

Bhutan

Chomolhari (7315 m) the second ascent was made by members of an Indian-Bhutan expedition led by Lt-Col N. Kumar. Starting from Camp II at c. 6800 m, S. Arora, Captain Prem Chand, D. Lhatoo and S. Thendup reached the summit on 23 April 1970. A second assault party of three set out next day, but when some 200 m from the top, at about 10.45am, the weather became cloudy, visual contact was lost and they were never seen again.

The successful party followed the route taken by F. Spencer Chapman and Pasang Dawa Lama on the first ascent in May 1937. See *A.J.* 49 203 and 72 304.

Australia

Probably the largest exodus yet of Australians to the New Zealand Alps for climbing instructional courses has taken place this year. Initial snow and ice climbing instructional week-ends using Watsons Crags in the Snowy Mountains, a 2000-ft gully and crag area, prepare young men and women for the alpine courses at Mount Cook. The result of several years of such instruction is now noticeable and Australian climbers are turning up in other mountainous parts of the world. The mainspring is the New Zealand A.C. (Australian Section).

Another development is the free moving between States with climbers sampling the fare of their neighbouring climbing clubs. New crags are being discovered now at an increasing rate and some of the techniques displayed are sophisticated and generally beyond the comprehension of the present writer. A breed of self-styled 'hard men' has appeared. However, in spite of the undoubted difficulty of some of the rock climbs attempted, a valid criticism is that very few creative route makers are on the scene. Expatriate Englishman John Ewbank holds the field for inventive routes leaving everyone else to copy. It cannot be long before Australia's own innovator will appear.

Queensland has developed Frog Buttress near Brisbane with some fiery new routes; Victorians still go mostly to the Grampians; Tasmania is going through a spell of sea stack climbing; New South Wales sees a spate of bolt removal expeditions, the purists removing the cliff face pollutions of those who went before. Canberra has produced an excellent guide-book to climbs in Australian Capital Territory.





99 *Mount Sefton, East face; South ridge on left skyline.* Photo: N. Hardie

An Australian Mountaineering Council has been formed in Sydney in an effort to set up standards for climbing equipment, etc. A similar Federation exists in South Australia and it remains to be seen whether any outfit can be truly Federal in the chauvinistic state attitudes often found here.

Further afield Colin Putt and Ian Dillon, both New Zealand A.C. (Australian Section) veterans, have recently returned from a joust with Greenland ice, with H. W. Tilman in *Sea Breezes*. Putt formerly went with Tilman to Heard Island and comments that Australia can now export crews to England on order.



100 Mounts Cook and Tasman, the Tasman glacier and the Hochstetter Ice-fall—
the Caroline Face of Mount Cook in shadow on the left. Photo: Aerofilms Ltd.

The only Australian climbing magazine, called *Thrutch*, came out recently with a glossy photographic cover. Having representatives in all states it may well provide the communication necessary in the absence of any truly Federal alpine club journal here.

Warwick Deacock

Ball's Pyramid The third ascent of this sea stack (at 1843 ft surely one of the highest in the world) in the Pacific Ocean, 400 miles north-east of Sydney, has been made by a new route—the North-west ridge. The first ascent was in 1965 by the South-east ridge. (Source: *Mountain*.)

North Wall, Buffalo Gorge This is a 750-ft crag, 200 miles north-east of Melbourne. *Mountain* (No 13, January, 1971) carries a full description of a route, *Ozymandios*, put up here on 18–20 October 1969, by C. Dewhurst and C. Baxter. It is outstandingly obvious that the latest modern climbing methods are now very much a part of the Australian climbing scene. They use their own grading system: for free climbing—Grade 1 to infinity (the present hardest is 21, *Cenotaph Corner* would be 16 or 17); for artificial climbing—also Grade 1 to infinity (the present hardest is M7). No doubt future exchanges will enable comparisons to be made between their standards and those of the rest of the world; it will be interesting to see how it works out. (Source: *Mountain*.)

New Zealand

The outstanding event in New Zealand during 1970 was the first ascent of the Caroline Face of Mount Cook by P. Gough and J. Glasgow. This very hard route of 7000 ft, frequently attempted in the past, was climbed in November with only one bivouac. G. Dingle and G. Harris followed a few days later, having just missed being with the first party.

Other outstanding new climbs include the South Face of Hicks (likened to the Walker Spur), the Whymper face of Elie de Beaumont and the East face and South ridge of Mount Sefton. The ridge from Tasman to Nazomi was traversed in a three-day expedition.

N. D. Hardie