
Book Reviews 1988

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

Touching the Void

Joe Simpson

Jonathan Cape, 1988, pp174, £10.95

In 1985 Joe Simpson and Simon Yates set out to climb the W face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes. They succeeded in their objective after three days and started on the descent of the N ridge in atrocious snow conditions. After a night on the ridge they continued their slow progress, breaking through cornices and having short falls, until one such fall resulted in Simpson breaking his leg. Yates started lowering Simpson down the W face, and they had almost reached the bottom when Simpson shot off over an overhanging cliff and was left hanging. After a considerable length of time in which nothing could be done, Yates cut the rope.

Giving Simpson up for dead, he made his way back to Base Camp and, during the next three days, sorted out Simpson's belongings, burnt his clothes and prepared to leave camp. It was then that Simpson arrived in a state of exhausted delirium, having escaped from the deep crevasse into which he had fallen and crawled and hopped over the long glacier and moraine.

The book recounts the story in a graphic and frank way. The psychological trauma following the decision to cut the rope; the thoughts engendered by being trapped in a deep crevasse with a broken leg; the embarrassment of the eventual meeting; these things are written about in depth and with a clarity that is only too well understood. You know Simpson will survive, but the tale is like a thriller – I almost said, a cliff-hanger – progressing from one dramatic situation to the next. Comparisons with other books obviously arise. The Scott/Bonington saga on the Ogre has similarities, but it is the terrible aloneness of Simpson that strikes home. The Taylor/Barber drama on Kilimanjaro is also similar, but whereas that ended in acrimony Simpson dedicates his book to his friend.

The book ends with a postscript written in the Hunza valley in 1987. Against all the odds, Simpson was back in the high mountains again. His experiences in 1985 are something he will never forget; it is the readers' gain that he has been able to describe them so well. The award of the Boardman-Tasker Prize was well deserved.

Geoffrey Templeman

All 14 Eight-thousanders

Reinhold Messner (transl. Audrey Salkeld)

Crowood Press, 1988, £19.95

This book is intended for the coffee table. Glossy pictures predominate, yet despite initial appearances *All 14 Eight-thousanders* is not really a picture-book at all. The book is a celebration of the completion of the Himalayan Munros.

There are, quite naturally, 14 chapters, one for each mountain. The chapters are structured identically. A chapter starts with a short chronology of the peak in question. The chronology is followed by a diagram of the mountain, short pieces of text by Messner's companions and admirers, and an essay by Messner. Each chapter is rounded out with a selection of photographs.

The 'chronology' is a very brief history of the peak. In this respect Messner's book tempts comparison with Louis Baume's *Sivalaya*, published in 1976. Messner brings the chronology of the climbing forward to 1986, and forms an addition to Baume, but the chronology is little more than a pointer to the events. There are few details of the expeditions involved, no references and no bibliography. There is in fact no real comparison; *Sivalaya* is authoritative.

I was most irritated by the poorly painted diagrams of the mountains which show the Messner routes, but no other. These diagrams are the real letdown of the volume. They correspond, in eight chapters, to full frontal photos of the mountain, but always from a differing, and usually confusing, angle. In the six remaining chapters there is no corresponding photograph at all. It is obvious that the artist has no interest in the detail of his subject. If you compare a Ginger Cain or a Phil Gibson with the offerings in this book, you will see exactly what I mean.

The 'companion' pieces are quite extraordinary. Some of them even cross the border of acceptable sycophancy . . . Messner has the 'instinctive, practical and intellectual capability to distil life from death . . .' and ' . . . total harmony of body and mind, that bedrock upon which his philosophy is founded'. The companion pieces also tend to have lurid titles such as 'Survived – fourteen times', or 'Survived – even though the tent ripped'. One can only conclude that the editor is utterly lacking in any sense of humour.

For me, Messner's essays are the meat of the volume. They tell the story of each climb, factual and often gripping stuff. At 8000m on Nanga Parbat:

. . . no bivouac equipment; no down jackets, no oxygen, nothing to eat or drink. It was a night that undermined us totally, physically and psychologically. The next morning . . . we began in desperation to descend the Diamir side of Nanga Parbat. I was nearly out of my mind . . .

We are used to thinking of Messner as some kind of superman. The book does nothing to dissuade us from this image. Messner writes: 'Only if a climber keeps forcing himself to train, if he lets himself be driven by his own fanaticism to the outposts of his potential, can these limits be moved . . . only thus is a climber capable of dismantling the inner barriers . . .'

And, in an echo from *The 7th Grade*: 'Good fortune and benign

providence are presents from the gods, as the Tibetans say; they are an extra. But the prerequisites for success the climber has to acquire for himself – they are never given freely, anywhere.'

When he leaves the factual account, Messner indulges his taste for philosophical homily: 'Personality alone is what counts . . . mountaineering is not measurable in points and seconds.'

And yet, 'points and seconds' is exactly what Munro-bagging is all about. What other fascination can this particular subset of Himalayan peaks offer over other, less explored, mountains?

I remember watching the Pole Voytek Kurtyka examining the Messner philosophy at Buxton this year. They both had pint glasses in their hands. Voytek said:

I like you as a human being . . . no, I do not like you as a human. I like you as an animal. I like the things you are doing, but I don't understand the things you are saying . . . You say, 'I was never in competition with others . . . others are in competition with me . . .' But also you are saying 'I, Messner, did it first!'

Voytek has an uncanny way of hitting the nail on the head.

The most successful photographs could have been (and possibly were) taken by trekkers. Dhaulagiri S face is stupendous. The most boring shots are the 'climbing' photographs. We are treated to the famous Messner 'tilt'. On the S face of Manaslu the angles are so bewildering that the climbers appear to be dangling from helium-filled rucksacks. There are exceptions, such as the stunning jacket cover, with an ice-encrusted Messner showing just how cold Makalu can be in good weather, and the superb Kangshung face of Everest in the background. But wait, the tent in the mid-ground has a strong shadow on the left, and Messner in the foreground is shadowed on the right. Surely he would not need to paste up montage for the cover, would he? You might think Messner must have hundreds of stunning 'natural' photographs, yet delving between the covers produces very few scenes of the same standard as the cover.

Last weekend I showed the book to a non-mountaineering friend. He is the sort of person who might actually go out and buy a good coffee table book. What he said was: 'I don't go a bomb on the pictures, but I suppose you can't expect a professional mountaineer to be a professional photographer too.' During a recent interview, Messner formulated a similar opinion:

The more a climb is a show, the less it is an adventure. More it is an adventure, less it is a show . . . at the extremes of adventure, when you really push yourself, you cannot make a film, you cannot make a show. At maximum you can record, maybe, one photograph on the summit.

Perhaps this goes some way to explaining the paucity of really fine photography. Messner, in completing the first collection of all 14 eight-thousanders, was pushing the limits of mountaineering. Success, survival even, was a matter of the slenderest margins. There was no room in his world for anything else. This is what the book is really about. Extreme adventure.

A V Saunders

The Making of a Mountaineer

George Ingle Finch (With a Memoir by Scott Russell)

Arrowsmith, 1988, pp viii + 456, £19.95

This book is much more than just a re-issue of George Finch's classic on mountaineering; surely one of the most readable on the subject ever written.

Originally presented to me in a first edition soon after I started climbing, it almost became my mountaineering bible for a time. How exciting were Finch's exploits in Corsica and the Alps at that time! The great Monte Rosa, Mont Blanc and Chamonix Aiguilles climbs, particularly the traverse of the Drus. But it was the chapters on Everest which really caught my imagination then in youth, before I went to Everest myself in charge of oxygen.

To my mind, Finch's oxygen attempt on Everest was more important than anything that had happened before on the mountain. It failed to get him and his gallant companion Geoffrey Bruce to the summit, but it proved beyond doubt that oxygen could do so; as was confirmed by Peter Lloyd in 1938 and Hunt's party in 1953.

The re-reading of this charming book brought back pleasant youthful memories. But what makes this new edition doubly interesting these days is Scott Russell's long 'memoir' of George Finch which includes a new account of his quarrels with the Mount Everest establishment in the 1920s. Russell's researches in the Everest archives at the RGS have added additional information to what was reported by Walt Unsworth in his splendid book on Everest.

This new edition of *The Making of a Mountaineer* is well worth while, not only in its own right as a classic of mountaineering literature, but because of Scott Russell's memoir of a great mountaineer who became one of the most distinguished Presidents of the Alpine Club.

Charles Warren

Feeding the Rat. Profile of a Climber

Al Alvarez

Bloomsbury, 1988, pp 152, £11.95

This book is a biography of Mo Anthoine. Accounts of Mo's early alpine climbs and later expeditions to the Himalaya and Karakoram are interspersed with chapters describing the building of his home from a ruin in Nant Peris and the establishment of his successful business, Snowdon Mouldings, in Llanberis.

'Feeding the Rat' is Mo's expression for what drives him and most other climbers out regularly to, in his words, 'flush out your system and do a bit of suffering'. Much of Mo's climbing philosophy is discussed and it is clear that the suffering should be within the overall context of having a good time with one's mates. Mo again: 'Expeditions are supposed to be enjoyable . . . Admittedly, they're bloody hard work and sometimes you get frightened, but primarily they should be fun.'

Following these principles, over the last 15 years Mo has made an enviable series of low-key, largely unsponsored expeditions with small groups

of friends to the Himalaya, Karakoram and South America. An exception was his participation in the 1986 Everest expedition, but we learn that there were not a lot of laughs on Everest. At a time when climbing in general and expeditions in particular are becoming more and more dominated by professionals, it is refreshing to read of Mo's traditional, publicity-shunning approach to mountaineering.

The book is short, with only 129 pages of text, and the few black-and-white photographs are well below the standard found in most modern books on mountaineering. The writing is in a simple style which is delightful to read; this is well illustrated by the evocative description of Llanberis on the first three pages.

I found that the most memorable chapters were the two where the author describes his own climbs with Mo, on the Comici Route on the Cima Grande in the Dolomites and on the Old Man of Hoy.

Rupert Hoare

Cumbrian Rock

Trevor Jones and Geoff Milburn

Pic Publications, 1988, pp257, £14.95

A Century on the Craggs. The Story of Rockclimbing in the Lake District

Alan Hankinson

J M Dent and Sons Ltd, 1988, £16

After a long period without a thoroughly researched, commercially produced history of Lake District climbing, suddenly two contenders sprang forth fully armed in 1988. The long history was due for re-rendering, at a time when some deny the past's relevance while others risk serious misrepresentation of it from inadequate methods, present-mindedness, plain lack of knowledge or parochialism.

Different qualifications are brought to the task. Trevor Jones and Geoff Milburn produced the rich mine of *Welsh Rock*; this is the companion in format and writing style. Their climbing experience and insider knowledge of the broad scene are impressive, as is the industry involved. Alan Hankinson also climbs, and has written before on the Lake District's Golden Age. Originally an historian, he salutes the fiery old revisionist A J P Taylor in his dedication, as historian, fell walker and Pillarite. Thus one can expect a critical approach to the sources, some weighing of the evidence and analytical sifting of wheat from chaff. Already he has succeeded in resurrecting the 'first tigers' from the black-and-white contrasts of the Abraham brothers' photographs, in a book and an associated film. Now aided by new-fangled interview and antique diary, he tries to bring the story up to date.

These histories had the advantage, not only of excellent FRCC guides and journals, but also of the 1986 special edition of the Fell and Rock Journal which celebrated *A Hundred Years of Climbing in the Lake District*. In its way, as with the *Helyg* book produced by Geoff Milburn for Wales, this did much to clarify

the key items for any would-be writer. It was legitimized by its authors who include among others H M Kelly, John Wilkinson and Pete Whillance. Hankinson acknowledges these and other bibliographical debts. Despite more extensive quotations from a mass of sources, exact references are not given and there is no bibliography in *Cumbrian Rock*. That is a pity, for it will make the book a good deal less useful in the future. Nor is there a list of illustrations. Also helpful to these writers were Bill Birkett's biographical sketches of *Lakeland Pioneers*, and to some degree the colourful but wildly inaccurate booklet published by Border TV to accompany their *Lakeland Rock* series of films.

What are we to make of the results of their labour? On general design and book production *Cumbrian Rock* is richer fare. Its photography is lavish, in colour and black-and-white, integral to the text and strongly supporting clean pages of bold typefaces. Its glossy paper feels made to last, and heightens the effects of the muddiest of ancient snaps. It allows, too, the survival of some black-and-white from slides of modern parentage. Dent have been much more penny-pinching, with two bunches of black-and-white athwart a text printed on passable paper. The black-and-whites come out a little punchier on photographic paper, as many deserve, but generally their impact is vitiated by their consignment to two ghettos. They are a slightly eccentric collection, with the wonderful ageing hippy of Borrowdale, Millican Dalton, getting far more coverage than the rock stars of any era. He does look more interesting than some.

The two books have parallels in structure, particularly in their middling chapters. Each makes H M Kelly worth a chapter and follows with another on the Welsh influence from the late 1920s. Does the structure of events really determine this irrevocably, I wonder? They give fairly convincing accounts, for those of us far too young to remember, of long distant times. Their use of the relatively ample sources varies a little. Hankinson uses Sid Cross to recall his first encounter with Alf Bridge and A B Hargreaves on Gimmer in 1931, whilst *Cumbrian Rock* recalls Bridge's impressions of these able but technically untutored youths from Kendal, making more of his overhearing the lads' opinion of the experts as '... a pair of doddering old devils'. Does anything ever change?

Frankly, this story underlines a difference between the books throughout. The Hankinson text is smoother, less encrusted with material, flowing and shaping into manageable chapters. *Cumbrian Rock* seems to me closer to its subject, less tidy and even losing its thread at times, but humorous, vital, lively and rich to a degree pasteurized out in the other book.

However, by the 1960s life becomes more difficult for both, as too many folk were now in the thick of it and are still alive and kicking. On that ground few can hope to please. Hankinson gives little space to the whole post-Dolphin emporium. Perhaps he was less comfortable with it. He has little idea of the interconnections of people, so that climbs appear as *deus ex machina* without much reason for their invention. Nor does he seem aware of the widespread advance in technical aids from the early 1960s onwards, including perlon, drill nuts on wire, wired wedges and harnesses. Partly this is the product of looking at the district through the microscope, and losing sight of wider influences such

as Welsh and Scottish sea cliff and eastern alpine and Chamonix climbing, in which many leading activists of the 1960s were steeped.

Trevor Jones knows all this and in general gives a more convincing account. Notables like Pat Fearnough, bridging RAF mountain rescue, the Peak, two Great Gable Guides and much alpinism, are at least mentioned. Both books, however, fall into the parochial trap of taking the Paul Ross versus Allan Austin controversies at face value. Much of the Keswick presented as supportive of Paul was active in Llanberis, Chamonix and on limestone. Quite simply, the parish pumps of Langdale and Keswick hardly mattered in the 1960s, though some of the issues did (people did not misuse the word ethics then). In particular, there was a sustained attempt to keep aid down, and to reduce it where possible on repeat ascents. This was what the Niche controversy was about in the early 1960s, though Trevor's text misses that vital point, and so it was with many other routes on their second or subsequent ascents. Until the new protection became more generalized and versatile after 1966, new routes kept on acquiring a jot too many bits of aid or fixed protection, but much of it was soon whittled down, a tendency which generically developed into the early 1970s, with the Read and Adams routes and what came after. Meanwhile, the rock attempted got harder and harder, to the point where someone had to consider modifying bodies and performance as well as changing the rules. Livesey's approach made its impact four years after Henry Barber's blitz on Britain, and after the high point of more generalized going to Yosemite and coming back 'born again'. By September 1971 Rab Carrington had chalk in his baggy trouser pockets on our ascent of Woubits, Henry Barber had been over twice, with his first six weeks in Tony Riley's (Alpha Club) house in Sheffield, and Ed Drummond was teaching John Allen (at High Stars school, but not his climbing).

My suggestion is a simple one. After the 1960s, internalist accounts of particular districts of Britain make even less sense than they did before 1900. In the Lake District what happened was that the 1960s performers walked on to other stages, with the exception of Allan Austin and other dedicated local (plus Peak or Yorkshire) oldies. Thus on 7 October 1971 Tut Braithwaite and myself did three short new routes on Number 5 Gully Buttress on Ben Nevis. It rained overnight. Next afternoon we tidied the Medlar on Raven Crag, Thirlmere (tried before its first ascent with Martin Boysen on the same weekend as our controversial first repeat of Hiraeth in September 1962). Ross had long been alive and well with Henry doing all sorts of climbing in New Hampshire. Everybody who was anybody was setting sights on the big faces, not merely on the Alps, in the 'run-in' which ended on Everest SW face in 1975 and with the great successes and tragedies of the ACG between 1970 (Ian Clough and Tom Patey) and 1986 (Al Rouse). The rock athletes were to perform better, on a stage bequeathed to them by abdication after more than a decade of hegemony. Perhaps that is why the only climbers on Creag an Dubh Lochain one June weekend of 1975 were Les Brown, Pete Turnbull and his mate from the old Wall End barn days, me, Pete Whillance and Jeff Lamb. Not that the Lakes were finished. In new route terms they had just entered a stage too blacksmithing for fun, requiring a new dedication.

These are very personal views, but the later stages of these books do not lead me to revise them. Both become guidebook-like, a catechism of rather ill-digested pieties about a world of which the authors can have experienced little. In Trevor's book the signal is an unwarranted put-down of Alan (Richard) MacHardy, whose Vikings in 1969 was the hardest route in the district at the time. It was not at all surprising that he led the route, as Trevor claims. Physically he was probably the strongest of the Alpha Club group, though technically others were more capable. Overall he was almost certainly the keenest, and, if his solo ascent of the Grooves and Overhanging Arête on Cynr Las and of dozens of other Extreme climbs, as well as a notable alpine career and early repetition throughout the decade of many hard routes (Dinosaur on Gogarth, June 1968) did not put him in the first rank, I don't know what did – he certainly couldn't cheat as imaginatively as Drummond, Pete Crew or even the Baron Brown. Nor was it an accident that he did Vikings with rising star Paul (Tut) Braithwaite. 'Richard' MacHardy had shivered his apprenticeship on the E buttress of Scafell a decade before, holding the rope for his clubmate Les Brown, new-routing on Centaur. Paul Braithwaite was later involved in the *Cumbrian* controversy with Rod Valentine. For all the noise nobody did it much better for three years after their first ascent in 1974. Valentine did a free ascent in 1988.

These are the carpings of old men. We are better off for these books, and each has its advantages. Both suffer from occasional typos, mistakes and misinterpretations. Nevertheless, their weakness is more often lack of analysis rather than mistaken fact. Keen as Pete Livesey was to disconnect rock climbing from its moorings to enhance its status, and with it the significance of his major contribution, still in public profile it has proved essential in recent times to use Chris Bonington to make it interesting (the *Lakeland Rock* films). It would be better perhaps if it were not so, but the recent free rock-climbing ascent of the Trango Tower by Bernt Arnold and Wolfgang Gullich suggests that not all rock-climbers have signed the self-denying ordinance. At least that means that some will retain the breadth of vision to see how much real climbing remains to be done. As always the best know that, while lesser mortals muddle on in misconceptions, whatever their muscle power.

Paul Nunn

Aladağlar. An Introduction

Haldun Aydingün

Redhouse Press, Istanbul, 1988, pp74, npq

In view of the growing popularity of climbing in Turkey, Haldun Aydingün's English edition of his pocket-guide is a welcome 'introduction' (he hopes to produce a full survey of the range later) to the 3700–3400m summits of the Ala Dağ range in Central Anatolia. Seven sketch maps, 21 clearly drawn topos and 16 pages of coloured plates illustrate the access routes and a variety of climbs in this interesting range, now said to be within reach of a long weekend from Istanbul. Rather different from the two-day walk-in from the Pozanti road-

head by Robin Hodgkin and your reviewer in 1943, when they made the first ascent by the couloir on the SW face of Demirkazik (second ascent) now known as 'Peck's Couloir'. In fairness this should have been Hodgkin-Peck's Couloir, were this name not harder to pronounce in Turkish.

Edward Peck

Nanda Devi. The Tragic Expedition

John Roskelley

Oxford Illustrated Press, 1988, pp240, £9.95

The American expedition which Willi Unsoeld led to Nanda Devi in 1976 has had to wait for over 10 years for its activities to be chronicled by Roskelley, one of the three members who reached the summit. It was, as the title states, a tragic expedition, riddled with dissension and culminating in the death of Nanda Devi Unsoeld. Maybe it was a story that could not easily be told until after Willi Unsoeld himself had died, his being the leading hand in the organization and in the effort to get his daughter to the summit of the mountain after which she was named. The assembled group were so mixed in their views, their personal relationships and their technical ability that dispute and argument were inevitable.

The fact that the author was the strongest, and loudest, critic of the enterprise makes a reader (this one, at least) long to hear an opposite point of view during much of the book, although he seems to mellow a little in the later stages. An interesting book, therefore, but an expedition that it was probably better to read about than participate in.

Geoffrey Templeman

Byron's Travels

Allan Massie

Sidgwick & Jackson, 1988, pp224, £14.95

Byron's travels, as described in his incomparable letters, are quite fascinating. This book should therefore be read to the end by those interested in Byron's travels in general. But from the Alpine Club's point of view, it is really only the second chapter which concerns us.

In 1816, self-exiled from home, Byron travelled to Geneva through Germany, visiting the 'field of Waterloo' on the way, and lodged there at the Hotel d'Angleterre where he met the Shelleys. Then here, near the town, a week or two later he rented the Villa Diodati where he lived for some months near the Shelleys in a house which had once been lived in by Milton.

It was probably those few months on the shores of Lac Lemman which were the happiest and most formative of his life, for it was here that he sailed up the lake with Shelley, almost getting shipwrecked on the way, to visit Chillon and write his famous poem about Bonivard – inaccurate historically, but good poetry.

It was during this brief but highly important visit to Switzerland in 1816 that Byron visited the Oberland with his friend Hobhouse. From the Wengernalp and the Scheidegg he admired the Jungfrau, and it was this visit which inspired him to write *Manfred*; the inspiration for that great picture by John Martin of 'Manfred on the Jungfrau'.

It was during this visit to Switzerland that he visited Chamonix, of which he wrote somewhat disparagingly. No, it was the Oberland tour that appealed to him and led to *Manfred*.

Charles Warren

Flora of Bhutan, Volume I, parts 1, 2 & 3

A J C Grierson & D G Long

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, for the Overseas Development Administration, London, and the Royal Government of Bhutan, 1983, 1984 & 1987

In June 1975, in the days when visitors to Bhutan in one year could be counted on one hand, Thimphu was rife with speculation about two Scotsmen who were coming out to do an inventory of the flora of Bhutan. As the authors write in their foreword to Part 1:

From 1914 onwards a small number of privileged botanists and horticulturists, mostly British, were able to travel extensively in Bhutan and bring back to Britain large plant collections. The greatest of these collectors were undoubtedly Frank Ludlow and George Sherriff who made seven visits to Bhutan between 1933 and 1950 and amassed over 6000 herbarium specimens as well as large numbers of living plants and seeds.

In spite of the considerable collecting activity, almost none of the resulting information has been available to those in Bhutan, such as the forestry department, for whom (J D Hooker's) *Flora of British India* remains the only reference work. In contrast, neighbouring Sikkim has enjoyed much more intensive botanical exploration for many decades, and numerous publications bear witness to its extremely rich flora.

The Royal Government of Bhutan not unreasonably felt that some of the information on their flora should be made available to them, and in 1974 they requested the Overseas Development Administration in London that a botanist be employed in Britain to prepare an inventory of the flora based on herbarium and living collections . . .

From their initial visit, those in the Forestry Department and elsewhere had no doubt about the professionalism of Andrew Grierson and David Long, and the sight of the lanky red-haired Long and his keen young Bhutanese assistants wielding penknives and plastic bags up some ferocious hillside gully was a novel feature of the Thimphu region. But as they moved to distant parts and the size of their task became increasingly apparent, there must have been some heart-

searching in ODA at the inexorable lengthening of the time-scale of the project.

As the work progressed, it transpired that the emphases of past collectors were on temperate, alpine and horticultural plants. So Grierson and Long's work has been directed towards tropical plants and to filling gaps in the database. Many new species have of course come to light – including a pine and two new rhododendrons, as well as many scores of species new to Bhutan. After several years' work, the need to include Sikkim became evident, in order to include many plants known from there but not yet found in Bhutan; and so, by 1979, a final format was adopted and a revised work-programme laid out. So far, in four field trips some 5700 specimens have been collected, and are now housed in Edinburgh. Many duplicates are deposited in Thimphu, where it is hoped a herbarium can soon be established. All this has been achieved by two botanists and a scientific assistant, but from this year the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, is increasing the research team to four, with a part-time scientific assistant, while ODA funds one botanist, all travel and subsistence, artist's fees and publishing costs.

Thus, the ideal 'developmental project' has been established, with the gradual production of a low-budget *Flora of Bhutan* which provides basic keys, short descriptions and some illustrations, while also serving as a check-list. The language has deliberately been kept as simple as possible, and unnecessary jargon and abbreviations have been reduced to the minimum. As the authors say:

Many plant groups are, by their nature, difficult to classify and identify (often also because of inadequate herbarium material or lack of knowledge), and the flora will be hard to use without some experience. For some groups (eg *Rhododendrons*) the taxonomy is relatively well-defined, but others, like *Salix*, are so poorly known as to make future re-revision essential after further field study.

The first three parts, which are of a sensible size for a rucksack, are in distinctive yellow limp boards, with good quality paper and a most pleasing layout and type-face, while the 49 illustrations by Mary Bates and others have a linear clarity which would commend them to any collector, whether professional or amateur. The reference map is helpful, and it is a pleasure to find complete consistency in the spellings of place-names.

The bibliographies in each part are worth detailed study, as are the geographical outlines, the classification of vegetation, the local and medicinal uses of plants, and the authors' remarks on conservation policy – surely a lesson to Bhutan's neighbours. The hoped-for completion during the next few years of Volume II, comprising four more parts, will provide a *Flora of Bhutan* with a relevance from Nepal to Assam, particularly for botanists and foresters, and in other parts of the world where Himalayan plants are studied or grown in gardens; and it will no doubt prove to be the definitive work on the flora of this little-known part of the Himalayan region.

John Tyson

Seven Summits

Dick Bass & Frank Wells, with Rick Ridgeway

Aurum Press, 1987, pp110 + 336, £14.95 (Also in a Pan pb edition)

As Bass and Wells say in a personal note introducing the book, they didn't write it – the sole author is Rick Ridgeway, and an excellent job he has made of it. The seven summits of the title are the highest summits of each of the seven continents – McKinley and Aconcagua, Elbrus, Kilimanjaro, Kosciusko, Vinson (Antarctica) and, of course, Everest.

Dick Bass – an entrepreneur in oil, coal and ranching, and owner of the Snowbird Ski Resort in Utah – and Frank Wells, then president of Warner Bros Studios, independently had the idea of being the first person to climb the seven summits, originally in one year. Each was in his early fifties, and each had done a little climbing. Bass had climbed Fuji, the Matterhorn twice and McKinley, while Wells had done Mont Blanc, Kilimanjaro and some smaller fry. They decided to join forces and have a go, and they did it, Bass doing all seven and Wells six, his wife saying when it came to the final assault on Everest that it was either the mountain or her! Their first attempts on Elbrus, Aconcagua and Everest were unsuccessful, and they lost Marty Hoey – one of their guides and an inspiration to Bass – when she fell to her death on Everest. But they were successful on Aconcagua, in 1983. The next attempts on Everest in the same year resulted in some of the team reaching the top, but not Bass or Wells. However, McKinley, Kilimanjaro and Elbrus fell quickly after that. Vinson then became a logistical nightmare, the flight in and out being almost the most scary part of the expedition, but they got there. Kosciusko, of course, was a doddle, but it finally came to Everest again. Bass tried to attach himself to various expeditions, each time being rebuffed with either unfriendliness or bureaucratic intransigence, but finally he and David Breashears were accepted on a Norwegian expedition, the same one on which Chris Bonington attained the summit. Bass and Breashears made it, and the Seven Summits were a reality.

I had originally thought that the story of two men buying their way up mountains around the world wouldn't be for me. But, as I said, Ridgeway has written an excellent book. The characters of the participants come over well. Their brashness and typical 'entrepreneurial attitudes' are well shown, and so also are their devotion to the job in hand, their humour and, above all, their determination. It's a racy narrative, well worth reading. After all, you don't get many mountaineering books that quote not only Chris Bonington on the cover, but Clint Eastwood and Robert Redford as well!

Geoffrey Templeman

Le Grand Livre des Cabanes

Orell Füssli Zürich, 1988, pp240, 66 Swiss Francs

In 1892 the Swiss Alpine Club published its first list describing the 40 mountain refuges or *cabanes* which had by then been constructed. Three subsequent lists followed, the last one in 1946. To mark its 125th anniversary in 1988 the SAC,

under the direction of Section Uto, one of the founder sections of the Club, has published a handsome new edition prepared by Willy Furter, describing the 154 huts and refuges belonging to the various sections of the Club, plus eight others owned by affiliated Academic Alpine Clubs. The cost of publication was guaranteed by an anonymous Club member, and a subsidy was provided by the Swiss Credit Bank.

The text – which appears in the three national languages, German, French and Italian – is concise and factual without frills or superfluties. The illustrations, as was to be expected, are of high quality and they form the major part of the book. The presentation is clear, as befits a good book of reference, and the information provided is about as complete as climbers and skiers could require.

The end-papers comprise a map of the whole Alpine region from Martigny to Scuol, on which each hut is positioned and numbered on an east to west system for quick identification, with corresponding numbers used throughout the book. An introductory alphabetical list provides the hut number, the section to which it belongs, and the pages on which it is described in the two main sections of the book – illustrated and descriptive which, for ease of reference, are printed respectively on white and on grey paper. The illustrated section devotes a full page to each hut, containing a colour photograph plus an orientation map and map reference numbers. This section is sub-divided into the six main Alpine regions Vaud/Valais, Bernese Oberland, Uri/Schwyz, Glarus, Grisons, Tessin, with the first two containing the largest number of huts, 46 and 36 respectively. The descriptive pages that follow include information about date of construction, size, access, base for climbs/excursions, and also provide useful SAC Guidebook references.

If a trifle bulky at 25.5cm² – not exactly pocket size! – this is a reference book of great merit and a magnificent volume for those who can afford its price.

Trevor Braham

Rimo. Mountain on the Silk Road

Peter Hillary

Hodder & Stoughton, 1988, pp176, £12.95

The expedition to climb Rimo was organized as a joint Indo-Australian effort but, as this account makes only too clear, it became 'joint' in name only. Most of the 'Australian' part of the group – which included a New Zealander, a Yorkshireman and an American – were what could be described as typical, independent climbing *aficionados*, while a number of the Indian party were military personnel. It could therefore be seen from the start that differences of opinion would arise.

The major factor, however, was that Rimo lies in that part of the Eastern Karakoram close to the border with Pakistan and China and actively occupied by the Indian Army. The team was kept under military surveillance the whole way and bureaucratic delays were frequent. When at last they reached the mountain, two attempts on the summit failed because of bad weather, technical

problems and the expiry of their army permit. The retreat was quite an epic, with the relationships finally breaking down, their film being confiscated and Hillary himself ending up with a terrifying encounter with the wrong end of a Sten gun.

The book is interesting to read, even though written in rather a pedestrian way, because of the author's views on the attitudes of the various members; once again, it would be interesting to have an Indian account to read at the same time. (See Harish Kopsiada's comment on p 270.)

Geoffrey Templeman

Pinnacle Club: A History of Women Climbing

Shirley Angell

The Pinnacle Club, 1988, pp xiv + 258, £14.95

The Pinnacle Club began in 1921 and is still flourishing. We have here an account of its founding and an admirably detailed record of everything that has happened since. Most office holders and many members are mentioned by name. Innumerable club meets throughout the years are recounted, with notes of routes climbed and who climbed them. More adventurous expeditions to the Alps and Himalaya are described in detail, and we are even told of mountaineering exploits by members outside the umbrella of the club.

Through this vast mass of fact percolates a marvellous feeling of the atmosphere of the club. Always warm, welcoming and supportive, it is friendly to spouses, offspring and newcomers. Especially in the early days, there were some eccentric characters, but we are left in no doubt that their hearts were in the right place. There are many references to the club hut at Cwm Dyli and its very special role in the life of the club is lovingly recounted, though we hear of some of its problems too. Alongside all this, very high standards of climbing are aspired to and achieved, with more capable members going to great trouble to help and encourage the less experienced. We also learn of the attitude of men to women climbers in the early days, and why even today there is a place for a women's club where women can climb together without men.

This book reflects an enormous amount of painstaking meticulous toil, extracting information from club records and members' diaries and recollections. It is brought alive by frequent verbatim quotes and the lively style of the author. Liberally illustrated with photographs spanning the whole period, all from the Pinnacle Club collection, it will be an absorbing read for all who know the people or the places or have even a passing interest in climbing.

Anne Andrews

Matterhorn

Beat H Perren

Stadler Verlag, Konstanz/Zürich, 1988

Essentially a book of pictures, containing about 250 colour photographs,

mostly full-page with several double-page spreads, this is an impressive volume 35 × 27cm in size and weighing about 2½kg. The technical excellence of the photography and reproduction create an immediate and startling impact, with the eponymous mountain pictured on every page and seen from every angle. The author, one of the founders in 1968 of the Air Zermatt Rescue Service and now its President, was born in Zermatt, grew up there, and from the age of 14 when he first climbed the mountain became fascinated with the Matterhorn. Since his parents had a photographic shop in Zermatt, photography and the mountains must have exercised a strong influence from an early age; obviously the right credentials for the conception and production of this book. Added value, with international sales in mind, is the provision of six languages (including Japanese) for the photo captions. Apart from the author's introduction and a short biography, there is no other text.

Air photography has been used exclusively. Besides a tendency to create more dramatic effects, air views possess certain advantages when they reveal the configuration of the various ridges and faces of the Matterhorn, as well as the sense of perspective relative to some of its illustrious neighbours that only an air photograph can give. But the reality of the routes, from the climber's viewpoint, is lost; and, with a large majority of the route photographs featuring climbing figures, a recurrent 'flies on a wall' setting characterizes most of the photographs.

The general concept and layout are admirable. 12 dazzling pages of the peaks and glaciers that fill the arena are followed by 33 pages of the mountain 'in all its splendour'. (There is not a single photo caption for the first 64 pictures.) While some of these views are breathtaking, a few are included for their photogenic value. The six sections that follow provide a picture series of the main climbing routes: Hörnli, Zmutt, Italian, Amici, Furggen, N face. The composite ridge or face view with which each section begins would have been greatly enhanced by a caption and a route sketch. The subsequent stage-by-stage route sequences leave one in some cases with the impression of apparently desperate climbing situations – as vertical views tend to do.

The book's merits depend upon whom it is aimed at. For pictorial air coverage, it deserves full marks. But not a single map or map reference is to be found, and there are no complementary sketches of any sort. The photo captions, such as they are, are grouped together and placed at the start of each section, making the search for them occasionally tiresome. There is no index, but this might have been hard to provide in an exclusively pictorial book. The reader might be excused for being lulled into the belief that the Matterhorn is immune from bad weather and storms, with flawless weather prevailing from the first page to the last.

For a book of such proportions, at a price beyond the reach of many mountaineers, the merits need to outweigh the flaws. Depending upon one's point of view, perhaps they do. Just take a look at the pictures on pp23, 103, 207. There are several others!

Trevor Braham

High Altitude Studies in Man

A number of important studies on this subject have been published in recent years; below is a review of nine of them.

High altitude studies in man are important because they throw light on the oxygen transport system which is essential to life. The degree of adaptation to oxygen lack is truly remarkable, for a man acutely exposed to the height of Everest (8848m) in a decompression chamber will become comatose and probably die, yet a Sherpa has now climbed Everest four times without supplementary oxygen and two continental climbers have ascended and descended the mountain from 5800m in two days, also without bottled oxygen. Oxygen lack affects every system in the body, and man at altitude serves as a model for those at sea-level with the chronic oxygen lack associated with heart and lung disease; and these are among the commonest ills that afflict humans.

In the mid-19th century the way in which oxygen is transported in the human body began to be studied by physiologists, their work coinciding with the start of the exploration of the world's highest peaks and the formation of the Alpine Club; ever since there has been a close relationship between the mountaineer and the medical scientist. In the last few years, interest in these studies has greatly increased and medical textbooks carry sections on the disorders of altitude and cold.

Millions of people now enjoy trekking, climbing and skiing in the mountains, and it is common to be lifted to 3000m and above by ski-lift or helicopter, so mountain sickness and its complications have become familiar to many. Increasingly, too, expeditions to extreme altitude – particularly in winter – are exposing mountaineers to the limits of tolerable hypoxia and cold. Finally, there is an increasing interest in the high-altitude populations of the world – in South America, Central Asia and parts of the United States of America. For these reasons there is a continuing need to update information about cold and hypoxia and this is what these books provide.

Hypoxia and Cold

Ed John Sutton, Charles Houston & Geoffrey Coates

Praeger, New York, 1987, pp16 + 560

Hypoxia and Cold records the proceedings of a meeting held at Chateau Lake Louise in Canada in 1985; these meetings, started by the Alpine Club at Plas y Brenin in North Wales in 1975, are now held at regular intervals in North America, are attended by scientists worldwide and in many different disciplines, and provide a real stimulus for research. For non-scientific mountaineers, the chapter on 'Limiting Factors' emphasizes the biological knife-edge on which the climber at extreme altitude is functioning, while the section on the physiological and psychological make-up of élite mountaineers, who are world class athletes in this particular dimension, is also most interesting.

This volume, as its title suggests, covers both cold and altitude and it is right that it should; these two stresses must always be taken together in the

mountain environment, for each modifies the effect of the other on man. In addition, the effects of exercise must always be taken into account. This point should be stressed, because in the laboratory each tends to be studied separately, whereas in the field (which is analogous to the clinical situation) all combine. This makes the interpretation of laboratory findings as difficult in the field as it is in the clinical dimension.

High Altitude Deterioration

Ed J Rivolier, P Cerretelli, J Foray & P Segantini

Karger, Basle, 1985, pp16 + 228

High Altitude Deterioration is the proceedings of a symposium organized by the Medical Commission of the UIAA which was held in Chamonix in 1984. Its flavour is European, and again it holds much of interest to the mountaineer and skier – in particular, the information that an avalanche victim dug out from the encompassing snow which prevents wind-chill may, if left unprotected from the wind, die rapidly from hypothermia. The crevasse victim, too, may lose heat very quickly to the walls of ice in which he is jammed. There is also a wide-ranging retrospective survey of accidents in the Greater Ranges of Asia. My criticism of this excellent book is the title, for 'High Altitude Deterioration' is a term used to describe a specific clinical entity brought about by long stay at altitude, and is associated with distinctive clinical features.

Seminars in Respiratory Medicine: Man at Altitude (Vol 5 No 2)

Ed John Sutton

Thieme-Stratton Inc, New York, 1983, pp103–216

Man at Altitude is one of a series in *Seminars in Respiratory Medicine*, and like the other volumes is mainly for the medical scientist and clinician. Of particular interest to the mountaineer is a series of short articles on the history of high-altitude medicine, and resumsés of the Silver Hut Expedition 1960–61 in the Everest region, the American Medical Research Expedition to Everest in 1981, when measurements were made on the summit, and studies carried out on Mt Logan between 1967 and 1979.

Within the last few years there have been three important studies in high altitude medicine and physiology. Firstly, the successful scientific expedition to Everest in 1981, led by West, to which I have referred above; and, secondly, the successful completion of Operation Everest II. This was carried out in the decompression chamber at the US Army Department of Environmental Health at Natick, Massachusetts, under the direction of Cymerman, Houston, Reeves and Sutton. Volunteers spent 40 days and 40 nights (a suitably biblical span), being decompressed gradually to the 'summit' of Everest. Extensive studies were completed, including a number of invasive techniques to measure heart function which are too dangerous to be carried out in the field. Finally, the results of Chinese work, both in the laboratory and in the field in Tibet and elsewhere, are becoming available.

Hypothermia and Cold Stress

Evan L Lloyd

Croom Helm, London, 1986

This book is a veritable encyclopaedia about hypothermia and stress due to cold in all walks of life, but there is relatively little about local cold injury. The author, who is an anaesthetist, is well known for his method of central re-warming via a face mask or tube into the lungs which has been carried out successfully in field conditions, and the chapter on mountain hypothermia will be of particular interest to AC members. With over 1500 references, the book is also invaluable for the research worker in this subject and it should be in every library that deals with environmental hazard.

High Altitude and Man

Ed John B West and Sukhamay Lahiri

American Physiological Society, Bethesda, Maryland, 1984

This is the report of a symposium stimulated by research carried out on the American Medical Research Expedition to Everest 1981. This was led by Professor John West, who writes in the opening chapter about 'Man on the Summit of Everest'. Each chapter and section has important implications in the field of high altitude physiology and there is a considerable input from China. That one section has five chapters on sleep at altitude illustrates how important this subject has become, for man spends about one third of his life asleep. As all who go to altitude know, irregular breathing (and snoring) are a feature of sleep, and the implications for the normal control of breathing are important. Although called Cheyne-Stokes Respiration, the first (1781) clinical description of the phenomenon was made by John Hunter, the father of scientific surgery, and is contained in his clinical case-books. The first observation of this condition at altitude was made on the top of Mont Blanc and is reported in John Tyndall's book *Glaciers of the Alps*.

Hypoxia, Exercise and Altitude: Proceedings of the Third Banff International Hypoxia Symposium

Ed John R Sutton, Charles S Houston, Norman L Jones

A R Liss Inc, New York, 1983

This book has an immense breadth of interest, with papers on sleep, control of respiration in early life and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, as well as chapters on fatigue and metabolism and nutrition at altitude. There are also two fascinating papers a little outside the mainstream of human physiology. One is by Hermann Rahn on altitude adaptation in organisms without lungs – that is, plants, insects, spiders and birds' eggs (at least 21 species of birds nest above 4000m). The other is on breath-holding in mammals, with considerable implications for the human swimmer.

**Abstracts from UIAA Mountain Medicine Conference held at St
Bartholomew's Hospital, London, 1987**

Among the many and varied topics contained in these abstracts there are two of especial interest, the use of various climbing harnesses and the occurrence of brain damage due to residence at extreme altitude. Both are controversial.

The recommendation that both seat and chest harness should be worn seems reasonable enough, but ease of movement and fitting are important practical considerations and have to be taken into account before this type of harness becomes worn universally.

The question of brain damage after going to altitude will assume a greater importance as more people climb to extreme altitude without supplementary oxygen. It seems that, as the measurement of mental functions becomes more sophisticated, so more changes are found after long stay at altitude, and whether these are temporary or permanent is not yet known. In the long term, mountaineers may have to decide for themselves what level of damage they individually can accept, and it does seem that there is room for the manufacture of a very lightweight oxygen set which can be used at great altitude if only for medical purposes.

Hypoxia, Polycythemia and Chronic Mountain Sickness

Robert M Winslow, Carlos Monge

The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, pp255, 1987

In 1925, Carlos Monge gave the first description of a case of chronic mountain sickness which occurred in a Peruvian miner working at Cerro de Pasco (4300m).

Since then many cases have been reported at Leadville, Colorado and in South America, but so far none in the Himalayan villages. However, evidence is accumulating that this condition occurs in Tibet, and Hedin in 1903 may well have described a case in a gold-mining community in north-western Tibet.

The medical scientist is interested in this condition because it is not a disease, as no specific pathological process is described, but rather it appears to be a result of over-response to the normal physiological process of acclimatization to altitude.

There is an increasing regard too for the public health aspects of high-altitude populations, and this book gives an excellent account of the background to an expanding subject.

Hypoxia. The Tolerable Limits

Ed John R Sutton, Charles S Houston & Geoffrey Coates

Benchmark Press Inc, 1988, pp373

Every two years the Hypoxia Symposium is held in North America, and this book records articles written for the fifth symposium held at Chateau Lake Louise in Alberta in 1987.

A number of papers deal with the results obtained during Operation Everest II in which a group of medical scientists was decompressed gradually, in order to acclimatize, to the height of Mt Everest. This was a natural development from Operation Everest I, carried out over 40 years ago at Pensacola Air Base by Houston and his colleagues, and it was the natural follow-up to the American Medical Research Expedition to Everest in 1981, led by West, when alveolar gases were obtained on the summit. Experiments in the decompression chamber complement field work and, while field conditions cannot be entirely mimicked, more invasive and potentially dangerous procedures may be carried out safely. For example, a catheter may be passed, via a vein in the arm, right into the chambers of the heart to measure pressure during exercise and at rest.

For the general reader the most interesting section is that on 'The Tolerable Limits of Hypoxia'. For instance, it is astonishing to learn that the Painted Turtle can recover after three months of complete oxygen lack at 3°C; while the caretakers of the Aucanquilcha sulphur mine at 5950m in South America live at this altitude for two years or more, taking a day off each week to descend to lower levels to play football. Finally, the medical background to the K2 tragedy of 1986 is discussed; a topic of great interest to the modern mountaineer.

The mountaineer can learn much from these books which, if 'inwardly digested', will improve performance at extreme altitude, make climbing safer and, most importantly, make it more enjoyable. The need therefore for a comprehensive and up-to-date text for medical scientists and clinicians incorporating all this work and relating it to common diseases of oxygen transport is now very pressing.

Michael Ward

Wild Walks. Mountain, Moorland and Coastal Walks in Britain and Ireland

Compiled by Ken Wilson & Richard Gilbert

Diadem Books, 1988, pp224, £19.95

The big Diadem 'Walk' and 'Climb' books continue to get better. The present volume follows on from *The Big Walks* and *Classic Walks*, and is the mixture as before – just under half in Scotland, fewer in England, fewer still in Wales and half-a-dozen in Ireland. The differences are, firstly, that now every picture is in colour and, while all are good, many are superb – photos that really linger in the mind. Secondly, 40 out of the 59 route descriptions are written by Gilbert and, although he writes well, there is a sameness about some of them, the memorable ones turning out to be one or two by other hands. However, this is a marvellous book with an excellent selection of walks and, although some might say that the Manifold valley, for instance, hardly comes into the 'wild' category, there is plenty here for all tastes. You are not likely to find too many people on Abergwesyn Common at any time of year, for a start! One small quibble: the

Welsh word *mynydd* must be one of the most common in climbing literature about the Principality, yet it is spelt in three different ways in the article on the Lleyn Peninsula. Fortunately, one of them is right!

Mont Blanc, Chamonix, Courmayeur in the Old Prints

Gherardo Priuli & Efsio Noussan (transl. John Iliffe)

Cordee, 1987, pp476, boxed, £80

This magnificent volume was published in Italian to celebrate the bicentenary of the first ascent of Mont Blanc, and has now been translated (in separate volumes) into English, French and German. £80 is an awful lot of money for a book, but the contents and style of production make this one well worth the price. The reproduction of the 627 prints is superb, and I would think that every old print in existence showing Mont Blanc, Chamonix and Courmayeur is here. Well-known ones from Whymper's guide and *Scrambles* are alongside obscure views which have hardly ever seen the light of day, all arranged in approximate date order. All the variations of the prints of de Saussure's expeditions are here, including the original where he appears rather portly and its successor where he is shown to be slimmer and smarter. For anyone interested in alpine history, good book production, or both, this is a must.

Physiology of Man at High Altitude

Nauka, Moscow, 1987, pp520, in Russian

Our Honorary Member Eugene Gippenreiter has presented the Club with a copy of this recently-published Russian book on national and international experience in the field of high altitude physiology. Whilst covering the field in general, special chapters cover the selection of candidates for the Soviet Mount Everest Expedition 1982 and the choice of food, oxygen equipment, etc.

Avalanche Awareness for Skiers and Mountaineers

Martin Epp & Stephen Lee

The Wild Side, 1987, pp137, pb, £4.95

A very detailed guide to understanding snow conditions and the creation of avalanches, and what to do if you are unlucky enough to be caught out. Concisely presented, and a perfect size for the pocket.

Ancient Pathways in the Alps

Giovanni Caselli & Keith Sugden

George Philip, 1988, pp192, pb, £7.95

The authors detail six long-distance walks following ancient tracks and drove-

roads through the Alps, from the high lands of Provence to Salzburg, concentrating on journeying with a 'theme from the past'. Well presented, with a map section and colour photos on each double page, it is just a pity that the tall, narrow format and tight binding make the centre of each map section difficult to read.

100 Best Routes on Scottish Mountains

Ralph Storer

David & Charles, 1987, pp224, £14.95

This book attempts to emulate the continental *100 Best* . . . volumes, but falls rather short of their standards in content and presentation. Each route is a circular walk with description, photo and map, and includes an attempt at grading and a guide to pronunciation which is very useful for the harder Gaelic names. It is also useful in that it includes not only Munros, but a number of lesser hills not covered in some recent publications.

Danziger's Travels. Beyond Forbidden Frontiers

Nick Danziger

Grafton Books, 1987, pp viii + 424, £14.95

Nick Danziger won an Open Category Fellowship awarded by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to travel to Central America. Various events caused him to abandon this project, and he turned to Asia, proposing to travel from Turkey to Peking via Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tibet. This book recounts his travels which, as you can imagine from the fact that he was often travelling in these countries without official authorization, were not without their adventurous side. Absorbingly written and well illustrated, this is a travel book which is hard to put down once started.

The Amundsen Photographs

Ed Roland Huntford

Hodder & Stoughton, 1987, pp200, £17.95

In the spring of 1986, the widow of Roald Amundsen's nephew found a packing case marked 'Horlick's Malted Milk' in the attic of her Oslo flat. Inside were more than 200 of the explorer's lantern slides – from the North-West Passage expedition of 1903, the South Pole expedition of 1911, and the journey along the Siberian coast in 1918, the majority being of the South Pole. This book collects together more than 150 of these slides, together with an introduction and description of each expedition by the editor. They are in remarkably good condition, many hand-tinted, and give a fascinating picture of polar travel in the early years of the century.

Bell's Scottish Climbs

Intro Hamish Brown

Gollancz, 1988, pp236, £12.95

J H B Bell's *A Progress in Mountaineering* has been a sought-after semi-classic for many years now, and Hamish Brown has had the excellent idea of collecting together all the Scottish chapters of that book for the modern reader, including the original photographs and delightful drawings. Bell was one of the great characters of British mountaineering. Hamish's introduction emphasizes this, and the articles themselves bring out the flavour of Scottish climbing of the time. It is good to have them in print again.

Mon Excursion Au Mont-Blanc

Henriette d'Angeville (Preface: Roger Frison-Roche)

Arthaud, 1987, pp200, pb, 85FF

In 1838, Henriette d'Angeville became the second woman to attempt the ascent of Mont Blanc. Her journal of the ascent was never published, remaining in the family, unread until recently. This paperback edition is therefore of some historical importance, giving her hour-by-hour thoughts and emotions.

The Great Outdoors Book of the Walking Year

Ed Roger Smith

Patrick Stephens, 1988, pp192, £14.95

The 12 chapters in this book correspond to the months of the year, each one written by a contributor to the magazine *The Great Outdoors*. They range from reminiscences of the Pyrenees and Himalaya to forgotten tramways in South Wales and, whilst the editor states that it was written by 'enthusiastic writers who were competent photographers (or better) as well', it is a pity that the many black-and-white photos are generally so poorly reproduced as to mar enjoyment of the book. It is even more of a pity as some of the photos can be seen to have been good in the original, and are shown up by the fact that care has been taken with the colour photographs. At this price, one expects better.

The Story of the Mount Everest National Park*Cobb/Horwood Publications, Auckland, no date, pp192, npq*

This beautifully-produced book tells the story of the 1200km² that form the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal. The various chapters cover the geology, weather, flora and fauna and the people, and then go on to describe various journeys through the Park, but the greatest delight is in the wealth of excellent colour photos which are on almost every page. An excellent introduction to the area.

The Tibet Guide

Stephen Batchelor

Wisdom Publications, 1987, pp xiv + 466, pb, £13.95

This superbly illustrated guide to Tibet is written by someone fluent in scriptural and colloquial Tibetan, who has been a Buddhist monk for the past ten years. It follows, therefore, that the main emphasis is on the monasteries, people and religion of the country, and the catastrophic events of the last few years. The general traveller is well catered for, however, with descriptions of routes to take and places to stay in the more 'popular' areas – Lhasa and the surrounding Central Area, the Tsang region centred on Shigatse and the Mt Kailas area in the west. General travel hints, an iconography, glossary and 'useful words and phrases' round off a book which will be indispensable to any traveller in Tibet.

Eddie McGee's Complete Book of Survival

Eddie McGee

Stanley Paul, 1988, pp192, pb, £9.95

'Complete' has to be the correct word for this book – survival at sea, in the mountains, deserts, jungles and the arctic; how to navigate, light fires, find water, trap animals, fish and cook; plus personal safety and basic medicine. Written by an acknowledged expert and well illustrated.

Mountain Days and Bothy Nights

Dave Brown & Ian Mitchell

Luath Press, 1987, pp 6 + 186, pb, £5.95

This very enjoyable and entertaining little book reminds one immediately of Alastair Borthwick's classic *Always a Little Further*. Hilarious tales of goings-on in all the well-known cottages, bothies and howffs of the Highlands are well told, complete with original dialect, and illustrated with line drawings.

Tales of a Cross-Country Skier

Guy Sheridan

Oxford Illustrated Press, 1987, pp185, £9.95

Exactly what the title says, tales of cross-country skiing in Norway, Iran, the Himalaya, Iceland, the States and places nearer home, by an acknowledged expert. Starting off with early experiences in the Royal Marine Commandos, the author recounts the stories in an interesting and amusing way, with a lot of information on technique tucked away in the text.

A Love of the Lakes

Geoffrey Berry & Brian Redhead

Constable, 1988, pp190, £14.95

Geoffrey Berry's name is the one that comes foremost to mind when matters relating to the preservation of Lakeland scenery are under discussion. The battles he fought as Secretary of the Friends of the Lake District are well known and, during his many years there, he took hundreds of photographs. Brian Redhead writes an introduction and also the captions to a selection of the photos which, while not all of high artistic merit, give a good overall picture of the Lakes and are a fitting memorial to Berry.

Hamish Brown's Scotland

Hamish Brown

Aberdeen University Press, 1988, pp xiv + 238, £12.50

This is a collection of short articles written by Hamish Brown over the years for publications as various as the *AJ*, *Rod and Line* and the *Glasgow Herald*. Not all pieces are on mountaineering, but the hills are in the background all through and, as the author says, it is 'a book to dip into while sitting in the garden, or reading in bed'. It has a slightly 'old-fashioned' feel, but is none the worse for that.

Personalbibliographie Historischer Persönlichkeiten des Alpinismus*Deutscher Alpenverein, 1988, pp412, DM160*

This bibliography is an elaboration of an archive left by the late Toni Hiebeler. It lists data (mainly references to autobiography, newspaper articles, obituaries) on over 5000 persons connected with alpinism, from the beginnings to 1986; German and Austrian entries tend to be covered more thoroughly than others. Many of the references are to press cuttings and short notices kept in the library of the DAV.

The Alternative Guide to British Rock Climbing

Gill Fawcett

Unwin, 1988, pp viii + 232, pb, £6.95

This rather quirky guide gives you a brief 'insider's' view of each rock-climbing area, followed by a list of recommended pubs and cafés with appropriate comments. Fun, provided you appreciate the 'The Old Nag's Head is easy to find, it's on The Old Nag's Shoulders' type of comment, and have a vulgar sense of humour. Despite the description as 'British', Scotland and N Ireland are not included.

Further volumes this year in the series of paperback monographs published by the *Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'*:

No. 56 – *Alle Origini Dell'Alpinismo Torinese*. Montanari e Villeggianti nelle Valli di Lanzo. Giuseppe Garimoldi/Bruno Guglielmotto-Ravet. A history of mountaineering in the Torino region.

No. 57 – *Fosco Maraini – Una Vita Per L'Asia*. A superb collection of photographs by Maraini, mostly from his visits to Japan, Tibet and the Greater Himalayan Range, but with a few Alpine and Sicilian subjects.

Wainwright in Scotland

A W Wainwright/Derry Brabbs

Michael Joseph/BBC, 1988, pp224, £14.95

Wainwright's fourth book in collaboration with the photographer Derry Brabbs covers the Scottish mountains in similar format to the others, mixing photographs, descriptions and drawings. It reached the best-seller lists and stayed there for many weeks, and is obviously a very popular book with visitors to Scotland. Wainwright's personality comes through in his reminiscences, but some of the photographs do not seem to reach the standard that Brabbs has shown in other publications. He obviously didn't manage to get any shots on Skye: the only photo in this section, headed 'Skye from the mainland,' is a rather unusual one that doesn't look like Skye at all!

Rocks Around the World

Stefan Glowacz & Uli Wiesmeier (transl. Martin Boysen)

Diadem, 1988, pp144, £16.95

With all due respect to the author and translator, this is the photographer Uli Wiesmeier's book. The climbs featured are in France, Britain, USA, Japan, Australia and Germany, and mostly feature Glowacz climbing. Needless to say, the climbs are 'out of this world', but the photographer really shows them to their greatest advantage. The contrast of vertical cliff and flat plain at Arapiles, the towers at Teufelsturm, the hordes at Verdon, are all unforgettable images, but so many of the pictures are excellent – and obviously obtained under very difficult conditions – that this book must rank as one of the best in the genre.

My Scotland

Hamish MacInnes

Constable, 1988, pp182, £15.95

MacInnes's latest book is really a photograph album. Following a short introduction there are 82 photos, one per page, mostly but not all of mountain

subjects. Some are good, some are poor, with various shades between, but no attempt is made at full descriptions.

John Cleare's Fifty Best Hill Walks of Britain

John Cleare

Webb & Bower, 1988, pp208, £14.95

There seems to be rather a surfeit of 'best walks' books at the moment, but this can be recommended as one of the better ones, principally because the author is an acknowledged expert mountain photographer – and his shots are well reproduced here – but also because he uses OS maps to illustrate the walks. All the hilly areas of England, Wales and Scotland are represented, with one or two less common routes included for good measure.

Climbing the Corbetts. Scotland's 2500ft Summits

Hamish M Brown

Gollancz, 1988, pp382, £14.95

Having very successfully written about the Munros, Hamish Brown has now done the same for the Corbetts, the 2500ft summits in Scotland. One has only to think of peaks such as Ben Loyal, Foinaven and Quinag in the far north, all of which are Corbetts, to realize that some of Scotland's finest and most interesting mountains come into this category. Each peak, or group of peaks, is described as the author climbed it, thus combining personal anecdote with accurate information.

Mountain Hazards

Kevin Walker

Constable, 1988, pp272, £8.95

Medical Handbook for Mountaineers

Peter Steele

Constable, 1988, pp248, £8.95

Two new guides from Constable. Walker's book is essentially for the beginner, and joins the numerous volumes in existence teaching 'mountaincraft'. Steele's book is a rewritten second edition and is a very different kettle of fish. Covering every type of affliction that can hit you in the mountains, there are facts here which can be learnt by everyone, no matter how skilled a mountaineer. For the layman it is a mine of useful information presented in detail, but with great clarity, with additional information in different type for those already possessing medical knowledge.

Honey Hunters of Nepal

Eric Valli & Diane Summers

Thames & Hudson, 1988, unpaginated, pb, £16.95

For centuries the Gurungs of Nepal have been collecting honey from the hives of the giant black bees in the area. The photographer Eric Valli accompanied 63-year-old Mani Lal and his assistants to hives high up on a cliff in the foothills in west central Nepal, and photographed him while he swayed about on a long bamboo ladder high above the ground, dislodging the hive and surrounded by swarms of angry bees. The result is a very large format picture book of stunning photographs illustrating what must be a dying profession.

The Pure Land. A Celebration of Wild Places

John Beatty

Thames & Hudson, 1988, pp112, pb, £12.95

John Beatty has become well known for his audio lecture shows on wild places, but this is his first one-man exhibition, so to speak. Although the book is in paperback, the publishers have done him proud, the reproduction being superb. The photos cover locations from the British Isles to the Grand Canyon, Greenland to Antarctica and the Alps, mostly landscapes but with a few action and 'nature' shots. One or two of the landscapes that include figures veer towards the romantic but, generally speaking, this is a fine collection by a master photographer.

The following guide books, instructional manuals and similar volumes have also been received:

Climbing Fit. Martyn Hurn & Pat Ingle. Crowood Press, 1988, pp96, pb, £6.95

The Adventure Alternative. Colin Mortlock. Cicerone Press, 1987, pp160, pb, £6.95

Climbing School. John Barry & Roger Mear. Stanley Paul, 1988, pp192, £14.95

Italian Rock. Selected Climbs in Northern Italy. Al Churcher. Cicerone Press, 1988, pp200, £7.95

White Peak Walks. The Southern Dales. Mark Richards. Cicerone Press, 1988, pp10 + 278, £7.25

Best Walks in North Wales. Richard Sale. Constable, 1988, pp294, £8.95

Escalades Sainte-Victoire. Saint-Ser. D Gorgeon, P Légier, A Lucchesi. Édisud, 1988, pp104, npq

Les Deux Aiguilles. Le Signal. P Bestagno, D Gorgeon, A Lucchesi. Édisud, 1988, pp120, npq

Randonnées Pédestres dans le Haut-Var Occidental. Alexis Lucchesi. Édisud, 1988, pp192, npq

Topo Guide des Voies d'Escalade du Verdon. Patrick Bestagno, Bernard Gorgeon, Alexis Lucchesi, Claude & Yves Rémy. Montagnes, 1988, pp384, npq

AMC Maine Mountain Guide. Appalachian Mountain Club, 6th Edition, 1988, pp xxx + 306, \$12.95

Scotland. Central and Southern Highlands. 100 Classic Climbs. Ken Crocket & Steve Ashton. Crowood Press, 1988, pp224, £8.95

The Island of Rhum. A Guide for Walkers, Climbers and Visitors. Hamish M Brown. Cicerone Press, 1988, pp100, £4.95

The Peruvian Andes. Cordillera Blanca. Cordillera Huayhuash. Ph Beaud. Editions Glénat/Cordee/Cloudcap Press, 1988, pp288, £11.95

North Carolina Hiking Trails. Allen de Hart. Appalachian Mountain Club, 1988, pp xxiv + 510, \$14.95

Best Walks in the Peak District. Frank Duerden. Constable, 1988, pp320, £8.95

Rock Climbs in the Verdon. An Introduction. Rick Newcombe. Cicerone Press, 1988, pp56, £5.50

Snow and Ice Climbing. John Barry. Crowood Press, 1987, pp144, £12.95

The Expedition Cookbook. Carolyn Gunn. Chockstone/Cordee, 1988, pp10 + 198, pb, £7.95

Classic Walks in Europe. Ed Walt Unsworth. Oxford Illustrated Press, 1987, pp168, £14.95

Sun Rock. Murcia Klettern & Monaco Mittelmeer. Panico Press, no date, pp364, pb, £12.95

The Avalanche Book. Betsy Armstrong & Knox Williams. Fulcrum, 1986, pp10 + 232, £9.95

Mountain High, Mountain Rescue. Peggy Parr. Fulcrum, 1987, pp10 + 192, £10.50.

(Both Fulcrum books obtainable from Cedar Tree House, Loughton, Essex, IG10 1QP)

Skiing Real Snow. The Handbook of Off-Piste Skiing. Martyn Hurn. Crowood Press, 1987, pp176, £12.95

Cairngorms. Winter Climbs. Allen Fyffe. Cicerone Press, 1987, pp120, £6.95 (3rd edition)

North York Moors. Walks in the National Park. Martin Collins. Cicerone Press, 1987, pp 240, £4.95

Walks in the Cairngorms. Ernest Cross. Luath Press, 1986, pp8 + 86, pb, £2.20 (Rev edition)

- Jersey and Guernsey.** Ian Smith & Alan Hill. Cordee, 1987, pp192, £5.95
- Monte Viso. Alpi Cozie Meridionali.** Michelangelo Bruno. CAI/TCT, 1987, pp600
- Escalades dans le Massif de la Sainte-Baume.** P Giffon & A Lucchesi. Édisud, 1988, pp168, 60FF
- BMC New Climbs 1987.** Gary Gibson. BMC, no date, pp236, £4.95
- Kinder Log.** T Nelthorpe. Cicerone, 1987, pp160, £4.95
- Walks in the Engadine Switzerland.** Kev Reynolds. Cicerone, 1988, pp186, £7.95
- Walking Austria's Alps Hut to Hut.** Jonathan Hurdle. Cordee, 1988, pp240, £7.95
- Tour of Mont Blanc.** Andrew Harper. Cicerone, 1988, pp136, £6.95 (3rd edition)
- Yorkshire Limestone & Gritstone Supplement.** Graham Desroy. Yorkshire MC, 1987, pp92, npq
- Traversée Occidentale des Alpes.** (Haute Randonnée Alpine II). Club Alpin Français. Édisud, 1988, pp168, 60FF
- Guide des Refuges et Gîtes des Alpes.** Association de la Grande Traversée des Alpes. Glénat, 1988, pp256 (Cordee, £7.95)
- German and Belgian Rock Climbs. An Interim Guide Book.** John Hart. Cordee, 1988, pp78, £4.95
- Walk Snowdonia & North Wales.** David Perrott & Laurence Main. Bartholomew, 1988, pp64, £3.95
- North Wales. 100 Classic Climbs.** Steve Ashton. Crowood Press, 1988, pp224, £8.95
- The Peak & Pennines.** W A Poucher. Constable, 1988, pp456, £7.95 (5th edition)
- Scafell, Dow & Eskdale.** A Phizacklea. F&RCC, 1988, pp324, £7.95
- Escalades Calanques. Sormiou.** L Denante & A Lucchesi. Édisud, 1988, pp120, 60FF
- Descente Sportive de Gorges et Canyons.** J-P Lucot & R Quintilla. Édisud, 1988, pp132, 80FF
- Trekking Dei Pirenei. 1000km dal Mediterraneo all'Atlantico.** Franco Michieli. Edizioni Mediterranee, 1987, pp114, L 15,000
- Arrampicate nel Bresciano. Dalla Maddalena alla Val Salarno.** S Zizioli & F Magri. Edizioni Mediterranee, 1988, pp112, L 15,000
- Alte Vie delle Dolomiti. I grandi sentieri dei Monti Pallidi.** Claudio Cima. Edizioni Mediterranee, 1988, pp216, L 20,000

Le Alpi a Piedi. 1950km dalla Liguria all Jugoslavia. Riccardo & Cristina Carnolvalini. Edizioni Mediterranee, 1988, pp140, L 20,000

The Hill Walker's Manual. Bill Birkett. Oxford Illustrated Press, 1988, pp128, £14.95

