Book Reviews 1992–93

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

The Ascent of Everest
John Hunt
First published in 1953
A new edition with a Foreword by John Hunt
Hodder & Stoughton, 1993, pp280, pb, £12.99

The 1953 British Expedition to Mount Everest and the First Ascent by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953 placed mountaineering once again firmly in the public eye at the time of the Coronation, with, it seemed, the ultimate achievement of the highest summit in the world. John Hunt's book, first published in 1953, was a classic of the era, inspiring many of us (I was 9 at the time) to take part in exploration and climbing. In a review in this 40th anniversary year I can do little more than salute the achievement, the planning and the drive which made the ascent successful.

In literary terms, this is a factual account of a great endeavour. The reader can actually understand how the expedition took place, its neo-military structure, how the ascent so nearly failed as it ground slowly up the Lhotse Face. The post-modern expedition book draws in more emotion, more controversy and more vignettes of the curious personalities involved in mountaineering. To have done so in 1953, and with this great success, would perhaps have belittled the achievement, and now 40 years on would make it seem more dated. It is still a good read.

Hodders, with a loyal and distinguished track record in mountaineering literature, have produced an admirable, affordable paperback, highlighting one of the most memorable of all summit photographs on the cover – I wonder how often Ed Hillary kicks himself for not making sure he had one of himself on top too.

It is worth recording something more: the royalties from 1953 went towards the setting up of the Mount Everest Foundation. That generous tradition continues with this edition, and there are not many expeditions which continue, four decades later, to support mountaineering.

John Hunt has written a fitting historic foreword, and Ed Hillary a postscript recalling sadly the junk, cost and commercialisation of Everest – and his own efforts to help Nepal and the Sherpas who have given so much to us.

Hodders have also published a leather-bound presentation volume, limited to 500 copies, signed by all living members of the 1953 team. It is expected that this will be sold out by the time this review is printed; any enquiries to the Alpine Club.

Charles Clarke

Alfred Gregory's Everest
Alfred Gregory
With a Foreword by Jan Morris
Constable, 1993, pp180, black & white photographs, £16.96

Each major Everest expedition gives the world a few selected images that remain in the collective memory. The Americans gave us their stunning shot of the West Ridge soaring up into the clouds. Captain Noel is probably remembered best for his photograph of Mallory and Irvine setting off on their fateful climb. Fifty-one years later Doug Scott immortalised Dougal Haston on the summit, glowing with palpable pride in the last rays of sunshine.

The drama of 1953 has been summarised over the years in a few oft-published shots of the Icefall, the famous photo of Bourdillon and Evans slumped in exhaustion after their extraordinary push to the South Summit and back, the picture of Hillary and Tenzing on the South-East Ridge below Camp IX, Hillary's shot of footsteps on the final ridge and, of course, the classic ikon of Tenzing on the summit. But, for every published expedition photograph, there are always a hundred negatives or transparencies that languish unseen in filing cabinets. For Alf Gregory, the official photographer in 1953, the 40th anniversary is the perfect excuse to bring some of those unseen photographs to light, using them to complement some of the images we all know so well.

Gregory chose to make his personal record in monochrome. Despite the fact that some of the pictures have been converted from colour, the quality is superb. Amidst the current plethora of glitzy colour mountain photography, it makes a refreshing change to see a whole book of black & white prints, produced with loving care by a master of the darkroom, and well reproduced by Constable. The negatives and transparencies only came into Gregory's possession recently. Some of them suffered in the past at Printing House, but the odd blob and scratch does not matter here; in fact they add to the feeling that this is a very valuable historical document.

The photographer makes it quite clear in his introduction that the book is not only a historical document but also very much a personal record of the expedition and of his love for Nepal. He writes with huge enthusiasm about the thrill of being invited by Shipton to join the 1952 Cho Oyu expedition and given the opportunity to roam freely over Sola Khumbu during what now seems a lost age of innocence. The photo of his first sight of Everest, from Rolwaling, captures all that magical sense of unlimited space and opportunity; similarly, his delicately radiant images of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, devoid of video shops and Coca-Cola signs, give us modern tourists a glimpse of what we have missed.

The 1953 leadership change is glossed over in Gregory's introduction. By deliberately avoiding controversy, he seems to be saying that this nostalgic celebration of a great event is not the place for opening up old wounds. In fact he writes with warmth and generosity about all his companions in 1953. Where a modern climber might complain at having to turn back 350m from the top, Gregory thanks fate for letting him get that high, on that memorable

afternoon 40 years ago, when he, George Lowe and Ang Nyima left Hillary and Tenzing poised for their summit bid.

During that afternoon of 28 May, Gregory was shooting colour film. Here he has converted the shots to black & white, using high contrast to isolate Hillary and Tenzing, dark figures in a white wilderness, as they emerge from the depths of the Western Cwm. Close-ups include detailed studies of Lowe changing film and Ang Nyima adjusting his oxygen set – both taken bare-handed at 8350m. These are two of the pictures that have not been published before. There are many others, like the shot of two Sherpas striding dynamically onto the South Col, doing a heroic final sprint for the camera at the end of their long slog up the Lhotse Face. Two pages later, by contrast, we see Da Namgyal, obviously exhausted after his climb with John Hunt, sprawled on the bleak scree of the South Col.

There are other interesting details, like the wonderfully dated shots of Sherpas strapping 10-point crampons to bendy leather boots topped with puttees, and a close-up of the special high-altitude boots that now look like bizarre galoshes; but as official photographer in 1953 Gregory had also to capture the monumental scale of the mountain. No one since has really superseded his shots of the South Col, which evoke all the chilling bleakness of that desolate spot. Likewise his pictures of the Western Cwm use tiny human figures to convey the immensity of the place; and the prints are beautifully made, with figures silhouetted against a white background that retains just enough detail to give form and texture to the snow.

Alfred Gregory's Everest is a picture book. Apart from the introduction and a foreword by Jan Morris, the only text is a running commentary of brief captions. The designer at Constable has chosen a simple, classic typeface and used a lot of clean white paper to give the pictures plenty of space to speak for themselves. My only criticism is that the publishers did not have the nerve to go for a black & white dust jacket. The dim colour picture they have used, printed from a poor duplicate transparency, is, for all its misty nostalgia, a poor advertisement for the images inside, which recall a great adventure with sparkling vitality.

Stephen Venables

Coronation Everest
Jan Morris
Boxtree, pp128, £6.99 pb

Newspapermen and mountaineers operate in different worlds. Reporters have their deadlines and hunger for the hard, swift-moving facts of a story. Climbers enjoy the isolation of a seemingly eccentric sport, pursued at a snail's pace far from the nearest telephone or FAX machine. 'Because it's there' will hardly satisfy the journalist with 1000 words to write and a news editor back in London drumming his fingers. As they lurk at base camp worrying about what to put in the next cleft stick heading for civilisation, expedition correspondents will inevitably be thrown back upon their powers of invention or skill at describing the various ways in which paint can dry.

In 1953 James Morris tackled these problems with great panache. He had never been on a big mountain when *The Times* dispatched him to Everest to file reports of the British attempt led by Colonel John Hunt. Unlike Boot of the Beast, who was similarly plunged into a deep end, Morris succeeded brilliantly in sending back reports of great humour and atmosphere culminating in a scoop to end all scoops – news of the conquest of the world's highest mountain released several days after the event on the morning of the Queen's coronation.

This was as much a problem of logistics for Morris as it was for Colonel Hunt in getting his chaps to the summit. But as cipherer, negotiator and author of elegant dispatches, James Morris – 'a very parfait gentle journalist' as one expedition member described him – triumphed. A telegram which read 'Snow conditions bad stop advanced base abandoned yesterday stop awaiting improvement' was decoded in Printing House Square, we know not how, as 'Summit of Everest reached on 29 May by Hillary and Tenzing'. The closely guarded preparation proved wise, for the message was intercepted and rival papers reported that the expedition had failed.

Coronation Everest, by James Morris, is reprinted for a greatly changed world to mark the 40th anniversary of that first ascent. The young gentleman from *The Times* has become a woman, the leading travel writer of her time, and Everest has changed hardly less. Much of the enigma which wreathed the summit 40 years ago has gone; lost in the trample of hundreds of feet across its top and upon every face and flank; lost to litter and tourism and the satellite links that bounce immediate words and pictures from the very summit. *Coronation Everest* gives a backward glance to a different and more romantic age, when Britain was proudly monarchist and climbing Everest reflected high achievement in every sense. What Jan Morris thinks about those Everest days reflects in her foreword to the new edition and rereading the book does jolt a memory of Everest as the closest platform to eternal space and an age when news travelled at a measured pace by hand of runner.

Ronald Faux

Himalayan Climber
A Lifetime's Quest to the World's Greater Ranges
Doug Scott
Diadem Books, 1992, pp192, £19.99

The author, an old friend, will not misunderstand that I, one of his many admirers, should have entertained inner misgivings when accepting Geoffrey Templeman's invitation to review this book for the *Alpine Journal*. It appeared to be just another 'coffee table' volume, embellished with the superb quality of mountain photography which we now take for granted, with illustrations of dramatic moves on hard routes with which many of us are familiar. But for this invitation, I might well have skipped through the photographs and placed the book alongside a row of other works of similar size and quality of production. After all, I have known about Doug Scott's great achievements and did not expect to be further enlightened about his record.

But those reservations were misplaced. This is the Odyssey of a man who has made mountains a way of life. He has climbed just about everywhere in the world, not only (as the sub-title of the book implies) in the higher ranges, but on mountains and crags, small as well as great. Unlike many books in this format, the eye should not be mesmerised by the marvellous pictures; the text must be read. For through it the reader can discern not only the high quality of the climbs, but something of the philosophy and nature of a man dedicated to his mountaincraft in a degree which is rare even among other leading professionals.

Scott's quest has taken him to ranges in every continent except South America. The list of the summits he has climbed, many of them as first ascents, and the standards of the routes by which he and his companions have chosen to climb them, are best appreciated by his peers in the fraternity of mountaineers. Climbers use the word 'commitment' to describe a determination to press on upwards, sometimes in the face of almost superhuman difficulties and almost beyond the limits of endurance. Doug has often committed himself in that sense. As an example of sheer persistence, it would be hard to better the eleven bivouacs his party endured on the East Pillar of Shivling; or the six nights he spent, with other companions, above 8000m during a traverse of Makalu.

He maintains that when, in such adversity, a decision has been made to continue the climb, fear and anxiety tend to be dispelled, 'creating space for an inner peace'; the handicap of tension is removed from the action. As regards fear, he echoes the experience of others among us mountaineers; when death has appeared inevitable 'I registered only curiosity . . .'

But Doug Scott is not foolhardy. Decisions to carry on have been made after a sober appraisal of the experience, stamina and skill of himself and his fellow climbers. He has turned back when his judgement dictated accordingly. I fancy that he shares with me memories of such 'failures' which are as satisfying as his many successes. Doug has demonstrated commitment, too, by returning again and again to certain great peaks which seem to have had, for him, a magnetic attraction: Everest, K2, Chamlang, Makalu. The latter mountain, he tells us, 'had such a hold on me that I was to go there four times in all'.

Nor were the highest mountains the only lure; he has paid no less than six visits to Iceland.

Whether it be because of or despite his exceptional achievements, the author is essentially a person of great humility. He admits that, after climbing Everest with Dougal Haston by its SW face and surviving unscathed a night in a snow hollow on the summit ridge: 'I thought I was invincible, could do anything. I was far too arrogant.' He avers that this mood may have had some bearing on the accident he suffered, and the eight days' ordeal, with both his legs broken, on his descent from the Ogre. Mountains, he writes, have helped to strip him 'of my sense of self-importance'.

It requires more than he has revealed through his writing to identify Scott as the caring person he is; for he tells little about himself, and even less about his climbing partners in this autobiography. Yet there is some hint of it in his references to local mountain people, and in his allusion to a great sadness in his personal life. He is also a man of firm principles. Sensitivity and principle may account for the very few expeditions during which there was a lack of harmony among the team.

'What does it mean, and why do I do it?', he asks in his Postscript. 'At its finest moments climbing allows me to step out of ordinary existence into something extraordinary . . .', 'to come alive in an environment where every step of the way is more difficult than the last . . .', 'not knowing where it will end – maybe on the summit and, if not, then as long as it is at the limit of endurance, that will have been enough to satisfy the soul and liberate the spirit . . .'

These may seem random unconnected thoughts which come to Doug's mind at the end of the book. They provide, at least, part of the answer to what lies behind his compelling urge to climb.

John Hunt

(Editor's Note: The *Alpine Journal* does not usually publish more than one review of each book. However, in the case of *K2: The 1939 Tragedy* and of *Sea, Ice and Rock*, two reviews have been included in order to reflect different shades of opinion.)

K2: The 1939 Tragedy
Andrew J Kauffman and William L Putnam
The Mountaineers/Diadem Books, 1992, pp224, £14.99

This was an expedition which not only ended with the deaths of one member and three Sherpas, but resulted in extensive controversy and recrimination when the survivors returned to the United States. The authors' thesis is that Wiessner was a great climber but an inadequate organiser; and that the blame he received, which was later transferred unfairly to Jack Durrance (whose diary, released after Wiessner's death, is used extensively in this account), was only partially merited. The tragedy was also caused by a whole chain of adverse circumstances.

Wiessner, of German origin, who had climbed in Europe, America and the Himalaya, was better qualified to lead a Himalayan expedition than most American climbers of the period. The rest of the team were comparatively inexperienced. The group were on the mountain for nearly three months, using the Abruzzi Ridge route. Very soon it became obvious that Wiessner intended to lead from the front and, although he appointed a deputy, there was no proper organisation at Base Camp. In all, nine camps were set up, with Wiessner and Dudley Wolfe, and Sherpa Pasang Dawa Lama, forming the assault party and everyone else employed as load carriers. Wolfe, who had helped to finance the expedition, was an energetic man but no climber. He appeared to treat Wiessner as his personal guide.

Wiessner himself, with Pasang Lama, reached a point about 250m below the summit. When the lead party, which had been held up by several periods of bad weather, dropped down a couple of camps to replenish supplies for a further attempt, they were shocked to find that the tents had been stripped. On the way down Wolfe fell, taking Pasang Lama with him. Wiessner managed to hold them, but Pasang Lama was badly hurt. Wolfe insisted on staying at Camp 7 – he was afraid he would lose acclimatisation if he descended! Two days later Wiessner and Pasang Lama reached Base having found all the other camps stripped.

Meanwhile, the porters had arrived for the walk out, two expedition members had gone home and the others, having seen no sign of life on the mountain for several days, had allowed the Sherpas to go up to remove equipment. In a rescue bid, four Sherpas, including the sirdar Pasang Kikuli, ascended to Camp 6 from which three continued to Camp 7 to bring Wolfe down. They found him lying in his own excrement, unwilling to leave his tent. They descended to Camp 6 for the night, and next day the same three went back up. Neither they nor Wolfe were seen again.

The book is notable on two counts: first because this American expedition is not so well known here as its importance merits, and secondly because it describes in detail how mountains were climbed before the age of the jumar. The account starts well, with good build-up and ever increasing tension as the tragic climax approaches. But it is difficult to understand how, even as long ago as 1939, any expedition could have been organised so ineptly. The authors tend to overplay their hand in their cumulative listing of problems: no radio, a divided party, no knowledge of the effects of the 'death zone', Sherpas with no command of English . . . The reiteration of these and other errors of judgement makes ultimately for tedium. However, the book is an important one, well written, and most of it extremely readable.

Livia Gollancz

Ed Webster writes:

Young climbers browsing the bookshelves might well wonder why a new title, *K2, The 1939 Tragedy*, would chronicle a Himalayan expedition over 50 years old. But interest in the ill-fated 1939 American attempt on K2 lives on for several reasons. The expedition's controversial and driven leader, Fritz Wiessner, was one of the century's finest mountaineers and rock climbers. On

July 19, 1939, with Pasang Lama, Wiessner came tantalisingly close – within 800ft – of making the first ascent of K2. He spearheaded the climb in modern style, using neither bottled oxygen nor radios. At a time when no 8000m peak had been scaled, Wiessner's near success foretold the future of mountaineering.

Yet the 1939 attempt on K2 ended in heroic, bitter tragedy. An American climber, Dudley Wolfe, and three Sherpas who went to his rescue, Pasang Kikuli, Pasang Kitar, and Phinsoo, all perished. The circumstances that precipitated the disaster were, as the American counsel in Srinigar who later interviewed Wiessner and Jack Durrance put it, 'of a very complicated nature'.

Briefly, following two separate unsuccessful summit attempts, Wiessner and Lama descended from Camp XI to Camp VIII, where Wolfe was in support. When all three descended to camp VII at 24,700ft to retrieve additional supplies, they found the camp stripped: the tents were open and filled with snow, the reserve sleeping-bags and mattresses were gone, and food was scattered in the snow.

While Wolfe waited alone at Camp VII the next day, Wiessner and Lama continued down. In succession, they discovered that every camp on the mountain had been evacuated. More dead than alive, Fritz and Lama stumbled into basecamp where they met the rest of the team, who thought they had died in an avalanche. Wolfe was now stranded, alone, at Camp VII, where he died.

In *K2: The 1939 Tragedy*, the authors have attempted to 'lay down as accurately as possible the events of the 1939 American Karakorum Expedition to K2 and to dispel misconceptions which have grown over the years', and have promised to tell 'the full story of the ill-fated Wiessner expedition'. Intriguing and commendable goals, but are they achieved? Do the authors maintain their objectivity and even-handedness when appraising the roles, actions, and responsibilities of each member of the 1939 team?

Unfortunately, they do not. Kauffman and Putnam have indeed clarified several sections of the expedition's tangled story by revealing Jack Durrance's diary entries, but the book, in general, portrays Fritz Wiessner as a blunt, headstrong, uncommunicative egomaniac, while making every effort to characterise Jack Durrance as a humanistic, caring individual, who did the very best he was capable of.

It is worth mentioning that Kauffman and Putnam initially began this project as a biography of Wiessner, and sent him various chapters to review. Wiessner was so incensed by the material that he flatly refused to help them further. Consequently, the pair abandoned the biography project, and the present book contains none of Wiessner's photographs, nor any direct diary quotations, save a few passages from a typed copy he loaned them early on.

The book is extremely well written and beautifully illustrated with crisp black-and-white photographs from Durrance and Chappel Cranmer's personal collections. Throughout the book, however, Kauffman and Putnam, old-school mountaineers themselves, judge Wiessner within the context of conservative 1930s standards. But should a person or mountaineer be viewed solely within the context and confines of the era he lived in? Seen through the

eyes of climbers today, Wiessner was not rash, but rather a determined leader, decades ahead of his time.

The true legacy of the 1939 American Karakorum Expedition to K2 is that Fritz Wiessner and Pasang Lama came within feet of rewriting the history of mountaineering. Annapurna, the first 8000m peak climbed, wasn't ascended until 1950 by the French, who used radios and oxygen (though not on their summit climb); Everest was scaled in 1953 by a large British team who also used both oxygen and radios. Wiessner was one of the first Himalayan mountaineers to consciously limit his use of technology in order to maintain the mountain's challenge.

Wiessner predated Chris Bonington's approach by 30 years, leading from the front where the action was, and not from the safety of the rear. Fundamental to this style of leadership, however, is that the team members below the leader must follow his orders, execute their tasks on the mountain, and fully support the summit team. This sense of duty is even more vital when radios do not provide instant communication between camps.

Tragically, in 1939, Wiessner's orders were not followed. Several members were injured and forced to descend, and personal duty and common sense did not prevail. The clearing of camps was begun before the summit team had safely quit the mountain. In hindsight, Wiessner's downfall was that he went to K2 with a generally unqualified team whose members exercised poor judgement and showed little personal initiative, especially when Wiessner wasn't directly supervising them. Wiessner later said that had he been partnered by Paul Petzoldt in 1939, he felt he would certainly have reached the summit.

The revelatory 'new information' promised by the authors consists of quotations, opinions, and information gleaned from Jack Durrance's long-withheld personal diary. Following the expedition, Durrance maintained a 50-year silence on the controversy. He finally broke it in 1989 when he loaned the authors his diary. Durrance's diary entries make for fascinating reading, are intelligently and sensitively written, and give great insight into the inner workings of a 1930s Himalayan expedition.

Although as leader of the expedition Wiessner was initially blamed for Wolfe's and the Sherpas' deaths, in later years blame shifted to Durrance, who, Wiessner claimed, ordered the removal of the sleeping-bags and mattresses. Regarding the early evacuation of the camps, *K2: The 1939 Tragedy* tells us that Jack Durrance, recuperating at Camp II on July 17, was asked in a note by Eaton Cromwell, the team's deputy leader, at basecamp, to 'salvage all the tents and sleeping-bags you can, we have ample food'. 'At Camp II, therefore,' write the authors, 'Jack had simply done his tasks as the agent for his superior. So one might rightly inquire as to whether Jack merited blame for stripping the mid-mountain camps.'

Unfortunately, the authors do not fully examine the related, crucial issue: Durrance decided to evacuate not only Camp II, but sent two Sherpas up to evacuate Camp IV, a decision that sent dire events in motion. Stripping Camp IV, the strategically most important, well-stocked, mid-mountain camp, had fatal consequences. While Sherpas Pasang Kikuli and Dawa were removing

the gear from this camp, they met two other Sherpas, Tse Tendrup and Pasang Kitar – who were supposed to be supporting the summit team – descending from above. Kikuli, the expedition's sirdar, immediately ordered them back up – but the damage had been done. When two days later Tendrup and Kitar came to believe that the lead climbers had died in an avalanche, having seen that the lower camps were being dismantled, they decided to save the expensive sleeping-bags and mattresses and stripped Camps VI and VII.

Four days earlier, on July 13, Jack Durrance had made yet another such decision – yet Putnam and Kauffman gloss over this point too. Heading to Camp VII, Durrance had begun suffering from the altitude and decided to descend. Wiessner ordered that Durrance should descend to Camp VI, rest until he felt better, and ascend for a summit attempt if he improved. Nonetheless, he was to remain high on the mountain with Pasang Kikuli to help supervise the Sherpas and the transport of loads. Unfortunately, Durrance's health worsened. He descended all the way to Camp II, insisting that both Dawa, his personal Sherpa, and Pasang Kikuli accompany him, thus removing the last remaining figure of authority who could oversee the Sherpas above. According to Wiessner, Kikuli strongly protested, stating later that 'Doctor Sahib', Durrance, had taken him away from his job.

Rather than cite Durrance's two decisions, Putnam and Kauffman argue that the most causative factor in the tragedy was Wiessner's decision to 'leave' Dudley Wolfe at Camp VII (at 24,700ft) during their descent on July 22nd. Wiessner has said that Dudley Wolfe himself requested to stay behind; there seemed no reason for him to descend since Wiessner was only intending to go to Camp VI, pick up supplies, and return the next day to rejoin Wolfe and launch another summit bid. When Wiessner and Lama discovered the stripped camps below, they realised that there was no way they could climb back up to Wolfe; they had left their only sleeping-bag with Wolfe, and the pair had already endured one forced bivouac the previous night.

The authors claim Wiessner should have expected trouble below when he first stumbled onto the ruins of Camp VII. This is easy to say in hindsight, but who could have honestly predicted the dismantling of nearly an entire support and safety system, five camps in all?

What is most disturbing about *K2: The 1939 Tragedy* are the numerous jabs made at Wiessner – insinuations that seem to reflect more personal bias than fact. Fortunately for history, there was one more member of the 1939 K2 expedition, an impartial observer who also put his impressions down on paper. He was the expedition's interpreter, the Indian schoolteacher, Chandra Pandit, who was questioned by past AAC President Lawrence Coveney in the 1960s. Kauffman and Putnam presumably did not know about Pandit's testimony – he is not quoted in their book – however, he gives a quite a different and damning picture of the American climbers and their British transport officer at basecamp regarding the early evacuation of the camps. His testimony clearly supports Wiessner's term for the evacuations: the sabotage.

Kauffman and Putnam have presented Jack Durrance's side of the story in *K2: The 1939 Tragedy*, but the book will not be the last word about this

controversial expedition – the crowning triumph of Wiessner's climbing career, and the enduring tragedy which haunted every member of the expedition for the rest of their lives.

Ed Webster

Ed Webster climbed with Fritz Wiessner twice before Wiessner's death in 1988. Ed has been working on his biography since 1983, interviewed him extensively on the subject of the K2 climb, and has read most of Wiessner's personal papers on the subject. This review first appeared in the American magazine CLIMBING and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor and the author.

Sea, Ice and Rock
Chris Bonington & Robin Knox-Johnston
Hodder & Stoughton, 1992, pp192, £15.99

Sea, Ice and Rock is a mountaineering adventure narrative of a sailing-cum-climbing expedition to the Kangerdlugssuaq area of the East Coast of Greenland in 1991. It is designed for a general readership, and has all the strengths and weaknesses that implies.

There is no doubting Chris's ability to tell a good story. He really is easy to read, though the style is now a bit too predictable, a bit too secure. Knox-Johnston is just as effective, and it all rattles along very nicely, with large type and plenty of good photographs. It has not been well sub-edited, but for a good read that hardly matters. It's an enjoyable yarn, even if the enjoyment doesn't come cheap – two to three hours' reading for £15.99 seems steep, given that this is not a reference book or something one is likely to reread.

For a mountaineering audience the interest is really in the sub-text, for in relating Chris's attempt to make the first ascent of the Cathedral, the highest point of the Lemon mountains on the north shore of Kangerdlugssuaq, the book records an interesting case of misjudgement. The expedition's crucial mistake was too tight a schedule and, as a result, the climbing party of Chris, Jim Lowther and Knox-Johnston had no time for a proper reconnaissance and found themselves on the wrong mountain. This turned out to be very hard, perhaps harder than anything else in the range, and a lack of gear – spare ropes, for example, to leave for retreat – hampered attempts to climb it. Unstable weather was another problem. Meanwhile the 'right' mountain – the mountain which is both the highest in the area and was named Cathedral by Wager in the 1930s – was found by the first ascensionists in 1992 to be relatively straightforward.

The climbing narrative is made interesting by the involvement of Knox-Johnston, whose job was to get the party to and from Greenland in his 32ft ketch *Suhaili*, but who had hardly done any climbing before. Chris has never denied that he is not the most patient of men and is not really cut out to encourage novices up mountains. His writing on this is diplomatic but, as on most other things, it proves disarmingly honest if one reads it carefully enough. Prior to the climb it is essential to teach Robin a few basics; so 'we

trailed over to the foot of a gully still in the shade on the other side of the cirque'. That verb says it all really.

The outcome is predictable, and just the sort of thing about which Bonington writes well: an explosion of frustration halfway up the climb when it becomes clear that things are not going as he had hoped. This doesn't quite tally with Knox-Johnston's claim in the last paragraph of the book that 'we had been together for nearly two months and there had never once been a cross word between any of us,' but it is much more interesting. They retreat, and on a second attempt (which still doesn't take them to the summit) proceed *sans* Knox-Johnston.

This leaves the sailing part of the adventure, which is Tilmanesque and immediately appealing. However, it is clear that Chris didn't really take to ocean sailing. In fact neither Bonington nor Knox-Johnston really seems to have taken to the other's sport. Knox-Johnston writes revealingly and honestly of the way his mind is forever on his boat even in the midst of the climbing, while the problem for Chris seems to have been that during the voyage he felt like a passenger. He also felt seasick, and one finds it hard to believe that on the return journey, which included several storms and sounds pretty miserable, he wasn't sorely tempted to jump ship. The outward journey was a different matter, as there was an undeniably glorious reward awaiting: the whole experience of approaching the Greenland coast slowly by sea. That must be absolutely magical, and it is the one part of the expedition that anyone who has only been in to Greenland by plane must envy.

Phil Bartlett

Lindsay Griffin writes:

The plan was simple, and were it not for the obligatory film crew even Tilman would have approved. The master mariner would introduce Bonington to the delights of ocean travel, and in return the mountaineer would help Knox-Johnston reach a lofty summit. A challenging programme was quickly agreed. The team would sail from Britain to the Arctic waters of Greenland aboard Knox-Johnston's 32-foot ketch *Suhaili*. There, in the limited time that pack-ice would allow a safe anchorage during the summer, they would quickly despatch an attractive unclimbed peak called the Cathedral and sail home. As a mere whipper-snapper, my first expedition had taken me to Greenland and, coincidentally, to climb a mountain called the Cathedral. With the realisation that there were 'other Cathedrals in the lives of men', my interest in this duo's travels through unexplored terrain was immediately aroused. The whole story is told in fractionally over 100 pages (it's true, modern narratives really are getting slimmer!), and whilst this is an extremely well produced book with some stunning colour plates, it falls short of being a truly great read.

To my mind the text is somewhat let down by the chapters from Knox-Johnston. I am convinced that the voyage to the East Coast and the final penetration of the ice-choked Kangerdlugssuaq fjord, must have been in many ways every bit as serious and exciting as the subsequent attempts on the

mountain. Unfortunately this does not come across and I don't believe that it is simply because I am unable to relate as easily to the chapters on sailing.

Contrast these with the central part of the book. Time ashore for Bonington, Knox-Johnston and the third team member, Jim Lowther, is by necessity very limited. It is certainly not long enough to allow a thorough reconnaissance, and the team attempt a crenellated rocky peak which they believe to be Cathedral, the highest point in the Lemon mountains, on the basis that the only available map marks it at this location. It turns out to be hard, very hard in fact, and with Knox-Johnston, if you will excuse the pun, well out of his depth the team decide to retreat.

With just a day or two left, Bonington and Lowther leave for a second attempt, and the next 28 hours are vividly described by Bonington, writing at his best. The drama, the anxiety, the air of commitment when making two diagonal rappels into a deep chasm in order to bypass a pinnacle, the tricky climbing on poor rock, the eventual failure, the analysis of their mistakes – it's all riveting stuff. Climbing back out of the abyss in the hours of dusk and after a long hard day, Bonington battles with a steep and difficult iced-up crack. The atmosphere is tense: Lowther and myself are willing him to succeed and we both breathe a hearty sigh of relief when he does so.

The hefty glossary of climbing and sailing terminology show that this book has been written for the public at large. However, for the more serious scholar, whether mariner or mountaineer, a wealth of information is to be found in the excellent appendices: these document the history of both sailing and climbing expeditions to this and neighbouring regions of the East Coast.

Despite failing on the mountain, one feels that this has been a successful and most harmonious expedition to an area of great potential. Anyone planning a trip to Greenland's icy mountains would do well to include this book in their list of background reading.

Lindsay Griffin

The Water People
Joe Simpson
Jonathan Cape, 1992, 239pp, £13.99

The novel tells the story of Chris, quiet and observant, and Jimmy, wild, egocentric and a bit touched, and their Himalayan expedition. Jimmy has strange ideas which Chris ridicules – ideas of eastern mysticism and the water people. It is a story of states of mind; and you can read it both ways: from Chris's point of view, or you may choose, for the duration of the novel, to believe in the water people.

I think it was a film director who once said he wanted to start his next film with a volcano erupting, and work up to a climax. Simpson opens with the volcano, and certainly ends with a stupendous climax. To put the mountaineering analogy, the novel opens with foothills and finishes up in mountains. But in between there are the plains, where the narrative is less compelling, though the images and smells of the subcontinent are vivid enough. About half way through I found myself wondering if Simpson had

used this first novel to unload some of his observations and travel diaries – it somehow has that feel to it (the unexplained translocation from India to Hunza and from Hindi to Urdu, for example). This is foreign travel seen through intelligent eyes, but not always pushing the story along. I asked Simpson about this, and he said that I was wrong; the 'plains' were background scenery, necessary for understanding the story.

This book is interesting, a good read throughout, and in places absolutely compulsive. I look forward to Joe Simpson's next novel with enthusiasm.

A V Saunders

The Darkness Beckons:
The History and Development of Cave Diving
Martyn Farr
Diadem Books, 1992, pp280, £22

Now that the whole surface of our dwindling natural world is subjected to the prying eye of the satellite, the field for genuine exploration has changed. Mountains still offer the occasional uninvestigated detail but for exploration on a grand scale, the future must lie on the ocean bed and under the earth's surface. Deep sea diving is an increasingly challenging and expensive technological pursuit; speleology was traditionally a low-tech sport but as far back as the last century cavers realised that 'sumps' – submerged sections of passage beneath the water table – were a tantalising hindrance to exploration. Cave-diving took up the challenge of these sumps, eventually using artificial breathing equipment to cover long distances underwater.

Martyn Farr is one of the world's foremost cave-diving pioneers and this magnificent new book, produced to Diadem's usual thorough standard, is a reference work for experts. But it is also a book to excite and amaze the layman. Many of the photographs (reproduced here in copious quantity and quality) induced in this reviewer feelings of claustrophobic terror. However, the book also makes one look beyond the terror and palpable danger of what many consider the most perilous sport of all, to a magical secret world. Take, for instance, Farr's description of exploring Somerset's famous Wookey Hole: 'I pushed my hand through the gap and a tantalising vision appeared. Beyond the squeeze bright blue water led the eye over speckled sandbanks down into a small, but continuing, passage.'

That was 60 metres below water level! Subsequent explorations revealed that this particular passage was in fact a dead end; but Wookey Hole was nevertheless a landmark in British deep diving. Normal compressed air is only safe to minus 40 metres. Below that the problems of nitrogen absorption and the associated 'bends' dictate special gas mixes and elaborate decompression procedures. Cave diving has only developed through the inventive use of increasingly complex technology and, as Bill Stone observes in his lucid foreword, the cave divers who survive are those who master the technology and the safety rules with meticulous dedication. Compared to the rather haphazard nature of mountaineering, cave diving seems rigorously disciplined.

Farr repeatedly stresses the technical thoroughness of his sport, but he does not attempt to hide the dangers. All the horrific deaths are here to read, but they are explained coolly and objectively. While most of us would never have the mental control to cope with those dangers, we can admire the calm skill of the experts who do.

The book traces the history of the sport from the first explorations in southern France and in the cold murky sumps of the British Isles to exciting recent developments all over the world. It is a fascinating story about using increasingly sophisticated equipment to make and break spectacular records; but it is also the story of brave pioneers fired by a burning ambition to see round the next corner. Cave diving, like mountaineering, seems to be more than a mere sport: it is a romantic journey into the unknown.

Stephen Venables

The State of the World's Mountains. A Global Report
Ed Peter B Stone
Zed Books, 1992, pp291 + xx, npq

Mountain World in Danger
Climate Change in the Forests and Mountains of Europe
Sten Nilsson & David Pitt
Earthscan Publications, 1991, pp196 + xi, £8.95

Both these books address the fundamental environment and development threats facing montane areas in Europe and the rest of the world today. Both have been written to raise awareness and stimulate international action – particularly *The State of the World's Mountains*, which was compiled expressly for the UNCED 'Earth Summit', held in Rio de Janiero in June 1992. But although both the texts have their *raison d'être* in advocacy (Stone's book even acknowledges that 'the political goals outweigh the scientific'), the quality of the collated data and its analysis (by a wide range of mountain specialists, including a number of Alpine Club members) can hardly be faulted.

This is especially the case with Peter Stone's fine volume, which was initiated by the Swiss-based group, Mountain Agenda. The authors state that the report was compiled and published in only one year using multiple authors from five different continents (including Antarctica!), and that the coverage was therefore felt to be inadequate. This *caveat* is disingenuous, to say the least: the book is probably the best single volume available on the issue. Moreover, it is well structured and readable, alternating commendable brevity where required with deeper and thought-provoking analysis in the individual case study regions.

The book is divided into ten main sections, which firstly overview the subject and then step into individual chapter overviews on major mountain areas including Africa, the Alps, the Himalaya, 'Mountains North and South' (a hotch-potch of 'lesser' regions, including *inter alia* China, Baffin Island and

our own Cairngorms), the Andes, the former Soviet Union and the Appalachians, before ending with two chapters on mountain protected areas and climate change.

Stone *et al* are not afraid to search for and postulate answers to difficult questions, such as why mountains have been so low on the environmental agenda compared to other 'sexier' topics such as tropical forests, regional and global air pollution threats, etc. This, they contend (convincingly) , is because of their geopolitical isolation and disenfranchised constituencies – away from the main decision-making centres in the lowlands. However, in one case study (the Alps) it is suggested that the most recent image of the mountains – as a 'disaster region' – has been conversely promoted by a city-based media corps distanced from the mountains, both geographically *and* intellectually.

Here and there, small points such as this, and others relating to the real or imagined 'fragility' of montane ecosystems, or the need for *better-planned* hydro-electric power schemes utilising baseload nuclear power (rather than no such schemes), suggest rather 'light green' tendencies on the part of some of the authors, especially with regard to their occasionally narrow view of 'conservationists' and their 'alarmist' views. Two chapters (the Andes and the Appalachians) also seem rather anomalous, being overly academic and not really addressing the core development issues underlying the other case studies and the book itself. But these are small points which hardly detract from what is a truly *magnum opus*, which – with widespread circulation – deserves to put mountains high on the environmental agenda way into the 21st century.

This was also the aim of Professors Nilsson and Pitt's smaller volume, *Mountain World in Danger*, which addresses itself to the considerable socio-economic consequences that large-scale atmospheric warming would have on the world's cryosphere regions, with a particular emphasis on the forests and mountains of Europe. Here, despite the carefully measured tones of the scientist, the threats of climate change to montane areas are clearly emphasised – suggesting that change could be much more rapid in these regions where fewer buffering mechanisms exist (a point also made in Stone's book).

Obviously this book, with its narrower remit, is more for the specialist or committed reader whose appetite may have been whetted by the Stone volume. It is unfortunately rather less digestible than the former book – probably owing to its report-style format and rather monotonous layout. Nevertheless, its scope (within the subject itself) is very wide ranging and commendably pro-active; together with the excellently summarised appendices, *Mountain World in Danger* maps out a much needed radical agenda for the urgent protection of our mountains. Nilsson and Pitt (in common with Stone *et al*) are also careful to emphasise that although high-level political action should be the overall focus, resulting policy cannot be developed in isolation from the ways and wishes of indigenous mountain people and their culture.

Andrew Tickle

Classic Climbs in the Caucasus
80 selected climbs in the Elbruz and Bezingi regions of the Svanetian range
Friedrich Bender
Diadem, 1992, pp318, £14.99

At last! A British guide to the Caucasus. Actually it's a translation (with a few minor amendments) of Bender's German guide. The author has in fact produced a comprehensive set of fully detailed guides to this range and must be the ideal man to produce a 'selected climbs' guide of this type.

The dissolving of the USSR and associated red tape has, of course, greatly eased access to this superb range, and Western interest is rapidly being rekindled. This guide will doubtless do much to boost popularity still more. It selects 80 of the finest routes of all grades and all areas of the range. Some of these, such as the Bezingi, have not been visited by British mountaineers for many years. The style of presentation is modern – a far cry from the tattered absorbent pages of all the other guides to the Caucasus that I have seen. A durable plastic cover sporting the classic shot of Ushba is enhanced by 27 magnificent colour photographs inside. An extensive series of black and white photographs, maps and diagrams complete the picture and provide a very useful and readable guide. The 58 pages of background information give an excellent 'feel' for the area and are well worth reading.

The one feature that I do find rather irritating is that the diagrams are clearly taken from Bender's comprehensive guides and are peppered with route numbers that bear no relation to the text. This is initially rather confusing but the quality of the diagrams is good and I can't pretend that this is anything other than a minor quibble. In fact it could be argued that the extra information provides a useful supplement to the detailed descriptions. Either way, it does not affect what is a well presented, readable and, most important of all, inspirational guide. If you are even mildly interested in visiting the area ... buy it!

Mick Fowler

The Alpine 4000m Peaks by the Classic Routes
A guide for mountaineers by Richard Goedeke
Diadem Books, 1991, pp240, £12.99

Eastern Alps. The Classic Routes on the Highest Peaks
A guide for mountaineers by Dieter Seibert
Diadem Books, 1992, pp176, £12.99

These well produced plastic-covered paperbacks have been published in an identical format. Yet they differ markedly in their content, in the way they have been initially written, and in the way they have subsequently been reproduced.

Goedeke is an established alpinist with new routes to his credit. He is also a member of the West German Green Party and his concern for the mountain

environment is a recurring theme throughout the text. He concentrates on describing the normal routes to the summits of the great alpine peaks, but also draws attention to a number of other classic lines on the mountain, irrespective of difficulty. Not being a collector of 4000m peaks, prior to reading this book I debated its usefulness – all the relevant information was already available, albeit in eight different works. However, I was in for a surprise. The text is both interesting and entertaining, the information seems well up to date, and route descriptions appear to complement rather than duplicate those in existing English guides, some of which are now more than ten years old.

Seibert concentrates on the normal routes up the major glacier peaks of a dozen different areas (around 50 peaks in total), from the Cima di Rosso in the west to the Hohe Dachstein of Eastern Austria. Apart from the latter, all the peaks are well over 3000m and within the scope of any experienced glacier traveller. If possible, a traverse is described and, on occasion, a detour on the descent to pick off a neighbouring peak. Each route is accompanied by a map (though they missed out Disgrazia!) which I found less cluttered and more pleasing to the eye than those in Goedeke. Descriptions are brief – as you might expect for a glacier walk followed by a snow arête. Goedeke includes paragraphs on the 'dangers and pleasures' of each route. Many of the 'pleasure' paragraphs are flowery and romantic, as one might expect, but I especially liked his appraisal of the Breithorn: 'after climbing this ordinary route any other ascent will be especially enjoyable'!

In both books the photographic reproduction is excellent. Coloured images are bound together, monochromes are inserted into the text. All show detail clearly and many are inspiring. On a large number of Seibert's lesser known peaks the potential for much harder ice or mixed climbing, on attractive ridges or faces, is obvious. However, most of these shots are either taken in spring, after fresh and heavy snowfall, or in the summers of yesteryear. Readers expecting this sort of scenery in mid-August will be in for a disappointment.

A personal criticism, and one about which others might disagree, concerns the way these books have been translated. In general, it is probably an advantage to preserve the original feel of the text, even if this results in a flow of words which, although unambiguous, sound unnatural to the English reader. This works relatively well with Goedeke, mainly I suspect owing to an interesting and often entertaining original. However, in Seibert I found the prose hard going, sometimes unclear, and not helped by several sentences 50 to 60 words long without a single punctuation mark! On the routes of Seibert's that I knew (not that many I'm embarrassed to say) I found two basic directional errors, one well-outdated description and a few statistical mistakes. This unfortunately makes me a little suspicious of the overall accuracy in the rest of the text. Where the two books overlap there are a couple of discrepancies, and I found myself agreeing with Goedeke in each case.

Seibert is a dry and in some ways unimaginative read – quite the opposite to Goedeke – and there was little except the brilliant photographs that inspired me to get out there. Despite these drawbacks it is an invaluable work. It draws attention to peaks hardly known to most British climbers and in a number of

cases not covered by any guidebook in the English language. We are indeed thankful to Diadem for being sympathetic to the widening interest in climbing.

Lindsay Griffin

Antarctica. Both Heaven and Hell
Reinhold Messner
Translated from the German by Jill Neate
Crowood Press, 1991, pp384, £19.95

Over a period of 13 weeks in the winter of 1989/90, Reinhold Messner turned from his mountain conquests to Antarctica, completing a journey of 2800kms, on foot, pulling sledges. He crossed from the edge of the continent across the Thiel Mountains to the South Pole, and then on to McMurdo Sound on the Ross Sea; a magnificent achievement. His companion on this journey was Arved Fuchs, a German adventurer who had crossed the Greenland ice cap with dog sledges, paddled round Cape Horn in a one-man canoe in winter, and marched to the North Pole earlier in 1989 – a companion, you would think, to equal Messner in effort and endeavour. But, as a business journalist quoted in the book says: 'Even his friends have their problems with Reinhold. The South Tyrolean is an ego-maniac. Preferably, he does everything himself because only he satisfies his demands for perfection.'

Thus, even though there were, apparently, no quarrels on the actual trip, the disputes and acrimony started immediately afterwards, and in my view this spoils the book. Writing about daily exertions in the wastes of Antarctica needs to be a little inspired to hold the reader's attention, but when page after page is filled with complaints about how slow Fuchs is, how he doesn't smile, and so on, I found myself skipping many pages and concentrating on the historical sections which are interlaced with the story.

At nearly 400 pages the book is too long, but the actual diary of the trip is interesting, and the chapters on environmental problems and the Chronical of Antarctica Expeditions are very useful.

Geof Templeman

The Turquoise Mountain. Brian Blessed on Everest
Brian Blessed
Additional material by John-Paul Davidson
Bloomsbury, 1991, pp218 + 6, £14.99

Anyone who saw the TV film of Brian Blessed on Everest will know what to expect from this book: a larger-than-life, ebullient, theatrical character who writes in exactly the same way as he talks on TV. And yet Blessed's joy in being among the mountains, his interest in climbing and his enthusiasm in following in Mallory's footsteps are self-evident throughout. Anyone less like Mallory in character and appearance it would be hard to imagine: the slender, introverted, serious Mallory, as opposed to the robust, extrovert and uproarious Blessed. The tweed jacket, pipe and pith helmet don't fool anyone.

One difference from the TV version is that Blessed is naturally the star of the film, with others rarely seen, whereas in the book his film crew, led by director John-Paul Davidson, play important roles, as do his climbing mentors David Breashears and Jeff Long. The over-the-top style does get a little wearing at times, but it is a fascinating book, well worth reading. The author's sheer enthusiasm comes through well. He never falters, even when told by a Chinese liaison officer, 'You is Mallory! ... Ha, ha, ha, ha! ... You big, fat Engliss gentleman, who will not go higher than Base Camp.' Blessed smiled, touched his hat, thought of him as a four-eyed pillock, and moved courteously on. Moved on, in fact, to 25,400ft on the North Ridge. A great effort. He's going back in 1993.

Geof Templeman

High Altitude Medicine
Edited by G Ueda, J T Reeves, M Sekiguchi
Shinshu University Press, Japan, 1992, pp546, npq

This volume is the Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium on High Altitude Medicine, held at Shinshu University in 1991. The papers deal with all aspects of oxygen lack and cold and cover recent research on these subjects in both man and animals. It starts with two review articles. The first deals with co-operative work between scientists of Shinshu University and those of the High Altitude Medical Research Centre at Xining in China during an expedition to the Amne Machin range of North-East Tibet. The second comes from Jack Reeves of the University of Colorado and his co-workers in the US, and deals with the sympathetic systems (flight and fright). This evaluates the important effect this system has on the heart and peripheral blood vessels in equating oxygen supply with demand.

One of the later sections deals with the rupture, due to oxygen lack, of the small blood vessels of the lung as a possible cause of high-altitude pulmonary oedema. A great deal of work is going on to elucidate the cause of this mysterious illness and our member Professor John West of the University of California, San Diego, is playing a leading part in this research.

The scope of this volume is wide, and it ends with an unusual paper on the chemical composition of perfumes used in Japanese and Tibetan religious ceremonies.

This is an important volume in the growing amount of work published on the medical hazards of mountains and though primarily for medical scientists, this type of information should be available in any comprehensive mountain library.

Michael Ward

Operation Everest II. 1985
Charles S Houston, Allen Cymerman, John R Sutton
US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, Massachusetts, 1991

Hypoxia and Mountain Medicine
John R Sutton, Geoffrey Coates, Charles S Houston
Queen City Printers Inc, Burlington, Vermont, 1992

A Colour Atlas of Mountain Medicine
J Vallotton, F Dubas
Wolfe Publishing Ltd, 1991

The 'first ascent' of Everest in a decompression chamber was made on 30 July 1946 at Pensacola Air Base, Florida, by two volunteers, after 30 days' gradual acclimatisation. They remained 'on the summit' for 21 minutes and exercised on a stationary bicycle. Neither used supplementary oxygen. This experiment, Operation Everest I, was masterminded by our Honorary Member Professor C S Houston, then a flight-surgeon in the American Air Force, and Richard Riley, a distinguished respiratory physiologist. It showed, for the first time, that man could acclimatise to the altitude of the top of Everest, but not that he could get there by his own unaided efforts. It was to be another seven years before the summit of Everest was reached using supplementary oxygen and 32 years before it was climbed without its help.

Operation Everest I was the first serious attempt after the Second World War to understand the main problem of Everest, that of hypoxia. It was a landmark experiment of great importance in the fields of aviation, mountaineering and medicine and well known to Sir Bryan Mathews, Dr Griffith Pugh and others who, for 15 months prior to the departure of the 1953 Everest expedition, worked on and solved the high-altitude problem.

Operation Everest II 1985 is an account of both Operation Everest I in 1946 and its follow-up, Operation Everest II, in 1985. Masterminded again by C S Houston with Alan Cymerman and John Sutton, Operation Everest II was carried out at the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine at Natick, Massachusetts and many well known physicians and physiologists were involved. After a general account of each experiment much of this volume is given up to the scientific papers that stemmed from this experiment and every aspect of altitude physiology is covered.

Operation Everest II was the counterpart of the American Medical Research expedition to Everest in 1981, led by our member John West. Whilst it is possible to carry out sophisticated work in a decompression chamber, it is not possible to mimic field conditions. Each investigation complements the other. Each is expensive, as a decompression chamber has to be manned by technicians 24 hours a day. Both groups of work are much admired and have made many important contributions.

Hypoxia and Mountain Medicine is the seventh in the series of monographs which detail the proceedings of the hypoxia meetings held every two years. Again, these were the brainchild of C S Houston and started at Yosemite in 1975, following meetings at Plas y Brenin and the Middlesex Hospital the same year. These have burgeoned and become an important stimulus for research worldwide. The papers in this volume reflect that wide-ranging interest, with contributions on liver transplantation, oxygen lack in air crews,

as well as many other aspects of medicine. For the mountaineer about to go to the Himalaya, the article on 'Pre-Acclimatisation in the Hypobaric Chamber' should be required reading. An important new theory with supporting evidence of the cause of high-altitude pulmonary oedema is put forward by John West. This volume and the meeting in 1991 were dedicated to Herman Rahn, an American respiratory physiologist whose depth and breadth of knowledge helped to lay much of the groundwork for our modern understanding of the oxygen transport system. The next meeting, in 1993, will be dedicated, very appropriately, to Dr Griffith Pugh whose work between 1951 and 1953 contributed so much to the first ascent of Everest.

A Colour Atlas of Mountain Medicine is an important addition to the considerable number of articles and text books which have been written about the medical problems of those who ski, climb and trek in the mountains. Their increasing numbers are mirrored by the many disorders of cold, exercise and altitude which they suffer. This book shows in stark pictures and detail how serious these disorders can be, and how difficult are the many rescue techniques required.

Over a million casualties occur in the mountains every year and there are about 100,000 air rescues, with 60% being by helicopter, whose pilots show amazing skill and bravery. New mountain sports present new hazards and new rescue methods. A striking amount of information is provided by each of the contributors who come mainly from the mountain countries of Europe, and there are articles on avalanches and lightning strikes, as well as on cave, crevasse and helicopter rescue. The photographs may upset some readers, but they do emphasise that mountain rescue, and accident and emergency medicine and surgery, is highly skilled, very professional, and efficient. It is also very dangerous. Many rescuers are both mountain guides and medically qualified. Mountain rescue is not an occupation for the amateur character-builder.

Michael Ward

Journal of Wilderness Medicine 1992 (Vol 3)
Edited by Paul Auerbach (US) and Oswald Oelz (Europe)
Chapman and Hall Medical, London
Four issues per year, subscription rates vary

The Wilderness Medical Society was founded in the United States in 1983 to provide knowledge of medical conditions encountered in the wild places of the world. In five years it grew to 2000 members including many medical scientists from different specialities. During this period a Newsletter kept members informed but in 1990 this was considered insufficient and the *Journal of Wilderness Medicine* was started. Published four times a year, it has now doubled in size, which emphasises both its need and popularity. It has two regular editors: Paul Auerbach in the United States, whose field is underwater medicine, and Oswald Oelz in Europe, whose field is mountain medicine. The editorial board comes from all continents.

The *Journal* publishes original work and clinical reports on cold and heat, on high altitude and diving, on the effect of hazardous plants, animals, reptiles and insects, both on land and in the sea. There are accounts of search and rescue, legal matters, and the field management of illness and injury, as well as natural disasters. The effects of global warming on the changing pattern of disease and many other matters related to the wilderness are also discussed.

So far, a high percentage of the articles have been related to mountains and all concerned with the health of trekkers and climbers will benefit from a glance at the pages of this journal.

Michael Ward

John Muir. The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books
Introduction by Terry Gifford
Diadem Books/The Mountaineers, 1992, pp1030, £16.99

Diadem have followed up their Tilman and Shipton volumes with the biggest compendium yet: over 1000 pages of John Muir's eight complete, unabridged books on the American wilderness. It seems amazing that you can actually get eight books into one, albeit very hefty, volume, but modern papers and printing make this possible. At just over £2 per book, this has to be the bargain of the year. So, once again, all praise to Diadem for producing this book, and to Terry Gifford for the idea.

It is probable that very few of today's climbers in Britain have read any of Muir's books, since only two of them, *The Mountains of California* and *My First Summer in the Sierra*, have previously been published over here. Even though John Muir originally came from Scotland, his name will largely be known here through the recently formed John Muir Trust. In America, however, his name is a household word wherever wilderness questions arise, and his books are continuously in print. It was after the Civil War that Muir decided to go to South America from his home farm in Wisconsin, intending to walk to the Gulf of Mexico. On the way he found the Yosemite valley and stayed there for six years, entranced by the beauty of the scenery and the flora and fauna. So began his obsession with the wilderness and its preservation. He visited many parts of the world, from Alaska and the Himalaya, to South America, Africa and his native Scotland. In 1892 he was instrumental in founding the Sierra Club, and became its first president.

The eight books published here range from journals and diaries, to guidebooks and autobiographical writings. All are worth reading – probably not at one sitting! They are as relevant now as they were at the beginning of the century.

Geof Templeman

Flammes de Pierre
Anne Sauvy
Diadem, 1991, pp176, hb £12.99, pb £8.99

These short stories, translated from the French, have the very smell of Alpine

climbing about them. They are so knowing – about the climbing itself, about the physical arena around Mont Blanc, but most tellingly about the culture of motivations, emotions, reputations and bullshit that we would all recognise within any climbing community. Diadem is to be congratulated for holding up to us this witty and superbly polished mirror from Chamonix.

Readers of the *Alpine Journal* will be familiar with Anne Sauvy's carefully crafted surprises, but the range of these 16 stories may come as a further surprise. The liberation of grief, for example, in 'Montenvers', or the inner questioning of 'The Penance', complement the satire of 'The Star' in which the author of *The Sky on the End of my Ice-Axe, Festive Summits* and *Voluptuous Faces,* with lectures, films and advertising, eventually 'made a significant contribution to France's balance of payments deficit'.

The quality of translation deserves special recognition. Much of the humour derives from an intimate knowledge of the British climbing scene, and one suspects the contribution here of John Wilkinson ('maintaining a slightly scruffy but clean image'), Anne Sauvy's husband. For example, as a professional name for The Star, 'Rock Hardy would have sounded like parody'. Translation at this level of detail is expensive and time-consuming. In fact, giving us this collection prevented the author from writing more in French for 18 months. But already this book is having an influence upon our own writers of climbing stories and it will be one of those books that will be reread and retold in homes and in huts for a generation.

Terry Gifford

Last Days
John Roskelley
Hodder & Stoughton, 1992, ppviii + 212, £19.95

Roskelley's previous book *Nanda Devi: The Tragic Expedition* was a one-sided account written long after the event; I had not particularly enjoyed it. So I approached *Last Days* with no great enthusiasm, particularly as the dust jacket states 'A World-famous Climber Challenges the Himalaya . . .'. In fact, I enjoyed the book immensely. It is in two parts: a two-man ascent of the NE face of Tawoche, and an alpine-style attempt on the SE ridge of Menlungste. The photo of the NE face of Tawoche, towering over Pheriche in Sola Khumbu, shows the difficulty of the undertaking – 'straight up' doesn't do it justice by a long way!

Roskelley first attempted Tawoche in 1984 with Bridwell and Sakashita, but prudently retreated in the face of continuous stonefall. So it had to be a winter ascent. In February 1984 Roskelley was once more back on the face, this time with Jeff Lowe, but after only one day he had to retreat when he knew he had cerebral oedema. After waiting a week, they started up again. This time, high on the face, it was Lowe who got sick, with nausea and dehydration. As Lowe had a history of bouts of oedema, this was worrying; but they pressed on, through storm and rockfall, to make the summit after eight days on the face. A nightmare descent followed.

The following year Roskelley teamed up with Jim Wickwire, Greg Child

and Jeff Duenwald for the SE ridge of Menlungtse. Much of this account is taken up with the approach through Tibet, relations with their Chinese interpreter and liaison officer, their Tibetan yak herders, and highlights such as seeing a snow leopard. When the climb actually began, after several days of storms, Wickwire announced he was leaving: home ties were pulling, his heart was not in it, and he felt too old for the climb. The other three continued, but with Duenwald expressing doubts about his fitness. After further storms forced a return to Base Camp, Duenwald found himself too weak to continue. Roskelley and Child carried on, but eventually further snowstorms and a wildly unstable ridge meant final retreat.

One can imagine that, in earlier years, Roskelley would have had withering contempt for companions who gave up on a climb, but time, age and family ties have mellowed him. Leaving Menlungtse his thoughts were that this had been his last expedition – until he saw the E face of Gaurisankar on the walk out. If his book on that is as good as this one, it will be very well worth reading.

Geof Templeman

Tyrants and Mountains. A Reckless Life
Denis Hills
John Murray, 1992, ppx + 262, £19.95

Never Judge a Man by His Umbrella
Nicholas Elliott
Michael Russell, reprint 1992, ppvi + 202, £14.95

Two excellent recent autobiographies have in common the fact that they both contain a little mountaineering and are great fun to read; but they are about two very different characters.

Denis Hills will be remembered by most people as the man arrested and sentenced to death by Idi Amin in Uganda, after writing a book which had been less than respectful about the dictator and his regime. Yet Africa remained one of his great loves, together with Germany, Poland and Turkey. After an early interest in Germany while at Oxford, he lived there in the early days of Hitler's rise to power, moving to Poland in 1936. Escaping in 1939, he made his way to Egypt via Romania, ending up as a liaison officer with the Polish forces and taking part in the battle for Monte Cassino. He later played a major part in rescuing Ukranians and others from being sent back to certain death in the Soviet Union. From the 1950s onwards, Hills held numerous teaching jobs in Germany, Turkey and Africa, never staying in one place for long and living in caravans and the houses of friends and acquaintances.

The mountaineering adventures described include ski-touring in the Alps, an ascent of Mt Ararat, and various trips in Turkish Kurdistan. He also climbed in the Virunga chain of volcanoes in western Uganda. But the main interest in Hills's book is the tale of his restless, ever-travelling life, always wanting to be where other people were glad not to be, and returning time and

again to places from whence he had only recently been thrown out. No wonder those in authority generally groaned when he reappeared. This sort of life naturally wrecks marriages and now, in his 80s, he has apparently ended up in a bedsit in Twickenham. While he hasn't the deep intensity of Wilfred Thesiger nor the literary skills of Patrick Leigh Fermor, he runs them a very close second in interest.

Nicholas Elliott has led a very different life. Like Denis Hills, however, his work has taken him to many countries, and he has been involved in diplomatic work in the Hague, Turkey, Switzerland, Vienna and the Lebanon amongst others; there are cameo chapters on the Cicero spy case, and on his personal involvement with Kim Philby. But it is the early chapters of the book which will most interest Alpine Club members, for they concern his father, Sir Claude Elliott, former Provost of Eton and, of course, President of the Alpine Club from 1950 to 1953 at the time when preparations for the 1953 Everest expedition were under way. The author gives an amusing and affectionate portrait of Sir Claude, and includes several pages on the problems that faced the Everest Committee prior to the change of leadership from Shipton to Hunt.

Like Denis Hills, Nicholas Elliott is an enthusiastic skier, but, despite taking part in Winthrop Young's famous house-parties at Pen-y-Pass, he never took to climbing. These gatherings left fond memories with many famous climbers, but the author dreaded the visits. The discomfort was remarkable and the sanitary facilities totally inadequate. To one who 'did not enjoy climbing ... hated the cold, couldn't sing, and could hardly be on an intellectual level with the rest of the company', the experience must have put him off for life!

Only a small part of this book is about climbing, but don't let that put you off. It is well written and immensely enjoyable.

Geof Templeman

Turner in the Alps
The journey through France and Switzerland in 1802
David Hill
George Philip, 1992, pp176, £19.99

In July 1802, Turner set out on a three month tour through the Alps which took him to Geneva and Lucerne, Mont Blanc, the Val d'Aosta, the Bernese Oberland and the St Gotthard Pass. There were comparatively few alpine travellers at that time and, with the war with France only recently over, a journey like this was no small undertaking. In the course of his travels Turner made nearly 400 sketches, which resulted in more than 50 major pictures. Although he returned to the Alps several times when in his sixties, it was this excursion in 1802 which resulted in his greatest alpine paintings.

For anyone interested in Turner, the Romantic Era, the Alps, or all three, David Hill has produced a gem of a book. It is richly illustrated with colour reproductions of both sketches and finished paintings, as well as colour photographs depicting present day scenes which the author took whilst following the same route. Turner's journey and activities are described in

detail, with added extracts from Murray and writers such as Byron, Shelley and Ruskin. This is a well produced and fascinating book.

Geof Templeman

Second Ascent. The Story of Hugh Herr
Alison Osius
Stackpole Books, Harrisburg PA, 1991, pp236, $19.95

The Merry-Go-Round of My Life. An Adventurer's Diary
Richard Hechtel
Vantage Press, New York, 1991, ppxiv + 220, $13.95

These two climbing lives (a biography and an autobiography) from the United States are very different in style and content. The subject of Alison Osius's book, Hugh Herr, is a young climber who was in the forefront of American rock climbing in the late '70s and early '80s when, in 1982, he and a companion were lost in a winter storm on Mount Washington. They battled for three days before being rescued, but the end result was the loss of both of Herr's lower legs through frostbite and the death of one of the rescuers. The book tells the story of his readjustment to 'normal life', and eventual return to high-grade climbing with artificial legs. It is a pity that this remarkable story is told in an over-adulatory style which grates after a while (to this reviewer at least!), with the few pictures being chosen mainly for sensational effect. It is also almost impossible to refer back to any particular point or episode, as there is neither an index nor chapter headings.

Richard Hechtel's autobiography is similar in that it, too, lacks an index and has few pictures, but there the similarities end. Hechtel is now approaching 80, and this charming little book tells his life story simply and with a touch of naivety. It splits neatly into two halves; his life in Germany up to 1958, and, after that, in the United States where he became an American citizen. His early climbing days were spent in areas such as the Berchtesgärt Alps and Wettersteingebirge, before moving into the Western Alps just before the war. His greatest achievement here was a solo ascent of the Peuterey Ridge in 35 hours in 1937. Having survived the war as a scientist in the aeronautical industry, he carried on with many hard climbs, notably the first ascent of the integral Peuterey Ridge in 1953. His activities after moving to America have included an ascent of Mt McKinley and climbs in the Himalaya, Africa, Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as walking the Pacific Crest Trail. The last photo shows him leading a route at Joshua Tree in 1987. The book is slightly unusual in having each chapter split into sections, each a page or so in length, headed 'About the pleasures of a porter', 'A restless night', 'On to the summit', and so on, but is nevertheless a delightful read.

Geof Templeman

Joe Dodge. One New Hampshire Institution
William Lowell Putnam
Phoenix Publishing, Canaan, New Hampshire, 1986
ppxiv + 162, $16.00

Place Names of the Canadian Alps
William L Putnam, Glen W Boles & Roger W Laurilla
Footprint, Revelstoke, British Columbia, 1990
ppxviii + 384, $22.95

The Worst Weather on Earth
A History of the Mount Washington Observatory
William Lowell Putnam
Mount Washington Observatory/American Alpine Club, 1991
ppxxii + 266, npq

Green Cognac. The Education of a Mountain Fighter
William Lowell Putnam
AAC Press, New York, 1991, pp14 + 242, npq

The above four books have all been produced comparatively recently by our member Bill Putnam; quite an achievement. The titles are mostly self-explanatory, but British readers should note that Joe Dodge, a New Hampshire institution as the sub-title indicates, was the best known inhabitant of the White Mountains, being huts manager for the Appalachian Mountain Club and founder of the Mount Washington Observatory, whose history is detailed in another of these volumes. *Green Cognac* is the story of the US Army's 10th Mountain Division, 1940–45, which fought in the Apennines in Italy in the Second World War, and of which Putnam was a member. Finally, in these brief notes, the book on the Canadian Alps is an alphabetical listing of every mountain with the derivation of their names, and includes some stunning colour photos. It is an impressive work of research.

Geof Templeman

The Climbers' Club Journal 1992
Edited by Smiler Cuthbertson

I am always pleased to receive the latest volume of the *Climbers' Club Journal*, and this one, under its new editor, is packed with good things: 36 articles in 136 pages, interesting photos, many in colour, with a further 30-odd pages of very readable reviews, obits and area notes. The scope of the articles is wide – from a little-known crag in the Rhinogs to the Karakoram, from Eurocrags to Dowbergill Passage. This is a satisfying, varied read, showing a thriving club.

Geof Templeman

Uganda Before Amin
Our family life in Uganda, 1949–1963
Anna Osmaston
Henry Osmaston, Bristol, 1991, ppvi + 88, pb, £6.95

Anna and Henry Osmaston sailed for Uganda in 1949 when he took up an appointment as an assistant curator of forests. They were to spend the next 14 years there in various locations, mostly 'up country', leaving after independence when thoughts of a future career and children's schooling made a change necessary. Anna Osmaston gives a vivid picture of family life in Uganda in the peaceful days before Amin. Their lives – and friendships – with their native servants, the trials and tribulations of bringing up children in the distant stations, the problems with the local fauna, and the joys of being able to go on impromptu safari are all well described and brought to life. A considerable part of the book is devoted to climbing forays in the Ruwenzori, the Virunga volcanoes, Elgon and the rocky hills of Acholi.

Obtainable from West Col Productions, Goring, Reading, Berks, RG8 9AA

Trekking in Tibet. A Traveller's Guide
Gary McCue
Cordee, 1991, pp304, £10.99

There have been a number of excellent Himalayan trekking guides in recent years by American authors, such as Stephen Bezruchka's *A Guide to Trekking in Nepal* and Hugh Swift's *Trekking in Pakistan and India*. Gary McCue's *Tibet* joins this group. The guide is in three main sections. The first deals generally with trekking in the country, the language, health problems, etc; the second major section details treks in five main areas – Lhasa, Shigatse, Everest, Shishapangma and Mt Kailas; the final section deals with natural history, the people and their culture. From the list of areas, it will be seen that the majority of treks detailed are in central Tibet, with Mt Kailas being the outlier, but these are the areas of most interest to the adventurous trekker. This is a very detailed and worthwhile addition to the literature of Tibet.

Mount McKinley. The Conquest of Denali
Bradford Washburn and David Roberts
Harry N Abrams, New York, 1991, pp206, npq

Washburn and Roberts have, between them, produced a glorious book on Mount KcKinley. Whilst they share the writing, the majority of the photographs are by Brad Washburn and are, as one would expect, superb. Most are black and white, but with two sets of colour interspersed. There is a lot of excellent reading here, as McKinley has a fascinating history. The authors share the chapters on the early attempts, then Washburn goes solo up to the first ascent. Roberts takes over for the 'Age of Washburn', and then Washburn finishes off on the extreme climbs of later years. The history of Denali has been told before, but this well written text, coupled with superb photographs, make this a book to treasure.

Sherpas. The Brave Mountaineers
Padma Sastry
Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling, 1991, pp76, npq

This is the first of two booklets on Sherpas by the HMI. Twelve Sherpas are featured, starting with Tenzing Norgay and including both older ones, such as Pasang Puthar, and younger, still active ones, like Dorjee Lhatoo and N D Sherpa, the HMI being a common link between many of them. The life story of each is recounted, together with details of the expeditions of which they have been members.

Walking Britain's Skyline. 45 Classic Routes
Tony Greenbank
Crowood Press, 1992, pp224, £18.95

There are numerous books on the market giving suggested hill-walking routes, many, as this one, linking a number of hills to give 'skyline' routes. Many, also as this one, are of large format with excellent colour photographs. Few, if any, however, have route descriptions like this one. The author set out to cover his 45 routes and take his photographs during 1991, and obviously had a whale of a time. You will find few detailed path directions here, but a fund of personal anecdotes, thoughts and general gossip which make for diverting reading. Not, as the author says, a book to take on the hill, but one to enjoy in the armchair, recalling memories of old favourites, or thinking of planning one or two of the more unusual ones included.

Escape to the Dales
45 walks in and around the Yorkshire Dales
Bob Allen
Michael Joseph, 1992, pp208, £13.99

Bob Allen's first two books, on the High and Lower Fells of Lakeland respectively, have been highly acclaimed and popular, and this volume continues in similar style and format. We are only given 45 walks in the Dales, as against the original 100 in the Lakes, the type is larger, and there are more small photos in place of the almost exclusively whole-page plates in the original Pic book, but there is still a good mix of information and personal experience, as before, with the excellent photographs expected from this author. The choice of routes is good and includes the Howgills and other marginal areas as well.

The Southern Highlands
D J Bennet
Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1991, ppx + 214, £16.95

The SMC continues its excellent series of district guidebooks with this latest guide to the Southern Highlands, covering the area from Glasgow in the south

to Loch Rannoch in the north, and from Oban in the west to Perth in the east. There is little to say about this guide that has not already been said about others in the new series; the descriptions and maps are good and the illustrations excellent. Covering some of the most popular Scottish mountains – the Arrochar Alps, Ben Lomond, Ben Lui, Ben Lawers – it is bound to be a sell-out.

A Munroist's Log
Irvine Butterfield & Jack Baines
Ernest Press, 1992, pp238, £9.95

The sub-title of this book really says it all, – 'Being a log in which to record ascents of those mountains in an extended list of 3000ft summits in the British Isles'. Each page is therefore divided into two for two separate mountains; after giving the name and height, you fill in the details for date, height, distance, weather, companions and 'Route and Notes'. Many people will enjoy having this hard-back book in which to look back on their memories, but it is a pity that there is only room for one ascent per peak. In other words, it caters for the real 'tick-it-off' Munro logger who never goes back a second time. But you can always stick extra pages in! The short section of colour photos is excellent.

The Alps (1986)
The Himalayas (1987)
The Karakoram (1990)
Photographs by H Fujita
Gyosei, Tokyo. Each volume pp96, 35cmx47cm, £70
(Obtainable from Han-Shan Tang Ltd, 717 Fulham Road, London, SW6 5UL. Postage £9.50 per copy.)

These three volumes have been available for some time, but it is worth drawing attention to them here as copies are now in the AC library. The first thing that strikes you is their size: 35cms by 47cms is big. Not only are they coffee table books; if you put legs on them you could use them as coffee tables! As always with such books, there is the practical problem of storage, any conventional bookshelf being useless. They are more like works of art, with each double-page spread needing to be looked at from a distance – and many of the photographs are certainly worth looking at. The detail on most of the plates, and the quality of reproduction, is superb. You could almost plan a route, step by step, on some of the Himalayan peaks depicted. For my money, the earliest book, *The Alps*, is the finest, especially where Dolomite peaks soar over alpine flower meadows, but you have to admire Fujita's perseverance in sitting out bad conditions to capture many of his Himalayan and Karakoram peaks.

Geof Templeman

The following books have also been received by the Alpine Club Library during 1992:

Walking in the Dolomites. Gillian Price. Cicerone Press, 1991, pp96, £3.99

Modern Alpine Climbing. Equipment & Techniques. Pit Schubert, translated by George Steele & M Vápeníková. Cicerone Press, 1991 pp176, £5.95

The Handbook of Alpine Climbing. John Barry. Crowood Press, 1991, pp208, pb, £14.95

L R Wager. A Life 1904–1965. Compiled by Jane Hargreaves. Privately printed, 1991, pp142

Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies. Sean Dougherty. Rocky Mountain Books, 1991, pp320, £11.95

The Climbing Guide to Scotland. Tom Prentice. Crowood Press, 1992, pp206, £13.99

The Bernese Alps, Switzerland. A Walking Guide. Kev Reynolds. Cicerone Press, 1992, pp240, £9.95

Glen Coe. Rock and Ice Climbs, including Glen Etive & Ardgour. K V Crocket, R Anderson, D Cuthbertson. Ed by R D Everett. SMC, 1992, pp382 + x, npq

Bibliography of East African Mountains. Rheker, Taiti & Winiger. Institute of Geography, University of Berne, Switzerland, 1989, pp66 + vi, npq

Summits for All. 100 Easy Mountains for Walkers (The French Alps). Edouard Prevost, trans Jill Neate. Cordee, 1992, pp224 + viii, £8.95

The Southern Uplands. K. M. Andrew. SMT, 1992, pp182 + x, £16.95

From the Pennines to the Highlands. A Walking Route through the Scottish Borders. Hamish Brown, Lochar, 1992, pp230, £7.99

Les Alpes Vues du Ciel. Bernard Pierre & Pascal Kober, with photographs by Loic-Jahan . Editions Bias, 1991, pp128, npq

To the Top of the World. Alpine Challenges in the Himalaya and Karakoram. Reinhold Messner, trans Jill Neate. Crowood Press, 1992, pp256, £16.95

North of England Rock Climbs. Stewart Wilson. Cordee, 1992, pp382, £12.95

Walking in Ticino, Switzerland. Kev Reynolds. Cicerone Press, 1992, pp176, £9.99

Buttermere & Eastern Crags. R Graham, A David & T Price. Fell & Rock CC, 1992, pp366, npq

Hard Rock. Great British Rock Climbs. Compiled by Ken Wilson. Diadem Books, pp236 + xx, £19.99

The High Sierra. Peaks, Passes and Trails. R J Secor. The Mountaineers/ Cordee, 1992, pp368, $19.95

Wainwright's Favourite Lakeland Mountains. A Wainwright. Photos by Derry Brabbs. Michael Joseph, 1992, pp216 + viii, £16.99

Wainwright in the Valleys of Lakeland. A Wainwright. Photos by Derry Brabbs. Michael Joseph, 1992, pp216 + viii, £17.99

Bosigran and the North Coast. Des Hannigan. Climbers' Club 1991, pp246, £10.95

Gower & South-East Wales. Ed Alun Richardson. South Wales Mountaineering Club (1991), pp366 + xviii, £13.25

Froggatt. Peak Rock Climbs – 5th Series, Vol 3, Eastern Gritstone. Vol compiler Keith Sharples. BMC, 1991, pp388, £13.95

Ski Safe. A Safety Manual for all Ski Sports. Scottish National Ski Council. Cordee, 1991, pp94, £3.95

Avon and Cheddar. Martin Crocker. Climbers' Club, 1992, pp468, £14.95

Eduard Imhof (1895–1986). Ein Leben mit Landkarten. Viola Imhof. Verein für wirtschaftshistoriches Studien Meilen, 1990, pb, npq

Geodesy, Geophysics and Geology of the Upper Shaksgam Valley (North-East Karakoram) and South Sinkiang. Ardito Desio, *et al.* Consiglio Nazionale delle Richerche, Milano, 1991, pp202 + viii, npq

NOTE

I very much regret that reviews of **The Climbers** by Chris Bonington (BBC Books/Hodder & Stoughton, £16.55) and **My Vertical World** by the late Jerzy Kukuczka (Hodder & Stoughton £16.99) were received too late for inclusion but will appear in the next volume; my apologies to the author and the publishers.

Geof Templeman