

was found to the East shoulder at the level of the Great Flake (A2, 700 ft), which should be climbable in the reverse direction also. Source: *Mountain No. 6, 1969*.

The 'Haute Route' of Central Norway During eighteen days from Graz, six of us did the traverse from Fjaerland to Roysheim on ski in May 1969. The best time for this traverse is probably end of March, beginning of April; a month later one often breaks through the snow, knee deep.

I regard the traverse of the Jostedals glacier as a serious enterprise, because a change of the weather can come much more quickly than in our Alps. Bivouacs on the Jostedals glacier and on the Lodalskapa require foam-rubber mattresses and/or a warm tent. Cooker, sleeping bags and food for several days are essential. Being late in the season the huts were mostly unguarded but the D.N.T. key gives access to them (except Spiterstulen, Glitterheim, Krossbu and Leirvassbu). Some provisions are kept in the huts.

During our traverse we did not meet a single person, except on the Bövertun-Elveseter road. We covered on skis about 200 km. Despite the lower altitude and the absence of steep ground I regard this tour as considerably more serious and valuable than the classic Haute Route from Argentière to Saas Fee. However, conditions are probably much better in March-April, because at that time many Norwegians are ski-ing in these areas and nearly all the huts have guardians present.

Hanns Schell

The Alps 1969¹

Summary 1969 was a very good season, with a long spell of perfect weather in July, as a result of which many good climbs were done.

The major new routes were those by Polish and Japanese parties on the Grand Pilier d'Angle and Eiger respectively (see below); but an Italian party did an important new route on the North face of the Matterhorn.

Among the most startling events were the various routes climbed solo. Those by Eric Jones and Cliff Phillips are recorded below; but Reinhold Messner

¹ We are again greatly indebted to the Hon. Editor of the A.C.G., Doug Scott, for help in collating the bulk of this material, and also to Mick Burke and Ken Wilson.

in particular did the first solo ascent of the direct route on the North face of the Droites and also the Vinatzer route (with a new direct finish) on the South face of the Marmolada di Rocca and the Philipp-Flamm route on the Civetta. In addition Alessandro Cogna soloed the Lagarde-Devies route on Monte Rosa.

There were a large number of accidents, especially from falling stones, including a fatal one to the very fine German climber Jörg Lehne (*A.J.* 74 [37]) at the foot of the Walker Spur. Among British parties, a particularly sad fatality was that of the young Roy Clarkson (eight years old) and his father on the Matterhorn, an event which caused widespread discussion as to the rights and wrongs of taking such a young person on such a big mountain; they had previously climbed, among other routes, the Old Man of Hoy. Among other fatal accidents were those to Bruce Rogers and Paul McDermott on the Sentinelle Rouge on Mont Blanc (p 346 below); Tom Hird on the upper section of the Gervasutti Pillar; Geoff Harper and two others on the Spencer Couloir on the Aiguille de Blaitière; Thorburn Sagar on the Nantillons glacier (falling séracs); Ruth Speaight and Margaret Picken on the Matterhorn; and Michael Aslett, who disappeared while climbing Monte Rosa solo.

As the A.C.G. Bulletin *Alpine Climbing* and the various Continental journals give full details of the main events, by all nationalities, we have confined ourselves in the following notes mainly to new achievements or useful comments by British parties.

MONT BLANC MASSIF

Grand Pilier d'Angle, South-east face; Polish first ascent E. Chrobak, T. Laukajtys, A. Mróz, 15–20 July. ED (A2–3, V sup.); risk of stonefall. Article p 95.

Technical note Start climbing the wall below a huge depression which divides this part of the pillar near its summit. The snow leads up into a couloir on the left and this is followed for several rope lengths without any great difficulty, except for one pitch of IV. The couloir leads to steep rock and the end of the easy section [60].

Climb up for 10 m and then right to a large block. Cross the block and a slab that rests on it and go left, traversing a vertical wall (V+). Now continue up at IV and III, going diagonally right. The artificial climbing begins here up a crack (A₃) and then A₂ until one can free climb over blocks (V). Continue up

the crack on pegs (A₂) and up a little wall onto a slab (V), climbing up its right side and back into the crack (A₃, V) and up to more blocks and a ledge. Again the crack-line continues: at first it is A₂, and later A₃ (one bolt) for two rope lengths before overhanging rock is encountered. Reach the roofs (V sup.) and go left and then right (IV) and up a chimney to a huge overhang with a big drop on the right and slabs on the left. For 12 m climb across two triangular slabs on the left, separated by a short wall (V). At the start of the second slab make a pendulum to the left and reach a crack slightly lower. Climb the crack to its end (10 m, A₁). The main difficulties of the climb are now over.

Climb up a loose rib which limits the right side of a huge couloir falling down to the Col de Peuterey. Climb up a wall on the loose rib, one piton, and then later traverse to the right. Reach the left side of a depression/couloir which descends from the summit of the pillar. Climb up over several steep walls and up a 10 m chimney in the last of these. Descend down into a couloir (V) and then up right to the other side and easily reach the summit of the pillar. From here follow the icy ridge to the summit of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur.

Eugeniusz Chrobak

Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, South ridge Cliff Phillips, 20 July. 6 hours 40 minutes; and back to Chamonix the same day.

Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey, North face Chabod-Grivel route. Eric Jones, C. Phillips, 20 August. First British ascent. Considerable avalanche risk was encountered.

Mont Maudit, South-east face, variation to Kagami route M. Guilliard and J. R. Irwin, 6 August. This line is about 50 m left of the Kagami route. See *Alpine Climbing 1970* for description.

Mont Blanc du Tacul, Gervasutti pillar Phillips and Jones soloed this on 24 July in 5½ hours.

Col du Caïman, North-west face J. Grieve and K. Spence in twelve hours from Plan de l'Aiguille. They found the last 130 m to the col to be a vertical ice-runnel. Descent down the Envers de Blaitière side. Possibly the first traverse. Grieve recommends traversing round the Fou and down by way of the Blaitière instead as Rébuffat and Terray did on the first ascent in 1942.

Grandes Jorasses, Pointe Croz, North face R. McHardy and P. Braithwaite

in July; sixteen hours. The route was found to be harder than the Walker Spur, with considerable loose rock and few pitons. First British ascent.

Grandes Jorasses, Walker Spur The accident in which Jörg Lehne was killed by falling stones while bivouacking, unhappily underlines the danger of stopping overnight at the foot of the face, especially when the weather is warm or there are parties above. See also p 137 above.

Aiguilles de Pra Sec, East face, first ascent August 1969. P. Crew, L. Dickinson, B. Molyneux. D sup. with one pitch of VI, c 920 m. The Aiguilles de Pra Sec are three minor pinnacles on the south side of the Grandes Jorasses, with a fine face falling to the Pra Sec glacier [84]. This face gives a long and worthwhile training climb, which is often in condition. We climbed the face in mist—there may be an easier alternative route in the upper part. The descent described is very unpleasant. A (theoretically) easier descent is described in the Vallot guide (routes 460 and 465a), but we could not find it.

From the Pra Sec chalets (1653 m) walk straight up the side of the moraine gully below the Pra Sec glacier and climb steep grass and broken slabs on the left, until level with the snout of the glacier. Climb the true right bank of the glacier, or the rocks on the left, depending on conditions, to the snow-slope at the foot of the face (2600 m, three hours).

Climb the water-worn slabs to an obvious arch overhang. Avoid this on the left (III/IV) and then climb more easily to the large snow-patch. Cross this diagonally to the right to the foot of an obvious diagonal break which cuts the lower part of the face. Climb the break, up chimney/grooves at first, then a deep crack in slabs, to a shoulder (305 m, III/IV with pitches of V).

Traverse horizontally right into a shallow couloir and up slabs to a good stance (IV). Move right and climb a shallow, smooth groove (50 m, V) which leads back into the main groove and continue easily to small ledges. Climb the steep walls above for one pitch (IV), then continue diagonally right and up a short overhanging chimney (V, one peg). Continue ascending rightwards for two long pitches (IV) to another small shoulder, below a shallow gully.

Move right into a deep chimney. Climb this for a few feet, then up the difficult slabs and grooves on the right (IV, one peg). Go up to the left and back right to the foot of a steep flake crack (IV). Climb the crack (VI, four pegs), moving right at the top. Continue diagonally rightwards for two long pitches (V, sustained), move left and up easier grooves to the col between the East and Central summits. From here it is a short scramble to the top (seven hours).



84 *The East face of the Aiguilles de Pra Sec* showing the route of the first ascent. Photo: P. Crew



85 *The North face of the Pizzi del Ferro* showing the route of the first ascent of the right-hand pillar (p 143). Photo: John Cleare

Descent: from the East summit, descend broken rocks on the West face into a shallow gully. Follow the loose rib in this gully for about 100 m, then cross over the rib on the right to the top of a large gully system. This leads to the foot of the face without too much difficulty, but it is very loose in parts. An alternative seems to be to descend the arête and walls bounding this gully system on the west. From the foot of the face, descend for about 300 m and cross the obvious col on the left. Easy slopes lead diagonally back to the approach route (three hours; about thirteen hours for the round trip). **Peter Crew**

Grand Dru, South pillar (Bastien-Contamine route). D. Bathgate and I. Clough; I. Rowe and M. Galbraith, 22 July. Probable second British ascent. According to the Charpoua hut-book several previous attempts, including two by British parties, had been thwarted by *verglas* on the first difficulties—a series of rather brutal cracks. The route takes the obvious pillar rising above the Charpoua glacier and gives hard and sustained free climbing on excellent rock. ED. The pitch gradings and route description given in the new Vallot guide seemed accurate (although we had difficulty with route-finding on the final tower) but the time given—that of the first ascent—must be regarded as a fast one. We took about twelve hours. The climb is recommended to those who would prefer not to have to queue for their *grande route* on the Drus. **Ian Clough**

Petit Dru, Bonatti pillar What is probably the second solo ascent was made by E. Jones in seventeen hours. One bivouac.

Aiguille d'Argentière, North face in winter On 17 March 1969 Dougal Haston and I went up to the Argentière hut and two days later did the Lagarde-Ségogne route on the North face of the Argentière. The trek to the Col du Chardonnet took five hours in deep snow. The climb itself was mainly on unconsolidated powder-snow lying on very hard ice—not technically difficult, but nerve-wracking. We had a bivouac about 500 ft below the top, in the main channel of an almost continuous stream of spindrift, and finished the climb the next morning. It was a first winter ascent of this route, though the direct route had been done previously.

Winter climbing in the Alps is an extraordinary experience, and one that comparatively few British climbers have tried. Even comparatively simple climbs, by summer standards, become very serious, and every route, in effect, is new, since the character of a climb and the line you take is changed so much. Because one must carry so much equipment, climbing in winter is physically much more exacting than in summer. It is an aspect of the sport that I am sure many British climbers would enjoy.

Chris Bonington

VALAIS

Petit Mont Collon, North face of West Peak M. Guilliard and R. Ferguson did this on 12 July in two hours and found it similar to the North face of the Tour Ronde (Mont Blanc group).

Mont Collon, Central ridge of North face (Gracey route). Same party. 21 July, 10½ hours. They encountered two 60 ft ice-pitches, one of 80° and the other overhanging in parts; variation followed as on second ascent.

Matterhorn, North face, Schmid route Mike Galbraith and I did this on 15 July. Conditions had looked favourable (i.e. icy) from Zermatt, and this proved to be the case.

We left the hut at 2am. The temperature was ominously warm as we groped our way to the upper glacier. At the top of the Ramp we could see two torches. After some searching we crossed the rimaye and started an exhausting but rapid kick up the exposed snowfield. After a dozen pitches, more care was required as we began to cross to the foot of the depression which is the key to the climb. It was still warm, and Mike was hit on the knee by a stone; this did not change our opinion that the mountain was behaving itself. The

depression is not a couloir but a rake, a change in angle of the face whose upper wall gives protection from falling stones. We caught up with the owners of the torches and passed them. They seemed to be going very slowly.

Rock alternated with water-ice. I found the climbing exhilarating in its variety and situation. We had crampons on all day and made much use of the front points on both ice and rock. We hardly ever felt the need of running belays and static belays were usually obtainable using chrome-moly pegs. Emerging from the depression we crossed a small snow-field and Mike led up a steep wall, the most difficult pitch at about mild VS. From here we traversed right, continuing our consistent trend, and gained the upper face by a short, bottomless gully. The remaining 800 ft were purgatory in soft snow with little security.

We waited briefly to see the others appear over the rim and proceeded up the Zmutt ridge to the summit, which we reached at 6.30pm. The climb had been done in perhaps optimum summer conditions, the tough water-ice/rock matrix having been sufficiently well established to resist the warmth of the day. In these conditions it had been most enjoyable. **Ian G. Rowe**

Peter Scott and Ron Lake repeated this climb on 19 July, with a bivouac below the summit; 18½ hours from the bergschrund.

Monte Rosa, East face on ski Article p 31.

BERNESE ALPS

Western areas: need for information This part of the Oberland is rather neglected in the A.C. guide-book *Selected Climbs in the Bernese Alps*, and I should welcome suggestions as to further routes to include, or comments on the present ones. See also p 288 below. **Colin Taylor**

Fründenhorn, North-west ridge Two English climbers were killed on this ridge last summer. On p 58 of the A.C. guide-book (above) there is a mention of the ordinary route (PD) but no description. It should be noted that the route does not take the crest of the ridge at all; it goes up steps on the North-west side of the mountain to reach the glacier which it takes to the summit. The true North-west ridge is AD and apparently quite difficult in places. **Colin Taylor**

Ebnefluh, North-west face (Aschenbrenner-Mariner route). Eric Jones and Cliff Phillips did the first British ascent on 5 July in $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours. They found the descent down the Rote Fluh ridge hard in the conditions, and thought it might have been preferable to reverse one of the North face routes.

Eiger, North face The third British ascent, by the original (1938) route, was made by Ray Colledge and James Fullalove on 1-4 August.

A Japanese party of six, one a woman, made an important new route to the right of the Harlin route using siege tactics in the period 3 July-16 August. It takes the 1938 route as far as the top of the Difficult Crack, from where it traverses right onto the Rote Fluh; this was followed to the level of the top of the second ice-field using expansion pitons. The wall above the second ice-field was followed, passing the Fly by the pillar on the right. The route exited onto the West flank about 100 m below the summit. It is thought possible that this route might become popular, as it does not appear to be as dangerous as the 1938 route, nor as hard as the 1966 one.

This route was repeated by a Swiss party in January 1970, in six days with some advance preparation of the face. A Japanese party did the second winter ascent of the original route; a major rescue was involved when one of them broke an ankle near the top.

BREGAGLIA

Piz Badile, North-east face Cliff Phillips soloed the Cassin route on 3 August in two hours fifty-five minutes.

Pizzi del Ferro, North faces of right- and left-hand pillars On 21 July Peter Crew and I did what we understand locally to have been the first ascent of the right-hand of the two impressive spurs of the 'mini-Jorasses' that dominate the upper Albigna cirque [85]. D, 2000 ft. It turned out to be a good mixed climb, which in good snow conditions would be really excellent; we had to get our feet wet in the poor conditions encountered.

We crossed the schrund a couple of hundred feet below and to the left of its highest point (where the ridge crest drops into it) and climbed up very shattered and dangerous blocks to a ledge-line trending left. Danger of stone-fall all the way. A steep icy-chimney led up right to the ridge crest, which was followed on ice and short rocky sections on its right flank. A short wall led back to the ridge crest, now a fine snow arête, and up and across a steep snow/ice field to its left. Steep broken walls and steep ice/snow sections

follow until a move can be made back right to the ridge crest, up a difficult crack, an exposed traverse on perfect rock and some slabs and chimneys just below the ridge crest to the right (IV sup./V). Back across left, up more ice and then some delicate climbing up and trending right on a smooth rounded buttress (crux; about V sup.) More snow/ice and broken rock, the odd indeterminate pitch and then the angle eases a little into the final steep snow/ice slope dotted with rocky outcrops. Wend your way up here and, a foot or two left of the summit, break through the steep, in places very overhanging, cornice onto the summit (six to eight hours from hut). We traversed the frontier ridge (III/IV) to the Colle Masino from where long snow-slopes with a large bergschrund (abseil) led back to the Albigna glacier, and the hut (eight to ten hours for round trip).

In the previous week Mark Springett and S. R. Young did the first British ascent of the left-hand pillar; it proved a first-class rock-climb in a fine position, c 1500 ft, D sup. with occasional pitches of V. **John Cleare**

Punta Allievi, East face (via Boga). N. A. J. Rogers and I. Roper did the first British ascent on 6 August. They found it a good, hard, training climb (1500 ft, VI). To avoid a stance in étriers, 180 ft of rope is needed on the first pitch.

Cima di Castello, South face by central pillar, first ascent Via dell'Esperanza. 8-9 August 1969. N. A. J. Rogers, I. Roper. ED, 1800 ft. Article p 48. The face consists of two large and very steep areas of rock, separated by a hanging couloir which carries a good deal of stone-fall. The Via Osio, climbed in the late 50s, and with three ascents to date, takes a line of cracks up the right-hand section. The present route is on the steep pillar defining the left (true right) edge of the hanging couloir. It is a fine and continuously difficult route, on good rock throughout.

Start at a dièdre which is the start of a line of cracks defining the left-hand side of the steep part of the face. Climb the dièdre for 80 ft (V+, two pegs) to a good ledge at the start of the obvious traverse line which cuts across the lower part of the face. Follow the traverse for 70 ft, when it is possible to tension traverse to a small ledge, visible from the start of the pitch (V+, two pegs). Continue along the traverse (two pegs, three slings), and climb a steep wall onto a ramp (VI). Follow the ramp and climb a flake (peg) and short crack (peg) until the traverse continues more easily to a niche (V+). Climb the slab under the roof, and move right into a rock crevasse which leads to another niche (V). (Note: at this point the line of the pillar has been joined. It may well be possible—but is certainly dangerous—to reach this point directly from the foot of the pillar. The route described is the safest and

pleasantest (because of wet rock) way onto the climb.) Descend for 15 ft and climb an oblique crack (VI, two pegs) into a shallow groove, and climb this, over a bulge to a huge ledge below a big roof, clearly visible from the Allievi hut (VI). Climb a diagonal crack and narrow slab to the roof (V+). Traverse right below the roof, (A₃ six pegs) to a shallow groove and climb this to a small stance (A₂ and VI, four pegs). Continue up the groove to an overhanging chimney which splits the edge of the pillar (AI and V+, three pegs). Move right onto a slab (V+) and regain the chimney where the angle relents. Climb the shallow chimney for 80 ft to a shallow cave (VI; no protection; poor bivouac site). Continue up the overhanging groove above the cave for 120 ft (five pegs, VI+) to a good ledge on the crest. (Note: there are several good bivouac sites from this point on.) Start up the left-hand crack and hand-traverse right into the chimney (VI-). Climb this (wide and strenuous, V+) and easier flakes to a large ledge overlooking the central couloir. Traverse right for 50 ft then climb directly above for several pitches (mainly IV+ with some moves of V) to the foot of a dièdre which splits the final tower. Climb this to an overhang (two pegs) and swing right into the next groove. Climb this to a ledge on the right (VI). Climb two bulges to the crest (IV+) which joins the pillar to the main summit. Follow this and a short chimney (III) to the top. *Descent*: easy snow on the west side of the Castello, Punta Baroni and Punta Allievi, to join the easy descent.

Nigel Rogers

Cima di Rosso, North pillar, first ascent On 21 July Mark Springett and I made what we understand to be the first ascent of this route in the Forno Cirque. It is a most impressive line, dropping direct from the summit and dividing the tangled séracs of the North-west face from the ice-wall of the North face proper. This latter is, of course, one of the classic ice climbs.

We crossed the rimaye with difficulty—an artificial pitch—and climbed several rope lengths up the North face before moving right to gain the Pillar itself above its lowest ice-smoothed rocks. This involved straightforward mixed climbing, but the snow was damp and in unpleasant condition. We followed the crest of the Pillar, often on good granite with pleasant pitches of IV and one of V to the big tower at about two-thirds of the way up. Here the rock was very poor and some of the climbing quite awkward. We turned the nose of the tower on the right and regained the crest of the Pillar, now an easy-angled ridge, behind it. A variation finish to the North face joins the ridge here from the left. A few hundred feet over huge granite blocks lead to the summit.

About 1500 ft, a 'mixed' route, D with a pitch of V. Highly recommended, especially if snow conditions are not first-class for the North face itself.

John Cleare