

Chilean-Argentinian northern boundary. The base of this mountain was reached on mules by an expedition of the institution mentioned, and a Base Camp was set up at about 4600 m. An ascent of the nearby Cerro Imán (5070 m) had been made *en route* on 30 November 1969 (A. Beorchia, group leader, C. Fava, F. Baruzzi and R. Accoroni), finding on top a rock-walled enclosure some 3×4.5 metres (15×19 ft). Nevado Tambillos was ascended on 6 December (the first three already named, plus H. de la Fuente); they found on the summit many traces of old Indian occupancy such as feather works, textiles, ceramics, clothing and rock altars. But vestiges of an excavation on the place seemed to indicate that grave-diggers, coming perhaps from the Chilean side, had beaten them to the punch. With one climber suffering from mountain sickness, the party retreated, abandoning its project of conducting a detailed survey of the Inca remains. The expedition was back in San Juan on 30 December.

CORDILLERA CENTRAL

Cordillera de Ansilta South of the volcanic district locally called *Puna*, but still north of the Aconcagua and Mercedario massifs, is found a group of rock and ice peaks named Cordillera de Ansilta, after its main peak, Cerro de Ansilta, 5885 m A. Beorchia, S. Job and J. Varas made on 11 February 1970, the first ascent of the unnamed southern peak (5100 m) of the Pico # 5 de Ansilta; route used was up to the col between both peaks, via the rocky south-east slopes. This peak was christened Pico Fantin, after a well known Italian climber and author. Two days later, Job and Varas, plus C. Eguaburo and A. Godoy made the fourth ascent of Pico # 4 de Ansilta (5130 m).

Polar Regions

Greenland

West part of Sukkertoppen ice-cap. Sukkertoppen ice-cap is situated between Søndre Strømfjord and Evighedsfjord on the west coast of Greenland. The mountains rise from sea-level to a height of 1500 m.

This area was visited by a Swedish party of three women and seven men between 15 July and 8 August 1970. The weather was good and we made twenty-six first ascents.

We had our base camp on the north side of the Kangâmiutfjord, and several peaks on both sides of this fjord were climbed direct from there. We also made a traverse of the Sukkertoppen ice-cap down to Kvandalen, spending about ten days on the ice-cap.

We had some communications problems. We travelled by aeroplane from Copenhagen to Søndre Strømfjord, from Søndre Strømfjord to Sukkertoppen by helicopter and from Sukkertoppen to the base camp in the hired police boat Malik.

The maps of the district are very good and it is also possible to see aerial photos covering the whole area.

E. A. Bo Söderberg

Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld (3261 m) This mountain in the Watkins Range in eastern Greenland was climbed during August 1970 by a British party—Andrew Ross, Graham Williams, Nigel Robinson and Peter Lewis. The expedition started from the small settlement at Scoresbysund, which is visited infrequently by Danish supply ships. A 250-mile journey southwards in a 17-ft open motor-dory brought them to Weidemann's Fjord, where a base camp was set up. The boat and some stores were left here, while the equipment and food for the mountain were relayed over 5 miles of moraine to the glacier. There now followed three days of marching inland under conditions of very poor visibility; then a sudden change revealed the surrounding high mountains, the Lilloise and Borgtinde massifs and Ejnar Mikkelsens Fjeld, which they had come to climb. Two days later they reached the foot of the mountain, now some 45 miles away from the base at Weidemann's Fjord.

A tributary glacier of the main Kronberg glacier, which they had been following, divides the peak into two, and this was climbed through ice-falls, followed by high snow-fields. Finally, the summit ridge was reached by an ice-face of 50°, climbed using ice-pegs and the front points of their crampons. The true summit, a 50-ft rock obelisk, lay out of reach a quarter of a mile along a heavily corniced ridge. They descended at once, reaching the foot again after seventy-eight hours on the mountain. Four very hard days later they regained the base camp by the sea.

Their difficulties were still far from over, but the remainder of the story is an epic of the sea rather than of the mountains. They drifted hundreds of miles out of their way, were capsized in heavy seas and were finally picked up when still a hundred miles from home.

There would appear to be considerable scope for future first ascents in this

hitherto little visited area, but it is a tough journey to get there. (*Source: Mountain*, January 1971.)

Antarctica

Elephant Island: British Joint Services expedition 1970-1, interim report The fourteen members of the expedition reached Elephant Island (at the eastern end of the South Shetland Islands) on 4 December 1970. It is a singularly craggy, desolate, ice-covered spot on the map and is largely noted for being unexplored; for its consistently inclement weather but also for affording sanctuary, inhospitable as it was, to Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-16 after his ship, the *Endurance*, had been lost in the pack-ice. Shortly after arrival, the inevitable veil of cloud descended, and apart from infrequent undulations usually bringing it down to sea-level there it has remained.

Our first mountaineering aspiration was to climb the unnamed highest peak on Clarence Island, which is about 20 miles east of Elephant Island. This is a fairly small island about 12 miles by 4 miles which rears itself out of the Antarctic waters in a torment of rock, snow and ice. It has been reported that a geologist once set foot on the beach, but that seems to have been the deepest penetration.

A small party (Agnew, Bruce and Hunt) was helicoptered in at sea-level on 4 December in the midst of a squawking and indescribably smelly penguin rookery. Willy nilly they were compelled to climb to 1400 feet to establish their base camp in a fresher setting. The following day, in what has become all too familiar white-out conditions, the party set off. Other than negotiating three interesting ice-falls and gambling with the support of occasional flimsy snow-bridges, the five-hour climb to the summit (5200 ft) presented no technical difficulties. They then retreated to base camp and were subsequently transferred by H.M.S. *Endurance* to Elephant Island to rejoin the rest of the party.

The next opportunity for a climb occurred on 12 December. The main base is established alongside the island's main glacier at 600 ft above an even bigger and smellier penguin rookery (with acres of somnolent elephant seals on the beach to provide added tang to the atmosphere). Just inland of our tented encampment rears an impressive avalanche-scarred mountain—also unnamed—which we believe is the second highest on Elephant Island. Although in the

earlier days during a freak clearance we had momentarily sighted the summit, we were so carried away now when the cloud-base rose to nearly 1500 ft that a party of us (Agnew, Burkitt, Hunt, Walshaw and myself) immediately set forth. Although it was an easy slog up into the cloud, once the visibility had clamped down the mountain's more interesting hazards started. The weather also took a turn for the worse and a bitter, snow laden, rising wind did not enhance the pleasure of the climb. Several quite respectable ice-falls were successfully negotiated without too much difficulty despite one particularly steep and exposed ice section. Eventually the gradient eased off and we found we had reached the domed summit (3300 ft).

There remain plenty of peaks to lure the expedition on. Who knows, perhaps we shall climb one day and actually enjoy a view from the top! In the meantime we are pressing on with our survey and scientific work to justify our being here and put this fascinating island properly on the map. When we come home in April 1971, we hope to be able to have much more to tell. **Malcolm Burley**

British Isles

Scotland 1970

On the whole it has been a poor year for Scottish climbing. The end of June saw the end of the good weather and most of the summer and autumn were very wet indeed.

The Cairngorms Here most of the crags saw some exploration but the trend of last year was continued with concentration on the most southerly and northerly parts of the area.

In the Creagan Dubh Loch area there was again a good deal of activity both in winter and summer. The better winter routes were *Centaur*, a 600 ft Grade III on Central Gully Buttress by A. Fyffe and D. Whitcombe and *Mammoth* on the Central Slabs. This is a fine natural 1200 ft Grade IV which fell to J. Bower, J. Furnell, N. Blenkinsop and I. Rae. The hardest route, however, was *Bower Buttress* which gave a hard 500 ft Grade IV with a fairly long complex approach. This was climbed by J. Bower and R. Simpson who also crossed the glen to Eagle's Rock to make the first winter ascent of *Lethargy* which gave a pleasant Grade III.