

Notes 1974 The Alps

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My thanks must go to Ken Wilson for supplying much of the information on which these brief notes are based. Full descriptions of other British ascents can be found in 'Alpine Climbing' and 'Mountain'.

Winter 1973/4

An increasing number of British and continental alpinists visited the Alps in 1973/4 resulting in several fine ascents and epics. The trend towards fast high angled ice climbing continues.

Mt Blanc du Tacul NE face. Bob Shaw and Dave Barton climbed a line in the Quille Couloir to the R of the Boccalatte Pillar. The top section of the route follows a steep ice couloir. The lower section is probably the same as the Macho route.

Another new route was made on this face by L. Griffin and Sé Billane. It follows a narrow couloir to the R of Gervasutti couloir. The climb was completed in 3 days. The climbers were caught by bad weather near the summit and took a further 5 days to reach Chamonix.

Mt Blanc Frêney Face. Gervasutti Pillar. First winter ascent. 22-28 January by Jean Coudray, Charles Daubas and Raymond Renaud. Ropes were fixed on the lower section and a new line was taken near the top R of the summer route.

Dômes de Miage NNW face (Blanc/Dujon route). The first winter ascent was made of this route on the 5 January by M. Berreux and P. Curral.

Aiguille du Plan N face. Roger Baxter-Jones and Dave Wilkinson climbed this face over several days in December.

Aiguille du Midi N face (Nativité spur). Robert Chere and Daniel Monaci made the first winter ascent of this route in March.

Grands Charmoz N face (Welzenbach route). Olivier Challet and Guy Abert made the first winter ascent between 11-13 March. They followed the Heckmair/Kröner exit.

Grandes Jorasses N face. A new direct route was made to the Point Whymper between the Japanese Couloir and the Bonatti/Vaucher route by Louis Audoubert, Marc Galy, Michel Feuillerade and Yannick Seigneur. The route was sieged between the end of December and 27 January. The final push began on 11 January. They reached the summit on the 27th where they were lifted off by helicopter.

Aiguille Verte Cordier couloir. Daniel Monaci made the first winter ascent on 27 January (solo).

Aiguille Verte Courturier couloir. 20 year old Jean Claude Charlet made the first winter ascent (solo) of the couloir during the night of March 2nd. He did the climb as a tribute to his father, the celebrated guide Armand Charlet (74) who made the original ascent in 1932.

Col Armand Charlet N face. Michel Afanassief and Elie Honoteau made the first winter ascent of the N couloir over 2 days in late February.

Tours des Courtes N face. Jean Pierre Bougerol, Dominique Marquis, Denis Ducroz and Bernard Germain made the first winter ascent. 21-22 February.

Mont Dolent N face. J. Belleville, Jean Marie Beaughey and Jean Dupraz climbed a new direct line up this ice face on 16–17 January.

Mt Collon N face. André Georges made the first winter ascent (solo) of the Georges/Schwartz arête.

Matterhorn N face (Gogna/Cerutti route). The first winter ascent of this route was made by Edgar Oberson and Thomas Gross during the last week of January. They were lifted from the summit by helicopter.

Trois Dents du Pelvoux N face (Couloir Chaude). J. M. Boivin and R. Berry made the first winter ascent of this steep ice couloir on 19–20 January.

Grande Casse N face (Coutin/Dupuy route). The coveted first winter ascent of this route was made by C. Pigeonnat, J. Brenat and the brothers J.-P. and J. Mermillod between 18–24 February.

Summer 1974

A season of mixed weather: long stretches that were relatively poor interspersed with good spells. Late July and early August saw most of the climbing activity.

In spite of the weather many fine ascents were made. Several deserve special mention. Joe Tasker and Dick Renshaw made what was probably the third ascent of the Gervasutti route on the E face of the Grandes Jorasses. Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler's 10 hour ascent of the Eigerwand was a particularly good effort since Messner had just returned from Makalu and Habeler from a long lay-off from hard climbing.

Japanese climbers, Susumu Inoue and Shine Matsumi made a noteworthy debut to the Alps by making a bold new route on the N face of the Grand Pilier d'Angle and later repeating the Cecchinel/Nominé route in a fast time.

Several high angle ice climbs were made and solo climbers were particularly active, for example Nicolas Jaeger who made a fine series of solo ascents: 23 July. Aig Peigne, Contamine/Vaucher route 1 h 40 min, SW arête and Fissure Lepiney 1 h; 24 July. Aig Argentière, SE arête of Minaret 2½ h, Arête du Jardin 3½ h; 28 July. Mt Blanc du Tacul, Gervasutti Pillar 7½ h; 29 July. Aig Verte, Nant Blanc-Charlet/Planatov route 7½ h; 2 August. Dru, S Pillar 5 h; 12 September. Aig Noire de Peuterey (Integral); 14 September. Pt Gugliermine-Gervasutti route 8 h.

Aig du Tacul NE arête. A new route by J. Afanassief and P. Cordier. 10 July. A mixed climb 900 m. D.

Aig Verte Nant Blanc face. Philip Cardis and Richard Beaumont combined the two Charlet routes on this magnificent face. They climbed the direct route (1963) to the foot of the upper spur and then traversed the upper couloir to join the 'diagonal' route of Charlet/Dévouassoud which was followed to the Ptn Croux.

Grand Dru Cecchinel/Jager couloir. Louis Audoubert, Jean Jaques Laines and Thierry Leroy made the second ascent (1st summer) of this serious route between 11–13 July.

Grands Charmoz Cordier route. J.-C. Droyer made the first solo ascent of this route.

Grand Pilier d'Angle Bonatti/Gobbi route. Richard McHardy and John Yates and later Pete Holden and Chris Radcliffe.

Petit Dru W face direct start. 10–12 ropes were reported on this route between 7–8 July. It is fast becoming the classic start to the W face.

Aig Blanche de Peuterey Oblique spur. 22–23 August. P. Olivet and D. Roulin made this new route which rises from the Frêne glacier to the SE summit. TD.

Grands Charmoz N face. John Bouchard soloed the face taking the Original Route and finishing up the Heckmair/Kröner exit.

Brèche du Triolet N face. The ice couloir leading to the brèche was climbed on 13 August by the Yugoslavs Igor Golli and Ignatev Sw hac.

Marmolata di Rocca S face. 16–17 July. Janez Gradisar, Igor Herog and Tina Mihelic made a new route on this face to the R of the Micheluzzi route.

Seconda Pala di San Lucano S and E faces. A. Gogna, G. Favetti and F. Ghio made new routes on these faces.

Gross Glockner N face. John Bouchard soloed the Welzenbach Direct.

NEW GUIDE-BOOKS

High Level Route. Chamonix–Zermatt–Sass (Ski Mountaineering in the Mont Blanc Range and Pennine Alps) Eric Roberts (West Col, 1973, 136 pp, £2.75)

This is the first English guide to the High Level Route. In fact as its sub-title implies, it is more than this, since it contains details of possible ski mountaineering ascents in the whole of the area covered by the route and its variants. Possible climbs are divided into three categories: the classic High Level Route, alternative high level routes and ascents of mountains easily accessible from these routes. The last is subdivided into Mont Blanc and the Pennine Alps and contains details of ascents of 44 mountains or mountain groups. In addition there is a wealth of information on topics such as the history of the Route, on necessary equipment, approaches, maps, huts etc. Although the quality of the maps is perhaps disappointing, the guide is a thorough and comprehensive account of ski mountaineering in this region.

Mittel Switzerland Lepontine–Ticino–Adula Alps Compiled by Michael Anderson (Pilot Alpine Guide, West Col Productions, 1974, 51 pp)

A very brief guide to the 3 ranges lying between the Simplon and Splügen Passes. It follows the philosophy of the pilot Guide Series, ie to provide information on regions not covered by more permanent and detailed guide-books in English. The few photographs do little to add to one's appreciation of the area.

Bregaglia West Sciora–Cengalo–Badile–Trubinasca Compiled and edited by R. G. Col-lomb (West Col, Alpine Guides, 2nd ed, 1974, 136 pp)

A much expanded version of the 1967 guide which aims to correct some of the inconsistencies found in foreign guides and maps, and to cover all the worthwhile climbing in the area on a selective basis.

Les Aiguilles Rouges. Perrons–Fis–Massifs de Colonne et de Plate Pierre Bossus (Arthaud, 1974, 240 pp, 48F)

This guide replaces the 'Guide Vallot' to the Aiguilles Rouges de Chamonix which appeared in 1946, and takes account of the many new routes of increasing difficulty which have been recorded since then. There are descriptions of 439 climbs, 30 diagrams and information on huts and access.

Klatrefører for Norge. (Climbing Guides to Norway) Compilation by the Norsk Tinde-klub Oslo

The Norwegian Alpine Club is producing this loose-leaf guide to climbing in Norway. For this purpose, the country has been divided into 30 separate geographical regions, and the

Club aims to cover climbs in the whole country in an identical format as details of routes are made available to them. Not surprisingly route descriptions are (unfortunately) in Norwegian, although there is some explanatory introductory material in English.

Escalades à Surgy G. Pellé and G. Richard (CAF Section de l'Orleanais and Section Nivernais-Yonne, 1974) and **Escalades Fixin Brochon** B. Quartaux (CAF Section Cote d'Or, 1974)

Two new climbers' guide-books to limestone outcrop crags—weekend trip distance from Paris. The first is only a few miles from Saussois, the other close to Dijon.

