

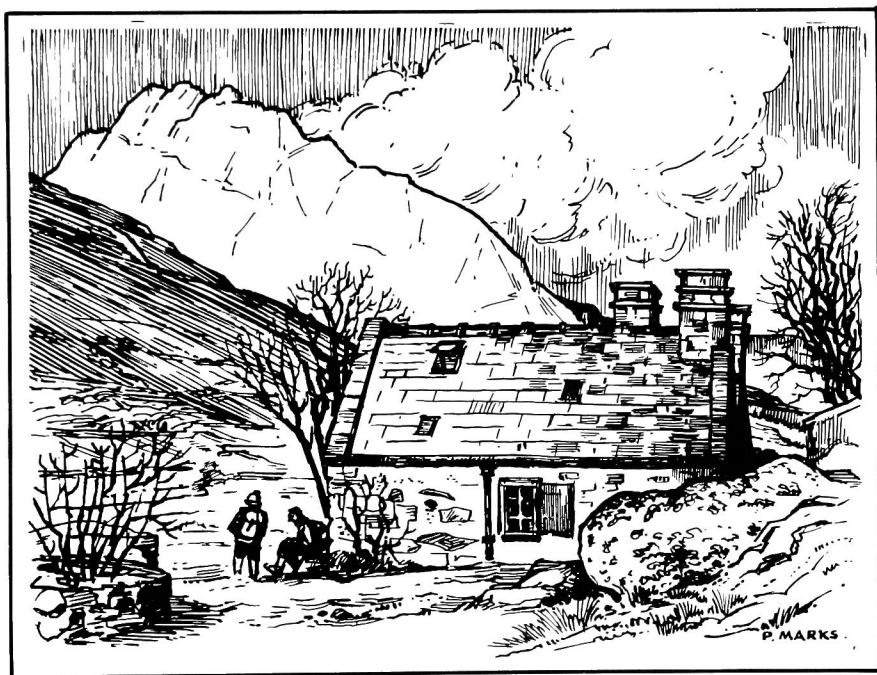
**THE
CLIMBERS' CLUB
JOURNAL**

1985/86

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

HELYG DIAMOND JUBILEE

Edited by
GEOFF MILBURN



1986
THE CLIMBERS' CLUB

Helyg drawn by Pete Marks for the 1986 Diamond Jubilee

This is the one hundred and sixth 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 1986
and produced by The Ernest Press
Glasgow G44 5QD.

Graphic Reproduction by Arneg, Glasgow.
Typeset by Gray & Dawson, Glasgow.
Printed and bound by Thomson Litho Ltd,
East Kilbride, Scotland.

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THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. XIX No. 3 (New Series) No. 106

1985/86

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ICE WARRIORS

PAUL WILLIAMS

Just when we thought that Winter 1985 had gone for good, after a superb ten-day cold spell when early February temperatures rose to the upper fifties Fahrenheit; when air was still and the sun beamed down benignly — gale force winds arrived carrying fine particles of snow and ice. Arctic blizzards came sweeping down from Siberia and brought much of Britain to a standstill.

After two days, a walk round Llyn Padarn revealed massive clusters of ice where spray from the lake had blown onshore; icicles, thousands of them dangling from trees and bushes, reeds encased in frozen bollards — and yet the mountains were virtually clear of snow, scourged clean by the cutting wind.

In Wales, as elsewhere, there had been a rapid freeze of incredible intensity. The next day I climbed Central Gully on the Grochan which seemed a little stiff for Grade IV. The guidebook legend stated, 'It requires a minor ice-age to come into condition . . .' It set me thinking. A strategic phone call the same night confirmed what I hoped. . . .

The next day, Martin Crook and I were sliding and skating across sheets of ice which covered the path from Aber (now confusingly renamed Abergwyngregyn) to the falls. As we neared their foot, a wind blew up from the East driving eddying spindrift into our faces. The falls looked quite impressive under their mantle of snow and ice. Completely frozen over at the top, a narrow torrent of water gushed out from the ice about five feet lower down; a stream two-feet wide at its exit point which fanned out to ten-feet as it plunged into the icy pool at the foot of the cliff. From out of this roaring cascade, huge blocks of ice protruded, perched crazily like garden gnomes (minus their fishing rods, of course). Periodically, a combination of water pressure and gravity detached one of them, an ominous crack, then a rumble and boom completed the cycle as icy shrapnel peppered the foot of the falls. Very atmospheric.

There seemed to be two or three ways to climb the falls; up the ice curtain just left of centre or up slightly easier-angled ice over on the right. As the steepest and most impressive line is the left-hand one, and being an absolute bloody hero, I started up it! The first pitch was a smooth almost featureless slab of ice leading to a scoop which looked to be about eighty feet up, but turned out to be 140 feet. Heaped powder snow gave way at twenty feet to iron-hard ice, as tough as rhino hide — an armour-plated shell. It needed two or three hard blows with the axes to



gain a reasonable placement, but as the angle of the ice was only fifty to sixty degrees the climbing was straightforward. In certain sections, the river could be seen beneath its frozen coat, only a couple of inches away — decidedly eerie.

There was a crash and a kerthump, as one of the icy gnomes went hurtling down to meet his Waterloo. Soon the scoop was reached. I hammered home three drive-in screws for a belay, cut a long foothold and brought up Martin as a continual sheet of freezing spray blew across onto the stance. Martin arrived. By that time I was covered in a thin sheet of verglas, shivering, and my Dachsteins were soaking, so when Martin offered to lead the next pitch I gallantly refused, preferring to take my chances climbing rather than suffer advanced hypothermia.

Above us an overhanging wall of organ-pipe-structured ice reared up. Thick icicles, thin icicles, all were brittle owing to the rapidity of the freeze. No protection, so where to go? About eight feet to the left, a steep narrow ramp with a sloping exit seemed to offer the easiest line, a 'Stairway to Immortality' if only we could climb it.

With Martin tied on (this took some time as the rope was by then encased in a tube of ice) to the 'coldest and wettest' stance in North Wales, I shuffled left to the foot of the ramp — verglas flaking my waterproofs. I looked closely. The ramp ran up for around thirty-five feet, its initial 75-degree angle steepening to nearly ninety degrees for the last fifteen feet or so. Out with the axes, themselves encased in ice. Much fumbling, frozen mitts sticking everywhere but on the axe handles. Ready. I reached up and shivered involuntarily as melt-water from my mitts ran down the inside of my Goretex outfit; down the arms, the stomach — the parts that 'only Heineken normally refreshes' — before forming a puddle in my boots. The ice was even harder. Six, seven, or even eight blows were needed to make a placement, the Vultures pecking holes through the tough frozen veneer caused by wind and spray, into the fine powder snow underneath. Ten feet up I inserted a 'drive-in'; not too good in that sort of stuff. Five feet higher, and another one. That was it, no more screws — it was 'do or fly'. At least up there I was out of the spray, looking down at a shivering Martin. I could see the ice building up on his clothing — ice warriors trying to slay the ice monster!

The next few feet was the crux, a smooth frozen verticality with hardly a ripple to ease the strain. The axes skidded and started to flail as my arms pumped. Calves screamed out for relief through what seemed an age of standing on my front points. The tricky exit led on to a narrow sloping ledge, and then I could rest. Trees beckoned from above, a safe haven. Upward progress was dramatically halted as the ice suddenly thinned and shattered in great sheets leaving me floundering in a fine wet powder. A careful retreat . . . heart racing. An airy fifteen-foot traverse along the lip of an ice bulge past an icicle thread, which

gave 'token security', led to an icy scoop in the centre of the falls. Between my feet I could see the ground two-hundred feet below. After the scoop I tried to exit left to a tree belay, but collapsing snow made that impossible. Behind the head of the falls a small icy gorge normally offers security. But no! A horizontal crack in its walls showed that the ice had collapsed and refrozen. I forced a blade peg into a blind crack, clipped it, then went back down to the top of the scoop. Gingerly tensioning left, body poised for a massive fall should the peg pull, I lurched for a tree. Phew!

Snugly secure in a matrix of slings and branches I could relax though sweat still ran down into my eyes. What a gripper. "Taking in." The ropes came in reluctantly, each one a frozen cable, the encasing ice breaking at six-foot intervals, as they ran over a bulge to the stance, then icily sliding around my back.

A faint shout above the roar of the waterfall indicated that Martin had started climbing. The ropes moved slowly, then stopped. Again they slowly slid upwards, then stopped. For half-an-hour nothing happened . . . then a yell . . . a scream. The slippery rope came tight on to me. Martin had come off. Thoughts flashed through my brain — he must be hanging free! Was he alright? What to do? I decided to wait a little. Urgent shouts from below were drowned in the roar of the water. I took the rope in slowly, bit by bit. After an age, he appeared covered in a thick sheet of ice — a suit of frosty armour — incredible! Standing in the foot of the scoop he bent a little and chunks of ice dropped from him as he chipped away at his frozen clothing. Soon he was ready to climb again. From the sluggish way that he moved and placed his axes it was obvious that Martin was suffering from exposure. His face was white, his lips blue and his speech slightly slurred. He insisted on continuing. The next pitch was easy, Grade I, and Martin quickly disposed of it. A final scramble-cum-swing-cum-struggle up powder snow (impossible to grade) and we were at the top.

On the walk down, Martin confessed that he could hardly move when he left the first stance. The weight of the ice on his clothes besides causing him to stumble had chilled him to such an extent that he had nearly blacked out. After he started climbing a lack of co-ordination had caused him to slip off, which had resulted in an exciting pendule.

And so down to the sacks, then the van and back to Llanberis for a brew at Pete's Eats. What we had climbed that day was Grade V, but four days later when I repeated the route the ready-made placements, the absence of wind and milder weather made it a good grade easier. We called the route 'The Well of Loneliness' and graded it IV/V.

The first ascent of Aber Falls in Winter by Paul Williams and Martin Crook on 12th February 1985.

Looking up at the steep ice pitch on Trojan.

Photo: Paul Williams.





Above: Peter Harding in the hills.

Below: Kim and the experimental Sunbeam.

Photos: Peter Harding



THE LITTLE MEN

PETER HARDING

That particular Sunday was fine and dry, perfect for climbing rock or testing motor cars. The car I was driving was an experimental two-seater; a prototype known then as the R.A.S. Those letters stood for Rootes and Armstrong Siddeley, a couple of famous motor manufacturers, now alas, long since gone. They had combined their technical skills in development of a sports car which was to become (in 1958) the new Sunbeam Alpine.

As I often did on test trips and even the occasional day rally I had taken my daughter along for the ride because, although she was only three years old (in 1957), Kim loved fast motoring. She also loved rock climbing and that day she was a nuisance. Every rocky scar and outcrop we passed as we sped down Widdale to Appersett, over the Buttertubs to Muker then across to Arkengarthdale, she would pester me to stop and climb.

“Look Daddy, there’s a good crag”, she cried as some lump of manky limestone whizzed by. “No! We can’t stop”, I shouted, heeling and toeing the R.A.S. into a sharper bend and lower gear as I felt the brakes going off a bit under cumulative effects of steep hills and high speed. “But on the way home, when Daddy has finished testing, if you’re a good girl I’ll show you a great big crag where the little men climb.”

That did it! Kim no longer piped up every few minutes, pestering me to climb, but went on in a continuum of questioning about ‘The Little Men’. My conditional promise had conjured up vivid mental pictures of elves and gnomes with ropes and gear, all swinging about on some huge cliff. “Tell me about ‘The Little Men’ Daddy; what are their names?” She wanted to learn more of ‘The Little Men’.

I couldn’t explain to an inquisitive three year old (even on the straight bits never mind the twisty ones!), that ‘Little Men’ was really a collective title, used by the climbing fraternity in general, when referring to the top cragsmen of the day. For in the Joe Brown/Don Whillans era nearly all our leading rock climbers were of smaller than average build. However, they didn’t like being referred to by such a title, taking it to be derogatory. (Don Whillans once emptied a pub bar, dobbing several big burly blokes in the process; all because someone mentioned LITTLE MEN!)

Kim kept on about ‘The Little Men’ and their big crag. “When will we see

them Daddy? When will we be at the big crag?" So, after I had made up my mind on some needed modifications to the brakes and suspension of the R.A.S., I turned south and headed home via Kidstones Pass, Kettlewell and Kilnsey Crag.

It was on Kilnsey that ropes had been seen, mysteriously left hanging from pitons; where rumour had it that 'The Little Men' were secretly at work, laying siege to its main overhang. But, although their retreat and return lines were much in evidence, no-one reported seeing any climbers actually en route. So, as we drove down Wharfedale, I told Kim she would only see the big crag where 'The Little Men' climbed; NOT 'The Little Men' themselves.

"Are they too little Daddy? Is the crag too big for anyone to see them?" Puerile pestering broke out afresh. Soon we were on the straight below Kilnsey but it was almost blocked with cars parked down each side of the road. Folk were gazing up, necks craned, watching two tiny figures, climbing, up there under the overhang. Kim was tremendously excited; those 'Little Men' were there after all. "Daddy", she cried, "can we go up and see them?"

We parked and walked up the grass to where small groups of rope-boys stood, underneath the great roof, their ropes stretching aloft to the climbers. One climber was hanging in etriers, almost at the lip of the overhang, noisily knocking away with his peg hammer while the other was sitting silently in a swing stance, suspended by pegs, well under the roof. Rope and tape festooned the rock; Kilnsey was well and truly entrapped, and being battered into submission! "It MUST be 'The Little Men' ", I thought but didn't recognise anyone. I asked the nearest rope-boy, "Who's leading?" "Ron Mosely", he replied. (My suspicions were partly confirmed). "Who's the swinger?" I enquired. "Fritz", came the reply, "Fritz Sumner". Not knowing him then, I thought 'Fritz' must be some teutonic peg artist from the Munich School, imported, persuaded, by 'The Little Men' to direct or strengthen their final assault on Kilnsey Crag. (In any case he looked too near average build to be a bona fide 'Little Man'). Just then a great hush descended on the crag.

Ron had stopped his hammering and Kim chose that very moment to pipe up in an amazingly loud voice for such a tiny tot, "ARE THEY THE LITTLE MEN YOU TOLD ME ABOUT DADDY?" Her question echoed across the cliff. "Jesus! She'll get me thumped", I thought and glanced round nervously for any sign of Dobber Whillans. Not to be denied, Kim repeated the question in an even shriller voice: I pretended she wasn't with me. Thankfully Ron started hammering again but a tough looking youth, ominously small in stature, who had been staring at us rather intently, suddenly moved towards me, unshouldering his rope as he did so.

"This is it!" I thought and put up my hands defensively. The next thing I knew

he had thrust his rope into them saying, “Cop owd o’ this mate while I finish off me buttty”. He produced a grimy looking half-eaten sandwich from his anorak pocket and proceeded to eat it. Then a shout from Moseley floated down, “Tight on Number 2!” realising that was now my rope, I quickly flicked it over my shoulders, pulled hard and took the strain.

At Moseley’s next command, up there under the roof, Fritz relaxed his rope which ran out to Ron through numerous krabs and pegs. This set him swinging precariously — a trapeze artist without any net! Kim squealed with delight and clapped her hands in appreciation: it was a lot more exciting than testing an R.A.S.!

So, for the next thirty minutes, ‘Fritz’ Sumner and I, plus Barrie Knox and Fred Williams, others too, manipulated Ronnie Moseley like a puppet round the lip of Kilnsey’s Main Overhang, well on his way to completing its first ascent. But the hour was late and we still had many miles to do, so at the earliest opportunity I handed rope Number 2 on to the nearest available rope-boy. Then I took Kim’s hand, leading her down, back to the car; but she started to cry. “Daddy”, she sobbed, “I want to stay and do that climb with ‘The Little Men’ — and have a swing with the one called Fritz”.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Disguised as a test-driver I went unrecognised by Kilnsey’s conquerors. Even the embarrassing questions of my little girl companion didn’t raise any suspicion or aggro. So we were never included as members of the team that did the first ascent of Kilnsey’s Main Overhang!

Just as well; Ron’s hammering was getting slower and it would have been well past Kim’s bed-time when it was our turn to follow. Besides, once she’d reached that swing of John Sumner’s — we’d have been there all night!



THE BLACK HOLLOW

DAVE GREGORY

He turned into the road with less than the usual zest, not feeling the pleasurable anticipation of a tough day to come, with the routes hard enough to give a craftsman's pride in the achievement, but safely within his limit, but more the tight stomach and vague weakness in the knees which had signalled a date with something at the edge of his ability, with a longish run-out, the crux not too well protected and the issue and perhaps life in doubt.

The gates would be shut and on his own he would have to stop and get out twice. His mind went back to all those other journeys. Being the driver, sitting in lordly ease while the front passenger did the honours, running to catch up and scramble aboard as the car pulled teasingly away. Sneaking through behind another car with a regal wave to that vehicle's gateman, or being one of the indolent back seat lords, stuffed around with tents and sacks but secure in the custom and practice of the front man's copping for the gate duties.

Today he was back to being the man outside and worse. The annoyance of this double chore stirred his resentment and he drove more aggressively, accepting the decision he had made. He slowed by the first two laybys but went past them through the final gate. They would use the second layby, he always did, and, if they walked back to the faint trod up to the stile, would not notice his car behind the wall. He changed into his light boots, got out what he would need, laid it all on the grass and began to pack his sack.

He would start with the case, brown plastic, reinforced by its ribbing. It would have to go in first, next to the back padding. He knew what was in it to the last round but he undid the clips to have one last checking look. Each piece was there, well oiled, covered with soft rag, the 'scope lenses protected by caps. He knew it well now, but he remembered how surprised he had been when, on his father's death, he had checked through the armoured cupboard. That was inside a larger, walk-in cupboard in the main bedroom, a permanent structure, made of welded steel plate, cut to follow the shape of the eaves. There was a list of the shotguns pasted to the taller wall and a collection of specifications and pamphlets for them and the rifles in a Fiberite cartridge box. On top of this pile was his firearms certificate, each piece written up, all excepting one. He remembered one from the war, when it, an elderly 0.22, had been the only licensed rifle in the local Home Guard platoon. That one had become his own on rabbitting expeditions and the

other two he had seen his father use. Had watched through binoculars while his father, at two hundred yards, had knocked the head off one of a pair of fighting pheasant cocks. He remembered still the sense of unbelieving pride which had begun to spread through the survivor until the whipcrack of the shot told it the real cause of its rival's collapse and it fled through the stubble to the shelter of the copse.

The fourth he had never seen before and he puzzled over it. It was unlike his father to break the law but there it was, not mentioned on the certificate, and there was no receipt for it, no maker's leaflet, no note of its provenance.

All of them but that one he sold to the nearest big gunsmith who offered niggardly prices for the rifles and was scathing about that pheasant-capping piece. "Where would you use it?" Muzzle velocity four times the speed of sound. Blows the rifling out. Fire that at rooks in Yorkshire and you'd kill seals in Skye. "No good to anyone." The orphan, uncertificated, probably illegal piece he would not touch. "Surrender it to the police" he advised. "At once."

So he intended to do, but, sitting alone in the bedroom, thinking, remembering, admiring the polish of the cleaning rods, savouring the smell of the gun oil, he opened up the case again and admired the blued metal sheen. Almost in fear of damaging the mating surfaces he started to lock the barrel and breech. Two or three tries and it went. The stock and 'scope followed and there it lay upon the bedspread, a lethal black killer, a jaguar among firearms.

The next day he rested a pillow on the window sill and aimed at a huge bracket fungus on a dying birch. The first shot went high and to his amazement the tree disintegrated six inches above the fungus and the top section crashed down. Although he had never shown much interest in the guns in his younger days, being an unwilling ghillie on the rabbiting expeditions, he became fascinated by the process of sighting the rifle. A sheet of newspaper pinned to the old cement mixing board served as a target and at 100 yards, 200 and 400 he adjusted the 'scope. The process finished he regretfully leaned the splintered board back against the garage wall and carefully cleaned the sections of the rifle, before laying them back in the brown plastic case.

He recovered from the double shock and consequent depression of his father's sudden death and his wife's going off with the club's flamboyant rock star and passed into a humdrum existence, a familiar round of local crag evenings, weekend car trips, returning unwillingly and alone to the empty, now ill-cared-for house, reminded by each ungreeted entry of the loss of, the theft of, his wife. He never saw her, after she left, until the day in the market. She was buying the weekend meat, a surprisingly small quantity, from the usual stall, and he saw her from several stalls away, walked up to her, touched her on the shoulder

and asked her how she was. "O.K." she said, obviously embarrassed, but she looked tired and unhappy. He started visiting his old pub haunts again, enquiring among his mates. One, an older and closer friend than the others told him straight. "He's left her already" he said. "It didn't last long, just like the other birds he's taken up with." "Ditched her and gone off with a model, a bit of a bicycle." "Mind you, she can climb a bit" he added grudgingly, going along with the typical climber's assessment that physical competence at his, the only sport of real worth, over-rides and cancels any lack of morality, any defects of personality.

Climb a bit she could, and the star seemed to use her as a rope-mate, as well as a bedding partner, unusual for him. He heard of their progress, saw their happiness increase as his wife's, distantly seen, decreased and his own resentment hardened into hate. He approached his wife a couple of times more, trying to open up an avenue to reconciliation, but she was too proud to admit of having been dumped and was terse and tense, short and cutting and the meetings left them both more depressed than ever.

He was close, that Thursday night, in the pub when they arranged to do White Slab. He had done it before, she not, but if they started early they would be on it while sunlight still hit the crag, do the route in good time and have time to do something harder.

"Other people can get up early" he thought and here he was, filling his sack just after light and pumping hard up the railway track to the bridge. Usually he jumped off the capstone on the abutment wall but today he was conscious of the special, delicate, weight in his sack and climbed down from it using the old iron fence post as a partial ladder. Halfway was closed, ugly and green and unwelcoming, so long before the first train. He broke across the slope from the track to reach the high point of the boulder-strewn ridge overlooking the Llyn and commanding a perfect view of the West Buttress. He moved back and forth along the ridge trying to find the rock which would hide him most effectively. It stood man high with a blaze of quartz an inch thick running across it, following the line of the striations in the rough grey volcanic rock. He laid out the khaki campamat and slowly assembled the rifle. He followed the line of the route with his eye and selected the stance, the killing ground. He gently eased himself prone on the mat and followed the line through the 'scope to the same stance. He could pick out a distinctive black patch of moss on the start of the slab and he aimed for that. The sheep jerked alert at the cracks, a pair of ravens flapped into view and the scar was low. Three more shots as he adjusted the telescope and the dark mass was scattered, the slab foot a cluster of white scars, each bigger than a man's head. Would they still be able to smell the cordite reek of stone dust, no, would he, he was the one who had wrecked their life, would he still be able to smell that ironic, foretelling, cordite reek.

He laid the rifle down on the mat, covered it with the summer pit, two layers of cotton and a feather, but sufficient to hide the rifle, and waited. It would be a fine day, a great day for a great undertaking. He saw the car, low in the gears, roaring between the gates, stopping for her to open and close them, pulling into the second layby and dying into the quiet of the early day. As the car's doors opened simultaneously and they both got out the tremor came. The ground shook, the ravens took wing again and some fragments of rock fell from the crag, clattering down the slabs to the screes on the terraces. In the Pass the cottagers thoughts flew to the rocks poised above them, high on the steep hillsides. The laggards in the huts and tents wondered at the rumble, nursed their hangovers and gave a little thought to the pots rattling on the shelves and the tent sides flapping in the windless morning.

The two by the car held onto its guttering for a few seconds and then, a little bemused and somewhat relieved, carried on with their preparations. The pair walked, noted by the watcher, but unnoticed, up the same track, but followed it round its fine arc to below the East Buttress to dump their sacks. They spent some time looking up its walls and cracks, pointing out lines to each other, the location of pegs and in situ runners. The watcher became nervous, his palms began to sweat. Perhaps they were going to try one of the modern Eastern classics. But no, after a short discussion they worked down the terracettes and under the Middle Rock to the tottery pillar breaching the overhangs under the West Buttress.

The watcher wiped his hands and lay on the mat in the lee of the huge boulder. His left foot touched the boulder side and he braced against it and took an exploratory sight through the 'scope. The scars leaped into view, an unnecessary reminder of the power about to be unleashed. The leader reached the belay ledge and fingered the bullet scars, picking up some of the rock fragments, smelling them and thumb-flicking them into space. The watcher waited until the leader was safely belayed and settled closer to the ground, working his elbows into the mat, settling his cheek onto the stock. Just before the leader shouted "When you're ready" he squeezed the trigger, and the instruction never came. The crack alerted the sheep again, the ravens wheeled and the leader slumped forward, a small hole in his chest leading to the blood-smashed cavity in his back. Already dead, he hung there from the belay nut above him.

The rifleman stared at the still, unmoving figure until he was convinced that the job was completely done. He relaxed his grip on the rifle and laid his head on the mat. He was drained of energy, all tension gone, empty of emotion and he lay there uncaring until the second tremor came.

It was stronger than the first, lasting longer. More fragments fell from the crag and the huge rock by which the rifleman lay groaned as if it too were mortally

wounded. The vibration running through it split the rock along the quartz flash. The apex block of the rock slid slowly down the line of the flash, grinding and screeching the rock fragments between the surfaces. The killer raised his head apathetically and watched the huge stone cleaver as it balanced for a moment on the edge of the boulder and then, as too late he tried to roll away, hampered by the rifle beside him, saw it sweep down, justice's stone axe, to crush him beneath its shearing edge.





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Below: Trouble on the PIG track?*

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Photo: Eric Byrom.*



THERE WAS AN OLD MAN WITH A BEARD

AL CHURCHER

*'There was an old man with a beard,
Who said it is just as I feared . . .'*

Since returning from Switzerland in early February with a misshapen ankle and a shoulder that refuses to perform as it should, my beard has become somewhat more important to me. The motivation for squeezing springs and tennis balls soon evaporates when you're unlikely to set foot on anything steeper than the garden rockery for a year or so — and beard-stroking can be a remarkably soothing substitute. I had thought of diverting my thwarted competitive urges into trying to become even hairier than Rab Carrington, but my last visit to the pub confirmed the unlikelihood of this, despite our family's usual longevity. Nevertheless, I'm watching it grow with interest, and it was looking in the mirror this morning that brought this poem to mind. I've always felt that some deeper meaning was concealed within those apparently innocuous lines, and at last Science has proved me right.

Of course it's been common knowledge for years that we hairies have something to hide. This may be ostensibly physical: a sloppy upper (or lower) lip, chinless (or too many chins), overfull sensuous lips or thin calculating ones etc., etc. Or the problem may be more purely psychological, and the facial growth symbolic of a need to hide from the world, an unwillingness to meet it on its own terms. Both add up to the same thing in the end — a real or imaginary lack of masculinity and an absence of true grit. By the same token it is surely little wonder that so many climbers do sport facial fungi, as climbing itself could well be described as the ultimate escape from reality. (The unshaveable in pursuit of the unscaleable?)

The mention of numbers reminds me of a certain Saturday night in the Pen y Gwryd, some ten or twelve years ago now. The usual scene — a group in one corner bellowing out the Wild Rover — another opposite attempting to drown them out with their own rendition of the Jug of Punch or something similar; and in between, a seething mass of raucous humanity, all talking at the tops of their voices. Like everyone else, we were making regular forays to the bar, determinedly translating our hard-earned wages into transferable liquidity — excursions that began more and more to resemble going over the wire at the

Somme as the evening wore on. I seem to remember that as one of our crowd was due to be married the following week-end, somebody decided that a toast was in order — an obvious strategy to ensure that Bob got his round in — Bob being notoriously backward at coming forward on such occasions. In the way of such things, one toast lead to another, and by the time we'd run through every possible absent friend, everyone's nearest and dearest, and were getting on to more obscure and obscene subjects, Tush and sufficiently tanked up to make a speech. There was so much noise, and so little room to stand, that as a true orator he decided he'd better stand on the table. Now these were low circular affairs, designed more with half-a-dozen pints of bitter in mind, than the twelve or thirteen stones of an ebullient Tushingham; but any creaks or groans as he struggled to mount, were drowned by the surrounding hub-bub. He was just raising his arm to begin, when with a splintering crash the legs gave up the unequal struggle and collapsed beneath him, depositing Tush on the floor in a heap of matchwood, and distributing the brimming contents of his glass far and wide across the assembled revellers, (few of whom had the presence of mind to open their mouths in time). For a few seconds you could have heard a gnat sneeze, until the barman's angry voice rang out through the silence:

"I saw you — you with the beard and the check shirt. Stay where you are!"

Now as at least a third, if not a half of the hundred or so packed and sweating bodies sported beards and checked shirts, the resulting chaos was total. Tush took swift advantage of both this and his recumbent position to crawl stealthily through the forest of boots and breeches into the night!

To return to my original subject: Science, in the shape of one Mikhail Dmitriyev of the Soviet Union's Academy of Medical Science, has proved that the assorted livestock that were said to have transformed our old man's facial foliage into some sort of miniature wild-life park, were in reality symbols for all kinds of nasty pollutants that lurk in the depths of the most urbane undergrowth. According to our friend Dmitriyev, beards and moustaches are responsible for an accumulation of evil sounding substances, such as benzine, ammonia, carbolic acid, and even the dreaded hydrogen sulphide. Mind you, my wife could have told him all this years ago, when she came up with the abbreviation R.B. to describe the combined odours which result from a build up of rotting left-overs from the various culinary delights she'd served up in the preceding weeks. (She would probably replace weeks with months, but then she always was prone to exaggeration.) Personally, I always suspected this was merely an excuse when she preferred a quiet read to my more amorous advances — but now the Sunday Times has made it official, I'm not so sure. She never was impressed by my reasoned explanations that these deposits could be a life-saver in the event of an

enforced bivouac, (I've always felt the dramatic account of Hermann Buhl searching the remotest crannies of his frozen beard for those last vital morsels of the previous week's Spaghetti Bolognese to sustain him on his lone descent from Nanga Parbat, to be one of the most evocative passages in mountaineering literature). But that's the trouble with having a climbing wife — she knows that forced bivouacs are less than likely on Stanage or Bradford Climbing Wall.

Mind you, since she's joined this women's climbing lot, things have gone from bad to worse. It's bad enough hobbling around with a pot on my leg while she's zooming off to all points of the compass, without her coming back on Sunday nights enthusing about what a great week-end it's been, and how easy she found climbs that I recall as being close to desperate. And it's hardly Spring yet, so as the season advances and fond memories of even harder routes start getting the Freda Dibnah treatment, I shall be grateful for the camouflage of my increasingly luxuriant whiskers. I shall sit back in my rocking chair, stroke them thoughtfully, and murmur wisely,

“Ah yes, but of course it's very different when you're leading Extreme. . .”

When she is, I shall have to think again — one of those rakish sailors hats always seems to go remarkably well with a distinguished, silvered beard. Yes I can see it now — the harbour at Nice, lying back in my deckchair recounting my epics of the mountains to a spell-bound circle of sunbronzed, bikini clad acolytes and neophytes.

“Wanted Mirror Dinghy in good condition. Exchange for climbing boots, harness, ropes, and complete set of nuts, karabiners, etc.”



AFTER DINNER, 1985

IVAN WALLER

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as a member of the Climbers' Club I feel especially honoured to have been invited to be the guest speaker and also somewhat apprehensive, as I know that there are people who have done great deeds on the great mountain ranges of the world, whereas my puny efforts have not extended higher than the Alps, and the highest I have ever climbed was not to a summit, but to a hut on skis with Gaston Rebuffat. Even this I owed to a member of this club, a mathematician called Richard Meyer who knew Gaston and arranged it all for me, and it is about some of the various ways in which members of the club have contributed to my pleasures in the hills over the last 60 years that I propose to talk this evening.

First the ladies. It has been well publicised that this is the sixtieth year of Helyg, but I would like also to remind you that it is the tenth year since we have had the pleasure of having lady members and enjoyed the benefits of their various contributions to the running of the club. I have been personally indebted to them on two particular occasions. There was one climb which particularly fascinated me, but I had been frightened off it for 50 years by the following description by G.D. Abraham:— 'The complete ascent should be left severely alone. Recent fatal accidents confirm the opinion that it is not a justifiable climb by reason of the peculiarly unreliable nature of the rock . . . '

It was at the 50th anniversary of Helyg that Marge led me up The Devil's Kitchen and I found out what a splendid expedition it is. Unfortunately my visions of a nice tete-a-tete picnic were dashed when Jack and A.B. arrived to meet us at the top. Another climb on which I had set my heart was Engineers Slab on Gable Crag. My climbing partner had assured me that to get me up it we should need perfectly dry rocks, that it tended to be very slimy and took three days to dry out and that even so we were to find it pretty difficult. All this led to several seasons of suspense and when at last we got the right conditions, all keyed up to this awe-inspiring climb, there ahead of us was Tony Williams being led up it by Daphne. It suddenly became a light-hearted and really enjoyable outing. The problem for the girls now is not to keep up with the men but to compete with the other girls. A girl in a disco wearing a fantastic close-fitting black seductive suit, told me she had led White Slab on Cloggy and had not found it particularly difficult.

Long before the war the female element was introduced to the club at Geoffrey Winthrop Young's Easter parties at Pen-y-Pass. These women were pretty good climbers and well-known in various ways. Geoffrey's wife Len was the daughter of Cecil Slingsby, the great pioneer of climbing in Norway in the last century. Included among his first ascents was the highest mountain in Arctic Norway on the Lyngen Peninsula and when my oldest son with a party of six from Manchester University climbed it fifty years later, they found the names of Slingsby's party on the summit. David Pye, who led the first ascent of the Crack of Doom above the Cioch on Skye, brought with him to Pen-y-Pass his future wife Virginia, whose sister Margaret Kennedy wrote a splendid book called 'The Constant Nymph'. George Leigh Mallory's daughters, Clare and Berridge, went to the parties, and their names figure in the pre-war list of first ascents on the East Buttress of Cloggy; Sunset Crack led by David Cox. Later on there was Nea Morin whose name is perpetuated on the Grochan, and her daughter Denise — who married Charles Evans.

Before going on from the girls to the men, I must tell you a story, an old chestnut, about ballooning . . . A man's turn came round to speak at a Rotary luncheon, and his friends egged him on to choose sex as his subject. When his wife asked him, he did not like to say so he told her he was talking about ballooning. Next day she saw a man whom she knew had been at the luncheon and asked about the speech. "Oh!" he told her, "it was wonderful and he had the most complete command of his subject". "That's very odd" she replied, "because he has only been up twice. The first time he was sick, and the second time his hat blew off".

Two of my earliest climbing companions were Steuart Palmer of Belle View Bastion fame and Jack Longland. We used to borrow cars from unsuspecting undergraduate friends to drive to Derbyshire or North Wales. It was on one such visit that Jack and I, coming down the Ogwen Pass after our climb, saw these people wandering about around a little cottage below Tryfan. We stopped to investigate and landed in the middle of the official opening of Helyg, and we both became members of the Climbers' Club. It was not long after this that Jack and I met the little man, A.B. Hargreaves at the Hut, and it is a great tribute to climbing and the Club that three such unlikely characters still from time to time find themselves together on the hills after so many years. It is worthy of mention that many of the early users of Helyg including the first two Custodians, were also members of the Wayfarers Club, also that Tal-y-Braich, across the road was at that time the Rucksack Club Hut and that it was there that we used to encounter Fred Pigott and Morley Wood.

In January 1926 I attended my first Climbers' Club Meet, which was a ski-ing

meet at Murren arranged by Maurice Guinness who was then secretary of the club. Arnold Lunn lent us his chalet above the nursery slopes, and we managed to become quite popular on the dance floor of the Palace Hotel in the evenings; until fate struck. But first let me tell you a story about Arnold Lunn. Much later in life he confessed to suffering from the habit which besets us old men, of forgetting to do up his trousers and one of the tasks of his secretary — Phyllis — was to ensure that his flies were not open. When Lady Mabel died, Arnold married Phyllis, and there must be a moral in marrying the woman who closed them rather than the reverse!

To revert to the Murren meet; one morning a member of our party woke up all covered in spots, it was measles. In those days before modern drugs had been developed, infectious diseases were taken very seriously, so we were immediately banned from the hotel and sworn to secrecy, for if the news got round the village it was feared that many of the visitors would pack up and go home. The Climbers' Club meet decided that this was the time to take to the glaciers, so up we went in the train to Jungfraujoch and ski-ied down to the old Concordia Hut. Next day we climbed up on our skis to the Grunhorn Lucke, but in spite of bright sunshine it was so cold that none of us could get warm. Maurice's toes were getting frostbitten, and Knowles had twisted his knee. It was all a bit too much for me, so I craftily volunteered to ski ahead down to the hut to get the fire going, but when I got back to the Concordia I could not find any matches. You can imagine my horror, and the reaction of the rest of the party when they eventually staggered into the cold hut. Our journey back up the Jungfrau Glacier next morning was quite an epic. Thick cloud and compass course all the way and we were all very relieved when we at last got back to the Jungfraujoch station. Maurice's toes were in a bad way and a year or so later Knowles was on a visit to China where he mysteriously disappeared.

I had a rather unusual experience at Helyg the following year. A young man called Walker wanted someone to climb with, so we went along together to Clogwyn y Ddysgl, where I proceeded up the Fallen Block Crack which was then unclimbed. After 30 feet I brought up Walker and tied him to a chockstone and then completed the main pitch of the climb. Walker was unable to follow but I had enough rope to let him down to the screes at the bottom and then soloed up to the top of the cliff. The rather odd thing was that I never saw Walker again.

Colin Kirkus, apart from his ability to eat absolutely anything, was quite the most outstanding climber in the late 1930s I was lucky enough to climb with. A particularly impressive climb was Mickledore Grooves up which he led me and Marco Pallis on the first ascent. (My dentist took me up 45 years later, and we were followed up by a young man who was taking his mother up the climb.) Colin

went on to Wales and did the first ascent of the Direct Route on the Nose of Dinas Mot and the following year he and I repeated it followed by what may have been the first descent. Immediately afterwards he took me up his remarkable unseen first ascent of West Rib. Most of his first ascents were in fact led without previous exploration, with the notable exception of Lot's Groove.

The next Easter there was a Climbers' Club meet in Scotland and I camped on the summit of Ben Nevis with Freddy Spencer Chapman who had recently been to Greenland with Gino Watkins who was a school-friend of mine. Kirkus slept in a trough which he hollowed out of the snow, outside our tent.

Alf Bridge was another striking character who started his career as a steeplejack. On one occasion he went to Paris armed only with a pair of gym shoes and got the contract for inspecting the main tensile bars of the Eiffel Tower. Jack and I witnessed his extraordinary first ascent of Lean Man's Direct on the Black Rocks of Cromford. Alf was a man of many parts and he rode with me as mechanic in a motor race which we won in Phoenix Park, Dublin in 1932.

Menlove Edwards I knew fairly well and had several trips on the hill with him, but it was not until many years later when I read 'Samson' that I had the slightest idea that there was anything odd about him. It is strange that the two toughest men I ever knew, Menlove and Freddy Chapman, both committed suicide.

Towards the end of the war two brilliant young climbers appeared on the scene at the Black Rocks; Peter Harding and Tony Moulam. Their climbs are well known but I doubt whether Peter's most impressive feat has often been repeated. I saw him do it a number of times. He used to jump from a ledge on the buttress immediately behind the Stonnis Pinnacle and land on the summit of the Pinnacle itself. Another of Peter's lesser known achievements was the regularity with which he clocked 60 minutes between Shrewsbury and Snowdonia on his very fast Vincent motor bike. I owe to Peter two memorable climbs on Cloggy; Pigott's with Dr Charles Warren in the party and a beginner who didn't bother to traverse out right from the famous crack, but pushed straight on to the top. It was on this occasion that Peter tried to get out onto the face of the Pinnacle, but I'm afraid we did not give him enough encouragement. The other climb was the Sheaf with Tony Moulam, when the two of them climbed in close formation with Tony leading and Peter who already knew the climb telling Tony how to do the various moves.

Another memorable climb on Cloggy was one evening when John Barford took me quickly and effortlessly up Longland's. Sadly he was killed soon after by a stonefall in the Dauphiné while descending from the Col de la Costa Rouge to the Glacier Noir with Michael Ward and Bill Murray.

At Easter 1954 there was a memorable Climbers' Club meet at Kingshouse in

Glencoe — then a small inn. The main transport was provided by John Mawe in his supercharged Aston Martin, but the great character of the meet was Roger Bannister accompanied by Chris Brasher. Roger was having a break in his training and not long afterwards achieved the first four-minute mile.

The Climbers' Club was strongly represented at the Matterhorn Centenary in Zermatt in 1965 and a year later I ran into a Climbers' Club chalet party skiing at Verbier, and organised I believe by John Longland, whom we recently welcomed as an Honorary Member of the Club.

To Dr Charles Warren I owe several wonderful climbing expeditions in the Alps in my old age, as well as some grand expeditions in Scotland culminating in the Cuillin Ridge in 24 hours in 1977 when we were both in our seventies.

What I have talked about tonight is but a fraction of all the good things the Club and its members have done for me over these 60 years, and I am deeply grateful.

Before I close, let me tell you another old story — this time about one of our Queens . . . She was being shown round some kitchens when she saw one of the chefs making the patterns round some pastry with his false teeth. "Oh!" she said "that isn't very hygienic. Have you not got a tool you could use for that job?" "Oh! Yes your Majesty" he replied, "but I save that for brandy snaps".

It remains but to give thanks Mr President not only for the hospitality which I have received tonight, but also on behalf of my fellow guests. I am therefore overjoyed to have this opportunity to ask you to rise and drink with me the toast to the Climbers' Club.





STILL A BEGINNER

PAUL MITCHELL

Bancroft used to say that there are no hard climbs and no good climbers, but then he qualified this by quoting Hank Pasquil, whom he said had only two climbing grades — easy and hard. Compared to climbs that were done ten years ago, my climbs are fairly hard, but, nuclear fission permitting, in ten years most of them will have been soloed. By twisted logic, by projecting myself ten years ahead, in climbing terms I am still a beginner. (In comparison with some of today's heroes I'm not even an also-ran, but most of them can't write. Perhaps their starvation diet kills off any literate brain cells.) Being a beginner permits me to view future climbing possibilities with awe, and to realise that on an infinite grading scale my achievements mean very little. All this is an excuse to explain the name of a new route I did recently called Beginner's Wall.

My stalwart (funny word) friend Barker and I were driving to or from a climb somewhere in Derbyshire, perhaps it was Ed Wood's 'Big Youth'. I was glad of the excuse that I couldn't try it because it was soaking wet, and looked hard; so we went prospecting nearby and 'found' a ludicrously overhanging buttress, which some imaginative metal-basher had decorated with a bolt ladder on its left-hand side. This crag was also wet and we decided that the line in the centre was almost impossible. Later we came back when it was dry, abseiled and attempted the moves. Obviously impossible. No chance of doing that leap or pulling on that useless pocket. Perhaps some kind and famous soul would come and chip it so that we could all climb it at a 'reasonable' 6b grade. On one occasion I managed the crux on abseil but couldn't do the move preceding it, so perhaps that was the crux . . . Trying to get Andy to go and try it on sunny days was hopeless. He set himself more reasonable goals and I wasn't sure that we could do the climb, but surely that was a good reason to try it.

One day we stood at the bottom, depressed by the overbearing presence of bulging rock, when a car stopped below and Hoey and Sharples came up, and we chatted pleasantly about the grotesque potential. We thought these two had no chance, but then they might tell someone who did; and then again they were strong men capable of the occasional brilliant spurt. We decided to get a team on it so Tim Freeman and the modest 'thug' Pete Kirton were invited along. I abseiled down again and couldn't do the move I'd done before. Barker said that we'd got no chance of doing it that way, so I shouted at him for not having a positive

attitude. I tried feebly to get a wire in so that we could start sieging it, as did Tim. We couldn't get the bloody wire in . . . Tim and Pete said that they'd come and try it again. We went to the cafe for a brew and my rage at Andy slowly cooled off. Perhaps he was right. I felt sorry, because we rarely disagree or shout.

Several months went by, and occasionally we'd drive past on the way to Staffordshire grit and the wall sat there, unclimbed. I started to nag Andy again and I abseiled down and practised moves to the right. This time I did the crux first time on the practice. I bashed a peg in and Andy managed to clip it desperately. We eventually worked out how to get to the crux, burning valuable energy. You had to climb it so fast that you couldn't get pumped, the wall being only thirty feet high. We suffered terrible stomach queasiness due to the adrenalin surge every time we set off blasting up the wall. Andy touched the hold that finished the crux several times, but was going so fast that he couldn't keep hold of it; I touched it only once.

Our heads got very pumped and our footwork went haywire on the last few attempts. All of the crossword completed, except the last word. Next day we returned with Matt and Neil. Andy and I got to the same place and I strained my left arm. Matt and Neil weren't as keyed up (perhaps as greedy) as Andy and I, and just enjoyed swinging around in space. Two days of failure was getting me down. We decided to have two days' rest and Andy would take a day off work for day three of our siege. We decided to bring Tim Freeman and Ben Moon to join it. Tim had been training hard and Ben had a long reach and had been doing some desperate routes. One of us had to get up it. My two days rest hadn't helped much, the left arm was still strained. Ben enthused at the bulging rock. "Let's get up there, man!" I decided to sit back and wait for the others to do it. I'd try for second or third ascent. I didn't want to strain my arm. Andy clipped the peg with difficulty (and a krab), came down, went up and almost did it. Ben and Tim had a few goes, almost sauntering up the bulges. They practised the moves above the peg till Tim got the pocket above the peg . . . but his fingers slowly slid out.

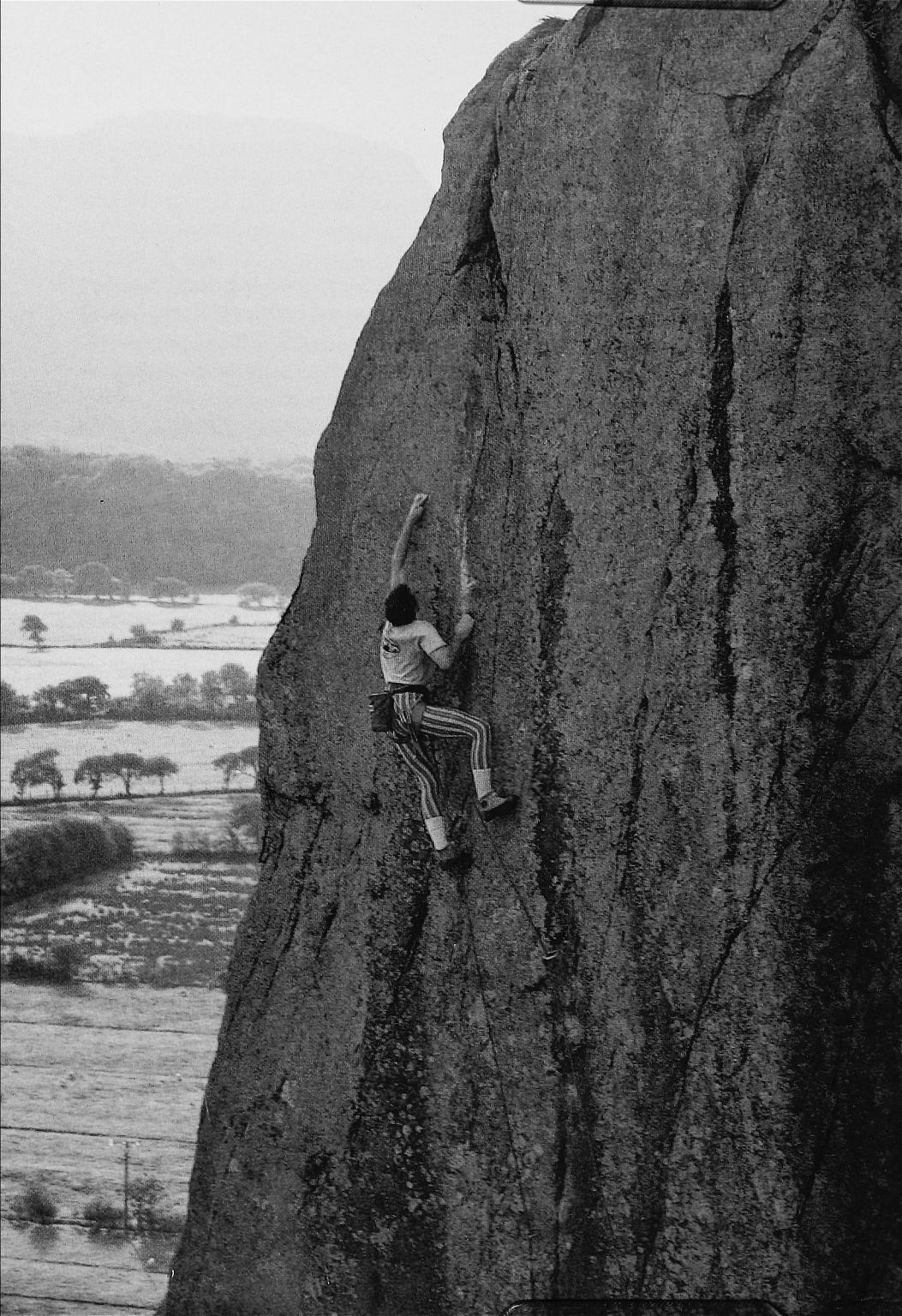
My greed opened its evil green eyes and I decided to have a try, although I didn't feel up to it. Chalk up at the bottom, no time to stop higher up (popular hard climb clichés), clean the Firés to an insane squeak, check out the sequence, and go. . . .

This was just like all the other times, reel off the numbers. I couldn't even see the rock, all I saw was a sequence. Strangely, the pocket had snuggled into my left hand, giving it a little love bite and tearing the skin. The others started shouting and my power suddenly went on strike. I couldn't possibly get to the pocket on the right, but the green-eyed demon forced me and I was faced with a three-and-a-half-foot leap for the top.

I almost cried out in despair at lack of strength, but there was no time, so I lunged and got the top and pulled over, shouting "Yeerss!" like a loony — not my usual quiet self at all. Ben laughed delightedly and I abseiled off. Tim and Ben did the 3rd and 2nd ascents and Andy failed with his fingers a quarter of an inch from the last holds, and straining them as well.

Ben looked at the fine line to the left. It looked about 6c and very tiring. He abseiled down but couldn't be bothered, as he reckoned it wouldn't be enough of a challenge. I think the route is well-named.





CAFE DAZE

CHRIS GORE

Wiping the condensation from the window, for no real reason except maybe to give my body a new sensation, I see the weather outside going from bad to worse. Surrounded by four walls and comforted in warm clothing, I sit here in this place, this shrine, this tomb, waiting for guidance as to what to do with this most awful day. The cafe, for so long a place of inspiration in my formative years offers nothing new, except for a tepid mug of tea which sits swirling in front of me. There is no decision to make, no place to go, the weather has seen to that. With my body inert and my mind in overdrive, I sit here wondering what this gloomy day will bring forth, with no certain future, a past I can only dream about; all I have to offer is my confusion. Just sitting here, hoping that somebody will enlighten me as to why I'm here, as to what I'm doing, to give me a reason — a reason to do what? That I don't know anymore. Sitting here with an urgency in my head, thoughts spinning around so quickly, trying to escape from the twisted dimensions of my mind, and then on to seek an entrance into the labyrinth of my nervous system to help me with my problem.

I must explain: You see I have this problem; no it's not personal, well sort of, it's not so much a problem either. I suppose you would call it an addiction, a need for something, and when you can't get that something you become despondent, deluded and you twitch. I'm twitching now, my fingers are tapping, legs are vibrating; it's the middle of winter and I feel a physical wreck. The withdrawal symptoms are quite severe, I've never had them so bad; I haven't done it for a month and a half now. I used to be bad after two days in the summer, so I'm finding this quite intolerable. I feel vegetable-like; I don't know which one though — potatoes are round, I'm not. Maybe a carrot, without the suntan of course. God, I feel rough. How on earth did I get in this mess?

There was a beginning, there always is, but I really don't know when that was. To actually pinpoint some sort of date or decision seems impossible. I could say 1975 for want of a year. I could even be more precise than that — May 1975 — but it's irrelevant. That was when I first tried it, you know . . . just to have a go . . . to see what it was like. The beginning I'm on about is that of the conscious decision to make it my life. No, that's wrong, it's not a conscious decision; how can it be? To actually devote oneself to a totally non-productive, sometimes self-destructive lifestyle, you've got to be unstable, drunk maybe.



What is this addiction? Why is this an addiction? . . . Climbing, that's what it is. Why? I don't know. It's a drug, you've got to have it — every day if possible — you've got to do something: workout, train hard, run — O.K. for a while — then, twitch . . . God, it really is bad at present.

It's stopped raining now, but the clouds outside are heavy, filling with rain, hovering, just waiting to unburden their watery load onto the masses below. They grow darker by the second, the lights inside the cafe are on now, but they do little to dispel the gloom that has formed. Nobody is smiling, little is the consolation that I am not the only one in this situation.

Think of those routes, think of last summer — every day out on the crag — the sun, the warmth. Think again; when did this happen, this problem, this addiction? Maybe '81, a fine year '81; did a lot of hard routes; did them in good style as well. I thought, well maybe if I start training I could do harder routes . . . yes, that was it, training. I'm sure that was it. Training became, has become, obsessive . . . not just the physical aspects, but everything that goes into making the body and mind into a more efficient system-cum-machine. Climbing by day and gym by night. I suppose to all intents and purposes, without realising it myself, I became a health fanatic. It's become one very nasty habit. So what has training to do with my addiction?

Well, I suppose it's something to do with my attitude towards physical activity. To say the least I detest it. I'm a generally lazy person, bone idle some might say. I really don't like doing something purely for the sake of it (don't ask me why I climb, I can't answer that one), so in a way climbing was an end to justify my means and as that means has become an obsession so has my climbing. There I've said it, I'm obsessed or is it possessed?

Very few people are left in the cafe now . . . they've gone home . . . it really isn't worth staying out here. Just another brew and then I'll go. I even packed my climbing gear — habit I suppose. The rain is turning to sleet, the temperature has noticeably dropped, my body is shaking, but it isn't the cold though — it's this damned addiction.

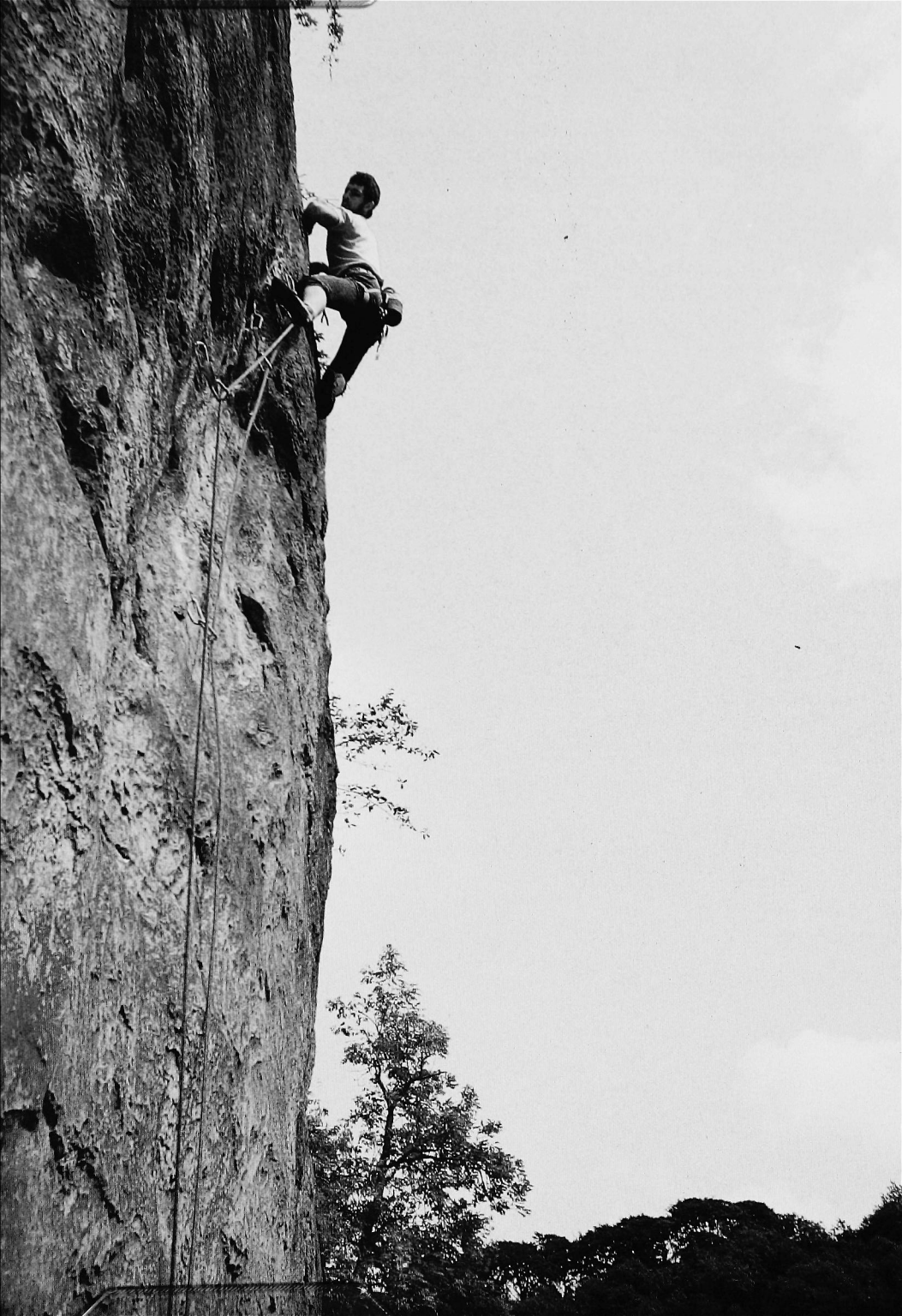
There's another facet to this, this what? Analogy, yes this analogy of my problem. I mentioned it in passing earlier on. I started training to do harder routes . . . why did I want to do harder routes? Natural progression would be one answer, but I think that would be simplifying matters and missing out a very important point. No, I think competition is the word that I'm looking for. Not competition against other people, no, my temperament is not suited to that, I hate losing! It's more against myself, a personal sort of competition; I set my own standards and then try to improve upon them. There's also ambition, that's also a driving force; everybody has some sort of ambition — I suppose mine is to be

better than myself. That seems to be a rather lucid explanation. When I'm in this state I always seem to ponder on these subjects, delving so deeply into the whys and wherefores. It really is quite simple; competition; to be opposed to someone or something . . . a distance . . . a time . . . a route; at present that something is myself.

So I've explained this addiction, to my own satisfaction anyhow. It might be a little hard to comprehend my situation for those outside of its illusionary boundaries, but then it might even help a few of those who are within them, those that are hooked.

It's snowing heavily now; what can I do? The poorer the weather becomes the worse I feel . . . it's hopeless. I can go training and O.K. it occupies me for a while. I can quite get into training sometimes, but for three months, that's just too much. A climbing wall — that's a poor man's solution. It's as if you're in a photograph, climbing in a two-dimensional world, backwards and forwards, stuck there like the subject on film, no corners, no angles, no brain.

The snow is settling on the pavement outside the cafe while I just sit here watching this murky solution in front of me go round. More people arrive, addicts such as myself, some happy, some miserable. Our view of the dismal exterior is totally obscured by the condensation. Arms are raised in a frenzy of activity playing the usual game of charades, windmills in a sea of sodden daffodils — but they don't need wind in their sails, just a little hot air. There is no saving these lost souls, these addicts, these junkies. The sad part of it, is that I'm one of them, just another one of the lemming brigade. It's not a habit I want to kick, though whether or not I could is not under scrutiny. However there is a ray of hope, it's called sunshine.





BOOT STRATA IN NEWLANDS GULLY

TERRY GIFFORD

May Day and the trees are still dripping outside. In this mist the mountains could begin to rise just beyond the garden, a glistening black outcrop in the next street, or lie, as of course they do, a motorway away. While I'm thinking again 'Did I do right not to go?' I remember it was a day just like this that David Craig actually persuaded me to set out with him for Miners Crag, carrying a rope. Cynically I splashed through rain runnelling the turf of Newlands' long glacial gutter. Missing the high path off to the left I scrambled up towards the crag over boulders like the backs of dolphins. Sweating rain I panted round to the bottom of a hidden cleft. Stacked up the first few feet of Newlands Gully were three generations of Lakeland pioneers roping up together.

"I didn't think you wore a helmet", said Young Bill to Old Bill. Old Bill grinned wryly up towards his two pals from Carlisle who had just completed the first pitch. Seven of us were preparing to get wedged like chockstones up in this drainpipe. Even in the days of big gullying parties there were just the Rev. Woodhouse and G.F. Woodhouse on the original ascent of this first recorded route of the valley in 1913. I wished I hadn't fallen for this ski hat fashion.

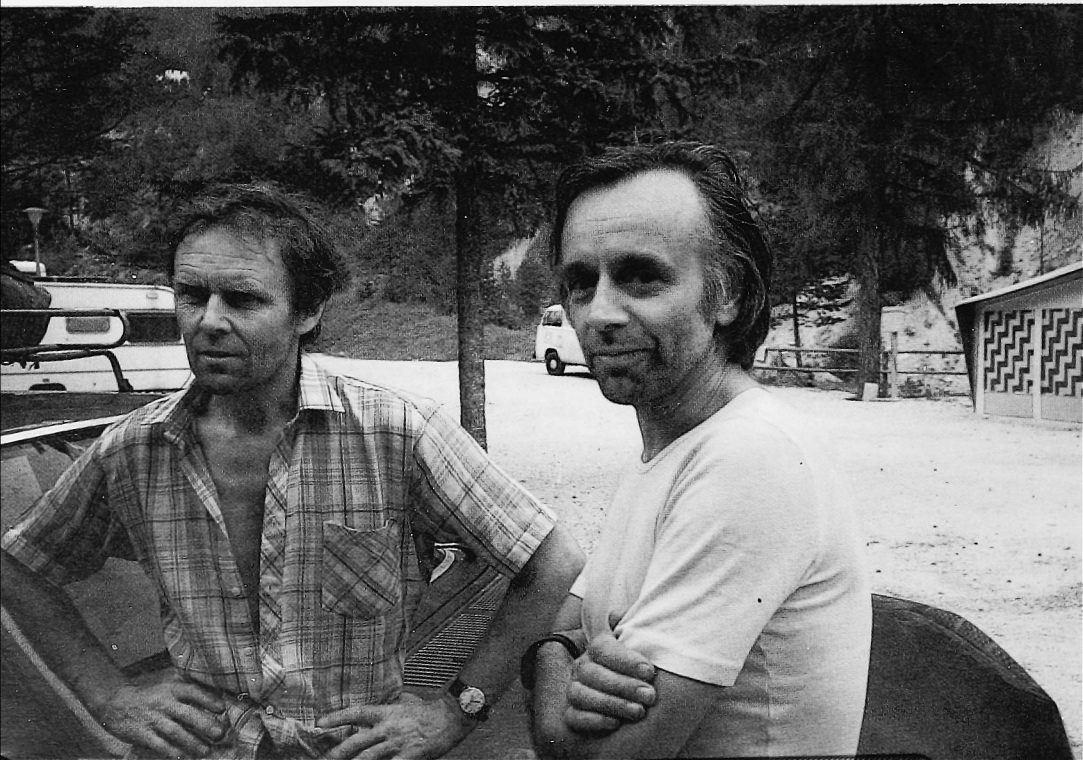
Actually, as gullies go, Newlands Gully is a surprisingly good route, clean, steep and not a pull on a heather root needed. The chimneying is never thrutching back and foot stuff but of the elegant bridging kind. The escapes from under its series of chockstones usually demand wall climbing on the right flank, and the V. Diff-sized jugs come just when the steepness is telling. There are not exactly the route-finding problems that face you in the depths of The Chasm, but then there isn't much of a waterfall either in Newlands Gully. Stances are undercut platforms of walled isolation with only a slight seepage of water in the small of the back if you choose to recline in the gully's chilling arms. Here you can look down at the orange caterpillars crawling up and down the path below, until your second's hand comes flapping over the chockstone searching for the jug.

You emerge from the tight clutches of the gully as it opens out and lies back to accommodate a tree. Fifty feet behind this the gully again constricts to offer a final thirty-foot chimney. We preferred the open rock on the right where, under a steep lee an alcove of dry rock enabled us for the first time to savour its texture, a quality that ensures that the neglected classics of Miners' Grooves and Corkscrew on the upper end of the crag are never desperate despite their openness.

The wet black rock at the start of the route was nothing to savour and it was glancing up then that I had noticed three strata of boots, three generations in the evolution of boots and of routes ranged up the gully above. They seemed to be aeons apart although they were worn by Lakeland pioneers of three rock climbing eras spanning forty years: the 40s, the 60s and the 80s. Nails glinted like the teeth of a miner, narrow French vibrams carried the romantic name of Terray, and plastic white shells were the product of the space age. They were not being worn for nostalgia but were each climber's best judgement for a wet day in Newlands Gully. And they were not together for some filmed reconstruction or tele-reality but out of simple friendship. Bill Peascod, Chris Eilbeck and Bill Birkett were not being beaten by rain on a Sunday, not being holed up behind windows where the rain soaks only the memory, and a climber's legs twitch foolishly like a lamb's on May Day.







100 NOT OUT ON THE PHILIPP-FLAMM

DEREK WALKER

We decided it was about time we went to the Alps again. I had not done a decent Alpine route since 1976 and Hughie's last one had been the West Face of the Blaitière in 1964, the same year we had both last climbed in the Dolomites. In those distant days in the '60s, before the Verdon Gorge and other French limestone crags were discovered, the Dolomites had been really popular with British climbers, many starting their Alpine tours there before going on to Chamonix and elsewhere.

At that time the route to do for the hard men was the Philipp-Flamm, a 3000-foot climb to the Punta Tissi on the north-west face of the Civetta, first climbed in 1957. Walter Philipp was a brilliant Austrian climber who did a lot of routes with Don Whillans in the late '50s and was one of the party on that epic early ascent of the Bonatti Pillar with Don, Hamish and Chris in 1958. According to Don's recollections Dieter Flamm had led most of the hard pitches on the route on the Civetta, and had been so impressed that he had never climbed again. Claudio Barbier, the Belgian ace, made the second ascent in 1961 and it was reported at the time that he would rather solo the North face of the Cima Ovest than repeat the Philipp-Flamm as second! Pete Crew and Al Wright made the 3rd ascent in 1962 and the climb was done for the first time in a day by Martin Boysen and Paul Nunn in 1963 on the 9th ascent, despite Paul breaking his leg in the final grooves. A year later Pod and Lew also climbed it in a day with, so the tale went, a packet of spangles and anoracs round their waists. Hughie was also there in 1964 with the intention of climbing it but the weather was bad and the opportunity missed.

However, all that was over 20 years ago and we all know how easy those old routes of the '50s are nowadays. The climb was bound to be overpegged and easily protected by modern gear so we thought we would make it the main aim of this year's summer holiday, and became quite excited about a return to the Dollies after so long. A few more 'golden oldies' seemed to share our enthusiasm for the Dolomites and we soon heard that a motley team of ex-Wallasey hooligans and

Below: President (Derek Walker) and Vice-President (Hugh Banner) after their climb on the Philipp Flamm.

Photo: Roger Salisbury.

Above: The great North West face of the Civetta towers above the village of Caprile. The Quota IGM (Punta Tissi) is the slight shoulder just left of the summit shoulder and the Philipp-Flamm route goes direct to the Punta Tissi.

Photo: John Cleare.

Cromlech Club has-beens such as Salisbury and Price; Frantic and Wright would be there as well as 'younger' Welsh habitués such as Barker and Jones. The presiding genius would be Sir Donald, who would be taking in the Dolomites as part of his grand European motor-cycling tour.

In the dreadful summer at home, our training was a bit perfunctory. Hugh, whose head is always sound, soloed a few 200-foot severes and mild V.S.s in the Pass while I soloed some familiar twenty-foot problems at Frodsham, but by mid-July we had barely climbed half a dozen Extremes between us and hadn't been on a major crag all year.

But Hugh's philosophy for a big climb is quite simple — you have just got to go out and do it! It is no use messing about on some shorter or easier 'training' route on which we should almost certainly be slow, tired, frightened and put-off; it is much better to get stuck in straightaway and be slow, tired, and frightened on the main objective.

We arrived in our separate family groupings in the beautiful lakeside village of Alleghe at the foot of the Civetta to be greeted by Uncle Donald who was just on his way for a pint. He had spent the last few days riding his bike around his old haunts of 30 years earlier. Unfortunately, his expected climbing and biking partner, the legendary Harry Smith, had failed to turn up but Don had done some walks and a 'Via Ferrata' with another motor cycling enthusiast. He had also been up to scan the great wall of the Civetta the previous day and we anxiously awaited his sage views:

"Aye, there's quite a bit of water about but I've seen worse. But the whole bloody face seems a great heap of rubble to me now! Anyway the climb can't be that 'ard. Messner soloed it didn't he? Pity 'Arry didn't turn up — we could've followed you up."

Donald recommended a leisurely day preparing, and looking at the face, but as the weather seemed perfect we decided to go for it straight away. As we must be among the slowest climbers in the Club, we knew we had no chance of doing the route in a day 'Pod' fashion with anorac and spangles, so we packed the sacks with enough gear to ensure a bivvy whether desirable or not. In went the litres of water, cans of orange juice, racks of friends, nuts and biners, bivvy bags, spare clothes, pegs and hammers. One valuable item which Don loaned us was a pair of his overtrousers which we reckoned we could both get into in an emergency.

Barely realizing at the time the effect all this weight would have on our frail, feeble frames, we sent the sacks up on the lift to the Tissi hut, and then staggered up the steep path to the hut in late afternoon. We camped under the face and in the last minutes of daylight, on the Villain's advice, I kicked some steps up the snow to the foot of the route to save time and fear in the morning.

By 6.00 a.m. we were ready to start and already felt shattered after struggling up the scree and snow with the heavy sacks. After a couple of rope lengths up chossy, rubble-filled gullies we were overtaken by two beardless boys — young

rock gymnasts — their joints as yet unset. Unhampered by age and unburdened by sacks, they quickly scampered past us into the far distance, and our only contact with them later was from the barrage of stones they sent whistling down the face.

By late morning we had done the first 1000 feet and reached the great yellow diedre which is the central feature of the climb, where the really difficult climbing began with continuous pitches of 5 and 6, many up constricting grooves and chimneys. As we climbed higher, we cursed the sacks which jammed and hindered progress. Late afternoon saw us near the top of the diedre, our arms weak through sack-hauling and continually strenuous moves.

As Hughie led off on a super 'Diocese' Chair-Ladder style pitch, traversing leftwards under an enormous roof, my hands were cramping and refusing to open. Worried now about my chances, and fearing that he would from now have to do all the leading, I nervously followed this pitch, willing my fingers to open as I lay-backed to join him on a poor and tiny perched stance.

He pointed me leftwards across a desperately exposed and delicate eighty-foot slab with few pegs for protection. Thankfully, my fingers opened and worked! I think it was on those two pitches that we fully appreciated just how impressive that first ascent must have been nearly thirty years ago. To reverse the climb from there would have been really difficult. On the next artificial pitch, Hughie managed to use his daisy chain to overcome a blank section and insert one of the few nuts (H.B. of course) which we were able to use on the whole climb. I think we placed three in 3000 ft. — but did manage to get in the occasional 'Friend' to supplement the meagre number of pegs, for the climb was hardly better protected than all those years ago.

Easier climbing led into and out of the great final gully until only one grade 6 pitch separated us from the so called good bivvy ledge. Hugh climbed this damp, awkward and overhanging groove but as the light faded and the ropes snagged he was forced to abseil down over the top roof and we had to bivouac where we were on a small sloping shelf of rubble.

Here, at least, we were glad of our sacks, though my spare clothes were damp and sticky from a punctured can of orange juice! As we settled in, a monster avalanche hurtled down the Solleder route 500 feet to the right. We had the inevitable three-hour thunderstorm around midnight, and Hughie's sleeping pill gave me hallucinations but no sleep!

Slow to get off in the morning, I persuaded Hughie to re-lead that pitch but it took us ages to free the ropes and re-climb that wet and dismal groove. At last we were into the easier gullies where the Comici route joined ours. Easy! They were choked with snow, with foul dripping walls and short overhanging chockstone

pitches to grovel over into more rotting snow. Belayed to a tottering icicle under one overhang we thought we could be sluiced down into the slimy innards of an enormous bog. After these few pitches we smelt foul and filthy, looking like Victorian climbing boys in our stinking clothes.

We had long since realised why no-one goes to the Dolomites anymore — bad rock, poor protection, stonefall, snow and storms — all the heady delights of Alpine climbing!

With some relief we climbed into narrower, drier chimneys but soon nearly came to grief when we misread our aged description and I stupidly climbed over some tat up a horrible loose and impending wall, coming within an ace of falling as I tried to get back to Hughie below. There followed about six more serious V.S. groove and chimney pitches, nearly all damp and with never more than the odd peg for protection. At last we completed the final A1 pitch above a great 3000-foot void, and shortly afterwards, after climbing V.S. rock almost to the very end, we were standing at the top of the route on the Punta Tissi. Scrambling to the summit of the Civetta in the late evening sun we were overjoyed to have completed our 'training' route and could now concentrate on enjoying the family holiday.

We had made a slow but not the slowest ascent of the Philipp-Flamm. Just possibly, we had made the oldest! As Hughie has recently passed his half-century and I am nearing mine, we reckoned we had completed our century partnership on the route, so there we were, 100 not out on the Philipp-Flamm. When we arrived down to join the team we were also pleased to see in Davy Jones's copy of Rebuffat's '100 Best Climbs in the Dolomites' that the route was, of course, Number 100 — which seemed fitting.

Sadly, Don, of whom we had talked much as we were coming down from the climb, of his exceptional exploits of thirty years ago and his great wisdom today, had left for Chamonix to recapture old memories and see former friends there. Tragically we were never to see him again.





BEYOND HANGING GARDEN GULLY

GEOFF MILBURN

Very few mountaineering articles stand the test of time to such an extent that they would automatically be chosen for an anthology. One of the few contenders for such an accolade would undoubtedly be 'In Hanging Garden Gully' by C.E. Montague who is one of the great unknown characters from the early days of rock-climbing.

Charles Edward Montague, born in Ealing on New Year's Day 1867, was the third of four sons and from 1879 he attended the City of London School on a day basis until 1885. Oliver Elton who wrote a memoir of Montague in 1929 described him as:

'In build he was slight, lithe and athletic. Never self-assertive or domineering, he had a marked individuality of a high order; he abounded in pure animal spirit; full of fun and quiet humour, he was modest, and never said or thought evil of anyone.'

A contemporary and close friend, Charles Heath, later wrote of Montague's youth:

'On any ordinary occasion you never felt sure that you had him; but in a real emergency you could count on him for certain. He always knew his own mind; the only trouble was, you did not always know it. He was an accomplished athlete and swimmer, but had a modest estimate of his own powers. I foolishly boasted, when he was coming to stay with me at Cambridge, that though I could not dive myself, I had a friend coming up who would think nothing of diving off the top stage at the Bathing Shed. The day came and Paddy said "he didn't do that sort of thing". In his odd stimulating way, he at last consented, "if I would do it too". He was bitten that time — and the day after he reached home he wrote me in a letter that he had dived off Richmond Bridge under cover of night.'

On the incident in question there were clearly several problems lurking at the back of his mind and Dr. Aubrey Montague described what actually happened: 'He wanted to dive from the St. Margaret's railway bridge, about twenty feet. As the railway people objected to trespass he used to do it at night, when it was impossible to see what might be floating down in the water.

It is also told that Montague, rowing down from Oxford on one occasion, stripped, climbed the railway bridge below Nuneham, and wondered

whether he would dive; but, as a train was approaching, did dive successfully.'

In October 1895 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and began his academic career. It was during his Oxford days that his great character was revealed when a serious accident took place. In February 1889 the St. John's punt was crossing the river which was flooded with snow melt water. Montague who was watching a race saw the punt overturn and when one person went down for the third time he dived in and dredged the man up from the bottom — thus saving his life. Another man drowned as the crowd on the bank looked on stupidly.

It is not surprising that a man of such mettle eventually found himself attracted to the world of mountaineers and in 1891 at the age of twenty-four he went part way up Mont Blanc with two guides. A year later, in 1892, in the company of Naismith and Wickham King he did several routes including the Wellenkuppe-Obergabelhorn ridge as well as traversing the Matterhorn. By 1895 he had done the Grand Combin, in 1896 he ascended the Eiger, then in 1906 he was in the Alps for a whole month during which time he did the Dent Blanche and made a crossing of the Schallijoch.

After university in 1890 he began his career as a journalist with the Manchester Guardian, which was to extend for some thirty-five years.

During his youth Montague was greatly influenced by a philosopher, Lewis Nettleship, who eventually died of exposure on Mont Blanc in 1892. In his essay 'Across the Pennines' Montague described his ending as a good and covetable one:

'That such things should sometimes — very seldom — befall, in this greatest of sports, as well as in hunting and football and swimming and every great sport you can name, is nothing against it or them. The mere retention of life is never a big enough aim to absorb all its powers. And even here it may count for a little that death by a fall on a mountain, or by exposure on one, is as a rule, death disarmed, for the dying, of many distresses — those that you know when you see men die, as the grimly ironical phrase is, "quietly in their beds".'

William Thomas Arnold (the nephew of Mathew and the son of Professor Thomas Arnold) was also to influence Montague in many ways:

'They walked and bicycled, each with a keen eye for the line of a country, in its water-sheds and contours, and for direction. They were, says one who often walked with them in the Peak, "ideal companions, both scholars and men of the world, full of the joy of their work and of jolly laughter".'

In the summer holidays Montague frequently made off to Switzerland, and more than once to Italy. He had done his first peak as a novice, in July 1891, going

from Chamonix with guides up the Aiguille du Moine: a climb he says, which is 'not much thought of'; but the ascent seemed rather hard and the descent harder.

Montague mountaineered whenever he could, in the Lakes and Derbyshire as well as in the Alps. He did not discover new heights or aim at making records, but took the severe game scientifically and faced all the usual risks. More than anything except war, climbing satisfied his thirst for adventure. He qualified for the Alpine Club, was elected a member in 1906, and in 1926-27 served on its Committee. The spirit and poetry of the heights pass into his books; and like Leslie Stephen, he stands high among the climbers who are also writers. After his marriage his constant companion was his wife; they often went without guides, and their favourite starting-point was from Chamonix or from the valleys south of the Rhone.

In 1906 Montague was forced by ill-health, due in part to overwork, to take a longer holiday than usual. The doctors threatened to forbid him night labour altogether if he did not relax. He went to the Alps, and got well, and he clearly enjoyed himself. Some years later in the summer of 1912 Montague again went to Switzerland and his letters showed the kind of exultation that was soon to pass into 'The Morning's War'. 'The Mountains', he wrote, 'hold me very tight, especially the Alps':

'We came back last Thursday from our four-weeks in the Alps, pretty fit and lean after some climbing that was as good for the body and soul as ever. After eleven months here I want to go out and do something violent, the way dogs want to eat grass, and there is the deuce's own medicinal virtue in being done up and scorched and funk'd now and then and brought back to the primitive hardships and joys of physical self-dependence — or at least in playing at it. I come back feeling like Longfellow's Evangeline when "homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her" after going to church. It's a rum thing that one simply loathes the mountains in some ways, for their beastly dead-white blinding snow and drab, dirt coloured rocks and their everlasting muck-heaps of moraines, and yet one is really in love — one aches with desire at 'em, though they're termagants',

Although too old to enlist (he was 47 years old in 1914) he dyed his hair and got accepted for the Royal Fusiliers. From his lodging bedroom, where the candle gave him little light for writing, he repaired in the evening to the 'office' of the Alpine Club:

'No one else in Club. Wind making noises outside in the darkened London and rain splashing. Wind has just blown ashes out of grate on to the carpet. Seems like a night alone in an Alpine hut.'

Men scaling with taut finger-tips

An Alpine needle's side
Find there the mazy ways of earth
Divinely simplified

No questioning about the things
That human life might be
Vex him whose every fibre clings
To mere life manfully

All hope and all ambitions live
Along one outstretched arm;
All life within him leaps to guard
Its mortal case from harm.

In February 1916 he wrote:

'I was grieved to hear last night that my oldest friend in my battalion was killed on January 28. He was the only son of Harold Herford, our professor of English Literature at Manchester University. The son and I climbed together for years and he became in the end the finest rock-climber in England. When I enlisted he came back from France, where he had been driving a motor ambulance at the front, and enlisted with us too. I can't feel sorry that he did, even now, but it is bad that such a magnificent fellow should be one of the first to go down. He was a sort of Norse giant, hugely tall and strong, blond, with tranquil blue eyes in which one could not imagine any expression of fear or despair as possible.'

In the dedication in his book, *Fiery Particles*, which was published in 1923 he joined three great men in a noble epitaph:

'To the memory of William Thomas Arnold, Laurence P. Scott (his brother), and Siegfried W. Herford: Unlike one another in everything but that they were not ruled by fear or desire and you could believe what they said.'

On December 9, 1916, Montague went with his party to Rollencourt, which was to be his main resort, with many short absences and one long interlude, until the Allied advance in 1918 . . . One of his companions, Sir Herbert Russell, wrote that:

' . . . he was very keen on all sorts of sports, and his great delight during the heavy winters we had was to get an old tea-tray, climb the hillside at Rollencourt, and toboggan down the snow.'

Montague was promoted up to Captain and despite being injured he tried to get

back to the ranks as late as 1918 but he was too valuable as a press officer. At the end of the year in Cologne he wrote:

‘As the infantry march into the cathedral square, the men’s eyes go up, from back-turned heads, looking for the tops of the western towers of the cathedral, which are in moving cloud, like Chamonix aiguilles.’

After the war a letter written from Seatoller House, Borrowdale, revealed:

‘My heart leapt up when I beheld both your hand-writing and the Zermatt post-mark on one post-card. “And I not there! . . .” Not that I should complain now, for M. and I had a fine month at midsummer in the eastern part of the Mont Blanc group — Champex, etc. It was our first Swiss climbing since the devastatory 1914, and we fairly wallowed in it.’

August 17, 1923.

Charles Montague died after a short illness on May 28, 1928 at the age of 61.



A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

JON DE MONTJOYE

The tiny, underpowered helicopter dropped like a stone . . . but of course it was all quite safe. That notion soon disappeared however as the sound of manic chuckling issued unnervingly from the pilot's intercom. After a ten-hour flight to Anchorage, three internal flights, and two-hundred miles by bus on dirt roads, we had at last arrived in an incredibly wild and beautiful place. On the last stage the helicopter zipped past the great sentinel of Mount Harrison Smith until at last the elegant granite spire of the Lotus Flower Tower came into view.

We recognised the camp site from Nipper's description and soon Rob and I were standing alone in the Cirque of the Unclimbables, listening to the fast fading beat of the helicopter. Alone? This romantic notion was quashed with a guttural Gallic greeting as five French climbers emerged from the greenness and immediately disclosed that they had 'done', the Lotus Flower Tower in one day. Careful questioning revealed the use of pegs, aid and getting caught with their pants down on the summit, and having to spend the night there. In a fit of patriotic fervour we immediately disclosed our plan of all free, no pegs and up and down in one day (a plan which had in fact been formulated only seconds before). It was, not surprisingly, greeted with Gallic derision. Thus the meeting broke up. We pitched our tent.

We were a bit like kids with a new toy. As soon as the last mouthful of freeze dried was gulped down, we stuffed all the hardware into our sacs and raced off toward the upper cirque. Hell, we had another sixteen days here, with the assurance from Nipper, that it never rained for more than ten days at a time, and here we were, going for it within a couple of hours, despite an ominously darkening sky. The latter was eagerly pointed out by the French as we passed their tents, but their warnings went unheeded.

This was indeed a beautiful place. Great ribbon waterfalls, lush green meadows and carpets of alpine flowers complemented the jagged granite spires and pinnacles; a balance that hopefully man will never disturb.

After an hour or so of sheltering from the, by then, quite heavy rain, we crawled out from under a large boulder at the foot of the face, and went back to the tent, leaving the gear in a large plastic Fisons fertilizer bag to protect it from the next nine days' rain. Broad Gallic grins greeted us.

By the next morning, of course, the weather was brilliant. We spent the day

exploring and photographing. It was amazing to find that the animals and birds had little or no fear of man. They knew nothing of the outside world.

In the late afternoon we retraced our footsteps and unearthed the plastic bag containing our gear. The idea of a one day round-trip appealed to us (even though it had been an off-the-cuff boast). If we used the usual big-wall technique of fixing the first couple of pitches we stood a good chance of success. The classic route up the Lotus Flower Tower is split into two sections, the dividing line being a ledge — the only ledge on the face — at exactly half-height. Whilst the top section comprises high standard crack and face climbing, the lower half of the route is considerably easier, with the exception of the first couple of pitches. These are strenuous jam-cracks and are often damp, and therefore time-consuming.

Rob led the first pitch, which, after twenty feet or so of frost-shattered rock, gave an excellent jamming pitch. He belayed when the rope ran out and I followed and led the second up to a huge roof and out right to a small stance on the arete. We abbed off, leaving the ropes for tomorrow's jumar antics.

The only flat place to bivvy was on top of an enormous boulder, perched somewhat precariously on moraine at the foot of the face. Here we lay, not daring to think of the prospect of the Great Toboggan Ride to Oblivion, that faced us should it decide to move.

We awoke on cue at 3 a.m. to the sound of heavy rain on our goretex bivvies, breathed sighs of relief and went back to sleep. Unfortunately the rain stopped at 3.30 a.m. and so the 300 foot jumarring epic commenced at 4. By the time we had reached our previous high point, untangled and tied on to the ropes, our cunning big wall tactics had probably cost us time. Also, the small ruc-sac that the second carried was now heavier to the tune of four jumars. This was partially solved by eating as much food as possible!

Quite easy face climbing up rightwards, then back left led into a monster crack/chimney line. This also gave quite easy climbing with peg/bolt stances every 150 feet. Eventually a short, rightward slanting crack led up to the halfway ledge. If you ever want a comfy bivvy, then this is the ledge for you — a fifteen-foot, square, flat, grassy affair — genuine 5 star!

However, it was by then 8.30 a.m. and so quite the wrong time of day to contemplate sleeping. The first 1100 feet of the route had only taken us 4½ hours, and so we sat for a few moments and lightened the sac further. Even though we were 'half way' it was at this point, that the niceties were over and the route began proper. Half-a-dozen parallel cracks, some no more than seams, shot upward, dead straight to the summit. The crack we would follow, started as a 100-foot corner crack, formed by a huge pedestal standing on the ledge. From the top of this it continued as a face crack, starting too thin to accept fingers then widening

gradually to off-width for the last couple of pitches — The Great Line.

The climbing was immaculate, as was the setting. The weather, however, started to threaten. We ignored it. A couple of hard pitches of about 5.10 — say 5c, gave way to slightly easier 5.9 as the crack widened pitch by pitch. The only deviation from the crack was to pass the second of two overhangs — the only features on the face. The original route pegged the roof via a thin crack, but the free variation traverses right to gain a perfect hand-crack through it and then returns to the Great Line above. Nipper had not known this and the thin crack had given him a hard time. The hand-crack, supposedly the crux of the route, was again about 5.10 but looked infinitely easier than Nipper's struggle.

With just a handful of pitches left before the summit, it began to snow. At that moment the crack widened to an uncomfortable width and there was a sense of urgency about the climbing. We thugged our way up the final easy pitch to the summit. As we stood there, tired and bedraggled, the snow stopped and the sun came out as if it had only been a bluff and we had called it.

It was only after taking summit photos of Brocken Spectres and lightening the sac even further by finishing our last few smarties, that we made The Mistake. By dint of sacrificing a handful of nuts we could have abseiled back down the route to the ledge and thence to the ground via the in-situ belays of the lower section. But no, we opted for the 'standard' descent. This involved abseiling down the ridge to the west and then descending a deep couloir, again by abseil. We had been told by the French that it was safe and that all the abseil points were good and in-situ.

The ropes came down after the first abseil and the trap was sprung. An old rotting sling round a chockstone at the top of the couloir immediately left of the main bulk of the tower marked the start of the false line. We glanced down into the dark dank depths of an unknown epic, and then continued down the ridge to the lowest col, which marks the top of the correct couloir. Like lambs to the slaughter we slid into its jaws. It threw everything at us, our replies were, to say the least feeble: loose rock (no helmets); snow (E.B.s); falling ice (see loose rock); hunger (very light sac) and, eventually and inevitably, darkness (no head torch).

Add to the above, rotten and often hidden abseil points, followed by, of course, jammed ropes.

Thus we sat at the top of what could have been our last abseil, where the couloir gave out into an overhanging wall, tied to a faded bit of tat growing out of the ice. Rob had already been a few feet down the rope but, as he couldn't make out in the gloom whether the ropes reached the snowfield below, had come back up, proposing that we should stay put until it was light. There was no way I was going to sit in the end of a gun barrel any longer than necessary, so I set off down with jumars ready. After only about 40 feet I was standing on the snow. We pulled the

ropes down, and then tied one end to a snow bollard and made a 300-foot abseil/slither down to the moraine, leaving the ropes to be retrieved in the morning.

Twenty-one-and-a-half-hours after leaving it, the Fisons bag was once again un-earthed and, wearing imbecilic grins, we climbed into dry, warm pits and looked forward to 14 days of bone idleness, and wondered how many other people had gone to such lengths to miss the Royal Wedding.

SUMMARY

An account of probably the first all free one day ascent and descent of the Lotus Flower Tower in Canada's North-West Territories via the classic South East Face in July 1981 by Robin Pearce and Jon de Montjoye.



A three star route 'Somewhere' in Wales!

Name the crag.

Photo: John Sumner.





A CAMP IN GLEN NEVIS

HERBERT CARR

In the Easter vacation of 1920 I was staying with an Alpine Club friend at his charming house at Portinscale, near Keswick. One evening in the week before Easter I went over to Penrith to meet the other members of the party at the George Hotel. They were Ralph Stobart, who owned a car, a big open two-seater American Dodge, seating three in front and one in a 'dickey' seat at the back, which I was to occupy. On his way north Stobart had picked up Noel and Mona Odell. Besides myself, Alec Frazer was to join us just for the weekend.

We had a good dinner together to prepare us for the long night run up to the Highlands and we finally set out about 11 p.m. I had put on all the clothes I could and was ready for the fray.

After Carlisle we met nothing whatsoever on that main road all through the night — except for the sheep, of course. They found the road a drier and warmer spot than their wet open moorland on either side. By slow and careful driving we had only one under the car. It was pulled out by Stobart, himself a farmer, who examined it and pronounced it unhurt.

By the time we reached Stirling we were ready for a splendid breakfast, but afterwards we were soon on a typical Highland road of those days and 12 miles an hour was quite good going. By the late afternoon we had got as far as the lonely little inn that stands on the moor some two miles east of Buachaille Etive Mor. The good folk there were not expecting visitors but contrived to make us comfortable and gave us plenty to eat. On the day following we climbed Buachaille Etive Mor by a snow route up its eastern face. Then our way led down the very steep road — was it called 'the Study'? — into Glencoe. (The word for 'the Study' is an English version of a Scottish word which means 'the Anvil').

The next thing I remember was the ferry-boat across the loch at Ballachulish. This was just a large open rowboat. A crew of two strong Highlanders propelled it as oarsmen. Luckily it was just broad enough to take Stobart's car — crossways amidships — with the wheels lashed securely to the thwarts. There was a fresh wind, and I was glad to disembark safely on the north side.

We stayed a night at Fort William and collected our camping gear, which had been sent on by post. Stobart had arranged to hire a campsite at Achintee close to where the path of the Ben began to climb the fellsides; and the owner would also let us have the normal supplies of food. Stobart provided the largest tent, a large

brown canvas globe, absolutely spherical. I had never seen one like it; I think it was a relic of Victorian days when families needed privacy when dressing and undressing for a bathe. We called it The Stately Pleasure Dome. The Odells had it, and it was also our mess-tent. Stobart also had a tent of a conventional sort. Frazer had his own and I had mine. The Scottish Mountaineering Club met at Fort William that Easter, and every morning I watched the procession march past: I remember only two names, Raeburn and Ling. They were gone up the mountain about 8 a.m., whereas we did not get off till about 10.30. We enjoyed that first week of April, a perfect spell of anti-cyclonic weather. Day after day was fine, providing us with a marvellous introduction to the most alpine of our British mountains.

On the fine days we did the climbs that were then popular, especially the Tower Ridge (Odell, Frazer, Stobart). The snow was in excellent condition and there was plenty of it. Our late starts meant that we got to the summit at about sunset and were using our glacier lanterns on the way back to camp, thus turning an alpine routine inside-out, as it were.





EVEREST 1982

EUGEN TAMM

The following account which was prepared for a symposium on mountaineering was passed on to Chris Briggs who kindly forwarded it to the Editor for inclusion in the C.C. Journal.

The Federation of Mountaineers of the USSR sends regards and best wishes. I would like to make a report about our ascent of Mount Everest in 1982. First of all I feel it essential to emphasise that this expedition was actually the first Soviet expedition to the Himalaya. The point is that in spite of numerous explanations given by our Federation there exists a false belief that as early as 1952 a Soviet expedition went to the Himalaya and ended with tragedy. Unfortunately this wrong information somehow finds its way into various books on the Himalaya.

The point must be made absolutely clear that there was no such expedition. Moreover, we have never heard in the USSR the names of mountaineers mentioned in books as members of this bogus Russian expedition. Those men never appear in our mountains let alone the Himalaya. So you may be absolutely certain that the so-called Russian expedition to the Himalaya in the Fifties is nothing more than typical newspaper canard. As a matter of fact it is really boring for us to clarify such an absurd rumour.

Turning to reality I can say that in 58/59 our Federation had been preparing for a joint Soviet-Chinese Expedition to Mount Everest via the Rongbuk Glacier. However the well known events in Tibet made that expedition impossible and hence our mountaineers had to wait for their chance an additional twenty years.

Now let us speak about the first real Soviet Expedition to the Himalaya in 1982. While planning the expedition we had a lot of reasons to hope for success in such a daring venture as the ascent of Mount Everest. First of all I would like to mention our forerunners whose brilliant achievements on Everest inspired us to find our own challenge to be met in climbing this mountain and whose tremendous experience was of invaluable help for us. So it is only natural that we feel ourselves very grateful to all previous Himalayan climbers.

Our belief in success has been based on the rich practice of high altitude climbing in the USSR. All members of our expedition excluding only our cook have a very respectable list of ascents at altitudes up to 7,500 metres in the Pamirs and Tyang Shan including routes of extreme difficulty. However we were well

aware of the difference between 7,500m and 8,500m and did try to prepare everything to be able to pass the Mount Everest exam.

In our mountains we have never used oxygen equipment. Our extensive experience in climbing up to 7,500m allowed us to expect a proper adaptation for the job at high altitudes. Nevertheless we decided to provide our climbers with oxygen not only for the final assault but for the whole period of the establishment of the intermediate camps starting from 7,800m. There was a very serious reason for this decision. In the course of our reconnaissance in the Spring of 1980, and through thorough analysis of available pictures we expected the chosen route to Mount Everest to be extremely difficult with rock-climbing up to the IV/V degree of complexity at high altitudes. It would be too risky a gamble for novices in the Himalaya to attempt such an ascent without oxygen. Due to the expected technical difficulties of our route we also had some reasons to doubt whether Sherpa porters would be able to help us with carrying loads and making camps at altitudes higher than 7,500m. I must say that our further experience justified these doubts.

So we had to rely on rather limited assistance from the Sherpas and our climbers had to perform all the exhausting jobs of transportation of food and necessary equipment starting from camp 3. Hence it was a matter of keen necessity to provide every member of our team with the opportunity to use oxygen. Naturally it was up to the personal choice of the climber to decide at what moment to start using oxygen.

Getting ahead of my story I can say that among eleven climbers who reached the summit there were two people who certainly preferred and almost managed to do without oxygen. Baliberdin did not use oxygen in the course of the ascent to the summit and had to exploit his oxygen equipment only during the night descent between 8,700m and 8,500m in an emergency situation. Another climber, Khrischaty reached camp 5, 8,500m, without oxygen. On his first assault on May 7th he did not use oxygen. Unfortunately the stormy wind on the ridge made further progress impossible and Khrischaty and Valiev had to retreat. At six in the evening the wind calmed down and they made a second attempt which proved successful. However they had to face very severe conditions on the night ascent and hence Khrischaty took his oxygen equipment and it was undoubtedly a wise act.

Looking at the work done by the expedition in a bit more detail, five intermediate camps had been established along the chosen route to the summit. The last camp, N5, was set up by the vanguard assault team — Baliberdin and Mislovsky — and it was the hardest part of their job. This team certainly paved the way to Mount Everest for all the rest of our climbers.

It took us about a month of very hard labour, from March 21 until April 25, to make all the necessary build-up preparations for the final assault: to prepare the route up from camp N1, 6,500m, up to camp N4, 8,250m, and to lift all our stores to the camps. This job was done by sixteen mountaineers helped by eight Sherpas. Unfortunately the route proved to be too difficult for Sherpas. Only two of them, charming Navang Nozgy and Nima Tenba, managed to carry loads to camp N3, 7,800m. All the others had to stop at camp N2, 7,350m.

I must also add that the weather in 1982 was extremely bad — rather unusual for that time of the spring. Bearing in mind our previous Pamir expedition we considered it of the utmost importance for all the mountaineers to have a rest and acclimatisation at lower altitudes. Tjangboche was evidently the place of choice and all the members of the assault team spent three to four days there after having done their three build-up ascents to the intermediate camps.

Camp N1 was set up at the usual place on a moraine in the Valley of Silence at 6,500m. Our route via the spur of the south-western wall of Mount Everest started practically from the tents of this camp. The camp had been provided with everything necessary for the comfortable Advance Base and there were two big tents with a gas kitchen.

Camp N2 at 7,350m consisted of only two tents that were fixed on artificially made ground at the base of a big rock fault and the route between the first two camps presented no serious difficulties. Camp N3 was also on an artificially made and very uncomfortable ground just over the rock fault already mentioned. The route to N3 was rather difficult and it was necessary to make a lot of horizontal traverses over vertical rocks covered with ice. You can imagine what an unpleasant exercise it was for the heavily laden climbers. These were the very obstacles that stopped most of our Sherpa friends.

At an altitude of 8,250m there was only one four-man tent fixed up at the narrow snow crest and the route up to camp N4 was the most complicated part of the whole ascent. It was an extremely difficult rock-climb over the steep, almost vertical cliffs, on the wall of the spur facing Bonington's Couloir. Camp N5 was established at 8,500m at a distance of several rope-lengths from the well-known South-western Ridge. Up to the moment of the final assault all the mountaineers had made three ascents up to between 7,850 and 8,500m and had thus acquired the necessary acclimatisation.

The most important part of our expedition came on April 27th when the first pair, Baliberdin and Mislovsky, left the Base Camp. They had a very responsible task to do — to make the route from camp N4 upwards and to set up camp N5. On May 4th at 2.35 in the afternoon they reached the summit. About the same time the second team, consisting of four men, got to N5. Two of them, Bershov and

Turkevitch, had left this camp at six in the evening and started their ascent as a support party taking additional oxygen for those on the summit. Baliberdin and Mislovsky had spent too much effort on the way to the summit and the support of the second pair was extremely necessary for them. The two pairs met each other late in the evening at an altitude of 8,700m.

After this rendezvous Bershov and Turkevitch continued their ascent and got to the summit at 10.25 in the evening. Happily enough on full-moon nights the weather was usually more tolerable than in the daytime. They then started the descent and returned to N5 together with Mislovsky and Baliberdin at 5.30 on the morning of May 5th. In an hour the third pair, Ivanov and Efimov, had made their start from N5. They were on the summit at one o'clock in the afternoon and returned to camp N5 at six in the evening.

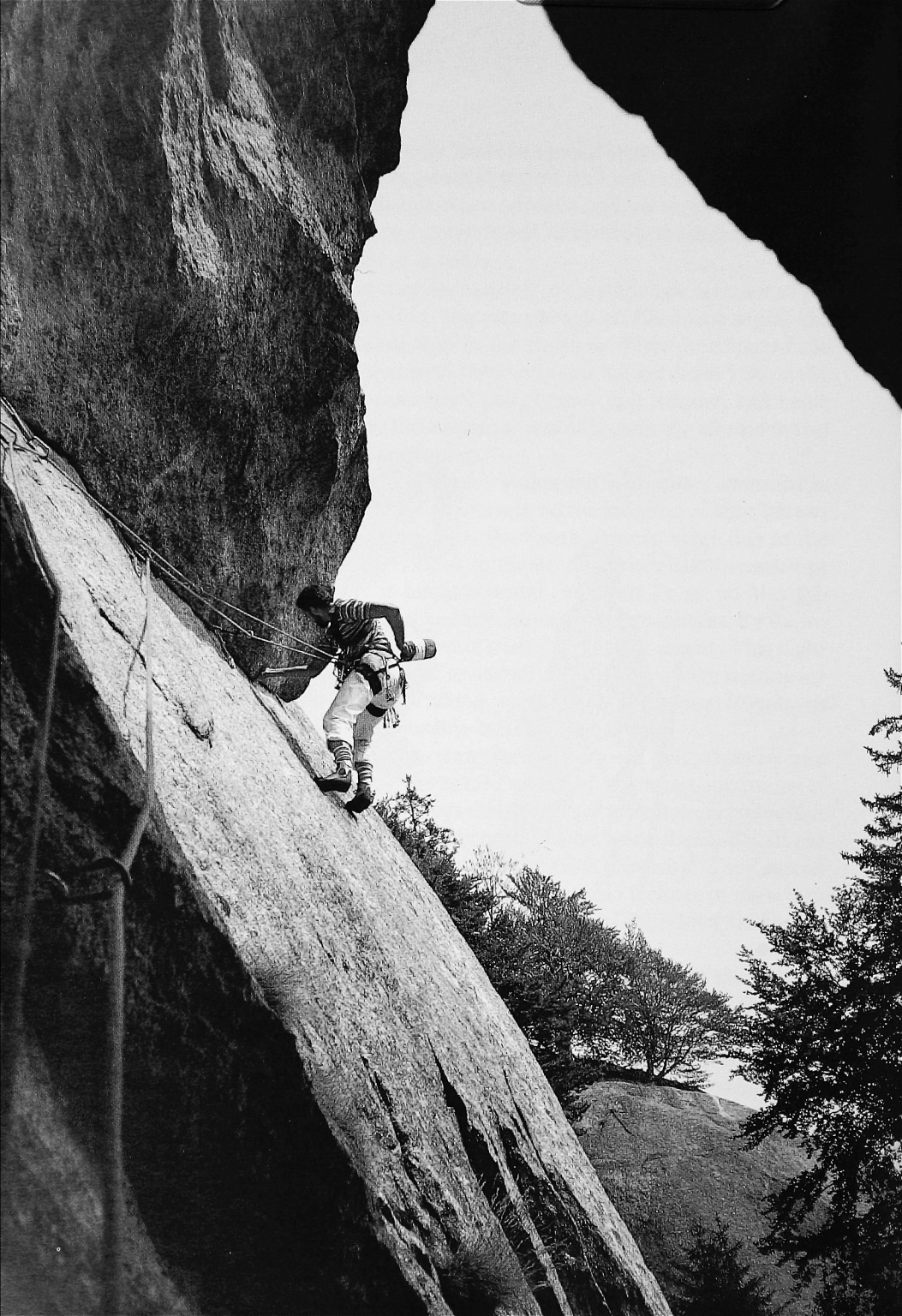
On the next day, May 6th, the fourth pair, Valiev and Khrischaty ascended to camp N5. As already explained, their first attempt on the morning of May 7th was unsuccessful, and they had to return from the South-western ridge due to the extremely severe weather and at 6 o'clock in the evening made another attempt which proved to be a lucky one. It was late at night at about 2 a.m. on May 8th when they achieved their goal and reached the summit of the mountain. By 8 a.m. they reached N5 having gone through severe trials during their ascent. This night was the most troublesome for the rest of us and all night long we were waiting for any message from the summit. Nothing was heard from our friends as unfortunately the batteries of their walkie-talkies had run low.

At camp N5 Valiev and Khrischaty were met by the next pair, Ilyinsky and Chepchev. Our relief from tension was mixed with fear about the conditions at night which they had to face. It turned out that they were actually safe but at that moment we had asked Ilyinsky and Chepchev to leave aside their own ascent plans in order to secure the safe descent of Valiev and Khrischaty. They agreed with our suggestion. Any mountaineer will understand the feelings of these two men who had to give up their long sought after dream at an altitude of 8,500m — almost within a hand grasp of the summit.

The last party of three, Khomutov, Puchkov and Golodov made their rather uneventful ascent to the summit by 11.30 on the morning of May 9th. That was really the victory day! Unfortunately the fourth member of this last team, Moskaltsov, was not able to participate in the ascent as while going for the fifth time through the Khumbu icefall he had fallen down the ladder. Fortunately he got only light concussion of the brain and completely recovered a month later. To survive after a flight of 16m into a crevasse of the glacier means a bit more than usual luck for a man! But in his eyes we realise that it is not very easy for him to find consolation in this thought.

All in all eleven members of our expedition achieved the summit. We had good reasons to consider our first Soviet Himalayan expedition to be a very successful one. Everybody including both the successful climbers and other members of our team shared the happiness of the victory.





THE RISING MOON (or Second Time Lucky)

AL CHURCHER

The Scoglio delle Metamorphosi is an upper tier to beat them all, soaring up from the shadowy depths of the ancient beeches of the Bosco Incantato — the Enchanted Wood. Below this lies another 800 feet of steep granite; the Bastionata dei Dinosauri with its classic Kundalini. The right-hand side of Metamorphosi is split by the continuous line of cracks and diedres of Luna Nascente; ten pitches said to give some of the finest climbing in Mello. An hour's steep slog above the valley floor and facing South East, Sergio and I decided on a dawn start — we'd already fried on one route and wanted to enjoy this one.

Not the best of sleepers at any time, when there's a big route next day, I wonder why I bother trying. I spent much of the night with my head-phones on — as usual dropping off just before the alarm. At first I put the morning's head-ache and dry throat down to too much vino-locale the previous evening; but the walk up was a nightmare as I became progressively more dehydrated, and after spending another hour finding the start, I was a dripping ball of sweat when we roped up below the first crack. How I expected to make a thousand feet of E2 I don't know, but sheer pig-headedness insisted I try at least one pitch. The start overhangs, but after clipping the old aid pegs, a couple of good finger locks and a heave brought a ledge within reach, and a few more easy moves the stance. The adrenalin had evaporated, and lacking even the energy to take in, I collapsed on the stance, puking fulmar-like onto the slab below. Somehow I made my brain operate long enough to ab off in one piece, before crawling off into the bushes as the eruptions began at the other end. Sergio would make a good Sherpa. Without a word of complaint he carried both sacs and ropes down — while I shivered my way down a path that had unaccountably steepened — my descent punctuated by numerous excursions into the surrounding undergrowth.

A year later Mello was virtually deserted, the sun had migrated North to Britain, the local hot-shots and their nubile camp-followers presumably in the opposite direction. For almost a week Metamorphosi had lurked in the clouds, and although this had cleared, we left the tent late enough to be sure of dry rock on arrival. Jill had opted to follow it — but with the threat of having to carry my own sac down if I decided to repeat last year's performance! The wrong path up, a diversion to hide a Parasol mushroom for supper that night, and a repeat of last year's search for the start, made it well after noon when I chalked up in the cave

beneath a familiar crack. Desperation had obviously lent inspiration the previous year. This time it took three attempts before I used the eyes in the back of my head to unlock the first crux and reach the ledge at the foot of Polymagou's chimney. Luna Nascente traverses almost horizontally right beneath an arching roof — bridge up the chimney — reach right for a Friend in a horizontal and tiptoe across the slab to the roof. Placing protection would make it much harder, but with in-situ pegs waiting to be clipped, it's an enjoyable, if strenuous, finger-tip undercling, the feet smearing across the slab below, until the final layback leads round the edge to the foot of the bottomless diedre. There was no obvious stance, and Jill had the topo.

"Jill, how long's this pitch?" "Fifty metres" came the muffled reply, or so I thought. The rope drag became impossible and twenty minutes later I was back at the same point, hanging uncomfortably in slings as I took in. She's said 15 metres!

"Al. I can't reach this Friend." "Just bridge up the chimney a bit." "I have bridged up. I can touch it but I can't reach far enough to reach the trigger." "Well bridge up higher." "I can't. My legs aren't as long as yours!"

Now I'd placed this Friend quite carefully, allowing for the difference in our height and reach — but obviously forgetting how much further I can bridge. The rope went out and came back in. Jill yo-yoed up and down. The minutes ticked away, and the muttered obscenities and mutual recriminations became gradually louder. We were getting into one of our famous on-crag rows, and it was edging perilously close to the "Last route I do with you" stage. And with an hour and a half on the route already, an epic was becoming more and more likely.

Realising this, I offered the ultimate sacrifice: "You'd better leave it Jill." "You must be joking — I'd never hear the last of it. It was bad enough when I left that nut in last week."

Eventually she managed to place a nut, and by hanging on a sling the Friend was retrieved and we struggled to change the belay in a less than pleasant atmosphere, Jill handing me the offending object with a fixed smile on her face that spoke volumes. But as the diedre unfolded, the tensions fell away in a joy of bridging, jamming and laybacking that just went on and on and on. Mostly on the feet, and never too hard or strenuous — a steady 5a, with a few moves of 5b — the next 100m were pure delight. Beech leaves shimmered in the sunlight below, and pools in the river were jewels on a silver chain. We were grateful for the shade when we reached the niche of the 'Occhio del Falco', (the Eye of the Falcon), to the side of a great exfoliated flake. Completely hollow, we could see right through it. Hit it with your hand and it emitted an unnerving boom as it vibrated beneath you. Climb the diedre to the top of the flake, then layback down it to its foot, before crossing over to gain the (thankfully easy) man-eating crack leading up the

other side. Of course some purist has now done a direct pitch that avoids all this — but you'd lose a lot of fun for the sake of a few feet of 5c. Another 50m of 4b brought the end of the crack, and of the continuous difficulties. The original guide suggests a 70 metre pitch above, but we followed a feldspar band leftwards to a short crack. Another two pitches via a belay on Juniper bushes and we were at the larch trees of the summit plateau.

Decaying stone walls and terraces indicate that it was once cultivated; in such a high and inaccessible position the thought was mind-boggling, as even the valley floor is only occupied for the warmer months. We had ample time to ponder the problem, as it took us several circuits of the summit and an equal number of false starts before we located the descent, a battle through scrubby willows and waist-high grass down a steep muddy gully. Luckily we found the sacks before it was completely dark — but we looked in vain for a Luna Nascente to illuminate the rest of the descent.

A couple of months later a brown paper bag appeared on the table. A Rock 1 and 2. She'd stripped the tape off two of her own nuts, and not told me about the two she'd left in place when retrieving the Friend . . . devious these women.

NOTE

A combination of Kundalini (H.V.S., mostly 4c, with some 5a and a few moves of 5b to start) and Luna Nascente would result in well over 2,000 feet of magnificent climbing, with just a short walk through the beechwoods between the two halves.



What are you doing
Pat? I thought we
were going to the pub.

Shut up and
give me some
more slack

FRANKIE (AND JIM) GOES TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

FRANK HILL

I cannot quite recall the decision being made. I think it was a natural evolution of a frivolous idea, you know, the type of thing that you hear after the Nth Pint, and when everyone begins to enthuse, you realise it must have come from your own lips! Suddenly it dawned, I'd been conned into a climbing trip to France, on a MOTORBIKE. "What, at Easter, 3,000 miles on a bike, bloody frost bite that's all you'll get!"

With the decision made, the team began to prepare, Jim Hewson — Suzuki 850, Lew Brown — Norton 750 (risky), Mike Collins — Suzuki 750 and myself Kawasaki 550. Questions came from all corners. "Will all the gear fit on the bikes?" "Have we enough food?" "Can Lew really burn a salad?"

By Thursday evening, however, we were ready. Mike had unfortunately made an early retirement due to lack of funds, but had agreed to hitch over to Fontainebleau. After much debate (mainly concerning the reliability of Lew's Norton) it was decided that Mike ought to leave first (with Lew in close pursuit). Dumped in Boulogne at 4 a.m. we faced a desperate early morning ride. With temperatures well below freezing 'whole body frostbite' became a definite possibility, and frequent stops were required to warm frozen appendages and drink large quantities of cafe creme. Lunchtime in Fontainebleau and Mike had already arrived. Boots and chalk bags were quickly donned to sample the delights of Couvier. A brief confrontation with a local ballroom head climber over the use of chalk livened up the day.

The next day Lew caught us up and we immediately set off for a rendezvous with Mike at Aix en Provence — but just north of Lyon — DISASTER. Accelerating away from the traffic lights, a look in the mirror revealed nothing! The Norton was left at the lights complete with a gearbox full of neutrals. Eventually, four frustrating hours later, we managed to jam the bike in top gear, and away it chugged. We arrived at the campsite at 2 a.m. absolutely knackered, especially Lew who had not slept for well over 30 hours.

A good day at Les Deux Aiguilles of Saint Victoire relieved our frustration. Following directions from Mr Livesey's bible, 'Les Commandos' proved to be an easy but excellent introduction, and to follow up, a local lad pointed out Septieme Metacarpel! An amazing wall climb of about 5c standard, with plenty of reassuring bolts and a BIG Chain to abb. off (No epic descents here). Meanwhile

back at the campsite Mike appeared, having been evicted from an irate French guy's tent he thought was ours!

Another day on the rock put us onto two superb routes, 'La Martine' 5b, 5c, 5a and 'La Resposante' 5b, 5b, 5b, proved to be in the many star category. Again we were pointed at another couple of routes, Variation à Picon (5c/6a), with only one bolt for protection in 50 feet of climbing and a desperate slab climb, (name unknown) to the left of the previous route (must have been 6b) finished off the day and our finger ends.

Climbing at Buoux no longer seemed 'Interdit' and the queues of people proved this. We filled in time by doing the routes on the 'Sex Pistol' slab. Lunch was interrupted by the arrival of the local Gendarmerie who cleared everyone off the field and onto the road except for Jim and I whom, being good law abiding citizens, coolly walked back up to the crag. Their visit seemed only a token gesture, and soon everyone was back on the crag. This break gave us a chance to get on Pepsicomane which combined with the Souche à Mex finish proved to be an outstanding classic. Pack-up time again — St Jeannet here we come, leaving Mike and Lew awaiting parts for the dead Norton (we never did discover whether or not Lew could burn a salad). Apparently all that was required for the gearbox was a 50p spring!

The camp site at St Jeannet was expensive, but provided an excellent view of the towering crag. 'Mafia' was the route to do but neither Jim nor I felt up to leading it. (Well it was a good enough excuse on the day.)

La Tavan gave a desperate start (with familiar peg and bolt protection) leading to an easier crack.

Jim fancied Muir Noir 5a/5b according to Livesey's book. Many attempts on the top pitch left us thinking we were on the wrong route. Later we discovered that popular opinion puts this pitch at 6a.

Having earlier seen an Italian group frequently pulling on 'Points' or 'Assurance' in order to ascend a steep wall, I reckoned that I could do it in better style. A hard move over a bulge on small finger pockets (à la Water cum Jolly) led to perfect wall climbing on mega-jugs. The route was later revealed to be French 6c/7a named Les Temps Modernes.

In the bar was Chris Craggs. "Where've ya been today Chris?" "Been to this Monaco Crag." "Worth a visit?" "Mm, give you a topo." Topo and route descriptions instantly produced.

Oh the heat! Tete Le Chien faces south overlooking Monaco and . . . The Med . . . oh for a swim! Six routes fell to the team mostly about 5b/5c standard and all with nice new bolts and big chains to abb. off. Although not a large crag by French standards, the location offers the ideal opportunity for the family climber.

“How about the South of France this year luv?” “Oh great, nice break from you climbing.” Family arrives at beach. “Ah, isn’t that a coincidence. There’s a nice crag up there and I just happened to have packed my climbing gear!” Family left on the beach — Divorce imminent. Another crag, we were told, is Loubier just 200 yards down the hillside from Tete Le Chien. Apparently this is a better alternative. A local guide is available but definitely a rip-off at 100 Francs.

Time to get up and pack gear again, we’ve got this off to a fine art now, the packing not the walking. A quick oil level check meant that the local ‘carroserie’ was 55 Francs better off — and that was only for ½ gallon. Aiming for La Palud sur Verdon, we rode through the mountains, with the sun beating down but snow at the road-side reminding us of the recent (?) winter.

The campsite was crammed full of Bank Holiday Italians, plus an English minibus full of Bolton All-Stars. We pitched quickly and decided an evening visit to the crag was in order. Jim fancied Mirror du Fou, (6a) I agreed instantly because I knew it was close to the road. Eventually we got on the route after watching two parties of Italians struggle up it. A nice wall and crack climb to the left of this finished off the day (and us), along with a few beers of course.

A hot day followed, very hot indeed. Joe (the wad) Healey pointed us at Overcool Babdose, (6b) on the lower Mirror du Fou wall. Past the crux and a ‘semi rest’ was won, the hard bit done I then confidently left the ‘rest’ to clip the next bolt. Why do they always put them just out of reach? Whizz, down I went, arms pumped out etc and other excuses. Lowering off and overcome by the heat I decided to ‘leave it for another day’ so back to the bar for a well deserved (?) beer and food.

Half a day’s ride through some spectacular scenery brought us to Buis les Barronies a town reminiscent of a spaghetti Western. Our lunchtime arrival meant a search for food. The shops were closed, apparently on their lunchbreak, so we were forced to go to the bar for a drink and a wait.

1 p.m. the shops are closed. 2 p.m. the shops are closed (suspicious). 3 p.m. the shops are still closed (very suspicious). “I think it’s Easter Monday” remarked Clint Hewson. So, stuffed with chocolate croissants from the only shop open, we aimed for the classic of the crag (spot the mistake). A steep well-polished (Mr Sheen) wall led to a second pitch comprising an horrendously loose flake, the only protection — a semi-placed tied off to a half-inch sapling! Enough was enough. “Stuff this” says I. “Stuff this” says Jim, and totally disillusioned by the place we abbed off. A walk up the crag brightened us up instantly. A superb slab with lots of those shiny new bolts placed on it. Painted topos on the rock, showed us the way to some beautiful moves, and big chains to get down. Three routes were completed as the sun went down. Probably 5c, 6a and 6b respectively.

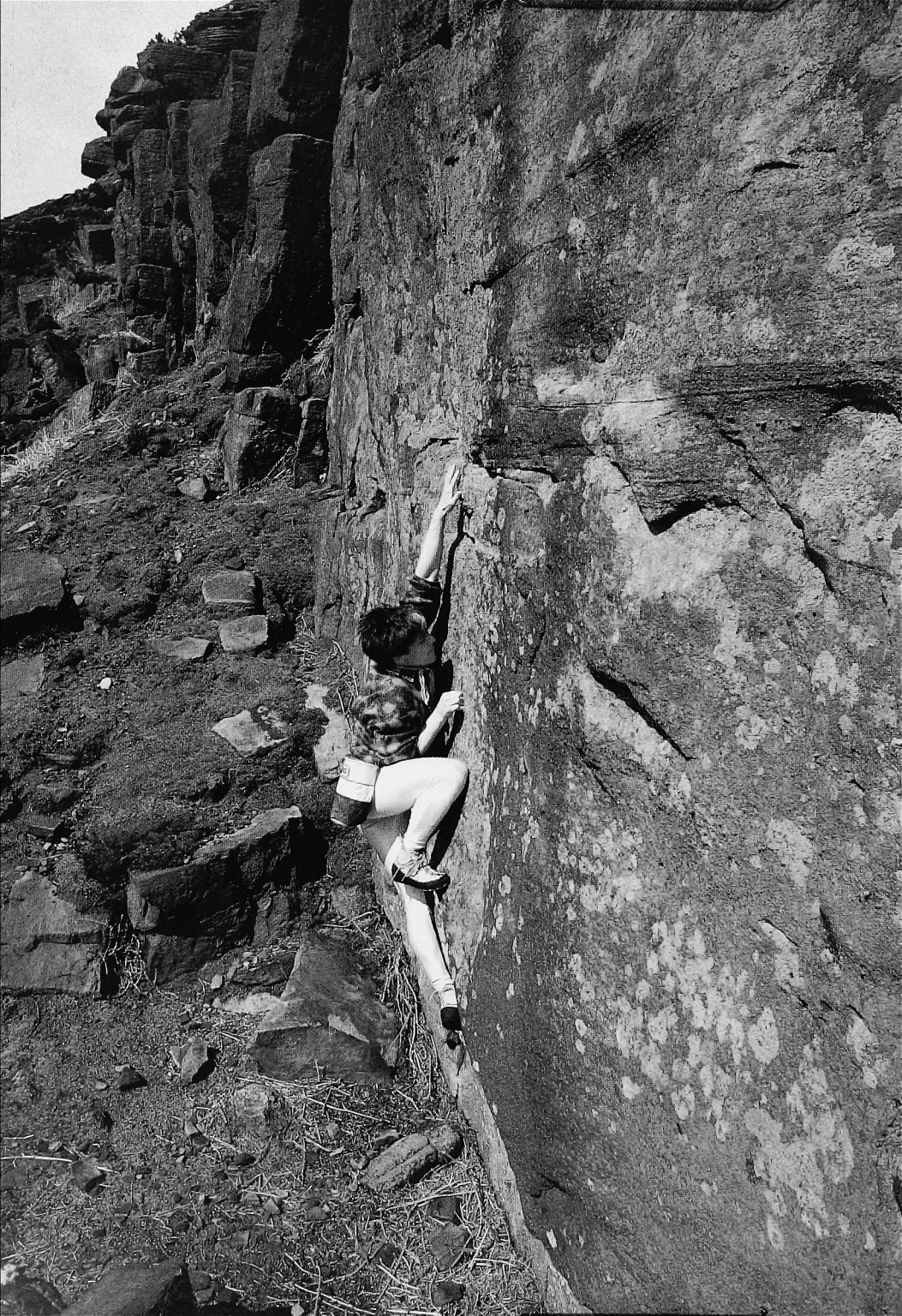
Descent in the dark, shower and into the town to earn some well earned grub. It really was Easter Monday and nowhere was open, "Help! we're going to starve to death." In the nick of time we were rescued from the vultures by an English team who donated some of their food. Thanks Boys and Girls.

The difficult decision to leave was made and we headed back to Fontainbleau the next day, a good place to split the journey. After a hard day's ride the camping sign was a welcome sight. A day here was planned but had to be forsaken when Jim developed an overnight flu of some description, so we decided to continue towards Boulogne.

Ferry tickets purchased, wine bought of course and a mad dash back to the ferry terminal put us on the boat just in time. Reality hit us in the shape of screaming kids battling for a brew on the boat and the mandatory English roadworks including a five-mile jam. The weather had been fine, not a drop of snow or rain and a suntan to boot. But had Lew received his gearbox parts?







VERDON BEETROOT

TREVOR JONES

The first time I went to Verdon I did the 'Demande' with Derek Walker in August. The previous night when we arrived it had struck us as rather strange that there were no English climbers on the campsite, but by 11 o'clock next day I realised why. The burning sun made the gorge like being in the inside of a microwave oven and my bald head became a colour which made a beetroot look anaemic.

But I had to go back. The climbing was so magnificent and I saw in it a release from the Alps. All those decades of waiting in Chamonix, Grindelwald and Zermatt in torrential downpours, waiting for the Eiger and the Walker and all that interminable Alpine nonsense. And as for all the gear that has to be remembered . . . It's hard enough remembering my gear for a week-end in Wales, without the quantum leap to crampons, double axes, goggles, glacier cream, bivvy bag and memory stretched to breaking point.

Fortunately Harry Smith acted as a catalyst and said, "About time yer gave up snow and ice and all that bloody nonsense". So I gave up the Alps and became a rock gymnast again. I even bought a pair of shorts which made me look like a real Empire builder.

While I was leafing through the Verdon guide, the phone rang and a strange voice said, "Trevor Jones?" "Yes." "Tell me about Mount St. Elias in Alaska." "Dunno, never been there." "But what about that superb ridge?" "I tell you, I've never been there", wondering if I was speaking to a nutter. "Just a minute, are you the old Trevor Jones?" "I suppose so." Apart from the inconceivable fact that there were two Trevor Jones, young and old, he slammed the phone down without speaking any more. Cheeky young pup, no respect for honorary members of the Climbers' Club.

Malcolm Campbell and I together with Les Brown and Peter Turnbull decided to have a short break on the Provence limestone. Firstly I had to persuade them to try the Pelle on Mont des Trois Becs in the Vercors. Ian Lonsdale, publican of the Black Dog at Belmont, had enthused ecstatically about it as he twirled expertly on his crutches after badly breaking his leg in the nearly always fatal sport of sledging with one's children in the winter.

The 'Pelle' or spade or Voie des Parisiens used to be described in the original Vercors guide as '1,000 feet. Entirely overhanging. Artificial pitches, bivouac

often necessary.' This guide-book had to be concealed from Peter Turnbull who is opposed to any such foolishness as just described.

It was important to climb with Malcolm who is calm, composed and organised whereas Les Brown and I are only perfect as a team whilst actually climbing . . . that is if we actually get that far. Les once arrived at the foot of Point Five on a beautiful Scottish winter day only to find that he had failed to bring a rope. When we climbed the Comici on the Cima Grande I dropped three karabiners, two slings, three pitons and all the food except two oranges.

At one stage Les said "Where are those oranges?" I fished them out of my pocket and showed them to him while standing on a minute ledge. "Here they are." "Put them away! Put them away!" "I'll just put them on this ledge for a second." Unfortunately they rolled off and fell among a crowd of disbelieving Italians who couldn't believe their luck at the shower of free gear from the English stupidos above. Les didn't speak after the stance until two days later.

The Pelle was great and not overhanging at all, vertical perhaps, and 5a/5b in alternate pitches. It was a sheer delight, particularly the Belgian girl who had to bridge just in front of my stance on frequent occasions. It's not often that one has such visual bonuses.

There was a perfect grass slope descent, not like in the Dolomites where one arrives at the summit of one's tower which is covered in loose scree without the remotest clue as to the whereabouts of the abseil point. Or if it is obvious, then halfway down the first abseil the rock suddenly moves twenty feet away and this results in a terrifying free-abseil to a point where a desperate pendule to an indifferent piton is necessary in order to escape half a dozen grudging lines of an obituary in the Climbers' Club Journal — sandwiched in between an advertisement for plastic Koflach Boots and a review of the West Highland Way.

The municipal camp-site at La Pallud was crowded with fit-looking young men who all looked the same as I'd left my spectacles back in England. I should say spectacle because I'd dropped them and broken one lens and it had seemed reasonable to just use them as a one lens job. I had another pair of spectacles but I'd lost them in Kenya with that madman Mark Savage who was looping the loop in his aeroplane when they fell out of a side window while he was ostensibly showing me an equatorial Tremadog at Lake Baringer.

Everyone in the C.C. exhorted me to do the Luna-Bong abseil. "It's essential" they said, "you've got to get gripped." That was the last thing I intended to do so I had to think of the route that would appeal to us all from the foot of the easiest abseil down the Dalles Grises. It had to be Dingomaniac which sounded to me like one of those delightful Foster's lager ads. on the T.V.

The route goes up a very broad arete and slowly gets harder. I climbed a pitch

and a half, then Malcolm led four and a half pitches. Eventually I overheated again to a beetroot-bonce, a phenomenon caused by over-exposure of elderly Altrincham bald heads to the furnace-like Provence sun.

The only fault with the route was the traverse to difficulty on the last pitch. Malcolm climbed it by moving round the corner the 5c way. I got to the bolt and looked at the grafitti which points vertically upwards 'autoroute GR75' an arrow to the right and a 5c precarious traverse. I had to have another rope down for the move and found it hard. We never stopped drinking that night.

I saw a young lad at the top of Darius a few weeks ago. "Remember the Verdon Trevor?" I don't remember. How dare young whipper snappers remember the Verdon. "When you danced on the table and pranced around." For once I kept quiet.



*There's nothing like
making a good start.*



OBERLAND SOLO

H.L. RICHARDSON

To my regret, I was unable to attend the Helyg Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, but the event set my memory working vividly back to the early years of my membership of the Climbers' Club (I joined in 1927), and to one event in particular. I was more interested in mountain climbing than in rock gymnastics, which I regarded as only a form of training for the 'real' mountains, meaning the European Alps. Geoffrey Winthrop Young's 'On High Hills' was my 'bible'. The hills of North Wales were a joy, after the flatness of eastern England, and the primitive Helyg made a grand base for exploring them.

I grew up in New Zealand, where in due course I became a member of the University Tramping Club, and, as well as joining parties, I became accustomed to 'tramping', alone but for a compass, through unsurveyed, trackless bush and over mountains up to nearly 10,000 feet high. (Above the snow-line.) So I was fairly self-reliant, although I had not had the good fortune to climb in the Southern Alps.

In 1929 a Climbers' Club circular announced that there would be a Summer Meet at Belalp, on the northern slopes of the Upper Rhone Valley. I thought that this would be a good opportunity to get some actual alpine experience, and I decided to join it, although, because of shyness and inexperience, I did not inform the organiser of the Meet. I had looked at a map, and had observed that the Bernese Oberland was crossed by numerous glaciers, looking (on the map) like broad, white roads. So I thought that I would get some preliminary alpine experience by going to Grindelwald, and 'tramping' via the glaciers across the Oberland to Belalp.

Thus, to Grindelwald I went, and added an ice-axe and a large-scale map to my usual tramping kit, of rucksack, sleeping bag, compass, nailed boots, food and drink and a climbing rope. Then I set off, alone and without informing anyone of my plans (I did not realise the potential hazards on the way, so it did not occur to me to do so). I started up the track beside the Unter Grindelwald Glacier, and when night came I extracted my sleeping bag, lay down under a rock beside the track, and enjoyed listening to the weird night noises that glaciers make — cracking and creaking — until I went to sleep.

Next morning, I crossed the main glacier and started up a branch glacier, in the direction of Belalp. This glacier was more of an ice-fall, so I mostly kept to the

lateral moraines (no tracks), until I reached a fairly level '*firn*'. This was heavily crevassed — no place for a lone climber. However, in the recent snow I saw the footprints of two climbers, evidently more expert than I, so I followed those tracks, winding among the crevasses, as far as the *bergschrund*. This proved to be wide and deep, with an ice-cliff on the far side and a steep, rocky mountain-side above it. I knew that I was beaten by this, so I retraced my tracks, down to the main glacier, and went on up the track on the far side. This led to the Strahlegg hut, where I rested. I had a meal there, but the hut was crowded, so I spread my sleeping bag outside, and lay on my back, admiring the brilliant stars against which rose the dark mass of the Finsteraarhorn.

An early start next morning saw me on my way, in the direction of the Strahleggfirn, but the track brought me to the edge of a drop of what seemed like about 1,000 feet, down to the *firn*. However, not far off was a descending rock rib, resembling the Parson's Nose (an off-shoot of the Snowdon Horseshoe, which I had climbed), only longer. Glad to see some familiar rock, I started down this rib, until (like the Parson's Nose) it grew steeper and steeper, and beyond my ability to descend, alone. So I traversed into a snow gully alongside, down which I proceeded to cut steps. This was an exercise on which I had not engaged before, but at first it went smoothly. Then my ice-axe began to hit hard ice, below the layer of snow; the latter grew thinner and thinner, until I was cutting shallow steps in the ice itself. In my inexperience, the inevitable happened — I slipped. There was a moment of absolute terror, followed by a curious sense of peace as I continued my slide (on a slope of about 70°). I had done my utmost — now it was up to Fate. Fate was kind: eventually I came to a halt, in a shallow *bergschrund*, still holding my ice-axe and with my elbows resting comfortably on the lower side. My rucksack had detached itself, had jumped the '*schrund*', and was waiting, about thirty yards further on.

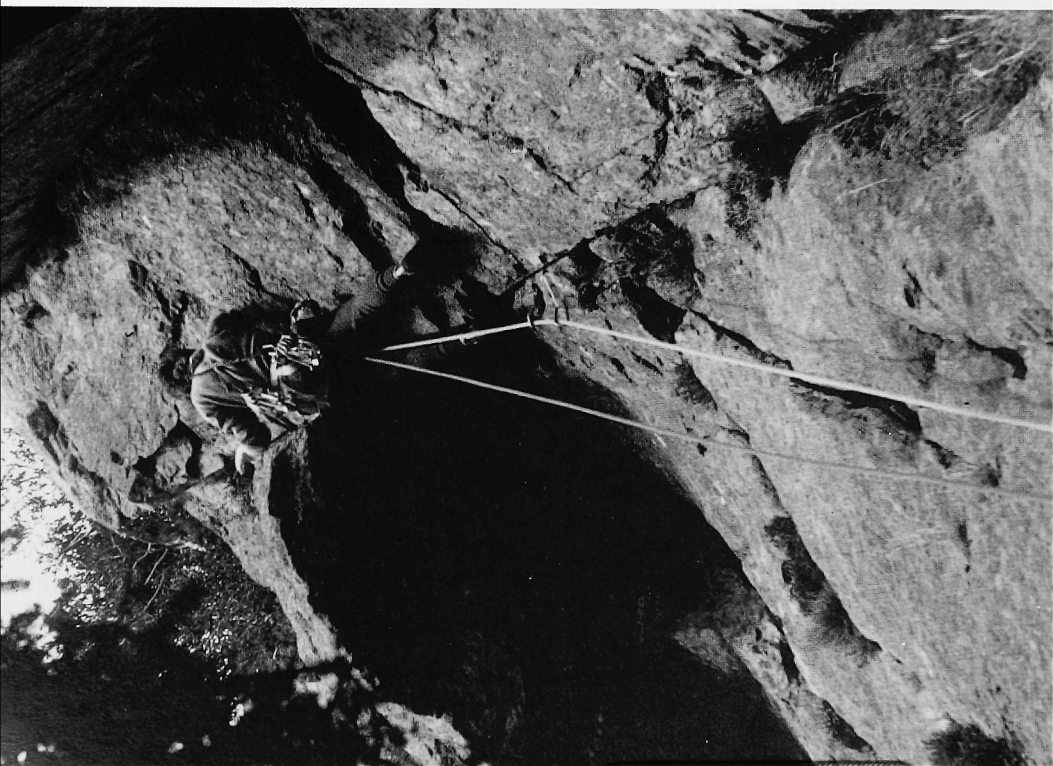
Later, it occurred to me that the reason why the *bergschrund* was shallow was, that in the afternoon, when the sun shone on it, the 'snow gully' into which I had traversed became a stone-chute whose rocks and snow had almost filled the '*schrund*'. Fortunately, I was there in the morning.

So, I climbed out of the '*schrund*', pulled myself and my belongings together, and proceeded down the Strahlegg glacier, thankful that its gradient was gentle and it was not crevassed. Arriving at its junction with the Finsteraar glacier, I had a choice: turn right, in the direction of Belalp but climbing and crossing more alpine snow passes, or turn left, away from Belalp, but following a wide, almost level, glacier — one of the 'broad, white roads' that I had seen on the first map. The decision was easy: no more steep glaciers and alpine snow passes for me, travelling alone. So I tramped happily down the Finsteraar, and, later, the

Unteraar glaciers, sleeping-out when night came. There were no crevasses, but an occasional 'muhle', easily avoided, where melt-water descended to the depths. After I came to the mouth of the glacier, there were only a few miles to a road, which led uphill to the Grimsel Hospice. Here I spent the night, next day proceeded by 'bus to the railway station at Gletsch, down the Rhone valley by train to Brig, and climbed by a zig-zagging mule path to Hotel Belalp. Solo traverse of the Oberland completed(!) although not quite in the way that I had planned.

The only trouble was, I was the only climber in the Hotel. For lack of support the Meet had been cancelled, and (since no-one knew that I had proposed to attend) I had not been notified. However, there was a middle-aged, unenterprising guide attached to the Hotel, with whom I got some 'real' climbing, after all. And the situation of the Hotel was magnificent, located high above the Rhone valley and looking out over lower hills and valleys to the Pennine Alps, including the Matterhorn.





RESCUE

A.J.J. MOULAM

Mist caressed the mountains as we sat in the smoke room of the little hotel, which huddled close to a tiny lake, in a fold in the hills. Everyone had come in early as the day had been so wet and dismal, but now we relaxed in front of an almost uncomfortably hot roaring fire which made a welcome contrast to the cold hard weather outside. Talk was animated, as the climbers savoured their drinks and, as I waited for the dinner gong, odd scraps of conversation came to me over the general hum. "You remember that hard move on Bowman's Buttress? You know, where you step . . ." "Then I pulled up, more or less a one-arm pull . . ." "I shouted 'Keep it tight' . . ."

I settled back in my chair, content and warm, and thought of my day; of how hard I had found the climb, of the discomfort as the first trickle of rain found its way down my neck, of the exhilaration in accomplishing a difficult move despite nearly frozen hands. Then I realised in retrospect, contrasting my current feeling of well-being with the agony of the climb, how worthwhile it had been. It was always like this.

I glanced out through the tiny window in the thick Welsh wall to the bare hillside. The cloud bank rolled majestically up and along the grey wet slope. A broken down wall ran straight up, with decision, to the track, and . . . yes, there was someone moving on the mountain. I got up and shifted my position so that I could watch the stranger's approach. He seemed to be coming very quickly, and it was getting dark. He ran lightly down a patch of scree, scarcely displacing a stone, and then on down through the heather and bracken so well in balance that he appeared to glide down through the wreaths of mist on the still fellside. He disappeared behind some boulders, and then struck straight and direct, for the road. I lost interest and went back to the bar to refill my tankard.

I had just regained my seat when the door slammed open and the runner burst in. He was dressed all in grey. His grey anorak had its hood pulled tightly round his face. All I was aware of was a pair of hurt pale grey eyes looking out from an ashen pallor. His trousers were grey and mudstained, and his boots and socks looked the same colour in the poor light. The only relief to the overall greyness was the red glow of the fire and the newcomer's black hair that protruded, dripping wet, from his hood.

Even after these few seconds he stood gasping in a steadily growing pool of

water. A hush fell on the bar, the fire crackling unnaturally loudly and counterpointing the drip, drip, drip of water from the apparition's clothes.

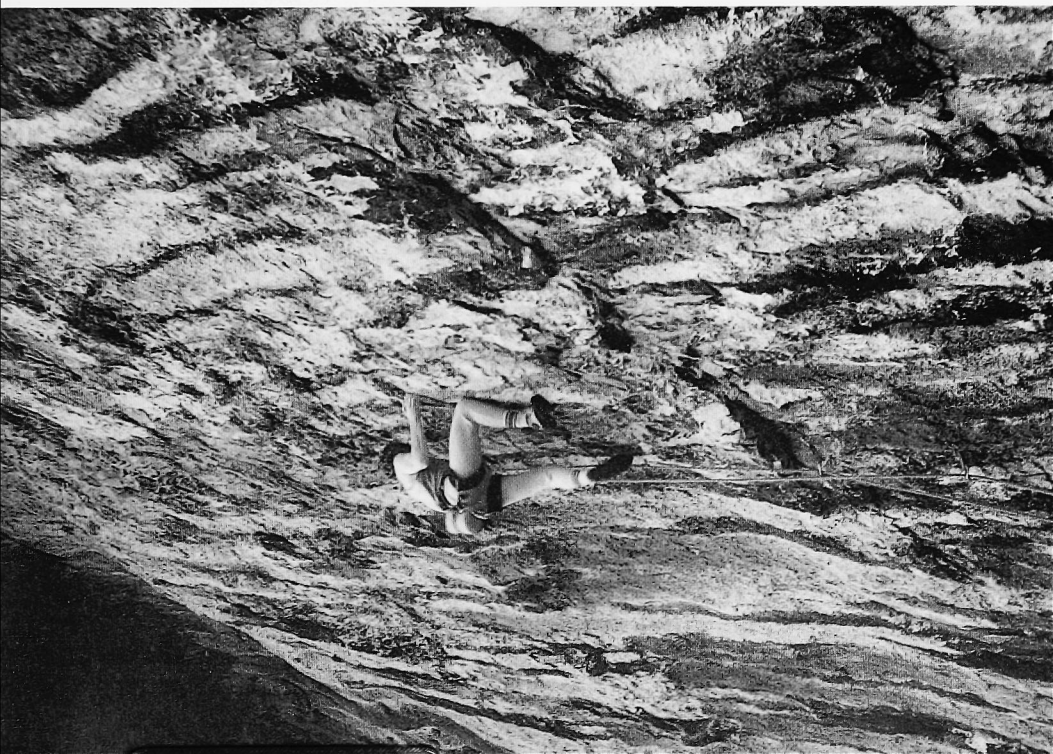
"There's been an accident", he said in a choked, distressed voice. The bar became a babel. "Where?", "How serious?" "How?" And then a rush for the drying room to curse and pull on our soaked clothing. It was particularly bad for me as I had cunningly found a place for my garments above the stove, and everything was clammy and steaming, like a turkish bath.

The supervisor of the mountain rescue post questioned the distraught messenger and then rang the police, the ambulance and a doctor. Quickly the unknown man helped to put the first aid rucksacks in the land rover, and struggled to fasten the stretcher to its roof. At last we were all ready and piled into the various cars with our ropes. The convoy drove up the pass to the car park and, the stranger was already there, with the stretcher ready on the ground. He commandeered the front and set off at a great pace as the rest of us took places at the other end and sides. Through the stile, with some awkwardness and then on up into the mist we toiled. From my position at the back I could only just see the leader; he hardly seemed to be there. But he was certainly a fine walker. It was an effort to match his pace as we stumbled through the boulders and the bewildering fog.

Would he never tire? On he forged, never looking back, and I could have done with a rest. My wet trousers chafed my legs and the new rain had just penetrated my dry underclothes. My feet were soaked and cold rivulets had started to run down my chest. Why on earth did I climb? Surely the others must be tired? But that relentless grey back still strode on at its punishing pace.

The track levelled out and became less well marked across a steep scree slope. We had left the tourist route and were now moving along where only climbers go. Above us steep and broken cliffs rose, as we perceived in occasional clearer spells, and a cold wind started playing round us. My bare hands were suddenly chilled, but I had no opportunity to put on gloves. I glanced back and saw the other members of the rescue team straining to keep up with us; despite them having no loads we had left them well behind.

It became darker and the path descended a little. We threaded our way between mini lakes, and then up again through ankle-torturing boulders and fallen rocks. An eerie chill came over us despite the exertion as the scree became steeper and more unpleasant. Then, before I saw it, I felt the presence of a body. There it lay, on a bed of stones, in the queer sad crumpled way of the obviously dead. We put the stretcher down by the corpse and I turned to commiserate with the grey stranger. But he had gone. And only then did I recognise the amazing resemblance between the dead man and the unknown who had brought the news.





A CLIMBING OPERATION

MIKE BALL

The ascent of a serious Alpine route is in many ways similar to carrying out a major operation. The differences for the climber and the surgeon can be summarized by saying that both enjoy solving the problem, especially if there are technical difficulties to overcome; but if anything goes wrong during an operation it is the patient that suffers and not the surgeon. Mike Ward, the doctor on the first successful Everest expedition, used to grade operations in climbing terms and it is interesting to see that as new climbs have become harder so have new operations, the risk factor remaining about the same in both cases.

Personally, I prefer to keep the risk factor at a fairly low level. New equipment, particularly angled front points to the crampons, drive-in ice-screws, and the carrying of a hammer with angled pick in the other hand have made an immense difference in ice-climbing, as I had found in Scotland in winter. My companion, Terry Young, had not used front points before, so one or two of the more reasonable Alpine North faces seemed just the right thing to start him on at about right hemicolectomy grade.

The North Face of Petit Mont Collon is only 1,000 feet high at an angle of 56°-58° in the upper reaches. I had done it before in snowy conditions with another partner, when we'd just walked straight up. Difficile+ seemed a considerable overgrading, even for the superb views down the face as we got higher. This time there was a decent patch of bare ice in the upper reaches, perhaps two rope-lengths, which would add to the interest. However, I had rather rashly chosen the climb as the first route of the season on this occasion, and had problems with acclimatisation. I began to feel sick as we crossed the rimaye (the large crevasses usually present between a face and a glacier) but this didn't seem to get worse as we moved smoothly though somewhat slowly up the lower two-thirds of the face. Terry was leading through to the manner born; surgeons always enjoy doing new operations; and the weather was ideal. It was when we reached the ice at about 3,200 metres and the technical difficulty increased that my altitude sickness showed signs of getting out of hand. It is annoying how often the patient begins to feel it when you start removing the tail of the pancreas with the stomach.

As I front-pointed up the ice it gradually became clear that I could no longer safely continue like this. I would have to stop to place ice-screws for protection and since I had only two of these on me, Terry having the other two, the run-outs

would have to be shorter and the whole thing take much longer. The problem was that I could not easily get good placements for the axes, the ice being unpleasantly flaky. It was rather like trying to suture a rotten artery to a prosthesis.

The ice steepened a bit for about twenty to thirty feet and then eased off, for perhaps a further 150 feet. Increasing nausea and loss of morale dictated a retreat and a bypass of the ice patch. This could be done easily enough on the right, by joining the ridge on this side of the face. The decision turned out to be correct as I had the greatest difficulty in reaching the summit due to repeated attacks of retching. I even had difficulty getting back down the easy way to the hut, as the last few hundred feet were uphill.

A week or so later with two more routes tucked under our belts made a world of difference, as a proper pre-operative preparation always does, and the next North face was to be the one on the Pigne d'Arolla. This is only Difficile, but is long as one starts from Arolla 5,000 feet below. The approach is first up a hut path, then over a glacier, up a long couloir (gully) to the ridge winding up to the North face. The last part of the ridge is at a very easy angle with a beautiful view both of the face ahead and back down to the Val d'Arolla.

The face starts fairly gently and then steepens to a short rock-band which one can dodge right, through where it is slightly disjointed, before heading up and back left again to the summit — an obvious and direct line, with no worries about where to go. The snow was a bit loose in the lower parts, but showed no tendency to avalanche. Higher up it was much better, and it looked as if the only problem was the traverse right through the rock-band. This was quite icy and again good axe placements were not easily made. I finished up belayed to a somewhat doubtful frozen-in rock and a tied-off ice screw. (If the screw won't go in to the hilt, you have to 'tie-off' the screw as it comes out of the ice, and not place the rope through the hole at the end of the screw in the normal way, because of the leverage effect in the event of a fall.) Terry didn't seem to have much difficulty, but had stopped wanting to lead through, so we changed over on the belay. It's always polite to ask the senior surgeon to do the hard bits and he always finds it difficult to refuse.

The situation above had changed in a subtle way. The summit ridge looked about three or four rope-lengths away up quite a steep slope, with two enormous cornices. On the right the slope led up between these. A previous party's old tracks started off for the left-hand cornice, which looked about six feet high. It was an unexpected set-back as time was getting on, and we could not move faster than three rope-lengths in an hour.

The slope beside the upper part of the staggered rock-band was straightforward enough, though it was ice now not snow, but the ice was much better, and took a

screw well at the end of the pitch. It still looked another three pitches and Terry still felt like remaining attached to the belay, so I set off again. The next hundred feet were really quite astonishing. The only other time I've been caught out in this way previously was while descending a ridge of the Pointe de Zinal, a small summit between the Dente Blanche and the Ober Gabelhorn. We did this in thick cloud and the leader just could not distinguish between the nice easy left-hand side of the snow ridge and the steep right-hand side down which you fell if you stepped on it. We took it in turns to lead and the antics of the one in front were so obviously ridiculous. The edge of the ridge was perfectly clear to those behind. However, with no reference point, the leader could not focus on the edge of the ridge five feet or so below his eyes and kept falling off to the right.

On this occasion it was assessment of distance that was at fault. After twenty-five feet it was obvious that two more rope-lengths were going to be needed not three. After another twenty feet I was almost there, the cornice had shrunk to only a foot or two, and I had less than 100 feet of rope out as I stepped into the usual cold wind on the summit.

Due to bad weather we got no further major routes done that year, but two years later were lucky enough to strike a perfect July. The sun shone almost permanently and conditions were ideal. This time we had a more ambitious plan of abdominal aortic aneurysm grade with the usual possibilities of extras attached. The route was the North East Face of the Lenzpitze, now a classic route, which sees several parties a day up it, but before the advent of modern ice-climbing gear, was one of the harder test pieces of the Alps. The route goes obliquely up to the left from the bergschrund (same as 'rimaye' but we're in a German area now) to the summit, the face being 1,500 feet high and the walk up from the Mischabelhutte easy. We ran into minor trouble almost at once, Terry falling off the upper lip of the bergschrund, so that I had to lead it. No more bother than the self-retaining retractor coming out but still a nuisance and an omen.

Again the face is about 56°-58°, but being higher with a long and fairly level ridge above it is composed of runnels down which snow and stones fall when not frozen in. We moved steadily up and to the left, leading through, but finding the runnels occasionally awkward, as the snow was harder inside them. There were two parties just above us and they were now slowing down as the face steepened a little and became more icy. In good snow one uses 'Dead Man' belays, these being metal plates with a long wire from the centre of their faces. They are driven vertically into the snow. When a pull comes on the wire the plate is drawn down into the snow and does not come out. Now the snow was too thin and we had to use ice screws. Just as the vascular clamps must not slip or damage the aorta, so the ice-screws must not come out or fracture the ice. To prevent this I have always

used two screws about 9-12 inches apart with the rope arranged so that the strain comes on both together.

A further problem now arose in that my right crampon kept slipping sideways on the boot, even after apparently careful adjustment. I was in the lead now and there were only about three or four pitches to easier ground. There was no particular difficulty with front-pointing except when the right crampon slewed round, and I thought I had now corrected this. At the end of a 40-foot run-out I was just reaching an ice ledge cut by our predecessors in order to belay comfortably when the crampon slewed again and the ice-hammer placement gave at the same time.

When major bleeding occurs during an aneurysm operation there are two considerations; how to lose as little blood as possible and how to control the bleeding point effectively. On this occasion I had to fall as short a distance as possible, or if that was not possible, as slowly as I could, while Terry had to spread the strain on the belay as much as possible to prevent the screws from failing. In the first six feet I almost succeeded in stopping by jamming the pick of the ice-axe into what snow there was but then fell faster, still firmly breaking with the pick. Terry, meanwhile had decided to let the rope run a bit when the strain came and then tighten up. To me, after an eighty-foot fall, the jerk came firmly and efficiently and the two ice-screws looked as secure as when they'd been put in. As I was feeling a little shaken, Terry offered to lead the next bit but had a shorter fall of about thirty feet and it was clear that a radical rethink of our technique was necessary.

Prior to front points one cut steps up ice slopes, a long and tedious procedure, and this is what I now did for the right foot. the only problem now was that it was the turn of Terry's crampon to keep falling off and he kept having to stop and readjust them. Once an operation starts going wrong it is surprising how often the difficulties multiply. We reached the summit quite late and had to bivouac on the descent, a beautiful calm night, if cold. We had to wait till sunrise before warming up enough to continue. It was at this point that I realised that I had put my outer boots on the wrong feet the previous day. I have plastic boots with a separate soft inner boot and at three a.m. in the dark I had managed to get the outers on the wrong feet. The crampons were on the correct feet but on the wrong boot and this explained my problems of the day before.

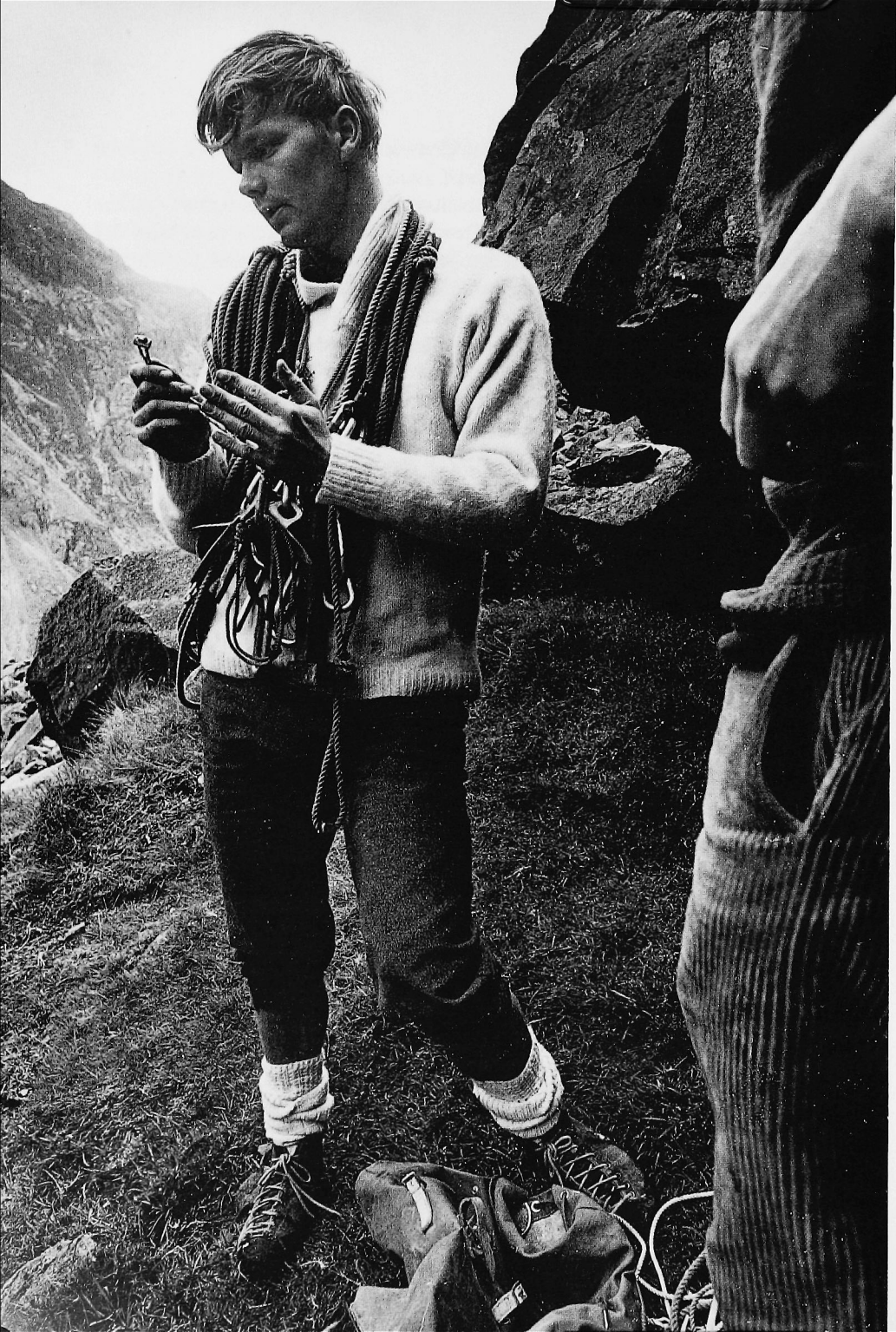
Successful operations are a combination of correct decisions and competent technique, and I had been sadly lacking in the second of these getting what I deserved. As we traversed the Nadelgrat to the Nadelhorn in order to get back down to the Mischabelhutte, we could see the day's parties ascending the face. They seemed to come up very quickly over the difficult part. Terry had pointed

out since that I had cut them a staircase! The views of the Weisshorn opposite refreshed us and helped me to keep myself awake.

The next issue of Mountain magazine contained a paper on ice-screws and the effects of falling onto them. Two large photographs showed pictures of bent and broken screws just like the pictures one sometimes sees of failed prostheses. Further reading showed that the ice often fractures round the screws so that they come out. Interestingly, the paper recommended using two screws with the strain coming on both simultaneously, but the author preferred to have one a good two feet above the other, as opposed to side by side. I don't propose to conduct a controlled trial to find out which method of placing the two screws is best, but am very careful now about which feet my boots go on.



Legs versus Alpenstock.



THIS IS YOUR LIFE — PETE CREW!

Knowing how close a climber's guide-books are to his heart it came as quite a shock to hear that Pete Crew had disposed of his climbing books during 1984. Luckily Jack Baines the Anglesey based second-hand book dealer has a sense of history and had the foresight to mention the matter to the C.C.F. Editor to ask if he had an interest before the collection was sold. The Harding guide to the Pass (plus Langdale and Eastern Crags guides) turned out to be a veritable treasure house as Crew's careful annotations have revealed for the first time much of his early climbing history outside the Peak District. Here then is the early Pete Crew story. Ed.

It is already on record that Pete Crew was born at Elsecar, near Barnsley, Yorkshire, in 1942 and was introduced to rock-climbing on Stanage where he took his first steps on Flying Buttress at the age of 14. In those first three years his talent lay dormant and some of his contemporaries still smile when they remember how he struggled on V.Diffs before his 'sudden and unexpected surge to prominence'. For most of the climbers in Sheffield at that time Langdale was the first 'away' target owing to its ease of accessibility and it is there that the story starts. (Note: In the list of routes 'R' signifies that Pete is repeating a route and the number following indicates how many times he has done the route).

1957

| | | |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| August | The Cambridge Route — D | A. Shutt, N. ('Pebbler') Fearon |
| | The Plaque Route — VD | N. Fearon, A. Shutt |

1958

| | | |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Apr. | Holly Tree Traverse — VD | D. Yould |
| | The Original Route — S | D. Yould |
| | Centipede — S | D. Yould |
| | Revelation — S | A. Shutt, D. Yould |

| | | |
|------|---|----------|
| Apr. | Ash Tree Slabs — VD | D. Yould |
| | Oliverson's Variation/ Lyon's Crawl — VD | D. Yould |
| | Herdwick Buttress — VD | D. Yould |

| | | |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Apr. | The Slabs, Route 2 — S | Reg. Pillinger, Bert Shutt |
| | Juntion Arete, White Ghyll — S | A. Shutt |

1959

| | | |
|--------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Feb. | The Original Route (R2) — S | Andrew Brodie |
| | Revelation (R2) — S | A. Brodie |
| March | White Ghyll Chimney — S | Al Wright |
| March | The Original Route (R3) — S | A. Wright |
| | Savernake — S | A. Wright |
| | Evening Wall — S | A. Wright |
| | D Route, Gimmer — S | George H. Kitchin, Dave Gregory |
| | Hiatus, Gimmer — VS | D.G., G.H.K. |
| | Gimmer Crack — VS | D.G., G.H.K. |
| March | Bilberry Buttress — VS | A. Wright |
| | Baskerville — VS | A. Wright |
| Easter | Slab Climb, Castle Rock — VD | SOLO |
| Easter | Nea, Clogwyn y Grochan — S | D. Gregory |

After sampling Bowfell at the age of 15, Pete began to build up confidence as a sixteen-year old the following year, not only by visiting Raven, Gimmer and White Ghyll but also by repeating routes that he had already done. In fact he did The Original Route on Raven Crag with three different partners, but also had the confidence to try his hand at soloing on Castle Rock. Although Bert Shutt started Pete off, George Kitchin of the S.U.M.C., who wrote the Harecliffe Rocher section of the 1957 Further Developments Peak guide, played a prominent role in introducing Pete to the big crags and pointing him at the right routes. Hiatus was his first volcanic V.S. behind Dave Gregory but then Crew immediately went for his first V.S. lead with Gimmer Crack. During these early Lakeland visits Crew also visited Dow for some of the easier Severes. It was after an Easter visit to Wales in 1959, however, that Pete was inspired to return during the school holidays with Bas Ingle, with whom he was destined to form one of the most powerful teams seen on British rock up to that time.

| | | |
|---------|----------------|----------|
| July 26 | The Wrinkle | B. Ingle |
| | Crackstone Rib | B. Ingle |
| | The Unicorn | B. Ingle |
| | The Lion | B. Ingle |
| | The Skylon | B. Ingle |

| | | |
|---------|---|--------------------|
| July 27 | Brant | G.H.K. |
| | Phantom Rib | G.H.K. |
| | Overlapping Wall D. Start | G.H.K. |
| July 28 | The Spectre — ES | B.I. |
| | The Trilon | B.I. |
| July 30 | Diagonal — VS | G.H.K. |
| | Western Slabs | G.H.K. |
| July 31 | Pigott's Climb | B.I. |
| | Pedestal Crack | G.H.K. |
| | Curving Crack | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 1 | Kaisergebirge Wall — XS | Mike Owen, B.I. |
| | Brant Direct — XS | B.I. |
| Aug. 2 | Slape — HVS | B.I. |
| | The Sickie — HVS | B.I. |
| | Hangover — XS | B.I. |
| | Brant was also done to 'rescue the guidebook from the trees'! | |
| Aug. 3 | Overlapping Wall — XS | M.O., B.I. |
| | Erosion Groove — XS | M.O. |
| | The Sickie (R2) | B.I. |
| Aug. 4 | Munich Climb | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 5 | Cenotaph Corner — ES | G.H.K. |
| | Tributary Crack | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 6 | Narrow Slab — HVS | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 7 | Vember — ES | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 15 | Sunset Crack | G.H.K. |
| | East Gully Groove | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 20 | Birthday Crack | G.H.K. |
| | Octo — XS | G.H.K. |
| | Longland's Climb | Martin Boysen |
| Aug. 21 | Chimney Route | G.H.K. |
| Aug. 27 | Curving Crack (R2) | J. Cole, Ted Maden |

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|----------|---|------------------------|
| Sept. 18 | Great Slab | Reg Pillinger |
| Sept. 19 | Bow-shaped Slab — VS (hard) | Reg Pillinger |
| | 'Reg didn't follow pitch 6 — rescued by Hugh Banner & Co.' | |
| Sept. 20 | Pinnacle Flake — VS (hard) | Ted Maden — 6th ascent |
| Sept. 26 | 'Rescued gear off Bow and did finger traverse on Great Slab'. | |
| Oct. 8 | Ribstone Crack — HVS | Alan Clarke |
| Oct. 9 | Hangover (R2) | A. Clarke |

Of the routes from the Harding era both The Spectre and Kaisergebirge Wall were big leads at that time and even Dave Gregory who was steadily ticking off the routes in 1959 recorded that he only led Spectre at the third attempt in 1960. Diagonal of course was grossly undergraded in those days and had a reputation all of its own. Hangover was the first of the Brown routes on which Crew succeeded, but Pete soon had his eyes on Cenotaph Corner, as did several others from Sheffield.

It is interesting to note that George Kitchin, who had done quite a few of the old VS routes on Cloggy at Whit, with Dave Gregory, returned to do them again in his summer holiday when Gregory went off to the Alps with Jack Soper. Crew's fifth route on Cloggy had to be one of the big three — Vember. How lucky he was to have the perfect weather of 59 'The Golden Year' to establish himself as a leader, but on their return from the Alps, Gregory and Soper soon wiped out the deficit with: Cenotaph Corner, Pinnacle Flake, The Left Edge, Llithrig, Vember, the last of the old routes, Octo, the Boulder and of greater significance the sixth ascent of White Slab. Not only had they caught Crew up, but they had clearly passed him. The stage was set for 1960.

1960

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Jan. 10 | The Parson's Nose | C. Taylor, J. Cole |
| Jan. 11 | Flying Buttress | C. Taylor |
| Mar. 9 | Western Slabs (R2) | B. Clarke (C.C.P.R.) |
| Mar. 15 | Rowan Route | B. Beck (R.A.F.) |
| Mar. 19 | Dead Entrance | J. Burrows, K. Richardson |
| | Shadow Wall | (O.U.M.C.) |

| | | |
|---------|--|-------------------------|
| Mar. 26 | The Sheaf | Janet Cox |
| Mar. 31 | Grooved Arete & Chimney Route & Soap Gut | Janet Cox |
| Apl. 2 | Soap Gut | B.I. |
| Apl. 7 | Great Slab | SOLO |
| Apl. 8 | The Gryphon | B.I. |
| Apl. 10 | Cemetery Gates | B.I. |
| | Tributary Crack (R2) | B.I. |
| Apl. 19 | Overhanging Bastion | Barry Webb, B.I. |
| June 5 | White slab start/Sheaf 7, 8, 9 'Escape from White Slab onto Sheaf'. | B.I. |
| June 6 | Ghecko Groove Longland's Climb to finish (R) | B.I. – 2nd ascent |
| June 18 | White Ghyll Wall | D. Yould |
| June 19 | F Route | J. Cox, D. Yould |
| June 25 | Main Wall | R. Pillinger, R. Thomas |
| June 26 | Brwynog Chimney | |
| June 27 | Gashed Crag | (C.C.P.R.) |
| June 28 | Direct Route, Dinas Mot | Dick Sykes |
| June 30 | Ivy Sepulchre Ivy Sepulchre Crack | Janet Cox Janet Cox |
| July 1 | Woubits | |
| July 2 | Broad Walk | Janet Cox |
| July | Question Mark | J. Scarr, 2nd ascent? |
| Aug. 27 | Little Buttress Climb | J. Cox, A. Brodie |
| Aug. 28 | Delphos | J. Cox |
| Aug. 29 | Sabre Cut | J. Cox, A. Brodie |
| Aug. 30 | Jubilee Climb Pitch 7 'Got lost and did a new route.' | J. Cox, A. Brodie |

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|----------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sept. 1 | Ochre Grooves | J. Cox |
| Sept. 4 | Surplomb | B. Ingle, P. Nunn |
| Sept. 5 | First Pinnacle Rib | (C.C.P.R.) |
| Sept. 6 | Rowan Route (R2) | (C.C.P.R.) |
| Sept. 7 | Kaisergebirge Wall (R2) | A. Brodie |
| | Brant Direct (R2) | A. Brodie, E. Marshall |
| Sept. 8 | Lorraine | (C.C.P.R.) |
| | The Cracks | (C.C.P.R.) |
| | The Trilon (R2) | (C.C.P.R.) |
| Sept. 9 | Halan | (C.C.P.R.) |
| | Dives | (C.C.P.R.) |
| | Better Things | (C.C.P.R.) |
| Sept. 11 | The Spectre (R2) | A. Brodie, J. Cox |
| | Yellow Groove | J. Cox |
| | Pharaoh's Passage & Brown's finish | M. Owen |
| Oct. 15 | Spiral Stairs | R. Gilbert |
| | Pharaoh's Wall | R. Gilbert |
| Nov. 5 | Spiral Stairs (R2) | T. Wiseman |

Taking into account the 15 routes that Crew did on Cloggy in 1959, to say nothing of all the hard Pass routes, it is surprising how quiet things were in 1960. Landmarks included: the solo of The Great Slab and the second ascent of Ghecko Groove — a bold lead at that time. The big push, however, was made on Woubits and in that case Crew just beat the Gregory/Soper team. The latter pair had had a very good year in the Pass and on Cloggy had knocked off: the East and West girdles in a day, Gargoyle, Spillikin, Moss Groove, Red Slab and of far greater significance — the 2nd ascent of The Troach. At the end of 1960 Crew was still behind in the stakes.

1961

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Feb. | Pigott's Climb (R2) | P.M. Hutchinson |
| Mar. 28 | Yellow Groove (R2) | A. Clarke, B. Ingle |
| Mar. 29 | Phantom Rib (R2) | B.I., A. Clarke |
| | The Unicorn (R2) | B.I., A. Clarke |



Above: Pete Crew in action on the Great Roof of Kilnsey Crag, Wharfedale, July 1964 for BBC television broadcast.

Below: Peter Crew and Al Alvarez below Dinas Mot, June 27, 1965.

Photos: John Cleare.



| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Mar. 30 | The Lion (R2) | B.I., A. Clarke |
| Mar. 31 | Cenotaph Corner (R2) — rain Tributary Crack (R3) | B.I., A. Clarke B.I., A.C. |
| Apl. 2 | The Slabs, Route 1, White Ghyll | SOLO |
| Apl. 3 | Delphinus | B.I. |
| Apl. 15 | Crackstone Rib (R2) The Wrinkle (R2) | SOLO SOLO |
| April | The Steep Band | B.I., Hugh Banner — 2nd ascent |
| Apl. 27 | Scorpio | N.J.S. — 1st ascent |
| May 20 | Red Slab | B.I. |
| May 21 | Diglyph The Boulder | B.I. B.I. |
| May 22 | Pigott's Climb (R3) | B.I. |
| May | Boomerang | P.M.H. — 3rd ascent |
| May 26 | East Gully Wall | B.I. |
| Whit. | White Slab | B.I. |
| Whit. | The Troach | N.J. Soper — 3rd ascent |
| June 18 | East Gully Groove (R2) Erosion Groove (R3) Kaisergerbirge Wall (R3) | Janet Cox, N. Rodgers Janet Cox Janet Cox |
| June 18 | The Unicorn (R3) Bole Way Brant Direct (R3) | N. Rodgers J. Cox J. Cox |
| June 19 | The Trilon (R3) | SOLO |
| June 25 | The Grooves Mortlock's Route, Dinas Bach 'Thin crack up central slab' | P.M.H. P.M.H. |
| July 6 | The Sickie (R3) Hangover (R3) | N.J.S. N.J.S. |
| July 7 | The Cromlech Girdle | N.J.S. — 8th ascent |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| July | Llithrig | J. Cox |
| Aug. 31/ Sept. 1/2 | Pinnacle Girdle Taurus Hand Traverse | N.J.S. — 1st ascent N.J.S. — 4th ascent N.J.S. — 2nd ascent |
| Sept. 7 | Erosion Groove D. Finish (It is not clear whether this was 59/60/61) | M. Boysen |
| Sept. 23 | Unicorn Direct Overlapping Wall (R2) | B.I. B.I. |
| Oct. 5 | Cemetery Gates — very wet | J. Cox |
| Oct. 7 | Serth | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| October | The Wrinkle (R3) | SOLO |
| Oct. 15 | Shrike (led p.1) | M. Boysen — 5th ascent |
| Nov. 18 | Mank Wall (This is now named Slime Wall!) | C.T. Jones — 1st ascent |

Clearly early in 1961 Pete went through a process of repeating old routes that he had done before to get fit but by April things were looking up as the weather brought Cloggy into condition. Once Crew had teamed up with Soper, to follow him on Scorpio, he soon disposed of The Troach and finished off White Slab which must have been an irritation for some time. Although Soper was still climbing with Gregory, and did The Grooves with him later in May, he did meet up again with Crew mainly to finish off their master-plan of the Pinnacle Girdle. When Ingle re-emerged their route Serth was a major achievement at that time and Shrike in 1961 was still a big lead. And so 1962 arrived — a very important year for Crew as his eyes were set on several new targets.

‘62 — the year Pete Crew tried to demolish the Joe Brown legend.’

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1962 | | |
| Mar. 12 | Slip Knot | B.I. |
| March | Cornix pitch 1 | B.I., Oliver Woolcock |
| April | West Rib | B.I. |
| Apl. 15 | Cornix pitch 2 | B.I. |
| April | Subsidiary Groove | B.I. |

| | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------------|
| April | The Spectre (R3) | B.I. |
| April | The Corner | B.I. |
| April | Slanting Slab | B.I. — 2nd ascent |
| Apl. 27 | The Shadow | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| Apl. 29 | Pinnacle Girdle Finish | N.J.S. |
| | Bow Variations | N.J.S. — 1st ascent |
| May 2 | Haemoglobin | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| May 5 | Triermain Eliminate | N.J.S. |
| May 6 | Ferrous Buttress | N.J.S. |
| | 'Iron crag is one of the loosest in the Lake District.' | |
| May | Diagonal (R2) | N.J.S. |
| May 24 | Surplomb (R2) | D. Gregory, Ragman (M. Owen) |
| May 26 | Trauma Grooves | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| May 27 | Great Wall | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| June 2 | Naddyn Ddu | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| June 3 | West Buttress Eliminate | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| June | Dovedale Groove | B.I. — 2nd ascent |
| June ? | Extol | B.I. |
| June 10 | Hiraeth | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| June 17 | Central Pillar | Mike Owen — 1st ascent |
| ? | Golden Slipper, Arcturus & Astra | |
| June 30 | Phantom Rib (R3) | D.G., M.O. |
| July 1 | Cenotaph Corner (R3) wet | N.A.J. Rodgers, J. Cox |
| July 8 | Diglyph (R2) | B.I. |
| | The Left Edge | B.I. |
| July 9 | Girdle of the East Buttress | B.I. |

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|---------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aug. 31 | Thirlmere Eliminate | B.I. |
| Sept. 1 | Kipling Groove '40 mins' | B.I. |
| | The Girdle, Gimmer '2 hours' | B.I. |
| Sept. | The Mole | B.I. |
| Oct. 6 | Lectern Grooves | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| | Western Slabs (R3) | SOLO |
| | Crackstone Rib (R3) | SOLO |
| Oct. 13 | Pedestal Crack (R2) | SOLO |
| Oct. 14 | Plexus | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| Oct. 20 | The Unicorn (R4) | SOLO |
| | Flintstone Rib | B.I. — 1st ascent |
| Oct. | The Lion (R3) | SOLO |
| Dec. 3 | Gardd | B.I., V.N. Stevenson — 1st ascent |
| 1963 | | |
| Feb. | Waterfall Climb, Rhaeadr (4 hours) | Paul Nunn |
| March | Anthropology | B.I. |
| | Canol | B.I. |
| | Spectre (R4) | B.I. |
| March | Brant Direct (R4) | SOLO |
| | Brant (R3) | SOLO |
| | Nea (2) | SOLO |
| | Phantom Rib (R4) | SOLO |

(Later in 1963 Crew was to add more new routes: The Infidel, The Great Buttress, Old Holborn, Tremolite, The Rosy Crucifixion, The Boldest and Suicide Wall Route 2).

Although this record is incomplete it does not take long to realise that the 'meteoric rise to fame' which one so often hears about is in fact really another myth. Crew had worked hard on crags in the Sheffield area such as Wharncliffe, Rivelin and Stanage (where he put up routes such as Orang Outang, The Vice, The Wobbler, Brush Off and Croton Oil free) and he also knew the western crags of Laddow and Tintwistle Knarr.

What one must remember is that in 1962 he was still only 20, which was very young for a top climber at that time, but it was nevertheless his seventh year of climbing, and he did have at least 34 routes of Cloggy experience behind him by the start of '62. Making the 3rd ascent of Slanting Slab was a tremendous achievement and with the thought of his forthcoming Cloggy guide at the back of his mind he must have been keen to start on the remaining unclimbed lines of which he was so well aware.

Although The Shadow, Haemogoblin, Naddyn Ddu and West Buttress Eliminate were all fine lines the plum which finally brought Crew instant fame was of course Great Wall. Shortly after that he was happy to go up to the Lakes for routes such as Hiraeth and Central Pillar in the knowledge that most of his main lines had been completed on Cloggy. In fact he only put up three more routes — The Boldest in 1963, and Chicane and Thrombin in 1966. His new route phase in the Pass was also almost at an end and after 1963 he only added about three more routes over the next six or seven years. By 1964 the exploration of Gogarth had begun and Crew had embarked on what is now a well-documented stage of his life, but the Baron was still in front, one step behind his own legend.





THERE'S BEEN GOOD TIMES

MIKE OWEN

When I first started my climbing career, at the age of thirteen, some fourteen years ago, I would have found it impossible to believe how much fun there was to be had from plodding up mountains and struggling and thrashing about with rock climbs. For me, though, a lot of the good memories actually come from the people with whom I shared a particular experience, rather than a particular climb or a certain crux sequence.

I served my apprenticeship in the hills, starting off with hill walking every weekend with my school mate John Roberts. At weekends I would put on the traditional tartan shirt, breeches and boots and during the week I would be seen around Abergele wearing bovver boots and the latest skinhead fashions! Gradually, the breeches took over from the bovver boots and I soon realised that I'd fallen in love with Snowdonia.

Walking trips gradually led to climbing trips and John and I would spend all our free time, firstly, in Ogwen and then in Llanberis Pass. We taught ourselves, so naturally we had a few epics and near escapes in those early days. I remember what a struggle Soap Gut was and how exposed Dives/Better Things was on the Cromlech and as to being a human Moac inside Monolith Crack . . .! Ah, well, we always enjoyed ourselves and couldn't wait for the next weekend to get back on the rock.

By the age of sixteen John and I were doing 'desperate' routes such as Unicorn and Diagonal. I remember struggling to follow that crux groove of Unicorn. At that time there was a jammed wire there, so, after unsuccessfully trying to climb the groove, I clipped a sling to the wire and stood in it; the only thing was I couldn't retrieve it afterwards. However, two guys did it after us and promptly presented me with my sling.

Soon afterwards John and I drifted apart — I guess I was keener and I'd only had a foretaste of what there was on offer. I then began climbing with Sandy Dobie and after doing Brant Direct and Spectre I really thought I'd made the grade. We then set about ticking off Tremadoc and early 1976 found us breaking the Extreme barrier. During this time we discovered alcohol so that proved as much fun as climbing itself and on some occasions we combined the two, once on the Mot when we puked down Black Spring.

Sandy and I met some other guys at that time — Two angelic looking youths

from St. Helens and two from Cardiff. Phil Davidson and Gary Healey turned out to be not so angelic, after all, and all four were very good climbers. Each weekend usually found all of us in very competitive spirits and each team eager to do a harder route than the others.

I remember when Phil and Gaz did Vector, followed by Andy Sharp and Steve Lewis and then Sandy and I. Chalk was just coming into fashion (none of us at that time used it) but Sandy and I sprayed our hands in anti-perspirant, instead, to stop our hands sweating (obviously we kept this a secret but the smell must have been a give away). I remember some serious looking types muttering at the time, 'Bloody puffs!'

Evenings were spent with wild parties at Martin Crook's and plate throwing contests at the S.W.M.C. hut in Deiniolen. Fire breathing and motor bikes were other distractions.

Whilst I was away in the Lakes (just after my eighteenth birthday and having just ticked Surplomb — remember that aid sling on the spike?) Crooky did Great Wall on Cloggy, chalk arrived for good and I was never to be the same again! You see I met my future wife!

That Autumn I decided to start training, as it now seemed that I wouldn't be able to climb every weekend ever again! To be fair Elaine was already a climber and it didn't take long really before we were climbing together all the time. The early days proved a bit tricky, though . . .

One day Dave Cowan and I went up to Cloggy with Elaine. The plan was that we should sprint up and do a route and then I'd climb with Elaine, but the trouble was that she sprinted up with us! Dave and I were a long time on Leech and Elaine ended up sunbathing near the lake. We thought we might as well do another climb, at which point Elaine came storming up and gave me a right bollocking and said that was it and promptly left. Dave meanwhile was on the crux of The Shadow at which point I untied and ran after Elaine to apologise for being such a naughty boy. Dave's cries for help were answered by somebody else sprinting across to belay him — I'm sure he's never forgiven me! Needless to say, Elaine and I made up and the following day we did Great Wall, which was her first route on Cloggy.

In 1979 Elaine and I went down to Cornwall twice with Gavin Peat, Tom Jones, Leigh McGinley and others. The climbing proved great, although the grades were a bit tough. I well remember the sight of Gavin putting his knee on a hold on Ghost, his last runner a long distance beneath him — he seemed to stay in that position for ages, though whose legs were shaking the most I'm not quite sure. On the last night, after a skinful in the Radjal, all six of us got out of Gavin's Marina and promptly peed all over Tom (who thought it was hilarious!). Tom and Leigh

slept the night, with heads poking out of their tent, puking sporadically. The tent — they ripped up in the morning and threw to the four winds.

At about this time I became a member of The Pex Hill Boys Club, due to travelling to Liverpool to see my lovely lady at College. I renewed my friendship with Phil and Gaz again and met Joe (Gaz's young brother) and Tony Mitchell who were both only fifteen. One day I took Joe climbing on the Mot where we did Ten Degrees North and I had to take over the lead on Windmill (Sorry Joe!). On another occasion I took them both up Stroll-On but, of course, nowadays it would be the other way round (or would it?).

Anybody, who has climbed on North Wales limestone will have bumped into Hugh 'Spacecase' Watkins. We did a lot of climbing together before I left Wales for Merseyside. At the time Hugh was always off his head and when he wasn't climbing he used to get really depressed. One evening in the pub he obligingly decided that we should call on his ex-girlfriend. At the time I had a broken heel and was hobbling around on crutches. Anyway, we arrived at this chick's house to find about six motorbikes outside; this alone should have been ample warning but we were feeling brave with beer. We knocked on the door and hit the first two guys who came out, much more than that I don't remember, except that we had to sneak back in the small hours to find Hugh's glasses and my crutches (both were broken).

Hugh is now in a bad way, regarding his state of mind — he seems to be in a continuous daze and is always mumbling. When he's belaying he never concentrates and there's always a big loop of slack. When I did Space Case, at Forwyn, he appropriately held my rope and he gave me a worrying time with his rope work on the Screw Machine at Pen Trwyn.

Usually, when I climb with Phil Davidson I have a rough time. One summer evening he phoned me about climbing the next day, he suggested some place called Raven Tor. I'd just arrived back from my honeymoon that day so I'd spent the last fortnight lying on the beach at Majorca. When we arrived at this Raven Tor place I nearly shat myself. "Oh, no Phil, you bastard" I thought. He did Sardine! I suppose though, in retrospect, it could have been worse . . .! The year after, the same happened when I came back from Corfu. Chee Tor was the venue. He did Golden Mile and the top pitch of Apocalypse, I got pumped very, very quickly . . . It took me a long time before I went back to lead it.

I got my own back though at Pen Trwyn in the golden year of 1983. Most weekends found Phil, myself, Mick Lovatt, John Monks, Joe Healey and Jerry Peel making early ascents of the new routes and in the process having mega E point days. On this particular day we both led Scary Canary and then Phil set off up Flakeaway, after a couple of lobs he passed the rope to me. I just tied on as a

formality thinking I'd have a go whilst he's resting. Somehow, I managed to finish the pitch and found it quite straightforward, I think Phil was as surprised as I was. By the time that I'd led Gold Rush afterwards we'd both warmed up and by the end of the day we'd got over 30 E points. We were well pleased with ourselves and all through that winter, when we were at Pen Trwyn every Sunday, the "Team Machine" (Mick and John) would try to equal our score. Now everytime Mick goes to Pen Trwyn he does at least 30 E points each day!

That winter of '83/'84 it became a ritual every Sunday to go to Pen Trwyn, having a good chat with the lads was as enjoyable as climbing itself. One day Elaine reckoned it was too cold and declined to get out of the car, so there was only one thing for it — she had to belay me from inside the car! Another time we were climbing on Yellow Wall, so I decided to move the car round so we could hear the stereo — Elaine of course advised me not to in case any loose rock came down. "No chance, there's no loose rock here . . ." said I. Ten minutes later and £120 worth of damage to the car Elaine was saying, "What did I tell you?" Some days it got even too cold for me but still the team machine would continue ruthlessly knocking off the routes. The image of Mick or Monksy pausing, briefly on some 6b crux, to wipe away the spindrift off the holds is something which is now regarded as folklore, but I can tell you that it is definitely true — I was there youth!

I've enjoyed other occasions when, because of the person I've been climbing with, we've been able to have a full day on the Crag; you feel good vibes from your partner and you seem to simply romp up the routes and have a great time, too.

Steve Foxley and I had a great day at Forwyn, two years ago, when we made the third/fourth ascent of People Mover, followed by Moonwind Direct, Space Mountain, Imminent Crisis, Great Wall, Quickstep and Sangfroid Direct. Days like that are very hard to come by but we had a real bubble on that day. Certainly, for just routes alone, it was an unbeatable experience, but there was more to it than just the climbing, as there were only two other people there all day and the weather was superb. Oh, one small confession — I dangled a length of rope, with a figure of eight in it, to clip on the crux of Imminent Crisis; I didn't want to hit the ground from fifty feet like Tom Jones and Andy Pollitt, nor did I want to top rope the climb. On this point (my only skeleton in the closet) I've always been honest!

Most of my really good days climbing have been with my wife, Elaine. To the end she is the most patient belayer I've met, and she is always full of encouragement. Our days of argument on the Crag are things from our youthful past. Great days like the one on Stromboli Buttress when she led the classics and

followed me up the harder ones; a full day at Craig y Llyn doing most of the routes there; Astra and Fallen Angel on Pavey; leading me up UFO and watching her leading The Strand at Gogarth; so many great days in Pembroke and, my favourite memory, of when we did The Cad, three years ago, when it poured down just as she arrived at the bolt, afterwards we just sat at the top laughing with sheer joy for being alive.

One last character, Joe Picalli (or Joe Spaghetti as we call him). . . . He's a very enthusiastic and fit youth from Liverpool with whom I climbed in Verdon. We had a couple of mini epics, usually caused by him swinging off some traverse or other. He started up Triomphe D'Eros with a German who fell off leading the very first pitch. That guy broke his leg. Joe carried him across the terrace and they managed to abseil down The Demande. From the foot of the cliff Joe then carried him out to Couloir Sampson where they were 'rescued'!

Joe and I have a funny story to tell about The Pillar at High Tor. I was near the first peg on the face above the roof. I'd just clipped a quick draw to it, in fact, and was well in control. Just as I pulled a load of slack through, to clip in, my finger hold snapped off. I should have fallen about twenty feet, but, I went all the way and cartwheeled down the grassy slope to finish about thirty feet below Joe! Fair enough, I was very annoyed but no harm had been done, Joe offered me a cigarette (I don't smoke) which went in one long drag. When I'd calmed down he shrewdly suggested that he abseil down and strip my gear, at which point I said, "Bugger off, I'll go back up again, only watch the bloody rope this time". No forgettee, Joe Spaghetti! Beware.

I've spent enough time this winter walking in Snowdonia and The Lakes, I've even got gripped on ice; it's about time that I started going to the climbing wall or to Pen Trwyn . . .

God, I hope we have a good year this time, . . . looking forward to seeing you on the rock!



DON'S ODE

RONNIE WATHEN

"The mountains give — the mountains take"
Was Whillans's simple arithmetic.
Cloughie was killed by a falling serac

So huge it blocked out the light of the sky,
All was dark, his friends stood helplessly by
And watched Ian squashed like a common fly.

They died in their dozens the climbing doyen
The flower of a Lost Generation,
Whom Whillans survived by Intuition:

"Happens when mountains seem most appealing,
Suddenly, out of nowhere, I get this feeling
The mountain is zero'd in for a killing."

Third week on Gauri Sankar with Cloughie
The morning was bright, the air not stuffy
But Don got jittery, and in a jiffy

In the nick of time, by the skin of his teeth
He stepped out of range of certain death
As the ice roared by with sickening breath.

Lifelong refusal to lower his guard
Led people to think him unduly hard,
But as Survivor and Life-Saver he held the record.

Climbing a mountain, he had early found,
One stepped at once onto dangerous ground,
Therefore one's movements had to be sound;

No room here for amateur distraction,
The climber loses control for a fraction
Then the mountain will finish the action.

It was merely a matter of keeping your head.
If you didn't, you ended up dead.
A fool was enough to make him see red,

His eyes (ice-blue) would narrow with the look
Of a trapped ferret, he snarled as he spoke.
He wrote few articles, only one book;

To some, a barbarian without art,
To others, a gorilla without heart,
It was in part a put-on, he was acting the part.

Don had more than the normal rock-gymnast's ration
Of aesthetic pleasure, an intense passion
Outlived his skills; he was scornful of fashion.

One had plenty of time on the bivouac ledge
Where patience was needed more than courage,
To admire Heaven with its thick white hedge

Of the stars of the Milky Way; much space
Down in Base Camp to relax and unlace
Salopettes and boots, and lie with one's face

Gazing into waterpools at the fish;
Plenty of room on the walk-in to wish
One were one with the circling birds. But rash

Fool is he who lets a beautiful view
Softens his resolve and lull his gut-fear
On a crux pitch of Eiger or Ogre.

This, though Whillans was sparse with the Word,
Was why some thought him suspicious and hard.
But Nature, let no one doubt, was his God.

Great sea-captain traversing through the years
And over mountainous oceans, What cared
He most for? What brought him closest to tears?

In a man of few words, it was hard to tell.
But one single fact stands out to reveal
The taproots and concealed springs of his soul:

Nine times Don went to the Himalayas,
Suffered frustration and strange diseases
And loss of income and expense of fares;

Nine expeditions of his own free will
Or two long years in aggregate total
He braved High Altitude's well known awful

Unending hangover-horror, like deep
Alcoholism, with all its creeping
Loss of appetite and lack of real sleep.

Would he again and again into Hell's
Gates have gone, been slandered as "The Devil
Of Everest", if truly he did not feel

In the high places of this earth at one
With the moon-force and the force of the sun?
Now my defence of his motives is done.

Nature at high altitude was his Goal.
Finally, Nature exacted her toll.
It was clear to his friends: Don was not well.

Take hermits who've fasted in mountain caves
Bring them to sea-level and something gives,
They gorge on the food the body craves;

"Something has happened to Don at great height"
Dennis Gray said, as Don put on weight
(Dennis stayed thin as a mosquito's fart)

Don's belly, starved for long periods,
Now in revenge added six stone in load
To this one-time nine-stone rock-climbing lad.

In the high Karakorum on Broad Peak
The younger climbers thought Whillans was weak
When he disagreed with their speed of attack

And suggested a slower ascent.
But Thexton, the doctor, died in Don's tent
Of Oedema, the same way Bob Downes went

Twenty-five years earlier on Masherbrum
Before pulmonary oedema had even been named.
"And what have we learnt in the Interim?"

Later they wrote to apologize.
But he passed his birthday, his fifty years,
Walking alone down the long glaciers.

At this point in his story, I again met Don
I'd been twenty years absent from the climbing scene,
"Where have you been, Ron, have you been in prison?"

We toyed with some climbs in my Spanish retreat
Where Don and his lovely wife Audrey came out
For the coldest New Year known in that part;

A fortnight of wind, blizzards of black snow,
Mallorca had put on her foulest show;
We drank; Don got 'flu, and was laid low

With vertigo, strange complaint for the likes
Of Don: since boyhood he suffered attacks,
But luckily not while up on the rocks.

In May, disaster again struck Don:
Bill Peascod, the well known Lakeland cragsman,
Died on Don's rope on the west face of Snowdon.

Bill's was no common-or-garden end
By falling or hitting: Don, his new friend,
Was showing him over the holy ground

Of Clogwyn du'r Arddu — Bill's lifelong dream,
Forty-five years at pithead and coal-seam,
And in Australian bush, was to climb

On this greatest rock-sculpture known to man:
He'd passed the first crux and was moving on,
He'd fainted, turned upside down, and was gone.

All June, Whillans stayed again at my place.
He never washed up, but he made no mess,
An odd sort of guest to have in the house;

He didn't take to my music at all,
His favourite tune was old Rock-n-Roll
"Come home, Speedy! Spread some muck on the wall!"

Jokes were a key into Whillans's heart:
One day as we passed through the Air Force gate
Below the Puig Major, to do a spot

Of climbing on El Paredón, the Great Keep,
We came across a flock of blue-black sheep
Which were scrounging around in a rubbish heap:

Rubber Sheep, Rubbish Heap, Rubber Sheep, I punned
Which Don thought the finest joke in the land.
Decadent humour was our common ground.

Last words of his at the airport were: "Stop
Drinking, or soon — you may have to grow up!
So, have a good do, Ron, and stay off the pop!"

Five weeks later, up the Chogo-Lungma,
I bumped into a fellow Alpine Club member,
I asked him the news, what he might remember

From the far, faraway, downbelow world:
"Don Whillans has died in his sleep". I recoiled
In disbelief at the truth he unfurled.

Don had come home from the "Dollies" and died
While asleep in a bed in Oxford, I heard
Mountains tried often to kill him, but failed.

Thus passed the greatest Climber of our age,
A man of supreme strength, supreme courage.
The supreme friend, if one avoided his rage.

I remember two scenes from early youth:
Don in a heap of unwashed plates, uncouth,
A Frenchwoman comes from one of those booth-

-like tents from the Field of the Cloth of Gold,
Chucks Don's plates in his tent, complete with mould,
Don chucks the plates into *her* tent. He's gaul'd!

And one night undressing beside my bunk
In Ynys Ettws, but I find this drunk
Or not so drunk, I quickly learn, who thinks

It is *his* bunk, we wrestle on the floor
Keeping the whole hut awake for an hour
Till Don, the more gracious one, gives over.

While asleep, the Climber died.
His mountains, his motorbikes,
The beers, the Crack with the boys,
Ceased to exist in his brain.
Now we must remember him.
What did you feel about Don?
Great sea-captain traversing
The oceans and the years, Yes?
Puck, clown refloating by his
Bubbles the boat of the Great?
Or the so-called Great, I mean.

Under an arch of granite
On the Dassu road (Don's land)
I hide from the sun, and ask
That passing white cloud (Don's soul?)
To cool me with a last drop.
Don loved mountains, let none doubt,
Nature, for Don, was his God.

Day Two of our mourning: Dawn,
Rosy-fingered here also,
Rises from the defeat of
Stars and charioteering
Telecom satellites — but
Not permanent victory. Tonight
The stars will repeat. Not us!
For us it's finis, we die
Never to be born again.
My faith is belief in Death.
We have to know that, or else.

Karachi 1985



COLOSSUS — WAS IT ONE OF THE RHODES TO RUIN?

PAUL WILLIAMS

Everyone walking round to the foot of the Rainbow Slab had passed below it and many had looked up and fantasised about climbing it. Rising up for fully 150 feet, seamed with faint cracks and covered with loose flakes, creaking spikes and green moss, yet still disconcertingly smooth and frictionless, the omnipresent wall towered over the path, frowning down upon the wide-eyed passers by, daring them to take up the challenge offered by its awesome concave face. Higher than the Cromlech walls, this El Cap look-alike in miniature could provide one of the longest single pitch routes in Snowdonia, if only someone would try it.

Several parties had abseiled down this impressive piece of rock in 1984/85, but the tremendous amount of gardening needed to render it climbable, not to mention easier pickings in the vicinity, caused them to rapidly lose interest. A 15-foot pinnacle was trundled off the face by one team, and a 6-footer by another. The cleaning would obviously need to be of MacAlpine proportions.

Late in 1985 I became interested in the Big Wall, as it had become known. Having spent an average of ten hours cleaning on each of my last five new routes in Wales I was prepared for a gardening epic! The most obvious way up the face seemed to go left via a left-slanting groove, crack and ledge system, a fine natural feature. The initial abseil inspection (from three rotting tree stumps) proved to be a bit of a trouser-filler, my ancient ropes just reaching the ground — on stretch! Another abseil, and three arduous hours of heaving and hammering on the central section in a rotten slate crack, with tottering blocks and dagger-like flakes hurtling down to shatter on the ground in an echoing explosion, proved quite exhausting. Yet the wall was hardly touched — I had cleaned only fifteen feet. Disillusioned, I slunk off back to Llanberis. A brew in Pete's Eats (where Johnny Redhead told me to hire a J.C.B. for the job) and a young nubile in the Padarn did much to raise my spirits that day. After a few pints, that's about all most men can raise — their spirits! But I digress.

March 1986, and a keen John Allen rushed down from Sheffield. Time mellows the memory. I told him about the wall. "No problem", I assured him, "it will be clean in a couple of hours". Once again, over the top. I resumed cleaning with great vigour and gusto. Two hours passed, then ropes dropped down the wall on my left. John, who had espied another line, now abseiled down cleaning frantically. In another couple of hours, after several star-worthy trundles, I was

knackered. My harness was beginning to amputate my legs, or so it felt. Abseiling down, I lounged around at the base of the crag in merciful release as the blood rushed back into my thighs. John, however, kept working away on his route like a man possessed, until nightfall.

Poked off at having wasted a sunny day cleaning, instead of climbing, the next morning and afternoon saw us 'zipping up' several classics on the Rainbow Slab, but in the evening, another spell on the rope saw the top half of my own line clean. Now a fall from this wall (a new steepness for slate) would surely prove fatal, the structure of the rock being somewhat hollow or shattered for much of its height. I decided to protect the route with bolts and top-roped it (horror of horrors) to find out exactly where to place them. The first seventy feet of the wall looked a piece of duff, even in its ungardened state. I was in for a shock. Much steeper than it appeared, this section was 'tottering death', flakes snapping alarmingly all the way up it. Five falls on the rope — not a very encouraging start. Even on the cleaned top-half of the wall, a couple of large holds made a dramatic earthbound exit. I pulled over on to the belay really shaken. All thoughts of leading the route had been temporarily dispelled.

Later that week bad weather forced us to clean again. Back to that bloody wall! Hacking and chopping at crazed pieces of slate, holds were 'uncovered' (some disappeared) on the initial section — now for the bolts. I was still 'psyched-out' from my top-roped ascent, and with a faint heart, not to mention a hammer, I started drilling the holes and inserting the anchors.

Three days of foul weather from Monday to Wednesday, during which John departed for The Peak in disgust, led to a brightening on the Thursday. I decided to go for it and rushed up to the quarries with a local support team. Abseiling down yet again, I screwed the bolt hangers onto the anchors — all thirteen of them!

Even though there was considerable seepage, I started up. The first moves were rapidly reversed as a ledge I grabbed collapsed, depositing me back on terra firma, shaken. Not a good beginning. My mouth now felt as dry as if it were packed with Weetabix — believe me, that is DRY! Still, there is nothing like a little apprehension to get the adrenalin flowing; you know, a man's got to do what a man's got to do; and all that stuff. The one false start gave me the impetus I needed, and the climb went fairly easily, though scarily to the tip of a sharp pinnacle at seventy feet. From this, an awkward move up and left gained a niche and a good 'no hands' rest.

A hard move back right on 'dinkies' across a wet section to the accompanying 'snap' of a disappearing foot-hold and I was at a jug below the central groove. Technical moves up this led to another tricky manoeuvre out left at the capping

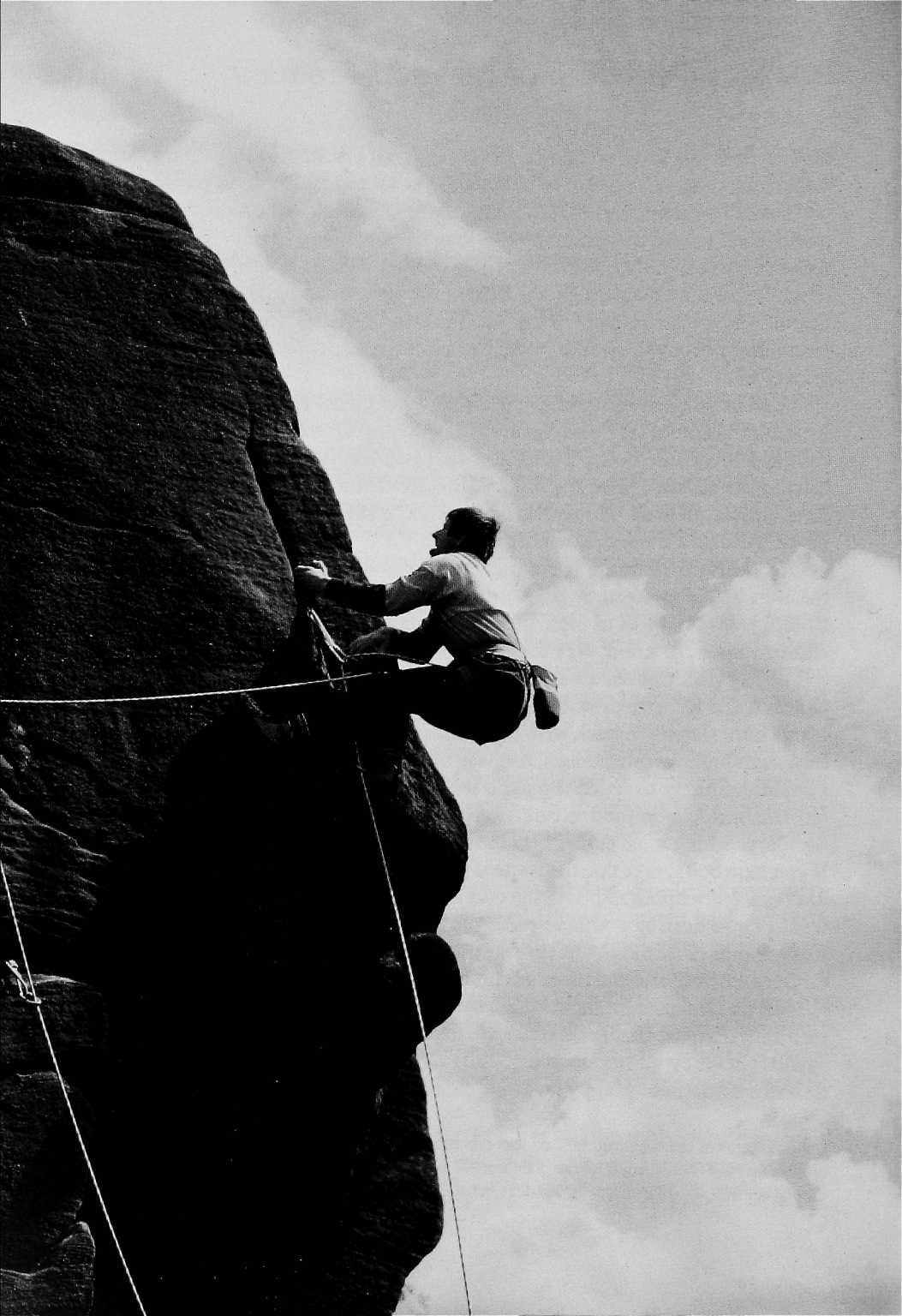
roof to enter the crux section, a 15-foot seeping crack. A grim struggle ensued, fingers slipping and sliding to reach a jug at its top (this part is psychologically cushioned by bolts 9 and 10!). A long span left, a swing and a sensational but easy mantelshelf gained the sanctuary of a long narrow ledge. Clip! — bolt 11. All that remained was a ‘Glory Road’; airy jug-pulling with a superbly exposed mantel (tricky) and then thankfully, the field at the top. A solid 170 feet of climbing up one of the most unlikely walls in the area. Eureka! Euphoria! Biorhythms bouncing! I brought up Andy who had been patiently belaying. He too was very impressed.

We went down to the cafe for a brew, to write up the route and take some of the inevitable flack for all those ‘little silver soldiers’ up there on that wall. What to call the route? The Bolts, The Bolts? As I had just passed my fortieth birthday, ‘Statement of Age’, ‘The Big 4-0’, ‘Mid-Life Crisis’ and ‘The Male Menopause’ were names mooted. However, in the end, a mighty pitch deserves a mighty name. And so Colossus was born.

Obviously, at first, the route is going to acquire a certain notoriety because of the number of protection bolts used (although they provide the only reliable running belays). Most of the criticism will surely come from people who have not climbed upon, or know very little as to how fickle slate of this steepness can be.

The day after Colossus was climbed, several of the most vocal critics went up to look at it and were surprised at how well spaced the bolts were. Subsequent ascent teams have also come back with comments such as “brilliant”, “classic”, and “it feels as though you are going a long way above the bolts”. In retrospect, I feel that I could definitely have led the pitch with eight or maybe seven, but I decided to ‘go the whole hog’ and create a relatively safe and enjoyable climb (for its standard) which must surely become a classic counterpart to Comes the Dervish. If you hate bolts, don’t do the route if you can resist its magnetic pull. Although it has been led without clipping the odd bolt, not one has been chopped — to do so would be to destroy a unique piece of climbing. Colossus points the way to the future; lines of shining bolts up really steep and improbable smooth slate walls as on Gerbil Abuse and the three unclimbed (at the time of writing) lines on the wall left of The Dervish. On slate, which has as yet no history or tradition as a climbing medium, it seems that bolts really are here to stay as there is no over-riding ethic against them. So gather up your Trolls and Petzels and maybe I’ll see you in the quarries sometime. Happy bolting!

An account of the cleaning, bolting and climbing of Colossus E3 5c, one of the ‘new wave’ slate routes, by Paul Williams and Andy Holmes. 27.3.86.



BOWFELL BUTTRESS

To stand with you unspeaking
in glory at the bright waterlight
on rock and grass
at that sharp brightness
which allows my foolish eye to blink at God
takes me to my renewing
pares my towntime from me
 towntime is fast
 nothing will last
 for long
 new chases new
 taking value with each replacing.

The valley grew iceslow
slowly the ice ground rock
grew green under the cool sun.

Cold rock beneath my searching fingers
unchanged by that small incident which is my life
unmoved by my presence
unaware of my impertinence to seek to climb
unheeding of my desperation
unsmiling at my rescue by Pete's words
his words from down the rope;
his thoughts on pidgeon keeping
cool my anxious hands
and help my unbelieving feet.

Rain chamfered summit rocks
grey brown rough abrasive
scattered by the ice not long ago
are there-not waiting.

To move still footed from umbilical safety
onto polished rock projections
requires the gentle banter of our wind blown conversation.

The sharp snap sound of final belay separation
marks my availability to death
and the start of my renewing.

David Weaver



They sympathise with the Egyptians.

MY HELYG TEN YEARS

TREVOR JONES

For a decade I was warden of Helyg from 1962 to 1972. I admit that at first I used the pretence of getting away to looking after Helyg every week-end to escape the responsibilities of shouldering the burden of looking after two small children.

"I'm sorry dear, I really would like to go and see your mother on Saturday, but the Helyg garage roof has some slates off it."

"Isn't it wonderful your gran is 80 on Sunday. I wish I could be there, but unfortunately the builder is coming from Bethesda to give us a quote for the septic tank."

"I really wish you could come this week-end now the kids have gone to your mother, but it's a men-only meet at Helyg."

"By the way, the pipes have burst at Helyg. I really don't want to, but I'm forced....."

There's a wonderful crop of daffodils at the front of the hut in the spring. I used to take a bunch home with me, often with ice crystals still glinting in the flowers, and they didn't thaw out till the car heater raised the temperature; that is when I was allowed to drive, which seems a long time ago now that the police in Llanberis are so vigilant.

We built a big pile of stinking mattresses one week-end by the rhododendrons. Dafydd Williams Isaf rushed over with a pack of yapping sheep dogs and asked me in his best sing-song North Wales accent, "Are you on fire?"

Another week-end there was a school party staying in the hut; it was a horrible mess. The teacher in charge asked me in an off-hand tone, "Are you a member?". I thought I'd have apoplexy..... I stuttered for a few seconds, then let him have the verbal blast.

It's a pleasant way to get into Helyg by climbing over the metal gate and walking over the soft carpet of pine needles crunching underfoot. The trees were planted by Brian McKenna - a big man who died on Cnicht. I was one of the rescue party that found him. My brother Stan was the first person of the rescue party to reach him. Stan was a professional cyclist and thought you had to run up mountains as if it were another version of the Tour de France in which he had been the 'lanterne rouge' - the last man.

Tom Peacock had a low-slung car which caught on the edge of the road as he was pulling out from the garage; while he was inspecting the problem another car

crashed into it at high speed - fortunately no-one was seriously injured. That's the reason for the concrete ramp now leading down into the car-park.

After a long day on Craig yr Ysfa, I was walking down the A5 back to Helyg where there was a university club staying. As I got closer to the hut I noticed someone on the roof. With a shriek of rage and a clumsy, loping stride, which is all that is possible when carrying a heavy rucksack I rushed to remonstrate. I was quite close before I realised it was only the chimney-pot. On the Monday I went to the optician's.

The best times on the hill while staying at Helyg were when I stayed there with Ralph Jones before the Welsh Dinner. We went slowly up the hillside because by then it was carpeted with bilberries and eating one's way uphill slows the pace to an acceptable level before tackling the Lower Amphitheatre Wall. On one occasion we went to try a new route in the Cirque. Exhausted from the walk I put the rucksack down. Wretched thing that it was, it promptly decided to roll off the ledge and bounded down the hillside in ever-increasing arcs to rest far down on the valley floor. I looked at Ralph and to his credit he didn't laugh.

A FEW DAYS AT HELYG

PETER HARDING

One day, well over fifty years ago, Alfred William Bridge was mulling over the possibility of a climbing holiday in Wales when an unexpected telegram arrived. It read, "MEET ME IN DERBY, STOP, EVENING DRESS, STOP, ROLLER SKATES, STOP, IVAN" (There was of course a date, a time and a place.). Always ready for adventure, Alf duly met Ivan at the appointed spot, appropriately attired and carrying the specific equipment. He soon found himself being ushered to a front seat in the Grand Theatre, at the first house of a variety show. However, long before it ended, he found himself, together with Ivan, quickly ushered out; a result of the latter's ribald comments and cat-calls to various performers.

After visiting a nearby fish and chip shop they meandered along eating an early supper from newspaper and Alf queried their seemingly incongruous dress. Ivan informed him that, later, they would be going to a rather posh dance, and with a couple of elegant young ladies too. At once expectant and impatient, but still somewhat bemused, Alf demanded, "Then what are we going to do with these bloody roller-skates?" "As soon as we've finished our chips we're going roller-skating", came the obvious reply.

Missing out any mundane details of pastimes such as roller-skating and ballroom dancing which were so popular in the thirties, suffice it to comment that the first did nothing to maintain Alf's sartorial smartness for although he had balanced in wet rubbers across Hadrian's Wall on Pillar's Girdle Traverse, A.W.B. had scant aptitude for remaining in equilibrium with wheels on his feet. As for the second pastime, this soon had his elegant lady longing to get Alf's feet off hers and hers off the dance floor because his dancing shoe placement was nowhere near as precise, or as delicate, as that of his plimsolls on Kinder Scout's Pavlova Wall. Whether this situation contributed or indeed led to a third, more intimate, pastime can only be surmised but it was in the early hours of next morning when Alf boarded a train back to Manchester.

He had thanked Ivan for a splendid night out and, suspecting some ulterior motive, asked what it was all about. Ivan had then explained about his entry for a motor race in Ireland and how, when doing a spot of practice in his Alvis Silver Eagle, his mechanic had unfortunately fallen out on a sharpish corner and broken a collar bone. Then came Ivan's carefully nurtured punch line, "I thought you might help me by sitting in for him" (In those days it was conventional in sports car racing

for one's 'mechanic' to be in the car beside the driver.).

Despite Alf's protestations that he was no motor mechanic and moreover had planned to go climbing, he did finally agree to accompany Ivan, in the Alvis, to Dublin's Phoenix Park racing circuit, for I.M.W. had played a trump card; on the way there of course, the team which had recently conquered Lean Man's Superdirect on Cromford's Black Rocks would certainly stop off and spend a few days at Helyg. In fact just to make sure, Ivan had made it an ace, "About time you became a member of the C.C.", he said.

Before A.W.B.'s train steamed out of Derby Midland Ivan had outlined some of the splendid benefits of the insurance policy he had already secured in the name of A.W. Bridge; loss of an eye, an arm, a leg; even life itself. The monetary sums were almost too good to miss! But, during his homeward journey Alf began to have serious reservations; for one thing he couldn't think of any rich, one-eyed, one-armed, peg-legged climbers who could lead V.S.s.

Less than two weeks later, in a racing Alvis fully equipped with all the latest gear: rope, rubbers, climbing boots, tent and sleeping bags, as well as a trusty friend, Ivan departed for Snowdonia. Alf had never dared tell his widowed mother that their family bread winner, namely himself, was going to take part in something dangerous such as motor racing. Climbing was different, it was after all what Alf, a steeplejack, did to earn his 'bread'. In fact he had just returned from Paris with a rather lucrative loaf, a contract to inspect the struts and girders of the Eifel Tower. His bold quotation successfully undercut all opposition by costing for only himself, a rope and a new pair of rubbers - when everyone else's bid involved large gangs of men with ladders and scaffolding! So Alf told his mum, with some truthfulness, he was off for a well-earned climbing holiday; he was going with Ivan Waller to spend a few days at Helyg. "Take care then Alfred", she chided, "and don't let your daredevil pal drive too quickly on those winding Welsh roads".

After a day or two's climbing around Ogwen, the leader of the Climbers' Club Motor Racing Section, together with its latest recruit, left Helyg at dawn to catch the morning boat from Holyhead. He drove in an uncharacteristically sedate manner, not out of any respect for the exhortation of Alf's mum, but to treat the Alvis with a gentleness which must surely increase its chances of a successful appearance at Phoenix Park. Passing the Milestone Butress, Alf was just musing whether to suggest a quick stop and rapid attempt on the virginal grass of that prominent vee-groove when, with a sudden, staccato roar, a speeding motor-cycle hurtled by. Crouched over its tank, the rider ear 'oled his machine round that fast right-hander and disappeared up the straight towards Ogwen Cottage. It was plain to see he was out for a bit of a dice because, held to his head by his goggles, was one of those flat hats with the peak on the back instead of the front and the still,

morning air carried that evocative smell of burnt Castrol 'R'. Quickly forgetting all good intentions, Ivan double de-clutched, changing down, then floored the go-faster pedal. The Alvis accelerated in hot pursuit as three carburettors gaped to feed the gulping demands of all 2,198 c.c.s of its six-cylinder motor (That tempting groove would now have to wait for the exploring team of guide-book writers, Wilfred Noyce and Menlove Edwards.).

There followed a two versus four wheel duel all the way down the Nant Francon to Bethesda... through Bangor... then on across Anglesey, although for much of this journey it is doubtful whether all, or indeed any, of those wheels were in actual contact with the ground. On reaching Holyhead, whilst Ivan supervised embarkation of his sizzling Silver Eagle, Alf chatted to the nutter on the nimble Norton who turned out to be Stanley Woods, leading T.T. rider of the day, returning to his native Dublin from some race on the Continent. And he reckoned it had been much less hairy than the one he'd just had!

That night, Ivan and Alf established their base camp near Castle Knock Lodge in Phoenix Park and next day set about stripping the Alvis, getting rid of mudguard and all other extraneous weight and windage. When the official practising for the race began Ivan found himself suspended from taking part in it because he had been scorching round the circuit before the specified practice period. Tim Birkin, perhaps the leading British motor-racing exponent of that time, had declared the secret of getting round Phoenix Park quickly was to take the fast bend of Zoo Corner flat out; so Ivan had been out on the track early, without his second man, to make sure he could do it. The leader of Clogwyn-y-Ddysgl's Fallen Block Crack and Tryfan's Belle Vue Bastion had an eye for a good line, whether it was up a crag or through a bend!

On the day of the race, cars on the grid, engines revving, Alf remembered how he came to be there and was well belayed to the Alvis's passenger seat - rubbers braced against the scuttle and ready for anything. He eyed the competition through a haze of smoke and glacier goggles. It was an impressive array; angry Alfes, rasping Rileys and burbling Bentleys. In his hand he held a matchbox which Ivan had given him. This contained one dozen matches, the same in number as laps of the four and a quarter mile circuit which they must complete during the race and Ivan had instructed for one match to be thrown away every time they passed the grandstand. Thus without any pit crew, they would always know how many laps remained. When the race got under way it was not without its fair share of thrills and spills; competitors spinning or making unscheduled excursions from the circuit as if it were de rigueur: Alf tightened his belay.

Approaching the sharp Mountjoye Corner at the end of the long straight, a troublesome Alfa which had been battling with them for most of the race suddenly

skidded sideways in front of the Alvis. It went broadside on, blocking the middle of the track, leaving a gap at one side, bounded by the crowded spectators, and a narrower opening on the other, between the Alfa's tail and a grassy bank. Without hesitation Ivan pointed his Alvis at the narrow gap, steering through, grazing the grass bank (Alf swore that after the race he discovered some clover, or a shamrock, in his left ear!).

In those days English drivers were not all that popular with Irish motor race fans, especially when the favourite to win was an Irishman - in an Alfa Romeo! But the Irish crowd did appreciate Ivan's skill, and his gallantry, in going for that gap on the opposite side and when the Alvis came round Mountjoye Corner on the following lap they cheered and waved their programmes.

Above the engine roar Ivan shouted to Alf, "How-many-laps?" A.W.B. remained silent, eyes riveted ahead, the matchbox crushed in his tightly clenched fingers, as it had been since the very first lap. Although he was utterly without fear of desperately difficult rock or difficult desperate men, (an archetypal Don Whillans), Alf found himself well and truly gripped in the fast seat of a racing car. On the next lap when they passed the grandstand everyone was standing grandly, waving frantically and cheering loudly. Other cars were slowing; the race was over. Ivan drove into the pits and, as the Alvis came to a halt, an excited crowd hoisted him and Alf out, carrying them off, shoulder-high. They had won the Irish Motor Club's Senior 50!

That night the écurie Climbers' Club team was wine and dined and local dignitaries would not allow the race victors to stay in a tent, they had to sleep at Castle Knock Lodge. In the morning Alf awoke thinking he must have been killed in a motor-racing accident and admitted to Heaven by some strange act of God. He lay on a great white bed in this huge white room, the ceiling of which was decorated with pinkish cherubim, seraphim and other heavenly bodies. But his head hurt like Hell and he could distinctly hear the ringing of its bells! In fact these symptoms were quite unrelated, the after effects of too much alcohol and of a butler pressing the room bell; while the former effect continued, the latter one stopped when the butler entered carrying a small jug of water. With considerable relief, Alf took the jug and a large swig of its contents. "Begorra!" The mystified man-servant regarded Alf with awe; he had simply brought the jug containing a sample of near boiling bath water to see if it met with the approval of his master's guest. In another room Ivan had spent a miserable night, his bed dreadfully damp and unaired.

Alfred William Bridge, one-time racing mechanic and member of the C.C., returned to Manchester without delay. There were steeples which needed a jack. Ivan Mark Waller, one-time racing driver, likewise, stayed a few days in Dublin, his stripped motor-car needed a re-build. When Alf arrived home his mum enquired if



he had enjoyed his few days at Helyg. "Good climbing Alfred?" she asked. "Yes mother", he replied, "I did some good climbs with Ivan." "Then I don't suppose you will have seen the newspaper", she said, handing it to him carefully so he couldn't miss seeing a large picture on the back page. It was one of himself and Ivan Waller being chaired, with laurels, to the winner's rostrum at Phoenix Park.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(This story is one which Alf Bridge told me on two or three occasions and about which a careful questioning of our honorary member, Ivan Waller has elicited a frank admission of guilt for his part in the affair — as well as a print of the photo concerned, together with a few details.

The Alvis Silver Eagle was a 1929 sports model in which he had covered some 100,000 miles, much of it on the Continent, before winning the Senior 50 race in 1932. Earlier that same year Ivan had driven it in the Monte Carlo Rally breaking the record for the 'Mont des Meiles' hill climb, only to find himself ultimately disqualified from the whole event for having arrived in Monaco 5 minutes too early so his hill climb record did not stand. In the following years Ivan lowered and shortened the chassis, replacing its original fabric-covered body with an aluminium one; in this form it did a further 50,000 miles before he sold it in 1937. Before then, Ivan drove up from Sussex (near Brighton) to North Wales, went round the Snowdon Horseshoe (on foot!), then drove back again — in under 24 hours.

Alf, having completed his Eifel Tower contract, continued with other notable climbs, mainly on rock!

I am indebted to Ivan, as I was to Alf, for so many things including the making, and the telling, of this story. P.R.J.H.)

1985 C.C.J.

MEETING MENLOVE AND OTHER WORTHIES

C.H.P. VERRINDER

The first cause of my meeting with Menlove was a shortage of water in the Dee. To elongate a short story, in April '33 with wife and two friends we had a week in Glencoe. After long bashes up one Buchaille we tried the Chancellor ridge, the Aonach Eagach. The first mistake was to eat all the food at midday: the second was to exuberantly climb along the ridge till nearly nightfall. No easy way off could be found, so we bedded down in the heather and were lightly snowed on. Next morning we decided the easiest way was up to the ridge and over the top. I had my first lead up a frozen waterfall — in hob-nailed shoes! We finally got our first meal for 30 hours at 6 p.m.

Meanwhile my wife and my friends were regaled with stories of climbers who had fallen into gullies and were then pounded by falling stones till they were unrecognisable.

A small S.M.C. party looked for us on the Glencoe side, but we had gone O.T.T. in every sense. After that we took up canoeing! Thus in August '38 with a young brother we did the Wye as training for the Dee, but alas there was not enough water in the Dee, so we went fell-walking round the hostels of Snowdonia. In one hostel I met a climber who enthused about the Idwal Slabs, so when we arrived at Idwal Cottage (in the dark) our next day's plan was 'to look at' the slabs. There was an inviting groove up the centre, which I soloed. I didn't know that one had to scramble a further 200 feet to an easy way off, so I nearly descended a V.S. as a way off a Moderate. I was hooked at the age of thirty, when many climbers pack it in and hang up their P.A.s and vibrams.

So in April '39 I was back in Ogwen with a borrowed rope (Beale's hemp with the red thread) and old ski boots nailed with clinkers - which soon began to rotate and had to be rotated back again before the harder moves. I hung about near the foot of climbs and thumbed a lift upwards. People were generous: a climbing pair would often take on a novice with a rope.

I was lucky to meet some memorable characters. Happy Hughes gave me Hope and Home Climb; he was reputed to carry a book of Latin verse in his back pocket. Joe Gianelli took us to, and up, the Chasm route; he was the author of several good

pictures of the Slabs, which were on sale as postcards at Mervyn's by Ogwen Falls. A legend was Dickie Morsley who had a passion for the Kitchen. (I met old Mrs Jones of Ogwen Cottage, who warned me against the Slabs: it was her coal hatchet that helped Owen Glynne Jones up the Kitchen in ice and snow.) It was rumoured that so many joined on Dickie's rope up the Kitchen that he was on the train back from Bangor to Liverpool before the last man on 'his' extended rope reached those steps like wet toffee near the final pitch. Menlove described it as 'Scenery for a murder'. Dickie apparently had a favourite game, of seeing how many parties he could climb through on 'Gash' on a Bank Holiday. There were stories of the great and exuberant Colin Kirkus who, tired of the conventional descent down the Slabs Ordinary, did it upside down, head first.

In April '40 I had ten days in the Lakes, joined the 'Fell and Rock' and thus became a kindred clubman, and Helyg and Glan Dena were available to me. I was a full-time teacher and a part-time fireman on duty every sixth night, but by doing two or three nights together I could get away for a fortnight's climbing. Hoping to save money I cycled from Dorset to North Wales; sadly I got so hungry that eating cancelled the fares saved. The chief encounters on this '41 trip were Harold Goodger and his son Kingsley, who introduced me to many fine climbs, such as the Direct on Glyder Fach, Zig-Zag, Hawk's Nest Buttress and the Great Gully on Craig yr Ysfa. We explored Craig Cwrwgl, Creigiau Gleision, and their waved slabs, in memory taller than Idwal's. Harold Goodger encouraged me to lead: Chasm Chimney was the first, followed by the Chasm itself, up which I later led many of my novices. I was given Lazarus, Holly Tree Wall and Flake Crack — once thought to be the hardest climb in Wales! So with a variety of Diffs and V. Diffs under my waist rope (before the days of harnesses) I began to lead school parties. One more, only one, memory: Idwal hostel only allowed three nights then one had to move e.g. to Llanberis, or Capel Youth Hostel. Arriving too late at the farm Ty Gwyn down the valley we spent an itchy night in new hay: the menu next day was Monolith Crack and Zig-Zag, never to be forgotten! At Helyg I met Kretschmer, Barford, Bechervaise and Waller. I remember that Ivan Waller, with friend, fell asleep in the hot sun at the foot of the Slabs whilst I was climbing: half-way up I was sad to see sheep next to Waller eating my carefully saved sandwiches. In '43 with the Goodgers and two or so novices a party of six - we did the Great Gully but arrived at the complex top cave in the dark. Some of our party were extracted by semi-prussik loops on the rope. We very cautiously crept back to Helyg, avoiding lynes, and had a chicken supper at 2 a.m. (Harold Goodger came with us to the Austrian Alps, and also cruising. On one trip in Germany we met F.E. Hicks, once the faithful second to Kirkus, who had taken up sailing in middle-age, I believe he had six or eight Atlantic crossing under his safety harness.)

I think it was April '44 when I was at Helyg with a school party, one of whom thought climbing Tennis Shoe was too easy to be exciting. We came in one evening to find another occupant of Helyg: he had enormous shoulders..... could it be...? A glance at the log book showed small neat initials 'J.M.E.'. So it was He, of the Very Strict Standards, who described the Milestone as 'Moderate: some of the little variations such as the Super Direct are difficult'!! We regarded Edwards and Kirkus respectively as the Classic and Romantic guide-book writers, and usually equated an Edwards 'Diff' as a Kirkus 'V. Diff' (except for Zig-Zag).

Menlove in 'How I Climb' said he took out a tin of sardines, a peg, and a length of line and when exploring a new cliff if he got stuck inserted his peg (with what?), ate his sardines, and then descended on his line. That April he was exploring a small cliff near the glacier-worn rocks of Cwm Tryfan. There was no evidence of sardines, pegs, or line. Menlove's climbing jacket was an old cowbrown Harris (very porous) held together by safety pins. Breakfast and supper were unsweetened porridge washed down by unsweetened cocoa. Coming from a small boarding school however, our rations were relatively luxurious.

Menlove was very interested in what we had done each day and when we came back from Amphitheatre Buttress he enthused about the 'longest layback in Wales', now climbed and known as Mur y Niwl, I think. Sadly he didn't offer to lead us. Being loath to waste the bash up the Heather Terrace we usually did two of the Tryfan routes, a trifle exhausting for some of our novices, if satisfying for others. One day one of our climbers was very tired and Menlove ordered a day in the bunk and said he would look after him. (This lad was J. Brook-Little, now Norroy and Ulster King at Arms.).

We had to leave Helyg before Menlove and we had a large pot of stew which I tried to give him. He insisted on paying two half-crowns, then real money. (Full board at the Youth Hostel was less than that a day.) So when we left I put the two half-crowns under the pan of stew with a note which read 'The balance here is delicate', which J.M.E. MIGHT have written of some route. There was a rhyme which may be unknown to some C.C. members:

'Edwards differed from Noyce,
About the Vertical Voyce:
Noyce thought it a mild severe,
Said Edwards "Nowhere near".'

Does anyone ever go to the 'Direct' and 'Hawk's Nest' and 'Needle's Eye' these days?

Some wartime humour is remembered. Me: "Got a good belay?" My leader, up above, "Yes, could hold an Italian battleship from here". That became a cliché.

With the Goodgers a song evolved, with chorus, 'If the juggy hand holds come off in your hand, remember there's a whoreson war on'!

To skip to April '51. I had three novices and some spare rope when we were about to attack 'Hope', or possibly my favourite bastard route, Chari-Hope-Faith, ending on the catwalk, the best of all slab-worlds. I saw a well-built youth, about 16, (not yet bearded like the pard) looking envious. I knew the look. It was my own of a dozen years earlier. "Would you like to tag on?" I asked. "Yes, please". His name was Chris. he ran up the slabs to join us, "Have you anywhere to stay?" "Well, no." "Come and join us at the Climbers' Club Hut at Helyg." "I'd love to."

So we took this young climber and introduced him to Helyg. It turned out that his Prep. school had been evacuated to Bettws and he had been fascinated by the Welsh hills (sensible fellow) and he had done a little climbing at Harrison's Rocks. Next day we went to Sub-Cneifion Arete, that elephant's trunk with a few rugosities that I thought I could lead. On the first pitch 'it wasn't going too well' (i.e. I wasn't) so I passed the rope to Chris, putting him at the sharp end. He semi-ran up that pitch. I could have done the second one, but damn it, you've got to be fair, so Chris completed the climb. For several days he was our chief leader: he was a natural climber. He enjoyed Helyg but at first he was mildly surprised to see one of my sixth form pupils bring me a mug of tea and a slice of bread and jam in my bunk; but he accepted it as part of life as lived at Helyg. When I came to fill in the log I had to put his name. Have you guessed it? It was Bonington. I believe he has since continued his climbing career.

Later in the summer of '51, I met another fine young climber in the Val Gardena, in the Dolomites, who took me on several climbs in the Sella region. He was Toni Demetz. I believe some C.C. members brought him to Helyg in '52, and showed him the Munich, Lot's Wife etc. up which he romped. Sadly he was killed by lightning on the Langkofel when aged only twenty. I have ski'd quite a bit in that region with Kingsley Goodger, and this year, '85, I have again taken pictures of my favourite peak, the Fünffingerspitze, on whose thumb I got lost in '51, when trying it guideless. Scarpetti do not mark the trade routes as did clinkers and tricouni on the rocks of Ogwen and the Pass. This year I was delighted to meet a cousin of Toni Demetz: there is a hut named after him on the Langkofel. I remember him taking me up the classic Schmidt Kamin, but can't quite find where it is.

One more friend of my climbing days I must mention, and that is Trevor Peck. We met in Cornwall (where else?) in the fifties and he came to Ynys in '56 to help me with a school party. He said I was to introduce him to North Wales, but he had a week or two with Scotty Dwyer, so he knew more climbs than I did. He gave us the Gambit, Crackstone Rib, Wrinkle, a repeat of Grooved Arete and best of all the Kirkus Route in Cwm Silyn. In those days Trevor walked to the climb in

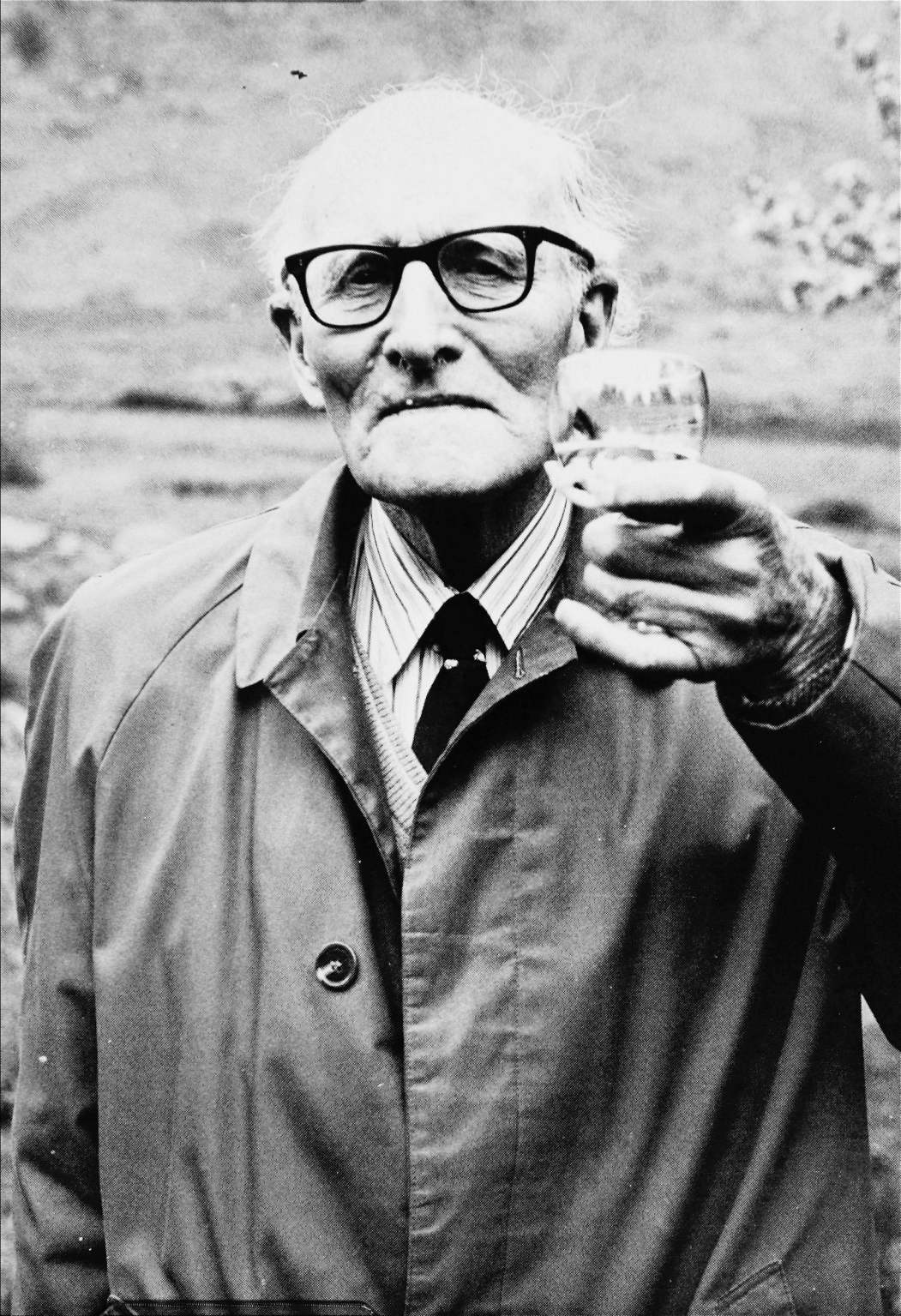
Tricounis, then changed to rubbers, which were dried when necessary, by two strips of towelling carried in his waist loop. Ten years later he helped with a school meet in Cornwall, then in P.A.s. A great character and a climbing millionaire; making half a million pairs of Pex Sox a week was not enough for him. He just had to make climbing gear, AND indulge his love of puns. His climbing axe was named Terrordactyl. I still have some of his nuts, labelled 'Crackers' ("Perhaps I am" said he, "but so are many climbers — thank God!") He lived on weak tea laced with honey, green peas and bits of chicken. When he and a pupil discovered they were both Bee Keepers the lad (with two hives) asked Trevor how many hives he had. He pondered and then answered quietly "I think about 170". If asked how many new climbs he had done he would have said "One or two, perhaps more". Trevor started climbing by an unusual method. He fixed a top rope, went to the bottom of the route, put the rope through two or three karabiners on his waist line, then in his own words 'abseiled upwards'. Try it if you are solo: it works.

Harold Goodger, a C.C. member from 1926, had climbed with Alf Bridge and seen Kirkus in action: he thought that Trevor Peck was the best he'd seen. He once, with Peter Biven, dragged me up a thing called 'The Little Whizzer' in Llanberis Pass. Does it still exist? Little Brown Jug will certainly survive.

Peter Newman, of Cwm Glas, was years ago one of my novices: generously he kept me climbing till nearly 70 and undoubtedly one of the best routes that we did together was Main Wall.

Portfolio of photographs taken at the Helyg Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 1985.

1. Noel Odell toasting the event. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
2. Herbert Carr (nearly 89) in June 1985 at the Helyg Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
3. The Helyg Custodian, Tony Jones with the plaque of Herbert Carr. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
4. Tony Jones receives the plaque from Herbert Carr while Trevor Jones and Ivan Waller look on. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
5. Tony Jones (Custodian) looking on as A.B. Hargreaves greets Herbert Carr. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
6. Chris Bonington and Noel Odell, Everesters 61 years apart. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
7. The Climbing Party: L. to R., Malcolm Cameron, Hugh Banner, Trevor Jones, Derek Walker, Ivan Waller, Mike Ball, Chris Bonington and Claude Davies. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
8. A historic gathering at Helyg, June 1985. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
9. The Presidents: Derek Walker, J. Emlyn Jones, Trevor Jones, Mike Westmacott, David Cox, Harry Sales, Tony Moulam, A.B. Hargreaves and Herbert Carr (seated). *Photo: Ian Smith.*
10. The Custodians: Johnnie Lees, Trevor Jones and Tony Moulam with Herbert Carr. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
11. Derek Walker (President) speaking at the dinner (A.B. Hargreaves and Noel Odell are on his left). *Photo: Ian Smith.*
12. The signed menu. *Photo: Ian Smith.*
13. Geoff Milburn (Editor), Herbert Carr (Helyg pioneer) and Derek Walker (President) relaxing in the lounge of the Pen-y-Gwryd hotel. *Photo: Ian Smith.*























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Alan Pullinger Herbert Con

Elmott Vnig

Jeff Pullen

John Cook

Robin Houghin

John Saks

Joe Saks

John Saks

John Saks

Ivan Waller

A. Alan Garm

Tony Mear

John Saks

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Joseph Ward Dewbury

CC THE CLIMBERS' CLUB

PRESIDENT
D.W. WALKER

HELYG DIAMOND JUBILEE REUNION DINNER

SATURDAY JUNE 8TH 1985
PEN-Y-GWRYD HOTEL



HELYG - THE DIAMOND

GEOFF MILBURN

'Here's Triple Health!... Let the toast Peak-and-Pass!
Raise Helyg, Gentlemen!... And drain your whole Cwm Glas!'

Herbert Carr's toast rang out boldly across the dining room of the Pen-y-Gwryd, quoting Geoffrey Winthrop Young's words of long ago, to celebrate a unique landmark in the history of our club. The date was June 8th, 1985, and gathered in the one room were a few of the small select surviving group of climbers of a bygone era, as well as a formidable array of Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Honorary Members of the Climbers' Club. The distinguished members included: Noel Odell, A.B. Hargreaves, Ivan Waller, Herbert Carr (with his daughter and son-in-law) and many others - it is not likely that such a group will ever meet again and include in its ranks survivors of that golden age in climbing.

At the end of his speech Herbert Carr finished with a few apt lines which are well worth quoting:

'Look forward 50 years - and fifty more.
There'll still be Helyg with its ever-open door.
Bacon will still be fried there and a kettle sings.
Surely, they'll laugh at us
Old, far-off forgotten things!
Well - not to worry - when I'm dead and gone
I rather think that Helyg will live on!

The event was not merely to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Helyg, rather it was a moving occasion of great nostalgia to acknowledge the birth of 'modern' rock-climbing in Wales which triggered off a sequence of subsequent events including a notable phase in the development of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club and the acquisition of its several Lakeland huts. Helyg was not merely a hut — it was an island in the centre of a vast ocean from which waves spread out far and wide to influence the whole future of British climbing. It was from Helyg that Kirkus and Edwards operated and set out to make their great ascents on Cloggy, in the Pass, at Ogwen and on Craig-yr-Ysfa.

The Diamond Jubilee had started well on the Saturday when Ivan Waller, a fit and sprightly 78 year old youngster (who had cycled up from Bettws-y-Coed the previous day), followed the President up Belle Vue Bastion to repeat a route he had

pioneered 58 years earlier in 1927. The party in fact only just got to Terrace Wall as Chris Bonington, back from his recent success on Everest, had somehow led the party slightly off route on the way up(!) which resulted in a lengthy traverse across gullies, ribs and vegetation to reach the Terrace. It was suggested that perhaps Chris was not feeling at home owing to the lack of snow. In fact Chris had returned to settle an old score. At the age of 17 he had fallen off Scars and concussed had hitched home. This time he had returned armed with sticky boots, chalk, friends etc. to redress the balance. Also on the face were Harry Sales, Rudolf Loewy, Trevor Jones, Hugh Banner and McNaught Davies. Ian Smith our 'official' photographer for the meet joined the Walker-Waller rope to capture a scoop which should be revealed in this publication if he remembered to load his camera.

Later in the afternoon a large crowd gathered at Helyg for the President's speech and to welcome Herbert Carr back to Helyg to thank him for his enthusiasm 60 years earlier. The crowd mingled enthusiastically as old friends bumped into each other and champagne (Buvet Ladubay Brut - NOT a cheap substitute!) flowed free. Herbert Carr presented a carved plaque to the warden and two rhododendrons were planted to mark the event. Although there was total silence for the speeches, as soon as a camera was produced for the photos chaos reigned supreme and the masses seemed to move away from the lens as fast as they were urged towards it. Nevertheless various Presidents, Hut Wardens and the like were urged and cajouled to line up to be shot in turn(!). Messrs Moulam and Jones even performed for the crowd on the Helyg boulder, and then just as the crowds began to depart a car slid to a halt beside the double white line and who should emerge but Hamish Nicol and Peter Newman fresh from a successful Scottish tour complete with a celebratory bottle of the hard stuff.

Once the champagne had been drained to the last drop the crowd departed leaving the occupants of the hut to gear up for the evening. Scruffs were exchanged for snappy suits and the warden descended from the sanctuary in the loft resplendent in kilt with sporran and dirk at the ready.

The pre-dinner mêlée made circulating almost impossible. Against the bar the Editor congratulated himself on having remained traditional to the last by his round of the Horseshoe earlier in the day while other less ethical types had resorted to ropes and the like on steeper rock — even though Hugh Banner had abandoned his lifeline on Tryfan. It was realised with some degree of hilarity that to emulate Ivan Waller's achievement Hugh Banner would have to make an ascent of Troach in the year 2,017. Perhaps some future Editor will note this prediction!

Before sitting down to dinner the ensemble had to run a gauntlet of paperwork to sign various manuscripts, locked books and the like, but eventually after the Grace we tucked into a rather fine pâté prior to Helyg Soup (which some wag hoped was

not brewed from the remains of the infamous Helyg Rat!). The local roast duckling, complete with apple sauce, new potatoes, peas and carrots soon disappeared but people began to flag through the apple pie and cream and only a few survivors kept on to the delights of an ample cheeseboard prior to the coffee.

It was well after 9.30 p.m. before the various toasts began and when Herbert Carr got up to speak on Helyg 1925, for those present with a sense of history, there was an awareness of those who have gone before but who have already died: Siegfried Herford, George Mallory, George Sansom, Fred Pigott, Ted Hicks, C.F. Holland, Raymond Greene and the like. In addition there were those who for personal reasons were not able to be with us: Jack Longland, Bill Stallybrass, Rennie Bere, John Poole, John Hunt, Dr. H.L. Richardson, Peter Bicknell and Maurice Guinness.

But it was Herbert Carr who stole the limelight with his powerful and evocative speech - and who better than the man who found Helyg for us so long ago. Not to be outdone A.B. (Hargreaves) stamped his own personality on the proceedings to make it quite clear to all present that the whole development of climbing revolved round Helyg — of course, where else. And it is for this reason that we are stepping out in faith to celebrate the Jubilee with a book that will underline the importance of Helyg for posterity. (The derogatory remarks in the bar the night before, “A horrible spot, Helyg, I never did like it”, were just a pole apart. But then I don’t like television computer programmes - they just haven’t got a sense of history!)

Derek Walker, a President who has done the Club proud since he took office, finished off the evening with a polished speech to reflect the healthy state of the Club in 1985. Prior to his speech, Derek had presented Herbert Carr with a Jacobean Goblet engraved with:

H.R.C. CARR
HELYG DIAMOND JUBILEE
1925 - 1985

On the other side of the goblet was an engraving of Helyg and Tryfan which was taken from the photo in the 1926 Bulletin.

The one hiccup during the dinner was an impromptu game called ‘passing the menu’. Eight ‘official’ menus went round to be signed by all present (for archives, absent friends etc.) as well as a variety of unofficial menus from members with an eye to collecting a unique souvenir of the occasion. A few of the lists are complete and some have even been signed twice owing to the fact that various clockwise and anti-clockwise combinations were tried to circulate the menus. Playing musical chairs during the meal couldn’t have caused much more chaos. Of such sterling

character is our Club well-enriched. It was a fitting build-up to a long session in the bar afterwards.

Now the Editor must make it quite plain that having sampled the beer and the wine to great effect he was not aware of the lateness of the hour when he arrived back at Helyg just before 3 a.m. It cannot be denied however that having brewed up he was about to embark on a lengthy discussion of a philosophical nature when the stentorian voice of our assiduous Hut Warden floated down from 'on high' in noble tradition (even to be applied on such a historic night/morning) to command the Editor to desist — or words to that effect. Suitably chastened the Editor (who was sleeping in his estate car to guard all the valuable photos which had been brought to him) grabbed his coffee and departed closing the door quietly behind him. Unfortunately, outside, the heavens had opened to such an extent that Herbert should perhaps have planted rice instead of rhododendrons. The door was locked! The Editor had no alternative but to follow his steaming mug of coffee up the steps. At the time following the white line down the centre of the A5 seemed a good idea — until the rain finally got through the Editor's best suit to sober him up enough to retreat to the shelter of a 'wretched hovel', which turned out to be the Garage. In the absence of the Hut Warden sleep came swiftly.

By morning Helyg was still, its occupants dead to the world, but in time life began anew. Sausages burnt to perfection in the pan seemed to highlight the night before and all its splendour. Even Tony was in a good mood and fought off the righteous members who were dutifully queuing up to pay their Hut Fees. Back at the P-y-G a leisurely breakfast was in full swing with waitresses busily ferrying delicacies to those who had been noble enough to give up their places at Helyg. In their warm rooms they had missed the dawn at Helyg where chattering magpies had flitted about in the wood: pale green larches, darker pines, white flowered hawthorns with the petals fading sadly, the willow's catkins nearly done (yes Helyg is not called 'The Willows' for nothing), and best of all the russet-coloured bracken stems providing a perfect contrast to the dazzling hue of the bluebells and the opening rhododendron flowers. There is no doubt in my mind that Helyg really is 'the jewel in the crown' of the Climbers' Club.

At the P-y-G a few parties were braving the elements, clearly inspired by the night before. Hodgkin and party appeared to be heading off for the mist and rain of Lliwedd, while a few gathered to bid Herbert Carr farewell. Herbert Carr was there when Helyg was 'discovered' for the Club and it is only fitting that this chapter in the Club's history should end with Herbert. On behalf of the whole Club, spread across the world, the toast is "Helyg, Maurice Guinness and Herbert Carr — we wish them all good health and a long life".

THE IMPORTANCE OF HELYG - SOME EXTRACTS

A.B. HARGREAVES

The decision to purchase Helyg turned out to be the most important decision ever made since the club began.

The setting up of Helyg had great effect, almost immediately on the club itself and started a Golden Age in the development of climbing in Wales.

The great virtue of Helyg was that it became a meeting ground where the young climbers could congregate, and operate from, instead of staying at hotels and guest houses, where they could not easily get together.

Another virtue of Helyg was that it was within walking distance of most of the main crags which was very important in those days, because few of the young climbers had cars.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My first visit to Helyg was in May 1927, as a very new member of the Wayfarers Club who were having a meet at Tal-y-Braich, then happily in the occupation of the Rucksack Club. In the centre of this meet, we thought we would go across the road and have a look at this place, Helyg.... I immediately decided that this was the place for me in the future, so I put in an application for membership of the club. That Wayfarers meet was the occasion of my first climb in Wales, when I had the privilege of being initiated by Roberston Lamb — an experience I have never forgotten. He took me up the Idwal Slab and then Holly Tree Wall in one run out, and then to the top of the Glyder by the Central Arete.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Now one thing led to another, from the setting up of Helyg. The Wayfarers, having appreciated the success of Helyg, decided to set up a hut of their own in the Lake District. This project was greatly helped by a gift from Robertson Lamb of the princely sum of £500 towards the acquisition of a suitable property. And in due course, after a long story of searching, acquiring and setting up, we got R.L.H., which was the first climbing hut in the Lake District.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In 1931 I left Liverpool to live in Lancashire, north of the sands, and very soon became Hon. Treasurer of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. Now at that time, the Fell and Rock did not climb in Wales. They thought there was nothing worth doing there! So, naturally I decided to set about educating them, by putting an article into their 1933 journal to tell them about Wales and the wonderful climbs which had lately been done there.

Following that, under my persuasion, some of the leading climbers in the Fell and Rock came to Wales with me, which meant Helyg..... there was my namesake A.T. Hargreaves and Geoff Barker, and Bill Clegg. They quickly appreciated Helyg and we came back with an idea which was that the Fell and Rock ought to have a hut in the Lake District.

Helyg had little accommodation, the most primitive of equipment, and was often very damp and cold, though gradually Stuart Chantrell got conditions improved.

I remember a grim occasion there after a long, very cold and wet November day in the Great Gully on Craig-yr-Ysfa, when we did not get to the top until it was pitch black and there had been so much pulley haulage work in the top cave that we could not undo the knots in the rope, so I decided that we could remain roped until we got down to the valley. My reasoning also being, that we did not want to risk a repetition of the tragic disaster which befell a C.C. party a few years before, who in similar conditions got separated on their way down from the Bwlch and two of them died on the way. However, when we got to Helyg, still roped, there was nobody there with a fire going that we had hoped for. When we opened the door, and shone a torch, there was a spring rising under the firegrate, with a flow of about three or four inches of water towards the door. In those days there was no electric light.....

From a speech at the 1985 Jubilee Dinner.

PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH AT THE HELYG JUBILEE DINNER AT THE P-y-G

DEREK WALKER

Gentlemen,

I must thank Herbert and A.B. for their magnificent speeches this evening.

Many of you have not been in close touch with the Club in recent years and it is only right that I should say a few words about the C.C. today.

Gentlemen, I think the club is in good shape. Our membership is now over 700 strong — a record number of 47 new members joined last year, and so far over 20 have been elected this year at two Committee meetings. Among these new members are not only many leading young rock-climbers but also some mature, experienced mountaineers, and we remain a club to which good committed climbers wish to belong — and we have not experienced the difficulty over recruitment felt by many of the other older established clubs — largely, I think, because we do try to project a youthful, forward-looking image — despite what you may see around you this evening. Everyone in the Climbers' Club is young — whatever his age — aren't you Noel, Herbert, A.B.?

As Herbert said in the 1926 Journal:

'The more climbers the Club gets the greater its capacity for service and the more important its position in the Climbing World.'

— and this still rings true today.

The kind of membership is, of course, different from your day in the 20s and 30s and even further away from that envisaged by the first esteemed President, C.E. Matthews who said at the first Annual Dinner in 1898:

'Climbing is a sport that from some mysterious cause appeals mainly to the cultivated intellect. 'Arry or 'Arriet would never climb a hill.'

We have indeed had our 'Arrys, one renowned in the legal profession though I can't disclose his speciality, our own distinguished ex-President who will live in our memories as the President who allowed women into Helyg, and who nearly severed relations with the Fell and Rock by his showdown in the Ladies' Loos at Rawhead.

And although we have no 'Arriets, we do have our Jills, our Geraldines, our Sallys and Daphnes. The Club has not only survived — that great row (over women membership) which caused such a schism in the late 60s and early 70s — it has

positively benefited from the wise decision taken in Hamish's presidency in 1975.

There has been no take over by the fair sex, Helyg has not been split asunder, there have been no chintz curtains, no influx of Fell and Rock type hutters. Rather we have seen a steady trickle of dedicated lady climbers — 23 in 10 years, and several of them such as Jill Lawrence and Geraldine Taylor climbing at the very highest levels, leading routes such as the Right Wall of Cenotaph Corner, which I don't think any of us here has done — yet!

And in the 80s, because of the ladies, our Club is friendlier, and healthier — the company at the dinners is prettier and the discos are decidedly livelier.

And what other changes? We now, of course, have six huts and I must say that at times, being the Climbers' Club who want to climb, we do feel over-stretched having to manage these properties in remote areas. It is a burden for the Custodians and for the Chairman of the Huts Committee, but we are fortunate that we do have at the moment such an able and caring Chairman as Henry Adler who has approached the job with such vigour in the past year — but we must give him our support and help.

Similarly we have been fortunate in having a dedicated Publications Committee, who, under the inspired leadership of Bob Moulton (our latest Hon. Mem.) and Alex Jones, have produced no fewer than 13 new guide-books in Bob's 10 year spell as Guide-Book Editor — a remarkable record. And we have a Journal Editor who is here tonight, Geoff Milburn, who has produced seven journals of a high standard in the last seven years — and is about to beat A.W. Andrew's record of 1904-11 this year.

As well, of course, this year Geoff is producing the Helyg book to celebrate this reunion, a venture which I am sure you will want to support, containing as it does the writings and humour of the Golden Age of Helyg climbing.

What else? On a 'National' front we have 'taken over' the B.M.C. in a grand slam at their A.G.M. in April when John Neill became President with George Band, Chris Bonington and Al Rouse as Vice-Presidents. I was asked to toast the B.M.C. at their dinner later, and after asking Dennis Gray to make the 'supreme sacrifice' and join the C.C. himself, I presented him with a large poster which read: 'C.C. RULES O.K.'

And of our relations with other clubs - they are at an amazing 'high' level and I discussed matters of moment at the Blencathra Summit exactly a year ago with President Ironfield of the Fell and Rock and President Slessor of the S.M.C.

But what of the climbing - because climbing and having fun is what the C.C. is really all about. Well, climbing in the mid-eighties has reached unprecedented high standards; there are dozens, perhaps hundreds of young people climbing extraordinary pieces of vertical or overhanging rock.

We are well represented in the Club and on the Committee with climbers such as Peter Gomersall and Phil Davidson, operating at the highest levels. But the great thing about the C.C. is that it is not only the youngsters but the older members too who are actively enjoying their climbing. We have seen the perfect example today with Ivan doing the Bastion at 78, 58 years since his first ascent - and to mention a few others: Jim Simpson at 72 leading climbs in Cornwall; Mike Westmacott leading our newest lady member up hard climbs in Yosemite in his retirement year; Hughie and Trevor leading routes as hard as they have ever done; Mike Ball leading Tower Ridge on his 60th birthday and hoping to repeat it on his 70th; Hamish leading a group of 'mature' members up Paldor in the Himalayas.

And perhaps a special mention of one who could be called our most enthusiastic member. He was one of the C.C.'s leading and bravest rock-climbers in the 50s. Thirty years later you will have seen from the Channel 4 films that he still climbs as keenly as ever. He led his first E3 last year. He was ice-climbing in the Lakes the day before he left for the Himalayas - and then at the age of 50 he has just climbed Everest. Our heartiest congratulations, Chris.

And it is appropriate that here in the Pen-y-Gwryd tonight we have several other men of Everest - Noel Odell, who exactly 61 years ago today, saw Mallory and Irvine disappear at 28,000 ft.; and Charles Evans, Mike Westmacott and Don Whillans.

And it is so appropriate that we are in the Pen-y-Gwryd to celebrate this great reunion - the home of the Climbers' Club at the very beginning of its existence, and where Chris Briggs has made us welcome over so many years. So thank you Chris and Jane for the splendid dinner and hospitality this evening - and thank you ALL for coming to make this so magnificent and memorable an occasion. I should like you to rise and drink a toast to our club - **THE CLIMBERS' CLUB.**



The Helyg Rat and A.B. Hargreaves, captor and executioner.



OBITUARY

DON WHILLANS

1978-1985 Hon. Mem.

My return from the Alps to Derbyshire this year had a similarity to the one in 1951. Then, getting home early Saturday morning after a rest and a repack, I caught a bus north, walking to our camping spot in the woods beneath Froggatt. Through the birch trees a couple of figures sat brewing and a steely-eyed surly lad looked anxiously at me. "Ah-do" said the other; it was Ray Greenall. He was rather ruefully eyeing an eighteen-inch rope burn, red and weeping, running down his arm to his wrist. "This is Don" says Ray. "Wots up", says I. "He fell off Peapod and I just stopped him hitting the deck. You'll have to climb with him", said Ray with that evil chuckle.

Over a brew I gave them a breakdown on Chamonix before we moved on up to Curbar, with me showing them the sights. Eventually we reached Deadbay; it had no climbs and I knowingly pointed out the possibilities of first the groove then the crack and an obvious traverse into the centre. "You lead 'owd lad' (I was 22)" so I did. "Well done 'owd lad" said Don as he came to the top. We were friends and were for another 34 years.

Unpacking the car this year a passing friend broke the news of Don's death, so we re-packed the car and went down to Ynys for the night, as the funeral was next day at Bangor. The drive down gave me plenty of time to reflect on those 34 years. The early fifties when in all kinds of weather we climbed established hard and new climbs together — interchanging partners amongst our close-knit crowd: the Greenalls, Brown, Sorrell, Price, Rimmer, Cowan, Moseley, Waghorn, Roscoe, Chapman etc. For it was not the climbs that the Rock and Ice achieved, it was the outrageous fun and games we had in the bivvies and tents. On those long wet boozeless nights of those early years, that brought the best out of the crowd, and in particular Don. For although comparatively untrained he was an outstanding natural athlete, and his enthusiasm for 'campsite olympics', that was a sight to be seen. Don was a most reliable person and an arrangement to meet him was always to be attended without fail, and it would be all hell if someone failed to turn up.

Don's early days with our lot saw him quietly finding his feet and slowly he aspired to be 'boss man'. This didn't go down too well with the likes of Moseley or Sorrell — the fiery ones — or the quiet generalship of Cowan or Les Wright. In the early years he knew when to back off, but there was no denying his qualities of leadership, and many good decisions soon gained the due respect.

The mid-Fifties saw the start of the 'dobbings'. Bus drivers, friends and enemies would be thumped when Don considered enough was enough. For he would become frustrated if consistently crossed, or the thick could not be got through to. Many would consider that they saw the dob of all dobs. Ask Colin Mortlock about Keswick, the night in the pub before 'Extol'. The recipient was out of order, a big lad; Don took off and the crunch-cum-squelch as his fist landed silenced the pub. I have never seen so much damage done by one punch to a face. The man insisted on apologising as he was carried out.

Don grew in stature through those hard years, and he had no equal, except of course the 'Baron Brown', and again I cannot say enough about this partnership, for to be climbing between those two was an amazing puppet-like experience.

Don moved on through his search for a full-time involvement in climbing to be an unpaid professional climber, as long holidays and expeditions watered down his love for work. Somebody pinched his blowlamp in the early sixties and he was a plumber no more.

Don took to lecturing to raise an honest bob, and what value for money he gave, for to have seen a Whillans lecture was the treat of all time. This exposure to the climbing world developed his unusual sense of humour and in particular the 'one liners' — again I could fill a page. Les Brown tells my favourite. On the Walker Spur in 1959 Don was trying to overtake a Czech party who were not only incredibly slow, but pegged and frigged every move. In a grade six groove Don in boots, with a sack on his back, bridged past them and on to the stance. Wide-eyed the Czech party praised Don. "Sir, you are tremendous, the most fantastic climber in the world." "No mate" said Don, "I'm not the best climber in the world. You're the bloody worst."

With a couple of hours spare before the funeral, Ruth and I walked in silence up to Cynr Las. My eyes picked out the line of Subsidiary Groove, then wandered across to the dripping Craig y Rhaeadr. I smiled to myself as I thought of Red Wall and Len Waghorn's epic follow. We descended to below 'The Mot' and sat on a boulder, not noticing the rain. Craig Ddu, the Grochan . . . Surplomb . . . Erosion Grooves . . . The Thing . . . Cemetery Gates . . . I swallowed hard and plunged down to Ynys to put on some decent clothes. Thank God I hadn't been to look at Cloggy — I would have had to give the funeral a miss.

Don leaves his memory and his fabulous wife, Audrey, the true sheet-anchor in 'The Villain's' life — our sympathies go to her. Forgive me if I stop at that, for you don't need me to tell you about Don Whillans. Enough to say, "What a man! We will never see another like him, and for me climbing and drinking will never be the same."

We had an arrangement, 'first there got 'em in'. See you in the next mate; your shout.

When I began climbing in Wales in 1956, Don was already a living legend. He and his climbs were talked about by us lesser mortals with bated breath and his reputation was already established. By that time he had climbed his hardest Welsh routes — Slanting, Woubits, Taurus and Erosion Direct, all of which were as awesome as he was. Don had also emerged as one of the leading Alpinists in Europe, having shared the 3rd ascent of the West Face of the Drus and the 1st ascent of the West Face of the Blaitiere with Joe Brown and making first British ascents of some of the hardest Dolomite routes in fast times.

In 1957 he reached to within 300 feet of the summit of Masherbrum on his first Himalayan trip, and three years later he returned to the Himalaya but unfortunately failed to reach the top of Trivor because of illness.

In the late '50s his Alpine achievements increased and after meeting up with Chris Bonington in 1958 on the first British ascent of the Bonatti Pillar, the partnership of Whillans and Bonington, one of the most formidable in Alpine climbing history, blossomed over the next few years culminating in the first ascent of that last great problem, the Central Pillar of Freney in 1961.

They made repeated attempts on the Eiger in 1961 and 1962 and saved Brian Nally's life in that epic rescue and retreat in 1962 from the second ice-field. But the bad luck which was a feature of Don's early Himalayan trips dogged him on the Eiger and he never achieved that aim. In contrast, Chris was lucky to snatch the first British ascent in near perfect conditions with Ian Clough after Don had left for home in 1962.

It was in that year that I really got to know him well, when Barrie Page and I invited him and Chris to join our expedition to Patagonia. Here their partnership reached its successful climax with the ascent of the Central Tower of Paine in January 1963. The 'Whillans Box', which he and Vic Bray designed and built during that expedition, played a major part in that success for it meant that we could keep pairs of climbers sitting out the storms under the Tower itself.

Soon after meeting Don I went climbing with him for the first time, to Scotland in May 1962 — with considerable awe and nervousness I might add. This trip I described in last year's C.C.J. I had never before climbed with anyone remotely as good as Don. He was then still at the peak of his rock-climbing ability and he flowed up the ferocious, overhanging direct finish to Carnivore — his last great British route which was unrepeated for the next 10 years. So it was that we began to climb regularly together in the mid-60s and our friendship was to last until his untimely death. Yet throughout our long friendship I, like so many other of my contemporaries, always remained somewhat in awe of him. I always remained aware of that latent aggressive side of his character and of that tough reputation — though in recent years he mellowed much, and became definitely avuncular.

By the late '60s he had gradually lost interest in British and even Alpine climbing for he always preferred new challenges in different and remote areas. He made trips to Gauri Sankar in 1964 and to the South face of Huandoy in 1968 but his resurgence into the top flight of world mountaineering came in 1970. As Deputy Leader of the Annapurna South Face expedition he steadily grew in fitness and determination and eventually succeeded in reaching the summit with Dougal Haston after climbing his first major face route in the Himalaya.

The next year he was again in the headlines on the International Everest Expedition, spending three weeks with Haston at Camp 6 at 27,000 ft on the South-West face, pinned down by bad weather. He relinquished his chance to be the first Briton to climb Everest by refusing to leave the face route which was the main objective and follow the easier alternative line he had found which would have led him to the South summit. He was back on Everest in 1972 with the ill-fated Anglo-German (Sterling-Scoffer) expedition, but was not offered a place on Chris Bonington's expedition in Autumn 1972 nor on the 1975 expedition which eventually climbed the South-West face, and this was to cause much acrimony and put a strain on old friendships.

More expeditions followed in the 1970s and '80s to Roraima, Cerro Torre, Alaska and the Hindu Kush but he never again achieved quite the same success or fame of 1970-72 when he was widely and rightly regarded as Britain's most successful and powerful mountaineer.

His last major trip was to Broad Peak in 1983 where Pete Thexton died in his tent at Camp 4 high on the mountain. Don had already lost one great climbing friend — Bob Downes, of pulmonary oedema — on his first expedition and now twenty-six years later he had lost another companion with the same illness. It upset him greatly and he returned home early.

In recent years, as his weight increased, he could rarely be persuaded to climb here at home though new areas continued to attract him and we had memorable little trips to Hoy in 1978 and to Cornwall later.

After seeing the 'Old Man' for the first time out came a classic Whillans' remark: "Bloody 'ell, if I get on that bloody thing with my weight it'll topple over."

He rarely needed to work in the conventional sense over the last 25 years for he had achieved a comfortable living from his inventive and superbly practical mind which produced the Whillans Box, the Whillans Sack, the Whillans Whammer and above all, the Whillans Harness — the first and most successful climbing harness. He also delivered the most entertaining lectures in the business, enhanced by his dead pan expression, superb sense of timing and laconic wit.

More recently his life had become somewhat of a great social round (apart from

Left: Don Whillans on the summit of the Central Tower of Paine, January 1963.

Right: Don about to start climbing the Central Tower of Paine.

*Photos: Chris Bonington
(D. Walker collection).*



the expeditions). He toured this country giving lectures, doing a spot of business and seeing his old mates; he went to Trinidad, The States and Spain for holidays; to the Red Sea for diving; to the Isle of Man for the T.T. and was featured at mountaineering dinners and discos, at quizzes and conferences. Who could forget the Miss Buxton Beauty Contest 1984 when Miss Donna Whillans was the popular winner. He looked superb in one of Audrey's old frocks! He had become, literally, larger than life — a lovable 'Andy Capp' character, a cult figure who was always a centre of attraction — especially over a pint at the bar! He was, by his own admission in his speech at the Club Dinner in 1982, a 'pub man rather than a club man' but his friendship with C.C. members spanned three decades; he welcomed and appreciated his honorary membership in 1978 and was a great supporter of our social events. 'Uncle Donald' was the natural and obvious choice to be my 'Minder' when I became President — I knew I'd have no trouble when he was around!

We had talked about going back to the Dolomites for the past year and we assembled a like-minded group of old friends both for the climbing and the company. Sadly, one of the team — and Don's expected climbing partner, Bill Peascod, died of a heart attack when with him on the Great Slab of Cloggy in May. In Alleghe, Don gave Hughie and me his customary sound advice before we set off on our climb on the Civetta, and we had expected to do a route with him on our return but unfortunately, he had left for home early before we came down the mountain. We were not to see him again.

It is hard to believe that Don has gone. He had seemed so indestructible. He had so much more to do — so many more laughs still to enjoy. I can't think that the door bell will never ring again to announce the arrival of that bluff little figure with the familiar greeting: "Hey up — how yer diddlin?" His death is a real loss to so many people, for beneath that tough exterior there was a warm and soft centre. We think of Audrey who since 1958 had provided that sheet anchor support through all those hard years from that cottage on the moors of Rossendale and more recently, from the guest-house in Penmaenmawr, of his close friends with whom he kept in touch and to whom he stayed so loyal, and of the whole mountaineering world where he was regarded with such great respect and affection. For myself, I shall miss my mate, my mentor and my minder.

Don Whillans was the best — the outstanding British mountaineer in the post-war period — unique! We shall not see his like again and the mountaineering world is the poorer for it. We are proud to have known him.

Derek Walker

My last memory of Whillans is seeing him amongst a crowd of distinguished Members at the Helyg Jubilee Dinner — and it struck me forcibly at the time as he flitted uneasily through a crowd of venerable academics that he was a man apart. Only perhaps A.B. showed a slightly truculent and abrasive streak which could put him in The Villain's class. In fact if the truth were ever admitted I always felt distinctly uneasy when I found myself at a bar within a six-foot range of THE MAN. Make no mistake though, if the chips were down he would be my first choice when picking sides. No, it was the time before which will haunt me in the years to come. It was after the club dinner at the Marquis of Granby when numbers had thinned and the walls of the bar were beginning to tilt to a rather uncomfortable angle. Through the faint alcoholic haze I became aware of an unmistakable voice to my left, almost like cogs grinding together in the machinery of a sawmill. He had his back to me for some time while he made small talk with a group of young climbers, then suddenly, almost as if he had eyes in the back of his head, he swung round. His eyes narrowed ominously and a scowl crossed his face. (Later it struck me that after n-and-a-bit pints he must have found focussing rather difficult but at the time I felt worried.) The silence froze me as words began to form, "I want a few words with you mate." (Oh no! That's it, finito benito, I thought. Was it my clothes that had offended him . . . or my stance . . . or merely my face?) It was too late to make a run for it, and any second I expected to wake up in Lodge Moor Hospital. And then he delivered the punch-line . . . "Does your dad write poetry?" (Well that was it, it was definitely a dobbing job.) If I said yes I was as good as dead, yet if I told a lie to Uncle Don he would find me out and pounce. I paused, swallowed hard and said a silent prayer. "Err, well, actually, err, yes", I finally admitted slightly defiantly (might as well go down fighting even if he did call me the son of a 'willy-woofter'). The silence was unbearable as he swayed slightly from side to side and I had time to check that there were no pint pots within easy reach. His punch came like lightning and yet he could have knocked me down with a feather. "Well, I like it . . . I've got his book, and I think it's great." His face relaxed into a weather-beaten smile, and we chatted for some time. Underneath his tough outer shell there was surprisingly a soft heart of gold; Don was human after all.

G.M.

Once at the old Ogwen tea shack Whillans was asked by a tourist who had keenly watched him climb an apparently hold-less rock-face just how he did it.

“Cracks”, growled Whillans, “I shove my thumbs in the cracks and climb up my thumbs.”

EDWARD HAMILTON MARRIOTT

1939-1985

Charles, as he was known to his friends, had recently returned from the Himalaya where he had trekked part of the Annapurna circuit — a considerable achievement for his 79 years. He died of a heart attack on 20th October 1985 in Cornwall, and so ended an amazingly varied life during which Charles travelled to the four corners of the globe.

Born in 1906 and educated at Oundle School, Charles began his climbing career in Switzerland in 1922 when he ascended the Albristhorn from Adelboden with his father who was then aged over 70. Three years later he returned for the Aiguille du Tour and the Grand Combin. At the age of twenty he obtained a commission in the Royal Artillery and that same year he did his first British rock-climb, Kern Knotts Chimney, with Nea Morin (then Barnard) and O.H. Barnard.

As early as 1929 he paid a visit to the Baspa Valley in Bashahr and made an attempt on Charang West Peak and others in the area. Five years later he went back to explore Kashmir.

In 1931 his Alpine peaks included: The Petite Fourche, Tête Blanche, Aiguille du Tour, Combin de Corbassiere etc. Before the war, in 1937, he climbed in the alps with Milner, Peaker, Graham Brown and Speaker.

During the war Charles was a Mountain Instructor at the Commando Mountain Warfare School and at the Mountaineering Wing in Lebanon, Syria. He also later instructed for the Mountaineering Association in 1958. Eventually he was to reach the rank of Major. Later in the post-war period he visited South Africa (1948/9), Australia and Tasmania (1950) and then in 1950/1 he climbed in the New Zealand Alps.

Undoubtedly Marriott's greatest adventures were with Bill Tilman when they

sailed together in *Mischief*. On the 1955/56 voyage to Patagonia they took the boat right to the foot of the glacier and then achieved the first crossing of the Patagonian ice-cap. Later Charles went with Tilman to Greenland in 1961 and 1964 and was also on the 1968 expedition to the Faroes, Iceland and Jan Mayen Island when *Mischief* was wrecked. In the Tilman mould Marriott's own yacht *Magnolia*, a six-ton cutter, was held together with string and sealing wax — just like his cars. In fact his tents and rucksacks were all home made and like his jackets tended to be rather ancient.

In addition to his membership of the C.C., Charles was also in the: Alpine Club, Club Alpin Suisse, New Zealand Alpine Club, Himalayan Club and was the first Chairman of the Land's End Climbing Club (formed in 1972). It was with the latter club that he did his last rock-climb on Carn Les Boel at the age of 77. One great success was when Charles negotiated free access at Land's End for climbers.

Recent travels prior to his death incorporated: Nepal, Russia, China, Hong Kong, America, Mexico, Japan, Malaya, North America and Scandinavia — an impressive list by any standards.

Noted for his keen eyesight Charles Marriott was a great raconteur with a memory for detail. He skied at intervals and was at ease in social gatherings where he was often to be found in female company. He enjoyed a drink and could usually produce a bottle from his rucksack at the appropriate moment! Charles was one of the great characters of the Club and he undoubtedly lived life to the full right up to the end. At the time of his death he was preparing his kit for a trip to Australia where he was intending to spend the winter.

Notes prepared with the kind help of John Atherton

MIKE HARBER

1980-85

Mike Harber and his climbing companion disappeared in the Himalaya this summer. He and another Cardiff climber, Mike Morrison, were attempting to climb Snow Lake Peak (Lupke Loa Brakk, 21,630 feet) in the Karakorum.



A keen climber for more than twenty years, Mike joined the Climbers' Club in 1980 and wrote the North Coast section of the first Pembroke guide. He did much of the exploration of this coastline himself climbing scores of new routes and keeping a meticulous record of climbing in the area. He was also joint custodian of the Pembroke hut.

Mike's main commitment was to big mountains. During fourteen alpine seasons he made ascents of many classic routes up to T.D. standard, and he carried this same determined approach to the greater ranges, where he was beginning to focus his ambitions. He had visited the Himalaya once before and three years ago achieved a major climb on Huascaran in the Cordillera Blanca, making the first alpine-style ascent of the South West Ridge.

Just before leaving for Pakistan Mike completed his section of the new Pembrokeshire guidebook, and thankfully a great many climbers will benefit from his work for years to come. But he will be sorely missed — by his family, his girlfriend Meryl, and by Cardiff's close-knit climbing fraternity, which all too recently lost Charles Heard in another Himalayan accident.

Pat Littlejohn

ANTHONY KEITH RAWLINSON
1948-1986

Anthony Rawlinson, who was to have represented the Alpine Club at the Dinner on 22nd February, died in a fall from Crib Goch that day. He was the first AC president to die in office and the first to lose his life in the mountains.

'Anthony was due to attend the Annual Dinner of the Climbers' Club that very evening as Guest of Honour. When I heard the news on my return from a good day's climbing I could not believe it, for of all people Anthony was safe, certain, experienced and knew exactly what he was doing. But although it had been a peerless sunny winter's day, the conditions were severe and alpine. He could have slipped or tripped or suffered a medical mishap which led to the fall. Nobody will ever know.

Never before have I seen the Climbers' Club, normally brash, lawless, irreverent and ebullient, so completely stunned and silenced. All speeches were cancelled and we stood and remembered, tragically aware that not only a great climber but a great man had died.'

He was one of the immediate post-war generation of alpine climbers, and played a large part in the revival after the long years when the Alps were out of bounds for the British. He was a founder member of the Alpine Climbing Group, which had as its main object the promotion of a high standard of alpine climbing, and later, when honorary secretary of the AC, was one of the moving spirits in the merger of the AC and ACG. He edited the CCJ from 1955 to 1959 and was a devoted member of the CC. He served on the Mount Everest Foundation for many years, and was its chairman in 1970-71.

Anthony was born in 1926, and his diaries record walking in the Lake District as early as 1937. For the next ten years he walked and scrambled and climbed in the Lakes, mostly based on family holidays in Buttermere, where he joined up with Claude Elliott, later to be his headmaster at Eton and president of the Alpine Club, and others. Thus by the time he went up to Oxford in 1947, after three years in the Grenadier Guards, he had a long apprenticeship in the hills behind him, an experience strengthened by his acquaintanceship with climbers he had met in the Lakes and by his keen interest in mountaineering history and literature.

So the top priority when he returned to Oxford (he had been born there) was to join the OUMC and enlist in the December meet at Brackenclouse. That was when I first met him, a tall enthusiastic figure, with a notable laugh, clad in camouflage ex-army anorak and patched breeches, as most of us were, but in his case also sporting a conical black felt hat with the front brim turned up, in better days the property of his father the Bishop of Derby. The weather was reasonably good for our first day, and we did the Napes Needle, in floppy tennis shoes rather than nails, out of respect for what was even then a well worn climb. The remaining week I remember as being wet and cold, with a lot of mud on the climbs and no view of the mountains at all, but we were young and had been brought up in the cold baths tradition so we climbed every day.

Back in Oxford next term, I was by no means sure I was going on any more OUMC meets, but a meeting with Anthony in the civilized setting of his rooms in Christ Church soon put paid to any backsliding. His enthusiasm, his pleasure in the fact that we had done such a classic as the Needle, his friendliness and sense of fun were all too infectious. The planning for the next trip started at once, and we were frequent climbing partners for the next twenty years. He was the best of companions, stimulating company, full of ideas for the next climb and full of information about it (he had always done the home-work). We had some marvellous times together.

Anthony was inevitably one of the leading members of the OUMC. He was a natural though never obtrusive leader; he was always ready to help, always did what he said he would do, and had a first class brain and the verbal ability to go

with it. He was elected treasurer, then president. For the next four years he climbed intensively with OUMC and CC friends and continued to climb with the same group for many years afterwards. The Alps were the focus of his ambitions. Steeped in the literature, his ideal climbs were the classic traverses of Geoffrey Winthrop Young and others. 'Good practice for the Alps' would be his comment on any particularly unpleasant day in British hills, and he believed strongly in a proper grounding in technique for all going to the Alps for the first time. When proposing him for membership of the Alpine Club in 1950, Jack Longland commented that the good record of OUMC alpine meets owed a great deal to Anthony's influence.

Part of the preparation for these meets was the annual trip to Ben Nevis at Easter. Anthony was on three of these, doing most of the then classics in a variety of conditions, mostly bad. It was en route to Ben Nevis that I once stayed at the Bishop's Palace near Derby — a large house, but scarcely palatial; toad-in-the-hole was served from an enormous silver dish, no doubt the property of the Church Commissioners, by an aged butler who was certainly paid by them. On the third of these meets, in 1951, Hamish Nicol and Anthony had a go at Zero Gully using old-fashioned ice-axes and tricounis.

'There were twelve Oxford undergraduates in the Charles Inglis Clark hut that week, all hand-picked by the President as was the undemocratic custom of the time. We had climbed Tower Ridge on the Sunday in a rather slow and cumbersome caravan and on Monday Rawlinson, Westmacott and I climbed Comb Gully which in those days was considered a difficult ice climb. The first twenty-five-foot pitch took two and a quarter hours to lead, equipped as we were with slater's picks and tricouni-nailed boots. Nobody who has only climbed ice with a curved pick and crampons can have any idea of how difficult things were with the old equipment and the old rules. Progress was measured in cubic feet of ice chipped away.'

'My most memorable climb with him, which might well have been my last, was Zero Gully on Ben Nevis. On Thursday March 16 1951 Anthony and I left the hut at 5.00 a.m., to attempt the first ascent of Zero Gully. It was a difficult and dangerous climb though we were scarcely aware of this at the time. The ice was steep, making it necessary to cut careful foot and hand holds. Little avalanches of powder snow kept pouring over us — not serious but enervating. Throughout all this Anthony remained a tower of strength and cheerfulness. We had made four long pitches, say 250 feet of vertical progress, when I fell. I was too badly concussed to have any idea of what actually happened. The ice pitons (it was long before the days of ice screws) came out "like buttons from a dress shirt" one by one and Anthony and I fell all the way down, and beyond to the Allt a' Mhuilinn

where we lay in a pile of tangled rope both seriously injured.'

Their spectacular fall of some 800 feet was luckily witnessed by John Sims, and a stretcher party came up from Fort William in time to get them to hospital before midnight. One of Anthony's favourite stories was of his reaction when the nurses were preparing him for the operating room. Having slit and removed his ex-army anorak, they came to a Shetland wool sweater, an expensive item for a hard up student, and remarked what a pity it was to have to cut it. "No you bloody well don't", said the patient — who up to then had been unconscious for hours and was thought to have a damaged skull — then sat up and removed the previous garment over his head, collapsing immediately afterwards and having no memory of the incident next day.

In the same year he took part in the first guideless British ascent of the NW ridge of the Aiguille de Blaitiere. This was a Ryan-Lochmatter route, and it was in keeping with Anthony's love of tradition that the first of his articles in the *Alpine Journal* described this and two other Ryan-Lochmatter routes, the E ridge of the Dent d'Herens and the Cresta Santa Caterina on the Nordend, both done in 1952. The latter was in some respects his best season and on return to England he was selected as one of the four reserves for the forthcoming Everest expedition. In fact he never visited the Himalaya, but this did not seriously disturb him because he was above all an alpinist, who found his greatest pleasure in following in the footsteps of the great alpine pioneers, particularly in the Valais.

It was in 1953 that he did one of his most notable climbs, the fourth ascent (first British) of the Tronchey Arete of the Grandes Jorasses, most of which he led, with Dick Viney, Ted Wrangham, Mike Harris and Ralph Jones. This was in a real sense a pioneering effort, with considerable problems of route finding on difficult rock. One has only to read Dick's account to see what a source of strength Anthony was in a difficult situation. Another epic, with me in 1955, was the SW ridge of the Fou. The climb itself was straightforward, but the descent over the Ciseaux and Blaitiere was in thunder, lightning and drenching rain, then in blizzard and extreme cold. We were not equipped for a night out, and it was quite a struggle, but we had the confidence in each other that comes from a long partnership, and I shall always remember Anthony's unfailing patience and competence.

The list of his climbs is long — nearly all the standard Valais classics, many of them repeated, and some of the less frequented routes such as the E-W traverse of the Dent d'Herens; in the Dauphine, the S face of the Pavé and of course the traverse of the Meije; the Mer de Glace face of the Grepon and the Ryan-Lochmatter on the Plan; and many more in these areas and in the Dolomites, Tarentaise, Oberland and Engadine. The last alpine route I did with

him (but by no means the last of his routes) was the E-N traverse of the Weisshorn. We had some snow on the N ridge, and we were not a fast party, so we had to bivouac uncomfortably on top of the Bishorn. When it was light we walked stiffly down, past a few surprised parties tugging up the Bishorn. Most of us collapsed into soft hotel beds in Zinal, but Anthony slept in a field for three or four hours and then characteristically managed to wake up in time to catch his train, so as not to be late at his Treasury desk.

In later years he found he was becoming slow and lowered his sights, unwilling to risk holding up his companions on major routes, but he continued to climb and to walk — the circuit of Mont Blanc, for instance — and to have every possible holiday in the hills. A posting to Washington gave him the opportunity to walk in New England and Colorado. And he returned time and again to Scotland, Wales and the Lakes.

In the world at large he had a brilliant career. A King's scholar at Eton, he won a classical scholarship to Christ Church in 1944 and a first in Classical Mods after national service. His accident in 1951, three months before his finals, may well have deprived him of the first in Greats expected by his contemporaries. He went into the civil service near the top of the list, and first served in the Ministry of Labour and National Service, transferring to the Treasury in 1953. He was rated one of the best civil servants of his generation. As Sir Robert Armstrong, a colleague and a life-long friend, said at his memorial service "His intellectual capacity was matched by exceptional clarity of mind and of utterance; and governed by unswerving integrity. He was extremely hard working and thorough, with meticulous attention to accuracy and detail, and a robust firmness and determination of purpose." He was primarily a Treasury man, but also served in the Atomic Energy Authority and in the Department of Industry. He was in Washington as Economic Minister and head of the UK Treasury and Supply Delegation at the British Embassy in 1972-4, and at the time UK executive director of the IMF and the IBRD.

To quote Sir Robert again 'Perhaps the zenith of his achievement was in his six years from 1977 to 1983 as second permanent secretary in the Treasury in charge of public expenditure. Throughout those years it was a primary objective of policy for successive governments not merely to control but where possible to reverse the remorseless tide of rising public expenditure. They could have had no more effective agent in the pursuit of that policy than Anthony Rawlinson: it called forth all his qualities of drive, determination and leadership. But he was no unreasoning axeman: determination was tempered by good judgement . . . He could respond to a strong case when it was put to him'. In 1983 he was appointed permanent secretary of the Department of Trade, which soon after was combined



with Industry to form a single department, of which he remained joint permanent secretary until his retirement in 1985. He was then appointed chairman of the Gaming Board. He was made CB in 1975 and KCB in 1978, and would only say of these honours that 'they come up with the rations when you reach a certain stage'.

But it is Anthony the man that we remember. His life was firmly rooted in the Christian faith, in the family in which he had been brought up and in the equally loving family which he and Mary made for their sons. Not that his religious faith was at all obtrusive, any more than his scholarship or the fact that he was a very distinguished man. But he was utterly dependable and loyal to his friends. And he was also great fun. Very much a traditionalist, he would laugh at himself for being one, and was far too intelligent to be conventional as well. He had a generous capacity for friendship and a zest for life. His many friends will feel his loss deeply and our sympathy is with Mary, who could not climb with him but accepted the risks that go with climbing, and with the three sons of whom he was so proud and fond.

'When a man like this is killed climbing one does wonder if it is worth it. Can a mere sport justify such a loss of life? If, however, Anthony had not climbed he would not have been the man we knew and admired. So goodbye Anthony, old friend, climber, Knight Commander, public servant, husband, father, blood brother. You can never be replaced and if I ever have to sing that hymn again, the one we tried to sing at your funeral:

*"Not for ever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way".*
I'll cry again like a child I swear it.'

Michael Westmacott

N.B. The quotes by Hamish Nicol are from the May 1986 issue of 'Climber' with the kind permission of Walt Unsworth.

HERBERT REGINALD CULLING CARR

1925-1986

"The great hills, I have them still in my heart", were some of the last words of one of the most outstanding men of our time. Right up to his death within a few

weeks of his 90th birthday Herbert Carr was making plans; he was brim-full of ideas for his forthcoming book, had every intention of going to the Pen y Gwryd for his birthday in July, and was greatly concerned that competition climbing was being discussed at the national mountaineering conference. His contribution to mountaineering in Britain is far greater than most people will realise and during the last year he saw the culmination of his selfless work for the Climbers' Club which spanned a period of 61 years.

Born in Madras, India, in 1896 in the days of the British Empire Carr began to visit the Alps with his family from 1905 at a time when skiing, skating and tobogganning as winter sports were in their infancy. His love for the hills then led to lengthy cycle tours while he was still a teenager. Looking back recently he wrote:

'I still thrill when I think of the old cycle shows at Olympia and the old badge of the Cyclists' Touring Club. Before 1914 and the advent of the motor car in full force, the roads were empty and all our own.'

In 1913 Carr did what few other teenagers can have achieved when he cycled to the Alps — a distance of 746 miles in 14 days. A picture of him near Grenoble was simply captioned 'en route for Italy'. The following year a tour of Belgium and Holland meant pedalling a further 883 miles on a primitive machine when roads were hardly fit for lengthy travel by bicycle. After a tour of the south of England Carr set his sights on the mountains of North Wales and began to explore the main summits.

Carr eventually did his first roped climb on Tryfan in 1915 having met the two Pitcher brothers on the summit. He then began to take an active interest in the crags and on the Parson's Nose he recorded:

'I climbed about half-way up it, but retreated again being alone.'

Educated at St. Paul's School Carr obtained a scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford in 1915 but the war changed his plans and he became a 2nd Lieutenant in the 63rd Division of the RNVR. At one stage of the bitter struggle he was injured while on the Western Front near Ypres and was then able to recuperate in the hills.

As early as 1916 Carr paid a visit to Clogwyn du'r Arddu with P.S. Minor and also Dorothy Pilley with whom he was to spend a considerable time climbing in the hills of Britain and the Alps. Carr recorded in his diary:

'This cliff is very imposing to look at, though the faces are too steep to climb. We did the East Terrace Climb. Easy rock at first — one interesting gully pitch when I had to do much gardening, an easy scramble up the terrace and a sensational peep down the sheer wall of the East Gully.'

In November of the same year Carr was taken to Laddow Rocks in the Peak

District by a party of Rucksack Club members which included the Kellys and in 1917 he joined their club. Carr's diary notes from this era are full of charming extracts such as:

'Three nurses, Hewitt, self and dog. Pony trap to Pen y Pass . . . Snowdon summit for tea.'

'Lunch and billiards at the P.y.G.'

'Up first two slabs of Hope to get a tin of sweets.'

'A large fox came within a few feet of us while we were eating.'

As the war neared its end Carr began to explore the great Lakeland crags and recorded many superb anecdotes such as during a day on Pillar:

'Below the Nose both Henry Bishop and I were lowered down the crack into Savage Gully to find we had to pass through a waterfall to get across. Under such conditions, it is certainly wise for two to go up round by this means. Great hauling was required for the rest of the party over the Nose.'

On the Gable crags, after an epic adventure on the Needle, Carr then saw one of the greatest climbers of their era in action:

'We then had a treat in watching Harold Raeburn lead the Eagle's Nest Arete.'

1919 was to be a year of great adventures and narrow escapes for Carr starting as early as April when with Minor, Hirst and Humphreys he attempted to lead the Great Gully of Craig y Cae which was lethally loose after a fall of rock and mud:

'A large block came away suddenly, narrowly missed Humphreys and cut his rope in seven places.'

In June a party up on High Man, Pillar, dislodged a huge rock which narrowly missed Holland and plunged with a deafening roar down into Savage Gully.

During the summer Carr paid a first visit to the Isle of Skye with Bartrum, Archer Thomson, C.F. Holland and Dorothy Pilley. With the two latter climbers Carr ascended a new route, Cioch West Face Climb, and also met the famous team of Steeple, Barlow and Doughty.

History so far has not given Carr much credit for his first ascents on Clogwyn du'r Arddu but during 1919 Carr paid no fewer than six visits to the crag. As he was intimidated by the final pitch of the East Gully the party escaped to the top of the crag via a series of ledges on the east side of the gully. The Far West Buttress offered a more realistic challenge and Carr added three new routes in September: Primitive Route, Slanting Chimney, and Slab Route taking the easiest line up the slabs. With long run outs and no protection Carr realised that these routes were far more serious than those on the Idwal Slabs.

As the year neared its end Carr got benighted on Lliwedd with heavy snow

falling and had to wait for rescue at first light when Kelly, Lamb and Prior descended from the top of the cliff. A day later Carr returned with Holland to finish what they had started, but that adventure was nothing compared to their escapade on Central Trinity Gully when the party of four completed the route — but only with the help of a clothes prop.

1920 was to be a great year which started well in April when Carr returned to Scotland with Archer Thomson and Noel Odell. On the Buchaille during poor visibility he recorded:

'When Odell's aneroid registered 3,100 feet we took to a snow couloir on the left.'

A day or two later on Ben Nevis they had a good day returning:

'Valleyward, getting home by lantern light about 9.30 p.m.'

In his first of many Alpine seasons Carr grabbed many peaks such as the Dent du Geant and completed traverses of the Grands Charmoz, Grepon and Drus — using guides such as the Summermatters and Ignaz Zurbriggen.

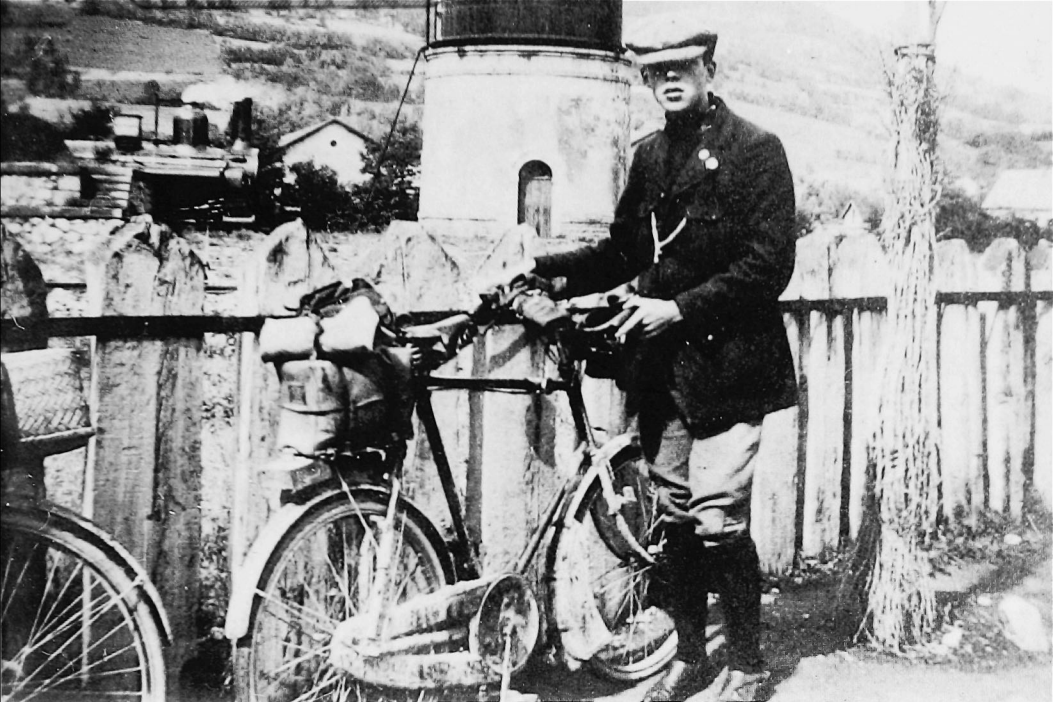
While at Oxford to obtain an MA in Modern History Carr not only rowed for his college but also revived the OUMC which had been started by Arnold Lunn long before the war. As an organising member of the Oxford Spitsbergen Expedition Carr was an obvious choice but gave up his place to Noel Odell in order to climb in the Alps with his father, Hirst and Raymond Greene. The Sudlenspitze-Nadelhorn traverse, Matterhorn and a host of other peaks and passes were duly completed.

In the 1922 season as well as peaks in the Graian Alps Carr did the Blaitiere, Aiguille d'Argentiere, A. du Tacul, A. du Chardonnet, Zinal Rothorn, Wellenkuppe, Dom and the Dent Blanche. Carr's Alpine Club membership is unique: 1922-1927, 1944-1975 (Vice-President 1955) and 1978-1986 and he was in recent years proud that he had joined the AC on three separate occasions. Carr was also a Founder Trustee of the Irvine Travel Fund and held the position from 1924 until his death.

After the OUMC meet at Arolla in 1923 during which Carr met Guido Rey and made a traverse of the Grand Combin, the next year took Carr to the Dauphine. With Couttet he made a May ascent of the Grand Pic de la Meije, said to be the earliest recorded in any season:

'I was a damn fool to get young Alfred to go down there in May.'

1925 was a special year for both British mountaineering and Carr himself. His classic book 'The Mountains of Snowdonia' was published and when it was realised that Carr was a driving force of considerable talents he was enlisted to help revive the failing Climbers' Club which was languishing in the aftermath of war. Carr's great stroke of genius was to discover Helyg which was to become



*Above: Herbert Carr at the age of 17 near Grenoble, September 1913, 'en route for Italy'.
Below: Herbert Carr (on left) during an early visit to the Alps.*



the first successful Welsh climbing hut. As a consequence of this innovation other huts were eventually opened in the Lake District by the Fell and Rock C.C. Having joined the Climbers' Club in 1925 Carr became the Hon. Sec. 1925-26, the Hon. Ed. 1926-28, the Vice-President in 1951-54 and President in 1954-57.

One setback just before the Helyg opening was Carr's tragic accident in Cwm Glas which resulted in the death of Van Noorden. Despite two nights out in the open Carr was eventually rescued and turned up for the Helyg opening draped in bandages.

Writing and exploring at a furious pace Carr produced 'A Climber's Guide to Snowdon and the Beddgelert District' in 1926. This was the first rock-climbing guide to the Snowdon area and it set the standard for a succession of memorable Clogwyn du'r Arddu and Llanberis Pass guidebooks.

Professionally Carr began his career at Repton and then went on to become Senior History Master at Alleyn's School, Dulwich in 1927. From 1931 to 1934 he was the Headmaster of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith where he was the first to introduce co-education in the form of mixed classes. His years from 1934 to 1960 were spent as Headmaster of the prestigious Harrogate Grammar School. During the war he served as a Flight Lieutenant in the RAFVR then when peacetime was restored he updated his 'Mountains of Snowdonia' in 1948 and also produced 'A Walker's Guide to Snowdon and the Beddgelert District' with help from George Lister and Paul Work in 1949.

During his retirement Carr established a successful antique business in the Cotswolds and became an expert in rare prints. He had not forgotten the mountains however and in 1978 he wrote 'The Irvine Diaries'. He also contributed regularly to the CCJ right up to his death and throughout his life he had a vision for the C.C. to go on to greater things. After losing his wife Evelyn, who had also been a companion in the hills, he was despondent for a while but soon set his sights on attending the Helyg Diamond Jubilee celebrations. From the moment he declared that he would live that long he manoeuvred the CCJ Editor into compiling a book on Helyg (one doesn't say no to a mandarin!). Time was short but Carr was not to be cheated and he not only had a triumphant return to the P.y.G. and Helyg but also hung on doggedly to await the book of his dreams. He even threw himself excitedly into research for a forthcoming biographical book entitled 'Halcyon Days'.

Throughout his long life Herbert Carr had tremendous drive and enthusiasm and once his sights were set on a project there was no going back or settling for second best. From the outset he was a born leader who was used to having his instructions obeyed to the letter and expected only the best from other people.

As a person he was gentle and peace-loving and above all his sense of loyalty to others was unfailing. He died having set his affairs in order after what he described as 'the most marvellous year of my entire life'. Perhaps the most fitting epitaph is an extract from his diary written after the Traverse of the Grand Combin in 1923:

'Here a waning moon rose upon the silent world, and we marched on as in a dream under stately walls of ice and over great fields of snow. It was a wonderful experience. It became very cold indeed, for we made height fast on the peculiar shelf called the Corridor. At 3.30 we hid in a little grotto in the ice and for a few minutes ate and shivered. We crossed the mauvais pas, now all rock-bound in the frost's grip and, as the first daylight came to us, we reached the ridge to the east of the twin-peaked summit. A steep snow wall took us on to the easy final slopes, and, at 5.10 precisely at the moment of sunrise we had the summit under foot. As we stood there, leaning on our axes, the sun crept stealthily round the south shoulder of the Weisshorn and lit our summit and Mont Blanc alone for some moments, before descending to the lower world. For several minutes too our peak threw a great purple shadow, triangular in form, high up into the western sky, an effect Leslie Stephen describes at sunset on Mont Blanc.'

Geoff Milburn

P.S. For 10 years I have worked towards the splendid ideals started by Herbert Carr so long ago. It was he who described us as 'guidebook writers and editors fifty years apart' and it has been my great privilege to share his dreams and aspirations over the last few years. By his kindly actions he also taught me how to give and not to count the cost. Herbert asked me specifically to take on the responsibility of writing his obituary and it is apt that this is the last piece of writing to complete this journal. He even added with a twinkle in his eye that he would rather like to read it, but that was not to be. Having made his peace Herbert has now embarked on his greatest expedition (1 Cor. 15: 50-57) and the last of the mandarins has now gone.

The Committee notes with regret the deaths of the following members:

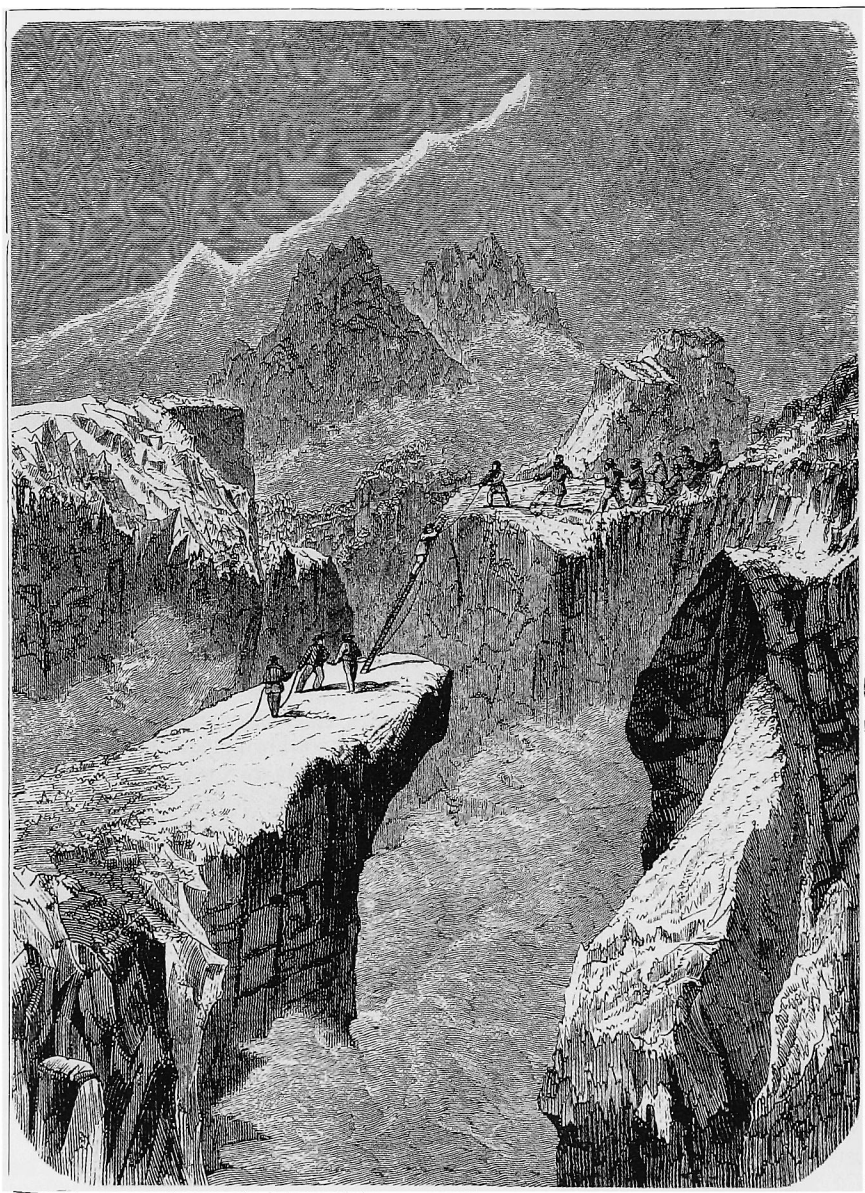
F.M. Coventry (1923-1985)

J.B. Allen (1927-1985)

M. Pike (1950-1985)

A.R. Edge (1931-?)

It is hoped that full obituaries will appear in due course.



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(R.O. Downes Hut)

EDITORIAL

There are good years and bad years and in some respects 1985 is best forgotten. From a climbing standpoint it was a washout and despite the inactivity climbers were rarely inspired to put pen to paper. After the Helyg Diamond Jubilee celebrations the planning of the Helyg book was an exciting project and it was eventually possible to incorporate into it at no extra cost some pages from this journal. Despite this, somehow for the first time in several years, the journal did not gel and the untimely death of Don Whillans put a damper on plans. Eventually it was decided to publish a reduced journal rather than wait any longer. However, the Editor was in dire need of inspiration, and time passed until the Buxton conference early in 1986. At the eleventh hour it transpired that a 'gullible' person was needed to fight the battle against COMPETITION CLIMBING. The following case formed the substance of the Editor's impassioned plea during a session entitled 'You the Jury' which was ably chaired by Ian McNaught Davies. The general trend of this editorial may appear rather similar to last year but the situation is now far more serious and climbers must stand up and be counted.

Your MACnificence, members of the Jury, chalk sniffers, bolt bashers, sling pullers and trundlers, I give you all due warning. The writing is on the climbing wall. Competition climbing is getting closer — like aids. Don't look behind or it will grab you. Russia, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Italy, France . . . The last barrier is now the English Channel and this is WAR. We must fight it on the chalk cliffs of Dover if necessary — not jump over it blindly like a mass of lemmings. Mobilise Mick Fowler before it is too late!

Why am I so worried about competition climbing?

(1) Intense competition will lead to many routes getting even more POLISHED than they are now. What happens when hard routes get practised before competition . . . Bitterfingers, Behemoth, Revelations, London Wall, Cenotaph Corner, Right Wall, Lord of the Flies . . . It will end up more like ice skating.

(2) There will be INTENSE TRAINING from a very early age, say eleven to fifteen. Do we really want to see the grandchildren of Chris Bonington and Ken Wilson crawling from the pram on to the crag?

(3) Training from an early age will lead to INJURIES of all kinds, tendons, ligaments, muscles etc. — as has happened with young gymnasts. If this happens you will need wheel-chair facilities for future Buxton conferences.

(4) Climbing at speed will lead to more ACCIDENTS on the crags. Of course that will create more jobs for the Mountain Rescue.

(5) DRUGS will be used as in athletics . . . steroids, stimulants etc. And women climbers will end up looking like men. No comment!

(6) Competition climbing will quickly spread downwards like chalk. There will be world, national, area, club, and school championships . . . leagues and knock-outs . . . and categories for speed, style, solo, lead and top-rope ad nauseum.

(7) Craggs will be CLOSED for championships. What would you feel if you got up to Cloggy or Scafell and found the crag shut?

(8) In the wake of televised championships landowners would probably start CHARGING for access to their crags. Would you pay £2 per day to get on to Kilnsey?

(9) TELEVISION is in danger of taking over and shaping our sport, as has happened with snooker and darts. The next thing is we'll have to wear make up and have pants with fancy stripes and spots and prance around like a load of fairies — oh, sorry, we've got that already!

And do you know about the secret list of crags drawn up for a T.V. company? Those that would be suitable for filming, cordoning off for spectators, with easy road access, and space for lots of cars . . . chips and ice-cream vans . . . and portable loos.

(10) Just think about all the extra LITTER and EROSION that there will be when competition climbing hits the crags. We will be knee-deep in crisp packets and there will be trenches head high leading up to the crags.

(11) MONEY, that greatest evil of all, will begin to grip our sport in its clutches. I can see the glazed look on Jim Ballard's eyes as the cash registers begin to tinkle. T.V. has already involved climbers such as Pete Livesey and Phil Burke in competitions on the crags. Just think of a top prize of some £50,000. And what about all the super-stars fighting for sponsorship? . . . Ron Fawcett uses Durex ropes for greater protection when he is climbing. Of course all the magazines will benefit from greater sales as well.

(12) The thought of PROFESSIONAL and AMATEUR status for rock-climbers is anathema to me.

(13) Lastly there will be RULES and REGULATIONS . . . and even QUALIFICATIONS for coaches, referees etc.

British climbing has always been unique and we must preserve our long heritage following in the steps of: Haskett Smith, Archer Thomson, Pigott, Longland, Kirkus, Edwards, Dolphin, Birtwistle, Preston, Harding, Brown, Whillans, Crew . . . yes, and Geraldine, Jill and Bonny too. What is British climbing all about? Simply it is about 'bottle', 'neck', 'the big push' — call it what you will. Ideally routes should be free-climbed on-sight from the bottom if possible. Bolts and excess ironmongery have no place in Britain.

Climbing is about the freedom of the hills and crags in all weathers to climb and wander at will. It is about leaving the environment unspoilt, not chopping down Ogwen oak trees.

If you must introduce competition climbing then restrict it to the indoor climbing walls and DON'T CALL IT ROCK-CLIMBING.

My case against competition climbing will NEVER rest and I ask you to record a verdict of GUILTY. The sentence should be to hang 'em high with their own climbing ropes.

Welsh Rock by Trevor Jones & Geoff Milburn

Here is a popular history to climbing in North Wales — the first since Snowdon Biography. 320 thrilling pages with over 200 historic photographs (128 colour & 82 black and white). From the early days of the sport right up to the latest limestone and slate super-routes this is a book for all members.

As a pre-publication offer a limited number of books have been specially prepared to commemorate Don Whillans and £2 from each book will go to the Whillans Fund. Each of these books with an extra two photographs will be signed by the author.

Cheques for £16.95 should be sent to: **Pic Productions, 25 Cliffe Road, GLOSSOP, Derbyshire SK13 8NY.**

REVIEW

The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland by Irvine Butterfield

The Munros edited by **Donald Bennet**

Diadem. £16.95. S.M.T. £10.95.

During 1985 a whisper spread round that there was to be a head-on clash in the publishing world and that there were two forthcoming books on the Munros in the pipeline. On one hand, Ken Wilson of Diadem with his impressive track record of coffee-table format books and then north of the border on their own patch were the S.M.C. climbers. At first it looked as if the book to reach the shops first would be the winner, but then the thought crossed people's minds as to what the market might stand. Thankfully for publishers there are a lot of walkers out on the hills each weekend and any good book should succeed.

The Munros eventually appeared first in October and within days it was selling like hot cakes much to the surprise of not a few people. (It sold so well in fact that before Christmas a reprint had to be organised.) This ambitious project has been shared by a team comprising: Donald Bennet, Bill Brooker, Hamish Brown, Derek Fabian, Peter Hodgkiss, Malcolm Slesser, Bill Wallace and Adam Watson.

Although rather large as a guide-book it can just about fit into a rucksack (not literally) and with 200 post-card size colour pictures it is possible to get a good idea of the majority of the Munros. At first sight the photos are a good collection and inspire the reader but the quality of some has been vastly improved on the second print-run. The maps by James Renny are very clear although hand-labelling as opposed to type-setting tends to look slightly less professional. For an S.M.C. guide it came as a surprise to have only metric distances which still messes up the concept of that magic 3,000-foot Munro. I was particularly pleased to note that the routes were not dotted in detail on each map, thus allowing the walker to plan and think for himself. On the whole this is an excellent book which will be used for years to come and it should greatly help to spread the walkers away from the most popular peaks.

When 'The High Mountains' appeared early in 1986 my worries were immediately dispelled; there is no reason to compare this book with The Munros as they are two very different propositions. Diadem has produced a large and sumptuously illustrated volume which ought to remain safe on the bookshelf of the ardent walker and mountaineer. It would be criminal to risk damaging this beautiful book amongst a pile of grotty climbing and camping gear in the back of your car or van.

The layout is STUNNING, Wilson at his best, and I defy anyone to criticise the book constructively. As a hefty 320 page volume this book is an ideal format to show hillwalking at its best. The three-colour (black, white and blue) area maps by Ivan Cumberpatch and Phil Gibson provide the perfect complement to the four-colour text maps by Don Sargent and the inclusion of the prominent route lines in red leaves no doubt for those who may be unsure of any particular route.

Open the book at almost any page and you will find it an eminently satisfying experience just to let your eyes wander — side to side — up and down — it gives one a nice warm feeling inside. So many of the 350 immaculate photographs will deserve a long purusal at your leisure over the long winter months. Several recent books have had photographs spoiled by a key feature of the photo being split by the spine of the book. Out of a total of forty photos which go across two pages not one was appreciably spoilt in this way. The one that baffled me however was the shot of Stob Coire a' Chairn at the bottom of page 93 which looked as if it might have been part of (but wasn't) the shot to its left. A trifling niggle but don't tell Ken or he'll offer to review my book when it comes out. On the whole I was

pleased to see the absence of climbers in many of the shots as they all too often looked posed or out of place. An exception to this was the very atmospheric photo (by Peter Hodgkiss) of two sombre figures on the Ben Alder plateau wondering what to do next as the weather conditions began to deteriorate.

My other two favourite photographs are: a majestic photo-montage looking west over the southern end of the Cluanie Horseshoe (by George Burgess) with creeping valley mist far below; and Irvine Butterfield's dreamy sunset of Beinn Lair A'Mhaighdean from Lochan Fada. Many other photographs have a compelling quality which is mainly enhanced by varying amounts of snow — a good indication that 'the wee ones' are not at large.

For my own personal preference I would have liked this book to include only the Munros, which is what ninety percent of it is all about. The comparatively few pages on the Lake District, Wales and Ireland might have been better served by other books which could have done them full justice.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is by far the best book to have come from Diadem and even if you have already bought *The Munros* then you will just have to resign yourself to the fact that you will need this one as well. It's a show-stopper and will be thought of as the Rolls-Royce of walking guide books . until Wilson strikes again.

Speak to the Hills edited by **Hamish Brown & Martin Berry**

A.U.P. £14.50

Few men have ventured on to a hill without pondering on the great mysteries of the universe and within the field of mountaineering there is a great wealth of prose that has been written by people who felt compelled to put pen to paper. There are however two great gaps in mountaineering literature; few books of a humorous nature have been written and curiously some of the best mountain poems have been written by non-mountaineers. Certainly anthologies of mountain poetry have been conspicuous by their absence, although this does not necessarily indicate that poetry has not been written, on the contrary, there is plenty to be found in climbing club journals. Many send poems to the magazines and get them rejected on the grounds that poetry is not fashionable. Another problem is that poetry is so subjective — one man's chalk is another man's pollution.

In the history of mountaineering only a select few have written poetry that has received wide acclaim. Undoubtedly Geoffrey Winthrop Young stands alone in this field, and there are few names to set alongside him. Of the early mountaineers Douglas Freshfield and Lawrence Pilkington come to mind, but from later years, after Menlove Edwards and Wilfrid Noyce, there are no literary giants.

Speak to the Hills is a colossal work being a compendium of over 600 poems by 312 writers encompassed within a book of 530 pages. To compile such a collection was no mean feat and took the editors five years to research. The project was given a grant by the Scottish Arts Council and to fund the venture a limited and numbered edition was offered to the public. It is saddening that only 77 subscribers came forward to back the venture, as there must be many people in the Climbers' Club alone who will find this book to be a treasure.

The sections of the book are organised to alternate geographic areas with particular themes:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The Restless Compulsion | 8. Hills to the North |
| 2. On Southern Slopes | 9. Waymarks of the Elemental |
| 3. The Seasons Through | 10. The Fells of Lakeland |
| 4. Wales and the West | 11. The Heart has its Feelings |
| 5. The Human Animal on the Hill | 12. Scottish Bens and Glens |
| 6. The Green Rim of Ireland | 13. In Lighter Mood |
| 7. Habitation and Habitat | 14. Retrospective |

For those who imagine that this is merely highbrow verbal limbo dancing don't be put off by the word poetry. If it was good enough for Whillans, then it's good enough for you! I'm not going to debate the merits of particular pieces, but I was glad to see the inclusion of Ewan MacColl's Manchester Rambler. As a Monday wage slave I treasure the fact that I am a free man on Sunday:

'So I'll walk where I will over mountain and hill
And I'll lie where the bracken is deep,
I belong to the mountains, the clear running fountains
Where the grey rocks rise rugged and steep.

I've seen the white hare in the gulleys,
And the curlew fly high overhead,
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead!'

Ewan's memories of working-class Salford, depression in the Thirties and escape to the hills will live on in his poetry and his songs. Behind every piece of poetry in this memorable book there is a story which prompted the writer to express his innermost feelings and bare his soul. Why not take a look into that world?

The Great Climbing Adventure by John Barry

Oxford Illustrated Press £8.95

National Service finished just before I attained the tender age of 18 and, despite having watched a blitzkrieg of war films as a child and living within four miles of Catterick Camp, it was a great relief not to get involved in white-washing coal, endless fatigues, and square-bashing. Nevertheless I still have a deep and lingering suspicion of mountaineers, in any shape or form, from the Services. The merest hint of a Sandhurst accent, a truck load of squaddies disgorging onto the hills, or a Forces Mountain Rescue Team about to embark on an exercise is guaranteed to make me feel uneasy. With a world-cauldron boiling hatefully and de-humanising all who come in contact I have a right to be suspicious. There is no turning the clock back for Siegfried Herford . . . Can a man who sells his soul to the war-machine ever write about the truth and beauty of the eternal hills? And there you have it, my prejudice in a nutshell, which is why I left this book to sink to the bottom of the pile.

Knowing the high quality of John Barry's after-dinner speeches I finally took the book at a rush and met the barbarian head-on amidst the flesh pots of the Far-East. By the time he reached the New Zealand Alps I had warmed to the man, especially his disarming honesty about their alpine incompetence — floundering through glacier snow instead of waiting for the freeze at night, and losing crampons at the most awkward moments. They almost deserved their success for stepping in where others would fear to tread.

The *Menthosa* expedition chapter was worth the read if only for the superb narrative of an encounter with a drunken Sikh — and then of course in the European Alps the memorable but totally illogical affray at Aosta after a couple of the lads ran amok during a drunken spree in the town. Oh, yes, and of course they did the north faces of the Matterhorn and Eiger.

It was on British rock that I began to get hooked, at the adventures of Scrim, a Glaswegian of some character . . . trying to smoke John Barry out of Logan Rock Chimney . . . and getting benighted on the Red Wall at Gogarth where they had one second in every eleven to grope their way up to the top section — 'Flashed up that, eh'.

The piece de resistance of the book, perhaps its very *raison d'être*, is the account of pulling over the top of Carnage at Malham to discover:

'There before me, as I hung, chin hooked over the horizontal for some extra support, two utterly naked bodies, in flagrante delicto, heaved and groaned, snarled and moaned in spectacular toe-curling abandon; those two sets of curled toes not more than a foot from my face and the epicentre of the passion not further than four urgently bent and straining legs away; gynaecologically glorious. Such was their transport that they were unaware of my intrusion . . . I didn't want to fall. It was a longish way to my last runner . . .'

In Scrim's words 'You mean they was rutting like crazed weasels. No reviewer could ever do justice to Barry's inimitable style and you will have to read the story in full for yourself. This story alone will sell thousands of copies of the book. It beats to a frazzle a story of the day on Cloggy when an amply endowed young woman stripped off for a swim in the llyn and about eighty climbers nearly fell off the crag simultaneously while trying to get a better look.

After Carnage, Barry's adventures on British snow and ice cooled my ardour slightly but were no less exciting than the previous chapter — indeed I loved the account of the third ascent of Smith's Gully. Oh that the book had finished with another two chapters of this vintage Barry. Sadly, for me, I had to plod up Gauri Sankar and watch my sleeping bag slither off into Tibet, before finally storming Alaska's Mount Deborah amidst a plethora of Grizzly Bear hunters who identified climbers with British accents as fairies.

This book will certainly be a popular read for the lads who revel in plain talking and demand the no bullshit down to earth approach. For my money I will long remember the episode when Barry's father, who had taken part in the D Day landings, returned with his son 41 years later to complete his ascent of the chalk cliffs — using modern ice gear.

Eric Shipton — The Six Mountain-Travel Books

Diadem. £16.95.

Although Shipton is not a cult figure in the Tilman mould he nevertheless is one of the greatest explorers and mountaineers of the twentieth century, and it is appropriate that Diadem should follow up the volume on Tilman with that of his contemporary. The introduction by Jim Perrin, who is working on the biography of Shipton, is a particularly fine piece of writing which is worth seeking out in its own right. To quote:

'Two major characteristics distinguish Nanda Devi and were to become hallmarks of Shipton's writing. The first of these is an intense curiosity — which remains with him, his conclusions growing more authoritative with increase of experience — about natural landforms, whether they be mountains, valleys, rivers, volcanoes or glaciers. This curiosity acts as a stimulus, a fund of energy, in his explorations, continually used as a basis, a point of reference: "It was enthralling to disentangle the geography of the region . . . for me, the basic reason for mountaineering".

Alongside this drive to understand the physical make-up of a landscape there operates a more reflective principle, very close to traditional nature-mysticism which Shipton almost invariably carries off with great poise and delicacy . . .'

The final quote in Perrin's introduction is particularly apt for Shipton:

'I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and ever when I move.'

Eric Shipton's vast experience began with the first ascent of Mount Kenya in 1929 and a successful ascent of Kamet (25,447 feet) then the world's highest climbed peak, in 1931. This led to

a series of major expeditions: Everest 1933, Rishi Gorge 1934, Everest 1935, Everest and Nanda Devi 1936, Shaksam 1937, Everest 1938 and Karakorum 1939. It is not surprising that Shipton's books which are included in this compendium are all classics, eagerly sought after in the second-hand book world. His first book, *Nanda Devi* (in 1936) tells a unique story of exploration on a shoestring, but it is his second book, *Blank on the Map* (1938), which is the rarer volume. These paved the way for an autobiography, *Upon That Mountain* in 1943. His work as a diplomat gave him time to explore for Mountains of Tartary (1950) and then *The Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition 1951* (1952) paved the way for the successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953. The final work, *Land of Tempest* (1963) is an exciting account of the crossing of the Patagonian ice-cap and a visit to *Tierra del Fuego*.

The odds are that you will not have got all six original Shipton books in your library and even if you have then you will still need this book to preserve your originals in order to keep their value. If you haven't got any of them then this is tremendous value for money.

**Escalades et randonees au Hoggar et dans les Tassilis by
Bernard Pierre et Claude Aulard**

Arthaud. 98FF.

Eh bien, mes amis. Ici un real cracker pour vous. Il fait blooming mal dans Engleterre avec tout cet pluie et neige mais il y a un pays avec beaucoup de soleil. Malheureusement il y a un snag. Parlez-vous Francais? Non! Tough. Moi non aussi. N'avez pas peur. Au Sahara il y a des bril rochers pour le bouldering grande, et des aiguilles comme le film 'Encounters du troisieme sorte'. Oh, les photos! Quelle superb topos! Mangez ton coeur out Cloggy. Oui, c'est pour vous. Comme Bernard a dit:

'Le Hogar et les Tassilis vous donneront joie et bonheur, car ils feront de vous le pionnier d'un monde a part, au coeur du plus grand et du plus beau desert de la Terre!'

Eh bien, c'est dans un nut-shell. Cherchez un camel et au revoir. N'oubliez pas moi envoyer un carte postale pour le Journal.

Mountain Navigation Techniques by Kevin Walker

Constable. £5.95.

A very close friend with a fair turn of phrase often used to resort to "Get lost!" when he was really annoyed, and it always struck me as a not very apt phrase. The only time that I have tried to do just that was on Kinder. My favourite game used to be to go up in dense mist or near white-out, walk for about twenty minutes across the plateau trying hard not to look at the surroundings, and then having twirled round a few times to try to get back to Glossop. A compass was of course taboo.

On Muztagh Ata with acute navigation problems in dense cloud John Cleare was amazed to find that his American team did not possess compasses. "Say man, what cute little gadgets" was roughly their reaction.

Forget all the bravado and admit it, how many times have YOU got lost while out on the hills? The trouble is that most of us in reasonable weather leave our compass (you do have one?) in the rucksack and then on rare occasions have to go back to basics to fight our way out of trouble.

Whenever my interest in navigation was rekindled I could never find the tatty bit of paper that used to be in the box with the compass. Now that will not happen again. This is an excellent little book that puts across the basics of navigation in a very palatable way. It is the size of a slim guide-book and will easily fit into a pocket so that if you are going to be stuck in a doctor's waiting room you will not have to resort to the back numbers of *Cheshire Life*.

If you are interested in back-bearings, sweep searches, leap-frogging, aiming off, orienteering or merely need to relocate yourself then buy the book. And for those of you who know Wales you will have fun identifying some of the photographs.

I was particularly pleased to read:

'The map comes first — the compass comes second.'

And for those of you who think that you know it all remember:

'A good mountain navigator is never lost; he may be "temporarily mislocated", but he is never lost!'

That reminds me of the time I was lost (sorry, mis-located) within two miles of my back door, and was I surprised when I popped out of the mist onto a familiar bit of ground. The only thing that the book doesn't deal with is SMOG. We once left the West End pub in Sheffield in a pea souper where it was nearly impossible to see a hand in front of the face. When we bumped into a pole we re-located ourselves by climbing it — to discover that it was a traffic light pole.

If you send your most hair raising stories of getting lost to the Editor I'll publish them next year and give the winner a copy of the book. If you haven't a story then you haven't lived.

Climbing in the British Isles by W.P. Kaskett Smith

Ernest Press. £12.

For those who do not know Haskett Smith's guidebooks of 1894 and 1895 this single volume facsimile of Britain's first guidebooks is a treat not to be missed. Within the 388 pages of this fascinating book there is a mine of background information about the birth of rock-climbing in Britain, which was first recorded in publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Penny Magazine*, the *Globe*, the *Times*, *Black and White*, *Chambers Journal*, *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Boy's Own Paper*. Dry humour is plentiful:

'Mr James Payn having occasion to allude to "dry weather" in the Lakes, adds demurely, "which is said to have occurred about the year 1894".'

while on the ascent:

'Inordinate perspiration and a desperate desire for liquids, if the ascent be persisted in, the speech becomes affected to the extent of a total suspension of conversation. The temper then breaks down; an unseemly craving to leave our companion behind, and a fiendish resolution not to wait for him if his bootlace comes undone, distinguish the next stage of the climbing fever.'

In some respects the guide is very modern and it comes as a shock to find crags included from Cornwall, Devon and Dartmoor, as well as even more esoteric places such as Brimham Rocks, and the Cheddar Gorge. However:

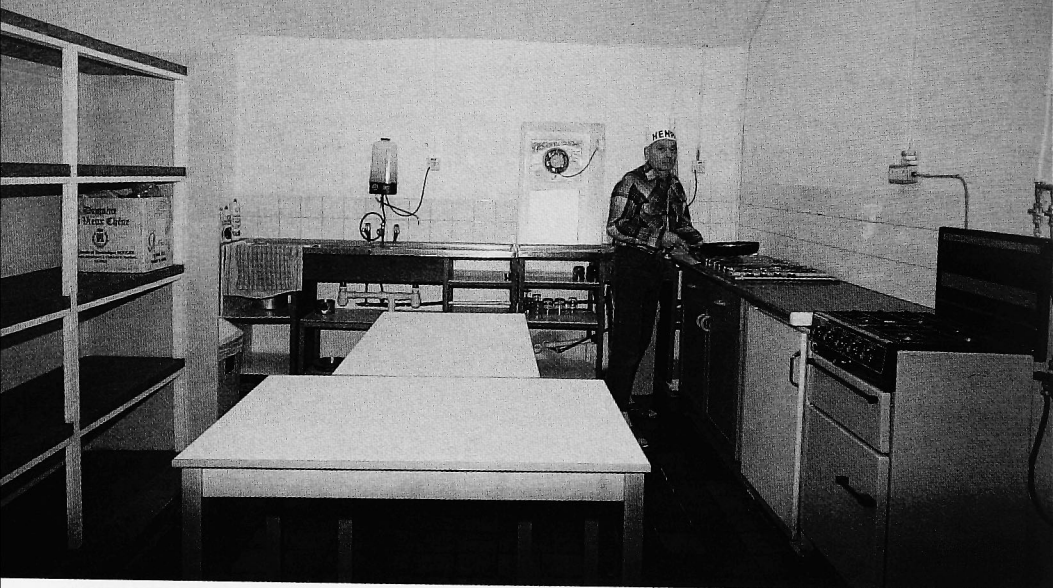
'Lancashire climbing has no real interest except in that part of it which belongs to the Lake country.'

'St. Bees: Several accidents have occurred on the cliffs here. They are of sandstone and incline to be rotten. The Rev. James Jackson — the Patriarch — lived at Sandwith close by, and was fond of climbing about on these cliffs.'

Anglesey cliffs are stated to be perhaps the earliest school of their art in Wales, chalk is said to give much excellent practice, and as for Cautley Crag:

'In this corner of the county the Yorkshire climber experiences the intense relief of seeing rocks which are neither chalk, limestone nor millstone grit.'

As Derbyshire is 'not really a climber's country' roam round Ireland, ascend Napes Needle, seek out hidden haunts on Cader Idris and go looking for skeletons on Clogwyn du'r Arddu . . . You won't be disappointed.



Above: Henry Adler cooking something up in the new kitchen at Ynys Ettws.

Below: Edgar Siddall and Frank Solari planting a rhododendron to mark the Helyg Diamond Jubilee. Herber Carr's daughter Patricia and her husband John Wardroper are to the left of A.B. Hargreaves.

Photo: R. Loewy.



EXPEDITION NOTES

British Lhotse Shar Expedition 1984

Paul Moores with fellow expedition members, Adrian Burgess, his twin brother Alan and Mike O'Donnel, a multi-national team, recently attempted to climb Lhotse Shar (8,383 metres) the world's sixth highest point without oxygen. They narrowly failed to reach the summit after trying to climb the difficult South Face for over 30 days.

The aim of the Expedition was to climb Lhotse Shar with a small team of four climbers in Alpine style without the additional aids of oxygen or high altitude Sherpas. Previously this mountain had been climbed only three times but always by large teams of climbers, using oxygen and high altitude Sherpas, and many many thousands of metres of fixed ropes, a method which tends to destroy the uncertainty and challenge which is always present in Alpine style ascents.

We flew to Kathmandu in Nepal on the 5th August and spent the first week buying local food and organising the 35 porters who would help us to carry our loads up to Base Camp at 5,000 metres. After a 14 day walk-in beginning in the jungle and slowly working our way up day by day in the torrential monsoon rains, we eventually arrived at Base Camp near the end of August. The porters were dismissed and from this point on it was between the four of us and the mountain. The next two weeks were spent in the essential process of acclimatisation. During this period we surveyed the South Face and carried supplies up to our Advanced Base Camp. This helped us to acclimatise and at the same time establish our next camp.

On the 16th September the four of us moved up to Advanced Base Camp at 5,300 metres where we planned to stay so as we could begin climbing on the massive South Face. We set out at 3 a.m. each morning in the dark, trudging our way by torch-light through knee deep snow, until the ground became so steep that we needed to use ropes. The next section of the Face was so steep and potentially dangerous that it took us 10 days of constant trudging up and down before we could establish Camp II. The nature of the climbing was such that we were unable to continue without some sort of fixed rope, this was necessary to ensure our safe descent when we would return from the Summit. We had now split into two teams of two, working day on day off, slowly climbing our way up this huge face, and it was at this time that one of the climbers, who had already previously suffered with frostbite, had real problems in re-warming his feet. He also was suffering with stomach problems and was unable to keep food down. This caused us a real problem as he had to return to Base Camp, cutting the team by 25%. The climbing above was of an extreme nature, much more difficult than we had expected; we had no more rope to fix on the mountain and our team had already got weaker. It was at this point that we decided to retreat and leave the mountain for another day.

Although the four climbers did not reach the Summit of the mountain the expedition could not be classed as a complete failure. An objective of such magnitude attempted in such a lightweight style requires not only skill and endurance, but a certain amount of luck with weather and conditions. When a team of friends pit themselves against heavy odds the measure of success is in the knowledge that all gave of their best and could have tried no harder. The summit was not reached but the peak of effort was.

Paul Moores



AREA NOTES

Peak District Notes

One might well expect a blank page after 1985, without a doubt the biggest washout for years. Oh, all those wasted hours in the gym and on the walls, only to get rained off every other route. T-shirts and tights were exchanged for wellies and cagoules and the new owners of Stoney Cafe were laughing all the way to the bank. Even so new routes appeared, albeit fewer than in previous years.

GRITSTONE: With the limestone dales being submerged until late April most climbers were to be found on the gritstone edges and to an extent this caused a resurgence of interest in this classic medium which persisted throughout the year. Even Agden Rocher received a couple of routes by a 'new' team comprising Doug Kerr and Paul and Neil Harrison, who have been particularly productive this year. *Wheat Thin* is between Castor and Pollux and *Dreams by the Sea* right of Bald Patch. At E3 5c and E2 5c respectively these routes may well awaken interest in this unpopular crag.

Similarly unpopular is Wharnccliffe where the collection of jagged blocks below the crag gives routes above 2a an E grade. Here Roger Doherty, another 'new' activist, added two new routes in the E4 grade; *Down to Earth*, 5c, takes the arête left of On the Air and *Summer Lightning*, 6a, the wall and arête right of Bolster. Other desperate routes added to the crag's repertoire later in the year were *Dead Heecet* E5 6b (slab just left of Renroc) and *The Cardinal's Treasure* E4 6a (crack left of Banana Wall) for which we are to thank Nick White and John Allen — now there's a familiar name. Nick White was also responsible for bringing Dovestone Tor into the 80s by climbing the arête left of Woodhouse's Wandering Way, *Dead on Arrival* E5 6b.

Always a pleasant place to climb, Rivelin Edge now boasts nineteen more routes, eleven of which were climbed by John Allen. Ranging from extended boulder problems such as *Cool Running* E2 6a, *Crafty Cockney* E3 6b, and *Europe after Rain* E4 6b (very extending!) to serious propositions such as *Party Animal* E4 5c, *The Terminator* E5 6c and *New Mediterranean* E5 6c; all his routes are extremely worthwhile. Also of quality is Paul Harrison's *Palm Charmer* E3 5c up the arête left of Auto da Fe. Details of all these routes and others appeared in High 33 and 34. Across the valley, Wyming Brook still remains unattractive to most climbers and it's doubtful whether Andy Barker's *More Pricks than Kicks*, up the wall between Samuel Beckett and Backwater Barracuda at E5 6a, will change this. Also active in the Peak, as ever, is the 'Cliff Richard of climbing' the eternally youthful Alan Rouse who still manages to find new lines on the grit. On Bamford he climbed the wall left of Wrinkled Wall to give *Access Account* E1 5c, and the arête below and left of Special K went to him at E4 6a to give *Down to Earth*. Alan also added a few routes to Stanage of which the most popular is likely to be *African Herbs* E2 5c on the wall left of Dark Continent.

The main activist on this edge however has been John Allen who is, to quote Paul Williams, 'owner of the most famous hairline in the Peak'. His most impressive addition was the slab left of The Strangler at E6 6c. *Skidoo*, needless to say is a serious and very technical proposition which John very nearly didn't manage to complete on the first ascent. More amenable are his *Walking the Whippet*, E3 5c, which follows the right arête of the boulder below Pegasus and *Feminist's Breakfast*, E4 6a, taking the direct start to Surprise and the wall to its left to finish. Still too hard? Well he also added another direct to Count's Buttress at only E2 but in the 6a slot. Steve Bancroft (remember him?) was also around this year and took his old partner Allen up *The Beautician* an E3 5c on the upper slab left of Impossible Slab. The same team also climbed the obvious direct start to Retroversion E3 6a but this has probably been done before.

Another familiar face on the crag this year was Ed Drummond who was on a 'poem tour' of the country — he left a new route of sorts. *Don* E3 5c follows the arête of Archangel on its right-hand side and simultaneous ascents of both these routes should prove entertaining. Before we leave Stanage,

Paul Williams has requested that I mention two routes of his done in late 1984 and therefore too late to get into last year's journal. So, just to keep an old man happy, here they are. *The Unthinkable* E2 5b follows the overhanging wall left of The Groper and *Amoeba on the edge of Time* VS 5a up the arête right of Bon Ami is described as a micro(be) route. Also just too late for the last journal John Dawes bouldered seriously up the bulges left of Snug as a Thug . . . to leave *Sad Amongst Friends* with, depending on when you ask him, a choice of grades from E7 6c to E6 6b!

Burbage Edge still retains its reputation as a good bouldering ground and once again the wire brushes have revealed some more worthwhile problems and routes. Allen again has been responsible for most of the play and his most impressive addition was *Ai no Corrida* — the hanging arête right of The Fin at E5 6b, and *Ring My Bell* E4 6b the wall left of Ringo on which Allen was partnered by Bancroft who with roles reversed had led the left arête of Phillipa Buttress to give *The Gargoyle* E3 5c. Smaller but more beautiful is Allen's *Small is Beautiful* which somehow follows the face right of Slanting Crack at around E3 6c. Along this principle his hardest route has to be *West Side Story* which is THE line on Burbage West (which is opposite Burbage North). Arguably the most technical route in the Peak but with frustratingly good looking holds it may be 7a to get to the half-height break but the upper 6b move is extremely worrying at an unpleasant height.

On the Southern Edge less of note has been added with the best route being a direct start to Millwheel Wall — *Hell for Leather* E4 6c. Continuing down to the Surprise View (gosh) on your right lies the impressive Millstone Edge. Activity has been slight in the upper grades with the most impressive line being the arête left of Plexity. *Plexity* which weighs in at E6 6b was first climbed by Dawes but unfortunately utilises some chipped holds. Another obvious plum was the wall right of Zanadu which finally went, after several 'looks' by various interested parties, to Mark Leach at E6 6c. With the name of *Adios Amigos* there are no prizes for guessing the protection used. Other less important additions are *My Heart is Higher* E6 6b by Roger Doherty up the wall left of Erb and *The Hunter House Road-Toad* E4 6b by Mark Pretty which follows the obvious thin crack from Detour.

Back on to natural grit Froggatt received just one new route by the infamous Paul Pepperday who no-one believes exists! His *Mastermind* on the wall left of Krypton Factor is E4 6a. More effort has been put in at Curbar. Allen has climbed the right edge of the Kayak Slab at E5 6b and had an *Appointment with Fear* E5 6a when he took a diagonal line up the slab right of Elder Crack up which the route finished. The other John (Dawes) was also having a go and made typically impressive ascents up Overtaker's Buttress (*White Lines* E6 6c) and led the direct start to One Step Beyond without the pre-placed runner. Further south at Gardoms the obvious but desperate direct start to Vaya Con Dios was climbed by Allen. *Spanish Fly* E6 6c and a slightly easier route *Sooty and Sweep* E5 6b/c was added by Andy Barker up Roadside Buttress. At the opposite end of the crag on the delightful Moorside Rocks Allen also added a superbly protected micro-route *The Jackalope* E2 6b/c which is well worth sorting out.

Cratcliffe Edge never ceases to amaze always coming up with the odd route. Pride of the crop must be *Trick or Treat* which is 'a fine new girdle at about mid-height finishing up the arête right of Savage Messiah'. Climbed by Allen and Paul Williams the route boasts three pitches at 6a, 5c and 5c with an overall grade of E4. Best route name of '85 has to be Paul Mitchell's *Snuffly Pig Eats Vincent Voles Porridge*. This E4 6b lurks somewhere in Robin Hood's Quarry . . . Interested? — then see High 38.

Staffordshire has had a bad year overall. Poor weather has left routes which would be queued for in the east, largely unclimbed due to iridescent layers of lichen. Nevertheless some useful routes have been climbed and Simon Nadin has been responsible for the majority of the best. On the Roaches he climbed the roof left and right of Sloth, both routes requiring E6 6a/b ability and presumably a masochistic desire for monster swings. On the Skyline Crag the slab right of Entropy's Jaw fell to him (and probably from it) at E6 6c — *Script for a Tear*. Not that he had the crag all to himself as Nick

Dixon (a name to remember) bouldered up the wall left of Slippery Jim at an E5 6b level. The majestic Hen Cloud also received visits from Nadin. The obvious thin line right of Batchelor's Left Hand was climbed by him to leave *Parallel Lines* (yes you guessed it — E5 6b) whilst his *Touch* E3 6a was felt by the small wall right of Deceiver. If you're wondering what happened to Gary Gibson, don't worry he hasn't disappeared, he's mainly been climbing on limestone but took a day off to hit the grit. On Hen Cloud he climbed the arête below Caricature and the wall to its right at E5 6a,6a leaving *Chiaroscuro*. Nearby Ramshaw has also received the Nadin touch. *Force 9* on the slab behind Magic Roundabout goes at E3 6c and is a desperate reachy pebble problem.

Finally on the mountain grit a great deal of activity has taken place in the Bleaklow area, probably as a result of interest in the forthcoming Moorland Gritstone guide. The team responsible includes Gabe Regan (remember him?), Al Parker (and him?), Keith Ashton, H. Venables and Barry Duckworth. At Tintwistle Knarr Parker led the wall and arête right of Gobbin Groove to give *Floating on Fire* E2 5c. At Rollick Stones some seven new routes have been added by this team with the hardest being the vague crack right of Malc's, *Old Country* E4 6b and led by Regan.

Venables and Ashton breathed new life into Yellowslacks by climbing the crack right of Blast Off to give the crag's hardest route at E2 6a. Torside Clough has yielded eleven new routes to the Regan team ranging from E1 5b to good old V.Diff.; and 3km right of Shining Cliff they have developed a new crag, Deer Knoll. So far 19 new routes have been found in the V.Diff. to E2 range with most in the VS region. Details of all these routes appear in High 35.

In the Kinder area development has been less, involving different faces both old and new. At the repulsive New Mills Tors Mike Warwick and John Gosling (remember him??!) added *Hallelujah Chorus*, an E5 6a up the wall between Heavy Duty and Bionics and with Gosling in the lead *The Redemption of a Grit-Pegging Anti-Christ* left of Bionics. Sorry John, but after pegging all those lines on grit you were sentenced to life at New Mills and naming routes like this still won't get you parole. Up on the moors a partnership of Rouse and Dawes has proved successful. *Debra* E3 6a follows the overhanging arête opposite Mark, Luke and John (this by Rouse) whilst *Zebra* the arête opposite Debra was Dawes' reply at E5 6b. Also worthwhile is *Act of Faith* another Rouse route up the arête left of Pan Crack Route.

LIMESTONE:— Still here? If you thought the grit section was a slog get a six-pack out, put your feet up and settle down for the limestone report. As already mentioned poor weather left many of the crags looking sorry for themselves until early May and consequently development was slow. However as soon as Gary Gibson got going the routes came thick and fast particularly as he was aiming to do his 1,000th new route in 1985. Concentrating his efforts mainly in Chee Dale here alone he produced more than twenty-five routes mostly in the E5 grade! Disappointingly for his critics few of them were minor eliminates and none plastered in bolts. On the contrary, Gibson forced lines up some of the most impressive pieces of rock using few bolts to leave difficult and serious leads. After stating that, it's possibly unfair to start with his development of the Max Wall region, where the additions are close together and relatively shorter than most of his other new routes. Nevertheless they shouldn't be underrated and are certainly worthwhile. Moving left to right (and starting below the obvious bolt) the routes are *Max Headroom* E5 6a, quite poky; *Max Pact* E2 5b, an eliminate between Black Max and The Max Works; *Max to the Wall* E5 6b, just right of Incandescent Courage; *Max a Million* E5 6b, just right again; *Max Museum* E5 6b, just right of Afterlife; and finally *A Bigger Max*, yes E5 6b and just right again. Add to these Keith Sharples' *Max 'is Wall* (right of Max Wall past a bolt hole) and Richard Davies' *Lunatic Fringe* E3 6a, just right again, and I think you'll appreciate it's all getting pretty crowded. Sharples' route was the subject of some controversy; placing a bolt produced a popular E3 6a but when Davies removed it after a debated 'on-sight' repeat an unpopular E5 was left. The continuation of the buttress has also received some more, though smaller, routes of which the best is

Tyranosaurus Max up the overhanging bulge above the stepping stones at an exciting E3 5c, again one of Gibson's routes.

Up river from here little of note has been added with the exception of Sharples' direct finish to The Dukes of Hazard turning a non-route into one well-worth doing, well attempting anyway with an E5 6c tag.

Meanwhile, back across the river Moving Buttress is still standing and taking advantage of this Mark Liptrot climbed two routes, *Price of Fame* E4 6a up through Vibration and *Spirit of the Age* E5 6a left of Autonomon. Two Tier still continues to provide lines but seemingly only to one man, Gibson. His *Reasons to be Cheeful* probably reflects this and takes the groove left of Wot a Waste at E5 6b whilst just left the direct start to Subterfuge provides *Quality Control* at a possibly undergraded E4 6a. His best on the Lower Tier has to be *Systems Malfunction* which sports some superb moves through the roofs left of Offal, yet again E5 6b. Gibson has also added some good new routes to the impressive wall left of Melting Point all in the E5 6a bracket. From right to left they are *Case Adjourned*, *Open Gate*, *The Incredible Pierre* and *Osher, Osher, Osher* — all offer steep run-out climbing. Below the latter route is the bulging Waterline Buttress which had its number of routes doubled this year. *Cabbage Disease* is Gibson's taking the arête left of Immunity Syndrome whilst *Down Some Lazy River* takes the wall left of Tomorrow's Dream, a Sharples effort. Both routes (need I say?) are E5 6b.

Down and across the river Gibson has made an impressive crossing of the roof left of Santiano at its widest point (don't they always!). A *Cure for Arapiles* is obviously E5 with a lot of climbing in upside-down land. Further downstream Gibson has continued to develop some of the most outstanding remaining rock in the dale — The Cornice — this time concentrating on the large wall at the right-hand end. The two finest lines are taken by *Cosmopolitan* above the divergence in the path and, *The Third Order* attacking the wall left of The Cruel Sea. Both require some psyching up at E6 6b. Further right where the wall diminishes Gibson and the Kerr-Harrison team have added some minor routes including the nicely named E4 6b *Too Juggless for Douglas*. On with the wellies and a quick wade across from here finds us at Chee Tor. Those bored with doing White Gold can now do a direct at 6b (Gibson) whilst those bored with ogling at Tequila can now ogle at the wall just to the left taken by *Boo!* This impressive route was subject to many attempts and huge flyers by Ben Masterson to leave an E6/7 6b. Also taking obvious gaps but slightly easier are Gibson's *Two Generations* up the wall left of Autobahn and *Laughing* leading up the wall right of Ceramic. Both are E5 6b. Finally on the tor Kerr showed A *Widespread Lack of Imagination* in the groove above Nostradamus at a pleasantly easier E3 6a.

Scooting on down the dale on the left one passes Tideswell Dale. Never popular and slow to develop the dale has at last seen a bit of activity, mainly in the middle (at least for the Peak) grades. Davies has made solitary visits to leave a bunch of routes in the HVS to E6 bracket whilst Chris Jackson and Bob Conway have filled the other gaps.

Raven Tor continues to be used as an outdoor gym. Whilst young men in tights with tunnel vision repeatedly ascend the hard routes of yesteryear the rock gets polished, the litter grows and the vegetation around the base dies. Effectively only one new route has been added this year. *Another Toadside Attraction* climbed by Steve Lewis at E5 6b takes a direct line past a monster bolt to the crux of Sardine after which it bears up right to finish. Although taking no new ground *Ello Ethique* is an extremely pumping combination of existing routes climbed by visiting Frenchman Jean-Baptist Tribut. Starting up Weed Killer the route then reverses the first pitch of Rooster Booster to finish up Sardine.

Continuing along the looseness scale brings us to Water-cum-Jolly, both banks of which have witnessed the renewed activity of connoisseurs. Jackdaw Point has been left staggering from the sudden attack of the Jackson, Conway, Wintrip team and the Davies team (membership of one). From

right to left taking the series of flakes left of Erithacus, the former team added *Armed with an Empty Gun* E4 6a, *Ground Control* E1 5b and *Skyline Pigeon* E3 6a, whilst right of Life After Death Wintrip produced *Omah Gourd* E1 5b. An alternative finish to the top pitch of Fledgeling was made available by Davies; *Violation of Trust* follows the upper wall on its left. On the right of this Davies has also developed a small buttress to leave some small but open routes varying from HVS 5a (*Nightmare* — the centre of the wall) to E5 6b (*Demon Striation* -the wall just right). Further along this bank the aid route right of Lammergeyer Twins has, after several attempts by various people, at last been free-climbed by Paul Mitchell. Typically Mitchell gave it an interesting name — *The Amnicolist Spies on the Black Submarine* and declined to give an E grade at 6a. His partner Andy Barker repeated the route with an alternative right-hand finish and thankfully a shorter name — *Periscope Voyeur* (same grade). Shortly before reaching Rubicon Wall, the buttress on the left, Ivy Buttress, has got some more routes mainly from Nigel Slater. All are worthwhile, but only the obvious slanting corner is gentle at HVS 5b, *End of an Era* climbed by Hugh Short. Left of this are Slater's *Money for Nothing* E3 6a (through bulges), *Clean Cut* E4 6a (groove behind tree) and the desperate *A Trail of Destruction* E4 6b (bottomless groove left again). The outdoor climbing wall, Rubicon Wall, unbelievably still provides new routes although blinkers must be worn. Quentin Fisher has squeezed in *Kingfisher* (modest man!) between Jezebel and Jaws at E5 6b and Tim Freeman has bouldered up the wall left of A bigger Splash at 6c to leave *A Bigger Tail*. On the opposite bank much less has been achieved. After a mammoth cleaning session Keith Sharples produced *La Route* which offers exciting technical climbing up the groove right of Sox. At E4 6b and without a single loose hold this should prove popular. On the same buttress, but farther left, Sharples literally climbed *The Importance of Being Earnest* just right of Hemmingway's Horror at the same grade. The only other route of note added to this side last year was Slater's *Castle Pudding* E5 6a up the wall right of Moat Wall.

Away from the river and perched on high, Ravensdale rarely yields new routes. Its shattered nature has left lines of ascent mostly in the lower and middle grades and these were consequently climbed years ago. The one 'blanker' section of the crag contains the hardest route, Wilt, and in 1985 two more routes were added to this wall. John Dawes, somehow finding himself on limestone, climbed *Pagan Man*, an E4 6a up the scoop left of Wilt and Fisher added a direct start to the latter at E5 6b, *Wily Alternative*. Cressbrook has received some more 'problems' to the bouldering wall' but the naive use of resin and blow torches (to dry the holds) should soon see these and others destroyed.

At the northern end of the Peak the Winnats Pass has long attracted tourists but seldom climbers. Two new routes last year may well change this but an E5 6b ability will be required before it is worth a visit. A1 Rouse's *Rite of Way* frees a bolt ladder on the left-hand side of the large wall half-way up the pass high on the left while just right the rusting bolt ladder is followed by Craig Smith's *Do Up your Flies*. At the other end of the spectrum Stoney Middleton is as popular as ever. Mark Pretty has been busy here producing a handful of routes. His *Big Nose* ascends (or ascended!) the arête and wall left of Evasor's top pitch at E4 6a whilst left of Colonel Bogey goes his *Stay Hungry* at the same grade. Presumably with food still on his mind Pretty forced the wall left of Traffic Jam to yield at E5 6b *Jam Sandwich*. *Ventricular Fibrillation* is a direct finish to Cardiac Arrest E4 6a and *The Disillusioned Brew Machine* E3 5c follows the wall right of the upper pitch of Easy Action. Not content with these Pretty squeezed one more route into this area and with no room left upwards he went sideways; *Dead on Arrival* is an E4 5c girdle of the Mortuary Steps buttress. The only other activist here was Quentin Fisher who, after much effort, put up two desperates. *All Systems Go* E6 6b is up the wall right of Scarab and *Tequila Tory* over on Stoney West takes the wall left of Twang at about the same grade.

But enough of these minor crags and on to the best outcrop in Britain, High Tor. Four new routes were climbed in 1985 by a variety of people. Nadin made sense of Musical Women by climbing a direct start to Flaky Wall and then continued up the rest of Livesey's original line to leave *Reproduction* E5

6b. John Codling's line left of Original Route, *The Unoriginal Route* E4 6a, was the subject of much controversy. Early repeats brought allegations of chipped holds and the removal of in-situ gear, but more recently the cleaning has been defended as being 'standard' limestone gardening. Are we soon to have an official dirty deeds committee? Less impressive is Howard Lancashire and Alan Austin's *The Grapevine* E5 6a,6b creeping up the eliminate line left of Brompton's Cocktail — itself an eliminate!

It is perhaps fitting that Gary Gibson should choose High Tor on which to do his thousandth new route, *Once in a Millenium*, but his choice of line was a little disappointing, the groove left of Layby. A more impressive line would have been that taken by his *Zulu Dawn* which at E5 6b follows the steep arête left of Dr Livingstone in Dovedale. Nearby and easier is Jonathan Howells' *Bird Street* E2 5c on the wall left of Chainsaw Massacre. Dovedale still remains a largely underdeveloped climbing ground with plenty of lines for the taking and Nick Dixon has plucked a couple up the wall right of Screwball at E5 6b and E3 5c.

This is by no means a complete record of the new routes climbed in 1985 and by and large the scene is alive and well in the Peak.

The bolt explosion has not really arrived but neither has there been a rise in standard. This was demonstrated only too well by the visit of some French climbers who like Napoleon were finally and some thought thankfully, defeated only by the bad weather. Before they left however, they made impressive flash ascents of some of the hardest Peak routes and after practice, second and third ascents of the very hardest. Particularly galling (de Gaulling? Ed.) to some was Antoine le Menestrel's solo of Revelations which even after practice is not to be sneezed at. Revelations was considered to be one of the hardest routes in the country! The way ahead is uncertain but it is felt that any increase in standard will require the use of French tactics ('frogging'!) and undoubtedly the placing of bolts. Oh well, next time they come we'll get them soloing on grit . . . that should sort them out.

Graham Hoey

North Wales Notes

This year will be remembered as the winter when ice routes started next to the road, and rock climbing was hit by the worst summer in most people's memory. The most outstanding event was for the ladies, with visiting Aussie, Louise Shepherd, cruising Lord of the Flies (E6 6b), which is, as the 'comics' reassured us, the best lead by a woman in this country. The expected boom of hard routes on the big cliffs simply never materialised in the face of constant high winds and pouring rain. Most development was curtailed early on, or restricted to the smaller crags, slate and limestone.

The winter, however, was a different matter. The cold snap in February, brought on by vicious North winds, gave rise to superb water-ice conditions, right down to the roadside in some places. The grade V's on Craig y Rhoeadr became trade routes, although the penalty for failure was a swift chopper ride to hospital in some cases. There were some near misses too, with two 'ice novice' rock stars having the devil's luck, the second man prussiking up the ropes with the leader still trying to get to the stance. Oh yes, it had gone dark too! Central Gully (V) on the Grochan was an eagerly sought after plum, with Smiler Cuthbertson even climbing it in the dark after work.

Some spectacular new routes were found too, including the first true ascent of a frozen Aber Falls. *The Well of Loneliness* (V), Paul Williams and Martin Crook, follows the main water course direct, with belays mainly on the left-hand side. Martin was still covered in ice two hours after the ascent, back in Pete's Eats, and the pair became celebrities in local newspapers.

Other routes on the fall followed: Andy Holmes and Phil Jones found 'Whippersnappers Route' (III/IV) on the right of the main fall; Williams returned to grab 'The Angels Tears' (IV) with Dave

Pycroft, up the central groove of the right wing; and the Poynton brothers nipped over to the far edge of the same area to produce '*Fountain of Youth*' (IV/V). All are reputed to be superb climbs.

Also in the Carneddau, Craig y Dulyn received some attention with '*Quicksilver*' (IV+), the work of John Barry and Malc Campbell, giving continuous ice climbing for 500 feet up the right-hand icefall, north of the lake. '*Fairy Falls*' (IV/V) 200 feet follows the main drainage line to a short sharp finish to easy ground, and is the work of John Silvester and Perry Hawkins.

Across on Lech Ddu, Martin Crook, this time with Dave Towse, found '*Y Chimneys*' (IV) 300 feet an interesting problem with some hard mixed climbing.

In Llanberis, every watercourse was frozen, enabling three 'ice-age' routes to be grabbed. '*The Terminator*' (V) 180 feet follows the ice smears and fall to the right of Crown of Thorns, and was the work of Steve Haston and Andy Newton. The name sums up the route's death potential. Just up the road, the ice falls to the left of the Grochan descent route gave '*Arcturus*' (IV) 200 feet to Crook and Nick Thomas, and '*Arcturus Left Hand*' (IV/V) to the Pointons, Mick and Tony.

Cwm Silyn has seen some interest in recent winters, and this continued with the spectacular '*Aquarian Wall*' (V) 400 feet by Crook and John Redhead. This follows the summer line of Aquarius on the Great Slab and then breaks right through the overhangs to finish. Never a team to do things the easy way, the route was completed with one set of axes in the dark, with rubbish belays adding more spice.

Just round the corner in Cwm Dulyn, Paul Williams and Wil Hurford climbed four good lines. '*Heart of Ice*' (IV) 470 feet takes the gully and couloir on the right-hand side; '*Ice Mamba*' (IV) 500 feet follows a sinuous line across the latter route to a steep finish; '*Central Icefalls*' (III) 200 feet takes the obvious central ice; and '*Jezebel*' (IV) 550 feet takes a pillar over on the left of the crag, to a steep finish.

Many other minor falls all over the area were clocked up by locals and visitors alike, although one might wonder when they will all form again.

Returning to the rock, we had better put the record straight about Phil Davidson's amazing solo climbs. Too modest to enter the debate, Phil did not solo 'Lord of the Flies', but certainly did 'third Class' Cockblock, a superb performance in its own right. Louise Shepherd's lead of 'Lord' did much to emphasise the growing stature women leaders are gaining in the sport, and not only those who engage constantly in the men v. women mind games. Next year, should see even more women out cruising those routes in good style.

Cloggy received a couple of new lines, both the work of Nick Dixon and Andy Popp. '*Dinas in the Oven*' E6 6a, 6b. 6a takes the blunt arête between Great Wall and Daurigol's main pitch to finish up the top pitch of Midsummer's, whilst '*Bold man, Big Willy*' E4/5 6a takes the arête to the right of Cloggy Corner, starting from the grass ledge near the top of Shadow. The latter route was climbed in true Cloggy weather ie. rain and mist, hence the uncertainty about the grade.

Over the ridge on Cynr Las, Steve Boyden and Simon Cardy, a team always on the look out for good new lines, found the summers most spectacular line in '*Long Kesh*' E5 4c, 5c, 5c, 6a/b. This super Skull climbs Great Buttress then Skull to reach a totally 'out there' pitch up walls and over roofs between Skull and Lubyanka. The subsequent repeat of the line confirmed the excitement of the top pitch.

Ogwen had little new to boast of, but Andy Newton and Martin Crook found '*The Hollow Men*' E1 4c, 5b climbing a neat groove to the left of the Hawk's Nest area on Glyder Fach and persevering despite snow flurries and frozen fingers. Crook, this time with Nick Donnelly, also sorted out '*The Last Starfighter*' on Clogwyn Y Tarw. This takes the steep crack and groove above Slab Route, to finish on an arête.

Crafnant produced one new line, with Loz Francomb and John Sonczak finding '*Happy Landings*' E6 6b. This takes the thin crack, wall and groove to the left of Crash Landing, with poor protection, although the team recommended everyone to 'go and do it!' On the Ricks and Racks, Sylvester and

Niki Thomas free-climbed an old aid practice route to give '*Hench House Hotel*' E4 6c.

Tremadog had very little new, other than odd variations of variations, but Craig y Llyn gave Crook and John Sylvester '*The Killing Fields*' E5 6a,6a, which is a sort of Wailing Wall direct. John checked out the fall potential on the top pitch, and it's quite a long way! The often underrated Moelwyn area provided a couple of lines; '*Bad Reputation*' VS 4c, which takes the blunt arête between Condor and Y Gelynen, and '*Stained Class*' HVS 5a climbing the steep wall right of Y Gilfach. Both these lines were by Pete Wright and Robin Barker.

With the big cliffs out of action for most of the summer, the locals had a good look over their backyard and produced in Llanberis a number of shorter routes, some very technical and most of interest. On the crag a short way beyond the PYG slab, Ray Wood and Hardy found '*Shadow of Youth*' E2 5c which takes the obvious slanting crack line. Further down the valley, Dinas Bach, normally the preserve of flailing novices, came under brief attack. The Felony mystery was solved, and this gave rise to '*The Boys of Summer*' E4 6a taking the right arête, and '*Body Rock*' E4 6c taking the left arête after starting from the right, both being climbed by Bob Drury, Mike Thomas and Phil Thomas.

John Redhead found three hard problems on Clogwyn y Grochan, the first two on Little Buttriss, left of the main crag. '*Tom's Plums*' E4 6b, with Crook and Newton, takes a steep groove near the left end of the wall, whilst '*Ryley Bosvil*' E5 6c takes a peg-scarred crack just to the right. This desperate problem had seen a number of attempts by various parties before John succeeded in getting up what is probably the most technical problem in the Pass. The third line takes the wall between Cockblock and The Pump to give '*Dried Voices*' E5 6b.

Over to the left of Drys y Gwynt, Sylvester discovered '*Tombstone Wall*' E4 5c which he soloed, then Willie Todd moved in to claim '*Masochist's Mambo*' E3 6a an overhanging finger crack left of Tombstone, with Sylvester, and '*Overhanging Deckchair*' E2 5c with Berwyn Evans, taking the cracked pillar below the last two routes. Sylvester also popped up to solo '*Mabinogion*' E2 6a, a good little problem on the wall to the left of Craig Ddu.

Out at Gogarth only one new line appeared, when early on in the year Crook and Newton visited Tsunami Zawn and climbed '*Charlie Don't Surf*' E2 5b, which takes a groove going left from Shell Shock to reach the arête. The new guide will almost certainly set off new explorations, so don't be late!

Llanberis slate is another area that might well see a rise of interest once it appears in print, as it will in the forthcoming Llanberis Pass guide by Paul Williams. So far, with the exception of the Vivian Slab and the Rainbow routes it has been the preserve of Snowdonia based climbers, but it would be good to see others risking being cleaved in half as well!

The Rainbow access problems have taken a turn for the better, and after a C.E.G.B./B.M.C. meeting it is hoped a permanent agreement will be thrashed out, the new power station management being in favour of climbing in principle. The new routes have seen a number of repeats (and a lot of top roping) with '*Naked Before The Beast*' and '*Poetry Pink*' commanding much respect. Cystitis has seen a few falls on the technical top pitch, and just one from the first pitch, the unfortunate leader being carried away from that one. Around the corner in Vivian Quarry, Comes The Dervish has also seen a few fliers commensurate with its classic status, surprisingly, so too has Flashdance with its rather more serious flightplan. This year's 'desp' on the slab is '*Menstrual Gossip*' E6 6b by Redhead, typically bold and technical slab climbing just to the left of the Dervish, it has already had a few gripping repeats. Mike Thomas and a big team added '*Spark That Set The Flame*' E5/6 6b to the smaller slab round to the right of the Dervish, and '*Last Tango in Paris*' E2 5b just left of Wendy Doll fell to Mel Roberts and C. Edwards.

No look at the recent slate routes would be complete without a mention of the explorations of Cliff Phillips, who like a latter day Kirkus, has combed the quarries for new lines. There is hardly a face of slate not surveyed by Cliff, and he has soloed a large number of routes. Indeed, he beat everyone to the

latest find, the Bus Stop Quarry, but having cleaned one line never got around to climbing it. This fell instead to Billy Wayman and Paul Williams to give 'Scarlet Runner' E4 6a, this team going on to climb 'Virgin on the Ridiculous' E4/5 6a and then, with Paul leading, 'Massambula' E3 5c, Andy and Rosie Newton nipped in to complete the slab routes with 'Gnat Attack' E1 5b. These routes are on the obvious slab near the bus turnaround at Dinorwig, with another buttress down on the left which gave the George twins a fine and popular line, 'Fools Gold' E2 5c, climbing a groove with a hard move to gain the finishing crackline. Further on into the quarries the Never Never Slab gained another route with Crook and Newton taking the groove and flake crack to the right of Never Never Land to give 'Kubla Khan' E4 6a, the last move involving an amusing lurch to an old quarry fitting for most people!

Despite a stream of rubbish talked by those who should know better, or know nothing about the subject, the bolt problem seems to be under control in Snowdonia. Since the offending bolts on Cynr Las were removed by Nick Dixon, none have been placed on volcanic rock, and long may it stay that way. The slate had developed a crag by crag ethic, Vivian Quarry, for example, had no bolt runners whereas the Rainbow Slab does have bolts, but you have to work to clip them, and so on. The visiting climber has only to ask around to avoid confusion. I have no doubt that some will still not be happy, but perhaps they will try the routes before engaging their tongues. Pen Trwyn continues to go its own way, but Buoux it is not. For all those who moaned about the bolts, many more have gone and done the routes. Not all of them make it up to Cloggy though, and maybe that's how it should be.

At the time of writing, though, it is Craig y Forwyn that has the worst problems with a total ban on climbing. The B.M.C. is doing its best to solve the issues, but this could be a long one with the landowner being fairly adamant in his views.

The only new line on the crag was climbed by Gary Gibson, as yet unnamed, E4 5c, taking the overhanging wall to the left of Purple Haze and then the right side of the arête above.

The Little Orme has seen rather more activity, mostly centred upon Craig y Don. On the Upper Tier, 'The Cruel Sea' E3 6a goes left from the cave on Hydro and climbs steep rock above, and was climbed by Chris Lyon and Mike Hammil. Mike then led four of his own routes: 'Hydraulic Transmissions' E4 6b with Maddy Raven, rightwards from the cave on Hydro; 'New Wave' direct finish to Hydro at E3 6a with Lyon; 'Frozen Moment' to the right of Hydro E4/5 6a with Lyon and Chris Bundock, and 'Nimmitz' E5/6 6b which takes a line leftwards from the last route then up to finish as for Doenitz. Dave Towse with George Smith and Steve Quentin also bagged a route with 'Dough Nuts' E5 6b taking the left side of the cave to join Doenitz.

The man they can't keep down, Gary Gibson, had a look at the Middle Tier and produced a couple of lines. 'Crab Slab' E2 5c takes the left side of the slab, while 'Just along for the ride' E2 5c takes the right side. Norman Clacher, after following the previous two, climbed 'The Get Along Gang' E1 5b with Gary in attendance, taking . . . wait for it . . . the centre of the slab.

On the Lower Tier, 'Exocet' E3 takes the obvious crack, gained from the right, and was climbed by Hammil and Bundock, whilst Lyon, Hammil and Raven found 'E.C.M.' taking the flake to the left of the last route.

On the other side of the hill, Towse and Andy Moog had another look at Meadow Wall, and found 'Slime Crime' E4/5 6b, just next door to Back to the Egg.

Every now and again, Gary Gibson nips over to Pen Trwyn and puts up the odd twenty or so routes, and this year was no exception although a few other leaders got a brief look in, so eyes down and here we go . . .

'Burslem Boys' E4 6a takes the roof to the right of Le Bingomaniac, and seems a good little climb by Gibson. 'Norman's Wisdom' E4 6a/b Gibson and Clacher starts left of the left hand corner of the huge arch and climbs the roof and steep ground. Paul Williams emerged from the ice with Terry Taylor to climb 'Jungle Five' E2 5c 5b which takes the big corner and groove left of Norman's Wisdom with

some wild, but not desperate, climbing on the second pitch. Chris and Dave Lyon had earlier found 'Touchstone' E4 6b 6a with some difficult roof climbing left of the last route. Just left again is an overhanging groove that gave Dave Lyon 'Talisman' E4 6a/b, the next open groove giving 'Testament' E5 6b another hard line for the Lyon brothers. Lastly in this area, Williams and Martin Barnicott climbed 'Wu-Shu Boys' E3 6a, this takes a curving line from the right edge of the cutaway 100m left of Testament.

'Platinum Blond' E4 6a by Gibson is a nice clean climb up the wall left of it, taking small holds to a 'mega jug', whilst 'Precious Little' E3 5c by Gibson with Simon Whalley climbs a direct on Precious Metal until it can't go any further! The wall right of these two became the 'Pyrites of Pen Trwyn' E3/4 6b with the help of Gary and Hazel Gibson and Mick Jones, and gave good climbing with a couple of very difficult moves, with the bulges right again giving 'The Bloxwich Blockhead' E4 6a, again to Gibson. 'Capturing the Coelacanth' E5 6b must have given Gary a hard time as the finishing move, on the upper wall between Love over Gold and Pure Gold, involves a jump!

The next nineteen routes were all climbed by Gibson with various partners or alone. 'Miner Forty-Niner' E4 6a takes the wall right of Flash in the Pan, starting up a thin crack and then the edge of a scoop, 'Afterthought' HVS 5a takes a flake to the left of Zig, whilst 'Hot Club' E3 6a/b takes the fine white wall to the left of Vagal Inhibition. 'Sussudio' E4 6a/b follows a groove and wall left of Prospectors and 'Slapstick' E4 6b takes the right arête of Alchemist's Dream. 'The Complicated Muse' E4 6a provides, with a lurch, a direct start to Too Low For Zero. 'Start Spangled Banner' E3 6a takes the nasty looking flakes left of Silver Surfer, but gives an excellent and exciting pitch according to Gary. The Arc of Eternity area provided a couple of new lines, with the hard 'Barking Up The Wrong Tree' E5 6b on the left and 'No Arc, No Bark' E4 6a on the right both giving very good climbing on this fine wall. 'Gobachops' E3 6a gave a poor route on the left arête of Pershing II. but 'The Cold War' E3 6a, starting between the two starts of Cruise Missile (?!), is a better line up a short wall and then through an overhang to finish. 'Foulish, Goulish' a line up the wall left of Mr. Olympia, took three days to climb and is graded E5 6a/b, which seems a bit easy for the effort involved.

Around the corner on Black Wall 'Another Dead Christmas Tree' E2 5b takes a thin crack to the left of Salty Dog, and 'Winterreise' E2 5b climbs a wall to the right of Lets Lynch the Landlord via a magneta (this year's colour?) thread. 'Second Hand Daylight' E3 6a is a righthand variation of the last route, whilst the short and hard 'Night Time Rendezvous' E3 6a seems a fine little route, right again of the last line.

The micro route 'Small Bore' E3 6a takes a triangular wall at the end of Solution Walls, with the last of Gibsons routes taking the left arête of Gold Coast to give 'After the Fact' E3 6b, with hard climbing up a bulging wall to reach a faint rib. Mick Jones with Gibson found 'Captain Percival' E2 5c up a groove to the left of Salty Dog, and finally on the cliff, Clacher and Dave Summerfield climbed a crack to the right of Gold Coast to give 'Chock a Block' E1 5b.

Well, lets hope that next summer provides the weather for everyone to get up on the big cliffs, and start producing and repeating the routes of the Eighties.

Andy Newton

NEW CLIMBS

TREWELLARD ZAWNS: WEST PENWITH

by Des Hannigan and Dennis Bateman

The Trewellard Zawns lie on the north coast of West Penwith between Pendeen Lighthouse and Botallack. The cliffs are of Killas slate, heavily mineralised and studded with pillow lavas and a variety of other intrusions. They lie at the edge of desolate industrial landscape on the most extensively mined coast in Cornwall; visually outrageous but fascinating because of it. The outfall from Penwith's last working mine at Geevor, stains the sea blood-red with iron oxide for a mile off-shore. Part of the upper cliff has been quarried, while rakes of shale and clinker sprawl down the gullies and lower slopes.

If all this puts you off, then you lack the pioneering spirit and an eye for visual paradox. This is still the Cornish 'Riviera' after all. Otherwise, Trewellard offers some of the most delightful low to middle-grade routes in West Penwith, a modest yet atmospheric venue that has a charm of its own. The rock has some looseness but is generally honest. It is climbable when wet, dries rapidly and catches the sun for midday onwards. All the climbs start comfortably above the spring high-water mark and are accessible except in heavy seas. Give yourself a break from all that oven-baked granite!

History. Trewellard owes its development to Dennis Bateman, Les Williams and Paul Murray, three Penwith veterans and long-term members of the Land's End Climbing Club. Dennis Bateman especially, recognised the wider potential after pioneering a dozen V.Diffs and Severs including the classic SKYLIGHT and BRIGHT MORNING. Together with Dennis, local climbers Andrew Trevorrow and Des Hannigan then took the cliffs into the HVS/Mild Extreme range with two fine routes on the Main Face, SHAMBHALA and JOHN KNOX.

Bateman and Hannigan continued to explore Trewellard and put up the first route in the strangely atmospheric, yet subdued, Goldsworthy Zawn. Finally, in the summer of '85, Devon climber Chris Nicholson gave the cliffs some edge with one or two more serious extremes, (light hearted in mae if not in vein: Nicholson was on his honeymoon.) Local climbers and two visiting Coloradons stitched up much of what was left.

There are now over forty routes at Trewellard from V.Diff to Extreme in the 60 to 120 foot range, with some hard potential (Autumn '85) on the overhanging Bible Wall, a squat, sunless monolith that neatly fits Thomas Hobbes's summation of this (sporting) life — 'nasty, brutish and short'. But challenging all the same.

Access. Take the lane directly opposite the Trewellard Inn car park between Pendeen and Carnyorth. This leads after a mile down to the coast by Levant Mine where a rough road curves rightwards towards three old chimney-stacks. Park by the second of these. Walk in a generally north-east direction towards Pendeen Lighthouse then strike down to the broken cliff-top. (See sketch-map). There is a sequence of cliff-faces and the following descriptions begin with Goldsworthy Buttress at the north-east end and continue to the south-west (Facing in). All descriptions, facing in.

GOLDSWORTHY BUTTRESS

The buttress lies to the left of the old wooden winding-frame of the Goldsworthy Shaft, an obvious landmark. From there, an easy-angled slab runs down to a ledge about thirty feet above the sea and directly below the buttress. The following four routes start from this ledge.



Double-Take 150 feet Mild Severe

A rock-walk including two short pitches.

1 75 feet. 4a. From the ledge scramble round the seaward arête then climb the obvious corner crack.

2 75 feet. 4a. Scramble up to the higher identical corner and climb it to finish.

First Ascent: L. Williams, D. Bateman, D. Hannigan.

Sea-Fever 130 feet Diff.

1 From the platform step left onto the wall and climb to a niche and then ledges.

2 Climb a steep slab and wall then move across to the final tower and climb the break on the left.

First Ascent: P. Murray, D. Bateman.

Bright-Morning 125 feet V. Diff.

★

1 60 feet. Start just right of Sea Fever. Climb the black wall to a niche on the right and then to ledges.

2 65 feet. Scramble over blocks and then climb the thin crack on the right of the tower.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, P. Murray.

Isosceles 70 feet VS.

★

1 70 feet. 4b. Start at junction of slab and ledge and climb diagonally rightwards up the bubbly wall, pocketing protection as you go.

First Ascent: A. Trevorrow, S. Wright.

GOLDSWORTHY ZAWN

This is the narrow black zawn directly below Goldsworthy Buttress. The east-facing wall is an artist's palette of cuperous stains and smears of Kaolin. The west-facing wall is clean and steep and has eight good routes. Main access is down centre of wall to a good ledge above high water mark. COLD IRON is the obvious deep crack that spits the face on the left. Iron wedge at foot.

On the seaward ledge there are some problem pitches of which the following are recommended. Abseil from above.

In the middle of the wall are two similar overhangs. SWEET METAL takes the left, CLAYMORE the right.

Sweet-Metal 40 feet HVS

1 40 feet. 5a. Climb up onto an obvious flake ledge then up to a small overhang which is turned to the right. Move up and back left.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Claymore 40 feet HVS

1 40 feet. 5a. Start ten feet right of previous route. Climb up to overhang and move right to short crack to finish. First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

MAIN WALL

Cluny 120 feet HVS

★

1 90 feet. 4c. From the foot of COLD IRON, traverse left to the arête flanking the Claymore ledge. Climb the crack in the arête to a niche.

Left: Andrew Trevorrow on Bateman's Boots, HVS 5a.

Right: The Bible Wall.

Photos: Andrew Lanyon.

- 2 30 feet. Move right and climb the steep wall.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

What Red Parrot 90 feet E3

★★

- 1 90 feet. 5c. Start at base of Cold Iron and climb diagonally left, almost to arête of Cluny. Protection possibilities. Move back into centre of wall and climb straight up. Bold.

First Ascent: C. Nicholson, D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Eric Goes to the Seaside 90 feet E1

- 1 90 feet. 5a. Start just left of Cold Iron and climb the wall direct.

First Ascent: C. Nicholson (solo).

Cold Iron 80 feet Hard Severe (Safer than the seasid.)

★

- 1 80 feet. 4b. Climb the obvious feature, with iron wedge at foot.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Steely Dan 90 feet E1 (The Colorado Contribution.)

★

- 1 90 feet. 5b. First sliced groove right of Cold Iron. Climb the groove and continue direct up bubbly wall.

First Ascent: Dan Mannix, Alison Sheets.

The Confluence 90 feet HVS

- 1 90 feet. 5a/b. The sliced groove of previous route. Climb groove and up bubbly-stubby wall.

First Ascent: C. Nicholson, I. Peters.

D.B.I. Presume 100 feet VS

- 1 100 feet. 4b. Start ten feet right of previous route. Climb wall bearing right to groove. Continue straight up.

First Ascent: C. Nicholson, D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Farge 100 feet HVS

- 1 100 feet. 4c. Start at right hand end of ledge above encouraging drop. Step onto wall and climb up to small overhang. Move right onto arête and climb crack above. Flimsy protection.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman, S. Salmon.

THE BIBLE WALL

This is the obvious overhanging wall two hundred yards west of Goldsworthy. So named from its striking resemblance to the Carnyorth Reformed Wesleyan Chapel in Trewellard Village Stark, sunless and fairly uncompromising. As yet unclimbed apart from two routes at left-hand end.

Geriatrics 50 feet Severe

Climb the cracks and ledges at left hand end of wall.

First Ascent: D. Roscoe, D. Bateman, B. Roscoe.

Fringe Benefit 40 feet E2

- 1 40 feet. 5b. The obvious crack at left hand end of wall. Don't lay-back. Supplicate with the jams.

First Ascent: C. Nicholson, D. Hannigan, M. Crayton.

GREY FACE

This is the shattered wall that runs west from Bible Wall then turns sharply into Trewellard Zawn itself. The first two routes are on the seaward face. Abseil access down Rainmaker is advised.

Ancients Way 60 feet Mild Severe

- 1 40 feet. From slabs move up left side of the grey wall and through a small roof to a ledge.
- 2 20 feet. Take the wall behind. Wide bridging leads to the top.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, P. Murray (Alt.)

Levant Jug Route 60 feet VS

- 1 60 feet. 4c. Climb the chunky wall just right of previous route.

Rainmaker 70 feet HVS

★

The first obvious line on the inner wall.

- 1 70 feet. 5a. Climb up to the overhang and pass it on the right. Strenuous and airy but well-protected.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman, P. Richardson.

Skylight 90 feet V.Diff.

★

- 1 50 feet. Start as for Rainmaker. but climb diagonally right to a recess. Thread Belay.
- 2 40 feet. Bridge up and out to right then steeply through overhangs. Traverse right on edge of all things. Then up through V-groove to finish.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, L. Williams.

Bateman's Boots 120 feet HVS

★

- 1 70 feet. 4b. From right-hand end of Rainmaker ledge, traverse along crack-line into back of zawn and move up into hanging chimney. Climb up to a niche on Skyliht.

- 2 50 feet. 5a. follow curving crack leftwards and make awkward moves round overhang into V-groove.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

MAIN FACE

This is the steep seaward-facing wall that runs west from GREY Face. Access is down the right-hand side, (facing in) via a narrow gulley at Diff. standard or by abseil from jammed block at the top of the gulley.

Debutante 60 feet HVS

A tough little pitch.

- 1 60 feet. 5a. Start at extreme left edge of face behind a fang of rock and climb the steep crack above. Instant exposure.

First Ascent: C. Gilbert, M. Burt, D. Bateman.

Shambhala 90 feet E1

★★

A fine, subtle route.

- 1 90 feet. 5b. The shallow wriggling crackline just right of previous route.

First Ascent: A. Trevorow, D. Hannigan, D. Bateman, P. Murray.

Sun Dog 90 feet E2

1 90 feet. 5b. A direct line up the centre of the face. Climb the grey rib to the right of Shambhala then take the middle of the steep wall to a niche. Continue up the crack above.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

John Knox 80 feet HVS

★

1 80 feet. 5a/b. The right-hand crackline. Start five feet right of Sun Dog. Climb easy rock to the top of a small pinnacle and continue up the bulging crack above.

(An added nuance to the Trewellard atmosphere comes with the periodic shot-firing in Geevor Mine. The underground explosions are transmitted through the cliffs as distinct thuds. Hence the pun on 'John Knox', which has a dour Scots tendency anyway. All crux moves are thus subject to the Rank, hammer-and-gong effect but there is no risk of the cliff exploding. It just feels like it.)

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Space Below My Heels 110 feet Severe

★

Start right of J. KNOX.

1 60 feet. Climb direct to a thin scoop which leads to a belay in cave.

2 30 feet. 4a. Traverse left then down. Climb up to a bay.

3 20 feet. Cross to corner then go up to finish.

First Ascent: L. Williams, D. Bateman.

VARIATION: (2) 20 feet. 4c. Climb the crack directly out of cave.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Brown Windsor 120 feet Mild Severe

Start at the base of a chimney right of previous route. (The chimney is INITIAL CRACK V.DIFF).

1 100 feet. 4a. Step across the chimney and climb black rock onto a slab (Often wet and awkward). Continue directly up the middle of the slab to a ledge (Poor protection).

2 20 feet. Take the wall above on the left.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Moxibustion 100 feet V.Diff.

Start 12 feet right of Brown Windsor.

1 50 feet. Ascend the grey slab to a wall and move left to belay.

2 30 feet. Go back right and up to a corner on a slab. Belay at a block.

3 20 feet. Climb through a break to the top.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, L. Williams, P. Murray.

WEST FACE

This is the small cliff that turns inland from Main Face. Access is by scrambling down the right-hand side.

Welsh Wizzard 60 feet Diff.

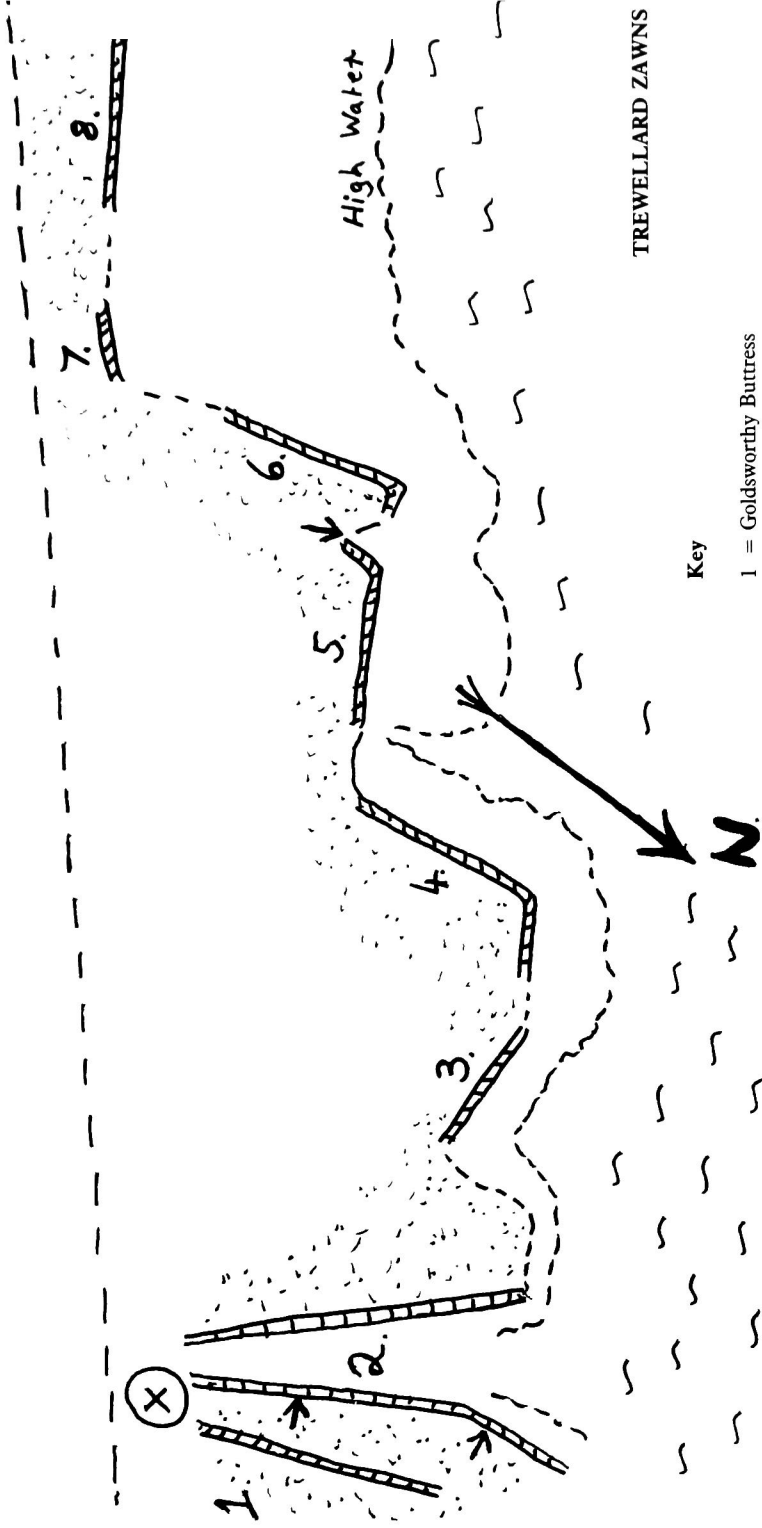
1 60 feet. Take the main break in the wall to the top.

First Ascent: L. Williams, D. Bateman, P. Murray.

TREWELLARD ZAWNS

Key

- 1 = Goldsworthy Buttress
- 2 = Goldsworthy Zawn
- 3 = Bible Wall
- 4 = Grey Face
- 5 = Main Face
- 6 = West Face
- 7 = Brown Buttress
- 8 = Black Cliff
- X = Goldsworthy Winding Shaft
- = Abscil Point



Solo 60 feet Severe

I 60 feet. 4a. A line up the left side of the face taking the crack in the smooth wall.

First Ascent: A. Trevorrow (Solo).

Microcosm 70 feet Diff.

Start five feet right of Solo. Climb up a few feet then traverse left below the smooth wall. Climb up easier ground to top.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, P. Murray.

Route Four 60 feet Hard Diff.

Start at right-hand end of face. Climb up for a few feet then traverse right and go up a groove.

First Ascent: L. Williams, P. Murray, D. Bateman.

BLACK CLIFF

This is the obvious quarried cliff high above the sea. Because of its disturbed nature some care should be taken, re. looseness. It offers a number of very pleasant, accessible climbs at an easier standard.

Rainbow 60 feet Severe

Start at left hand end of cliff just left of deep groove (GREY GROOVE) Climb steep wall then move right and up second wall.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman.

Grey Groove 70 feet V. Diff.

Climb the deep groove to a platform then take the wall behind.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, L. Williams (AL) P. Murray.

Slanting Crack 60 feet Mild Severe

Climb crack on the right of Grey Groove, then traverse right at a corner. Ascend straight up to the headwall and climb this to top.

First Ascent: D. Bateman, P. Murray.

Andrew 60 feet Severe

Fifteen feet right of SLANTING CRACK. Climb over bulges to a final steep corner.

First Ascent: A. Trevorrow, P. Murray, D. Bateman, D. Hannigan.

Black Shadow 60 feet Hard V. Diff.

Towards right-hand end of cliff. A series of ledges joined by steep walls to a final loose corner.

First Ascent: J. Twigg, P. Murray.

Shades 60 feet Mild Severe

Start right of the previous route and climb a series of corners.

First Ascent: D. Hannigan, D. Bateman, R. Pottinger.

Grey Shadow 60 feet Diff.

Start just right of previous route. Climb a wall to a platform. Finish up slab and corner to a final tower.

First Ascent: P. Murray, D. Bateman.

SKYE — COIR' A' GHRUNNDA — NORTH CRAG OF SRON NA CICHE

Vagabond Crack 400 feet E1

A 135-foot corner crack gives a good climb in a rather doomy situation. It starts from a ledge high up the buttress which is marked by a horizontal block protruding into space. Below this a huge slabby expanse glides down to the scree. It seems that the last bout of exploration here was in 1920.

Climb the slabs easily for almost two-hundred feet to a point 20 or 30 feet below the block; step leftwards to a shattered ledge on a rib. A few awkward moves upwards are made to the Great Block, then climb the crack, reasonable at first but steep, damp, and precarious at the finish. Enjoy the sunlight, if you're lucky, on a large ramp-like platform, and admire the view before easy scrambling to the left brings the top within reach.

First Ascents: 28 May 1984, B. Molyneux, R. Reeve.

HELYG edited by Geoff Milburn

For those members who did not take up the offer of this compelling book to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Helyg it is still possible to obtain a copy, price £9.⁷⁵ (post free) from the Editor.

In addition members are also urged to tell their friends about this book which is available from Cordee or from shops where it sells for £12. Several hundred copies must still be sold if we are not to run the venture at a loss.

29, Waterloo Street,

Birmingham, 31st Mch 1898.

H. V. Reade Esq
16 Scarsdale Villas
Kensington.

Dear Sir, Climbers' Club.

Thanks for your letter of the 30th.
We hope to get many Alpine Club
men in the new Club, so I hope
you will join.

The memories of Wastdale and
Pengwryd are quite as wholesome
as those of Zermatt and Chamonix.

We look forward to having a
journal but we must walk before
we can run.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew.

Come along
John Raven
don't argue -
we
migrate!!



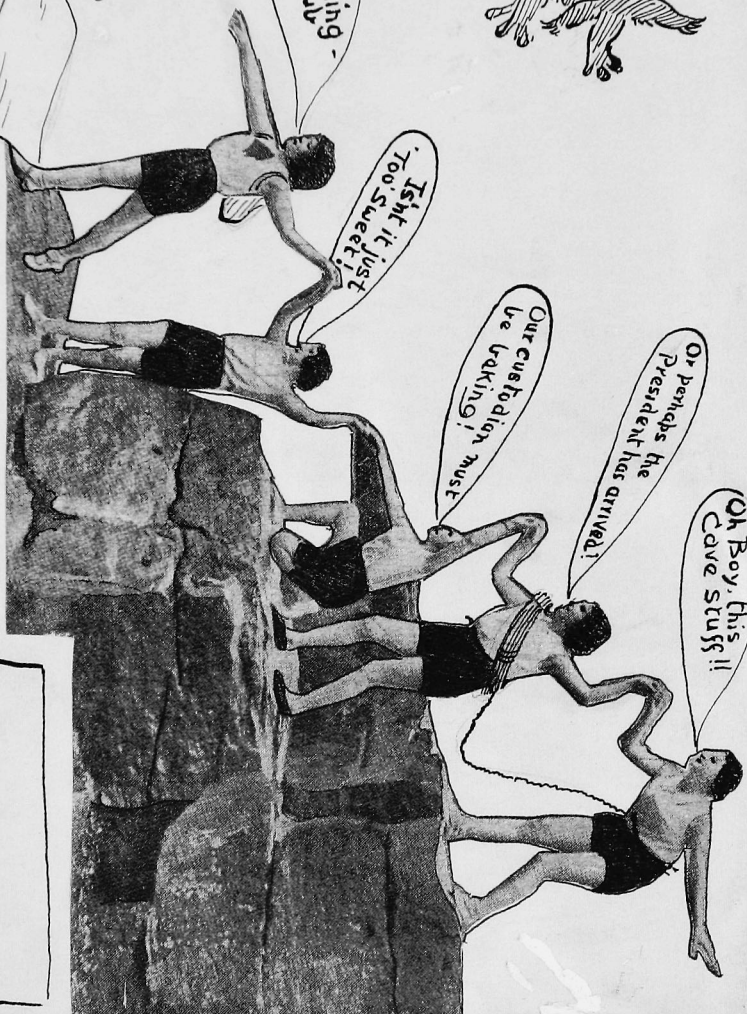
Oh look Darling -
there's the Club
Hut!!

Isn't it just
Too Sweet!!

Our custodian must
be taking!

Or perhaps the
President has arrived!

Oh Boy, this!!
Cave stuff!!



'LIWEDD'
Summer 1933/!

CLIMBERS' CLUB GUIDEBOOKS

OLD SERIES

Lliwedd (1972) by Harold Drasdo.

Cwm Silyn and Cwellyn (1971) by Mike Yates and Jim Perrin.

NEW SERIES

1—Carneddau (1975) by Les Holliwell.

2—Ogwen (1982) by Tom Leppert.

3—Llanberis Pass (1981) by Geoff Milburn.

4—Clogwyn Du'r Arddu (1976) by Alec Sharp.

5—Lliwedd.

6—Tremadog and the Moelwyns (1983) by Leigh McGinley.

7—Gogarth (1977) by Alec Sharp.

Cornwall—West Penwith (1984) by Pete O'Sullivan.

Southern Sandstone (1982) by Tim Daniells.

Pembroke by Jon de Montjoye (1986).

SUPPLEMENTS

Llyn Peninsula (1979) by Trevor Jones.

Gogarth 1981 by Geoff Milburn.

Pembroke 1982 by Jon de Montjoye and Mike Harber.

North Cornwall and West Penwith (1982) by Pete O'Sullivan and Bob Moulton.

North Wales New Climbs by Andy Pollitt (1983).

IN PREPARATION

4 Cloggy and Snowdon West by Paul Williams and Dave Farrant.

5 Llanberis Pass by Paul Williams.

7 Gogarth by Steve Haston.

North Wales Limestone by Andy Pollitt.

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North Wales Limestone by Andy Pollitt (1982)—Dark Peak.

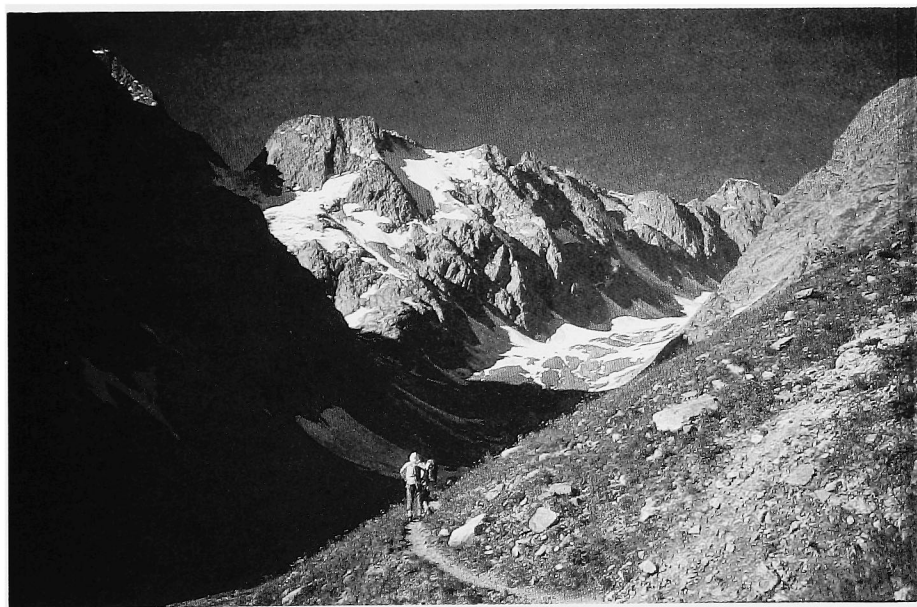
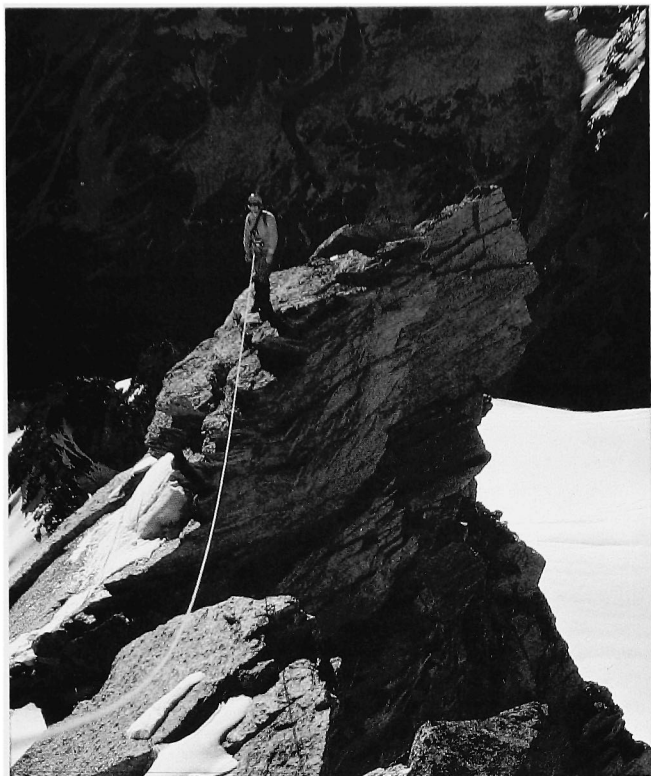
Clwyd Limestone by S.M. Cathcart (1983)—Cicerone Press.

Gower and South-East Wales by Mike Danford & Tony Penning (1983)—SWMC.

Ted Maden on the
E. Ridge of the
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Below: Pics du
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