

EXPEDITIONS

TRAVERSE OF PARROTS PITZE, LYSKAMM, CASTOR AND POLLUX. G. C. Band and R. R. E. Chorley. June 28, 1952. The combination of starting too late and deciding to include the Parrotspitze gave us bad conditions on the Lyskamm and left us insufficient time to traverse the Breithorn. Without a guide book the descent of Pollux was not obvious and an abseil was made.

Times : left Mte. Rosa Hut	03.05
Parrotspitze	07.10 (halt near Lysjoch 07.40-08.05)
Lyskamm East summit	10.30 (halt 20 min.)
Lyskamm West summit	12.40 (halt near Felikjoch 14.05-14.35)
Castor	15.20
Pollux	17.25
Schwarztor	18.55
arr. Mte. Rosa Hut	21.57

NORDEND, SANTA CATERINA GRAT. G. C. Band and R. R. E. Chorley. July 5, 1952. The following technical description is given as there is no adequate description in the 1937 guide book and the climb is undoubtedly one of the most attractive climbs in the Zermatt district. G.H.M. gradings.

Standard D with four passages of IV and several of III. The difficulties are in the first two *ressauts*.

The best route from the Mte. Rosa Hut to the Jägerjoch is to descend by the path and glacier to the foot of the prominent moraine on the (true) left bank of the Gorner Glacier. Ascend the moraine, the glacier, and the snow slopes to the Jägerjoch. Twenty minutes of snow and 20 minutes of easy rock lead to a point where the ridge steepens considerably. Traverse right and then up a steep wall (IV) to a niche (belay piton). Climb the wall of the niche (IV) to a large ledge. This peters out to the right into a line of weakness across the face. Traverse right at first slightly down then slightly upwards; 120 ft., magnificent situations (III and III *sup.*). The traverse ends at the foot of a chimney, climb this for 25 ft. then traverse right (IV) into another chimney; surmount the *toit* on to a scree-covered ledge, bear slightly left then straight up. This is approximately on a level with the top of the first *ressaut* and to the left of a steep shallow scoop partially snow covered. Continue directly up by layback up a flake, then by small holds and finally flakeholds up the wall to a level with the top of the second *ressaut*; mostly IV, 100 ft. Regain the crest of the arête; delightful climbing and positions with passages of III on the third *ressaut*.

Follow the snow arête and the steep rocks to the top of the fourth *ressaut*. Cross the snowfield to the summit ridge of the Nordend.

Times : left Mte. Rosa Hut	02.10
Jägerjoch	06.00 (halt 30 mins.)
Top of 4th <i>ressaut</i>	10.30 (halt 30 mins.)
Nordend	11.47
arr. Mte. Rosa Hut	13.13

(First British ascent since first ascent in 1906. Two further British guideless ascents were made later in the year.)

AIGUILLE DU PEIGNE, ARÊTE N. INTÉGRALE. G. C. Band and R. R. E. Chorley; A. R. Dolphin and I. G. McNaught-Davis. July 31, 1952. The route is described in the new edition of the Vallot guide and is surprisingly long—650 m. *dénivellation*—for such a low peak. Some difficulty was experienced in finding the best way in the lower part of the route (the first 450 m. is D and typical Chamonix climbing), but the guide book time of 3–4 hours from Plan de l'Aiguille is optimistic. It is the 'Grand Dièdre' however which raises the climb to TD *supérieure* and gives the climb its remarkable character. Some 200 m. long it is noteworthy for the almost continual necessity for hand jamming, the number of *toits* and overhangs, and the continuity of difficulty. According to the guide book there is only one artificial pitch but we found a rope stirrup necessary on another pitch. We found some parts rather greasy; many of the pitches are hard VS. In the opinion of both parties the passages of V were incomparably harder than any other V's or even V/VI's they have come across. Bivouac on the descent.

Times : left chalet nr. Montenvers	03.40
Plan de l'Aiguille	04.45
'L'attaque'	06.05 (halt 11.00–11.40)
Foot of dièdre	12.20
Peigne summit	20.00–20.15
Bivouac	00.45–04.30
Plan de l'Aiguille	06.00
arr. chalet	07.05

(First British ascent.)

AIGUILLE NOIRE DE PÉTERET, SOUTH RIDGE. G. C. Band and R. R. E. Chorley; G. H. Francis and E. A. Wrangham. August 5, 1952. Although the same grade as the above route, it is not of comparable difficulty and in the opinion of both parties there are no pitches more difficult than hard severe. Little difficulty was experienced in route finding on the ascent. We were held up for about 1½ hours on the fifth tower by an Italian party (who had already bivouacked once!). A comfortable night was spent a few minutes below the summit on the East ridge. Sleeping bags and light Meta cookers were

carried but there was never any need to climb without sacks. The climb is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful rock climbs in the Alps.

Times : left Noire Hut	03.40
‘ L’attaque ’	04.45 (halt on ridge 09.30-10.00)
Pte. Welzenbach	11.00
Pte. Brendel, halt	14.30-15.05
Fifth tower	17.30
Pte. Bich	19.00
Noire, summit	20.00
Bivouac	20.05-07.00
arr. hut	12.45 (halt 30 mins.)

R. R. E. CHORLEY.

(First British ascent.)

We understand this climb was repeated later in the season by R. E. Meyer and V. Ridgeway.

NORTH RIDGE OF THE DENT BLANCHE. J. Streetly and G. C. Band. July 19, 1952. A starry cloudless night faded into a fine sunny day. Good progress was made from the Col de la Dent Blanche until the latter part of the traverse across the snow-spattered slabs. Here, unnecessary difficulties delayed us while searching for the best route. We were thankful to complete the traverse at the highest possible level to the conspicuous brèche in the ridge. Numerous pitons left by previous parties made the overhang above somewhat easier and we climbed into the sunshine with delight. On the upper part of the ridge the difficulties diminished only gradually so we refrained from moving together until quite near the summit. A few pitons extracted from the harder passages proved of great value for an uncharted descent of the Wandfluh in a race with the darkness to the Schönbühl hut.

Times : left Cabane du Mountet	23.55 (July 18)
Col de la Dent Blanche	03.45-04.10
Brèche	10.20
Summit	15.45-16.20
Point 3882 m. on South Ridge	18.10
Cabane de Schönbühl	21.30

G. C. BAND.

(Probably the ninth ascent and first British guideless ascent.)

GRANDES JORASSES—ARÊTE DES HIRONDELLES. G. H. Francis and G. J. Sutton. We left the Gervasutti hut at about 04.00. The Frébouzie glacier was complicated, and we reached the Col des Hirondelles shortly after 07.00 in brilliant sunshine. The wind was cold and strong, but weather was beginning to build up over Italy.

We ignored the guide book start, but, about 08.00 traversed across to the very foot of the arête proper. We followed this as far as the slabs, which were of a Very Difficult standard. Then it was the arête again to the 'Brèche en V'—the notch. Here we waited nearly an hour for a Swiss party to surmount the Fissure Rey. The weather became very menacing. From the notch the fissure looked hard, but Francis was up it in a couple of minutes. The sacks were hoisted, and then I climbed the pitch. It contained ten pitons, of which neither of us used more than two. The crux does require them—the rest are superfluous—and is of about a hard severe standard.

Our route above followed neither the Gobbi variant, which is slow, nor the gully on the left, down which boulders were continually bowling, but followed a middle course, containing pitches of grades II and III. There was also a final slab of grade V where I inserted a piton for assurance only. Thence the arête, in poor condition, was followed rather wearily to the summit, which was reached at about 14.30. After an hour we descended slowly, in the excellent company of the Swiss, by the glacier and the Rocher de Reposoir. We reached the Boccalatte hut at about 19.00. The variant between the gully and the *ressaut* is highly recommendable: the line will be obvious to anyone on the spot. We found in it one piton. The views are very fine, especially that of the East face.

(First British guideless ascent.)

MONT BLANC BY THE PILLARS OF FRESNAY. G. H. Francis and G. J. Sutton with Lionel Terray. The climbers on the first ascent (G. Gervasutti and P. Bollini della Predosa) approached this climb from the Bivouac Eccles; the second (M. Bastien, J. Julien and two others) over the Col de Péteret from the Glacier de la Brenva. We as the third mounted by yet a third variant. After tea in the Gamba hut, we crossed the Col de l'Innominata at about 18.00 and fixed our bivouac shortly after 20.00 at the lower end of a poorly defined rib separating the Güssfeldt Couloir¹ from a subsidiary couloir perhaps 50 yards to the south-east. It was, after some labour, fairly flat, with just room for three, apparently safe from stonefall and undoubtedly so from the vast and frequent falls of ice which tumble from the Glacier Supérieur de Fresnay. The route to it, however, involves some risk.

We left in the morning at about 03.30 after an unpromising night. We ascended the true left bank of the Güssfeldt Couloir for a long way until it was possible to cross it. The lower portion contained a deep gully of water-ice. We then made an ascending traverse around a prominent buttress and mounted snow-slopes to the Col de Péteret. It was 09.00. After an hour's rest we crossed the bergschrund and mounted up awkward mixed rock, ice and snow to the foot of the first

¹ This name is new to me. Dr. Paul Güssfeldt never visited the Innominata basin, and a more appropriate name would be the 'Balfour' couloir—after F. M. Balfour, who lost his life near by during an early attempt on the Aig. Blanche de Péteret (*A. J.*, 11. 90).—*Editor.*

ressaut. Here we made a variant, turning the *ressaut* by mixed ground on the right, and thus avoiding a pitch of V. The variant is recommended. Above the *ressaut* is a short, narrow snow arête. It had a double cornice but Terray, fresh from the first ascent of Huantsan, made a swift and brilliant lead of the difficulty, and we followed as we could. In one spot it was necessary to sit astride the arête. Soon after this we came to the foot of the grey slab. Using rope stirrups and the doubled rope technique Terray led the narrow crack which cleft the slab. We had lost the guide book, so, when at about 60 ft. he traversed left into a secondary crack instead of going straight up, he was making a new variant. The leader must have two 100 ft. ropes and a minimum of six pitons. The pitch is grade six and A1. Francis writes that 'it is much harder than the two V/VI pitches on the South Ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Péteret.' At the top is a good stance. We left three pitons in the rock. From here one traverses left over steep rotten rock, then up to the foot of a chimney. This chimney is grade six, A2, and choked with ice. It contained a large block which fell on Terray's head, rendering him unconscious for some seconds. When I followed I found the pitons rather loose, and one came out in my hand. We left three behind, of which two were already in place. This pitch was harder than the grey slab, from the foot of which we had taken 5 hours to climb about 180 ft.

We were now at nearly 15,000 ft., and conditions were very bad. An icy wind was blowing and it was snowing a little. The rocks were plaqued and plastered with thick ice covered with new snow, and what might sometimes be comparatively easy gave us much trouble. It was around 19.00 and we hastened to the top of the *ressaut* and looked up to the third and last. Fortunately this one is turned on the left in a gully of mixed rock and ice. We put on crampons. The rocks petered out and we moved hurriedly up, trusting to our claws alone. Terray estimated the ice to be at 45° or over. We reached the Brouillard ridge at dusk. Breaking a small cornice we stepped out beside the little Picco Giusto Gervasutti, and thought with even deeper admiration than before of its great namesake. Then in falling snow we plodded painfully along the ridge, up the Calotte, to the summit. We all suffered from hallucinations of fatigue. We passed over the summit in darkness at 21.15. A brief pause. Words. Then we went down the Bosses arête. We reached the door of the Vallot at about 21.40. From the Col de Péteret to the Picco Gervasutti 11 hours. A fine piece of work by Terray.²

G. J. SUTTON.

(Third ascent.)

² This fine and difficult piton climb lies on the immediate (facing) right side of the N.E. 'Pillar of Fresnay.' The S.W. 'Pillar' was climbed direct in 1933 (*A.J.*, 45. 377) to the point on the Brouillard ridge reached by Bollini and Gervasutti in 1940 (*R.M.*, 50. 197). The S.W. 'Pillar' had been descended with two abseils by Eustice Thomas and Underhill in 1928 (*A.J.*, 40. 389).—*Editor.*

MONT BLANC BY THE PÉTERET RIDGE. August 5, 1952. I. G. McNaught-Davis and N. Mather. The night of the 5th was spent at the Refuge-bivouac Brèche Nord des Dames Anglaises reached from the Gamba hut by the Col de l'Innominata and the Fresnay glacier. The couloir leading to the Brèche Nord des Dames Anglaises was steep, loose and icy, and the hardest part of the climb. On the Aiguille Blanche there was little snow and much ice. A halt was made for 45 minutes on the Grand Pilier d'Angle. From here the going was at first good over sound snow but later ice covered by powder snow slowed progress. The night was spent at the Vallot hut. Good weather. Descent to Courmayeur via Dôme du Goûter and the Miage glacier.

Times : left Gamba Hut	15.15
Col de l'Innominata	16.30
Bivouac Brèche Nord des Dames Anglaises	20.45-05.00
Aiguille Blanche, South-East Peak	08.30
North-West Peak	09.30
Col de Péteret	11.10
Grand Pilier d'Angle	16.30
Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur	19.05
Mt. Blanc	19.35
Vallot Hut	20.00

TRAVERSE OF THE AIGUILLES DU DIABLE. I. G. McNaught-Davis and D. R. Fisher. July 20, 1952. The traverse was uneventful and involved delightful climbing and abseiling in airy positions. Loose rock was encountered approaching the Aiguilles and from Isolée to the summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul. The traverse was made from the Requin Hut; this proved to be much too far away, the Torino Hut being the best starting place.

D. R. FISHER.

DENT DU CROCODILE BY THE EAST RIDGE. G. J. Streetly and D. R. Fisher. July 5, 1952. The ascent was begun from the Envers des Aiguilles Hut. Rapid progress was made until the glacier steepened below the rock; here the triple bergschrund presented more of a problem than was expected so early in the season. The foot of the Ryan-Lochmatter Ridge of the Aiguille du Plan was ascended and the Plan-Crocodile Couloir crossed. Slabs and cracks were then climbed in a diagonal line to the top of a red tower; here the difficulties began. The second pitch, a somewhat fierce chimney, turned out to be the crux of the climb. The artificial pitch presented no real difficulty, although 6 karabiners and 3 rope stirrups were essential. No pitons were inserted as there were plenty everywhere. The best way down is to abseil, as the normal route is very liable to avalanche. The climb

was fairly long and tiring, although no individual pitch was technically above 'Severe' Standard.

Times : left hut	03.45
bergschrund	05.30
commencement of difficulties	08.00
summit	16.30
left summit (second time)	18.00
bivouac (jammed rappel rope)	21.00
left bivouac	03.30
hut	07.45

D. R. FISHER.

DENT D'HÉRENS. East Ridge. A. K. Rawlinson, R. M. Viney, M. H. Westmacott. July 30, 1952. The ridge was climbed in good weather. There were about 2 inches of fresh snow on the rocks. It took the party longer to reach the ridge, which is joined just West of the Col Tournanche, than they had expected. This despite good snow conditions on the delightful snow rib leading to the ridge. The ridge itself was found to be more notable for length than for difficulty. Only on the Pointe Carrel—the second of the four main points of the ridge—was a set route obligatory.

The party descended by the Tiefenmattenjoch, the North side of which consisted of good snow.

Times : left Schönbühl Hut	01.10
reach East Ridge	06.15 (halt 30 mins.)
Pointe Maquignaz	09.25
Pointe Carrel	10.20
Pointe Blanche	12.30 (halt 30 mins.)
L'Epaule	14.50
summit	15.35 (halt 20 mins.)
bergschrund	20.10
Schönbühl Hut	23.40

WANDFLUHHORN. Mayer-Dibona Route. A. K. Rawlinson, R. M. Viney, M. H. Westmacott. July 22, 1952. Possibly the third ascent of this little-known route. It was selected as a suitable training climb and proved to give excellent climbing. The guide book makes the route sound harder than it is, but gives all the description required.

Times : left Schönbühl Hut	04.45
bergschrund	05.20
summit	12.05

We have also received reports of British guideless ascents of Mont Blanc by the Innominata and by Route Major, Aiguille du Plan by the Ryan-Lochmatter Route, South-West Ridge of the Aiguille du Fou, Aiguille du Grépon by the Aiguille du Roc and by the East face,

Aiguille de Blatière by the Voie Leininger-Neuenschwander, Aiguille des Grands Charmoz by the West face.

SOUTHERN DOLOMITES

SASSO DI SCARNIA (2,227 m.) (Feltre District) by North-East Ridge. First tourist ascent, June 10, 1952. J. Sanseverino, alone, left Primiero at 05.30 hours and, following the path over the Caltene Ridge to the Nagaoni valley, gained the Passo della Finestra (1,772 m.) at about 09.30. He then scrambled up the long rocky ridge to the culminating point (approximately $5\frac{3}{4}$ hours from Primiero). Leaving the summit at 12.40, he descended by the same route, and reached Primiero at 17.05.

This ridge, sometimes followed by chamois-hunters, does not seem to have been previously climbed by tourists.

FORCELLA CIMONEGA (2,156 m.) (Feltre District). June 11, 1952. The same, starting from Primiero and following the usual route by way of the Giasinozza valley, visited this pass with the object of reconnoitring the northern ridge of the Sass de Mura (2,550 m.). As clouds shrouded the mountain soon after his arrival on the col, however, he merely made a half-hearted attempt to reach the first gendarme before turning back.

This ridge was first ascended by the guide Gabriele Franceschini of Feltre, alone, in August, 1943, but does not appear to have been climbed by tourists.

MONTE TRE PIETRE (1,965 m.) (Feltre District). June 17, 1952. The same, leaving Cesio Maggiore (510 m.) at 05.15 hours, toiled up the wearisome southern slopes to the depression between M. Tre Pietre and Col Grande (1,917 m.), and reached the summit at about 10.00. Unfortunately, clouds hid the view. The descent was made by the same route.

This peak has been ascended by surveyors and chamois-hunters, but is very rarely, if at all, climbed by tourists. The long serrated ridge uniting the mountain with Monte Pievidur (2,068 m.) is 'alpinisticamente' (to use a delightful Italian adverb) still virgin.

CIMA DELLE CORAIE (2,090 m.) (Feruc Group). June 18, 1952. The same made the second tourist ascent of this peak, which seems to have been completely neglected by amateurs since its ascent by F. O. Schuster with E. Conedera and G. Zecchini on September 7, 1902. Starting from Peron (409 m.) at 08.30 hours, he followed the route recommended by the Italian A.C. guide book to the Col dei Porz (1,115 m.) where he halted for a snack. The view from this point was remarkably fine. Continuing on his way, he made for the depression between Monte Alto (2,068 m.) and Cima delle Coraie, and gained the top at approximately 14.00 (no difficulties). As usual, clouds concealed the view. He descended by the same route, and reached Peron at

1,815—a few minutes before the departure of the last train to Bribano.

The unfrequented Feruc mountains (there are no huts and few paths) certainly deserve more attention than they have hitherto received even from Italian mountaineers.

FORCELLA DEL PIEVIDUR (c. 1,740 m.) (Feltre District). First crossing, June 20, 1952. The same, after being conveyed by car a considerable way up the Canzoi valley, proceeded to La Stua (654 m.) where he crossed the stream and followed the path to the Casera Fraton (1,065 m.). Heading north, he entered the wild Fraton glen, already partly filled with rising clouds, which he ascended to the crags below the pass. The final climb was made up a steep gully with a short but awkward pitch. The dense mist made the precipitous and by no means easy descent to the Scura valley most disagreeable, and he experienced some difficulty in choosing the easiest route. A violent shower of rain, accompanied by heavy thunder, greeted his arrival in the appropriately named Valle Scura.

This col, baptized by Mr. Sanseverino with the above name, is located on the M. Pievidur-M. Tre Pietre ridge somewhere between heights 1,770 m. and 1,820 m. of the Italian map.³

³ Sheet 23, III, N.W., Carta d'Italia, 1 : 25,000.

HUGH CAMPBELL CHAMBERS

1889-1955

Hugh Chambers, who died on March 17, was the son of John Chambers, one of the early settlers in Hawkes Bay, N.Z., and a sheep farmer on a large scale.