

Regional Notes 1979

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As far as is known, all these notes refer to events which took place in 1979, unless otherwise stated.

THE ALPS AND EUROPE

As usual, extensive coverage of the year's activities has appeared in *Mountain* and elsewhere, and the reader must refer to these sources for detailed accounts of the many new routes that have been recorded. It is fair to say that the large majority of these are additional routes added on faces which already boast a wealth of previous lines, or climbs of existing routes done in better style, ie by reducing or eliminating aid. We try to illustrate these trends below by mentioning some of the more outstanding achievements.

Free climbing of hard rock routes is the main objective of climbers in several regions of the Alps as in other areas of the world; in addition to the W Alps, there have been considerable achievements in the Wetterstein, Kaiser, Berchtesgaden, Dolomites, Urner Alps and the Rätikon Alps. Free ascents with continuous sections of 5b and 5c are being done, graded at Alpine VIII. It is thus thought that some of the new climbs are harder than the Pumprisse, the first to be graded VII. The first woman to climb the Pumprisse was the German girl, Christel Feederle with the Swiss Hans Howald in late 1978. They also climbed the Philip Flamm route on the Civetta, the Carlesso on the Torre Trieste and several other first free ascents in 1978. Hundreds of routes in the Dolomites have been freed. For example, Peter Livesey, along with the German free-climbing expert Nicko Mailander free-climbed the W face of the Cima Scotoni, which has a section graded VIII, the SE pillar of the Pilastrò di Rozei (graded VII+), and a virtually free ascent of the Brandler/Hasse route on the Rotwand. Livesey estimates that this last route is a more serious undertaking than many Yosemite classics and is perhaps more comparable with the hardest routes on the Diamond on Long's Peak. Similar activity has been reported on French limestone and in Switzerland; in the latter, the S pillar of Gandschijon in the Urner Alps was climbed free, the first Swiss VII, by W. Kraus and S. Scharz. A developing climbing area in Switzerland is the Handegg Wall on the Grimsel Pass—the climbs on granite are easily accessible and are similar in character to the Glacier Point Apron in Yosemite. Hans Howald, mainly partnered by Christel Feederle, climbed a number of new routes here in the summer. More information, including a photo-key to the wall, is given in *Mountain* 70 18.

Solo ascents are popular in all parts of the Alps; the following are examples. The first winter solo of the Walker Spur on the Grandes Jorasses was made by the Japanese climber, Tuneo Hasegawa, between 25 February and 4 March. His ascent was filmed and the result is to be called 'Ballad of the North Face'. On les Courtes, the first winter solo ('free') of the Swiss route on the N face was made by Jerome Saadi in 11 hours on 22 February, from the Argentièrè Hut and back, the descent being via the NE face. The Charlet/Platonov route on the Aiguille Verte was soloed by Michel Berreux on 24/25 February. Patrick Berhault had a remarkable season of soloing including: Lagarde/Segogne couloir, Aiguille du Plan (4½ hours); Super Couloir, Mont Blanc de Tacul (3½ hours); Terray/Rebuffat route, N face of the Aiguille des Pèlèrins (4 hours); the Cornau/Davaille route, N face of les Droites (5¼ hours); the Grande Pilièr d'Angle by Dufour/Frehel (3 hours) and Bonatti/Zapelli (2 hours); Carpentier Pillar, Grands Charmoz (5 hours); NE couloir of the Drus (6¼ hours). Another very active solo climber was Patrick Edlinger: Kelle route, SE face of Tête d'Aval de Montbrisson (2¼ hours); Bonatti route, NE face of Pic Coolidge; Fourastier route, Ailefroide Central. The last 2 were begun at 10pm and completed by daylight. Martin Moran (UK) made the first solo ascent of the British route, Piz Badile (750m, VI, A2), on 23/24 July.

A Polish team consisting of K. Pankiewicz, Z. Wach, A. Warm and M. Serwa made the first winter ascent of the Comici/Benedetti route on the Civetta NW face, between 4 and 14 March. The 1500m climb has 200m of summer Grade VI and over 600m of V/V+. Temperatures were as low as -15°C and a storm on 8 March led to unstable snow on the upper part of the route. Only 20m of the climb were aided. A Czech party (L. Slechta, J. Svedja, J. Kutiw and T. Prochaska) squeezed in a new route on the Grandes Jorasses between the Walker Spur and the Desmaison route on 25-29 July. It is the 17th route on the face and has pitches of VI and A3. Slechta was hit by stones some 100m from the summit and had to be evacuated by helicopter; the route was thus named 'Rolling Stones'.

Between 18 and 20 August, Christian Roussel, partnered by Jacques Duc completed the

circuit of Mont Blanc (Chamonix; Les Contamines; Col du Bonhomme; Les Chapieux; Col de Balme; Chamonix) in 25 hours. The 160km circuit involves 6500m of ascent. Later Roussel, with Jacques Berlie improved the record to 21 hours 48 minutes. The Chamonix to Zermatt Haute Route record was improved by Jean-Pierre Bernard to a round 24 hours.

Four French climbers, M. Berreux, L. Audoubert, P. Luneau, and M. Babilion made the most extensive traverse of the Mont Blanc massif to date between 2 and 16 September. Starting from the Albert Premier Hut, the route included traverses of the Aiguille d'Argentière, Tour Noir, Dolent, Triolet, Talèfre, Leschaux, Jorasses, Mont Maudit, Mont Blanc and the Dôme de Miage, Col de Bonhomme and finished at the Trélatête Hut. Eight nights were spent in bivouacs and 5 in huts. The route was largely between the heights of 3500 and 4800m, was 40km in length and took in 25 summits and 10 cols. *Montagnes Magazine* 12 60 contains an account in interview with Michel Berreux.

Extreme ski-ing has a limited but increasing following since the first descents by Sylvain Saudan in the late 1960s. *Montagnes Magazine* 11 16 has a feature on this topic by Hubert Gay-Couttet including comments by Saudan and another noted performer, Patrick Vallencant. The following list of key descents is taken from this article and includes ranges other than the Alps:

- 1967 *September*: Couloir Spencer, Aiguille de Blaitière, Sylvain Saudan
 1968 *June*: Whympet Couloir, Aiguille Verte, Saudan
October: Gervasutti Couloir, Mont Blanc du Tacul, Saudan
 1969 *June*: Marinelli Couloir, Monte Rosa, Saudan; S Face Marmolada, Heini Holzer
October: NW face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay, Saudan
 1970 *March*: SW face of the Eiger, Saudan
 1971 *April*: NE face of les Courtes, Serge Cachat; S face Grandes Jorasses, Saudan; N couloir Torre Innerkofler, Holzer
May: Couloir des Italiens, La Grande Casse, Patrick Vallencant; N face Koenigspitz, Holzer
June: N face Tour Ronde, Vallencant
September: Couloir Copt, Aiguilles Dorées, Cachat
 1972 *March*: N face Bellecote, Vallencant
July: NW face Lenzspitze, Holzer; Piz Palu, N face, Holzer; Couloir en Y, Aiguille d'Argentière, P. and Marie-José Vallencant
September: W face Col de Miage, Jacky Bessat
 1973 *June*: N face Aiguille de Gouter, Cachat; W face Mont Blanc, Saudan; Brenva Spur, Mont Blanc, Holzer
August: Couturier Couloir, Aiguille Verte, Cachat; NE couloir Dômes de Miage, Bessat
 1974 *June*: N face Aiguille d'Argentière, Holzer; N face of W summit of Lyskamm, Holzer
July: Voie Normale, Chardonnet, Cachat; Couloir de la Table, Aiguille du Tour, Cachat and Daniel Semblanet
 1975 *Spring*: SE face Matterhorn, Toni Valéruz; Oisans, N couloir Coup de Sabre, N couloir Col du Diable, couloir Barre Noire, Vallencant
July: N face Ciaforon, Yves Anselmet; S couloir Col Armand Charlet, Anselme Baud
 1976 *June*: Argentière slope Col des Courtes, Daniel Chauchefoin and Dominique Delahaye; Couloir du Diable Mont Blanc du Tacul, Chauchefoin; NE face Aiguille de Trélatête, Bessat
 1977 *March*: Jaeger Couloir, Mont Blanc du Tacul, Bessat; Couloir Puiseux, Périades, B. Delafosse, J. P. Mansart and D. Potard
May: N face Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey, Baud and Vallencant; N face Aiguille du Midi, Chauchefoin, Baud and Yves Détry (with rappelling); Frendo Spur, Aiguille du Midi, Jean-Marc Boivin and Laurent Giacomini (with rappelling)
June: N face Col de Peuterey, Boivin and Gabarrou; Sentinelle Rouge, S face Mont Blanc, Bessat (with rappelling)
July: Voie des Autrichiens aux Courtes, Chauchefoin (with rappelling); Oisans, Couidors couloir, Montaz and Puiseux; N face Aiguille du Plan, Boivin and Giacomini
September: NE face Chardonnet, Boivin and Détry; N face Grande Casse, Boivin
 1978 *April*: couloir between Route Major and Sentinelle Rouge, S face Mont Blanc, Valéruz
May: SW face Pointe Matthews, Chauchefoin; Couloir Barbey Aiguille d'Argentière, Chauchefoin
July: N slope E col Pelvoux, Christian Duval
 1979 *May*: direct descent of the Couloir de la Table Aiguille du Tour, Potard and Jean-Paul Lassalle

High-altitude descents

- 1969 *June*: 2 Japanese skiers make the first ski descent of Mount McKinley (6200m)
 1972 *June*: SW face of Mount McKinley, Saudan
 1977 *Spring*: Descent of Nun Kun (7135m), Saudan
 1978 *Spring*: Descent of Chimborazo (6310m), Thierry Renard; Huascarán Nord (6650m), Vallencant; Huascarán Sud, Boivin, Michel Poencet, Dominique André, Vallencant; Chopiqualqui (6420m), P. and M.-J. Vallencant
May: Cardon Massili route on Huyana Potosi, D. Chapuis
June: N face Quitaraju, Boivin and Poencet
July: descent of Yanapatcha, Dominique and James Merel
Autumn: ski descent from above 8000m for the first time, Everest, Jean Afanassieff and Nicolas Jaeger
 1979 *Spring*: Yerupaja (6832m), Vallencant

La Montagne et Alpinisme 116 56 has a brief article which gives a French view of extreme ice-climbing ('Glacé Extreme') written by one of the exponents of extreme ski-ing whose name appears frequently in the list above, Jean-Marc Boivin. In particular, the author gives his view of the grading of ice-climbs, quoting specific examples using the French system ranging from the Gervasutti Couloir on the Tour Ronde at AD inf to the Boivin/Diaffria/Vionnet/Fuasset route on the Pic Sans Nom at ED sup. He also discusses the use of Grades III, IV and V of the Scottish system with examples.

The Massif d'Oisans is not normally a region considered in the context of ski touring. However, in *Montagnes Magazine* 10 80, César Ilaire describes the first traverse of the Haute Route d'Oisans, commencing at la Grave and finishing after 11 separate stages at Villard Notre Dame, just S of Bourg d'Oisans. The route was pioneered by A. Charbonnier, V. Louis and R. Martin, all aspirant guides, and is therefore presumably not for beginners.

Alpinisme et Randonnée 9 28 contains an excellent article on climbing in the Verdon Gorge by Jean-Luc le Floch which complements earlier articles mentioned last year, eg Peter Livesey in *Mountain* 61 22. A centre page folding spread gives a 4-page panoramic view of the N side of the gorge on which are marked 62 routes; 17 of these are further described in a detachable section consisting of diagrams showing individual pitches and their gradings. British climbers have recently shown a lot of interest in the Gorge and in the Calanques, both of which give long rock climbs of good quality on sun-drenched rock. In keeping with this interest, Al Evans describes in *Crags* 21 32 some of the rock-climbing potential offered by the Costa Blanca in Spain. The centre of the area, Benidorm, is well known for its devotion to less strenuous pursuits, but it appears that there are a number of mountains nearby which offer excellent scope—long routes up to 600m and the prospects of good weather.

Another climbing area in Spain is described in *Montagnes Magazine* 12 82 which contains a short article by Olivier Schulz on Les Mallos de Rigos, which are in the Spanish Pyrenees about 100km S of the Col de Somport. Les Mallos are vertical pillars (apparently of limestone) with deep chimneys and few cracks, providing difficult climbs not easily protected without the use of pitons or bolts.

Two new French monthly publications, *Montagnes Magazine* and *Alpinisme et Randonnée* appeared at the end of 1978 and have been referred to in these notes. They may be described as covering ground intermediate between *Mountain* and *Climber and Rambler*, although both in addition give a large coverage to various aspects of ski-ing. Both are extremely well produced and provide interesting reading.

The following guide-books have been received or are noted:

Le Mont Viso—Guide d'Escalades H. Gentil (Collection Alpes et Midi, Escalade no 2, Ophrys, 1977, pp 75, maps, photos and diagrams). A brief guide in French covering Monte Viso and the surrounding area of the Cottian Alps.

Kletterführer Klausen-Urnersee Heinz Leuzinger (Verlag Schweizer Alpen-Club, 1977, pp 126, diagrams and photos). A climber's guide to the Klausen-Urnersee region of Switzerland.

Bernese Alps East and Bernese Alps West Robin G. Collomb (Alpine Club, 1979, pp 174, 28 diagrams and pp 234, 44 diagrams respectively). These are revised versions of the material originally contained in *Selected Climbs in the Bernese Alps*, published in 1968. It is now much expanded and issued in 2 volumes dealing with the 2 regions. The Jungfrauoch is taken as the natural division between them.

Ski Alpin Vol 3—Alpes Valaisannes Andre Pont (Club Alpin Suisse, 1977, pp 229, plus 64 aerial photos, further diagrams and photos). This hard-back guide to ski tours and climbs in the Alpes Valaisannes gives useful introductory material on the dangers encountered in ski touring, mountain rescue procedures, maps, cabins and other types of accommodation before going on to describe 165 basic tours, many with several variants. The routes are shown on the 64 aerial photographs which are grouped together at the back of the guide. A well-produced and organized publication providing all the information needed to plan ski tours in this region.

Guide Vallot—La Chaîne du Mont Blanc IV Gino Buscaini and Lucien Devies (Arthaud, 1979, pp 272, many diagrams and maps). This is a 4th edition of this standard guide which covers the areas Grandes Jorasses, Géant, Rochefort, Leschaux and Talèfre.

Falaises de la Seine—Les Andelys F. Bocianowski (R.S.C.M., Montreuil, 1978). A topo-guide to cliffs on the Seine, including Les Andelys, La Roquette and Le Thuit.

La Montagne et Alpinisme 116 105 contains a useful list of all available guides (in the French language) for mountain and rock-climbing and also for mountain-walking and Grandes Randonnées.

AFRICA

In *AJ* 83 236 the question of what constitutes the 'Grand Traverse' of Mount Kenya was raised, following a report in *AJ* 81 236 when we stated that D. Cheeseman and P. Snyder had made the second traverse. P. H. Hicks wrote that he and Firmin had made the first ascent of the N face and had traversed over Batian and Nelion in 1944, descending via the SE face, and suggested that this was in fact the second traverse of the mountain. He pointed out that Firmin and Howard later made traverses during their climbs and felt that others must have done likewise.

Fortunately, John Howard himself has kindly written to shed some light on these points. His definition of the Grand Traverse is a complete traverse from Point Piggott to Point John via Firmin Col, the W ridge of Batian, over Nelion and on to Point John. This is apparently described in an article by Rusty Baillie in the *Bulletin of the Mountain Club of Kenya* (58 18; June 1964, and also in *AJ* 70 294). The climb described in *AJ* 81 236 was evidently the second occasion. He points out that Point Piggott and Point John are in fact outlying peaks though certainly connected by ridges to the main peaks Batian and Nelion. Shipton and Tilman of course made the first traverse of these main peaks in 1930 by the W ridge of Batian and the descent of Nelion by the ordinary route (*AJ* 43 138). Later traverses were made by Firmin and Hicks in 1944 (as indicated above; *AJ* 55 76), Firmin and Howard in 1946 (first ascent of the SW ridge of Batian and descent by Nelion ordinary route; *AJ* 55 400) and by the same pair in 1948 (2nd ascent W ridge of Batian and descent by Batian N face; *AJ* 57 94), the first traverse not involving Nelion.

The Grand Traverse is apparently a formidable undertaking. Not only is the climb long (2 bivouacs) but part of it will be iced up and out of season no matter what time of year is chosen (*AJ* 69 304). In addition, Midget Peak could be included also (a Super Grand Traverse?).

The above discussion has dealt with some of the history of earlier climbs on Mount Kenya. More recent events are reviewed in a substantial and well-illustrated article in *Mountain* 67 35 by Iain Allan, who himself has contributed considerably to the advent of hard rock-climbing on the mountain. He identifies Barry Cliff's climb on the NE pillar route of Nelion in 1963 as the initiation of the modern phase although he rightly credits Ian Howell as the recent activating influence who has realized the potential indicated by this 1963 climb. The last 5 years have been a very busy period on the mountain, but much unclimbed rock still remains on Batian and Nelion, and the potential for good climbs on the smaller neighbouring peaks has scarcely been probed. An example of the possibilities are provided by the description in the article of the SW face of Point John, climbed by Baillie and Tom Phillips in 1964 by a route that has yet to be repeated. In 1977, Howell and Allan completed another line to the right of the Baillie/Phillips route.

The Diamond Couloir on Mount Kenya is now receiving many ascents, British, French, Italian and American ropes being successful in the 1978/79 season. Most complete the route by the Covington/Chouinard headwall, but others apparently traverse off to easy ground without completing the route to the summit of the mountain. The E groove of Nelion, first climbed by Howell and Allan, received its second and third ascents respectively by Richard

Toon and Brian Melling (UK) who took 3 days, and British climbers Ed Hart and Mick Haffler with the American Matt Christensen, who were able to completely free the route. An unconventional approach has been made to Nelion by Ephraim M'Ikiara, apparently described by the media as a barefoot holy man. He in fact wears wellingtons for the approach march, socks on the climb ('to keep his feet warm') and carries kit that includes a bible; his wish is 'for the Commissioner to allow me to go up the mountain when the Lord instructs me'. After his first climb in 1974, he was arrested by the Rangers and sent home; in 1978 he was undetected and this year, although he met 2 British climbers in the Lobonar bivouac hut near the summit, he managed to evade the authorities by dint of superior speed and local knowledge. There seems every likelihood that he will continue to climb 'at God's instruction', in spite of efforts to prevent him.

On Mount Kilimanjaro, Iain Allan and Vince Fayad were able to guide a relatively inexperienced American tour party of 7 on a successful ascent of the mountain by the Heim Glacier (IV). The climb is not difficult technically but is 1500m in length and on a remote part of the mountain. The members' training was merely that obtained on a climbing programme on Mount Kenya in the previous week.

Rock-climbing in Hell's Gate Gorge was considerably advanced by the visit of the strong team of Hart, Haffler and Christensen who freed Capital Punishment (24) and First Aid (25), the latter being probably the hardest rock-climb in the country. There has been renewed interest in the crag at Embaribal, only 25 miles from Nairobi; the Nithi Gorge, E of Mount Kenya, was visited by Nick Kekus and Richard Cox who made the second ascent of Ricochette, first climbed by Snyder and Howell in 1971, and identified other exciting possibilities in this little-visited area.

An article on climbing in Malawi appears on p 69 of this journal, and Peter Robson has kindly provided the following review:

Guide to the Mulanje Massif Frank Eastwood (Lorton Publications, Johannesburg, 1979, pp 146, figures and photographs, K 8.50—equivalent to about £5.00). Mulanje in S Malawi rises to about 3000m and covers 650 sq km. It is a magnificent area for the mountain walker and casual climber. Making my 6th visit in 1979, I carried this guide, written by Eastwood with contributions from other specialists. It provides a wealth of information on approaches, huts, porters, flora and fauna, geology, history, routes and scrambles to the main peaks, and rock-climbs. The latter are chiefly on Chambe, which offers the longest rock-climb in Africa (1700m). The book's format is more suited to the shelf than the pocket. I felt it a pity that it was not more comprehensive on the peaks themselves and would have welcomed even brief approach notes on such omitted peaks as Mchese. The book is well illustrated and well produced and will surely be welcomed by habitués and newcomers alike. Certainly anyone who has tried to find his own routes to Mulanje's delightful peaks will fully appreciate the toil which is to be saved by using it.

ASIA

HINDU KUSH

Activity in this region has been much curtailed since the political upheavals in Afghanistan, and we therefore have nothing to report.

KARAKORAM

K2 (8611m) Reinhold Messner has added this mountain to his tally of 8000m peaks. He and Michael Dacher climbed the Abruzzi Spur route on 12 May without oxygen. Because there were various delays initially and because there was a need to be off the mountain before the arrival of the French W ridge team, the original plan to climb the W ridge was abandoned. Three bivouacs and some fixed ropes were used up to 7300m, where bad weather forced a retreat. However, the pair eventually returned with a small tent and food and bivouacked at 7900m on their way to the summit. The attempt was made semi-Alpine style, the expedition slightly altering its plans in the absence of its doctor who broke her leg on the march in—she was carried by Messner to Askole to be helicoptered out for treatment. A French team abandoned an attempt on the SSW ridge in September 1950m from the summit because of bad weather. This mountain is the subject of one of the Dyhrenfurth series of articles in *Mountain* 70 27 which gives more detail on Messner and Dacher's ascent.

Rakaposhi (7787m) A joint Polish/Pakistani expedition climbed a new NW ridge route on this mountain, 2 teams reaching the summit on 1 and 2 July. A third team consisting of Anna Czerwinska and Krystyna Palmowska, unassisted by the men, also made the summit in difficult conditions on 5 July. These were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th ascents of the peak by a new and difficult route involving a highly technical rock- and ice-ridge and 4 camps. It was the second highest ascent by a woman's party, exceeded only by Halina Krueger and Anna Okopinska's climb of Gasherbrum II (8034m) in 1975.

Latok 3 (6852m) and **Latok 1** (7143m) Japanese expeditions successfully climbed L3 for the first time and L1 by a new route, both from the Baintha Lukpa Glacier.

Broad Peak (8047m) Yannick Seigneur and George Bettembourg made a 2-man ascent via a line similar to the original Austrian route on 4 June 1978.

Gasherbrum 5 (7321m) The first ascent of this mountain was made by a Japanese party in August 1978, 5 members reaching the summit. The leader, Ryuichi Babaguchi, was killed in a crevasse near the summit.

Uli Biaho (c 6000m) This very difficult sheer rock-climb was completed on 3 July 1979 by the American climbers John Roskelly, Kim Schmitz, Ron Kauk and Bill Forest after 10 days on the face. The climb began at 4250m on 24 June. The mountain lies in the Trango Towers.

GARHWAL

Thelay Sagar (6985m) An American team made an Alpine style first ascent of this peak in June 1979. The climb took 8 days and was via the NW couloir and W ridge; Roy Kligfield, John Thackray, Jon Waterman and Pete Thexton (UK) were the climbers involved. It was one of the first non-Indian expeditions in recent years to be allowed into the Gangotri region. The descent was made by a different route to the Thelay Sagar-Jogin Col.

Kalanka (6902m) The third ascent of this peak but the first in Alpine style was made by Allen Fyffe and Bob Barton in October 1978, by a new route on the S flank.

96 *The peaks of Chiring We* (Photo: H. Kapadia)



KISHTWAR

Lindsay Griffin writes about an expedition which made several first ascents in the Barnaj and Chiring Valley, E of Sickle Moon during August and September 1978. The initial plan had been to attempt Barnaj 2 from the N but an impossible river crossing indicated an approach from the S via Kishtwar and Machail, the party eventually operating from a small village in the main valley. Phil Bartlett and Lindsay Griffin climbed Maguedonne (5750m) S of Barnaj 3, via the NW ridge on 15 August. They also discovered an extremely easy pass crossing the main Himalayan chain from N to S and not marked on any existing map, which they think would prove very useful to future parties. After other members of the party had returned, Lindsay Griffin visited the Chiring valley and climbed 3 peaks of about 5650m not marked on any map, one of which (Blade Peak) gave excellent rock- and ice-work (D-Alpine grading). He feels this is an excellent area for small expeditions operating on a small budget.

PITHORAGAH

Harish Kapadia writes that he led a Bombay Mountaineers' expedition which climbed in the area near the Kalabaland Glacier which lies to the E of the Milam Glacier. They made first ascents of Chiring We (6559m) and Kalabaland Dhura (6105m) and second ascents of Bamba Dhura (6334m) and an un-named peak (5928m).

NEPAL

Everest (8848m) A Yugoslav expedition was successful on the W Ridge starting from the Lho La, A. Strempefj and N. Zaplotnik reaching the summit on 13 May and S. Bozic and Ang Phu Sherpa on 14 May. The last named was tragically killed on the descent when being greeted by expedition members—he slipped and was unable to control what developed into a very long fall down the N side of Everest. The expedition used oxygen since they were above Camp 4 for 2–3 weeks (7620m).

A West German expedition was successful by the South Col route. Ray Genet, an Alaskan guide and climber, and Hannalore Schmatz, wife of the expedition leader Gerard Schmatz, were forced to bivouac on the descent at 8200m and did not survive. Mrs Schmatz was the fourth woman to climb Everest. This expedition had many firsts to its credit in spite of the tragic loss of 2 of its members. It was the smallest party to date, made the fastest ascent, was the first to get all its members on the summit and its leader was the oldest to climb Everest.

Nuptse (7879m) Doug Scott, George Bettembourg, Alan Rouse and Brian Hall reached the summit on 20 October after a 5-day ascent from the Western Cwm. Mrs Jon Scott and children formed part of the support party for this expedition, and Miss Rosie Scott was possibly the youngest member (6 months) ever to have gone on an expedition to this region. This party with Alan Rouse and Mike Covington (USA) was subsequently to have attempted Everest, but did not start since it was late in the season and the Ice Fall was in poor condition.

Peak 29 (7835m) A Polish team led by Ryszard Szafirski have made what may be the first ascent of this mountain. No traces were found of a previous Japanese expedition where H. Watanabe and L. Tsering were thought to have reached the summit but who did not survive to tell the tale. The route taken by the Poles was on the NW face, having initially tried the centre of the W face from which they retreated due to avalanche danger. The climb was very sustained in the upper and lower sections; 1500m of fixed rope were used.

Gaurishankar (7145m) was climbed by a joint Nepalese/American team via a new route on the 2300m SW face. Five Americans and 5 Sherpas were involved, co-led by Al Read and Pertemba. The climb included large stretches of steep water-ice (70–80°) and sections were described as being more difficult than the N face of the Eiger with the added difficulty of extreme altitude. The summit was reached by John Roskelly and Dorje Sherpa on 8 May—subsequent attempts were abandoned due to Kim Schmitz having frost-bitten toes. Later in the year, a British team was also successful, Pete Boardman, Tim Leach, Guy Neithardt and Sardar Pemba Lama reaching the summit of S Peak on 9 November by the W ridge.

Annápurna I (8079m) was climbed by the French Ski Expedition led by Jean-Louis George by the original French route. Yves Morin and Henri Sigayret reached the summit on 30 April.

Morin was killed on the ski descent, running into the loose end of a fixed rope. An American expedition also met with disaster on the Dutch Rib route, Maynard Cohick, Gil Harder (USA) and Eric Roberts (UK) being killed by an avalanche at Camp 4 (6500m). This was the first planned attempt to climb Annapurna without Sherpa support and it seems that if it had not been for this tragic accident the expedition would have succeeded.

Annapurna 3 (7555m) A lightweight British expedition reached the summit on 6 November (Linda Rutland, the leader's wife, and John Whittock via the SW face and the W ridge).

Annapurna South (7291m) A Polish team established a new route on the W face, K. Smieszko and K. Wielich reaching the summit on 2 May; however 3 members of the expedition lost their lives.

Dhaulagiri Group A Japanese expedition led by the only woman member, Dr Michiko Takahai, has succeeded in a 25km traverse of several peaks in this group as follows: White Peak (6400m); D3 (7715m); D2 (7751m); Snow Peak (6365m).

Nilgiri Central (6190m) This peak was climbed for the first time by a Japanese party led by Maskai Aoki. The route was via the SE ridge and S ridge; 4 members reached the summit, 2 on 30 April and 2 on 1 May.

Ganesh 2 (7150m) A joint Japanese/Nepalese expedition climbed this mountain for the first time, 3 groups reaching the summit on 19, 20, and 21 October. The planned route was the SE ridge, but this was found to be too difficult, the N face being chosen ultimately.

Ama Dablam (6856m) This was a very popular mountain in 1979. An American expedition led by Tom Frost climbed the S ridge and made a film in the process. Two parties reached the summit on 22 and 25 April respectively, and later on 30 April, Jeff Lowe soloed a difficult new route from Camp 1 and got back to Camp 3 the same day; he had also been a member of the first summit party. Post-monsoon, there were 3 other parties on the mountain, only one of which was successful, the expedition composed of guides from Briancon who put 17 team members and Sherpas on the summit.

Kangchenjunga (8589m) Doug Scott, Pete Boardman and Joe Tasker reached the summit on 16 May 1979 via the W face of the N Col and the N ridge without oxygen; this was a new route. The fourth member of the party was Georges Bettembourg who had to retire from the climb at a late stage.

Kangde Shar (6190m) Lindsay Griffin writes that he and Roger Everett made an Alpine-style ascent of the N face of this mountain, descending by the S face to reach the main Dudh Kosi Valley after 10 days. The ascent was made in spite of thefts of equipment on the approach march from Kathmandu; the only climbing rope was cut to 95ft. This was the first official ascent of the mountain, but it appears that the summit may have been reached by an unofficial German party from the S side some years ago.

Climbing (53 10) contains an article by Galen Rowell entitled 'Shipton's Dream' in which he discusses the emerging trend in the Himalaya whereby emphasis has to some extent shifted away from the larger peaks in favour of highly committed Alpine-style ascents on lower peaks. The article's title stems from a remark made by Shipton when asked how he would have lived his life differently. He replied, 'I wouldn't have spent so much time mucking about Mount Everest. I would have gone to lower peaks that could be climbed with a few classic tools by a few friends'. The article illustrates this trend by describing the planning and logistics of the first ascent of Trango Main Tower in 1977. Many of the climbs briefly noted above are in the same vein.

Nepal and Pakistan have agreed in principle to bring about greater uniformity in the rules and regulations and fees relating to mountaineering in their 2 countries. One possible likelihood is that if climbers are banned from one country for breaking its mountaineering regulations, they will also be banned from climbing in the other. Both countries have formed their own mountaineering associations to promote climbing by their own nationals; joint expeditions are proposed involving parties from the 2 countries. Trekking agencies are

currently well organized in Nepal and Pakistan hopes to follow this example. Pakistan has recently become a member of the UIAA.

An error in attribution in our Asia notes last year has been pointed out by Donald Mill. The photograph of P 6401 on p 226–227 was not his, but was taken by Doug Scott, to whom we apologize.

We would like to thank Mike Cheney, Lindsay Griffin, H. C. Adams Carter and Harish Kapadia for kindly providing material for these notes.

AUSTRALASIA

We have no direct news of events in Australia and New Zealand this year; some information has appeared in the pages of *Mountain* and we note some of the highlights below.

AUSTRALIA

As usual, Mount Arapiles in Victoria is the centre of new developments in Australia and Kim Carrigan, along with Greg Child and Kevin Lindorff, has played one of the biggest parts in raising the standards even higher. The appearance of a guidebook to 'Australia's hardest cliff' has been instrumental in promoting this activity. Carrigan put up the first Grade 27s when freeing old aid problems Yesterday and Denim. The latter was subsequently repeated by the visiting American, Tobin Sorenson, who reckoned the climb was equivalent to an American 5.12. He felt that all Australian 27s would be rated 5.12s but only some 26s. Carrigan freed the ceiling on Tiger Wall, Fox on a Hot Thin Roof after 5 days and graded it 28, which was subsequently reduced to 27 after a relatively easy repeat by Sorenson. Another visitor, John Allen (UK), led the 3rd free ascent. Carrigan had previously been responsible for Australia's first Grade 26 climb when he freed Procol Harum on Castle Crag.

Some good new routes have been done in the Grampians, also in Victoria, the hardest again being due to Carrigan, partnered by the New Zealander Neil Parker, who did Life at 24. The other hard routes here are typically graded 20–22, so the overall standard is a little lower than at Mount Arapiles.

On Frog Buttress in Queensland, Sorenson and Allen did a further Grade 27 climb, Catcher in the Rye. This is reported to be possibly the most technical climbing in Australia, but was said to require 'English tactics', ie the arrangement (presumably prior to the climb) of protection on the first ascent and on a later repeat. Other reports of climbs in Australia contain phrases such as: 'This route received some attention from abseil prior to the first ascent'; 'A bolt runner was placed by abseil'; 'one aid point was quickly removed by wire brushing'. Evidently, some of the practices which are becoming a feature of UK climbing (see p 223) are also becoming prevalent in Australia. Sorenson and Allen also freed a pair of aided climbs, both graded 26 (Barbwire Canoe and Plastic Comb).

NEW ZEALAND

In the Mount Cook region, the best route done in the 1978/79 season was Murray Jones and Merv English's ascent of the Abel Jansen face of Mount Tasman—1000m of very steep ice taking 24 hours including 8 hours on the descent. There were many climbs on the N and S faces of Mount Hicks. On the latter, Lindsay Main and Tim Wethey made the first ascent of the left-hand rib, which gave 600 m of reasonable rock. Two Swiss climbers, B. Weillisbach and B. Wicht, did the central and right-hand buttresses of the N face in 12 hours from the hut and then the original S face route in 12 hours. A climb of note was the first winter ascent of the N ridge of Mount Cook by Dick Price and Murray Judge, followed by a Grand Traverse of the 3 peaks.

New routes have also appeared in the Otago Alps; most notable was the N face of Mount Aspiring by Don Bogie and Ken Hyslop. The N buttress of this mountain received its second ascent after 22 years by Michael Rockell and John Thornton, and the unclimbed NE face a fine new winter ascent by Bogie and Lindsay Bell. In summer the route suffers from considerable stonefall, and so a winter climb seemed the best alternative.

In the Darrans, harder free climbing is being attempted and competition is getting fiercer for new routes. These are now being named and graded in a manner similar to the Australian system, the highest grade at the time of writing being 19. A notable achievement was the traverse by Jones and Judith Terpstra from Homer to Martins Bay.

NORTH AMERICA

ALASKA/YUKON

In the past year, many pages of climbing magazines have been taken up with articles and letters discussing the 'Alaska Land Controversy'. This has arisen because the US Government proposes to bring in a new Alaska Lands Bill which will mean that a further 56 million acres will be subject to access controls at the discretion of the National Parks Service. The NPS already has such powers in Mount McKinley National Park which is about 5 million acres in extent, and climbers feel that the rules exercised here and elsewhere are in many senses unnecessarily restrictive to climbers. Friction has been caused in this and many other climbing areas in the continental US where the NPS has similar powers, eg Yosemite (where attempts have been made to ban climbing on El Capitan for instance), Long's Peak, the Tetons, Mount Rainier and several others.

The primary objective of the new legislation is the laudable one of preserving from development regions defined as 'National Monuments'. However, there is a feeling that when big business interests put on pressure, the objectives of the legislation are too easily cast aside in favour of the dollar; the restrictions are thus seen to be ineffective in the area they were primarily designed to influence. Climbers on the other hand are subject to these rules and have no business or economic muscle to combat them. A major source of dissatisfaction is that many aspects of detailed control are at the discretion of the local NPS, which is felt to be an undemocratic procedure; in particular it is felt that the NPS introduces registration for entering a park and in effect converts this into a permit system which is considerably more restrictive.

In the particular case of Alaska, a number of specific points are causing concern. Thus it is proposed to limit air traffic, which is the vital means of communication in a region where roads are often non-existent and which is in any case limited naturally by the scarcity of landing sites and the exigencies of the seasons. The taking of fire-arms into wilderness areas is to be regulated although many feel these are essential in a country where bears are prevalent. Discretionary closure powers are envisaged to protect the land from over-use if necessary; it is feared that these may be abused and in any case are largely irrelevant during those parts of the year when seasons dictate access. Development and popularization by the NPS itself are provided for in the new Bill, and many people think that the Service is to blame for creating existing problems in popular locations by over-advertising and over-development. An influx of tourists has resulted and the rules that have been introduced to cope with these numbers are seen to be inimical to the special interests of climbers.

The Service has had an opportunity to state its own views in *Mountain 70* 13 and recognizes that mountaineers and the NPS have never been in complete harmony. However, they point out that regulations have often been written in collaboration with local climbers, eg on Mount Rainier. The fact that the distinction between permit and registration has not always been observed is also accepted, but it is pointed out that similar access restrictions exist in many other parts of the world most notably in the Himalaya. They feel that registration does have a valid place in the management of a national park, particularly from a safety and rescue aspect. Many climbers feel however that they provide an adequate rescue service themselves and wish that the NPS would not intervene and subsequently blame the climbing fraternity for wasting tax-payers' money.

This is only a brief outline of the many detailed issues involved. It is clear that the NPS has many different interests to consider and it would be surprising if some conflict did not arise. The new Lands Bill seems rather a blunt instrument which is likely to ignore the minority interests of climbers in an undemocratic way. There is a feeling that regulations which may work reasonably well in national parks in the continental USA are not necessarily appropriate or relevant to the conditions prevailing in Alaska, where the land area under consideration is enormous and, apart from a few locations, the pressure of use by climbers or anybody else, is extremely small.

Roger Cowles, David Johnston and Brian Okonek made the second winter ascent of Mount Foraker (5303m) by a new route (Sultana Route), which pieced together bits of other lines previously established. There had been 8 previous attempts to do the whole route which is 12km long. It starts up the SE ridge of Mount Crosson (3902m), over P 12472 (3802m), and continues along a 5km ridge to the NE ridge of Foraker. The traverse took 22 days, the weather only allowing 7 full days and 4 half days of climbing in this period. In June, the whole traverse was repeated by Phil Erschler, Michael Semansky, Paul Slota and Glenn Kaplan.

The extraordinarily difficult S ridge of Mount Huntington was climbed in late May by Jeff Thomas, Scott Woolums, David Jay and Jay Kerr. They gained the head of the Tokositna Glacier from the W fork of the Ruth Glacier. After surmounting 2 dangerous ice-falls, they climbed a 600m ice-couloir and a rock band to bivouac 200m below the summit. The final ice-cap averaged 70°.

Andy Embick and Jim Bridwell climbed the NW face of Kichatna Spire in the Cathedral Spires W of Mount McKinley, the highest peak of the group. It had been climbed once before in 1967 after a 3-week siege, via a hidden couloir. This year's route was up an overhanging face which ran with ice-water (Bridwell wore a kayaking wet-suit) but there were more cracks than on some other faces. They designed a special free-hanging tent suspended from a piton for the expedition. *Mountain 69* 24 contains an article on the Kichatna region written by Alan Kearney. It is largely an account of the first ascent of a peak his party named Reisenstein followed by a climb of Citadel by a new route on the NW ridge. There is a list of past ascents in the area.

There are 2 outstanding climbs on Mount Logan (5944m) to report. In the summer of 1978 Steve Davis, Roger Hirt, George Seivewright and Jon Waterman made the first ascent of the mountain by the W ridge. This ridge is a massive buttress averaging 4875m in height and over 6.5km long, and was, apart from the SSW buttress described below, the last remaining unclimbed major route on the mountain. The group spent 27 days pioneering a route and contended with 15 days of storm (Alaska grade V rating). In 1979, Al Burgess, Jim Elzinga, John Lauchlan and Ray Jotterand climbed this mountain by the much-tried route on the SSW buttress, a 3000m ascent which took 12 nights on the peak—the weather was extremely bad most of the time but the party had food for 12 days only and so decided to keep on climbing.

The twin peaks of Mount Salisbury rise only some 15km from tidewater to the E and W, and the higher N summit was climbed 2 years ago. This year, Dan Cauthorn, Peter Speer, Mike Friedman, Ben Dobbins and Ernie Jones climbed the precipitous N face of the S peak (3648m). Fred Beckey and Rick Nolting made the first ascent of what Beckey describes as Mount Foresta although there seems a possibility that they may in fact have climbed a slightly higher peak close by; the peak lies between Mounts Cook and Seattle in the St Elias Mountains. They climbed the peak from the W. Paul Clark, James Balog and Mark Ippolito made the first ascents of 2 major peaks near the Devil's Thumb in the Stikine Icecap. They climbed P 7030 by its 1000m E ridge on Bugaboo-like granite after climbing a steep ice-fall. They also ascended P 6610, another spectacular granite peak.

CANADA

Glenn Randall and Dane Waterman climbed the N face to Mount Brussels on August 16 and 17; the steep limestone face was made more difficult because of rotten rock. Difficult new routes have been done on Geikie by George Lowe and Dean Hannibal and on Turret Peak by Chris Jones and Brock Wagstaff. There were some notable ascents in the Rockies in the 1978/9 winter. Tobin Sorenson and Alain Henault climbed the N face of Mount Robson (a winter first) and later Sorenson and Jack Roberts climbed the Central Couloir of the N face of Mount Kitchener. Climbing ice-falls is still a popular pastime. Greg Sphor, Trevor Jones and Ray Jotterand made the first ascent of the upper part of Weeping Wall in 2 days. The route is Grade 6 if both tiers are done. Jones and Jotterand then climbed Takakaw Falls in 5.5 hours and rated it much less hard than the previous climb. The following day, Takakaw was free soloed by John Lauchlan in 2.5 hours, the first solo ascent of a Grade 6 waterfall. This climb was later repeated by Albi Sole.

One normally hears little about climbing in Eastern Canada, but *Mountain 67* 14 gives a brief review of the 2 most popular cliffs in Ontario. These are Rattlesnake Point, a small cliff of excellent dolomite about 30 miles from Toronto, and Bon Echo Provincial Park where there is a 110m granite cliff rising straight out of Mazinaw Lake. The former area has seen most activity, boasting some 5.11 routes, but development has not been as rapid at Bon Echo.

UNITED STATES

Each year more and more difficult rock climbs are being done with the accent on aid elimination; these are described in some detail in the pages of *Mountain* and elsewhere. In

May, Ray Jardine and Bill Price climbed free the W face route on El Capitan, which had first been done in 1967 with aid by Royal Robbins and T. M. Herbert and graded VI, 5.9, A4. In the same week, Half Dome was also climbed free by Leonard Coyne, Dennis Jackson and Doug Lorimer. The route was the NW face, VI, 5.12. Coyne was in fact the only member of the party to accomplish a completely free ascent of the entire route and led all of the 5 hardest pitches. An earlier attempt was made by Jim Erickson and Art Higbee and failed narrowly, the pair having to use aid on the last 20ft, being at that stage out of food and water. This effort was filmed, which Bob Godfrey describes in *Mountain* 66 26. Also in this magazine (p 30) is the first of 2 articles by Mark Hudon and Max Jones which constitute a brief review and photographic essay on the current trends in free rock-climbing in the USA. They spent a year in the States doing hard climbs and putting up some new routes of their own; the second article is in *Mountain* 67 28.

In the Sierra Nevada, Gerry Adams and John Fowler made the first traverse of the Palisade Crest in 7 days in July. The route is 13km long and contains 5 14,000ft peaks; 2½km is moderate Class 5, 5km Class 4, some snow and mixed patches and some scrambling. The rock varies from fine granite to shattered diorite.

We would like to thank H Adams Carter for providing some information for these notes.

The following guide books have been received or are noted:

A Climbers' Guide to Smith Rocks, Beacon Park and Steins Pillar Jeff Thomas (Cul Brown and Brath Wernel, Oregon 1978, pp 67, \$4.95, many photographs). A guide to some Oregon rock-climbs.

A Climbing Guide to Colorado's Fourteeners W. R. Borneman and L. J. Lampert (Pruett Publishing Co., Boulder, Colorado, 1978, pp 238, \$7.50).

Cascade Alpine Guide—Stevens Pass to Rainy Pass Fred Beckey (The Mountaineers, 719 Pike St, Seattle, Washington 98101, 1978, pp 356, 137 photos, maps and sketches, \$11.95). The second volume of Beckey's guide to the Cascades.

Parijs d'Escalade au Quebec E. Levesque and J. Sylvain (Editeur Officiel du Quebec, pp 385, 193 photos, 107 maps and sketches, \$5.95 paperbound). A guide to the rock climbing areas of Quebec.

Cathedral, Humphreys and Whitehorse: a Rock Climbers' Guide Paul Ross and Chris Elms (International Mountain Climbing School Inc, North Conway, New Hampshire, pp 157, 32 photos, maps, \$9.95 hardcover). A guide to the main cliffs of glacially polished granite in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Climbers' Guide to Devils Lake W. Widule and S. O. Swartling (University of Wisconsin Press, 114 Murray St, Madison, Wisconsin 53715, pp 198, 8 photos, 36 maps and sketches, \$8.95 paperbound). A guide to climbs in Devil's Lake State Park in Wisconsin.

Rock—The Climbers' guide to Palisades—Kepler State Park John Ferguson (River City Rock and Ice, Iowa City, Iowa, pp 126, 25 photos).

SOUTH AMERICA

(The following notes have been kindly provided by Evelio Echevarría.)

The 1979 Andean year does not seem as bright as the last few years, as far as worthy enterprises are concerned. There were fewer expeditions, which on the average undertook somewhat less-important climbs. On the other hand, there seems to have been an increase in the number of small parties, often unpretentious as to goals, carrying out repeat ascents. Reasons for this picture could be many, but the more logical ones are the popularization of the mountains of Asia as an increasingly more accessible trekking and climbing ground, and the fact that several of the well-known climbers, who had tested themselves on the more difficult Andean walls, may have now also turned their attention to Asia, in search of harder terrain.

Besides many other expeditions of the repeat type mentioned above, the following deserve mention.

COLOMBIA

Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Several expeditions have visited this range, which means that the grip the Arhuaco Indians had over its ways of access has loosened. Two Venezuelan parties were active in the main group of peaks. The one under José Betancourt stated that the Indians limited the expedition's stay in the mountains to 12 days and charged US \$10 per day. An American party of 5 introduced variants, if not new routes, on the N faces of Tairona (5050m) and El Guardián (5285m). La Reina (5535m) was ascended by its SW flank, perhaps a new route, and Pico Ojeda (5490m), by its 'second gully from the W ridge of the NW face.'

Sierra Nevada de Cocuy (Güicán) The impressive peak of Los Portones, variously known as Picacho, to Cambridge students, who had made the first ascent in 1959, and San Pablin Norte, to Colombians, was ascended for the second time on 27 Dec, 1978. The Colombians Sergio Gaviria, Jaime Maldonado and Ernesto Murillo, and the German Hubert Frank, reached the summit (5266m) and described the climb as exposed but not difficult. On the same day, the whole party had made the first ascent of the lower (SW) peak, 5222m.

PERU

Cordillera Blanca The Jugoslavian Alpamayo Expedition inaugurated a new route on this peak, which the Peruvians fondly call 'the most beautiful mountain in the world'. Tomo Cesen, Matjaz Dolenc, Peter Markic and Zarko Trusnovac climbed the 800m high SE face, mixed ice and rotten rock, with a bivouac, on 5 June 1979. Members of the same group (reinforced by the Peruvian Alberto Callupe) repeated the standard N ridge route and the Italian SW face route, as well as the N face of Quitaraju (6040m).

Several expeditions to this range made many ascents but they all agree that the area is becoming littered with refuse, particularly in camping places of valleys with an easier access. Even in the Parrón valley, not often visited by climbers, Britons Richard Renshaw and Dave Wilkinson found plenty of litter. This small party made a new ascent (on 23 July), the SW face of the fluted peak of Pirámide de Garcilaso (5886m). An Austrian group did the E ridge of Tulparaju (5787m) and the W face of Hualcán (6104m), both new routes.

Cordillera Huayhuash The same British party mentioned above accomplished the actual first ascent of the NW ridge of Yerupaja (6617m). A New Zealand party had failed on this route in 1968.

The Frenchman Nicolas Jaeger led a group to this range but some of his companions were not equal to his enthusiasm and either left for Europe or did not take part in all that was programmed. Nevertheless the following climbs were accomplished by members of the party: Tsacra Chico Oeste, 5589m, a first ascent; Tsacra Chico Norte, 5513m; Ninashanca, 5637m, new route on W spur; Yerupaja, 6617m, W face and S ridge and Trapecio, 5644m, SW ridge, second ascent. As for Jaeger, who had made a name for himself with great Andean solo climbs, these achievements were not enough and in addition he accomplished the traverse, Russian style, of the Rassac peaks (5700, 6040 and 5617m) from W to E and N, in 2 days. He also climbed Trapecio again, alone.

Cordillera Occidental An event dating back to 1965 but reported only in 1979 is the finding of Inca remains on the flanks of the glaciated volcano Coropuna (6423m). A Peruvian hillman found the funeral shroud of a mummy at about 6000m. This means that the Incas did not restrict themselves to scree volcanoes as was so far believed, but also tackled some ice peaks.

BOLIVIA

Cordillera Real On Illimani, an Austrian expedition under Anton Putz made the first true traverse of the mountain from S to N, accomplishing at the start the first ascent of the S face of the S peak. Five Italians also opened a new route on the same mountain, the N face of the N peak. An American group from Colorado climbed in the Illampu massif ascending, among several peaks, Llihiri (5970m) by its S face and Huayna Illampu (6056m). In the Condoriri group the same party climbed, for the first time, 'the steep couloir of rotten ice of the SSW face (facing the lakes) and SW ridge' of Ala Sur, 5482m.

CHILE

Northern Andes The Federación de Andinismo de Chile held its 9th national mountaineering convention in the Calama area, near the Bolivian border. Affiliates, often in large



97 SW face of Cerro Alto de los Leones, Central Chile (Photo: E. Echevarría)

parties, ascended Licancabur (5921m) and traversed the twin volcanoes San Pedro and San Pablo (6063 and 6118m).

An international expedition led by Herbert Ziegenhardt, including 4 Germans, 2 Austrians and the Chilean Eduardo Saavedra established a base camp at Barrancas Blancas, Atacama province, under the highest volcanoes in the world. The very highest of them, Nevado Ojos del Salado (6885m), with some solfatara activity, was climbed twice, by its NE ridge and N face, the latter route being described as 'rocky terrain, snow and a rock band'. Nevado El Muerto, 6476m, was ascended for the second time (first ascent in 1950 by 3 Chileans) and finally, the group made ascents to the twin peaks of Sierra Negra, 6034 and 6060m, which may have been visited before. This expedition took place in Jan 1979.

Central Andes The most noteworthy enterprise in 1979 was for the Chileans the first ascent of the SW pillar of Alto de los Leones, 5445m, a remarkable tower rising over the low Andean valleys like a dark, giant skyscraper. The peak, located some 70km NE of Santiago, had been ascended 8 times, but always from the same side, actually by a wall belonging to a neighbouring peak and then the summit was reached by traversing. On 16 Jan, 1979 Gino

Cassassa and Alejandro Izquierdo climbed the pillar (350m high) and bivouacked on its top. The climb was resumed the next day, traversing to the W face and finally overcoming a wall, the most difficult part of the new route (40m of HVS, A3), with very bad rock.

Patagonia The Italian Renato Casarotto made on 19 Jan 1979, the solo first ascent of the N pillar of Fitzroy. An ice-cave was used as base camp. Storms destroyed ropes, which had to be replaced. Main details for the climb are: from the base of the pillar, a gully about 300m, vertical, IV superior; a section with 100m of fissures, V plus; bivouac at c 2360m; great diedre; direct climb up the pillar, 130m, with a slight deviation to the E; summit of the pillar at almost 3000m; then a wall some 300m high, some ice and again rock, about 100m.

Fitzroy was also ascended in early 1978 by 3 South Africans, including a woman, by the Californian route and also by 2 Americans who made the third ascent of the 'Super Couloir.' A British expedition also reached very near the top of 'Fortaleza' or 'Fortress' (both unofficial names), in the Paine group.

ARGENTINA

Central Andes Members of the Club Andino Bariloche led by Mario Serrano entered the long Vacas valley E and N of Aconcagua and accomplished several new routes, particularly 3 on the broad SE face of the peak unofficially known as 'La Mano' ('The Hand'), which the Argentinians call the Grandes Jorasses of their country. A 5100m high peak was also ascended, for the first time, and christened Cerro Link, after a German who perished on Aconcagua in 1944.

The second ascent of the SW ridge of Aconcagua itself was made by 3 Spaniards, Xavier Erro, Juan Hugas and Martin Zavaleta, who descended by the normal route. This ridge had been opened in 1953 by 2 Argentinians and 2 Swiss.

ANDINISTAS IN ASIA

In 1979 2 South American expeditions visited Asia. A strong Argentinian group was in late October attempting the E ridge of Manaslu (8125m) and at the time of writing had laboriously placed a high camp at 6200m. A Chilean expedition made the second ascent of the Polish route on Gasherbrum II (8035m), Karakoram. This is the first time a Latin American expedition had climbed one of the giants of Asia. The Chileans won their summit at the first attempt, without portage beyond the advanced base camp at 5150m and with no previous Himalayan experience. It is evident that the South Americans have profited from the fact that they can train in their own mountains in heights up to almost 7000m (the Argentinian expedition encamped, as a part of its training, for 3 nights on the top of Aconcagua, 6960m). Lack of huts, roads and porters have forced the South Americans to take even the lesser climbs as an actual expedition experience. All this, plus the recent progress in technical climbing shown in Venezuela, Chile and Argentina leads one to believe that South American *andinistas* may obtain meritorious results should their expeditions to Asia continue.

POLAR REGIONS

Regrettably, the only news of climbing activity in Antarctica in the last year has concerned the efforts of New Zealand climbers on the slopes of Mount Erebus following the disastrous Air-New Zealand crash at the end of the year.

Nor is there much up-to-date news of expeditions in the Arctic regions, although as usual, the *Canadian Alpine Journal* is the best source of information on the various efforts in the Canadian Arctic in the past few years. Volume 66 contains articles by R. Chipeniuk on an expedition to the Torngat Mountains in Labrador, and by G. Cochran on a 1978 trip to Bowman Island and Ellesmere Island. Brief accounts of a further visit to the Torngats (by M. Adler) and of 6 expeditions with a variety of objectives to Baffin Island are given later in the *Journal* in the section on Eastern Arctic Canada. One of these is a detailed description of the 1978 Scottish Baffin Island Expedition (N. Bielby, A. Reid, G. Little, R. Little, P. Moffat, C. Ross and T. Simpson) which climbed 11 new peaks including the N ridge of Point Ruscoe (490m, TD, 5+ and A2) and the SW ridge of Runival (D, 5 and A1). Further details of some recent climbs in Baffin Island are given in *Mountain* 66 13.

BRITISH ISLES

As usual, readers are referred to the pages of *Crags* and *Mountain* where there are detailed records of individual climbs done in the last year; we merely attempt here to identify some of the more outstanding events, new departures and subjects of controversy.

Another hard winter following that in 1977/78 meant that climbers were well prepared to take advantage of the severe conditions which prevailed over the whole of the British Isles. Ice-climbing was again possible in various localities which are not normally sought out for this purpose; on the other hand, winter rock-climbing activity was much curtailed in areas such as the South West because of the harsh conditions. The Lake District was a popular venue for ice-climbing—thus Great Gully and C Gully on Wastwater Screes (both winter IVs) attracted 31 climbers on one Sunday to everyone's inconvenience. Unusually, a party of Scottish climbers came S to the Lake District; to some extent conditions on Ben Nevis were not ideal because the exceptional cold caused the snow to stay as powder and finally to be carried away by the wind. A list of climbs made in the Lake District under winter conditions is given in *Crags* 17-13. Routes in Derbyshire were also in good condition for winter climbing, Kinder Downfall being an example.

North Wales also provided some good opportunities for winter climbing. An exceptional effort was Tut Braithwaite and Roger Baxter-Jones's ascent of Bloody Slab, which at one stage involved a 35m unprotected run-out on $\frac{1}{4}$ -in ice. Mick Fowler was the outstanding example of those taking advantage of the good conditions. His climbs with several partners included a number of Grade Vs, eg Left Hand Pillar and Chequered Wall at Craig y Rhaeadr and Central Gully Direct and East Peak direct at Lliwedd. John Sumner with I. Tapley and A. Knox climbed North Gully on Craig Cowarch in Mid Wales, a 240m Grade IV. Sumner with John Codling and Glenn Kirkham made the first winter ascent of Trojan on the Cyfrwy face of Cader Idris, the first V route in this region.

In spite of conditions being less than ideal on Ben Nevis, there was nevertheless plenty of activity in Scotland. Dave Cuthbertson climbed the so-called 'icicle' direct entry on the W face of Aonach Dubh in Glencoe and subsequently decided that Scotland needs a Grade VI. He felt that this route was much more difficult than any Grade V he had climbed previously and that although shorter than the Orion Face on Ben Nevis was a more serious undertaking. Gordon Smith has also climbed several very hard routes in the Cairngorms, and Fowler made a winter ascent of Shield Direct on Carn Dearg. Later, Braithwaite and Dave Pearce followed The Shadow to give 340m of sustained climbing at Grade V. A team of 6 French climbers visited Scotland in late February and climbed a large number of high-standard routes on Ben Nevis, Craig Meaghaidh and Lochnagar; the trip was organized by the BMC and accounts of their visit subsequently appeared in *Alpinisme et Randonnée*. They were impressed with the quality of the climbs, the steepness of the ice and with the fact that the locals climb in conditions which would keep the French indoors in Chamonix.

In *Crags* 17-22, Alan Rouse reviews winter climbing on Ben Nevis in the period 1970 to 1978. He lists all the Grade V climbs on the mountain in approximate order of difficulty; at the time of writing (end of 1978) these numbered 30 of which 13 had not been repeated. He also discusses the grading system, the original definitions due to Patey being:

- I Simple snow-gullies with no ice-pitches
- II Easy buttress climbs or snow-gullies with simple ice-pitches
- III Technical climbs with long ice-pitches and/or difficult mixed climbing
- IV Long expeditions on difficult terrain or short climbs (less than 500ft) of highest technical difficulty
- V Very sustained climbs of a severe and technical nature

Grade V climbs are thus supposed to be both very hard and over 500ft in length, although this latter condition has been relaxed in some cases in W Scotland. Rouse points out that these grades refer to the climb overall and that it therefore does not make sense to use these designations to classify individual pitches on a climb. However he suggests that in some cases, it may be useful to have such a facility and puts forward a system of 6 subgrades which can be used to describe individual pitches in the usual condition in which they are climbed. In his system, the pitches of Point Five Gully would for example be 2, 4, 5, 5, 2/3, with the overall grade remaining V as before. His view is that most climbers are happy to accommodate new hard climbs within the present top grade of V, and that new climbs that often appear more difficult than established classics at first, in retrospect seem less extreme. Rouse is thus not in agreement with Cuthbertson's views mentioned above. However, Allan Fyffe also feels like

Cuthbertson that because of the large range of difficulty now being encompassed by Grade V, it might be appropriate to reconsider the whole grading system, or at least to introduce a Grade VI; obviously, regrading all climbs is not a matter to be undertaken lightly.

With the hard winter conditions, the traverse of the Cuillins, which was achieved twice in the 1977/78 winter was a great attraction in the following year, at least 6 parties making the crossing. Paul Moores and Pete Long took a mere day and a bit. In *Mountain 65* 32, John Beatty describes the traverse he made with Rob Beaton in February 1978.

The hard winter was followed by a year which was characterized by the usual high level of activity in all parts of the British Isles. New routes continue to be found by the ingenious and aid elimination is the order of the day. The spirit of current endeavour is to some extent encapsulated by the caption to the cover photograph of *Crags 21* which is as follows: 'Tom Proctor attempting to free the top pitch of Menopause at Stoney Middleton of its 3 aid points. His next move entailed jumping from a one-finger undercut for a small finger hold up to the right. He was actually established in the top groove, past all the aid, when his strained finger gave out. He later discovered that he had pulled the tendons in most of his fingers. Meanwhile, the route still awaits a free ascent'.

In the midst of all the activity everywhere, doubt is being cast on the practices being adopted by some climbers in their attempts to do something original, an objective which becomes harder and harder to achieve as more and more climbers flock to the crags and the inherent difficulty of the game increases. Accounts of new climbs frequently contain the phrase: 'cleaned and inspected by abseil'. A specific report runs as follows: 'The route is now free at E5, 6a but still awaits a continuous ascent, having been inspected and yo-yoed on at least 4 occasions before the first pitch was actually completed'. Another example: 'after top-roping it 3 times and using a peg for protection which had been preplaced by another party who were beaten to the line'. In another instance, the second on a major new climb subsequently dissociated himself from the venture since he felt that the leader had climbed using unnecessary aid, a point which was subsequently glossed over in the guide-book description of the climb. These examples present various of the more doubtful aspects of the sport as it exists today. The tendency to piece together new routes is very widespread and one often wonders whether the glib and brief descriptions of new routes that appear tell the whole story. Often hard pitches on a new route are climbed on different days, and this may present something of a problem to those making the second ascent since they will be making not only the first on-sight lead but the first continuous ascent. A number of hard routes in the Lake District are unrepeated, presumably for this reason.

An author writing under a pseudonym addresses these problems in a letter to *Crags* (16 42), and suggests a far-reaching solution. He would like a system which actively encourages the desirable practice of on-sight free leads, and suggests one based on the idea of grading climbers themselves on the difficulty and style of the ascents they make, rather than grading individual routes as is the current practice. This scheme would have the merit of acknowledging the competitiveness which leads to the current malpractices, and of putting it on a systematic basis. The idea has some attractive features; unfortunately it is difficult to see how it could be made to work in practice without an army of inspectors stationed at the bottom of all the crags in the British Isles. Perhaps it was not a serious suggestion after all.

Crags 16 16 contains an article by Pete Livesey entitled 'Jonathan Livingstone Steelfingers' which attempts to look into the future of rock climbing. In so doing, he summarizes his views on the situation as it exists today and identifies the different trends in 4 countries where innovation is occurring, i.e. the UK, the USA, France and East Germany. He feels that in the UK, we are shifting away from the desperately strenuous and sustained climbs of recent years to a greater concern with the technical move. In the USA on the other hand, the trend is to the sustained type of route with move after move of desperate climbing. In France, he identifies 2 main areas of interest; the very hard boulder garden such as Fontainebleau on the one hand and the free climbing of long mixed-rock routes on the other. The crag-sized cliffs in France are usually well protected with bolts and the moves are therefore of higher difficulty than one would expect 60m off the ground in the UK. East Germany and neighbouring countries have developed a purer type of rock climbing; the style and equipment on the Dresden outcrops has been virtually unchanged since the inception of climbing there. Bolts are frequent, the climbing hard and sustained and the falls also frequent. Livesey suggests that it takes visiting climbers some while to adjust to the style of another area but feels that UK climbers have proved themselves versatile in this respect having achieved significant successes abroad.

A record was set by Terry Marsh who climbed the highest peaks in the 4 countries in July

in 27 hours 13 minutes. He flew from Dublin to Wales and drove himself to each mountain, a total of 700 miles by road. The objective was to raise money for charity. In April 1978, a very long coastering traverse was done by a party in N Devon. They went from Foreland Point to Combe Martin in 4 days, taking all their equipment with them. Constant radio contact was maintained with support on the cliff tops and the whole distance was done by climbing and walking, no swimming being involved (see *AJ* 83 194).

Rock climbing possibilities in Northumberland are reviewed by Martin Boysen and Steve Blake in *Crags* 20 18. They point out that this is a county normally neglected by climbers, but in fact containing a number of fine sandstone crags ranging from easy to extremely hard. Ten individual areas are described and a graded list given of the hardest climbs in each. The same issue on p 22 also reviews recent developments on the sandstone crags of the SE (by Mick Fowler). In spite of being a very highly populated region with apparently little scope for climbing, a steady stream of new routes have appeared since the Holliwel revision of the guide in 1968. The emphasis has been on new lines rather than on solo ascents. The best known outcrop, Harrisons Rocks, has seen less development than the other 4 areas considered. Again, graded lists of new climbs are given.

The recent editions of *Crags* have contained many other useful reviews in addition to those already noted, of which the following are a selection:

- 16 20 'Causey Quarry', Karl Telfer (near Newcastle).
- 16 32 'The Ilkley Saga', Ron Fawcett. Contains a list supplementing route descriptions given in the 1974 Yorkshire Gritstone guide.
- 17 16 'Mid-Wales', John Sumner.
- 18 18 'Great Orme', Rowland Edwards.
- 18 28 'Dartmoor', Pete O'Sullivan.
- 19 14 'The Promised Land—South West Review', Pat Littlejohn. Covers the area dealt with in his recent guidebook, ie the Land's End, Bristol, Swanage triangle (see below).
- 21 29 'The Lower Churnet Valley', Steve and Brian Dale.

Reviews have also been published in *Mountain*. Thus 66 19 contains an article by Nigel Shepherd about Suicide Wall on Cwm Idwal; it indicates how far ahead of its time Preston, Morseley and Haines' first ascent on this wall was in 1945, when they climbed Route 1 (E2, 5c). Since the article was written, new lines have been added by Shepherd and Hulme (Jailbreak; E3, 6a), Shepherd and Leslie (The Reprieve; E1, 5b) and Fawcett and Gibb (Wall of the Dead; E4, 6a). *Mountain* 70 22 deals with the Lake District in winter, a joint article by Bob Bennett, Bill Birkett and Andy Hyslop, all editors of the guide to winter climbing in the Lakes.

Crags has started a series of pull-out guides—the centre 4 pages of the magazine are removed, scissored and stapled appropriately to form a small guide. The first sample in *Crags* 21 deals with Baildon Bank, a gritstone crag near Otley.

The following guidebooks have been received or are noted:

Climbers' Guide to Arran W. M. M. Wallace (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1979, pp 184, map and 15 diagrams). This is a revised version of the guide which first appeared in 1970, and contains a supplement by W. Skidmore detailing 23 new climbs.

Irish Walk Guide 3—North West Patrick Simms and Gerard Foley (Gill and Macmillan, 1979, pp 87, many maps). One of a series of pocket paperback guides being prepared under the general editorship of Joss Lynam; it covers Donegal and Sligo. It describes 44 walks which take in a variety of summits and areas of fine coastal scenery. Maps are reproduced covering all these, based on the old Ordnance Survey 1in black and white sheets to which some additions have been made where updating is necessary. Two other guides in the series have also been received, No 5 (E) covering 37 walks in Dublin and Wicklow and No 6 (SE) describing 37 routes in Tipperary and Waterford. All are priced at £1.25 and seem good value for anyone proposing to walk in these parts of Ireland. Three other volumes are available covering the NE, W and SW respectively. All the guides include a glossary of common Irish words used in place names for those who haven't the Gaelic.

New Climbs 1976, 1977 and 1978 Ken Higgs (Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland, pp 34, 50 and 40 respectively). These 3 bulletins, in handy pocket size, describe new climbs made in Ireland in the years indicated.

Bray Head and Minor Crags around Dublin Joss Lynam and Liam Convery (FMCI, 1978, pp 81, cover photos, maps and diagrams). A FMCI climbing guide in paperback with a plastic sleeve cover describing 11 locations near Dublin and to the S in Wicklow. Traditional adjectival gradings are used.

Malinbeg and Other Sea Cliffs Jim Leonard (FMCI, 1979, pp 45, cover photos, maps and diagrams). Another FMCI guide in similar format to the above describing sea-cliff climbs in SW Donegal.

Burren Seacliff Tom Ryan (FMCI 1978, pp 32, cover photos, maps and diagrams). A further FMCI guide to some sea cliffs in NW Clare.

Climbers' Guide to the Cairngorms Area Volume IV/V G. S. Strange and D. S. Dinwoodie (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1978, pp 171, 15 diagrams). This guide covers Lochnagar and Creag an Dubh Loch; it describes both rock-climbs (9 step adjectival gradings) and winter-climbs (existing 5-grade system). In addition to the 2 major climbing grounds, some outlying cliffs are given brief mention, ie Broad Cairn Bluffs, Craig Gowal and 3 locations in Glen Callater.

Climbers' Guide to Ben Nevis J. R. Marshall (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1979, pp 256, 15 illustrations.) This is an edition of this guide (which originally appeared in 1969) containing a 26-page supplement whose aim is to up-date the guide, pending a more comprehensive review. The guide omits information on Poldubh and nearby crags which have become major climbing areas since the first edition was published; the scale of activity has been such that the author feels that a separate guide to Glen Nevis is needed (see below). The supplement largely deals with the new ice-climbs done in the major ice gullies of Ben Nevis as the result mainly of the advent of new equipment and front pointing techniques in recent years.

Rock Climbs—Isle of Man G. Gartrell (Cicerone Press, pp 50, map, diagrams and photos, 50p).

South-West Climbs Pat Littlejohn (Diadem Books, £5.50).

Rock Climbs in Lancashire and the North West—Supplement Les Ainsworth, Dave Cronshaw and Al Evans (Cicerone Press, £2.50).

Tremadog and the Moelwyns Mike Mortimer (Climbers' Club, £3.75).

Froggatt Area Dave Gregory (BMC, £3.25).

Devon Rock Climbs Bob Moulton (Cordée, £2.50).

Rock Climbs in Glen Nevis—Poldubh and other Crags Klaus Schwartz (Nevis-print, £2.15).

Equipment and Technique 1979

Tom Connor

Friends We mentioned last year (*AJ* 84 245) the new rock climbing protection device known as 'Friends', which were invented by Ray Jardine. These have caught on fairly quickly and as is usually the case when an entirely new type of protection is introduced into climbing, have excited some controversy. *Mountain* 69 36 records an interview between Jardine and Alec Sharp and follows this up on p 42 with an article by Eric Perlman on the history, construction and use of Friends. Jardine was a former systems analyst for the Martin Marietta Corporation,