

**THE
CLIMBERS' CLUB
JOURNAL**

1984

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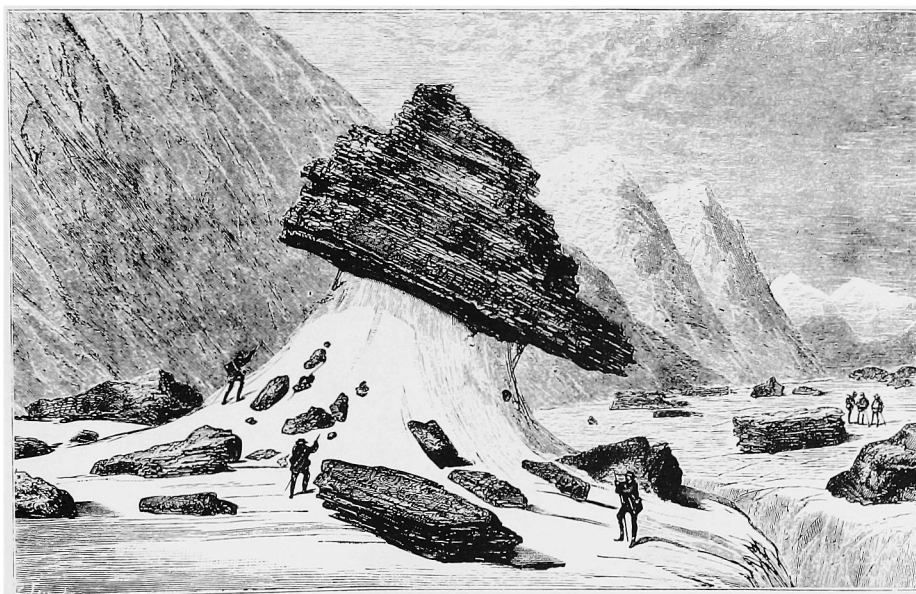
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THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Edited by
GEOFF MILBURN



THE AAR GLACIER.

1984
THE CLIMBERS' CLUB



'Hotel des Neuchatelois'

This is the one hundred and fifth issue
of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

Copies of the Journal may be obtained
from Cordee, 3a DeMontfort Street,
Leicester, LE1 7HD.

Published by the Climbers' Club in 1985
and produced by The Ernest Press
Glasgow G44 5QD.

Photoset in Plantin Medium and Bold 10pt. & 8pt.
by C.M.R. Graphics Ltd., East Kilbride
Printed Offset.

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Obituary: E. Stuart Chantrell	141
Gilbert F. Peaker.....	146
Cuthbert H. French.....	149
John H. Buzzard.....	151
H.G. Balfour.....	151
Tim Lewis.....	152
Officers and Officials of the Club.....	155
Editorial.....	156
Reviews.....	161
Area Notes	179
New Climbs	191

THE CLIMBERS CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. XIX No. 22 (New Series) No. 105

1984

CONTENTS

	Page
Three Days in the Life of a Rock Climber	Neil Foster 1
The Bat Reconstructed	Paul Nunn, Jim Curran & Tony Riley 7
Night on a Bare Mountain	Bob Allen 15
Alpine Addictions	David Hope 19
Climbing with Trepidation	Dave Gregory 27
The Dovedale Dash: Were You There?	Ted Maden 33
Diamox the Magnificent	Trevor Jones 37
Time Travels.....	Graham Hoey 41
Early Days in Cressbrook Dale.....	Keith Sharples 45
A Dream Come True.....	Mike Owen 49
The Horoscope	Dave Gregory 55
The Kinderscout	Louis S. Jennings 61
Professor Falls.....	David Hopkins 67
The Emasculated Climber	Graham Hoey 71
Mickey Mouse (Sup) for Gerries.....	John C. Wilkinson 73
Charlotte Dome South Face	Mike Westmacott 79
The Wonder World of Nature	Anon 83
Committee Member — Performance Appraisal.....	Graham Hoey 85
High Mountains Deep Water	Paul De Mengel 87
Glencoe Revisited.....	Derek Walker 93
Mellowed Out.....	John Codling 99
Training for the Ben.....	Mike Ball 103
On Ben Nevis	Mike Binnie 109
Easter Days in North Wales	Dr Karl Blodig 115
The Seven Year Itch	Geoff Milburn 129
Huncote Quarry	Steve Allen 137

THREE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A ROCK CLIMBER

NEIL FOSTER

Sunday, April 1st, 1984

April showers, but not rain . White walls of heavy snow raced over the Peak. A late start in the early afternoon takes Al and myself to Gardom's, following up a tip-off. I'd not been before and the shady left-hand end, complete with icefalls(?) and wet streaks, called for a retreat. But Al told of a change in aspect further right, so we pressed on.

We'd come to look at a groove by Crocodile. A pessimistic shout from one of the most optimistic climbers I know almost made me not bother. sliding down I agreed. I wondered about the arete to the left and penduled, spotting odd holds which I gave a quick brush. It looked desperate and frighteningly bold. The next step was a top-rope attempt. The reason was to see if I was wasting my time and to discover which holds to brush. Also there was no way I would attempt to lead untried 6b-looking moves about 10 feet above poor-looking runners and about 30 feet above a painful ground. Unethical? Not perfect admittedly, but to my mind the end result is the most important thing. I'd only ever top-roped one new route previously (Winter's Grip at Millstone). I would never chip a hold or place a bolt at present. Top-roping doesn't damage the rock — these practices do. Although a hard route initially top-roped today may not get many ascents at first, a few years will see the masses soloing it.

The first attempt saw all the moves done with rests and some tight. It felt desperate. I then brushed the relevant holds and tried again. Success on a slack rope this time and I started to get frightened. Set up again! I looked for a way out, any excuse, but none was forthcoming. Rousey tried and failed miserably. More brushing was needed, amongst which I tried odd moves. Al waited patiently, cocooned in duvets. Remembering his amazing ability to contrive belays on an ice-covered Ben Nevis last winter, I appointed him technical adviser. He abbed down and set to work. A reasonable Friend and wire were found to protect the very powerful 6b crux. Would they protect the 6a/b sequence 10 feet above? I hoped I wouldn't have to find out. Al then tried again and, with my shouts of encouragement, managed it. I certainly couldn't back out now, especially as Al kept reminding me he'd seconded the route before I'd even led it! (That reminds me of a three star modern route at the Roaches

that was seconded one 'weekend' when the route was cleaned prior to a clean lead mid-week. Ed.)

I psyched up and climbed up to place the gear, but pumped out posing for photos and had to reverse for a rest! Another snow shower loomed so I set off and made the break and Friend past the crux section, though it felt very poky. Al then ran around the bottom of the crag with my camera and what with the tree and the large rock step, much knitting resulted. "Can I jump off now?", I shouted, as I saw him take me off the sticht in a vain attempt to untangle the mess! Make it Snappy is a classic gritstone route. The grade of E6 6b is for an on-sight lead. Will anyone repeat it this year, I wonder.

Tuesday, April 3rd, 1984

A day full of lectures had meant the loss of Monday's climbing. Tuesday was perfect however. I'd arranged to meet Al in the early afternoon after my morning's lectures. I was about to walk to his house when he rang at about 9.30. Bernard rang a couple of minutes later. What's the matter with these people? Do they think I'm not a dedicated, conscientious student?!

I persuaded the team to go to Curbar as I wanted to look at the arete by Mr. Softee. I tried (on a rope) but . . . well, this finest remaining line on Derbyshire grit may have to wait a couple of years yet. Another arete left of 7 Metre Crack looked more promising and I gave it a quick brush. This one had no gear — perhaps slightly more justification for top-roping? I tried, and the barn-doorish moves were all too apparent. Much more brushing was needed and as I worked away Andy Bailey led the front of the tower to the left (Hidden Pleasure, E3 6a), whilst Al led a three-move micro-route up a small buttress opposite (Andy Pollitt's Jacket, E3 5c). Incidentally, both these routes were top-roped first.

John Allen and Mark Stokes had now arrived. They'd seen our car at Curbar Gap and thinking their line to the right of Dark Entries to be in danger, had raced over the hill. Sadly, we'd not spotted it and John set to work cleaning. Mark and I soloed 7 Metre Crack and then I soloed Andy Pollitt's Jacket. On sight? Well, yes, but I'd watched Al lead it, so I knew what to do which does make a difference.

Al and Andy departed for new climbs further right, to be replaced by Matt Boyer and then Tony Ryan and Johnny Dawes. It was becoming an excellent day with a good merry team. I love this sort of atmosphere, with a group of friends, much heckling — and the serious side of events pushed to the back of the mind. Anyway, I top-roped the arete as did John Allen. Bernard arrived from Stoney and was press-ganged into some first ascent photography. I then soloed it with a big catching team and rucksacks in the hole in the gully. Ulysses or Bust, E5 6b (named retrospectively) did not remain unrepeated for long. John Allen soloed it with customary ease,

Neil Foster soloing the first ascent of Ulysses or Bust, E5 6b, Curbar.

Photo: Bernard Newman.



and then Johnny Dawes launched out on sight. He'd watched John solo it but had not remembered the sequence. Laybacking much higher than us (we had to face holds above the layback to start) he was level with the jug on the left, but couldn't reach it. I cringed as he plummeted, but he was luckily unscathed. He then set off again (must be mad!) and did it quite easily. John Allen then started to lead his fine-looking route by Dark Entries.

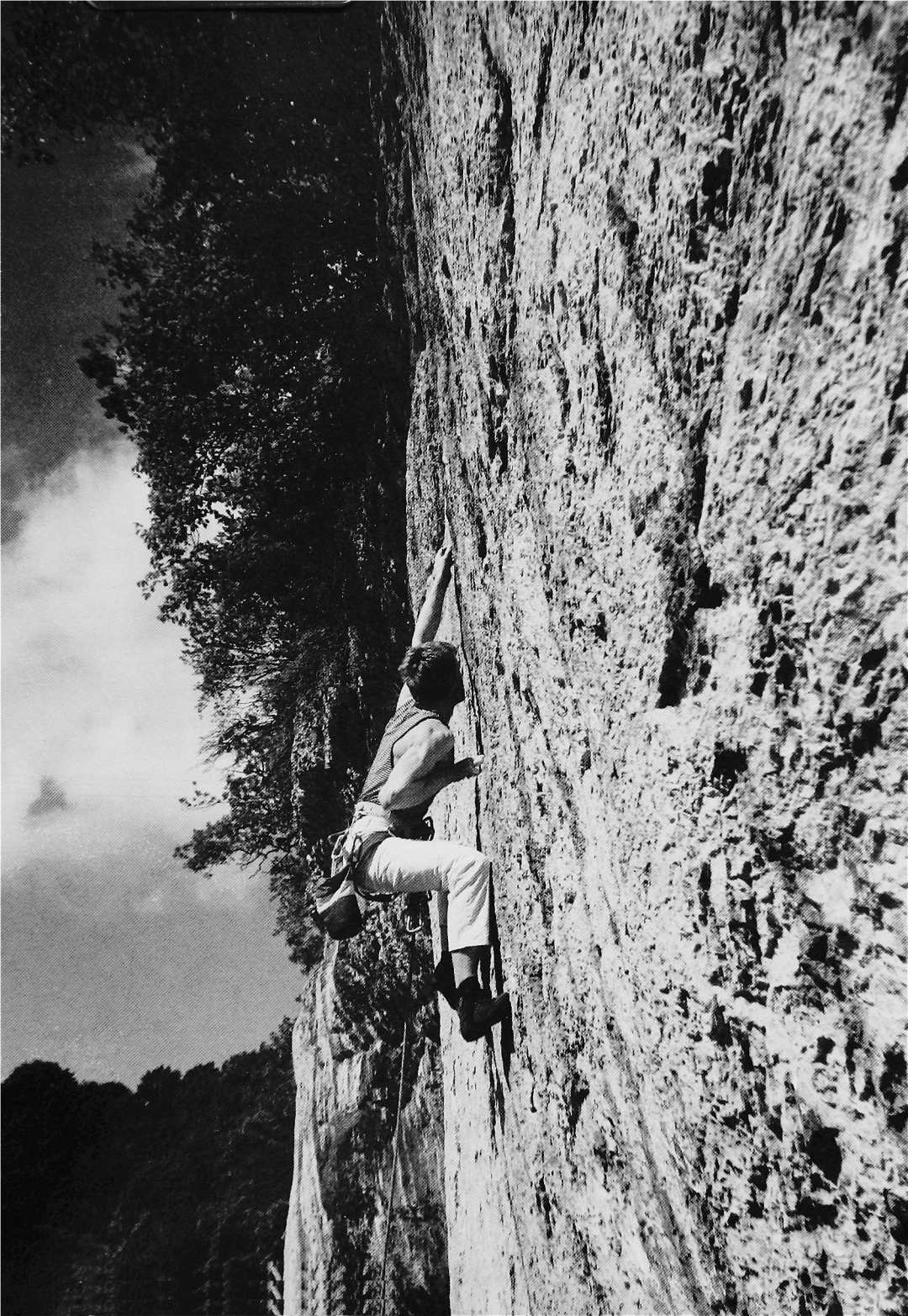
Clouds loomed and the prospect of loss of light saw Bernard and myself racing back over the hill to bag Profit of Doom. I'd not done it before and really wanted to cruise it. Sadly we missed the light, and my dejected photographer said I might as well do it anyway. Quite pumped by now I found placing the wire desperate. At first I couldn't reach it at all, but a fingery pull and it went about one tenth of an inch and got stuck. I then had to stretch right up the wire, drag it out and then try to push it in properly. It seemed poor but would have to do. By now I was really pumped and climbed down for a rest. Then go for it. Back and foot on not a lot, then straighten up further than ought to be possible and grab the pocket. The top sloped and, totally wasted, I nearly fell off pulling over. Hell! and there was a jug there all the time. What a magic route and an excellent day's cragging with a big group of good friends.

Wednesday, April 4th, 1984

Early afternoon sees Ian Smith, Tony Gleave and myself departing for a film recce at Stanage. I'm keen to climb and have Ulysses in the back of my mind. This is an established route so any sort of inspection was out of the question. Foolish? Well, those are my ethics and I don't bend them. Warming up soloing Death and Night and Blood and Wall End Slab Direct, I'm ready for a go. The afternoon is warm and the need for much chalk is obvious. The crux is at the top and on reaching it my lack of ability, knowledge of the moves and the excessive heat suddenly become frighteningly obvious. I'm about to try and reverse, but off shoot my hands.

What did I do wrong? Well, top-roping new routes had probably given me a false impression of my on-sight ability. I'd been tempted onto the route in weather far too hot. I'd been tempted by two other factors. Ron's battle for the top with Jerry has produced a lot of backstabbing. I know this so should have taken Ron's comment of E4 6a with a pinch of salt. I can climb E4 on-sight. I cannot climb Ulysses on-sight. Finally Johnny had said Ulysses or Bust was harder, but he had been trying it a much more difficult way than John or me. I should have realised just how much harder his sight solo must have been.

Today's high standard rock climbing in the Peak is going in two separate directions. The main attraction to most (myself included) is steep limestone, often well-protected, with bolts becoming increasingly common. The other direction is the bold



gritstone route. Sometimes appearing innocuous, this can be deadly. People playing this game have to be sharp. Most of the time you will get away with it. Someone apparently fell off Ulysses a couple of days after me and walked away. Lucky? Perhaps, but to say the I was unlucky may be more accurate.

I think my fall was due to a combination of bad judgement and bad luck. Costly? It nearly cost me my left foot. Several hours in pain I wouldn't have realised possible preceded a major operation by a top surgeon. With the aid of two long plates and some thirteen screws, he rebuilt my smashed tibia and fibula. I lay in a daze of regrets. What might have been. Two weeks in a hospital bed nearly killed me. I long to climb again, but even if I can, falling will be out. I can't afford to damage the leg again. I love bold limbing. All the most memorable climbs for me have been bold: Jenny Wren, Piranha, The Cad, Great Arete and Heart of Gold. Soloing Edge Lane, Guillotine and Suicide Wall. Magic memories for me, but that's all they will be. I'll not be able to do them again.

Top-roping is regarded by many as unethical. Lying about how a route was done can endanger other people. I know which I think is worse. Speak the truth. Silly undergrading and non-admission of tactics are cowardly practices. The number of serious accidents to leading climbers have been few over recent years. Sadly I think they may become more widespread. If you choose to play the game, tread warily. Confidence — yes. But you can have too much faith. The exception may prove a painful reality.

POSTSCRIPT

This article is a collection of thoughts written at a time of high emotion, on my emergence from hospital. You certainly aren't short of time in hospital and I spent endless hours pondering events. Just writing this piece was a vital exercise at the time, so publication is really unnecessary. Rather than change any of the text I thought I'd mention here various changes in my thoughts, to guard against accusations of inconsistency in the future.

There is a place for bolts on British limestone. Having spent much time watching and photographing top new routes this summer, I have become completely convinced of this. Opinion is also the result of very lengthy thought, though there is no room to explain the arguments here. If I ever return to new routing and felt a bolt appropriate to a situation, I would place one. The situations, however, are very specific.

Regarding top-roping, I have received an immense amount of stick for the top-roping of these three routes. There are indeed, disadvantages in honesty. A silly amount of hair splitting is evident at present. Top-roping, move practising on jumars when cleaning and hang-dogging are all ways of learning moves prior to a clean ascent, yet some are 'allowed' and others not. The difference between the first two really is negligible, yet the top-ropers are decried and the practisers praised. perhaps I'll try practising next time — to keep everyone happy.

THE BAT RECONSTRUCTED

PAUL NUNN, JIM CURRAN and TONY RILEY

In August 1979 five climbers spent a week on Ben Nevis filming a reconstruction of a first ascent on the mountain's biggest buttress by Robin Smith and Dougal Haston in 1959. The film, "The Bat and the Wicked" is based upon the classic article by Robin Smith in the SMC Journal of 1960 — which was later reprinted in Games Climbers Play.'

Predictably the first drops of rain splattered the windscreen as we left the M6 and drove into Scotland. Not for the first time the whole idea seemed ludicrously improbable and likely to prove an expensive experiment. Rab Carrington and Brian Hall were to be the climbers. Paul Nunn was to organize locations and provide back-up camera work, and Jim Curran and Tony Riley were the film-makers. We could manage only one week of shooting on Ben Nevis and that in the first week of August, potentially the wettest month of the year.

We were attracted to filming a reconstruction of the first ascent by the sheer liveliness of Robin Smith's classic article. The Bat refers to one of many falls, a great backwards swoop by Dougal Haston out of an overhanging corner: "Then his fingers went to butter. It began under control as the bit of news 'I'm off', but it must have caught in the wind, for it grew like a wailing siren to a bloodcurdling scream as a black and bat-like shape came hurtling over the roof with legs splayed like webbed wings and hands hooked like a vampire . . . I could have sworn that his teeth were fangs and his eyes were big red orbs."

Two extreme talents at the forefront of British climbing making repeated and stealthy attacks on this daunting rock climb, eventually succeeding in the middle of a moonlit night—it had obviously been a great adventure. Now a classic in climbing writing, Smith's account is as much about people as climbing, and it manages to combine several perspectives. Somehow he is himself intense about climbing. His use of language, particularly Scottish words, seems naturally suited to both the action and the atmosphere, yet communicates to a non-Scot. The writing evokes strong visual images and provided a challenge to us as film-makers. The narration had to be linked with suitable pictures which complemented rather than overpowered the words.

Somehow the limitations of the project turned to advantages. We were on a very low budget in film-making terms, although the Yorkshire Arts Association gave as generous a grant as they could. Low-budget filming was no novelty to Tony and Jim, whose first film, *A Great Effort*, won first prize at the Trento Film Festival,



Above: Preparations at Base Camp!

Photo: Tony Riley.

Below: Rab and Brian playing the roles of Dougal and Robin.

Photo: Tony Riley.



Italy, in 1977 for contributions to art and literature in cinema. It was shown on BBC2 in 1975. Three Himalayan films had followed, *Trango*, *Barnaj 77* and *K2 The Savage Mountain*, shown on BBC1 in 1979. Limited finance meant that we could not afford extensive or sophisticated shooting techniques, or a large film crew. There would, therefore, be no helicopters or aerial shots; on the other hand there would be no time-wasting problems with co-ordinating such shots or a large team. The deliberate blurring of traditional film-making roles worked well in such a small group. Everyone involved had a stake in the project, all were familiar with Ben Nevis and its moods, and all were rock climbers able to look after themselves and work as a team on a 1,000-foot overhanging precipice. Paul had known both Smith and Haston and had also made an early repeat ascent of *The Bat* in 1962.

Jim had approached Rab Carrington at Easter and asked him if he would be prepared to act/climb the part of Robin Smith. Enthusiasm for the project was engendered by an immense respect for Smith and his climbs but tempered by the thoughts of having to fall off in front of a camera and of having his beard shaved. Such was the result of the latter process that everyone failed to recognize the friend of a decade—but he did not look like Robin! Brian was taller than Dougal and did not resemble him except for a long head, wolfish grin and consummate boldness.

In Fort William it had stopped raining for the first time in weeks. The pile of equipment, said Rab, was more than had been taken to Nepal to climb Jannu. We were camping because the Scottish Mountaineering Club feared that the film might cause gross inconvenience to users of the Inglis Clarke Memorial Hut— despite the fact that we were trying to honour two of the SMC's most distinguished members; and that the hut remained empty for most of our stay. Such considerations hardly comforted the actors as they relayed two or three 60lb loads up "the knee-deep black bog". It rained that night and on Tuesday morning the great buttress on the north side of Carn Dearg dripped and glistened. A shambles of climbing and film gear had to be reorganized while Rab and Brian donned late-1950's period clothes and equipment. Much of the gear came from Paul's attic, though the hawser-laid ropes had been borrowed from friends. One of them had survived a 70-foot fall on the Black Cleft of Clogwyn-du'r-Arddu in Wales in 1959.

Past experience had shown the film-makers that early shooting is often disjointed and contrived, but that with steady effort a project tends to come together. We had just one week to do the shoot and were lucky with the weather: it was dry enough for the climbers to get up the route in their old-fashioned climbing gear and for us to use the film equipment, but there was also sufficient drifting mist and water-streaked rock to capture the brooding and gloomy atmosphere so typical of the mountain. Compressing the shooting into a few days also allowed good lighting continuity, while filming without live sound recording is much quicker and involves fewer

repeats. It was possible to use Smith's narration virtually as a shooting script and to proceed more or less chronologically.

Despite lack of previous film experience, Rab and Brian needed surprisingly little guidance. They were so much into their roles that they called each other Robin and Dougal and the cameramen felt as if they were invisible witnesses to the first ascent. As they climbed, one camera operated from the ground and another from a position prepared by Paul on the climb. It was still wet and the first section was initially led by Paul and rigged with some furtive protection, while the cameraman was brought up to the first position on a freehanging rope before Rab and Brian began to climb. Paul supervised climbing sequences and allowed the cameramen to concentrate on filming without worrying unduly about stances, belays and other security. He had occasionally done such rigging on BBC outside broadcasts since Operation Overhang in 1965, and on a few film projects as well.

The first day went remarkably smoothly. After filming the first pitch the climbing became very serious as it was necessary to traverse a long slab of rock which ends abruptly in massive overhangs. A fall would have put its victim straight into space without enough rope to be lowered to the ground. Rab and Brian put on a virtuoso performance in climbing this section at all, for it oozed wet and slime and their equipment gave far less protection than is available to modern rock climbers. A chilling wind numbed the fingers but took up a little of the moisture as the day passed. Despite the climbing difficulties ahead that would form the climax of the film, the potential dangers of this day seemed in many respects the greatest. Like their predecessors, Rab and Brian came down a freehanging rappel in gathering gloom: . . . "I heard a long squelch and murky oaths. He seemed to be down so I followed. Suddenly my feet shot away and I swung in under the great roof and spiralled down till I landed up to my knees in a black bog," said Robin Smith in his article.

In poor conditions we had reached the Hoodie Groove and filmed the traverses which need not be repeated. A single nylon thread hung for 150 feet in space—it was the route to supper and back to work next day. Paul used climbing clamps (jumars) to get back above the overhang next morning. The rope was already beginning to chafe badly at the lips of two of the overhangs and from then on a second protection rope was used. A further fixed rope led more easily to the Hoodie Groove which was to be the starting point for more filming: . . . "we stood looking into the little green hoodie groove. I was scheming to myself, . . . now the groove will be terrible but nothing to the Corner, and I will surely have to lead the crux, but Dougal shamed me with indifference . . ."

Now it was Brian's turn to lead, and as there was room for only one camera on the high-angled slab at its base Jim and Paul hung far down in a cocoon of ropes



Above: Brian Hall 'in flight' on the fall sequence.

Photo: Tony Riley.

Below: Rab Carrington (as Robin Smith) on The Bat traverse.

Photo: Tony Riley.



while Tony filmed from the ground. Brian had to fish with a sling for a small pike on the left wall, luckily he got it after only three or four attempts. Jim had visions of all the film being used up attempting authenticity in this manoeuvre. Brian reached the big corner and Rab followed: “. . . I had to go and follow it myself. Half-way he told me, you lean away out and loop a sling over the top of a spike and do a can-can move to get a foot in the sling I came out at the top of the groove in a row of convulsions”

It had taken eight hours to film 40 feet of climbing and ahead loomed greater problems. Paul, Rab and Brian were not optimistic about the great corner for it was running with moss and water as it usually does except on the few days of drought which Ben Nevis enjoys annually. Half the climb was filmed but it was taking longer and longer to reach our positions and the corner would be a very difficult proposition. That night decisions were taken. Rab and Brian would ascend the corner next day using every trick in the book to overcome its damp, slippery defences. Tony and Jim would concentrate on long-shots and Paul would ensure that there were enough supplies for several more days by visiting the fleshpots of Fort William.

Throughout the shoot we were fearful of normal Scottish weather. Rock climbers do *The Bat* in the very best conditions, which we did not have. Instead there was a compromise. After the first night it did not rain in the Allt-a-Mhuilinn, but rain occasionally came down past the bottom of the valley in great curtains, and it seemed to be falling everywhere else in Scotland. Each evening spectacular sunsets accompanied late camp meals.

Friday was crunch day. Brian and Rab had forced the corner and knew what was in store. Paul jumared up the ropes ahead and fixed a personal position far out on the top left edge of the great corner. From there all the action could be seen and it was possible to film and take still photographs downwards. He spent about six hours using one half-foothold. Tony was to film in the corner, right under the actions, while Jim shot from the ground. Brian and Rab were wearing full body harnesses under their tatty sweaters and worn anoraks, with ancient hawser-laid ropes and nylon slings weighed down by steel snap links for protection. Helmets were rarely worn in Britain for climbing before the 1960s but the steepness of the corner seemed to minimize the chances of head injury. Tony quietly asked Jim before starting the hair-raising ascent of the corner, “Would you throw yourself off up there—just to be in a film?” Both thought not!

A lot of work went into arranging the falls, for there are three in the story. First it was Haston’s turn. Brian calculated that he would fall about 10 feet free and rigged a friction system to allow a gradual rather than a sudden stop. A combination of the system working farther than intended and Rab allowing him to slide a little at the end of the fall gave a 30-foot slow-motion epic. Brian was stretched across

the upper corner primarily attached to a modest right handhold. Tony and Jim checked out their cameras and Paul focussed his Bolex. "O.K. Brian—action."

"As Dougal neared his ledge he was slowing down but flailing all the more, left fingers clawing at grass in the crack and right leg scything moss on the wall. I pulled down the sleeves of my jersey over my hands and took a great grip of the ropes. Then there came a sort of squawk as Dougal found that his ledge was not. He got a hand on it but it all sloped. Rattling sounds came from his throat or nails or something. In his last throes trying to bridge he threw his right foot at a straw away out on the right wall, then his fingers went to butter." Brian just fell out of sight of Paul's position, too fast to stay in the frame. For Tony he almost fell into it from about 40 feet above. To Jim he fell all the way down the corner of the big open book. There were expletives and congratulations on the ledge.

Then it was Rab's turn, made worse by injury in a spring fall in Derbyshire and by the fact that Brian had already done his. He had to fall twice over the roof in the groove: "At full stretch I could just reach two pebbles in a crack but as I reached up I felt a lurch in my stomach like flying through an air pocket . . . desperately I seized a baby nylon sling and tried to thread it around the pebbles, then I was gracefully plucked from the rock to stop 20 feet under the roof hanging from the piton . . . with the traitor wedge hanging from me and the threaded sling sticking out of the corner far above."

Then there was an immense sense of relief and anti-climax. A little film of Rab leading, the eventual success, Tony's climber's eye view of the fall contrived by dropping a protected camera spinning down the corner. It remained only to withdraw slowly and carefully, clearing the equipment from the great buttress. Saturday was spent on cutaway filming and ferrying down loads to the road. The film was in the can and we were tired. "At last I emerged still fighting on to ledges and bewildering easy angles and great good holds . . . by this means we put an end to this unscrupulous first ascent."

Unusually for this film team, there was too much climbing footage. The climbing action had to be broken by expanding part of Smith's narration where he and Dougal spent time in the valley between attempts on the climb: characterization could be developed by such scenes as buying fish and chips and waiting for the pub to open. Much of that came later.



NIGHT ON A BARE MOUNTAIN

BOB ALLEN

It didn't seem like a good omen when we saw Peter Gordon's anxious face at Manchester Airport and he told us his flight was delayed; it meant he'd have to catch us up at Geneva instead of being ahead of us as planned. Then our enquiries on the Tignes ski-resort bus as to the likely availability of rooms for four English ski-mountaineers just for that one Saturday night produced completely blank looks . . . in Tignes? In high season? Impossible! Never having had this sort of problem elsewhere on previous tours we were a bit flummoxed, but hopefully studied the town-plan provided by the Supertravel rep. and spotted a chalet marked 'C.A.F.' That seemed a good place to start . . . fellow-mountaineers and so on. Well if you are ever in our predicament — 7 p.m. on a Saturday night in Tignes and nowhere to stay, don't waste your time on the French Alpine Club. A pompous and portly gentleman kept us waiting for twenty minutes while he drank his coffee, and then declared that "Yes", he was 'responsible', but "No there are no places". "On Saturday", he said, "everywhere, but everywhere is full. You have come on the wrong plane. You should have come on another day". We apologised for the day, the plane, and for our irritating presence, and then I asked, ever so politely and in my most careful French, whether there might not be a possibility of sleeping just for that one night on the large dining room floor. "Non." he said. He was not 'responsible' for us. Members of the Alpine Club, BMC, FRCC, CC, Wayfarers and mountaineers though we may be, so far as he was concerned we could just do the famous trick of the ooze-eye bird and disappear.

Mildly disappointed at this lack of fraternal warmth and muttering rude words about his parentage as we departed the premises, we set off round the hotels, starting naturally at the one whose prices were at the bottom of the very-inflated league table. That one was genuinely full, but at least the helpful and sympathetic lady made a phone call and found us rooms and dinner two hundred yards away in a friendly and comfortable hotel. Our faith in (French) human nature was being restored.

Sunday morning the weather was cloudy but looked likely to clear, so we had the usual agonizing about what to leave behind, and then huffed a bit about having to buy a full day's ski-pass at £10 when all we really wanted to do was to get a lift to the Col du Palet. But having heaved our sacks on and set off up the lift system

we suddenly found ourselves in a world of brilliant sunshine above the mist still thick in the valleys. There, close to, was the great wall of the Grande Casse, and, clearly visible, the Italian side of Mont Blanc with the Peuterey Ridge and the Geant very obvious. Our spirits lifted and we quickly made a few ups and downs to reach the col where we hid our sacks behind rocks to collect later. Then we set off to get our money's worth from our day-passes, over to the Grande Motte system, skied the Wall safely if not very elegantly, and so back to the Col du Palet and our sacks at about 2.30 p.m.

We were really off on our tour at last, following some other tracks heading in the right direction for the chalet at La Plagne where we aimed to bivouac before traversing under the Grande Casse the following day to reach the Felix Faure hut). The snow was heavy, and the visibility not very good, but we were in a world of mountain silence, with great shapes looming out of the thin mist, and we were enjoying it . . . the freedom . . . the escape from the crowds.

Till we reached the wide couloir. We took it carefully—I was nursing my back (not very easy with a thirty-five to forty pound sack on it)—and we were half way down when I made a bad turn and fell very awkwardly. Roger said I was screaming before my body hit the snow. The binding on my right boot simply did not release—obviously I had it set much too tight. Well Hamish heaved and pulled at the blessed strap and couldn't release it, and Roger, who has the same bindings, tried with no more success, until eventually, in between howls of pain from me, I told Hamish what to do to get it off. My leg felt as though my calf-muscle had been ripped off. Hamish, who is a doctor, said "Did you hear anything crack? How do you feel?" I felt a bit second-hand but I hadn't heard any cracks.

Optimistically, and so as to do something positive I swallowed, some strong pain-killing tablets, and rather belatedly slackened-off my bindings!

Then the debate began—what to do next? I couldn't bear any weight at all on my right leg and the slightest twist was agony, so I could neither walk nor ski. We weren't sure how far it was to the chalet where we had planned to bivouac, but we were probably too far beyond the Col du Palet for anyone to get back to Tignes that night. Eventually Peter, our best skier, was despatched to assess how far it was to the chalets while Roger and Hamish started to make a stretcher out of skis and ice-axes. Hamish stuck a syringe of morphia in my shoulder which drained the pain away for a while, and then Roger and he decided that, since it was taking Pete such a long time to return, going down to the chalets wasn't feasible. And making stretchers out of skis sounds easy, but in practice, without some extra bits, it's very tricky—be warned! They gave it up. There was only one alternative: a snow-hole bivouac.

Now for years we've carted Peeps transceivers, shovels, duvets, ropes, bivvy-bags

(now goretex of course), lightweight stoves, headtorches and spare batteries—along with the prussikers, harnesses, slings, spare goggles etc. etc. that one might just need, and that one carries with such effort on Alpine ski-tours. Here at last was a real-life opportunity to use some of it! So we set to with a will. Perhaps I'd better say that Roger and Hamish set to with shovels, while I sat slumped in a haze for about an hour until the main hole was tunnelled horizontally into the bed of the couloir, and then, when I was actually inside it and could sit down, I had a revival of sorts and did my bit in enlarging and shaping the bits that we were to sit on for the next fourteen hours. Halfway through the job Peter reappeared. The chalets were a long way down and he had left his sack in their direction thinking we would be going down there—which we weren't—so Roger set off back with him to retrieve it. Hamish and I finished off the hole, the others returned, very weary, and then we settled into our little snugery. We brewed-up, and then brewed-up and wrapped-up, and then twitched and dozed throughout the night. Apart from the work involved in making snowholes, so long as you have goretex and karrimat for some insulation, I can recommend them.

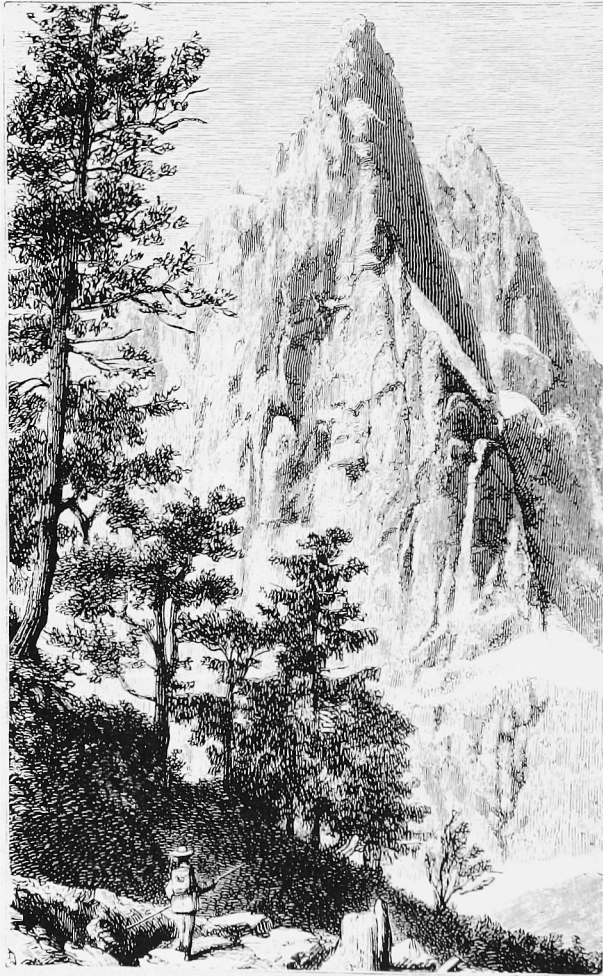
The morning dawned clear. Peter and Hamish put on skis and set off back for Tignes to organise a rescue by helicopter, while Roger and I sat outside the hole . . . me congratulating myself on having taken out the insurance to pay for the rescue! . . . and dozing in the sun. Eventually the helicopter arrived overhead with a clatter, parked behind the ridge, and a chap with a portable stretcher skied down the couloir, seemed a bit surprised to see me looking so cheerful, and congratulated us on our snowhole! The helicopter couldn't land in the couloir, which was about 45 degrees, and there was some debate as to whether I could somehow totter to the bottom with assistance, or whether they might have to winch me up . . . which would mean a different helicopter. While we were trying to sort this out the 'copter suddenly appeared just below us in the couloir with its skids just touching the snow at the front end and in the air at the back, while the rotor must have been missing the up-slope by inches. Anyway I hopped and was hustled into the cockpit and in seconds we were away. I took photos as we clattered into the air . . . first time I'd ever been in one . . . and the pilot said, in good English, "Was it cold in your snow-hole?" "Not so bad", I replied, "Tout confort". "Ah yes," he said, "The British phlegm". He told me a little later that he flew Spitfires with the RAF during the '39/45 war,

In no time at all I was in Tignes, being X-rayed, having my battered knee shoved and prodded all over again, and then it was slapped in plaster that the doc said had to stay on for five weeks!

I kept worrying about Roger, for he'd been left on the mountain with two heavy sacks and two sets of skis, but he was shortly afterwards whisked out and reappeared with his usual grin.

Two days earlier, just as we were leaving Manchester Airport on our departure, Hamish had said to me “Do you ever wonder why we keep doing this?” and I said “Certainly I do . . . but we always have an adventure don’t we!” And with friends like mine you get out of the misadventures safely too.

I suppose I’ll be going back!



‘The Aiguille Verte.’

ALPINE ADDICTIONS

(or, Maybe it's the way he tells them)

DAVID HOPE

Dark. Immediate environmental perception — total discomfort. A cold, tortuous trickle of water runs down my spine as the steady rain of ice particles gathers around my neck and melts. The morning air is rent with screams and yells as the mountaineers of Europe begin their play.

You guessed it. Another Alpine holiday is just beginning. For those of us who can only experience the delights of such dizzy heights for two weeks a year such discomforts are immaterial and irrelevant. However, there are moments when well, you know, you wish things could perhaps be better arranged. Perhaps the huts now. . . .

. . . Each is a unique hazard in itself. Some are crammed full of tourists and you're lucky if you get allocated a quarter of a bunk space. Unless, of course, it's some voluptuous continental beauty. The last time this happened to me the young German lady concerned proceeded to demolish the 'stille Nacht' with the most raucous snoring I've ever had the misfortune to try and sleep against. The resultant sound was more akin to the mating call of a rusty file rather than anything remotely resembling a human voice. Then there is the Top Tier Titterer. Have you noticed how there is always one? Mumble, mumble, tee, hee, hee, snigger, snigger, giggle, squeak, on and on. Or the Constant Conversationalist, characterised by bursts of chatter in stage whispers that bounce round and round your head. And what about the Considerate Stumbler, the guy who doesn't put his head torch on so as not to disturb anyone that's sleeping: but who manages to walk into the bunk uprights, trip over sabats and finally place his odorous foot on your face as he attempts 6a moves into the top bunk. Here he is repulsed by a lively stream of vituperative because he's got the wrong bunk. So down he comes, big toe leading, carefully feeling for, and finally entering your left nostril, before slipping and crashing to the floor where he is inadvertently impaled by carelessly strewn axe or crampons.

Enter one irate hut warden who proceeds to deliver a lecture on how to be quiet and respect others who are trying to sleep. Lecture is delivered in excited Latin tones at approximately 180 decibels. Everyone now awake except for rusty file (still mating). The night wears on and the heat builds up. Surreptitiously, every Brit. in the room tries to sneak open a window. Just as surreptitiously a continental hand closes it firmly. Ironical that we're all there to benefit from the mountain fresh air but can't

survive the night in a hut unless the atmosphere is 100% carbon dioxide and the temperature is 115 degrees F. Eventually you succumb to the seemingly eternal ravages of the night and are just dying off into sleep when . . . , the lights flash on and a voice cries, "Bon jour. Une heure", or whatever, accompanied by much banging on the woodwork. Some are gentler of course but the effect is always the same. Thirty odd zombies stagger about in various stages of disdress (or distress) except for our snorer who bounds into zestful action with loud cries of 'Guten Tag, etc.' You're almost only too glad to slop your way through breakfast (usually best left undescribed) before falling through the door and putting your frozen frame through two hours of mental limbo and physical purgatory on the glacier.

Cooking in huts can be fun too. Recently, in two huts in succession, attempts were made to incinerate us all as raving lunatics insisted on changing gaz cylinders when the maximum number of people were in and the gaz cylinder wasn't empty. Why bother to turn it off when it saves lighting another match? Actually, if you want some elbow room in which to move it's a sure-fire way of creating it. Nobody gives a damn about your B.O. but a sheet of flame ten feet high works wonders for creative cookery. In the Albert Premier Hut I had the experience of watching a not so young Italian lady convert her polenta into a towering inferno. Her companion, a panic-stricken youth, got through to the door (and through fifty climbers) in a fraction of a nanosecond, knocking over five other stoves en route, several of which also gave impromptu pyrotechnic displays. In the mild excitement which followed, I and the lady were able to upright the stoves and she doused her original offender by the simple expedient of slinging it into the sink and turning the tap on. This, I do not advise! An open window is far safer but woe betide any poor unfortunate strolling in the starlight and communing with nature as a glacier-bound comet zips by his ear-hole. Enter hut warden who proceeds to deliver bollocking on safety, mouthpiece some two millimetres away from my left ear, then delivers ingratiating apology to lady with sarcastic reference to 'Imbecile Anglais'. After drying my left ear I reflect morosely on the bitter nature of justice and being a True Brit with stiff upper lip and exceedingly flabby lower chin I keep my ungentlemanly reply to myself.

A final word about hut toilets. Do beware. Depending on the hut you're in, the thought of a slip doesn't bare mention! That solid wooden door, more often than not, hides a couple of insubstantial planks over a not inconsiderable drop. If the fall doesn't kill you the contamination probably will.

. . . A resounding smack followed by a buzzing in my ears and star-filled eyes rapidly brings me back to earth. More to the point, where the hell am I? Another dinner plate bounces off my head, shattering into bright stars in the rays of the headlamp. Damn! Why did I have to wake up? Out comes the belay screw, painfully, slowly, as a team of six Spaniards demonstrate the effectiveness of objective dangers. Well,

I was warned but I could avoid them altogether if I'd stayed on at the. . . .

. . . The term is a euphemism really for unavoidable causes of death. There's a lot of these in the Alps. (Objective dangers that is: and deaths too I suppose). Basically they fall into two categories. Things that fall down on you such as lumps of ice, lumps of rock, lumps of equipment, lumps of climber, lumps of lightning, lumps of precipitation, etc., and things that you fall down on or in or through, such as holes in the ice (crevasses to the cognoscenti), cliffs, equipment (crampons etc.), bars, campsite toilets, the occasional telepherique and so on. Experience is a great teacher here and the inventive or unlucky climber can run into a tremendous variety in a very short space of time. Some friends were on the Aig. du Moine recently when they were passed by a Frenchman. Quite normal, you may think, for overtaking is common in the Alps. However, this one was descending in a manner best described as 'uncontrolled', when he bounced between them and fortunately came to rest on a ledge some twenty feet below where he lay groaning. Instinct rapidly converted their speedy solo ascent into a dignified roped party after they had left the Frenchman swathed in bandages and garmoline. (The same, still avec bandages and presumably bruised ego, refused to acknowledge them a few days later when encountered in the Alpenstock. Perhaps their request for the return of the bandages had something to do with it!)

The Italians are pretty good at falling off too, and at knocking things off. We learnt several lessons in the Dolomites a few years back. Much Italian vocabulary for instance. Many descents were accompanied by calls of 'sasso, sasso' as little stones pinged and clattered past. Suddenly the air was rent with a scream of 'MASSO' and our attempts at crawling into the tiniest of cracks succeeded as a car-sized block thundered past looking for Mr. Newton. Moments later an Italian gent. ran past us, checked, slipped, overbalanced and started sliding feet first on his back down a seemingly bottomless gully that the aforementioned masso had taken. Breath stuck in our throats for a lifetime as we willed him to stop. Much to our relief (and no doubt his) he did, some five feet short of eternity. He gingerly crept back to the ledge, noticed us, shrugged with extreme (I don't care, I'm tough) Latin eloquence and whipped off around the corner. As we turned it we discovered him hopping in pain, hands jammed in armpits to sooth the grazing sustained. Offers of aid were scornfully rejected. His nonchalant self returned and off he went, with us following closely, enjoying all the while his little secretive hugs when he thought we weren't watching. On reaching the path and safety, we returned his woolly hat that he'd dropped during his trip, shrugged with as much eloquence as we could muster, stuck our hands into our armpits, and hobbled off down the path, groaning. Our Italian was pretty limited but we reckon we caught the gist of what he shouted after us.

Well personally I've been relatively fortunate in avoiding storms and avalanches,

and my ample waistline(!) has prevented me from descending more than two icy holes. Actually, I've found that the best way to cross crevasses is to ignore them. Or at least don't look down them. The first time I had the temerity to peer down a six-inch crack in a glacier I was rather dismayed to discover that I appeared to be standing on a foot-thick shelf projecting several metres out from the true edge. Prayer seemed an attractive alternative at the time but now a few more turns of the rope, a quick check to make sure that prussiks are near to hand, and closed eyes, seem to do the trick.

In these days of modern gear, falling off the mountain is pretty hard to do, so it takes great ingenuity or soloing to make it a possibility. However, abseiling does still offer a lot of scope for the adventurous and the forgetful. The basic rule is remember the knot in the end of the rope. The Japanese are very good at forgetting this especially on (or is it off?) the Drus but many others have shown an aptitude here as well. Similarly, the sight of a French guide abseiling via the classic method on a single 9mm rope brought tears to my eyes until I discovered the secret weapon. Not a previous vasectomy as you may be thinking but a large piece of chamois leather rammed up the crutch. I remain unconvinced. The second basic rule is never to trust your anchor, but sadly, one often broken and one that sometimes doesn't play the game itself.

. . . This time it was my elbow that needed nursing as I cursed the continual barrage of ice and rock from above. Even though we'd let them get some way ahead to try and reduce the bombardment the lumps still came. We'd had enough and mutual agreement followed. Moving together we caught and passed the lower pair. Both were obviously tired and one was just plain scared. Their companions were out of sight over the top and already in the sun. Then the unbelievable happened! More Latin screams cut through the air and a three hundred-foot top rope slowly snaked its way down the ice towards them. We pressed on in amazement, almost running up the ice to avoid this accident looking for a place to happen. Continental climbers certainly took some getting used to, I ruminated, while partaking of chocolate and summit sunshine. . . .

. . . No. 1: The Spanish Fly. As voluble as No. 5 but much louder. Climbing style is extravagant, intensive, perilous. Extremely gregarious, especially on campsites. Gather in large groups around one tent, all speaking at the same time, gently at first, gradually rising to screaming crescendo. Not sure whether any communication is taking place. Suddenly, absolute silence. Then a gentle murmur and it all begins again. Very generous on climbs—shares bits of equipment, advice, hot air, rocks and ice, with gay abandon. (See above).

. . . No. 2: The Aryian Eagle. Strong, silent type but lets the odd guttural grunt escape now and then. Glazed blue-ice eyes. Loves carrying lots of jangly bits of gear.

Extremely determined. Experience? I'd just finished safely esconcing myself and spouse in a sheltered niche when on looking down I realised we were not alone. The method of climbing was akin to that of a JCB. Each fist smashed into the rock, the steel-clawed fingers squeezing and scratching, the jerking arms followed by the swinging and clanking of much ironmongery, and all accompanied by a peculiar flailing effect and a scraping of leather and rubber that marked his occasional efforts to find a hold here and there. Throw in some excessive heavy breathing and clenched beard below glaring eyes and you begin to get an approximation of his style. Sue became a little concerned, for his approach did not instil utter confidence and she rather feared being JCB'd off the mountain altogether. I turned to present the stiff upper lip. My mumbled "Look here old chap, it's not cricket", faded into incoherence as he crammed himself into our space and promptly clipped himself onto me and his mate onto my rope. He turned his glare upon us and proffering his teeth in the Teutonic equivalent of a smile pointed to the sky. "Ve up go, ja?" he croaked. "Oh aye?" I countered, not wanting to disillusion him, for I was surreptitiously unclipping his rope from mine at the time. "Ze storm it vet makes ze rock, ja?" "Vot, er what storm?" "Ze storm zat ist storming, ja?" I was suddenly aware of the thunder and lightning, hail and rain, that was accompanying our Wagnerian interlude. It seemed that he now wished to go down so I obliged in part by rapidly and unobtrusively untying his mate from my rope also. "You our ropes to use down go, ja?" "Why aye, er ja," I agreed swiftly, anything to get away from this barmy German version of Bonington. Smiling grimly, I clipped on as they waited at the bottom. A few rapid seconds later I was in shelter and safety on the ground as he tried desperately to unclip the glowing crab from his brand new fluorescent and now somewhat extended rope.

. . . No. 3: The Yellow Peril. Silent, extremely inscrutable, and extremely hard. Rarely to be seen outside Chamonix or Grindlewald. Most common habitat below Meteo Noticeboard clutching copy of French or German/Japanese dictionary. Carry huge packs everywhere. Look good but many just nip up and down Mont Blanc by the ordinary route. Have a penchant for long unroped abseils. Experience? French guide descending with two Jap clients. Sets up abseil and descends. Jap lady tentative but steady. Jap male exhorted by guide to give it some welly as he's late for tea at the hut. Client does just that by leaping off the top and steaming down the rope shouting "Goodbye Japan". I know, I know! But honestly, he did! Guide had thoughtfully tied knot in bottom of rope.

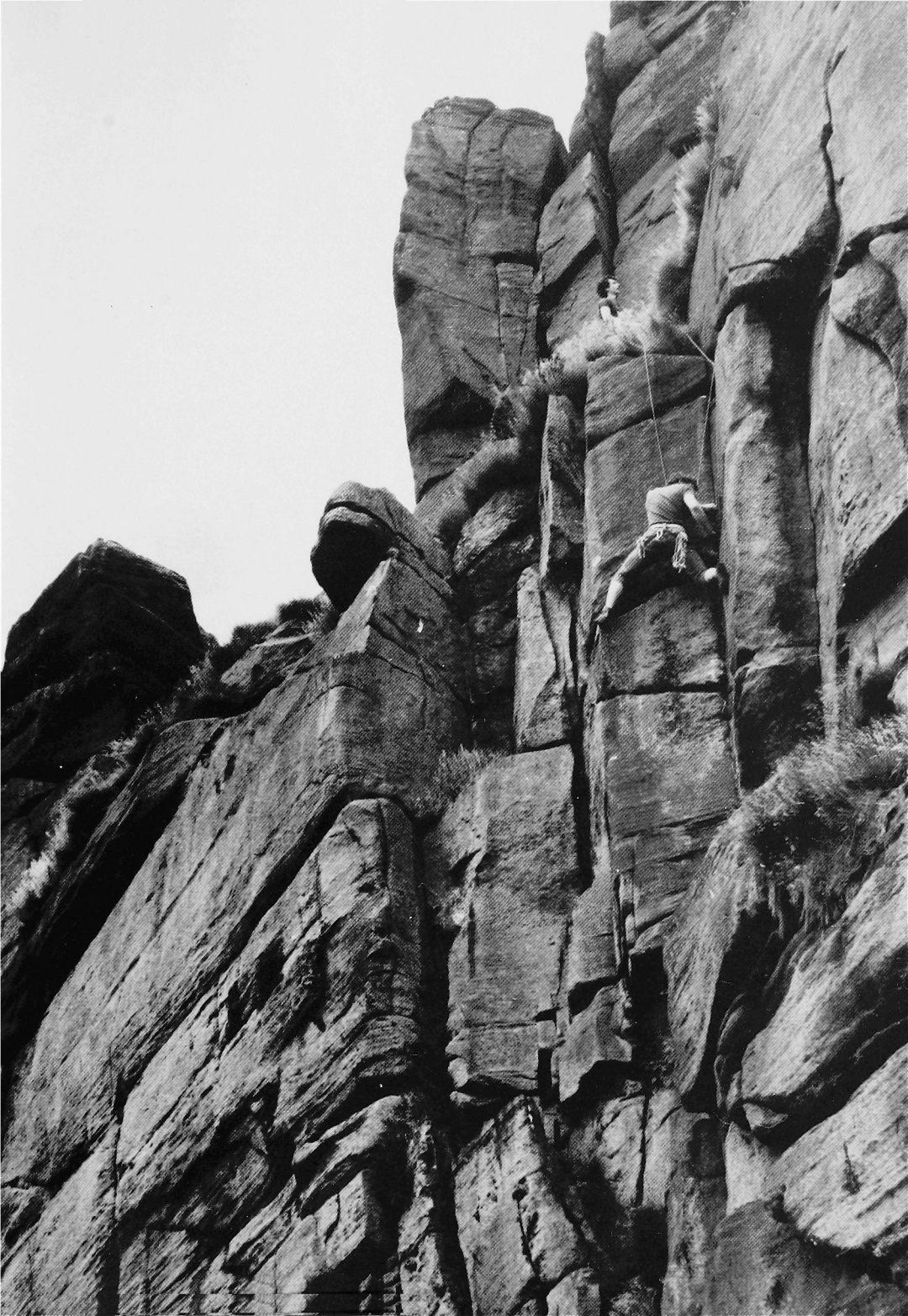
. . . No. 4: The French Connectors. See 'Deux Grandes Bieres' by I. McNaught-Davis. He says it all.

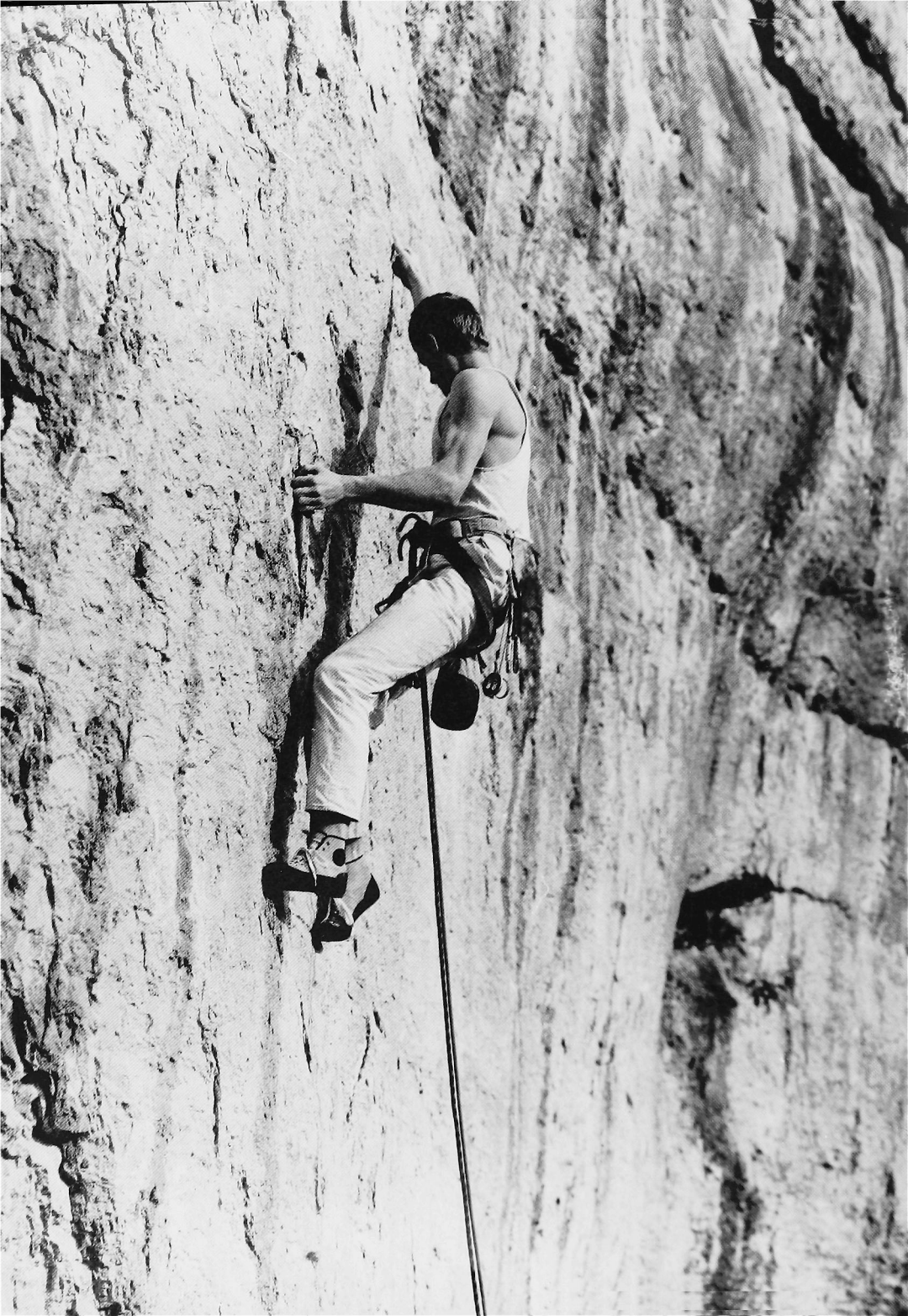
. . . No. 5: The Italian Job. An extremely lively and prolific species. High mortality rate. Loud noise and extreme volubility. Extremely gregarious. Experiences

include five parties on the same pitch with intertwined ropes. Much repelling of overtakers. Dozens of novices at the top of the Third Sella Tower all waiting to be taught the finer points of abseiling. One decides to do it his way, puts the rope over his shoulder, forgets to clip in at the waist and sets off. A sea of multinational voices in a wave of horror all shouting their own version of No! A guide, tied on, leans casually out and plucks the offending youth from his attempt to emulate Icarus. We pick up a few more swear words for our rapidly expanding vocabulary. Next, Mont Blanc du Tacul on a baking hot day. Two Swedes and I pass comment on a soloing youth. His technique is to tie on to the main belay of a convenient party, climb forty feet clipping in to everyone's runners on the way and then asks you to untie him so he can continue. This system guarantees complete immobility for everyone except himself. He gets to the top first but then has to wait, for how else is he going to descend except by abseil—on someone else's rope. He roars down with incautions, carefree instability missing his footing and crashing into gully walls, ropes twanging over serrated edges. Mine is not one of the ropes he mangles but we do have to free several of the ropes he has jammed above us. I'd never have believed that so many volatile nationalities could have been so indulgent, so tolerant, until seeing this performance and the general acceptance of it. The Swede mutters "We heard a few stories about this one in the hut last night." I observe that if he continues in the way he is going then it is unlikely that many stories remain to be added.

. . . No. 6: Assorted Allsorts. There are many nationalities strolling around the Alps each having their own characteristics. Strong-jawed silent types with Eiger or Eckpfeiler written in their eyes are usually East European. Americans can be heard long before they're seen. Fair-haired Finns look as if they've all been cloned from the same troll. The Dutch and the Danish wander about bemused by the multitude of verticality around them. And the Brits of course are most noticeable for their amazing squalor, astounding dress and appalling conceit . . .

. . . Oh, oh, we would be clever and overtake. Now they're above as we descend and down come the rocks again. All in a day's work for one of Gaston's One Hundred Best Quotes, I suppose. We wait in the shelter of an outcrop while the earlier group crosses a couloir only to be nearly wiped out by a massive rockfall sent down by their compatriots. Grinning inwardly we reflect that maybe there is some justice in the world after all. Soon we would be at the hut, a beer in hand. And so we were. Our last climb of the season. Home tomorrow after a day of brightest splendour and the whole of the Alps spread out before us on the summit. A day to remember and savour whether we 'arranged' it better or not. Next year perhaps we may manage it better but as always, the best days will just pounce unexpectedly and will be all the better for it, alpine idiosyncrasies included.





CLIMBING WITH TREPIDATION

DAVE GREGORY

High Tor rises above Matlock Bath in every sense. In height it towers. In grandeur it dwarfs. In spirit it soars above the squalid souvenir shops, video arcades and burger bars of the inland Blackpool. Ruskin would have disapproved of Matlock Bath and the A6 as he disapproved of the railway line from Bakewell to Buxton, running as that did below crags of almost equal grandeur, through valleys as beautiful as Matlock Dale must once have been. High Tor was majestic then and remains it now. The maze of routes upon its main face may seem, when traced upon a diagram, to scar and conquer the citadel but when the inter-crossing lifelines and industrious multi-coloured ants have gone the westering sun gilds the crown of the king of crags and it stands there, supreme, inviolate, as it did, and should.

To many people the Tor's grandeur is not dominating. They scuttle and scurry upon it, masters of the tiny flakes and finger-end pockets. On other crags as great—at my standard—so do I, but that great blank white face overawes me and I have to feel that I am going well and stiffen the sinew thoroughly before I venture across it on the sharp end. The blunt end is often little less unnerving for the leader of the day's eyes will be set on some thin-wall nasty and such on High Tor can be very steep.

The latest visit was a short day. We got away from Sheffield a bit before noon and the sky over Fox House lowered and blackened. We drove past its decision forks to the Calver lights and weighed the possibly fruitless pertol to Matlock against the seemingly certain thunderstorm on Stoney, for the darkening was hot and sultry. The southern sky held a pale grey lightening and south we went, through the shopping hordes of Bakewell and the Matlocks to the last empty space on the canoe launch lay-by. We walked boldly past the alpine chalet of the cable-car station and sneaked along the wallside until we could contour back above the hut hiding the takers of money from tourists walking to the Tor. It was unoccupied. No matter, it is the principle that counts. Matlock must be full. A regular parade of people passed the other way under the Tor. More than one group were grateful to be told that there really was a way out and that the whole track was not just a practical joke on the part of the Matlock Council.

A mêlée of over-heated climbers was thrashing about on the dusty terraces below the main face but the opposition eventually reduced to three parties of two, all needing

the tree. We for Flaky Wall, the others for Original Route and a team of three inching across on Delicatessen to jam the Original belay. An interesting afternoon will be had by all. We were not yet geared up and the two twos hedged back and forth and decided which was the faster rope.

I have a choice to make of footwear. I have a pair of E.B.s, going home fast, but well tried and almost comfortable and a pair of Firés. I have not had my Firés long. They are a modern form of Chinese foot-bending torture but made in Spain, a country which used to house the Inquisition. (I suspect that when Torquemada's methods of the thumbscrews and the fire fell into disrepute his descendants produced these ill-disguised alternatives to cripple modern recusants). The folklore states dogmatically that one must purchase a pair which hurt. Following instructions, I had watched television in them, walked round the house, driven to work in them. This latter has led, I suspect, to my being put on the list for redeployment. The pins and needles I suffered when I removed them in the car park left me staggering about the schoolyard like a Sauchiehall Street soak to the surprise of the local vicar's son. The vicar is the Chairman of Governors. Now, sitting below the crag, almost in the shade, sweat is beginning to roll. It will be an oven on the face. Even with chalk it will be slippery. A touch more friction on the feet will be an advantage, and so, despite the memory of those pins and needles, I lace up the Firés and scramble up the easy rocks to the tree. There is a choice of three belays. A male Londoner, a sweet young lady and the tree. I chose the tree. He is sweaty, she has enough trouble already wrestling her ropes' coils from the clutches of the briar just below and the tree is not likely to protest. "Who are you climbing with?" says the Londoner. "Trepidation" says I, leaning out to squint up the wall "and painful feet"; hanging my Firés from the belay crab and wriggling my toes.

Team two has, by arrangement, left the peg clear and Deen climbs the crack above the tree to join the main groove and reach the peg. Clip in the orange and back down the groove to the curving overlap. From a good layaway hold in the crack she can put a good Rock in the crack under the overlap and move steadily right and down. Another Rock and laying out on the left arm she pads her right hand over the overlap, near at first, further, higher and lower and then the fingers sink from sight and she pulls over the overlap, reaches to her rack for a Friend 1 and in it goes. Not well. The cams open past the optimum. She lifts it up and puts a Rock below. The cams trap her fingers; curses and blood flow and she moves at some speed to—surprise—a stance above.

At this juncture there came sliding, from the tree by Darius, with the slickness of experience, like Burt Lancaster from the castle walls or Robin Hood from the Sherwood oak, a certain Jackson. This Jackson is possessed of possibly the first life membership to the crag and must therefore must be at least seventy but he looks

seventeen and seven stone and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of its routes. I have heard it said that when Puttrell and Baker were quarrelling about the quality of High Tor Gully, Baker's finding it unwholesome was based on his finding the young Jackson cutting his teeth on a peg ring just below the crux. I do not believe this story for iron tastes very unpleasant as anyone who has teetered on the rop rung, first choice peg in his left hand, tap tapping it into the blind crack with the second choice peg in his mouth will testify. Nevertheless the Editor and I on a pilgrimage ascent of the Gully (some time later than Baker's) did find a large fragment of a child's potty in the depths of the Gully, but no ownership could be ascribed to it. However I digress. He recognised Deen despite his looking straight into the sun, for not many climbers with that quality of husky voice climb in turquoise leotards. She is demanding directions and gets them. To satisfy his natural curiosity as to her second he looks straight at me and recognises me not.

I expected this, for Chris and I have a curious relationship. We meet often at climbing functions in the town. We attend the same meetings, frequently travelling to them together. We swop guidebook proofs at each other's houses and in all these circumstances he readily converses. Meeting whilst strolling about crag bottoms we exchange comments. He is, however, either short-sighted or possessed of a delicate telepathic sense, for on those occasions when I face a pitch or so of terror and Old Man Trepidation sits on my shoulder he tactfully says nothing and passes on whilst as for me, I keep quiet for my voice is not merely husky, but more like shaking pebbles in a rusty tin, and recognisable round half a dozen buttresses. It is best to savour one's fear unobserved.

It transpires that she has gone too far right and is on a stance on Bastille. She describes it as spacious and safe but before she needs to invent any other enticements to my joining her I assent for it will split the hard work into two halves with a rest between. On with the crippers and away from the tree. The crack above it has actual holds, more than adequate, and the short section of Original leads easily to the peg. The ropes to the Bastille stance aren't a great deal of comfort and I untie one rope and thread it through the ring of the peg in Original. The sun is well round and the sweat rolling; dripping off my nose end and trickling down my right arm outstretched into the crack under the overlap. There are no footholds below it. None. So much for sticky boots. The chalk on my fingers paddles to a paste. The fingers slip, the feet slip and I lurch back to the welcoming groove. Next try on I accept defeat and use the first Rock as a handhold. Beyond it I can stand, almost in balance, and it comes out easily enough. I too pad right-handed over the overlap and flick aside the metalwork in the pocket to clear the flaky edge. There is not enough of it left uncluttered to lean back to wrestle with the second Rock and I lean off the krab below the Friend to release the swivelling nut in the overlap. She has a hex

above the Friend and they both come out easily. The Rock will not. The pocket is formed of two flakes pointing opposite ways, the left in front of and overlapping the right with a hole behind. The Rock will not come and I cannot feed my left hand fingers in. Defeat again. I arrange another above it and clip into that. The original comes out with a struggle and I am just going to lift the second out when it pops out and I move right and up with a fair degree of speed.

She is fastened to a shiny stainless steel hanger. The bolt looks rusty but the hanger's bright. I clip into the bolt, and a Friend, and a nut and we start to change places. I comment that this is not the usual situation where hot sweaty male and female flesh come into contact but she doesn't answer. Her mind is on other things and quite right too. It takes me three reloadings of the Sticht plate to get it running properly after she has gone behind and through and under the belays. I lean back on the bolt to get a good view of the proceedings and notice the bolt above. In easy reach. She runs a rope through that and things look a little better. About now I take my right boot off. But not a lot better, for when she moves back down to the groove there is only one runner, lowish down. This must be where Livesey removed the peg. What a cad he is; ethical, but a cad. She scrutinises the rock and tries every size of nut. Occasionally our glances cross and slide away. We neither of us want to mention that life has got serious. "I shall have to do it without." She pulls right-handed on a finger end hold, one of two, on the right of the groove. Right foot in the groove angle, left on a miniature black marble rib. She reaches three left finger ends onto a small triangular hold above her head. I freeze as her right hand moves slowly up like a slow motion replay of a crawl stroke to grip the very bottom of a small ripple of a flake. Her left hand flies to its more definite development above. She has a foot on the triangular hold and a nut in the flake. Flaky bloody Wall. She turns and smiles. "I was frightened then" she said. My mouth is too dry to speak and I am too dehydrated to wet myself but I suppose I convey the same general impression. I have a grip on the ropes that would bend iron bars, no circulation in my legs, trapped by the leg loops. I notice that my feet and knees are painful from pushing out to see as best I can. I take my left boot off. She climbs steadily up the flake which rises up to the right and romps up the top band to disappear over the horizon to tie herself to an assortment of blackthorn bushes.

I start to sort myself out. I take off all the belays but the bolt. Put on my boots. Reach up to the higher bolt and release the rope from that. I have a triple twist on the ropes in front of me. I hold the sling in the lower bolt and rotate three times on that inadequate little stance. Breathe deeply and move back down the holds into the groove. No more holds have sprouted and what there are look very small. I try the move she made, to no avail. This I tell myself is no time for ethics, this is a time for getting up it; a time for naughty expertise, frigging to the fore; so be it.

I pull up on both the right hand holds and call for tight. I get it. I hold one rope right-handed and push down left-handed on the holds. Slack develops in the rope I'm holding and I wrap a turn of this round my right hand. Heave-ho and I get my right foot on the hand holds, lean my left foot into the groove, first on the marble rib and then on the triangular hold. I reach up left and grab her runner, transfer to proper holds in the flake and life has become human again. The flake is a delight, the blank wall above it a pleasant puzzle and the bulging top band reveals lumpy holds. I climb it all too fast and arrive in a lather of sweat. What does one say? "Good lead, kiddo, you're a marvel" and I go and lie on the turf, gallons of sweat running to waste. A voice from along the crag top asks her what she thought of it. 'A hard lead' she says. "Well, everybody does say it's 6a". She can draw pride from that—and me—consolation perhaps.

The next day I went to Castle Naze to start the guidebook work. My arms were tired but the rock was rough and Old Man Trepidation was nowhere around. I knew where he was though. He was waiting on the stances on High Tor for some other hopeful, climbing beyond his class.

'MORE DIE FISHING THAN CLIMBING' was just one interesting heading in the Daily Telegraph this year. According to Fatal Accidents Occurring During Sporting and Leisure Activities 1982; 31 people died while boating, diving and fishing; 19 deaths happened while horse riding; 15 deaths each for ball games and air sports; 9 deaths in mountaineering; and 7 deaths in motor sports. No wonder Joe Brown took up fishing after climbing—obviously it is more exciting.

'Al Evans got married last weekend.'

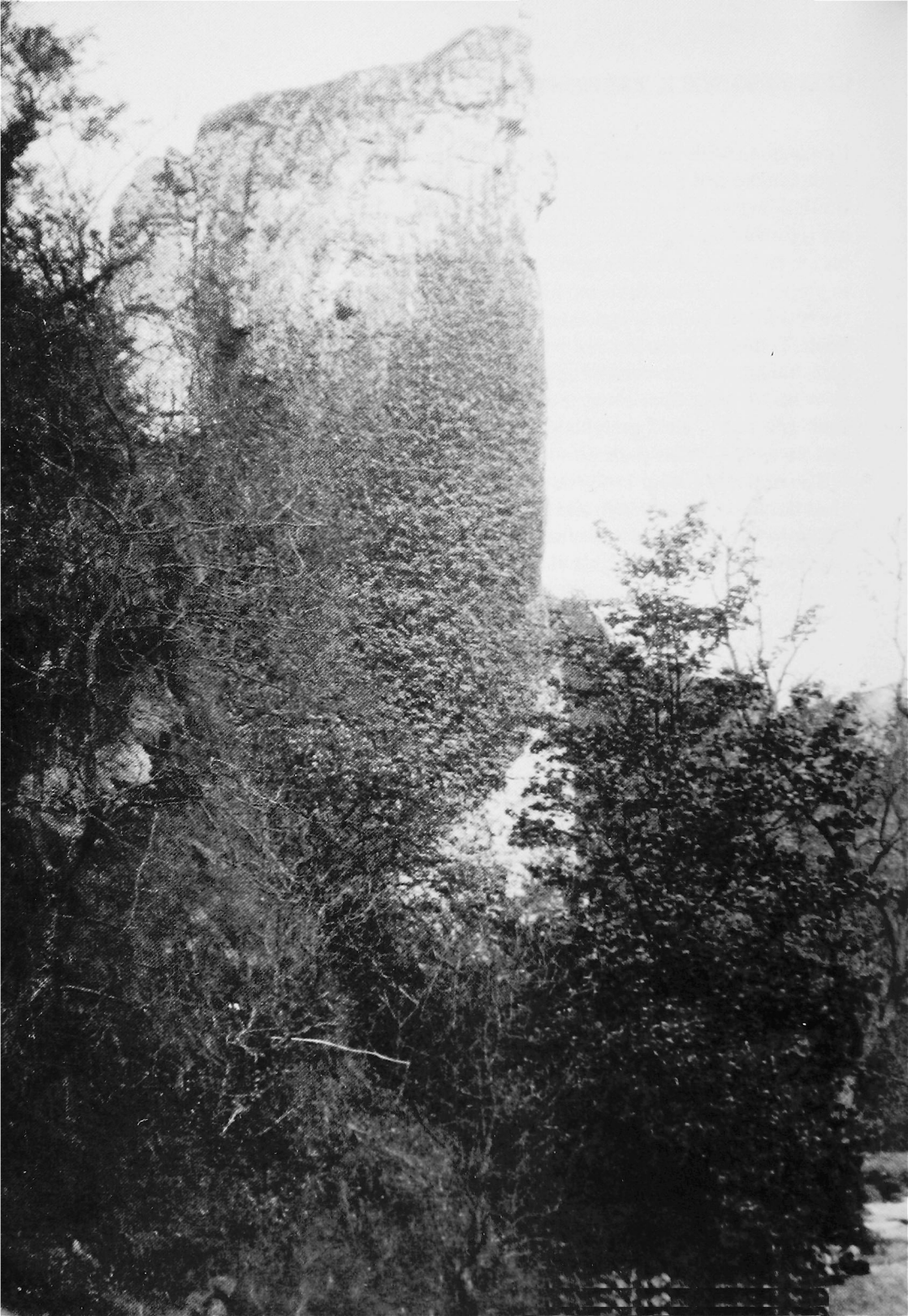
'At the A.G.M. 50 anti-nuclear demonstrators were waiting outside the Victoria Hotel to greet the guest speaker, Nicholas Edwards, the Secretary of State for Wales.'

'Trevor Jones the ex-President of the C.C. has marketed Mr Sticky Fingers—a brown tacky fluid called tincture of benzoin—to be used in lieu of chalk. It is to be applied before the hard moves on a route, then shake the dispenser and re-apply on the easier moves.' My word, what these presidents get up to! Perhaps we may yet see: 'Derek's descendeurs for dashing descents' or 'the Walker-wedge for wild cracks'.

'I have found the journal most interesting though the photographs are a bit monotonous, being all about acrobatic climbing.'

1984 Mustagh Tower Expedition—'Archaeological discoveries included a Pierre Allain Karabiner in perfect working order with the legend J. Brown stamped thereon.'

Also in 1984 a team comprising of Les Brown, Claude Davies and one Joseph Brown appeared on Curbar to climb a new route 36 years after Joe's first visit to the crag.



THE DOVEDALE DASH : WERE YOU THERE?

TED MADEN

'Members will by now have virtually completed their training programme for the Dovedale Dash on the Sunday.' (Climbers' Club circular, October 1983.)

During several years in Scotland my contact with the C.C. had been virtually limited to perusal of the Journal, circulars and Meets' cards. Upon recently returning to the North of England I entertained no hopes of catching up with climbing in the 'E' lane. But what was this Dovedale Dash that featured in recent Meets' cards and the above circular? Here, surely, was something for everyone.

Thus on an autumnal Sunday morning Gina and I were driving along the Leek to Ashbourne road heading for Dovedale. As an intending runner I had started the journey from home mildly keyed with a sense of pleasant anticipation. This was now sharpened into tension by extensive fog patches and the belated realization that the distance to Dovedale was much further than we had remembered. Running events, unlike climbing activities, start promptly on the gun.

From Ashbourne, if you are bound for the Dovedale Dash, you drive northwards for a couple of miles on the Buxton Road and then turn left down a side road towards Thorpe. You will probably have seen little traffic all morning and you may even begin to wonder whether you have come on the right day, until you turn a corner and abruptly encounter a traffic jam: hundreds of cars packed with competitors and edging forwards at some five miles per hour. This happened to Gina and me. After crawling along in the jam for a mile or so while the minutes ticked by, we escaped into the car park of a handy pub and walked the last mile to the start. Surprisingly, there was adequate organised parking near the start for all comers who had had the patience, inertia or prior knowledge to remain in their cars.

We were in good time after all, as frequently happens when one worries about the clock. The centre of activities was a large, undulating field, in which numerous runners were engaged in various warming up exercises or standing around, in groups or alone, and into which further runners in track suits were continually arriving. I waited my turn and registered for the event at a small temporary hut. Then I went through some warming up of my own while further taking in the scene.

It was still a little misty and I had not gained my bearings in relation to Dovedale. Also I was under two misconceptions, both quite illogical. The first was that I would

encounter a large C.C. contingent containing all my old climbing friends. A negative search for a single familiar face among the fifteen hundred or so competitors led me to revise my assumptions as to the importance currently attached to this event in some quarters of the C.C., notwithstanding the Meets' card and circular. The second misconception was that the course was ten miles. This seemed to spring from my rather tenuous grasp of the overall geography of Dovedale rather than from any specific knowledge of the event. During a pre-race chat with a fellow runner I learned that the course is in fact five miles, and this information enabled me to make a rapid readjustment to those mental preparations which are so crucial on these occasions. I had previously gleaned from former president Trevor, during a quick (twenty minute!) telephone conversation, that the race commenced with a headlong hurtle downhill, during which the less nimble would become horribly impaled on a barbed wire fence. Thus variously informed, prepared and forewarned, I moved over to the broad starting line-up where I judiciously took a place at the rear.

The race started and the pack surged across the undulating field, then bottlenecked into a boggy descent down the hill into Dovedale. The main route avoided the barbed wire fence to which Trevor had alluded, but there were squelchy mudholes and slippery lumps of limestone and generally plenty of hazards underfoot, as well as micro-colonies of salad-like plants and other curiosities which circumstances permitted only the most fleeting attention. At the bottom of the hill the course crossed the Dove at the stepping stones. For some minutes the river was pounded into a muddy froth; fifteen hundred runners did not stand placidly by to await their turn for the stones.

Across the river a surfaced path afforded some respite underfoot. Here I perceived that I had been over-cautious in my position at the starting line, and that movement through the pack should be striven for. The path was not wide, and the progress required some intricate weaving between bodies and not too many scruples when going for the gaps. There followed several grass fields of various shapes, sizes, slopes and consistencies, with further bottlenecks in the form of fences with stiles which were difficult to circumvent. The strategy which emerged was to forget about aerobic running and to dash from one bottleneck to the next, where the ensuing jostling would afford a few moments for partial recovery. When wallowing through succulent bogs yet further skills were required to retain one's running shoes on one's feet.

Gradually the pack spread out and the jostling eased. We crossed the Dove again via an old stone bridge and turned upstream. I had only a vague idea whereabouts we were, but I ran a bit harder and reeled in some more runners from just ahead. We rounded a bend and re-entered the jaws of Dovedale, and there was the starting hill on the right, but now it was the finishing hill with the finish at the top. Some of the runners whom I had just passed kicked again on the hill and repassed me. I was fading and could not respond. At this critical juncture we all concertinad into

a large queue which had formed for the finishing gate. The marshalls took control and kept us in line until we each shuffled in turn through Checkpoint Dovedale.

I finished seven hundred and forty first, almost exactly in the middle of the field. Another climber whom I had met before the start came seventieth. Several months later I met Derek Walker. He had finished fairly close to me but we had never seen each other.

Were you there?

THE BLENCATHRA SUMMIT

On Saturday, 16th June, the day President Reagan's conciliatory offer of friendship and co-operation to President Chernenko was duly made and predictably rejected, a Summit meeting did take place between the three Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club and the Climbers' Club.

As far as we are aware this was the first time that the Presidents of the three senior clubs had met to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern, and as such it was of historic importance. There had been talk of such a meeting for some time, but the real initiative came from Harry Ironfield of the F.R.C.C. who met Malcolm Slessor at the S.M.C. Dinner in December 1983 and then broached the idea to me at our Dinner in March. A few weeks later Harry arranged for us all to meet at his home at Threlkeld in the Lake District.

The three Presidents, plus S.M.C. Secretary, Bill Wallace, had a splendid walk up Blencathra via Sharp Edge, and then over Lonscale Fell before returning to Harry's cottage where we were joined by Secretaries Paddy O'Neill and Mike Browell. Topics for discussion ranged far and wide, covering key issues of huts, membership, subscriptions, publications, journals and administration.

The three clubs do have much in common and the 'summit' was most enjoyable and constructive occasion from all points of view. Over the years there have been occasional disturbances in our relationships with the other clubs, and this kind of meeting can only strengthen our bonds for the future. A further meeting is planned in two year's time.



DIAMOX THE MAGNIFICENT

TREVOR JONES

We bumped along the Rift Valley in the Landrover and I could tell that the Kenyan hard men thought, “What’s this white-haired, old English pillock doing with us?”

Kenya Number One hustled us onto a route called Excelsior Direct, but took a long time on the final 5b pitch. The second pitch wandered off into jungle, game reserves and other less desirable parts of Hell’s Gate. Above was a beautiful sweep of white rock, split by a divine, overhanging and unclimbed crack. “What about that?” “Unclimbed”, he said crisply. “Too hard”, as if I were mad, stupid or touched by the sun. “Mind if I have a do?” Aghast, he didn’t even reply.

A perfect gritstone crack which required a dextrous movement of the paunch on the crux, with a perfectly placed number 3 Friend, and the problem was converted into a perfect 5c jamming crack. I was reminded of our honorary member, “You show me the zonking ‘and jams and I’ll show yer the fancy foot work”.

We did a new top pitch, overhanging, interleaved paving stones which sorely needed a liberal application of Portland cement to make it acceptable to an ex-President in his fifty-fifth year. This climb was the aperitif to the main business of the holiday, the North Face of Mount Kenya. Mount Kenya gets more difficult as I get older since I generally try and keep below the altitude of the top of Dinas Mot.

My young, overworked medical advisor introduced me to Diamox the magnificent, an elixir of life which works as quickly as spinach did for Popeye—Diamox which charms away mountain sickness, headaches, piles, baldness and snoring in huts. So I was prepared for mountaineering again, which I keep on stupidly coming back to as I gave it up when I was forty but have frequent attacks of amnesia when I wake up and find myself doing it yet again.

A great help are Kenyan porters who carry forty pounds a day enabling one to imagine that the scene is the golden age of mountaineering and Whymper or Mumery might be just round the next heap of moraine.

When Mark Savage and I got to the glacier I was upset to see my porter faltering on the steep ice in his torn Wellingtons and so to ensure he carried my load as high as possible and to get maximum productivity for my £5, I held his feet in place on the icy holds and was happy to see that even Africans can get the leg-shakes when they get gripped. Then suddenly the North Face of Mount Kenya with the thin,

slabby wall of the Scott Braithwaite bounding its western edge. It brought back the magic, intangible feeling which is why we all pine for what we do in the mountains. I tried to eradicate the sudden memory of 1978 when I lay gasping at 15,000 feet on the cold floor boards of Top Hut on the other side of the mountain. This time we were in the Kami Hut at the same height but due to the Diamox elixir I was upright and keen.

There were rats in the hut, squeaky, hungry rats with a rather nice white stripe down their backs, but which fought all night over the crumbs on the table as if it were their last supper. One, with extraordinary agility ran across the ceiling and in doing so defecated on Mark's face—which oddly he didn't seem keen on.

The porters slept outside under a rock; this seemed odd since Kenya was their country and the Empire was years ago. The same thing had happened on the continual road blocks on the way to the mountain—all cars with whites in were waved through, but their own race were stopped and given a nasty time. Fortunately they hadn't seen my licence the endorsements of which drop out in a picturesque manner like those old drop-down seaside view postcards.

One delight of the Equator is the twelve hour nights so there are none of those tiresome 4.30 a.m. alpine starts when you could cheerfully brain your companion with an ice-axe for getting up so early.

The climb was just under two thousand feet long and we hoped to do the third ascent as it was E.D., plus we had to haul the sacks up most of the pitches. Routes like this are designed specifically so that there are many stalactite type overhangs which spear through rucksack straps and defy all frantic tugging from above to move them upwards.

The crux was a 5c layback, which seemed ridiculous to me at that altitude, so I gulped another Diamox down just to be on the safe side, but this didn't stop me from an almighty cough just above which caused the loss of my top dentures. Breeches too were a problem, new ones with minute pockets and no retentivity and every now and then as I stepped up, a treasure was lost from them: a watch, an exposed colour film of the lower part of the route, a packet of butties. All too similar to 1960 on the North Face of the Cima Grande with Les Brown when I dropped all our food and most of the gear and the tourists had all moved away as they couldn't understand the mad English above who showered them with ironmongery and food.

The bivouac was a splendid ledge seven feet by four feet, just room enough to lie down. Mark complained that I snored loudly all night and kept him awake, which I said was a gross fabrication and that I would get all my young friends in the Climbers' Club to refute this allegation.

It was easy to the top, Hard V.S. or something like that—then a good rest and a brew on the summit and the view alone was worth it, even though I don't really

climb for pleasure, but solely to get mentioned in the President's speech and Mountain.

I discovered when I got down that I'd lost nine pounds in weight in four days. So elderly mountaineering weight watchers, Mount Kenya is the place for you.

"Not many stories for the Journal this year" said the Editor, "Could you write us one of your daft articles?"



Redbrook.



TIME TRAVELS

GRAHAM HOEY

Once again that feeling was there, deep in the stomach, making sleep impossible. My mind wandered back to the last time I experienced it this intensely. almost a year to the day, same place, Helyg, same situation, a school climbing club trip run by myself and Kevin Flint in charge of nine boys. Then the route was Right Wall and the feeling had been present all day, climbing classic routes in the shade of the Mot watching the shadow crawling agonisingly slowly across The Wall until it was time to bite the biscuit. My thoughts were suddenly broken as Kevin shoved a mug of tea at me. As usual he was wildly enthusiastic looking like a cross between a Wookiee and Conan the Barbarian “Well, are you gonna go for it?” he enquired grinning like the proverbial cat. “I dunno Kev, it depends on where we’re going today.” A pathetic excuse and he knew it. “Come off it, we’ll drop the lads off at the hut at tea-time and zoom over to the Pass.” Too enthusiastic, I tried a different angle. “You do realise don’t you Kev, that if we go there you’ll have to do THAT route again” I retorted. “Yeeaaaaah” he screamed masochistically, and then just in case there was anybody else not yet awake added, “Okay lads, let’s get this show on the road . . . go, go, go”.

The Helyg kitchen became a hive of activity as seemingly endless amounts of food were fried, boiled, baked, burnt and eaten regardless. Rucksacks were loaded up with the usual climbing paraphernalia and even more food. In fact if it were a choice between a rope and a bag of sandwiches the lads would most probably go soloing.

All but two of the boys were competent to be left to their own devices and Kevin and I were left with the two novices. The weather was superb as we set off on the long trog into the Carneddau. Amphitheatre Buttress again, one of the best mountaineering routes in Wales—steeped in tradition and first climbed in 1905 by the Abraham brothers along with J.W. Puttrell, the cream team of the 1910s.

As usual we got lost between the col below Carnedd Llewelyn and the base of the route, nearly losing one of the lads down the steep hillside in the process. They were both thoroughly gripped when they saw the buttress and I secretly envied them doing such a climb as their first in Wales. Even the second time around the route had lost none of its majesty, a Welsh Tower Ridge complete with ‘gap’ and pinnacles, and as I wandered lazily up I wondered why I just couldn’t forget about the hard routes with their debilitating demand of high physical and mental effort.

We arrived at the top in mid-afternoon and crashed out in the bright sunshine scrounging drink and food from our young companions who were still full with the experience of the route.

“What now, Gra?” Kevin intruded into the calm, his eyes glinting. “How about doing Aura or the Amphitheatre Wall being as we’re here?” I replied. A cop out and we both grinned. “Yeah, we’ll go to the Pass tomorrow” he suggested. Just then, as often happens, a familiar face appeared and the usual banter began. Good route, nice day, and then the weather forecast sketch. “Thunder-storms, tomorrow?” Kevin and I glance at each other in sudden panic, both minds thinking alike. “What do you reckon?” “Shall we go for it?” “Yeah, yeah, yeah.”

In two seconds flat the sacks were packed, the lads given instructions about the way back to the hut and we piled off down the hill at breakneck speed. One broken speed limit late the minibus screeched to a halt below the Cromlech. A rapid nervous scan indicated that the routes were unfortunately free then that feeling came again. A head throbbing push up the screes found us below Cenotaph Corner (the route right of J.R.!) at 7 o’clock.

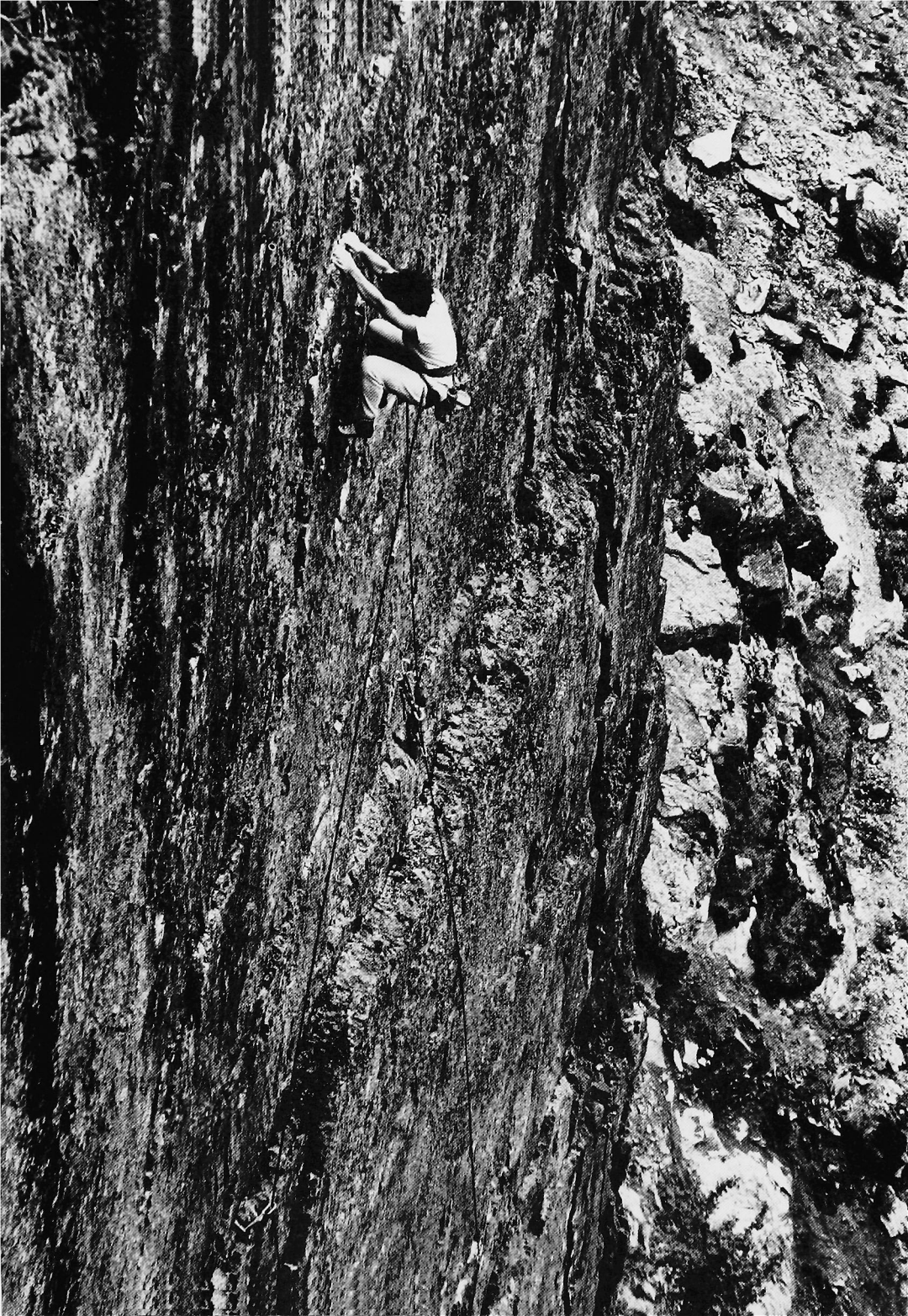
“Kill Kev, kill” I shouted, as Kevin set off on Left Wall, loaded down with a range of nuts representing a full history of the development of climbing protection from 1960 (what, you even had reamed out iron nuts? You’re pulling our legs. Ed.) to the present day. This on top of his own twelve stones had me doubting the security of the mere three, superb nuts I used as a belay.

Pushing words of encouragement up the rope towards him, he climbed smoothly up to the rest—only placing about 15 runners. He was looking good as he took on the crux, “Keep going” I shouted, but he stopped. “Good God he’s putting another nut in”, but I was wrong he was putting another two in. He set off again. “Great!” I shouted and again he stopped. Not another runner I thought, but no, off he flew with a cry of “Shiiiiiiiit!”

Refusing to hold him on the rope (I’m good with other people’s ethics) I lowered him to the rest. A few minutes later he was at the top and pulling in the ropes. Deciding not to get too tired I bombed the lower crack ripping out the nuts and leaving them on the rope. Funnily enough one of the nuts disappeared down the rope of somebody on True Grip. We both looked at one another as we realised I’d taken his runner out. He stared at me incredulously. “What did you do that for?” “Uhm, sorry, got carried away. Are you okay?” But he was and had two good wires next to him and rationalising my incompetence by reasoning that he shouldn’t have had a runner in Left Wall I climbed on.

Back on the ledge it was my turn to be gripped as Kevin busied himself fixing a belay. A few minutes later—and lashed into NINE nuts—he told me he was safe. Lord of the Flies . . . I couldn’t believe I was daft enough to try it as I wobbled

Catherine Destivelle (France) on Right Wall during International Women’s Meet, 1984. Photo: Ian Smith.



up the first easy crack. The Friend looked good and feeling too short to place the high nut I swung right along the hand-traverse. A rock-over and a stretch up provided me with a good nut not far below the peg. The moves past the peg proved more reasonable than expected as I laybacked up leftwards to a large pocket containing a poor spike. Another good nut out to the right and my fluttering heart was stilled. It was very steep there with small footholds, a place to shake out and reflect. After what seemed seconds but was very much longer I got fed up with swapping hands on the spike in an attempt to recover and reluctantly set off on the long trek to the Girdle. This was the section I was dreading the most, but it went alright and with a sigh of relief I reached the sanctuary of the Girdle ledge.

By some delicate manoeuvring I got sat down facing out with my legs dangling over the ledge; the Pass was almost deserted—no doubt the pubs weren't. I'm no good at resting, I get too bored and before long (too soon!) I declared my intention of carrying on. Expecting the rest of the route to be easier I was soon in for a shock; leaving the ledge was desperate, the crucial holds being just out of reach. This left me nicely tired for the next few moves, a bit of a nightmare. The lower hand-traverse was repeated but on poorer holds followed by a more difficult rock-over a disturbing distance above gear. A poorish nut maintained the tension until a couple of pulls on better holds led to a good runner below and right of a large hole. Remembering that the latter feature was reknowned for taking a large hex, I threw in the largest, only to see it rattle about disconcertingly.

Then it happened, like the tenth pull up on the last set my arms suddenly turned to jelly; this was much more like myself I thought as I stared up the final section. "Keep going, keep going Gra." Kev. screamed up. So I did and it got harder, arms pumped, calves pumped, and the only good thing about reading Arnold's book now was that I knew that my brachioradialis muscles were also pumped. Ten feet to go. I'm going to come off soon I thought, three moves to go. Some lads on the left shouted something about good holds to go for, but it didn't quite sink in. Two moves to go. The lads stopped shouting, presumably signifying the end of the good holds. "Keep going Gra., keep going." Again it was Kev. It's okay for him I thought, he's not up here. One move to go. Unbelievably I moved up and was there, safe on the top.

Back down on the ledge somebody asked us what else we had done during the day. "Amphitheatre Buttress—a classic." I don't think he believed us.

EARLY DAYS IN CRESSBROOK DALE

KEITH SHARPLES

Ian and I slipped down the path from Ravensdale toward Cressbrook Dale, Ian with his thoughts, and I with mine.

Nearly two years had passed since my last visit here, and through the winter treescape we could see the waterfall and the pool ahead with the first buttress beyond.

The first buttress on the left bank is overhanging and undercut and according to the guide book features the old aid route *Has It*. Further downstream we arrived at the second buttress, with its tall central section and another old aid route *Nogbad*. If anybody had been here recently their activities were not obvious. One line up the central section stood out with its lone red sling showing the passing of the aid men and pointing the way for things to come.

That's a start then we said, "Number one", then the old aid route on the left, "That's mine", said I and "Number two" for us. Further upstream on Has It Buttress, an overhanging crack goes from the bottom to the top, "That's mine," says Ian and "Number three". Further upstream again, overlooking the waterfall and rock pool an old headless peg leered from the bottom of a series of discontinuous pockets leading up a 'Livseyean' style miniature discreet wall, that's "Number Four". Downstream now and on the end of this wall is a bottomless groove "Number five", and a leaning wall just right again should give somebody "Number six" the half dozen. That's enough for today though and we head back to Sheffield to the real stuff in the gym!

March 1983 and here we are again, but with the gardening gear this time. Today we spend two or three hours apiece cleaning our respective lines, in full view of the road which is only one hundred metres away, but clearly visible through the winter trees. The cleaning goes well, but soon it's a question of rain stops play, so back to base again.

A Saturday in mid-April and it's third time lucky: the sun's out, the rock is nearly one hundred per cent dry and the camera man is here! An hour's worth of cleaning and then Ian is ready. His crack hangs the wrong side of vertical but the first four metres seem okay and soon the crux is overcome by a sneaky hold on the right that gives access to the upper crack. Finally a little niche above gives a contorted rest before the top. Our man with the photo gear stands easy, his motor winder silent now and his gear by his side. He looks satisfied. Ian on the top looks outwards and appears satisfied too, a good route and *Motor Drive* becomes the name.

Whilst Ian abseils for his gear, I clean away for a little longer, then everything's ready; down with the abb. ropes, away with the brush, on with the ropes and rack, and let the show begin! Rush up the first wall to the break, then off rightwards for two metres, take care with that greasy break, and then on with the oppo-wires and relax. Before you know it you are up the little wall and hanging out off undercuts from the overhang. Runners in, shake out, chalk on, then away, three metres to traverse right, two, then suddenly everything's all right; leaning outwards to make it look hard for the camera. Posing now as the final groove goes by easily, a good route for posers; that's it the *Sloane Ranger* rides again. Soon it's all change and Ian leads the Sloane Ranger and I the Motor Drive. Then it's off home again, but via the cafe for a spell of writing.

A visit to Chris Craggs some time later reveals that Ed Wood, Mark Stokes, Martin Veale, and Chris visited the dale in 1980 and much to his disgust Ian's Motor Drive is really Ed's *Billy Two Hats*. This team also did the righthand exit to this route and the smart little wall to the right of THE line on Nogbad Buttress. Abseil inspection of THE line had not been favourable however and they left the dale behind them for others to discover.

The pioneering spirit returned in mid July and I returned with Yorkshire immigrant Neil Foster and Ian Smith for a mid-week sortie. True to my research an abseil inspection revealed that the dale's first prize was indeed going to be hard but well-protected; three in situ threads assured us of that at least. Cleaning over, I set out, first the entry crack, then a traverse left onto the wall and then a stretchy scoop up to the first of the threads. Fifteen minutes on and half a dozen attempts later I was still at that thread, being unable to gain the second thread, or for that matter any other hold, rather than the obvious finger pocket. Neil tied the ropes on and tried several alternatives, but was equally unsuccessful. Back on the ground we concluded that we would have to spend the next winter in the gym or simply import a 'heavy duty' leader. Finally the flake above the first thread seemed to beckon and *The Plough* taking the initial scoop and the flake now serves as a pointer to things to come.

FOOTNOTE:

Since this article was written in the summer months of 1983, Cressbrook Dale has attracted considerable attention. Before the end of the year Paul Mitchell added *More Me Than Me*, *Hip Hop*, *Opportunity Mocks*, *Avoiding the Issue*, *Speckled Egg* and the fine micro-classic *Belling the Cat*. Andy Barker re-climbed Ed's Wall in mistake for a first ascent and then added *Flick of the Wrist*, *Square Peg Round Hole* and culminated his efforts by soloing *Doing the Business*. All these routes were reported in Gary Gibson's supplement, the only tit bits of outstanding information were that both Barker and Mitchell had failed on the line left of The Plough and the impending wall left of Doing the Business.



Things started in earnest again in spring 1984 when Martin ‘Basher’ Atkinson climbed the line left of The Plough. Dampness due to seepage on critical holds was eliminated by using a blow torch! *Hot Rock* was immediately repeated by Chris Gore and Tim Freeman—the ‘blow torch boys’ and then the pack moved in. Hot Rock can only be described as a real gem and it is definitely the classic of the dale.

Since then Mitchell has climbed *Billy Bull Terrier*, *The Smoke and Noise-Filled Room*, *Disturbing the Midnight Owl*, *Mother Milk*—all on the left bank; and *Bleeding Scalp*, *Not a Patch on the Apaches* and *Tax Dodge* to the right bank. Barker then added *Burying the Red Man* as a direct on Mitchell’s routes.

Although these routes are hard enough in themselves, Quentin Fisher and Jerry Moffatt then went on to produce some really hard problems on the bouldering wall. Fisher produced *Cherokee Lane* and *Trail of Tears*; the former is just left of Doing the Business and employs a dynamic sequence. Moffatt eliminated the jump when he found a static version which he then called *Jericho Road*. This starts just to the left again. *Pink Indians* was added to the right of Trail of Tears, which itself is right of Speckled Egg. Finally before leaving British shores Moffatt added a low level girdle traverse which he called *Moffattrocidity*. Understandably these routes have seen few repeats, the latter is still awaiting a second ascent, but it is understood that ‘King Fisher’ is working hard for the prize.

Here things stand for the moment but I doubt if we have heard the last from Cressbrook Dale, the original Little Big Dale!

A DREAM COME TRUE

MIKE OWEN

With winter fast approaching, and the awful inclement weather curtailing any hopes of any more climbing, before the year is out, it seems an appropriate time to put pen to paper once more. . . .

Come to think of it, it happened last winter. Yes, I'd visited Verdon for the first time in '83 (rather late in my climbing career, too) and although returning home very impressed with the gorge, and not so with a certain author's Selected Climbs Book, we didn't have tales of all the supposed sunshine to tell our friends—in fact the weather that time would have put Scotland to shame! I did, however, dutifully part with the £15, or so, to take home 'Opera Vertical' with pictures of real climbers in shorts, looking bronzed, etc. . . .

The rain hadn't put me off wanting to return, but having been caught out, on several occasions, on the longer routes, it seemed that the shorter, newer routes on the faces would be a safer and, indeed, more enjoyable alternative for the next visit.

Anyway, what I'm trying to get round to is:— the two full-page photos of a team on Surveillier et Punir really caught my imagination. I, immediately, was committed to a return visit to Verdon just for that one climb alone. At about the same time an article appeared in one of the mags entirely on the Frimes et Chatiment wall, with a bit about Surveillier et Punir—apparently the best route in France; needless to say this further fuelled my desire.

Elaine and I made it to Verdon in August with doubtful feelings, having left the unbelievable heat wave behind us at home. These feelings were further enhanced as, all the way through France, we were chased by the most horrific thunderstorms I have ever known. Upon meeting up with the rest of the Mersey Team, at La Palud, we were relieved to find out that the weather there had been okay after all!

Things didn't start off too well, though. Our first route turned out to be Reve de Fur, which was a real beauty, but it felt quite hard for supposed 5c. Next day we went for Mort a Venise, expecting an enjoyable E2-5c/6a, but which actually turned out to be good E4-6a; I remember looking down at my Cragratz; on the last move to the break; with toes in hideous sloping scoops saying, hopefully, "Come on 'ratz don't let down now." Thankfully they dealt with the task in fine style . . . just!

Next day saw Liz and I rapping for Frimes et Chatiment itself only to realise, at the bottom, we'd done the wrong ab. We were at the start of Mort a Venise again!

Not wanting to tread that path once more I opted for a horrendous traverse round the buttress to the next gully and the start of our proposed route. We made it just as an Austrian couple came down. It transpired that they were going to do Les Freres Caramel Mou and we naturally assumed that it was the man who proposed to lead it—we were wrong! The lass actually led both the pitches, whilst not quite in true British style; we were gobsmacked and I fancied a go sometime during the holiday . . . but that's another story.

Frimes itself was ticked quite quickly and was a fantastic wandering journey across a beautifully clean white limestone wall.

Elaine and I then had a couple of really great days climbing, although the sun had disappeared and we got a bit wet, occasionally. We did Necropolis in a fine drizzle, this saw a biggish lob out of the top groove and my first (bitter) taste of the magic 7a grade (French).

By this time we'd bumped into Ralphy and Angela and we'd partaken in many eating and drinking sessions; we were getting into the swing of the way of life down there and also getting a bit in tune with the climbing.

Ralphy and I did Tapis Volant finding the first pitch desperate, too, and having to escape off the top pitch in torrential rain. After a couple of days Elaine and I watched a chap, who looked like Lech Walesa, self top-rope the top pitch of Surveillier—I was surprised how often this kind of thing was done, as it looked quite dangerous and the French certainly go about this task with a certain complacent arrogance. Afterwards we set about tiring ourselves out on TNT and then Tapis Volant again for the rest of the top pitch. This time round I found the first pitch really hard and disappointingly had to rest on a peg on the bulge. Ooops, jibber!

I was still finding the climbing hard but nonetheless decided another 7a was in order before the big one. L'ange en Decomposition turned out to be one of the most impressive routes that I've ever done. To look up the crux pitch you cannot believe the climb goes up there, honestly. It does, though, and not without a lot of hard work. All sorts of little things for fingers; incuts and a couple of finger-jams lead tiringly for about 100 feet, with good bolt protection, to an amazing Frodsham style overhang, miles above your last gear, heaving on jugs, that are well spaced, above the most noticeable drop in all Verdon which deposits you gasping and laughing, through sheer enjoyment of such an experience, onto the belay perched right on the lip of it all. Surely THIS is one of the most 'Out there pitches' in the world.

That day we bumped into Dave Turnball and his mate John from Leeds. I'd been enthusing about Surveillier to all the Mersey lads but nobody fancied a go; when I mentioned it to Dave he was more than keen. So the plot was made—we'd rest tomorrow and get on it the day after.

On our rest day Dave swam the gorge from Chalet Malinnes to the lake, clad in

Karrimat which he had wrapped around himself for buoyancy. He was absolutely made up with this achievement. I had a more leisurely day with Elaine on Midnight Express, and plenty of swimming and sunbathing.

Talking with Paul Bolger and Rick Newcombe at the campsite that night, it became clear that they were going for Surveillier tomorrow, too, thus ensuring plenty of competition on the crag that day. Both teams were in favour of an afternoon ascent.

Next day the campsite was empty except for Paul, Rick and myself. Rick was busy writing descriptions and access notes for the gorge routes, I was eating stacks of food and resting in the sun, but Paul was well and truly psyching himself up reading some heavy novel and repeatedly playing 'RELAX' by Frankie goes to Hollywood at full blast on his car stereo.

Paul and Rick headed off at about 1.30 p.m. and Dave and I set off about an hour later, giving them time to get going. When we arrived at the top of the crag we were alarmed to see Paul and Rick waiting at the foot of the crag, behind a team which was on the first pitch. After waiting for half an hour, we decided to abseil down, as we reckoned these guys would soon bail out (hopefully) as it was obvious they were having a very hard time.

When we arrived at the bottom, after a filthy abseil past tottering bilge, the first pair were on the second pitch and Paul was established on the first stance. Slight progress. Half an hour passed and a couple of falls later the problem became apparent—the bolts were quite spaced and the leader was having to do some free-climbing in between now! Suddenly, to our astonishment, Rick (who is normally very patient, indeed) started shouting and barracking them, so Dave and I saw fit to join in. I was emulating my great friend Phil Davidson by voicing some examples from his repertoire of verbal abuse such as, "Come on you spaz", etc.! A worried-looking Paul peered down and muttered along the lines of, "Hey, shut up—these Italian's are about 6 foot 6!" So we did . . . quickly!

Soon after, they must've got the message as they retreated. I set off immediately on Rick's heels, so by the time the Italians got down, Dave was on his own to face their wrath. But apparently they were very pleasant. Mind you Dave is a big lad, too. Unbelievably, by now the time was 5 p.m.

Dave led the second pitch quickly enough. Both these pitches served as a good warm up for the harder top two pitches. We had been told to do just the top pitches (so as to be fresh for the hard climbing) but we were really glad to be doing the route from the floor.

Now Paul's Fire's fell apart a couple of days earlier. He'd had to buy a pair of second-hand Cragratz from somebody in the campsite—he hadn't got used to them yet; in fact, he wasn't at all impressed with them. By the time I'd followed the second pitch, I just caught sight of him completing the third and crux pitch. He'd

had a lot of trouble with his boots and had to come down once from the crux. We let Rick set off, allowing me a good rest.

By now Elaine, Ralph, Angela and some other friends had gathered at the top of the crag to watch; so I had to do a good job! I was able to rest at the bolt at the start of the really hard climbing (this bolt had a 3-foot sling on it—obviously used as a foot sling!). It looked feasible above, with a couple of bolts to encourage me on upwards. It turned out to be exquisite Pex Hill-style climbing on small pockets and tiny footholds (my cragatz didn't let me down). Actually, clipping the bolts was quite hard, then a bit of a lunge for the jugs above and a good rest before the really trying and technical moves to the stance, I couldn't believe it—but after all, I'd been psyched for a long, long time. . .

Dave absolutely walked up the pitch in fine style. All that was left was the top pitch, which is British 6a and demands a bold approach. Dave had a look, but had to admit that he was tired out by then, so I had the advantage of leading the top pitch as well. Elaine was waiting (as always, patiently) at the top for us; it was 8 p.m. and by now the sun had disappeared.

We got such a buzz out of climbing together, on Surveillier, that Dave and I immediately made plans for Caramel Mou, which is a harder proposition. So, by the time we dropped him off, our next sports plan was established. We got that done early in the morning. Funnily enough, just as we finished, Lech Walesa was going down to lead Surveillier, and we had a quiet laugh between us. Then soon after, it started thundering and lightning and also snowing very heavily—it was time to go home.

Top left: R. Brookes leading E. Byne on Himmelswillen.

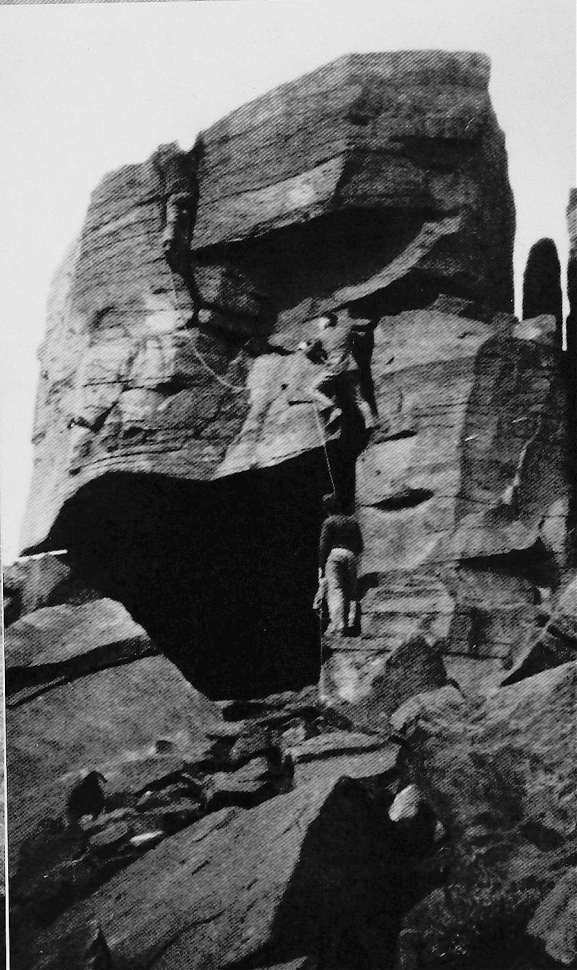
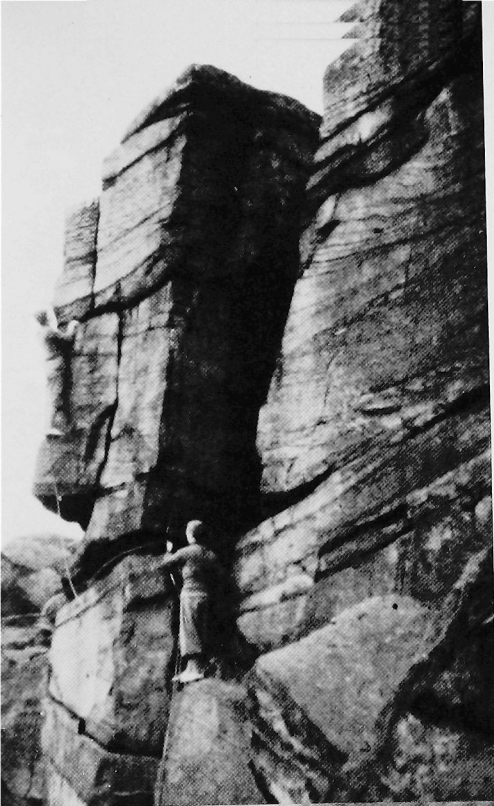
Top right: Don Roscoe on Sloth.

Bottom left: Dave on 'The Pebble' By George.

Bottom right: Puttrell's Progress, Wharnccliffe, 1933.

Photo: J. Brown.

Photos: Byne.





THE HOROSCOPE

DAVE GREGORY

It was in late December, just before I left on a skiing holiday, that I called in at my sister's, to swop presents, exchange the season's greetings, and, as ever, for me to be indoctrinated in her latest fanaticism. Homoeopathic medicine, health foods and horoscopes seemed to be the received wisdom this year. I accepted a bottle or two of Doctor Foster's foulest and listened to next year as laid out for me by Fate and interpreted by the sibling. I long since learned to interject the odd "Fancy", "Good Heavens", "Yes, dear", "I will certainly try that dear", rather than pour scorn—it makes for an easier life. Besides, one cannot consume much goat's milk coffee or peanut butter shortbread whilst maintaining a dominant end in an argument. It is not surprising that most of the dietary advice and the future as foretold passed unheeded; in fact only one piece of information stuck. "Someone close to you will die."

I took my leave. "Merry Christmas", "Keep taking the garlic tablets", and pondered on the forecast. The departed was hardly likely to be the sister—she ought to manage the statutory seventy with her attention to dietary theories. There are aged relatives scattered about the family, but all pretty hale. It was not until I was passing an hour or so in London before catching the train to the airport and witnessed a Hooray Harriet stepping into the road to hail a taxi and finishing up wrapped round a Honda 500 with a perspex faceguard full in the charlies that I realized the more literal meaning of "Someone close to you".

I began to take more notice of little incidents which occurred near to me and it certainly seemed that a mysterious agency was working at someone's passing on. My immediate neighbour on the plane almost choked on one of the airline's rubber roast potatoes. The lady behind poked herself in the eye with a plastic knife as we went through a small air-pocket. In the same turbulence a bottle of airport duty-free fell out of a locker onto the head of a man two rows behind. Crusty old port? But the smile died. I saw myself as a Jonah. Should I warn the airline? The bumpy descent into Geneva furthered the line of thought. If the 'someone close to me' was on the plane his passing was likely to take me and a couple hundred others with him.

I began to be anti-social. To ride single on ski-tows and lifts; to the annoyance of the long queues and attendants—anything to avoid being too immediately near to the future deceased. My averting tactics seemed to work. The resort suffered a

rash of loose skis. One, hurtling sideways, struck the lead pupil in a herring-boning ski-school amidships and dominoed the entire class. Another hit an ice lump, came down vertically from the stratosphere and plunged up to the binding in the piste to the discomfiture and future embarrassment of a honeymooning bridegroom snow-ploughing into the sudden middle-wicket. A third ricocheted off a lift pylon and speared through one seat of a telesiege to the horror of the occupant of the other.

A rather attractive Swiss next to me in the queue caught her scarf in a pommel tow and was dragged halfway up the track. A less attractive Geordie, more used to Newcastle Brown than gluhwein, tried to ski direct down the tow track and wrapped himself round one of its pylons as I was tugged by. However, a hospital cot for him, not a coffin.

A rather large telephoto lens disengaged itself from its camera, held firm on the window sill of the telecabine and splashed into a fondue dish on the terrace below. Dying of a cheese scald seemed to be an esoteric end but it fitted into the pattern. A ski-stick dropped from a chairlift scored a direct hit on a pizza being raised to its eater's mouth. A perfectly sober adolescent fell out of a chair, another was struck on the head by a maverick tow-pommel. The chapter of accidents seemed endless—and all too near me. A black cloud over otherwise perfect days.

The early powder snow was crusting over to give a bearing surface on almost any slope. Off-piste skiing came down to my level and I ranged far and wide—as far from other people as made 'near' inoperative. The superb crust allowed me into situations impossible in other conditions. Swooping traverses across whole slopes. Near contour swings into and out of gullies—following the crease line where the two slopes met. Exhilarating—but you can't trust crust. On one swing with the crease the surface gave and I sank through into a white void and chaos.

The gully was hollow, covered over by a wave of snow overhanging from both banks. Each side up to the crust was a billow of snow. I was surrounded by it. The entry hole must still be there but the space between it and me was blocked by the fall-in. I was covered in snow, neck-filled, sleeve-stuffed, my ski fronts jammed up to the boot tips in the snow bank. Mirror specs gone, sticks nowhere, cold, halfway to upside down and hardly able to see. It took quite a time to release the first heel binding by hand so that I could kick the second open. I rolled onto the gully bottom and found a firm footing. It was solid, flat and icy under the snow but a good enough base to search for the specs, unbroken, and the sticks, one a bit bent, to pull out the skis and clean the snow from the bindings.

Common sense said to wade up the gully side, arming down the powder, slipping and sliding up the bank and battering through the crust. Pessimism asked how to deal with the skis. Wear them? Side-step up the bank, lifting a ton of snow on the ski top with each step. Carry them? Drag them? No. Memory said that the crease

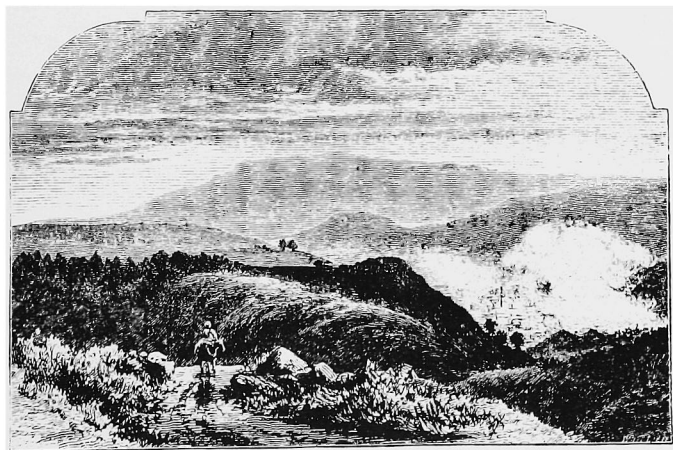
in the snow, which I had been following, and which showed the line of the gully, smoothed out into a clear slope with no steps or cliffs.

Decision said to ski slowly forward on the icy bed of the gully and break through the crust where the gully lost itself in the slope. As I slid slowly forward on the icy bed of the gully I left the enveloping cocoon of powder and crust fragments which had surrounded me and gained speed in the narrowing tunnel on the snow covered ice which floored it. There was no room to attempt to turn, slow down, or stop, except by throwing myself into the white side walls which disguised who knew what manner of boulders. I swallowed hard, ignored the hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach and poled forward hard. The tube down which I was hurtling narrowed further and the roof lowered. I crouched into the egg-schuss and burst through the ceiling of crust in a flurry of powder, slab and flailing sticks.

I must have cleared the ground by a foot or two but a jolt, a lurch and a stagger later and I was under relative control and came to a more or less textbook stop.

The elderly gentlemen who had been sedately traversing the hillside had braked hard at the sight of the apparition erupting from the ground in front of him, pitched forward and passed into eternity as his heart surrendered to the shock.

Of his misfortune I knew nothing, but shaken clear of snow I skied serenely on to enjoy the final sun-filled and incident-free days of the holiday. This was all last year and no one close to me has died. Which is why, when discussions on the topic arise, you will find me heartily scornful about horoscopes. They really are a load of rubbish.



Hayfield, from road near Edale Cross.



*Above: William Walker and Ivar Berg at High Neb Cave, Stanage, 1916.
Below: Above Upper Booth Barn.*

*Photo: A. Schaaning.
Photo: Byne collection.*





*Above: Some Whitehall Instructors: K. Axon, G. Sutton, S. Moore, H. Pretty, R.A. Brown, (T. Baugh).
Below: Ready for action. R.A. Brown second from right.*

Photos: Byne.





THE KINDERSCOUT

LOUIS S. JENNINGS

In 1982 a great deal of interest was shown in the celebrations to commemorate the 50th centenary of the notorious Kinder Trespass and bearing in mind how close Kinder is to our hearts the following extracts of over 100 years ago provide a unique vignette of a bygone era.

‘My next visit to the ‘Scout’ was made in the early summer of the present year (1880), from Hayfield, a village which has the advantage of standing almost in the centre of the wildest scenery in Derbyshire. The first discovery which my enquiries brought to light was that the Kinderscout is regarded as strictly private property, and that it is divided up among numerous holders; almost all of whom are at logger-heads with each other and with the public. The mountain—for one may speak of it, seeing that it is close upon 2000 feet in height—is one vast moor, intersected with long, broad gulches, and abounding in deep holes, patches of wet moss, and pools of dark water. There are said to be certain public rights of foot-way, but they do not appear to lead to the best points, and even in regard to these there are constant disputes. Moreover, they are hard to find amidst a labyrinth of heath and ferns, and it is not unusual for the game-keepers to turn strangers back even when they are upon the paths which are supposed to be fairly open to all.

The owners of the moor are jealous to the last degree of their rights, and quarrel over the few birds which by some accident are still left as though the cause of empires were at stake. This arises from the foolish way in which the district has been parcelled out among a number of smallholders, in patches not much larger than a table-cloth. One man’s allotment is actually under two acres in extent, and his only chance of getting a shot is on the day when his neighbours are out shooting, and the grouse are driven over his field. Then he stands waiting for a chance and if he can manage to bring a bird down on his little patch, he has had a fine day’s sport, but if the bird drops outside his boundary he goes home with an empty bag.

On an average during the season there are about three guns out to each bird, and in one case a gentleman who pays £50 a-year for his bit of moor only got two birds all last season—£25 each, and I hope he didn’t think it too much. When I heard all this, it brought to my mind a line which I had once read in a sort of burlesque almanac—‘August 12th. Lobster shooting begins on the Peak of Derbyshire’. If the

Kinderscout is ravaged many years longer as it now is, the 'noble sportsmen' of the district will have as much chance of shooting lobsters there as of finding grouse.

The stranger in these parts would naturally pay very little heed to local troubles and bickerings if he did not speedily find that they materially interfered with his freedom. If you go to the right you are liable to be warned off; if to the left, to be threatened with an action for trespass. You get permission from three or four different holders, and find that there is still another who bars the way. While mentioning these facts, however, I am bound to add that personally I experienced no inconvenience whatever. The gentlemen of the district not only placed their information at my disposal in the most obliging manner, although I was entirely unknown to them, but gave me permission to go where I pleased. Here, as everywhere else, the stranger will meet with all civility if he begins by himself showing it to others. But people who insist on going everywhere without so much as a 'by your leave' and who delight in fussing and flourishing about, and butting their conceited heads against local prejudices, ought not to go to the Kinderscout; and indeed it is a pity that they do not stay at home altogether.

There is an inn at Hayfield, the Royal, at which the visitor may make himself comfortable during his explorations. The landlord has the power to give him permission to go over the mountain as far as Kinder Fall, which is all that most people care to see. The village lies in a hollow amid lofty hills, and there are several print and other works in the neighbourhood, so that there is always plenty of smoke in proportion to the number of houses. At night there are no lights in the streets after March, but that is not of much consequence, for there is nothing whatever to see. By daylight, however, if the visitor does not find anything to interest him, it will be because he has 'no taste and no eyes.'

In front of a roaring fire in the kitchen of the inn Jennings met a group of labourers and workmen, one of whom informed him that he was called Mad Jack—an interesting point as, although many people are of unsound mind, none of them seem to know it. Jack offered to act as guide and filled in some detail including information about peat cutting. Interestingly the labourers eventually got round to arguing as to who could walk the farthest—'I tell thee, he can lag it on'—at which point Jennings left them to it and stole off to his bed. The next morning he turned up Jumble Lane and followed the banks of the River Sett, which comes down off the Kinderscout.

'I passed along its banks, but there are times when it can make itself dangerous, and even terrible, sweeping away mills and houses from its path, and even, as recorded by John Wesley in 1748, tearing up the churchyard, and washing away the dead bodies. Before the stranger advances very far upon this road he will notice on his right a

rocky hill known as the Fox Holes, while before him stretches the Kinderscout, covering a large space, for it is about four miles in length, and in breadth it extends over a still larger area, much of which consists of 'moss' and bog inaccessible even to the most adventurous of travellers. The visitor is warned by a local guide-book never to attempt to cross the mountain near nightfall or in misty weather, for even the shepherds and gamekeepers have often lost their way. The warning is not unnecessary, for the moors are difficult to traverse, even in broad daylight, so cut up are they with long and deep trenches, across which it is impossible to get in wet weather. Some of them are ten or twelve feet deep, with soft peaty banks, black as ink, and offering no foothold if one has unluckily got to the bottom. No wonder, therefore, that even those who have frequently travelled the mountain lose their way in the mists which are apt to arise, or discover that instead of being in the middle of the moor they are on the verge of rocks which go suddenly down 1500 feet below them. If I had to be cast adrift somewhere on a dark or foggy night, there are few places which I should not prefer to the Kinderscout.

From the Farlands I kept close to a wall on the left-hand side, down towards the stream, and through a narrow green lane, then across the river, and through a gate to the left a few yards up, and on to another old green lane, between stone walls, once a road for packhorses, and now rarely used even by chance travellers. The view of the Scout from this point is very striking, for the great fissures on its rugged surface begin to stand out under a dark sky like ghastly wounds, and the huge rocks which hang upon its sides look as if some tremendous convulsion of Nature had but just shaken the world. The rocks are black, the heath, when not in bloom, is dark in hue, and the whole scene is of a stern and sombre character when the sun is not shining upon it. Through gaps in broken walls, and round by wet patches of moss, I made the best progress I could towards William's Clough on the left side of the valley—a wild and forbidding-looking spot, for all the heather had been lately burnt, giving a most desolate aspect to the scene. Through this valley it is possible to make one's way to the Snake Inn.

A little further to the north-east is the part of the Scout called Mill Hill, covered with boulders, and with masses of rock hanging over the top. To the right of it is a deserted farm known as Hollinhead—a farm which I passed on another occasion, and a melancholy spot it is with walls tumbling to decay, windows broken, and doors falling from their hinges. There is a narrow path by Hollinhead, which may be followed almost to the foot of the Fall—a journey short in distance, but taking a long time to get through, for the moor is very wet hereabouts, and inhospitable walls come frequently in the way. The view from above Hollinhead, on the side of Mill Hill, is another memorable one. From thence the eye can wander gradually round to the Fall, with its precipitous sides and its wild drift of stones, over which the

dark storm-clouds lower even when the sun shines in the valley far beyond. There is, of course, no road now—all is dark moor, relieved here and there in colour by patches of a soft and beautiful green, tempting the traveller to leave his rough climbing and go and walk upon them. but enticing as they are they must be avoided, for they are ankle-deep or waist-deep in water, according to the rain that may have fallen recently. Immense rocks and boulders are strewn over the surface of Mill Hill, many of them half-covered with heather, and having deep holes at their sides into which the unwary foot is almost sure to slip. The stranger cannot be too cautious in plodding his way over this rugged region, especially if he happens to be alone; for a sprained ankle would be quite sufficient to put him to considerable inconvenience in a spot not visited perhaps for weeks together.

Leaving the most broken part of Mill Hill a little to the left, and gradually working my way up to the top, I saw below me a pool of water high above the valley. The sun had come out for a few moments, and the blue sky above the mountain pool made it gleam like a sapphire. This is called the Mermaid's Pool, and they say that at twelve o'clock at night, as Easter Sunday is coming in, if you go and look steadily into that pool you will see a mermaid. It is worth trying. . . A few grouse had evidently chosen the moor near the pool as their favourite abode, and called to each other with their strange guttural cry, followed by the rapid utterance of notes sounding very like the two words, "Go back! go back!" And there are times when the warning ought to be duly heeded by the stranger. . . .

. . In course of time I found myself at the top of the hill, and kept pretty close to the edge of it in an easterly direction. The rocks are exactly like sea-cliffs, sometimes very precipitous, and defying any kind of vegetation to take root among them for some distance down. At times they are placed one upon another in thin layers; at others they stand out in vast masses, hanging over the edge of the mountain on so slender a foundation that it seems as if the slightest touch would push them over.

At the top of the mountain, the walking is far more difficult than on the sides. Now begin the deep trenches, the long winding watercourses with sandy bottoms, the dangerous holes thinly covered over with heather, the green oasis in this sterile land, which the traveller will touch only to his sorrow and dismay. You go along a yard or two and come to a yawning ditch, with no water perhaps at the bottom, but with soft peat sides which will scarcely bear your weight. Down you go, and after scrambling to the top, expecting to see a smooth table-land before you, and to find all your troubles over, a long vista of similar ditches stretches away in all directions, few less than four feet in depth, and many of them at least ten. It is tiring work to go in and over them, for as the farmer complained of the claret they do not bring one 'any forrarder'²—one makes no perceptible progress. Beside all this, there are long round-about tramps which it is necessary to take to avoid the swamps and

bogs, and the occasional wrenches which one is sure to get through slipping down holes—a more glorious mountain there cannot be in England.

The Kinder Fall looks like a huge cliff rent violently asunder, strewn on both sides with boulders—at the top a broken mass of stone and rubble, then two comparatively smooth ledges, and then a confused heap of rocks and boulders, which extends far into the valley, sometimes almost blocking it up, so that the stream has to worm its way in and out, or is forced to continue its route in miniature cascades. The water must take its rise partly in springs, for very little was coming over the Kinder Fall on either of the occasions of my visits, although the stream at the bottom was always tolerably full.

Beyond Redbrook, keeping round the hill, we reach after another hard tramp the highest point of the Scout, marked by a small heap of stones and a stick. It was here that the Ordnance survey was taken many years ago, and it might as well have been left alone, for the map of the Peak then planned out was inaccurate in many important points, and for the traveller in this region it is worse than useless, for it absolutely misleads.;

From the ‘Soldier’s Lump’, as they call this point, it is easy to get to the pile of rocks known as the Joseph rocks, standing like sentinels above the valley of Edale. From there I came back to the brink of the Scout, and worked downwards towards a shooting cabin, over very rough ground, and with many moss-traps strewing the way. On the way to the cabin I passed what is called the ‘Old Smithy’, where there exists something like the rough outline of a rude stone building, once as it is said, the smithy where steel was made before Sheffield was heard of. Fragments of large grindstones are to be seen near the ‘smithy’, and several in a perfect state still exist—two I noticed before reaching the shooting cabin, and another was by the side of that comfortable little house, so arranged as to serve as a table, with stone seats all round it. And many a merry carousal must have been held on this spot, if one may judge from the champagne and claret bottles which have been cracked on the old grindstone, and now lie in heaps on the heather. How came the smithy there, who worked in it, and what were the huge grindstones really used for?

The Shooter’s cabin, built by a Mr. Sidebotham and named after him, is in a beautiful spot, near to three rounded hills, which stand a little apart from the main ridge of the Scout, and are known as the ‘Three Knolls’. The visitor should try to find them out as soon as he can, for they will serve to guide him in the event of his losing his way. From the cabin, a narrow track runs round close under the Three Knolls, amid charming mountain scenery.

Jennings eventually descends the slopes and returns to the bar-parlour of the Royal where he meets yet another group of characters before taking his leave of the north.

‘Small as Hayfield is, it is not a quiet place at night; few small towns are. But by twelve o’clock at the worst all is silent, indoors and out, and then the traveller may sink into a serene slumber as he passes before his mind’s eye the various pictures which he has seen during the day—the broken and desolate hills, the wandering stream, the spectral outlines of the peaks and rocks, the black moor stretching far away into mere cloudland. The best point from which to see all the Kinderscout is Hayfield, and the best way of reaching Hayfield is to walk to it from Castleton, over the hills and through the Edale valley, and by Edale Head. Then go to Mill Hill and the Fall, and find your way to the ‘Snake’ near Glossop, and so to Ashopton, and afterwards wheresoever you will. Having done all this, you may say with a clear conscience that you have seen the Kinderscout, and have been where not one Derbyshire man in a thousand has ever dreamt of going.’



Kinderscout.

PROFESSOR FALLS

DAVID HOPKINS

It was a stolen climb: that Friday late in March should have seen me in my study writing, or at the university talking to students, preparing a lecture or marking. Instead I was in the Rockies revelling in that most esoteric branch of mountaineering—climbing frozen waterfalls. The decision had been easy to make; for it is almost sacriligious for a mountaineer to be so close to the Rockies and not to climb. Having supervised my student teachers in the East Kootenays I pointed the rent-a-car in an easterly direction and headed for Banff. Arrangements for a climb were quickly made over a leisurely dinner with an old friend. Not being able to climb with me himself, Greg suggested that Tim partner me on the appropriately named ‘Professor Falls’. Making a quick phone call, Greg confirmed Tim’s participation, suggested that we leave early the next morning, and use Tim’s car and my rope; little more needed to be said. I nodded my head in agreement and returned to the wine.

Apart from perhaps the Highlands of Scotland, the Canadian Rockies contain the finest collection of ice climbs in the world. As a sport, ice climbing began in Scotland at the turn of the century, but for more than sixty years it remained the preserve of a select number of hardened enthusiasts. The mysteries of winter ice climbing was appreciated by only a small group of masochists, who delighted in cold, danger and general discomfort. Recent technical innovations which allow difficult and serious climbs to be done comparatively safely, have encouraged more people to participate in winter ice climbing, and have led to a redefinition of what it is possible to do on ice. Equipped with crampons and short ice axes with drooped picks the modern ice climber is able to move upwards much in the same way as a rock climber ascends a rock face. As a result, ice climbing objectives have changed: early ascents focussed on gullies and easy angled slopes between mountains or buttresses, but with improved techniques and increased competition the ice climber has ventured onto steeper ground, onto iced-up rock climbs, and increasingly onto frozen waterfalls. It is the existence of so many waterfalls that gives the Canadian Rockies its pre-eminence for the ice climber. In the summer the tourist in the Rockies delights at the beauty of its cascading and sparkling waterfalls, but in the winter with their incandescence frozen the waterfalls provide more intimate pleasures for those who revel in climbing the ice.

Not all ice climbs are the same: steepness, length, quality and seriousness are the criteria that differentiate one frozen waterfall from the other. Our chosen climb, one

of the classic ice climbs in the Rockies, was 'Professor Falls'. It is graded 4 and although the climb contains many steep sections they are not unduly long and the climbing in general is comparatively safe. 'Professor Falls' lies in a narrow gully, and the climb rises in a series of six tiers with four of these sections being at least 80 degrees steep and over 35m high. The climb faces north which means that it is in the shade and therefore cold throughout the day, a definite advantage on the longer, warmer March days. Also, the climb is not threatened by avalanches, which considerably lessens the seriousness of the ascent. Only a few weeks prior to our climb John Lauchlan, a member of the Canadian Everest team was killed, having been avalanched down 'Polar Circus' a long, difficult and dangerous ice climb situated above the Banff-Jasper highway.

As we had packed our rucksacks the previous evening, it did not take Tim and me long to finish breakfast, jump into the car and set off for the climb. 'Professor Falls' is situated close to Banff on the north side of Mt. Rundle above the Bow River and access therefore is comparatively easy. We were soon established at the base of the climb, and the ritual of sorting gear, uncoiling the rope, adjusting clothing and strapping on crampons began. As we looked up at the gully from the river the ice appeared very steep, an impression not belied on closer acquaintance. Tim volunteered me to lead the first pitch, and as I could not think of a reasonable excuse I agreed, but meekly, being very conscious of the vertical icicle rearing up in front of me.

Tim quickly pounded a couple of ice screws into the base of the icicle, tied himself to them, and handed me the end of the rope. I tied into the rope, checked the equipment slung around my body, grabbed my axes and walked to the base of the climb. Taking a last look at Tim I swung my axe into the ice, it entered with a reassuring thud and the placement of the other axe was equally good. My crampons bit well into the ice and with my heels level, I extracted the axes and placed them higher. Gradually the movements became more fluid, I began to relax and enjoy the methodical and disciplined actions that took me farther and farther away from the ground. The ice was in good condition, neither too hard nor too soft: when it is hard (as often is in the extreme cold of the Rockies), the ice tends to shatter when hit with the axe, with chunks inevitably hitting you or your partner; when the ice is too soft the placements feel insecure and there is danger of the ice detaching itself from the rock. That day however the ice was receptive; as I climbed higher my initial clumsiness disappeared, and I moved into an economical rhythm. After fifty feet I reached an easier angled section. Here I stopped to place a screw, and with it securely fastened I proceeded with more confidence over an awkward little bulge to a steeper section that led abruptly to a large shelf, below another very steep pitch. I clambered across to the base of the pillar inserted two screws, pulled up the slack rope and when I felt Tim tight on the other end shouted for him to follow.



As I took in the rope I gazed at the landscape around me, conscious for the first time of my surroundings. Below me the Bow River was meandering gently, sparkling in the sun, its dark translucence contrasted with the snow and ice layered on its banks. Above the river, and beyond the road, a series of other ice climbs glistened, refracting and reflecting the intensity of the sun now well risen above Mt. Rundle. Further north, the peaks of the Rockies stood out starkly against an increasingly azure sky. What a great day! Stolen days usually are I thought; but my reverie was soon broken by Tim calling for me to take in the rope, and soon he joined me on the shelf.

It was now Tim's turn to lead, he took the spare gear from me and was soon embroiled on the second pitch. He was climbing well, but with no obvious resting place was forced to hang off his axe in order to place a screw in the middle of the pitch. Soon he was up and I, with my rhythm now well established, quickly joined him on another large ledge. And so the climb continued with steep pitches interspersed by large terraces, with us alternating the lead for a further four pitches, and soon we were at the top.

We were pleased with the efficiency and speed of our ascent, and remarked that too few climbs are so trouble free. It is reassuring to occasionally do a climb competently for it reminds us that climbing does not always have to be a desperate struggle! The ease of our ascent also allowed us to appreciate some the aesthetic qualities and intellectual demands that climbing involves, but that are often underestimated. The clean stark lines of the climb, the beauty of its setting, the contrast between the steep unrelenting ice pitches and the broad terraces, the precise technique that ice climbing demands, the niceties of judgement that the climber has to make as regards strength, commitment and experience, the contrast between the concentration required whilst climbing and the euphoria that characterises the end of the climb, were all very evident to us that day.

The descent involved clambering down the side of the climb, and included a number of roped descents off conveniently located trees. After a couple of wrong starts we safely reached the bottom, collected our rucksacks and despite having to perform first aid on Tim's car still managed to make the pub by mid afternoon.

That evening, on the plane back to Vancouver, I reflected on the day and the climb. Although I have done many similar climbs before, and anticipate doing many more in the future, that one was special. It was special because it occurred out of context—a stolen climb taken from a busy schedule of travelling, lecturing and writing. As such it added texture and counterpoint to a seemingly frantic urban existence. It is moments like these that we must continue to steal, and to treasure.

THE EMASCULATED CLIMBER

GRAHAM HOEY (a 'bald' climber)

Roping up he knows no fear,
he's got the gen on all the gear.
His rack of nuts has no end,
from filed down rocks to a 1/2-sized Friend.

CHORUS: Oh put in another one,
just like the other one.
This route's not got you beat.
The gear's never poor,
and one thing for sure,
it's never below your feet.

So get those nuts in 1, 2, 3,
there's got to be another R.P.
Back them up with a Friend or two,
once E6, but now E2.

Below the crux of the route,
next to a peg, what a beaut.
The fall potential's next to none,
but what's that over there—an R.P. 1?

"Have you got me?" you hear him yell
is this the big one, who can tell?
But not to panic, it's hardly a stunner,
as he gently weights the overhead runner.

But on The Cad it's time to halt,
waiting for the replacement bolt.
No nuts here, to avoid big falls,
if you want this one, just get some balls.

"So where are the bold?" comes the call,
for even the young are scared to fall.
They don't really mind the number of flights,
it's just the thought of laddering those tights.



MICKY MOUSE (SUP.) FOR GERIES

JOHN C. WILKINSON

“Christ, not another old climber”, this impertinent youth exclaimed as he pulled over onto the stance at the bottom of Troach.

I could see his point for next door was the balding dome of the President valiantly babbling its way up Scorpio whilst all over the cliff were scattered members of the C.C., a club distinguished more for persistence in the game rather than youthful endeavour. I assured him that my leader was nobut 38 but I have a funny feeling that merely confirmed his views of the senility of the climbing scene on Cloggy that day. For me, that weekend was a rejuvenating experience. True, it brought home the fact that I had actually reached the age when there were some members who went on meets who were younger than me but it did revive my old belief that Wales had the finest rock climbing in the U.K. I refuse to subscribe to the view that any serious climber does not turn left off the Autoroute du Soleil before the road that leads to Buoux but I have been sufficiently imbued with the ethos of the times to accept that Sheffield is where the scene is at and that Highland Britain is for festering in pubs or bog-trotting. The C.C.’s June meet showed that the weather could still be like it used to be and that all the tottery limestone from Yorkshire to Cheddar (you can throw in Buoux too) is not worth a single cliff of your real grit, sorry rhyolite.

Mark you, all that practice stuff in sedimentary Britain had raised my seconding standards. So Al Churcher and I progressed from a warm-up on Nexus, now a beginners’ El without the peg, to Zeta, about which I remember Tony Willmott telling me all sorts of horror stories concerning the first ascent. Even I managed to get by without using a sky-hook although I had to resort to cheating on the desperate overhanging finish, proportionately as vicious an end to an E3 slab climb as the final crack is to the rest of Diagonal, Mozart turned Bartok. Even Al didn’t exactly bomb it and gave me time to observe from performances next door that despite a 100% increase in protection (i.e. a number one instead of a meccano nut on a boot lace), Diagonal could still sort the men from the boys. This confirmed the impression gained by my wife shortly before when down at the Saussois she expected to find everyone but me as a budding Edlinger (French for Ron Fawcett) but concluded that the proportion of incompetents to competents had actually worsened because in the old days few of the former would venture beyond Le Parc to the big cliff. But on the Clog next day when the Climber’s Club took over only the *crème de la*

crème, or at least the top of the milk, was on show. I suppose it would be impious to say, there was a sense of competition in the air, much too gentlemanly for that. But there was a certain ambience of great expectations and as far as I was concerned they were realized. In the old days Troach represented the ultimate in seriousness in Welsh (and hence all that was best) rock-climbing. It still is a badly protected lead; but for me vicariously enjoying the thrill of steep wall climbing on the blunt end it was sheer joy and the climax of a superb week-end.

Four weeks later, to the day, I stood on the summit (well, not quite, the summit ridge) of Artesonraju at 6,000m in the Cordillera Blanca. This time the sensation was quite different. Two summers before I had, rather belatedly, gone on my first Himalayan expedition, with an Oxford group to the Kishtwar Himalaya. That was a quite extraordinary experience and certainly far tougher than what we faced in the Andes, physically and mentally. But although I had spent three days in a Winttringham kennel on a col at 5,500m in a storm I had not made the summit and that rankled. Our Andean outing had originally been a sort of carry-on climbing trip by the same group but in fact the job scene had taken toll; Nick Barrett whose idea originally it was had a course, whilst our Kishtwar leader, Simon Richardson, had to take his leave between tours on a drilling rig in Libya. So he knocked off Taulliraju with Mark Miller the month before, leaving only Mike Harrop and myself from the old team. Mike too, albeit hardly smooth, was at least an oil company executive and so had exactly four weeks holiday. I think our experience showed that the Andes makes a worthwhile trip even for a short visit. In two weeks, three out of the four members of the new team (Nevil Hewitt and Simon Richards had been recruited) climbed Millishiraju II, Loyajirca, Kiteraju, the S.W. face of Alpamayo and the N.E. face (1965 route) of Artesonraju. The fourth was, of course, me. I got up our training peak of Millishiraju but dysentery, a temperature of 35.4C and a pulse rate only three points higher were not conducive to carrying a 30 kg. rucksack up to camp for a week on the glacier between Kiteraju and Alpamayo. So with a heavy heart and a runny gut I stayed down and eventually managed to kill the bug with a massive dose of Flagyll. Artesonraju was therefore my last chance to get up a major summit. And mighty serious it was, albeit technically not too difficult. After flogging up interminable moraines, spiky grass and loose scree we bivvied at the foot of the glacier (the place we first chose was wiped by ice during the night) and by 2 a.m. were picking our way through a chaos of ice falls, somehow always getting higher. One does not write of sunrises and sunsets in climbing articles nowadays, so I will pass up the staggering beauty of that dawn with the summit of Paron already below us, lapped in an orange sea of Amazon cloud. Anyhow, life was getting too serious for contemplation for everything seemed to be barred by walls of ice. Each yielded a relatively easy runnel but the amount of lethal material suspended above never seemed

to abate: and when eventually we did get on to more straightforward 50-degree upper slopes the snow was trashed, the altitude agony and the weather deteriorating. At 900 metres above our bivvy at the foot of the glacier, with no sleeping gear and with the thought of abseiling off snow mushrooms, stakes and ice screws in the cold swirling cloud which now blanketed the mountain the summit ridge was a very different place from the exit of Troach. As Rebuffat puts it, the human animal was not happy, and any purist ideas about the actual summit were swept away by the thought of getting the hell out of it: "who goes to the summit of the Dru when you get to the tunnel on the quartz ledge anyway" was Simon's salving remark.

Back home a week later after a sleepless night on the floor of a sleazy hotel in Lima and 27 hours flying I spent my third night checking a three volume report I had left for typing and binding. I had miscalculated dates when I had originally promised a mid-day deadline in London for the next day. But now I had another fortnight in which I could afford to climb seriously. Troach, Artesonraju and what? Wouldn't the Walker make a splendid Alpine third for the last year of my fifth decade! This time I at least managed to get as far as a bivvy below the Leschaux hut; rain, cold, unfitness and general winge put an end to this particular attempt. In fact the extraordinary conditions in the Alps during July had made the big mountain out of condition so only a rock route was really feasible, and eventually Simon Donowho and I went for the Cordier route on the Grands Charmoz. My experience forced our way to the head of the queue and Simon's ability ensured that we stayed there until the end of the climb, nine and a half hours later, after what Rebuffat would describe as *un escalade enthousiasmante*. Our arbiter of climbing standards, Simon Richardson, subsequently declared the ascent as Micky Mouse Sup. by reason of the fact that we had abseiled back down the route, collecting gear which we had discarded in caches on the way up as our confidence had grown. But then Simon has a weird grading system which runs from Trivial to Mega and the North face of the Droites in winter only merits Difficult Sup. As far as I was concerned the ascent combined the pleasures of Troach and Artesonraju without the pain, whilst abseiling down meant we could climb all the second half, with its magnificent red dièdre and that extraordinary final smooth wall split only by a 130' off-width crack in P.A.s (sorry E.B.s) and no sack. And the mass abseil of eight people, jabbering in Italian, French and English on four pairs of ropes, eventually reduced by stonefall to two (pairs of ropes, not climbers) was much more exciting than scrambling down the standard descent. In fact, I think young Simon is not with it. All that *Sturm und Drang* stuff is a bit wallyish. I'm going to settle for Micky Mouse (sup.) for the next decade. In fact I have got a new ambition; to abseil off the jammed block at the top of the American route. Then I can really say I've done the Dru.

(Editor's Note: Ref. line 1—"Maranatha". 1 Corinthians 16:22.)



*Above: Looking towards Stanage, High Neb.
Below: Bivouac at Cratcliffe.*

*Photo: Byron Connelly.
Photo: Derek Ritson.*





Above: George Walker and Frank Burgess. Sheffield Climbing Club Tigers. 1934.

Below: Harry Scarlet, Reg Smith, and Jim Wylie, Derbyshire. 1936.





CHARLOTTE DOME SOUTH FACE

MIKE WESTMACOTT

It was the inclusion of the route in Roper and Steck's 'Fifty Classic Climbs' that induced us to try it. Graded III, 5.7, it seemed within the capacity of our 225 year old party, Bill Thomas, Art Fitch, Natalie Bull and me. Somehow we weren't aware that the first ascensionists had said it was IV, 5.8 We agreed later that they had overgraded it, but with some reason.

The approach is from Independence, CA, on US 395. A very good side road leads up to a car park, ranger post and mule packing station at Onion Meadows (9,200 feet). In August, numerous day-trippers and back-packers, many of them fisherman and a lot of them overweight, are to be met on the superb trail over Kearsarge Pass (11,823 feet) to Charlotte Lake. We had arranged for a mule to take most of our gear to the lake, and beyond if possible, so we walked easily past the perspiring load-carriers. I developed mild guilt feelings, quickly suppressed when Bill suggested that the cure was a couple of boulders in my sack. The sun shone, but it was not too hot. There were flowers, lakes, pine trees and ridge upon ridge of the Sierras. Life was good.

On the far side of the pass, we missed the proper trail and dropped down to Bullfrog Lake instead of staying high. It was such a lovely spot that we had no regrets for the lost height and the extra mile. We arrived eventually at the ranger post at Charlotte Lake in plenty of time for our rendezvous with the wrangler. While we waited, the ranger's wife warned us of a bear with cubs which had been making a nuisance of herself. She had been attracted to the area by the carcass of a dead horse a quarter of a mile away, which we could smell—or was it Bill's feet?

From the Lake, the trail becomes indistinct, and very rocky in parts. The wrangler cheerfully came with us for nearly a mile but eventually, faced with yet more slabs and boulders, said he and his mule could go no further. Art, who had been there before, said it was only a mile to a convenient campsite, later amended to 'a country mile'. With heavy loads it took us nearly two hours and for most of that time I was blaming Art for the terrain—at such moments is character revealed.

Next morning we were not very quick off the mark, but arrived at the foot of the climb at 8 a.m. The south face is in fact a rounded buttress, with its right side an astonishingly smooth 70° for nearly 1,000 feet, the left side almost as steep but a lot more broken and bounded on the left by a great amphitheatre. The start of the climb is close to the highest pine tree, on the left side of the buttress.

'Fifty Classic Climbs' dismisses the first few pitches, leading towards a prominent crack with an overhanging projection forming its left side, as 'fourth class'. Art, however, advised the rope. He was right. At least one section was severe and adequate runners were difficult to find. "If this is scrambling" said Natalie, "When does the climbing begin?" Somewhat disturbed by the grading of the climb so far, we arrived at the foot of the crack, supposedly the crux of the route. One is advised to take 'the most fearsome' of the cracks available; to us it seemed the only practicable one.

I was being nice to Art that morning, so when he offered me the lead I very sincerely offered it back to him. It appeared, however, that he really didn't want it, so I took over our few chocks and attacked the crack; that is to say I went very tentatively up the first easy bit and looked anxiously for a runner placement under the overhang. There was one, and it looked as if protection would be possible higher up, so there was no excuse. Moreover, there were small holds on the right wall for the feet and enough for the hands on the left. The overhang went surprisingly easily and one could rest above it, half jammed in the crack. The rest of the crack went slowly but steadily, the occasional hard move being well protected. Near the top, a small flake on the right wall broke under my foot, but there were no other incidents.

After a short easy section, the route takes a so-called dihedral on the right—in fact another steep crack with the left wall again overlapping the right—also graded 5.7. This was almost as steep and rather more strenuous than the first crack. Half way up it, at about 60 feet, there were two niches and good belays, so Art came up to me. He had just arrived when Bill, complaining of incipient cramp in the hands and a dearth of runners, called for a rope for the last hard move. We lowered him a loop and he soon joined us.

The climb had suddenly become a lot more serious, for Art also was suffering from cramped hands. The rock was unrelentingly steep in all directions and we felt very exposed half way up these hard cracks and with only two ropes for the four of us. Short pitches would be necessary, but up to now belays had been scarce.

I returned to the crack. Again it was steep, strenuous, but well protected. After 25 feet it petered out into a groove. Clearly the route went up left, over a steep and unprotected slab. I fixed two runners at the foot of the slab and balanced up to a thin line of lighter coloured rock that gave some promise of holds slanting left to a niche. On arrival, the line of colour was just that, a line of colour—perhaps a slight easing of the angle for the feet but absolutely nothing above it for the hands. I looked down to the runners; one of them ought to be good, but they were 25 feet away and there was more to come. For a long, long time I stood uneasily on small sloping holds, searching the slab in all directions, wondering whether I dared step on to the line of colour and traverse up it by faith. At last I decided instead to make for

a steeper but slightly more scalloped section of the slab to the left, using a providential pocket hold that was a bit low but at least gave the impression of being something one might swing from if the worst came to the worst. Left hand low in the hold while two very delicate steps were made. Right hand quickly replacing left, press down, reach over with left to a finger tip flake, move feet again, then abandon the pocket hold and balance quickly up the faint scoops in the slab. Ah, a handhold. Not quite over yet, step up, a flat handhold, and foot in the niche. Thank God. After a pause to regain my wonted equanimity, I rigged a belay on three nuts and called down to Art, to make quite sure he left a rope for Bill.

The next pitch was supposed to involve a traverse right for 30 feet, at some point, but it appeared better to go up more directly. It was steep wall climbing, with just enough finger and toe holds, and would have been most enjoyable if it had not been for the lack of runners, the flakiness of some of the holds and the general stress of the climb. It was not a place to linger, and I climbed quickly, marvelling at the way hold after hold appeared, just when they were really needed. Maybe 5.6, I thought, but I was hardly in a fit condition to judge. The wind tugged at my sun-hat, so I put it in my shirt. Natalie was not so lucky, and a very fetching white peaked cap spiralled down into the valley.

A little further, and we came to the famous Furrow Pitch—a steep section formed of great scooped out water-worn cracks. Some of the man-size scoops were basin shaped, complete with drainage holes formed by solution of granite by drainage water—like monstrous bidets. We took a furrow on the right, climbing it partly back-and-foot, partly mantel-shelfing from one scoop to the next. A most eccentric series of moves took us out of the first furrow into one further right. Finally, a struggle with a small bush brought us to a large ledge—the first since the beginning of the difficulties.

Here we divided again into two ropes. A steep rose-red wall with superb knobbly holds went up to the left. After a few feet it was fairly clear that there were no difficulties between us and the summit ridge. It was 4.45 p.m. when Art arrived and we sat down to eat our lunch and drink a little.

Wary of more surprises, we kept the rope on to the top. We didn't stay long there, and quickly scrambled down the easy NE ridge to a place where we could see all the way down and change into comfortable footwear. When we'd left camp, we'd been under the comfortable impression that the climb was technically easier than Snake Dike on Half Dome, done a few days before, and that we'd be finished with it early in the afternoon and on our way back to Charlotte Lake. Now we only thought of making camp in time to cook and eat before the light went. We were tired enough, but glad now we hadn't known in advance how serious the climb was going to be. If we had, we'd have missed a splendid day, and the best route of the summer.



THE WONDER WORLD OF NATURE

Amongst the dross that landed on the Editor's desk this year was a strange book entitled 'The Wonder World of Nature'. Within the contents were various gems such as: Keeping Tortoises as Pets by Rosemary Bagwell-Purefoy; Beekeeping is a Splendid Hobby; The First Living Things (a biography of Trevor Jones perhaps?); Seaweeds and their Uses (free well-bound Journal for the most original suggestion); Some Queer Creatures of the Wilds by Richard Ogle (a history of the SUMC?); Game Birds (have we any in the C.C.?); some Amusing Sea Shells; and The Giant Panda. About to consign the publication to the waste bin my eye caught sight of a couple of intrepid climbers esconced in a fern-infested gully—or as the caption said; 'Climbing one of the last great problems of Scotland. A picture taken on the first ascent of the Dalness Chasm, when its last 1,000 feet went to a strong party of climbers'. A fascinating note explained that one belay on the left and a similar one on the right were to ensure that if the leader fell off he would be held—in mid-air! Good solid stuff I thought as I scanned the book more closely. Knowing that the BMC is about to produce a series of instructional booklets it struck me that there might be a few choice hints to pass on and the extracts below will be passed on to Dennis Gray in due course.

'Fell walking, rock-climbing, and ice-work are the three branches of mountain craft which it is necessary to learn before you can be called a mountaineer.'

'Fell-walking is the best way for you to begin a mountaineering career.'

'Two people get along better than ten.'

'You will have a lot of fun and adventure, provided you remember to *keep away from crags at all times*.'

'Your equipment essentials are nailed boots and a framed rucksack, to which might be added cape. . . '

'Climbers argue about the nailing of boots as much as fishermen do about bait!'

'For all but the most specialised climbing the best type of boot is one which fits snugly over two pairs of thick socks without restricting the toes, and is nailed around the edge with clinkers and in the sole with muggers. Tricounis, nails which look like little saws, are vital for the Alps, but not really necessary for a beginner on British rocks, and this also applies to the rubber type Commando or Vibram climbing sole which can be seen in the shops.'

' . . many rock-climbers use gym shoes to climb in . . unless you intend to become a rock specialist they are best avoided.'

'It is surprising the number of people outside of climbing who still think that the rope is more of a danger than a help.'

'Rock-climbing is concentrated mainly in Scotland, North Wales and the Lake District, although there are a few outcrops in other places such as Helsby, Cheshire.'

'For more expert climbers, Lliwedd, Gimmer, and Scafell Buttress have their own attractions.'

Oh, the joy of finding such a collector's item. Words are simply inadequate at such a time; but what a pity that the author could not have his name boldly emblazoned across the title; 'High Adventure—The Thrill of Climbing'. Perhaps another look at the Contents list might reveal a clue! Well, well, I never! If you promise not to reveal the identity to another living soul I'll let you into a little secret. The author was . . . (wait for it) . . . one Walt Unsworth. To be fair, however, the date on the book was after all over 20 years ago—C.C. reviewers do seem to be a trifle lax nowadays.

'A BOLT is a BLOT on the whole climbing face'

The Peak District 'shouting match' which debated the issue of bolts and graffiti came up with a few classic asides earlier this year:

"If you put a bolt in when I'm at the top of the crag you'll get a brick on you." Dave Gregory.

"It's a question of bolts or balls." Graham Hoey (said without a thought for sex equality!).

"The people who use bolts don't give a damn," said a voice from the back of the room. "You're preaching to the converted." Bernard Newman.

"Some of your guide-books get into nice homes."

"If Geoff doesn't like it he can always bonk it on the head." Bob Bradley.

"A pinchgrip walkover was once a Beeston bolt route by Dearman."

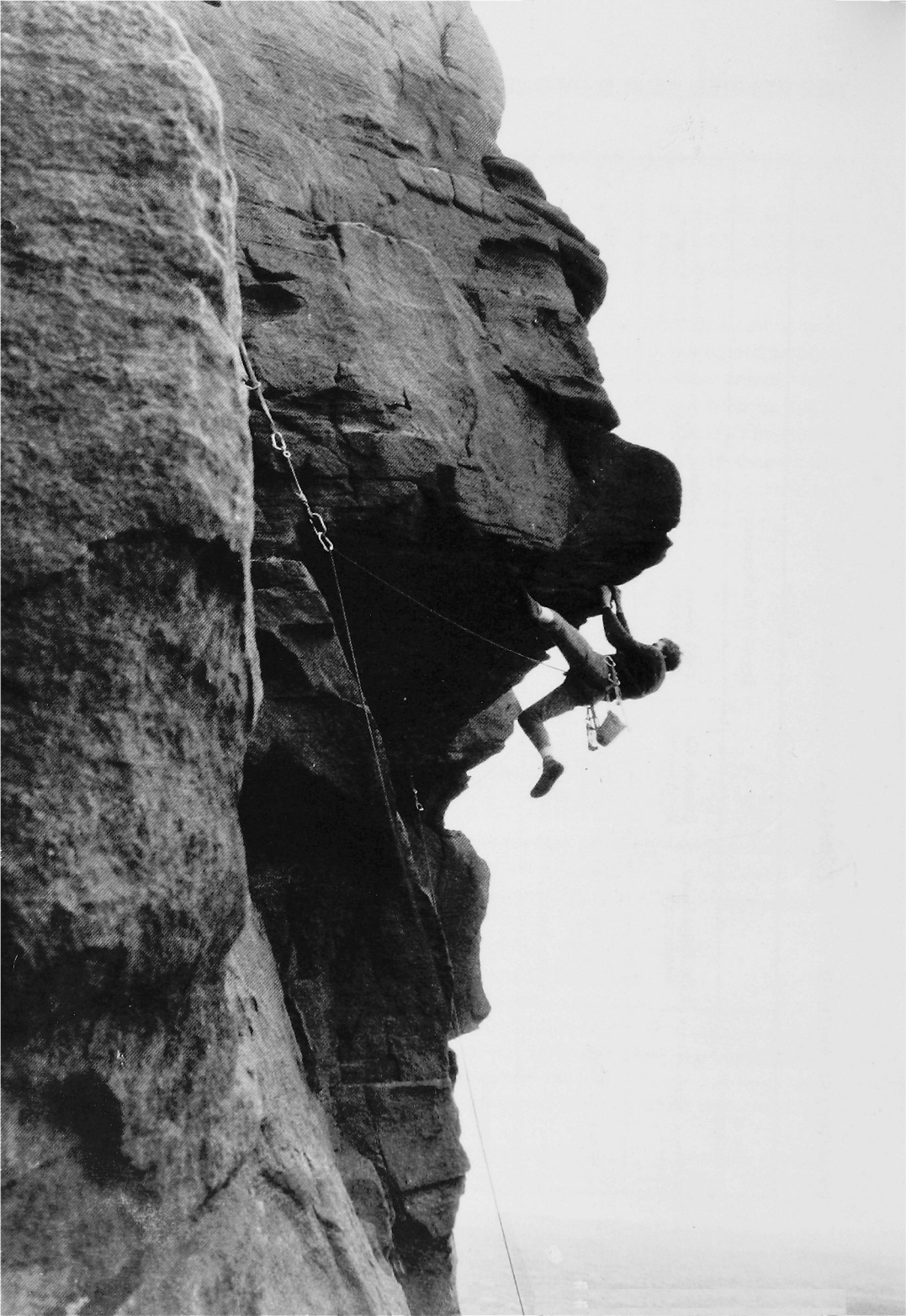
Quote from Mike Browell:—"I haven't gone into this in enormous depth. . . ." "Derbyshire leads the country. . . ." "What we see today the world sees tomorrow. . . ." "I want to hear what leading climbers think." etc. etc. "We will if you shut up." Dennis Grey.

"In the free era, Tom Proctor put the first bolt in, Billy Bancroft put the second one in on Lime Crime and Ron put in the third on Tequila Mockingbird."

A butterfly flew off into the air. "What, opened your wallet again Dennis?" "It symbolises the spirit of free-climbing." Mark Kemball. "Unlike Highlight which was battered to death." M.B. "He's poetic, isn't he?" D.G.

COMMITTEE MEMBER — PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Area of Performance	Degree of Performance				
	Far Exceeds Job Requirements	Exceeds Job Requirements	Meet Job Requirements	Needs Improvement	Does not Meet Minimum Requirements
Quality of Work	Leaps tall buildings with a single bound	Leaps tall buildings with a running start	Can leap tall buildings if prodded	Bumps into buildings	Can't recognise buildings
Promptness	Is faster than a speeding bullet	Is as fast as a speeding bullet	Would you believe a slow bullet	Misfires frequently	Wounds self when handling guns
Initiative	Is stronger than a locomotive	Is as strong as a bull elephant	Almost as strong as a bull	Shoots the bull	Smells like a bull
Adaptability	Walks on water	Keeps head above water under stress	Washes with water	Drinks water	Passes water in emergencies
Communication	Talks with God	Talks with the Angels	Talks with self	Argues with self	Loses argument with self
Climbing ability	Flashes Extremes regularly	Falls off Extremes regularly	Falls off routes of all grades regularly	Very rarely climbs	Member of Fell and Rock club



HIGH MOUNTAINS DEEP WATER

PAUL de MENGEL

Being at a loose end at the beginning of the year, I jumped at the chance when Alun Hughes asked me to come with him to Tierra Del Fuego, to make an adventure film for S4C Welsh Television.

Having arrived at Punta Arenas jet-lagged and saddle sore, the task of extracting our cameras and a huge pile of equipment from the Chilean customs was accomplished with surprisingly little hassle.

Our application for permission to come and climb in the area was still, for all we knew, hiding under a pile of bumph in some obscure office in Santiago. However, no one had refused us permission. A low profile was adopted, and hiring a taxi we loaded up and got out of Punta Arenas, P.D.Q.

Still nervous about being apprehended by the authorities and having our plans nipped in the bud, we stopped on the beach at Pta del Hambre, only long enough to cram into our boats: Six weeks food, two super 8mm cine cameras, dozens of cartridges of film and a full size tripod. Oh yes, and mountaineering boots, ropes, ice axes, crampons, tent and all the other paraphernalia needed to canoe to and then climb an 8,000 foot mountain.

One of the major worries up till now had been whether it was possible to get so much gear into two Nordcap canoes. This was the first time all the equipment had been assembled in one place, and of course, it didn't fit.

A group of Chilean holiday makers were having a barbecue on the beach. They plied us with wine and an excellent Goulash, as we packed. When each of the boats three watertight compartments would accept no more, a considerable pile of equipment still remained. This was stored in watertight bags and lashed on deck. Our hosts watched with some mirth, as in our now rather unstable canoes, we wobbled our way down the coast and off into the sunset.

The next day we crossed the Magellan Straits at Cabo Froward and arrived tired but happy and quite alone in Tierra del Fuego.

Our trip nearly ended in disaster in the first week. On arriving at a beach in the Cockburn Channel just before high tide, we were pleased to find that for the first time there was enough room to pitch our tent, between the high water mark and the jungle. So we settled down to the first comfortable night's sleep for a week. Beware the Magellan tidal enigma—twelve hours later we had a rude awakening. At 4.00 a.m.

water came pouring into the tent, our sleeping bags were soaked, but worse, the canoes containing all our food and most of the equipment had been left lower down the beach. We found them bobbing about in eighteen inches of water. The morning high tide in these parts is a good three feet higher than the afternoon high tide. Both the canoes had been afloat for some time and the slightest wind would have blown them out to sea, leaving us marooned, with no hope of rescue.

A strong westerly wind flushed us across Seno Keats, riding the swell and keeping well offshore, good sport was had surfing along, letting the wind and tide relieve us of any hard work. Keeping on course in a following sea was the only problem and we regretted having to leave home before Frank Goodman had been able to fit rudders he was making for our Nordcap canoes. The good weather held and we made fast time to our camp at the foot of Mount Sarmiento.

Adapting to our mountaineering role we followed the time honoured alpinists ritual of packing too much food and equipment into over large rucksacks and kidding ourselves that we would soon get used to climbing with these enormous humps on our backs.

The jungle bashing needed to get to our mountain was a nightmare, and our humour was not helped by having to wade balls deep across an ice cold stream in order to reach the snout of the glacier. However, it was a beautiful day and we dumped our gear at a bivouac site and set off up the glacier to have a look at our objective, till now hiding behind a bend in the valley. Sarmiento provided a magnificent but frightening sight. 8,000 feet of inverted ice cream cone, plastered with snow and ice from top to toe.

I had a bit of a scare here, Alun had gone ahead up the glacier while I changed a film in my camera. I came to a high part of the glacier and was surprised not to see him. I shouted but got no reply. Assuming that he must be some way further up, I continued for a while until I reached a place where I could see most of the glacier: No Alun. I shouted as loud as I could: No reply. I ran round getting more and more worried, looking into crevasses and calling all the time. Eventually quite hoarse with shouting, I returned down the glacier. All I could think to do was go back to the glacier snout and start searching again. What a way for our trip to end, if Alun was laying at the bottom of a crevasse. I met him on the lateral moraine on the edge of the glacier. He had stopped to set up the cine camera. I had walked right past him on the way up. He hadn't heard me calling because of the noise of a river running on the glacier close to where he was filming.

The storm of the next four days put the lid on it, we didn't fancy being holed up in an ice cave, waiting for the mountain to come into condition. On the first (and only) ascent, an Italian team had spent the best part of a month on the face.

We put plan 'B' into operation, to the dreaded armchairs (our canoes) and paddled off looking for another mountain to climb.

Finding one, our next two attempts also failed. The first because of an impossible barrier of toppling séracs. The second because of a storm. However, our 'one last try' pulled it off. The inevitable fight through the jungle to the 2,000 foot contour, put us on a fine ridge with a good bivi spot at the snow line.

Next day in deteriorating weather conditions, we made our way across a snow field, skirting several crevasses on the way. A long pull up a concave slope seemed that it would never end. Then eventually, poor visibility and a rising wind forced a stop for half an hour. For a time defeat seemed inevitable. Then just what we were hoping for, a clearing in the clag showed the summit to be only a few hundred feet above.

We made the top, but stopped only long enough to eat a handful of currants before running for safety with a full gale close on our heels.

The team had mixed emotions about this ascent. One half was elated because we had climbed (perhaps a first ascent) a high if technically easy mountain. The other miserable bugger was moaning because he had been unable to film the climb or get a view from the top.

There was only one thing for it, we must find and climb another mountain. So once more we paddled off in search of adventure.

Our next choice proved somewhat elusive. We spent the following week slogging through impenetrable jungle, extracting ourselves from crevasses and brewing tea from the shelter of bivi bags, while sitting out a storm half way up a mountain. In general, having a jolly good time?

In the end we gave up. Time was running out and we wanted to find somewhere where we could film a glacier flowing into the sea.

Seno Agostini provided the setting and we found not one but twelve different glaciers all plunging into the sea. Canoeing amongst the ice flows was for me, one of the most pleasant experiences of my life. On more than one occasion the wind blown ice had completely filled a bay, requiring us to punt rather than paddle the canoes. We were sure to keep well out of range of the falling séracs, some as big as a two storey house falling 300 feet straight into the sea.

Whilst exploring Seno Agostini we came across some very friendly Chilean fishermen, camped in two tin shacks. They welcomed us into the camp and we lived with them for nearly a week, helping where we could with the business of collecting scallops and king crabs destined for sale in Punta Arenas.

One fine morning, leaving the fishing camp at dawn, we paddled across Seno Agostini for a final attempt on a mountain. Our objective was modest in height but surrounded by high peaks. Dispensing with the hitherto standard bivouac at the

snow line, we raced along a ridge with very light rucksacks, roped up only out of respect for the crevasses, climbed a long arete and after a short traverse from a false summit made the top. A magnificent sight lay all around us. High mountains, deep water, ice on the sea and even an inquisitive pair of Condors. We could not have been more happy.

I have always thought the West Coast of Scotland to be the most beautiful place on earth. I now relegate it to second best. The setting of that mountain (I still don't know its name) is truly wonderful.

The wind that had been causing some concern on the descent, had dropped and we paddled out through the breaking waves into a big swell. We arrived back at the fishing camp well after dark.

We left our friends next day. Our return journey was hastened by stormy winds blowing us home and a rapidly depleting store of food.

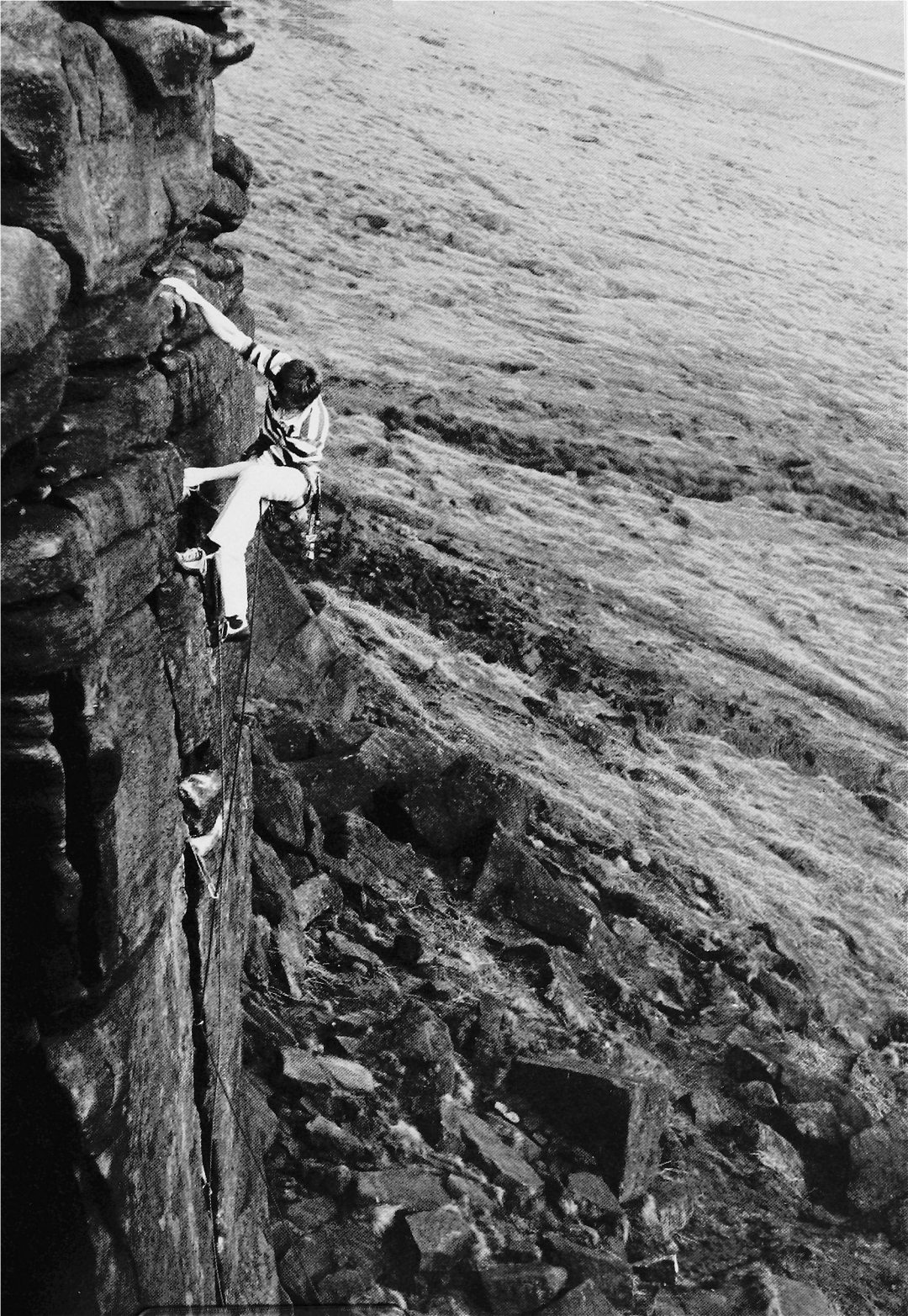
Our next adventure was far from planned. Crossing Sienon Inmon I had to stop on a small island for a pee. The wind was quite strong and the landing on a rocky shore in the surf was not easy. Five minutes later I may have been relieved, but my action had put us in a bit of a spot. The wind was increasing and we were on a rocky shore with no shelter. Our only hope of avoiding damage to the boats was to get off the beach into the relative safety of deep water. Seal launching the boats, we paddled as hard as we could, directly into the wind. Our efforts got us about a hundred yards off shore but the wind, now about force 8 was blowing us back onto the rocks. Every other stroke was a slap for support, but we managed to turn the boats so the wind was now beam on. The idea being to run clear and get into the lee of another island.

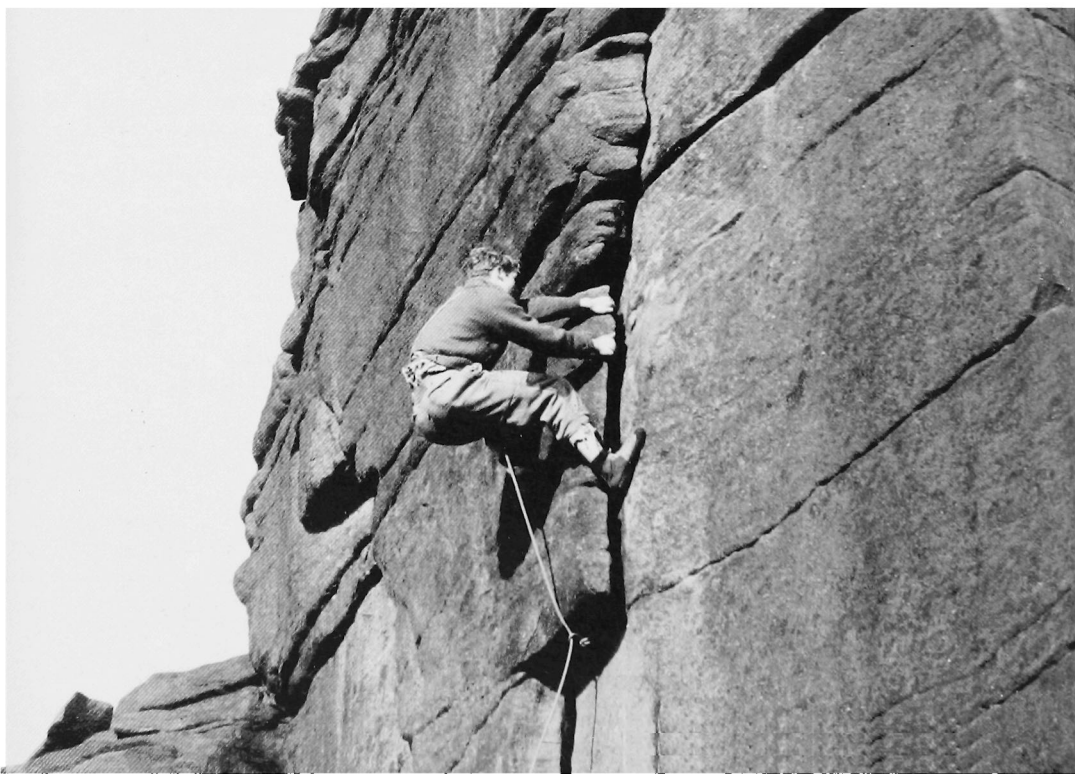
I think we were both quite gripped up, communication was impossible because of the crashing of the breaking waves and the howling of the wind. It was a full-time job just to keep the canoes the right way up. But it was imperative to at least get clear of the lee shore. As quickly as it had sprung up, the squall abated.

The sea was still quite high but with the dropping of the wind, we were able to turn round and resume our original course.

Having had such a close shave, we paddled as hard as we could for a sheltered beach. One epic day is quite enough.

For two days we waited for the right conditions to cross the Magellan Straits, it was only a distance of twelve miles at the narrowest point but we had experienced the wind picking up, from calm to full gale in a period of twenty minutes, and we had no wish to be six miles from land in a force 8. Our nerves were on edge when we at last 'went to have a look' and made it across. We got back to our departure beach six weeks to the day after setting out. A lot fitter, in my case a lot thinner and surprisingly after living in each others pockets for so long, still good friends.





GLENCOE REVISITED

DEREK WALKER

For the Whit Holiday this year Richard Carter and I zoomed north up the motorway in his big Mercedes, hopeful as ever of ticking off a few more 'Hard Rock' routes from Ken's Bumper Fun Book. A 'phone call to Glenmore Lodge revealed that it had been raining lately in the 'Gorms and that the snow still lay high up in the Gullies, so we decided to forget the Needle and King Rat for this year and return to Glencoe, where apparently it had been dry for weeks.

Apart from a couple of days with my old mate Ian Clough in 1968, and a memorable climb up The Chasm in 1978 with Don Whillans en route for Hoy, I had done no rock-climbing in Glencoe since my first summer visit there back in 1962, when I had my first 'Hard Rock' experiences with Donald.

I remember '62 with considerable nostalgia and that little trip was part of it. It was probably the last time that Don was really keen on a British rock-climb. He had recently come back from climbing the Aiguille Poincenot with the Irish Guinness expedition, and was due to return to Patagonia that autumn with us on our second attempt on the Paine Towers. Actually Guinness was kind enough to supply us with 1,000 cans for *that* expedition to supplement our ample supplies of MacLennon's whisky and Dreadnought gin—but that's another story. Surprisingly, Don was doing a spot of work for Blacks in Greenock at the time and we arranged to meet in Glencoe in the valley below Hamish's cottage.

Another C.C. Carter, Derek that time, provided the transport then—the standard grey mini-van beloved of '60s climbers. After crossing Lancashire to the Whillans' household in darkest Crawley Booth, Audrey, Hilary, Derek and I dived it out with the big lorries over Shap, broke down on the cobbles in Glasgow, and eventually arrived in pouring rain on a mid-Saturday afternoon after an interminable journey. Just as Audrey was taking a quiet snooze in the tent to recover, Don hitched in with orders to get the tea on.

I had not climbed with Don before and knew little about the current state of Scottish climbing, but Brian 'Fred the Ted' Fuller had been with him in Scotland at Easter, and had warned me that Don was after a route called Carnivore. The next morning was cold and gloomy though the rain had just stopped. We drove up to Lagangarbh and wandered up to the Creag a' Bhancair Wall. Derek Carter, whose previous climbing exploits included surviving an eighty-foot flyer off Lliwedd, getting

stuck inside Sunset Crack with Chris Bonington, and damaging his knee on Lockwood's Chimney, was going to be third man in his neat white plimsolls.

Audrey had told us a bit more about Carnivore. How she had held the rope for Don during their honeymoon in 1958 when he had found the key to the climb, the difficult entry and the long traverse pitch. How they had recruited John Cunningham, and Don had reached the final overhanging crack before bad light had stopped play and caused retreat. How the dastardly Cunningham had refused to go back with Don but had returned soon after with Mick Noon, completing the route with a different finish and claiming it to be the hardest route in all Scotland and giving Don scant credit. Audrey sounded decidedly bitter while Don merely growled 'Aye'.

As we shivered on the damp grass, Don shot up the first 50 feet, put on a runner then delicately tip-toed across the 80-foot wall to the distant stance. My great moment, climbing with the master for the first time, now came. At the first hard move 20 feet up my hand pawed beneath the wet jug, slipped and I was off, penduling across into the moss. Derek didn't fancy having a go in his plimsols, so with the rain once more falling, Don stoically abseiled off. As we trudged down the hillside, we helped with the rescue of some eminent and elderly Scottish mountaineer. A press photographer was threatened and then thumped and for some reason we were given £5 to spend on beer at the Kingshouse, though I can't remember why!

Next day was a bit brighter and we went to the Etive Slabs and climbed Swastika. I secretly hoped Don might find someone else to follow him up Carnivore, but the only other climbers about were Alan Austin and Matey Metcalfe, and he wouldn't ask them. The third day was gloomy and threatening once more but we went back to the foot of the Creag a' Bhancair wall. This time it was dry; I found the jug, and by fixing a back rope managed to teeter across the thin traverse to the stance. Don made short work of the next two pitches—I seem to remember one runner on each—then we were at his previous high point where an evil overhanging crack went straight up, and where Cunningham's traverse line had gone to the right. The rain was sweeping across the valley again but fortunately we and the rock stayed dry under the overhang. Don hammered in a peg at the foot of the crack and lay-backed out of sight. I had a desperate struggle following, weakening my feeble arms trying to remove the peg, and being hauled up the crack. When I emerged he was forty foot higher, and after slipping and sliding up the wet, lichenous slab, I joined him after the hardest pitch I had ever done.

We walked to the Kingshouse in the pouring rain. He was dead chuffed to settle the old score and I gather the 'Villain's Finish' was unrepeated for ten years. It was Don's last great first ascent on a British crag, and usually when we climbed together in the mid-60s he made me lead, while he sometimes brought a 'Western' to read on the stances.

That was the end of the climbing on that trip. The monsoon continued; Audrey had heard of the palm trees in Poolewe, so five-up in the Mini van, we toured the North of Scotland hoping to find some tropical sunshine. I reckon the round 1,000-mile trip cost us in 1962 about £5.50 between us, with petrol at 4/6d per gallon. To put this in perspective though, Derek was earning £730 per annum as a young probation officer, I, slightly more in my first year teaching, while Audrey was getting peanuts in the sweated labour clothing factory in Manchester.

So there is a short memory of '62; the year Pete Crew tried to demolish the Joe Brown legend; the year Chris 'chose to climb'— with us in Patagonia; the year he and Ian made the first British ascent of the Eiger North Wall; the year that Kennedy and Khrushchev were eye-ball to eye-ball over Cuba in those late October days as our Paine expedition was sailing towards the Caribbean on the *Reina del Mar*!

Forward then to Whitsun '84. Five hours to the Clachaig from home in the luxury Merc.; crowded pubs, campsites and chalked-up crags; dry weather and fabulous climbing for a pair of middle-aged never has beens.

The first climbers we met on the cool Saturday morning were certainly links with the past—the famous climbing/fishing duo of Joe and Claude, en route for the Etive Slabs. We joined them and dozens of others, including half the Mynydd, at the foot of the cliffs I hadn't seen for 22 years. Amazingly the start of The Pause was free. It gave magnificent slab climbing, the new Firés wiping out the hard moves, beautiful balance and sufficient protection when needed. What a fantastic route to start the week! Meeting Mark Vallance and Martin Wragg, they too enthused about Pause being the best route on the slabs.

Sunday was warmer and sunny and we began to hit the high crags and tick off some of the great climbs of the late '50s. First to Trapeze, Jimmy Marshall's classic of '58, on the west face of Aonach Dubh. Following two other parties up it, we would look and shout across to Mark and Martin who were enjoying Big Top. Not much gear in the top traverse pitch of Trapeze and the exposure was keenly felt. Next day to Yo-Yo on the North face of Aonach Dubh, which must surely rank as one of the finest crack lines in Britain with every move at 5a/b for 300 feet—a magnificent climb with a sensational second pitch.

After two more days of classic climbing including the delightful Ardverikie Wall which we enjoyed all to ourselves, it had to be the Ben for our last day. For years I had thought about the Bat, read Robin Smith's famous article, knew the folklore and seen the recent film. Freezing cold on that day, we climbed old-fashionedly in two sweaters, anoraks and balaclavas but the new fangled protection, the 'Friends' and the 'rocks' gave me the confidence I would never have had to attempt the climb 22 years ago. It is a great climb—delicate traverses, a bottomless corner, the evil little

hoodie groove before the big roof from which those dramatic falls took place on the first attempt in '59—all tamed now by modern gear.

We found the Bat a long, hard and demanding climb, a superb climax to one of the finest week's climbing I've ever had in Britain. Six perfect days—six star-quality routes on different crags in tremendous situations.

But how times have changed since '62. Then there was no 'Mountain', 'C & R', or 'High', no Hard or Soft Rock books with routes to tick off, no 'Friends', nuts or harnesses. Comparatively few climbers were doing the routes described above, only the bold few who were prepared to make the big leads with the minimal protection and knowledge then available. Nowadays, of course, everyone can do them—even middle-aged presidents and ex-presidents can lead routes they would not have dreamed of attempting 25 years ago.

Mike Browell has commented how lucky we of the '50s climbing generation are to be still able, 25 or 30 years on, to climb the hardest routes of that time, largely because of the advances in protection gear. He argues that it can never happen again; that the young, hard climbers of today will have no chance of repeating their climbs so far in the future.

Perhaps so; probably he is right. But would Brown, Banner and Jones in the early '50s have dared forecast that they could still be leading harder climbs than 'Cenotaph' or 'The Grooves' 30 years on? Would Bonington in 1953 have dreamed of leading Whillans up Dovedale Grooves (unrepeated for 9 years) in 1984 in plimsols with three line runners? Could Banner, after his first ascent of Belle Vue Bastion have imagined that he could solo it 30 years later?

Yes, Mike, we are lucky. 'Glencoe revisited' was a tremendous nostalgic trip for me doing some of the great climbs of the late '50s and reliving those exhilarating times. Long may we be able to continue to climb at this or any level.

So, varying the words of the song just a little

Give me the Surgrip
Give me the Friends
and leave the rest to me.





MELLOWED OUT

JOHN CODLING

I should have guessed fate's hand much earlier, when the girl's mini throbbed more roughly than usual; failing to respond to my heavy right foot. The road over the pass was snow covered and the only other cars about had chains on. "But it doesn't snow in September" she said. With a well projected facade of experience I explained that anything could happen on Swiss roads. "Why is my temperature gauge into the red and my feet are cold?" That I couldn't answer. My feet were cold too, not just cold, frozen. I'd been driving with my heels in two inches of icy water for a couple of hours now.

Next morning I was still trying to hide my embarrassment at failing to make the top of the pass and to understand rudimentary car mechanics. We sat waiting with trepidation in a flash Swiss garage as a pride of well-paid mechanics (with intricate precision) fitted a new radiator to the mini. "I thought you were an engineer", said she. Not for the first time I couldn't think of an adequate reply. The cheque-book made a brief but painful appearance. As if from a Swiss Banker's signal the sun came out and stayed for a week.

Mello Valley arrived through the fly-spattered windscreen a day later than planned. Italy was as expected, hot, dusty and full of drivers that were making me appear competent (thankfully).

'Turn right off the main road at S. Martino' the article in Mountain magazine read. The mini and male took another battering as the car bounced in and out of a series of enormous potholes along a track. The campsite proved to be idyllic, with quiet green pastures, a river, boulders and even a cafe close by. The cafe was quickly sussed and found to be embarrassingly cheap.

Our first route was an experience which should have given some warning of the farce to come. 'Nuova Dimensione' provided a much sterner test than anticipated. Tony, my unfortunate partner, had watched me with a glazed expression for an hour from his hanging stance. I'd been involved in the mental and physical debate that one goes into before a committing 5c slab move thirty feet out from the last runner which was, incidentally, the belay as well. In this case the portions of the human brain involving sense and self-preservation were excluded from the decision-making process and the move was made. Score one for the climbers; the summit of the Piz Badile above smiled benignly.

A day followed—immersed into lakes (water and wine), sun-worshipping and doing silly things such as looking for spaghetti trees. A day during which a large obelisk, set above the campsite, began to prey on the mind. ‘Precipizio degli Asteroidi’ had a massive groove-line in the middle of its impressive upper face.

Next day the groove had to be climbed. However, a complication, the groove started halfway up the mountain. A mass of rock faces and hanging jungles had to be ascended in order to get up to the start of the top of the topo and the guidebook preamble could not be understood. “Bugger this”, Tony and I thought, we’ll stick to the green bits; there’s bound to be a good trail. There wasn’t and we wasted hours playing Tarzan and Jane up trees. The trouble was that Jane wasn’t pretty and Tarzan was in an ugly mood. It took about the same amount of time to find the start of the route as to watch a full performance of ‘Greystoke’.

We eventually got onto solid granite and the needle (plus two happier climbers) and got into the groove. Seven magnificent 5b/c pitches up the crease culminating in an overhang or strapiombo (we’d learnt something). A couple of 5c/6a pitches saw us onto the headwall. The topo indicated that there were five more pitches. They must have borrowed Livesey’s rope for it took eight long pitches at 5a to pull out onto the rounded dome.

‘Discesa: Salire e spostarsi a sinistra . . .’, we were buggered again and had to take pot luck. Thirst drove us leftwards where abseils, down a near-vertical tree-covered slope, brought us into a stream system which plummeted down the mountain in a series of icy waterfalls. As sure as the chilled droplet that penetrated tee-shirt and shorts, we would have to follow the stream down. Abseil after abseil followed. From trees into waterfalls, from waterfalls into trees, and always with sodden tangled ropes. Sometime during all this it got dark and the night air turned cold. Things weren’t too happy with Tarzan and Jane at this point. Tarzan would have preferred thermal loin-cloths, or even a friendly orang-outang to huddle up to.

The routine continued: untangle ropes, throw into the gloom, test branch and lower further into the blackness. During one of these routines I abseiled past the profile of a rock I’d walked past on the way up. We’d been roping down a path for some time now, having become totally disorientated.

Our embarrassment quickly faded as we stumbled onto the campsite after midnight. We dragged the girls out to a sleepy café for a ‘full set’ and the remains of the wine lake.

Now that’s mellowing out!





TRAINING FOR THE BEN

MIKE BALL

Giles Barker and I had arranged to spend a week in the C.I.C. hut at the end of January and suddenly I was landed with a month's trip to Abu Dhabi ending a week before we went up. I could do nothing about preparing for the cold, but wondered how I could keep fit.

I was staying at a small village about 150 miles West of Abu Dhabi city called Jebel Dhanna, which was tucked in at the base of a headland with a harbour and an air strip, all part of an oil terminal. Above the harbour was a range of low hills and on my first free week-end I was taken by car to the foot of these, to climb the second highest mountain in Abu Dhabi—all of 360 feet high. Abu Dhabi is as flat as a pancake, with low plateaux rising at intervals, and vegetation varying from something green every 6-10 feet to nothing green for miles, most of the growth being spiky. From the top of the hill there was an astonishingly wide view over the arid plain. Further west along the coast was a bluff and beyond this a projecting island, Shuwait, hazy in the distance. Out to sea from the harbour was the larger island of Sir Bani Yas, with a palace on it. Immediately below us were oil storage tanks. These were inside a barrier that stretched across the whole base of the headland. It later turned out that an ascent was not without risk, as a subsequent successful expedition was followed by the arrest of all members of the party on the summit. They took a few hours to talk themselves out of this situation.

The only worthwhile objective seemed to be the distant island, Shuwait, especially when I learnt that, at low tide, it was connected to the mainland and a car could be driven across. I had only one week-end more on which to make the attempt, but weather is no problem being monotonously fine (though not humid or too hot at Christmas) so on the Thursday (Arab week-ends are Thursday and Friday) I set off across the base of the headland keeping well below the main summits. After a bit I joined a track which contoured round the hills to reach the point of the headland. An hour after starting I left this track where it turned seawards.

In front was a wide stretch of complete desert, with dunes beyond and I headed over to these on a compass bearing. Three quarters of an hour later I was on the beach and, placing an upright piece of driftwood to mark the point of return, set off westwards. I had left later than I had intended as I had to do a little work first. Shuwait was still hazy in the distance and it was clear that I could not reach it that day.

Jetsam of one sort or another had been washed up a surprising distance beyond the low dunes, showing what could happen in the rare storms. The beach was wide and the sand flats were covered with wading birds of one sort or another. I had already seen an osprey catch a fish at Jebel Dhanna, diving spirally down out of the sun, and slender-billed gulls plunging into the edge of the water at high tide, beak first right up to the wing tips, coming out with a fish every time. I now enjoyed watching the herons dashing about as they sometimes do and tried to identify the various smaller birds. The only sign of human life was a low fisherman's shelter, with only a roof of material to keep the sun out. I turned back about twenty minutes from the bluff. Shuwait was now about as hazy as the headland behind. At this point a dead turtle with a handsomely decorated shell had been washed up on the dunes. It seemed I would have to be content with this as a training walk and went back the same way, easily following my tracks over the desert section in the wide expanse of sand.

That evening I learnt that I had gone further than I thought and that it was only 'three or four miles' from the bluff to the base of the causeway to the island. Next day I got up fairly early, and took a torch for the return journey, sunset being at 6.00 p.m., and full darkness only forty minutes later. I reached the beach in 1 hour 40 minutes and set off firmly for the bluff, ignoring the birds except for one lark, new to me, the short-toed. The turtle shell took another forty minutes and the bluff a further twenty, where I stopped on a log to eat my lunch. The island was nearer than the headland now and beyond the bluff a vast bay opened out, from the end of which the causeway probably started. It was neap tide, and high water was due when I would reach the causeway so I could not have chosen a worse week-end if I had tried. Staring vainly through binoculars at the water between the island and the mainland I saw several wrecks and then, to my astonishment, a tiny lorry driving over the sea. Mirages of one sort or another are common in the desert, and even if I was imagining it the sight seemed a good omen, so I set off round the bay. There was more seaweed here as the water was shallow for a long way out and there were more waders than ever, but I dare not stop. At one point I passed a hut with a lorry standing outside it, the only sign of real civilisation I saw all day. Whether it had been the lorry I saw through the binoculars I did not know, but as I neared the end of the bay it became clearer there was no causeway leading from this point.

It was like a false summit. A further bay opened out discouragingly. However, there was now a clear view of the causeway. At this state of the tide there was an island in the middle and water on either side of it. The large bay had taken 55 minutes and this one took 25 minutes, so I was four hours out as I finally stood on the point. Behind me a large area of desert had been enclosed in a tall barbed wire fence leaning over inwards at the top. This area of desert looked just the same as the desert

outside the fence. The wrecks, half a dozen of them, were on the eastward side of the causeway. To the West a boat was fishing. I took off my shoes, socks and trousers and put them in my rucksack. I also put on my light anorak as the wind was cold off the point. The first gap was shallow and I was only up to knee level in the water. I hurried over the central island to find a very shallow gap and then a considerable deeper channel. I was not going to be stopped now and just managed this without getting my pants wet, and redressed to get warm.

The island had two summits, one lower and nearer on the left, and the other, higher one, at the seaward end on the right. This was clearly the one to go to and many jeep tracks showed the way. Just under the hour from leaving the mainland I was on the top and could really pause for the first time. Below, down the steep seaward slope, were two unoccupied fisherman's shelters and out to sea a rock where cormorants gathered. Looking back to the mainland the panorama was one of the most extensive I have ever seen, rather like looking from the Nepalese border into Tibet, a vast red-yellow plain with occasional humps right to the edge of sight. Even the immediate mainland had a slight haze to it at this distance of three or four miles. The wrecks being nearer stood out, clearly etched against the haze. The place was a death trap. A further headland to the West matched the one to the East, the outline blurred by the distance. And all this from a height of no more than 300 feet.

The time was three o'clock and I was five hours walking time out, let alone stops for food, so I stayed only a few minutes. I particularly wanted to get the desert section done before dark. Fortunately, there is little hostile animal life about, though camel spiders are supposed to jump at you if you get too close, and are more often active at night. The tide had gone down a foot when I got back to the causeway, so that its crossing was faster. However, any time that I saved was lost by my having to tape my feet which were beginning to get sore. I had a brief break for 'tea' and headed steadily eastwards. Reaching the bluff felt like returning to civilised regions and the turtle shell I greeted as an old friend. I left the beach at 6.00 p.m. as the sun sank red into the sea just off the bluff. With three sets of tracks the desert section was straightforward though it got pitch dark as I reached the track. I switched on the torch and set off round the base of the headland, more slowly now as I was getting a bit leg weary and lost the best line after leaving the track, continually going down into and back up out of shallow runnels. I now had the lights of the village to guide me and found the road by walking on to it. Ten hours and a quarter at a speed, probably nearer 4 m.p.h. than 3 m.p.h. meant I had covered somewhere between 35 and 40 miles.

On the way home I spent an afternoon in Abu Dhabi city waiting for the night plane. The sea front is very formal with grass and flower beds above a stout sea-wall. Two low mounds are placed at either end from the summits of which the usual fine

view is obtained over the flat city. In the centre an even larger mound was being built. A notice told you what was planned. 'Project for the beautification of the cornice' and below, in smaller letters, as if this was a very mundane matter 'The design and construction of waterfalls in Abu Dhabi!'

When we reached the Ben the waterfalls were only too apparent, as was the wind. I lost half a crampon in the gale on the summit of Carn Mor Dearg and we also distinguished ourselves by falling down the top of Number Four Gully when the cornice broke. The turtle shell would have been useful though, as a shield to prevent spraying on necessary short journeys outside the hut.

"Have you heard the one about the woman who is suing a bloke she was climbing with? The instructor put a runner round a chock for a top rope and when the woman fell off the runner came out. She broke her shoulder and smashed her face. Moral—don't climb with women!"

Well-known member of club serving in climbing shop. Extremely large woman had gone through every item of clothing on the shelf and was dis-satisfied. "You haven't much of a selection for the mature figure young man." Exasperated assistant at end of patience—"Madam we supply clothes for human beings, not blooming elephants." Exit lady! No wonder some of these lads manage to get off climbing every day of the week.

'... just up the dale a little Ron Fawcett climbed the daunting Spizz Energy.' As opposed to a big Ron Fawcett?





ON BEN NEVIS

MIKE BINNIE

Early in 1958, during my second term at Oxford, I received the highly coveted invitation from Colin Mortlock to join the President's Meet of the OUMC at the C.I.C. hut, in March. It was like getting one's school colours all over again and, flushed with pride and excitement I accepted.

Colin and I travelled up to Fort William in Peter Hutchinson's pre-war, folding roof 'tourer', together with someone else to whom I can put neither name nor face. The weather was bleak and cold. No matter whether the roof was up or down in Peter's car, we just froze—or three of us did. Not so Colin, who sat resplendent in an enormous home-made duvet, in shocking pink, lined with kapok. He was the only Oxford climber of those days who possessed a duvet which he used to wear during his occasional forays into college from his digs out in Cowley. Every ten days or so he would appear, wearing, if memory serves me right, black jeans, thick, crepe-soled **black** suede shoes and this extraordinary, hooded duvet. He was a man who actually looked like a climber with immense shoulders, long loose arms and a well-oiled, loping walk. In those days the OUMC President held an ex-officio seat on the C.C. committee and so Colin was on first name terms with all the big-shots of the climbing world; he also climbed with Don Whillans—and possessed a pair of PAs. A man not to be trifled with.

We reached Fort William on the evening of the second day to be confronted with grave news. The RAF Kinloss rescue team had set out for the mountain an hour or so before our arrival in aid of two climbers, rumoured to be an Oxford university pair, who were in some sort of difficulties. The C.I.C. custodian with whom we were to spend the night in the town, was unable to tell us more. Undoubtedly the two were our friends, Derek Hill and Bill Wycherley, who had elected to come up to the Ben for a few days prior to the meet's official start. None of us had been on the mountain before and as several hours of darkness had elapsed there was little we could do that night, so we retired early, and uneasily, to bed.

Next morning saw us slogging up the Allt a Mhuilinn track heavily laden with a week's supplies. It was a gloomy day with the upper half of the mountain wearing its accustomed mantle of thick cloud. Yesterday's holiday atmosphere had long since been dispelled and we were a noticeably silent party, each immersed in his private thoughts, hoping against hope for welcome news at the top. It was not to be.

I can't remember the time it took us to reach the hut. Call it three hours. Colin

was well ahead and out of sight, the other two some distance behind when suddenly it appeared on a rise above me, not another large boulder, but the little stone building itself. Within a minute I was at the door staring, scarcely believing, at a Thomas stretcher and on it, strapped under a blanket, clearly a body, and protruding from the blanket two very short boots. It was Derek; I remember I recognised the boots, a pair of Frendo's which he had bought the previous summer in Chamonix and of which he was incredibly proud. His ambition was to be unrealised, that of becoming a Chamonix guide.

A mass of people were inside the tiny hut. Colin was sitting on a bunk talking to Bill who looked absolutely wretched. The RAF fellows were standing about drinking mugs of tea and talking quietly amongst themselves. There may have been some other climbers present, I can't remember. The rescue party had only recently got back to the hut.

Gradually I pieced together the story. The pair had completed a climb and were descending, unroped, into Coire Leis when Derek slipped and rolled several hundred feet to the bottom. He was conscious though concussed but appeared not to have had any other injury (which was later confirmed). Bill did what he could to make him comfortable and then went back to the hut for help, where there were other climbers. Someone went down with a message for the RAF while Bill and a party went up the corrie to Derek. They were unable to find him. The RAF team arrived and the search went on for most of the night. Shortly after light he was found, some fifty yards or so from where he had been left, hunched up beneath a boulder, and dead. The emergency shelter now in Coire Leis marks the spot, almost exactly, where the tragedy occurred.

Eventually there was a general move outside and the rescue team took hold of the stretcher and dragged it off. It was terrible to watch Derek being bumped down the mountain like that. Bill went with them, so there were only four of us. It had started to snow. I think we all felt very intimidated by the mountain and very isolated. It was a bad moment. We went back into the hut and sat down and just looked at each other. We didn't know how to cope with the situation at all. And then Colin did something extraordinary. Extraordinary because, begging his pardon, it was quite out of character and secondly it was absolutely the right thing to do. He leapt to his feet and began earnestly and furiously to sweep the hut in, what seems to me now, all these years later, an unconscious effort to expunge the awfulness of that moment. He didn't say anything to us but one by one we set to and helped. We swept and dusted every corner of the filthy hut, mopped the floor, did the washing up in the wake of the rescue party, dismantled the stove and scraped it clean. The entire operation took about two hours and at the end we sat down with mugs of tea and felt ten times better.

Later that afternoon Jack Saddler and Dick Burgess, our two American members of the OUMC, arrived. We talked long into the night and even tried to make plans for the week's climbing. In the event the weather was abysmal and we remained hut bound for much of the time. Dick was a Mormon and made valiant, but unsuccessful, efforts to convert us. I remember we did some of the standard gullies; and made rather heavy weather of them. Colin, Jack and Dick got up Gardyloo Gully. I was not sorry when the meet drew to a close.

Two years later and again the President's Meet assembled at the C.I.C. hut. The weather was magnificent, clear, and cold and we did some splendid climbs. Members of the party were Kim Meldrum, Nigel Rogers, Alan Wedgewood, Colin Taylor, Richard Gilbert and Jim Murray from North Carolina and Merton College. Bob Kendell also came but slept in a tent (he was from the Other Place). Various parties did Tower Ridge, North East Buttress (three ropes), Comb, Green and Gardyloo Gullies. The outstanding climb, to my mind, was Glover's Chimney described by MacPhee in the 1954 Guide as one of the finest winter climbs on Ben Nevis and certainly the final chimney was as exciting a pitch as any I have done. Bob Kendell and I shared leads on Glover's as we did also on a 'new' winter line on the Italian Climb.

We climbed this on the last day of the meet and returned to the hut on a lovely Spring evening feeling very chuffed with ourselves. Inside we found the Monarch of the Glen, Hamish MacInnes himself, sitting by the fire, on his own, cradling the Message. For those who are ignorant about that age of climbing technology, the Message was his famous steel prototype of the modern, metal ice-axe. We were full of our triumph and the Master listened with consideration while we described the route. He then asked us if we wouldn't mind stepping outside and pointing out the line. This we were pleased to do; after which there was a pause while he gazed thoughtfully up at the crag. He then turned to us and said gently:

"Sorry tae disappoint ye, lads, but I did it masel' last week." We might have guessed.

The event of the week centred on our party of gate-crashers. We were awoken late one night by the sound of—could it be . . . singing? My God, it was, and getting closer. I remember the tune to this day. Loud, raucous voices, and getting louder, until they were right outside the hut. One of them screeched a yodel which echoed round the corries. A moment later the hut door opened and into the room stumbled the current enfant terrible of British climbing, Robin Smith, followed by two friends. Clearly they had postponed leaving Fort William till after closing time. They fumbled about, lighting candles, dropping things, giggling helplessly in the well-known formula of late arrivals at any hut. One of us muttered irritably about the noise and 'consideration' for others. Then one of the three peered into the hut book. "Look," he called out, "Oxford University!" More giggling, followed by a mocking

conversation in the following vein: "Ay say, Charles, what claimbs shall we do tomorrow, old boy," and so on. We squirmed.

There was no sign of life from them when we set off for our climb the next morning. When I returned forty minutes later (Kim thought I had the rope, I thought he had, and Bob was fairly certain one of us had—all this discovered at the foot of Green Gully) the Scotsmen were still dead to the world. The hut was empty on our return that evening and it was while we were cooking supper that someone discovered the loss of a 250 rope. "I bet one of those Scotch buggers has got it."

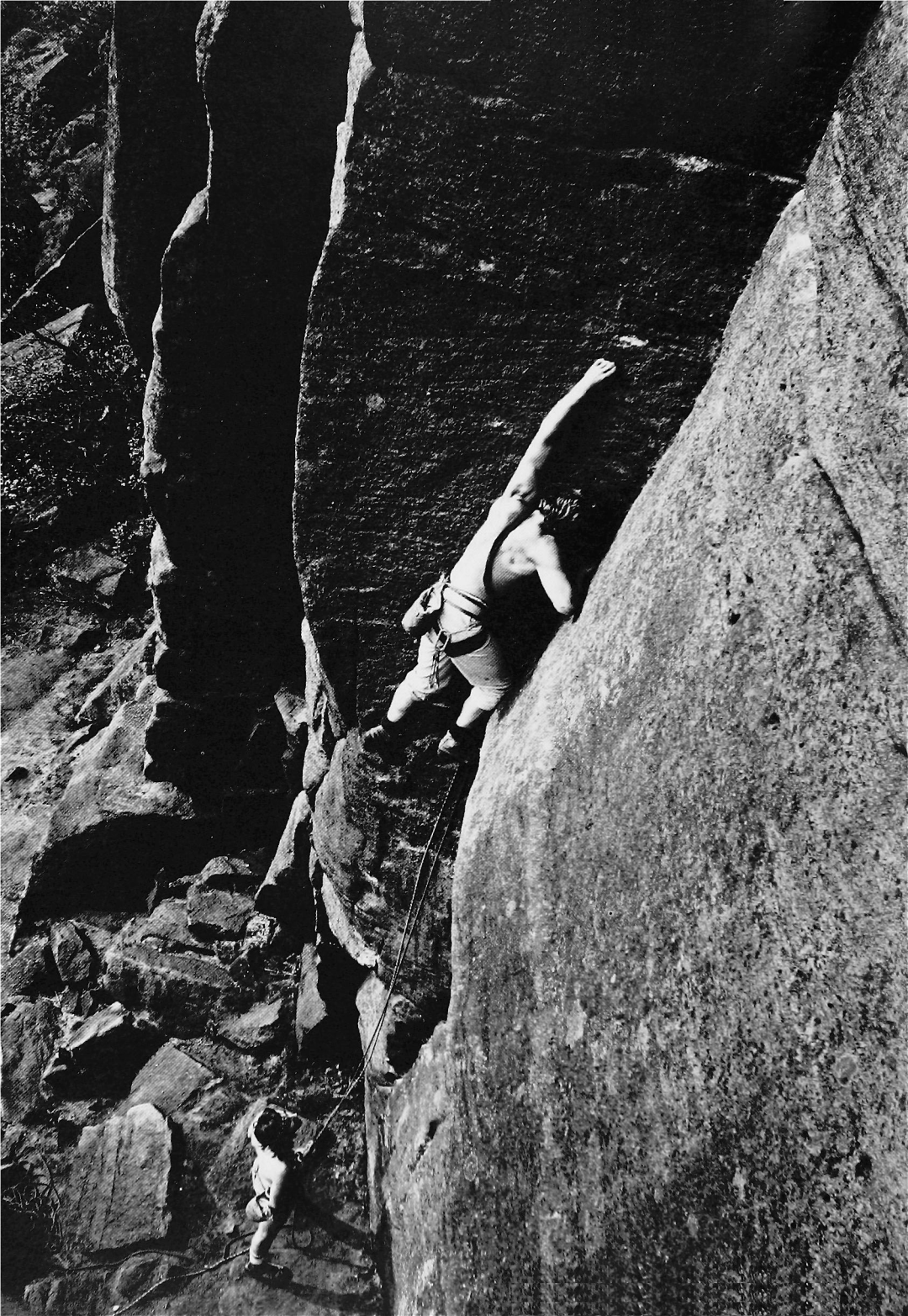
Several hours after dark the hut door opened and they came quietly in. We still had no idea who they were but clearly they were hard men; they were wearing decrepit jeans. Sure enough they had our rope which they handed over with suitable apologies. "We left ours in Edinburgh," said sheepishly and by way of explanation. "What did you do?" we asked. "Oh, well . . . we went up Zero."

The question of who would do the second ascent, and when, had tantalized the climbing world since its first ascent by Patey, MacInnes and party in 1957 (Its first de-scent, and a rapid one at that, was accomplished several years earlier by yet another Oxford University party, now wise and distinguished members of our club).

It was pretty late. Had they experienced any problems? "Um . . . we didn't start the climb till two. And Jimmy hadnae got any crampons." We were in the presence of Supermen; all was forgiven. They retired to bed almost immediately and when we returned from our climbs the following evening they had gone.

We opened the hut book, and there it was: 'Zero Gully, Second Winter Ascent', followed by their names, R. Smith and two others we didn't know, one of whom I've long since forgotten. The third, scrawled signature was that of a seventeen year old—destined to travel to the uttermost celestial heights—D. Haston.





EASTER DAYS IN NORTH WALES

Dr KARL BLODIG

Never having learnt German I found an article entitled 'Ostertage in North Wales' frustrating in the extreme owing to the fact that there were references to Eckenstein, Mallory and other C.C. members. The article in question first appeared in the 1912 CCJ. Some time ago, however, I acquired a translation in English from one of the book dealers who had bought the item when the original C.C. library was sold off. Here then, after 72 years is the complete story. Ed.

Years ago my esteemed friend Eckenstein invited me to visit the mountains of North Wales with him. For a long while I refused, for one reason because the Lake of Constance on which I live is a good 1,300km distant from Llyn Llydaw and for another because I thought that a range attaining 1,085m in its highest point would scarcely be worth a visit. Then, in 1909 and 1910, I received from my friend two nice books entitled 'The Climbs on Lliwedd', by J.M. Archer Thomson, M.A. and A.W. Andrews, M.A., and 'Climbing in the Ogwen District' by J.M. Archer Thomson, M.A. Text and illustrations taught me that here, even for much travelled mountaineers, must be an interesting practice-ground. The description of certain routes, however, convinced me that a solitary Rambler of my capacities would not do much on Lliwedd and certain other mountains. I always felt that my ideals in Alpine matters had matured on quite other lines than the attainment of any remarkable technical proficiency in climbing. With the object before me of becoming acquainted with all the great mountain groups in the Alps and visiting successively their highest peaks, I had left myself no time to take lodgings in the Kaiserbirge of the Dolomites, or to become in any way an exceptional climber according to modern ideas. I left Bregenz on Lake Constance on the afternoon of 6th April and reached Betws-y-Coed at 5 o'clock on the 8th. One has to remind oneself that one is in England and not in Switzerland. The place is charmingly situated at the point where the Llugwy enters the Conway. Mighty oaks, beautiful ash trees and richly flowering gorse characterises the neighbourhood. Rocky, partly wooded, summits rise on either side of the valley. During the drive to Capel Curig one can admire the pretty water-falls and picturesque rock forms; the dazzlingly clean houses, too, with their gardens of hyacinth and tulip, and the ubiquitous narcissus: an enchanting scene! An excellent team brought us—Mr. H.O Jones and Mr. L. Noon had joined us at Llandudno Junction—to Penny-Pass, which was now to be our headquarters for 14 days. My friend Eckenstein having introduced me as his guest, I was welcomed in the very kindest way by the

members of the Climbers' Club present. As a rule, for each day's plans my lot was cast the night before and I was attached to some particular party

LLIWEDD, PRIMITIVE ROUTE, WEST PEAK

On the 9th the party, consisting of Mrs. Orton, Mr. H.O. Jones, Mr. L. Noon, and myself, started at 9.30. The well-kept path leads round a spur of Crib Goch to Llyn Teyrn and the grandly situated Llyn Llydaw. Here one first gets a nearer view of the celebrated Lliwedd, the triple-crested. Because one does not know the character of the rock, the ribs and gullies appear less menacing and easier to overcome than they really are.

At 10.20 we turned eastwards from the lake and made our way up amongst boulders to the foot of the precipice. The rope was now put on, as further up no such convenient place for this necessary business can be found. It was eleven o'clock when we arrived at the actual wall. The way hither, over rocky hollows, terraces and ledges, reminded me forcibly of the ascent to the Quintino Sella hut on the Rocher du Mont-Blanc. In deference to my lack of training the party had chosen one of the easiest routes. Before reaching the Pulpit, a small rock-tooth projecting from the cliff, the first point at which one can rest after beginning the actual climb, there is one place, after a traverse, which dwelt in my memory; standing on a point of rock one spreads oneself over the face and shuffles up it, availing oneself of small hand-holds. Those who are short accept the offer of a shoulder or make use of the rope. The Pulpit is the official breakfast place. We left it at 1.20, and as a direct traverse did not seem feasible, we descended a little and reached the foot of a small cliff, across patches of heather. As a special honour I was here allowed to take the lead: A fairly smooth slab gave me enough to do. Above, on a small projection, lay a huge apparently quite trustworthy block, I circumvented it and lodged myself, without in any way disturbing it, in the crack that ran straight up from it, placed the rope round a convenient notch and sang out "All right!" Mr. Noon followed, overcame the difficult slab much quicker than I did, but at the very moment he pressed upon the block below me, and trusted his weight to it, it yielded a little with a rumbling sound. I pressed the rope with all my strength against the rock, and whilst I was every instant expecting to hear man and block whirring into the depth, there resounded from below a reassuring peal of laughter, quite heavenly to my ears. Mrs. Orton and Mr. Jones saw, in fact, clearly that the block was firmly wedged and had only gone over from a position of unstable into one of stable equilibrium. We then climbed up through a difficult cleft to the Bird Crag, which I embraced with delight at 2.30. An easily crossed arete and heather scrub led on to the West Peak of Lliwedd, which we reached at 2.55. The descent to Pen-y-Pass occupied from 3.15 to 4.30. I was always being told by inmates of Gorphwysfa Hotel that this was the easiest route on Lliwedd. So

that I was all the more curious about the ensuing routes. As for me, more than one passage of the 'Primitive Route' had sufficiently tested my 'developed' capacity.

TRYFAN, CENTRAL BUTTRESS

On the next day, the 10th, the same party, strengthened by Mr. Orton, set out from Pen-y-Pass at 9.40, and reached at 11.25 the foot of the East face of the glorious Tryfan. Of all the heights in North Wales, so far as I became acquainted with them, this one is the only one besides Lliwedd which unreservedly merits the name 'mountain'. Whether one looks upon Tryfan from east or west, south or north, he is always an individual of noble aspect. The climbing was much more congenial to me than that on many of our limestone hills, because the rock, with quite few exceptions, is firm. Moreover, the type of obstacle, which rendered necessary many 'backings up', was much to my taste. A chimney immediately beneath the summit must be noted as difficult. The holds are sparse and not altogether trustworthy. We reached the summit at 1.40. The descent was commenced at 2.5, and Mrs. and Mr. Orton, with Mr. Noon, went off towards Pen-y-Pass direct, whilst Mr. Jones and I at 3.15 reached the Devil's Kitchen. As the rocks below were completely ice glazed, we had some trouble to get into the innermost cavern. The waterfall was transformed into a solid mass of ice. The dripping grass-cushions and bulging rocks made the ascent appear too hazardous. We rounded the massif on the west and peeped down into the cleft from above, after pushing forward through deep snow to the verge of the abyss. The east side of the Devil's Kitchen exactly resembles the grass-grown cliffs which in the northern and southern limestone Alps every year cost the lives of a dozen or two seekers after edelweiss. The climbing of such bulging walls can never be reckoned as mountaineering. It took us from 4.15 to 5.30 to reach Pen-y-Pass. Whilst crossing the great plateau on Glydr Fawr I was busy trying to judge distance. Whilst in the Alps one is often adversely 1½ or 2 hours out in one's reckoning, here it is just the opposite. Points of rock which I judged to be from half to three-quarters of an hour distant, were reached in eight or nine minutes. The moist atmosphere here plays the newcomer one practical joke after another, but always to his advantage.

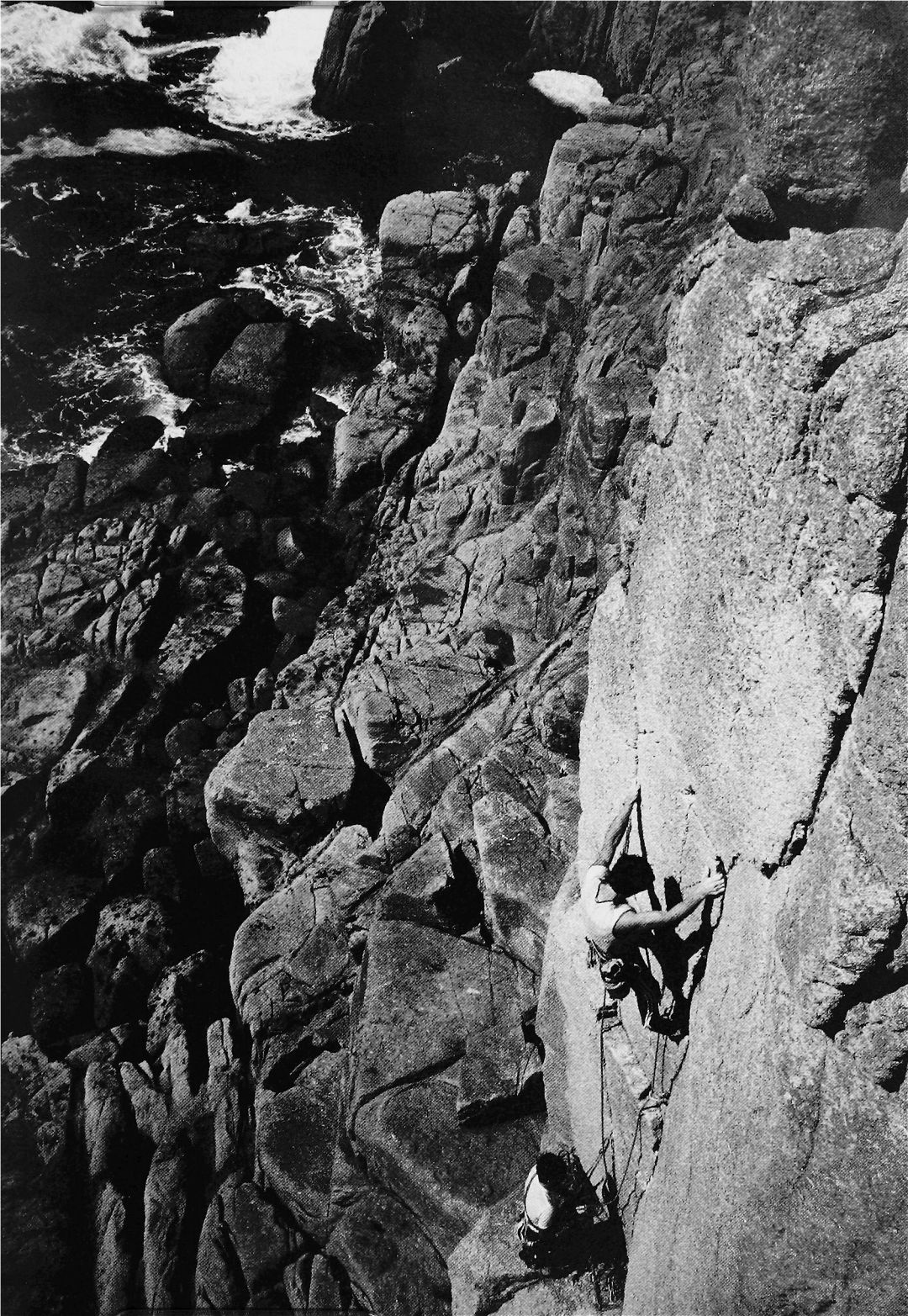
LLIWEDD, EAST PARK, ROUTE II

In a temperature quite like summer the company of ten left Pen-y-Pass at 10 o'clock on the 11th April, and were glad to reach the mountain shadow of Lliwedd at 11.20. A cloudless sky stretched over us and all present praised my good luck with the weather. As a place in the new rope did not quite please Friend Eckenstein, who had accompanied us as far as the precipice, he cut it out and joined the two ends. I privately resolved forthwith to submit every rope before every expedition to a renewed

searching examination. We began to climb at 11.50. I had to-day put on climbing shoes with hemp soles and found I got on very well with them. At 12.50 we reached the breakfast place called the 'Recess'. I never tired of admiring the ease with which my companions, above all, Mr. Jones, climbed with nailed boots. A passage situated below the Quartz Babe, a shallow chimney with quite insufficient holds, gave me quite enough to do. At 1.10 we continued the climb and came, at 2.25, to the Quartz Nose. We stayed here until 2.50 and reached the East Peak of Lliwedd at 3.30. The magnificent view made us linger till 4 o'clock; then the descent was made by a route which appeared to me very complicated. It was a combination of various 'ways'. At 5 o'clock we stood by the great marble cross over Llyn Llydaw. The place is very appropriate to the forming of good resolutions concerning prudence.

CRAIG YR YSFA, THE NORTH CRAG, THE GREAT GULLEY

According to the ideas which prevail under the Guild of the Climbers' Club in North Wales, I ought to begin: 'Soon after midnight on the 12th April we started from Pen-y-Pass'. That is to say it was 9 o'clock before, after great preparations, two carriages were in motion (Fabulous! The old guys really were just like modern day C.C. members. Ed.). In the first was the party under whose care and protection I had been permitted to climb on the 9th, 10th and 11th; the second contained Miss Sanders, Mr. H.V. Reade, Mr. G.W. Young and Mr. G. Mallory. After passing Capel Curig, a place grown very dear to me, we followed the great high road towards Holyhead and started walking at 10.5. Tryfan, now an old acquaintance, towered majestically to the south. Mrs. Orton led us, light-footed as Diana, over pastures and rocky slopes, so that after a short ascent I abandoned the attempt to keep up with her. At 11.20 we reached the saddle named Bwlch-y-Tre Marchog, from which point splendid views were opened out on both sides. We enjoyed a quarter of an hour in contemplation, and then at 12 o'clock precisely we traversed the north flank of Craig Yr Ysfa down to the beginning of the great couloir. Over moderately steep slopes we then ascended into the ever narrowing cleft which in places was covered with a plant new to me, *Lusula sylvatica* Montana. Sedges and marsh plants grew everywhere, and among them one climbed for all one was worth—stranger contrasts are not easy to find. As the great couloir is interrupted by a step which rises vertically in the middle and partly overhangs, we turned to the orographical left side. Owing to the early period of the year the lowest chimney was clad in ice. Moreover, from the steep walls of the west side huge icicles hung into the cleft. At brief intervals smaller and greater masses of ice flew down, and once the members of the second party barely escaped the missiles by a sudden ducking of the head. Mr. Jones climbed into the chimney, an ice-axe of antediluvian length and weight was passed up to him, and he began to hew away the ice covering. As we stood right under him in





the line of fire and it was impossible to turn aside, the fragments struck against our shins and heads; yet as they were not particularly big ones, the position was endurable. I had, however, another anxiety. If friend Jones brought away the supports of the principal mass, which was about 85 centimetres broad, 40 centimetres thick and 150 centimetres high, and weighed about half a ton, and the block whizzed down, it would carry Mr. Jones with it, to a dead certainty, and both would then fall on Mrs. Orton and Mr. Noon. I had temporarily squeezed myself into a crack, but I could not have arrested a possible fall of Mr. Jones. I proposed turning back and trying another route. But this did not at all please the men of the second party. Mr. Mallory climbed up, turned himself with his back against the ice-block, wedged himself as firmly as possible in the chimney, and let Mr. Reade follow. Then Mr. Mallory utilised him as a living ladder and worked himself up with the greatest pluck and most admirable technique over the holdless outer side of the chimney until he disappeared from our view. A general 'Hurrah!' and 'Bravo!' rewarded this extraordinary feat. Then the members of what had now become the first party quickly followed and Mr. Jones now prepared, as leader, to force the passage. At my request—the ice-block under whose mass a small stream poured down made me quite nervous—Mr. Young now let down a rope; by the aid of which we followed as quickly as possible and without disturbing the fatal block. A gently inclined slope, overgrown with grass and *Lusula*, followed, and we then stood before the most difficult bit of the whole route, the Great Chimney. The name chimney however, is not at all suitable; it would be better to call it a small unfurnished chamber. The absolutely vertical, smooth walls stand quite 1.3 to 1.4m apart! Although a lady and three men of the first party and afterwards Mr. Jones as our leader showed me how to accomplish the feat, yet I was very glad when those above and below offered suggestions as to the best way to get up. Only by the exertion of my whole strength did I overcome the position, and it is to-day a mystery to me how the first man without at least the moral assistance of the rope, and in nailed boots, surmounted the chimney. The next steep pitch concealed a treasure of quite another sort; from a crack one had to climb over an overhanging block almost without hand-holds. My companions were of opinion that the pitch was as difficult, or very nearly so, as the great chimney, but as a practised gymnast I had no difficulty at all in pulling myself up by my finger-tips and then, with my legs dangling, in getting a support for my back. Everyone has indeed his specially developed abilities. Moreover I was lucky enough to discover high up behind the well known overhanging block, which gave great trouble to far better climbers than I am, a hold that my predecessors had overlooked. Mr. Noon, who also made use of it, was of the opinion that the pitch was now child's play. This must, however, be taken with liberal reservation. With the greatest suspense I awaited the famous cavern, thinking of the way which leads out of it to the upper world again. But the

originality and piquancy of the place exceeded even my boldest expectations. The rock here, by way of a joke, plucked Mr. Jones's cap from his head—there would be nothing remarkable in that, but held it wedged into the overhanging wall. The admirable security of both sides gave me the sensation of a sparrow sitting on a telegraph wire, as I crept along the face of the wall, safeguarded by Mrs. Orton and Mr. Jones. With this brilliant passage the Great Gulley is surmounted, and a few minutes afterwards (it was 5.10) one stands on the summit. From 5.30 to 6.15 we were descending to a spotless little inn on the road from Capel Curig to Holyhead. Mrs. Orton, supported by Miss Sanders, did the honours for us in the kindest fashion. A glorious drive through a landscape illuminated by the full moon formed the fitting close to this expedition, according to my experience and for me the most difficult one in North Wales.

PARSON'S NOSE, CRIB-Y-DDYSGL, SNOWDON

The 13th saw my friend Eckenstein, Jones and myself at 11.35, after an hour and a half's walk, at the lake above Cwm Glas. I should call this place the most remarkably picturesque in the whole district. If only alpenrose and edelweiss grew there, one might believe oneself in the heart of the high Alps of Austria or Switzerland. At 11.55 we sat down to breakfast above a small, still frozen lake. During the meal a party came up over the slopes of Cwm Glas. It was quite uncanny to observe how their movements were magnified into monstrous shapes in the moist atmosphere. One imagined the stalking figures shod in seven-league boots, as they measured the apparently great distances between the separate hummocks in a few strides. Then from 12.20 to 12.35 we made our way up to the foot of the precipice. I should compare the climbing on the ridge of the Parson's Nose with the ascent of the Nadelhorn from the Lenzjoch. The firm rocks, the splendid hand and foot holds, with a slope averaging 60 degrees, made the climb an exceedingly delightful one. The wet, greasy passages distributed in prodigal abundance on nearly all the mountains of North Wales are lacking here. I attempted in vain to overcome the 'Book' without the use of my hands. After I had half 'read' it, I was compelled to invoke the aid of the anterior extremities. At 1.45 we stood on the North Peak of Crib-y-Ddysgl. Snowdon towered imposingly aloft; the lakes of the Horse-Shoe, of Llanberis, and others beside, shimmered up at us in the sunlight. There stood Lliwedd menacingly, with his mighty precipice, as the dark guardian of the valley. At two o'clock we stood on Snowdon. Unhappily the view was spoiled by mist. In five minutes we went down to the saddle that forms the link between the districts of Llyn Cwellyn and Llyn Lldaw. Here Friend Eckenstein had awaited us. It was with real regret that I now saw Mr. Jones leave us. Arrangements with Mr. J.M.A. Thomson called him away. Zoological,

botanical, historical and technical researches combined to postpone our arrival at Pen-y-Pass until 5.30.

LLIWEDD, SLANTING BUTTRESS

On the 14th Miss and Mr. Andrews, and Dr. Williamson as well took me under their wing. Miss Andrews officiated as leader, and we readily followed our light-footed guide. We left Pen-y-Pass at 10 o'clock and put on the rope at 11.15 on the lowest ledge. At 11.20 we reached the place where Lliwedd towers in an unbroken wall above the Quartz-band. As a second party was following us, we had unfortunately to wait here until 11.40, so as not to endanger those underneath from falling stones. At 1.15 we stood on the West Peak of Lliwedd. After the impressions of the Great Chimney on Craig Yr Ysfa, the climb appeared to me fairly easy. There are no wide chimneys to overcome, and for other things I am fairly gauged. By this I do not mean to infer that the climbing on the Slanting Buttress did not fascinate me; there were a succession of slabs, some traverses, and one smooth rock pillar which all interested me uncommonly. Moreover my somewhat depressed self-esteem rose a few degrees. We left the summit at 2.30, but as Mr. Andrews' zeal was not yet quenched, we accomplished the descent by another route that was well described to me as a combination of the Girdle Traverse and Bilberry Terrace Extension Route. This time I came last, which on difficult tours in the Alps is indeed my favourite position in descending. As a safe and prudent man I feel at my best when I have the whole party in front of me on the rope. It was 5.45 before we stepped on to the scree-slopes, as we had often been obliged to wait in sheltered positions for a party following in our track. In spite of all precautions, however, it was inevitable that falling stones should more than once spread terror abroad. A succession of magnificent pitches distinguished our line of descent. Miss Andrews climbed in india-rubber shoes, which I must note as far surpassing our hemp-soled climbing shoes on wet rocks.

LLIWEDD, ROUTE 1, EAST PARK. GIRDLE TRAVERSE

The shameless luck in weather which I had enjoyed without cessation from the 9th onwards, resulted naturally in my undertaking a big expedition every day. This had procured for me the honourable title of 'the victim'. On the 15th, then, the victim was taken in tow by Messrs Reade and Mallory and brought to the East Peak of Lliwedd. At 11 o'clock we stood at the lower edge of the scree-slope, and at 11.25 the rope was put on at the beginning of the huge, soaring precipice. Mr. Mallory went in front, I ended the procession. If I may here venture to give an opinion, the nonchalance with which Mr. Mallory vanquished the most difficult passages was

indeed charming; on the other hand, Mr. Reade from the first moment to the last inspired me with the conviction: 'The man cannot fall even if he wishes'. What impressed me most was the method and style with which Mr. Reade strode along over the steep debris covered grass patches and rock ledges, whilst even Mr. Mallory—of myself I will say nothing—at every step tried more or less gropingly whether the stuff adhered to its foundations. The never-to-be-forgotten Purtscheller is the only man I remember to have seen go over ground of the most difficult nature in this manner. Mr. Reade showed such a sovereign mastery of the subject that I reckon this day on Lliwedd as the most remarkable that I ever spent in the high mountains. At 1.25 we climbed out through a chimney on to a grass-grown spot where two cairns mark the junction of Route 1 and Central Chimney Route. The East Peak was gained at 1.45; we at once descended eastwards and down through the Little Gulley. Here at 2.40, the rope was again put on, and then began one of the most interesting climbs that I have ever undertaken, the Girdle Traverse across the whole massif of the glorious Lliwedd. We owe this climb to that untiring and most praiseworthy explorer of the mountains of North Wales, Mr. J.M. Archer Thomson. Had he discovered nothing but this route, he would to my thinking, be for ever rescued from oblivion. At 4.40 we stood on the Pulpit, after I had, with mingled feelings of rapture and horror, looked up and down into all the gullies and chimneys and over all the buttresses and ridges which my well-informed guides were so good as to name for me. A climb to make one's hair stand on end led us forth out of the Great Chimney. The body dangles anyhow over the abyss, whilst with a single hand and foot one finds scanty hold. In many a difficult place I tried three or four times before I discovered the right trick; for I would not let myself be helped with the rope, although morally at least I owed my progress many times that day solely to its presence. And here I must give Messrs Reade and Mallory my best thanks for the unwearied patience that they showed me. The climbing on Angle Nook is delightful, though I found it strikingly easy. At 6.10 we climbed out upon the West Peak of Lliwedd, and highly contented, I set out on the way home to Pen-y-Pass, which cosy nook we reached at 7.15.

I was convinced after this climb that the great physicists, who invented a stable, unstable and indifferent equilibrium, were sad bunglers. If they had done the Girdle Traverse on Lliwedd, they would then have discovered at least another half dozen degrees of equilibrium in which a man may there find himself, without toppling down into Llyn Lldaw.

BLACK CLEFT ON CRIB GOCH

At last, on the 16th, the weather was so bad that any ordinary mountain expedition was not to be thought of. I slept profoundly and tried to heal all the luxations,

sub-luxations and distortions which the Girdle Traverse had begotten in me. On the 17th, too, the weather was truly wretched, but 'the victim' with gentle force was handed over by his inexorable manager Eckenstein to the pair of torturers, Mr. Reade and Mr. Mallory, to be dealt with officially and dragged off to the Black Cleft. I am very thankful to the aforesaid gentlemen that they were not deterred from taking me with them again on the 17th, in spite of my clearly demonstrated inferiority on the 15th. The—unfortunately only two—steep pitches in the Black Cleft suited me excellently. It is a pity there are not twice as many and that the affair lasts so short a time. On arriving at the top Mr. Reade, alas! had to say good-bye in order to return home. Mr. Mallory, still active, busied himself in a rescue expedition. A continental tourist—I felt rather anxious indeed lest it might be a fellow countryman—whilst coming down from Snowdon had wandered on to the cliffs of the Parson's Nose and now sat up there shouting for help. We got back to Pen-y-Pass fairly drenched.

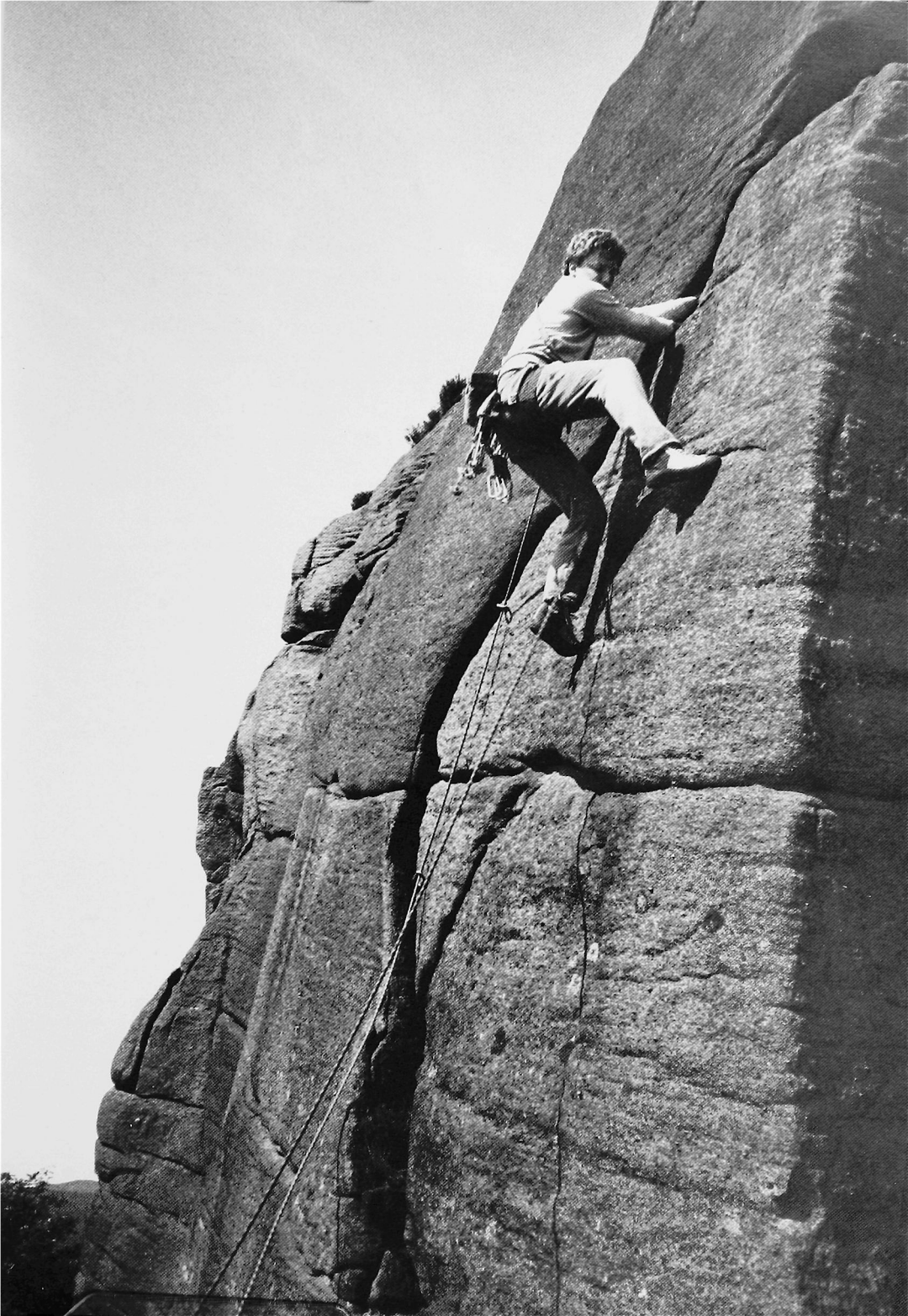
GREAT CHIMNEY, LLIWEDD

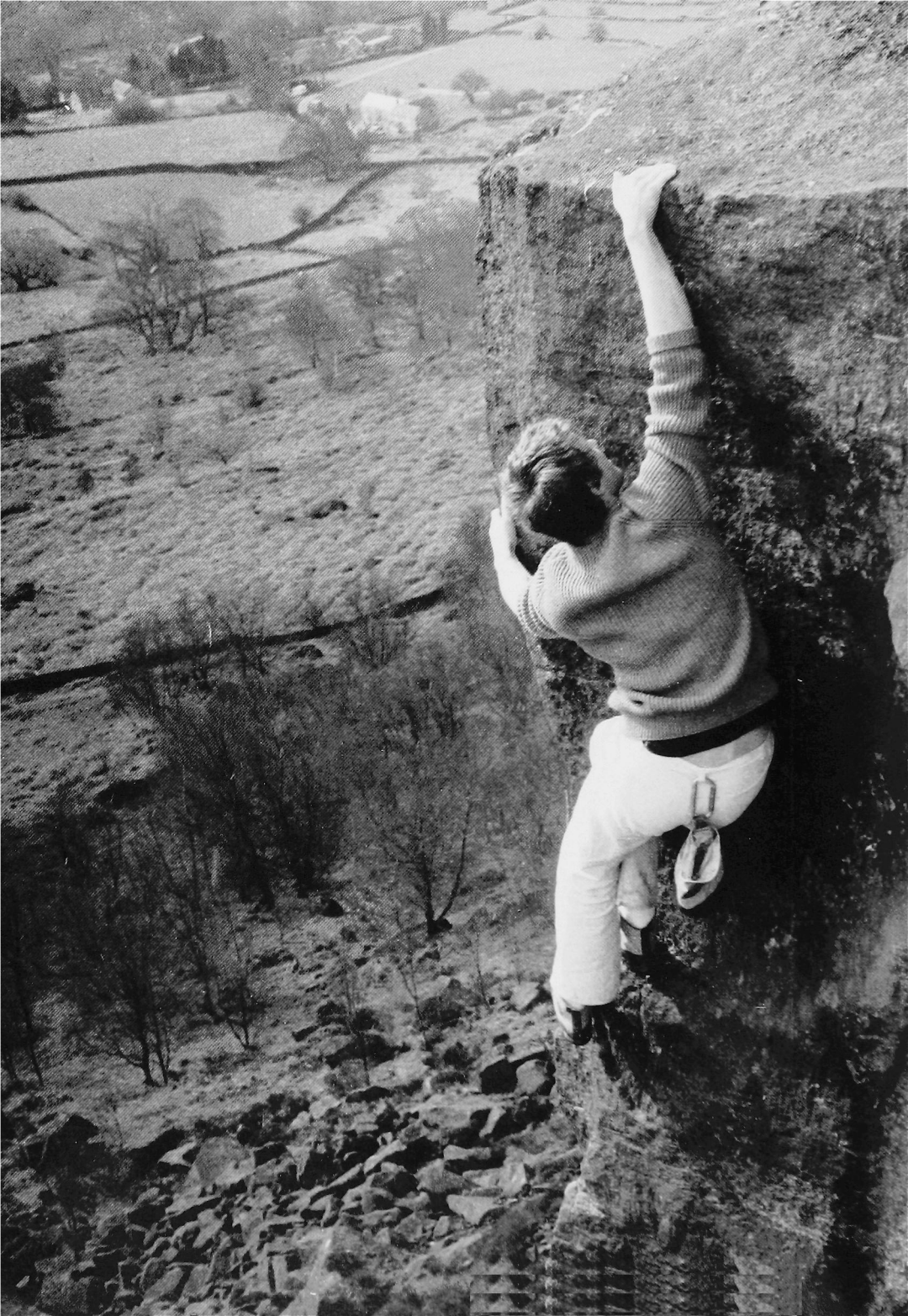
On the 18th and 19th I renounced high expeditions in every shape. The storm shook the little house in which I lived with my friend Eckenstein in such a way that the beds fairly rocked. The rain drove in through the shut windows so that we had to move the tables back lest our writings should be wet through. Nevertheless there were several young people who ventured out. I preferred, however, to stay by the warm chimney instead of getting thoroughly frozen in the dripping rock chimneys. At length on the 20th came the last day on which I could undertake an expedition. Friend Eckenstein brooded over a master-stroke against me and my rest; and it was successful! The new snow indeed lay pretty far down on the south side of the mountains, but in the opinion of the weather-wise, Lliwedd, with its north flanking, was free from it. After endless weather prognostics and discussions whether we should go at all, we decided—listen and wonder!—not, forsooth, on a walk over Crib Goch or Glyder Fawr, no! but on the Great Chimney on Lliwedd! At 11.25 we started and betook ourselves to the East Peak, with which I was now on terms of affectionate intimacy. I feel myself incapable of expressing even in a small measure the happiness I experienced on that day. The party comprised—I give the names in the order in which we went—J.M.A. Thomson, A.W. Andrews, Miss Andrews, myself and O. Eckenstein. Can a man climb in choicer company? We began the ascent at 1.5 and reached the exit on to Lliwedd at 5.55. To spear with Faust: 'The fulness of the vision was so over-powering', that I do not even attempt to give a connected description of it. The readers of these pages indeed for the most part know the expedition; moreover, the description in the book of Thomson and Andrews is incomparable. I will only touch upon what particularly impressed. Above all the crossing of a giant slab before one arrives in the Great Chimney. The position can be taken by skilful

balancing without in any way demanding an exertion of force. In the chimney itself and its containing walls the most splendid pitches are piled up in such a manner that one would cut out of them a dozen typical passages in which Bernese and Valais peaks are very deficient. Most delightful of all, on a spot rather exposed to stones, is a veritable crag. I baptised it 'Lady's Cage', because it is so small that friend Eckenstein, for example, with his well-developed frame, could not crawl inside. The highest chimney of all appeared to me the most difficult, after one has left the Great Chimney far behind one. It is quite short, but 'absolutely vertical and no hold at all', as the guide, Hans Steiner, said on the Bishop's Mitre. Groaning and panting, I wriggled and shoved myself up like a trodden worm and afterwards jeered at my friend Eckenstein, who in the middle of the chimney supported himself with back and legs, drew out his pipe and lit up! Either I am badly built for this, or I must take a special course in chimney crawling at Pen-y-Pass. Between 6 and 7 we strolled down to Pen-y-Pass, engaged in lively discussion.

With longing do I look back on Lliwedd, Craig Yr Ysfa and Tryfan; all that I there saw and experienced, under the most favourable conditions imaginable, seems to me now like a golden fairy-tale! With grateful heart I call to mind in a quiet hour the kind friends in whose company I was permitted to spend two blissful weeks. May it fall to my lot some day to be able to take my dear companions of the Climbers' Club for expeditions in the beautiful Austrian mountains!

EXCELSIOR!





THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH

GEOFF MILBURN

Without a vivid imagination I'd have been dead long ago. Over the years I must have backed off so many routes that the list must be endless by now—in fact I backed off the first route I ever did—and am even now suppressing the urge to go for the next big fright. For me climbing has nearly always been a struggle with fear at the very limit of my nerve endings, a raw craving for that adrenaline rush, an almost uncontrolled blind panic when gravity screams at me, and then a cartwheeling into happy oblivion when all danger subsides. For a quarter of a century that black fear has held me gripped in its spotlight, like some poor moth battering itself remorselessly against the window pane. When confidence has been at the wheel enjoyment has often lurked in the boot. There is another side however . . .

About 1963 I got the compelling urge to slide off on my own to some quiet cliff to explore another corner of the mind, leaving safety behind and stepping into the unknown. To solo the Eiger is logical . . . to set off alone up Everest with only a rucksack and a couple of ice-tools is compelling and no mere dream of an urban dweller harassed by the cuts and bruises of a ruthless society. It may of course be a sub-conscious desire to confront 'the last enemy' on one's own terms rather than fall prey to the body decay of old age, the big C, cardiac arrest, or to be smashed out of existence by some drunken teenager behind the wheel of stolen car. But family ties are strong and restrain the thought of a head-on confrontation with God Almighty. Beware of trying to twist the finger of Fate.

But the urge is there and on occasions I have it in mind to challenge the body to a duel whether it be some 50-mile round in the darkness of the Peak or a solo session alone on a crag. In 1970 I went for a ton of routes on rock one day, but did not complete the target until April a year later.

The thought of Richard McHardy soloing Overhanging Arete, Ron Fawcett on November, or Phil Davidson pushing the limits even further, alone on Right Wall and Lord of the Flies, all set my blood on fire but alas they live in a world apart and I am all too mortal.

With 100 routes in a day behind me the logical thought lurked and gestated deep down, until seven years ago in 1977 visions of Hermann Buhl began to impinge on my thoughts once again. I can still see his harrowed features photographed on his return to life from Nanga Parbat. And all of a sudden there were no doubts or worries, just another goal—the magic figure of 200 routes—the Grand Slam. It was all systems go . . .

The wife smiled unbelievably as she watched me stretch out on the bedroom floor beside the bed where she was snuggling down in comfort. Her face was a picture. "But darling if I sleep in bed I'll never hear the alarm go off and get up in time." Long pause. "You must be blooming mad. Do you realise what the neighbours would say if they could see you?" Silence. Lying there in the dark it struck me that she was probably right. A ten-hour epic on Stanage followed by a nine-hour session on Burbage were behind me, but to add them together into one full day just seemed to fade into a dream.

A built in alarm jangled stridently in my brain and woke me up with a start about a minute before the alarm clock went off and before I could change my mind distant feet pushed back the blankets out of the way and took me off in the direction of the kitchen. Bleary eyed I shovelled in a mound of unpalatable cereal and washed it down with mugs of tea. Once in the car it was almost a pleasure to roar off up the road. No-one else was abroad and as I slalomed the car down Snake's bends in a fit of nervous energy, eyes fixed firmly on the goal. All too soon the engine stopped and the lights went out at the click of a switch—the silence of the night hit me like a wall and as a shuddery chill ran down my spine I wished that the idea had not seemed so good the day before.

Swinging a light rucksack on my back I staggered off up the moonlit road to look for the path leading up to the south end of Stanage. Within a second or so of reaching the crossroads out of the inky blackness there came a blinding flash and the thunderous noise of a twelve-bore shotgun going off at nearly point-blank range. "My God, I'm shot!" was the initial reaction as fingers clutched at a lurching stomach in an instinctive reaction. Seconds passed and all of a sudden I found myself racing uphill as fast as my legs would go, until totally winded my body collapsed to the ground. Just then as I crouched down in the bracken, far below, another shot rang out, showing the position of what must have been a group of poachers. It's a wonder that I didn't die of fright.

With twitching nerves I stumbled off along the track above the crag aiming north, until a strange growling noise ahead of me slowed me down. Almost immediately there in front of me, looming through the mist, was a flying saucer—slap bang across the middle of the path. Instant panic gave way to curiosity and on closer acquaintance the space capsule turned out to be a tent, with its snoring occupants dead to the world. Stumbling along in the dark was a nuisance but it was already after 3.0 a.m. and as the first rays of light were filtering through there was no time to hang about. Slithering down to Stanage End, where the mist was starting to lift, was no joke as wet P.A.s provided little in the way of a good friction surface. Below the crag the wind was cutting and the rock looked unusually high and unfriendly, but on the dot of 4.0 a.m. I set foot on rock. Half-way up The Aerial slab familiar ground

seemed to have changed out of all proportions. "Where on earth are the holds?" Within seconds of starting I was back on the ground to look for a couple of Diffs round the corner until increasing light began to reveal holds on the slab. Here and there the rock was green or wet and several routes got the better of me in quick succession; even one or two old favourites. Before I knew where I was the time was already 6.0 a.m. and as a steady drizzle silently swept in defeat began to stare me in the face. 25 routes in two hours was just not good enough and disconsolately I turned off down the hillside to head back home.

Another week of tension saw a repeat of the action but this time I stayed up late watching Valley of the Dolls on the box and spent most of the film trying not to fall asleep. After TV. close-down hunger drove me through to the kitchen for fried chopped ham, beans and coffee. Somehow sleep stole over me in the middle of eating and I woke up with a start at 2.0 a.m. Instantly wide awake I was ready to go—totally calm and my senses acutely aware of my surroundings. In the half-darkened room my eyes traced round the patterns of the carpet and followed the folds of the curtains. How many books were on the shelves? One, two, three, four etc. . . . musn't fall asleep again. Again and again I worked out how long it ought to take to reach Stanage and walk along the length of the edge in the dark—surely no more than an hour to Stanage End. "Will it be light enough to climb at 4.0 a.m.—and also warm enough?" The wind was blowing outside and so I settled for a 2.15 a.m. start from the house. "Weather willing can I make 150 routes? Is it possible to go for 200? What IS the limit?"

There was no going back and I felt that this had to be the year of the big effort before it was too late, and it had to be on my own despite the fact that I had told Wendy that I would like some company. It was the old problem of the inner battle against oneself and I was still whirling round the variables in my head as I raced up to Stanage. Unfortunately light was fast approaching so scrapping my intended plan I went for Burbage instead. The only problem was that the walk back to the car would have to be done after the climbing and the longer Stanage routes would be left for when I was tired and more liable to make an error. Still, that just couldn't be helped.

This time the weather seemed just right and the slight early morning breeze was a help rather than a hindrance as it removed sweat from the fingers at just the right rate. On the first few routes there was plenty of time to relax and watch the wildlife wake up and go about its daily business. Several plovers were flapping about anxiously and an early kestrel was already hovering about looking for breakfast. From time to time a ring ouzel made an appearance while two cuckoos hidden somewhere in the vicinity kept mocking my efforts with their cynical calls.

25 routes were dispatched in under an hour and in no time at all (or so it seemed)

50 were behind me. "Let's see, 4.15 a.m. start and now its 6.30 a.m. That's not bad at all." The sun had made an appearance and its swarming rays spurred me on to the next section. I remembered Green Slab and Pulcherrime distinctly but the very act of remembering to tick off every route was an irritation and before I had time to think I was laybacking happily up Lie Back on my way to Still Orange—which awoke a craving for liquid by mere auto-suggestion. Funnily enough six years before when doing the 100 I had been very tense and climbed badly but with a much greater target at the back of my mind, I actually relaxed while climbing to save the mental effort for later. Only the odd chimney slowed me down but at least they gave my fingers a bit of relief as they were starting to get rather sore by 8.50 a.m. I noted the time as the first walker had appeared with his inquisitive dog. One can feel a sense of superiority at such a time when the rest of the world is just waking up. It must be the same for olympic swimmers who train at the crack of dawn.

At that moment I felt absolutely alive and buzzing with energy. Never before in my life have my senses been so tuned up; for once it was not a human body with all its shortcomings, rather a well-tuned engine ticking over sweetly. My eyes not only took in every wrinkle in the rock but on the descents took in all sorts of activities in the valley. If an insect moved on a twig then the movement was immediately obvious as was the flight of a bird cutting the far horizon. Sounds however slight seemed to be amplified many times and even the movement of grass stems in the breeze became easily audible. For once I was tuned into another world.

Climbers often talk about experts flowing up a section of rock but it is only on rare occasions that the average climber can aspire to such heights. To do a whole route without a break is wonderful feeling especially when one's feet make the correct moves without one having to work things out, and fingers glide smoothly over the surface of the rock fitting onto holds as if each one had been tailor-made for the job.

While jog-trotting down from the North Edge to the South it was clear that I must be going exceptionally well as I had included a mass of Severs which I had never done before and each one had fallen without even a second thought. Almost as if running by clockwork I completed the 100th route at exactly 9.15 a.m., 5 hours after starting. It was good going indeed as the last time on Burbage the 100 had taken me 8 hours, but that had required a variety of stops for rests and sorting out where routes went. This time I had climbed non-stop for five hours to reach the target and there is no way that I could improve on that time and remain within the bounds of safety.

Towards the end of the edge the possibility of suspect rock in the quarries deterred me and not wanting to waste further time I made tracks for Carls Wark across the valley. This was the time consuming section as all the lines seemed hard for their grades and I covered a long distance without clocking up many routes. Despite

the heat and the sweat I pressed on past Higgar Tor to reach the car at 11.45 a.m.

Strangely enough my main craving was for something hot and the stove was brought into action for soup and a few brews. The greatest relief was when I unlaced my P.A.s and pulled them off two very swollen feet. It is amazing just how much feet can swell on a hot summer's day. Just flaked out beside the car mopping up the sun was all too easy and it was a great temptation to call it a day there and then, but I hadn't made all this effort for nothing and exactly an hour after reaching the car an inner force took over and sent me off up the slope at a rush for Stanage.

Below the edge the whole scheme struck me as both futile and hairbrained, but almost immediately I snapped out of my lethargy and slowly and ungainly swung up the first holds. Hell, my fingers were starting to cramp up and muscles all over my body were making their presence known. Looking at my fingertips I saw that the prints were just about worn off leaving a round red area on each one. How much wear and tear would make progress almost impossible? No time to think as I faced up to the start of Crack and Corner. This was the route which got me moving smoothly and fluently again and with only seven routes to make 150 a subconscious mental burst speeded things up. By the time I reached Hollybush Crack it was only 10 to 2 and as I moved up to the steep layback section of the crack at the top I realised that with tired fingers it would be all too easy to let them uncurl and it made me more determined than ever to keep a tight control of myself.

In retrospect I realise that once past the 150 mark I was cruising along rather than trying to beat the clock. It was also apparent that I was starting to miss out on any routes which created the slightest doubt in my mind. Realising this I went into Heaven Crack and swung up the flake with only a slight hesitation near the top. There was no doubt about it, I was getting light-headed and rock drunk; a feeling of carefree abandon was creeping over me. Deep down I knew that I was about to accomplish what I had set out to do and only a freak accident could stop me.

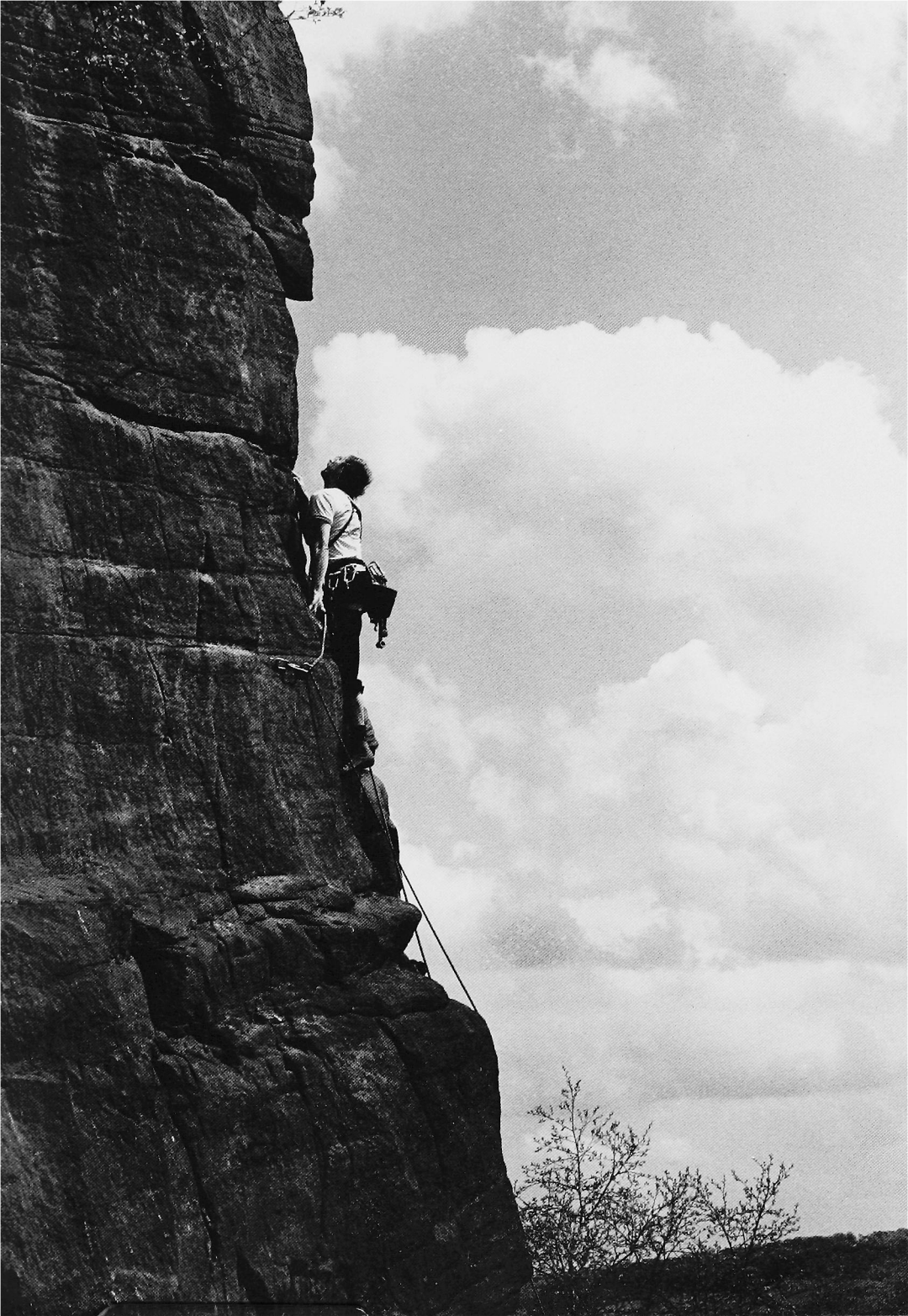
By 4 o'clock Baws Crawl was just in front of me and sprawled underneath were Clive Jones, Mark Vallance and the visiting American ace Ray Jardine. It was a relief to be able to talk to someone but it broke my concentration and also the automatic routine, and when I left them getting going again was a real struggle. There were only a few routes in the Plantation Area that I wanted to do and before long I stumbled towards the Wall End Area where Chris Addy and his mates were leisurely pottering about. By now I was looking really rough and my filthy appearance must have made them wonder what on earth was going on. My eyes were clogged with a black greasy ooze which made them sore and rubbing only made it worse. After exchanging a few pleasantries I escaped round the corner to get away from humanity.

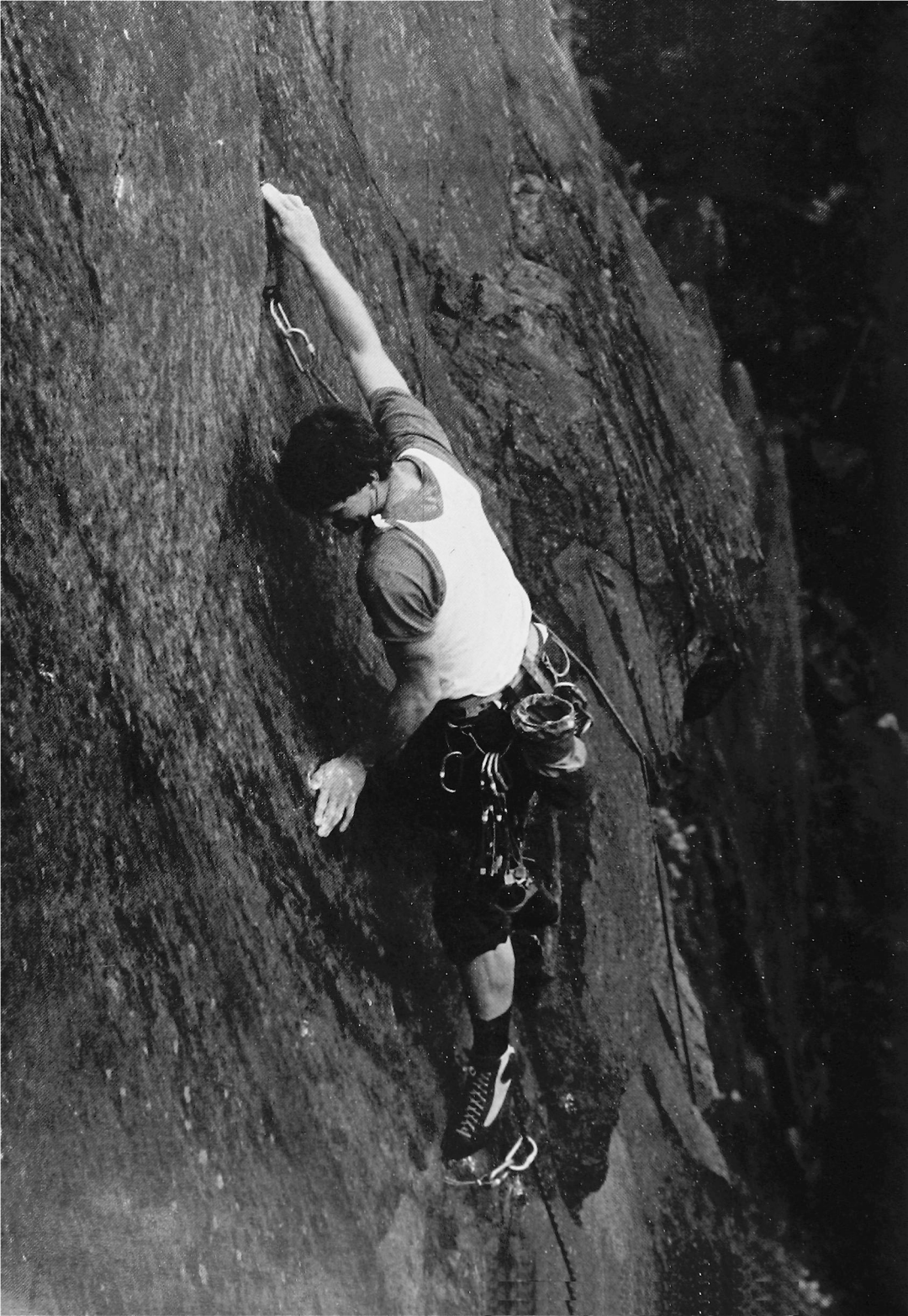
Just before Outlook Layback (which seemed a desperate struggle) I passed the 200

mark and got the shock of my life when I realised that it was already 7.00 p.m.. Where the last two hours had gone I just did not know—it was a complete mystery. In a semi-dazed state I must have slowed down to a near halt. My mind seemed detached again and I wasn't aware of any feeling whatsoever in my body. After a few more routes I came to a full stop and sat down idiotically just to gaze about me. Bathing in the dying rays of the evening sun I realised that I had done my 'grand slam' but had I achieved what I originally set out to do? Somewhat confused I decided to do a V.S. in slow motion just to prove that I was still in full control. Pulling over the top I realised that I was bored out of my mind and only the presence of other human beings could have urged me to go for more routes. In any case there was nothing left to prove after 212 routes but as I started to stroll back I realised that there was still a lot of light left—at least three hours to be precise. 300 in the day really was a possibility but there again so what? So it was all seven years ago and the old feeling is still there, it hasn't died yet.

NOTE:

Starting at 4.15 a.m. and arriving back at the car at 8.15 p.m. the 212 route round involved 12,730 feet of both ascent and descent with about 10 miles of walking between the routes during the 16 hours.





HUNCOTE QUARRY

STEVE ALLEN

Solid rock, reliable all year round sun, superb views out to sea, nymphettes leaping from hold to hold, . . . Huncote Quarry has none of these.

Quite a few C.C. members live in the south east. Far from me wishing to intrude on anyone's sports plan, could I suggest that instead of jetting off to Wales or Derbyshire on Friday night, have Friday afternoon off work, sneak off before lunch, spend the afternoon at Huncote then leave for a pleasant evenings drinking (Derbyshire is only about forty minutes further on).

The village of Huncote lies about six miles south-west of Leicester, sandwiched between the M69 and the old A46 (now the B4114). The best bet is to get to Huncote village, then take the road to Croft. Just before you leave Huncote you'll pass a pub on your left. It has good beer and is reasonably tolerant. Go over the little bridge and about two to three hundred yards further on is a large parking area on the left. Park here and walk straight towards the trig point on the hill. When you plummet about 150 feet you have found the crag. An alternative and safer descent is to find the overgrown remains of the ramps that the trucks were pulled up in the days of yore. Having descended the ramp you will find yourself on a large, broad tier, still some thirty feet above the lower level. To your right is a large wall, slightly slabby in nature with overhangs at about half height. This is the Rack Wall. Opposite you is a shield-shaped wall about eighty feet high starting some thirty feet above the lower ground level. This is Firing Squad Wall. About a hundred yards left of Firing Squad Wall is where the broad tier you are standing on fizzles out. The wall above the end of the tier is Sundive Wall.

Although there are many routes between these walls, most of them eminently suited to Mick Fowler et al, and most of them having absolutely appalling finishing moves, only possible with a flame-thrower, ice-axe, and full body helmet, the routes given below have either pleasant finishes, or in the case of Firing Squad Wall, abseil bolts.

Best place to start is the Rack Wall. At the left hand end of this wall, above the line of overhangs is a clean-cut corner groove. 150-foot ropes and a selection of small wires are required for most of the routes.

The Stretcher 150 feet HVS 5a

★ ★

Start directly beneath the corner groove and climb to a good ledge beneath overhang. From right hand end of ledge climb up then across into corner groove. Finish rightwards on the easier ground above.

Heat Treatment 150 feet E2 5c

★★★

Climb centre or Rack Wall via a flake then large blocks (more solid than they look!) to twin pegs just beneath overhangs. Climb through overhang to rest place on large slab (PR), problematical moves lead to a niche then easier ground to finish. Superb.

Intensive Scare 150 feet E3/4 5c

★★

Start at right-hand end of Rack Wall. Climb up and leftwards trending towards blocks (PR) under overhangs. Traverse left past twin PRs (on Heat Treatment). Continue left to thin crack, use this pull through the overhang (small NRs). Make superb committing moves up the thin scoop 10 feet right of corner. Finish more easily. Strangely enjoyable even with the runouts.

Steeleye Span 150 feet E4 6b

★★

From top of thin crack splitting the line of overhangs 20 feet right of corner groove, balance right upwards, (PR) then levitate leftwards to a small hold. Crank through to another, then respite. A superb few moves up in the air.

Probably the best way to get an idea of the routes on Rack Wall is to start as for the The Stretcher up to the large ledge then move up into the left-hand corner groove. Bolt belay. A route starts here.

Ballistics 140

feet HVS 5a★

Traverse right into groove of Stretcher, then traverse the slabby wall above overhangs passing beneath crux moves on Intensive Scare and Steeleye Span. Move awkwardly around arete to ledge (possible stance). Climb straight up, then trend leftwards to finish. Exposed and delicate climbing, but with reasonable protection.

The second area, Firing Squad Wall, has two routes of worth. Both effectively start from the chossy ledge at about 30 feet.

Firing Squad 90 feet E4 5c

★★★

(The second might find it better belaying from the quarry floor for this route). Start beneath the right-hand end of the shield-shaped wall. Climb ledges to reach the chossy ledge beneath a vague line pretending to be an old aid route. Climb this (PR) moving right at the bolt to a finger ledge. Move up (PR) and head for belay ledge (Bolts).

Descent: As for Eton Rifles. Good'n hard route.

Eton Rifles 120 feet E4

★ ★

50 feet. As for Firing Squad to the chossy ledge. Move left along this to a good shot hole belay.

70 feet. 6b. From about 15 feet right of belay attack the wall under the rightwards slanting overlap. Make hard moves to clip protection pegs, then move back under overlap. Pull over it (crux) and climb wall above (occasional PRs on right). Bolt belays. Abseil off in situ bolt/krab system.

The final area worth climbing is the shorter (but still two pitch), Sundive Wall. Both these routes are well worth doing.

Surveyor's Waltz 65 feet E2

★

30 feet. 5a. Climb the improbable short blank groove below the obvious blocky arete.

35 feet. 5b/c. The steep juggy wall just left of a ragged crack proves perplexing near a small niche.

Sundive 70 feet E2

★

40 feet. 5a. Climb the overhanging wall right of the blank groove and thence an awkward square-cut arete to a ledge.

30 feet. 5c. Precarious layback moves up the overhanging fault above. (2 PRs).

Huncote is never going to be an important crag, but if initial prejudice is cast aside and you at least get to grips with some of the routes above you might be pleasantly surprised. After all is said and done you still have the weekend ahead to climb on those little crags in Derbyshire.



OBITUARY

E. STUART CHANTRELL

1927-1984

Stuart Chantrell's special contribution to the Climbers' Club started when he was appointed Hon. Custodian of Helyg after the tragic death of its first custodian, Charles Marshall. Helyg had been acquired in 1925—a great event for the Club—and Marshall was an ideal first custodian, a very good rock climber, and a bit of a martinet (he made all the young climbers swim in the Llugwy before breakfast!). When Marshall was killed in a climbing accident at Helsby in 1927, Stuart was chosen to succeed him. He had good connections in cricket and rugby—promising sources of recruits for the Club—and this would stand him in good stead. Stuart, who had been a great friend of the Marshalls, doubtless accepted the custodianship, in part, out of respect for his friend. Thus he began, in his own quiet way, the long stint of thirty years during which all that Marshall's fine beginnings at Helyg had promised came to fruition.

There followed a period of great development in climbing, especially by Liverpool members such as Menlove Edwards, Kirkus and A.B. Hargreaves. Liverpool now became an important centre for the Club as, with Stuart as Chairman of the Northern Committee (on which he served from 1930 to 1951) and in this responsible role, he 'oversaw' another great event for the Club, the extension of Helyg. This ambitious undertaking, turning a small, rough and ready one-room building—the present kitchen, often flooded to several inches in spring—into a fine well-built and well-equipped hut with its large bunk-room, the entrance hall and its sea-going bath, etc., entailed for Stuart, and many others, a great expenditure of time and effort.

Stuart was always introducing young men to climbing and the Climbers' Club, believing strongly in the worth of both. He got on well with young climbers and would tolerate even those who seemed at first out of place, speaking up for them when others were reluctant to welcome such people. And these young climbers submitted willingly to Stuart's gentler but still definite discipline: bunks unfailingly tidied and pots and crockery washed before going out, lats. cleaned out when necessary and the contents buried! He also brought Brian McKenna into the Club, that skilled and jovial horticulturist from Anglesey, who did so much to 'landscape' Helyg—the fine copse, the magnificent rhododendrons and much else. He was a close friend of C.H. French—the dinner-jacketed cartoonist and catcher of fish in the Llugwy (and rats!) for breakfast. Those who knew Stuart all through those many years attest to his steadfast loyalty to the Club and his great influence on its character.

Many climbers such as David Watson and Bill Ward wrote in to testify to Stuart's service to the Club. Bill commented:

'I never climbed with Stuart and never recall seeing him climb, he was too absorbed in Helyg housekeeping and training young members to keep the place tidy. He reprimanded offenders in no uncertain way and this sometimes made him unpopular!'

He was a Morgan enthusiast (always keeping them in perfect condition) and a good raconteur. He would arrive at Helyg late Saturday afternoon, invariably with a yarn about some escapade in mist, fog, or snow when crossing the Denbighshire moors, carrying a carton of rations, which invariably included lamb chops. He would groan and complain about the mess and untidiness and set about organising cleanliness and order. When this was done his happy moments came—as could be seen by the twinkle in his eyes while frying his chops and sucking his pipe in a tidy kitchen. He always slept in the loft, hence the label 'Reserviertplatz für der Huttenwart' which some affable C.C. member had filched from a DOAV hut and nailed on the door (is it still there?).

I suppose I got to know him best during the first two or three years of the War, especially during air raid times, when I would arrive from the South of Wales on a motorbike and he in his Morgan from Liverpool. Both glad to get away from the turmoil to the peace and quiet of Helyg. To have a good sleep without fire-watching, sirens and the drone of planes was a complete rest cure. Stuart always slept in the loft with the fanlight fully open, while I slept in the dormitory. One morning Stuart greeted me in a state of despair, "The bloody planes were over here last night; I had to get out and shut the fanlight".

M.R. Loewy writes (a la Times obituaries!):

'Stuart had four loves: Cricket, the Climbers' Club, the Air Training Corps—during the War, and Animal Welfare. They were all represented at his funeral; a strong contingent from the Birkenhead Cricket Club—Stuart was scorer for 62 years! He also revived the club after the war; Birkenhead Park would have died without him. Some of his climbing friends were there, the R.A.F., and the ladies of the local Animal Welfare Society—for Stuart had been that rare phenomenon in the Society, a man and very active in its interests.'

Many C.C. members will have affectionate memories of Stuart in his beloved Helyg; Stuart endlessly busy tidying up, cleaning, doing repairs; Stuart sitting contentedly by the fire with his pipe when the rest of us got back to the hut. For Stuart would be at Helyg every week-end, despite the long journey from Wallasey. In winter we would drive down on Saturday afternoon (of course we worked on Saturdays then), in summer in the evening, after cricket. On the return journey the back of the Morgan was piled high with used pillow-cases, these must have puzzled the laundry greatly.



Above: Helyg in 1933.

Below: the custodians, E.S. Chantrell and B. McKenna.





I'm Helyg's Hon. Custodian,
A busy Mop-and-Bucket Man,
Jeystising every hut-defiling sinner.
Meanwhile do not forget the date,
— SATURDAY — MARCH — 28 —
Bring guests and all support the—NORTHERN DINNER.

(Drawing by C. H. F.)

Here was an apparently respectable suburban house, with the usual kind of laundry list, but always with anything up to 50 pillow-cases! What could be going on there? In fact 39 Cliff Road was a model of decorum; a bachelor household consisting of Stuart and Maurice Eggleshaw (once an active member of the then C.C. Northern Committee), who jointly owned this spacious house, and two or three other C.C. members, and Porgy the cat.

Stuart was very precise in all he did—our household accounts, the Helyg records, and I am sure, in his scoring and in his job at the Harrison Line shipping office in Liverpool. He was also instant in all he did. As soon as he came home from the office he would go out and trim the hedge, cut the lawn, paint the window-frames, and any necessary chore. In the lunch-hour each day he would drive through the tunnel to Birkenhead and work on the cricket ground, fork the pitch, feed the club cats, have his sandwiches, and then drive back to the office. But although apparently ‘always at it’, there was no fuss or rush about Stuart and when he had done, in the same quiet manner he would sit in one of the great ‘elephantine’ armchairs at 39, smoke his pipe, with Porgy on his lap, and listen to music. He had one of the best radiograms of the day and a fine collection of records.

Stuart was a friend of Menlove Edwards, and a very true friend. When Menlove’s depression became deep and dangerous Stuart several times went to his aid and helped him back to living. He was also guide, counsellor and friend to more than a few young men, in his business, in the Cricket Club and in the C.C., continuing in that role over a great span of years, long after they were no longer ‘young men’.

Finally a happy and amusing incident associated with climbing and cricket. A few years after the war Stuart came to the Alps with me—the Silvretta, the Engadine, a glimpse of Italy and the Ticino. He had some idyllic moments. As we were going up to the Silvretta hut from Schruns—the ‘back way’, up the modest and quite deserted valley behind the main ridge, in glorious weather, Stuart stopped more than once to look around and declare that this was the best day he had ever had in the mountains. When we got to Lugano, however, it rained ceaselessly. Towards evening of the second day Stuart was thoroughly down in the dumps. Suddenly he said, musingly: “If I caught the train tonight”—it was all train then—“I could be in Manchester tomorrow evening.” And then with relish: I’d be in time for the Test!” And so it was. At once Stuart was full of beans again; back to the hotel to pack, check the train times, a cheerful last dinner, and he was off to good old England and the Test.

GILBERT F. PEAKER**1927-1984**

With the death of Gilbert Peaker at the age of 80 the Club has lost one of its oldest members—one of a select group of climbers who joined the Club in the 1920s. A Yorkshireman by birth Peaker studied celestial astronomy at Cambridge prior to taking up Cartography within the Civil Service, a calling which took him abroad to work in Nigeria for some time. On his return he taught Mathematics at King's College London and also in Leicester. Not only did he become an academic in the field of Education, but he was also very active in the hills for many years and he was a frequent visitor at Helyg—mainly in the late 20s and 30s. There are many memories of him:

'I can only remember meeting Gilbert Peaker three times. He had an entirely unsought after reputation as something of an iron man, and all three of my recollections of him are consistent with this image. My first encounter with him was a matter of about two minutes. I was with an undergraduate party in the Alps, probably in 1935, about to go down from the Montenvers to Chamonix. The weather had broken completely; and we were surprised when a snow-covered figure walked in, trying to find a companion willing to attempt some fairly serious climb from the Argentiere glacier in the early hours of the following morning. No-one volunteered, and Gilbert went out into the snow disappointed.

Two or three years later, we did a climb together on Lliwedd. I was staying at Helyg, and (as on the previous occasion) he had looked in the previous evening, to ask if anyone was available for a climb the next day. I cannot remember what route we did, but what does stick in my memory is that, whereas I drove round from Helyg and left my car at Pen-y-Pass, Peaker walked all the way back again.'

'Peaker and I climbed together from Helyg many times. He was remarkably tough and impervious to bad conditions. There was some story about him exhausting some boys by over-climbing them—probably apocryphal. He and I put in a lot of climbing during the day—we were both keen on climbing down as much as up. I remember traversing Tryfan with him from north to south by going up the first climb and down the next and so on, and I think we did the same on Lliwedd. He was an interesting and amusing companion. '

'My first lead on British rock was the Amphitheatre Buttress on Craig yr Ysfa. My two supporters were Gilbert Peaker and Eric Shipton. I wonder if anyone has had two such competent mountaineers behind him on his first lead.'

Within the Club, Peaker served on the Committee in 1937 and was also a member of the Northern Committee between 1937 and 1940, but some of the best stories come from visits to the huts:

‘Two endearing habits in huts are worth recording. On occasions he would snore continuously for a time (Oh no! Not another Trevor Jones. Ed.) and finally awaken himself by a particularly violent outburst. At this point he would leap out of bed and shake all fellow inmates and accuse them of snoring! At breakfast he would often ask to put his bacon in the pan with the batch being cooked. After cooking he would extract with mathematical precision, the exact number of square inches of bacon he had put in. No-one dare tell him that bacon shrinks when fried!’

‘. . . His energy on the other hand did not extend to catering or cooking and he was quite content to leave that side entirely to his companion, whose reward for his labour was sallies such as: “This breakfast is fit for a king”—(pause for surprised acknowledgement)—“two days after the revolution. Now pass me the tobacco!”’

Apart from his natural humour and intellectual drive Gilbert clearly had great physical strength, which manifested itself on many occasions.

‘Climbs were punctuated by his expounding some philosophical or mathematical point, usually when one’s whole attention was focussed on working out the next move.’

‘During the autumn and winter of 1938-39 Peaker and I spent four weekends together at the Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale and one at Helyg. He was a man of tremendous energy and was reputed to be the heaviest man to have run a Marathon in standard time (It was said at the time that he just failed to make the Olympic Team for the Marathon.). Days on the hills with a man of such stamina were an unforgettable experience. He would cram as many climbs as possible into a day, whatever the weather. . . . Despite the passage of 44 years, the eight days which we spent on the hills together have left an indelible impression of an enthusiastic, stimulating and witty companion.’

Although Peaker is not well known for first ascents on British rock he did however team up with Menlove Edwards at one stage and seconded him on the first ascents of both Bracketside Spout, a Severe on Lliwedd, and the far more famous Slape on Clogwyn y Grochan. At the time of the Harding Pass guide Slape was regaded as a very exposed and strenuous Hard VS—in fact one of the hardest routes in the area prior to the Brown and Whillans era. It must have been quite a traumatic and memorable event watching Edwards work his way up the ‘short wall’ without modern protection to safeguard the pitch.

During the Second World War Peaker was attached to the Treasury and had some responsibility for the working of the rationing scheme, then at the end of the war he became an HMI in 1945. This led to an interest in 'declining standards of national intelligence' in 1948. Having developed skills as a statistician he carried out research for the Newsom and Plowden reports some years later.

In the post-war period Peaker kept up his climbing despite the call of his academic interests and it is interesting to quote from an article in the 1948 CCJ; in fact—the only article that Eric Shipton wrote for our Journal.

'Among those at Helyg I had been delighted to find Gilbert Peaker. It was a curious circumstance, for it was with him that I had stayed there the only other time in my life, more than eighteen years before!'

Shipton and Peaker spent one day on Tryfan and the Glyders with frequent rain and hail showers and then the next day went for the Great Gully of Craig yr Ysfa.

'After so much rain we expected to find it impossibly wet, and, as we had slept late, there was the added interest that to climb it and get back in time to catch our train at Bettws-y-Coed that afternoon meant working to a fairly tight schedule. The Gully was wet, though not unpleasantly so. Ten minutes before we reached the Hut a torrential downpour soaked us to the skin. This upset our time-table as we had to strip and dry our clothes against a night in the train while we ate our lunch, washed the dishes and (Members PLEASE NOTE! Ed.) tidied the Hut. But despite the fact that a tyre of Peaker's bicycle had burst under its quite unreasonable burden, we caught the train.'

In 1948 Peaker organised and directed the first (and only) Ministry of Education Training Course for Mountaineering. This was advertised to be an extension of a Ministry Course on Organised Camping in Langdale. In the event Clifford Bingham was the sole member of the Camping Course selected to go forward to the Mountaineering Course. The other recruits were all either members of the C.C. or the Alpine Club! Bingham found himself roped up with Jack Longland and A.B. Hargreaves for the first session. As the first course of its kind it attracted press coverage and also had reporter/photographer cover from the Times, Picture Post and Illustrated London News.

'Peaker had no mercy. The non-climbing reporters were dragged to Napes Needle for photos of the whole group, a few other Longland specials behind the Needle and then a quick jog over to Pillar to complete the day.'

Despite Peaker's considerable strength he was involved in several accidents, including one rather serious incident in the 50s.

'... also on Lliwedd it was the day of the C.C. Welsh dinner in the late autumn. This was the occasion on which the 'Matchstick' a 15-foot spike of rock weighing many tons which, although not part of the mountain, had stood the

strain of parties climbing over it for 60 years, slowly keeled outwards and disappeared with an immense crash down the cliff. We were climbing in two ropes of three, and I was very glad not to be on the first rope, which was actually using the Matchstick as a belay. Naturally, they all went with it. However the party was miraculously preserved when the Matchstick dug itself into a wide bilberry terrace some 25 feet below. Peaker was one of the three who survived; he was obviously hurt, but refused to wait for a rescue party. His injury was later found to be a broken pelvis, and it must have required extraordinary determination on his part to complete the climb and walk all the way back to the road from the top of Lliwedd. He must have been in his middle or late fifties at the time.'

Clifford Bingham in fact ended up in hospital just after Peaker:

'My next encounter was when I moved into the bed recently occupied by Peaker in the Bangor Hospital after his fall on Lliwedd. As he was allowed out I was admitted having slipped on the ice at the summit of Glyder Fach and landed in Cwm Tryfan.'

'Two memories persist—one of his habit of breaking into a trot over the Carneddau summits after a hard day's climbing and secondly his casual attitude to belays. I always assumed I was free climbing (soloing) when he was leading.'

'After he was crippled in the accident, he managed to get about with the aid of two sticks and would descend a hillside at some speed leaping from rock to rock, with great agility.'

With such an outstanding character as Peaker it is hard to sum up his life as an active member of the Club, but perhaps the following comment is most apt:

'I always enjoyed meeting Gilbert Peaker in the hills. It was relaxing yet challenging both physically and intellectually. There was always an element of surprise around the corner, coupled with a boyish enthusiasm for just being there. His death is a sad loss both to the Club and to mountaineering in general.'

Compiled with extracts from:

Clifford Bingham, Bill Stallybrass, David Cox, Charles Marriott, and
A.B. Hargreaves.

CUTHBERT H. FRENCH

1930-1984

C.H. French joined the Club in 1930 and remained a member until his death earlier this year at the age of 90. In the 1930s he was one of the real characters to

be found at Helyg, often reeling in trout for breakfast, and was often observed smoking a cigar while pursuing his hobby of observing others—which accounted for the uncanny likeness of all his sketches to the unwitting victims. His sketch of Stuart Chantrell is appropriately included in this journal.

Reminiscing in the 1948 C.C.J. Stuart Chantrell added a touch of flavour with a sketch of 'the lads' at play:

'C.H. French's skill in making sketches for the Club Guides has helped to make them successful, and we could do well with more of his caricatures than the few that adorn the walls of the Helyg Kitchen. It was not so easy to appreciate French's introduction of fireworks into the Cottage, and a fitting retribution awaited him when he was forced to satisfy the demands of nature closeted with a large and explosive "Rip-Rap". I could hardly sympathise, having suffered a previous experience of a Roman Candle being fired under my bed and a "Sprinkler" inserted in my cigar.'

From 1933-1940 and again from 1946-1951 French was a member of the Northern Committee and during the earlier period he put in a great deal of hard work to draw the crag diagrams for several of the C.C. guides. Starting in 1937 he did the diagrams for both the Tryfan and the Glyder Fach guides. Later, in 1939, he produced a whole-crag diagram for the Lliwedd guide, then a year after, he illustrated the revised Cwm Idwal guide for Menlove Edwards—altogether an impressive tally. Ask any of 'the old brigade' of the Club, and they will remember not the guide diagrams but the brilliance of his caricatures of such eminent figures as Solly, Ruttledge and General Bruce.

During the war he served as a Lieutenant in the Pioneer Corps and it was said that he had served with distinction in the First World War. In fact, he played the part to perfection, being short, dapper, neat, meticulous and looked every inch an army Officer.

Although he is not well-known for his ascents on rock his near-perfect technique made it a joy to watch him climb. He was unambitious and kept well within his capabilities, although he did accompany Menlove Edwards on the first ascents of three rather vegetated routes on Clogwyn y Geifr: Dump Crack; the smooth and delicate VS, North Slabs; and Devil's Dive, which in 1948 was described as:

'It must have taken some daring to launch up the centre of this steep cliff.

A serious undertaking, both in position and execution. The initial steep vegetation is part of the strong character of this route. . . '

Dispensable rock and remarkable plant life were the attributes of these routes and it needed a man of character to follow in the steps of Menlove. French was such a man.

JOHN H. BUZZARD**1937-1984**

John Buzzard was born in 1913 and died at the age of 71 years after being a member of the C.C. for some 47 years. In his early days he did some minor pioneer work on Creigiau Gleison and also several crags in the Ogwen valley. He was a contemporary of Gilbert Peaker and shortly before his own death recalled traversing Tryfan from north to south by going up one climb and then down the next, and so on. At one time with Bill Stallybrass he did a crazy abseil down the Twll Du waterfall before the days of abseil gadgets—on thin line which cut into the flesh as they dangled in mid-stream!

He was educated at Wellington and New College, Oxford and was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1937. In the 1939-45 War he served with the R.A.F. in Iceland and was a climbing instructor at the Air Crew Mountain Centre in Kashmir in 1945. After the War he was Recorder of first Great Yarmouth from 1958 to 1968 and then Dover until 1971. It was said that he knew the answer to every legal problem and had practised from magistrates courts to the House of Lords. In 1974, the year in which he lost the tips of two fingers in a letter bomb explosion, he became a circuit judge at the Central Criminal Court.

In the summer of 1983 John was very ill and confined to a wheel chair after making plans to go trekking in Kashmir. Sadly those plans did not materialise.

H.G. BALFOUR**1925-1984**

H.G. Balfour, one of our oldest members, died on Boxing Day 1983, after an illness which had lasted for several months. He joined the club in 1925 and during the 20s and 30s was an active climber, although he was not putting up new routes. He did most of the standard routes in the Lake District and North Wales and was a regular visitor to Helyg from 1925 onwards. He made several trips to the Alps before the War, including being a member of the first C.C. meet at Chamonix in 1925.

After the War he stopped climbing, but continued as an active hill walker. He married late in life and was in his 60s when he introduced his son, Hugh, to the joys of the hills—first in Connemara, then in the Lakes of Scotland. Their last hill walking trip together was when he was 70, but after that arthritis and ill-health put an end to his climbing days, although he kept up an interest in the mountains.

TIMOTHY I.F. LEWIS

1967-1981

With the death of Tim Lewis the climbing world has lost one of the most colourful characters that we have seen for some time. Although not still a member of this club at the time of his death he certainly deserves the thanks of this club for editing the fine 1970/71 C.C.J. at a time when the club was just starting to experience difficulties with journal production.

Born in Aberystwyth and educated at Dulwich College and Jesus College, Oxford, Tim took an Honours Degree in Modern History in 1967. After post-graduate work at Bangor he later lectured at Derby College of Further Education.

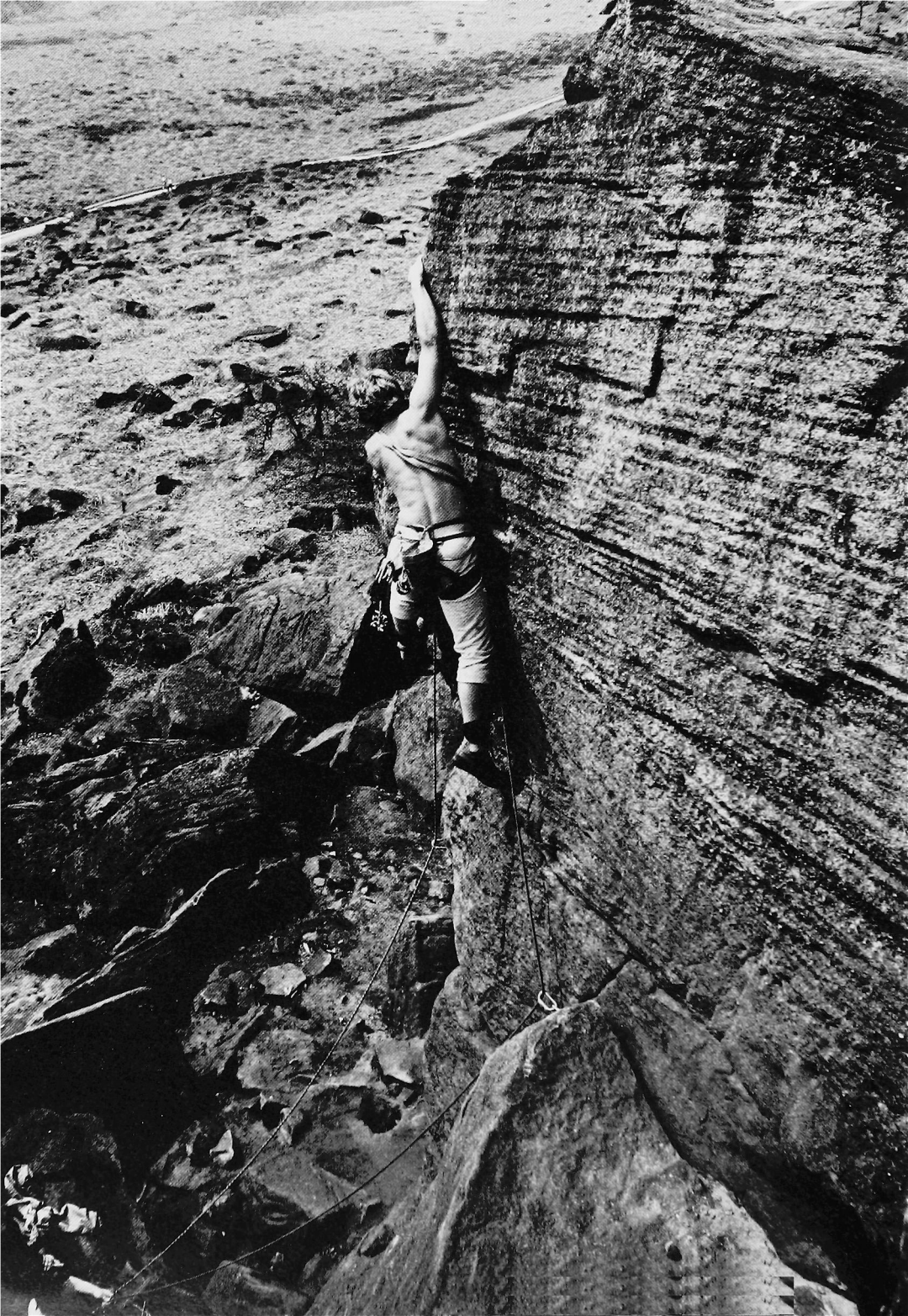
After the C.C.J., Tim first took on the Editorship of Rocksport magazine in 1972 and this in time led him to take on the more demanding Editorship of Mountain magazine in 1978.

In addition to his interest in climbing he was also a keen caver and went on several key expeditions such as Gouffre Berger (1975), Abbisso Michel Gortani (1976) and Ressaui Felix Trombe (1976).

His sharp wit and exuberant sense of humour once experienced could never be forgotten and Tim left a very lasting impression behind him.

In Mountain 99 there is the text of Paul Nunn's address which was read to a large assembly at Sheffield Crematorium in August of 1984.





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EDITORIAL

Norfolk jackets and an extra sweater on Everest . . . walking to Wales . . . trespassing on Kinder . . . patched moleskin breeches . . . home-made nuts . . . route descriptions scribbled on the back of a cigarette packet . . . a team alone on a crag . . . rumours of a new route . . . three climbers on a big cliff with just 80 feet of rope. And here we are in the brave new world of 1984—a mere five years since the climbing world began to change drastically . . . for the worse.

Fight your way up to Stanage and you will see the posers in action, soloing routes well below their normal standard for the benefit of the crowd, chalk-dipping nonchalantly and pausing casually to offer advice, and generally getting in the way of as many teams as possible. You can't fail to hear them either. Then there are the pants . . . the spots, the blotches and the stripes, a multi-hued extravaganza of eye-catching proportions—and as for those tights! Well! Swan Lake had nothing on some of these ballerinas. High magazine, 23, was good for a laugh with 'Out Rage' its novel fashion parade, but even my teenage son and daughter couldn't take it, "Oh no! The big wets", "The right wimps" they pronounced in quick succession, after craning their necks for a disbelieving second look.

The image of the climber is changing just as surely as the visual media have changed snooker from one of an activity of sleezy smoke-filled billiard halls of ill-repute, to one of snappily-dressed young men who are prepared to entertain the masses for large sums of money. Personally, I like to shed my work suit, collar and tie and potter around the hills looking scruffy and neither television nor a multitude of glossy photos in the magazines will change my outlook. I hope . . .

At the risk of offending friends, it needs to be said that the recent TV. spectacular on Hoy was an abhorrence in the eyes of many climbers. Raucous and brash, it smacked of Dallas and the American bull-doing intrusion into our established way of life. Only Pete Whillance and Murray Hamilton came out in a really good light. Far too many seabirds were disturbed(!) by the strident cries of certain climbers and the stars of the show, which well-symbolised the whole affair, were the vomiting fulmars. It is time that TV. companies showed climbing on our terms. It is NOT their job to portray our sport as they would like it to be seen. Newspaper sensationalism should not be the rule of thumb; too many sporting activities are being moulded anew by the media.

When magazines were of a poor standard and appeared infrequently we all waited eagerly to glean the small amount of information that was available. Now we are saturated with a constant barrage of material and often have to suffer the latest juicy bits of scandal in triplicate from Mountain, High and Climber and Rambler. Heroes and super-stars are created overnight and all of a sudden there is the world of big business blocking our drive-way. Starring in glossy adverts is now commonplace and some faces are beginning to dominate our lives as they stare out at us again, and again, and again. Right now we are even entering an era of rock-climbing videos. Can you REALLY believe it? It won't be long before we have a route library so that before you wind yourself up to the next big lead you can watch the route being done by an expert.

Filthy lucre, spondulicks, mazuma, loot . . . call it what you will, money is now making inroads into the sport in a big way and a 'what's in it for me' attitude is rapidly emerging—particularly amongst the younger generation, many of whom are not in full-time work. Adverts pay, magazines pay for articles and photos (not like the good old days when you had to hassle Lewis or O'Connor for a few bob to cover expenses) and there are even sponsored quizzes etc. and now we are getting closer to having a battle over guidebooks. Several guides by commercial companies have been poor and over-priced and climbers are less-inclined than ever before to do the job for the love of it. Granted that diagram artists do a lot of work, but the thin edge of the wedge is being driven in. Once artists get paid, then the photographers

queue up cap in hand, then the guide writers . . . and the Editors. May the day never come when the Journal Editor is paid an hourly rate, or how about the Committee having clocking on and off cards for their meetings?

What is particularly disturbing to many is the general change in attitude towards our 'sport'. In fact the very word 'sport' is now anathema to those who still consider climbing to be a pleasant and social recreational activity. Sports are normally thought of as outdoor activities where people can compete amicably according to a set of rules. Whether they compete against others or themselves is of course up to the individual—some people are content to tick off other people's routes, some like to compete for style with others on the same rope, while some prefer to do their own lines, pitting themselves against the rock. For better or for worse things have now changed. Rock athletes, the new breed, have now emerged—super-fit individuals with an intense, dedicated drive, which borders on the obsessional, have now appeared on the scene, not only to compete with both others and their own self-imposed standards, but to succeed come what may—even if the rules have to be bent in the process. And make no mistake about it, the rules are not only being bent nowadays but often broken by unscrupulous individuals who have an entirely ruthless approach. Anything goes as long as you don't get caught.

And then of course there's training. Personally I find the thought repugnant unless it is another sport such as squash or badminton, or days actually spent on the hills. There is no substitute for the real thing, but jokes are already being made about days in the hills being a build-up to where the real action happens—on the walls. The climbing-wall cult with bulging biceps and steel fingers is attracting a fanatical following of people who have nothing better to do with their time. To merely live for 'the move' or to have a target of being able to do one finger pull-ups is to miss what climbing is all about. Begin to read any old climbing book or journal article and frequently the climbing itself is almost peripheral to the experience of just being with others in the hills. Do we really want our sport split into climbers in the traditional sense on one hand and rock athletes on the other? Like it or not, the dichotomy is now here to stay. As part of that split we are already about to embark on the first wall speed climbing competitions in this country.

In case you haven't noticed lately, women are now sprouting muscles in places where nature didn't place them and the thought at the back of many people's minds is *WHEN* will women catch up with men in our sport—not is it desirable . . . or do they even want to? If a woman emerges who just happens to lead E8 so what? Good for her, and climbing has got just that little bit harder for the rest of us. In education our textbook illustrations have to show a spread of red, white, yellow and black children to be fair to all groups and a comment on a recent climbing book was that there weren't enough pictures of women climbing. There aren't many women photographers either. Why must we all conform to some uniform standard of society whether it be blue jeans, short hair or a ring in the left ear? One must play the game according to the rules.

Well I say, "Keep your 1,000g rack, your purple tights, your nice dry and sculpted climbing walls, your finely-honed balanced diet and your blazing sun. Give me the swirling mist and the beating rain, a jam sandwich and a mouthful of hot tea behind some distant boulder, and leave me to battle my way down to the pub before nightfall"

THE JOURNAL

Editors are either sensitive creatures aware of the slightest criticism or hardened campaigners with skins like elephants ready to charge off in any direction attacking all in sight. The current Editor is a cross between the two breeds and having suffered from a swingeing attack from a prominent member of the Committee at the May meeting in the Marquis of Granby (before drinks were served!) it took several months before he was ready to reply. Basically the verbal onslaught suggested that our present journal: a) is not up to the standard that our journal was in the 50s; b) ought to be up to the standard of the American publication Ascent; c) should not show in any way the achievements of non-members; d) should not be merely sent out as 'piece of junk' to the old guys. While granting that the Committee did not endorse this view the Editor began to wonder on the issue and felt compelled to do a quick analysis of our journals since the war.

	Articles	Obituary	Review	Notes & Climbs	Photos	Adverts.	Total Pages
1939	50	4	13	3	21	15	114
Pullinger							
1940	28	5	1	7	1	8	57
1941	30	12	1	8	3	9	70
1942	56	8	1	7	7	10	100
1943	77	24	1	5	7	8	126
1944	100	10	12	10	7	7	154
1945	61	10	16	12	6	6	127
Cox							
1947	74	4	12	5	6	8	118
1948	132	14	24	9	8	8	200
1949	94	7	11	11	5	4	138
Keenlyside							
1950	75	12	11	8	11	8	130
1951	59	3	21	14	9	8	125
1952	86	10	16	18	10	11	158
1953	86	11	20	20	11	12	168
1954	84	8	11	12	8	13	142
Rawlinson							
1955	97	4	31	25	14	15	200
1956	96	10	34	34	12	15	209
1957	68	15	18	23	12	15	162
1958	92	20	24	23	18	14	198
1959	78	10	11	23	13	8	151

	Articles	Obituary	Review	Notes & Climbs	Photos	Adverts.	Total Pages
Neill							
1960	76	15	8	21	16	16	175
1961	80	9	10	14	11	17	164
1962	85	2	11	15	11	20	155
1963	73	11	9	15	11	14	148
1964	60	6	9	—	5	7	93
1965	66	12	8	22	18	—	140
Rogers							
1966	82	2	11	24	13	8	147
1967	70	2	23	64	10	11	189
1968	90	7	11	6	17	6	147
Wedgewood							
1969	48	3	15	—	12	—	84
Lewis							
1971	153	5	10	54	13	6	262
Wilson							
1976	54	7	6	40	16	8	133
Milburn							
1977	61	1	2	26	12	—	108
1978	52	10	7	38	19	11	144
1980	54	29	11	57	35	—	195
1981	107	6	16	29	52	7	224
1982	130	1	14	10	50	—	214
1983	83	11	12	12	48	—	176
Average	78	9	13	20	15	9	151

Mere facts and figures can often conceal the truth but one or two interesting points emerge from the above tables. Obtaining ADVERTISEMENTS to bring in income is never an easy task but after the war ads. were gradually built up and reached a peak in John Neill's journals of the early 60s. After that things got gradually worse until the present situation when firms are not prepared to release money unless it is to one of the national magazines with a very large distribution.

Although big is not always beautiful a big, meaty journal is usually more successful than a thin war-time publication. It is apt to mention in this journal that the Tim Lewis journal of 1971 tops the chart. One should also remember that modern journals are printed on thinner paper and consequently appear smaller than they really are.

If one takes the number of pages devoted to ARTICLES then a slightly different picture emerges.

Of the other sections there is no doubt that the Rawlinson era of the late 50s takes the prize for both quality and quantity when it comes to REVIEWS. In the same way, Nigel Rogers dominated with

extensive coverage of NEW CLIMBS—but of course one must remember that today national magazines and regular supplements cover route development.

	Total pages	
Lewis	1971	262
Milburn	1981	224
Milburn	1982	218
Rawlinson	1956	209
Cox	1948	200
Rawlinson	1955	200
Rawlinson	1958	198
Milburn	1980	195
Rogers	1967	187
Milburn	1983	176

	Article pages	
Lewis	1971	153
Cox	1948	132
Milburn	1982	130
Milburn	1981	107

Review Pages		
Rawlinson	1956	34
Rawlinson	1955	31
Rawlinson	1958	24

Climbs Pages		
Rogers	1967	64
Milburn	1980	57
Lewis	1971	54

Obituary Pages		
Milburn	1980	29
Pullinger	1943	24
Rawlinson	1958	20

Just as if few routes are done in a particular year, it is hardly fair to blame the poor Editor if members linger on and obituaries are not needed until the next Editor comes along.

Whatever the shortcomings of the most recent journals the excellent PHOTOGRAPHIC content should be beyond criticism. Prior to the 35 photos in the 1980 journal the previous maximum was 21 as long ago as 1939. If too many photos show young gymnasts in action then that merely says that other climbers have not the incentive to submit their work which would most certainly be welcomed for inclusion.

Summing up the views of many people there are very good reasons for keeping going with our journal:

- 1) It should reflect the general health of the Club in any one year.
- 2) It is a permanent record to show to the climbing world that our club is worth joining.
- 3) It is a tangible item for members who are unable, for one reason or another, to use the huts or attend social functions.
- 4) It is a strong link between many friends who may be scattered widely all over the world.
- 5) It allows successes, failures and personal viewpoints to be aired publicly within the club.
- 6) It is a historical document which will be valued in years to come.
- 7) It is a vehicle for literary creativity to be encouraged.
- 8) It disseminates news, humour, information, obituaries, policies, details of new climbs etc.
- 9) It allows amateurs within the club to record adventures which possibly would not be accepted by the national magazines.
- 10) When assessing the value of our journal, never forget that it is a link in a chain which first began in 1898 when rock-climbing was in its infancy.

Ultimately, when you read this journal, you will no doubt make some comment about the contents and at that moment you should ask yourself the question, "What have I done for the Club so far?" Of greater importance is the future. . . .

REVIEW

Menlove (The Life of John Menlove Edwards) by Jim Perrin

Gollancz. £14.95

'Menlove rugged and burly, warm-hearted and lovable but also with the black well of loneliness inside him . . .'

This is not just the story of one man, rather it is a compilation of many issues skilfully interwoven within one theme; essentially, however, it is an unfinished symphony which successfully attempts to go far beyond the first movement of a magnum opus with which we struggled some twenty years ago after the publication of 'Samson' by Geoff Sutton and Wilfred Noyce (the latter being one of the key figures in the story). In the entire history of rock-climbing there has been no other climber who has even remotely made such a dramatic impact on the climbing scene and yet has left behind in his wake so many unanswered questions. This then was the challenge which faced Jim Perrin several years ago when he set out to piece together the clues—countless sherds in some gigantic four-dimensional jig-saw where the pieces may appear to fit in more than one position and an unknown number of sections have been lost forever. The whole truth will never be known and ultimately we are left with mere speculation.

Born the son of a clergyman, in 1910, Menlove went through public school and graduated at Liverpool University in 1933. Although he had intended to become a medical missionary he ended up as a brilliant clinical psychiatrist—but failed in his life's work, in the field of experimental psychiatry. Immensely strong, he pitted himself against the elements on many occasions such as when he swam the Linn of Dee while it was in full spate and then in 1935, during winter, he rowed a small boat across the 40-mile Minch to reach the Outer Hebrides. It is hardly surprising that he became the leading climber in Britain for a period of time, exploring new cliffs in North Wales and pushing standards ever higher. As a writer he excelled, not only with verse and prose but he also penned guides to Idwal, Tryfan, Lliwedd and Cloggy as well as editing the Mountaineering Journal in 1937. In addition to the problems with his work he had to shoulder not only the burden of being a Conscientious Objector during the War years but also had to contend with the reality of his homosexuality and its implications within the framework of his religious beliefs.

Following Perrin's labyrinth of intricate windings is a sheer joy and makes compelling reading. Make no mistake, this is no treatise of semantics designed to tease and torment; this is a major academic study and Perrin has gone out of his way not to unduly baffle the reader—in fact the story can be unfolded at more than one level. Imagining Perrin hard at work it is tempting to misquote: 'There he weaves by night and day, a magic web with colours gay'.

One of the recurring threads in the pattern is Helyg—the focal point of the highly active Climbers' Club in the 1930s. Menlove started his climbing career in Wales from the Helyg hut, returned to it on many occasions over the following years and even escaped to it during his shadowy torment. 1985, the publication year of this book, is also the diamond jubilee of Helyg and many of the contemporaries of Menlove will be there to retrace their steps, possibly for the last time, and Menlove will live once more in their mind's eye.

Open this book at almost any page and the Climbers' Club of an earlier era will come to life with a strongly beating pulse . . . the names . . . the faces . . . the deeds . . . and particularly the countless routes up the great dripping precipices—dark and brooding haunts, not unlike Menlove himself. Fortunately as far as climbers are concerned it is the accounts of the climbing that have been preserved in the greatest detail, and Perrin has liberally included extracts and quotes throughout the text. It is these extracts which are destined to hold most readers spellbound.

How little we often know about even the closest of our friends: it interested me to hear a few days ago from the mouth of a well-known climber who features prominently in this book, that he hadn't the slightest idea at the time that Menlove was homosexual by nature. But deep inside the man a battle raged as he constantly strove to come to terms with his feelings and to reconcile them with his innermost thoughts.

Perrin identifies well the situation in which Menlove found himself as a Conscientious Objector and we are given a rare glimpse of the strength of the man and the deep courage of his inner convictions which persisted until the latter days when his world started to fall apart. And the unplumbed depths of his loneliness. . . . Even Perrin's treatment of his prose and verse brings out imagery of many hues and recalls the work of the likes of T.S. Eliot:

'We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation.'

When Perrin tried to dissect the fragments of Menlove's kaleidoscopic mind the most important information was missing—details of the vital psychiatric work on which Menlove had been working for years were destroyed after his death(!), which is very strange considering that all the details of his homosexuality were openly there for all to see. Perhaps the family had suffered enough and did not want the wound to be re-opened. Certainly Menlove suffered in those last tragic years when the whole world including friends and family seemed to be against him, and he endured the whole gamut of human emotion. John Clare writing inside an asylum put it very succinctly:

'I AM! what I am who cares or knows?
My friends forsake me like a memory lost.'

Jim Perrin has successfully delved a long way into the tortured emotions of a human mind entangled in a deep-seated mental illness. He conveys the supreme irony of Menlove Edwards, a highly qualified doctor specialising in psychiatry; he knew all the answers but could not solve the questions. The theme which Perrin so ably portrays is mankind's basic flaw of imperfection which is all too apparent in someone as complex as Menlove. In his own writing Menlove reveals such an inadequacy:

'Does not the oak tree bow before the wind?
Does not the eagle?'

T.S.Eliot's imagery also highlights life's vanished vigour and vitality, whether it be of the body or of the mind.

'Where are the eagles and trumpets?
Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.'

Yes, this book is undoubtedly a masterpiece and a major landmark in the literature of mountaineering and Jim Perrin can be justly proud of his final version, but this is by no means the end of the story. . . .

Geoff Milburn

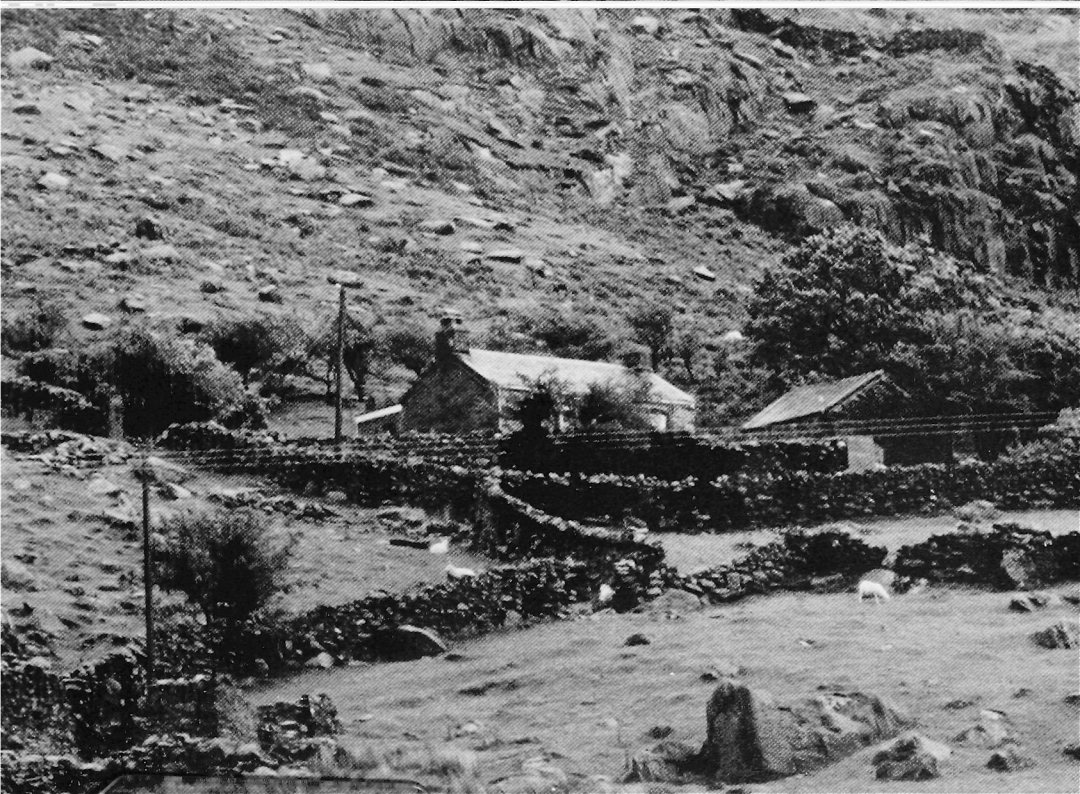
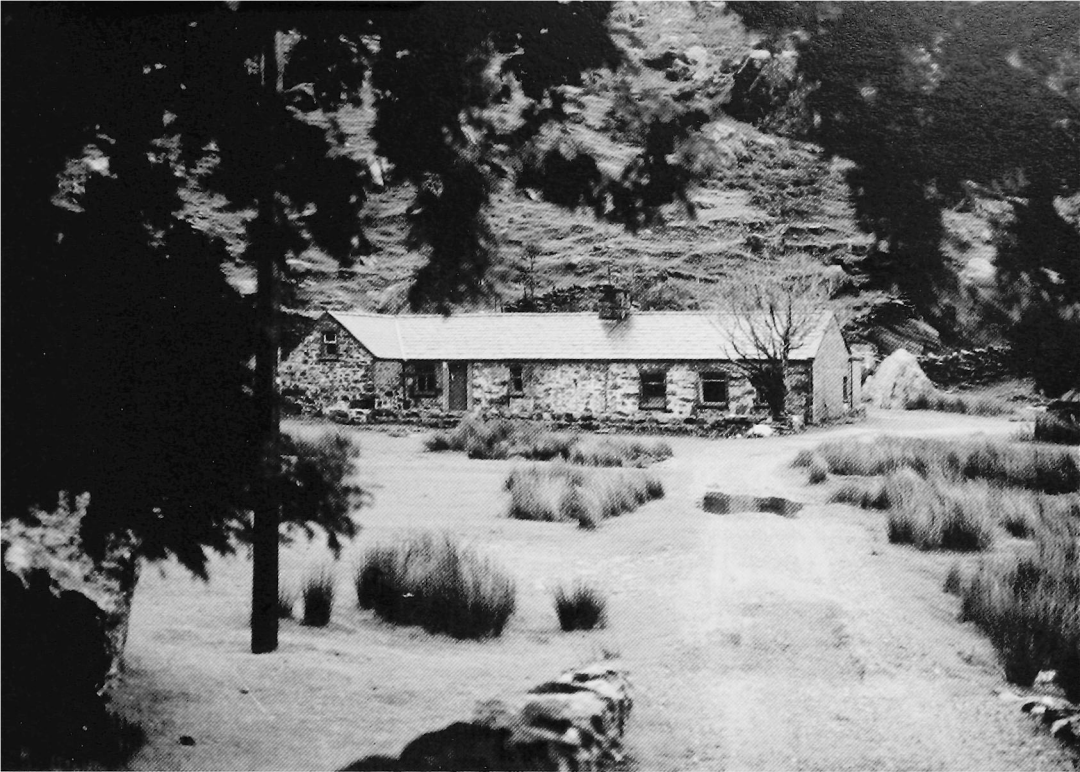
Mirrors in the Cliffs edited by Jim Perrin
(A second anthology of climbing literature)

Diadem. £12.95

Royal Robins' foreword to the volume serves as a cerebral review of it and members may be spared my mundane comments on this collection of flowers and treated to a more perceptive assessment of it by spending five minutes in the bookshop reading that (it begins on page 13). If the afternoon be wet and the proprietor unpressing turn to page 371 and go 'A Short Walk with Whillans' and Patey and then, and then . . . there is much for every taste and I have already betrayed mine.

Ynys Ettws and Cwm Glas Mawr, with the Pass in a sombre mood.

Photos: Bob Entwright.



It is self-evident that this anthology is at a disadvantage. It is the second of Diadem's collections and so takes a runner-up's choice of recent selection of our sport's literature and who knows what number it is in the total list of mountaineering anthologies. (Milburn probably does.)

It cannot include therefore, 'The Bat and the Wicked', the finest article ever on British rock-climbing, or the other Smith articles and the elder Marshall's ripostes. Or Austin's 'Lazy Man's Ways', or Dave Cook's panegyric on 'True Grit' or—lest my prejudice shows—the worthy items on higher mountaineering such as 'Out with the Boys again', or, on the morbid sided, the masterly description of the Cairngorm Tragedy. The restriction is not crippling. Only the 100 odd articles in its stable mate are denied to it—the other wealth of climbing literature, including that of any previous anthologies, is open for selection. What then of that selection?

I like a good fat book. My taste in women runs along the same lines, Rubens rather than Lowry, but it is seldom gratified. Were it to be I would be unlikely to spend aeons of foreplay stroking golden tresses or gazing into eyes like pools. No. Straight to the interesting bits. So with this good fat book. A search down the contents list for the nuggets. Robin Smith, Dutton, J.R. Marshall, avoiding the names of Spanish-American florists with a taste for psychology—or for that matter—fanatical continentals with a taste for suicide. And there, shining out of the cast list like a 24 carat beacon, is Patey on Whillans—or as it turns out, Patey on Whillans and Patey. Classic stuff. What a loss to climbing literature that legions of scribes have not committed his saws to paper to add glitter to the swirling gravel of an anthologist's pan.

Despite the inclusion of pieces with a humorous intent (and achievement) as a leaven, the overall impression the volume leaves is of seriousness and of taking itself too seriously and if it is read in a sequence of long sittings one is left with a feeling approaching melancholy. This, then, is not the way to tackle the volume. Search and sample to find the pieces which suit one's mood is the system and a valiant effort is made to organise the book to make this possible. In spite of the difficulty of classifying any mountaineering article under any single one of half-a-dozen headings they are so grouped. To help in one's choice a subject index (page 686) lists the articles under other headings, several of them appearing in more than one of these labels. Using these two aids one searches for the pieces close to one's own interest and although one may acknowledge the quality of the articles on other topics it will be the number and quality of the articles on that central interest which will govern one's final personal opinion. Accepting that pieces from 'The Games Climbers Play' cannot be included there are still, if my personal interest be given full reign, some inexplicable omissions.

Perrin's own paean on Gritstone, 'Right Unconquerable' from 'Hard Rock'; Allan Austin's 'Clachaig Gully' from 'Classic Rock' to name but two. 'In Hanging Garden Gully'; John Barry's farewell to Pete Boardman, 'Raven's Gully with the Great Man', and Raeburn's 'Green Gully'—both from 'Cold Climbs'.

I feel too that it lacks the frivolous and the small to balance the long and serious. Such things as 'The Ballad of Idwal Slabs'; Kingsley's dismissal, of Ruskin's 'gas lamps seven'; Semiond's admission as to fleas—the pleasing trivialities of our literature, (but in defence try 'Brick-edge Cruiser').

All these comments signpost the pitfalls lying in wait for the reviewer. His function is not to display his own narrow interest, his intellectual incapacity for absorbing ethical and philosophical considerations and to conclude how well or ill the book satisfies them but, as I see it, to estimate how well it will suit the average reader-member.

It is well bound and well printed. It is reasonably well proofed. Occasional prepositions and articles are missing.

'Grandois' is an odd word to find in an English translation from the German (King-size Gaulloise?). Should not 'Taugwalder soon' be 'son' or 'sohn'? There are others. The print type is attractive and of a satisfactory size. The price, by today's standards, is not outrageous. The range of experience covered by the articles is immense. I have already indicated my disappointment at the particular omissions of

the lightweight and the sparse representation of our British scene. I do not like the cartoons, their humour and line are not mine. Putting aside these personal foibles there is much to commend. There is a wealth of experience detailed in many countries and continents and styles. There are short articles for the snatched moment and long for the luxurious evening. As I have written, the overall impression is of seriousness, to that I would add quality.

Perrin's choice is not completely my own but it is one which is worth purchasing, for, to offset the flaws there are jewels, some of them agonising brilliants. Alex McIntyre's 'Dangerous Dancing' closes with 'and they all lived happily ever after.' The quote from Tom Patey that 'the mountaineer should never underestimate the importance of staying alive', and, to twist the knife in that wound, hidden in Royal Robbins' 'An Excursion to Scotland' is the heart-rending phrase that 'Tom drove north like he had only a few hours to live.' So he had, so he had—and *Mirrors in the Cliffs* is in these small items a mirror to memory, one worth having on your wall.

Dave Gregory

Ascent edited by Steve Roper and Allan Steck

Sierra Club Books. £16.95

I guard my climbing magazines jealously nowadays and after every twelve copies have them bound up into durable hardback volumes. In my old age I expect to browse at leisure through the *Mountaineering Journal* of the 30s, the *Rocksports*, the *Crags*, the *Highs* and the *Mountains*. Oh for a set of 81 *Mountain Craft* magazines. How many of them have merely fallen to bits or been thrown away? How much of our best climbing literature is now lost to the main body of our sport except when made available in anthologies? At least the main Club journals will be preserved for posterity having run fairly continuously since the last century.

Now *Ascent* is somewhat unusual as far as its evolution is concerned. It did not appear until 1967 when it consisted of a limp-bound large-format publication of a mere 48 pages. By the end of 1972 Volume 1 consisting of 312 pages had been completed. Volume 2 consisted of the issues for 1973, 1974 and the combined issue for 1975/76 which was made available in Britain in softcover book format. After a four year gap *Diadem* published the complete Volume 3 in Britain to introduce the publication to a far wider audience.

Allan Steck's original concept was 'a large-format periodical which would graphically depict the sheer visual delight of mountaineering, and, using cartoons, drawings, and satirical articles, offer the reader an insider's view of the whimsical side of climbing'. Several of these lavish productions have done just that, which has led to a worldwide reputation for the highest quality. There has also been a trend towards the introduction of fictional writing as well as factual accounts and the current policy of a four year gap between issues is to nullify the topical aspect (which the magazines cover adequately) to allow time-balanced judgements to be made.

The 1976 issue contained 128 pages and by 1980 this had been expanded to 272 pages. With the current issue we see a reduction to 175 pages but this has allowed us to receive the publication in full hardback format. The colour photographs are just as stunning but I was rather disappointed that many of the black and white shots lose impact through not being on glossy art paper. For the money I think that I would have preferred the limpbound version with another 100 pages. It also occurs to me that if I am to collect future volumes of *Ascent* I should like a copy of the first volume to keep up a full set—unfortunately unless a reprint is done that will be most unlikely.

In the current volume we range from Denali to Black Canyon with Ed Webster, to Patagonia and the Paine Cordillera to Masherbrum. There are one or two interesting pieces on rock action and I was particularly pleased to read 'Tricksters and Traditionalists—A Look at Conflicting Climbing Styles' by Tom Higgins. It is an article that should be read by EVERY British climber aspiring to do new routes—on the grounds that we have our own 'tricksters' in our midst, including one or two very respected names.

'The conflict between traditionalists and tricksters extends to reporting new routes. . . .'

Say no more. Is your conscience clear?

The point is made that climbers subscribe to the 'construction' of hard new lines of great technical difficulty AT ANY PRICE.

'He demonstrated a willingness to cheat selectively . . . as long as it extended the upper range of the free-climbing spectrum. The attitude seems to be, so what if protection bolts are placed on aid or rapel, as long as the resulting climb is a good one? So what if a flake or crack is altered slightly to make a great free climb? Why should climbers be bound by old rules—or any rules—when creating new routes or trying to free climb old routes?'

The tricksters are the very people who are most reluctant to reveal details of their own style.

'Other climbers acknowledge their aid ladders or rests on protection, but only to close companions. The information rarely gets into print. Journal articles relate heroics, not style, and modern guidebooks short on history but long on route maps, contain few references to the style of ascent.'

Yes, it is almost worth buying a copy of *Ascent* for this one article alone, but there are plenty of other articles to hold your interest for a few days of good reading.

P.S. 'When climbers finally decide to do their routes, they often fall repeatedly and rest on their protection. The new protection devices, Friends, encourage this behaviour; since the protection is more easily assured, climbers can push closer to the point of falling.'

Sounds like a good publicity gimmick—Frig with a Friend in Complete Safety.

The Ridiculous Mountains by G.J.F. Dutton

Diadem. £7.95

If your first meeting with the Doctor, the Apprentice and the Narrator came via the *Diadem* anthologies (*Games Climbers Play*, *Mirrors in the Cliffs* etc), as did mine, then this is undoubtedly the book you have been waiting for; a collection of twenty adventures, fifteen of which are new to me, although ten of them have had previous outings in the *SMC Journal*. A note to *SMC Members*—buy the book anyway; there are new stories, and a compilation such as this avoids searching old journals for the gems.

For the waiting English, appetities whetted by 'The Craggie', 'Good Clean Break' and 'Chalking it Up' this opportunity to know more of the the Doctor and his friends is long overdue. All the stories display the same gentle humour as the familiar ones, funny not because of outrageous jokes but because Dutton has a wonderful eye and ear for capturing the slightly ridiculous things that happen to us all, and expanding them into stories that come alive, populated by characters we know and recognise.

For example; chapter 15, 'Man's Faithful Friend' struck a responsive chord for me. It tells the tale (Tail perhaps, or is this a shaggy dog story? Ed.) of a meeting with a stray dog, in this case on Arran, which attaches itself to the party becoming progressively more of a nuisance, which of course spreads to annoying other people on the hills—who in turn blame the Doctor as its supposed owner. Their attempts to separate themselves from their faithful hound seem doomed to failure until . . . but no, I'll not give it away, other than to say it's not what I did, but the Doctor's solution had me laughing out loud.

Not all the tales are of climbing mountains and crags, the Doctor persuaded his friends to try their hands at other outdoor activities, caving and yachting in 'A Cave Meet' and 'A Yacht Meet', which predictably have less than successful results, certainly not unique events when climbers take to different environments. They end up enjoying themselves though, competing and playing jokes on each other, the 'fossil' bone in 'A Cave Meet' being a prime example.

Back in the familiar mountain settings our heroes not only have more adventures but run into some wonderful characters—watch out for Col. Gow Gow, the unsuccessful stalker in 'Sportsmanship', A.J. Evergreen, the compulsive organiser in 'An Occasion', Virginia Prusik and Sep, the visiting American climbers who solo an E4 and a new route on Cove Crag and remarkably leave the Doctor almost speechless,

and finally my favourites, the veteran hill-bashers, Geordie and Wull, the latter a cautious man who manages to carry two of everything, maps, compasses, bootlaces, etc, and even a spare rucksack packed into the other.

In fact we learn much more of these folk and others like them, than we do of the protagonists. Of the Narrator we hear virtually nothing, the Apprentice appears as a keen young rock-climber not always willing to get involved in other activities, unless they involve attractive young ladies he can charm into disappearing into the heather, and lastly the Doctor. We seem to learn the most about the leader of our group through hints and asides, but very little concrete. He seems well-educated, well-travelled and and well-off, an adventurer willing to try most things, but with particularly strong tastes for music, science, whisky and all things traditional. This includes the binding agent that brings our friends together, the Doctor's aging Mercedes, their transport to the hills.

Although these stories are set in the Scottish hills, their appeal is not their Scottishness, but in their spirit of adventure, a point made clear by Dutton in his preface.

'The scene is largely Scotland . . . we could . . . be in the Alps, the Lakes, California, Wales, Nepal, New Zealand, the Caucasus, anywhere among mountains.'

I'm sure those familiar with the nooks and crannies of Scotland will find something extra in these stories, but there is more than enough to entertain the rest of us in search of a gentle chuckle to brighten our winter evenings. There is certainly not enough humorous writing on climbing, and certainly not of this high quality. This book is certain to be a classic; buy it soon and enjoy Dutton's Ridiculous Mountains before returning to your own.

Ian Smith

Scafell, Dow and Eskdale by G. Willison, M. Berzins, R. Matheson and E. Cleasby F.R.C.C. £6.95

The phone rang angrily and a familiar voice from the general direction of Sheffield enquired if I had seen the latest Scafell guide. Within a few minutes my first good impressions had been tarnished by yet another episode in an unsatisfactory saga, which had started 14 years earlier. On June 5th 1968 Greg and I celebrated after doing C.B. by putting up a new route, Sleeping Crack, on Deep Ghyll Buttress. It needed plenty of gardening which we did on sight of course, but the big event was when I trundled a delicately balanced block of huge proportions that Dave had spent some time passing without daring to breathe on it. A slight pull released it and it rebounded off the Pinnacle, ricocheted down the gully (luckily it was late evening and no-one was about!) to Lord's Rake before bounding down the screes far below and heading off towards the valley. One clearly remembers finishing a route higher than any other in the country. Our description duly appeared in the 1968 F.R.C.C. J. but in the 69 Journal an identical route(?), Gobsite, was claimed by T. Martin and J. Wilson—BUT for 1.6.68 which pre-dated our ascent by 4 days. Rather nicely we were also on Deep Ghyll Buttress on June 1st but met no-one climbing and certainly no-one gardened a new line. The crudely named Gobsite appeared in the 1974 Scafell guide in preference to our route. Curiously BOTH routes are included in the latest guide but without crediting us in the First Ascent List. This is war Fell and Rock! So play the game before I happen to lose a few Fell and Rock routes on the C.C. patch. I can think of one 'suspect' route on Cloggy for a start.

Prejudices apart the front cover is brilliant, being aesthetically pleasing and it is a great improvement on no photograph on the covers. The back cover is, however, quite frankly . . . grey . . . and provides a welcome change from boring photographs of boring climbers. It somehow reminds me of Dennis (Are you under-insured then contact the B.M.C.!).

The area maps are fine and a vast improvement on previous offerings and Al Phizacklea's futuristic relief maps are superb. What a pity that Al did not do a full set of drawings to give a completely new look. Which reminds me, why do artists sometimes sign their names in such huge letters as for example on the Scafell Pinnacle diagrams? On the diagrams letters instead of numbers irritate me and scientists will be foxed by Mg, Co, Mn etc to say nothing of finding WC on a crag. The Hodge Close Quarry

labelling is chaotically illogical for instead of labelling in the house-style we get C stands for Stage Fright and K is for Sky. With a key why not simply label routes from left to right, A, B, C, D, etc—or is this boringly simple? I liked the red lettering on the diagrams though—it looked classy.

Hand the credit out where it is due, the Fell and Rock nipped ahead of us when they elected to include colour photos inside the guide but the printers wanted shooting for what they did to some of the shots. Those of Central Buttress, Mickledore Grooves and Side Show all look fine, but the sky above Nazgul and Moss Ghyll Grooves looks unreal for this country. It looks as if the Eliminate A shot was vandalised by the printer as the picture is out of focus and there is a black line across the page. Is there any truth that the printer is in the C.C.?

The graded list which isn't, still manages to waste 15 pages without giving any new information. Why oh why? The First Ascent List also worries me somewhat as it is debatable as to whether the history of a major crag such as Scafell should be combined with that of Dow. What will Cloggy look like when combined with Cwm Silyn and Castell Cidwm?

I must admit that I do like the motif of the Fell and Rock with Napes Needle standing out proudly—a far cry from our own C.C. which could stand for some obscure Cricket Club or County Council.

Although the price is nearly £7 there are over 600 routes described in this double guide and it is good to see the club moving forward once more. The grades are pretty good as well, I can go along with most of them. At last, Red Edge up to E1, Moss Ghyll up to Severe and best of all High Man via Slingsby's Chimney up to Very Difficult. No more 'Very severe (hard)' and all the grades are in the text; things are looking up—I just might nip back up to Eskdale before long. There must still be a few gems waiting to be discovered. Ed.

PEAK SUPPLEMENT by Gary Gibson

BMC. £3

The relative importance of a piece of climbing gear can be gauged by the sense of grief or loss when it is found to be still under the stairs when Karrimor's best is tipped out at the crag. The fact that I broke down in tears and sucked my thumb at Stanage the other day, due entirely to the lack of G.G.'s little tome places it further along the grief continuum than forgetting your rope or having one's family wiped out by a meteorite. (This is at Stanage as well—the most recent and best guidebook out therefore the one least requiring revision.) This is not because I whip out Gary's thing at every crag and fling myself at unprotected aretes with gay abandon, but simply because climbers are conditioned by the evil capitalist system to be Bang Up to Date. At other crags however, this guide is a valuable, nay, essential piece of equipment helping to banish the fear of the unknown. The list of grades for crags with out of date guides (or no guide at all) will be found especially useful. Other user friendly features include colour pics on the covers, a handy size and illuminating history sections.

I think it's a good job we have Gary Gibson. I might be doing a lot of Peak District climbers an injustice, but I just don't think there are many people around prepared to put so much work into the sorting of Peak routes. (In the beginning there was Eric Byne. . . .) Gary's position as Crags news editor for High magazine obviously helps him in terms of his info., and this is reflected in the accuracy of the routes in the guide. (The ones I have seen or done at any rate.) The standard and quality of many of the routes is quite amazing. Only a year or so after the last supplement and in the same period as the very important Stanage guide came out it seems incredible that whole new crags are discovered, or brought screaming and kicking from the 50's/60's into the 80's. Examples are many; Pic Tor's superb pocket climbing, many Chew Valley quarries (with routes at all grades), virtually the whole of Raven Tor, etc, etc. Hi-tech rubber plus micro's and friends, plus a long neck have allowed pebble moves once considered possibly only on slabs, and thought to be almost the ultimate on grit, to be made vertical. Pushing weights, climbing on the dole and bouldering on walls permits The Move to be made not once, but twice or twenty twice times in succession. Where will it end? What will be the ultimate route? Who knows? Who cares?

Left: Lord Bromwell of Ettw and serfs at work!

Right: Nunn at Play, Rivelin.

Photo: Anon.





In the editorial introduction Geoff Milburn mentions the ethical problems of our time, viz. bolts. Gary is patently pro-bolt and was clearly testing the water with his well bolted Clarion call (yawn). Some of the locals felt it was too hot, removed the bolts leaving them at Stoney cafe for Gary to collect (ZZZZZ . . .). We are also informed that this is the first guide produced with the help of a word processor which will obviously help with layout and late insertions etc. Future Peak guides seem destined to be produced the same way. God—even hi-tech guides!

Gary acknowledges the lingering problem of grading routes, especially strenuous routes. Some climbers include strenuousness in the E grade, others don't. E5 speaks volumes. E5 6A doesn't. It could mean anything.

It is possibly unfair to criticise a supplement because of its transient nature, however I would have liked a plastic cover, especially as a supplement is likely to be taken everywhere. Derwent Valley (say) might only suffer the indignity of travelling with the bog roll in the top pocket once every couple of months. Whereas this supplement is going to be very indignant in a very short time.

The acid test of any guide is not whether it shows you where the routes are, but whether you enjoy reading it in the bath (polite version). I do. If you climb in the Peak, at any grade, I suggest you buy it.

Steve Allen

Rock Climbing in Ireland edited by Calvin Torrans and Dawson Stelfox Constable. £6.50

When I think of Ireland and its climbing my mind conjures up a picture of funny little guidebooks which seem to have been produced on a shoestring. Somehow that, coupled with horrendous rumours of permanent bad weather, have put me off a visit. No more. A long browse through this excellent new guide has whetted my appetite and my only dilemma is whether I ought to tackle the Irish crags clockwise or anti-clockwise. Sorry if that sounds a bit Irish.

Dublin it must be for a start, ostensibly to limber up at Dalkey Quarry and then visit Wicklow Mountains for Luggala and Glendalough—but really I fancy a trip into Dublin itself for the Folk Clubs and to see the big G (draught Guinness) in action at first hand. If half the stories I have heard are true I will get no further, but if I can prise myself away then it is south for Coumshingaun in the Comeragh Mountains of Waterford. A beautiful glacial corrie with good jamming cracks sounds just the right sort of spot for me.

Now Ailladie might say limestone routes to most folk but to the botanist there is a far more compelling connotation—it says The Burren, home of many rare and exotic plants. The climbing would have to be good to drag me away. On past Galway Bay and I shall home in on Sail Rock in Donegal before heading for Lough Belshade and Lough Barra. Now for the big one—all roads for the climber lead to Fair Head with its huge dolerite columns. A man from North Yorkshire is no stranger to dolerite but here the cliffs are Big and ready for action. For a finale it must be the picturesque Mountains of Mourne before heading for home and the Peak District.

There are over 300 routes (though sadly without a star system for quality) described in this selective climbing guide and with 100 photographs of crags and action shots as well as several useful maps Constable has come up with one of their most useful books in what is now an extensive series.

Caves, Crags and Gorges by Tony Waltham Constable. £6.95

To a small boy caves hold a strange fascination and at Richmond I can recall King Arthur's Oven, the old copper mines and Drummer Boy's Cave. Even this year our family visited the extensive caverns at Postojna in Yugoslavia. Childhood interests often overlap into adult activities and clubs such as the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club and our own Club have a long history of caving exploits since the last century. And just look at the many thousands of tourists who visit places such as the Buttermere, Stump Cross Caverns and the Castleton Caves such as Blue John and Speedwell Caverns.

Kinder Downfall in winter.

Photo: Ian Smith.

Within the scope of this book Tony Waltham has presented a variety of interesting limestone features from England and Wales which should interest the climber/potholer who wishes to know just a little bit more about his environment. There are plenty of photographs, maps and drawings of major underground systems, which give an insight into a whole new world.

A Cambrian Way by Richard Sale

Constable. £6.95

We all know of the Lyke Wake Lemmings and the Pennine Motorway eroded by a non-stop vibram onslaught—Please get in lane for Cross Fell—Kinder Junction coming up in three miles—a never-ending assembly line of north and south-bound traffic. What began as a beautiful dream finally ended up as a nightmare of mud and peat. The Pennine Way? No way! The only solution seemed to be for the hordes to come down out of the hills to find peace in the valleys.

One answer in the 70s was the arrival of a new breed of book: the short walks, the long walks, walks for motorists, walks for the non-walker. We now have: the Cleveland Way, the Norfolk Way, the West Highland Way and a foot-loose generation of trampers all pounding along as fast as their little legs can carry them. Some books motivate the masses and increase the problem while others seem to spread the load a bit.

This Cambrian Way is a splendid 260 mile footpath along a high level route, taking in some of the best scenery in Wales. Starting in Cardiff one can head off for the Black Mountains before traversing the Brecon Beacons to reach the long haul north. After Plynlimon it is onward to Cader, the Rhinogs and familiar ground in Snowdonia.

This book is not for the speed-merchant with ticking pen hot in a grubby hand; here we have an insight into the life-blood of a proud nation steeped in history.

Plan this walk carefully, don't look for the waymarkers—there aren't any—and as Richard says 'To those who complete it at one go, in twelve days, in continuous rain—congratulations. But you have missed the point'.

Ed.

Cornwall—West Penwith by Pete O'Sullivan

C.C. £6.95

Writing a review entails a critical analysis of an author's work. A rock climbing guide-book takes months to compile while a review requires some experience of the area, certainly not as detailed as that of the author. A few hours reading the text and evaluating its contents gives sufficient scope to comment objectively.

A new guide book gives the author an opportunity to wipe the slate clean, and bring the previous text up to date in the light of modern developments. This calls for a great deal of soul-searching and consultation with the pundits. At this juncture it is appropriate to point out that the pundits should encompass a reasonable cross-section of the climbing fraternity. To consult one's own circle will not give a balanced view of grading and quality. Cornish climbing seems to be out of step with the rest of British rock. Many of the routes seem undergraded particularly if compared with their Welsh counterparts.

When the Extreme and numerical systems of grading were introduced, the numerical grade was a measure of a technical standard for the various pitches of a particular climb: the 'E' factor, a measure of the seriousness of the route as a whole. It is now accepted that the numerical and 'E' grading have merged to give one an overall standard of difficulty.

This latest edition of the West Penwith Guide seems to further confuse the system which has now been accepted. Some Severe routes appear at 4c, V.S. routes at 5a, conversely E1 routes also appear at 5a and 5c, whilst other HVS routes appear at 5b. To add to this the Star quality of a route seems to depend on technical difficulty and many are the more recent additions in the area. Surely the aesthetic quality of a route and its position merit some consideration!

Left: Somewhere in Derbyshire!

Right: The man who fell to earth. Steve Allen on a ropeless abseil.

Photo: Pete Nadolski.

Photo: Trev Johnson.



The following should illustrate these points:

Laceration—HVS. 5a. (first 10 feet only), Diocese—VS. 5a, Bishops Rib—E1, 5a—however no mention is made of the rock fall, which in my opinion has raised the standard somewhat. Terriers Tooth—VD, 4a—It gets worse The Pawn and Espresso Bongo HS, 4c and HVS, 5b. The Cormorant's Bill, Lands End HVS, 5b. Yankee Doodle gets E2, 5b. In my opinion it is one of the finest routes in the guide book but it only rates two stars, yet contrived lines such as Stone Boom, get a three star grade! The top pitch of the latter is almost certainly 5c and there are no peg belays. Escape onto another route is possible at any stage of the climb. Saxon HVS, 4c. Ziggurat, Carn Vellan, three star route with two points of aid and one or two rests if the route is wet—come on! Samson and Samson Arete, the same route with a different start or is it the other way round? The photograph only shows the one route although they are described as two routes in the text, and at 5a someone is on an ego trip! Rumour has it that this route has stopped more young activists than any other route in Cornwall.

The layout of the guide is typical of all C.C. Guide books. However, the climbing photographs and sketch of Great Zawn are of little interest and only add to the weight of the book. Alex Sharp made an impressive attempt to produce a concise guide to Cloggy and Gogarth. A page out of his book as an example of how to reduce bulk and weight would not have gone amiss. If users treat the grading system with caution the West Penwith guide makes an interesting, informative addition to one's climbing library.

David Howard-Jones.

International Mountain Rescue Handbook by Hamish MacInnes

Constable. £9.95

I am reminded of the story of Whillans being asked why he wasn't wearing his crash hat on Everest. When a stone came through the tent wall and bounced off the enquirer's head Whillan's reply was, "Cause they attract stones". Well I have a thing about mountain rescue and teams on practices—they seem to cause accidents. They seem to perch like vultures waiting for victims and the French sort even fight to present their bills as they rescue you. Folk have even been known to fight rescuers off when they themselves didn't want rescuing.

Having just thumbed through a few pages of avalanche victims I have realised with horror that my teenage son should have landed at a French skiing resort just a few hours ago. At least if things go wrong if they follow this book then he should survive.

It is twelve years since Hamish first wrote this book and a revised second edition has been long overdue. Just how big the market is for a book such as this it is hard to say, but the final result is very impressive. The whole book is more than amply illustrated with both clear sketches and black and white photographs—the shots by Ludwig Gramminger are particularly startling and drive home very positively the dedication of those who put their own lives in jeopardy to save the lives of others.

As well as details of normal climbing equipment the book includes chapters on such points such as: avalanche search, dog rescue, stretchers, lowers, helicopters, radio links, ski rescue, tracked vehicles, winches etc. It is strange however that there are no references to page numbers on the contents page.

Ever since I read of Corti being plucked off the Eiger I have been fascinated by winches and tragsitz systems, but today's rescues with helicopters ready to whisk the injured off faces such as the Eiger make the whole operation seem so much safer—and yet the risk is there all the time. It only needs one slight error of judgement or a freak gust of wind to cause a further accident.

I was greatly interested to see the use of thermal imagers to detect victims either in snow, smoke, vegetation or at night. Transistorised loud hailer as listening devices are also very clever.

This book is not just for locals, it is as it says, International and there are references to rescues in many

Martin Veale 'limbering up' on Desperation, E1 5c, and Flying Buttress Overhang, HVS 5b, Stanage.

Photo: Chris Craggs.



of the world's mountain ranges. Reading it may one day save a life, and don't forget, when a helicopter lowers a guide rope DON'T tie it in to your belay system!

Ed.

Mountaineering and Leadership by Eric Langmuir

£9.80

In February 1973 we flogged round Bleaklow in near white out and blizzard conditions as part of the MLC assessment course—just to be able to take school pupils out on the hills; which of course we had done for years anyway. The point for me was that, although we thought we knew it all, we each had gaps in our knowledge which needed sorting out. Nobody likes to be bound by tight regulations when going on the hills but we have all seen two teachers with about 80 kids dispersed liberally all over the Kinder plateau and heading for some accident. The miracle is that there are not more fatalities. Consequently mugging up for the test caused a lot of debate and argument when we read the original Langmuir (published in 1969). How many leaders carry 120 feet of rope when walking the tops? Or a sleeping bag? We did though start to carry a first aid kit around for the first time. Oh yes, I do remember the walkers getting hot under the collar that they had to do some rock-climbing which they thought was ludicrous.

The original handbook laid out the topics needed for the summer and winter certificates in a clear and concise way but it was a syllabus rather than a teaching manual. The new version is so much more in that within the 361 pages it takes the beginner through vital stages from an instructional point of view. The navigation section is particularly good and will be of immense use in schools and colleges as well as in outdoor pursuit centres. Other excellent sections include: hypothermia, thoughts on party leadership, snow and ice techniques, basic rope work and camp craft.

As this is the official handbook of The Scottish Sports Council and the Mountainwalking Leader Training Board it is bound to sell well. If the original smaller version went out to 20,000 people then the new volume could well double the sales.

For those who are about to take young people into the hills perhaps one of the best bits of advice that comes through is, 'the 'woolliness' of the 'walking with friends situation' will no longer suffice'. How many of just tend to throw a few odds and ends into a sack and then head off into the hills?

Ed.

Rock-Climbing in France by Jean-Pierre Bouvier

Diadem. £4.95

Diadem has come up with a fairly indispensable product for the British climber at large in France. Two years ago you could have bought this guide to the locations and descriptions of 279 crags, but it would have been written in French. This guide is not the sparkling gem which it appears to be at first sight—more like cut glass masquerading as diamond—but even a replica of the 'real McCoy' may be of extensive use. The Wilson 'by appointment' seal of approval is missing here as even a cursory glance at the heading of page 14 will reveal. For 'Auvergne' read the district 'Auvergne'. The introduction alone (I spotted the first error in line 8) is a pearl to be savoured by all guidebook addicts:

'The publishers and the translator cannot vouch for the accuracy of the information and some anomalies have already been discovered particularly in the correlation between the printed information and the maps. Notes of correction from those who brave the uncertainties of the French hinterland, will be as eagerly awaited as cables from Livingstone or morse from Scott.'

And with this apologetic throw-away the kettle proceeds to call the frying pan black by panning poor Pete—again!

'Pete Livesey's selected guidebook to French rock-climbs is also useful, though it contains many errors—indeed the history of British attempts to translate and adapt information from the Latin climbing areas is a graveyard of lost reputations.'

At least Livesey only tended to be hundreds of metres out whereas crags in this guide according to expert information can be up to 25km out in some areas. The question is, would a Frenchman find Stanage if it were shown on a map in the region of Chapel-en-le Frith? Of course they would! It is certainly unique to obtain a guide-book which needs an admitted 'degree of clairvoyance' to find the cliffs.

Without wishing to cross swords with other reviewers of this guide it is interesting to speculate on the spread of Franglaise with such terms as 'Club Alpine Francais' instead of 'Club Alpin Francais' or 'French Alpine Club' but *ca va sans dire*—as Birtles said to the Bishop.

There are many errors, but at least this is a start and for anyone driving through France in the hope of finding crags by accident this guide is a big step forward in that it does get one fairly close, and certainly gives a very good overall picture of crag distribution in the country.

The Alpine Journal: 1984. Edited by John Fairley

Namcha Barwa appears to be the highest mountain in the world as yet unclimbed, and it is only the 31st highest peak. At the rate we are going, the last six in the top fifty will soon have fallen. A list of the state of the game with the top 50 peaks is just one item in this latest Alpine Club production; volume 89. No. 333.

One really can't instantly review a publication such as this as it has to be dipped into at intervals, but there is plenty of choice: Ueli Buhler on the East Pillar trying hard not to become Nanga Parbat's 41st victim; Stephen Venables losing the vital cigarette lighter on Kishtwar-Shivling; the first winter ascent of Mount Everest by the Poles; an article from last year's C.C.J.(!); down to three mini Mars bars on the Finsteraarhorn; Scottish ice techniques on the Peigne; a wandering summit book near the top of Ararat; John Barry wintering in Wales and throwing the gauntlet down to the lads north of the border; and a retaliation from Scotland in the form of Ken Crocket reviewing 1981-83. What more could a mountaineer in a comfy armchair want?

'A Chance in a Million' by R.D. Barton and D.S.B Wright The Scottish Mountaineering Trust. £4.95

Ever since a friend fell off Striding Edge in winter and plummeted down onto the thin ice of Red Tarn, I have taken a morbid interest in winter accidents, whether they be from falls, white-out, or avalanches of epic proportions. A recurring vision of tunnelling through a cornice only for one side of the tunnel to disappear leaving me bridging wider and wider until left impaled by the tip of an axe on a precarious ice bulge. Textbooks on how to do it, or what not to do are invariably as dry as dust and the only advice is to get up on to the hill to do your own thing. And then of course there are the statistics, bare bones in a local newspaper, which never account for what really happened in that alien world of snow and ice. It is only those who survive to reach the pub that can tell the tale.

This instructional book about Scottish avalanches is a book with a difference in that it is not merely an instructional book written by two of the Glenmore Lodge instructors—rather it is a fascinating account of some of the documented accidents which have taken place over the years. A short history at the beginning with some of the gory details whets the appetite, particularly the 'chance in a million' tragedy of the accident on Beinn a'Bhuird in December, 1964. More gripping was the story of 1968 when experienced climbers, Dave Bathgate, Graham Tiso and Douglas Briggs, got into trouble while out on a rescue mission.

After well-illustrated chapters on 'Avalanche Anatomy' and the even more vital 'Improving the Odds' to help one survive in the event of an emergency, there is a 'delightful', if somewhat morbid chapter entitled 'The Grey Zone', which takes a look at the spectrum of incidents from 'the possibly hilarious to the definitely tragic'. Take for example Philip Tranter on the Ben in 1965:

'And another thing too, I forgot, Wul and I were avalanched out of No 4 Gully on Nevis on Sunday. . . . Wul, poor sod, lost his axe. His hands were pinned behind him and he couldn't breathe.

When we stopped and crawled out I at first thought I was going to have to use my skill at artificial respiration on Wul, but he came round spluttering and cheerful. Funny thing was, I never even felt breathless. Still, it was all good British fun and enlivened an otherwise rather dreary day.'

And then of course there was the hair-raising story of Ben Lui in 1934 . . . and that of Cairngorm in 1976 . . . and the even more horrifying story of Carn Dearg Meadhonach in 1978:

'A shock wave or motion of some sort made them look towards the top of the ridge some two hundred and fifty feet above. At the same instant an explosive "boom", exactly like gunfire coincided with a crack running across the slope one hundred feet above the party. The crack was extensive and was probably one hundred and fifty feet wide and occurred above the whole of the party. Instantly the mass of snow below the break began to slide fairly slowly initially, downwards.

All good gripping reading, made all the more frightening by the fact that not everyone gets out of such predicaments to tell the story.

Of the several appendices I found the list of avalanche black spots most interesting, but the appendix of total known accidents was like a first ascent list in a climbing guide only a bit more gruesome. One can also play spot the names: Rear Admiral Lawder, John Harvey (C.C.), McInnes, Langmuir, Gunn Clark, Pete Boarman, Don Roscoe, etc. etc. Grab your terrors and your crampons and head for the border—you may just manage to get your name added to this list in time for the next edition of what is a most fascinating book.

Ed.

TWENTY YEARS ON BEN NEVIS: W. T. KILGOUR

This facsimile of the 1906 Second Edition has 208 pages including 32 photographic illustrations and an additional 8 chapter tailpiece drawings. Kilgour's book is a charming account of the life and work of the observers at the highest meteorological station in the British Isles. It was written with the aim of raising funds toward the continued life of the Ben Nevis Observatory, and his account is anecdotal and full of human interest. However, it also shows the author's deep appreciation of the natural beauty of his surroundings and contains a core of meteorological data that is of great interest to those who frequent the hills.

Copies available from: Anglesey Books, 1 Thomas Street, Holyhead, Gwynedd.

£5.95 plus 74p for postage and packing.

AREA NOTES

Peak District Notes

Well, at last the year's over and we can all breathe a sigh of relief as we head off towards the relative safety of the gym and get on with the real stuff, training. People seem to spend so much time moving iron these days that I'm sure that they find the summer's climbing a bit of an annoying digression and dream of hangs, curls, flyers and the like—but I digress.

On the gritstone the main activist has been John Dawes whose 'limestone finger strength' has ironically served him best on grit. Undoubtedly his real talent lies in the ability to climb steep slabs using crystals with little regard for his own safety. Indeed, all but one of his routes have been led/soloed on-sight after cleaning, without practice, although it must be said that a good inspection goes a long way. Even so he has survived some hair-raising falls/jumps and few people have been keen to repeat his routes save on a top-rope. His closest 'rivals' have been John Allen and Simon Nadin. Allen, who was once called 'the Shirley Temple of gritstone climbing' was unkindly renamed 'the Judy Garland of the same game' when he failed to cause a huge impact on his welcome return. However, he patiently regained his original form and is now climbing better than ever. Nadin, also going well, has concentrated mainly on the western edges. Other regular contributors have included Paul Mitchell, Andy Barker and Ron Fawcett.

On Stanage about 25 new routes have been added to the edge this year. The desperate-looking arete right of Left Hand Tower went at an unbelievable E3 5c, to Les Hermczinski (*Slap and Tickle*) and in the same area *Heath Robinson*, E5 6b finished off Doctor of Physik and *Saltation*, E4 6c, took the wall left of Old Salt—both these being the work of Dawes. Dawes was also responsible for *The Cool Curl* which at E4 6b follows the centre of the face right of Out for the Count, and the fact that John decided to top-rope this one speaks for itself. Shorter but no less difficult routes by him include: *Silk*, E4 6c and *Satin* E3 6c—the direct starts to Argus and Living at the Speed respectively, *Swoop* E4 6b above Tower Face and *Twin Cam* E4 6b on the buttress left of Apparent North buttress. The latter buttress now has *Stanage Without Oxygen* E4 6b by John Allen, which involves some precarious slaps on slopers to gain the finish of Apparent North. Allen has also climbed the superb, oft looked at, wall left of Whillans' Pendulum, *Wall of Sound* E4 6b and the wall left of Desperation, *Pacific Ocean Wall* at the same grade. Undoubtedly his hardest addition has been the well-brushed slab left of Shock Horror Slab, *Shirley's Shining Temple* which at a hard 6c(E4) possibly represents the most technically difficult slab move in the Peak at present. Allen had also looked at, but was beaten to, the wall left of Old Friends. The *Crypt Trip* by Fawcett involves some immense stretches at E5 6b.

On nearby Bamford Edge Dawes has added a few routes including the excellent *Sterling Moss*, E4 6a, over the roof 3m left of Ontos and the outstanding *Cliff Richard* up the blank wall left of Curving Crack. This, at E5 6c, ranks with the best on gritstone. More recently A35 has been resascended at a new grade of E4 6b by Steve Allen.

Dawes has also left his mark on Millstone. Using side runners he had previously ascended the wall right of Bond Street at E5 6b (*Monopoly*), only to return later to repeat it using a low peg runner but no side runners at E6. His *Wall Street Crash*, E6 6c, was a poorer effort however, using pre-placed protection (some lengthy) on bolt heads up to the wall left of Shaftesbury Avenue; even so it is reputedly very hard. In contrast he made an impressive ascent of the arete left of The Rack using some old threaded bolt heads and a peg runner as protection—*Adam Smith's Invisible Hand*, E6 6b.

The big news on this crag however, was Fawcett's lead of The Great Arete first pitch. Its grade, E6 6b, and unusual protection, an amigo, have ensured no repeats to date. Fawcett also climbed the wall right of Windrete at E5, 6b and finished direct on Jermyn Street at the same grade. *Clock People*, again by Fawcett follows the thin crack left of Watling Street at E6 6c, and the arete right of S.S.S. was left to Neil Foster for *A Winter's Grip*, E5 6a. Just across the road on Lawrencefield, the wall left of Billy Whiz has been climbed by Tony Ryan at a very optimistic E4 6a—*Von Ryan's Express*.

Fawcett has also been active at Froggatt. *The Mint 400* takes the wall right of Ulysses and *Neon Dust* the wall left of Narcissus starting up that route, both at E5 6b. Unfortunately the hardest addition here has been short-lived. *Benign Lives* by Dawes took the centre of the slab right of Right Flake Crack until a less than delicate individual broke off a crucial pebble whilst top-roping. Although it has been reascended on a rope even with the pebble it was E6 6c and is therefore likely to remain unled for some time. Also desperate but still existing is *Hot Knives* by Jerry Moffatt, which takes the wall left of Cavatina. Of a more reasonable grade is *Parting Hare*, which at E2 5c, sidles along the break two-thirds of the way up The Great Slab—the work of Nick Dixon, and reputedly worthwhile.

Moving south Curbar Edge has received several new routes. *Ulysses or Bust*, E5 6b, laybacks the arete left of 7m Crack (now called The Unreachable Star) and was named after a subsequent ankle-shattering attempt by its first ascensionist, Neil Foster, at an on-sight solo of Ulysses on Stanage. *King of the Swingers*, E5, 6c, provided Fawcett with a crucifix move on the wall left of Diet of Worms. He also climbed a direct start to One Step Beyond using a pre-placed runner as a carrot. Yet again, that man Dawes appeared and produced a couple of desperates in *White Water*, up the Slab right of Canoe, and *Committed*, up the wall right of Insanity—both routes weighing in at E5 6c.

The best route however, has proved to be *Forbidden Planet* up the wall left of Apollo. At E4 6a John Allen has produced a route comparable in style and quality to his now classic routes of the 70s.

Moving farther south to Gardom's, Roadside Buttress has been considerably altered by the addition of several new routes varying from E3 6a to E1 5c, the work of Keith Sharples, Chris Craggs and Graham Parkes. Sharples also added *Raging Insomnia* at E3 6a right of Tsetse Fly but had to avoid the challenge of the roof below Sleeping Sickness. Even so it is worthwhile. The most important addition however, has been by Foster, climbing the impressive prow left of The Crocodile, *Make it Snappy*, E6 6b.

On nearby Birchen Edge, Allen has led the previously top-roped roof left of Hollybush Gully to give a *Gritstone Megamix* at E2 6b, and across the road on Gun Buttress he has climbed the prow itself, *Ultra Violence*, E3 6b.

In the Burbage Valley things have been relatively quiet but what has been done has been worthwhile. On Burbage South Dawes climbed the futuristic slab right of Byne's Flake to produce *The Braille Trail* at E5 6c. This major addition remains unled and since the unfortunate loss of a pebble, is an even more sustained and serious proposition. Also on this crag Moffatt resurfaced to climb the fine arete right of David, resulting in *Messiah*, E5 6c. On Burbage North the extremely patient Alan Rouse has at last managed to link together the moves right of Remergence to leave.

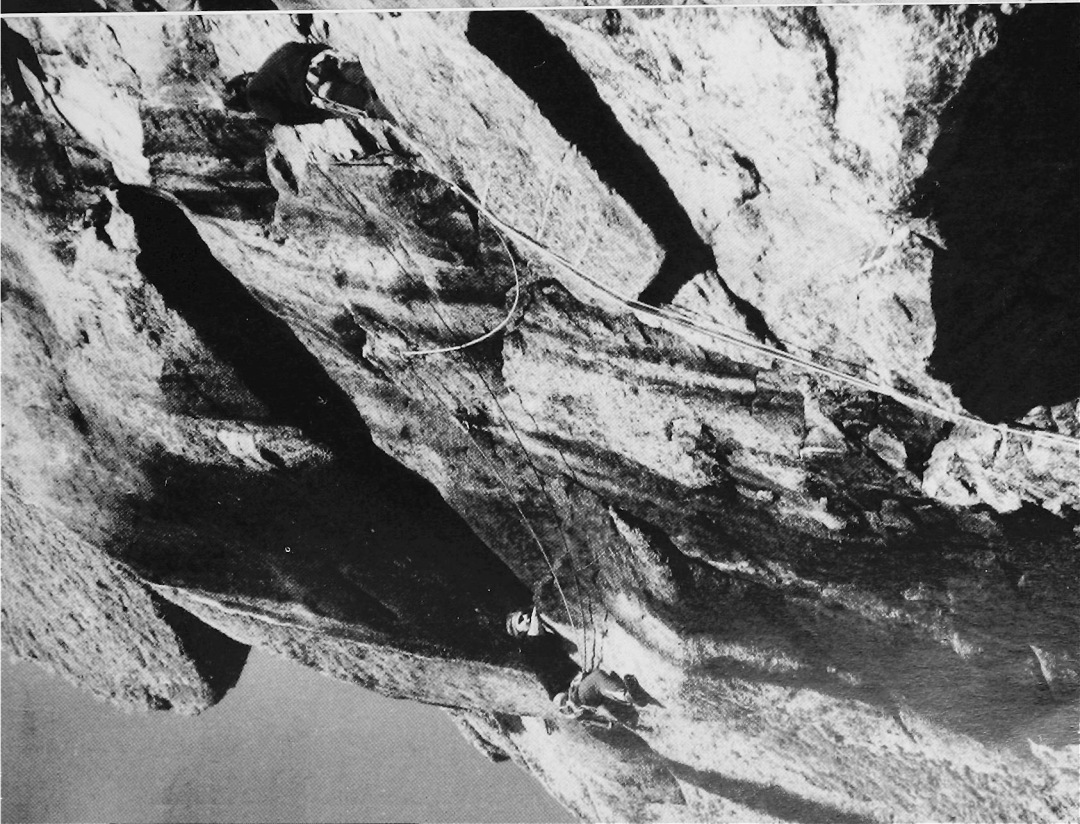
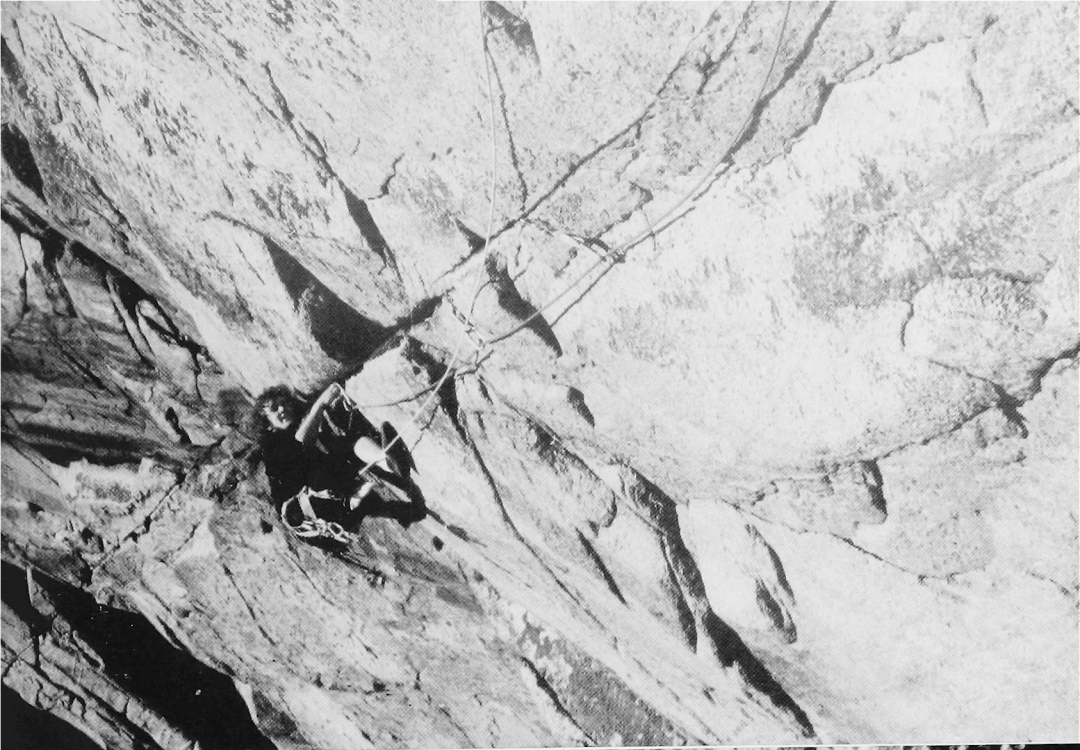
Going back south again there has been the long awaited development in the Ambergate area spearheaded by Paul Mitchell and Andy Barker. In Duke's Quarry, *T.L.* at X.S. 5c follows the first crackline left of The Great Corner, and *The Dragon Whose Fire Went Out*, X.S. 6a takes the next crackline—both these routes being climbed by Mitchell. The second crackline left again was ascended by Barker at E5 6a, *Long-Nosed Hawk-Nasty*, who also climbed a crack left of Hen Corner, *Vincent Vole Likes Smelly Shoes*, E4 6a. Mitchell has also climbed *Pale Object Moving Fast* up the wall 40 feet left of The Great Crack, X.S. 6b. This pair has also been active at Hallmoor Quarry and Bauston Tor, producing even more routes in the E3/4 6a/b region, details of which will appear in the forthcoming Derwent Gritstone guide.

Across the Peak on Staffordshire gritstone there has been a reduced activity. On the Roaches the slab right of Hypothesis was finally solved by Simon Nadin at E5 6b; he also added *The Secrets of Dance*, E4 6b, up the wall just right of Eugene's Axe. *Barriers in Time*, another Nadin route takes the arete right of Ackit, E6 6b. *Bloodstone*, E6 6b, the centre of the slab right of The Mincer and *Bloodspeed*, E6 6c, the slab further right are also his routes, and on the Nth Cloud he straightened out Nick Dixon's route *Ageing Adolescent* up the slab right of Rowan Tree Crack, E4 6b. On Hen Cloud he has climbed the tower and rippled vein right of Chockstone Chimney to give *Master of Reality*, E5 6c, and just left of this some other veins have given *Mindbridge*, E7 6c.

Left: Martin Randel and Mark Stokes on *Suicide Wall*.

Right: Ed Wood on *Thin Wall Special*.

Photos: Keith Sharples.





Just across the field at Ramshaw, Nadin has added a direct start to Handrail at E4 6b, whereas a little further afield at Harston Rock the impressive arete left of DNA has been climbed by Nick Dixon at E6 6b.

Finally on the 'Mountain' Grit, a handful of routes have been sorted out by Alan 'Himalayan approach' Rouse and Andy 'laid back approach' Bailey. *Book of Changes*, E3 6b, is in the Chinese Wall area of Kinder and takes the buttress left of Surprise, while further west on Ashop Edge *Kinsman*, E3 6a, leaves Brothers' Eliminate to finish up a rounded arete and *Growth Centre*, E3 6a, takes the wall left of Dunsinane. All these routes were done by Rouse while *Space Runner*, E4 6a, up the wall left of Legacy and *Count Dracula*, E1 5b, up the right side of the Twisted Smile Face were provided by Andy Bailey.

Over on the white stuff the action has been no less than on grit although more climbers have been adding new routes. On the awful Great Rocks Dale Gary Gibson has found *A Recipe for Paralysis*, E4 6a, between Dismembered and No Cure for Gangrene, while Steve Lewis was apparently happy free-climbing Double 0 at E2 5c. Funny but I thought it fell down years ago. Across the way at Staden Richard Davies has solved the arete 300m right of Joint Effort Wall at E4 5c and nearby Gibson has added *Much Monkey Magic* to Craig y Biceps taking the crack and roof 15m left of Main Motor Mile.

Going on to some decent rock, Chee Dale has been almost blitzed with new routes, most of them worthwhile. In 1983, Dave Lee free-climbed Little Miss Muffet on the Embankment to produce *Open Secret*. This year a hold has come off pushing this up to E4 6c. Just a little right *Afterlife* takes the face 6m right of The Max Works which has a new direct start, *Incandescent Courage*—both E5 6b and both by Davies.

The Cornice continues to draw attention. On the left-hand end Gibson climbed *Up the River Without A Paddle*, which at a sustained E4 6a takes the face left of Spiders from Mars; he also added a direct finish to Martial Music, E5 6a and ascended the wall and roofs right of Clarion Call at E4 6a, *Armistice Day*. The controversial Clarion Call has again been in the news. After Mitchell removed the bolts the stream of ascents rapidly stopped but the route has now been re-led using peg-runners, by Nick Dixon—a fine effort at E5 6a. Further along Fawcett has added a direct finish to Bad Blood to produce a very sustained route at E5 6b.

A short paddle away Chee Tor East has been rediscovered. Nadin has freed White Out, E4 6a, and climbed the groove left of White Life, *Too Tame for Trouble*, at the same grade. The crack right of White Out, *White Death* was soloed by Davies, E4 6b, a serious climb. Keith Sharples working on the guidebook, ran out of hard well-protected routes and decided to add some of his own, and pretty good they are too. *The Glorious Ninth* free-climbs 2nd Helping at E3 5c while *Blanc de Blanc* takes the groove and arete right of White Life starting up that route, E4 5c. White Life itself has been re-cleaned and is now an excellent very reasonably protected E4 6a.

The routes continue to appear on Chee Tor particularly in the region right of White Gold. Starting up that route then breaking out right Gibson climbed *Nobody's Hero*, an excellent route at a hard E4 6a. Just right again THE LINE has at last fallen to modern technique to give *The Myrmidon*. On this sustained climb Sharples cemented a peg runner into a drilled hole to produce an excellent route deserving an E5 6b grade. Rumour has it however, that the cement has already started cracking—which is a big worry for Sharples seeing that he has almost completely rebuilt his house. 5m right again *Fatty Manuel and the Paranoid Oysters* is the work of Paul Mitchell at E4 6a and at a higher level Paul Clarke traversed out from Koroblin to add *The Ape Escape* at the same grade. Mitchell also climbed the groove 5m right of Koroblin to produce an interesting route, *Kriklet's Cancer*—again at E4 6a. Interesting from the point of view of protection, two points, both in-situ. The first is a tied-off knife blade and the second a 'mashie' i.e. a hex hammered into a depression in the rock! Further right Nadin has climbed the direct start to Mortlock's Arete and then wandered leftwards up the wall right of Tequila resulting in a very difficult pitch, *Eyes of Fire*, E6 6c. He then continued up from the girdle left of Mortlock's second pitch to give *Freedom Trap*, E5 6a.

Other worthwhile routes added in this area include *Goal of the Month*, E1 5b, right of Match of the Day, and *Snap Dragon*, E4 6a, in between Flycatcher and Leering Wall—both by Gibson. Further upstream on Nettle Buttress the scoop in the arete left of Stuffed Badger has been climbed by Sharples at E4 6a and Dougie Hall has managed the impressive wall left of No Light, E6 6b. On Two Tier Buttress the big news has been Moffatt's free ascent of the first pitch of Orange Sunshine, while equally desperate looking is *The Flight of Icarus*, E5 6b, taking the wall right of Goldfinger, a Nadin effort. Moving rightwards several routes have been done on the Long Wall, the best of which is *High Society* on the wall right of Voyage to Nowhere at E5 6b which was first ascended by Sharples.

Moving back downstream to Water Cum Jolly both banks have witnessed some activity. On the left bank *Tree Dweller's Crack*, E3 6a, is just left of Deception while just right of Deception is *Rio Verde*, E4 6a. Both these were climbed by Rouse who partnered Bailey on *Christilano* Wall, E4 6a, up the groove left of Marsh Dweller's Rib. Meanwhile on Rubicon Wall, Barker added a direct start to Jezebel, E5 6b, and Mitchell traversed from Honeymoon Blues to Lapin for no apparent reason, *Dapper Slapper*, E5 6a. On the right bank the most important development has been on The Cornice and undoubtedly the best route put up has been *Brachiation Dance* at E5 6a by Tim Freeman. This takes the roofs just left of Nemesis and overhangs continuously throughout its 20m, offering extremely sustained movement. Also here *The Bulge* 1984 by Barker follows bulges at the left-hand end of the wall at E5 6b, whilst *Nothing to Help the Poor* by Mitchell breaks rightwards from Barker's route at E5 6c.

On Raven Tor more big numbers have been added. *The Body Machine* (Fawcett) goes in between Indecent Exposure and The Prow at the usual E6 6c whilst the direct start to The Prow has been practised into submission by Moffatt to give *Revelation* E7 6c. At the same grade Moffatt has conquered the wall right of Obscene Gesture, *Verbal Abuse*, and Tim Freeman literally pieced together using araldite a direct start to Rooster Booster, E5 6c.

Considerable effort has also been put in at the recently discovered Cressbrook Dale with the addition of no fewer than 10 new routes since the publication of the supplement. In between Speckled Egg and Doing the Business four 6c's have been bouldered out by Quentin Fisher and Moffatt. The main activist here has been Paul Mitchell, adding routes to the wall right of Opportunity Mocks. *Bleeding Scalp* is a 6b diagonal entry into that route whilst 5m right is *Not a Patch on the Apaches* at X.S. 5c and Burying the Red Man, E5 6b, is a Barker addition taking the wall and scoop leading to the latter route. On the left bank the superb leftward trending line from The Plough was sorted out at E5 6b by Martin Atkinson and Mitchell has entered various grooves left of Square Peg, Round Hole all around the E5 6b region. *Disturbing the Daylight Night Owl* is 12m left and *The Smoke and Noise Filled Room* is 3m left.

Away from the water, at dusty Stoney Middleton there have been few additions the best of which is *Easy Skanking* breaking out left from Little Plum and continuing up the groove right of Gerremdown, an Andy Pollitt effort, E6 6c, 6b. *You Are Only Mortal* by Mitchell follows the wall left of Breathing Underwater at 6b whilst his *Swine Vesicular* also 6b takes the groove right of Circe to a junction with that route.

Finally in Staffordshire there are only a few routes to report from 1984. On the Dove Holes Pumping Iron was free-climbed (without the 'rest' point) by Craig Smith with no change in grade whilst on Dovedale Church Gibson added *Blue Sister* up the centre of the face crossed by Judge Jeffries, E3 6a and *Sold Down the River*, E4 6b, up the flake on the very back of the Church. Also in this area Gibson did *The Dovedale Dash* up the right arete and wall of Cat's Eye and down on Reynard's Cave managed a very fine route following the thin streak up the right wall of the cave, *Things Aint What They Used To Be*, both being E4 6a.

So that's it, another productive year from the Peak and this is only a selection of the many first ascents. A promising note is the fact that very few routes have been added using bolts despite the predictions of a year ago. Indeed I wouldn't be surprised to see a few go next year . . . those on Darius, Circe and A Midnight Summer Dream perhaps?

Graham Hoey

North Wales Notes

In an area which has been well combed for new lines it is inevitable that new development will be restricted to: good lines on minor crags; minor lines and utterly desperate routes of the highest standard on the main crags; and even in 1984 some discovery of unknown and undeveloped crags for the lucky opportunist.

Two notable achievements which do not fit the above trend stand out as milestones in Welsh climbing history—almost too startling to comprehend are the solos of Cockblock on the Grochan and Lord of the Flies on the Cromlech, by Phil Davidson. Both routes involve total commitment at the highest level of performance and each route in its own right is normally a test-piece for the best leaders of the day using all available protection. To ignore that safety factor on these routes is to take commitment one stage further towards that fine line which exists between life and death. Clearly this, the purest of approaches, is in direct conflict with the opinion of those who advocate bolt protection and whose policy is to put the safety of life and limb as a higher priority than purity of style.

Not surprisingly, with the very dry summer this year, Cloggy saw plenty of action and at the forefront John Redhead not only made the second ascent of Master's Wall, E7 6b, but also produced another 'equally' hard line, *Margins of the Mind*, E7 6b/c, up the wall left of Psycho Killer. The reported comment was that 'Margins of the Mind is more sustained and technical, but Master's Wall is a more difficult lead'. Obviously it's all in the mind! Redhead and Dave Towse also climbed a fine, new pitch, *Wombs Bits*, E5 6b, the direct start to Great Wall. Farther along, Andy Sharp and John Harwood free-climbed *East Gully Wall Direct* at E4 6a, and then started on the Far East Buttress with *Human Touch*, E4 6a 5c, the grooves left of Little Krapper. At the other end of the crag Colin Foord and Martin Wragg continued to plug the gaps with three new routes: *Going Straight*, E2 5b, 5b, 5a, 5a, 5a, the groove right of Sych then just left of Moss Groove; *Hidden Treasure*, E2 5b, 4c, 4c, 5a, 4c, the overlap right of Great Slab then a slab and groove to reach Mynedd; and lastly *Bloodlust*, E4 5b, 5b, a line right of Slanting Slab, to finish over the roofs above Bloody Slab. With the prospect of a new Cloggy guide before long there should be plenty of incentive to make the best of the weather in 1985.

In the Pass, apart from Phil Davidson's remarkable soloing exploits, one or two other events have caused interest. Not a few people breathed a sigh of relief when Nick Dixon chopped Cathcart's offending bolts on New Era/Steel Appeal to give *Mild Steel*, E5 6a. Andy Popp quickly then made the second ascent. Also on the South side Andy Sharp and John Harwood made the slog up to Clogwyn y Dydsyl worthwhile with: *Hexagonal Phase*, E1 5b, 5b, 5a, a direct line up the Quarter Wall and *Bad Moon Rising*; E3 6a, the impressive crack left of Simulid. Low down on Dinas Mot Jim Moran cracked the overhang of Groper Buttress to give *Zyklon B*. On Clogwyn y Grochan, Pete Gomersall with Bonny Masson sneaked in *Cunning Stunts*, E3 6a, to the left of S.S. Special, before, Bonny took over the lead on *China Girl*, E2 5b/c, to the left of Canol on Craig Ddu. This lead is very significant in that in a year when women leaders are forging ahead by getting up hard routes up to E5, women are also starting to make inroads on the new route scene.

Despite some opposition by the 'Authorities' there has been a great deal of interest shown in the quarries of the Llanberis area. In Vivian Quarry three hard lines have emerged: *Bell Dance*, E6 6b, by John Redhead (Second ascent by Fawcett) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, E5 6a, by Andy Pollitt are to the right and left of the Dervish. *Swinging by the Bell*, E5 6a, is a girdle by Dave Towse. A fine discovery, the Rainbow Slab, has yielded some superb pitches including: *Naked Before the Beast*, E6 6b (Towse and Redhead), *Cystitis by Proxy*, E6 6a, 6b, with TWO BOLTS (Redhead and Towse), *Poet by Pink*, E5 6b, with TWO BOLTS (Redhead), *Raped by Affection* with TWO BOLTS (Redhead), *Pull my Daisy*, E3 5c (Mark Lynden) and *The Rainbow of Recalcitrance*, E6 6b, 6b (John Sylvester and Mark Lynden). With these routes access is likely to be a problem for some time.

In the Ogwen valley Sharp and Harwood have added two routes to Gallt yr Ogof; *Red Cloud*, E2 5b,

5b, 5b, follows the left-hand side of the roofs right of Sodom while *War Horse*, E4 6b, 6a, is to the right of Red Cloud. Tom Leppert and Jim Yearsley climbed *Ghost Rider*, E3 6a, on Drws Nodded and Simon Cardy and Steve Boyden did *Optical Illusion*, E3 6a (1 point aid) up the wall left of Cobalt Dream. The big lead in the valley, however, was made by Nick Dixon when he succeeded on *Teenage Menopause* the bold wall left of Demetreus. Jonny Dawes on the second ascent suggested a possible grade of E7 6b. Dixon also climbed *One More Calorie*, E5/6, between Wavelength Touch and Balcony Cracks. Cardy and Boyden followed the winter line of Devil's Appendix to give *Appendicitis*, E3 5c, 4c. Further down the valley on Carnedd y Filiast Arthur Bowman and Ray Fletcher did three new lines on Tree Slab: *Friction*, VD; *White Lightning*, S; and *Bracken Corner*, S. On the other side of the valley on Carreg Mianog the wall left of Central Route yielded *Red Start*, E4 5c, 5b, to Sharp and Harwood.

Tremadoc has seen very little development but there have been one or two very notable repeats. After a few falls Redhead made the second ascent of Psyche and Burn after a wait of three years but the main interest was in Strawberries. Ben Moon and Mark Leach made ascents but so far Andy Pollitt's five falls, Martin Atkinson's three falls, Christian Griffith's two falls and Chris Gore's two falls have been the best ascents so far. Atkinson also produced a direct finish to give *Dream Topping* at E7 6c. Pollitt nicely knocked out the LAST aid point on Tremadoc when he freed the Hogmanay Girdle. Two of the few new routes in the area fell to Andy Bailey and Richard Haszko when they ascended: *The Steal*, E4 6b, the roof and groove between Scarecrow and Steelfingers; and *Stormy Weather*, E3 5c, 6a, a route in the area of W.O.B. On Carreg Hyll Drem Pat Littlejohn and Malcolm Campbell while 'passing through' tackled the very large roof left of Raging Bull to give *Raving Lunatic*, E5 6b, 6a—a desperate line if ever there was one. *Beyond the Cosmos*, E3 5c, by Dave Cuthbertson takes the fine crack left of the descent gully on Craig y Llyn, while on the Wenallt Martin Crook continued his exploration with *Psychedelic Cult*, E2 5b.

Gogarth still manages to lure the keenest activists, offering as it does such a wide range of routes and gripping situations. With work progressing steadily on the next guide it is significant that the remaining aid moves are attracting the jackals. Not only did Pollitt free Ludwig at E6 6b, but at last he cracked the problem of the last aid point on Mammoth to give a tremendous free route of E5 6b. Pollitt also climbed the huge chimney left of Mammoth at E6. Pollitt's *Skinhead Moonstomp*, E6 6a, 6b, takes a line right of Alien then a tremendous flake above. Joe Healey has already made the second ascent of this big new line. Moran, Williams and Sonczak found *The Cruise*, E5 6b, on the wall right of Winking Crack.

When we had first explored the North Stack wall in 1978 and after Al Evans brushed the line of The Cad we set the rumours going that here was the pitch of the future. Little did we think that in six short years the wall would sport some of the hardest and best pitches in North Wales. Most of these desperate pitches have fallen to John Redhead who seems to be able to 'put it all together' with the bare minimum (or less!) of protection. *Art Groupie*, E5 6a, (Pollitt and Redhead) is the wall right of Blue Peter; *Birth Trauma*, E6 6a, (Redhead and Pollitt) takes the wall left of Wall of Horrors; a right to left line across The Cad (*The Clown?*) E6/7 6b, is another Redhead creation, as was *Demons of Bosch*, E6 6b, the wall left of South Sea Bubble. On the latter, the rope somehow unclipped from the bolt runner leaving John well and truly committed above retreat which must have been somewhat unnerving—except perhaps to a climber of that calibre. Much to my annoyance Redhead also grabbed *Le Bon Sauveur*, E3 5c, to the left of Not Fade Away. Jim Moran cleaned and brushed it a few years back and somehow we just never got back to finish it off. Ah well, that's life in the fast lane nowadays. Rumours have circulated of *Helmet Boiler*, a hard and serious route by Mick Fowler, to the left of Death Trap in Mousetrap Zawn.

There are several areas on Gogarth which will be opened up in the next few years and just one area at Rhoscolyn—a mere five miles from Gogarth—has yielded a whole host of new routes this year, mainly to Paul Williams and Jim Moran. Of the top six, only *The Trail of Tears*, E4 6a, by Gaz Healey (featured on the front of Mountain 99) was not the work of Moran and Williams. These two accounted for *Medicine*

The good . . . the bad . . . and the ugly! Mike 'Appleseed' Browell planting trees, Don Whillans at Zennor, and Trevor Jones on the Helyg boulder on the last day of his Presidency. Photos: Derek Walker.





Man, E4 6a; *Big Boys*, E4/5 6a; *Warpath*, E4/5 6a; *Dreams and Screams*, E5/6 6b; and lastly what was described as ‘One of the most audacious routes in North Wales’—*The Jub-Jub Bird*, E6 6b. With over 30 routes to go for this crag is destined for high popularity as soon as full descriptions of the routes get circulated—these are to be found at the back of this journal.

On the Ormes several top routes have been added to Castell y Gwynt by Andy Pollitt: the hanging column of rock left of Central Pillar is *Blast Peru*, E5 6b, 6a (2 bolt runners); the groove right of New Dimensions is *Good Taste!*, E5 6b (3 bolt runners); the bulging wall left of Psychic Threshold is *Teenage Kicks*, E6 6b—6 falls taken over two days. After a 40-foot flier Martin Atkinson completed *Sidekick*, E6 6a, to the right of Psychic Threshold.

Craig-y-Forwyn has seen slight development with the odd route by Gary Gibson. He added *The Black Hole*, E4 5c, to the Upper Tier and then climbed two very hard routes on the main crag. *The People Mover*, E5 6b (1 bolt) is just right of The Snake and received a second ascent from Phil Davidson. Gibson also straightened out Book of Dreams to give *Magnum Opus*, E5 6a, but provocatively used a bolt on the pitch. This was unceremoniously chopped by Pollitt on the second ascent. Of considerable interest is the second ascent of Space Case by Phil Davidson.

Despite the ban, Craig Pen Trwyn has maintained its interest this year and many lines have been done. To find all the routes however, one now needs a guidebook, two supplements plus all new route details! Oh for a complete and up to date guidebook to cover all North Wales limestone. On a new buttress the Lyons brothers have added *The Reflex*, E4 6a. Pollitt and Tom Jones climbed the roofs right of A Touch Too Much to give *Ape's Hit* (Well I included all letters in the correct order! Ed) E4 6b. Masterclass has at last had a second ascent at E6 6c from Chris Gore and Ben Moon did the second ascent of Oyster at E5 6c. Pollitt connected Bearded Clam and Oyster to give *Readers' Wives*, E5 6b and also reclimbed De Torquemada without the flake at E4 6a. *Krankenstein*, E4 6a, by Steve Lewis takes Gorgo crack direct. From the bolt on Price of Gold Pollitt climbed to the thread on Kruggerand at E5 6b and followed direct to the crux of Sour Dough at E4 6a. The wall above Cruise Missile gave Dave Towse and Keith Robertson, *Greenham Girls*, E2 5b. Steve Lewis did the wall right of Charlton Chestwig—*Dive, Dive, Dive* at E5 6b (2 bolt runners+1 peg) and the thin crack just to the right, *Crunchy Toad*, E4 6b. Paul Clark climbed *The 11th Hour*, E3 6a/b, to the left of Gibson's *Homo Sapiens*—itself left of Thin Red Line. A harder line, *White Hopes*, E5 6b, was done to the right of Homo Sapiens by Pollitt and Atkinson.

Lower Pen Trwyn has given lots of excitement this year in a variety of ways. *The Pink Pinkie Snuffs It*, E4 6a/b, follows grooves in the wall right of Cynical Pinnacle (Staniforth and Curley). Steve Lewis found two parallel lines left of the cave; *Face Race*, E5 6b, and *Mean Mother*, E5 6b, while at the extreme left end Atkinson added *Under the Boardwalk*, E4 6a (1 bolt runner). The wall left of Libertango yielded *La Boheme*, E5 6b to Pollitt. Adrenalin was running high over an overhanging monstrosity in which Ben Moon had placed EIGHT bolts. It finally took Ben SIX DAYS to sort out *Statement of Youth*, E7 6b, and very ethically he pulled his ropes through before making the final push. It didn't take long, however, before Gerry Moffatt nipped in for the second ascent of this mega-route. While trying to sum up the achievements of a memorable year perhaps it is apt to end with Moffatt's spectacular unroped descent—a 50 foot solo leap off the lip of Pigeon's Cave—into the sea below. A slight contrast to Davidson's solo of Lord of the Flies! As they say, 'what goes up must come down'.

Geoff Milburn



NEW CLIMBS

NORTH WALES—GOGARTH AREA

RHOSCOLYN

THE MAIN CLIFF—LLAWDER (The Sun Walls)

Icarus follows the obvious ramp and groove up the right-hand side.

The following four routes are on the tower right of Icarus.

1 Adrenalin, HVS, is the corner at the extreme right-hand end of the Sun Walls.

2 The Cocktail Trip 120 feet E4

An interesting pitch with good steep climbing. Start below the groove in the arete of the tower.

1 120 feet. 5c. Climb the short groove moving right to a bulge at 25 feet. Pull over this onto a sloping shelf, then steeply up the groove on the right to a perched block. Step left to climb a short corner, crux, and continue in the same line to the top.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

3 The Medicine Man 110 feet E4

A sustained and technical test-piece. Start at the base of the tower as for The Savage Sunbird.

1 110 feet. 6a. Follow The Savage Sunbird to the sloping ledge at 35 feet. Move right and up to a good hold. Climb the groove, passing 2 peg runners, and the wall above, until moves right lead to a small ledge on The Cocktail Trip. Continue up the last 20 feet of this to finish.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams, J. Sonczak

4 The Savage Sunbird 120 feet E3

Excellent climbing up the leaning groove just right of Icarus. Start at the pocketed wall 6 feet left of The Cocktail Trip starting groove.

1 120 feet. 5c. Go boldly up the wall to a good ledge at 20 feet. Gain jugs on the sloping shelf 10 feet higher. Balance left and pull up onto a ledge. Climb directly up into the superb groove which has an awkward exit. Finish up leftwards.

First ascent: P. Williams, I Peters

5 Icarus, HVS, is the ramp and corner crack.

6 Big Boys 100 feet E4/5

A bold and impressive pitch up the impending wall above the start of Icarus. Start on the orange slab below a 20-foot flake crack.

1 100 feet. 6a. As for Icarus to the top of the flake. Step right and go up to another flake. Follow the arching crack/shallow corner to a peg runner. Make difficult moves left, then go up and over the bulge via a flake crack. Move awkwardly up the corner on the right to good holds below a bottomless chimney. Step left into the chimney exiting left at its top onto the last moves of The Sun.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

7 The Sun 145 feet E3

A superb route which follows the massive bottomless groove left of Big Boys. Start as for Icarus and Big Boys below the 20-foot crack.

1 25 feet. 4b. Scramble up to belay on top of the flake.

2 120 feet. 5c. From the left-hand end of the belay ledge, peg runner, traverse left into the groove on good holds. Move up, peg runner, and follow the crack strenuously to a small ledge at 60 feet. Continue more easily on good rock moving right 10 feet below the top of the crag. Finish direct.

First ascent: P. Williams, J. Moran

8 Warpath 125 feet E4/5

A sensational and airy climb which takes the arete left of The Sun. Start on the ledge 25 feet left of the arete at a peg and block belay. This is also the start of the Durkan/Costello route El Dorado.

1 125 feet. 6a. From the right-hand end of the ledge, move up and traverse right to the foot of the orange hour-glass shaped slab, peg runner. Climb the slab to its apex. Jam over the roof to good holds. The strenuous and technical wall above leads past a peg runner to a ledge on the arete. Finish leftwards easily.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

9 The Mask of the Red Death 135 feet E3

The crackline left of Warpath gives a superb finish. Start as for Warpath, at the peg and block belay

1 80 feet. 5c. From the right-hand end of the ledge, move up and traverse right to the base of the orange hour-glass slab (as for Warpath). Climb the slab for 15 feet to good footholds. Step down (hands on the square ledge) and swing left into a small groove. Climb this and continue to a good horizontal crack. Pull directly over the bulge to a small belay ledge and peg belay.

2 55 feet. 5c. Stride right then continue up the crack which has an awkward move near the top.

First ascent: P. Williams, T. Jadwat

10 El Dorado, HVS, is the easiest way up the wall left of the previous route.

11 Waxwing 100 feet E1

A better and more pleasant way of doing the old HVS route, Cocaine, which started up the scruffy corner on the left. Excellent climbing. Start at a 2-foot square block belay below the middle of the orange slabby wall.

1 100 feet. 5a. Climb the wall past a peg runner to a ledge at 30 feet. Follow this left to the corner. Go up the crack and wall around the bulge to reach the delightful finishing groove.

First ascent: P. Williams, J. Moran

12 Cocaine, HVS, the corner started direct left of Waxwing.

To the right of Waxwing, a Dave Durkan route, The Wild Rover, meandered up the wall. This has been straightened out to give two fine routes.

13 Little Queenie 100 feet E1

A smart climb up the centre of the Waxwing Wall. Start at the 2-foot square block, as for Waxwing.

1 100 feet. 5b. Go up the wall for 30 feet to the sloping ledge. Continue up just right of the pointed flake with a tricky move to gain a ledge on the right. Move onto the ledge above. Step back left and finish up the centre of the wall past an obvious flake.

First ascent: P. Williams, J. Moran

14 Mainlinin' 110 feet E1

Good exposed climbing on sound rock. Start as for Waxwing and Little Queenie.

1 110 feet. 5b. Climb the wall to the horizontal crack at 30 feet. This leads rightwards to a flake on the arete. Go up and left to the ledge at the base of the groove (junction with Little Queenie). Finish up the groove in a fine position.

First ascent: P. Williams, J. Moran

15 Direct Start (to Mainlinin') 40 feet E4

A bold problem.

1 40 feet. 6a. The shallow groove just right of the normal start gives poorly protected climbing to the horizontal crack on the parent route.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

LLAWDER—Fallen Block Zawn

This Zawn is approached down a steep gully to the right (looking out to sea), or via an easy sea traverse round from The Sun Walls. The starts to routes are affected by the tide for about four hours. As one looks onto the crag, the slabby corner on the left is Truant, VS. The routes are described from Left to Right.

16 E.P. Special 120 feet E3

A good start deteriorates into a grotty finish. Start on some blocks below the prominent hanging fin of rock.

1 120 feet. 6a. Climb the obvious line to the sloping ledge just left of the overhanging chimney/crack. Step right and go up past a peg runner to a good resting spot. Finish up the dirty groove above: the rock on this section needs careful handling.

First ascent: Costello/Durkan. FFA J. Healey, P. Williams

17 The Trail of Tears 130 feet E4

An elegant pitch which traverses out of E.P. Special to climb the left arete of the hanging fin. Easy for grade. Start below the fin of rock.

1 130 feet. 6a. Climb directly up to the ledge just left of the chimney/crack (as for E.P. Special). Step right and climb the crack to a peg runner. Move right onto the fin and go boldly up, peg runner, to a small ledge on the arete. Finish up the left edge in a fine position.

First ascent: J. Healey, P. Williams

18 The Jub-Jub Bird 130 feet E6

A sensational and totally committing undertaking which crosses the right wall of the fin. One of the most audacious routes in North Wales. In the words of Lewis Carroll, 'Beware the Jub-Jub Bird'. Start as for Trail of Tears, below the fin.

1 130 feet. 6b. Climb the groove and crack up the right-hand side of the pillar, then step right to follow the arete for the last 10 feet to a resting place (junction with Godzilla). Move across the outrageously overhanging wall to a peg runner at its left extremity. Layback strenuously up to a good slot on the front face of the fin. Climb up to a welcome resting place. Finish up the arete by some thin moves—a real pumper.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams, J. Sonczak

19 Godzilla 125 feet E3

The corner capped by a roof at 90 feet of the fin gives an impressive outing. Start at the foot of the corner.

1 125 feet. 5c. Go up the corner and groove to an undercut traverse left at 30 feet. From the end of this follow the flake back right to a niche below the roof, 2 peg runners. Airy moves left lead left to easier climbing up the finishing corner. A very good pitch.

First ascent: P. Williams, J. Healey, J. Moran

20 The Viper 130 feet E3

Originally done with some aid, this fine steep route now goes free and finishes direct taking in some dramatic scenery. Start in the centre of the wall below the prominent diagonal crack.

1 130 feet. 5c. Pull over the bulge and climb the wide crack until a move left leads to easier climbing past a couple of ledges below the hanging fang of rock (the snake's head). Go up to an old peg runner, and make a long reach right for a good hold. Climb directly up the crack/groove past a peg runner and rotting wire to a steepening (the original finish went right here). Continue up the steep crack on good jams exiting right via a large flake-hold. Make an awkward step back left across a small corner to gain better holds and finish up the steep slab.

First ascent: Durkan/Costello. FFA J. Moran, P. Williams

21 Centrefold 130 feet E3

A fine line with good protection up the steep wall right of The Viper. Start below the diagonal crack, as for The Viper.

1 130 feet. 5c. Pull over the bulge (as for The Viper). Move 10 feet right and climb a small groove to a ledge. Continue up the steep flaky corner until a bold swing out right then a short leaning wall lead to a good jug and runners below a small overhang split by a crack. Surmount this and undercut right into the interesting finishing groove.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

22 Dreams and Screams 135 feet E5/6

A ferocious and sensational route which takes twin cracks up the concave wall to the right of Centrefold. Previously A3. Start below the slanting crack, as for The Viper and Centrefold.

1 135 feet. 5b. Pull over the bulge, traverse right and climb the short groove, as for Centrefold. Move right 8 feet to belay below the impressive twin cracks.

2 100 feet. 6b. Climb the cracks for 45 feet, then move left into a slanting crack. Follow this back right for 10 feet to a painful jam. Make a wild swing right onto a hanging flake which is rapidly laybacked to good holds over the bulge. Finish easily up the slab. An exhausting pitch.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

23 Magellan's Wall 155 feet E4

A magnificent route which takes an elegant line across the lip of the red concave wall right of Dreams and Screams. Start as for The Viper and Centrefold, below the diagonal crack.

1 35 feet. 5b. Follow Dreams and Screams to the crack belay.

2 120 feet. 5c/6a. Traverse right and then up using the obvious undercut to a small ledge. Move right into a groove, then climb up to good holds by a peg runner. Follow the jugs right to a hanging rib and groove. Ascend boldly and finish up a slab. Magic climbing.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

SEA CAVE ZAWN

This lies to the left of Fallen Block Zawn. The descent is via a wide chimney/gully which drops down from above the cave to rocks at its left-hand side. The corner crack right of the cave is Tomorrow Has Been Cancelled Due to Lack of Interest.

24 Kissing the Pink 100 feet E2

Start at the left-hand side of the cave.

1 100 feet. 5b. Go up for 10 feet. Move left to a flake, then climb directly up for 15 feet to a curving crack. Follow this, then traverse right for 40 feet. Go straight up to finish.

First ascent: D. Towse, W. Davies

25 Electric Blue 120 feet. E3

A fine line. Start at the left side of the sea cave, as for Kissing the Pink.

1 120 feet. 5c. Traverse across the lip of the cave on the obvious juggy line by scary climbing.

First ascent: S. Haston, T. Saunders

The left-hand side of Rhoscolyn Headland (as one looks out to sea) overhangs considerably. Two routes find their way up this wall, just right of the old classic, Symphony Crack, Difficult.

27 Raging Bull-Dyke 90 feet HVS

A juggy pitch which follows the black streaks up the wall to finish via a short crack. Much better than it looks. Start by carefully descending a steep gully below the right-hand side of the face. Belay a few feet up below some flakes on the leaning wall.

1 90 feet. 4c. Climb past a large spike and continue up the flakes to a narrow ledge, by a suspect block. Traverse 10 feet left and climb direct to finish on good holds at the top of a short cack.

First ascent: P. Williams, T. Jadwat

28 Fear Test 80 feet E3

A little route with a big feeling which takes the ludicrously steep groove between Raging Bull-Dyke and Symphony Crack. Start directly below the groove.

1 80 feet. 5b. Bold climbing up the groove leads to strenuous moves onto the upper headwall. Finish slightly left.

First ascent: J. Moran, P. Williams

WHITE WALL ZAWN (Where Generation Gap is situated)

The Cruel Sea 60 feet VS

1 60 feet. 5a. Climb the central corner left of Generation Gap, passing the bulge on the right.

First ascent: P. Williams, T. Jadwat (Probably done before)

The Sea Shall Not have Them 80 feet HVS

A good pitch up the wall right of Generation Gap.

1 80 feet. 5a. From the foot of Generation Gap, swing round the arete onto the overhanging wall. Climb this to a ledge at 20 feet. Step up, then finish diagonally rightwards across the juggy wall.

First ascent: P. Williams, T. Jadwat

White Water Wall 75 feet E1

Takes the bulging wall left of The Cruel Sea.

1 75 feet. 5a. Start 2 feet left of The Cruel Sea (runners in this reduce the grade to HVS) and climb to jugs at 12 feet. Go steeply up to a handrail which leads left to the arete. Finish up the arete.

First ascent: P. Williams, T. Jadwat



RHOSCOLYN

HEADLAND

RHOSCOLYN

