

PERUVIAN NOTES

By COLIN DARBYSHIRE

THE 1964 season has again been a very active one, with some twenty expeditions in all.

Leigh Ortenburger was again in the Cordillera Blanca with a very strong U.S. party. They made the second ascent of the West peak of Chacaraju (6,113 m.) by a new route up the North ridge. Chacaraju is one of the most spectacular peaks in the Blanca and both its East and West peaks are extremely difficult propositions, and both had been climbed only once. The party made another hard new route on the West ridge of Huandoy and climbed three other peaks. Ortenburger is reported to have now climbed sixteen peaks of over 6,000 m. in the Cordillera Blanca.

A little further south in the Cordillera Huayhuash, another North American expedition led by Leif Norman Patterson made the first ascent of the very hard North peak of Jirishhanca.

Also in the Huayhuash, two members of an Argentine expedition got to within 100 m. of the summit of the North peak of Yerupajá before being turned back by an ice-glazed rock step. The col between the North and South peaks was reached by a new route up the steep West wall; three bivouacs were needed. A number of other peaks in the range were climbed.

The North peak of Yerupajá is a very attractive undertaking since the first ascent, made by a Harvard expedition in 1950, has still to be repeated. A Scottish party, led by Malcolm Slesser, had this as their objective but arrived too late in the season and bad weather upset their plans. Earlier they had been exploring in the Yanatili range near Cuzco in the south.

The New Zealand party's activities, first in the Cordillera Real in Bolivia and then in the Blanca, were described in *A. J.* 69. 217-27. For Michael and Jean Nelson this was their second trip to the Blanca and for Don Mackay his third trip to the Andes.

The latter's arrival in Peru a few weeks ahead of the rest of the party fortunately coincided with two long week-ends and he joined up with Charlie Powell, who stayed on after the 1963 Rondoy expedition, and myself for two quick trips. In the second one we made perhaps the third ascent of a peak of c. 18,000 ft. in the Raura group after a good climb up steep snow-slopes. Despite these attractive possibilities, week-end climbing in Peru is almost unknown.

Although Charlie Powell with one companion were certainly the smallest party operating last season, they received by far the greatest attention from the newspapers. After an unsuccessful attempt on Huascarán they mentioned that they had been turned back by a big crevasse which is a well-known feature of the normal route. Unfortunately this area had only a few years earlier suffered a very severe avalanche caused by a rock fall from Huascarán, so the information was eagerly seized upon and distorted. It was some time before the reports of the 'eminent Welsh glaciologist' were allowed to drop.

THE GREAT WALL (1901-04)

A new era of climbing was ushered in on September 2, 1901, by the completion of the *Yamala Gable on Clowyn du'r Arddu*. It had taken three days, was a 'last great problem' which had been attempted by several competent parties, and the conquerors were young and unknown. Notably enough, there were seeds for controversy, and the methods and amount of aid used were criticised strongly. Nevertheless the climb was not repeated until 1903 by Austin and Metcalf, in six hours, but Soper and Crew were vindicated as to the number of pegs used and by the route itself, which remains one of the longest continuously difficult routes in the country.

Settled the seal on the arrival of the new generation about a month later, on October 7; an epic ascent by Crew and Ingle on a cold, wet day. As the end of the year drew near, activity transferred to the low, warm cliffs of Tremadoc; and *Plumb, Yskawar and Holloway* appeared. *Larawda on Cragg Alltun*, was climbed many times, and began to acquire its well-deserved reputation amongst minor climbs.

The weather was extremely good at Easter, 1902, and the new season saw great efforts on 'Clowyn'. The psychological barrier of *Shanling Slab* was passed with its third ascent by Crew. It even had two ascents in one day, by Soper and Webb, and Boyesen and White, and routes such as *Yskawar, White Slab and Swale* (which until now had a high reputation) were becoming commonplace, with many ascents by the Alpha Club and others. Crew and Ingle, and Ingle and Boyesen, added *Shadon and Dargol* on April 27 and 28, with *Hawmagoblin* on May 2. This was only the second time in two years that the line had been dry, and the drought conditions had made all this activity

The task of compiling the present Notes has been immensely helped by the cooperation of P. Crew, J. A. Austin, E. J. Griffin, Eric Byre, Paul Nunn and C. S. Tillyer. The Irish section is modified from accounts in *Climbers' Club Journals and the C.C. Bulletin, 1904*, originally written by Sean Rothery.—A.J.M.