# NOTES ON CLIMBING IN THE BRITISH ISLES[1]

By A. J. J. MOULAM

(*Four illustrations: nos. 43-46*)

## NORTH WALES (1961–64)

A NEW era of Welsh climbing was ushered in on September 2, 1961, by the completion of the *Pinnacle Girdle* on Clogwyn du'r Arddu. It had taken three days, was a 'last great problem' which had been attempted by several competent parties, and the conquerors were young and unknown. Naturally enough, here were seeds for controversy, and the methods and amount of aid used were criticised strongly. Nevertheless the climb was not repeated until 1963 by Austin and Metcalf, in six hours, but Soper and Crew were vindicated as to the number of pegs used and by the route itself, which remains one of the longest continuously difficult routes in the country.

*Serth* set the seal on the arrival of the new generation about a month later, on October 7; an epic ascent by Crew and Ingle on a cold, wet day. As the end of the year drew near, activity transferred to the low, warm cliffs of Tremadoc; and *Plumb*, *Alkatraz* and *Holloway* appeared. *Lavaredo*, on Carreg Alltrem, was climbed many times, and began to acquire its well deserved reputation amongst minor climbs.

The weather was extremely good at Easter, 1962, and the new season saw great efforts on 'Cloggy'. The psychological barrier of *Slanting Slab* was passed with its third ascent by Crew. It even had two ascents in one day, by Soper and Webb, and Boysen and White, and routes such as *Mostest*, *White Slab* and *Shrike* (which until now had a high reputation) were becoming commonplace, with many ascents by the Alpha Club and others. Crew and Ingle, and Ingle and Boysen, added *Shadow* and *Daurigol* on April 27 and 28, with *Haemagoblin* on May 2. This was only the second time in two years that the line had been dry, and the drought conditions had made all this activity

[1] 'British Notes' last appeared in the *Journal* three years ago (*A.J.* 67. 172). The task of compiling the present Notes has been immensely helped by the cooperation of P. Crew, J. A. Austin, L. J. Griffin, Eric Byne, Paul Nunn and C. S. Tilley. The Irish section is modified from accounts in *Climbers' Club Journals* and the *C.C. Bulletin*, 1964, originally written by Sean Rothery.—A.J.J.M.

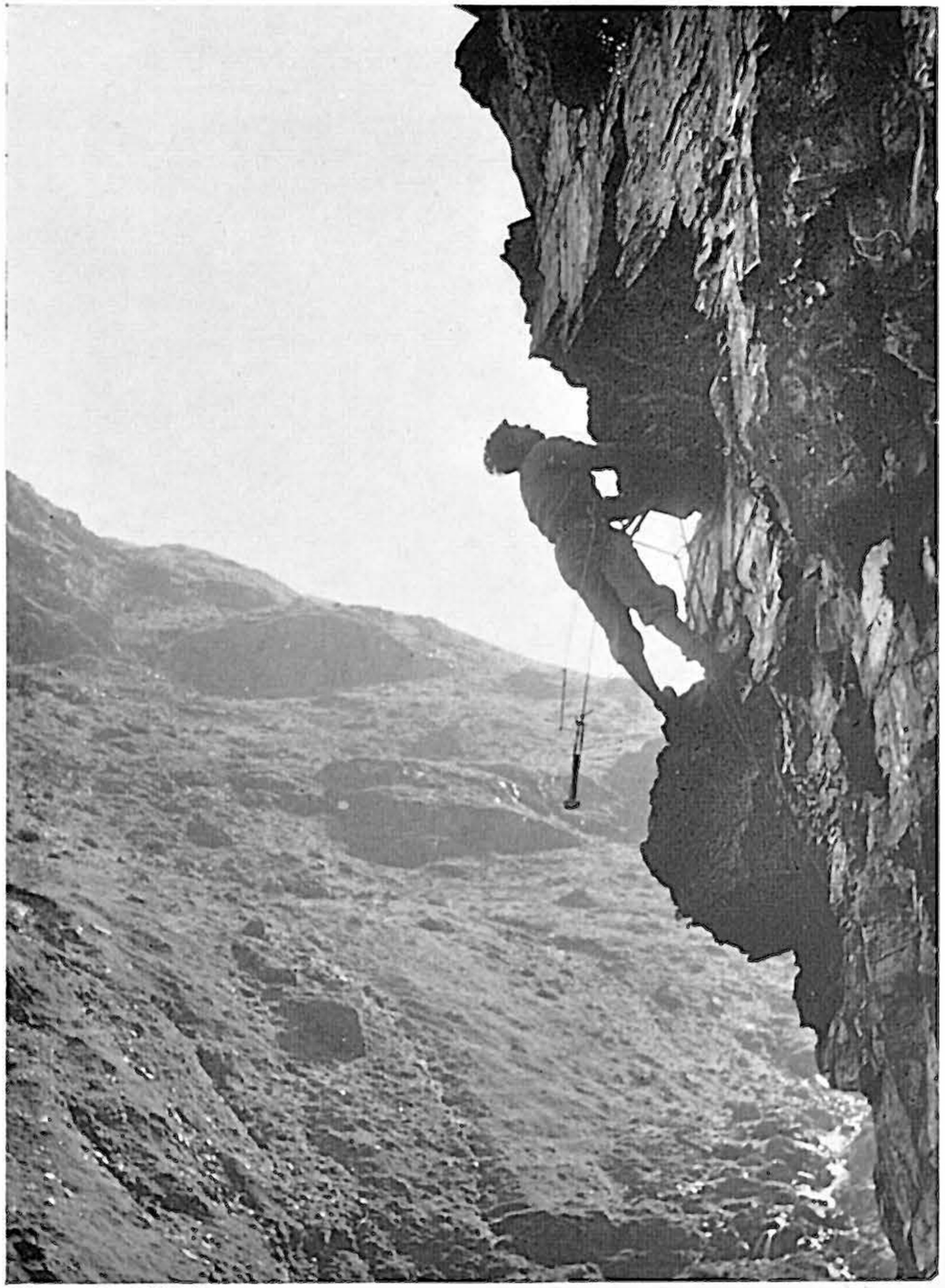


*Photo: E. Siddall*]

J. BROWN LEADING THE FIRST ASCENT OF TRAMGO (CASTELL CIDWM).

**(No. 43)**

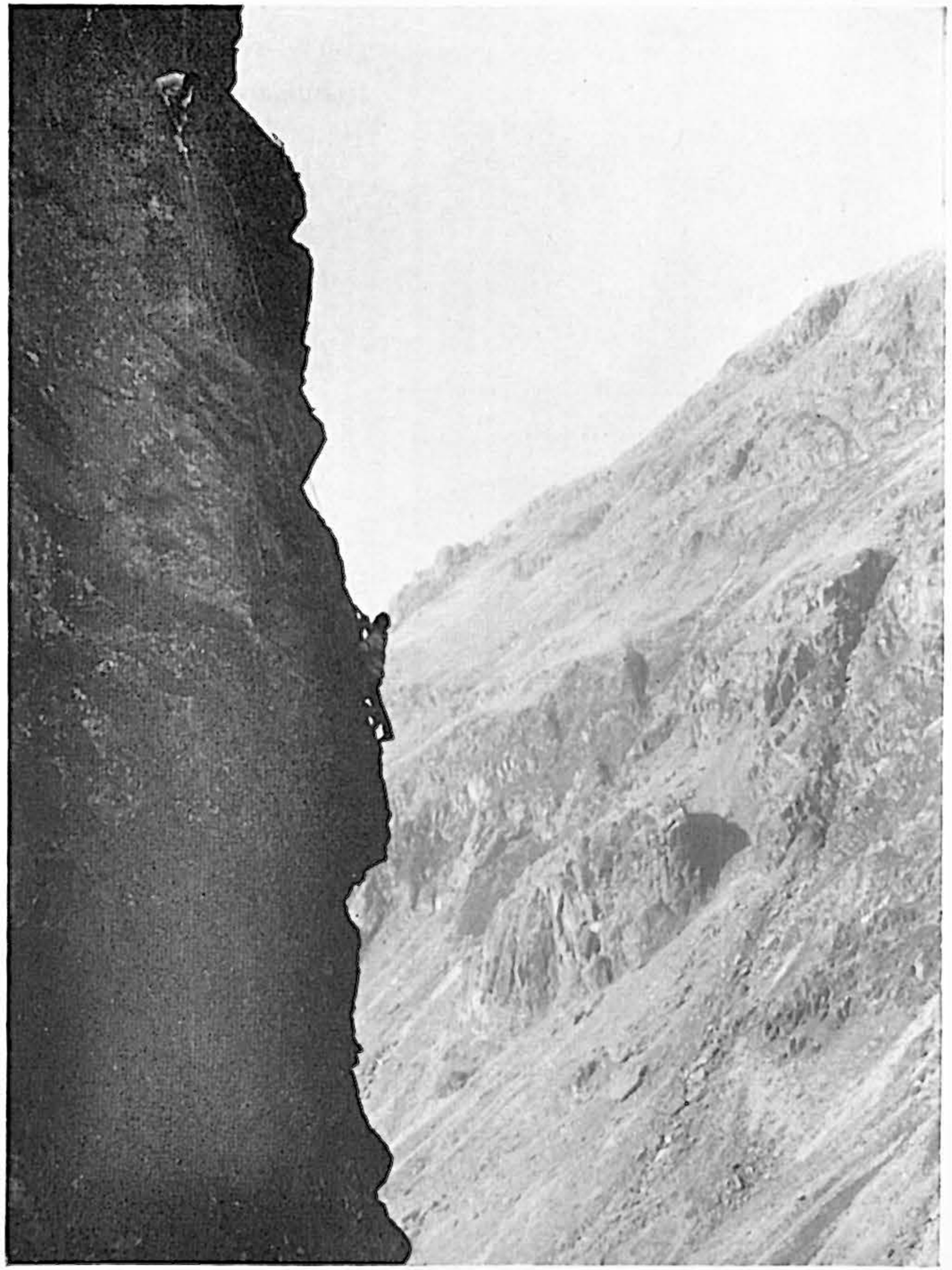


*Photo: K. Wilson*]

A RECENT NEW ROUTE ON THE EAST WING OF DINAS MOT.

**(No. 44)**

possible. The preoccupation with one cliff was the result of guide-book priorities, and Crew was about to upset the establishment again.

The *Great Wall* was climbed on May 2—but the cliff was treated like an outcrop! The crack was cleaned and chockstones inserted by abseiling (as at least two more pegs would have been needed otherwise). In the event two 300 ft. ropes and one of 150 ft. were used, and thirty-six slings and karabiners. J. Brown had attacked the wall several times, and opinions varied, some saying it was a great step forward in technique, others that it ought to have been left until there *was* a great step forward in technique. Of course *November*, five years earlier, had been climbed by a similar subterfuge, but everyone seemed to have forgotten that! Information anyway was vague, and the second ascent was done later that summer by Yates who abseiled and fitted slings to the chocks, which is how he thought the first ascent had been accomplished.

The manuscript for the guide was complete, but *Naddyn Ddu*, *West Buttress Eliminate*, *Gael*, *Pinnacle Arête* and *Croak* were contributed in June and July, in time for the appendix and a place in the list of first ascents.

Elsewhere *Ancient's Wall*, a hard but minor contribution by Banner and C. T. Jones on Craig-yr-Ysfa, *Bochlwyd Eliminate* and *Epitaph* on Dinas y Gromlech, led by R. James, were found. The latter is the arête between *Sabre Cut* and *Cenotaph* and is repeated regularly; it is assessed as a little harder than *Cemetery Gates*. Anyway Cloggy was getting exhausted of 'reasonable' new routes, and the search turned to the wings of Dinas Mot. On the East J. Brown, as long ago as April, 1961, had shown the way with *Mole*, and now *Plexus*, hard VS and perhaps one of the best routes in the pass, was dug out of the grass of the largest buttress of the West Wing. *Crosstie*, Banner's counter-Diagonal on the Nose, was repeated by Nunn and Austin, and found good and hard. *Trauma Grooves*, a fine line by *Main Wall* on Cyrn Las and one of the most spectacular routes in Wales, and *Tramgo*, by Brown and Bonington, on Castell Cidwm complete the list of notable doings in the period, but there was an unusual crop of fillers-in at Tremadoc. This year, the best were *Scratch Arête*, *Meschach* and *Y Broga*.

The winter was exceptionally good. Ingle and Boysen did the first winter ascent of *Waterfall Climb* on Craig y Rhaeadr in four hours. From the top of the pedestal a groove in the left-hand icicle was followed until a traverse right could be cut across the right-hand one, and the snowy rocks on the right were followed to the top. The climb was repeated by two parties, who found this section much harder, as the snow had consolidated. The greatest exploit was the three-day siege of *Black Cleft* by Boysen and Ingle. An ice-boss of 30 ft. diameter

tapered up to the overhang 150 ft. above. Rock and snow-covered slabs led to the top, and only eleven hours were spent actually climbing; and so 'presumably a fit, fast party could do it in one go'.

Easter, 1963, was poor, but Whitsun saw the third and fourth ascents of *November* by Crew and by Swallow and Nunn. Cwm Silin was receiving attention from Ingle and Wilson, who first made rather a poor route up the corner right of the Great Slab, *Kirkus' Climb Direct*. The welcome free ascent of *Briggs' Climb* was followed by what is perhaps Ingle's best route to date, *The Crucible*. It is similar in style and difficulty to *Vector*, but on a much more impressive and serious crag. For the record, some less significant routes had been done in the cwm at the end of 1962, amongst them *Sideline*, *Tower of Strength* and *Flintstone Rib*.

Llanberis South was now receiving the tooth-comb attention of the guide-book writer. The *Great Buttress* of Cyrn Las fell to Ingle and Crew. Next, *Nexus* (to the right of *Plexus*) was made by Boysen and Nunn, and the varied weft of *Tremolite* wove its way up the unsatisfactory looking West Wing of Dinas Mot to provide a superb route for Crew and Ingle. Barry Webb was quietly working out routes on the East Wing, and *Gollum* and *Beorn* give two very hard climbs in fine position.

After the Alps the weather was generally poor. T.V. cameras were suspended in various places on Cloggy, and an ascent was shown to the wondering public. Clogwyn y Ddisgl yielded *Rosy Crucifixion*, its hardest route, to Crew and Ingle, and the next day *The Boulder Direct* on Cloggy was done, an expansion bolt being used for a runner. Controversy again; but perhaps this was the hardest route in Wales. There was a second route on *Suicide Wall*; but the usual addition at Tremadoc was offset by an excision—that of *Hound's Head Buttress*, which was deemed unsafe and blown up. C. E. Davies and G. D. Roberts replaced it with *R.I.P.*, a much inferior climb. In May, 1963, Swallow and Cowburn did another route on Castell Cidwm, *The Straighter*.

1964 started badly, but ten new climbs, all at least VS, were done on a 400-ft. 'new' cliff at Holyhead. *Tensor* by J. Brown and a series of new routes on Craig y Castell, seem to have taken all lines on this hitherto blankest of Tremadoc cliffs. Banner and Wilson did a new entry onto the West Buttress of Cloggy, *The Arrow*, following up the groove on the right of *Narrow Slab*, and Clements and Bell did *Griseofulvin*, a steep route up the pillar to the left of *Mur y Niwl*. This required some aid, is hard, and, as a matter of interest, is the line which I first tried on this wall. The last two items of interest this year are a route out right from the Ogof in Cwm Silin, by Ingle and McHardy using two pegs, and an ascent of the direct pitch of Lliwedd's *Slanting Gully* by

Brown in ice and snow; this repulsed other strong parties following the next day.

## LAKE DISTRICT (1961–64)

Although the F. & R.C.C. has followed a policy of publishing details of new routes in their guides as revised, it is pleasing to know that new editions are planned. Langdale will probably be the first to appear, under the auspices of L. J. Griffin, the new editor, as Kelly, after long and valuable service to climbers, has retired from the post. It has been suggested that the grades of the climbs should be altered so that each standard represents a harder climb than formerly. In this way, the use of the XS grade will be avoided, and the tremendous variation of climb at present covered by VS will be reduced.

Of the new routes to appear in the Langdale guide almost all have been repeated, except *Red Groove*. *Astra* has now had about ten ascents, the second by Crew and Soper, and it remains the best and probably the hardest climb in the area. Austin and Metcalf also did a very good Hard VS route, just left of *Deception*, called *Arcturus*, but although the smooth wall above, and right of, *Bowfell Buttress* yielded a few hard pitches it was on the whole disappointing. A series of pitches, led at different times by different people, has been linked in description to form *Gimmer String*, one of the best climbs on the crag and harder than *Deer Bield Buttress*.

*Nimrod* on Dow Crag, climbed by D. Miller in 1962, was found very hard on the second and third ascents by Austin and Metcalf on the same day in 1963. It is a good climb, but follows a rather artificial line. Another route of 1962, so far unnamed, follows the prominent groove up the front of A Buttress, then traverses right to join the steep continuation groove above *Unfinished Symphony*. It was led in April by L. Brown, whose *Sidewalk* (the long-noticed line up the edge of this buttress) was repeated by Bonington, who endorses the opinion that it is a good climb.

Pillar has not received much attention, but Yates in 1962 led the fierce crack up the big wall overlooking *Grooved Wall*. It is, as yet, unrepeated and is said to be very hard. Crew and Ingle did a difficult, but wandering, route on the Shamrock, and there are other new routes by various West Cumberland climbers.

At Easter, 1962, Austin did *Pillar Front* on Pike's Crag, a particularly useful VS as it will often be in condition when both Scafell and the East Buttress are cold and wet. On the East Buttress, Bonington did the second ascent of *Ichabod*, and it has now been done nine or ten times. L. Brown and Sullivan did both *Ichabod* and *Phoenix* (third ascent) in one day, and found the latter the harder of the two. Nevertheless *Ichabod* is XS and is one of the best climbs in the Lakes. 1961 saw

the second ascent of *May Day Direct* by L. Brown, and Austin and Boysen did the third and fourth ascents in 1964. They found it a fine route, though neither as good nor as hard as *Ichabod*. Of Robin Smith's contributions, *Chartreuse* (near *Mickledore Grooves*) was sorted out and *Leverage* was led by Austin in 1964. This repetition confirms that it is very hard, perhaps the most difficult route on Scafell. Allison's route between *Great Eastern* and *Ichabod*, crossing *Yellow Slab* and finishing up the corner above it, is obviously a very big line. It involves rather more pegging than previous routes on the crag, but is still the best contribution of 1963. Griffin and Wilkinson showed that scope remains even here for new routes, making three in the course of guide-book work with neither a peg nor a hammer between them. Of the routes on Scafell only *Monday* and *Armageddon* lack repetitions.

Perhaps June 17, 1962, will remain unique in the history of current climbing. On this day three good new routes were done on one well-known crag, Esk Buttress. The two parties involved had both gone for *Central Pillar*, a very fine line giving a steep, exposed and technically demanding climb to Crew, who got there first. It was repeated by Austin and Metcalf in 1963 and Bonington and Boysen and McHardy in 1964. The other routes, proving that the Lakes are still far from worked out, were *Black Sunday* and *The Red Edge*, made by Austin, Metcalf and Soper.

The three big climbs on Dove Crag have turned out to be the most formidable group in the Lakes. Not until 1962, ten years after the first ascent, was *Dovedale Grooves* repeated by Crew and Ingle. It has now had eight ascents, and Austin contributed an extremely difficult *Direct Finish* in 1963. Boysen did the second ascent of *Extol* in 1961 and Crew and Ingle made the third, and contributed another route, *Hiraeth*, between the two. *Extol* has been followed three other times, and all those concerned consider the initial lead very bold. The crux of *Hiraeth* was led clean by Ingle, but Boysen inserted a peg on the second ascent. It is still there after six or seven ascents by Metcalf, Bonington, Woods and D. Miller, and hence it looks as if it is one of the very hardest pieces of climbing in the Lakes. To settle the *Extol*/*Entity* argument, Soper and Metcalf did a good ordinary VS, *Entity*, up the steep, narrow buttress left of *Inaccessible Gully*, and elsewhere in the Eastern fells Soper girdled *Scrubby*. Perhaps the acquisition by the F. & R.C.C. of a cottage in this valley will lead to even greater and more exciting (if possible) developments in this late to be exploited region.

*High Crag Buttress* in Buttermere was led originally with four pegs, by Allison, but is now done free and is a very good ordinary VS. The most notable of the many new routes on Buckstone How is Crew and Ingle's *Alexas*, the big, capped overhang left of *Cleopatra*, but it does

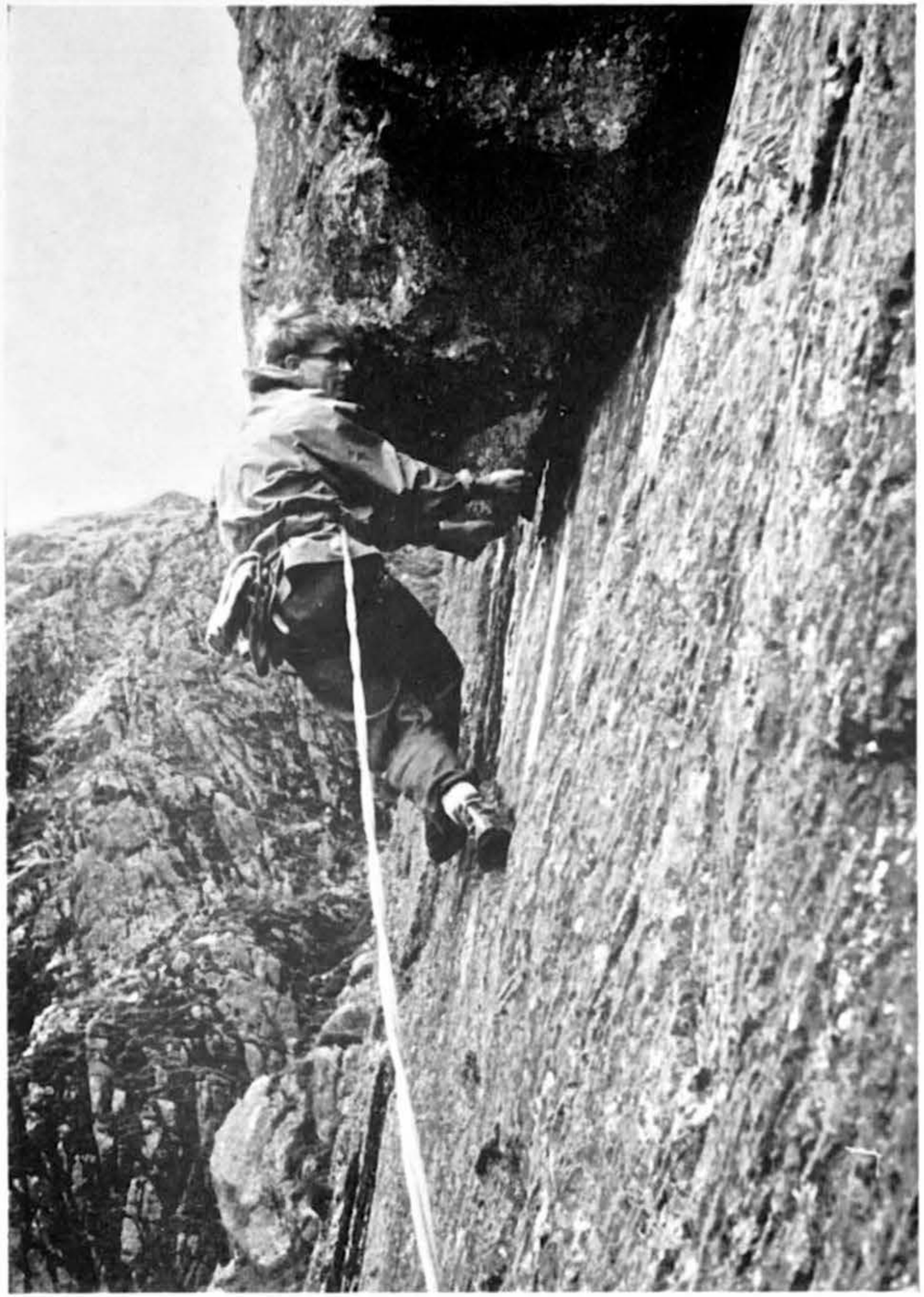


*Photo: A. Greenbank*]

KIPLING GROOVE, GIMMER CRAG (NOW A CLASSIC ROUTE).

**(No. 45)**

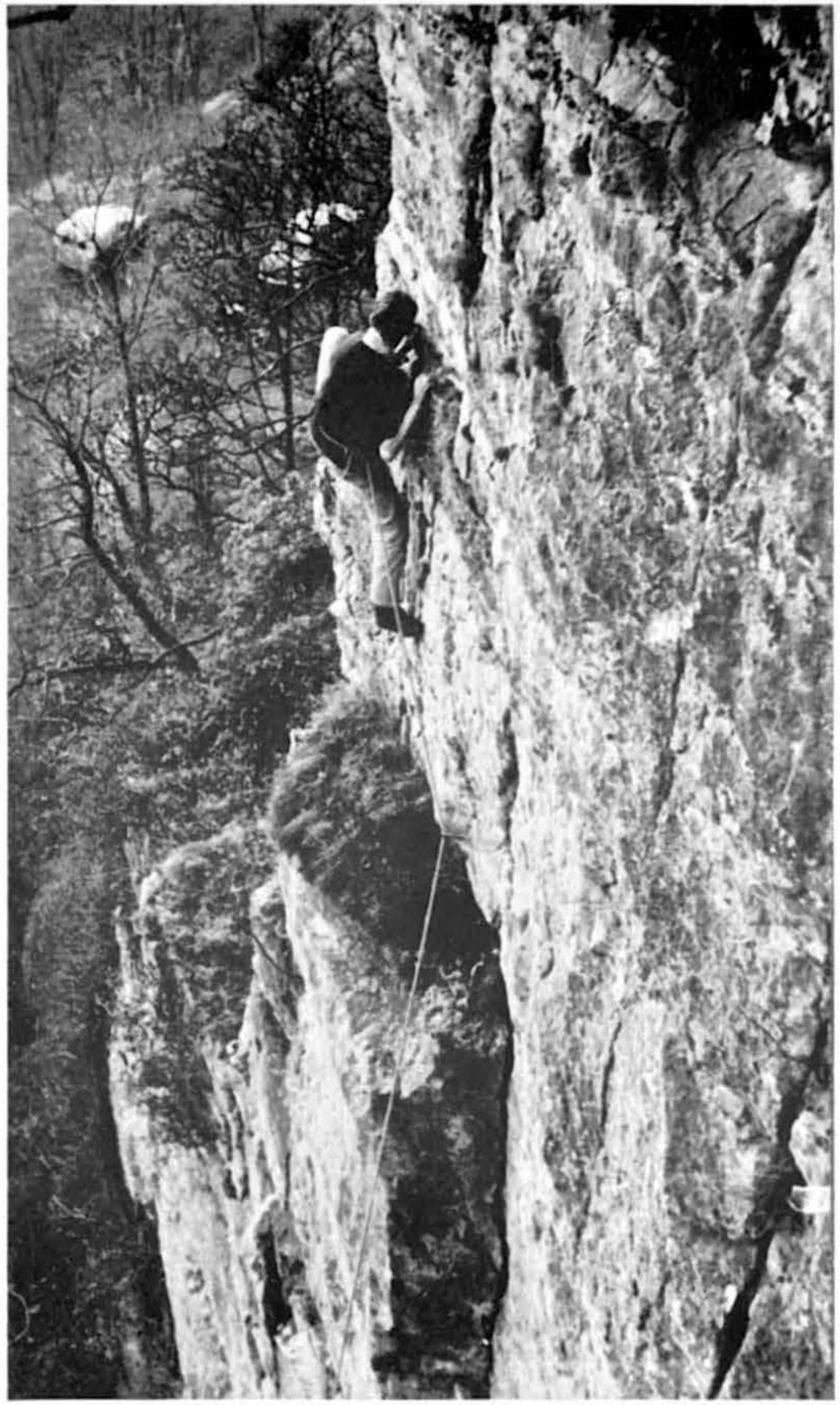


*Photo: A. Greenbank*]

STONEY MIDDLETON: GOLDEN GATE.

**(No. 46)**

not appear much harder than the rest. Development in Newlands is confined mainly to Red Crag, but the most important innovation is *Mithril* on Dale Head. Alan Wright and Soper did it in 1963, and it is sufficient on its own to alter the character of climbing in this valley. It is reminiscent of *Delphinus*, but harder and bolder, and has already had four or five ascents. Perhaps unfortunately, some of its length and quality is gained by pitches avoiding an unpleasant direct crack; much of the merit will be lost if this is climbed.

Reverting to the Eastern fells, and Thirlmere in particular, because of the reference above to *Delphinus*, we find that Metcalf and Webb have each provided different direct finishes. The original route has been pegged up, de-pegged, and is now again on the way to bristling with them. This distressing trend is prevalent in the Lakes, where pegs are commonly found in climbs and places which have been done without them. When resorting to aid in such circumstances, leaders should realise that they are degrading the route and not raising their standard. Finally, on Raven Crag in 1964 Boysen and Bonington did a very impressive route out of the left-hand side of the cave. Here some aid may be needed in the future, as a vital spike broke under the second man.

On Castle Rock, West Cumberland climbers have been active and raised *The Ghost*, between *Triermain* and *Rigor Mortis*. It is harder than either, but has already been repeated. The other routes are becoming relatively popular, and in fact 'Lightning' Smith has led *Triermain*, *Rigor* and *Angel's Highway* in one day.

Of course the usual developments have taken place in Borrowdale, including several routes on the steep and impressive Lower Falcon Crag. Most notable is the XS *Niche*, done by Liddell and Macaffy using one peg for protection on the first pitch and four for aid on the second. This was reduced to one for protection and one for aid on the second ascent and, done this way, it is hard but well protected. It is naturally not comparable with routes of similar standard on more serious crags such as Dove, where danger exists. One of the most recent routes, to finish this review, is *Mandrake* on Quayfoot Buttress. It has repulsed a party hoping for the second ascent, has a long and fairly unprotected pitch and was originally done by Liddell.

## THE PEAK AND YORKSHIRE (1961–64)

### (a) *Gritstone*

The field work for the new series of guides, undertaken by the Peak Committee of the B.M.C., was started in 1962, and so far one guide-book has appeared—to the Sheffield–Stanage area. There are about twice as many climbs described as in the same sections of the 1950

edition, although some of them were included in *Further Developments in the Peak District*. Of the latest spate, done in the period under review, perhaps *Orang Outang* (Crew), *Don's Delight* (Whillans), *Tippler* (Webb) and *Millsom's Minion* (Millsom) are the most noteworthy. I can find no record of a second ascent of the last of these; and *Crossover* also seems very hard.

Saddleworth—Chew valley and Sheffield—Froggatt, respectively volumes 2 and 3, are in the printer's hands, and *Cave Wall* at Froggatt might be selected as one of the best and hardest climbs. The *Dead Bay* routes and *Tree Wall* at Curbar keep their reputations, as does *Elder Crack*, but the routes on the Great Buttress carry a fair amount of traffic. Vol. 3 will be particularly welcome, as it will include a great part of the Whillans/Brown contribution to gritstone climbing.

A pleasing trend that is continuing is the emergence of Millstone Edge as an excellent free climbing arena. Many of the routes, originally artificial, have been led without aid and often without piton protection. On the other hand the peg routes here and at Lawrencefield are often occupied, although with big artificial routes in the Wye Valley so close at hand one often wonders why. There are now about a hundred routes on Millstone Edge, compared with some twenty-five or twenty-six in the original guide, which again points to the immense impact of the 'climbing explosion' on these local crags.

Kinderscout, for long the Cinderella of Peak District climbing, is at last achieving the recognition it deserves. After all, it and its crags are the nearest approach to a real mountain in the area, with problems of approach, steep ground and often less than perfect rock. Of all the climbs *Moneylender's Crack* on Nether Tor is among the best gritstone cracks, and although *Gomorrah*, on Kinder Great Buttress, is not terribly hard it has a fine line. Developments in the Downfall cirque have now produced about a hundred climbs, and the length of Ashop Edge is being intensively explored.

After considerable lobbying the Peak Committee agreed to allow the Yorkshire area to join in their guide-book series, a wise decision as we will have in one format and with one editor, Eric Byne, a description of virtually all gritstone climbs, in whatever county the outcrops occur. Ilkley and Almscliffe are perhaps the most important crags out of the Peak District, but they have been climbed on extensively and little new of note, if anything, has been done. *Wall of Horrors* and *Western Front*, two routes done at Almscliffe in 1961 by Austin, still lack a second ascent, but exploration has switched to other minor crags. Guisecliffe is usually green and uninviting, but the brothers Barley have given it a lot of attention and added many new routes, some of them good and hard. There is still some scope at Brimham, not surprising to anyone who has seen its countless weird pinnacles and blocks, and

in 1963 Robin Barley led *Beatnick*, a big, hard, bulging crack on the Cubic Block.

Another smaller cliff to be exploited is Eastby Crag, which used to sport only one or two climbs, although one of them was a very good value Very Difficult. *Pillar Front*, hard VS, has been led three times and, although it appears possible to jump into a gully from the crux, I should not like to try! *Whaup Edge* and *Knuckle Slab* are two other enjoyable routes, and all in all there is enough here for a pleasant afternoon. Various scattered outcrops on the moors above Pately Bridge are receiving attention, and Todmorden's environs seem likely to yield even more routes and cliffs. A few worth mentioning are Whillans' fierce crack in Heptonstall Quarry and the various problems on The Scout, *Grey Buttress* being the best.

Nevertheless it is nowadays becoming so difficult to find worthwhile new routes on gritstone, and in general one must be so good, that more and more climbers are turning towards limestone, where there are startling developments.

(b) *Limestone*

In 1961 a guide to the mountain limestone of Derbyshire was published by the Manchester Gritstone Climbing Club, acting with the inspiration of Graham West. It brought to the notice of the climbing world not only the existing climbs but the immense possibilities on this rock, inexplicably almost disregarded for nearly sixty years. The descriptions of the routes were often overwritten, and it is now generally reckoned that nothing done in the first phase was above VS in standard. Attitudes have changed over the last three years, many one-time peg routes are now climbed free or with much less aid, and even such big routes as *Mecca* and *The Big Plum* have been climbed solo!

Above the Wye there has been a lot of activity. Another fine route, *Little Plum*, has been done by Howard and Nicholls on Plum Buttress, in three pitches (VS and A2). In Water cum Jolly Dale, Two Tier Buttress now has *Chicken Run*, a superb route (Hard VS) with a direct finish that improves it, made by following Black Flake. These were done in 1964 by Howard, Holt, Rowland and Nunn. Girdle traverses have also been provided; that of Central Buttress in Water cum Jolly Dale is 500 ft. (VS and A3) with some loose rock, whereas Chee Tor gives the best in the valley, 700 ft. (VS) with only three or four pegs. This was done by C. Jackson, but perhaps Dearman's *Contortion* on Chee Tor is the hardest of the new climbs. The second could not follow, it is as yet unrepeated, is 80 ft. and A3, using two or three bolts, micropegs and about three ordinary pegs.

Another fine route on Ravens Tor in Millers Dale is *The Prow*. It starts as *Mecca*, but then takes the huge, black nose of the crag direct.

It is the longest artificial climb in Derbyshire, took Dearman and J. Gerrard seven to eight hours, is 175 ft. and A3. The line traverses left from the first stance on *Mecca*, goes up the wall on bolts and then over the final overhang.

Even before the guide was published, it was out of date at Stoney Middleton. *Medusa*, the fierce-looking jamming crack mentioned in the text, was not led until 1963, by Millsom, but Webb had been very active and produced amongst others *Brown Corner*, *Mortuary Step* and *Pology*, all VS or HVS. *Windhover* was led by Webb, using only one peg for aid to leave Windy Ledge, and C. Jackson added a left-hand finish, climbing the impressive and very exposed top wall diagonally left. This uses two pegs for aid and finishes up a steep crack.

At least four good routes have been added in Ravensdale, including a very good girdle from *Delusor* to *Mealybugs*. An excellent, varied climb, *Ploy*, was made by Woolcock and R. D. Brown in June, 1964, starting just left of the climb mistakenly called *Flypaper* in the guide. Nunn and Woolcock climbed *Mephistopheles*, 170 ft. (VS), up the buttress right of *Mealybugs*, and Rowland and Nunn did *Conclusor*, the most difficult of these three, in September, 1964. It starts by *Delusor* and follows the groove above; it had been attempted in 1959.

*Skylight* is an excellent free climb at High Tor which is often over-pegged; to its left is a long, fierce groove with a roof which was climbed by D. Scott. *Castellan* and *Loerin* are two artificial climbs on the same cliff, leaving the cave of *Skylight*. The first is hard and the second unrepeated, hard and open. Webb and Mackinnon and Nunn and Woolcock were responsible. *Darius* is earlier (1963) and takes the wall between *The Bastion* and the *Ordinary*; first a groove, then faint cracks and a bolt to finish. The four ascents so far made used a stance in étriers.

Willersley Castle is another excellent cliff and has had a new guide, published by Nottingham C.C. Unfortunately there is still some difficulty about access here. Elsewhere, a few routes have been done in Dovedale, mainly on Tissington Spires and Ravens Crag, the latter a traverse with seven short pitches.

In Yorkshire, the big right-hand buttress of Kilnsey Crag was climbed by Sumner, mainly with bolts. It and the overhang route are followed regularly, and there has been another long bolt route made up the face of Malham Cove. Classic routes such as *Cave Route* and *Face Route* at Gordale have many ascents, and there have been several new routes here.

Despite all the artificial routes, free climbing on limestone is really in the ascendancy. Attermire Scar and Malham Cove were the first areas to be exploited, and the wings of Malham Cove are still the most popular. There are two good new routes at the Cove, one starting near

*East Wall* and continuing straight up and the other taking the great loose wall left of *Scorpio*. Both are hard and were led by Robin Barley.

Developments take place with startling rapidity, both of known and of newly discovered edges. For instance there are now over thirty free routes at Gordale, including two very good ones of 150 ft., *Darkness* (VS) and *Light* (HVS). Crummock Dale has eight new routes, a 90 ft. VS called *Olympus* being probably the best. It is wrong to imagine that all the development is only for the tiger. Twistleton Scar is a complete new crag for the more moderate performer, providing 35 ft. to 60 ft. routes from S to VS.

With the wealth of limestone as yet untouched, both in the Peak and in Yorkshire, the northern climber will not have to rest on his gritstone laurels. Many of the climbs are as long and serious as those of Wales and the Lakes, and it may not be long before people travel greater distances than hitherto in order to enjoy the steepness and exhilaration to be experienced on these fierce cliffs.

## IRELAND (1962–63)

In the summer of 1962 the great corrie of Coomsaharn under Teermoyle Mountain was explored. It has a great, impressive buttress with no inviting lines of attack. On the left is a subsidiary cwm with many challenging shorter buttresses. The gully right of the main buttress was climbed in one pitch (mild Severe).

At Glendalough a variation finish was made to *Aphrodite*; the often tried wide crack was climbed (HVS) by E. Goulding to give *Little Eiger*; and Goulding, Ingram and Shelley shared leads on an A2 climb, *The Great North Road*. This takes the dièdre right of *Sebastian*, moving left near the top. *Sentanta* is another VS on the right-hand extremity of the main buttress.

In Donegal, the obvious weakness in the centre of the main face in Glen Veagh gave a hard VS route to Goulding and O'Halpin, which they called *Ariel*. It is a long and good climb, 450 ft. Bingorm West received a lot of attention and several new routes were found, including *Erin Go Bráth*, a HVS direct finish to *Rule Britannia*, by Ingram and Goulding. A 200-ft. VS, *Kestrel*, was contributed by O'Halpin, and for the more moderate climber *Cripple's Way* (HS) and *Crudde's Original* (VD), by Shelley and Thornley respectively. This was about the end of the intensive exploration on this crag, and even short routes on the walls of Square Cut Gully are being done. *Surplomb Grise*, first led by Frank Winder in 1955, was not repeated until 1963, but is a beautiful line, just right of the *Thin Gully*. Miss Healy's *Ploughshare* became popular and was graded VS.

In 1963 Goulding returned to Glen Veagh and made, with Higgins,

a dramatic climb of sustained difficulty, very exposed throughout its 400 ft. It starts in the great corner right of *Empathy* and then takes the rib on its right side.

Elsewhere, short routes and variations proliferated on Camaderry, and a series of short buttresses near the head of the fjord of Killary were explored. Two routes were made on a definite 100 ft. pinnacle, and an obvious slab leading to an easy chimney was done. These last climbs were done by Miss Healy, Rothery and Winder.

In Northern Ireland, activities are more or less confined to the Mourne Mountains. There are granite cliffs and tors in plenty. Cove Mountain is popular, two new hard climbs on the lower cliffs being *Brewer's Gloom* (Grindley) and *Praxis*, which is HVS (Ingram and Shelley). A guide to the Mourne rock climbs published not so long ago is now so out of date that a supplement was provided at the end of 1963. Even that had been made incomplete by the spate of new climbs done before it was printed.

Eagle Rocks, though fairly short, were provided with at least four new routes in 1963, *Solstice* and *Determination* both being VS; and *One Each*, a Hard VS on Speelach Buttress, was climbed by D. Dick and C. Moore, although they had a top rope for the last pitch.

## SCOTLAND (1961–63)

Since the Abrahams said that the Coolin were 'the grandest mountains in Britain, either to climb or look upon', they have been to the Sassenach the most popular rock climbing area in Scotland. The provision of a hut in Coir' Uisge has led to the exploitation of Mad Burn Buttress, a 350-ft. diamond of gabbro only two hours away. Slesser was active here in 1962 and with Bryan and Mrs. M. Wallace made *Mayday*, *Warsle* and *Diagonal*, all Severes. A 700-ft. climb (MS) was done on the slabs east of Loch Coruisk by Lauren and Highet, and they report that the slabs are better and steeper than they look. Routes are still being made on Cioch Upper Buttress—*Desire* (Severe) and a MVS route, *Sarcophagus*, on Cioch Buttress, both by J. R. Houston in 1963. The Sgurr nan Gillean Pinnacles are also being exploited, *Thor* and *Frig* being done by A. James of the J.M.C.S. on the first and third pinnacles respectively. All development has not been in the Coolin, though; Patey in 1961 visited the Waterstein cliffs, Duirnish, where the weather is often better. His party climbed the *Green Lady*, an elegant 100 ft. rock spire.

In Arran the Rosa Pinnacle, perhaps the most attractive piece of rock in the island, has yielded several climbs. A VS, *West Flank Route*, by W. Skidmore in 1963 is perhaps the best. It follows a natural line of chimneys, cracks and grooves between *Sou'wester Slabs* and *Hammer*.

A 1,000-ft. girdle of the Pinnacle (VS) must also be an excellent climb, dating from 1961, by Campbell and McNiven. The North-east face of Cir Mor has received attention, as has Glen Sannox and Ben Tarsuinn.

Rhum and Harris were both further exploited in 1961. A series of short climbs were done on Allival, Askival and Ruinsval by parties mainly led by Anne Littlejohn. R. B. Evans and L. A. Howarth did two routes on the main face of Strone Ulladale, *Great Gully* and *Tyke*, and then extended their activities to the West Wall for a series of easier but still worth-while climbs, the *Gangway*, *South Buttress* and, perhaps the best, *Midgard* (600 ft.; VD).

In the Northern Highlands, where there is so much attractive looking rock, Patey has shown the possibilities by climbing alone difficult routes such as *Sword of Gideon* (Sgurr a'Chaorachain, Applecross—South face) and the *Nose Direct* of Fuar Thall, Achnashellach, in 1961. Robin Smith provided a climb, *Boggle*, up a pale, shallow dièdre in the upper part of the eastern ramparts of Coire Mhic Fhearchair, and Patey again was instrumental in annexing Sgurr nan Clach Geala for rock climbing, in the Fannichs. 1962 was another good year in this area. *The Gash*, following a bizarre chimney in the East Buttress of Coire Mhic Fhearchair, and *Fusilage Wall* on the West Buttress, both Severes, were led by Patey. He also explored the cliffs at the head of Glensguaib of Ben Dearg in Ross-shire, doing *Tower of Babel* (VD) and the *West Buttress* (D). He notes the winter possibilities here, and did the first winter ascent of *Inverlael Gully* with J. M. Taylor and A. G. Nicol in January, 1963. Creag Dionard of Foinaven has received attention from the R.A.F., Kinloss, and the Thurso M.C. since 1955, when progress was noted in the S.M.C. *Journal*. This led to ascents of *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, but has left much rock still virgin even today. Patey made a long MS route here, *Fingal*, on the South Buttress, about a hundred yards left of the main waterfall.

The climbs in Coire Ardair are essentially winter ones. In 1962 Patey and Brooke added *The Last Post*, a line left of and parallel to the *South Post*, and *Post Horn Gallop*, which is a diagonal traverse visiting all four Posts. In 1963 the minor corrie was visited and a series of shorter and less serious routes than the Posts was done, valuable for short days and less experienced parties.

The number of rock climbs on the Ben still increases. Amongst them are *Astronomy*, on the Orion face, and *Subtraction*, on Minus Two Buttress. The parties were Clough and Grandison and J. McLean and W. Smith, in 1960. J. R. Marshall, G. J. Ritchie and R. Marshall climbed the left arête of *Gardyloo Buttress* and *The Shield Direct*, just right of *Titan's Wall*, in June of the same year. The Great Buttress of

Carn Dearg has seen perhaps the best innovations, *The Bullroar* and the *High Girdle* providing two traverses of VS and Severe respectively, the first done by J. R. Marshall and Stenhouse and the second by Clough and Sutcliffe. This last party also climbed *Orgy*, another girdle starting up *Route I*, then weaving its way through the complicated terrain entering *Centurion* and *Sassenach* and descending parts of these routes, then continuing over to *Titan's Wall* and *The Shield*; over 2,000 ft., VS!

The vast acres of the Cairngorms have not deterred the modern rock climbers. In 1961 Hell's Lum Crag on Cairn Gorm was the scene of endeavour by many parties. Patey produced *The Wee Devil*, Marshall and Stenhouse *Hell's Lump*, C. A. Sands and M. Main *Architrave*, A. and M. Main *Gangway*, R. Kerr *The Sheath* and R. Smith *The Clean Sweep* and a direct finish to *Hellfire Corner*. The crag was girdled by M. George and D. Pyper in 1963. A fine VS on Shelter Stone Crag (Ben MacDhui) was done by R. Smith and D. Agnew in 1962—*The Needle*.

The accessibility of Glencoe explains the number of climbs in the area and also the continuance of discovery. There is still plenty of untouched rock, but most of the buttresses are now nearly as criss-crossed by routes as, for instance, Gimmer or the Three Cliffs. The newest playground is the South Wall of 'E' Buttress on the West face of Aonach Dubh. *Hee-Haw* is a very impressive climb with a hard first pitch, but *Trapeze* looks even better. *The Big Top* (R. Smith and J. Gardner) is on the same face, and the piton climb, *The Lid* on D Buttress, done by B. W. Robertson in 1964, crosses three roofs, perhaps the first Scottish climb to do so.

The North face of Aonach Dubh was girdled in 1962 by R. Campbell, Haston, McNiven and R. Smith, the long problematical barrier crossing being solved. The white wall right of Ossian's Cave was also climbed by Haston and Campbell, and was called *Kuf*.