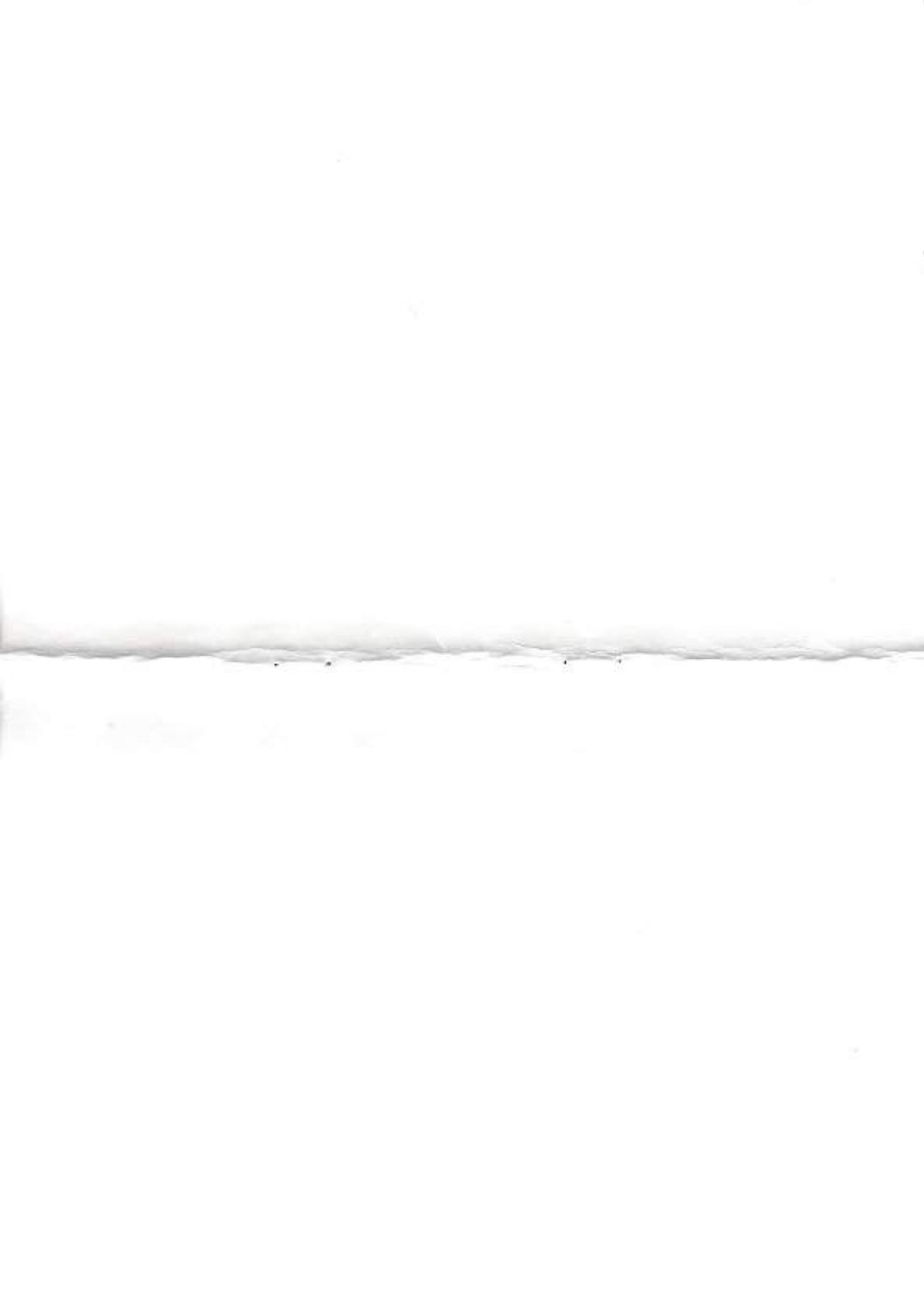


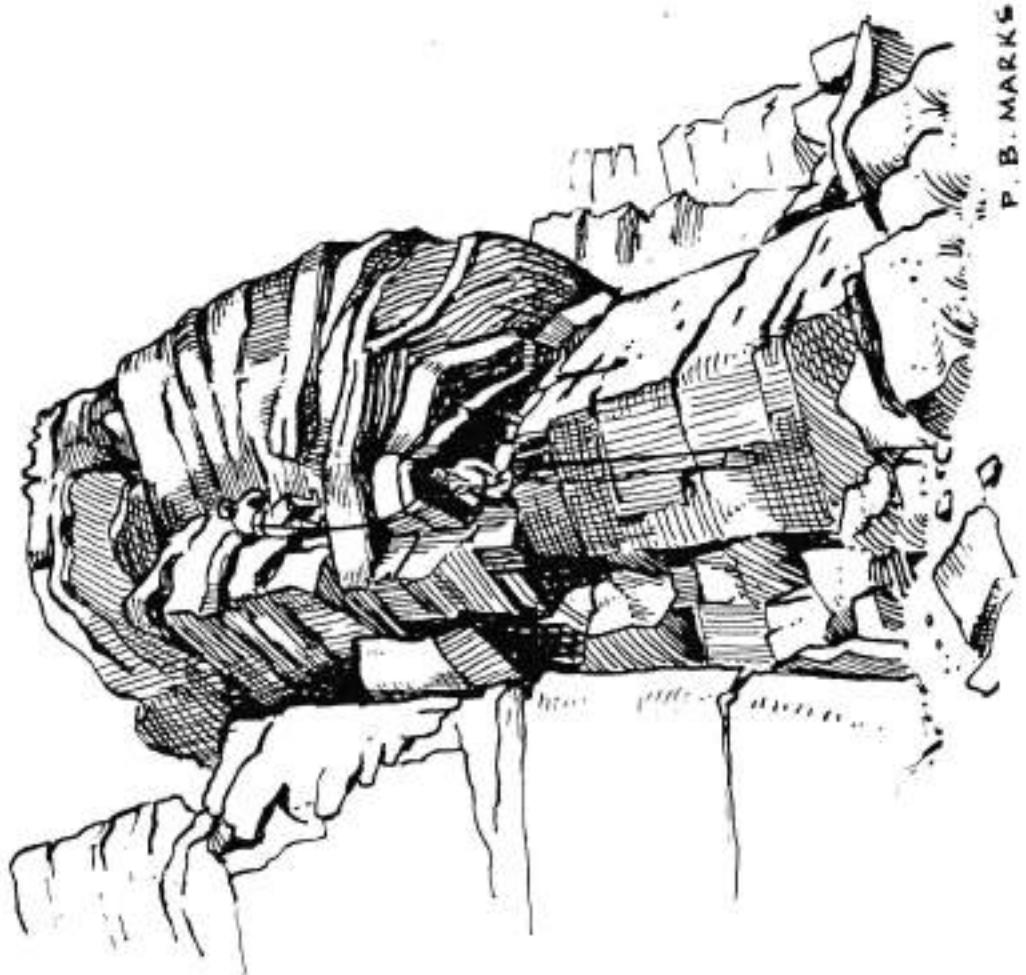
**50 YEARS
OF THE
PEAK CLIMBING CLUB**

**AN
ANNIVERSARY
JOURNAL**



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Introduction

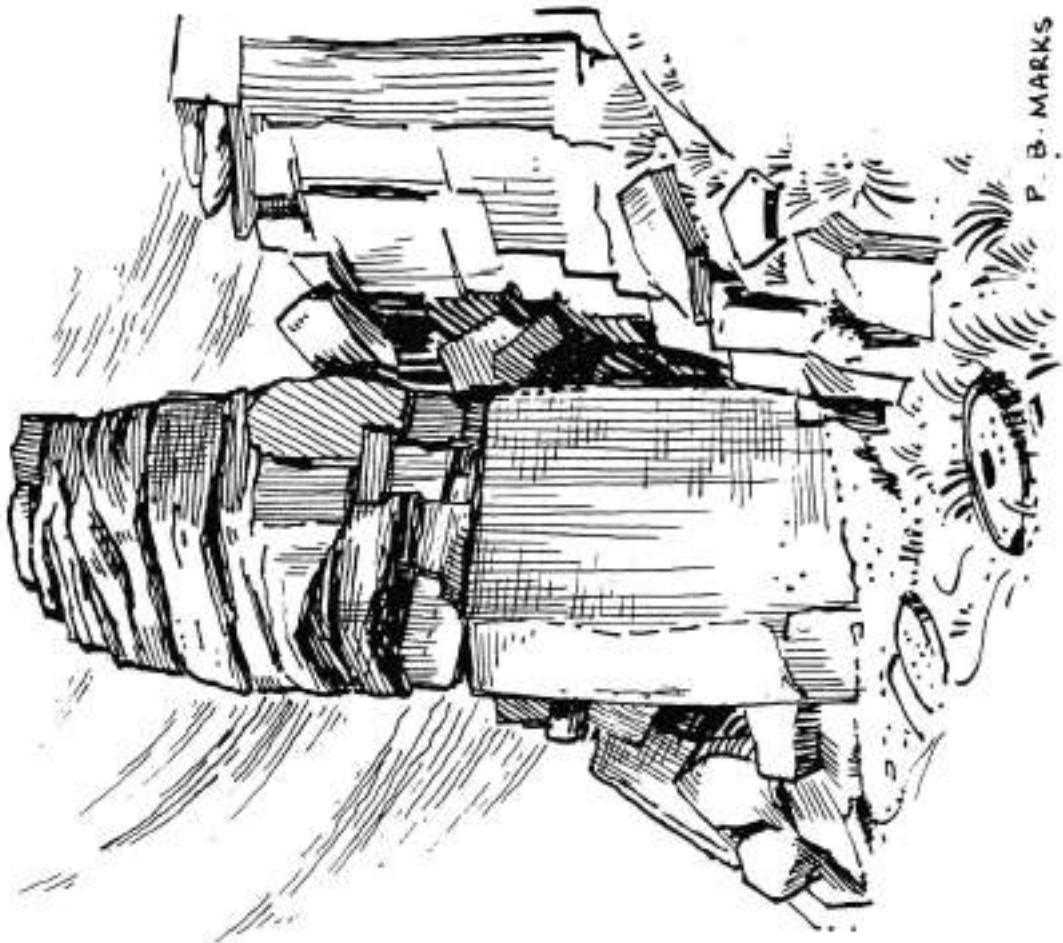
The Peak Climbing Club has never produced a regular journal in the manner of the larger, national clubs but it has, at intervals, produced small journals, usually of Roneo-duplicated sheets stapled together.

The present volume is more ambitious as befits a journal commemorating the Club's having lasted fifty years. It contains both a selection of articles drawn from all the previous journals and others written for the occasion by past and present members. The articles culled from previous journals were selected by the 'Anniversary Sub-committee' and have been included in the chronological order of the journals in which they first appeared. Some of the longer articles have had to be omitted for sheer lack of space.

The newly-born articles are in no particular order. It was a painful process getting them but the final not insubstantial crop is perhaps a good indication that the Club could support the production of a small journal every couple of years. We shall after all need a source for material for the centenary issue. Articles to the Club Secretary please.

Finally; congratulations and thanks to the writers, past and present and in particular to The Club. Some of its original members are still going strong. May there be some of us as hale and hearty in 2042 and may the Club be as worthy of them. As the following articles show it has given enjoyment, pleasure, and perhaps pain, in plenty over the years. As long as we are allowed access to 'Sheffield's Golden Frame' the same opportunities should be available. It is up to the members to be prepared to defend and take advantage of them.

D. Gregory, Editor



P. B. MARKS

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mutually agreed to climb without ropes. The Climber soon left. The Invalid and was at the col when the latter was half way up. The next half hour saw him on the summit of the Wetterhorn. The Invalid on the col. By the time The Invalid was half way up

The Climber was back at the col. The snow where the footsteps had gone was stained with blood from The Climber's throat as he drove himself too hard. The Invalid followed the two tracks finally reaching the summit 3 hours from the hut. Meanwhile The Climber had reached the top of the Mittelhorn. One on each top, a completely clear sky gave views down into Grindelwald; to the left the Eiger, south the Lauterhorn and Fiescherhorn at 13,400 feet. The Invalid decided to resort to the movies, taking a complete panoramic shot, until to the north the sky became totally black with an electric storm raging across the valley. In his haste The Invalid dropped the camera but luckily it stopped a few feet down the slope. Retrieving the camera and quickly repacking the sack a hasty retreat was made down to the col. Within a quarter of an hour the storm had cleared and The Climber and Invalid had met again and were taking lunch.

Surprise, surprise. The guide and his clients had arrived.

"You are a very fast party, good climbers" said the guide.

"You are a very good wanker" stated The Climber as the guide and his clients greeted us as they passed. The guide thought he had been awarded a medal.

After lunch we had some spare time so a deviation was taken to the dreaded Grindelhorn on the top of the North Face of the Wetterhorn across the glacier. This was a small rock peak of about 200 ft and Severe up to the top and its views of the face and the valley below. During the descent a lemon juice drink was taken at the Gleckstein hut and then down to the valley taking roughly an hour to the Grindelwald Hotel where a cheaper-priced lager was available.

Mine Host Hans who had been guide to the Wetterhorn asked us where we had been. "The Wetterhorn. Three hours from the hut."

"You must be a very fast party" says Mine Host and rewards us with free drinks.

His father had been the first guide to climb the Wetterhorn and he had followed in his father's footsteps as a guide for fifty years. He was now eighty two and long retired..

I dedicate the ascent of the Wetterhorn to the complete climber from Sheffield who lost his life in the Karakoram when a monsoon landslide in 1978 swept him into the river. A member of the Penin Club and later the Peak and the Alpha Club. He was a member of the Fell and Rock and twice wrote the guidebook to Gable, Wasdale and Eskdale. It was a privilege to climb with you Pat Fearnough.

The Invalid, thirty years later.

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large cliffs of the South Buttress of Blaven and picked out some of the routes. The climbing here looked very good, perhaps someday we will return.

As we were descending the sun came out and gave a much pleasanter feeling to the place. Looking back now at the saw-toothed ridge silhouetted against a wonderful back cloth of blue sky it was quite satisfying to pick out our route and follow it in detail.

On arriving back at Lofty's caravette the first job was to put on the kettle. The tea mashed, we all sat in the sun at the side of the caravan looking up at the Clach Glas traverse. I was pleased that I had managed to fulfil one of my ambitions. The experience was made more pleasurable by the company of Lofty and Lol. This was certainly a day to remember.

The Wetterhorn with Company

The Eiger was unfit with its own storms on the North Face and therefore a diversion was attempted up to the Jungfraujoch in the cloud. The team for the face climbed to the top, one of them not taking the precaution of using snow glasses and consequently suffering snow blindness from the ultra-violet filtering through the clouds. He was blind for three days and eventually went home which left The Happy Drinker, The Invalid, and The Climber.

The Climber and The Invalid, to acclimatise, ventured onto the northern range of the Grindelwald valley, with an ascent of the Schwartzhorn. In the cloud we heard the sound of flying pigs. 'Piamigan' they turned out to be, with companions of wild horned goats.

After two weeks the weather cleared up so The Invalid's arm came out of its sling and the Gleckstein hut was targeted for an ascent of the Wetterhorn. At mid-day we set off from the campsite to the bottom of the North Face, to traverse right across the face up to the lower ridge, across the lower glacier to the ridge on top of which stands the Gleckstein hut. After a short V Diff rock climb with the assistance of fixed ropes the hut, which stands on a plateau, was reached. It was now late afternoon with brilliant sunshine. A very welcome lager was enjoyed. The Happy Drinker was in his element. Everybody relaxed in the sun.

Supper was booked for 6pm and after stew and a beer bed was sought at 7.30 pm ready for a 3 am start. The Mairazenzäger was a twenty bed unit, ten on either side. Sleep was possible until midnight when late revellers awoke us. Sleep was disturbed again later when vibrations through the mattress caused another interruption to our rest. A guide we had seen earlier, with his two clients, seemed to be playing with himself at the far end of the room.

At three am, after a light breakfast, and taking the packed lunch, The Climber and The Invalid set off for the peak. A rock ridge, then a snowfield up to another ridge led to the col between the Wetterhorn and Mittehorn. On the second ridge it was

The route onto the mountain went via the Alltna Dunainche. We were surrounded on all flanks by soaring rock ridges. On the skyline tiny dots appeared and to our surprise several parties had already started traversing the ridge. Some had started on a ridge to the right of the bealach we were heading for. It looked superb and an obvious thought was that we wished that we had started via the same route. It would have probably extended the ridge by some half a mile in distance.

After skirting several boggy sections and scrambling up numerous rock bluffs we were at the bealach. The view was one of stark, saw-tooth ridges contrasted with views of the Red Cuillins and the vast expanse of the Atlantic in the background. Off I scampered up the first little wall, quite a technical move I remember, soon I was quite some distance from Lofty and Lol and I remember Lofty shouting "Fissing slow down and enjoy it". I found it extremely difficult to do this. The surroundings, the sense of exposure, the pent-up desire of wanting to do the ridge for such a long time seemed to take over, which resulted in an over-enthusiastic reaction. On and on went the ridge until I was finally stopped in my tracks. I had reached the tower of Clach Glas. I could not see any obvious line; I went down, traversed sideways, but with no success.

Finally Lofty and Lol caught me up. Lofty said "Follow me" and proceeded directly up the centre of the tower. Lol and myself stood back and watched in amazement, Lofty moved with such ease and confidence, his every move calculated and deliberate. We were impressed. Soon we started to follow, I remember Lol, who was close on my heels, saying "I wish we had roped up" but it was too late for that, even though the combination of the damp rock and the exposure made it seem quite serious. Soon we were on top of Clach Glas and enjoying a brief respite from the thrill of the ridge.

After a cup of tea and a sandwich we were off again. We now had to descend into a bealach some several hundred feet below and the way down did not appear obvious. I traversed into a gully but this ended in a sheer drop. Once again the day was saved by Lofty. He had found an exposed but relatively straightforward way off. We were soon at the bealach where we met a party of people traversing in the opposite direction. We exchanged some light conversation and were off again. Looking back at the party of people ascending Clach Glas gave us some indication of the scale and exposure. It looked superb.

After traversing what seemed endless sections of ridge we finally arrived on the summit of Blaven. The views were not so good since the cloud base was down to about 2,500 - 3,000 feet. We kept getting intermittent views of the Black Cuillin and on occasions were able to pick out various features and land marks. I remember sitting there on the summit feeling extremely cold and anxious to get moving again.

Just before leaving the summit we were joined by a party of young ladies who had walked up to Blaven by the ordinary route. We chatted for some time and were kindly given several sweets and chocolates. We said our farewells and off we went on the long descent back to Loch Slapin and the van. On the way back we looked at the

The Birth of the Peak Climbing Club

The first suggestions that a climbing club based on Sheffield should be formed were made during the weekend of August the 8th and 9th 1942.

The formal steps were taken at a meeting in the cafe at the Church Hotel in Edale on the weekend of August the 29th and 30th.

Jack Williamson was elected Chairman; "Tubby" Brookes, Secretary; Les Hall was Treasurer and on the committee were Ron Townsend, Cedric Ayres and two 'lads from Manchester'.

After MUCH discussion the name 'Peak Climbing Club' was decided on. The committee held a meeting at the Derwent Hostel on the last weekend of its existence (the 19th and 20th Sept 1942).

During the weekend 26th/27th Sept 1942 "Tubby" Brookes reported that the club had bought Stangie Cottage. The club staked half the roof of the Cottage and did a lot of cleaning up. The agents for the property, Sandford and Potter, insisted that the Cottage had to be insured for £250 and that all repairs had to be finished by the end of the year.

The first Annual Dinner was held on February 13th 1943 at the Church Hotel, Edale. The landlord, Fred Heardman, accepted the Club's offer of Honorary Membership and donated half a guinea to the Club's funds.

The following were present: Percy Bryson, Jack Bricklebank, Ron 'Gus' Eggington, Malcolm Padley, Colin Wade, Gordon Hannon, John 'Tubby' Brookes, Cedric Ayres, Ben Twigg, Jack Reeves, Alec Higginbottom, Eric Hill, Ron Townsend, Bill Goodhall and five 'lads from Manchester'.

The first A.G.M. was held at the Church Hotel, Edale on November 13th 1943. Frank Turton was elected Chairman; Tubby Brookes was re-elected Secretary and Alec Higginbottom as Treasurer. The Committee was Ron Townsend, Jack Bricklebank, Jack Reeves and Ben Twigg.

Lady members were admitted to the Club in 1944. The first being Madge Cobb (now Townsend), Eva Brightman (now Higginbottom), Betty Habershon, and Peggy Coates.

The club badge was designed by Ken Mounsey.

Getting the Best From Your Brownie

by
"Caesar"

P.C.C. Newsletter No.2

Not an instructive essay for ambitious girl guide captains this; nor for enthusiastic perverts, but a few notes for the beginner in photography.

A camera of course is just a light-tight box with a hole in one end and you at the other. Its operation is quite simple. You merely point it at something beautiful - your best girl perhaps; or a pint of walkop; or the south end of a cow looking north, press the button and rewind. Repeat eight times, dash around to the D & P man with the exposed film and wait for the result. A week later you pay a small sum, receiving in return a few pieces of glossy card patterned by a splotch of muddy greys and blacks. You are now qualified to enter the great and swelling ranks of Photo-bores.

Photo-bores are, after women (and who isn't after women these days, especially my friend MacMarlie who has even bought a motorcycle in order to get after them a bit quicker), I repeat, are, after women, the most pernicious pests in climbing circles. The worst Photo-bore in the North is undoubtedly Larris Desley. I met Desley once in the City Library. He was courageously climbing a book-case brandishing a piton hammer in one hand and a copy of "Family Limitation" in the other. The route was V.S. but Desley made it look easy. He is a fast climber, in fact so fast he once climbed right out of his hair and it never caught him up again. He came down when he saw me. "Would you like to see some photographs?" he said proudly.

"Yes" I replied politely. (You know how polite I am).
He produced about fifty and gave them to me. I looked at the first one, I turned it upside down and looked again. I turned it back to front and held it up to the light. "Good isn't it?" said Desley.

"Er, Y-e-e-e-s" I said weakly, because vanity is one of Desley's four heels of Achilles, and one really has to keep friendly with all sorts of people in these days of Black Markets and things.
"You know where it is" he said.

"Er, we--ll--".

It's taken from the Waverley Monument looking down".

"Ah, of course" I said "The name had just escaped me", I put the wretched thing at the back of the pile. Forty-nine to go and only half an hour to closing time; my hand stole out to the piton hammer ...".

And so as part of my campaign to oust the menace of the Photo-bore, I am writing this article to give expert advice to novices with Box Brownies. My advice is - "Throw the thing away and buy a Leica". Next month, 'Getting the best from your Leica'.

"I do not accept tents and in particular wee laddies who drive onto my site at 50 m.p.h. and then give me cheek. I threw him off."

We did set about trying to find him but unfortunately without success and eventually settled at Gairloch in a perfect camp site.

The next day we were up at 6 a.m. and off to traverse An Teallach which Lol Bartrip and myself had wanted to do for years. The sun shone all day and the full traverse of the mountain was superb. We finally arrived back at the car which had shattered and then had to set about repairing a blown silencer on the car which had gone whilst travelling that morning. Before driving back to Gairloch a visit to Dundonnell Hotel seemed to be a good idea.

We were awoken the next morning once again by brilliant sunshine. "What shall we do?" "Slioch" Lol replied. So off we went, the walk in, around Loch Maree, was never ending. We could see why Poucher recommends purchasing the services of a 'ghillie'. For those not familiar with this term a ghillie is someone who rows you across the loch, which in this case would have saved us some eight hours walking. On the ascent to the summit of Slioch the weather began to change and soon it was anoraks on. After reaching the summit the objective was to get to the valley as soon as possible.

This being our second tough day in succession, by the time we reached the car we were all in, however our spirits were lifted by a chance meeting with Trevor. We all reentered to the cafe and shared our experiences. Whilst we were consuming our refreshments a young man started to speak to us. On asking what he had done that day he replied "Oh I've just run Beinn Eighe, Liathach and Ben Alligin". We replied "In a day?" "Yes". This made our efforts seem feeble.

That night we all met at Gairloch and consumed vast quantities of ale and reminisced about our exploits so far, at which Jean and Clare (wife and daughter) were becoming rapidly bored.

The next day we were off to meet Lofty and Norma at Balmacara, near the Kyle of Lochalsh. The weather had improved and the drive down was superb. We had arrived at the site and pitched the tent when appeared Lofty, who for some reason had booked himself into a site further down the valley. In true Lofty style, full of enthusiasm, we were whisked off, for what he said was a short walk. Some four to five hours later we returned.

Our objective for the next day was to be the 'Jewel in the Crown', the Blaven-Clach Glas traverse. This was another classic mountain traverse which both Lol and myself had wanted to do for years. The next day came and we were off. We chugged along in Lofty's VW van to the ferry and soon we were in Skye. The weather was not so good and looked unsettled, with the possibility of rain. As we slowly made our way to the mountains via narrow and twisting roads Lofty related to us his experience of the last time he was on the mountain. It sounded superb and we were itching to get started.

Then Loch Slapin and the mountain itself came into view. Its stark saw-tooth ridges silhouetted against the dull grey sky looked quite awesome. We were soon parked up, on with our boots and off.

happy, that fear disappears from your world. And that's when it's dangerous, when you have no fear. Fear is what keeps you alive, keeps you thinking – why? Why am I here? What the hell am I doing? How the heck do I get out of this?

Anyway, I digress, but that's what it was like on this climb, when the devils and the gods joined forces and tested me to my limits. They all laughed long and loud as I came round from my dream and looked down at my starting point 40 foot below me and 15 feet in front of me.

The angle was steep. Strength-sappingly steep. My heart was beating slowly. Thump, thump, thump, beating out my funeral march. A few feet to go – "come on, come on, control, control". "Think, think, search, search, VS 5a, VS 5a. You can climb it, you can climb it, you've got to climb it."

I reached up. Wow! Another beautiful jug. Now, just the last move to go. I reach round the top lip for the last hold. Nearly there. Oh no... Oh hell... Nothing but flat, rounded, smooth, frictionless grit, wet with lichen.

I lowered down on the jug, strength diminishing rapidly, clear thought had gone and pure instinct burst through. On a surge of concentrated adrenaline I reached up again and slapped with one palm, then with two, ...then with an almighty effort I powered everything into the push out and round and down. My body swung out and I turboed up. A foot landed on top of the lip and I was rolling over onto my face shaking with relief as I realized how close I'd been.

I sat quietly on the top and sensed with a purified soul. There before me was a world I had never seen before. A world I had only ever seen in black and white, but now I saw in colour.

Kinder by Frank W. Hall.

The moon was riding high as we entered the 'Gates' on our way back to the warmth and friendliness of the hearth at the Old Nag's Head. Long shadows slanted across the frozen peat bogs, whilst cold white moonlight cast a phosphorescent glow on patches of hard snow, turning a myriad snow crystals into piercing points of scintillating light. We were feeling good. Behind us lay a weekend of unforgettable memories, a chain of incidents and thoughts small in themselves, but bonded together by the spirit of perfect comradeship we had found together.

The crossing of the ridge separating the Hope and Edale valleys, the crunch of hard snow beneath our heels as we made a fast descent, the merry quip and jest, and the warm glow as enriched blood flowed strong in our veins. Saturday evening dinner at the "Church", a feast without comparison, the friendliness of the well-stocked bar, and the feeling of snug satisfaction as we "shot down in flames" a would-be bar-room 'tiger'. The short, brisk walk up to Lee House in the cold sharp air beneath a million stars, our nails ringing clear on the hard road, then the comforting warmth of the sleeping bag and the sweet smell of hay – thoughts of the morrow and the thrill of anticipation, sliding softly and luxuriously into sleep.

Sunday morning breakfast, the appetizing smell of frying bacon hanging on the still morning air, the flash of sun on Crowden Towers as the first rays slant over Brown Knoll, then the steady grind up Five Cloughs taking short rock pitches in our stride. The feeling of exhilaration on the summit plateau and the beauty of the slender curving snow ridge on Kinder Low. The grim majesty of the frozen Downfall and the anxious moments on the ice-glazed rocks of the first pitch of Downfall Corner, numbed fingers and condensed breath offset by the hot fierce struggle in the upper chimney.

The thrill of exposure on Mermaid's Buttress and the tense expression stamped on the leader's face on the last pitch, the bite of the rough rope as it slides carefully through cold hands, the roar of the 'Primus' and the deep gulps of steaming tea. The sun setting in a fiery ball, the sting of the cold air on exposed cheek, the thrills of the day behind, and now the long lop over the plateau bewitched by moonlight, the feeling of well being and of comradeship well tried – these we shall remember.

A Week In Scotland (and a day out with Lofty)

by
Alan Piper

It had been an absolutely first class week, despite not having met Trevor Prew until our last day. This was our annual Spring Bank Holiday visit to Scotland and this year we were in Torridon. We had arranged to meet Trevor at Kinlochewe but on arriving at our pre-determined meeting point at the camp site we were greeted by a somewhat outraged Scotsman. We politely asked if he had seen a young man in his early twenties wearing spectacles. "You mean that wee laddie who drove onto my site last night, never asked permission to camp and then proceeded to pitch his tent?" We asked, "Well where is he?"

Bleaklow Bastion
by
J. Bernard Steele

P.C.C.J. 1950

Two of us set off at dusk from The George and Dragon to join the others encamped below the rocks at Yellowslacks, hoping that the small amount of light coming through the overcast sky would allow us to find our way over the top without the misfortunes which are likely to happen should you be so careless as to start over Bleaklow at night without map, compass, or torch. However, as we climbed the hillside overlooking the miniature pampas of dried-up Torside reservoir, our spirits quickened to make us feel unregretful that our maps and things had been left behind, for the prospect of managing without would add greatly to the charm of the crossing.

After following the clough nearly to its head we decided which direction Yellowslacks would be and continued on for a little while. Sure enough, the ground sloped away when we thought it would and below us was Dowstones Clough, or rather the lights of Glossop, with our friends in the murky gloom in between. An exchange of cat-calls with them confirmed this and we very soon had a mug of tea in our hands. The rest of the party had spent a splendid day climbing on Shining Clough and were eagerly looking forward to another good day on the morrow. The wind in the night made those of us using the ground for a bed and the sky for a canopy a trifle envious of the two fortunate ones in the solitary tent, but we were able to console ourselves that they, not we, had to carry it around.

Dawn broke fine and sunny, though rather windy, but soon everybody was up on the rocks and tasting once more the exhilarating sense of height these crags give due to the rapid fall-away of the land towards Glossop. The leaders on top welcomed their seconds with more than the usual amiability, which was quite inexplicable until his companion met the full force of the gale and realised that it was his turn to stand there in the teeth of the gale with the sand stinging his face. Quite a number of climbs were finished by the most temerarious members of the party before the increasing gale compelled us to retire down below for an early lunch.

Leaving a few still by the brook, the rest of us made tracks over to the Snake Road by way of Shelf Moss, continuing over Featherbed Top and down Upper Gate Clough to the Ashop. By this time we all agreed that although the weather that day had not been ideal for climbing, we could not have had a better day for a tramp over the rolling tops. The abundant fresh-air and radiant sunshine had keyed up our senses so that we were striding over the groughs and bilberry at a fast pace yet not seeming to overtax ourselves in the least. The sorry remnants of our week-end rations were expeditiously and undecorously 'polished off' of on Kinder Edge as a prelude to ending our day by crossing the 'Scout'. On the way over to 'Four Jacks' cabin and Grindstrook, we all chose our own course, each thinking of the superiority of it when

But you can feel the
Rough round ledge. The
Edge below your aching toes
Grips like fire on tinder
Moors. You stretch and twist
And rise then pose.

Dedicate in studied poise,
The mind in balance with
The sun, you reach
For harmony high above
And sweep the body up,
To lie on gritty top
And feel the day
Held by hand, so tight that
Time creeps quietly to a stop.

The Trap
by
Trevor Prew

High on a Dark Peak edge is a beaten mass of gritstone that stands dark, powerful and forbidding. Like a colossus it rises defiant against the forces of nature and the ravages of time. For thousands of years it has stood and stared with a blank expression at a world which has thrown everything it could into its iron-bound face. For thousands of years the combined armies of the wind, water, ice and sun have battled with its weaknesses and grain by grain have etched a dimple here and a wrinkle there – until now our tiny fingers can caress and stroke the smooth and subtle handiwork of a master craftsman.

And there you stand, at the bottom of the crag, the lover or the fool, you know not which. You reach out. You pull on the first, and then you pull on the second. It's so easy, so beautiful, so tender, so warm and so natural.

Like a drug it sucks you. Like a drug it sucks you higher with the promise of paradise. The holds are so perfect you don't want to let go.

You reach higher and the next hold is even better. The angle is getting steeper, but you have to pull, it feels so good. And so, without thinking, you're lured, rising deeper into the trap, falling upwards into the jaws of a savage teacher. You go gladly, stupidly, you ignore your instinct which usually says stay on the ground, stay safe, stay secure.

Immortality – that's what is it! You feel so relaxed, so in tune with the rock, so

darkness falling about four o'clock. Reg Pillinge aptly summed it up as 'a drinking weekend with a little walking in between.'

During the 50s one of the most colourful characters who visited Stanage (or anywhere else in the Peak for that matter) was Toni Nicholson, an experienced climber from Manchester. I vividly recall him with a large group of University Students. He was in his element showing the young ladies the ropes and giving instructions to all and sundry in a loud cultured voice. We lost them for a while, but moving into the Robin Hood section we saw one of his females straddled across the 'Slide', fully stretched and unable to transfer her weight forward or backward, gradually sagging into a 'splits' posture. With constant directives from the large party below Toni Nick sprang into action, climbing up to give a very supportive hand where it was needed most, bringing a loud cheer from the gallery and an embarrassed smile from the young lady.

I left the climbing scene in 1957, married, and re-surfaced around 64. Fellwalking gradually took over from climbing in the 70s and I managed the Derwent Watershed in 14 hours and joined the Fellowship of Fellwalkers. In the early 80s Geoff Milburn of the Climbers' Club asked me if I would illustrate the next Llanberis guidebook. This completed, the Ogwen guide followed. Nowadays walking, cycling and landscape painting fill most of my leisure hours. My youngest son, Bruno, climbs and was on a successful expedition to the Karakoram some three years ago. That's enough of the reminiscing and chat. I must leave some for this year's 'half century do'. One last thought - "I wonder if so will be there?"

Sunday Outing by John Skelton

Stroll up gritstone steps
With pleasured friends,
Pass boulders square as
Chopping blocks, to lie
In warming Sunday sun.
Then newly shod to rise
And touch the rippled rocks
And feel the warmth of years
Through your fingers run.

The feet may burn in
Tightening shoes and sweat
Between your fingers soak

compared with the ones the others were following, only to craftily adjust it as the various landmarks in front became visible.

As the sky was reddening over Grindslow Knoll we spent the last few minutes of daylight scrambling up some of the delightful boulders and slabs that abound on the slope below Nether Tor, before finally jogging down the now well-trodden path to Edale village, rejoicing in the knowledge of yet another well-spent week-end on Derbyshire's two highest hills.

Beginning by

Wendy Webb (Partington) P.C.C.J. 1956

Having been educated at a grammar school of no small repute(?) the suggestion to spend an Easter weekend bivouacking in the midst of the Welsh mountains held no great fears for me.

This was but the beginning! "Of what?" you may ask. There again you may not... of a series of uncomfortable, unsatisfactory, sometimes even enjoyable weekends. But what a beginning! No need to enquire if you too have illspent many happy hours delightfully chatting to the accompaniment of steadily falling rain. Here prevails the original family spirit... "your own b****y tea". "Pass my mug from the drain" ... "Guess what, a dry sock!" Pleasant repose on a bareskin couch of cement blocks. Convenient water supply and drainage system merrily meandering around the 'bed'. Ventilation brisk and uncontrollable. Outdoor convenience - rarely visited on account of the weather.

Looking hesitantly around, I carefully note my various companions, later to become my friends. Friends!

"Ooh, I couldn't!"
"You could!"
"Ooh, I couldn't!"
"You could!"

Mc, at the bottom of what Reg, was determined was to be my first climb.
"Is this easy?"
"You'll run up it!"
That, I thought a little unfair, as I wasn't even used to my boots yet
"Is it a Moderate?"
"A very easy Moderate."

That was the only time I was completely fooled. Being a 'bright little thing' I soon learned that Reg, moved everything down a couple of grades when I made such enquiries. I took to sneaking off and looking in small books and did not climb much for a while.

When quite used to seeing people bounce at the bottom, and apparently revel in it, the way they immediately (with words, I presume, of encouragement) furiously attacked the piece of rock in question, I ceased to worry so much. My hair returned to its normal colour, and I began eating again.

Then came the winter. I have decided determinedly that I am a summer climber. Roll on the warm summer weather!

Wasdale 1955

by

Dave Gregory

P.C.C.J. 1956

Although the meet in Wasdale was ostensibly an S.U.M.C. affair, as a result of Bert Shutt's encouragement of "Aw cum, tha'll be all reight", the final party included three Peak members and two then unattached colliers 'gone sick'. Six of us travelled by train from Sheffield to Manchester and of these Keith Allen continued by train on the luxury of a forces warrant. The less affluent five went by bus to Kendal, where, in deference to the University members present, they spent the night in the courts of learning, namely Kendal School yard, a cold spot which caused Bert, who did not use his airbed, to be so awake as to hold a one-sided telephone conversation with our alarm clock.

After an early start, to avoid any worn-hunting policemen, we went by bus to Ambleside where we were rejoined by Keith Allen, risen from the front garden in which he had spent the night. Whilst in the process of consuming the contents of a tea stall we stocked with food an immense cardboard box which was put in the care of the most trustworthy member of the party. By bus to Langdale then up Rossett Gill where three young ladies were surprised to find the Pembrokeshire Cricket Club * on its way to a match in such rocky terrain. Notwithstanding such diversions the party fought its way over the top of England to the haven of Mrs Ullock's in Wasdale where this good lady, by the quality of her cooking, elicited sotto voce enquiries as to whether she had five daughters. This same farmhouse was to see more of us during the week, as those who were first off the mountain, whose job it was to start cooking the dinner, were invariably surprised there by the later arrivals who had hoped to escape the chore altogether.

Excellent though it was, this farmhouse was not our only source of food, for, true to form, John Henry Fearon found a rabbit, dead, but diagnosed by four of us as in an edible state. The cause of death was thought to be shock at the stories and songs it had heard the night before, for its ears were still warm. Despite this propitious post mortem, only those four would eat it and the others of the party are still looking for signs of myxomatosis.

The ascent of the Gable mecca, the Napes Needle, was denied us on our first attempt on Tuesday when a sudden hailstorm turned our chivalrous attention to aiding

An Artist's Notebook

by
Pete Marks

Although I have only been a member of the Peak C.C. for a relatively short period in the 60s I have known many members of the club over a much longer period.

My walking and climbing started in the war years, a time when the few climbers operating on Stanage, say, all had a nodding acquaintance with each other. Ron Townsend, Eric Byrne, Peter Harding etc. spring to mind, I can clearly recall Ron powering up and over the flake on Christmas Crack and smoothly ascending Black Slab, hard routes for that period.

One day Jack McLeod, who had been climbing solo, took in hand two young climbers trying to identify some of the routes. We had a marvellous day's climbing with him and secretly hoped that his patience and time had all been worthwhile.

During the 40s my partner was nearly always Denis Lockwood, a quiet lad who seemed to find expression in rockclimbing and walking long distances. He was light in weight and had a lovely balance technique. He was pleasant to watch while you were holding the rope but sometimes difficult to follow. I particularly remember Tower Face on Laddow and Javelin Gully above Idwal.

We occasionally went down to Wales with the P.C.C. when they had coach seats to spare. Albert Shutt, Frank Hall, Jack Peach, Raymond Priestley, and Ron Townsend seemed to be the regulars of this period.

In the early 50s the Pennine Mountaineering Club was formed in Sheffield. Its founder members were Sid Wedge, Denis Austin, Alan Hall, George Mappin and myself. Don Morrison and Pat Farnborough, who eventually joined the Peak were also members. They were outstanding climbers both sadly lost in the Karakoram in the late 70s. I partnered Don on many a route and sweated up some of his hard ones. He also enjoyed walking at a hard pace. The triple Marsden-Edale with Harry Gillett and many other challenges took his fancy.

During the 50s I managed four Alpine holidays, one with Reg Pillinger and Pete Rickus. Little climbing was achieved as I had a stomach upset. Reg and Pete were unlucky to be hit by a rockfall whilst attempting the Shreckhorn. Reg came off worst with a fractured finger and severe bruising. In some pain they managed to retreat to Grindelwald and hospital treatment. A hefty bill awaited Reg on returning home. About this time I became involved with gritstone guidebook illustration through Eric Byrne whom I had known for some time. My involvement lasted some 20 years; a labour of love and also an opportunity to really get to know the gritstone edges. Eric also asked me to illustrate his classic 'High Peak' which was published in 1966. Sadly he died a few years later.

A hardy annual which I occasionally shared with the Peak was the Marsden-Edale, traditionally done in December, usually in bad conditions with

pulling equally our progress down the lake was an erratic zigzag. Before the crew had got properly organised I suddenly realized that the yacht had flopped over and all I could see was one person apparently standing on the water. Miss Pritchard's two friends were Dick Moseley and his wife Mary. Dick was a very well-known climber and with Scottie Dwyer (who later became a guide) had done some extremely good climbing in North Wales but unfortunately he could not swim. Miraculously he had extricated himself from the boat and was standing on the hull, which was a few inches above the water. He had managed to remain completely dry, not even getting his feet wet. There he was, standing upright, balancing on the hull of his boat chanting to the crew of nine - "In, Out, In, Out". My two oarsmen were in no way capable of keeping to his timing and we started our erratic way to the rescue, zigzagging back down the lake to the yacht. Eventually we reached them and we took Dick and Mary Moseley and Miss Pritchard back to the shore.

The next problem was to rescue the yacht. Since we were going to have to get in the water it seemed sensible to remove our clothes, which we did, placing them in a hole in the wall. We rowed zigzag back to the yacht and tried to remove the centreboard which had slipped out of its slot and become entangled with the sails. This proved difficult because every time Bill went into the water to try to grab it the top half of his body came back to the surface before he had made any progress, so Ron and I each took one of his legs and thrust him down into the water and held him under until he had pulled it out. We then dragged him out and placed the centreboard in the rowing boat. By the time we had righted the yacht and furled the sails we were all extremely cold. We decided that Ron and Bill would go back in the rowing boat while I would stay on the waterlogged yacht and bail it out. Off they went and I bailed out as best as best I could. I was concentrating so much on the bailing that I did not pay any attention to what else was happening to the yacht and was surprised to find it travelling quite fast down the lake. When it arrived at the end of the lake I thought it would be safe to drag the yacht up to the sand and leave it there.

I set off to walk back to the Youth Hostel. Walking on the rocks at the edge of the lake was extremely painful, and since it was now raining quite heavily and visibility was quite low, I decided it would be less painful to walk along the A5 to the hostel. Whilst I was jogging along the A5 a coach overtook me; fortunately the windows were all steamed up so that I don't think anyone noticed me at all. I eventually arrived at the hole in the wall only to discover that my clothes were gone and assumed that Bill and Ron had taken them to the hostel. How was I going to get into the hostel, stark naked, without causing major problems? To give myself some time to think I nipped into the telephone box just outside the hostel. After some minutes a brilliant thought struck me: I could get into the drying room at the side of the hostel, borrow some clothes and subsequently procure my own. There was no one about so I made a quick dash into the drying room and there, to my surprise and relief, were my own clothes. The hole in the wall had not kept them completely dry so Bill and Ron had kindly hung them up. I was able to get dressed and enter the hostel just in time to sit down to dinner.

two bestridden and benighted young ladies to whom we offered a helpful and platonic rope. That they were ungrateful and suspicious was evident for they rushed rapidly from us down the valley.

Having spent Wednesday engaged in a nippy rubber and a marathon game of pintoon for matches we climbed the Needle on Thursday and from that vantage point viewed with mingled amusement and scorn the histrionic performance of some bounding professionals on the nearby rock. It was on Thursday too that Tom Collis found himself loose on Westmorland Crag with half the mountain in his arms.

The swansong of the meet was divided between Pillar and Moss Ghyll on Friday when one S.U.M.C. member discovered on the former that exposure does not necessarily mean being only partially clothed, and on the latter Collie was cursed for not having excavated his famous step with a steam shovel instead of a puny ice axe. Saturday saw us walking over Sty Head again, this time to Seathwaite, but not early enough to escape the farmer who demanded an astronomical figure for the use of his field. He was beaten down to a more sensible price by Reg who, however, disgraced us on the bus from Seathwaite to Keswick by assaulting the driver.
* Note. This deliberate misrepresentation of the club badge was a serious slight to the club in particular and to mountaineers in general by the assumption of the party that they would better glorify themselves in the eyes of the young ladies as cricketers.

A Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Guide Book Writers

by
Albert Shutt

Being a suggestion for a rational system of grading

P.C.C.J. 1956

There are, at present, two methods of grading climbs in guide books to the British Isles. There are the descriptive and the numerical methods. Of these the numerical method is only a fancy variant of the older method and consists of calling a climb $\frac{1}{2}(4a \pm b)$ instead of Severe, and one is easily translated into the other by means of a table to be found in the front of the guide and the judicious use of a slide-rule and logarithm tables.

The present descriptive system was first used by O.G. Jones: he had initially three grades, viz: Easy, Difficult, Very Difficult. This system has been extended and sub-divided until we have the present confusion of Easy Extremely Severe, Hard Very Difficult, Moderately Very Severe, not forgetting that fine but often unremarked contradiction, Mild Severe. This system with its opportunities for hedging and the avoidance of giving a meaning-full opinion on the grade of a climb, has resulted in a

great number of anachronisms and anomalies. Such anomalies arise for a variety of reasons, I shall give a few examples.

Firstly, we have the difference in guides written by J.M. Edwards and guides written by anyone else. In general when a guide says a climb is Very Difficult, it does not mean to imply that the climb is very difficult, it means that the climb is a suitable one on which to take a good beginner, or for a reasonably competent party to do on a wet day in October. When J.M. Edwards says a climb is Very Difficult he means that J.M. Edwards found it very difficult and J.M. Edwards is a very good climber. There is something to be said for both methods, for the former, that is traditional and with experience one can find out what it means; for the latter, that is truthful and fairly consistent.

There are anomalies between guides which have, theoretically, the same standards, for instance, South West, V.S., on Pillar Rock is much easier than Moss Ghyll Grooves on Scafell which is Severe.

Then there are anomalies in the same guide. Nelson's Nemesis and Horatio's Horror are Severe whilst the easier Crow's Nest is V.S.

Plate Glass on Stanage is Severe and there are at least twenty harder and better V.Diffs on the edge.

Situations like these are bound to arise when the system, which has never been explicitly stated or explained, is applied by so many different people, who climb in different styles and drink different quantities of beer the night before. Even if new climbs are done by several people on different occasions it is still possible to make mistakes; for example, there has been in recent weeks divergence of opinion as to what is the end of the Severe and what the beginning of the V.S.s on Lawrencefield.

Another point which creates difficulties is what is the relative weight to attach to technical difficulty, exposure and nature of rock when deciding on the grade of a climb?

Clearly the present system of grading climbs is unsatisfactory and should be replaced by a better one, and unless some bright young man can evolve a system of absolute grading by means of which a grade can be calculated from the physical data of the climb, our only hope is to suggest a set of standard climbs with which we can compare any given climb and arrive at a fairly consistent system of grading.

So far as gritstone climbs go, I would like to suggest the following: first of all we consider only technical difficulty and use the following list of well-known climbs as a reference standard.

If a climb is easier than Question Mark then it is Easy.
If a climb is harder than Question Mark but is easier than Jitter Face it is Difficult.

If a climb is harder than Jitter Face but easier than either Black Hawk Slit or Wall End Slab it is Very Difficult.

If a climb is harder than either of these but easier than Tower Face (Laddow) or Inverted V, then it is Severe.

If a climb is harder than either of these then it is Very Severe.

I am not prepared to discuss grades for climbs harder than V.S. as these depend

Round your knees and
Your arm thrust out
Stiffly as if a
Fresh green tree had
Sprung from your torso.

Did you foresee the
Cripple walk, return again
Courage crammed between his thighs,
His legs as whole as
Each completed day?

No centuries here, a
Mere decade of fragile
Fragments patiently pieced
To form a rising volition.

And so to the move,
Think only of this movement
For predictions bring visions
Of panic.

Written after Gordon Armstrong led Nostradamus, Chee Tor, ten years after breaking both legs in a fall from it.

A North Wales Incident

by

Alec Higginbottom

It was 1943 and several of us were staying at Ogwen Youth Hostel and the Warden, Miss Pritchard, had a yacht on Llyn Ogwen. Ron Townsend, Bill Elliott and myself fancied doing a bit of sailing on the llyn so Ron went off to see if we could borrow the yacht to sail down the lake. She had already promised to take some friends out in the yacht but she would let us have a rowing boat, free of charge, providing we would be available in case she capsized, squalls being very frequent on the llyn. We readily agreed to this and in due course launched out onto the lake in the rowing boat. Unfortunately the boat had no rowlocks so that we had to hold the oar onto the edge of the boat with one hand whilst trying to row with the other hand.

Ron and Bill decided they would do the rowing and I agreed to do the steering. Unfortunately, my two oarsmen were a bit ill-matched and because they were not

A possible third attempt was when John Firth and I never made it to the hut and had to bivvy in heavy rain on the Mer de Glace. This was a most frightening experience, sheltering under a large boulder, listening to the huge crashes as the rain washed large stones and debris down off the flanks of the Moine. Unbeknown to us an English climber was killed as he slept under a similar boulder on the other side of the Mer de Glace. This was John's first Alpine experience which prompted him to say he would never be frightened on Millstone again.

So it was third or fourth time lucky as Alan Sanderson, Terry Sayles, Ben Hodges of the Antarctic and myself left the hut at 6.30am. The route starts within 1 hour of the Couverte - which provides a superb viewpoint. The small Moine glacier is ascended to its highest point from where ramps and couloirs lead pleasantly to an easy section of the ridge. There do not appear to be any named pitches on the route to provide a focus of attention, but the climbing is always interesting being generally IV with one V-sap move. Nevertheless it is always surprising how exhausting some of the pitches are when you are not acclimatised.

Alan was happy with the technicalities of the rock but Terry and Ben found some of the moves at this height quite knackered. The weather was brilliant and I was continuously trying to coax more speed and fewer stops, but it still took twice the guidebook time to reach the summit at 3412 m. The 360 degree panorama of the Chamonix Aiguilles was still worth all of the sweat and scraped skin as we gazed upon the scenes of famous epics in the Mont Blanc range laid out before us.

The descent though easy, was long and we were late back, but the hut warden took pity on us and produced a simple but very welcome meal. I was happy to have achieved a niggling ambition in such good company.

(An ascent, in 1988, of the Diagonal route on the South Ridge of the Aiguille du Moine. Standard AD/D).

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to an enormous extent on the build and temperament of the climber concerned, and also cover a much wider range of difficulty than all the climbs of less than V.S.

If a climb has its most difficult moves in a situation which is more exposed than the second pitch of Atherton Brothers (Shining Clough) then it should be raised one standard, and if the major difficulties are found less than twenty feet above the deck or less than ten feet above a ledge, with a good belay, the ledge being at least four feet wide, then the grade should be lowered by one degree.

For loose rock, if after initial gardening, the holds continue to be insecure then the standard should be raised by one grade.

In conclusion I would like to point out that this is a personal point of view and probably does not coincide with the ideas of the majority of climbers. However the present unco-ordinated system of grading is rapidly becoming farcical and each new guide book produces fresh howlers and does not correct older ones, so I hope that the above may give a lead in straightening out the muddle.

The Conquest of High Tor

by

Eric Byne

P.C.C.J. 1957

It all began in the early years of the century when E.A. Baker, the head librarian of the Midland Institute at Derby, wrote an account of the Great Gully that cleaves Matlock's High Tor and mentioned briefly his two unsuccessful attempts to climb this great limestone rift. In 1903, Baker, a member of the Kyndwr Club, published his book - "Moor, Caves and Crags of the High Peak" - which was composed mainly of reprints of articles previously published in the Manchester Guardian. Even today this book is interesting for many of its passages have great charm and beauty, particularly those dealing with the high moorlands. However Baker was by no means generous to his friends and companions, many of whom were far superior to him in craftsmanship and mountain craft, and the book is noticeable for the omission of the names of those who took Baker climbing on the various crags, thus giving the impression that he alone was the leading light in the various expeditions described.

The book mentioned the High Tor Gully and Baker's unsuccessful attempts to ascend the lower pitches. This excited the attention of J.W. Putrell of Sheffield, a cragman of considerable skill and repute, who can be considered the founder of Peak District rock climbing, considering that he had begun climbing Wharcliffe as long ago as 1885. Putrell and William Smithard of Derby, both friends of Baker, and fellow members of the Kyndwr and Climbers' Clubs, visited High Tor on December 12th 1903. Accompanied by A.M. Bennett, a photographer, Putrell, seconded by Smithard, succeeded in the first ascent of this great cleft, climbing the whole way unaided, with only the moral support of the rope behind him. The 150 feet climb took three hours

Nostradamus

by

J. Skelton

Did you foretell
That past attempts
Are mirror reflected
In sun-baked glass,
That careered downward
Out of control?

Yes, you Michel, with
Your faded yellow belt

and, towards the top Bennett, the third man, started a scree avalanche which shot down the gully with great velocity, carrying with it a heavy camera and tripod which were afterwards found, much shattered, near the foot of the crag. Fortunately for Bennett his companions were well placed and safely held him on the rope, otherwise he might have followed the photographic appliances to their final resting place.

The Great Gully safely ascended the party, now in jubilant mood, explored the crag thoroughly and noticed a promising chimney in the cliff nearby. To this Putrell and Smithard returned in January 1904. They climbed it, finding it to be part of the same rock weakness as the Great Gully, being on the opposite side of the Toe. This cleft, which they named 'Slanting Chimney', was much easier than the Gully, giving sound holds and pleasant climbing. Further south still was discovered another rift in the rock, an "enclosed chimney" of 60 feet up which for a considerable way the two explorers found themselves ascending a perfectly dry and completely enclosed shaft, in a semi-gloom, until suddenly the chimney opened out, becoming smooth and narrow, and giving what was considered to be safe, but exposed and exhilarating climbing.

So ended the first stage in the conquest of High Tor. The great crag had been taken by its weaknesses: (little did the victors realize as they gazed backwards at the great towering bastion that half a century would pass before final subjugation would be reached). Jubilantly the pioneers departed, and Smithard enthusiastically broadcast the details of their victories, waxing eloquent about the High Tor Gully, to his many friends and acquaintances, and giving a full account of the climbs in the Manchester Guardian and the Climbers' Club Journal.

The news reached Baker and the ink from his pen now dripped with envy, criticizing the ascent, and stating that the gully was a disgusting and filthy place, with its mounds of refuse, old tins, bottles, and many other abominations which were to be encountered. This unjustified attack was made within the pages of the Climbers' Club Journal, and Baker apparently forgot that he had once described this magnificently situated cleft as a "Noble Gully".

William Smithard, now the president of the Kyndwr Club, was so disgusted with the obvious envy and jealousy of his old friend Baker, that he was moved to write a strong letter of protest, defending the merits of the climb, and attacking Baker's attitude. The latter replied in fiery terms, condemning all climbing on Carboniferous Limestone and so, for a considerable period, a bitter controversy raged between them in the pages of succeeding Climbers' Club Journals, a most deplorable affair which was eventually to prove the beginning of the disintegration of the Kyndwr Club and in time would see J.W. Putrell and Smithard founding the Derbyshire Pennine Club as its successor.

During the next twenty years the "Great Gully" of High Tor gradually established a reputation for being a unique showpiece of the district, and by the middle of the 1920s it was being regularly ascended, usually on the Saturday afternoon, by climbers from far and wide who came principally to the district to climb at Cromford Black Rocks on the Sunday.

Great North Face routes in the Alps. Later on that year I met the Director of Training for the Mountaineering Association in Zermatt and was asked to take the qualifying test to become an instructor, which I did.

In 1964 and 65 I worked full time as a guide for the Association initially in the Lakes and Wales and then in the Alps, climbing just about everywhere. In between guiding I climbed with various people, but mostly John Gregory, and we did many of the traditional routes such as: the Yellow Edge, the Catenaccio East Face, etc in the Dolomites; the Breithorn North Face, the Oberghellhorn South Face; all the peaks around Zermatt, Anolla and Sassi Fee plus a few of the Chamonix big rock routes. I had a fabulous time. In late '64 I hiked/hiked through North Africa to the Atlas Mountains and the following year, after a complete winter survey of the area, I led the first holiday/expedition courses there for The Mountaineering Association, sneaking in a climb up the Rock of Gibraltar en-route. Back in England later that year I managed to get my name on a couple more 'firsts' in North Wales, climbing with Rowland Edwards; 'Diwedd Grooves' (on Cloggy) and 'Spectrum' (with Martin Boysen in the party on Clogwyn y Grochan).

My plans to climb The Fortress as part of The Yorkshire Patagonian Expedition were sidetracked totally when I came to the Bahamas and got married but I managed to spend time climbing in the U.S.A. in Yosemite, the Grand Tetons, Mount Rainier, Mount Hood, and the Canadian Rockies before the triples arrived in 1971.

Since the highest point on my island is about 40 ft above sea level I haven't done much climbing for the past 20 years but I go diving and sailing most weekends and do the occasional 'sky-dive' over in Florida.

I did drag the kids up Mount Rainier in 1986 and made a nostalgic ascent (my seventh) of the Matterhorn and a few of the Zermatt peaks again in 1989 but this summer is the first real climbing holiday I've spent since the 1960s. I climbed in Southern California on Taquitz Rock, Joshua Tree, Mount Whitney etc., and had a great time on some spectacular crags.

I hope to be in England in 1992 and would like to spend some time in Derbyshire.

Remember me to anyone I used to know.

The Aiguille du Moine
by
Barry Needle

It was my route choice, firstly because I had been up to the bivvy at the Couvercle hut twice previously and failed to set off. Once when the weather was appallingly bad and then when my partner cut his thumb badly whilst opening a can of sardines. Gaston Rebuffat had it listed in his 100 finest routes which seemed a good second reason for doing the route.

'good to be alive' mood to take the Saab back through the snow to The Cheshire Cheese.

(An account of a winter ascent of the south-east face of Mam Tor by Michael Tutt and Trevor Wilson on 6th February 1991. Time 3 hours.)

A Climbing Life by Dave Mellor

(Dave now lives in the Bahamas (his address will be disclosed for a sizeable contribution to the club funds) and the article below is drawn almost verbatim from a recent letter to Ken Morgan written in response to a request for 'something for the journal').

Your letter was a surprise. I am just getting back into easy climbing after a 26 year lay-off during which I've been very busy raising my three sons. I don't think that I could ever be considered a 'star' in the climbing scene of the 60s especially when you consider the contributions of other Peak members. I remember so many. Pat Fearnough and Don Morrison, who finished up giving up their lives to the sport. My old friend John Gregory, who climbed 'The Fortress'. (I got married and backed out of that expedition). Les and Harry Gillott who did many good routes and introduced me to Alpine climbing as well as an endless list of others who were all associated with the Club at one time or another.

I started climbing in 1956, with Dave Johnson of Sheffield University on Stoney Middleton and later Ravensdale. Dave J did many first ascents, including Windhovver, Aurora, What the Hell and a bunch more on these crags with me as his struggling second.

When Dave Johnson got married and left Sheffield I teamed up with John Loy and we continued to climb in Ravensdale. I joined the Peak C.C. and got my first introduction to climbing on gritstone with Les and Harry Gillott who probably saw me as an accident just waiting to happen.

North Wales, the Lakes and Scotland soon followed and then in 1959 I ventured forth for my first Alpine holiday in Austria when it rained in the valleys and snowed in the hills just about every day. The main currency then was 'Viking' nylon ropes which I remember trading for an ice-axe, crampons, and boots. We didn't do much climbing worth mentioning.

Practice doesn't always make perfect but I did improve enough to climb the Mauterhorn in 1960 and then again in 1961.

The 'bug' really bit me around that time (what had he been doing so far?) and the following year saw John Gregory and myself struggling up a very stormy N.E. face of the Piz Badile which I think was one of the earlier British ascents of one of the six

The 'Greyhound' at Cromford was the climbers' pub of this era, and parties arriving there on the Saturday, would sally down to Matlock Bath to view the monstrosities in the Fish Pond and to "have a look at" the great cleft in the Tor. Local opinion believed (and perhaps the belief was fostered by the climbers concerned) that these expeditions at Matlock were in search of rock pigeons' eggs; however, according to those who took part, this was an opinion most certainly not shared by the custodian of the Alpine Gardens at the top of High Tor, for he was firmly convinced that the climbers' method of ascent was but an attempt to avoid payment of the small fee which is charged for admittance, and he could be usually be found waiting patiently at the top, with his roll of tickets at the ready.

Eventually however climbers in general began to abandon these visits to Matlock owing to the embarrassment caused by the watching crowds on the main A6 highway below, and ascents of the gully became few and far between, some climbers preferring to attempt it late on a summer evening, and others occasionally by torchlight on a moonlight night.

It was not until around 1953 that climbers began seriously to think of trying to scale the great slabby face of the bastion itself. Many had gazed upwards at that tremendously exposed towering wall; a gleaming white challenge in the sunlight; but it looked impregnable to the average cragsman whose sole thought was suitable hand and foot holds on which to balance and climb. However the continental technique of artificial climbing, whereby a climber can ascend otherwise unclimbable rock by hammering into a crevice a metal ring-ended peg, onto which he can clip his rope, was now beginning to be practised in this country. With this method of climbing in mind, R.A. (Dick or All-hallowed) Brown, D. (Don) Wooller, and F. (Frank) Fitzgerald, three climbers from Sheffield University, decided that 'Coronation Day' would be a suitable festive occasion on which to attempt the ascent of the great bastion face. It was even thought that it might be possible to stick a series of little flags in the rock as upward progress was made, thus showing their patriotic loyalty to whomsoever cared to criticize.

Unfortunately, although Everest fell to commemorate the great day any ascent of High Tor Bastion was out of the question, the English weather drowning all enthusiasm for such a venture. Downhearted, but not dismayed, the three S.U.M.C. climbers postponed their attempt for a week, and then returned full of hope and determination. They underestimated the number of pinions that were necessary and these unfortunately ran out during a critical phase some two thirds of the way up the tremendous wall. Disappointed, they were forced to descend; to be met by the guardians of the law, who were vitally concerned at the dislocation of the traffic on the A6.

New plans were made, involving a mid-week attempt sometime in the future; however this was not to be, for other climbers were nursing similar ideas, and on June 21st the Bastion face fell to a party of three from Leicester led by that great peak land cragsman – Peter Biven. The route up the wall follows a shallow groove, centrally situated. This groove

dwindles to nothing about 15 feet or so from the top, and to overcome this critical portion it was found necessary to traverse right for about 20 feet, in order to reach the next feasible line of weakness which would enable upward progress to the summit.

About one third of this sensationaly-situated slab, lies up sound rock and very steep exposed slabs, on which no artificial aids are necessary. The remainder is careful piton work, more reminiscent of a dolomite climb than of an English crag. This being so, the Tor has attracted the attention of other climbers with modernistic ideas on rock gymnastics, and during the last three years this great white limestone face has been successfully scaled by various intrepid parties. One can but wonder what old J.W. Putrell and his hob-nailed companions would have thought of such peregrinations. Would he have approved? Would the "Father of Derbyshire climbing" have gazed with tolerance and understanding at the adventurous daring which has taken our youth of today up such far off giants as Everest, Kangchenjunga and the Musnagh Tower? I think he would have understood; for, fifty years ago, he and others of like mind were looked upon by the general public as a breed of men who were not quite right in the head; objects of derision and pity, and sometimes awe!

So the subjugation of the High Tor of Matlock has taken place. Its cracks and gullies and walls have been climbed and of all the people who pass along that winding road some 400 feet below the summit, only the climbers can really appreciate the wonderful rock architecture that flanks itself so challengingly to their sympathetic eyes.

Mam Tor in Winter

by
Trevor Wilson

There we were under one of the highest, loosest 'rock' faces in the Peak District. It was sub-zero and soon to be dark. What on earth were we doing here? Tutt had suggested the possibility of a winter ascent of Mam Tor a week before. I phoned him with a "Yes, how about tomorrow?" and that was it.

From the top of the scree ramp Tutt led up over the first rock band and out of sight. A distant clatter of crampons and banging of axe-on-rock-peg breaks the slow swirl of snow in the wind. Somebody else was braving the snow; a walker approached across the scree slope. He happily pointed out the fact that it would be dark in an hour. I pointed to the Peetz on my helmet. By this time Tutt had stopped and set up a belay. The walker wished me luck and I set off up the rock band. I pulled out the first piece of safety and held the crab in my mouth to remove the Rock 8. Big mistake. It stuck to my lips. I pulled off the crab leaving a white arc of frozen moisture. The first pitch was not too bad being more scree than rock steps, but I could see an intimidating rock band above Tutt's belay. Tutt handed me an assortment of rock pegs to go with my rock gear and I headed off.

After about fifteen feet I could see how hard this was going to be. I was bridging between two solid blocks with my crampons but most of the rocks I had tried so far with my gloved hand and pick were loose. I nearly backed down but after a bit more block-testing I decided it was a 'goer'. One more rock peg (which I thought would hold) and one Friend 1 (which I thought would not) and I started to move. I chiselled the shale layer off a block on my left and planted my axe in the frozen shale on the best block to my right. After pulling the two gloves off my left hand with my teeth I stuffed them into my pocket and gingerly pulled up. After a bit more teetering up I reached a sloping shale ledge.

It was now dark. I put two rock pegs in the wall behind me and planted my clipped axe in an icy crack. Tutt started to come up steadily at first and then stopped. After a few choice descriptions about the state of the rock (and removal of some of it) Tutt was moving again, very carefully! Tutt's axe appeared over the top closely followed by the rest of him as he pulled onto the safety of the ledge.

Tutt headed up the belay wall flailing his crampons close to my helmet and was soon onto the first of a succession of steps. Tutt shouted 'below' louder than usual-I ducked into the back of the ledge as a block a foot square flew over my head; my helmet would not have been much use against that one. I was whistling 'In the Summer Time' as Tutt made his belay. I led through and headed over easier ground to the top. The final axe placement was magnificent.. The turf 'cornice' was so solid I nearly dived over the top.

It seemed as though we had spent a month on that face. We headed down in a

For some reason not obvious to the average sun person, it had been decided to attempt to climb High Tor Bastion. A reconnoitre of the route was made on the Saturday by two members of the party, and at first glance the climb did not appear a very healthy place on which to spend the Sunday. Not to be deterred by the findings of the reconnaissance party, we were up by 6-45 am after spending the night on forbidden territory. A start was made by 8-15 am.

The start of the climb consists of fifty feet of glorified scrambling over rather loose limestone blocks and vertical grass fields, up to a belay round a conveniently situated tree. From the tree a traverse is made for about ten feet to the left over rather slippery rock which is covered by loose grass sods. At about this position we were visited by the gentlemen from Leicester who are credited with the first ascent of this somewhat unfrequented path. The visitors offered us the advice that it was not necessary to insert pitons in this area, but it was found desirable to revoke this advice in view of the unsafe nature of Matlock's rockery. Mr Biven also informed us of the

The Ascent of High Tor

by
Alan Wright

P.C.J. May 1957

always wanted to cuddle our club secretary". He muttered some words of abuse about my father so I drifted back to the pains in my foot. Radio calls now flashed through the air. The R.A.F. lads were overdue and their fellow man was concerned. messages like "What has happened?" "What is your location?" "Do you require assistance?" The answers were returned. They had enough men to carry me down and the world returned to silence only to be broken by "Lif" and the sound of shuffling feet.

I shuddered at the thought of having to spend a night out here. I know many have to. I'd put on all my spare clothing in between stops and still I shivered with cold. A night out here, I cast the evil thought from my head. At the next changeover Alan took off his jacket and gave it to me to put on. At last, even if looking like a Michelin man,

I began to feel warm. Radios crackled alive again and as the message was that it would be quicker to descend into Glen Etive and that they would have a Landrover waiting we turned at the right-hand fork and headed down. Crampons were taken off ahead of time and my carriers' feet slipped desperately on the frozen water runnels just as if they were running on the spot. There were times when we passed over drops and their legs spun round. I couldn't help but let off little trumps all the time.

I was wishing that they had left their crampons on but the ground improved and now we could see the lights of the Landrover down below. At first they did not seem to be getting any nearer, but within the hour I was climbing on board. When all their gear was tied to the roof rack the R.A.F. lads climbed in and made room for Phil and Trevor, our two car drivers. The plan now was to drive round to the cars parked in Glen Coe and there, Trevor was to come back for the rest of our party, while Phil and I went to Fort William.

Nine miles and frozen cars were reached. We thanked our helpers without whom I would have still been up there for a few more frozen hours and bade them farewell as they sped away for a late meal. Ice was scraped from windscreens while I answered a call of nature but before I had zipped up Trevor had shot off for the lads. I did not have a chance to send Alan's coat back. He must have been well and truly frozen by then.

On arrival at hospital staff were recalled from their homes (for which I am sorry) and it was disclosed that I had a fractured foot plus a dislocated big toe. They tried their best with the repair but it was found to be more complicated. I was therefore transferred to Inverness where an operation was performed.

Now I reflect back to that day. We had perfect weather and conditions. We ticked off an excellent route. There had been eleven deaths and numerous accidents that week. I consider it to have been OUR LUCKY DAY.

existence of a spacious ledge just above the notorious black triangle; the ledge being equipped with an enormous ring piton for anchoring purposes. We therefore decided to change the leadership at this 'halfway stage'.

A little difficulty was experienced in making the move from the end of the traverse into the bottom of the groove; a large loose block enhancing the safety and security of the situation. The sixty feet or so from the bottom of the groove to the black triangle were found to be quite straightforward, and it came as a shock when the battle with the dark bulge was forcibly commenced. A review of the situation at this point revealed a very exposed and lonely position surrounded by ideally situated vertical ledges.

In order to gain moral support for the move ahead, a 'stance' was taken below the bulge or triangle, partially seated in etriers, and number two brought to the bottom of the groove, number two's belay being arranged in a similar comfortable manner. After weighing up the pros and cons of the situation, to the helpful prompting of number three, it was thought advisable to discontinue. In spite of this decision, the route was continued, bearing in mind that the afore-mentioned ledge was close at hand. A succession of weird and wonderful wedges and pitons was passed between the triangle and the ledge, the wedges ranging from accurately machined best quality mahogany, complete with rather aged nylon fittings, to pieces of broom stalk rejects fitted with pieces of dirty old parcel string; unique pitons were also encountered on this section.

The dimensions of the 'big' ledge had obviously diminished since last visited by Mr. Biven and it was found to be a very tight fit even for three not very stout occupants. It had been suggested that the best route to the top, a matter of ten feet, was by taking a straight line; this course was found not to be practicable for persons of rather limited reach, owing to the absence of holds and cracks. This difficulty was not overcome in spite of the longest member of the party standing, complete with either rungs, on the limbs of one long suffering member of the party. The problem was finally solved by making a twenty foot traverse right, as taken by J. Brown, and then finishing up over very loose rock and another steep band of herbland and ivy roots. As an added safety factor at this altitude assistance was rendered in ascending the last five feet of very unsafe ivy rooting, in the form of a rope from spectators above.

About thirty pitons and wedges are necessary on the route, but a number of these are already in position. The route took about seven hours, though it has been led by a certain party, (not a member of the P.C.C.), in one hour five minutes.

(An early ascent of High Tor Bastion, now called Original Route, by Alan Wright, Alan Clarke and John Henry Fearon on 10 Feb. 1957. The original article carried an acknowledgement by Clarke and Fearon that Wright had led the difficult sections. The first ascent of the route was by P. Hassell, P. Biven and 'Darkie' in June 1953).

A Good Turnout
by
Dave Gregory

P.C.C.J. May 1957

And so it was. There were thirty of us in the small room at The Railway Hotel, and as the tone of the evening was not temperate the temperature of the room soon rose until shortly before time, when all but one of the Sheffield Climbing Club contingent, together with the only lady in the party, left to spend the night in law-abiding slumber at The New Inn. Shortly after time the remaining two dozen saluted forth to feed the inner man; the majority at the village's two fish and chip shops, leaving one normally respectable gentleman squatting by a wall begging for chapatis.

The way to the barn was pointed out, without our asking, by a night watchman, which seems of sinister import on recollection, but leaving him, we streamed out of Marsden, decorous under the surveillance of a patrolling police car. The desire to get a good spot for the night made those in front set a hot pace and it seemed no time at all before the hillside by the barn was covered by a winking trail of torches.

Much sooner than usual everybody was settled for the night, with the exception of messrs Pilling and Porter who appear to have lost the battle for a door in the top barn and had retired to mingle with the plebs in the lower one. It being now Sunday we were singing a hymn to pave the way to innocent slumber when a rough steatorian voice commanded us to "Shut up". Thinking no doubt that one of us was not appreciative of such music the owner of an equally rough voice told the supposed critic what to do with his advice. The disturber established his identity by shining a torch of tremendous candlepower into our faces, drawing forth grumbles muted as we began to realise that The Law was among us.

The Law proved to be a young and not unpleasant constable who had first visited the top barn, finding there only three who had innocently pleaded that their presence was due to having missed the last train home. These he instructed to "Stop here." In the round up later on these three were spotlighted in his torch beam, putting his orders into operation by rushing rapidly up the hillside to freedom.

In accordance with the constable's request to "Get out of here" the assembly rose from the hay, like corpses from the grave, and made their way outside to be interrogated. This consisted, in the main, of a desire to know our names and addresses, and although this was met by Reg's handing him a newly distributed club syllabus, saying "My card, constable", the evening ended on a not unfriendly note, for the constable consented to loan his torch while Reg packed his rucksack, always a lengthy process. This was to the great delight of Tom Collins who had lent Reg a torch on a previous midnight excursion, only to have it returned in a non-functional state, and who no doubt had visions of Reg on his way to Marsden in irons for maltreating constabulary property.

Once more the hillside was studded in lights as we made our varied ways to the

the end of his fall and when he stopped and stood up I gathered that he had hurt his leg by the way he was hobbling around. Otherwise he seemed to be O.K.

At that moment I realised that we were on dangerous ground. Where Phil had been standing was stripped down to bare ice. The whole surface had been covered to a depth of two or three inches by a layer of windslab lying in wait for its prey, and we were still on it. I was about to turn to tell the other two lads above me to turn round and front point down when I heard a ghastly sound from Vic. As I turned his crampon dug through two layers of clothing into my right thigh. Automatically I let go of my drive-in ice axe to stop his fall and in the next second found myself tumbling down without an axe.

Grave thoughts rushed through my head. "My ice hammer, with its long pick is strapped to my back... Is there going to be a drop?... Is there a boulder field sticking through the snow?" My eyes remained closed by stinging snow. Somewhere I felt my left crampon bite hard into the snow but it tossed me airborne for a second or two before I came down in a swallow dive with snow ploughing over my chest and out-flung arms until I came to rest. I gazed back up the slope. Thank Christ for that. Vic was still there some hundred feet above.

I tried to stand but slumped back down with stinging pains in my foot. On seeing this members of our party made their way across to me while Vic and Gary came down with the other climbing party who happened to be following us down. They all gathered round and as I said "All the pain seems to be in my ankle" a guy emerged from the other party, saying "Let's take a look, we belong to the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue. We'll soon sort you out." (Another stroke of luck).

Off came my crampon and the lace was slackened round the top of my left foot for the guy to feel gently around. "Do you feel sick or faint?" I assured him not. "Nothing seems to be broken". There was a slight pause while he stood up and then continued with "It could be just a sprain. Do you think you could hop down between two of us?" My answer was "Yes" and this we did but only for a short while before two tired arms and one tired leg refused to go any further. They sat me down to rest. "Nothing seems to be broken".

By now it was totally dark and one by one rays of light shone about as the headtorches came out while a new plan was being devised. The rope was coiled into large coils which were looped over the head of one person so that it rested on his left shoulder and then looped over the head of another so that it rested on his right shoulder. I was to sit on the rope in the middle with my arms around them. This was style. They carried me like an emperor and the rest of the Trojans followed on behind carrying rucksacks. One man was out in front as scout finding the easiest way down. The guy who was in charge was in front of me and my carriers, walking backwards, telling them where to place their feet and occasionally enquiring how I was feeling. Every ten minutes or so there was a change of carriers. Even though I was under eleven stone I put strain on their backs as they trod on steep uneven ground.

Phil came forward limping with his bruised leg to do his share of the carrying. "Right lads" cried the charge hand "put the knot under his arse. Lift", and I rose on his command with my arm around Phil's shoulders. Trying to be cheerful I said "I've

the final pitch to the summit. I stopped beside the second and belayed. We had started to queue for the finish. I called for Gary.

While chatting with the second I found out that they had done Castle Ridge on Ben Nevis the day before. Another superb route he said, slightly harder than this had been upto now. I didn't get to know what he thought of the next pitch as a distant voice called out his name and he gathered his anchors and moved on. At that moment Gary climbed the last ten feet up to my stance saying "How much further is it? I'm just about knackered".

"There's the top" I said pointing up to the large cornice from which a blue rope threaded its way down out of sight into the dip eighty feet below the cornice where we couldn't see it.

Seconds later Alan shouted "Right oh, Trev" and Trevor's head appeared on the skyline, the size of a pea against the great mass of snow. Up went the rope and so did Vic in hurried movements, arms and legs moving so fast it reminded me of a spider running for cover. He never stopped once on the pitch; whether he did on the summit was another matter, but reaching it must have been a great relief.

By now I realised it left Alan and Phil a full rope to climb out on and rightly so, the pitch would need it. An extra man on the same rope would have made it very awkward. Traffic started to move again and it was my turn to move on. I trod the airy arctic to where it dipped; this was the crux, the point of the hold-up and where Trevor and Paul had decided to rope up. I descended slightly, and gently but positively, tip-toed across an awkward near void. This done I moved forward a few more feet to a large split rock, where I put in a bomb-proof runner and tied off. I started to breathe once more. Gary did quite well over the naughty bit, handling it well despite an expressionless look on his face as if he were in some sort of shock.

Now climbers appeared across the gap and we must move on. I tied the lad to the belay and set off up the final pitch; sheer enjoyment, every move on perfect snow. The feeling was quite superb. On I went to the final heave over the cornice to be greeted by every one and clipped into the ready-made belay. Gary soon arrived with a big grin on his face gasping "That was great" then others followed, one by one, as we bundled gear into sacks preparing for the journey down.

It was now ten past five and the sun was starting to set. We said "Cheerio" to our climbing compatriots (not knowing we would meet again in a short while) and began to make our way off this solitary top. Paul and Trevor had waited so long on the top for us that they had become quite cold and being eager to be moving again to get warm they soon strode out in front. We descended by the north-east flank of the mountain just as light began to fade. Trevor led the way over an enormous rounded cornice on the steep but safe ground. A hundred and fifty feet down he moved left and glissaded down a small depression to a safe landing eight feet below. Paul and Alan were following in his tracks.

Suddenly there was a weird sound. SWISSHHHHH. Phil, a few feet below me was sliding down feet first. I stood and watched helplessly as he bounced down, wrestling with his ice axe trying to gain some sort of control. He managed this towards

track that leads to the Holmfirth road and the now deserted Isle of Skye hotel, which soon looked as though the fairy folk had come to assist in its demolition when the swarm of lights appeared and disappeared in every available nook and cranny. What had been the best room lived up to its name, for here the upholstered seats lining the wall remained. A lucky few slept here, the rest on the cold, cold ground, consigning the police force to perdition with the wind that whistled through the gaping windows to keep it company. There was one consolation, at least we were at The Isle of Skye before the lodgers in the village and although on their arrival in the morning we left without complying with the police regulations as to signing the visitors' book, The Isle of Skye's last guests were grateful for its shelter.

Acknowledgement. For the ambiguous title the author is indebted to Harry Shillam who, incidentally, spent the night in the empty cellars in the hope that a ghostly barrel of beer would appear to frighten him.

Lo, the Mountaineer

He riseth early in the morning and upsetteth the whole household. Mighty are his preparations. He goeth forth with a great hope in his heart, and when the day is far spent he returneth smelling of strong drink and the truth is not him.

P.C.C.J. 1957

My First North Wall

by

Alan Clarke

P.C.C.J. 1957

I arrived at the foot of the wall one cold and blustery January morning. Deep drifts lay everywhere and looking up at the immense wall towering above me, I felt very small and alone. The wall looked cold and forbidding with patches of snow and ice glistening on it, whilst at the top the wind was tearing at the loose snow forming a localised blizzard. Surely, to tackle this wall solo was presumptive to the first degree. I moved in to the attack.

Immediately the fierceness of the face came upon me. The small hand and footholds had to be cleared of loose snow, and the smooth ice beneath chipped away with a piton hammer. Slowly I moved upwards until forced to stop by a vast holdless wall. A long ascending traverse to the right took me out on to the west ridge where I was greeted by the full force of the wind. A second traverse back to the left brought me to the centre of the wall. Straight below me were the drifts and debris cone that I

had stood on so confidently such a long time ago. Above, the wall soared upwards to meet the grey skies.

After a rest I moved on again, following the route up the slabs, until the wind-blown snow stung my face, and the cold numbed my fingers. But the top was in sight. Very carefully I moved forward, clearing the ice off each hold. I was now very tired but I forced myself onwards; a slip here could have been fatal. At last, thankful for having been released from the clutches of that formidable wall, I reached the top of Stanage's 'Jitter Face'.

(With apologies to Messrs. Buhl and Rebuffat.)

What Do You Know About The Peak?

A quiz compiled by Eric Byne P.C.C.J. 1959

1. Give the name of a Derbyshire inn, so called from a famous unbeaten racehorse, bred near Rotherham, and owned by the Duke of Devonshire.
2. Who was the man who inaugurated the famous cross-country bog trot known as the Derwent Watershed; who at the age of 53 broke the Peak and Fell record walk of the Lake District around 1922; who recently (1959) flew over the North Pole?
3. Name two Norwegians, a Swiss, and an American, whose activities are associated with Stanage.
4. Name the first limestone climb done in the Peak and the name of its pioneer.
5. Where was the Four Jacks Cabin and who were the four Jacks?
6. Who first led Inverted V on Stanage and where did he live?
7. Give the name of a famous gritstone-climbing policeman.
8. Who named a famous climb after a tree that grew upon it and later had to change the name because it wasn't the tree he thought it was?
9. Name the first ascent party on Suicide Wall on Cratcliffe.
10. What famous Peak District inn was known for 30 years as 'The Rope and Rubbers'?

"We're not going up there, are we?" asked Victor, with an 'I'm not sure I want to go' in his voice.

"Yes" someone replied.

Vic swore for the first time that day. Vic and his brother Gary had rock-climbed in the summer months but they were both newcomers to this white world of snow and ice and I knew that they were overawed by what they saw.

On our approach to the foot of the climb six more climbers, roped up in pairs, were already climbing. We watched them going various ways as we started to put on harnesses and crampons and discussed the approach. The guidebook gives variations for the first few pitches and Vic was wanting to do variations off. It was decided that Trevor and Paul, being the strongest of our party, were to break away and try to solo it as far as they could. The rest of us decided that to save some time we would tackle the snow flank on the left, then traverse out right above the rocky bluffs to gain the ridge proper. That should take us some three to four hundred feet above. This we did and eventually it placed us above the party which had already been climbing.

Alan drove in a peg for the belay. At first we roped up as five on two ropes but this we found to be more time wasting so the idea was abandoned after forty feet. Alan, Phil and Vic took the first rope while Gary and I had the second. Now at last we were making progress.

As we went on there were times when I caught a glimpse of Trevor and Paul way above us. They were still moving together and I thought to myself the ridge cannot be too bad for they were still unroped. Gary moved up to my stance remarking on the position we were in and the views being "budeful" as he put it.

"Something for you to remember. At times back home you will relive these moments" I remarked.

Behind him, two hundred feet below, came the first pair of climbers which had now started to gain on us, I untied from the belay and moved up on beautiful wind-blown snow as crisp as can be.

The next pitch was straightforward, just like the last and it soon went by but on the next the whole thing seemed to rear up and the exposure was tremendous on both sides. The two climbers had now caught me up so I stepped to one side and stayed there hanging onto my ice axe and hammer to let them come by.

"Thanks a lot" said the leader, "Great day" and he sped by, arms and legs going like an automaton's. I could not help but admire his technique. Why can't I be that good? I felt humble as I climbed on another twenty feet till the rope ran out when I belayed and called Gary up.

The ridge now became a knife edge with drops that fell away near vertically. Time for a steady head. I went up and soon the gradient eased and there, perched on the crest was the second man from the speedy team which had overtaken us. He was sitting belayed some twenty five feet in front of me and beyond him twin ropes lay along the narrow strip of ridge and then vanished from view. The ridge then descends slightly to where I hope his leader is, plus Phil, Alan, and Vic because from the dip the route goes directly upwards to a large cornice and I cannot see them. That must be

- shown on T.V. The Glossies also played (as they still do) their part. You pick up a magazine on climbing and see the picture stories of multi-coloured lycra-clad heroes (and heroines) seemingly at ease on the latest 6b or 6c.
- This type of climbing with its speedy rise to high standard climbing is almost certainly the outcome of the expansion of the sport away from the hills and into the gymnasium, as much as of equipment advance. Muscles are developed by weight training and techniques by the use of climbing walls. One outcome of this is that modern climbers seem less proficient at climbing cracks and chimneys than the "old timers".
- It was inevitable I suppose that all this should lead to competition climbing; the heats, semis and finals of the national and international competitions. It makes me wonder, what next? It's certainly a long way from the time when climbing was about friends disappearing up a mountain side for the day with a rope and a bag of sandwiches!
11. Who first climbed (led)?
 - (a) Ilam Rock
 - (b) Priscilla, Laddow
 - (c) the Bass Rock, Wharncliffe by its long side
 - (d) Froggatt Pinnacle
 - (e) The Inaccessible Pinnacle, (Tegness) by its long side
 - (f) The Zigzag, Kinderscout
 12. Who made the first surreptitious ascent of Holme Moss T.V. mast?
 13. Who climbed on gritstone with a peg leg?
 14. What gritstone climbing club held its inaugural meeting on Hampstead Heath?
 15. Which gritstone climbing club, during the war, had its members arrested as parachutist saboteurs by the Home Guard at Redmires?
 16. Who wrote the magazine-sized book - "Trespassers will be prosecuted"?
 17. What is the origin of all the innumerable small hollows, like shell-burst holes, in the bracken and heather under Birchen Edge?
 18. Who was the famous Swiss, always associated with Laddow, who was eventually killed by loose rock on Nantlle Y Garn?
 19. Who were the two walking demons who inaugurated the Marsden-Rowesley walk?
 20. When J.W. Puttrell forced the long thin passage from Cave Dale into the roof of Peak Cavern early this century what was he looking for?
 21. What Sheffield climbing club, on its inaugural meet, went looking for Roman remains, and found them underneath a crag? Where was this?
 22. Who was the first, and probably only, member of the P.C.C. to surreptitiously ascend the Holme Moss T.V. mast? Who was his companion on this ascent?

Our Lucky Day: Sron Na Lairig

by
Lol Bartrop

In a layby near the big cairn by the meeting of the three waters in Glen Coe we put on our winter gear. Seven of us had driven up from Sheffield the day before for our annual February meet. As usual we were hoping for good weather and today it was exceptional. Trevor remarked on the spinning ice-wheels in the nearby river which spun and bobbed about in the fast-flowing waters. We all found them amusing to watch. How funny that in all these years I've been climbing I had never noticed them before.

We set off up the valley heading for Coire Eilde, our objective being to climb Sron Na Lairig, a thousand foot Grade Two winter climb. The guide book gave it a three star rating and that drew our interest. Within half an hour we had to cross Allt Lairig Eilde's rushing waters, with large rocks draped in water ice which did not make for an easy crossing. Laughter lit up our faces as we watched each other cross the freezing waters, all except for the one who was doing the intricate moves to cross. With one foot wet and the other dry I did not do so badly. We continued on our way, each one of us in his own thoughts.

I was admiring beautiful white-covered mountains with black rugged faces that really matched the hazy blue sky when Alan broke the silence.

"Look, there's our route. It goes up there."

He pointed to a large broken ridge in front that stretched to a far off summit. There was a chance for a breather now as cameras came out and clicked away and everyone began to get excited. It had been a long walk in.

Summer on Kinderscout

by
Dave Gregory

P.C.C.J. 1959

Deep black peat groughs, whose high steep-standing sides
Seem strong but, crumbling, let the thrusting foot
Slide to wet black sludge on which no water glides,
But sinks and mixes with the dust like soot
That, carried by the wind would make men blind,
Filling eyes and nostrils with fine black sand.
Other gullies show the skeleton white rind
Of rocks scourred by rushing water as by a hand,
And make a Roman way between the bags;
A better way to tread else feet would bear
The clinging traces of the glue that drags
And holds the feet until the leg strings tear
From ache of muscle to a stabbing pain.
Between black walls these rock-paved jennels wind
To join the wider sand all-covered lane
Which bears the prints of hundreds ill-defined
Where in winter the ochre currents run,
Bubbling cold between the cracks and ledges
To this bleached cliff, now sexless in the sun,
For only grains of sand fall from the edges,
Blown fitfully by the unhammersed breeze
That will, in winter, lash the falling water to a spray,
And whirl about the torrents so they freeze
Like twisted, modelled pillars done in clay.

Here, where beauty had admitted of defeat
And the very grass must struggle for a hold,
On the ridges of dark unyielding peat
White against the black.

Climbing on Limestone 1958-1992

by
John A. Loy

From the earliest days of climbing the pastime had plodded steadily on, advancing slowly. But around 1958 climbing in the Peak District had a great change – it diverged – climbing on the other type of rock(!), which formed great(er) cliffs, started to gather momentum.

Before this time there was climbing on gritstone, the only climbing of any consequence. Although there had been a few forays onto limestone before this time, there was very little of great consequence climbed.

Who would have forecast the revolution that started in earnest in 1960? The climbers still using traditional equipment – most of the routes being climbed in mountain boots and the projection, that every modern climber seems to think of as having been used for ever, was almost non-existent. Threaded, self-inserted chockstones and a few pitons or slings tossed around trees being the only protection. Also at this time it was normal for climbs to be done from the ground up with no prior inspection and all cleaning and恭darning to be done on the ascent. This usually consisted of just enough cleaning to get up the climb by the leader and a thorough spring clean by those that followed (a sure recipe for holding down the ultimate standard of the climbs). The first guide book to Peak Limestone in 1961 was a rather hurried affair. It proclaimed of course – there is a whole new world to climb on – most of which is free climbing. This free climbing bit probably surprised the pioneers as much as anyone else as most of them went to limestone intending to make and practise artificial climbs, the way of big new climbs throughout the world at that time.

It was not long before PAs were being used as elsewhere, but the real spur to development – again as everywhere else was the introduction of aluminium chocks and kernmantel ropes some time in the mid '60s.

Around this time started the practice of abseiling down prospective new routes and doing all the necessary cleaning off of loose rock and, on quite a few occasions, of actually sculpturing a few judicious holds if these were lacking, not to mention the practising of crux moves.

The momentum was slowly gathering force. New and harder routes were soon constantly being made. Like all sports, the pioneers of these new routes were soon leapfrogged over by seemingly waves of improving leaders.

The 1970s and 1980s were decades where the developments were of such magnitude that every year made one think where it would end. Would it just come to a sudden stop as the last hand and foothold on the last obscure crag had at last been pulled or trodden on? These two decades had probably seen as many climbs in the Peak District as in all the previous years of climbing right from the days of Puttrell. Much of the upsurge can be put down to the media coverage with the sport being

The singer started again, way out of tune. "For Christ's sake, shut up" said his mate and then laughter filled the air.

When roped up, John turned round and looked up the climb. Lifting up his arms imitating the letter 'v' he shouted "Ah'm a coming baby" and burst into song as he started to climb. He went at one speed from start to finish, never slowing or stopping, not even to place protection. His runners seemed just to know their place and flew into position like magic and at the crux section he still sang. "HE MADE A VOW WHILE IN STATE PRISON, VOWED IT WOULD BE MY LIFE OR HISN, I'M NOT AFRAID OF DEATH, BOY, WHAT WILL I DO" - brilliant stuff, the man had style to perfection and was a pleasure to watch.

Now at the top, he was belayed to the fence, and looking back down he cried out "Climb when you're ready" and his second obeyed. I still watched with interest over the top of my guidebook as I still pretended to read. The second stopped just below the pulpit shouting "You dirty bugger". I looked up to see that his leader had lobbed out his old man and was urinating down the climb in zig zag movements as if to get the second, who was now ducking and diving on the end of the rope, but to no avail. Crikey I thought to myself, you have got to be tough to be a climber. The second man climbed on, filling the air with foul language, every handhold being wet. The singer took no notice. He just sang on.

The two climbers made their way down to their sacks where large flasks were taken out and tea was poured.

"Do you climb?" asked John and I humbly replied "Only just".

I fired off all sorts of questions to gain knowledge.

"What was his favourite crag?"

"Dow Crag. It's thee crag, the best of them all" he replied.

Time went by and John turned to his mate and said "Come on then, let's do another". They went over to the Slab on the right where John turned and shouted back "Come and do this one with us if you like."

I half nodded yes, then remembering what happened on the last climb and shamefully, while 'High Noon' was sung again as John negotiated the difficulties of Meringue, I too pissed off, singing to myself "I'M NOT A COWARD BUT OHHHH WHAT WILL I DO?"

The First Dolomite

by

Frank W. Hall

P.C.C.J. 1959

Its jagged outline reared up in one clean sweep of fantastic pinnacles like the crest of some primeval monster; a gigantic cockscomb of warm, cream rock flecked with gold as a myriad facets reflected the early morning sun. So it presented itself as I lay in a glorious state of expectation this first morning, the shutters of our bedroom window thrown wide, the sky framed in the opening, a deep Italian blue.

This was to be our first dolomite, its ascent conceived at home in the long dreary winter months after much painstaking poring over maps and guide books; the Gruppo di Cir (Tscheirsprizen), chosen primarily for its ease of access, its choice of countless routes up a dozen and a half minor peaks each terminating in a reasonably small point, thus easing the difficulties of route finding, and finally because it is the smallest group in the Val Gardena and the most obvious choice for an introduction to dolomite rock. The approach up the alps to the Passo Gardena was breathtaking in its beauty, for only in the Dolomites does one find such dramatic contrast between beautiful green alp and stark barren rock. Behind us and across the head of the Val Gardena the Sasso Lungo (Langkofel) thrust its broad, steep eastern face up from a footstool of dazzling white scree fans; to the right the vertical walls of the Sella, dark, grim, and foreboding at such close range, lowered over all giving an air of complete inaccessibility; ahead the green Passo Gardena, dotted with late-flowering gentians, nestled between the cliffs of the Sella and the needles of the Tschierspitzen.

A halt at the rifugio was more than welcome, and over a glass of cold beer we were able to discuss the details of our proposed route with a young Italian 'guida' using his English-speaking German client as a medium; they were en route for Canazei and the Rosengarten group and were willing to while away a few moments in the complicated triangular discussion whose outcome was that the route up our chosen peak had no route complications. A frontal approach from anywhere on this side would inevitably lead to a bulge below the summit on which we were warned to take special care. The descent was clearly marked, commencing down the northern side overlooking the Val Chedul and spiralled round to finish back on the Passo Gardena side; for the technically minded the route was a dolomite grade III.

We bade 'addio' to our friends and half an hour saw us roping up at the apex of a dazzling white scree fan. What followed was pure delight; the face fell back at a comfortable angle, the rock was rough and dry and holds were abundant and after the initial strangeness of the unfamiliar rock, we found upward progress was no more difficult than on the Idwal Slab routes. The comparatively easy angle enabled us to familiarise ourselves with the dolomite practice of not belaying on moderately difficult open rock, for this we knew we would have to do on the longer ascents. A rough estimate put this preliminary section at something over one thousand

feet in length and nowhere was progress halted, the old hackneyed phrase, 'like climbing the stairs to bed', was very apt, but it may be of importance to note the absence of any deeply cut-back ledges, and although there was an over-abundance of holds, the strata were all in the same plane and stances, when taken, had to be sideways into the slope with the lower foot and leg taking the weight. Perhaps because of the natural scepticism that all wives have of their husband's prowess, I could not persuade Cathie to fall off for a practical demonstration of the soundness of the method.

We reached a platform where we broke open our lunch packets and dined off cold veal, cheese and rolls, with fresh peaches washed down by copious draughts of Chianti. (This practice I was to pay for later in the holiday). This platform, approximately six feet by ten feet, gave a fine view of the walls of the Sella rising up in three vertical steps, cut down by deep clefts and gullies, its magnificent top step gleaming with ice, and to the east across the Val Badia, the summits of Monte Cristallo and Sorapis.

Clouds had begun to build up over towards the Austrian peaks and it was becoming decidedly colder so without any more ado we once more tied on the rope and approached the next section. The first step below the bulge was not so formidable as expected, the holds were beautiful, like perfect jug handles, but the verticality threw the balance backward with all the weight on the arms, and the rock above bowed out in a beautiful curve, then, lo and behold, a line of fixed pitons disappeared up and over it! After dithering about indecisively for a time, during which Cathie encouraged me in the manner of all impatient seconds who can see none of the difficulties, I grasped the first peg in a vice-like grip (petrified would perhaps be more apt) and hauled myself over the bulge, using pegs for both hand and foot holds. The rock ahead once more fell back at an angle where the arms could rest, but was obviously steeper and more serious than what we had ascended below, so using the last piton as a belay I brought up Cathie, who, in justification, scorned the pegs and climbed the rock.

The line of weakness took a diagonal trend upwards to the right, the abundance of holds was surprising but also made the choice more confusing. A long traverse left to avoid another overhanging bulge brought us to an easy gully which finished below a steep wall with an open groove. This to me seemed difficult and perhaps took longer than necessary and consequently I wasn't prepared for the shock of being on top, for that was it, the smallest summit, apart from Cir Mhor, that I had ever been on, a small pile of stones and space for three people to sit close together.

The clouds had begun to roll over from the Austrian border and it had turned bitterly cold. We just took time to enter our names in the book in the cairn (one other English name appeared in July, a gentleman from Newcastle who had very modestly inserted one word after his ascent, SOLO...) and not wishing to be caught on rock in a snow storm wearing vibrams, we descended on the Val Chedul side by a line of fixed cables which, after descending down a steep slope of conglomerate, finished at a col separating us from the next peak. An easy gully on the Val Gardena side, which was descended by bridging facing outwards, opened out into a long fast scree run finishing on the green alp, and with a feeling of complete satisfaction we had a quick glass of

from below. Only the later post mortem examination revealed that the back of our knobbly was blind and its top merely sloping.

I lied in quite happily and off he went again, "— steep climbing up the crack —" the guide said. He made it to the crack but, from this point the situation deteriorated rapidly; he couldn't get up; he couldn't get down; he couldn't hold on; "I'm off". A man of honour, even in such a crisis he did not lie, and down he came, past me with arms outspread like a great bird that had lost its power of flight, the rope tightened, my feet skidded in the compost, TWANG went the belay sling and I, too, was airborne, hurtling head first towards the steeply sloping ground at the foot of the crag. I have a clear mental image of the rapidly approaching ground, and of putting out both arms in the manner of a high board diver; then I was slithering down the slope, finally coming to rest in a patch of heather already occupied by my erstwhile leader.

We looked at each other, "Are you all right?" he asked. To me, at the time, it seemed rather a stupid question; it was perfectly obvious to me that I was all right and, somehow, that he was too. "Of course I am" I replied rather testily. Then we both burst into roars of uncontrollable laughter.

A Ballad From John Conn

by

Lol Bartrop

I had not been climbing very long when I made my first visit to Lawrencefield with a brand new guide book that I had just bought. I wanted to match up some climbs with the descriptions and see if there was anything it was possible for me to do. I sat in the middle of the bank facing the pool and to my amazement no one else was in sight, I had the whole place to myself. Across the pool there was a large rock shelf that resembled a stage; sheer walls of grit, some sixty feet high were its backcloth and they virtually surrounded me. So, guide book at the ready the scene was set and the drama began.

Far over to my left and out of sight I could hear someone singing.

"DO NOT FORSAKE ME, OH MY DARLING, WAIT ALONG, WAIT ALONG" – and closer it came – "ON THIS OUR WEDDING DAYAYAY". Faces appeared on top of the path that drops down the bank side. Two climbers I could tell by their sacks. I could also tell that they had had a drink or two at the midday session by their cheerfulness. "WAIT ALONG". The singer came up to me and, dropping down his sack said "AH doo, Grand day innit?" (I didn't know then but at a later date I learnt that his name was John Conn). John pulled a rope out of his sack and wandered over to a corner crack at the left hand side of the pool. By careful research from the sketch in my guide book I found it to be Great Harry. "Bloody Hell, it's V.S." I gasped.

laughing. You learn quicker from failure than from success but you have to succeed more times than you fail to remain confident.

So it's easy really and people are learning that they can climb on rock where there are no rules, where they are fully responsible for their actions and freedom reigns. So enjoy your climbing and enjoy life. Oh – and don't forget you've got some feet and a good guide book comes in handy!

Happy Climbing.

On Falling Off by George Kitchin

I can hardly claim to be an expert on falling off; in fact my experience is extremely limited. You see, when I was a lad (I'll bet you, if Bert Shutt writes an article for this journal, it will start, "When I were a lad", on second thoughts that will probably be the title!) the first law of climbing was, "The leader shall not fall", and I always was a law abiding sort of lad. In any case the second law was, "If he does, he shall be killed or badly mangled" and that, believe me, having carried a few, was an even greater incentive! Nowadays, I gather, the laws have been repealed and hard climbs rapidly lose their reputations as such when leaders can do them without falling off more than three or four times before getting up.

In truth, I've only really fallen, through the air that is, once, and that was all down to the big fellah – you know him? the one with the nose, although, come to think of it, most of you probably don't, it was all too long ago.

We were on Shining Clough with our little thin "Laddow Area", the first of the "Climbs on Gritstone" series, pre-dating even the old green "Sheffield Area". It cost 15p (really it was three shillings in old money for those of you who know that there was such a thing) and we'd had a pretty good weekend, climbing most of the Severes on the crag, leading alternately. That was good going for those days; people thought you were somebody if you could lead Severes on sight, only supermen led V.S.s, and Joe was God. It was another three years before anyone in the Peak was leading regular V.S. on all types of rock.

It was really my turn to lead, but he seemed to have a thing about "Unicorn Cracks" (I think he'd backed off it on a previous attempt) and wanted to lead it. I wasn't bothered, so off he went, up to the first ledge, where he belayed and brought me up. I say "ledge"; it probably is now, a good flat ledge of solid gritstone. In those days it had a sloping surface, piled up with a mixture of peat and grit, good for somebody's rock garden perhaps but not exactly your best buy for secure stance material. The belay was well above his head; it looked a nice knobble, about the size of a fist, with two little grooves running down, one from either side and he had flicked a sling over it

"Tee mit Rhum"

at the rifugio, and were back at our hotel in time to change and have a leisurely aperitif before dinner.

During the ensuing fortnight we made longer and more difficult ascents, and no doubt we shall visit the Dolomites many more times, but time will never dim the memory of this, our first dolomite ascent.

Suspense – Aquatic Variation

by
Alan Clarke

The evening of November 2nd found two members of the P.C.C., namely W. Hulka and A. Clarke, by the lakeside at Lawrencefield. It had been decided to have a dable at the direct start to 'Suspense', a route that had so far repulsed all efforts. The gallant pair were well equipped for heroics, having numerous odd-shaped pitons, expansion bolts, tide-tables and the like. It was observed at the outset that the tree trunk connecting the mainland to a small ledge at the base of the crack had been swept away, and much effort was wasted in a vain attempt to rebuild it.

It was then suggested that the leader should pendulum across on a rope held by the second at the cliff top. This method was decided upon so the second sped to the top, belayed, and dropped the rope to the leader. The leader clipped on, and yelled to the second to take in all the slack and more besides. The leader then announced his intention to jump, and suiting the action to words, jumped – straight into the pool, much to the amusement of three onlookers who had chosen that moment to appear. Their merriment was soon dispelled by the curses of the leader, thrashing about in the pool and who was endeavouring to persuade the second to pull him out. The second was however, convulsed with mirth and was consequently unable to help his unfortunate leader, who had to haul himself up on to the ledge and clip on to a rusty-looking piton (a memento of past attempts) at the base of the crack.

Picture, gentle reader, the plight of the unfortunate leader, sitting in etriers (always an uncomfortable business) with water dripping from boots and trousers, about three feet above high water mark, and supported by the insecure-looking piton which threatened to give way at any moment and precipitate the leader and his ironmongery into the pond for a second time.

However, succour was at hand, the second came sliding down the scree run still bubbling with merriment at his mate's plight, and asking idiotic questions about the leader's sanity in bathing at this time of year, mermaids, and such things.

At length order was restored and an attempt made to get higher up the route. But darkness was falling so the second was despatched to the cliff top in preparation for the pendulum back. This was accomplished without incident, except for the detaching of a large flake of rock which caused an almighty splash, giving the second reason to

think that the leader had gone in again, and suffering great disappointment to find that he hadn't. And so the route was left for the morrow.

Sunday morning was wet and miserable but it was unanimously agreed by the second that a further attempt should be made, and so the pair returned to Lawrencefield. Once again the pendulum was repeated, without incident, and the leader was returned to his stance in etriers. But he was not left in peace long. A horde of ruffians led by an urchin in a bright blue padded jacket commenced lobbing half-enders at the leader, who was powerless to reply, even verbally, due to the presence of several attractive young ladies of a rival club. But at last the team was ready for a serious attempt on the route and, to add encouragement, the sun began to shine.

The initial thin crack was pegged to where it peters out below the smooth wall. At the top of the crack is a shallow horizontal crack for which the 'secret weapon' was employed. This consisted of a piece of aluminium channel about an inch long and three sixteenths of an inch thick which the leader had decided was absolutely necessary after a previous visit to that unsavoury spot. The peg fitted into its appointed place, like 'a city gent into his bowler', and so a few precious feet were gained. Above, the crack became more of a scratch and it was thought that expansion bolts would be necessary. However, the crack suited some of the small micro-pegs which the leader had, and had not dared to use before, so the section was overcome, the only excitement being when one of these pegs came out in the leader's hands after he had been merrily swinging on it for some time.

Above here the normal 'Suspense' route was joined and followed to the top without excessive difficulty, except that the initial flake appeared to be becoming detached from the main face, which gave rise to considerable anxiety. However nothing untoward occurred and the leader duly arrived at the top and adjourned the session for lunch.

After lunch, the second pendulummed across and depegged the route in the same time that it took two members of a University Climbing Club to decide and to do Meringue, a commendable performance on the second's part.

So another route has been added to Lawrencefield's evergrowing number, and another member has had an unwelcome bath in the pond. What other routes still exist on Lawrencefield is a matter of conjecture. The writer is convinced that The Great Wall may offer a couple of variations to the existing routes; a member of The Pennine was observed half way up a route between Flake Climb and the Ashes, and it is known that several routes exist in the Cordite Crack area which are waiting for a first ascent. Perhaps a spate of new routes will follow the publishing of the guide.

managed to gain the Cave despite a rucksack almost as big as mine and a canvas bucket of water. My first acquaintance with the Peak Climbing Club. I lived in a house without gas or electricity and frequently used primus but I was impressed in spite of myself by the carefree way in which they lighted their stoves without maths in a puthur of dancing paraffin flames. Brews all round, the dregs down Tea-leaf Crack and out. I expect that it was on Sunday that we went home, walking past the Pole and the dams to the bus terminus at Lodge Moor hospital. I remember nothing of it but I remember my mother's saying when I was hardly through the door –

"Good heavens, you're filthy. You're not going to want to go again are you?" My father was sitting on the other side of the table, facing the door with the light from the paraffin lamp on his face. Old centre half, he knew the sweet delight of robbing the centre forward and sending his wing away and I saw on his face that he didn't need me to tell him that I'd found my sport.

Nearly forty years later I am still hooked and staggering up to Stanage. My father is dead. He didn't believe in the hereafter but wherever he is the Fifth Form Chemistry set won't think it's Heaven and he'll be dressing down shopkeepers who shortchange the new arrivals. My mother I visit regularly, usually on a Friday, and on one occasion recently she had just heard the weather forecast and passed on the information that Saturday would be fine.

"You'll be going climbing I suppose? Well, you must like it or you wouldn't go."

Climbing by Trevor Prew

People start climbing because they are afraid. They come to see if they can overcome their fear of rock, the height, the injury, the unknown. They come to climb to prove to themselves that they can survive, to boost their confidence, just in the same way you become confident when you reach the top.

Oh it's hard at times, but the real failure in life is not to try. The holds are few and far between and there maybe some you shouldn't use but if you choose correctly, and pull in the right order, up you go. The harder you pull the quicker you arrive at the top, happy and contented in a beautiful world but remember never to stop looking and searching for those hidden holds, the ones that if you find them, make the climb easier. So don't throw yourself too hard at a climb, take it at your own pace and allow others to go at theirs.

Understanding climbing partners help and not taking climbing too seriously is a great benefit. Then if you do find yourself in trouble you come back next time

to purchase a pair of ex U.S. army russet kip boots. These had a non-shiny outside, the first I had seen, and edge nails. These were similar to tricounis but much softer so that they barely lasted the first few days climbing. They had the built-in disadvantage, as I was to discover when running through the city's streets to catch the last bus home after a day out in Derbyshire, that they were lethal on the granite kerbstones but to compensate for that they struck fear into any intending aggressive individual who found knee britches and a cut down mac, a matter for humour.

Those boots were brilliant. They had very stiff soles at a time when most boots had soles which would turn round and look at you when the toe was placed on a hold. Under the advice of the Peak's elder statesman I replaced the edge nails with tricounis and for years contributed my share to the scratches on the local grit edges. Eventually the wells fell off after the repeated perforation of replacing the tricounis. I hung on to them for a couple of years despite their being of no further use and then committed them to the bonfire of another Guy Fawkes night. I told my brother that the fire was very smoky but it was the loss of those first boots that was causing the prickle at the back of my eyes.

Four of us were going to Stanage for part of that first half term and intended to sleep in Robin Hood's Cave. There were still considerable restrictions on the purchase of food and we had had at home for some time a cache of ex-W.D. tins which supplemented the usual items of the family's diet. Many of these had lost their labels but by trial and error we had established a fairly high certainty of what each tin contained. I carried about a dozen thought to contain a form of luncheon meat. This load formed the ballast of a borrowed, and over, and badly filled ex W.D. rucksack. Like most mothers mine thought that I should both starve and freeze to death so that beside the load of tins I had enough blankets to build a Bedouin tent, and several pullovers. I had managed to persuade her to let me go without a pair of pyjamas and, advised beforehand, had left soap and towel at home as well.

My father currently had a battered Bedford van and a developing passion for wildfowling. The van got us all to Lodge Moor and along the Redmires road where his overwhelming desire to identify some innocuous fowl on the last dam and lessened attention to steering nearly had us through the iron fence to join the ducks. The walk past Stanage Pole to the edge is short enough but the moor was bogger than and by the time we reached it my legs had had enough of lifting half a hundredweight of peat at each stride. As we made our way along the edge towards the Cave my dragging foot tripped and I pitched head first into one of the clefts between the crag top boulders, trapped by that accursed rucksack. The others pulled me out and I staggered to the top of the gully which leads to the Cave.

I can't remember what routes we did, nor how many days we stayed there. I remember that the luncheon meat defeated us all and that we buried most of the tins in the floor of the cave. Saturday night was eventful, it being Guy Fawkes night. We were all well away when its being sufficiently long after closing time for people to have walked from Hathersage was signalled by the arrival in the Cave of a remarkably well aimed rocket followed by a bang and some cave regulars, the last of whom

My First Climb in the Rockies

by

Bernard (Ben) Wilson

P.C.C.J. 1959

The Canadian rock climbing season is very short, lasting from July to September. The route I am about to describe was done in November.

On reaching Calgary I made the acquaintance of Dick Lofthouse. He originates from Leeds and is taking Maths at the Tech, as well as lecturing. He introduced me to Brian Greenwood, originally of Hebden Bridge, who is so keen a mountaineer that he does no work but lives on the unemployment insurance, which is quite possible out here.

On Saturday the 1st November 1958, we three set off from Calgary at 8.0 a.m. in Dick's Volkswagen. Our objective was 'Yarmuska' mountain, about sixty miles away on the way to Banff. The southern side of the mountain is a limestone face about one and a quarter miles long and with a maximum height of 1500 feet. From the road it gives the appearance of being sheer.

A climb through the timber and up the slopes to the face takes a good hour. When we reached the face my heart turned over as the face scared straight above us. The rock, what I could see of it, was like **** but this side of the Rockies is like that in most places. After climbing about 100 feet of this loose stuff we reached firm rock and rested awhile before proceeding. Brian decided to solo the route leaving Dick and me to rope up.

The first pitch was a wall of about 20 or 30 feet which Dick led. I led through; after a short wall the route broke out into a large gully. At the top of the gully a huge chockstone sealed the exit but a bit of potholing brought me round the back of it. The rope ran out and I belayed under the chockstone. Dick came up slowly because as I took in the rope it disturbed loose rock which landed down on him.

The top of the chockstone was a huge platform. The walls of the natural break in the face rose vertically, in places overhanging, on either side of us. We could see the obvious route rising up in front of us. Progress was pretty easy, and we were able to move without rope control. It was practically scrambling for 200 feet until another gully was reached. This was followed by a wall which was quite interesting, on which Dick had a slight accident. His camera strap broke and his exposure meter fell off. I ducked out of the way thinking rocks were coming down, only to see the exposure meter flying past. On my next lead I was confronted by a vertical wall with a crack running up it, followed by a broken rock chimney, leading to another platform, similar to the Cloch on Skye. After bringing Dick up we sat in the sun, chatting. This was a good half way up the face, which is 800 feet high at this point. In front of us rose a steep wall of about 25 feet of about Severe standard, and Dick kindly gave me the chance to lead this pitch. It proved to be the most interesting part of the climb, and according to Dick, some people found it necessary to use pegs as runners on the wall.

The angle of the face eased slightly and we gained height rapidly. Above us the sides of the fault we had been following closed in on us, leaving one of the largest chimneys I have ever seen. The break was about three feet wide and the depth of the penetration into the mountain I could not see. The chimney was about 200 feet high and finished at the top of the face. The inside of the chimney was very smooth limestone and was overcome by bridging. I have never had such exposure in a chimney before and one slip would have been it. There would have been no stopping before the bottom.

The top of the chimney finished in a cave in which we found two pegs, the reason for which was a mystery as there were scores of belays. It seems that the Yanks and Canadians put pegs in where the slightest bit of difficulty arises. It was only a matter of steps to the top of the cliff where we met Brian who had been there for an hour. The time for the full 800 feet for we two was two and a quarter hours, which was not bad on local standards.

This cliff is one of many which would give hours of pleasure to rock climbers. It seems a pity that there are so few climbers out here.

Dangle and Whack

A survey of available gear

by

Alan Clarke

P.C.C.J. 1959

The interest shown by various club members, including at least one young lady, in the noble art of piton bashing and allied trades, and several arguments, have prompted me to write this article. It is concerned only with gear which can be bought, easily made, or scrounged.

Pitons themselves constitute the most important items. Perhaps the commonest is the ex-W.D. type which is extremely versatile; this, and their cheapness, make them a very desirable proposition to 'peggers'. They are, however, too long in their present form. The blade can be safely be cut and ground down to $2\frac{1}{2}$ " to give a very useful peg that will stand a lot of use.

The Stubai horizontal blade pegs are not much use due to the weak point where the head joins the blade. This tends to fracture when the peg has been subjected to sideways hammering whilst de-pegging. The vertical blade pegs are, however, free from this defect; the short Stubai vertical blade peg, with a blade length of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " is an admirable peg. The larger editions are too long to be of much use except in rare cases. The Stubai thick pegs are also useful, as they are much thinner than W.D.s, and also softer, and hence shape themselves into a crack better.

The Simond horizontal blade piton is excellent as it has no weak spots, is in

On my first month-long, third-world mountain trek (crampon and abseiling experience necessary) it seemed reasonable for apprehension to override joyful anticipation. After six months or so of preparations, sorting gear, relevant injections – shall I, shan't I bother with Japanese encephalitis, rabies etc?; plus days on Stanage with a son gratifyingly concerned to improve his mother's abseiling and rope techniques, I had plenty of the apprehension – brought to a head by a phone call, suggesting I practise prusiking in case I fall into a crevasse. Not likely! The week before departure date I was considering treatment for high blood pressure – by departure day excitement and the thrill of anticipation I always get before travelling had taken over.

These fears seem pretty mundane now, after the genuinely amazing, uplifting experience of being in a land whose beauty, remoteness and wildness is quite stunning – and of being amongst people with a lifestyle and outlook of acceptance and severity, living in much closer contact with their natural environment.

For a while some of this rubs off. The eyes are opened to simpler aspects of life. Oh, the joy of being warm, of a bowl of food, of hot water and a clean T shirt, of being alive and well. The harsh reality of living in tougher conditions forces you to look at how insignificant and vulnerable you really are...but that's what we get from the mountains isn't it, and why we're still 'going for it' forty years on.

A Beginning

by

Dave Gregory

I remember it well. Or rather I don't. If I'm ever asked when I began climbing I always say October 1950 but it could have been the year before. 1949 seems decades before 1950 and hardly believable so that I stick to 1950. Whichever year, it was October half term and the catalyst was Mick Healey. He had a sister who was a medical student at Sheffield University. Her boy friend, another medic., was a rock climber and, as was the tendency of girl friends in those days, she went along and sat at the bottom until activity was over for the day. Mick caped his way into being allowed along on one visit to a local edge and he was hooked. A gooseberry young brother is not a welcome companion and having been told fairly bluntly that he wasn't welcome as a regular hanger-on he turned to his school mates for converts. I was about four down the chain of disciples and was to be indoctrinated during that half term.

My father had despaired for years of my ever showing competence at any of the usual sports and showed evident signs of relief at this unexpected development. I was sent into Sheffield, directed at Thomas and Taylor's to buy a pair of boots. I came home with a totally unsuitable pair and was escorted back to watch awe-inspired while the old-hand teacher cut the assistant down to size for so misleading an innocent and

my presence of mind", because I hung my rucksack by one shoulder strap so that the pocket containing the condensed milk was directly above Townsend's head! I was the last into bed, lights were immediately put out and soon all was silence and sleep.

Came the dawn. People stirred, Townsend stirred and, still half asleep, reached a hand out of his precious, pre-war, Icelandic Special, to scratch his head. The barn exploded! Townsend's vocabulary must have been stretched to breaking point. His dense, black, wavy hair was a-drip with condensed milk, and what was not in his hair was daubed over the top of the Icelandic Special. It is surprising how far a small tin of condensed milk will go. There was a second explosion as the rest of the club party roared their amusement at Ron's state and discomfiture. I truly wished the ground would open and swallow me. This was surely hubris, lèse-majesté, blasphemy, and all the capital offences rolled into one; but no-one seemed seriously concerned, even Townsend, and I suppose my stuttering attempts to apologise only contributed to the comedy. Ron's sense of humour rapidly reassured itself with some Rabé laisan comment about being the victim of some airborne, elephantine, wet-dream and a rueful remark about having to get Madge to wash the sleeping bag. I came cautiously out of my self-dug hole and we all got on with breakfast and packing up in a very good humour. I was careful to dispose quickly and discreetly of the offending condensed milk tin, and not to complain at having to drink black tea.

The rest of the walk was without further disaster or embarrassment, and the party tolerant of a novice, even friendly. I found that although stretched by a walk longer than I was accustomed to I was enjoying myself. The day was a good one for November, early mist dispersing to give a fine day with occasional sunlight, which lit up a Peakland then unfamiliar, but much more attractive, even exciting, than I expected. Particularly I recall coming over the moors from Flash and seeing for the first time the surprisingly fine hills of upper Dovedale, Chrome Hill and Parkhouse, and though I was tiring it was a delight to walk over them on a fitfully sunny late autumn afternoon. I slept most of the bus ride from Bakewell to Sheffield, and the one from the town out to Parson Cross. A few days later the Committee elected me a member of The Peak Climbing Club: I still offer them my thanks.

fairly soft metal and will take a good deal of punishment. The Simond channels in the same metal are also very useful and bridge the gap between W.D.s and wedges. The gripping power of these channels is astounding.

The Westrob channels, now being produced, have the advantage of cheapness, but, made in mild steel plate, cannot be used many times before distorting. However they are cheap enough to be discarded when this happens.

Micro pegs are best made from stainless steel plate in the form of a shallow 'U' and then ground to a taper. They should be no more than 1½" long. These also distort with use and care should be exercised in using the same micro twice.

One comes across many variations on the basic peg designs, such as pegs with two heads for use in both vertical and horizontal cracks; various shapes in abseil pitons, pitons that can be coupled, and many others, but for the average climber they are hardly worth the expense.

Wedges come in all shapes and sizes. Authorities recommend ash, but I have found that the cross-pieces on the stools of a certain public body* are excellent. Shovel handles can also be utilised with success, but it must be remembered that wedges of any wood split easily, and should therefore be used only once or twice. According to Mr Sutton, the wedge must be hard enough to stand hard hammering (agreed) but soft enough to grip the crack. But surely the hard wood will grip better than steel, as wood can expand, after passing through a constriction, to a greater extent than steel.

Karabiners present a sore point. On long routes thirty or more may be required, and hence the expense factor must loom large in any such survey. Stukai are perhaps best but ex-W.D.s have been used quite successfully in spite of the warnings of authorities. But in any case W.D.s are sufficient for etriers, guard strings and all such-like.

Etriers are important and care should be exercised in their construction. The step needs to be large enough for the foot to be placed on it when it is lying against the rock and channel 2" wide by ½" deep would do. They also have to be wide enough to sit in comfortably whilst belaying. The rungs should be between 12" and 14" apart. For three rung etriers a ten foot length of quarter weight nylon would be ample. A loop should be left beneath the bottom rung so that two etriers can be joined together for depegging. It is as well to cover the top loop with polythene tubing to prevent the line being torn by constant passage in and out of karabiners.

Methods of carrying pegs and karabiners whilst climbing present a difficulty. One of the best methods is the use of a carrier, which consists of a wire frame threaded onto the waist length. This enables the pegs to be detached easily, an important point when one can only use one hand to do this, as happens quite often. A continental idea for carrying a few pegs for runners whilst face climbing, is to hang them, on karabiners, from a sling passed round the neck and beneath one shoulder, so that the pegs hang level with the climber's stomach and can be reached easily.

A good piton hammer should possess several essential characteristics; strength, and be of sufficient weight to give the pegs a good banging with a minimum of blows, yet not so heavy as to be an effort to lift. There isn't a good hammer made in England

Forty Years On by Wendy Partington (née Webb)

"Anyone interested in joining a Fell and Rock party visiting the Kumbu Himal region of Nepal in October/November '91 get in touch....." sounded interesting, so I replied. Unlike some of my friends a trip to the Himalayas had never been my burning dream. However it was a fairly bemused, and decidedly apprehensive me, setting off for Kathmandu, one of a party of 9 F.R.C.C. members; 5 men, 4 women, average age 57!

as yet; the various substitutes such as geological hammers, all have their defects. The hammers with short points have no great advantage except when it is necessary to cut a peg, or for chipping footholds (a practice which I hope will never become widespread) and are more of a danger than a benefit. Perhaps the best is the double-headed Stuhai hammer, which is well-balanced and just a nice weight.

It is important when peg-bashing to safeguard the peg with a peg sling. The number of pinions at the bottom of the Lawrencefield pool testifies to this fact. The sling should be long enough to pass round the climber's head and beneath one shoulder, and reach 3" or 4" beyond the extremity of his reach. An untimely end by hanging will be the fate of the leader who indulges in the dangerous practice of passing this sling round his neck only.

I have tried, in this brief survey, to give an outline of the equipment necessary, neglecting the gear that is only available on the continent or at great cost in England. I hope I might have encouraged more club members to have a dabble. Little drawings in books of men going over overhangs well supplied with jugs in the right places differ from reality as chalk from cheese, and the novice should remember that these diagrams are over-simplified. The actual art of peg-bashing can only be learnt by practice.

* In 1959 Alan Clarke was at a Sheffield school being taught chemistry by the Editor's father who occasionally mentioned the tendency to collapse of the stools in his laboratory.

assumed that the disused barn of Ferriser lay somewhere between Buxton and Bakewell and hence the walk must be approximately 15 miles, Buxton to Bakewell via Ferriser for the night. I was not used to walking with a weekend rucksack, but from the little I had done I thought could manage that sort of distance. I was on the bus before I discovered that Ferriser was about nine miles from Buxton, in the opposite direction to Bakewell, and the whole trip would be more like thirty miles.

The meet leader was Ron Townsend, Townsend, the club secretary; Townsend, the best climber in the club (a member of The Rucksack Club, no less); the doyen of the club, and more to the point the seconder of my application to join the Peak. This despite my total failure to follow him on Cave Gully Wall on the only occasion I had climbed with him. The others on that meet, ten or a dozen of them, I cannot now recall; only Ron Townsend stands out – for reasons which should become clear.

We walked out of Buxton in the dusk of a November evening. Up the hill on the Cat and Fiddle road, en-route for the pub in Wildboarclough. Probably it was the laudable wish of the rest of the party to get to the pub as soon as possible. I did not rationalise it at the time, but I soon realised that a fast pace was being set. Combined with the unfamiliar weight of the heavy week-end pack it was beyond me. As the hill steepened up the lane at Burbage my difficulty in keeping up became noticeable, and my first embarrassment occurred. Of course it had to be Townsend who spotted it, who paused, identified the problem, and placed a weighing hand under my sack.

"What the *** have you got in there? Here, swap with me."

Pride was already shattered, feeble protests only prolonged and publicised the embarrassment; I swapped rucksacks.

Years later I saw a Turkana warrior, warriors normally too proud to carry loads, similarly take a rucksack from a heat-exhausted member of our party in a remote part of northern Kenya: by then I could recognise the blend of enlightened self-interest and kindness we call comradeship. Relieved of the excessive weight I had been carrying I found I could keep up, just. But that was all I expected to do, my elders and betters knew the way, I, the apprentice, was merely expected to follow. We stopped in a pub somewhere in upper Wildboarclough, probably at Bottom-of-the-Oven, and after closing time did the last mile and a quarter along disused farm track to Ferniser.

Ferriser lay about a mile north of Shutlingslow and had been abandoned to allow forest plantation around the Trentbank reservoir. The farmhouse was shuttered securely but there was a large barn with unlocked doors, and even some fairly clean hay or bracken on the floor. We settled in and soon every one had stoves lit and was 'drumming-up'. I drummed-up as much as I could eat, partly because of hunger, and partly to reduce the weight of my sack before morning. We finished off with a brew of tea, hot, sweet, and milky from liberal dollops from my tin of condensed milk, which I had opened by stabbing two holes in the lid. As I pulled on my spare clothes I saw that the rest were packing all their food back into their sacks and hanging them high on the walls or beams of the barn. Instructed to do the same because of rats or mice I duly packed up, the tin of condensed milk fitting back on the very top of the side pocket. Like Gerrard Hoffnung's bricklayer, I can only plead, "at this point I must have lost Hand on the arête. Face round it. 'Na den dee.'"

Stance

by

Dave Gregory

S.U.M.C.J. 1960-61

Small, this little ledge, only room for one. Slopes the wrong way. Toes are beginning to hurt. Bet the big one's black. Black-eye type, not just mucky; washed 'em on Wednesday anyway. Should have cut my toenails.

The rope moves round the arête a foot. Pay a bit out. The rope comes back, the curve of it deepens. Catenary, T = sine something or other, or maybe tan. Yes, tan.

Up it goes again, two feet. Pay some out. Must have been here half an hour. God, bet he's tired. Hope he gets up or it's me for the high jump. A real jump, a hundred feet for sure to the scree, three hundred feet to the pool.

Be nice and warm on that bit of grass, nice and cool in the water. Lucky wench that, yellow costume. Idle beggar. Bet her feet aren't hurting.

Half an hour for sure. Shadow's on that flat rock by now. Rum shadow, like a brontosaurus's back.

Rope comes back, take some in. Shuffle your feet.

"What's job?" Just sortin' it out eh? Sortin' t' post for half Wales.
Hand on the arête. Face round it. "Na den dee."

The Rites of Passage or The First Shambles

by

Reg Pilling

Once upon a long time ago a young lad packed his rucksack. How long ago? November 1948. How young? Very young, sweet sixteen and never – never before walked with the Peak. This was to be a formative initiation.

O tempus, O mores, O the tackle. The rucksack was a height of fashion, state of the art, ex-wartime Commando sack. Heavy khaki canvas and webbing, with brass buckles and an external tubular steel frame. So robust that it survived years of being sat on whilst waiting on railway platforms or bus stops, or at the road-side hitching lifts and being slung into the backs of lorries when a lift turned up. It weighed a ton. Into the rucksack went my sleeping bag, ex-U.S. army this time, made of thick fleecy woollen blanket material, it had been designed as an inner for use with a down bag in Arctic conditions. On its own – the down outers were a rare find and way beyond my pocket – it was just about OK in summer, but in November, in a draughty barn, I might be chilly even wearing all my clothes. It also had an irritating design feature; mummy-shaped, with a round hole for the face, it had a long zip which needed to be pulled right up to maintain warmth, but, having been designed for fighting soldiers, a slight extra tug pulled the slider off so that the zip fell open immediately. This might have been fine in an emergency call-to-arms but it was very easy to activate the escape mechanism unintentionally whilst turning in one's sleep and wake up frozen.

Underneath the sleeping bag went the conventional ex-army cape-goundsheet. This was a totally waterproof rectangle of rubberised fabric, excellent as a goundsheet, but less efficient as a cape as rain inevitably poured in around the crude collar. It also suffered from the common problem of the gear of the time – it was heavy. By now you should have the message so I will not extend the gear check list – except for the boots I, oh so proudly, wore. As proud as any current young rock-jock in his or her multi-colour, skin tight, stick – like-shit-to-a-blanket rock shoes, I wore my father's old Home Guard boots. Courtesy of Timpsons these had been transformed from their Dad's Army function into climbing boots, and now were graced with American Army tricouans. These nails were slightly loose on the sole's edge, and the actual teeth of the nails were slightly loose in the plates, so that while walking or climbing in them I was accompanied by a delightful two-tone 'chink' or rattle. With fifteen or so 'trikes' on the edge of each boot and a cluster of hob nails in the centre, their weight was in keeping with the rest of the outfit. One other item packed in the sack must be mentioned, part of my rations, literally rations 1948. An eight ounce tin of condensed milk, it went into the top of a side pocket, neatly and innocently. As innocently as I set out that Saturday afternoon.

We met at the bus station in Pond Street and caught the late afternoon bus to Buxton. The meet was listed as Ferriser to Bakewell. In my ignorant innocence I

"Na den. Well?"

"Comin', comin', the rope move's next."

"Fair enough."

Face goes, hand goes. Rope pays out.

Bloody great brontosaurus. The Monster of the Lyn of the Black Hollow.

"Don't go and eat too many humans dear" his old lady would say. "You know how they give you indigestion. Well, go on then", giving his spines a last polish. Off he goes. Get no beer here he won't, not tomorrow anyway.

"Take it tight!"

Clasp the hands in to the waist. Rope tightens round the hips, knees bend to take the shock.

".....!" Bloody train. Why the hell can't people walk to the top? Can't bear yourself spit for that clanking scrap-heap.

Rope pays out tight and slack. Slack it comes, slacker, take it in.

The train goes behind the ridge and the shouting becomes intelligible.

"Next time's it." Out goes the rope, taut, scraping on the arctic. Out, tsat, out.

"Slack off, I'm there."

"Good for thee mate. Have a putty medal." Have two medals.

Now it's my turn to do the first pitch of Llithwrig.

Lead Head

by

Patrick Farnborough

P.C.C.J. 1963

A little girl fell on her head
While she was up in Skye
She also cut her knee,
But I never heard her cry.

We took her to the doctor's,
And the risk was not delayed,
He sent her to the hospital
To have her head X-rayed.

He turned on the X-ray machine,
But it cannot see through lead,
He told her she was lucky,
She'd fallen on her head.

Peak District Limestone Climbs Personal Beginnings and Recommendations

by

John Loy

P.C.C.J. 1963

It is only since 1957 that limestone climbing has become at all popular in the Peak District. Around then I made my first serious ventures onto the limestone cliffs of the District to try to find somewhere to practise piston climbing and be out of the way of others that frown on such methods.

Che Dale was the first place we visited as I had heard that some climbers had been putting up some routes in that area. We went into the wrong end of the dale of course, and spent all our time and energy on a small outcrop. The great 30ft high face was conquered by the use of numerous pitons. (The route would have gone free if we had tried hard enough).

Elated by our great success in having conquered this mighty crag, we set out for the fresh fields of Lathkill Dale where we climbed a much higher crag of 60ft, or so with some quite worthy routes on it. That weekend my companions had borrowed all my pitons and karabiners on the Saturday. "In case they wanted to do a route before going to the pub that night". It was just a good way of getting themselves completely kitted up and most probably well up a climb before I arrived for I was to meet them there on the Sunday morning. This actually happened. Just as I arrived the intrepid leader of the rope was nearing the top of the crag and laughing merrily at the start they had got on me. He must have laughed too hard for the piton he was standing on came out resulting in his unzipping the climb, so that he had to start again from the bottom.

Soon after this that I was told about the massive crags in Ravensdale, near Cressbrook, and paid a few visits to them in late 1958, always carrying all our pitons, carriers, etc. The first thing we attacked here was the biggest buttress - now called Ravens Buttress - all 150ft of it. In our first two visits we succeeded in getting precisely nowhere. Eventually we did have a success. Starting from a shelf dividing the right side of the buttress into upper and lower sections, we reached the the crag top for the first time. This upper section contained about 90ft of climbing, 65ft of which we did without using pitons. The following week we succeeded in ascending the lower half of the buttress to link with the route on the upper section. The weather this time was misty and everything coated with a thick layer of frost. We climbed just over half of this section on pitons and stirrups and cleared off a great deal of loose rock and vegetation to reveal a clean cut groove. The upper part of this section went free past a large flake that one is loath to layback on. It was on this ascent that we realised that the whole of this route might be climbed free, and on subsequent visits to the crags we looked for routes to climb free rather than by artificial means.

It was not long before we met other climbers using the limestone crags like ourselves, and found that their experiences were similar to ours. They came in the first

10. The George and Dragon once on the Woodhead road and demolished by the Water Board. First used as a climbers' rendezvous by Fergus Graham and George Bowler in the 1920s.
11. Ilam Rock first led by Siegfried Herford (1914)
Priscilla first led by Morley Wood (1921)
Bass Rock first led by Harry Scarlett (1931)
Froggatt Pinnacle first led by Henry Bishop (1910-12)
Inaccessible Pinnacle first led by Owen Glynn-Jones
Zig Zag Climb, Kinder first led by J.W. Putrell (1900)
12. John Harvey of the Manchester Y.M.C.A. Climbing Club (at night). Date not known, but he was killed in the Cairngorms in 1952.
13. Geoffrey Winthrop Young climbed on Laddow and The Roaches.
14. The Polaris Mountaineering Club.
15. The Polaris Mountaineering Club (after listening to a lecture in Sheffield by Jack Longland).
16. Phil Barnes - one-time Assistant Secretary of the Sheffield Branch of the C.P.R.E.
17. They are the remains of lead smelting pits. Lead ore from Longstone Edge used to be crudely smelted here using the birch tree wood.
18. Anton Stoop.
19. Fred Heardman and John Firth-Burton. Their companion Harold Gerrard had to give up at Stanage through severe cramp.
20. Putrell was searching for a secret passage believed to join Peveril Castle and the Peak Cavern. Because of its dangerous nature the passage was eventually blocked. Putrell is believed to be the only man to have passed underground from Cave Dale to Peak Cavern.
21. The Derbyshire Pennine Club founded in 1906 held its inaugural meet at Easter at Brassington. They made some excavations of Roman foundations at the foot of Rainster Rocks.
22. Patrick Pearsehough, during a Double Marsden-Edale. Paul Nunn, his companion, completed the walk but declined the ascent of the mast.

"You'll have to give me a tight rope Al, I've broken the pick of my hammer," I finished the pitch by Alan keeping me in tension whilst I placed the axe.

I reached Alan, and found him hanging from a bolt with his feet on a three inch wide step. I was not in a very confident state of mind, but as Alan flatly refused to leave his bolt I had to lead the last pitch. We swapped hammers and I set off. It was the steepest yet, absolutely vertical but with a slight groove in it. My calves were ready to burst but I carried on, and even remembered to put in a screw. The angle eased, but I then reared up in a bulge which I managed to pass with a small traverse. Thank God, the difficulties were over. I nearly ran to the safety of a large boulder above, where I belayed. I then had to pull up all the slack and lower Alan his Chouinard Hammer, so that he could second the pitch. This he did, and then led through to the summit plateau, which went quite easily as there was hardly any cornice.

The guidebook describes the climb as a grade 3 to 4, time 2 to 8 hours, and admits it can be a serious route. Our time was 2 hours at grade 4.

Answers to the Peak District Quiz

1. 'The Flying Childers', Stanton in the Peak.
2. Eustace Thomas – perhaps the greatest of all Peakland walkers.
3. Alf Schaaning, Ivar Berg, Helfenstein, Rice K. Evans.
4. The Dargai Crack in Cave Dale, Castleton by J.W. Putrell, 1898.
5. The cabin was at the top of Grindbrook. The four Jacks were: Tym, Burdekin, Rowbottom and Belfit. The cabin was built about 1870 by Macah Tym, of Edale. By 1929 it had deteriorated considerably and was repaired by the four Jacks. It started to deteriorate again in 1943. It was still just usable in the early 1950s but vandals spoiled it utterly and The Peak Park Board had it completely taken down and removed.
6. Inverted V was first led by Cyril Ward of Hathersage in 1922.
7. Joe Brown's roommate 'Slim' Sorrell was a policeman.
8. Jack Longland at first called 'Birch Tree Wall' at Black Rocks, Beech Tree Wall.
9. 'Suicide Wall' was led by Pete Harding with Veronica Lee (later Phillips) as second. The climb was rumoured to have been invented by Frank Elliott in 1933.

place to look for artificial climbs but found instead a great new climbing ground for free routes of superb quality.

Late in the spring of 1960 I paid another visit, attempting a fierce-looking crack springing from the roof of a cave at the left end of the crag. I was repulsed and only succeeded in falling off to be left dangling below an overhang with my hand trapped behind the rope as it came down to me from a running belay above. A week or two later, on another visit to Ravensdale, I found two other climbers 'trespassing' on 'my own crag', Dave Johnson – a Sheffield climber I know well, and a lad (then) called Dave Mellor. I tied onto the end of their rope and was taken up a route they had pioneered the previous week, called Scorpio – they must have been proud of it to repeat it so soon. The three of us then moved to the crack I had fallen from and this time I managed to lead it, making the first ascent. Of all the routes done that day not one used a piton for direct aid.

Dave Johnson moved to Tyneside and Dave Mellor and I began a thorough exploration of Ravensdale. I wrote a guide to the crag which was included in the excellent guide to limestone climbs in the Peak District edited by my late friend Graham West. After this I turned my attention to other limestone crags in the district and I will now give a brief description of some of the classic routes on limestone I have come across.

One of the oldest routes on Peak District limestone is High Tor Gully. It must be one of the easiest classic routes on this rock, being a narrow gully climb in the tradition of its era of some 60 or more years ago. It is about Difficult to Very Difficult with a scree at the top composed of rotting leaves and empty tin cans deposited from the summit cafe.

Although climbing on limestone is still in its early stages a number of routes is quickly becoming classic. The most developed cliff is Stoney Middleton. In my opinion the best classic route here is probably Sin which has a magnificent corner crack of some 70 ft. It gives a steep and sustained Very Severe that is nowhere excessively hard, but hard enough, with a degree of exposure. It requires almost continual hand and toe jamming. Close by is another, somewhat easier, crack called Glory Road. It shares the same first pitch as Sin, then goes up a widening crack of Hard Severe to Easy Very Severe standard. Another climb here, The Pearly Gates, gives a superb three pitch Very Severe route over 150 ft. long. The first pitch ascends a large angle at the base of a tower, and to me seems to get harder the more it is climbed. This is followed by a tricky stride and mantelpiece on the right wall. An easier traverse pitch then leads to the start of the last steep pitch to the top of the tower, known as the Cauliflower, as a cauliflower once adorned its crest.

Two very long routes by Peak District standards are worthy of mention. One, Aurora, ascends to the ridge at the right of the well known 'Windy Ledge' but can't be seen from the ledge as it is just round the corner. The HVS Windhover is up the blunt ridge left of Aurora. These routes are 200 ft. or more long and give very good climbs. Aurora is Hard Severe and its middle-section is a little friable. Three new routes at Stoney Middleton are quickly becoming classic. These are Mortuary Steps, at the

left end of the main crags, **Poiley Wall** in the centre, and **Compositae Groove** at the right-hand end. Three magnificent climbs of very high standard.

Ravensdale has some routes worthy of being called classic. The best is probably **Amain**, the crack that springs from the roof of the cave, 15 ft up the crack is a strenuous overhang followed by 10 ft. of strenuous VS climbing. An easier steep crack leads to the second crux, a delicate step on overhanging rock. It is hard to choose between the merits of the long (over 150 ft.) routes on Ravens Buttress. The best are probably **Delusor**, **Via Vita**, and **Scorpio** (*Medusa* in the guide). These last two could be called variations of one route as they share the same stances. Delusor has two pitches, the second being the crux giving a lonely lead of about 110 ft.

Mention of climbs on limestone would not be complete without including **Dargai Crack** in Cave Dale, Castleton. This route was first done in 1898 by J.W. Puttell, and solo at that. It still rates as a fine route today. It is unfortunately completely misrecorded in the guide book the description being definitely of the wrong route. I might be wrong about this but I think that the name should go to the route described as Spinal Finale. Two easier climbs at Castleton are **Elbow Ridge** and **Matterhorn Ridge** in the Winnats Pass. Elbow Ridge has been scrambled on by climbers and tourists to the Pass for many years.

One of the greatest routes on the mountain limestone of the Peak District must be **The Big Plum**. It is the longest vertical route in the Peak and is magnificent. One thing tends to spoil it, the close proximity of the railway line passing through Chee Dale. It is also unfortunate that its rather high standard of both free and artificial climbing prohibits many climbers from doing it. It is 270 ft. long, containing four pitches, none of which is really easy, three of them being completely free. The first pitch is a corner crack, at the top of which an exposed Severe traverse out to the left brings one to a sloping stance and piton belay, 80 ft. above the start. Above this is the most serious part of the climb, another pitch of about 80 ft. It begins with a steep delicate wall giving 15 ft. of VS climbing to a rake running right across the buttress. From here very hard artificial climbing leads to the roof overhang, which seems deceptively small from the base of the crag. This gives nearly 20 ft. of artificial climbing out under the ceiling, of about Severe standard but this time hampered by the drag of the rope through pitons under the roof. This leads to an excuse for a stance, the type never seen in climbing textbooks. Two footholds that a boot sole can just be placed on, both at slightly different levels and the most vertiginous position you can imagine. Here, tied to a piton, one takes the rope in whilst the next man ascends. It is a relief to climb again once the second man is secured to this comodious stance. The next pitch consists of a traverse left for 15 ft., followed by either a steep crack or a corner. My preference is for the crack, which seems easier, being about Hard Severe, although the exposure may tend to make it feel more as there is no protection. From the top of this crack you have a chance to escape from the climb by crossing a steep grass slope which leads to the base of the cliff. Having come this far though one might as well finish the climb, which gives another 55 ft. of Severe climbing up a shallow

This year there was very little snow and nearly all the gully routes were bare ice, with no build-up of snow. The snow line was about two hundred yards from the hut and here we put on crampons. We crimped up Coire na Ciste to the foot of Glover's Chimney. This is a four hundred and fifty foot V-Diff, in summer but in winter it is a classic grade 3 or 4 ice route. It lies on the side of Tower Ridge and finishes at Tower Gap.

Alan put in a screw and a dead boy and belayed as I prepared to lead my first ice pitch about 60 ft high, starting about 80° for 20 ft and then gradually slackening to 60°. In with the axe and hammer, kick with the crampons, "What about a runner?" shouts Alan. Great idea. I try a Cassin screw, and for my trouble a great dinner plate of ice falls off. I realise this is not the place to learn how to insert ice-screws, especially Alan's manky Cassin ones, so I just pound it in and give it one twist. By this time I'm just about to fall off, as my calves can't stand the strain, so it's off again up to some rocks where I manage to put in a manky peg. Alan comes up, no trouble, and leads through up a short icy groove. I follow, and we both move together for about two hundred feet, to the foot of the final chimney.

The day before, we had done Tower Ridge and had inspected the chimney where it finishes at Tower Gap. We had also been told it was in hard condition. Alan set off and managed to bridge the chimney instead of climbing the icy back wall. He belayed in Tower Gap and I followed up to him. We reached the summit by climbing the upper part of Tower Ridge, and then descended No. 4 Gully.

We had planned to do Green Gully, but there was a chap trying to solo it so we passed on round the corner to the foot of Comb Gully. We soloed the first two hundred feet and Alan belayed below the first sleep section. It was obviously going to be my pitch, so I had a try. It was vertical for about 15 ft and I wasn't fancying the idea. "I think I'm going to decline to do this Alan" I aid. "Have a good try, it's not far" was the reply. I set off. it was so steep I was having to twist my knees to keep my balance. "Don't forget a runner" said Alan. The ice here was harder than in Glover's Chimney and more prone to dinner-plating. I managed to fix one of the tubular screws above which the angle eased to around 75°, another screw and I managed to reach a step someone had cut previously. Here I belayed to two blade pegs in the side wall of the gully.

Alan reached my stance and commented on how steep it was. I said, if he thought that was steep, he'd better take a look at his pitch. It was just less than vertical all the way. He led it in fine style, cunningly using a shoulder on the overhanging side wall.

The gully had narrowed to a 10 ft wide slash between the vertical rock walls. The ice was very hard and it was very difficult to get good placings for the hammer and axe. After 40 ft it proved impossible to get any placing at all for the hammer, I started to get a bit desperate. The more I tried the worse it was. Huge dinner plates of ice were falling off. I realised something was drastically wrong, and on inspection found that two inches had broken off the end of the pick of my hammer. The broken stump was obviously too blunt to start cutting steps, there was only one thing to do,

stabs and grooves, plenty for the hands but not a lot for the feet, just a question of padding up.

From the stance I lead off up a short scoop, a bit thin for the next few feet, I hesitate. "Just a question of balance and friction" Malcolm shouts. A small wire nut slots in. With feet sliding I move up quickly to better holds. Breathing more easily I arrive at the stance below the overlap.

Malcolm arrives, facetiously asks if I enjoyed it, and then moves off to tackle the overlap. A few grunts, flying feet, and he's disappearing into a deep crevasse complete with belay. I move over the overlap, an awkward move to reach a good jam, pull up and over into the crevasse. Malcolm's type of move if ever there was one! I lead up past the crevasse, suddenly stopping a few feet short of a willing peg. I shout over to Malcolm. "Up and over to the right" he replies. I balance up, clip into the peg and step right. An awkward move down onto the subsidiary slab brings a good horizontal break and I traverse along to the very welcome stance.

Malcolm climbs through and round to the right. He reappears above and to the right of me, climbing steadily. I watch him idly in the warmth of the Scottish evening. What a place! What exhilarating climbing! Never hard, never easy! A shout brings me back to reality. My turn to follow. I move down and round. A steep groove and an awkward move bring me up onto a steep nose, more delicate moves and a smooth groove finally see me on the stance. Malcolm is laughing. "This stance needs cleaning up" he says, eyeing up several new pegs and a large loop of tape. I clip into the belay, glad of the breather. A good pitch and a good lead.

"I hope you can do this" he says. I look up 150 feet of smooth slab with a thin peg-scared crack up its centre. A peg beckons invitingly 20 feet up, just before the crack peters out. "Up you go then". I move up, fingers in the peg pockets, feet in friction. Clipping into the peg I continue up in friction over a slight bulge. The slab angle eases and the stance is soon reached. Malcolm follows up and we gain the safety of the terrace.

We escape from the slabs as the sun begins to set and the midges begin their reign of terror.

An ascent of Spartan Slab, VS 4b - 4c. An excellent introduction to the delights of climbing on the Trilleathan Slabs. Good protection and good belays.

The Ben. '75
by
Mick Walsh

P.C.C.J. 1975

corner to the right of the are above. The first ascent of this route was made in September 1960 by G. West and B. Roberts.

There are excellent climbs on the Peak District's limestone cliffs ranging from technically very hard routes, both free and artificial, to pleasantly angled climbs like Elbow Ridge. Unfortunately there is a lack of routes in the easier grades. Routes of Difficult and Very Difficult only being found in any quantity on the cliffs at Stoney Middleton and Deep Dale.

Climbing on limestone has only just begun to shake off the smear given to it by well-known early climbers, such as J.W. Puttrell and Henry Bishop, who wrote in their various club journals that climbing on limestone was suicidal (although they both left a goodly number of routes on the limestone crags) – and this belief still persists in some circles even today (1963). One thing is certain; the rock is not as bad as some people believe, or the ever-increasing visits by more and more climbers would not be taking place. Most of the routes are reasonably sound, and certainly no worse than some climbs found in popular regions like Wales or Scotland.

The one thing I have found is that climbing on limestone develops a better technical ability than any other type of rock. This is probably due to the patches of loose rock which must be climbed properly without making any hasty grabbing movements. If one didn't and a loose hold was met it could have disastrous results. Against this a large number of incut holds are found which are quite pleasant to use after the continuous supply of sloping holds found on a gritstone route.

Tragic

by

Patrick Farnborough
P.C.C.J. 1963

On Christmas Day my friends and I
Went up on Pavey Ark,
We started up Great Gully,
Ice climbing for a lark.

The first few feet looked easy,
At least that's what we said,
So we went up without the rope,
And were our faces red!

Our third day on the Ben was started at 5 am by the sound of feet shuffling across the floor of the C.I.C. hut. It was Alan lighting the gaslights. This was the signal for everyone to get up. True to form Alan was the last away.

The next pitch didn't look too hard,
We'd take it at our leisure.
But just in case some one should fall,
We belayed for good measure.

So, chopping steps like window-sills,
For eighty feet or so,
We came upon an ice-bound wall,
And tried to make it go.

But we found that higher up
Conditions got much worse,
Which didn't give us any choice,
And we had to reverse.

The climb had broken our morale,
There is no more to tell.
We cried our little hearts out,
In the Dungeon Ghyll Hotel.

stop until we were clear of this place of chimneys and iron. All at once we came upon a valley into which we descended from a high mountain pass.

We had many good days of climbing within the womb of Snowdon but perhaps one should be recorded. How many times we had travelled to this path to The Black Cliff, always as though the first, neck craning, eyes bulging, mind racing to catch that first glimpse.

We had agreed upon 'Shrike', rising out of a dark gully towards the light, a bird of the sea strangely stranded.

A jump into a crack and gritstone greed almost becomes grief. Relief lies to the left and Gene (Kelly) creams across without loss of balance, then up. I must admit that a hand was placed, in haste, on a sling in place. However, soon the verticality gave way to a ledge, illuminated by a tongue of gold descending the wall from above.

All this time, the 'Bill' spoke not once, nor did he utter one sound, save those of delight and wonder at such a beautiful place as this.

Then, surveying the mighty wall above, he spoke thus:

Scrambling in the Alps - 1962

by

A. Wright

P.C.C.J. 1963

Now that a greater number of British climbers have transport and money it follows that a greater number of climbers are visiting the Alps. Numbers have flocked to the Bregaglia where the Piz Badile N.E. face seems to be a purely English route. As always Chamonix is very popular, the main attraction being the cheap 'nosh' house built for Mont Blanc tunnel workers, but containing an ever-increasing number of hungry British; other attractions being the football table in the National Bar and the odd route on the hills! In the Tre Cime region the snow line was rather late in receding this year and the popular sunbathing lakes below the West Tower had a snow field on their banks to deter all but the most intrepid.

I met up with Peter Crew, complete with his heavily laden, high speed Morris van and several other evil-looking Sheffield climbers, outside Bolzano station. During the 24 hours I had been pacing up and down waiting, I had had time to reconnoitre the town for the cheapest 'pasta' house and even had a hair cut to pass the lonely hours.

The first destination was to be the Tre Cime. After a day spent resting, swimming, etc., in preparation, we eventually felt inclined towards doing climbing. Our first route was to be the Cassin North Face route on the Cima Ovest. Inspection on our rest day had revealed a fair amount of water in the central couloir on the face, but as the route only involves crossing this point and not climbing up the wetness it didn't seem too bad.

The line of the route is up the right hand end of the face for a few pitches before entering upon the more serious business of traversing across the wall to the distant

so

valley into which we descended from a high mountain pass.

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Then, surveying the mighty wall above, he spoke thus:

"Tread only in mine footsteps,
and place your hands only where
mine do touch.
Follow the true path of my friend,
and no harm shall become you".

So spake the prophet, and so it was.

Strange as it may seem I remember very little, only the shimmering waves of light mingled with the distant cries of my body, and visions of 'Shrike' conquered. Time was marked only by the movement of the rope, sky stretching away, blue for ever more.

And so it came to pass that after seven days and seven nights, we did leave that land and did pass over the border into place of another kind. We knew that this was home and we blessed those little green crags of ours; which oft times have given us pleasure.

'England Expects.....'

by

P. Goult

P.C.C.J. 1975

We rope up slowly, it's very hot. The walk up from Loch Etive has been steady in the blistering heat. What a day to be climbing on the Trilleachan slabs!

Malcolm sets off, climbing quickly he soon reaches the stance. You can tell who has been here before, I muse. The rope tightens, with a shout I set off. Easy angled

and was just preparing to press the shutter release when they disappeared behind the hill.

After leaving Kernsary, which is just a cottage on the Whitbread estate, the path starts rising up towards Beinn Airigh Charr some three miles away, at which point the scenery becomes mountainous. The mountains are not particularly high in this region, but have been dramatically shaped by the glaciation of the ice-age, and possess a distinct grandeur.

The path continues on towards Beinn Lair (2817) passing several small lochans. It is fairly level now and remains so right round to Carnmore. The path never climbs very much and reaches a height of only 700 ft above sea level all along its length. It is a very well maintained path, being used by deer stalkers to reach the hunting lodge at Carnmore. This is especially so after being joined by the path coming over from Letterewe on the shores of Loch Maree.

The crag of Carnmore is part of a fairly insignificant hill and it is not until one gets close to it that its size becomes apparent. It doesn't have the appealing shape of Cloggy or Scafell, but its setting must be pretty well univalued.

After spending some time photographing and recovering from the walk-in I set off back to Poolewe. The lack of food was beginning to have its effect. The nearer I got to Poolewe, the more frequently I sat down to rest. Towards the end of the walk I was stumbling over rocks and generally walking quite unsteadily.

I took a different path from Kernsary to Poolewe, passing quite close to Loch Kernsary and was rewarded with fine views back towards Beinn Lair.

This was undoubtedly one of the finest days I have spent in the hills and I intend to visit Carnmore again in the near future. I can only recommend that the reader does likewise. You won't be disappointed.

bank of the rather wet couloir. A 90 ft VI and AI pitch was provided for a warm up involving the use of pegs for most of its length, with the odd free move. The next pitch, a horizontal traverse, one starts by walking along a fair-sized ledge and within 50 ft one is back on etiers below a bulging wall. At this point, if we had been carrying 18" wedges we could have continued traversing onto the line of the next pitch. In the circumstances we had to take the alternative course and descend about 15 ft onto another peg line which led to what I'm told was a rather uncomfortable belay! After a few more pitches, part free and part artificial, we reached the 'Plimsoll' line. At this point there are two possible lines across the couloir, depending on the humidity. The line we selected involved climbing a 30 ft artificial section to reach a line of ledges crossing the waterway, hanging from a peg at this point was a notice in German informing us that our train left from that point. As it was rather wet I decided not to wait and swam to the other bank!

After traversing the couloir the climbing, although not easy, became easier, until we reached the source of the water - a large mass of snow at the head of the couloir. In our haste to escape the storm which was starting to break about us, we descended into the wrong gully and had to kick steps down a seemingly endless snow slope, followed by an abseil down a very wet waterfall, before reaching the familiar track below the north faces, back to our camp "plate".

(In search of better weather Al and Pete moved to the Civetta. They did the fifth ascent of the Solleder route and, with Claudio Barbier, the Belgian ace, the third ascent of the Da Roit on the Busarza face and then...)

Equipped with a good supply of food and extra ironmongery we finally returned to the Vazzoler hut with the Phillip/Flamini route of the Quota IGM 2992 in mind. Not very impressive, a route to a nameless point, but one of the most interesting routes on the Civetta. The route starts near the Solleder so we planned to start again from our fairly comfortable bivvy below the face, to save the two hour leg round before dawn. On the first ascent in 1957, Walter Phillips had made two bivvies on the route. On the second ascent, in 1961, Barbier had taken about 19 hours and one bivvy. We reckoned on being slightly slower than the Belgian in view of his speedy reputation (e.g. the five north faces of the Tre Cime in 8 hours odd) but still within two days - i.e. one night on the face and possibly one at the Torraini hut at the summit.

From the bivvy we trudged up the scree and snow patch to the initial chimney. Pete had difficulty kicking steps in his 'Desnaisons'. [Not the heavy mountain boots but a form of rock boot, Ed.] The first 1,000 ft involved a fair amount of climbing in chimney's at a general standard of 4 and 5. We climbed this section fairly quickly, at about the same rate as Barbier in the second ascent. We were feeling pleased with our progress - having over a third of the route behind us before 9 a.m.

No doubt someone will run up the whole 3,000 ft at the same rate, but it didn't turn out to be us. We slowed down somewhat after the initial burst of enthusiasm and as the climbing became more difficult. The chimney closes into a groove, slanting leftwards; it is a conspicuous feature of the centre section of the face, the general standard increasing to 5 and 6. We had been warned by Barbier that the belays on some

The Good Time
by
P. Brayshaw
P.C.C.J. 1975

Summer '75 was not the good June; no it was not. With a shattered alpine dream cradled somewhere deep inside, I turned my eyes towards home and of course my feet soon followed.

My arrival was greeted with the customary rainstorms. This summer I carried a liquid shroud to signify the death of my aspirations. Of course the weather had been good once.

There was no other course of action open to me, so I sought the house of the Peak C.C. guru and Billie spoke thus, "We shall depart this land".

With wheels set four square to the sun, over hill and dale we rolled. We did not

of these pitches were rather poor and consequently we carried a drill and one or two expansion bolts just in case.

Pitch 13 finished in a chimney and the last 10 ft was very dodgy, up a pile of loose blocks. After the next pitch, while Pete was complaining about his stance being uncomfortable, I began pitch 15. The description says simply; "straight up groove to big roof". There was certainly a pleasant-looking groove line to take, but as I found out, it would have been more finitely situated on Cloggy to be climbed in P.A.s. Wearing boots and having a large sack dragging me down, I found it impossible to finish the pitch up the groove which was blind, in addition to its other attributes, preventing my planting a piton. After exhausting myself in the attempts to force this 'direissima' I eventually found a deviation to the left, to a flake line. Traversing I found a large peg hidden behind a flake, indicating that the route didn't really go straight up the groove.

Clipped in the peg I moved up. One of the ropes jammed behind a flake below me. Leaning out on the peg to reach down to free it I found myself doing a backward roll. Fortunately the perlon rope which had jammed, held, although seriously damaged, and we had to chop off about 30 ft leaving us with 30 and 40 metre ropes. Shaken, but not seriously hurt I decided I would sooner press on than abseil 1,500 ft. I think Peter was similarly minded! I climbed back up and re-planted the peg, a fair sized blade, more securely, before re-traversing into the groove line to the belay in a smallish niche where Walter Phillip had made his first bivvy on the first ascent.

The next pitch added to our misfortunes when one of our hammers parted company with us and bounced down to the screes, rather out of reach! It was to waste a lot of time on the remainder of the route, lowering the existing hammer for the second to de-peg. A couple of pitches later the third time-wasting event hit us; the description said "traverse across something" - which we couldn't translate, and we wasted about three hours traversing across the wrong thing. To the right a rake of loose yellow rock led in a direction which we thought would take us into the final couloir. To the left was a rather desperate-looking slab. We climbed to the right and reached a fairly big ledge. From there Pete attacked a desperate wall and eventually had to abseil back to my stance. Retracing back another pitch we returned to the slab again and found it possible to traverse across.

Ahead of us was one of the artificial pitches; we were feeling tired and the day was late so we decided to call a halt for the night. The ledge we were forced to select was only big enough to sit on. We had carried duvets for the night and wore our pullovers as overtrousers to keep our legs warm. To complete the luxury we had our feet in etiers and pulled the bivvy bag round us, hiding the rather lengthy sheer drop to the deck. We were at the bottom of the long final couloir and had we needed it there was a supply of water dripping down beside us.

To start the second day, after not too bad a night out, with but 18 of the 40 pitches behind us, there seemed a possibility of a second night on the face. With our one remaining peg hammer, Peter defeated the artificial pitch and we were established in the water course proper. A further 200 ft of fairly easy climbing led to the last V1 pitch

Never ending, pitch by pitch,
Time by now is running short,
Motionless above the earth
Fear moves in and out moves mirth.

'Til that moment when we stand,
Unbelieving, breathing hard,
Far above this petty world,
Watching truth's banner unfurled.

Together sink into the mist,
And minds drift back to other friends,
Who stand forever at the top,
For they had lived, and most had not.

Carnmore Visited

by

Alan Sanderson

P.C.C.J. 1975

Owing to the realities of life, financial and mechanical, I found myself in Wester Ross without a climbing partner. The climbing/family holiday was changed almost entirely into a family holiday, but I resolved to spend at least one day in the mountains.

June is supposed to be the best month to visit Scotland, as the weather is more settled than at other times of the year. This was certainly borne out by the weather which we encountered. The exceptionally long hours of daylight and the lack of midges make it ideal.

For my day in the hills I decided to visit Carnmore, which lies approximately 10 miles south-east of the village of Poolewe. With permission, and a fee of £1.25, one can use the private road up to Kemsary, thus saving a walk of three miles. Unfortunately I didn't have permission.

On the day in question I set off from our caravan at 5.30 am. I had been so determined not to lose any time that on arrival at Poolewe I found that I had forgotten my sandwiches and flask. I wasn't going back now, at 6.0 am.

The private road to Kemsary passes through birch woods, the ground of which was covered with bluebells and primroses. Their scent filled the still morning air. Cuckoos were calling to each other and Blue Tits seemed to be in every tree. It was idyllic.

Just before Kemsary the woods give way to more open ground. As I rounded a corner I looked up and saw two stags above me on a small hill. I reached for my camera

Next weekend I was parked once more at Stony when someone flashed off Gabriel or somewhere around there and landed on the bonnet of my car. I rushed over, but apart from a scratch the bonnet was alright. The bloke though didn't look too good. So I drove down to the garage to phone for an ambulance. To which request came the reply "No you can't, the last bloke an ambulance came for walked off."

"There's no justice, is there?"

On a Mountain

by

D. Watson

P.C.C.J. 1969

Cold barren light of dawn,
How soon your searching fingers found my eyes,
Pried them open, red and full,
Groping forth with little will.

How soon the chill melts,
Life returns with rhythmic stride,
Sunlight's breath upon the peaks,
Silent men, and leather creaks.

Stumble turns to measured tread,
Wakening muscles, light gay spring.
Bright eyes ever upward glance,
Quivering spires of rock entrance.

Like Death's advance,
Upon the life of mortal man,
The mountaineer's pace, unseen and slow,
Firm and steady, specks on snow.

Looming ever larger now,
The warming gabbro, quartzite streaked,
Proud, grey, like an ageing friend,
Poised on tiptoe, stiff boots bend,

Wandering through the maze of rock,
Cracks and chimneys, incut holds,
Now a spider, now a snake,
Writhing, straining to the break.

of the route. The line followed a steep rake containing pegs, with the guide recommending using several others. A further pitch led to the bivvy site Phillip used for his second night, a sizeable hollow in which two people could stretch out in comparative comfort. At this point one meets up with the Civetta, a fairly long route, which takes a diagonal line across the Civetta face.

The remainder of the route followed the system of chimneys up the line of the couloir. Much of it was graded V and V+ on the first ascent but we didn't think it as hard as that. No doubt after their two bivvies Walter and his mate were finding it hard work. We made good time to pitch 38, a so-called roof. The bulging wall required the use of six pegs; the main difficulty I found was getting off the ground. It proved to be the last major obstacle between us and the lemon tea at the hut.

We thought the route was really worth doing. It is about 3,300 ft and but for 100 ft of artificial climbing maintains a high free standard not yet spoiled with an excess of pegs belaying from every crack.

An account of the ascent of the Cassin route on the Cima Ovest and the first British and the third overall ascent of the Phillip Flamin on the Civetta by Alan Wright and Peter Crew in summer 1962.

The Parlous State of England

by

Dave Gregory

P.C.C.J. 1963

Row upon row, like peas in pods,
The steady ranks of houses go,
Roofs and entries alternate like piano keys;
And dominant the magic rods,
Alphabetic symbols of a new religion
Drawing vision from the invisible air
And holding to the shiny complicated box's
Flickering half-white eye,

The interests and emotions of the rare
And sapient Homo sapiens.

From fact to fiction all-absorbing,
Accepting as a truth without decision,
The watching nation sits and stares,
Its muscles atrophied excepting
The nystagmic, twitching tennis eye.
Here for their delectation
A man, fit and modest, giant

Not in stature, but achievement,
Climbs and mocks at gravitation
On the rugosities they cannot see.

While they sit, and fat their buttocks grow,
He pits himself for pleasure
Against the wall, and climbs so that
The ripples of his muscles come and go,
Mocking their flabby flesh and minds.
His seeking fingers, that could hurl
The tyrant screen afar,
Move gently on the rock and find
A hold, and round it curl,
And lift him higher like a tautened spring.

But not for them the weakness in the belly
He feels which drives him on,
The conquering of fear that's pleasure called.
Oh no. "I've seen it all on 'telly".
You passive emasculated clod.

D.G. used, in the early fifties, to travel home through the Parson Cross estate and saw the gradual spread of the then X-, Y-, and K-shaped aerials as T.V. became popular.
Joe Brown took part in one of the early T.V. climbing programmes.

to blink and he wiped it away. He staggered to his feet and made for a niche between two pinnacles of rock and lay between them.

The wind howled above his head but could not reach him, only the rain when the wind abated a little, came down to catch the figure that lay there.

He ran his hand over the rock that he had come to love, and remembered how when he was fifteen his father had taken him along this self same ridge and had begun a love that was to last for all his life. Of the weekends he had spent climbing and walking, sleeping under the big boulders in the Pass before they filled with rubbish as they were now. Of the men he had climbed with. Famous men who had gone on to Everest. It was one of his great regrets, that he had never been chosen for an expedition. In his day he had been a well known and accomplished mountaineer. Perhaps he hadn't known the right people. It didn't matter really. He had led a good life. A life full of love for the hills and mountains. A love that went past understanding, that seemed to be part of his very soul.

When he tried to explain to the nurses at the old people's home they smiled kindly at him and said they understood. How could they understand? How could anyone understand?

"Never walk the hills again" they had said, "too old now."

That's why he had to come back. To lie down where he had spent the happiest days of his life. To drift into a long sleep, and to die.
The wind dropped for a moment and the rain fell gently on the figure that lay still among the rocks. Then howled afresh and tore on across the hills.

Excerpt from Keith Myhill's Autobiography

P.C.C.J. 1969

I was spending my day the way many climbers do by sitting on Windy Ledge chatting and watching when I see this lad having trouble on the first pitch of Windhoven.

Being by nature a kindly soul I climbed down just to the left of him where it isn't so steep to point out the holds. I stepped down on a large ledge of grass which had decided it had had enough of cliff hanging and collapsed earthwards at a rate of knots. Being thus left devoid of holds I followed.

Luckily, the gradient being less than vertical I tumbled about a bit which broke my fall, before landing none too gently in a heap on the path.

A passing climber, upon asking me if I was dead and receiving no reply, rushed off to phone for an ambulance.

I got up, leaned against the car and felt distinctly bad. Home and bed I decided was the best thing for me, so I drove very carefully back to Sheffield. On my way there came, exceedingly fast, an ambulance, lights flashing, from the direction of Sheffield. Oh! I thought, some poor devil's hurt himself.

The Lament of a Climbing Widow OR When did You Last See Your Husband by an Anonymous Wife

This first appeared in the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club Journal (1960) and was reprinted in the P.C.C.J. in 1963

He comes home at midnight all weary and worn
With bliss on his face, his knuckles all torn,
"Been doing hand jams", he tells me with glee,
His trousers need patching, they're split at the knee.
I trip on the gear he has dumped at the door,
His Vibrams leave marks on my polished floor;

Paul answered "Stuff your arm down the pipe and lever up on it to reach the top."

I did just that and my fingers curled round the edge of the parapet - pitch 3 over, named 'Satan's Way' V.S.

The seepie looked awfully high and my fingers were awfully tired. Up on to the battlements, fall back onto the spire, reach up for the first gargoyle, pull up, reach for the next. Much like climbing a very awkward, very airy ladder. On every third or fourth knob I attached a runner by means of a hero loop; it was quite well-protected, but some of the knobs were very rounded. I was two thirds of the way up before I decided that pulling up on three feet spaced gargoyles was too strenuous for the state of my fingers to warrant the risk of my leading further (besides I'm a coward). I came down leaving the runners on and Paul went up. As he neared the top I heard him whisper "Below".

"Oh" I thought, "it'll only be a sling or something". The next second there was a loud bang and a steel crab appeared by my feet. I whispered abuse at him, then remembering where I was tacked 'Amen' on the end and put my crash hat on.

Paul was now at the top. The rope went tight and I began to climb. With a leader's responsibilities gone I quickly reached the top.

"It's great up here Chad, isn't it?" Paul said. I looked down at the crowds outside the Cutlers' Hall, gave the weathercock a spin, said a none too happy "Yes" and began to back down. Paul then reversed, and we abseiled down the rest of the way taking care not to swing into the stained glass windows.

Once down off for a much needed pint at The Roebuck.

His forehead is cut, there is still a blood smear –
Head jamming, perhaps is in fashion this year.
And now, here in bed, he shouts, "Take in the slack".

In his sleep he is trying to traverse my back,
While I dream of dancing and sunshine in Spain,
He dreams of Scafell and Gimmer in rain.
Last week we invited some friends in to tea,
But he and his pal were missing, you see,
He'd forgotten our guests, he was in such a daze,
He just blew his top last Friday night.

He wanted his rope; it was nowhere in sight,
The kiddie had borrowed it, just for a skip,
The air then turned blue - he did let it rip!
The short time he's home he's reading guide books,
If I dare interrupt him he gives me black looks;
We need some new curtains and rugs but he says,
"We just can't afford them; I bought some P.A.s".

It's no use to ask him to bring up the coal,
The top of a climb is his only goal;
He's fully immune to smiles and caresses,
He's saving his strength for the latest V.S.s.
He is planning hard climbs on a great Welsh buttress,
The world is forgotten, he couldn't care less;

He's happy when wearing his boots and thick socks,
How jealous I am of those cursed rocks.
No doubt folks will say, "Go with him you fool!",
But I get quite dizzy stepping up on a stool.
Some day when too old to climb craggy heights,
He will sit and remember on cold winter nights.

Then, maybe, I'll have him all to myself,
Instead of him dicing on some mantis shelf;

But then when you think, he could do much worse things
Than climbing with ropes and pitons and slings.
At least he is leading a full healthy life,
And I must be patient and be a good wife;
So now I'll turn over, and to help me to sleep,
I'll try counting climbers instead of the sheep.

The rain lashed across the ridge in great sheets nearly horizontal, carried by a furious wind that buffeted and plucked at the lonely figure as he made his way carefully along. His whole appearance was of someone in clothes not used for a long time. Threadbare gloves and tattered capoule afforded little protection. Again and again the wind pulled at him, as if determined to crush this impudent trespass upon the domain of the wind and rain.

The cold was beginning to tell and the teetering old man had to struggle harder to keep a semblance of balance. He was long ago soaked to the skin and his body warmth was leaving him. A fresh violent burst of wind caught him balanced on a boulder, his arms swung up to counteract the sway but he slipped and his head struck the rock.

He lay stunned for a few minutes till the blood running into his eye caused him

Mountain Memories

P.C.C.J. 1969

by
Steve Chadwick

Agner Bivouac
by
Patrick Farnborough

P.C.C.J. 1963

Across in Italy we have of course the famous Dolomites of the Eastern Alps. The Dolomites, as they are commonly termed, are split into groups or massifs, which makes it easier for guide writing purposes, mapping, etc. Some of the groups are more popular than others and although these groups tend to sport the best climbing, they also tend to attract thousands of tourists. Now if you are a guy like me, you'll be wanting to get away from these milling crowds of singing, yodelling, happy-go-lucky rubber-necks. If you do, then allow one to recommend to you Monte Agner in the Pala group.

Monte Agner lies to the north-west of Agordo and can be reached, as the guidebook points out, by car up a track leading to the Col du Pra. The Col du Pra is somewhat disappointing, for instead of being a Col as we know or like to think a Col should look like, it is, in fact two or three wooden shacks at the junction or fork of two great valleys.

To the south of the Col, across the main valley, lies the towering north wall of Monte Agner and it was this wall that in the summer of '63 my companions and I were fated to attempt. I must point out at this stage that our three man effort was no match for this gigantic 5,000ft wall, for three men take exactly twice the time of two, which on a long route of this nature, could mean lots of lovely bivouacs. However since the new English guide had downgraded the route from V1 to V we thought that we could be on the summit in 2 or 3 days at the most, or retreat, depending on conditions.

I don't know if this is original, but we set off at a tired stroll just after the crack of noon intent on following the guide description for the approach march. After a long search at the col we finally found a crude bridge that led us across the swollen glacier stream and so into the darkness of the wooded foothills. At five o'clock that same day we emerged from the almost vertical forest, filthy black and just about on our benders, at the foot of the wall. Looking back we could see the Col away off to the left. Between us and the Col was nothing but trees, millions of trees, with not a trace of track to be seen, and then looking straight down into the main valley we saw it - the Van de Mez valley, winding its way down from the wall to the main valley, providing the mountain with a natural fire lane and an easy route of access to the wall. Oh how we cursed the guide writers!

By nine o'clock we had climbed the first 1,200 feet of the wall, but now it was almost dark and we were preparing to bivouac beneath a desperate-looking chimney pitch that went in at the back higher up to form a shallow cave. The walls on either side were smooth and vertical, and it reminded me of The Cauldron on the Buchaille Etive, and as we sat cramped in our duvets we discussed the possibilities of our overcoming this pitch come the dawn, and prayed that it did not rain while we were in this dangerous position, for this chimney is the main watercourse down the face. As

I was broke, as usual, and looking for someone to buy me a beer. A glance at the dejected faces told me that all I'd get was abuse, so I wandered disconsolately over to Paul to chat about our proposed trip to the 'Coe' over Christmas. He was staring into his pint glass.

"How do Paul?"

"How do Kid, where are you climbing this weekend?" A faint trace of cynical amusement crossed his face as he asked the question.

"Very funny" I said "we may as well climb the Cathedral for all the climbing we can do in Derbyshire."

His eyes lit up. "A great idea" he said "we'll do it, it'll be a superb route."

"Oh no, what have I done?" I said to myself, as Paul rambled on.

"How about Saturday night, early on, whilst town is busy?"

"See here Paul, I was only joking" I said.

"Well I'm not, how about it, just the two of us."

"Oh ducky" I said "just the two of us" but he missed the subtlety and carried on.

"It won't be a first ascent of course, Tom's done it already, his case comes up in February."

"Very nice" I thought.

Thus it was, armed with slings galore, and double whiskys at every pub we passed on the way, we arrived at the Cathedral.

We walked round the Cathedral, up a dark recess at the back, and changed into our P.A.s behind a large column. Facing us was the first pitch, a 15 ft. drain pipe past a lighted window. We called it 'Vicar's Wall' on account of the Vicar we saw through the window as we clambered past.

Once on the first roof we were hidden from the road and felt a little safer.

Confronting us were a few wooden steps, up and turning right we saw our first climbing pitch, a 30 ft. drainpipe and corner that we named 'Congregation Corner' for reasons that will become obvious. Uncoupling the rope I tied on and began up. As I reached the second drain pipe section it began to rattle like the clappers of hell. I looked round and could see people walking up the alley, no one had seen me. I reached the top and glanced in through the window; the congregation were singing a hymn. "This is blasphemy" I thought, so leaving a runner on I climbed down. When singing had stopped, Paul tied on and whipped up to the top, I followed.

We were now on what appeared to be the main back roof, with wooden gantries crossing it. We had the choice of climbing another pipe or step ladder. Once up the ladder we stepped round the new round tower and back long the top roof to the square tower.

Being Paul's turn to lead he began up. This pipe looked hard, but after a gymnastic move at the top he was up. In trepidation I followed; fingers couldn't close around the pipe so one had to use pressure on the sides and little footholds on the wall. The pipe stopped 3 ft. below the top and I found myself in an exhausting lay back, with strength running out of my finger tips.

"Where now?" I pleaded.

We told him that we saw and carried on with our chores. Rod and I had a cigarette. "It's harder than I thought and I have only one peg and no axe" said the youth.

We said "Oh".

"Where does the route go then?" said the youth.

"Up" we said and told him where to go.

At this point the route goes left for about thirty feet and then straight up but there is a line straight up from the ledge we were on. We decided to try it.

We tried, both of us, for about half an hour to force more than ten feet of the 'direct'. The ledges slope outwards at about 60° and in between these were short iced-up walls about eight feet high. The walls were not too bad but the ledges had loose powder snow on them and wouldn't take ice pegs or steps or anything. We gave it up and followed the normal line of the gully.

The traverse would have been fairly reasonable but the day tripper had demolished everything in sight with his peg hammer. I traversed a little higher on good snow ice into the main gully and fixed a runner. At this point you are suddenly faced with a fair amount of exposure and the climbing is steep and good if the snow is compact. I belayed, Rod came up to the belay and led through the last pitch. This is superb. The ice was thick and Rod chopped small holds upwards. The exposure at this point is quite fair and the work is mixed as there is a lot of rock about. I came up at a slow pace being held up by the youths in front. Rod couldn't see me and I couldn't hear him due to the wind on the summit.

The peg-hammered one reached the top with about two feet of rope to spare. He stood there and brought up the next one and then he walked back and the two of them brought up another and so on. Rod was laughing at this long line of bolts strung out across the summit and I was yelling for slack, getting tight rope and being pulled off balance. I joined Rod on the summit in the sun and we went down. By eleven thirty we were congratulating ourselves in the 'Fox'.

I sat there thinking of the horrible wet overhanging pitches below us that we had climbed that afternoon, some of grade 5 and two or three of grade 6. I felt the first drops of rain.

The moon had no sooner disappeared behind a black cloud than the heavens opened and lightning was crashing all about us. In a manner of minutes the chimney was gushing and bubbling like a sewer and our small ledge was transformed into a small pond before the rushing water poured over the chockstone that formed our window sill, into the void below. We were standing up to our knees in foam trying to grab our gear before it was hurled into the abyss, when the mountain opened up on us with a broadside of hundreds of gallons of icy water and a grapeshot of stones. Whatever it was that had been holding back the water 150ft above us had finally broken and the water and stones shot over the brink with a great roar like an express train shooting out of a tunnel.

Things were now getting a little desperate and the volume of water was making it hard to breath, not to mention stand up with the force, and we were beginning to wonder if we could survive the night under these conditions. We just had to get out of the full force somehow - but where could we go? Bruce found the answer. We saw him clawing desperately up the waterfall; at first I thought he had gone mad, but then I remembered the shallow cave. If we could reach it we might be safe from the torrent. Time after time we were forced back, but after a bitter struggle all three of us managed to reach the 'cave' and we stood side by side with our backs pressed tightly to the wall just out of the cascade of water.

The night dragged slowly on and as we stood there shivering behind the waterfall watching the lightning through a curtain of water, we cursed, shouted, and sang filthy songs into the black night. All our food had been washed away and all that was left were the ropes and ironware which we intended to use for our retreat if it ever came light again.

Come the dawn and the rain had stopped and the force from the sluice above had slackened off to a mere flow. We wasted no time at all in abseiling into the swirling mist down six waterfall pitches and on to easier ledges. Then, 300ft above the scree came the final abseil down a difficult section into the head of a gully. On reaching the gully we found that our abseil rope would not pull through; somewhere it had jammed and someone would have to climb back up and free it. I decided to go and quickly climbed hand over hand up the rope. I found the reason, too much friction round the belay. I moved it and shouted to my companions to tug on the rope and test it for running. Jack hauled on the rope and it set up a series of vibrations which flicked it off the belay, and I watched with horror as the rope disappeared into the mist.

Would we never escape from this nasty face? After climbing down 40ft, I could go no further for the wall below was vertical and running in water. Jack would have to climb up to me. He managed to get within 20ft, and then with a lot of cowboy antics finally managed to flick the rope to me. Hanging on to my piton with one hand I managed to thread the rope with the other hand and then abseil down past Jack and so to safety. Half an hour later we were jumping onto the patch of hard snow at the foot

Foot and Mouth by Steve Chadwick

P.C.C.J. 1968

A mood of gloom hung over the club; climbing had been banned for just two weeks and depression had set in. Nerves were on edge, normally friendly people were touchy and bitter. Every now and then the silence would be broken by a cry that would run something like:

"Put my bloody ale down, go buy your own."

"Watch 'oo you're shouting at you, you'd fall off a bloody foopath."

In a few minutes the enthusiasm even for an argument would dissipate back into a despairing hush.

of the wall. The time was 9.00 am and the Van de Mez valley wound its way down to Agordio and beer bottles.

Hoy - the Sixth Ascent

by

Paul Gray

P.C.C.J. 1968

We had the Old Man to ourselves at Whitsundie. This was just as well, because any would-be epics would go unnoticed. Our first glimpse proper, of the Old Man, was on Monday night on the way over on the ferry. There it stood, a 460 foot high needle of loose sandstone made rotten by time and the cruel Atlantic breakers, but nevertheless an impressive sight.

The next morning (Tuesday) we were greeted by rain, and a thunderstorm thrown in for good measure. But the weather quickly brightened up and the sun appeared. Left with no further excuses, we filled a sack with the usual junk - most of it borrowed, and set off down to The Causeway. This is the ridge joining the Old Man to the mainland and gives access to a loose buttress which leads up to a good ledge dubbed The Gallery. From here all the three present routes begin.

Pete Williamson led off, up the broken and rather loose buttress, slowly at first, but more quickly as he 'warmed to the route'.

I quickly joined Pete, and not wanting to waste any time, dispensed with the tension move and free climbed to a small ledge at the base of the long overhanging crack - the crux. Pete followed across with some trepidation. The crack proved hard, and is climbed by a variety of techniques, mainly by bridging moves. The whole pitch is in a superb position, and is supposed to be free! but judging from the amount of aid in place - well one wonders!

Having flopped thankfully into the cave at the top, and having belayed to someone else's sling, we were just in time to avoid a jet of 'gob' shot from an enraged guillermoat from finding its mark. It's quite surprising the amount of fluid these birds can deliver at one 'squirt' if disturbed.

Pete soon found the disadvantages of carrying a sack on such a confined and strenuous pitch. We should really have hauled the sack, but as there was no contact between us, above the roar of the breakers, little could be done.

The next two pitches (200 feet altogether) were really quite exciting and exposed too, the standard being around the Severe mark. Odd, interesting things were climbed past - a large coil of wire, from which most of the belays had been constructed, no doubt from an old relic of the T.V. filming, - a rusty spanner - eggs just laid on the rocky ledges, all items of added interest, then of course there was the rock, not as safe as Stoney Middleton, more like Anglesey, but certainly nowhere desperately loose.

The last seventy feet provided the most pleasant climbing of all. A corner crack climbed on good jams and holds - and very airy.

After smoking cigarettes and erecting a cairn on top, the 5th (someone hasn't built one), we began to abseil down the way we had come. It didn't take long to reach the big cave and the overhanging section. We talked for an hour on the best way down this section - I was in favour of abseiling down the overhanging rock and taking 'pot-luck'. Pete favoured peusliking on the fixed rope we had carried up. Eventually the idea of fixing the rope on the South-east Arctic side, and abseiling down, clipped into the fixed rope with a karabiner, occurred to Pete. The idea being that as the overhang became apparent, the karabiner on the fixed rope would pull you bodily into the bottom peg in the wall above The Gallery.

It was Pete's idea, and so he abseiled first. His method worked well and before long we were both down on The Causeway without further incident.

Hoy is rather a hostile place, with no pubs, no shops and where we camped, no water, so the next morning after being interviewed by the local reporter, we set sail for the mainland.

I thank we both agreed that, although we had not climbed anything of outstanding difficulty, and only the one route, we had at least been amongst and enjoyed the wealth of wild and unusual scenery.

Mam Tor Gully in Winter

by

Phil Bamforth

P.C.C.J. 1968

It seemed strange to be meeting Rod at 6.30 in the morning to go climbing, especially as the night before we had rather a good night at the local pub. It was cold and still a bit dark as the famed 1937 Pre-Bat Van motor cycle approached. We drove at a sedate 45 mph to Castleton and Mam Tor.

The face was covered in snow and ice and as solid as anything. We went across the rubble (a lot of which fell off the summer before, making the top section steeper) and up the first 50 ft. of the gully.

At this point we roped up and kicked steps upwards for a while. The snow was deep and hard and in places where the wind had driven it from the gully bed there was a layer of ice an inch thick. These we avoided if we could but if not chipped small steps in them. The gully steepened and we cut steps up to the final hundred and fifty feet. At this point we cleared a ledge and sat down to cramp on up. Suddenly around the corner of Blue John Rib came a figure clutching a peg hammer. He traversed onto our ledge with four 'unarmed' youths on a length of halfwight nylon.

"Morning" he said "we traversed off the face".