

Val Beeldwel. 1977.

ceunant
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The artwork features a dark, textured background. On the right side, there is a large, dense area of vertical black lines that tapers towards the top. In the lower-left and middle sections, there are smaller, more irregular areas of vertical lines. A large, faint, circular shape is visible in the upper-left quadrant, partially overlapping the text. The overall composition is abstract and layered.

CEUNANT MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

SEPTEMBER 1977

EDITORIAL

This is an editorial. I'm not quite sure what to write in it, as the only other ones I've seen, just moan about people who refuse to write articles. Although this is probably justified to a certain extent, it's not a very good way to introduce a magazine. The other popular ploy is to waffle on and on like a very poor after dinner speaker (and we all know what they sound like!).

No! This one must be different. Far from being "extinct as a functional unit" (Roger Bennett's editorial, January 1971), or "apathetic" (Dave Irons, June 1968), the club seems to be a very healthy being. It seems to have lost the cliques, which threatened to destroy it a few years ago, and is now quite united. This was proved in the last two years by the remarkable efforts of members in raising the £3000 necessary for the work to Tyn Lon. This has not been the work of just "the few" but everybody.

The club has now "come of age" - twenty-one this year, and is quite well known. Let's keep this healthy, upward trend going, so we can at least have some more, good boozy birthday parties!

CLUB NEWS & INFORMATION

Following the A.G.M. the Secretary unfortunately decided to resign. The Committee therefore for 1977-78 is as follows:-

CHAIRMAN	Derrick Grimmit
VICE CHAIRMAN	John Rooker
SECRETARY	Pauline Rooker
TREASURER	Garth Fenton
HUT WARDEN	John Beddard
HUT SECRETARY	Ron Ellis
INDOOR MEETS SECRETARY	Pam Powell
OUTDOOR MEETS SECRETARY	Elaine Hindle
EDITOR	Jon de Montjoye
MEMBER	Paul Millward
MEMBER	Steve Smith
AUDITORS	Van Greaves and Rod Bamford

INFORMATION

Camping at Gatesgarth Farm in Buttermere, previously unlimited, is now restricted to maximum of fifteen tents. The two large fields that were available are now closed to campers, and the present camp site is now approximately half the size of Tyn Lon's garden. However, it is possible to camp free between Gatesgarth and Honister by the roadside (this road is now very quiet due to the appearance of signs on the Borrowdale side of the pass saying "unsuitable for caravans").

Care should be taken by anyone abseiling into the seaward end of Bosigran's Great Zawn, Cornwall. At the foot of the abseil is a deep granite trench which contains the remains of at least four abseil ropes. When setting up the abseil, only enough rope to reach the ledge should be thrown down - any excess automatically falls into the trench and is virtually impossible to retrieve even at relatively low tide.

Discount (up to about 10%) is available to club members at a number of shops. The amount of discount varies accordingly to how much effort the purchaser uses. Remember the climbing shops profit margins are enormous and they can well afford to give discount.

Frank Davies (Birmingham)	1%-5%! in special cases 10%!
Frank Davies (Ambleside)	10%
Pindisports (Birmingham)	NONE
Y.H.A. (Birmingham)	10%
Joe Brown (Capel Curig)	10%

Joe Brown (Llanberis) 10%

Ellis Brigham(Capel Curig) 10%

It is well worth "trying it on" at other shops as a threat to go elsewhere frequently works! Enterprising members have been known to do better than the above, and one in particular has on occasions been known to get 100%, though this practice is not recommended as it can lead to long holidays!

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Following the success of the recent barbecue at Tyn Lon, it has been decided to have another and combine it with the Bonfire. It will be along the lines of the last one, but of course with fireworks, and promises to be a good do! Tickets will be available from any of the committee members on Wednesday nights in the Fountain or by post from:

Garth Fenton
32 Chelford Crescent
Kingswinford
WEST MIDLANDS.

Price of tickets: £2.00

The annual dinner has been booked at the Wastwater Hotel again, and will be on Saturday night March 4th at 8.00 p.m. To avoid confusion of last year, admission will be strictly by ticket only. These will be available from committee members or by post from Garth Fenton - see above.

As the numbers are restricted to 60-65, tickets will be available only to paid up members before December 31st 1977. Members are to be restricted to one guest only - this includes wives who are not joint members. After this date, tickets will be available on a first come, first served basis. Accommodation is available in the hotel or camping in the paddock as last year.

To book hotel accommodation, you should contact the Wastwater Hotel direct (Tel: 09406 229). The complete hotel is at our disposal on Saturday night, those wishing to stay Friday night should phone as soon as possible as the hotel will be available to the public.

Cost of accommodation per night is £5.25 per person for Bed and Breakfast.

Cost of the dinner is £3.50

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OUTDOOR MEETS

Jon de Montjoye

14th - 15th Dec. 74 Derbyshire

A good meet with Christmas dinner, but poor weather. Pegging and walking seemed the order of the day. (Both days).

18th - 19th Jan. 75 Gower

This meet was well attended both by members and unfortunately high tides! A long approach to Boiler Slab was made and all the routes thereupon duly burnt off. Sunday the weather was poor, and the Neath Valley caves were visited.

15th - 16th Feb. 75 Cheddar

The landscaping mounds at Avon sprouted lots of little orange tents on Friday night, from which the Ceunant conquistadors emerged on Saturday and immediately dived underground led by 'mole Irons'. Some actually went climbing in Cheddar but the state of both the climbers and the rock were so poor, that the results are best left unreported. Sunday saw the same teams failing on every route in the Avon Gorge.

1st - 2nd March 75 Glen Etive

A successful skiing and climbing weekend.

Easter Lundy

Mediocre weather coupled with appalling climbing standards, produced a dreary holiday compared with the previous year. Towards the end of the week, both the above improved marginally and allowed the ascents of several routes, the best of which were perhaps Albion, Frontspiece and Albacore.

17th - 18th May Loughrigg

The meet was blessed with excellent weather and was well attended. Gimmer and Pavey Arc were the targets of most members and various routes were climbed from Diff. to XS.

28th - 29th June Wasdale

Magnificent weather once again attended as did a good number of ceunanteers. The pattern was similar to that of the previous year i.e. Scafell on Saturday and the Napes on Sunday.

Some of the best routes done were perhaps Hells Groove, Mickledore grooves, Trinity and once again Tophet Wall. One route which must rate as one of the most dangerous and poorer routes on Scafell, despite reports in the guide book to the contrary, is Centaur and is best left alone!

6th - 7th Sept. 75 Buttermere

Due to poor weather in Buttermere a large number of members amused themselves on the putting green in Keswick. Dave Irons insisted that he won because he had the highest score! Others went to Shepherds Crag and "took it apart". Sunday - after a good drinking session, saw better weather and one party went over the Scarth Gap to pillar. Another party of experienced mountaineers were pulled up a diff on Grey Crag by Elaine.

27th - 28th Sept. 75 Cwm Cowarch

A well attended meet, but unfortunately members were scattered all over the country by the very high winds which also blew down their tents! Saturday was spent walking around Cader, whilst on Sunday a large group went to Burbage Edge! Different, anyway.

25th - 26th Oct. 75 Gordale

Another Dinner was arranged for the Saturday night, but the quality was unfortunately not as good as the previous year, due to a change of management. It was however quite a good evening and several members succeeded in getting very drunk! A bit of climbing and caving was done, but as is the case with such occasions, was only of secondary importance!

13th - 14th Dec. 75 Derbyshire

This meet was well attended - by about 20-30 members - as a Christmas Dinner was arranged for the Saturday night.

On Saturday Birchens and Gardoms Edge were hammered into submission and on Sunday various parties went walking or pegging in Dovedale.

17th - 18th Jan. 76 Scotland. Glencoe

Cancelled due to bad weather - luckily the club did not have to pay any hut fees to the S.M.C.

14th - 15th Feb. 76 Scotland. Glen Etive

Quite well attended - members went skiing mainly, although one intrepid party set off into the hills. Good snow conditions made this a very successful meet. One member, was seen to be skiing backwards 90% of the time. Asked why, he replied "You can see how many people you've knocked over".

6th - 7th May 76 Lakes - Borrowdale

I did not go on this meet due to holiday commitments, but Ron Ellis informed me that the Bowderstone cottage was very pleasant and that we should perhaps book it again.

8th - 9th May 76 Scotland, Glen Etive

This meet was held at Gogarth on Saturday! (One of the party who slept all the way in the back of the car, unaware of the change of plan said he did Spartan Slab but thought the approach was a bit wet!). On Sunday Cloggy was visited and Great/Bow shaped slab and Bow Right hand were ascended, despite considerable barracking from a country member and team.

19th - 20th June 76 Wasdale

This meet was well attended, and very successful, despite the lack of the perfect weather conditions, that the previous two years were blessed with. On Saturday, one group did the Mosedale Horseshoe, another ascended Great End and Scafell Pike, whilst another larger group invaded Kern Knotts and the Napes and harrassed C.C. members wherever they could be found. Sunday saw another group setting off into the hills, whilst those seeking "sun-kissed rock" went to Wallabarrow and found it. Also there, were a group of C.C. members who said "On no, not you again"

28th - 30th Aug. 76 Eskdale

Once again a very well attended meet. Luckily the weather held, and, whilst the rest of the country were subjected to flooding etc. the lakes enjoyed the last few days of drought conditions.

Scafell, Esk Buttress, Heron Crag and Wallabarrow Crag were visited and numerous routes were done, ranging from HS to XS.

November 76 - Bonfire Party - Tyn Lon

The first of the season's 'social meets"! A good time was had by all. Highlights of the evening were, Ron Ellis playing at Guy, Elaine's and 'Sirhcy's' (note correct spelling!) hot dogs and someone's gaz cannisters in the Bonfire, very spectacular.

December 76 - Christmas meet at the George Alstonefield

Despite lots of moans about last years Christmas Dinner, the George was once again fully booked. This year there was nothing to complain about, the food being excellent. "After dinner games" consisted solely of members attempting to crawl under the sideboard. There were notable failures!

January 76 - South West

This was held at Lands End! A vast ceunant party (five in all) descended on chair ladder on Saturday. There was a strong wind but luckily the tide was low and access was possible to all routes. Sunday was a superb day and Bosigran and Great Zawn were visited. The most foul deed of the weekend must have been the almost entirely artificial ascent of Bow Wall by yours truly!

February 76 - Glencoe - Lagangarbh Hut

Despite the fact that some eighteen people paid in advance, only thirteen turned up. Snow conditions were superb for the skiers, with several inches of new powder. By the same token, conditions were appalling for the climbers. Roger Lavill and Tom Leppert put in a good performance when they did Crowberry Gully.

Easter - Buttermere

Luckily not many attended the meet! Luckily, due to the virtual closure of the Gatesgarth campsite. Due to bureaucracy (or something like that) the farm has been compelled to reduce its quota of tents to a maximum of fifteen. Consequently, a few of those present had to camp further up the valley towards the Honister pass. The Great End Gullies still held a lot of snow in good condition, and Central and South East Gullies were ascended by various parties. In addition Corvus on Ravens Crag was climbed by the same parties on the following day.

March - Stanage

By Elaine Hindle

Not a very well attended club meet due to bad weather and no doubt the warm fire at home, however an excellent curry was enjoyed in the Taj Mahal curry house; that's good enough reason for a visit to Derbyshire. Sunday was a better day due to a few extra people. Unfortunately Ken Hipkiss arrived at Stanage edge to find that we had all gone to Cratcliff Tor.

CLUB'S 21ST AND BARBEQUE

A very well attended meet, no doubt due to the food and 36 gallons of beer.

The weather conditions weren't perfect for a BARBEQUE but the marvellous construction in the garden saved the day. I think everything went off as planned, even though it turned out like a Bun fight.

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A 'MAJOR' EPIC

by Bob Millward

It was Norman's big idea. The rest of us were just carried along by his infectious enthusiasm. It was to be a big party, three pairs on the Route Major. Maximum food, minimum gear.

The team assembled:- Norman, the "I've done the face twice" fanatic, and myself, mumbling "Avalanches, countless thousands dead, five thousand feet, doom, doom. Next pair "Tartan" and Arthur. Surprise, surprise from Scotland. A walking compendium of drunken reminiscences and a permanent advert for Scottish climbing and whisky. Next pair, Steve, strong, silent and capable from Lancaster, and a Spaniard who happened to be standing too close when Norman had his big idea. Ricardo seemed to fit the bill. He was the big, strong, silent type, a tower of fitness. As events proved, for big, strong and silent, read big. It was a shame only two of us could speak pidgin French as he had no English at all.

We caught a late cablecar to the Midi and about 4 hours later staggered into the Trident hut as darkness fell, Ricardo proclaiming proudly that the ice he had just climbed was the steepest he had ever been on. We got to bed at 11.00 p.m., where I for one lay and quaked in abject terror at the prospect of the climb. We rose at 12.00 a.m. and left at 1.30 a.m.

The snow was in fantastic condition and fear evaporated as we bombed across to Col. Moore at a great pace, trying to ignore Arthur's flamboyant trick of walking gaily down a crevasse.

With the brightest headtorch and a brief glance at the guide book, I found myself leading diagonally through a wilderness of rocks and snow, crossing countless ribs and couloirs.

After one of several delays waiting for the others, it was discovered that Ricardo had no headtorch, and two of the others had failed. Torches were therefore shuffled and the upward progress continued. Miraculously after 1,500 feet of chequered sloping maze, we appeared at the exact prescribed spot on the Great Couloir (Death Couloir as Norman would gleefully call it). Norman and I crossed and gained the safety of the rib. Route Major at last!

We sat and waited as the dawn came, and with it four more climbers racing for the safety of the rib. A couple of ropelengths up, we stopped for a brew while the first of the large avalanches came down the face we had crossed. Two small avalanches caused mild consternation amongst the party. The first consisted of a fork and spoon, and the second a bright blue gas stove with one leg missing. The leg was firmly clutched in Steve's right hand, and was solemnly packed away incase we should come across any legless gas stoves higher up.

It got hotter as we got higher. Ricardo started another avalanche with great aplomb. "Comme il fait chaude," he said expressively mopping his forehead, thus consigning his crash helmet to a long journey like an orange bouncing bomb designed to explode in the depths of some crevasse and dislodge the foundations of the mountain.

As no devastating explosion followed, we continued up the rib to find some excellent mixed climbing. Generally, the face was very snowed up. This gave some really superb pitches of rock climbing for the hands, while hungry crampons pecked away at glistening ribbons of ice.

Gradually we drew ahead, but were soon summoned to a conference. Word came up the grapevine that Ricardo had a bad foot and wanted a helicopter. We stopped about three and a half thousand feet up the face. It took another hour and a half for the last rope to join us and explain the position. Ricardo, because of his slow crossing of the lower couloirs, had caught a small avalanche and had gone some 30 feet, twisting his ankle in the process. Since then, he had taken tranquilizers, and was climbing as high as a kite. Half an hour's blunt reasoning persuaded him that his only salvation lay upwards.

We continued in two threes, Tartan and Arthur taking Ricardo, Steve joining our rope for a rest. The final buttress arrived with its pitch of V inf. I led, really enjoying the strenuous pitch, crampons rasping merrily on the rock. Then followed an agonising session of pulling, almost all done by Norman, as what was now a rope of six, heaved itself in puffing instalments over an obstinate chockstone. By now we were in cloud and being snowed upon. Tartan vanished into the murk looking for invisible seracs, while I went to answer an urgent call for a translator.

I slid down a fixed rope and rejoined Norman to find him engaged in a tug of war with the last man. Pretty basic Anglo-Saxon was being hurled to the winds from above, and I suspect some equally basic Spanish or French was gurgling from somewhere out of sight below. My services weren't much use as the Anglo-Saxon had little relevance to the climbing, and the continental dialogue was totally unintelligible. However, by some happy accident, Ricardo soon made the ledge having rescued all the relevant bits of gear.

In a rapidly darkening white out I rejoined Tartan at the foot of the elusive seracs. We picked the easiest line, and set about climbing it while the others gathered fixed ropes and scattered wits. A short wall led to a sort of hanging gulley, which in turn led to a twisting chimney giving out on to easy ground at the top of the seracs. The ice was like glass and would sustain neither hammer nor axe, so after a hastily inserted screw, I began to cut steps.

"Steps indeed," I thought "Tartan must think I'm a right amateur." Three more screws and several steps got me into the gully and a steady flow of spindrift. The back of the gully was a crevasse, bridged with rotten snow leading up into the chimney. With care, I climbed the junction between the rotten snow and the rock hard ice. That chimney must have been the brainchild of a demon contortionist.

One often reads of a bottomless chimney, but this one was toplevel! It petered out at the top of a system of ice walls. The exit involved a standard back and foot chimney, but at the top, one had to lean out sideways, twist round and fix axe and hammer behind one's head. All that then remained was to shout 'Geronimo!' and bodily jump out of the chimney, swing on the axes, executing a 180° twist to land four feet behind one's starting point. After this manoeuvre, thirty foot of steep but easy snow led to the top of the seracs. Only a few small crevasses separated us from the snow slopes to the summit.

"Eureka," I shouted. In went an axe and up came the next man. I was right, Tartan had been thinking, "What an amateur," but he revised his opinion after falling off twice between the first two ice screws. After some more dynamic reversals caused by collapsing snow in the chimney, Tartan joined me with a glazed look in his eyes, asking "d'ye speak nice words to the snow or what?" The others followed in growing darkness with varying degrees of difficulty. While Arthur and I hauled the others, Tartan sorted out a suitable crevasse for a bivouac and began enlarging it to give some sort of shelter. Ricardo was dragged up exhausted, moaning about frozen hands, and crawled away to rest in the crevasse. The fifth man started and after holding a tight rope till my fingers seized up, the word "prussik" was made out over the wind. With relief I tied the rope off and went off in search of my own snowhole.

About ten minutes later I heard two screams so I slung a rope on and went down to the top of the chimney. A light was visible just out of sight, but the voice shocked me. Norman was prussiking and had jammed in the chimney. Totally exhausted, he was unable to move up or down, and was slowly being strangled in spite of his harness. The voice was the voice of exhaustion without hope, reconciled to a sleep without waking. A couple of hours waiting on the dark, bare slope below the seracs, and the bitter wind had done its worst. In comparison the top of the serac was a scene of cosy domestic activity.

I retraced my steps and in a moment a few sharp words had Tartan and Arthur at the ready. On a long rope I went back to Norman and to further complicate matters, walked backwards off the edge. I hurtled head over heels down the chimney to find myself jammed solid in Norman's arms. I was expecting some sign of consternation at least, but he was so pleased to see me he hardly noticed my unconventional arrival.

By memory and with the aid of a rope I made the awkward exit from the chimney, and dropped Norman an end. Two minutes later he positively flew up the remainder of the pitch on Scottish Porridge Power. Last man Steve elected to prussik, spurning all attempt at climbing. He soon joined us, blood pouring from lacerated knuckles, but proudly bearing all five ice screws.

I never cease to be amazed at the change in spirits which comes over a party on a forced bivouac. One moment everything is a grim race against time and weather; the next, everything is black, and the race is over. The first feeling is overwhelming relief for the chance to rest. Spirits rise as the party is united, and however inhospitable the bivouac site, it becomes home for the night. Every wrinkle within torchlight becomes a familiar friend. This cosy complacency is all very well, but unroped wandering between bedrooms, oblivious of the 5,000 ft. drop from the landing is not to be recommended.

The other five occupied a mini-bergschrand forming a sort of balcony looking east. The only protection was provided by the slightly overhanging upper wall. I had an attractive (architect designed) detached residence some yards downhill. A 6" hole into a hidden crevasse was kicked into a crawl hole with a small cave behind, the spoil being conveniently disposed of by the crevasse, which sloped away to the bowels of the mountain. It must have taken about an hour and a half to organise a seat to one side of the entrance so that the constant river of spindrift went past me into the crevasse. It was my eleventh alpine bivouac and definitely the worst. I did not dare to sit down so I made some soup to while away the standing time. Two hours later two pints were produced and divided between Norman and myself.

With no further excuse I removed crampons, sat on a

rope and went to sleep. In less than an hour I woke up to shiver uncontrollably for a further hour. In desperation I stood up and started another brew, again a lengthy procedure.

I peered outside; cloud flowed round us. It was a moving painting, a living abstract, white on white. There was no colour yet, only an eerie perception of great distance. With the faintest of light, great seas of cloud filled the sky in the aftermath of the storm. Vast white fleets fought with ponderous slowness. Frothing plumes reached up thousands of feet into a luminous white haze, only to come crashing to ruin in some dark unfathomable gap in the white sea. As the light grew, colour came, and the dense white clouds were gradually shepherded eastward towards Switzerland revealing a freshly whitewashed world. The first weak sunlight struggled through turning the snow a pale yellow and warming body and soul alike. "Dawn is ever the hope of men", the quotation echoed in my head.

The temperature soared to still ridiculously cold and I kept falling asleep on my feet, waking to find myself lolling against the icy cave wall. Waking was a reluctant necessity, and soon various mounds of snow sat up and shook themselves, disgorging bits of gear and all sorts from under the snow.

Fortified with a small brew and half a packet of glucose tablets each, we set out in yet another arrangement of ropes and partners. A couple of easy zig-zags and we hit the final snow slope to the summit ridge. Easy angled new snow to the knees greeted us, with a snarling 70-80 mph headwind for further amusement. Beards, duvets, nostrils, gloves, cameras, all froze solid in the most bitter conditions I have seen. Spindrift even filled goggles through the tiny ventilation holes. I did not enjoy it. No jot of skill was required, no technique, no cunning route finding, no little useful

tips from experience could reduce the energy expended by a single calorie. We used up the required amount of energy, mostly on all fours, and duly gained the ridge in the most incredible gale. In our hurry for the shelter of the vallot hut, we ignored the final 300 ft. lump of Mont Blanc, and did a wild quarter-mile traverse across the steep ice at the top of the west face to reach the Bosses arete and its easy descent.

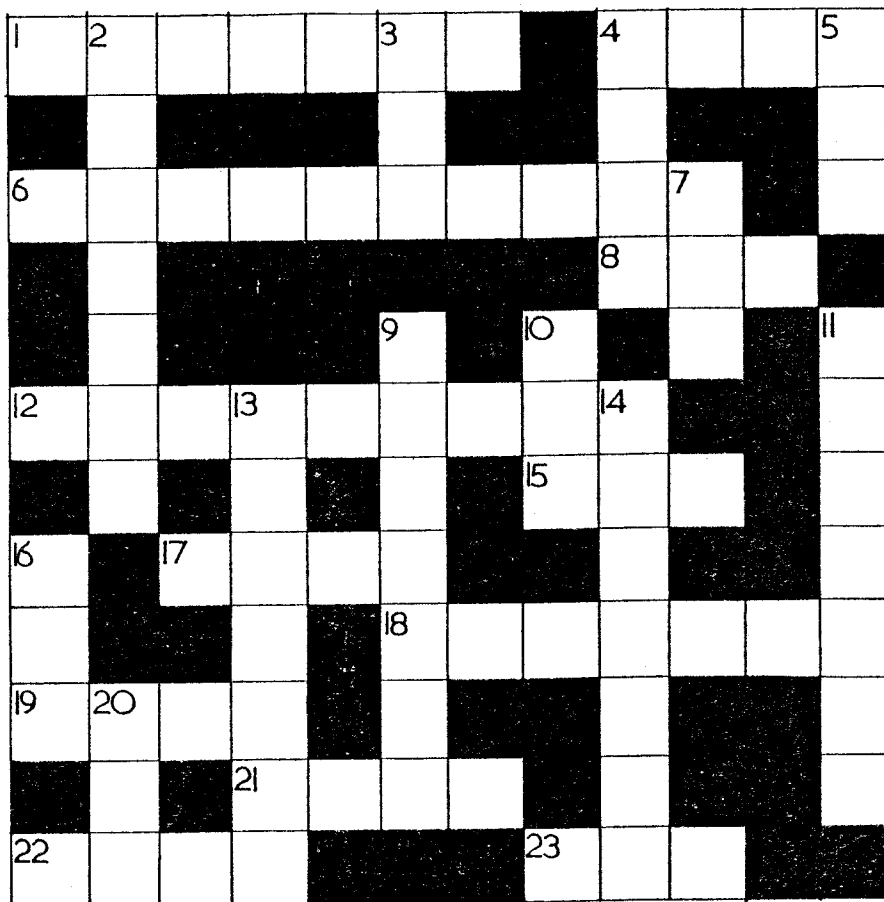
Our arrival gave a pleasant surprise; the descent was out of the wind! Lines of white faced trippers were staggering senselessly behind their guides, negotiating the route. Only the fittest gave the slightest thought to the frosted father Christmasses who appeared to have completed a girdle traverse of the mountain. These few were further mystified by the wild screaming and dancing which the hoary apparitions performed as fingers and toes regained feeling. We soon reached the Vallot Hut, and a long awaited brew.

The climb really ended here, for the fellowship was broken. Norman was in agony from frostbitten hands, so he and I pressed on to the Mulets Hut, where a helicopter was summoned to whisk him off to hospital. Ricardo went off with some passing Spaniards and next day filled the bed next to Norman. Tartan, Arthur and Steve joined me at the Mulets Hut for fourteen hours sleep before continuing.

The aftereffects of the route lasted for quite a while. One day later, Tartan and Arthur returned to Scotland with frostbitten feet, badly blistered. Norman and Ricardo left hospital after another eight days to return to their respective houses amply supplied with bullshit material for many wintry nights to come. Only Steve and I were left to aspire to the major heights of laziness, gluttony and drunkenness traditional after a Major Epic.

CROSSWORD

The first person to provide a correct solution wins all his own climbing gear back from Joe Brennan!



CLUES

ACROSS

1. Gimmer's rock cake (7)
4. The biggest fish in Wasdale (4)
6. Stately Crag (10)
8. Tyn Lon (3)
12. Rotten cheese on Anglesey (9)
15. Backward Tom is a Fortress (3)
17. Large scale refreshment in Buttermere (4)
18. Ron James wrote his own on the Cromlech (7)
19. Not just abominable (4)
21. Extinct, but living up the pass (4)
22. Just mere water (4)
23. Great finish (3)

DOWN

2. Scafell's hail of regret (7)
3. Reverse wen slab - Different (3)
4. The easiest route (4)
5. Castell Cidwm needs a lot of energy (3)
7. Paul Newman's route on Gogarth (3)
9. Is Bwlch Y Moch really between Wasdale and Borrowdale? (3,4)
10. Sticky hold (3)
11. Ogwens cuisine (7)
13. A committing route in Ogwen (7)
14. Side entrance in Borrowdale (7)
16. Birketts route on Scafell might become a classic (3)
20. Are backwards, period (3)

A REPUTATION TO MAINTAIN

By Jon de Montjoye

An account of a winter ascent of the East Buttress of Scafell via the wall of early morning light and late afternoon dark!

It was the weekend of the dinner, late January, and very cold. The man on the telly had predicted temperatures of -7°C , and, this, coupled with the promise of a gastronomic extravaganza in the evening, virtually ruled out any possibility of being benighted, even with my reputation of being late.

I struggled out of my comfortable bed in the Wastwater Hotel, put on a duvet and went out into the cold to look for Jim's tent in the field. In the middle of the site was a plastic rubbish bag and about half a dozen tents. After an inspection of the tents, which failed to reveal Jim's whereabouts, I was about to boot the rubbish bag in disgust, when I spied a few wisps of frost covered red hair, poking out of the top of the bag. Found him! After a bit of careful prodding, a curly head emerged, followed by a very long neck. The team was complete!

I went back to the Hotel and had a magnificent 5 course breakfast.

When I returned, I found Jim walking round the field in bare feet, looking for his boots. It appeared that the bivvy had been enforced as neither Jim nor Junior had the required co-ordination, the previous evening, to put the tent poles together.

Eventually gear was packed and the team set off toward Scafell. It was indeed very cold. Vibram soled boots slithered over the frozen grass. Please God let Central Buttress be covered in ice so we can go for a walk! The snow started at Hollow Stones and I stopped to put on my crampons.

"You don't need those bloody things" scoffed the 'neck' as he strode past. "The pioneers didn't 'ave'm".

I hammered past him and reached Mickledore with ease. The snow was in superb condition - very hard, affording just enough hold for a pair of front points. Looking back down I could sense the fear that gripped Jim as his boots skated about. He eventually floundered onto the col like a fish out of water.

"Pioneers had nails!" I said in a very "told you so" type of voice "Anyway put yer crampons on now".

"I've forgot 'em!".

We sat down and had a discussion as to the various possibilities that were presented to us. Central Buttress had been out of the question from the outset, but the sun was shining directly onto the East Buttress.

We reasoned that Morning Wall was of a reasonable standard and was likely to be in the sun longer than anything else. What we forgot was that it followed a natural line of drainage and was likely to be very iced up. As we passed under the rest of the East, under previous triumphs of bumbling, cheating fingers, we noted that the rock was completely dry. We were in for an easy day.

It was a bit of a grip getting to the bottom of the route, but now, looking at the sunkissed rock above nothing could stop this team - me, cunning, with an amazing ability to cheat, and Jim, long neck and very few brains. Jim had just been saying that the rock didn't look all that steep and that perhaps we should try something harder, when he stopped in mid sentence to ask why those very large icicles were hanging at a ridiculous angle. The truth dawned and he donned his gear with no further questions.

P.A.s seemed the order of the day. Jim set off up the easy gangway, diff. in summer. An hour later he reached the stance, chipped the verglas out of the cracks and constructed a bomb-proof belay. Looking up, the rock had appeared to be in good condition but in fact every hold was covered with ice. Even with a hammer it was impossible to remove the coating and upward progress was very difficult. I followed wearing boots, much easier.

The next pitch was mine. A steep crack, a groove, a gangway and belay in a chimney. The crack was overcome by those same cunning, cheating, fingers that frequently bludgeoned most other routes into submission. Two slings later and I was at the foot of the groove. It was dry and went quickly, next was the gangway. A narrow, ice coated, sloping ledge led off to the left over an increasingly alarming drop. This was it. It was very unpleasant, the only holds were provided by an ice hammer biting into the verglass.

The belay was scarcely more pleasant - hanging from three poor nuts in iced up cracks. Jim came up and immediately suggested abseiling off, but this would have been difficult as the nuts were poor and we would have been left dangling in space several feet out from the crag. He had a go at the chimney pitch but came down muttering about abseiling. We swapped places and I cheated my way up the chimney with two slings. A short wall and a slab led to a good belay and I recognised where I was - the top easy section of Hells groove, it was easy from here on.

Jim came up and led the top pitch with no trouble and then I cramponed up the broken rocks above to easier ground.

At last we sat on top of Scafell in the midst of a magnificent sunset, marred only by the sight of Windscale.

Getting down was problematical to say the least. Eventually after lowering Jim down steep snow, cursing him for forgetting his crampons, and abseiling down Broad Stand we arrived at Mickledore. Jim was appalled at the thought of descending the steep snow from Mickledore to Hollow Stones so we decided to go over Scafell Pike and then descend to Sty Head via the corridor route and then down to Wasdale Head.

At last we staggered into the Hotel at ten minutes to eight, (the dinner was due to start at eight) to be met by Elaine, who didn't appear very concerned.

"It's only been dark for three hours, and you're always last off the crag!"

* * * * *

THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG

By Bdr (reduced to L/Bdr)
23626619 P E SOPPIT

All you who have gazed in admiration at my recent climbing exploits will expect to hear tell of stirring efforts up a climb of great renown. But, no, I would like to turn the pages of history back to the days when men were men and women were women. To Hong Kong, 1960. To whit, "The World of Suzie Wong", and the year of my 21st Birthday

As the sun crept over the paddy fields and the only sound was the patter of tiny Chinese feet crossing said paddy fields an idea formed in my mind. I MUST fight off the pervasive idleness of the hot humid summer, and in an effort to recapture the spirit of the gunboat era, I would make a first British ascent of the 2,000 ft. overhanging grass covered "Castle Peak". To assist me in my endeavours, I chose the roughest, toughest climber a chap could wish to meet - "The Gritstoner",

I call him "The Gritstoner" not only because he was a Derbyshire lad, chock-full of tales of great gritstone climbs, and built like a tank, but primarily because I have forgotten his name! This, of course, can be seen by the astute as a forerunner of the two-man expedition (Boardman/Tasker) so much in vogue now, but we claim no fame.

I first met "The Gritstoner" on another alpine expedition across the paddy-filled landscape of Southern China. A dozen of us were to be dropped from a lorry some distance from our army camp, and we had to find our own way back to base. There were basically two options : the soft one of following the road back to camp, or, alternatively, to go across country, which appeared a shorter if somewhat more perilous journey. Needless to say, 23626619 L/Bdr. Soppit, to show his worth to the chaps, elected to go for the tougher alternative. It did not surprise me that I was the only one to chose this route. After all, I thought, mountaineers are a special breed. However, all went well until I came down out of the hills to be confronted by 2 miles of paddy fields between me and the camp. To those of you who have not seen paddy fields I can only state they personify the theory that the shortest way between two points is round them! As a result, when I slunk, somewhat crestfallen, between the gates of the camp I was informed by the duty officer that, although I was not the last back, he would have expected better from L/Bdr. Soppit, and he pointed out to me the "first-class chap" Gunner X, who was the first back. This was both my first meeting with "The Gritstoner", and my first failure at orienteering.

This led me to conclude that in the event of my genius-filled leadership of the team failing at any stage, I would have excellent back-up material in the shape of "The Gritstoner", and so, the following day, during NAFFI break, I consulted him.

He was agreeable, somewhat reluctantly, not being so much of a patriot, but only on one understanding : in the event of a difference of opinion I could not pull my rank. I concurred : "Leadership from the front" I stated.

The following Saturday, armed with hardtack and water bottles, we left the camp and advanced rapidly on "Castle Peak", pausing only to throw stones at rabid dogs and water buffalo. Under my outstanding leadership we successfully fought our way up overhanging grass to arrive on the summit shortly after lunch. Thence came our first error. A little tired and rather hot we decided to have a snooze before descending. A short snooze it was to have been. A long snooze it turned out to be, and we woke to find it was later afternoon. A meeting of the minds of the intrepid pair : "No problem" was the answer - "still sufficient time to make the road before dark", and without more ado we set off. Well, we might have succeeded but for the fact that due to Alpine route-finding we lost our way in a gigantic patch of elephant grass. Elephant grass, to the uninitiated, is grass as high as elephants. What it was doing in China, let alone on the side of a hill, goodness only knows. Anyway, after stumbling around for an hour in circles in this patch of grass it was decided that "The Gritstoner" should sit on my shoulders and by this method, just being able to see the way, would direct proceedings. This plan worked, and we emerged just in time to see the sun sinking in the west! Once again, a conflagration. Once again, complete agreement. Our great mountain experience told us we should follow a stream down and near at hand, Surprise! Surprise! was a stream. As the natural leader of the expedition, I undertook to take my rightful place in the van, and started to grope my way down, after being re-assured by "The Gritstoner" that snakes would not be found in the water at night. My progress was achieved by my sticking my foot out in the dark until it felt terra-firma underneath, and then repeating the exercise with my other foot.

It was not halted until, suddenly, I could find nothing firm to put my foot on. "Just a short drop in the stream bed", declared "The Gritstoner". "Take a little jump" - so I did, bowing to his superior rock-climbing ability, and found that it may have been a little jump, though in the dark it seemed much longer, but it ended in a deep rock pool in which I landed up to my neck. "Never mind", said "The Gritstoner" as he found an alternative, drier route down to the side, "Its all good experience, lad". I did not agree, and subjected him to a stream of best army abuse and, indeed, was still very damp when we eventually arrived at the road an hour later, which led us safely back to camp.

The moral of this story is very plain to see. Put briefly, it is always have a shuftie before you have a pee or, as Tilman was recorded as saying, "A day's reconnaissance is a day well spent!"

What has all this got to do with the world of Suzie Wong? Well, nothing really - I just thought it might make somebody read my article!

* * * * *

LLAN'GOLLUM'

By Peter and Lyn Law

For most Ceunant members Llangollen is merely a chip-stop. The limestone cliffs and slate hills make attractive scenery to traverse on the way to Snowdonia but nothing more. Living in the area and being otherwise condemned to pursuing the Outdoors week after week in pouring rain with

children from Walsall, most of the Bryntysilio staff have been only too glad to go underground. If the programme says Field Study it can be called 'Industrial Archaeology' or 'Surveying', and 'Adventure Activity' if it is in lieu of climbing. Most of the Centre trips are into the slate mines found in the Dee and Ceiriog valleys. Some of these workings are vast, one having 7 or 8 levels with numerous chambers and passages in each. We had been told locally that "There are more tunnels in there than there are streets in Llangollen", a statement which says more about the smallness of the town than the complexity of shafts, tunnels, chambers and inclines in the mine which is so extensive it almost breaks through into the next valley. At one point a chasm into the level below is spanned by a chain suspension bridge, now in an advancing state of decay, the roof bolts rusting and the boards sprouting fluffy white fungus. At another place the roof of a huge chamber is supported by a 40 foot wood pile built like an enormous sleeper-stack.

Some of the mines were still being worked after the last War and there are still rails, machinery, sweating explosives and other more personal relics of the workmen (Look, Sir - fossil sausages"). In the Ceiriog Valley some of the chambers of the Cambrian mine were recently drained of water and a trip was made by rubber dinghy further into the mine to determine how many more chambers full of water were threatening the valley below. In fact most of the far chambers proved to be empty or at a low level and so the inhabitants of the village can rest easy.

For all the limestone around (in some places 2000 feet thick) the Llangollen area is not known for its caving. Until recently it was thought that this was because there were no caves. Now the view is growing that somewhere in that mass of Carboniferous limestone there are "caverns

measureless to man" and the North Wales Caving Club, among others, has been involved in pursuing likely looking entrances into the bowels of the earth. A small cave is known at Chirk with a couple of squeezes and a rift, ending in a boulder choke. Caves with fantastic formations and walls of quartz crystals open out of lead mines at Minera. Another cave, with several ladder pitches, amazing not for its formations but for its mud, is Ogof Hesp Alyn. Since the cave was full of water until the turn of the century when lead workings broke into it, no beautiful calcite forms festoon the walls and chambers; instead brownish clay of 'a certain quality' eases ones movement along the passages. Whoever coined the phrase "bowels of the earth" knew O.H.A.

One does not have to go to the ends of the earth (well, actually, it is just beyond World's End) to reach a site which may go down in caving history as a most exciting discovery. Dye tests indicate a potential length greater than Ogof Fynnon Du in South Wales, and the N.W.C.C. is busy attempting to dig through to the 'Big One'. The 100 foot or so at the entrance is a low, wet, flat-out crawl, which in dry weather is not too bad. In wet weather one's body dams the passage and the incoming water rises. There is then nothing for it but to wriggle on one's back, breathing the pockets of air just above one's nose. The unwilling body is finally posted through a letter box at the end. By way of reward there is a finely decorated passage leading off to one side. Calcite curtains and glassy-clear straws hang from the roof while knobbly stalagmites grow rudely from the floor.

The dig pursues the main passage, ("When did you break into this chamber?" "We didn't break into it, we made it") and it seems as though the potential we believe to be there may sometime be realised.

Next time you pass through Llangollen, remember that there are two sports in which much of the activity takes place lying down, and think that the other one may be going on under them thar hills.

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VAGABOND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

By Pam Powell

PETE & MARG WHITEHEAD
WORLD TRAVELLERS, INTERNATIONAL
LOVERS AND LAST OF THE BIG
SPENDERS OFF TO INDIA BY TANDEM

9 HUNTERS LANE
LIVERPOOL
MERSEYSIDE UK

Any queries about spelling mistakes should be taken up with the above upon their return!

Marg and Pete Whitehead (The Minstrel) flew to Delhi via Moscow last September. On reaching Delhi they found they could have obtained a transit visa to visit Moscow for three days - too late!

They did however spend a couple of days passing through Delhi and came away unimpressed. If they had given to every beggar that shuffled before them they would have come away penniless.

The next stop was Nepal, where they went on a small trek to the Helambu Valley. During their visit they

attended a four day religious festival where sheep and goats, that had been gathered together for weeks before, were slaughtered. They also went on another trek, this time six days, to Gyang (9000 ft) which is the central settlement of the sherpas. Whilst there, they joined in a ritual dance, held in honour of someone who had just died. Apparently it was rather a boozy do, and they were soon pissed up on rice spirit.

As Marg has mentioned 'bowel disorders' a lot in her letters, I suppose I had better mention it here. Up to this moment they have only been loose twice and seem to have settled down again. (They are getting quite used to using their hands when there's no bog paper!).

Unconnected with the above ailments is Marg's craving for Cadbury's chocolate eclairs, which has to remain a craving at a price of two eclairs per rupee (1 rupee = 5p).

By 26th October they had visited Pokhara and the Annapurna base camp and were about to move on to Kathmandu, when they decided to treat themselves to staying in a hotel, but had to move on due to the rats!

Eventually they reached Calcutta where they watched cricket - very English as everyone wore whites. Unfortunately they were barred from entering the Temple of Juggernaut as they were not Hindus!

22nd November saw them on their way again, this time to Puri. This is a small fishing village where the inhabitants still live in huts made from palm leaves, and the beach is the scene of much insanitary behaviour. Highlights of this stop were the witnessing of the above inhabitants performing the aforementioned behaviour, a pig being slaughtered and a chicken flapping along the beach, having had its head removed by some children!

December. Their journey from Puri to Madras, by train took 43 hours due to a cyclone!? They managed to find

a really nice lodging house for 80p and settled down to Birianis and Masalas and real coffee, (Nescafe is twice the price) and after a rest moved on to Mahabali Puram and then to the beautiful French Cathedral town of Pondicherry. Here they tasted Indian whisky but report that although its very nice, it tastes nothing like whisky.

On again, (they get around!) this time to Tiruchy, where they visited a temple built on a rock overlooking the town. The temple was used by people who worshipped Garesh, the god of the elephant. Just inside the doorway of the temple was an elephant, to which Marg gave 10 poise (2p). The elephant gave it to the man at the side of him and then it 'blessed' Marg by bonking here on the head with its trunk. Marg teetered and to add its approval the elephant promptly 'shit itself'!

Whilst they had been staying in Puri, they had booked a plane (the boats didn't run due to the monsoon) to Ceylon. The journey only took ½ hour. A train then took them to Colombo, where they stayed in a Youth Hostel. Here they met an Australian couple, with whom they travelled to Hikkadaira to spend Christmas Syngalese style.

January 23rd found the travellers at Nuirana Eliver (6200 ft). They then climbed Pidurutalagala (8286 ft) from the top of which could be seen Adams Peak. (The Holy Mountain with Buddhas footprint on the top). It was while they were at Nuirana Eliyer that they found a real pub with draught beer at 15p a pint. Only trouble was, it closed at 7.30 p.m., so they had to down six pints faster than usual! Other places of interest visited were Kandy and Arugan bay where they teamed up with a Danish couple and an Australian girl (born in Grimsby) and walked along the Hortori plains for about 8 miles and came to a place aptly named Worlds End where they were able to look over a sheer drop of 4000 ft down into the valley below.

They then went to Rataapura (gem city) and watched white gems being cut the old fashioned way, by hand.



The day before they set off for Adams Peak they went to see the Kiniadi Ella Waterfalls and watched the locals catching fish. First they dam off the water into one of the pools above the fall, empty the remaining water out with buckets, then they pick the fish off the bottom by hand.

They started walking up the next day at 5.30 p.m., at 6.30 p.m. everything suddenly lit up; yes, all 6350 ft of pathway was lit up. There were loads of tea shops on the way. They reached the top after 6 hours and bedded down at the monastery on the top, which is specially for pilgrims. They awoke at 6.30 a.m. to see the famous shadow of the peak, like a brocken spectre illuminated on the clouds. Then 4½ hours of steep descent and off to Batticola to hear the 'singing fish'!?' (Sounds like a Monty Python package tour!!).

2nd March 1977. By this time Marg and Pete have been to Kalkudah, Polornaruva and Sigirya. At Sigirya there was a huge rock font, they climbed a spiral staircase (200 ft) up the rock to see some fresco's of a woman painted over plastered rock about 1000 years ago, which were protected by a huge overhang. They carried on up two steep staircases and then traversed upward on the rock with the help of a handrail. On the top they were able to see remains of a Kings council chamber and dancing hall, the ponds which fed the water supply all those many years ago, and, down below, remains of the Kings gardens, paths and lakes.

From there they went to Trincomalee, with its rock headlands and mountains coming down into the sea. It was here they had these dreaded worms again, but one dose of tablets soon cleared them up. They also went on a boat trip across the harbour (apparently it is the largest natural harbour in the world) they were on the boat for over an hour and it only cost 5p.

Before leaving for India on the 15th March they visited the ancient capital of Anuradhapura, and went to a Rock Concert, which, they said took them back 15 years.

The top male single in Sri-Lanka came on right at the end and sang a song that went  no balls at all, no balls at all, she married a man who had no balls at all . After they stopped laughing, they left Sri-Lanka and headed for the now cooler North.

At the time of them writing to me, Sri-Lanka was sending lots of Tamils back to India, so there was a lot of emotional upsets and crying at the ferry terminal. The Tamils are only allowed to take 10 rupees out of the country, so the rest of their money then spend on gold, stones and jewellery to pawn in India.

From Rameswarum, where the ferry pulls in, they went to Maduri and saw the Melnakshi temple which has five huge towers decorated with gods, goddesses and animals.

Bugger me she's got the shits again, but she hasn't said whether she's got rid of them this time. Oh, she says its a case of having to get used to Indian germs.again.

From Madurai they went to Quillon where they caught a boat to Alleppy. Here you can sail down canals and lagoons and for 10 hours it only costs about 16p! Another boat ride this time in a thunderstorm to Kottayam and then to Munrar, in the Cardamom Hills. They climbed Anai Merdi (8841 ft) - Its the highest mountain in India south of the Himalayas. There was only one way up between impressive 1000 ft crags, and they must have looked a pair with Pete's longi (skirt) tied around his head and Marg with her umbrella up, keeping the sun off themselves. For the next few days they didn't do anything but sit under fans and read, at a place called Cochin. They did see some Kathakali (Kenela) dancing, where Marg said the facial movements were fantastic, rather like a belly dancer using her belly.

Since I started writing this little tale I've had another six letters, I can't keep up and, since I can't really monopolise the magazine, I'll shorten the rest!

They arrived back in Delhi after travelling through

Parjiou and Bombay and then on to Kashmir. They've seen the Taj Mahal, stayed on a house boat on the River Thelum, finally caught a truck to Weh, after delays through avalanches, having to go part of the way on foot, getting a lift on a snow plough and being fed by an army unit in Drass, (the second coldest place in the world). The army from there gave them a lift to Kargil where they caught the truck to Weh. They had to go over two passes and the journey took 12 hours from Kargil to Weh. They had to stop on the journey because a vehicle ahead had stopped to bury a man they had found, who had obviously been killed by an avalanche. Marg says that nobody knew who he was, so his family may never know what has happened to him.

They stayed with a Tibetan family at Weh, before the return journey in another truck which took 21 hours.

They very last I heard on June 9th was they had tried to get a train Lakone (Pakistan) but the border had been closed so they had come back to Armritsar to stay the night.

Well, they say that is my last letter from India and that they are on their way to Ajgamstan for the journey home. I hope they return safely to tell us the rest of their story of nearly twelve months holiday!

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NEW ROUTES

DERBYSHIRE - STANAGE EDGE

MEDDLE - 60 FT. H.V.S.

Takes the left arete of Blurter Buttress and is slightly harder than The Blurter.

Climb the arete direct to the ledge, level with the top of the groove of the Blurter. Now swing onto the left wall for two moves, then continue over the shattered bulges to the top.

FIRST ASCENT - Jon de Montjoye and Paul Millward
October 1976.

WALES - LLECH DDU

THE PSYCHLIST: 400' XS.5c

(Easier if you use all the pegs).

A bold route in superb position only marred by the grass break in the middle. Climbs the centre of the big buttress right of Iota, crossing Ribbon route at the grassy break.

Start at a groove in the front of the arete left of Ribbon route. All pegs in place. Serious.

1. 100 ft. 5a. Climb the corner for 60 ft. until 15 ft. below the overhang. Cross the steep R. wall on flakes and up to gain an obvious block/pinnacle on the arete. Straight up to a small stance on a flake, nut belays in the wall behind.

2. 120 ft. 4b. Climb the overhang into the chimney above and gain the vegetated ridge (20 ft.). Scramble up the vegetation to a belay in a groove in the front of the upper tier.

3. 130 ft. 5c. (As described). Up the groove to the roof. Left round this and up the wall to two thread runners. Straight up from the right hand thread to the huge roof. Move R. (peg runner) to a tiny niche and peg runner in the roof. Then diagonally R. 1 peg runner, 1 peg aid to reach a peg and dangling crab. Tension/abseil diagonally R. to the lip of an overhang to gain the foot of a rib. Up the rib moving right to gain a small stance. Spike belay, thread in the gully.

4. 50 ft. 4b. Up the slab behind the stance then right and finish up the gully. Block belays on the left.

FIRST ASCENT - Easter 1976
R.E. Millward and N.W. Ingham
with much aid after 5 days of
effort over 2 years. Several
reascents leave it as above.

DINAS MOI

EPSILON: 210 ft. H.V.S.5a

Unconditionally the best route on the nose. A conglomeration of others. Well protected too! (Compared with some of the others).

1. 150 ft. Start at the quartz ledge where Zeta starts about 40 ft. right of the foot of the nose. Go straight up aiming for the right hand end of the hand traverse of direct route. Belay when the rope runs out. A superb pitch.
2. 20 ft. Up and left to belay on the leaning flake belay as for direct route.
3. 50 ft. Straight up a little groove and Layback round the overhang at its top (jugs). Finish on jugs.

All as for Superdirect.

FIRST ASCENT - A. Dilger and N. McKenzie
June 1976

SCOTLAND

RIGHT EDGE: 600 FT.

Gardylloo Buttress Ben Nevis Winter III/IV

Start as for Smith's route - Gardylloo Buttress.

An excellent exposed route giving a good alternative to Good Friday or Gardyloo Gully.

1. Up trending R. Belay at the foot of an overhanging wall.
2. Traverse R. and round the arete at a flake, up and snow belay.
3. One or two pitches up near the edge of the buttress
- & 4. very exposed, to gain the crest.
5. Up to the summit.

FIRST ASCENT - R.E. Millward and F.A. van Gement
January 1977

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