

# Rocksport

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Cover Photo: The late Geoff Hayes climbing on Tremadoc.  
(photo: Gordon Gadsby)

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## APOLOGY

A change of Editorial address and a fire at the printing works where the magazine is printed have contributed to a large measure of chaos over the last few months. Firstly this issue is 'one behind' — due allowance will of course be made for this to subscribers. More important the administrative machine of the magazine was disrupted at a time when it was just beginning to function. Will anyone who has written unanswered letters or not yet received magazines or back numbers please accept this humble apology and be so good as to write in again to receive his due.

## Editorial

### SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL EVEREST EXPEDITION

Dear Sir,

*This summer a winter expedition led by Altrincham Goodman is to grasp the opportunity of attacking the South by South West Corner of Mount Everest whilst no-one but the press, the radio, television and the Pathe News are watching. So great are the problems on this face that the only solution seems to be to send another badly chosen team to fail where all the others have.*

*The select group of mates and mates of mates have grown so accustomed to each others faces that it would be unfair to ask them to take along any outsiders. They are all accustomed to the various hardships of Modern Himalayan climbing - arduous helicopter flights, surfeit of caviare above twenty thousand feet and the smell of the Sherpas - and as none of them will detract from the glory accruing to the leader of the expedition, it says so in their contracts, they have decided to ask you for the money to sponsor their attempt.*

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Yorks.

If I ever receive a letter like that I will be tempted to give the same reply as I was recently when the "British Everest Expedition 1972" — in the person of Bob Stoodley, presumably a professional fund raiser — wrote asking me for two pounds towards the £60,000 that they, poor things, need for the trip. To them I said that I was going to Scotland for the summer and that for two pounds I too would send them a postcard, in fact, for two pounds I would think seriously about the possibility of delivering it personally to their door.

It is undoubtedly the right of anyone to form a Himalayan expedition and to take with him whoever he chooses and to con whoever he can into paying for him to do so. But if he does let him be honest about it. Call it the 'Joe Bloggs and Co. Expedition' not 'The British Expedition'. It would be unfair of me to let pass some of the errors that the appeal made. Everest's South West Face is not "The most challenging mountaineering problem in the world". I don't know what is but somebody does and no doubt he will explain why to us just as soon as the Everest rubble pile dragon has been laid low — preferably in full colour on 'News at Ten'. The group named, Chris Bonington, Jimmy Roberts, Dave Bathgate, Mick Burke, Nick Estcourt, Dougal Haston, Kelvin Kent, Hamish MacInnes, Doug Scott, Peter Steele and Graham Tiso, admirable climbers though they all are have not "grown accustomed to each others strengths and failings on many climbs throughout the world," they barely know each other, nor were "Six of the team together on the successful ascent of the South Face of Annapurna" — only five members of that expedition are mentioned and even a schoolboy could tell you the name of who for one is missing. Small points all, but

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calculated to deceive the undiscerning member of the public.

I get the same general feeling about this team as I would if they sent the British team to the Olympics without Dave Bedford, put a team into the World Cup without Gordon Banks or left Boycott out of the Test Match team. It may be a team, it may be a strong team but I don't feel its the best. The obvious question is where the Hell is Whillans?

The obvious answer is that those of you who like me feel that the team is not well selected are mistaken about the real nature of modern climbing. Climbing, as every schoolboy knows, is about men and mountains. Mountains are terribly dull and dreary, they make bad villains because they are impartial. The basically uninteresting mountain must take second place in the mass media to the interesting man. If the mountain can't be the bogey man then find a bogey man for the mountain. Guess who got the job? As the expedition wasn't being sponsored by the Lancashire Co-op it had to be the other plumber, the nasty one who still lives in a flat hat in a pub 'oop North'. The idea that the men are more important than the mountain emerges strongly in the begging letter that the most recent trip is sending round. Of the four paragraphs of that letter one is about the mountain and the other three about the team - how many, how good, how much kit they have and how much, how very much money, they need. Take a graph of the most successful Himalayan expeditions - number of men involved and number on the summit - and the smallest, Herman Buhl and Diemberger on Broad Peak is the most successful. (They got more on the summit than they had in the party because Diemberger went twice!) One of the sources of humour in looking at old pictures of Alpine climbing in its infancy is to see the amount of ladders and hampers and porters that the old timers took with them. They must be laughing their socks off now at the kit required to slay a Himalayan giant. Just think of it, £60,000 would buy 10,000 pairs of E.B.'s, 30,000 runners and crabs or 500,000 pints of beer - what a way to go! I don't mind industry wasting all this money on the 'Conquistadores of the Useless' but it gets me right in the most painful part of me, the wallet, when someone tries to take a week-end's climbing money from me to send him and his friends to the Himalayas for four

months. What some of the top British Alpinists feel like I hate to think - people such as Spence and Fyffe, who find the hardest ice routes in the Alps "Scots Grade Three", or Shaw and Burgess, about the only two climbers to improve on a 'Bonnatti Special' mixed route or even O'Connor and Braithwaite who climbed the Central Pillar of Freney from start to finish in fifteen hours. Attach turbines to their ears and I'm sure the steam emerging would provide electricity for Manchester.

All in all, to misquote Voltaire, "It is neither British, nor Everest, nor an Expedition." If I asked them to pay for my summer holiday they would give me a very swift reply, in fact I have asked some of them to pay for my beer and got a swift reply, but they, because they are 'media men', i.e. got their faces on the telly and in the Observer and Sunday Times apparently have every right to touch me and you for our lolly for their summer holiday. When I was young and at school the Everest team of 1953 seemed to me to be Olympian, the cream of climbers pitted against the top mountain, I would gladly have given them my lollipop money if they had wanted. Nowadays though, perhaps because I know a little more about the climbing scene, I don't eat lollipops any more. It's all very altruistic to want to conquer Everest for the British, but whoever does it is made for life in these commercial times. That for me is the final straw. They are going to conquer a face that is only a problem because they and their predecessors have made it one to get the money from the sponsors and now that they can't get enough on their own account they want you and me, Joe Soap the public, to pay for them to go. If you did that in a hotel bar you would be run in as a lounge lizard and a con man - you'd probably get five years for fraud not the O.B.E. for being a smooth climbing bastard. From my point of view the team isn't very 'National' either. You'd better support your local Everest Expedition, it doesn't look as if you will get a look in on the National one unless your face looks good in colour by technicolour. No Messrs. Stoodley and Co. you won't have my £2, not even 3p for a rude reply, but I wish the expedition the best of luck, I really do hope they do it so that we can read about something else in the papers.

# THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF DOW CRAIG

by  
**Rob Matheson**

Photo: Ian Roper



Once the haven of expert and enthusiast alike Dow Crag has become a place where the harder routes are seldom done. A hot mid-summer's day (You must be joking. Ed.) will bring the crowds, but onto routes such as Murray's, Hopkinson's and Central Chimney. Eliminate 'A' bears its traditional traffic, whilst 'B' and 'C' remain comparatively neglected. Leopard's Crawl lies silent and alone and its new friend Tarkus awaits recognition. Tiger Traverse receives scant attention from piano-playing big-boot men. All the obvious features were climbed early in the century and by 1922 the hardest routes on 'Doe Crag' were a match for 'Scawfell'. Eliminates 'B' and 'C', Black Wall and Great Central Route were all done and in the guide book of the time they all merited the 'exceedingly severe' grade and the guide writer advised 'Rubbers as an insurance policy.' These routes were well documented. The guide book writer felt it necessary to glorify and personify route descriptions, revealing all sorts of secrets in doing so - a style not evident today, drab people.

A few examples:-

**Eliminate "C":** *Very Severe*; rubbers essential as are perfect conditions and morale.

**Intermediate Gully:** *Severe Strenuous*  
Train on raw meat and stout. The leader should face inwards until the chock-stone can be embraced, after which he faces right and uses back, knees and tongue. There is an ominous cessation of the noise of running waters during these operations.

**Great Central Route:** *Exceedingly Severe*: Rubbers or suckers essential, together with perfect conditions; best number three or four experts..... the way is desperately severe ..... the second steadies the leaders foot, rattles the bag of acid drops or performs any other service required of him.

The corresponding 'experts routes' of today have not been so well documented, perhaps because of their recent origin, but also due to the neglect of these routes by contemporary climbers. This is a situation hard to understand as they are all climbs of

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quality, their difficulties matching those of any other area.

The first to arrive was Leopard's Crawl in 1947, and at the time it was a bold and unprotected lead. This Birkett solution seems to have been overshadowed by his developments in other areas, a position which should be rectified. It is a superb little-used climb which can be adequately protected using small nuts, exposure, however, always being felt due to the cliff dropping steeply away. The first moves are strenuous and committing but a delicate wall follows as a complete contrast. An exit is made up a slim groove, this part being the technical one, overcome using tiny finger holds. A final pitch continues in the same vein and should not be neglected in favour of an easier exit up Murray's Route.

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#### The development of 'A' Buttress in the early 1960's

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The 1950's saw furious developments in other major areas and it was not until 1960 that the next step forward was taken on this Southern outpost. Seeming the obvious place for new routes, attention was turned to 'A' Buttress, a fine piece of rock bristling with overhangs and other such modern attractions. The dark, damp depths of Great Gully proved too great for Les Brown in 1960 so he strode up its overhanging left wall in hard fashion, following a series of steep grooves and corners to the sunshine once more. This was Sidewalk. The first and crux pitch is a fierce poorly protected test and is best climbed in a confident style associated with good form. The remainder is a full grade easier and provides all the enjoyable climbing, being well protected and varied, the final groove providing a fitting exit.

The smooth central portion had been attempted by Unfinished Symphony (Cain and Shotton) in 1957 but finally completed in the name of Isengard (Les Brown and McHardy) in 1962. This is a good face route in every sense of the word, but unfortunately finishes half way up the buttress. Climbing is however, by no means over and it is best to reverse the Roches Perches pitch of Eliminate 'A' and finish up Sidewalk.

The Balrog (L. Brown and K. Jackson 1965) completed the picture as far as 'A' Buttress was concerned. For the connoisseur of overhanging rock this is a must, aid being necessary due to the angle. Guide book par is three rests, modern par is one rest, but no doubt a surging ape man could dispense with all - obviously a matter for the individual. The initial groove pitch when dry is the most pleasant part of the route, but taken as a whole the climb is not in the class of Isengard or Sidewalk.

In 1962 David Miller produced the superb Nimrod, making the Girdle Traverse a reversible outing, ascending the line of its second abseil. All the pitches are exciting, and the crux very technical, with several moves on Dow Crag 'rough' being necessary before a lovable spike can be appreciated. Everything remains steep throughout and on excellent rock - a feature of harder routes on the crag.

Perhaps the best introduction, at least psychologically speaking to these harder routes is Sirius, a steep groove line in the overhanging wall to the left of Central Chimney, beginning half way up this climb. The greatest problem lies in discovering the correct level of entry, but, the groove, once attained, presents no real opposition, and the atmosphere can be enjoyed in full. 'Central Wall' is then crossed in a more delicate fashion, but at a lower level and at a lower standard than the original route. One could call the route as a whole an ambitious variation to Central Chimney and can be enjoyed by all who find loose rock unpleasant and enclosure tedious, factors which increase in the upper reaches of the chimney.

So this was the position in 1968 when the F & R.C.C. guide was published - two extremes and five H.V.S. - a combination seemingly unable to attract the attentions of the above average man, woman or child. Today this situation remains pretty much the same as it is seldom one will see Nimrod or Sidewalk alone.

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#### More recently the menu has been improved by the addition of four extremes and a couple of hard V.S.'s.

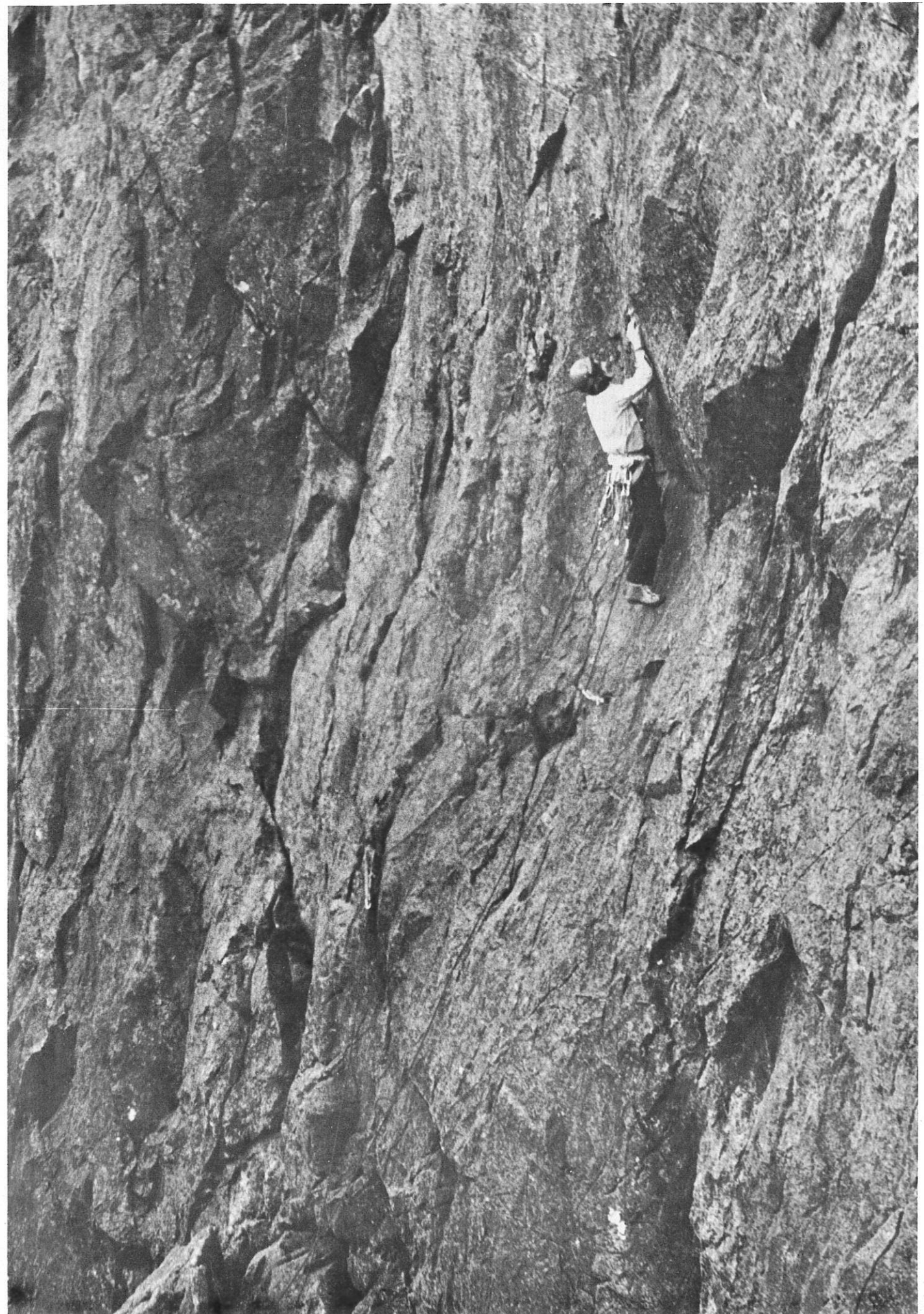
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Again 'A' Buttress was first, and a much attempted problem was solved by Read and Lake in 1970. Silence is somewhat aptly named as little is known about it, responsibility for this position resting on the fact of no second ascent. The line is impressive, weaving an unlikely way through the overhangs directly above the Roches Perches pitch of Eliminate 'A'. Only the future will reveal all and I should imagine we won't have to wait long, being a climb on many a list (once the weather improves). It is likely to be in the same order of difficulty as the first pitch of Sidewalk - only longer! (See Lakes Notes).

Holocaust (Matheson, Poole and Fleming) attacks the unlikely looking wall to the right of Nimrod, using a peg and wire sling for aid (a now noticeable feature in the middle of nowhere). The pitch begins pleasantly enough by a short groove, but the tempo changes once the sling is reached, further progress being steep, technical, delicate, committing and every other adjective in the book. Escape is made leftwards, success being guaranteed by a large lucid handhold, which is characteristically caressed in a manner of thankful deliverance. Two more pitches are made through the upper buttress, the penultimate by means of an awkward traverse from the right, attaining an obvious grass ledge, and the final, finishing rightwards directly through the bulges in a fine position.

One freezing November day the name game once more upreared its fearsome head - Brass Monkeys was the call - alas not to be - Catacomb was the name (R. Matheson and M. Matheson), following the neglected traverse line beneath the overhangs high on the Nimrod - Holocaust Wall. The climbing is both strenuous and delicate, a bold attitude being an asset, on this not too technical a line. Above Giant's Crawl a direct path is taken to just right of the large flake crack.

*Holocaust XS Dow Craig (Photo: T. Lewis)*





a delicate scoop is left in that direction by what one would call a 'great' move, protection remaining scant until a fine ledge is reached, quartzite intrusions providing the means of progress. Holocaust is joined at the grass ledge and provides a soft and pleasant bed for those who feel so inclined. The steep crack lures, and with luck followed in typical gritstone fashion to the top, entry being somewhat hard, rough rocks perpetually biting as if to expel.

Both these climbs must be ranked along with the best in the area, with a combination of the first pitch of Holocaust and the second pitch of Catacomb proving the most rewarding.

The more popular sections of 'B' Buttress have in the past received numerous variations and directs. One of the more recent Eliminator (Harwood and Evans) follows the trend taking a crack line to the right of Murray's Direct. An obvious slim groove above the cave roof of Murray's Route is attained, using aid from the left, and followed pleasantly to the top. This last pitch is quite entertaining but the aid may be dispensed with in the future, no doubt making it even more entertaining - after all this is the 'in' thing to do however hard it may be, whatever and wherever it is and no matter how many people get cut out as a result - food for thought.

The mean looking wall to the right of Leopard's Crawl exhibited a peg for many a year, showing the probable high point of a Hugh Banner attempt - following the failure of this Cloggy expert an aura of impossibility descended upon the face and it was neglected. Close examination reveals a few tiny holds and so in style of gibbering fear and vulgar verbal discourse Tarkus was led (R. Matheson and M. Matheson). The start is quite frightening due to an immediate and acute feeling of exposure - atrocious landing! Fingers all the way to the crack line, where better protection presents itself, Murray's Route soon being reached in a manner more akin to enjoyable, rather than desperate climbing.

A couple of minor routes, or rather pitches have been made by Matheson and Collins in the steep little buttress just right of Intermediate Gully. The obvious curving groove line just left of 'D' Ordinary has received the undignified name of Snibbo and is mild very severe, the climbing being quite interesting, and in places awkward. More serious and a good deal nastier is The Cage, which takes the very steep groove in the centre of the overhanging buttress, a peg being in place for protection because of an apparent lack of it, in very steep surroundings. An entry is made by a very delicate traverse from the Snibbo Groove. These are pitches on superbly rough rock, more reminiscent of Skye than the Lake District and would provide an interesting Summer evenings entertainment.

A final point of interest is the graded list, which is in an ascending order of difficulty to lead and as with all such lists is purely personal and should act mainly as a source of conversation etc. A quantity of harder routes is immediately apparent and it would be true to say that today Dow Crag has something concrete to offer the whole spectrum of the climbing world, and is not just a place for the less skilled climber.

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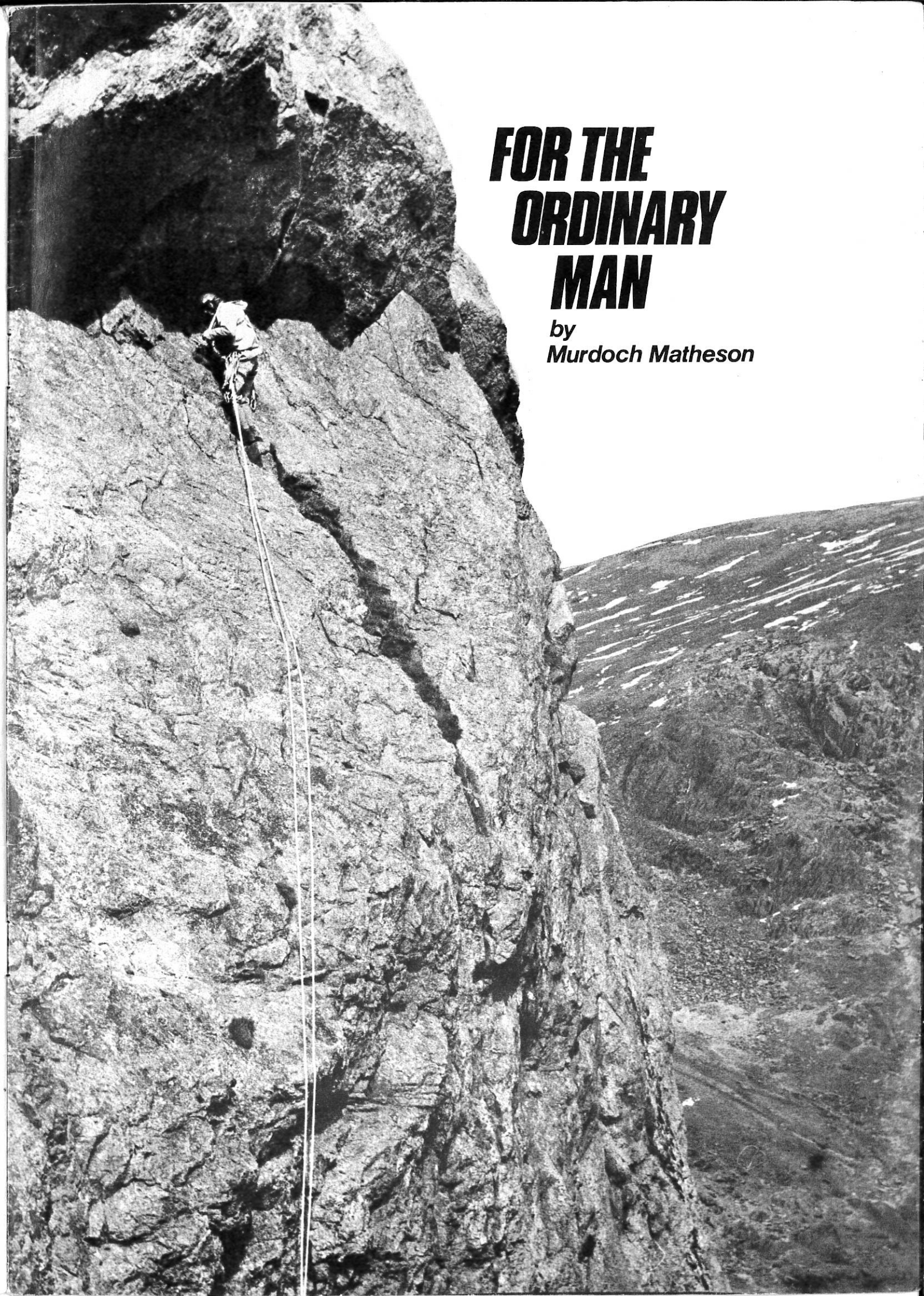
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# FOR THE ORDINARY MAN

by  
**Murdoch Matheson**



*Giants Crawl, Dow Craig, V. Diff. (Photo: Steve Foxley)*



As Dow Crag is the nearest major crag to my home I have followed the track from Torver on more occasions than I can remember - sometimes hopefully, sometimes fearfully, according to the 'programme' for the day, but always secure in the knowledge that whatever 'form' we were in, Dow had something to offer us.

Niel and I were both, shall we say kindly, mature family men when we began serious rock climbing and so our progress through the grades was less meteoric than is the case with most beginners today. Added to our natural caution and the burden of our responsibilities we had to make do with the ultimate in unsophisticated equipment (one pre-war hemp rope - this in 1955) and we were happily ignorant of such exotic devices as slings, karabiners and other aids to safety and confidence. The mainstream of British climbing was passing us by - we knew little of it and didn't aspire to join it. In those days we always climbed together; we were never 'taken up' anything harder than we could lead and as a result we probably underestimated our ability - this was undoubtedly a safety factor which made up for the lack of modern equipment.

I cannot remember ever having any difficulty with 'C' Ordinary but in spite of its lack of 'bite' I still found it an enjoyable excursion, and in our early climbing days Niel and I found it a great confidence restorer after we had been shattered by something a bit harder - like Arete, Chimney and Crack! 'C' Ordinary is an excellent route for beginners, but leaders should beware of over-long run-outs. Just the other week I saw a youngster on the first pitch, out of sight and sound of his instructor, 'climbing' over ten feet of easy rock on his knees - his commando soles were visible all the way!

Gordon and Craig's Route on 'A' Buttress has always been a favourite of ours: It wanders all over the buttress and this is one of its charms. And here and there you find a little bit of harder climbing which adds to the pleasure. Going along the famous traverse on busy days we would pick our way through the ropes of parties on Eliminate 'A'. They always seemed to come from Blackpool, Preston or Bradford and addressed one another only in rough Lancashire or Yorkshire oaths. They always had a kind and courteous word for the two old dossers - we conjectured vaguely about their marvellous expertise but never hoped to emulate them.

One magical day I stood in Easter Gully watching the hob-nailed soles of Niel's boots with a frightened fascination as he led up Jone's Route - our first Severe! Well, we thought so then, but our guide book was a Fell and Rock publication - Bower's Guide of 1922. A few shillings and a few weeks later, we were undeceived, but it didn't matter then, as we had climbed Arete, Chimney and Crack on 'A' Buttress, a good companion climb to Gordon and Craig. However, our great step forward didn't come until the early sixties when, mercifully, our old nailed boots finally fell apart and we had to replace them. I bought a pair of Kletterschube and Niel a pair of 'Vibs' and we went wild and bought a full-weight nylon rope and a couple of slings and Krabs! Murray's Route on 'B'

was a highlight and it has, ever since, been one of my 'compulsive' routes. Nowadays, when we are at Dow, no one asks me what routes we should do - unless they want to do Murray's! It is full of variety - backing up or bridging up the first short chimney, followed by a delicate traverse with nothing much for fingers or feet. Then there is an awkward movement round the nose; the confident can make this easy by using the undercuts. Easier climbing leads to the Cave. A steep little wall is followed by an airy traverse: Then comes a rather polished chimney and another pleasant traverse to the foot of the final crack. This last pitch is most easily done without thrutching!

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"... take him up 'Murray's' and watch him readjust his values."

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When a novice has got to the stage of scorning 'C' Ordinary and talking condescendingly about Giant's Crawl or Gordon and Craig's, take him up Murray's and watch him readjust his values. Southern Slabs is a fairly introduction to fairly thin slab climbing, though I prefer to do this climb when there's no one doing Central Chimney - there are still a few loose bits in the cave.

Abraham's on 'B' Buttress, undemanding for the most part, is a pleasant climb with one or two awkward moves on the final pitch, particularly at the start, which are thought provoking and give the climb its Severe grading. Intermediate Gully, between 'C' and 'D' is more of an experience than a climb - it shouldn't be missed. I have seen people foiled by it, sick in it, but most often, swearing at it.

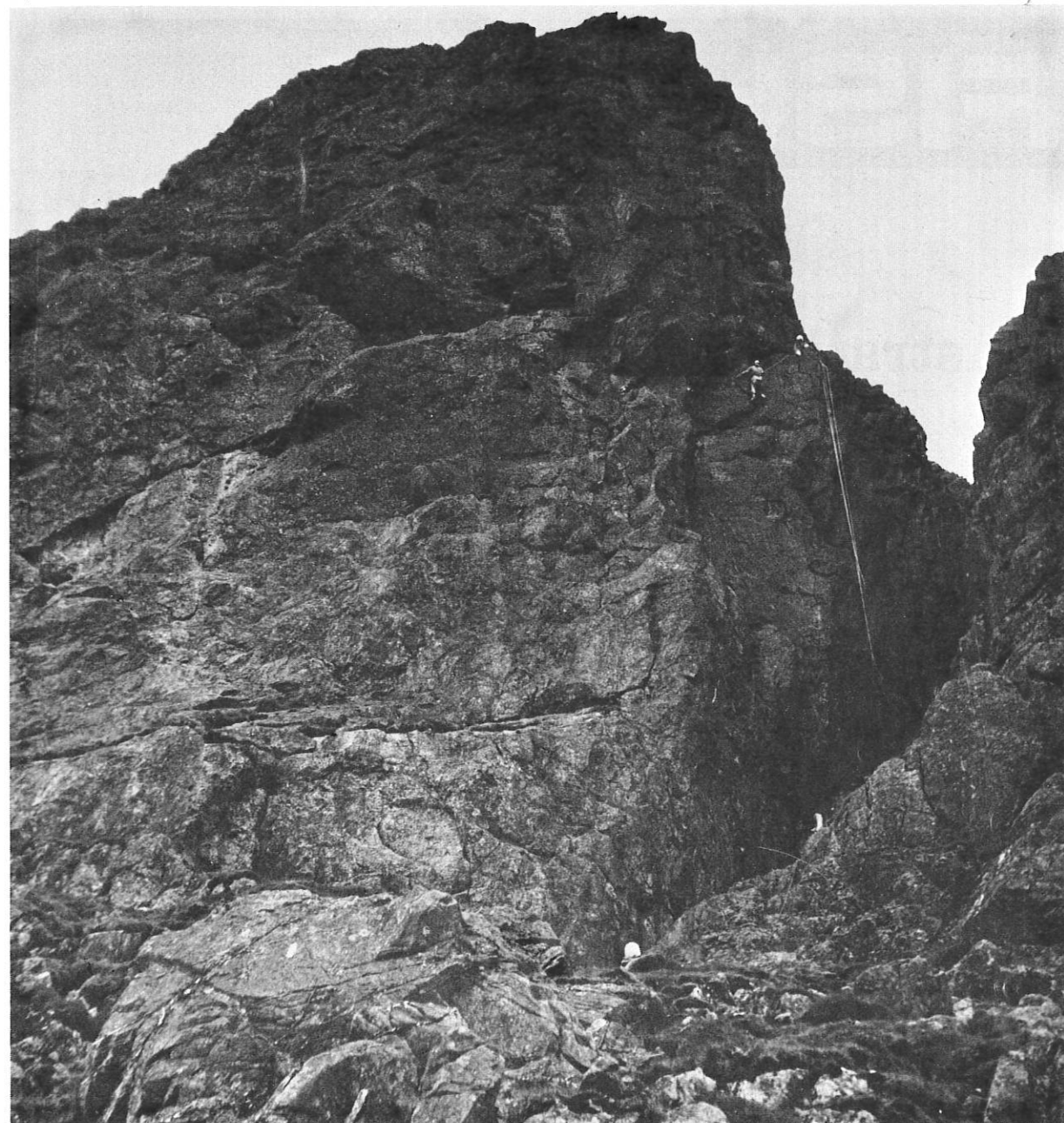
This article was supposed to give the viewpoint of the 'moderate' climber, with reference to Dow Crag. Perhaps I should qualify the adjective - it shouldn't really be attached to the climber but to his ambitions. I have followed on Hard Very Severe and Extreme climbs on Dow Crag and elsewhere, yet my ambition is such that I have very seldom pushed myself to the extent of leading H.V.S. The main reason is, I think, that in my climbing the pleasure principle is the driving force. And I think that most climbers have a threshold - a point at which the pleasure in the actual climbing diminishes rapidly and grim determination takes over. The 'point of grip', perhaps! My personal threshold - which varies slightly according to 'form' or the quality of recent experience - is probably at the milder end of H.V.S. and so I invariably find the greatest pleasure in climbing good routes of V.S. standard.

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".... good routes of V.S. standard."

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For me, Dow offers two climbs in that grading, Eliminates 'A' and 'C'. 'C', I think, is of slightly lesser merit, but it has two fine pitches which are very satisfying. Eliminate 'A' has, I think, great quality - it seems to improve with repetition. The disappearance of the loose blocks from the famous Rochers Perches pitch resulted in the insertion of a peg, which has been removed and resurrected



A. Buttress Dow Crag (Photo: I. Roper)

a few times since. This peg is useful, though not absolutely necessary, as a belay, but it doesn't seem to have much relevance in the actual climbing of the pitch. I hasten to add that I am not joining in the everlasting debate on protection and aid. I must confess that I can keep calm when I see a piece of ironware with which some decadent climber has desecrated our sacred British rock; it may have been his response to the urge to stay alive. Empty tinware and other litter left by climbers at the foot of the crags exemplify, for me, a problem of more immediate concern. However, this is a divergence; Eliminate 'A' is more important. Climb it. If you don't feel up to leading it, get someone to take you up. Even the young 'tigers' who are inclined to scorn anything below 'hard' Hard V.S. are known to have found pleasure in doing this great climb.

Easter Gully offers a variety of climbs in the Severe bracket, and of these Hopkinson's Crack is the best known. The crack line is steep and direct and offers a number of interesting situations.

I have not mentioned Eliminate 'B': I haven't done it: Some people say that it is unsatisfactory, an artificial line - others say it is great. However there is another good V.S. on 'B' Buttress - Murray's Direct - which has a fingery and delicate start, a steep but not arduous second pitch and a taste of lay-backing on the final pitch.

Most of this you can find in the guide book - there are no great mysteries uncovered in this article. Perhaps some 'moderate' climbers who find that accounts of the latest improbable 'Extreme' bear little relevance to their climbing experience may find pleasure in comparing their opinions of the Dow Crag climbs with mine. I know that I have missed out many good climbs - I have not mentioned what may be the best of all; the Girdle. Well, Niel and I have had ambitions for the past five years but for one reason or another they have never been realised. Give us just a few dry days this summer holiday and we'll be there, each trying to organise it so that the other leads the harder pitches. There's always something to do on Dow.



# FISHERS

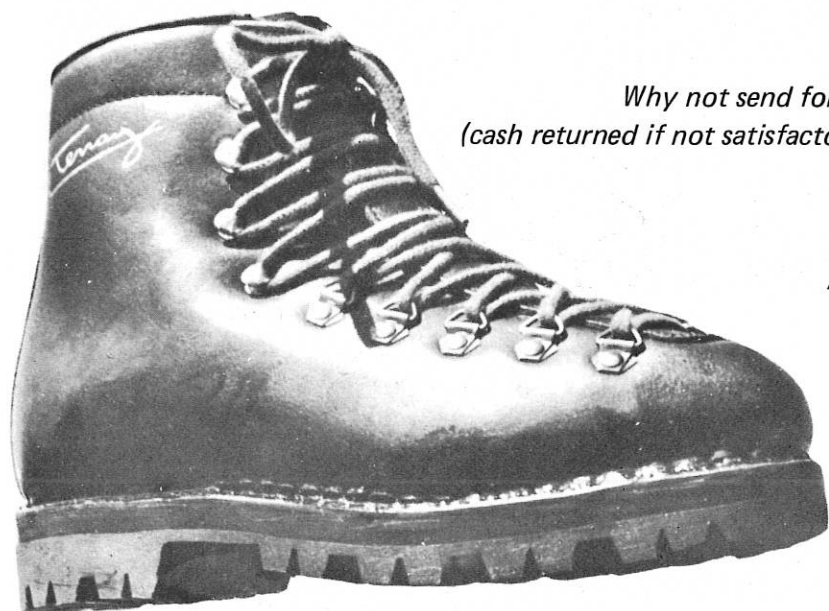
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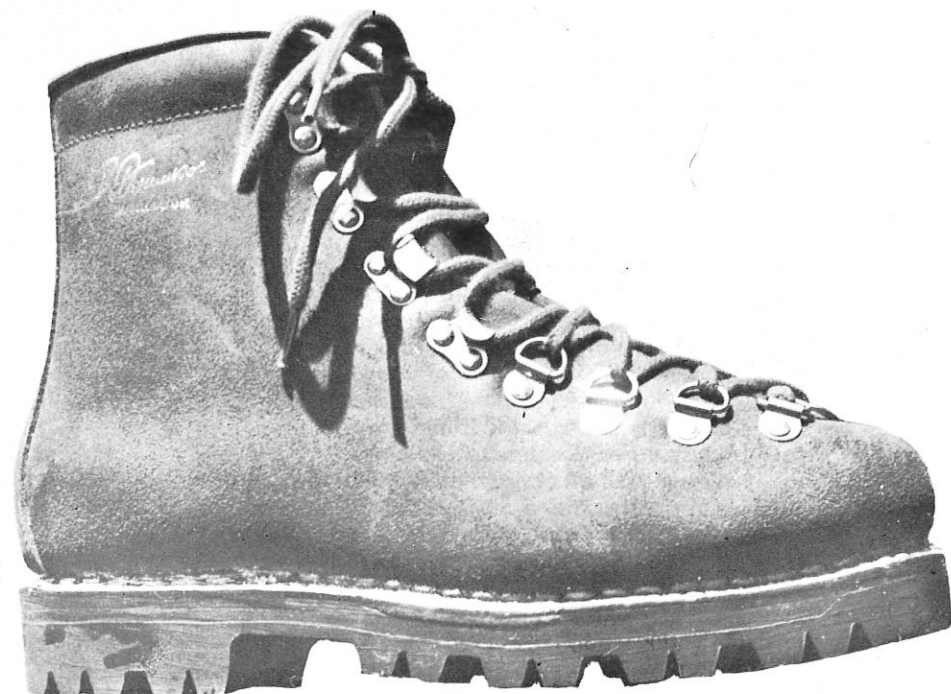
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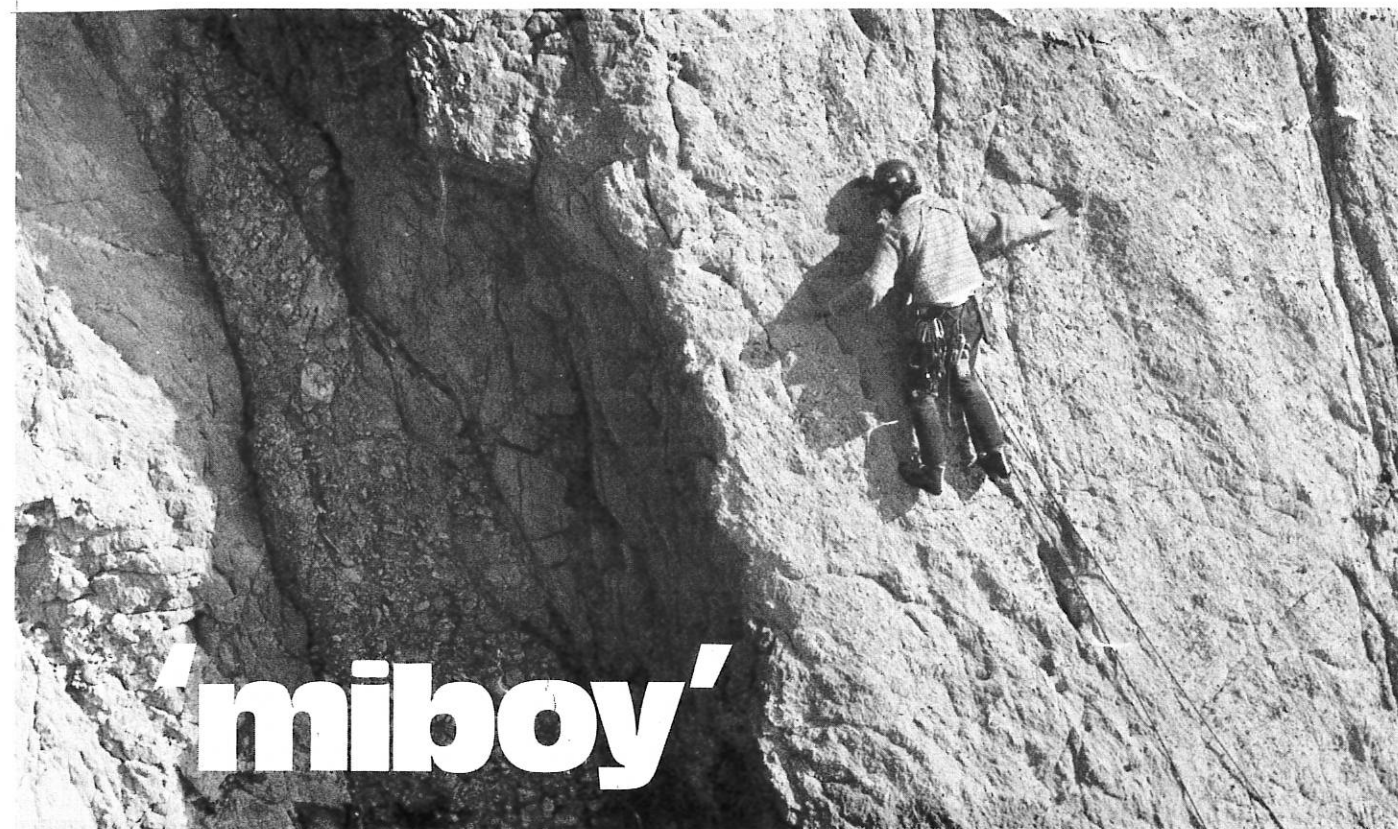


Photo by Griff Croft (Concrete Chimney, Gogarth)

"Right," said Arfur draping his wares round him. "Let's hit the rock Miboy."

Miboy laced up his Lebees, gently lifted the perlon and swung it around his waist.

"O.K. Big Daddy," he said softly. Below at the foot of the scree, a small audience had begun to form and were watching intently as Arfur sauntered up and into the big V-groove. Whistling softly and pausing only to turn round and admire the view he gained height. On up he went until at 100 feet he stopped.

"Better put a runner on," he said to himself, "There might be a beginner watching." He unclipped a Krab, bit off a piece of bright red Trog adhesive tape and slapped it across the bare rock. In the centre a small loop had been left unstuck. He clipped into it and moved up to the roof capping the groove. He never even paused.

The assembled throng smiled knowingly as they watched the 3'6" of wiry toughness that was Arfur Thug move out and out and out and finally over the roof.

"Right," yelled Arfur, now safely belayed to two partially inserted, tied off Balubalus.

Slowly Miboy stood up, adjusted his dark sunglasses and oozed into the groove. His long slender legs spread across the width of the Vee, he moved up. As he did so he whispered, more to himself than anybody else, "Man this is what I call a really mean bridge." Whereupon he stormed up at a pace that would have made even Jackie Stewart sit up and take notice. Calmly he swung around on his fingertips beneath the overhang.

"Right," said Arfur, lighting a cigarette.

"No way man. Overhangs aren't cool." Miboy paused. "I'll lay back up that crack."

"Eh?" queried Arfur. Then he spotted the blind crack tracing its own image up the side of the overhang. "Right," he puffed.

Seconds later Miboy stood beside him.

"Not bad man. About H.E.S." he drawled.

"Nudging Supreme," said Arfur, "If you take it direct."

Down below, in the larger audience, a breathless little man clad in a pair of running shorts and clutching a toy microphone in one hand and a pencil in the other, was scribbling in

a B.B.C. notebook. "Fantastic! Superb! Modern climbers boldly going where no man has gone before. Incredible! Unbelievably gripping! Nature's last bastion/stronghold/challenge etc."

"Your pitch," said Arfur, "Looks desperate to me."

Miboy studied the wall above them. He then studied his finely manicured nails and sighed.

"Yeah. I guess it does. Reckon we'll have to aid the start. Hell! You KNOW I hate aid — it ruins my nails." Resigned to his fate Miboy banged in a Hic, clipped in a sling and moved up. A free move, another Hic followed by a badger's claw and he was on the free moves again, moving rapidly skywards.

Seated on the stance Arfur could see the tourists on the far side of the crag scatter as a body detached itself from the rock and hurtled down the scree towards them. It was a sad day for rock climbing, he thought, when lads got their kicks by throwing themselves off the crags to frighten the hordes. The rope came tight.

"O.K. Big Daddy. I'm waiting."

"Right." It wasn't too bad up to the peg, but Arfur found the traverse stretchy. At one point a long step split his Levi's right up the leg. He was glad when he came to a runner and could repair them — there was nothing like Trog tape for running repairs as well as runners he thought, wincing at his own pun. He made a mental note to tell that one to the lads in the pub. The traverse led to an exposed arete. Arfur looked up and saw Miboy's head appear over the top, his sunglasses peering obscurely down at him. Arfur started lay-backing up the arete edge.

"Real cool man."

Arfur lay-backed right on to the top and pirouetted onto the grass.

"Good route," breathed Miboy.

"Right."

They walked along the top stopping now and then to watch some blokes on a route or two. They watched an instructor or seconding a beginner up a H.V.S. slab. They also watched him peel off only four feet from the belay and stumble, slithering and screaming back down 80 feet onto the instructor.

"A pity," drawled Miboy, "He got real close."

"Right," said Arfur, reaching for his fags.



# BOOK REVIEW

## THE FIRST TIGERS'

(The early history of rock climbing in the Lake District.)

By Alan Hankinson Dent £3.00

The early history actually means the period from 1882, when Heskett-Smith first went to Wasdale, until 1903 when Broadrick and his companions were killed below Hopkinson's Cairn on Scafell Pinnacle. During time the author rightly points out that no other roped climbers were killed in the area despite the fact that routes of the quality of Botterill's Slab, Kern Knotts Crag and Eagles Nest Ridge were being discovered. If the author hadn't already done it someone would have been tempted to call it a "Golden Age".

The characters of the age emerge strongly. Haskett-Smith perhaps is the hero of the piece, fittingly so for the first man to ascend the Napes Needle, and solo at that. His wit and character are obviously well in keeping with modern ideas. "Silence as the leader advances was not the rule with him," and his wit was considerable. In 1936, fifty years on from the first ascent, he again climbed Napes Needle in front of a large and appreciative audience from the F.R.C.C. When he was on the summit someone shouted, "Tell us a story". Haskett-Smith, eighty seven years old, retorted, "There is no other story. This is the top storey." As well there is the character of O.G. (The Only Genuine) Jones. A stronger, physically and mentally, man than most he made a very great impact in the brief years he was active before his untimely death in the Alps in 1899. Perhaps the best of the sixteen Abraham's Brothers plates that illustrate this book is the one taken in 1896 of Jones and George Abraham on the first ascent of Scafell Pinnacle from Deep Ghyll. "Abraham has adopted a dynamic stance" (i.e. struck a pose!) halfway up and Jones is at the top of the crack, no sign of a runner of course.

But if I was to pick any one piece to typify the spirit of the

age that this book catches well it would be Fred Botterill's account of the first ascent of Botterill's Slab on Scafell, ice axe in his mouth and raising his hat to a lady in a party on the screes below. Almost worth buying the book for that alone.

For Hankinson that ascent marks the end of the age and also its high spot. It certainly shows that the 'Age of Gully climbing' was short lived and came to a sudden end. There is an artificiality to breaking climbing into clear periods though though because all the climbers do not stop climbing at the same time.

As has already been indicated this group, the Abrahams Brothers Haskett-Smith and Collie in particular kept on well after the first World War so the naming of 1903 as the end of an era is suspect for that reason alone. In general the books only short coming is that whilst being good on the subject of climbing it is not so good as a social and historical document. The author gets so involved with his subject that his prose takes on the stilted air of the age, e.g. chapter headings such as 'The Annus Mirabilis'; 'The Cragsmans Equipment' and 'Exeunt Omnes' are mirrored in the text by a concern for the worthiness of the people concerned constantly pointing out that they were 'gentlemen climbers' or 'electrical engineers' — it makes no difference for most of us if the current hard man happens to be a spare time brain surgeon what matters is his climbing. He is also very naive when it comes to the competitive aspect of that generation, he ignores it but the pages abound with the sense of 'needle' felt between the climbers — especially O.G. Jones and the others. Like so many other amateur historians Hankinson confuses quaint and ancient with the historical — because they wrote in a manner and because they paid lip service to 'manners' and behaviour does not mean that the late Victorians were any more moral than we are.

To sum up then the book is really entertaining and it makes very strongly the point that it

was in this era in the Lake District that the essence of rock climbing was found — that it is a personal game. What annoys me is that Mr. Hankinson and other 'historians' like him think that the Early Tigers found it because they had no guide books or equipment and that we have lost it. If they had the chance they used all the gear at their disposal and there were so few of them that word of mouth sufficed where we use printed guides. The real achievement was that they found the spirit and then passed it on to us, just as Mr. Hankinson so admirably passes their deeds on to us

Editor

## EDUCATION AND THE MOUNTAIN CENTRES.

Harold Drasdo. Tyddyn Gabriel Melyn-y-coed, Llanrwst, Denbighshire.

This is the first attempt that I know of to give an 'educational' explanation of Outdoor Activities. As such it should become standard reading for all those teachers and instructors engaged in work at Colleges of Education or in centres or at Universities. If there were any way of making it compulsory reading for Directors of Education then I would use it. The pamphlet covers both field studies and adventure activities, which the author — who is head of Wolverhampton Authority's Towers Centre — rightly classifies as the two main types of outdoor activity in which education is involved.

The first, he states correctly, are teacher orientated but the latter are pupil orientated. Starting from this premise he moves on to show that the psychological benefits of transfer of physical and mental training from activities in the hills is limited and that the main effort should be concentrated in two areas — the increasing of aesthetic awareness the development of parasocial awareness. (This last the author coins to mean a combination of critical ability and philosophical awareness.) He is rightly repulsed, as was Ruskin by

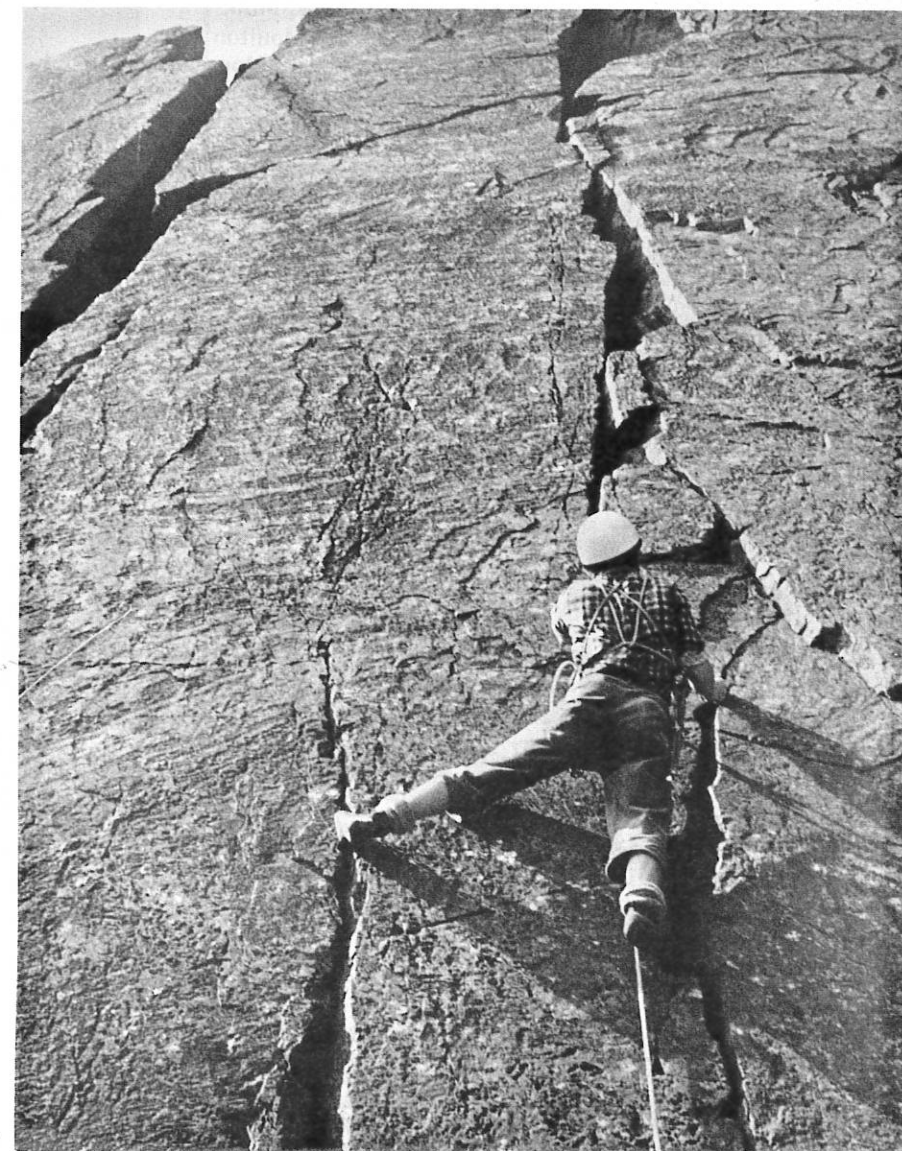
Whymper on the Matterhorn, and as I am by the attempt to treat nature as a 'greasy pole' as Kurt Hahn and the early Outward Bound philosophy would have it. Mountaineering is not undertaken as a physical test but as a mental one and Drasdo points this out very clearly with his analysis of the thoughts of a climber dragging his wet way up a steep hill on an unpleasant day — he does not fight against nature so much as turn more and more in on himself and his own thoughts and fantasies. He goes further to point out that the utter concentration required on a hard climb — or on any climb for that matter — minimises the amount of external stimulus available to the brain and therefore allows us to place our existing knowledge and ideas in a better perspective. This point seems valid because of the way it explains the protest and social rejection that climbers do practice i.e. the way they look down on non-climbers and their frequent rejection of 'normal' home life and work standards. But it must be psychologically suspect. If, as is patently true, concentration in climbing is utter then there is no time for anything else to occur in the brain whether it is social or parasocial. A more satisfactory explanation is that the climber achieves within his own limits a satisfaction in climbing and this enables him to 'sublime' or transfer the urges which lead other people to build homes and gain satisfaction in their jobs.

Perhaps what is most lacking in modern climbing and what the centres do little to teach, concentrating as they do and must, on the mechanics of the sport, is the aesthetic aspect of it. This was abundantly clear in the origins of climbing and is still there in the way that most climbers prefer an 'Elegant line' to a grotty little scramble skulking in the grass at the side of a big crag. It is perhaps most important now to make clear to people who climb how much of the benefit and pleasure of their sport comes from the view and that if the C.E.G.B. and

Rio Tinto etc. have their way the hills will be ugly not beautiful.

The most worrying part of the pamphlet is the conclusion. Drasdo has serious doubts, and he convinces me about them, as to the future of outdoor pursuits. What was a few years ago the most impressive experiment in education has become a standardised activity. How many of the outdoor courses run in this country include any art or appreciation course in their syllabus? The standard range of subjects — camping, climbing, canoeing, sailing and orienteering — is horrifyingly similar and has become stereotyped. One

reason for this is the intrinsic danger of these activities and the desire of the Education Authorities to minimise the risk to the e.g. the recent Edinburgh disaster. A fair desire but one which could be the death of 'organised' outdoor pursuits. Drasdo is frightened about this and so should we all be. The speeding up of learning and appreciation that a trained teacher can make is not something to be lightly forsaken in a desire to revert away from the standardisation that organised activity brings with it. But if we don't get away from the currently standard forms then a great deal of the point of taking



Kern Knotts — a classic of the 1890's



people to the hills will be lost. Drasdo offers no solution to this dilemma, he has done well enough in putting it before us let others now try and find a way to go. An essential piece of reading.

G.C. Belik

*\*This pamphlet is privately published and there is no price on it. Copies are available from Joe Brown's shops or from Frank Davies at Ambleside. ED.*

#### AVON GORGE!

A guide to rock climbs by Ed Drummond  
Graphic Print Cardiff £1.20

The Avon Gorge must now have more guides to the square inch than any other crag in the country. The climber now has not only to take care in selecting his climb but also in selecting his guide book to make sure that he gets the one with the hardest grades in it! Not much to be said about the guide in detail. The routes are well described, the author has a deft and literary touch in places e.g. on the guide, 'No one who has been bitten by a snake will try to tell you what the experience was like ..... Avon has many snakes and, though a few are grass snakes, there are also some whose bites are unforgettable.' Thus he describes the harder climbs.

The diagrams are in the form of marked photographs and as the photos are by Ken Wilson and Leo Dickenson the standard is more than adequate. The descriptions are in the usual manner as are the grades. Drummond has abandoned his experimental grading system being content to add only the more conventional system of technical grade to each pitch i.e. 100 ft. 5a or 45 ft. 5c etc. This is unarguably a good move as it conveys more information to the climber but the author is the first to point out (that snakes quote) that all gradings are informative and not definitive. This is the most up to date guide that I have ever seen produced as the most recent routes in the back were put up at Easter this year. Something of a record that and one which the author and publishers should be proud of. The currently definitive guide to the gorge, accept no imitations.

#### SUPPLEMENT TO LUNDY ROCK CLIMBS.

By R.D. Moulton  
Royal Navy Mountaineering Club. 15p. Available from:-  
R.D. Moulton,  
2 Gladstone Road,  
Buckhurst Hill,  
Essex.

This must be about the best 15p worth currently going in

climbing books. The supplement contains about fifty routes and variations done on the island during the last two years and as the date for the guide book revision is still in the air it is a must for anyone who wants to go to Lundy. Not a classy production but a vital one.

#### CLIMBS IN LEICESTERSHIRE.

By Ken Vickers  
Available from:-  
Leicester Mountaineering Club,  
249 Knighton Church Road,  
Leicester.  
Price 80p including postage.

A revised and much extended version of the old guide which includes all developments up to June this year. To quote the author, 'Leicestershire ..... is not an 'ace' area but many climbers have gained a great deal of satisfaction here ....' This is an excellently produced guide book whose style and format should be a warning/hint to the major guide book producing clubs. They have managed to get sensible and adequate descriptions of nearly five hundred routes on about sixty outcrops into forty pages-gritstone guides take note. A useful guide to an area that should certainly take some of the strain off the overcrowded Derbyshire gritstone.



#### KARRIMOR

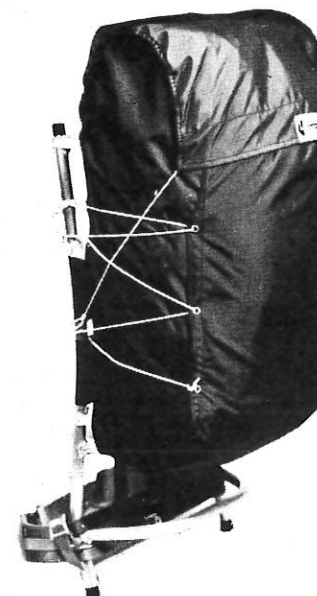
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# NEW CLIMBS

## WILDCAT TOR

### TIGER TRAIL 120 ft. H.S.

*Below and slightly to the left of Tiger Chimney is an obvious, steep short corner (near a tree and a large fallen block). There is a niche cutting the corner, thread belay.*

1. 70 ft. Climb the corner, surmounting a detached ledge. Climb the wall above using a sharp finger jug and holds in the blind crack (crux). Step right onto a good foothold on the arete then stride up left and continue up to a ledge and a large spike belay.
2. 50 ft. Start slightly left of the belay, climb straight up (some loose rock). Finish over vegetated ledges to a large tree belay.  
*Les Morris Chris Burgess Spring 1971.*

### BAGGY POINT

### LONG ROCK ELIMINATE 200 ft. H.V.S.

- A straight line up the slab. Start 20 ft. left of 'Sexilegs'.*
1. 60 ft. A cobweb of cracks to the overlap. (Peg used on first ascent unnecessary because good nut just above.) Twin cracks (thin) and step left to red bulging stance of 'Midnight Cowboy'.
  2. 40 ft. Step from stance rightward onto slab above overlap. Trend up and rightward (ignoring peg on Midnight Cowboy) to good nut under the bulge. Follow shallow groove to grass stance.
  3. 100 ft. The crack behind the stance and straight up to finish just left of the big, loose overhang.  
*D. Johnston A.D. Baker Easter 1971.*

### RIGHT HAND ELIMINATE 210 ft. H.V.S.

- A straight line up the slab. Start 10 ft. left of 'Sexilegs'.*
1. 120 ft. Climb the faint crack to the first traverse of Sexilegs. Continue up the groove and crack above the overlap to a second overlap (junction with Narrow Way). The crack above (thin at first) leads to a stance 15 ft. right of and slightly above the stance on Long Rock Eliminate.
  2. 90 ft. Straight up to just below the big loose overhang. Turn this on the right.  
*D. Johnston J.J. Zangwill Easter 1972.*

## YORKSHIRE

### LOUP SCAR, WHARFEDALE

### LAPPER 75 ft. H.V.S.

*Takes the upper of the two overlap lines (Louper takes the lower) starting under a crack bending to the roof at the left hand end.*

Climb easily to the crack and climb this to just below the roof. Move right using a nut in a short crack and continue leftwards along the traverse line (Peg runner) until a break in the roof is reached. Pull over this spectacularly to reach a horizontal tree at the top.

*Livesey Sheard May 1972.*

### GORDALE SCAR

### REBEL 155 ft. Extremely Severe.

1. 5a 60 ft. As for Jenny Wren.

2. 5c 65 ft. Move left from belay cave to a smaller cave. Bridge up over the roof to reach a protruding peg. Using this for aid gain a corner to the right. Climb this for 20 ft. to a peg. Use this for aid and climb to a roof. (Rest taken on a peg here.) Pass the roof on the left using undercuts and lay back holds making some very hard moves to gain a good flake above. Up right to a cave stance.

3. 5b 30 ft. Place a nut on the lip of the overhang and use it for aid to gain the crack above. Climb this with difficulty to the top.

*P. Livesey John Hammond 13th July 1972.*

*Inspected by abseil first.*

## NORTH WALES

### SPEEDFREAK 130 ft. H.V.S.

*The arete of Pharaoh's Passage. The first 20 ft. are very hard but go free.*

*B. Molineux R. Schneider*

## SCOTLAND: ISLE OF SKYE

### MAD BURN BUTTRESS: LOCH CORUIK

### KING GEORGE IV 200 ft. V.S. +a1

1. 40 ft. Start in corner 10 ft. left of Warsle. Follow steep crack to white overhang. Swing onto rib right to large platform.
2. 25 ft. Follow Trap Dyke for 10 ft. then traverse left on good peg crack under small overhang and up on left to stance.
3. 50 ft. The shallow groove above the overhang is followed to hard mantelshelf. Peg. Traverse left until ledge steepens. Peg. Then up right on small quartz hold round bulge and across Wet Bay to crack and good holds. Up this to good belay. Crux pitch.
4. 40 ft. Cross gully and climb crack on right.

*Pegs were used as necessary on pitch 2. (A1). For belay top of pitch 2., as runners on pitch 3.*

*In future some or all of these may be dispensed with.*

*Unfortunately pitch 2. may be avoided by continuing up dyke and traversing left at top (2nd pitch Warsle?). Pitches 1. and 3. are both excellent and hard.*

*R. Butler I. Wilson.*

## LAKE DISTRICT

### GOWBARROW CRAG: EASTERN FELLS

### Diagonal Route 130 ft. Severe.

*Starts about halfway up the steps below the crag and takes a diagonal line rightwards up the cleaned rock to the tree belay on the Buttress Route. It then follows this route to the right and takes the escape route from the chimney to break up right and finish with Susan.*

*R.J. Kenyon April 1972*

### GOWBARROW BASTION 120 ft. V.S.

1. 60' as for Diagonal Route. Climb to the belay on Buttress Route.
2. 60' Regain the slab above and climb the wall on the left to

a ledge. Move up right and ascend the short groove (crux) and easier wall above to the belay at top.

*J. Kilduff R. Kenyon May 1972*

### DIRECT START (to above) 60 ft. Severe

*A more logical start. Takes the cleaned wall just left of the start of Gowbarrow Buttress and finishes at the tree belay.*

*P. Rigby R. Kenyon May 1972*

## RAVEN CRAG, LANGDALE.

### FINE TIME 150 ft. X.S.

*A fine steep pitch, the upper half consisting of a free ascent of the old piton route Kaisergebirge Wall.*

Start at the foot of the rib below and left of the obvious fiece crack splitting the overhangs. Climb the rib on good holds to the roof. Step right to the foot of the crack, bridge up and reach the peg and sling (in place) on the lip of the roof. Using this gain and climb the steep slanting crack above with the help of holds on the right wall. Easier up to a second roof, then move left and up a groove to finish.

*P. Livesey J. Hammond June 1972*

## MANIFOLD VALLEY. THORS CAVE

### TEMPEST 170 ft. Just Hard V.S.

1. 30 ft. As for Thunder to the short groove. Small stance

spike belay. Pegs advised.

2. 110 ft. Up the slab for 25 ft. Swing left to a steep groove which is followed to a thread runner (in situ). Climb the wall and thin cracks above until it is possible with difficulty to gain a position beneath the bulging wall (protection peg in situ). Ascend the steep groove just left of the ivy to grass. Step right to a conspicuous block and climb the grassy groove to a good stance.

3. Traverse easily right and finish up the steep corner.

*Stephen Dale Brian Dale May 20th 1972*

## HIGH TOR, MATLOCK

### MUGS ROUTE 130 ft. V.S.

*30 ft. left of Wezzy Wonks at the lowest point of the buttress below a Yew tree.*


1. 30 ft. Climb up the cracked groove through trees to the grass ledge.
2. 40 ft. Continue up to the overhang where the left hand crack is climbed, trending right to a dangerous arch of rock. Step right round this and on up to another grass ledge. Peg belays (removed).
3. 60 ft. An awkward mantelshelf to a ledge is made, then ascend the overhanging corner crack until it is possible to step left and up through the grot to a tree. Ascend the wall behind the tree to a final tree belay.

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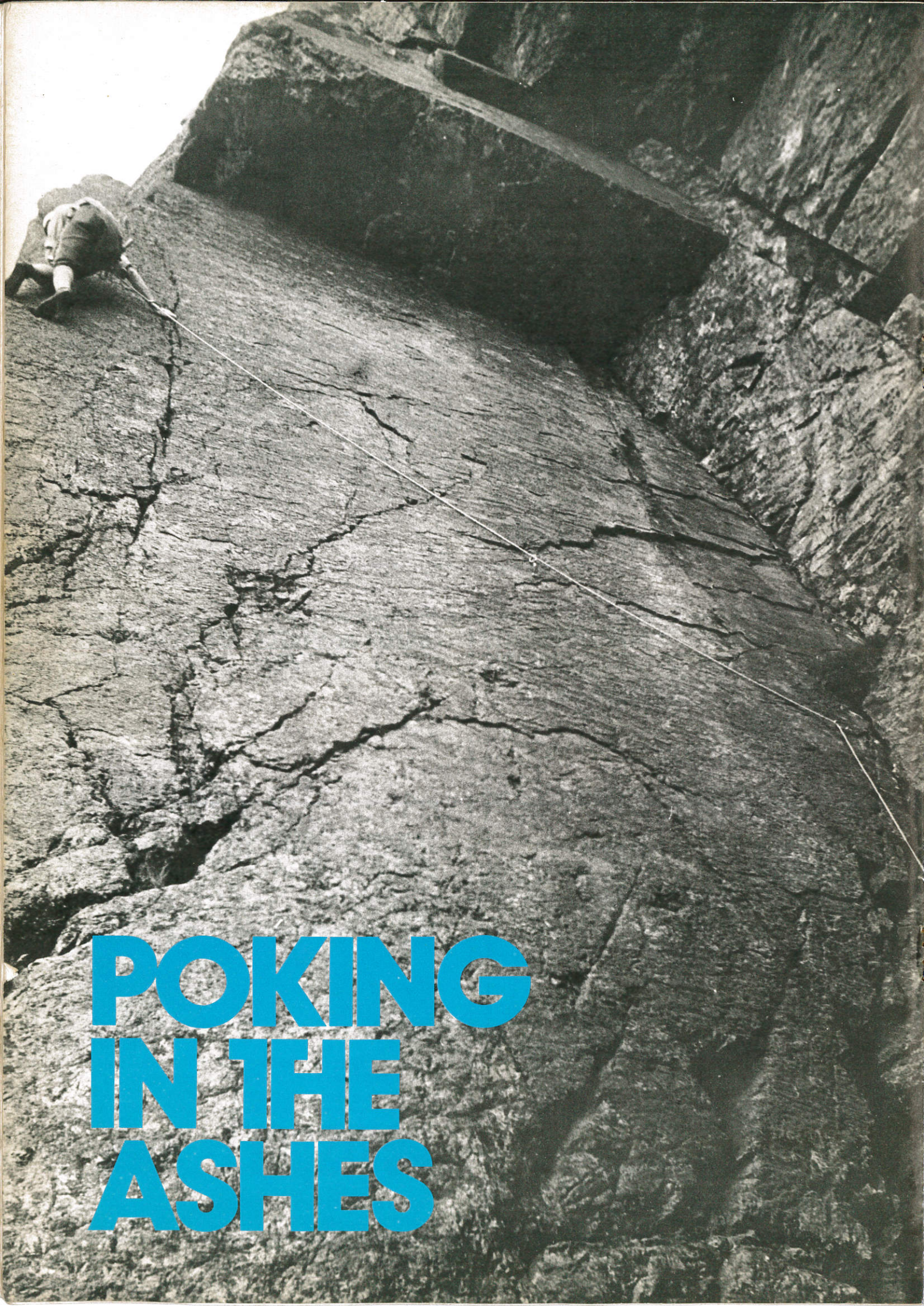
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# POKING IN THE ASHES

## Lakeland Controversies

BY HENRY FORD

*The "Wise Owl'd Judge" of the English Lake District wryly smiles at the evidence in hand. The jury of wide-eyed spies, hangers-on, apprentices and informers await eagerly, full of conjecture about the inevitable judgement to come. "He's a bastard, a liar and a cheat!" proclaims the beaming judge. (Stupendous applause) "He was seen to top-rope the bloody thing at fifteen hundred hours." A stifling silence ensues. "Excommunication — send him to Wales — that's all!" The atmosphere was one of fear and respect. It was a demagogue's dream; the situation called for more. "We must maintain the Status Quo or fall into the pit of vice and modern perversion. These "bastard practices" must be cut out. "On sight" is the thing. Top-roping, abseiling down, pegging, skyhooking, lying and the like demonstrate this modern perversion and they must be challenged and erased from the record. Participants must be discredited and their routes must be 'put down' and/or brought up to traditional levels. Such things as skyhooks cannot be tolerated: a fifi or nothing! If a series of four or more pegs are encountered, the line must be regarded with contempt. Names must be of a traditional unimaginative nature, as they have been in the past. Now, go forth with these descriptions; treat them with great suspicion, especially if they sound hard. Try and cut out all aid, and if deviation from our elastic rules be necessary (in order to succeed, that is), be sure of complete secrecy. If it's too hard, report the fact and evidence will be sought to condemn that very route. We have succeeded before and shall do so again. Now go!"*

Kelly and Doughty could see it all coming in 1936 when they wrote, "One of the less fortunate results of the great influx of new climbers who are not directly in touch with the main tradition is a tendency for the growth of slip-shod methods ..... The continental climber, with his armoury of pitons (wall-hooks), hammer, and carabiners (snap-rings), has no counterpart in this country ..... we may yet see such methods introduced in Lakeland as the supply of new routes gives out, but they will have to encounter the resistance of strong prejudice." (F.R.C.C. Journal 1936/37)

So the hordes have come, settling in separate communities throughout the 'Dome'. Those from Cumberland and the North-East chose the Borrowdale, Buttermere and Scafell areas, while the rest feasted mainly in Langdale and the Eastern Fells. Everyone visited Dow Crag and the West, on occasion, in order to fill in the gaps left by the Explorers of yesteryear.

Wales has Llanberis, the pubs of which appear to act as the hub of opinion. Controversy here is basic. Matters are sorted out swiftly over 'free drinks' or, if this diplomacy fails, more physical means are adopted. This is a real man's sport — and here is a 'Universal Hard-Man's' ideal environment. After all, Wales breeds 'hard-men', or at least the magazines tell us so, and controversy is crushed in a style akin to their folk-lore.

The Lake District has a much more stimulating system because of a three way split, between the Fell and Rock, those in the North, and visiting marauders. It has been apparent, or been made apparent, that in the last twenty years these groups have differed from one another in their ethical and moral approach towards the advancement of climbing. As a result of this, together with geo-

graphical and social diversity, controversy has tended to linger and smoulder. The media has often distorted specific cases, resulting in greater and more ferocious argument. It appears the dialectic is taking a true course, at least according to Marx — progress means conflict. It is an environment of intrigue, cynicism and secrecy — altogether more stimulating than the system adopted in other areas academics could have a field day.

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"A few mates, a little imagination ..... a manufactured controversy."

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Perhaps 'The Niche' controversy illustrates the attitude of the Northern approach. A few mates, a little imagination, and several letters later the scene was set, A manufactured controversy. The Borrowdale team had made themselves a little more famous and a little richer from payment for letters and had had a good laugh, but let's face it, the most important thing of all was the route. The cynics of other areas could sense the atmosphere of steel and there can be no doubt as to their astuteness. Progress — competition — conflict: leading to an inevitable stretching of the traditional ethics and means. Progress is leading today to a 'purifying' process and this has been obvious in the case of Borrowdale. Difficulty undoubtedly increases as a result of aid reduction, and great difficulty breeds great doubt! Controversy today has, therefore, a whole range of factors to feast upon; from using too many pegs (the original complaint) to using too few pegs (the modern complaint of questionable methods and prior knowledge).

Back to Nature. 'The Niche' is now ascended using peg runners only; or at least





this is how the guide book says it ought to be done. The first pitch is perhaps the more technical of the two, the second pitch being more suited to the strong and stupid. 'The Niche' serves as a creditable example of Fell and Rock's determination to cut out, as far as their ability would allow, aid from Borrowdale routes. A comparison of the Ross and Thompson 'pirate' guide with the Fell and Rock's latest guide illustrates this de-pegging attitude. 'Peg-haters' and 'Hard-Men' alike attacked Goat Crag, cleaning-up such routes as 'D.D.T.' and 'The Big Curver'. 'The Lastest' on Black Crag lost its aid moves and remains at H.V.S. Maybe it was a mixture of competition, haste, bad rock and vegetation which made aid necessary on these first ascents. Many climbers would attribute it to the first two factors and perhaps they are correct. It may just have been an attitude basing climbing on achievement alone, where traditional values and ethics had little place. Was indeed Ross correct when he wrote "It has also been said that one should not use pitons too much in Wales or the Lake District. This is ridiculous. Who is to say in which counties of Britain one can or cannot use a peg?"

Ross did, however, stray south into Langdale and climbed 'If' on Gimmer and 'The Horror' in White Ghyll. This was by definition controversial and many an uneasy relationship became distinctly strained. A Welsh gentleman kindly reduced the aid on 'If' to make it just acceptable for the guide. 'The Horror' was not so fortunate — it was ignored. What does one expect in Langdale where quasi-traditional Fell and Rock attitudes have so vehemently manifested themselves? If 'outsiders' breach the walls of acceptability, which are, incidently very thin, strong words are sure to be passed. The first such incident was 'Kipling Groove', indeed a fine climb (harder than 'Gimmer String?') it received a peg. Vague stories circulated and opinions developed — besides, it was one of those Rock and Ice dwarfs they aren't human. 'Our Man' from the Fell and Rock had led it in plimsolls, without runners (but don't forget, he had top-roped it first). What was all the fuss about anyway? A peg remains in 'Kipling Groove' today — at least, most of the time. The crux of the route teases without fail. The sudden transition from the delicate to the strenuous has been the undoing of many; the peg acting as the most popular smoking anchor in the area.

White Ghyll deserves special attention: a place where controversy seems to thrive. 'The Horror' was a challenge to the Ghyll's historical cleanliness, but the line it tresspasses upon is practically non-existent. It has been repeated only a few times and does not appear to be very worthwhile. (Unless of course, you are an aspiring cowboy!). 'Man of Straw' was a different proposition. It had the advantage of being a good aesthetic line linked to the fact that locals put it up. All who had suffered before under the wrath of these possessive gentlemen looked hard for evidence to discredit.

"Is that a score mark? Yes! That's it! Must have pegged the bloody thing!"

All pretty revengeful and puerile stuff. It was a damn good lead by a damned good climber — Alan Austin. Today 'Man of Straw'

is regarded as a mild extreme and will be enjoyed by all who only like pegs for runners, with a few holds thrown in for progress. It has nevertheless, been known to defeat some good leaders,

The base of the groove more often than not being the scene of the repulse. The final wall is not without its own problems too, a few delicate moves being necessary before the final juggy arete is reached. All in all the easiest extreme in White Ghyll!

The shoe was on the other foot, somewhat, as far as 'Eliminot' was concerned. Vagueness was used as an excuse, (for failure, perhaps said the locals) and it was left to Austin to straighten it out with the very hard direct finish, which is the crux today.

The first pitch is very steep with poor protection on its latter half, progress being made on superb holds. A peg has replaced the 'tiny chockstone' which tends to reduce its seriousness. Adequate protection can be found using nuts and a free ascent of this pitch brings its standard nearer to that of the crux. Pitch two is loose and hard. Most fail at the rickety break through the overhangs but for those who get through the sting awaits. The impending wall above, though short, has a distinct lack of holds. A pinch grip kills it — not too hard though: the universal armchair afterthought theory!

Vagueness meant controversy, at least, that's all you seem to need in such an atmosphere and in such surroundings. The name was changed just to show 'em — God knows what a Pod's got to do with it anyway!

More recent talking points have been 'Long Hair' by Pete Livesey, and Paladin by Rob Matheson. The former was top-roped first, a fact which has been freely admitted. For those who know the line it isn't really worth bothering about and this is how Livesey views the situation. I should imagine the guide writers have a corresponding attitude but as far as they are concerned actions speak louder than words and the event was a challenge to purity. Apparent difficulty makes it a hard climb for the 'on sight' guide writers to evaluate and therefore its validity must come into question on this personal level.

'Paladin' is the best line in the Ghyll. It had to be done. It is believed to be Matheson's first new route and from this aspect one can understand his desire to make it as hard as possible and not to fall into the trap that many had done in Borrowdale. The climb itself is said to have two very difficult sections: the initial bulging wall and the groove through the overhangs which is steeper but on better holds. The final groove is said to be the only 'enjoyable' part of the climb.

The route is no doubt extremely strenuous and very technical: the fact that his free lead, six months later, was not on sight (obviously) does not negate his claim that 'Paladin' needs no aid. It has been said that a second party found it very difficult indeed and were unable to do the route without aid. It is also said that these very people were annoyed and sought evidence to discredit the climb. Let us hope 'Paladin' is not to receive the same treatment as 'The Barbarian' has on Craig Pant Ifan — "the second over-



hang is probably Extremely Severe if climbed free"! Similar problems seem to arise as they did for 'Triermain Eliminate' — if you are not a superman you will have to rest. Matheson concedes that an 'on sight' leader will have to rest at the 'good spike' (perhaps this should have been mentioned at an earlier date). I would like to know, however, how many difficult first ascents are done today without a certain amount of prior knowledge? It is a fact that, in the past, aid has only been removed from existing routes by 'on sight' leaders — or have some cunning merchants got away with it! Who knows? Far too much fuss is made of the 'resting' phenomenon as a whole. By the very nature of our species no universal law can be adopted. Direct aid is objective, resting is subjective and entirely a matter for self-criticism. If the amount of 'resting', according to the consensus of opinion, is exceeded, it can only be left to prey on the individual's mind. The superman/idealistic can preach, but it will make no difference.

"Pavey Ark ..... leering silently at those who approach."

Pavey Ark stands proudly above Stickle Tarn, leering silently at those who approach. Its aged face had received little attention until the Fell and Rock gentlemen of the Fifties and Sixties moved in, Routes fell fast and furiously — 'Astra', 'Arcturus', 'Golden Slipper', 'Red Groove', 'Cascade', 'Rainmaker', and many more. Controversy was alas at a low ebb because of close circle domination and it has not been until recently that skirmishes have broken out. One can understand the owners' concern as to the crag's well-being. Fullalove erected the dangerous 'Hobbit', Livesey and Rogers arrived, with the audacity to climb 'Sally Free and Easy'. Barley and Long sneaked in with 'The Sun'. Finally, Matheson and Colvin planted 'Cruel Sister' next to 'Arcturus'. Others were done it is true, but they are not really important — no good at all for moaning, groaning, and up-tight cajoling — they fall easily at V.S.!

'The Hobbit' was no problem; the aid was removed leaving a very bold lead up loose impending rock. The technical difficulty however, is exceeded by others on the cliff. 'Sally Free and Easy' seemed well set until 'Ragman's Trumpet' arrived. Their central parts cover common ground up the obvious crack line to the right of 'Hobbit' but use different entrances and exits. The former is very hard and very direct; the latter is fairly hard and fairly direct — at least that's how they look! Only the future guide will reveal the verdict. Whatever the outcome it must be remembered that guide writers are in a responsible and vulnerable position and this very position itself engenders a patronising and a condescending attitude — it can be left to the imagination what one will be like after many years in such a responsible and vulnerable position! 'The Sun' has fallen to Valentine and the removal of an aid peg must make it another difficult route. 'Cruel Sister' is a problem child. Not only does it look desperate but the guide book deadline seems to have arrived. It is revealed that the crux is at the end of a series of hard moves protected

only by tiny threads. On top of all this it uses a sky-hook for aid. "A bloody WHAT?" Would you credit it — on Pavey Ark as well! Any bets on the next bone of contention?

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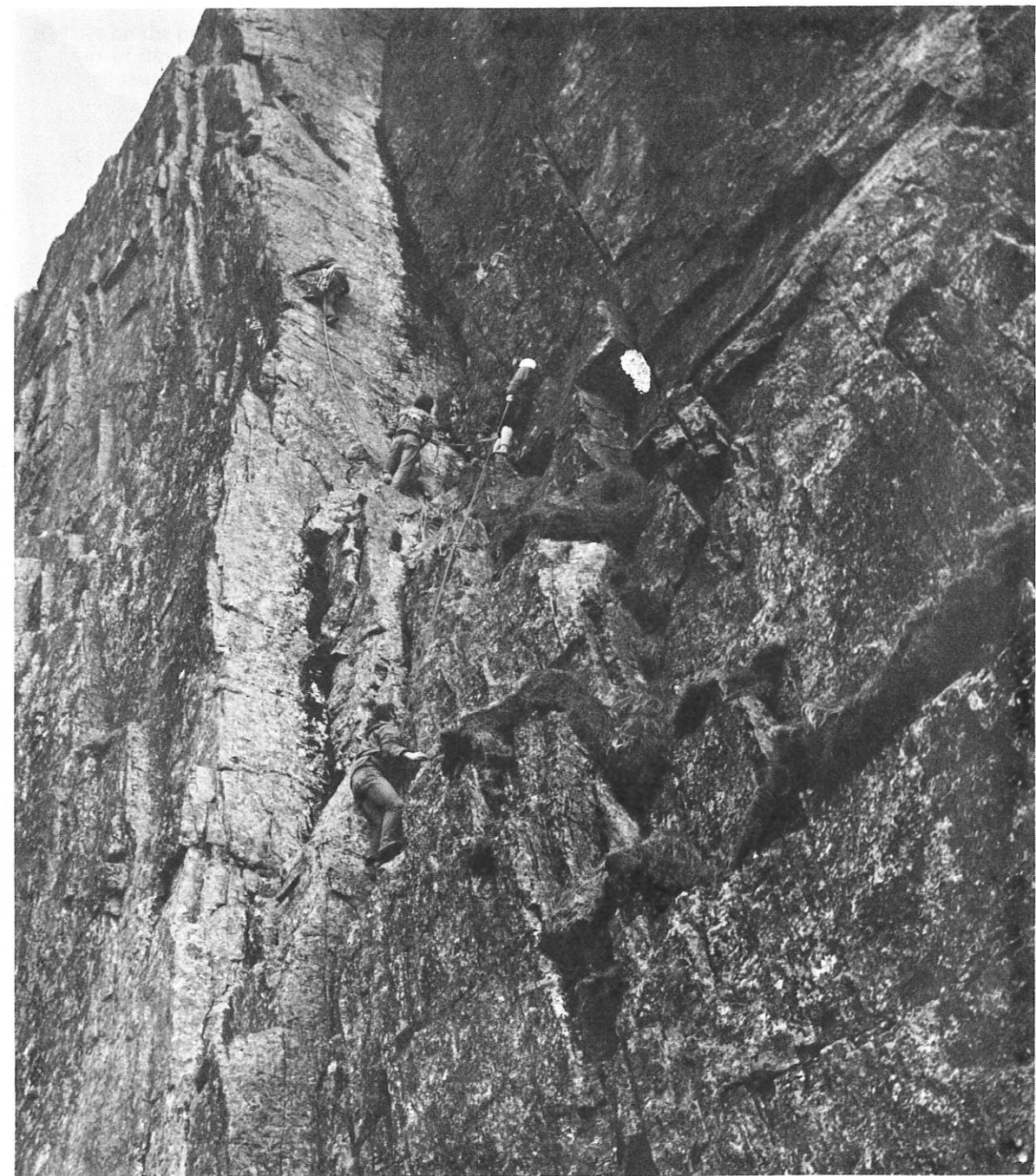
Deer Bield Crag, made famous by its superb Buttress route, has not been left out in the cold. 'Peccadillo' is the name, failure was the game. Doubt turned to disbelief, and when it was found that the first ascendants were, indeed, not eight feet tall, an explanation was sought. "When did 'sling lassoing' become a natural climbing habit, requiring no mention?" The Fell and Rock men asked. The nastier minds might say that the F.R.C.C. gentlemen are not good enough to be 'Gods of Possibility' because in fact the sling has been reached since without aid. It is unfortunate that these people represent the standard and guard the position by literary and verbal means rather than by climbing achievement.

The fate of 'Peccadillo' now lies in the capable hands of Rodney Valentine. General questions arise — could it be said that many of our leaders are liars, or is it that excitement and the prospect of fame gives them periodic lapses of memory? Another climb upon this slaty crag worthy of comment is 'Hubris'. Many had ignored it for years because of its easy appearance but deception was its very nature. Many pegs later and it was either conquered or just hammered to death. Today it is an excellent Hard Very Severe needing no aid whatsoever. What excuse was given? The weather was said to have had something to do with it.

The 'Big Three' on Dow Crag fell to the 'Welsh'. Murmurs were heard in private circles and there they remained until — yes! A Welshman of repute put a peg on 'Hiraeth', but sadly, had the grace to remove the offending convenience soon afterwards. Now what? Pegs? Bolts? Aid? The cliff moaned and finally repulsed these determined attacks, but on they came, hour after hour, year after year, until we were presented with Chris Woodall's 'North Buttress' (A1/H.V.S.). The final pitch provides a fitting exit to Adams' and Read's impressive Girdle — a fine effort by a pair who have in the past solved several outstanding problems. As far as high standard mountain routes in the Lakes are concerned, Dove takes a lot of beating, with 'Hiraeth' and 'Extol' outstanding.

"A hi-jacking foray from Wales."

Back to the core the last great problem of Esk Buttress was ready for the taking but a hi-jacking foray from Wales carried off the prize Human elements hurled insults galore. The amoral aliens thought this competition was great and returned home full of tales of intrigue and sunrise walks. That's about it really; they called it 'Central Pillar' (by popular request?); it's Extremely Severe and takes the best line on the crag. 'Black Sunday' is indeed well named and at H.V.S. takes the second-best line on the crag. Surely a day when modern climbing morality came under



Botterills Slab, Scafell (Photo: I. Roper)

fire, but surely a day when three fine routes materialised — the 'Red Edge' completing the trio — if this is what competition achieves it's not all bad.

So year by year the story continues; in one area or another disputes and disagreements spring up like bush fires, flicker brightly for a time before being damped down to smoulder on, producing perhaps, a little smoke and an acrid smell.

This is normal, but on occasions the Lake District seems to lack a sense of humour in its arguments. Bonington called a climb on Scafell, East Buttress, 'The Holy Ghost'. At one stage of the argument it looked as if his doubtful taste in route names was going to provide the necessary prejudice for another good climb being omitted from the Fell and Rock guide books.

New routes today are scarce and competition is intense, especially on the more popular crags, and climbers, both young and old, will be tempted to use every means at

their disposal ("If I don't do it, somebody else will!"). This attitude if carried too far, can be pernicious, and could have adverse effects on the high standard of free climbing which now obtains in the Lake District. The traditionalists of today, like their forerunners, see themselves as the guardians of the standard — they act as a counter-balance to the 'modern trend'. Their attitude, too, can be pernicious if they belittle indiscriminately the achievement of anyone outside their ranks. Both attitudes, though opposing, are complementary. On the other hand, the traditionalist is a necessary restraint on the other, the 'modern' helps to maintain a progressive development — so essential in such a personal and individual sport as rock climbing.

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# pub talk



## DAM THE NATIONAL PARK

The decision of the C.E.G.B. to plump for the Dinorwic site near Llanberis for a new Pump Storage Scheme will come as no surprise to those who have followed the saga. The red herring alternatives of Cwm Penamnen and Croesor are now being used as propaganda to show that by dropping them the C.E.G.B. cares. In fact one suspects that such red herrings are now being used as a built in safety valve for any large organisation that wants to encroach upon the National Parks.

R.T.Z.'s efforts in the Dolgellau area of the park followed a similar pattern with an ugly operation of dredging the Mawddach for gold and other ores being abandoned "in respect for public opinion" while the main target — the mining operation further inland in the Hermon Valley probably gets the go ahead.

Some conservationists while relieved that the scheme has gone to Llanberis rather than the other "alternatives" are fighting it as hard as they can, seeing it as yet another thin end of a multi-pronged wedge that will eventually destroy our National Parks.

### Where next?

They point out that if the scheme goes through there is no guarantee that the other

sites investigated will not be brought into use at some future date. Other "potential" sites include the Gwynant and Nant Francon Valleys and a couple of valleys in the Peak District National Park. Technically the most attractive scheme must be the one incorporating a raised Llyn Gwynant and the lakes enclosed by the Snowdon Horseshoe. At the moment the C.E.G.B. wouldn't even dare suggesting it but that does not mean that, emboldened by success in the present and future schemes, the day will never come that they would.

The most vociferous of all the objectors are all locally residing, "non native" climbers. To the forefront are Joe Brown, Pete Crew and "Ginger" Cain. The locals recognise Joe as the leader though Cain is certainly more vociferous and probably more active in his opposition. Crew is acting as "the voice of reason" trying to convince the locals that the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is fools gold. He has drummed up a lot of local support, most of it passive.

### Jobs for the boys

Because of what one C.E.G.B. official described as the "hysteria for jobs" the majority of the local people seem to be taking a stand in favour of the scheme though some that I talked to had grave misgivings,

particularly on the point of the likelihood of an influx of itinerant labour. The majority however feel that the very fact that the area is a National Park is a disadvantage to them personally in that industry other than on a cottage scale is either banned or actively discouraged. The tourist industry is the mainstay at the moment but apart from the climbers it is to a certain extent seasonal and a lot of the peak season work goes to outsiders some of whom then stay on.

Thus the issue has re-opened the healing rift between English and Welsh residents. Generally the English and particularly Joe Brown have done rather well since they came into the area but they have, with one or two notable exceptions in recent years, employed "immigrant" climbers to the exclusion of the resident dole queuers or have good jobs — their intelligence would of course often guarantee them even better jobs outside the area. This is obviously a sore point and the statement by one of the scheme's opponents that the locals haven't the intelligence to see that the scheme offers them little or no guarantee of long term employment rankles even more.

### M.P. pulls switch

The local Labour M.P. Goronwy Roberts supports the scheme wholeheartedly though he is not over-pleased that it has been pointed out that he opposed the 1949 Hydro schemes for the very reasons that opponents of the present scheme are using.

### C.E.G.B. pulls stops: Lady pushes Joe

In the week when the C.E.G.B. lashed out its money on a big P.R. exhibition and film show, demonstrations became almost commonplace. A group of local climbers demonstrated outside the show, disrupting the opening ceremony, local children paraded with **NO TO JOE YES TO DAM** banners and a local lady physically attacked the enigmatic dart player in the Padarn. Since the bother started there is a notable lack of locals now among the crowds in their climbing Mecca.

Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party, support the scheme, mainly because so many English visitors and residents oppose it, officially from the employment angle, in disregard of all their past policies. This support is lightly regarded by the objectors which is further evidence that any appearance of integration is purely superficial. On a dry Sunday night the voice of Nationalism with a capital N comes over strong in the chapels.

### Hell on earth

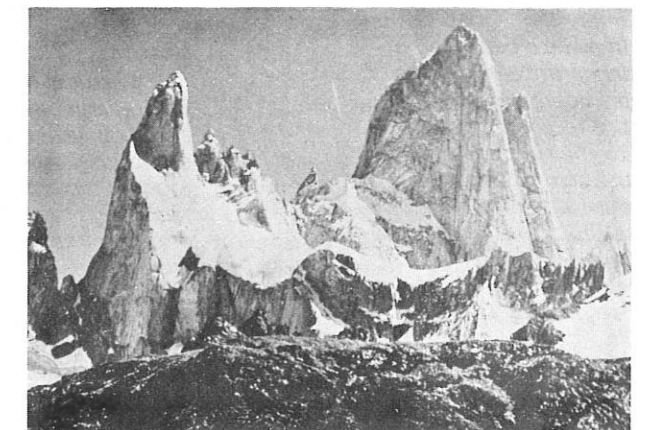
So what does the scheme mean to the climber? If he knows or cares about the National Park he must be totally committed against it. C.E.G.B. literature explains that the scheme is "near the edge of the National Park". This means **IN THE NATIONAL**

**PARK!** If he cares about two forty feet embankments on Llyn Peris which the board say **COULD** be attractively screened, if he cares about a dam of natural materials at the end of Llyn Marchllyn which one C.E.G.B. official enthusiastically told me will "look like just another slate tip" he will oppose the scheme.

What if he doesn't care? The area for the next seven years — in Joe Browns words "a climbers climbing life time" will be a trouble spot, it has reached saturation point already as far as climbers and walkers are concerned yet it will have to cope with a flood of itinerant workers also looking for kicks. Clashes and with them a build up of the FEDS is inevitable and the attendant risks need not to be tressed to those who drive. All this may of course lead to the increasingly necessary decentralisation of climbers as getting away from it all means swapping an industrial city for a rural construction site. The Pillar of Elidir will be out of bounds, which, inevitably makes it **THE** crag to climb on.

Is the cause lost? From a visiting climbers viewpoint the answer is almost certainly **YES**. If the scheme goes through we and the National Parks lose, if it doesn't hostility from the locals at causing the loss of jobs they would probably not have got anyway will take us back to the bad old days. Six months ago the old differences and jealousies were for the most part swept under the carpet now they're there for anyone to see. The foot and mouth epidemic made them see which side their bread was buttered but that was over four years ago, in their present mood they might even support a 100 foot dam at the bottom of Llyn Padarn, if it meant a thousand jobs for them before they drowned.

## EAST FACE OF FITZROY the last frontier



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# LETTERS

## Outdoor Centres and Accidents.

Dear Sir,

Your editorial of the April/May issue is vague where it should be precise. You say, "men were put in a position where they could lose control of the party." What or who put them in that position? You imply that the 'System' did. Surely such a sinister pressure deserves better definition than that.

Is your statement, "You add nothing to a child's moral fibre by frightening the living daylight out of it....." a statement of your belief or do you mean that there are people who deliberately set out to induce real and deep fear in their pupils by means of mountaineering? If the latter then you owe it to your readers and other concerned parties to say who the people are.

You say, "expeditions to the hills have taken over the role of the cold bath in the morning". What was the role of the cold bath and who wishes to replace it?

You imply that a local climber is the best source of climbing instruction. Your own Derek Ellis showed up the local climber for the doubtful operator he is in his recent article on rope work at Tremadoc.

You imply that "good climbers would make a better job of instructing in the centres than the people doing the job at the moment. The 'good climber' coming to the centre is frequently frustrated to find how little use he can make of his advanced skill. He is understandably disappointed when he finds that he is lucky to get on to a self-respecting 'Diff'. with his pupils.

In any sort of teaching it helps if the teacher has some knowledge of current educational practice, methods and objectives and has considered what his responsibilities are and where his loyalties belong. Are reflections among the equipment of the 'good climber'?

The 'good climber' can be a great stimulus: indeed if he can meet the other requirements he is invaluable, but he is often only interested in short term

employment. Perhaps this is due to the essential freedom of the hard climbing type, it may be as you suggest due to poor pay but it could be due to the prevailing conditions of service.

One knows what one is going to be paid before taking up a post at a school, but in a centre one does not know what ones hours of work are going to be—except long—the arrangement is 'open ended'. Demands that are quite unreasonable can be made, and at peak periods are made, strong, keen men are reduced to just hanging on. Such a situation would not be tolerated in industry and there are laws to prevent it happening in the road and air travel industries. In teaching the problem is supposed not to arise.

M.H. Burt.  
Wolverhampton.

I am glad that someone has added detailed comment to what was inevitably an emotive Editorial. What Mr. Burt and I both feel is that there should be further study of the 'how' and 'why' of outdoor education. In this context the new pamphlet by Harold Drasdo, 'Education and the Mountain Centres' (Reviewed in this issue) is relevant and essential reading. ED.

## Pollution: A Reply

Dear Sir,

"When the last Great Auk died, everybody's belly was full and they were contented. Let the futurists seek out their own food." Mystery of the unknown has always been the fascination of an exciting existence. This has just been aptly pointed out to us in Alan Evans article, but very soon denounced by the yearning for detailed route descriptions which are the highest form of the destruction of the 'mystery element'. Scotland's infamous route descriptions e.g. '1,000 feet, climb the rib by the line of least resistance.' to give an extreme example, epitomises the situation. Here you are not spoon fed by the guide book with a hold by hold commentary and a list of the exact number and size of nuts to carry—and whether to place them with the right hand or the left—leaving

nothing to the imagination and intelligence of the individual. Surely this sort of route description is the ultimate 'Murder of the impossible'. Impossibility lies not only in being weak in the physical sense, but also in the mental approach to the realm of uncertainty ie. mystery. Logically by destroying the 'impossible' we must be destroying the 'mystery' along with it.

After climbing a scantily described route the amount of achievement enjoyed is greater in a pioneering sense. Bonnatti often refuses to write descriptions, why should he? If somebody wants to repeat his ascent let them do it in as near the same frame of mind that Bonnatti needed and they themselves will have 'climbed' the route without any excess help and so derive a much greater satisfaction from it.

The purpose of artificial climbing must be made clear—it must possess an objective which is a natural feature, whether it is an obvious crack or a blank roof, hence you have the basic reason for your assault. The next is your ethical approach to overcoming it, which is directly connected with the level of technical progress at the time. Therefore it is wrong to deplore Biven and Peck for climbing 'Malham Central Wall' in 1959 as they (a) had the easily discernable natural feature, and (b) climbed it on a par with the level of technology ie. there were only bolts and 'bendy pegs' available. It is also ludicrous to proclaim that 'Controversy' now climbs that bottom wall without resorting to bolts as it does not follow the original blank line of 'Central Wall' and 'bolts' were used but in a different form. Differentiating between a bolt and a drilled thread hole is absurd because they both rely on the same factor—the destruction of a natural feature to lower its impregnable formation to that of human climbing abilities. The desecration of the is in the DRILLING and not by what you place in the hole by devious and cunning methods. So the 'ethicists' at this time should start denouncing 'drilling' and leave 'bolting' as a word of the past.

Al Evans doctrine is selfishly

directed to a high level of competence and ability, allowing no leeway for the average climber. Evans' Laws are hard, true and rigid but if followed to their logical conclusions how many new routes and established hard routes will he, and many others, not dare to attempt for the fear of the 'avenging hand of Big Brother' striking them down for touching a nut?

The conclusion of the article centres around the 'treasured right to do our own thing on the crags'. So, why did he spend some two thousand words attempting to convince us that we shouldn't? Climbers are human beings (mostly) and are apt to be weak both physically and morally especially in the trying situations that climbing imposes on them. These idealistic viewpoints could only be made real if we all passed through the B.M.C. and turned into calculating climbing machines, computerised with detailed information, striding forward, consciences clear into an ethical fantasy land where individuality is a sin.

Ken Jones,  
Sheffield.

## Scottish Guide Books.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your challenge in the April/May "Pub Talk", I would like to say what my attitude to guide books is, since I have been climbing for two years in Ayreshire without one. South of the border, I can only climb about H.Sev., but I think this is mainly because I am unwilling to be blinkered by route descriptions and like to remain uncommitted. But on my home ground on Loudoun Hill, near Darvel, Ayrshire, I can climb AND explore at my top standard all day. Instead of using books to judge what routes I can do, I use my eyes, which are much more dependable. I think this is what experience really is—an instinctive grading of a route by your own judgement and not someone else's.

"Pub Talk" stated that information would be needed for the 'rabbits', but I would challenge this. If all the 'rabbits' began their climbing as I have had to do, there would be no danger of them killing themselves. From the first day, they would cultivate a true awareness of the rock they are climbing.

It is only when common standards are set up, thus leading to competition, that climbing becomes more dangerous for the inexperienced.

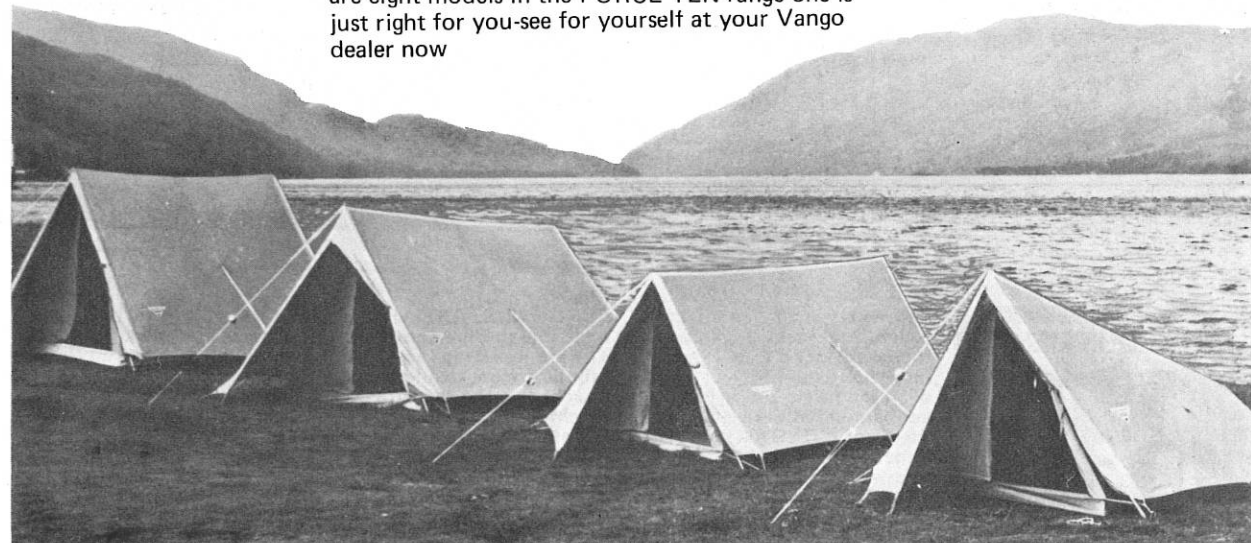
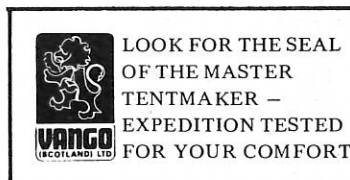
Obviously, from the author's attitude, he believes that these undocumented crags should only be savoured by the "hard man". But he seems to forget that when you are leading a route that has not been recorded in any way, your standard goes down due to the non-committal approach needed when exploring possibilities. This will mean a healthier outlook on climbing morals because we will forget our commercial and competitive viewpoints in favour of a more aesthetic one. In my opinion this is the purest form of the sport. It is no use going about it in a businesslike manner, since the sport is itself illogical.

In answer to those weak willed Sassenach critics, I have this to say—we realise that climbing must be kept an adventurous sport. Unlike you sheep, we do not need to brag of our standards. Instead of technical standards we prefer to judge our "hard-men" by the amount of



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Alastair W. Rigg  
Cumnock,  
Ayrshire.

**New (?) Routes in The Lake District.**

Dear Sir,

I was reading about the centre of Raven Crag Thirlmere in a previous issue. You obviously did not know that Brian Robertson and I did a route straight up the centre, mostly on aid in 1964. The Fell and Rock would not acknowledge this as the route used pitons. It was then, I think, the biggest and best aid route in the district. Also you might like to know of another climb which, as far as I know, has not had a second ascent. It is 'The Horror' in White Ghyll which uses only three pins in 250 feet. After climbing the first pitch of 'Haste Not' the route goes directly over the roof above. This is another that the Fell and Rock man for the area did not print because of the pins.

Paul Ross,  
North Conway,  
New Hampshire,  
U.S.A.

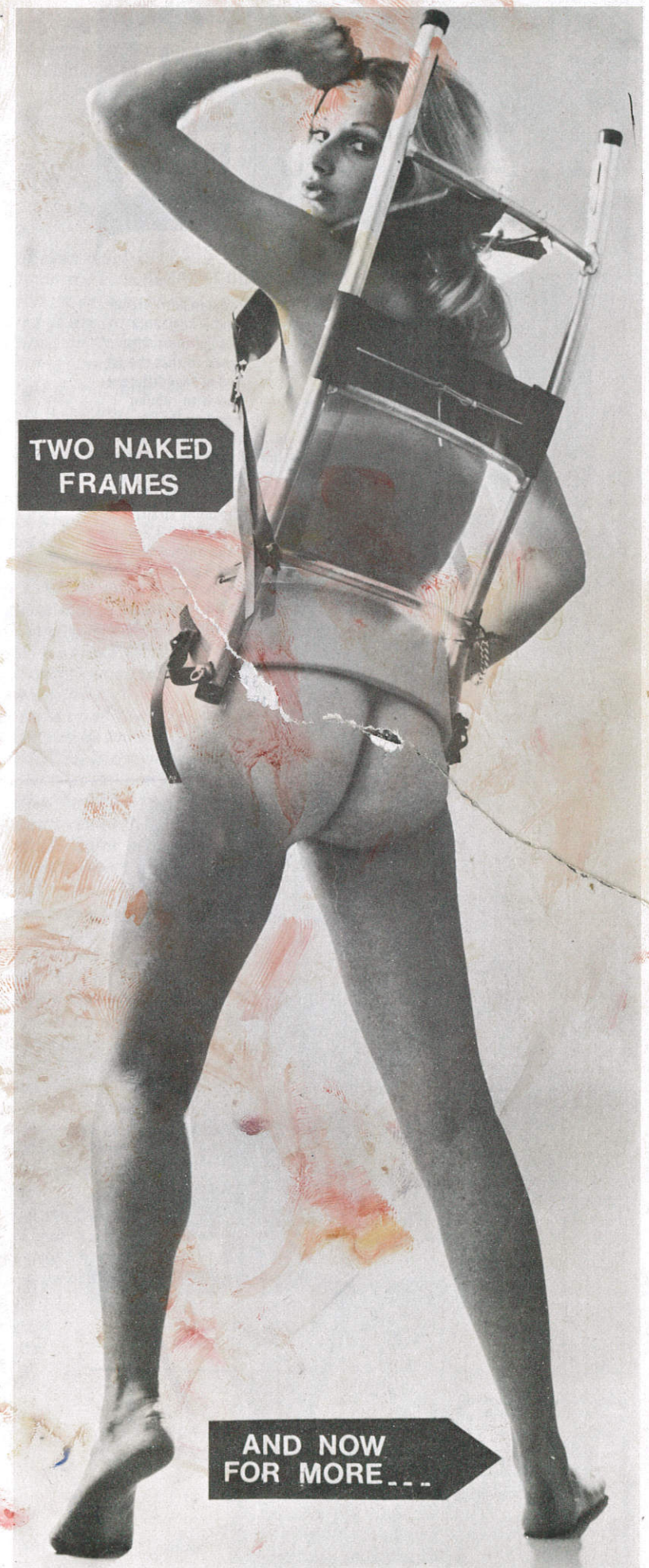
Times have not changed. ED.

**Ethics?**

Dear Sir,

After your refreshing article on the first ascent of Harrison's Rocks, I insist that your readers realise how the main stream of rock climbing flows.

The following snips of conversation were first learnt during 5 years of looking like a climber at the foot of BROWN SLABS ARETE. (Alas, I never could afford the Duvet), They have been invaluable in my progress! I now feel good enough to stand at the foot of Cloggy (but I still cannot afford the Duvet):  
**WHY I WILL NOT LEAD IT:**  
I have forgotten — my PAs/cigs!

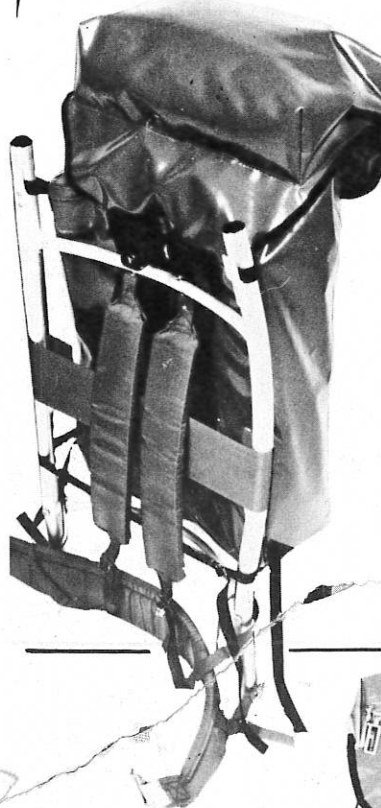


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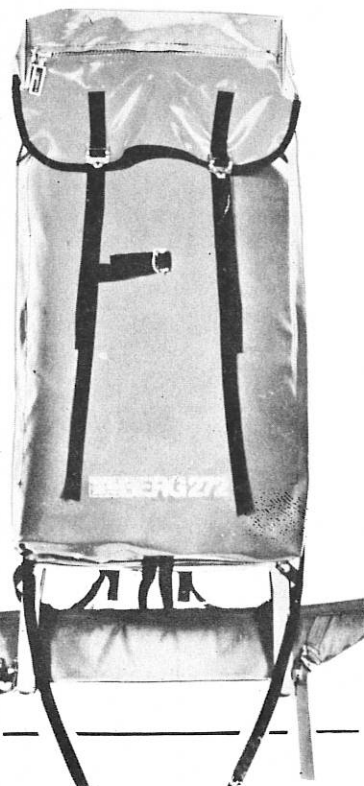
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*The other party — are going too slowly/about to fall off/will laugh.*

*My mother/girl friend/wife/ insurance agent — would not like it.*

*I have just had — 'flu/broken neck/dysentry/six pints.*

*WHY I DID LEAD IT (the first pitch):*

*Are you really sure — there is a bottle of brandy/ a man selling ices/a girl in a bikini — at the belay?*

*Do you really think I am too good?*

*I just had seven pints.*

*What did that rude boy scout say?*

*WHY I INSISTED THAT THE SECOND LEAD THROUGH:*

*I am enjoying the — view/a smoke/ a quiet relief/changing underwear.*

*You need the experience (actually he needs the view/smoke/ etc.).*

*The second pitch is — tooeasy/ too short/not enough exposure.*

*WHAT I SAID IN THE BAR AFTERWARDS:*

*"Just a short route on one of those out-of-the-way quiet crags. No I don't know the name of the route, it's about 500 feet, it may have been a first, the rock wasn't scratched. It felt about mild VS (TRUE)."*

*Happy (non) Climbing,*

*F.A.Ling*

*(Nom de scramble for Guy S. Cliff)*

## Free Climbing Standards and New Routes.

Dear Sir,

*I have decided, because of rumours circulating, that if any approach was made regarding the validity of our routes I would reply, quite naturally I think with a, "Stuff you — I.m doing my thing and I don't have to justify them to anyone". A recent letter to me about the exclusion of my routes from the guide book due to doubts as to the way in which they were put up — or whether they have ever been climbed in the way that I have claimed, has decided me to reply and explain (NOT justify) the routes. As far as the guide is concerned I don't care whether they are left out or not, but I do care about the 'word being put out' as it were.*

*Two main allegations have been made — that I used aid (for resting or otherwise) and did not mention it, and whether I top roped the routes previously or not. Two very separate factors I would have thought.*

*First point — my route descriptions are absolutely accurate as far as pitons (For protection aid or resting) and aid moves or resting points are concerned. I think all of our routes had witnesses, apart from the Trow Gill ones. And anyone would be wise to check with them, especially re. Face Route, which most seem concerned about. I have very pure views on resting points, which seems to be the problem on Face Route — I believe that 'If it's touched it's aid.' and I most certainly did not hang on any slings or pegs on Face Route. I had in fact very little on in the way of slings on Face Route — the only runner of any kind above the initial groove, which is simple anyway, was the peg runner after the crux — WHERE YOU CAN STAND ON A LEDGE WITHOUT HANDS ANYWAY. John Barker and Phil Johnson were there, but I don't recollect any other people being there.*

*As far as using pegs before removing them goes (To learn moves?) I have never done this — the only possible case of this was on Clink — Trow Gill — where I had led the route with one peg for aid, but realised after I had used it that it would go without, so I returned the weekend after, removed the peg, then led the route again. Some may complain about the ethics of that, but if I didn't remove it, then later someone else would have.*

*As far as the other point — whether the routes were top roped or not I consider this a very different matter, and have never made any attempt to hide exactly what was done prior to the ascent of the route. I would remind anyone these routes are very, very hard and some very unprotected — the only other routes of this standard were top roped first, or climbed by repeated attacks whittling down aid. Apart from Clink I have never whittled down aid, but the following list of how all my routes were approached may be what is wanted:-*

*LANGLIFFE — all 'on sight' leads except Sickler, where I had a top rope from half way on my 1st attempt.*

*LOUP SCAR — Louper led on sight; Lapper top roped first.*

*PENYGHENT EAST — on sight leads.*

*GOREDALE — Face Route and 2nd pitch of Jenny Wren top roped first; Rebel inspected from abseil.*

*TROW GILL — all routes top roped first.*

*KILNSEY — Diedre top roped first; Central Wall abseil down.*

*MALHAM — Doubting Thomas, abseil down.*

*There has been much discourse lately on the ethics of abseil inspections or top roping. I have arrived at the following criteria (Helped by thoughts of other leading climbers):-*

*(1) Whilst I do not approve of top roping it has been done and makes the route no less valid though every attempt should be made to climb the route without top roping first.*

*(2) Abseil inspections are less objectionable, but on routes of this difficulty they are prudent to say the least.*

*(3) I believe that second ascents of these routes should be done without either of these preliminary techniques and make no bones about the fact that under these conditions a second ascent can be harder than the first. That is the principle I have worked to in my second ascents. Finally Austin's statement seems relevant, "On hard first ascents, some people only lead on sight where there is protection."*

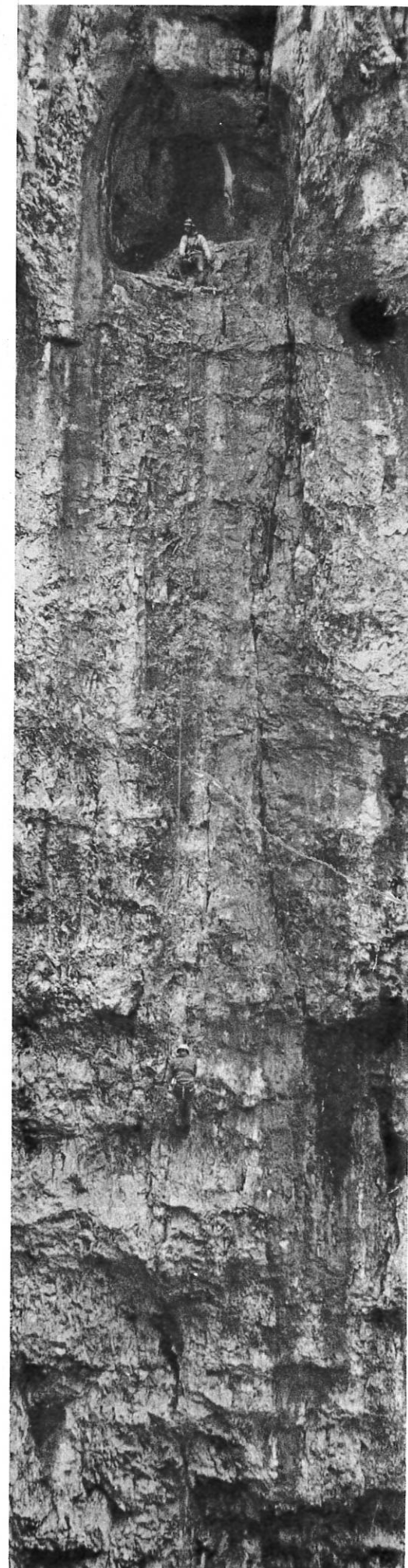
*I have never done any of the old peg routes as peg routes, and so cannot be accused of doing routes on pegs first, an even more dubious practice than top roping.*

*You can see from my latest two routes (Doubting Thomas and Rebel) that I have decided that top roping is no longer valid for me. But that is personal and I do not criticise others doing it, I just hope that ethics on this point will improve generally if we all try.*

*I hope this clarifies things but I must repeat — all my route descriptions that I have written are accurate regarding aid and resting.*

*Pete Livesey,  
 Scunthorpe,  
 Lincs.*

*Cave mouth, Gordale  
 (Photo; Roger K. Pearson)*





# Obituary

Anthony Charles (Tony) Willmot



One of the leading modern developers of climbing in the Avon Gorge slipped and fell to his death there recently. Tony Willmott was born in London and started climbing at the age of thirteen on Harrison's Rocks. He first went to North Wales when he was sixteen, but it was to the Avon Gorge—comparatively easy of access from London—that a great deal of his climbing trips were made. It remained one of his favourite climbing areas. So much so, that shortly before his death he had moved down to Bristol to be nearer the crag.

Tony made more than a dozen first ascents in the Gorge, more than any other climber except Ed. Drummond, and had also climbed just about every other route. Perhaps his best known climbs are Think Pink, the direct finish on the Pink Wall above Malpractice, and the two mind bending climbs on the Unknown Gully Wall—Exploding Galaxy and Amanita Muscarina. For the boldness of the last two enterprises in particular people will continue to remember Tony with respect.

Outside the Gorge Tony had climbed extensively. On Skye he made what was probably the second ascent of Robin Smith's

legendary Thunder Rib and had also climbed other of the celebrated climbs on the island including King Cobra and Vulcan's Wall. In North Wales he made early ascents of The Great Wall and Woubits Left Hand—before the main mass of hard climbers turned their attentions to these climbs. At Swanage he was an early pioneer of hard climbing with climbs such as Strophanthin and Heidelberg Creature to his credit.

Abroad too, Tony was not one to be impressed by a reputation. In Norway he made an early and speedy ascent of the Rimmon Route on Troll Wall and was the author of several new routes in the area. He had been to Yosemite where he climbed many of the valley classics with Doug Scott and climbed the Nose on El Capitan with another celebrated pioneer of Avon climbing, Chris Jones—now a resident of California.

In short, Tony was a fine rock climber, at home or away and a person whose presence one always welcomed as adding something to the pleasure of life. It is tragic that he should have been killed in a moment of error when soloing home at the end of a day's climbing, on the cliff which he liked best and where he had done so much.

# AREA NOTES

## LAKE DISTRICT

There have been two small mistakes in the last sets of notes both due to the Editor's inability to read his own writing. In the last issue it was stated that Bill Freeland and George Simm free climbed Athanor on Goat Crag in Borrowdale. This statement should have been that they reduced the aid on the second pitch by one peg and did not, in fact, manage to climb the whole route free. In the issue prior to that (April/May) mention was made of the fact that Bill Freeland and MacHaffie made the second ascent of Zoar. It appears that Tony Stephenson and Chris Sice in fact made the second ascent.

My apologies to all concerned, especially to the magazines correspondent in the area who has suffered a severe loss of credibility due to my bumbblings. The only real way that the truth and hard facts will get in print though is if you, the climbers, let us know; on a part time basis I haven't got time—or the ability—to be everywhere at once.

Elsewhere in the Lakes a few new routes have been made. In the Ullswater are of the Eastern Fells two new routes and a direct start have been added by J. Kilduff, P. Rigby and R. Kenyon. All three are on the upper section of the crag! 'Diagonal Route' climbs up across Buttress Route to join 'Susan' (130' S.). 'Gowbarrow Bastion' (120' V.S.) breaks left from the same line and goes to the top of the crag. A Direct, and more logical, start was added later to the Bastion.

Matheson's routes Holocaust and Catacomb on Dow Crag were both repeated by Pete Livesey and Roger Baxter-Jones. But Matheson has managed to keep one climb ahead of the competition by putting up Tarkus, an impressive vertical crack line to the right of Leopard's Crawl that had, apparently, been attempted on pegs before. The route is graded H.V.S. but it would probably be unwise to regard it as easy in this grade just because, as on several of the other climbs he has done Matheson was accompanied by his father. Without wishing to start a 'Climbing Grannies' competition that august gentleman must be one of the more impressive over fifty year old climbers currently operating.

Matheson himself, with David Miller, made the second ascent of Read and Lake's 'Silence'. They found it to be a difficult and impressive pitch with dubious rock thrown in for good measure, all in all more difficult than the first pitch of Sidewalk. It does, however, provide a link between Isengard and Sidewalk for the foolish and the brave!

On Scafell East Buttress Miller and Matheson also made the fourth ascent of

Gold Rush. This they found to be more unpleasant than hard though the excellent final crack and groove line make a splendid final gesture. Also on Scafell Read and Adams appear to have made the best attempt to date to climb the appalling steep central section of the East Buttress. They reached a point about halfway up this piece of rock which must be one of the biggest unclimbed areas of rock, with natural lines, in the Lakes.

Alan Austin, with Ed Grindley and Dave Miller, climbed the very steep slanting crack above the First Aid Box on Dow Crag. The climb finishes with an exposed pitch above the Abraham's Cave. Though a similar line had been taken before it ignored the challenge of the fierce crack line by traversing right. Though artificial in that sense the route is very difficult in execution. (X.S.)

In Langdale Pete Livesey turned his attentions to the former peg climb Kaiser-gebirge Wall. The new climb is called Fine Time (150' X.S.). Aid, in the form of a peg and sling, is used to surmount the first roof but the rest of the climb is free.

A similar line to the right of this was climbed some time after by Matheson who has also repeated Sally Free and Easy on Pavey Ark. Another party to repeat this route in early September stated that though hard the long diagonal crack was a superb pitch—one of the better ones in the valley.

See elsewhere in this issue for Lakeland activities and new climb details.

## SCOTLAND

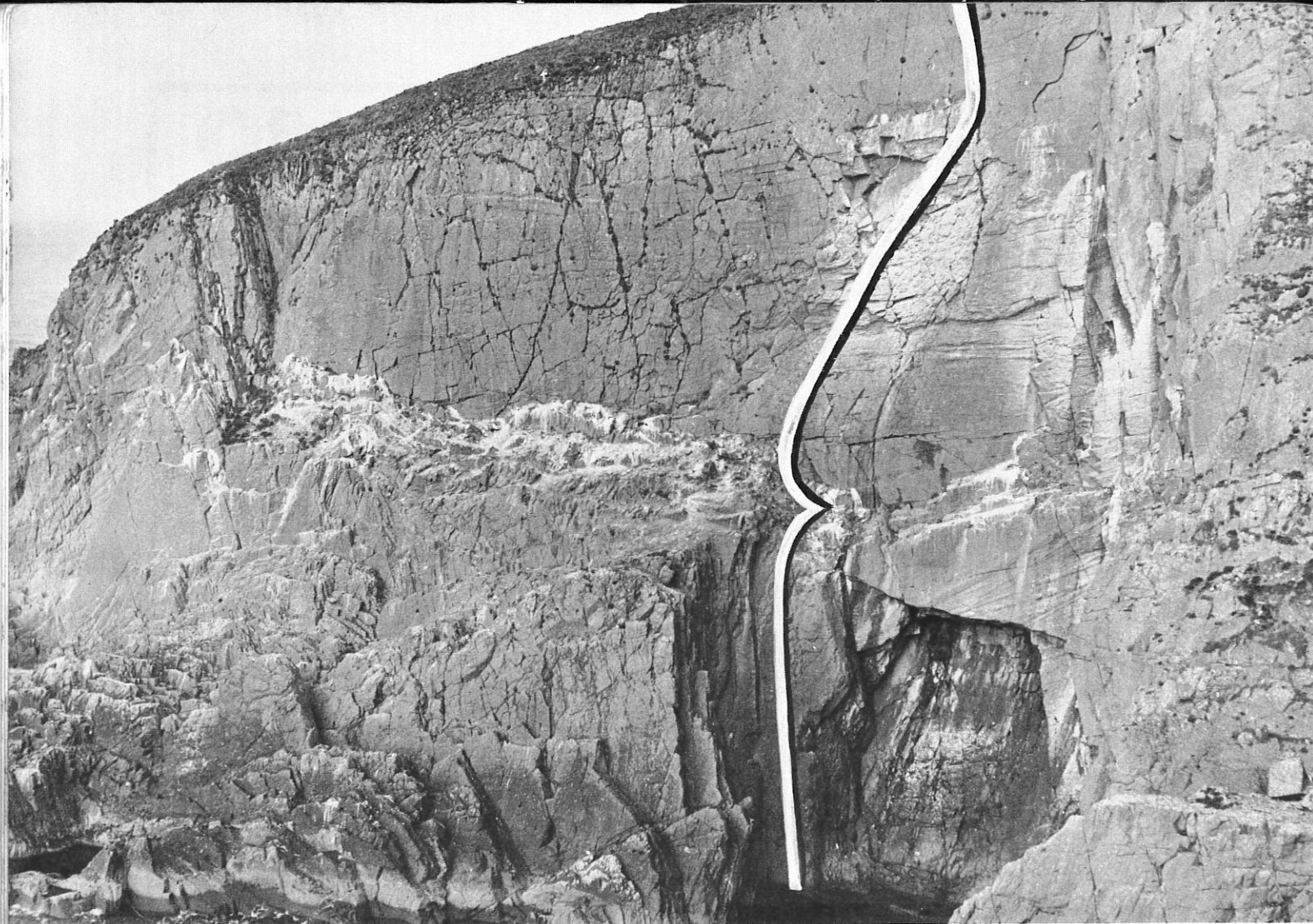
Once again the editor's hand writing has led to two errors in previous issues. One was the dubbing of Muir and Docherty the 'Stream Team' this should have read 'Steam Team'. The same pair also had their first winter ascent of Left Hand Route stolen from them in print by Carrington and Rouse (June issue). Carrington and Rouse in fact climbed Right Hand Route.

Apologies to all concerned, I never could tell my right from my left.

### Kirkcudbrightshire

As you rush for your maps let me save you the time. Turn left at Gretna as you go into Scotland and you will get to Kirkcudbright in about fifty miles. The cliffs are sea cliffs about six miles south of Kirkcudbright town itself indenting the headland to the west of Little Ross Island. There are four main cliffs but as yet only two of them have been climbed on. On the main cliff the best routes are probably K9 (165' V.S.), Cheverst, Dickinson, Scultick and Cottingham., and Yellow Dog (160' H.V.S.) by the same party. On the





Kirkcudbrightshire Craigs Limehouse Blues 205 V.S.(H). Excellent untouched line in the corner to the left (Photo: W. Cheverst)

photograph of this cliff the climbs are on the left hand side. K9 is hidden by the central ridge and Yellow Dog is just visible to the left by the overhangs. Cliff 2 contains one route especially worthy of mention; Limehouse Blues (205' H.V.S. party as before). Though the corner to the left looks to be a 'junior Tyrannosaurus Rex' and is as yet unclimbed.

The handiness of these cliffs for parties in the Lakes and coming to and from Scotland does not need to be stressed. There is obviously great potential here as exploration has only been going on this year.

Since the receipt of the notes on Kirkcudbrightshire their author, Bill Cheverst has most unfortunately been killed in the Alps. Formerly a Nottingham based climber and a member of the best known Nottingham Hindu Kush expedition for which Doug. Scott compiled the report Bill had been in the Lancashire area for the last two years and was an active explorer both there and in the Lakes. His death is particularly untimely for his wife and family to whom we extend our sympathy.

#### PEAK DISTRICT

A sudden burst of activity at Cratcliffe has resulted in the elimination of some long standing problems and some fine climbs on the large prow shaped buttress between Weston's Chimney and Owl Gully. Boot Hill (60 ft. XS) climbs out of the bottom of

Weston's Chimney at the bottom break to the arete and then up this to the top via one or two reachy moves. (See photo in last issue). Led by Proctor with Evans, Jones and Myhill (Hawke and Cobley were in the Alps) this should become a classic as all the hard moves are well protected. Fern Hill (50 ft. XS) by the same team but led by Myhill takes the fierce diagonal line across the wall opposite Tiger Traverse, starting 10 ft. up the gully and using a poor nut for aid near the start. The girdle of this buttress is Dr. Prune (90 ft. XS) by Myhill and Jones and traverses the next break up from Fern Hill. There are some committing moves near the start and some awkward jamming round the other side of the arete but the climbing is magnificent. The combination of Nunn's superb traverse of the Suicide Buttress—Mordaunt, and Dr. Prune should form the basis for the "best girdle on grit".

Elsewhere on grit of note is Pearls (50 ft. XS) on Chatsworth Edge. This climbs the right wall of the buttress containing Emerald Crack, starts as VS and becomes steadily harder terminating in a hard finish. By Myhill and Les Bonnington the top of Pearls is similar in standard to the top of Impossible Slab on Stanage.

In Millers Dale on an isolated crag near the left hand side of the road going up towards the Buxton-Bakewell road a very steep crack has been climbed using 1 sling for aid by Geoff Birtles and Ron Fawcett. A fine wall climb has been made by Proctor

in the region of Bang and Dangle in Water Cum Jolly but no details are available.

Elsewhere on Limestone it is worth noting that all the climbs on the main face of High Tor have now been done free. Various leaders have been responsible at one time and another but most recently the inevitable Pete Livesey has been free climbing to his own standard, three grades higher than most mortals!

On Beeston Tor Gordon Smith eventually completed his lower and complete girdle of Beeston Tor. The route has so far only been done in two parts spaced by a year and Smith does not want to write the route up as fully done until he has returned and done it all at one fell swoop. Much interesting climbing was done though the line is inevitably fairly artificial, being so near to so many other climbs.

#### SOUTH WEST NOTES

##### Cheddar Gorge

The Crow - See Rocksport Dec. 70/ Jan. 71, Cheddar Gorge Notes p 29 plus photo of 'crux'.

This has been repeated by Brian Wyvill and Terry Gloag. The route was first climbed by Pat Littlejohn with Martin Chambers and they graded one of the pitches 6a. Littlejohn said that it was the hardest thing that he had done. The lower pitches of the route follow the line of The West Route (artificial) but climb them free. The 6a pitch links these pitches with the top pitch of Shangri-La (climbed by Paul Nunn).

Wyvill and Cloag thought that the difficulty of this pitch had been considerably overrated. They found it bold and sensational but on good holds all the way. They graded it 5b. They thought that the first pitch of the climb was much harder (They also grade this 5b) and they found it necessary to use a peg for aid on this.

Wyvill, (who climbed the French route on the Troll Wall with Ben Campbell Kelly last summer) is at present in Yosemite with Campbell Kelly to attempt the North America Wall on El Capitan.

##### Avon Gorge

Wyvill and Cloag have also been active in the Avon Gorge. (Wyvill was one of the authors of the present guide book).

They have repeated the recent Tony Wilmot 'Eliminates' Steppenwolf, Urban Gorilla and Magic Theatre and thought that they were all good and worthwhile routes.

Wyvill with Mike Thompson (one of the Old Men of the Gorge) have also sorted out a new route from scraps of old ones in the vicinity of Puke - Puke Right Hand H.V.S.

The tragic accident in the Avon Gorge on the evening of the 8th July highlights the dangers of Limestone when wet and of carelessness on the descent/way home. Tony Wilmott was a very talented and experienced climber; he will be missed, but if his death serves no other purpose than to remind those still alive of how careful they must be to stay that way he has not lived in vain. (See obituary)

#### Lundy

At Easter Pat Littlejohn and Keith Darbyshire added about ten new climbs or variations.

At Easter Littlejohn, Derbyshire, Morton and Moulton added several new climbs. Shamrock Corner (120' Hard Severe) is an impressive line which fell to Moulton and Thompson. In the same area, St. Patricks Buttress, Derbyshire and Morton climbed 'Cow Pie' (150' S.) which despite its unappealing name is a fine route. Both of these routes are in the more 'sensible' grades. Littlejohn's climbs, Destiny and Time Bomb in particular, are not as easy though seemingly excellent climbs. Destiny (210' X.S.) is a steep jamming crack and Time Bomb (210' X.S.) is that unlikely climb a "strenuous and intimidating climb which takes the slabby arete between Albacore and Juggernaut". Full details of these new climbs and of other recent developments are available in the new Lundy supplement printed by R.D. Moulton. (See book reviews for address and cost.)

##### Bosigran Face, Cornwall

Pat Littlejohn (again!) has removed all the derelict ironmongery and rotting slings from Bow Wall (XS). This greatly improves the route and makes it much more serious. The 5a grading of the crux pitch given in the guide book is generally thought to be absurd - it should be 5b.

##### Wyndcliffe, Wye Valley

Frank Cannings and Peter Hicks have added a new route Papillon (VS) between The Cracks and Sundowner. C. Milford has added three new climbs to the right hand cliff - Zulu (XS) takes a vague line to the groove between Pheonix and Firebird; Klute (VS) takes a crack on the right of Vanguard; and another route (XS) (I don't know its name) takes the groove between Vanguard and Klute.

#### Portland

Climbing on Portland Bill has been going on for some time now so it would seem worth pointing out how good the cliffs are. The Coastguard Cliff, near the Southern end of the Bill, was first climbed on in 1967. The route, Vesuvius (V.S.) is a double crack line with an exposed finish. Since then the cliffs in the next cove to the north, Wallsend Cove, have been explored. Two of the best routes are Gash Crack (V.S.) and Ferocity (Just H.V.S.). The routes vary in length from one to two hundred feet and unlike Swanage there is no real problem in getting to the foot of the crag as there are several good paths. The finishes though are pretty exciting and it almost worth carrying an ice-axe! There are three or four miles of cliff on Portland Bill and the present tally of climbs is slightly over a dozen so there is plenty of scope left.

#### SOUTH WALES

##### Ogmore

The sea cliffs between Porthcawl and



Penarth are, for the most part, a crumbling mass of Liassic shale bands which rise to a height of up to 200 feet. Locals and exiles alike have been scouring the area for years in the hope of finding their 'Gogarth', but rotten rock consistently prevails. However at the end of 1970 an area of unusual rock (Suttonstone and Southerndown Beds) 1½ miles east of Ogmere (O/S map 153 ref. 872740) was visited and two solo ascents made, Route 1 (40 ft. diff.) and Tim's Route (80 ft. V. diff.), on what proved to be surprisingly sound rock. In spite of the problems of the tide limiting access to three hours either side of low water, it was obvious that further development would be extensive.

Although the cliff hereabouts is only 70 feet to 150 feet high, the steep independent lines following overhanging cracks, chimneys and walls give an impression of seriousness and height not normally experienced on a crag of this size. Also a fall onto the clinted limestone platform is a horrifying prospect: a sheep recently gave an action packed demonstration of this geological mincing machine. Fortunately natural protection is usually excellent and the climber's best friend 'Moac' comes into its own.

Soon after the initial foray, tide tables were avidly consulted and several harder routes began to appear; progress being limited, because of the tides, to alternate week-ends. Abbey Road (90 ft. H.V.S.) was first, following a steep, sustained groove. The climbing turned out to be even steeper than appeared from the ground but, apart from the last 5 feet, on almost perfect rock. Further to the right an impressive line under a series of roofs yielded Megalopolis (110 ft. H.V.S./X.S.). Although fairly strenuous the climb is not technically difficult and an easier direct start has now been added. The Gremlin (90 ft. H.V.S./X.S.), Siren (110 ft. V.S.), Pluto (90 ft. V.S.), Flash Harry (80 ft. H.S.) and Wet Look (110 ft. V.S.) quickly followed, all climbing impressive overhanging rock without aid. Pinocchio (120 ft. V.S.) initially repulsed strong parties, the leader flying off when a skyhook experiment failed. The route however turned out to be easier than expected and did not require aid. It is probably one of the best climbs in South-East Wales. The classic slanting overhanging square chimney to the right hand side of the main bay, produced another fine route, Tusker Chimney (110 ft. H.V.S.). The top pitch, which takes an overhanging wall on diminishing holds, took several attempts by four different climbers to conquer.

Several more splendid climbs were soon added to the list: these mostly being in the harder bracket and only the odd route using minimal aid. Eventually an improbable looking line round the lip of a large cave, Fools Fantasy (110 ft. H.V.S. A1), was completed using six points of aid on the horizontal sections only. This deceptively steep and strenuous climb is in no way spoiled by the aid moves, which if anything add interest to a really good route. Three pegs were used on the upper traverse and are in place. The remaining aid uses fairly easily placed nuts. The unique exposure of the final 20 feet overhanging groove provides

some of the most exhilarating free climbing in the area.

After this the development slowed down, but there are now nearly 40 climbs on the main cliff. All the routes in the main bay can be recommended, but one or two climbs right of Siren tend to be on less satisfactory rock.

The area is well worth a visit, but it is essential that tide information is obtained beforehand. The closest convenient reference point for this is Port Talbot and times are given daily in the South Wales Echo and Western Mail. Also some of the South Wales docks and harbour board offices can be contacted by phone. Ogmere is included in the South-East Wales guide book which will be available shortly.

#### YORKSHIRE

Pete Livesey has continued his free climbing activities on the former peg routes of Yorkshire. The latest to be climbed free is Rebel at Gordale. The first pitch of the route is as for another of his creations, Jenny Wren, thereafter the route is independent for two pitches. Two pegs are used for aid on the first pitch and a nut on the second. Though entirely free this is a massive reduction of aid on previous ascents where the route was pegged from the word 'go'. (Rebel 155 ft. X.S. Livesey and Hammond.) At Malham Livesey also climbed a new line parallel to and just left of Wombat. (Doubting Thomas 100 ft. X.S. Livesey and Sheard.) Both these climbs were previously inspected from an abseil — a matter on which Livesey's own ideas, expressed in the letters column, seem to provide adequate comment. Elsewhere in Yorkshire, at Heptonstall Quarry, Barry Rawlinson and Gerry Peel managed to do the Thin Red Line without any aid — though this may have previously been done by Ken Wood. Also at Heptonstall, Man of God had a second ascent from the same party and a week after this was climbed free by B. Whittaker.

#### LANCASHIRE NOTES

Longridge Quarry

by Andy Hill and Chris Massey

This is a steep sandstone quarry about 80ft high and is situated at Longridge — about 7 miles North-East of Preston. It is at the North end of Longridge immediately South of the Longridge Go-Kart track, and access is from the Jeffrey Hill Road.

The rock is on the whole firm but does require care in places especially towards the top. There is little natural protection so most is by pegs.

Most of the routes are worth doing though Parete, Noddy's Grotto, Gamblers End and Fibrillator especially so.

During the few years of development evidence of previous climbers was found and we apologise for any rearrangement of routes.

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