

AUSTRALASIA

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Henry Barber made a considerable impact during a 6 week visit. At Frog Buttress in Queensland, where there were previously no climbs above grade 21 which did not require aid, he made 4 clean ascents of grade 23 and 12 of 22. He also made 11 free first ascents in the area. It was hoped that his 6 state tour might provide some basis for comparative grading of different climbing areas. However, this expectation did not materialise, although in some instances he tended to grade climbs slightly lower than the guide books, so that overall some confusion resulted. One of the first climbs graded 23 in Australia (by I. Lewis at Mount Buffalo Gorge in Victoria) was later downgraded to 22 by Barber.

However, local climbers have not been inactive, and many outstanding climbs have been achieved in all the states. The elimination of aid on hard routes is a continuing theme in all this activity.

NEW ZEALAND

In the Mount Cook area, poor weather hampered climbing. However, J. Fantini with various companions established several new routes, the W Buttress of Mount Vancouver from the La Perouse Glacier, the right-hand buttress of the N face of Mount Hicks and the 'Hidden' Balfour Face of Mount Tasman. Late in the season W. Denz, P. Herron and M. Judge completed a new route on the S face of Mount Hicks which had defeated them the previous winter.

The Arrowsmiths are becoming a popular region, the attraction being a number of steep ice-gullies. The Darrans are being developed after a spate of first ascents in the last few seasons. Thus, 2 more routes have appeared on the N face of Sabre, one by the original team of Denz, Murray and Judge and the other by Herron, R. Aitken and N. Whiston. A number of first ascents have been recorded in other regions e.g. the E face of Castor by G. McCallum and Margaret Fyfe in the Wilkin area, and the Kitchener Face of Aeroplane in the Aspiring area, by B. Robertson and L. Kennedy.

NORTH AMERICA

ALASKA—YUKON

Summer 1974 saw the first Polish expedition in this area. They climbed Mount McKinley by the W rib and later Mount Hubbard and Mount Kennedy in the St Elias Range; 2 members of the party were killed by an avalanche under the Weisshorn when attempting an unnamed peak near by. Steve and Gary Tandy made the first winter ascent of Mount Foraker (5302 m) in February 1975 in 5 days. Mount Deborah, a hard ice-peak which has resisted repeated attempts since its first ascent in 1953 by Beckey, Harrer and Meybohm has been climbed again by Pettigrew, Stuart, Condron, Hoffman, Oknik and Wheeler via a new route on the SW ridge. There has also been considerable activity in the Kichatna Spires in the Alaska Range; this area has been compared with the FitzRoy/Cerro Torre regions of Patagonia, and there is evidently considerable scope for new climbs. Some first ascents have been recorded in the Fairweather Range; Mount Wilbur (3298 m) via the 2000 m S ridge and Peak 12,606 ft via the Fairweather Glacier and the N ridge. 'Mountain' 43 40 contains an account by Gary Bocarde of the first ascent of the SW face of the Moose's Tooth, a 800 m rock face. A new route on the S Face has been recorded by J. Krakauer, T. Davies and N. Zinsser following an 800 m couloir; the climb was completed in a single 22 hour push. These 2 ascents of the Tooth are a good illustration of the trend to big wall climbing under Alpine conditions characteristic of current activity in Alaska.

Don Sheldon, the noted bush pilot, died of cancer on 26 January. He made a considerable contribution to the climbing world by supporting expeditions, particularly Bradford Washburn's photographic and mapping activities, and in carrying out daring mountain rescues.

CANADIAN ROCKIES

A new trend to ice climbing in the Rockies mentioned in AJ 80 235 has been described in detail by Bugs McKeith in articles appearing in CAJ 1975 8 (Details of 20 ice climbs up till April 1974) and in 'Mountain' 41 16. A noteworthy climb of the very difficult Central Couloir of the N face of Mount Kitchener was completed by J. Lowe and M. Weiss. They commenced in the evening at the bottom of the couloir to minimize stone-fall danger, and climbed continuously for 26 hours.

AMERICAN RANGES

The journal 'Off Belay' is publishing a series of review articles on climbing areas in the USA. Those that have featured to date include the Californian Palisade Mountains, a fine granite range in the Sierra Nevada, the Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho and the rocks of the Columbia River gorge in Oregon.

Yosemite Bertone and Cosson made a near winter ascent of the Nose in November 1974, the first Italian rope in the valley. A review of recent climbs on El Capitan by the Canadian climber Hugh Burton appears in 'Mountain' 44 24; events here are apparently not following the trend to free ascents typical of the rest of the valley. The prospects for winter ice climbing in Yosemite during the brief periods of cold weather have been investigated in the last few seasons. Kevin Worrall and Keith Chapman made 2 outstanding ice climbs in the 74/75 winter; the upper part of Sentinel Falls and the Widow's Tears. The ephemeral nature of the ice will probably limit this development. On Elephant Rock, the first 5.12 route has appeared, Hot Line having been climbed completely free by Kauk and Bachar. In Tuolumne, Wailing Wall is another route graded 5.12, due to Bridwell, Bard and Accamoza.

New England Last winter, the harder than average conditions resulted in a burst of winter climbing activity in many areas ('Mountain' 44 10). An ice grading system has been devised for local comparative purposes, i.e. the New England Ice (NEI) system. The Adirondacks appear to be entering a period of very active exploration.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The AAC's controversial guide certification scheme, mentioned in last year's triennial review, was thrown out by a meeting of the Club's directors in April 1975. Rather than requiring mandatory guide certification, the Board has voted to establish a series of educational seminars to be conducted as a public service to the climbing community.

The following guides are noted:

Climbers' Guide to the Rocky Mountains of Canada—North William L. Putnam, Robert Kruszyna and Chris Jones (American Alpine Club and Alpine Club of Canada, Springfield, Mass., 6th edition, 1974, pp 289, \$7.80 members, \$8.80 non-members)

Alpine Guide to Southwestern British Columbia Dick Culbert (Published by Dick Culbert, 1st edition, 1974, pp 441, \$9.75)

Rock Climbing in Ontario (ACC Toronto section, 85 Fallingbrook Rd., Scarborough, Ontario, 1974, 1st edition, pp 96, \$4.00)

Wilderness Digest—Guide to California and Grand Canyon Wilderness permits Don M. Deck ed. (Published annually in May by Wilderness Digest, PO Box 188, Independence, California 93526, USA, pp 64, \$1.25)

Starr's Guide to the John Muir Trail Starr Jn. (Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco, California 94104, USA, pp 156, \$3.95)

Rock Climbs in Yosemite Dave Nichol ed. (Private publication. Available from the editor at Hawse End Centre, Portinscale, Keswick, Cumbria, £1.60)

Climbing Mount Whitney W. Wheelock and T. Condon (1975, pp 36, \$1.00)