

CHAPTER TEN

‘THE DEVELOPMENT 1958-65

*“Above all, a hill is different — non human in scale, dwarfing even modern technological man, and telling him how small he is, and how short are his legs.
Sir Jack Longland*

1958 for the Oread was a year of change — maturity call it what you will, but certainly an era had passed. Three factors seem to stand out as relevant in this context. First it was the year in which the Welsh Hut at Rhyd-ddu was purchased. Many were involved, but certainly Ernie Phillips, Dave Penlington and Laurie Burns were instrumental in searching the valleys for suitable premises, finally settling on Tan-y-Wyddfa as a good buy at well below the £ 1,000 mark. An appeal was made to the membership by the President, Phil Falkner, to loan or donate money and in a very short period of time the club were home and dry with their own property. It was the old station master’s house at Rhyd-ddu on the disused Caernarvon-Beddelert-Festiniog single track railway line. The property was obviously in need of considerable alteration to suit our needs. The Club’s concern at this time with the purchase of the hut brought a reaction from our founder member — George Sutton, who wrote, “While wishing the hut well I feel it looms too large in the lives of many — how many I wonder will view the proximity of Cloggy as an advantage? ... I only ever saw ‘Bryn-y-Wern’ once so there are no nostalgic feelings on my part except for the spirit of the days before the hut. I hope to recapture it, but not with the Oread.” George Sutton was made an Honorary Member the same year.

The second factor was the crisis in the production of the newsletter. Charlie Cullum had been editor for five years and had during that time edited 50 copies. He wished to retire. Much credit must go to Charlie for the valuable work he did in initiating a lively and informative monthly newsletter and for his editorship,

which did so much to keep members in contact, particularly those resident away from the Derby/Nottingham area. At the Annual General Meeting and in the newsletter the cost of the production was debated at length, the value of producing it at all and of course a new editor had to be found. Harry Pretty saved the day and took over editorship with the August 1958 edition.

The third significant feature of 1958 was that Bob Pettigrew, who had been an instructor with the Outward Bound in Malaya, adjusted his journey back to the U.K. to 'call in' on the Himalaya. Time being short he made for one of the most accessible valleys — the Kulu valley in the Punjab Himalaya of India. From here he walked over the 4050m Rohtang Pass to Keylong, capital of Lahoul, as well as reconnoitering Indrasan, an unclimbed peak in the area. On his trek to Keylong Bob was arrested, but was released after he had 'presented a 1950 C.A.F. (French Alpine Club) card as a British Passport'. This quick visit to the Punjab/ Kangra Himalaya was to form the basis of the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition 1961 with members drawn mostly from the Oread.

In spite of concern over property and its conversion, the club was active at home and abroad. The newsletter gave interesting reading of winter meets in Llanberis, Ogwen and Glencoe; John and Ruth Welbourn camping and skiing on Braeriach with Doug Godlington and summer in the Karwendel; Roger and Beryl Turner climbed in the Jotunheim in Norway and there is an amusing account by Ray Handley on his ascent of the Peigne above Chamonix with Ray Colledge and a 'Greek girl who lived in Paris'. Trevor Panther gave an account of his visit to Lyngen, the main interest seeming to have been the reconnoitre of the North Face of Gukkisgaissa 'colossal face 3000' high and a good mile in horizontal length'.

The events of 1959 consolidated the changes of 1958. Bob Pettigrew returned from the Himalaya, took a teaching appointment at Derby School, and became the new Oread President. He soon let the club know of his intention to return to the Punjab Himalaya with the aim of climbing Indrasan, the modest 6221m peak he had reconnoitred the previous year and reached 5500m. It was the final 700m or so which presented the technical difficulties requiring more resources than were available in his reconnoitre of 1958. He commenced a busy two year period planning an expedition, duties as Oread President and one must not forget his activities as o/c Derby School Combined Cadet Force — and driver of their 3-tonner truck transporting 'the men' on mountaineering expeditions to North Wales and morning parades in the Pass!

Harry Pretty continued as editor of the newsletter until July 1959 after which Tom Frost took over. Harry in the New Year editorial commented with an apparent air of surprise that the club had 'survived a decade'; it would be ten years old in March. Harry was obviously not entirely happy with developments and, though accepting the fact that the new 'Establishment', 'mostly men with strong ideas', may rejuvenate the club, his final editorial in July 1959 stated 'The average age of those on the membership list goes on increasing year by year and everyone is nice and cosy inside what seems to have become a kind of socially restricted watertight perimeter. Perhaps most people want it that way and if the majority of the active members are in favour, then that is certainly the way the

situation will continue to develop. But I think it is lousy; and so do most newcomers who try to force their way into the 'Bell'* on a Tuesday night. Despite isolated examples to the contrary I know for a fact that it is virtually impossible for them to effectively 'break through'. The 'Bell' has declined into a convenient place for those who are accepted, to arrange their next weekend often regardless of a listed meet and nearly always regardless of the stranger. The 'Bell' as I fully realise is a difficult place and inadequate for our purposes. Therefore the sooner a room is found where any strange face is immediately noticeable, the less excuse will there be for those who come, stand around, wonder who the hell all these people are anyway and depart half an hour later more than a little disillusioned."

There is little doubt that the two dominant personalities of the founder membership, Sutton and Pretty had been strong protagonists of the original ideals of the club once expressed by Sutton as "the gay audacity; the friendly welcome of novices; the high standard of all round ability; the philosophy of loving to climb hills to see hills to be among hills, and not to regard hills merely as a display case for prowess." Maybe something had been lost of the basic simplicity of approach on which the club was founded — a leaning towards the Shipman Tilman style of mountain exploration. But the club had grown rapidly in ten years from a founder membership of six to over a hundred. It now covered many aspects of mountaineering skiing and alpinism, with the accompanying sophistication, to the technical difficulties of vertical to overhanging rock. Many club members had come from the now defunct, but excellent, climbing clubs of the late forties and early fifties, the Stonnis and Valkyrie; Ernie Phillips, Veronica Lee (now Mrs. Phillips), Don Chapman, Peter Janes, Ray Handley, John Welbourn to mention a few who had joined the Oread from such clubs. They had been contemporaries of Peter Harding, 'one of the greatest rock climbers of all time', and Tony Moulam, another tiger — and still not past it, for that matter. Both Harding and Moulam had been Derby residents at one time. There was also an overlap with the Rock and Ice, largely through Nat Allen, also a Derby man. ,

There was indeed now a widespread of interest and activity within the club. Mention is appropriate here of the Photographic Meet held in the autumn of each year when members compete with their photographic efforts. There are three main classes (i) Mountaineering at Home (general and action), (ii) Mountaineering Abroad (general and action), (iii) Club Interest.

The first two classes are judged by an outside photographer, and the third class by the President, often based on the volume of laughter or applause produced. In the early fifties slides were few' and monochrome prints formed the main entry. Sad to relate the monochrome section finished in 1963 due to the pathetic entry and now the evening is reduced to a 'slide show' rather than the fine exhibition of monochrome prints of earlier years. There have been many judges, including John Cleare with the modernistic approach, but by far the most appearances have been by C. Douglas Milner, the well known mountaineer and photo-



grapher of earlier vintage and Honorary Member of the Oread M C. Milner's uncompromising judging has helped to maintain a quite high standard of photography throughout the years. In 1959 Ray Handley was meet leader and introduced a challenge cup — 'The Norman Cochran Photographic Trophy'. It was a memorial tribute to Dr. Norman Cochran who had been killed that year in the Dauphine Alps. He had been one time President of the Midland Association of Mountaineers and it was a sad loss to his many mountaineering friends in the Midlands. His death was particularly felt in the Oread since he had been associated with the club for some time and had judged the Photographic Competition the previous year.

On the skiing front, Ernie Phillips, Ronnie, Fred Allen and Don Chapman went on a ski-mountaineering holiday in the Stubai early in 1959. They were in a guided party and the twelve days of peaks, passes and glaciers leaves the reader of the account in little doubt that it was a remarkably active holiday. No piste 'bashing' and afternoon tea dances!

As if in defiance of the attitudes expressed by George Sutton the previous year, Tom Frost's first newsletter in October 1959 records a host of routes on British Crags and in the Alps done by members that year. For instance, the Clogwyn Meet lists Pigott's Climb, Sheaf, Chimney Route, Curving Crack and Sunset Crack, Angel Pavement on Craig-y-Bere, Route 2 on Lliwedd and Eastern Arete on Y Garn-Nantle, all with details of the ropes.

The Wasdale Meet — on Scafell — Scafell Pinnacle, Slingsby Chimney, Pisgah Buttress, Moss Ghyll Grooves, Central Buttress, Botterills Slab, Mickledore Grooves, Overhanging Wall, Great Eastern; on Gable-Eagle Ridge, Tophet Wall, Tophet Girdle, Arrowhead Direct; and Sepulchre on Kern Knotts; on Esk Buttress; — Medusa Wall and Bridges Route — the lists continued with climbs from Diffs to VS.

An interesting aside also appears in the newsletter describing how Doug Cook and Brian Lee reversed the Chasm on the Buachaille mistaking it for South Gully in the mist!

In the Alps it had been a particularly active season with Oread parties visiting Chamonix, the Zillertal, Arolla, Zermatt and the Otztal. Possibly the best routes had been done around Chamonix by the Burgess, Colledge, Chapman and Handley team who did (i) the Aiguille du Fou, (ii) traversed Les Droites and (iii) the Aiguilles du Diable traverse to Mt. Blanc de Tacul.

For sheer quantity in the Zillertal the Ashcrofts, Welbourns, John Fisher, Colin Hobday and June Telfer had traversed the Zillertal claiming nine peaks, six passes from the Hinter Stangen Spitze in the East to the Grosse Mosele and Olperer in the west. The Haute Route had been traversed between Zermatt and Chamonix by Jim Bury and friend.

Four young new faces appeared on the Oread scene about this time — Doug Scott, Guy Lee, Des Hadlum and Paul Grainger. They have all turned out to be high fliers on the climbing scene, but did not remain members of the club far into the sixties. Doug Scott left to form his own club 'The Nottingham Climbing Club' and Guy Lee followed him. Scott emerged as a driving force and has now



pitted himself twice against the rigours of the South West Face of Everest. Guy Lee has similarly excelled in the expedition field, his latest achievement being a new route up Fitzroy in Patagonia in 1972. Des Hadlum left the Oread to join the Alpine Climbing Group and is now in his fourth year as a climbing instructor in Colorado U.S. A. Paul Grainger also joined the A.C.G. and became a member of the Rock and Ice and now combines climbing with printing the popular climbing magazine 'Rocksport'. All four characters remain in touch with the friends they made in the Oread — but then Harry Pretty's assessment of the 'Bell'

could have been right. Who knows? Towards the end of 1959 Harry Pretty was made an Honorary Member. A decade had passed and the fibre and spirit of the club carried on into the sixties.

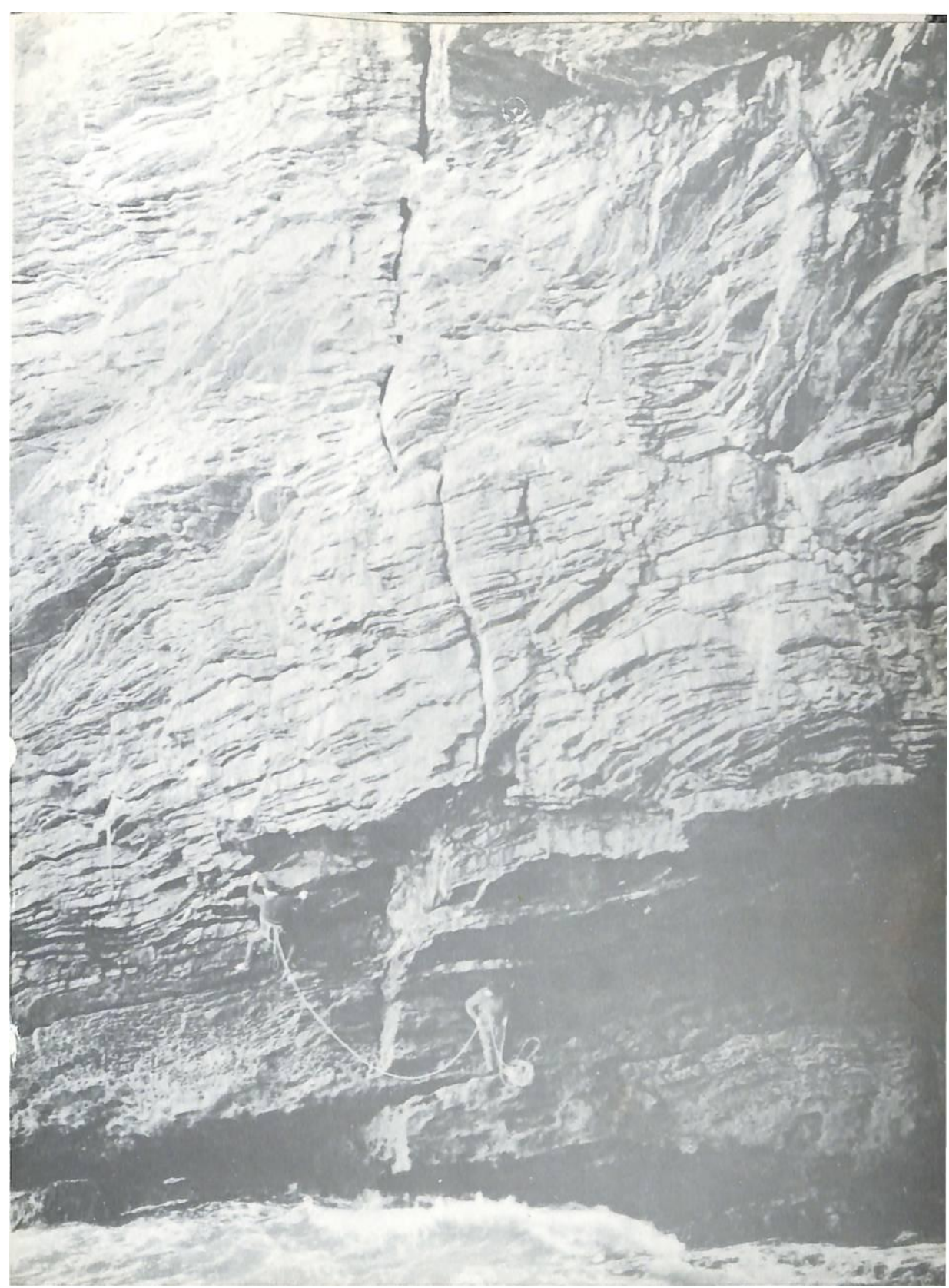
1960 was comparatively peaceful after the turbulence of the previous few years. At the same time it was an active year with the 'new establishment' having taken firm roots. Running parallel with club activities were the efforts by those determined on the Himalayan expedition planned for 1961. The Welsh Hut occupied much time with Fred Allen as Custodian organising the work of conversion and ably administering the affairs of the hut in general. The hut was officially opened by A.B. Hargreaves, tiger of the 1920/30's, on 5th November, 1960. In his speech he speculated on the age of the house and its association with the old Caernarvon-Beddgelert-Festiniog railway. No doubt the detailed history of the line is available, but it is interesting to note that E. Downes, father of Bob Downes* was a civil engineer connected with construction of the line in the mid-1920s. At that time he was involved with exploratory climbing at weekends; Engineers Climb, Recess Route and Overhanging Chimneys on the crags of Cwm

Silin are all climbs of such vintage and appeared in the classic 1926 Snowdon District Guide Book of H.R.C. Carr.

Returning to the Oread, Tom Frost continued to edit the newsletter with a regular account of mountain activity, laced with the odd philosophical discourse on such topics as the nature and purpose of climbing clubs and thoughts stemmed off by Wilfred Noyce's** book 'Springs of Adventure'. To quote from one editorial — "It is the complexity of motive which makes it difficult for the average person to understand mountaineering, for in general a sport or a pastime only appeals to one or possibly two sides of a man. For the rigger-man the physical side, for the photographer the aesthetic side, a combination of the two perhaps for the sailor. To draw an analogy the physical and aesthetic sides may be likened to the length and breadth in the realms of dimensions: the one indicative of positive physical motion from one place to another, the other, in contrast suggesting a certain inertness of positive action - the appraisal of a painting or a scene. In this realm of dimension it is the third dimension, depth, which provides the clue as to the 'complexity of motive involved in mountaineering'."

*Bob Downes died suddenly of pneumonia at top camp on Masherbrum in the Karakorum.

**Wilfred Noyce and Robin Smith were tragically killed in an accident on Mount Garmo Pamirs — Anglo-Soviet Expedition 1962.



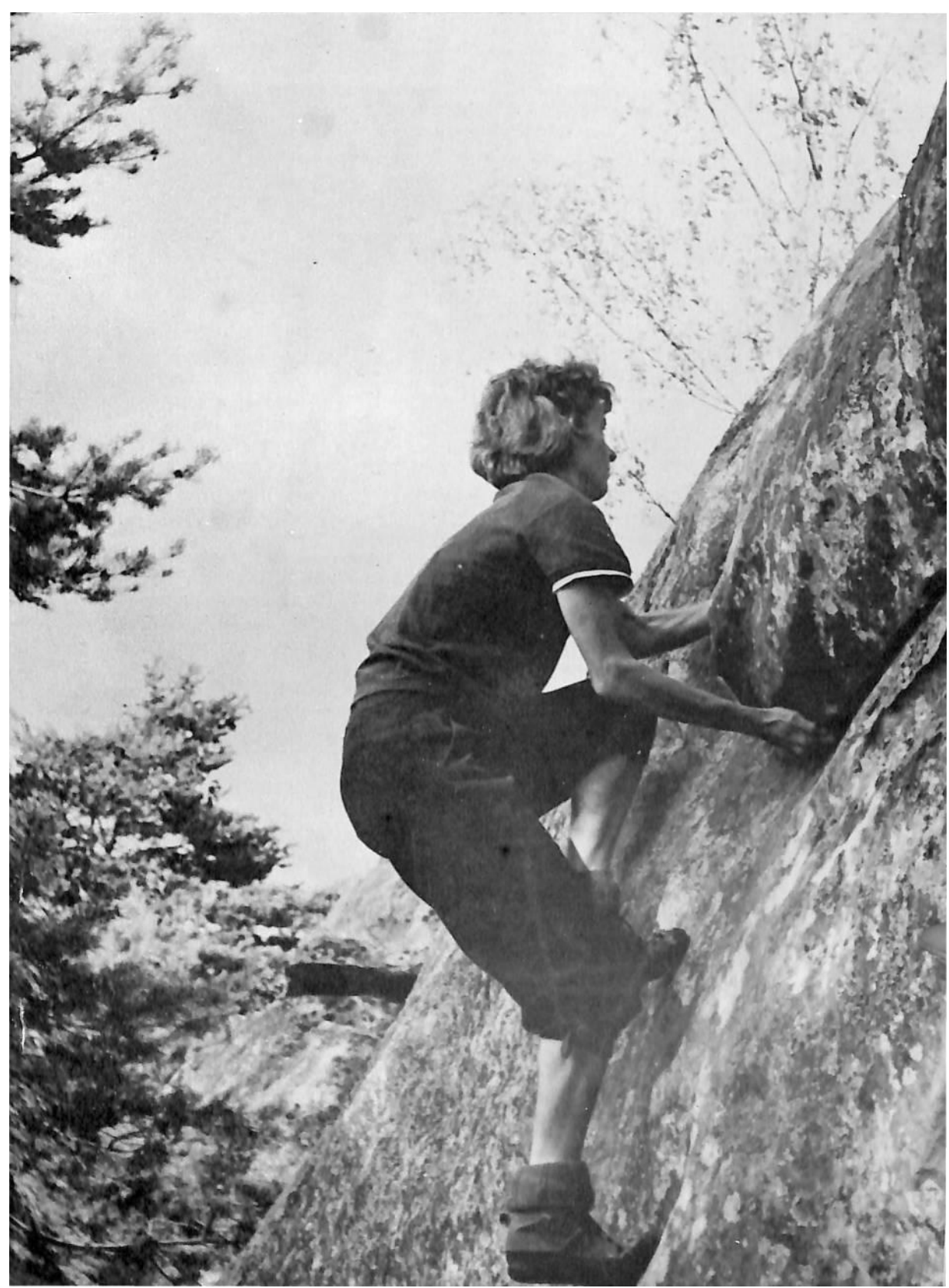
Adding 'bite' to the correspondence page, the committee thought it appropriate to print in the newsletter a letter of resignation from Brian Richards (whdthen went tolivein Switzerland).The letter was far from poiite and produced letters from Laurie Burns and Roger Turner ("You know this is just not damn well true") — but Laurie Burns' statement on cliques was probably the choicest. To quote — "It is a logical corollary of numbers, when homo sapiens are gathered in numbers, they nucleoate, and smaller intimate groups form, but the wider activities and interests overlap and integrate the individual in the whole. Above all they are essentially nice people and although they have much in common with intimates, will not rebuff a stranger or little known member. We are constantly adjured to make entry into Oread circles easier, but something more than a purely negative approach by the novitiate is required. Otherwise only time will bring confidence which is probably the best way."

During the course of the year the Marsden-Rowsley walk was done and active meets were recorded in Wales and on the 'Ben' in Scotland. The newsletter also contained an amusing account of the 1959 Bullstones Meet by Harry Pretty — how Bob Pettigrew first came to Bullstones — getting lost in the process with Clive Webb and Ron Dearden at the head of the Derwent in the dark. This report prompted a rejoinder from the Pettigrew team stating Pretty to be an 'arch-culumniator' among other insinuations. "Older Oreads will know that Harry learned his techniques not on the mountains but from his Uncle Stephen at Yeovil." All good youthful stuff one might say. But so what. Those who do not keep young in mind, body and spirit miss much. It would not do for all of us to be the same in life, but mountaineering probably has an appeal to those who strive for intellectual and physical perfection — this means keeping young.

In the Alps, Derrick Burgess, Ray Handley, Don Chapman and Doug Cook visited Chamonix. The weather was poor so they moved to Zermatt but not before all had ascended the west face of the Point Albert on the Aig de L'Moine and the east face of the same peak. Derrick and Ray then went to Zerrhatt in search of better weather and Don and Doug snatched the Forbes Arete of the Chardonnet before joining them. From Zermatt Derrick and Ray did the Young- grat on the Breithorn and spent a 'cine Handley' day traversing the Rimpfisch- horn between the Tasch Hut and Flu Alp. Don and Doug did the Triftjigrat (North Face) of the Breithorn and also the Dufourspitze of Monte Rosa.

A company of eleven visited the south side of the Bernina most of the party traversing passes between Poschiavo in the east and Chiareggio in the west below the Muretto Pass and the impressive north face of the Disgrazia and the classic Corda Molla Ridge. Most of the time was spent at the ideally situated Marinelli Hut, from where the Bernina was climbed by Jack and Janet Ashcroft, John Fisher, Colin Hobday and June Telfer. The same party also traversed the Bella-vista one day, the Piz Sella and Dschimels on another and a gentler day climbing Cima-di-Caspoggio. Jack Ashcroft, John Fisher and Frank Dobson also attempted the Piz Palu but were forced to retreat from a bivouac hut in white out conditions after a blizzard.

Possibly the route of the year as far as the Oread and associates were concerned was Ray Colledge and Dennis Davis' ascent of the North Face of the



Triolet - an ice wall at the head of the Argentiere glacier. Ray was not at that time a member of the club, but did climb regularly with club members. Dennis Davis, a Rucksack Club member, was the following year to spearhead the way onto the summit of Nuptse 7800m with an expedition under the leadership of Joe Walmsley, another Rucksack man. The Ascent of Nuptse was a big step towards the kind of route we have seen in recent years on Annapurna South Face and more recently the South West Face of Everest. We stress route rather than expedition!

To conclude this resume of 1960, Laurie Burns' quote of 'nucleolating' seems appropriate. There was in the club groupings - the Gadsby-Eric Wallis-Walter Smith-Craddock-Goldsmith contingent — graduates of Pettigrew's Mountaineering Association Courses at Cottesmore School, Nottingham; (Gordon and Doreen Gadsby, Eric Wallis and Alma spent Christmas Eve 1960 on Snowdon summit. A goodly proportion of the time the tent was lashed by a hail blizzard "of such intensity that we all thought our time had come" wrote Gordon at the time). Then there were the serious rock sportsmen. Derrick Burgess, Ray Handley, Fred Allen, Wes Haydn, Norman Milward, Des Hadlum, Brian Cooke, Pete Janes, Doug Cook and Brian Lee to mention but a few. And then there was forever present the Rolls Royce graduates team, Tom Frost, Pete Gayfer, L.K. White, Kim Rumford and James McKay.

It is difficult to define groups but in relation to Rolls Royce, there has throughout the years always been a large number of Rolls Royce employees who were members of the Oread. John Fisher has often been heard to exclaim. "It's about time the Oread stopped being run by Rolls Royce" - Debatable point that — in view of the Company's recent history!

A principle feature of 1961 was the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition. That is not to say the club were not active as a whole, but insofar as newsletter reports very little appeared. Geoff Hayes reported on an active Whit week on the Isle of Arran with many routes accomplished and nearer at home it was noted that Wally Smith led Kellys Overhang! at High Neb. and in Wales, Des Hadlum led Beryl Turner up Cenotaph Corner and Doug Scott led the Boulder on Cloggy. Cemetery Gates and Cenotaph Corner in the Pass. All rather domestic but hard stuff.

In the Alps, the Hayes, Gadsby, Wallis, Berry team visited the Bernina traversing the Piz Palu, Piz Cambrena, Allalinhorn and Matterhorn.

The Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition comprised eight members, five of whom were Oreads including the leader Bob Pettigrew. The others were Derrick Burgess (Deputy Leader), Jack Ashcroft (Surveyor). Ray Handley and Trevor Panther. Dennis Gray* as a Rock and Ice Club Member joined the expedition with Steve Read of the Summit Mountaineering Club, the Nottingham based club. The eighth member of the expedition was Nick Smythe who at the time was working in India, a temporary ex-patriate of the Mountain Club of Stafford. The expedition was fortunate in obtaining as Patron, the Duke of Devonshire, and the help of Sir Jack Longland and Robin Hodgkin was for ever present. It is difficult to itemise the individuals and organisations who supported the

*Dennis Gray's book 'Rope Boy' (Victor Gollancz) devotes one chapter to the expedition.



Kulu Himalaya. The Snow Dome — Deo Tibba 6002m taken from the Third Shelf at 5,500m.

Photo — Bob Pettigrew



Kulu Himalaya. Indrasan 6221m from the Third Shelf at 5500m. On the left the serrated West Ridge. On the right near foreground the East Ridge.

Photo — Bob Pettigrew

expedition in various ways, but two men within the Oread who worked conscientiously until the moment the party left England were Harry Pretty and Dave Penlington. It was their intention to go on the expedition themselves at one stage, but they had to withdraw for various reasons well before the expedition left.

The expedition left valley base near the village of Manali in the Kulu valley in the eastern Punjab of India on 2nd June 1961. They were to return 7 weeks later relatively satisfied with their achievements in the glacier system of the Kulu/ Bara Shigri Divide. The main objective of the expedition was to climb Indrasan 6221m, a difficult peak in its upper reaches. Derrick Burgess and Dennis Gray reached the highest point on the mountain by following the west ridge⁰⁰ which appears the most feasible mountaineering route to the summit. However the length and technical difficulties of the ridge and resources available at the time turned back Burgess and Gray on 3rd July some 200m short of the summit. The consolation peak was Deo Tibba 6002m, a snow peak close to Indrasan to which the expedition gave its 4th and 5th ascents.

The east ridge* of Indrasan was also probed,, but found to offer no easy alternative to the west ridge. Bob Pettigrew in his report of the expedition wrote “the only route which would seem to offer any hope of attaining the summit would be a frontal attack in a diagonal line, utilising the tilt of the strata before taking to the steep snow of the south face.” This in fact was done the following year by a Japanese expedition. Having learned from our experiences the previous year they discounted the west ridge and on 13th October 1962 two members of the expedition** made a determined bid for the summit involving a 23 hour round trip including a bivouac at 6150m. The leader Professor K. Onodera of Kyoto University wrote “They stayed there (at the bivouac) during a night of terrible cold and hunger and then began to climb down in beautiful weather next morning. They abseiled four times and reached the upper end of the fixed rope at 12.10 hours. They were completely exhausted, moved very carefully and came back to Camp III at 15.20 hours on the 14th.”

Another objective of the Derbyshire expedition was ‘to endeavour to solve some of the cartographical confusion which at present existed on the maps illustrating the watershed between Kulu and the Bara Shigri and other glacier systems on the Spiti side.’ Other expeditions had been in the area over the years and reported various difficulties with existing maps, so much so that on one occasion a party came near to death from hunger and exhaustion in attempting to follow a valley on the map which didn’t exist!

⁰⁰ Finally climbed by Mndrasan West Ridge Expedition 1971’ Tony Johnson, Roger Brook, John Brazington, Geoff Arkness, Geoff Tabbner, Bryan Pooley.

◆East Ridge of Indrasan First ascent in 1973 expedition led by H. Day and G. Owens.

**Kojiro Tomita and Yasumasa Miyaki



*(Back Row, From Left) Bob Pettigrew, Capt. Ba/git Singh (Liason Officer) Ray Derbyshire
Row, From Left) Bob Pettigrew, Capt. Ba/git Singh (Liason Officer) Ray Handley, hire Himalayan
From Left) Bob Pettigrew, Capt. Ba/git Singh (Liason Officer) Ray Handley, DennisHimalayan*

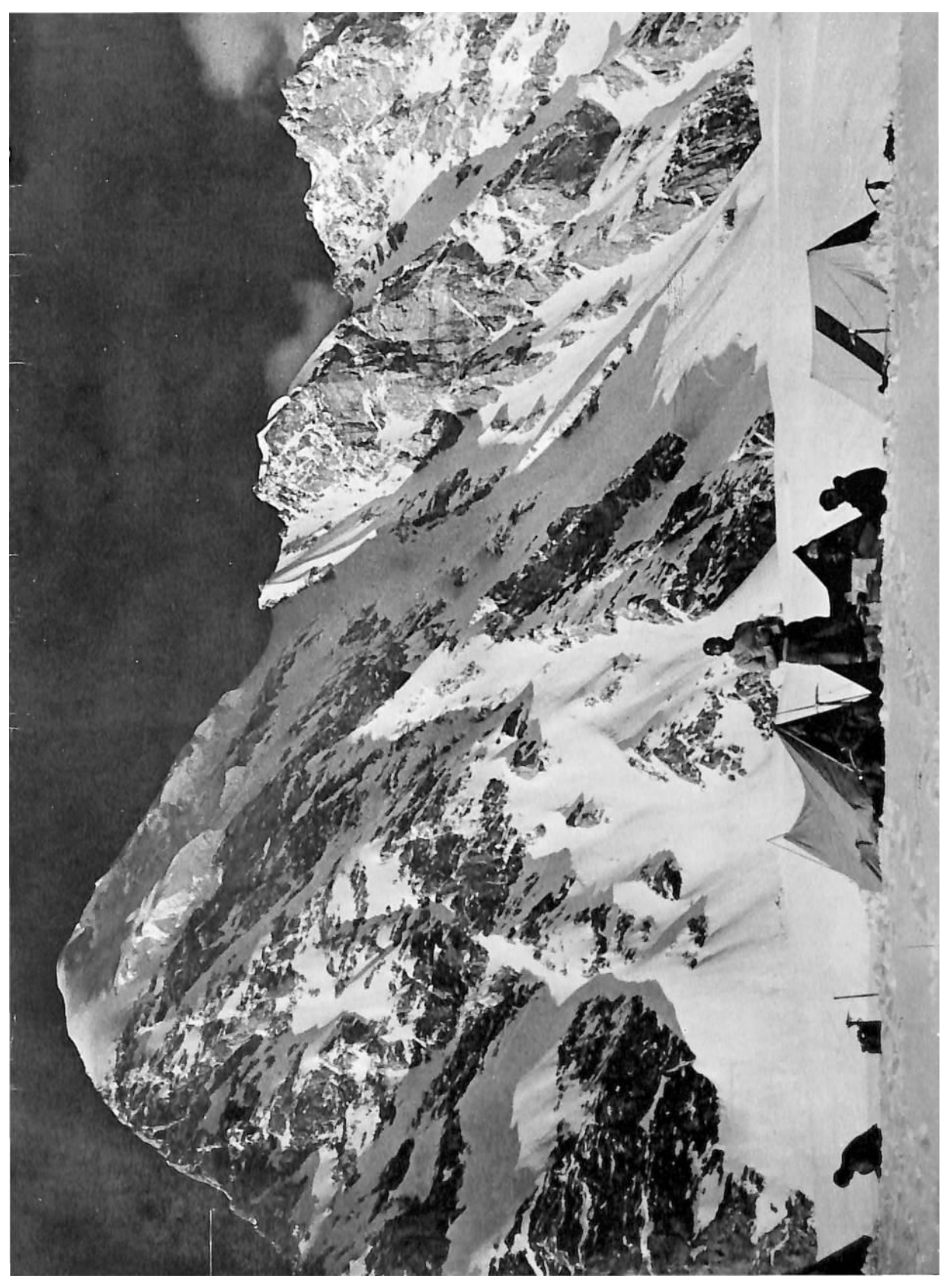
From 9th July for ten days Pettigrew, Burgess and Ashcroft trekked over passes between the Malana Glacier and the Bara Shigri Glacier setting up plane table stations and taking photographic panoramas for production of a map. This checked existing maps and added to work done by Snelson (1951), Dr. A.E. Gunther (1954) and J. P.O.F. Lynam who had essentially surveyed on the Bara Shigri side and eventually co-ordinated the findings of all the surveys into one complete map.

In 1961 on the return journey from the survey trip, Pettigrew, Burgess and Ashcroft decided to 'snatch' a peak. Time was short and the monsoon was due, but they did manage the second ascent of White Sail, a beautiful peak of 6446m and first climbed by Lt. Col. J.O.M. Roberts in 1941. The climb was not done with ease, since the two Ladakhi porters⁴¹ with the party, due to language difficulties, felt at one stage they were about to embark on another non-existent valley trek and the food was down to little more than Ryvita and Oxo! However three nights on the mountain and a 16 hour day for the final assault gave the three their summit. They were watched by the porters from the camp some 1000m below, who were by now in a more cheerful mood knowing what it was all about.

The final objective of the expedition was to reconnoitre and climb if possible Ali Ratni Tibba, a rock peak of 5492m and undoubtedly the finest and most distinctive in the Malana glacier area as viewed from the north. There was some discussion at the time whether Ali Ratni Tibba was in fact peak 5492m. However the name has stuck and we doubt if the two expeditions now known to have climbed the peak would like to be told they had not! In 1961 Handley and Gray explored to the south of the peak and made two first ascents in the cluster of aiguilles known as the Manikaran Spires. They were unable to pursue a route on Ali Ratni Tibba because of the onset of the monsoon.

So the expedition came to an end. It is now interesting to note that the Japanese expedition on Indrasan spent the same time to get to grips with the summit as the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition did with a similar size party — but if the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition of 1961 failed in any respect it was through attempting too much. Had all effort been put on one objective, the results would obviously have been different. To counter-balance this, it can be said that the expedition did much ground work for future parties to the area, surely a worthwhile achievement. Tom Longstaff wrote well before the war "In all the Himalaya there is no more attractive nor neglected playground for the normal climber than the district of Kulu. Spiti, Lahoul and Bashakr, with which may be grouped the independent state of Chamba." The age is now with us. International tensions permitting, we can indulge ourselves in such areas. It still abounds with peaks and unclimbed walls and ridges in the 5000m to 7000m Pettigrew did of course go back to attempt some of the problems of the Bara Shigri Divide, visiting the area with various parties no less than six times between 1963 and 1967. The choicest peaks climbed were Kulu Pumori m, which he climbed by the South West Ridge with an American, Dr. Franz

*Jigmet and Ang Chook.



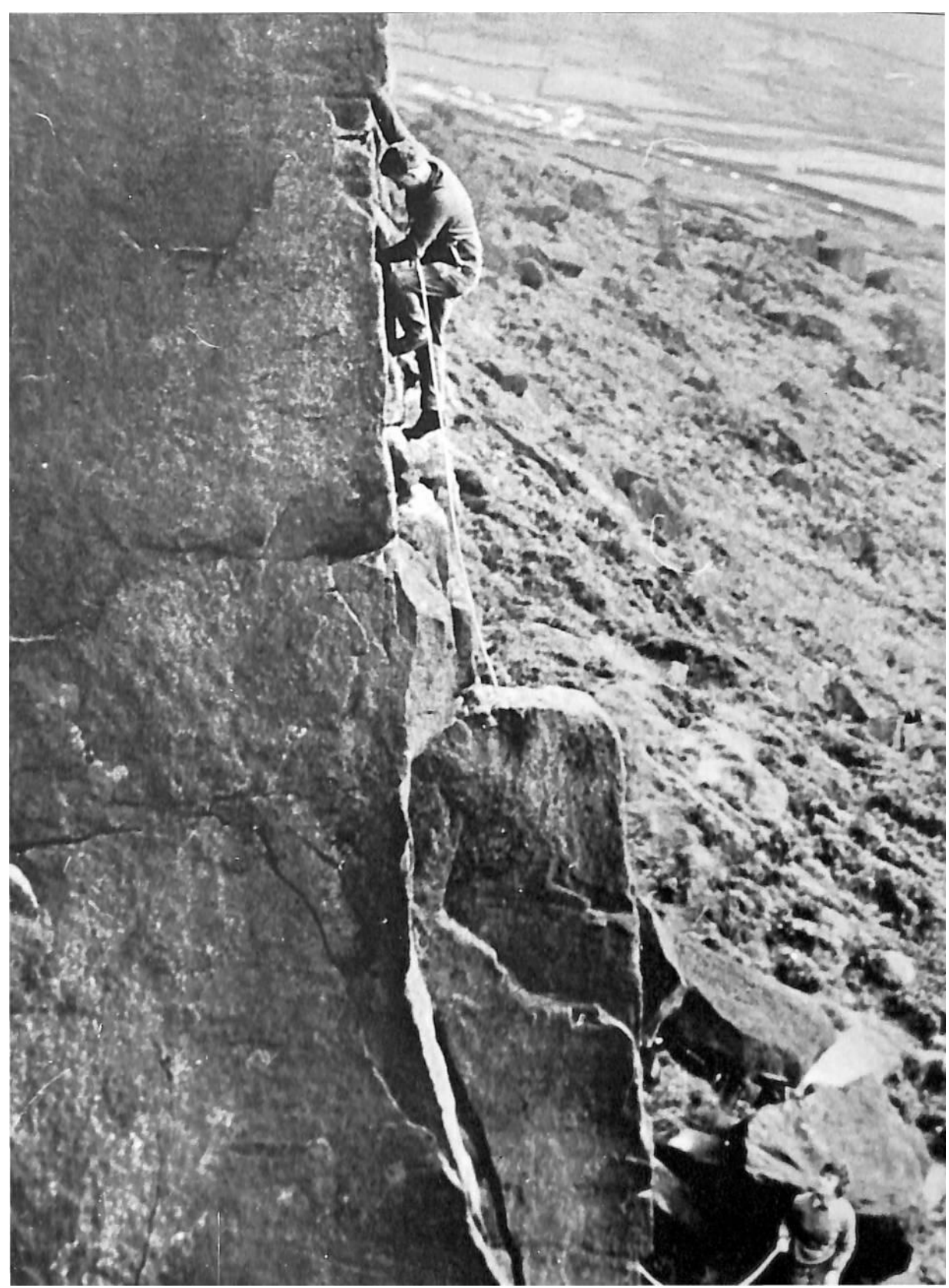
Mohling in 1964, and Peak Papsura 6451 m climbed in 1967. In retrospect you might say Pettigrew opted to become a 'centralist', took a teaching job in India and romped off to 'the hill' as often as possible after 1961. On the other hand Dennis Gray also made a determined effort after the Derbyshire Himalayan Expedition to be with the hills — probably a more complete commitment, as related in 'Rope Boy' — but then of course compared with Pettigrew he was at the time, single with no family responsibilities.

The Expedition was on its way back to England before the end of August and to a grand reunion weekend at Tan-y-Wyddfa on 16th/17th September 1961. The weather was not good but spirits were — with routes done from Creag Dhu Wall on Tremadoc 'all the way up the road' to Sunset Crack on Cloggy. Sunday was essentially a walking day.

One final feature of 1961 was a re-organisation of the club newsletter. Roger Turner became newsletter editor in association with Geoff Hayes with the intention of maintaining a monthly 'news' sheet. Longer articles went to Tom Frost for publication in a 'Journal'. This system in fact lasted only 18 months after which Geoff Hayes took over editorship and production of the newsletter entirely, which he continued to produce practically single-handed for the next six years. “

During 1962 the newsletter came out frequently and was full of brief notes on meets and a regular chatty feature appeared — 'Oreads in Shorts.' For instance a quote from Pete Janes was reported — "Tennis Shoe in the rain — sounds like a new pop song." Meets throughout the British Isles were reported with possibly a January meet in Langdale and an Easter Meet in Glencoe standing out for the superb weather conditions experienced — sun throughout the day and hard frosts at night. In contrast Colin Hobday led a meet in Skye in generally inclement weather conditions but nonetheless active and Derrick Burgess led the Welsh Walk from Cynwyd to Cwm Cowarch in particularly poor weather. Derrick's write up contained the following note describing the difficulty in finding a 'haven of rest' after battling over the tops in driving rain on the Saturday. The evening was not without incident. Our comfortable barn was visited by an irate lady who, it transpired, owned the place and did not take kindly to our being there. Pretty, attired in pyjamas, assured her we were respectable and responsible, she however failed to see this, and no doubt objecting to being called 'madame', gave us the boot. The farmer down the valley was of a more friendly disposition and made us welcome." Hence Burgess the misogynist!

On the Welsh climbing scene Nat Allen and Derrick Burgess made the early ascents of Brown's routes on Tremadoc, such as The Fang, The Plumb and Leg Slip. In the Alps, the same pair climbed the East Ridge of the Crocodile and Derrick with Hank Harrison made the 3rd British Ascent of the West Face of the Petit Jorasses. Others active in the Alps were George Rhodes who climbed the Zmutt Ridge on the Matterhorn with Les Hughes and Eric Beard, whilst Ray Colledge and Dennis Davis spent one of their famed fortnight holidays by doing the Ryan Lochmatter on the Aig-de-Plan, the south ridge of the Aig Noire-le-Pueteroy and the Cassin route on the north east face of the Badile!



Other items of domestic interest were that Bob Pettigrew sailed for India to take up a teaching position at Rajkumar College, Rajkot and in the newsletter an amusing repartee was reported between Geoff Hayes and Fred Allen on the club purchase of a latrine tent for camping meets. Geoff, forever the purist, just did not feel it necessary to encumber the meet leader with the problem of detailing a squad for latrine duties! The Dovedale Dash had by 1962 become a regular feature on the meets list of several climbing clubs and the newsletter gave positions of runners — something new in Oread reporting.

In 1963 the club was active at home and abroad. Jim Kershaw wrote articles on two expeditions he had been on. The first one was to Spitzbergen in 1960 when he joined an expedition led by Tony Daffern of the Ceunant Mountaineering Club. They spent seven weeks on the peaks behind Magdalena Bay “not higher than 4,000’ and varying between mere heaps of rubble and fine pinnacled ridges and summits.” They climbed 23 peaks of which 19 were first ascents. Names were given to summits and pinnacles on which first ascents were made, but at the time Jim wrote it was not known whether they had been accepted by the Norwegian Polar Institute. Jim’s second report was on an expedition to the Vatnajökull Glacier in Iceland when a party of three sledged across the 100 mile glacier from south to north including climbing Iceland’s highest peak Hvannadalshnukur 2103m and attaining Grimsuotn 1578m which is near the centre of the Vatnajökull Glacier and the site of volcanic activity.

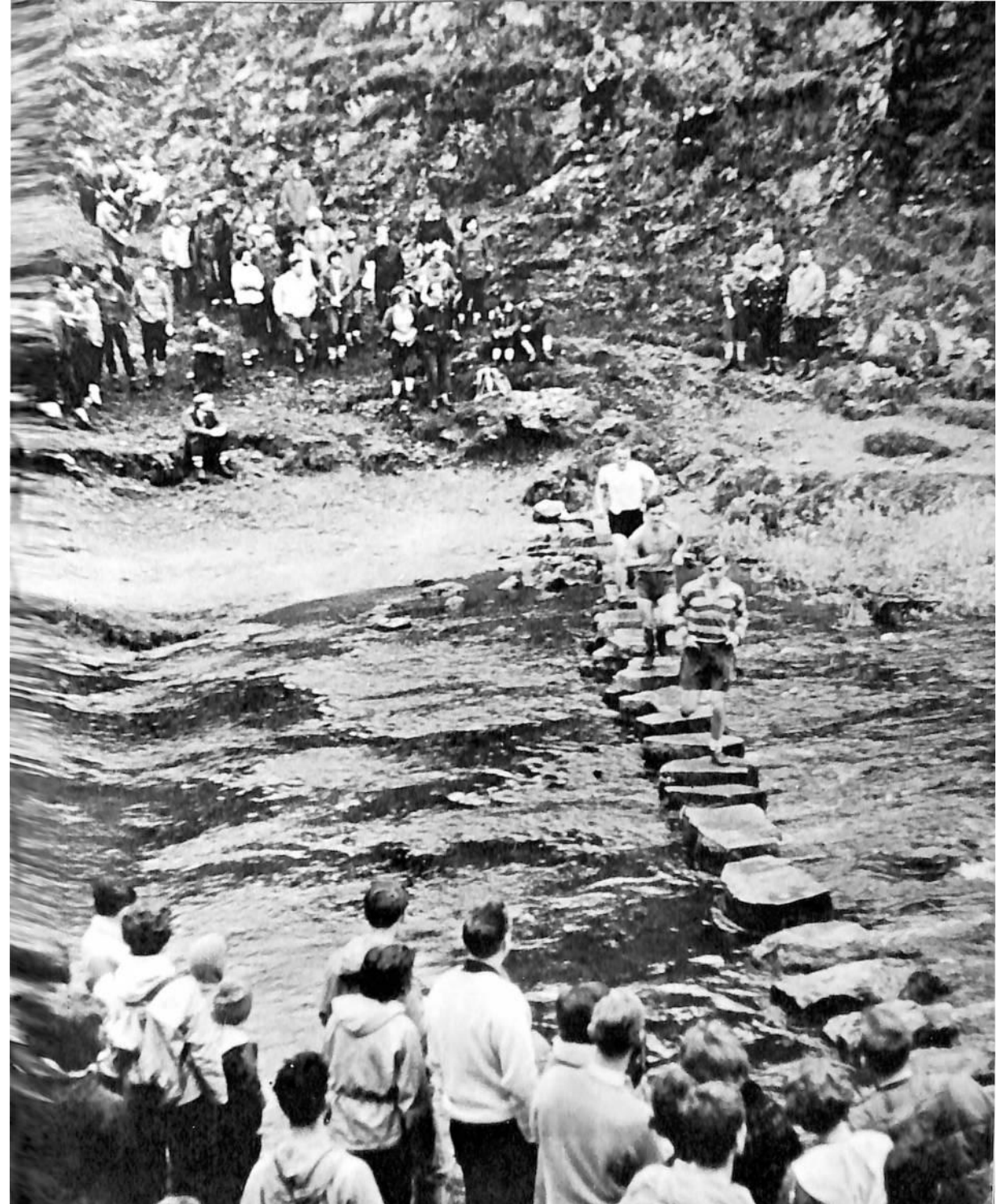
In the Himalaya Bob Pettigrew made a reconnaissance expedition on the Kulu divide to Solang Weisshorn 5930m, which he eventually climbed in 1966, being the 2nd ascent after General Bruce’s first ascent 54 years previously. In the Alps, Route Major on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc was climbed by Ray Colledge and Derrick Burgess, and Ray Handley and Pete Hassall did the Old Brenva route on the same mountain. In the Dauphine, Brian Cooke, Jack Ashcroft, Beryl and Roger Turner climbed six peaks, the best technically being the West Ridge of the Nord Cavales. Nearer home Nat Allen and Derrick Burgess were active on gritstone and limestone. Probably the best of the new gritstone routes »!f^s P, ?l^{um} (VS) on Curbar, whilst on limestone they took on the Manifold Valley for Volume 8 of the Limestone Peak Guides. They pioneered Beeston Eliminate’ to ‘The Thorn’, the latter climb being completed by Gordon Speedy Smith and Terry Burnell giving one of the finest routes on limestone.

In the newsletter an exchange of letters was of interest. One ‘Active Member’ wrote of the club as “a pile of dead wood waiting for someone to put a match to it and destroy it forever.” John Fisher took objection to this and wrote the following letter full of irony.

“Dear Editor,

Through the medium of your newsletter may I seek advice on some climbing matters which might be of general interest.

Is it possible for some avant-garde member to offer suggestions as to which climbing patterns are most highly thought of this year? The tricouni edge nail appears to enjoy popularity, but new types of clinker are available so possibly someone has some useful experience to impart on this most interesting subject. Illustrations would be a splendid idea although no doubt difficult to reproduce in



the newsletter.

A further recent innovation too, is the lighter type of Beales' Hempen Alpine line which seems to be a great improvement upon the heavy manila in use at the present time. Does this give satisfaction?

Whilst reading the letter of 'active member' in the most recent newsletter it is difficult to resist the temptation to ask if whether, to some degree, he is confusing vociferousness with interest and is this partly responsible for the absence of some members on meets?

Yours sincerely,
John Fisher."

Roger Turner also wrote a letter where he wrote "My dictionary says 'Club' — heavy stick with one thick end. Obviously this is what he means by dead-wood and you know which is the thick end without me pointing it out!"

In the sixties, February was traditionally a Langdale Meet at the Fell and Rock Climbing Club Hut, Raw Head. 1964 was unusual in that snow was down in Derbyshire and it was assumed it would be similar in Langdale. This was not the case and consequently those who brought skis left them on the cars throughout the weekend and launched out into an active rock climbing weekend. Geoff Hayes reporting the meet chose to list the climbs thus: - "The following are some of the routes climbed by those on the meet: Raven Crag Middlefell Buttress, Oak Tree Wall, Original Route, Savernake* Kneewrecker Chimney. Bow Fell — Bow Fell Buttress. Pavey Ark — Crescent Slab, Gwynnes Chimney, Cooks Tour. White Ghyll — Slab routes 1 and 2, Gimmer Main Wall, Bracket and Slab, 'B' route, Herdwick Buttress, Ash Tree Slabs, Pallid Slabs. Easedale — Deer Bield Chimney. Not a bad collection for a weekend in February."

In the May 1964 newsletter, Derrick Burgess, full of vigour for limestone wrote the following article with a view no doubt of passing on his enthusiasm to the rest of the club. Much water has now gone under the bridge and the article should now be read bearing in mind the date of 1964.

"Limestone Climbing in Derbyshire"

Derrick Burgess

The development of limestone climbing in Derbyshire has opened up a new field for the climber from the Derby and Nottingham area. We have for years considered ourselves fortunate in having the gritstone edges so handy and Black Rocks situated close enough for an evening's trip in summer. The 'dolomite' limestone of Brassington and Harborough was considered the only limestone rock sound enough to climb upon. This was the general view. 'Classics' have been done on limestone, the chimneys had been climbed on High Tor years ago, Ilam rock's challenge has been answered, but the only serious ascents up to about 1950 were Golden Gates (formerly Valkyrie) and Morning Crack on Stoney Middleton and Sunset Crack on Wildcat Rocks, climbed by members of the Valkyrie Mountaineering Club. The full potential of the crags with which Derbyshire abounds was seemingly still unnoticed and there was, of course, still plenty



Snow Arete on the old Brenva route Mont Blanc 4807m. Peter Hassel climbing.

Photo - Ray Handlev



Monte Rota 4634m. Stuart Bramwell and Ron Chambers on the shoulder of the Signalkuppe, the Italian summit of the mountain (with the Col Gnifetti below and the Lyskamm 4527m on the right).

Photo - Gordon Gadsby

of scope for development on Gritstone.

As the Edges became more commonplace there was an automatic swing to limestone. At first it was by climbers seeking artificial practice for the harder continental climbs, and it soon became apparent that many of the routes would go 'free'. The rank of 'ivy puller' was created and soon many crags, stripped of their ivy cloak, revealed good rock with many obvious lines. As a result of this development the guidebook 'Climbs on the Mountain Limestone of Derbyshire' was published giving details of many cliffs and first class climbs.

This development has, of course, its drawbacks. Many inexperienced parties 'artificial' up free routes; the occasional use of pitons has resulted in parties putting in the odd peg to 'make it go.' Routes graded V.S. on limestone *are* V.S. and it's no use thinking otherwise, the practice of climbing above one's standard and banging a peg in at every hard move is to be thoroughly deplored.

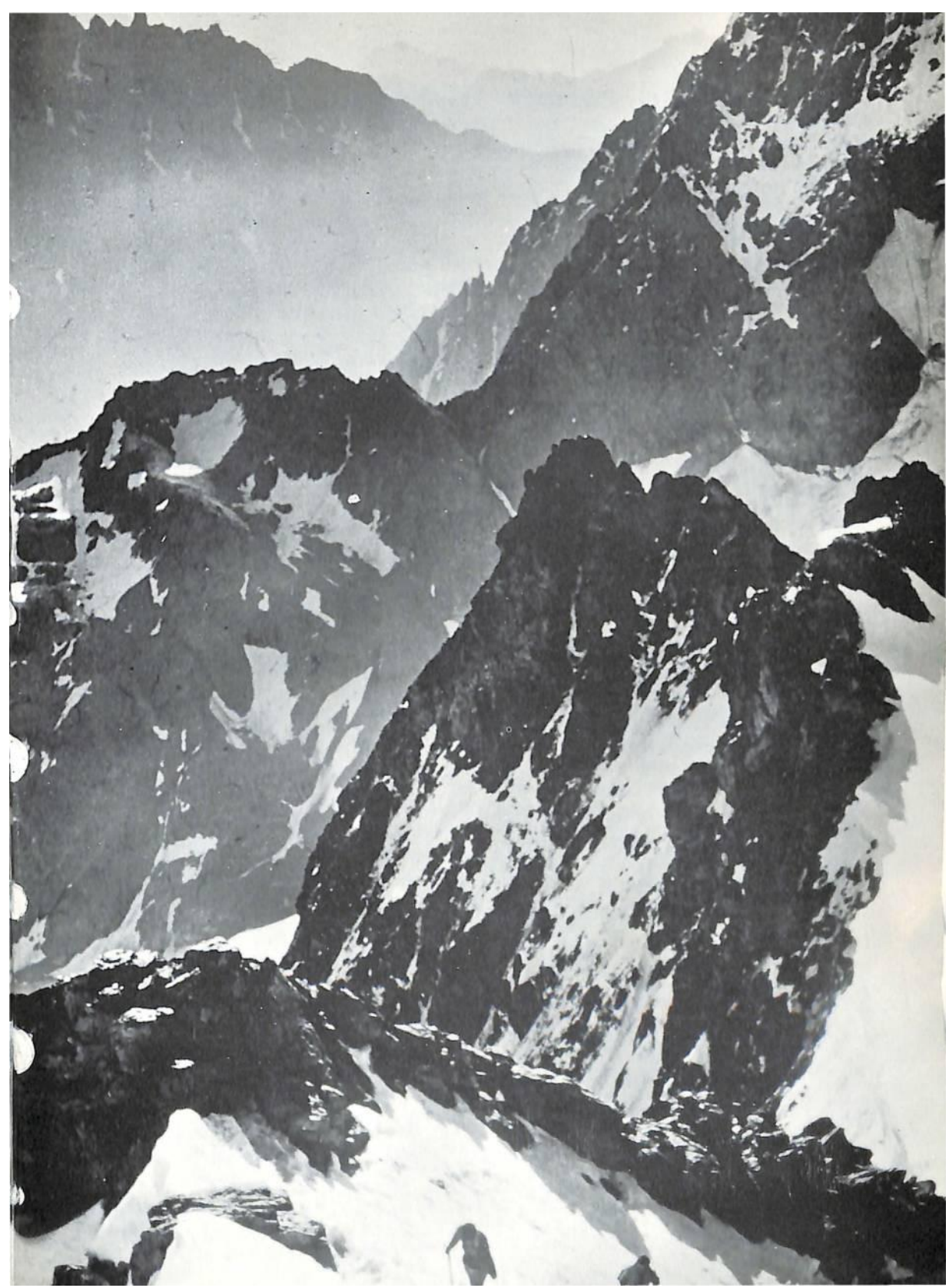
"What are the best places to climb on limestone?" you may well ask. Stoney Middleton undoubtedly offers many first class routes and at most standards. Routes such as Glory Road, Aurora and Golden Gates are all 'Severe' in standard and worthy of becoming limestone classics; harder still but still good are, Sin, Froth, and What the Hell, in fact the choice at 'Stoney' is wide and varied. Unfortunately the crag is over popular, the proximity of the road and quarry detracts scenically and the transistor radio, well! that's your opinion. But where else can a climber come face to face with a potholer half way up a route or sit in the local cafe and listen to 'fast lads' with their bikes discussing the morning's 25?

Chee Dale, marred by the railway, is famous for 'The Big Plum' a 250' route with A3 overhang. However, its companion route 'The Stalk' is more for the ordinary man whilst further left there are some excellent cracks and corners. Water-cum-Jolly is rather disappointing, numerous routes but not such good quality, however 'Mecca' on Ravenstor is a challenge for the peg man with a liking for expansion bolts.

Leaving Water-cum-Jolly one can enter Ravensdale and at last a limestone crag pleasantly situated. Not many routes but those on the left hand buttress are short and good. Medusa is the easiest route on the main crags and with the steep hillside below gives a feeling of exposure rare outside Wales.

Further south lie the limestone crags which are more the domain of the local climber. Matlock Bath is hardly the place for lovers of solitude, but High Tor offers a challenge to any mountaineer, although permission to climb there must be obtained and that granted only throughout the winter. Opposite the New Bath Hotel lies Wild Cat Rocks, which is the home of the Nottingham Climbers Club. Apart from Sunset Crack, climbed many years ago, they are responsible for stripping the crag of its extensive growth of ivy and putting all the routes up; some of these are very good, although in many places the rock is loose and dirty from being covered for so long.

Starting within feet of the main road and yet seemingly secluded, Willersley is the most easily accessible and possibly the best of the limestone crags. The 'original' Crack and Cucumber Grooves are the only routes at 'severe' standard,



slightly harder is the impressive Sycamore Flake which is comparable with such routes as Ivy Sepulchre in the Pass. Pot Hole Wall, Overhanging Wall and the 'Sinuous Diedre' are for severity, enough to test the mettle of anyone. Pot Hole Wall is a marvel of a route finding through the upper overhangs of the crag.

The Dove and Manifold valleys offer climbing in pleasant surroundings. I lam Rock is famous for the 'White Edge', a pure peg route, but has a route of Severe standard up the back. Pickering Tor is a worthy summit, again peg routes predominate, but there is once more an 'original' route traversing right from the col and up the grassy ridge to the summit. Tissington Spires and the Twelve Apostles all are climbed upon and there is the possibility of further routes on these crags. However, the first real cliff of the dale is Raven Tor near Milldale. Two free routes, a hard crack on the right buttress and a pleasant 'Longlands' type route crossing the left hand Buttress are the best 'free' lines. The other routes are more for the peg man. The other development in the Dove Valley is in Wolfescote Dale on Drabber Tor and the Celestial Towers Which look worthy of a visit.

The Manifold holds both Beeston Tor and Thors Cave, and offers the hardest and most sensational limestone climbing. Thors Cave, or rather the crag, towers above the valley and the climbs all start from the 'West Window' of the Cave. The obvious line is the chimney and groove leading upwards from the 'window' to the summit; this gives very sensational straddling and bridging before more normal techniques can be utilized in the final groove. On the right wall of the 'window' is an interesting peg route whilst further left there is a deceptively hard and exposed crack.

Beeston Tor is known more for the cave at its foot rather than the climbing, but this will surely change as more people hear of, and climb, 'The Thorn'. This route leads by a 60' slab pitch to a stance in the huge cave, a traverse left soon dispels the secure footing created by the cave and the continuation upwards over a small roof and up the wall to the finishing rake is tremendously exposed. Three pitons are inserted in the roof and should be left in by future parties. The cave can be vacated rightwards on pitons. The only other line is the 'Eliminate' which crosses the crag from left to right. This is mainly free with one pitch on pegs and gives an exposed route crossing The Thom at mid height.

Alderley Cliff at Earl Sterndale is worth a visit when walking in the Upper Dove en route through the Peak. A quarried slabby crag that dries quickly now that the trees have been ruthlessly cleared, it offers routes of a reasonable standard, although the climbing is not typical of other limestone crags. The above is a brief account of the limestone potential of Derbyshire for the climber and it is hoped it will be of use visiting the areas mentioned. It only remains to say that there *is* loose rock, so a fair degree of competence is required and the best training ground is still on the gritstone outcrops."

In the pre-monsoon period of 1964 Pettigrew was active in the Kulu Himalaya with a Dr. Franz Mohling of the American Alpine Club. Bob and the Ladaki Porter, Wangyal, followed the next day by Dr. Mohling and Porter, Ang Chook, made the first ascent of Kulu Pumori a peak of 6555m. Bob described the final



Jack Ashcroft



Photo — Bob Pettigrew Derrick Burgess Photo — Jack Ashcroft



Brian Cooke

Photo — Mike Berry



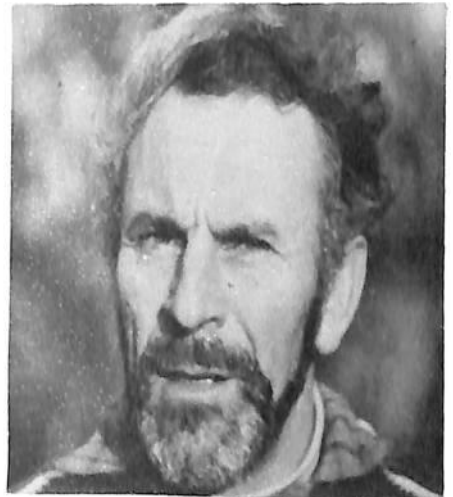
John Welbourn

Photo — Jack Ashcroft



Ray Handley

Photo — Harry Pretty



Peter Janes

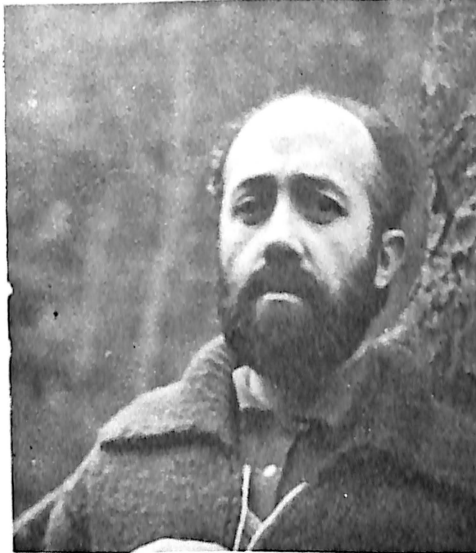
Photo — Gordon Gadsby

section to the summit thus:-

“Roped up on doubled red nylon line we stumbled off up the last little rise before the cliffs at 6.00 a.m. Though feet and faces remained cold and numb we made good time climbing up the spine of the south-west ridge until the point where it terminated decisively at the bad step that demarcates the summit pyramid proper from the approaches. According to plan we now left the ridge and struck across the prominent snowfield called the Apron — a steep slope with an awesome run-out over black cliffs at the top of the South Face. The angle of the snow forced us further and further right towards the South East ridge where we had no desire to be. The alternative was to climb the Apron direct, so after resting briefly on a rock outcrop, we struck upwards in firm snow and soon rose above the bad step on the South West ridge. We had traversed half the width of the Apron before changing direction.

Once we gained the lowest rocks of the ill-defined buttresses leading to the summit ridge the nature of the climbing changed to scrambling over mixed terrain of loose rock bearing unreliable powder snow forcing us to take stances and pitch sections for greater security. But good progress was maintained and at about 6420m it became possible to take a diagonal line westwards back towards the South West ridge, our first love, on steep but excellent snow. By this time the sun had just cleared the summit ridge and it could not have found more devout worshippers in the whole of the sub-continent. I still could not feel my toes despite frantic wiggling. Wangyal, too, complained of lack of feeling in his feet and looked like Santa Claus with hoar frost twinkling all round his balaclava helmet.

From our position on the South face, as contrasted with other mountains in the vicinity, it was obvious that we were near the top. The summit ridge, reached shortly after, is a keen blade of rock plastered on the North side with the vertical ice flutings we had viewed with dismay from the glacier below on our first day's reconnaissance trek. The snow dome on which we were now standing is a subsidiary summit to the east and we contemplated with misgivings the 200' of airy, undulating traverse that led to the principal snow top. On our right hand were corniced ice columns whilst on our left hand vertical rock buttresses enclosing narrow couloirs plummeted to the Lai Qila glacier. The first barrier was a step of smooth red rock overlain by a cornice of powdery snow. Wangyal led off over this and spent some minutes beating it down before he would trust its attachment to the rock. There followed a scramble down into a gap from which we gained an upraised edge of rock which served as a belay as a final section of the ridge to the summit. I anchored here to safeguard Wangyal's cautious advance along the crest to the half way point — a sheet of sharp edged slaty rock upflung athwart the ridge, four feet high and no way around. Straddling this hurdle was a delicate operation and threatened emasculation. Moreover the airy situation added to the delicacy of this high altitude gate vault. The final few steps to the summit lay steeply up the finely etched snow cone in good, frozen snow. Warily I joined Wangyal; we anchored the rucksacks and sat down. The time was 9.00 a.m. on June 6th, 1964. The ascent had taken 3 hours and Kulu Pumori was won. Below, on all sides lay a welter of glaciers, snowfields and mountains. We shook



Bob Pettigrew

Photo – Gordon Gadsby

Fred Allen

Photo – Gordon Gadsby

Chuck Hooley

Photo – Gordon Gadsby

*Marsden Rowsley 1957
From Left – George Sutton, Jim Kershaw,
Laurie Burns, Jack Ashcroft, Dave Widdows.
Photo – Harry Pretty*

hands ardently as we gazed in admiration at the snow-bound ranges stretching towards Tibet. Far to the west my gaze located and saluted former adversaries like White Sail, Indrasan and Deo Tibba where we had known defeat and victory.*

Undoubtedly the same thoughts were passing through Wangyal's mind for he has campaigned much in Kulu. Across to the east Shigri Parbat 6655m,**a great icy fang of a mountain, represented the final upsurge of the Kulu/Bara Shigri Divide before the mountains of Spiti, and ultimately Tibet dominated the scene. Urgently now I took out the Leica, posed Wangyal for a summit shot and photographed a 360° round.

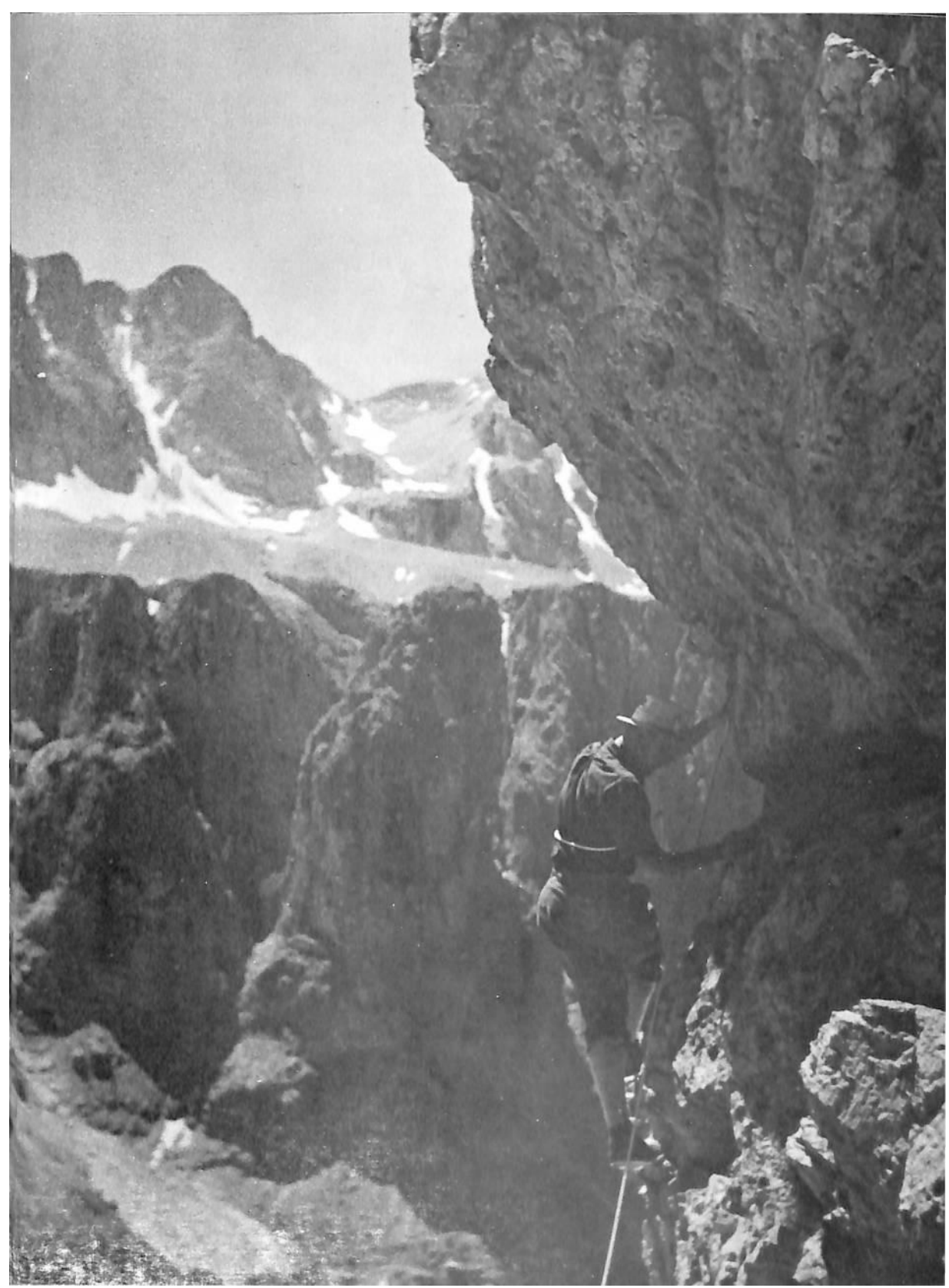
After half an hour on the summit we carefully commenced the descent. Following the same route to the upper slopes of the Apron, we then struck off direct for the South West ridge taking a diagonal line in sugary snow which yet bore us safely back to the foot of the bad step. The sight of Camp 7, a vivid orange splash in the featureless snows of the ridge, was a great incentive and we made a rapid descent to the canvas haven. We had made good time; 1 hour and 15 minutes. Wangyal prepared tea while I removed boots and socks and contemplated my semi-frozen feet. Pleasure at our accomplishment was mitigated for me by an attack of sneezing conjunctivitis(from ill-fitting goggles),and a great weariness. The hot sweet tea alleviated my condition and I was soon enjoying the climb in retrospect. Forty-five minutes after our arrival in Camp 7 the clink of an axe on stone announced the arrival of Franz who had made a solo ascent of the Cockscomb by an improved route. He reported that Ang Chook was ill and had remained in Camp 6. We discussed plans for a second assault on the summit. Franz agreed to remain at Camp 7 while we descended to Camp 6. In the event of Ang Chook's illness continuing we agreed that either Wangyal or I would return to Camp 7 for the summit climb; then we descended the Cockscomb down the easier line discovered by Franz to join Ang Chook in the lower camp. By the time we got there he was feeling much better and had decided to join Franz in the upper camp the next day."

Nearer home there was a meet on Skye when a party of five traversed the Cuillin Ridge. Easter in Glencoe and Whit week on Arran were their usual successful vacations. On gritstone Nat Allen completed the manuscript for the Froggatt-Curbar-Baslow guide book published in January 1965 and put up a new climb V.S. named 'Noser' with Derrick Burgess on Chatsworth Edge. In the Alps, Uschi and Colin Hobday climbed in the Stubai attaining 5 summits, but probably the best routes were done by Derrick Burgess and Ray Colledge who did the East Ridge of Pain-de-Sucre at Chamonix and at the other end of the Alps, Derrick did the Scarfe Arete in the Dolomites with Ray Handley.

By 1965 the Newsletter had taken on an informal lively style full of small items of news and comment much of which was written by the industrious editor Geoff

*Alpine Journal 67.305

**Himalayan Journal Vol. XXIII. p. 56.



Hayes himself. If meets were not reported on by their leaders, Geoff would find some comments to put on record. Of the meets recorded in detail, one in the winter at Llanberis led by Paul Craddock and an August Bank Holiday meet in the Gwynant led by Merle Wallis were exceptionally active and attended by vast numbers of people. Whitsun was spent in Eskdale and Chris Martin was meet leader for a September weekend at Dow Crag. The tenth anniversary meet of the Welsh Walk was led by Fred Allen around the Plynlimon massif and Margaret Hooley recorded a Marsden Rowsley walk done over the Whitsuntide weekend by Les and Ron Langworthy, Chuck and herself. They bivvied Friday night at the 'Isle of Skye' and Saturday night beside a wall overlooking the forestry plantation below Crookstone Barn. They had hoped to spend the night in Crookstone Barn, but on arrival discovered it had recently been converted into an outdoor pursuits centre and so another night under the stars was the only option open to them.

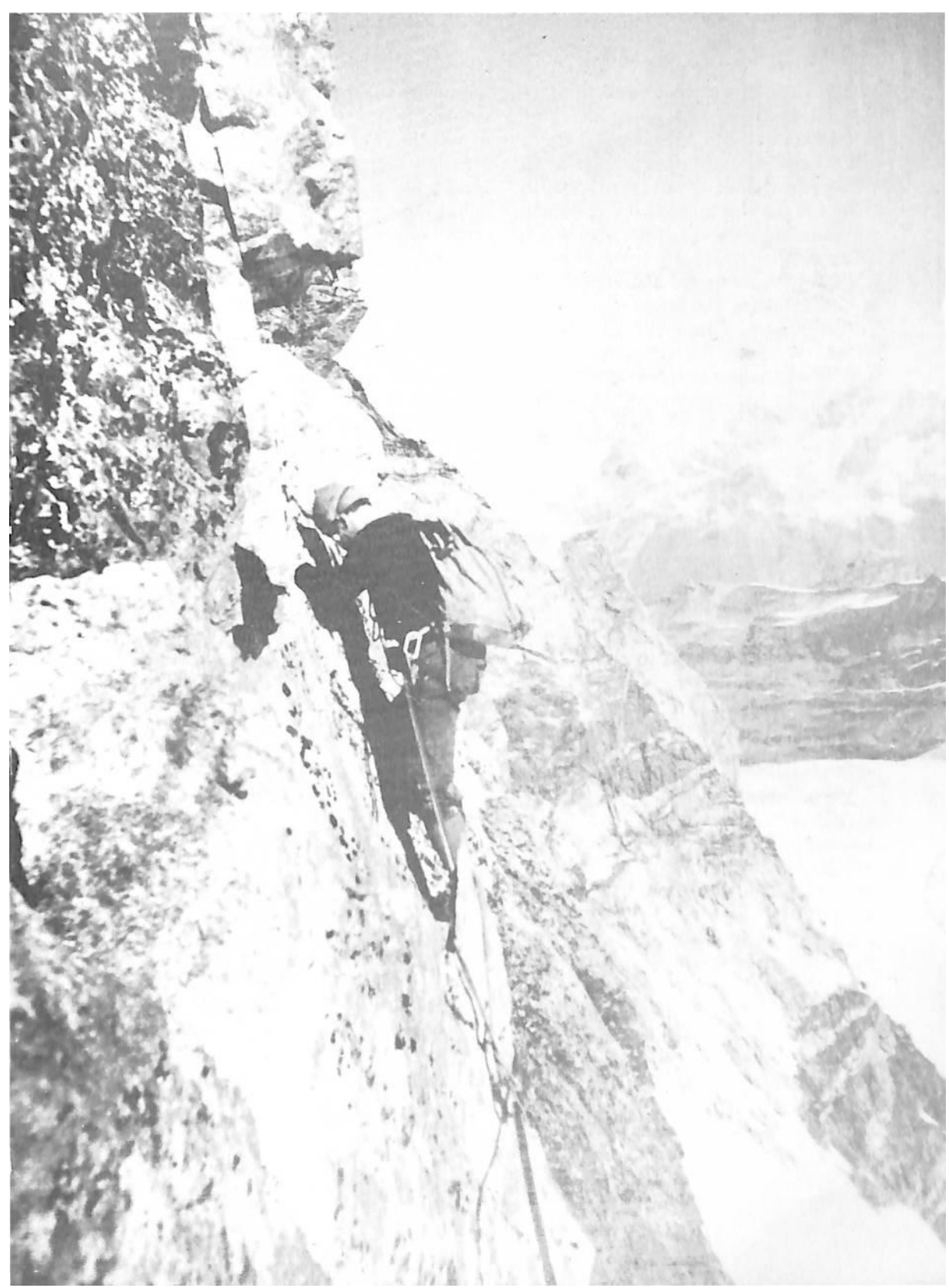
1965 saw the go-ahead for work on the Manifold Valley for Volume 8 of the Peak Limestone Guides. This commenced 5 years of concerted effort before it was finally published. Nat Allen, Derrick Burgess, Derek Carnell and Ray Handley pioneered such routes as Skylight Flake, Skylight Groove, Lynx Wall, Ossians Ridge, Cumberbund (an outstanding VS limestone route), The Sweep and Hermits Traverse. Allen and Burgess also produced a new HVS route now named Black Crack at Swanage, whilst in the north on the Yorkshire limestone of Gordale, Des Hadlum and Eric Wallis put up a fine new HVS route called Light.

The Alps were not neglected with probably the best routes being the North Face of the Lyskamm and the Caterinagrät on Monte Rosa done by Ray Colledge and Derrick Burgess. The Zmutt Ridge on the Matterhorn and the Triftjigrät on the Breithorn were done by the same pair in company with Ray Handley.

The year 1965 must not be without mention of its significance in the history of mountaineering, The Alpine Club founded in 1857 — the first club for mountaineers in the world and thereby the senior of all clubs — held a Centenary Dinner marking the conquest of the Matterhorn by Whymper in 1865 and the end of the Golden Age of Mountaineering when all of the chief Alpine summits were conquered. A group of Oreads attended the Centenary Dinner held in the elegance of a West End Hotel. Harry Pretty chose to write up the occasion as a humorous gibe at the current Oread President as well as less obviously at the A.C. The article reproduced here is rather typical of the humour which many an Oread has been subjected to over the years.

'Playboy of the Alpine World — Profile of a Man in Office' Harry Pretty

The title is enough. Hardly need to mention those illustrious initials which, in themselves, have given rise to a strange mystique. R.H., the man who has established himself in all our hearts as the arbiter of mountaineering manners and good taste, the end product of long years of apprenticeship to the high priesthood of the senior club regime.



There are persons who say it is the result of his venerable association with R.L.B. Colledge, but others see a more profound explanation of that unmistakable panache which a succession of vicissitudes has not diminished. He has become since his elevation to the Presidency, every inch a R.U.R.P., the very personification of the twentieth century realised ultimate reality person.

But, to see him at his best you must observe him moving with a kind of furtive over confidence across the exotically furnished arena of an Alpine Club Winter Dinner.

I still get sublimated anxiety symptoms when I remember the now notorious A.C. Centenary Dinner.

As Pettigrew said, making his usual play, "... only the top people you understand." We were therefore a little surprised that R.H. was of the party since this was before he had achieved real distinction as the only hard man not mentioned by name in Mr. Joe Brown's biography of N. Allen.

Todhunter (Pete Janes) was openly dubious as to whether the R.H. brand of savoir faire, a monument to the scholarship of his friends, would stand up to the worldliness in depth of such an occasion. "After all," said Todhunter "... in the company of Pretty, Pettigrew and myself, masters of the sport you might say, he could crack." And Todhunter mused in a fragmentary way on a previous Alpine Club occasion when our man, not appreciating the modernising effect of A.C. members from Mallory to Hunt, had appeared in a hired set that started with button-up boots and ended with that type of frock coat favoured by professional gentlemen in mid western cow towns towards the end of the last century. The bit in between had been a trifle indeterminate.

Nevertheless, on the night, our fears were allayed. Admittedly his set was a little on the sharp side. The coat had a bit of the Joe Loss hang but, otherwise, he was impeccable and we entered the room with easy confidence.

Gone was the twitching ill-at-ease manner that he had assumed on previous occasions. At last, we thought, we are reaping the dividend of careful indoctrination.

We watched him circulating among the Lords and Bishops, nodding familiarly to Italian Counts and sundry belted knights. We listened to him speak with authority to Tilman and Francis Chichester on some of the obscure problems of navigation of small boats across Weymouth Bay. We noted his comments to Shipton on the logistics of small parties in the Himalaya, and we were silenced by the ease and familiarity with which he dispensed advice on gamekeepers to his landowner friends. We tried hard to overhear his remarks to one of several Bishops, but the thread of his erudite exposition on things ecumenical was lost in the hub-bub that greeted a special announcement.

Whymper's original tent, as used on the first ascent of the Matterhorn was about to be unveiled. It had been preserved (something of an over-statement) by the Italian A.C. whose representative, in this Centenary Year, had now returned the remains to the proper heirs. It was indeed re-interrment on consecrated ground.

It stood there, droopily supported by tatty guys tied to several chairs. The

ancient stained canvas seemed to have received a heavy charge of grape shot, and the whole contrivance looked as though it might crumble to dust at a touch. As a precaution, all electric fans were switched off. The encircling press moved back as though their very breathing might invite catastrophe. Men, nearly as ancient as the object before them, moved uneasily on their sticks, and wiped away small tears with large silk squares.

The Italian representative, a Count of distinguished lineage, moved forward. The murmur of appreciation fell away, a great silence was about to engulf us all as we stared transfixed at the holy relic.

But, seemingly, we were not all transfixed. R.H., cock-a-hoop at his success as an entrepreneur in ecclesiastical politics, was apparently oblivious to other matters in hand. That a large plate of salted peanuts on a far table should take his fancy, thus causing him to interrupt his exposition of the similarities between the Synod of Whitby 664 A.D., and the current antics of Papal Curia; that he should fall over a chair reaching for the plate; that the chair was holding up one end of Whympers' tent; and that all these things accompanied by a crash of breaking timber and a dreadful oath, should happen at the same moment as the Italian representative was about to speak — was an appalling coincidence.

They took him out of the wreckage of broken guys, chair legs, the bits of string and fragments of ancient cloth and eventually, when the dust had settled, they started again with the remains of a tent which had now assumed more of a lean-to shape.

As for R.H., he was taken away in a plain sealed van and, at the moment of truth, I am ashamed to say we denied him and gave it as our opinion that he was a waiter who had 'taken a drop' or, even worse, perhaps a journalist.

H. Pretty.