

Book Reviews 1984

Compiled by Geoffrey Templeman

Mountains of the Middle Kingdom

Galen Rowell

Sierra Club Books, San Francisco 1983, pp 191, 80 colour 48 b & w photographs. Large format 30 × 25cms. USA \$40.00.

This book is important, lavishly and beautifully illustrated — and understandably expensive.

The work is important because it is the first to be published since the Revolution which attempts to bring us up to date with mountains and mountaineering in the great ranges of China, including of course the northern slopes of the Himalaya and Karakoram. Galen Rowell inevitably leaves this task incomplete because, first of all, only eight mountain areas have been opened to travel and, second, because he only deals with five of these areas, having visited four of them. Even so, as a first offering it is most welcome.

The riveting thing about the book is the photography, greatly enhanced by the large format. Galen Rowell must surely be rated as one of the most talented contemporary mountain photographers. His 'Rainbow Over the Potala Palace' is superb. In addition to the author's fine colour pictures there is a well chosen collection of historical black-and-whites. So, as a picture book on China very high marks must be given but there my total enchantment ends.

The written content is variable and does not cover all the mountain areas now open to access. Rowell is predictably at his best when he writes from personal experience. He was the first western mountaineer to ascend Muztagh Ata in the Pamirs when he climbed, or rather skied, 1400m on the final climb — a formidable *tour de force*. However, the neighbouring, higher and more important Kongur gets short shrift. Again, he writes well of his second ascent of remote and mysterious Amne Machin but his acquaintance with Everest, Minya Konka and Bogda in the Tien Shan is scant and this is apparent.

As a prelude to his description of each mountain area, a succinct mountaineering history is included and this is useful reference material. Personal comments are also given on the socio-political situation in the mountain provinces today. Another interesting aspect is the information, much of it obtained at first hand, on Chinese mountaineering achievements, including the 1960 ascent of Everest from the north which was so controversial at the time but is now given full credence.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to fly extensively over China's vast western provinces will agree with Rowell (echoed by Charles Clarke writing of Bonington's 1982 Everest expedition) that anyone who fears that there is nothing new left to climb in the world today need only fly over S Tibet. As Rowell puts it: 'Snowy peaks in all directions, a vision off the scale of my experience.'

This impressive book will surely whet the appetite of any mountaineer to climb

in China. The horrific costs the Chinese impose will probably make him think again!

Mike Banks

Chamonix, une vallée, des hommes

Published by the Bibliothèque Municipale de Chamonix and assembled by Edimontagne, St Gervais, pp 302, map and photos.

This magnificent work has been produced in a limited edition of 125 copies and is not for the moment on public sale. It is to be hoped that it soon will be. A copy has been presented to the AC Library.

With a preface from our old friend Roger Frison Roche the book comes from many different authors, each an expert in a particular subject. It is profusely illustrated with excellent photographs (colour & monochrome), diagrams and a map. Every section concludes with a bibliography. There is a general index.

The reflection that comes to a reader after his first study of the text is that it has been composed by eleven writers, who really know the Valley, have lived in it and are at home. Many of them are familiar with the now disappearing patois (differing widely from Vallorcine at the upper end to Les Houches and Servoz at the lower entry to the Valley). These writers are not just learned professors of geology, or what have you, from the distant academic lowlands, they are *of* the Valley. Some are *citoyens* of one of the *communes* by birth. Others, born elsewhere, and therefore *Monchus* in patois, are certainly *citoyens adoptifs*, a distinction rarely accorded.

The first section of the book covers a general description of the Valley, including glaciers, geology and avalanches, flora and fauna. Then, passing to *les hommes*, there is a detailed and most interesting history of life from the earliest ages, concluding with a fascinating description of the daily round in village and chalet in the 19th century. The final section is devoted to mountaineering. It includes chapters on the Guides' Company of Chamonix (founded in 1823, when Chamonix was part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, i.e. Savoy). The description in later years is perhaps inevitably and tactfully reticent about the multiplication of guiding and training organizations and their rivalries, which form such a large background to life in Chamonix. However the *École Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme* receives a brief mention. Here it was that for twenty years our Hon. Member Armand Charlet supervised the training of guides and raised standards that had sunk low.

Skiing has its fair share in the book as have facilities for other sports (winter and summer). The *Club Alpin Français* and its huts are also covered.

All in all the book is a praiseworthy effort by the Chamonix Library and by those who contributed.

Douglas Busk

Ortles-Cevedale. Parco Nazionale dello Stelvio

Gino Buscaini

C.A.I. — T.C.I. pp 461, maps, drawings and photos.

This, the 45th volume in the series 'Guida dei Monti d'Italia', well maintains the high standard of its predecessors and is at least as thorough; e.g. it gives detailed descriptions of over 1000 climbing routes (26 for Ortler alone) and over 100 ski routes. The general information, especially regarding the huts, is also comprehensive.

The area well repays a visit, but is rather remote. The average grade of difficulty is lower than that of the main Alpine chain, and this applies especially to the rock climbs. Finally, two words of warning: (i) some of the huts do not open before 15 July (later than the book says) and (ii) some of these Italian valleys (including the beautiful Val di Solda) are mainly German speaking.

W. L. Robinson

The Hills of Lakeland

W. Heaton Cooper

Frank Peters Publishing, 1984, pp 126, 16 colour & monochrome illustrations, 2 maps, £15.95

This is the third edition of W. Heaton Cooper's first book which was first published in 1938. The second edition was in 1947. One's first impression of this book is pleasing and this impression is not betrayed on closer inspection. Of course, its style of printing appears now to be somewhat old-fashioned, but this is a book more intended for the lover of the Lakes and of painting than the modern hard rock climber, yet the drawings of crags will be familiar through the Fell & Rock guide books. Its text rambles along pleasantly with many an interesting diversion, returning always to the central theme of the Lakeland and painting. Many an insight is provided to rural life in the early 20th century and to some of the history of the Lakes. The pictures are much more than illustrations; they are an integral part of the book for the text makes frequent reference to them, and an unhurried study of them will add considerably to one's enjoyment. All too quickly, one reaches the end of the book for, despite its apparent size, it is quite a short publication, but one which should bear repeated rereading.

J. M. F.

Mirrors in the Cliffs

J. Perrin, Ed.

Diadem Books, 1983, pp 688, pictures black and white and colour, some cartoons, £12.95

This is a second massive anthology of mountaineering literature constructed to the same formula as *The Games Climbers Play* produced by the same publishers in 1979, which was reviewed in *AJ* 85 248.

One can but admire the breadth of selection it exhibits, ranging widely through the literature of the sport in time, in mountain area and even in language (translated).

One function of anthologies is to direct the reader to the study of further writings of those of the selected authors who may appeal to him, while warning him off others, if this offering indeed represents the maximum of their skills. Here the main attractions are those we already know well — Young, Shipton, Tilman, Murray, Fitzgerald and so on; among the more moderns where are their successors? Except perhaps for Patey none is revealed.

There is the customary plethora of four letter words. Two at least of the extracts are in quite appalling bad taste, while some are too short to make an impact of any sort.

A great deal of modern mountaineering literature seems to be characterized by gropings after philosophical meanings and backgrounds, leading to the sort of

stodge which made whole issues of the American *Mountain Gazette* (now defunct) more or less unintelligible. Maybe such meanderings are of literary and even of human importance, but they certainly make dull reading and at the end leave us unenlightened.

It is not customary, and perhaps may be considered arrogant, for an anthologist to select a piece of his own writing for inclusion.

The pictures, again a wide ranging selection, are very good. The cartoons do not impress me, though the *AJ* reviewer of the earlier work found them 'topical and amusing'.

At rather less than 2p per page the book is good value for money in these inflated days and is recommended as a good cross-section for the very short bookshelf. The longer shelf will already have sufficient of the originals to eliminate the need for anthologies.

If, as in the popular desert-island games, one had to select only one book, or a severely limited number, would it be better to have the classical greats or some anthologies such as this one? It is a subject worthy of more prolonged study. I cannot give the accolade which the *AJ* reviewer accorded to *The Games Climbers Play* — 'an important contribution to mountaineering'. This one, worthy as it is, certainly cannot be said to scale those heights.

Edward Pyatt

Total Alpinism

René Desmaison

Granada, 1982, pp 202, illustrations, £12.50

Mountaineering has many faces ranging from the gentle to the exceptionally savage. This book deals with the outer limits of the savage end — extreme Alpine routes in winter. This is not sport or adventure, but war pure and simple, and is horrible.

You have to read the book to find out what goes on out at the front, but few, if any, will be inspired by it to go and find out for themselves.

The translation from the original French is wholly admirable.

Edward Pyatt

The Summits of Snowdonia — A guide to the 600-metre mountains of Snowdonia.

Terry Marsh

Robert Hale, 1984, pp 192, maps and drawings, npq

This is a 'tickers' guide to all those summits over 600m in Snowdonia which, in this case, is taken to include all the Berwyn range and such comparatively little-known hills as the Tarrens and those above Aberdovey. The maps are purely diagrammatic and the ascent descriptions short, so that the book is, as the author says, a check list which will encourage people to get out and see for themselves. I have only two criticisms. A general one — the arrangement is alphabetical and therefore all the Foel Goch's, for instance, are together, whether they are at Ogwen, near Moel Eilio, in the Arenigs or at Hirnant, which leads to discontinuity. And a particular one — any walker who has stood on the summit of the Ogwen Foel Goch and looked straight down the Esgair ridge will, I am sure, not treat it with great care, as suggested, but avoid it like the plague!

G. W. T.

The Himalaya. Aspects of Change

Ed. J. S. Lall

Oxford University Press, India, 1981, pp xx + 482, maps, diagrams and illustrations, £17.50

A rather late notice for an important book on the Himalaya. It is a study for the general reader of the changes that are taking place there and is in three sections — Nature, Man and Interrelationships. To quote from the 'blurb', these aspects are covered by:

- 1) Chapters devoted to specific studies of the climate, bird life, fauna, flora, geology, glaciology, earthquakes, soils and water resources of the area;
- 2) a separate section on the political and cultural changes taking place in the hill areas of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Ladakh with developments in art and architecture shown to be closely related to economic and social changes;
- 3) the last few chapters present authoritative assessments of the ecological dangers inherent in the changes caused by tourism, industrial and economic development. In such a wide-ranging book, treatment of individual subjects is of necessity brief and to treat 'Mountaineering in the Himalaya' in 20 pages raises a question as to whether it was really worth including. A chronological list of major ascents and a brief bibliography would probably have been of more use. However, the value of the book is in giving a composite picture of the Himalaya as they are today, and this it does very well.

Pukajirka '81

Piero Bonicelli

Cedis, 1983, pp 140, maps and photos, npq

The expedition book, in Italian, of the attempt to climb Pukajirka Central in the Peruvian Andes in 1981. The party, from Valle di Scalve, lost three of its members high on the mountain.

Everest '82*Moscow, 1984, pp 368, maps, diagrams and photos, most in colour, npq*

Our Honorary Member, Eugene Gippenreiter, has presented the Club with the official account of the Russian expedition which ascended the SW face of Everest in 1982. It is a lavish production which, unfortunately, without a knowledge of the Russian language it is impossible to begin to read. It is obvious from the earlier illustrations, however, that a history of the mountain is included, and the diagrams show clearly the lines of the major routes on the mountain. The centre section of the book comprises some 150 pages of colour photos which form a good record of a very successful expedition. I wish I could read the rest!

L'Arrampicata Sportiva

Furio and Luca Pennisi

Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1984, pp 176, photos and diagrams, softback, L.18,000

A book, in Italian, of modern athletic preparation for rock-climbing with programmes of exercises.

La Montagne. Bibliographie Belge

Bernard Leclercq

Privately published, 1983, pp 27 single-sided typescript, npq

An alphabetical (by author) listing of publications relating to mountains by Belgian authors and also concerning climbing in Belgium.

Lyngsalpene

Ben Johnson and Ove Skjerren

Universitetsforlaget, 1984, pp 112, many colour photos, maps, large format, Kr. 245.000

A survey, in Norwegian, of the Lyngen Peninsula, generously illustrated with colour photos. Following a general geographical and historical introduction, the book deals with the various mountain groups on the peninsula, from the early climbs of Slingsby, Hastings and Elizabeth Main up to present-day ascents. A welcome addition to the small library of books on the Norwegian mountains.

North Wales Limestone — 1983

Andy Pollitt

Climbers' Club, 1984, pp 32, £1.45

The new climbs on Craig Pen Trwyn in 1983, plus a few additions on other limestone crags.

Les Alpes*pp 294, many maps and diagrams, large format paperback*

The 25th International Geographical Congress, held in Paris in August 1984 and attended by our member Sir George Bishop, had as its theme 'The Alps', and this book was prepared as a contribution to the Congress. It sums up the current problems and possible future developments of the Alpine regions in numerous papers, mostly in French, but with a short summary in English for each chapter.

Randonnées Pédestres dans le Luberon

Pierre Griffon

Édisud, 1984, pp 128, maps, diagrams and photos, paperback, F.50.00

A guide to 35 walks in the Grand and Petit Luberon.

Gites et Refuges en France

Annick and Serge Mouraret

Éditions Créer, 1983, pp 360, maps, paperback, npq

Detailed list of every hut available for walkers, climbers and skiers in each area of France, listing, in addition to hut details, useful addresses in the area.

Rock-Climbing in France

Jean-Pierre Bouvier. Translated by Claudie Dunn

Diadem, 1984, pp 72, maps, paperback, £4.95

A brief guide to the location and description of 279 crags all over France, originally published in 1982. Very much an interim publication, it will be indispensable to anyone seeking diversion on their way to the Alps, or looking for a change from British outcrops.

Piste Again. A Guide to Survival Skiing

Barry Walters

Queen Anne Press, 1984, pp 96, drawings, £3.95

Described as a 'definitive handbook for hesitant skiers', the title will tell you what to expect. A humorous read, with excellent illustrations.

Wordsworth's Walking Tour of 1790

Donald E. Hayden

University of Tulsa, 1983, pp 130, maps and photos, paperback, £4.75

Most people, linking Wordsworth principally with the Lake District, may be surprised at this European walking tour, but in fact he spent a lot of time in Europe in the 1790's. This particular tour started at Calais, travelled via Lyons and Grenoble to Switzerland, zig-zagged all over that country and returned via Cologne. Quite a trip. The author and his wife followed the route in 1980 and give their own comments in addition to extracts from journals.

The Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District

W. A. Poucher

Constable, 1984, pp 200, colour photographs, £12.50

The sixth in the present series of colour plate books on the British hill districts and the Alps, this volume extends from Dovedale to Hadrian's Wall. Comprised of mostly excellent photographs, many of these now show their age, whether from the climbing gear displayed, the youthfulness of Joe Brown, or the existence of railway lines in Monsal Dale, but this can have no effect on the landscape portrayed.

Mountain of the Gods

Ian Cameron

Century, 1984, pp 248, maps and illustrations, many in colour, £12.95

This study and history of the Himalaya and the mountains of the Central Area is by the author of 'To the Farthest Ends of the Earth', the history of the Royal Geographical Society, and has been published in association with the RGS. Ian Cameron has therefore had access to the Society's records and has used a fascinating selection of paintings and historical photographs from these to illustrate his book. The story of the exploration of the Himalaya has been set out in a number of recent books, but this is an excellent introduction for the general reader. After brief chapters on geology and the 'Coming of Man', the chapters follow the exploits of Pathfinders, Explorers, Climbers and, finally, Scientists. An interesting appendix details the principal ethnic divisions of the people of the mountains.

Cornwall. West Penwith

Pete O'Sullivan

Climbers' Club, 1984, pp 240, maps, photos and photo-diagrams, £6.95

The latest Cornwall climbing guide returns to covering the whole of the tip of the county in one guide, — Bosigran and Chair Ladder in one. This makes sense, as the total area involved is so small that it is easy to travel from north coast to south as the weather or whim dictate. A well-produced guide, up to the Climbers' Club's recent good standards.

Escalades à Sugiton, Saint-Cyr

Alexis Lucchesi

Édisud, 1984, pp 160, maps and topo-diagrams, F52.00

The latest in the series of climbing guides to the Calanques, this volume maintains the high standard of the rest of the series, with incredibly detailed diagrams. Alexis Lucchesi is listed as being the author, or part-author, of twenty climbing guides to southern France, fourteen of which are in print in Édisud's current catalogue, which must be some sort of a record!

The Central Highlands

Peter Hodgkiss

SMC, 1984, pp xiv + 210, maps, diagrams and photos, £9.95

This 4th edition of the SMC's district guidebook to the Central Highlands has been almost completely revamped by the author — the text is new, including revised information on access, afforestation, etc, as are the clearly drawn maps and the many black and white illustrations, mostly by the author. The reproduction of the photos is not good on the whole but, apart from this, it is a worthy successor to previous volumes for what must be the most popular area for climbers in Scotland.

Zermatt Area including Saas Fee

Robin G. Collomb

West Col, 1984, pp 144, maps and photos, npq

This 'visitors guide to excursions and scrambles' replaces the Zermatt and District book brought out by the same author previously. Whilst not intending to be a climbing guide, it gives an excellent introduction to the area and details a number of interesting walks.

High Level Route

Eric Roberts

West Col, 1984, pp 148, maps, photos and diagrams, £7.50

This second edition of the guide originally published over ten years ago has been published in-house by West Col, the author having died on Annapurna in 1979, and Donald Mill, his revision editor, in Scotland two years later. Following general information, it gives full details on valley bases and huts, a description of the classic Chamonix-Zermatt-Saas Fee high level route with alternatives and routes up ski peaks. A short summer route supplement completes an excellent guide.

Glacier Hazards

Lance Tufnell

Longman, 1984, pp 10 + 98, maps, photos and diagrams, paperback, £5.95

One in a series of titles 'Topics in Applied Geography', this book is concerned with the effect on human communities of the advance and retreat of glaciers. After dealing with the nature of glacier fluctuation world-wide throughout history, the final chapters are a detailed study of these fluctuations and the hazards they cause in the Valais region.

Going Higher. The Story of Man and Altitude

Charles S. Houston

Houston, 1983, pp xiv + 274, diagrams and photos, some in colour, paperback, npq

Charles Houston started to write this revised edition of 'Going High' (1981) almost before the print was dry on the page of the original edition. He felt that so much had happened since he was writing in 1980 that a complete re-write was necessary and about half of the present book is new. Dr. Houston gives a detailed history of man's interest in air and space from the earliest times and, following chapters on the circulation of the blood and haemoglobin, reaches the core of his book in two long chapters on altitude illness and acclimatization. As is well known, Dr. Houston writes from practical experience of high altitude and his book must be essential reading for all those planning to 'go high'. It is a great credit to him, both as author and publisher.

Mont Blanc. Les grandes traces

L. Bersezio & P. Tirone

Glénat, 1984, pp 208, maps, numerous photos, half in colour, npq

The French edition of an Italian book originally published in 1982, giving 69 ski-mountaineering routes in the Mont Blanc area, plus the 9-day 'Raid du Mont Blanc'. Described and illustrated in the format of the '100 Best . . .' series.

Surviving Denali

Jonathan Waterman

American Alpine Club, 1983, pp 192, photos and diagrams, paperback, \$12.50

This new AAC book is a study of accidents on Mount McKinley from 1910 to 1982. The author, who has made a number of ascents of the mountain and has himself suffered from pulmonary oedema and frostbite, is now co-ordinating rescues as a mountaineering ranger with the Denali National Park and Preserve. He is thus well qualified to both analyse the accidents that have occurred in the past 70 years and to give advice on preparing for an expedition to the Alaska Range. The chapters relate to the various causes of accidents, with detailed tables for each type of accident over the past ten years or so. The photographs bear witness to the rather horrific fact that there are still 23 bodies on the mountain.

Trails of the Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash of Peru.

Jim Bartle

1981, pp 160, colour photos and maps, npq

This privately published venture gives a complete guide to the trails of these two Peruvian mountain areas, with excellent colour photos and a separate map covering the region. Each group of trails has its own detailed sketch map and itinerary, and many useful hints on the areas are included.

Everest. The Ultimate Challenge.

Al Burgess and Jim Palmer

Hodder and Stoughton, 1983, pp 10 + 214, colour photos and diagram, £12.95

This is the 'official' book of the 1982 Canadian Mount Everest Expedition, described in the blurb as the 'world-record-breaking assault on Mt. Everest'.

Written in the first person by Al Burgess, presumably with Jim Palmer keeping a fatherly journalistic eye on the prose, it is a more-or-less straightforward expedition account, copiously illustrated, of the familiar approach march, ice-fall problems, heavy breathing on the Lhotse face, and so on. It is well written, however, and what makes it fascinating for the reader is that, for an official account, the author is very critical of much of the organization and many of the participants. The expedition had more than its fair share of tragedy and dispute, the latter starting some years before they left Canada, and this is all faithfully recorded. The whole large, expensive ('world-record-breaking' can surely only refer to cost?) and cumbersome party finally dwindled to a handful of climbers magnificently supported by their Sherpas, and the fact that six people finally stood on the summit reflects great credit on that handful. The many photos in the book were obviously excellent, but reproduction has left most with a blue/red bias which renders them rather monotonous overall.

i) Bibliography of Colorado Mountain Ascents, 1863-1976

ii) Bibliography of Colorado Rock Climbs and Ice Climbs, 1863-1976

Joseph Kramarsic

Privately published, i) 1979, pp 10 + 258, ii) 1983, pp 10 + 98, npq

A vast amount of research has obviously gone into these two volumes which, between them, must list every item of mountaineering value that has appeared in magazines and journals since 1863. The listing is alphabetical under mountain name or climbing area.

A Cambrian Way

Richard Sale

Constable, 1984, pp 270, maps, photos, £6.95

Another in the Constable series of long-distance footpath guides. A Cambrian Way, you will notice, not *The*, as the proposed official route was dropped after considerable opposition. As a guide, the book is strong on myth and legend but sometimes less than descriptive on the type of terrain encountered. The statement, 'From Glyder Fach the Bristly Ridge leads down to Bwlch Tryfan' gives little indication to the unwary walker of what he will meet. Maybe detailed description is not a good thing, but surely the type of walker who can happily descend Bristly Ridge will not be the one who will want to buy this guide?

Ben Nevis Observatory 1883-1904

The Royal Meteorological Society, 1983, pp 28, photos, npq

Reprint of two articles originally published in *Weather* in 1954 giving the history of the observatory, to mark the centenary of its opening, plus a short account of the installation of a commemorative plaque in 1969.

Give Me the Hills. The Verse of Syd Scroggie

Winter, 1981, pp 72, drawings, npq

Collections of Scottish verse are very popular these days and this selection of Syd Scroggie's poems, arranged by David Phillips with drawings by Colin Gibson, has some most attractive verses amongst it.

A noteworthy French collection

This notice covers an impressive series of books, produced under the general direction of our member, Gaston Rébuffat, and published in Paris by Denoël. Some of these, already acquired, have been reviewed elsewhere in this Journal; the receipt of several others, recently donated, is gratefully acknowledged.

The magic number of subjects in each volume is usually 100 — ‘Belles courses’ in high mountains, ‘Belles courses et randonnées’ in lesser mountains and ‘Belles descentes et randonnées’ for skiing areas. Each of the chosen items is usually covered in a double-page spread with photographs, topos etc, making the volumes ideal for in-between-time planning of future activities. The standard of production is uniformly high.

The present extent of the series is as follows:

- Le massif du Mont Blanc* — G. Rébuffat (rev A7 81)
- Le massif des Ecrins* — G. Rébuffat (rev A7 89)
- Le massif de la Vanoise* — C. Maly (newly received)
- Les Pyrénées* — P. de Bellefon (newly received)
- Grottes et Canyons* — P. Minvielle
- Les Alpes du Soleil* — J.-M. Morisset (newly received)
- Les Alpes Valaisannes* — M. Vaucher
- Calanques, Sainte Baume, Sainte Victoire* — G. Rébuffat (rev A7 87)
- Les Prealpes du Sud* — P. Cordier (rev A7 88)
- Le Grand Paradis* — C. G. Grassi (rev A7 89)
- L'Oberland Bernois* — H. Grossen (rev A7 89)
- Les Alpes du Nord a Skis* — A Baud (newly received)
- Les Prealpes du Nord* — C. Jager & J. Martin (newly received)
- Les Dolomites Orientales* — G. Buscaini
- Le Haut Dauphiné a Skis* — A. Bertrand (newly received)

Future volumes promised are:

- Les Andes du Pérou* — Y. Astier
- Le Massif Central* — A. & S. Mouraret
- Engadine-Bergell* — G. Miotti & A. Gogna

One can only envy the French for having such a wide range of rocks and mountains, here so adequately and beautifully described, and to vow to explore them for oneself at the earliest opportunity.

No prices are quoted on the books themselves; presumably the cost is notched up periodically in line with inflation. The cost in this country depends also on the importer's surcharge; as a guide, I paid £13.60 for the Calanques volume some three years ago.

Edward Pyatt

The Illustrated Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes

Ed. Peter Bicknell

Webb and Bower, 1984, pp 208, illustrations, many in colour, £9.95

What an entirely delightful publication this is! And how extraordinary that such a book should have escaped publication before. As its forerunners we have had the catalogue of that delightfully imaginative exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge with the arresting title of ‘Beauty, Horror and Immensity’. And then

the catalogues of the two equally imaginative exhibitions at the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere in 1982 and 1983. (All three in the AC Library.)

Wordsworth's 'Guide to the Lakes' is, of course, much more than an ordinary guide book; it is great prose literature. It is really a descriptive essay on the scenery and life in the country he loved so much that he lived for almost 80 years of his life in it. The only other Guide to the Lakes at all comparable with it is that of Harriet Martineau. But here it is, at last, the real *Illustrated Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*; and what a good thing this is, edited, and with illustrations chosen by Peter Bicknell. What more could you ask for? The text is that of the fifth and enlarged edition which contains Dorothy's two contributions. And, for good measure, we are given, in an appendix, Wordsworth's sonnet and two letters about the Kendal and Windermere railway.

It was the combination of the romantic artists and poets which popularised the English Lake District. It is therefore, entirely fitting that, at long last, the contributions of a romantic poet and the artists contemporary with him should now be brought together in this very pleasant form.

What a lovely book this is with its classic text, and all those beautiful illustrations so carefully selected by the editor, our distinguished member. How much he must have enjoyed putting this book together.

Personally, I particularly like the Gainsborough drawing on page 13 of a young man looking in his Claude glass because this seems to epitomise for me the whole atmosphere of this delightful book. And I like too the Harden drawings. But I do wish that the Abbott Hall museum would occasionally let us see them there. After all they are the quintessence of the Lake District as it was at the most romantic period of its popularity.

This must indeed be one of the nicest books to do with that mountaineer's happy hunting ground, the English Lake District. A book which is really very nicely produced and extremely modestly priced.

Charles Warren

Mountain Painter An Autobiography

W. Heaton Cooper

Frank Peters Publishing, Kendal, Cumbria, 1984, pp xvi + 148, illustrations, £18.95

Heaton Cooper, now in his eighties and still actively engaged in portraying the beauties of his native region, has recently been justifiably described as 'the Lake District's leading artist'. This book, beautifully produced by Frank Peters Publishing of Kendal and lavishly enriched with 129 illustrations, three quarters of which are in colour, is a splendid presentation of his life's work. The bulk of the illustrations are his own views of the Lake District, supplemented by a few of the Alps, Norway, the Andes, Greece, Italy, France, Scotland and Wales, as well as works by other members of his family — his father Alfred, his wife Ophelia and his son Julian — and photographs of biographical interest. Twenty of his pictures are reproduced as full page colour plates (30cm × 23cm), each with an explanatory note on the time and circumstances of the painting, the nature and geology of the scene, and illuminating descriptions of the working methods employed.

Heaton Cooper's home has been in the Lake District — Coniston, Ambleside and Grasmere — for the whole of his life. This makes his work significantly different from that of his predecessors. Francis Towne, for instance, only visited the Lakes once in 1786 and Constable in 1806. Of all the artists who have painted in the Lake District, Cooper's first favourite is Towne whose delicate watercolour drawings present the anatomy of the mountains with sensitive ink line and transparent washes. Cooper's drawings show a similar appreciation of mountain form; but whereas Towne remained in the valleys, Cooper has wandered all over the fells and climbed on most of the rock faces. In the 1920s and 1930s he climbed in the Lake District with almost all the distinguished rock-climbers of the period. His skill as a draughtsman and his intimate knowledge of the crags made him the ideal person to illustrate the Guides of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. Climbing guide diagrams are usually drawn from photographs by draughtsmen who cannot climb or climbers who cannot draw. Cooper's are unique in the clarity with which they show the features of the climbs and in being in themselves works of art.

This volume, with its wealth of attractive pictures, is not just another coffee-table book, but is the story of an artist's life. In the words of the dust jacket blurb, it is written 'as a straightforward narrative, but it suggests a great deal more than appears on the surface, revealing the shadows in his life as well as the light, the light and hope predominating'. The author admits that he finds 'the medium of words a very difficult one' and this book confirms clearly that he is not as happy with words as he is with brush and pencil. His life, he says, has mostly been spent doing what he enjoys most — drawing mountains. His devotion to the Lake District and his joy in drawing mountains are triumphantly demonstrated by his book.

Peter Bicknell

Journey to the Lake District from Cambridge 1779

A Diary written by William Wilberforce

Oriel Press, Stocksfield etc., 1983, pp 96, illustrations & map, £4.85 paperback

On 10 July 1779 William Wilberforce, an undergraduate at St. John's College, set out from Cambridge, through 'country miserably bad, and dead flat', to join some friends at Keswick, set in what he was later to describe as 'the very *deliciae* of mountain scenery'. He recorded his extensive holiday, 24 days of which were spent in the Lake District, in a diary. This, preserved in manuscript by his descendants, edited by his great-great-grandson, C. E. Wrangham (who sadly died before the book had been completed), was published in 1983 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of Wilberforce and of the abolition of slavery in the British Commonwealth.

The Diary has no literary pretensions, but is written with the enthusiasm of an intelligent and observant young man, already, after two previous visits, committed to a lifelong devotion to the mountains of the Lake District. It now takes its place as one of the earliest of the innumerable published Lake District Tours. At the age of twenty Wilberforce had assimilated the conventions and the idiom of the 'Travellers in search of the Picturesque'. He carried West's *Guide to the Lakes*, less than a year old but to become for fifty years the *vade mecum* of the

'Lakers'; he sought out West's 'stations', from which he turned his back on the prospect and viewed it in his Landscape Glass as a little picture in a frame suffused with the mellow glow of Claude Lorrain; and he frequently quoted from Thomas Gray's *Journal*. At Lowdore for instance he found that the sublimity of the scene transcended the art of Salvator, but Gray's and West's accounts rendered any further description unnecessary, and indeed the former was the best thing of the kind he had ever read. He also took a conventional, though lively, interest in local characters and customs, activities and phenomena. However, he departed from convention in the zest and energy with which he explored the region. He penetrated the little visited western valleys. In Ennerdale he saw the Pillar Rock; and at Wasdale Head he took on John (or Thomas) Braithwaite to guide him over Styhead, from which he saw Great Gable 'looking dreadful as it stands bristling up in spiked columns'; so he was probably the first tourist to notice the Napes Needle. He also crossed the wild passes of Honister, Hardknot and Wrynose; ascended Skiddaw at the second attempt; and wandered unaccompanied up Loughrigg and other lesser fells. He was not deterred by the weather, and more than once returned soaked to the skin.

He carried a map of some sort which occasionally led him astray. In the 1770s maps do not seem to have been part of the normal equipment of the tourists who were conducted by local guides; but Wilberforce only engaged them for the more hazardous expeditions — Braithwaite of Wasdale for Styhead and Hutton of Keswick for Honister and Skiddaw.

The book is well illustrated with forty black and white plates, about half of which are engravings of Lake District views from books of about 1830, showing things as they were half a century or so after the diary was written; unfortunately they are lamentably reproduced. It also includes the map from West's *Guide*; but as this did not appear before the third edition in 1784 it cannot be the map that led Wilberforce astray.

This book is a notable addition to the literature of the 'Discovery of the Lake District'.

Peter Bicknell

William Green of Ambleside A Lake District Artist (1760-1823)

M. E. Burkett and J. D. G. Sloss

Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, 1984, pp 100, illustrations, npq

William Green, a Manchester surveyor, settled in Ambleside in 1800 and devoted the remaining 23 years of his life to recording the Lake District in an enormous number of drawings, paintings and prints. In 1819 he published his accumulated knowledge of the district in two volumes of *The Tourists' New Guide containing a Description of the Lakes*, which covered the ground with a thoroughness which had not been seen in any previous book. His drawings and prints have left us a wonderfully complete and accurate record of the scenery and the buildings of the Lake District in the period between its 'discovery' by the Travellers in search of the Picturesque and the advent of the Tourists, brought there by the railway.

The publication of this book, the first full scale work on William Green, coincided with the first full scale exhibition of his work at Abbot Hall, Kendal, in

April-June 1984, which was subsequently to go to Middlesbrough, Keighley and Dove Cottage, Grasmere. The nine coloured and 39 black and white illustrations in the book give a good idea of the scope of William Green's work. The interest of the text has been considerably increased by the authors' reference to the artist's unpublished diaries which were recently given to Abbot Hall by his great-great-grandson.

Peter Bicknell

Ascent

Ed. Steve Roper and Allen Steck

Sierra Club/Diadem, 1984, pp xii + 178, photos and drawings, £16.95

This is the third issue of *Ascent* that has been readily available in Britain, the first as a hardback publication, and it follows generally the style of the two previous issues, although there would appear to be a greater proportion of fiction this year. The photographic sections are, as usual, excellent. The drawings, also as usual, leave this reviewer cold, but then that is a matter of personal taste. The articles are very varied in content and, as the editors give as one of their aims the elimination of tedious 'for the record' climbing accounts, they have certainly succeeded. I particularly liked David Roberts' 'The Public Climber: A Reactionary Ruminant', and Rick Slone's portrait of Mrs. Robertson, but have my doubts as to whether so much fiction is a good idea in a general interest book at this price. Whilst fulfilling the aim of portraying a wide spectrum of the climbing world and being different from most other climbing publications, it will remain to be seen whether it reaches a ready market.

G. W. T.

Rock Climbing in Britain

David Jones

Willow Books, 1984, pp 192, numerous photos, mostly colour, map, large format, £20

David Jones's new book is an excellent celebration of the sport of rock-climbing in Britain today. The main section comprises 100 full-page colour photographs of outstanding climbs, the greater part being high grade modern climbs and most of the pictures excellent in quality. But it is more than just a picture book. A potted history is included which is especially good for the last ten years or so, an area not covered in one volume elsewhere. Chapters on modern gear, training, climbing walls and bouldering follow before the main picture section starts. Thumbing through the pictures shows some really superb shots, including the cover ones of Mother Carey's Kitchen, but also some which appear to serve no purpose other than as an heroic portrait of the individual concerned, and this leads to my only small criticism of an otherwise excellent publication. Would it not really be better to see a picture of Rocker Route, rather than of an individual gazing into the sunset, or more of Herford's Route than just the admittedly very attractive young lady climbing it? The emphasis does seem to be on the individual rather than the climb, every climber being named even though in some cases almost too small to be seen! That minor criticism apart, it is a book that is a joy to thumb through and should find a place on many shelves.

G. W. T.

Die Schneeberge Ecuador

Marco Cruz

*Eigenverlag, Nürnberg, 1983, pp 175, 14 colour and 53 b & w ills, 30 maps and line drawings***Por los Andes del Ecuador**

Jorge Anhalzer and Ramiro Navarrete

Ediciones Camp Abierto, Quito, 1983, pp 172, 120 colour ills, 8 black & white line drawings

One of the most useful and complete guidebooks by an Andean is this one by Marco Cruz, an Ecuadorian professional guide and tourism expert. It methodically and efficiently reviews Ecuadorian heights on a peak by peak approach, complementing information with a large number of very good photos and route sketches. The text is in German, but it can be easily followed by anybody more or less familiar with the history of Ecuadorian mountaineering. There are illustrations practically on every page and the compact and light format of the book makes it an ideal guide to carry in a rucksack while in Ecuador.

The second work, by the two leading mountaineers of Ecuador, is a guidebook in a rather general sense. It also introduces the equatorial highlands peak by peak, but mostly by means of the colour plate. The variety of picture motifs attests to the wealth of the mountain scenery of that country. Climbers interested in doing pioneer work would do well in studying illustrations of some unclimbed faces of Altar, Antisana and Cayambe.

Political stability, a favourable currency exchange and an easy access has made of the Ecuadorian mountain world a desirable goal. These two books by expert local climbers have timely arrived to offer guidance.

*Evelio Echevarría***Munro's Tables**

J. C. Donaldson

Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1984, pp 10 + 134, photos and maps, npq (£6.95)

A revision of the 1981 edition, with the list of Munroists brought up to 1983, and including the 'Corbetts' and 'Donalds' and the Gaelic Guide.

El Nevado del Acay

José Luis Moreno

Club Andino del norte, 1979, many illustrations, npq

A book, in Spanish, on this mountain region in northern Argentina.

Verdon Escalades Choisies

David Belden

*Denoël, 1984, pp 192, maps, photos and photo-topos, npq***Verdon sans Frontières**

David Belden and Christine de Colombel

Denoël, 1983, pp 152, photos, many in colour, large format, npq

These two books between them will tell you all you want to know about Verdon. The first is a pocket guide listing 105 chosen routes in the gorge, of which 83 are described in considerable detail. The usual notes on access, *etc.* are included. The

'coffee table' volume takes a more general look at the gorge area as a whole, with excellent illustrations, virtually all of which are by Belden. The final section, '20 itinéraires, 20 expériences', gives individual impressions of selected routes. A separate folding photo-topo of 85 principal routes on Falaise de L'Escales is included.

Index Gazetteer of the Himalaya (ed. 4)

Hiroo Kanai

Japan Nepal Society, 1984, pp 70, paperback, npq

An alphabetical listing of place names in the Himalaya, including mountains, rivers and other features, giving grid references.

Voix de Femmes au K2

Christine de Colombel

Denoël, 1984, pp 122, many photos, large format soft-back, npq

The account, in French, of the attempt on K2 in 1982 by one French and eleven Polish women, which reached 7200m. The main account of the progress of the expedition has, coupled with it at the side of each page, a column giving the members' thoughts on the climb. The book closes with a general chapter on women in the Himalaya and gives a table of expeditions with women members up to 1983. The illustrations are generally good, with a number of colour double page spreads.

Les Grands Raids à Ski

Michel Berruex and Michel Parmentier

Éditions Agla, 1983, pp 220, numerous illustrations and maps, large format, npq

Sub-titled *De La Vanoise au Spitzberg*, this book in fact gives details of 25 ski tours in areas ranging from Nice and various parts of the Alps, to Spain, Morocco, Sicily, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Roumania, Iceland and the Scandinavian countries. Each section gives a general description of the area, with the skiing possibilities, a brief fact sheet and then short descriptions of each day's stage.

Expedition Medicine Planning Guide

Robin N. Illingworth

Blackwell, 1984, pp viii + 56, softback, £4.95

The third edition of this concise, useful guide to planning for accidents and illness on expeditions.

Scafell, Dow and Eskdale

Various authors, edited by D. Miller

F&RCC, 1984, pp 4 + 276, maps, drawings and photos, £6.95

The third in the new series of F&RCC guides, this is the first to appear. We can leave to others criticism of the niceties of gradings and route descriptions and merely say that this comprehensive guide is well produced, the reproduction of the colour photos and the two Heaton Cooper drawings being the only things to have suffered in printing. To have included all of SW Lakeland in one volume of this size is a good achievement.

Lightweight Expeditions to the Great Ranges

Ed. Charles Clarke and Audrey Salkeld

Alpine Club, 1984, pp 4 + 90, softback, £6.00 including postage

This is not the place to review an in-house publication, just to note that it is the Proceedings of a Symposium for Mountaineers and Expedition Organisers sponsored by the Club.

Mountaincraft and Leadership

Eric Langmuir

Scottish Sports Council/MLTB, 1984, pp 6 + 362, illustrations, softback, £9.80

It is now 16 years since Eric Langmuir published *Mountain Leadership*, and this new book has been considerably revised and enlarged to make it an up-to-date manual for all who go on the hills. As someone who has spent a considerable part of his life in the organisation of outdoor skills, the author can be expected to know his stuff, and it is put over here in a clear and authoritative way. The general layout and illustrations are excellent, but it is a pity about the price. Still, try and afford it — it is worth it!

Fellwalking with Wainwright*Michael Joseph, 1984, pp 224, many colour photos, drawings & diagrams, £12.95*

It is not often that one has to note a best-seller in the review pages of the *AJ* but, at the time of writing, 'Wainwright' has been in the *Sunday Times*' Top 10 non-fiction list for 17 weeks. The author describes 18 of his favourite Lake District walks but, without detracting from this in any way, pride of place must go to Derry Brabbs's photographs. After his success with *Herriott's Yorkshire*, *Wynford Vaughan Thomas's Wales*, etc., his superb pictures have evidently attracted a big following.

Grizzly Trail

Gwen Moffat

Gollancz, 1984, pp 186, £7.95

Gwen Moffat's latest thriller takes Miss Pink to the Rockies in winter to face bears and other killers.

International Mountain Rescue Handbook

Hamish MacInnes

*Constable, 1984, pp 268, numerous illustrations, £9.95***Beyond the Ranges** Five Years in the Life of Hamish MacInnes*Gollancz, 1984, pp 12 + 202, maps & photos, £9.95*

These two books are, naturally, very different in style and content. I think it is true to say that Hamish MacInnes's name has become synonymous with mountain rescue the world over, and that the first edition of the Handbook in 1972 became the rescuer's bible. This new edition has been brought up-to-date and revised by the addition of new chapters on Snow Structure, Rescue Dogs and Search Procedure, and revisions to helicopter technique. The diagrams and photos are excellent and, whilst the author claims that it is only a general outline

of the subject, if climbers assimilate all the detail contained here they will have a marvellous knowledge of mountain rescue.

Beyond the Ranges is a very entertaining read of some of Hamish's activities over a five year period, ranging from three expeditions to South America, to filming *Five Days One Summer* in the Alps and assorted outdoor frolics for the BBC.

Two books which deserve a place on anyone's shelves.

Modern Snow and Ice Techniques

Bill March

Cicerone Press, 1984, pp 96, photos and diagrams, £2.50

A completely revised edition of this popular handbook, originally published in 1973. The diagrams are clear and the text gives you all you want to know on the subject, being written by an expert in the field. What more can you ask for?

The White Death

Georges Bettembourg/Michael Brame

Reynard House, 1981, pp 314, diagrams and drawings, \$13.95. Published in this country at £10.95

A brief note on this book published in the States in 1981, which charts the author's expeditions to Broad Peak, Kangchenjunga, Kusum Kanguru, Everest and Nuptse. The blurb states that it is a lyric book in which the author 'reaches deep inside himself'. I would not disagree with that, but found it hard going at times.

Two Generations

Edmund and Peter Hillary

Hodder and Stoughton, 1984, pp 224, colour photos and maps, £10.95

After numerous individual books, the Hillarys *père et fils* have joined to tell their story, Ed taking the first half, Peter the second. The stories intertwine on many occasions, and it is interesting to see the different viewpoint of the different age group and father-son relationship. Ed's story is obviously a very much potted version of his other books, but well worth reading again. Peter's concentrates more on some of his recent expeditions, some of which have had tragic consequences. The great tragedy in the book, however, is the loss of Ed's wife Louise and daughter Belinda in a helicopter crash in Nepal, which is movingly told. This is an interesting book to read, with good illustrations.

A Man and His Mountains

Norman Croucher

Kaye and Ward, 1984, pp 6 + 218, maps and colour photos, £9.95

Anyone who heard Norman Croucher's lecture to the Club in 1984 will know the enthusiasm, humour and sheer doggedness with which he overcame his disabilities and went on to climb in the world's highest ranges. This all comes through in the present book. I particularly remember the story of the incredulity of the members of an Austrian team climbing Huascaran when they met Norman's expedition. First they met the dishevelled Harry, contrasting strongly with their own immaculate turn-out; then Julie — 'we do not climb with women';

then round the corner came Norman, his crutches quietly clicking at each movement. 'That's our leader', Harry said. Similar occurrences are dotted throughout this wonderful tale of one man's effort to overcome his disabilities and what he wants to do, and of his encouragement for others in similar situations. It is very well worth reading.

Magie du Mont Blanc

Walter Bonatti

Denöel, 1984, pp 208, colour photos, npq but selling at £30 in Britain

This is a large format (35cm × 25cm) picture book of Mont Blanc, with the French text limited to 5 pages. It is a coffee-table book *par excellence* and needs to be looked at whilst resting it on the tables, as it weighs a ton. So, what do you get for your £30? Some superb photos of the Mont Blanc area — and a few not so good — including sections with shots of dramatic skies, rushing water, ice details, plants and so on. It's a lovely book to browse through and to receive as a present, but maybe more text and descriptive matter would be welcome before one lashes out and purchases it oneself.

Les États Unis

Romain Vogler

Denöel, 1984, pp 176, numerous colour and black and white photos, topo-diagrams, npq

For the latest in his series 'Les Plus Belles Escalades' Gaston Rebuffat has left the European mainland and goes to the States. The collection includes a selection of the 'best' climbs on the East Coast, the Mid-West and the Pacific coast, and is presented to the usual high photographic and descriptive standard of the series.

The Ridiculous Mountains

G. J. F. Dutton

Diadem, 1984, pp 158, £7.95

This Climbing Game An Anthology of Mountain Humour

Walt Unsworth

Viking, 1974, pp 220, drawings, £7.95

Years pass without any humorous climbing books coming on to the market and then two appear within months of each other. Unsworth's collection contains many old favourites such as *In Hanging Garden Gully* readily available in other anthologies — but then you couldn't really leave such a memorable piece out just because it is available elsewhere, could you. Personally, even though you have to share things out, I could have done with more Tilman, Patey and Kevin Fitzgerald at the expense of some which, to my taste, don't come into the category of humour at all.

Dutton's tales of his trio's exploits have delighted SMCJ readers for many years and it is good to have them collected in one volume. Like other collections of this type, it is best to dip into them occasionally rather than go through at one sitting, as in this way they preserve their freshness. For a really belly laugh, though, one has to return to *Rum Doodle*, reissued again in paperback, as is the same author's *The Cruise of the Talking Fish*. Whilst the latter is good, it doesn't have the same appeal to climbers and can't touch it for humour.

G. W. T.

Montagne. Photographs 1845-1914

Musées de Chambéry, 30cm × 24cm, npq

This superbly illustrated volume is a *catalogue raisonné* of the exhibition organised by Françoise Guichon in 1984.

The photographs are accompanied by three scholarly essays reminding us of the changes in attitudes to mountain landscape at the end of the 19th century, by writers, painters and eventually photographers.

Françoise Guichon in her foreword quotes approvingly the broad objectives of our own Club, in literature, science and art.

Lastly there are fascinating biographies of the photographers whose work is reproduced. Comment is made that Ruskin was *farouchement* opposed to mountaineering.

The plates include no fewer than 12 by the Bisson brothers, then four each from Donkin & Sella. Two plates from Fenton (best known for his Crimean War photographs) show Nant Francon Pass and Cheddar Gorge, on dull days. They will do nothing to disabuse the French of their opinion that the sun never shines in Britain.

Finally, the most interesting plate is the famous telephotograph by Fred Boissonas, taken with a new Dallmeyer lens, of Mont Blanc from 54 miles! It was shown at our own exhibition in 1892.

Naturally the main contributions are from French sources, but generous tribute is paid to us, as Bob Lawford provided 12 prints from our archives.

C. Douglas Milner

