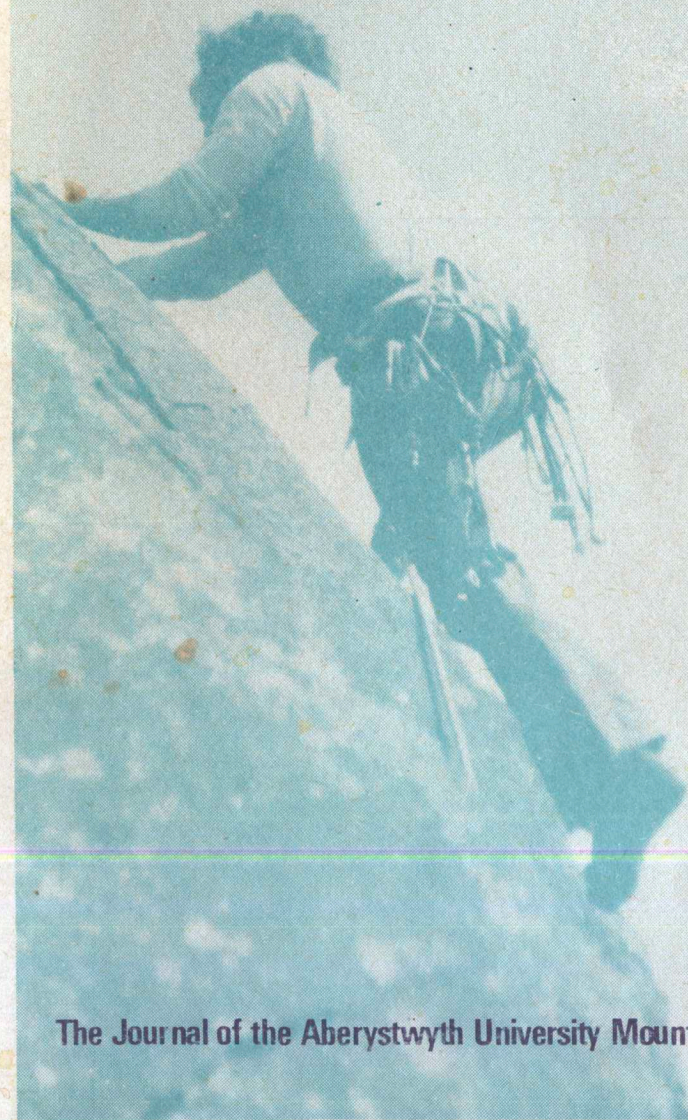
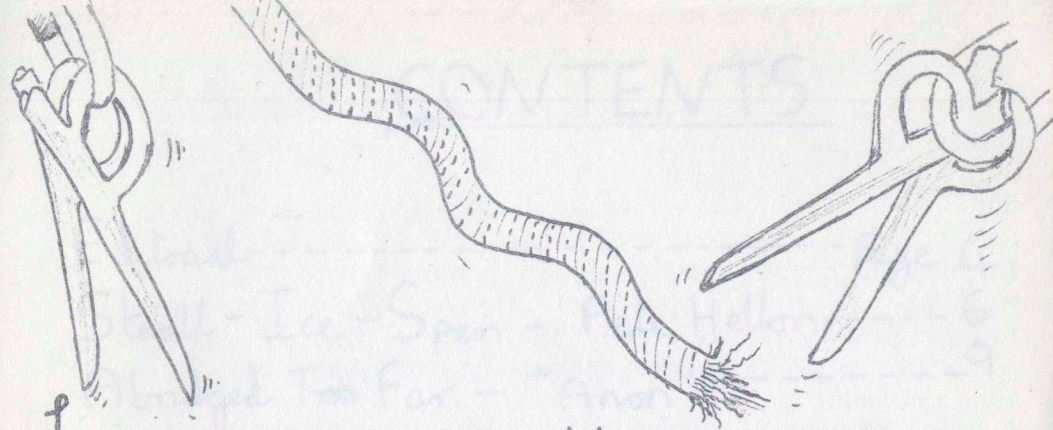


DRINGO



The Journal of the Aberystwyth University Mountaineering Club

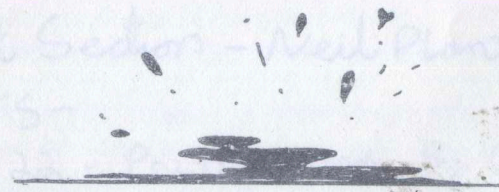


Little pitons jingle jangle,

On my climbing hat,

When I finally hit the ground,

I'll make an awful SPLAT!



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[WARNING FROM]

H.M. GOV.T. DEPT.OF ENJOYMENT SANCTIONS MEMO
No.074393/A.

RE. DRINGO.

This publication is scandalous.It depicts,in clear terms and understandable wording (something which H.M. Silly Service forms and confusion sect. cannot tolerate), enjoyment in one of its' most abhorrent states.It seems todays montaineering student (clearly a contradiction in terms) will stoop to extremely low depths to obtain satisfaction.

What is worse in our departments eyes is that after experiencing such self-indulgent happiness,persons (unnamed) set forth to visibly influence others by way of the printed word.Clearly,if people are to remain under our control they must not be allowed any form of enjoyment.

It is therefore with great pleasure ,and by the power in my vest,sorry invested in me,that I fine this production the sum of one bag of marbles (or equivalent in lire if applicable) and bucket of curried sea water.

Yours in silliness,

S.Megg(M.a.)

Dear Readers,

I received the above tied to a rotting sea-gull thrown through my door.I think everyone should read it, think about it, then ignore it.

'Ead 'Itter.

AT LAST! Editor of the mag has benn given a committee position.-We are now set to take over where Pigeon fanciers clour supplement left off.That is we are publishing in B& W.

As usual trying to prise (or prize)articles out of people was like trying to get drink out of a President. Heres' hoping that future editor will have more luck;just remember,no articles no magazine.Probably the best idea is to keep an Editorial ice-axe especially sharp (Intimidating would-be writers)for the purpose of procuring articles.I seriously hope,however, that Dringo will continue to be published-despite the hard work it means for everybody;the hardest work being for the bone-idle climbers to wrench them-selves away from guidebook browsing, do some proper jullibit -ing - the written type (so -4- out the one)

QUOTES :-

"He-ee-ah mm" - Jerry
(after his 21st)

"I Suppose it just gets harder & harder until you fall off." - ?

"I've got an Ice Tool!" - Neil.

"Maps are more diggicult to Read than books - the words am't in straight lines." - Steve.

"They'll have trouble on these Trunk roads when the trees die"
- Bob.

STEAL LIKE A PAN

A yellow and red streak flashed down Penglais Hill at 85 m.p.h. one dark Thursday night in December. Was it another U.F.O., or had the brakes failed on Little Pete's Mini again? As it screamed to a halt outside the Pier with two traffic bollards wedged under the front bumper and a policeman clinging onto the roof aerial like grim death it became apparent it was the latter. The august (I know I said December, look it up in the dictionary.) vehicle then disgorged two bedraggled figures onto the pavement—Pete and Chris had arrived back in Aber in their own inimitable style.

They strolled into the back bar to be confronted by the club President, Head in hands, slumped in a chair.

"Oh God Jerry, you've not been at the scotch and gingers again?"

The President hurriedly staggered to his feet and passed a weary hand across his bloodshot eyes.

"What time is the tranny leaving tomorrow?" they innocently inquired.

At this Jerry slowly backed into a corner of the room holding a chair defensively against his person.

"Err.....well lads, it's like this," he stammered, "there's been a slight hitch."

Two minutes later a bleeding and bedraggled figure emerged from the back door closely followed by a hail of ashtrays and beerpots, a large number of Anglo-saxon expletives and two irate climbers.

So began the club's annual Christmas epic.

By no means were the epics confined to walking and climbing in the Scottish Hills. The Mac. to Dolgellau road, the M6, the A74 and all the other Scottish roads provided their fair share of excitement/terror/laughter and stained grounds. One of the boons most treasured by the survivors of the journey was the occasion when two happy(?) hours were spent outside a petrol station in sub-zero temperatures only to be confronted by a large notice bearing the message "Sorry—No Petrol". To make use of a popular cliché Geoff and Neil were not pleased, in fact they were so displeased that I arrived in Scotland looking as though I had gone 15 rounds with Muhammed Ali, encased in a straightjacket.

We arrived at the hut about $\frac{1}{2}$ –3, bleary-eyed and weak in limb, with brain cell/cells very fatigued after about 17 hours travelling. Crossing the wire bridge gave us one of our most amusing, and Neil one of his most painful, moments of the week (see the slides if you get half a chance.). Geoff, Neil and I began poking around the hut, and so began the saga of the mantles, which commenced with a sprint down the "path" from the hut 10 miles of rally driving, many minutes of swearing, two trips to Nevisport, another two trips down the

path and many Basil Fawlty incantations and ended with threats to precipitate me at some velocity into the river Nevis.

Perhaps the most frightening moment was...no, it wasn't Neil and Jerry in a near whiteout on Binnein Mor, nor watching a certain climber when you were holding the other end of his rope, neither was it polybagging up the road at 30 m.p.h. being towed by an inebriated Matt, not even that of Neil penduluming 40ft on verglassed rock whilst belayed to a small 'curver', or even C.J. cramponing confidently up Perfect Wind Slab on Am Garbh-anach. For me, and I'm sure for all the others present, the moment so awesomely terrifying that I have to change my grounds every time I think of it, was when a certain climber of less than average stature knocked over a scotsmans pint in the pub-gasp, shock, horror. This sacriligious, nay, suicidal, act was immediately followed by a stunned silence and communal trembling amongst the other unfortunates present. By a supreme act of cowerdice we all managed to escape the owner of the pint and we all lived to drink/climb/bone/crater/lob/fall off another day.

Here endeth the gospel of St. Peter the Piss, Sorry Pious.

P.S. We did a bit of climbing as well.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

© inc. C.J. ASPRIN MOTION PICTURES © 1978

1978 was a bad year for British Mountaineering--

Nick Estcourt was tragically killed, Vaughan fell off Loochwoods, Chris Bonington's expedition on K2 failed, it was a disastrous Alpine season, and worst of all, the legendary Redbourn chalk quarry was closed and converted into an industrial toxic waste pit. At the time there were those who said that this latter occurrence would not substantially alter the character of this renowned crag, considering the sanitary behaviour of the local climbers but for the mystical "Herts chalk man" (immortalised in Professor Winifield-Phellons' excellent book "Pic du Dunstable North Wall Diretissima-My Way.") it was a very black day indeed. Sadly this legendary (and regrettably, dying) breed of climber was forced to practice his art on the lesser outcrops of Helsby, Tremadoc, Craig-y-Forwyn, Harrisons and even the Roaches (that chalkmans nightmare). Despite the fact that some satisfaction, and indeed pleasure was gained on the delectable slopes of Aiguille Consti, true utopia for the "Herts chalk man", was eventually discovered amongst the mind-blowing verticalities of the Colney Heath Railway Bridge. This magnificent crag, undoubtedly the finest in all Britain, is romantically situated below the quaint A6426 alongside the idyllic St. Albans-Hatfield disused railway. Here, rising from an unbroken sea of nettles, old prams, piles of dog turd, broken bottles and old car doors, rise the tremendous

faces of black, shiny, soot-encrusted brickwork, seamed with vertical cracks and chimneys and bulging with tremendous overhangs, aretes, corners, buttresses and rusty gas mains.

The crag was discovered by the famous Prof. Winfield-Phellon, who, when totally pissed one night, plunged his equally famous car through the railings and down the embankment alongside the said railway bridge. Wiping the blood from his Specs. he gazed in amazement through the broken windscreen at the awesome precipices that were silhouetted against the clear night sky. He then turned and shook the drunker lying prostrate on the back seat. "This is it" he cried excitedly "-Jerusalem!", (at least that's what I think he said.) - thus the new mecca of the Herts chalk man was born. On being released from Hospital, intensive exploration began until now, two years later, there are five fine routes, all of them classics of there grade.

The first route - a layback crack all of 180 inches high - was first ascended by none other than Mr. B. Jackson (of Valeries Rib-in-therain and Pyrenean cycling tours fame.) During an epic first ascent all possible techniques (and some impossible ones.) were used until eventually this 15ft. classic succumbed to combined tactics in order to reach the finishing jug (in this case a handily placed gas-pipe). The route was called Curving Crap, after an unusually large turd at the bottom present at the time of the first ascent and must not be confused with a similarly named but vastly inferior Snowdonian boulder problem.

The second route, Groin Strain (7b, Extremely Silly), is a complex problem in bridging and trouser ripping and was named after an unfortunate incident on the first ascent involving none other than myself. (N.B. I would recommend all subsequent ascensionists to wear the specially designed Whillans Truss, which, if used correctly now renders the route completely harmless.)

The third route, and undoubtedly the classic of the crag is Shiteron (1b-Very Chossy.). Like it's not dissimilarly named Tremadoc counterpart the grading of this route has proved to be extremely controversial. Although most well known authorities consider it to be just Moderate, Mr. Don Rampage, the infamous Yorkshire mountaineer, adamantly maintains that it is in fact a testing severe. Incidentally, this route is normally covered in pigeon shit.

Two other routes are worthy of mention - "Bleeding Crack" (affectionately known as "once a month.") was named after an early attempt had resulted in an unfortunate encounter with a broken bottle at the bottom. Finally there is "Traverse of the Sods" (4C Very Painfull - especially if you fall off into the brambles.) - a strenuous exercise in fingernail traversing. This route is another delectable creation of Prof. Winfield-Phellon, that grand old man of the chalk Eigerwands, now in the autumn of his illustrious career and yet still guiding the hordes of eager climbers that regularly flock to the St. Albans area since it was opened up as a major climbing centre. In the 6th volume of his last guidebook B. Jackson rashly stated that "the crags have at last reached full maturity" and that "no new routes are physically possible".

and yet, even as you read Prof. W-P, humbly aided by his trusty(?) second (myself) remains tirelessly at work on his next astonishing route - Route X on Hidden Choss Buttress (so called because of the height of the brambles around it.) Despite the fact that 10lb sledgehammers, chisels, ladders, expansion bolts and skyhooks have been used, the route is said to be ethically very pure, although its location remains a secret at the present.

Commenting in the New York Times, from his luxurious T.C.E. penthouse apartment, Prof. Winfield-Phellon stated that Route X, together with The Great Arete on Consti., represent the greatest challenges left to world mountain-eers, and that when he has successfully climbed both he will retire and devote the rest of his time and tremendous energy to the foundation of a world-wide "Save-the Mini-Cooper" fund, a cause he has vigorously supported since the tragic demise of his own lovable vehicle.

—:—

(In order to avoid any potential libel actions the author wishes to remain anonymous.)

It's by C.J. Signed: Prof. W-P.

Extra Editorial.

Well, here it is at last, after over 20 long years of waiting, this year's committee have finally taken steps (gigantic strides!) to get this mag. printed.

After several cock-ups, a flurry of last-minute editing / writing / drinking, should now see this ready by X-Alba dinner. (The biggest cockup was having this printed at all, as the printer should have been told to abandon it) although this magazine is now of more interest to X-Alba members - it is hoped that club members will find it interesting / amusing.

Due to the mag being printed, there is a new air of confidence that an up-to-date one can be produced - hopefully by Summer '82 (give or take 3 years) If anybody has any articles which they consider worthy of this mag. then they should be sent or given to:

I.J. Owen, Rhydygwyn, Llanfair, Aber. by May 1st 1982., and will be considered for inclusion in the next mag.

Ian (Stumpy) Owen [ed. '81-'82].

SUMMERTIME BLUES

As the early morning rays of the sun found their way through the walls of the X-Aber Hut, I pulled myself out of my pit and climbed down the steps for a brew, only to find that Dave Butler had been considerate enough to throw up all over my rucksack. Nice boy, eh!

A few minutes later I am on the road in Capel Curig, where, unbeknown to me, Geoff passed me on his way to "Eric sale; "I'd recognise those kegs anywhere", he commented later.

I set out to hitch over to Llanberis to meet Ding at Pen Ceunant, and soon a car pulled up; "Hey Up, you bugger! where are going?". The familiar voice of Barry Clarke Chatte away as we drove up to the door of the hut. Walking in I see Smeg and Tom having a brew, and my heart nearly stopped when I heard the words; "Ding?, oh, he's on the Mot."

Shit! Ding was on the Mot already, the bastard had double-crossed me. I ran down the hill to the village and set a fast pace up the pass with my thumb out. What's wrong? Why no lifts? Do I smell? I pass the Vanol, still walking and still swearing loudly. My emotions were bursting.....all these weekends away and on the one DRY one he goes off with Jaimie to do OUR route.

By the Grochan now. The idea of soloing the first pitch to catch him up comes to mind. Surely it's only 4b. The Mo comes into sight, and....."oh hell", My mind goes numb and I stop in my tracks as I see two unmistakable figures already on the first pitch of our route.

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and Geoff arrives at the scene. He's just off to do cruxes with a friend as we meet, and I stand swearing at him for a full five minutes.

"I've got this route in mind, Geoff!"

"Oh yes."

"Diagonal."

Geoff's mate makes excuses and goes for a walk, leaving us to slog up the scree to arrive just as Ding starts to follow the first pitch. Determined not to be left behind, we quickly gear up, but alas, our departure from terra firma to terra stricken is delayed by a party (no booze) on Crosstie which shares the first stance.

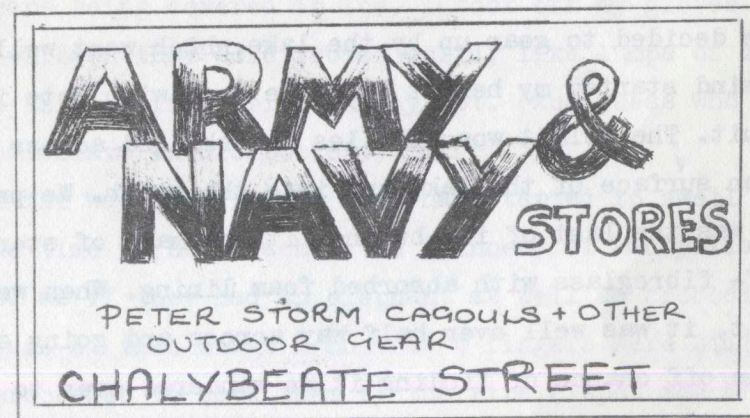
By the time we started, Ding was well into number two but easy climbing found me moving up and across, till, "Oh Christ" -- "Oh, you've got to be joking." Off route, the move onto the stance was desperate, and as sweat poured off my fingertips, Jamie gave a cheerful goodbye and quickly climbed to Ding at the next stance.

Geoff joins me quickly and belays as I move off. My hopes of catching the other two are almost instantly dashed as the true reality of my first "Sei" hits me. I move slowly up to the chimney, casting a nervous glance at Jamie. He smiles, waves off to meet Ding below the final wall. As I pull onto the stance and dip into the peg there is no sign of the others "Nighe," I thought "It's o.k. from here on." How wrong I was.

Again Geoff arrives with ease, enjoying the exposure and apparently finding it no harder than cliff. Still, I was on the sharp end, and that counted for me. Off again, and as I straddle the pockets leading to the groove, the crag - - - -

erupts with the sound of "Smegma". Ian and the C.M.C. had arrived and with unhelpful comments from Tom, stood firmly on the ground below. I reach to so-called mantle-shelf in desperation. From here the difficulties ended, and a good job too, as I look back to the runnerless rope leading down to Geoff.

As we move up to the final crack the others are seen at the foot of the crag. The impetus gone, I set to the last pitch about which I'd heard so much. A move up, and a surprise. It's easy, and I'm soon pulling up the rope for Geoff. We race down to the others, smiles all round. It worked out best for all. A great route, a great crag.....the best.



ONCE BITTEN

Once upon a time, on a fine day, (well it was clear but monkeys.) two idiots decided to climb East Gully on Cader Idris.

It was only 8.30 a.m. and the yellow peril was playing up. It didn't even reach T.C.E. from Penbryn before the fan belt departed. Half an hour was spent with Pete replacing the belt, while I tried to look as if I was helping. We eventually reached Idris Gate and departed at 10 a.m. for the Cwm. This we reached in due time, where the wind really hit us, and this combined with fantastically hard snow floored us both, and the party behind us, several times.

We decided to gear up by the lake, which went well until the wind started my helmet down the snow with Pete in hot pursuit. The helmet won by miles and skidded across the frozen surface of the lake and into the water. We presumed that was the last of it, but no, it was made of sterner stuff- fibreglass with absorbed foam lining. When we last saw it, it was well over half way across and going strong. In the off chance of finding it we wandered over to the other side of the lake, where indeed it was. Pete bravely fell in trying to retrieve it. Because the foam had absorbed so much water I put a hat on underneath it - this may well have saved my ears.

We started to climb with Pete leading fast, finding belays slowly, and me following. Nearing the end of the climb above the crucial ice pitch, the spindrift was blinding me, whilst the ice chips from my axe were blinding Pete above. Lips were swollen, hands were cold and we were miserable. (guess who left his overgloves in his rucksack.)

Pete grovelled over the chock-stone near the top, I followed grovelling equally badly, if not worse, then lead through to and under the cornice. I was knackered, I could hardly lift the axes up, and almost ran over the gap in the cornice with the joy of getting out of the wind-channal, The wind was so strong it was like leading with a top-rope, the rope surmounted the cornice long before I did. Pete followed quickly and took a few photographs of frozen smiles.

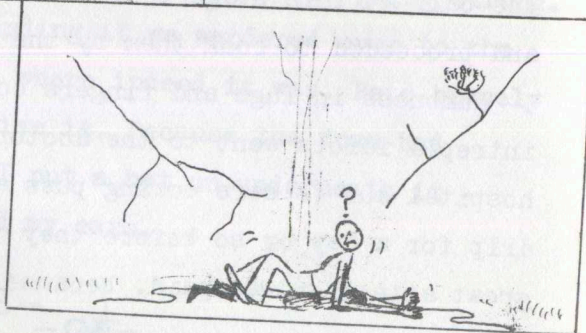
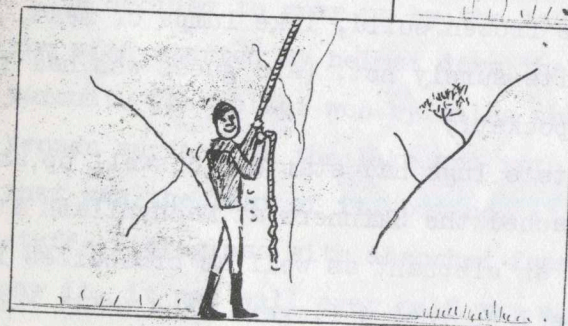
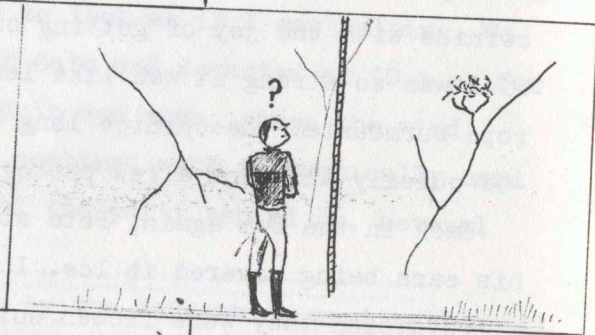
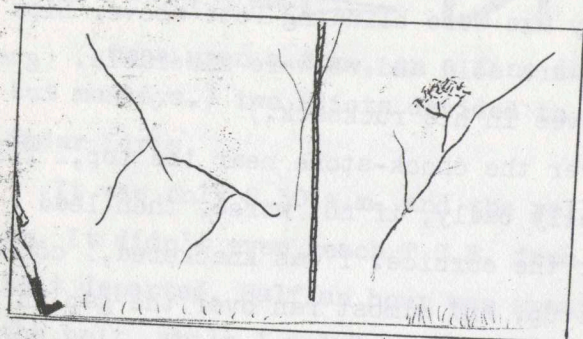
Back in the Cwm again, Pete started complaining about his ears being covered in ice. I took off my gloves and to my revulsion they were frozen solid, like lumps of meat. Could this be frost-bite-surely not. (And guess who had left his balaclava in his pocket!)

On the way back Pete's lugs had started to swell up and by the time we had reached the Skinners at Machynallath it looked as if they had an elephant as well as crocodiles in the bar. At this stage I noticed 4 fingers were still numb and proceeded to cook them by the fire (spot the brain cell).

Numbness in lugs and fingers continued next day and both intrepid idiots went to the doctors. Pete also went to the hospital due to ears oozing puss all night. They continued to drip for a day or so before they too peeled. In the hospital great attention was paid, because everybody wanted to see

what frostbite looked like!

It would certainly appear that East Gully has got it in for the Aber M.C. (a bit like C.A.B., I wonder?!))



Nothing To do With Climbing

"I don't care for a 2-bog-anne
I don't like a bob-sleigh
But polly bag I'm her man
On a snowy day."

(from the master bagger's chant)

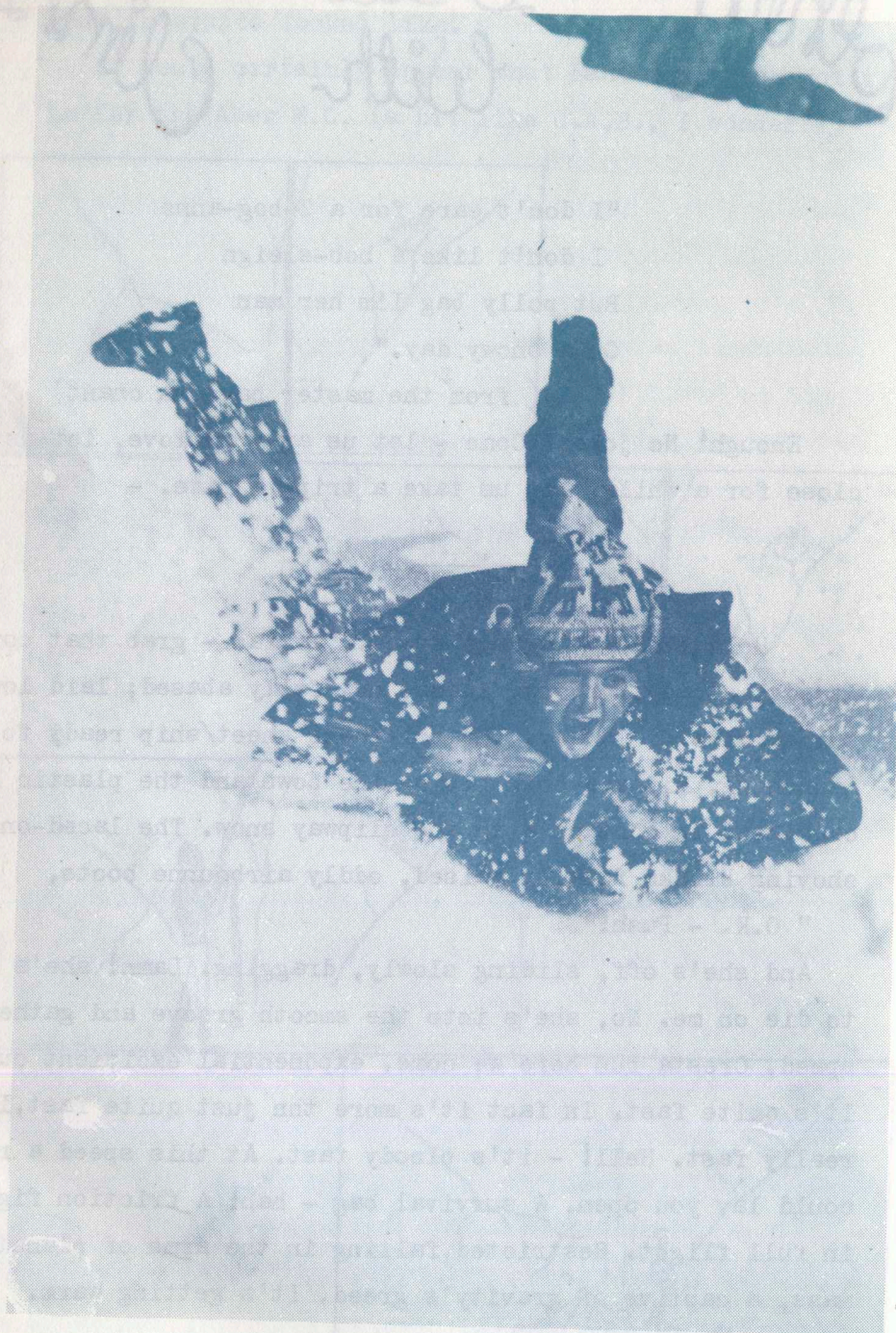
Enough! No jokes. Come - let us away my love, let us lie close for a while, let us take a trip, a ride. -

—:—

Hold still my orange steed! "Julian - grab that corner. Steady, steady, on your knees, now fully abased; laid low in the service of lunacy. The polythene sheet/ship ready for the launching, mittens both biting the bows and the plastic rib-cage keel in contact with the slipway snow. The laced-on shoving blocks finally raised, oddly airbourne boots,

" O.K. - Push!"

And she's off, sliding slowly, dragging. Damn! she's going to die on me. No, she's into the smooth groove and gathering speed. Cresta run here we come, exponential excitement curve. It's quite fast. In fact it's more than just quite fast, it's really fast. Hell! - it's bloody fast. At this speed a rock could lay you open. A survival bag - hah! A friction fighter in full flight. Restricted falling in the arms of planet mass, a captive of gravity's greed. It's getting warm.



Accelerate/Exhilarate. It's getting hot. This high speed Chicht caress might burn through and take something valuable with it. The Snow-queen, the slope slave, ploughing out unevenness and leaping undulations; ice-spray stinging and mounds followed by a kick in the sternum; bump: gasp: bump. Blind and prone, doing over 20 m.p.h. - mad polythene hurtling, the white hill thrill making a take-over bid for sanity. Viva sex, drugs and adenalin!

Then grip-slip, slide-slide and off into a tumbler's travesty. A bundle of body momentum bowled into a localised shower of snow. Bounce, roll, roll, bounce, somersault, head-break and stop.

Limbs scattered, lung waves breaking and dragging at high speed, heart probably prestissimo, and somewhere a hand still gripping the precious plastic. For a moment just lying there, trembling slightly. Snodonia eating into Euphoria. Coming down. The wet, the cold, sliding into place.

Then on your feet, waving at the specks waiting high up the slope, shouting- "Bloody Marvellous!" and starting the struggle towards them, dragging behind you a bright orange off-cut of heaven.

—:—

HOW ETHICAL ARE YOU?

Here is a short quiz to test your suitability for membership of Aber Mounts. Scoring may be found on page 33

- 1) Your hands are sweaty, you are sliding off ahold, do you,
 - a) Dip in the chalk bag
 - b) Opt for the peel
 - c) I never carry chalk anyway
- 2) You are behind with your work, and a meet is imminent, do you,
 - a) Take work with you
 - b) not go on meet
 - c) forget the work.
- 3) It is a rainy day, do you
 - a) Sit in hut, reading
 - b) Go to the cafe
 - c) If the 'Rock & Ice' can do it, so can I.
- 4) It is time for a brew, do you
 - a) Make yourself a single cup
 - b) make you and your cronies each a cup
 - c) make a mega-communal brew.
- 5) You meet a mob from X-Alba who are going for a game of Claptrap in the 'Tunny' do you,
 - a) make apologies and wimp out

- b) Opt out after a few pints
 - c) Deny it all the next day.
- 6) You have just been in the Bear's Head for a heavy sesh. Do you
 - a) Crash out in town
 - b) Get a lift home
 - c) Drive home yourself anyway.
 - 7) You have just bought this piece of literature, do you
 - a) File it away with your back-numbers of "The Great Outdoors"
 - b) Read it and lose it.
 - c) Use it as a replacement for Jeysoft.

Now! Turn to page 33 for the scoring and an assessment of your ethics.

(NB I have been informed that - regarding this club - there may have been a mixup with Q's 1) and 2).)

POINTS OF REALITY.

THE ROPE came tight ,but I was leading- something was wrong!

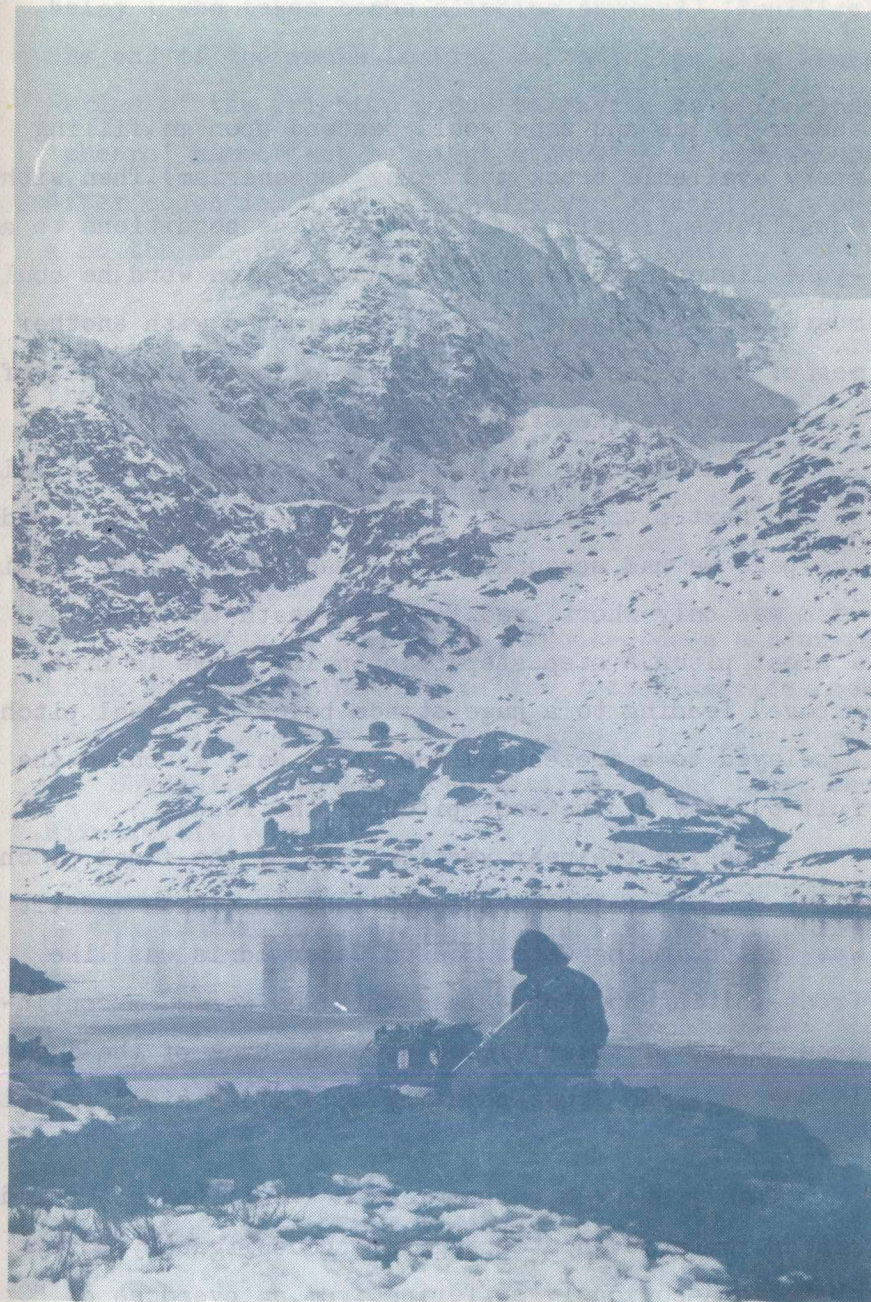
I remembered looking up the five mil I could see my hammer embedded in the.....the ICE. Reality struck home as memory returned.

I picked myself up, thankful that the pick had held. Neil unbalanced some distance below, failed to fully perceive the difficulties. Previous statements of ease of angle and strength of belays were reversed. I thumped in a dubious peg and continued leaving Neil to recover from his cardiac arrest.

I reached the top of the first pitch with much further difficulty. "I could lead over this next step if I had enough rope", I lied to myself. Two somewhat non-textbook ice pegs later and the faithful second was following. At this point I had time to contemplate my 'small error' and could feel that great Chouinard in the sky shaking his finger at me. I felt I had been let off lightly.

As Neil joined me I could see the line, a short travers left then up and right, however, it was not that simple. Powder snow from the previous night had had blown up against the ledges to form an inclined crust which had to be removed before climbing. This was the very stuff which had caused Neil's cardiac arrest on the first pitch. Neil was soon up and out of sight over the lip,

A regular pattern of events then ensued. A



shower of ice and snow would descend upon me, filling every available crook and nanny (spoonerism)! Then, with equal force, 'Youff' would describe the conditions to an -yone listening, using all the Anglo-Saxon word, he could muster. The pitch, and language, terminated with another peg of unsubstantiated quality. I followed the trail of devastation to the stance.

Reality overcame elation as I viewed the beginning of the next pitch. A quick transfer of the few rock and ice pegs we had scrounged and I had no option. My pessimism was only shortlived for underneath the mawk lay a great pitch. A step step then an ice grove (a nice groove) leading to a huge stance below the final pitch. I belayed to a frozen boulder while Neil savoured the full quality of the best pitch of the route.

Seeing the near vertical ice of the final pitch all I could recall was a comparison that Rich made. It was that climbing water ice on Cader Idris was like front-pointing up plate-glass. This was worse, a continuous stream of water flowed down the back of the ice. It was now like front-pointing up a glass sided swimming pool.

This presented no problem to 'Youff' (on his third winter route), even stopping for the obligatory posey photograph - obviously suffering from an overdose of "Craggs" I thought. With whoops of delight and tales of bombproof

belay (who takes bombs climbing anyway?) 'Youff' celebrated the end of the route. Leaving me to follow with weakened -scales of the right arm, due to having no wrist loop or 'cheapo' hammer not as might otherwise be conjectured. After seconding the bold lead I was greeted by a broad and the universal acclaim for a good route.

"Good, eh?"

"Brilliant," I replied.

The hysteria soon subsided as we saw crampon marks and smattering of powder snow. All thoughts of Co-op finish Woolies Window variation left my brain (O.K. I lie; brai as I realised that the direct finish had been complete less than 24 hours ago.

Slightly despondent we crunched down a near gull bring us back to the base of the frozen cascade. Looking up we could see why it looked so easy from the camp.

SUMMARY: -A personal description of the third ascent Bifrost, (IV), Cwm Cau.

HERTFORDSHIRE CHALK.

Not many people are aware that the finest type of rock for climbing is to be found in an area bounded by the famous beauty spots of Luton, Whipsnade, Watford and Sandridge. For decades phonies like Don Willans, Joe Brown and Pete Crew have been paid vast sums of money to swear blind that North Wales is a rock-climbers paradise. For instance, a character named Jon Rames is reported to have made payments of £10,000 each to ten top-grade climbers, in order to preserve sales of his illustrated guide-book, featuring his recently introduced 'Irish grading system'. I am sure many poor climbers who were conned into buying his book have had epics on the scores of 5aV. Diffs. that abound amongst its pages.

Those of you who enjoy grey rock, grey cloud, grey mountains, grey skies, torrential rain and beer that tastes as though it ought to be grey will probably agree with these phonies who look on North Wales as paradise, but the enlightened few know better. Nestling seductively in the green and productive folds of the beautiful Hertfordshire countryside are many exquisitely beautiful crags, veritable jewels in England's crown.

Regarding the quality of the rock I don't think I can do better than quote from Dr. C.J. Aspin's excellent publication "Rockclimbers in action on Redbourne chalk quarry" (he has also written a companion volume - "Selected routes on Colney Heath railway bridge.") "Grave doubts have been cast on the cohesive properties of chalk and, indeed, on its overall stability but I can state quite categorically that this is just another example of North Walian and Lake District propaganda. It is true that the rock does need care in places and generally speaking the climber succumbs most readily to a delicate, fluid, preferably non-stop, style of climbing. This is all to the good in my opinion, as it tends to discourage the hordes of jackbooted, he-man gritstoners prevalent on so many of the country's lesser crags".

The ideal chalkman is skinny, knock-kneed, lilywhite (useful - flage when conservationists are poking around mumbling about excessive gardening) and has virtually no strength in arms or fingers, in fact very similar to Wednesday night habitués of the Pier back bar. In one of his more unguarded moments Dr. C.J. was heard to say that even the awesome 'Faces of Hell' would pale into miniscule insignificance beside Herts chalk Eigerwands. Absolutely no equipment is necessary for chalk climbing as even the clinking of Moacs and Hex's, or the footfalls of E.B.-clad feet can precipitate awesome powder chalk avalanches from the less stable cliffs.

This absolute necessity for a delicate climbing style led Joe Livesey (no relation) to spend many months training at Carnedd Dunstable in preparation for his attempt on a new line on the Graffiti Wall of Dinas Bog, eventually named Trotterless Pig.

The objective dangers posed by some crags have inspired some unusual names and gradings such as "One foot up, Three feet down" (Mod 4c) on Dunstable main cliff and "Multi Fatality" (V. Diff 6b) on Stoke Poges Upper Tier. Even the red-table Joe Livsey was once heard to mutter "That place has seen more craters than Neil Armstrong ever did!" In defiance of these extremist views comes the well known expression "different as chalk and cheese." Which was, in fact, inspired by the superb qualities of Herts native rock, it being so different

-ent in quality from the crumbly gubbins
foun at Cheddar.

And to end this a ll-too-brief resume I must add
a note of caution. Recently evidence has come to li
-ght in some provincial newspapers (notably the
Ayot St. Lawrece Gazette) of some rather disurbing
events. One of the great advantages of chalk is its
brightness and generally cheering and welcoming
appearance. Some vandalistic fiends have taken to
advantage of this and are pinching chalk from Herts
crag, grinding it to powder in special "chalk bags"
and plastering it over their own crags in order to
artificially brighten their appearance. This despi
-cable practice is resulting in large scale erosion
of many chalk cliffs in the area. The idea of re-ope
-ning quarries to meet the growing demands of some
so-called climbers is another even more disturbing
proposition and one which will be strongly and bitt
-erly opposed by aha nd-full of chalk devotees at
present active in this country.

Pete "Whiter than White" Hellon.

Scoring for Quiz.

For each a) answered score 0
b) " " 2
c) " " 5

[0] - you are an unethical wimp. Get out of
this club immediately.

[2-20] - you have some good points, but an increase
in 'sociability' is needed to get along in this
club.

[20-32] - you are a fine member of this club

[35] - are you are you aren't president?

A few points arise out of this quiz.

1) there is far too much working on meeths.
this activity must stop or there will be serious
repercussions for offenders.

2) For all you wimps. when making a brew
make a full teapot for everyone. - It's just
as well they abolished capital punishment
for this one!

A BIGGER JAUNT THAN USUAL

The idea first came about around about Christmas when, after innumerable pints in a pub, Bill told me "I definitely want to go like." Geoff was equally keen, so it was settled. After that came the catch-phrase "Good training for the Alps." which seemed a good enough excuse for nearly everything we did. In fact we did nearly everything except train for the Alps - no, I tell a lie we did attempt to learn moving together on the Idwal Slabs and found out that a medicore day on the Glyders absolutely knackered us - a good omen!

Still after much discussion (we didn't really know what we were talking about) and traditionally buying gear (useless things like ice screws etc) we seemed ready to go. When we packed our sacks we found that we had about 200lbs worth' - 'I've never taken this much to Wales before." The train journey was torture, but what was worse was that an error on our otherwise meticulous planning meant we had to get off the train about 40 miles from our destination. So after a quick train journey into Italy (wrong country!?) and a taxi back out again, we resorted to hitching the last few miles to the campsite - a little place called Ailetroide.

On the first day our enthusiasm was bubbling over so we got up at 4.00 a.m. but still didn't manage to get away before 7.00. It was cold at that time, and as everyone knows, the Alps are serious so on went breeches, jumpers, jackets etc. However by 8.00 the sun was up and on went the shorts and T-shirts so we had to carry enormous sacks stuffed full of excess clothing - we still had a lot to learn. We all had one day one day having trouble with the altitude and, being the only smoker and the unfittest, my

*all
the
best*

FROM
**JOE
BROWN**

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worst day was the first. I was so knackered walking along level ground. That it was 22 minute rest every 10 paces - real Chris Bonington stuff. That night we met the English guidebook writer for the area, John Brailsford, who gave us lots of advice on the routes and stopped us making more mistakes than we would have done. The next few days were spent attempting to acclimatise and learn ice climbing and glacier technique on the Glacier Blanc; then (trumpet fanfare) came our first route. The South East Face of Les Montagnes des Aiguilles, sounds impressive, but in fact it was just along tidge up snowslopes and yet more snowslopes with a final rock pyramid to the summit that was about 11th. Still, it was good experience bivvying, and who else forgets to bring the rope on their first alpine route. "Go back and get it Geoff!" - the only consolation was that we had about 40 frogs to the summit, but I managed to lose my brand new Ice Hammer on the descent - that'll teach me to carry superfluous gear on a facile.

The next day was a shopping day to replenish supplies of suntan cream and to buy something to cook in - ever spend three weeks looking out of one billy? But we couldn't keep off the hills for long and our next route was the South Ridge of Pic Coudidge - another uneventful route except the bivvy which was spectacular, right under the 3,500' South Face of Ecrins. However, we did make an hour long detour off route in a desperate attempt to get lost. Hairily completed two faciles, we felt we were ready for greater things, so Brailsford mentioned the Helvoux traverse. This is a

classic of the area, and although much of the ascent was st snow slopes, this time they were a bit steeper. The descent the Violettes Glacier, the steep glacier falling from the summit snowfield, was spectacular and gave us a taste of ob-ctive dangers as we rushed past seracs and crossed snowbr-ges at about 10.00am when the sun was getting a bit too-rm! What really made it good was meeting a group of Geordi lads on the summit "pass t'tin o'sardines lad."

We had now been out for two weeks and had only one week left so Brailsford said, "Get on the Ecrins lads - don't go the easier way I know a better (harder!) way not in the guide." The Ecrins is the highest peak in the area and route was the North East Couloir. This is on the North face and misses out the snow plodding of the voie normale but joins it for the final third of the route - we never got t far. It was our first day of bad weather. We started out at 3 a.m. and reached the face about 5.30 a.m. A nasty looking snowbridge took us over the bergschrund and into the coulo. It didn't look very high but after 14 rope lengths we had changed our minds. Loose powder on top of old snow ice made the going slow, but we were even slower. When we got to the at about 10.00 it was misty and snowing and it seemed too late to go to the summit so we traversed across the North Face, through an avalanche and over a lunatic snowbridge to voie normale and descended that. We finished the route with brown stained breeches but it gave us an idea of how serio the climbing could be.

After that epic we yearned for rock so we chose t Cineasles Traverse - a nice rock route. It WAS a nice rock -ute but all this leading severish pitches with boots and

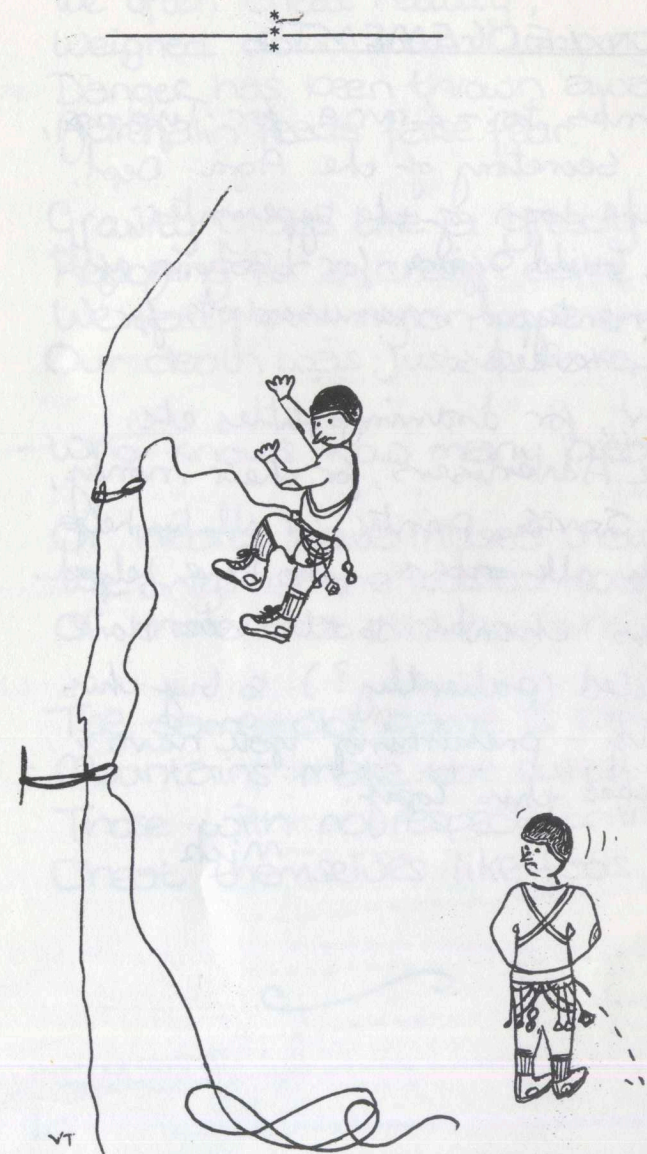
sacs is a little off-putting. We met the most abysmal Frogs on the route who held us up - so we sang them a song. The route followed an arete over several towers "like? *! *?! point to point this" commented Bill. The guidebook time for the route was 6 hours but we managed it in 12 - yes, I was impressed as well. Still, it was a good route and for the first time it felt like the sort of climbing we wanted to do.

Time was getting short now with only three days left. It took two days to do a route so that left a spare day. Other English lads on the campsite had been talking about an amazing climb on a crag across the river. Brailsford gave us a description for it, "It's a 1000' and VS." - what more could we ask for. The route followed an obvious crack which split the cliff for 1000'. It took us 4 hours with 8 pitches, two of which were VS and the rest about severe. It was the only chance to use our E.B.'s which we had so lovingly brought out all the way from England.

The next route was our last and most enjoyable we climbed. The bivvy was freezing (gossip has it that I tried to get into Geoff's sleeping bag to keep warm), but the day was superb. The weather was warm, the rock good, and we were at last moving quickly and competently. The route, the South ridge of the Pic du Glacier Blanc, was graded A.D. (one pitch severe, the rest Diff - V.Diff) but we moved together along most of it and when we reached the summit we could see Mont Blanc about 100 miles away.

So that was it; the last day was spent packing and then we had another mammoth train journey back, but we occupied our time working out how to raise the money for next

year. It was about the best climbing holiday I've had, certainly a bigger jaunt than usual!



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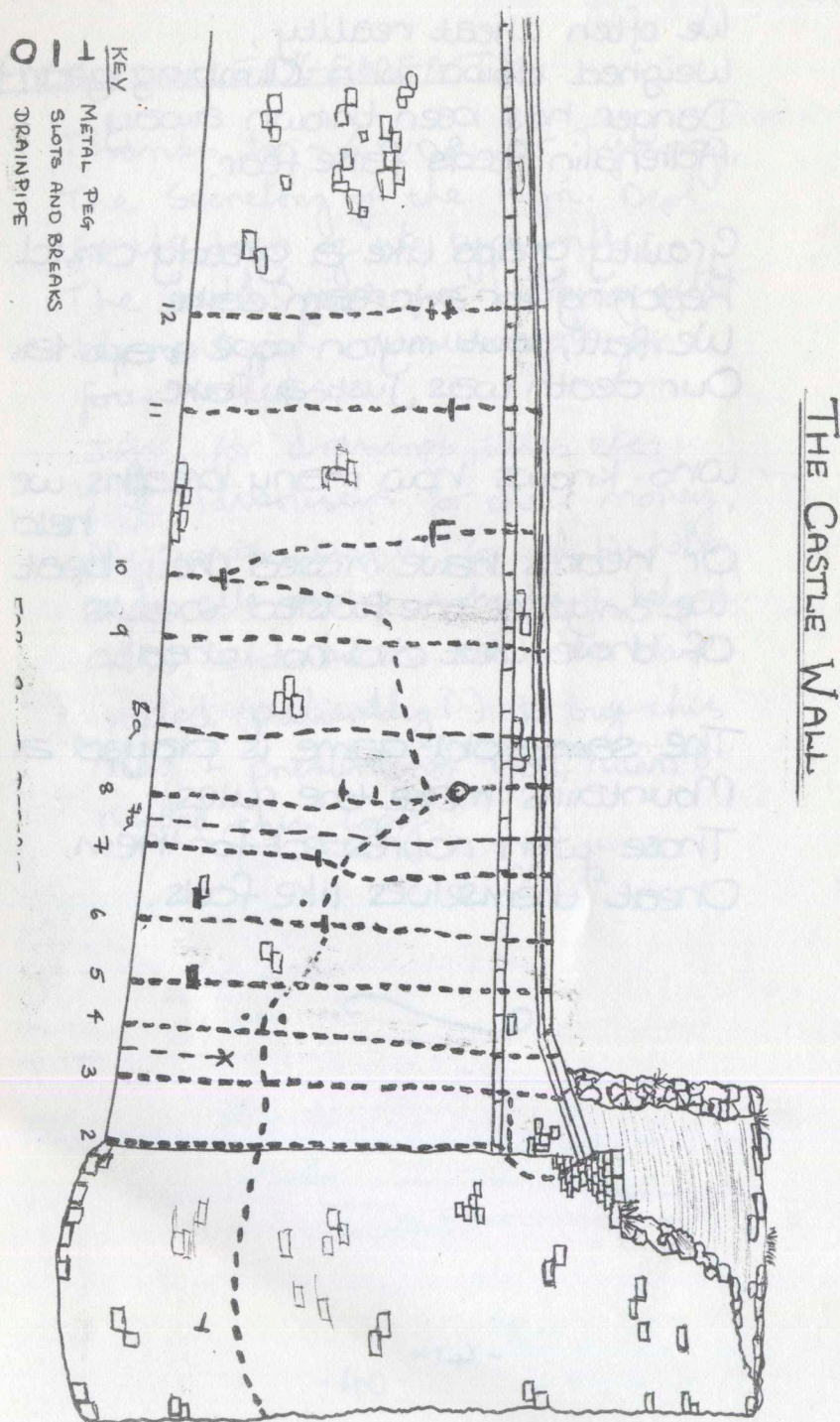
mick.

We often cheat reality,
Weighed down with Climbing gear,
Danger has been thrown away
Adrenalin feeds false fear.

Gravity grabs like a greedy child
Reaching for a cream cake
We fall, but nylon rope snaps tail
Our death was Just a fake.

Who knows how many breaths we
held
Or hearts have missed their beat
We only see the twisted wrecks
Of those that did not cheat.

The same old game is played a
Mountains make the rules,
Those with no respect for them,
Cheat themselves like fools.



CASTLE WALLS

The college in its infinite wisdom has consistently failed provide the club with an indoor climbing wall so the club has over the years developed its own practice crags. The sea wall had been climbed for many years, the south beach traverse being a classic of the grade. Move over Summer!

This year however has seen the pre-guide book development of the ultimate crag, the castle wall.

The typical climber is seen in full winter plumage on blustery day. He is identified by having arms like a gorilla's fingers (and nerves) of steel.

The drainpipe route had been climbed by previous members used as a test of nerve or blood alcohol level. Late and hard routes followed most aiming for obvious "finger jugs" (what hell are they!) usually by crag rats suffering from gallop withdrawal.

All the routes are very steep, with 'micro exposure' very prominent especially in the 5b area.

ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS

- 1 TRAVERSE - A SUSTAINED ROUTE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
- 2 THE CORNER FINISHES LEFT OR RIGHT, NOT STRAIGHT UP AS YET
- 3 A HARD START LEADS TO A BOLD FINISH
- 4 STRENUOUS AND COMMITTING TO GAIN THE BAR
- 5 DIRECTLY UP FROM HOLE IN WALL
- 6 LONG REACH MAKES THIS STRAIGHTFORWARD
- 7 LONG REACH MAKES THIS STRAIGHTFORWARD
- 8 UP TO DRAINPIPE DIRECT
- 9 HARD AND STRENUOUS
10. GOOD BUT HIDDEN HOLDS
11. GOOD HOLDS LEAD UP BY A FAINT CRACK
12. BRIDGE UP TO REACH THE BREAKS

NUMEROUS SMALL PROBLEMS EXIST LEFT OF ROUTE 12.

THE PLUMMET SECTION.

This part of the magazine is devoted to falling off, and once again club members have taken great trouble over the last year to entertain their fellows with stylish lobs from various crags around the country. This year there have been a few serious contenders for the "all time great" award, and the scars can be seen on all those involved. It is difficult to decide who can claim the star position this year, but Ivan must be the first for his broken leg received last winter in Scotland, resulting in endless weeks on crutches. At second equal must come Geoff, against the combined efforts of Jerry, John, Mark Dawson and, yet again, Ivan. These two masterpieces were also on the "White Shite", and Geoff, with no expense spared, travelled all the way to Chamonix so that he could fall off the Glacier des Bossoms to receive his broken collar bone. The silly boy fell 150' into a small cravasse on his first day out. The other lads gave an excellent display in East Gully (III), on Cader Idris by falling 300' down the gully with an avalanche in close pursuit. Jerry now proudly sports the scars on his knee, whilst Mark tries to forget that he was involved in a project on avalanches when it happened, nothing like first hand experience.

But now we leave the snow and ice well alone, and turn to the antics seen on rock..... and there were indeed some antics. Another team event occurred on Lockwoods Chimney, (D), after the dinner in '78, when the log records no less than four lobs, by Bill, Jerry, Neil and Vaughan. Rumour has it that Billy took both hands off the rock to adjust his head-torch at the crucial moment, and Vaughan, to quote the log "made a tactical retreat and felloft all the way down the water fall pitch and continued for 30', and eventually hit a tree causing 'serious' knee injury."

Also in '78, the summer holidays provide Ding with the most spectacular lob of the year off Cemetery Gates, (H.V.S.). The poor lad was just pulling up onto the belay ledge at the top

of the first pitch when he descended rapidly all way down again about 60' in all. This must also be one of the most unfortunate, (or stupid), falls recent and Neil tried his best to match up to this standard by lobbing of the final move on the top pitch of Gra-er, (XS). This would have been considerably less if Smeg had been holding the rope mind!

Neil must also take the award for bullheaded stupidity, for having already taken two short falls of the first pitch of Extraction, (XS), he returned again for a second attempt two weeks later. This time all went well until the second pitch..... then he fell less than three times before eventually reaching the top. Five lobs from one route! Is this a record?

At the same time as this was going on, Jerry was on Striptease, (VS) nearby. Having just watched Neil bone off, he shouted down to John; "ho, ho, it'll be my turn next" and then promptly came bouncing down for 20'; and it wasn't set up either! Now Jerry is definitely the most consistent bonner the club has seen for many a year, and one of his best displays was on Merlin (H) at Tremadoc from which he took two brilliant 15' lobs before being successful on his third attempt. Well I suppose we must say that it was raining and everyone else was brewing up in the hut when he was out on the rock.

Now you would think that on such a classic route as White Slab (XS), on Cloggy would be impossible to off route. but no.. Ding did! It was on the first main slab pitch, after the crux, when he tried to go straight up instead of left, heartily encouraged by Neil on the distance. This 50' variation resulted in a rapid 20' descent onto a loose insitu peg, so they abseiled off and went for a swim instead.

The master of the tactical retreat, Pete, failed to perform at his best on Moai Man (HVS), at Gist Ddu, and took a fine lob leaving part of his finger behind. (believe photos are available for those morbid souls amongst you!) On Freshers Meet the idea is to show p

-le what climbing is about, and as part of climbing occasionally involves falling off, Bill decided to volunteer a fine display, keeping the audience riveted in silence until he finally went with a build up that made some people look away, and gave his best for 20' of the Wrack, (HVS), on Bochelewyd Butress.

Only one more thing to mention, and that was that Paul actually managed to fall off the belay "field" on Avalanche (V.D.); This was a large flat ledge but somehow his great potential as a plummet star showed through to give a nasty gash on his leg.

Well, may you all have many good lobs to keep this page full in future editions!!

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