper rock climbing, just to keep myself in trim, and I was within lasso distance of a holly tree. Unfortunately there wasn't an abundance of rope left so the best I could do was arrange one final point of aid, with knotted bootlace, krab and Dis. As a safety precaution I kept quiet, and tiptoed up with feet and fingers, lest I should cause Dis to suddenly pull out the aid in some waking fit of over-enthusiastic ropemanship. Those weren't the days for 'fliers'; it was all just for fun then, and any failure to do 'the next bit' simply meant that you had to climb all the way down again. Nor were there any critical masses of ground-based experts to discourage thoughts of prudent retreat—unless you could describe Dave Thomas, (who had just arrived at the foot of the wall), as a critical mass.

In the event I was soon on a stance with belays round the Holly: it was Disley's turn. He bombed up in fine style, as you might expect of a rock climbing steeplechaser; a bit slow near the top because he'd not had all the rest breaks that I had; banging in pegs, jamming knots, clipping krabs, moving up and down the hard moves. (You know; all the things a crafty leader can get away with as excuses for taking a long time!).

I tackled the short remaining wall to reach the grass of Lords, then Dis brought up Tony. He climbed it at a good rate of knots, you might say.

Untying I scampered down Ledge Way to climb Eric again as last man, taking out my treasured hardware, the knotted slings and also confirming that underneath all those adornments it really was a damn fine route.

The story goes that being a former racing cyclist, I attempted this feat on my bike but above the rising traverse, on the hard bit, I leaned too far, trying to pluck out a sling knot without losing upward momentum. A pedal touched the rock and I came off. This legend also tells of the crank which miraculously jammed in a crack, and how I unscrewed its cotter pin with my teeth whilst hanging from the crossbar, finally releasing the cragfast machine and remounting it to finish fourth; completing the climb using one leg. That crank remained, like Excalibur, defying all manner of attempts over the years, to wrench it free from the rock. Of course the tale admits that I was protected by Dis and Mo. But it is quite untrue, I never unscrew cotter nuts with my teeth because it tends to round them off, and in any case, riding a bicycle up steep places with one crank is astonishingly difficult, unless it has a fixed wheel sprocket. (My bike had a derailleur!)

Having joined my fellow Phoenicians, our indefatigable trio continued up Ledge Way to the top of the cliff, preferring always to finish a good climb on a summit. Then we went to put on our track suits, eat, and prepare for the evening gymnastics.

Later, when we wrote up our new route in the log, we didn't call it Eric but named it Kaisergebirge Wall.

Tony Moulam, being the only Phoenician in Nant Peris with a knowledge of German, dictated the entry as follows:—

'Die Ostwand am links von Mittkamin wir kletten die strengst wand mit sieben hacken (attacken!) zu gipfel von "Klein Eric".

Dann wir kletten "Ledge" weg zu gipfel von Clogwyn-y-Grochan, Ho ja! Erste Klettere: Les Trois Phoenicians. (P.R.J.H., J.I.D., A.J.J.M.)'

When my guide book came out two years later, the use of pegs was still spreading. Four years, almost to the day, after that first Phoenician Expedition to Clogwyn-y-Grochan, Joe Brown arrived with Doug Belshaw and blasted his way up the corner next door to Ivy Sepulchre with five of them. (Pegs; not Phoenicians!). That didn't stop the young tearaways either. Now look what they're doing!

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A few years ago when I related the ascent of Kaisergebirge to Jim Perrin for a profile article, I explained about the pegs. When galley proofs arrived for my approval I complained to Jim, "You have written that only two pegs were used when I actually said that there were three". "Ah", he replied, "you really used only two of them and in any case what you would have regarded as aid in the late 1940s would now be called free climbing". So . . . it was "The Free Phoenicians", Ho! Yes!

NOTE: To be able to get the above article into its true perspective some rare photos of the first ascent of Goliath's Groove on Stanage Edge have been included.

September 1947. ' . . . and Goliath's Groove on Stanage, one of the most photographed climbs in the Peak. It was suggested as a possibility by Alf Bridge during a walk along the edge with Harding and Moulam. The bottom half of the groove was already used by Doncaster's Crack, but where this route escapes out to the right Harding led it directly on up. He and two of his Stonnis companions used the jamming technique they had perfected on Black Rocks, but the fourth man, David Sampson, a powerfully built geologist from Sheffield University, laybacked the crack all the way and was pronounced a veritable Goliath by his friends. So the groove received its name.

For the next couple of years Harding devoted most of his attention to the rocks of North Wales . . .'

Eric Byne, High Peak, 1966.

# FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY— STING LIKE A BEE

TONY WILLIAMS

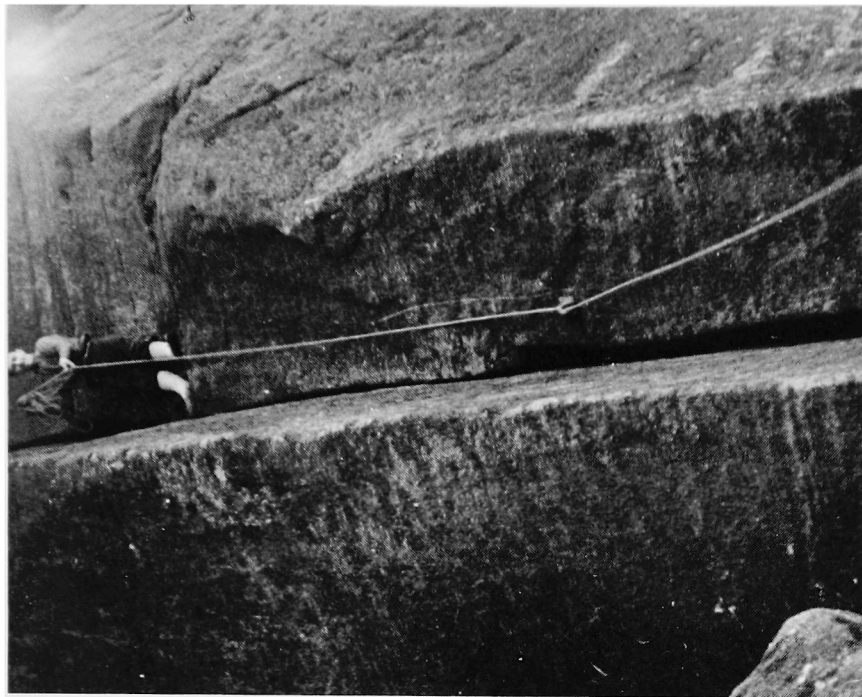
“To me, to me!” “Great!” “Pass!” “Well done!” “Over here!” “No! No! She’s on the other side” . . . “Watch out behind you!” . . . “Mind that netting!” . . . “AAAAAH! . . . I can’t stop . . .”

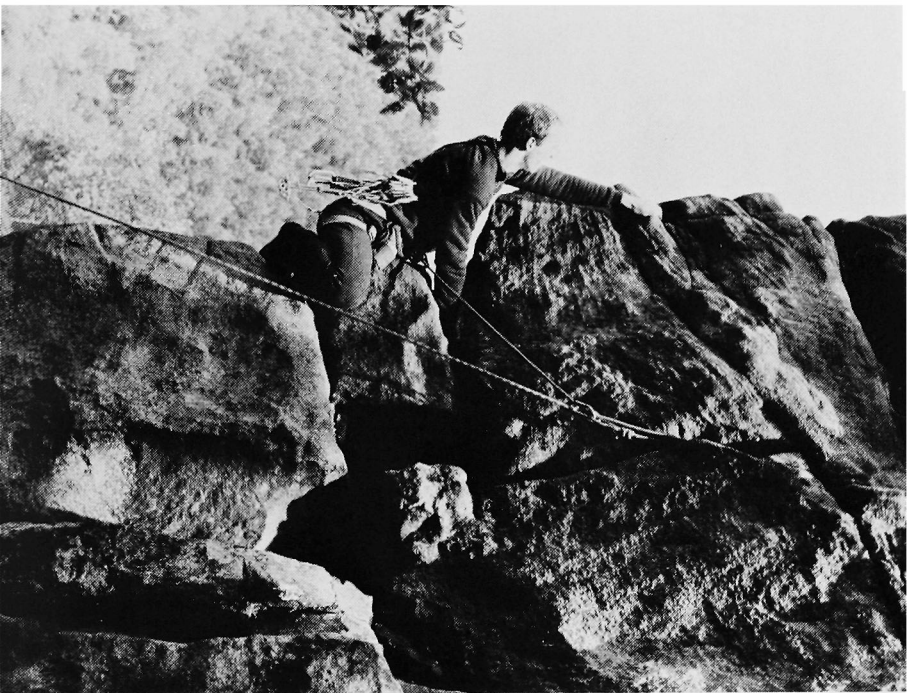
And with a resounding crash four otherwise staid and normal British skiers collapse in a heap of laughing, struggling, tangled limbs and skis. The inscrutable French queuing at the start of a nearby tow stare in blank amazement. Eventually, recovering from near hysterical laughter, the skiers gather themselves together and slide off down the slope to meet up with instructor and ski sticks.

“Well,” said Sarah, our instructor, “What did you learn from that?” ‘That’ was a game of rugby on skis between two classes using a glove as a ball and with both teams playing downhill towards a non-existent try-line. The only rule seemed to be that sticks were to be left at the bottom of the slope. “Come on,” demanded Sarah, “You must have learnt something.” “Quite a revelation,” remarked Keith. “Amazing,” said another, “I would never have thought I could have skied like that.” “I felt I had more control skiing down that slope without sticks, chasing that silly glove than I have ever felt before on skis,” chipped in another. And so the class chatted on until it was time for the next game.

Games—what games? Well, they were not so much games as techniques or subterfuges to help us improve our skiing using the ‘Inner Game’ approach to learning. I quote from the holiday brochure, ‘The Inner Game technique is about the elimination of the mental obstacles to our best performance in sport’. I had never really got the hang of skiing despite several attempts over the years. I am sure that there are many climbers such as myself who took up skiing so as to go ski-mountaineering but nevertheless harbour a secret envy of their friends who manage to ski with apparent ease, don’t fall over every other turn, can ski parallel over rough moguls and are not floundering as soon as powder gets more than a few inches deep.

So you are a natural and experience none of these problems—OK,







you might as well turn to the next article.

I am definitely not a natural and tried conventional classes only to find myself bored with the slow pace forced by unfit non-mountaineers and learning little from instructors with a poor command of English, pushing pupils into lines and extolling them to "Bendeyzeneese". Tuition from friends proved equally frustrating and no more successful. It was whilst looking for a skiing holiday for myself in 1982 that I first read about Inner Skiing courses run by the now defunct tour operator Snowball. The method seemed to have several virtues: small classes with English speaking instructors were offered promising dramatic improvements in one's skiing using a non-conventional teaching methods. But, more importantly, a lot of laughs and a very good holiday. As it sounded fun and could not have been more unsuccessful than my previous efforts at learning to ski, I signed on.

The courses were run at Puy St. Vincent, a gem of a resort to the east of the Dauphiné, not far from Briançon. Classes started off rather stiffly with much reserve and scepticism. Indeed it was all very British. Well, I mean, you do feel rather a fool pretending to be a car or a gorilla (complete with sound effects) thrashing down a slope packed with supercilious French kids on a sunny Sunday morning. But it soon became apparent that the games were not chosen at random but were all devices to develop awareness of our bodies, our skis and the snow and to help us understand how we should use them together. There was no attempt to teach techniques in the accepted sense of the word; rather technique was allowed to unfold of its own accord, to reveal itself to us. We were led (almost) unawares into improving. One of my group went so far as to describe it as teaching by stealth!

By calibrating various positions or sensations in the body and calling out readings to ourselves through a series of turns we gradually and without any effort on our parts felt ourselves to be getting weight-transference right and edging better through turns. I found that turns became smoother when I was skiing down a wide clear piste concentrating very hard on the sound my skis were making on the snow. By imagining myself holding a tray of drinks in front of me I found that not only did I keep my arms under better control but that I also was facing down the fall line more (Sounds funny but it works—try it).

Looking back on the week I remember a key word being

*Opp. Left: Moyer's Buttress, Gardoms Edge—Pete O'Sullivan climbing.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*

*Opp. Right: Paul Nunn on Wuthering, Stanage.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*



**VISUALISE.** Try following good skiers and emulate their movements. Want to ski more smoothly—imagine yourself a bird, perhaps a Golden Eagle, swooping majestically down the piste. Or if you want to really blow your mind borrow a personal stereo and ski to music. I found that with music, movement became more rhythmic and by cutting out all external interference the music concentrated the whole of the mind and body on skiing down the slope in front of me. Another key phrase comes to mind here: **RELAXED CONCENTRATION.** In a few words: clear the mind of all unnecessary thoughts or fears and concentrate only on the matter in hand. Killy devotes a whole chapter to ‘Relaxed Concentration’ in his book ‘Situation Skiing’, and expands further on the concept.

This may sound very unlikely, if not totally mad or irrelevant, but I found these ideas helped, and indeed most of us on the course found our skiing much improved at the end of the week. One of the lads was so impressed by the improvement he found in his skiing that he was impelled to write in a letter to me a few weeks after the course that he felt the ‘Inner Skiing experience had amounted to almost a quantum advance’ for him. He also felt that he had learnt things about himself which were useful in ordinary life. I know what he meant, but feel that the hopes some of the instructors seemed to hold, of curing all of life’s ills by adopting an ‘Inner Approach’, was taking their enthusiasm just a little too far!

# FOOTLESS ON THE CROW

GEOFF MILBURN

A large crowd had gathered under Stanage—all the old familiar faces were there—and not surprisingly no-one seemed in any hurry to brave the February cold. So early in the year it was all too easy just to stand about shouting the odds to all and sundry. Following The Tippler was no big deal but with Burke soloing on my heels the route shrank even more. The Dangler however required a big effort after the first greasy holds but at least the shadow was no longer dogging my every move.

All the way down to the Welsh dinner the car was buffeted about by lashing rain and a mindless gale. In theory climbing was out, but James took a dislike to the crammed Tremadoc cafe and was soon impaled motionless high on Spare Rib. His limpet technique provided a strong contrast to the uncertain leader who was wind-rocked on the jugs of Scratch Arete. Falcon seemed a pleasant finish but was far too wet and James decided to 'escape' up Vulcan. Rope tingled through my half-numb fingers as he took the pitch at a rush but the bulge was far too slimy and precipitated the first flight of the season. As he plummeted down into sight I groaned in anticipation and was promptly catapulted forwards to head butt the stout ash tree which was inconveniently situated at the wrong side of the belay ledge. With darkness falling fast I completed the pre-dinner hors d'oeuvre, puffing and panting like some ancient grampus.

By April we were up to the eye-balls in mud squelching down Dovedale, wearing wellingtons, to tick such outstanding routes as Caesar and Phil's Route and James was all too soon fighting his way up Tales of the Riverbank continuing on his own personal vendetta.

Over Easter the masses invaded Pembroke again and St. Govans was just like Froggatt on a good Sunday. No sooner had we started on The Butcher than a pair of evil faces peered down from the top. "Are you enjoying yourself Geoff?" "Above 5b only when I reach the top." It was Burke and Carrington yet again. It is amazing how many times one bumps into the same climbers on crags. Later in the pub Dave

Cook commented that it did him no end of good watching me struggle on the crux, as he had spent the weekend watching a stream of fit young lads creaming up the route without a pause. Barbarella made a fair impression on us but Pleasure Dome was the route that everyone was raving about—an airy traverse then immaculate wall climbing on sharp little holds. In the evening sun we went for Lucky Strike, an amazingly good pitch which is reminiscent of some of the best wall-climbing at South Stack. Unfortunately our visit was terminated rather abruptly when a large hold on Clean Hand Blues Band came away under Jim's body weight depositing him unceremoniously back on the ground. That was the final straw as 'everyone and his dog' had cruised up the route over the weekend saying that it was a soft touch for its grade.

Back in the Peak District the 50th anniversary of the Kinder Trespass was an eventful milestone especially when the 'old brigade', survivors of the original trespass, went up to join Benny Rothman during the unveiling ceremony in the quarry. It was a unique opportunity to chat to Benny as he led the cavalcade of walkers streaming up onto Kinder. It must have inspired me as after work on the Monday I took advantage of the drought conditions to tackle the Derwent Watershed round again and left Glossop in a rush of enthusiasm. Having negotiated Bleaklow's dusty peatways and the Upper Derwent moors before dark I aimed for the Snake road and in time stumbled under Stanage, before trotting up to the Marquis of Granby just in time to catch last orders. Two pints later finishing the 40-odd mile walk/trot just didn't seem half so important and I hitched a lift back to Glossop from the Whinnats Pass.

Getting fit by now I was going much better on rock, or so I thought after Adjudicator Wall—that was until we spent a best forgotten day on gritstone to grab Sentinel Crack. Jim flashed it using Jerry Frost's runners and then the heavens opened. We all had to make the decision whether or not to stay dry under the overhangs only to be trampled to death by Mortimer's dog, which had returned black as the ace of spades having excavated a large portion of the nearby hillside. At some point I realised that the upper part of the crack had become a water chute and promptly set off to de-runner the waterfall. Apart from hanging on the odd runner I was more concerned with the stream which coursed through my clothing, clogging my eyes and ears (I couldn't hear a word from below) and transporting half a ton of peaty

and lichenous filth in a downward direction. The rope was by now held firm by two or three would-be stalwarts on the ground who helped to support me on the final section. On arrival back at ground level, half-skinned and oozing mud all over, Jerry wanted to know if my ascent epitomised the current wave of free-climbing. Just you wait mate! Some folk have long memories.

After that little fiasco it was back to our favourite limestone haunts; gritstone isn't what it used to be. The first of the big new routes we did was Leviathan on Central Buttress, Water-cum-Jolly. It wasn't as steep as our own route Yankee Dollar but it had a nasty-looking blanker section with only small R.P.s for protection. I watched Jim with some trepidation as he would have taken a monster fall, but finger fitness means confidence and he eventually placed a good 'Rock'. "I'm not going to die", came the familiar call (said with considerable relief and feeling) and the route was soon in the bag. The final wall of creaking flakes and brittle little holds must have been a trouser filler to lead.

Chee Tor has now vindicated our earlier predictions that it was to become the local limestone crag of the 80s and it is now getting the attention it deserves. We still had a few ticks to go for and Absent Friends, White Gold and John Fleming's new route in particular all gave good value for money.

We had neglected the hard work of new routes for some time and it was a high priority to sort out a few. My original list of 'possibilities' had suddenly become 'certainties' given the current high standard of climbing. On Ravens Tor we sneaked in two good crack pitches in the headwall of Central Wall: Judas and The Doldrums. Later when we learnt that we had lost one of our mates, Simon 'Sox' Horrox, in the Alps we both knew the route that we wanted to do for him. To the right of Ron's La Chute was a steeper line through the overhangs which Jim had dismissed as 'not on' when I first pointed it out (mind he once said that about Barbarossa to Al Evans!). Having started on steep rock to the left of La Chute we crossed the latter to reach a clean little groove. During my ascent I had, at one point, an unusually good view of it from mid-air. Above that the rock was only prepared to tolerate the elite and I groaned loudly that it was even too hard for me to 'frig' it a bit to encourage me to follow. Sox will be a good memorial for a lost mate (who incidentally helped the C.C. a great deal when he volunteered to help check some of the more obscure routes for the '78

Pass guide. His intention was to join the C.C. but somehow he never got round to it.)

While waiting for the funeral we hit Malham, accidentally parking the car opposite Pete Livesey's new pad. No sooner had we got out than a motley assortment of familiar faces disgorged from Pete's baronial castle. It must have been some party the night before. By late afternoon we had several routes in the bag (Crossbones at HVS, they must be joking) and coming down I bumped into Livesey and entourage. "Are you chasing Jim?", he said with a mischievous grin. "I'm always chasing him", I grumbled. "I wish to hell that I could catch up with him, just once." It amused me later when I learnt that the lads going to France were manoeuvring hard so that they wouldn't have to climb with Jim. Too much like hard work.

Below the crag another team ran into Pete.

A.H. "Do people still avoid talking to you Pete and disappear when you're around?"

Pete "Well it's not so bad as it used to be."

A.H. "Ah well, cheerio Pete. I've got to be off."

Of the routes we did, Carnage and Carnage Left-Hand were outstanding but Lime Hill was the hardest and most dramatic, being situated at the exposed end of Terrace Wall directly above 'the drop'. Some climbers have been known to get so gripped up that they chalked up to go along the approach path. On the second day we motored round to Kilnsey for The Diedre, a magic route that should have gone into Hard Rock. It seemed like a more impressive Cenotaph Corner but again who ever thought that it was only HVS? To descend from the tree by a free abseil gives a sensational finish but for peace of mind it is worth seeing if the ropes reach the ground as it looks a long, long way down. Some of the latest free routes on this majestic limestone crag are 'something else' and here are the real possibilities for the 1980s.

A week of good weather in the Lake District is a sufficiently rare event to raise a few eyebrows in disbelief and when it happens it is certainly worth writing about. Consequently it was with some regret and great reluctance that we turned our backs on all the nubile young female bodies disporting themselves in Ambleside and made tracks for White Ghyll to warm up on Paladin and Warrior. There was no time to waste and before long the car was pointed over Wrynose in the direction of Cockley Beck where we basked in the afternoon sun

pruning our gear to a minimum ready to go high. We also ate what we could not carry and fortified by a couple of pints in The Woolpack we set our minds to the long slog up Eskdale. The first blow to fall was that James had forgotten the lightweight tent (his thoughts were on a young lady that he had failed to seduce before we came away) and we were condemned to dossing out on the hillside below Esk Buttress. The midges ate us alive while we slowly stewed in our sleeping bags, clothing pulled over our heads for some meagre protection. Next morning I loudly bewailed the lack of a hot brew—James had also forgotten his small stove (was that the woman or the ale?). My stiff bones creaked all the way up the Red Edge but fragments of crushed pie and cold sausage offered some slight consolation before Central Pillar. A good tick that I thought, in keen anticipation. Unfortunately high up the route, just as I was enjoying myself, the idiot took a wrong turn and before I knew it I was at grips with The Cumbrian a horror pitch of the first order. The runners all piled up on the rope as I climbed flat out and it was a long way before I could rest to transfer them to my belt. That shattered me completely and I departed for a windy midgeless ridge to seek refuge from the wee ones. They tracked me down however and I lay there apprehensive for an endless night.

After another cold breakfast we ploughed up into the mist in search of Scafell's East Buttress. Hidden teams from Wasdale were already at work and we raced for the start of Ichabod exchanging the time of day with the ever green Terry Parker while sorting gear. James was in one of his determined moods and blasted upwards only pausing to have a quick look at Phoenix. With little respect for history he ran it all out at one go and before I had time to decide whether I was enjoying myself or not I was watching the rope snaking up Midnight Express, one of the fine newer routes. Two routes up and the weather looked better, so off we went in search of the main crag. A steep wall, a bit of a traverse and a couple of little slabs later and The Nazgul was behind us. It seemed as simple as that. By then the mist had disappeared, as had all the climbers, and in the glowing evening sun we enthused our way up Saxon after the immaculate and intricate Direct Start to C.B. With over a thousand feet of X.S. rock behind us we bolted back down Eskdale, galloping through the dark to beat last orders. The first pint never even hit the sides. What a day in the hills.

On our rest day we visited Pavey Ark for Cascade Direct and Fallen Angel (oh the sheer agony of that thrutch and bitter struggle). Even

the thought of another dip in the tarn or the well-endowed topless bird in the distance could not regain my composure until I had vacated that cruel groove.

The inevitable was about to happen and as Deer Bield was rumoured to be falling down it had to be Goat Crag. Jim at least had the decency to warm me up with a nonchalant ascent of Bitter Oasis, a classic route complete with creaking flakes and flying top pitch. After all the latest limestone horrors in the Peak Jim had no respect for any Lakeland route and was only bothered whether our 50m ropes were long enough. Footless Crow . . . the mere name had me gripped . . . and in any case I can't climb 6b. He left me isolated on a little ledge about twenty feet up the crag and then dithered about until he settled down to the job. It wasn't long however before he was under the big roofs reaching for those infamous, downward-pointing spikes. A Friend in—that's good. Traverse moves left that's bad. He's done it; damn. And then of course he just had to run out of gear once the crux was behind him. Its all very well and good pruning gear to the minimum in order to climb hard but once every so often it just has to catch you out. Now what? At that precise moment I became aware of the fact that a leader on the top pitch of Bitter Oasis was dithering above the void. And then to my complete disbelief Jim spoke. "Hey pal, have you any hexes?" (The climber continued to dither high above Jim.) "Can you throw me one down?" They won't believe it, I thought, shaking my head and raising my eyes to the sky. Of course impatient to the last he couldn't wait and pressed on crabwise. And then, all too soon he was tugging fiercely at the ropes and demanding more . . . and more . . . and yet more. A flurry of chalk and I was away climbing to keep pace with him. How much more rope did he want? Ultimately a faint cry floated down from high above. "Shall I ab. for my gear?" A lad out on the scree relayed a reply. "No! He's already half-way up the crag and he says you're a bastard." Abseil for his gear indeed! The cheeky young whipper-snapper. Not on this baby, if it's the last thing I do.

It seemed a really long, long pitch just to reach the cluster of bolts, but with some brilliant climbing on the way. It was clear that I could reach the first spike but hanging around to practise moves was out so I went all out for the Friend and micro-nut and clipped into them with my hook-crook (and they ask why I carry a fifi-hook about!). Ten feet over to the left Jim had a good Friend but I couldn't free the moves to

*Opp: Brodie, Gregory and Kitchin en route to Esk Buttress in the 60s.*

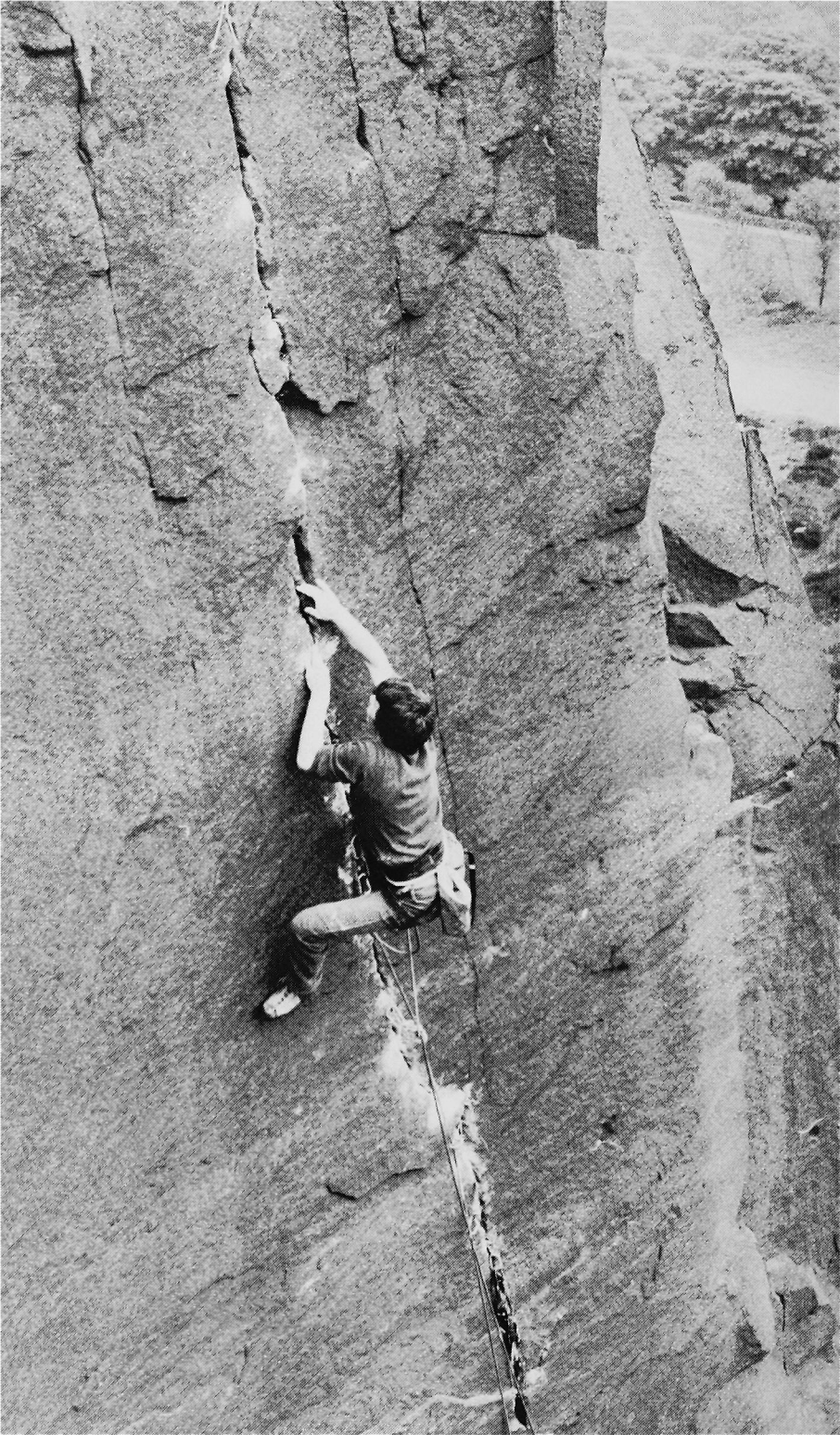
*Photo: Geoff Milburn.*

*Centre Left: Andy Bailey in action on London Wall, Millstone Edge.*

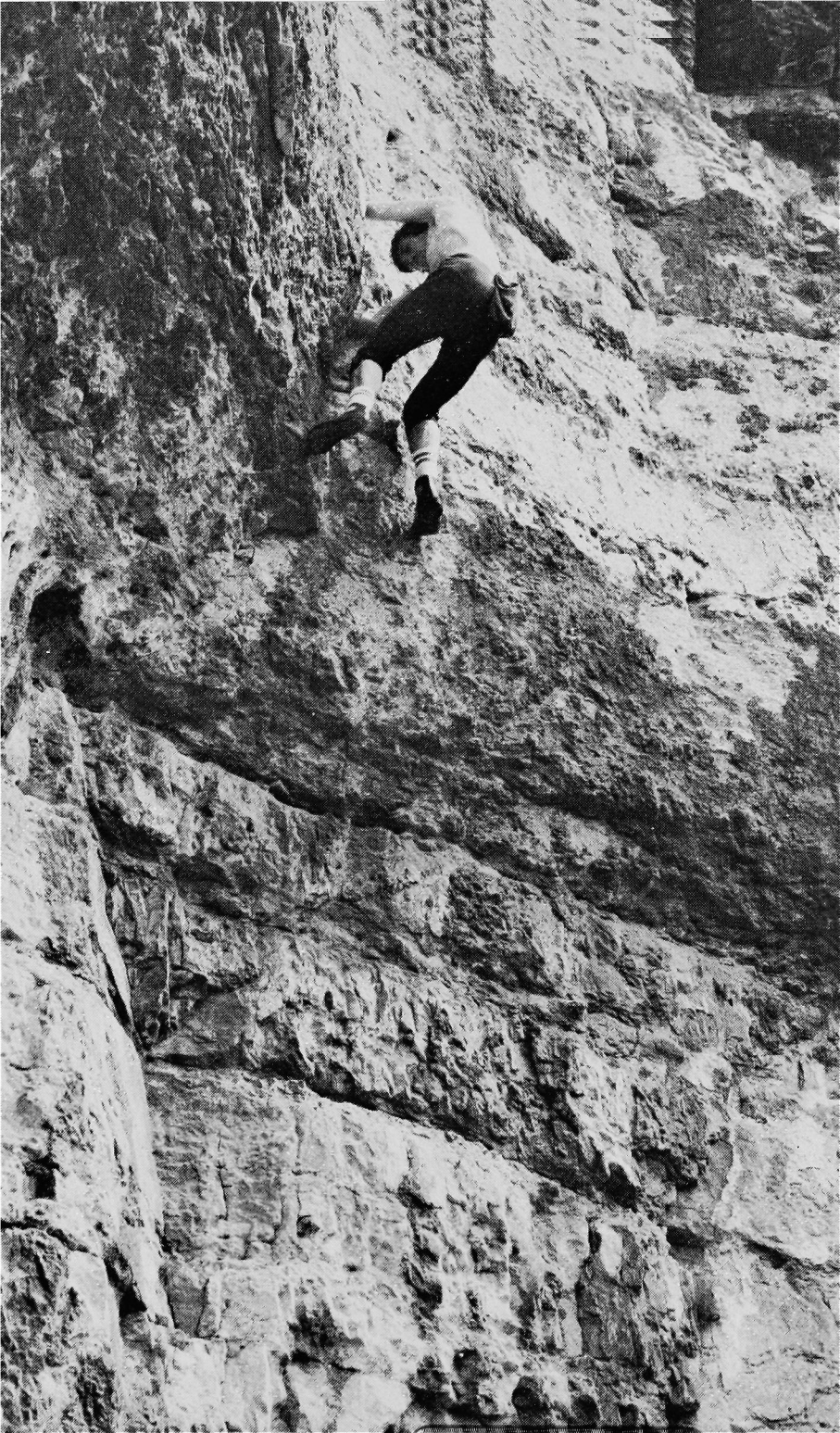
*Photo: Steve Wright.*











reach it, especially if I removed the two runners that I was hanging on to. At full stretch leftwards I was feet short of the next runner. And there I stuck wishing for an up-and-down rope. To this day Jim is still baffled as to how I moved across AND removed the gear. It was simple really—a combination of silent prayer, brachiation and phenomenal ‘luck’. I lunged across at full stretch in one flowing move and at that precise moment both the R.P. and Friend behind me ripped out. The momentum of the move carried me the extra few feet sideways through space to reach the next runner where I recovered my composure. I’d like to see a bumbly try to aid those few moves. After that it was proper climbing again, good strenuous 5c, dodging the bulges to exit up some fine slabs over on the left. Pete’s route is worth at least four stars on the current three star system and despite its few ascents so far it must rank as a mega-classic of the future.

Unfortunately encapsulated in a state of euphoria I failed to put the brakes on Jim in time and we were half-way up Tumbleweed Connection before I realised where I was, climbing like some demented robot. Some day that. If life begins at 40 (next year for me) then just lead me to all that rock.

On our last day I was determined to keep Jim below 6a come what may so the masterplan was revealed. Storm up to the Ghyll for White Ghyll Eliminate, blast on up the hillside for Astra on Pavey, then cross the Langdales for Gimmer String to finish. There might be no skin on my finger ends but my feet were still good enough to raise the stakes a bit. Later with the plan in the bag I was a trifle put out when we observed two fit young females in slings on Amen Corner overcoming it by combined tactics. Now that was a real challenge—the ladies that is, not Amen Corner.

As Jim departed for France with the team’s secret weapon imported to wear him down—in the shape of one Bob Berzins—I was reminded of the words of a little girl we recently met in Millersdale. Jim, resplendent in American sun/basketball hat, T-shirt, white pants and trendy fell shoes asked her if we looked like athletes. “No”, she replied with some curiosity, weighing up the situation. “You look more like farmers to me.”

*Centre Right: Keith Sharples on The Arete, Tintwistle Knarr.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*

*Opp: Phil Burke soloing on Scoop Wall, Stoney Middleton.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*



# A CAUTIONARY TALE

HERBERT CARR

When I was very young Hilaire Belloc wrote his books for children which are now almost as classic as the Alice books. 'Cautionary Tales for Children' and 'The Bad Boy's Book of Beasts'. These titles are now sufficiently old to warrant their being stolen by us. I suggest 'Cautionary Tales for Climbers' or the 'Bad Climber's Book of Blunders'. With the Editor's permission this story might do for either of them.

In the early 1920s my parents rented a small flat in Lausanne. My father wrote early one year to say he wanted to try the Italian ridge of the Matterhorn but we must have a good pro. to go with us. I agreed that the strength and skill of a good guide on such an expedition would be of great value. And so it proved to be.

I had got to know and like a young Chamonix man who wanted to gain experience outside his home ground. I had had Alfred Couttet to join me in Dauphine one springtime week-end and we had made a quick and rash attack on the Meije from La Berard (See A.J. Vol. XXXVI). He had never been to Zermatt and was glad to accept my invitation.

On the due date, therefore, we three met in Zermatt and walked over to Breuil where we stayed the night.

On the following morning we walked up to the Italian Hut which is quite high on the mountain above the Col de Lion. Just above the Col a large platform suggested a rest, so we sat there. Alfred, who was carrying most of the provisions was behind me. Our attention was attracted by something in the valley when I asked Alfred (in French) to pass me the water bottle. Now it will seem incredibly stupid but we had two aluminium bottles exactly alike, one with water, the other methylated spirit. I took the one he handed to me and without thinking raised it to my lips and took a gulp—of methylated spirit! Never have I been so violently sick and of course I felt very ill indeed. After a time Alfred took the loads and my father up to the hut and came back to help me.

Luckily there was no-one else at the hut, indeed we saw no other party during the whole time we were on the mountain.

The sickness went on for about three hours and then slowly I began to recover. By about 8 a.m. next morning I felt I could have a go to do the climb; so we started—very slowly at first. Then my strength came back to me as the poison drained from me and by the time we reached the summit, about mid-afternoon, I was feeling pretty well alright again. It was just as well. Without pausing we passed along the ridge and began the descent down the snow slopes on the Swiss side. Bad weather was coming and we had only got to the rocks above where the chains hang down the slabs when the storm broke over us. The wind rose to a gale and it began to snow heavily. After that we had to fight every foot of the way. Alfred went first holding my father and guiding each move he made, while I belayed as often as I could and did not move till the rope ran out and the others halted.

It seemed an eternity until we got to the shoulder and the storm abated a bit. We then made better progress; Alfred going on first shouted once or twice—"Have we missed the Solvay Hut?" But I had been up and down the Swiss ridge (in 1921 with Will McNaught and John Hirst) and had a good 'bump of locality' on a mountain so I was able to shout back with confidence, "No! No Alfred. This is a bigger mountain than your Aiguilles". At long last, with only about an hour of daylight to spare, there was the hut just below us and M. Solvay had the heartfelt blessing of three tired men. Inside it we got out of ice-coated clothing and wrapped all the blankets about us. Then was the moment for our little stove and what meths I had left!

Huddled together under cover of the blankets we passed not too bad a night and the dawn broke cloudless and still. The sun soon came to us and we knew how wonderful it was to be alive. When about 9 a.m. we went on down; the hotel with its promise of a hot meal beckoned ever nearer.

I believe the Duke of Wellington was known to admit that Waterloo had been 'a pretty close thing'. So indeed was this expedition brought to a safe conclusion by the strength, patience and skill of our good young guide.

NOTE: Alfred Couttet was killed some years later on the Dru.

In the early 1930s my wife and Ben Bathurst did the same route with a local guide. My daughter was taken up by the Swiss ridge by Otto

Furrer in the late 1940s. On the way down the girl turned to Otto—a great big fellow—and asked innocently, “Are you sure you know the way?” This, to about the best guide in the valley, made all Zermatt roar with laughter.

## DAWN

N.C. PEACOCK

It's five fifteen. An hour ago a restless mind  
had forced me down to work.

Now, half cold coffee on the table, my eyes  
turn from papers to the uncurtained window and through it  
slip my thoughts.

A low Welsh hill lies black against a limpid wall of virgin blue  
with just a hint of gold;

And Venus, Bethlehem bright,  
hangs beside an oval smudge of charcoal cloud.

How many dawns like this have held their magic breath as friends  
we moved across the frozen snow?

My inner eyes recall the sunrise sliding down the ice-bound rocks  
of Aiguilles, Rothorn and the Rockies,

Cloud filled valleys and diamond studded skies.

My mind: the storms, the bivouacs, the warming rock and  
frozen fingers, of friendships made and friends who died.

When will I know again those days? Days of anticipation,  
fear and stress and final jubilation.

Or have they gone forever?

# SUPER—MEDIUS

MIKE BROWELL

“HAVE YOU GOT ME YOUTH?” Screaming a rhetorical question, because if he hasn’t it’s academic. A swoosh of rope, clatter of hardware and a moment’s pause before the inevitable verbal barrage assaults the relative tranquillity of spring in France.

The place, Sainte Victoire, the French answer to British climbing style. The climb; Super-Medius, E4, 6b, and the screamer; Martin Berzins, he of the loud voice.

The crag has an unfortunate reputation of having poorly protected routes, but that is just not the case. The climbs are much the same as their British counterparts; some have big reputations, some don’t. None are choppers.

This climb has a medium reputation, boosted perhaps by Livesey’s prose and boosted still further when standing below. From down here it looks like a huge reputation. Martin has just pushed it a little further; perhaps a little too far. . .

Several days had passed and Super-Medius had remained untried. Despite the European hordes who had descended and ascended and moved on. Most other routes had been challenged and beaten, the chalky paw prints now showing the way. But not on Super-Medius and now with Super-M on the rope, cautiously feeling his way; and he can feel further than most, he can’t feel enough and so . . . “HAVE YOU GOT ME YOUTH”, screaming.

Not a lot of need to haul sacks of gear up it. You can count the pieces from down here. That tat on the left, and a peg, then right to the bolts, that’s two in forty feet. Then a ten foot section to a flaky thing that’s laughingly called an overhang on a smooth wall like this, although its only three inches wide. (The overhang, not the wall! Ed.) There are two pegs here, and a long way to go.

Then up, up, a little more to a flake—is it really a crack, might it take a Friend? Possibly a rest up there and then there’s a bolt in the middle of a blank section, and then nothing. With twenty feet to the bushes below.



So it's six quick draws and a nut and a Friend for the impossible, a crack. It's a long way to the first peg and for a long climber, just a little less because he can clip the tat for what it's worth. But the moves up and across are hard, very hard, and so is the ground—and it's just a little bit too far away at 25 feet. So it's lashings of white courage and a delicate stride across the blank bit and clip, clip, safe at last. But don't wait around too long because it's not a slab.

Now out rightwards with plenty of conviction because there are bolts out there and maybe even a rest. No, not a rest, so probably best to keep going and going, and going and . . . "HAVE YOU GOT ME YOUTH?"

It's a long way to the flaky thing and when you get it there aren't any hands spare to reach the next holds. Pity. Next time round and a clever hand change and it's been 5c for quite a while now, so it may be 6a, but it won't be tonight in the bar.

And still no rest to speak of so it's off again, but luckily not so far this time to the next flaky thing, and this looks really very hard, all on the fingers and a bit of strain on the toes.

Well, maybe this is a rest, and maybe those below were rests too—yes, they were fairly restful, so they probably were. It's just that it looks so steep, and when you move you really have to pull. Hard.

One more pull and he's leaning off—a flake crack, a layaway, rest at last, laughing and hanging out diagonally on straight arms and no foot holds to speak of. Suddenly a flurry of movement and a ledge has appeared on top of the flake and has therefore become a sensible place to stand. And it's almost restful, and right by a bolt. So all of a sudden the route looks in the bag and elation surges and Kodachrome is exposed from all directions.

Then pausing, for a glance around reveals the *raison d'être* of the bolt, and the crux of the route. A beautifully blank section, so blank after the wall below. The bolt grins because it has seduced the ethical intentions of many brave leaders who got this far unaided.

So the action ceases and a period of reconciliation commences. For a man with above and beyond average reach, there is a solution. Jump.

So he does, and unbelievably, it's a hyper-jug. And whooping rushing, that final twenty feet disappears because it's really easy.

For non-jumpers, Graham Hoey devised a thinking dwarf's solution at 6b, to a horrific problem, on a subsequent and very elegant ascent.

# SCARED OF THE DARK

MIKE OWEN

I well remember my first experience of climbing in the dark. I was still resident in Colwyn Bay in August 1979 and I had been spending many summer evenings, after work, at the local crags of Forwyn and the Ormes. However, I still hadn't done New Dimensions on Castell y Gwynt on the Great Orme. I had looked at it the previous year and half heartedly tried the first pitch, on which I failed just below the large thread.

One evening that August, John Roberts and I arrived at the bottom of the crag at about 6 p.m. only to find John Redhead 'a cheval' on the arete of Plas Berw's first pitch. He quickly completed the impressive first pitch and Keith Robertson was soon following it. Both New Dimensions and Plas Berw share the same start, so I set off immediately on Keith's heels, knowing time would be short. John and Keith abseiled off the joint first stance, allowing me to bring up the other John (whether this was politeness to me or they had had enough after the first pitch I'm not sure). My John arrived on the small stance muttering something about the rock being the wrong side of vertical and it consequently being a bit too strenuous.

Time was getting on and it was already near dark by the time I'd done the second pitch. What a magnificent pitch it was too, with leg-splitting bridging and small finger holds. I wasn't sure about those rusty protection bolts either. By the time John arrived at the belay it was dark. Keith and the other John had already gone, so we were completely on our own with over two hundred and fifty feet of evening dusk between us and the sea below, with the top pitch still to do. John didn't want to lead it so we swapped over belays, a dangerous and risky thing in the dark. Just before I started, I remembered about the loose flake which detached itself and parted Paul Trower from the rock for a flying lesson . . . I hoped I wouldn't find any loose flakes in my pitch-black grovel to safety. Fortunately, I found the peg and obviously the right holds and I was soon looking for belays at the top and bringing up John. At the top we breathed sighs of relief and

scrambled off to the car and then to the pub just in time for last orders.

The following January Phil Ralph was staying at my flat; we fancied doing some climbing, so we went to Gogarth late in the day with thoughts of a quick passage across Dream of White Horses. Fortunately, Elaine decided to wait for us at the top of the cliff. When we got on the climb the whole of Wen Slab was seeping and it was much too cold. We should have retreated but for some reason we continued. It was so cold and wet, and windy, that we both wanted to end the misery of it and jump into the sea. All Elaine could do was watch our pitiful and miserably slow progress from the other side of the zawn. Phil finished that last soaking, freezing pitch in the dark and it took everything I had to follow it; fingers had long since lost any sense of feeling and I pulled on most of Phil's runners. We were both scared and knackered by the experience and we slept dreamily whilst Elaine drove us back to Colwyn Bay.

On another occasion in the summer of 1980 John and I went to do Moon Shadow on the Little Orme, again after work. We walked through the boulders to the foot of the climb just as the tide was going out. The guide says the beach is clear of the sea for four hours, but we learnt that night that this was not so. We estimated that we had ample time for this particular two-pitch route. However, the second pitch required some cautious climbing as it was technical, the pegs were missing and towards the top it was covered in sticky, stinking guano—and it also started to rain. Anyhow, I took a fall when all points of contact slipped on the filthy stuff. I went back up, but with the rain it was hopeless, so I lowered back down to John.

To our amazement we noticed that the tide had already come back in, but we couldn't tell just how much. We couldn't see round the corner back to the beach and the hotels, and it was only about two and a half hours since the tide had gone out. We had to get down, as we didn't fancy staying on that stance for the night which was (again!) soon upon us. We decided that we could either scramble onto Rubble Buttress or take a swim for it. So we quickly abbed off that horrible belay peg down to the boulders at the foot of the climb. From there the tide didn't look as if it had come in too far, so we opted for a paddle with the bonus that, if successful, we'd have beds to sleep in that night. Ropes were coiled quickly, E.B.s strung over our shoulders and gear tied as high around our bodies as possible. In that fashion we stumbled back to safety tripping over and stubbing toes on submerged

*Opp: Graham Hoey at mid-height on Super Medius, St Victoire. Photo: Mike Browell.*

*Centre Left: Bob Conway on Mercury Direct, Carn Gowla, E2, 5b. Note the 250-foot joined ab. rope. Photo: Chris Jackson.*











boulders and butchering vulnerable feet on barnacles with the sea lapping our chests. Back at the beach in the dark of the night, in a completely different world, at our backs, we collapsed exhausted with bloodied feet and soaking wet . . . laughing stupidly, knowing we had lived through another gripping experience . . . knowing we were a little wiser.

Later on that summer I spent a miserable week in Cornwall, when all hopes of Dream/Liberator were foiled for the third time. On our fifth day down there we finally braved the inclement weather to do some climbing. Elaine and I went to finish off the day with Paragon, having previously done Beowolf. Whilst I was leading the very good second pitch the mist came in very thickly and turned the rough granite into a soaking, running mass. Strangely enough it seemed to go dark extremely quickly and the cliff became alive with rather big slippery slugs; they were in every crack and handhold and feet skidded off the rock every time one was stepped on in the dark. We did the top two short pitches in that fashion; eyes straining to see, fingers clawing for holds, the rock damp from the mist, the foghorn blaring away in the background and the slugs making our progress very slippery and treacherous indeed. The weather didn't improve after that so we drove north the next day to spend a few glorious days in the Peak.

More recently Tim Bancroft, Phil Ralph and I went to do Mousetrap at South Stack. The guide book said to descend the steps to the hole in the wall and scramble down the grassy slope; the only trouble was that the tide was in and therefore the approach was impossible. So, after walking back up all those steps and abseiling down the buttress between Left Hand Red Wall and Mousetrap Zawn, we descended down the slippery, smelling, guano-covered slope to the boulders at the foot of the climb, where we arrived filthy and sweaty only to have to wait for a party of four ahead of us.

The strata exposed at South Stack consists of schists and gneisses which are amongst the oldest rocks exposed in Britain and date from the Pre-Cambrian period of Geological time. One would have thought that if these rocks were some of the oldest then, surely, they would be amongst the most solid; but wind and water have eroded the softer layers thus forming the characteristic curving chimneys of this very photogenic climb.

*Centre Right: The Great Escape from Longships Promontory. Roy Small on Longship's Wall, E3, 5c and Sennan Henassay on Yankee Doodle, E2, 5b.*

*Photo: Chris Jackson.*

*Opp: Martin Berzins on Double Top, E4, 6a, at Beeston Tor. Photo: Chris Jackson.*



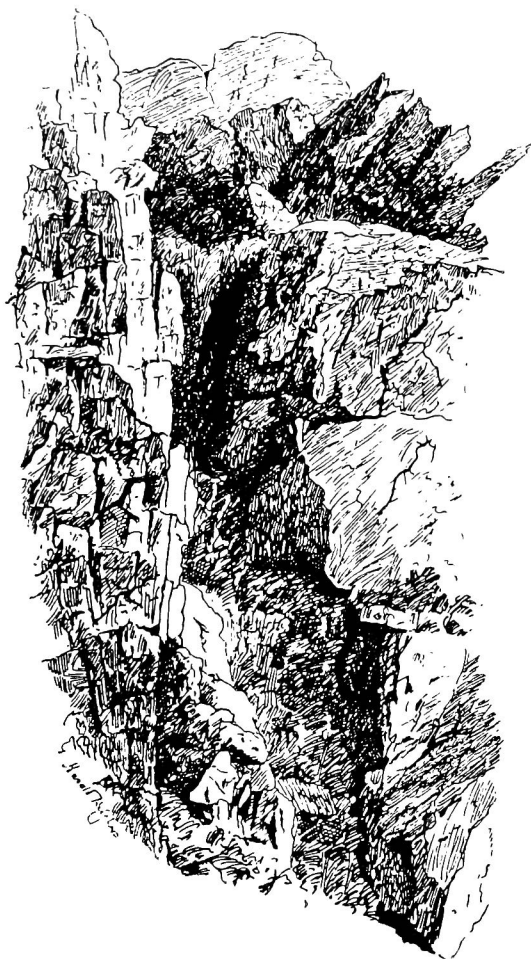
I started up the first juggy groove and was amazed how solid it was; it was steep as well. From the top of the groove easy moves up a slab led to two protection pegs from which a short descent enabled a traverse across the wall on the right to the first of the chimneys. The peg on that wall was missing and there was no other form of protection so a fall would have resulted in a long pendulum. I tried to climb straight up that chimney, but I was struggling desperately with my last runner being those pegs a long way to my left. But from the weirdest position I noticed holds enabling a pull round the rib into the next chimney. Once in this chimney the climbing became a lot easier and in a splendid situation, with strange spikes and flakes jutting out from everywhere. At the top an easy traverse right led to an excellent belay. Tim came up next and he also tried to come straight up the chimney. For the first time I realised it was getting late, colder and we had a lot further to go still; it was January so it would be dark soon after 4.30 p.m.

All three of us assembled on the stance and it was decided that I should lead the second pitch as Phil was really cold. The climbing on that second pitch was superb with steep moves leading to Crew's original peg and an exhilarating swing above a big drop into the next chimney. Delightful climbing up the chimney led to the slab with a small belay in a really exposed position. Tim and Phil soon arrived and Phil led the slab on a single 9mm rope, by which time light was already beginning to fade. Whilst Tim was following the slab pitch the ropes tangled, so, by the time I arrived at Phil's belay, it was almost completely dark and the lighthouse had been on a considerable time already.

As soon as I arrived at Phil's belay I grabbed the rack of gear and set off up the final pitch—Tim hastily read me the description. That top pitch was steep but it had consolations in the form of good protection and solid holds. The only problem was that it was difficult to see the holds or where I was going. With light from the lighthouse I was able to make my way across to the final groove. Once in the groove the lighthouse could no longer help me . . . I quickly raced on not seeing holds and unable to see anything for protection. I knew I was climbing for keeps as our ticket to freedom lay entirely on me reaching the top . . . I also knew that one slight slip and I'd almost certainly break my hand again—the doctor said that I shouldn't climb for a long time yet . . .

At last I fumbled my way over the top with utter relief knowing we'd made it, again! The party in front of us had retrieved our abseil slings and put them at the top of the route—I was glad that we didn't have to go looking for them.

Surprisingly, Tim and Phil were both quickly at the top where we all sat watching the ships and the lighthouse light scanning across the Irish Sea and, of course, talking excitedly of how magnificent Mousetrap really was; we couldn't understand why we hadn't done it years ago.



A GULLY ON CRAIG YR YSFA

# DAYS

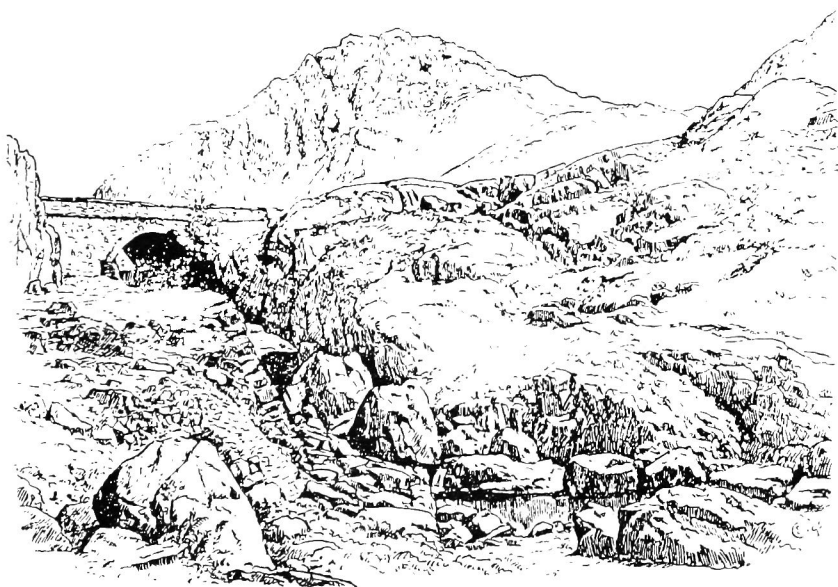
DAVID HOPE

The morning climbed a tree and spat a cloud or two from the sun. Blazing white, the limestone's mirror agonises bleary eyes the morning after, blinded into the brighter blue and screwing with apprehension at the bulkhead walls where flying cracks split slender pillars apart at the joints. Knowing then that later, in some steep place, the warmth reflected will cause hands to sweat over holds and coat in white fineness jeans and shirt, dulling the shining nose peeking out from glass-like polish on time-trodden steps. Know also that the hands, firm in jams, and the feet, calm on square-cut corners, will ensure strength with confidence, season's heat with agility, and pitch after pitch flying into the summer sun. Know too the effortless effort and stupefying satisfaction when small runners distil fear into fight and muscles into flight, as you, basking in the afternoon sky, taste the pleasures of a limestone day.

And across are facing small sombre walls, huge in their massiveness, split by gaunt verticalities and horizontal gashes, ghastly black and brown smiles, blotched on occasion with lichen green or pigeon white. There, on grey soulless days, you wrestle with the greenness, with arms half in and half out of swallowing cracks, laying out in extremis, each tendon at its tender limit with sometimes a softening suddenly; and then a regurgitation of cartwheeling limbs spinning crazily about into suspended, jangling animation on a second's puppet thread. Or sometimes spreadeagled crabwise with an odd millimetre of rubber here and a spasm of skin there and an ant crawl up the smoothness to prepare for the predatory lurch for the jug which is there but sometimes isn't for the small, or the tired, or those who just didn't lurch far enough. Or sometimes feet and hands caressing smooth curves with security, knowing the limits and thus pressuring self into higher impossibilities to impress the plimsoled tourist on a hot, stinking day. Or rarely, with the eyes stinging to the sandstone scour of the wind, you, red rimmed and face aflame but feeling good, finish the route and drift on to the next, the growing

knowledge of each testpiece filling to the brim as each harder problem is tackled and taken with appreciative abandon.

Then, in the evening, when arms are soggy and slack for turning wheels, when frayed finger ends of red raw flesh clutch absently at a glass or three, when crushed toes expand and blood flows through forgotten tracts, better known vessels fill and flow into the memories' channels, well-worn with refreshment. When clothes are summarily washed before tired time expires, when the darts become too heavy too see and when the buzz dies out in the night air, then in the chair the feeling grows that the next weekend is a little nearer and bugged the work, you feel good, your fingers itch, the long hot summer is pulling on and the feeling wants to be on and up all the time. Then the ale's false hunger helps with the plans and the visions (especially the visions) and the long drive isn't so long for a while, until the city arrives, where, on its doorstep, sleep does its job and the dreams are faced again.



TRYFAEN FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

# EARLY DAYS IN HELYG

T.A.H. PEACOCK

The first reference to Helyg appears to be in George Borrow's 'Wild Wales', published in 1862. He was walking from Capel Curig to Bangor. For the benefit of those C.C. members who do not have a copy of Wild Wales I am taking the liberty of quoting the following passage.

'An hour's walking from Capel Curig brought me to a bleak moor, extending for a long way amidst wild sterile hills. The first of a chain on the left was a huge lumpy hill with a precipice towards the road, probably three hundred feet high. When I had come nearly parallel with this precipice, I saw on the left-hand side of the road two children looking over a low wall behind which at a little distance stood a wretched hovel. On coming up, I stopped and looked at them: they were a boy and a girl; the first about twelve, the latter a year or two younger; both wretchedly dressed and looking very sickly.

"Have you any English?" said I, addressing the boy in Welsh.

"Dim gair," said the boy, "not a word; there is no Saesneg near here."

"What is the name of this place?"

"The name of our house is Helyg."

"And what is the name of that hill?" said I pointing to the hill of the precipice.

"Allt y Gog—the high place of the cuckoo."

"Have you a father and mother?"

"We have."

"Are they in the house?"

"They are gone to Capel Curig."

"And they left you alone?"

"They did. With the cat and the trin-wire."

"Do your father and mother make wire work?"

"They do. They live by making it."

"What is the wire work for?"

"It is for hedges to fence the fields with."

"Do you help your father and mother?"

"We do; as far as we can."

"You both look unwell."

"We have lately had the cryd" (ague).

"Is there much cryd about here?"

"Plenty."

"Do you live well?"

"When we have bread we live well."

"If I give you a penny will you bring me some water?"

"We will; whether you give us the penny or not. Come sister, let us go and fetch the gentleman water."

They ran into the house and presently returned, the girl bearing a pan of water. After I had drunk I gave each of the children a penny, and received in return from each a diolch or thanks.

"Can either of you read?"

"Neither one nor the other."

"Can your father or mother read?"

"My father cannot, my mother can a little."

"Are there books in the house?"

"There are not."

"No Bible?"

"There is no book at all."

"Do you go to church?"

"We do not."

"To chapel?"

"In fine weather."

"Are you happy?"

"When there is bread in the house and no cryd we are all happy."

"Farewell to you children."

"Farewell to you, gentlemen!" exclaimed both.

"I have learnt something," said I, "of Welsh cottage life and feeling from that poor sickly child."

Helyg was bought by the Climbers' Club in 1926. Before that it had been a road-mender's hovel, occupied by a Mr. Jones. It consisted of the present kitchen, divided by a partition into two rooms, and a loft. The loft was accessible by means of a ladder from the inner room. At the top of the ladder was a door bearing a notice, 'Reserviert für der Huttenwart', which notice had obviously been removed from a Swiss

hut. There was a skylight in the loft and a window in the inner room. The front door occupied the position of the present south window.

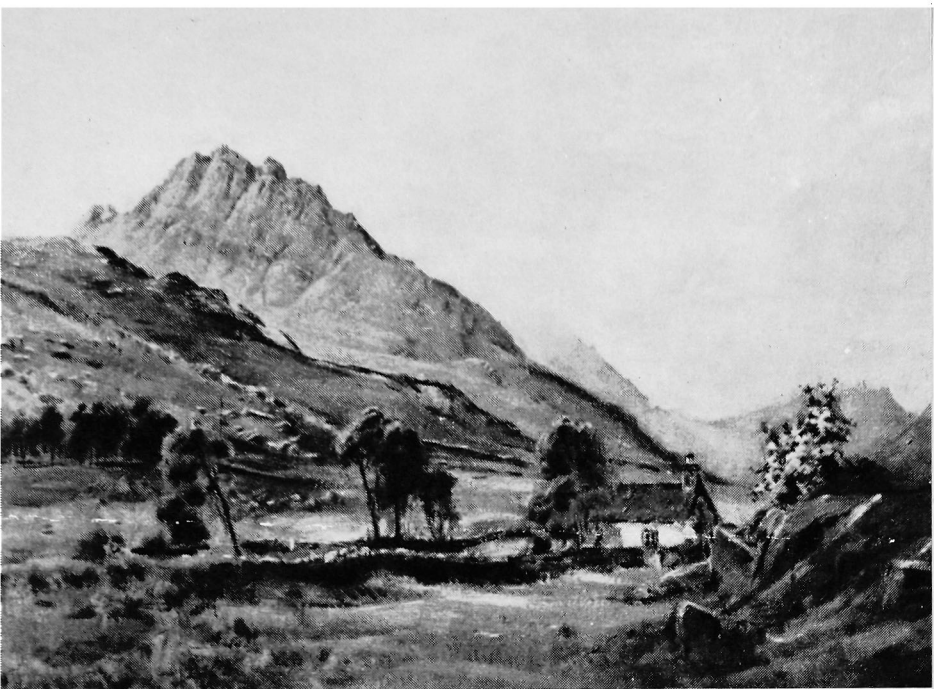
According to Mr. Williams of Gwern-y-Gof Isaf, Mr. Jones brought up six children in this hovel and they all survived and his father, from whom he inherited Helyg, brought up fifteen and they also all survived. So much for modern ideas on light and air! Now which Mr. Jones was the sickly-looking boy who spoke to George Borrow? If it was Mr. Jones the younger, then he must have been nearly eighty in 1926. I incline to the view that the boy was Mr. Jones senior, but perhaps some older member of the club who can remember the circumstances surrounding the purchase of Helyg can clarify this matter.

My first visit to Helyg was in March 1931 with an O.U.M.C. party of eight. The party consisted of John Bingham, George Meade-King, John Philpot, David Hodgkinson, Patrick Greeves, John Gairdner, myself and one other whose name I forget. Seven of us stayed in Helyg, but John Bingham preferred the fleshpots of Pen-y-Gwryd and the company of the Lockwoods!

Four of us arrived a day early, travelling in George's car. Next morning we set off to climb Lockwood's Chimney, but failing to find it we made the laborious ascent of Lliwedd from the Power Station. We had taken the key of Helyg with us and on our return we found the remainder of the party had arrived and were attempting to force an entry via the skylight.

The club had built the garage which was in better condition than it is now. Nine bunks had also been installed in the outer room of Helyg and two camp beds in the loft. To enter the loft it was considered unsporting to use the ladder and you were expected to do a straight pull up. With the door closed this was a good V.S. Whether Mr. Jones used this method of entry is doubtful. Cooking was with primus stoves, and an Alladin lamp cast its fitful gleams in the kitchen, when it was not sooted up. Outside there was a coal shed and the lavatory consisted of an Elsan. This had to be emptied periodically and the two medical students in the party were elected by a majority of five to two to carry out this task, which they did to perfection.

On the lavatory door was fixed a remarkable notice which some enterprising member of the C.C. had removed from a foreign hotel. It read as follows: 'On est instamment prié de ne jeter aucune object obturante, tel que tampon ou autre carton dans le lavabo'. This was

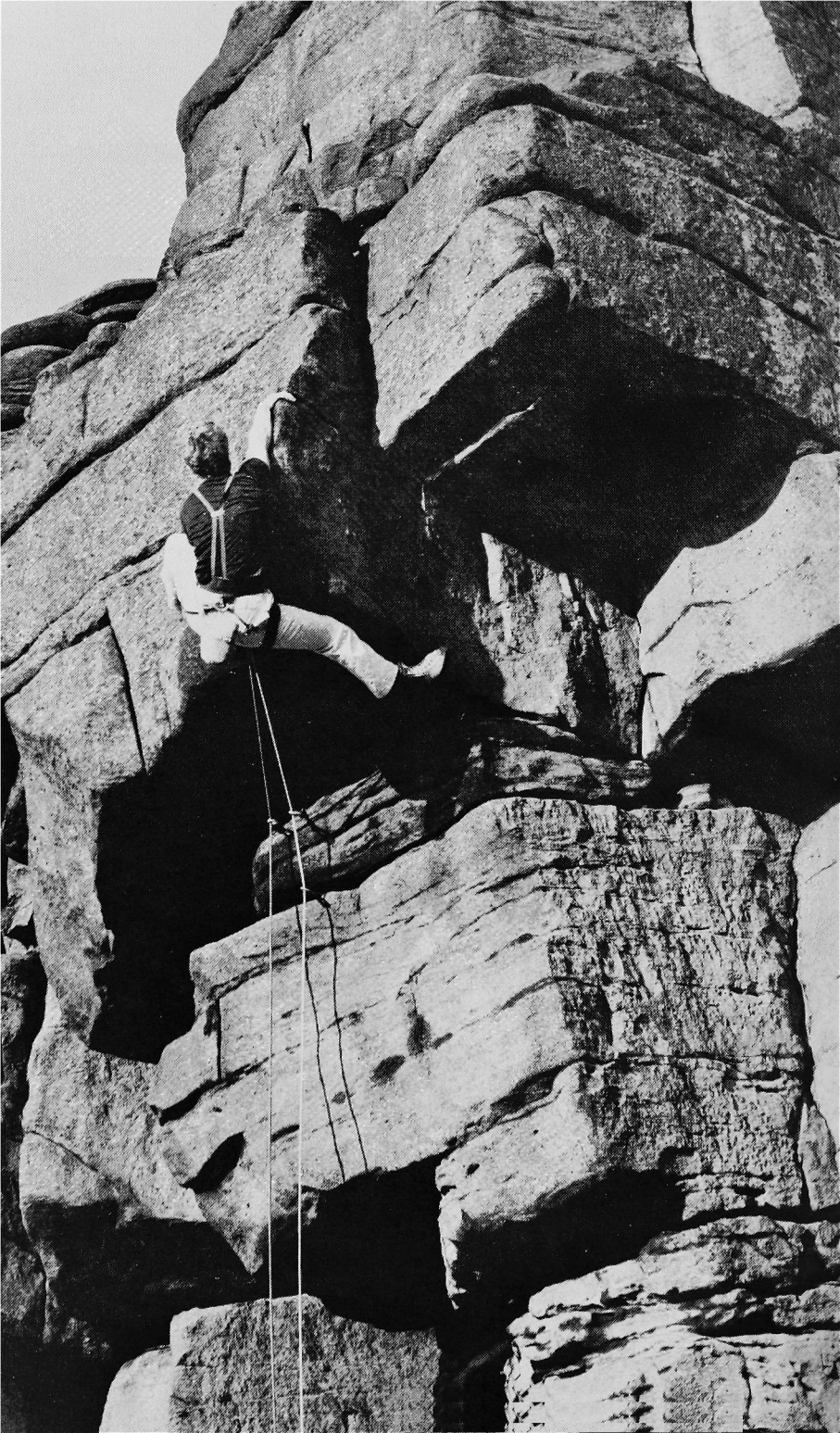


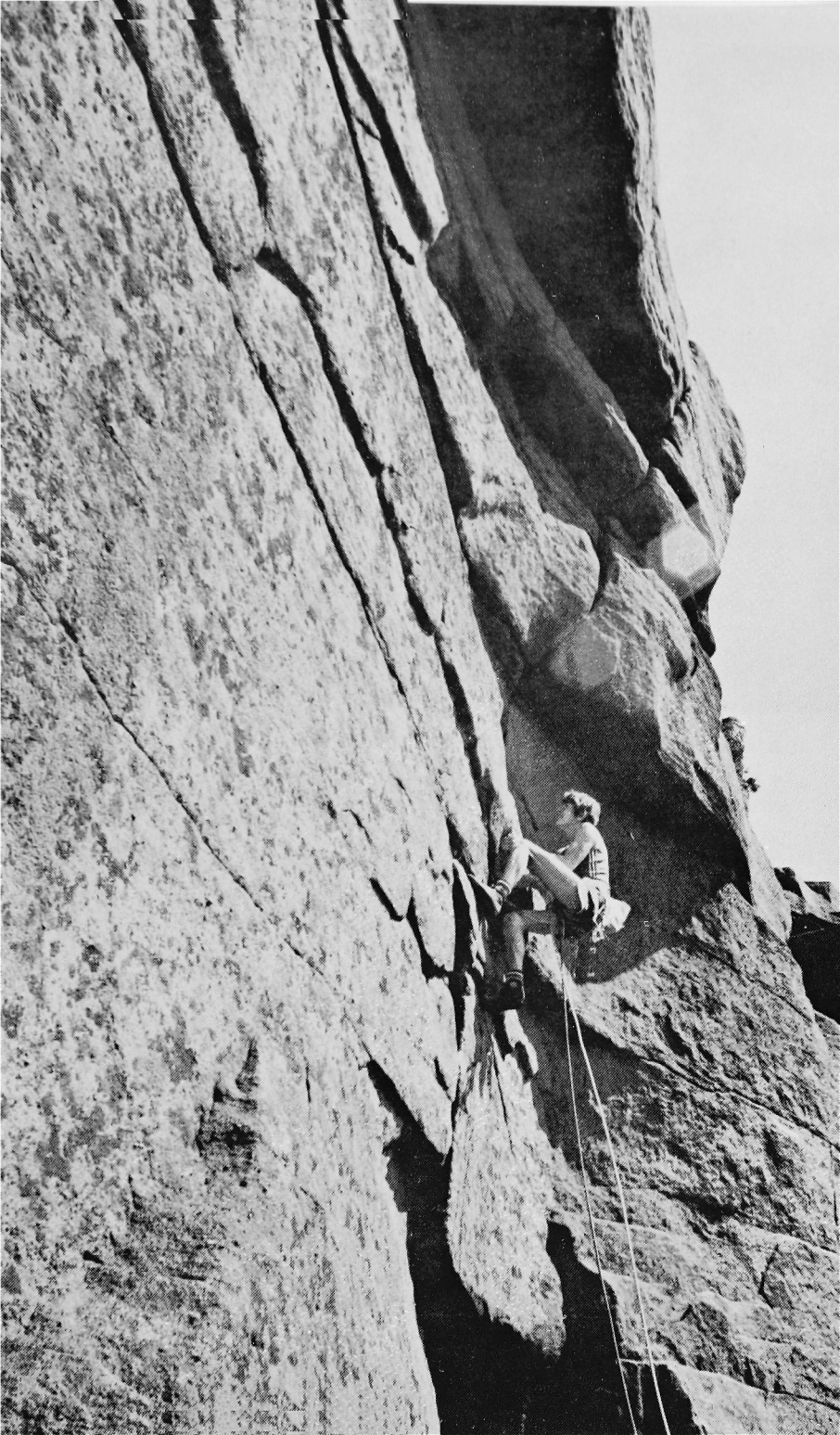
*Above: Helyg Cottage painted by David Hewitt.*

*Below: Helyg as seen in 1926.*







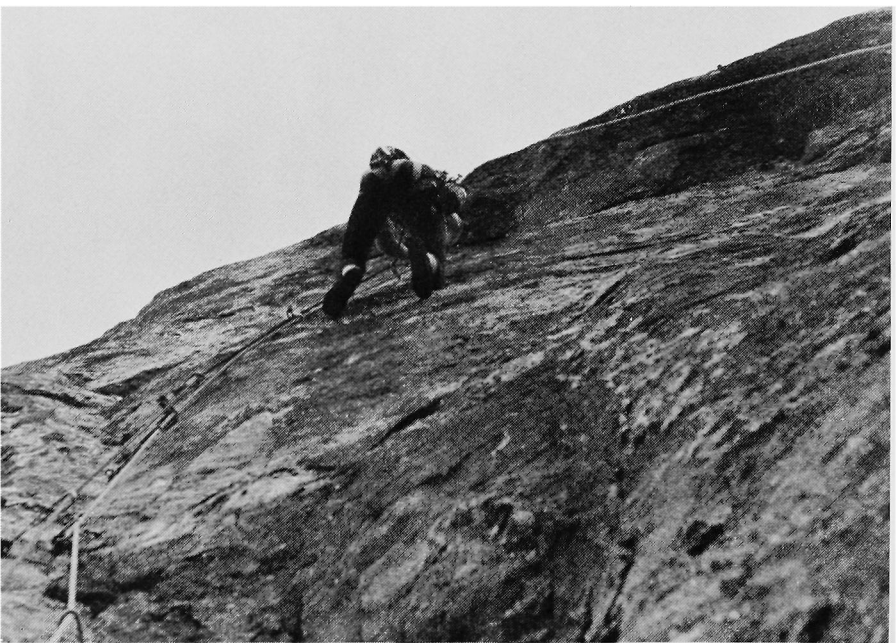




*Above: Andy Sharp on Barracuda, 1st ascent. Gower.*

*Photo: J. Harwood.*

*Below: Crime and Punishment, Gower. A. Sharp on 1st ascent. Photo: J. Harwood.*



followed by an 'English' translation, 'You are instantly recommended to don't throw any obturating materials such as pad, cotton wool into the closet'.

The walls of the kitchen were decorated with some brilliant caricatures by a member of the C.C. named French. I remember two in particular; one of General Bruce and another of Colin Kirkus frying the Helyg rat, and entitled 'The Epicure'. We never actually saw the Helyg rat, but we heard him at night gnawing the floor boards. I am glad to say that he never attempted to gnaw our toes!

The inner room could be heated by a coal fire, but the chimney smoked so badly that we never used it. Drying facilities were distinctly limited, but the weather, fortunately, was gloriously fine throughout our stay with much snow in the gullies, but the rocks were clear on Tryfan. The whole scene, in fact, was Alpine. Outside we found the Helyg Boulder a challenge for using up spare energy. In the late thirties J.M. Edwards wrote up in the Helyg book a guide to the boulder with 47 routes on the face! No doubt this triumph is preserved in the archives of the Club (You must be joking! Ed.).

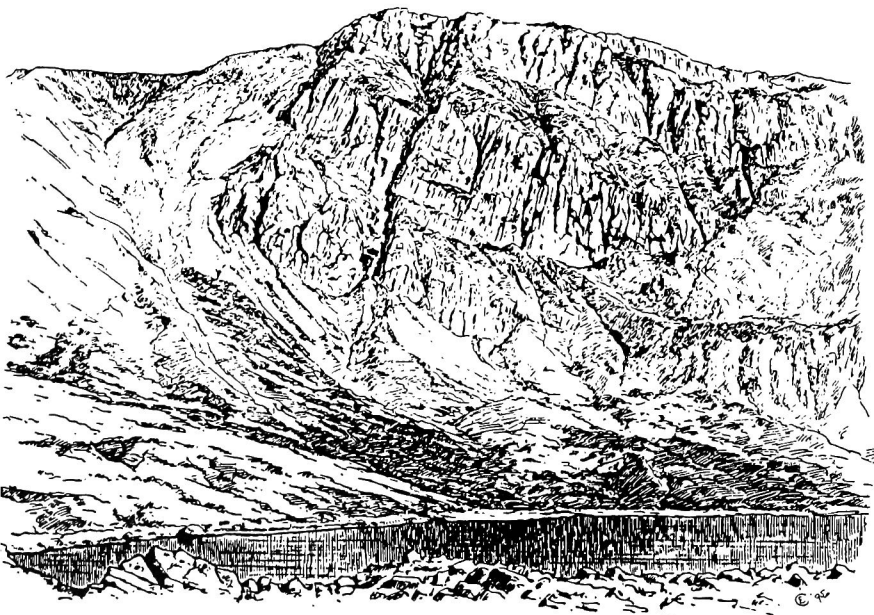
We were all novices to Welsh climbing except our leader, John Bingham. Being the only other officer of the club and having climbed in the Alps, I was appointed a leader and on the first official day of the meet we started traditionally with the Milestone Buttress, Ordinary Route, four on a rope. We then moved round to the East Face of Tryfan to do the Pinnacle Rib. Having found little difficulty and suffering from swollen head I ventured to tackle the final chimney which John had wisely avoided. The small stone, which I believe had previously been jammed in the crack, was missing and I could not get started. Having read in George Abraham that in such circumstances the leader should take a shoulder, I positioned the third member of the party, wedged in the lower part of the chimney to belay me and attempted to stand on the back of my second. His back proved unstable and I fell off backwards, but luckily landed feet first in some soft snow. I say luckily as the previous man to fall out of this chimney was reported to have killed himself. After this abortive attempt we bypassed the chimney.

Next day we did the Idwal Slabs and then six of us followed John up the Holly Tree Wall belaying traditionally on the Holly Tree. We were all of course using Clinkers; rubbers would have been considered bad form; the holds, though small were less polished than now. We then

attempted the Central Arete of Glyder Fawr, but found too much snow.

We had another day on Tryfan doing Grooved Arete and Gashed Crag and on the last day John took a party up Parson's Nose while I did Slanting Buttress on Lliwedd. This was in real winter condition and the final chimney was so choked with snow that I had to jam my ice axe in the upper part, pull up and finally stand on it! All somewhat unorthodox.

Thus ended the first of some fifty visits to Helyg, the last being in 1975. Two members of the party became life-long friends, George Meade-King and David Hodgkinson and we climbed together for many years. It was a memorable holiday and the recollections of it are as clear today as they were fifty years ago.



CADER IDRIS  
(seen across Llyn y Gader)



# BREAKFASTS AT HELYG

RENNIE BERE

Editors are strange people. Some wait for articles to arrive. Others worry potential contributors until they eventually give in. Others again complain that no-one ever sends them anything. Geoff Milburn is different. One wet afternoon about two years ago he arrived at my home (the nearest house to the Compass Point crag on the culm coast of north Cornwall) carrying a cardboard box full of paper—‘papers’ he would probably prefer me to say. ‘Had I known Ted Hicks?’ I had and was able to help with material for the article which he and A.B. Hargreaves wrote for the 1978 C.C.J. and which most members have probably read. The ideal editor I thought. He encourages you to waffle about climbs done many years ago and then does all the real work himself. But I was mistaken. One more visit and several letters later, there comes a suggestion. ‘Would you feel like writing a nostalgic sort of article for us?’

Where do I begin? The last time I wrote for the C.C.J. was about East Africa—at least thirty years ago—and before that there was a long walk with my wife in the Sikkim Himalayas. So perhaps it should be Compass Point as I spent many hours long ago looking hopefully but helplessly at the face which now provides most of the climbs. Once, probably in 1935, I escorted my father to the end of the ridge and climbed the nose (‘North Ridge’) on a top rope—the first lead of which I know was by David Pasteur in 1962. I also climbed the easy ‘Troy’ and its variation solo, so the late Keith Darbyshire did not make the first ascent in 1974 as the guide books suggest. For a few years before I went to Africa (in 1930) I spent as much time as I could in North Wales or the Lakes without ever becoming a particularly good rock climber. But I was extremely lucky in the people with whom I climbed.

After two visits to the Alps with my parents and a few guided expeditions, I went up to Cambridge in the Autumn of 1926, joined the C.U.M.C. and, on a meet at Wasdale, was taken up my first British rock climb by Jack Longland—Kern Knotts Chimney if I

remember correctly. Shortly afterwards I met Ted Hicks. I was walking along a road on the outskirts of Cambridge when I saw someone comorting himself rather strangely on the trunk of a tree. I stopped to watch. "Excuse me", I said, "but what are you doing?" It was Ted Hicks trying to solve a climbing problem. We were both in our first year and soon became firm friends, climbing together as often as we could in Wales, the Lakes and on Cambridge roofs. My home was then in the Isle of Wight which meant that I could not get to the mountains as often as Ted could from Birkenhead. However, we were soon climbing 'severes' and occasional 'very severes' which few people did in those days. One result of this was that on C.U.M.C. meets (which Ted usually avoided as he did not like being told what to climb or who to climb with) I was often in demand as a second by those who wished to try themselves out leading the harder routes—I recollect particularly some good days on the face of Scafell Pinnacle with Peter Lloyd.

One summer Ted came to stay with us in the Isle of Wight. We did a few nameless scrambles on the chalk cliffs and achieved, probably for the first time, the long traverse round Culver Cliffs from Sandown Bay to Bembridge. Expecting to come off—there was an awkward hand-traverse which had precipitated me into the sea on an earlier attempt—we climbed naked with some clothes tied to our heads in a turban. Whether the trouble was indecent exposure or a rescue attempt I do not know but we were hailed by a boat-load of coastguards and rapidly made for the top of the cliff and safety. When the boat moved away, we came down again and completed the traverse without further complications.

In June 1929 Ted and I were at Helyg with Charles Warren and Archie Spence. After a day's climbing Ted decided that he wanted to spend the night alone on the Heather Terrace and to walk there barefoot. Would we meet him next morning on the top of Tryfan bringing his boots with us and a pair of 'rubbers' in case we should feel like climbing anything interesting. Ted then left us. There was no-one else in the hut, and while we were breakfasting next morning a stranger arrived from Liverpool on a bicycle. As he did not seem to have any food with him, we reluctantly asked him to share our meal. With dead-pan face the stranger said: "I usually just eat bread fried in vaseline". And that was my introduction to Colin Kirkus.

The rest of that day has become a detail of climbing history. Charles

led us up one of the standard Tryfan ridges and insisted that Colin should rope up, though he did not really see the point; we soon realised why and that we had with us a climber of quite unusual quality. We found Ted sitting on a rock between Adam and Eve studying his sore feet, but from that moment Colin took over. He first introduced us to Belle Vue Bastion and then took us to Glyder Fach where there was 'something interesting' he wanted to try. The result was the first ascent of Lot's Groove (by Colin and Ted alone) and an enjoyable foursome on the Direct Route where, according to the old guide book, the final crack was 'like all Gaul, divided into three equal parts'. Not long afterwards, when I was staying with Ted at Birkenhead and attending a C.C. dinner at which General Bruce was the principal speaker, Colin introduced me to Helsby which gave me a startlingly new view of climbing.

During those years with Ted we paid a few visits to Wasdale and climbed most of the better-known routes in Wales—does anyone now climb the superb Avalanche or Paradise on Lliwedd? My own most vivid recollection, however, is of becoming firmly and alarmingly stuck in the Monolith Crack when taking what was intended to be a quick and easy way down from the Gribin—a singularly unpleasant experience, particularly when two rude and mocking individuals are threatening all sorts of indignities from above. We also started looking around at various exciting possibilities many of which were eventually incorporated into that surge of new climbs for which Colin, Ted, A.B. Hargreaves and Menlove Edwards were to be so largely responsible. But by that time—after a memorable early spring visit with Charles Warren to a completely snow-bound Skye—I was on my way to Africa and a very different way of life.

After nearly three years and frequent debilitating attacks of malaria, which was very prevalent in northern Uganda before the days of modern prophylaxis, I came home on leave early in 1933 and made for Helyg as soon as I could. There I met Menlove Edwards for the first time. "Are you the RMB who used to climb with FEH?", he asked me—we tended to be known by initials rather than by names in those days—if so would I like to climb with him. His deeds on mountains were well known to me, and I was told that he was even capable of climbing feet-first into the sleeping loft of the old Helyg; so perhaps I should have known better. But I accepted with alacrity and followed him up Devil's Dump and several repeat climbs which I



much enjoyed. Later Menlove and A.B. Hargreaves, an old friend, asked me to join them on the second ascent of Colin's Great Slab route on Clogwyn d'ur Arddu. What happened was described by A.B.H. in his obituary of Menlove in the 1958 C.C.J.

'Menlove made no bones at all about that slippery little slab and the long green caterpillar but it was when I joined him at the top of it that I first saw an exhibition of his enormous strength. Our third man, weighing fully fifteen stone, just made a dash at the slippery slope and shot off into space at the end of 150 feet of line . . . Menlove lifted that chap with his hands until he was able to get hold of something and be pulled back on to the climb by the fourth man. We then sacked number three and proceeded.'

I was the villain of that incident and my only complaint about the account is that I certainly did not weigh fifteen stone, though I must have felt like a ton at the end of that line. However, I met them at the top, and we then made the third ascent of Curving Crack without mishap.

Also that spring (18 March 1933) came the opening of the 'new' Helyg and the 'Reformation Banquet' at Pen-y-Gwryd. There were thirty or so members present including the then President, Dr. Tom Longstaff; the guest of honour was L.S. Amery, politician and former Colonial Secretary. It was an excellent party with witty speeches by both Amery and Longstaff, and a talk by the latter on expedition techniques mainly for the benefit of those who were about to set off for the Gangotri Himalayas with Marco Pallis—the 1933 Everest expedition was already in Tibet. The next morning Colin Kirkus, Menlove Edwards and I found ourselves cooking breakfast for the whole party: sausage, bacon, eggs and bread fried without the vaseline. Whenever we produced a presentable platter we reserved it as the presidential breakfast and put it in the oven until there was another good enough to take its place. Members emerged sleepily and sat around—all except Longstaff who stayed in his bunk apparently asleep. The scene was the familiar one of climbers lounging about in various stages of undress, digesting their overlarge breakfasts, talking, smoking, putting things into their rucksacks and taking them out again—doing almost anything, in fact, except putting their boots on.

Eventually there were signs of life from the presidential bunk. The cooks rushed forward with their offerings only to be swept aside as

Longstaff swung straight into his boots, ate a couple of spoonfuls of pemmican from a tin and demanded to know who was ready to start out for Lliwedd. Nobody was. With his red hair and bristling red beard, Longstaff could play to perfection the part of a fierce little man, but his natural aggression was tempered by a great sense of humour. He told the three of us that he had watched us slaving away at the stove, wasting our time on a lot of good-for-nothing layabouts—‘wastrels’ was the word he used I think. Then he told the rest of the company what he thought of them which wasn’t much. “Now let this be a lesson to you”, he ended. “Do your boiling overnight!” Good fun and a strangely expressed thought but I must admit to having been influenced ever since by that extremely sensible advice—and not only in relation to food and mountains. I wonder how many others still remember that occasion almost exactly fifty years ago. A.B.H. who was there, will certainly do so.

I often look back at those years, and at the three climbers who dominated them so far as I was concerned. Both Colin Kirkus and Menlove Edwards had better records than Ted Hicks, and these extended over a far longer period. But Ted always looked the better and safer climber on difficult rock, though one hesitates to measure climbing in terms of style. Having reached his peak, Ted stopped climbing. This was partly because of an accident from which he escaped more or less unhurt. I suspect also that temperament came into it. Ted had a very secure personality. He found fulfilment easily enough in many spheres and not only on hard rock. I doubt if he could have committed himself totally to climbing for any length of time at what then appeared to be the limit of the possible—particularly so in view of the hopelessly inadequate safety precautions for leaders in those days. Menlove, the most remarkable climber of the three, was a complete contrast, and his life became a total disaster. It was Colin who genuinely found himself on the mountains, only to be killed on active service during the war. But I digress from my brief.

On my next leave (1935) I joined a C.C./O.U.M.C. Alpine meet, based on Lognan beside the Argentiére glacier. David Cox and Robin Hodgkin were in the party, and I recollect particularly climbs on the Aiguille d’Argentiére, the Aiguille Verte and a traverse of the Grepon led by David. We bivouaced on the Nantillons glacier before the climb and slept on the Montenvers station platform after it. Rain dripped through the roof, and I cannot pretend that we had a very comfortable

night; nor were we popular with the stationmaster when he found us there in the morning.

By this time, my English home had moved to Cornwall. David then lived at Yelverton on the edge of Dartmoor, and that September we joined forces for an attack on the Devil's Rock of the Dewerstone in which he had been interested for some time. A splendid day produced the climb which has become known as Climbers' Club Ordinary. I don't know why—nor does David.

What happens nowadays? I wander on to the downs to see if there is any activity on Compass Point. There usually is when the tide is out and the weather fair, and I watch climbers overcome almost nonchalantly problems unimaginable to my generation. Once there was Pat Littlejohn and Keith Darbyshire, a few days before the latter's death when climbing in west Cornwall. Then came Pete Whillance making the first ascent of Dreadlock Holiday, a beautifully controlled lead on very small holds. Afterwards over a drink, we talked and looked at some of my old photographs from earlier days. Standards may have changed but we still used the same language. While I was writing this article, Ashley Greenwood (for many years a member of the C.C.) paid us a visit. Together we watched another fine lead, up and over a savage little overhang. What would Menlove or Colin have made of it, I wondered. With modern harness and a well placed piton they would probably have managed but I doubt if many others would have done so. Today so many more are climbing to these new standards. I am indeed lucky, after more than half a century, to be able to keep in touch with this tiny fraction of modern developments.

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Quote from the Helyg Log Book

'C.H.S.R. Palmer was at the Cottage from January 4th to 11th, 1926, and was joined on the 8th and 9th by J.L. Longland and W.S. Dyson. The last-named gentleman seems to have found some difficulty in discovering the cottage in the dark and spent most of his first night in his side-car two miles up the road.'

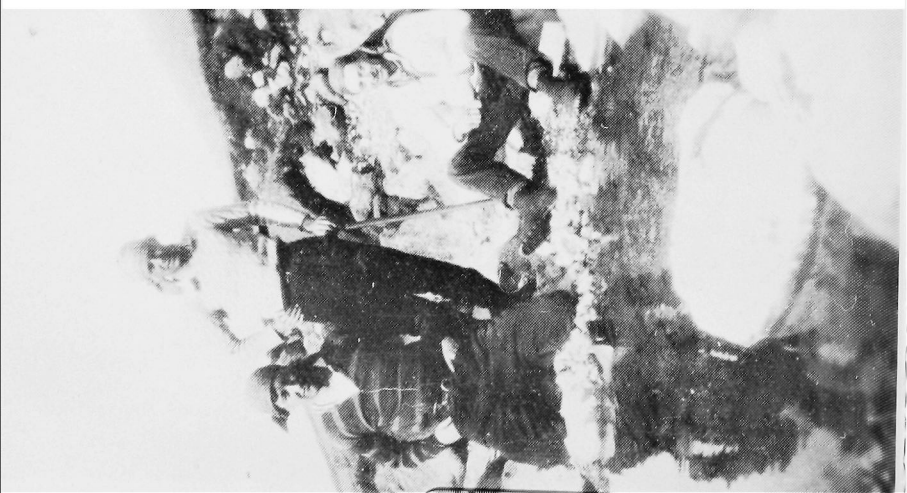
*Opposite Left: Ted Hicks leading, and Colin Kirkus on Belle Vue Bastion, 1929.*

*Photo: R. Bere.*

*Opposite Right: Ted Hicks and Rennie Bere on the last pitch of Direct Route, Glyder Fach.*

*Photo: R. Bere.*





# PEAK HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the production of a new Peak District guidebook a draft manuscript is put together and circulated to a variety of local climbers for errors to be spotted and useful comments to be made. The following will hopefully not appear in the Stanage-Millstone guide next year:

A 'Friend' is as good as a peg—except that it wobbles when you stand on it.

'... leads of Jeremy Bear by Browell and Utechtoid by Bradley, the latter overhanging a considerable distance.' It was pointed out that it is the route which overhangs a great distance, not Bob!

'A large Friend could also prove essential.' As protection, or to land on?

'Ascend the flaky carck.'

"Is this worthy of inclusion as a separate route?" "No!" "It sounds like a Gibson but is no sillier than many variations already in."

Dave Gregory and Albert Shutt walking under Millstone about 1954: "There'll never be any free climbing here."

'The Direct Finish is VS, 4a and finishes direct.'

I am no wiser, what is a quern?

Is all this Bynese necessary?

'Desolation Angel—one of the best of its gender in the Peak.' Who knows what sex angels are?

Stannington Ruffs provoked a very juicy and libellous comment. 'There are several climbs on this crag, all of which are awful. The crag was discovered and developed by Al Evans, a fact which speaks for itself. End of story.'

Can a 5m route be E3?

A stemmers paradise. (?!)

'Holds on the wall are of great assistance.' They always are!

'A bootomless corner.'

"I really do think that we ought to cut a length off . . .'s arms, legs and tongue."

Bancroft will never make a Frenchman.

'Valhalla has now fallen down and joins several routes at Dovestones Quarry which have failed to outlast their creator.' . . . the rock fell a long way! (Hint: Valhalla is/was on Burbage).

'A starting crack contains a fine 'Joe Brown' type pebble.'

Do you mean a peg?

'J.W. Putttrell.'

'Harder for the tall.' NO, harder for the short!

There is a Red Corner somewhere here that was done years ago by two unknowns at V.S. and more recently by Gibson at E2.

'Step off the right-hand block.' Aa. .a.aa. .gh!

'This is the finish.' (or it will be if you fall off here.)

Perhaps it should be mentioned that C.C. members must accept at least ninety per cent of the blame for the above. No wonder our guidebooks look like they do!

P.S. None of the above reached the standard of the classic guidebook boob of all time which simply read, 'Beg for aid.'

There was of course the hint in the Chew Valley guide that it was possible to catch V.D. by touching rock. In the geological section it referred to 'the deposition of boulder clap'.



# REMEMBRANCE

GEOFF MILBURN

Last night I watched the red tide fall,  
Forgotten souls each poppy head.  
The old men nod, return through time,  
But for our youth, a list—of dead.

The ones who fought, that we might live,  
Who still remain, though life is done.  
Today each year I seek the hills,  
To pay a tribute for my son.

How many?—of the men who died,  
Forsaking all—and their life-blood,  
If given the chance, would gladly change,  
To Bleaklow peat—from Flanders mud.

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When all was quiet at Cenotaph,  
On Kinder's flanks the wind was stilled;  
And then a lone plane droned o'erhead,  
The years turned back—my stomach chilled.

On open moor when time stands still,  
Might I return to '41 . . . ?  
To join the War and pay the price,  
From being aware—abruptly gone.

How many?—children now at school,  
Know of the plaques in entrance hall;  
Or of the names engraved in bronze,  
The ones who answered Britain's call.

---

And while the crinkled leaves whirl down,  
 The roll-call echoes out on high.  
 Each name in turn I hear it well,  
 As massed ranks muster in the sky.

Here down on earth the trees bend low,  
 The old brigade who never die.  
 So straight and true the upright pines,  
 While far away the willows cry.

How many?—sons, alive today,  
 Now free to choose and go their way,  
 Unfettered by restrictive force,  
 Will thank the souls who saved the day?

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In two World Wars, when madness reigned,  
 Our troops were slaughtered in full flower;  
 Picked out by shells—a random choice?  
 How cruel to fall, at dawn's bleak hour.

If Herford and Kirkus had not gone,  
 Unwittingly killed by ruthless shell,  
 What deeds on crags we might have seen;  
 Just think of the stories that they might tell.

How many?—climbers, keen of eye,  
 And fleet of foot, were soon no more.  
 And how did climbing history turn,  
 Diverted by the curse of WAR?

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Note: This was penned on Remembrance Sunday 1981 while strolling over Kinder. It was intended for 4th years at school but the last verses are really for the climber.

# THE BEMPTON FLIER

G.M.

Yorkshire can proudly claim to be the birthplace of both gritstone and limestone climbing. Although it is not well documented, there is little doubt that Cecil Slingsby (born in 1849) was the first to climb for pleasure on the Yorkshire outcrops, possibly as early as 1864. Guidebooks have recorded wrongly that J.W. Puttrell was the first to set foot on gritstone at Wharncliffe Crags in 1885. About this time a young boy, Sam Leng, from Flamborough began to explore the cliffs of the Yorkshire coastline in search of birds eggs.

\* 'I started my climbing experiences at the early age of eight years, with a pal about my own age, using a bit of fisherman's rope, commonly called a "pot tow", i.e. the rope fastened to crab pots to pull them in. There was a donkey tethered to this pot tow, and we turned the donkey adrift and pinched the rope. We used the iron stake to which the donkey was tethered, and hammered it into the ground, fastening the rope to it. I took the first turn down the cliff, and came up wildly excited with a prize of two puffin's eggs.'

It did not take the small boys long to realise that eggs could be sold and a lucrative business began until his parents realised what had been going on and promptly put a stop to the antics.

Between 1887 and 1891, Sam was allowed to go with his elder brothers who were cliff climbers of some experience; they also had the proper tackle. Unfortunately they were lost at sea in a gale while fishing. Sam worked first on a farm for four years and then took up sea fishing. It was during this time that he began cliff climbing again as a member of the Bempton gang. Apart from during World War 1, when Sam served in the Merchant Navy, he climbed regularly up into the mid-20s when he wrote about his exploits in a book called 'Experiences and Reminiscences of a Cliff Climber'. Some of his stories about the limestone cliffs are hair-raising to put it mildly.

'Previous to the War the climber wore a policeman's helmet to protect his head from falling rocks, but since the War a friend of mine sent me a tin hat, to which I owe my life on several occasions. I

remember very well, after having used the tin hat for nearly a fortnight, I was climbing near Flamboro' Head, and was about 50 feet down the cliff face, and was just reaching for an egg when a large piece of rock came crashing down on to my head, and but for my tin hat I should have been killed. As it was, I was knocked unconscious, and the weight of my fall nearly pulled the man who was lowering me over the cliff as well, so they knew something had gone wrong and hauled my back to the top, still unconscious. The hat was staved in . . .'

Often tourists used to flock to watch the climbers and on occasions they would be lowered down to try their hand at the sport.

'I remember on one occasion we let a Japanese gentleman go down for some eggs. After he had been over for some time I thought it was time he was coming back. We could feel him jerking about in the ropes, and wondered what he was up to, so I went down to investigate, and much to my amusement, instead of gathering eggs I found him jabbing wildly at a guillemet with a dagger. He could not reach the bird by about two feet, and was swinging about on the rope and getting hopelessly twisted in its coils, so I had to go to his assistance and straighten him out, so that he could be hauled up. He was very disgruntled at not getting the bird . . .'

On another occasion a film maker from London turned up to shoot the 'climbers' in action. He was about to be lowered over the 350-foot drop when he suddenly realised that the tide was in. He immediately declined to go down but commented that he wouldn't have minded if the tide had been in as he was a good swimmer. Eventually he was lowered down at a point not affected by the tide, after asking what the distance would be to the nearest place at which he could land if the rope broke and he had to swim for it. He was perfectly confident in his ability to swim the 2½ miles to safety but never once thought of the matter of a 350-foot drop before he hit the water!

At that time there were many 'Egg Collectors' about who used to pay well for rare and well-marked eggs. One in particular used to boast that he knew every egg there was, so for a joke a lady painted a special multi-coloured egg which was pre-placed at a prominent place on the cliff they were due to visit. In due time the Collector arrived and was wildly excited when he observed the 'rarity' through his binoculars. He insisted that he should have it and promptly offered the princely sum of £1, although Sam let him off with 5 shillings. He went off

contentedly saying that it was the best egg ever found. Eventually he was told of the joke and took it all in good part.

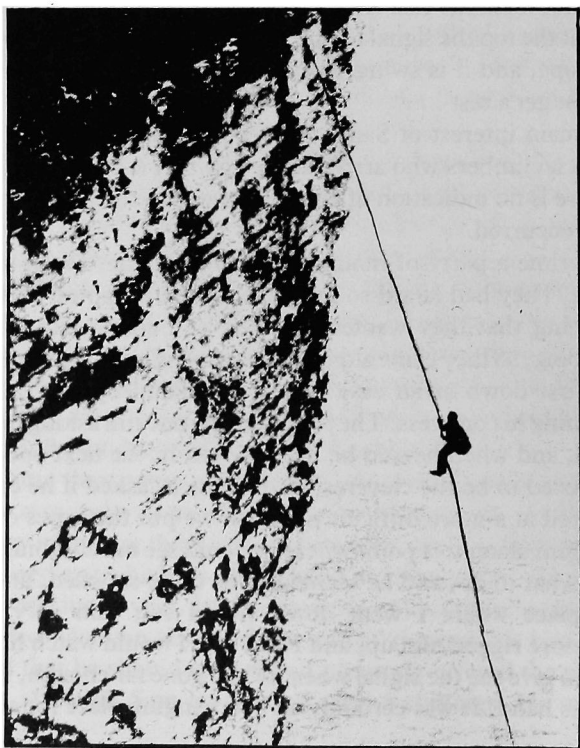
The bird cliffs stretch for about 7 miles from the 100-foot Flamborough Head passing a 400-foot section as they go north to Bempton and Buckton before finally running out towards Speeton and Filey. Apart from the looseness of the rock which has deterred modern day climbers there are often other obstacles to negotiate.

‘For about 200 yards further on the eggs are very difficult to get, and I have to ‘get the eggs in the rope’, which means that I cannot get a rest from leaving the top to getting back again. I slack enough hand rope over to reach nearly to the bottom, and after leaving the top I am continually on the swing, the cliff overhanging so much that I have to swing 40, 50 and 60 feet sometimes, and each time I come in to the cliff I grab an egg, kick off again, and come back and get another, all the way down. The most difficult part about this is keeping the balance in the rope, as if I get a false swing I hang that distance from the cliff and cannot get in again, and have to give my pals at the top the signal to pull me up again while I am swinging on the rope, and it is swing, swing, swing until I reach the top, as I cannot get a rest . . .’

The main interest of Sam’s book comes when he meets up with some rock climbers who arrive at the coast. It is a great pity however that there is no indication of either who was in the party or when the episode occurred.

‘One time a party of mountain climbers came, about a dozen of them. They had heard so much about the Bempton cliffs and the climbing that they wanted to try it as a change from mountain climbing, so they came along, and each wanted a turn over. We put the first down at an easy place, “Medland Spring”, the others watching his prowess. They kept calling out and asking him how he fared, and when he said he had enjoyed it, the next one, who was supposed to be the cleverest of the bunch, asked if he couldn’t be lowered at a more difficult place, so we put the ropes over, and I sent him along to a point where he could see me climbing, and told him what to do, and he seemed to be quite satisfied, and thought the place where I went down would suit him very well. We therefore rigged him up, and I told him I would watch him, and he was to give me the signal when he had gone far enough, by holding up his hand. It was certainly an overhanging place for about 10 or

15 feet, but I told him to kick himself off and he would always come back again into the cliff, so over he went, waving his hand to his pals as he disappeared over the top. When he got to the overhanging bit he began to spin in the ropes, that is, twist round the guide rope. We still lowered him, and I watched for his signal when he had gone far enough, but nothing happened, and we kept on lowering till he was down about 250 feet, and then I signalled to the men at the top to stop lowering him, as I thought he had gone far enough. They began to haul him up, and he was all plaited and twisted in the rope. I went over the edge of the cliff to help him, and when I got to him I saw that his eyes were tightly shut, so I asked him if he had had enough. He said, "Yes, thank God I'm back again; no more cliff climbing for me." I asked why he hadn't signalled for us to stop lowering him if he felt that way, and he said he had closed his eyes on first going over and never opened them till I spoke to him on getting back!



*Centre Left: Bampton Cliffs, looking south.*

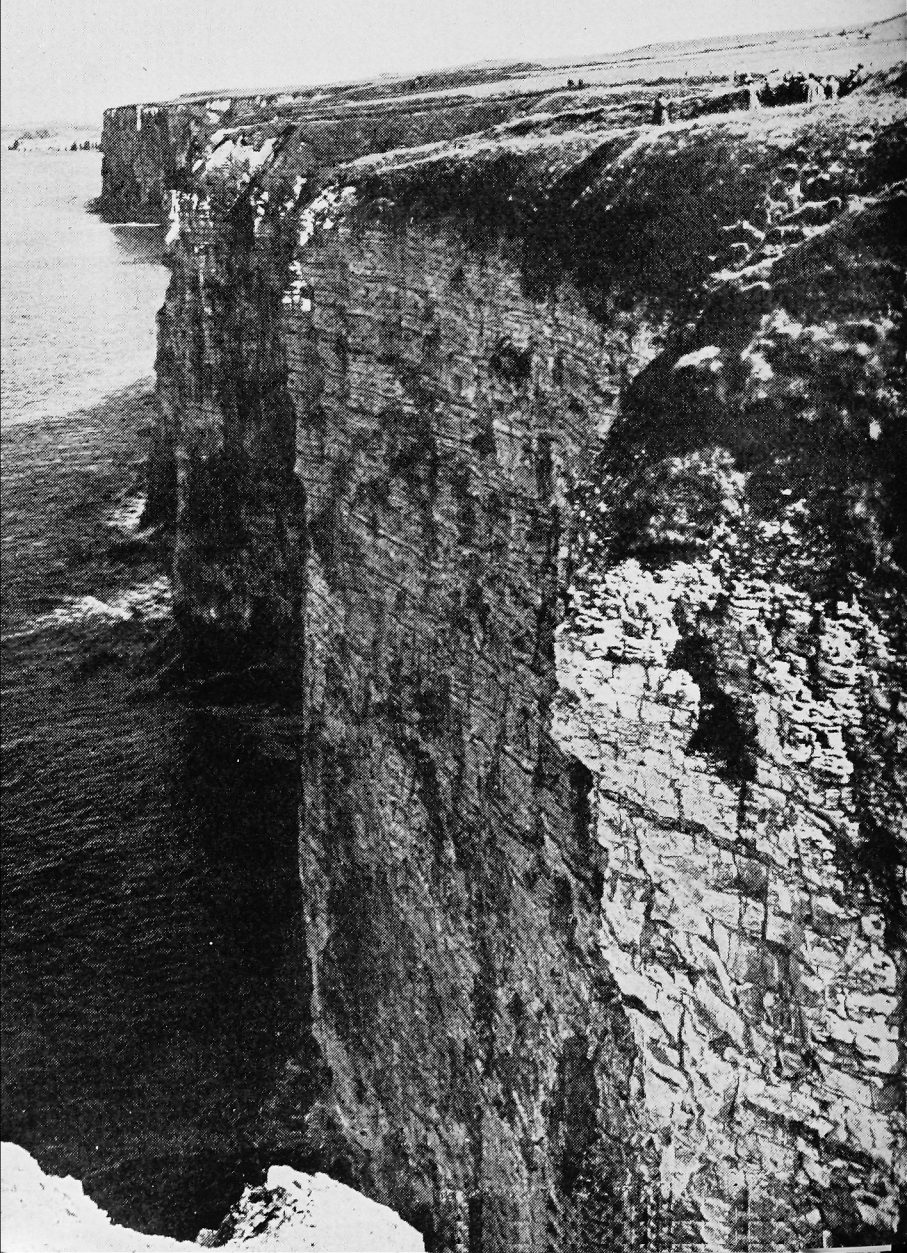


*Above: Flamborough Cliffs.*

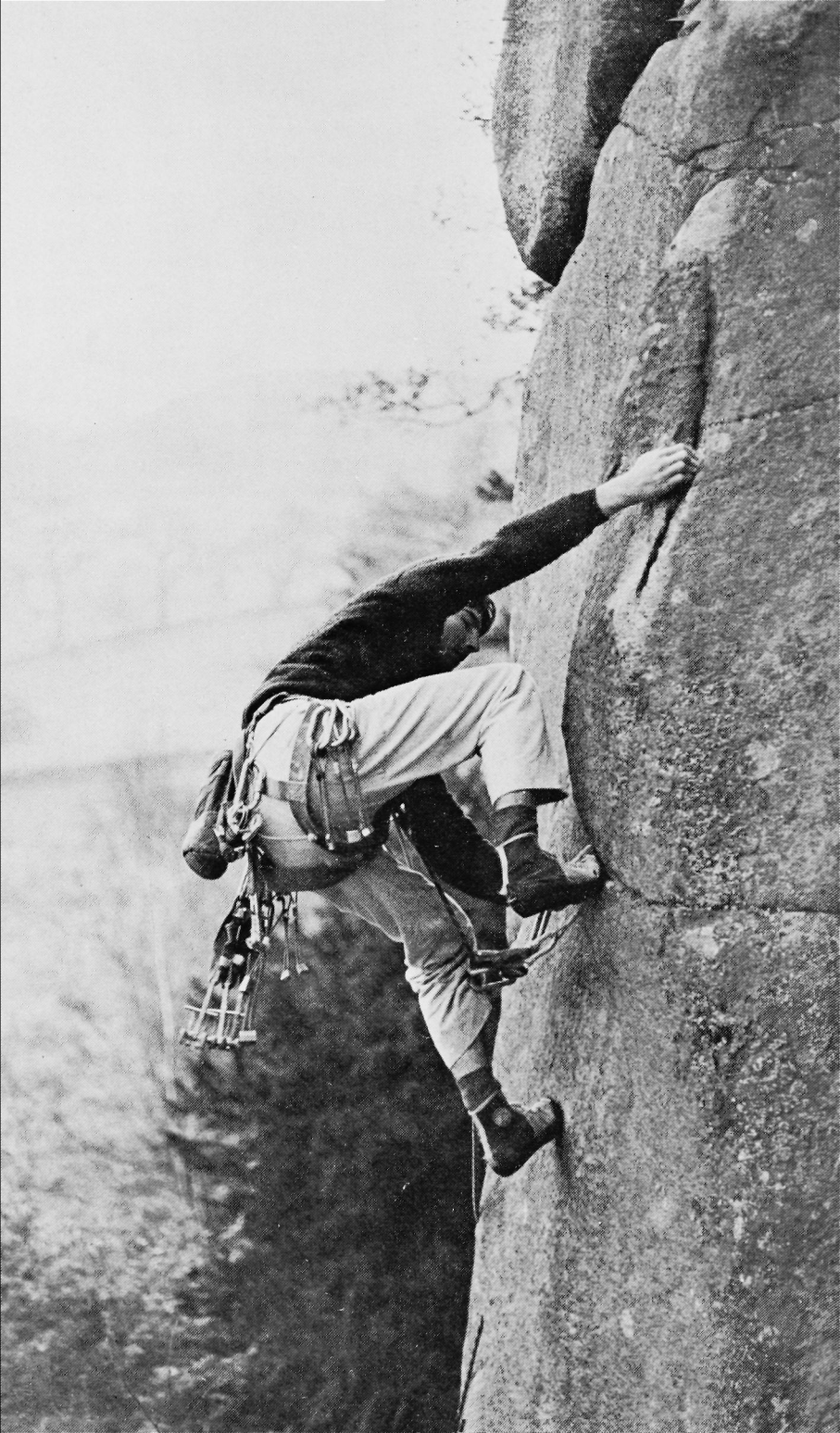
*Below: 'The Climbers', with Sam Leng kneeling down.*











# THE QUICK WAY OFF

DAVE CUTHBERTSON

It was, I think, his whoops of delight and the boisterous heel clicking, wildly in mid-air, that upset us most. There we were, standing in the evening sun on top of the Verte, just a few yards from the summit, watching 'Matey' the French climber winding his way down towards the Argentierre Glacier, hanging from his parachute.

My thoughts of cold, clear weather supported by lots of good neve on the faces, had already crumbled after a midnight start to the Gervasutti Couloir and after a reasonable solo to the top an unnerving descent of the Col du Midi; no, this wasn't the End of Winter June I'd looked forward to, but conditions hotter than any July I'd been in Chamonix, together with lots of snow.

Still, make the best of things, one down, two to go on the sports plan. Next the Verte and the Nant Blanc Face. No easy way from the Col du Grande Montet, as the telepherique was on holiday for a month.

After a slog up the morraine to the Dru Rognon and a bewildering display of avalanches from the Flames de Pierre, Bonatti Couloir, Grande Charmoz and, worst of all, the Nant Blanc Face, we finally decided it wasn't quite cold enough and returned to Chamonix. Two days and a carbohydrate load later we were back there, armed with renewed determination and, with the weather still warm and the snow soft, we chose a night ascent, 9.0 p.m. from the Rognon would mean 7.0 a.m. or 8.0 a.m. on the top, conditions permitting.

The conditions didn't permit and four exhausting hours later we were on the bergschrund with, at last, gradually improving ice. Once over the steep start, we pitched steadily up the great ice slope and soon reached the mixed rock in the middle. It just wasn't on when this dark, the moonlight agonisingly lighting up the Grande Montet descent behind us. So we stayed on ice and gradually approached the rock ridge dropping from the summit seracs.

The evening's exertions were taking their toll now, and we were definitely slowing down. Mind you, there was no hurry now. We

wouldn't make the Whymper Couloir in time, so we had a break on a little ledge near the base of the ridge, as the day awoke.

Good weather and 8.0 a.m. shook us up. Off in the direction of rock we went, always swinging leads, exchanging the gear and trying to stay alert while your partner struggled above.

Soon we were on the ridge and most difficult it proved, still coated in Winter snow. We spiralled up towards the ice slope on the right. We should have stuck to the ice—it would have been easier and faster. Still, we eventually stepped back on and bumped into 'Matey'.

We'd spotted him soloing in our steps a while ago and had expected to meet him sooner or later. Later turned out to be 11.0 a.m., and I was glad of the breather while we chatted. Thoughts of following his footsteps down to the Couvercle were shattered when he told us he would parachute down to Chamonix, using the 'chute which comprised the only content of his sac apart from a cag.

'This guy's screwy' we thought. We kept up with him for a while until the sun got really hot. A nasty little pitch nearly caused a fall until I spotted and hooked a peg with my Vulture, and a hasty retreat to compose. 'Matey' must have had a wobbler too, as his beaming face peered over the top of the chimney and asked me to bring his glove up.

What followed was one of those Sahara nightmares. Pitch after pitch of 40° slopes, knee deep in snow that just wouldn't consolidate even after 'Matey'. The ice was hard underneath, the sun tortuous, the climbers exhausted and down to a snail's pace.

It just went on and on, the summit seracs providing the only interest, and that was only seven feet. Then back to the slog, sometimes on all fours, until there was 'Matey' sitting and smiling on the very top, with his chute spread out and ready to go, once he'd got his glove back.

The usual chat on top was curtailed by a flurry of snow. Gradually it got worse. A suggestion to use the 'chute as a cover proved just right. With three of us inside, the temperature rose with our spirits. A little electrical discharge made the metal buzz and nerves a little tense. 'Matey' maintained he would jump off as soon as the weather improved, and would be down in twenty minutes. The snow continued but then stopped just as quickly as it began. In fifteen minutes it was a glorious evening amid four inches of fresh snow.

'Matey' laid out his 'chute, adjusted the harness, checked and double checked the set up. We watched, somewhat dubiously. The



guy was obviously a 'loony', but he had done it before, even though this would be a 'first' from 4,000m. 'Hope it's not his last!'

Watching his antics made us forget our own problems. There we were on top of the Verte, with no easy descent, only the Whymper Couloir, a good thousand feet away, reached by a hairy ridge. After ten minutes of 'syching' himself up, 'Matey' finally decided there wasn't enough wind to warrant a jump, and asked us to help by holding the 'chute in the air. With this extra help, three or four steps down the snow and the 'chute rose above him, and he was off. Circling, spiralling down, shouting thanks and wildly cheering, with heels smacking together with that boyish sense of achievement.

Soon he was out of sight and we were alone. Subdued, we trogged back up to our sacs and set off along the knife edge ridge. The rope gave us courage in the soft snow, but it was easy enough.

Soon we were at the top of the Couloir. Even after the fresh fall of snow conditions in the gully looked OK, and with the time at 7.30 p.m. we decided to lose some height and pitched down for four pitches. An ice clad ledge in the side of the Couloir, safe from a fall of most kinds, was cleaned up ready for the evening doss.

Mal was asleep before I could tell him the stove had packed up. An early retirement to bed was called for.

The usual cold crept in and at 6.30 a.m. we abseiled from in situ slings until we warmed up. Coiling the ropes gave us the first opportunity to gaze on a glorious morning.

On down we went, the angle gradually easing until a couple of abseils dropped us over the bergschrund onto the snow. We soon realised the expected couple of hours to the Couvercle hut might not be on, when 200 yards took nearly an hour.

Sinking waist deep into the snow at every step, it was desperate. Our luck changed when we picked up some tracks. Our speed increased threefold and apart from a few hairy crevasses the trip down to the deserted Couvercle hut proved uneventful. Our first drink for twenty-six hours and meusli gave us that little extra stamina, and with sacs getting heavier with extra clothes we set off for the Iron rungs, leading down to the glacier.

One trouble with an early season is the lack of telepheriques, closed for their annual hols. Another is the likelihood that fixed access points, such as Iron ladders can be hanging loose. Swinging down the rattling ironwork, we felt a rope would be useful, and with this extra

confidence, we landed on the Leschaux Glacier.

A couple of weary hours later it was all over, the return tickets proving a good buy. With conditions as they were, the big 'D' would take a week, so off to the Vercors for a rock route and home via the Saussois.

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### Quote

21.1.73. A large party set forth for Parsley Fern Gully in what could be described as poor conditions, near white-out, driving snow and the lot. Near to completion of the said route, the large unstable-looking cornice became even less stable and detached itself from the mountain, this at the mere sight of one Robin Prager, missing him and the writer by inches; unfortunately the full force hit Godfrey and Alexa sweeping them down the gully; again fortune favoured us for they were unroped (as were we all), Alexa even had the presence of mind to throw away her husband's trusty grivel, to save further injury. Luck prevailed and the following party, Mr. & Mrs. Hopkinson, had a narrow escape as the snow wave shot downwards. Eventually all arrived at the top safe but shaken, ready for a half hour's bumble around to find the railway and thence to less hostile pastures.

Tom Chatterley

1973ish. Whilst on Lion M.J.B.'s false tooth fell into the trees below. During the rescue operations, a crab, a wire sling and a piece of wire for removing the same were discovered. Finally the errant tooth was discovered. 'An eye for an eye, a crab for a tooth etc'.

We also perfected the triangulation rope technique for parties of three, with three ropes. Each man is tied to the other two. This provides flexibility and insanity on 450 feet of rope. Rotation of leaders with each rope held by a different second is easy. After two or three pitches the ropes become inextricably entangled. The middle man jumps off and thus solves the problem at high speed. For bifurcating parties, first and third man can lead adjacent routes—with disastrous results for the second. The advantage of this scheme is that after the leader has done a pitch the 2nd and 3rd man can follow simultaneously, thus ensuring a rapid ascent.

(Pat. applied for.)



# OLDER AND WISER

TONY HUSBANDS

I am sure that most members will like to think of the Climbers' Club as having young, active people climbing their 6a's here and their E.D.s abroad and those in this category will not want to read any further.

Nevertheless we all grow older and some of us still like to try to make an easy ascent here and there. Thus it was that five members of other clubs and I set off in mid August from Kandersteg to climb the 11,000' Frùdenhorn. Kenneth is 65, John and myself approaching 60, Nigel 54, Richard 53 and Brian 42. John remarked on the smallness of my sack and I explained that I could not carry anything heavier. Nevertheless on seeing the size of his and Kenneth's, I felt obliged to offer to carry the rope, a massive full-weight 150' weighing four or even five times as much as my own, which is admittedly only eighty feet but quite strong enough, as a similar one had held me after a free fall of some twenty feet last year when I came off climbing solo after photographing an eagle's nest.

On the way up to the hut we were overtaken by three climbers from Sheffield and the daughter of the oldest one. She was wearing a blue bra and well-fitting, white shorts and carrying only a camera. I reached the hut about twenty minutes after the first three, with John and Kenneth arriving about twenty minutes later.

Towards 5.0 p.m. we were surprised to see three people just below the summit and coming down. They reached the hut at 9.0 p.m. and we found they were English and had just done their first alpine ascent. It had taken them fourteen hours.

The guardian told us not to leave till 7.0 a.m. as the rocks could be icy. When we reached them Kenneth asked for the rope to be put on although there didn't seem to be much need. It soon became clear that we were not going to reach the summit because he was going so slowly.

Although we had stopped frequently for short periods at about 9.0 a.m. Kenneth asked for a longer rest and at 9.10 said he didn't think he could go on. We sat and discussed the position and gave him

some sugar and he put on another jacket. I asked him if he would mind if John and I went on as it was easy to get down, but he said he didn't think he could manage by himself. However he didn't need two people to help him down and as I didn't think John would want to go on alone I asked them if they would mind if I did and this was agreed, so I continued at 9.30.

By then I was about 50 minutes behind the other three at that point but must have gained a little because when I reached the summit they were still there and said they hadn't been there much over half an hour. They invited me to join their rope for the descent of the frozen snow and ice slope which I thought was about 30-35° but we took the rope off as we reached the rocks.

Back at the hut Kenneth seemed to have recovered and we had some soup and a little to eat. About 2.20 I said I was going to set off down as I knew the others would catch me up as indeed the three younger ones did. We could see Kenneth and John coming down slowly a long way above and eventually heard shouts. This was fortunate because in another half minute it would have been too late as the path went under a huge wall of rock.

Nigel, who is a G.P., and Brian left their sacks and axes and went back up and before long I saw Brian running uphill towards the hut. Richard then decided to go back up but before long he returned carrying Kenneth's sack, with John.

They said Nigel didn't think Kenneth could get down and he had sent Brian up to call up a helicopter. In a surprisingly short time we heard the engine so we decided to continue, but first we had to arrange for the three of us to carry the six sacks. I put mine inside Kenneth's together with odds and ends out to some of the others. John and Richard decided to carry one sack on their backs and the smaller ones on their chests. I found I couldn't lift mine and had to sit on the ground to get into the harness. John went in the middle as he could hardly see over the top of the one on his chest.

Some while later Brian caught us up and took a sack and eventually Nigel did likewise. From the Oeschinensee the road goes uphill to the chair lift. Going down the previous day and talking amongst ourselves we had hardly noticed it and thought it would take about ten minutes, but it must have been well over a mile with a rise of about 350' and it took us all of twenty minutes arriving just on 6.30, the official stopping time, but the attendant let us go down.

Next day we went to take some clothes to Kenneth and see him in Frutigen hospital. We could hear his heart beat in the corridor before going in to his room which was a most impressive sight, with Kenneth all wired up. We hadn't been with him long before an alarm bell rang outside and a nurse came in, but said it was nothing to worry about and reset the machine—although the same thing happened again not long afterwards.

The doctor came in and talked to Nigel and we gathered that Kenneth was alright and hadn't damaged his heart. We decided to take his climbing clothes back and when I picked up his boots I dropped them, they were so heavy. This surprised Kenneth who insisted that they were light-weight.

On the way back Nigel jokingly suggested that Kenneth had overdone it in trying to keep up with the comely young lady in the white shorts. The fact is that, although he had been to Arran the previous week to do some training, his sack was far too heavy. He had got everything: food, spare clothes, helmet, harness, pegs, guide book, waterproofs, gaiters etc. The last two were certainly not necessary because the snow only came up to the welt and it wasn't going to rain going up to the hut. If it rained on the way down what did it matter? There were dry clothes back in Kandersteg. It was a good job he was insured. I have heard it said that English climbers are so afraid of being benighted that they take everything in case they are, and as a result their sacks are so heavy that they can only go slowly and in consequence are often benighted. Although this did not apply to Kenneth I do think that the older one gets the more one has to watch the weight of one's sack.

A day or two later, following twenty-four hours heavy rain, John decided to go back up to do the climb with Nigel's son Martin, who had climbed so well at Arolla last year. This year Martin had his girl friend with him and consequently he hadn't been with us on the previous occasion. Nigel and I decided to go up to the Blumlisalp hut. Nigel was keen to go as he had met a middle-aged English couple who had told him they were going up and he was impressed by the fact that they had just done three 4,000 metre peaks near Saas Fee although he hadn't asked them which. I suspected they were the easy Allalinhorn, Strahlhorn and the Weissmies and I found I was right.

The route to the Blumlisalp hut is described in the book as a slog. I don't think I have ever read such a description before but it is quite

right and although I had a good night's sleep it told on me and I had a job to keep up with Nigel the next day. In fact when we came to put our crampons on I asked him if he would like me to go back so that he could go on with Laura and her husband, John, but he would not hear of it so we pressed on with me leading so I could set the pace.

We had decided to go up the Weisse Frau and then perhaps go on to the Blümlisalp and whilst traversing under some rocks I found an ice piton. Our Sheffield friends were well ahead but I guessed it had been left by a party on the descent as it was a bit exposed there. I stopped on the rocks above for a rest and something to eat and whilst Nigel was waiting I heard him say, "Would you like me to throw a rope down to you?", to which Laura replied, "Oh! Yes please".

When they had joined us we asked if they wanted to stay roped to us and they said they would like to, so we then moved on as a foursome. The ice got steadily steeper but there were some good steps cut in it and near the top rock started to protrude and we could see about five stanchions driven in at suitable intervals. At the fourth we waited for the Sheffield lads to come down. The two younger ones were aged about twenty-five and were rock experts but elected to come down this steep pitch on a doubled rope and facing inwards. The oldest one came down last without difficulty.

From the summit we had a very fine view from Mont Blanc to the Pennines and all the Oberland peaks. The Weisshorn looked particularly good. Immense and plastered with snow. Two choughs landed nearby and gradually came to within about three feet to pick up pieces of biscuit.

There was a fine snow arete to the Blümlis alp but Nigel and I knew without saying anything that Laura couldn't do it and as we suspected that they would have the utmost difficulty in getting down without us we had no option but to descend the same way. And what a time it took. I have seldom seen anyone so slow although she was protected by Nigel in front and her husband behind and then myself for good measure.

I was a bit constricted at the top of the steepest pitch and it took them so long that just as I was beginning to think I could get ready to move I found I had got cramp in my leg and had to take some salt. When I reached the last stanchion Nigel was on easier ground and moving below to the left but I wanted them all that way in case I came off because if I had done so I would have fallen over the edge to my

right. We had the utmost difficulty in persuading Laura to face outwards let alone try to keep an eye on her ropes. When she joined Nigel, who I had asked to wait whilst I descended the steepest bit, she asked him to put in an ice screw, although there was no need. However we eventually got down safely and I found my little rope particularly useful as I could keep John at the right distance and at the same time carry all the coils in one hand.

A day or two later Nigel decided to go back to the Blümlisalp but with Martin and our John to do the Blümlisalp. I had had enough of that slog and as I had no-one to climb with went for a walk up to the Daubensee. On going into the dining room in the evening I found John there and asked him what he was doing. He said he felt too tired to go up to the hut. It wasn't till about 9.0 p.m. that it occurred to me that, as John had a car, we could set off about 5.30 a.m. and be on the Jungfrauoch by 9.0 a.m. in time to do the Jungfrau or the Mönch. I put it to John and told him the forecast was only good for the next day but he still pleaded tiredness so we didn't go and as the forecast was right it started raining the following evening and didn't stop for sixty hours by which time we had to leave.

Nigel and Martin duly did the Blümlisalp and on the way down met a man and his daughter on the way up. Nigel said the girl seemed unhappy on the rocks and when they failed to come back to the hut the guardian called up a helicopter and the crew saw them lying dead in the snow. Sadly the mother and another daughter were waiting at the hut for them.

# AU DÉJEUNER DE NAPOLÉON

HERBERT CARR

In the last week of August 1922 I went on a short walking tour with my Father, starting from Zermatt. We crossed into Italy by an easy glacier pass and had reached Aosta when the weather broke badly: it was obvious we were in for several days of rain.

We decided to rejoin my Mother who had gone to Montreux, and a long dull walk over the Great St. Bernard' Pass, mostly in thick cloud, rain and sleet, enabling us to see little of the good monks' Monastery and large dogs—though the little flasks they carried reputedly attached to their necks, might have done something to lift the heart if not the feet along the weary way.

As the light began to fade we entered the village of Bourg St. Pierre, a cluster of old chalets among which we found the welcome sign, the title to my story. It was as old and not much larger than the rest. One entered by a dark passage and staircase; at the top a door opened on a well-lit salon combining reception and dining rooms all in one. The furniture suited the period of the house; I had never seen this before in a Swiss hotel.

M. le Patron and Madame came forward to greet us. I pointed my Father, "Ici, Napoléon: moi, son fils. Vous avez, sans doute, un bon repas toute a l'heure?" They laughingly assured us that as we were their only visitors that evening we should have every attention and that two rooms were ready for us on the first floor. Having made ourselves as comfortable as we could and had our wet things taken to be dried, we came to the salon an hour later and were set down by candle-light at the very same table at which the great General had breakfasted on that April morning 122 years before.

It was a simple but very satisfying meal, washed down by the rather harsh red wine of the Rhone Valley. The Patron brought us our coffee at the table and presented us with two of his own cigars. "Worthy of the General", he said smiling.

As we smoked, we both began to feel very sleepy, natural enough after a long day over the windswept pass. My eyes soon closed. When I

opened them again I looked round the heavily curtained room and then I noticed the door began slowly and noiselessly to open. Framed there was an old lady, dressed in the costume of the Canton, her weather-beaten face wreathed in a smile of welcome. Before I could try to speak, some noise from the street outside may have broken the spell, for in a moment the door had closed again, the vision was gone.

I looked round at my Father. "Did you see her too?" he asked. We both laughed. My Father got up. "We must have drank too much of that wine if we begin to see things. We had better go up to bed." And so we did.

Next morning broke fine and as we paid our bill before leaving to walk to Orsieres, my Father asked our host about the old lady we thought we had seen the night before. The man looked sharply at us. "There was no such person in this house last night. Not since my grandmother died at a great age—oh—perhaps 40 years ago."

I have never been back to Bourg St. Pierres and the years may have changed the village. It may well be that the Déjeuner de Napoléon has vanished like the dream. On the other hand the Swiss are quick to pick up an idea with money in it. So—there may well be half a dozen.

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### Quote

22-24 April 1977. C.C. Meet pathetically organised with little notable success climbing-wise, but a superb night's drinking in conjunction with the B.M.C., A.G.M. The sleeping arrangements were a total disaster and I suggest we do not ask Al Evans to organise any more such meets.

A.J. Evans (Meet Leader)



# A MOUNTAIN SONG

JIM PALMER

‘When you gets up Milestone way, Any morning any day,  
You’ll find them all, Doing the Sylvan Traverse.’

(with apologies to Lupino Lane)

During my schooldays in Essex with three brothers, we used our cycling enthusiasm to meet boy cousins of similar age from Surrey and Gloucester. When some of us were staying at Cheltenham, the local lad took us to the Devil’s Chimney, a limestone pillar about fifty feet high with a flat slab on top, and we managed to climb it. Nowadays this is forbidden by the authorities as the rock is thought to be unsafe. So we hadn’t ever been to the mountains, but before long our cycle-touring reached Wales and the Lake District, where ‘pass storming’ became a refinement. We took bicycles over the Big Mountains from Hay to Llanthony Abbey (there was no road in 1931), then the Lakeland passes culminating in Sty Head, and also over the Roman Steps as a route from Harlech to Lake Bala—one of us (was it I?) had to be dissuaded from trying to take a bike along Helvellyn’s Striding Edge.

By now we had seen peaks such as Crib Goch and Great Gable and wanted to climb them, but with no other guidance we had to rely on books, and I still have a weathered copy of the first one—George Abraham’s ‘British Mountain Climbs’, from which we tackled some routes in North Wales (Dinas Mot, Idwal Slabs), the Lake District (Kern Knotts, Pillar), and eventually in Skye. On sighting Crib Goch from the Llanberis Pass, we attempted to climb it, but failed because my light cycling shoes came apart; nowadays there is better publicity warning of dangers and difficulties for newcomers to the mountains.

My first attraction for the physical challenge of rock-climbing developed to a wider love of the mountains, and ambitions to see sunrise from Belle View Terrace, Tryfan, and Owain Glyndwr’s Cave (Moel Hebog); to search for pine-marten, Lloydia, and choughs; to view the mighty effects of glaciation; and to envisage legends of Prince

Idwal and King Arthur, as expressed in poetry and song.

We used catalogues to get clinker nails (and later tricounis) and the highlight of a Beale rope—with the red strand amongst the manilla—marvellous! Somebody got a pair of (second-hand) Lawrie boots, which I still have for gardening, some forty years later.

Our first-ever demonstration of correct rope management was by a pair of Scottish lads, when a photo had lured two of us to the top of the Bhasteir Tooth (by the easy route) on Skye, and we all wanted to go along the ridge to Sgurr nan Gilleann. In Wales an enormous help was to find and use the Climbers' Club guide-books which gave such excellent detail, and the careful grading by which we could select suitable routes to tackle (still under our own steam) and make progress up to Severes. From using the C.C. guide-books our heroes (though we never met them) were Menlove Edwards, Wilfred Noyce and Colin Kirkus—on different bits we would say, "I'll bet that Edwards didn't use his knees on that move". Of our heroes I was later to have the privilege of climbing with Noyce. At first we thought of them all as serious and dedicated, and didn't realise the singing and laughter implicit in the guide-book remark that on Tryfan's Terrace Wall one gramophone would serve for all the climbs.

First attempts at abseiling produced exquisite terrors, first at Harrison's Rocks in Kent, and then my gymnastic cousin did enormous pendulum swings somewhere up near the big block at the top of Milestone Buttress (Tryfan). Incidentally another cousin doing the chimney on the Ordinary Route there had a box of non-safety matches catch fire in his trouser pocket, resulting in some interesting antics. On the Sylvan Traverse (a favourite on the Milestone) the rope ran out as I was negotiating Soap Gut, and I had to bridge my body for the second climber to cross—as I looked down I had a proper dose of the 'jim-jams' (if you'll pardon the pun), and it was a real relief to get tied on to the great pillar of the Rope Wall belay. Dorothy Pilley's 'Climbing Days' led us to the delights of the Holly Tree Wall. I didn't have a very good head for heights, but this added to the thrill of rock-climbing especially when on each visit to the mountains I (usually) managed to adjust to airy situations with the joy of the wonderful surroundings.

By 1936 we had all started work in offices and factories (myself a local government accountancy assistant), with only an annual week or fortnight's holiday plus breaks at Easter and Christmas; to save

travelling time, our mountain trips were mainly to North Wales. But we had acquired motor-bikes and one additional friend had a car (1934 Austin Ten, with the dickey-seat), very helpful to take camping gear which we usually set up at Little Tryfan Farm. Going up the A5 a favourite stop was the 'George' at Kilsby (where they sold draught Bass, a pleasure rarely found nowadays), whence car-passengers usually fell asleep while the driver went nobly on through the night. Generally our parties were self-sufficient, though we occasionally joined up with folks we met on the hills; but we hadn't known how to contact the 'tigers' we'd heard or read about. No clubs were available in our home areas, and the ambition perhaps to join the Climbers' Club seemed impossible—later for me the luck came to meet Members on war service, and to be able to join.

The outbreak of War in 1939 soon divided our group who joined different Services and travelled to various parts of the world. One cousin wrote from Egypt and claimed a 'new one on us' by having climbed the Cheops Pyramid near Cairo; others went to Canada, Burma, and Scotland, and myself (on Fleet Air Arm observer training) to Trinidad, West Indies. On this island the highest peaks, about 3,000 feet, are in the Northern Range, covered to the top with sub-tropical jungle, and need a taxi for access. Our car driven by a local Trinidadian tended to stall on the steep bends and he jumped out to blow into the petrol tank—we felt sure it was the rum on his breath which made the engine re-start. A track to the summit went past a Portuguese planter's house growing cocoa, and he told us lurid stories of how a bushmaster snake could catch a man running at full speed.

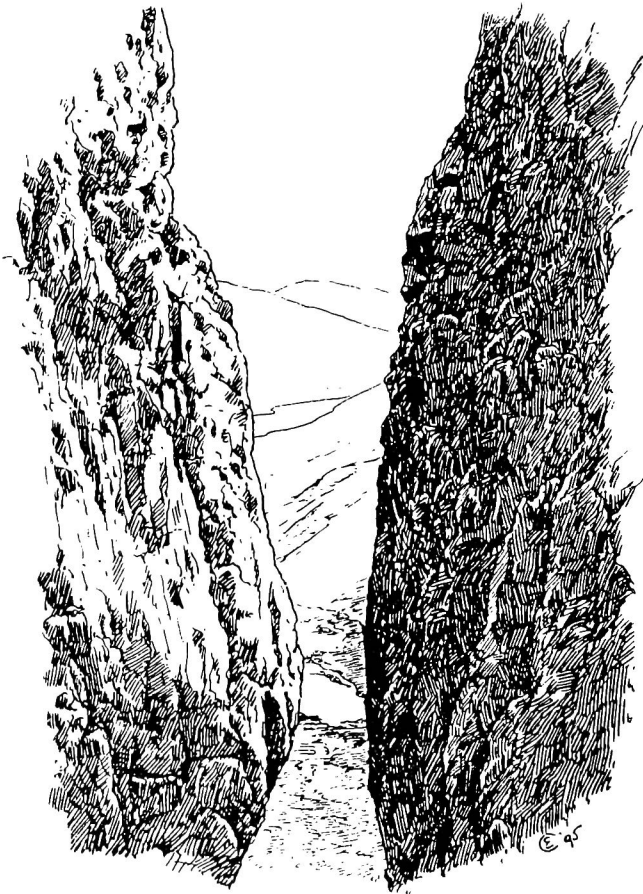
The peak of El Tucuche ('Lion's Head') had a small surveyor's hut, and was cleared of large trees, but a lemon tree had been planted, and its fruit was a fine thirst-quencher in the heat. Three trainee-flyers and myself stayed a night in the hut, and tried a short-cut on our return—before long we were lowering ourselves down a precipice on roots and lianas, until it became overhanging rock beyond our ability, and just then the sudden tropical sunset arrived; we had to sleep out on a ledge, wondering about ants, snakes, and vampire bats. Next morning we got back to our original route for a safe but late return; a subsequent inspection of our precipice by an approach to its foot showed a magnificent waterfall—on All Saints' Eve this spot was the goal of an attractive illuminated procession of local people who set their lighted candles on nearby rocks.

On our training course in Trinidad I met and flew with Nick (later Lord) Piercy, and found he was a Member of the Climbers' Club; on completion of our training we were posted to the same operational air squadron, and looked for opportunities to go climbing. Once, when we were shore-based in Hampshire, we got to Helyg for three days' climbing on Gribin Facet, Milestone Buttress and in the Devil's Kitchen (see Obituary of Lord Piercy in the 1981 C.C.J.). On another occasion when our aircraft-carrier was in Glasgow, I went solo for a few days to Glencoe hoping for some mountain walking, and was co-opted by a jolly school party for expeditions including Curving Ridge on Buchaille Etive. Who should be at Kingshouse Hotel but John Barford, Secretary of the C.C., doing some routes on Bidian nam Bian with a friend—he kindly agreed to sponsor my membership. Unfortunately the last two days of my stay were reduced to hobbling along the road to watch the others, as I had sustained an ankle injury while attempting Scottish reels encouraged by the proprietress of Kingshouse Hotel.

The squadron at another time was based at Machrihanish, Mull of Kintyre (we navigators said the name was Gaelic for 'magnetic disturbance', perhaps an excuse for inaccurate flying)—we had some pleasant hill walks in the area, and one New Zealander earned the nickname 'dryboots' from his skill at crossing boggy patches. From the air, I remember a wonderful view of Ben Nevis, gleaming snow covered from eighty miles away; nearer at hand were the peaks of Arran, which we admired by day but which were dreaded when flying at night, especially if cloud-base was low—unfortunately we couldn't get to the island for climbing. During the last two years of the war I was almost continuously at sea (on convoys to Canada and North Russia), and although we sometimes had good views of the Inner and Outer Hebrides, the coasts of Nova Scotia and North Russia, and even of the Faroe Islands and the remote Bear Island, there were almost no opportunities to explore.

When the War ended in 1945, none of the world's ten highest peaks had been climbed, nor Ivy Sepulchre, the Old Man of Hoy . . . nor Rum Doodle. Vibram footwear had only been available to commandos, and we had yet to see nylon climbing ropes, duvets, Jumars . . . In 1982 we can see how much the Climbers' Club (then still purely masculine) and its Members have contributed to post-war advance. I myself had yet to set foot on snow and ice climbs. Yet in

whatever time, place, or form, the joy and comradeship of the hills never fail.



TWLL DU

*Opp: Jim Palmer on Cir Mhor, Arran, August 1953. The Swordfish (inset) is from the 836 Naval Air Squadron, 1943.*

*Photo: J. Palmer.*



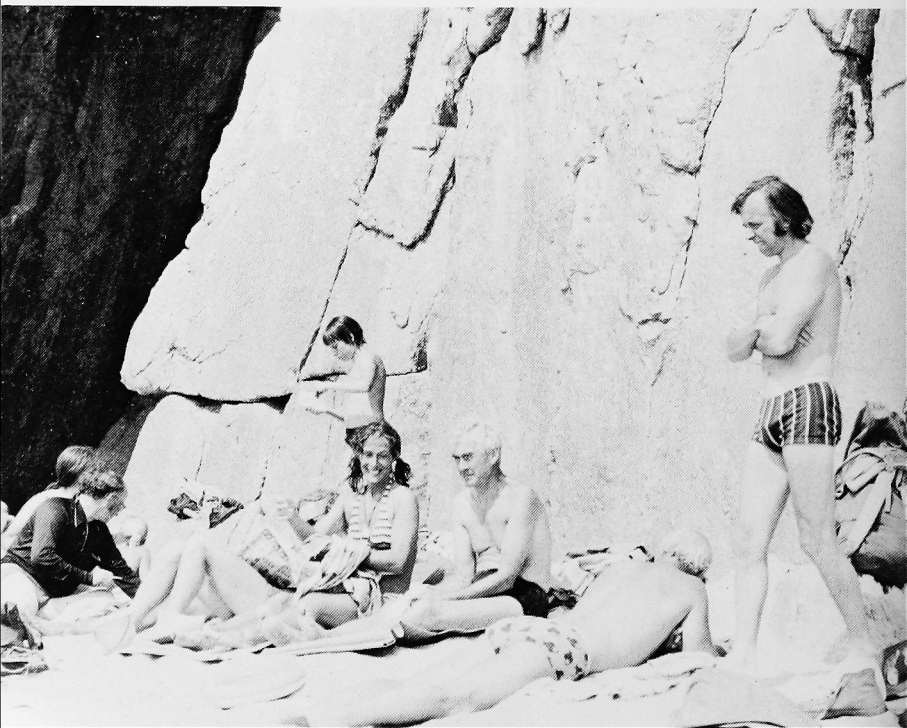


*Above: A. Riley on Barnaj, 1979.*

*Photo: P. Nunn.*

*Below: Cornish outing.*

*Photo: P. Nunn.*









# TANNE DU BELLE ESPOIR— GROTTE DE LA DIAU

PIP HOPKINSON

How it all started I'm not sure. Previous years had me saturated with climbing politics and I had made my enemies. The weather was bad and I was missing my adrenalin fix. Others kept on telling me that the weather was lousy for climbing but good for caving. I had never really fancied going down a cave, they were cold, wet, dirty and dangerous in an unpredictable way. As the rat gnawed at my stomach my mind began to change and I began to talk to people about trying this game.

We first tried caving in Yorkshire during a November monsoon, but a metre of very active flood water put us off. At the next attempt we got into an old Derbyshire mine on Boxing Day and came out cold, wet and dirty. Other trips and gear acquisitions began to follow. We did a very wet Giants in 'dry suits' with the water in the Wind Pipe close to the roof and between the two of us novice cavers never lost the way. We were obviously getting better at it and the gloomy prognosis didn't seem to matter so much as that it was also fun and occasionally enchantingly beautiful.

Instead of going to Cornwall that Easter, we went to the Dales. Alum Pot, Ireby Fell, Scafton Pot and Stream Passage to Bar Pot in the Gaping Ghyll system were added to the list. The bug was beginning to bite a little harder.

In between times we went down most of the dirty rat holes in Derbyshire, learnt SRT technique (jumaring to you), and how it felt to climb a free-hanging 180ft ladder.

Whitsuntide came; we did the classic Swinsto's Valley Entrance through trip, climbed in the Lakes with caving friends and started to plan more adventurous exercises.

In the pub one night I became involved in a caving conversation about a trip to France. The discussion continued for some nights and eventually I asked if anyone could come along. I was told: "not anyone, but we'll count you in".

The trip through France was like any other trip through France

except that instead of having skis and climbing gear all over the place we had caving gear: wet suits, dry suits, ladders, ropes, tins of carbide and cameras in ammunition boxes. Cavers' camps are like climbers' camps with the same aura of disorganised chaos and smell of dirt. Our camp was outside a small village not far from Annecy. The cave we had come to do was the Tanne du Belle Espoir to the Grotte de la Diau. The Diau was first entered by the French in the 1930s, and they pushed their way up the resurgent stream passage giving every portion a Gallic name: The Opera Room, The Lake of the Tortoise, the Savage Passage, The Big Blower—except that they sound better in French.

The war came and the Diau caves were used as an arms dump by the Resistance until a troop of S.S. Mountain Troops interfered, with consequent loss of life. After the war the French carried on up the Diau streamway and by now were having to bolt up the walls to make progress. Eventually they reached the Puits des Echos and saw no way on. Being Gallic and consequently full of *nous*, they had accurately mapped their position and height. They went on to the Parmelan Plateau some 800m above them and then methodically descended every likely-looking shaft above the cave. This was no mean feat. The Parmelan Plateau is like a Malham Pavement about 3 to 4km square, with numerous shafts, upwards of 300, all going down for 50 to 300m. Eventually on shaft 267 a group of CAF Grenoble members found the Belle Espoir and in 1976 completed the first through trip. The trip has been repeated by perhaps 100 people since then.

We drove up to the Parmelan Plateau on a Monday, parked the van, and after the compulsory beer, started walking up the plateau to the shaft entrance carrying our caving gear, ropes and wet suits. This sounds a simple exercise, in fact we found the shaft first time. Later in the week a member of our party was to spend 6½ hours on the plateau unsuccessfully looking for the shaft entrance.

A team of four went down with 250m of rope and a bolting kit. They came out some 3 hours later to report that they had fixed the first four pitches including the two pendulums, put in three bolts, there were two free-hanging changeovers, and it was a cold cave. The free-hanging changeovers worried me a bit. I wasn't sure what these were. It was gently explained that you hung in space from your rack (a caver's abseiling gadget), put a jumar from a cow's tail onto the live rope, took the rack off the live rope and transferred it to the next rope.

You then 'utched' up, took the jumar off and continued on down. Not a large margin for error I thought as I memorised the sequence, knowing that next time (my first time) it was for real.

It was hot the following day as once again we drove up the hill. Four set off at once to start down the cave while the rest of us had a leisurely lunch accompanied by that tightening of the stomach that you get when you know you're just about to start on something big. We strolled leisurely across to the cave, put on our wet suits, checked lamps and harnesses. I seemed to have an extraordinary amount of gear considering I was just going down. Two jumars, a cow's tail, spare slings and karabiners, my rack and Miss Piggy, my caving rucksack, dangling between my legs with more gear stowed inside it including the compulsory Mars Bars.

It was 2 o'clock and my turn; just clip in the rack, pose for a photograph and go. The first changeover was 7m down where everyone could see me making a mess of it. I got myself right and continued down. The shaft, which at the beginning had been about 1m by 1.5m had opened out to impressive proportions and I estimated it to be about 8m in diameter. The rope went through a rock window, another changeover and down through a narrow shaft, that I later free-climbed, into an enormous shaft. Immediately there was another changeover downhill from a very steep ledge. The changeovers were really to protect the rope from abrasion, remembering that we would have to climb up them.

As I set off again I could see Ian beneath me, a glimmer of light. I was now about 100m down and had lost the daylight. My carbide lamp hissed reassuringly, the shaft was big and the abseil free-hanging. Near the bottom I penduled over to Ian who was sitting in a rock window at the top of another shaft, on an 'ice' cone.

"Somebody wants something . . . I can't hear, can you wait and I'll shout to you? You tell James to wait at the pitch head."

Eventually it was sorted out; someone had left a tackle bag on the surface with 25m of rope in it; could the next one down bring the 25m? James brought it to me, I took it to Ian, another free-hanging changeover and a big pendulum at the bottom of the pitch.

This was becoming enjoyable. We had done the first 200m shaft system and were starting on the diabolical section of the cave, the 45 downward muddy crawls that the French call 'Toboggans'. The first one was tight and I entered it feet first, belly down, having first to climb above it to get into this position. Thrutch and struggle

downwards to a pitch head. The gear had become so muddy it was impossible to tell rack from jumars from karabiners, they were all big lumps of mud. I carried on down with mud oozing from the rope and the rack to the Passage of the 12th Congress. I'm not sure who did what to whom at the 12th Congress but it could have been a dirty exercise.

Two more toboggans and two more pitches and suddenly there's a lot of gossip from below. Voices broke my isolation with the shout, "This one brings you into the Salle des Rhoimboidres". I looked up and couldn't see the roof. I looked down and about 150m beneath me was a small cluster of lamps and people in an enormous chamber with blocks the size of houses on the floor. The cave was still dry but the walls on this pitch were running with water. Everyone has lamp problems after the mud. I refill mine with the water I've carried and prick the jet out. We are all concerned that in this cave we could run out of carbide as well as reserve electric light. Following the walls round leads to the only graffiti in the cave, 'S.G. C.A.F. 1976' and an enormous arrow pointing to a large rift leading into the Puits des Echos. The descent here is fairly long, 26m and 50m to the floor, an enormous chamber with an 8-second echo.

Halfway down the pitch, a rope protector is muddily on the rope. I miss it and have to fight the thing to get it off. Eventually someone sends up a knife on the end of a rope and I cut it out. The problem had been caused by the person in front, abseiling on a figure-of-eight and just putting all the rope protectors through it, making the whole thing look and feel like a rope.

From this chamber the stream Affluence des Grenoblois leads out, ox-bowing with beautiful formations. Pitch still follows pitch but they are all wet by now and further apart. At this point I become fascinated by the state of some of the bolts—did that one move? . . . I'll swear it was 7mm out . . . that hanger's rusty and squeaks . . . it's only a 30m pitch, it'll be alright.

Eventually the Salle du Chaos, a large pendule across a seemingly bottomless hole and suddenly we are in the main Diau streamway in the Grande Avenue. We try and get the party together here and a group gathers like a lot of cold sheep all cuddling each other. Lamps are sorted out again and again we play at guessing the time. We set off with Ian and myself in front to fall in the lakes. Ian's wearing the life jacket I carried down for him in Miss Piggy and I reckon I'm the best swimmer in the party. The stream passage is fun—rapids, followed by

lakes neck deep; I fall in the odd one and swim across just for fun. At the Labyrinthe we wait for everyone before going up a moon milk floored passage and again into the stream.

Part of our team emerge from the sumps under the Labyrinthe with one of them suffering a little from hypothermia. We are all beginning to feel tired by now. We cache his tackle and carry on past more lakes and the occasional whirlpool. The water in the streamway is low and there are traverse wires 10, 12 and 15m above our heads. At the Big Blower (La Grande Soufflerie) a line of stemples (wood jammed across a passage to form a ladder) leads up. The wind blows out the carbide light almost immediately and except for the strong cold wind it feels like being Derbyshire again. The French have fixed ladders for the descent at the end of the passage and the English have fixed more as the French ladders are manky. We enter the gallery of the Cupola's with its green stream and suddenly we seem to have lost the others.

We lie down and doze on a sandbank for how long? . . . We'll never know. Eventually they arrive and all 12 of us carry on past Lac Tortue and L'Opera to the Grande Salle d'Entres. Frustratingly I can see the sky and smell the trees but no way could I ever climb the 75m overhanging cliff to that entrance.

We follow the cave round and then step into the night, the stars and the trees. Everyone is tired. Half of us have come out without any light left and it's 20 minutes downhill to the road. We are back at camp at 4.30 in the morning for early breakfast of bread, cheese and wine. At 9 a.m. the last pair arrive having had their own problems, their own trip, and the day is spent sleeping in the sun.

The following day we de-rig the cave, one party going through while two of us remove the rope from the Toboggans upwards and take photographs. I was going to go in the bottom entrance on Friday, but God gave me a day off and I went to photograph Annecy old town instead. Saturday I got back home.

The through trip, Tanne du Belle Espoir to the Grotte de la Diau, is currently I'm told the second deepest caving through trip in the world. When rigged it can be traversed in 8 to 10 hours. A team carrying two 100m ropes can abseil through it, but check bottom water levels and weather. In bad weather the cave surge-floods in 2 to 3 hours after rain and becomes impassable.

Well, that's it—want to dive Rowten Sumps\* this weekend?

\* 8, 10, 30ft, first dived by Livesey.



# A STEP BACK IN TIME

MIKE OWEN

Unsettled weather . . . fed up of this unsettled weather. A hard winter in the Sport Centres; a hard summer sheltering from the showers and the cold. The odd spell of good weather and a couple of good hard routes. The enthusiasm returns. Always, always fingers aching for warm, dry rock, but alas the rains come again.

Weeks spent longing for a warm dry weekend only to be spent at Tremadoc . . . again. Firstly doing the ones that were previously too hard . . . Erebus, Vulcan, Pippikin, Void, Atomic Finger Flake, Fingerlicker. That last pair were 'ard. Then find some too hard . . . use the peg on Pellagra and grind to a halt on Zukator for the third time in as many years. End up repeating classics again . . . Grasper, Vector (E.B.s feel like roller-skates), Extraction, Silly Arete. No challenge, no enthusiasm . . . the spark is disappearing.

Fed up of Tremadoc, need a change. Pay a visit to where it all began (for me at least) and this time a really superb classic.

I first visited Craig y Forwyn when I was about 13. My school mates and I used to go for bike rides and games of war on the surrounding hillsides. It was on one of these trips that I first saw the jutting overhangs, magnificent corners and oh-so steep walls of this very fine limestone crag. I lived but four miles away, my bike was good so I visited the cliff more and more often, eventually always on my own. I became an addicted mountain walker in my latter days at school and eventually became more and more keen to sample vertical rock.

I bought a pair of baseball boots as they looked similar, but were a lot cheaper than E.B.s In this fashion I soloed the easier routes and bouldered the starts of anything from V.S. and under. I gained a partner (from school), a rope and a pair of E.B.s

John and I went a long way from those first tentative steps in 1973. We worked through all the grades on the Crag. Eventually, other, bigger cliffs called us away, until by 1977 we began to separate. It just happened. I became all-of-a-sudden more keen than my trusty rope mate and climbed with a variety of people since then. It was with other

people that I did the hardest routes . . . Freedom, Wackeroo, Great Wall. I tried Quickstep but couldn't do it. It is only recently that I have been back and done it along with the modern and very good Moonwind.

That was in '77. Since then other areas have kept me absorbed. Other milestones to measure my ability against . . . Skull, Right Wall, Stroll On, Dry Grasp, Grand Alliance. Pick the plums, get around. So, fed up of the rain and fed up of Tremadoc I returned to Forwyn to climb the Great Wall once more, four years after I first climbed it.

Even as we gear up dark ominous clouds threaten overhead. Phil and I crack a few jokes trying to ignore them; anyway we have to do something so I start climbing. Fingers chill at the first touch of rock, my mind chills as I look up to follow the line of the route up this long and overhanging wall . . . so smooth except for that small flake sticking out near the top.

The pair who have just failed on this magnificent wall sit down to watch my progress. I climb confidently, knowing that I've been here five times before, up to the first protection peg at twenty five feet. Somebody has threaded a tiny sling a bit higher up to protect that traverse too, thanks whoever you are. I try to rest fingers and mind, knowing that once I start traversing right I won't get a decent rest for a long time.

Before, everytime, I remember having difficulties on that fifteen-foot traverse, but this time it goes fine—I don't even struggle, there's even time to place my own threader at the end, as that one in situ is very old indeed! The next few moves involve long reaches from slippery incuts up to an old bit of tat, where a weird finger jam enables some good holds to be reached, leading up to the pod, where I can thankfully rest.

The rain starts—heavy at first and then just constant drizzle. Here I am at the rest spot with a decision to make . . . up or down? What the hell, might as well carry on; at least I know the holds and the gear. Clip the rope to yet another awful piece of tat, but I can also put the Friend in underneath. I trust its placement to be bombproof.

Up I go, firstly stepping left to the whie pillar with its adequate but hidden holds (lots of people miss this and try to go directly up). The footholds for the first time are very small but even a short-arse like me can get that jug without too much effort. Another ledge, but this is where the wall starts overleaning, you can't let go. Step back right to a

good hex placement in a pocket and follow the thin crack above. I start to feel tired at the top and the wire I place drops out . . . stretch left for a jam under that flake. I wonder what it would be like if that flake ever breaks off.

There's not much further to go now. But, the top part of the climb is soaked. Good nuts at the flake (as long as it doesn't break). Moving up to the bolt is awful—its as if it's all covered in verglas. Clip that bolt. If I were tall I could reach that bolt with ease. But, unfortunately, I remember I'm not and those ripples by the bolt are very small and even non-existent in the wet. I try about three times but it's raining heavier now. Finally a pull on the bolt, plenty of verbal abuse to the rain and I finish the climb in complete annoyance.

Fortunately, Tim brings my cagoule up and so I don't get wet belaying Phil. He really wants to do it; it's his first time. He climbs so quickly but has to pull on the bolt. I've been sulking at the top but Phil soon cheers me up—he says I did it well, considering, pity it rained . . . Anyhow, it made a pleasant change from Tremadoc.

And so back home to work and studying the guidebooks. Where will it be next weekend?



(‘Great Wall, Forwyn, better than any equivalent length gritstone route.’ J.P. quotation in 1982. Ed.)





# THE RHINELAND PFALZ

GILES BARKER

The Pfalz is not the sort of place you would expect to find extensive rock climbing possibilities. It is a heavily wooded area of rolling hills, with pockets of farmland in the valleys. The landscape is almost medieval, except that the villages consist of relatively modern buildings. At various times in the past its ownership has been contested with the French, though one would find it hard to visualise the violence of warfare in this peaceful corner of Germany.

From a climbing point of view the Pfalz does not present the show stopping drama of French limestone. It is not far removed from our own gritstone, but rarely do the tors and pinnacles stand in proud situations as in the case of Derbyshire and Yorkshire. The trees usually camouflage and present an unfavourable image. However once involved the climber finds himself in well defined grooves, man-eating cracks and well-rounded faces leading to the added bonus of a summit. Almost all of the crags are sandstone ridges, which have managed to partially withstand the weather, but as a result have formed into pinnacles and narrow ridged summits.

From amongst the tranquil countryside a small force of climbers is rapidly transforming the Pfalz into a high standard climbing area, comparable technically with other rock climbing centres. A peculiar situation exists, however, due to this radical change; a change which the conservative tradition of the area failed to cope with. It appears that until the mid-1970s the hardest climbs never exceeded VS in standard; when a harder move was reached a large cemented ring solved the problem. This was evident on many climbs where bolts were difficult to clip because they were placed right where you wanted to get hold of them, (we never did of course!).

During the 1970s some of the young local climbers went to Yosemite and found out about hard free climbing. Naturally they brought these techniques back to Germany, and the Pfalz began to get a hardened look about it. It was not long before completely new climbs such as Utopia and Flug des Albatross appeared with pre-placed bolts.

The traditional clientele could not get up these in any way. The resulting fracas featured abseiling to remove the bolts and effectively destroy the climbs because soloing is rather unjustifiable on much of the sandstone. The new wave hit back in various ways, such as leaving nasty things in the route book tins on top of the crags. Apparently events became quite fierce, but now the situation seems to have calmed down somewhat. Nevertheless we missed out on quite a few nasty-looking problems on account of the bolt chopping.

Our trip consisted of an English team of two: Mike Waters and myself. We spent the whole fortnight camping in the idyllic Barenbrunnerhof's corn field, free of charge. This is the centre of Pfalz climbing. It was here that we met several German climbers, some of whom we climbed with. Our first meeting was often a drinking bout with some local war veterans in Schindhard. They got their war wounds out (Eastern Front of course) and promptly drank us into the ground. At the end of all this we were introduced to Fritz Mungay, who promptly took us climbing on Hochstein. This was rather embarrassing especially for Mike who managed to leave his money in the pub and E.B.s in a corn field (both items were later recovered intact). We staggered up to the crag colliding with the odd tree. Fortunately Fritz wasn't into the big league and we weren't required to climb harder than VS. We rushed up a few pleasant cracks and a fine arete called P.K. Kante.

The next day saw us at Asselstein, which is impressively situated above the trees. We were still in an alcoholic haze, and went straight for the hardest looking route, a line of bolts up a very steep 18C' wall. Unfortunately Mike failed on what we later discovered to be Utopia, a 5.11 testpiece. I had sobered up sufficiently not to attempt it, and unfortunately our standard dropped for a few days.

Fritz chauffeured us round from one crag to the next over the next few days. Sometimes he climbed with us, at other times he declared that a route was 'too heavy' for him. He had a great system—a long end of rope from his chest harness, which he just wrapped through a bolt and cranked up on when there was any difficulty. We did some great climbs, all really enjoyable, though the best by far was Jubliaumsweg, a superb crack and face climb, which was comparable with the best gritstone routes.

After we had been climbing for about a week, we met up with Wolfgang Emisch and Richard Mühe. They introduced us to some



recent classics. Climbing with Richard was quite interesting as he tended to point us at his own routes (he is one of the more prolific activists in the area). These were not always bolt protected, but had secret nut placements, which he proceeded to give details of at exactly the right moment. During one of these excursions I took Fritz up a couple of recent routes at Wilgartisplatte. This was a slab climbing crag, with teetery piano playing and frictiony moves. Unfortunately for Fritz the bolts were placed before hard moves here so he had to free climb everything. After initially being rather worried he got quite a kick out of climbing much harder than his usual standard.

This arrangement of climbing in English/German teams was a good arrangement as it added variety to the holiday. It meant that we got to nearly all of the good crags, climbed some of the best climbs and visited the best ice cream shops, which are better than English equivalents.

For pure rock climbing it's definitely good fun. The recent climbs tend to be quite desperate, but there are plenty of easier routes of all grades, where jamming is the most common technique. Since we went some very hard routes have been done and other British climbers have also visited. According to Richard the only Brit. before us was—guess who? Pete Livesey, who also failed on some of the problems we failed on.

To finish here is a run round the highlights:

Rodelstein: The best crag, best rock, classic routes; especially Dezemberweg (5.11) and Oliverweg (5.9).

Nonnenfels: The best route, Jubiläumsweg (5.10).

Wilgartisplatte: The best slab climbing, Graue Wand (5.10) and other good 5.10 and 5.11s.

Asselstein: The largest crag. Superb cracks; Pfundstein—Schmitt Riss (5.9) and Utopia (5.11).

Trifels: Richard I and Blondin made it famous!

Spirchbacher Rauberg: The best named climb; Hans Wenger Gedächtnisweg mit der Direkter Einstieg.

Bruchweiler Rauberg: The best named crag plus Superlativ (5.11).

Jungfrausprung: The best legend (cf. Lovers' Leap, Stoney). Also two superb climbs.

Luger Friedrich: The most ridiculous ab.

Busenburg: Best Leberknödel.

Anweiler: Best ice cream.

# I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

DAVE GREGORY

I cannot remember how many times I have parked at Hafodty Newydd, hopped across the roadside ditch and plodded up the rushy field to the railway track and the path to Cloggy. Tens of times. On scores of occasions, probably into three figures I have contributed my erosion share to the swaths that run up to Stanage, but with some crags the small number of visits, for whatever reason, leaves each one clear in the mind.

Llech Ddu is such a crag. I first went, a long delayed visit, in 1965 and even with a memory like mine I remember the circumstances well. Brodie and I were spending three weeks in North Wales. He was connected with the design of the Tebay extension to the M6 and had to return to Kendal in mid-holiday to fettle up some concrete details. The spare days were spent variously: just plain festering, beach festering; Kirkus's Direct on Cwm Silyn with Reg Pillinger. The approach march to this was a traumatic experience because in addition to the sisyphean struggle up the final screes we had his two small girls and wife and what I remember as about twenty-five push chairs to manhandle to the llyn. On one of the days I had a more amenable companion. Pete had knocked a day from work and a page from someone's guidebook. He threw the 1,000 van around the bends up to Gerlan and we strolled up that admirable path. How unique a crag among great crags to have a gentle walk to it. This walk was made to finish by a large boulder, which contained a suitable crack, for he had a heavy rucksack. The major heaviness was a string of hard steel pegs being developed by Clog, and a session of 'conseil de technique' followed. Some split, some bent, some passed muster. Back into the sack they went and back to Clog.

A short struggle up quite a civilised slope and we were at the foot of Central Route. The Groove already existed to the right but the day was to be gentle. The first groove was a touch wet and I was happy for the maestro to cop for the sharp end. He chose to go further up the groove to the higher move left. Now, if not well known, it was strongly

suspected that he and Bingle used to go to sleep on the stances while the other one was leading but even so I was surprised when at the move left, he shouted down for me to take a bit of notice. I wasn't when I got there. The move was hard enough in its own right and there wasn't much protection, above or below it. I did the next pitch, keeping my feet off the wet patches and fitting as many of my drilled out iron nuts as I could into the crack in the groove. He followed, grumbling at my old-fashioned gear and we wandered up the disappointingly easier rest of the route and off the crag.

My second visit was in 1976 and it was The Groove that brought us. We had a whole guidebook this time and there it was, three stars and all. The second pitch looked wet and Clive was persuaded to take that and I tackled the first. I can remember little else of the day except a feeling of euphoria, sadly let down by our later finding Elliw full of grass and not worth the gardening. A sweet-bitter day.

The third visit and fourth visits came together, bitter-sweet. The dry spells of early '82 warmed the seed sown in 1976; that there was another great classic, The Big Corner, waiting to be done. We chose Cupid's Inspiration as a way to the terrace below The Corner. We chose wrong. The first, supposedly 4a, pitch was more than that, and badly protected. The peg and spikes at the stance carried a recent krab and two slings, sowing a seed of doubt and mute testimony to someone's retreat. The moves above the stance were upsetting and the peg, probably the original, frail and bendy. Fear trickled down the bulge and the belay peg and spikes began to look more substantial, even capable of sustaining an abseil. We took the krab, left another sling and slid timorously to the ground and fate.

For fate took a hand. On the Tuesday evening before we came away Jim and I had been for a brisk rattle along Baslow Edge. During the jostle from route to route, dodging the trees, midges and boulders my Rock No. 3 went missing. A sad event. But now, as we moved right to the foot of Central Route to use that as a way up to the terrace and The Big Corner, there, carefully placed on the grass patch at its foot was a Rock No. 3. Gratefully accepted. I did the first pitch. Jim the second and we went left up the easy crack to the foot of the Big Corner. It was wet, and vegetated and we wondered if the peg on the second pitch was as bad as the one on Cupid's. We knew it would be, so back we went down the easy crack to Central Route. We went up the Scarface/Groove finish and what a route that makes it. As good as any the same

grade on Cloggy, and moreover it gave me a look down the long pitch of The Groove. Clive had led that last time and I knew where I wanted to be on the next day.

And so we were. The weather was still good and we drove easily through Llanberis, past Rhiwlas and jostled through the jabber of Bethesda and the quiet of Gerlan to the bend on the bridge over the river near Ty Slatters. The indecisive track round the water station was familiar now and the path along Cwm Llafar still friendly, even in the developing heat. The usual double decision. Started off very hot. One layer? North facing, could be cold. Two? Coming over dark and cold. Three? Touch of wind getting up. Three. First pitch? Second? I'd led the first pitch before and wanted the second now, and that long fourth. So it was settled easily. Jim for the first pitch.

Now the first pitch is also a groove, but not an open book diedre sort of a groove, more of a chimney that has a back within arm's reach. A diedre of the sorrows for Jim who's quite a big guy, with footballer's knees. Most footballers have knees and most footballers have something wrong with their knees. Perhaps the cartilages have been reduced to pulp by opponents trying to remove the bottom half of their legs or perhaps it's the rheumatism they get from kneeling in the wet grass kissing each other, but at all events footballer's knees ain't what they used to be and they don't bend too good. Ten minutes of bruising his patellas in the restricting confines of the chimney and he came down muttering darkly about "keeping a dog and barking yourself" and "grovelling about in holes is for midgets" and "let the old scrawmer at it". It was an old-fashioned chimney pitch but without the doubtful benefit of vegetation. A few arm sprags, a bit of back and foot and some bridging leads to a grassy terrace and a dead tree. This tree is thoroughly dead but a tempting belay. One can stand below it and pull it onto one or sit above it with one's feet propped against it and push it off if a pull comes on one. There is a bit of a Moac under a downward pointing flake just left of the start of the next pitch which might stop you following the firewood down the crag. I rely on that and use the tree to hang my anorak on as the sky is clearing and there is sun shadow on the slope below. It looks like being another fine, warm day.

Jim grunts his way up, knees and all, to stand beside the tree and discussion number two begins. We've got the pitch order wrong now and the next groove is wet in the back. The guide talks about 'when

wet a sling may be required for aid at the first bulge'. We mull things over and reach an agreement. I leave my anorak hanging from the tree and start off up the groove. Bridging on small holds at first in an open groove. Awkward steps up and reaches until the left-hand wall begins to lean over and it is easier to change over to a back and foot technique, facing right. The right wall is made of lumps like small apples, polished for display by the greengrocer but making a superb series of footholds in a variety of positions to give a chance of a rest for aching leg muscles.

At the bulge the wet streak had become wider and the left wall fell away. Back and foot had to become bridging again but the holds were getting greasy and the protection was sparse. I tried the move at the bulge tentatively. It would involve a layaway facing right. The rock apples have faded out and the footholds are not as definite. The vital handhold is a sloping, incipient flake, on the shiny side, and not big enough. Some reassurance is needed. In front of my face on the right wall is a small wedge-shaped hole but it flares out too much for anything to stop in it. At the back of this hole is a crack, full of mud. A scrape or two with the poker and the Rock No. 3 slides in like magic. Fate. The footholds are more definite and less shiny. So is the handhold, which has also become larger and set at just the right angle. Fait. Over the bulge and up to a nest of pegs for the belay.

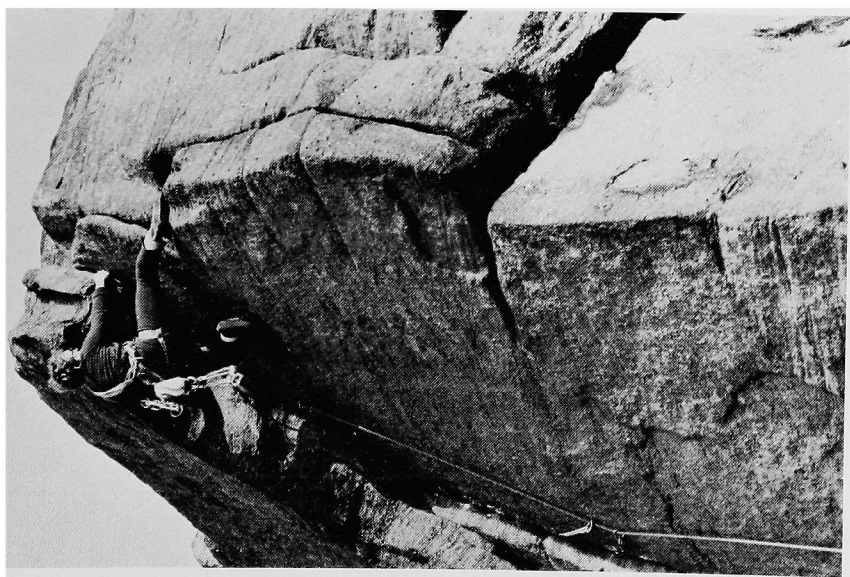
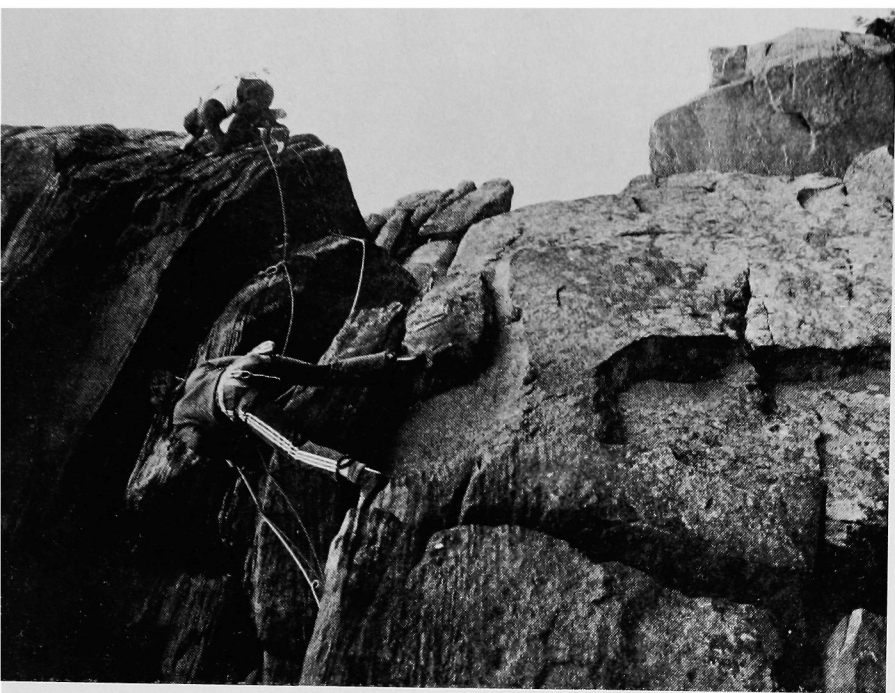
The guide speaks of a peg above the stance to protect the next pitch. There it is above my head bristling like a Christmas tree with a garland of tatt. I climb up to it, sort out the tatt, which includes what looks like a bridle and snaffle ring, clip the rope in for Jim's lead of the next pitch and come down. Up comes the rope and the "That's me" and the grunts and the creaky knees and he's hanging my anorak on the belay and selecting the gear he wants.

No sooner has he stepped left than another peg comes into view. Not above the stance, but more useful and he clips through that and I belay straight to it letting the moving rope behind me go up to the bridle ring garland. The holds on the traverse left are plainly visible, outlined in chalk. There only seem to be two and more rock round them than there ought to be. What has happened to the British Standard distance between holds on pitches of 5a? Not a nice trick either for the leader to have to sort his crux out a three-foot stare from his comfortable second man, particularly when the leader knows that handing over the lead is no comfort because it will be just as hard to

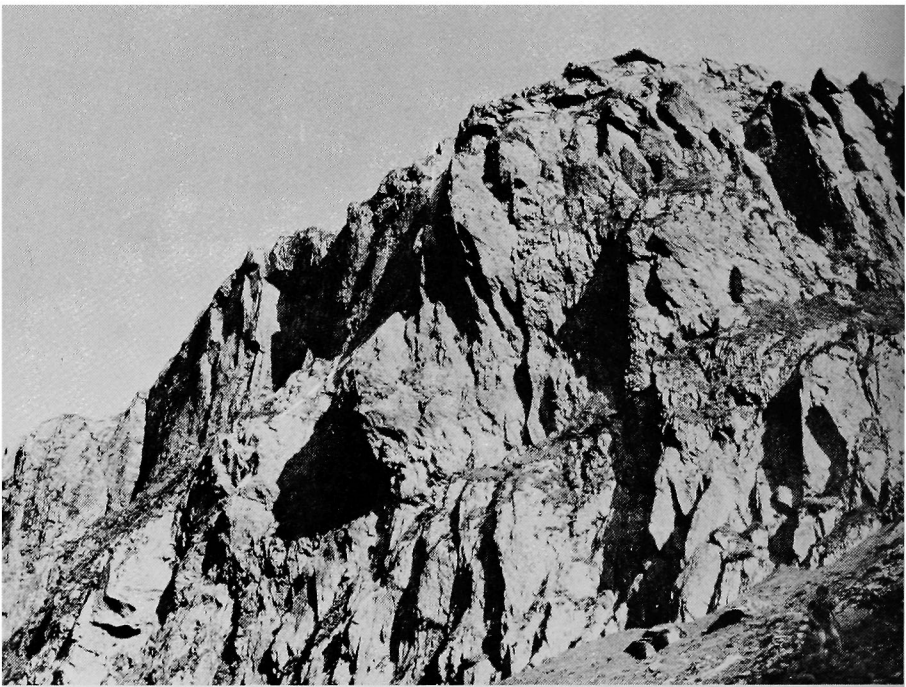
second and the second knows he knows and so on. Leaning left to the first chalky incut and putting his right hand on top of his left leaves him secure but hog-tied. Standing on the nothing below the incut to take off a bit of weight he wriggles the left hand fingers into a bunch and squeezes a couple of the right hand fingers onto the incut. There is a speck of chalk on a blunt flute to the left and while the left hand flies to pinch that the right hand settles into the incut. Lower and left is the other hold, a prime Welsh beauty. A narrow flake with a projecting top and a neck of strangling size with an ermine chalk collar. Left he leans, with his feet on some more nothing, left, and his fingers strain on the incut and hint at slipping. He backs a bit, pinches both hands on the flute, leans left again supported just by the right and throttles the life out of that beautiful Welsh neck. He moves round the arete and into the groove. We're nearly there.

The nylon goes in jerk by jerk until the geometry of ropes comes tight on the pegs and belays. Clip the waist tie out of the chock behind me, and both ropes from the pegs in front. One rope goes up to the Christmas tree and the other left along the line. It is twisted in front of me so I perform a careful slow rotation hold by hold until the twists have gone and I am facing in. Up to the Christmas tree, one rope going in above me and the other out behind. I can imagine him cursing at the foul-up at his plate. Clip into the tree. Untie that rope, feed it through the tree, tie on, unclip and move down to the belay again. Clip in. Knot on the rope to him. Untie it. Pull it through the tree, tie on, unknot and I'm ready. He takes in the remaining slack, I unclip and down I go for the incut, the strangle hold, some awkward moves left of it and there is the groove, beautiful groove.

The solemn handover ritual to be gone through. Harness right side, harness left. Bandolier right side, bandolier left. That must be enough. The sky has become much darker but as I finish loading up with metal bits the sky brightens momentarily, brightens from lightning we cannot see reflected off it. Thunder rumbles, how far away? Time to be moving. I can only remember one thing about this groove. There's a small downward pointing lump in the groove somewhere with a hole up behind it and near that it's awkward. It's not far up the groove, within sight, and the moves up to it are awkward. Above, the holds come to order, beautiful groove, more than adequate protection, beautiful groove, why can't it go on for ever, ropelength after ropelength, but all too soon the angle eases and







*Above: Rare sun on Llech Ddu.*

*Photo: R. Enwright.*

*Below: The beautifully remote Cwm Llaffar.*

*Photo: R. Enwright.*







here is the Scarface belay of yesterday. Jim begins; he's singing and whistling now and cheerfulness floats up the rope. He arrives all agrin, a Christmas tree himself with the gear taken out. "Cracked it lad" he says "we've been here before". Lad indeed. Cheeky young footballer.

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### Quote

A list of new climbs in the North Cornwall Supplement, 1982, included the seconds as 'clients'. The P.S.C. felt rather disturbed about this rather professional approach and indicated that perhaps clients should be included as normal human beings. The Series Editor admitted that this was an error of judgement and pleaded that he had been rather busy removing the 'Mrs, Misses and Ms' from the text of the forthcoming Ogwen guide. And before anyone complains about the latter policy it was done to ensure equality. Personally I like to know what the ladies are up to.

The time taken to produce a Supplement guide is gradually being cut down since the appearance of the '78 Gogarth Supplement. The current North Cornwall supplement for example came out in May, '82 and even contains a route done in that month. If supplements come out any faster it has been suggested that perhaps instead of just the year it will be necessary to state the exact date . . . or even a time!

*Centre Right: Paul Jackson leading Elliw, Llech Ddu.*

*Photo: R. Enwright.*

*Opp: Tunnel Vision, Chee Dale.*

*Photo: Chris Jackson.*

# TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

BOB BRADLEY

It really became apparent in those long, hot summers of 1975 and 1976, the realisation that the hardest routes around could no longer be picked off at weekends after a week of inactivity. The top routes were being wrested out of the hands of the casual climber and to do them it became necessary to climb regularly, maybe three or four times a week. Climbers emerged with an almost professional approach, at first just a few but many were to follow. The freedom of the hills has always been seductive, offering intrigue and adventure; young lads would knock days off school and hitch-hike to Wales or the Lakes where they would camp or sleep rough in barns suffering any discomforts just to be there.

The sixties saw strong climbing communities in places such as Llanberis, many on the dole or doing just casual jobs, there were hard climbing wild parties and of course the annual trip to Chamonix and for many their interest still lay in the big mountains, but those few warm summers in the middle of the decade saw the establishment of new ideas and techniques and British rock climbing would never be quite the same again.

Tom Proctor had pointed the way in the late sixties and early seventies with routes such as Our Father, Wee Doris and Queer Street, all steep, sustained pitches and harbingers of what was to come. Al Rouse climbed the futuristic Positron, steep, goey climbing in an 'out there' position. Then came Livesey, initially a caver of no mean ability he trained seriously for climbing, traversing walls, using weights and repeating hard moves to build stamina. At first the outlets for his talents were the steep Limestone cliffs of Yorkshire and Derbyshire and such fine routes as Face Route and Flaky Wall are legacies from this period, more was to come. In 1974 after abseil inspection Livesey climbed the Right Wall of Cenotaph Corner to give a route that was a full grade harder than anything else in Wales at that time and a year later he did the same for Lakeland climbing by adding Footless Crow to Goat Crag in Borrowdale; his place in climbing

history was assured. Many of his other routes of this period such as Quickstep, Craig y Forwyn; Central Wall, Kilnsey; Fingerlicker and Zukator, Tremadog; and Dry Grasp, Falcon Crag; all stand out as being harder than the existing desperates. Fingerlicker especially was criticised as having been yo-yoed but so what, Livesey was after all pushing new ideas and standards, plumbing new depths.

In Derbyshire a lad almost half Livesey's age was pushing some standards of his own; John Allen of Sheffield once described as the Shirley Temple of British rock was quietly snipping off some of the best routes on grit. In the company of Steve Bancroft and various combinations of the Stokes brothers he produced such test pieces as Nectar, Strapadictomy, Moon Crack, Profit of Doom and London Wall. All these routes represent the top limits at the time and are still big undertakings for most.

1976 saw the advent of a magazine called 'Crag', the idea of Geoff Birtles, it was to quote 'originally set up to fill a vacuum in the media for a hard core climbing paper about British climbing and climbers'. The centrefold of the first issue depicted a skinny youth clad only in shorts, with EB's and chalk bag. He hung one-armed from the jug on L'horla and below one read the inscription 'Remember Last Summer', the climber was Ron Fawcett and the scene was set; every young lad wanted to dangle in that relaxed fashion, dip into the white bag and power up!

Once again the limestone dales came under close scrutiny, Proctor flexed his muscles and accompanied by Birtles, just pipped Fawcett and Livesey to a free ascent of Mortlock's Arete on Chee Tor, and Bancroft and Allen climbed the wall and flake to the right of Mortlock's to give Apocalypse, whose technical crux is on the first pitch, but the route saves its real meat for the second, where a harrowing flake tires mind and body. Down in Water cum Jolly, previously the province of the aid climber, Proctor made an ascent of Behemoth using only one nut for aid; Fawcett and Livesey dispensed with this on the second ascent and the route received the top grade. A nasty off-finger crack on this one leads you on only to leave you scratching at its top to reach good holds and the safety of the groove above, a real stamina test. Amidst all this activity Gabriel Regan was sweeping Chee Dale and finding many good routes; on Chee Tor he climbed the superb Ceramic an elegant groove in the wall to the left of Great Central Route. His major contributions were however further



down the dale on Two Tier Butress; here he added the now classic Mad Dogs and Englishmen, Malnutrition, Isolate and Darl. The last two being free versions of old aid routes. Darl gives especially difficult climbing of a bouldering nature and may represent one of the hardest routes of this period. The freeing of aid routes gave many superb pitches and was a trend which grew. High Tor already had many classic climbs which originally employed aid, Darius, Lyme Cryme, Flaky Wall and the immaculate Bastille, which was climbed by Livesey early on using one aid bolt low down. Fawcett added Supersonic, a bold lead taking the groove below and the wall above Flaky's crux and requiring determination at the top where a missing protection peg means a forty-footer if you fluff the moves getting onto the belay ledge. Many hard routes had gone but still the body could do more; later Phil Burke squeezed the reachy Tales of Yankee Power in between Supersonic and Original Route and also added the excellent A6 to the left wing; this again was based on an old aid route.

On gritstone Curbar held the stage for a while; Fawcett climbed Rigid Digit and One Step Beyond, Tim Leach led the much eyed line to the right of Usurper to give Moonshine and Burke climbed the wall left of Peapod, The Shape of Things to Come. However Limestone was the pre-eminent medium for many new routes lending itself as it does to steep fingery pitches of a strength-sapping nature which can often be reasonably protected by cunning and tiny wires, if you can hang on long enough to place them.

In 1979 and 1980 Proctor climbed a new batch of desperates at Stoney Middleton confirming his reign over the crag as he had done ten years before; he then proceeded to seek new adventure in the caves and passages below Stoney Middleton and beyond. A decade had passed since the first steep limestone testpieces were climbed; the next wave of hard routes would leave many wide-eyed and open-mouthed.

Wales and the Lakes had not escaped the eyes of the new routers. In the Lakes Pete Whillance, a man noted for his cool added the very serious Take It To the Limit, to Deer Bield Crag, a companion route to his earlier Desperado; both these routes give bold, technical climbing on a just off-vertical wall. On the other side of ninety degrees Fawcett freed Hell's Wall on Bowderstone Crag to give a very steep, but well-protected pitch. In Wales Gogarth was given a face-lift and after rigorous examination about seventy new routes climbed. Jim Moran spearheaded the activity and with various combinations of



Paul Williams, Geoff Milburn and Al Evans produced such routes as Barbarossa, Horrorshow, The Assassin and a free version of Television Route. Both Barbarossa and Horrorshow employed an aid point on the first ascent, both of which have subsequently been dispensed with to give desperate wall pitches Barbarossa giving especially steep and fierce climbing with its crux on razor blades. Many face routes were added to the blank North Stack wall. Fawcett climbed one particularly blank looking piece of this wall having placed two bolt runners and named the route The Cad. On the upper tier he climbed Blackleg up the rib to the right of Barbarossa to give a desperate-looking pitch with apparently no protection worth talking about—blank walls held everyone's eye. No matter how steep they were, if they had just enough tiny holds and maybe some protection they would go. Whillance beaten to The Cad by Fawcett added his own routes, The Long Run and Blue Peter to the North Stack wall, but it was the Hull climber John Redhead who upstaged everyone with his lead of The Bells! The Bells! to give Wales its first E7; as yet unrepeated the pitch must stand as one of the hardest leads around. Down at sunny Tremadog Redhead added another intricate face pitch, on the more remote Stromboli Buttress and this route, Sexual Salami, has proved exceedingly popular. On the historical Vector Buttress (or should it be Weaver Buttress now?) Redhead climbed the overhanging flake stuck to the underside of the Ochre Slab and named the route The Atomic Finger Flake; and here again popularity was instant, awkward moves with good protection and nothing but space to fall into below ensured many repeats. Also on Vector Buttress Redhead climbed Bananas, originally graded 7a until a second ascent by Fawcett saw the hard pitch lowered to a modest 6c; not so the other super-pitch climbed at that time. Many had eyed the obvious, thin crack in the Vector headwall to the left of Cream, some had even made rope inspections. The route had been given tentative names such as Strawberries or Peaches to accompany its established neighbour; again it was Fawcett who stepped in to lead the pitch after many falls. Strawberries it was and the grade 7a. The route has yet to see a one day ascent and the possibility of an on-sight 'cruise' seems remote for at least a few years.

Ron, obviously on top form, turned his attention to Dinas Cromlech. Having had his appetite whetted by Lord of the Flies, his ascent of which was filmed by Sid Perou and broadcast on TV in the

Rock Athlete series he went on to prove that the walls of 'The Corner' could be climbed almost anywhere on tiny flakes and pockets. By the end of April 1980 routes were dotted everywhere. Precious, J.R., True Grip and a new girdle, Ivory Madonna, stood as new challenges—all steep wall climbs in the modern idiom. In the same month Fawcett added Hall of Warriors to the wall right of Ivy Sepulchre and the vicious Atomic Hot Rod up the overhanging crack which breaks leftwards out of Horseman's Route. Is it safe to say that the Cromlech is worked out? Only time will tell. It is hard to see where future independent lines might go but there again that has been said before. Around this time the steep limestone cliffs of the Great Orme were subjected to a free-climbing onslaught and it was the impressive Castell y Gwynt which bore the brunt of the attack this time, led by Redhead. He repeated Rowland Edwards' Psychic Threshold using only one aid point and a month later free-climbed Central Pillar, an Edwards' aid route of the early seventies, to give The Bitter Sweet Connection. He then turned his attention to the hanging arete left of the classic New Dimensions; the route went at a necky 6a to give Plas Berw, probably the hardest lead on the cliff. Other climbers got in on the action too, on Craig Pen Trwyn, Andy Pollitt and Jerry Moffatt got to work on the aid route Mayfair and eventually produced a fine free version in March 1980. However, the top award on this accessible crag must go to Mel Griffiths and Leigh McGinley for their superb Axle Attack, brilliant climbing on sound rock with good protection ensure classic status for this ninety-foot route.

And so back to Derbyshire; Fawcett was by now resident near Buxton and climbing virtually every day. He set to work on the local crags viewing every area of open rock as a prospective route. It was again limestone which provided the scope, for upon the steepest of walls it was possible to have moves near to the limit of difficulty one after another. Water cum Jolly was again raided and provided routes which were often of a quality not to be expected in an area famous for its loose rock. Fawcett climbed La Chute and the desperate-looking Cool Hand Luke, Jim Moran added Timewarp, a free version of Midnight Cracks and the Lee brothers, Dominic and Daniel, climbed the wall to the left of Saint Paul to give Leviathan, another excellent pitch. Further down the dale, Fawcett produced free versions of Mandrake, and Deception and shared in a wave of activity on Rubicon Wall which resulted in Jaws, Piranha, White Bait and The Angler, the

last two by the Lees; all these routes consist of short finger-wrecking pitches of the highest order of difficulty.

It was however on one crag in particular that Fawcett kicked his heels and sprinted away from the pack. Raven Tor Millersdale was surely the domain of only the aid climber, somewhere that the mouldy etriers could be given an airing in the long winter months. Five years earlier Ron had climbed the girdle of Raven Tor free and the route named Cream Team Special gave two very exacting pitches. Unfortunately the route was given only a short derogatory mention in Steve Bancroft's recent developments book and further slighted in the last Northern Limestone guide by the inclusion of the alternative aid version going the opposite way, i.e. left to right. Hardly fair when other routes climbed in far worse style were included willy-nilly. However the crag obviously had potential and it was Sardine that was first to be subjected to a rigorous clean and which eventually yielded Fawcett an excellent free route, the crux of which comes after some thirty feet of strenuous climbing and no hope of a rest until the girdle is reached. Ron also dispensed with the aid peg on Hubris giving another hard pitch; the protection was described as tremendous on this but it is probable that the rusty old bolts will be washed away by this winter's rain. And so to 1982 and again Raven Tor; Fawcett set to work on the aid route Prowler left of The Prow and produced a very sustained pitch on the smallest of holds with no prospect of a rest; a steep top pitch was added up to the groove to the right of The Prow and the route named Indecent Exposure. What now? Well why not go the whole hog and try The Prow. Well, that is exactly what Ron did, and after three days the route was done. Moffatt free-climbed Cambridge Bolt Route to give Rooster Booster; unlike Indecent Exposure and The Prow this route is unrepeated so far, probably owing to the disposable nature of some of the starting holds where the route leaves Sardine. Also sporting holds of a somewhat ephemeral nature is Dominic Lee's Obscene Gesture which takes the wall right of Sardine and is the last addition to the wall thus far.

Many have been stunned by these ascents and they certainly represent experiences available to only a few at present and then only by sheer hard work and determination; so where does the future lie? Inroads have already been made to Kilnsey's main overhang and this must surely be on the cards as a free route. What then—the Malham bolt routes, the great aid routes in the Dolomites such as the Brandler-

Hasse on the Cima Grande? With climbers either on the dole or in further education and getting to the crags every day in fine weather and training walls and in the gym during the winter months who knows, anything is possible.

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### Quote

I commented to S.H. about Ron soloing November on Cloggy, and he replied, "Ah, but he'd done Vember first". Simon went on to add, "Ron did the first pitch of Great Wall while I was putting on my P.A.'s . . . And then he did the second pitch while I was weighing up the first pitch of Vember."

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"I was climbing with a bloke at Easter. He went home with Chicken Pox—reckoned he'd caught it on a route." "That's nothing, D.H. reckoned that one could catch warts by jamming in cracks, as they infected the crag."

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'It's only 6b, but there's a lot of it.'—Tom Proctor re Circe.

Phil Burke soloing Elegy at the Roaches got stuck. He shouted to Eugene to "Get a rope, quick!" "Hang on Ron, I'm coming."

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Classic 'ee bah gum' conversation—Ron on Neb Direct at Tremadoc. "Eh, Chris, I can't do this." "Why not Ron?" "My fingers are too big, Chris." "How much too big are they, Ron?" "Oh, about so much too big Chris."

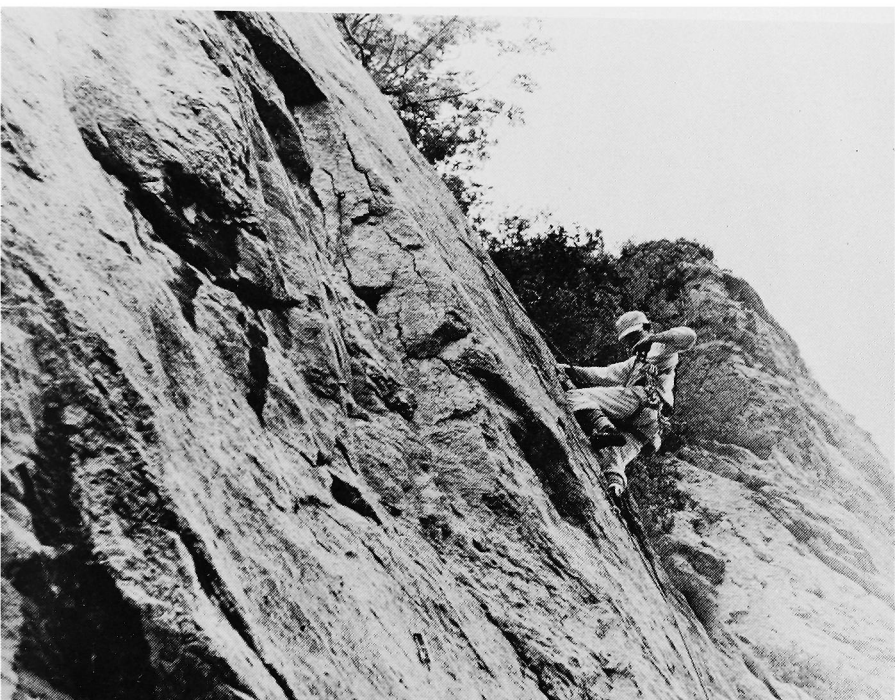


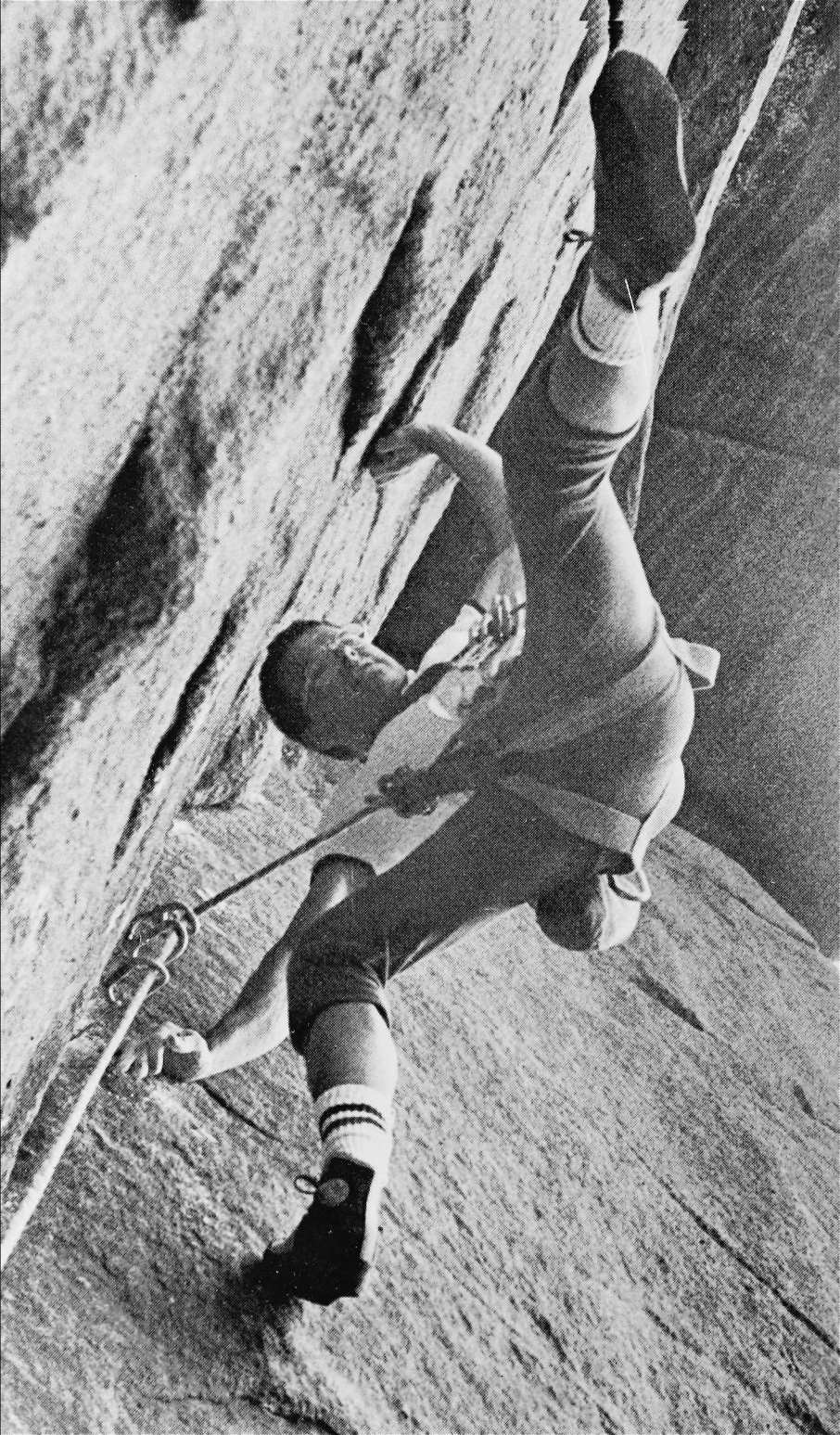
*Above: J. Moran preparing to leave Supersonic.*

*Photo: J. Storah.*

*Below: Decadence—protecting the hard moves.*

*Photo: J. Storah.*





# THE WARM-UP ROUTE

AL BARKER

Well, for once the car had a full tank so I wasn't bothered where, and Jed wasn't either because he's impartial, provided he gets photographs. James's mother answered my knock with the usual friendly smile, but James's smile, as he flourished the new Derwent Valley guide, was more like a crocodile's.

"I thought perhaps we could nip down to High Tor."

Lovely drive past Chatsworth House and even more lovely down Darley Dale where the fifth-form nubile practises tennis too near the road for safety—the motorist's safety that is.

"Watch the road please, Al."

And with High Tor in mind I wonder what I'm letting myself in for this time. Onto the silly car park on the kerb where last year I holed the exhaust on the new white Ford, driving it straight over the drop. Into the boot, out with the sacks, into the track-suit legs and away. (Why does James have to walk everywhere so quickly? Nothing to prove, we know he's fitter than us . . .)

"Thought we might do this thing called Decadence."

(Oh very off the cuff, but it didn't fool me—the bugger's had all this planned . . .) "Pass the guide, James." (And what's this little cross next to the description for? Has some poor soul died on it?) James is racking gear systematically and as my number two E.B.s are returned to the sack to be replaced by my number ones I suspect that I shall find this hard. So, up and along the unpleasant traverse to the start and the belays.

"You can get a good number four Stopper in there, and a sling round that tree."

(What tree?) "What tree?"

"Well, that ivy patch there."

(Dear me. Still, if I jump rightwards I can bounce down that grass and into that big, leafy tree down there . . .) But as soon as he starts he's got a wire in and two moves up he clips a good peg, so no more worries about being plucked off the stance: and thereafter dare-devil



Al is sat well back in his harness to watch the action up above. James in that silly baseball cap which Addy gave to him in the States last year; reminds me of that youth in 'The Catcher In The Rye'. "Big wall hat, good, eh?" The pensive silence for a dogleg of intricate 6a, after which he's sitting well back, belayed I hope to at least half a dozen bomb-proof pegs. Steady metronome of Jed's camera shutter stopped now—changing film no doubt for yours truly, who after all can pose much better on the sensible end of the rope.

"Safe Al."

Take him off the Sticht plate and the rope slides quickly away. Yank out the Stopper and de-thread the ivy. Check soles for damp, laces and rope for tightness and bag for chalk. Oh yes, and hair for the camera of course. "Right?"

"Right."

"Right, climbing."

"Right."

Last look round for Jed. Got to know where to smile—or grimace! Where is he? No sign anywhere. "Can you see Jed from up there?"

"No, probably asleep or gone for a brew."

"Ha ha." Barker beetling over the bold bulge. Bye bye stance, hopefully for good . . . "There's nae grips, Jimmy." (Silly repartee we have).

"Shimmy left a wee bit."

"You're so helpful don't you know."

"You can have that Rock; it was in situ."

(Good Lord, crag swag already—this is getting better.)

"You want to take a rest there; the next bit's strenuous."

"Oh, only the next bit, eh?) Shake arms out alternately then grab the small pockets and . . . go. Run the feet up high and reach, whoops, no, feet higher, reach the poor side pull and I can see your chalk marks, good boy James, and then straighten up and lean over left to stay in balance, and got to make it look good for Jed, and then crank like the proverbial to reach a layaway flake and go for the bigger flake . . .

"Good jug on top of that flake."

. . . with a horrible sharp-edges hold on top and I could take a real monster off this traverse left . . .

"If you want a back-rope on the traverse just clip that nut and I'll abseil for it afterwards."

. . . James you are so accommodating, but I'm a hundred and odd feet up and I won't hit anything, so who needs a back-rope? . . .

"You don't mind?"

"No, it's an easy ab."

. . . well alright, you talked me into it. And what a traverse with that never to be forgotten foot-change on this dazzling, white wall with smooth holes for two fingertips per hand and a hop-skip for the feet and ample fresh air to land in if you miss it.

"Nice one buddy."

Encouragement and a grin from the shadow under James' cap-peak and after a jigsaw of 6a technicality we're hanging from . . . Good God! . . . no bomb-proof pegs but two bendy bolts . . . and calm down, stop panicking, two excellent Hexcentrics now hidden under coils of slack rope. "Good lead, youth."

"Ta. Good route, innit?"

Hand over the retrieved gear, swap belays, put him on the Sticht plate and Moran moving leftwards like an escaped fly from this web of a belay. Barker the spider meanwhile taking tentative bounces in the harness to test these anchors. Impeccable logic. Would look pretty silly if, etc . . . And if doting baba ever follows in father's footsteps I'll tell him, son, get on High Tor and do Decadence. A rustle in the bushes below and there's Jed blinking up through cigarette smoke and sunlight. "Where have you been?"

"Went for a brew when James got belayed."

The actor has been playing to an empty theatre. "Oh!"

With a shout of delight from the belay high on Original Route James declares this the best route he's done on High Tor.

"Only 5c this pitch."

Remove all the anchors and follow James's chalk marks across Flaky Wall to find the moves on Supersonic as hard as I did last year. There's a lot of climbing on this route. Grab the big jugs and whoops . . . not much for the feet I see, and the traverse into Original Route is as enjoyable as the crux, right up to the final, whoops again, awkward! Downwards swing into good old Original which years ago was my finest moment. We ignored the final pitch; the day was wearing on. (What's he planning now?) Because as I pulled over the grass and brought James up the last thirty feet I could almost see his mind at work.

"I'll abseil for that nut."

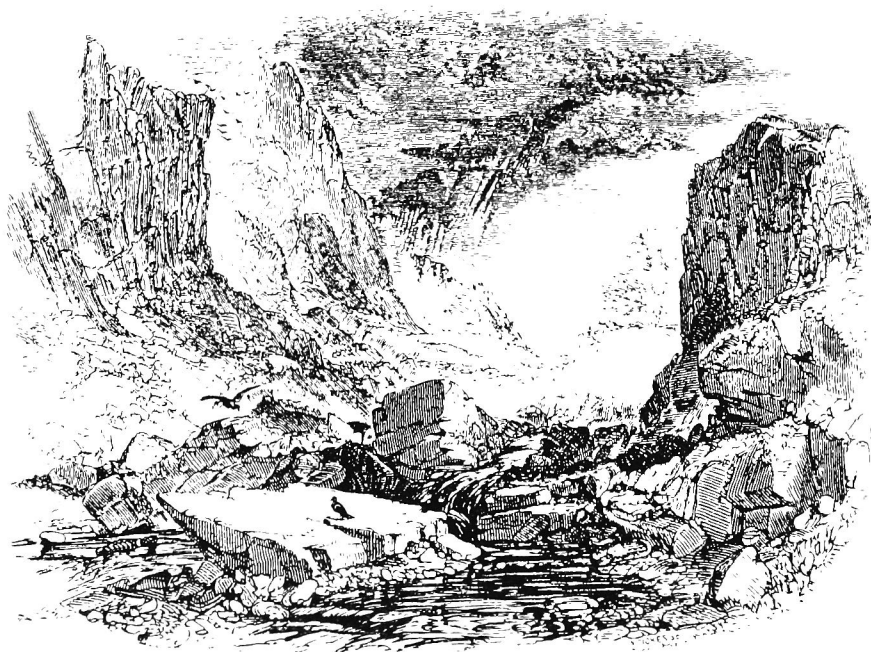
(Yes, it'll save you walking round . . .) "No, it's alright, I clipped it, I'll abseil." (And it'll save me walking round.)

"Well I'm all ready now."

The peaked cap slid over the edge and I watched the abseil rope flatten the brambles on top of the finest crag in the Peak. An inspiring climb on perfect rock. Why did they call it Decadence? And why only one star in the guide? And 6a, certainly harder than others in the area. But then, let others sort that out. Two coiled ropes and a slippery descent later and my arms were ready for Matlock Bath and the cafe.

"Good warm-up route, that. Fancy a quick do at Castellán?"

(Where does he get all this energy? . . .) "Bugger off—I'll hold your ropes though, if you want to do the roof." Which I did; and he did it; and Jed got the photos; but who wants to read about a big brute overhang?



PASS OF LLANBERIS.

## PEN-Y-GWRYD

*This excerpt from 'Gwaith Glaslyn' by Carneddog, was originally published in Welsh in 1914. It was translated by the late Elfed Thomas, historian and poet, of Nant Peris, and given to the present Hon. Secretary in 1976. It is reproduced here by kind permission of his family.*

“Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?”

Shakespeare, Henry IV, Act III, Scene I.

Pen-y-Gwryd is probably the best known of all mountain inns in the British Isles.

In the year, 1914, a pamphlet ‘Reminiscences of Pen-y-Gwryd’, by C.E. Mathews, sometime President of the Alpine Club was printed for private distribution i.e. to the Climbers of the period.

C.E. Mathews was a learned judge, a gentleman and a skilled climber. Referring to Pen-y-Gwryd, he asked the question, “Is there another inn in the British Isles so hospitable? Falstaff would have been at home here.”

Judge Mathews went on—“The visitor is welcomed here as a friend—at all times. Mr. Henry Owen and his wife are wonderful hosts. I visited Pen-y-Gwryd in the spring of 1854. In April 1901 I was the only guest. I attempted to climb Snowdon, although the snow lay deep between Llyn Glas and the summit. I was forced to retreat and returned to Pen-y-Gwryd to realise the changes which had taken place over the years. The kind, familiar faces had disappeared.

Where was Mrs. Pritchard who had made such delicious sweet cakes? Where was Henry Owen and his wonderful wife? Where were their daughters, Catherine and Jane, the most efficient and courteous waitresses ever? Where were my old climbing friends of Snowdon, the Lliwedd, the Crib Goch, the Siabod—and the heights of Carneddau, Dafydd and the Glyder? Time and tide had taken them away! In my

loneliness I can conjure up their ghosts, their dear faces, even the clasp of their hands and their hearty laughter.”

After 40 years at Pen-y-Gwryd. Mr. Henry Owen died in 1891, followed by his wife in 1896. Both were buried in the ancient churchyard of Beddgelert. Their admirers, members of the Alpine Club, had this tablet put up in the church:

‘To the memory of Henry Owen, for 44 years landlord of the inn at Pen-y-Gwryd, and guide to Snowdon.

In business, upright and courteous,

In service, strong and patient,

In friendship, simple and sincere.

This tribute is erected by old friends who knew and honoured him.’

By 1914 all members of the Owen family had disappeared.

The literature in the Visitors’ Books of Pen-y-Gwryd is known to many poets and writers. Men of renown and note had contributed to these books. The first Visitors’ Book dates back to 1854. Seven others followed. Unfortunately, these valuable records have been misused and maltreated by the vandals of the period. Pages and extracts have been stolen.

Fortunately the remains of these eight books were collated and beautifully bound by loving hands. They are now (1914) in the possession of Mr. J.W. Hawkins, Master of the Supreme Court. In these books you will find the names of dozens of students, lecturers and professors from Oxford and Cambridge. The subjects dealt with were varied: climbs, botany and geology.

Some tragedies on the mountains were recorded. A Mr. Alfred Evans died on Lliwedd in 1888. Messrs. W. Owen, Griffith Williams and Evan Evans brought down the body of Mr. J. Mitchell of Oxford. There were valuable notes on The Devil’s Kitchen by Mr. Owen Glyn Jones, who later lost his life on the Dent Blanche.

It was Charles Kingsley, with his friends Froude, Tom Hughes and Tom Taylor who really put Pen-y-Gwryd on the map. Kingsley had been there several times before his friends. Then, the inn consisted of one parlour, facing towards Beddgelert, and two bedrooms. In one of his letters to a friend, Kingsley described Pen-y-Gwryd as ‘The divinest pigsty beneath the canopy’.

In April 1856, he wrote to Tom Hughes, “My dear old lad, Froude cannot go with us. So, are you willing to go to Snowdon? Buy the two sheets of the Ordnance Map (I’ll go share in pence), then, send ’em on

to me in the coat-pocket of one Hughes Esq., from a Saturday night to Monday morning, and we will talk it out."

'There is no inn in Snowdon which is not awful dear,  
Excepting Pen-y-Gwryd (you can't pronounce it dear);  
Which standeth in the meeting of noble valleys three,  
One is the vale of Gwynant, so well beloved by me;  
One goes to Capel Curig, and I can't mind its name;  
And one is at Llanberis Pass, which all men know the same.'

Later in the month, Kingsley wrote to Tom Hughes,—'Of all men on earth I should like to have Tom Taylor for a third. Entreat him to make it possible, and I can show him views of the big stone work which no mortal Cockney knows, because, though the whole earth has been given to the children of men, none but we jolly fishers get the plums and raisins of it, by the rivers which run among the hills and the lakes which sit atop thereof.'

On August 11th, 1856, the three friends were fishing in Llyn Llydaw, slept the night in Capel Curig, and returned to Pen-y-Gwryd highly pleased with their fishing expedition.

About this time, several letters appeared in a Caernarvon newspaper as to the possibilities or otherwise of climbing up and over Snowdon in winter. Most of the arguments were against, because of the obvious dangers.

But two agile farmers, a John Emwnt, Glan-yr-Afon, and Francis Roberts, Cae'r Gors, were in the habit, even in the dead of winter, of hunting foxes in this area.

Just before the Christmas of 1860, the Professors Tyndall and Huxley reached the summit even though the snow lay deep on the ground.

At Christmas-time 1873, a Mr. and Mrs. Taylor of London, guided by Mr. Owen, took to the Miners' Track on horseback. How they managed to reach 'The Saddle' remains a mystery. The snow was deep. From 'The Saddle' they had to battle against a freezing north wind. It was impossible to reach the summit of Snowdon. The storm drove them helter-skelter to Llanberis.

In January 1870, a number of learned friends of the Alpine Club met at Pen-y-Gwryd to form a Welsh Alpine Club. Their intention was to climb and survey Snowdon and the surrounding mountains in winter. There would be an annual meeting of the club at Christmas time. That gentlemen of the calibre of Judge Mathews and his friends

climbed Snowdon in the depths of winter over a period of 30 years, is ample proof of their love for nature in its harshest mood.

Herewith some reminiscences of Pen-y-Gwryd by the learned gentleman. 'I first visited P-y-G in 1854, then again in 1861. Between those years I made several climbing excursions in Switzerland. But, in 30 years of climbing, not once did I reach Glyder Fawr from Llyn Idwal. If I told you the number of times I climbed Snowdon you would not believe me.

Of this I am certain; I and Mr. Adams-Reilly, were the first climbers ever to tackle Snowdon annually and in winter. On one occasion Judge Mathews and Mr. Reilly were joined by Frederick Morshead from Winchester. Unfortunately, not for their peace of mind, other less intrepid souls stayed at the inn. Under an entry made in the Visitors' Book by the three climbers, an outsider had remarked, "What an ass a fellow must be to come to such a place in January!"

This was the time when the 'Society of Welsh Rabbits' was formed. Its main object was to explore the Snowdon area in winter. The society's coat-of-arms was designed by Mr. Adams-Reilly, an expert artist.

Mountaineering was not always the topic of conversation. One afternoon the discussion was 'The Idylls of the King'. From that day onwards Jane and Catherine Owen, the two daughters of Henry Owen, were baptised as Enid and Gwenhwyfar.

In the Saturday Review, on the 6th January, 1861, there appeared an article on 'The Ascent of Snowdon in Winter'—by Professor Tyndall. Accompanied by Professor Huxley, and led by a guide, Robert Hughes, they had successfully reached the summit of Snowdon under atrocious wintry conditions. The panoramic view was breathtaking

In 1870 ice-axes were first introduced by Mr. A.W. Moore and Mr. R.S. Macdonald, from the Foreign Office.

On April 2nd, 1855, Messrs. Dent, Walker, Morshead and Mortimer, stayed at Pen-y-Gwryd with Professor Tyndall. The famous Alpine guide, Melchior Anderegg, was also of the party. Tyndall, who knew the district best, led the party. Reaching Crib Goch, Anderegg advised them to return. As he remarked, when he saw glimpses of Snowdon enveloped in snow and mist, "It will take us 6 hours to reach the summit." Tyndall would not agree, "It will take us one hour," he insisted. In 70 minutes they were safely on top.







*Above: Outside the 'Olde Robin Hood', 1931.*

*Photo: Byne collection.*

*Below: The remnants of the old Sheffield Climbing Club. E. Blakeley, G. Walker, A. Heath. In front, B. Connelly.*

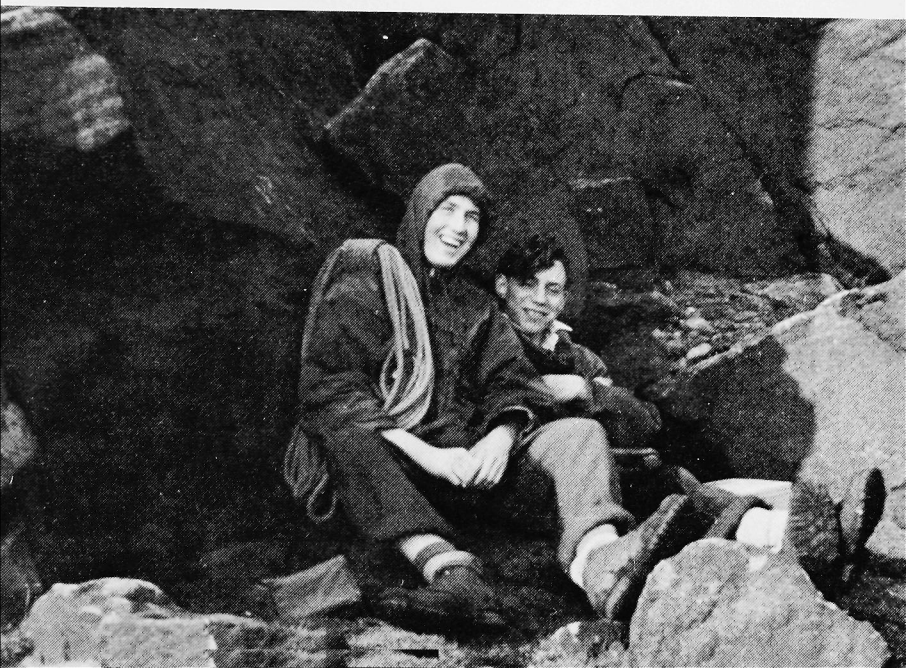
*Photo: F. Burgess*



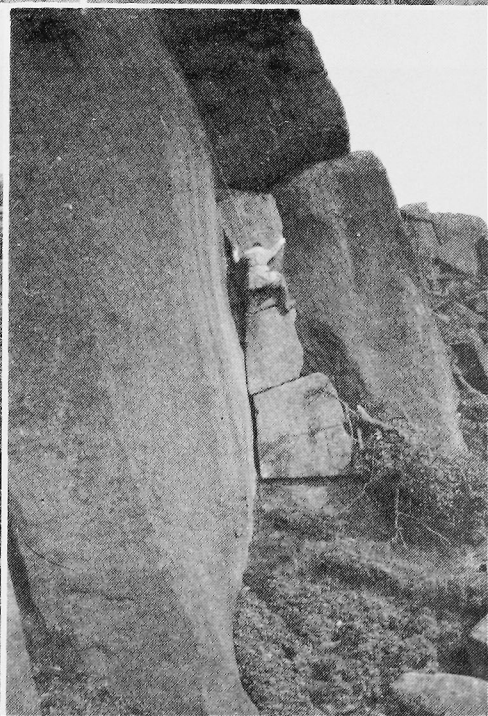
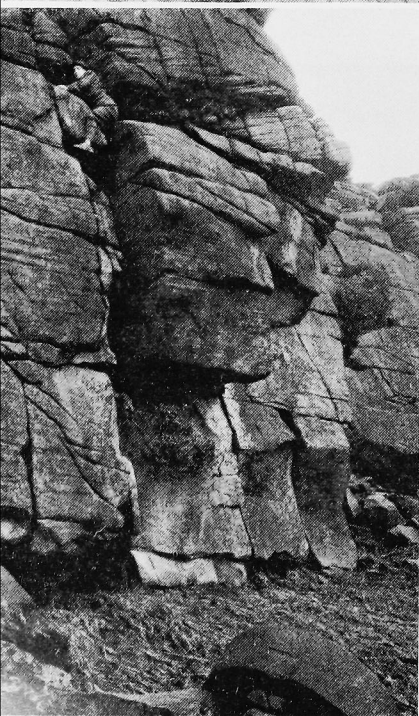
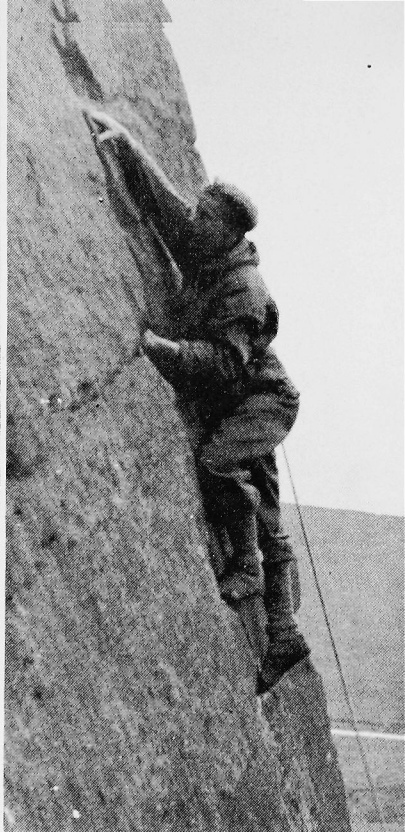
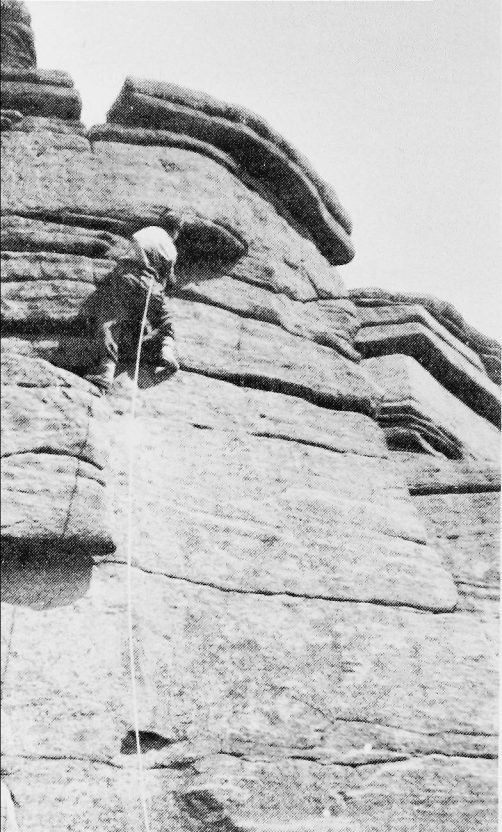


*Above: In the Barn, Chatsworth, Sept. 1930. Frank Reddican, Caleb Salt, Eric Byne.  
Photo: Byne collection.*

*Below: Two modern Sheffield 'Tigers'. P.G. Titterton and R. Briggs.  
Photo: Byne collection.*







Other lovers of P.y.G. are mentioned:— Haskett Smith, Bowring, Burrows, Williams, Haliday, Bryant, Kidson, Corbett, Thomson and Turner. Scores of younger members were also attracted to P.y.G. and the mountains. Notabilities and scholars found their way there—Lord Coleridge, Robert Gregory, Lewis T. Dibdin, Augustine Birrell, Tyndall, Huxley, Dakyns, Prickard, Henry Kingsley, W.F. Short, Hastings, Carson, Gladstone, Mathesons, Lyttleton, Glynn, Bloxhams and Hawkins were frequent visitors.

More than half of the professors and dons of our universities left their marks here. Scholars of renown left records in the Visitors' Books in English, Welsh, French, German, Greek, Latin and Armenian.

(Also see *Mountaineering in Britain* by Clark and Pyatt, pages 39 and 48. Ed.)

### Quote

'Mick Fowler supposedly reckoned that Andromeda Strain was dangerous and went on to suggest that perhaps it was the most dangerous route that he had done.' Clearly it is a route which is beyond our current grading system.

*Opp: Top Left: J. Brown on 1st ascent of Right Unconquerable. Photo: E. Phillips.  
Bottom Left: Bill Humphrey on Eckhard's Chimney, 1913. Photo: A. Schaaning.  
Bottom Right: A.W. Boyd on Hollybush Gully, 1913. Photo: A. Schaaning.*

# ZEN IN THE ART OF CLIMBING

DAVID HOPKINS

Imagine. Place yourself below a crux—any crux as long as it taunts, tightens your breath and dampens your palm; remember the protection barely adequate wafting gently too many feet below; and recall the cramped position with you not resting, holding as lightly yet as determinedly as you can with the forearms slowly pumping. Have you placed yourself? Can you think yourself back into that familiar enticing yet fearful situation? This is rock climbing's quintessential paradigm case. Are you now there? Good. Let your mind take you slowly and self-consciously through those next moments, minutes or hours until the adrenalin leads you gently back down, and your world is filled with euphoria the pink-golden all conquering glow that makes the moment all alright, and allows you for that instant to be invincible as you dance and velvet foot up the easier rocks above. Hold that time before you—those stand-still moments when past and future coalesce to add counterpoint to existence. Hold the experience and let us explore the meaning.

If I am right and leading the crux of a route near the limit of one's ability provides us with 'rock climbing's quintessential paradigm case', then analysing our behaviour during that period of time should illuminate in a powerful way some of the essential qualities of our sport. At least that is what I hope; in any case it is this idea that provides the impetus for this brief essay.

Reading first-hand accounts of rock climbs is becoming an increasingly boring and fruitless enterprise. In the same way as expedition books tend to follow a characteristically banal formula (vide Dave Roberts in *Ascent*, Vol. III, 1980), so do descriptions of modern rock climbs. Young, bronzed leader after months spent on the local climbing wall or boulder 'wiring' his (sic!) perception of the crux moves (a time during which all others have failed spectacularly at 'his' chosen line) finally approaches the route. Resplendent in white denims our hero (oops, sorry! leader) performs his pre-route ritual, chinks up, makes a quick inspection of his rack and with an assured

glance at his second, launches himself at the initial moves of the route. All of this is described in a terse, modest style and so it continues until the crux is reached. Now the narrative expands to gladiatorial proportions. The stage is set to describe in minute detail the major actors; our leader and his opponent—the fearful, overhanging, undercut, poorly-protected (friendless?), crack that looms and leans above. The first tentative forays are described, as the combatants take each other's measure (a sort of rock foreplay), and then our leader realises that his sequence of moves are THE ones and with confidence inspired by months of practice/reading he climbs/describes in utterly precise technical movements/language the exact sequence of moves needed to overcome the enemy. The rest of the climb/article is anticlimatic, the climax has come . . . and gone, and the episode peters out. And so it is with minor and increasingly unethical variations such as yo-yoing, wiring moves on a top rope or pre-placing protection on crags, and in magazines and journals throughout the western world. I suppose it is to be expected: climbing has reached a stage of development where mainstream societal values increasingly impose themselves on a sport that revels in technical sophistication and that has a penchant for over-emphasising the role of individual psychology. So it is inevitable that many articles propound values which emphasise rationally, man versus nature, analytic empiricism, and evaluation in terms of normative performance criteria.

What I find even more disturbing is the ubiquity of these values. Even such sensitive, creative, articulate, and deep thinking climbers as Royal Robbins and Jim Perrin write in this way. Remember Robbins' creative little piece in the back of *Advanced Rockcraft* where he describes a new route he did at Lovers' Leap with (the equally ubiquitous) Ken Wilson. In describing the crux section Robbins wrote:

'There had to be a way. And then I saw it: The problem was that if I attempted to stand up with my foot on the center grey knob, my arm would be bending. It would take strength to pull up, and worse, as I got higher, there would be an outward pull on my fingers, and they might slip. If I could keep my arm straight . . . I was breathing hard in anticipation of the effort. Soon I was ready. I had to go. I sank my fingers in the grey knob. My toes moved to the smudges below: left foot, right, left, then the right leg arching up and the foot carefully set on the now familiar centre knob. I pulled



forward toward that foot, and up, reaching to my limit, fingers on the edge. I had it. Then . . . easy . . . I pivoted a bit, arching my back, getting more weight on the right foot, and keeping my right arm, its fingers gripping the high edge, extended. With a quick movement I took the fingers of my left hand from their grip and—this was the worst moment—turned my hand around and pressed the heel of it down on the sloping hold. I could then push on my left hand, gaining six critical inches, and could move my other hand up and right to, as I had guessed, a more secure edge. My total being was focused on that right hand, and it pulled me up, up, until I could remove my left hand and replace it with my left foot. Phew, heavy duty!’<sup>1</sup>

Even Perrin, that cavalier romantic endlessly epicurean epithet-giver described the crux of Vector (of all climbs!) in this way:

‘. . . the crux area, hanging over your head, a great curved blade of rock, thin edged, fretted, rust coloured, the ochre slab; a strange name for an overhanging groove. Hard to leave the Pinnacle behind, a body lean, kick round into balance and teeter upwards, hand groping for a long rounded hold; a treacherous, unwashed ally, grease spattered from this roasting spit of a crux. Tiny footholds, aching calves, a move to be made . . . breathless move up, convulsive, the tiniest footholds; an excruciating hand change, layback, bridge, and you’re on the ochre slab at an old bent peg. Nothing more beautiful.’<sup>2</sup>

But I want you to remember the experience, then search for the meaning and now ask yourself: Is it really like that?

In the space that remains I want to argue that rock-climbing is not like that. But if it is like that to you, then the contemporary and normative emphasis on technology, rationality, ends-means thinking, performance criteria, and one dimensionality has subverted climbing’s essential values, and reduced it to a sterile series of unemotional acrobatic movements. You may have had the experience, but you have missed the meaning.

Let’s do it again. Leader approaches crux—it still taunts, the throat still tightens and the palms still sweat: protection waves back from below, the non-resting position is cramped and you are tiring too quickly. You move up cautiously, tentatively probing the way ahead, the solution blurs, your mind cannot think that far, return to non-rest, the feet are cramping and relax as you will the pumping steadily

increases in the forearms. The breathing shallows and you move up once again, but still you cannot see beyond the strait gate. Anxiety increases, you wonder how long you can continue to non-rest, you move up from foot to foot and consider retreating, but then remember how poor that runner is waving up at you from below.

“David, relax, calm down, take a deep breath, you have been here before, relax into the rock, let it calm you, you know you can do it, remember all those other times, calm . . . now go with it.” Less tentatively I move up, commitment increases with movement until I am embroiled in the crux and go through the right passage; a series of timeless moments, a series of intelligent precise yet unconscious and unknown actions, a rock-conforming dance and emerge joyful, the master and the servant of the dance.

That’s how it is with me, not always, but often enough to know that that is how it can be. What I am saying is that climbing is in its most profound form a spiritual act. Spirituality, in the sense that I am using it here, implies an individual state where conscious technical ability has been absorbed into the intrinsic discipline of the activity; where the essence of you, the climber, is meshed with the essence of your art, climbing. Of course we can climb ‘unspiritually’ and not feel what I have just described; but when that happens societal values have intervened, the one dimensionality that has invaded other potentially spiritual activities (skiing, perhaps) has done the same for climbing. Climbing is a multi-dimensional textured and liberating experience, but it seems to me that we are losing much of its richness.

Let me contrast this example with my earlier and perhaps somewhat unfair stereotype of the modern rock climber. In both instances a climber approaches a crux that lies at the boundary of his (but it could be her) competence; there is hesitation, apprehension, commitment and then the crux is efficiently climbed. If we were there, personal idiosyncracies aside, we would be observing similar events. Yet scratch below the surface and they are worlds apart. In the first instance climber and rock are in opposition, the former overcomes because of sheer technical efficiency, and the performance is measured in terms of normative criteria, 5.6, 5.12, or whatever. In the latter example, climber and rock suffuse to create the experience, success is a function of transcending technical competence, and evaluation is authenticated in action.

Pirsig makes a similar distinction in ‘Zen and the Art of Motorcycle

Maintenance’:

‘Phaedrus never reached the mountain. After the third day he gave up, exhausted, and the pilgrimage went on without him. He said he had the physical strength but that physical strength wasn’t enough. He had the intellectual motivation but that wasn’t enough either. He didn’t think he had been arrogant but thought that he was undertaking the pilgrimage to broaden HIS experience, to gain understanding for HIMSELF. He was trying to use the mountain for his own purposes and the pilgrimage too. He regarded himself as the fixed entity, not the pilgrimage or the mountain, and thus wasn’t ready for it. He speculated that the other pilgrims, the ones who reached the mountain, probably sensed the holiness of the mountain so intensely that each footstep was an act of devotion, an act of submission to this holiness. The holiness of the mountain infused into their own spirits enabled them to endure far more than anything he, with his greater physical strength, could take.’<sup>3</sup>

To the untrained eye ego-climbing and selfless climbing may appear identical. Both kinds of climbers place one foot in front of the other. Both breathe in and out at the same rate. Both stop when tired. Both go forward when rested. But what a difference!

For me the most succinct expression of the essence of Zen has been put by D.T. Suzuki in his introduction to Eugen Herigel’s beautiful little book ‘Zen in the Art of Archery’:

‘If one really wishes to be master of an art, technical knowledge of it is not enough. One has to transcend technique so that the art becomes an “artless art” growing out of the Unconscious.

In the case of Archery, the hitter and the hit are no longer two opposing objects, but are one reality. The archer ceases to be conscious of himself as the one who is engaged in hitting the bull’s eye which confronts him. This state of unconsciousness is realised only when, completely empty and rid of the self, he becomes one with the perfecting of his technical skill, though there is in it something of a quite different order which cannot be attained by any progressive study of the art.’<sup>4</sup>

The use of the word ‘transcend’ is important in this context. In conceptualising climbing in this way I am not denying the importance of technical ability, but it is only a starting point, and I believe that the over-emphasis on technique inserts a wedge between the experience and meaning of climbing. The Zen-climber (to use Pirsig’s phrase)

transcends technique to become one with the rock. The self-conscious reification of individual achievement so characteristic of modern-day rock-climbing has no place in Zen climbing. Rather, it is the subjugation of self, the unconscious blending of skill and environment, that leads to the inevitable certain movement of climber across rock. Inevitability too is an important word, for the pattern within which we act and suffer is broader than we know, and once committed the outcome cannot be in doubt, the dance leads over the crux as surely, deliberately and inextricably as the arrow finds the bull's-eye. To use my friend Bill Sumner's felicitous phrase, commitment implies 'following time's arrow along its only path.'<sup>5</sup>

Bernard Amy's essay 'The greatest climber in the world'<sup>6</sup> illuminates this theme well. In it he tells of Tronc Feuillu, an archetypal Zen climber who, having astounded the climbing world with his ascent of the direct North Face of Mount Rekwal, retires to meditation whilst his companions continue to make other climbs. Amy's meeting with Tronc Feuillu involved the ascent of a flawless ochre-coloured 20-foot high granite boulder. So complete was Tronc Feuillu's meditative preparation for the ascent of the boulder, that as he moved towards it his feet did not crush the blades of the grass but gently parted them. The climb itself was executed so effortlessly and economically, that the elegance of the movements served to erase the very inertia of those movements. Later Tronc Feuillu tells Amy of Chi-Ch'ang who aspired to become the greatest climber in the world. Despite his consummate technical skill Chi-Ch'ang lacked humility and self-discipline, and the story tells of long years of preparation under the guidance of two great masters, first Wei-Fei and latterly Kan Ying where Chi-Ch'ang is gradually stripped of his ego involvement in climbing, and learns how to concentrate, to see, and to become one with the mountain. So complete and extended is this preparation (which incidentally came after Chi Ch'ang's achievement of the highest of technical skill) that Chi Ch'ang eventually merited the accolade 'the greatest climber in the world'; but paradoxically it is only then that Chi Ch'ang realises that 'the ultimate stage of climbing is not to climb' and true enough his transcendence is so complete that he never climbs again.

As I wrote those last words I could imagine some readers feeling that although Amy's essay may be an attractive parable, it is just too fanciful and is basically irrelevant to contemporary rock-climbing.

But wait—think of John Gill, that ‘master of rock’, and his unroped first ascent of ‘The Thimble’, probably the most serious, difficult and mystical of his legacy of climbs. Having mastered the lower section of the climb, Gill prepares for the complete ascent and describes it thus:

‘Eventually I worked myself into such a fevered pitch that I committed myself to the top portion and very fortunately made it. It’s like a lot of other sporting activities. You not only get psyched up but almost become hypnotised or mesmerised to the point where your mind goes blank, and you climb by well-cultivated instinct. You do it.’<sup>7</sup>

Gill is here describing a similar experience to Amy’s story of Tronc Feuillu and the ochre-coloured boulder. Gill in fact is a similarly mystical figure; witness his commitment and dedication to bouldering as an art form, his unassuming distaste for publicity, and his wonderfully unending quest for form and purity of movement on rock.

Talking about Gill and the meditative aspect of his climbing, Yvon Chouinard commented:

‘. . . climbing is still in a stage of pure physical movement, and the next is going to be mind control. I think Gill has already gone into that from watching him prepare for a boulder, even in the late ’50’s. I would walk up to a boulder and just do it. He would sit below a route, do his little breathing exercises . . . getting his mind calmed down and his body ready to go. You’re going to have to use meditation and Yoga to be able to get up some of the new climbs, because pure physical strength or technique are not going to be enough.’<sup>8</sup>

So perhaps Amy’s Zen fable is not as fanciful as it may appear. Yet Chouinard’s comments worry me, because he implies that Yoga and meditation should be used as a means of increasing achievement, as a way to enhance technical ability, rather than for spiritual or transcendental purposes. His comments still lie within the normative paradigm, and once again the meaning may be lost.

Here the essay must end, for to say more would stretch beyond my competence and be doing what I am implicitly arguing against. But let me briefly restate the argument. Leading (or soloing) the crux of a climb near the limit of our ability provides us with ‘rock-climbing’s quintessential paradigm case’. This is where it’s at: And it is here that the essential qualities of the sport are most clearly etched. Modern









rock-climbing values individual achievement, rationally and increasing technical competence. These emphases, which reflect contemporary societal norms, ignore the emotional and spiritual context in which we are inevitably grounded, and also perhaps the reality that we individually experience. Viewing climbing as an activity that transcends technical ability, that acts in concert with nature (external and our own), that seeks to subjugate the self, and that combines our essence with the essence of our art, produces values of a different and more lasting quality. We are fortunate that climbing is an activity that allows us to dig deep, to have the experience and to own the meaning: it is a pity if we do not use it in that way.

Footnotes: 1. Royal Robbins, *Advanced Rockcraft*, 1973, p.90. 2. *Hard Rock*, 1975, p. 157. 3. R.M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 1974, pp. 205-206. 4. D.T. Suzuki, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, 1971, p. vi. 5. Bill Summer, *Ascent 2 : 2*, 1974, p. 63. 6. Bernard Amy, *The Games Climbers Play*, 1978, pp. 55-69. 7. John Gill, *The Master of Rock*, 1977, pp. 109-110. 8. Yvor Chouinard in Ament, op.p. 74.

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# ADVICE TO YOUNGER MEMBERS

In these days of shorts, T-shirts and chalk bags it is perhaps time to whip the younger generation back in to line with some sound words of advice. Consequently the following words of wisdom should be digested and acted upon. The extracts incidentally come from a rare booklet entitled 'Some Cumbrian Climbs and Equipment' by Richard Watson Hall who acknowledges the invaluable help given to him by fellow members of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. To preserve inter-club peace it should be mentioned that this undated publication first appeared circa 1920. Ed.

## EQUIPMENT

Breeches should be of stout, closely woven tweed, with a patch of corduroy over each knee.

Next a stout woollen shirt with no collar.

Waistcoats are a nuisance.

Of hats much might be written. Perhaps for general use an old soft felt hat with a wide brim is the best; although I am inclined to think that the old style J.W. Robinson cap with ear protectors and a 'neb' back and front (a sort of deer stalking affair), is best; but these are of such extraordinary appearance, and now so unusual that some courage is needed to wear them, at least until one gets into the further wilds.

Any other garments or under-garments not mentioned are unnecessary, for as a rule climbing is very hot work.

It is obvious that the climber's rope must be of the best material (hard pressed 'Manilla'). Ancient cart ropes must not be used! A leather waist belt is useful in hot weather to sling one's coat in over one's shoulder and carry thus.

In choosing an ice axe see that the ash haft is free from knots in the wood. My own axe is a very ponderous weapon . . .

Rucksacks should be sufficiently large to hold a complete change of clothes, and should have one small pocket outside for food. Do not

forget to put a pair of stout warm bedroom slippers in the rucksack . . . I like to wear them to sleep in instead of heavy boots . . .

At one time I used to contend that camping in Cumberland was too dangerous owing to the wet, but this opinion I have altered. I think I base the view on what John Wilson Robinson said about it. He once camped out, high up in the Great Doup under Pillar Stone, and though I cannot remember him denouncing camping, I have a hazy idea he did not recommend it.

The four tent poles are of bamboo.

The ground sheet I use is made of very good American oilcloth, with the oiled side to the ground, and over this I spread an old quilt, which prevents one's nails destroying the oilcloth. I prefer sleeping in my day clothes, to changing into night attire, and then have a good scrub all over next morning.

It is a good plan to keep food, milk, eggs etc. in large square biscuit tins, which may be bought from any grocer or confectioner. Three or four of these tins packed in a box carry sufficient food for three men for a week.

A man requires 2lb of food per day, 1lb of which must be meat, and 1lb bread, or to bring it to terms of purely raw material—1lb of flesh and 1lb of corn; or to be more poetic, herds of cattle and acres of golden grain are necessary for the sustenance of mankind.

One gallon of paraffin will last three men ten days.

Lime juice cordial is a healthy drink.

Be sure to have plenty of good fat bacon and eggs for breakfast always, and oatmeal porridge with lots of cream.

Remember always to air your rugs when it is a fine dry day—air them every day if possible.

If the site chosen for the tent has long grass growing on it, cut this down before putting down the ground sheet.

See that your water supply is freshly running, and that no dead sheep pollute the stream.

Should any signs of sickness, colds, coughs, or any other disease, however slight, break out, return home instantly and report to a Doctor telling him where you have been and all about it.

## SOME CLIMBS

South East Gulley, Great End . . . The other pitches are not sufficiently decided, nor of so forceful a character as to have impressed

themselves on my climbing memory.

Slab and Notch Route . . . 'The Slab' (there is only one slab in all England and this is it, of course!) faces one. A great deal was written about the exact angle of the slab in the early days of J.W. Robinson and other Pioneers. Whatever the angle was then, it is the same now, and can be known by referring to the climbing books.

Grassmoor Gullies . . . much beautiful vegetation, and, in the season, innumerable bleaberries.

In wet weather, when this pitch becomes a waterfall, climb up the Holly Tree itself, on the left.

Scawfell Chimney . . . Pitch follows pitch fairly regularly. The correct outlet is over the big square block of stone at the top, but this I have not done. There is another outlet on the right, a little below the block, but the only way I have myself got out is to return to the foot of the chimney by the way I climbed up.

Deep Ghyll . . . I found a rucksack a great nuisance, and left it there, to be found and forwarded by Gaspard, the Swiss Guide of Wasdale, a few days later.

Green Crag Gully . . . After being beaten back by the water which usually pours down this otherwise fine climb . . .

Lower Kern Knotts . . . The disadvantage is that it is not a definite course, in the sense that it is just out on the mountain face, and it is an easy matter to walk up one side of the climb and throw down a rope. Were this enjoyable climb in a gully, it would be an exceedingly good pitch, but the fact of it being isolated in this fashion, makes it too easy to throw down a rope from the top . . .

Kern Knotts Chimney . . . From the boulder the way is up a very fine slab, with minute finger holds, and for about 4 feet the position is exposed, and in a strong wind must be dangerous; when the writer passed that way it was dry and without much wind. After this the climb disappears in the mountain face.

The Great Central Gully (Ennerdale Face of Gable Crag) . . . take a traverse to the right and look at the remains of old Moses' whisky hide. This old man lived 100 years ago, and is reported to have distilled illicit whisky, for the safe carrying of which he made a well-cairned and engineered track over Brandreth, used to this day. He must have been one of the earliest rock climbers, though he probably dumped his whisky down the easy scree gully just above his ancient hide, yet to give him evidence on the other side again, it is only fair to say that

there is an exceedingly difficult climb, 'Smugglers' Chimney' immediately below old Moses store, up which, if he climbed, he could boast more than my party of four, for we were thoroughly beaten in our attempt to climb it, and that without the added difficulty of whisky transport!

. . . This hard pitch requires a great deal of strength; the strain on the clothes alone is great, and in the writer's passage of it he noticed a button which some former climber had shed, owing doubtless to the rigours of the struggle.

Birkness Gully . . . As the leader's climbing covers (usually) the same route as the remaining men, the writer purposes describing his work.

. . . Birkness Gully took us five hours to do.

Stack Gill, Buttermere . . . The next pitch was over 80 feet high, and the last man had to unrope, owing doubtless to lack of rope, but as the writer was the last man he can assure the reader he was in a proper position . . .

. . . At one point a 'shoulder' is very helpful. A 'shoulder' in this sense often means a 'head' as well. The writer was, as has already been said, the last man, so there was no friendly shoulder for him at this part of the climb. The man immediately above him on the rope was a jovial, easy-going climber of 13 stones, who required a 'shoulder'—the writer's shoulder. Besides being heavy and jovial he seemed to be in no hurry, but chose deliberately and carefully the exact and most comfortable part of that shoulder on which to rest his iron-shod boot.

. . . It took us six hours to accomplish Stack Gill.

Easter Gully, Doe Crag . . . When one comes to the Great Amphitheatre of rocks, with Broadrick's and Hopkinson's cracks opposite, a feeling of insignificance comes over the climber (if he be an ordinary climber like the writer) as he looks at these terrible passages, two of the worst and hardest, not only in England, but the World.

Pillar Rock (by North Face) . . . Perhaps, as a climb, the grandest of any, taking into account difficulty, length, and the unique problems. It took, so I have heard, a Pioneer, like Mr. W.P. Haskett-Smith, nine years to put the climb together . . . Yet today it is so well known, and has been so much written about, that, doubtless, a good climber could lead it after being led up himself only once.

Arrowhead Ridge (direct) . . . I reckon this to be the darkest and most dangerous climb I have been led up, though climbing books give it easier than Stack Gill.

# **“ALL HAIL TO RON!”**

**DAVE CUTHBERTSON**

It was the usual steamy scene, typical of Friday night in the ‘Pad’. All the hard men whisking through their halves, flexing their muscles and swilling out their chalk-caked mouths (some say that the beer’s only coloured water anyway!)

The door burst open and in walked the ‘Cromlech Cruiser’. Reaching for his half of orange, he nodded to the boys. “Anyone coming ticking, tomorrow?” Suddenly there were spaces; people making excuses and trying to drift unnoticed to the other ends of the bar-room. All except Smiler! “Where are you off then? Or rather, how many have you got left to do?” “Eleven, Smiler. How about you?” The few uneducated listeners soon realised that the conversation revolved around Ron James and his book, *Rock Climbing in Wales*.

Smiler was pleased as punch to be able to reply rather louder than usual, “Cracked the last one on Wednesday night!” The Cruiser grimaced as he realised that the race was over for the Number 3 spot. First was Ron himself, although the tickers would like to think that maybe he didn’t do them all. Then there was the ‘Puerile Ticker’. Smiler reflected on a grey day at Cidwm, when he thought he was going well, leading both pitches on Central Wall, (E.S.—), whereas Will knew different; he was ensuring a difficult Tick!

Now, just four weeks before the Alps, North West Buttress by Terrace Wall Variant (D/VD) on Tryfan, and the Girdle of the Lower Amphitheatre Wall (E.S.—) on Craig yr Ysfa, the final two were cracked, thanks to newcomer Colin, who, unlike the rest of the boys, hadn’t spent weekend after weekend on Glyder Fawr or the dreaded Lliwedd.

So, Number 3 spot belonged to Smiler. Hot on his heels were the Cruiser, Martin (who only had five to do, but they were E.S.— and most of them were on Cloggy), and Spike, who, with Paul from Clog, were plugging away to catch up although it is doubtful if they would ever admit it.

After all, there ARE 200 routes to Tick, most of them really good,

and yet some are on crags most weekenders never get to, such as West Butress (S) on Craig Lloer, or Little Woodhead (VS) on Craig Cwm Cywion. Try saying that after five or six pints in the Pad! Then there's Widdershins (S+) on Braich ty Ddu, and Flake Wall (VS+) on Nantlle y Garn.

Of course, you've got all the Pass classics to tick; all the old favourites on the Mot and the Three Cliffs. Ron even lets you use aid on some pitches that have gone free for years. So if you're seen pulling on a point say that you are just 'Ticking'.

Most Tickers have already done the classics in the Pass, on Cloggy, Cyn Las, the Wenallt and Tremadoc but paradise is when you find yourself on a wet afternoon on Overhanging Chimneys (VD+) on Cwm Silyn or aiding your way up Connie's Crack (HVS/A2) in the Crafnant (even though it now goes free at 6 something or other). And remember Ron had the Gogarth classics such as Dream (VS+) and Mousetrap (HVS) in his book first.

All this ticking calls for you to find a partner who is willing to follow you to the ends of the earth (and when you're trying to find the Vertical Vice pitch of Chasm Route (VD) on Glyder Fach, in the thick mist, sometimes it feels like the end of the earth); and of course, if you lose the route it means returning on another day. It's disappointing when you are trying to 'clear a crag' and you lose the way!

Being a True Ticker, you can't add the magic '✓' until you've done the route. Someone in the climbing world once said, (if you pull on a sling on a free route) "You only fool yourself in this game!" The rest of the climbing world are not concerned. If you're a true Ticker, it becomes impossible to fool even yourself into believing you've done the route.

Of course, it helps if you can 'do' a bit. On the harder routes of the book, the elusive Rosy Crucifixion (HVS+), the 'tottery' Central Gully Direct (HVS), the delicious Slabs of Rowan Tree Direct (HVS—) and the poorly protected Route 1 (E.S.—) on Suicide Wall. On all these you could do with Gogarth or Left Wall form, then your tick is almost pleasure after the effort to get there from the nearest road.

However, for most 'Tickers', it is the sheer joy of seeing the hard man's face in the pub on a Saturday night, after he's asked you what you did that day; you tell him, "Oh! Geoffrey Winthrop Young's Climb on Clogwyn Pen Llechan and, Angel Pavement, on Craig y



Bera."

Meanwhile, the word had got around the dimly lit bar-room. J.B. wanted Smiler's Ron book so it could be nailed (shut) to the bar. The Cruiser just smiled in agreement when Smiler shrugged his shoulders and replied, "All hail to Ron!"

P.S. The 'Martin' is Martin Crook. The 'Cromlech Cruiser' alias Anvil Supertick alias Paul Williams. The 'Puerile Ticker' is Will Hurford. Incidentally (23.5.81) I've just learnt he's only just done the Direct Finish to Bole Way, which means he hadn't done them all. Pictures: I've got none, which is why I suggest cartoons. (We haven't got any of those either! Ed.)

## PEMBROKESHIRE

According to E.C. Pyatt in the New Climbs and Notes of the 1951 C.C.J.:

'... The orthodox climbing possibilities do not compare with those of West Penwith; I saw no crag comparable with Chair Ladder.

... Many of the mainland cliffs, e.g. north of St. David's look climbable but plunge steeply down into deep water, so that some consideration might be given to the possibility of starting climbs from a boat.

... The cliff climber, as distinct from the mountain rock climber (who can always reach the foot of his rocks), might be justified in the use of rope ladders to pass vegetation covered rocks to reach rocks offering orthodox sports.

Of the rock types, limestone outcropping at wall angle is fine to look on, but hopeless to climb; limestone at slab angle can give pleasant short routes (e.g. at Lydstep).

... The walking, scrambling and bathing are first-class, while a new sport of cliff climbing may one day find extensive scope here based on some of the climbing unorthodoxies suggested. . . '

*Opp: Bill Wintrip on Carnage Left Hand, Malham.*

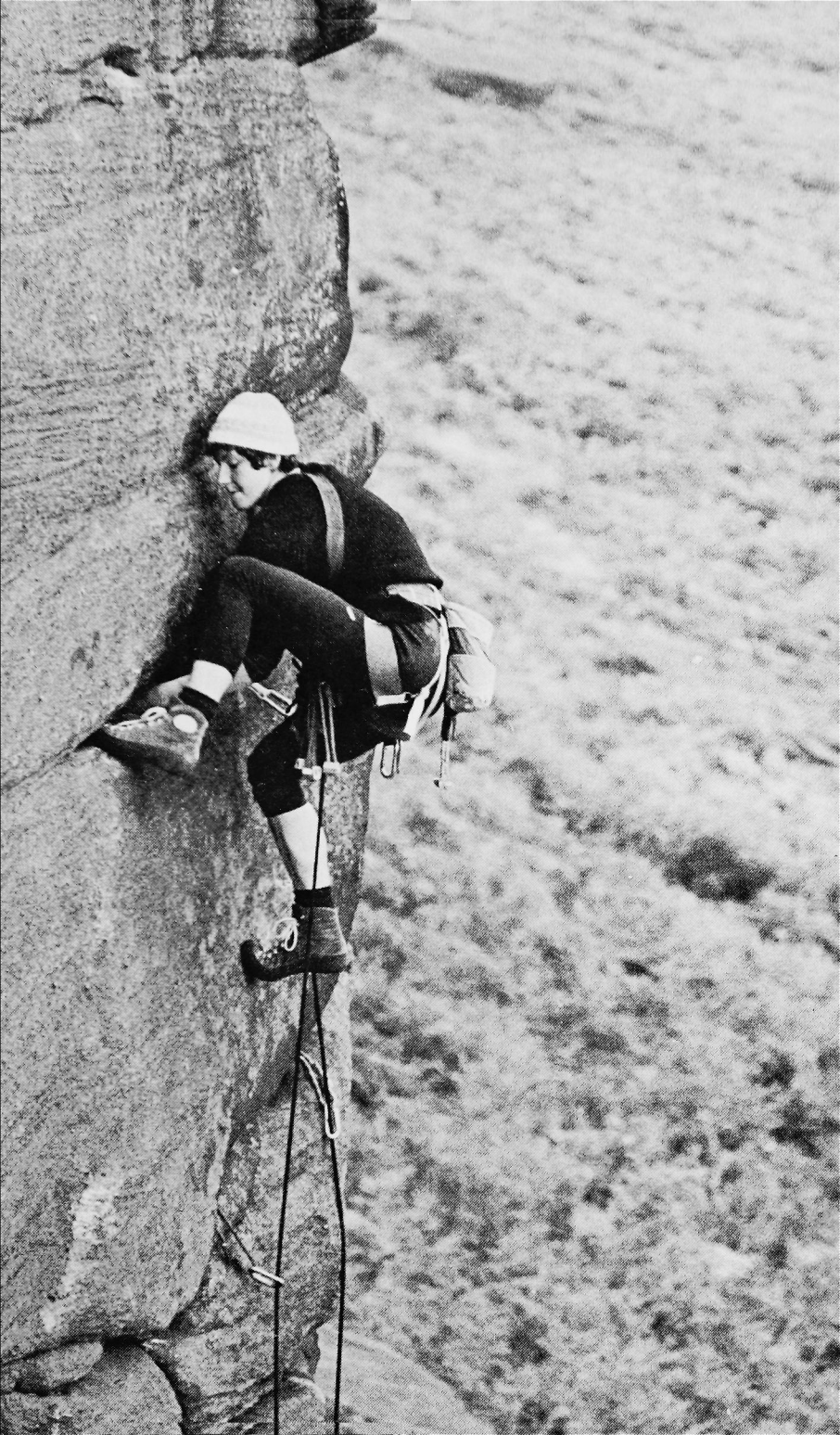
*Centre Left: Rab Carrington leading Heartless Hare, Froggatt.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*

*Photo: Ian Smith.*











# VENUES

JIM PERRIN

## 1. The Hanging Stone

Circumstances are important. It is a perfect spring day. I am sitting in a small Derbyshire house, hard at work marking up a typescript. A knock at the door, a girl outside, and between us at that time a certain thrill of curiosity. “Drive me to Swythamley Hall” she says and, glad to get out of the house, I willingly acquiesce. When we get there, she goes in to attend to her business, and I sit in the MG in the sun, hood down, my dog ranging the lawns, and get on with my work.

After an hour-and-a-half of intense, mind-blanking concentration, the work is done. B, as I shall call her, re-appears and we set off up the valley for a walk. Quite suddenly, beyond a wood, a striking gritstone buttress rears up. Reaching its foot, B and my dog scramble off up some steps leading round the side. I stand beneath looking up. Two plaques are set in the rock on either side of a nose. The buttress is forty or forty-five high, and on both sides at two-thirds height an easy traverse line leads back to the grassy slopes. Right at its top, on the prow of the buttress, a beautiful gritstone roof crack winks and leers. It looks about HVS.

Although I haven’t come prepared for any rock, I take off my jacket, tighten my trainees, and set-to on a technically difficult little wall past the right-hand plaque. It is all rather tenuous—feet slopping around in loose shoes and those in turn creeping slowly off the small holds. Obduracy and momentum see me through.

A little shaky from the lower wall, I move up to the roof. Putting in a jam, I bridge out and peer round the lip. A crack, awkwardly wide, continues for eight feet to the top. There is a flat hold. Leaning out, I explore its texture. Smooth rock, granular with lichen—using it without chalk from this angle doesn’t appeal. I swing back to the ledge. It seems a long way up, the ground below falling steeply away into the valley. To the right I could almost walk off. B and my dog cast shadows on the hillside as they stand atop the buttress. I think about giving it up, but cannot. There is a wilful assertion in my mind that

with rope, runners, EB's, chalk, it would all be so easy. I launch back out onto the roof and reach as high as I can from a squatting position, rocked right over on the good jam by the lip, but the best I can manage is an insecure fist-jam. A half-hearted pull before I think better of it and sag back down to cringe on the ledge. The red veil slowly draws down; I am getting very angry. Deep breathing to relax my tightened chest-muscles, and I go for it. Back to the lip, rock over, fist in the poor jam, right hand on the flat hold, heave, stab left toe in the crack, a higher jam, and I'm on top, snarling with laughter.

My hands are pretty tattered and sore. B and the dog have gone, so I trip off down, stumbling and unco-ordinated now, very shaky. By Danebridge, the sun is rolling down behind a light mist. I stop by a tree and watch, calming myself. The colours suddenly coruscate, explode. Shadows gape, weak rays of the sun flare violently, an oceanic feeling of great peace washes over my body, beatific, a well of infinite goodness. My steps float me away into a wood and, wandering amongst rhododendrons savagely bursting into bloom, I came across a dark glade with the remnants of a fire. Beyond it stands B, her eyes upon me, widening into black pools, inviting oblivion, above her a latticework of branches. I watch. Flesh drains, drips like melted plastic from her face. Cadaverous, she steps aside. Even thus, in my pride of strength, mortality haunts my trembling limbs. Love one another or not, we still must die. The black dog, Melancholy, stalks my heel and the sun goes out with a pop.

## 2. Bryn Adda:

Give me one bluebell from a springtime wood and I will show you an act of faith beyond compare, an iridescent marvel, sempiternal green flesh prayer-like in its sustenance. Oh, once I looked across the glowing breasts of a woman, naked by my bed in the morning, to the bluebells which throbbed in the beauty of the sun. Such a moment as makes redeemable, whenever and whenever, our squalid and our paltry lives. Somewhere, to someone, this moment will come again. They will bathe in its lumen, its light, hope thereafter forever renewable. And I? I cannot forget . . .

## 3. Brithdir:

On the low ridge opposite my house, the sun sinks until it gazes right in, irradiant. Love is beyond the heart when the heart has ceased to beat. All quiet now, yet humming like a taut string. Brooding



despatch of evil atomized in an instant. I have become the sun, and am extinguished thus. The planets swirl.

#### 4. Mowing Word:

"You're not abseiling off that," Brown said. I didn't know whether it was a statement or a question, so I ignored him and threw the rope over. He watched. When I was ten feet down his face peered over the edge.

"Bollocks," I grinned up at him. "O.K. then," he agreed, "I'll tell Valerie to throw the rope down." We crouched together at high-tide level. Grotesque gargoyles of draining rock crunched under our feet. The rope swayed down and hissed into the water. "Shit," he said flatly, and scurried away, leaving me to coil it.

"I'll get you for this, you little f.....," I yelled after him. A glinting sherpa smile mocked around the corner. "Ha, ha, ha!" it said. I slung the rope over my shoulder, salt water dripping down my neck, and followed him.

He was waiting. A wave slithered along the cliff and his ledge was awash. We leapt out of reach. "You're not going through that f..... cave," he said. I carried on traversing, pausing on the corner to grin back down at him.

"Why not?" I asked. His eyes narrowed, recognizing the game. We got to the cave, five feet wide, ten feet high, devil's heart black and the tide coming in.

"Pity about your legs," I jibed. "They're telescopic," he replied. A wave sluiced in before us, crashing and sucking, and another followed it. I moved before the qualms took over, bridging high up in the roof, stretching, going as fast as I could. Looking back, I could see him against the light, legs out at right angles, neatly plotting his way along. I was glad he couldn't see my scrabblings and lunges. Fifty yards of grazed shins and lurches in the dark and I was through, leaping across boulders to one well out of reach of the tide. He emerged, cat-cool and wreathed in smiles.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he cackled at me, hugely happy with himself. We raced across boulders to one which gleamed black and whale-like ten feet from our line. He got there first and turned to laugh at me. Thirty yards out a big wave was bearing down on us. I leapt past him for a little, flat rock just awash, and thence to the marble-smooth base of the crack, thrusting a jam in, pulling up hurriedly, swinging my body out horizontally as the wave careered by. Twenty feet higher I bridged

across the groove, dried the soles of my boots, and asked if he wanted a rope. "You f...." he smiled.

"Better be quick, Joe," I parried, spying another wave on its way. He waited. The little rock had remained obstinately submerged and the incoming wave splashed over the big one, dousing him. I roared with laughter.

"Get out of that, you little bastard," I yelled at him, and climbed another twenty feet up the crack. The next wave got him fair and square, soaking him to the waist. He jumped in before another one came, and waded across. Forty feet up the crack we had a wrestling match as I tried to stand on his head, then I sorted out the rope and belays as he fastidiously pulled wet cloth from cold flesh.

"You can lead," he said slyly. I set off, trying to impress, but got it all wrong at a bulge and had to come down, attempting to look unconcerned. "Should've faced the other way," I told him, then climbed thirty feet without stopping. At which point the crack finished and it became loose. Forty feet away was a ledge, thirty feet down was my last runner. I put in half-a-dozen, tied them all together, and teetered onwards. "Bit loose up here, Joe," I shouted, prepared to call it quits.

"Ha, ha, ha," drifted out from the crack below. I kicked a block off in that direction to shut him up. An hour to climb forty feet, terror all the way. If I stand on it, will it move? If I press it this way, will it stay? What in God's name am I doing here? If you let me off this one, I swear I'll join the SDP, subscribe to Newsweek, and grow fat before the telly . . . Oh Lord . . .

The ledge, realm of broken promises and the return of arrogance arrives. I put in eight nuts, tie myself intricately and variously on to them, hope that the block I'm sitting on will remain here longer than I intend to, and tell Joe to come up carefully. He does. Above us, a little curving dièdre leads to the top. "Up there," I tell him. "F... that" he replies.

"Don't come on this ledge," I say to him, "Or it'll collapse." That preempts his move to take over my belay. "How many nuts have you got in?" he asks with more than passing interest. "Eight, and that's the best of them," I answer, pointing to one jammed between a tuft of sea-pink and a fragile sliver of mud. I'm lying—a better one's behind me. "Oh," he says, "Wouldn't you like to do this pitch?" "No," I reply.

“Then we’ll get someone to rescue us.” He puts two fingers in his mouth and lets out the most piercing whistle. Across the bay, Ben and Marion give no sign of a response. “I don’t think they can hear us” he says. “Better do your pitch then” I prompt, “You’re the experienced one . . .” He grins, trapped.

“I’ll just have a look at it.” Twenty feet up he gets a huge runner on. “Watch me here,” and he swings across under the overhang. “I’ve got you” I reassure him, but he’s already gone and the rope runs out, slowly at first, then rapidly. I follow and find him sitting in a hollow amongst the bugloss and the thrift, his feet down two rabbit holes. He drags me down and punches me. We roll over wrestling till he gets me in a headlock. “You’re f..... mad,” he says grinning. Ben and Marion arrive. “What were you whistling about?” We join forces to curse them roundly.

At the top of the path down to Broad Haven I stop, watch them head over the river and out across the sand. A woman and two small, greying figures ambling along the beach, the tide ebbing away, colours pale in the twilight, the beam of a lighthouse winking across the sea. Before the stumbling, sandy rise to the car park, I catch them up again. The engine fires, lights come on, we swing into the night.

## 5. A Prayer in Lud’s church

Malory’s King Mark, with his “And but we avoid lightly, there is but death.” Ha! It is all indissociable, all of this. It is all of a piece. I said to my soul, “Be calm.” My soul spoke back: “Fight on, thrust through, the calmness comes. Where Gawain’s neck was grazed my quest began. The places you shall reach all times are in your heart. Silk of the body fades and tears, sand rubs and blankets soft against the rock. Sea-battered, the cliffs break, but do not fall. Screech of an axe upon the stone, crash of a wave upon the shore. On the ebb-tide, we all go down.”

# **“MONSIEUR, MON VIEUX AMI EST MALADE”**

**DEREK WALKER**

The President called his closest friends and associates to a top level conference at The White House, Albert Square in January. As the subject under discussion was the annual summer holiday, the Allens of Lumb Hall were naturally there, Lord Salisbury of Helsby, the ex-Wallasey hooligan was invited, as too was the President's oldest and perhaps dearest foe, Atkins of the Fell and Rock. We too, of course, were present.

For a short time there were reminiscences as we re-lived the heady experiences of yesteryear—Gaspard, Grauwand, Badile, Kingspitz—to recall but a few. Then we waited with bated breath for the presidential proposal for the coming summer holiday. At last it came. “Now if we get a Villa in St. Tropez, we can leave the families on the beach and nip up to the Buoux or Verdon.”

His suggestion fell on deaf ears. After four hours of discussion, argument, shouting, accusation, during which proposals for Corsica, Picos de Europa, Gites in Provence, Huts in Dauphine were all thrown in and thrown out, the four invited couples departed leaving an enraged President shouting: “You lot are impossible, I'll go to the States with Les Brown”. It was a memorable evening.

Yet he always gets his way, and sure enough in mid-July, three of the families met-up in sun-drenched St. Tropez. There for a few days we swam on the best beaches, ogled the topless beauties, ate baignet-pommes and guzzled litres of French plonk. As he does not swim and hates the sun the President lay comatose on the sand, fully-clothed and taking cover under Anna's umbrella, emerging occasionally from ‘The Life of Ernest Hemingway’ to purchase another baignet-pomme. At 5.20 each afternoon to celebrate the end of the day's ordeal he poured himself his first sundowner.

After four days he could stand it no longer. “Let's go to the Verdon”, he said, “the Demande is only supposed to be V.S. We'll start early and piss up it before it gets too hot.” As I had never climbed

in the Gorge before, and being a cautious soul, I was keen to get some local knowledge, so we set off next afternoon to La Palud to find some English climbers to talk to. There were no English climbers there, there were no French climbers, in fact in that mid-July heat wave there were no climbers at all apart from us.

It started badly in the Couloir Samson at the foot of the Gorge where we spent the night in the car-park. As usual his head touched the pillow and the snoring started. It has been the same on all bivouacs no matter how uncomfortable. As usual I lay awake pondering—E.B.’s or Arseholes, thin or thick socks, rucksack or dangle the water bottle—and so on. As well as snoring the night was punctuated by the comings and goings of a French fishing party who opened and slammed their car doors at regular intervals. Just as I was nodding off, it got light, he nudged me and said it was time to go.

We stumbled through the dark tunnels then out into the brilliant daylight to find the foot of the climb. We carried a litre of water from the harness and four Custard Cream biscuits for lunch. It was already hot. Then we saw the line. The Demande has the reputation of being a great classic. It was the first route in the Gorge (1968) and is one of the longest, following a magnificent crack line for 1,500 feet, and ending, so we had heard, with some horrific chimney pitches at the top.

But it wasn’t V.S., we did not ‘piss up it’ in a few hours, we went off-route half-way up, we suffered agonies of thirst and sunstroke, we got frightened . . . It was a fantastic day out!

The first pitches were steep and slippery. We went slowly. As the heat increased so we went slower. Halfway up I left him on a small, exposed, uncomfortable stance and took a while to lead a hardish pitch to a comfy, shady bower. When he arrived he groaned about his swollen ankles and feet and sunburnt head. We sat in the shade, guzzled the water and took stock. As he hates abseiling even more than I do, we decided to press on.

Then we took the wrong line. Lured right by an easy scramble, we left the crack and (full of doubts) followed two unpleasant, loose-ish pitches, until we stuck under an evil off-width crack with a bit of tatty line at its foot. After trying unsuccessfully for twenty minutes to pull up, mantelshelf on, stand on a No. 4 Friend, I gave up. The hot-shots may get up there, but the B.O.F.s couldn’t. After more dithering we abseiled back to the shady bower with much more cursing.

Hoping to summon up more energy I tried to force down the remaining crumbs of the Custard Creams, but that only dried up my mouth further. The water had now run out, and sucking a limestone pebble was another puerile idea I tried.

Back on the correct crack line the climbing was brilliant, despite the heat. One pitch was especially good, a slight rightwards traverse followed by a steep groove, a pull over an overlap, then a return on tiny pockets to the crack. Trevor drove his head into a pine branch low down on that pitch, drew blood, groaned in agony, then thankfully continued to follow up.

At last we reached the notorious final chimney, "the scene, arguably, for more 'wobblers' than any other pitch in the Verdon". (Mountain 84). After a long climbing partnership with C.T.J. I know that we should always have runners nine inches apart, and should never move upwards without a good nut or a blue handhold above the head. So what the hell was I doing here, with no protection for miles? Trevor muttered encouragement as I gingerly backed and footed up, knowing full well I would wipe him out if I fell on top of him.

An hour later we reached the top of the Gorge, stiff, bruised, and dehydrated. The sun had gone, it was dusk, and we were actually cool. There seemed little hope of a lift down the road at that time in the evening and the prospect of an eight mile trek to the Couloir Samson was daunting. His feet and ankles were swollen, blood was trickling down from his head from the encounter with the branch. After hobbling ten yards down the road in his E.B.'s he tried barefoot for ten yards before the gravel increased the agony.

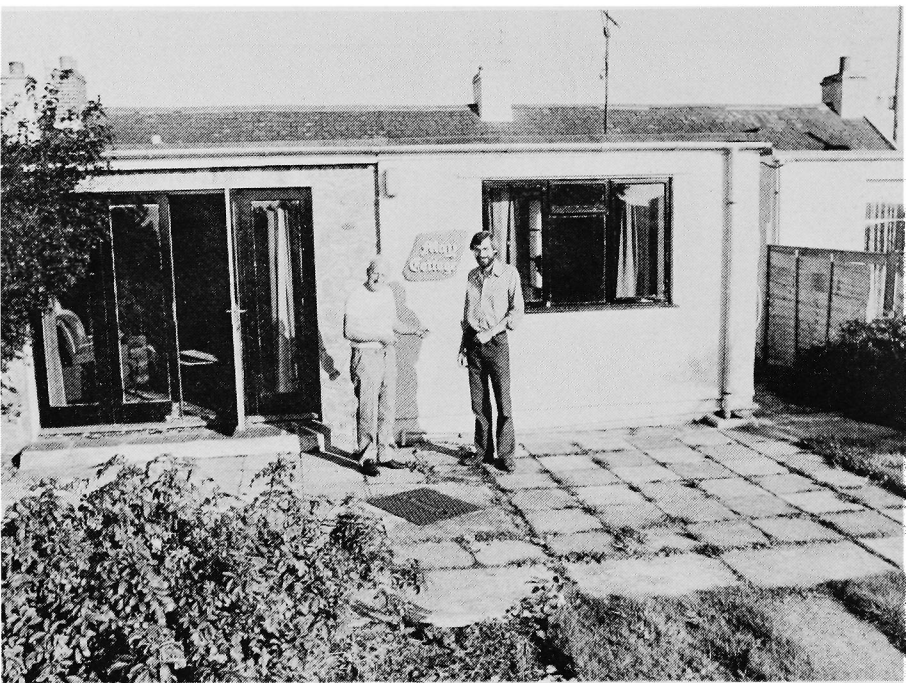
Then, as usual, his little star came to the rescue. We heard the car approach; I stood in the middle of the road and flagged it down.

"Monsieur, mon vieux ami est malade—chute de pierres" I shouted, pointing to the President's bloody pate. The Frenchman spoke perfect English; Trevor quickly recovered his composure and chattered away as we were driven all the way back to our car. Five minutes later we were quaffing pints in the Pointe Sublime Pub. "Good day out", he said, "Much harder than those rocks routes in the Alps. Bloody heat!"

Back on the beach next day we bored the families with details of the climb, but they didn't want to know. Hilary yawned and smiled at Anna. 'There are no fools like old fools', they thought.

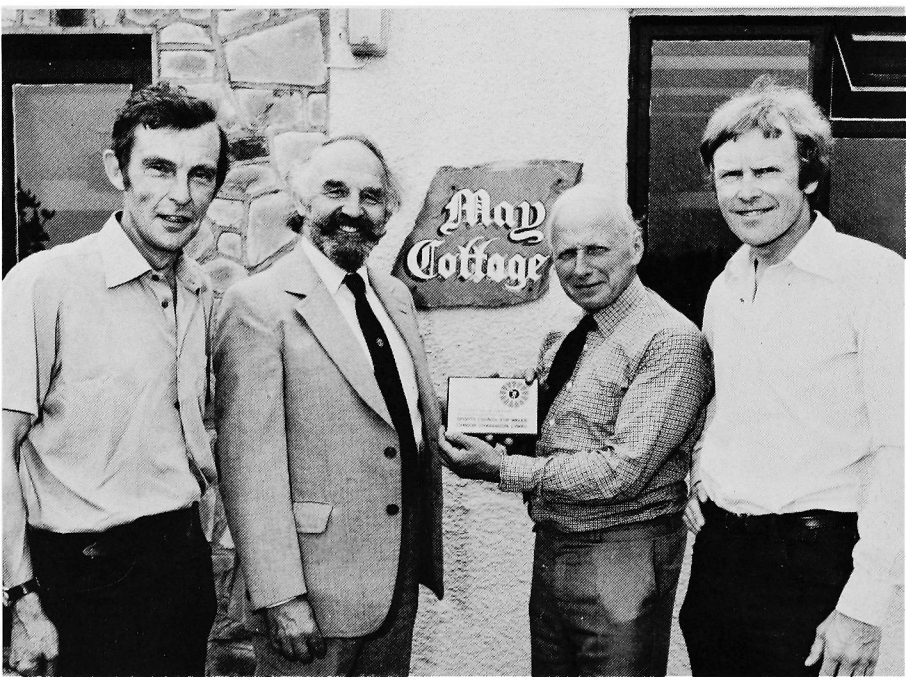






*Above: President (Semi-detached suburban Mr. Jones!) handing over the new hut key to Mike Harber.  
Photo: Mike Browell.*

*Below: The opening of May Cottage. J. Longland, Bert Russell, Trevor Jones and Derek Walker.  
Photo: Gareth Davies.*



## NEW PEMBROKE HUT

The new Pembroke hut, MAY COTTAGE at Maiden Wells, was opened on June 5th. A representative of the Welsh Sport's Council, Mr. Bertrand Russell attended and the Climbers' Club is grateful to both them and to the English Sport's Council for the very generous grant which enabled us to purchase this property.

A substantial amount was also raised from club members, the majority of the money being made available from our older members.

The opening was a particularly pleasant occasion and neighbours and local dignitaries also attended including our very good friend Mrs. Margaret Thomas from the 'St Govan's' Inn at Bosherton.

The Committee was apprehensive in the early discussions about opening a new hut in an area which has not been used to an influx of climbers. In that context it was decided to have special booking conditions in the early stages of the hut's existence.

Happily it now seems that our initial fears have not so far been necessary. Perhaps this may be due to the distance of May Cottage from the main climbing focal points and although unlikely at first thought, the clean and somewhat luxurious nature of the furniture and fittings of the cottage.

It has certainly given me a rather sardonic pleasure in the slight unease of a lot of Members perched uneasily on the front of armchairs surrounded by fitted carpets.

Who knows? Do the same at Bosigran and Ynys Ettws? Pembroke has something for everyone—a thousand routes from Diff. to E6. I became converted to the area after a whirlwind indoctrinational weekend one cold November in 1980 by Jaws (Ken Wilson) and Pat Littlejohn, when we looked at six properties, seven cliffs, walked eight miles and did a new route (E1).

Any Climbers' Club member who sees the Elegug Stacks for the first time followed by the view down the awe-inspiring Cauldron will probably, like me, realise that this is a great rock-climbing area and a wonderful new area in which our new sixth hut is placed.

Trevor Jones (President).

## NOW WE ARE SIX

Sometimes huts just happen. They arrive out of the blue, when you're not expecting them. Sometimes they're pushed onto you while you're being too polite to say no, thank you, we don't need a hut in Norfolk. Sometimes they are Structurally Unsound, and a Liability, and cause Headaches for the custodian and committee.

Occasionally, however, huts take quite a bit of getting and some clubs spend years trying and Never Quite Make It. The C.C. is, of course, very fortunate; it has always had huts, lashings of them all over the place; so many in fact that some members have been known to say that the huts are the club. Naturally, we know better; the Journal is the club and that explains why I'm writing this under threat from the Honorary Journal Editor.

We haven't been given or bought a hut for years. Certainly not in my time. The Editor will, no doubt, remind you which hut we acquired last and when, using these brackets which I'm placing here for that purpose (Helyg, 1926; Count House, 1938; Cwm Glas Cottage, 1948; Ynys Ettws, 1950; R.O. Downes Hut, 1961. Thanks for the brackets. Ed.). Then in 1980, some extremely High Pressure was put on the committee by a group of Activists. The Future Policy Sub-Committee voiced their Opinion and after much Informed Debate, the matter was put to the club by way of a Referendum. Some 78 members chose to make their voices heard, and by an overwhelming majority South Pembrokeshire was selected as The Place for the Next Hut. Pity the poor committee; they thought that they'd been elected to arrange dinners and the odd meet, perhaps approve a new drain for Bosigran. But to buy a hut . . . well, that would require skill, judgement, financial acumen, and quite a lot of time and effort. Fortunately, casting around it was found that just such talents were in fact available on the committee . . .

How a simple wish for more property could cause so much pressure, anxiety, harsh words, ill feeling, aggression, soul searching and plain old fashioned hassle is a story in itself which I shall keep for my memoirs. The more perceptive reader will, I hope, be able to sketch in some of the scenes which occurred between November 1980

and June 5, 1982. During this period we searched, located, surveyed, pounced, missed, pounced and missed again, and again, and again. Were bitten, growled at, hassled and counter hassled. From without and within. Heroic deeds were done, mild mannered members of society were transformed into cunning property wheeler-dealers, and only the tenacity of the Club's Officers prevailed over a rising sense of doubt that we would ever acquire a suitable property.

### **Sports Council Grant**

Our financial position was fairly sound, but became substantially more so when preliminary discussions with the Sports Council revealed a potential loan source of £10,000 to match a similar sum raised ourselves. The net effect of this discovery was to raise our sights above the 'derelict barn, in need of modernisation, would suit hardy heifers' to the modest target of a roofed cottage with some mod cons. Naturally, our area of interest happened to coincide with a zone of equally great interest to retired persons, holiday home buyers and local residents intent on living close to their place of work. The added purchasing power of the Sports Council grant gave considerably greater scope to our search.

### **The Search, much condensed**

Our target was initially defined as a detached property in the Bosherton area, preferably within walking distance of the crags. The price had to be below £25,000 inclusive of commissioning costs, and the property would be capable of providing 20 bunk spaces. A small area of grass would provide occasional overspill camping at peak weekends.

During the searching period from November 1980 to November 1981, many hundreds of hours were spent telephoning, driving, inspecting and negotiating. Ad hoc meetings were held with local personalities and a clear message came through from the residents of Bosherton . . . Rather than clash head on, we widened our zone of interest.

Early in 1981, the ideal property came up; the price and position were right, the repair work feasible and the name, Cold Comfort Cottage, was made for the C.C. The adjoining derelict paddock would provide space for a few tents. How the local newspaper came up with a horror story about climbing hippies, pot smoking and chalet

development in the backyard has not yet been unravelled. Trevor Jones (I am sir, not a hippy, and neither are my erstwhile colleagues Messrs Bonington, Hunt, Longland and Vaughan-Thomas) defended the C.C. but local opinion meant that the battle for Cold Comfort was over. Haranguing continued in the bar at the St Govans Inn.

By late 1981 despondency was setting in; now on our fifteenth property; then a further threat loomed up. Unless contracts were exchanged and the money spent before the end of the financial year in March 1982, we might lose the Sports Council's offer of £10,000 towards the hut. Longland and Owen took up the scent with renewed vigour and an even wider brief. Anywhere within five miles of Pembroke.

And suddenly, everything gelled. May Cottage at Maiden Wells arrived on the market, photos were passed round at Committee meetings and within a couple of weeks our offer was quickly and painlessly accepted.

### **May Cottage, the Sixth Hut**

May Cottage is a mid-terraced cottage in Maiden Wells, a tiny hamlet some two miles south of Pembroke. Maiden Wells has a garage but no pub and no shop, the nearest being two miles away. It might be possible to walk to the pub, and even the five miles to the crags at Stackpole, St Govans and Castlemartin, but a ten minute drive reaches them. The pub can be reached in two minutes in someone else's car.

The cottage was originally a two room affair with a long garden. The garden is still long but slightly reduced by rear extensions to the cottage which effectively treble the accommodation.

As a C.C. hut, May Cottage is palatial, being carpeted, curtained and wall-papered throughout. There are no plans yet to spartanise the cottage as the domestic character remains appropriate to its position in a village with neighbours on both sides. Security is less of a problem than with our more remote huts, but privacy is lacking and there remains a need for restrained behaviour. The garden is an extra responsibility, and can't be grazed or allowed to grow brambles. We have been fortunate in securing the services of David Ball from Bosherton Vicarage, who cuts the grass every three weeks. Members who favour close mown turf round their own homes will need to relax their standards or bring a mower.

**Phase One—Commissioning**

For C.C. use, two stages of development are planned for the cottage. Initially, taking things cautiously and establishing ourselves on good terms with neighbours, accommodation for twelve would be provided. The peak-demand times of Easter and May Bank Holidays attracted about 50 C.C. members to Pembrokeshire in 1981 and 1982, and because of this potential overload on facilities (not least being the septic tank) it has been decided that the level of use would be controlled by booking through Mike Burt, the Honorary Hut Bookings Secretary. The key would be a special and not the standard C.C. type.

To provide twelve spaces, the two front rooms would each be fitted with a sleeping shelf (mattrazenlager) to sleep six. The existing washroom with shower and WC would be supplemented by an additional outdoor WC and two wash-basins in a conveniently vacant corridor. Two electric cookers, hot water batch heaters and calor gas space heaters, and dining and sitting room furnishings would complete the first phase.

**Phase Two**

Dependant on demand for further accommodation over a trial two year period, and also on our continuing good relationships with neighbours, it should be possible to increase the capacity of the cottage to 20 bed spaces without major work. The kitchen would be replanned, possibly providing a work surface with double calor gas burners, and extra WC facilities could be built onto the outdoor WC needed at Phase One. The existing back door could be closed off to facilitate kitchen replanning, and a new porch built on in the position of the patio doors. Eventually, when we get a hedge established along the open boundary of the garden, we might be able to pitch an occasional tent. Custodianship of a remote property is a real problem, and the closest active member we could find is two hours away. Fortunately, Mike Harber, co-author of the guidebook, and Steve Lewis are Pembroke fanatics and they agreed to take on a joint custodianship.

**Commissioning and Opening Ceremony**

The technicalities of buying May Cottage were completed by January 1982 and this initiated a new crop of headaches. Buying from a distance was hard enough, but physically fitting the place out for

use, with the committee being five hours drive away, was a nightmare. The cottage was bare when purchased, and over the course of a few months, various teams of skilled and unskilled builders, joiners, plumbers, decorators and electricians were coerced into abandoning their climbing ambitions and spending a few pleasant weekends fittings bunks, locks, blinds, wiring etc. Deadlines for completion came and went, so did the hot water system. Electric batch heaters were fitted in kitchen and washroom, second-hand electric cookers were acquired and the shortfalls of the wiring system became apparent. Dining tables and benches were ably constructed, and cheap cheerful armchairs obtained. More deadlines were set.

Then came one which couldn't be ignored. The Welsh Sports Council, co-granters with the Sports Council, requested an official opening ceremony. Eventually, even this was postponed to June 5, 1982 and emergency committee meetings were called. Tasks were liberally doled out to all present, and like the well-oiled machinery which everyone expects to be running the C.C., everything meshed and moved sweetly forward.

On the Appointed Day, Trevor Jones gave a few well chosen words which included: "national climbing club . . ." "one of our many huts . . ." "contribute to the local community . . ." and "responsible . . ." These seemed to do the trick, and a speech from Wynford Vaughan Thomas concluded the affair.

In keeping with tradition, after liberal participation in the festivity, and upholding the C.C.'s reputation in being able to dispose of quantities of booze more ably than the local seasoned journalists, the President went climbing armed with an ice axe. This firmly established a precedent which others really ought to follow.

So now we are six.

Mike Browell



# **OBITUARY**

## **ERIC DUDLEY WARD**

**1944-1982**

In June this year, Dr Eric Ward died at the age of 75, after an operation. He had first joined our club during the War and had been a member for some 38 years.

Eric was educated first at Whitgift School and then later at Emmanuel College, Cambridge before qualifying as a doctor at St. Thomas's Hospital London in 1931. While at Cambridge Eric became a member of the Cambridge Alpine Club and also joined the Swiss Alpine Club prior to visiting the Alps.

For a great deal of his life Eric was a dedicated G.P., particularly interested in midwifery, and spent 43 years at his practice in Chertsey. He was an M.O. in the Home Guard during World War Two and later joined several committees such as the Surrey Executive Committee and the committees of St. Peter's Hospital where he later died. Eventually he retired to Pyrford in 1976.

Apart from climbing his other interests included amateur dramatics and golf.

It is fitting that we should remember such an eminent and dedicated member of our club.

## **A.L. HOBSON**

**1951-1982**

The death of A.L. Hobson from Kirk Ella in East Yorkshire was recently reported and it is hoped that an obituary will appear in due course.

## OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

**President:**  
C.T. JONES

### Vice-Presidents:

D.W. WALKER

J.H. LONGLAND

**Hon. Treasurer:**  
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**Hon. Secretary:**  
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M.G. ALLEN (Committee)

**Hon. Membership Secretary:**  
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**Hon. Guide Book Editor:**  
R.D. MOULTON

**Hon. Journal Editor:**  
G. MILBURN

**Hon. Hut Booking Secretary:**  
M.H. BURT

### Hon. Custodians:

R. ENWRIGHT (1981- )      A.S.G. JONES      P.M. NEWMAN  
(R.W. Lloyd Hut)      (Helyg)      (Cwm Glas Mawr)

J.W. SMITH      R.J. TREGLOWN      M. HARBER/S. LEWIS  
(Bosigran)      (R.O. Downes Hut)      (May Cottage)

### Huts Sub-Committee:

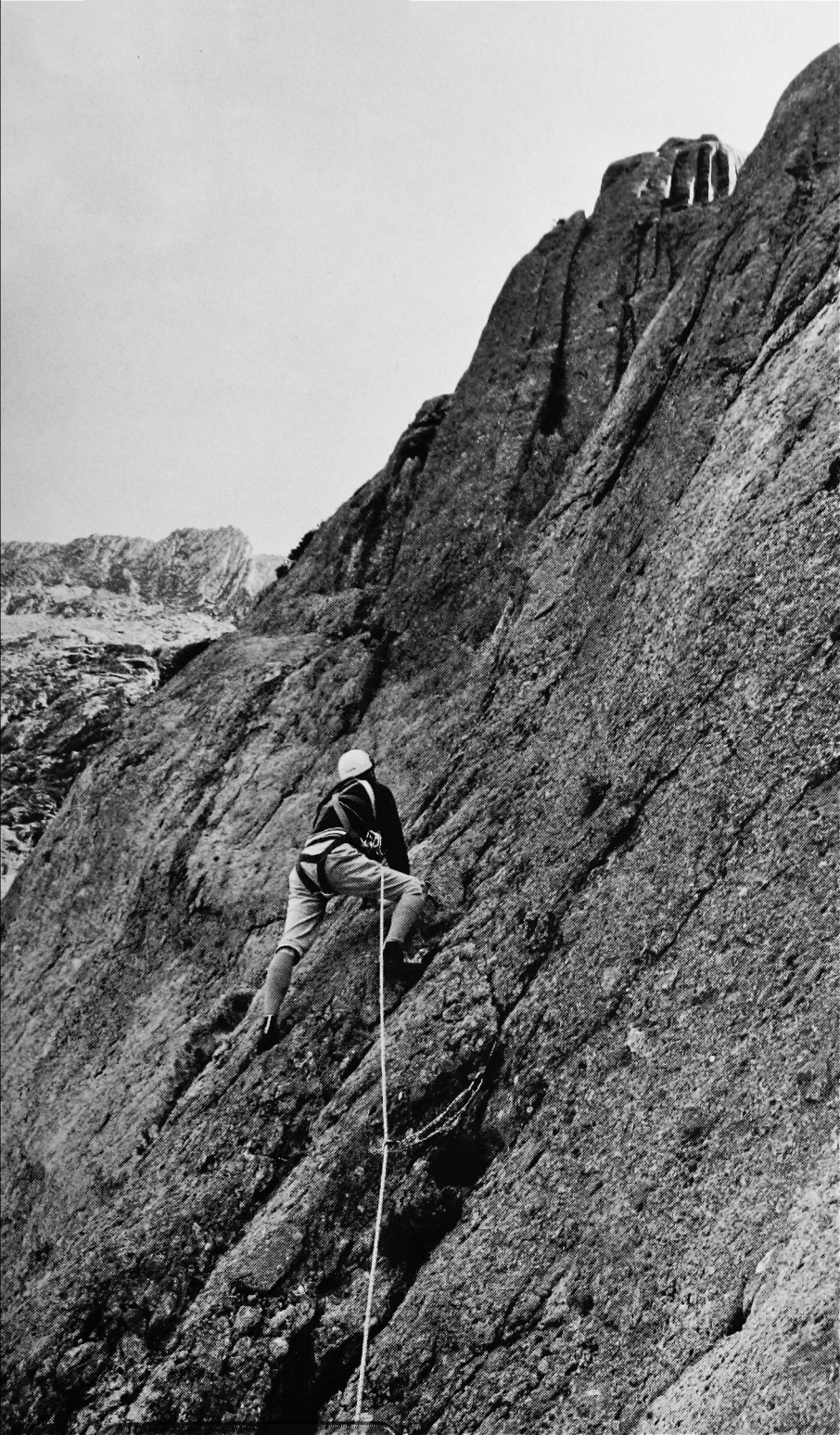
D. WIGGETT (Chairman)      D.W. BATEMAN      M.H. BURT  
R. ENWRIGHT      A.S.G. JONES      P.M. NEWMAN  
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J. PERRIN      K.S. VICKERS (Non-Voting)











# EDITORIAL

In a somewhat offended tone a relation recently asked why she had not received a Christmas card from me in 1981. For a few seconds I was nonplussed until my wife reminded me of the 700-odd journals which we parcelled up a few days before Christmas (having extracted those for members who had not paid their subscriptions), and of the subsequent journey through a blizzard of snow to reach the post-office. Within 24 hours several telephone calls revealed that the first few journals had reached their destination in time for Christmas Eve. Those calls and the welcome letters which followed made the whole job well worth while. It is also very pleasing that one of the National magazines has now referred to our journal as 'superb', but the future is still up to you, the members; one swallow does not make a summer.

There are times when one wonders just where a year has gone to, and 1982 seems to fit nicely into such a category. It has been a year in which climbing standards have risen considerably and this has been due to a nucleus of hard climbers such as Fawcett, Moffatt and Woodward. They have forced the pace while 'the pack' has raced along behind ready for the slightest hesitation. In the Peak alone the technical standard of the latest routes is now firmly in the 6c/7a area and many other climbers are fighting for new lines not far short of that high level. While writing, news has just arrived that Right Wall on Dinas Cromlech has now been soloed. Where will it all end?

This is a historic year for the club in that our new 'hut'—May Cottage, in Maiden Wells village, Pembrokeshire—has at last been opened. It will undoubtedly take some time to get used to the idea of having a semi-detached cottage as a hut, but clearly it was vital for us to get a toe-hold in an area which has attracted so much attention from climbers in the last few years.

In February history was made in the House of Commons when the unmentionable four letter word was uttered by Mr. Reg Race, the Labour MP for Wood Green. It happened on a day when the Government was attempting to cut down the number of sex shops. According to Sir Bernard Braine, Conservative MP for S.E. Essex, 'These shops are springing up like poisonous fungi all over the country'. It transpired that Sir Bernard wanted such shops 'outlawed to the top of Ben Nevis, Orkney and Shetland and the Brecon Beacons'. One can only speculate as to how this might affect the apparel and composition of the clientele found on the Ben. S.M.C. beware!

It is interesting to note that Everest still continues to hit the headlines. As early as January an extract appeared in *Punch*: 'The climber Chris Bonington who conquered Everest has cancelled a talk at Clifton Hall, Rotherham, because of snow. R. Goddard (Yorkshire Post)'. Slightly more worrying was the pointed warning in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 12.

'“SAGARMATHA National Park: Displays Office.” So reads a notice-board in a photograph which illustrates an article in the *National Geographical Magazine* about “Everest National Park” (Sagarmatha is the Nepali name for Everest).

The photograph shows a collection of small wooden buildings which must by this time have been greatly extended to include an Everest Cafeteria, Leisure Area and Interpretive Centre, perhaps even a casino, disco, marina and an old folk's artificial



ski-run (Has our illustrious President had further visions of grandeur? Ed.)

The terrible old mountain still looms in the distance, its paths, slopes and precipices, though graded and littered with the debris of innumerable expeditions, still capable of dealing death, a leisure activity not yet satisfactorily interpreted.

But already Everest (or Sagarmatha) has lost half of its enchantment; how long before it is absorbed into the environmental movement as Statutory Protected High Wilderness Area No. 1?

Recently while playing snooker in a local working men's club I noticed that the stranger who had elected to give me a game had a very distinctive tie with a mountain peak pattern. With some enthusiasm I waited until he had finished his break and then rather apologetically commented that I did not recognise his tie. "Oh, Everest", he replied modestly, causing me to mis-cue violently. "I'm sorry that I don't recognise you", I murmured. "I'm in the C.C." That one fell flat, much to my chagrin. Reluctantly I qualified the statement by suggesting that I did a bit of climbing (do the high altitude lads remember Llanberis I wondered?). "Nay lad", he went on, "I'm Everest—Everest Glazing that is!"

And then of course there was the shattering news that Joe Tasker and Pete Boardman had disappeared high up on the mountain. As ever we can only feel sad that it is so often the nice guys that have the accidents.

Returning to club matters it has often struck me that the C.C. has gradually drifted ever further away from its London base. Being morbidly curious in obscure and useless facts I took a close look at the addresses on the envelopes when the last journal went out. The following emerged:

Yorkshire	85	Nottingham	18	Essex	10
Wales	53	Herts.	18	Middlesex	9
London	50	Kent	17	Devon	8
Abroad	46	Sussex	17	Gloucester	8
Cheshire	40	Oxon.	17	Bristol	8
Lancashire	36	Leicester	15	Warwick	8
Derbyshire	29	Cornwall	13	Avon	8
Surrey	26	Buckingham	13	Hampshire	7
Cumbria	20	Staffs	12	Somerset	6
Scotland	20	Berkshire	11	Cambridge	6

There were a few others of course but the interest for me was there, right up at the top of the list. No wonder the Y.M.C. . . . In fact it is very like the cricket set-up really!

Oh by the way you nearly didn't get a 1981 journal. When I collected the order I noticed a scribbled comment on one of the boxes. Clearly written by one of the printer's staff it read, 'We're going to great heights to do this job'. While appreciating the humour of the unknown pen it came as a shock to hear that the printer's premises had been raised to the ground by some lunatic arsonist within a matter of hours of the journals having been removed. One can only speculate as to whether or not the firm prefers a 'hot metal' printing process.

My last thought is that it will be nothing short of a miracle if you read this journal before you sit down to Christmas dinner. When the 82 journal was not mentioned in the April Newsletter the Editor became somewhat agitated, but this was as nothing

compared to his feelings when the July Newsletter had not appeared by late August . . . My one consolation is that while climbing on Scafell in July a member told me that he had seen Smiler Cuthbertson in the Alps a few weeks earlier and that when last seen he was busy gathering material for 'a real cracker'. Take care Smiler . . . and no climbing (it's far too dangerous) . . . I can't afford to lose my lead article.

G.M. (25.8.82)

### CORRIGENDA

At a late stage of the 1981 Journal one or two errors crept in on the captions for the photographs. The shot of Coronation Crack showing Les Holliwell was in fact taken by Ken Wilson. Chris Griffiths was probably still in the cradle at that time! The photos of Right Wall and Dragonflight were both the work of Ian Smith; sorry Ian.

### COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EDITOR

1) 'A page has just fallen out of my 1979/80 Journal (perfect bound). This is not good enough; I am sure you will agree.' The problem we are faced with here is that to have the journal stitched it would cost far more and it would delay the journal by some months. Printers do in fact assure us that perfect bound journals should not come adrift. Would members prefer to sacrifice 50 pages of the journal in order to have a stitched copy? So far the Editor has taken the attitude that it is better to have a bumper journal to read in the current year rather than to make certain that it outlives the original reader.

2) The insert 'Graffiti 1981' unfortunately offended some of our women members and the Editor is still on the run. In line with a general policy to add a less serious aspect to the journal the Editor has tried to use amusing quotes wherever possible. The extract in question was not an attack on women members, nor was it intended to point the finger at the perpetrators of the graffiti (in fact it now seems highly likely that it was certain male members who daubed the slogans). It was merely a mischievous report of a conversation which did in fact take place.

3) Following on from 2) I must also admit that I included several snippets about Citizen Ken. It is certainly not the Editorial intention to ridicule any person in the Journal, but the more well-known one is then the more one is likely to have to take a bit of stick when the humour is flying about. Consequently I will restrict myself to one anecdote this year. Apparently Ken has obtained a fine new word processor to store all his latest literary ventures. When asked how long it took to learn how to work it he replied about two weeks. Quick as a flash a close friend quipped, "Ah, but that's only because Ken kept answering it back and arguing with it".

# C.C. JOURNAL—New Series

In the last decade the numbering of the C.C.J. has become somewhat erratic and has prompted some pithy comments from librarians. Below is a revised version from the P.S.C. to clarify the situation.

Pub.	Year	Vol.	No.	Editor	Pub.	Year	Vol.	No.	Editor
51	1912	I	1	Lunn	80	1955	XI	1	Rawlinson
52	1913	I	2	Lunn	81	1956	XI	2	Rawlinson
53	1914	I	3	Huxley	82	1957	XII	1	Rawlinson
54	1915	II	1	Mathews	83	1958	XII	2	Rawlinson
55	1920	II	2	Mallory	84	1959	XII	3	Rawlinson
56	1923	II	3	Greene	85	1960	XIII	1	Neill
57	1926	III	1	Carr	86	1961	XIII	2	Neill
58	1928	III	2	Pearson	87	1962	XIII	3	Neill
59	1929	IV	1	Hills	88	1963	XIV	1	Neill
60	1930	IV	2	Hills	89	1964	XIV	2	Neill
61	1931	IV	3	Hills	90	1965	XIV	3	Neill
62	1934	V	1	Hills	91	1966	XV	1	Rogers
63	1937	V	2	Viney	92	1967	XV	2	Rogers
64	1938	V	3	Viney	93	1968	XV	3	Rogers
65	1939	VI	1	Viney	94	1969	XVI	1	Wedgewood
66	1940	VI	2	Pullinger	95	1970/ 1971	XVI	2	Lewis
67	1941	VI	3	Pullinger	96/ 97	1973/ 74/75	XVI XVI	3/ 4	Longland Longland
68	1942	VII	1	Pullinger	98	1976	XVII	1	Wilson/ O'Connor
69	1943	VII	2	Pullinger	99	1977	XVII	2	Milburn/ O'Connor
70	1944	VII	3	Pullinger	100	1978	XVII	3	Milburn
71	1945/ 1946	VIII	1	Pullinger	101	1979/ 1980	XVIII XVIII	1	Milburn
72	1947	VIII	2	Cox	102	1981	XVIII	2	Milburn
73	1948	VIII	3	Cox	103	1982	XVIII	3	Milburn
74	1949	IX	1	Cox					
75	1950	IX	2	Keenleyside					
76	1951	IX	3	Keenleyside					
77	1952	X	1	Keenleyside					
78	1953	X	2	Keenleyside					
79	1954	X	3	Keenleyside					

It has been suggested that the two large format journals (96 and 97) should be reprinted as one book in the normal format. This would of course allow members and libraries, who have their journals hard-backed, to complete their sets. Please let the Editor know if you would like to receive such a volume in due course.

# REVIEW

**A Scrapbook of Snowdonia** by Dr Vernon Hall

A.H. Stockwell £2.95

This book might almost have been better titled 'A Pen y Gwyrd Scrapbook', describing as it does/mostly the changing scene of outdoor activities in Snowdonia almost as seen from the front door and occasionally the kitchen door of the Pen y Gwyrd.

From this point of view it is out of time with the current generation of climbers and even my own rapidly disappearing generation. It is a delightful book to read, browse through and dip into, mostly describing mountain activities in times past when, if we could afford to visit the hills at all, we did so in a more leisurely and gentlemanly manner. The spectacles and anecdotes of those times, lovingly presented and brought to life include the formation of our own club and incidents involving many past and current members. The Kevin Fitzgerald stories alone are worth the price of the book!

Dr Hall has recorded and preserved a great slice of our mountain history, we should be grateful to him, and it would be ill-mannered to carp about the few inaccuracies, not I am sure of the author's making or due to his lack of research, but I suspect a result of some of our members' illegible handwriting.

Strangely, in a quiet way, this book complements 'The Mountain Men' by Alan Hankinson, a history of rock climbing in North Wales. It will be enjoyed by many of our members, large numbers of climbers and by even more visitors to Wales. I only hope that mine and succeeding generations find ourselves such a caring and skilled raconteur to tell our stories.

Pip Hopkinson

**Scotland** by W.A. Poucher

Constable. £9.95

Walter Poucher has cost me a fortune over the years and it has just struck me why impecunious climbers fight shy of reviewing books. When I received a review copy of 'Scotland' I was so impressed that I promptly went out to buy 'Wales', the second volume in this latest series. By the time 'Lakes' and 'Alps', the other two companion volumes are published this review will have set me back a cool £30. On the other hand there is the thought that a copy of *The Magic of Skye* that I picked up for a mere £3 in a Manchester book shop is now worth over £50—but there again I couldn't bear to part with it to realise its value so I'm not going to gain (until I die and my book collection is sold(!) and it will be over my dead body).

'Lakeland Through the Lens' in 1940 was to be the first of many photographic masterpieces. A preview in 1941 stated, 'the finest collection of Lakeland pictures ever published in one volume' and 'so many of the pictures excel in revealing the quintessence of the Lakeland scene that comparison is almost invidious'. From then on a whole family of 'Pouchers' appeared during the 1940s—14 by my reckoning, culminating in the masterpiece of 'The Magic of Skye'. Some had evocative titles such as 'Escape to the Hills' and 'Wanderings in Wales', which must have tugged at the emotions of war-weary mountaineers stuck in the towns and cities. All these volumes are now keenly collected in the second-hand market.

Undoubtedly the most useful series came in the early 60s with the advent of 'The Lakeland Peaks', 'The Welsh Peaks', 'The Peak and Pennines' and 'The Scottish Peaks'—'pictorial guides to walking in these regions and to the safe ascent of their most spectacular mountains'. With the aid of these compact and comprehensive books several generations of walkers have found their way onto the high hills and it is not surprising that all these volumes have now run into several editions and are still going strong.

The latest series in colour is a lavish display of Walter's favourite 100 photographs for each area. When I started to look closely at 'Scotland', Ben Lui and The Saddle caught my attention and started to make me feel restless. By the time I reached a dazzling Beinn Eighe and Slioch—both resplendent in winter coats—I was positively drooling. Every few pages I stopped to re-live past incidents such as when I saw the view from Cairn Gorm across the plateau. By the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann and the Coolins from Elgol I was distinctly dis-satisfied with life near Manchester, and started pestering my wife for a decision as to how soon we could get on the road north. Like Walter, I firmly believe that Skye and the north-west hills of Scotland are unique—a compelling and beautiful area, mountains that constantly call to me from afar.

There is however one problem with books such as this. I clearly remember when Ken Wilson first showed me the proof photographs for *The Big Walks* and triumphantly said "What do you reckon to them then?" My reaction was, "Absolutely great, but mostly they are too nice. The mountains I know are not like that." The mountains are usually dark and sombre, with sleeting rain and boiling mist, and they brood there in the distance, waiting, and throwing out a challenge. And so it is with 'Scotland'. The true challenge for the photographer working in colour has still to be met, but until that time arrives we have an idyllic record of our mountains at their best to help us dream.

Ed.

**Take it to the Limit** by Lucy Rees and Alan Harris

Diadem £5.95

The attitude of the reader to this book and his response to it must, as with any narrative depicting an unusual life style, be governed by the age and ethos and resulting sympathy, or lack of it, of the reader.

To the middle of the road, middle class, climber of Harris', own and immediately succeeding generation, reading 'Take it to the Limit' will be an experience akin to the revelations of Aleister Crowley upon the thirties' vicar's drawing room. Raised as I was in a diluted Non-conformist background, deeply indoctrinated by the supposed Protestant work ethic the antics of Harris and his drop-out circle both fascinated and appalled me. So might a teetotal hard-working dormouse have gazed upon an alcoholic sunbathing cobra.

One can only assume that much of the book is autobiographical with respect to Al Harris. There seem to be no blatant discontinuities of style and since there are no major streams of female consciousness one can but assume that Ms Rees was recruited to smooth the flow between the incidents to fashion the series of Padarn tales into a novel. If she were the catalyst or craftsperson we must be grateful to her for the novel needed to be written. That so few novels, in English, have been born out of the large, argumentative and articulate climbing fraternity (sorority?, personality?) is puzzling, particularly in view of the evidence from journals and magazines that literacy often accompanies that articulacy. There is sufficient evidence that Americans cannot write well or interestingly in English, Dare one say that some of it is in 'The Games Climbers

Play'? For those in search of a glimmer of hope in the transatlantic gloom of half sentences, fractured grammar and scatological conversation (the 'Shit, man' school of writing) the novella 'Like Water and Like Wind' in *Ascent* 1980 lights a small beacon. The time of 'One Green Bottle' and the Filthy Lewker stories is gone. Our age needs meatier fare and Harris and his contemporaries in the English colony in Snowdonia provide a good protein base for the ragout.

The strong meat is provided by the fund of stories which passed around the Welsh climbing scene in the 60s and 70s and the book's strong feature is in its wealth of action and incident. Success and accident, vignettes comic and serious follow quickly on each other, changing in type and location to the ultimate injustice in the cathedral of Yosemite. This variety is at once the book's strength and its weakness. Its strength in the maintaining of interest and its weakness in that one episode follows too quickly and unconnectedly on its forerunner to allow the authors to develop any complexity of character for their puppets. There is sufficient material in the book and the antics of the English colony for several novels and a more experienced author would not have wasted that wealth in one short publication. But perhaps Harris knew better than we how short a span was left him and used his material as profligately as his life style used his energy. If he wished to write a picaresque, racy novel, he has succeeded and one should not criticise the authors for achieving that and not the careful analysis of a much longer work.

The book is well printed and bound. It would have to be, for what printing house would willingly bring down the wrath of the Wilson upon its head by work less than perfect. I did find 'supercede' in its pages but perhaps so frequent a mistake has become common usage and as such beyond even our Ken.

My personal assessment of the work is based upon my feelings for its characters. For the woman, Kate, I feel nothing. She is secondary to the two men, the climbers. For Bob, whose character is not fully drawn but who is given dependability and physical solidity (upon whom in the Llanberis coterie was he modelled?) I developed a respect and liking. He protected and tolerated the erratic, gifted, worthless, great child, Luke. His weakness was not to sever the traces which held him to this ill-starred potential front runner on the climbing scene. And Luke. Talented but worthless; erratic, magnetic, dishonest and a drunkard. His qualities bred hate for him in me. Luke cannot control his appetites and weaknesses and the consequences of his near addiction, his delirium tremens and the strains it puts on his tortured mind lead to his ultimate betrayal of his rope-mate when they need all his genius on rock. Why was it not he that died? Why?

You see how involved I have become, so involved that I have gone from a sneaking respect for its anti-hero, the proto-Harris, through disliking him to hate. And yet I have read the book three times and shall read it again. The year '59, I suspect will return to it again and again for an awed reminiscence of how their youth was not but how that of some, was. An earlier generation, among them our Club's elder statesmen?, may see in it an underwriting of their suspicions of the decadence of today. Whatever their response to the volume they should buy it for somewhere among the generations of their relations and acquaintances it is sure to strike a chord.

A pity that Al Harris could not have survived to further exercise his literary talents. What a combination he and Tom Sharpe might have made.

Dave Gregory

**Classic Walks** compiled by Ken Wilson and Richard Gilbert Diadem Books. £17.95

Stunning! That was my initial reaction and I am not likely to change my mind in the future. Even the postman was impressed as he staggered up the drive to deliver what must be an instant success story.

In previous journals one can find a wide array of reviews of both books and guides which helps to give a contemporary angle on each new publication. This is particularly important as when looking back years later it is sometimes hard to understand why particular books found favour before they eventually became dated. Although it is sad that few book reviews have appeared in our Journal in recent years it is perhaps not surprising as since the early 70s we have been engulfed by an avalanche of publications. This is in strong contrast to the early years (1800-1850) when perhaps only one beautifully engraved book appeared per year. By the turn of the century when photography was firmly established by photographers such as Sella about six weighty books were produced each year. Even in the late 30s when Himalayan peaks were under attack the annual output in written English was only about 10 books. Post-War, after the ascent of Everest, the output rose considerably but the quality of publications was vastly inferior to that of the forerunners. Economy became a critical factor as the purchase of mountaineering literature transferred from the 'idle' rich to the awakening masses. In the 30s and 40s Smythe and Poucher led the photographic field, but during the early 60s Gaston Rebuffat was one of the first to exploit the modern market with his superb Alpine albums. At home only John Cleare's photographs in 'Rock Climbers in Action' made a similar high impact.

After Ken Wilson's meteoric success as Editor of Mountain Magazine his first major breakthrough was with *Hard Rock* in 1975, but at the time no-one could forecast what an impact such a book was to have on the world of mountaineering. It soon became apparent however that the combination of high class black and white action shots in a large format with a polished and provocative text to complement it was to provide a major breakthrough. This quality production was to pave the way for: *Classic Rock* (1978), *The Big Walks* (1980) and now *Classic Walks* (1982) with *Cold Climbs* and *Extreme Rock* to follow in due course.

Floating a publishing company inevitably has an element of high risk and when the two Kens combined to 'give birth' to Diadem nothing was certain. Although *Games Climbers Play* (1978) and *Calculated Risk* (1979) were successful neither carried the high financial risk of the walking extravaganzas. *The Big Walks*, which clearly appealed to a much wider audience was to shoot into the top ten best sellers list of the Sunday Times. One suspects that this was partially due to a slick pre-sales campaign but a fast distribution system must also take some of the credit.

And what of the two walking books themselves? Well, I must admit, just sitting down thinking about some of the long walks makes me tired. As expected the writing of such walks must have been a much harder challenge than when at grips with the vertical world of rock, but despite this many of the individual contributors succeeded and they may tempt me out onto a few of the 'strolls' which have been included. *Classic Walks* is another kettle of fish altogether and I might well not go abroad next summer with so many new areas to go to. A lot of climber/mountaineers will be heartened to have ticked many of these walks already and like Munro Bagging *Classic Walks*' addicts will become part of a new cult. I can already hear the clatter of boots down the street.

Although it is a temptation to debate the merits of some of the 79 walks which are



included my instinct tells me to concentrate on the wealth of compelling photographs which jump out and grab you every time you browse through the book. My top ten are all from Scotland and Wales:

- 1) Ben Alder from the north-east by Hamish Brown.
- 2) The eastern slopes of Foel Grach by Peter Wild.
- 3) Schiehallion from the north-west by Tom Parker.
- 4) Ben Loyal from the north-east by Peter Wild.
- 5) Cwm Cau and Cader Idris by Peter Wild.
- 6) Slioch from Loch Maree by Tom Parker.
- 7) The Green Bridge of Wales by Phil Ideson.
- 8) Snowdon from Moel Eilio by Ken Wilson.
- 9) Northern slopes of Quinag by John Allen.
- 10) Yr Aran over Bwlch Maderin by R.S. Clow.

In retrospect most of my happiest memories are of a distant peak with a covering of snow and a feeling of total isolation. The photos which I thought totally incongruous were a tramway on Snaefell, the interior of Compston Martin Church (which I may well visit one day) and a once-proud stag balanced over the back end of a horse. Perhaps these three photographs are there to remind us of the splendours of the wild.

My greatest accolade must go to the layout of this and other books in the series—a professional standard that is unlikely to be bettered until the advent of three-dimensional photography. Lastly, dare I mention that I found one printer's error after much searching, but that is an almost unheard of event in this series. Buy just one and you will then be compelled to obtain the rest of the set. Ed.

### **Continents in Collision** by Keith Miller

George Philip £12.50

The International Karakorum Project was the multi-disciplinary scientific expedition sponsored by the Royal Geographic Society in 1980 to the Karakorum region. The expedition had over seventy members from Britain, Pakistan and China and was made up of a number of research teams studying theories of continental drift, mountain building and decay including glaciation, and the effect of natural hazards on local people. Between them they produced over 40 scientific papers. This book, with the help of 17 maps and 48 colour photographs tells the story of the whole expedition from start to finish. It's a fascinating account, a mixture of science, politics, anthropology, geography, exploration and mountaineering.

The author, Keith Miller, is Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Sheffield University. As leader of the expedition he had the nightmare task of overseeing the organization and dealing with the enormous number of political and other problems involved in an expedition of this size in such a politically sensitive and physically dangerous area. Writing this book cannot have been a much easier task, everyone involved gets a mention and there's a chapter on the work of each research team.

In this epic with its cast of thousands including administrators, government officials, local headmen, guides and porters, and Lord Hunt who contributes a chapter, it's the landscape that emerges as the star, imposing its difficulties and dangers on all who live and work in the region.

This book ought to be top of the reading list for anyone planning to travel or climb in the Karakorum region. Pip Hopkinson

Ogwen by Zdzislaw Leppert

C.C. £4.95

Just as rationalisation has combined the two Llanberis guides into a single bumper-fun book, so we now have a really meaty guide to Ogwen. The Tryfan and Cwm Idwal guides seem to have been merged successfully into what will probably become the Club's best selling guide-book. Not only that, but other out-lying cliffs such as Carnedd y Filiast are also covered to give a really comprehensive volume.

The book starts with clear maps of the area which should save the non-walker buying the O.S. map—but then who is a non-walker in this district of mountain crags? Next follows the Introduction and a very good and interesting Historical section. I thought that Jim Perrin had done very well here although I know that his rambling style does not appeal to everybody. A significant portion of the Historical is devoted to describing the infamous 'tree-cutting incident'. Unfortunately, I am not sure whether it will succeed in its purpose of stopping the football-hooligan mentality pervading even those parts of our hills which we thought were free from inner-city vandalism. I hope it does. Elsewhere in the guide, Tom Leppert makes some even more important points about respecting the existing vegetation, especially on Clogwyn y Geifr.

Then on to the cliffs themselves. Naturally, these are arranged in geographical order. The descriptions to each are reasonable although I thought that, in one or two cases, more should have been said of the type of climbing, speed of drying after rain, or suitability for visiting during wet weather. Such matters are known to devotees but not to newcomers. The information would be especially important for evening visits (e.g. to Bochlwyd) or to save a long walk (e.g. to Clogwyn Du). Some sections, such as the Gribin Facet, have some of this information but many don't. Another small point is that descents from cliffs or parts thereof are seldom described. Although not essential, it does save time to know the quickest (and best) ways down.

Leppert was 'surprised at the neglect of Gallt yr Ogof'—but I certainly wasn't! Its main merit to me has always been that it is uncrowded! The descriptions of climbs are clear and some rationalisation is apparent with older climbs. In some cases this seems a pity for I have always liked pitches that are introduced by a terse phrase such as—'The Narrows and the hardest part of the climb' or 'This is extremely exposed, the crux and a bad place to fall' (as history confirmed in that case!). However, a few remain and I was glad to see that the bastard layback of Milestone's Superdirect was still there—I never knew whether that was an expletive or some new climbing technique! Some other quaint expressions are apparent here and there. For example on Faustus one is told to 'climb smartly up the groove'—whatever that may mean (top hat and tails?). And what about the come-on for Cobalt Dream—'The crack now runs horizontally for 15 feet, where it widens to a suffocating nightmare' (charming!).

I was grateful that some of the climbs are now graded harder than they once were. Once upon a time Monolith Crack was given Exceptionally Severe (it still should be according to some!) then it went to V. Diff. and now it is Severe. Javelin Blade is given quite a write-up in Historical, the cliff section and the first ascents list—and quite rightly so. On my very first day at Idwal, as a raw beginner in bendy boots in the rain, I tried this at a time it was graded V.S. Fortunately I balked at the crux and was able to climb back or it might have been my last day at Idwal or anywhere else for that matter! However, the gradings are still harsh. I get the impression that the grades in this guide are more in keeping with Derbyshire than with other North Wales guides. I think that it is most important for the Climbers' Club to look carefully at the gradings of their

individual guides. I am convinced that gradings in the Tremadog, Llanberis and Gogarth guides are all significantly easier than in this Ogwen volume. For instance, Homicide Wall is a case in point. This is undergraded technically and overall. To give a climb such as that E1 is asking for trouble. The Wrack is another climb which has a ridiculous grade—if climbed direct as it should be (not as in the description) then it is at least E2. Even when entered from the right as in the description, I know of several Extreme leaders who have failed or resorted to aid! Suicide Groove would be E1 in most parts of North Wales but that doesn't matter so much because it is excellently protected. I think also that most people climbing Grey Slab find it much harder than expected from its Hard Severe grade. One peculiarity which has persisted is Great Flake Crack at Creigiau'r Dena. This is described as a vicious problem and graded V.S. I have had many happy hours taking modern hard-men to this particular piece of rock (usually after climbing Suicide Wall) and watching them fail (it used to be Hard Severe) and I will have some more fun! The grading problem is my only serious criticism of the guide and, even then, it is only an important matter on serious routes. However, it is something that needs to be sorted out and, in the meantime, it will keep alive the reputation, amongst Llanberis devotees, that Ogwen is a hard place to climb.

The diagrams are generally good. I particularly liked those of Bochlwyd Buttress and the various ones of Idwal Slabs. The drawings of the Milestone and Glyder Fach were difficult to decipher but, then, I suppose these are difficult cliffs to draw anyway. I found great difficulty in finding the key letter j (for Clogwyn Du) on the general diagram of Tryfan and the Glyders, even though I knew where to look! Perhaps such letters could be printed in bolder type or circled in future.

A quick glance at the first ascent list did not reveal any glaring mistakes (How about T. Japson? Ed.)—indeed, the whole book was refreshingly free of errors (good proof-reading lads). A few (trivial) modern climbs seem to have been missed out—perhaps deliberately? The comments in the first ascents list I always find interesting and I thought that in this case they complemented the Historical section very well. Would that all guides could afford the cost of such sections.

All that is left to comment on is the cover which is plastic and serviceable as usual, yawn! The photos are both good and quite atmospheric although personally I wish one of them had shown a harder climb.

Overall I feel that the guide is a success. It is certainly a tribute to a tremendous amount of hard work by Tom. He had some definitive books to follow in the Kirkus, and Edwards guides and he has certainly not disgraced himself. As Jim Perrin wrote in the Historical, Ogwen has never been an 'in place' of recent years. This has its advantages for there are still many great days to be had there in relative peace and solitude whether one is a beginner, a jaded expert or a modern hardman. This guide is a worthy reflection of the place—thought-provoking, interesting and containing hidden gems—but please Climbers' Club get your guidebook gradings consistent.

John Harwood

Raggy Bison has struck again . . . but this time the self-confessed doyen and leading activist of Peak Climbing (the unheralded ghost-writer of limestone crags such as High Tor, Wild Cat and Willersley in the last Derwent Valley guide) has gone into print

backed by Dank Peat and advertisers such as Spear and another firm Splinter Soap (anag.)

Whatever I say about what the locals refer to as 'Gary's Little Joke Book', it is likely to be construed as sour grapes, so there is really nothing to lose. Anyway I was one of the first to suggest that Gary should do a supplement—but the thought that he would 'go pirate' instead of using the Peak guidebook machinery never crossed my mind for a minute. Full marks for initiative. Again, well done for collecting together the 370-odd new routes, but then nearly one hundred of them are Gary's own creations so he 'ought' to know where they go. This supplement will be of immense use to Peak addicts who wish to keep track of the ever-decreasing blank bits between existing routes. Another good point is the inclusion of Phil Gibson's excellent crag drawings—the one of Two Tier Buttress is particularly impressive and highlights the fact that Phil is the ideal man for the job when it comes to doing all the drawings for the next Peak District limestone volume.

And now for the needle. The cover is an unimaginative, flat shot which does nothing to whet our appetites—one suspects that this was not Gary's fault. Once inside the covers one finds a host of irritating errors such as 'abseiling inspecitons', 'mutli-pitch', 'pirahna', 'Ressurrection' and 'wierd'. Mind I've missed a few of those in my time(!) so perhaps let sleeping dogs lie there. While mentioning terminology one or two of the bits of advice, such as 'wilt up', made me cringe. Wilt up?

Although 'not intended for general adoption' Gary invents an 'S.H.' grading system to indicate seriousness in the event of a fall. S indicates a SHOCKER and H indicates a HOSPITAL possibility. Rumour has it that he is going to extend this system to cater for IRREVERSIBLE INJURIES and TERMINAL LIKELIHOOD; thus it will be known as the S.H.I.T. system—or that is what the angry young climber in the Stoney cafe said, I think.

My hackles rose when our fine route 'The Alien' was referred to as 'Alien'. Alien means repugnant and other such derogatory terms whereas our route refers to THE creature which was eventually shot out into deep space. Hmmm.

In the Acknowledgements section Gary makes the statement that 'If this supplement should reach a published state then there are few people without whom it could not have existed'. This statement is wishful thinking as the route details reveal. Why on earth did Gary not ask a few of the lads in the know? I counted at least 32 names where no second is mentioned. Just look at the list of leaders: Regan, Woodward, Hamper, Burke, Hart, Fleming, Calow, Ward, Browell, Francomb, Knighton, Booth, Dewsbury, Rodgers, Cropper (P and B), Burton, Bolger, Lee, Wilson, Mitchell, Fawcett, Moran, Leach, Moffatt, Colton, Barker, Hall, Evans, Gaunt and Gosling. Never heard of them! What worried me most was that Gary even put himself down without a second on many routes!!! . . . and just look at some of the routes: Blood Blisters, E4; Diseased Meat, E3; Eurospeed, E3; Just Like Nothing on Earth, E4; Peaches, E4; Ergonomic Buttress, E2; Subterfuge, E3; Living at Speed, E2; Logic Book, E2, etc. etc. Was this merely an oversight? Did Gary really do Livebait, at a mere E4, 6a, with its 'explode on to the roof' move and an 'alarming reach' and then somehow forget who was his second? Climbers who have doubted some of Gary's routes in the past, such as Peaches—'A long reach may be essential', might note that in the supplement he refers in one description to a 'telescopic reach' being needed. Is that the answer to the problem? Surely it would have been easy for Gary to ask the above lads who seconded them? They are mostly locals after all. In the supplement Gary states that 'Where known the names of the first

ascentionists appear in brackets after the route description'. Does he not know who seconded him on many of his own routes? If it is merely a question of the second not being able to follow then he should have said so.

I offer a simple code of practice for recording new routes:

- 1) Record the names of ALL the team who climbed a new line.  
e.g. J. Brown, G. Gibson.
- 2) If the route is not seconded then, e.g. G. Gibson (R. Fawcett failed to follow)  
The second can then confirm the validity of the ascent—or otherwise!
- 3) If a route is soloed either, e.g. A. Performer (solo) or better  
e.g. G. Gibson (solo—witnessed by K. McCallum)
- 4) If an aid route is freed by the whole team then,  
e.g. 1st free ascent, G. Gibson, W. Unsworth, T. Lewis
- 5) If an aid route is freed only by the leader and the second needs aid then;  
e.g. 1st free ascent, G. Gibson (with G. Milburn)

The 5th point is in fact already in use in some Welsh guides. In the case of malicious rumours the second can then be contacted to give his version of the ascent.

On the whole this Supplement is very welcome and I have suggested to Gary that he might consider doing the next one for the Peak District team—that is if he is still on speaking terms. No offence meant Gary.

Ed.

**Pembroke 1982** by Jon de Montjoye and Mike Harber

C.C. £1.45

The Gogarth 1981 Supplement provided a good opportunity to experiment: was it possible to produce a more attractive-looking supplement in the same format and type face as the parent guide? Would it be too bulky to fit inside the latter and would anyone buy it at the consequent increased price? It seemed to work and Pembroke 1982 continues this new look style. The feverish level of activity both on the climbing and guide writing scenes has been maintained in Pembroke over the last year and the supplement contains over 200 route descriptions as well as details of a number of re-gradings and text corrections for routes in the original guide as more of them are repeated and a collective opinion begins to emerge. The fitting of all this into supplement size implied certain economies such as compressing the First Ascent list and Index by using smaller type. Colour covers were foregone to keep the price down—it is considerably less than the cost of a gallon of petrol; oh,—and I am also told that it floats quite well.

(This is a non-review partly because, having a slight vested interest I could not give a totally unbiased opinion and partly because I have not done any of the routes in the supplement—though my single climbing weekend in Pembroke has confirmed that it is nearly as good as Ramshaw.)

Nick Longland

**North Cornwall and West Penwith New Climbs**

by Peter O'Sullivan and Bob Moulton

C.C. £2.45

(Dear Geoff, Nick threatened me with a thick ear if I didn't write a bit on the Cornwall Interim and New Climbs Supplement, so here it is!)

Since the emergence of Pembroke as a mainstream climbing area Cornwall has fallen back in the old pecking order of places at which to be seen climbing. It's good in a way for the crags aren't as crowded at Bank Holidays and with a guide such as this being produced with more routes to go at in a greater number of climbing locations then the trend continues and I may finally get to find Bow Wall free.

Flicking through the pages it's easy to see why we are prepared to travel such vast distances, by British standards, to climb in this neck of the country—Eroica, America, Ill Duce, Mastodon, Astrall Stroll and Yankee Doodle are all brilliant routes of National importance, gathered together in one guide for the first time. This guide is therefore a must for any Extreme leader worth his salt on this point alone. It is in this attraction to the masses of Extreme leaders that the guide falls short in producing the guidely goods. It's great to stuff the thin booklet down your teeshirt but in certain areas you can't have this luxury because you need to carry the original 'master' guide to find the crag in the first place. This surely can be avoided by giving all the crags' O.S. references and brief accurate descriptions of approach even if repeating the original guide. If that was the case then this type of guide could stand up on its own and not be dependent on the one you've just left in the back window of the car. The West Penwith section being the main culprit of this gripe.

I liked the colour piccies and the water repellent cover. To hell with the cost, you've spent 30 times as much as the cost on fuel, beer, suntan oil and 99'ers so that old argument tends to wear a bit thinner the more pissed you get.

The diagrams are good but could have been boosted with a bit more info, e.g. parking other than regular car parks, good pubs and campsites—small improvements maybe but they can save some frustrating hours searching.

Another gripe is that an ideal opportunity to sort out the gradings of the 1978 guide to Bosigran area has been lost. Surely those E2,5cs at Bosigran Main Cliff are not all of that grade; is Behemoth only 5a, the second pitch of Xanadu is definitely harder than 5a, Samson is nudging 6a at least—all relatively old routes that should have a stable grade by now.

Finally I liked the guide, love the area, it has so much more character than Pembroke. Some of the descriptions could have been a bit more, well er . . . descriptive, but what the hell. Getting all this information together has been a difficult task especially when the Bosigran log book had been lifted. A good guide, lots of new routes, which means lots of excitement for lots of bods such as you or I.

Dave Jones

**Yorkshire Gritstone—A Climber's Guide**

Y.M.C. £5.50

Nice one Blue!

A bunch of the boys were bouldering it out, near the Ilkley bar saloon,  
Mourning a photo of Caley, of a route that they call—High Noon.  
Somewhere up there was Edwards the man—so nearly out of view,  
The guide was the Yorkshire Gritstone—the one that they say is blue.  
Folk say that the front man is Sheard, that the route may be Wellington Crack,  
But I know full well, and as sure as hell, this one won't half take some flack.  
For his face can't be seen, and it looks like a night, all under the silvery stars,  
And down on the ground there are craters around; and it could be the  
landscape of Mars.

Now the back of the guide might be Brimham, but then yet again it might not,  
 If that's Birch Tree Wall, as my eyes recall, its nothing but optical grot.  
 It states on the front, 'A Rock Climber's Guide' whatever that phrase may mean,  
 But its quite plain to me and I'm sure you'll agree, that it 'aint a geologists scene.  
 And to give it the name of Yorkshire Gritstone—a misnomer as you will tell me,  
 That without our Bell Hagg and proud Wharnccliffe Crag, it's wanting in  
 Slipstone you'll see.

Take a bow o fine artist for Almscliffe so fine, the lines and the numbers are neat,  
 But what on earth did they do on the rest of the crags, stomp around with some  
 ink on their feet?

There's footballs, and kisses and crosses; road markings with squares and black dot.  
 They mess up the artists, brave efforts, and make them a right heap of grot.

Page one six six has a climber you'll see, aspiring to ascend up to heaven.

But for twenty five years he has stood there alone—not moving since year '57.

He's changed just a bit, touched up for a laugh, by a pen that is (not a bird),

But to leave him the same for so many years, does seem just a trifle absurd.

Now I dig that Gaukroger at Widdop, get a look at those ace baggy pants.

Do they wear them today, while they are at play(?), there's room for an army of ants.

And those shoes on his feet that he's wearing, so strange, free to solo the crag  
 at his will;

But it's P.A.s for me and we will soon see, if he ends up there—in Boothill.

Two ropes they hang down from Cow Rib; Allan Austin ex-king of the pile.

Scornful of harness or helmet, he solos Great Western in style.

The cowboys of a new generation; they climb hard, they drink hard, indeed.

Just look at the one on Hipgnosis, 'tis a blur because of his speed(!).

Now the baddies are Orchrist at Almscliffe; Adrenalin Rush—Caley's Hell.

Slip and Slide at Crookrise, Forecourt Crawler;—then Quark—and Left Wall as well.

With six Hard Extremes, to sort out the men; from the peach-lipped,  
 chalk-chewing young lad,

It means that those wanting to get up Extreme, will have to be real bold or mad.

There's Desperate Dan or Tryche at 6a; you can leave all your runners behind.

Have a really good look before climbing; and beware of those cracks that are blind.

For above Mild Extreme is a graveyard—of innocent bodies now dead.

The range of the grade is astounding; to climb here one must use one's head.

And I've looked for E grades, and I've looked for some stars, but they're not there,  
 of that I know well.

From Almscliffe so grand to Brimham once banned; come Dennis what  
 happened do tell?

And the Yorkshire M.C. as a club fine and old, is as proud as all else in the land.

But with guides such as this, I can give it a miss, the ostrich is still in the sand.

Ed.

### **Climbing at Wasdale Before the First World War by George Sansom**

When George Sansom died in 1980 it gave me great pleasure to be able to carry out some research on his climbing history and I was able to write an obituary with the help



of his son Christopher. Since then George's long lost climbing diary which had not seen the light of day for over sixty years has been discovered behind a huge bookshelf. The diary covers the period of time from 1908 till 1911 prior to Sansom's meeting with Siegfried Herford and the subsequent ascent of Central Buttress, Scafell in April 1914.

The diary has been edited and published privately by Christopher Sansom and copies may be obtained from Castle Cary Press, Castle Cary, Somerset, price £10 post free. This quality production with twelve early photographs and nine drawings by Wainwright to enhance its appearance is a MUST for all climbing bookworms. I cannot urge you too strongly to go out and purchase this unique chunk of our climbing history. Just think on that you can't get a copy of 'Samson' now for love or money. In five years time this book will be sought out keenly by collectors. Don't wait—it will only cost you more in the long run.

Ed.

**The Nature of Cornwall** by Rennie Bere

Barracuda Books. £9.95

In 1966 Rennie Bert wrote 'The Way to the Mountains of the Moon'. If you wish to receive a 'Subscribers Copy' of this his latest book you are too late. My copy is number 820 out of 1,309 and I thought that I was in with a chance of a low number.

For the climber who takes an interest in the flora and fauna of his cliffs then this delightful book is well worth having. There are lots of charming pen and ink drawings and plenty of photographs including ones of the Culm and Bosigran cliffs.

If you can't obtain a copy from your bookshop or the publishers you will have to console yourself by reading Rennie's article in this year's Journal.

Ed.

**Retreat** Hamish M. Brown

Before us the clouds  
camouflaged the mountains and cwms in erratic tones—  
a frantic preparing for battle  
which we, hopefully neutral,  
could have done without.  
Before Llyn Ogwen the hail  
shot its bullets in our backs  
and the Carneddau rumbled bigger guns.  
We fled!  
Down, to our mobile column,  
safe from the horrible ills,  
down the A5, suddenly full  
of August refugees,  
to make our peace in 'The Cock & Bull'.

Hamish has recently brought out a 32 page booklet of poems written by James Macmillan and Hamish himself. It is called 'Eye to the Hills' and copies may be obtained from Pettycur Publishing, 21 Carlin Craig, Kinghorn, Fife, KY3 9RX. Price £1 but also send a S.A.E. measuring 22cm x 16cm minimum.

**Poems of the Scottish Hills** selected by Hamish Brown

A.U.P.

Since our Journal went to press the Editor has just received a pre-publication copy of this important work. In the anthology there are nearly 250 poems by 140 poets both past and present. Such anthologies are few and far between and this one will become an important part of our mountain literature. It may be obtained as a hardback at £11 or as a flexiback at £5.90.

**The Winding Trail** edited by Roger Smith

Diadem £10.50

Well it wasn't my fault that the review copy was faulty—really Ken. It was well constructed (unlike our journal and there was no danger of a page falling out of it!) but there was just the little problem that the first 32 pages appeared twice. Not that I mind as it is all good reading and unquestionably good value for money. To put it right I sent the book to a binder friend to amputate the mutated section. And then of course I forgot about it!

What was it like? Well there were one or two nice photographs here and there and it was a fairly thick tomb (sorry tome). Lots of the authors were very well known: Alasdair Borthwick, John Hillaby, and Showell Styles immediately come to mind. Then there were one or two fictitious-sounding characters such as Randy Thomas, Livia Visser-Fuchs, Thomas de Quincey and would you believe, Bump Smith. Where did Ken get hold of them from?

The 80 odd articles were culled from a variety of sources and nicely reflected the history of walking from well-loved British peaks to far off lands. That reminds me; the one thing that I can not stomach is Tobias in print. I'm afraid that man gets right up my nose whenever I try to read some of his . . .

'Shameless, my genitals swaying to each vague suicidal step, the sun pierced my pale white back, consuming it brown with cosmological talons.'

How on earth can anyone take it seriously and even worse, commit such pretentious rubbish to print.

On the whole though if you like: ghosts, hunger marches, moorland mysteries, haunted glens, marathons and trespasses then this is a book for you. It is a worthy successor to *The Games Climbers Play*. If I can find time to chase up that binder friend I'll let you have a look at the book, but I suspect that he took time off work to read it and having got inspired is somewhere along the Appalachian Trail by now—which is where I should disappear to before Ken Diadem catches up with me. For heaven's sake buy the book and put a big smile on the man's face.

Bembo Palatino

**JOURNALS OF KINDRED CLUBS**

The Committee acknowledges receipt of the following journals: Mountain Club of South Africa 1979 and 1980; Rucksack Club 1980; Appalachia Dec. 1980; New Zealand A.J. 1981; American A.J. 1981; Oxford Mountaineering 1981.

The Parnassus M.C. Journal for 1982 is a particularly good read with articles by Chris Jackson, Bill Wintrip, Ian Smith, Dave Sant, Keith Naylor, etc. The journal is worth getting hold of just for the classic Snowdonia Essays—this is a real scoop and it would be a good idea to 'borrow' it for next year's C.C.J.

**Southern Sandstone** by Tim Daniells

C.C.

South East England guidebooks have been more or less the same for the last quarter of a century but now we have a new-look guide for the sandstone addict who is marooned in the metropolis. Tim can be fairly proud of the final product which should be with us for quite a few years to come.

Here we have a guide to Harrison's Rocks, Bowles Rocks, High Rocks and Bulls Hollow Rocks. In addition Eridge Green Rocks have also been included despite the fact that there was a lobby to have them excluded. The message is loud and strong; if a crag exists then it is our responsibility to publish details of the existing routes. It will be a sad day if we ever return to the landed gentry—Brigadier Ponsonby Hyphen Smythe-get-off-my-land-you-riff-raff attitude. This sadly prevails in many places.

The cover photo is superbly dynamic and modern although the yellow lettering does make the effect look just a little bit too much chocolate boxy. Black lettering might have been better. The back cover is rather subtle and gives a very pleasing effect with just a hint of a warm spring day and things waiting to be done.

Several ethical issues are given a fair airing such as the soloing/top roping problem which now appears to be settled in favour of soloing wherever possible, although top roping will always have its place. It is good to see that the climber is discouraged from causing rope grooves and changing the nature of routes as a result of abseiling.

The Historical has its interest and we progress from Charles Nettleton and the Eridge Hunt to Claude Wilson, Nea Morin, H. Courtney Bryson, Ted Pyatt, Johnny Lees, Tony Moulam, John Smoker to the Holliwells, Boysen and Fowler. There is sadly a lack of sparkle and we only meet the odd 'gypsy camp', 'ferocious pig' and 'cycling window cleaner'.

6b at last makes its belated appearance with such horrors as: The Wrecker, Carbide Finger, The Crunch, Smile of Beyond, The Limpet, Boysen's Crack and Honeycomb. And that brings me to the next point; the photos are nearly all of hard routes in the 5c/6a bracket—a pity as plenty of folk must still operate below 5b!

The quality of the black and white photos is not good enough and one can not but help note that the printer is the same as for Froggatt, Yorkshire Gritstone etc. He needs instructing to deal with each photo separately—instead of en masse.

The highlight of the guide comes in the section on the chalk (gulp) cliffs. Ice gradings and an instruction to climb in full ice gear had me grinning—why have we not got a photo for the journal and posterity? We MUST have one next year. I note that after the pitch 1 ice screws belay there is a 'wise' crack. Clearly this was named after the visiting American climber who took one look at it then changed his mind. Mick Fowler must not only have nerves of steel to climb on that white stuff but he must also have no fear of the supernatural powers of the occult. Who but Fowler would tread the crumbling edge of Crowley's black abyss in daring to mis-spell Crowley's anti-Christian name thrice in one attempt? For 'Alastair' read 'Aleister'. If Crowley called his mother 'a brainless bigot of the most narrow, logical and inhuman type' he ought to get on well with Mick if their paths ever cross . . .

The text of this much wanted guidebook is slightly dull and needed just a bit of life injecting into it but then after all in an era of streamlined guidebooks which are to fight the ravages of inflation it is the icing on the cake which is usually sacrificed to leave the hard core factual material.

Next time you are on your way back from France why not drop in to sharpen up your claws before heading north to the big stuff.

# AREA NOTES

## Pembroke and South East Wales Notes

New route production in Pembroke seems to have settled down to about 150 per year, which should give us 2,000 routes by 1990, when hopefully guidebooks will have been miniaturised. So far most people have refrained from recording the ridiculously short, the grotty and the insignificant. Two seminal events this year were the opening of the new hut and the official acceptance by the military of climbing in Castlemartin Range East, both of which will help to ensure the future prosperity of Pembrokeshire climbing. There is even talk of the BMC buying a chapel for conversion to a bunkhouse.

Moving from West to East, the most important climbing developments would appear to be as follows. Nipper Harrison added three routes to the East face of The Castle, a cliff which now boasts a fine collection of fairly short (up to 100 feet) hard routes on perfect rock. Many good climbs were discovered in the various nooks and crannies of Hollow Caves Bay by John de Montjoy, Charlie Heard and others, and on Stennis Head, Ron Fawcett blasted straight up the Pleasure Dome wall to give a very hard and brilliant route which is yet unnamed. Harrison also added some good routes to the eastern section of Stennis Head.

Trevallen Cliff is fast emerging as one of the major crags of Pembroke, mainly thanks to de Montjoye's efforts. His routes *Sachsenving* and *Dogs of Hoare* (both E4) look superb. Fawcett also made his mark on Travallen by climbing the two thin cracks between Barbarella and Sunlover at 6c and 7a, while the vicious thin crack left of Sunlover fell to Littlejohn to give *The Bitch*, E4, 6c. In St Govan's main area, Jerry Peel climbed the left-hand arete of Tangerine Dream, which was graded E5, 6b and looks shockingly hard, and Littlejohn climbed the impressive wall to the right of Goad, giving *Wicked Gravity*, E5, 6b. Perhaps the plum route in this area however was the striking line through the arching overhangs right of Public Enemy. This fell to Littlejohn and Steve Lewis to give *Crime and Punishment*, E5, 6c, which features some wild roof climbing and superb face climbing on the wall above.

A remarkable 'rediscovery' this Spring was an extensive set of cliffs on the Eastern side of St Govan's Head, just a stone's throw from the most highly developed area in Pembroke, with at least a dozen excellent routes so far (from Littlejohn, de Montjoye and Harrison) and more good ones in the pipeline this promises to be an important area. It is also fairly sheltered and largely non-tidal.

Outside the Range, Harrison climbed half a dozen lines on Gun Cliff, an interesting crag unaffected by nesting restrictions. Nearby, on the Southern tip of Mowing Ward, Littlejohn added *Close Shave*, E2, 6a, and *The Olive Branch*, E3, 6a, both offering good climbing on perfect rock. Harrison has at last breached the East Face of Stackpole with a mean route, E4, following a corner system. Finally at Lydstep, Andy Pollitt discovered some very good routes at Skomar Towers, a good bit of detective work for a far-afield visitor. Very little from previous years remains unrepeatd, and the current crop of desperate routes will no doubt get a hammering at next Easter's annual gathering.

In South East Wales, Mike Danford and Tony Penning are putting the finishing touches to a new guidebook, which has prompted a fair bit of last minute activity. On

the Gower Peninsula Andy Sharp and John Harwood climbed *Barracuda*, E4, 6b, an obvious challenge on Juniper Wall, and also developed a compact little wall at Rhossili with four hard routes, the best being *Trial*, E3, 6a. On Yellow Wall, Gower's prime crag, giving routes equal to Pembroke's best, Littlejohn and Lewis added *Secret Combination*, E3, 6a, a steep line between Yellow Wall and Muppet Show.

The inland crags are in the ascendant, with Sharp, Penning and Harwood responsible for a score of good routes at Dinas Rock and Llangattock while at Ogmere, South Wales' crag for the twenty-first century, Littlejohn added *Zardo*, E5, 6b, and failed on various other monstrosities. A few of the harder routes at Ogmere such as *Spellbinder*, *Fool's Fantasy*, and *Fire*, have at last been repeated, by Harrison, but many still await second ascents and should give the Cardiff and Bristol lads some entertainment in a year or two.

Pat Littlejohn

### South-West Notes

Once Torbay was a fashionable place to climb—now everybody is going to the culm cliffs of the North coast. So small is the number of active climbers in the South West compared to, say, Derbyshire that only one area seems to get attention at any particular time. It has been a good year generally, with yet more new crags turning up and one or two new names making an impact. Some of the old evils are about too, with bolts appearing in West Penwith, Lundy and Wintours Leap in alarming numbers. A pity—when Ed Drummond chopped the bolts on Beowulf we hoped that was the end of bolting on Cornish granite, and the idea of taking a bolt kit to Lundy is slightly appalling; however there will doubtless be some good sport for bolt-choppers in the years to come.

At Wintours Leap Gary Gibson was the main activist, weaving an intricate web of routes on Fly Wall and adding *Strange Little Girl*, E4, 6a, on the tower of Big Brother.

Not much new at Avon except on the steep headwall of Unknown Buttress where John Godding led *Big Wednesday*, E4, 6a, and Martin Corbett led a direct finish to *Low Profile* at E5, 6b. A welcome addition to the British climbing scene are the crags of Trym Valley, which are not far out of the city and were developed by Keith Derrick and Nipper Harrison, giving routes up to E4 about 100 feet long, as well as some good bouldering (which should ease congestion at Avon's toilet block).

A dismal year for Cheddar, probably as a result of the too-restrictive access restrictions, which have killed off interest in the place for anyone but a few dedicated locals. Sad to see some of Britain's best and longest limestone routes become smothered by vegetation through lack of traffic.

Better news in Devon. The Culm Coast has really taken off this year, with many fine routes and even new crags. Exmansworthy is now rated as the prime cliff, and development continues with routes by Gibson, Mick Fowler and Pete O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan was also responsible for Blackchurch's only new route of the season—*Jamaican Dub*, E2, 5c, which takes the slab right of Sacre Coeur and must be excellent. Gull Rock at Marsland has seen intense development, putting it in the Compass Point league, and Iain Peters' routes *Dominator* and *Matchless* have at last been located at Old Walls Point, North of Lower Sharpnose. Peters added *Serpico*, E1, 5b, at Wrangle Point and was also active on Dartmoor, producing *Anarchist*, E2, 5c, at Kingstor

Quarry. Perhaps the prime line of the Culm Coast this year is Corbett's *Silver Shadow*, which at E4, 6a, is a Yosemite-type crack line half a mile south of Sandymouth.

Mick Fowler is still grappling his way up the North Cornwall shale and adding the odd X.S., which roughly equates to E5. *Seal Appeal* is a long, 370-foot line at Willapark, and *Under Pressure* a hard and serious rising traverse between huge overhangs on Lye Rock.

An impressive addition to Pentire is *Pulses Unreal*, E4, 6a, which takes the wall between Eroica and Darkinbad and was the work of Andy Grondowski and Steve Findlay. Findlay also added *Dislocation Dance*, E3, 5c, which traverses in to Pulses Unreal from Eroica.

At Carn Gowla Littlejohn climbed the buttress right of America to give *Guernica*, E6, 6b, the biggest and meanest route on the crag, while Lakeland visitors Cleasby and Matheson climbed a direct line right of Baptist at E3, 6a.

The big event on Cornish granite was Rowland Edwards' ascent of the huge virgin wall right of Buffalo Gorge at Lands End, a line eyed-up by many leading climbers. Despite the use of bolts *Atlantic Ocean Wall*, E4, 6a, is a tremendous route and a fine achievement. Repeats of other Edwards' routes around this coast all seem to confirm their high quality. At Carn Barra, Gibson made a fine contribution with *Golden Brown*, E4, 6a, taking the wall right of Grand Plage.

So there's plenty to go for—time for another holiday in Cornwall!

Pat Littlejohn

## North Wales Notes

Although the big news of the year has mainly come from the Peak District there has still been plenty of action in North Wales. Following the impressive solo ascents of *Great Wall*, E3, 5c and *Quickstep*, E4, 6a at Craig y Forwyn by Andy Pollitt, the staggering news of the year was undoubtedly Phil Davidson's necky solo ascent of the *Right Wall*, E5, 6a, of Dinas Cromlech. Follow that if you can . . .

At a more modest level *Scarab*, HVS, 5b is the wall to the right of Cobweb Crack by W Parker and S Reid, and *Wet Behind the Ears*, HVS, 5a, by Moss and Saunders is the arete of Jericho Wall. It is however further down the valley on Clogwyn y Grochan where the main developments in the valley have been seen recently. *Spectrological Arete*, E2, 5c, by S. Lewis and R. Williams is the arete of Spectrum, and *Gissard Puke*, E1, 5b, an atrociously-named route between Ochre Groove and Slime Wall was the work of Crook and Haston. One can only speculate as to why when it comes to naming routes—and even in everyday speech that the current generation feels so compelled to resort to cheap crudities, obscenities and blasphemies. Somehow these seem to be so incongruous when compared to the fine achievements we now see on rock. Such a fine landmark was the freeing of *Perygl* of all of its aid to give Haston and Crook an E5, 6b testpiece. This ascent freed the north side of the Pass of its last aid points at one fell swoop. It is rumoured that a certain misguided individual immediately added a new route with an aid point to Craig Ddu—merely to reverse the free status of the north side! Also on Craig Ddu Jones and Reid added *Jupiter*, E2, 5b.

Development in the various Llanberis quarries continues; in Vivian Quarry Haston and Trower have put up *Reefer Madness*, E2, 5b. Of greater interest is the story of The Big Hole, one of the Dinorwic quarries, where some of the longest routes in Wales are to

be found—up to 730 feet in length. Joe Brown and Claude Davies started their exploration in 1971 with: *Opening Gambit*, VS; *Hamydryad* XS; and *The Razor's Edge*, HVS. After a gap of ten years they returned in 1981 for *Scorpion*, XS, and in 1982 for *Bushmaster*, XS. Details will be included in the forthcoming North Wales supplement.

Over on the south side Gary Gibson freed *Sych* and also created *A New Austerlitz*, E2, 5b, 5b, 5b, to the right of Gollum. Also on the Mot *Tremolite* was straightened out by Martin Crook and two visiting Bavarians.

On Carreg Alltrem the above three climbers also climbed *Falconer's Rib*, HVS, 5a, to the right of Lavaredo and also *Bavarian Dream* E3, 5b/c, between Bay Groove and Green Wall.

Interest in the Crafnant valley has been shown by a few devotees and one new route in particular deserves mention—Andy Pollitt's *Carousel Waltz*, E5, 6a, 6a, follows Connie's Crack to Snowdrop and then finishes up a sensational arete.

In the Ogwen Valley some pre-guide development took place and on Cwm Marchlyn Mawr Boysen and John Yates found four routes; *Manana*, HVS, 5b, 5a; *Siesta Cracks*, HVS, 5b, 5b, 5b; *Coelacanth*, E1, 5a, 5c; and the fine pitch of *Living Fossil*, E2, 6a. The big route however was undoubtedly Littlejohn's *Hell's Gate*, E3, 5c, over on the Devil's Kitchen cliff. During the summer climbers were crying out for the new Ogwen guide which was only about two years overdue. After some late modifications by the P.S.C. team the guide eventually reached the shops early in October. As expected it is selling as fast as copies reach the shops and has already been well-received. Tom Leppert can at last breathe a sigh of relief now that he is no longer being hounded for script.

Since the production of the North Wales Limestone guide there has been a high level of activity on the north coast. On Great Orme Redhead has had a field day with *The Disillusioned Screw Machine*, E6, 6b, 7a (1 point of aid) right of Carrigan's Groove; *The Bloods*, E5, 6b, near Axle Attack; and *Burning Sphincter* E5, 6c, left of Dumbell Flyer (his route names certainly don't reflect his artistically sensitive temperament!). On Little Orme *Doenitz*, E4, 6b, by Kevin Howit sounds particularly worthwhile. Craig y Forwyn has also seen plenty of activity—the big route sounds like *Imminent Crisis*, E5, by Fawcett. This takes a line left of Cutter. Gary Gibson has also put a few routes on record: *Space Mountain*, E5, left of Ash Groove; *Panorama*, E3, 6b, and *Side Drain*, E1, 5b, to the left of Grundge. In this limestone area Pollitt in particular has been hard at work reducing aid and developing new lines.

Out at Gogarth the new route boom has slowed down but Pollitt freed *Ziggurat* at 6a and Redhead has at last repeated *The Big Sleep*. Redhead is clearly going very strongly and at Tremadoc has added a *Direct Finish to Fingerlicker* at E5, 6c, as well as following Pollitt on *Sheer Resist*, E4, 6b, to the left of Yogi. Pollitt has also been prowling in the Carneddau and on Carreg Mianog has produced *Temper*, E2, 5b, 5b, 6a and *Funny Bone Alt. Finish* at E2, 5b.

An unusual piece of history has unfolded on Llechog where Hugh Banner and Mike Yates have brought the crag up to date with some modern style routes. *Zarquon* is a 340-foot HVS, 5a, 5a and *Erection* E2, 5c is a superb pitch up the left edge of the gaunt red slab. The route is said to be 'a long-standing problem of Jim Perrin' and is reported as 'very stiff' for its grade (Quote—the remains of the Altrincham All-Stars).

Another climber who has been mooching about in the hills is Mick Fowler, on holiday from all that horrible loose stuff on the far south coastline. In Cwm Silyn he



made free ascents of *Bandersnatch*, 5a, 5c; *Codswallop*, 5b; and *Bourdillon's Climb*, 5c. He also freed *Dulyn Groove*, 5c, on Craig Cwm Dulyn.

Lastly we come to Cloggy where a fierce controversy is currently raging. John Redhead, the very talented local climber, has clearly set his sights on the 'blank' section of Great Wall which is undoubtedly the greatest unsolved Welsh problem of the current era. Redhead first caused a murmur of disapproval when he repeated *Midsummer Night's Dream* after replacing a peg runner that the Berzins had removed on the attempted second ascent. Unfortunately he then went on to place two bolts by abseil to produce a stance on the blank part of Great Wall. Long ago Joe Brown chose not to use more than his self-imposed quota of aid before Pete Crew eventually cracked the problem using 200-foot ropes to avoid taking a stance on the wall. No-one seems particularly bothered that Redhead's pitch has been given the first 8a grading. Most folk seem to be saying that bolts have no place on Cloggy and that unless Redhead is prepared to get a longer rope and find more guts than he should leave it for a better climber. As on gritstone bolts have no place in the Welsh hills and unlike the proud oak which once graced the Milestone these metal appendages need chopping before they have time to multiply.

Stan Din (for Jim who went AWOL)

### Peak District Notes 1981 and 1982

Pundits of the Peak scene have said that 1981/82 has been the Ron and Jerry show, starring Dominic, Daniel and Jonny. They might be right.

In 1977 there was 5c + but rarely; the scene was Bancroft's and Allen's, and mainly gritstone. Then by 1980 there was 6a, and even occasionally 6b, and the scene was shared between Burke and Fawcett and comprised both gritstone and limestone. And now the scene is under the multiple rule of Fawcett, Moffatt, Woodward and the Lees. The new word is 6c and 7a, and even 7b, and it is almost totally dominated by very steep limestone. Rock is a name for something that climbers hide under while the megastars and superbrats push the grading ladder up and out.

The explosion in standards seen in 1981 and 82 has once again confirmed the Peak District status as the absolute frontier of climbing development in Britain and possibly the world. New ethical codes are being kicked around, and old taboos rejected. Each new ascent, with singular exceptions, is a known sequence of moves to known holds with known protection.

Gritstone achievements, seen under any other climate than the present one of hyperactivity would be monumentally impressive. But compared to limestone, grit is the poor relation. One single ascent on **Froggatt**, however, overshadows all else on grit and ranks in significance with *The Prow* free, *Profit of Doom*, *Old Friends* and *Our Father* as one of the Peak District's big deals. Jonny Woodward's ascent of *Beau Geste*, E6, 7b, stunned the climbing world, but was predicted in advance by Geoff (crystal balls) Birtles. Jonny rigged up a sophisticated triple rope system with side runners which was just about capable of keeping him off the deck. He succeeded after eight long leader falls, and so far no-one has managed to repeat the route.

Another desperate at Froggatt is Dominic Lee's *Mean Streak*, E6, 5b. The Lees brothers, unknown in 1980 and megastars by 1981, have systematically taken Derbyshire climbing to pieces and built their own set of standards which include 6c and 7a, top-roped practice and rigorous training. *Mean Streak* was top-roped 'it goes

without saying' and similar tactics were employed by Mark Miller, who eventually led *Science Friction*, E4, 6a, with a side runner. Above the head preplaced and preclipped runners secured notoriety for Paul Mitchell's *Greedy Pig* (long stick to place them). Other routes of note include Fawcett's *Spock's Missing*, E5, 6b, Daniel Lee's *Circus*, E5, 5c, an improbable pitch above Hard Cheddar, and John Hart's *Paranoid Android*, E4, 5c up the impressive wall left of Big Crack. Martin Veale found *Beau Brummell*, E3, 6a, just right of Cave Wall.

At **Curbar** the Lee brothers made their first significant contribution early in 1981 by beating Fawcett to *Cool Moon*, E5, 6b, which used a pre-clipped side runner high in Moonwalk.

The new Stanage guidebook is imminent and Gary Gibson produced a large crop of filling-in routes such as *Vena Cave-In* E4, 6a and *Eight Winds, Four Directions*, E3, 6a. The obvious but unimaginatively named *Quietus Right Hand*, E3, 6a, was sorted out by Ian Maisley, and his partner, Woodward tiptoed to a right-hand finish on Tippler, *Paranoid*, E4, 6a. Graham Hoey used a 'long thin piece of metal, hand placed' which he claims is not a peg, but certainly sounds like one to protect *No More Excuses*, E4, 6b.

Craggs (did someone say crabs?) has shown a penchant for horizontal movement and a wish to prove me wrong. The 'worked out' block of **Higgarr Tor** now has *Rock Around the Block*, E4, 6a, a super-girdle which measures a long way between the two horizontal breaks. At **Cratcliffe**, Craggs has found another girdle, *Renaissance*, E2, 6a.

**Millstone** and **Lawrencefield** have seen further aid elimination. Unbelievably at E4, 5b, Lawrence Francombe has freed *The Rack* of rest points. Nigel Riddington achieved an instant classic by climbing direct up the thin crack where Time for Tea bifurcates; *Tea for Two*, E4, 6a. In the hole at **Lawrencefield**, the Lees freed *Block Wall* at E3, 6b and Roger Gearick cleaned up *Pool Wall*, E4, 6b.

High standard bouldering at **Burbage** gave Andy Barker and Paul Mitchell *Nosferatu* and *Simpering Savage*, E5, 6b.

In Staffordshire things have been fairly quiet but on the **Roaches** Lower Tier Phil Burke grabbed *Crystal Gazer*, E5, 6b, the line which Woodward failed to pick up sufficient cerebral deficiency to lead. Woodward's test piece, *Piece of Mind* still scares all away!

On Limestone the crags have been hammered and on the least unlikely crag, **Raven Tor**, the central overhanging section now sports two E7, four E5 and two E4 routes in juxtaposition. Early in 1981 Fawcett freed *Sardine*, E5, 6b, to establish a classic, now a trade route. Then after freeing *Hubris* at E5, 6b, he created a free version of Prowler, *Indecent Exposure*, E6, 6c, 6b. That took him two days, and while he was getting his breath back Jerry Moffatt free climbed Cambridge Bolt Route now *Rooster Booster*, E7, 6c, 6c. In reply Ron freed *The Prow*.

Immediately acclaimed as 'Britain's Top Route' by Birtles, whose new magazine High had predicted the ascent. The grade tag of E7, 6c, 6c, 7a, gives some idea of the effort needed. Moffatt then managed to complete the route in a single day. After Prow . . . Dominic Lee found a finger-wrecking *Obscene Gesture*, E5, 6c. Everyone now waits for someone to climb Prow's first 25 feet which Ron avoided by traversing in.

After these amazing events, the rest of limestone might appear jaded but fortunately not. A similar level of activity has been reached on almost every crag.

**Water cum Jolly** has been blitzed again, and as predicted Central Buttress continues to provide desperate routes. Fawcett's *Cool Hand Luke*, E5, 6c, *La Chute*, E5, 6b, and *White Fright*, E5, 6c, are examples of the overhanging horrors discovered. Jim Moran

has kept up appearances with *Yankee Dollar*, E4, 6b, and *Sox*, E4, 6b, for Simon Horrox. The Lees climbed *Leviathan*, E5, 6b, and Moffatt found a line immediately left *In Bulk*, E5, 6b.

Rubicon Wall has been redeveloped, in fact it probably started the race for Raven Tor, being a mini-version with a similar tilt. Andy Barker bouldered his way up *The Miller's Tale*, E5, 6b, and since then all hell has been let loose. The Lees scooped gems such as *A Bigger Splash*, E2, 6b, *White Bait*, E5, 6c, and *The Angler*, E5, 5c. Their exploitation of digital rigidity culminated in a free ascent of *Jezebel*, E4, 6b, but Ron polished things off with *Jaws*, E5, 6c, *Honeymoon Blues*, E4, 6b, and finally the amazing *Piranha*, E6, 7a. There are a couple of very nasty things that eat people down at Rubicon Wall.

**Chee Tor** has seen repeats of Livesey's mega-route, Golden Mile, which is every bit as bold and good as Livesey said! As consolation Fawcett has climbed the other two lines. No-one has had sufficient neck to lead *Autobahn*, E5, 6a, the easier alternative. None had the cheek to place two bolts and two pegs in *Tequila Mockingbird* either. Moffatt has since succeeded on this E6, 7b, mega-route but after a flier decided that the route should be E7, 6c. Luckily he bounces.

John Fleming has found two routes worthy of the name he has carried around for years. *Splintered Perspex of Youth* has been equally divided between an E4, 6a and an E3, 5c, route, raising a note of nostalgia for some. Woodward, not splintered nor splinted, climbed a new top pitch for *Ceramic* at E5, 6a, and Chris Gore snatched an instant classic, *White Gold*, E4, 6b, on the far left-hand end of the crag.

The big roof of Santiano has yielded up two further horizontal horrors. Attempting to free climb Storm, A3, gave Moffatt an E5, 6c pitch called *Storm* which is really something else because Storm is now *Rock Umbrella*, E4, 6b, by Daniel Lee.

Two Tier Buttress was attacked early in 1981 by Fawcett who was *Running On Empty* at E4, 6a, and *Countdown*, E4, 6c. Colonial Kim Carrigan bouldered out the top pitch of *Darl* at 6c and Gore added *Ape Index*, E5, 6c, which makes *Machineries* look like a cop out. Healthy rivalry between Moffatt and Woodward yielded *Ninth Life*, E6, 6c, for Woodward after Jerry took a decker.

On Nettle Buttress close contenders for bad taste awards are Gary Gibson's *F... Argentina* and *Good-bye Belgrano*. Over on Great Rocks Dale Gibson's *Nuclear Device*, E2, 5c, is destined for classic status. On Plum Buttress Domic Lee has added *Raisin Roof*, E4, 5b.

Fawcett has pinched the line of the crag on Ravensdale; *Wilt*, E5, 6c, traverses in from Cut Loose.

**High Tor** received early scrutiny by Fawcett, resulting in *Roadrunner*, E5, 6c, which breaks left out of M1. John Codling's variations add a touch of abysmal originality to Peak route names. He gets a bonus for *Yellow Brick Road*, E5, 6b, but this is deducted for *Beep*, E6, 6b, and *Bleep*, E2, 5c. *Ambler Gambler*, E4, 6a, is another appalling name but pride of place goes to *Fantasia*, E5, 6a, 6a, 6a, 6a, a fine name on a crag where all girdles are 'D' routes. Better are *Brompton's Cocktail*, E5, 6a, 6b, by Andy Grondowski and *Delta*, G, E3, 5c, by Chris Jackson.

In the **Dovedale** backwater Ed Cleasby and Rob Matheson took an obvious line across Adjudicator Wall for the superb *Wall of Straws*, E4, 6b. Further down Codling's short lived Wild Country was re-named *Amazonia* (Shame! Ed.), E5, 6b, having lost its tension and gained a top section. Jim Moran traversed even further left towards the

Bat Holes from The Umpire and tiptoed out over space with *Police and Thieves*, E4, 6a. Once again Fawcett scooped the route of the valley with *Eye of the Tiger*, E6, 7a, being an honest to goodness free ascent of Pleb's Route.

In the **Manifold** at Thor's Cave *Doctor Blake*, E5, 6c, by the Lees is the terribly obvious bottomless groove to the left of the cave. At Beeston Tor Burke and Pete Thexton climbed *Flying Doctor*, E5, 6b, and Mark Elwell put up *Pat Trick*, E4, 6b.

Since Tom Proctor hung up his chalk bag in 1980 the **Stoney** crown has passed on to Jerry Moffatt who started his Peak District career by finding some of Proctor's 30 listed gaps which Tom had put aside for a rainy day. *Black Kabul*, E5, 6a, *Helmut Schmit*, E5, 6b, and *Hysterectomy*, E4, 6c, were the first of the new crop, but Moffatt's claim to legend will be recorded as his leisurely ascent of *Little Plum* free. At E7, 7a, 6c, it would have been the route of the decade had it not been for The Prow. As it is, Moffatt considered the route quote worthy enough to say 'there exists no other pitch which is more out there'. It took him two years between pitches!

And lastly Gary Gibson's little book was published. Perhaps prematurely, because the state of the art is in a period of rapid flux at the moment. But as a sports plan for jaded Peak climbers it has been superb. And those who couldn't climb the routes at least had something to criticise in the cafe. Those, of course, who hadn't chosen to hide under a rock until the new wave is over.

Mike Browell

# NEW CLIMBS

In the past one of the main aims of our Journal has been to record all important new climbs in our area and to comment on significant trends and ethical issues. Perhaps as a result of the spread and frequency of national magazines which record all new developments climbers are now more inclined to send details of new routes in to the magazines.

It is perhaps time for us to take a new look at the role of the C.C.J. and its format for the 1980s. In particular if details of new climbs are to be diverted to supplements and guidebooks then undoubtedly the area notes ought to be expanded in the future.

The Publications Sub-Committee has discussed this problem and an author has been found to prepare a 'North Wales New Climbs' supplement. This will include not only the crags of Snowdonia but also the North Wales limestone where there has been a great deal of development since the recent guidebook. Subject to agreement by the main Committee the idea is to publish the supplement by May 1983. The Editor will pass on any details of new routes which he receives.

Included below are only the few Pembroke routes which were sent in.

## PEMBROKE

### **Boontown Rats** 160 feet Hard Very Severe

A companion route to Rave from the Grave accepting the main challenge on the bastion to the left of the main slab of Humanity, Proletarian etc. The route takes the big slab to the left of Rave. (Note: originally called Blast from the Past in the C.C. log.)

1. 95 feet. 5a. Climb the rib easily until it is possible to move left onto the slab, over an overlap, crux, to gain a crack on the main part of the slab. Follow the crack to a ledge, step up to the right and continue up the edge of the slab to a ledge below steeper rock (in situ peg belay).
2. 65 feet. 4c. Sustained. Move up the edge and gain a crack which leads to the top of a pillar. Steep moves lead to another ledge followed by a shattered wall, a fragile glacis and the top.

First ascent: August 1, 1982. K.J. Wilson, R. Carter (A.L.).

## CRYSTAL SLABS

### **Sloose** 100 feet Hard Very Severe

1. 100 feet. 4c. Climb the corner between Bloodstone and The Gadfly, moving right at the top, finishing over an overhang to avoid loose rock at the top of the corner.

First ascent: April 10, 1982. T. Thomas, B. Gookey.

## BULLSLAUGHTER BAY

### **Terry's Corner** 80 feet Very Severe

A prominent corner right of a flying buttress in the centre of the bay. A superb route but

a little loose at the top.

1. 80 feet. 4c. Climb a buttress to gain a platform at 20 feet, then go up the corner.  
First ascent: April 10, 1982. T. Thomas, B. Gookey.

**Invincible** 80 feet Very Severe

On the left side of the bay is a pillar leaning in to the main cliff to form an arch. Behind the pillar are three parallel cracks facing right. Another fine route.

1. 80 feet. 4c. Climb the centre crack, with overhangs at 30 and 60 feet which are climbed direct.

First ascent: April 10, 1982. B. Gookey, T. Thomas.

## SPACE BUTTRESS

**Airspace Factor** 120 feet E2

1. 120 feet. 5b/c. The open groove between Space and Entity.  
First ascent: 1982. P. Littlejohn, S. Lewis.

## TREVALLAN CLIFF

**The Bitch** 90 feet E3

1. 90 feet. 6b/c. The ferocious thin crack left of Sunlover.  
First ascent: 1982. P. Littlejohn, L. Foulkes, S. Lewis.

## ST. GOVAN'S HEAD

**Poison Arrow** 120 feet E2

1. 120 feet. 5c. An excellent pitch up the thin crack left of Cupid's Bow.  
First ascent: 1982. S. Lewis, P. Littlejohn.

**Wicked Gravity** 140 feet E5

1. 140 feet. 6b. The impressive wall right of Goad.  
First ascent: P. Littlejohn, H. Clarke.

**Crime and Punishment** 160 feet E5, 6c, 6a

A plum line through the roof right of Public Enemy. Rest point above the roof.  
First ascent: 1982. P. Littlejohn, S. Lewis.

## MOWING WORD

**Close Shave** 120 feet E3

1. 120 feet. 6a. The smooth groove left of Razor's Edge.

## LYDSTEP AREA

**Hank Williams will live forever in people's hearts** 80 feet HVS

A tough well-protected crack line. Skrinkle Haven Bay is reached by a line of steps down from the recently opened coast path which now extends past Forbidden Head to the edge of the army camp. On the east of the bay there is a line of cliffs, getting lower

towards the seaward end. Unfortunately these are capped with unpenetrable jungle, except half way along them where a rightward facing corner gives the line of the route. 1. 80 feet. 5a/b. Climb the groove to the overhanging corner crack. Go up this to a ledge on the right from which it is possible to exit onto the pinnacle. From the top of this step left into a small groove which leads to the top. Spike and peg belays in place well back.

First ascent: April 12, 1982. D. Cook, A. Morgan.

## **CLIMBERS' CLUB GUIDEBOOKS**

### **OLD SERIES**

Lliwedd (1972) by Harold Drasdo.

Cwm Silyn and Cwellyn (1971) by Mike Yates and Jim Perrin.

### **NEW SERIES**

1—Carneddau (1975) by Les Holliwell.

2—Ogwen (1982) by Tom Leppert. (This really is out at last).

3—Llanberis Pass (1981) by Geoff Milburn.

4—Clogwyn Du'r Arddu (1976) by Alec Sharp.

5—Lliwedd.

6—Tremadog and the Moelwyns (1978) by Mike Mortimer (Out of print).

7—Gogarth (1977) by Alec Sharp.

8—Cwm Silyn and Cwellyn.

Pembroke (1981) by Pat Littlejohn and Mike Harber.

Bosigran and the North Coast (1978) by Ed Hart (Out of print).

Chair Ladder and the South Coast (1975) by Robert Moulton (Out of print).

Southern Sandstone (1982) by Tim Daniells.

### **SUPPLEMENTS**

Gogarth 1981 by Geoff Milburn.

Llèyn Peninsular (1979) by Trevor Jones.

Pembroke 1982 by Jon de Montjoye and Mike Harber.

North Cornwall and West Penwith (1982) by Pete O'Sullivan and Bob Moulton.

### **IN PREPARATION**

6—Tremadog and the Moelwyns by Leigh McGinley. Due out 1983.



