

New members welcome The Alpine Club welcomes as members men over 21 who have Alpine experience and can show evidence of continuing interest in mountains and mountaineering. The technical qualifications for entry are, by modern standards, not very high. A rough-and-ready guide is that about 3 seasons in the Alps and about 20 good Alpine peaks are required, but the Committee makes due allowance for exceptional routes and for experience elsewhere. Contributions to mountain art, literature and science may also count. The candidate must be proposed and seconded by members. The Committee is engaged in working out a form of aspirant membership for interested people not qualified as above.

Membership of the Alpine Club applies automatically to all members of the Alpine Climbing Group, for which the technical requirements for membership are much higher. Application forms for the Alpine Club may be obtained from Dr C. H. C. Brunton, 24 Lavington Court, 77 Putney Hill, London SW15 3NU.

Guidance for contributors The Editor urgently requires contributions, which must arrive by **mid November**, unless special arrangements have been made for late delivery.

Addresses Material for publication should be addressed to: Edward Pyatt, 64 Percy Road, Hampton, Middlesex. Tel 01-979 1450, but notes can be sent direct to Dr T. M. Connor, 19 Shaef Way, Teddington, Middlesex. Tel. 01-977 4796. Advertising is dealt with by: R. G. Pettigrew, Education Office, The Castle, Winchester, Hants and sales matters by West Col Productions, 1 Meadow Close, Goring, Reading, Berks RG8 OAP. Review copies of books and journals should be sent to the Alpine Club.

Miscellanea and Editors' Notes

Club Alpin Français We offer our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the Club Alpin Français on the occasion of its Centenary. The shores of the Lac du Bourget may well be said to have seen the beginnings of the CAF for it was there, in July 1870, that MM de Billy and Adolphe Joanne conceived the idea of forming a national association that would bring together all who were interested in mountains and in particular in the mountains of France at that time little known to most Frenchmen, though the Société Pyrénéiste Ramond had been founded by some British climbers in 1865. Adolphe Joanne, well known as the writer of many guide-books, was later an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club while de Billy was an Inspector of Mines and the son of one of Napoleon's generals killed at the battle of Jena.

The unhappy events of 1870 delayed any further steps being taken towards the foundation of a national mountaineering club. It was not until the end of March 1874 that the statutes were drawn up and a committee of 12 members elected (among them the Marquis de Turenne, later a member of the Alpine Club). The Club was officially founded on 2 April 1874, M de Billy being unanimously elected President; unfortunately, unaware of his new duties he did not live long to enjoy the honour, being killed 2 days later in a railway accident near Dijon. He was succeeded as President by Ernest Cézanne.

The first *Assemblée Générale* of the Club was held on 19 November 1874. There were 7 sections, the first to be founded being the Section de Paris, and 607 members. By December of the following year the membership had increased to 1634; in 1972 it had risen to 56,360. Within a few years of its foundation the CAF achieved a notable success when one of its younger members, H. E. Boileau de Castelnau, made the first ascent of the Grand Pic of the Meije in August 1877. We offer to the CAF our warmest good wishes for the future and for its continued success and well-being. **D. F. O. Dangar**

Anniversaries We offer our congratulations to Mr C. F. Meade, elected 2 February 1904 and an Honorary Member since 1965, and to Mr W. R. Caesar, elected 29 March 1903, who have now achieved seventy years membership of the Alpine Club.

D. F. O. Dangar

Litter Up to 150 tons of litter are left behind in the mountain huts of the Swiss Alpine Club by some 280,000 visitors each year. The SAC has come up with a new idea for the disposal of this large quantity of refuse. A *Mullkuli*—a metal bin with a special garbage disposal unit—is to be installed in the smaller huts. Incinerators for combustible material and compressors for tins will be used in larger huts. What remains will then be taken down to the valley by air or rail in sacks. Hut wardens will also be helped financially by the SAC. Keep Switzerland tidy! (Source: *News from Switzerland*). **D. F. O. Dangar**

Alpine Club of Pakistan This was recently set up by Ardeshir Cowasjee at the instance of Mr Bhutto, who has become the chief patron. Colonel Ata Ullah has been nominated as the first Convenor. Little is yet known of the precise intentions of the organisation, but the Prime Minister is reported as being keenly interested in promoting good fellowship among mountaineers, and he has begun what is hoped is a policy of opening hitherto 'difficult' areas by opening to the public the road to the Chinese border over the Khanjerab Pass. The headquarters is at PTDC Suite 221, Metropole, Karachi.

Michael Baker

Request for photographs of Cordilleran Glaciers During the last several decades there has occurred a very noticeable decrease in the flow of the Rivers San Juan, Mendoza, Tunuyan, Diamante and Atuel, fed exclusively by snow and ice from the high Cordillera in the Argentine provinces of San Juan and Mendoza. This is a matter of great concern, because these rivers are the only sources of water for the important agriculture of the two provinces.

In order to facilitate a study of the volume decrease of the glaciers on the Argentine side of the high Cordillera between Latitudes 30° and 36° south, Alpinists who have photographed glaciers in this region are kindly requested to send copies with approximate dates, location and other useful information to the 'Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Tecnicas', Calle Rivadavia 1917, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Council would also appreciate receiving information on the possible location in libraries, archives or private collections of older photos, especially those taken between the turn of the century and 1962, when the whole region was covered by aerial photography.

Henri Bader

Climbing environment The famous Calanques of Marseille are threatened by proposals to construct a corniche motor-road along the highest and wildest section between Cassis and les Goudes. The calanque of En Vau, which somewhat resembles an extended Cheddar Gorge running down to a small beach and a blue sea, is to be spanned by a viaduct similar to those breaking out these days all over the Alps. In spite of the almost complete lack of feeling usually exhibited by the vandals of British officialdom I cannot believe that we would allow the building of a viaduct across Cheddar Gorge. However, there is only an unmotorable track down the floor of En Vau, so that perhaps it is the road in Cheddar which saves it.

In places the crags will probably be blown up to make a way for the road, just as were the chalk pinnacles by the cliffs at Birchington—an irreversible change if there ever was one! These attacks on the landscape, small in themselves, total to a massive large-scale destruction. They have to be fought individually therefore and not allowed to get by because each one seems only small. All we can do from here is to write letters of protest, but we wish every success to those bodies, prominent among them the Section Provence of the CAF, which are struggling on the spot to avert this particular catastrophe.

Overturning the established order There is a regrettable tendency in climbers' guide-books these days to cater at length for the super-expert while substantially neglecting the average rock climber. This attitude is completely wrong. Only the media and those who get financial benefit from it want climbing to become an élitist sport concentrated on those capable of doing HXS. One of the good things about climbing in the past was that it attracted many a young person who, having failed completely at school as a player of ball games, turned to it in his later youth and became after all a thorough-going sportsman. Now there is a danger that young aspirants are put off if they do not achieve very high standards within a very short period, so that many a potential climber at VD or mild S will get the impression that the sport has little to offer him.

Turning to guide-books, it is of course the average climber who needs to be told where are the easier lines which he may perhaps accomplish. Accounts of exceptionally hard

96 *The Calanque—En Van* Photo: Edward Pyatt



lines, which only a handful of climbers can do anyway, are nothing more than boastful challenges thrown down to the rest. Those who feel they are engaged in a ranking contest should by all means promote their wares among themselves; but a far greater number remains who would still like to be told where they can safely proceed within their more modest standards.

Wilderness areas in Britain In *New Scientist* (October 1972) Jon Tinker puts forward some interesting proposals for modifying the present National Parks in England and Wales. It is well known that these are tending to be destroyed progressively by the pressures of tourism, military training and miscellaneous industrialisation, so that the ideals of the 1949 Act are never likely to be realised. It is now suggested that each Park be divided into a central wilderness area and a surrounding access area in which limited development of facilities, possibly on the lines of the present Country Parks, is allowed.

It is the wilderness areas which are likely to interest mountaineers. There would be no roads and no permanent residents, no hotels, shops, cafés or Youth Hostels; the only access would be on foot or horseback and overnight stays would involve either camp or bivouac. There would be no industry, no forestry and only limited grazing. Fifty square miles is regarded as the minimum viable area; it is estimated that 10 to 15 such areas could be set aside in England and Wales.

The proposed wilderness area in North Wales would require the closure of A5 between Capel Curig and Bethesda, of A4086 from Capel Curig to Nant Peris, of A498 from Pen y Gwryd to Nant Gwynant and of A487 from Beddgelert to Rhyd-Ddu.

'The British wilderness', the author concludes, 'still exists, precariously, today; but it will be gone for ever if we do not take action to safeguard it'.

Resort-building in the Alps More quotations from the national press:

Of Isola 2000, only 50 miles from Nice—'The real triumph was the layout of the resort as one huge balcony-hung building, zig-zagging across the suntrap at the centre of the valley, with all the facilities linked by heated indoor galleries. You go out to ski . . .'

Of Avoriaz, 40 miles from Geneva—'Some sea-faring influence appears to have come to bear on the architecture. At night the buildings look like lighted galleons on a foam-covered ocean . . . Externally, from quite a short distance, the rather irregular buildings, which are of reinforced concrete with unpolished copper roofing and cedar-tile cladding imported from Canada, so blend into the landscape as to be mistaken for rock formations.'

As others see us. 'Mountain climbing', writes Dr H. J. Campbell in *The Pleasure Areas* (Eyre Methuen, 1973), 'according to my definition must also fall into this category of the immature seeking after autonomic pleasures, for nothing of any material use is accomplished by scaling high rocks. Though the attractions of mountain climbing must be manifold, what permeates the whole unproductive endeavour are the difficulty and danger involved. Only rarely does the search for autonomic multiple sensation produce some real benefit for mankind, as with exploration or aviation, in which the early pioneers must have enjoyed the tremendous risks they ran.'

As a fellow member sees us ' . . . That geriatric eccentricity of the climbing world, the Alpine Club' (*Mountain*, May 1973).

Statistics A charming and entertaining article on 'Snow Crystals' by Charles and Nancy Knight in the *Scientific American* concludes with the following 'calculation bearing on the proverbial problem of whether or not there have ever been 2 identical snow crystals'.

'A typical snow crystal weighs about 10^{-6} gram. If the average amount of snow formed on the earth each year (including snow that melts or evaporates before it reaches the ground) is equivalent to a layer of liquid water 3 centimetres deep over the entire surface of the earth (probably an underestimate), and if the earth is 3 billion years old, then some 10^{35} snow crystals have formed in that time. This comes to some 10^{29} grams—about 50 times the mass of the earth. Each snow crystal, however, consists of some 10^{18} molecules of water. Considering the huge variety of ways that number of molecules can be arranged, it may well be that there have never been 2 identical snow crystals.'

Intervisibility The article on this subject in *AJ* 77 172 has led to correspondence with Norris McWhirter of the *Guinness Book of Records*, who asks what is the extreme example of intervisibility between peaks anywhere in the world. Among our readers there must be some who can report views at extreme distance from mountain tops, such as Mount Kenya from Kilimanjaro over 200 miles apart. Will they please write about it to the Hon Editor.

Editor's acknowledgements This number owes a great deal to D. F. O. Dangar (Assistant Editor), Tom Connor (Editorial Assistant), Paul Sharp (Designer), Peter Rowe (of the printers) and Bob Pettigrew (Business Manager). It is with considerable regret that I have to report that D. F. O. Dangar feels he can no longer carry on with the volume of work which he has undertaken on behalf of the *AJ* during the last 20 years; our debt to him is considerable and I shall miss his wise counsel at every turn.

The regional and general correspondents in this country have once again proved their worth. I am very grateful for the efforts of Richard Brooke, Derek Ellis, Charles Kemp, Bob Lawford, Peter Stubbs and Colin Taylor; their contribution is substantial. The efforts of a number of foreign correspondents are also gratefully acknowledged, while the following also gave help in various specialised fields—Mrs A. Babbage, E. N. Bowman, Mrs S. Parkinson, H. Pursey and Mrs A. Salkeld. The *Journal* owes a great deal also to my wife and daughter.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the dwindling numbers of contributors, whose efforts are reproduced herewith and the very considerable efforts they have made towards this production.

Finally I acknowledge with quite different feelings all those who refused for not very obvious reasons to contribute, those who hurriedly put forward an utterly useless alternative to themselves and those who engaged to contribute and then disappeared beyond the range of all enquiry and entreaty; they make the Editor's task considerably more arduous than it needs to be.

Edward Pyatt

Other Books Reviewed

Charles Kemp and others

Hazards in Mountaineering Helmut Dumler (Trans. by E. Noel Bowman, FRGS, pp 160. Profusely illustrated by photos and 2-colour line drawings). (Kaye and Ward Ltd, 1973. £2.90). This is the first version in English of a work which started with Emil Zsigmondy's book of about 1885. This was succeeded by a new work by Wilhelm Paulcke of Leipzig of some 500 pages which became a classic and ran to 6 editions the last of which appeared in 1933. The present version is up to date, condensed and covers pretty well every risk including those arising from equipment. It excludes rescue techniques and other highly specialised topics.

La Montagne des Autres Bernard Amy. Pp 230, 26 photos, 4 maps. In French (Arthaud, 1972). Bernard Amy describes a 14-man expedition to SE Turkey which accomplished several first ascents in the Cilo Dag Massif. It was a 'light' expedition. Much useful information is given on how the expedition was organised, how each member travelled out, the journey to the massif and the various climbs undertaken. The last third of the book relates the history and describes the way of life of the Kurds. The area is remote and a real sense of adventure was experienced. Amy's writing is vivid, evocative and has both sympathy and humour in due proportion. A very worthwhile book for those planning to visit the area and a very interesting one for those who are not.

Ski Court Gilbert Gauthier and Michel Vachez. In French, pp 112. (Arthaud, 1972). A very clear instructional book with 39 photos and 61 line drawings promoting the merits of short skis for beginners to acquire (and long absentees to regain) confidence.

A la Découverte du Ski de Fond Claude Terraz. In French pp 155 (Arthaud, 1972). Another very good instructional book profusely illustrated by photos and line drawings, for experienced skiers as well as beginners.