

**oread** 79





# OREAD 79

## OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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OREAD '79

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Cover: Jumaring on Strone Ulladale. Photo B.Wright.

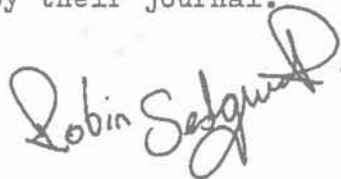
# EDITORIAL

At long last the 1979 journal appears for your perusal. An initial lack of articles resulted in the missing of the Annual Dinner deadline and since then my own lethargy and Parkinson's Law have seen production drag on. Finally however, the finished article rests in your hands.

Hopefully most people will consider the journal to represent the full spectrum of club activity and for this my thanks must go out to you, the members, who have taken the time and trouble to put pen to paper. As well as articles on individual deeds and doings, this years Journal includes a number of selected meets reports, giving cover of an aspect of the club which I felt was lacking last year. Between them these half-dozen or so reports give a solid cross section of the club's wide ranging meet activity; activity which is the mainstay of any thriving club. My thanks to all meet leaders who submitted reports.

Thanks also to the people who have assisted in the production of the journal. Marion Northcote for her typing and Jill Gregson and Colin Hobday for reprographics. Additional help was also gratefully received from Ken Hodge, Chris Wilson and Pete Northcote. Between them these people have relieved me of a considerable workload.

Hoping all members enjoy their journal.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Robin Sedgwick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

R. Sedgwick,  
Editor.



# NORTH FACE OF M 7

BY PETE HOLDEN

The mountain was first climbed by a French party in 1969, by way of the long North Ridge. They took three days on the final successful attempt having established camps on the lower part of the ridge during earlier attempts.

The Catalans (Spanish) who were with us in the Mandaras valley in 1977, being desparately short of time, also chose M.7 as their objective. They also resolved to climb the North Ridge, but decided to attack it by way of a varient start which took a steep ice buttress which descended from the true North Ridge.

From a bivouac at the foot of the ice buttress two of the team climbed in one day to join the original French route, where they made a bivouac. The next day they continued along the ridge and successfully gained the summit and returned to their bivouac of the previous night. The continued the descent the next morning, doing so by way of the original French line of ascent. A few hundred feet above the foot of the ridge they were met by friends who had climbed a 1,000ft couloir to meet them. The whole party made a bivouac on the col at the top of the couloir and descended the next morning to the glacier by way of a series of abseils, some of which were made from bollards cut out of the penitente!

Thus the mountain had been climbed twice, substantially by the same ridge, but the major challenge from the Mandaras valley is the 1,200m (4,000ft) North West Face. Howard Lancashire and I had resolved to attempt this climb in 1975, but inclement weather and insufficiency of time had now allowed of this. In 1977 we had to choose between joining a large team of M.8 Norwand, which was the greatest and the most beautiful challenge in the valley, or to go it alone on M.7. The huge wall of M.8, with it's great rock barrier at mid-height, seemed to me, then, to be too big an undertaking for my present physical and mental condition. Howard, fortunately, was of the same frame of mind. We were very happy to wish those going for M.8 every good fortune in their climb, whilst we made preparations for our own climb.

The Catalans had left a dump of food and gaz at their moraine camp below M.7, which we planned to use as a reserve supply in the event of a period of bad weather.

We left Advance Base on the morning of Tuesday 9th August, carrying heavy loads so that we could make a camp at the Catalan moraine site. The carry up the glacier, during the heat of the day, was quite arduous, and took us three hours of steady plodding, finished with a strain up the steep, huge slope of the moraine to it's top. On arrival at the camp site we were overjoyed to find that the dump was in reality a treasure trove of many varieties of tinned foods together with such delicacies as chocolate, chocolate and almond cake, almond nuts, raisins, apricots, tube milk, tea bags and Nescafe, all in abundance.

Some of this store had already been attacked by huge black ravens, who had discovered this gratuitous easy feed. Delighted with our good fortune we could not resist tucking into the almond cake immediately, followed by a quick sample of anything that took our immediate fancy. Only after we had satiated our lust for luxuries did we begin to set up our camp.

Having established ourselves we began to take in our surroundings. The tent was pitched on the surface of the glacier which was covered there with small granite debris and all around us were glacier 'tables' of a great variety of size and in many different stages of formation. The whole scene was quite bizarre - crazy pinnacles of ice capped with overhanging granite boulders were perched 2 to 3ft above the surface of the glacier and doomed to eventual collapse with no warning to unwary passers-by.

The place was a desert and the hot mid-day sun beat down upon us relentlessly. The searing heat, with it's intense light unabated by the rarefied air and reflected and intensified by the glacier ice and crystalline granite boulders, was almost unbearable. To find relief we erected the bivy tent as a shade over the kitchen and we sought comfort there whilst we lazily prepared and ate out meals.

The cool late-afternoon winds revived us and then we were able to admire the true splendour of our surroundings. The Mandaras valley is a truly magnificent place, being very reminiscent of the most impressive of the Mont Blanc valleys, comprising fabulous granite mountains which are beautifully gilded with drapes and aprons of snow and ice.

As we lounged in the pleasant evening sun we planned our route on M.7. The line in the upper part of the face was obvious, being a narrow, curving couloir formed between the two main features of the face. These predominant features are a line of enormous seracs, which dominate the left-hand side of the face, and a series of huge rock buttresses, which almost form a separate, true west face. This latter feature offers a superb, as yet untried, challenge.

The problem was to find an approach to the upper couloir with the least danger from potential avalanches, and this, we resolved, could best be achieved from the left-hand side of the face. On the right-hand side, we reckoned that we would be

quickly forced into the lower central couloir by steep and technically difficult rock buttresses, so we abandoned thoughts of that side for an approach.

Our chosen line was certainly exposed to avalanche danger, but we hoped that the lines of rock bands, which rise diagonally across the face from left to right, would give us shelter and protection from this possibility.

Having decided upon a proposed line of ascent, we turned our attention to sorting out equipment and food sufficient for the three days which we expected to be on the mountain. That evening we enjoyed a large meal of food from that left by the Catalans, and thus replete, we retired to our pits prepared for an early start across the glacier in the dark of the early morning hours.

As we walked across the glacier by the light of our head torches we became concerned that the night was not as cold as we thought it should be for starting out on a major mixed climb. Our concern turned more to frustration, when, on arrival at the foot of the face, we could not see well enough to find our way through the enormous bergeschrund which barred our way onto the face proper. A further great worry was the sound of a torrent of water streaming off the face, which only served to reinforce our thoughts that we should not begin the climb that morning. We inspected the 'schrund at close quarters and were dismayed at the sight of so much water pouring off the face and decided to sit still until dawn.

At the onset of dawn we decided to abandon our attempt for that day and proceeded, instead, to make a very useful reconnaissance to seek a safer way onto the face, which we did successfully. Then, after leaving a cache of gear, we returned to our camp and the unwelcome prospect of another day in the 'desert'.

The next morning we were at the foot of the face just after dawn and quickly by-passed the first 'schrund and moved easily up to the second 'schrund. There we stopped to rope-up beneath an impressive wall of impending ice at the only point of weakness. Fortunately the gaping crevass was bridged at that point which enabled us to reach the vertical 'schrund wall which we climbed across, protected by ice screws, and reached the easy angled first icefield. This we climbed in two long pitches to the first rock band. We turned the rocks on the left on steepening ice and above it we gained our first close-up view of our line of ascent. The terrain there was much more complex than we had been able to ascertain from below, the rock bands being larger than expected, and hid from us views of the upper part of the face which made the route planning rather more difficult. But one thing did rise substantially above these bands, and that was the serac barrier high up on the face, which could be seen clearly as it stretched across the skyline above the rocks. The enormous size of this barrier was now very much in evidence, being about 350ft high at it's maximum at the left-hand end, and it appeared to us as a huge 'sword of Damocles' which threatened our very survival.

From the cool of the shadowed face we looked out to admire the superb mountain prospect before our eyes, and on the fact itself we revelled at the sight of the bold, yellow granite forms silhouetted against the deep blue of the sky, or against the grey of the hard, bare ice which they seemed to thrust up out of.

The ice was not only very hard, but it was also very brittle and thus required much care and attention, together with no mean effort as pitch after pitch we gained height on the fact. The rock climbing which we encountered was all undertaken with crampons on, and provided us with some fine pitches on good, sound rock.

At about ten in the morning we climbed into the sun and immediately we began to suffer from the sudden dramatic rise in temperature, for which we were over-dressed. To alleviate this



we stripped off our upper garments to our vests! Climbing under this oppressive heat was extremely tiring which, compounded by the effects of altitude, made us feel quite shattered by the end of each pitch.

Of the many pitches which we climbed that day some are particularly remembered for sheer delight gained whilst climbing them, whilst others leave memories of struggles endured, though, fortunately the latter are very few. One such difficult pitch was quite an ordeal for Howard as he had to overcome 40ft of treacherous powder snow overlying the ice, followed by a desperate squeeze behind a huge flake whilst still having to fight for security through the power snow to the ice beneath. Fortunately most of the climbing was delicate and technical rather than that which demands brute force and thus we were able to really enjoy climbing the most varied and interesting of pitches on mixed ground which offered sustained difficulties.

All day we had been heading for the 'Grand Block', a prominent feature high up on the face adjacent to the central couloir, which we hoped to reach on the first day and find a bivouac site. We had been unable to see the 'block' whilst we were in the lower part of the face, but early in the afternoon we sighted it and felt that we could attain our objective and reach it before dark.

The angle of the face steepened below this 'block' and suitable bivy ledges were few and far between, so when I unexpectedly came across a small ledge and adjacent to a curious, horizontal, deep slot in the rock, I brought Howard up and we decided to bivouac there. The site was 200ft below the 'block' but was, fortunately, endowed with a supply of water by way of a regular drip which enabled us to fill up all of our containers and we were reassured at the thought of the many brews which this would ensure for our parched throats.

Howard was able to make himself comfortable in the slot, but I had to remove a number of rocks before I made a satisfactory, comfortable site for the night. After we had drunk and eaten our fill we snuggled into our bags and relaxed to the sight of a superb sunset which was enhanced by the banks of cloud which had drifted in from the south.

Though this cloud was scenically very dramatic, it was quite disturbing in that we thought that it might herald the onset of a spell of inclement weather. We dozed off with this thought and in the short periods of wakefulness we noted the cloud had rolled right in to obscure the view completely, until at sometime in the early hours of the morning it dispersed and the temperature dropped with this clearing of the skies, and the sleeping bags became heavily frosted over. I started to make a brew at 3.00 a.m. from water which I had kept from freezing by keeping the bottle in my sleeping bag. But even though we started preparations at that early hour, it was still 5.00 a.m. before we were ready to begin the day's climbing.

On the first few pitches we endured bitter cold in our hands when we removed our gloves to tackle the more difficult rock sections. These pitches took us to the top of the 'block' which we had been aiming for for so long. Above we were faced with steep, smooth ice and rounded rocks; we traversed along the upper edge of the 'block' on brittle, grey ice and near holdless rocks to the nearside of the couloir. The prospect of crossing the couloir at this point was most uninviting as it's surface was polished like glass by avalanches and we also knew that it would be extremely brittle beneath the blows from the axes. This was a great disappointment to us as we now had to face up to climbing directly upwards beneath the serac barrier which loomed extremely large and forbidding above our heads. The icefield was really only marginally better to climb on than the couloir because the angle was just as steep, but not being polished by avalanches the surface was covered with small, thin

penitente which snapped off at a touch and made us feel most insecure whilst climbing.

This penitente was so rought that on at least one complete pitch we climbed without using our axes at all, simply by using the penitente as hand and foot holds - we found this mode of progress to be very disturbing. What with the difficulties encountered on the icefield itself and the further disturbance of moving up close beneath the threatening seracs, these combined to build up tension within us and we longed for the relative safety seemingly offered by the mixed ground on the far side of the couloir.

Five long pitches up the icefield took us to the base of the seracs where we were forced to make a difficult traverse to the right towards the couloir. It was here that Howard made a stance in a most impressive situation just before he reached a huge mass of giant icicles which grew down from the serac wall. This wall considerably overhung his stance, and we found that this close proximity to such an enormous mass of potentially moving ice, was quite oppressive.

From Howard's stance I continued the traverse on bubbled of water ice, which was extremely unstable, to reach an ice grotto formed between the seracs and the mass of suspended icicles. There I took a short rest whilst I contemplated the couloir just ahead of me, and which I had to cross in order to escape from beneath the tons of ice which seemed to be literally weighing me down. After hacking away a few of the icicles, done nervously lest my actions had brought all and sundry upon my head, I stepped our into the couloir at a narrows and quickly crossed to the security of a rock rognon on the other side.

Having crossed the couloir we were then in a far less immediate danger from potential avalanches and we felt great relief for that. The climbing above continued on steep mixed ground, but it was not without interest as we had to overcome sections where deep powder snow overlay the ice, which involved much strenuous

work, and this was followed by steep, ice filled grooves between the rocks.

By the late afternoon we began to notice the strain of the day's exertions and tensions and we realised that we must try to find a good bivouac ledge for the night. The ground was very deceptive from below and imagined ledges just never materialised being, on arrival, sloping rock ledges or slopes of hard ice. The angle of the face never relented and the difficulties continued as we gained height in our search for a suitable ledge.

Eventually a steep rock wall forced us back into the couloir, which we crossed to reach a rock rognon on which we decided we must make a bivy. Thus we were extremely frustrated when we failed to discover the hoped for ledge on top of the rognon. In fact our frustration was so great that we decided upon the idea of escaping from the couloir through the seracs on the far side, in order to reach the summit icefield which was tantalisingly close. We began this ill-founded action which required us to make a diagonal abseil across the glassy ice. The execution of this proved to be extremely difficult and was also quite unnerving and thus when I made a footing on a rock boss I came to my senses and called a halt to the made-cap scheme of escape.

After a moment's reflection I realised we could make some sort of bivy site out of the top of the rock boss and secured myself and brought Howard across to join me. We managed to make two bearable bivy spots on that small perch in the middle of the couloir on the only buttock size ledges which we had seen for hours. Our situation was quite incredible, suspended as we were in the centre of that extremely steep shute of grey ice with the daunting prospect of spending the night in the knowledge that the serac wall rose above in a curving line and constantly threatened our position. The slightest tinkle from a falling icicle was sufficient to startle us as we constantly expected the worst from above. But soon we were fully occupied

with the preparation of the evening meal which required careful attention to operate in such a confined situation without losing anything to the void beneath. Eventually we dozed off after having enjoyed another magnificent sunset, but we slept only very fitfully as we were unable to relax in one position for very long.

By the onset of dawn we were well on with the preparation of our morning brew which was made from ice hewn from the couloir. A bitter cold breeze swept up the couloir and numbed our fingers as we struggled to pack away the gear, meticulous precautions having to be taken to avoid losing essential equipment over the edge.

We re-crossed the couloir and gained the rock rognon which we had to climb for the second time, a precarious exercise in sub-zero temperatures as we had to climb up technically difficult rock whilst wearing crampons to gain its upper edge. Above the rognon the couloir opened out into a wide fan of grey ice and gradually merged into the summit icefield, which was a vast slope of penitente ridges standing 2 - 3 ft high.

Howard led the first 150ft up onto the fan of ice and he found this to be very demanding because the ice was either extremely brittle for the most part or it was covered with a thin layer of crusted powder snow which was very difficult to obtain security on. Whilst Howard worked away on that pitch I suffered a regular bombardment of lumps of ice which hurtled down upon me and cause great pain when I was unable to avoid a direct hit (I was not wearing a helmet!)

When I joined Howard at his stance we discussed the options open to us regarding the route ahead. The summit was above us to our right and we had hoped to exit from the couloir on that side, but our way out there was effectively barred by a steep wall of snow which was overhung by a large cornice which looked to be much too unstable to invite a closer inspection. The fan of grey ice directly above us was equally uninviting and so we



turned our attention to the serac barrier on our left as this offered hope for being breached to reach the summit icefield.

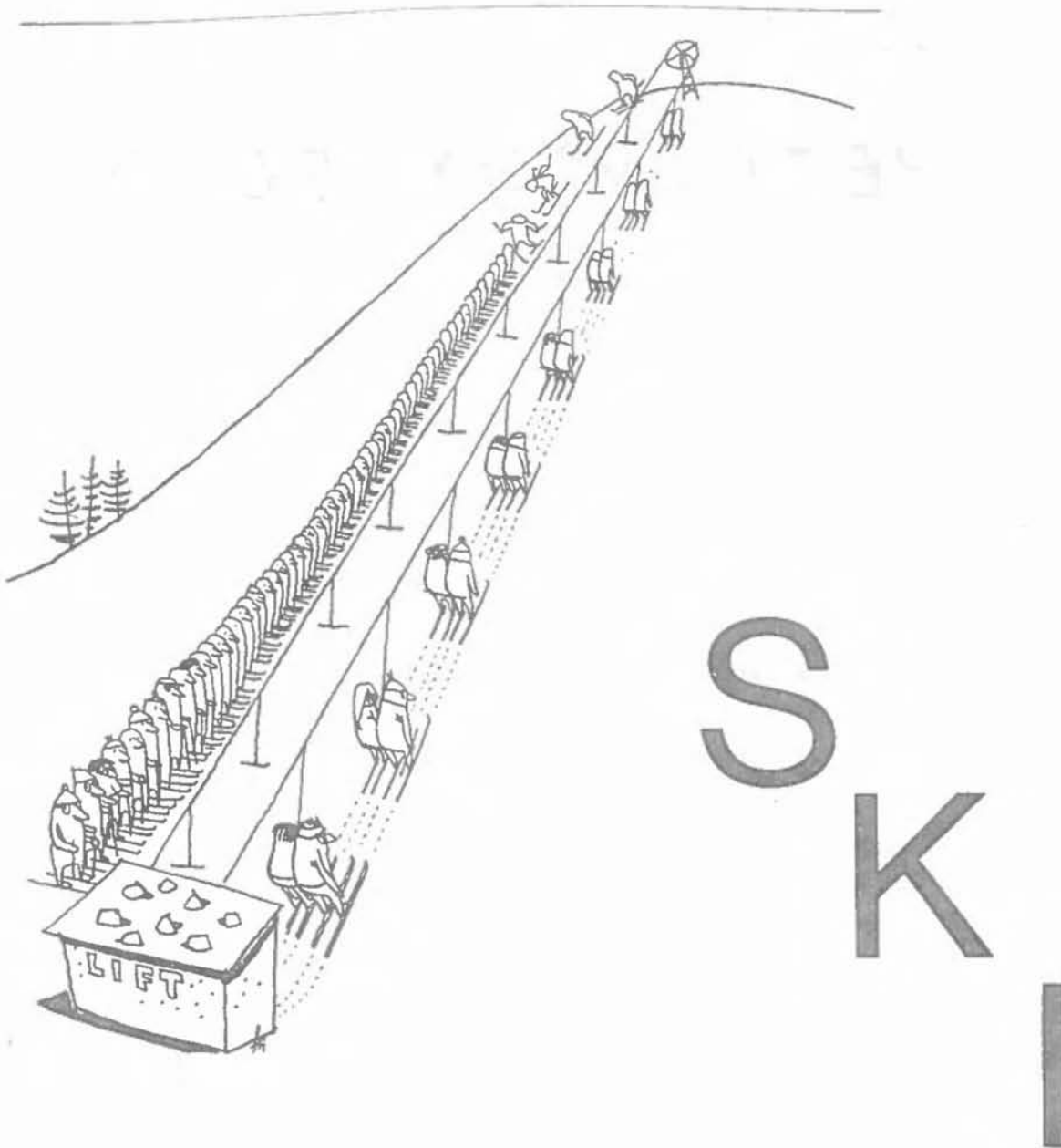
The climb through the seracs was quite exciting and involved the descent of an ice chimney which was blocked by a boss of snow. My attempt to climb over this boss failed when the whole issue collapsed and I was left hanging from a convenient knob of ice which I had just managed to grab. I quickly re-established a bridging posture across the chimney and re-gained my breath before I hammered home an ice piton to secure my descent of the chimney, which was now clear of all encumbrances.

From twelve feet down the chimney I was able to climb out onto the summit icefield and climb easily up this to make a platform stance cut out of the penitente. When Howard joined me we sorted out the gear and made a much needed cup of tea. The tension drained gently from us and we were able to relax and admire the superb view as we eased the warm tea down our parched throats. Even though we were in the sun, we soon cooled off with our inactivity and we had to turn our minds once again to the way ahead. The summit was a few hundred feet above us beyond the couloir and could only be gained by a circuitous route round the head of the couloir. We just could not face this as it would all have had to have been made on the awful penitente so we decided to gain the summit ridge at it's nearest point. We were very happy to have climbed the North West Face and could not bear the penance required to attain the summit itself and thus we droned off across the huge field of penitente which lay between us and the summit ridge. This long rising traverse was tedious in the extreme and left us with great admiration for the Catalans who had had to overcome bast stretches of that terrible terrain in order to gain the summit by way of the North ridge. Our relatively short sting was almost more than we could tolerate and we realised that we might never have achieved success by the technically easier but gruelling conditions to be found on the ridge itself.

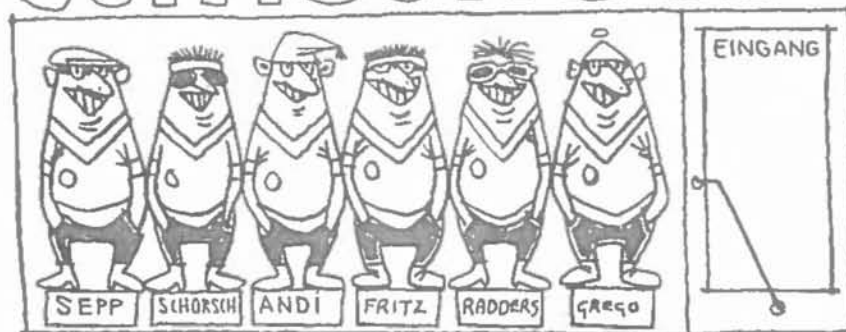
The descent of the ridge was made easily at first unroped down moderately steep ice slopes covered in penitente. A large crevasse which barred our way caused us some difficulty until we found a place where we could lower ourselves from it's upper lip which overhung the slope beneath. This drop was quite exciting, particularly as we could not be certain that we would land on the other side. Eventually the ridge steepened and we had to resort to descending by abseil. We were fortunate that the Catalans had left the slings behind which we needed for this and thus our progress was quite rapid. The lower section of the ridge is a complex of rock ridges and towers with steep ice ridges and couloirs between. We were very pleased to find two ice pitons left behind in a vast sheet of polish-ice which we were able to abseol from very quickly. By late afternoon we reached the head of the final huge snow couloir which we would have to descend to gain the glacier below, but we resisted the temptation to begin descending this so late in the day and instead we looked for a suitable bivy ledge on the sheltered side of the ridge on top of a huge block projecting out from the wall over a huge drop to the glacier below. We passed a very comfortable night on that ledge and felt quite rested for the long descent to the glacier ahead of us.

We descended the couloir by a series of long abseils, but our patience was tried to extreme by the ropes getting tangled up in the penitente each time we pulled them through. Eventually we were able to climb down unroped for the last two hundred feet and cross through the complicated bergeshcrund without mishap to reach the comparative safety of the glacier.

From the glacier we were able to gaze up to the face again and with the experience gained on it over the previous three days we viewed it with a far greater respect than perhaps we had given to it before. But that is one of the great attractions of making first ascents of big faces - the discovery of their secrets and the solution of the problems which they offer and these are often only revealed as one progresses from one to the other.



## SCHISCHULE



## ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY

# **PETE NORTHCOTE**

The idea was to combine some of the more debauched Oread's drinking habits with a visit to my local crag. I had always wanted to take a bunch of outsiders to Portland to test the reaction of mainstream climbers. Being involved in the island's development prior to the Dorset Guide by R. Crewe, local climbers like myself were never sure of the reception the crag would get. The mention (somewhat innocently at first) that my father was a Publican and that his main beverage was "Badger Beer" got the right result from the Wright! people. Cries of "fix it up" and "remember that time at Swanage" prompted me into organising a trip. I arranged pits in the Skittle Alley and fixed the date. The main problem was that when broaching the subject of actually going, and mentioning "Dorset" to people, the net result was instant horror. Excuses were varied, ranging from "on bloody strike" to people even leaving Derby - amazing.

Seven fearless but rather apprehensive members of the Oread finally succumbed to the idea - the Two Ronnies, John the Tyke, Chris Wilson, Pete (I'm in love with your sister-in-law) O'Niel and Martin (I fancy your wife) Musson.

Taking Martin in my car, we set off early Friday afternoon and were in Dorset for 19.30. Martin's usually unshockable nature was shattered by the sight of my dog being the centre of an orgy at my mates house. You can't keep a good terrier down, but my dog couldn't keep him off. Anyway, that was the only live sex Martin saw all weekend!

We got down to the drinking by 20.00 and were half cut by 21.10 when the others turned up. Dave and Mark, fresh from adventures in Moroccan Jails (if the haircuts are anything to go by) set about the beer with unrestrained vigour.

Pete sniifed the cider and was totally "gone" before the glass even touched his lips. After a "Chinky" we went to bed at 24.00.

# PORT WINE AND SKITTLES

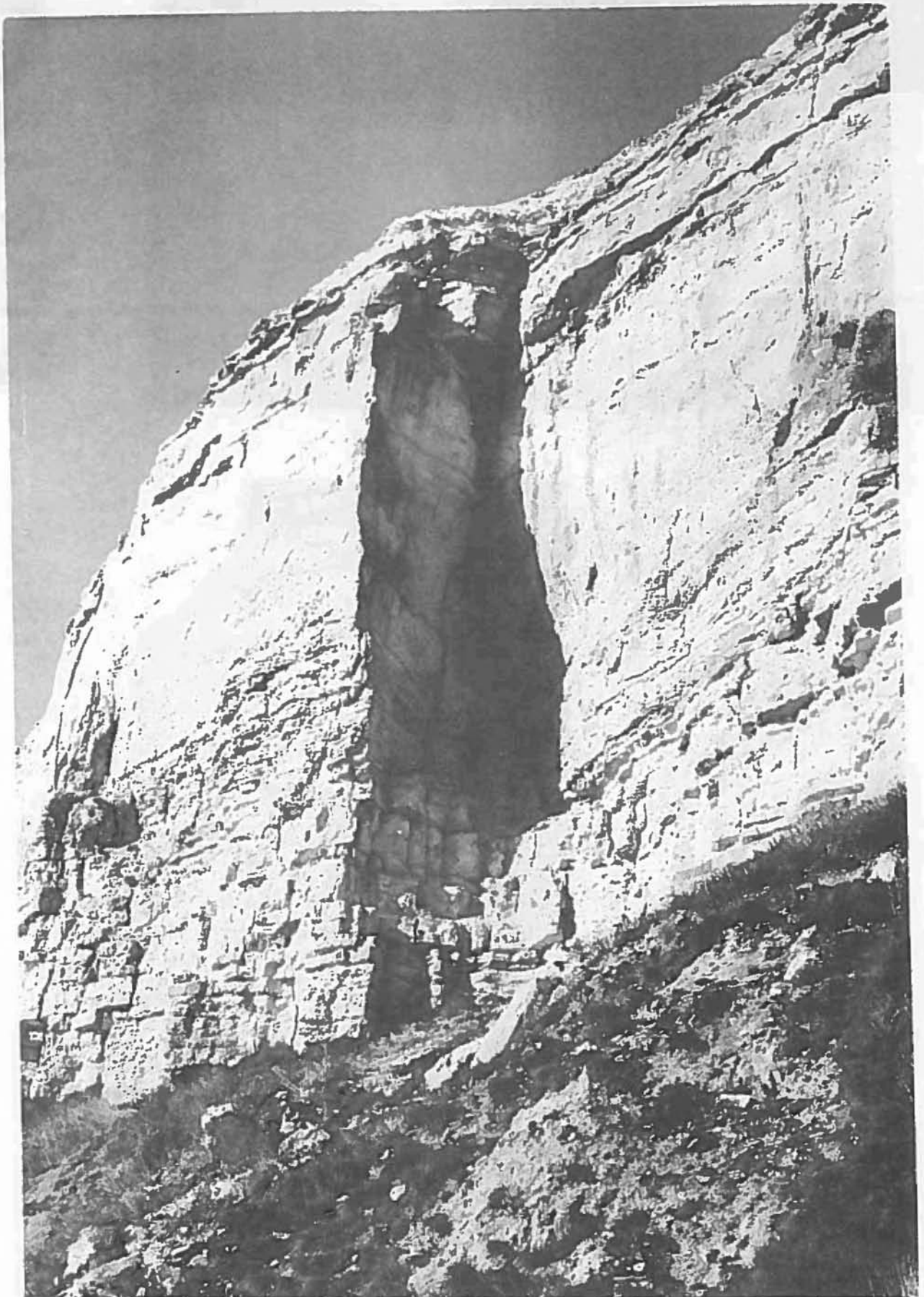
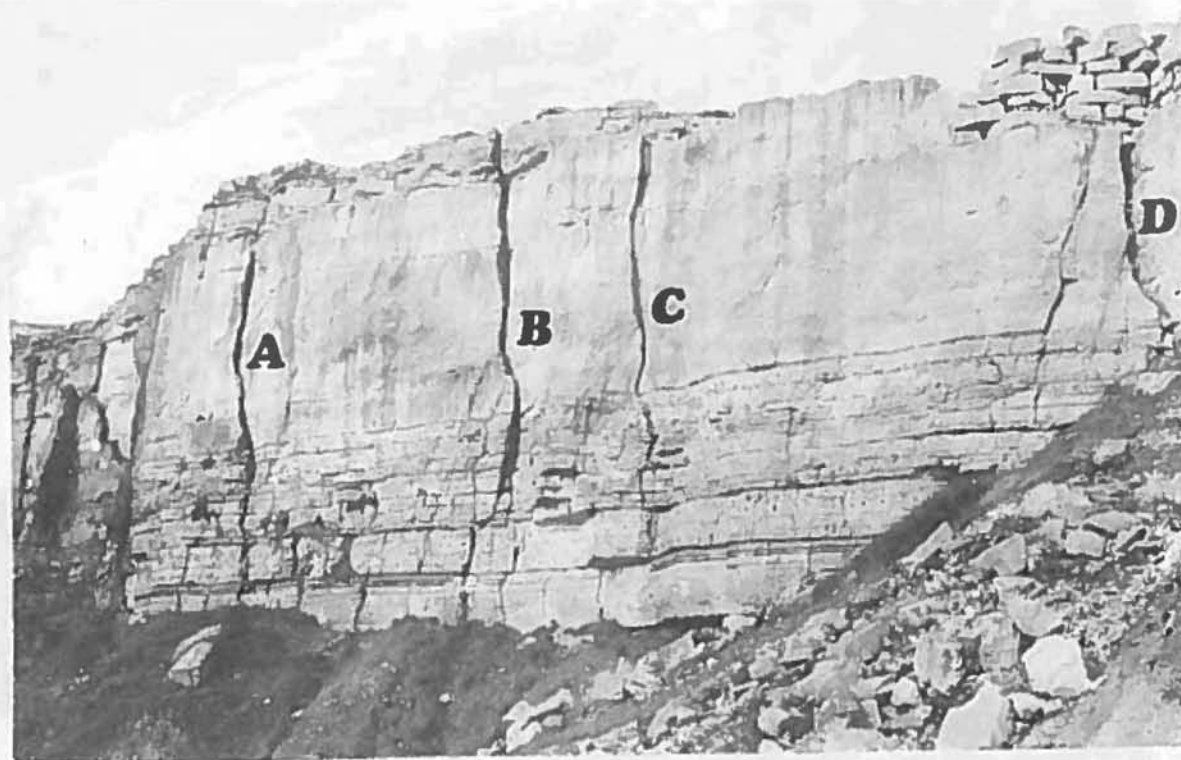


PHOTO: BIG CORNER, 170 feet, V.S., BLACKNOR SOUTH, PORTLAND.



# portland



BLACKNOR SOUTH, ISLE OF PORTLAND, DORSET.

The rock is Jurassic Limestone similar to that at Swanage.  
Routes take the obvious crack/ chimney lines and are :-

- A - Insistence, 110 feet, Hard Severe.
- B - Persistence, 115 feet, Hard Severe.
- C - Port Wine, 100 feet, Very Severe.
- D - Blockhead, 70 feet, Hard Severe.

Guidebook is 'Dorset', edited by Richard Crewe.

Breakfast was at 08.30 and we were away by 09.00. A quick trip across country and we picked up Tim, a local climber and friend, and set ourset for the "Isle of Portland". On arrival at the crag one find's oneself at the top and as the crag is above the sea by a good 100ft, access is no problem. Tim showed our intrepid heroes the top of a route called "Bag End" and the immediate reaction was a mixture of shock and near hysteria. Martin said "let's go home now". Anyway, the lads showed their merit by attacking the path down. Martin tackled the slippery grass and mud, not in wellies, but town shoes! On arrival at the foot of "Blacknor North", Tim and myself showed the existing lines and pointed out a few choice lines as yet still unclimbed. On turning "Blacknor Point" one comes to the crag known as "Blacknor South". The first route in the guide book that we undertook was "Bag End", 75ft HS. A mass descent was made on 4 ropes of 2. Some of the comments about the guano and rock were a little prejudiced. A quick "ab" down and I found D.D. attacking "Dreamer", 100ft HVS, thinking it was MVS. He was past the difficult start and in the process of trying to smash a large Hex into a crack, grumbling about the rock. It is a bit meringue-like but nevertheless good, sound, stuff. He eventually retreated and climbed "Bag End". Meanwhile, Tim and myself, Martin and Pete set off on a tour of the crag. Needless to say they were quite impressed. We pointed them up "Blockhead", a short, fun route and I sat down to watch while Tim indulged in his favourite pastime, trundling. In his own 'Whymperish' fashion he succeeded in unearthing huge blocks and the whole crag vibrated as clouds of sulphurous dust billowed all over the place. Basically he's a bloody vandal. Martin was having fun on the crux of "Blockhead" so Tim and I left him to it and went off to do "Persistence". I have done this huge chimney about 8 times over the years, but this time even I shit out. The powdery first 20ft quickly sent my brain into a fade and a quick retreat. Tim took over and was soon at the stance. I set off quickly past the scene of my embarrassment and was soon at the stance. Tim informed me there was no belay. Crazy bastard. Still, it was good to be back on a crag that I know so well. Every cabbage plant is an old friend and every line an old adversary. Martin was on his way up behind me as Tim set off up the main pitch, a 4ft wide chimney about 70ft high all back and footing with no runners. The most impressive line is up the outside edges but D.D. resorted to some Troglodyte antics later in the day, he

even found a runner where the back of the chimney touches.

While Tim, Martin, Pete and myself were doing this, Chris and John had made a quick inspection of "Big Corner" and had quickly followed the path to safer havens. I recommended "Port Wine" to Chris and off he went. We could hear Chris on the stance of "Port Wine", the sound of a peg being driven in echoing through the separating buttress. After finishing "Persistence", Tim and I took up seats in the grandstand to watch Chris tackle the crux of "Port Wine". After a few initial forays, he attacked the overhanging crux with venom and emerged into the peapod above slightly breathless and with screaming arms. He finished the pitch methodically and in good style, exiting to a good, clean finish with nothing but good comments on the quality of the route.

The excitement over, it was back to get the gear and lunch and more trundling. This time the massed forces of the Oread set to with a will and succeeded in unearthing 2 giant boulders which, to shouts and screams, hurtled towards the sea with the resulting, satisfying, explosion at the foot of the crag.

After this short sojourn, Tim and Martin climbed "Port Wine", Martin leading the first pitch. While all this was in progress, D.D. and Mark (the Two Ronnies) had been occupied with "Persistence". I peered down the top chimney to find D.D. not too happy with his lot. The normal brain fade being in operation. After a little coaxing he eventually arrived unscathed at the top to start the task of getting Mark out of the bowels of the crag. After a somewhat loud struggled, he too emerged hot and bothered at the top.

After this it was decided to go for a swim. One ex-colonial blanched visibly at the water and Martin and Pete made the supreme effort of dipping their feet into the water. Tim and myself showed them how it was done by leaping in starkers and, after a short swim (!), came out looking like some young castratii after a bath. After a quick bit of soloing on the "Fallen Slab", we set off for the hotel. We stopped off in Dorchester and had a few pints in the Legion Club there, and then it was off again to a sumptuous meal of steak, egg and chips back at the hotel. After this meal, which seemed to vanish as quickly as it was put on the table, it was back to the drinking and skittles. The

evening turned into a real session and Martin, apart from oggling my mother-in-law's legs, won the skittles and the money. We turned in late, about 01.00, the bar being still open.

The next day saw us on the way to Avon Gorge after the statutory fried breakfast. Although a bit expensive, it was a good laugh and a pleasant change. Hairy arse climbers being waited on hand and foot was quite a novelty, but it was probably like the old days, except I don't think they had a skittle alley in the Wasdale Hotel.

The trip to Bristol was achieved without incident and we soon settled into the routine of drinking tea. I had a quick kip on the carpark while the others got their bearings. I woke to D.D's learing face and a cracking wench trying to squeeze into a pair of shorts. Thighs like treetrunks - great. Needless to say we got kitted up and went to follow her up a route. In the end we did one to the right of hers. Pete did the first pitch so we pointed Musson up the slab pitch. He achieved the belay without much ado, simply a mild coronary at the sight of the soft, blank section of the slab. I went next and was soon telling Martin to watch the rope and with calves screaming, blew the remains of a hangover straight out each ear, along with a jet of steam. We "abbed" off "Lunchtime Edge" and arrived at the bottom to find Marion and her sister. After a quick letch we set off to do "Dawn Walk" which went off without incident, well, apart from rescuing D.D., who was stranded in the middle of his route with his second nonchalantly watching the proceedings from the carpark. A quick "ab" took us back to the girls and a bite to eat. While all this was going on, Chris and John were engrossed in "Central Gulley" and seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Hunger abated, we set off to do "Sinister" and, apart from Martin's grovel on the second pitch, which I refuse to mention, it rounded off a great day. When we got down, Chris and John were back on terra ferma.

All in all a good weekend with good climbing, latching and drinking. The success of the trip was marred by the inevitable queue on the motorway. It seems to be the norm these days. Martin actually crept up on Chris' car (on foot). Still, that's life.

# ALPS

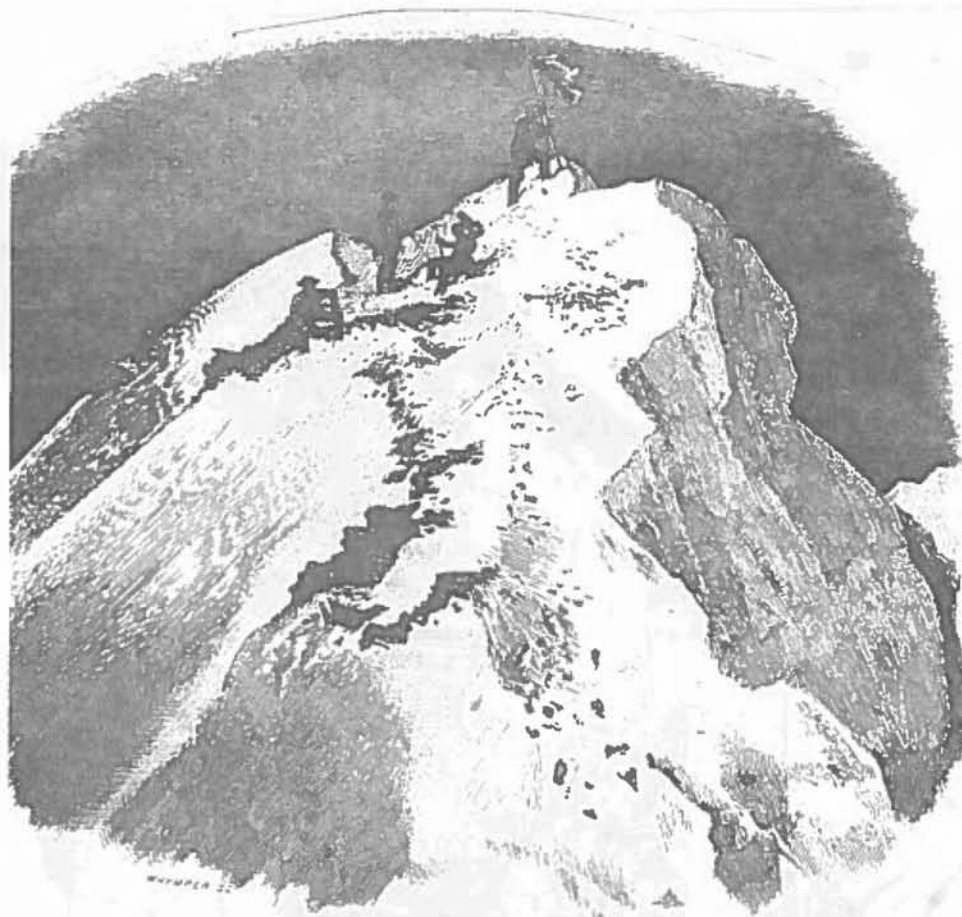
## 1979

The absence of an official venue for the club Alpine Meet in 1979 meant that members were dispersed at several centres. A large party returned to the Paradiso, scene of the 1978 meet, while the Bernina was also popular. Chamonix received its usual patronage and isolated ascents were also made in the Pennine Alps, Bernese Oberland and Graians. At least one team made ascents in three different areas and for many others the tendency was to change centres during their holiday. Whether this trend will continue in future seasons or if there is a return to the traditional Alpine Meet format remains to be seen. Many members have, however, expressed disappointment at the lack of an accepted venue for 1979.

The following pages give details of ascents made.







## GRAN PARADISO

Grivola N.W. Face (TD)	P. O'Neil, G. Wright (8 hrs)
Grivola N. Ridge (AD)	D. Wright, P. Dyke, J. Turner (15½ hrs)
Treseta N. Face (PD+)	D. Wright, B. Abley (3½ hrs)
Apostoli - Traverse (AD)	S. Firth, Edith, C. Bryan, K. Gregson, J. Gregson (6 hrs). Also P. Wragg, H. Reed
Gran Paradiso - Circular Traverse	P. Wragg, H. Reed
Punta Nera - Punta Bianca (PD-)	P. Beverley, J. Draper
Gran Paradiso (F)	P. Beverley, J. Draper
La Trasenta (PD-)	P. Beverley, J. Draper
Punta Patir	P. Beverley, M. & D. Mills
Herbetet E. Ridge (PD)	M. & D. Mills
Becca D. Moncair (PD)	M. & D. Mills
La Trasenta	K., M. & L. Bryan, J. Welbourne, G. Gadsby



Piz Roseg  
3987 m.

## BERNINA

Piz Roseg N. Face (D/TD)

P. O'Neil, G. Wright (4 hrs)  
K. Gregson, C. Bryan (3½ hrs)  
J. Hudson, S. Godfrey (4 hrs)

Corvatsh (F)

C. Bryan, K. Gregson

Cambrina Ice Nose (D)

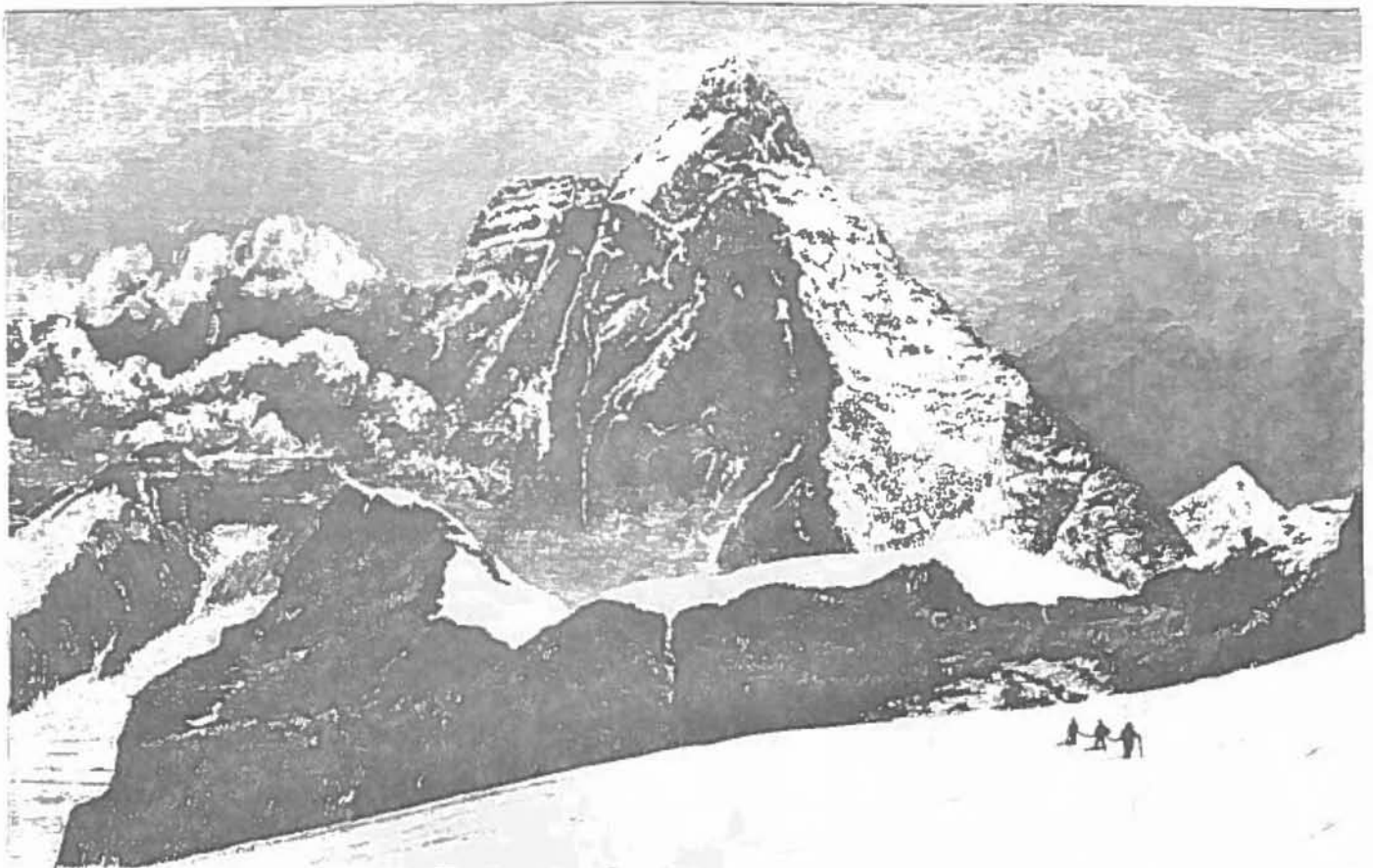
K. Gregson, C. Bryan, P. O'Neil,  
G. Wright

Piz Paul N. Pillar of E. Peak (AD)

P. Wragg, H. Reed

Biancogrät (AD+)

P. Wragg, H. Reed



# MONT BLANC

Blatiere, W. Face (TD+)

P. Addison, R. Sedgwick (7 hrs)

Mt. Blanc, Brenva Spur (AD/D)

C. Bryan, K. Gregson, J. Hudson,  
S. Godfrey (5 hrs)

Keith Gregson reports their descent round Mt. Maudit and Tacul to be "very reasonable" despite poor visibility.

also M. Musson and P. Davis -

who were caught by a storm near the summit. Dave Pitt-Plady, a member of an accompanying party, died of exposure during a bivouac on the descent.

Aiguille du Midi, Frendo Spur (D+)

M. Musson, P. Davis, C. Wilson,  
M. Mortimer

Petit Dru, N. Face (TD)

C. Wilson, M. Mortimer (12 hrs)

Mont Maudit, Frontier Ridge (D)

C. Wilson, B. Wright (12 hrs)

Aiguille du Peigne, N. Ridge (TD+)

P. Davis, D. Pitt-Plady





## **OBERLAND**

Eiger, Mittellegi Ridge (AD+)

D. Wright, P. Dyke, J. Turner  
(4 hrs)

Ochs Fischerhorn, N.W. Face (TD+)

P. Addison, R. Sedgwick (12 hrs)

- probably 2nd British ascent.

## **GRAIANS**

Grande Casse N.N.Q. Face (AD)

P. Wragg, H. Reed

## **PENNINE**

Matterhorn, N. Face (TD)

P. Addison, R. Sedgwick (12 hrs)



**a  
cairngorm  
traverse**





## **BY GORDON GADSBY**

Easter Day on Deeside dawned bright and clear and here in the great pine forests that surround the Linn of Dee we had the promise of a good day. The gale force winds that had swept across Britain for the last two weeks were strangely subdued. The chatter of the forest birds could be heard clearly for the first time in days. Two red squirrels darted across the thin carpet of fresh snow outside the tents, then froze in characteristic manner on the trunk of a nearby tree. They watched us mischievously whilst a pall of mist slowly rose from the trees beyond the campsite. As the greyness lifted it revealed two fine stags eyeing us intently as we prepared for our trek to the heart of the Cairngorms.

The five of us, Ken and Chris Bryan, Alan Squires, Peter Beresford and I had planned our expedition the night before over a pint in the cosy bar of nearby Mar Lodge. If the tops were reasonably clear when we reached the Luibeg burn we would traverse Ben Macdui via the ridge of Sron Riach, returning by the Lairig Gru Pass and the pools of Dee. If Ben Macdui was out of the question we would make a decision at Luibeg bridge. One way or the other, whether we went high or kept low, we were all keen to see this remote part of the Cairngorms after the heaviest snowfalls for 30 years.

The sky over Braemar was still tinged with pink as we set off along the good track towards Derry Lodge. Each of our sacs was well stocked with a variety of food plus spare clothes, crampons, ice axe, gloves, snow goggles, etc., whilst Ken also carried the rope. We were ready for anything and expecting at least a twelve hour day.

A tiny bat circled round and round us on that first mile of track then a large herd of red deer crossed the glen in front of us and headed for the slopes of Sgur Dubh. On the high ground just before Black bridge, young Chris shouted excitedly from the head of the party. "Look, we can see one of the snow peaks". It was the 3,700ft Derry Cairngorm, completely plastered in new snow. Seen through a clearing in the ancient pine forest with several stags in the foreground, it made a perfect landscape picture. "Is it one of the big ones?" asked Alan, focussing his camera. I assured him that it wasn't. A few minutes later, however, we did see one, namely Stob Coire Sputan Dearg 4,095ft the second highest top of the Macdui group.

We continued our journey over Black bridge then northwards up Glen Lui. On the fringe of the trees before Derry Lodge we spotted another herd of deer, two of them were rearing on their hind legs and sparring like kangaroos sometimes do. As I captured the moment on film, I realised I was gaining the rewards of bringing my 200mm lens along, despite the extra weight!

There were a few mountain tents situated by the Derry burn behind the Lodge, which was all shuttered up. It was an idyllic spot to camp, but you would have to carry the gear at least four miles from the nearest road. One by one we crossed the narrow wooden bridge over the burn then carefully picked our way across the very marshy ground between the confluence of the two rivers. We were entertained on our way by the spectacular courtship display of a pair of lapwings, twisting and turning in the morning sunlight.

In less than ten minutes we reached the snow covered higher track beyond the keeper's cottage and looking back we could see that the clouds were already gathering over Lochnagar, the Queen's mountain, above Braemar. Once we had crossed the low spur of Carn Crom we were on a level walk for a mile or two. The snow was deep though and every few steps the frozen upper crust would collapse making it a trying walk.

The sun was still sparkling across the snowfalls as Chris, Pete and I reached the metal footbridge across the Luibeg burn. The bridge was almost unnecessary as just beyond it the burn was completely blocked by enormous drifts of snow thirty to forty feet deep. From a vantage point on the west side of the bridge we waited for Ken and Alan to catch us up. Ken had broken his leg some months ago and this was his biggest trial yet. Chris watched him anxiously. "Is it going to be alright Dad?" he asked. "Ay, but it's hurting a bit" grunted Ken. "Never mind, though, the weather is making up for it". Alan stepped across the bridge and climbed the steep snow bank to join us. "Is Ben Macdui on then Gordon?" he asked. I looked up the dark shadowed cwm behind the Leibeg bridge; although we were in sunshine and sheltered from any wind, the heights of Sron Raich and Macdui above the cwm were being attacked by fast moving waves of snow-laden clouds. It was blizzard conditions on the tops and I think we all knew it! "No, it's not on" I replied, "at least not for me". (Having traversed Cairngorm and Ben Macdui in an arctic style blizzard some years ago, before reaching the haven of the Shelter Stone beside Loch Avon, I personally had no intention of repeating that performance). The others agreed that conditions up there did look bad and in all probability would only get worse.

"Let's do the Lairig Gru then" suggested Alan. "We can get as far as we can and make sure we turn back in time to get home before dark". It was agreed, we would walk over into Glen Dee along the most famous highland track in Scotland. We tramped towards the shallow col between Carn a'Mhaim 3,329ft and Creagan

nan Gabhar, a col which would lead us into Glen Dee. On looking back we could see the snow clad hills around Glen Luibeg and Glen Lui were shrouded in an ominous blackness, a blackness accentuated by the azure blue of the sky immediately above us. It was one of those days, storm and tempest, sunshine and shadow, all rolled into one glorious bundle of mountain weather. And yet we seemed to possess the luck of the Gods with our own little anti-cyclone following us around. In fact, due to the dazzling sunlight on the snow, Chris and I were already wearing our sun goggles.

As we neared the cairn marking the col there was no sign of any track just a great white expanse into which we sank wearily at every other step. Suddenly a fierce blast of wind hit us head on, whipping up the fresh powder snow and throwing it in repeated waves against us. The surprise rush of wind flushed out a flock of grouse from some nearby rocks and they went scurrying this way and that into the very teeth of the gale. At first they seemed unable to take off, then one after another in a flash of red and dark brown they zoomed away to our left skimming across the snow uttering cries that sounded like "Ready Brek, Brek, Brek!" Chris, Pete and I continued towards the cairn, the wind dropped to a mere gentle breeze and the magnificent prospect of Glen Dee opened before us.

"Look at that for a peak" gasped Chris pointing with his axe. It was the Devil's Point, stunningly beautiful as it emerged from giant wind driven cobwebs of mist and cloud. The last time I'd seen it, it had just appeared as a dark pointed peak amongst snow covered neighbours, but from this viewpoint with the higher peaks covered in clouds it seemed of majestic proportions. When Ken and Alan reached us they too were captured by the beauty of the mountain. Without more ado we changed our plans, the Lairig Gru would have to wait for another year, the lure of Devil's Point was too strong.

We were an excited group as we made our way down the flanks of Carn a'Mhaim, with a little luck we would snatch the plum and

possibly get a good view as well. As we rounded the bend before the final descent to the river we could see straight up the Glen to where the massive slopes of Braeriach 4,248ft and Ben Macdui 4,300ft swept down to meet at the Lairig Gru pass 2,733ft. It was white-out conditions up there with just the odd fleeting patch of sunshine crossing the great snowfields. Nearer to us and in sunshine was the climbers' haven called Corrour Bothy, a small stone cottage which has already survived a hundred Cairngorm winters. Nine miles from the Linn of Dee, it was originally built to house a deer watcher to check on the movements of deer in Glen Dee in 1877. The cottage was completely refurbished around 1950 and since then has accommodated a multitude of mountain travellers from the most famous to the complete novice. In summer the bothy is hard to detect against the rough terrain, but today it stood out with a backcloth of snow.

We crossed the Dee by the iron bridge erected in 1960 and after a five minute plod through deep snow we entered the sturdy shelter. The simple room with a large fireplace was festooned with sleeping bags and brightly coloured waterproofs; the floor was wet and uninviting. We stepped outside for our lunch. The time was 12.45 p.m. Half an hour later we were on our way up Coire Odhar with the snow improving at every step.

Ken was moving well despite the pain from his leg. "Shall we do Cairn Toul as well?" he asked. I looked across to our right, a seemingly endless blanket of grey cloud was sweeping across below the 3,000ft contour completely blocking out the sky. I didn't need to answer, the weather would be the deciding factor. As we climbed higher Chris pointed to the tremendous cornices on either side of the burn that flows down the corrie. They were of alpine proportions and quite spectacular.

We were now about 800ft from the summit in a direct line. The easiest way, however, would be via the col, but I noticed a shallow gully on this north flank of the mountain. It looked a sporting way to the top. Chris led the way up the easy angled

gully which was about 700ft long with three short icy steps about mid-height. The snow was excellent but unsuitable for crampons although the axes were very useful. At the third step we disturbed two ptarmigan; they swooped away into the corrie, white shapes against the grey, cloud-filled cwm. The last time I'd seen two was on Meal Odhar in 1971. Above us the sun was highlighting the upper rim of the gully whilst racing clouds on either side threatened to extinguish it.

Another fifteen minutes and we were being blown along the corniced summit ridge by the westerly gale. The actual top was a complete snow cap with just the rocks of the cairn breaking the skyline. We had one brief view down Glen Dee and nearby Glen Gausachan (Glen of Pines). It was hard to believe that these now treeless valleys were once heavily forested, or that the forest once covered almost the whole of the Lairig Gru. Before we could take it all in the clouds were upon us; we fought the wind back along the ridge; Cairn Toul was forgotten. Fierce winds whipped up the snow on the lip of the corrie. There was no cornice but everywhere was so white, it seemed incredibly steep. It wasn't! and soon we were plunging down in the deep snow away from the wind.

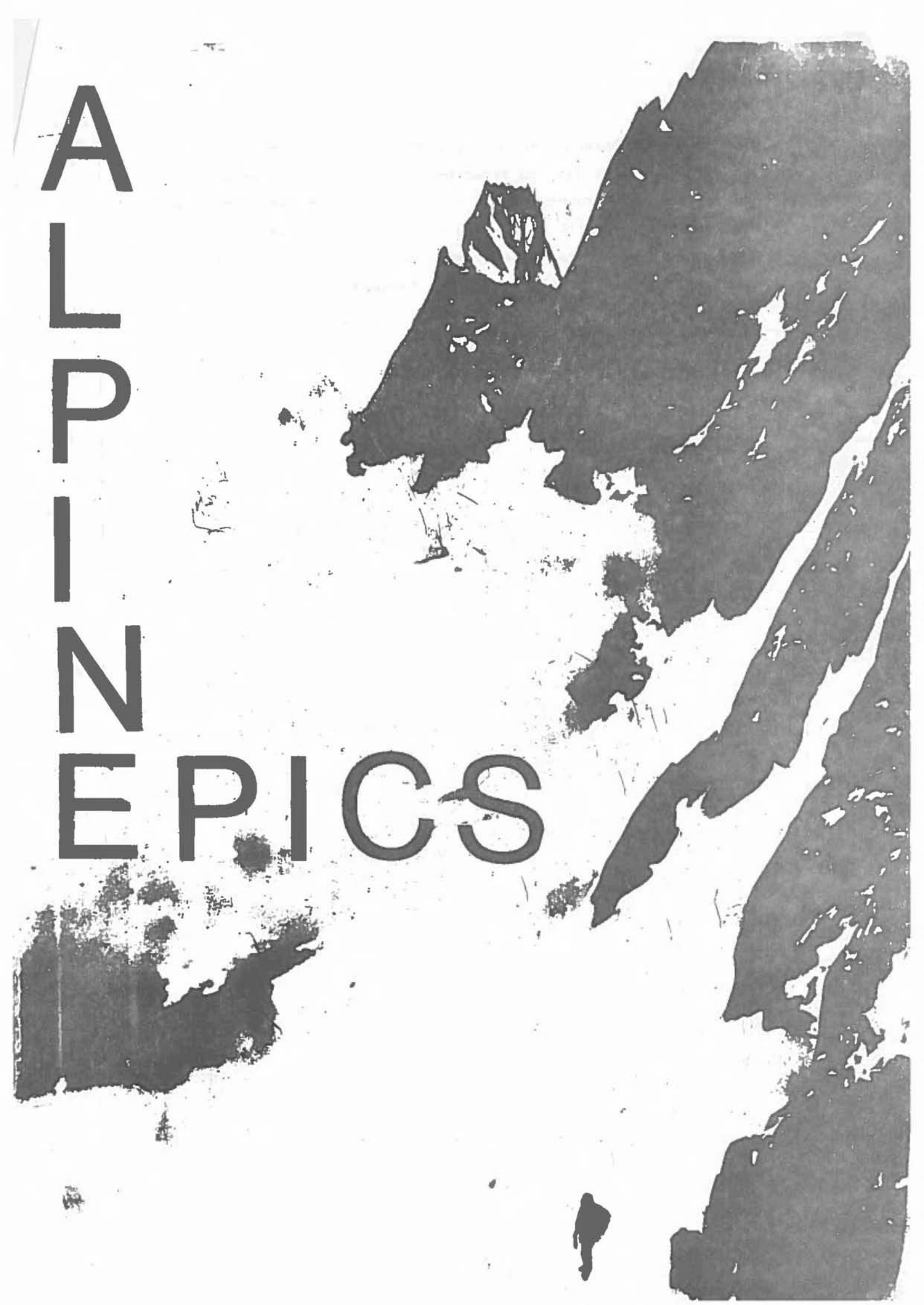
It was a silent world in Coire Odhar, the clouds settled around us and then it started to snow. The flakes came thick and gentle, soon we were like strange ghosts moving in a white world. It cleared briefly as we passed Corrour and we saw the climbers returning from the hill shaking their clothes before entering. Heavy snow followed us across the iron bridge and up the hillside - what price Cairn Toul now!

We reached the signpost on the Lairig track, the snow stopped and the southern skies started to clear. Instead of going back the way we had come we decided to go beneath the towering crags of Beinn Bhrotain and the Chest of Dee, a beautiful deep pool with towering rocks and tumbling water. It was two miles longer than the Derry Lodge track but more than compensated in delightful views (especially looking up river).



Good weather remained with us the rest of the way. We had a last orange at White bridge and after passing the Linn of Dee we entered the great Forest of Mar. Above the trees the evening sky was streaked with pink cloud. As we strode up to the tents my young sons, Richard and Peter, came running across the clearing to greet us. It was a perfect end to a fabulous day.

# ALPINE EPICS



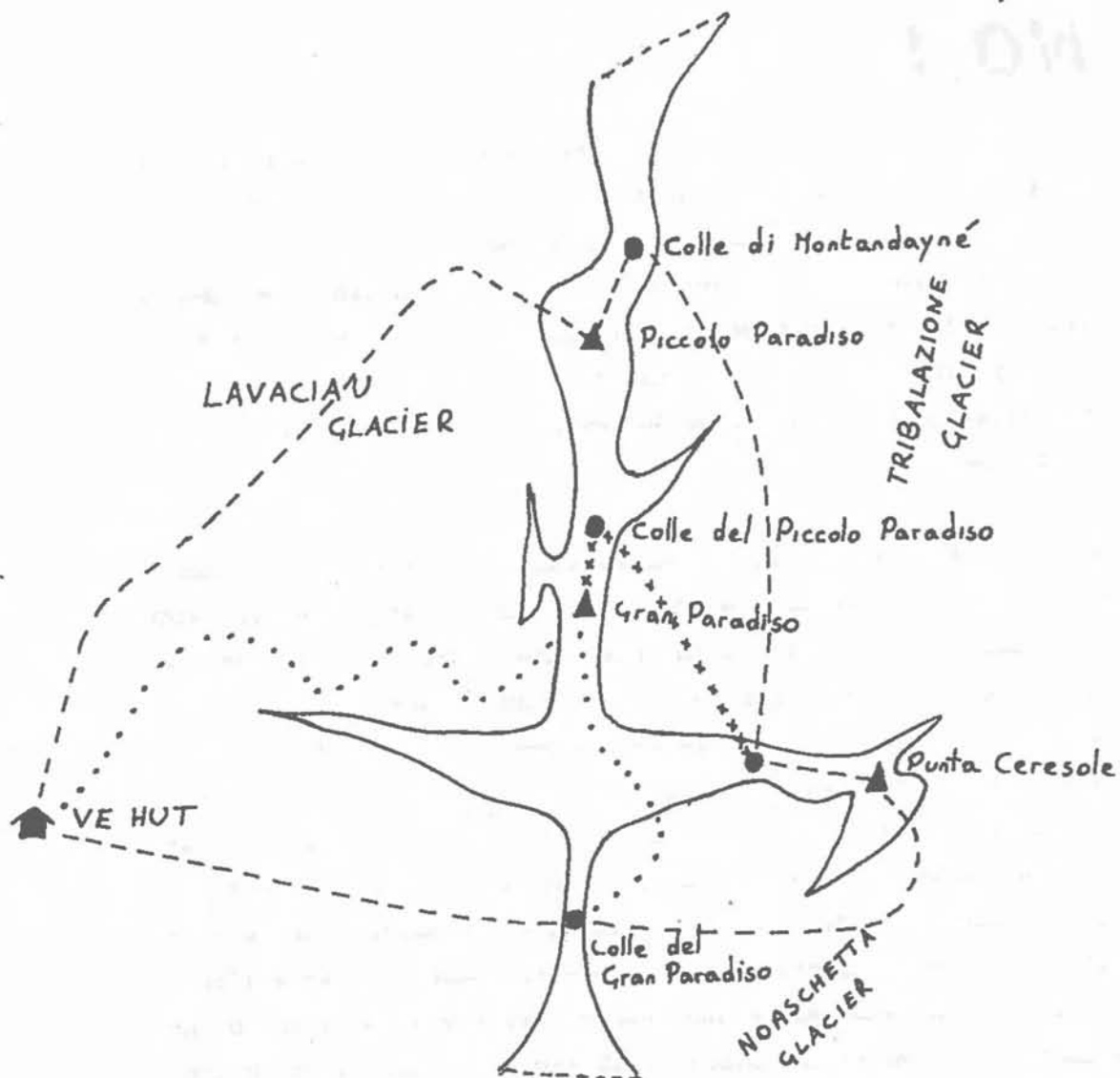
# HILARY REID

## NO.1

After our successful traverse of the Apostoli Ridge and three days of eating I felt like something a little more restful, so we (P. G. Wragg and I) decided to attempt what is described in Collomb's guide as "the best outing on the mountain (i.e. the Gran Paradiso) for the average climber based at the VE hut"; the circular traverse. We knew that the previous year the 'Stuarts' had failed to find the route but we put that down to incompetence (apologies).

Our hut walk was uneventful and we soon discovered a five-star bivvy spec complete with wooden planks and plastic sheeting within water-carrying distance of the hut. The eerie sound of axes on rock woke us the next morning at 4.20 and we were soon at the Colle del Gran Paradiso. From here we followed the guide implicitly and walked for 30 minutes in a north-easterly direction across the Noaschetta glacier. We located the three snow couloirs described in such confusing detail by Collumb and set off up the most appallingly loose debris it has ever been my misfortune to climb. After a two hour nightmare we reached the base of a snow slope. Quickly up the snow slope and then mercifully sound rock to the summit of ? "Where the bloody hell are we?" Instead of being just on our right, the Paradiso loomed ominously far away on our left. It took a few minutes of frantic work with the compass and Mickey Mouse map to discover that we had just done a new route up the SE face of the Punta Ceresole (3,777m). We needed to cross the

# THE ROUTE????



Intended Route 1 .....  
 " " 2 xxxxxxxx  
 Actual Route -----

Herbetet-Paradiso ridge to retrieve our bivvy gear; the Colle del Piccolo Paradiso was the obvious crossing point and visible in the far distance, though no details of the ascent from the east were given in the guide. We descended to the Col di Chamonin and began the long trek across the Tribolazione glacier. The Apostoli Ridge and associated peaks formed a magnificent panorama at our backs. The ascent to the col was defended by an enormous bergschrund and deeply furrowed by stone fall. This was the part of the day I enjoyed most. Although steep, the snow was soft and huge, safe buckets were easily kicked into it. Half way up the couloir we saw that it eventually became vertical and was topped by an insurmountable cornice. We moved onto the rocks on our right; an old abseil sling indicated that we were not the first to pass that way.

At the col we consulted the guide book once again. Two alternatives; up to NNE ridge to the summit of the Paradiso (AD, 1½ hours) and down the ordinary route or reverse the hanging glacier to the foot of the col on the west side of the ridge (AD/D, 5 hours in ascent from the VE hut). We chose the former and began the ascent of the steep snow/ice slope using both axe and hammer. After the final rock step, only a delicate snow crest to the summit - or was it? Five evil-looking rock towers stretched away into the distance, the elusive Paradiso was still far away. It was four o'clock. "Where the hell are we now?" Punta Vaccarone, the start of the Piccolo-Paradiso traverse and 5 hours to the summit of the Paradiso. The col we had climbed to was in fact the Colle di Montandayne (3,723m) and not the Piccolo. Reluctantly we realised that we would have to reverse the approach to the col from the west, described in the guide as more serious than the ridge itself, a steep 400m glacier couloir with ice - and stone fall danger (AD, 5½ hours in ascent from the hut). As we climbed down the rocks which crowned the snow slope I noticed a wide couloir bounded by loose rocks leading down to the havacrau glacier. We decided to risk it and crept stealthily downwards constantly kicking down rubble onto the glacier below. The bergschrund fortunately did not present us with too much difficulty. We by-passed a number of gaping crevasses and reached the safety of the moraine at seven o'clock. We were

miles from our bivouac and still had a glacier to cross.

An hour later we stumbled back to base camp and at nine o'clock we reached the car, exhausted and soaked from the rain. Pete now announced that we didn't have enough petrol to get back to Epinel. We crawled into Aasta and after a great deal of sign language and pidgin Italian found a petrol station, gorged ourselves on ice-cream and congratulated each other on our very own circular traverse - we'd gone all the way round the bloody mountain without getting up it.

## NO. 2

After the Oread left Epinel for home we too struck camp and moved to Pralognan in the Gralans West, an idyllic place surrounded by mountains with marvellous camp sites. We wanted to climb the Grande Casse (3,855m), the highest mountain in the region by its NNW face (AD). The walk up was not too exhausting and unusually interesting. We crossed, by a causeway, the Lac les Vaches above which towers the Aiguille de la Vanoise, an imposing rock needle with a number of excellent routes on it.

As is usual with me, on an Alpine bivouac I spent the night having nightmares when I slept and praying (unsuccessfully so far) for rain when I was awake. We set off at 5.15 across a grassy slope to the moraine bounding the Grande Casse couloir. Reaching the col de Grande Casse at about seven we stopped for a snack and took the opportunity to relieve ourselves of the rather revolting French sausages we'd consumed the previous evening. I was quite cheered when I saw the face; it was not quite so formidable as I had expected. Both it and the adjacent north face had obviously altered substantially since the guide book drawings were done.



Pete led across the bergschrund onto some nasty wet rock covered in loose rubble. We quickly traversed off this onto a steep snow/ice slope which we pitched. I eventually moved left on easier ground through a serac barrier and we quickly reached the second bergschrund. Beyond this considerable obstacle was the steep upper slope which, according to the guide, would take only 45 minutes. We confidently estimated three rope lengths (75 feet, as we were using one 9mm doubled) and set off, leading through initially on ice screw and then, as the snow became softer, on ice axe belays. On and on it went; after ten or fifteen rope lengths the summit seemed no nearer. I had an agonising pain in my left big toe and at every belay I bit at the snow to assuage my thirst. We could see tiny ant-like figures on the col far beneath us but otherwise the mountains were deserted. At last we reached the top of the face; the upper slope had taken three hours. Pete's Snowdon Curver had given up the ghost on the last pitch; two inches of the pick remained embedded in the snow.

We were confronted with a sharp undulating snow ridge to the summit. I was so drained I didn't feel like bothering but off we went and eventually reached our goal. We were rewarded with breath-taking views of the surrounding peaks and of the face we had just ascended, which looked horrendous. The upper slope constituted well over the half of the 2,100 feet from col to ridge.

The introduction to the description of the ordinary route, the SW face (which we intended to descend), told us it was the most popular route in the area and only PD or in certain conditions, F. We didn't bother to read any further. We expected a well-trodden track leading downwards but the snow by this time was so soft that all footsteps from the summit had been obliterated. We set off down the relatively gentle slope from the summit and then began traversing a snow slope. Neither of us had any clear idea of where the route went. Our crampons were balling up at every step. I thought Pete was getting gripped up for no reason until it dawned on me how far beneath us the glacier actually was. It eventually became clear that straight down was the only way to go so we began front pointing down the seemingly interminable slope.

After a couple of hours we reached an enormous bergschrund at the bottom of what the guide describes as the "grande pente" (big hill) 1,500 feet of 45° slush. The glacier is in retreat and we had considerable difficulty negotiating the trackless expanse of crevasses. By the time we arrived at the tongue of the glacier, a steep slope of black, grit-encrusted ice, words of abuse were being freely hurled between us.

It was six o'clock before we staggered back to the bivvy and ecstatically consumed half a tin of fruit salad. I found two edelweiss which set the seal on the day. On our weary way back to the car we horrified the immaculately dressed, non-perspiring Froggies strolling up to the Felix Faure hut, by our wild eyed and ragged appearance and our ability to gollop vast quantities of stream water at every opportunity. On reaching the tent we decided to have a little nap before preparing a meal and woke up at nine the next morning fully dressed with the tent doors wide open.

We'd had enough. The sun and sea of the south revived us a little and we grew fat again on the contents of patisseries and charcuteries as we drove slowly back to Cherbourg through France after a marvellous holiday.

NOTE:

The route description for the NNW face of the Grande Casse which appears in the 1967 guide has been translated almost word for word from the 1947 French guide (of which I have a copy). Guess who's responsible?

Answer: Collobomb

# OREAD?

## What's an Oread?!

**DOROTHY KIDD**

I suppose, on reflection, how could I escape writing an article in the Journal being the Editor's girlfriend? The Oread was first introduced to me about a year ago with the Annual Dinner and as we passed through the "silly season" of post summer activity to a state of apathy and social meets rather than anything active.

I guess I am basically lazy but enjoy that "after the day is done" feeling, sitting in the pub reflecting on the day's events. So, when a weekend in the Lake District was suggested, I jumped at the chance.

At 5.30 on Friday evening when Gobbo picked Robin and I up from Derby he was over an hour late due to the snow that had been falling all day. We put on the usual blinkers adopted when people have decided to go away, done all the preparation and are not at the last minute to amend their ideas.

I cut short a rather slow, slippery journey to Sheffield to meet the Oread Playmate, alias Martin Musson; just to say we arrived eventually outside his flat. We swapped cars, much to Gobbo's distress, who had not had the dubious, but never boring, experience of travelling in the supersonic Martinmobile.

Gobbo's ramblings were either ignored or brushed aside when he pointed to the holes in the car's bodywork and noted the fact that one had to be a memory expert to remember which of the four doors actually worked and, if they did, from which side they could be opened.

Being seasoned travellers in this vehicle, we put Gobbo at his ease - well, as much as could be expected from somebody about to travel with Martin at the wheel.

Progress was painfully slow through Sheffield as the snow was, by now, deep and a route was carefully chosen which avoided steep hills.

At about 10.15 p.m. the three men backed each other that "wouldn't it be a sensible idea to rest the car at the soonest possible moment", which just happened to be a pub about the fifth in the town of Swinton, but one that sold "decent beer" and was opposite a fish and chip shop. (Both Robin and Martin are looking for flats in the vicinity "all basic needs dealt with within 100ft of each other!").

Luckily the car was rested as we piled into it after refreshment, both liquid and solid. We settled down for what we believed would be the final leg of the journey.

The snow had been falling now for at least 12 hours and was settled in the surrounding fields. The amount of traffic had kept the two slow lanes clear, but the fast lane was coated with about a 3 inch layer, through which Martin ploughed, overtaking all the traffic in the other two lanes.

Unfortunately the pressure of the snow on the floor beneath the pedals was so great that it forced itself below the pedals, compacting itself and making the pedals rigid and useless.

The first we knew about this was Martin yelling that the brake didn't work, which is not a pleasant thought for anyone with the slightest imagination travelling at about 70 m.p.h. on a snow covered motorway.

"Well here goes" he yells and somehow brings the car to a stop on the hardshoulder by use of the hand brake and luck, the like of which is only experienced by Martin and cats.

The problem was that the snow had broken through the rusty and rotten floor and gathered under the rubber mat below Martin's foot. This snow was duly shovelled out and the incident was put behind us and we once again made for the Lakes.

My story would have ended there except for the fact that our plan of staying within the two wheel tracks in the two slow lanes was shattered when a huge lorry pulled into our lane, forcing us once again into the snow which scraped the car floor.

It came up with such force that it burst the rubber mat and came jetting up like a white soda syphon covering Gobbo, who was sitting in the front. He frantically tried to unbury himself, muttering about the effect on him becoming a father.

This time the snow had ripped the petrol feeder away, which meant that once again we skidded to a halt on the hardshoulder. How Martin manoeuvred that wounded car to safety is a credit to his novel driving skills.

Damage was examined and a verdict arrived at that we were in need of help and a tow to the nearest garage - which would be Preston as that was the nearest turnoff on the motorway. As we sat discussing what to do amidst the suffocating petrol fumes, Robin piped up with "I suppose I had better not light up in here". If three people could simultaneously think the same violent thoughts, I suspect it was then. Robin was banished into the height of the blizzard looking more like Scott of the Antarctic

than somebody off to steal a quick smoke on a motorway hard-shoulder.

The next thing we fully comprehended was the car being shaken by the Sir Galahad of Preston who towed us to our bedtime stop of Preston Docks. I hate to admit it, but when we got to Preston at about 2.30 a.m. I had a comfortable night in the back in my sleeping bag which had, luckily, not been packed into the boot. Unfortunately both Gobbo and Martin had miserable nights, both soaking wet, and Martin had nowhere to put his feet, except in the pool of melted snow that had gathered on the floor.

8.00 o'clock eventually came and the garage opened up and took the car in and did a smashing deed of driving us to a transport cafe, where huge quantities of tea were consumed and a hearty breakfast was demolished. The four of us awoke and entered once again the feeling of being human.

Once again problems arose - this time when it came to pay at the garage the £36.00 bill. Who would believe out of four people who all held current accounts there would not be one person with a cheque book. We dug deep and raised £34.00 which the garage accepted - most probably to get some sanity restored to the place. This left us in Preston with no money and a car with one gallon of petrol. Therefore we could travel all of 22 to 24 miles in any direction.

Luckily my family is quite large and distributed surprisingly evenly throughout the United Kingdom. My sister was living about 24 miles away, but my attempts to 'phone her were thwarted by not knowing her number. The operator was very unsympathetic to my pleas as she was ex-directory. As we had little option, we risked her being away and after four dead ends, in her local haunts we found her.



She had not previously met the occupants of the car, but quickly gathered their habits when all three cheered when she apologised for not having the cash, so she would have to cash a cheque in the pub. After another session of liquid refreshment "to wash the breakfast down" we made our way to the Lakes, £7 of Elaine's £15 loan already having been converted into alcohol!

As we turned a sharp bend in the Langdale Valley, two walking hitch-hikers looked rather familiar and as we overtook we could not believe what we saw - in the shape of Chris Wilson and Dave Wright - who had also broken down, spending a cold, uncomfortable, night in Preston approximately ½ mile away from the wounded Martinmobile.

They wondered why I hesitated to take up the offer of going on the next meet, but there should be a saying of "Anything can happen on an Oread Meet". But I survived and now, in the warmth of my flat, it was an unusual experience and I have taken life in hand and gone to a number of meets since then - but they are other stories.



# **of storms, seracs, bivouacs, chinamen and things....**

***BY CHRIS WILSON***

It was a great day, the sun shone and we were both enjoying the climb. Soon we would be at the top and hopefully we'd be back in town combatting dehydration tonight. Beside me was 'Hong Kong', sleepily bringing up 'Japan'. They were flagging now and had only just got back on route after an apparently interesting, but rather pointless and time consuming, excursion across the face. Mike and I, whilst never climbing particularly fast, were making excellent progress. We'd been left behind at the start by our Oriental acquaintances who'd really rocketed away and it was pleasurable to now find ourselves moving past them.

Then I was reminded that alpine climbing is not usually quite so straightforward. Japan, traversing out of sight below us, decided to pull up on a car-size loose block. The air was filled with bangs and crashes as the block trundled downwards, then thumps and yells as a body followed it. Beside me Hong Kong was screaming out for help - although he was belaying properly he appeared to be taking dynamic belaying to extremes. The only immediate help I could give was to advise him to "hold the f...ing rope", but I eventually managed to put a knot in the remaining slack rope and clip it into his belay. Soon all was quiet again. Hong Kong began sobbing about his burnt hands; Mike above wanted to know what was going on and below, Japan was complaining about a broken bone in his behind (after all, he had just descended 100ft - a real "leader simulated" fall). Further below the heads of the others now on the route anxiously peered round overhangs, awaiting the next piece of debris to descend.

Eventually Japan arrived on the ledge and collapsed. It appeared that a helicopter would somehow have to be summoned. Hong Kong was in full agreement - his hands were too painful to climb properly. Japan, however, had other ideas. "No helicopter, I go to top". He went on to suggest that I untie from one rope and the two of us could then second the next pitch, and the next, and so on. Well, it got us moving and gave me a chance to discuss the situation with Mike.

By the time I'd got up the pitch I'd decided that there couldn't be any broken bones, just damaged ego and nerve. Above us were two French lads and we asked them to wait for us at the top in case we needed help. Also they knew the descent. The climbing became painfully slow, it was too hard for us both to second together, especially since some of the belays were none too good. Eventually we stopped 150ft from the top and told Hong Kong/Japan that they had a choice. Either they took a helicopter from the top or they could manage without us. There was a storm on the way and we had both begun to tire of their inability to see the danger they were putting us in. Japan was again adamant "No helicopter".

Then, seeing the remaining rock above, he untied from our rope and told us to go on, which we did with all haste. On top we met Andre and Patrick who had waited for us and we four decided to go down together, sharing ropes and thus increasing speed. Also we would take a short cut.

Unfortunately this discussion took too long and just as we started to descend a voice with an Eastern accent asked if he and his friend could join us. We made no comment so they did. The short cut Patrick (an aspirant Guide) knew is mentioned in the Vallot Guide - "very fast and exceeding dangerous", and so it was. Free abseil followed free abseil, and at the end of each one a pendule across to a peg where one hung until the rope below was ready. Each abseil was marked with the remains of previous epics, tattered ropes festooning every available rock. All stones which we knocked off crashed and banged their way down to the foot of the Bonatti Piller. Then we realised we'd gone too low and should have been way over to the left. Getting back on route entailed ascending a short pillar by a chimney chocked with ice and sun bleached rope - perhaps we weren't the first to end up here.

A long time later we sat in the evening sunshine on the normal descent. This does not go down the first couloir at the Flames de Pierre but goes back up to the ridge and descends the next very easy couloir. It was nearly dark by now and Patrick assured us all that there was a line of abseils leading straight down that would get us back to the normal route just above the glacier. Well, the threatened storm was obviously on it's way, the normal descent could prove tricky in the dark and we didn't want to stay where we were, so on down we went.

By now Japan had returned to life and pulled out a French route card showing the line of the normal descent. "The traverse, where is the traverse ..." he started yelling, meaning the traverse onto the glacier. He was politely told that this was some way below, but if he wished to traverse now he could. He

and Hong Kong then began arguing amongst themselves as to the merits of staying with us. Down we all went, once again in a reasonably orderly fashion, until the end of my rope looped over a flake as Japan was pulling it down. As I was yelling out the dangers of pulling it harder, the rope was jumped on and jammed solid. As dark came swiftly upon us, Mike climbed up and freed it. Soon afterwards it was the new 300ft rope of Hong Kong and Japan's that jammed. Japan ignored all warnings and, as we rapidly got on with the abseil below, began climbing hand over hand up the free end. Some time later he joined us, apparently under the impression that we'd left his rope there on purpose (it stayed anyway).

The next obstacle was a small snowfield down which we began to solo. This was the final straw. Japan refused to go on, informing us that we were going to die. Hong Kong pointed out that the storm was nearly upon us and we should get as low as possible. Eventually we left Japan with strict instructions not to start coming down behind us and so knock stones on our heads. So there we were, one below the other kicking steps in the slush when above us we heard a sound. "O.K., I die, I die" and down came Japan. Attempting to take two steps to each one of ours, he kept sending huge lumps of snow onto us as his footsteps gave way.

By now it was pitch black. The wind had begun to howl and we had obviously got too low. However, since there was a new peg with a new piece of tape every hundred and fifty feet, we decided that this must also get us safely onto the glacier. The stances had got very small and it became necessary for the last two people to wait until the first two had left a stance before they descended to it. Unfortunately Hong Kong and Japan were at the back. We would ask them to wait and this they would appear to do (only one had a head torch) when the pitter patter of small stones on one's helmet would indicate that the wait had become too much. With yells and blood-curdling screams down they would come. One last abseil took us to the glacier. As soon as Patrick and Mike were down they set off to find a way across to the hut, whilst



the other four of us put on our overtrousers and cagoules and attempted to make ourselves safe on the 45° slope. After a while it became apparent that the other two were having trouble as their torches were seen weaving around in the seracs.

Then the storm hit us. Giant hailstones were followed by heavy rain. Flashes of lightning lit up the glacier, revealing a tangled confusion of huge seracs all around us. The bangs of thunder and the roar of the wind made communication difficult, but it appeared that Japan had decided to jump into an enormous crevasse - because it would be more sheltered. I grabbed him as he hovered on the edge and eventually the four of us ended up on a tiny step inside a 2 man bivouac tent.

After a very long night, morning found us alive but shattered. All night seracs had been crashing down around us, occasionally making the whole area we were on shake. Andre and I had resorted to prayer on more than one occasion whilst Hong Kong and Japan had resorted to screams and yells. After a while Patrick and Mike got back near to us and we all began to move across to the hut. The glacier was in terrible condition. As we wove our weary way over the crevasses and through the seracs, Japan enjoyed himself by walking into each and every hole he came to. When he wasn't doing this he would kick the rope, each time being given a word of encouragement by Andre.

By the time we reached the hut he was in tears and announced that never would he climb again. This brought Patrick to remark that perhaps this was an excellent idea. At this we said farewell to our Oriental friends and retired to the hut for an excellent, and free, breakfast. A few days later both Mike and I came back to England, still trying to work out what we'd done to deserve such a terrifying epic. Perhaps we should have been hard at the start and told Hong Kong and Japan what to do with themselves when they asked for our help? Or, maybe, the two of them should never have been on that climb.

# raid across the border

**MARTIN MUSSON**

Tring-Tring ... Tring-Tring

"Hello"

"Hello Martin, Dave here. Anything going on this weekend?"

"Hi Dozey. Yeah, could be. How do you fancy a long weekend in Scotland?"

"What!!! Sounds great, but I've no holiday left"

"You could be ill for 2 days. There's still plenty of snow and it's freezing hard every night in Sheffield, let alone on the Ben"

"Alright, I'm convinced, when shall we go?"

"How about tomorrow evening. I'll pick you up from West Hallam at tea time, if your Mum cooks me something"

"Okay, see you tomorrow"

Friday's work seemed to sail through with the thoughts of water ice and gully climbs. We left Dave's place at 7.30 p.m. with full stomachs, half-full rucksacs and an empty ration box for the weekend. By 1.00 a.m. we were drinking coffee in a motorway cafe at Glasgow, when Dave asked if he could drive the next stage north. I readily agreed and donned sleeping bag on a fully reclined passenger seat. In no time at all Dave had

reached Stirling and I was abruptly awoken by a huge jolt and rushing of air. Needless to say, Dave had fallen asleep, and driven straight up and over an 8" kerb on the exit from Stirling.

We immediately drew into a lay-by to investigate the damage. A buckled and flat front wheel, a buckled rear wheel and a greater list on an already snapped chassis member. I was changing the front wheel, still dressed in my sleeping bag, when one of our friendly boys in blue came to check up on things. Luckily he was of the friendly nature and didn't ask any awkward questions, such as buckled wheels and sleeping bag clad drivers, so left us to our business.

I decided to drive the rest of the distance and we arrived at Glencoe by 4.00 a.m. We parked in the lay-by opposite the Buchaille and slept in the car.

We awoke at 10.00 a.m. to a brisk, bright, clear day feeling lethargic, stiff and muzzy headed. We had no real plans so drove slowly down the pass sussing the scenery. We pulled into the Tourist Information Centre behind the Clachaig and abluted. On returning to the car, the West face of Aenoch Dubh caught my cleary eyes. It was a mass of snow and ice looking perfect after the continual nights of hard freezing.

As time was getting on, we decided on a short route, either No.3 Gully or the Screen, if we thought we could do it. As we walked up the slopes, the Screen looked larger and more imposing, but we were compelled to be drawn towards it.

Just after mid-day we were standing at the base of the milky white and blue flutes of the Screen. It was probably 100ft broad at it's base, rising eventually to a ramp-cum-runnel of only 10ft width 250ft higher. The guide book gave 4 hours to climb it's ordinary route. A rising traverse rightwards, then leftwards, above a bulge, then up the ramp/runnel to finish.

We discussed the route and decided to give it a whirl, but tackle the direct line straight up the front. This may seem a bit of a rash decision considering neither of us had climbed at the Screen's standard before, but you've got to start somewhere.

We geared up; I had 2 proper ice screws and 3 excuses for ice pegs, Snowdon curver, terra and Makdu crampons. Dave had 2 rock pegs, MacInnes (6ft) sheet metal ice axe, Chouinard hammer, Salewa crampons and lots of guts.

Dave decided that he wanted the first pitch. Very impressive; it started at about 50° rising to the vertical at 80ft. He carefully romped up the first 50ft and decided to place an ice-peg. I was sitting at the base staring down at the Clachaig, listening to the hacking and chinking of ice. After about 5 minutes worth of banging and cursing, I looked up and saw Dave really struggling to get the peg in. He hadn't realised that it was a screw-in; so after Lesson 1 on how to place a screw-in, he proceeded with a fairly good runner. The next 30ft reared up alarmingly, ending in a small ice-cave. Dave managed to place another ice-peg from Lesson 2, the Warthog. From the ice-cave there was 20ft to a belay on an ice-shelf, 12ft of which was plum vertical involving an awkward pull onto it from the cave.

After some time Dave shot up it and ensconced himself on the belay shelf. He shouted down that there was no belay as there was no rock or cracks showing. I suggested fixing 2 ice-pegs about 3ft apart and belay off them.

The rope was slowly taken in as I climbed the lower portion of the pitch. At the first peg a step rightwards proved awkward and higher the entrance and by-pass of the ice-cave gave me the eye bulges. When I pulled onto the belay shelf I admit to being somewhat shocked at Dave's belay. A short, shaky clog corkscrew and 9 inches away a long, fairly solid, steel thing. Anyway I was climbing fairly confidently so just passed through.

The second and final pitch was a full 150ft leadout up a runnel chocked chimney for 15 vertical feet then out rightwards at 55° - 60° to end up belayed on a tree at Middle Ledge. Dave joined me shortly and made some comment regarding the chimney. It was 4.00 p.m. and we had taken 3½ hours to climb the route. Feeling well pleased, we traversed Middle Ledge and descended the buttress between No.2 and No.3 Gullies.

Later that night we met some friends from the Derwent Mountaineering Club who were staying at the Lagangarbh hut under the Buchaille. They had some spare places and we were invited to stay with them.

On Sunday the weather wasn't so good, still freezing but incredibly thick mist everywhere. We later walked into the Lost Valley trying to find some ice falls to play on. Eventually we heard voices on the left hand side of the plateau. We climbed up to the noise and found the Glencoe School of Winter Mountaineering practising ice-craft. We listened in and learnt some useful tips - like how to place an ice-screw whilst climbing vertical ice; by hanging off a well placed axe clipped to the harness allowing both hands free to start and screw the peg in. It works in practice and theory but requires some nerve. We messed around for a few hours on plenty of ice problems of up to 30ft high in varying grades of difficulty.

Later that night in the Kings House under the influence of alcohol we decided to go to the Ben for Monday, weather permitting. We awoke next day at 6.00 a.m. to a perfect clear, windless day. We drove round to the distillery at Fort Bill and started off up the Allt a Mhuilinn. The Ben looked superb, plastered but firmly crisp and frozen. Halfway up to the C.I.C. I realised that I had left my cagoule at Glencoe. I was a bit worried with the thought of the weather changing halfway up a climb later in the day, but I decided to risk it as it was still clear blue skies. We arrived at the C.I.C. by 9.00 a.m. and then studied the guide book. That was only a formality, though, as Robin Sedgewick had recommended Green Gully many times. Three hours later after a

terrible slog, we reached the start of Green Gully. We could only see the first 100ft of the gully as it bent off rightwards higher. Again the ice was superb, if not a little brittle. The first two pitches went with relative ease in a series of staircase-type steps and both rock and ice belays and runners were readily available, had we the right gear. The 3rd and 4th pitches were a little more technical being almost vertical for a few moves in the 3rd, and a leftwards traverse to a short ice bulge on the 4th. At the top of the 4th pitch our belays seemed to run out. I had led the pitch and almost scoured the gully around me to find a belay. I eventually had to settle for a tape over a rounded ice bulge, too thin to accept a peg. I shouted to Dave to climb with care, which he did, then had a real gripper when he saw the belay. He climbed very cautiously over some broken ground to a large rock and placed a stonking rock peg, the first descent runner/belay for 2 pitches. The last 50ft of the exit from the gully was not technically difficult, but awkward through dry powdery snow and a small, but impressive, cornice to overcome.

The whole climb had been excellent in both situation and weather conditions. From the lower belay points there were excellent views of the many ascents made on the Curtain, a very impressive looking piece of ice. From the upper belays wonderful views of the Caledonian Canal.

We coiled our ropes at 4.00 p.m. after taking 4 hours on the climb, and descended via the Cresta Run to the halfway Lochan and back to the distillery. We had a deserved celebration at the Kings House and on Tuesday took a steady drive back to Derby and the Clubnight.

I would like to thank Dozey for coming to Scotland at such short notice and climbing so competently with our lack of gear and experience.



## OREAD PHOTO QUIZ



For each photo can you name route, crag and climber ( all are Oread members). First correct answer wins a free night out with Martin and Maurice Musson. Second Prize is two free nights out with Martin and Maurice. Monogrammed 'Gregson-Sportiva' chalk-bags will be awarded to runners up.

3



4



5



# Family Meet OCT.'79

Three families enjoyed the fantastic October weather. Numbers were reduced this year due to last minute cancellations but those present were very impressed at the work done by the recent working party.

On Saturday we all walked down the Aberglaslyn then over the tops via Cwm Bwychan to Llyn Dinas and Beddgelert. The sun shone all day giving a magnificent view of Snowdon, Siabod, and the Gwynant from the col above Cwm Bwychan. The autumn colours were superb.

In the evening Brian and Marion Cook visited the Hut from the luxury of a nearby hotel and we had an interesting chat beside a good log fire. It was Brian's first visit for 16 years! Earlier in the evening Paul Bingham had delighted the children with a surprise firework display.

Sunday morning was even better than Saturday - not a cloud in the sky - just like the alps. As we had breakfast we heard screams and shouts from upstairs. Cath Abley rushed up to find Peter Gadsby hanging upside down from a hook by his sock and James Abley suspended by his jumper!

Bev and Paul went climbing in the Moelwyns while their wives and children went to Port Meirion. The rest of us went to Black Rock Sands for football in the sun. Brian Cook had a turn in goal and proved he can still get down to it. Marion went beachcombing. On the way home we had a glorious sunset over Snowdonia.

Thanks for coming and see you all next year.



# Symonds Yat

**KEITH GREGSON**

As usual the weather was brilliant - well for half the weekend at least.

The drive down the M5 was the usual shambles with roadworks holding most people up at some point or other. The Oread tended to congregate at the "Rock", therefore a somewhat merry tent erection session followed.

Saturday morning dawned crystal clear with the first frost of the year. Several heads were gently shaken outside the tents - the result of the previous night's scrumpy, and life was gently infused into the Oread camp, except for bushy tailed Radders, who was rushing about trying to get someone to help him chase a big monkey! We put it down to the cold night.

Most of us drove gently to "Wintours Leap" in order to give the sun a chance. Not so our President who seems hell bent on disproving the theory of relativity and thus becoming the first man to travel faster than light.

Many climbs were done and everyone was seen either on or near to a crag at some point. A high point of the day was the near disintegration of Welbourne's pipe as he was approached by a large boulder which seemed to take little notice of the Guru's ramifications. The rock had been supporting Jill Gregson 200ft

further up the cliff when it decided on an early bath - she wasn't too happy about it either!

Routes of all standards were done including several ascents of "King Kong" and no chalk was used to my knowledge - although Dave Wright revealed that he carried the stuff by the cwt. in order to help his car go round corners better!

A splendend night's drinking ensued in the "Rock" and so to bed.

On the Sunday it drizzled and little was done, although the enthusiastic did a couple of routes whilst the rest walked gently.

A strong team went to the dry ski slope at Gloucester which resulted in the first winter accident of the year!

A great weekend.

# kinder inns

15:9:79

## **JACK ASHCROFT**

Friday night 10.30 p.m. the Traveller's Rest, Brough. I found myself and one other Oread, Roy Eyre, in readiness for a 7.30 a.m. start on Saturday. "Not an exceedingly good turn out" I pondered. "At least I won't be talking to myself all day". We emerged from the tent on Saturday morning and then the numbers grew to six with Andy Smith, Rosemary Perkins, Frank and Jennifer Mallow from the Castle M.C. It had dawned a perfect morning with hardly a cloud in the sky. We left the campsite for Win Hill at 7.40 a.m. - on the wrong foot I felt since one of our number led the party through a hole in the campsite hedge! It was all go after that. Win Hill 8.15 a.m. Then as we walked down to Hope Cross, Dave Penlington came galloping from behind. The party was complete - OMC : CMC :: 2.5 : 4.5.

We traversed Kinder via Madwoman Stones, Trig Point 590m and Upper Tor. We took a break at Grindsbrook Tor at 10.30 a.m. I had intended walking up Grindsbrook to Crowden Head and into the Kinder River Head. In the event, largely at Penlington's instigation, we made a direct beeline for Kinder Downfall with my warnings of man traps to come. Andy, not noted for delicacy of build proved the point - up to his knees in it at one stage. The males in the party thought they were making good progress at one time, then suddenly as we dropped into the head of the Kinder River, we realised the ladies had crept up on us. Enough said.

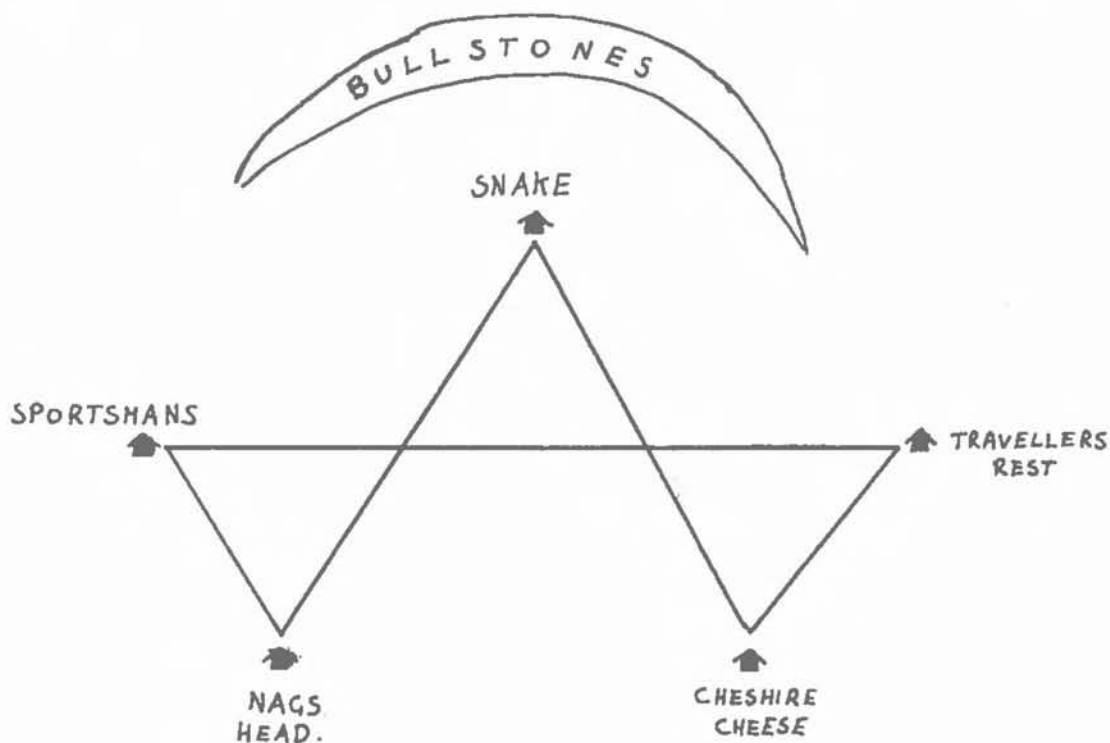


A rather lengthy break was taken at the Downfall - pleasant in the sun. I'd got my ideas set on Ashop Head and down William Clough after that. Others suggested an immediate descent past the Mermaid Pool. This I vetoed unless a bathing party was arranged. Rosemary said she hadn't brought her fish tail with her and so that was that; Ashop Head it was. The rallying call for the rest of the day became mermaid and ships at Hope - or was it Hope for mermaid and ships?

We were in the Sportsman's Inn, Hayfield at 12.45 p.m. - and the beer must have been good since by 2.00 p.m. we were sunning ourselves at Edale Cross and continuing our lunch. It was then down Jacob's Ladder to Upper Booth and the Broadlee - Bark path to Edale to a pint of tea about 3.15 p.m. At this juncture, with 20 miles or so behind us, temptation presented itself. The train at 4.35 p.m. to Hope? The direct walk back to Hope via the Youth Hostel and Jaggers? But no; all were resolute on the Snake. We set course up Grindsbrook over to Seal Stones and down the shorter path to the Snake Inn. Grindsbrook was as dry as I've known it as we scrambled up the rocks to the top. We rested there and soaked up the sun and watched a regular parade of walkers pass on the descent to Edale. "It used to be a privilege to work" said one rambler, obviously carrying on a learned conversation. Our minds boggled at the rights, the wrongs and the privileges in our society as we rested on the Kinder plateau. Little was said - much was thought and then the focus of attention was turned to my holey trousers in need of repair. No one had a needle and cotton, so that delay tactic crumbled. Over Blackden Rind we hit Seal Stones spot on, and then found ourselves arriving at the Snake Inn for 5.30 p.m. Now this is, under normal circumstances, opening time, but today the clocks must have been slow and the door failed to open. Seven travellers in need, remained in need. At 5.45 p.m. - thirsty - but happy - and with comment galore we walked up the road to the Roman Road and set course for Hayridge Farm, Hope Cross and the Cheshire Cheese. The walk in the setting sun was very pleasant, though feet in the party were at various stages

of tenderness. We all arrived within minutes of each other to the welcoming lights of the Cheshire Cheese at 8.00 p.m. where a pleasant hour or so was spent with copious liquid refreshment and bar meal. (Mermaid was off, Trout on). It only now remained to walk the mile to the Traveller's Rest and nightcap and sandwiches. It had been an excellent day. Good company. Ideal walking conditions.

The thought struck me as I went to sleep. The walk could equally be titled "A Kinder Rivers Walk". Jagers, Grindsbrook, Kinder, Noe, Ashop, Fairbrook and Alport had all added to the day's experience. Try the walk sometime. It could be done in 5 easy stages!



# alstonfield

The weekend's begun, the prospect is fine  
The tents are all up and pub stormed at nine.  
The 'Thirsty Thirteen', joined by The Boot,  
Their glasses replenished, lines for to shoot,  
Becoming more garrulous in the small hours  
When 'Sportzplans' abound like hot summer flowers.

But, the next day, from contorted beds  
There rose a succession of aching old heads  
And all around the campsite so sunny  
Were cries for sweet tea, for milk, and for honey.  
Carnell LOOKED ill, Nat Allen seemed too  
The one confessed, while the other one drew  
A shroud round his feelings - feelings all whirly  
"It's Gregson that gets us PISSED FAR TOO EARLY ....!"

And so around Dovedale, and Beeston Tor  
There was created a lot of furor  
As our Mountain Nymphs with legs made of lead  
Went through the motions, in fact, often LED!  
Their team-mates went on to reach the belay  
And some of them seemed to be doing OKay.  
John Peel, Livingstone, Hortus, Simeon too,  
Were felled 'neath the boots of our sickly crew:  
And Carnell? - He wilted, and drank, in the sun  
Then sold off equipment to add to the fun!

The Dinner was great - The food in excess  
The view of many: One of the Best.  
And later then as the ale did flow  
Events of the day were made to grow;  
And Radders too great stature feels  
In skin-bulge shirt and platform heels .!!  
To Edith then, and Janice too  
There fell a duty, given to few,  
To shrive the President of his folly  
And break his bout of melancholy .....

There then ensued, upon the floor,  
Events that touched some on the Raw;  
Whilst others postured, gave advice,  
Suggesting things concerned with Vice,  
The President - our Radders Dear -  
Fought on, while Scott sly-drunk his beer!  
Some photos too, they say, were took  
(In Playgirl magazine you'll look .!.)  
But this I'll tell you, just for hoots:  
The 'Midnight Cowboy' lost his boots ...!!

Thus Sunday came - too soon for some  
(Ms Colley, she was feeling rum .!.)  
A late arrival - that was Rock -  
each leg encased in Pope Paul sock.  
And with Ron Sant we must agree -  
At British Rail, they're fourteen Pee:-  
The camp's convulsed this Sunday morn  
To hear the Query, pretence shorn  
As Santoe's voice goes on and on:  
"Where've you put my Rubbers now, Yvonne? ...!!!

And now the scene shifts out once more  
To tall Thors Cave and Beeston Tor.  
The latter sees, on West Wall climb,  
A stuttering movement, most sublime.  
As, hands in gutter 'neath the 'hang,  
The feet fly off and knees go bang.  
Ah, Roland, how I'd've liked to hear  
Your attempted W-W-W-Warn that a fall was near ...!!

Now let us flit across the valley  
Where Scott and Raddlers, in an act so pally,  
Speak to each other in dulcet tones  
Regardless of possible broken bones:-  
"Take your own weight, Please don't linger  
The bloody Sticht plates'got my finger!"  
- This to the man who, seconds before,  
Was higher up t'cliff by eight metres, or more ...  
"But YOU won't get where I am today  
Without falling off rock" said our C-J .!!!

So remember, remember you Hard-Drinking Bunch  
To climb on the 'morrow's inviting a crunch.  
The object's to ENJOY, at least that, I think,  
Not give it your ALL, befuddled with drink -  
I want you to come back again and again,  
To sing in the sunshine, perhaps laugh in the rain  
To all the young wives who endured it, you're sweet,  
I hope you enjoyed our Alstonfield Meet.

Derek Carnell.

Summary: At least forty-eight people and nine children attended during the weekend, and 35 sat down to an excellent meal on Sat. night. Thirteen members were out on Fri. night, and numerous arrived to climb on Saturday. Rock Hudson was the last to arrive, wearing his white confessional socks, on Sunday. Radders fell off (25 feet) on Thors Cave, Roland had a quietly desperate moment on Beeston, and most others enjoyed themselves somehow. The weather was excellent.

# little orme oct. '79

CHRIS WILSON

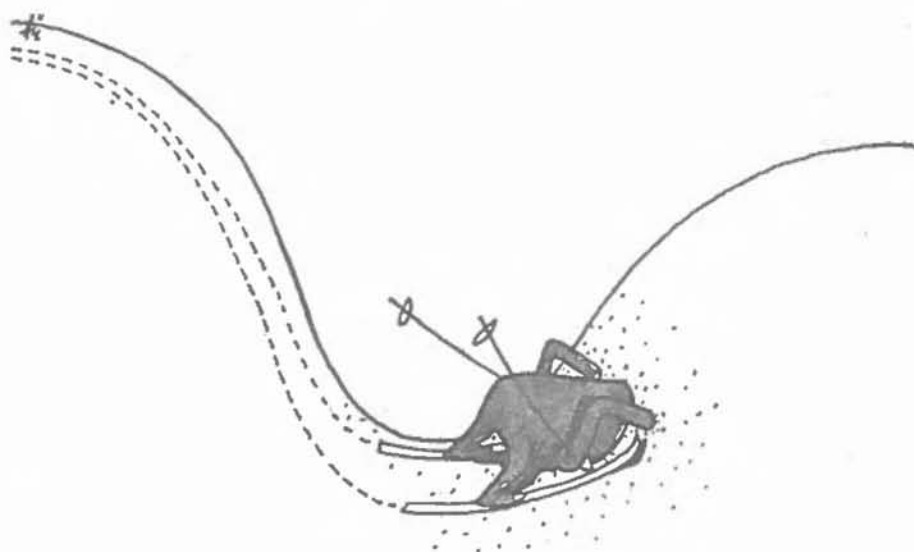
This meet had a surprisingly good turn-out - Dave Hull even returning from the fleshpots of Copenhagen (via Morrocco!) for the weekend. Some of the response was undoubtedly due to Mountain magazine's superb write-up of the Little Orme which gave the impression of 600ft of clean limestone. Saturday saw Pete Holden and Chris Radcliffe scurrying in vain all over looking for these elusive cliffs. One look at the Great Zawn convinced them that the apparent 100ft grass covered cliff was not for them and on the meet leader's recommendation they set out to climb Rlliwledyn (500ft VS). Unfortunately it would seem that things have changed in the last four years. What had been a small cabbage patch has become an extensive allotment covering all but the final 160ft chimney and forcing a new direct start to be made. From the top they were able to watch Pete Wragg and Hilary Reed struggling through the undergrowth and sea cabbages on Scoop Route (140ft S). Apparently 10ft of the route was good, the remainder not to be recommended. Two other teams - Chris Wilson and Martin Musson; Dave Hull, Pete O'Neil and Robin Sedgwick - had meanwhile discovered the start of Rabble Rouser (640ft VS) in the Great Zawn. A 300ft traverse, which had an excellent 50ft section, led to the start of the route proper. After avoiding a dead bird and some rotting seagull's nests a stance was made at the foot of an 80° lawn. Martin led to the first cabbage and then retreated, leaving Pete O'Neil to lead the way onto rock and a superb 50ft layback section. The final pitch, a 100ft traverse below a roof, was watched sceptically by Pete Holden and Chris Radcliffe. At this point the rain came down and Chris Wilson was last off the cliff in the dark. Pete O'Neil and Chris Wilson declared it an excellent route ("better than Great Slab on Cloggy") whilst the other three were unconvinced of its merits. All thought



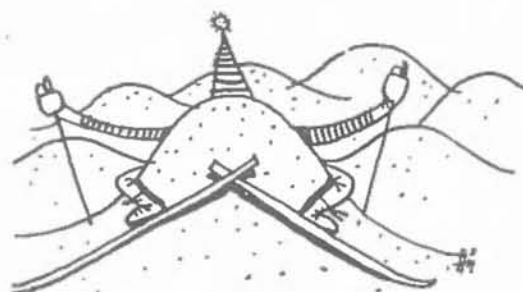
it undergraded at VS (HVS - RS, Scottish III/IV - Chris Wilson; "mountaineering" - Pete O'Neil). Pete Wragg and Hilary Reed went to play on Milestone Buttress in the rash (then on to a cultural evening watching a punk rock group). On Craig y Forwyn Mark .... and Trevor .... had a good day doing Route 66 (VS), Ivy Sepulchre (VS) and Softly Softly (S) before taking a look at the impressive Great Orme.

On Sunday everyone concentrated on Craig y Forwyn.

All in all a good weekend considering the weather. The camping was cheap, the pub warm and the climbing fine (a much disputed point). Little Orme would be good if more people climbed there (Pete Holden is convinced that a classic route on this cliff is one which has had a second ascent!). Craig y Forwyn has many fine routes of all grades and would make a good alternative to Tremadoc for wet days.



**The art of  
MOGUL skiing**





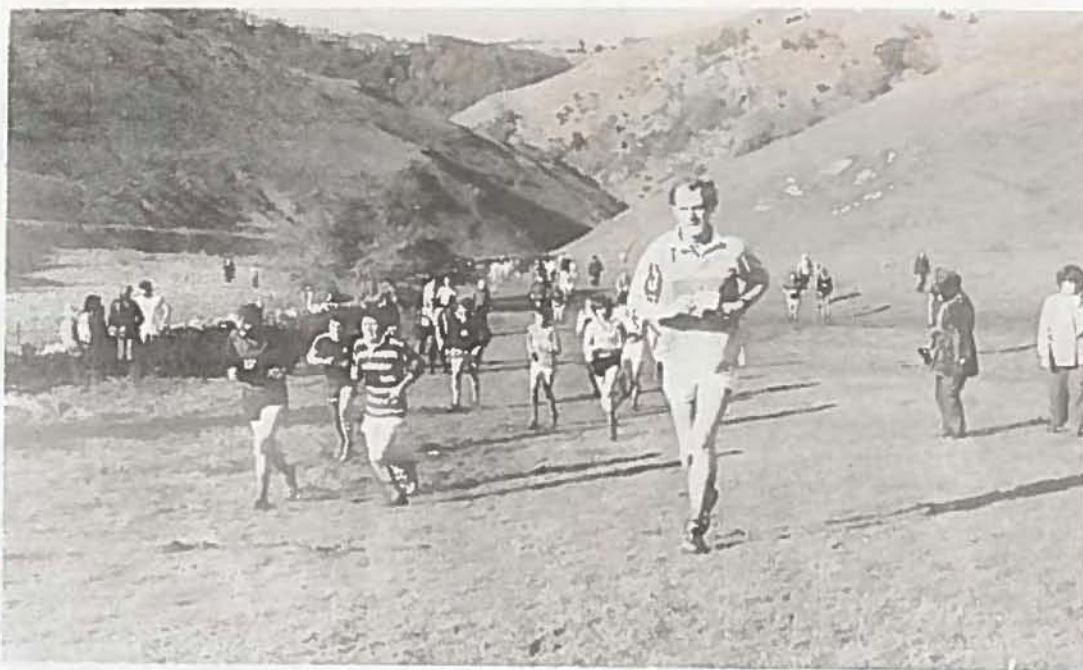
# Dovedale Dash 1979

TOP LEFT: Chris Wilson with Nat Allen  
just visible to the right.

TOP RIGHT: 'Team Ansells' challenger,  
Dave Wright.

RIGHT: Derek Burgess collects his  
free cup of tea.





TOP: Stuart Firth  
 ABOVE LEFT: Pete Kenyon  
 ABOVE CENTRE: 'Rusty' in his traditional  
 role of first Oread finisher.  
 ABOVE RIGHT: Martin Musson in Oread  
 colours.  
 LEFT: A study in grim determination  
 as Chris Radcliffe finishes.



# **Oread Times**

## **EXPOSED!** **shock horror probe** **we name the** **chalkmen.**

Extensive investigations by our team of Oread Times journalists have discovered a previously unsuspected Chalk ring in our very own Oread. Working in close co-operation with Chief Inspector Gregsot of Scotland Yard (Carn Dearg Division) we have infiltrated the chalkmen and are able to bring you staggering revelations that indict even those in the highest office of the club!! None other than our own President Radders is implicated in a scandal which threatens to grow to Watergate proportions! "I was first turned on in the Verdon last summer", Radcliffe admits, "Pete 'the pusher' Holden lent me a little bag in which I freely dabbled my fingers". Since that fateful day Radcliffe has spent more and more of his time abroad: Sweden, South Africa, Israel, all countries where chalk is freely available.

"This menace must be stamped out", the cloth-capped Inspector Gregsot told our reporter. Pausing only to top up his bucket of Theakston's Bitter he told us of his investigations. "As well as the President other respectable figures are involved. One in particular, Gardner by name, covers his tracks well, masquerading as a pillar of society, a deputy-headmaster and family man but in reality is a leading member of the chalk-ring".

In order to infiltrate their circles, Insp. Gregsot went to great pains to establish his credibility, learning the complex jargon of their group; 5C, 6a, W-grades, aid elimination, yo-yo. Clad in cut off Levi's and headband he mixed with them on the crag and was even seen to purchase that vital piece of Chalkies



Photo: Chalk-man Paul Gardner holds up a chalk bag. A chalk bag of similar design is believed to have been used by President Radcliffe.



## LIGHT CARBONATE OF MAGNESIA

DOSE.—As an Antacid, quarter to half teaspoonful. As an Aperient, one teaspoonful. For Children, quarter teaspoonful.

50c

25c

FRANCIS ORRELL M.P.S.  
126 KEDLESTON RD. DERBY

The label from a box of "Light Carbonate of Magnesia", in reality CHALK! This was purchased openly at a chemist's shop at 126 Kedleston Road, next door to premises frequently visited by many Oread members.



ABOVE: Top Oread rock man and embryo chalkie, Paul Addison. Addison admits to "liking an occasional dabble".

equipment, a "chalk-bag", at the club auction last year. What he discovered shocked him. Top Oread rock-man of last year, Paul Addison, was found to have succumbed to the lure of the evil white powder, taking dabs on routes such as Lawrencefield's "Billy Whiz" and Willersley's "God". It is understood that David Wright is not averse to its use and it follows that many more Oreads are probably in grave danger of falling under the influence of the evil men.

It is only through the unceasing efforts of Inspector Gregsot that maybe one day this scourge will be eliminated and the crags will once again be fit places for women and children.

NEXT WEEK: Sex-change sherpa in K2 wife-swapping scandal.



PHOTO ABOVE: Inspector Gregsot in disguise on a recent winter trip to Aviemore. While there he made chalk free ascents of several gullies and even a chalk free descent of the White Lady ski run.

## PHOTO QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Dave Helliwell on Chequers Crack, Froggat.
2. Chris Wilson on West Wall Climb, Beeston Tor.
3. Robin Sedgwick on Praying Mantle, Goat Grag, Borrowdale.
4. Chris Wilson on Central Climb, Almscliffe. (did you get it Keith?)
5. Paul Addison on Crewcut, Millstone Edge.





