



OREAD
1980

THE JOURNAL OF
THE OREAD
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB



OREAD

'80



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This page and cover, The Bat, Doves

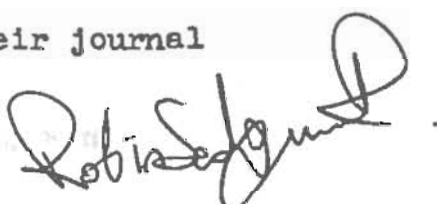
Photos: Dorothy Kidd

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of the Oread's annual journal. I had hoped this would be ready for the dinner but last minute problems with duplication seem liable to prevent this and by the time you are reading this the dinner will probably be history. Many thanks, as usual to the people who have taken the time and trouble to put pen to paper and written a contribution. I know it is no easy task to bare one's soul on paper and that writing is not everyone's forte, but even so I found this year's contribution of only 5 articles from a club of nearly 200 people disappointing to say the least. Fortunately, the use of three articles left over from last year and the production of two articles by myself has brought the publication up to a respectable thickness. The fact remains however that the purpose of the journal is to reflect the activities of the members of the club as a whole and not just the isolated activities of a few individuals. If you feel there are any omissions of club activities then it is up to you do do something about it. If you don't do anything about it no one else will!! It is your club and your journal. The job of the editor, whether it be myself or a successor, is to collate and present the material provided by you the members, material which hopefully should encompass the whole sphere of club activities. The message for next year is therefore one of "Get Writing". The publication date is the Annual Dinner in November and copy should be in the hands of the editor as soon as possible, preferably before the end of September.

Finally sincere thanks to those who have helped with this year's production; Marion Northcote has again done sterling service on the typewriter and Colin Hobday has been his usual helpful self in a number of areas. Thanks also to Pete Scott for handling the duplication, Beryl Strike for producing cartoons to order and Pete Northcote for continuing support. Ta also to Pete Lancaster for the loan of the typewriter and finally Dot for putting up with 2 months of squalor and piles of paper in the flat.

Hoping everyone enjoys their journal



Robin Sedgwick, Editor.

November 18th 1980

XANADU

An Epic Poem

Lines by Coleridge after a visit to Millstone Edge - reputedly written under the influence of Marston's Pedigree.

Of Xanadu did Kubla Khan
An aid-free clean ascent decree:
On high the awful traverse ran
'Cross fathoms measureless to man
Above immensity.
So twice five slings of nylon sound
With alloy krabs were girdled round:
And there were wire, new, and Richard's Hills
Did ring up many a profit-bearing fee,
And here were Moacs, ancient as the hills;
And Rocks; and Friends; and yet more gadgetry.

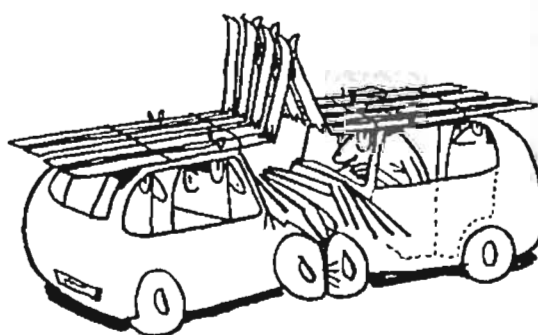
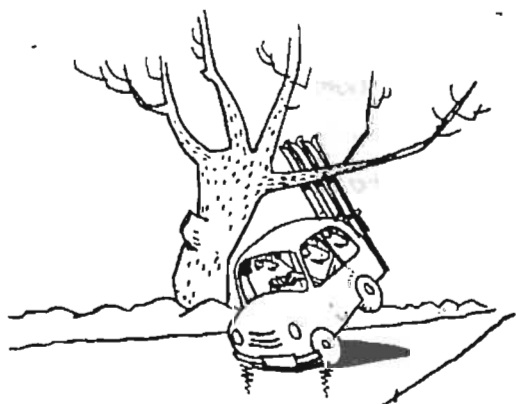
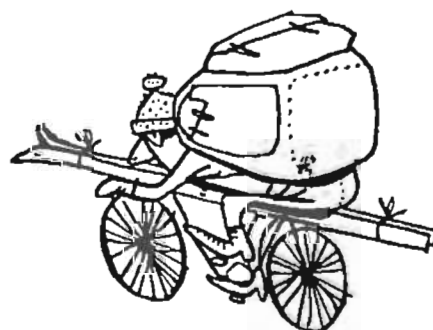
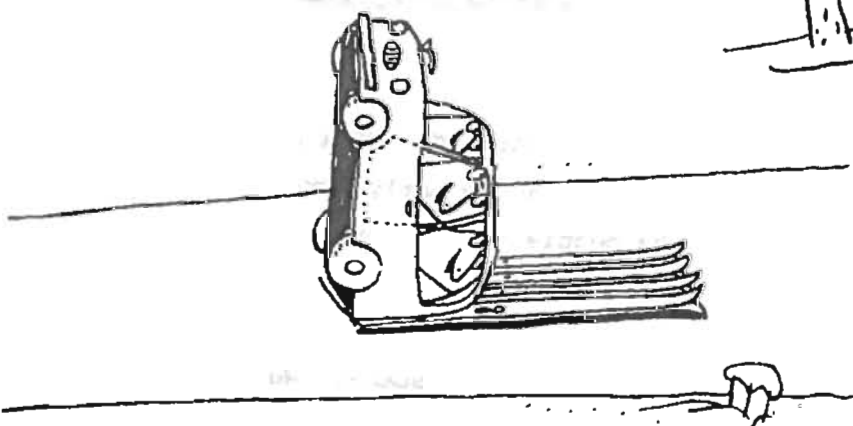
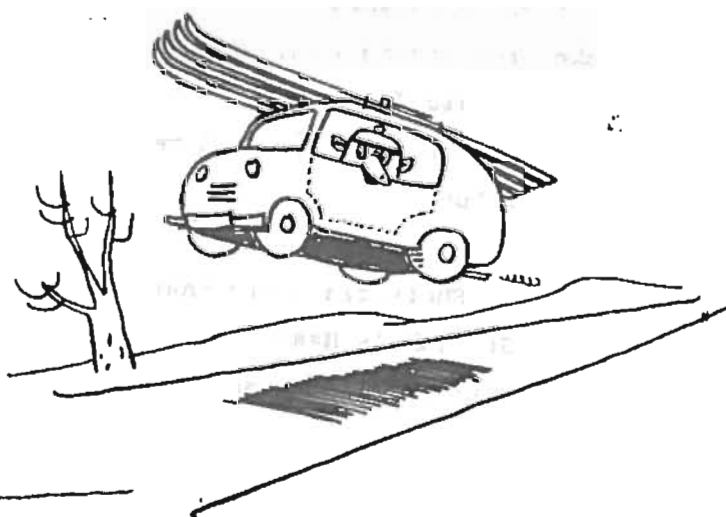
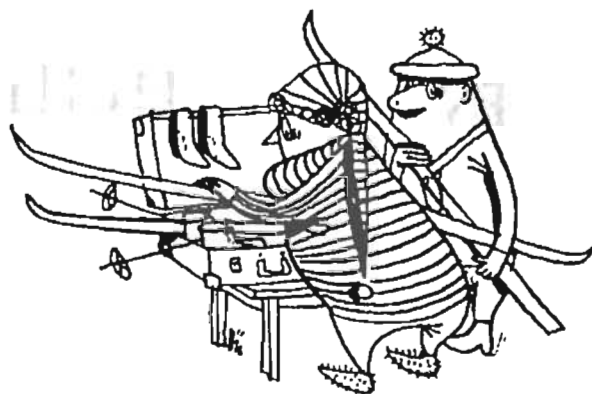
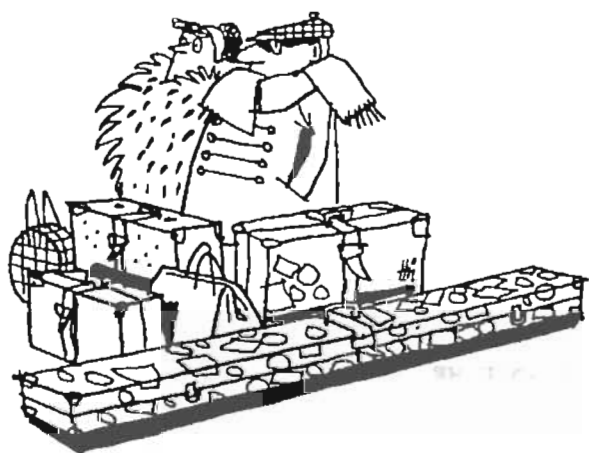
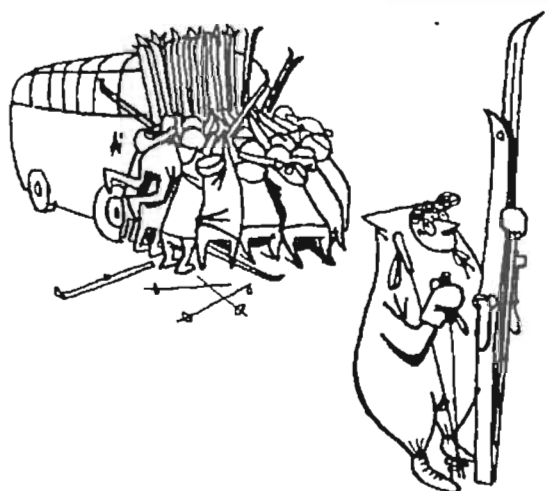
But oh! that wide, forbidding chasm which slanted
Across the bare rock; no doubt, a real chopper!
A savage place! as evil and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By chalkie wailing for his Chouinard Stopper!
Across this chasm, with neat adrenalin seething,
As if hell-hounds are at one's heels breathing,
Reluctant body must needs be forced:
Unless with swift, half-nauseous course
Should consciousness spin and horizons swoop
As bodiless mind make peregrine stoop.
Beset by bodings ill and thoughts anxious
He tied all the tighter his Whillans truss.

UDANAX
Three pitches meandering in a mazy motion
Up crack, 'cross ledge, the rankling route ran
Then reached the traverse measureless to man.
Here all was quiet, except below,
When Kubla heard, 'midst all the talk
Heretical voices, prophesying chalk!
Ben Nevis, Meaghaidh, and grim Glen Coe
Dreamed dark dreams darkling deeper;
No move the rhythmic echo
Of Terror and of Leeper;
There was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny climbing wall, with routes of ice!

A climber with a chalk-bag
On the telly once I saw:
It was Fawcett, so they said,
And on the box he was portrayed,
Soloing, I think, Tensor.
Could I derive within me
His artistry and song.
To such great heights 'twould win me,
That despite how hard and long,
I would climb these routes so rare
And sit all day in stoney "caff",
And all who chanced to see me there
They all would cry "Beware! Beware!"
His cut-off shorts, his flowing hair!
At his headband do not laugh
Unless at XS plus you lead,
For he the Kilnsey roof has freed
And creamed the crux of Cenotaph.

Brian West

The hazards of traveling with SKIS



ST. JOHN'S HEAD

By Dave Helliwell

The dormobile lurched followed by a thud, lurched again and another thud, I awoke from dozing in my pit. "Rod forgot about the bad bends at Helmsdale" said Terry. We both remembered the bad bend having nearly slung our bikes down the road two years previously when we climbed the Old Man of Hoy.

We had left Sheffield early that morning, it was 1969. We had planned to climb St. John's Head last year but had been beaten to it by some Sheffield friends in the spring of 1969.

We were now on home ground and pulled into Thurso at around 1.00 a.m., parked the dormobile and crawled into our pits. We awoke early next morning and started sorting our gear out. The people in the North of Scotland are fabulous. A woman came out of the house outside which we had parked and invited us in for breakfast. Her husband was a long distance lorry driver and she took pity on our dishevelled state. We offered to pay her but she would take nothing. After thanking her we drove down to Scralosier to catch the St. Ola across to Orkney. We found somewhere to leave the dormobile and soon we were on our way. "Look there's the Old Man of Hoy" said Terry. Rod had never been up here before. We chattered to the sailors who remembered us from two years ago. Once in Stromness we looked up Raymie and Liz where we had stopped before and were soon sitting down to tea. We gave them a load of photos we had taken on the Old Man of Hoy and then had a session with Raymie's home

brew. We said farewell early next morning and went to catch the Watchful, a converted fishing boat that served as a ferry round the Orkneys. Once again the sailors remembered us from before and we had a cup of tea with them.

Last time we had the motor bikes and had taken them to Hoy, so we had landed at Lyness but this time we intended being dropped at Rackwick the nearest point to St. John's Head. As we landed we recognised a familiar figure, the Hoy postman who had been very helpful before and once again he proved so, running us in his van up the road to the nearest point to St. John's Head. All that remained was to slog up onto the cliffs with all the gear and food. This was accomplished in two carries and by evening we were established on the cliff top.

After cooking a meal we went to investigate the descent. We had a route description given to us by our friends, including the descent, which sounded gripping. The descent gully was to the left of the face, but became very wide at the bottom and involved a long pendule across right to the grassy slabs at the bottom of the face.

Next morning dawned bright and after a quick breakfast we were away. After a series of abseils down the wet vegetated gully we found ourselves on a large ledge on the left hand side of the gully, threequarters of the way down. This ledge was inhabited by a large colony of puffins. They were very inquisitive and edged each other closer to us. Rod fixed the rope for the traverse across the gully "Hey come and see what I've found" he said. We looked, it was a fluffy little seagull chick. "Isn't it lovely" said Rod. At that moment it shot a stream of evil smelling liquid at him. "Good God it's a pukka" said Terry. We had heard of Fulmar Petrel chicks, which as a means of protection, emptied the contents of their stomach at the intruder. "There are more here" said Terry and in fact the whole face was covered in them, every ledge!

Rod penduled across the gulley and fixed the rope on the other side. Terry and I Tyrollean traversed across the rope with the sacs. By this time it was late afternoon, and after releasing the fixed rope so that we

could retrieve it later, we continued abseiling down the grassy slabs at the bottom of the face. We reached the easier angled section, about 200ft above the sea and climbed a couple of easy pitches to a bivouac site, where the wall above steepened. After a meal we got into our pits and were soon asleep. We awoke next morning and breakfasted.

Terry led up the wall above. The climbing was really good, sandstone with good holds at about V.S. We reached the foot of a steep groove and crack which had two pegs for aid on the first ascent but the climbing was good and we managed to dispense with them.

On the grass ledge we had lots of company, a colony of Puffins who amazed us with their antics, it seemed incredible that they could fly as they were all very barrel shaped and not like a bird at all. They seemed to fly down to the sea in the morning and spend the rest of the day getting back to their ledge.

From the ledge we moved up the steep wall on good rock to another ledge and another pitch led us to a large cave which the first ascensionists had used for a bivouac. Terry led on up a steep chimney and here we had a mishap. He had about 40ft of rope out when he dislodged a large block which crashed onto the belay ledge cutting the rope. He set off again up a series of chimneys and cracks trending rightwards across the face.

We moved on easily upwards up cracks and grooves at about Mild V.S., the only problem being the pukkas which guarded every ledge. The worst point being a mantelshelf defended by 4 of them arranged to get you in a crossfire as you poked your head over the ledge. We were soon covered from head to foot and smelt like a rubbish tip from foul fish oil. Although it was far too late we developed a means of protection where the leader placed a grass sod over the pukkas and this was removed by the last man as he moved above it. We continued up the cracks and grooves mainly at M.V.S. with the harder pitch thrown in. This section was very enjoyable and I don't think we followed the line of the 1st ascent as the route description given did not tally. We eventually reached a large grass terrace which had been described as the last good bivouac site before the top and we still had 200ft to go including an aid pitch so we climbed another pitch, abseiled off and decided to bivouac. The ledge

HIGH LEVEL

was superb with a flat bottomed cave - real 5 star luxury. We overslept and did not wake until 11.00 a.m. as the St. Ola was going past. We climbed back up to the belay we had abseiled from and Rod led up the aid pitch. We then moved right across a steep wall and belayed below a chimney cutting through the overhangs. Terry led up and disappeared from sight. I followed and pulled out of the chimney onto the top. We had done it. Soon we were back in the tent having a brew. We then walked down to the "old man" to suss out a new route on the seaward face but that night the weather broke.

Next day Terry and I retrieved the rope from the bottom of the gully and climbed back up while Rod packed the tent. We carried the gear down but had missed the Watchful. We had a word with the Postman who gave us the numbers of some water taxis. These operate in the same way as radio cars do here. We 'phoned one up and he came across in a small motor boat to pick us up and take us to Stromness. The fare was very cheap as well. Soon we were back at Raymie and Liz's drinking home brew. Next morning we said our farewells and caught the St. Ola back to the mainland, vowing to return again.

HIGH LEVEL ROUTE

BY
JOHN
FISHER

on foot!!

The ski tigers will regard this account as tame stuff. One cannot but agree, bearing in mind the greater seriousness of mountain travel in Spring. Nevertheless we thought it an interesting prospect especially since David Penlington intended to bring along his two sons, Roger 15 years and Nigel 17 years, as companions. A good introduction to the Alps he thought, more a question of forging in the fire was how I saw it.

For the benefit of the truly ignorant or the pleasantly naive, essentially the route lies across the Valaisian Alps roughly north of the Swiss-Italian border starting at Argentiere and finishing at Saas-Fee. The first natural stop was the Argentiere hut in the Triolet, Courtes, Dolent, Verte and Argentiere cirque. The N-face aficionados were present in some force it seems but their ambitions were thwarted by mediocre weather. It also caused us to take a late (2.00 p.m.) start to go over the Col du Chardonnet on the way to the Saleinaz hut. A dubious abseil over the awkward bergschrund lost quite a deal of time and we reached the Saleiraz hut at 9.00 p.m., just in time to enjoy the hospitality of that hut where we were well treated. From there down to the Swiss Val Ferret to pick up food cached in Orsieres and thence to Bourg St. Pierre where we spent the night in a cheap dortoir. For those interested there are cheap dormitories also in Arolla and Zermatt which serve for valley accommodation on trips of this kind and, if you wish, as valley bases.

The real effort then started with something of a grueller up to the Valsorey hut placed beneath the Grand Combin and with views of the Mont Velan. An attempt the following day on the Grand Combin was cut short by an intimidating stone fall caused by a large party on the Col du Meitin compounded by a lack of enthusiasm and condition on our part. In retrospect it was a stroke of luck since a severe afternoon storm made the return of the large and experienced party something of a route finding trial - and they knew the way! It was intended that the next stop would be the Chanrion hut and for this there were two options. One over the Col du Sonadon and the Gl Durand and the other via the Panossiere hut down to the Mauvoisin barrage followed by an easy walk to the Chanrion. The former was not on our map and furthermore the guardian muttered the word "eischraube". Now my idea of ascending cols does not involve ice screws, heavy packs and 15 year-olds, so we opted for the easier Panossiere route over the Col du Meitin. The situation of the Chanrion cabin is quite delightful. Grass, lakes and the tinkling of cow bells, but to my chagrin the others would not contemplate a further nights stay. From there a long day, about 14 hours with stops, up to the Glacier du Brenney, an easy traverse of the Pigne d'Arolla and down to the Vignettes hut. Our intention was to stay there but we felt quite fit, the way to Arolla was all down, and new crampons were needed by the youngest of the party. His dad had loaned him a pair, crudely welded on at least two occasions and in more places. Happily Arolla is a little unfashionable and, unlike Zermatt and Courmayeur to cite two examples, has not suffered from a rash of skier's hotels which has to subdue their charm. Shades of R.L.G.I., Smythe and quite a number of less formidable reactionaries one might say, but the proof of the pudding is there to see. After a night in the dortoir away to the Bertol hut, finely situated with impressive views of the Dente Blanche in particular and high with it (3,200 m). There we encountered a remarkable French group including a substantial well-tanned bikini clad lady we had already met at the Vignettes. A corker if you care for the ample type who looks after all man's wants and a mountain goer too. Her husband seemed constantly happy, ambling about, acting as a major domo and reading about hard routes but with no intention of embarking upon them. Sensible chap. With a good many

others we set off early to go over the Tete Blanche and dropped down to Zermatt. Another longish day relieved by good weather but marred by a descent of the very snout of the Zermatt glacier. Another two hours on that mass of instability would have had us in tears. Advice - go up to the Schönbiel hut as soon as possible and ramble down the Moraine path to Zermatt. My romantic illusions of Zermatt were quite shattered (I had previously been no closer than Randa and Täsch) by it's development and crowds and so after a night at Fraulein Biner's hospitable establishment, we set off for the Täsch hut. Täsch viewed from the track to the Täschalp seems little more than a massive car park - the shades again. The options from the Täsch hut are limited and for our part we took the simple rock ridge traverse over the Feekopf to the col and then up the easy snow slopes of the Allalinhorn. There was some satisfaction in completing the trip with an ascent of a four thousander. Well, that was it, just the walk down to Saas-Fee which the two boys and myself took easily whilst Dave raced down to retrieve the car and camping gear. The fellow simply cannot keep still but he is good at carrying insupportable loads and we were grateful for it.

A mountaineering plum in the bag, so to speak, especially for the 15 and 17 year olds!

ALPS

1980



This summer saw a large number of the club active in a variety of areas in the Alps. After initial indecision as to the venue of the official meet over 40 Oreads converged on the Ortler for a meet both successful and enjoyable for all those who attended.

In addition, sizeable groups were operating from Visp and of course the ubiquitous Chamonix. One point worth noting is the unusual weather and conditions which prevailed this season. Most people arrived in the Alps at the end of 6 weeks of appalling weather that left the mountains plastered in large amounts of fresh snow. The following weeks saw 90°+ temperatures and very high freezing levels producing conditions underfoot which resulted in several failures. Indeed, one team, Pete O'Neill and Dave Wright failed to accomplish one success despite 5 attempts. Eventually they departed for the South of France.

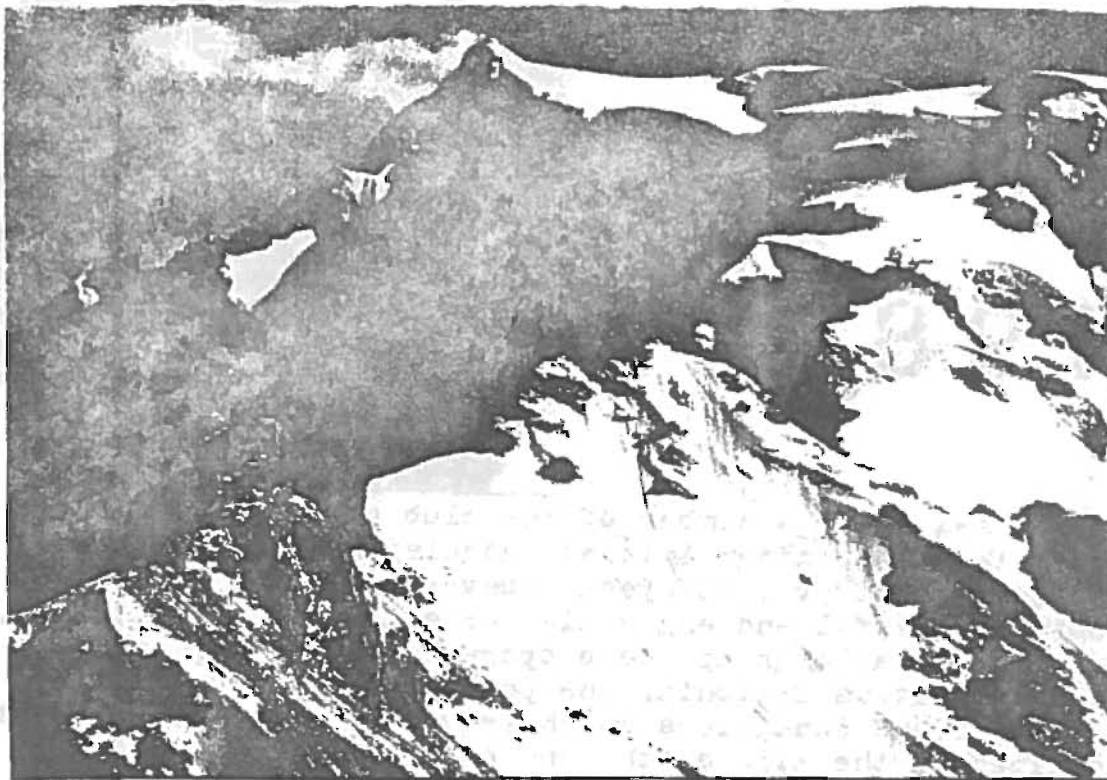
Colin Hobday documents the Ortler meet overleaf while the following gives details of what else was done.

Visp

Wellenkuppe	from Rothorn hut	P.D.	G.Wright P.Wright
Lo Besso	S.E. ridge	F.D.	G.Wright B.Wright
Alphubel	from Tasch hut.		G.W./B.W.
Tasch	S.Ridge		G.W./B.W.
Mettelhorn	from Zermatt		G.W./F.W.

Chamonix

Chardonnet	Forbes Arete	A.D.+	C.Wilson D.Holliwell
Aig. de Perseverance	N.E. ridge	D.	C.W./D.H.
Point Lachenal / Eperon de Cosmiques		T.D./D.	C.W./D.H.
Midi Plan Traverse		A.D.	C.W./D.H.
Grandes Jorasses	Roche fort Ridge	A.D.	P.Scott & party
Tour Ronde	N. Face	D.	P.Scott & party
Grandes Jorasses	Walker Spur	E.D.-	P.Addison R.Sedgwick
Aig de Flan	N.Face	D.+	P.A./R.S.
Petit Charmoz	Traverse	A.D.+	R.S./D.Kidd
Mont. Blanc de Tacul	Gervasutti Pillar	T.D.	P.A./M.Hardwick
Petit Jorasses	W.Face	T.D.	M.H./G.Laker
Argentiere	Jardin Ridge Integral	D.	G.L./G.Miller
Moine	E.Face	T.D.	G.L./P.Davis
Midi	S.Face	D.+	G.L./P.D.
Pic Adolphe Rey	Salluard	T.D.	G.L./P.D.



ORTLER

By Colin Hobday

Only two weeks before departing for the Alps, a hurried meeting was called in an effort to sort out the campsite for the Alpine venue. A long distance call to the local Tourist Office in Prad revealed a campsite in Trafoi, and in due course we were given the telephone number. When we finally got through to "Herr Vincent", warden of the campsite, and booked places for about 20 people, there was a long silence at the other end. He said he would have to mow the grass first for that many people, but in the end he said it would be alright and also told us about the facilities, such as Toilet Block, Washrooms, no shop apart from one in the village - but he promised us fresh bread every morning, milk straight from the cow and home-made butter. The general feeling was 'let's give it a try' as it was the only campsite in the mountains and with that the meeting was resolved.

Most Oreads left England on the 18th July, arriving in Trafoi on the 19/20th July, after driving across Europe with the windscreen wipers working non-stop and at top speed. With the campsite at 1500m. and the snow level at 2000m. it was indeed a bleak outlook. Various rumours were ripe about moving to Southern Italy in search of warmth and sunshine. However, on arrival, my presence soon saw the Pryors and Smedleys with boots and wet weather gear parading around the campsite asking if anyone was coming. Needless to say there was no response. John Welbourne appeared to be in charge of the wood-fired hot water system, which produced a puff of white smoke every time it was lit, morning and night. So, twice a day John informed us that a new Pope had been elected.

In true Oread tradition we all camped together on one tier of the campsite whilst the other tier was taken over by skiers. The main road for the Stelvio Pass with its more than 30 hairpin bends about 1/2 mile above the campsite in the forest winding its way to the top, while straight in

front the Trafoi Icewall soaring upwards, to our left the icefalls of the Ortler which sent tons of ice crashing down at regular intervals, especially in the morning, which never failed in fetching everybody out of bed camera at the ready.

From the campsite it was a pleasant 10 minutes walk to the village across Alpine meadows, watching the locals mowing the grass with their long scythes, past the church which had a plaque on the wall in remembrance of local people who died in the 1914-18 war in Russia. Hotel Tannenheim was suggested as a likely meeting and drinking place for the evening and this turned out to be a great success. It had a good room, an ample supply of beer, wine, gelati, apfelstrudel and other local delicacies plus colour t.v. (Rockford Files and Olympics). The owner of the hotel, whose name happened to be Ortler, also an ex-guide, proved to be a wealth of information, himself having 5 brothers working at huts in the area.

After a very cold and frosty night, the morning dawned cloudless, the hot Italian sun soon bringing life to the campsite and setting the pattern for the rest of the holiday.

The general feeling was that a training walk would be the order of the day. A large team set forth for the Furkel Hutte, 2250 metres up through the pine forests, getting some excellent views across the valley to the Ortler with the Payer Hut perched on the ridge. It soon became obvious that there was plenty of snow left from the winter plus plenty of recent snowfalls. Once above the Furkel Hutte the snow line was reached, one group made for the Furlerspitz (3000 m.) which proved to be very interesting in these conditions, while the B team climbed the Schafberg (2935 m.), finishing with a pleasant walk down to the valley in evening sunshine, feeling well satisfied with the first day. That evening plans were made over a glass of beer for the following day. There was no doubt - it just had to be the big one, the Ortler.

The next day seemed hotter than ever as we left the campsite at mid-day with heavy sacks, slowly plodding up at a very steep angle through the forest, past the ruins of the Alpenrose Hut. The way seemed endless up loose scree and old snow, sinking up to our waists at times, eventually reaching the Payer Hut (3020 m.) 5.5 hours after leaving Trafoi. That evening we had a beautiful sunset and the usual 'NIKOMATMANIA' set in. No wonder the sacks were heavy.

We split into three teams, two groups via the ridge which was supposed to be rock but now heavily covered in snow. I chose to descend a gully and climb a steep couloir with Don and Wendy Prior, while Ken, Chris, Rock, Tony and Vincent made the more difficult ascent of the ridge. Up through the upper icefall with some impressive views of the ice cliffs to our right and the North Face on our left, over a snow bridge and across a snow plateau to the final summit ridge. A cold wind hit us as we hastened towards the summit (3920 m.). The panorama that awaited us was magnificent, the Konigspitze dominating the scene with the Cevedale in the far distance, while across the Sulden valley we saw the Vertain group.

The descent was without incident, though care had to be taken descending the steep snow. We had a quick snack at the Payer Hut and then the long descent back to Trafoi. Meanwhile the Welbourns and Theobalds had been up to the Dusseldorfer Hut, unsuccessfully attempting to climb the Higher Angelo, due to bad snow conditions.

The weather continued to be perfect. Some went to Prad, either shopping or to the open-air swimming pool, equipped with a large bottle of Olive Oil for a browning competition.

Meanwhile Mike Wren and Roy Eyre and families arrived from Visp with stories of waist deep snow on all the hills. Also Jack and Janet Ashcroft plus Peter and David arrived followed in hot pursuit by Dave and Roger Penlington and John Fisher, Dave having had slight disagreements with an Italian whose right it was to cross a narrow bridge first, which resulted in two scratched cars. However, they were soon all making extensive plans for the following days. Oreads went off in all directions, some for walks in the valleys, some to the various huts - it was quite a problem to keep track of what was happening.

On Sunday of the first week, a large group went to the village of Glurns to watch a folk festival and a few beers set us in the mood for a walk up to the Dusseldorf Hut late that afternoon, with a thunderstorm threatening over the peaks. Everyone made the Hut before the storm broke, though Tony Smedley did 'fetch up' a couple of times (too much beer). However, the Hut Warden soon put him right with a herbal fire water (schnapps). The Penlingtons and John Fisher were already settled down in a corner of the room and somehow the Oreads just seemed to take over and a most pleasant evening was spent in this most delightful hut.

Next morning the weather was perfect again, the sun catching the summit of the Konigspitze, giving fine reflections in the small lake near the Hut. Chris and Roger, Roger and Dave and John Fisher went to the Vertain Spitze whilst the families, wives children and all, headed up the moraine for the Grand Angelo. On reaching the snow we roped up and made a steep climb up to the ridge on difficult snow. With every footstep we broke through a thin crust of ice into the soft snow below. The col offered excellent views of snowcapped and unclimbed peaks, whilst on the ridge of the Vertain Spitze we could see our friends heading for the summit. The ridge of our summit which is normally just a rock scramble, but now had a lot of snow on, proved to be quite tricky slowing down progress, but everybody made the summit (3520 m.), a fine effort by the young ones, the youngest one being just 12. We were rewarded with a nice summit cross and the superb Alpine scenery all round. Back down at the Hut, everyone celebrated the summit with a beer before returning to Trafoi and our idyllic campsite. The Ashcrofts had meanwhile been active on the Southern side of the Ortler, having climbed the Cevedale and skied on the Stilfser Joch.

Time was already slipping quickly by and our holiday was past the halfway mark. We had various trips to the open air swimming pool, some went on a 100 mile trip round the Dolomites, others went buying ski equipment in Bormeo on the other side of the Stelvio, whilst others lazed round the campsite on their restdays or receiving first aid for weak knees, bad backs, haemorrhoids and for severe burns namely Margaret Theobald, who scalded her leg with a pan of boiling water, whilst quite a few others at various times had the 'runs'. Thanks to Ruth, our Sister in Charge, for helping us all out.

A party of eight set off to climb the "Konigspitze", leaving the cars in Sulden and walking up to the Casati Hut. Half way we met Bev and his friend John just coming down, having encountered deep snow on their route, but just the same having had a good day. We crossed the Langen Ferner and arrived in the Casati Hut (3269 m.), normally a summer ski-ing area, but this time minus the skiers. The reason soon became obvious, as all the

lifts were still buried by 3m of snow. The luxury of the bedrooms (with down covers) was great, though expensive. We even had an afternoon's sleep to get our money's worth.

Next morning we were away before first light, having agreed the previous evening to try the ridge from the Casati Hut to the Konigspitze in preference to the normal route. The ridge went quite well to start with, we had a splendid sunrise over a sea of cloud. We encountered an awkward descent on soft snow and loose rock and within minutes were enveloped in thick mist. Chris and Rock, who had disappeared in the mist, reappeared reporting that no-one had traversed the ridge further on, but they saw footsteps leading off left down a gully. As the mist showed no signs of lifting, we went down into the gloom, which seemed like a Scottish gully on a bad day. By the time we had reached the bottom of the gully and re-assembled on the glacier, 3 hours had passed since leaving the Casati Hut and we were now 1000 feet lower than when we had started!! Feeling rather disillusioned and with the mist coming and going, there was a certain amount of indecision as to what to do. Tony Smedley and Don Prior headed back down, as they were leaving for home the next day. Chris and Rock, Roy Eyre and John Theobald made a determined effort and reached the summit of the Konigspitze (3850 m.) though the mist denied them the view; while Ken and myself went as far as the Konigsjoch before returning. On our way down to Sulden, we met Dave Penlington and his little party about to set out on another mammoth walk about.

That evening 41 Oreads sat down to a 3 course meal of local delicacies at the Tannenheim Hotel for 3.00p a head and without anybody feeling ill afterwards!! Everyone had a good time, with the vino flowing freely, even the children seemed to take to it quite easily.

The next day quite a few left for home, whilst another team decided to climb the Ortler, this time via the Tabaretta Hut and then up to the Payer Hut. All had a good time and reached the summit, although marred by a solo climber who fell to his death by falling through a cornice.

We too had to leave for Munich, our next stop, leaving the Bryans and Rock, who went round to the Alpini Hut and climbed the Thurweisser (3652 m.) claiming it to be the best route of the holiday.

At the final count, 44 people (including children) attended the meet, the campsite was perfect, the weather great, the mountains excellent, the company first class. Thank you all for coming and making it a great success and sorry if I have failed to mention anyone.

THOSE PRESENT and PEAKS CLIMBED (Apologies for any omissions)

Present on Meet -

	Mike, Sue, Simon and Lucy Wren
	Ken, Margaret, Chris and Linda Bryan
Rock Hudson, Colin Barnard, Dave Jeffreys,	John and Margaret Theobald
Roy & Chris Eyre & the three girls	Bev, Kath, James and Gareth Abley
Jack, Janet, Peter & David Ashcroft	and their friends John and Katie
John, Ruth and Helga Welbourn	Dave and Roger Penlington
Colin, Uschi & Stephen Hobday	Don & Wendy Prior, John Fisher
Tony, Barbara, Vincent & Fiona Smedley	

Ortler (3878m)	R. Hudson T. Smedley K. Bryan D. Prior	J. Theobald V. Smedley C. Bryan W. Prior	U. Hobday M. Wren C. Barnard B. Abley & John	C. Hobday R. Eyre D. Jeffreys
Konigspitze (3856m)	C. Bryan J. Fisher	R. Hudson J. Theobald	R. Eyre R. Penlington	D. Penlington
Suldenspitze (3376m)	C. Hobday B. Strike D. Prior	K. Bryan C. Barnard	I. Brindle D. Jeffreys	B. Abley & John T. Smedley
Cevedale (3778m)	J. Ashcroft I. Brindle	J. Ashcroft B. Strike	P. Ashcroft C. Barnard	D. Ashcroft D. Jeffreys
Grosser Angelos (3520m)	C. Hobday L. Bryan T. Smedley V. Smedley	U. Hobday D. Prior B. Smedley F. Smedley	S. Hobday W. Prior J. Fisher	K. Bryan D. Penlington R. Penlington
Vertainspitze (3544m)	C. Bryan B. Strike	R. Hudson C. Barnard	I. Brindle D. Jeffreys	D. Penlington R. Penlington
Furkel Spitze (3004m)	K. Bryan J. Theobald P. Ashcroft	C. Bryan M. Theobald D. Ashcroft	R. Welbourn J. Ashcroft K. Abley	J. Welbourn J. Ashcroft
Schafberg (2935m)	R. Hudson C. Bryan S. Hobday B. Smedley	C. Barnard K. Bryan D. Prior V. Smedley	D. Jeffreys C. Hobday W. Prior F. Smedley	J. Theobald U. Hobday T. Smedley
Dreiländerspitze (2638m)	C. Hobday	U. Hobday	S. Hobday	
Thurwieser Spitze (3652m)	K. Bryan	C. Bryan	R. Hudson	



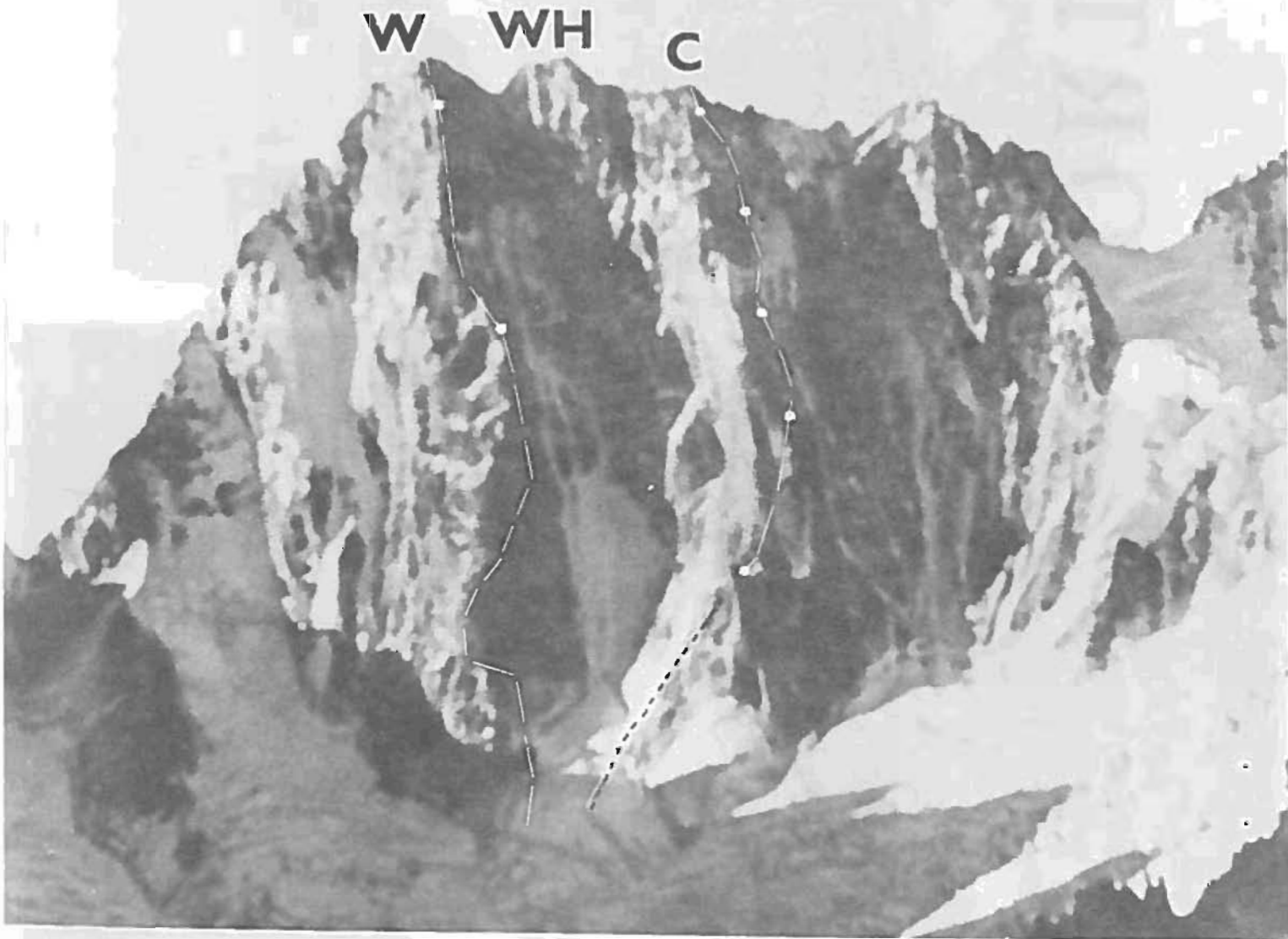
ORTLER

Left: On the summit ridge of the Grand Angelo.
 Below Left: Dussledorf Hut and Konigspitze.
 Below Right: Crossing the meadows at Trafoi.

Photographs: Colin Hobday



GRANDES JORASSES



The 1200 metre North Face of the Grandes Jorasses, rising above the Leschaux Glacier.

W- Point Walker, 4208 metres.

WH- Point Whymper, 4184 metres.

C- Point Croz, 4110 metres.

The lines of the Walker and Croz spurs are marked and white dots indicate the bivouac sites mentioned in the articles.

DOUBLE TOP

This year saw two notable Oread successes on the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses in the Mont Blanc Massif. Firstly Pete Holden and Chris Radcliffe made an ascent of the Croz Spur over 6 days at Easter, an ascent which, while outside the period for the recognition of Winter Ascents, was probably the first time the route had been climbed by a British team in winter conditions. It was Chris and Pete's third attempt at the route.

Later in the year Paul Addison and Robin Sedgwick made a storm-bound four day ascent of the neighbouring Walker Spur.

In the following pages Pete and Robin tell the stories of their climbs.

ENFIN ~ Les Grandes Jorasses par L'eperon de la Pointe Croz ; 5th - 10th April 1980.

Words ; Pete Holden

Photos ; Chris Radcliffe

As a most generous act Howard Lancashire and Pip Hopkins carried some of our gear and deposited it beneath the Leschaux hut as an extension of their ski-descent of the Valley Blanche - this act most probably saved us a further bivouac on the glacier approach to our climb.

I called to Howard as he was about to ski away from us - "Give Angela a ring" - he agreed, and he skied away with the words to catch up with Pip and together they sped from the mountain fastness, down to the security and comforts of Chamonix. Chris and I were left alone on the glacier - once more in winter looking up at the North Face of Les Grandes Jorasses. Our view of it was as one might see it in a dream, with fleeting kaleidoscopic images of it's towering wall seen through the light cloud, the swirl of which effected to both reveal and conceal at the call of the restless wind.

The eye can be such a deceiver, the image we received then was that of a vast mass of vertical rock and ice and the first response that this activated was sheer numbness of mind to the possibility of climbing such a thing, the image had to be reinterpreted in the light of past experience if we were to go on.

But what was it that we were resolved to go on to? The Croz Spur was our objective and to quote from the Guide Vallot - "Ascension de grande envergure" (a great climb of the highest level); and if I can add to this a quotation from Alan Rouse - "There is no summer climb in the whole of the Alps which can begin to compare with the Grandes Jorasses in winter" (Mountain 71). Then these two quotes give, I feel, an indication of the esteem in which this climb is held, particularly as a winter undertaking. (Our ascent was made outside the period commonly recognised as winter, i.e. 21st December - 20th March).

Chris and I had made two previous attempts on the climb, both over the Christmas period, but the highest point attained on these had been the top of the rock barrier beneath the middle ice-field. These attempts had cost us enormous effort and had been great experiences - but of course to retreat twice from the same climb had left a very deep impression of an undertaking unresolved. So for a third time we faced the mountain; it looked the same majestic bastion, but were we this time sufficiently determined to overcome our weaknesses and it's strengths?

After Howard and Pip left us we re-sorted the gear and brewed tea. Above us was the Leschaux Hut which we had dug out and used on our previous attempts - but attaining it had cost no mean effort and we were now determined to expend all that we had on the climb itself.

After the two weeks of storms, which had preceeded our attempt, the glacier was covered in deep, fresh powder snow; but whereas the Mer de Glace had been quickly transformed into a regular firm ski-piste, the Leschaux Glacier before us was virgin and soft and we shoed off into the mist with occasional glimpses of the mountain gained through a thinning of the veil. Chris made the trail and I stumbled after in his tracks - a monotonous grind for both of us, with nothing to aim for but immeasurable distance covered and height gained in a featureless world where mist and glacier were indistinguishable. On a slight easing of the slope we decided to make our bivouac and proceeded to stamp out with ease a large platform in the powder snow. Suddenly the mist rolled away and above us was revealed the Grandes Jorasses Norwand which was touched by the evening sun and we were able to study our proposed route on the Croz Spur.

Once settled into our bivy sacks we prepared a meal on the "tower stove" which was hung from the ski-sticks and during the preparation of this we were surprised to see a small group of skiers advance up the glacier and then make what was obviously an arduous ascent to the Leschaux Hut.

We sealed ourselves into our bivy sacks and lay back and listened to the wind as it swept down the valley with it's charge of spindrift and by dawn our hollow had been neatly levelled and we had to dig out ourselves and our possessions.

The sky above was clear and we turned our eyes and thoughts to the steepening glacier above us which we had to ascend for 1,500 ft to reach the foot of the face - we knew that this would be exhausting work in the deep powder snow because we had done it twice before! Three hours of strenuous plodding punctuated with regular halts to gasp air deep into the lungs and to relax aching muscles and this brought us to the bergeschrund at the foot of the face. The last few hundred feet of ascent had been a battle against the wind slab crust which had formed and threatened to break off in large slabs as it cracked loudly and crazed under our weight and some small slabs broke away in a very disturbing fashion.

As usual it was a great relief to take a stance beneath the first ice-field and to gear-up and to take off the snow shoes; though it was small comfort then to have to swim up to the bergeschrund and cross this delicately to gain a footing on the face itself.

The ice-field was covered in deep snow and we could plod out 150 ft at a time - though as the snow thinned a secure footing became more difficult to obtain and the labour increased proportionately. The good snow-cover over the ice continued up into the couloir behind the 'first rock tower' and apart from short sections of bare ice and mixed ground we arrived at the foot of the 'second tower' without encountering any serious technical difficulties.

Immediately above us we knew that the serious climbing began in earnest - on our last attempt we had been involved in a near bizarre epic in the company of Patrick Valencenne only 150 ft above where we stood and we had all retreated from that point. Thus we were quite happy to make an early stop and prepare a bivouac at the foot of the rock wall having established ourselves on the climb with the prospect of a hard day ahead on the morrow.

It was a typical winter bivouac situation; the snow couloir swept up to merge with the rock wall above and the crest of the ridge was corniced over another precipitous couloir. A couple of hours work fashioned two very respectable ledges out of the slope and we enjoyed

the luxury of sufficient room to lie down on and pass a comfortable night. Such high standards of accommodation were not to be repeated again on the climb! The next morning we resolved to avoid the steep rock tower which we had climbed on previous attempts (the last time disastrously) and had experienced such difficulties in doing so and we opted for the steep ice gully on it's left hand side which had always looked to be so difficult. We were right - it was very difficult (Scottish Grade 5 for 300 ft), but having fought so hard to overcome those two pitches we felt committed to the climb, perhaps as never before, and we meant to climb through all that came our way.

The angle of the climbing eased as we followed a snowy couloir until it steepened at it's top and we were forced to take extreme care with the soft unstable snow which terminated in the most amazing knife-edge arete atop the 'second tower', which gave us a 75 ft sky-walk along it's fine crest which we executed with bated breath as it's mean thinness seemed too frail to take our load. From our confined stance beyond that arete we were faced with snow-plastered rocks which defied initial probes but height was gained more easily after some perilous balance moves made to reach a thin crack into which a small nut could be slotted for a rest. Two strenuous pitches up these snow-plastered rocks led to the clean, near vertical, 150ft wall which bars access to the 'middle ice-field'. We knew that there was no good bivouac site to be found above the wall so we resolved to make the best of the poor site where we stood - but we still had the time to climb the wall in the late evening sun without a sack and to leave a rope fixed on it for the morning. Pleasant as it was to see the sun it's rays were too weak to offer physical warmth, but to move on steep rock unhindered by a heavy sack was almost enjoyable despite the biting wind which nipped away at the fingers. The top of this rock wall was our high point of our 'first attempt' from which we had retreated in a raging storm. Now in the last light of a fine day we hacked away two acceptable ledges from the hard grey ice.

That evening we were treated to some superb mountain scenes enhanced by the sea of cloud which filled the valleys. The view took in most of the major peaks of the Mont Blanc group and beyond these we enjoyed extensive views out to the Matterhorn and surrounding peaks.

To sit on this vast wall in winter is an incredible experience - the feeling of isolation being compounded by the intense cold which was intensified by the strong wind which brought periodic showers of spindrift snow cascading down the wall to penetrate the smallest hole in our defences.

We settled into our icy-nicks and things looked well - we had the rope tied off from our previously attained high point on the route and the storm in the valley was somebody else's problem - though there were signs that it might rise to envelope us - but that was not sufficiently imminent to be disturbing. The first two nights were reasonably comfortable - tucked up in our down bags inside our "Goretex" bivy sacks. Cooking was a problem because of the wind but little did we know what difficulties of that nature were to be in store for us later.

We warmed to the next day by prussiking up the rope fixed on the previous evening and above the tiny stance there we contemplated the huge expanse of hard grey ice which forms the "middle ice field" and up which we would have to climb as a diagonal line for eight pitches. The climbing was very strenuous on this ice; to obtain placements with the axes was not too difficult but to achieve security with the front points we really had to work hard. Very often the shattering of the brittle surface skin would cause a foot to skid off and one's whole body heaved with the strength of the reaction which powered front-points back into place. (It took two months for our toes to recover from this mal-treatment!)

A very dramatic moment occurred which I asked Chris to make a pendulum across the ice because an in-situ piton had tempted me too high onto the ice glazed rock wall - as he started this spectacular front-point scrape the back-up piton, which I had placed, moved under load and the existing one began to bend slowly down. I cried to Chris to off-load the rope and in those agonising seconds, as I watched him quickly regain security, I saw Chris fifty feet below splayed out on the vast sheet of mirror-like ice above the impending void. I replaced both pegs securely and Chris climbed the rest of the descending traverse to another in-situ peg in a small rock rib. I joined him by a rather difficult diagonal abseil from the offending pitons - yes I prayed!



Chris Radcliffe's Photos on this and the following page show something of the difficulty, commitment and sheer physical discomfort involved in climbing a major North Face in winter conditions.

Chris and Pete are intending to present a lecture on their climb to the club in the early new year.





The upper rim of the ice-field was followed with sustained effort until at the highest point of the ice the rock band had to be taken to. The Grade VI pitch directly above was not even considered under the conditions but the alternative Grade IV rock was heavily encrusted in ice and proved to be as difficult as it looked with a 'white slab' style lasso to start.

After this pitch we were once again briefly in the evening sun, but the rigors of a steep ice crack and chimney absorbed the last remaining minutes of light and above the expected ledge could not be found and eventually a desperate bivy place was fashioned where we stood. The wind was up and the tangle of ropes froze as we worked away through the early night to fashion something to rest on. Eventually we settled down, somehow secured by loops of rope as there was previous little else to prevent us sliding off, and we passed the night away.

The dawn came red and fiery and we knew that the storm which had been building up for the last few days was about to break and our desire was to be above the rock band which we had been caught out upon. The wall above us rose steeply until it disappeared into a frighteningly steep sheet of ice. The rock to the left of this was compact and most uninviting except for a faint weakness which tempted a tentative look. This first effort lasted ten feet and was appalling and a retreat was made. The pressure to find a route up was great because of the swirling grey clouds sweeping in. We scanned right across the wall and decided to make a traverse on the steep, brittle ice at its foot in the hope that something would turn up! Eventually the ice gave out to bold granite ten feet before a groove which promised a way up and out. That ten feet was stubborn and was overcome with help from a sling over a tiny knobble. The groove itself was formed in exceedingly compact rock without a crack at the back and it was ascended by friction climbing with large snowflakes swirling in the air and settling on the rock. From a constricted belay in the groove its continuation soared above to the ice-field and this had reached down into the groove with an icy slither which neatly filled all the cracks and holds. The ascent of this pitch in the swirling snow without crampons on was something which demanded full use of the skills of delicate bridging on both rock and ice, combined with cunning deployment of curved axe-picks until the

ice-field was reached and crampons were strapped on whilst standing in a sling. The strength of the storm was by then such that regular snow avalanches cascaded down the face and we became buried on belays and everything rapidly became covered in 6 inches of freshly fallen snow. Progress was slow under those conditions needing a laborious job of snow clearing in order to make headway and stances were endured in a biting wind with driven snow stinging the face. After a few hours the storm eased but the deep-lying snow remained to burden our day and we swept our way slowly upwards until we reached the next rock band and there we searched for a place to bivy. Climbing rock under those conditions was appallingly difficult, as every inch had to be cleared of fluffy snow. Whilst engaged in this I dropped a glove and my hand froze whilst I completed the pitch before I could don a spare - such mishaps with their painful after effects are just reminders of the seriousness of winter climbing.

An obvious bivouac site did not materialise before the ice loomed again so we applied creative ingenuity in the form of a two hour hacking session at a hard, grey ice-boss atop a rock flake to produce a couple of meagre sloping ledges. Though the storm had abated somewhat the strong wind remained and caused regular snow avalanches to sweep the face and in the evening light we apprehensively watched them as they flowed relentlessly down the steep grey ice which we would have to climb the next morning. Throughout the night we were disturbed by the weight of snow which built up behind us and tended to force us off the meagre ledge out over the void.

The first pitch on that next morning was 150ft of total concentrated effort on four points, cruelly unreliable on brittle glassy ice, with the nerves keyed by the threat and actuality of powder snow avalanches hissing and spitting and dragging as they swept by. Further ice led into a rocky couloir which acted as a perfect funnel as, with only a few seconds warning, we regularly found ourselves completely enveloped in rushing, pouring snow, and for eternal seconds we endured tautness and strain to maintain contact and then once over, naught but to climb again and the clearing and scraping and moving upwards in dreadul insecurity and apprehension. A narrows formed a steep, technical pitch up a chimney and an icy crack which led to easy but very unstable

snow which we followed to the crest of the spur.

The views from this point across the face of the Pointe Whympere to the Walker Spur were tremendously impressive. After a brief rest we tackled the steep rocky crest above and gained easier angled mixed ground. This was quite deceptively difficult and we soon found ourselves tackling a very demanding section of brittle, thin ice overlying appalling loose rock. After 150ft of this climbing a crisis of confidence occurred on a band of shattered rock which defied all attempts to place a secure belay and eventually the second man moved up with dubious security being obtained from a tied-off, thin blade. The wind was up again and chilled us to the bone as it blasted in from the north-west. And yet again we began the search for a bivouac place - but this ground promised none and above us reared the summit headwall with its serrated and corniced crest looking tantalizingly close - but quite beyond our reach for that day. Above the ice a groove of rotten rock was climbed to a fine ledge and in-situ peg - but the ledge was tired and collapsed beneath its human burden and cascaded down the face. Above this was just one mass of shattered rock which it was quite impossible to bivouac on and a descent had to be made from two pitons placed in excavated cracks. Frayed nerves jibed at this manoeuvre - climbing down collapsing rocks to an extremely exposed crest of the wall with no prospect of a bivy ledge - all in the teeth of an icy gale-force wind which threatened to freeze us where we stood. Desperation forced us to scratch out two places to sit with feet hung over the void and with utmost haste we struggled into our bivy sacks and sought respite from the freezing wind.

Once inside the bivy bag life became bearable again and I think that at that time, more than any other on the climb, we were extremely close to suffering from severe exposure. Cooking under those conditions was a contortionist's nightmare. Chris persevered against the wind and all pervading spindrift and also against an exasperating defective washer on the stove which caused the stove to flare up at a certain pressure. Against all that Chris laboured to produce two cupfuls of cold water from ice. But that cold drink was taken then with great relish and so too were our last lumps of frozen cheese eaten as if 'haute cuisine'.

That night was one of extreme discomfort for us both due mainly to the restricted nature of our perch and I suffered particularly from searing pains in my thighs which I can only attribute to continuous tension in the muscles and I was not relieved of this pain until I began climbing the next day. By dawn the wind had not abated and we struggled out of our sacks as the deep red sun rose out of the grey cloud-sea below and we geared up as quickly as possible to once more tackle the decaying rocks above. From the previous day's high point we were undecided as to the route and our first attempt led up into a horrendous steep, loose groove which was reminiscent of the best of its type as found amongst the red walls of south stack, Anglesey. The descent was undertaken with the utmost care and trepidation and the insecure belay, once returned to, seemed a haven. With that choice of exit barred we tried another way out and the secret was soon discovered to be a diagonal descent with aid from the rope into an adjacent couloir on our left. A jammed rope on this pitch caught the leader teetering on ice-glazed rocks out of communication with his hidden second - yet another delicate descent was made to a temporary stance in order to bring us within sight and sound of one another again. The final two pitches up the steep ice-glazed rocks had to be climbed with numbed hands often bared to the rocks with no piton to guide the way or even to secure a fall. I am sure that we shivered with the cold for most of those last few pitches and then suddenly the deep soft snow of the summit ridge was reached and instantly the world was changed. On the other side everywhere was brilliantly white with the southern aspect out over Italy blinding and dazzling at first sight and the wind, that cruel, cruel, cold win, could be felt no more.

A final exasperating struggle with another jammed rope (being frozen stiff they were terribly difficult to handle) and at last we were both able to enjoy the quite dramatic relative warmth in the sun and out of the wind, and we slumped and made a much needed brew a few feet beneath the summit of Pointe Croz.

The descent is another story in itself, suffice to say that we survived a high speed fall down a steep snow slope, after I had slipped, to be saved by the rope being caught on a small protruding spike of rock! A gashed eye to Chris from this caused some concern but fortunately turned

out to be a gusher from only a small cut. A night in the hut was commenced with an unrestrained attack on the plentiful liquor store until my head reeled and I forced myself to vomit frequently to sober up! The descent from the hut to the valley was serious enough with steep snow slopes, avalanche danger, hidden ladder (which took 2 hours to locate) and soft, soggy snow in the valley floor.

WALK_{ER} ON THE WILD SIDE



Article and Photos; Robin Sedgwick

Cartoons; Beryl Strike

THE WALKER SPUR:

"A route to dream of, perhaps the finest in existence"
- Gaston Rebuffat.

"The most beautiful of the extreme alpine routes"
- Reinhold Messner.

"To feel the fascination of the Walker Spur is
the most wonderful and, at the same time, the most
overwhelming experience that a climber can have"
- Walter Bonatti.

Early August in Chamonix and Paul is involved in his usual "see if you can get your ruc-sac to weigh less than 10 pounds" packing session. Having decimated our already meagre rack of hardware to 10 Karabiners and 3 nuts, and our food supply to 12 Mars bars and a bag of sweets, he is now contemplating his bivvi gear with an evil glint in his eye. Suggestions that we needn't take any down gear are studiously ignored on my part and eventually he settles for an extra sweater and my waistcoat.

A last check on the weather forecast at the Guides bureau reveals "une orage avec tonnerre dans la nuit" for the end of tomorrow (Thursday). The prospect of sitting out a few hours of storm doesn't unduly worry us as we've both got gore-tex bivvy bags and the forecast is a return to "Grand Beau Temps" for the Friday. The die is cast and we set off for the Montanvers railway.

Fighting through the tourists at Montanvers we bump into Herr Bergfuhrer Scott, the Oread's director of operations in Chamonix. He's been spending his summer pontificating from the depths of his mountaineering experience and despatching teams throughout the range with dire threats as to the price of failure. Only the previous week we narrowly escaped having to whitewash the whole of Snells' field with a toothbrush after an absolute fiasco of an attempt on the Bonatti Pillar. Fortunately, he approves of our objective and wishes us luck.

Two hours stagger up the Mer de Glace and we arrange a bivouac on a heap of moraine within half-an-hour of the foot of the face. As is usual on moraines, there are nasty sharp stones sticking into tender bits of your anatomy wherever you choose to lie and I end up sleeping with my head next to a yawning crevasse that belches and gurgles all night long, gleefully anticipating the prospect of me and half the moraine sliding into it in the small hours of the morning.

Awake at four, a quick brew and set off for the bottom of the face where lights are already visible. After our usual route-finding cock-ups and numerous detours and retracing of steps we arrive at the bergschrund to find a crowd of competition for the route - 4 British, 2 Austrians and 3 Japanese - standing around doing very little. Moving together up the initial snow slopes the Japs and Austrians are moving as though they've got two weeks to do the route and one of the British pairs decides to ignore the route description and climb a most unlikely looking blank wall, so we're soon out in front. Feeling very smug and efficient with our overtaking, we're sorting out gear at the start of the rock climbing when an ice axe whistles over my head and cartwheels out of sight towards the bergschrund. My suspicions as to the ownership of the axe are confirmed by Paul's sheepish looks. Fortunately, at this point, one of the British lads arrives at our stance clutching a Curver axe minus the end 3 inches

of the pick. Paul's spiel is perfect - "Just broken it? Got a hammer as well, have you? Mind if I hang onto your axe until the top?" Within 10 seconds it's "fait accompli" and we're back in business and steaming off up the first of the rock pitches.

Two pitches on superb rock, peg pulling strenuosities on the Rebuffat Crack and then steep icy mixed ground, both moving well, enjoying the climbing. More rock and moves right to the 75m. diedre, superb bridging and laybacking in two long pitches. More mixed ground leads to a fixed rope across a belt of slabs. A glance at the route card confirms this is the diagonal abseil and Paul swarms off across the rope and slides out of sight down its continuation.

As I'm preparing to follow there's a sudden loud curse from Paul and a confession that our only copy of the route description is fluttering off to join his axe in the bergschrund. It was obviously going to be "one of those routes". The prospect of 1000 feet of difficult rock with no description has little to commend itself, but the words of Bergfuhrer Scott ringing in our ears spur us on "use your mountaineering sense and experience". We keep going. A strenuous overhang and then onto the grey slabs, more superb climbing - steep, sustained and surprisingly delicate on perfect rock. Several pitches with tricky route finding then, with afternoon drawing into evening, Paul leads a long traverse to the left of the spur crest, a variation that retrospect decides was off route. I follow, bleating, across a hundred runnerless feet of technically easy but apallingly loose ground, poised blocks and flakes, a jumble of perched rubble above exposed, steepening, mixed ground. I arrive at the stance to find Paul belayed to a single, doubtful, in-situ peg that bends under finger pressure, the loose ground precluding any better belay. Sorting gear for the next lead we discover one of our ropes is jammed out of sight below the stance. Pulls and tugs from various angles fail to free it and we realise the only possibility is an abseil and prussik, a possibility too awful to contemplate in that position and with that belay. We keep going on a single 9mm rope.

Two more ropelengths on easy loose ground bring us back to a notch in the spur crest at the top of the grey tower. With dusk gathering, two small lie-down ledges, about 4 feet apart, are a welcome sight and we start to settle in for the night, feeling very satisfied with the day's climbing for, despite the mishaps, we're two-thirds of the way up and there's no sign of the promised storm. As we settle down for sleep, lightning flickers over to the North while we bask under a starlit sky - "Ha! it's missed us!"

I awake sometime after four. Light is slowly returning and there's a strange weight on the bivvi-bag. A peer outside and all is revealed. The weight is an inch of fresh snow and the only view is a swirling maelstrom of white. "Paul, it's snowing!" We wait and it gets worse. Bangs and flashes with frightening simultaneity and torrents of ball-bearing like snow that cascade down the rocks. The hours slowly slip by in a daze. Around mid-morning I'm conscious of a pressing weight on my right side, and on moving slightly and peering out, the rocks of the ledge retaining wall bounce off into the swirling void and cascade down the face. There's a bank of snow on my left between me and the rock that's half burying me and slowly pushing me off the ledge. I struggle into cagoule and mitts, pull the bivvi-bag round my waist and start digging. Fifteen minutes later the process has to be repeated and again after that.

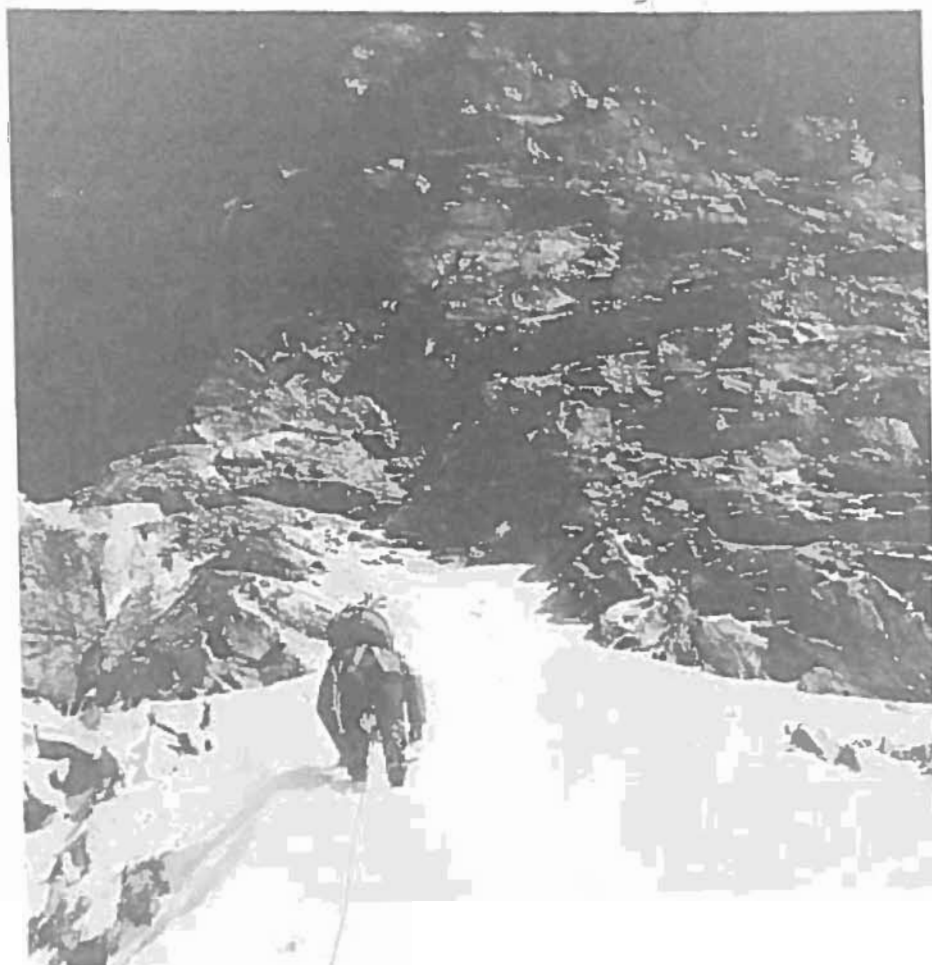


WALK(er) ON THE WILD SIDE: Paul Addison peers out of his bivi bag during a lull in the storm and (below) is ready to start climbing again after 45 hours in the bivouac.





(Above), Paul Addison leads the first pitch after the storm-bound bivouac.
 (Below Left), Paul makes rapid progress up the triangular neve.
 (Below Right), Robin Sedgwick looking happy and relieved on the summit of Point Walker.



The storm abates slightly and Paul does a hero's job with the stove and produces a couple of mugs of coffee. We start to take stock of our situation. We decide to sit tight until the storm stops, but after that the prospects are none too heartening. The idea of 2,500 feet of retreat with a single 45m. rope and a meagre stock of hardware is uninviting. We're doubtful if the upper part of the spur is climbable, mantled in fresh snow and ice. Our stock of food is 2 Mars bars, a packet of soup and half-a-dozen boiled sweets. Perhaps a helicopter? The storm increases in intensity again as the day slides into afternoon and we pass the time cocooned in our own private worlds and thoughts. My down bag is slowly getting damper. Ice encrusts the inside of the gore-tex outer and, despite care, my continuing excursions to excavate the ledge results in influxes of spin-drift which add to the problem. By now it seems another night on the ledge is inevitable if uninviting. We share a Mars bar, talk a bit and drink the soup. We're both sitting now, huddled with arms round knees as the snow build up makes lying comfortable impossible. It slowly gets dark and the swirling snows continue as we settle down for our second night.



Daylight slowly returns and with it blue skies and a white panorama of snow-plastered rock. The temperature is right down and the snow piled up around our respective ledges has a hard frozen crust. We have a brew and discuss our plan of action. Our predicament has a serious look about it so we decide to see if we can thumb a chopper. We spend the morning flashing mirrors and waving vainly at distant aeroplanes to no avail. In the early afternoon it slowly begins to dawn on us that, like buses in England, helicopters are never there when you want one. How long before our friends in the valley raise the alarm? To-morrow? The day after? "Go for the top?" - "Aye."

Getting ready to go is a major effort, damp clothing chilled by a biting wind, numb fingers digging out the tangled frozen mass of rope and hardware from their icy coverings. Struggle into boots and pack the sacks. After half-an-hour we're ready; shivering with cold, Paul leads off, smashing ice off the rocks, limbs heavy with inactivity and chill. "Christ it's plastered!". "Keep going". It's good to be going again after our 40 hours of inactivity. Mind and muscles warm to the task in hand and we find we're making reasonable progress. The easy bits are hard, banked up with snow and ice, but fortunately the snow hasn't stuck to the steeper bits, so the hard pitches are no worse than normal. Two more pitches, a pendulum across a glassy, ice-encrusted slab and a rope length of delicate climbing on the sloping slabs of a snowed-up couloir. A pitch of tricky mixed and then steep cramponing up the triangular neve to the base of the couloir leading up left of the red tower. A groove on the left of the couloir is capped by an overhang. Paul swings out right on pegs, one pulls and he takes to the air. He bounces to a stop 20 feet lower but no damage is done.

The sun's on us now and it's good to be climbing again, although it's now early evening and the possibility of another bivouac is looming large. A traverse below the tower and on up the couloir on its far side. Dusk is gathering rapidly but we keep moving up, hoping for a bivvi ledge. On easy ground Paul dislodges a television-size block. I duck, nudge it sideways and watch it bounce off the belay ropes and disappear into the dark. It's now 10 p.m., we're above 4000 metres, there's a strong bitter wind and we need a ledge. Paul brings me up to a small ledge on the nose of the spur that's exposed to the full force of the wind. It's sheltered across to the right but this is the only available ledge and we decide it will have to do. It's only just large enough to seat both of us and we struggle, booted and fully clothed, into our bivvi gear for our fourth bivouac. The initial warm glow soon dissipates and I shiver all night in my wet bag.

Dawn eventually arrives, but the effort of getting out into the bitter wind and struggling to pack with frozen fingers is such that it's 8 a.m. before we're ready to go. Up to our right the summit of Point Whympers beckons, gleaming white in the morning sun. Our way leads straight up, delicate chimneys and snowed up couloirs for three or four rope-lengths until a short snow rib leads to a pull-out onto the sunlit snowy expanse of the summit of Point Walker and it's all over. Italy lies in front of us, to our right Mont Blanc glistens in white splendour while to our left the distant Matterhorn rises majestically above the peaks of the Pennine Alps. Behind and below us the 4000 feet of the Walker Spur. It feels good to be on top.

Already our thoughts are turning to steak and beer and cream cakes. We plod over to Point Whympers and the long descent to the distant valley below.

1



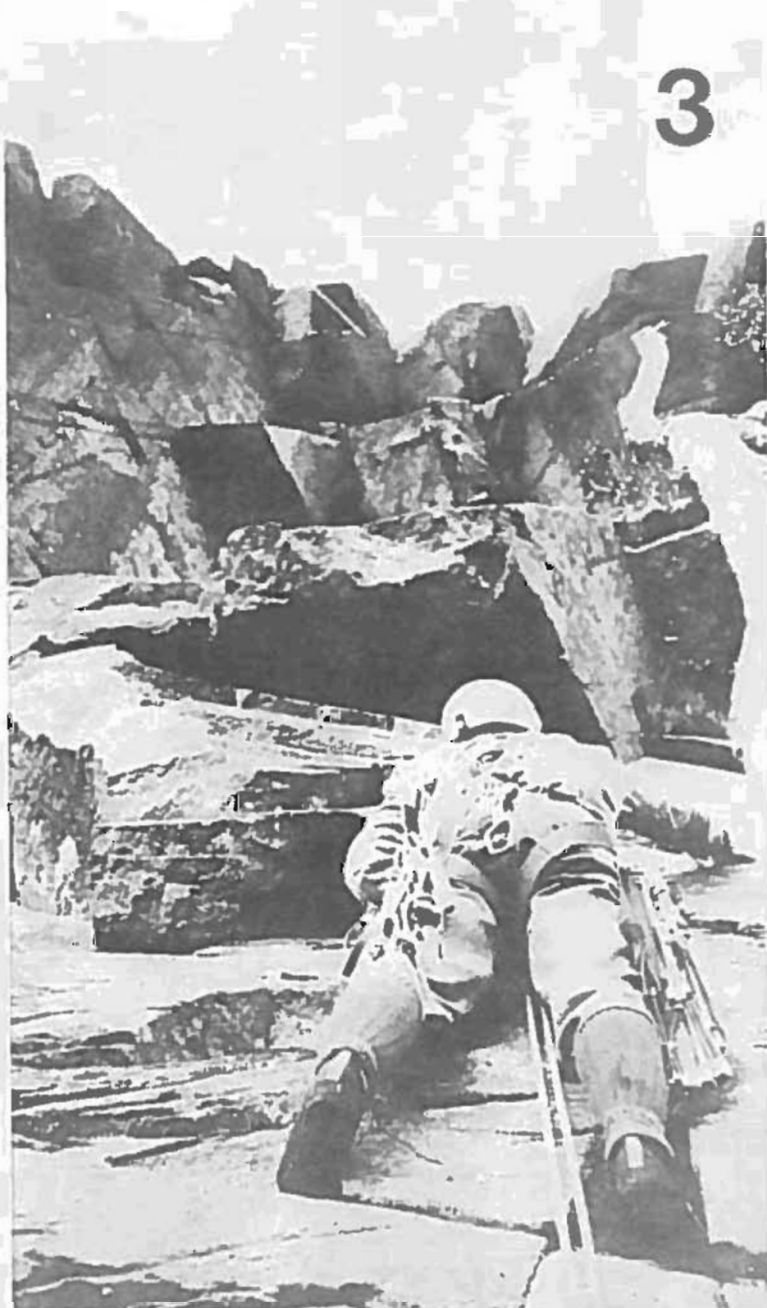
OREAD PHOTO QUIZ

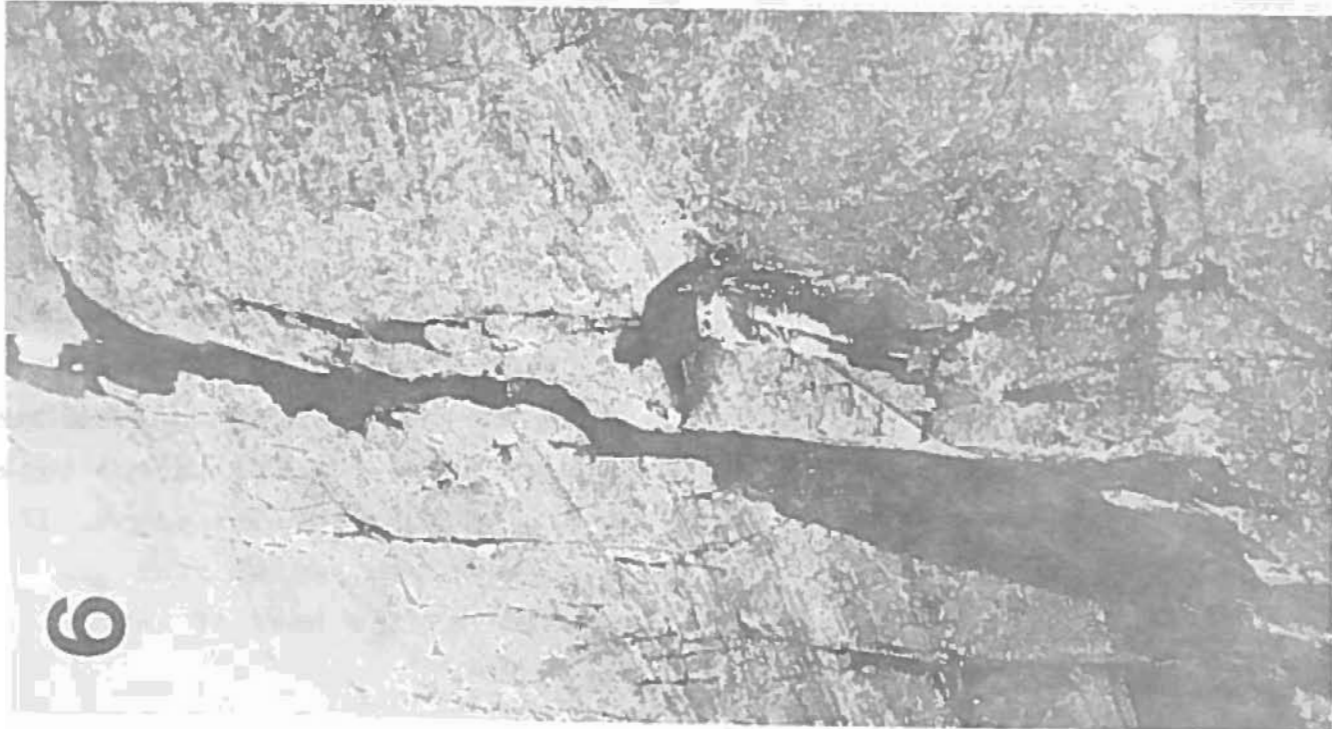
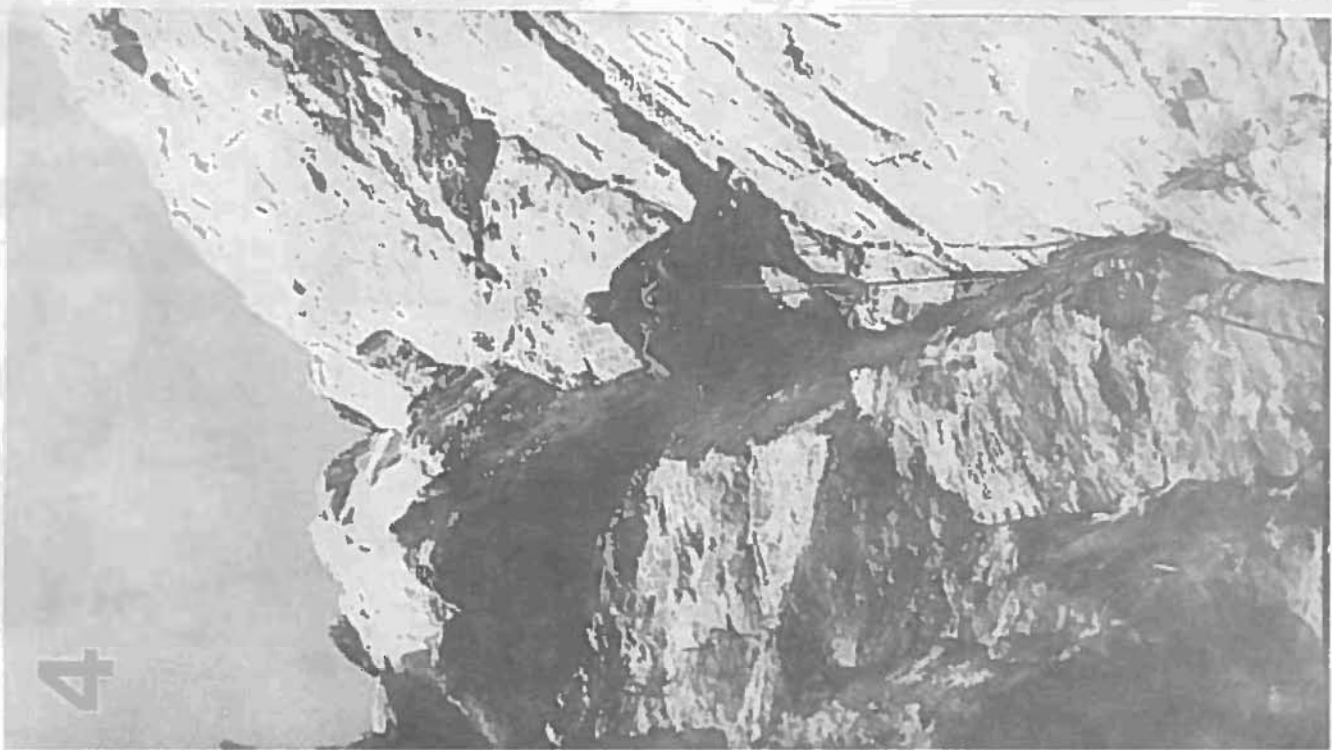
Once again, by popular demand, another Oread Photo Quiz. Just name the route, crag and climber. All climbers are (or in one case was !) members of the Oread. If any stump you you'll find the answers at the back of the magazine.

2



3





CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO, 1978

By John Fisher

"If you can raise the cash to travel out, then join me and we shall look around the country and maybe get up the odd volcano". These were the parting words of an old Alpine climbing companion, David Jacobs, before he set out to take a teaching job in Mexico City. Here was a chance not to be missed.

The main intention was to see Mexico, get the flavour of it and, although we had ascents in mind, these were of minor priority. Of particular interest were the pre-Columbian ruins of the Aztecs, Olmecs and other ecs not to mention the less cultural delights of Acapulco, divers and all. The most striking thing about the country, apart from the contrast of riches and extreme poverty, was the abundance of decorative and functional art and we saw a great deal of the latter. As for the mountains, in sum we made ascents of one high, one low and a failure on a further high summit. All were volcanoes of greater or lesser age and indeed all high mountains of Mexico are clearly volcanic in origin. The following is a matter of fact description of our activities.

Paracutin (9213 ft)

About 200 miles from Mexico City in the State of Michoacan. This is the most recent of the Mexican volcanoes (1943 eruption) and consists of a typical volcanic cone rising from a bed of laval outflow. Our ascent of this was a hot grueller in which the main difficulty was the approach, first a diabolical road and then a devilish grind over the jumbled lava. The trip from the laval edge t-ok 8 hours and we arrived back just as darkness fell. Grateful to be off it but an interesting and unusual mountain nevertheless.

Popocatepetl, 17,887 ft.

High, snow covered, partially glaciated and roughly 50 miles South East of Mexico City. After a night in the hotel/hut near the Pass of Cortes, we only got as far as the Teopixcalco shack at 16,000 ft or so, defeated by the ghastly wind, altitude and cold. The ascent that far seemed to be like walking up a sandy beach tipped to 30°. I prefer to forget about it.

Iztaccihuatl, 17,343 ft.

Situated on the other side of the Pass of Cortes from Popo, an enormous long ridge of relatively uniform height with snow covered bumps. Partially glaciated, the peak is said to resemble a reclining woman from which it derives it's Nuahtl name. The main anatomical features are the head, breast, belly, knee and foot. We got as far as the knee (17,000 ft) starting at the foot end after a somewhat cold and grisly night at a camp at 13,000 ft or so. A pleasant expedition

with no difficulties other than the obvious one of altitude. More could have been done had we realised that there were shelters at 16,000 ft about which we had no prior knowledge. Even with this advantage, a traverse of the mountain is quite a proposition since the ridge is long.

Not a particularly successful mountain effort, one might say, but then we were not very serious about our activities on the volcanoes. There is, of course, one left and we did not try the more inaccessible Orizaba (Citlaltepetl) which is even higher at 18,701 ft. Rather more formidable than the others, especially in terms of access.

Altogether an interesting change from the usual Christmas at Tan Y Wyddfa.

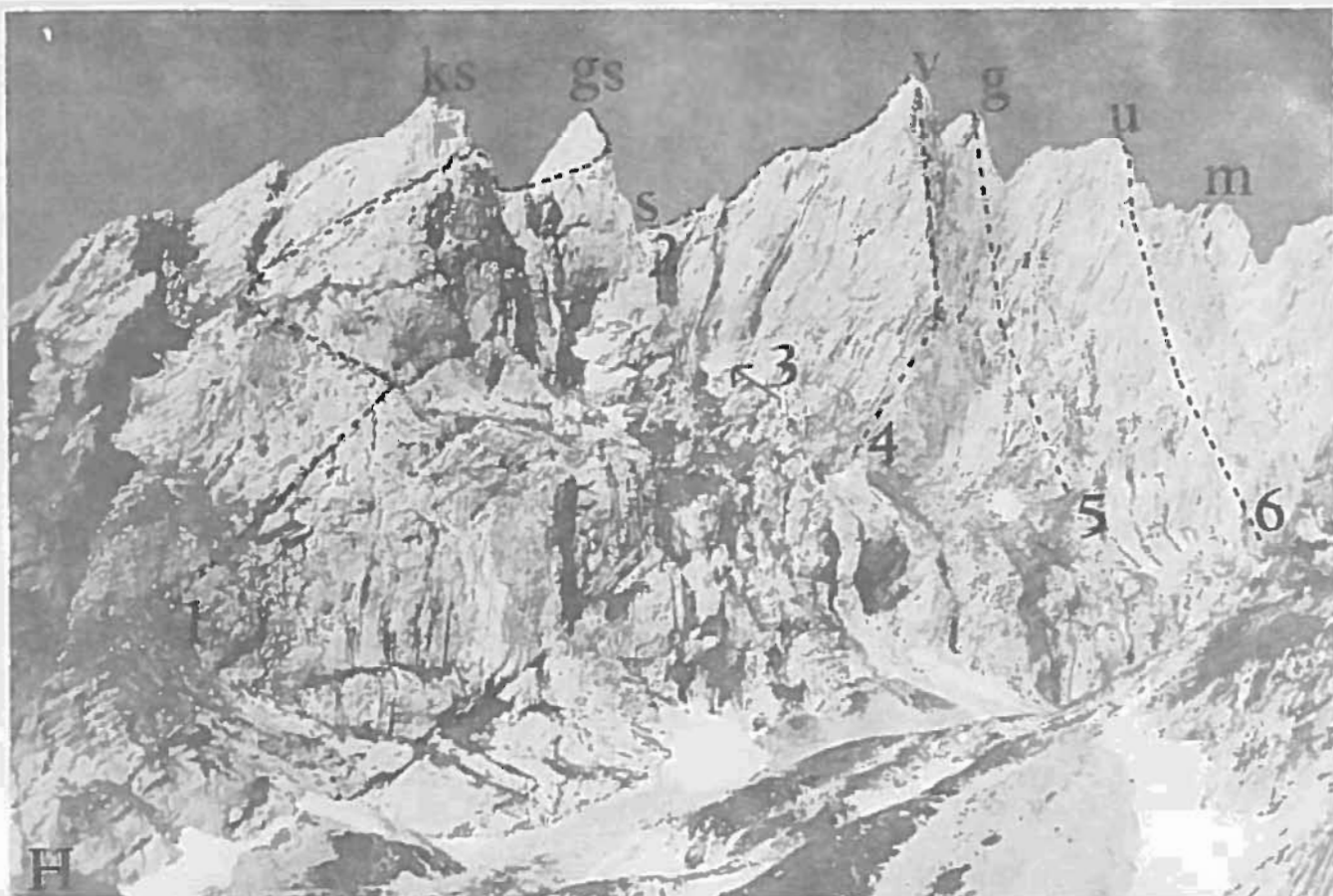
ENGELHÖRNER; AN ALPINE TREMADOC

By Robin Sedgwick

It's any summer weekend in Wales. Thick grey cloud hangs over Snowdon, the drizzle trickles slowly down the windows of Tan y Wyddfa and somewhere up in the mist Cloggy soaks under a layer of slime. Our two heroes adjourn to Tremadoc where the prospect of dry rock and enjoyable climbing await them.

It's July 1980 in Grindelwald. The temperatures soar into the nineties, not a cloud to be seen, turning 6 weeks fresh snow into chest deep slush. The avalanches thunder down with monotonous regularity. The night time freezing level is 3,500 metres. Our two heroes adjourn to the Engelhörner where the prospect of 1,000 foot routes of all grades on perfect limestone awaits them.

Engelhörner? Never heard of it! Neither had I until I picked the guide-book up in a second hand book shop. An area of superb climbing offering excellent sport for when the higher peaks are out of condition. Firstly some facts. The Engelhörner is the name given to a horse-shoe



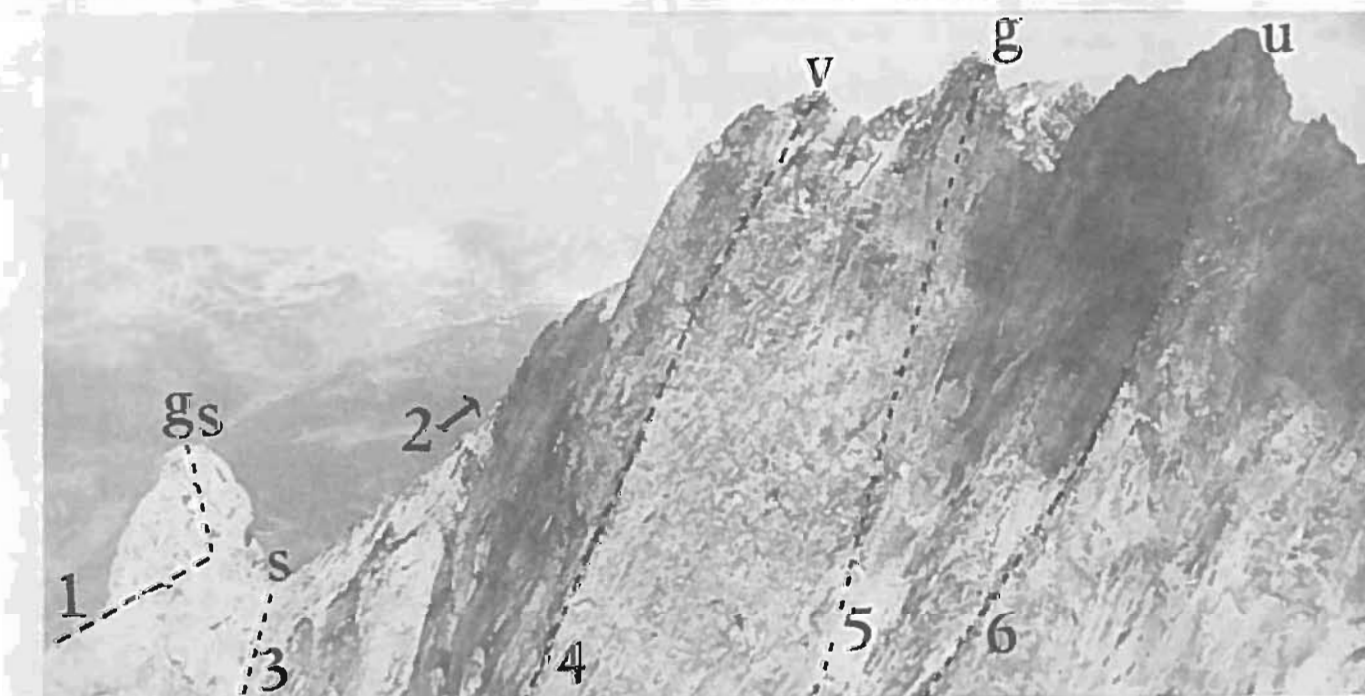
Two views of the Peaks of the East side of the Engelhörner horseshoe. The upper photo is taken from the hut path, the lower from the summit of the Kingspitz.

KS- Klein Simelstock, 2383m	Gs- Gross Simelstock, 2482m
S- Simelisattel, 2426m	V- Vorderspitze, 2618m
G- Gertrudspitze, 2632m	U- Ulrichspitze, 2636m
M- Mittelspitze, 2633m	H- Engelhorn Hut

A small selection of routes are marked. These are as follows:

1. Gross Simelstock ridge traverse, Grade III/IV.
2. Vorderspitze from the Simelisattel, Grade I
3. Approach to Simelisattel, Grade I
4. Vorderspitze West Kante, Grade V
5. Gertrudspitze S.W. Wall, Grade VI/A2
6. Ulrichspitze West Wall, Grade III/IV

In addition the Mittelgruppe Ridge Traverse (Grade IV) which traverses the peaks to the right of the Vorderspitze is highly recommended.



Two photographs of the superb North East Face of the Kingspitze.

Below: Acres of white rock as Paul Addison leads a V+ bulge halfway up the route.

Right: Paul in the long Diedre that provides the route's first hard pitches.



of limestone peaks between 2,300 and 2,700 metres that lie above the hamlet of Rosenlaui in the Bernese Alps.

Rosenlaui is easily reached by car from the Grimsel pass, or by foot from Grindelwald over the Gross Scheidegg (5 hours walk but great views!). From Rosenlaui a further 2 hours walk leads to the excellent Engelhörner Hut, unwardened during the week, and less than an hour from the start of the routes.

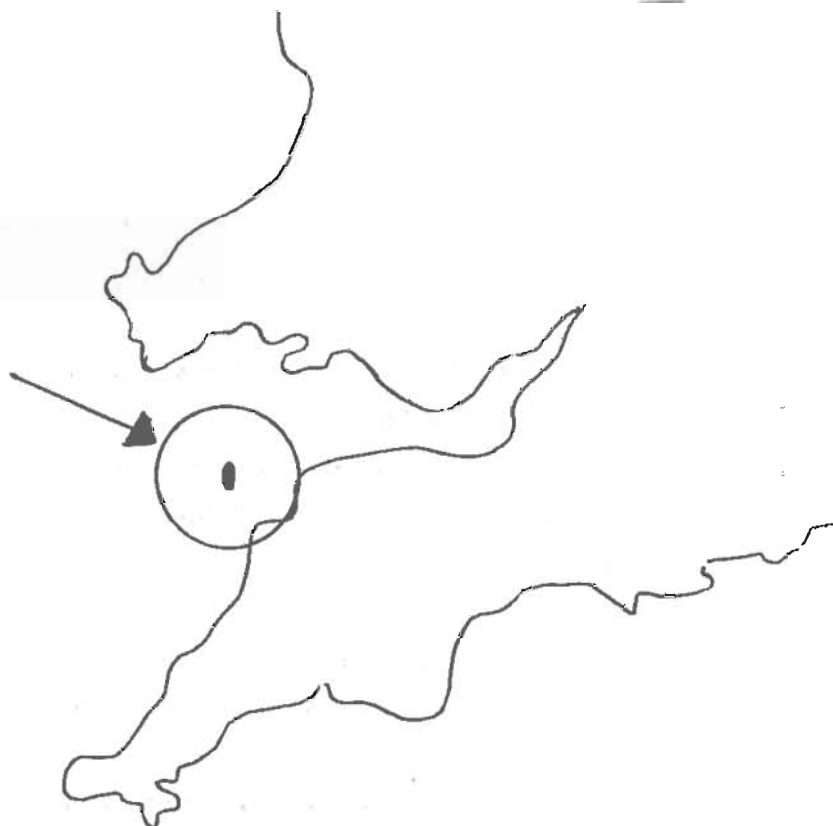
Despite this year's exceptional amount of snow, all routes and descents were clear of snow and we found a "crag rat" approach worked. Walk up in light boots or trainers, and climb in E.B's with just a cagoule and a sweater in the sac. Our first route was the 250 metre Grade V W. Kante on the Vorderespitz, a striking arete line that more than fulfills the guide book's promise - "wonderful climbing on very steep firm rock with considerable exposure". A superb route, nowhere desperate and with crux pitches plastered with protection pegs; certainly one to recommend.

Directly opposed the Vorderespitz W. Kante the 550 metre N.E. wall of the Kingspitz dominates the scene. It looks so good we just had to have a go. Graded VI in the English Guide, V+ and Ao in the latest Swiss guide, it gives over 500 metres of superb climbing, sustained at good V.S. level with a couple of pitches slightly harder. Once again protection pegs are there when needed and the rock is generally superb. Definitely a "must for any competent party".

Good routes are not confined to the higher grades however. The guidebook (Engelhörner and Salbitschiesen by Jeremy Talbot, W. Col 1968) describes and recommends routes in all grades from II to VI and this, coupled with the low altitude and quick drying rock, make the area an attraction for everyone when adverse weather or conditions make the higher peaks uninviting. It's within 5 hours drive of any of the main alpine centres and gives superb climbing in a beautiful high mountain atmosphere. So next year don't just sit round the campsite moaning about conditions and weather - pack your E.B's and set a course for Rosenlaui.

LUNDY

By
Richard
Freestone



On Sunday afternoon September 14th ten Oreads and four guests assembled on Ilfracombe's wind swept jetty and waited for the ferry to arrive that would take us across 22 miles of storm tossed Bristol channel to the island of Lundy. The very same boat had failed two days previously to get through due to the conditions but as luck would have it this time she made it. With a motion somewhat resembling a cork she bobbed across the waves with a number of unfortunates ground baiting over the side. Finally we arrived in Lundy Roads to be taken off by a couple of little motor boats and dumped on the beach.

The accommodation, which is ignominiously called the Barn, was palatial. Decorated in pine it had two showers, a well equipped kitchen, fourteen beds in two rooms, a large dining table and a huge open fire. Across the gravel track outside was the shop, and about fifty yards away the Tavern, so most people agreed that the situation was just right.

The rock on Lundy is of very sharp granite not unlike that of Cornwall, giving excellent friction. The quality of routes are first class, and in some cases unique. The Devil's Slide, for example, a 400ft slab more akin to Scotland than the South West of England. The gradings in Moulton's new Lundy Guide did give rise to some discussion and disagreement, and in the words of Ron Sant "I'll give that Theakston a right tightener next time I see him". Some of the routes were really

quite hard for their grade. Although the most popular routes were obviously on the slide (Abblon V.S. and Devil's Slide S.) and on the Flying Buttress (Diamond Solitaire V.S.) the whole West Coast of the island offers climbing of a very high and satisfying standard. "Magic Flute" on the Fluted Face, "Immaculate Slab" on the Egyptian Slabs and "Ulysees Factor" on the "Focal Buttress" all come as recommended routes.

The weather was really quite kind to us. The almost constant high winds helped to blow away the odd rain squall that happened to pass over the island but on one afternoon when climbing was out of the question and most people were either washing up or reading or just staring into the fire dreaming of the next day's routes, Radders announced he was going for a run and invited others to join him. Needless to say he set off on a solo circumnavigation of the island. Life in the barn carried on at it's almost dead stop pace. Some considerable time later, as dusk was descending the peace of the barn was shattered as the door burst open to reveal a panting, sweating, steaming, mud splattered apparition. There was a muffled scream, cries of "My God", "Good Lord the incredible hulk" and "Mother". The apparition then staggered forward, wheezed one word "Great!" and collapsed on his bunk. Sometime later after a good shower, a much happier Chris sauntered into the Tavern for a little liquid refreshment. I say little because at 56p a pint nobody got themselves drunk. Our illustrious President caused another stir one morning when, after opening a carton of long life milk it hit his cornflakes with a consistency of putty. "Oh my God" he cried and stormed out into a force 8 gale in the direction of the shop, carton in one hand, bowl in the other and his cornflakes disappearing back towards Ilfracombe.

On the Sunday of our return journey we listened to the shipping forecast and convinced ourselves that we were marooned for another few days but the intrepid mariner got his boat through and the return crossing was not as bad as we had expected, although a few ashen faced individuals were pleased to get back onto Ilfracombe jetty.

Equipment necessary for a week on Lundy:-

Plenty of ropes for abseil descents

Plenty of films, it's a photographer's paradise

Plenty of books, if it rains there isn't a lot to do

Plenty of money, the shop and Tavern are expensive

A set of tide timetables would be handy

Right; The granite coastline of Lundy
with the Devil's Slide in profile.
Below Right; Keith Gregson on Albion,
a superb V.S. which takes the
left hand corner of the slide.
Below; The superb rock architecture of
the Flying Buttress.



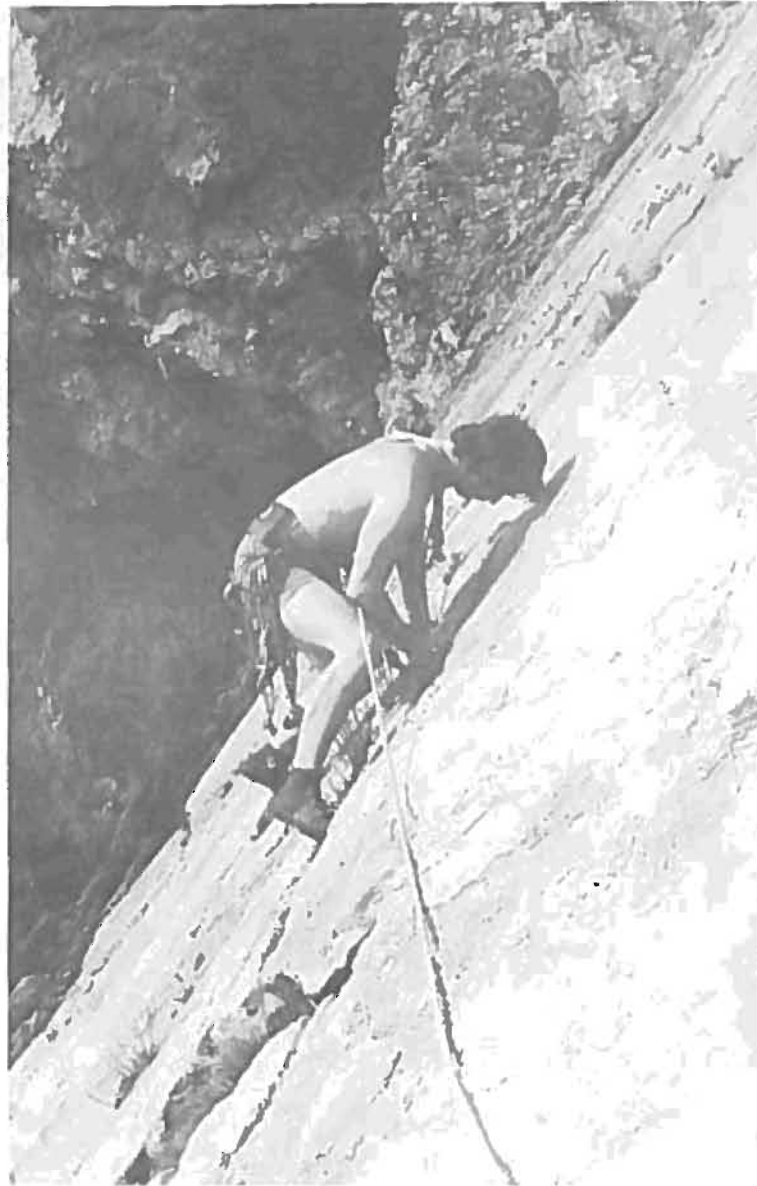


Pembroke is an area that continues to be popular with the Oread and this Easter saw a large number of members in action in both the St. David's and Manorbier areas. These photos, taken by Pete Northcote on the latter meet, show some of the attractions of Pembroke climbing.

Left: Maurice Musson, watched by brother Martin, Richard Freestone and Pete O'Neill.

Centre: Martin Musson in action.

Right: Maurice Musson and Richard Freestone.



MALHAM STANAGE WALK

OR:
"HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS
AND INSULT PEOPLE"

3rd - 5th MAY 1980

Burgess said "You're only trying to prove yourself". Fisher said "I'm not going on another Ashcroft ego trip", and Hobday said "I'm going to Brighton for the weekend".

With such words ringing in my ears, I left the Rowing Club with the thought that maybe the Club had at long last taken to water. I had another go the following Tuesday evening with much more success. The idea of the meet was for those interested in climbing at Malham to give lifts on the Friday night, then on the Monday afternoon to pick up the walkers again at Stanage. Without going into detail - but co-operation seems the appropriate word, it worked. Not perfectly - but then I said without going into detail (in the event two travelled up by train).

Seven of us did the walk. Dave Penlington, Brian West, Paul Bingham, Ron Chambers, Bev. Abley, Pete Kenyon and myself. The route was a variation on the true Pennine Way, generally a western variation on the first day, the true Pennine Way on the second day and an eastern variation on the third day. A fair description of the route might be the Buck Inn - the Craven Heifer - the Pack Horse Inn - the White House Inn - the Fleece Inn and then we failed by lingering too long in metaphysical discussion on the site of Bullstones Cabin. We failed to make the Ladybower or the Yorkshire Bridge, but who should have been wandering in the vicinity of Abbey Brook but H.P., who we mistook for some hail and hearty old gentleman out on a bank holiday afternoon walk. He let us know later that he had 7 pints of beer with him, but failed to define whether it was in the stomach or not.

MALHAM

How did the walk finish? After three pleasant days and 70 miles we finished over Stanage High Neb - down the Roman Steps to the Plantation car park, about 5.00 p.m. There we were met with a brew on by Pete Scott, Chris Wilson, Dave Helliwell of the climbing team and Kath Abley and the "mighty atoms" to meet Dad. The climbers in company with Dave Wright, Robin Sedgwich and Pete Lancaster had spent a good weekend on Malham.

As a rider, the following weekend Ron Chambers was seen at Stanage proving himself on Goliath's Groove - and who was seconding - none other than Burgess, and I bet if I'd looked a little further afield I'd have found Fisher and Hobday on the Unconquerables - smoking Pot no doubt.

I must write about the walk sometime.

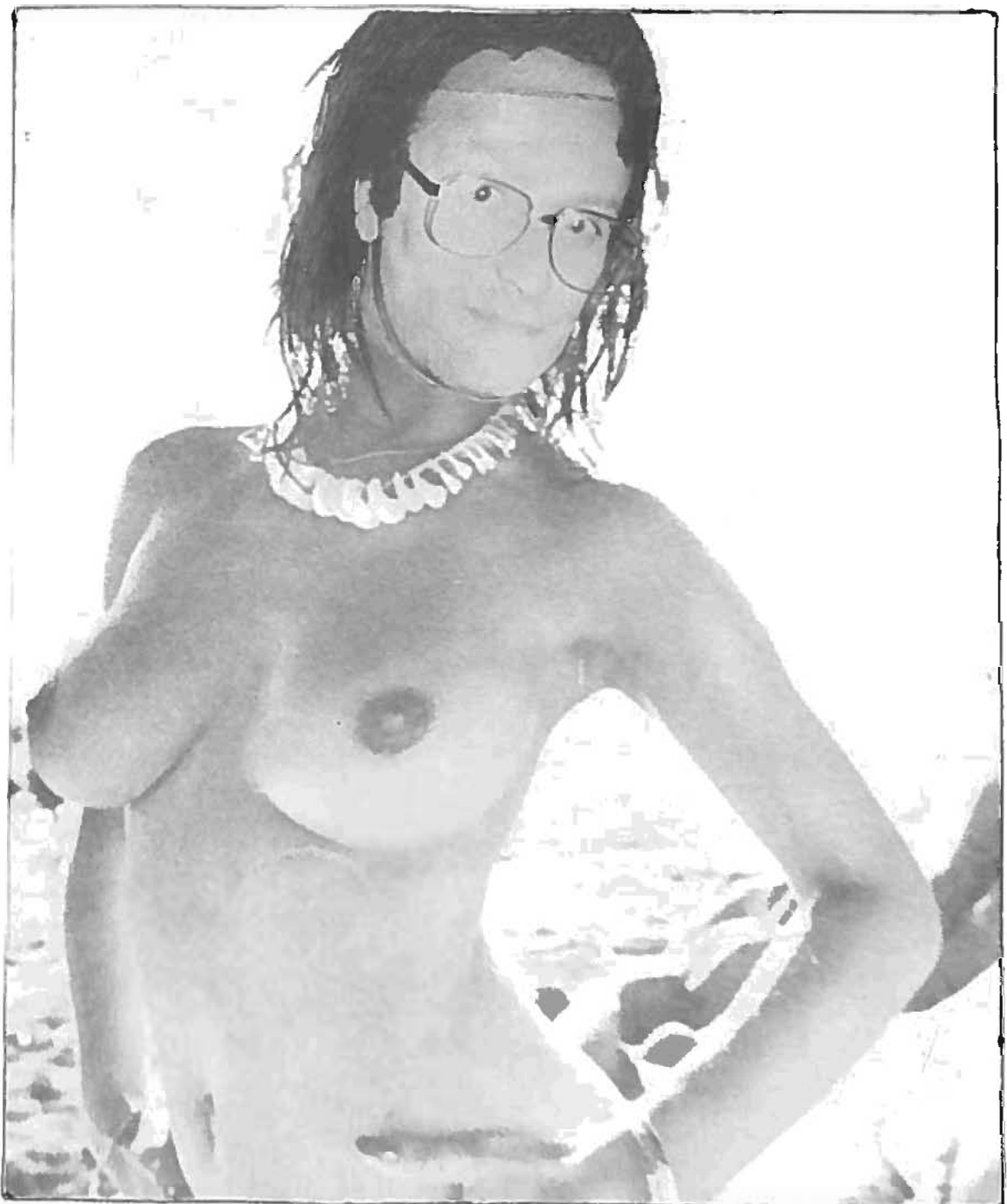
Jack Ashcroft

OREAD TIMES

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MUSSONS CONQUER THE DARK CONTINENT

One of the furthest travelled Oreads of the year was Martin Musson who, accompanied by brother Maurice spent the summer in Kenya. Unfortunately, their plans to climb Mount Kenya were thwarted when Maurice began to suffer badly from altitude sickness and was unable to continue. He is pictured below, recovering from his gruelling ordeal.

Martin, pictured right having a quiet drink at the Rowing Club prior to his departure, did however manage to make a solo ascent of one of the mountain's smaller outlying peaks and also stuck his ice axe into the bottom of the Diamond Couloir. His comment was that it 'looked good'. Retreating to lower altitudes the pair, not uncharacteristically spent the rest of their holiday in the fleshpots of Nairobi and Mombassa where they and even

stick of celery warthog,
who
Martin

damp galoshes

for three days
exhaustion.

EDITORS NOTE: It has proved necessary to censor certain parts of this report





Bla C K m A i L

C o R N e R

Which diminutive Oread member on his first trip to the Alps became involved in a fight with a one-legged French geriatric in the Chamonix Post Office ?

Which Gentleman wore a ladie's pantie girdle under his breeches for most of last winter ?

Which experienced Oread alpinist spent 8 hours on the traverse of the Petit Charmoz (Guide Book time 2 hours), Arriving back in the valley at 1:30 am ?

Who was guiding for Roger Baxter Jones in Chamonix and allowed his client to solo the crux pitches of the North Face of the Tour Ronde, much to R.B.J's displeasure?

Which renowned dipsomaniac had a free sample of beer in a Swiss supermarket and liked it so much he bought two six-packs ? Whilst gleefully consuming it in the campsite later that day, it was pointed out to him it was non-alcoholic !!

Which prospective member untied halfway up Gimmer Crag without telling his ropemates and later had to be rescued ?

Which high-ranking member became involved in a protracted wrestling session with a lady after the Dovedale Dash ? and who was the lady ? And how much are they willing to pay for the negatives ?

Who pulled on the protection pegs on the last pitch of Leg slip at Tremadoc and the first pitch of Gauntlet at Gogarth ?

If you can recognise yourself in any of the above, send a cheque for £100, payable to ' Oread Times Extortion Account' to:

Account No.91024566,
Swiss National Bank,
84, Konigstrasse,
Zurich,
Switzerland.

Names of defaulters will be published in the January newsletter.

Photo Quiz Answers

- 6).Paul Addison on Kern Knots Crack, Kern Knots, Great Gable.
- 5).Pete Lancaster on Right Wing Girdle, Malham Cove.
- 4).Dave Helliwell on Director's Groove, Boulder Huckle, Swansage.
- 3).Russell Walker on Stromboli, Craig Pant Ifan, Tremadoc.
- 2).Robin Sedgwick on Great Crack, Duke's Quarry.
- 1).Pete Lancaster on The Nose Direct, Dines Mot.