

'A good quality, annual publication to which Australian climbers can turn for a picture of the exploits of their fellows at home and abroad: something of a local *Ascent*'. It is good to have a journal which gives the flavour of current Australasian climbing activities which otherwise tend to be reported rather briefly in the UK. The second issue, for instance, contains an article by Kim Carrigan describing the 12 climbs graded 25 and above on Mount Arapiles and which ranks 14 climbs graded at 24; the author is of course the principal creator of these very difficult routes and is thus ideally qualified to write about them. One wishes this publication every success and hopes that it is able to keep going on a regular basis, serving as it does basically a rather small audience at a time when publication costs are rising dramatically, as this Journal is finding to its cost.

## NEW ZEALAND

The 1979 winter season saw the first winter ascent of Mount Cook's E ridge by Colin Monteath, Greg Mortimer, Steve Anderson and Richard Schmidt. The S face of Mount Hicks received 2 more new lines in winter, the most impressive being by visiting Californian Tobin Sorenson and local Nick Craddock who put up 2 ice gully lines to the right of the original Left Hand Buttress route. By and large however, the weather was disappointing and the impetus of the previous year faltered. In the 1980 summer season, a group of Yugoslav climbers visited New Zealand to climb in the Mount Cook region, and the weather was good enough for them to complete 8 routes in the first part of February. Benkovic and Vidmar climbed the celebrated 2000m Caroline Face of Mount Cook on 20 February.

## NORTH AMERICA

### ALASKA/YUKON

Two new routes were climbed on the S side of Mount McKinley in 1980. Jack Roberts (USA) and Simon McCartney (UK) found a fresh line to the left of the Cassin Ridge. A Czech party were successful on a line between the American Direct and the Japanese S Buttress; they met steep blue ice and rock pitches of IV—V. The face involved 1700m of roped climbing with poor bivouac possibilities in the lower sections. The route was climbed by Orolin, Petrik and Bakos (Czechoslovakia) and Philip Johnson (UK). The entire climb was filmed.

The Roberts/McCartney climb was completed by Roberts despite incredible problems and is described in some detail in *Mountain 75* 14 where a letter by McCartney is reproduced; he grades the climb VII A2 5.9 Scottish grade 5. It began on 8 June and was done in alpine style—the face is about 2700m, so this meant that insufficient food could be carried. McCartney suffered badly from altitude sickness and finally had an attack of cerebral oedema, and the pair had to bivouac at 5900m, unable to go back down to lose height. Roberts decided eventually to leave via the summit to get help. Fortunately, at this point 2 friends, Helms and Kandiko, arrived as Roberts was leaving and were able to give some help so that eventually McCartney and Kandiko decided to continue for the summit. This proved to be more than McCartney was capable of at this stage, and the pair were forced to return to their campsite. Roberts and Helms had gone to find help but were not successful since it appears that there is no organization for rescue on the S side of the mountain, although Army helicopters are able to reach these altitudes. Kandiko and McCartney had thus to descend on their own for 7 days down the Cassin Ridge and eventually joined up with an American party who helped them descend further. They were eventually able to call the Park Services radio operator to say that rescue was no longer required. McCartney had now spent 20 days on the mountain and was suffering from trench foot; both suffered a fall into a crevasse which broke McCartney's wrist. Before a rescue could be organized, the weather closed in and another 3 days elapsed before a number of volunteers from Kahiltna were able to take the pair out on a sledge.

Glenn Randall, Pete Athens and Pete Metcalf (USA) made the first alpine style ascent of the S face of Mount Hunter (4442m), via the SE spur. The first ascent in 1978 required an airdrop of supplies on to the summit and a total of 144 days climbing time. On the second ascent, only 6 days supply of food could be taken and the climb took 13 days. The route is similar in difficulty to Deborah's N face or to the Infinite Spur on Foraker. Also on Mount Hunter, Billy Ireland (Northern Ireland) and Ulf Bjornberg (Sweden) climbed the previously much attempted N buttress for the first time at the beginning of July. In May, British climbers Roger Mear and Stephen Bell climbed a new route on the SE face of Mount Huntingdon. In the Kichatna Spires, Randy Cerf and George Schunk made the first ascent of the W face of Mount Jeffers. Two days

were spent fixing the first 6 pitches, then after a day of waiting for better weather, the pair climbed the remaining 19 pitches, some as hard as 5.10 and A3, to the summit. They descended by the original Robbins route in a total of 54hr.

A traverse of Mount St Elias has been made for the first time. George Bolling, Kelly Creamer, Dick Dietz, Rob Leitz and Chris Pizzo from Colorado landed by helicopter at 1500m on the S ridge, climbed twice previously in 1946 and 1948. The summit was reached in 15 days of which 4 were spent sitting out poor weather. The night of 24 June was spent on the top of the mountain; the party then split, Pizzo and Leitz descending via the Abruzzi Ridge to complete the traverse, the remainder going back down the S ridge.

*Off Belay 52* brings an article by Larry Fahlberg on the Brooks Glacier Peaks in the Mount McKinley National Park; these lie to the NE of the main massif, and are much less frequently visited than McKinley itself or the ranges to the S. This largely seems to result from the difficulty of access, which requires an approach along the Park road, a 20 mile hike including a crossing of the frigid waters of the McKinley River and mosquito infested tundra. The largest peak is Mount Silverthrone (4030m) situated at the head of the Brooks Glacier and others of note are Mount Brooks, Mount Mather, Wedge Peak and Pyramid Peaks.

*Climbing 57* is largely devoted to climbing and the politics of climbing in Alaska. The first article is entitled 'Freedom versus Regulation: the National Park Service in Alaska', and consists of 2 parts, one by Robert Gerhard, the Park Ranger, and the other by Doug Buchanan of the Alaska Alpine Club. This is a part of the controversy over land use in Alaska which we briefly mentioned last year (*AJ 85* 226). Since then many thousands of words have appeared in print in American journals and magazines on this topic, and the pages of *Mountain* have also given considerable space to the problem. The up-to-date situation is not known, but there is no evidence that the protests are having any real effect.

A summary of mountaineering in 1979 in the Mount McKinley area appears in *Off Belay 49* 29, prepared by Gerhard. The year saw 149 expeditions involving 680 climbers tackling the mountains in the Park, of whom 398 were successful. Of these about  $\frac{1}{3}$  were foreign expeditions including 18 Japanese and 8 German parties. Trash left by mountaineers still decorates the popular routes on Mount McKinley—Gerhard feels that all climbers should make a commitment to bring down all equipment, eg fixed ropes and spare food wherever possible.

## CANADA

The 1980 Canadian Alpine Journal (63 3) has an interesting article by Glen Boles concerning the exploits of Don Forest who has climbed all the 51 peaks in the Canadian Rockies which exceed 11000ft (3350m). The mountains are spread over an extremely wide area, from Mount Harrison in the Kootenays to Mount Whitehorn NW of Mount Robson, a distance of 275 miles; many have difficult and extremely tedious approaches. So this equivalent of Scottish 'Munro bagging' requires considerable dedication. The task was commenced in 1963 and finished in August 1979 at the top of Lunette Peak—Don Forest is the first person to have achieved the feat of climbing all 51 peaks.

Recent issues of *Off Belay* have contained a history by William Putnam of climbing in the Canadian Rockies.

## AMERICA

*Mountain 72* 16 gives a review of the current state of very hard climbing, ie at the 5.12 level, in the Yosemite region. Grand Illusion, Sugar Loaf, has not had a second free ascent and is thought to far exceed any other climb in difficulty. It is supposed to be very much harder than the Phoenix which is rated 5.12d or 5.13a which therefore makes it of an exceptional order of difficulty. Fingers at Sugarloaf (5.12 +) by Hudon and Jones has repelled many attempts at a second ascent. The third ascent of the Phoenix by Bill Price was outstanding for its style, with no falls, lowering off or aid of any sort. Jones and Hudon made the first climb of Razor's Edge, a longstanding problem with one yo-yo, rating it 5.12c. In less than a week Jim Collins and Tony Yaniro managed to climb nearly all the 5.12 routes in the Valley, with few or no falls. The feeling seems to be that the state of 5.12 is now as 5.11 was a few years ago, as predicted by Hudon and Jones in *Mountain 66/67*. On the big walls, speed ascents of El Capitan came into popularity again. Yablonski and Leshner did the Shield in 48hr; this was accomplished by doing a 5.10 A1 climb (Freeblast) in the dark. Pacific Ocean Wall has had ascents in 5, 4½ and 4 days.

At Joshua Tree, free solo ascents have been the trend, with Yablonski and Bachar being the prime movers; the former's Leave it to Beaver was perhaps the most impressive. However, it seems that many of the harder routes (5.11 and upwards) are repeatedly top roped before they

are free soloed, and disputes are common about priorities on new routes. At Tahquitz Rock, Gibb Lewis and Charles Coles have added new 5.10 and 5.11 routes.

In Colorado, Alex Sharp and Dan Hare have been prominent in climbing new lines at both Eldorado Canyon and Boulder Canyon. Well over 100 new free climbs in the 5.10 to 5.11 grades have been done in the Boulder area. *Mountain 74* 15 and 76 17 give further details. In the Garden of the Gods, several new 'soft rock' sandstone climbs have been done and a new guidebook (called *Soft Touch*) has been produced. Up-gradings of climbs have sometimes to be made because key holds break off. Peter Gallagher and Peter Williams have put up some new routes in the South Platte Wilderness, which they later freed. In the Black Canyon of the Gunnison River, Earl Wiggins made an outstanding solo climb, after returning from a 6 week trip to Yugoslavia, of the Scenic Cruise (IV 5.10 +) on the North Chasm View Wall. He took only 1½ hr on a climb which normally takes 10-12 hr on roped ascents. The climb is 600m long with the crux at mid-height, and is one of the most audacious solo climbs yet done in the USA. Ed Webster and Bryan Becker started off on a second attempt on Hallucinogen Wall (VI 5.11 A5), probably the hardest climb in Colorado. However, they found that Bruce Lella and Ken Trout were already 6 pitches above them; this pair were surprised in their turn to discover the cache of gear left by Webster and Becker on their first attempt. In due course the 2 parties combined; the climb became something of an epic and after 8 days Trout abseiled off and returned to college. Two days later, the others had to retreat to get more food and on their return were joined by Jim Newberry. The climb continued in atrocious weather, including a 1½ day snow storm, and had by this time attracted considerable publicity. It was finally completed after 18 days (from 29 April to 15 May).

In Utah in remote Taylor Canyon, Ed Webster and Steve Hong made the first free ascent of Moses, a 200m Wingate sandstone spire in one day. It is probably the longest and hardest free climb on any of the sandstone spires in the SW. 'Friends' were used for protection in the parallel sided cracks.

*Mountain 73* 20 contains a brief article by Harvey Arnold on the Shawangunks, which includes a list of 32 recommended climbs graded from 5.2 to 5.13. *Climbing* has a series of 3 articles entitled 'Fifty Years of Granite State Climbing', by Michael Macklin, which gives details of the history and current state of climbing in New Hampshire.

We would like to thank H.C. Adams Carter for kindly providing material for these notes.

The following guidebooks are noted:

**A Climbing and Hiking Guide to the Wind River Mountains** Joe Kelsey (Sierra Book Club, 530 Bush St, San Francisco CA 94108, pp400, illustrations, maps and diagrams, npq).  
**Climbers' Guide to the Olympic Mountains** (Olympic Mountain Rescue, 1979, The Mountaineers, 719 Pike St, Seattle, WA 980101, pp237, \$7.95 paper back) A revised second edition.

**Climbers' Guide to the Kankakee River State Park** Matt and Andrew Nicodemus (M and A Nicodemus, 1030 Maple Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202, 1979, pp26, 8 illustrations and 2 maps, npq).

## SOUTH AMERICA

The following review of South American climbing has been kindly provided by Evelio Echevarría.

The same trends that characterized the 1979 Andean year—fewer expeditions undertaking somewhat less ambitious climbs and a large number of repeat ascents—have also been the characteristic for 1980. Perhaps it should also be added that mountain trekking in the Andes has been sharply on the increase.

### VENEZUELA

To commemorate the 44th anniversary of the first ascent of Pico Bolívar, highest mountain in the country, José Betancourt made on 4 April 1980 the first solo climb of the N. face. The same Betancourt, with Gustavo Gómez, made on 19 Febr, 1980 the first ascent of the S. face of an unnamed mountain ca. 4450m high belonging to the central district of the Sierra de la Culata (north of Mérida city) and some 6 km from the town of Mucuchíes. The attractive name of "Pico Mistajá" was assigned to the mountain, Mistajá being a legendary Indian heroine. It has now become apparent that some of the steep, albeit short, rock walls in the Culata peaks are offering local climbers a new playground.