

EXPEDITIONS

THE 1958 SHERBORNE KULU-SPITI EXPEDITION. The objects were to find a route up the valley above Losar through to the Gyundi and thence to the Bara Shigri, and subsequently to attempt any of the unclimbed peaks 31/52H (20,570 ft.), 48/52H (21,410 ft.), 35/52H (21,760 ft.), and Holmes' Central Peak (20,600 ft.).

The route from Losar to the Gyundi and thence to the Bara Shigri was opened up successfully. The Losar valley involved difficult going for a couple of miles, traversing steep moraine, crossing two considerable side-streams and avoiding a gorge, although it was necessary to keep fairly low throughout. Earlier in the year with continuous snow bridges there would probably have been no difficulty. Once onto the glacier, it was soon established that the route to the col over the Gyundi lay to the left and not on the main continuation.

A reconnaissance beyond this col disclosed that the watercourse below the glacier could not be followed owing to gorges and instead a traverse had to be made over two ridges to the right separated by steep and very loose scree slopes before the way led out to the Gyundi valley, 5,000 ft. below. Happily the gorges in this valley, which had held up the Abinger party travelling from the west and Holmes from the east, lay to the left so that the route to the col overlooking the Bara Shigri was open. A small stone shelter suggested that these gorges were passable earlier in the season and that sheep could be taken through for grazing for a short period.

The bulk of the expedition was then committed to the Gyundi with eight days' food and after carrying on the survey work they found the col to the Bara Shigri. This involved some steep ice work on both sides and was by no means obvious to locate, owing to the number of ridges and valleys at the end of the Gyundi. By the time the col was reached the food had been exhausted, so that it was with some relief that the remainder of the party bringing fresh supplies up the Bara Shigri was sighted immediately below the col.

Unfortunately the total time out from roadhead at Manali had to be cut to five weeks, and also our Indian member, Malhotra, was taken ill early on and had to return. As a result there was little time left for serious climbing. In the remaining two days a camp was established in one of the high hanging valleys over the Bara Shigri with a view to attempting Central Peak, but the guess proved wrong and a peak of slightly under 20,000 ft. was climbed instead, revealing Central Peak in the adjacent valley. Peaks climbed for survey purposes included one

of 20,200 ft. over the Losar-Gyundi col and a couple more of slightly less than 20,000 ft., but not involving much technical difficulty.

We formed the impression that peaks 48 and 35/52H would be really worthwhile problems and also the Abinger 'Schreckhorn' but that 31/52H and Central Peak were straightforward from the south, but the latter looked fearsome from all other directions.

Mr. J. P. O'F. Lynam, who was in charge of the survey, reports that so far as the survey was concerned, 'the object was to fill the gaps in Holmes' map and to solve various problems he had raised'.

From base camp at Losar in the Spiti valley a plane table survey on 1 : 126,720 scale was commenced, working from the Survey of India triangulated stations 16,890 (Ganmo) and 17,244 (Shilatakar). The survey was taken south from Losar into the upper Gyundi valley as far as a peak on the Gyundi-Bara Shigri divide near Holmes' Central Peak. The survey was closed onto peaks 48/52H (21,410 ft.) and 35/52H (21,760 ft.) without appreciable error. Heights were determined by Indian clinometer.

In addition to this, photographic panoramas, using a Super-Ikonta and bubble levelling on a panoramic head, were made from almost all plane table stations and also from several points east of the Kunzum La and south-west of Central Peak. Analysis of these are under way and with some further information from the Gunther and Abinger expeditions it looks as though a fairly complete and accurate map of the whole area west of longitude $77^{\circ} 50'$ will be available later this year.

We have established that peak 31/52G is where Survey of India put it and that Holmes confused it with 20,340 ft., three miles further north. We consider that the Survey of India height of 21,410 ft. for peak 48/52H is too low and estimate the true height at about 21,800 ft., compared with Holmes' figure of 22,500 ft. In general, considering the simple methods used and the area of ground covered, Holmes' map is astonishingly accurate.

J. G. G. STEPHENSON.

EAST AFRICA. There has been a great deal of activity on the Ruwenzori, but I have heard of no new climbs deserving to be reported. However, H. A. Osmaston and A. C. Stuart repeated the North-east ridge of Margherita during 1958 and then spent a day or two ski-ing on the Stanley Plateau. They had with them Tim Bazzarrabusa, an African Member of Legislative Council, who developed considerable proficiency on ski and later climbed Speke for the second time. This is something that gives considerable encouragement for the future, as also does the fact that the number of African schoolboy parties visiting the glaciers continues to increase.

Meanwhile the main track has been improved and a new foot bridge

built across the Mubuku. Hut accommodation has been considerably extended at Lake Bujuku and on Mount Stanley, where there are now two high bivouacs near the fifteen-thousand-foot level. One hut has been built in the Birunga volcanoes and another in the crater of Mount Elgon, to commemorate Dr. Ronald Ladkin (*A.J.* 60. 382). These are the most important activities of the Uganda Mountain Club.

Excellent progress has been made on the Ruwenzori map. The air survey and ground control were finally completed in 1956 and a provisional topographical sheet produced last year, but this lacked mountain detail. After a good deal of discussion, and thanks to an extremely co-operative survey department, arrangements are now in hand for the production of a 1 : 25,000 sheet of the Central Ruwenzori, of a type suitable for mountaineers. The final map will be drawn in London, on thoroughly up-to-date lines. T. D. H. Morris, who with his wife recently completed a full traverse of the Ruwenzori from north to south (skirting the highest peaks), has done a great deal of detailed work on this and was able to add professional skill to an intimate knowledge of the range.

Two International Geophysical Year expeditions from Makerere University College have been studying the movements of the Ruwenzori glaciers. The second of these (June 1958) was marred by the death of W. H. G. Dickins, who contracted pneumonia on Mount Baker. Even so, the work of the expedition continued and arrangements have been made for the regular measurement of certain glaciers in the future.

I managed to get onto the Ruwenzori myself late in 1957 and climbed Alexandra in thick fog with David Pasteur, J. M. Savidge and my nephew David Barber, then under eighteen. Before this, and before David Pasteur had joined us, we nearly got ourselves into serious trouble on Speke. In order to make this rather dull mountain more interesting and to give Savidge (who had never done any climbing of any sort) some practice, I decided to take a new line up the Speke glacier. Thick mist descended and we had had all the practice we needed by the time we had emerged from the crevasses and climbed over the cornice on to the summit ridge, at 4.30 p.m. It only took a few minutes to get to the top (16,080 ft.), where we had the first halt of the day and some food.

To retrace our tracks down the glacier was out of the question; and I thought that I could remember the easy way down (which involves leaving a ridge at exactly the right point) in spite of the pea-soup fog, falling snow and the fact that I had not been there for over eight years. I was wrong, and how many others have been wrong, too, in similar circumstances? In the event darkness caught us huddled together on a tiny platform in the steep ice of what eventually turned out to be part of the morning's glacier. Luck however was with us for the mist

cleared and about two hours later a bright tropical moon rose above the rim of the glacier. Everything froze hard and at last it became possible to move and see. A rather fierce sixty-foot crack in the ice allowed us to leave the platform and so reach the open glacier. We got back to the hut at about 1 a.m.

The Birunga volcanoes have seen a great increase in activity during recent years. The reason for this is a charming little mountain inn, The Traveller's Rest, kept by a German called Walter Baumgartel, at Kisoro, base of Muhavuru (13,547 ft.). Directly from this inn, or perhaps better from a beautifully placed hut at 10,000 ft., one has every chance of seeing the rare mountain gorilla during the course of a day or two's rough walking and scrambling. A new tracking technique has recently been worked out to make this possible. I won't go into this here, but one wonders sometimes if Reuben, the incomparable gorilla guide of the volcanoes, would not be the best person to search out the Abominable Snowman. The volcanoes are of rare beauty and great interest to naturalists. To see the mountain gorilla in its wild natural home is perhaps the greatest thrill the animal world has to offer, and there are plenty of other unusual creatures in these hills. As an indirect result of all this, of course, the three volcanoes, of which the summits are in Uganda territory are now visited much more frequently than they used to be and the Mountain Club is planning another hut in the region.

We have had a visit from our distinguished honorary member, King Leopold, who stayed two nights with us. While talking about the Ruwenzori (which he hopes to go up in 1960 and of which he took a superb air photograph a few years ago) I mentioned the splendid route up the Albert peak of Mt. Stanley made by Jeremy Smith and T. Fletcher in January 1956 (*A.J.* 61. 384). This route was wholly in the Congo Belge.

When I saw Smith and Fletcher after their climb, we discussed the possibility of naming this route after Count Xavier de Grunne, who in fact called attention to its possibilities in 1932 (p. 121 of the *Bulletin du Club Alpine Belge* for Oct.-Dec. 1932). The western slopes of the Ruwenzori are part of the Parc National Albert and it seemed appropriate that I should write to the national park authorities in Brussels. I did this, suggesting that the route be called Arête de Grunne. This produced no reaction and it was not followed up either by me or by either of the two climbers. We should have done better to have written to the Belgian Alpine Club.

I mentioned all this to King Leopold, who was clearly much taken with the idea of calling the North-east ridge of Albert, the Arête de Grunne.

R. M. BERE

MUZTAGH ATA. Eight Chinese women have established a new world altitude record for women climbers. On July 7, 1959, after six days' hard climbing they reached the 7,546 m. peak of Muztagh Ata in the Pamirs, 90 m. higher than the world record set up by Madame Claude Kogan during a Swiss expedition to the Himalayas in 1954.¹

The eight women were 21-year-old Chou Yu-ying, a geological surveyor; 26-year-old Sheirab, a Tibetan worker at a state farm; 21-year-old Phundob, a fellow worker of Sheirab; 21-year-old Chhimed, a Tibetan student; 21-year-old Rabjor, a Tibetan student; 25-year-old Wang Yi-chin, a physician; 21-year-old Wang Kuei-hua, a geological student, and 21-year-old Chung Chen, also a geological student.

Sponsored by the Chinese Mountaineering Association, the expedition included 11 women and 36 men. The eight world-record-breakers reached the top together with 25 of the male climbers.

As early as 1894 Swedish explorer Sven Anders Hedin, after four attempts, reached a height of 6,280 m. above sea level.² Fifty-three years later, E. E. Shipton and H. W. Tilman reached 7,000 m. before they gave up the arduous attempt.³

Muztagh Ata was first climbed in 1956 by a joint Sino-Soviet team of 31 members. Chinese women first took part in mountaineering in August 1958 when four women ascended a 5,215 m. peak in the Chilian Range in North-west China.

Later in September three Chinese women climbed to 6,900 m. as part of a Sino-Soviet group which ascended the 7,127 m. summit of Pik Lenin. In February, 1959, eight women climbed a 6,177 m. peak in the Tangla Range in Tibet.

The party followed the same route as previous expeditions. They spent two weeks in building Base Camp, Camp I, and Camp II at 4,500 m., 5,500 m., and 6,200 m. respectively.

The actual climb began on July 2 when the 47 members set out from the Base. Camp III was built at 6,800 m. and after leaving it, a cameraman, a Tibetan girl and two physicians accompanying the team suffered from dizziness and had to descend accompanied by a climber.

¹ This claim will not pass unchallenged. The Survey of India height of Muztagh Ata is 24,388 ft. In October 1954 Madame Kogan reached on Cho Oyu a height of about 25,300 ft., the lowest figure given for her highest point being 24,770 ft. Even if the Chinese figure for the height of Muztagh Ata (7,546 m. = 24,758 ft.) is accepted, there seems little doubt that Madame Kogan reached a greater height. See *The Mountain World*, 1955, p. 95.

² Sven Hedin estimated that he reached this height on his second attempt. On his fourth and last attempt he camped at the highest point previously reached, but did not proceed farther on account of the strong wind.

³ Shipton and Tilman went considerably higher than 7,000 m. (22,966 ft.). They certainly reached over 24,000 ft. and in Shipton's opinion 'can have been only a very few feet' below the highest point when they turned back. *A.J.* 56. 326.

By the time they reached 7,200 m. and built their fourth and last camp, another four members had to descend accompanied by two climbers, reducing the party to 36.

The climbers set out on the last 346 m. stretch from Camp IV at 11.15 a.m. on July 7. A rest was necessary after every ten minutes. Even the strongest had to pause twenty times to rest before they completed the last 150 m.

At the 7,500 m. mark, only 46 m. under the summit, deputy leader Yuan Yang suffered from the rarity of air and she too descended on doctor's orders accompanied by two climbers. This left 33 members who finally reached the top.

The first group reached the summit at 6.20 p.m. Peking time. The temperature was 22° C. below zero on the summit. As a metal box containing details of the ascent was buried under a cairn, Chung Chen lifted high the national flag. A newsreel was shot by Shih Chan-chun, as the two cameramen who had been with them were unable to reach the top due to high-altitude dizziness.

CHI YEN-LANG.

CENTRAL CAUCASUS. A French party made a number of fine climbs this summer.⁴

JANGI TAU, North buttress (Schwarzgruber rib). July 21 and 22. S. Feigelson and P. Habran, with Pierre Julien.

Bivouac on ascent at 2 p.m. (storm). Starting from and returning to the Austrian bivouac site on the right bank of the upper plateau of the Bezingi glacier; 13 hours climbing. (This route was climbed in 1935 by an Austrian party, *A. J.* 48. 111; A. Blackshaw, Sir John Hunt, R. Jones and C. Brasher made the second ascent of the rib in 1958, but did not proceed to the summit of the mountain, *A. J.* 63. 247 and 64. 70.)

SHKARA, North buttress. July 21-23. P. Girod, P. Puiseux, J. Ravier. Starting from and returning to the Austrian bivouac site. Two bivouacs on ascent, one on the descent by the East ridge; 20 hours climbing.

This was the fourth ascent of the buttress, first climbed in 1930 by W. Müller and H. Tomaschek. The second ascent was by a Russian party led by V. Abalakov, the third by G. Band, D. C. Bull, M. J. Harris and Kutsovski, in July 1958, *A. J.* 63. 247.

DYCH TAU, by the left-hand of the two South buttresses. August 3. L. Bérardini, A. Billet, S. Feigelson, P. Girod, P. Habran, P. Julien,

⁴ We publish in this number a sketch map of the Bezingi basin by John Neill, which will help readers to get their bearings in connection with these notes and those which appeared in our two previous numbers.

P. Puiseux, J. Ravier, R. Salson, J. Soubis. From a bivouac at the foot of the spur, 9 hours 15 minutes from attack to summit. Descent by North ridge.

This was the third ascent, the first having been made by a Polish party early in the summer, repeated by a Russian party. With many pitches of V and two of VI, this is thought to be the most difficult rock climb in the Caucasus. (The buttress is shown in the photograph, *A. J.* 64. 68; the right-hand buttress was first climbed by M. J. Harris and George Band in July 1958, *A. J.* 63. 247 and 64. 66.)

MISHIRGI TAU, South buttress. July 21-23. L. Bérardini, A. Billet, R. Salson. Starting from and returning to the Austrian bivouac site. Two bivouacs, one up, one down.

KOSHTAN TAU, North ridge. July 28. S. Feigelson, P. Girod P. Habran, P. Julien, J. Ravier, R. Salson, J. Soubis. Approach march by the extremely broken Mishirgi glacier on July 26 and 27. Left second bivouac at 5.30, summit 12.50, return 6.30.

BERNARD PIERRE.

PERUVIAN ANDES. The S.A.C. Expedition has made first ascents of seventeen peaks over 5,000 m. E. Reiss and E. Haltiner made the second ascent of Pumasillo on June 7, involving arduous and dangerous ice-climbing; S. Abderhalden and F. Anderrüthi repeated the climb on the following day. Another group, C. Asper, M. Bron and Habersaat climbed Nevado Camballa on June 7th after six hours of ice-cutting; they describe the route as the most difficult they have ever achieved. This climb was repeated on the morrow by R. Schatz, Frommenweiler and Steiger.

KANJUT SAR, KARAKORUM. Camille Péliissier, a Valtournanche guide, reached the summit of Kanjut Sar on July 19. The expedition, organised by the Milan section of the C.A.I., met with many difficulties from porters and weather.

ALPINE CLUB MEET. A combined meet with the Climber's Club took place at La Bérarde from August 17 to 29. The following members were present for all or part of the time: Commander C. J. W. Simpson, A.C., C.C., J. M. K. Vyvyan, A.C., C.C., A. T. Griffiths, C.C., H. K. Goodger, C.C., D. St. J. R. Wagstaff, C.C., Dr. C. B. M. Warren, A.C., C.C., Carl Nater, A.C., 2/Lt. R. Langford, C.C., T. A. H. Peacocke, A.C., C.C., Major E. H. Marriott, A.C. C.C., Dr. Roland Rodda, N.Z.A.C., Iain Ogilvie, A.C., Captain N. J. Monk, C.C., and two non-members, C. A. Park and C. Gorrie.

The weather, which had been brilliantly fine before the party arrived, deteriorated after the first two days and the fifth, sixth and seventh days were bad, with continuous rain setting in on the fifth day. In the second week the weather improved steadily and there were two brilliantly fine days, but the big peaks—Meije, Ecrins and Ailefroide—had been heavily plastered and were out of condition. This considerably restricted the scale of operations. The following climbs were accomplished: Pic Nord des Cavales (2 parties), Tête de la Gandolière, Les Bans (2 parties), Pic Coolidge (2 parties), Aig. Dibona (5 parties—one by the south ridge), Aig. Centrale du Soreiller, Aig. Orientale du Soreiller, Pte. du Vallon des Etages from La Bérarde with descent to La Lavey, north peak of Aig. d'Arves and Grande Ruine.

La Bérarde itself is not now an attractive place, but the surrounding huts are very well equipped and many of them are provisioned. The climbing is quite first-class and when the big peaks are out of condition the lower peaks offer very fine climbing of all shades of difficulty. Unfortunately the area is very popular with the French younger generation and for this reason the huts tend to be crowded in the first three weeks of August. For those who require hotel accommodation the best hotel is the Hôtel des Glaciers, run by the famous guide Casimir Rodier, but there are very few bedrooms. The Maison des Campeurs (opposite) offers simple and quite cheap bedrooms and also has a 'dortoir'.

T. A. H. PEACOCKE.

RASSEMBLEMENT INTERNATIONAL OF THE ÉCOLE NATIONALE. R. J. Wathen and M. Gravina were the guests of the C. A. F. at the Rassemblement International of the École Nationale at Chamonix in July. They did the South-west face of the Aiguille Mummery, Aiguille de l'M, Géant, Tour Ronde and the traverse of Mont Blanc from the Torino to Chamonix via the Frontier Ridge. They particularly wish to record their gratitude to the École and the C.A.F.

A FIRST SEASON IN THE ALPS. Apart from climbs done with Wilfrid Noyce, mentioned elsewhere in these notes, C. J. Mortlock did the East face of the Grand Capucin (July 18-19) and the North ridge of the Aiguille du Peigne (July 27), both with Peter Hutchinson (O.U.M.C.). On the Brown-Whillans route on the Blaitière they were forced to retreat by bad weather after surmounting the crux (the fissure Brown).

AIGUILLE DE BLAITIÈRE: West face, Brown-Whillans route. July. Joe Smith, D. Metcalfe. Near the summit Metcalfe fell 30 m. but was not seriously injured even after two nights out in heavy snowstorms. Smith made a solo descent in rappels to get help.

BERGELL AND DAUPHINÉ. July, August, 1959. In the Bergell, the party was Mr. and Mrs. R. Fedden and John Rampton, with a guide added for Piz Badile. In the Dauphiné, the party was Mr. and Mrs. R. Fedden; Mrs. Janet Roberts joined them for the Arête de la Bruyère.

Bergell

From the Forno Hut:

July 13. *Monte Rosso* (3,088 m.) by the North ridge, with the Kluckerzahn.

‘Percorso veramente intersessante’, as the Italian guide-book has it, and the best route on the mountain. The extended ridge from the anti-summit clean and exposed; the treat, or the worry, an aery slab, possibly just ‘IV’.

July 16. *Monte Sissone* (3,330 m.) and *Cima di Rosso* (3,366 m.) by the ordinary routes. Bad weather.

Montagnes à vache by these routes, but the Sissone is a wonderful belvedere.

July 17. *Piz Bacone* (3,243 m.) by the North ridge.

‘Interessante arrampicata, piuttosto dura’: agreeable, but in fact less interesting and less difficult than the Monte Rosso North ridge. Usually combined with the Cima del Largo. The serrated South-west ridge, taken from the Albigna Hut, is clearly the best route on this mountain.

July 18. *Lo Scalino* (3,164 m.), North ridge and traverse.

This discreet summit north of the Cima di Cantone gives lyric climbing and seems seldom done. The North ridge is razor sharp, the exposure constant, yet on superb rock the traverse is never more than the guide book’s ‘alquanto difficile’.

From the Rifugio Pontin (reached from the Forno Hut by traverse of Monte Sissone and the Bochetta di Roma):

July 20. *Monte Disgrazia* (3,676 m.), by Cresta di Pioda and descent by Via Baroni.

A beautiful mountain and a pleasant mixed route without difficulties (that of Leslie Stephen’s first ascent). The Via Baroni is loose, indeterminate, and unrewarding.

From the Sciora Hut:

July 25. *Piz Badile* (3,308 m.), by the North ridge, with descent to the Capanna Badile.

One is advised to make the climb from the closer shepherd huts at Sass Fura. Questionable advice, as one misses a comfortable night at the Sciora Hut. The North ridge is splendid, all its eight hundred metres of solid granite, and the climb a memorable

experience. The length for the moderate climber constitutes the problem. There is little respite and the fine situations follow ineluctably. But it is not otherwise a difficult expedition on the *right* route. The slab passages of 'IV' are not intrinsically hard, and a single 'IV Superior' is well protected. Early parties did not always take the right route, hence the serious reputation that the climb once enjoyed. The way off the mountain is not easy to find.

Dauphiné

August 3. *Brèche de la Meije* (3,358 m.) from La Grave, and descent to Promontoire Hut.

August 4. *Meije* (Grand Pic 3,982 m., Pic Central 3,974 m.), traversed with descent to Aigle Hut.

August 7. *Arête de la Bruyère*, traversed west to east.

Approached from Pont de l'Alpe. A climb first explored in the thirties; a resource and a delight when the big peaks are out of condition. Good rock, exposure, a difficult and amusing start, with routes later to suit all tastes.

A Note on the Bergell.

The summer saw a British ascent of the North-east face of the Piz Badile, but the area unaccountably is little visited by British mountaineers. In the last three years half-a-dozen names in the register at the Forno hut, and a bare dozen at the Sciora. Yet the attractions of the Bergell are notable: dramatic mountains; unimpeachable granite, offering every degree of difficulty; relatively few climbers (a happy contrast to the adjacent Bernina); unusually comfortable Swiss and Italian huts, guarded and providing more than adequate food; in bad weather the Capuan delights of St. Moritz near by.

The Swiss side of the Bergell, with its three valleys and three huts, is the more rewarding. The best point to start a holiday is the Forno hut above Maloja; from the Sciora hut the climbs tend to be more difficult; vast electrical works, silencing the longest waterfall in Europe, temporarily make the valley leading to the Albigna hut more interesting than attractive. There are two guide-books to the region, a German and an Italian (the latter by Count Aldo Bonacossa is the more complete), and both are out of print.

R. FEDDEN.

CHAMONIX. As a first climb, on July 19, we chose a T.D. route, the South-west ridge of the Aiguille du Fou. Somewhat untrained, we took 7 hours to get to the Col du Fou by the very interesting route which crosses the North-west ridge of the Blaitière and proceeds along

the *vires Fontaine* across the West face of the Blaitière. The actual ascent of the ridge took $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours and gave some very fine rock-climbing, but after the long approach march, we found it strenuous and tiring. The descent, past the Ciseaux to Blaitière and the Bregeault ridge, was as interesting as the ascent, covering much ground again.

On July 21 we traversed Les Droites, taking nearly $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours to the East summit, then 2 hours 35 minutes for the traverse to the West summit. This traverse was truly remarkable for its narrow pinnacles which gave ideal situations for photography. It was thought to be the most beautiful climb ever done by the other members of the party. The descent of the couloir just below the Signal Vallot gendarme, was made hazardous by soft snow on ice.

The third climb was a traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable.

After a day of waiting at the Torino hut in thundery weather, we left for the Aiguilles du Diable on August 27, 1959. It was 3 a.m. and the weather looked reasonably promising, provided we were not too slow on the climb. Our object was to traverse the Aiguilles du Diable ridge of Mont Blanc du Tacul, descend from the summit of that peak to the Vallée Blanche, and then walk back to the Torino with a view to doing another climb. It was the latter part of the expedition which was the most gruelling.

We roped up in two parties of two. To get onto the Arête du Diable we chose the normal route up the south-west side of the ridge, which meant walking into the circle of the upper Glacier du Géant, below the Col Maudit. Everywhere we saw overhanging lips of open rimayes, until at last one not so bad tempted us to attack. It meant step-cutting in hard steep ice to reach the overhang, but whilst starting this, a party of four Swiss climbers overtook us to try further along. Near by, and almost under the Col du Diable, they found a weakness. With a companion pushing him against the slight overhang, one climber stabbed in two ice-axes and with another push from behind, strenuously arrived on the upper snow slope. Realising that I would have to tackle my overhang unaided, from a stance on very steep ice, I rapidly transferred my party to the scene of the more successful operation. It was now much lighter and we realised that we should have delayed our start by half an hour, to arrive at the rimaye in daylight.

Our Swiss friends kindly offered a rope from above, and since it was firmly tied to an ice-axe belay, we simply grasped it and pulled ourselves over the rimaye lip, hand over hand. Once gathered on the snow slope we waited for the Swiss to move off, and then we also crossed to the loose rocks. At first we traversed diagonally upwards to the right, to avoid steep ground above, moving on mixed rock and frozen snow. After a while we moved more to the left until steep rock took us to a pinnacle overlooking the Col du Diable. This was a great moment,

for from here the climbing becomes more interesting, whilst on the far side of the col, foreground rocks led up to the first of the Aiguilles du Diable, the Corne du Diable, standing proud in its magnificent rock symmetry, with the richness of its colours shining in the early morning sun.

The passage of the ice ridge which formed the Col du Diable, required care, as little snow was adhering to the ice. As we commenced the passage, the Swiss climbers moved off from their breakfast place below the Corne du Diable. Having achieved the ledges where the others had paused to eat, one of our party disgraced himself by removing his rucksack before his axe which had been loosely pushed between the straps after traversing the Col. He watched the axe clatter down to disappear into the couloir below the Col du Diable. Worse still, the last man of our second rope saw it stick in the snow of the couloir, and so we had to wait whilst the owner descended nearly three hundred feet to regain his property. We could well have managed without it, but he refused to leave it sticking in the snow as a warning to others. After a lengthy rest whilst the axe-man recovered his composure, we moved off, turning the Corne du Diable to the south to arrive easily at the Brèche Chaubert between the Corne and the Pointe Chaubert. Here the more difficult rock-climbing commences.

The ascent of the Pointe Chaubert started with a rib with small holds, but soon improved. From the summit of the Chaubert we endured three rappels down a snowed-up face to reach the Brèche Médiane, from where we moved across to the base of the Pointe Médiane. The Médiane gave delightful rock-climbing up a great open chimney; whilst we were pleased to find some magnificent platforms near the summit, bathed in sunshine. The clouds were gathering, however, and so we quickly made for a sort of tunnel beneath the summit. From the exit we did a rappel of 30 m. direct to the Brèche Carmen, down very steep rock. The Pointe Carmen was reached with difficulty, using snow-plastered cracks and hand-holds. Two or three pitons in place were very welcome as holds for frozen fingers, as after waiting in a snow-hole at the Brèche, the first two to rappel down became rather chilled. Between the two summits of the Pointe Carmen there was another fine platform, and from it we prepared to do another two rappels to the Brèche du Diable. These involved the descent of very wintry-looking rocks, the ledges being loaded with powdery snow.

By this time clouds obscured the sun completely, but we felt we still had time to climb the Isolée, although this impressive and apparently unclimbable point stands to one side and one can easily walk past it. The Isolée gave the hardest pitch of all, as expected, but once above this pitch there was surprisingly easy yet delightful scrambling to the summit. A quick rappel down the difficult section took us back to our

rucksacks, and after a pause to eat we set off through the mist along broken rocks towards the East summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul. Another stop for food in the shelter of the East summit rocks, and we moved along the snow ridge to the West summit which we reached in a bitter snow-filled wind at 3 p.m.

Although two of us had descended in similar conditions from the same summit some years previously without difficulty, we were glad of the tracks of the Swiss party, as these speeded our descent. In fact barely any trace remained on the ridge, but once on the great slope leading to the Vallée Blanche, a trail of footsteps led down through the immense crevasses and séracs.

Once in the Vallée Blanche we found the snow of such a texture as to almost support the weight, only to let us through to a depth of about fifteen inches. This went on until we reached the regular track from the Aiguille du Midi, and was largely responsible for our tired arrival at the Torino hut at 6 p.m. By this time the clouds had dispersed except on the high peaks.

The party for these climbs was R. Handley, D. Burgess, D. Chapman and myself. Continued bad weather suggested an early return to England.

R. L. B. COLLEDGE.

DACHL (GESÄUSE), North face, diagonal crack. First ascent. June 9-11, 1955, L. Scheiblehner, K. Gollmeyer. This crack had often been attacked unsuccessfully; it is of great and unremitting difficulty, involving many considerable overhangs; the 60 m. of the upper part overhang throughout. This remarkable climb appears not to have been reported until the appearance of the May/June number of the *Oesterreichische Alpenzeitung* this year.

NORTH FACE OF DENT D'HÉRENS. Welzenbach Route. August 5, 1959. J. R. Sadler, W. Noyce, C. J. Mortlock. This was the first (only?) ascent of this year, and conditions were remarkable. The party left the Schönbühl at 2 a.m. and found the rocks below the ice-walls easy though loose. The ice-walls leading to the terrace (crossed by the Finch route) took $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours and required a number of pegs. The most problematical was the last wall. Where it had previously been possible to walk round to the right on to the terrace, a huge gap has appeared, narrowing at just one point below an overhanging 20 ft. ice-wall. This wall was led, with pegs and loops, by Colin Mortlock.

The terrace was reached at 2 p.m. and the upper face attacked. The angle varies, starting steeply at 60 degrees, then easing to 45, then steepening again. Conditions were not good, since in the upper part rocks appear, there was not enough snow to cover them and allow protection whether by axe or peg. After climbing straight up on the snow

while it existed, the party bore right and reached the ridge rather to the right of the summit at 8 p.m., 18 hours from the hut. Bivouac on the ordinary way down.

Later in the month a Polish party reached the terrace, but then found impossible conditions on the upper face.

W. NOYCE.

DOLOMITES. After the Walker Spur, noted elsewhere, D. Whillans moved to the Dolomites. On the Tre Cime, with Joe Smith he did the Spigolo Giallo (August 6), and the North face of Cima Ovest, Cassin route (August 8), as well as the Pilastro di Rozes, Tofana (August 13). With S. Read, he climbed the South pillar of the Marmolada (August 20); on the Civetta, with R. Black the South wall of Torre Venezia (August 24), and with W. Phillip the Cima de Terranova (August 25); and in the Karwendel, the North wall of the Laliderer by the direct route with S. Read (September 9th).

DREI ZINNE and others.

Aiguille de Blaitière, South-east ridge, August 7. C. J. S. B. and J. E. Horton.

Punta di Frida, South face, Comici route. August 14. Gunn Clark, C. J. S. B., J. E. Horton.

Cima Piccolissima, Preuss Riss. August 16. Gunn Clark and C. J. S. B.

Cima Grande, North face, Comici route. August 17. In a snow storm, 14 hours, bivouac at top. C. J. S. B. and Gunn Clark.

Cima Grande, North face direct. August 21-23. 16th ascent.⁵ 21 hours of climbing. The climb is completely pegged but already two expansion bolts have broken off, and they are all rusting badly. Many of the pitons are working loose. A fine route with some good free climbing as well as hard artificial. C. J. S. B. and Gunn Clark.

Cima Ovest, North face, Cassin route. August 26. 9 hours. C. J. S. B. and Gunn Clark.

Cima Piccola, South-west face of Anticima Sud (Toni Egger, 1955). August 28. 4th ascent. Party took 6 hours, but traversed off 200 ft. below summit owing to thunderstorm. Free climbing nearly all the way on decidedly loose rock. C. J. S. B. and M. Thompson.

C. J. S. BONINGTON.

EIGER, NORDWAND. August 10-13. Fourteenth ascent by two Swiss climbers Adolf Derungs and Lukas Albrecht.

⁵ By the end of August, at least 18 ascents had been made. Most of the ascents this year were by Austrian or German parties, but a Belgian, C. Barbier, was on the 9th and a Spaniard, J. Anglada, on the 11th. E. Hofmann and O. Reuzz made the ascent in one day.

GRAND CAPUCIN, East face. June 23-25. Gino Buscaini, alone.

GRAND PIC D'OSSAU, South buttress. First ascent. July 5 and 6. P. de Bellefond, R. Despiaud, B. Grenier, J. Ravier. 250 m., E.D., 60 pitons and wooden wedges, good rock.

GRANDES JORASSES, North face, Walker Buttress. July 21-22, Robin Smith and Gunn Clark; Stanislas Biel and Lechoslaw Utracki. July 22-23, D. Whillans, L. Brown; J. Streetly, H. MacInnes. Biel and Utracki are a Polish pair who were attending the Rassemblement at the Ecole Nationale; two other parties, one Austrian and one Czech, also made the ascent on July 22-23 on which days there were six parties of two on the climb.

ITALIAN GRAIANS, July. Peter Lloyd, Alan Pullinger and F. H. Keenlyside recorded a number of failures appropriate to middle age, but managed to ascend the North ridge of the Grivola from the Alpe Gran Nomenon and the South ridge of the Herbetet from the Sberna refuge, which is very conveniently close to the Col Bonney.

JARDIN DU ROY (VERCORS), North-east pillar. May 16-17 and 31. First ascent, achieved in two sections. First part, G. and Mme. Livanos, R. Lepage, M. Vaucher; second part, R. Lepage, G. Livanos, M. Vaucher. 400 m., E.D., 120 pitons.

LYSKAMM, West Summit, North-east face. Route 107.⁶ August 11, 1959. J. R. Sadler and W. Noyce (leading through). One of the more amenable north faces. The line keeps just to the left of a very obvious straight rock edge slanting from left to right up towards the West summit. The angle maintains itself at a steady 50-55 degrees until, near the top, what the guide-book describes as a 'cluster of séracs' is reached. To get through these one must traverse delicately on ice below them to the left, but when that is accomplished a cunning way opens up between these monsters and leads without difficulty on to the ridge near the West summit.

From here it is easiest to traverse the main summit and on down the East ridge. Time from the Monte Rosa hut and back: 13 hours.

W. NOYCE.

MATTERHORN, Furggen ridge direct. August 8, 1959. C. J. Mortlock, W. Noyce. The party left a bivouac near the Hörnli at 2.55 a.m., crossed under the face and reached the foot of the ridge at

⁶ This route was first followed by E. R. Blanchet with Kaspar Mooser and Josef Aufdenblatten, August 5, 1927. See *A. J.* 39.314.

4.15 a.m. A chimney and slabs call for moving one at a time to begin with, but after that one is virtually on the East face and can move fast as far as the Shoulder, reached at 7.25 a.m. One moves particularly fast to cross a couloir just below the shoulder, where there is a slight, but so far as we could see not great, danger from stonefall.

From Shoulder to summit took five hours. The ordinary route bears left, on to the Italian face. The direct route goes straight up, using at first a line of chimneys. These give out, and the face above is climbed by a series of moves to the left on doubtful rock, steep and exposed. This was the crux, and we found two pegs which made one of the leftward moves a pendulum. The operation lands one on a broad ledge under the fierce-looking overhangs of the upper face.

From the ledge the route keeps just left of the main overhangs, and the climbing continues to be strenuous and delicate in turn for a long way, mainly up cracks and chimneys which sometimes held verglas. It eases out on to the final ridge, which landed us on the summit at 12.50 p.m.

First British ascent of the direct route.

W. NOYCE.

MONT BLANC, Brouillard ridge. July 4-5. Walter Bonatti and Andrea Oggioni have effected a new variation. They did not follow the ridge from Col Emil Rey but climbed the steep cliff above the upper Brouillard Glacier to the ridge of Pic Luigi Amedeo.

MONT MAUDIT, Brenva face direct. August 6 and 7. First ascent. W. Bonatti, R. Gaglieni, A. Oggioni.

MONTE ROSA : SIGNALKUPPE, North-east face. August 15, 16, 1959. W. Noyce, J. R. Sadler, C. J. Mortlock. First British ascent.

A long climb, since the route starts on the glacier just beyond the Zamboni Hut (6,970 ft.) and ends directly on the Signalkuppe (14,965 ft.).

In order to avoid the dangers of avalanche prophesied by the guide-book in the lower section, we started at 2.45 p.m. on the 15th from the Zamboni and climbed the lower glaciers in the late afternoon. There were some complications but these did not appear dangerous at that time. We bivouacked (8 p.m.) in a thoroughly safe place on the lowest rocks of the great 'Promontoire' of the Signalkuppe, the most striking feature of the face. About 10,800 feet.

On the 16th we started at 3.15 a.m. and continued to work up the glacier alongside the Promontoire rocks until these became easier and it was possible to strike up left across them, to reach the huge gangway-cum-couloir which descends from directly below the summit.

This became very icy after a time, and after some step-cutting we escaped to rocks on the right. We kept to these rocks, snow-covered but amenable, till shortly below the summit ridge, always just to the right of the ice, which higher up narrowed into a deep gully, repugnant under these conditions. The day was fine, but near the top a brisk wind blew down bucketfuls of fresh powder snow, slowing us down.

The crest is guarded by a line of enormous sérac. By moving to the right on steepish ice we could cut delicately round at the one point at which the sérac formed a rather less fiercely angled nose. This led directly to the summit plateau and a short trudge to the Margherita hut, reached at 3.30 p.m.

Certainly a great route : the nicest line up the biggest face in the Alps. Its reputation for danger seemed to us a good deal exaggerated.

W. NOYCE.

PIZ BADILE, North-east face. July. Joe Smith and D. Metcalfe.⁷

PYRAMIDE DU TACUL, North-east face. August 28. First ascent. Mme. Dudognon, M. J. Martin with Maurice Lenoir. 250 m. D. One pitch V and one AI.

ROCHERS DU PARQUET, East face, super-direct. The first half was done in 1953 by MM. Coupé and Puissant. In 1956 MM. Coupé and Couzy avoided the final bastion. In the spring of this year, G. Livanos and R. Lepage provided a direct finish. The climb is of 200 m. mostly on excellent rock; E.D., *limite inférieure*.

⁷ It was suggested in some quarters that this climb was the first ascent by a British party. This is not so ; it was done in August, 1955, Alan Blackshaw and G. Sutton, R. O. Downes and E. D. G. Langmuir (*A.J.* 61. 385). The first ascent by a member took place August 27-29, 1948, when Bernard Pierre with Gaston Rébuffat made the second ascent.