Book Reviews

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

A Portrait of Leni Riefenstahl
Audrey Salkeld
Jonathan Cape, 1996, pp312, £18.99

There are two photographs of Leni Riefenstahl, both reprinted in this book, with which readers may be familiar. One shows her with the Führer, laughing happily, while he responds to the rapturous acclaim of the citizens of Nuremberg by giving the Nazi salute. The other, from the latter part of her career, was taken in Africa and shows her with a stark naked (and extremely well endowed) Nuba warrior, whom she appears to have recruited as her camera assistant. Together they encapsulate the dilemma which confronts anyone attempting to reach a balanced judgement about this extraordinary woman and her place in the story of the Twentieth Century.

The American writer Susan Sontag, the severest and most articulate of Riefenstahl's critics, sees them both as manifestations of the same thing: a naïve acceptance of fascist ideology, especially those aspects of it which embrace bodily perfection, the purity of the simple life and a rejection of the intellectual corruption which, in Nazi terms, had pervaded so much of European culture. Many people have attacked Riefenstahl in similar terms. A few have come to her defence. In this thorough, very well written and thoughtful book, Audrey Salkeld seeks to find a way through this minefield of emotionally charged accusations and counter-accusations.

However, this is not a book based on sensational new revelations. No letters or memoirs have come to light, proving conclusively that Leni Riefenstahl was Hitler's lover, as many believe, or that she was rabidly anti-Semitic, which she has always denied. What we have instead is a meticulous and very readable account of the various stages of her life which raises fascinating questions about the nature of propaganda, the motivation of mountaineers, the cult of the body and the craft of film-making.

Understandably enough, in the early chapters Audrey Salkeld warms to her subject as she struggles to succeed in a man's world. Personally I found myself liking Riefenstahl less and less as the great god of ambition drives out more endearing qualities. If the art of manipulating people was something she picked up from Hitler, she certainly learned fast. One gets the impression that she would have preferred even her personal relationships, husbands, lovers, friends, to fit in with the grand plan – which was the success of her career.

In the early years she wanted to be a dancer, and then an actress. The idea of directing came later, and then almost by chance. It was the *bergfilme* fraternity, a bunch of intrepid German film-makers who used the Alps as the backdrop for all their work, who pounced on this lithe, attractive young woman who needed no 'double' to perform impressive feats on rock and ice among the peaks of the Dolomites and the Engadine. Through her involvement in films like 'The Holy Mountain' and 'Piz Palu', her name was later to become associated with the cult of extreme climbing as an expression of racial superiority. This led in the early Thirties to the conquest, by German and Austrian climbers, of the great north walls of the Alps, such as the Eiger and the Grandes Jorasses, in honour of the 'Fatherland'.

This is unfair. Like many devotees of the mountains, Riefenstahl loved the bright clean air of the Alps and the sense of liberation which comes from getting away from grimy cities. If they are honest with themselves, a majority of climbers, and skiers too, would admit to feelings of superiority after the achievement of spectacular ascents and descents. They are sports which particularly lend themselves to athletic narcissism. Riefenstahl and her coterie of mountain film-makers, like Arnold Fanck, Hannes Schneeberger and Luis Trenker, enjoyed showing off; all the more so since they could do it on film before a mass audience. But this is some way from claiming mountaineering achievement as a form of racial superiority, as Dr Goebbels was to do on behalf of National Socialism.

Indeed I would go further and suggest that in pushing mind and body to the ultimate, there is a link between a certain type of climber and the original concept of fascism, before it fell into the hands of men like Hitler and Mussolini. I can remember meeting people in mountain huts who thought and behaved like that. Not that such ideas survived for very long in Britain. John Hunt's determination to make sure that Tensing Norgay was one of the conquerors of Everest in 1953 was followed soon after by the arrival on the scene of Don Whillans, Mick Burke, Doug Scott and others, who treated political and social dogma with refreshing irreverence, and replaced the mystique of the mountains with down-to-earth respect. Sceptical of all authority, they refused to countenance any notion of prejudice in their sport which related to class, race or country.

Nor, as Audrey Salkeld makes clear, does that other charge against Leni Riefenstahl really stand up – that she carried the cult of the body to such extremes that it too became part of the Nazi credo of Aryan superiority. Certainly she admired physical beauty. For the opening sequences of 'Olympia' she chose a young man called Anatol Dobriansky to represent the Greek (and by implication the German) ideal of physical perfection. Devoid of almost all his clothes, she made her cameramen film him from every angle as he ran through woods and fields on his way to light the Olympic torch. (She was later to discover he was a delinquent Russian.) There are plenty of other human specimens of both sexes to admire in

Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Olympic Games: runners, gymnasts, swimmers and scantily clad 'Rhine maidens'. The diving sequence is particularly famous. She must surely have known that the Nazis would use it all to bolster their creed of Aryan superiority. But I am quite prepared to believe that she ignored the demands of Goebbels to reduce the amount of footage devoted to the four Gold Medals won by the black American sprinter Jesse Owens.

As her later career unfolded, it became clear that her interest in the human body was rather different. Well into her seventies, it was in those few remaining parts of Africa untouched by Western civilisation, that she found new inspiration. Living for quite long periods among the Masai, the Kau and Shilluk peoples, who hardly measure up to Nazi standards of Aryan purity, she rejoiced in photographing the gleaming bodies of wrestlers and dancers who saw no need for clothes (nor indeed for her camera, which was to play its own part in the destruction of their way of life).

This admiration for the primitive, untainted by the constrictive taboos of Islam and Christianity, seems to me much closer to the fascination of eighteenth century intellectuals like Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot with Polynesia and the ideal of the 'noble savage', than any of the half-baked notions to be found in *Main Kampf*. Susan Sontag on the other hand links those earlier themes of 'longing, purity and death' with the taint of fascism running through all Riefenstahl's work like a deadly virus.

But as Audrey Salkeld is well aware, these are the minor charges against Riefenstahl. The main one is her association with Hitler and the whole apparatus of Nazi propaganda. It seems that she first came to the Führer's attention after the making of 'The Blue Light', the first film venture where she dared to put herself forward as the director as well as the star. It was a simple mountain fairy-tale, but it won a Silver Medal at the Berlin Film Festival.

The Hitler she saw, who became her friend, had charm. He liked attractive women and patting small children on the head. Audrey Salkeld gives no credence to the many stories that she became his mistress. Certainly she was beguiled, even dazzled by his charisma. But it seems much more likely that she regarded him as the ideal patron; and in this she was right. In spite of the much-quoted Nazi view of women's role in society ('Kinder, Kirche, Kuche') he saw her as the ideal person to make the definitive version of the massive 1933 Nuremberg rallies where he was due to perform the blood-blessing rites over 316 banners. This was the pageant that would set the tone for the coming years, as the Nazis swept to power.

Hitler wanted to call the original documentary 'Victory of Faith'. This proved to be no more than a forerunner to 'Triumph of the Will', perhaps the greatest, most powerful propaganda film ever made. But was it also the most diabolical? From the very first sequence we know that we are not in the hands of a detached observer. This was a 'party political' film if ever there was one. However disturbing, even disgusting, we may find the subject

matter, it is difficult not to respond to the sheer skill and emotional manipulation of the images and the thunderous martial music which accompanies them. Once she had planned her camera positions with the meticulous care of a commander about to go into battle, the real skill she displayed, on this and all her subsequent films, was in the cutting room. Without exception they are brilliantly edited, and none more so than 'Triumph of the Will'.

How should we define propaganda, and can it ever rise to the level of art? Some of Beethoven's greatest orchestral works like the 'Eroica' symphony were composed in honour of Napoleon. But there is surely a difference. We can enjoy them today without being aware of that fact. Hitler and 'Triumph of the Will' are inextricably linked. This is the public image of himself that he wanted the world to see. And Riefenstahl was the all-too-willing agent who gave tangible and permanent shape to his fantasies – a service to the Führer, and the Third Reich, which has dogged all her remaining years.

In her own memoirs, which Audrey Salkeld draws on perhaps a little too uncritically, Leni Riefenstahl has pointed out that 'Triumph of the Will' was made long before the Jewish purges of *Kristallnacht*, that she herself was never a member of the Nazi party, and that the Allies cleared her of any direct involvement in crimes committed in Hitler's name.

No less a figure than John Grierson, who coined the phrase 'the creative treatment of actuality' to describe documentary film-making (of which he was one of the pioneers), came to her rescue after the war. Describing her as 'the greatest female film-maker in history', he pointed out that he too was a propagandist, who happened to be working for the other side. Should we exonerate her, then, from the taint of evil which has clung to her so tenaciously since the heyday of Hitlerism?

In her final chapter, entitled 'The Long Shadow of Shame', Audrey Salkeld marshals the evidence like a presiding judge and attempts a summing up. It is well argued and scrupulously fair. But at the end of the day, this particular juror feels obliged to return a verdict of 'guilty'. We can believe her, I'm sure, when she claims to have known nothing of the worst excesses of Nazism. But by the late Thirties, the German upper classes and intelligentsia knew perfectly well what was going on. Many distinguished artists left the country. Those who stayed condoned the regime because they saw an advantage in it for themselves.

Leni Riefenstahl was one of them. She hitched her wagon to the wrong star, and her reputation is of no consequence compared with the appalling crimes committed by the Third Reich. In her fascinating book Audrey Salkeld gives her the last word. When it was suggested to her that the world was still waiting for her to say sorry, Riefenstahl replied: 'Being sorry isn't nearly enough ... it's such an incredible burden that to say sorry is inadequate. It expresses so little.' Quite so.

Christopher Ralling

I May Be Some Time
Ice and the English Imagination
Francis Spufford
Faber, 1996, pp372, £15.99

'Because it's there!' cried George Mallory, in exasperation, I have always assumed, at being asked the same question over and over again, and I am not sure that he would have enjoyed this profound investigation into the impulses behind British polar exploration, culminating in the tragedy of Scott's last expedition. As a survivor of an older Britain, with an innate distrust of too much analysis and over-intellectualisation, I approached the book myself with extreme caution.

Nor did I romp through it. It is long, written with a somewhat exhausting density, often predictable in its views and sometimes, for my tastes, what the old explorers used to call 'too far north' – too clever by half. But by the time I had turned its last page, ennobled by an ending of exquisite artistic simplicity, I had come to realise that *I May Be Some Time* is a truly majestic work of scholarship, thought and literary imagination. Its faults are petty beside its merits, its design is grand and its attitudes are generous. It will certainly enter, and perhaps dominate, the classic repertoire of polar literature.

I despair of defining the nature of the book. Imagine the blended talents and intentions of Sir Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton, Herman Melville, Simon Schama and the author of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and you may have some inkling of its scope and manner. It is a mixture of history, sociology, conjecture and literary criticism, applied to an activity which, for most of its practitioners, was essentially self-explanatory. Just as for Mallory to climb Everest was a perfectly obvious thing to want to do, so Scott, his predecessors and companions, however varied their motives, seldom questioned their need to go to the ice. They left it to another generation to ask the reasons why.

Spufford is in no sense a debunker. What he is doing is setting the long record of British polar enterprise against the background of national consciousness and making a work of art out of it. One of his preoccupations, inevitably, is the formal, consciously traditional, Royal Navy style of British expeditions, compared with the leaner and more freelance methods of the Scandinavians and Americans. This of course is a theme with infinite echoes: from the cautious strategies of Montgomery to the stultifications of postwar British industry, or even to the huge, meticulously organised expedition which did at last reach the top of Everest in 1953.

More endearing is the flavour of Romance, with a capital R, which the British assiduously injected into the polar subject. The successive expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic, so often ending in disaster, gave them all kinds of vicarious thrills. There was the thrill of national continuity – for were not Sir John Franklin and Titus Oates direct successors to the

Elizabethan navigators? There was the thrill of extended knowledge, geographical, botanical, geological. There were the thrills of desolation, of icy beauty, of challenge, of human courage, of comradeship, even of evangelical religion. And there was the undeniable thrill of heroic failure, which was later to sustain and inspire the British through so many historical setbacks, Gallipoli to Dunkirk.

With a virtuoso energy, tending sometimes towards overkill, Spufford demonstrates how intensely these notions impregnated British art and manners in the heyday of the polar obsession, especially during the long years in which expeditions searched for the missing Franklin and his men. The polar ice got into everything – popular songs, cartoons, the vernacular, the writings of Byron, Coleridge, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens and Bishop Heber.

For a time the Eskimos, it appears, were the British epitome of primitive man: not exactly noble savages, because they never washed and ate their own lice and sweat, but representations of what the British themselves had once been like, and thus living confirmations of all that Progress could mean.

All this Spufford relates, compares, collates, discusses: but oddly enough he is at his best, in my view, when he reverts to simpler forms – more manly forms, as the old Navy might have said – and displays his remarkable gifts of portraiture and narrative. He has a marvellous passage about Sir Clements Markham, the egregious begetter of Scott's last venture, a polar buff in the kind of a train-spotter or a builder of matchbox Eiffel Towers, who devised heraldic devices for those officers of the expedition who could not demonstrate their own coats-of-arms, and personally designed swallow-tailed banners to be flown from sledges. And best of all, at the very end of the book Mr Spufford succumbs to the old Romance himself, and reconstructs the death of Captain Scott with a grace and kindness that tugs at the heart.

For the British may have not been the best polar explorers – their postures were often absurd or arrogant, their pride was self-delusory; but somehow or other, like Mallory when the time came, like Francis Spufford despite himself perhaps, they managed to turn the stuff of bathos into an indestructible splendour of myth.

Jan Morris

Himalaya Alpine-style
The most challenging routes on the highest peaks
Andy Fanshawe & Stephen Venables
Hodder & Stoughton, 1995, pp192, £35.00

It may be overstating the case, but I wonder if the appearance of this book is historically significant. As Venables' introductory essay points out, alpine-style attitudes have been in use in the Himalaya for a long time. But no one

has ever quite suggested – not for a hundred years anyway – that they might lead to a 'Playground of the Himalaya' essentially indistinguishable from Leslie Stephen's Playground of Europe. The Himalaya were different.

Now here is the book to make you wonder. It may be too large to go in the back pocket of a pair of breeches, but it could easily fit in a porter load. More realistic might be transfer to CD-ROM, suitable for insertion into a miniature player strapped to the climber's wrist. One could then stop for a breather whilst halfway up, say, the South Face of Annapurna, and look to see where the route goes next. Perhaps people will start 'collecting' the routes, as they have with *Hard Rock*.

That the Himalaya could be turned into an alpinist's playground is underlined again and again in this book, and I found the tone and excitement which flow through it so effective that I had to hold on to my head in places. It really does make you feel that all you need is enthusiasm. Erhard Loretan himself, whose stature is judged with great authority here, as is that of all the main protagonists of the last twenty years, said recently: 'What we do is possible for anyone with a certain amount of Himalayan experience.' Like Loretan's remark, this book could be dangerous to the unwary. But if that's a fault, it is an inevitable one in a book as inspiring as this.

Sandwiched between the introduction and a single page of information on regulations, peak fees and a short general bibliography, the authors present forty essays, each summarising the state of alpine-style climbing on a major Himalayan peak and suggesting one, or at most two, preferred routes. Each essay is around 1500 words and is lavishly illustrated. Not the least of this book's achievements is that it balances and integrates essay, photographs and captions in a way few books of this *genre* do. The writing is no poor cousin to the photography, even though the pictures are superb.

The sense of Himalayan alpine-style as something in the making rather than a mere record is immediately evident. The front end paper shows a climber on Ama Dablam's SW ridge against a background of unclimbed peaks; the contents panorama shows the Chinese side of Broad Peak. There are all kinds of new opportunities and possibilities, sometimes hinted at, sometimes downright suggested. The authors have been generous with their knowledge. At the same time, they are clearly aware of the sense of sadness which must inevitably accompany the organising of information like this, the sense of 'climbing made easy'.

The solution they have used seems logical, and has the added advantage of giving the book shape. Firstly, they have restricted themselves to the main Himalayan/Karakoram range, the limiting peaks being Rakaposhi in the west and Kangchenjunga in the east. These are also the first and last essays, as the book is arranged strictly geographically, working eastwards.

Secondly, the book makes no concessions to very easy routes, however popular. As Venables writes in his introduction, he decided 'not to include very straightforward climbs like, for instance, the normal route on Nepal's popular Mera Peak. The criteria were that the mountain should be an

inspiring summit and that the route up it should be either an irresistibly compelling line or redolent with historical association; it should also be 'a sporting route where success will never be certain.' Within these restrictions the book falls naturally into three sections: Pakistan (16 essays), India (10), and Nepal/Tibet (14). Nothing in the Hindu Kush, therefore, nor in Bhutan, nor in Central Asian ranges such as the Pamir or the Tien Shan.

Thirdly, the authors have tried to concentrate their essays into geographical groups. Thus under the Pakistan section they have chosen four mountains in the Hunza region, two in the Ogre group, two in the Trango, four in the Baltoro (but five essays since K2, uniquely, gets two – one for the northern and one for the southern side) and one in the Hushe valley. Only Nanga Parbat stands entirely alone here. In India we get concentrated work on Kishtwar, the Gangotri and the Nanda Devi group, with only Rimo in the Eastern Karakoram standing alone; and under Nepal and Tibet, there are the Rolwaling, Khumbu, Makalu and Kangchenjunga groups, with the South Faces of Shisha Pangma and Annapurna as the outsiders. Each section of the book starts with a clear outline map and is followed by a summary of statistics and information. There are further maps, where justified, for individual mountain groups.

By this clever device, the authors may satisfy both those who want easily accessible information and those who deplore the opening up of secret places. Almost without exception the chosen areas are well-known, with the dubious advantages of a burgeoning trekking and climbing industry already in place. In that sense, this book does not open new ground. But within these areas there is a fantastic amount of exploration still to be done, and this book presents it. The essay on Drifika in the Hushe valley, for example, manages to be an excellent introduction to the whole valley.

One obvious advantage of concentrating on specific areas is that it is possible to cross-reference the photographs, and the authors have made the most of this. Time and again, looking at the pictures, I saw interesting things on the horizon and, sure enough, when I turned to the caption, it told me exactly what I wanted to know, and often related it to some other mountain in the book. Without ever losing a sense of focus, the authors have done a great deal more than tell you how to climb forty mountains.

Venables, to whom control of the book passed on Andy Fanshawe's death in 1992, has clearly been given a fair amount of rope by the publishers, and while Fanshawe inspired the book and did much of the early work, credit for its overall shape and style must be his. The Venables influence is evident throughout and the scene-setting, in particular, is masterly. People who have no intention of ever going anywhere near any of these climbs but have a general interest in the Himalaya would still get a great deal out of this book. Venables was always a keen historian, and the sense of a wide vision, a simultaneous awareness of past achievements and exciting remaining challenges, makes this a highly civilised volume. On the other hand, it is obvious that the authors are practising alpine-style protagonists; no pure

historian or book-packager could have written with this sense of immediacy. Quotations from other climbers are used very sparingly, and rightly, since there is very little here which Fanshawe and Venables couldn't fairly claim to understand and describe from firsthand experience. A serious mountaineer's hand is also evident in the photographic editing. All the photographs have something to say about the experience of expedition mountaineering, not least those where there's no climbing anywhere to be seen. The only time I thought the author not entirely 'there' was in the description of the futuristic ice climbs, often done in winter, which are beginning to festoon the lower Khumbu peaks – Jeff Lowe and David Breashears' route on the North Face of Kwangde Lho, for example.

I read the first half of the book continuously without losing interest, and found only two short paragraphs which seemed to me to be 'fillers'. I found only one significant printing fault. The standard of every aspect of this work is very high indeed, and very well maintained. Nevertheless, everyone will have his favourite pieces because even 'alpine-style' embraces a great width of ambition. At the very least, this book must further the holiday approach to areas like the Hushe Valley in Pakistan, and encourage more rock climbers to pack their rock shoes and chalk bags and head for the Trango Towers. To what extent the real super routes – like the Catalan route on the South Face of Annapurna, the West Pillar of Makalu or the North Face of Kangchenjunga – will become a 'Himalayan playground' remains to be seen. It's hard to believe at the moment. But then people always say that.

Phil Bartlett

Ice World. Techniques and Experiences of Modern Ice Climbing
Jeff Lowe
The Mountaineers, 1996, pp256, £19.95

This is not your conventional old-fashioned ice-climbing instruction book peppered with blurred black-and-white photographs of intrepid mountaineers using their crampons to stop themselves slipping on 20° slopes. Far from it. Here we have 250 pages of glossy colour photographs and state-of-the-art techniques. It is not all about 'instruction' either, which has to be a major plus-point. 250 pages of 'how to do it' text could get pretty dry!

As the sub-title suggests, Lowe approaches the subject in a 'Techniques and Experiences' way. And it is the 'and Experiences' bit that makes it different and inspirational. After all, it's all very nice learning about how to do something but there's nothing like some real live accounts of the pleasures that await those who have mastered the craft to whet the appetite.

Lowe approaches the subject under five main headings. Firstly, we are

taken through an interesting history of the sport, touching on selected major advances from 16th century Alpine shepherds to 20th century state-of-the-art climbs. Lowe's vast firsthand world-wide experience has enabled him to chart progress through the years and draw direct comparisons between standards reached in Scotland, the European Alps, Canada, Peru, New Zealand, USA, Patagonia, the Himalaya et al. Few climbers enjoy such a far-reaching depth of knowledge.

The second section concentrates on Lowe's own climbs from the early 1970s to date. And the list is impressive to say the least ... from Mt Kitchener's Grand Central Couloir and Colorado's Bridal Veil Falls to achievements further afield, such as the Hungo Face of Kwangde and the NW Face of Kangtega in Nepal.

At a quick glance the 'Clothing and Techniques' sections look to be conventional stuff but as we move towards the 'extreme' section more colour photos start to appear and the text ratchets up several gears. No doubts about where the author's preferences lie. I found the extreme section intriguing. Anyone (like me) who thought that ice climbing was simply about twanging ice axes into ice and pulling on them is in for a shock. Terminology as well as technology are stretched to the limit. 'Gorilla Grunts', 'stacking tools', 'orang-utan hangs' and 'figure of fours' flow freely. We are also introduced to the joys of 'dry tooling' (where, judging by the photograph on page 178, there is no need for any snow or ice at all) and 'heel hooking' using extended and sharpened heel-clamp bolts.

For me, though, the 'Hard Water Guide' section – an overview of world ice covering sixteen selected climbs throughout the world – is the highlight of a book which is as enjoyable to flick through quickly as it is to read and absorb. Those who are looking for ideas, inspiration and hints on how to go about achieving wintery dreams need look no further.

Mick Fowler

Scottish Winter Climbs
Andy Nisbet and Rab Anderson
Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1996, pp x+326 , £15.95

This is the long-awaited replacement for Hamish MacInnes' volume with its idiosyncratic pleasures. (Remember the figure drawn to an absurdly small scale on the photograph of *Savage Slit*?)

The new volume fits nicely on my shelf next to the seven SMC volumes it condenses: two guides to the Northern Highlands, two to the Cairngorms and one each to Arrochar, Ben Nevis and Glen Coe. Any book of selected climbs will produce some disagreement; but the classics are all here, and there are enough in most areas to give climbers some alternatives when there are queues on their chosen objective. It is unfortunate that the new

book includes nothing from Skye. My only other gripe is that the diagram of the North Face of Aonach Dubh shows routes that ought to be, but are not, included in the text. I hope this will be rectified in the next edition.

The new volume has some excellent diagrams, which often improve on those in the extended series and should give a clear indication to those approaching a winter cliff for the first time. Finding the route is, after all, the crux of winter climbing. There is a discussion on risk, avalanche and weather, a wee ramble about tactics and some advice about choosing a venue. All good stuff. But the main advantage is in not having to traipse around with seven guidebooks for a weekend's winter climbing.

All in all, I think *Scottish Winter Climbs* should prove of real benefit to the occasional visitor to Scotland. Recommended.

Victor Saunders

K2 Challenging the Sky
Roberto Mantovani and Kurt Diemberger
Swan Hill Press/Airlife Publishing Ltd, pp144, £19.95

Here is a sumptuous picture book telling the story of the mountaineer's mountain, 'the mastodontic K2', to quote co-authors Roberto Mantovani and Kurt Diemberger (who are credited in that order on the jacket).

The first 47 pages deal with exploration and history and if there is a slight bias in favour of the Italians, this is surely permissible in a book about a mountain they made their own. Wiessner comes out somewhat better from this narrative than he does from other recent histories.

The next 14 pages celebrate the Italian first ascent with evocative and extremely well reproduced black and white photographs, including a boyishly smiling Bonatti. The acrimony which removed that smile is logged, down to Bonatti's last public hearing forty years on, but the joint authors studiously avoid voicing a judgment of their own on this, or indeed on any other of the much picked over controversies which have dogged attempts on the mountain from Crowley's day to the present.

The remaining 83 pages of this slim but handsomely designed book chronicle the consolidation of the Abruzzi Ridge and the opening up of more routes on this most unforgiving of 8000m peaks, taking us from five and a half kilometres of fixed Japanese rope on the South-West Ridge to the pure Alpine-style triumph of Béghin and Profit on the North-West Ridge and Face. In so doing, it almost becomes a history of expedition climbing technique in microcosm.

The map and topos are helpful and there are telling margin extracts from climbers' reflections, written in moods of awe, euphoria, recrimination or, occasionally, philosophy, such as Alessandro Gogna on deciding to turn back: 'It is up to us to decide and afterwards to smile.' There's not much smiling in the story of K2.

Though the table of climbs ends with a summary of the 1995 deaths, attempts and successes, the actual narrative text stops in 1994, forty years on from the first ascent. But what makes this a bit more than just another gloatworthy coffee table item is Kurt Diemberger's own lyrical obsession with the mountain which became his dream factory.

Nevertheless the value of a book such as this rests on the quality and the selection of the colour photography and this is stunning, especially the big spreads from high on the formidable north side of the mountain. This *tour de l'horizon* is the stuff for armchair climbers to bask in and one to make those planning future expeditions reach, in best Tilman and Shipton tradition, for the back of an envelope.

Maggie Body

The Story of the White Crystal
Maria Antonia Sironi, Hildegard Diemberger and Others
Ferrari Editrice, Italy 1995, pp199, npq

This sumptuously produced book combines pictures of outstanding quality with an historical theme which has been interleaved with a modern commentary on and description of the life and times of a contemporary Tibetan society in that hard, remote land that lies beyond the ranges.

The setting is the Southern Tibetan village and monastery of Shekar, part of that once inaccessible world whose southern horizons are bounded by Everest, Cho Oyu, Makalu and Shisha Pangma. Its first European visitors were members of the 1921 Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. Howard-Bury's famous photograph of the Abbot of Shekar Monastery, dressed in fabulous robes of gold brocade and worshipped as the reincarnation of his predecessors, recalls the sanctity and mystery of an older Tibet before its barbarous destruction during the Cultural Revolution. Shekar is still a living village and monastery, dominated by the ruins of a fantastic, fairy-tale fortress improbably engrafted onto the ribs of a bare mountain by its fourteenth century rulers, the 'Lords of the South'. Only the bones of this once impregnable fortress remain but something of its history – together with that of its rulers, abbots and monastery – has been faithfully preserved in the recently rediscovered eighteenth century manu-script from which the book takes its title.

The Story of the White Crystal represents the joint compilation of an Austro/Tibetan research team headed by Maria Sironi and Hildegard Diemberger (anthropologist and Tibetologist) with supporting Diemberger family roles played by Karen (maps) and Kurt (photography). Fosco Maraini contributes an elegant Preface to place these mysterious 'Hidden Valleys', sources of the Brahmaputra, into some topographical and historical context. The abbreviated translation of the Tibetan manuscript, accounting for a quarter of the text, will primarily interest the specialist while the greater part of

the book sympathetically describes the country, its people, their religion, aspirations and what remains of their ancient culture. The Epilogue ends on a note of hope, reconstruction and revival.

This beautiful publication will lift the hearts of those who cherish Tibet and its peoples and delight all mountain lovers.

J G R Harding

Weir's World, An Autobiography of Sorts
Tom Weir
Canongate Books 1994, pp248, £15.99

In this autobiography Tom passes on to us a continuity with the past, in the form of a tartan weave of a long life spent among mountains all over the world. Like Tom Longstaff, who had greatly impressed him as a young man, he had his dreams and put feet to them, yet this successful achiever in several fields kept them all in perspective. Tom quotes Hilaire Belloc and maintains that we are all part of a splendid tradition, however varied our initiation.

From quiet homes and first beginning,
Out to the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning,
But laughter and the love of friends.

This is not a blow-by-blow history but an enjoyable read, covering a wide range of interests, which swings back and forth in time with many comments and diversions on the way. The result is sometimes amusing, sometimes moving, always vivid. The book also reminds us – unintentionally – that the spirit of Shipton and Tilman never faded, as some suggest, but was carried on by the strong team of Murray, Scott, McKinnon and Weir who made the first British lightweight Himalayan expedition after the war. In hindsight, this was a time of considerable historical importance which led to successes by others on greater mountains (Everest, Kangchenjunga) a few years later.

There are chapters on the Cairngorms and the Cuillin, on climbing in the Alps, but the meat of the book is about the exploration of remoter, lesser-known regions: Julian Alps, Corsica, Turkey, Arctic, Lofoten Norway and the Atlas Mountains of Morocco – all very successful expeditions. For the last I am eternally grateful, as it was the enthusiasm of Tom (and Gavin Maxwell) which first took me to the Atlas, over thirty visits ago. Tom's photographs and slides were part of that influence, for as well as being a well-known writer on mountains and wildlife (especially birds) he lectured widely and has contributed a monthly piece to the *Scots Magazine* ever since 1956. He also became a well-known TV figure through his series of programmes about Scottish life in the outdoors.

Tom has gobbled up experiences, of people, places, wildlife and mountains for most of his eighty-plus years; to have compressed all these varied activities into one book was a *tour de force*. The topics range back and forth to give a kaleidoscopic effect rather than a steady narrative. Although he has already written two books on the Himalayan years, a book about Norway and several collections of articles, Tom's experiences seem freshly remembered and I had no feeling of having read it all before.

When I first saw this book it was as a much photocopied untidy script. On dipping into it, I was at once captivated. For years I had been urging Tom to arrange a reprint of his first book *Highland Days*, the pre-war story of his youth which is now recognised as a period classic. But he always reacted with a wicked twinkle, for my remark had seemed to imply that nothing he wrote subsequently could possibly bear comparison. Now his octogenarian youthfulness refutes that idea, and I was both astonished and delighted when this autobiography came my way.

Hamish M Brown

High Himalaya Unknown Valleys
Harish Kapadia
With a Foreword by Chris Bonington
Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, pp335, Rs 350

Harish Kapadia's contribution to his chosen sport has raised the reputation of India in the eyes of the world. His chief contribution to Indian mountaineering has been to build on the traditional Hindu regard for the Himalaya rather than to ape the West with its eternal quest for altitude records. Chris Bonington's Foreword sums up India's first pioneering mountaineer unerringly. He remarks on the meticulous planning, reliable relationships with tried and trusted porters, and the breadth of knowledge and warmth of personality that Kapadia's name always evokes.

Harish's wife Geeta has done the striking sketches for this book of his explorations and their two sons are named after Sherpa companions. Behind this extraordinary exception to the cautious joint family philosophy of obviating all risk in life is Harish's father, who blessed his son's talents as a climber, explorer and natural expedition leader.

This book is a must for any serious student of Himalayan lore. Kapadia proceeds beyond where most trekkers turn back. Quality climbs rather than eight-thousander fixations are a feature of his book and always his eye is for the unclimbed route or the aesthetic peak that the ordinary adventurer can have a go at without the rigmarole of applications to officialdom (with father's name, if any, in triplicate).

The range of Kapadia's travels along the Himalaya must put him in the ranks of the great explorers, but such is the laid-back geniality of the author that it is hard to equate him with the enormous ego of a Sven Hedin.

A perusal of this collection of travels reprinted from the *Himalayan Journal* reveals that only the Arunachal Himalaya is missing from the author's itinerary, so far. No doubt with the easing of border tensions he will eventually cover that area as well, to make his profile of the Indian and Nepal Himalaya complete. His journeys are a fascinating mix of full-blown expeditions, winter excursions, family outings and serious exploration of Karakoram glaciers. His early enthusiasm for big peaks led to some hard lessons learned in the Nanda Devi Sanctuary. The loss of Nitin Patel and Ang Kami on Bethartoli and his own accident on Devtoli – which put him on crutches for two years – mellowed his ambitions from the lure of vertical achievement to the more speculative satisfaction of mountain exploration.

Throughout these treks the reader is given useful local information almost impossible to come by elsewhere and likely peaks are pointed out to stimulate other parties who may follow. I certainly wait for a Kapadia write-up before I set out on a trek. His local lore invariably makes the trip more interesting and that much easier.

One failing is that the author does not think in English and his use of idiom tends to be infelicitous, if not open to misinterpretation by those unfamiliar with the subcontinental habit of omitting an article where English custom demands (and inserting one when unrequired!). But this shortcoming, one could argue, is the best proof of Harish Kapadia's overriding virtue: his affair with the mountains is entirely Indian in inspiration. Objective, scientific, yet aware of the effect of the moon on local weather patterns, Kapadia's comprehensive coverage is valued by the international climbing community. These collected explorations can be considered among the most significant Himalayan publications since Kenneth Mason's *Abode of Snow*, a classic that presented the bare bones that this book by Kapadia has fleshed out.

Bill Aitken

The High Altitude Medicine Handbook
Andrew J Pollard and David R Murdoch
Radcliff Medical Press, Oxford and New York, 1996, pp xx +146, £16.95

Since the appearance of the first formal textbook on mountain medicine over twenty years ago, there has been an increasing number of publications on the medical hazards of mountains. *The High Altitude Medicine Handbook* is the latest of these and it is excellent, giving a common-sense, down-to-earth and practical account. Both the authors have wide experience in the field, laboratory and hospital and their advice is based on sound scientific principles.

Largely as a result of packaged tours, many millions now visit the mountains to trek, ski and climb. At one time exposure to altitude was gradual and acclimatisation occurred slowly. Now air travel can expose the traveller

suddenly, and mountain sickness and its complications, lung and brain oedema, are all too frequent. Cold injury, too, is a possible hazard, and the prevention and treatment of all these are well covered in this handbook.

With the increasing trend to family treks and school parties, children and adolescents are also at risk, and the chapter entitled 'Children at Altitude' by one of the authors, Andrew Pollard who is a paediatrician, is timely. Other specialised subjects covered include training, dental problems, medical kit, preventative measures and much more in a concise 146 pages.

There is now absolutely no excuse for anyone going to the mountains to be ignorant of potential hazards and how to deal with them. Certainly all climbing doctors must be fully aware of the contents of this book. Any intelligent layman, too, will be able to understand most of the text, in particular the important 'bullet points' highlighted clearly in 'boxes'. Highly recommended.

Michael Ward

The Game of Mountain and Chance
Anne Sauvy
Bâton Wicks, 1995, pp159, £8.99

This is the second volume of Anne Sauvy's short stories on mountain themes, now published in English translation. Her first volume, *Flammes de Pierre*, appeared in English in 1991 to critical acclaim (reviewed in *AJ98*; the original French edition was reviewed in *AJ88*, and her third volume, *La Ténèbre et L'Azur*, not yet available in English, in *AJ97*).

In a previous review I called Anne Sauvy the Scheherazade of the mountain world, and this still seems to me an apt description. She knows how to tell a good story with clever twists to the plot, although the denouement is sometimes a little too obvious. The paperback will not significantly add to the weight of the rucksack when it is taken to hut or tent for passing the time whilst the storm rages outside. The English reads well: in fact many people have helped with the translation, as explained in the Preface, and the proliferation of cooks does not seem to have spoiled the broth.

There is an interesting range of styles, each adapted to the theme of its story; thus, in 'The Bronze Mountaineers', undoubtedly the *pièce de résistance* of the collection, Balmat and Saussure are made to speak, each in the fashion appropriate to his class, in what is presumed to be late eighteenth-century English. This seems reasonable; one small grouse, though: whilst a *poilu* is certainly a French soldier of the First World War (p13), he is not an 'Old Contemptible'! In this, as in other stories, the supernatural plays its part and all manner of ghosts, in the form of pretty women, invisible climbers, fairies – which are ugly old hags, of course – and Victorian mountaineers make their appearance.

There is plenty of wit and irony and a certain ruthlessness in Anne Sauvy's

view of the mountain scene – I find it hard to tell whether the irony extends to her romantic descriptions of upper-class English folk. The most disconcerting story for an elderly reviewer is 'The Veteran', and I confess to a special liking for 'The London Dinner', which was included in *AJ96*.

Some of the stories, such as 'The Curved Spire' and 'The Stunt' (published in *AJ95*), are very slight, but are none the worse for that. This volume is a worthy companion to *Flammes de Pierre* and deserves to be equally successful.

Ernst Sondheimer

Mountain Holidays

Janet Adam Smith

The Ernest Press, 1996, pp ix+194, maps, illus., £12.50

At this late stage it is unlikely that lists of favourite books of the century will need revision. In a category for the most delightful reminiscences on alpinism I would stand this beside Dorothy Pilley's *Climbing Days*, a pairing often made, and Robin Fedden's book on the Encantados, less-well-known but closer in spirit. On first publication *Mountain Holidays* won immediate acclaim and it has been long out of print. This reissue in its fiftieth year is to be welcomed. One has to assume that most readers of Alpine literature will know it already so I will sketch its content rather briefly. Some remarks, however, on how it reads today may be justified.

The account extends from family holidays in Arran just before the First War to Alpine excursions with her husband just before the Second. On the evidence of her book the author is a centrist. In Scotland she favours Arran and the Cairngorms. In the Western Alps she visits the best-known regions and makes guided ascents of classic routes; the focus, however, is on intensive guideless explorations of the Graians. The outings described are not of great difficulty but they attest to her stamina, early and arduous solo crossings of the Cairngorm block leading up to serial hut-walks and ascents, sparing of rest days, in the Tarentaise and Haute-Maurienne. And though she relishes a comfortable hotel she is quite prepared to sleep in the straw.

The moment of its writing shaped the book. The war had gone on and on and resumption of travel was nowhere in sight. The author reflects that the good years will come again for her children, if not for herself, and her book is suffused with nostalgia for the Alps. Not surprisingly, in a time of tight rationing food troubles her thoughts and she torments herself and her first readers by recounting the full menus of sumptuous and well-earned feasts.

Appearing before the era of unremitting development, the book is filled with small portents of change. The new road is being constructed over the Col de l'Iseran; a new shop has opened at Val d'Isère; at Bonneval and Lac de Tignes – and at Braemar – there is speculation on whether a regular winter season is possible; the guide dons rubbers for the Mummery Crack;

luggage is searched at the frontier – for cocaine, she speculates; and on both sides of that frontier troops are on manoeuvres.

Mountain Holidays recites a fond litany of remembered names: peaks, passes and glaciers; huts, hotels and villages. It is lifted out of the ordinary by the charm and clarity of its observation, the liveliness of its portraits and the rich humour of its encounters. The author makes good use of her knowledge of early writers and an incidental interest to some readers may be afforded by her own literary associations. Beginning her hill-walking under the eye of W P Ker, she attains her maturity as mountaineer with her husband, Michael Roberts. Improbably, they enlist William Empson for winter ski-mountaineering and he arrives with less luggage and proves himself a better skier than either. At Val d'Isère a telegram from Laura Riding and Robert Graves invites them to Majorca. Book reviews and page proofs are despatched between climbs.

Importantly, the book is a memorial to the Courmayeur guide Othon Bron, who had become close friend as well as leader and who died in a crevasse fall a few days before they were to join him once more. Relations between guides of neighbouring valleys and different nationalities have not always been cordial but Chamonix sent eight guides to join the cortège and a touching appreciation from a French paper is quoted. Translating freely: *Bron was a solid lad, such as mountains know how to make ... Who, at Chamonix, didn't know that tanned face with its strong and lively features, always smiling, always joking ... This was a Valdôtain of whom we can say that he was one of our boys.*

Janet Adam Smith handled this loss with both feeling and restraint to produce one of the most moving tributes I have read in Alpine literature.

Harold Drasdo

Spiti – Adventures in the Trans-Himalaya

Harish Kapadia

Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996, pp216, Rs 1250, $100

Spiti, the unknown, only opened to non-Indian nationals in 1993. Even now only a handful of trekkers and climbers have visited this sparsely-populated and barren land. Harish Kapadia knows more about it than anyone else and this book is primarily a very readable and closely-researched record of his explorations, climbs and adventures since his first expedition to the area in 1983.

Personally I have only looked into Spiti from the Rohtang La above Manali. That was back in 1993 when the area had just been reopened. No foreign teams had climbed there since 1955/56 ... just before I was born. The unknown is invariably attractive and since then I have always kept my eyes open for literature on the area – without ever having found anything of substance beyond Harish Kapadia's own writings.

The opportunity to review this book then was something which I leapt at ... and I have not been disappointed. Kapadia paints a vivid history of the area very much drawing one into an atmosphere of stark beauty, unexplored terrain and traditional culture. He manages to give a unique insight into both the people and the geography of the area. The result is a book which will doubtless become a bible to prospective mountaineers, trekkers and anyone with even a passing interest in the area.

There are a couple of his stories that I found particularly memorable: the first is a classic, but tragic, war escape story involving Ludwig Schmaderer and H Paider. Whilst Heinrich Harrer (of Eiger North Face fame) was escaping from the British and on his way to spending seven years in Tibet, Schmaderer and Paider (who had been interned in 1939 when they returned from a mountaineering expedition to the Kangchenjunga area) were also successful in escaping and reaching Tibet. Thereafter they were not so fortunate. The reception they received was not over-friendly and they were persuaded to return to India. Once there they decided to trek through the Spiti winter and try to go east to Gartok in Tibet. They did not know that the war had already finished. In Tabo they separated to buy provisions and Schmaderer was never seen again. It was later established that he had been murdered – the first such offence in Spiti for 40 years and an incident which briefly brought Spiti to international attention for the first (and only?) time this century.

The other story goes a long way to summing up the relative isolation of Spiti. Whilst up in the mountains Harish's team had asked the postmaster at Kaja to retain their *poste restante* mail for five weeks. On returning they found, much to their dismay, that the numerous items of post had been returned to their senders. On complaining to the Shimla Post Office Harish received a written reply along the lines that ' ... the Kaja postmaster is already on a punishment posting and we do not know where else to shift him'.

Kapadia covers such stories in a very readable, informative and often amusing style. His love and enthusiasm for the area are obvious to anyone reading just a few pages. This book is an absolutely essential purchase for anyone interested in this remote and exciting part of the world. I found it sufficiently inspiring to put Spiti firmly on my list of places that I *have* to visit.

Mick Fowler

The Return of John Macnab
Andrew Greig
Headline Review, 1996, pp viii+280, £16.99

Three young aristocrats, a lawyer, a banker and a cabinet minister, in the course of conversation at their club, find that they are each frankly bored with their lives. Even shooting and fishing seem without sufficient challenge.

But what if they were to turn poachers, with their reputations as well as their heads at risk? So warnings are sent to the three estates neighbouring their friend's deer estate in Scotland which they can secretly use as a base. Between specified dates a deer or a salmon will be poached in a sporting manner and delivered to the laird's house without detection. Each letter is signed 'John Macnab'.

John Buchan's 1925 novel *John Macnab* is an adventure story set in the North-West Highlands which nevertheless confronts the issues of Scottish land ownership raised by this apparently 'Bolshevik' behaviour. It is the son of the American laird (Buchan's topical joke) who finally worries that 'there may be a large crop of Macnabs springing up' and 'it's a dangerous thing to weaken the sanctities of property'. He is made to look as foolish as the three John Macnabs when it is pointed out by his father that, of course, no gentleman landowner would have dared spoil the reputations of three men upon whom business dealings might rest anyway. The self-interest of the landed class hushes up the escapade and it's back to business.

Andrew Greig's cunning second novel has sprung a tripartite John Macnab for the Nineties, now challenging estates in the Cairngorms. With a sharp eye for witty detail Greig's economical style concentrates on plot tension and lets the emotional and political themes develop within the drive of a thriller. The American is replaced by a Dutchman and his 'nasty keeper' will be instantly recognised by many (although thankfully replaced in 1995 by a friendly young keeper from Wensleydale). The three modern Macnabs resemble characters in Edward Abbey's radical, influential novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, upon which the 'Earth First!' movement was based. Alasdair is ex-army, survival-trained and votes Conservative. Murray is a radical District Councillor who keeps the access issues bubbling. Neil is the central character who is suffering from too much emotional control of a personal crisis that is sensitively handled by Greig. But the character with whom the author obviously has most mischievous fun is local journalist Kirsty who discovers John Macnab early on, like her predecessor Janet Raden, but who insists on playing a more wicked role. 'There's no sex in *John Macnab*,' Neil complains, as his and Kirsty's pasts get as increasingly tangled as their feelings for each other.

That the final estate challenged is Balmoral, and that Charles himself arrives to defend it, brings the added edge of a shoot-to-kill policy. With MI5 on their trail these modern 'scallywags', as Buchan called them, are heading into a heavy-duty noose and the novel takes an unexpected turn, even for a book of tightly-orchestrated sudden turns.

The Return of John Macnab manages to be both gripping and hilarious. Ironically, Buchan and Abbey explore access and ownership more fully, but Greig's handling of nineties' love relationships is deft and knowing. This is the kind of guaranteed good read you will find yourself passing on to friends. You will want to get it back to read again.

Terry Gifford

Terra Incognita. Travels in Antarctica
Sara Wheeler
Jonathan Cape, 1996, pp306, £16.99

The author fell in love with Antarctica when she caught a glimpse of King George Island during a visit to Chile in 1991. Two years later, against enormous odds, she was accepted as the first foreigner on the American Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists' and Writers' Program. After preparations of unparalleled complexity, she embarked on her seven-month Polar journey from New Zealand 'like Jonah' aboard a ski-equipped Hercules. 'I couldn't see a window, so I hurtled towards Antarctica in my own private capsule.'

This is a book for anyone interested in 'the last great journey left to man', as Shackleton described it, whether or not they have travelled or intend to travel to Antarctica. It will appeal to those who enjoy not only an exceptionally well-described story but who see adventuring to far-flung places as a metaphor for man's search for the unattainable: Sara Wheeler's experience of Antarctica taught her 'another way of looking at the world'. At the same time, though, she has this marvellous British way of deflating any hint of pompousness or pretension. For instance, a lot of the time she didn't think about Atlantis or metaphorical allusions at all. 'I thought about how cold I was.'

It is a beguiling mixture. On the one hand, Wheeler can write with imaginative precision. Thus, the view along the Sound from McMurdo:

'The sky was mottled with cirro-stratus like fishscales, and shafts of sunlight fell on the creased surface of an ice tongue, a massive projection fed by two glaciers. Beyond it ink-dark seals lay around their holes. On one side mountains sank into glacier snouts, and on the other the sea ice had melted into a berg-studded ocean which rippled lightly, like a wheatfield touched by the wind.'

On other occasions she betrays a marvellously earthy humour: 'The best place to go drinking was an unofficial nightspot known as the Corner Bar, and any reprobate who arrived on the ice was ineluctably drawn towards it like an iron filing to a magnet.'

All Wheeler's images are freshly seen; indeed, many of her descriptions have a visual quality that brings them, intact and life-sized, before our eyes:

'They had been living at this bleak spot with thousands of penguins for three months, and later I watched them capturing nesting birds with what looked like a large black butterfly net, stowing the egg lying under each one in a skua-proof box, tying the bird up by its feet, weighing it on a weighbridge, opening its cloaca to determine its sex, measuring its beak, passing an infrared wand over it and painting a number on its back. The penguins kept quite still throughout this ordeal, and afterwards settled back on their stone nests with a quick wing-flap as if little more than a minor inconvenience had occurred.'

'How do you tell which is which?' Wheeler asked.
'How you tell which man is which?' was the reply.
'Er, well, they sort of look different.'
'Yes, so penguins look to me.'

Most of the men on the base were, in fact, referred to by Wheeler as 'frozen beards', in a generic sort of way. The Italians, though, were different: 'Everything the Italians did, they did stylishly. They had the best gear, and far outclassed any other nationality on the ice with their red *tute* bodysuits and red-and-white rucksacks. They made the British look as if they hadn't left the continent since 1912.' They also gave Wheeler a warm welcome when she visited the Italian station at Terra Nova Bay.

By contrast, her reception at the British Antarctic Survey at Rothera made her feel like an outsider. Things started badly when no one met her at the airstrip (though they knew she was coming) and during her first evening she was virtually ignored. 'It was as if I had moved into a family home and tried to pretend I was a relative.' BAS is the oldest programme in the Antarctic and the scientists there all come from the same 'club' in Cambridge. While writing this review, I checked with a friend at the Scott Polar Research Institute: 'All non-scientific visitors cause some disruption,' my friend said, 'so that scientists and support staff, who form a close-knit community and have full programmes to complete, can be less than welcoming. Wheeler should have been better received by all accounts, but she need not have made such a meal of it in her book in comparison with other stations. I have no doubt that her reception at Terra Nova Bay was almost overwhelming but the Italians are like that!'

Be that as it may, one of the things I most admire about this book is the way the history of the continent is welded seamlessly into Wheeler's account of her travels, albeit by modern forms of transport, over much of the same ground covered by the early explorers. For instance, she describes how, with the help of a helicopter, she located the rock shelter built by Cherry-Garrard during his epic journey with Wilson and Bowers from Cape Evans to Cape Crozier in 1911: 'When I spotted the remains of the shelter, my heart contracted. It was as if they were going to appear from behind a rock, their necks frozen, smiling through cracked lips ... '

In his classic account, *The Worst Journey in the World*, written when he had been invalided home from the Western Front in 1914, Cherry-Garrard described how the three men had maintained their comradeship even at the worst moments and created, as Wheeler describes it, 'the archetypal transmogrification of failure on a human plane into success on a higher one.' By contrast, after Roger Mear made the same journey, one way, in 1985, he recounted in his book *In the Footsteps of Scott* how he and his two companions had allowed their relationships to deteriorate into tensions and hostility. Perhaps nowadays we are simply more frank about our reactions under pressure – like Warren Hollinger, writing in this volume: 'Which partner did I want to kill first?'

Not many people have the courage to try to define exactly what it is about Antarctica that makes it special and significant for them: 'The landscape drew my thoughts away from worldly things, away from the thousand mechanical details of my outward life. I had found the place where, loosed from my cultural moorings, I could find the space to look for the higher power, whatever it was, that loomed over the snowfields ... '

I hope I have indicated the high quality of Sara Wheeler's writing and that this is a book which can be savoured and enjoyed by everyone. I urge you to read it.

Johanna Merz

Monte Rosa
Fotografie di Carlo Meazza
Editoriale Jaca Books, 1992, pp296, npq

This sumptuous, large-format book brings together a collection of images from the Italian photographer, Carlo Meazza. Childhood holidays, spent on the shores of Lake Varese, allowed Meazza plenty of opportunity to build up a relationship with the second highest mountain massif in the Alps and he resolved to produce a book that would not only illustrate all the many facets of the great snowy giant and its surrounding peaks but also the village people who live below it. The result of his efforts is aimed at a wide audience and not primarily towards the mountaineer; the alpinist or mountain lover is well-provided with many revealing pictures taken both of and from the mountain.

There is little text, but that which exists is reproduced in English at the end of the book. It largely deals with the history of the region but includes a section, by AC member Gino Buscaini, on 20 recommended walking tours and climbing trips in the area, such as the Alpe Testanera, Corno de Faller, Testa Grigia, Tour de Monte Rosa, Signalkuppe and the Lyskamm Traverse, to name but a few. With its superior panoramas and aerial photography this is a book that should appeal to many AC members familiar with the area. It's a fine Italian production and there is promise of more to come, for Meazza is currently working on a similar photographic extravaganza to Mont Blanc.

Lindsay Griffin

Masino, Bregaglia, Disgrazia. Montagne per Quattro Stagioni
Gianluca Maspes and Giuseppe Miotti
Ramponi Arti Grafiche, Sondrio 1996, pp440, circa £25-£30

The established author and pioneer, Giuseppe Miotti, has joined forces with the young local hot-shot, Gianluca Maspes, to produce a selection of

climbs on both sides of the range that English alpinists traditionally refer to as the Bregaglia (lip service is paid to the Disgrazia massif by including a single route, the *via normale*). The bulk of the guide deals with the pure granite rock climbing for which the area is truly famous but there is also a short section outlining the winter potential on several Alpine faces and a more comprehensive coverage of icefall climbing at lower altitudes.

Over one third of the book is devoted to the Sasso di Remenno (the largest boulder in Europe) and its outliers, plus the peerless slabs of the Mello valley. The authors then offer over 160 Alpine rock routes on various peaks, most of which are in the higher grades. A common feature throughout this book, and one that makes it so worthwhile as a source of reference, is the additional mention of existing routes, other than those described, on the individual peak, face or feature under scrutiny. There are no photodiagrams but a reasonably clear series of basic mountain sketches locate the climb. As virtually all routes in the guide are presented in topo format, foreign visitors with a smattering of Italian will find it perfectly usable.

It would have been nice to see more described in the forgotten eastern peaks of the Sasso Manduino, and on Disgrazia's serpentine subsidiary summits but this is probably the best work to date that brings together the wealth of superb valley cragging, popular Alpine classics and the vast majority of the excellent modern offerings under one roof.

Lindsay Griffin

Bernina

Nemo Canetta and Giuseppe Miotti

Club Alpino Italiano/Touring Club Italiano, 1996, pp610, L64,000

The new definitive guide to the Bernina will be more than welcome to devotees of this beautiful and extensive massif of graceful rock and ice peaks. With the current SAC equivalent considerably outdated, the new CAI offering becomes the first complete guide to the region since Silvio Saglio's 1959 edition – an amazing scenario considering the tremendous popularity of these mountains. CAI guidebook productions, currently under the control of our member Gino Buscaini, are arguably the best and most comprehensive to the areas of the Alps that they cover. This, probably their best to date, introduces a sturdy softback cover and superb full colour photodiagrams plus maps. As usual, the guide is produced on a thin yet surprisingly durable 'Bible paper' that allows an immense quantity of information to be packaged into a manageable size. Over 80 route diagrams enhance the text and there is the customary section on all the available valley cragging, icefall climbing and ski-mountaineering.

While there have been relatively few significant additions to the Swiss side of the range in the last two decades (but noticeable glacial recession), considerable new development has taken place on the various walls of sound gneiss or rough red serpentine on the Italian side of the range, such as the

south faces of the Sella Group and the various facets of the Musella peaks. There are also many fine new creations from active winter aficionados.

The two authors are both eminently qualified, with Miotti, the well-known Sondrio guide, concentrating on the main massif and the harder technical climbing, while Canetta contributes the lesser known regions and many attractive walks and scrambles.

The selection of routes in the current AC guide will probably be sufficient for most AJ readers but for up-to-date information and an insight into many hidden corners of this enchanting area, alpinists with some grasp of Italian will find this scholarly work a useful addition to their library.

Lindsay Griffin

Karakorum. Graphic Index of Maps
(with an Introduction by Jerzy Wala)
Servei General d'Informació de Muntanya,
PO Box 330, E-08200, Sabadell, Spain.
Federación Española de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada, Sabadell, 1996.
pp117, 9 folded colour key-maps, 1 folded colour map 1:600,000, npq

This publication, which has taken five years to complete, is a bibliographical index of topographical maps of the mountain ranges of the Karakoram. It offers not only a list of catalogued maps of the region, but also a guide to their location on the ground. Thus, the work has been divided into two parts: a General Index and a Graphic Index. Only maps of a scale up to 1:1000,000 have been included, and to avoid overloading the Index no reference has been made to the many small sketch maps which illustrate articles published in magazines, journals and expedition reports. The editors suggest that this material could give rise to a complementary publication.

During the preparation of the Index it became apparent that no up-to-date map existed covering the whole of the Karakoram on one sheet. The useful 1:600,000 map included with this Index offers an overall view of the mountain range as a whole. It is intended that it should be consulted in conjunction with the two much more detailed 1:250,000 maps by Jerzy Wala which were published in 1990 by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research. All the cartography used in the Index comes from the document collection of the Servei General d'Informació de Muntanya at Sabadell, Spain, which is available for consultation by anyone.

The *Graphic Index of Maps* was produced under the auspices of the Documentation and Information Commission of the UIAA with the collaboration of Consejo Superior de Deportes, Fédération Française de la Montagne et de l'Escalade and Deutscher Alpenverein. It is an obligatory reference for any group or institution wishing to study, in theory or on the ground, the magnificent but complicated orography of the Karakoram.

Johanna Merz

John Muir: His Life and Letters and Other Writings
edited and introduced by Terry Gifford
Bâton-Wicks, London/The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1996. pp 912, £20.00

This monumental book adds to the earlier omnibus of John Muir's eight 'wilderness discovery' books (Diadem, 1992): a good 90% of his writings are now in print again. This second volume assembles essays, letters, stories, and a posthumous travel book on Alaska, with some eloquent obituaries and the full-length *Life and Letters* first published by his masterly literary executor William Frederic Badé in 1924. The result is a mosaic which shows how completely this man's experiences, his observations, his thoughts, and his writings interlocked. In *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), his memoir of 1869, he called Yosemite 'a grand page of mountain manuscript that I would gladly give my life to be able to read', and so he did. In 1871 he wrote down his ideal in a letter to a friend, Jeanne Carr: 'Patient observation and constant brooding above the rocks, lying upon them for years as the ice did, is the way to arrive at the truths which are graven so lavishly upon them.' This was not a fanciful metaphor. Year in, year out he frequented the Californian mountains, as a shepherd and sawyer, as an explorer and naturalist, usually alone, living on bread and tea, kindling fires from dead wood or (in Alaska) shavings from the underside of his sledge, habitually carrying no blankets and sleeping on beds of resinous branches. His daring was evidently unshakeable. The climbs he made on the likes of Mount Ritter (13,157ft) seem to have been frequently at grades 5.8 (US) or VS/HVS (UK) and he made them alone, without ropes or protection gear, or maps or guidebooks, or any chance of rescue since nobody knew where he was.

At a time when established geologists thought that the Valley was formed when its floor dropped in a huge seismic event, Muir could see that the graving and shearing had been done by glaciers forcing their way along the cleavage joints in the granite. He knew the terrain so well that he could see the ice action as clearly as if he had witnessed the Ice Age for himself. The results of his field work, as devoted and intense as can ever have been carried out by anybody anywhere in the world, were written out in his many books and in the articles which made his name, supplemented his income (he also became manager of his father-in-law's fruit farm), and threw a shining light on the beauty of the western-American wilderness and the urgent need to conserve it.

The eloquence of his prose is still irresistible – passionate and precise at the same time. A technical paper on how glaciers change direction and carve out hanging corries on valley sides, illustrated by his own diagrams full of arrows and As and Bs, culminates like this: '... we find everywhere displayed the same delicate yielding to glacial law, showing that, throughout the whole period of its formation, the huge granite valley was lithe as a serpent, and winced tenderly to the touch of every tributary.' He delighted

so intensely in nature that he couldn't help seeing even ice and rocks as alive. That supremely beautiful crag Half Dome, (which I believe we should agree to call by its Indian name *Tissiack*), was to Muir 'full of thought ... no sense of dead stone about it, neither heavy looking nor light, steadfast in serene strength like a god.'

Muir was also a very practical visionary. He drove himself unsparingly in his campaign for National Parks, to save mountain slopes and meadows and virgin forests from destruction by mining, logging, and sheep-farming. He was the mainspring of the project to make Yosemite a National Park, which came about in 1890. As a result of his intensive journalism and an historic camping trip through the Yosemite forests and trails in May 1903 with Theodore Roosevelt, the President became a champion of the American wilderness, steering through bills that preserved three times as much forest (46 million acres) as his three predecessors put together, doubling the number of National Parks, and designating sixteen National Monuments. Anybody who has been to them and benefited from their immaculate management, intelligent and devoted staff, and brilliant information centres should remember Muir with gratitude. He failed to save the Hetch-Hetchy valley from flooding to make a reservoir, and shortened his life by his urgent and tireless efforts on its behalf. Nobody had done more to keep the remnants of natural America intact, both for its own sake and so that we can recreate ourselves among the mountains and forests.

This book is invaluable because it provides rich samples of his literary work set in the frame and sequence of his life.* It has been tidily compiled to that end by Terry Gifford and designed by its publisher, Ken Wilson, with a skill that makes the massive volume comfortable to handle and read, with enough well-reproduced colour and black-and-white photos and contemporary line drawings to open many windows onto Muir's America.

David Craig

The Last Hero. Bill Tilman: a biography of the explorer
Tim Madge
Hodder and Stoughton, 1995, pp288, £18.99

It is ironical that the second biography of Tilman should fall to a sailor. The mountains were where Tilman undoubtedly had his greatest achievements and the sea was where he finally had his greatest pleasure, if that is not too hedonistic a term for this Spartan 'hero' of a past, but not 'last', generation. He was John Muir without the joyousness, needing little to get him into wild places. He was Scott of the Antarctic with wit, laughing ironically at his own stiff upper lip ('I believe we so far forgot ourselves as to shake hands on it', he wrote of the first ascent of Nanda Devi). Tim Madge believes that he, like Scott, ultimately gave himself up to his chosen wilderness.

* See also Edward Peck, 'John Muir, Mountaineer 1838-1914' in *AJ99*, 201-212, 1994. *Ed.*

Madge argues that Tilman was emotionally scarred by the First World War and shaped by Africa. He carried the reticence of the guilt of survival, the ready acceptance of further hazards that cannot be so devastating as those he had survived, and the learned loneliness of the African planter. His sense of humour provided the way to outflank these privations. (In four different books he chuckles at his favourite proverb, 'The sight of a horse makes the traveller lame'.) The sailor takes what weather comes, so it was hard for Tilman to accept defeat on Everest in 1938. But his final reflection is worth repeating: 'We should not forget that mountaineering, even on Everest, is not war but a form of amusement whose saner devotees are not willing to be killed rather than accept defeat.'

The mountaineering chapters form less than a quarter of this book. The mountaineering biography and assessment of Tilman has yet to be written and those who knew him seem less able to demythologise the man than he was himself ('I was moving with more dignity than ease'). Tim Madge has written a very readable account of the facts of a life, with, as I've suggested, an overview running through the narrative. In his Epilogue he considers each of the popular questions about Tilman's life (centring around misogyny and misanthropy) and provides some half-hearted counter evidence in defence of his 'last hero'. Perhaps the most sad and most courageous evidence is Madge's conclusion that Tilman knew he was joining an ill-fated final boat that ultimately disappeared without trace between Rio and the Falklands. Madge the sailor puts Tilman the sailor to rest in a fascinating, well-researched and well-told book.

Terry Gifford

Over the Hills and Far Away
Rob Collister
The Ernest Press, 1996, pp190, £11.95

The author of these 28 essays and 3 poems, ranging in date from 1969 to 1996, has roamed the world for his mountain experiences, from the Alps to the Himalaya, and from the Welsh hills of his home to Antarctica, South Africa and many other countries. In each essay, some of which have appeared previously in journals and magazines, Collister's passionate concern for the values of the wilderness emerge, whether it is expressed in despair at the gouging out of a roadway up a small hill in Wales, or in anger at the litter-strewn environs of Makalu.

Although every essay in this collection contains serious points about our mountain experiences and environments, there is a lightness of touch about the book which makes it a delight to read. Highly recommended.

Geoffrey Templeman

Gary Hemming. The Beatnik of the Alps
Mirella Tenderini
The Ernest Press, 1995, pp190, £11.95

In August 1966 two German climbers became trapped on the West Face of the Dru. A huge rescue operation swung into action involving the École Militaire de Haute Montagne, a group of guides, various officers and cadets on a climbing course, and other climbers. For a number of reasons the operation ground to a halt. It was at this stage that Gary Hemming came on the scene. He knew the West Face well, having made the first ascent of the *American Direct* with Royal Robbins four years previously. With five companions, including Mick Burke, he decided to go straight up the face to the Germans and lower them down. The guide René Desmaison had had the same idea and, with a companion, he joined Hemming on the face. The rescue was successfully accomplished and the 'beatnik' Hemming became the toast of Chamonix, to the virtual exclusion of all his companions including Desmaison who was expelled from the Bureau des Guides for 'insubordination'. The whole incident attracted widespread publicity, including a feature in *Paris-Match*.

Gary Hemming was a strange character. 31 years old at the time of the rescue, he was already well known as a climber, but even more so as a 'beatnik' who restlessly wandered the world, climbing wherever he went and working as guide, ranger, road mender, unlikely car salesman and other short-term occupations. He had a love-hate climbing partnership with John Harlin, with whom he made the first ascent of the South Face of the Fou, and relationships with countless women around the world. At the same time he maintained a 'steady' one in Grenoble with Claude Guerre-Gentons by whom he had a son. What he hated most, however, was the feeling of being trapped in a partnership, when he would immediately disappear. In 1969 his life came to an abrupt end in equivocal and dramatic circumstances.

Mirella Tenderini evokes the lifestyle of Gary Hemming in an admirable way, and has interviewed everyone she could find who knew him, from Pierre Mazeaud, who gave Gary shelter in Paris after the famous rescue, to those who were present at the final climactic ending of his life. It makes an enthralling read.

Geoffrey Templeman

Landmarks: An Exploration of Great Rocks
David Craig
Jonathan Cape, 1995, pp 335, £20.00

People who live by and near great rocks have always needed to give them names or to make their own marks on them. This stone working is what

really stimulates Craig as he tours his own choice of rock around the world. In search of 'wild rocks ... the most real stuff of earth' but journeying sometimes prosaically by taxi, he ends up with a chronicle of how we humans have interacted with great rocks. Like the family in Alan Garner's *Stone Book*, he discovers why men and women make marks on stone and how this helps them own up to a place and a sense of themselves rather than merely owning a place.

Craig points out how cultures down the ages have seen the need to put a name to a great natural form in order to bring it within the human compass and relate it to essential human processes. Competing cultures have given these rocks different names and Craig is quick to point out how frequently indigenous people get the names right first time. Often, of course, it is simply a matter of survival: the mythic interpretation of these rocks frequently conceals a purely practical human purpose. El Morro, for instance, holds precious water in natural wind-scoop ponds on its summit; Gibraltar, too, has been made into a vast water collection point and a riddled fortress. And Craig is insistent about this: great rocks are sometimes essential to our survival: '*We must name to make landmarks unforgettable in the wilderness of kindred features.*' Without the names of great rocks we cannot explain where we are or, quite literally, who we are.

Landmarks can be read as Craig's latest attempt to effect an act of relocation. Moving further out (though maybe no further in) after the seminal but local journey round Britain and British climbers that is *Native Stones*, and his exploration of dispossessed and relocated peoples in *The Crofters' Trail*, Craig has now made his own trail in search of meaning from mostly non-native stones. Always on his journey, from America through Australia, Africa, Greece and Peru, back to Britain, he brings his wide reading and erudition to bear on some of the world's most mysterious rocks, seeking to know what they mean, to whom and why.

If Craig brings us to a fuller understanding of the human function of his chosen rocks – as homes, books, myths, reservoirs, galleries or fortresses – he sometimes inadvertently brings them down to human size by the force and detail of his daunting frame of reference and density of style. Ineffable presences sometimes seem almost *too* material under the microscope of metaphor; myths lose their meaning when too closely catalogued. And I think he has a problem with his potential readership, too. This is both a great travel journey and a personal quest; but virtually the only climbing writing in the book (about an intended ascent of the tottering Rock of Gibraltar) is not up great routes of the world. Few of these landmarks actually get climbed. Indeed, some places on every climber's dream tour don't even get visited or their proper due. El Capitan is virtually ignored; the Troll Wall in Norway doesn't figure. Both these great rocks (each a mile high) have been colonised around their feet by non-natives, and their stories need retelling just as much as the rocks Craig identifies. Climbers are great namers of rocks – and many, like Craig, are good writers about

climbing. Perhaps more of Craig the climber writer would have given us these great rocks from a climber's eye view.

The chapters on Britain which close the book are the most accessible – both in fact and writing. Here are rocks which Craig can and does climb; and if he continues to remind us of the creeping privatisation and commercial colonisation that threatens all Britain's treasured wild places and rocks, still we can follow his breakneck journey from Lands End to Hoy safe in the knowledge that we too can still climb where he has climbed. But many rocks are threatened, here and worldwide, by climbers and non-climbers alike. Will all these landmarks last? Craig's own stand against the looting and defiling of our world's precious resources is already recorded, but I wonder if more could have been said here.

Landmarks is a demanding but rewarding read, full of tension between the inherent mystery of great natural landmarks and one man's efforts to offer explanations for their significance in human life. It bears out Plato's observation that '... names have by nature a truth, but not every man knows how to give a thing a name.'

Tim Noble

Mont Blanc. The Early Years
A Bibliography of Printed Books from 1744 to 1860
Eugene P Meckly
Privately printed, 1995, pp iv+138, $36

The author of this work has had the interesting and useful notion of reproducing the title pages of his entries, in addition to the basic bibliographical information itself. This is not only a real aid to the collector, but has also uncovered a number of intriguing variations in publication details of some of the early Mont Blanc items. The book is well produced and the title page reproductions are for the most part admirably clear.

However, in the opinion of the reviewer, the author made one very odd decision in terms of information to be included. This was to exclude pagination, while including a measure of page size. While the former is a critical piece of bibliographical information, the latter is highly variable in early books and therefore potentially misleading.

The user should also be aware that the book contains a number of errors, covering dates and the numbering of ascents of Mont Blanc, in addition to descriptions of the entries and other information. One hopes that these will be corrected in any future edition. The author might render further service by reconsidering some of his exclusions, amongst which Lory's *Voyage Pittoresque aux Glaciers de Chamouni* seems particularly eccentric.

With these provisos, this work is a most welcome addition to the reference shelf, as well as being an intriguing read in its own right.

Jerry Lovatt

The Himalaya in My Sketch-Book
Geeta Kapadia
Indus Pub Co, New Delhi, 1996, pp144, 54 b/w sketches, Rs500

In England it is raining. From outside the office I hear the drone of traffic and the splash of puddles thrown against the pavement. Everything is damp and grey.

Geeta Kapadia's new book is the perfect antidote, reviving the spirit with memories of the clear, bright light of the Himalaya. It is a collection of monochrome pen and ink sketches, which might not seem the best cure for English greyness. Better, you might think, to reach for another extravagant volume of lavish colour printing; but you can only take so much glorious technicolour before the eye becomes satiated. After a while you appreciate subtle suggestion, rather than the glaring statement. Geeta Kapadia's drawings achieve the former, focusing on some of the details that make Himalayan journeys so memorable and, by association, evoking all the brilliant light and colour that is never anyway going to be captured fully in a photograph.

The details I like include the river windings of the Sangla valley in Kinnaur, the abstract patterns of Ki monastery in Spiti, and the suspension bridges which are such a feature of any Himalayan journey. But what really holds the drawings together and gives them purpose is the accompanying text, covering over twenty years of trekking in India and Nepal, for those of us who aspire to great deeds on precipitous walls. Geeta's evocation of trekking at slightly lower altitude is a reminder of what ambition can easily overlook. She captures the universal contentment of food, warmth and comfort after a hard day's exercise. She brings back the scent of juniper and the tingling sensation of the thin cold air. She reminds us of the local deities and she describes friendships with some of the famous Sherpas like Pertemba, Nawang Gombu and Gyalzen.

Having trekked with the Kapadia family and their Bombay friends, I particularly enjoyed having personal memories triggered. Most of all, it is the sense of shared endeavour – of companionship and laughter, with the loyal support of the Kumaoni men from Harkot – which comes flooding back.

Stephen Venables

May the Fire be Always Lit. A Biography of Jock Nimlin
I D S Thomson
The Ernest Press, 1995, pp vi+210, £11.95

Jock Nimlin was a well-known Glaswegian climber, carrying out his major climbs in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of these were in the Arrochar area, but he climbed all over Scotland carrying on the climbing fraternity traditions of sleeping out in barns and bothies and existing on very little.

Jock became the first field officer for the National Trust for Scotland, organising trips to the Cairngorms to search for gem stones (one of his passions) and to St Kilda. Ian Thomson has written a very readable biography, allowing much of Nimlin's own voice to come through in extracts from diaries, journal articles and newspapers.

Edward Theodore Compton (1849-1921)
Mountaineer and Mountain Painter
P A Tallantire
Private Publication, 1996, pp vi+94, £7.50

E T Compton was one of the greatest painters of mountain scenery, carrying out several hundred paintings and drawings of Alpine scenes, of which the Club is the proud owner of eight oils. Although brought up in England in a family where his father was also an artist, Compton moved to Germany with his family in 1867, attending art school there. When the family returned to England two years later, however, he stayed on, married in 1872, moved to Bavaria, and remained there for the rest of his life.

Compton was a passionate climber, his companions including Yeld, Tuckett and Purtscheller, but principally Dr Karl Blodig with whom he made many ascents, including a number of firsts. P A Tallantire has written an excellent, well-illustrated memoir of an artist about whom little has previously been written in English other than his *Alpine Journal* obituary.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY ALSO RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING BOOKS DURING 1996:

The Mont Blanc Massif. The 100 Finest Routes Gaston Rébuffat
Bâton Wicks, 1996, pp240, £25.00

Langtang with Gosainkund & Helambu Kev Reynolds
Cicerone, 1996, pp160, £8.99

The Trekkers' Handbook Thomas R Gilchrist
Cicerone, 1996, pp176, £10.99

The Lakeland Fells
The Fell and Rock Climbing Club's complete illustrated guide for walkers
Ed. June Parker & Tim Pickles
F & R C C / The Ernest Press, 1996, pp x+214, £16.95

Magic Mountains Rennie McOwan
Mainstream, 1996, pp160, £14.99
Ghosts, faeries, witches and the supernatural in the Scottish mountains

The Rope Terry Gifford *Red Beck Press, 1996, pp56, £6.95*

Mountain Footfalls. A Calendar of the Scottish Hills Ian Mitchell
Mercat Press, 1996, pp x+126, npq

Walking in the Haute Savoie Janette Norton
Cicerone, 1996, pp304, £12.99

The Mountains of Central Spain Jacqueline Oglesby
Cicerone Press, 1996, pp304, £14.99

The Hillwalker's Handbook Steve Ashton
Crowood Press, 1996, pp160, pb, £12.99 Revised edition

Britain's Alpine Ridges. Snowdonia and the Lake District
Robin Ashcroft *Crowood Press, 1996, pp160, pb, £12.99*

The Best of Poucher's Scotland W A Poucher
Constable, 1996, pp214, £20.00

Gens de Montagne. Des Alpes à l'Himalaya Intro. by Bernard Pierre
Omnibus, Paris, 1996, pp xix+978, pb, F145

Chatsworth Compiled by Geoff Radcliffe
BMC, 1996, pp390, £13.95
(Peak Rock Climbs, 5th series, Vol 4 – South East Gritstone)

Into the Blue. A Climbers' Club Guide to Deep Water Soloing in Dorset Cook, Robertson & Taylor *Climbers' Club, 1996, pp96, £7.95*

Classic Rock Climbs Paul Dearden
Blandford, 1994, pp xii+131, £8.99

The Cairngorms. Rock and Ice Climbs 4th edition
Vol I Cairn Gorm, Ben Macdui & Braeriach
Vol II Lochnagar, Creag an Dubh-Loch, Glen Clova & Beinn a' Bhuird
SMC, 1995, Vol I - pp x+252, Vol II - pp x+214, npq

Rock Climbing Techniques Steve Ashton
Crowood Press, 1995, pp128, £10.99 Revised edition

The Ruwenzori Discovery. Luigi Amedeo de Savoia Duca Degli Abruzzi
Roberto Mantovani *CAI, 1996, pp72*
Monograph 105 of the Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'. In Italian, English and Swahili

Mountaincraft and Leadership Eric Langmuir
Scottish Sports Council MLTB, 1995, pp viii+472, £14.99 Revised edition

Best Walks in Ireland David Marshall
Constable, 1996, pp386, £9.95

Klatring I Romsdalen. Utvalgte ruter Anne Grete Nebell & Bjarte Bø
Private publication, 1996, pp90, npq

Pembroke. Parts 1 & 2 John Harwood, Dave Viggers et al
Climbers' Club, 1995, pp i+414, 415-830, £12.99

East of Ireland. Walk Guide
David Herman & Miriam McCarthy Gen Ed Joss Lynam
Gill & Macmillan, 1996, pp vi + 168, £6.99

Mountaineering First Aid. A guide to Accident Response and First Aid Care Carline, Macdonald & Lentz
The Mountaineers, 1996, pp144, £7.95 4th edition

Where Warriors Met. The Story of Leeva Downs, Kenya
Edward Paice *Tasker Publication, 1995, pp142, npq*

The Lost Tribe. A Search through the Jungles of Papua New Guinea
Edward Marriott *Picador, 1996, pp xii+276, £15.99*

The Highland High Way. A High-Level Walking Route from Loch Lomond to Fort William Heather Connon & Paul Roper
Mainstream, 1996, pp224, £9.99

Walking More Ridges of Lakeland, according to Wainwright's Pictorial Guides, Books 4-7 Bob Allen with Peter Linney
Michael Joseph, 1996, pp192, £17.99

100 Jahre Akademischer Alpen-Club Zurich. 1896-1996
Ruedi Kaiser *AA – CZ, 1996, pp222, npq*

Walking to the Mountain. A Pilgrimage to Tibet's Holy Mountain, Kailash Wendy Teasdill *Asia 2000 (Hong Kong), 1996, pp212, npq*

Hiking Guide to Poland & Ukraine Tim Beerford
Bradt Pub, 1994, pp x+372, npq

Hiking Guide to Romania Tim Beerford
Bradt Publications, 1996, pp x+326, £10.95