

as a matched team, sharing the lead and capitalising on their combined experience.

The route up the buttress was hard and strenuous. It constantly taxed their climbing skills and made even bigger demands on their reserves of nervous energy. The climb was turning against them and they could feel it. At last the final cruel blow came when it was least expected. The route up the buttress led them on to an isolated pinnacle not obvious from below but detached from the main ridge by a drop of about 150 ft. They were marooned. To climb down was to court disaster so friable was the rock ascended. The hopelessness of the situation struck home after an hour of trying and failing to get even one piton to hold for an abseil. So, perched on their narrow downward sloping ledge they sat out the night. The following morning a helicopter dropped in to pluck them from their predicament.

It had been a long night of tension. Under such conditions it can be comforting to eat as well as helping to maintain physical well being. Again the lightweight foods came into their own. Dehydrated stew nourished, warmed and imparted liquid for the bodily function. Dextrose tablets fizzed refreshingly in the mouth and Dolly mixture upheld spirits, so outrageous did they seem in relation to the situation.

Thus with ambition frustrated, both men returned to base with ego and body slightly bruised but otherwise in good physical well-being. The strain of the attempt was clearly evident but it quickly dissolved amid intensive analysis. It was encouraging to see that in at least one aspect we had shown success. Our feeding arrangements, designed for a strenuous climb had been well suited to the needs of a very demanding occasion.

Filming on the Nordwand

Leo Dickinson

I had never seen the Eiger before the summer of 1970, but felt, as I am sure other climbers feel, that I knew more about the route on the Eiger's North face than any other mountain in the world. There are at least five books devoted entirely to the North face, one on the history, one on the first winter ascent, one devoted entirely to a single rescue and two on the Direct Route. All the publicity was channelled to a hungry press and starving public. Kleine Scheidegg was a stage for mass sensationalism made easy by the mountain railway, telescopes and comfortable hotels. The blame does not really lie in any one sector; by nature human beings are disaster-conscious yet they are protected from most natural dangers. It comes about therefore that the appetite of the non-mountaineering public for this sort of sensation is partially or wholly satisfied by the risks and disasters which befall climbers.



55 *Filming the morning cloud.* This and next photo: L. Dickinson

The Eiger therefore always seems to play second fiddle to the human tragedy. It was with such noble thoughts that we embarked on a filming ascent of the mountain to try and make a fair film of the risks, jubilations, fears and problems that all climbers must overcome there. Of course we never expected to die; we had two cine cameras, 10,000 ft of colour film, five still cameras and forty rolls of still film as well as a tape recorder and with this equipment we were far too valuable to die! After the first attempt I realised that the film weighed too much—each 100-ft roll was $\frac{1}{2}$ lb—so on the second attempt we only took 5000 ft.

On our first retreat Cliff Phillips fell 200 ft down a steep icy slope; by sheer chance I had the cine camera working. Once he fell I expected him to stop, so I carried on filming anyway; besides I could see him better through the zoom lens. He hit the ledge at the bottom and stopped; his first and immediate



56 *Filming on the Second Ice-field*

reaction was to ask if I had filmed him. Cliff was sitting on a small ledge about 10 ft long by 4 ft wide with a drop below of 600 ft to the scree at the bottom. He tried to make out afterwards that he had intended to glissade down the slope but it seemed to me a funny place to glissade, especially if you were not very good at it.

Up to the Hinterstoisser Traverse the filming was relatively easy, the only drawback being the incessant rain which made loading the cameras tiresome as wet film tends to jam and gum up the gate mechanism. Eric Jones led across the Hinterstoisser Traverse and I leaned out to film him. A small stone hit the camera and knocked it out of my hands; it was attached to a cord around my waist so it did not come to any harm. I quickly retrieved it and resumed filming. It's rather like playing Westerns but the play here is real: you are shooting the Eiger on film and the Eiger shoots back but with stones; you are taking away its privacy and the Eiger is trying to take away your life . . . A mutual respect is born and you do not attempt to film too much.

At the end of the Second Ice-field we were in good spirits, the climbing and filming had gone well. Above now was Death Bivouac, an obvious place to film, safe from stones, steeped in history and memories, but the Eiger thought differently; it did not seem to want me to film this place. Every time I managed to load a film the camera jammed. When I did finally load a film the lens was opaque with condensation. I ruined at least 600 ft of cine film and did not bring back any successful shots of Death Bivouac.

The Third Ice-field is relatively short and Pete Minks and Cliff had fixed a rope across this the previous night to enable faster progress in the morning. This passed without incident and we moved up into the Ramp. We all climbed as quickly as possible and took no film until an icy chimney stopped Pete. He tried to climb it but saw a line of about six pegs on the right-hand side. This was time consuming but ideal for the filming and the film taken was good.

At the end of the fourth day came our first storm. Thunder and lightning followed and we were all struck by the lightning. We held our breath and quickly took off our crampons and threw both them and our axes to the far end of the Brittle Ledges. We slept the night here. The next morning dawned fine and soon Pete led across the Traverse of the Gods. Because of the conditions of the ice we made slow progress and there were long spells of waiting, ideal for filming.

In my mind the film was nearly complete, we only needed some shots of the Spider, Exit Cracks and summit. I took some film of Pete and Cliff entering the ice-field of the Spider but none whilst actually in the Spider. I was exhausted and on two occasions mentally built myself up to take off my sack, take the camera out, load it with a film and shoot it. On each occasion, just as I was about to start, either stone-fall or falling ice made me change my mind. It was just too much effort dodging all the stones. We hardly filmed the Exit Cracks at all although Cliff took some startling shots looking down and into the Spider. That night, our fifth on the mountain, we slept at the Corti Bivouac. Nobody

bothered to take any film, only Eric managed two still pictures. By now I had realised how difficult it was to make films in a hostile environment.

Pete led up the Exit Cracks taking out 150-ft run-outs with no runners—there weren't any—until finally we came out of the shadows of the North face into the sun and warmth. Hence the title of the film, 'Out of the Shadows into the Sun'. In the sun the filming became easier, for one thing it was much warmer and for the other the cameras could operate at a higher f. stop, making the focusing simpler for my tired mind. By the time we reached the summit the wind was blowing a strong gale and the snow blew upwards making the final summit shots as difficult as any taken. We took about three rolls of film on the summit and put the cameras away. The film was completed, we had climbed the Eiger.

SUMMARY Peter Minks, Eric Jones, Cliff Phillips, Leo Dickinson, climbed and filmed the Eiger from 5–10 September 1970. Filming equipment taken as follows: One Cannon Scoopic, battery operated (without a battery operated camera shots like Phillips falling would never have been taken). Ten batteries for Cannon. One Bell & Howell DR 70 with 10 mm, 25 mm and 50 mm lenses, clockwork. One Sony TC50 tape recorder. 10,000 ft of Eastman colour negative film 16 mm. Thirty rolls of Ektachrome ×35 mm still film. Ten rolls of Panatomic × X film. Two Rollei electronic flash units and five Rollei 35 still cameras.