

Book Reviews 1983

Compiled by Geoffrey Templeman

Everest: The Unclimbed Ridge

Chris Bonington & Charles Clarke

Hodder & Stoughton, 1983, pp 132, photos & maps, £10.95

There is a great sameness about expedition books but this one, as one knew from the outset, was going to be special: the return of a British party after forty years and more to the scenes of our endeavours in the twenties and thirties and to a greatly changed Tibet, the story of an attempt substantially without oxygen on this enormously big and certainly difficult NE ridge, the drama and tragedy of the disappearance and loss of those uniquely experienced and skilful climbers Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker. It is indeed a rewarding and compelling story graphically and movingly told with an alternation of descriptive passages by the two authors interlarded with excerpts from Boardman's diaries and some of Tasker's letters and, need one say, magnificently illustrated. I particularly commend, because I am not yet fully habituated to it, the present convention of describing and analysing some at least of the emotional tensions, the fears, the antipathies, the fluctuations of friendship which in my time were glossed over or ignored. This way the characters of the protagonists stand out much more clearly though sadly Joe Tasker, partly because he seemingly kept no diary, remains rather enigmatic.

Charles Clarke in one of his introductory chapters gives a sympathetic account of Tibet and its people as the expedition saw them, with breathtaking photographs of interiors in the Potala, but it seems a pity to quote yet again that unrepresentative comment of Mallory's on Tibet as 'a hateful place'. So many other pre-war Everesters found the country fascinating; — Longstaff, Somervell and Warren all come to mind.

But the heart of the book is, of course, Chris Bonington's account of the climb, with the scene changing many times between the base camp in the Rongbuk valley, the advanced base near our old Camp III — a notoriously cheerless spot — and the ridge itself where the climbing team of four with no help from porters laboured to make the route and establish the three snow holes which were their intermediate camps. It was a daunting task: a route of some considerable steepness and difficulty in the height range 6850m — 7850m on snow that was less and less compacted the higher they went. The second 'snow cave' was to a large extent excavated out of ice and rock. The increasing strain and exhaustion is clearly portrayed, especially in the diary excerpts.

The final chapters describe the sudden elimination from the climbing team of Dick Renshaw after the stroke suffered high on the ridge, followed soon after by Chris Bonington's withdrawal, realising that he had shot his bolt, then the departure of Boardman and Tasker on their ill-fated attempt to complete the route. In fine weather the watchers are for a time able to note their progress and

converse by radio, then as they disappear from view and fail to answer radio calls doubt and anxiety turn gradually to certainty and grief.

After an expedition on which three out of a climbing team of four are casualties some uncomfortable questions about small expeditions to big mountains remain in the air, but the story could not have been better told. *Peter Lloyd*

H. W. Tilman. The Seven Mountain – Travel Books

Introduction Jim Perrin

Diadem/The Mountaineers, 1983, pp 896, photos, £14.95

This omnibus *Tilman* really is rather a good thing. I don't normally like omnibus volumes but, somehow or other, Bill Tilman's seven mountain travel books seem to come together rather well in such format. Possibly that is because he never really changed his style and so his books, brought together in this way, emphasise the whole. But how very good that style was. Every one of Tilman's books is highly readable just because of that. My favourites are *Snow on the Equator* and *Everest 1938*. Surely there is no other author in mountaineering literature who has had such a delightful command of quotation from the English classics with which to punctuate his own laconic humour? It is however, his quotations from his own favourite author, Sam Johnson, which principally delight us.

But what a strange character Bill Tilman was. An enigmatic personality! And yet not so much, perhaps, as you would think. I believe that he was really a rather shy man. I also believe that he was not the misogynist that he made himself out to be. Whenever I saw him in company with women I was struck by his rather old-fashioned courtesy towards them.

This book is very well put together and beautifully printed and produced. The principal contributions to this republication of the Tilman classics are twofold: firstly Jim Perrin's excellent introduction and secondly, Ken Wilson's admirable and valuable appendices on Tilman bibliography and on his mountaineering record. *Charles Warren*

Views of Mediaeval Bhutan. — The Diary and Drawings of Samuel Davis 1783.

Michael Aris.

(Serindia/Smithsonian, 1982, pp 124, illustrations, \$35).

What was so nice about the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was that almost anyone who was in the least well educated knew how to draw and paint in watercolours to such a state of proficiency that at that period there were more really good amateur artists, both male and female, than at any other time. And here is a book by and about just one of them, with examples of his work done during his travels in Bhutan.

How important this accomplishment was considered to be in those days can be appreciated when we remember some of the distinguished names of artists who were employed as teachers in the military academies. Paul Sandby, for example, was employed not only in the military drawing office in the Tower of London but

after that was drawing master for 28 years at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich; David Cox, for a brief period, taught drawing at the Military College at Farnham; and Aaron Penley became Professor of Drawing at the Addiscombe Military College. In the days before photography, it was an important part of an Army Officer's training to be taught how to draw. That is why the period is so rich in the very nice drawings, and delightful sketch books, of gifted amateurs.

This altogether charming book is an overdue tribute to a long forgotten amateur artist and interesting man, Samuel Davis, the reproductions of whose entirely delightful sketches of Bhutanese life and scenery take up about half the volume. Here it is the pictures which really matter. Even if you have never been to Bhutan, and few Englishmen have, Davis's drawings are so lively that you can imagine yourself there. It is the less formal sketches that I find so beautiful and which, it seems to me, at a stroke conjure up the whole atmosphere of the place. Look at p. 67 for example. And what about pp. 70, 73, 116 and 117?

Although it is really the illustrations which are the making of this book, the text in itself is of much interest. It comprises a valuable introductory essay on Davis and his times which is followed by extracts from his Bhutan Journal of 1783. The whole book is a vivid record of life in India and the far East in the days of the old East India Company and Warren Hastings.

But readers, even if you happen not to be interested in the text of this book, do just glance at the illustrations which I think you will find entrancing even if you have never been to that part of the world, except perhaps in imagination. How much more vividly they depict what life was like in Bhutan at that time than any photograph could ever have done.

What an entirely delightful addition to the Club's already most elegant library this latest acquisition is; and what pleasure it is bound to give to present and future readers! *Charles Warren*

Himalayan Pilgrimage

David Snellgrove

Prajñā Press, Boulder, 1981, pp. xxviii + 304, maps & photos, paperback, npq

This American paperback reprint of a book first published in 1958 tells the story of the author's six month journey in 1956, through Western Nepal, starting from Nepalganj and working eastwards towards Kathmandu, on the northern side of the main Himalayan chain. David Snellgrove is Professor of Tibetan at London University and, as the book is sub-titled 'A Study of Tibetan Religion', it might be thought that it would prove heavy-going for the general reader. Instead, it provides a marvellous account of the everyday lives of the very varied peoples met on the way and a perfect example of a 'live-off-the-land' journey. Whilst the author's fluent Tibetan and knowledge of religious practice obviously helped him and his two companions (one Sherpa, one Magar) on their way, it remains a formidable undertaking. In a preface to this second edition, the author comments that recent journeys have shown him that little has changed in 25 years in these remote regions. *G. W. T.*

First Across the Roof of the World

Graeme Dingle & Peter Hillary.

Hodder & Stoughton, 1982, pp 232, maps & colour photos, £9.95

All of a sudden, crossing the Himalaya from end to end has become THE great adventure and, according to the title, Dingle and Hillary were first in the field. They were closely, but not too closely, followed by an Indian army team and, of course, it has now been done at a run and is set to become an integral part of the charity fund-raising scene. None of which detracts from the fact that it is a massive undertaking which, if completed, stamps the participant as a pretty tough adventurer.

This pair did complete it, from Darjeeling in the south-east, north-westwards to K2, a total of 5510km distance, 500km in height up and down, from January to November. At times, though, it was a close run thing, not so much from the sheer difficulty of the traverse, but the incompatibility of the two main characters. The chapters are related alternately by the two authors and page after page is filled with their squabbles. One can only feel sorry for Tashi, their companion throughout, who was invariably caught in the cross-fire, and use the book as a reminder to choose one's companions carefully.

The photos, which are numerous and all in colour, are magnificent. Two small quibbles here though; too many photos are captioned 'Peter doing this', 'Graeme doing that', 'Peter looking at this', . . . that gets a little wearying, as we know well who they are after a few pages and, secondly, a rather unusual, intermittent, use of 'Mt. Lhotse', 'Mt. Makalu', 'Mt. K2', and others. However, these are small points in an interesting book which, for the standard of production, must represent very good value for money.

G. W. T.

Expeditions & Exploration

Nigel Gifford

Macmillan, 1983, pp 208, b/w and colour photos, diagrams, £12.95

As an introduction to the planning and management of expeditions, this book makes a good read, with plenty of illustrative anecdotes to underline the points it makes. Occasionally these anecdotes get in the way and, indeed, sometimes take over from Gifford's text. The chapters cover the setting of objectives, planning, financing, personnel, leadership, travel, logistics, communications, operations, publicity, food, equipment and several other topics in a straightforward, clear style. The short chapters tend to simplify several of the topics, but not to the point of being less than helpful. The longest chapter is on food and cooking, the most important items once an expedition is in the field, and contains much useful information including diagrams of a somewhat smarter oven than I ever managed to construct in the field. Contributors to the book include Chris Bonington, Roger Chapman, Peter Drake, Robin Hanbury-Tenison, Wally Herbert, Derek Jackson, Jim Masters, Sebastian Snow, Shane Wesley-Smith and Nigel Winser. All in all, this is worthwhile reading for anyone who is planning an expedition for the first time and perhaps, too, for some who think they know it all.

John Fairley.

The Himalayas. Playgrounds of the Gods

Capt M. S. Kohli

Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, pp 244, maps and photographs, many in colour, npq

Despite its rather lyrical title, this book is a very practical trekking guide, written by one of India's most experienced mountaineers. After a brief practical introduction (seasons, equipment, medical, rescue facilities, etc) its main text is devoted to a country by country description of trekking opportunities, covering India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, China and Afghanistan. Over half the text is devoted to India and Nepal and one feels that the six pages devoted to Afghanistan are included only for the sake of completeness. There are descriptions of most of the popular trekking areas, a wide selection of day by day trekking itineraries, and some useful information on the mountaineering possibilities.

To mountaineers accustomed to the literature on the mountains of Britain and Europe, any single book which attempts to cover the mountains of a whole subcontinent is bound to have its shortcomings. The author assumes that most parties will use the services of a trekking agency and gives little of the local information that a self-organised party might require. The western visitor might prefer his own medical check-list (certainly the one given would be easier to follow if pages 24 and 25 were not transposed).

Many of the treks described appear to originate from other sources, to judge from the differing levels of detail, and the varying drafting standards of the maps; detailed information is not always up to date. To be set against these points, however, is the scope of the book. While it is unlikely that many people will follow the advice on the dust-jacket and carry the whole volume with them for the sake of the two-page trek description they are following, it does provide a valuable basis for planning by describing the possibilities that different areas offer and contains some excellent photographs. One hopes that it will become readily available in this country. *Steve Town*

Beyond Endurance

Glin Bennet

Secker & Warburg, 1983, pp 275, illustrations, £9.50

Subtitled 'Survival at the Extremes', this is one of those interdisciplinary books which attempts to set out an integrating philosophy by taking examples over a wide range of human activities. Stories come from pilots, sailors, climbers, train drivers, soldiers, victims of terrorism, imprisonment and torture, survivors of disaster and adventurers of all kinds who have been pushed into terrifying situations and either succumbed or survived.

The mental states of people driven beyond their physical and psychological limits and their abilities to cope with potentially overwhelming problems presented to them, are affected by fatigue and by mental or physical worries and their efficiency in a crisis is thereby impaired. A study of all aspects of this subject with the wealth of examples should make it possible for the individual to handle

such situations more confidently in the future, while hoping fervently that they may never arise.

This is a book much more interesting than promised by casual examination and, indeed, is fascinating reading. *Edward Pyatt*

Avalanche Safety for Skiers and Climbers

Tony Daffern

Diadem, 1983, pp 172, illustrations, £7.50

'The victim is male, 27 years old, has had several years skiing and mountaineering experience, and doesn't know an avalanche from a snowball!'

Thus an American expert describes the average avalanche victim, going on to emphasise that most avalanche accidents occur when hazard is known to be high and to people who should, but do not, know better.

Snow avalanches are the greatest source of danger for mountain travellers in winter. They catch and very often kill the unwary who literally trigger their own destiny when they venture onto unsafe snow slopes in moments of inattention or ignorance.

Since 70%-80% of avalanche victims are climbers or skiers and only some 50%-60% of these survive their unique experience, the avalanche phenomenon behoves study and I would recommend this book to all aspiring ski-mountaineers and climbers. It is presented in a readable and concise form which will encourage the diffident reader to pursue the subject through to the end. Ease of reading does not, however, indicate that the treatment is superficial and the many examples of avalanche accidents are supported by sketches and diagrams clearly explaining the mechanisms of snow accumulation and release.

Based largely on North American examples and experience the text is nonetheless generally applicable to other areas although the chapter on hazard evaluation is closely related to N. American Alpine zones whose continental weather patterns are often markedly different to those encountered in the Alps or Scotland. For instance, non ski-mountaineers will be as surprised as I was to read that the Föhn is similar to the Chinook of N.E. America and 'does not increase the likelihood of avalanches.'

A small gripe though, and in all this is a very useful book. It stresses the avoidance of avalanche hazards by good route finding, by recognition and avoidance of hazardous slopes and by staying out of avalanche terrain when hazard is high — but it is only a book and as the author emphasises, as such can be no substitute for going into the mountains and practising what you have learnt. As Andre Roch succinctly put it, 'Remember this my friends, the avalanche does not know you are an expert.' *Derek Fordham*

Mountains of the Pyrenees

Kev Reynolds

Cicerone Press, 1983, pp 152, photos & maps, £10

To describe a whole range must be an extremely demanding task. One thinks of Carr and Lister, 'The Mountains of Snowdonia', or R. L. G. Irving's 'The Alps'. 'The Mountains of the Pyrenees' does not reach this class, no doubt due partly to the economic stringency of our less favoured times. Nevertheless in 140-odd

pages, Mr. Reynolds manages to give a great deal of well chosen information. The book consists of a preface, an introduction, an historical survey of climbing in the Pyrenees, a description of the mountains and four appendices. The historical chapters are much the most interesting. Ramond de Carbonnières, Charles Packe, Henry Russell and Henri Brulle are as fascinating a quartet of mountaineers as you will find anywhere. After these giants, there were the Cadier brothers, Arlaud, the Ravier twins and many others, but as in all other ranges the romantic age of exploration and discovery is apt to degenerate into a list of new and difficult climbs through which detail it is difficult to distinguish the wood from the trees. This of course is not Mr. Reynolds' fault: the roll call could perhaps only be made more interesting by a much fuller treatment beyond the scope of an introductory book.

The descriptive part of the book, 'The Mountains', contains much useful information but is less successful than the historical section. Topographical description can either be very succinct à la Baedeker or simple like most of the Victorian mountaineers; the high flights should be left to the Ruskins. Mr. Reynolds, impelled by his affection for the Pyrenees, has aimed too high so that his prose becomes tangled rather than limpid; the linguistic excess may be pardoned for his very proper enthusiasm.

There are notes for climbers and walkers, useful for planning a holiday, but the climber or walker would need to supplement them by a guidebook or, perhaps even better in the Pyrenees, should march in equipped only with map, compass and camping equipment. The main danger in these mountains, particularly on the southward side, is that of being lost in the seemingly endless succession of empty valleys. It is useful to realise that French and Castilian are not the sole languages of the Pyrenees. The language at the Eastern end is Catalan and at the Western end Basque. A few more Catalan words could have been included in the Glossary of Pyrenean terms.

Mr. Reynolds has a helpful and praiseworthy little section on the flowers of the Pyrenees, but I wish he had given us more than six pages. I have always assumed that Ramonda, a type of wild Gloxinia, was named in honour of Ramond de Carbonnières, but I should have liked this fancy confirmed. It is found only in the Pyrenees, but even there is local. The author very rightly draws attention to the many publications of the Alpine Garden Society.

It is a pity that the pictures, many of great interest, could not only have been better reproduced but reproduced in a larger size; the photograph on the dust-jacket shows how much size and colour can do to improve the effect. The limitation was no doubt also due to financial stringency. I regret too that the bibliography is limited to works in English; he leaves out many authorities.

A hundred years ago Douglas Freshfield gave the Pyrenees a puff in the *Badminton 'Mountaineering'* but they have never gained the popularity they deserve among British climbers. The reason, of course, is the paucity of ice; there is very little ice or mixed climbing. The one classic ice climb of the range, the Couloir de Gaube, was done by Henri Brulle and party in 1889; it was not repeated for 44 years. This relative unpopularity of the range is, in these crowded days, its greatest attraction. Mr. Reynolds' book will surely bring others to these splendid mountains, but I hope not too many. *Francis Keenlyside*

Cold Climbs — The Great Snow and Ice Climbs of the British Isles.

Compiled by Ken Wilson, Dave Alcock and John Barry.

Diadem Books, 1983, pp 280, 224 photographs, £17.95

This book, the fifth in the series by Ken Wilson, has been available for some time now and for those enthusiasts who have not already acquired it, its value as a source of reference for British winter routes cannot be overemphasised. The format of *Cold Climbs* is similar to the two previous publications on climbing, *Hard Rock* and *Classic Rock*, drawing on a range of leading participants to relate their individual route accounts. Each article is supported by a selection of photographs, some in colour, with an inset route diagram to help pinpoint the line followed.

The book relies heavily on the photographs, many of which somewhat unexpectedly highlight individual route detail, not the easiest of achievements given the often hostile nature of the environment found on a British cliff face in winter, and it is for assembling such a collection of quality material into one book that Ken Wilson and his fellow compilers should be praised. The colour photographs are outstanding, from the illustration of extreme ice climbing as shown in the sequence on Mick Fowler tackling the brittle ice of Craig y Rhaeadr in North Wales to winter panoramas as shown in the excellent montage on the Cuillin Ridge in Skye.

Of the seventy routes described in the book, two thirds are in Scotland and of these thirty are on Ben Nevis, Creag Meaghaidh and Lochnagar. The remainder are from the Lake District, the best of the Welsh climbs and a sprinkling from Ireland. Many of the routes contained in the book are in the upper grades (5/6), reflecting the current state of the art, which through the use of ultra specialised hammers, axes and crampons has led to a spate of routes up sustained vertical ice sheets, bulging curtains of water ice and even odd summer HVS under a thin winter mantle. This choice therefore in a way overlooks the fact that most winter mountaineers in this country climb to a lower standard and often combine a route with a summit or two. However, there is also a healthy selection of middle grade Scottish classic gullies to be found in the book.

The articles are on the whole interesting, although it is difficult to get away from the standard ingredients of a cold creaky start, followed by a crampon scraping, pick flailing ascent and the trudge back to base. However, many a personal insight can be gained if the essays are studied carefully, two examples being Marshall's almost Welzenbach type commitment to the Pinnacle Face of Creag Meaghaidh and Boysen's burning ambition to make the second winter ascent of Parallel B on Lochnagar. Outstanding articles by Harold Raeburn, Jimmy Marshall, Robin Campbell and a Geoff Dutton yarn help to cover the 'Scottish angle' although overall this is lacking in *Cold Climbs*. True, the SMC Journal has faithfully recorded winter climbing developments north of the border and contained a steady stream of supporting articles; however, with the passing of Smith, Clough, Patey, Haston and most recently Cunningham the vast wealth of knowledge about post-war Scottish winter climbing is declining and perhaps the publication of this book will, if nothing else, inspire the production of a more definitive work to take its place somewhere between Murray's account of the halcyon days and Patey's memorable autobiography. Nevertheless *Cold Climbs*

does succeed extremely well in that it illustrates quite superbly many of Britain's best winter routes, helps cast some light into those dark northern treasure chests and will undoubtedly prove to be the best reference book on the subject for many years to come. *John Steele*

Total Alpinism

René Desmaison

Granada, 1982, pp 202, photos, £12.50

René Desmaison wrote two autobiographical books in the early '70's — 'La Montagne à Mains Nues' in 1971 and '342 Heures dans les Grandes Jorasses' in 1973. These have now been combined in a new English translation, with a very short additional linking passage on the ascent of the Shroud in 1968. The book starts with a resumé of the famous Dru rescue of 1966 and then proceeds to describe early days in the mountains, the first winter ascents of the West Face of the Drus, the North-West face of the Olan and the Walker Spur, the ascent of the Frêne Pillar, and also very short accounts about the Cima Ovest and Jannu. The whole of the second half of the book then deals with the winter ascent of the Direct Route on the Walker Spur and the resulting tragedy, which the author recounts in a very moving way. Desmaison has often been the centre of controversy in France and the death of Serge Gousseault on the Walker and the subsequent rescue plunged him once again into a bitter dispute similar to that which happened after the Dru rescue in '66. It makes interesting reading. *G. W. T.*

Montagne di Valtellina e Valchiavenna

Boscacci/Pelosi/Bettini/Fassin

Banca Piccolo Credito Valtellinese, 1982, pp 304, numerous illustrations, 24 × 31cms, npq

Sub-titled 'immagini dall' esplorazione all' alpinismo moderno', this is another sumptuously-produced Italian monograph on a mountain region. My Italian not being what it should be, I can only say that it appears to cover new ground by being published on behalf of the CAI by a local bank — and they have made an excellent job of it. Principally a picture book, it includes old prints, modern colour photos, double-page Sella spreads, ephemera, old postcards and much else. Obviously, a knowledge of Italian helps in appreciating the book, but the mountaineering history of the region can be assessed from the pictures alone.

G. W. T.

Fontainebleau escalades et randonnées

M Schulman *et al*

Arthaud, Paris 1982, pp 236 in French, A5, diagrams, illustrations black and white and colour, npq

This comprehensive guidebook describes climbing and walking in the Fontainebleau area, which, so conveniently close to Paris, has played an important role in the development of many a French mountaineer. The rocks are reminiscent of our own Kent and Sussex outcrops but on a considerably more extensive scale.

Climbs of approximately equivalent standards on isolated boulders and faces are linked into circuits, which are waymarked in colour. Around 180 such circuits of all grades of difficulty are spread out over some 30 sites. Interlinking walks are also detailed.

The climbing is certain to be very specialised in type, but anyone with southern sandstone experience should fall into the way of it fairly readily; after all it is within reasonable reach for a weekend trip from SE England. This book is all that is needed to locate everything worthwhile. *Edward Pyatt*

La Vie de la Montagne

Bernard Fischesser

Chêne/Hachette, Paris 1982, pp 258 in French, 310 × 240mm, illustrations black and white and colour, diagrams, npq (price in this country exceeds £40, maybe it would be less in France)

This is a splendid general book about mountains, though hardly at all about mountaineering. It covers mountain geography; the origins of mountains; the geomorphology of mountain terrain; snow, ice and avalanches; flora and fauna and their adaptation to the environment; and the impact of man on all these. The major slant is towards the Alps, but there is pertinent information on other great ranges of the world.

In addition to the fine collection of photographs there is a wealth of detailed diagrams, such that the book can be opened anywhere at any time and something interesting will immediately be found to study.

Not only do our coffee tables, already strengthened to support past offerings, continue to wilt under the load, but our bookcases need ever increasing accommodation for books of large page size. And they are all so well worth having! The verdict in this case has to be — 'unreservedly recommended', though unfortunately the price puts it into the heirloom category. *Edward Pyatt*

Adventuring in Lakeland

A. H. Griffin

Hale 1980, pp 189, illustrations, npq

This is unusual in being completely non-élitist — it covers every mountain activity in the Lake District except hard rock climbing; scrambling, geriatric rock climbing, gill climbing, snow climbing, ski mountaineering and mountains for the elderly. The author is well known for a whole series of books on the Lake District, which through the years must have contributed to the present overcrowdedness. Here he claims that the crowds can still be avoided and plenty of adventure enjoyed even by the climber of modest attainments. We have to hope that he is right, though this book may well have opened the door to even these sanctuaries. *Edward Pyatt*

Die like a dog

Gwen Moffat

Gollancz 1982 pp 160 £6.95

A pleasant little novel of crime and detection set in Snowdonia with an authentic climbing background. *Edward Pyatt*

The National Physical Laboratory — A History

Edward Pyatt

Adam Hilger, 1983, pp 270, illustrations, charts, etc. £24

This latest work of the ex-Editor of this journal is of additional interest to us, since a member of the Alpine Club, Richard T. Glazebrook, was the chief instigator and first Director (1900-19) of this, our national standards laboratory. His Alpine career extended from 1890 to the first World War and he was elected to the Club in 1899. (Obit: *AJ* 48 158)

A number of others have been members of both organisations simultaneously; there were five at one time during the 1960s. *Peter Hillman*

Mountains of North America The great peaks and ranges of the continent

Fred Beckey

Sierra Club, 1982, pp 256, map, numerous colour photographs, 23x31cm, \$35.00

What a marvellous production this is by Sierra Club Books! Each of the 35 mountains chosen has 3 or 4 beautiful photographs to illustrate the author's description, many whole page and a number of double page spreads. The mountains chosen range from the gentle wooded slopes of Clingman's Dome in the Appalachians to the expected giants of the Grand Teton, St. Elias and McKinley, taking in on the way a number that I would not expect to be too familiar to British readers. The author mixes geography, history and personal reminiscences in a delightful way, but the book is worth seeking out for the pictures alone.

K2. Verso il Cielo Appuntamento dal versante cinese*L'Altra Riva, Venèce, 1983, pp 160, many illustrations, mostly in colour, npq*

Our member Ardito Desio has presented us with a copy of this large format book which documents the reconnaissance expedition to investigate the North Ridge of K2 in 1982. The book starts with a description of the exploration of the Shaksgam valley in 1929 by M. Desio, who was on that expedition, and then describes the 1982 journey through China to the foot of the mountain.

Rock and Ice Climbing The History, Practice and Techniques

Massimo Cappon.

Orbis, 1983, pp 160, copiously illustrated with drawings & B/W & colour photos, £15.00

Originally published in Italy in 1981, this large format book is split into three parts — a brief historical survey of mountaineering, a textbook on climbing on blue paper in the centre, and a final hotch-potch of chapters to finish. Whilst many of the illustrations are good, it is difficult at this price to see exactly what readers the book is aimed at.

A Mountain in Tibet

Charles Allen

Andre Deutsch, 1982, pp 225, numerous illustrations and maps, £12.95

A number of books have been appearing in recent years on the adventurers who, for a variety of reasons, took great risks in exploring Tibet and the other remote areas of Central Asia during the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. Charles Allen's story is principally concerned with the search for Mt. Kailas and the sources of the main rivers of India. For centuries, legend told of a holy mountain at the centre of the world from which sprang the Ganges, Indus, Sutlej and Tsangpo-Brahmaputra and exploration over the years confirmed this as substantially true. Starting in the 17th century the story ends with Sven Hedin and includes so many of those military surveyors, pundits and pure romantics travelling in disguise that at times the tale gets a little complicated to unravel, but it is well worth the effort.

Trespassers on the Roof of the World

Peter Hopkirk

John Murray, 1982, pp X + 274, photos and maps, £9.75

A second book published in the same year as that above on the exploration of Tibet must, inevitably, tell a number of the same stories. The journeys of the pundits and of people such as Henry Savage Landor are repeated here, but the emphasis is on reaching Lhasa and so a number of newcomers are introduced. The famous/infamous expedition/invasion by Younghusband is given detailed treatment and the story comes up to date via the early Everest attempts and Heinrich Harrer's journey to the final occupation by the Red Guards. The book is well written and chronologically easier to follow than the one on Kailas mentioned above.

A Tale of Two Lakes The Fight to Save Ennerdale Water and Wastwater.

Geoffrey Berry

Friends of the Lake District, 1982, pp X + 86, photos and maps, paperback £2.25

The story of the fight to save Ennerdale Water from the attentions of the North West Water Authority and Wastwater from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., told by one of the champions of the Lake District. The decision by the Secretary of State to reject the proposals reflected great credit on all the objectors.

A Genius for Friendship The Life of William Bellows of Gloucester

Grace Bellows

Ebor Press, 1982 pp X + 188, photos, paperback, £5.55

A life of our former member William Bellows, who died in 1942, told by his widow. The details of most interest to members of this club will be extracts from his writings on three ascents of the Matterhorn and, in particular, meetings with Guido Rey at his villa at Breuil.

Castles in the Air Men and Mountains in New Zealand.

Philip Temple

McIndoe, Dunedin, 1973, pp 168, numerous illustrations, npq

A brief note on a book ten years old, but just received for the library, by a former editor of the N. Z. Alpine Journal. It gives a largely pictorial history of mountaineering and exploring in New Zealand together with some attractive early mountain paintings.

The Naked Mountain An Adventure to the Deadliest Peak in the Himalaya

R. G. Morse

Fleet Books, Toronto, 1982, pp 200, maps & colour photos, £9.95

This book, not only written but published by the author as well, is the story of a 6-man expedition to the Rupal Flank of Nanga Parbat in 1980. The spearhead of the attack was the Burgess twins who reached high on the mountain, but Randy Morse writes from the standpoint of the self-acknowledged weakest member of the party who gave up and returned to civilisation after another member had also had to retire through ill health. Whilst the reader is left in no doubts about the author's thoughts and feelings during the time he was with the expedition, it loses something in the fact that it is not told by the principal protagonists.

A Walk in the Sky

Nicholas Clinch

The Mountaineers/American Alpine Club, 1982, pp xii + 214, photos, some in colour, maps, npq

Nick Clinch has sent this copy of his book to the Club 'in appreciation of the invaluable contributions made by British mountaineers to the success of our expedition'. The expedition in question took place 25 years ago, being both the first ascent of Hidden Peak and the first American group to climb an 8000m peak; the book itself was also written soon after the climb and only the preface and epilogue were added recently. The author gives his numerous reasons for the fact that it wasn't published earlier and one might think that an 'ordinary expedition book', 25 years old, would be of little interest today, but, apart from the historic aspect of the ascent, the book is written in a charming and amusing way which makes delightful reading. It is worthy of sitting on the bookshelf alongside other major expedition books.

Another Ascent of the World's Highest Peak — Qomolangma*Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1975, pp 120, numerous photos — mainly in colour, diagram, npq*

A rather belated notice for a book which, being published in 1975, recognises the ascent from the north side that year as 'a triumph of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, another creditable achievement of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius'. From a mountaineering point of view, however, the book is of interest in giving a pictorial record of this ascent, on which 9 Chinese mountaineers reached the summit. Whilst pictures such as the line of supply lorries arriving at Base Camp (14 lorries in sight) and the white-coated stores men sorting out baskets of fresh

fruit and vegetables at Base, may strike us as so different from current Western thinking on Himalayan expeditions, this book gives a fascinating picture of what was a very creditable performance by Chinese mountaineers.

Nepal Namaste

Robert Rieffel

Sahiyogi Press, Kathmandu, 1978, pp 388, maps, colour photos, Nep. Rs 75/\$7

A late notice of a revised and updated edition of this guide to Nepal. The first part covers history, economy, art, etc., whilst the remainder is devoted to tourism and trekking. A useful guide.

Mount Qomolangma — The Highest in the World

Zhang Rongzu

Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1981, pp 64, drawings, diagrams and photos, paperback, npq

A general book on the geology, flora, etc. of Everest, with some references to ascents.

Mattia Zurbriggen, Guida Alpina

Felice Benuzzi

'Lo Strona', Valstrona, 1982, pp 88 + 15 pages of photos, maps and diagrams, L.17,500 to CAI members

The author has presented the Club with a copy of this limited edition publication which tells of Mattia Zurbriggen, 'his feats, his companions, his mountains'. For anyone with a smattering of Italian, it tells the fascinating story of his travels with Conway, Fitzgerald, Borsalino, Borghese and the Workmans, and of his alpine climbs with Rey, Kugy, the Gugliermi brothers and many others. The book is a valuable addition to the literature about the great Alpine guides. The author asks if anyone knows the whereabouts of Zurbriggen's 'Fuehrerbuch'.

L'Oberland Bernois. Hans Grosse. *pp 256*

Le Massif des Écrins. Gaston Rébuffat. *pp 240*

Le Grand Paradis et les Vallées du Lanzo. Gian Carlo Grassi. *pp 248*

These are the three latest volumes, printed or reprinted in 1982, published by Editions DENOËL under the direction of Gaston Rébuffat and sub-titled 'Les 100 Plus Belles Courses et Randonnées.' The format will be familiar from the only volume so far published in English — Mont Blanc — and really there is little more to be said. The quality of production is superb, each route is fully described with diagrams and excellent photographs, many in colour, and the general introduction gives a good condensed picture of the area concerned. Eleven volumes have appeared so far and four more are in preparation; roll on the next ones!

Vittorio Sella Fotografie e Montagna Nell'Ottocento

CAI, 1982, pp 364, maps and numerous photos and other illustrations, paperback, npq

A catalogue, in Italian, of the exhibition of Sella's photographs organised by the Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi' and held in Turin and Aosta in the early part of 1983. It includes pictures from all the major expeditions, plus extensive notes on his life and work.

Planting the Five-Star Flag on Mt. Tomur

Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1979, pp 104, photos — many in colour, £6.50

Published several years ago now, this is a record of the ascent in 1977 of the highest peak in the Tien Shan by a party of '21 men, 6 women and a film maker.' It is largely a pictorial record which, as in previous publications, includes pictures strange to our eyes, such as those of the political meetings at Base Camp. Maybe, however, we should take a leaf out of their book and engage more in the 'dancing joyfully at a camp at 5400m.' Who knows, it might get good results.

Time Gentlemen. Some Collected Poems

Hamish Brown

Aberdeen University Press, 1983, pp 10 + 124, illustrations, npq

Aberdeen University Press have followed their successful edition of Scottish mountain poems with a collection of Hamish Brown's poems, the majority having a mountain flavour. It is a very pleasant collection to dip into, with something for everyone, and the illustrations in a variety of styles by Ian Strachan are excellent.

Cervin

Gaston Rébuffat

Grands Vents, 1983, pp 168, numerous illustrations, npq

Following the first volume in this series, 'Chamonix — Mont Blanc 1900', we now have the Matterhorn in similar style; early photographs, drawings, postcards and posters, many reproduced in colour, give a wonderful picture of the mountain and its surroundings in past years. Books in this nostalgic vein are becoming more and more popular on the continent and I must say they are very appealing. The Pyrenees will be next in the series.

The Highlands of Scotland

W. A. Poucher

Constable, 1983, pp 206, colour photos, £10.95

The Alps

W. A. Poucher

Constable, 1983, pp 204, colour photos, £12.50

Two more 'luxury' Poucher volumes this year. The first is an extension of 'Scotland', reviewed last year, featuring mainly the higher hills, whilst the second is only Poucher's second alpine book, the first being 'The Magic of the Dolomites' published in 1951. As usual, the photographs are superb, but the review copy of 'The Alps' seems to be particularly tightly bound so that it won't open flat. Whilst this is normally only a minor irritation, it becomes a major nuisance where so many pictures cross the double page and detail in the centre is lost.

Always a Little Further

Alastair Borthwick

Diadem, 1983, pp viii + 220, photos, £7.95

This is, in effect, the fourth edition of this ever-popular classic of climbing in Scotland, first published in 1939. 13 of the author's photographs are included.

Memorable Munros

Richard Gilbert

Diadem, 1983, pp 192, maps and photos, £7.95

A revised and expanded edition of the paperback originally published in 1976 and reviewed in *A.J.* 327, 1978.

The Lake District Discovered. 1810-1850. The Artists, The Tourists, and Wordsworth

Peter Bicknell & Robert Woof

Trustees of Dove Cottage, 1983, pp 88, illustrations, npq

Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Grasmere and Wordsworth Museum during 1983.

Guinness Book of Skiing

Peter Lunn

Guinness, 1983, pp 6 + 186, photos, drawings and diagrams, £8.95

Peter Lunn's new book provides a comprehensive picture of the skiing world. Half the book is devoted to a detailed history of skiing, including details of the Olympic Games and speed and jumping records. Then follow sections on snow-craft and preparation, with a final section on technique. Written by someone who won a prize in a ski race in 1923, captained the British Olympic ski team in 1936 and competed in the 1983 'Inferno', it is naturally authoritative and is presented in the attractive style one has come to expect from Guinness books.

High Level. The Alps from End to End

David Brett

Gollancz, 1983, pp 206, maps and photos, £10.95

David Brett's book describes his solo walk in the summer of 1981 from La Béarde to Heiligenblut — a Grand High-Level Route on foot. He managed to collect 14 peaks *en route*, less, one gathers, than he had hoped when he started, but not a bad total at all when one considers the variations in weather likely to be encountered on a trip of this kind and the fact that the author was alone. As Wakefield says at the end of his 'Pennine Way Companion' — 'you won't find me here again' — so, one gathers, you won't find David Brett on the full traverse again. Once is enough! Having said that, the moments of joy shine through in this interesting and humorous narrative. The author must have been a great sight, striding along, his rucksack supported by a headband, talking to the marmots.

Land Search and Rescue

F. E. Gallas

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand, 1981, pp X + 166, photos and diagrams, npq

The second edition of what has become the rescuer's bible in New Zealand. It concentrates, as the title implies, on the organisation of searches, with considerable emphasis on helicopter work. Some of the illustrations show graphically the problems associated with evacuation in bush country.

THE YEAR'S GUIDES

Scrambles in Skye

J. Wilson Parker

Cicerone Press, 1983, pp 144, photos, maps and diagrams, £5.50

The latest in Cicerone's guides to the scrambling areas of our hills is on Skye, the supreme example of a scrambler's paradise. All the major peaks and crossings of the main ridge in the Black Cuillin are included, plus the standard walks from and to Coruisk, with clear diagrams. Included in the 'package' — a plastic container — is a very useful coloured map of the Black Cuillin at a scale of 1:20,000.

North Wales. New Climbs

Andy Pollitt

Climbers' Club/BMC, 1983, pp 70, diagram, £2.45

The up-date on the climbing scene in North Wales, excluding Tremadog and Ogwen, but giving a fairly full account of all major climbs in the Crafnant Valley. 'E' grades are also assessed for a number of crags.

Stanage Millstone

Ed. Geoff Milburn

BMC, 1983, pp 336, photos, maps and diagrams, £5.95

Vol I in the Fourth Series of 'Peak District Climbs' is edited by Geoff Milburn with a team of 24 helpers and is a handsome production by any standards. It has a coloured frontispiece in addition to colour covers, numerous other, generally good, photos in the text, and covers all gritstone crags from Penistone down to Grindleford. Very good value at today's prices, and if the standard keeps as high, the new series will be one to treasure.

Tremadog

Leigh McGinley

Climbers' Club, 1983, pp 166, photo diagrams, £4.95

Described as the fifth edition, this guide encompasses the areas of the old 'Snowdon South' and 'Snowdon East' guides, the main areas being Tremadog, the Moelwyns, Carreg Hyll-drem and the Lledr Valley, with numerous smaller crags between. The Climbers' Club seem to have settled in to a high standard of guide in their current series, with clear, succinct descriptions, interesting first ascent notes and clear diagrams. The standard of production is also excellent.

The Western Highlands

Donald Bennet

SMC, 1983, pp xii + 180, maps & photos, npq

This is the district guide to the Western Highlands in the SMC's standard high-quality series that we have all got used to.

The Peak and Pennines

W. A. Poucher

Constable, 1983, pp 456, maps & photos, £5.95

The fourth edition of Poucher's pocket-albeit quite a big pocket-guide to the Peak and Pennines. Comparing it with my 1966 edition, it's almost a third as big again and the photos are better reproduced. Plus, of course, the photo of the author on the dust jacket keeps pace with time. It is still a remarkably good guide to the area and good value for money.

Walks and Climbs in the Pyrenees

Kevin Reynolds

Cicerone, 1983, pp 208, maps, drawings & photos, £3.95

The second edition of this invaluable guide has been expanded in the five years since the first edition to include five new areas, to update routes generally and to add high-level routes linking the various massifs. A clear, well produced guide.

Rock Climbing in the Peak District

Paul Nunn

Constable, 1983, pp xx + 328, maps & photos, £6.95

The third edition of this popular guide to climbing in the Peak now contains some 1100 routes and has been fully revised to include the best routes of recent years.

Creag Dubh & Craig-a-Barns

Dave Cuthbertson

SMC, 1983, pp 142, photos and photo-diagrams, npq

This first SMC guide to roadside crags in Scotland covers the popular area from Newtonmore in the north to Perth in the south.

New Climbs 1982

Tom Ryan

FMCI, 1983, pp 96, diagrams, npq

Over 250 routes are listed throughout Ireland and an updated list of Irish crags by Peter Coakley is also included.

Gower and South East Wales

Mike Danford & Tony Penning

S. Wales Mountaineering Club, 1983, pp 192 maps and photo-diagrams, npq

This latest guide to the climbing in S. Wales shows a vast increase in the number of routes and may divert some activity from the more popular Pembroke area. A concise and well-presented guide.

Rock Climbs in Lancashire and the North West (including Isle of Man)

Les Ainsworth

Cicerone Press, 1983, pp 360, diagrams, photo, £6.95

Guides are getting bigger all the time! This third edition has been greatly expanded to include numerous small crags and quarries all over Lancashire (and over the borders, too) plus the Isle of Man. A lot of work has gone into detailing the hundreds of climbs in this previously rather neglected area. Many of the quarry climbs are now classics.

Yorkshire Gritstone

Ed. Eddie Lesniak

Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, 1982, pp xiv + 230, photos and diagrams, npq

This second edition of the rock climbing guide to the gritstone outcrops of West Yorkshire now covers nearly 1500 named routes on cliffs both famous and obscure. The area covered is from Huddersfield in the south to Pateley Bridge, and from Burnley eastwards to Wetherby.

Wyndcliffe

Tony Penning

South Wales Mountaineering Club, 1983, pp 20, npq

A guide to 50 rock climbs at Wyndcliffe, overlooking the River Wye close to Wintours Leap.

Picos de Europa. Northern Spain

Robin Collomb

West Col, 1983, pp 144, photos, maps, drawing and diagrams, npq

A well illustrated guide to the area, giving general history and information plus detailed descriptions of each summit with a selection of routes. From being very poorly represented in mountaineering literature, in English, the Spanish mountains are rapidly catching up.

The Mount Cook Guidebook

Hugh Logan

NZAC, 1982, pp 132, maps and photo-topos, paperback, npq

A well-produced guide to all the major climbs in the Mount Cook district with a brief history and details of first ascents. Route descriptions are kept to a minimum and the guide is one to be studied in the hut rather than carried on the climb.

Irish Peaks

Ed. Joss Lynam

Constable, 1982, pp 250, photos and maps, £5.95

The latest in Constable's series of pocket guides to the hills, 'Irish Peaks' is by the acknowledged expert in the subject, acting as editor for the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland. It will prove an invaluable guide for anyone considering a walking holiday in the Irish hills, with clear maps for each mountain group and numerous photographs.

Scottish Winter Climbs

Hamish MacInnes

Constable, 1982, pp 480, many photos, £6.50

The publishers are doing a great service to climbers and walkers in bringing out their thick, single volume guides to the climbing and walking areas of Britain. The author follows his 'Scottish Climbs' with the present volume which lists some 500 routes throughout Scotland, the greater number having a related photo or topo.

A Guide to the South Devon and Dorset Coast Paths

Roland Gant

Constable, 1982, pp 242, many photos, maps, £5.95

A useful, well-illustrated guide to the coastal walk from Plymouth to Poole.

High Peak Walks

Mark Richards

Cicerone Press, 1982, pp 208, maps, diagrams and drawings, £4.95

Open this guide at any page and you will think you are reading a 'Wainwright'; the lettering, drawings and maps are virtually identical. As it appears, however, that the author has been actively encouraged by Wainwright himself, this must be acceptable. The result is a useful guide to 22 walks in the Dark Peak, ranging from 5 to 12 miles, but ending with the Marsden — Edale as something to aspire to, and is Vol. 1 of a two-volume set to cover the White Peak as well.

Four new volumes were received in 1983 of the Edisud climbing guides:-

Escalades dans le Massif de la Sainte-Victoire: Baù Cézanne, la Croix.

Bernard Gorgeon, Christian Guyomar & Alexis Lucchesi. *pp 102, numerous maps and topo-diagrams, 2 photos, FF 45*

The third volume to this area.

Escalades dans le Massif du Saussois

Thierry Fagard & Jean-Paul Lebaleur.

pp 158, numerous topo-diagrams & photos, FF 58

A new guide to the region.

Escalades dans le Massif des Calanques: en Vau

Alexis Lucchesi.

pp 160, numerous maps and topo-diagrams, FF50

A new enlarged edition.

Escalades dans le Massif des Calanques — Morgiou

Alexis Lucchesi

pp 126, maps & topo-diagrams, npq

Mention should perhaps be made of the always-excellent diagrams — 71 of them in this volume — which illustrate this series.

FILMS

Eiger

Leo Dickinson with text by Audrey Salkeld

Central Independent Television, 1 hour. First transmitted 9 December 1983.

Eric Jones, well known to many a mountaineer and rock climber as proprietor of the café at the foot of Tremadoc Rocks, and as a mountaineer in his own right, made the first solo British ascent of the Eiger's N face following the normal route. The ascent, together with reconstructions of events in the history of the exploration of the face, is the subject of this film.

The film uses Jones as a human pointer moving up the face to indicate the position of each of the historical events it describes, starting with Hinterstoisser's key traverse to the Swallows' Nest and the ensuing tragedy of their retreat. Later it describes the first successful ascent by Harrer, Kasperek, Heckmair and Vörg in 1938 with its unwanted propaganda consequences, and also the tragedy and success of the first ascent of the John Harlin Route.

The reconstructions are supported by commentary by some of the climbers who were involved at the time. The simultaneous translation and overspeaking of speech (as is the fashion in British television today) was irksome, even though it was done better than most, with just sufficient of the original audible at the start and end of each passage to give at least some impression of the speaker's real personality. The reconstructions were mostly skilful and believable, and even though one knows what is coming, the moment of Harlin's fall is unspeakably heart-stopping.

For me, the only real fault in the film was that there was not nearly enough of Eric Jones climbing. What there was, was full of interest with a commentary by Jones describing his feelings and experiences as he progressed. There could have been much more of this without any risk of boredom: just as the climbing was becoming interesting the film would digress to describe the history of the face or would cut away to show the arrival of the helicopter to deliver the camera to some new vantage point . . . and for me the spell would be broken.

The film is full of superbly beautiful photography. The filming was done with the aid of extremely powerful telephoto lenses from vantage points on the face, on the ridges and from the helicopter. The tremendous scale of the face and the insignificance of the lone figure on it were well portrayed by means of the liberal use of zooms onto the face and pans down the face. There are many beautiful aerial shots of the Berner Oberland, and the film ends with Jones on the summit against a flaming sunset. For the photography alone, the film is enjoyable.

John Fairley