
BOOK REVIEWS 1987

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

The Mystery of Mallory and Irvine

Tom Holzel and Audrey Salkeld

Jonathan Cape, 1986, pp xii + 322, £12.50

This is an unusual book where there is scope for some difference of opinion. It originates in the interest which the American Tom Holzel developed in 1970 in the question whether Mallory and Irvine in fact reached the summit of Everest before they perished in 1924. He found it amazing that Mallory's two biographers do not speculate about how he died and largely ignore the question whether his great ambition to climb the mountain had been crowned with success. He not only read up all the available literature on the subject, he corresponded with Mallory's contemporaries and, since the northern side of Everest was still out of bounds, planned and got permission for an expedition to Makalu, intending to make a clandestine foray into Tibet 'only 12 miles away' to look on his own for traces of the two climbers. Nothing came of this plan, but it shows the extent of his enthusiasm for the project. In parallel with this activity, appreciating the limitations of existing oxygen equipment he developed a new type of chemical closed-circuit set. This, however, is only briefly referred to in the book.

His interest was further excited in 1980 when the Japanese Alpine Club reported to him, in reply to his enquiries, that one of their Chinese porters, on the day before he was killed by an avalanche on the N Col, had told a member of the expedition how in 1974 the Chinese had found two bodies of Englishmen, one evidently Maurice Wilson, the other 'at 8100m on the NE ridge route', presumed to be Irvine.

Holzel's next move was the sensible one of enlisting the help of Audrey Salkeld. He also, as the Tibetan side of the mountain became legitimately accessible, renewed his plans for an expedition there to search for fresh evidence and obtained permission for this after the monsoon in 1986. Surprisingly, the present book was written before the expedition took place, and it was intended to follow it with a second, to be entitled *The Search for Mallory and Irvine*. Bad weather and heavy snowfall made the expedition abortive, and the second book is presumed to have been abandoned. There is certainly no room for another on the subject, but a film has been made this year (1987) which further examines the evidence about the events of June 1924.

The book divides, it seems to me, into two quite distinct parts. The first part, consisting of the first and penultimate chapters, is an exposition of Tom Holzel's ideas which are that, contrary to the consensus reached in the twenties

and thirties (see for instance the 1924 and 1933 Everest books), the likelihood is that, with insufficient oxygen to get both climbers to the top, they separated; Irvine went down alone and fell where the axe was found in 1933, while Mallory went on alone, very possibly reaching the summit but perishing on the descent. The evidence on which he draws is that of rates of ascent achieved with oxygen on later climbs, but this part of the argument is not presented in detail. More emphasis is laid on recent knowledge, from the Chinese, Japanese and Catalan ascents of the NE ridge, of the nature of the last 300m of the mountain, including the second step itself. The Chinese climbed this with the help of a ladder and the most detailed description, by the Catalan party, records that it has one pitch of grade IV/IV sup or v diff/mild severe.

Holzel's preferred scenario is briefly as follows. It is not the first but the second step where Odell sees the two climbers. The ridge brings them to within 5m of the top of the step which they successfully climb. But it is now 1pm and their oxygen supply is running low. Realizing that they cannot both make the top they decide to separate. In the continuing fine weather Irvine should be able to manage without oxygen the descent over the slabs as far as Camp 6. Having seen Irvine down the second step on the rope Mallory transfers Irvine's partly filled bottle to his own frame and, with about three hours' oxygen supply left, starts for the top. There is still a vertical height of 230m to climb and, at the speed they achieved from Camp 6 to the second step, it is touch and go if he can make it. 'The Chinese in 1960 got down on hands and knees and crawled the final stretch to the summit. Would Mallory have done less?' Despite various objections and doubts over this reconstruction of events, it is not inconceivable.

This same penultimate chapter reports in part the vigorous rebuttal which an earlier statement of Holzel's ideas (*Mountain* 17, 30-35, 1971) drew from Sir Percy Wyn Harris (*Mountain* 21, 32-36, 1972). Both are worth reading in full in the original source. Wyn Harris castigates Holzel for two things, first the suggestion that Mallory's contemporaries (e.g. Norton and Ruttledge in their comments on the events of 1924) were motivated by jealousy, second for the contention that Mallory could possibly have so far ignored the ethos of the time as to abandon Irvine, high on the mountain, to make his own way down while he, Mallory, sets off alone for the summit 'in one great effort of self-glorification'.

The remainder of the book, by far the greater part of it, is a retelling of the Everest story from the beginning up to the 1924 expedition and its aftermath. Inevitably it covers the same ground as Unsworth's book *Everest*, published in 1981. Sometimes the story and the speculations and the disputes with the Everest committee are spun out too long. 'Because it's there' rates a whole chapter, nor are we spared the fatuous idea quoted by Unsworth that Mallory chose Irvine as his companion for aesthetic reasons. 'It would have been characteristic of Mallory with his own superb proportions to choose of two objects the more beautiful.' But, though familiar, the story is presented with a new slant, for it is told to a considerable extent through quotations from the letters and writings of Mallory and his friends. There are some fascinating contemporary comments on Mallory from people as diverse as Robert Graves, Karl Blodig, Tom Longstaff, General Bruce and A R Hinks. There is a great deal

of new material here, and these middle chapters constitute a new and very worthwhile biography, well written and carefully documented, presenting an excellent picture of Mallory the mountaineer. One thing that remains unexplained is the contrast, to which Unsworth drew attention, between Mallory's central position in the mountaineering world of his time, with his interesting and distinguished circle of friends, and his undistinguished professional career. Another puzzle to me is the fact that, while most prewar Everesters with wide interests found Tibet a fascinating place, Mallory dismissed it as hateful. The whole of the book is eminently readable but this 'biographical' part seems to me by far the most valuable, a genuine addition to Everest history.

In the end one must ask oneself the question: to what extent does Holzel's vision of the events of 8 June 1924 carry conviction? One crucial factor is the nature of the second step which is now confirmed as a pitch of genuine climbing difficulty which, at 8500m and with the encumbrance of oxygen cylinders, would hardly have been quickly overcome in the short interval during which Odell had them in view. The second is, naturally, the point on which Wyn Harris seized so emphatically, i.e. the break with the traditions of the time in sending an inexperienced second down alone over treacherous ground to allow the leader to go ahead solo. (For Norton and Smythe to go on a short distance on the open ground of the N face, when each had very nearly shot his bolt, was quite another matter.) No member of my generation will easily accept this, but contemporary climbers may well see it differently. For my part I am happy to have the mystery unsolved and let Mallory and Irvine rest in peace in the fame they won.

Peter Lloyd

K2. Triumph and Tragedy

Jim Curran

Hodder & Stoughton, 1987, pp219, £12.95.

K2. Savage Mountain. Savage Summer

John Barry

Oxford Illustrated Press, 1987, pp187, £9.95

These two very different books, both written by members of the 1986 British K2 Expedition, make compulsive reading. Both are well illustrated. John Barry is in the heat of the action, involved, emotional, and partial, but thankfully retaining his very considerable Irish sense of humour. His narrative is, in general, limited to the story of the British expedition.

Jim Curran, film-maker, stood a little apart from events to record the now well-known carnage on K2 with a compassion which did not blur his sharp and experienced perception of events. He had the advantage of spending a good deal of time in the quite extraordinary tented township of Base Camps set up at the foot of the Abruzzi Ridge by an unprecedented number of expeditions from all over the world. He was therefore a witness at first hand of many of the tragic events which were to leave 13 dead on the mountain.

Jim Curran imparts a feeling of impending Greek tragedy in the way he unfolds the story of the British expedition. K2 was billed as 'The World's Hardest Mountain', which it probably is not. The members described themselves as the strongest team of climbers ever to set off on a British expedition, which they possibly were. But, with so many stars in the party, competition and summit-hunger soon surfaced. Internal dissent was exacerbated by Al Rouse's uneven leadership which Curran deals with sympathetically but honestly. We see Al Rouse, the apostle of the ultra-lightweight alpine ascent, reluctantly committed to siege tactics on the unclimbed NW ridge. He also made the elementary mistake of dividing the party into two teams, with the totally predictable result that two rival cliques were created. While being fulsome in his respect for Rouse's formidable talent and climbing record, Curran has to admit that 'I found Al intensely irritating at times . . . but he, more than anyone else on the expedition, had an awesome determination to climb K2. . .'

Their strength eroded by deep snow and foul weather, rather than by technical difficulties, the British assault petered out at about 7400m. The strong men to emerge were the powerful Burgess twins who pronounced the route unclimbable that year and opted for a quick, unauthorized dash up the Abruzzi Ridge. The expedition disintegrated, with the mercurial Rouse ditching Dave Wilkinson and opting to climb K2 with the Polish woman climber Mruška Wolf. And this is where Curran's book really gains momentum.

From here on Curran describes the unfolding tragedy of that summer with consummate skill and sensitivity. He was present during the harrowing radio exchange when Michel Parmentier, near the end of his tether and lost in cloud at 8000m, was directed towards the fixed rope below a vital gap in some seracs. He was present when the Frenchman Benoit Chamoux returned from his incredible 23-hour ascent of K2. He went up to help with the rescue of Renato Casarotto who, on his descent from a fine but unsuccessful attempt on the SSW ridge, fell to his death in a crevasse within sight of Base Camp and his waiting wife. He was a witness of the last terrible act when the British climbers Al Rouse and Julie Tullis were to die after their successful ascents. When all hope had been given up, he saw Willi Bauer stagger into Base Camp and had the presence of mind instantly to climb to Advanced Base just in the nick of time to help down a frostbitten, exhausted Kurt Diemberger. Curran concludes with an analysis of events which seems broadly fair to me but on which everyone will have their own opinion. This book must have a strong claim to be the definitive account of the summer of 1986 on K2.

If Curran paints on a broad canvas, John Barry fills in the absorbing detail of the ill-starred British expedition. He has his strong points as a burgeoning writer which we now begin to identify. He is a master of the self-deprecatory anecdote and this is nowhere better displayed than in the opening chapters dealing with the preparations and approach march. It is his sharp eye for the quirks and incongruities of people and events which makes his writing so attractive. He may also, I fear, be gaining a reputation for misprints. At the very opening we are told that Mallory and Irvine attained a ceiling of 7535m (24,715ft) on Everest in 1924!

The bulk of Barry's book is in the form, which I never like, of diary extracts. A certain immediacy is achieved, at the expense of the story being jerkily told. As fillers-in he quotes cold, long extracts from expedition circulars, official biographical details (which Barry, with his wry wit, could surely have improved upon) and reprints from *Mountain* magazine.

We do, however, get an inside view of the day-to-day goings-on. This brings everything out into the open. It early becomes clear that John Barry and Al Rouse are oil and water. Rouse's perceived shortcomings as a leader are thoroughly catalogued. Eventually Barry is in some danger of hammering the nail out of sight. This is, I suppose, the inevitable result of publishing honest, unedited thoughts recorded in one's diary.

Clearly, the last word has not yet been written on K2. These two books, but Curran's in particular, tell the story well and bring out the rewards and the harsh penalties of every technique possible on the world's biggest mountains, from the Koreans' cautious success using siege tactics and oxygen at one extreme to *Le Sportif* dash by Benoît Chamoux on the other. One dread message is clear: don't hang around at 8000m.

Mike Banks

Living on the Edge

Cherie Bremer-Kamp

David & Charles, 1987, pp214, £12.95

In December 1985 Cherie Bremer-Kamp and Chris Chandler made an alpine-style attempt to climb Kangchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, at 8586m. They reached a high point of 7800m when Chandler contracted oedema. He died on the descent and Bremer-Kamp had to leave him on the mountain and continue down without him. They had been accompanied by their sirdar, Mongol. *Living on the Edge* gives an account of the 1978 American Expedition to K2, the occasion where the couple first met, goes on to describe their own expedition to Yalung Kang in 1981, and ends with the harrowing story of the ill-fated winter expedition to Kangchenjunga.

The opening chapter of the book is a gripping account of how the couple were caught in a storm in their yacht, Laylah, off the west coast of America, while sailing to Alaska for some Himalayan training. During the storm Bremer-Kamp was nearly drowned twice, and she recalls that, the second time, 'As the ship rolled, I was plucked free. This was the very edge of life. There was nothing left to cling to.' On that trip fate had spared them both, but the following year, on Kangchenjunga, she is faced with choosing between life and death. In the final chapter, when she is coming to terms with Chris's death, she writes, 'As I lay there looking into a bottomless pit, I was drawn closer and closer to the edge. I was suspended in space. I wanted to go with Chris, to seek out where he had gone. A subtle presence became more strongly felt. I recognized it as my two children standing there beside me, looking solemnly at the scene without pleading, grief or tears. . . . Although they never asked for help I turned towards them, and Chris went on alone.'

The writer herself admits that it was in many ways tragic that she and Chris met, since they were both already committed when they did so. It is the intensity of the new relationship that dominates the book and very much influences the character of the climbs, probably to adverse effect: Cherie's desire that they should be together, and 'alone', coupled with Chris's violent temper, could not have helped when making climbing decisions. It certainly leads her to make some fairly ungracious remarks about Mongol's presence on the mountain.

Bremer-Kamp is very critical of the way in which the American K2 Expedition was carried out. As the only female in an all-male climbing team (the photographer and Base Camp manager were the only other women), she was dismayed at the resentment she felt directed towards her. This obviously raises the thorny old question: is this her own inferiority complex or are they a bunch of Sexist Nasties? Well, we can go on debating this *ad infinitum*. She further takes issue with the style of the large expedition. Having previously only climbed alpine-style, she was apprehensive of the organization and tactics of the Big Expedition. Four of the 12-strong team, chosen by the leader, went to the summit. Everyone else carried loads. There was no team-spirit and no discussion of strategy. Orders came from above and had to be obeyed. One of the summiteers was abandoned on the top to make his own way down – nearly losing his life in the process. The myth, therefore, that there is safety in numbers was blown, and Bremer-Kamp concluded that there was nothing to recommend the large-scale expedition. For Bremer-Kamp climbing is a metaphor for life and a tool of moral development. Neither of these views was shared, in her opinion, by anyone else on the K2 expedition.

Three years later, in 1981, she returned to the Himalaya with Chris Chandler to attempt the previously unclimbed N side of Yalung Kang (8505m), the W peak of Kangchenjunga. This was also to 'purge' themselves of all the 'garbage' they carried from K2. This way, they felt, they would be able to make their own decisions, take their own risks, and rely on their own expertise. On consulting the Oracle, they were given fair warning of the dangers, but, rejecting ancient Chinese wisdom in favour of Christian piety, they chose to believe that humility would bring them success. Their experience on K2 should have taught them that the brazen have as much chance of success as the humble, if not more so (whether in terms of summits or survival). And, as if to prove the point, Yalung Kang remained elusive, despite their honourable intentions.

On Yalung Kang Cherie and Chris having rejected the easier option of following the Czech route, reached the same high point as on Kangchenjunga four years later. Here, as throughout their time together, they chose to go it alone, to take the option closest to the edge: accepting permission to climb Kangchenjunga in winter and K2 less than six months later indicates the force of such obsessiveness, for which they paid a heavy price. Their courage was admirable: their foolhardiness was greater.

There are many enjoyable passages in the book describing aspects of local life, from Hindu myths to lavatorial practices. Unfortunately there is no index and no list of illustrations: a lack that I always find infuriating. All measurements have, irritatingly, been given twice, in metres and feet.

Kangchenjunga – which means Five Treasure Houses in the Snow – is inadequately illustrated with only one picture, showing Yalung Kang in the foreground. The maps, however, are excellent.

Margaret Urmston

Extreme Rock

Compiled by Ken Wilson and Bernard Newman

Diadem Books, 1987, pp296, £27.95.

It is the same well-tried and trusted formula. Spectacular pictures galore and articles by the enthusiasts.

Its appeal may be limited by the number of climbers able to aspire to the dizzy grades glossed across the pages, but it must rate high on the birthday/Christmas present list for aspiring stars. A smattering of E6s, E7s and inclusion of an E9,6C on Cloggy's 'Great Wall' mean that the hobby, amongst some, of ticking off all the routes could prove more problematical than with previous books in this mould. Queues on 'Indian Face' seem unlikely.

One only has to glance through the book to see the huge amount of effort that has gone into putting together a vast series of superb photographs. They are the most striking feature of the book and, with many of them being Bernard Newman's own work, his efforts must have demanded immense dedication, not to mention enviable powers of persuasion to get the performers in the right place at the right time.

My only criticism, if any, is that too much is crammed into the book. Personally, with the possible exception of some outcrop areas, I would prefer the one-route/one-author syndrome. I certainly question the wisdom of having four or five routes covered by one article, as is the case on the main cliff of Gogarth. My sympathies are with Pat Littlejohn as he struggles to write a flowing piece of text about five routes which share many characteristics and are squeezed on to a 50-metre section of crag. The aim throughout the book does seem to have been to pack 'em in as tight as possible; the result is coverage of far more routes than *Hard Rock*, but with some unusual combinations where routes on completely different crags share the same article: 'Unicorn/Kingpin' and 'Freak Out/The Clearances', for example.

Nevertheless, these criticisms are minor. The true strength of the book lies in the way that it captures the atmosphere of modern climbing via both the dynamic photos and the often revealing literary pieces. Andy Pollitt's writing on 'Disillusioned Screw Machine' sums up the tremendous effort which climbers are now prepared to make, and their equally tremendous determination. Gone are the days when it was possible to shuffle up to the foot of the crag and, throwing off vegetation and loose rock, make truly on-sight first ascents ranking with the hardest of the day. I must admit that it is with a sense of harsh nostalgia that I see the old values recede into the distance and the vibrant new scene of athleticism take over from the rugged, scruffy, death-defying days of Brown and Whillans. But the changes are happening fast, and it is great to see them documented.

The book concentrates on the new, but the odd truly exploratory mountain route of the 1960s such as 'Thor' (Skye) makes an appearance,

contrasting sharply with modern challenges ranging from the serious 'The Bells, The Bells' at Gogarth to the strenuous and technical 'Revelations' at Ravenstor. For me, though, it is the photos which really capture the 1980s sensation. Whilst the question of who out of Andy Pollitt and Martin Atkinson will become male model of the era is left open, the book is liberally sprinkled with the stars of the day engrossed in various horrific-looking positions. Glenn Robbins's photo of Martin Atkinson on the final overhang of the 'Prow' (Peak) epitomizes the levels of strength and fitness required to succeed on the harder routes, whilst Chris Gore's writing admirably captures the willpower and ability necessary to stand a chance of success.

It has taken eight years to compile the book. One can sympathize with the delays caused by the stars directing enthusiasm at the rock rather than the pen, but it is an eye-opener to realize that, when the idea was born, many of the routes finally included had not even been climbed. Deciding when to call it a day and ignore the ceaseless tide of superb new lines must have been difficult.

Needless to say, climbing standards continue to rise as do levels of seriousness. 'The Scoop' (Harris) has been free-climbed since publication and pushes hard towards new heights, ensuring that the scope for *Harder Still Extreme Rock* will be there. Doubtless, the preparation work will start soon!

For the time being, though, you won't find a better selection of illustration narratives covering the state-of-the-art up to 1987. At £27.95 it is not cheap – but then the best in any field rarely is.

Mick Fowler

A Dream of White Horses

Edwin Drummond

Diadem Books, 1987, pp224, £10.95

Ed Drummond's collection of autobiographical essays and poems (many of them published before) makes compelling reading. He is, of course, the notorious *enfant terrible* of the climbing world, and his 'iconoclastic spasms' (his words) cover his famous big-wall climbs, his 'protest-climbs' of public buildings and the problems of personal relationships. He has been accused of publicity-seeking, but for me his insights are genuine, his appraisal of the climbing and human scene critical and, on the whole, just. His social analysis is not profound, but it appeals to me: 'The history of civilisation is the story of the determination of small numbers of people to remain sane in the most difficult of circumstances.' A climber's credo? It is from 'JimLove Menwords', Drummond's review of Jim Perrin's *Menlove*, which is included in this volume and which, it is suggested, was rejected by the *Alpine Journal* for prudish reasons. In this thoughtful discourse on the nature of free will, determinism and responsibility, Drummond presents a powerful case against Perrin's position without convincing me of his own. However, one doesn't have to share Drummond's philosophy to be impressed, stirred – and perhaps troubled – by the imagery and power of his prose and poetry.

But the book's theme is climbing; it is addressed to climbers and it makes

few concessions to its readers: they are supposed to command the jargon. Within this context Drummond has an exuberant way with words – he experiments without inhibition and his style is full of quotable, arresting phrases, metaphors and neologisms. Here is an extract from 'Frankenstein and Linda', describing his nine-day solo ascent of The Nose of El Capitan: 'There is no more public stage than this titanic auditorium, these one night stands on Dolt Tower or El Cap ledge, aloof pantomimes whose only audience is those flowers in the meadow who throw no bouquets at the end of your tremendous, silent soliloquies. Only your heart applauds wildly the laggardly madrigals you make up the blunt prows and shields of this bastion of eternity, and probably no more than a haul bag spinning in the wind will ever thump you on the back, when you climb El Cap alone. As for music . . . True, you have been known to whistle when all's well, jingling your tools like a cap-o-bells as you skip up a tricky crack, or hum a hymn while you're fixing dinner on a ledge with plenty of light – but, let there be the merest rumble on the drums beyond Half Dome, a cymbal flash of lightning, or the wind rise, booming bassoon behind some hollow flake, or flaring the slack from the trailing haul line like a vast, trembling clef as you pound on the jams, and you don't want to hear.' Obviously such a rich diet can become a bit indigestible, but in general Drummond's way with the English language is remarkably successful. 'Stone' contains a wonderful description of incipient hypothermia (again on El Capitan). 'A Grace Period' is the tale of the failure of an expedition (to Makalu) and a marriage. Dreams and nightmares play an important part in the narrative. There is a splendid account, by a seven-year-old, of climbing on Half Dome, in a place called Yesummertee.

Drummond's famous recitals, on his 'portable 7000mm mountain', should provide proof enough of the symbiosis of poetry and climbing ('words are holds'). Peter Ackroyd's remark that prose may be the more difficult art, but poetry is the higher, applies to climbing literature too (and I hope that one day soon a volume of poetry will win the Boardman-Tasker Award). Drummond's merits seem to me particularly well brought out in the poetry. There is high art in the deceptive simplicity of the style. Amidst so much that is mediocre in mountain literature, Drummond's writing stands out – long may he continue to topple the idols that we worship in our complacency.

Ernst Sondheimer

Native Stones – A Book About Climbing

David Craig

Secker & Warburg, 1987, pp10 + 214, £10.95

By the time a reviewer gets round to reading, and writing about, a book for the *AJ*, it has usually been published for several months and will already have been reviewed in all the climbing magazines and, if it is an interesting book, in the quality papers as well. Such reviews are normally remarkably similar in tone. *Native Stones* is rather different. It received rather muted praise in some quarters, a distinctly hostile review in one magazine, and yet, in the heavy weight-Sundays, two eminent literary critics each listed it as one of their chosen books for 1987. As they only chose two books each in total this was high praise,

one describing David Craig's book as '... a classic ... unforgettable', whilst the other said that it ought to be 'put on the same shelf as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*'. So, opinions differ. The dust-jacket tells us that the author teaches Creative Writing at the University of Lancaster, which probably explains why the book finds such favour with literary critics. Personally, I found some of the poems rather uninspiring, but for the greater part of the book I have nothing but praise.

The author's aim is to put on paper exactly what climbing means to him, the smell of the rock, the sensation of fear, the enjoyment of the environment and of the literature that the sport has spawned, and to link all this with his own personal climbing experiences. There is nothing new in this. Smythe, among others, was very successful at this in his day, although he is somewhat out of fashion at the moment. This is not an autobiography but it has a logical climbing sequence, starting with the author's boyhood days on the hills and leading on to the introduction of his own sons to climbing. Eventually, of course, son overtakes father. The book ends with the author trying to coax other 'old timers' to come out and re-climb some of their early ascents – with varying success. The descriptions of all these climbs are superbly done, but it is the thoughts arising from the climbs that are the real meat of the book. Occasionally lapsing into long-windedness, they are nevertheless continually thought-provoking and a delight to read. This is a new classic in climbing literature and, whilst I probably won't read *Anatomy of Melancholy*, I will read this again more than once, I'm sure.

Geoffrey Templeman

Norman Collie. *A Life in Two Worlds. Mountain Explorer and Scientist 1859–1942*

Christine Mill

Aberdeen University Press, 1987, pp. xiii + 197, npq

This appears to be the second biography of Norman Collie, a previous one entitled *The Snows of Yesteryear* by Professor William Taylor (whose help is acknowledged by the present author) having been published in Canada in 1973. However, Taylor's work has the character of an illustrated sketch rather than a life-portrait, and the present book is both more compact and more complete.

Such a study is overdue and my only criticism is that one would have liked more imaginative comment about this very interesting and complex personality, perhaps at the expense of some of the *curriculum vitae*.

Of Collie's two worlds, mountains clearly took precedence, so that he was sometimes dubbed a 'part-time chemist'. On the day when, with Mummery and Hastings, he made – *à cheval* – the first guideless traverse of the Brenva ice ridge, back at University College his senior colleague, Professor Ramsay, discovered Argon! Collie got his own back to some extent later by designing the first neon lamp, and also taking the first X-ray photo, showing metal in the human body. His scientific papers, 77 in all, are listed at the end of the book, in addition to his 75 first ascents and his many contributions to mountain literature.

The long saga of climbs includes well-written chapters on Scotland, the Lake District, the Alps, the Himalaya, the Rockies, the Lofoten Islands (a land 'worn down to the bone' as Collie called them) and of course Skye, his greatest love, to which he returned as to a magnet.

To whet the reader's appetite, here are a few highlights: Collie's Step on Moss Ghyll which he cut with Hastings's ice-axe, after which he cried *peccavi* and then completed the pitch; the great shadow on the face of Sron na Ciche by which he first discovered the Cioch; the three seasons of the 'Three Musketeers' – Collie, Mummery and Hastings – ending sadly in the disappearance of Mummery with two porters on Nanga Parbat in 1895; the first traverse of the Grépon; and a host of others.

His character was paradoxical. He was a life-long bachelor but no misogynist; a connoisseur of wines, antiques and much else; an experimental scientist who hated fools and small-talk; but also a man greatly beloved by his chosen friends, an artist and mystic with a deeply-rooted belief in another world, unseen and inaccessible to science. The latter he attempted to explore not merely through the medium of mountain beauty, to which he showed exceptional sensitivity, but also in the occult – even proposing for membership of the Alpine Club a black magician later known as the 'Great Beast 666', but, luckily for the Club, without success.

Appropriately, the book closes with the last years in Skye, where Norman Collie, after John Mackenzie's death, became more and more a recluse; so that, when war came in 1939 and found him already there, he simply stayed on, living out the remaining three years of his life almost in silence in the inn at Sligachan. Many climbers of those days, myself amongst them, cherish an unforgettable memory of a tall, unstooping figure, upright in his chair, looking out to the hills. He was distant with strangers, even when they came to climb, and it may be that increasing preoccupation with the dark, mystical gods which held so much fascination for him, together with the loss of all his close friends, contributed to the sadness of his demeanour in those final days. However that may be, his stature as mountaineer and scientist is beyond question, and the author has given us all a thoroughly readable and well-researched account of his life.

There are excellent illustrations, taken almost entirely from Collie's own slide collection, now in the possession of the Alpine Club.

Edward Smyth

Treks and Climbs in the Mountains of Rum and Petra. Jordan

Tony Howard

Cicerone Press, 1987, pp8 + 144, pb

The outside cover answers the usual first question 'Jordan is *flat desert land* brown and hazy?' No, it definitely is not . . . Tony has tried to portray the vivid colours, the beautiful scenery, the amazing people who have remained changeless for well over two centuries. He has managed to write an overall guide to Jordan whatever your tastes and pleasures are. It is a wonderful eye-

opener for anyone considering a trip to this country. Not only has it got the many climbing areas covered, it also gives you an insight into the way people live, the cost of living, the political way of life and their many customs which date back to the Nabatians over 3000 years ago. He has covered in detail all the interesting sites, buildings and cultures of those long-past tribes and kinsmen.

The climbs are well described, the areas marked, with suggestions of when and how to use the local Bedouin transport – such as four-wheel drive or camels. These can be easily arranged (at a price) from the local Bedouin. Situated by the rest-house at Wadi Rum, where there is a large Bedouin village or settlement, if you make yourself known and behave in a friendly manner you will be rewarded tenfold. They are a very proud, fit, large, extended family.

When you establish yourself at Wadi Rum and compare the gigantic walls all around you to the routes Tony has entered and described, you will then fully understand the amount of virgin rock awaiting first ascents – so you can either do the classic routes already established or go for completely new ground. One thing you learn very quickly is that shade is a pleasure to climb in where direct sun is far too hot. Bivouacs are fun, light sacks are great and also essential.

Tony quotes Lawrence of Arabia's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* as saying of Wadi Rum: 'Rumm the magnificent . . . vast echoing and GODLIKE . . . a processional way greater than imagination . . . the crimson sunset turned on its stupendous cliffs and slanted ladders of hazy fire down its walled avenue.'

A must for all people visiting Jordan is a trip to Petra, 'the rose-red city half as old as time'. Climbing in and around Petra would seem sacrilegious but there are many walks, scrambles and great trekking areas – a visit to Aaron's Tomb on one of the nearby summits is a must.

As I said at the beginning, Tony's book is a complete guide covering all areas, whatever your leisure and pleasure – it makes excellent reading and is great value.

Brede Arkless

With O'Leary in the Grave

Kevin Fitzgerald

*Michael Russell, 1986 (Oxford University Press paperback, 1987) pp176,
£9.95*

'My father was usually a rich man.' From its splendid opening sentence, Kevin's book is brilliant. His father, maddeningly, unpredictably embarrassing, teetotal and verbose, stalks around these stories of youth and childhood and gives the book its thread. There is only a premonitory flake or two of mountaineering in it. Nevertheless, it is even better stuff than Kevin's extremely funny and surrealist mountain writing.

The book has the same luminous quality as Sassoon's early memoirs – *The Old Century* etc – but is funnier. It raises a question which touches on all travel writing and which is connected with the boringness of so much autobiography: why do the anecdotes and detail in popular travel writing and radio features sound so false? Yet quite a number of Kevin's marvellous stories can't have been literally true either; and yet they have the ring of truth and of

hilarious or painful reality. Another great Irish writer (possibly Wilde) said something like this: 'a good story is not only superior to an established fact; it has a positive duty to expel it.' But what is it that makes these stories good? I can think of two tentative answers. One is to do with Kevin's loss of his self-indulgence. The other is the many vivid layers of memory: family, faith, holidays (with sand in the shoes still), farming (a marvellous bit on ploughing), hills and disasters. They are all gathered and stitched with loving irony by a wise old man whose failing sight and shining memory have served him, and his friends, well.

Robin Hodgkin

Chronicles of John R Jenkins. Mountaineer, Miner and Quaker

Edited and privately published by Dulcibel Jenkins, pp330, £6.95 + £1 p&p

John Jenkins was such a rich and ebullient personality that anyone, mountaineer or other friend, who enjoyed his companionship in the thirties and forties would have been hard pressed to convey an adequately distilled account of what he was and did. He fell to his death, with Nully Kretschmer, when descending the Old Brenva route under fine but treacherous conditions just over 40 years ago. 50 years ago last year he and Michael Taylor did their splendid new N face route on Tetnuld in the Caucasus. This was on an expedition which was, for all its members, a wonderful pre-war high spot, with fine new climbs. These and many other mountaineering exploits are recorded, through diaries, letters, snapshots and sketches, in this book which his widow has compiled. It has not been heavily edited and it is in effect a printed archive of Jenkins material. Anyone who knew John or who is interested in that effervescent mountain epoch will find here an unpolished yet highly characteristic and, in some ways, a moving collection. Not the least interesting are John's papers on economics, socialism, Quakerism and mining. They may sound a little naive today, but they were true to him and to his generation. At the beginning of the war he resigned from a comfortable family engineering business because of its 'defence' contracts and settled for an uncomfortable but challenging mining job in Northumberland.

Robin Hodgkin

Porophyllum Saxifrages

Radvan Horný, Mirko Webr and John Byam-Grounds, with illustrations by Eva Zoulová

Byam-Grounds Publications, Stamford, 1986, pp372, £25

The saxifrages are an extensive and very varied race, having evolved over the past two million years to survive the advance and retreat of the north-polar ice and occupy specialized niches from the arctic to high mountains and temperate lowlands. Many species are truly alpine and some are found as far apart as our British hills, the Alps, the Canadian Rockies and Asia. Botanists have recognized some 15 Sections of the genus, one of which comprises the nearly 100 species of the *Porophylla* (including those formerly known as *Kabschias*,

and distinguished by their secretion of lime near the margins of their leaves), which prefer a high intensity of radiation and reasonable warmth and so are not found north of the Alps, the Caucasus and the Tien Shan of Central Asia. Many saxifrages have proved very garden-worthy and they have received much attention from hybridizers during the past century, leaving much confusion about origins and nomenclature. Nearly 80 years ago, Reginald Farrer wrote, 'In no great family is there more fearful confusion as to names; some Oedipus is sadly needed to take the race in hand and unravel its riddles.'

The book under review derives from studies of the *Porophylla* over many years by the two Czech authors and by our member John Byam-Grounds who, on retirement, created an outstanding alpine garden near Llanrwst where he grew most of the *Porophylla* species in current cultivation and almost all known surviving cultivars. It differs in some respects from the Czech version published by the Alpine Garden Club of Prague to take note of British conditions and availability of works of reference. To my unprofessional eye it is a comprehensive and unique treatise on both species and cultivated *Porophyllum* saxifrages. Who will now take on the other 14 Sections of the genus?

Frank Solari

A Little Walk on Skis

Peter and Beryl Wilberforce-Smith

Dickerson, 1987, pp12 + 258, £12.95

This book is a gem. Alpine traverses have been described before and the distinguished lineage includes Martin Conway and Frank Smythe – the latter the only author to do much of the traverse on ski. The present work is in the best standard of a great tradition.

It is an entertaining and thoroughly informative work – well written and illustrated, and with a wealth of meteorological, glaciological and topographical detail. Its subject, however, is an account of a journey made over several seasons from the Col de Tende to Austria.

The very special thing about it is that it represents a very personal record of years of endeavour by the authors and their friends – some of them distinguished members of the Alpine Ski Club and the AC. The indefatigable partnership of the Wilberforce-Smiths is reflected in the text – most of the earlier part written by Peter and the later chapters by Beryl. Their happy team was broken by Peter's death in 1976, and the final years of 1977 and 1978 were undertaken by Beryl with friends, amongst whom were our members Fred Jenkins and Richard Brooke. The reader cannot but sense that Peter Wilberforce-Smith remained an integral part of the expedition and his physical loss must have been eased by his spiritual presence.

No ski-mountaineer should miss this book. It is one to keep, enjoy and re-read. The mountaineers and skiers who have not yet tasted the delights of ski-touring will learn hugely from it and may well be tempted to broaden their horizon of enjoyment.

It is, at the least, a first-class account of an alpine expedition with an

infinity of valuable information. At its best, it is a record of a great physical and emotional progress.

P S Boulter

William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism

Jonathan Wordsworth, Michael C Jaye and Robert Woof

Rutgers University Press/Wordsworth Trust, 1987, ppviii + 262, npq

This volume is much more than just the catalogue of what must have been one of the finest exhibitions ever to have been mounted in the world. It is a series of essays by eminent writers on the whole history of the Romantic Movement in English literature and art at the close of the 18th century which ended with Talleyrand's cry for the old regime, 'They who did not live before 1789 know not the sweetness of life' and then Wordsworth's welcome for the new with his 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive'.

But romance has to do with the imagination, and never before have I read a better explanation of what 'romanticism' really is than in the glorious essays in this catalogue.

It must be the fourth essay on 'The Discovery of Nature' which will be of most interest to our readers in the Alpine Club. But I defy anyone who has once picked up the book not to go on reading and looking at it. It is quite fascinating reading and the illustrations are superb. Where on earth will you see collected together such lovely reproductions of the finest pictures, borrowed from at home and abroad, as in this sumptuous production?

Readers, do not miss a glance at this book. It is far more than just a catalogue, good and scholarly though the latter part is; it is a great literary exposition of the meaning of English Romanticism as centred upon the life and writings of William Wordsworth. And how important it is.

Charles Warren

Garet el Djenoun. Escalades

Josep Paytubí and Servicio General de Información de Montaña

Edición del Servicio General, Barcelona, 1987, pp53, npq

The 'Servicio General' at Barcelona had previously published two successful monographs on Aconcagua and Chaltén (FitzRoy). Each one of these monographs is practically a guidebook. This third one now treats Garet el Djenoun (2330m) in Algeria, the most remarkable mountain in the Hoggar massif. Although written in Catalanian, this book will now become the basic source for anybody planning to visit the Hoggar and the peak of Garet el Djenoun itself. Its information can be easily followed. It covers history of exploration, climbing, access, routes, grading of routes and variants, useful data, maps and bibliography. Its 12 black-and-white photos and 27 sketch-maps and line-drawings make reading very easy. All in all, it is a good guidebook for this area, recommended not only to rock-climbers eager to visit the Hoggar, but also to trekkers and tourists.

Evelio Echevarría

Climbing

Ron Fawcett, Jeff Lowe, Paul Nunn, Alan Rouse. Ed Audrey Salkeld
Bell & Hyman, 1986, pp256, £15.00

This is one of those books which is a cross between an instruction manual, a descriptive volume on mountains in general, and a set of personal reminiscences. No one would dispute, at any rate in Britain, that the four authors are supremely well qualified to deal with their particular specializations, but the subject-matter itself means that the results are uneven.

Fawcett and Lowe, dealing with rock and ice-climbing respectively, are the least interesting, since much of the content is taken up with descriptions of technique, equipment, etc, which can be found in many instructional manuals. With Paul Nunn on alpine climbing we are in a wider field, and the interest grows. Nunn gives a broad historical introduction, and then recommends a number of climbs by which a hill-walker or rock-climber might start alpine climbing, going on to more difficult and grander courses. Each example is described in some depth and laced with personal reminiscence. This method works well.

In the final section, Alan Rouse deals with expeditions, and this will prove the most interesting to many people. In some 50 pages, he packs into a small space an incredible amount of information on arranging an expedition; everything from likely costs, weather conditions in various parts of the world and handling of porters, to fund-raising and dealing with bureaucracy. There is very little personal reminiscence here, but a wealth of experience is made available to all; it is only sad that it turned out to be Al Rouse's last book.

This book is therefore rather uneven, but it is very good in parts and is well illustrated.

Mattia Zurbriggen. *Guida Alpina*

Felice Benuzzi

CAL, 1987, pp108, pb, npq

This 52nd publication of the *Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'* is a monograph on the famous alpine guide Mattia Zurbriggen from Macugnaga. Zurbriggen had a particularly far-flung career for, in addition to his exploits in the Alps with Rey, Whymper, Kugy and others, he was with Conway in the Karakoram, Fitzgerald in New Zealand and on Aconcagua, Borghese in the Tien Shan and the Workmans in the Karakoram. The museum does a great service to mountaineering in general by publishing such excellently-produced books, and it is a pity that an English edition cannot be produced. The ever-growing band of amateur alpine historians and book-lovers would surely welcome such a step.

The Guiding Spirit

Andrew Kauffman and William Putnam
Footprint, 1986, pp256, \$21.95 Canadian

When the Duke of the Abruzzi climbed Mount St Elias in 1896 he had with him

several Italian guides. These were the first professional mountain guides to be employed in North America. The next year, Prof Dixon employed Peter Sarbach from St Niklaus for several weeks' climbing in the 'Canadian Alps', and then, the year after that, it was suggested to the Canadian Pacific Railway that they should engage some Swiss guides to be available for their patrons in the mountain regions the company was seeking to exploit.

One of the young men who came was Edward Feuz Jnr, and it is through his life that this story of the Swiss guides in Canada is told. 'Uncle Ed', as he was always known, died in 1981 at the age of 96, but the authors had had numerous interviews with him in previous years to get the full story. Many well-known mountaineers, such as Don and Phyl Munday, Leo Amery ('a gentleman') and Whymper ('not such a gentleman') are featured in this well-illustrated, continuously interesting book.

Moments of Doubt *and other Mountaineering Writings of . . .*

David Roberts

The Mountaineers, 1986, ppixvi + 238, pb, \$8.95

When David Roberts's first book, *The Mountain of My Fear*, about his second ascent of Mt Huntington in 1965, was published, it was realized at once that another member of that rare breed, the good mountain writer, had been born.

This book is a collection of 20 essays and articles on mountaineering and adventure, culled from magazines and journals such as *Outside*, *Ascent* and others over the past 20 years. The articles are very mixed in content, but each one is a joy to read.

White Limbo. *The First Australian Climb of Mount Everest*

Lincoln Hall

Weldons, 1987, pp262, £17.95

In 1984, Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer, of the first all-Australian expedition to Everest, reached the summit via a new route on the N face. This magnificent book by Lincoln Hall is a record of the expedition and, to a lesser extent, the expeditions to Annapurna and Ama Dablam that preceded it. The author tells this story of a great achievement well, but the book's main attraction is in its photographs; surely one of the best collections ever assembled for an expedition book. Very good value for the British reprint.

Scotland's Mountains

W H Murray

Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1987, ppxi + 305, £15.95

In 1976 Bill Murray's book *The Scottish Highlands* was published; it gave an excellent general description of Scotland's mountains. This has now been enlarged, updated and given a new title, in the now standard SMC format. Sections on topography, geology, plant and animal life, and man in the Highlands, are followed by guides to each area, rounded off by histories of

mountaineering and skiing and various appendices. The book forms a first-class general introduction to the SMC's detailed area guides.

De Saussure et le Mont-Blanc

Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste, 1987, pp84

Publication by the local Tourist Board celebrating the 200th anniversary of de Saussure's ascent of Mont Blanc, including the catalogue of an exhibition.

Holding the Heights: a rock-climbing diary

John Bassindale, Richard Sale, Annette Jones and Kevin Bassindale

Constable, 1987, pp192, £12.95

The authors of this book split down as follows: John and Annette did the climbs, John (mostly) writes about them, Richard and Kevin took the photos. It is a diary of rock-climbs done in England and Wales in one year between May and October, with descriptions, thoughts, etc, and with copious photos. One is tempted to ask: who is really interested in one couple's efforts in one year? – and certainly some of the photos showing sequence after sequence of holds are rather tedious – but perhaps that is a little unfair and sales of the book may prove me wrong!

**H. W. Tilman. *The Eight Sailing/Mountain-Exploration Books*
*Diadem, 1987, pp 966, £16.95***

Diadem have now completed the service they have already done the mountaineering fraternity, in publishing the omnibus editions of the Tilman and Shipton mountain travel books, by producing all eight of the sailing books. I suspect that many climbers started off by reading the first, *Mischief Among the Penguins*, when it was first published, and then read one or two more, but tailed off after that in the belief that they were purely for sailing *aficionados*. The present collection shows that this is a fallacy, as mountains and wild places were always the ultimate goal of every voyage. Best of all, though, Tilman's marvellous writing makes the reading of every volume a joy, and I think it is the first time that colour photos of HWT's voyages have been published as well. A marvellous compilation.

The Mountains of Central Asia. 1:3,000,000 Map and Gazetteer
RGS/MEF, 1987, ppxxviii + 98, £14.95

The RGS and MEF have produced this small-scale map of Central Asia, spanning a region from the southern Nepalese border up to Urumqi and the Bogda range in the north, and from Tashkent in the west to Chengdu in the east. Following a general introduction by Michael Ward, there is a 98-page gazetteer of place-names, mountains, etc. From the mountaineer's point of view, it is a pity that, whilst the names of many, many mountains are included in the

gazetteer, so few are shown on the map itself, but it is most useful to have this vast area shown on a single sheet at last.

Ski Mountaineering

Peter Cliff

Unwin Hyman, 1987, pp160, pb, £12.95

Fawcett on Rock

Ron Fawcett and John Beatty with Mike Harrison

Unwin Hyman, 1987, pp158, £14.95

The publishers Unwin Hyman have brought out two excellent instructional books in these two volumes which are hard to fault.

Peter Cliff's book covers all aspects of ski-mountaineering, with very clear diagrams, particularly good in the chapter dealing with crevasse rescue, and ends with a selection of tours suggested both by himself and other experts.

Ron Fawcett puts his expertise on rock into words (always a difficult task), aided by John Beatty's action shots, and covers training, equipment and technique with equal thoroughness. Both books contain sections of colour photos.

In the Footsteps of Scott

Roger Mear & Robert Swan

Jonathan Cape, 1987, ppxiv + 306, £14.95

In 1985, Robert Swan and Roger Mear, with Gareth Wood, followed Scott's route to the South Pole, pulling their sledges in total isolation, without radio links or back-up supply depots. This excellent book tells the story of their 883-mile journey from Cape Evans to the Pole, and includes details not only of their preparations, which included the first solo winter ascent of Mt Erebus, but of the official hostility they faced from the American Antarctic authorities. Their enforced evacuation makes sober reading.

The Ice. A Journey to Antarctica

Stephen J Pyne

Arlington Books, 1987, pp8 + 428, £12.95

The author is an American professor of history who spent three months in Antarctica as the recipient of an 'Antarctic Fellowship'. This book is the end product, and it really is a monumental work. From the title, one could well imagine purely a travel book, but it is far from that. Amongst subjects treated are the history of exploration, the literature and art of the continent, its geopolitics and, above all, the scientific reasons for its being the way it is.

On High Lakeland Fells. *The 100 Best Walks and Scrambles*

Bob Allen

Pic Publications, 1987, pp190, £9.95

The number of walking guides to the Lakeland hills produced from the time of Wordsworth onwards must be almost beyond count. Many have been pedestrian in the worst sense of the word, until, a few years ago, came Wainwright, with a series of guides which, for their lovingly-prepared detail, hit a new high. Now comes another such success. Bob Allen has written and illustrated a first-class book on the walks and scrambles of the Lakeland fells. The descriptions provide just the right amount of detail spiced with anecdote, the maps give adequate indication of routes, the scrambles are shown on charming pencil sketches, but the real joy of the book are the whole-page colour photos, many of which are taken in wintry conditions. They form one of the best collections of Lakeland photos seen for some time. This is Pic Publications' second venture and it forms a worthy successor to *Welsh Rock*.

Mountaineering Literature. *A Bibliography of Material Published in English*

Jill Neate

Cicerone Press/Mountain Books, 1986, pp296, pb, £14.95

In 1978, the author produced *Mountaineering and its Literature*, the first serious attempt to give the English-speaking mountaineering world a bibliography of its literature. That book contained, not only an author-index of 949 entries, plus selections of guide books, fiction, etc, but also a subject-index and an index of all major mountains in the world. Ms Neate has now produced a vastly-expanded version of the bibliography section which, at my count, contains over 3600 items. This represents an incredible amount of research, and will ensure that it remains the mountain book collector's bible for years to come.

Alan Rouse. *A Mountaineer's Life*

Compiled by Geoff Birtles

Unwin Hyman, 1987, pp224, £12.95

When Al Rouse died on K2 in August 1986, the British climbing community lost not only one of its stars, but one of its best-loved members. Everybody seemed to know him and to have a story about him, and Geoff Birtles has collected reminiscences from a number of his friends in this book. They range from the escapades of wild early days to the more factual accounts of later Himalayan expeditions, and include a few articles by Rouse himself from magazines and journals. Whilst there is a certain amount of unavoidable repetition in some of the earlier accounts, they all add up to a fascinating picture of a rather complex character. The compiler did a great job in getting so many contributions from a diverse bunch of climbers (not best-known for buckling-down to writing when pressed!) and into print in such a short time. It only shows in what regard Alan Rouse was held.

From Kinder Scout to Kathmandu. *A Rucksack Club Anthology 1907-1986*
 Ed by Peter Benson, Mike Cudahy & Ian Grant
Rucksack Club, 1987, pp240, £10.00

There cannot be all that many people around who have complete sets of the *Rucksack Club Journal* on their shelves, and it is therefore good to see the appearance of this anthology – a sort of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* of the Rucksack Club. One or two obvious classics by Doughty, Holland, etc, are here, and it certainly seems as if the earlier journals contained the best writing. There are 10 articles pre-1930, six in the 30s and eight in the 50s, but only one each in the 60s and 70s, and two in the 80s. Having said that, 'The Crossing of Greenland' in '82 and 'The Pennine Way in Three Days and Five Years' in '83 are as good as any.

There is something here for everyone interested in climbing history. Copies can be obtained from: 'R C Anthology', 4 Raynham Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester M20 0BW. Price £10.00 inc p&cp, less 10% for AC members.

The Magic of the Highlands

W A Poucher

Constable, 1987, pp200, £14.95

Walter Poucher has returned to the Highlands for a second selection of colour photographs in his series of large-format colour-plate books. There are more full double-page spreads in this volume but, as in the previous selection, this leads to problems of distortion in the middle of the plates, anything right in the middle being lost.

Mont Blanc. Jardin Féérique

Gaston Rébuffat

Denoël, 1987, pp240, npq

This fourth edition of Gaston Rébuffat's history of Mont Blanc has the addition of a list of historic ascents in the Mont Blanc range by Alex Lucchesi, and a number of new illustrations. It remains an excellent illustrated account of the mountain.

The Price of Adventure. *Mountain Rescue Stories from Four Continents*

Hamish MacInnes

Hodder & Stoughton, 1987, pp192, £10.95

Hamish MacInnes's volumes of rescue stories seem to become almost an annual event, but this particular batch ranges even wider afield than usual. Scotland is, of course, well represented, but we also travel to the Alps (the Dru), the Andes, Mount Kenya, Mount Washington, the Tatra and Mount Cook. The author always writes well, and includes here a piece on himself as victim on the Dru with Bonington and Whillans in 1958. The stories range from 1925 to 1985 and, although there may well be morals to be learned from them, most readers will just enjoy them for the good adventure tales they are.

Reinhold Messner. *Le vainqueur des 14 huit mille*

Tr. Noëlle Amy

Denoël, 1987, pp248, npq

This is the French edition of *Überlebt – Alle 14 Achttausender* by Messner, telling the story of his ascent of all the 8000ers between 1970 and 1986. The book splits naturally into the 14 sections, each of which contain a brief history of ascents of that particular mountain, a selection of superb colour photographs of Messner's expedition(s), the story of the expedition, and a brief article by another eminent mountaineer on an aspect of the mountain. Some parts, such as the 14 portraits of Messner forming the frontispiece, are a little 'over the top', but the book is an excellent production, with splendid photos, and it provides a first-class summary of all Messner's Himalayan exploits.

Wo Europa den Himmel Berührt. *Die Entdeckung der Alpen*

Gabriele Seitz

Artemis Verlag, 1987, pp238, DM98

Where Europe touches Heaven is an extremely attractive coffee-table book on the lines of Lukan's *Alps and Alpinism* of several years ago. Chapters deal with the early history of the alpine regions, the coming of mountaineers and tourists, the start of skiing and so on, each chapter ending with quotations from contemporary authors and including a marvellous selection of illustrations, none of which are later than the 1920s.

The Swiss and the British

John Wraight

Michael Russell, 1987, ppxiv 474, £17.95

Sir John Wraight has written a fascinating history of the relationship between the Swiss and the British from all aspects. In a lengthy introduction he covers the historical perspective and then proceeds to discuss, in general terms, travellers and visitors, cultural relations, education, science and economic relations. The main body of the book, however, is a chronology of Anglo-Swiss relations, commencing in medieval times and progressing to 1984. From the 1690s onwards, events are noted for each year. The detail to be found here is fascinating and all mountaineering events of note are recorded. The book is copiously illustrated and has a number of detailed appendices, the bibliography alone running to 62 pages. As British Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation from 1973 to 1976, Sir John's knowledge of Switzerland and the Swiss is unrivalled, and it is our gain that he has made such a large part of his studies available.

Polskie Wyprawy Karakorum Alpinistyczne

Zbigniew Kowalewski and Andrzej Paczkowski

Wydawnictwo 'Sport i Turystyka', 1986, pp240, npq

This book is a mainly pictorial summary of Polish expeditions to the

Karakoram between 1969 and 1984. Each expedition is given a maximum of half-a-dozen pages of brief summary, map and selection of black-and-white photos. Then follow three sections: 'Karawana', mostly pictures of approach marches; 'Panorama' which, as the name suggests, are general mountain photos; and a final selection of colour shots. Whilst the minimal text will not be intelligible to most *AJ* readers, the photos, although not too well produced, will be of great interest to those contemplating a visit to the Karakoram.

XII Apostoli – un rifugio, una chiesetta

Annetta Stenico and Roberto Bombarda

Grafiche Artigianelli, 1987, pp50, npq

A little memoir of the Rifugio XII Apostoli and nearby chapel-in-the-rock in the Brenta Dolomites.

Going Higher. *The Story of Man and Altitude*

Charles S Houston

Little Brown & Co, 1987, ppixii 324, npq

Charles Houston has now brought out a revised edition of *Going Higher*, his comprehensive book on the effects of altitude on man. It brings current medical thinking up-to-date, and in addition there is a greatly enlarged bibliography for those who wish to carry their studies further. Although the book is technically very comprehensive, it is written in such a way as to provide a fascinating story for the lay reader.

The Great Backpacking Adventure

Chris Townsend

Oxford Illustrated Press, 1987, pp6 226, npq

The 'Great Adventure' series continues with Backpacking. Chris Townsend is well known in this field, being the editor of *Odyssey* magazine, and here describes his major expeditions: the Pennine Way, Lands End to John O'Groats, and Corrou to Ullapool in Britain; along the Pyrenees; around the Markarfljot in Iceland; and the Pacific Crest Trail and Continental Divide in the United States.

Island in the Sky. *Pioneering Accounts of Mt Rainier. 1833-1894*

Ed Paul Schullery

The Mountaineers, 1987, ppxiv 202, \$10.95, pb

14 accounts of pioneer ascents and explorations of Mt Rainier which the author found when he was researching literature for a project on elks in the Mt Rainier National Park.

Classic Rock Climbs in Great Britain

Bill Birkett

Oxford Illustrated Press, 1986, pp172, £14.95

In this book, the author takes five major climbing areas of Britain from south to north – South-West England, Wales, Northern England, the Lakes and Scotland – and describes a number of climbs in each which, in his opinion, are 'classic'. Many are of proven status, that of others is arguable, but each gets guidebook treatment, plus a short historical-cum-personal experience chapter, and is illustrated by the author's own photographs.

The market at which this book is aimed is uncertain, but the photos are good and the text is interesting, and it is worth a look-through by any climber.

A Wilderness Original. *The Life of Bob Marshall*

James M Glover

The Mountaineers, 1986, ppx + 326, \$17.95

The autobiography of Bob Marshall, one of the leading lights of the American conservation movement in the Twenties and Thirties, after whom the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana is named. He was particularly known for the years he spent in Alaska and the books he wrote on his life there.

Denali Diary. *Letters from McKinley*

Frances Randall

Cloudcap, 1987, ppxxiv + 136, pb, \$9.95

In the busy summer months the park authority hires an organizer to run the Base Camp on the Kahiltna Glacier on Mt McKinley, to keep track of climbing parties, transmit weather reports, communicate with pilots, co-ordinate rescue operations, and so on. From 1976 to 1983, Frances Randall had this job and became quite a legend among climbers. A symphony violinist by profession, she often entertained her visitors to an impromptu concert in the snow, and herself climbed McKinley. She died from cancer in 1984.

She wrote numerous letters whilst at Base Camp which give an excellent picture of life on the glacier. These have been gathered together here, with a number of tributes and recollections.

Moving Mountains. *Coping with Change in Mountain Communities*

Sara Neustadt

Appalachian Mountain Club, 1987, ppxiv + 210, pb, \$14.95

The mountain ranges of the world are facing ever-increasing challenges from mining, forestry, tourism and other potential disasters. The author takes seven examples, from the Rockies, Alps and Himalaya, of individuals who have moved mountain communities to act against impending environmental disasters.

Mount Everest

Z. Kowalewski and A. Paczkowski

Wydawnictwo, 1986, pp193, in Polish, ZL. 2000

This is considerably more than the 'coffee-table' book it at first appears to be. It includes an historical list of Everest ascents, a bibliography and detailed photodiagrams of all current routes on the mountain. The main part of the book consists of colour photographs of the ascent of the mountain, taken from the three Polish ascents, by Wanda Rutkiewicz in '78 and the expeditions of Winter '79/80 and Spring '80, but presented as one continuous sequence. It is definitely a book worth looking at, even if you can't read Polish.

Les Alpes Valaisannes à Skis. Les 100 Plus Belles Descentes et Randonnées

Denis Bertholet

Denoël, 1987, pp240, FF 228

The 20th volume in the series 'Les 100 Plus Belles . . .', created by the late Gaston Rébuffat, deals with ski routes in the Valais. It has the usual high standard of production, with excellent illustrations – every alternate page being in colour – and covers every grade of difficulty.

Grande Traverse and the Mont Blanc Tour

Malcolm and Nicole Parker

Diadem Books, 1986, pp64, £6.95

A 'book-size' guide to the 400km traverse of the Alps from the Mediterranean to Lake Geneva, covering the route in both summer conditions and as a winter ski tour. The maps are clear, the descriptions on a day-by-day basis, and the colour photographs excellent. The tour of Mont Blanc is added on, and appendices give details of accommodation, transport, maps and a short bibliography.

Ohmi Kangri Himal 85*Club Alpin Suisse, nd, pp48, npq*

The report on the joint Swiss-Nepalese expedition to the Janak Himal in 1985, which reached the summit of Ohmi Kangri (7045m).

Himalaya Conference '83*Deutscher Alpenverein, nd, pp176, npq*

The report on the results of the Himalaya Conference held in Munich in March '83. Papers on tourism, ecology, porters and guides, etc, in English.

Climbing

Thomas Hrovat

H. Weishaupt Verlag, Graz, 1987, pp160, npq

A large-format colour photo book of modern rock climbing at Yosemite, Joshua Tree, Frankenjura, Buoux, etc, including a few pictures of Malham, Kilnsey, Tremadoc and other local crags. Well produced, with text in both German and English.

Le Huitième Degré. Dix Ans d'escalade libre en France

Jean-Baptiste Tribout and David Chambre

Denoël, 1987, pp186, pb, FF 98

The story of modern free climbing in France, including competitions, climbing walls, etc. In French.

L'Escalade

David Belden

Denoël, Paris, 1987, pp260, FF 240

The latest French manual on the '*connaissance et technique*' of climbing, or, rather, rock-climbing, as there is another volume on *L'Alpinisme* in the same series. This is a large-format, glossy production, with many colour photos and hundreds of diagrams and black-and-white pictures covering every aspect.

The Stone Spiral

Terry Gifford

Giant Steps, 1987, pp42, pb, £2.50

This is Terry Gifford's first collection of poetry, 26 poems in all. The majority are about wild life, climbing or mountain landscapes, and they make pleasant reading. Al Alvarez describes it on the blurb as 'an impressive collection'.

Mountaineering in the Andes. A Source Book for Climbers

Jill Neate

Expedition Advisory Centre, 1987, ppvii + 279, £9.95

This source book is in three roughly equal sections. Firstly, topographical descriptions and climbing history of all the ranges that make up the Andes; secondly, a peak gazetteer listed by country, range and group; and thirdly, a bibliography plus appendices on a few general matters. It is obvious from looking through this book that a vast amount of research has been carried out by the author – there are over 2300 references in the bibliography alone! It will prove an indispensable aid for many years to anyone researching Andean mountains.

Degrees of Difficulty

Vladimir Shatayev

Mountaineers, 1987, ppixii + 196, pb, \$10.95

In 1974, six Russian women died on Peak Lenin. One of them was Elvira Shatayeva, leader of the women's team and wife of the author. In 1977, Vladimir Shatayev published this book in Russia, giving his climbing experiences and culminating in his detailed account of the 1974 tragedy. It has taken 10 years of effort for the work to be translated and published in America. It makes very interesting reading, showing how people become climbers in the USSR, and how that structured, orderly system works. It also gives graphic accounts of some climbs in the world's greater ranges, as well as a very moving account of the events on Peak Lenin.

Ski Powder

Martin Epp

Fernhurst, 1987, pp64, pb, £5.95

One of Switzerland's leading guides has written this instructional book for those who wish to leave the crowded piste slopes for untrodden powder snow.

Neubranljivi Izziv. (The Irresistible Challenge)

Dudley Stevens

Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana, 1987, pp232, npq

This book covers the author's climbing experiences in Snowdonia, the Highlands and the Alps, from 1946 to 1960, and in the Julian Alps from 1960 to 1972. The introduction and many of the photographs are by Walter Poucher. The author's story is full of wisdom and interest. The book is a translation into Slovene of the author's English typescript version which has been deposited in the Club Library, where it can be seen on application to the Librarian by anyone researching the Julian Alps.

Abode of Snow

Kenneth Mason

Diadem/The Mountaineers, 1987, pp xviii + 366, £12.95

Abode of Snow, originally published in 1955, has become the standard history of Himalayan exploration up to 1953 and is increasingly hard to find in second-hand bookshops. This new photo-reprint edition by Diadem has the benefit of 82 excellent photographs, many of great historical interest, a forward by Doug Scott, and a list of amendments suggested by Trevor Braham. In his review of the original book (*AJ60*, 416-7, 1955), Hugh Ruttledge said, 'All British lovers of mountains will welcome this book; and I hope it will be translated into many languages'. The translation hasn't happened, but this modern reprint must indeed be welcomed by all mountain-lovers today.

Land of the Snow Lion. *An adventure in Tibet*

Elaine Brook

Jonathan Cape, 1987, pp238, £10.95

The author joined Doug Scott's expedition to Xixabangma in 1982 with the intention, not of climbing high, but of leaving the party after a while to go trekking on her own through Tibet. We have already had Scott's version of the personality clashes that occurred, in the book *The Shishapangma Expedition* (*AJ*91, 243-4, 1986), and now we have Ms Brook's. It makes interesting reading and readers can make up their own minds as to whose 'side' they are on. After these 90-odd pages Ms Brook is on her own and on her way to Lhasa, without permission and chased on her way by the Chinese authorities. Her experiences ranged from very pleasant periods with Tibetan families, to very much less pleasant experiences with the authorities; all are recounted in a very readable manner.

Catherine Destivelle. *Danseuse de roc*

Catherine Destivelle

Denoël, 1987, pp188, pb, npq

The French rock-climbing star Catherine Destivelle has written a book in two parts, the major part describing her climbing activities to date, the second illustrating the exercises she does to prepare for her climbs. The first part is illustrated by numerous excellent colour photos which will appeal especially to young male rock-climbers.

Ski Mountaineering in Scotland

Donald Bennet and Bill Wallace (eds)

Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1987, pp122, £12.95

The SMC have followed their excellent volume on hill-walking on the Munros with this equally good volume on ski mountaineering. The presentation is similar, with maps and colour photos for each mountain group, and is uniform with recent SMC publications. As the authors say, 'This publication is a significant step, for it is the first SMC guidebook to recognise the present status of ski mountaineering in Scotland'.

Climbers' Guide to Central and Southern Scotland

Jerry Handren

Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1986, pp302

The SMC has drawn together the small guides previously issued for the lowland Scottish crags and has published one huge all-encompassing volume to Central and Southern Scotland. It makes interesting reading, from the early days on the Whangie to the latest epics at Dumbarton, and is complete with modern gradings and starred routes.

Rock Climbing Guide to the Burren

Ed Calvin Torrans

Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland, 1986, pp114, npq

The first detailed rock climbing guide to Ailladie sea cliff and the inland crags of the Burren.

Alpi Lepontine. Sempione-Formazza-Vigezzo

Renato Armelloni

Club Alpino Italiano/Touring Club Italiano, 1986, pp480, npq

The latest Italian climbing guide, detailing routes on 588 summits in the Lepontine Alps north-west of Locarno. It is in Italian, but the clear maps and diagrams make for easy reference.

Cascade Alpine Guide - Climbing and High Routes I. Columbia River to Stevens Pass

Fred Beckey

The Mountaineers, 1987, pp328, \$16.95

The completely revised and updated second edition of Fred Beckey's mammoth guide to the southern area of the Cascades. An incredible amount of work has gone into the production of this volume. It is the bible for anyone wishing to visit the area, which includes Mt Rainier.

The High Mountains Companion

Irvine Butterfield

Diadem, 1987, pp112, pb, £4.95

The text of *The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland* in condensed form for practical use, with a log-book at the end to record one's exploits.

The Hills of Cork and Kerry

Richard Mersey

Alan Sutton, Gill & Macmillan, 1982, ppix + 160, pb, £5.95

A comprehensive guide to walking in the hills of south-west Ireland.

Llanberis

Paul Williams

Climber's Club, 1987, pp306, £9.95

The guide to the Llanberis area has come of age – 306 pages, including some of the best action colour photos seen in a pocket guide, with a large section devoted to the recent wonders (horrors?) taking place in the quarries. A good historical introduction, interesting first ascent list, and a generally humorous approach make it a good read, even if you can't do half the routes in it!

Trek the Sahyadris

Harish Kapadia

The Mountaineers, Bombay, 1987, ppix + 160, pb, npq

This third edition of the guide to the Sahyadris, or Western Ghats, along the western coast of India, will cover the needs of anyone trekking or climbing in the area.

Klettersteig. Scrambles in the Northern Limestone Alps

Paul Werner, tr. Dieter Pevsner

Cicerone Press, 1987, pp176, £7.95

Originally published in Munich in 1983, this selected translation covers the best of the *via ferrata* in the northern limestone Alps, from the Allgäu in the west to Berchtesgaden in the east.

Classic Climbs in the Dolomites

Lele Dinoia and Valerio Casari. Tr. Al Churcher

Cicerone Press, 1987, pp176, £7.95

93 selected/recommended routes taken from the Italian edition of '84.

Malta. New Climbs. 1986 Supplement

Roger Brookes and Simon Alden

Fylde MC, 1987, pp78, £2.99

An update on the 1971 RNMCM Malta guide, giving new climbs since that date.

Wye Valley

John Willson, David Hope, Tony Penning and Matt Ward

Cordée, 1987, pp288, £7.95

A much-enlarged second edition, covering Wintor's Leap, Symonds Yat, Wyndcliffe and Shorn Cliff.

Walking Switzerland. The Swiss Way

Marcia and Philip Lieberman

The Mountaineers, 1987, pp272, \$10.95

A guide to walks in the Swiss Alps, using vacation apartments, hotels, mountain inns and huts, both from selected centres and on longer tours.

Rock Climbing in the Lake District

Bill Birkett, Geoff Cram, Chris Eilbeck and Ian Roper

Constable, 1987, pp14 + 298, £7.95

The third edition, revised and extended, in a new 'guidebook type' plastic cover.

Rock Climbing in the Peak District

Paul Nunn

Constable, 1987, ppxxiv 316, £8.95

Fourth revised edition, in series with the above.

The Corsican High Level Route. *Walking the GR 20*

Alan Castle

*Cicerone Press, 1987, pp80, £4.50***North Wales Limestone**

Andy Pollitt

Climbers Club, 1987, pp224, £5.95

The latest guide to Craig y Forwyn and the Great and Little Ormes. The size of this guide shows the expansion that has taken place since the first guide, published as recently as 1976.

Peak Limestone – Stoney. *pp284***Peak Limestone – South.** *pp304***Peak Limestone – Chee Dale.** *pp344**BMC, 1987, £7.50 each*

The limestone cliffs of the Peak District now need three volumes, a total of 932 pages, with simply masses of climbs and with excellent illustrations, both from diagrams and photographs.

Idaho Rock. *A Climber's Guide to the Sandpoint Area and Selkirk Crest*

Randall Green

The Mountaineers, 1987, pp120, pb, \$8.95

This climbing guide to North Idaho covers the practice rocks in the Sandpoint area and then the whole of the Selkirk Crest. The illustrations show what a fascinating area it is.

Buttermere and Eastern Craggs

D Craig and R Graham/J Earl, A Griffiths and R Smith

F&RCC, 1987, pp288

The latest edition of the combined Buttermere/Eastern Craggs guide, which kicks off the Fell and Rock's seventh series of guidebooks. A good production.

The Mount Cook Guidebook

Hugh Logan

New Zealand Alpine Club, 1987, pp144, \$NZ 25

This second edition of the Mount Cook guide has been revised and up-dated from that issued in 1982, and gives a very comprehensive list of ascents in the whole area, from the Mueller Glacier region in the south to Mt Elie de Beaumont in the north, with numerous photo topos.

Les Dolomites Occidentales

Gino Buscaini and Silvia Melzeltin

Denoël, 1987, pp240, npq

The 21st volume in the '100 Best . . .' series created by Gaston Rébuffat covers the western Dolomites. All of the really classic climbs on the Marmolada, Sella, Brenta, Pordoi, etc, are covered, plus many lesser-known climbs and walking routes. The excellent standard of previous volumes is maintained.

Walking on Dartmoor

John Earle

Cicerone, 1987, pp 224, £4.95

A selection of 43 walking routes on Dartmoor, plus four longer routes, with a detailed introduction to the moor, by one of the 'local experts'.

East Africa. International Mountain Guide

Andrew Wielochowski

West Col, 1986, pp152, npq

This guide covers not only Mt Kenya, Kilimanjaro and the Ruwenzori, but the numerous rock-faces, towers and pinnacles that exist in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. The author includes a selection of the best routes in these areas, plus notes on trekking and caving.

The following are new guides from Édisud, to their usual high standard, complete with maps, topo diagrams and photos:

Randonnées et Ascensions en Haute-Maurienne. La Vanoise

Roger Féasson

Randonnées et Ascensions en Haute-Maurienne. Les Alpes Grées

Roger Féasson

Escalades dans le Massif des Dolomites

Bruno Brenier and Marlène Dossetto

Selected climbs over the whole Dolomite area.

Escalades dans le Luberon. Buoux

D Gorgeon, S Jaulin and A Lucchesi

Randonnées Pédestres dans les Monts Auréliens

Alexis Lucchesi

'Between Sainte-Baume and Sainte Victoire.'

Randonnées au Ventoux et dans les Dentelles

Isabelle and Henri Agresti

The following, in Italian, are new from Edizioni Mediterranee:

Abruzzo con Lo Zaino. *Le più belle escursioni sopra i 2000*

Adriano Barnes

Walks and ascents in the Abruzzi region.

Corsica. GR 2C. *150 km di trekking da Conca a Calenzana*

Luca Pennisi

Grandi Trekking Italiani. *200 giorni di cammino su Alpi e Appennini*

Riccardo e Cristina Carnovalini

Verdon. *Incontri scelti con il calcare più bello del mondo*

Marco Bernardi

Selected climbs.

Marmolada. *Parete Sud. La Parete d'argento*

Maurizio Giordano

A detailed rock-climbing guide to the Marmolada.

The *Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'* publish regular monographs on mountain themes as the official catalogues for exhibitions held in Italy. The most recent are:

No 52. Mattia Zurbriggen Guida Alpina

(Reviewed above.)

No 53. Nuova Zelanda. *Alpi e Vulcani nel Sud Pacifico.* 1987. pp152.

In Italian.

Mountaineering and mountain tourism in New Zealand.

No 54. Aimé Gorret. *L'Ours de la Montagne.* 1987. pp56.

In French.

The life story of Abbé Gorret of Valtournanche.

