
Book Reviews

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

Eric Shipton: Everest and Beyond

Peter Steele

Constable, 1998, pp290 + xiv, £18.99

Eric Shipton was born dyslexic, a condition where the brain has difficulty in relating the written word to sounds but which has nothing to do with intelligence; many dyslexics have outstanding careers. Even today a number of dyslexic children are not diagnosed early enough and this plays havoc with their education, as it did with Shipton. In 1907, when he was born in Ceylon, little or nothing was known about this condition. When his father died three years later, his mother, a reserved and aloof lady, tried to assuage her grief by extensive travel, and Shipton was introduced to the sort of nomadic life which later made him happy.

In common with many children of those who worked in the British colonies, at the age of eight he was sent 'home' to boarding school in the UK. Here his slowness to read and learn resulted in severe teasing and punishment. It is clear that this mental, emotional and physical stress contributed to his resilient, stoical and detached nature, with which he confronted the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' in his later life.

His first encounter with mountains was on a family holiday to the Pyrenees, and a later visit to Norway ignited a passion that was to last a lifetime. Inevitably, perhaps, he failed to get a place at Cambridge, and this increased his sense of inferiority, particularly as many well-known mountaineers of the period were university men.

Following seasons in the Dauphiné and at Zermatt with a group of Cambridge climbers, he departed for Kenya to start life as a colonial entrepreneur. He planned to spend the rest of his life there, but noticing some mountains on the map, he prudently took with him an ice-axe, boots and a rope. He furthered his climbing career by pioneering new routes with P Wyn Harris, a colonial civil servant, and H W Tilman, a planter. Kenya turned him from a shy introvert into a more outgoing person for he also discovered girls and dancing at which, with his natural rhythm, he was very good.

In 1931, because of his record, he was asked by Frank Smythe to join an expedition to Kamet, which he climbed and this was followed by the 1933 Everest expedition on which, with Smythe, he reached 28,000ft without supplementary oxygen. He now began to question the wisdom of large,

expensive expeditions and in 1934, following in the footsteps of Longstaff and others, and with Tilman, Angharkay and two other Sherpas, he completed the first exploration of the 'inaccessible' Nanda Devi basin. This set the pattern for the rest of his life, and on his return he wrote *Nanda Devi*, one of the best books on mountain exploration.

In 1935 he led a reconnaissance to the north side of Everest which broke very little new ground, but on which many peaks over 20,000ft were climbed. The main scientific contribution was by Michael Spender who made the first photogrammetric survey of the north face of Everest. Shipton's management of the 1937 Karakoram expedition was excellent and on it, with Tilman, Spender and John Auden, a geologist, he complemented the basic pioneering work of Kenneth Mason and others on the north side of the Karakoram watershed in the Shaksgam and Aghil regions. Again the main survey was done by Spender with back-up from Tilman and Shipton. Shipton's book *Blank on the Map* is his most sought-after publication.

After an abortive expedition to Everest in 1938 Shipton returned to the Karakoram in 1939, but the Second World War curtailed this expedition. He enlisted in the Indian Army but the government, showing some imagination, posted him to Kashgar as a 'caretaker' consul. On his first tour of duty he was more or less confined to the consulate, which he later told me had one of the best libraries on Central Asia but of which he appeared to make little use. He was then sent to Central Europe as a 'cereal liaison officer' [*sic*] before returning to Kashgar, this time with his new wife Diana and with more freedom of movement. Given his knowledge of this romantic and fascinating region, the pivot of Asia, his book *Mountains of Tartary* is disappointing. It contains little about the culture and politics or the history of its exploration, which dated back to the Forsyth Mission of 1874. The dominating range is the Kongur Massif, just south of Kashgar, which includes the highest peak in the Pamir and West Kun Lun. In Shipton's time, this area was unexplored. Despite this, all his journeys from Kashgar avoided this primary problem. When researching for the 1980 and 1981 Kongur Expedition, which made the first ascent, I had to rely on *Chinese Central Asia* by Claremont Skrine for essential information.

Kashgar was followed by a posting to Kunming, where the dead hand of Chinese communism was all-enveloping. At the end of a miserable tour, Diana left for the UK where she had to spend some time in hospital. After selling the contents of the consulate, Shipton followed, and entered the most taxing and disagreeable period of his life.

After his arrival in the UK in 1951 he was asked by a small group of mountaineers – Bill Murray, Tom Bourdillon and myself – to lead our party to the then almost completely unknown and unexplored southern, Nepalese side of Everest. Its purpose was to confirm a potential route to the summit, found by myself after examining photographs and maps in the archives of the Royal Geographical Society. Pessimistic of success, Shipton characteristically accepted the invitation because it would involve visiting

and exploring Sola Khumbu, rather than because of any conviction that a route on Everest existed. I disagreed with him. With the success of the preliminary medical and scientific work at the Medical Research Council already completed by Pugh and myself, I considered that once the Khumbu Icefall had been overcome there would be a good chance of getting to the summit. In any event, with the Tibetan route barred by the Chinese, there was no viable alternative.

On this expedition Shipton proved to be a modest, excellent, undemanding yet slightly detached companion who left most of the organisation to Angharkay. However, both Tom Bourdillon and I were unhappy that when the entrance to the Western Cwm was barred by a final monstrous crevasse, no attempt was made to put a camp on its edge and try to cross it.

Shipton's book about this reconnaissance was superficial, for the whole of Khumbu was then unknown and unexplored and the historic journeys of the Pundits, in particular by Hari Ram who circumnavigated Everest, would have made an excellent introduction. But his account of the most controversial part of the expedition, finding the Yeti footprints, was an absolutely true and correct record of what happened. It was no hoax. (See article 'The Yeti Footprints: Myth and Reality' in this volume.) However, neither the map, nor the topographical photographs, the evidence on which this expedition was based, were published either in his book or in appropriate articles. This was unprofessional and misleading of Shipton. (See *M P Ward and P K Clark, 'Everest 1951: cartographic and photographic evidence of a new route from Nepal' in Geographical Journal 158, 47-56, 1992.*)

The 1952 Cho Oyu Expedition that Shipton led was the nadir of his fortunes. In the same year an extremely strong and professional Swiss party attempted Everest in the spring and in the autumn. They failed, not through any mountaineering or leadership deficiencies but because the physical condition of the climbers at great altitude was like that of a severely ill hospital patient, owing to inadequate medical and scientific preparations and malfunctioning oxygen sets.

The British 1953 Everest Expedition owed its success almost entirely to the work of the Medical Research Council, started in 1951 and brought to fruition by Griffith Pugh during the 1952 Cho Oyu expedition. One has only to read Pugh's thoroughly professional report of the scientific research into the effects of altitude made on that expedition and compare it with Shipton's apologetic article in the *Geographical Journal* to get a flavour of their respective attitudes. Shipton's unprofessional approach was also reflected in his disinclination to return to the UK and start organising the 1953 expedition, once he had learned, in the field in 1952, that the Swiss had failed in their attempt.

Peter Steele's chapter on Shipton's dismissal from the leadership of the 1953 expedition is the first time that a detailed account has appeared of this melancholy episode involving a performance by the Joint Himalayan Committee of the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society

reminiscent of a Whitehall farce. Steele has had access to all the relevant reports and documents and has interviewed many of the participants. First, Shipton was appointed leader and then, a few weeks later, he was sacked. A major factor in this vacillation was the chairmanship of Claude Elliott, President of the Alpine Club, who had never been to the Himalaya. Shipton's replacement, John Hunt, had been turned down for the 1936 Everest Expedition by E G H Kempson, his climbing mentor at Marlborough, and had played no part in the 1938 Everest Expedition. As a mountaineer he was not in the same class as Shipton and he was as ignorant as Shipton of the significance of the work of the Medical Research Council. He failed, for instance, to mention in his book *The Ascent of Everest* the pivotal and vital reason for our success in 1953. This was the use of *double* the amount of supplementary oxygen at great altitude, which enabled climbers to climb faster, more effectively, through bad weather and more safely than any of our predecessors. Hunt was, however, a better organiser, but it matters little how good an organisation is if the other ingredients for success are wrong, as they had been for the previous 30 years on Everest. It was the correct ingredients, provided by the Medical Research Council in 1953, that resulted in our success. Steele recounts that he asked members of the 1953 expedition and others about the change in leadership. A good proportion confirmed that, for the reasons explained above, it had made little difference to the outcome.

Naturally this rejection shattered Shipton, but he appeared on the surface to have been very stoical, and shortly afterwards he was appointed warden of the Outward Bound School at Eskdale. Here, however, his marriage broke up and he then spent a period working as a farm labourer in Shropshire.

There followed a new phase of exploration in Patagonia and Tierra Del Fuego, and he was involved in the Argentine–Chile boundary dispute. With its severe weather, the traverse of the north and south Patagonian ice caps was no picnic, but the use of a man-hauling sledge seems to relate to a former period. After the years of stress and disappointment, this period of travel in unknown country was a solace, and Shipton found peace of mind and happiness. The final phase was spent as a celebrity lecturer. He died of cancer in 1977.

This is a well-written and affectionate biography by Peter Steele who describes his subject as one of his childhood heroes. Although the author leaves clues and makes comments that hint at a darker side and less admirable qualities, only a demanding reader would find that these raised implacable questions and he is left to make up his own mind. A key question is what was Eric Shipton's contribution as a mountain explorer and how does this compare with others? To do this it is necessary to make a detached assessment unclouded by sentiment.

There is little doubt that Shipton reached the peak of his achievement in the Himalaya in the 1930s. He will be remembered in particular for the

exploration of the Nanda Devi basin and the north side of the Karakoram watershed adjacent to Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang). However, because of his lack of any particular expertise, his personal contribution was inevitably less than that of the scientists and others of many disciplines with whom he was associated. His advocacy of small groups was not new and was initially pioneered by T G Longstaff who probably developed this idea after meeting the Pundit Kishen Singh in the early part of the century. In fact, Longstaff's career as an explorer mirrors Shipton's, but his contribution was greater because as a physician and naturalist he wrote one of the first theses on 'acute mountain sickness' and made many other contributions to natural history in addition to his geographical exploration. Shipton never developed this sort of background. For instance, despite his earlier survey work he showed absolutely no interest (unlike the RGS) in a compass traverse that I made west of Everest during the 1951 Reconnaissance.

Many Central Asian travellers and mountaineers have made massively greater contributions to mountain exploration than those achieved by Shipton. Aurel Stein mapped much of the Kun Lun range as well as making seminal observations on archaeology and the civilizations of Central Asia. Sven Hedin, in the course of many journeys in Tibet, identified a new mountain range, the Gangdise, just north of the Tsangpo River, crossed it in many places, mapped it, and wrote many volumes on the topography of Tibet. Frank Kingdon Ward, by his meticulous botanical observations in the 'gorge' country of south-eastern Tibet over many years, added greatly to the understanding of the mountain ranges, their glaciation and natural history of this extremely difficult area. The contribution, too, of many individual Pundits transcended anything achieved by Shipton; in particular Kishen Singh (A.K.) who worked alone, in secrecy and great danger, over many years and who surveyed over 4800 miles of new and unexplored country in Tibet.

Finally, to be presented, as Shipton was, with the geographical and medical solutions of the world's last and most formidable geographical problem, the first ascent of Everest, literally on a plate, and to have shown such lack of enthusiasm suggests that any interest that he had for this particular piece of mountain exploration had long since evaporated.

Any attempt to understand Shipton's life means entering many separate rooms, but some remain firmly locked. He had many lady friends and kept on good terms with the majority. One of Steele's great successes as a biographer is that he persuaded many of them to discuss their relationships and they allowed him to read their personal letters. His medical training, too, adds an extra dimension essential to a book of this sort, for he can discuss clearly and accurately how oxygen lack dominates life at great altitude in the Himalaya and particularly on Everest. Other bonuses are the excellent and clear maps that he has drawn, and importantly there are enough of them. In addition, the sketches by Bruce Paton are most evocative.

The writing of this fine work, which won the Boardman Tasker Memorial Award for 1998, was a travel saga in itself, for Steele has travelled the world to get information about his subject. Eric Shipton was a nomadic drifter with a commitment to mountain exploration, but only on his own terms. He could have made an even greater contribution, but of this he seemed blissfully unaware. He was a man attracted by easy options and many of the ills that befell him were of his own making.

Shipton was happiest when he saw before him a vista of unexplored peaks stretching from one horizon to the other, amongst which he could wander at will without commitments. His books express his manifest joy and pleasure in that untravelled world.

Michael Ward

La Cordillera Blanca de los Andes

A Gómez Bohórquez et al

Madrid, Ediciones Desnivel, 1998, pp190, npq

Usefulness is the key word for this book about the most popular mountain range in South America. Remarkable in it are the photographs, which are an integral part of the text. Readers will no doubt examine them repeatedly to study their planned climbing routes. Within the 190 pages of the work one finds 15 large, sharp, sepia-tone portraits of peaks, plus 30 very descriptive colour and 78 black & white photographs. The text itself, although in Spanish, can easily be followed. It is composed of six parts dealing with general information about Peru, including economic data of use to visitors, details on mountaineering conditions to be encountered, technical information of use to expeditions (resources, guides, access, rescue, huts, maps, massifs and their routes), and trekking in 12 major valleys. The health section (pp171-189) was prepared by co-author Consuelo Amorós, medical doctor and wife of Gómez Bohórquez. Finally, we find an unusual addition to guidebooks, the section 'Alimentación', with a succinct description of menus to be found in local restaurants.

But it will be between pages 95 and 141 that the more ambitious readers will delve. Its discussion of 'massifs, mountain peaks and routes' is exact and straightforward. Its usefulness is reinforced by the display of black and white photos on which routes are marked in solid lines. Some 66 major routes are covered.

The accompanying folding polychrome map displays on one side the range itself, and the reverse contains maps of the more important area towns.

Author Gómez Bohórquez is known to Cordillera Blanca experts for having accomplished the first ascent of the east face of La Esfinge, 5320m (vertical rock). His must be the most useful and the most handsome work yet to cover that happy hunting ground, the Cordillera Blanca of Peru.

Evelio Echevarría

A Night on the Ground, A Day in The Open

Doug Robinson

Mountain N' Books, pp255, £12.95

'Ah, the modern John Muir!' said Steve Roper, the historian of Yosemite climbing, when I mentioned that I was going to review Doug Robinson's collected essays. Certainly Muir is one of the major influences on Robinson, cropping up, like T S Eliot, more than once in these elegant lyrical reflections, wild stories and sharply observed character vignettes. The comparison with Muir can be borne out on several levels.

Firstly, Robinson built a way of living 'out there' year round, characteristically on the east side of the Sierra, wintering in a cabin and skiing the Sierra crest, then teaching climbing in the Palisades each summer from a high camping spot inherited from the legendary Norman Clyde and Smoke Blanchard. Like Muir, Robinson attracted a series of significant visitors to his cabin where he was resident philosopher and poet, working at distilling the essence of climbing, its essential joyous spirit, in years of notebooks and journals which are the basis for these essays. Long new routes on summer rock, the discovery of summer ice climbs, wild back-country ski expeditions formed the core experience from which discoveries were made, 'by lying,' as Muir said, 'on the rock as the ice had done'.

Not that Robinson's experience was confined to the Sierra. The second ascent of Ama Dablam, guiding around the US, skiing the *haute route*, hanging out at Camp Four during the Golden Age, even breaking his back soloing, all get the Robinson treatment of intense action reflected upon with joy and wisdom. And here is the second parallel with John Muir. Robinson's prose style is sometimes closer to poetry in its sharply focused attempts to celebrate the buzz that his titles hint at: 'Moving Over Stone', 'Dances With Gravities', 'Running Talus', 'Wanderers of the Range of Light', 'Tuesday Morning on the Lyell Fork with Eliot's Shadow'. Robinson has a reputation as an anarchic trickster, but his writing is also seriously questing for insights. The inspired cover photo of *Climbing 165* shows Robinson wild haired, face creased up with laughter above the title, 'Fringe Lunatic'. It's taken on the first hammerless ascent of Half Dome. In his book there's a photograph of a naked Robinson photographing the photographer Galen Rowell trussed up in a hammock. You can catch the spirit of Robinson's approach to climbing: commitment, judgement and joy.

Thirdly, like Muir, his writing has had a profound influence upon more than just his own generation. Robinson's writing was influential in mediating, through catalogue articles, two revolutions in US climbing tools, techniques and styles. For Robinson they were a single philosophy of engagement with rock and with ice. 'The Whole Natural Art of Protection' in Chouinard's first catalogue championed 'clean climbing' through the use of nuts. It's worth asking both the wall-trained and the bolt-battling climbers of today to hear how Robinson put it in 1972:

The most important corollary of clean climbing is boldness. When cracks that accept nuts peter out, long unprotected runouts can result, and the leader of commitment must be prepared to accept the consequences that are only too clearly defined. Personal qualities – judgement, concentration, boldness, the ordeal by fire – take precedence, as they should, over hardware ... Rather, the value turns inward. The motion of climbing, the sharpness of environment, the climber's reactions are still only themselves, and their dividends of joy personal and private.

At the moment when pegs had turned into bolts, nuts offered a return to climbing's core values: 'Moving Over Stone' was precisely what both safe bolt climbers and athletic boulderers alike delighted in. But Robinson, at that historic moment, reminded them that physical performance alone was denying the resources and delights of personality, judgement and the engagement of the whole person.

The second revolution was Chouinard's drooped ice-axe pick which stuck in rather than shattered the ice. Robinson contributed to *Climbing Ice* and now regrets not claiming a byline to his 'tuning of ideas' such as 'Tool Man' which ends:

This is the technological inversion: fewer tools applied with increasing delicacy. I am rewarded for walking this edge by seeing more sharply what is around me, and feeling more deeply what comes boiling up from within.

I suspect that future generations will still be pondering upon Doug Robinson's theories of the source of the heightened perceptions that can come from mountaineering. Robinson is best known in the UK for his essay 'The Climber As Visionary'. This ground-breaking research was collected in *Mirrors In The Cliffs* and is the furthest anyone has perhaps gone to explain the heightened awareness both Doug Scott and Phil Bartlett, in their different ways, have tried to understand in their writing about mountaineering. Robinson's biochemical stuff was so 'out there' that I had to ask the grizzled trickster when I met him at Banff, grey-haired and babe in arms, how much it was tongue-in-cheek. Not in the least, I was embarrassed to find out. In fact, a preview of his next book *The Alchemy of Action*, which 'explores the volatile world of adrenalin', is included here.

In emphasising the searching quality to Robinson's writing I have perhaps not acknowledged his affection for tradition. He is about to make a first visit to England as I write. What does he want to do? '*Cenotaph Corner* in socks. A nineteenth century classic. I want to untie the rope to thread it behind a chockstone.' It'll be November so all this may be not only possible but advisable.

This gem of a book from the modern John Muir is a lyrical articulation of what has 'come boiling up' in a lifetime's writing from a committed hedonist in what 'then was a lifestyle, a Zen; now is perilously close to sport'.

Terry Gifford

High Life. A History of High-Altitude Physiology and Medicine

John B West

*Published for American Physiological Society by
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp494+xvi, US \$79.50*

High-altitude medicine and physiology, though a very young subject, has very old roots that extend back to the pre-Christian era. An indication of its youth is that I attended lectures by Professor Joseph Barcroft at the end of the Second World War at the School of Physiology at Cambridge. He was a major and pioneering figure in this subject and made very important contributions on the transport of oxygen in the blood and through the lungs and was one of the first researchers to carry out experiments at high altitude in the field and in a decompression chamber. It is only recently, too, that modern textbooks have been written on the subject, and John West's *High Life. A History of High-Altitude Physiology and Medicine* is the first substantial history.

The increasing ease of transport to and in mountain regions has meant that, whereas 50 years ago only a relatively small number of mountaineers ventured above 10,000ft, now millions of people of all ages trek, ski and climb at and above this altitude, exposing themselves to the rigours and dangers of chronic oxygen lack and severe cold. Increasingly, too, various forms of high-altitude disease have been discovered and modern strategies adopted to improve the working conditions of those who have to carry out hard physical and mental work for long periods at great altitudes. All these factors make for a fascinating scientific adventure story.

The early chapters of the book are mainly anecdotal: Chinese sources were the first to describe 'headache mountains' that produced mountain sickness and also a condition which was probably high-altitude pulmonary oedema. European scientists of the Middle Ages made the first barometer to measure atmospheric pressure, which was observed to be lower on the tops of mountains. The discovery of oxygen, and how the heart and lungs work, followed. The French professor, Paul Bert, the founding father of high-altitude physiology, published his book *La Pression Barometrique* in 1878, and the middle of the 18th century also saw great altitudes reached by balloonists. The formation of the Alpine Club, the world's first mountaineering club, in 1863 stimulated the exploration of mountains in Europe and of high-altitude regions in Asia and South America.

Inevitably attempts on Everest have played an important part in understanding the effects of great altitude, and the recurrent failures of mountaineers to climb Everest are clearly shown in this book to have been due to ignorance – and a willingness to be ignorant – of the main hazards, which were medical and scientific rather than mountaineering.

These factors were emphasised by the failure of the Swiss team in 1952. By contrast to the amateurs in the British/New Zealand party of 1953, the Swiss were professional mountaineers but they failed for three reasons.

First, their oxygen sets were faulty and only delivered oxygen at rest and not when climbing when it was most needed; second, their oxygen masks were fixed, so that they were unable to move their heads to look for hand and footholds when climbing; and, third, their daily fluid intake was so inadequate, due to lack of efficient stoves for melting snow, that they were disastrously dehydrated, with resulting exhaustion. In common with the British mountaineers of the 1920s and 1930s, on the upper slopes of Everest they were like 'sick men walking in a dream', and in no fit state to climb the mountain.

By contrast, owing to the work of Dr Griffith Pugh and the Medical Research Council over the previous eighteen months, most members of the 1953 expedition were in excellent physical condition at great altitude. This was due primarily to the use, for the first time on any Everest expedition, of an adequate oxygen uptake, which transformed their performance.

The first ascent of Everest stimulated not only an explosion in high-altitude mountaineering but also a burgeoning of scientific interest in altitude. The first ascent of Everest without supplementary oxygen in 1978 was a natural progression, and an event that had been foretold by A M Kellas in the early part of the century.

With hindsight, the most original and stimulating field of investigation after 1953 was the Silver Hut Expedition of 1960–61, which wintered at 19,000ft in the Everest region. The winter physiology party, of which John West was a member, was led by Dr Griffith Pugh and it completed a monumental amount of important pioneering work which has stood the test of time. They also achieved a major first ascent, that of the 'Matterhorn of the Himalaya', Ama Dablam.

The Silver Hut investigation was the template for the highly successful American Medical Research Expedition to Everest in 1981. Led by John West, the author of this book, this expedition made many very important observations up to and including the summit.

In 1985 a complementary American decompression chamber investigation was master-minded by Dr C S Houston. This was based on his own ground-breaking chamber investigation of 1946, at the Pensacola Naval Air Base in Florida. An important French chamber experiment was completed in 1997, while the British Mount Everest Medical Expedition of 1994 also did some useful research into high-altitude medicine (*see AJ 101, 163-174, 1996*).

Whilst altitude investigations are now increasingly taking place in many countries – Russia, China, the United States, the Indian Subcontinent and Europe – the region that has the longest history of these studies is South America. With its large indigenous high-altitude population, much important work has been completed over the years. However, as these results have often been published in Spanish journals, they are not as well known as they should be. For instance, the first modern description of chronic mountain sickness (Monge's Disease) was made by Carlos Monge in 1925.

In addition, a detailed description of high-altitude pulmonary oedema (H.A.P.E.) was reported by South American workers, though there is little doubt that the original description was made by T H Ravenhill in 1913. He was a mining doctor in South America whose description was overlooked because it appeared in such an obscure medical journal.

John West has an immaculate pedigree for the authorship of this excellent book. He is a mountaineer, a very considerable research worker in both the field and the laboratory, as well as being a scientific historian of note. He has written many articles and textbooks. This is a work of very considerable scholarship and with 40 pages of references it is a mine of information. The thumbnail sketches of selected participants in the ongoing high-altitude story, many of whom are still alive and working, show a lightness of touch that extends into the text, and means that the book can be read with pleasure as well as profit.

This is a book that should certainly be found in the libraries of all serious mountaineering clubs, medical schools, and those departments of physiology concerned with oxygen transport. Many people, too, will wish to have their own copy. It could become a classic.

Michael Ward

Postcards from the Ledge: Collected Mountaineering Writings

Greg Child

The Mountaineers, 1998, pp 224, \$22.95

The wide diversity of Greg Child's climbing experience is reflected in the 27 articles contained in this collection, all previously published in *Climbing* or *Outdoors*. Style, too, ranges across a broad spectrum, from the pithy snapshots like 'Mother Knows Best', through carefully woven stories of climbing exploits and personalities – threaded with a rich seam of hilarity – to the considered and deeply researched polemics which form the final section of the book. Here, Child examines controversial mountaineering territory on the overcrowded slopes of Everest and in the contested summit claims of Lydia Bradey and Tomo Cesen.

It is the humour in Child's writing which makes the most immediate mark. This is evident in the postcard titles heading each chapter. 'I Was a Trango Love Slave' recalls a helpless obsession with climbing the eponymous tower and 'Travels in La La Lands' vividly evokes the surreal quality of journeying to countries whose bureaucracy makes our own seem benign.

Child understates danger in alerting the hapless reader to the horrors intrinsic in a life spent on terrifyingly unstable verticality. He smartly short-changes his own considerable achievements on a wide variety of terrain, exuberantly reminding us of his gaffes as only a man who is quietly confident of his own ability can.

Thus the reader is by turns seduced, alarmed, entertained – and above all made well aware of the potential within these cameos for the loss of life, limb or sanity.

Brevity and a brisk narrative pace bounce the reader through the more obviously journalistic pieces, but Child can handle the rhythm of a longer narrative just as adeptly. The final story is the most frustrating as Child barely flexes his authorial muscles before the tale is over. 'Unrequited' captures without sentimentality the difficulties posed in aligning a climber's lifestyle with the commitment required of personal relationships. Child's grasp of this tension is sure and it is intriguing to speculate on what more might be to come in this creative vein.

Postcards From The Ledge explores the same dichotomies as *Mixed Emotions* and *Thin Air*. Society's superficial appreciation of the glamour of climbing is set sharply and memorably against the harsher realities of illness, betrayal and death, shot through with a passion for the sport to which Greg Child has devoted most of his life.

Val Randall

Souvenirs from High Places A History of Mountaineering Photography

Joe Benson

Mitchell Beazley / The Mountaineers, 1998, pp 144, £17.99

'Mountaineering photography represents some of the most spectacular imagery in the entire field of photography. ...' writes the author. Sentiments with which no climber, camera-user or not, will disagree. Indeed it's surprising that this history has not been compiled before. It's a book long overdue covering a subject worthy of serious study, yet only three volumes in my own fairly comprehensive library even approach the subject. *The Splendid Hills* (Phoenix House 1948) is Ronald Clarke's portfolio of Vittorio Sella's work but all these images are the work of one great man. Clarke's *Picture History of Mountaineering* (Hulton 1956) happens to include – among the mundane record shots – many fine photographs from mountaineering's first century, selected rather for their illustrative value, however, than for their merit.

And that superb and massive tome *Montagne des Photographes* (Élisabeth Foch/Contrejour, Paris, 1989) is essentially a collector's art book limited to monochrome images only. Note however that this present book is a history of *mountaineering* photography – as opposed to *mountain* photography. Benson is dealing only with action images rather than merely sublime alpine landscapes.

'Part sports and part landscape photography, it combines the dramatic visual elements of one of the most exciting of all recreational activities, played out in some of the world's most extraordinary and beautiful

landscapes.' Thus does Joe Benson define mountaineering photography as a separate photographic genre. What makes it unique, he reasons, is that few other photographic forms demand that their exponents are themselves competent participants in their subject rather than mere voyeurs, while few again require the subtle melding of both the action and the landscape idiom. Despite including many superb images, Benson is at pains to point out that the illustrations were chosen to reflect the changing styles, techniques, equipment and subjects of mountaineering photography over the years, rather than as the finest mountaineering images ever created.

Benson is well qualified to handle the subject. An American academic and no mean climber himself, he teaches Visual Communication and Fine Arts Photography at university, meanwhile authoring and illustrating volumes as diverse as *A Climber's Guide to the Bugaboos* and *A Traveller's Guide to the Pony Express Trail*. In the present volume he traces the evolution of mountaineering photography from the advent of the medium itself to the present day, having initially located the roots of mountaineering illustration in the fifth century. Photography and mountaineering were both born nearly two centuries ago and Benson intriguingly points out the parallel development of the two subjects and their links to the Victorian philosophy of Determinism – the striving to comprehend and ultimately to control the physical world. Personally I had never considered either in those terms but then my livelihood depends on driving the camera rather than reasoning why. It is hardly coincidental that the book happens also to record the outline history of mountaineering itself.

Starting with a painting of Moses spaced out on the crags of Mount Sinai, Benson progresses swiftly to such artists as Elijah Walton, Edward Whymper and Edward Compton and then on to the first climbing photographers – celebrated men such as William Donkin, Sella, the Tairraz family and the brothers Abraham. Their work was restrained by primitive and bulky photographic equipment (Sella's favourite camera used 14 x 18 inch glass plates) and rudimentary mountaineering gear; one can only admire their application, their artistry and their masochism. I was intrigued to read of one lesser-known pioneer, Jules Beck, a professional photographer from Strasbourg. Equally at home recording serious alpine rock routes as well as snow ridges, he did good business selling library pictures to collectors. Between May and September, however, he would accept no orders, reserving these months exclusively for climbing. Would that I could do likewise!

Obviously the style of images that it was possible to shoot reflected the evolution of photographic materials and equipment. For many years incredibly slow emulsions, necessitating awkward tripods and long exposure times, prevented the shooting of any meaningful action pictures. Benson recognises only two really revolutionary advances in photography to date, the first of which enabled spontaneous action-climbing images to become a reality by the turn of the century. This was the introduction of the Kodak hand-held camera by George Eastman in 1888. Nevertheless we must not

forget that without faster emulsions and better film the Kodak itself could not have materialised.

Climbing photographers discovered a new versatility when Ernst Leitz's innovative new format using long lengths of 35mm movie film appeared in 1924. Of course *thirty-five-mill* has dominated the genre ever since, particularly during the last forty years as film quality and speed improved in quantum leaps. The first Kodachrome reached the market in 1936, but colour was not in general use until the sixties and even then not considered good enough professionally for quality reproduction from 35mm format for a further decade. Subsequent technical developments have been in detail and refinement: for instance crisper and more exotic lenses, built-in metering and motor-drives, and recently auto-focus. Benson's second revolution is the present advent of digital imaging with ramifications of which we can only guess. But despite all the galloping technology the camera is still only a tool. It is still the eye behind it that makes the pictures.

In parallel to photographic and mountaineering evolution, Benson examines the style and techniques of the leading photographers of each era. Typically his observations are perceptive and occasionally controversial. He claims, for instance, that in the '20s and '30s Frank Smythe was more of an 'adventure journalist' than a photographer. Not so, he was a prolific and successful camera artist and although I personally consider his images rather stilted, his photographic books and portfolios were extremely popular in their day and a major influence on the public perception of the mountains and wild places. Nevertheless he was certainly the first whose livelihood depended on exciting projects with reader appeal and Benson rightly sees Smythe as the precursor of Messner and Bonington today.

Telling action photography developed apace after the war both in Europe and America, and among the progression of excellent pictures from lesser known but perhaps equally skilled photographers of the '60s and '70s, the consistent work of several stands out. Brad Washburn with his immaculate eagle's eye, Vilem Heckel with his intensely subjective images, Pierre Tairraz and Jürgen Winkler with their dramatic and carefully anticipated climber-in-context shots, are surely among the greatest photographic artist/craftsmen? It is no accident that their work shown here is in monochrome, indeed it seems that the ability to use the black/white medium successfully still separates the true craftsman from the lucky snapper. It is a tragedy that in Britain today there is virtually no demand for black/white photographs – in my opinion photography's true art form. Publishers, the media, ultimately the public, are just not interested.

In the mid-sixties the media, in print, television and film, discovered the spectacle of climbing both on crag and on mountain, and spurred on by commercial imperatives, young photographers, now frequently working professionals, developed innovative techniques to exploit newly available equipment – rope manoeuvres, for example – in order to employ, close-in, the novel very wide-angle lenses.

Appropriately, colour appears on only the final 18 of the total 134 editorial pages. Here we find the masterful and already familiar work of Galen Rowell and Pat Morrow, professional North American adventure photo-journalists and top flight mountaineers to boot. Unfortunately several equally brilliant photographers warrant no mention, notably New Zealander Colin Monteath and Gordon Wiltsie from California. Coincidentally both are also among the finest polar photographers currently active and it would be interesting to see how this has influenced their mountain work.

Finally Benson introduces us to several younger photographers, names only vaguely familiar to me, whose work is certainly worth watching. Particularly eye-catching are the graphic rock-climbing pictures of Californian Kevin Powell, a trained landscape artist. Others are the dramatic shots of Chris Noble and Beth Wald – the latter one of the rare female photographers in this book – both busy professionals who are able to work almost exclusively in the climbing and mountaineering idiom – where else but in America?

Most mountain goers carry a camera and by definition most arm-chair mountaineers enjoy perusing mountain pictures. I would recommend this book to all of them. It's a history well written and well presented and it makes a fascinating and stimulating story. Who knows, it might even inspire a gallery devoted to the mountain genre – both photography and painting – or is that too much to hope?

John Cleare

World Mountaineering

with a Foreword by Chris Bonington

General Editor Audrey Salkeld

Mitchell Beazley, 1998, pp 304, £35

This is a deceptive book. At first sight, it offers itself as a populist evocation of the world of high mountaineering, offering – in the words of the dust jacket – ‘rare insights into the lives of those who dare to defy nature’s most awesome challenges’. The opening pictures endorse this appeal, with images of climbers at large in a hostile and featureless environment. It is the kind of presentation which could deter the average Alpine Club member from giving the book a closer look.

But persevere. Within this sensationalist exterior is to be found a wealth of detailed material the committed mountaineer will relish. The core of the book consists of a survey of 52 mountains across the world, from the high-profile Himalayan names to less fashionable peaks such as Mount Tutoko in New Zealand’s South Island and Jebel Toubkal in Morocco. The editor, Audrey Salkeld, explains in her introduction that the selection is intended to provide ‘a taste of the variety and choice’ on offer, with a selection of ‘great favourites alongside lesser known but no less exciting peaks’.

There is an introduction to each peak written by a roster of climbers who include a fair proportion of AC members, among them Doug Scott on Mount Asgard, Stephen Venables on Gasherbrum IV, George Band on Kangchenjunga. Then come a climbing history, detailed topographical photographs keyed to a list of routes, and practical information about access, facilities, even the insurance requirements and prospects of rescue. There is an inspiring global sweep to the enterprise, reflected in the choice of both mountains and contributors, so that the book reflects the spirit of the international community which mountaineering now embodies.

It is a tribute to Audrey Salkeld's standing and perseverance that she was able to assemble such a formidable collection of talent and information. It is one of those books you delve into time and again, relishing the detail and nuances of the route descriptions, succumbing to the temptation to plot your own lines. It is a pity that some of the introductions are rather dry, leaving the impression that they have been tailored by the publishers so that they fit the book's gazetteer approach, rather than making the most of the contributors' individual skills and reputation.

Happily, the mix is enriched with 17 more personal narratives, all commissioned specifically for the book. There are trusty story-tellers such as Jim Curran and Roger Mear, expertly weaving tension around their exploits on Nanga Parbat and Mount Kenya. Anderl Heckmair's memoir on the 1938 Eigerwand ascent is a coup, as is the account of his ascent of Everest in 1995 by George Mallory – yes, the grandson, moved to tears at what he calls 'the completion of a family project begun seven decades earlier'. Refreshingly, not all the writers are élite climbers: we have Hilary Boardman describing how she climbed Mt Carstenz with her husband, Peter, in 1978.

Sadly, the book is still flawed, and in a way which reflects the unresolved ambiguities of its appeal – whether to a knowing mountaineering readership or the broader market implied by the publishers' dust jacket. While there are some breathtaking pictures, others are poorly selected or reproduced. The designers show little sense of the iconography of the territory: the shadowy colour picture illustrating the Eiger could have been almost any summit anywhere, rather than one representing an epic arena of mountaineering's history.

In addition, the publishers made the mistake of printing two crucial images in reverse. One is Kurt Diemberger's extraordinary shot showing a climber on the Hillary Step in 1979, with two climbers visible on the summit overlooking the Kangshung Face (one can only assume that Audrey Salkeld did not see a final proof). The other flipped picture is Victor Saunders' shot of the Ben, taken looking up the Allt a'Mhuilinn. Other pictures – too many for a book with an official cover-price of £35 – are murky or indistinct.

Equally revealing, in the confusion over the book's aims, are the picture captions, which range from the intimate and expert to the crass and unknowing. Some identify climbers and dates, and perform their function of hooking the reader from the photograph into the text. Others are bland

or simply banal, as if written in enormous haste. There are other signs – familiar to anyone who has been through the ordeal of editing an illustrated book – of last-minute production panic, with some texts awkwardly cut to fit the design.

It would be a shame to let these blemishes override an appreciation of the book's virtues. Whether it reaches the wider market the publishers are striving for remains to be seen. For mountaineers, there is a wealth of material to savour.

Peter Gillman

Walks and Climbs in Romsdal, Norway

Tony Howard

Cordee, 1998, pp 128, 3rd edition, many photographs and illustrations, £14.99

When I first came to Romsdalen – home of the famous Troll Wall – in the fjord regions of south-western Norway in the early 1990s, very little guidebook material (not even in Norwegian) was available. Tony Howard's guidebook from the 1970s had long been out of print and copies were jealously guarded by visitors and locals alike. Fortunately, I was still able to obtain a copy directly from the publisher, who supplemented his last (faulty) copy with Xeroxed sheets from the original master copy. Ever since, this little guidebook has been an invaluable companion on many of my mountain journeys in Romsdalen.

Walks and Climbs in Romsdal was first published by Cicerone Press in 1970, followed by a second edition in 1979 which included a new route supplement for the intervening years. I was delighted to see a third edition of Howard's book published in 1998, essentially as a straight reprint but with the promise of 'introductory notes and other important details updated'. Sadly, however, it does not live up to its billing. Many inaccuracies and errors – present in the early editions – remain when their correction could have been facilitated easily by using the latest version of the local topographic maps.

The first edition of the excellent 1:50,000 topographic maps of Romsdalen appeared as late as the early 1970s. Such a lack of maps makes Howard's initial efforts even more commendable and it would be improper to criticise that many of the mountains covered in *Walks and Climbs in Romsdal*, editions 1 and 2, were listed with their heights either given incorrectly or missing. Since then, second editions of the topographic maps have appeared in the 1990s, their features being the correction of some spot heights but, even more so, large numbers of spelling changes of mountain names and even complete renaming of individual peaks (and a somewhat peculiar shift of grid lines by about 2-3mm both in east and north). It is regrettable that Howard has not updated his book in that respect. Here are some illustrations: the routes 186-189 to Middagsfjell and Middagstind (both given

without height) will confuse anyone looking at the map. First, there is no Middagsfjell. Second, the real Middagstind (actually covered two pages later) is some 5kms distant on the other side of the valley from the route described on what is actually a peak called Gråfonnfjellet. Also, Ringshorn (routes 190-192) is most certainly Alnestind with the real Ringshornet some 3kms further south beyond two separate peaks in between. Finally, names such as Mjøltnir glacier (on 39a to Kvanndalstind) are of little use when no map or other publication indicates such a name. Indeed, for glacier routes it is worth keeping in mind that approaches may have significantly changed due to glacier recession in the close to 30 years from which the guidebook information dates.

Where the guidebook remains exceedingly valuable is in its description of the classic routes on the Troll Wall and its vicinity on both sides of the valley. These descriptions have significant historical perspective as the author was often involved in first or early ascents. And although these ascents may date from three decades ago, it should be remembered that the repetition rate of the major routes is very low: the most recent winter (to my knowledge) failed to produce a single successful ascent of Trollveggen, with the only attempt quickly abandoned.

Many new photographs are included in the new edition and the layout is very attractive. All in all, *Walks and Climbs in Romsdal* remains a useful guide book in many respects and I would still recommend it to those who wish to give Romsdalen more than a brief visit. Yet at the same time it must be mentioned that guidebooks of Romsdalen are now available with information that can only be gathered by local climbers with longstanding and continuous involvement in the mountain scene. *Klatring i Romsdalen* (1995) by Nebell and Bø focuses on the classic routes in the higher grades and *Fra topp til topp i Romsdal* (1997) by Gjelstenli concentrates on hikes, scrambles and lower grade climbs. While both are in Norwegian (the latter with English summaries), they provide excellent and detailed up-to-date information about the many exciting mountain routes of Romsdalen.

Werner Weiglhofer

The Queen of the Alps

Riccardo Cerri & Laura Osella Crevaroli
Edizione Zeisciu, 1998, pp xvi+480, L150.000

'In front of us was the Queen of the Alps in unclouded majesty, a sublime scene indeed ...'. So wrote, in 1858, the Rev Samuel K King (*The Italian Valleys of the Pennine Alps*, p.379) describing the view of Monte Rosa from Alpe Pile. Little did he know that, 140 years later, his powerful image would provide the title for this beautifully assembled collection and review of

writings by nineteenth century British travellers to Valsesia, south-west of Monte Rosa.

The original texts are translated into Italian and accompanied by plentiful contemporary illustrations and biographical notes on the various authors quoted. An introductory section provides the framework to the main body of the collection, describing the development of British travel to the Alps, from crossing Alpine passes as a necessary evil on the way to the classical destinations on the 'Grand Tour', through the stage of scientific exploration, to surprisingly modern forms of tourism and mountaineering. While the book concentrates on travel to and descriptions of Valsesia, it is a paradigm for British exploration of much of the Western Alps.

In an open letter to his friend and fellow climber Bartolomeo Gastaldi, Quintino Sella wrote about the first Italian ascent of Monviso in August 1863, a date which marked the starting point for setting up, later in the same year, the Club Alpino Italiano. Sella, one of the key founders, notes how the inhabitants of Casteldelfino had mistaken his party for Englishmen. 'As if they alone should climb our mountains!' was his comment. It was indeed common amongst the local population to refer to all alpinists as 'English' in a way that had made the two words synonymous. National pride apart, Sella knew all too well that it had been the English who had launched the fashion for climbing mountains. In his search for a model for the new Italian Club he looked to the Alpine Club in London. He sent copies of his report on Monviso to the President and several members, at the same time asking for details of the statutes and organisation of the Club.

The Queen of the Alps takes us back to those pioneering days, when mountaineering itself was still being explored. It allows Italian readers, who otherwise would not normally have access to those early texts, to gain a better appreciation of the influence of nineteenth century British travellers in shaping the object and the practice of mountaineering to this day. The book provides delightful sketches of local history and customs as seen from the outside. It also brings to life adventures and exploration in the Alps, a part of the world which today seems domesticated, with easy road access, mechanical lifts, huts and helicopters.

The value of the book, however, transcends local history and nostalgia. One of the main features of the book, which makes it particularly commendable to readers with a special interest in the history and literature of nineteenth century mountaineering, is the wealth of information to be found in the biographical sections, often the result of original research. Perversely, this information is now only available in Italian!

The efforts of the authors are well matched by those of the publisher, who deserves a special mention for the quality and elegance of the finished product, with high quality paper, printing and binding, making the book particularly pleasant to handle.

Giovanni Vaciago

The Peak. Past and Present

Gordon Stainforth

Constable, 1998, pp224, £25.00

When I heard that Gordon Stainforth's new opus was going to be a book on the Peak District I must confess to a slight sinking of the old heart. How, I wondered, could a book on the bleak moorlands of Derbyshire compare with Stainforth's previous sumptuous volumes on the Cuillin, the Lakes and, perhaps best of all, *Eyes to the Hills*? To put it bluntly, I thought he was in for a flop.

How wrong can you get? *The Peak* is to my mind his best yet, for several reasons. The photography is mature and self-assured. It is also highly imaginative and personal. His contrasts, from the general to the particular, from passive to active, from past to present, are brilliantly juxtaposed. He captures to perfection the kind of autumnal melancholy that I have loved in so much of the Derbyshire landscape. His research, particularly in digging out those old black and white sequences of Joe Brown on the first ascent of the 'Right Unconquerable' and contrasting it with a recent one nearly fifty years later, is just inspired.

Selfishly, the climbing sequences delighted me because for once I could enjoy a modern photographic book and actually claim to have done many of the routes. Not of course the Johnny Dawes or Felicity Butler ones, but Stainforth has chosen a set of Derbyshire classics and showed us why they are so good. Very wide-angle shots on High Tor and Ravensdale work particularly well and his choice of climbing sequences show just how much variety – both visual and technical – there is crammed into this small chunk of England.

I suppose I am not the best person to comment on the writing. I am no historian and after living in Sheffield for only thirty or so years I couldn't claim to be a local expert either. But I have heard it said that Stainforth has given too much importance to Derby and the Peak District in his historical account of its development, which seems to me to be totally unfair, for that is *exactly* what the book is about – the whole story of life in the Peak District – a pretty ambitious project, and one which I think Stainforth has come to terms with remarkably well.

If I have any minor criticism, it is a certain ambivalence about the 'period stagecoach' sequence, which seems to me to be a little too film-settish and contrived. I also regret the lack of what I still find one of the most stirring sights in the Peak (though others might disagree). This is the view driving back in the dusk from Stanage down Ringinglow Road when, right on the very edge of the Peak Park, the surreal vista of the lights of Sheffield are suddenly spread out before you. But perhaps that's a photo I should take myself!

This book is fantastic value for £25 and a certain winner as a Christmas present – after all, you can give it to an elderly relative or they can give it to

a young rock climber just as easily. Both will find it absorbing and stimulating. Gordon Stainforth's next offering will, I am told, be set in the Himalaya. Now there he's bound to come unstuck!

Jim Curran

A Deathful Ridge: A Novel of Everest

J A Wainwright

Mosaic Press, Canada, 1997, pp x+138, \$14.95

Myths are the product of our desire for perfection. They are governed by the ideals with which we seek to elevate the more mundane aspects of our existence. George Mallory embraced the role of Sir Galahad, his Grail the conquest of Everest, his knights a group of Cambridge University climbing contemporaries whose names straddle the worlds of literature and mountaineering. Mallory, Hazard, Odell, Irvine, Norton, Somervell: Wainwright has them mistakenly convinced that the values they held dear before the First World War were still in place, undiminished by the brutality of slaughter, the hypocrisy of glorious sacrifice which Wilfred Owen brought before the public eye in his war poetry.

In deconstructing the Galahad myth, Wainwright creates another in its place; that Mallory summited on Everest and when Irvine, climbing later, saw him apparently in distress on his descent, he abandoned his own summit bid to come to Mallory's aid. Mallory, jealous for his own success, pushed Irvine off the Second Step – falling in the process and tearing his face on the ice. Guilt and grief rendered him mute for the 22 years which were left of his life.

Wainwright also spins the fable of Nye Davies, Llanberis guide, given charge of the scarred and – we are asked to believe – unrecognisable Mallory until his death. At 104 years of age Davies breaks his silence in response to the narrator's questions, since the conspirators in the plot to protect Mallory – and all this Galahad stood for – are now dead.

There are several irritating anomalies in the novel: Davies is the uneducated son of a farmer, yet he is almost poetically fluent. He says of Young's letters to Mallory, 'There was a far greater eloquence here than I could possibly summon up' – a statement repeatedly contradicted by the precision and linguistic expertise characterising his account. It is also unlikely that such a man would incorporate 'I'd gotten married' into his habitual speech patterns.

Incredulity is again occasioned when we learn that Mallory was first cared for on his return to England by a German war widow – Mrs Bergschund [*sic*]. This is a clumsy artifice and further diminishes the novel's credibility, making it less possible for the reader to experience Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

The author's poetic background drives the narrative: some analogies are arresting in their precision, but others are strained beyond their compass –

for example, Mallory's extended metaphor comparing his wife to the slopes of Everest: 'Your breasts huge slabs of rock. Your thighs cold couloirs of desire. Between your legs the place where flags are planted'.

Wainwright moves, sometimes unsteadily, between a number of narrative voices: Nye Davies, Mallory's journals, Madeleine Carroll (star of *The Last Climb*, who explores Mallory's relationship with his wife) and the unnamed narrator. This variety of speakers fails to stabilise the flow of the novel, necessitating the inclusion of a curious final section in which the narrator converses with the dead Mallory. This seems to act as a summative device, explaining authorial motivation and examining the themes in the novel. The narrator argues with Mallory about his story: 'It's made up of truths that have to do with who you were, what you tried to do and the impact on those who watched and waited.'

A Deathful Ridge is an ambitious first novel, well-researched and rich in imagination but lacking the focus and narrative control necessary to leave a wholly coherent impression on the reader. A bolder editorial hand might have excised these flaws and presented the author's premise to better advantage, allowing the intriguing exploration of truth and reality to be executed more convincingly than it is here.

Val Randall

Le Sentiment de la Montagne

Musée de Grenoble, Glénat, 1998, pp287, FF295

This splendid catalogue, fully illustrated in colour, accompanied an exhibition of mountain art held at Grenoble from March to June 1998 and at Turin from July to October 1998. The exhibition was wonderfully comprehensive; if there was an understandable preponderance given to French artists, it was balanced by a strong representation from Germany, Switzerland, Britain (nine artists shown), Austria, Norway, Italy and even Russia and the USA. The catalogue includes, by way of introduction, art historical essays, that on German Romanticism being especially valuable. Each artist's work is accompanied by a biographical note, and sometimes by an art critical note. The catalogue concludes with an illuminating series of literary extracts on the mountains.

If it is true that British admirers of mountain art tend to be limited in their tastes though not without proper pride, *Le Sentiment de la Montagne* would serve as an excellent broadening. If, for example, Carus, Fearnly, Calame and Giacometti are little known to the reader as mountain artists, this catalogue might well come as an agreeable revelation.

James Bogle

Meeting the Mountains

Harish Kapadia

Indus Publishing, IR500

If you are in Bombay and can force yourself to get out of bed early enough, then I recommend you go down to the city's elegant race-course. While the horses exercise on the outer ring, you will see tracksuited office workers taking a turn round the inner course in the fresh, cool air of morning before the traffic and the heat get to work to spoil things. More than likely, among the power-walkers and sweat-banded joggers, you will see a shortish man of middle years, thickening round the waist, but belting round the track like he was a three-year old in training for the Derby.

Of course, horse-racing is not Harish Kapadia's sport. Gasping after him on my morning at the Bombay race-course, he told me he had never seen a race there in his life. When he is at home, in all probability the television is showing cricket, with the sound turned down if he has company. I suspect Harish would agree with the point of view that cricket is an Indian game, accidentally discovered by the English.

He is also a great chronicler of the Himalaya. Too often and increasingly, European visions of the Abode of Snow are narrow and technical, insufficiently coloured by the depth and sympathy of past writers who knew the region well and could be bothered to make enquiries and educate themselves.

This is part of the value of Kapadia's work. In his eyes, the Himalaya are far more than just the greatest mountaineering challenge on Earth, but a physical expression of a nation's consciousness, in his case an Indian consciousness, although he is curious and sympathetic enough to value the range of beliefs and attitudes found throughout the region.

(I remember him explaining to me, as we walked around the Bombay race-course, the sadness he felt at the emigration of his friend Muslim Contractor, and the increasing numbers of the Muslim élite who feel similarly compelled to live abroad in the new and intolerant atmosphere of Hindu extremism.)

The book is really a miscellany of reports from most corners of the Indian Himalaya with a brief but valuable contribution from Nepal. Kapadia takes two 'tourist' treks, in the Annapurna and Everest regions, and it is interesting to read the responses of a man who has been to so many places so far untouched by the characterless hand of tourism. His balanced remarks illustrate someone thinking adroitly and not having his prejudices confirmed.

There are brief portraits too of some of his friends from the Himalayan Club and elsewhere, and to be honest I would have enjoyed some more of this. I imagine that the Indian mountaineering scene was once very well understood in this country, but I don't think that is any longer the case, especially among younger mountaineers. Kapadia is an affectionate observer of his friends, and as in his travels, he has a good eye for the telling detail, the shorthand portrait winningly captured.

Most of all, the book is packed full of information and detail from only part of a lifetime's passion and will be a useful addition to the reference sources used by potential visitors. In his Foreword Bill Aitken makes the observation that 'mountains are nothing without mountaineers'. If only more of them could train on Bombay's race-course.

Ed Douglas

Guide des Livres sur la Montagne et l'Alpinisme

Jacques Perret

Éditions de Belledonne, 1997, Vol 1 pp576, Vol 2 pp580, FF600

M Perret has made a major contribution to the bibliography of mountaineering and mountain travel in this monumental two volume work; indeed, perhaps the major contribution thus far.

Volume 1 consists of the following parts:

1. An introduction to the work, including a discussion of the vexed subject of definition.
2. A useful discursive piece on 'Livres de Montagne' from the beginning of the 16th Century to the present day.
3. A note on the collecting of books on the subject, including a (somewhat selective and already outdated) list of dealers, auction houses and festivals.
4. Indices by title, chronology, subject matter and geographical region.
5. An index of illustrators.
6. A list of published collections of books.
7. A short but interesting list of pseudonyms.

Volume 2 comprises the full descriptive list of some 4800 titles by author, including 900 or so biographical notes on the principal authors.

Given the enormous scope of this work, it would go far beyond the constraints of this journal to attempt an exhaustive analysis of the contribution M Perret has made. However, it must be said that he has produced a work which should be on the shelf of all mountaineering libraries, many general libraries and all serious collectors. Having said that, the responsible reviewer must comment on the deficiencies he sees, if only in the hope that the second edition will be even better.

M Perret admits that the work is heavily biased towards the French language, with only the principal works in other languages being included. To do other than this may well have meant that the work would never have appeared at all and one must respect the author's decision. However, one feels that a related decision is more unfortunate, namely that of identifying the French title of a book in the relevant entry, even when it was originally written and published in another language. In extreme cases this produces

titles totally unrecognisable, at least to the British reader. For example, Norton's *The fight for Everest: 1924* becomes *La dernière expédition au Mont-Everest*. The same thought process results in the Windham and Martel entry being that of the Geneva edition of 1879 (Martel being given priority over Windham), with the undeniably more important English edition of 1744 being referred to in the text as "une version anglaise sous le titre "An account of the glaciers or ice Alps in Savoy ...".

There are inevitably mistakes, though most appear to be relatively unimportant: in the detail of titles of books, authorship (Collie and Stutfield) and missing editions (Barry 2nd with black and white plates; Atkins with no plates – possibly the true first issue).

Some of the overall omissions are a little harder to understand, for example Cunningham and Abney's *A facsimile of Christian Almer's 'Führerbuch', 1856-1894* and Weir's *East of Kathmandu*, though the far less important *Camps and climbs in arctic Norway* is present.

One final comment concerns the author's decision to apply a kind of two-dimensional rating scale to the rarity and collectability of the scarcer items. It could be argued that the serious reader will already be only too well aware of a book's status in this respect and that the more casual reader may not really care. The unfortunate aspect of doing this is that, almost inevitably, the apparent authority of this judgement will lead to a further escalation in the price of the rarer books, which are almost out of reach already. More seriously, this is not bibliographical information, though perhaps the author's defence would be that he has written a 'guide', not a bibliography.

It is far from the purpose of this review to sound any kind of general critical note concerning this excellent publication. It is a well produced, well researched and thoughtful document and deserves a place on the reference shelf of anyone who considers himself serious in the field. It is far and away the best of its kind of which at least this reviewer is aware.

Jerry Lovatt

Walking in the Alps

Kev Reynolds

Cicerone Press, 1998, pp480, £25.00

Hubert Walker's *Walking in the Alps*, published in 1951, has been an inspiration for many hill walkers and mountaineers. It was a unique work, in its enthusiasm, its idiosyncratic layout and style and, not least, in the demands it made on its followers: when Hubert Walker addressed himself to the 'energetic walker', he meant it! Since then much has changed in the Alps, and a successor volume was long overdue; but such an undertaking required courage. Cicerone Press and Kev Reynolds are to be congratulated on their accomplishment. If anyone was to do the job, Kev was the man;

he has already written a series of excellent walkers' guidebooks to the Alps, and his knowledge of the range, particularly its more secret recesses (yes, they do exist) is probably unrivalled. Of course, Walker's effort was unrepeatable and, wisely, a somewhat different approach has been chosen for the new volume. Hubert Walker dealt only with selected regions, and he gave routes for both walkers and climbers. Kev Reynolds, instead, aims at comprehensive coverage of the entire range. He has 19 chapters, starting with the Maritime Alps, finishing with the Julians and covering almost everything in between (it would be quite unfair to complain that one of my favourite areas, the Sântis region, has been left out). He addresses himself to the walker only – rightly so, climbers are by now amply catered for – and, of course, in a work of such compass he does not attempt to provide detailed guidebook treatment. Instead, the book consists basically of an immense series of suggestions for rewarding walks, 'giving a nudge in the right direction', as Kev puts it, and deliberately giving only hints, without too much detail, for some of those places that you have to discover for yourself. For each region there are useful summaries which list principal valleys, peaks, centres and huts and recommend maps, guidebooks and other relevant literature. Some important features of Walker's book have been retained, such as giving outlines of composite multi-day treks, and the extensive, aptly chosen, quotations from previous writers on the Alps – evidence of Kev's own wide reading in the literature and, one hopes, an encouragement for his readers to follow suit.

Kev Reynolds has brilliantly succeeded in conveying the enthusiasm of his predecessor. The trouble is that, according to my calculations, if I wanted to do everything listed in this marvellous book I would need to live to just over 400 years and remain fit to the end. Let's hope the book remains in print until bio-engineering has made this vista a reality, and that the developers will not have got their claws into Kev's more delectable byways in the meantime.

Ernst Sondheimer

Everest – Free to Decide

Cathy O'Dowd & Ian Woodall

Zebra Press, 1997, pp301, npq

Ascent & Dissent

Ken Vernon

Jonathan Ball, 1997, pp292, npq

And so the ashes of the 1996 Everest season continue to be raked through. These two books concentrate on the controversial First South African Everest Expedition and present two completely different views of that unpleasant trip.

If you are unlucky enough to be given these books – and I certainly would not recommend buying either of them – I would suggest you read Ken Vernon's first. He was the journalist assigned by the sponsoring newspaper to cover the expedition. It makes for sorry reading. The expedition was the brainchild of one Ian Woodall, who had been a client of my friend Mal Duff and whom I met briefly in 1989. He became the instigator of a British Army expedition to attempt the first British ascent of Everest in winter, on which I eventually participated as a guide. On that occasion it quickly became apparent that his competence and climbing experience were so inadequate that he was removed from the leadership in short order. He was next heard of in South Africa trying the same trick.

This time he was not found out in time and Ken Vernon angrily tells: '... the tale of one of the most remarkable fakes South Africa has ever known – a man who misled the largest newspaper in the land, as well as a long list of major companies who sponsored his fatally flawed expedition, those ordinary South Africans who followed the expedition, and, last but not least, the president of the country.'

Vernon tells in pure tabloid prose the story of the expedition's progress to base camp, by which time his relations with Woodall had reached such a low point that he was sacked by Woodall and sent home, along with the three most experienced members of the expedition. Space is too limited here to go into the full details; suffice it to say that the blurb on the back of the book is quite correct in saying that: 'No punches are pulled in this exposé of the deceits, errors of judgement and rash decisions that led to the expedition becoming a scandal across two continents.' Indeed, Vernon even goes so far as to accuse Woodall of being a 'narcissistic paranoid delusional' and 'a small-time confidence trickster whose time had come'.

You might think that all this would make a riveting read, but in fact it amounts to the catharsis of a journalist who knew that he had been taken for a ride and should have found out the story beforehand.

As abruptly as Vernon's book ends at base camp, so Woodall's book starts in the same place, with absolutely no reference to the events of the walk-in. The three climbers who were fired (Andy de Klerk, Ed February and Andrew Hackland) have become non-people, airbrushed out of history, like Trotsky was removed from photos by the Stalin regime. Everything about the book makes me want to spit, from the dedication to Mal Duff ('without whom there would have been no beginning') to the very last page, which is a 'Candidate Application Form' for projects to the North Ridge of Everest and to K2.

The group is caught up in the events of May 10, the day of the 'disaster', but although they are at the South Col at the time, their exhaustion and inexperience lead to them being of little assistance, refusing to give up their radio and go and look. Although the contrast with Anatoli Boukreev's heroics is stark, I cannot find it in myself to blame them too much for their actions. They were clearly inept lower down the mountain so why should they be more competent higher up?

Eventually, on 25 May, Woodall and Cathy O'Dowd reach the summit along with Pemba Tendi, Ang Dorje and Jangbu. Bruce Herrod summited much later the same day and perished at the foot of the Hillary Step. Questions have been asked by Vernon and others about exactly what happened that day, but again I feel that the truth will never come out.

Since then Woodall and O'Dowd have been back to Everest – the North Ridge this time – where their Sherpa guides, my friends Lhakpa Ghelu and Jangbu, again summited. I understand that they are going back in Spring 99 from the North. I will be climbing from the South and very much hope that I do not meet them on the summit.

Jon Tinker

Himalaya. Reflections

Erhard Loretan

(Translated from the French by Trevor Braham)

Editions La Sarine, Fribourg, 1998, pp136

Erhard Loretan is a world-class mountaineer who has combined exceptional achievements in the Alps, Himalaya and Antarctic with great sensitivity to the environment. Having become the third person, after Messner and Kukuczka, to climb all the 8000-metre peaks, he has argued strongly that nature should be left undisturbed by any human traces. Happily, his achievements and concern for the environment were recognised in 1997 when the King Albert Memorial Foundation awarded him their Gold Medal 'for reaching new frontiers in modern alpinism'.

In his introduction to this beautifully produced book of reflections, Loretan relates how the mountains cast a magical spell over him from a very young age: '*Chaque instant de liberté, je l'ai consacré à ma passion.*' Starting out as an apprentice carpenter, he soon realised that an indoor occupation was not for him. He had just one wish: to get to know the mountains. After a spell of Army service, he decided to become a professional mountain guide. In 1982, with a few friends, and inspired by Hermann Buhl's book, he climbed Nanga Parbat, his first 8000-metre peak. Some thirty expeditions followed, all in Alpine style, culminating in 1995 with the ascent of Kangchenjunga – his fourteenth 8000-metre peak.

Loretan's passion for the mountains is reflected in this book which tells, in poetic language and superb photographs, the story of his life and philosophy. The photos, a dominant feature of the book, are not professionally staged pictures – some are even technically imperfect – but they reveal an intensely artistic eye and perfectly capture the atmosphere of his expeditions.

Trevor Braham is largely successful in translating Loretan's poetic French into harmonious English. His task is made more obviously difficult by the fact that the French is presented side by side with English and German translations, inviting comparison. There is something about the French

language which lends itself to reflective thought. For instance, how can anyone do justice to '*J'ai tout simplement l'immense avantage de pouvoir vivre mes rêves*'? Braham gives us 'Quite simply, I have been immensely fortunate to have been able to live my dreams.' It is hardly Braham's fault if this sounds a little prosaic compared with the original French.

Braham has an easier time later in the book when Loretan describes the more practical aspects of his expeditions, such as food, drink, sponsoring, transport, acclimatisation, as well as more subjective concepts such as 'fear', 'danger', 'motivation', 'the art of suffering', 'the death zone', 'knowing when to stop' and 'the competitive instinct'. Interestingly, under the latter heading, he deplores a magazine's recent list of the climbing fraternity's "Top 50". 'As if that were not enough,' he protests, 'they have judged by the same standards the performances of athletes, which are confined exclusively to technical climbs on walls, with the mountaineering achievements of experts on major mountain peaks. I regard this as pure nonsense.' Many of us would agree.

This book of reflections is notably lacking in egotism. Loretan gives no detailed descriptions of his many expeditions. Only his main ascents are listed, modestly, at the end. Instead he sets out his philosophy as he has acquired it through his wide mountaineering experience. His conclusions are significant and valuable and I would recommend this book to anyone who has ever asked the question 'Why do these top mountaineers persist in putting their lives at risk?' Loretan answers this and many other interesting questions in a lavishly produced and very individual book.

Johanna Merz

The Antarctic Mountaineering Chronology

Damien Gildea

Pub. Damien Gildea, 1998, pp.112, £19.95

This book provides an impressive mass of facts, including a chronological list of first ascents of mountains in Antarctica, plus ascents of mountains and high points in the islands of the Southern Ocean and off the Antarctic Peninsula. A number of repeat ascents and new routes are also recorded.

Following general notes on mountaineering in Antarctica, the chronology kicks off with the year 1817, when D. Carmichael from the vessel *Falmouth* climbed the highest point on Tristan da Cunha on 4 January. The years up to 1945 occupy only three pages, yet in 1998 there are nine entries for January and February alone. The author holds the 'Seven Summits' concept responsible for increased activity in recent years. Each entry in the chronology gives date, mountain, latitude and longitude, route, party and any relevant notes. A number of colour photos, seven pages of maps and an extensive bibliography complete the work.

Damien Gildea studied at the Scott Polar Research Institute and the

Institute for Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies at the University of Tasmania, and he has climbed in many parts of the world. In researching this book and publishing it himself in Australia, he has accomplished a formidable task. The result is an invaluable work of reference.

Geoffrey Templeman

Sacred Mountains of the World

Edwin Bernbaum

University of California Press, 1997, ppxxvi+292

Sacred Mountains of the World was first published by the Sierra Club in 1990, and the University of California has now reissued it in a sumptuously produced, large format, coffee-table softback. The author is a 'scholar of comparative religion and mythology', and judging by both the text and the number of photographs ascribed to him, he has visited and climbed in many of the regions described, .

The eleven chapters in the first part of the book start in the Himalaya and travel via China and Central Asia, Japan, the Middle East, Europe and Africa, to the Americas and Oceania. In each area, the spiritual significance of individual mountains is comprehensively dealt with, the chosen peaks ranging from the obvious, such as Kailas, to peaks which are less well-known to the layman. Britain's contribution is Glastonbury Tor; Ireland's is Croagh Patrick.

The second half of the book describes 'The Power and Mystery of Mountains', and here many climbers may part company with the author's assertion that we are all making spiritual pilgrimages when we climb mountains, even if we don't know it! The book as a whole, however, is a marvellous introduction to the connection between mountains and the religions of the world, beautifully produced and illustrated, at a reasonable price. It goes on the shelf alongside Tobias and Drasdo's *The Mountain Spirit*.

Geoffrey Templeman

Whale Watching with a Boy and a Goat

Terry Gifford

Red Beck Press, 1998, pp56, £6.95

The first half of Terry Gifford's fifth 'solo' book of poems includes the title poem, records impressions during his stay as Writer-in-Residence at Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory, North Carolina during 1997 and, although there is little about mountains here, the majority are concerned with nature and environmental concerns. The author's strong feeling for country matters comes through, whether seriously in 'Second Chance' or more lightly in 'How to Shoo an Elk'.

In the second part we travel widely – to Poland, Crete, Cairo, the South of France – with occasional nips back to Yorkshire and the Dales, all captured in a style of verse which is delightfully easy to read. Not a lot of climbing here either, but the final poem, ‘The Single Falling Stone’, is a touching tribute to Paul Nunn, which members may remember from the 1997 Journal. All in all, this is Terry’s best volume of poetry yet, and well worth a place on your shelf.

Euskal Herria en Los Techos del Mundo

Los catorce ochomiles vascos

Antxon Iturriza

Pyrenaica, Bilbao, 1997, pp 194

This magnificent volume from Pyrenaica is a history of Spanish/Basque attempts on, and ascents of, the fourteen 8000-metre Himalayan peaks. Each mountain has a chapter to itself, detailing every attempt, followed by a brief chapter giving a resumé of all expeditions to these and other Himalayan peaks from 1993-1997. The main feature of this coffee-table-sized book, however, is the superb illustrations. The text is in Spanish, with some ‘pen portraits’ of climbers in Basque.

K2 and Northern Baltoro Mustagh

Monograph-guide-chronicle

Jan Kielkowski

Explo, 1997, pp 116

Another of Kielkowski’s inimitable Himalayan guides, this time to K2. All you want to know about K2, the Skyang Kangri peaks and surrounding area, the geography, routes, attempts and ascents.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY ALSO RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING BOOKS DURING 1998:

Ulrich Inderbinen Heidi Lanz, Liliane De Meister

Rotten Verlag, 1997, pp 180, £12.95, in English

The Complete Doctor Stories: The Ridiculous Mountains, Nothing so Simple as Climbing. G J F Dutton. *Bâton Wicks, 1997, pp1-146, 1-160, £9.99*

Against the Wall Simon Yates. *Vintage 1997, pp176, pb, £7.99*

Sant'elia 1897 Luigi Amedeo di Savoia Duca degli Abruzzi.
C.A.I., 1997, pp 120

Touching the Void Joe Simpson. *Vintage, 1997, pp208, pb, £7.99*

A Dream of White Horses. Recollections of a Life on the Rocks
Edwin Drummond. *Bâton Wicks, 1997, pp224, £8.99*

Munro's Tables and other Tables of Lower Hills Revised & edited by
Derek A Bearhop. *SMC, 1997, ppviii+168, £15.95*

Costa Blanca Rock Chris Craggs. *Cicerone, 1997, pp256, 2nd revised edition, £12.99*

Mountain Weather David Pegley. *Cicerone, 1997, pp144, 2nd edition, £7.99*

The Gran Paradiso and Southern Valdotain. The Long Distance Walks
J W Akitt. *Cicerone, 1997, pp160, £7.99*

Climbing Guide to the Burren Calvin Torrans & Clare Sheridan. *MCI, 1997, pp xviii+161, npq*

The Heart of the Cairngorms Jim Crumley. *Colin Baxter Photography, 1997, pp128, £8.95*

Sacred Mountains. Ancient Wisdom and Modern Meanings
Adrian Cooper. *Floris, 1997, pp320, £27.50*

Kilimanjaro & Mount Kenya A Climbing and Trekking Guide
Cameron M Burns. *Cordee, 1998, pp174, £11.95*

Exploring the Hidden Himalaya Soli Mehta & Harish Kapadia.
Indus Publishing Company, 1998, pp190, 2nd revised & updated edition, Rs 200

K2, La Montaña Sin Retorno Pepe Rebollo et al. *Prames, 1997, pp256*

Picchi Piccozze e Altezze Reali. Ricordi Alpini a cura di Amedeo di Savoia Aosta Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'. *CAI, Torino, 1998, pp208*

Der Schönste Platz der Welt Skizzen und Erinnerungen Ernst Gertsch.
Schlaefli, 1997, pp184

Escape Routes. Further Adventure Writings David Roberts.
The Mountaineers / Cordée, 1997, pp272

- Lliwedd** Kelvin Neal. *Climbers' Club*, 1998, pp96, £7.95
- Grenzt das Matterhorn an Tirol? Zur Präsenz Vorarlbergs im britischen 'Alpine Journal' (1863-1996)** Peter Strasser. *Pp175-199 Jahrbuch des Vorarlberger Landesmuseums – Freunde der Landeskunde*, 1996
- The Cairngorms. The Nature of the Land** Colin Baxter & Rowdon Goodier. *Colin Baxter Photography*, 1998, pp84, pb. reprint, npq
- Garhwal & Kumaon. A Guide for Trekkers and Tourists** K P Sharma. *Cicerone*, 1998, pp192, £9.99
- Further Modern Rope Techniques** Nigel Shepherd. *Constable*, 1998, pp191, £10.99
- 50 Best Scrambles in the Lake District** Bill O'Connor. *David & Charles*, 1997, pp144, pb, £9.99
- The Highlands and Islands (Exploring the British Isles Series)** *Readers Digest*, 1998, pp176, npq
- The Scottish Peaks** W A Poucher. *Constable*, 1998, pp518, 8th edition, £12.99
- International Mountain Rescue Handbook** Hamish MacInnes. *Constable*, 1998, pp360, 3rd revised edition, £18.99
- The Long Distance Walkers Handbook** Ed. Brian Smith. *A & C Black*, 1998, ppvi+282. £11.99, 6th edition
- Best Irish Walks** Ed. Joss Lynam. *Gill & Macmillan*, 1998, ppviii+208, 2nd edition.
- First Ascent The Life and Climbs of Greg Mortimer** Lincoln Hall. *Simon & Schuster*, 1996, pp xvi+254
- East of Ireland. Walk Guide** Jean Boydell, David Herman & Miriam McCarthy. *Gill & Macmillan*, 1998, ppvi+168, 3rd edition
- Southwest of Ireland. Walk Guide** Seán O'Súilheabháin. *Gill & Macmillan*, 1997, ppiv+162, 3rd edition
- Mournes. A Rock Climbing Guide to the Mourne Mountains** Ed. Robert Bankhead. *MCI*, 1998, pp342
- The Ronde Spire** Ivar Erik Tollefsen. *Orion/Cordee*, 1997, pp160, £24.95

Bhutan Stan Armington. *Lonely Planet, 1998, pp320, £12.99*

Scotland's Winter Mountains. The Challenge and the Skills
Martin Moran. *David & Charles, 1998, pp320, £21.99.* Revised & updated.

The Climber's Handbook Garth Hattingh. *New Holland, 1998, pp160*

A Perilous Playground. Misadventures in Snowdonia and the Development of the Mountain Rescue Services Bob Maslen-Jones.
Bridge Books, 1998, pp208, £9.95

Fall of the Phantom Lord. Climbing and the Face of Fear
Andrew Todhunter. *Doubleday, 1998, ppx+212, \$23.95*

Survival of the Fittest. Understanding Health and Peak Physical Performance Mike Stroud. *Jonathan Cape, 1998, ppx+214, £16.99*

A Most Hostile Mountain. Re-creating the Duke of Abruzzi's Historic Expedition on Alaska's Mount St. Elias Jonathan Waterman.
Henry Holt, New York, 1997, ppxiv+254

The Face. Six Great Climbing Adventures Richard Else & Brian Hall.
BBC Books, 1998, pp208, £18.99

Otto Meiling. Un pionero de Bariloche Vojko Arko.
Ediciones Caleuche, 1998, pp126

Hall & Ball. Kiwi Mountaineers. From Mount Cook to Everest
Colin Monteath. Hedgehog House, Christchurch, 1997, pp160

Il Colle del Teodulo. La Storia attraverso i documenti e le incisioni d'epoca Efisio Noussan. *Exhibition Catalogue, Valle d'Aosta, 1998, pp108*

Cook & Peary. The Polar Controversy, Resolved Robert M Bryce.
Stackpole Books, 1997, ppxviii+1134, \$50.00

Royal Robbins. Spirit of the Age Pat Ament.
Stackpole Books, 1998, ppiv+302, \$19.95

Macc and the Art of Long Distance Walking Graham Wilson.
Millrace, 1998, ppviii+152, £12.95

Abbé Amé Gorret. L'Ours de la Montagne 1) Autobiographie et Écrits Divers 2) Maximes et Aphorismes, Suivis de quelques Écrits sur l'Auteur
Administration Communale de Valtournanche.