Book Reviews

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

Snow in the Kingdom. My Storm Years on Everest
Ed Webster
Mountain Imagery, Boulder, Colorado, 2000. pp 589, $29.95

Snow in the Kingdom is a love story, a personal record of the author's infatuation with Mount Everest. His passion began in 1986, took him close to the summit twice, and finally up the most difficult face and nearly to his death. It is a moving and intimate diary of a great adventure.

Webster began climbing in New England as a teenager and soon went on to difficult climbs in the United States, Europe, Britain and Canada. The death of his beloved girl-friend on a climb – for which he held himself responsible – clouded his life for a year but he went back to full-time climbing and at age 30 was ready for the Himalaya. As a boy he had been stirred by a lecture on Mount Everest, and when an invitation came he eagerly accepted.

In the next two years he went with world-class mountaineers to two difficult and dangerous routes on the Tibetan side, but they were turned back by the notorious Everest weather and rifts in the party. This apprenticeship in harsh reality, sweetened by a solo ascent of Changtse, only increased his infatuation. He quickly joined three others and decided to attempt the fearsome Kangshung face which had been climbed only once, in 1983, by a very dangerous route. Webster studied their photographs and persuaded his companions to try a safer though more difficult route.

The four would climb without bottled oxygen and without Sherpas, calling it a 'pure' climb. The story of will, strength and undaunted courage on this awesome route occupies more than a third of the book, magnificently illustrated by 64 colour plates distributed in six sections throughout the book, plus black and white photographs on almost every page.

Three of the party got close to the summit, but only Venables, the British member, made it to the top. One chilling chapter describes the exhaustion, hallucinations and terror which flooded over them during the harrowing three days of descent to safety. They had been too long above 24,000ft, without adequate food, water or rest; all would pay a price, but especially Webster, who lost all his fingertips on one hand and several toes. He feared he would never climb again but a year later he began to regain some of his skills, though he knew the hypoxia and cold would make Everest impossible for him.

Webster is one of the few who have been on all three of the great faces of Everest and his descriptions and insight are excellent. The conversations throughout the book ring true because he recorded them each night in his diary, and even when disabled, he dictated the record. It has taken twelve years to complete the book, which he then published himself.

This is a big book, printed on high quality paper, with superb illustrations and very well hardbound. The personal informal style, the real conversations, the candour and self-scrutiny make this a refreshing change from the standard Himalayan fare today. There's enough but not too much self-examination and philosophy – though only a little about Tibetan or Chinese culture and socio-economics. A few of Odell's original photographs appear here for the first time, and Webster speculates about Tenzing Norgay's childhood and possible meeting with George Mallory in 1924. There's a good bibliography and an unusually good index.

All in all, a splendid and important book.

Charles Houston

The Wildest Dream
Mallory: His Life and Conflicting Passions
Peter and Leni Gillman
Headline, 2000, pp.xiv+306, £18.99

The question is not why there have been so many books about George Mallory, but why there haven't been more. He was and remains a compelling figure, not least because of the cinematographic last glimpse of him on the slopes of Everest, but also because of his apparently effortless connections and his physical beauty. Lytton Strachey wrote of him: 'Oh heavens! His body!' His tutor at Cambridge, the highly strung Arthur Benson, described Mallory as 'one of the most ingenuous and purest-minded creatures I know. . . very beautiful, too, to look at, and finely proportioned, so that it is a pleasure to me to see him move, or do anything.' Of course both men were keen on getting George into bed, but even the senior master in his house at Winchester was struck by his physical appeal. 'He had a strikingly beautiful face,' wrote Graham Irving. 'Its shape, its delicately cut features, especially the rather large, heavily lashed, thoughtful eyes, were extraordinarily suggestive of a Boticelli Madonna, even when he had ceased to be a boy – though [and here you can imagine Irving's voice dropping an octave] any suspicion of effeminacy was completely banished by obvious proofs of physical energy and strength.'

And if his friends were overwhelmed by his mixture of long lashes and butch physique, then Mallory's character was no less admired. After his death, Howard Somervell described him as one of his few real friends, 'loved as one of the most delightful and splendid of men'. Robert Graves, whom Mallory had taught at Charterhouse, described him as 'his first real friend'

who showed Graves that marriage could 'after all be made a decent relationship'. To Geoffrey Young, whose affection one assumes was touched by erotic desire as well as love and friendship, Mallory was his 'mountain sunlight, the light of almost passionate hope and reassurance'.

Leaving aside the man himself, there were his friendships and connections with several of the most influential movements and thinkers of the early twentieth century. With *entrées* into the Bloomsbury Group and leading Liberal circles, with friends like Arnold Toynbee, Maynard Keynes and Duncan Grant, it's difficult to see how Mallory *couldn't* have been an interesting man. And yet, in some ways, the picture of him is a little hazy. So many extraordinary people wanted something from Mallory that their desires seem to blur the edges of the man himself: the waspish, cynical Stracheys wanted his body; Benson wanted to find a 'kindred spirit'; Young wanted his leg and his youth back. (People still want things from Mallory, of course. A reputation, perhaps, or the contents of his pockets.)

One of the great strengths of this new biography by Peter and Leni Gillman, is the generous good sense it exhibits in analysing Mallory's personal life. He had homosexual experiences, it's true, but so what? It would be difficult to leave public school and Cambridge behind *now* without something of the kind happening. But at Cambridge in the 1900s? And if he had been gay, then his life would have been more complicated but no less admirable. As it happens, the Gillmans tell us, he was straight, and happily married, except for the inevitable tensions that arose from his long absences during the Great War and afterwards on Everest.

Mallory's marriage forms the central plank of their view of him, and it's a valid foundation. In that sphere, as in others, Mallory's life is like the prototype of the modern climber, torn between a successful career doing something 'worthwhile' as so many of his friends did, while at the same time mesmerised by the mountains and the knowledge that there he could live intensely, the master of his own fate. You could, cynically, argue that there have been plenty whose intellects have not had sufficient edge to match their ambition and who have consequently turned to the mountains as the arena in which to leave their mark.

But the Gillmans suggest that Mallory's career, far from being stalled, was showing new growth and that his participation in the 1924 Everest expedition sprung not from desperation but more from an inability to leave the damn thing alone. The most affecting passages centre on the correspondence between Ruth and George, especially the final letters from base camp, which show Mallory aching for home and the arms of his children even as he turned to face the mountain for a final attempt. Simply put, and this may sound familiar to an awful lot of mountaineers, he wanted to have his cake and eat it. (Although few of us can afford the kind of childcare the Mallorys enjoyed.)

The Gillmans also squash a lot of ill-considered theories, like Walt Unsworth's suggestion that Mallory took Irvine along on that fateful day

because he fancied him. It's true Irvine was not in as good condition as Odell, but then neither was Mallory. The young man's technical expertise was reason enough. The Gillmans also puncture some of the imperial froth that surrounded and still surrounds the early Everest expeditions, quoting Mallory's cynical appraisal, to Rupert Thompson, of the reasons he was on the mountain in 1921: 'I sometimes think of this expedition as a fraud from beginning to end, invented by the wild enthusiasm of one man, Younghusband; puffed up by the would-be wisdom of certain pundits in the AC; and imposed upon the youthful ardour of your humble servant. The prospect of ascent is almost nil, and our present job is to rub our noses against the impossible in such a way as to persuade mankind that some noble heroism has failed again.' Change the personnel, and he could have been talking about the war he'd so recently witnessed.

I especially enjoyed the Gillmans' demolition job of the secretary of the Mount Everest Committee, Arthur Hinks, a pernicious little man who habitually sent spiteful notes under the pretence that they came from his president and made withering assessments of Mallory's abilities from the security of his desk. George Finch was dropped from the 1924 expedition, to Mallory's horror, with clinical indifference in part because the man had the temerity to wear his hair long and to be a somewhat impoverished Australian. Imagine! The snobbery and prejudice of the upper echelons of the Alpine Club and, even worse, the Royal Geographical Society, are now – one assumes – a thing of the past.

Not that Mallory wasn't capable of his own brand of snobbery. He seems to have taken a dim view of North Americans, and indeed anyone outside his own circle who didn't sparkle in conversation. He had liberal instincts, but they carried the whiff of patrician smugness. In the rough and tumble of real politics, rather than the talking shops he experienced, Mallory's prejudices would have bubbled to the surface more obviously. But then, and this is the real tragedy, we shall never know. Perhaps with Everest out of the way and his naked ambition, his confidence that he would be someone of consequence tempered by experience, Mallory would have played a useful role in steering the nation's elite from its jingoistic and blinkered habits. Ruth Mallory, instinctively devoted, quite correctly didn't give a damn about the mountain. She wanted the man.

Perhaps this book's greatest achievement will be to redress the avalanche of cliché and self-justification that has surrounded the discovery of George Mallory's mortal remains. The bleached flesh and splintered bones of this gifted, forgetful, driven, privileged and generous man should not be the lasting image the public holds in its mind's eye. The Gillmans are partial to their subject, and at times a less generous view would have offered balance, but they show that at the core of himself George Mallory was a climber. And I'd sooner remember him for that.

Ed Douglas

Fearless on Everest
Julie Summers
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000, xii+290, £20

'My face is perfect agony,' Andrew Irvine scribbled in his diary, close to the summit of Everest. 'Have prepared two oxygen apparatus for our start tomorrow morning.' They were the last words he would write. On 8 June 1924, he and his partner George Mallory climbed into the clouds and disappeared forever, creating one of mountaineering's most fundamental myths. Irvine was 22 years old.

One of the curious things about the discovery of George Mallory's body in 1999 was how long it took for the climbers who found him to realise just who it was lying half-buried in front of them. Of course, they had set out that morning looking for Irvine. They believed they had a rough fix on the body discovered by Chinese climber Wang Hong Bao which was thought to be Irvine's. But even when they found a name tag on one of the pieces of clothing which identified it as belonging to Mallory, the first instinct was to ask why Irvine was wearing something belonging to George. The mistake, I'm sure, was largely due to altitude. So often preconceptions get welded more firmly into place by hypoxia. But I'm sure that part of it is explained by the notion that finding Mallory was too good to be true; a little like going out to look for a treasure map and instead finding the treasure.

Irvine has almost always been described in relation to Mallory, a cipher for analysing Mallory's motivation, even his sexual orientation. Why should he have chosen to climb with an inexperienced Oxford student, when Noel Odell, fit and well acclimatised, was close at hand? Walt Unsworth, in his widely praised history of Everest says: 'One is forced to the conclusion that no recognizable logic played a part in Mallory's decision. Was it after all, as Duncan Grant has suggested, that Mallory chose Irvine partly on asethetic grounds? ...Was he an ageing Galahad making a last desperate bid to find his Holy Grail and choosing as companion a young man who embodied all he himself had once been?'

Well, no, actually, he wasn't – and he didn't. Unsworth's coded reference to a homosexual impulse in Mallory 'choosing' Irvine is simply wrong and if you want to know why, then I suggest you read Peter and Leni Gillman's biography of Mallory, *The Wildest Dream*, which won the Boardman-Tasker Award last year. But Unsworth's remark is also reductionist in its treatment of Irvine, as though he was entirely plastic, to be formed however the rest of the expedition chose. The obsession with Mallory – understandable given the richness of his life – among most climbing historians has only served to perpetuate this view.

Now this excellent new biography of Irvine, *Fearless on Everest,* written by his grand-niece Julie Summers, has revealed that far from being just an impressionable and inexperienced boy, there was so much more to Irvine

than you might have imagined. While the handsome rowing blue's life was tragically short it was nevertheless action-packed, and included an illicit affair with his best friend's step-mother which prompted a divorce which wasn't settled until after Irvine's death. Summers has also produced new evidence for why Mallory chose to climb with Irvine which stops the gossipy imaginings of some historians in their tracks.

While Andrew Irvine was struggling towards the top of Everest, his erstwhile lover, a former chorus girl born Marjory Thomson, was being divorced by her husband, the steel magnate Harry Summers, Julie Summers' great-grandfather. Irvine met Marjory through her stepson Dick, a shy, dark-haired boy whom Irvine had befriended on the fives court at Shrewsbury School during their first week there. Dick Summers had been devastated by the premature death of his natural mother, and thrived on his friendship with Irvine, nicknamed 'Sandy' for his shock of blonde hair.

Irvine, who grew up in Birkenhead, spent summers with Dick at Cornist Hall in North Wales, massively extended by Harry Summers who added a swimming pool and kept a Rolls Royce in the garage. Harry's wealth had also impressed the 19-year-old Marjory Thomson, whose blue eyes and, according to Julie Summers, 'charming, sunny personality' completely bowled over Summers, then 52. They were married in 1917, but Marjory soon started seeking out company more her own age.

Irvine had gone up to Oxford in 1922, shoe-horned into Merton for his prodigious talent as a rower, one of the stars of the 1919 'Peace Regatta' at Henley, the first since the Great War. He won a place in the University Boat as a freshman and was part of the winning VIII in the 1923 Boat Race, which Oxford narrowly won – the only occasion they did so between 1913 and 1937. 'They were almost like gods,' one female spectator wrote of the Oxford crew, men who had just missed serving on the Western Front. 'We just stood and stared in awe and admiration.'

In response to those who argue that an ascent of Craig yr Ysfa's Great Gully, an exploratory trip to Spitsbergen and a winter's skiing at Mürren are hardly sufficient preparation for an attempt on Everest, Luke Hughes makes the point in the last edition of the *Alpine Journal* that 'anyone who has trained for and rowed in a Boat Race twice will have known about pushing the limits and urging his team-mates to do the same. Nor should his inexperience have been such a handicap; amateurs, not fearing to tread behind more seasoned partners, have a tradition for excelling on Everest.'

Although she had first known him as a boy, Sandy's burgeoning physique, charming manners and new celebrity made an impact on Marjory Summers. She made a determined effort to capture him and began an indiscrete affair, driving Irvine to the theatre in her husband's Rolls and taking him for intimate picnics in North Wales. When Irvine was invited on the Oxford University expedition to Spitsbergen, where he so impressed Odell, Marjory joined the team for the first leg to Tromsø, Irvine visiting her first-class cabin at night.

Harry Summers finally became aware of his wife's infidelity when a friend saw Irvine leaving her bedroom in the middle of the night, soon after he returned from Norway. Divorce proceedings were instigated by the millionaire, and a settlement reached in 1925, a year after Irvine's disappearance. Summers speculates that Irvine loved Marjory but was relieved to be out of the relationship, considering Marjory too poor a catch for marriage. Harry Summers gave her £3000 a year in the settlement, but after a string of marriages to wealthy husbands, Marjory returned the money to the Summers family in her will.

Dick Summers, after a brief liaison with a Danish heiress, proposed to Irvine's sister Evelyn, Julie Summers' grandmother. The proposal devastated Irvine, who, despite his own affair with Marjory, felt betrayed and jealous of Dick's intimacy with his beloved sister. Despite their friendship, Irvine thought Evelyn was wasted on Dick. 'You'll have to make a real man of him before I'll feel really happy about it,' he told her in a letter. Their friendship remained strained when Irvine left for Everest.

Irvine's other great relationship, with George Mallory, was perhaps the most unlikely of all. Mallory was 38 and hugely experienced. Irvine had barely climbed at all before leaving for Everest, but after their time together in Norway, Odell championed his inclusion in the Everest party of 1924. Irvine was practical, able to strip and repair machinery; that skill and his legendary strength were, to the Mount Everest Committee, more use on Everest than climbing prowess alone. The team relied on heavy and unpredictable oxygen sets, and Irvine was seen as the man to keep them functioning. Plans for modifications drawn up by Irvine and rediscovered during Julie Summers' research, show just how skilled Irvine was as an engineer. On the mountain itself, he showed himself full of the practical efficiency and common sense that are most useful on a big, technically straightforward mountain.

The expedition, or at least some of it, left Liverpool Docks at the start of March, 1924. Cruelly, as Irvine waved goodbye from the ship carrying him to India and Tibet, his younger brother Thurston announced to the rest of the family: 'Well, that's the last we'll see of him.' During the voyage, Mallory found his young partner likeable if dull-witted, telling his wife Ruth that Irvine was 'one to rely on, for everything except for conversation'. Both were Cheshire men; the local paper ran the headline 'Mount Everest Expedition – Two Birkenhead Men In The Party'. But if Irvine lacked intellectual depth, he shared Mallory's obsessive drive and saw the former schoolteacher as a role model.

He was popular with the other climbers, and worked hard on the mundane chores that make life at extreme altitudes so hard. Irvine sometimes comes across as being a bit too eager to please, but given his background, demeanour and age, this is hardly surprising. Where Summers did particularly well was hunting down Irvine's correspondence from the mountain, a bundle of eleven letters, in May 2000, which shed new light

on the climbing decisions taken on the mountain, dispelling much of the speculation and controversy surrounding the last days of the 1924 expedition.

Mallory, who had briefly been James Strachey's lover, described Irvine as having 'a magnificent body for the job', a comment that added fuel to Duncan Grant's conclusion that Mallory was thinking 'on aesthetic grounds' when choosing Irvine. But, in a way, Mallory was underestimating Irvine. Because he lacked, or had not yet developed, Mallory's articulate explanation of mountaineering's appeal, it is tempting to consider him as just a body, honed by rowing and fearless, but just a body. The appeal of this book is that it fills that vacuum. The most poignant moment in *Fearless on Everest* is not the disappearance of Mallory and Irvine on Everest, but the letter Arnold Lunn's nine-year-old son Peter, whom Irvine had befriended at Mürren, writes to Irvine's mother:

'At Mürren in the skiing he was always so cheery. He explained to me all about compasses, barometers, oxygen etc. without showing any sign of getting bored of my questions. I especially loved that side of his modesty that enabled him to speak as though I am grown up. I am very sorry for you at having lost your son, for having a mother, I know what it would be like.'

Ed Douglas

Siegfried Herford: An Edwardian Rock-Climber
Keith Treacher
The Ernest Press, 2000, pp.168, £16.95

To anyone interested in the early days of rock climbing this must be an unusually interesting book, not only because it explores a singular and romantic personality but also because of the exceptional and diverse influences which touched him. His name probably reverberates in your mind with Botterill's Slab (second ascent; after nine years) and, of course, with the epic first ascent of Central Buttress on Scafell.

Treacher often gives us a somewhat jumbled story but the book remains a treasure house. Dozens of interesting personalities and topics are glancingly touched on: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Unitarian theology, Froebel education in the North West, the early days of aeronautical engineering, the invention of the 'roller' bicycle chain, to name a few. A particular focus of interest which ties some of these together and will be appreciated by many readers, concerns the early thinking which surrounded the beginnings of adventurous – eg 'Outward Bound' – educational experiments.

After a mercurial and almost absurd sequence of trial schools, young Siegfried went to the Herman Lietz school at Bieberstein – one of several German schools founded in the wake of ideas generated by Cecil Reddie of Abbotsholme. This experience tapped into a strain in Herford's make-up for heroic leadership and service and to his family's connections with

Germany. In his first week at Bieberstein, for example, he found himself helping to organise schoolboys to fight a major fire, which threatened to burn down the whole school. A little later, he played a big part in organising a school expedition to Iceland. In the summer of 1909 a party climbed to the summit of Mount Hecla and later made an adventurous and, as it turned out, dangerous crossing of one of the ice-sheets. This was, indeed, the kind of pioneering epic which Herford relished.

One intriguing development from all this came a few years later, partly through his friendship with Geoffrey Young, when Herford surprised some of his friends by taking a strongly pacifist position in the 1914-18 war. One thinks both of his namesake Siegfried Sassoon and, much later, of Menlove Edwards. But Herford's story ends, not in literary achievement but with a Flanders bomb.

The book contains a worthy collection of contemporary photographs and, on the jacket, a reproduction of Mark Scott's moving memorial window at Eskdale. A fine and fascinating book.

Robin A Hodgkin

Frank Smythe: The Six Alpine/Himalayan Climbing Books
*Bâton Wicks, 2000, pp.944, £18.99 **

I'll have to confess to always having had a slight prejudice against Frank Smythe, which I cannot quite put my finger on. His books have long since been out of print, and the few I read years ago failed to impress; the received wisdom was that they embodied a rather dated romantic mysticism. It was as if the undoubted prejudices against him in certain quarters of the Alpine Club in the fifties had somehow percolated all the way down to me. Or perhaps it was simply that the names of his books are generally so uninspiring: *Climbs and Ski Runs*, for example, must be one of the most humdrum titles ever to grace the front of a mountaineering book, giving no hint of the evocative writing that lies within. So it came as a complete revelation to me to reacquaint myself with Smythe's work in this superb new 944-page six-book omnibus of some of his best writing.

There are two main surprises. First, I had not previously grasped the full range of his climbing achievements. Although he was not an outstanding rock climber, I had forgotten about his contribution to the first ascent of the West Buttress of Cloggy (led by Jack Longland). But it was in the Alps and the Himalaya that he really left his mark. He made several very important first ascents in the Alps, including the Sentinelle Rouge and the

* The Publisher has asked us to note three small but important misprints in the Smythe/Graham Brown controversy. On p.927, line 6: 9 a.m. should read 9 p.m.; on p.929, line 12: 1933 should read 1928; on p.930, line 8: the first "my hopes" should be deleted.

justifiably named Route Major on the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc, and over a dozen first ascents in the Himalaya, including Kamet (the highest peak in the world to be climbed at that time), Nilgiri Parbat and Mana Peak – the final 800 feet of which he climbed solo when his companion was overcome with fatigue.

He also took part in several much bigger expeditions, attempting Kangchenjunga in 1930, and Everest in 1933, 1936 and 1938. On Everest in 1933 he reached 28,100 feet without bottled oxygen – again solo, when his companion (Shipton, this time) flaked out – a feat that was arguably one of the most impressive performances on Everest until Messner's solo ascent nearly fifty years later. He was determinedly opposed to the use of oxygen, as being both 'bad sportsmanship' and 'artificial, unnatural, and therefore dangerous'. He was certainly a bold climber, and on one occasion when he went for a summit the Sherpas decided that 'undoubtedly the Sahibs were mad and especially Ismay Sahib (the nearest the Tibetan can get to my name)'. Another contemporary wrote that although he was physically quite frail, when he was at great altitudes 'a new force seemed to enter him'.

But the biggest revelation is the quality of Smythe's writing. There are some quaintnesses of English, it is true – like 'benignantly' and 'rank bad mountaineering withal' – and not all the writing is of a consistently high standard, but at his best a no-nonsense Englishness is miraculously combined with the intensity of a poet. It is full of vivid vignettes – of people's faces being lit up by a gust of flame from a camp fire, of lightning storms, of boulders falling in the night and just missing his tent, and of towers of ice being illumined suddenly by the setting sun. His first trip to the Alps at the age of eight has all the evocativeness of Ruskin – but done with about one-tenth as many words. He can also be very amusing, as when Wood-Johnson had the 'brilliant idea' of trying to ride a yak – from 'a gentle, doormat-like creature it became possessed of seven devils' and sent him flying through the air, or on the subject of his skill at making 'hashes ... which Mrs. Beeton at her best could hardly hope to emulate. My record hash was compounded of eighteen ingredients; I remember it well because I was sick afterwards.' At times he is quite touching. When he buys a goat for camp food – which he dubs Montmorency, 'but why I cannot for the life of me recollect' – he finds that he has 'not known him above an hour before I regretted his fate; he was very intelligent, very affectionate, very fond of human society, very docile at the end of his lead, and he had the most pathetic expression, as much as to say, "Please don't kill me yet. Let me enjoy a little longer the sun, the air and the luscious grass."' Finally, Smythe is, if you'll forgive the pun, very frank – especially about the merits and weaknesses of his climbing partners and porters, for he disagrees with 'the hide-bound convention that your companion on a mountain shall remain only a name.'

What raises Smythe's writing well above most mountain literature is the sheer breadth and depth of his interests; as well as climbing – and many of the climbing descriptions here are among the most gripping I have ever

read – he was interested in the whole mountain landscape, the mountain people and their culture, and he had a near-fanatical passion for botany. And he was multitalented: as well as being a prolific writer (27 books), he was a fine photographer, and a musician capable of listening to a Tibetan melody and writing it down in four-part harmony.

He is also something of a philosopher. And it is here, traditionally, particularly among his colleagues in the Alpine Club, that Smythe has been held to have come unstuck. Lord Schuster said his observations were 'neither as original nor as profound as he seems to think', while Sir Arnold Lunn condemned him for attempting to 'construct a religion out of his mountaineering experiences'. And very recently I have heard another critic describe his ideas as 'wacky'. Looking at his writings again, I think this is very harsh, indeed entirely unsustainable. Smythe's wackiest idea is that he believes in God, an idea that has never gone down well with the scientific reductionists. I think also the fact that he was – as he himself confessed – an 'incurable romantic', interested in flowers and sunsets, made some of his contemporaries regard him as a bit wet. Smythe tells us that Ruttledge called him a 'blooming sybarite, only he did not use the word "blooming"', and he admits that he runs the 'risk of being labelled "sentimental" – a red rag this word to the bull of materialism.'

I think the so-called 'philosophical' aspect of Smythe's work needs to be looked at a little more closely. While he was certainly a religious aesthete he was scarcely the mystic that some have branded him. God is mentioned extremely infrequently, and then only in a very abstract way. Fascinated by one particularly delicate mountain flower, he simply remarks: 'Heaven knows how it grows – and that I think is the correct answer.' There is nothing remotely intellectual or obscure about his beliefs. 'A clever friend once told me,' he says, 'that "the trouble with you is that you feel more than you think." If this is so, thank God for my disability ... I am content to accept with childlike faith and delight the infinite beauties and grandeurs of the universe.' If this is a philosophy at all, it is a very gentle philosophy. True, there are clichés – there is a chapter at the end of *Climbs and Ski Runs* that amounts to little more than a re-write of Whymper's famous reflections at the end of Scrambles – complete with platitudes like 'on [the hills] we approach a little nearer to the ends of the Earth and the beginnings of Heaven' – but there are also some sincerely held beliefs with which many modern climbers would undoubtedly concur.

So what are Smythe's main beliefs? First, that climbing is not about 'conquests' – despite the title of his early book, *Kamet Conquered*. A mountaineer's '"conquests" are within himself and over himself alone'. Second (in a splendid chapter entitled 'On Doing Nothing', in *The Valley of Flowers*), that 'to get a kick out of life, a man must sample the contrasts of life ... to appreciate the joys of activity it is necessary to practise passivity ... if he neglects inactivity, he neglects contemplation and we cannot appreciate Nature otherwise.' Third, against materialism and conflict, he

advocates 'simple living in natural surroundings' as the means of freeing ourselves from 'the germs of unhappiness and frustration, which produce the particular fever of war'. (And for him the worst type of conquering attitudes were to be found in the 'foul plague of Nazism'.) Fourth, and very closely connected with this: that it is in the peacefulness of the mountain setting that we realise that 'we are part of a growth infinitely serene; why then should we not partake of serenity?' Thus he detests the noise of guided parties on the Dent du Géant who render 'the still morning ... hideous by triumphant catcalls and other offensive noises'. And, in the 'incredible silence' that he experiences alone on the summit of Mana Peak, he feels that 'to shout would be profane'. And, finally, on such occasions Smythe often becomes aware of what he calls a 'Presence ... some supreme Purpose', and senses that 'in some inexplicable manner' he has been brought 'into closer touch with the creative forces out of which we have been evolved'. That is Smythe's 'philosophy' in a nutshell.

Now, this is all a matter of taste, but I personally enjoy such 'old-fashioned' reflections – it is only the 'politically correct' who would cursorily dismiss such ideas as being past their 'sell-by date'. And his purist attitudes to climbing anticipate the likes of Messner or Fowler.

Perhaps the most successful book in this collection – in which all the main themes and strengths of Smythe's writing seem to come together in a perfectly balanced and beautiful way – is *The Valley of Flowers*. After his second unsuccessful Everest expedition, he returned the following year, 1937, to the Bhyundar Valley, in the Garhwal Himalaya, which he had already dubbed the 'Valley of Flowers' when he first discovered it in 1931. Here his great theme of living a life of contrasts finds its fullest expression. The merit of Garhwal, he says, is that the climber can 'spend the morning on the snows and the afternoon amid the flowers. In such contrast lies the spiritual essence of mountaineering. The fierce tussle with ice-slope and precipice and complete relaxation of taut muscles on a flower-clad pasture; the keen, biting air of the heights and the soft, scented air of the valleys. Everest, Kangchenjunga and Nanga Parbat are "duties", but mountaineering in Garhwal is a pleasure – thank God.' Here, in the peace and quiet of this mountain paradise, previously unvisited by Western man, Smythe not only makes a number of very impressive first ascents, but is also able to spend a lot of time collecting flowers. His enthusiasm is infectious. Of *P. candollii*, for example, he says ' ... you must see this plant on a misty day, when it seems to attract the distant sunlight to itself, so that its thin almost transparent petals glow as though illumined from behind. Even if you have little or no interest in flowers, it demands that you pause and pay tribute to its beauty and to the Divinity that raised it among the barren rocks.' Viewed from the Valley of Flowers, the 'distant combative world' that he reads about in the papers he receives by mail seems 'utterly fantastic ... it was as

though I were looking down on an ant-heap that had gone completely crazy.' He is deeply impressed by the Himalayan peoples who say: '"We don't want your civilisation ... for wherever it is established it brings unhappiness and war." It is a terrible indictment and it is true.'

It is fitting, then, that the last book in the collection features Smythe's last mountaineering trip before the Second World War, and that on the very last climb he makes before the outbreak of war – the Innominata Ridge on Mont Blanc with Jim Gavin – they are accompanied by four young Germans. There is a striking camaraderie between them as the two parties keep overtaking each other, with the Germans warning them of falling ice and later offering them 'candied fruit, which we accepted gratefully'. The Germans, 'all ardent Nazis', were 'fit, active young men, and their leader was of that strikingly handsome type that Germany so freely produces. ... it is one of the greatest tragedies the World has seen that a political ideology ... should imbue such men with its vicious principles.' But the ambience of the holiday had been one of 'such peacefulness' that 'the thought of war, which, had we but known it, was only a few days' distant, seemed so absurd, so fantastic, so completely and utterly inappropriate, as to be unbelievable.' Smythe does not labour the point; as they descend, the thunder begins to growl and 'a few days later Europe was at war'.

The book ends with some useful appendices, including an outline of the whole of Smythe's climbing career up to the War, a list of all his writings, a detailed account of his petty but unpleasant feud with the 'touchy' and 'disputatious' Graham Brown ('the only enemy I have ever made'), and several of Smythe's own articles, including a scathing attack on the use of mechanical aids in climbing.

If the book has any real weakness it is that, except for a very meagre and mean-spirited affair by Sir Arnold Lunn, who was clearly jealous of a rival's achievements, there is no brief biography of Smythe. We are not told how he came to die at the early age of 49, though there is a mysterious and minuscule footnote on the very last page intimating that there will be a 'later volume' covering the years up to his death. On the plus side, the book is very well illustrated with both archive and modern photographs, and it is peppered with useful maps and diagrams, which Smythe's original volumes lacked.

All in all, this adds up to a magic, monumental work that is astounding value at £18.99. Diadem and Bâton Wicks have done the mountaineering world a great service over the last 15 years in producing these omnibuses of out-of-print works by such luminaries as Shipton, Tilman and Muir, and this is perhaps the most attractive to date. I urge anyone interested in mountains, mountaineering, indeed the whole mountain landscape and culture, to read this exceptionally rewarding collection.

Gordon Stainforth

Military Mountaineering
A History of Services Mountaineering 1945-2000
Bronco Lane
Hayloft, 2000, pp.296, £25.95 (pb £17.95)

In the bad old days, if a Serviceman went off on an expedition he was regarded by his strait-laced superiors as something of a renegade. Having been on a string of polar and mountaineering expeditions, I was summoned by the Colonel and informed that my activities were giving the unfavourable impression that, somehow, I was being disloyal to the regiment. Another Colonel gave me lousy marks for 'Power of Communication' just after I had written a climbing book which got a Book Society Recommendation, put a half-hour Himalayan film on TV and appeared as the castaway on Desert Island Discs. Not to worry; as they say: 'if you can't take a joke, you shouldn't have joined!'

All is now changed, as Bronco Lane graphically reveals in *Military Mountaineering*, a record of Services mountaineering from 1945 to 2000. This same period, of course, saw a world-wide explosion in mountaineering. The three Services all founded their mountaineering clubs, which then provided the official infrastructure from which to mount ever more ambitious expeditions to the Greater Ranges. What started as a trickle soon became a torrent.

Three years of painstaking research have enabled Bronco to catalogue a staggering 700 or so Service expeditions to every far corner of the earth, varying from a small exploratory probe to some remote and neglected massif to a full-blooded Everest expedition. There are also interesting dissertations on the background and present roles of the Royal Marines Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre, the Army Mountain Troops and the RAF Mountain Rescue Teams.

Such a list could have been dull and repetitive. However, Bronco is a lively ex-SAS soldier with a robust sense of humour and a light literary touch. The book therefore reads remarkably well and is far more than a mere record or reference tome. It is amply illustrated but the standard of reproduction is not high. It is a must for all serving or retired Service mountaineers and a useful research tool for anyone planning a climbing expedition to almost anywhere. Finally, although there are plenty of accounts of Service women playing a full part in more recent expeditions, the story is told of Gwen Moffat being debarred by Whitehall officialdom from taking part in the 1959 Army Mountaineering Association Karakoram Expedition.

For older Service climbers, like myself, the book is a beguiling walk down memory lane.

Mike Banks

Legless but Smiling. An Autobiography
Norman Croucher
St Ives Printing and Publishing Co., 2000, pp.vi+368, £26.50

The title is apparently the slogan of Callestock Cider Farm in Cornwall, which is certainly appropriate. The story of how Croucher lost his legs at the age of 19 is well known – the planned bivouac in the Cornish countryside, the drunken night out, the stagger back to find the bivouac site, the tumble down the embankment onto a railway line, and the coming-to with no legs below the knees. A lot of the detail of what happened in the following years afterwards is not so well known, and this book puts that right.

Being a determined sort of character, Croucher soon started to get back into climbing, in a small way to start with, but even then his sights were set on one of the 8000-metre peaks. Work in his early years saw him running the crypt at St Martin-in-the-Fields, sorting out the problems of the homeless. Eventually he found this work depressing and exhausting and decided he needed a practical challenge that would also toughen his legs for more serious climbing, so he walked from John O'Groats to Lands End. Then it was off to the Alps. Guides were found to accompany him, and he soon saw off the Mönch, Jungfrau, Breithorn, Mont Blanc, the Eiger and the Matterhorn. Quite a bag!

From then on, Croucher's sights were set on the rest of the world, and the book details each of his major achievements. Peru came first, climbing Pisco and Huascaran with, amongst others, Julie and Terry Tullis, Dennis Kemp and Henry Moorhouse. In 1982 he climbed Aconcagua and, later the same year, Mustagh Ata with John Cleare's expedition. In the years that followed, Mount Kenya, Kilimanjaro, Illimani, Mt Assiniboine, Elbrus, Alpamayo and Cotopaxi were fitted in around numerous Alpine seasons. More trips to the Himalaya followed, with an ascent of Masherbrum II, attempts on Broad Peak, Everest, Shisha Pangma and, finally, the ascent of Cho Oyu, the coveted 8000-metre peak. The list of ascents at the back of the book runs to 80 peaks – quite a formidable list for any individual, let alone one with two artificial legs.

At nearly 400 pages, there is quite a lot of detail about these expeditions, and all except one are happy, if arduous, experiences. The Everest chapter describes a commercial expedition which left the author feeling bitter and frustrated, and he doesn't pull his punches here.

One cameo I liked came from the Huascaran trip. They were walking up the trail when they passed a group of smart Austrian climbers. Harry Curtis, a person of unkempt appearance, was in the lead. The Austrians looked at him aghast. Then came Julie Tullis. 'We don't climb with women,' commented the Austrians. Finally, around the corner came the third member, with his crutches quietly clicking at every movement. 'That's our leader,' said Harry.

Geoffrey Templeman

The Great Arc
John Keay
HarperCollins, 2000, pp.182, npq

'No scientific man ever had a greater monument to his memory than the Great Meridional Arc of India. It was one of the most stupendous works of science.' This comment, by Sir Clements Markham, President of the Royal Geographical Society, sums up the work of William Lambton and George Everest in the first half of the 19th century. They produced a gridiron system of triangulation, both horizontal for distance and vertical for height, which was the basis for the then quite exceptionally accurate maps of the Indian Subcontinent produced by the Survey of India.

This system of triangulation was started by Lambton in Madras and initially went south to the southern tip of India. It then continued north under Everest, his successor, through central and northern India until it was checked partly by the Himalaya and partly by the Independent Kingdoms that border Central Asia. In addition, it went east and west to Bombay and Calcutta, skirted the Himalaya and entered Kashmir. The obstacles were daunting, the mortality among surveyors was high, but the accuracy of observation and measurement was remarkable.

If genius can be defined as an infinite capacity for taking pains, with inspiration one per cent and perspiration 99 per cent, then both Lambton and Everest were geniuses. Obsessive to the point of monomania and physically exceptionally durable, Lambton was rarely ill, whilst Everest suffered a lot from ill health. For instance, he describes 'four successive attacks of fever in six months'. For treatment 'he was bled to fainting, had upward of a thousand leeches, 30-40 cupping glasses, 3 or 4 blisters besides daily doses of nauseous medicine, all of which produced such a degree of debility as to make it of small moment whether I lived or died.' Indeed, it seems fairly clear that this treatment of Everest did nothing to prolong his life and probably hastened his death.

The third genius of the Great Trigonometric Survey was an Indian named Radhanath Sickdar. He was a human computer, a number cruncher, whose skills and dedication were absolutely vital to the success of the project. Endless revisions and adjustments, of the highest mathematical complexity, had to be made in order to ensure that the Survey was as accurate as possible. It is he who is credited with the 'discovery' of the height of Mount Everest, and the fact that it was nearly a thousand feet higher than any other peak.

Whilst relatively little is known about Lambton, this book, together with a recent monograph by Professor J R Smith, have fleshed out the life of George Everest. John Keay likens him to a film-maker orchestrating a vast production where scientific probity was tantamount to artistic integrity. 'Creative genius was at work, enormous expense had to be justified, a perfectionist reputation upheld and a monumental ego sustained. If the Great Arc was the star of the production, all India was its set.' With an

explosive temper and an obsessive personality, Everest's treatment of his assistants left much to be desired, though he did mellow with age.

Although a map was important to the Government of India, the fundamental drive of both Lambton and Everest was 'geodesy' or finding out the exact shape of the earth, and there were often official comments and complaints about the tardiness of map production. These maps were of great importance to the Government of India, for they demonstrated that the British had a better grasp of geographical features and centres of population than the local rulers, and the maps were the precursors of roads, railways and telegraph that connected and knit together the people of this vast, inchoate country of so many different cultures, religions, languages and topographical features.

At some stage the Survey hoped to connect up with the Russians in Central Asia, but this had to wait until the early part of the 20th century. The Survey also spawned the Pundits who clandestinely explored so much of the Himalaya and Central Asia in the 19th century. This book has a unique photograph showing Montgomerie, who initiated the Pundits, Waugh, who decided to name the world's highest peak after George Everest, his immediate predecessor, Walker who took over from Montgomerie, and Thuiller, an assistant superintendent. However, with the ghosts of the obsessive and meticulous Lambton and Everest peering over my shoulder, I must point out a photographic error. This is a black and white reproduction of a colour painting by Hermann Schlagintweit painted from a viewpoint at Phalut. The reproduction is laterally inverted and the mountain, despite Schlagintweit's original caption, is not Everest but Makalu – Peak XIII.

A book about the Survey of India could be dauntingly dull, but this is quite the opposite. It is witty, lucid, erudite, intelligently written and imparts a mass of information in a lighthearted manner. It has filled an enormous gap in my own knowledge of the exploration of Asia, and it contrasts the really enormous difficulty of carrying out accurate measurement and field work in the 19th century with the relative ease with which it is possible to do these things today.

Michael Ward

Killing Dragons. The Conquest of the Alps
Fergus Fleming
Granta Books, 2000, pp398, £20.

This history of mountaineering in the Alps has been given much publicity by the media, and it evidently has the ingredients for a best-seller in the present-day market. The author has a fluent style and has many a lively, if well-worn, tale to tell; the illustrations are well chosen, and there are plenty of apt quotations from the classic writings. All these factors combine to make the book a 'good read'.

And now for a few grumbles. The author tries to cover himself by saying at the outset that 'those who know the Alps like the back of their hands ... will doubtless smite me for a thousand heresies of omission or misdescription'. He also admits that his treatment is selective: he deals only with the Western Alps, and in the main only with the first ascent of major peaks: thus Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn inevitably have pride of place – but he cannot refrain from bending his own rules to include the Eigerwand. He also has much to say about the investigation of glacier flow and the attendant controversies. With these limitations some of the great names such as Owen Glynne Jones, Cecil Slingsby, Geoffrey Winthrop Young are mentioned barely or not at all.

A bit of further smiting cannot be resisted. Much is made in the early chapters of the terror inspired by the Alps in early times (hence the book's title) – this is a half-truth: the Alps served to connect as much as to separate, witness many pass routes used from ancient times. Eccentricities of characters such as W A B Coolidge are well described, but it does seem rather patronising to call Francis Fox Tuckett a madman (p208). There are too many simple errors of fact which could have been avoided with a bit more time and care: thus (p6) Mount Pilatus is not near Geneva, (p14) Geneva was not a member of the Swiss Confederation in Saussure's time, (p215) Horace Walker was not Lucy Walker's father, (p331) John Tyndall was not killed by an overdose of chloroform. On p350, where the ill-fated Eigerwand pair Sedlmayer and Mehringer are discussed, it is pointed out that the *Alpine Journal* misspelled the name of one, but the author misspells the name of the other.

After so much Coolidge-like nitpicking, let me end by quoting what the author says about the *Alpine Journal* in his bibliography:

'... It is still in publication [indeed!] and its many volumes are invaluable to anyone interested in the history of the Alps or mountain/glacier exploration.' We should no doubt forgive our author much for such a handsome acknowledgement.

Ernst Sondheimer

How the English Made the Alps
Jim Ring
John Murray, 2000, pp.287, £19.99

It is fitting that John Murray should publish this history of tourist development in the Alps, for during much of the nineteenth century it was Murray's own *Handbook* that was seen by many Victorians as *the* Alpine traveller's bible. Indeed, such was its success that between 1838 and 1892 the *Handbook* ran to no less than 18 editions and enjoyed sales of almost 50,000 copies. Although no mountaineer, Murray owed his election to the Alpine Club to the fact that his guidebook 'contributed so much to our

knowledge of the Alps that he was ... almost the sole authority on the subject.'

The original *Handbook*, which is frequently quoted here, contained much of interest to the early alpinists. It is not clear, however, at whom this present book is aimed. Although an initial glance at *How the English Made the Alps* would suggest that a significant part of the book and most of the illustrations deal with alpinism, this is not the whole story. That is how it should be, for the pioneers of our sport may have been responsible for kick-starting Alpine tourism, but we delude ourselves if we think for one moment that mountaineering is anything but a bit-player in the economy of the Alps today. A study of the figures for winter sports soon puts alpinism into some sort of perspective.

Since he's bent upon telling the story of Alpine tourism in the form of popular history, Jim Ring's title smacks of inaccuracy, for a number of important characters in the story were not English, but Scots, Irish, Welsh. However, the first two paragraphs of his Preface are devoted to a defence of the title, in which Ring claims that since it was customary for the inhabitants of Alpine countries to refer to their early visitors as English, never British, he has decided to do the same.

Leslie Stephen once wrote that: 'Before the turning point of the eighteenth century, a civilized being might, if he pleased, regard the Alps with unmitigated horror.' And yet it took barely a generation to view those same Alps with a less than jaundiced eye. So how did the English 'discover' the Alps and create an industry out of their enjoyment? What was it that turned a general abhorrence of mountains into an obsession that borders upon idolatry?

The key, of course, was the Age of Enlightenment which was not the spontaneous product of one single nation, but the result of an intellectual climate that honoured no frontiers. It just so happened that a level of English society had sufficient leisure, financial security and the inspiration to explore and express new thinking. Their grand tours invariably included Alpine scenes which for the first time gave vent to ecstatic praise, and for many came to represent God's very own handiwork. Thomas Gray, for example: 'Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and piety.'

But it took a Genevese scientist, not an English poet, to replace pedestrian worship with adventure among the snowclad heights. With the words: 'What I really saw as never before, was the skeleton of all those great peaks whose connection and real structure I had so often wanted to comprehend', de Saussure gave legitimacy to mountain exploration and the activity (for purely scientific reasons, of course) of mountaineering. The rest, as they say, is history.

That history has been told and retold many times, perhaps never better than in the words of Ronald Clark. But *How the English Made the Alps* is not a history of alpinism, although it scans the subject as it also scans the history of skiing, and includes (as it must) a review of the Alps as a sanatorium. It

also tells of the importance of roadbuilding and the coming of the railways that did much to make the mountains accessible to a class of traveller who of necessity had to work for a living.

Today tourism is the world's largest single business; in the mid-1990s some 700 million people were annually travelling abroad. A little over two hundred years ago just a handful of English strode among the Alps to improve their health or to receive almost divine inspiration for their poetry. Mountain-scientists took matters further. Not content with valley scenery they ventured onto mountain peaks, studied glaciers and took rock samples, until bit by bit, like a dancer with seven veils, they stripped away any pretence of scientific study and climbed simply because they enjoyed it.

Then, as the Golden Age of Mountaineering was being celebrated by the winning of summit after summit by (mostly) British climbers, a certain Midlands printer with a fervent Christian zeal was arranging outings to rallies and religious entertainments. These outings were so successful that in 1851 Thomas Cook took 165,000 visitors to the Great Exhibition, and twelve years later led his first tour to the Alps. From 26 June to 15 July 1863, a party of sixty visited Geneva and the Mont Blanc region. 'It really is a miracle,' wrote one of his customers, 'Everything is organized, everything catered for, one does not have to bother oneself with anything at all, neither timings, nor luggage, nor hotels.'

In 1897 *The Excursionist* reported: 'When Queen Victoria came to the throne ... a return trip by diligence to Switzerland via the Rhine had cost £36 and taken sixty-six days. It can now be accomplished in two weeks for £9. Since Thomas Cook's first excursion train it is as if a magician's wand had been passed over the face of the globe.'

The Alps were in the process of being 'Anglicized' before Cook's tourists arrived. That process now gathered pace, and the demands for what became known as the 'cardinal British institutions' of tea, tubs, sanitary appliances, lawn tennis and churches led to a boom in hotel building and the delight of the railway companies.

Cook's tours were to the summer Alps, but it was Henry Lunn, described by his son as 'a queer mixture of merchant adventurer and mystic', who developed winter tourism in the mountains, and effectively marked the end of exclusivity in the Alps that had been so long enjoyed by the worthies of the Alpine Club. Lunn's first trips were to Grindelwald where he organised religious winter conferences, but he had abandoned these by 1897 and turned his skills to running his own travel agency specialising in winter sports. In those days winter sports meant skating, curling, sleighing and tobogganing, but thanks to Henry's son Arnold, who fell in love with skiing at Adelboden in 1903, all that was about to change.

In the early years of the twentieth century the new sport of skiing spread rapidly with the founding of the Ski Club of Great Britain, then in 1908 the Alpine Ski Club, and the following year two books were published that helped introduce growing numbers of Englishmen to the sport – and to the

Alps in winter. In 1909 Lunn managed to persuade the authorities to open the rack-and-pinion railway to Mürren for the winter season, and within two years the village had become so popular that it was described as 'practically British territory'. Mürren was not alone in courting and being courted by the British, for all over Switzerland the winter season gave new life to former summer-only resorts, and there were those who concentrated on visitors from this side of the Channel by advertising in English newspapers.

The Great War was a catalyst for change in so many respects, not least in English (British) influence in the Alps. The old order had been swept away. Politics, society, and the cultural and economic stability that had enabled the English to patronise and develop the Alps to their taste for much of the nineteenth century had all been disrupted and there could be no more certainties. There was a brief resurgence, but while the number of tourists from these shores slowly regained momentum, their proportion never recovered. One need only look at our own Club's influence in the inter-war years to see how activists from the Continent were forging ahead with a different set of rules to those laid down by the founders of the sport. While Colonel Strutt blustered and frothed about the use of pitons on the Grandes Jorasses, his fellow club members were engaged in carrying the flag of Empire on the Tibetan slopes of Everest. In skiing the British continued to slide down the slopes for fun, while our neighbours across the water tended to take it rather more seriously. And their numbers were greater than ours.

How the English Made the Alps takes the story as far as the last war. 'In 1940,' concludes the author, 'even as Churchill came to power, it seemed to Arnold Lunn and other English alpinists of his generation that the story of the English in the Alps had come to an end.'

The idea behind this book is a fascinating one, for it unites the many factors that developed tourism, not only in the Alps, but into a worldwide phenomenon. But I'm afraid it is an uneven story that frustrated me at times – especially where errors crept in that could so easily have been checked. The young Douglas Hadow, for example, who died in the Matterhorn tragedy, is referred to as Roger; Armand Charlet as Arnold; William Mathews' name is misspelt, and the illustration of Leni Riefenstahl and camera crew on a rock peak was clearly not taken on the summit of Mont Blanc as the caption suggests. Minor errors, perhaps, but they undermine the authority of much else that the reader has to take on trust. A pity, because the amount of research required to tell this history must have been considerable. It deserved the eye of an editor familiar with that history – or at least with the characters who played in it. But don't let me put you off. This is a book that is worth reading and it will, if nothing else, remind you of what Zermatt, Grindelwald and Chamonix might have been had not the English 'made the Alps'. Should we hang our heads in shame – or feel proud and rejoice? I leave that to you to decide.

Kev Reynolds

Pyrenean High Route. A Ski Mountaineering Odyssey.
John Harding
Tiercel SB, *2000, pp325, £40*

In the last chapter of this book John Harding states his view that the quintessence of ski mountaineering is the concept of quest. In his case that quest has taken him to regions little visited by British ski-tourers, such as Turkey, Corsica and latterly Greece, but above all to the Pyrenees. This book is an account of nine skiing visits to the High Pyrenees, between 1975 and 1988, during which he achieved, in stages, a complete traverse of the range. After an initial guided tour, he decided this was not for him, so thereafter all his visits were guideless, with in all 18 different companions, including eight members of the Alpine Club.

Compared with ski touring in most parts of the Alps, Pyrenean ski-touring is in a different league. The summits are lower, so there are no large glaciers, but the terrain is steep and complex, and the avalanche risk is almost certainly higher than in the Alps. Maps are poor compared to those of the Alps. The huts are mostly unguarded in winter and spring, with the exception of those in Catalonia, and often the huts used were in a derelict state. So, in addition to the usual ski-touring equipment, the parties had to be fully self-sufficient, and sacks might weigh anything from 40 to 60 lb, if not more. Then there is the weather. In the Alps one can expect reasonable spells of settled weather, but here it seems to be completely unpredictable, and the book reads almost like a never-ending catalogue of forced retreats and desperate descents to the nearest village. However, there were many good days which clearly offered some memorable skiing. Overall, John reckons he had 43% good days, 21% indifferent and 36% really bad. There must be a certain fascination in this battling with the elements, for eight of John's companions travelled with him more than once, indeed five of them three or more times.

The book begins non-chronologically with an account of the 1979 tour, when the party encountered even worse than usual weather. During a retreat from the Baysallance hut they had the misfortune to be caught in a vast avalanche off the Petit Vignemale, in which four out of the five of them were trapped. Thanks to their transceivers all were located and dug out, but sadly John's cousin Alain was found to be dead. Many of us might have settled for something easier in future, but as a dedicated mountaineer John determined to push through with the Traverse, partly as a tribute to his cousin's memory. Other tours also suffered mishaps – a damaged back, a dislocated shoulder and broken arm, and John himself was evacuated with concussion.

John has settled for telling his story as it was, so he does not hesitate to tell us his feelings at the time, his uncertainties and frustrations, and disagreements with his companions, who might be less dedicated to the quest for the Traverse. It is this honesty which makes the book compulsive

reading. We learn about his companions: the ever dependable Alan Wedgewood; the charming but irresponsible Jean-Pierre – 'c'est très classique' – always inviting friends and acquaintances to come along, without John's knowledge; Walter Good the Swiss avalanche expert – 'no time for that rubbish in a place like that' (referring to digging of snow profiles) – and devotee of steep slopes and couloirs; Roger Childs, linguist and Spanish landowner, working his magic on the hostesses in Spanish inns; David Williams, supreme skier and fast uphill; Rupert Hoare the irrepressible peak-bagger.

Anything written by John can be relied upon to give us an insight into the culture and history of the region, and so, among other things, we learn something of the little-known pioneers Anne Lister and Parrot, as well as the better known Packe and Russell. And I was disappointed to learn that Belloc's Miranda, of Tarantella, was not after all a captivating young lady, like Carmen, gardienne of the Ventosa hut.

The narrative is illustrated by 41 photographs, half of them in well reproduced black and white. A list of these would have been useful, as would an index. The maps printed are on much too small a scale to give anything more than an indication of the route taken. Anyone wishing to follow the route in detail would have to obtain something much better. Finally, the book does seem to be rather pricey.

Jeremy Whitehead

Travail So Gladly Spent
Tom Price
The Ernest Press, 2000, pp.280, £17.50

The mountaineer has little use for the 'level playing field' beyond commandeering it as a campsite. But it is, figuratively speaking, the presumed arena for the review of books by mountaineers. The reviewer is expected to be informed and informative, judicious rather than prejudiced, interesting yet disinterested, offering opinion without being opinionated.

Not in this case; I eschew both the worn turf of the playing field and the austere chill of the moral high ground. This book has too many resonances for me to be other than partisan. *Déjà vu* obscures my vision. The overlap was mainly in the decade following the Second World War. Tom's six years in the forces reduced a generation gap to a few years. We shared a similar social and academic background and essentially the same foregound – the people, the climbing clubs, the huts and the hills, but especially the attitudes and the equipment.

No 1 Nylon line, for example. This hybrid of string on steroids and (I am told) knicker elastic boasted a breaking strain of half a ton. Light, and its cost irresistibly modest, we saw it as the answer to alpine abseils. In those traditional days the reality was excruciating; it sliced into the shoulder like

piano wire. The tangles it could generate were indescribable in a respectable journal. Ignorance of elementary physics hid the awful relationship of mass and velocity. Only good luck shielded us from the terrible consequences of hanging from a thin cord tensioned over a sharpish edge.

We shared (and still share) the Yorkshireman's genetic awareness of the value of money. A pound saved by bivouacking rather than using a hut represented another day in the hills. Unless there was a barn or cowshed or a boulder, the sleeping bag would be damp with dew if the night had been clear. Rain would be repelled to some degree by a plastic sheet and condensation would supplement the invading water. We even engaged in trade. While Tom sold coffee beans to the good people in the post-war Pyrenees, I hawked my nylon rope round Innsbruck at the end of the season.

We both, in similar circumstances, abused our acquaintance with the worthy G Graham Macphee, patron of our university club. Our respective parties found ourselves in the wrong valley in the wrong weather at the wrong time. We sought to evade the just consequences of our folly by bending the wrought-iron rules of the Fell and Rock. Hammering on the hut door after midnight loudly enough to be heard above the storm, we used the doctor's good name as the thin end of our wedge and grovelled our way in.

Tom's long affair with adventure has taken him to a wider world. A surveying expedition to South Georgia, man-hauling sledges like Scott half a century earlier; a canoe journey in the Canadian arctic; a horseback safari in the Lesotho hills; all physically demanding and, in their different ways, forcing him to dig deep into his mental resources.

This inner journey rather than anecdotal ephemera is the aspect of the book which could have lifted it above the ordinary. Doing risky things for fun sometimes exacts the ultimate penalty and imposes burdens on family and friends. The loss of several close friends on Batura Mustagh and his years with the Eskdale Mountain Rescue must have given the author cause for pondering the selfishness of climbers, and his employment in outdoor education, the opportunity for analysis. His suspicion of that industry combined with his involvement in it would have made his assessment of its value well worth reading.

John Temple

Pushing the Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering
Chic Scott
Rocky Mountain Books, 2000, pp.440, £30

This marvellous large-format book is the result of five and a half years' full-time work, some of it spent writing in a tent when the money ran out, by a man who crossed Canada three times, recording 90 interviews and looking at tens of thousands of photographs. At one point he actually had to sell

his collection of CAJs and AAJs to survive. The result is a triumph of comprehensive coverage, individual stories and picture-packed design. Both writer and publisher have built a book that will last well. Knowing that a history on this scale is likely to contain some small errors that will immediately be spotted by the first, keenest readers, I asked the author if he had received any corrections yet. 'Not one,' was his reply when he came over here six months after the book was published in Canada. Accuracy, as I had been told by people who knew him, would not be a weakness of this encyclopaedic labour of love.

The book begins with maps – and the only colour photographs in the book, which strongly evoke the variety of climbing in each area: the Rockies, the Coast Mountains and Vancouver Island, the Columbia Mountains, the East, the North and the Arctic Islands. These areas provide the structure for the coverage of each historical period chosen by the author. The story really begins in 1887 when the first peak over 10,000 feet was climbed by the Canadian surveyor J J McArthur, who made a technical ascent of Mount Stephen. Then came Norman Collie, George Baker and, in 1899, the first Swiss guides, brought over by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Scott ends his chapter of 'Glory Days' of first ascents in the Rockies and Selkirks with the ascent of Mount Alberta in 1925 by a Japanese party led by Swiss guides.

The section covering 1926-1950 is titled 'Canada drifts from the mainstream of world mountaineering', but it contains such stories as that of the Mundays, Don and Phyllis, who carried 60lb loads for 13 days of bushwacking in search of Mount Waddington, felling trees to cross glacial torrents (photo page 108). They were ultimately unsuccessful after a decade of such trips, reaching a slightly lower summit on two occasions. Such was Canadian mountaineering in an era given a negative title by an author building up to a section called 'Canadians make their mark overseas, 1955-1990' which coincides with the period 1951-1990 at home that is titled 'Canadian mountaineering comes of age'.

British climbers such as Brian Greenwood, who are largely unknown in the UK, have made a huge contribution to climbing in their adopted country, as is fully acknowledged by the author. But the issue of Canadian distinctiveness is revealed by such chapter titles as 'John Lauchlan - the first Canadian climbing star' and 'Canadians climb Mount Waddington at last'. Indeed, the final section, 'Into the future 1990-2000', indicates the variety of Canadian climbing: waterfalls, big walls, alpine, sport and competition climbing. Scott also lists 'gym climbing' which implies never going out into daylight as a Canadian climber. (Even Sheffield 7 climbers, who stay in their cellars during hot days, venture out as far as Burbage to go bouldering in winter!) How will these climbers understand the contents of this book? Or the photo on page 390 of a naked climber casting something called a 'shadow' on rock?

If the purpose of a history is to inform, contextualise and raise issues for the future, what questions does this book raise? Continuing in his report-

ing mode, the historian offers what he must think is a neutral title: 'Crag climbing evolves into sport climbing'. He reports that the debate in the Rockies in the '90s was about chipping rather than retrobolting. 'In the 1990s the search began for long, multi-pitch sport routes,' Scott writes. At Back of the Lake (Louise), he reports, 'traditional routes with minimal protection were retrobolted, making the crag one of the great sport climbing areas in North America'. So what happens when these activities get both more specialised and more overlapping? The prospect of the 'evolution' of bolted alpinism and top-down 'built' big-wall routes makes the story of the Mundays at the front end of this book look rather quaint.

On the issue of access Scott has more to offer in a statement that is somewhat ahead of much European and UK thinking: 'During the next decade climbers must band together and deal with access issues before the land managers and their lawyers do it for us. This is already happening in British Columbia ... ' Surely the terrific traditions of such a diversity of forms of climbing, on the wonderful richness of terrain in Canada celebrated by this book, deserve more imaginative forms of evolution than those dependent upon the drill and the helicopter.

There's more history waiting to be made, Scott suggests, in first winter ascents in the St Elias Range, on the SE face of Mount Logan and on remote big walls. His work lays down a challenge from the spirit and achievements of the past. This book is the finest tribute imaginable to human imagination and endeavour in a country that must present one of the greatest challenges to the historian of mountaineering.

Terry Gifford

The Lost Explorer. Finding Mallory on Mount Everest
Conrad Anker & David Roberts
Simon & Schuster, 1999, pp.192, $22.00

In last year's *Alpine Journal* Luke Hughes reviewed in detail three of the books on the finding of Mallory's body. Too late for a review to be included in that issue was the book by the American climber who actually found the body – Conrad Anker. *The Lost Explorer* is a dual effort with David Roberts, presented in alternating sections. Roberts gives a potted biography of Mallory, together with accounts of all three Everest expeditions in the twenties, plus some of his own thoughts on the ethical arguments that raged after the event in 1924.

Anker's writing does not have the literary quality to match that of Roberts, but makes up for this by his personal involvement and by the immediacy of his writing. Much has been made of the naïvety of the team in being surprised at the uproar created by the way they handled the subsequent publicity and, whilst Anker does his best to explain their actions, an unpleasant aftertaste still remains.

Anker describes his own first unaided ascent of the Second Step, from which he continued to the summit. In the book's final section, Anker gives the reasons why he has reluctantly come to the conclusion that Mallory and Irvine could not have reached the summit.

The book is well worth reading in order to share Anker's thoughts on what may have really happened during Mallory and Irvine's climb, together with his explanation of the events following his own expedition. The mystery is still there, however.

Geoffrey Templeman

Voices from the Summit:
The World's Great Mountaineers on the Future of Climbing
Ed. Bernadette McDonald and John Amatt
National Geographic Adventure Press, 2000, $30

Voices from the Summit celebrates 25 years of the Banff Mountain Festival by bringing together 31 climbers and mountaineers to consider the future of their sport. The contributors are diverse and the selection criteria intriguing, with the common ground a passion for mountains. Many of those included are legends who have become mentors for climbers wishing to follow in respected footsteps. There are glimpses of living history in Anderl Heckmair, Sir Edmund Hillary and Riccardo Cassin, evidence of received wisdom from those who have followed – Catherine Destivelle, Royal Robbins, Thomas Hornbein – and always the 'new breed' whose worlds – consciously or subconsciously – echo the sentiments expressed by earlier practitioners; the philosophical parallels in the essays by Doug Scott and Leo Houlding, for example, bear welcome witness to this.

Thus, a sense of tradition is created, built on shared values and common experiences: an unequivocal desire by climbers to protect their playgrounds – foolish, indeed, to bite the recreational hand which feeds so well – and an insistence on the need for challenge, adventure and routes in harmony with their surroundings, climbed solo, capsule or alpine style and leaving no trace.

The paradox of climbing is often articulated – it is only by going to dangerous and unforgiving environments that we find the rich spirtuality lost within the artificial confines of society's materialistic rewards structure. As climbers look back to the beginning of the last century, it seems clear that society has always been the reason for escape for those who love to test themselves – nothing new there. In Doug Scott's words: ' ... the climber creates for himself heightened sensibilities and an awareness verging on the extraordinary, summoning up areas of his being that are normally hidden. These are times when a little light is let into our lives ... '

Another frequently discussed topic is debated within these pages – 'Making a buck out of climbing' by Greg Child. Here again, the whole

spectrum of belief is explored, from Dr Charles Houston's firmly-stated view that professionalism is 'unseemly for mountaineering' to Greg Child's articulate and outspoken tenet that money can be ethically made out of climbing so long as the climber is not motivated solely by financial gain.

The American alpinist Kitty Calhoun points out that those who climb as hard and as simply as possible will never attract sponsors, since their climbs are so remote and personal that they will never generate high-profile publicity. This ideal – to embrace Krzysztof Wielicki's 'extremely hazardous lifestyle', to be driven by what is around the next corner, to climb for the joy of being in the mountains – sings out of many of these essays – reassuringly, in the bleak picture of a littered and debased Sagarmatha National Park painted by Junko Tabai.

And there are more delights: Audrey Salkeld's scholarly piece on Mallory and Irvine, exploring the current obsession with their place in history and our own continuing need to define and categorise – even at the price of conjecture. David Breashears revels in the role of mountaineering cameraman, seeking to create images which record and inspire, just as Sir Edmund Hillary's photograph of Tenzing Norgay on the summit of Everest led Breshears into a life of climbing.

The book ends with 25 pages devoted to the history of the Mountaineering Festival – anecdotal, informative and succinct. The whole volume is enhanced by the black and white photographs of each of the contributors: occasionally the props they have selected proving an amusing and no doubt intentional distraction.

For those outside the world of climbing, *Voices from the Summit* provides a richly detailed source of information and inspiration. Those who are already members of the climbing community will acknowledge their own motivations – and continue to debate and dissent in their quest for a better alternative to what society has to offer – in short, to quote Ed Douglas quoting John Ruskin: 'to believe that the only wealth is life'.

Val Randall

Feeling through the Eye
The New Landscape in Britain 1800-1830
Spink-Leger, London, 2000, £20

Feeling through the Eye is the catalogue of an exhibition of works for sale held at Spink-Leger in March/April 2000. All were landscapes or townscapes dating from a highly significant moment in British art, the early decades of the nineteenth century. Several of the pictures were mountain landscapes. The catalogue illustrates all the works in colour. The introduction, by Timothy Wilcox, has much interesting and relevant information; but it is nevertheless not wholly satisfactory, as it fails to show the unity and development of the material.

Virtually all the great names of the landscapists of the period are represented and a variety of locations. The most distant mountain scene (with one exception) is an attractive watercolour of Ben Lomond by John Samuel Hayward. There are several works from the Lake District, including William Daniell's delightful *The Estuary of the River Leven*, near Ulverston, which shows Cartmell Fell. There are even more from North Wales, among them a number by John Linnell, very influential in the movement, and a fine series by Joshua Cristall – Snowdon from Plas Gwynant, a mountainous view near Snowdon, Beddgelert Church (with Lliwedd beyond) and Nant Guinion (Nant Gwynant?), all executed with much skill and care and showing an obvious attraction to the mountain landscape. A most forceful work comes from the hand of Thomas Girtin, at the height of his powers in 1799, *Mynydd Mawr*; the light on the mountain is sombre, apart from a flash of sunlight on a bridge and a little plain near the foreground. The picture strongly expresses the mood induced in the artist by the mountain scene.

But the 'jewel in the crown' of the exhibition is J M W Turner's *Mont Blanc from Fort Roche in the Val d'Aosta* which has all Turner's mastery of rock and trees and water, and a bottomless gorge to convey a feeling of height. As he commonly did, Turner includes some figures to humanise the scene. The glory of the picture is Mont Blanc. There are few works from his 1802 tour of the Alps where the mountains are unclouded, and this is certainly the most splendid. There are yet surprises, wonderful surprises, in mountain art.

James Bogle

The Enchanted Mountains. A Quest in the Pyrenees.
Robin Fedden
The Ernest Press, 2000, pp.142, £15.95

I remember when this book first came out in 1962 picking it up in a bookshop with interest, not only because it was a book about mountains, but also because it had a colour frontispiece by the artist John Piper, another passion of mine. The frontispiece is still there in this new edition, but minus the colour, which robs it of its beauty. Otherwise the book is the same, with the addition of some new photos. Robin Fedden's writing captivated me and has made me return to the book many times since. Slightly old-fashioned in some ways, it is a far cry from the modern expedition volume.

Fedden and his companions, including his wife and Basil Goodfellow – although they are never named – spent three summers walking and climbing in the Pyrenees, and the author has moulded these into one narrative. He says himself that 'this book is not primarily about mountaineering', but he gives a wonderful picture of wanderings in remote mountain country, and of encounters with local people and the history of the area. There is little detail in the book, and you certainly couldn't use it as a guide, but it is to be savoured slowly in quiet moments.

Climbing High. A Woman's Account of Surviving the Everest Tragedy
Lene Gammelgaard
Pan, 2000, pp.xvi+212, £6.99

Lene Gammelgaard climbed Everest in 1996 at the time of the tragic events in May of that year. She reached the summit as a member of the Sagarmatha Environmental Expedition, being the first Scandinavian woman to reach the summit. The expedition was led by Scott Fisher, who did not survive.

Climbing High was published in Denmark in 1997, but had to wait a further three years to find a publisher in English. The bulk of the book is concerned with the minutiae of expedition life and the author's ambitions, but only really comes alive after the summit, when describing the descent through the storm to the South Col and benightment in a snow hole. The writing, however, is sometimes a little hard to take: 'Mother Goddess of the World, Chomolungma, Sagarmatha, truly you are the grandest mountain, and I tread upon you with the profoundest respect and awe. Your summit is all I desire.' We'll put it down to the translation.

Facing Up. A Remarkable Journey to the Summit of Mount Everest
Bear Grylls
Macmillan, 2000, pp.xiv+290, £14.99

This is the book of one man's ascent of Everest – 'the youngest British climber to reach the summit and return alive', as the blurb puts it, although this record has been disputed since the book's publication. Everest had always been in the young Grylls' mind, but a parachuting accident while in the army seemed to put paid to that ambition. His recovery was good, however, and not long afterwards he reached the summit of Ama Dablam, making Everest a possibility again. He organised a small expedition, linked up with Henry Todd's larger one and, after surviving a crevasse fall, reached the summit after seventy days on the mountain.

On Top of the World. Climbing the World's 14 Highest Mountains
Richard Sale & John Cleare
Collins Willow, 2000, pp.228, £19.99

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the ascent of Annapurna, the first 8000-metre peak to be climbed, the publishers have brought out this large-format book telling the stories behind each first ascent, commencing with Annapurna and culminating in Shisha Pangma. Having John Cleare as one of the authors, it goes without saying that there are copious excellent illustrations. Each section gives a summary of the exploration of the peak, plus details of the first ascent and interesting subsequent ascents, completed

by diagrams of the various routes. An appendix gives names of ascensionists on all 14 peaks, and the book forms a very useful summary of the history of the eight-thousanders.

Everest. The Mountaineering History.
Walt Unsworth
The Mountaineers/Bâton Wicks, 2000, pp.xviii+790, £25.00

This is the third edition of Unsworth's monumental work. So much has happened on Everest since the second edition in 1989, including new routes on the NE ridge and North Face, the tragic events of 1996 and, more recently still, the discovery of Mallory's body, that interest in the mountain is at an all-time high. A new edition was almost inevitable. For almost anything you want to know about Everest, this book is indispensable.

Storms and Sunsets in the Himalaya
A compilation of Vignettes from the Experiences of a Mountaineer
Parash Moni Das
Lotus Publishers (Jalandhar City), 2000, pp.(4)+184, Rs.250,00

The author, a member of the Indian Police Service, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation and the Himalayan Club, has walked and climbed in the Himalaya for many years. As Deputy Inspector General of Police in 1995 he led a team which reached the summit of Mana Peak in Garhwal via the difficult North Ridge, and in the next year he was Senior Deputy Leader of the ITBP Mount Everest Expedition which achieved the first Indian ascent from the north. The sub-title of the book describes exactly what it is – a compilation of vignettes based on all these experiences – but it is unusual in including a short story and a short play.

Hell of a Journey
On Foot Through the Scottish Highlands in Winter
Mike Cawthorne
Mercat Press, 2000, pp.xii+164, npq

Mike Cawthorne had already traversed all the Munros in 1986 when, after ten years of wanderings and climbs in many parts of the world, he decided that there was still great adventure to be had closer to home by climbing all 135 of the 1000m peaks in Scotland in one continuous push, in winter. This he did in 1997-98, solo with the exception of a few days with friends, starting at Sandwood Bay and zigzagging across the country to end at Glencoe. As might be expected, he encountered blizzards, swollen rivers,

wind chill and all the adverse conditions you can think of, as well as those brilliant days which are only experienced in mid-winter. The book is well written, particularly the short passages of conversation, and well illustrated.

Rock Climbing in England and Wales
David Simmonite. Ed. Neil Champion
New Holland, 2000, pp.160, £24.99

Extreme Rock & Ice. 25 of the World's Great Climbs
Garth Hattingh
New Holland, 2000, pp.160, £29.99

New Holland seem set on cornering the market in large-format, glossy climbing picture-books. These are their two latest and they are both beautifully produced. Simmonite has covered the rock-climbing scene in England and Wales from far north to far south-west, from Bowden Doors to Sennen Cove, in a series of stunning action shots, mostly taken by himself, in 25 chapters/areas. I find the pictures excellent, as the majority feature the climb rather than the climber, which is the opposite of what seems to be the current fashion. Most, of course, are of climbs in the upper grades.

Hattingh's third book for New Holland keeps up the high standard of photographic reproduction seen in all their books, but it is best treated purely as a book of photos, as there are countless errors in the text and captions, showing a lack of knowledge of mountaineering and its participants. The selection of the 25 is also odd; whilst no one would argue with the Golden Pillar of Spantik or the south face of Lhotse being world class climbs, *Total Eclipse of the Sun* at Ogmore doesn't seem in quite the same class.

Across the Frozen Himalaya
The Epic Winter Ski Traverse from Karakoram to Lipu Lekh
Harish Kohli
Indus (New Delhi), 2000, pp.296, Rs.595 (£17.99)

It was in 1981-82 that Harish Kohli carried out his great traverse across the Himalaya, 8000km from the Karakoram to Bhutan, in a total of 475 days. As if this wasn't enough, he then decided to do a winter ski traverse of a section of the Himalaya, starting at the Karakoram Pass, and ending after 2000km at the Lipu Lekh Pass on the India/Tibet/Nepal border. The eight-member team kept as high as they could throughout the journey and were joined at various times by British, American and Australian supporters. They crossed a total of 20 passes, some previously unknown, and had their share of hazards and mishaps, getting lost on several occasions and suffering intensely from the adverse conditions.

Mount Everest Massif
Jan Kielkowski
Explo, 2000, pp.314, £18

I suppose it would have been almost unthinkable 50 years ago that anyone would produce a guidebook to Everest, detailing the many routes that find their way up the mountain, and also Lhotse, Nuptse and the other peaks that form the massif, but here it is, in a much enlarged and revised edition of Kielkowski's 1993 opus. It joins his volumes on Cho Oyu, K2 and Kangchenjunga as part of his plan to issue monographs on the highest mountain ranges on Earth. As the author says, he has 'tried to include all available information concerning the described region', and it is all here – geography, geology, expeditions, ascensionists, bibliography, place names, maps and so on. A marvel of research.

Shisha Pangma. The alpine-style first ascent of the South-West Face.
Doug Scott & Alex MacIntyre
Bâton Wicks/The Mountaineers, 2000, pp.322, £12.99

Bâton Wicks have reissued this book, originally published in 1984 as *The Shishapangma Expedition*, in a new standardised format and, in their usual way, with useful appendices bringing the climbs on the mountain up-to-date (1999), and with an extended bibliography and new additional photos. This was always one of the better expedition books and it is good to have it in print again.

The Alpine Club Library also received the following books during 2000:

Trekking and Climbing in Nepal Steve Razzetti, with Victor Saunders
New Holland, 2000, pp.176, £13.99

Lonely Hills and Wilderness Trails Richard Gilbert
David & Charles, 2000, pp.320, £16.99

The Stanford Alpine Club John Rawlings
CSLI Publications, Stanford University Libraries, 1999, pp.(10)+194, $39.95

The Deprat Affair. Ambition, Revenge and Deceit in French Indo-China Roger Osborne. *Pimlico, 2000, pp.244, £10.00*

Il Terreno di Gioco dell'Europa. Scalate di un Alpinista Vittoriano Leslie Stephen. *Vivalda Editori, 1999, pp.288, L.35,000.* Italian edition of *The Playground of Europe* with new introduction and illustrations.

The ULGMC at 50. A Celebration of the University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club 1950–2000 Ed. Jill Bennett, *2000, pp.36*

Montagna Grigia. Catalogo della letteratura grigia e minore. Biblioteca Nazionale del Club Alpino Italiano, etc *2000, pp.350.*
Catalogue of all the 'lesser works' in the library of the CAI.

The Independent Hostel Guide, Britain and Europe Ed. Sam Dalley
The Backpackers Press, 2000, pp.336, £4.95

La Conquista de Los Tres Polos. Una Hazaña de al Filo de lo Imposible
Sebastián Álvaro & Javier Ortega
Temas de hoy, 2000, pp.262, npq

Barrow's Boys Fergus Fleming
Granta, 1999, pp.xx+490, £8.99

Das Edelweiss. XVII. Special Issue of the 80th Anniversary
Kwansei Gakuin University Alpine Club, 2000, pp.396, npq

Tremadog Dave Ferguson, Iwan Arfon Jones & Pat Littlejohn
CC, 2000, pp.286, £13.50

Winter Climbs in the Cairngorms Allen Fyffe
Cicerone, 2000, pp.186, £15.00

North Devon and Cornwall David Hope & Brian Wilkinson
CC, 2000, pp.368, £14.50

West Cornwall. Bosigran, Chair Ladder and The Lizard. Vols. 1 & 2
Ed. Nigel Coe. *CC, 2000, pp.344 & 328, £17.50*

Peak Limestone. Wye Valley Ed. Geoff Milburn
BMC, 1999, pp.192+illus. & 288 (two parts), £15.95

Queueing for Everest Judith Adams
Oberon Books (Oberon Modern Plays), 2000, pp.104, £6.99

Travel Medicine and Migrant Health Ed. Cameron Lockie et al.
Churchill Livingstone, 2000, pp.xvi+500, £39.95

Tourism and Development in Mountain Regions
Ed. Godde, Price & Zimmermann. *CABI Publishing, 2000, pp.viii+358*

Rother Walking Guides:
Mallorca Rolf Goetz. *2000, pp.160, £7.99*
Around Mont Blanc Hartmut Eberlein. *2000, pp.122, £7.99*
Provence Thomas Rettstatt. *2000, pp.134, £7.99*
Iceland Gebriele & Christian Handl. *2000, pp.134, £7.99*

Lonely Planet Guides:
South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland J. Murray & J. Williams. *2000, pp.676, £13.99*
Mozambique Mary Fitzpatrick. *2000, pp.200, £11.99*
Hiking in the USA *2000, pp.512, £14.99*
Walking in France 2000, pp.400, £12.99

Extreme Expeditions. The Big Freeze C J Charley
Puffin Books, 2000, pp.vi+154, £3.99

Odle – Pùez. Dolomiti fra Gardena e Badia Lorenzo & Pietro Meciani
CAI/TCI, 2000, pp.400, L70,000

The Lycian Way. Turkey's First Long Distance Walk Kate Clow
Upcountry (Turkey), 2000, pp.128, £12.99

The Long Walk. The True Story of a Trek to Freedom Slavomir Rawicz
Robinson, 2000, pp.242, £6.99

Die Kleinen Dolomiten und Gino Soldà (1907-1989) Adriano Tomba
Città di Valdagno, 2000, pp.30

A Journey North. One Woman's Story of Hiking the Appalachian Trail Adrienne Hall. *Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2000, pp.xx+202, $22.95*

Life at the Extremes. The Science of Survival Francis Ashcroft
Harper Collins, 2000, pp.xxii+312, $22.95

Kidstuff. Poems to share with children Dave Wynne-Jones
CK Publishing, 2000, pp.58, £2.99

Kingdoms Beyond the Clouds. Journeys in Search of Himalayan Kings Jonathan Gregson. *Macmillan, 2000, pp.xxvi+510, £14.99*