Notes
1) Although D. W. Freshfield had reached the summit of the Vignemale in the Pyrenees on 25 April 1874.
2) In his book *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*
3) The heights of the S and N summits are today recorded as 3482m and 3478m respectively.
4) The leading guide on the first ascent in July 1872.

Regional Notes 1980

Tom Connor
As far as is known, all these notes refer to events which took place in 1979, unless otherwise stated.

ALPS AND EUROPE

The pattern of activity in the Alps has been much as in recent years, solo ascents and winter climbs producing some element of novelty, with the occasional new route being completed usually on faces already having several well established lines. Many of these climbs are detailed in *Mountain* and elsewhere; we just pick out some of the highlights below.

Jean-Marc Boivin soloed the N face of the Matterhorn on 5 August in 4hr and 10min, a record for the face. Not content with this, he then used a hang glider to make the fastest safe descent of the mountain. A few days previously, he had skied the E face, starting just below the headwall. Patrick Edlinger was very active in the Massif d'Oisan, soloing the N face/E col route and the central ice slope/N face of Pelvoux and the Sombardier Gully on the N face of Ailefroide. Earlier in the year, Edlinger and Patrick Berhault made a very fast winter climb of the Marmier/Mercadier route on the NW face of Ailefroide. The return trip to the Refuge Cézanne took 23hr and no bivouac gear was carried. The American solo climber Charlie Foster was active in 1979 completing an impressive list of routes: Swiss route Les Courtes; N face Aiguille du Plan; N face Grands Charmoz; N face Les Droites; Nant Blanc Aiguille Verte; Nant Blanc Pic Sans Nom. The 19 year old Seattle climber Steve Sustadt soloed the N face of Les Droites in 6hr. Another climber specializing in solo ascents is the Italian Franco Perlotto who had 27 solo ascents in the Dolomites to his credit, beginning with the first winter ascent of the direct route on Cima Piccola as long ago as 1975. He has made first solo ascents in other regions also, eg Mont Blanc, Norway (Trollryggen) and the Hoggar (N face of Mont Adriane).

Some very fast winter climbs have been completed. On Les Droites, Berhault and Phillipe Martinez made the second winter ascent of the Cornuaia/Davaille route, leaving the Argentiere hut at 1am and reaching the summit at noon. They took one light sack between them and no ice pitons, preferring to belay with their iceaxes. The first winter solo of the Lagarde couloir on Les Droites was made by Bernard Muller in 6hr. He also climbed the Bonatti/Zappelli route on the Grand Pilier d’Angle in 4hr. In the Pyrenees, 3 British climbers, Ray Harris, Pete Shone and Nigel Perry visited the Cirque de Gavarnie in winter and completed 3 ascents of steep ice routes. All gave excellent sustained climbing mainly on water ice (Scottish grade V); the Diedre des Mystiques was particularly notable for its 3 final pitches and the ascent (probably the second) was completed in 5hr. In the Dolomites, Czech climbers were active in winter. A party of 4 including a 20 year old girl climber made the first winter ascent of the Via degli Amici/Messner on the Civetta. Porvaznik and Valovic made the first climb of a new route on the NW face of Piceola Civetta in March, taking 7 days; Fulka and Smid made the first winter ascent of the Via dei Fodom on the Punta Civetta in 5 days. Other Czech parties made first winter ascents on Torre Alleghe and Monte Agner. During the summer season of 1979, Polish women climbers made a number of first ascents by all female parties: E face Aiguille du Moine (Halina Kaniut and Anna Buraczewska); Bonatti route E face Grand Capucin (Irena Kesa and Wanda Rutkiewicz in 16hr); Cordier Pillar W face Grands Charmoz (Ewa Pankiewicz and Agnieszka Smolska); Migot Pillar N face Chardonnet (Kesa and Rutkiewicz).
Outside the Alps there have been reports on rock climbing from several areas. The Verdon Gorge is the scene of much activity: Patrick Berhault has been responsible for many solo climbs of hard routes, as has Jean Marc Troussier. A film of hard free climbing involving these 2 climbers and several other French climbers has been made by Laurent Chevallier and Jean Paul Janssen in the Verdon. It includes shots taken on the routes Pichenibule, Triomphe d’Eros, Necronomicon and Estemporanée and illustrates bivouacs and Tyrolean traverses. A commentary on the style and ethics of modern French free climbers is given in Mountain 75 28, in which Troussier illustrates his points by describing climbs at Deux Aiguilles on Montagne St Victoire. In recent years the trio of Martine and Christian Guyomar and Christian Flautcoeur have been largely instrumental in introducing new routes, 87 in the space of 6 years, many of them free climbed. They have always climbed their routes from below with no abseils or prior inspection. The cliffs saw the establishment of the first grade VII route in France. The rise to prominence of this and other similar areas has arisen from the present tendency of French climbers to seek out a new cliff and spend part of their holiday developing it. The Deux Aiguilles are covered in a new guide by Pete Livesey which is reviewed below. La Montagne et Alpinisme 199 229 has a special feature on the Pyrenees, a series of articles covering aspects of the history, current climbing, ski-ing etc.

Recent trends in West German outcrop climbing in the Frankenjura and the Paltz are described by Kay-Uwe Zumwinkel and Richard Muhe in news items appearing in Mountain 74 16. In the Frankenjura the introduction of the use of cemented bolts has changed the character of climbing, and the crags are no longer regarded just as a training area. The better protection provided by the bolts has raised the standard and encouraged free climbing; the UIAA grade VII (5.10) was introduced by Kurt Albert and Wolfgang Fietz in the early 70’s and free climbing has now reached the unofficial grade VIII (5.11). The Paltz has also developed in the same way, now being regarded as the hardest rock climbing area in West Germany with climbs ranging from II to IX (5.12).

In Italy, the Mello Valley (a minor valley of Valtellina in the Malino-Bregaglia-Disgrazia group) is coming to be regarded as the ‘Italian Yosemite’, having the best granite climbing in Italy with rock features up to 600m high. So far about 50 routes have been done, but many other possibilities still exist and the grades already go up to VII and VIII. In Mountain 73 15 Antonio Boscacci describes the valley and 10 selected routes, several of which he helped to pioneer, with grades ranging from III+ to VIII.

According to a news item in Mountain 72 17, the move to free climbing is occurring slowly in Austria, although it seems that for the classic routes this may merely mean a return to the style adopted on the original ascents in the 1920s and 1930s which were climbed with the absolute minimum of protection pegs. Two climbing areas much used by the Austrians are referred to, the Pellstein, 30km SW of Vienna, and the Gesäuse 250km to the W. The former is a ‘klettergarten’ with steep, solid limestone faces up to 100m high; there is a rule against bolting and the maximum grade so far is VII. The Gesäuse is on a much larger scale, 10km long and 1000m high, with some of the hardest climbs in Austria.

Paris-Chamonix 38 8 contains an article by C. Torres and D. Garnier on climbing on the Sierra de Montsech which lies about 50km S of the mid Pyrenees near Tremp in Catalonia. The cliffs rise to a height of 400m, and the rock resembles the limestone of the Vercors—10 routes are briefly described. The next issue of Paris-Chamonix (39 26) continues the description of this area.

The following guide books have been reviewed or are noted:

French Rock Climbs  Peter Livesey (Cordee, 1980, pp77, diags, £3.95) This book fills a gap, for information on the many rock climbing areas of non-mountain France has hitherto been widely scattered. Here are the whereabouts of a dozen of them, mostly limestone, with a selection of climbs, mostly unfortunately of a rather high standard. For this reason the work is not of much help to, what I would term, the average climber (though perhaps the standard of the average climber has nowadays advanced far beyond that of the reviewer).

Many other areas remain to be covered, so that there is scope for a companion volume in the future; the ‘Climbers’ Playgrounds’ feature of this journal has mentioned several such over the last few years. Edward Pyatt

Pyrenees, Andorra, Cerdagne: A Guide to the Mountains for Walkers and Climbers  Arthur Battagel (Gastons-West Col, 1980, £6.00)

Ski Alpin III: Alpes Valaisannes  A. Pont (Club Alpine Suisse, 2nd ed, 1977, pp229, 64 photos, npq)
Val Vigezzo (Itinerari Alpini 28) B. Francese (Tamari, Bologna, 1976, pp150, maps and photos, L5000)

Valmalenco Itinerari Scetti I; Disgrazia-Vazzeda A. Gogna and L. Marimonti (Tamari, Bologna, 1977, pp143, maps and photos, L5000). Also Vol II; Bernina-Scalino (1977, pp156, maps and photos, L5000)

Ski Alpinismo in Adamello e Presanella J. Casiraghi, M. Andreolli and R. Bazzi (Tamari, Bologna, 1978, pp279, maps and photos, L7000)


Del Lago Segrino a Canzo: Itinerario Geomorphologico, Geologico e Botanico G. Nangeroni and E. Tagliabue (Club Alpino Italiano, 1977, pp69, photos, npq)

Presanella D. Ongari (Club Alpino Italiano/Touring Club Italiano, 1978, pp324, maps and photos, npq)

Randonées a Ski Nordique dans le Massif Central Annick and Serge Mouaret (Ed Creer, Nonette, 1980)

Randonées et Ascensions choisies dans le Parc National des Pyrenees Occidentales et ses Environs Robert Olivier (Ed Librairie Parisienne, Pau, 1980)


Sierra Nevada: Itinerarios de Esqui de Monten F. A. Olmedo Roelas (Ed by the Federacion Andaluza de Montana, Granada, 1979)

AFRICA

The following review of South African climbing has kindly been provided by Michael Scott.

The past year has seen an unbelievably rapid rise in grades from the established G2, through 3 grades to H2. Many of the claims have been regarded with more than scepticism, but plenty of hard climbing has been done, however rated.

On the technical side, ‘Friends’ have made their impact, chalk hasn’t yet, and the trend to non-wearing of helmets has been tragically emphasised by some fatalities. In one case the leader wore a helmet, but not a recommended one. He died of head injuries sustained after the helmet was knocked off his head during the fall.

Perhaps the continued high cost of petrol has caused it, but a shift in emphasis away from country route climbing in the Cape to more of a crag scene on Table Mountain, has occurred. Only one significant country route in the Cape was opened during the year. The Transvaal kloofs have yet again yielded a number of new climbing areas, as well as dozens of fine hard routes in established areas. The final points of interest are the large number of schoolboys actively leading in the F grade and higher, and the large number of leader falls on low grade pitches.

Transvaal

Handlip—Romey and Eckhard Druschke made the 3rd ascent of what they maintain is an ‘absurdly named’ route called Handlip Frontal Direct. Be that as it may, Handlip Frontal Direct is now a Super Direct. Previously the pitches on the lower tier tended to break leftwards with the rock features. A completely new start was opened by Haber, Maclennan and Ward. The new line takes a steep recess 10m right of where the fence terminates against the rockface. The new lower section is approx. 100m, G1M1. On the upper tier 2 pitches were climbed in a very prominent crack and recess right of the leaning pillar, which joins the finishing pitches of the...