



OREAD

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OREAD '78

EDITOR: Robin Sedgwick DUPLICATING: Jill Gregson TYPING: Gwyneth Jones

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NOVEMBER 1978

# EDITORIAL

Another edition of the journal marks the passing of yet another year in the club's life. Hopefully the following pages serve to document the activities of the club and it's members.over the course of the last twelve months. Obviously the success of this is limited to the array of material presented for publication, but fortunately the articles are of a diverse nature covering virtually the full spectrum of what people have been up to. The praise for this of course goes to the members who have taken the time to sit down and put pen to paper and I offer them my thanks.

Sincere thanks must also go to the people actually involved in the production of the journal who contributed so greatly to making my job so much easier and the finished product so much better. Jill Gregson has provided invaluable liason to previous year's journals and a most efficient duplicating service as well as a wealth of useful advice. Gwyneth Jones has done sterling service on the typewriter and Chris Wilson has been most helpful in providing photostats. Thanks also to Beryl Strike for her excellent cartoons and Keith Gregson and Rock Hudson for their considerable talents with pen and ink drawings. Finally the many members who have been so forthcoming with ideas and suggestions.

Perhaps this time of the year, with the publication of another comprehensive journal and another sell-out annual dinner, is as good a time as any to take a look at the state of the club. Browsing through some old journals I came across some biting editorials and related correspondance concerning the poor health of the club and how young, active members were sorely needed to save the club from creeping senility. Well, those words were written 8 years ago and in the intervening space of time a new generation (in which I should really include myself) has become established and there now exists in the Oread a keen nucleus of young, but experienced, mountaineers climbing regularly to a high standard. This, coupled with the past record and traditions of the Oread should ensure the health and vitality of the club for a number of years to come. There has been some concern voiced concerning the consequent increase in membership, but this new blood is vital to the long-term survival of a club which, although steeped in an illustrious past, must continue to look to the present and the future if it is to maintain it's enviable position as one of the country's senior mountaineering clubs. Obviously the intimacy of a small club will be lost if membership continues to increase beyond a certain figure and this is therefore a problem that the club committee must continue to keep under close scrutiny. The matter has already been raised at an A.G.M. and will continue to concern members in the future. Obviously any solution to the problem must be one that preserves the spirit of the club and keeps it between the two extremes of nebulous association and élitist clique. For the present however, the club is thriving and to myself and many others epitomises all, and more, that a good mountaineering club should be. Long may it remain so.

20.11.78

Robin Subgeit

Editor.

# LETTER TO THE OREAD from Tony Moulam

The Oread must be tired of after-dinner speakers making feeble jokes about mountain nymphs, and I often wonder if the name was chosen to give the guests a chance to liken or contrast, their hard men with demi-goddesses! From my post prandial observations perhaps you should have settled on Green Men! But whether nymphs or not, the club spirit has been held high over the years. The early Lyngen expeditions and the Oread book are just two of the many notable accomplishments for a 'local' club, but the Oread is strong because of its local connotations, rather than in spite of them.

Having been banished to the southern flatlands for nearly ten years, and having other commitments at weekends, most of my recent climbing has been at Oread evening meets. I'm not yet sure whether I make the Wednesday evening pilgrimage to Derbyshire for the rock, or for the beer in Jonah's pub. It's probably a bit of both, and at least it keeps my consumption of routes and ale at an acceptable level.

Certainly I begin to live, as opposed to exist, at the Derby exit from the M1. There is a change in my metabolism, when I enter Oread country, and sparks of joy as I meet the members at different crags, all well set up in a rosy glow brought on by kindred spirits. Either struggling up a few feet from the ground, or sitting on it chatting, I feel I have come home. The high spot of 1977 was not an official meet but it was one of the best attended. Nat Allen's 49th (oops - perhaps he'd meant to keep the number secret) was the occasion, a week after the season had officially ended. I arrived at Black Rocks, scene of my youthful endeavours, and thus dear to my heart, complete in city suit. A bite or two of this nourishment fortified us for a flying visit to Dukes Quarry, and Great Crack; as Nat put it: "the best gritstone crack you've never done".

Keen to get back to the meet we did it quickly and descended. On the quarry floor we met the eternally youthful Peter Pan figure of Nobby Millward, and his wife, who had come to see us in action. They were too late as we declined to do it again, and so back to Black Rocks for a work-out until dark. Birch Tree Wall, (LH) Stonnis Crack, The Ravage - how often <u>is</u> it done? I'll swear Harding's buttons still lie in the dark depth of the crack, and they have been there since they fell from his cut down mac in 1945! Queen's Parlour Slab as the last light faded took me back to the old Stonnis days when Harding first top-roped it, and then led it - with a handkerchief round his eyes. The result of a youthful boast in the Greyhound that he could do it blindfold.

The great days of our formative years culminated in the Superstitious Stant on Lean Man's Buttress, the Easy Exit from the Promontory Cave, and Demon Rib, the latter an early forerunner to the extreme and unlikely gritstone routes of today. These were all done on a Friday 13th, and apt it was, too, on Demon Rib. I gave Harding a top rope so that he could learn the early moves and thought he shouted 'haul away!' As I did so he jumped for the ground, having really said 'all away!' and to his surprise floated upwards drawn by the rope manipulated by my strong young muscles!

However, the Promontory was our 'pièce de résistance'. Members of the Polaris had witnessed our early tries and told us, gratis, that "better men than you have tried and failed." The nose was relatively easy to reach and one Thursday, (after school!) Harding and I stood in the cave. We had confidence in one another, and no belay. A little tension ensured my exit down the eastern side, my feet searching for the hidden foot crack. My toes slipped in and somehow I made the few feet to the abseil spike. A descendeurless (? - typist) abseil on a single line deposited me in Prom Gully, and left Peter to make these few difficult and unprotected moves before he could join me, and we knew that, at least, we could completely girdle our home ground.

It seems we were blind to the limestone possibilities that have now become the normal routes, aping climbs on bigger cliffs. We did try one or two things but were indoctrinated to believe it was all rotten, steep and unclimbable. Our ascent of High Tor Gully, full of debris, was not inspiring, although I well remember the struggle shared with Harding, Horsfield and Herbert up pitch after pitch of rubbish, after the first clean little wall. The park police were not so active then, or , years later, when I did the Original Route on High Tor with Don Whillaws. They wanted to take our names but they didn't believe us when we said that we were both called Brown!

After that digression I had better return to the subject of celebration. The 23rd Oread dinner in 1972 was my "21st Anniversary of Oread dining." I was presented, along with some ribbing, with a plate specially printed to commemorate my feat of attending 19 out of 21 dinners as an official guest! The Committee has obviously rumbled me as since then, I've only been twice, and on both occasions have had to pay for myself.

The 1977 dinner was particularly enjoyable as I sat near to the principal guest, my old 'oppo' Harding, and the cabaret had women as women, no longer do we have to put up with Dave Appleby in drag. My many friends in the club appear, like Nat, ageless. I see them year after year, perhaps - a little greyer, or a little balder, but never (as far as I know) bent!

But, to finish, I will recount to you how I came to be at this last dinner, and the trials and tribulations incurred to get there. The Royles were organising the first Mynedd Fell Race and were finding it difficult to get entrants. They bribed me by getting me a place at the Oread dinner, which of course also meant I would not be very fit on Sunday and so would not win the first prize! At the back of my mind was the idead that I could plead that I should attend the Oread President's Meet instead, but they were adamant that I should perform. Reluctantly, I took up my place at the starting line with lots of young men in tee shirts, shorts and running shoes. My elegant, if hairy, legs were modestly hidden in climbing breeches, though a hint of what might be was given by my bulging cyclist's calves moulding tight green socks. Naturally, I wore boots, because the B.M.C. ways you should always do so on mountains. As I plodded round the Castlenaze edges I could only think of how nice it must be in the pub in Alstonfield, but the Beehive made a satisfactory alternative, when the pain was over.

Having survived that, I suppose I may just about make 42 years of Dread dining. If I do so, I expect Harry Pretty will still be a fixture in his corner seat in the Green Man Bar, and anyway there will be a lot of summer evenings climbing before then, with the climbers with whom I feel so at home.



## G AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE

#### BY MARTIN MUSSON

Drip, drip, drip, crash!

"Get this bloody snow off me!" was the rude awakening to New Year's morning. Four drunk, cold people arose and started hurling wet snow off me. I was pinned inside my pit by the weight of wet snow that hit me in the face and chest.

It all started on New Year's Eve, whilst on a climbing spree in the Cairngorms. Eleven of us travelled up to the Boat of Garten Caravan Site in my Bedford van a few days before. It wasn't too crowded! (I remember it as reminiscent of the slave-ship scene in 'Roots' - ED.) I had previously suggested spending New Year's Eve in a snowhole, and wondered how many of the group would go through with this mad outburst. Four daring sculs agreed to the venture: Robin Sedgwick, Dave Parnham, Pete Wragg, and Hilary Reed.

We stocked up in Aviemore with beer, whisky, and port, and then drove up to the car park at the ski-lifts. Our sacs were enormous and looked as though we were off on an expedition. I had borrowed a Cyclops Roc with a capacity of 80 litres. Due to its size, I ended up carrying the 24 cans and bottle of whisky. Pete and Hilary wouldn't let the port out of their sight.

The rest of the team helped us on with our loads and wished us well, then went off to try skiing. We trudged heavily up to the Fiacaill Ridge of Corrie Cas, then dropped into Corrie an t-Sneachda. We were in the usual Cairngorm clag and fresh snow on a reasonable base. Robin found a suitably high drift for the construction of a snowhole. It was about 30 feet high with a small delicate cornice at the top. Unfortunately, the top 10 feet was fresh snow and could not be tunnelled into for fear of collapse.

We emptied our sacs and donned caggies and overtrousers, taking

shifts to tunnel into the drift with ice axes and deadmen. (We had our climbing gear with us for the next day, weather permitting). We luckily tunnelled into an existing but shrunken snowhole, and spent a couple of hours enlarging it. Unfortunately, we hit the frozen snow beneath and couldn't tunnel upwards into the fresh snow. The hole was far too small for five people, so plan B came into action.

This contingency plan involved building an igloo round the snowhole using the hole as storage. We started hacking huge snow/ice blocks with our axes. Each one was about 2' - 6" long, by 1' - 6" square. The hours passed quickly as the igloo took shape. The first roof corner started going on at around 5.30pm. The lower wall was so high and solid that we cramponned up the sides to lay roof blocks.

Then the first disaster struck - it drizzled as darkness fell. We hurriedly finished the roof construction by cutting immense winslab blocks and carefully slid them into position. By 7.00pm we were ensconsed in our home for the night. It was very spacious with room enough to stand upright. The night outside was cold and windy, with the threat of more rain. Inside was still and warm, from the heat of our stoves, lulling us into a false sense of security.

We set about the booze and by 9.00pm were well on the way. It was funny going for a pee; because whilst sober we carefully exited the igloo and walked down the slope. When fairly pished we just hurled ourselves out the doorway and rolled down the slope. Hilary was especially funny as she had drunk most of the port. She borrowed Pete's boots and staggered out of the entrance. We shouted her to turn left, but confused, she turned right. We laughed raucously as we watched her headtorch outlining arcs of head over heels down the slope.

By 11.00pm we had finished the booze and had fallen asleep before the New Year. None of us realised this until the first roof fall at 2.00am. Pete and Hilary were sleeping under the ice blocks at

one end, whilst the rest of us were under wind slab blocks. Two of these blocks gave way and hit us in our stomachs. We awoke to a bleary chorus of Auld Lang Syne whilst hurling fallen snow out of the gap in the roof. We hazily surveyed the rest of the roof and decided to change round, so that the next fall (if any) would hit our legs.

Drip, drip, drip, crash. Sure enough, the blocks crashed down onto our feet. Again the mess was hurled out of the roof. The next block that was ready to go was directly above our heads. A short time after, it started dripping and eventually crashed down on my head and pinned my arms inside my pit. I bellowed loudly to get the others to free me. That was the end of the windslab blocks, and we gazed skywards to see overcast blackness.

We slept well until dawn when the ice blocks started dripping. We were still very tired and balanced mess tins on sleeping bags to catch the drips. We eventually arose at 8.00am, after a reasonable (!) sleep. The weather was clear but warm. We decided not to climb, but to descend back to the car park.

All that remained of our combined snowhole and igloo were four walls and a hole. We christened it IG because the gloo didn't hold it together.

#### MORAL

On descent we checked the previous night's weather forecast at the ski-lift station .....



Southerly winds, Rain, Freezing Level

### SOMETHING BY ON MY PAUL GARDNER MIND

If there was ever any doubt that climbing was all about what happened above your neck, then my experiences on Vector should seal it. Five times I had made it to the large spike but as soon as I stepped round to the foot of the Ochre Slab, my resolve evaporated, I had shakily retreated to the spike and abbed off into defeat.

This time I felt more confident than I had ever done before, except i rhaps the first time, when I didn't know what was involved. We had arrived in Wales the previous day after several weeks of wet weather, and the crags had only just begun to dry out. We had dispatched Nexus, Superdirect on the Nose and a wet Black Spring without any great hesitation, and so felt ready to blast the mental barrier.

It had rained in the night, but by the time we arrived at Tremadoc, and drunk a cup of Mrs. Jones' tea, the rock was dry except where the drainage leaked from the overhangs.

There was no question but that I should have the middle pitch. It was mine - it had large quantities of my sweat on it, not to mention lost abseil slings.

John led steadily up the first pitch. Only V.S. but damp and greasy where the leaves practically touched the slabs. A few layaways and incuts and we were both esconced on the stance with John lashed tightly in. Coming out of the trees the heat was making itself ... felt, and one layer of clothing was bundled together and tossed down.

Out across the first wall. The moves were imprinted on my mind, and I had total recall. Step onto the sloping hold, reach up right for the good jug and get rested. In went the bomb-proof runner - the first of many. Tight fingerjams led up right. A quick swing and I could sink my arms in deep. Leaning out a large hex. bit the dust before I heaved up onto the spike and draped it with a long tape.

This was pretty much as far as I had ever got before and I took a breather, trying in vain to fit a nut above my head. Fortunately, I didn't get too involved in this fruitless exercise but poked my head around the corner. Apart from a passing resemblance to my blackboard at the end of a busy day, it seemed to have footholds that hadn't been there before.

I knew the move around the corner by heart and it went as smoothly as anything dreamt about so often should do. On sight it must be one of the hardest moves on the route. Now for the stopper move. I determined to have a look, stepped up, reached into the crack, laybacked up, and found myself bridged onto the Ochre Slab.

"Christ, John, was that what all the fuss was about?" Eight years of mental block dropped away.

Slot a nut and examine the peg. It was an ancient ring, so curved it was almost moulded to the rock the original? Tiptoeing up the slab, using the crack under the overhang there was a balancy move when the crack closed, but soon the peg was bypassed and I had my fingers in the famous crack round the overhang. With feet a bit higher, I sank another wedge in, and laybacked round until the left wall reappeared to bridge onto. More of the same and I only had a short traverse left to accomplish.

At this point, I encountered water for the first time. The sloping footholds

were wet, but with good horizontal fingerholds, and the haven only a few feet away, this presented little difficulty. A long reach got a jug on the edge of the cave, but gave me a shock. It felt wet - but on re-examination turned out just to be the first chalkless hold for 80 feet. And so the cave. Strapped in tight, I relaxed to a rich feeling of satisfaction. An old ghost laid.

John came up with disarming ease for one who only gets out a few times a year. After a quick rest he set off on his pitch - and it looked wet. It took a moment to decide on the point to cross the overhang, but his body soon swung out of sight and the rope rapidly ran out.

"It's dry." came a relieved voice.

Then he stopped. By this time someone else had arrived. John had reached the infamous final crack, and the first moves were wet.

"Any ideas how I get going?" "Layback on the undercut." "Yeh - but how do I reach it?" "Well!"

We could chuckle - we were safe. Finally a rapid run of rope and John announced that he was up. Moving over the roof was amazing - an enormous jug, full of water, and then an easy traverse to the final dripping groove.



It was a bit problematic to reach the undercut flake, but once there the sharp layback holds led up - no mud nowadays. And so the top. Big grin - right chuffed. And a very tasty piece of crumpet coming up One Step.

What a route!



It didn't hit me suddenly - it was more like a gentle icy trickle worming its way into my boots. I'd disappeared up to my knees in a raging torrent of melt water, struggling to keep my balance in the rounded pebbles beneath. I emerged with numbed feet and as I trudged along, alternating warmed and icy water squelched and oozed around my boots and rotting toes.

Yes, at last I was there, the land of my dreams for the past five years. It was just great! The bedraggled mass marched on, heads bent and bodies stooped against the driving wind and rain. I was simply following the footprints of the one in front, watching the red gaiters as they pendulumed back and forth, plunging my feet into the freshly-vacated prints. The red gaiters broke the monotony of the black desert of ash and the grey of the day, as we journeyed on across the Maelifellsandur plains, each foot sinking a short distance into the water logged black spur of Hekla.

What was I doing here? Was it really a holiday? Of course it was, we didn't have to cook, Paul, our leader, had that arduous rask. Only this morning, we had the wondrous delicacy of sardines on sweet biscuits and a mug of cold water - the primus had failed. Lunch was slightly more palatable, dry biscuits slapped together with Icelandic margarine and yet more sardines or liver paté, and then, pure ecstacy, a chocolate biscuit.

Not a lot was said that day, we walked on and on, across an ashy, water-logged plain, over a ridge, across an ashy, water-logged plain, over a ridge, across an ashy .....

Then suddenly a small grey dot appeared on the hillside, it seemed a lifetime to reach, yet more ash and icy streams and then we were there. Two hours later there was the ceremonial scraping of mess tins as farmhouse stew was removed to make way for the dessert (After all, who likes gravy with strawberry instant whip?)

The exhausted, but by now satisfied party, were perched on illadapted biscuit tins, leaning at awkward angles to dodge the incessant drips from the discarded articles of clothing. Bed time came early. Four were for the minute space up top and the rest for the hardboard sheets on top of the black ash. After much pushing and shoving, and acrobatics, four persons were established on the top storey (There was a distinct lack of a ladder) and eventually peace and quiet reigned.

Dawn broke wet and misty. Shortly after breakfast panic set in as folks made a grab for one of the three spades, wondering in which direction to disappear in order to avoid the two other diggers well, what do you expect after a breadfast of porridge followed by sausage and beans:

Due to the wather 'Plan B' was put into operation - a trip to the ice caves of the Torfajokull ice cap.

Packed lunches were made and a hand dipped into a biscuit tin to be slowly removed.covered in sticky chocolate up to the elbow. The contents of soggy Marathons were duly distributed along with the dry biscuits and the usual filling.

So we set off into the mist, one tilley lamp in hand. For a while, we plodded upwards over snow and ice.

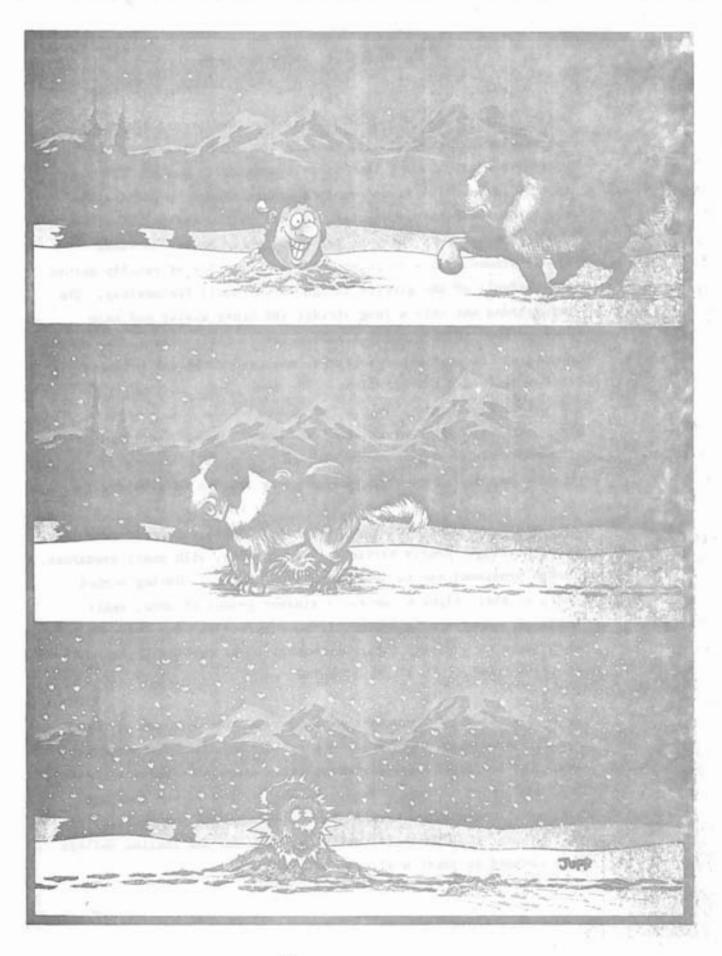
Suddenly we arrived at a large hole in the ice, from the centre of which issued a fountain of steam. We clambered down and wandered along collapsed passageways and so into a cave. In the darkness a hissing sound could be heard. Closer examination revealed a puddle of bubbling, dancing water and nearby a mud pool with slowly-rising spheres which reached a peak, hung for a moment, then popped and subsided. From here, we slid back down the ice cap to the hot spring. This was a large natural bath created by damming off a pool with lumps of obsidian and rhyolite. There we lay moaking up the heat absolute bliss - the first bath for a week. Much of the following two days was spent there playing very silly games with jiffy lemon squeezers and salt cellars and dodging the green slime that lurked at the bottom of the pool.

Then the weather improved, the mist lifted, the heavens closed and Iceland became the 'Land of Fany Colours' once more.

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A truly exhilarating holiday!

### Two Routes in A Day



### Two Routes In A Day

#### by Rock Hudson

Colin (Barnard) and I had made rapid progress across the smooth uncrevassed Moncorve Glacier towards the N.W. Buttress of the Ciarforen since leaving the Vittorio Emmanuelle Hut at 3.15 p.m. At this buttress we fixed crampons and continued up undulating slopes of the Monciair Glacier. To the right, the peaks were showing the silvery edges of pre-dawn, while above the stars slowly dimmed. We were going well, too well for we rapidly gained the headwall of the glacier though it was still featureless. The bergschrund was only a long stride; the heavy winter and late spring falls of snow not yet having let go their grasp. The slopes opened out as we climbed together, making for the col between the Monciair and the Ciarforon. The dawn showed that the N.W. face of the Monciair, previously noted whilst at the hut, was no longer so impressive as the angle had eased, though deeply furrowed. It would provide a good route, though its upper third was not visible and therefore might present some unknown difficulty.

At the col we turned towards the Monciair, traversing along a pleasant ridge, nearly horizontal for a while, with small gendarmes, though prominent due to their monolithic nature. Having turned there to their right we ascended steeper ground of snow, small bands of mixed terrain and a welcome surprise for the guide stated that there is normally a fair amount of loose rubble; again last winter's snowfalls had not all melted away.

By 6.15 we were on the summit, taking in a wide panorama of peaks, now illuminated by a sun which was rapidly climbing the eastern sky. The Dauphiné peaks far away, while nearer the Western Grisons, formed a series of wavy ridges. To the north-west was the huge bulk of the Mont Blanc Massif soaring above a boiling cauldron of fair weather cumulus cloud, while to the south the Italian valleys were clothed in thick mist.

Photographs taken - we were off, Colin to what he thought would be a quick and easy descent, while I thought of getting in another route. At the col I had worked out a way of traversing the ridge in the direction of the Ciarforon - a route not indicated in the guide. Though Colin was perhaps still casting his eyes downwards, he was willing to follow and I set off along snowy waves, up steeper icy ramps leading to rocky buttresses. Alternate leads brought us to the foot of a large rock buttress, somewhat shattered and it was therefore more prudent to continue by a leftwards rising traverse over steep icy snow. Enjoyable pitches were followed by a narrow rock band made a little tricky by a covering of verglas. An icy runnel provided an exit to a long sweep of steep snow interupted by a rib of rock. Below this rib the slope increased in angle and Colin took to the rock, which were climbed by broad cracks to reach the final snow leading to the ridge. At the summit we found Keith (Gregson) and Ron (Sant) waiting for us after they had done the North Face.

The four of us descended down the west face - the normal route and quickly reached the rock band previously noted. The other rope pressed on leaving Colin putting a new film into his camera. The descent now turned into a little epic as one of my crampons had broken. Belayed by Colin and balanced by one crampon, ice axe and borrowed dagger I stepped down kicking a tiny nick for my boot.. The process which was repeated many times as we slowly lost height; it only gave moments of apprehension when the boot skidded off the little nick, my weight coming on the other points of contact. A slip would have been difficult to stop from turning into a fall because Colin's axe belay was more of psychological help than real protection. After what seemed ages we were back on the glacier, which was now a wet morass and we continued by slips and slides back to the hut.

### CHAMONIX BY IN FEBRUARY

Having decided to go to the Alps in Winter, we went on the scrounge for information, accomodation, and equipment. Chris excelled at this and managed to obtain free accomodation and use of skis at Flaine and enough gear to equip an eight-man Himalayan expedition. One interesting fact emerged that although Oreads had been out the previous two Winters, nobody had actually completed a Winter route. This sounded ominous, so the primary objective was to complete a Winter ascent, however small. This we did, doing the Petite Aiguille

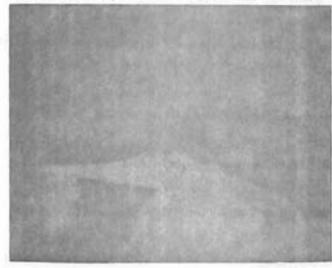


Photo: Chris Wilson on the Petite Aiguille Verte.

Verte; in Summer it is an easy route - a simple rock scramble but in Winter it provided some interesting mixed climbing. Instead of the 1½ hours for a Summer ascent, it took 6 hours up and 2 hours down. The only incident being the night before when bivouacing at the Grand Montets téléphérique station, when the allweather high altitude super-sports gas stove with liquid gas adaptor refused to function correctly and a huge flame shot out from a pre-heat tube (Good name for It) and wouldn't go out. In desperation this unscrewed the cylinder and just as I was advising against this pourse of action we disappeared in a huge ball of flame.

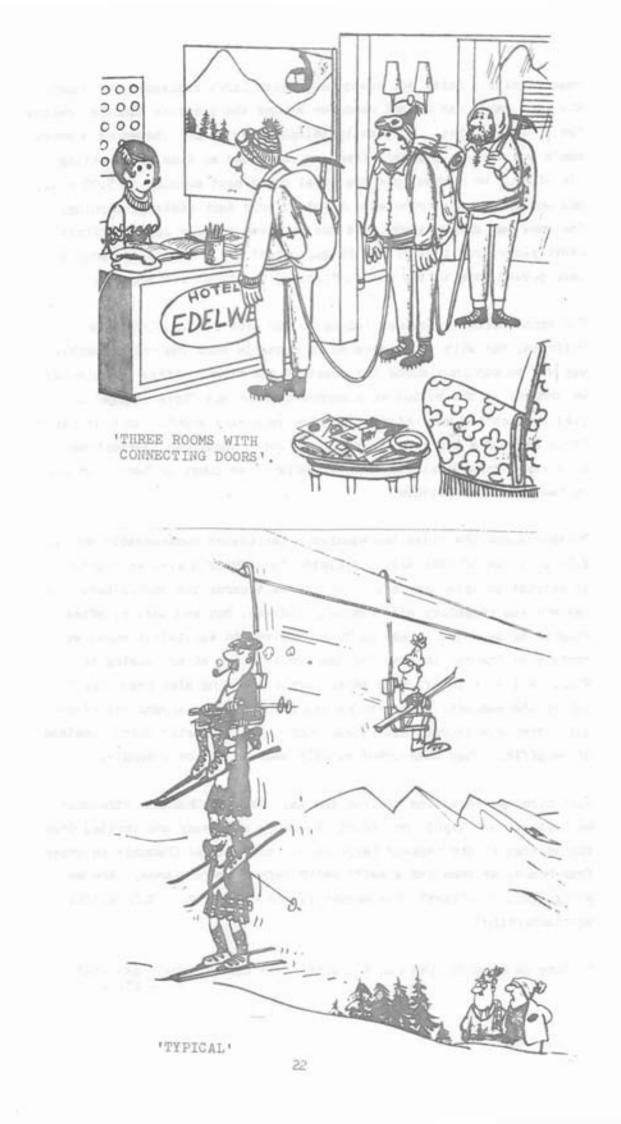
After this Mickey Mouse route we had a couple of days sleep and then drove round to Chamonix to try the Midi - Plan traverse. Packing and dressing in front of a large and inquisitive audience of skiers caused quite a stir, but eventually, with large rucksacks, we caught the last cable car up and wandered around the concrete tunnels looking for a bivouac site. A friendly téléphérique worker showed us a workman's hut with an electric fire and we wasted no time in accepting his offer. We pushed open the steel doors next morning at 5.00 a.m., and apprehensively crunched out into a cold dark winter's morning. The snow was surprisingly good and we moved quickly down the first heavily-corniced part of the ridge. First light saw us descending deep powder snow to the Col du Plan and our first big problem.

The route normally crosses ledges to the side of the first rock buttress, but with these covered in unstable snow the only possible way was to continue along the crest of the ridge. After two pitches we arrived at the bottom of a narrow chimney and Chris started up it just as a strong wind started to blow spindrift about. An hour later, Chris reached a stance, and pulled me up; I continued, laybacking up a steep snow-plastered wall and after five hours of hard climbing we had done four pitches.

Further along the ridge the weather deteriorated considerably and at 2.00 p.m., being basically interested in staying alive, we started to retreat in total white-out conditions towards the Reguin hut. The descent was purgatory and seemingly endless, but eventually, after staggering down the Envers du Plan glacier, in waist-deep snow, we arrived at the hut in time for tea twelve hours after leaving the Midi. A little later, some skiers arrived having also been caught out by the weather. The evening was spent huddled around our stove until they discovered that it was running on four-star petrol instead of paraffin. They then moved quickly away to sit by a candle.

Next morning, expecting to find the walk down to Chamonix strenuous, we left at just light, but found the going very easy and trotted down the ski-run in our rackets (snow shoes) and reached Chamonix in under four hours. We then had a swift half\* before driving home. Are we going again in winter? The answer is yes - ski-ing. Stuff winter mountaineering!

\* Come on Wrighty, you can't expect us to believe that, can you? - ED. -





# trois grandes courses

Chamonix has long been regarded as one of the finest centres in the world for alpine mountaineering. Classic climbs, many representing notable landmarks in mountaineering history, abound on the icy slopes and granite walls of the Mont Blanc Massif. This summer saw a number of Oread teams in action in the area . Routes achieved included the Sentinelle Rouge, Frendo Spur (2 ascents), Ryan/Lochmatter (Aig du Plan), Peuterey Ridge, and the North Faces of the Argentiere, Plan and Petit Dru. The following pages describe three of these classic Alpine Climbs.

# FRENDO SPUR

Photo: The celebrated ice-arete on the upper part of the Frendo Spur on the N.E. face of the Aiguille du Midi.

### CHARLIE JOHNSON

I woke bright and early - couldn't have been a minute after 11.30, and looked out of my tent to see the biolay once again bathed in sunlight; on meeting the glare my eyes and brain rose in a joint protest at the extra pint, or should I say 'Grande bier' that I had sunk in the Bar Nash the night before, a rather ordinary morning, really.

Cliff, another typical English climber, festering the summer away in Chamonix, was cooking again in his shelter across the clearing from my tent. Poor Lad seemed to spend his whole time cooking for the rest of the Stoke crowd. I managed to stagger from my tent to his shelter in one go and, without a belay, to scrouge a cup of tea. Cliff, as usual was obliging and as we sat in the sun supping the brew talk got round to climbing and the possibility of us doing a route -I recoiled at the thought - climb with this beautiful sunbathing weather. However, I was easily persuaded and we were soon packing up with our sights set on the North Face of Triolet.

"Any rock on the route?" asked Cliff. "Don't know - why?" "Nuts." "What?" "Nuts - should we take any?" "Better take a couple." I replied.

Not long after we were sitting in the Nash having a last beer. The Metéo was not too hopeful for the next day so we had decided to do the Frendo Spur on Aiguille du Midi instead - then if the weather did break we would not have wasted so much money getting to the route. I had been stormed off the Frendo the previous week so was not too disappointed at the change of venue. I am sure the fact that it meant we had time for a few more beers had nothing to do with it - we are not all called Gordon Wright.

That evening found us walking across the Plan d'Aiguille looking for a suitable bivi below the route. We found one and settled down for a long and comfortable night. I sat and gazed up at the route with its long rock section - looking very steep in the light of the setting sun.

"How many nuts did you bring?" I asked Cliff. "I don't know - where's the guide book?" "Here - oh shit." "What's up?" "Wrong volume".

With good intentions of doing Triolet, we had set out with Volume Two of the alpinists bible - the Frendo is in Volume One. Looking around, we saw some footprints in the snow on a ledge leading off into the darkness, and so, roping up I led off bravely following them. We soon found ourselves on long steep rock pitches and in the dawn light realised we were a long way to the right of the correct line.

Cliff began muttering about 'bloody mad Frenchmen wandering about lost and leaving footprints in the snow leading nowhere.' I wasn't sure where he thought we were or what we were doing. However, we had no option but to continue on the wrong line as between us and the correct line was a big blank wall removing any question of a traverse, anyhow, we were certain we were not far from the snow ridge. But alas, midday found us still on the rock with a long, difficult-looking section of mixed ground in front of us before the rock of the top gendarme, at least that was what we were certain it was.

Below us lay what had been numerous very hard pitches, made no easier by our miserable array of nuts. At one stage, I had used two nuts for a belay and Cliff led a horrendous 150' pitch of 5b without protection, as he was saving the last hex. for his own belay. I also had a chance to discover how good a Chouinard ice hammer can be when used as a mut although it does tend to be rather particular about the sort of crack it is placed in.

As feared, the mixed ground proved to be very difficult, a good Scottish

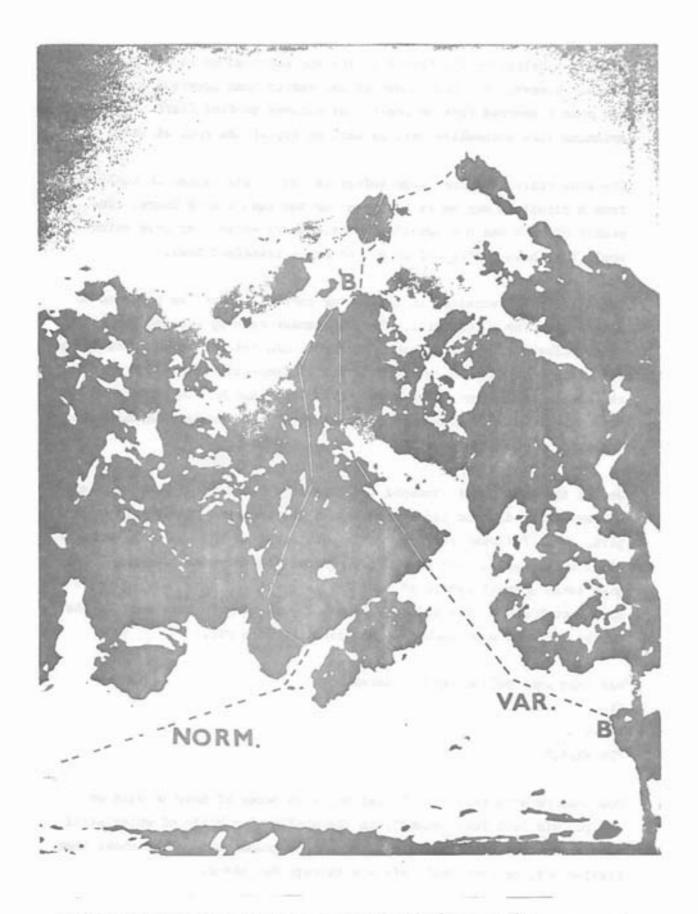


Photo: The four thousand foot long Frendo Spur on the North East Face of the Aiguille Du Midi.

Norm. : Normal line. Var. : Variant described. B : Bivouac sites mentioned. four, not helped by the fact that the sun had been on it for a few hours. However, the rock above it was easier than previous rock pitches, and soon I emerged from an ice-filled chimney to find Cliff sitting grinning like a Cheshire cat, we were on top of the rock at last.

The snow ridge stretched away before us but it was bathed in sunlight from a cloudless sky as it had been for the last 6 or 8 hours. The result of this was a disgusting mushy, sugary excuse for snow which would have been better off in a Scotsman's breakfast bowl.

Deciding that discretion is the better part of valour, we prepared to settle down for a long bivi. Three Japanese came up - using the right route, clever little men these Orientals, and set off up the snow ridge but we considered them the originators of kami-kazi and left them to it. As it turned out, they moved very slowly and had to bivouac on the top rognon. We met them on the top and they wer complaining bitterly of little ledges and no sleep.

We, on the other hand, scraped together some remnants of food and made a brew before digging large trenches in the snow and crawled into our pits. What followed was a glorious fourteen-hour bivi watching a beautiful sunset and a long warm sleep. Expecting only one bivouac, I had only taken a small bottle of fuel for my stove and next morning there was just enough for a brew and to melt a billy of snow for the rest of the route. We were soon packed up and ready for the off.

"Has that snow melted yet?" I asked. "Yes." CLUNK "Oh shit."

How someone with only size 6 feet and with acres of snow to walk on can put his left foot squarely in the middle of a billy of water still puzzles me, but Cliff certainly managed in grand style. The stove then fizzled out, no more fuel left - a thirsty day ahead.

The rest of the route was fairly straightforward, with some interesting steep brittly ice round the top rognon, which we tired of after a while

and found a route up the rock. We were soon plodding up the snow ramp to the Midi Télépherique Station and a much needed beer in the Restaurant, plus a meal of bread and cheese provided by a French family who took sympathy on a pair of poor bedraggled looking Englishmen.

On the way down, in the cable car of course, Cliff mentioned what a beautiful reaction would result from the tourists if someone pulled out a hand-grenade. Possibly someone overheard him because at 4.00am the next morning, the bottom station was blown up!

To end on a sad note, which is a pity after such an enjoyable, if a little adventurous climb a week later Cliff was killed while solo-ing on Mont Blanc du Tacul. My sympathy to his family, and any reading this who knew or climbed with him, a great character.



# sentinelle

# rouge

#### BY CHRIS WILSON

Smells of cooking from the next room mingled with memories of soya cubes and sent another wave of nausea eddying through a body vainly attempting to sleep. A body unused to high altitude, hard work, and too much sun. A brain clamouring for release from its overheated surround. Inside, a tangled web of thoughts, feelings, and memories: " .....considerable avalanche danger...... " so said the authorititive 'Mountain';

" ..... " the unexpected hut guardian;

" .....Lots of spindrift - it'll be cold...... " Pete, watching plumes of whiteness billow into the howling wind and fall from the summit down the intended route.

And now a mental onslaught. A teacup being stirred - the deafening sound finally exceeding tolerance level. And then cramponed feet walking on the Trident hut's steel floor. Why should a body be so punished? Has ambition exceeded reality? Perhaps for summer's first route something a little lower, shorter, and easier would have been more advisable. But now winter's fantasy has become summer's reality, and reality is often hard to face. At last, sleep, soothing and refreshing.

Midnight, and first to leave the hut. At Col Moore the confusion of old footsteps ensures a false line and enforced retreat but soon the long exposed traverse to the Sentinelle's rock commences. No obvious line to follow, either. Simply cross a couloir, heart in mouth, go to the next arret and repeat the process, fighting terror all the time. Usually the 'line' goes up and across, sometimes down, and always snow or ice. Snow covers everything, making identification difficult.

"Is this the Red Sentinelle?"

"No, because this isn't the Great Couloir."

Up and across, nothing difficult, and body now almost enjoying its unroped freedom. At last the Sentinelle Rouge and the start of the long diagonal traverse distance, hugging Mummery's Rib, pretending to be shielded from avalanche. Up and up and then across the subsidiary couloir. It's a long way. Shapes loom up from lofty heights above. On towards the couloir's centre.

Sh....sh....sh....shush.

The sound was almost imperceptible. A slow timeless river, un-ending. Gentle rivulets flowing slowly and smoothly down, down into the narrow beam of torchlight. There a change occurred. Individual particules madly cascaded down, bumped into one another, and accelerated one another, bomber cars bent on destruction. Just like a river in full spate.

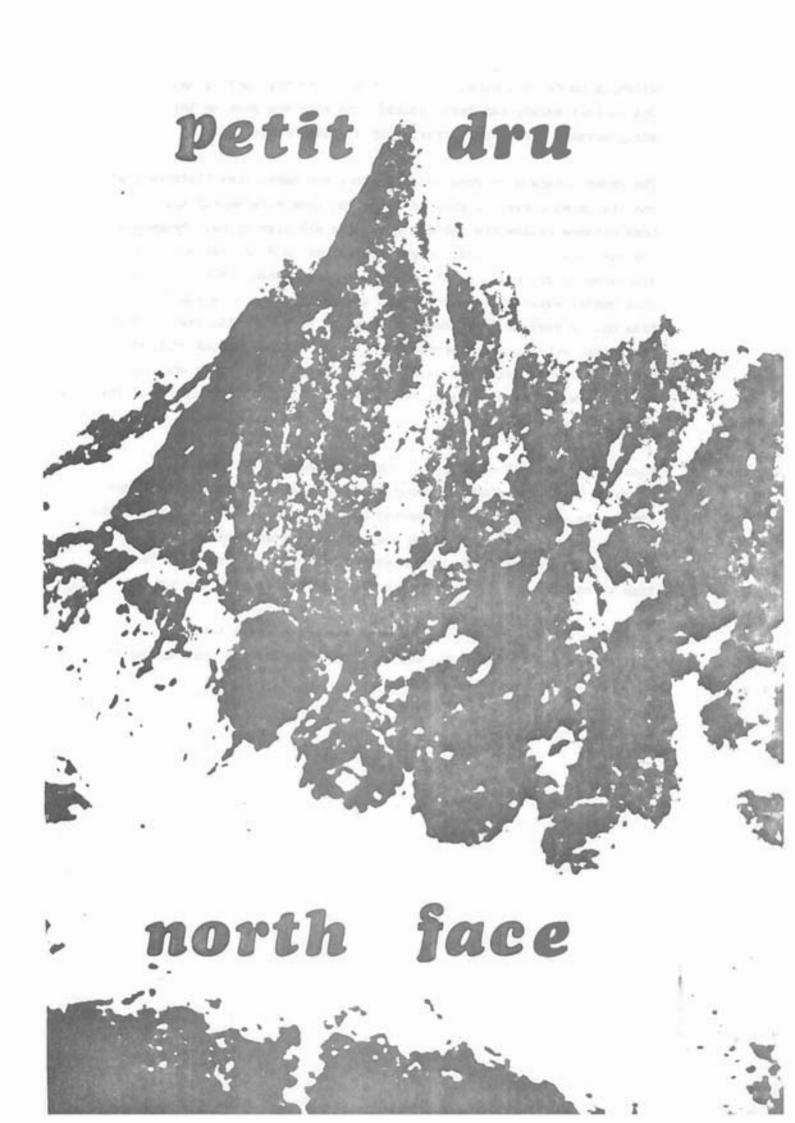
A brief hesitation, long enough to grasp that anything larger than these grains of snow might also follow the same course. And then again long enough to realise that this might not be a pleasant viewpoint. Merely time to regain lost rhythm - hammer in, crampon in, right crampon in, axe in - only now with increased tempo. Later, a slight lessening of tension as body and mind emerge unscathed from the tumult. But the rib is still far off; adjust course for the snow arrêt at its base, trying not to look up at the menacing shapes far above. On the arrêt aching lungs and weariness catch up, as does

slightly harder climbing, so it's on with the rope and up again. But at last safety has been reached, and none too soon as the early morning sun wakes a previously sleeping face.

The ground changes to snow-covered rock, not hard, just 'interesting', and the sweet curves of snow on the right look more appealing. Long pitches follow one another until the Rib lies below. Meanwhile the sun, despite the wind, is getting warmer, and all the while throats are becoming drier. A water bottle would have been appreciated on this route, especially as no ledges are forthcoming on which to brew up. A respite from the wind, gaining strength with every metre in height, would also be appreciated. The 'difficult rock chimney' mentioned in the guide and leading to the upper slopes, is enclosed in an ice wall and this calls for more skill than the usual run of the mill 'advanced snow plod'.

"Scottish Grade 4?" enquires a croak from above. "Tight", being the standard reply in such situations, is croaked back. Above, the wind increases, inducing a strong desire to be done with the route. But on it goes, through the windslab, ever upwards. As Route Major recedes below the climbing and angle ease until it becomes time to unrope, and struggle on up the last few feet to the top.

There, in the screaming, numbing wind, a thought gets through -"Still nearly 3 weeks to go, and we've got one off the list already!"



### By Robin Sedgwick

Cold dawnlight, gunmetal grey, streaking the cloudless sky from the East, announces the promise of a beautiful day. A brief one-arm excursion with lighter into the bleary-eyed 5 a.m. cold, and then snuggle back into the bag for a few final moments of down-induced comfort. The stove purrs hypnotically, benevolently enticing a return to sleep, until the realisation that the snow in the pan is now boiling water necessitates a search for tea bags and a full awakening to the new day. Brew, cigarette, pack the sac, a second brew, another cigarette, into boots, and harness, fumble frozen-fingered with crampons, and finally crunch off across the frozen snow of the Dru Glacier. It's 6 a.m. on a July Saturday, and Paul and I are going climbing again.

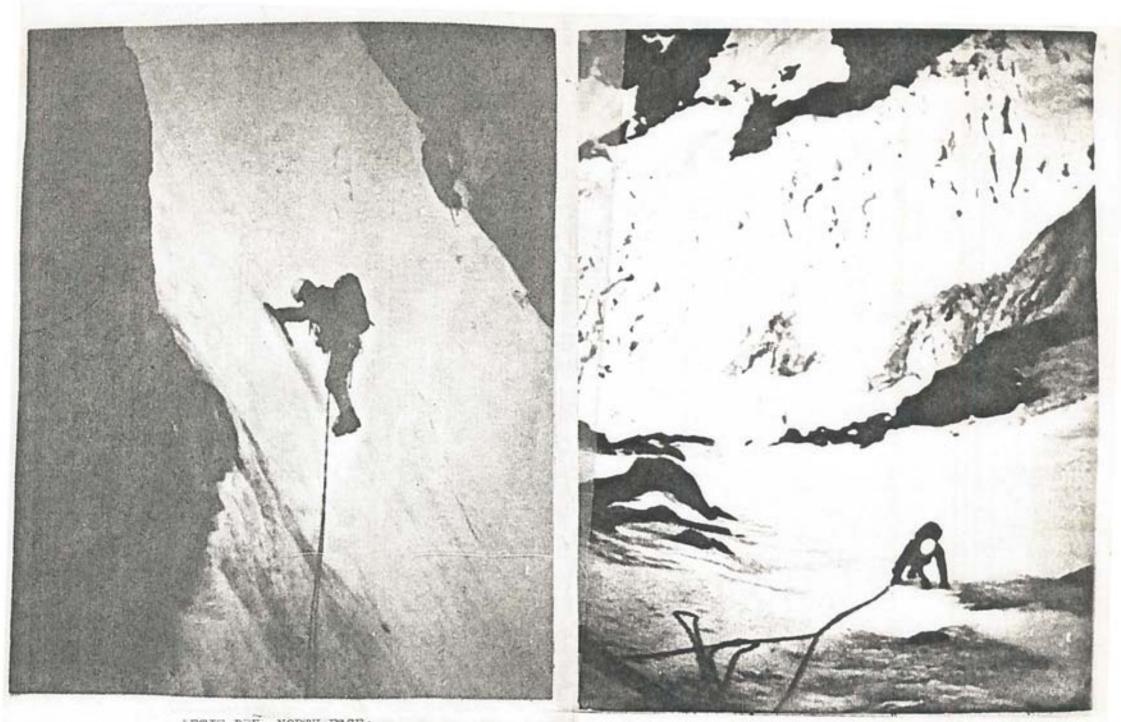
The initial couloir was ice; hard, brittle, and 50 degree steep not the broken rocks of the description; an ominous sign that continued to manifest itself as we traversed the snowfield that buried the stone terrace. To our right, on the triangular pillar, three teams were already at work on seperate lines, all making disturbingly slow progress. We commenced a fourth line, higher to the left, and as Paul romped his way up it, first the French, then the Anglo Scots started their abseil retreats, muttering about the amount of ice on the route. Steep cracks and delicate ribs led to Paul's stance at the foot of an ice-choked chimney which led to the top of the pillar, ahead of the remaining competition. Two superb pitches followed; steep cracked walls on perfect ice-free granite, trending right all the time towards where the Fissure Lambert provides the key to unlock the way to the central icefield of the Niche.

An icy squeeze chimney provides 30 feet of panting lungs, wedged shoulders, and delicate cramponless tiptoeing on the ice that chokes the back. Past Paul's stance, then right to the foot of the Fissure Lambert, a broken line of weakness that pierces

the gently-impending wall. It is mercifully free of ice and goes surprisingly easily on jugs and jams to where a sling on a peg assists the final pull out into an enclosed bay. I belay in a sheltered niche, out of the firing line of the barrage of ice-particles discharging intermittently from the icefield above and bring Paul up. For nearly an hour, I watch and wait, and smoke cigarettes, while he bridges an overhanging groove, and, 80 feet above my head, struggles, with feet in slings, to turn a small overhang. Eventually, with much pulling on in-situ pegs, and two judiciously placed aid-nuts, he vanishes from view and moves up to a stance. I follow, with liberal use of etriers and rope tension, and arrive at a tiny ledge at the base of the ice couloir that points the way upwards to the Niche.

Three pitches of Scottish Gully climbing, and then moving together across the Niche, saw the day rapidly slipping into afternoon. We moved back onto rock again, steep, perfect granite, a succession of grooves, chimneys and jam cracks, that led to a small ledge occupied by two other climbers. It transpired that they were Polish, and had started the previous day. Their slow progress was soon explained by their liberal use of aid from mild steel pegs, which they hammered in and out with great gusto and much wastage of time. After an hour's wait, there was still no sign of them making any progress on the next, unavoidable pitch. We decided to call it a day and an abseil took us to a tiny erie where we drank tea and soup, and discussed the day's progress. With promise of good weather for the morrow, we settled down to a comfortable, if constricted, night's sleep, feet hanging off the ledge, tight belays preserving the status quo.

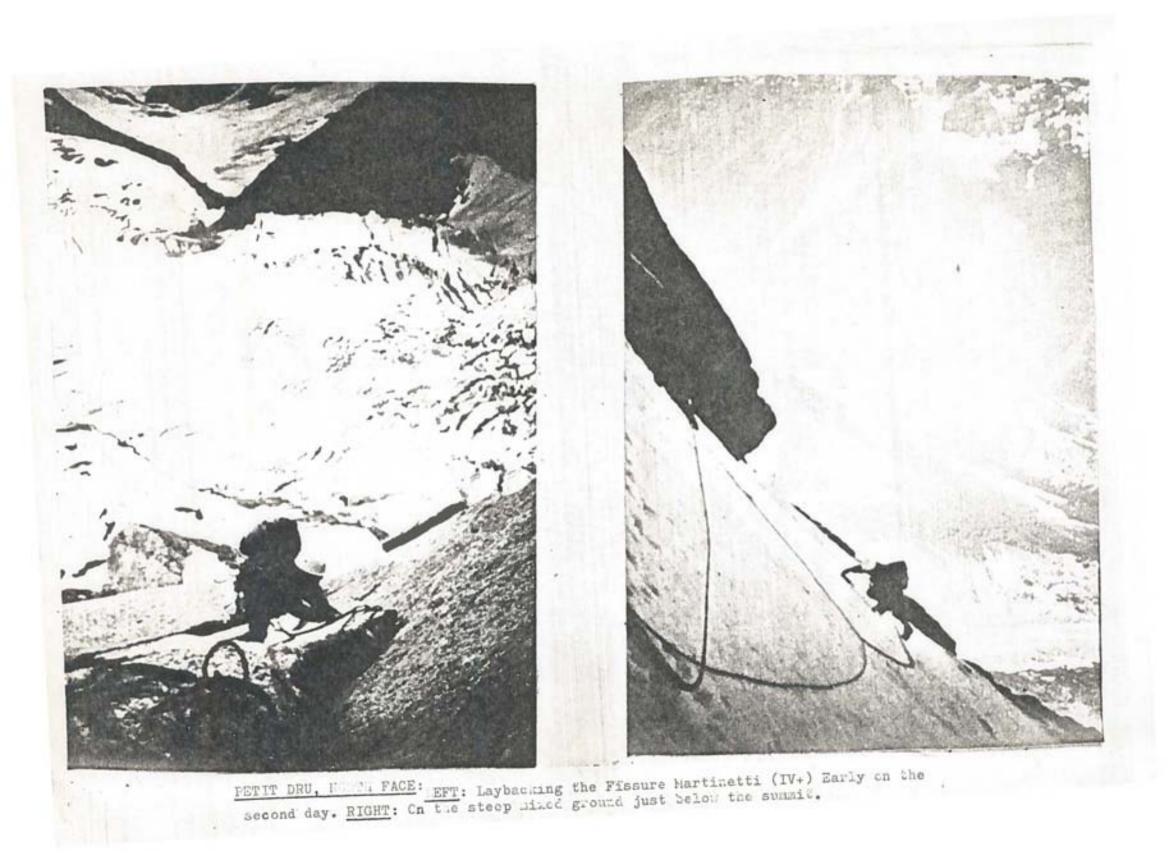
A breakfast brew at 5.30 a.m., and 50 feet on Jumars up the abseil rope, started the second day's work. While the Poles commenced another aid extravaganza on the Fissure Allain, a move right led to superb laybacking up the Fissure Martinetti, and a Grade V flake crack. As Paul arrived at the stance we looked down at the Poles, swinging in etriers, 30 feet below. Clean climbing rules! 0.K? The last of the hard rock pitches behind us, the way led upwards for 3 rope lengths



FETIT DRU, NORTH FACE: LETT: Faul Addison traverses the first she field to the foot of the triangular pillar. HIGHT: Crossing the ice field of the Miche, haliway up the face.







of steep but straightforward rock. More company arrived in the shape of Allan and Cubby, two Scots lads who had just emerged from the American Direct on the West Face. For two hours we picked our way upwards together, sharing stances. In between, pitches of steep mixed ground, teetering on crampon points on hard, brittle ice, that lurked below the small, insubstantial patches of snow. Hanging off our belays on foothold stances Allan and I compared notes on our respective routes, routes already done and those still to be done and ice climbs back home on the Ben, while somewhere above, in the depths of a steep icy chimney, the two leaders moved slowly upwards.

We say farewell as the Scots move off right, en route for the hole leading through the Bonatti Pillar to the descent route on the S.E. ridge. Paul and I continue, up and left, drawn by the glinting lodestone of the Summit Madonna, now visible in the afternoon sunlight, seemingly beckoning from above the final ramparts of the face. A straightforward snow and mixed gully leads me inexorably upwards to the base of an appalling-looking squeeze chimney, walls glistening with verglas, back crammed with rotten ice. I clip into an in situ ring peg on a long belay and bring Paul up. It's 4 in the afternoon and the sunshine has deteriorated into thick, cold, all-enveloping grey cloud. Forcing tactics are the order of the day. Paul takes both Terrordactyls, the etriers, and most of the hardware and moves up 20 feet to the base of the chimney where a peg provides welcome protection.

"Leave your sac on the peg, I'll bring it up." He acknowledges, removes his sac and slips it in. Moving up, he realises the rope is tangled round the sac so reaches down and unclips it again.

The next half second runs through with the clarity of slow motion as Paul's crampon points shear out of the ice and, oh, so slowly, for the senses, but much too fast for any action save reflex, he's off and down. We both yo-yo to a stop on the ropes; he 15 feet below the peg, still holding his rucsac, me swinging on the belay rope in the middle of the gully, pulled off the stance. We clamber back to our previous positions. Paul clips his sac into the peg and tiptoes on up, terrors biting rotten ice, crampons grating on ice-glazed granite. An aid-nut, a struggle,

into a sling, another nut and finally a pull out from the icy slit into a gully and easier ground. 1 bounce up on jumars, towing his sac, impressed with the lead as I swing into the chimney to clen the pitch. As I crampon off into the mist on what we both hope wil be the last lead, Paul's voice floats up behind me;

"Shout Geronimo if you get to the top." Ten minutes later, he emerges into view to find me sitting smugly on a square-cut block, topped by a small, gold-coloured Madonna:

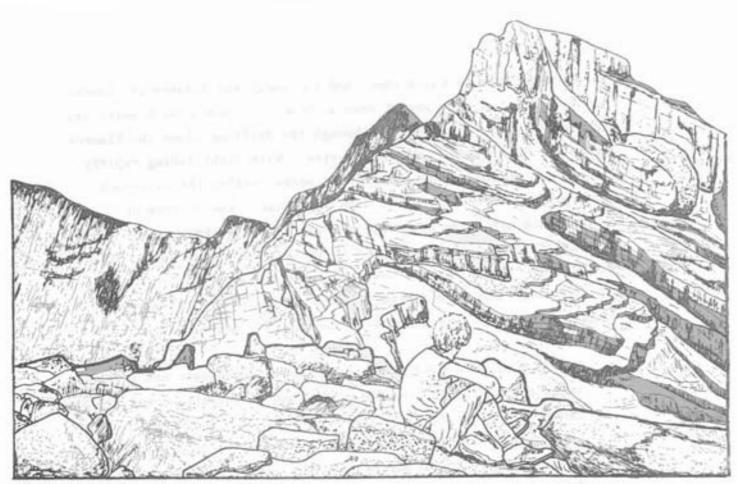
"What was the name of that Indian, Paul?"

From the depths of somewhere a carefully-preserved last cigarette was produced. Summit photos, tired but happy faces, enveloped in balaclavas, and topped by crash hats, battered hands and bleeding knuckles against a back-drop of thick grey cloud. Cloud that parted momentarily to reveal an ominous towering black anvil of cumulo nimbus, threateningly close. It was 6 p.m. as we moved hurriedly from the top, thunder booming in the distance. Down, through the mist, looking for the descent. A steep gully of sun-softened slush led to a col, a christmas tree tangle of abseil slings and a weatheredlooking perlon rope that led off down the first abseil. We set our own ropes up in preference and Paul slid out of sight. For 5 minutes we shouted and cursed each other through the mist. Misheard commands and suggestions drifted back and forth as he pulled the ropes and I adjusted slings, but still we couldn't get the ropes to run. Eventually, aware of the position I was in, and the decreasing time between the now numerous bangs and flashes, I dropped our ropes and set off down the fixed perlon. My initial mistrust of it was vindicated as I came over an overhang to find my descendeur running smoothly on fluffy white nylon fibres of core. Four feet lower, the sheath graciously reappeared and I continued gingerly downwards, trying not to bounce.

A second abseil, then a thir, a fourth and a fifth, keeping them short where necessary to avoid further hang-ups; a recurring task of pulling down, and fixing slings and peering down into the murk for the next anchor point. The weather got steadily worse, hailstones bounced from the rocks and built up on ledges, the descendeur sprayed a constant

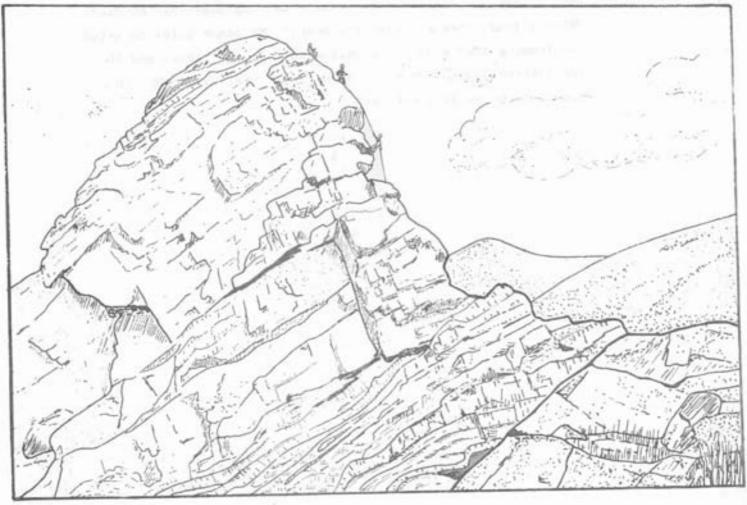
stream from the saturated ropes and the bangs and flashes got louder and brighter. A long abseil down a chimney streaming with water led to slabbly ground, and below, through the drifting cloud the Flammes de Pierre flickered in and out of view. With light fading rapidly we cleared a small ledge of snow and rocks, pulled the bivi-sack over our heads, and struggled into down gear. The problem of cooking did not arise as we had no food left. A simultaneous crash and flash stirred us from stupor to indicate the storm had finally reached us. We discovered that our ledge was on a line of drainage, the bivi-sack wasn't waterproof, and ventilation in the sack was considerably less than adequate. The wait for morning began.

It's 4 p.m. on a Monday afternoon, and a numb brain and gritted teeth operate leaden legs in a slow and deliberate ascent of the ladders from the Mer de Glace to Montenvers. The final haul up the slope to the station and we're home and dry. Tourists gaze at us curiously, with an air of detached tolerance; refugees from a different existence. Across the glacier the Dru stands alone and aloof, wreathed in scudding cloud, its seemingly monolithic sides somehow strangely difficult to relate to the events of the past 3 days. A line of a Grateful Dead song pops into my mind: "What a long, strange trip it's been." We stand aside to aviod the lemming-like tourists fighting to board the train and the realisation dawns that we're back in the real world. Or, then again, maybe we just left it?



SGURR DUBH MOR FROM SGURR DUBH BEAG

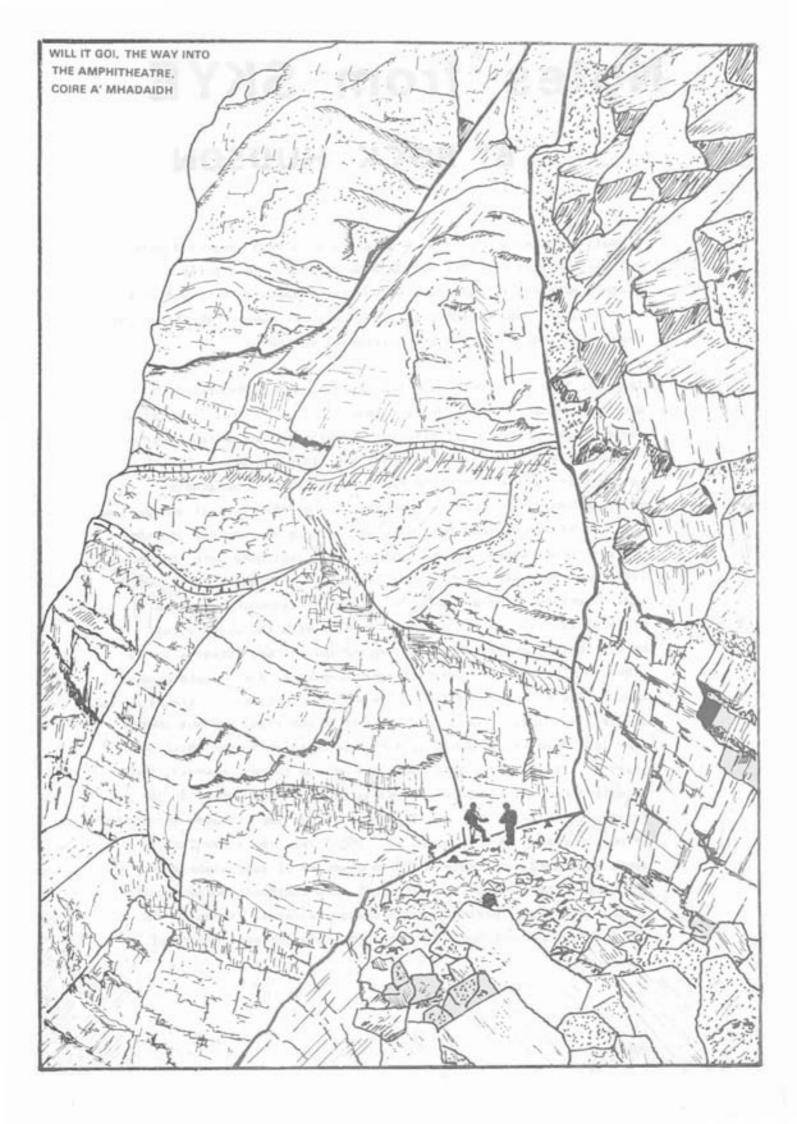
SGURR DUBH BEAG.



## Notes from SKYE BY ROCK HUDSON

A small splinter group of members camped at a very congested Glen Brittle campsite over the Spring Bank Holiday. Near-perfect weather provided us with days of walking, mountaineering and rock climbing, and thus a number of recollections, some of which are put sown below, together with some pictorial sketches.

Tuesday, 30th May found David (Jefferies), Derek (Mountford), Rodger (Chapman), Colin (Barnard) and myself with crust turning a deeper brown by the hour, plodding up Coire na Banachdich under a cloudless sky. After reaching the main ridge the party turned to the left, and we traversed the tops of Sgurr na Banachdich, Sgurr Thormaid, and Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. By this time it was getting late, so it was decided to find a way down into Coire nan Creiche. After studying books, guides, and maps, we continued onto the gap lying between Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh and Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. A gentlyangled terrace lying at about 30° was seen descending below sets of steep cliffs. We set off down rubble, with the width slowly being reduced, while the cliffs reared upwards and outwards to the right. On the left, a sense of great exposure, due to unfathomable depths, while far beyond lay the less harsh features of streams, grass, and gentle slopes. The terrace turned to the right and was therefore lost from view. Would it go? Was there an impass which would leave us stranded far above the floor of the coire? However, the situation was one of the most impressive I've come across in the British Isles as we were now looking into the Amphitheatre surrounded by rock faces up to a thousand feet high. We took a few further steps and found a suitable way down a series of easy slabs which descended into the back of this great rock embayment, where a patch of snow still lay; protected from the sun's rays. We passed out of the realm of dark basalt and gabbros into the open spaces of





LOOKING NORTH - NORTH EAST FROM THE QUIRANG

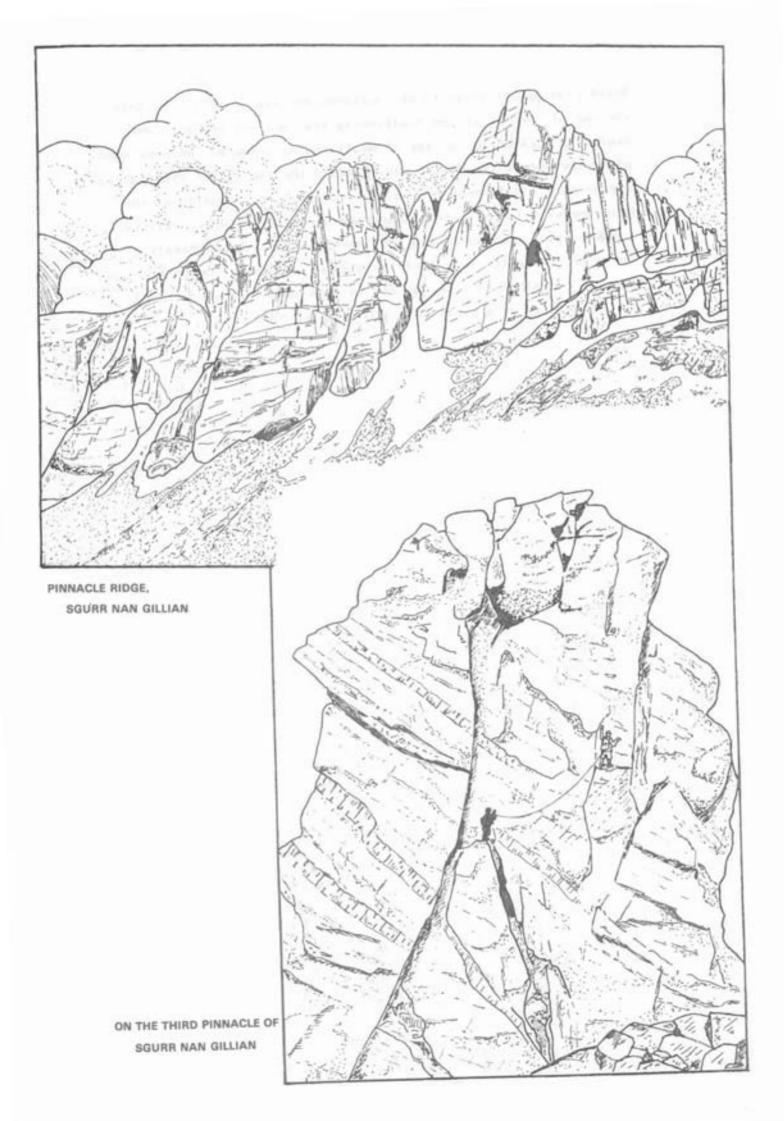
THE AMPHITHEATRE, COIRE A'MHADAIDH

Coire a' Mhadaidh with its warm sun, screes, gurgling stream between a carpet of grass and still further on to the broad valley bottom of Coire na Creiche.

May jist, a Wednesday, found Rodger, Derek, and myself, trudging up towards the base of Pinnacle Ridge on Sgurr na Gillian, only this time we actually found it. On a previous day we had set out in thick cloud and only after a long walk, together with a timely break in the clouds did we look upon the Am Bhasteir from the top of Sgurr a' Bhasteir. Scrambling took us up and over without difficulty, but giving us fine views and continuing interest. There was a more difficult and exposed descent from the third pinnacle which required roping up. The way ahead was up the final rocky ridge, with the best rock being found a little way to the left of the true crest. In no time at all we were sitting on the top of Sgurr na Gillian, and talking to a couple of very tired, but very contented ridge parties.

The hot sun was high overhead as Rodger and I set off on Thursday, 1st June, along the path to Coruish though keeping close to the lip of Coire a' Ghruidh after the path turned down towards the sea. Traversing easy ground brought us to a small col, with an old stone wall from which a short descent led to the bed of An Garth Choire. We made for the ridge leading up to the Dubh's and gained The Slabs some two hundred feet above Loch Coruish. A sweep of clean rock rising some 2,300 feet lay in front. Delightful slabs, short steeper walls provided great sport and we quickly gained height. A slower party were soon silhouetted against the dark water of the loch far below. From the top of Sgurr Dubh Beag an awkward free abseil again landed us on the crest of the ridge which curved towards Sgurr Dubh Hor. Scrambling brought us to the steeper section below the summit, where a few short pitches allowed us to gain the summit. After a long, cool drink, we made our way to the main ridge of the Cuillins from which we could see the descent route into Coire na Grunda.

Friday, 2nd June, found the Cuillins wrapped in mist, so Colin and



David plus myself drove to the northern section of Skye. We left the car at the top of the Staffin-Uig road and set out in slowly improving weather to the top of Meall nan Suireanach. We continued along the top of the Table, and followed the run of the escarpment north-east. We descended from the run into the confusion of the Quirrong with its miniature landscape of cliffs, ridges, valleys, summits, plus tiny lochs and tall needles of weathered basalt. These all being the result of the greatest landslip in the British Isles. We walked back to the car in warm sunshine, which ended the activities of a great week's holiday in Skye.

And a pinty of the second

## GRAN PARADISO OREAD ALPINE MEET 1978

#### by Keith Gregson

As we drove up the Grand St. Bernard Pass the weather was foul. Mist and sleet swirled over the mountainside and the wind buffeted the car incessantly. The prospects for the Alpine Meet looked no better than for the rest of the meets this summer. Nevertheless we drove on, sometimes between walls of drifted snow up to fifteen feet high, and eventually reached the summit with all lights blazing. Conditions were reminiscent of the road to Pen-y-Gwyrd on a wet November night. The lake was ice-bound and doubtless even the local dogs were in the nearest bar queuing up for brandy refills. The time was three in the afternoon.

We passed through the customs, a mere formality with the officers glad to stay in their shelter, and began the descent into Italy. The road surface deteriorated alarmingly, exagerating the relative poverty of Italy compared with its wealthy neighbour to the north. However, the weather improved, thus redressing the balance. The further we descended the clearer the sky and the warmer the air until we were driving with the windows wound down and Jill and I were marvelling at our luck.

We soon left Aosta behind and were glad to be climbing out of the heat into the Cogne Valley. This journey was to become familiar to the Oreads over the next couple of weeks, but the view of the North Ridge and the North East Face of the Grivola never failed to impress. We passed on through the village of Cogne - a busy little market town with typically volatile Italian drivers everywhere, and were glad to reach the campsite via a bumpy dirt-track of a road. A thorough search of the area revealed no other Oreads, and a very poor set of facilities. Whilst we were contemplating the next move we were accosted by Rock and Colin who had apparently followed us up the road. The vanguard of the Oread had already written off the predetermined site in favour of a more convivial one further down the valley. And so we arrived at "Camping Reggio Verde" - a splendid campsite at Epinel (A good word, that!) which is a small village about two miles down the valley from Cogne.

We set up camp with the early arrivals in what was to be known as "Bhagdad Corner", so named because of the general squalor and chaos which invariably surrounds British climbers.

It was Wednesday, July 19th. The early arrivals - Rock, Colin, and the two Stuarts, had already been out to do battle having got to within 100 feet or so of the summit of the Punta Patri in a snowstorm. Dave Wright, who had already solo'd the Paradiso, and Peter Oneil, who had arrived the previous evening, had departed to do the North Face of the Grivola.

After a leisurely meal, we were introduced to the campsite bar which was both pleasant and cheap. Some time during the night Pete and Dave returned. The following day over morning beer we were treated to the full story:

"The guide book was wrong, the mountain was in the wrong place, the path was non-existant ..... etc, etc." The upshot of it all was that not only had they not done the climb, they hadn't even seen the mountain. Round one - the first of many to the Grivola.

Rock, Colin, and the two Stuarts, departed for the Vittorio Sella Hut, where they subsequently climbed the Punta Nera - Punta Bianca traverse. The Punta Nera proved popular with the Oread over the holiday, the view from the summit must be one of the best in the Alps (Unless your name is Ashcroft ) and the ascent is a relatively easy one (Unless you climb it with Ashcroft ). The V.S. hut, from which the ascent is started is a disgrace however, we all had problems there. Jill and I were kept waiting outside in freezing conditions until 6 p.m. before we were allowed in and allocated a bunk. The only place to cook was in the lean-to containing the toilet. The custodian appears to have no interest whatsoever in mountaineers, prefering instead the more lucrative trade of the day

trippers and the rich tourist. This attitude was also prevalent at the Vittorio Emanuele Hut, the other major hut in the area.

As a result of our hut experiences Ron Sant and I decided to bivouac before climbing the North Face of the Ciarforon.

Dave Wright and PO had done the climb a couple of days before but we took quite different lines. It was on this route that we met Matin Musson, Pete Wragg, and Hilary Reed who had gone straight into the mountains without establishing themselves in Bhagdad Corner. They were on the North West Ridge route and later completed the traverse of the mountain. We also met Rock and Colin on the summit - they had already climbed the Monclair that day. Rock had another minor epic on the descent when a crampon broke. On our descent to the valley we met the A team on their way up. Jill and Roy were on their way to climb the Faradiso by the ordinary route, PO and the Wright boys to the same mountain via the North Face.

N. FALE

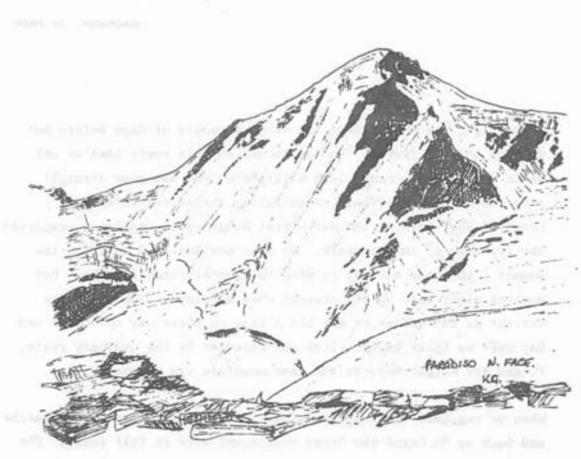
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When we regained the campsite after the drive down the Valsavaranche and back up to Cogne the Oread contingent were in full force. The campsite was becoming generally congested but fortunately we had our own space-maker with us in the form of Heather Eyre (and M11e.

Honkey!) who had contracted a mild attack of mumps. A search through all the dictionaries failed to discover the relevant Italian word. However, Heather was encouraged to play with all the local children and thus we were allowed more than our fair share of room.

Flash Ash was seen for about two seconds before he disappeared up the mountain in a cloud of smoke, the family following at a more sedate pace. They all returned the following day having climbed the North East Flank of the Grand Serra. Apparently, Jack believes his speed has got something to do with his "ability to open my legs further than anyone else".

Meanwhile the POW team (Pete Oneil and the Wright boys ) had completed the North Face of the Paradiso, taking a line up the right hand side of the large ice wall and finding the top section quite difficult.



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Jill and Roy had also managed their route on the Paradiso. Further afield, John, Dave, and Pete, (The Burton Brigade) had climbed the East Face of the Grivola and the MPH team had climbed the Monclair.

The following day, Wednesday 26th, saw a change in the weather which gace everyone the chance of a rest day (Plus morning, afternoon and evening beer sessions, pizza and ice cream in Aosta, etc.)

Suitably rested, the various teams were keen to be on the hill again the following day. The Ashcrofts set out for the V.E. Hut and the Paradiso. Ron, Rock, and I followed with the intention of bivvying under the North Face. The POW team left for the Old Brenva route and Martin and Pete headed for the North Ridge of the Grivola via the Balzola bivouac, the latter provided an eight hour hut walk. The following day they reached the summit of the Grivola in good style but had a desperate time on the descent of the E.N.E. ridge eventually being forced off the ridge to the relative safety of the glacier. This apparently involved desperate climbing on appalling rotten rock and water ice with an impressive leap over the Bergschrund to complete the manoevre. The result of all this was a forced bivouac on the glacier. The final descent the following day also had its moments with Martin examining a crevasse at close range and both of us eventually reaching the campsite absolutely whacked. Hilary smiled again.

Meanwhile, I enjoyed yet another lousy bivvy. Unfortunately, the cloud came down as we settled for the night, thus condemning us to a damp bivvy bag, and the prospect of a walk back to the valley in worsening weather in the mornig. However, the sky cleared and we were roused by an Italian team (They were noisy!) who clanked past our pile of boulders at about 4 a.m. in the dark. They ran like hell up the glacier when we shouted a greeting. We left at a more sober hour after a good brewing session - Sant is a bugger to get moving in the mornings. Again we took a different line to the POW party, favouring a diagonal line to the left under the ice wall. The route went uneventfully except for the last 300 feet of steep ice which gave two exciting pitches in a superb position with excellent ice peg belays. Another party of English lads had trouble however, so we left the pegs in place which cost us a couple of hours on the summit waiting for the gear to arrive. The Ashcroft

tea was most welcome when we reached the V.E. hut. They also had been successful! Jack in his go faster bendy boots, of course! However, his time was wind-assisted, so no record could be accepted.

Further north the POW team completed the Brenva, which was in indifferent condition, and spent a long day regaining the valley.

There followed a couple of days of indifferent weather, which, fortunately, most of us observed from the valley. It did, however, enforce a long stay in the Balzola bivouac for Brian Wright and Pete (Chopsy) Davis. Once again the Grivola took points from the Oread.

The enforced rest was, of course, too much for Jack the Ripper, who felt the urge to run up another hill. This time he conned Roy Eyre and Colin Hobday into following him - ostensibly to climb the Punta Nera and look at the view. It's amazing how gullible some of Jack's friends can be! Anyway, on Monday, August 31st they claim to have climbed the Punta Nera - "Never saw a thing because of the bad conditions", (Probably blood before the eyes, vomiting, fighting for breath, etc.) Anyway, not content with having seen nothing from the Punta Nera, they pressed on across the Trajoz Glacier and <u>descended</u> to the summit of the Punta Pousset, where once again they saw nothing! Then they had to climb up to get down off the mountain - sounds like a touch of the mad axeman to me! Eventually, after an eleven hour cross country (course unspecified and unidentified) our hero dragged his dishevelled team back down the mountain where they were suitably medicated for halucinations and re-entry burns.

By this time the party was beginning to dissipate with Dave and Pete returning to Chamonix, looking something like Steptoe and Son in their overloaded Midget. They managed to climb the Ryan-Lochmatter before the weather finally won.

Others of us had a final fling before returning to the dreaded English summer.

The Ashcrofts managed another compulsory walk, over the Col del Arollaz via the Vallone di Valleille and back down the Vallone di Bardonney. This area is unfrequented and very enjoyable according to the dispatches. The MPH team also reached another summit the Punta del Orsa - by mistake. Apparently, Martin was navigating! The two Colins, Jill, Rock and I climbed the Tour Ronde via the ordinary route and enjoyed a magnificent day. The views of the Mont Blanc range from around the hut are magnificent and the ascent of the Tour Ronde with the panorama from the summit is worth anybody's time. Unfortunately, the weather was unsettled whilst we were on the mountain so the promised views of the Brenva Face never really materialised and we descended in snow and cloud. We returned to the hut and Uschi and Anette who had been on a minitour of the Géant Glacier.

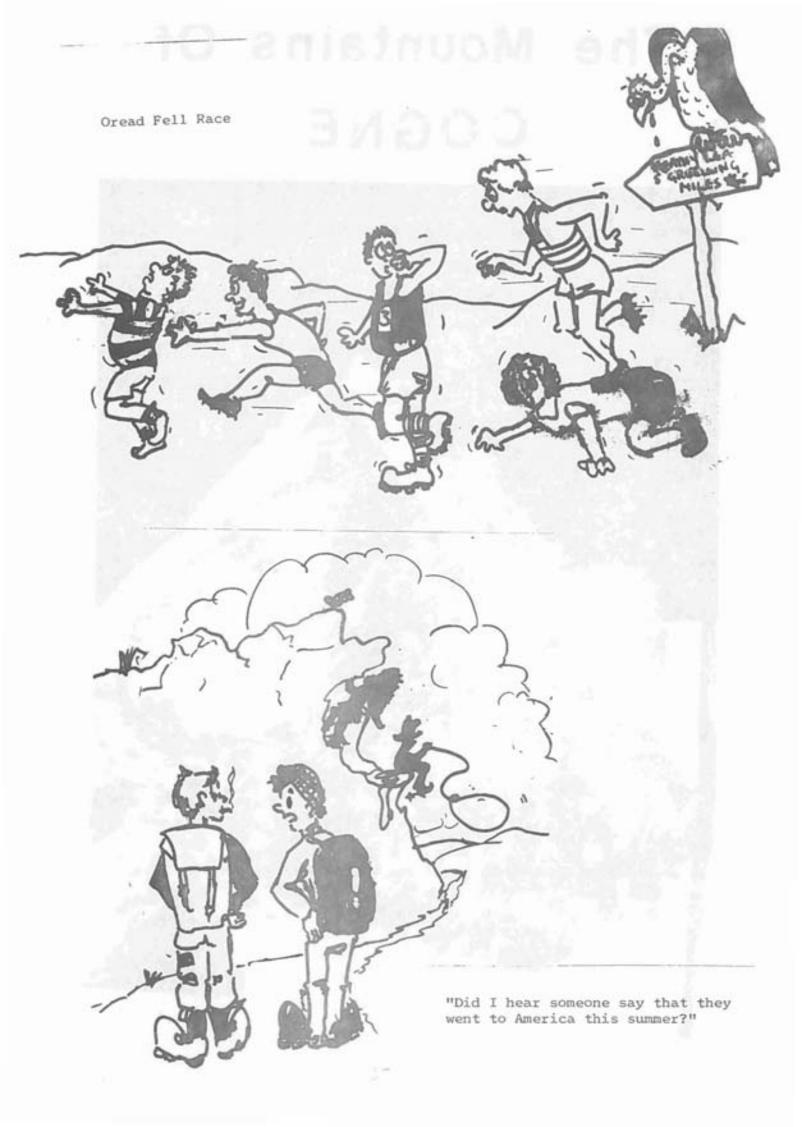
The last epic for the two Stuarts - who seemed destined to find all of the errors in the guide book, was to attempt the summit of Mt. Emilius. In the event they never got anywhere near since the description gives totally inadequate times for the approach and ascent. It is probably worth noting that we all found errors in route descriptions at one point or another and would recommend that the guide book (Graians East - West Col - 1969) be either treated with the greatest circumspection; or left at home.

One important factor which has received scant mention so far is the most enjoyable evenings spent in the campsite bar. The staff were most co-operative and we enjoyed many good evenings there. P0 may claim to be a non-drinker, at home, but he sure as hell made up for it there, sampling every bottle in the place, and having to be piloted home on several occasions. Dave Wright was easily second in the BOOB (Bombed Out Of Brain) competition, and Simon kept us all entertained with his fluent Italian. Before we left we made a presentation of a small wooden plaque with the Oread badge, carved by Simon Oneil, to the owners. This appeared to go down well - as did the speech by Colin Barnard in perfect Birmingham French, and should ensure a good welcome for future Oreads in the area. Once again, I would like to thank everyone belonging to the staff at Camping Reggio Verde, Epinel. I would also like to thank everyone who came. I have no doubt that I have omitted

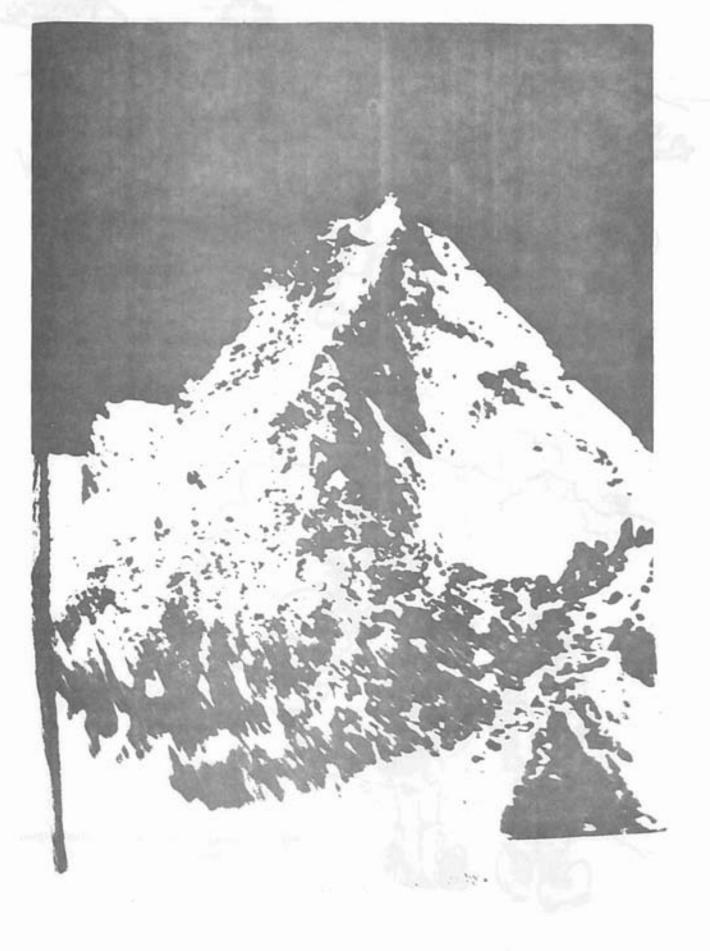
many achievements, and possibly some names. I hope that you all enjoyed the Paradiso as much as I.

Those present included:

Janet, Jack, Peter and David Ashcroft, Collin Barnard, Pete Davis, Allen Ames, Peter Dyke, Dave? (The Burton Brigade) Christine, Roy, Jill, Sue, and Heather Eyre, Uschi, Collin, and Anette Hobday, Stuart Firth and Stuart ?, Peter, Jean, and Simon Oneill, Thelma, and David Wright, Hilary Reed, Pete Wragg, Martin Musson, (MPH) Brian Wright, Yvonne and Ron Sant, Jill and Keith Gregson.



# The Mountains Of COGNE



### **By GORDON GADSBY**

In 1856 Victor Emmanuel II, King of Italy, acquired exclusive hunting rights in the district of Cogne on the south side of the Aosta Valley.

He placed the existing herd of Steinbok (Ibex) under the strictest supercision. Under the watchful care of the King's keepers the original small herd increased rapidly and is continuing to do so until the present day.

In 1922 the famous royal hunts came to an end and the Mountains of Cogne became the Gran Paradiso National Park, so saving for future generations this area of outstanding beauty. The Ibex, the chamois, and other fauna may now only be looked at and not killed.

As long ago as the seventeenth century the Ibex was extremely rare. One cause of this was the belief in the therapeutic quality of various parts of its body. A belief which of course greatly increased the value of the carcass. It was also believed that a goblet fashioned from its horns would enable the user to detect the prescence of any liquid poison.

While the Ibex belongs to the goat family, the chamois has the distinction of being the sole representative of the antelope family in Western Europe. Fantastic stories are often told about the climbing powers of the chamois and the ibex, and it is in truth almost impossible to overstate the animals' skills on the rocks. A chance to see these majestic animals and to climb again in the wild and beautiful Paradiso mountains was the main reason thy last year with all the alps to choose from, we decided to return once more to the land of the ibex.

After a stormy, but uneventful journey across France, we crossed into Switzerland, drove through Martigny in glorious sunshine and

started the climb up to the Great St. Bernard Pass. For years I had wondered what would happen if anyone was unfortunate enough to get a puncture on a hairpin bend of an alpine pass - now I know you just get on with it! The traffic just squeezes past you, buses, juggernauts, the lot. One English car did stop to offer help, but by then it was too late. The camber on the bend was so steep that the car was in grave danger of tipping over as I jacked it up and struggled to get the wheel off. Ricky thought it was all great fun!

Later that afternoon we went through into Italy and the Gran Paradiso range driving up the winding road to Cogne, a fine old alpine village. Stuart and Kath Bramwell were already camped there at the site we had picked out of the climbing guide. Without even putting up our tent we decided it wasn't the place for a three week holiday. It was cramped with a 1 in 4 sand road, poor facilities, and the only view was of a scree-covered hill-side where the locals were making a new road. We moved two kilometres down the road to the village of Epinel with a delightful open site, excellent amenities, children's playground, bar, shop, great views, etc and it was cheaper!

The next morning the cars were white with frost at 8 a.m. By 8.30 a.m. the frost had gone and the sum was scorching down from a cloudless sky. This was it! The reason why some people in July and August prefer the Alps to Scotland. We had breakfast outside, (what bliss) dried out the sodden Tinker we had used on the road, had an early lunch, opened the Cinzano Bianco, made plans for an afternoon walk in the pine forest, and decided to go up to the Vittorio Sell Hut the next day. It was great to be back in the Alps!

The walk up to the Sella carrying heavy sacs in the afternoon sun brought us back to reality. Maybe there was something to be said for Scotland in July. Then Stuart reminded me of the midges and I immediately felt much better. As we left the tree line Ricky saw a lizard on the stony path and then Stuart spotted several ibex on some crags just right of the track. They were magnificent animals and fought pushing each other for possession of the highest point.

Further up Margaret saw a chamois and then where the tracks began to

level off, Stuart spotted a herd of over 70 ibex crossing the river towards Lago Lauson - a wildlife photographer's dream.

We booked into the hut and ordered soup - this was a bit of a shock as my order for 3 bowls cost nearly £2. Later on, Stuart and I did a recce of the approach to the Grand Serra, the highest independant mountain between the Grivola and the Herbetet and our target for tomorrow. Kath was also coming with us. We retired to our quarters in the old stables and then met two German climbers who spoke excellent English. They had been to Skye and after reminiscing about the Cuillins we went to sleep.

A few hours later we thought we were on Skye as the rain was coming down in torrents. At 9 a.m. we retreated from the hut in dismay, the clouds were boiling and the rain was unabated. For 48 hours the rain continued almost without stopping. On Saturday we dodged in and out of doorways in the old part of Aosta, a fascinating place.

Monday was a lovely day and the five of us walked to the very beautiful Lago di Loye with its magnificent views of Mont Blanc and one of the finest waterfalls we have ever seen.

That evening, Stuart and I decided that if the weather held we would have an early start and climb the very impressive rock peak above the campsite, Punta Pousset, 3046 m, a climb of over 5000' from the tents.

The very friendly Italians camping all around us watched as we pointed upwards and heard us say the peak's name. Five minutes later we were surrounded by jabbering Italians, including two who were climbers and claiming to be amicos of Bonatti. After much hard hand waving and with the help of an Italian girl named Sylvia, acting as interpreter, they explained that the climb would be desperate as the upper slabs were overhanging. I produced the English Guidebook and showed them our proposed route which was not up the face but up a ridge that could not be seen from the campsite and was in fact a mere scramble. They all seemed happy at this and left us to finish our dinner.

The two of us were away at 6 a.m. walking first up river to Cretaz

village and then steeply up through the pine forests to the Pousset Cwn. It was another great alpine morning with wild flowers in great profusion and the sun warm on our backs. Above the treeline we came upon a herd of chamoix (about 15) crossing a large snowfield. They were in high spirits jumping around and tossing the snow into the air like children playing. Suddenly the nearest one saw us, all heads turned, a moment's hesitation, and they were off, racing across the icy slopes in single file. In seconds the last one had disappeared over the ridge towards Monte Erban. We continued with our steady ascent, our minds filled with the wonders of these mountains.

Soon we in turn reached the edge of the snowfield above the Upper Pousset Cwm. Looking back it was an idyllic spot with lush meadows, bubbling streams, and an extensive view towards Monte Emilius 3559 m. Sheltered as it was with impregnable looking crags above and below, it was indeed a mountain haven, no wonder the shepherds centuries past had built half a dozen stone chalets them. Today they were still almost intact and would make a great bivvy spot.

Ahead of us there were no traces of track on the snow so we headed in the direction of the Col di Pousset for 50 m and then left the snow to turn sharp right beneath towering cliffs. We soon found a narrow track threading its way through the rock barriers and leading directly towards the South West Ridge of the mountain. The route was quite difficult in several places where small avalanches of new snow had fallen from the crags above and were either blocking the path completely, or melting in the hot sun, so making the steep track into muddy slipway. Another half hour and we had reached the ridge proper, two ten foot chimneys and an easy, if icy, scramble and we were on the top.

The view surprised us, as in the English guidebook it said 'good local views'. Local - they couldn't have seen what now lay before us. We were almost completely ringed by magnificent peaks dazzling with new snow. In the North West the Mont Blanc massif looked breathtaking, and surprisingly near, the Geant, the Grandes Jorasses, and Grand Combin hardly less so. Further away the Weishorn and Matterhorn

were clearly visible and not a cloud to mar the view. The peaks of Monte Rosa were hidden by the nearer Monte Emilius group, but continuing the rightward swing, we could see beyond Punta Tersiva, range after range of snow mountains into the infinite distance, then the Punta Patri, Gran San Pietro, Eoccia Viva, Becca di Gay and some of the peaks of the Gran Paradiso completed the view south. But best of all was that magnificent mountain the Grivola 3969 m looking tantalisingly near across the Trajo glacier. Our climb had taken nearly six hours but we were well satisfied. To add to this we found a clump of that most cherished of all alpines - Eritrichium Nanum 'King of the Alps' growing in a crevice on the summit rocks, the tiny azure blue flowers amazing us as they seemed to be winning a desperate fight for survival on that exposed rocky crest. Reversing our route of ascent we were down in time for tea and a welcome rest.

The hot weather continued and on Wednesday we visited the market at Courmayeur - I've never seen so many climbing boots on display. Then on the high road up Wal Veny the avalanches were thundering down the Brenva Face and the Grandes Jorasses was plastered.

Next day Stuart and I made an abortive attempt on a rock spire called L'Ouille 2521 m from the campsite and were defeated forty feet from the top by rotten rock. We turned in the opposite direction and walked up a great hulk of a mountain called Monte Erban 3004 m . Deep snow almost covered the summit but the bronze Madonna was clear and views of the Gan Paradiso peaks were the best yet. On the descent we saw groups of chamois performing rock gymnastics on the cliffs of Cresta Della Forcia that would have been beyond any human climber. No wonder the Swiss Alpine Club has this incredible animal for its club badge. We also saw an eagle splendidly highlighted by the evening sun as he swooped very close to us and then surprised soared far, far away over the valley of Valnontey. To walkers really interested in seeing the wild life of this region the untracked wastes of Monte Erban are a must. The mountain can easily be ascended by leaving one of the high level traverse paths from the Rifugio Sella 2584 m and picking a way up the boulder-strewn ridge starting at L'Ouille. The walk can be extended by continuing along the spectacular but easy ridge to Testa Tsa Plan 3013 m and the Col Vernianaz 2900 m then on a very

steep path back to the Sella Hut. To climb the peak direct from the valley allow at least five hours in ascent.

A few days later the five of us again walked up to the Sella Hut from Valnontey. The young guardian put us in the stables once more, this time with a large party of French mountaineers whose brand-new ice axes, crampons, rope, sacs, etc, had never been used before. Our old British nylon rope was the cause of much chatter that evening. Also the herds of ibex that gathered at dusk around the environs of the hut.

Next morning Stuart and I were first away having eaten our breakfast by torchlight on the end of our bunks. The Grand Serra 3552 m proved a delectable if easy mountain with a 50 metre rock climb up rough granite slabs to finish. The summit itself was an unusual rock table where you could set out a meal for six people beside a small steel cross and no danger of spilling the wine. The view was also unusual, below us a huge granite monolith stuck out like a giant cannon, beyond that were great glaciers and a sea of swelling clouds through which the Matterhorn occasionally appeared. Behind us the 400 m Gran Paradiso, which we had climbed together 10 years before, was stark and clear against an azure sky. An hour later on the glacier we met ropes of French and Italian climbers toiling upwards in the hot sun. We exchanged Bon Giournos as we passed and then turned to look back at the summit rocks. It was 10.15 a.m. and the gently rolling clouds were closing in fast, so they would have to hurry if they were to see anything.

We continued our descent in the deep soft snow, down to our waiting families, down to the hut and the incomparable ibex, down to the valley and home. Climbing the high peaks in that delightful land of the ibex was over for yet another season.

### **BIVOUAC OF THE YEAR**



"I could stand the thought of a night on Angel Pavement. I could stand those silly buggers waking us up every hour. I could even stand the thought of 'em jugging it up at the Tan Ronen. But all these fags and no matches....."

( On December 26 th. Dave Cheshire and John Doughty were benighted on Angel Pavement on Craig Y Bera. They were unable to retreat and spent 18 hours sitting on a small ledge without bivi-gear. The following morning they were rescued by a strong Oread team led by Chris Radcliffe.) 列表现了 法外行 中国 计外部的导致器

## WELSH ICE

### **by PETE WRAGG**

Some good winter conditions seemed a possibility for the forthcoming weekend. The clear, still, and cold night on the way up to Wales was almost too good to be true.

A notoriously cold MAM hut and the constant coughing from an unknown body somewhere on the other side of the dormitory made sleep difficult, but the much-desired early morning start easy. David demonstrated the unarguable advantages of owning a cheap, old sleeping bag by getting out of it fully-dressed - quite a time-saver! I soon followed, shivering my way into a set of cold clothing. A perfect clear cold and windless winter's morning outside made a rushed breakfast unavoidable. Frozen boots refridgerated in Dave's car overnight were forced on. At last we were ready and on our way at 7.20 am.

A fast pace was set (I'm not sure who set it.) at first along a monotonous mile of the A5 until we forked off left to start climbing the conveniently placed "Scar on the Landscape" C.E.G.B. road which leads up to Craig yr Ysfa. Excitement mounted as we crossed the occasional snowpatch, which had consolidated to a perfect cramponning constituency. Was this really Wales? Would the conditions last the day? The pace quickened. But what's this? Two figures came into view. A final flog up onto the coll above Craig yr Ysfa and we managed to catch up with this obviously inferior pair of Liverpudlians. A short chat confirmed our suspicions that they were also heading to do Great Gully.

The pleasant surprise of beer supplied by David made a natural break for a few moments to savour the still silent crisp winter's morning. After fitting crampons we gained the lead over the Liverpudlians on the approach to the base of the climb. The perfect snow made what is normally a tedious steep grass descent into an easy and enjoyable walk in crampons. The base of the gully was at last located - but what's this?

Despite all our rushing we were not the first arrivals. A party of two were standing in a precarious position at the bottom of the first pitch trying to untand their rope. We sorted out our varied selection of ice-climbing gear and quickly established a stance about 30 feet below the other team. After a few minutes waiting they agreed to let me pass onto the first pitch. This was a bulge of snow only about 20 feet high but considerably harder than it looked - hard enough to cause concern in my mind as to whether Dave had taken a belay at the stance. But this was fun, and after demonstrating my ice-climbing technique - struggling and kicking down large quantities of snow, to the pair I had just burnt off, the difficulties eased, and an easy snow slope led to a good belay underneath a large boulder. I was just about to call Dave to start climbing when a body appeared over the first pitch. Not, as I had expected, one of the party I had just passed, but one of the Liverpudlian team who were evidently more competent than we had thought. By the time I was caught by Dave on the stance, they had both disappeared upward.

by PETE

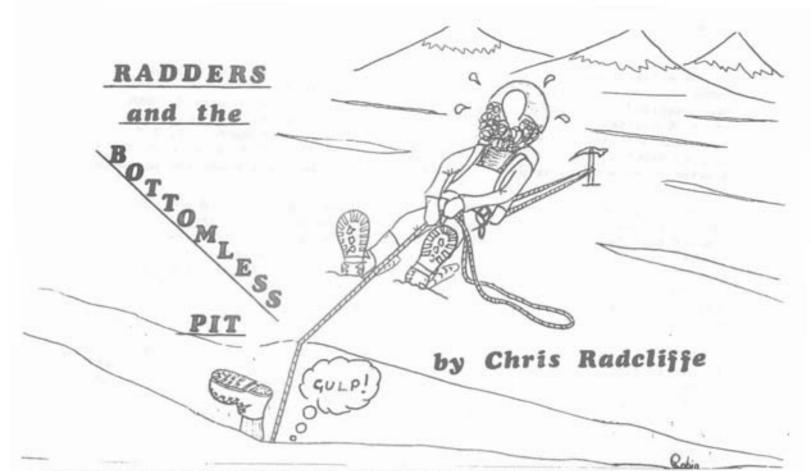


Dave led through a short way before faking a stance below a pitch of 30 feet of vertical and insecure icicles. This I avoided by taking a more inviting 'easier' looking route to the right which was followed until I became too gripped to proceed further. Anyway, anxiously inserting a peg I belayed and Daid arrived to be confronted with what proved to be the hardest pitch in the gully. This consisted of a steep chimney which, from the safety of the peg belay appeared quite straightforward. Dave hacked his way slowly up the dinnerplate shattering ice with the aid of his antiquated, straightpitched, long-shafted ice axe, until further progress became impossible. Fortunately, at this stage, he managed to insert a good Moac for protection, and continued this time taking to the verglassed rock to the left. This led to a desparate step across (about VS standard - in gloves and crampons!) to gain the more reasonably angled snow of the main gully bed once again. Whilst anxiously belaying Dave I had watched more exciting climbing from the Liverpudlians who climbed directly up the big icicles which we had shied away from. Tons of ice crashed from the pitch as they formed holds behind icicles into which they could insert their Terrordactyls and so make fast upward progress with a series of one arm pull-ups and the occasional precariously inserted crampon.

The pleasures of leading through on easy angled snow came to a sudden end when I was confronted with a 50 foot chimney without snow or ice. Fortunately this was bypassed by climbing the right hand side of the gully as had the Liverpudlians who were now in front of us. At last I ran out of rope just in time to avoid a nasty V-shaped groove at the bottom of which I belayed. This was climbed by Dave without perceptible difficulty. Another pitch brought us into the bowels of the Great Cave pitch which according to the guide is the crux (Well planned again - Dave's lead!). With an interesting system of slings and chockstones David front-pointed up wafer-thin verglas to the awkward and delicate powder snow covered traverse which leads to the skylight exit. Using a sling which had been conveniently left by the other team he made the exit into the huge chockstones with comparative ease.

My turn came and using a similar technique to that demonstrated by Dave

I gained the powder snow-covered traverse ledge. It was then that I realised that perhaps my planning hadn't been quite so brilliant - how was I to remove the sling which was 3 feet beneath me to start with. Somehow I reached it but then there was the traverse. The sling which the Liverpudlians had so nicely left us in position was in fact before the hard bit. Not wanting to appear too concerned about the situation, I removed this as requested and continued traversing the narrow, bulging, cold, wet rock - hindered by all those climbing 'aids' that us 'ice climbers' tend to carry - dead men, ice axe, hammer, pegs, crampons, etc.. After a few moments of eye-bulging climbing it was all over. We emerged from the shade of the deep gully into the brilliant mid-day sunshine. Easy scrambling led to the ridge and a magnificent and much awaited climb was completed. Exhausted and pleased with ourselves we flopped onto the ground to once again appreciate the perfect Welsh day and more beer was produced from the bottom of Dave's bag. The day was rounded off with a superb walk to Carnedd Llewellyn Carnedd Dafydd and Penyraluen and so back to the MAM hut.



Regrettably, the charm of Zermatt is rapidly fading in the face of Mechanistic Man advancing on all fronts. The general ambience of mountaineering stemming from the 'Golden Age' of the last century has long ago given over to that of tourist and teashop. But in the few years since I was last there the pace of change has stepped up. The motor road open for all as far as Tasch, now gives access to the perimeter of Zermatt for all inhabitants of Valais. Concrete car parks cater for the increased demand. Tower cranes mark out new building sites throughout the town; a vast telepherique system - to rival that on the Midi - is being constructed to the Kleine Matterhorn; the horse drawn carriages are now all but extinguished by the electric trolly and always there is the frequent mechanical clatter of helicopters setting off for the hydroelectric scheme in the Zmutt valley and the cement works further down the Visp, as well as taking wealthy aspiring mountaineers and their guides up to the Huts.

Yet despite all this, the Matterhorn continues to dominate the valley in a unique way and once out of the immediate vicinity of the town, the magic is still there. Rob and I arrived early in July seeking the good snow conditions of an early season for an ascent of the Nordwand. Events Late snow meant that the snowline was down to a level dictated otherwise. more typical of May or June and a continuous series of depressions crossing Europe provided endless rain and scudding cloud more typical of Wales than the Alps. The campsite was half empty, apart from American students remorselessly keeping to their schedule of "Europe on \$2 a day". The conditions called for reserves of patience and a predilection to books and scrabble to while away the hours. It was a frustrating experience and in the end time ran out for me on a conventional two week holiday. The sole excitement had been provided by an incident early in the trip while snatching a training route.

Our plan was to climb the Norman-Neruda route on the N.E. face of the Lyskamm. The morning was fine and sunny and we were optimistic about a change in the conditions as Rob set off to walk up from the valley, yet it didn't last and as I followed later on the Gornergratrailway carrying the sacks, it turned to rain. We spent a couple of hours at Rotboden station waiting for a clearing, then set off on the easy walk to the Monte Rosa hut. We decided to bivouac near by. The rain had held off, but I decided to make use of a "dog kennel" barely 5 ft long, filled with foam mattress that didn't deserve too close an inspection, but relatively comfortable nevertheless. It was a fairly wild night with a blustery wind - unusual in the Alps in Summer - and low cloud. At the critical hour we decided conditions were too unsettled to do the route and, indeed, the cloud cover increased, then later it started snowing. Rob joined me in the "dog kennel", but with only the guide book to read it soon became boring as well as cramped. It had stopped snowing, so eventually we decided we might as well do a recce up the glacier as this would help us when setting off in the early hours the following morning.

We set off around 13.30, starting up the rocks immediately behind the hut then eventually we struck off onto the snow covered moraine on the right bank of the glacier. It was just a grind in soft snow in near white out conditions making it difficult to pick the best line. We got on to the glacier itself making for an icefall below point 3696M. We had roped up and were alternating leads although still moving together. We weren't very fit and it was a matter of setting a target of 50 steps or so, then a brief rest, and on again.

In this way we had climbed some 2000 ft above the hut and were obviously in a crevassed zone. The snow cover was heavy, almost like winter conditions, but we had successfully crossed a couple of bridged crevasses without incident and it seemed sensible to get a track made through this section to make it easier for ourselves in the morning. Then we planned to turn back.

Shortly after this, a rather placid makeshift sort of a day turned into something of an epic and a close shave as far as I was concerned. I was aware of the crevasse, but I assumed that the snow covering was a strong enough bridge, although in hindsight I thought I had a slight premonition of disaster. Nevertheless I stepped forward and suddenly felt myself going through. Sometimes I have put a foot into a narrow crevasse and been able to stretch across and recover my position. In the instance that it takes for these things to happen, I realised that in this case there was no such chance and that I was falling into something very much bigger.

As we were moving on a short rope, I didn't fall more than 15 ft before Rob held me on his axe. I had managed to retain my axe and almost instinctively I got a good placement and then began to assess my position. I had held 2 or 3 crevasse falls over the years, but I had not previously been in this situation myself and I was very impressed, not to say gripped. I had fallen through perhaps 3 ft of soft snow and the crevasse was no more than 3 ft wide at that point, but the top overhung on both sides so that it opened out into a cathedral-like cavern, more than 30 ft wide lower down. I was dangling against a gently overhanging wall of ice on the west side of the I could see daylight to the N. (downhill), but the other end was crevasse. hidden as the crevasse curved out of sight. Just to my left there was an enormous 'chockstone' of ice, some 20 ft lower down. To my right a sort of shelf at a similar depth. However, immediately below me there was nothing that could possibly break my fall, it simply narrowed to a dark green hole that continued to unseen depths. I was acutely conscious that I was completely dependent upon the rope and on Rob's ability to hold me. I could just imagine him struggling to hold me single handed, his strength ebbing out so that at any moment I would plummet into the horrifying pit below. In fact he had a good placement and the axe was holding me, although almost certainly he was on the overhanging tip of the crevasse.

I did not have my crampons on and my feet scraped uselessly on the ice. My weight caused the rope to cut through the overhanging snow on the lip of the crevasse and in a series of sickening jerks I dropped a further 5 or 6 feet. Each time I got a new axe placement until my arm was fully stretched on to the axe loop and I couldn't remove it. I had to pull myself together to do something about my predicament. One handed with my knees braced against the ice, I removed my sack and balanced it on my knees. My spectacles had survived the fall and I put these away. Then I got 2 slings out, clipped a krab into the axe loop and arranged the slings so that I was tied off on my harness. I took my crampons out, clipped these to my waist together with my "Dynaclimb" prussikers. Then I carefully replaced my sack.

The next move was to get my crampons on. This involved pushing well out from the ice which I found difficult to do psychologically, because it put a fair leverage on the axe and the placement of the axe was important to me as a point of security if, for some reason, the rope failed. However, my recently specially curved Chouniard was well placed and stayed in. It was an awkward manoauvre, but eventually I got my crampons on. I could then pull up on the axe and take the weight off the rope by balancing on my front points. Rob could now get a new placement further away from the edge of the crevasse, although it had the disadvantage that it was now more difficult for us to communicate. Then he suggested getting the other end of the rope down to me to act as a top rope. In fact it hung well away from me, but by learning right out and slightly modifying my position, I could just reach it.

The time had now come to start moving upwards. With "Dynaclimbs" attached to the rope, the prussik upwards was quite straightforward. First, though, I had to let go of my axe and I swung out, wholly dependent on the rope. Once I had rationalised the situation I quickly reached the point where the rope cut through the snow. I knew I had a job on to get out of the overhanging hole. I started chopping some of the snow above my head. Apart from the unpleasantness of this falling down my shirt, it seemed a hopeless task.

I called to Rob to let me down and I reversed the prussik until I was hanging on the end of the "fixed" rope again. I wanted to see if I could pendulum to a sort of shelf to my right where I thought I could stay in balance, then by some sort of manœuvre escape out of the open end of the crevasse. I quickly realised that this was totally out of the question unless I unclipped from the fixed rope and even then, with only one axe, it would have been difficult climbing on steep ice with a risk of a big pendule back. Hence all this was wasted effort - it had to be out of the hole.

I prussiked back up. This time it was strenuous as my strength was failing. Back at the point where the rope disappeared into the snow I transferred both prussikers to the "top" rope and put my weight on these. Now I was dependent on Rob holding me directly, although as an extra precaution I tied off on the "fixed" rope. Once again the rope started cutting back into the soft snow, however, I was able to gain height until I could bridge across the crevasse. This was very insecure because it was an overhanging edge and the soft snow kept breaking away. I gained a little more height, then my sack fouled up on snow still bridging the crevasse. I shifted to a chimney position with both feet on one side of the crevasse and my back on the other. Suddenly the soft snow gave way and I slipped back on to my prussiks with my feet below the overhang again. I was feeling pretty desperate now and with my strength ebbing away, this setback was really frustrating. I just had to try again. I chopped snow away from the rope and managed to get the prussikers a little higher than before, although the rope was running almost horizontally in the soft surface snow. Once again I got established in a bridging position and with my axe deep in the snow I managed to move one foot high enough to pivot on it. With a desperate struggle, pawing at the snow with one hand, pulling on the axe with the other, Rob encouraging my every move, I finally made it and I emerged, with lungs heaving, out of the abyss.

My shirt was soaked after floundering in the snow and, while I recovered, Rob sorted out the gear. It had been a worrying time for him and I was thankful that he had been able to hold my fall and provide a secure anchor while I struggled at the other end of the rope. Despite my palpitations, I felt we had executed a classic crevasse self rescue in reasonable style, but I was really glad to return to the relative security of the "dog kennel".

The weather cleared overnight and the following morning we made an ascent of Monte Rosa to get acclimatised. Technically straightforward, it was a long flog with deep powder in the upper part and deteriorating weather after a clear start. We returned to Zermatt for what proved to be a long wait in foul weather and although we did get out on the hill again before I had to return home, poor conditions caused us to abandon our route. For me it was a disappointing season, although the incident down the hole certainly enlarged my mountaineering experience. Nevertheless, it is not one I shall want to go out of my way to repeat.

## <sup>by</sup> Chris Wilson

Chris Wilson lived in Kenya for eighteen years, returning to England, the country of his birth, at the æge of twenty. It was im Kenyæ that he started climbing with Iæin Allen who later went on to become the leading light of Kenyan mountaineering. In the following pages Chris gives a brief survey of climbing in the country and suggests a possible itinerary for a visiting party.

> Cold wet grit, slippery polished limestone, queues at the foot of crags, traffic jams to get there - Britain? Hot and humid, driving rain and thunderstorms, crowded mountains, lousy beer, foreigners, expense - the Continent?

Ever felt like a change? Like going somewhere where the climbs are magnificent and the crags deserted; where the weather is predictable, where the sea is warm and the beaches empty. Kenya, a republic in Africa that actually has a stable government, can offer all this, plus much much more. Game reserves the size of England ancient Arabic architecture, coffee plantations, and Tusker, (the local brew). A country where open space











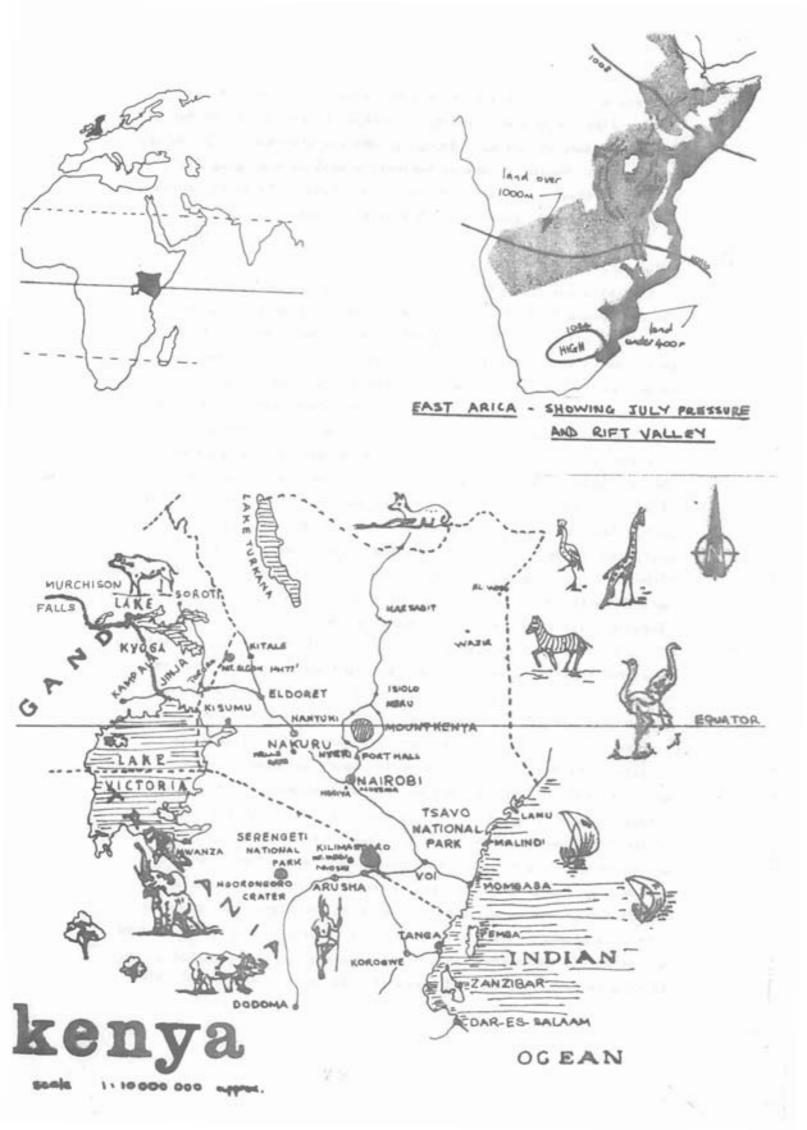
takes on new meanings. Don't take my word for it, ask anybody else who's actually been there. With the current price of air fares, (£187 return to Nairobi) the idea of an 'Alpine' meet there isn't really all that absurd. What, however, of the climbing. Just what is there that could be achieved in a three (or four) week holiday? First, we need to acclimatise and recover from 'jet-lag' so a few days on the 'local' crags wouldn't go amiss.

#### Lukenia

This rocky bluff overlooks the Mombasa road (to the sea, 300 miles away,) 24 miles from Nairobi. On the way there you will see your first sight of vultures and maribou storks eyeing up the Kenya Meat Commission. The ridge, an outcrop of basement gneiss rising like an island through the phonolite lave of the Kapifi plains, has a high point of 6028 feet above sea level, with cliffs of up to 250 feet., mostly giving delicate slabs and walls. The surrounding bush is rich in wildlife; Egyptian Vultures, Verreaux Eagles, Chanler's Reedbuck and Klipspringers for example. (Not to mention the baboons, who use many of the climbs for training routes for their young.) Climbed on since the thirties it was still possible ten years ago to discover the odd new V.Diff. However, being Nairobi's answer to Stanage, these days have long gone and the modern routes are as hard as any anywhere. For the masses Cakewalk Corner (superb exposure on big jugs) and Eagles Nest Crack ( Beware the Eagle! 120 feet V.S. ) and Le Pelley's variation ( A favourite with the baboons ) make a good introduction to Kenyan climbing. For the hard men, Iain Allen's magnificent Primess Street (X.S.) is the route, with its 150 feet top pitch traversing a runnerless slab before breaking through the overhangs via a mud-filled crack. In general, the crag has a warm relaxed air about it with large acacia trees to picnic under - well-suited to the first exhaustion filled day.

#### Ndeiya

This line of 150 - 200 feet high cliffs in the Kedong Valley lies near the edge of the Rift Valley ( a rather large feature worth reading about prior to the holiday) and the emphasis here is on cracks and chimneys. In contrast to Lukenia the approach gives an introduction to the worst of Kenya's roads, and the crag some idea of what more remote outcrops might be like. Routes worth doing for



starters are Cliff's Route, (after Barry Cliff, at one time the leading light in Kenyan climbing), Crackpot (first ascent by Martin Harris who many of you know, Fracture and for the sake of my vanity, Fascination. On the return to Nairobi, a walk up the Ngong Hills is well worthwhile. Apart from some fine animal life in the forest, lower down, superb views can be had from the top.

#### Hells Gate

By the third day the effects of travelling should have worn off, and the sun shouldn't feel too hot anymore, so, with movement being less of an effort, we venture further afield into the Rift Valley, past some extinct volcanoes, (e.g. Longonot and come to Lake Naivasha, home of the pink flamingo. Ignoring the camera clicking tourists however, we shall continue to the nearby Hells Gate, arguably the best climbing ground in Africa. One wall of the gorge stretches almost unbroken for several miles giving cliffs up to 550 feet high. The other wall consists of smaller and more broken cliffs. Up the gorge's centre lie several rock spires about 150 feet high. Ten years ago the number of climbs in the gorge was very small, now it sports its own guidebook. Development started on Fisher's Tower, the first spire (granite) into the gorge, which reached maturity with the ascent of a girdle traverse. Attention was turned elsewhere, first to the Crumbly Buttress, which is, as its name implies, of repellant rock with a consistency of rotten cheese. Schoolboys from Nairobi's Duke of York School put up almost all the routes here, not without mishap (One lad landed headfirst from 50 feet, fortunately without major injury). Skirmishing parties had already climbed the remaining pinnacles but the main cliff remained unviolated. With large overhangs in its lower and middle reaches and a 50 feet bed. of apparent mud at the top many felt that its virgin state would remain. At the time some of the younger members of the M.C.K. were out to force the club to take notice of them and to remember that it was a climbing club rather than a social gathering. Undoubtably, spurred on by these thoughts Iain Allen did just that and, with dreams of epics on the Eiger, put up Hells Gate Wall direct - 550 feet V.S. and A1. A year later, on the second ascent it was downgraded to V.S. but no criticism was levelled at the first ascendants. Worth climbing, if only for its historical value



As good as Cairo or Athens . . .

#### SON

The African Night, the Ngong Hills, the dusty track, signposted from Karen or for 10/- return. Buses leave New Stanley at 5.30 p.m. Licensed bar. Bar B.Q. steaks, hot toddles and bonfires

#### ET

#### BOOK NOW

Tickets 15/-

Children half price New Avenue, Anhassadeur, Nile-star, College House Kiosk, Arcade Tohacconists, New Stanley, Norfolk, or take a chance at the site. Show starts 7.30 p.m. Dress warm!

LUMIERE THIS SATURDAY and SUNDAY EVENINGS

Iain Allen lecaing Junction (VS) (Lukenia)



and today her mixture of maize and green peus served with wellseasoned meat is a popular item on the hotel's menu.

Eagles Nest

Central Tower Hell's Gate

Temporary membership available

SOMBRERO

**Gulzaar** Street

Dancing nightly

from 9.30 p.m. (including Sundays) Cabaret after 10.30 p.m. with GREGORY singer RENEE GAZELLE striptease dancer Special attraction by Memories Group and DOTTY exutic dancer **Residential African Band** 



## VISIT NAIVASHA -THE SUNSHINE LAKE

It is usually fine, warm and sunny at Lake Naivasha even when it is cold, dull or raining in Nairobi.



6.00 - The Key/Ufunguo. 6.45 - Jamna ya Mzee Pembe. 7.15 - Habari. 7.30 - Nyimbo za Dial. 8.00 - Here's Harry. 8.30 - The Nurses. 9.30 ---News. 9.45 - Mantovani.



lain Allen leading Pitch | on First ascent of Helfs Gate Wall Direct. (550' N.S.).

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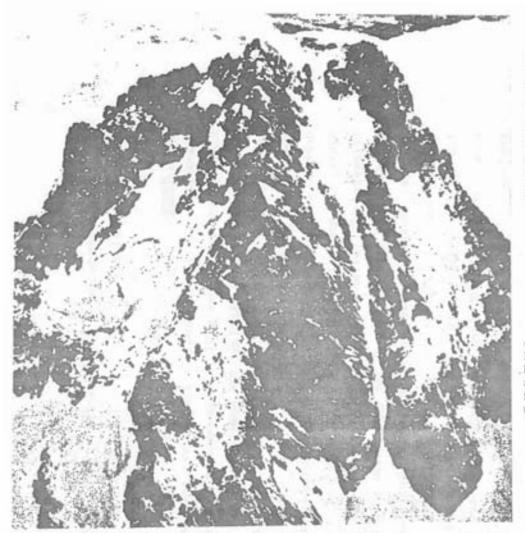
the route meanders at quite a reasonable standard up a series of grooves, avoiding the overhangs. The mud turns out to be rock, albeit resembling Aero chocolate. The following year Iain's climbing dramatically improved with the acquisition of a new rope and a pair of E.B.'s to replace his old boots. Stilletto fell next, a superb H.V.S. marred only by a long traverse near the top into "Yellow Matter Gully" (That should date it!). Since then, the routes have fallen thick and fast, Iain taking the lion's share, all apparently of mindblowing exposure and difficulty. In short, not to visit Hells Gate would be a major ommission for any self-respecting climber.

Should any more time be available during the holiday there are several other large but more remote crags - Soipus (giving 600 foot routes), Longido (1000 foot routes), the Mouse and so on. However, since we're all now fit and used to the sun we can get on with the main business - the big two.

#### Kilimanjaro

Africa's highest mountain and one of the world's highest volcanoes unfortunately lies just over the border in Tanzania, and access to it lies in a state of political flux. Hopefully, the approach from Loitokitok in Kenya, which dispenses with huts and the 'normal' tourist path, will be open, when we are there. The mountain's base is 30 miles long by 50 miles and there are three major volcanic centres - Kibo (19340 feet), in the centre, Mawenzi (16890 feet), in the East, and Shira (13400 feet) in the West.

From a climber's point of view, Shira is of little interest, Mawenzi is a worthwhile objective, but it is undoubtably Kibo that you want to climb. The glaciated peak resembling a Christmas Pudding covered with icing has the "hardest and most serious ice climbs in Africa" on it. The normal route is however a long walk. Personally I find it singularly uninspiring, but I'm sure a great many people would enjoy it, especially the approach march. If time permits a journey into the crater of this still active volcano is said to be interesting. Like all routes at high altitude, it should not be underestimated, the consequences of severe altitude sickness, for example, being dire when rescue is dubious. After our 5 days on Kilimanjaro, though,



## Mt. Kenya From South

Mount Kenya lies on the Equator, in the belt of mainly easterly airflow which sweeps across Eastern Africa nearly the whole year round. At heights below about 10,000 ft. variations in the general flow occur with the seasons of the north-east and south-east "monsoon" flows (N.E. from late December to March, and S.E. from July to October). THE injured Austrian climber. Dr. Gurt Judmaier, who is wing at 17.000 feet on the gnow-swept slopes of Mt. Kenya, will spend an eighth day on the mountain tomorrow before being brought down for proper medical attention.

he Notio

Temperatures at altitudes above 16,000 ft. are seldom above freezing, and they fall to as low as -18°C at night. A night on the peaks can be very cold, though not dangerously so if one has some protection from the wind; and luckily gale force winds are practically never encountered.

The glaciers of Mount Kenya have few crevasses or bergschrunds. This is partly because of the slow movement of the ice, but also because of its relatively high plasticity when compared with the ice of glaciers in extra-tropical regions. This plasticity makes it easier for the glaciers to mould to the shape of their beds without signs of strain. It also makes the work of step-cutting more arduous wherever this is necessary, since the ice has a tough and glutinous consistency allied to its plasticity. The Diamond and Northey Glaciers in particular, despite their smallness, are major obstacles in terms of the time and effort which may be absorbed in cutting on them.

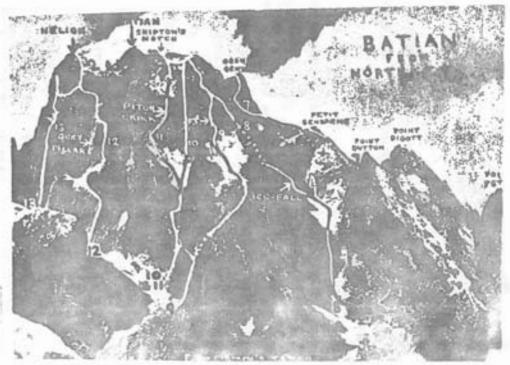
> In 1899 the railway had just reached the present site of Nairobi, and it was from here that Mackinder's party set out on their long march to the mountain. In those days safaris were, of necessity, organized on a large scale, and his party consisted of "6 Europeans, 66 Swahilis, 2 tall Masai guides, and the remainder (96) naked Wakikuyu".

Perhaps the most interesting of the smaller inhabitants of the forest is the Crested Rat (Lophiomys ibeanus hindei). It has few of the features one usually associates with rodents, having long black and white fur with a short, bushy tail, and when encountered is a very slow moving creature; one family of these lives close to the Met. Station Clearing on the Naro Moru track. The Kilimanjaro expedition is pressing on with its attempt to climb the East Face of Mawenzi the "Eiger of East Africa".

The climbers, defeated in their attempt to reach the 6,000ft. face from the gully of the Great Barranco, are now trying to scale the face by Downie Peak ridge. Two climbers, Ian Howell and Roger Higgins, bivouacked iast night at the foot of the face after climbing Downie Peak and hoped the fog would lift to enable them to tackle the East Face today.

Two other members of the team, tain Allan and Chris Wilson, set off today to climb the West Face and meet Howell and Higgins if they reach the summit. Conditions on the mountain last night were reported poor, with rain and mist.

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it's back to Kenya and a 'quick' drive to Nanjuki for the final pièce de resistance.

#### Mount Kenya

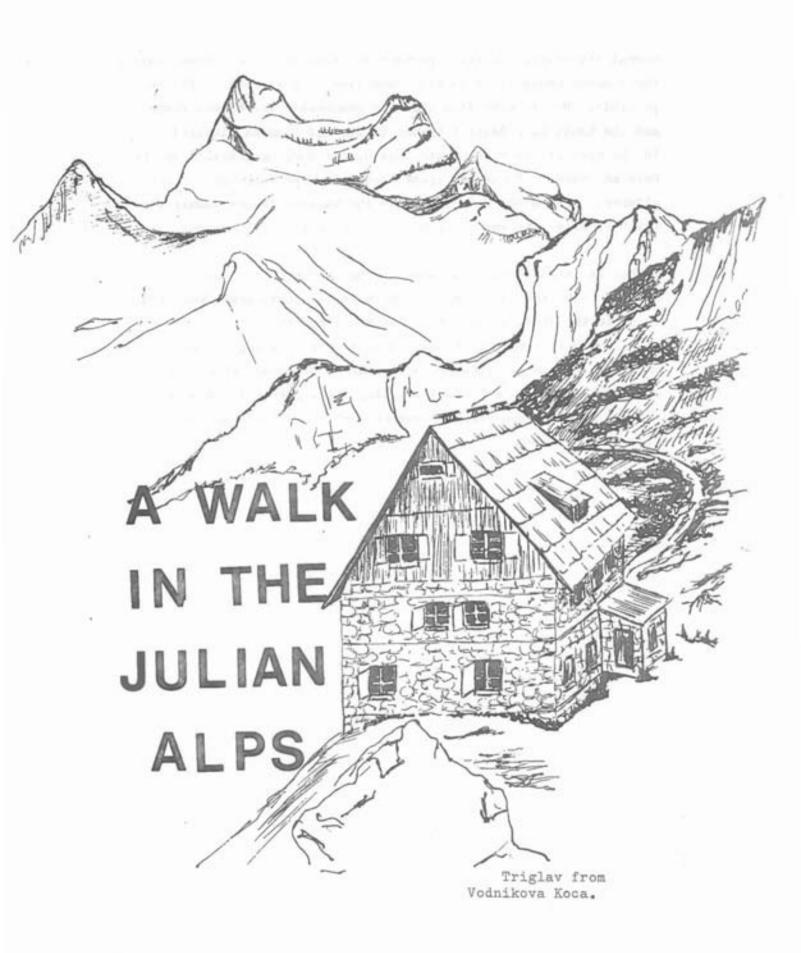
Undoubtably the finest mountain I have ever seen, even in photographs. I guarantee that no one will be disappointed with it, even if they don't reach the top. Batian, the summit peak, was first reached at noon, 13th September, 1899, by MacKinder, Ollier, and Brocherel (Courmayeur guide and porter)after a march in from Nairobi through drought and plague-ridden country. A remarkable achievement. In Kenya, the great tectonic disturbance resulting in the Rift Valley triggered off volcanic activity on a grand scale. Mt. Kenya (and Kilimanjaro), was just one of the many products. Rising on a 60 mile diameter base above the surrounding 5000 foot plains the summit (the volcano's original core) stands at 17058 feet above sea level. The syenite of the central core is massive and coarse grained. The rock's strength and uniform composition, together with the wide spacing of fractures, result in a generally good rock for climbing (a bit like gabbro).

From the top of the track (10000 feet) an eleven hour hut walk follows. Although somewhat arduous, it is not without great interest stupendous views, amazing plants and wierd animals. A problem emerges at the hut - which of the fifteen or so routes to do on Batian? In August/September, the easiest route is the North Face Standard Route (Fitmin/Hicks, 1944 - 7 hours.) Although mainly of an easy standard, Fitman's Tower, the crux, is a sustained 130 foot IV sup. pitch up a chimney. The last part of the route is common with the West Ridge. The North Face route is usually used for descent, leading back to the starting hut. The West Ridge is long, (V - 10 hours) and can be extended further to give a traverse of the Main Peaks. It is on both rock and ice and is said to be one of the most pleasureable routes on the mountain. Again on the North side the Northey Glacier (V- 10 hours) and the North East Pillar of Nelion (V sup. A2 - 2 days) amongst others offer good climbing on rarely frequented routes.

In our summer the South side of the mountain is in winter conditions, thereby excluding the easiest (IV) route on the mountain from a

normal itinerary. However, perhaps the mountain's best known route, the Diamond Couloir, is in mint condition with its casier finish possible. By its side lies the more reasonable Ice Window route and the South Face Route ( by the Darwin and Diamond Glacier). In the west at least one route ties up the hanging glaciers of the Heim and Forez Plenty of scope, then, for the enthusiastic ice climber. Around the main peaks lie the various lesser summits, which usually give short climbs, and scrambles of all grades.

So Mt. Kenya has been vanquished, as has Kilimanjaro, and we return home to count the cost. Was it worth it, we could ask. Why didn't we go to the Hindu Kush instead, or America, etc etc ...... Well, Kenya is almost certainly cheaper, the climbing and weather as good, and we can go elsewhere next year or the year after. After all, Mt. Kenya should be good training for bigger (?) and better(?) things, and have you ever met anyone who's been there and doesn't intend to go back?



#### by Jill Gregson

Stara Fugina is a small village on the shores of Lake Bohin, about 50 miles inside the Yugoslav border and surrounded on three sides by impressive limestone mountains making up the southern part of the Julian alps. The houses are in typical alpine style, many undergoing extensive renovation, thanks to government grants prompted by an increase in the tourist trade. The community is close and friendly, the streets are narrow and unsurfaced. Chickens scratch around in the road and hay is collected in horse or ox drawn carts. There is a feeling of yesteryear about the place, where time is marked by the changing seasons and rewards are those gained by the sweat of the brow.

This was the place from which we set out to walk in the Julian alps, a trip which lasted 5 days and covered approximately 70 miles. The party consisted of myself and Keith, Mike who works in the building trade and is a typical Dalesman, never using two words where one will do, and Fred, lecturer in Geography, who can hold an audience spellbound on any subject, especially after 8 pints of beer, something which he does frequently. Keith and I have known Fred for many years, and he regularly combines lecture trips to Yuglslavia with walking in the mountains, so we had an excellent guide, interpreter and raconteur.

We set off about 8 a.m. - Fred insists on rising early - in a fine drizzle through dense jungles of pine and thick undergrowth, and with poor Mike bitterly regretting the meal he had consumed the night before. Not an auspicious start! After an hour or so we took our first break on a true Alp - a patch of luxuriant green grass with a few scattered buildings and magnificent cows, tended with loving care by little bent old ladies with faces like cracked walnuts. The sun came out fitfully, giving us glimpses of the glorious panorama of shing white limestone above the band of dense jungle

that we still had to ascend. The paths in Yugoslavia are really excellent, well-marked with red paint and maintained by volunteers. I was very thankful for the efforts of this unseen band of heroes as a macheti would be the only way to make progress otherwise. Eventually we did get above the jungle and the path wound its way along the sides of limestone cliffs in very spectacular fashion, crossing deep ravines, and by early afternoon brought us to Vodnikova Hut, 1260 metres above our starting point. I think we were all pleased to sit down and have a welcome cup of soup in the main lounge. The hut was typical of those we stayed at in the Julian alps, with all wood interior which made it seem very snug and the accommodation upstairs was bunk beds, all very clean and neat. We had intended pushing on to the hut below Triglav, the highest mountain in Yugoslavia, at 9000 feet, but Mike's stomach was still playing him up so we booked in for the night. Later that evening, we dined well on ham and eggs, a speciality made by a most exceptional landlady. She had been cooking at the hut every summer for 30 years, and now was flown in and out by helicopter paid for by a member of Tito's staff, because, due to some unfortunate disease, her legs were swollen to such grotesque proportions that she could hardly shuffle round the kitchen. It did not affect her good humour, however, and we left next morning with her deep-throated laughter ringing in our ears. We also left a pair of my blue knickers, and one of Fred's blue socks, which is why we spent the rest of the day looking for a one-legged, tory transvestite. I only mention this, to scotch any other rumours which may circulate regarding the loss of my knickers!

It was a windy day with high clouds and we made good progress until we got to the limestone scree slope beneath the Dom Planika Hut. Everyone suffered on this ascent but we got to the hut about 10 a.m. and had a welcome brew of herb tea, amidst feverish activity generated by hoards of Yugoslavs stamping books. Each hut and mountain summit has its own rubber stamp which you put on your log book to prove that you have been there. We took a dim view of all this and set off up Triglow. The ascent is quite steep in places and offers excellent rock scrambling. There is a wire rope along the most exposed sections but it presents no more difficulty than the Bristly Ridge. The summit is marked by a small, red, rocket -shaped

metal hut, inside which is a picture of the panorama including the names and heights of all the peaks. Due to vandalism, inside and low cloud outside, we were denied much of this view. Nevertheless, the surroundings were impressive due to the sheer immensity of the limestone area. We descended, after the usual photographs, and spent a pleasant early afternoon walking to our next stopping place - Dulich. We arrived just as a thunder storm which had been brewing on the valley made its noisy.arrival on the summits. The hut was modern and extremely cheap by alpine standards, £5 per night for B & B, evening meal and a few beers! There was an impressive menu stretching nearly from floor to ceiling, but when we had sat round like Pavlov's dogs anticipating steak, all they could offer was soup! The hut had its own generator which duly failed when full darkness descended and it was about that time that a group of Yugoslav's hit the hut. They were a very merry crew who entertained us with Tyrolean accordion music, and song until the guardian blew out the candles. After a bit of an argument, we all trooped off to bed.

Next morning, about 8 a.m. we gained the limestone pavement area above the hut and in gradually improving weather, began the day and the long trek down the valley of the seven lakes. This was the most impressive part of the walk. The effect of brilliant sunshine on sheer limestone cliffs rising several thousand feet above a narrow valley was magical. The sparse vegetation eventually gave way to alpine meadow with scattered conifers and it was good to be alive. The afternoon was spent ploughing through forest as we descended through the Triglav National Park towards Domna Komni Hut. The last part of the journey was less pleasant, intense heat and thick vegetation making progress wearisome. We were all glad to collapse in the hut and have a cool beer. The landlady, Maria, was saying fond 'Goodbyes' to a party when we arrived, with much tearful draining of slivavitch. The difficulty in getting us booked in was not so much a language problem as the fact that she was tight! This impression was substantiated when Fred tried to order more beer: "Three beers, please.", says Fred. "No three beers," says Maria, "You dance!" And so they did, to piped alpine music, a vigourous knees up with Maria in slippers and Fred in alpine boots, Keith, Mike, and I thought it was hilarious, and we were obviously in for a good night when another party turned up, also long lost

friends of Maria. It became clear that everyone who arrived at the hut was greeted enthusiastically and Mike looked forward with growing unease to our departure next morning.

In the event, it was a rather ragged bunch that set off next day. Lack of sleep and a frugal meal did nothing to help our ascent of Shrobina (1910) and even after we reached the col, it was still a long thrash through dense vegetation down the next valley, to the Razor Planini Hut. Cloud and mist descended and morale was low. We kept kidding ourselves that it could not be much further to the hut and the hours passed. Then, faintly at first, the sound of accordian playing reached our ears and laughter ebbing and flowing on the light breeze. Surely, the hut must be close by around the next bend, through those trees, behind that boulder. And still we descended, until quite suddenly - we were there. A large grassy terrace with tables and benches outside the hut and that same merry band of Yugoslavs that we had met at Deilich welcoming us shouts and foaming tankards. We flopped exhaustedly on the damp grass, removed our steaming boots, and prepared for a good drinking session. The next three hours are a bit hazy! Even Mike, who had refused beer and stuck to Coke before now joined in the infectious gaiety of these Yugoslav lads. I remember at one point the landlord brought out a crate of beer and there were loud cheers. He even joined in the dancing. And then just as suddenly, they were gone, - only a few scattered beer bottles, on the lawn, the mist flowing around the hut and in the gentle breeze and red gold falling slowly off the trees.

We were the only occupants in the hut that night and I think my blood alcohol level was still in the danger zone after breakfast next morning, when we set off up our last mountain, Vogel. (1922 m) After an hour and a half of hesitant progress, we gained the summit and were treated to a magnificent panorama. The valleys were filled with cloud but the tops of all the peaks were brilliant white against a deep blue sky. It was wonderful just to stand there and look around us. Finally, with the ski hotel promising cool beer, we began the long descent off Vogel and once more took to the undergrowth. As we were all feeling rather weary, we decided not to take the obvious path but followed the ridge, which described a parabola before finally descending to the ski hotel. This undoubtedly made

the walk longer, but less up and down, or so we thought! It was early afternoon before we got to the top of the ski lift and the hotel was still a long way below us. We were down to our last barley sugars by now and the descent was hot and tedious. Somewhere along the way we lost Fred. We waited for him at the halfway stage on the ski lift, but after 45 minutes decided that he must have caught us up and slipped past on one of the many interconnecting paths in the thick vegetation. We decided to push on and wait at the ski hotel. We descended rapidly in sweltering heat and flopped down on the hotel verandah. What a view! Straight down to Lake Bohin below. Magnificent. But no Fred, and worse, the hotel was shut. Half an hour later we were really worried and walked miserably round the side of the hotel wondering if he had had an accident and what we should do next. The lower section of the ski lift was working and several people came down, but no Fred. We should have known. Fred is never far from beer, and suddenly there he was remonstrating with us for getting lost and what on earth were we doing, mooching around the hotel when the notice clearly said it was closed and beer would be available at the hut a few hundred yards along the road, which of course, was where he had been , waiting for us!

The party was re-united, and who had lost whom was soon forgotten, as we enjoyed a bite to eat washed down by bottles of beer in brilliant sunshine, on a platform overlooking the magnificent grandeur of the Julian alps.

## An Idiot's Guide to PHOTOGRAPHY by Colin Hobday

With many Oreads turning their hand to Photography, it is felt that this A - Z guide in Photography may be of some use.

#### Aperture

A little hole in the camera through which a wife, child, a group at Lower Small Clough, Dovedale Dash, snow bunting, climber on a desperate move or a couple who were the life and soul of the party that last night in Kitzbühl, may be observed by the photographer. At one time, due to the fault in the mechanism, these subjects appeared upside down. Now the camera has been juggled about with so that they are now right way up, although this does not help as regards remembering the identity of the Midlands couple in Kitzbühl.

#### Box Brownie

The photographic equivalent of the Alpenstock, the Brownie comes in a sort of miniature gas-mask case which makes it all the more suitable for taking the kind of nostalgic snap that, even on the day it comes back from the developers, makes all the climbers look as if the climb is steeper than it actually is!

#### Camera

An incredible simple device for taking still pictures without batteries or plugs, unlike those movie cameras which need either or both in order to function and make a whirring noise. The camera consists of a lens, a shutter, a button, an aperture to look at things through, some film and a red transparent disc with numbers on it. (See Red Transparent Discs with Numbers on Them). Jumbled up with all this gear are some other items too complex to explain, hence the camera's original name. Camera Obscura.

#### Developer

Some stuff which is smeared on the negative (See Negative) to turn it into a positive (See Positive.) This stuff is a chemical which turns black into white and white into black. Why the camera cannot be adapted to do this job itself, in the same way as it has been adapted to stop showing things upside down, has never been disclosed.

#### Enlargement

A means of making a photograph bigger by sending it off with a postal order to a firm of chemists.

#### Film

The material on which precious fleeting moments are captured for all time. Originally, when photographers were in the habit of putting a bag over their heads before taking a picture, this film was made of glass. When photographers stopped putting bags over their heads and began to roam about with Box Brownies it was found that glass was not melleable enough to roll up inside the new portable cameras. Hence celluloid, being less brittle, came into common usage. It is not known why the precious fleeting moments cannot be captured for all time on a roll of Sellotape.

#### Gadsby, John Frederick

The man who discovered in 1962 that if films were sensitised with the vapour of bromine as well as iodine, it would lay the way open for John Frederick to get himself written up in reference books as the father of photography. This also explains why all his subjects look as if they have just caught a whiff of vapour of bromine as well as iodine.

#### High-Speed Film

It is generally known that when someone moves in a photograph, you get a sort of blur. With high-speed film, you do not get a sort of blur. This would seem to suggest that it is not high-speed film at

all, since it seems to be fractionally behind what is going on at the time. However, that is the misnomer by which it is known in the trade.

#### Incident Light Exposure Reading

A technical term used in manuals purporting to explain the art of photography to the layman.

#### Joule Capacity of Flash Units

An even more technical term used in the same manuals, which at this stage in the alphabet have lost their audience.

#### Kodachrome

A proprietary colour film first introduced in 1936 for 35 mm still cameras. How colour film differs from black and white film is fascinating, and remarkably easy to understand, but unfortunately the Kodachrome process, being proprietary, is copyright and therefore top secret.

#### Light Meter

Somewhat like a traffic meter, it has an arrow which goes up to some high numbers when ther is too much light, and down to the low numbers when ther is not enough. Experienced photographers find that somewhere around the middle is just about right. You do not have to put any money in a light meter, by the way.

#### Magic

The process by which someone can press a button and then fiddle around with the back of the camera and out comes a finished print. Also known as polaroid.

#### Negative

A piece of film that makes everyone look like the Black and White

Minstrel Show. Very interesting when held up to the light.

#### Over Exposure

An over-exposed picture is one that makes its subject look as if they have somehow acquired a deep sun-tan in the middle of a thunder storm. Over-exposure is caused by leaving your camera switched on for too long. There are tables of numbers to help you over this problem, but if you think of your camera as a primus, and of your subject as a pan of curry, that is about to boil over, you cannot go far wrong.

#### Positive

A snap, or more usually a series of snaps, contained in a yellow paper wallet. Some of these are black all over and some have pictures on. The ones that are black all over have been over-developed.

#### Red Transparent Disc with Numbers on it

This is the most important bit of gadgetry in the modern camera. Every time you take a picture you must twist a sort of roller thing so that the number under the red transparent disc goes up by one. If it goes up by two, it probably means that you have got sand in your lens. When you get to number 20 it is time to put another roll of film in the camera, although it often turns out that it would be quite safe to go on rolling until you have reached number 36.

#### Shutter

What goes up and down when you have taken a photograph. The shutter chops up your roll of film into separate pictures and thus prevents it from becoming a home movie.

#### Tripod

A three-legged stand on which cameras may be mounted in order to

prevent water getting in on waterlogged campsites.

#### Under-Exposure

The opposite of over-exposure. If you are still thinking of your camera as a primus, what you will get with under-exposure is the photographic equivalent of a lightly boiled egg.

#### Viltage Control

A misprint sometimes found in simple manuals for the novice photographer, - what they mean is voltage control.

#### Welbourn, Mr. J.

An early manufacturer of dry photographic plates who used to coat them by hand from a batch of emulsion prepared in a teapot. This side of the business was considerably expanded by Eastmen Kodak, a worldwide enterprise involving millions and millions of teapots.

#### X-Ray

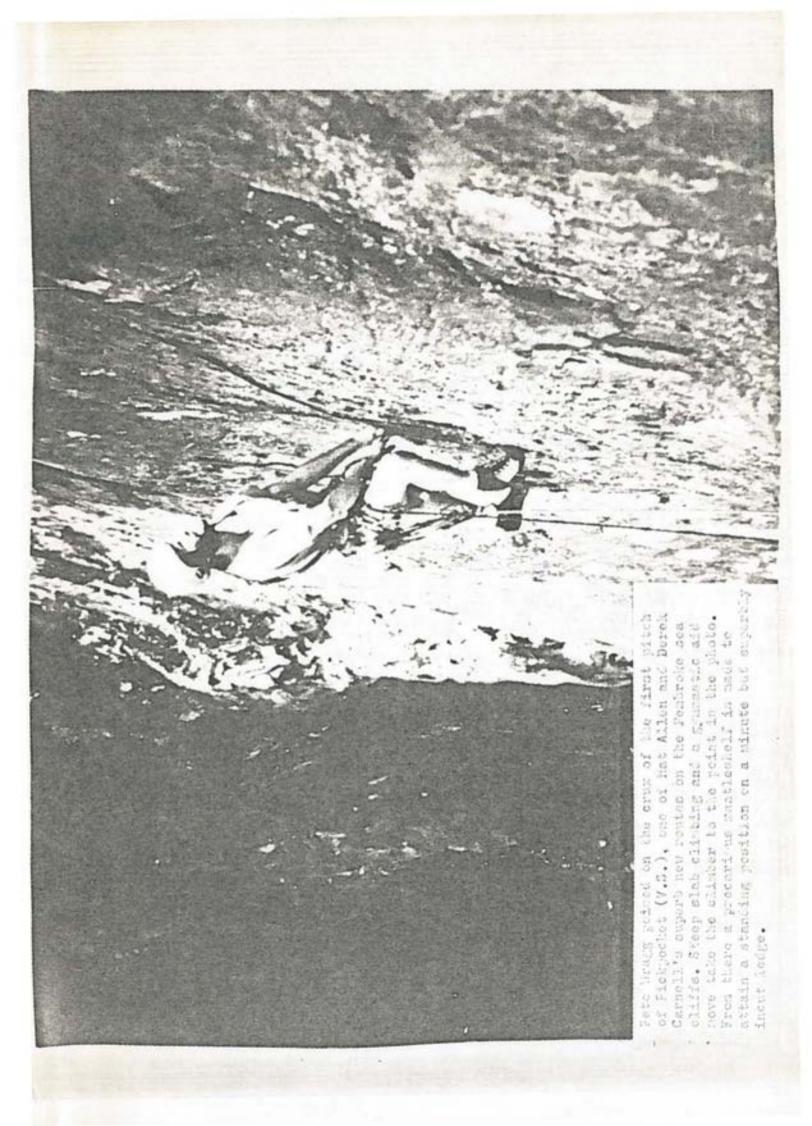
A spectacular photographic effect produced when electrons, accelerated to a very high speed in a vacuum by applying a high voltage, are allowed to impinge on a solid target such as a hexcentric swallowed by a climber.

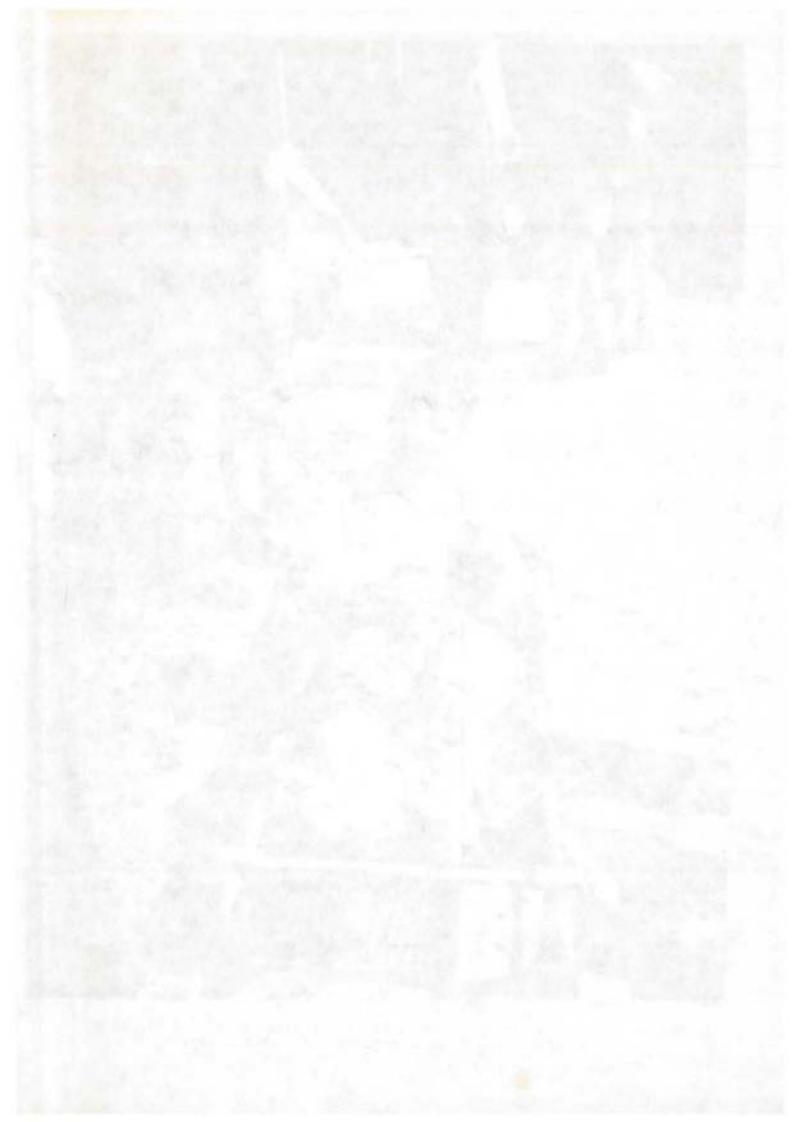
#### Y-1/607/s.r.l.

The kind of name now being given to cameras in order to humiliate people who only know how to ask for Box Brownie, and who wish they were dead.

#### $\underline{\mathbf{z}}$

A letter of the alphabet which according to the elading manuals does not seem to be connected with photography in the slightest degree.







Gordon Wright, battered, bruised, but still smiling, awaits his ride to Sheffield Royal Infirmary. Photo: Tony Smedley.

# OREAD TIMES OLD MAN FALLS OFF STANAGE

That was the headline for the afternoon news bulletin on B.B.C. Radio Sheffield on Sunday June 18th. According to the report, a geriatric walker had failed to see the cliff edge and fallen 30 feet. Surprisingly, none of the many Oreads present on the crag have any recolection of the incident. This was possibly due to the fact that they were preoccupied with the salvage of Gordon Wright, one of the club's up and coming youthfull rock gymnasts, who had slipped and fallen while attempting to solo 'Right Hand Twin Crack', his 63rd route of the day. Suitably anaesthatised with Stone's best bitter And Fortral, Gordon was whisked off to hospital in Sheffield where two broken heels were diagnosed. In the same ward, with a fractured polvis was well known Sheffield climber Keith Myhill who had involuntarily made an accelerated reversal of most of Millstone's 'Green Death'.

Although the two accidents happened within minutes of each other (approx 2:45p.m.), their is believed to be no connection between their time and the chucking-out time of the 'Scotsman's Pack' and 'Fox House'.

Gordon is now on the mend and by the end of September had already made an ascent of Snowdon. Best wishes from the club for a continuing and full recovery.

## PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR

Dusky brunette Martin Musson (right) may not have won the recent Photo contest, but he was considered by judge Dennis Gray to be the best looking girl in the club (!!). Martin (24), considered by many to be the natural successor to James Hunt, is an experienced climber, sailor and reindeer-herdsman. His one unfulfilled ambition (apart from Britt Ekland) is to find accomodation with a 20ft.x 12ft. wall: large enough for the half life-size,full colour poster of the Matterhorn he has recently acquired.'It's so big it's got real snow on top' was his only comment to our reporter.





If anyone is considering libel action as a result of this publication, the Editor would refer you to his solicitors Messrs. Sue,Grabbit and Runn of St. Mary's Gate. (as used by Tommy Docherty)

## HELLO SAILOR

The nautical arm of the Oread ( shouldn't that be flipper ? - Ed. ) continues to expand. Latest recruit is Derek Carnell who recently payed an undisclosed figure for Musson's **tes** Yacht. After extensive sea trials around St. Justinian Bay in which club president Colin Hobday was nearly wiped out on the rocks, Derek was suitably impressed and is now the proud owner Of Mirror Dinghy 49511, registered name'Elohesra'.

Elsewhere on the briny deep, grizzled sea dog Pete Wragg spent a week in late September cruising around the island of Mull. Crew for the voyage included First Mate Hartin Musson, deck fiand and movie producer Maurice Musson (drunken debauched brother of Martin ) and cabin boy Hilary Reed.A Tair wind blew throughout the voyage; Force 8 every day except one. The other day it was Force 9. 'With a crew like mine ', said Pete ' I'm not surprised people choose to sail single handed around the world '.

On a more sedate cailing note, Charlie Johnson and Robin Securick recently sook time off from the Gritstone and spent a weekend on a canal barge. Challie's superhuman strongth Came in handy when the engine failed and he had to punt a 36 foot steel barge for two miles. Robin, meanwhile was plodding down the towpath tethered to a tow rope. There is no truth in the rumour he is changing his name to Dobbin, however. For those of you not familiar with Charlie, he looks like a cross between Steve Austin and the incredible Hulk and used to have a holiday job kickstarting Jumbo Jets.



## FASHION

Last winter was undoubtably enlivened by a string of Haute Couture creations sported on the crags by Chris Wilsof. His designer 'Eric' of the house of Multifabs, Osmaston Road, Has reached new and divine heights in his use of fibre pile and PVC. The 'pink polar pantaloons', first modeled on North Sea oilrigs, provide the ultimate in chic for an informal day on the gritstone, whilst for those special occasions on larger snowy hills the bright yellow roadmenders trousers give the ultimate in style and condensation. Unfortunately, Chris's Attempt tto qualify for the 'Best dressed man of the year competition failed when he was eliminated in a preliminary round by Patrick Moore and Columbo.

## NO-GO NORDWAND

Long running 'hard lukk story of the summer' must be the one about Rob Tressider and the North Face of the Matterhorn. Rob spent two weeks in Zermatt with Radders in the early part of the season, but failed to achieve any success on the route due poor snow and freezing conditions. Amonth later, after ascents of the North Faces of the Badile and Cima Ovest, Robreturned, full of confidence, to Zermatt.

Throughout an initial week of poor weather, Rob lived a gurulike existence to prepare for the rigours of the route. Yoga, early morning cross country runs, whole-

food diet, and early to bed was the order of the day while his partner caroused in the local hostelries, lay around the campsite drinking beer and chased South African Crumpet.

Alas, poor Rob. An attempt on the Nordwand was repulsed by bad weather from the top of the first icefield. Asecond attempt got no further than the tourist office and a bad weather forecast, while a third ground to a halt little higher than the first. By this time Rob had spent over a month in Zermatt and lined the coffers of the Municipal Campsite with over 100 Swims Francs. Sadly he decided to call it a day and return to Derbyshire while his partner, having failed to catch the crumpet, returned to Chamonix.

See future instalments of the Oread Times (It must be the best buy in Britain !! ) for future instalments (Hic !!)

What the well-dressed Radders will be wearing to the "Dash" this year. The only dirigible tracksuit in existence. (Do not accept cheap

imitations - only genuine if

bearing the trademark R101.)



#### FASMINT

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