

SOUTH AMERICA

As in the Himalaya, there is a trend in the Andes to small alpine style expeditions by small teams—this was particularly so in Patagonia in the 1976–7 winter season.

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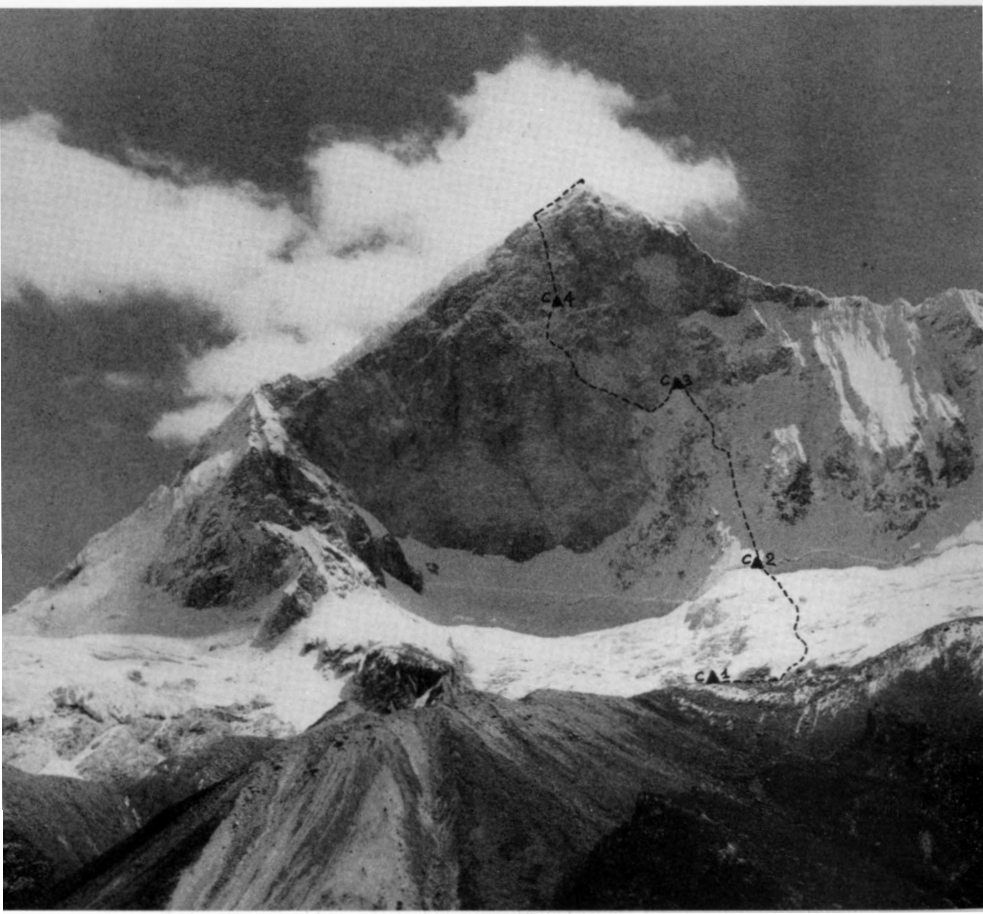
In the summer of 1976, Rab Carrington and Alan Rouse made an Alpine style first ascent of the 1500m S face of Nevado Yerupaja (6632m), with 2 bivouacs, one on the face and one on the summit. It was mostly a 55° ice-climb (ED); they descended via the W face, the 20 pitches on 45–50° ice taking a mere 2½ hours. This pair also registered a number of other first ascents; the W face of Nevado Rondoy (5883m), a mixed and steep ice-climb completed in 2 days (1100m, EDsup); the S face of Nevado Rasac (6040m), a very sustained EDsup route with 12 ice-pitches of Scottish Grade 5; the NNW face of Ancocancha (5644m), a short ice-climb (600m, D) which took 5 hours.

In 1976, a Japanese party led by Ikuo Kakimoto climbed the NNE ridge of Yerupaja in 3 weeks with 4 camps, Kondo and Hayashi reaching the summit on 21 August.

CORDILLERA BLANCA

In the summer of 1976, 3 parties were climbing on the S face of Huandoy Sur (6160m). The first success and first ascent was by the Japanese team under Kakimoto, 3 climbers reaching the summit on 27 June. They were followed by an Italian expedition led by Franco Nembrini on 6 July. Finally a French party under René Desmaison completed the climb on 22 July. All

98 *Huandoy Sur—S face* (Photo: G. Barachetti)



the parties took different routes that are extremely difficult climbs involving precarious bivouacs and vertical aid climbing.

A Polish party led by Stanislaw Zierhoffer had also hoped to climb the S face of Huandoy Sur, but when they found 3 other groups there before them, turned their attention to Huandoy Norte (6395m). They made the first ascent of the 900m E face in August 1976, 3 climbers reaching the summit.

A 6-man Spanish party made the first ascent of the NE ridge of Nevado Pucaranra (6147m); the summit was reached by 4 climbers and a local porter after a 3-day push from a camp at 5200m. A subsequent attempt by this party on the W face of Nevado Chinchey (6222m) almost met with disaster. They were hit by an avalanche 120m below the summit and were swept down 900m; luckily, only one member was injured seriously.

South African climbers Dave Cheesmond and Phil Dawson made ascents of Nevado Alpamayo (5947m) and Artesonraju (6025m) in the summer of 1976. They made the first ascent of the NW face of Nevado de Ulta (5375m) in late July, the climb taking 5 days.

In 1977 a French expedition led by Nicolas Jaeger made a number of new ascents in the Cordillera Blanca. Jaeger made the first solo ascent of the SW face of Alpamayo in 2½ hours on 26 May descending the N face in 45 minutes. Later, on 31 May he made a first ascent of Santa Cruz Sur (6259m) by the N ridge (the first solo climb of the mountain; time 5½ hours) and on the same day 2 other members of the party climbed the mountain by a direct route on the NE

99 *Mount Friga—W face (Photo: S. Parr)*

face in 9½ hours. Later they made new routes on Ranrapalca (6168m); a solo by Jaeger of the SE face and a new route on the E ridge by 3 other members. Subsequently, Jaeger made solo ascents of Pucaranra and Paclaraju (6274m). An ascent of Huascarán by a party of 4 was followed by a long glider descent into the Mitapampa Valley, 4000m below, by Rene Ghilini—a new height record.

CORDILLERA REAL

Cheesmond and Dawson also climbed in this range. They made what turned out to be the second ascent of the very long and rocky NE ridge of Nevado Illimani (6462m). They estimated that they had done 5km of technical climbing with 1500m of ascent, 1500m of traversing to reach the N ridge, and a further 1500m of descent to regain the screes. (In fact, an Italian team under Zappelli had made the first ascent earlier in the season.) They made a first ascent in 3 days of the W ridge of Tiquimani (5550m) also, mainly a rock route; in both cases, the rock was of good quality.

PATAGONIA

Climbers from many nations were active in Patagonia in the 1976–7 season. In the FitzRoy area, John Whittle and Brian Hall made the first ascent of the last major unclimbed peak, Cerro Stanhardt on 8 March. They were forced to retreat on their first attempt, but later



returned, gained their previous high point, bivouacked and climbed the 300m head-wall the following day. The Americans John Bragg and Jay Wilson reached the summit of Cerro Torre a year after their first ascent of Torre Egger. Rouse and Carrington climbed a new route on the W face of the Aiguille Poincenot in 15 hours having previously failed on the 2100m W face of FitzRoy—they completed 1500m before bad weather intervened. In all, 9 climbers reached the summit of FitzRoy in the season using either the American or Super Couloir routes.

In the Paine group, Cheesmond and Dawson made the first ascent of The Mummer (c 2150m) in 20 pitches (A3, 5sup).

The following guide-books have been received:

Guía de Excursionismo para la Cordillera de Santiago Gastón San Román (Santiago: Federación de Andinismo de Chile, 1977, 81 illustrations in black and white, pp 136) Text in Spanish, describing the hiking that can be done in the Andean district of Santiago province, in central Chile. Hikes from about 1000 to 5400m high are surveyed; some reach passes on the Argentinian border. There is no map (readers are referred to military maps sold in the country) and photos are a bit too dark. But heights, distances, resources, huts, camps, points of interest and even local folklore are efficiently covered. Considering the quality of the text alone, this work is in my opinion the best so far published by an Andean mountaineer. Unfortunately this, the first Chilean mountain guide, appears when much of the area it describes has been awarded in concession to foreign copper companies and closed to local climbers and hikers.

E. Echevarría

Nievesy Riscos Merideños R. A. Romero (Caracas: Cromotip, 1976, 108 illustrations in black and white, 16 in colour, pp 246). Romero surveys the expeditions that his club, the Centro Excursionista de Caracas, carried out in the Sierra Nevada de Mérida between 1936 and 1976, mostly around Pico Bolívar the Liberator and an exaggerated patriotism shows in almost every page. But from the viewpoint of the illustrations, this is the best coverage of the Mérida range that has so far appeared and photography alone can make this book worth its price.

E. Echevarría

POLAR REGIONS

In Greenland in 1976, a number of small parties of various nationalities were active in the S and W. Among these were 2 Spanish groups who were in the Evighedsfjord (led by Ramon Mansol) and Wegeners Halvo (led by Jordi Riera) areas; the latter sailed from Spain in a 30ft boat. Both parties made some first ascents of minor peaks. The British Trans Globe Expedition under its leader Sir Ranulph Twistleton Wickham-Fiennes with members Charles Burton and Oliver Shapard spent the summer in Thule training and testing equipment preparatory to their aim of following the Greenwich meridian around the world. The expedition started in August 1977, will use surface transport only, and will take 3 years to complete. In April 1976, Jeni and Derek Fordham, with 2 Eskimos, travelled from Thule via the Kane Basin and along the E coast of Ellesmere Island, where they surveyed some palaeo-Eskimo settlements.

The 1977 South African Baffin Island Expedition, led by L. P. Fatti, attempted the N face of Tasuit Tower. This peak had already been climbed and named Bastion by Roger O'Donovan's party (see *AJF* 1977 202). They were driven back by bad weather; however, 2 members climbed the Tower by an easy ridge at the back and also 3 other peaks, one Castle—a first ascent. See p 153.

Steve Parr writes that he and Phil Bartlett climbed in Baffin Land in July and August 1976. An attempt on the S face of Mount Asgard was foiled by bad weather. However, they made 2 major new ascents. The first was a rock-tower in a valley S of Tyr Peak, lying fairly close to Summit Lake. The route was via the NW ridge (about 2000ft) in 23 hours with 60 aid points; upper and lower thirds fairly sustained (Vsup and A2) with a middle section on slabs and cracks (IVsup). They also climbed the W face of Mount Friga (see accompanying photo); a mixed route with 2500 to 3000ft of climbing in 8½ hours. There was considerable objective danger from avalanches from the upper couloirs but the technical rock standard was low (Scottish buttress climbing up to IV). Also in July 1976, Craig McKibben and Clark Gerhardt climbed a new route on the E face of Turnweather Peak in Baffin Land (3000ft, 5.8, A2). In addition, they made 2 other good ascents nearby. Further detail is given in *Mountain* 53 13.