

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.

With the disappearance of the snows, summer activity started fairly quickly with the ascent of *The Predator*, an obvious crack line to the left of the *Mouse-trap*. This gave a 700 ft VS to G. Strange and B. Findlay. Soon afterwards A. Fyffe and J. Savoury added a direct finish to *False Impression*, a 300 ft VS line continuing the arête abandoned by the ordinary route. The most important additions, however, came during a good spell in June when I. Nicolson and D. Knowles put up two fine new free routes. The first, *Dubh Loch Monster*, a very thin crack line just left of *King Rat*, gave a 900 ft VS, which unfortunately like its neighbour *The Kraken* suffers from being something of an eliminate. Their second route, *Gulliver*, 1000 ft VS, however, is one of the best of the recent routes—a bold line going straight up the lower part of the frontal face, up the overhanging *Red Wall* and then straight to the top. This pair also eliminated the aid from *Goliath* and K. Martin and partner eliminated the top peg on *King Rat*. During this period of dry weather G. Hunter and D. Lang climbed the big corner system on the left of the *Broad Terrace Wall*. Although it resisted several attempts, this route, *Sword of Damocles*, eventually gave a 500 ft VS and A.3 climb, which unfortunately required three bolts on a blank section.

On the nearby Eagle's Rock Hunter and Lang climbed the arête left of *Lethargy*—*Nimrod*, 350 ft, VS. A direct start and finish were added to *A Likely Story*. Also climbed by A. Fyffe and R. Zorab was the groove line right of *Gibber-Whisper*, 450 ft VS.

Further north on Lochnagar came the first winter ascent of the *Tough Brown Ridge* (Grade V) by M. Rennie and N. Keir, and of *Shadow Rib* (Grade III) by J. Bower, G. Strange and B. Findlay. In the summer Rennie and Forbes added a new route to the *Tough Brown Face* between their others *Mort* and *Crypt*. It proved to be similarly hard, but this time the difficulties were mainly in the artificial climbing. On Beinn a'Bhuird two long sought routes *The Carpet* and *Hourglass Buttress*, fell to J. Bower and G. Boyd (both Grade IV).

In Coire Sputan Dearg the slabs on the left of the corrie were investigated and some pleasant routes found, while further west the corries of Braeriach also yielded climbs. In the summer of 1969 J. Light and A. McGregor climbed the *Tower of Babel* (400 ft VS) in Garbh Choire Mòr, while later came the first winter ascent here of *She-Devil's Buttress* (500 ft Grade IV). Nearby in Garbh Choire Dhaidh the same team climbed *Billabong* (600 ft Grade III). In Coire Bhrochain there was also summer and winter activity.

The Loch Avon horseshoe was the scene of exploration both in 1969 and 1970. *Threadbare* on Raeburn's Buttress is 1000 ft and VS. Other new routes include *Consolation Groove* and *Postern Direct Finish* on Shelter Stone Crag and *Drop*

*Out, Good Intentions* and *The Vacuum* on Hell's Lum Crag. In winter the most important route here was *The Chancer* by J. Cunningham and B. March. Although only 300 ft it is Grade V and said to involve some very hard and technical climbing up an exceptionally thin and steep ribbon of ice to the left of Hell's Lum.

The *S.M.C. Journal*, 1970, recorded eleven new routes in the northern corries of Cairngorm. Others were added during the year. Thus, from being one of the least inviting rock climbing areas in these mountains, these corries, particularly Coire an Lochain, now give as good routes as many other places, making up for their lack of length by quality and severity.

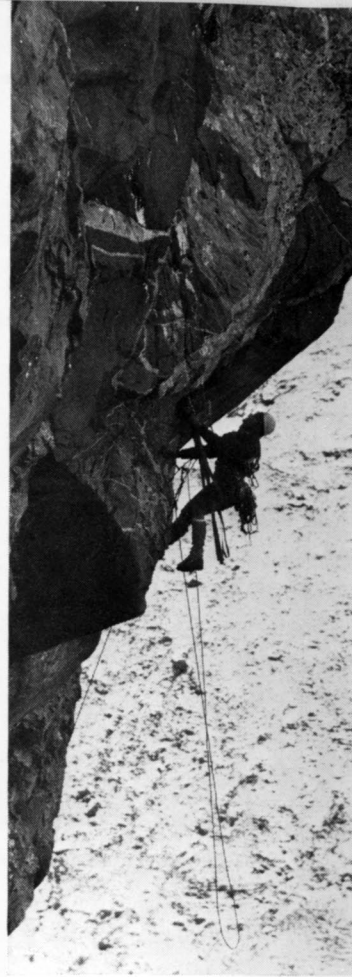
**The Remainder of the Mainland** During the winter a few routes were done in the north-west, one of these—*Suspense Buttress* (MacInnes and Spence) gave a fine route of Grade IV standard in Applecross.

In Glencoe the Americans, Chouinard and Tomkins, did the *Direct Finish* to Ravens Gully, a route of very high standard. In February the late Ian Clough and K. Spence did a new climb on the north face of Aonach Dubh, *Late Night Special*, which gave Grade IV climbing up a gully line to the left of Ossian's Cave. '*B*' *Buttress* on the West face of Aonach Dubh was climbed in February by H. MacInnes and party and also *Route I* on Rannoch Wall, another good route of high standard.

The summer of 1970 was one of the most disappointing for many years with almost continual poor weather limiting the number of routes. The best was probably the second ascent of *Kingpin* by I. Nicolson and D. Knowles; most of the original aid was eliminated and the climb lived up to its reputation of being hard and extremely good. Opinion puts this route in the same class as *Yo-Yo* and *Shibboleth*. The only other climb of note was a girdle traverse of Rannoch Wall, a long pleasant VS. On the Etive Slabs *The Thin Red Line* had its second and third ascents but little else of note was done.

Nothing was added to the fine routes on No 1 Dionard Buttress (Foinaven) made by Paul Nunn and party during 1969 (not mentioned in last year's *Journal*). Achnashellach was again visited by MacInnes in the spring and five new routes done in this superb area which rivals Carnmore.

**The Islands** A series of attempts by D. K. Scott and others on the unclimbed nose of Strone Ulladale in Harris was unsuccessful. Two fine VS routes were made on Creag Dubh Dibidal during the summer. One by the Squirrel M.C. with W. Sproul follows the obvious chimney/crack line on the left of this



102 *J. Upton on the Scoop, Strone Ulladale. Photo: D. Scott*

103 *Doug Scott during an attempt on the nose of Strone Ulladale. Photo: L. Dickinson*

superb face. The other, taking a crack line on the right of the cliff was done by M. Reeves and W. Ball.

Two more stacks have been climbed in Orkney—North Gaulton Castle, nine miles north of the Old Man of Hoy, and Stack o' Roo, north of the Bay of Skaill. E. Ward Drummond and O. Hill climbed the 1200 ft of the North wall of St John's Head.

In February the nose of the Sgurr of Eigge was climbed in a snow-storm (VS and A.3)

**H. MacInnes and A. Fyffe**



104 Selection of equipment for Strone Ulladale. Photo: K. Wilson

## Ireland 1970

This has been a lean year for new routes. Because of the paucity of rock-climbers in Ireland (the same names recur time and again in the lists of first ascents) there tends to be a rush of first ascents as a new crag is opened up, followed by a lean period.

The discovery of Fairhead, mentioned in these notes last year, produced a magnificent series of new routes, but the flood has now subsided, and 1970 brought only one route of importance. *The Burn-up* 260 ft HVS, by Paul McHugh and Shay Billane follows the first groove right of Greyman's Path. It is well up to the standard of the crag with a pendulum move and the crux near the top of a 150 ft lead out.

The Spillikin Club has published a provisional guide to Fairhead, listing fifteen climbs. Except for two Hard Severs, the gradings are all VS or higher. This is the only guide published during the year, though the MS of the definitive Donegal Guide is said to be nearly ready.



105 *Luggala, main face—the big overhang clearly visible.*  
Photo: J. Lynam

Interest has now turned to Luggala in Wicklow. This is a big granite cliff with tremendous possibilities, but extremely daunting. There is quite a lot of vegetation, a luxuriant growth of moss and lichen, and even the simplest line generally turns out to be holdless and difficult. It was the first crag to be tackled seriously by Irish climbers after the war, but techniques were not good enough for the difficulties met, and apart from two good routes on the lower buttresses, *Crevasse Route* 275 ft VS, and *Pine Tree Buttress*, 300 ft, S., only the fringes of the crag were successfully climbed. The huge overhang on the Main Face which dominates the whole cliff was attempted without success, and efforts were transferred to the more tractable crags above Glendalough. There was a brief resumption of interest in 1959 when Deacon and Stephenson of the Royal Marines, spurred on by Frank Winder put a magnificent route, *Spearhead*, 190 ft, HVS up the Main Face. The route goes up the face below the overhang, which was forced by a spectacular hand traverse round the right end.

It was not until 1969 that another route was made (*North Buttress*, 180 ft VS), but all through 1970 at least a dozen climbers were busy on the crag, working out their own lines, and cleaning. So far only one route has been completed—*Soyuz Ten*, about 200 ft, XS, again by the team McHugh-Billane. It lies to the right of *Spearhead*, and goes directly through the smaller overhangs just right and below the big overhang.

**Joss Lynam**

## The Lake District 1970

A late winter followed by a short summer foiled most people's hopes of regular climbing on the high crags, although the usual spell of fine weather in June lasted a whole month. It was during this period that most of the climbing was concentrated. The year was memorable by its list of second rather than first ascents as the post guide lull became more pronounced. The exception was Gable Crag which produced five new routes within a month.

On the coast, the St. Bees sandstone cliffs established themselves as crags in their own right and not just wet weather alternatives.

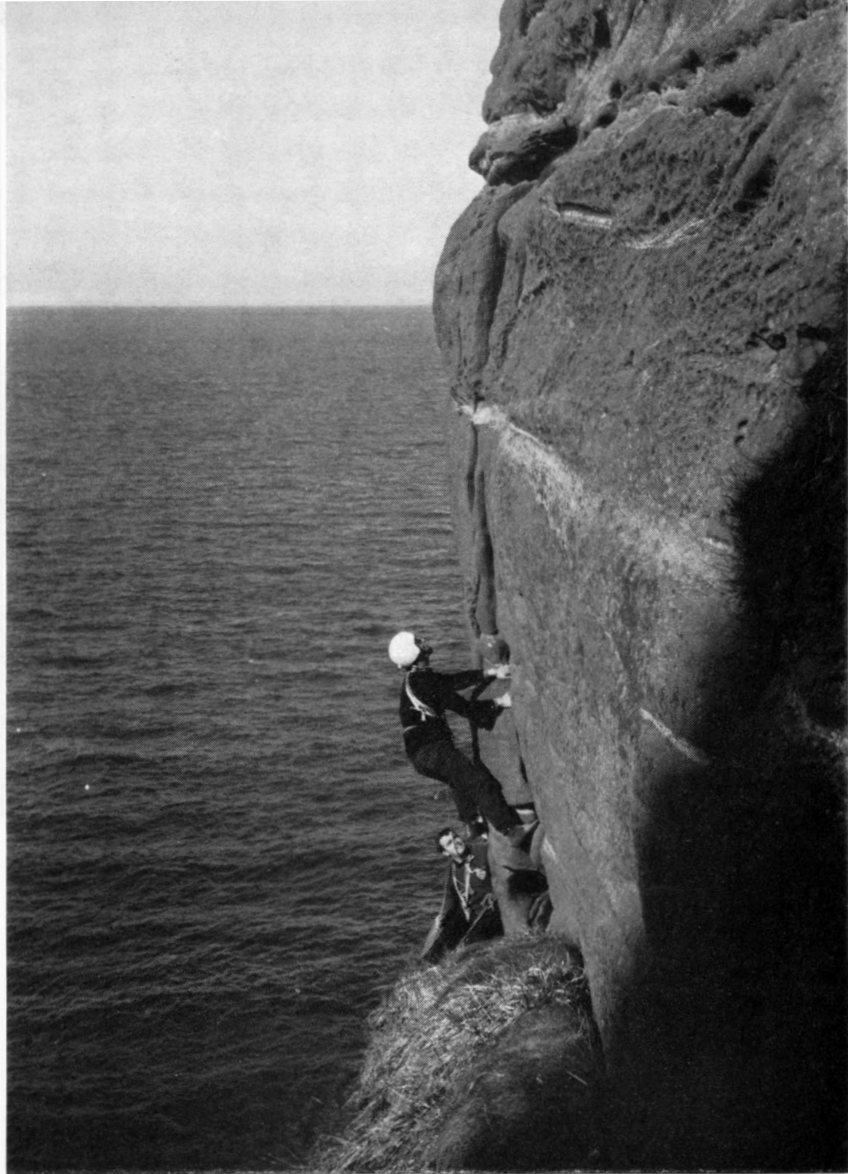
**Borrowdale–Buttermere** In Borrowdale new routes continued to be uncovered by the irrepressible McHaffie. On Raven Crag with Allison he climbed *Raven Crag Grooves* (VS) and solo'd *The Warbler* (VD). With Frehlands he climbed *Autobahn* (HVS) to the left of *Spinup* on Lower Falcon Crag, *Excalibur* (HVS) on a new crag opposite Gowder Crag and added an extreme pitch on the Girdle of Quayfoot Buttress. On Greatend Crag he also forced a line out of the left-hand side of the cave and named it *The Sorcerer*. On Eagle Crag, Read and Adams climbed a series of grooves between *Postern Groove* and *Postern Gate* and named it *The Seams* (HVS). Frehlands solo'd the Girdle. *Post Mortem* maintains its reputation, having as many failures as ascents. Young and Robinson made the second ascent of *The Web* on Force Crag, Coledale Valley and thought the top 100 ft corner the most dangerous pitch they had ever climbed on account of the loose nature of the rock. Robinson parted company with the rock twice when the holds broke away. However, it is a good route and should the top corner ever become solid, it may become quite popular.

The Buttermere guide has appeared and declares no extreme routes. This seems likely to cause some controversy as a few routes have long been regarded as being in the extreme grade.

At last the Green Crag routes have been published after much secrecy to discourage competition. The best routes appear to be *Menchevik* and *Paper Tiger*.

One route which was completed too late for the guide was *Gethsemane* (HVS) on High Crag.

**Eastern Fells** Castle Rock, Raven Crag and Dove Crag still remain the most popular cliffs in the area although many of the smaller crags and valleys remain quiet and untouched, a pleasant relief in this day and age.

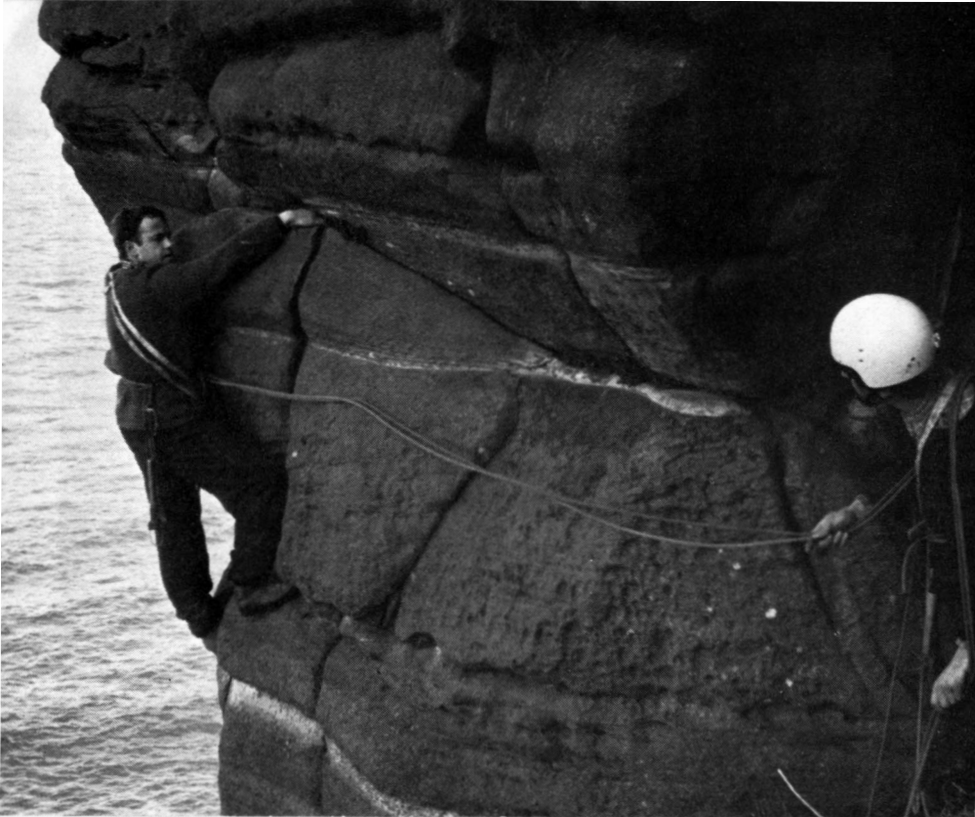


106 *Sea cliffs at St Bees.* Photo: I. Angell

On Castle Rock, Frehlands climbed an intricate line between *Agony* and *May Day Cracks* and called it *Eliminator*. It may be well named as it is a bold lead on dubious rock.

Rainsbarrow Crag after its brief spell as top of the new crag scene has now fallen almost into obscurity, partly due to the lack of 'big routes' and partly due to the vegetation which is very much in evidence.

**Gable-Eskdale** Gable Crag, long regarded as a big, grassy, damp cliff has received something of a face lift and is now becoming more and more popular.



107 *Traverse at St Bees*. Photo: I. Angell

No fewer than five new routes appeared this year of which the best appears to be Valentine's *Jabberwock*, a thin crack line to the right of *The Tomb*. Although a shorter route *The Serpent* 140 ft XS by Read and Robinson is probably harder. Of the existing routes all are climbed regularly although only one or two people have managed the original way of doing the crux pitch of *The Tomb* and *The Slant* is now regarded as being only HVS.

**St. Bees** The sandstone cliffs at the North and South Heads provide Lakeland's nearest answer to Gogarth. Exploration started in 1969 by the Egremont climbers and Wyndham M.C., continued at a steady pace throughout 1970. It now boasts twenty-seven routes in the VS and above categories and lengths vary from 200 to 400 ft. Many of the routes at present follow crack/chimney lines of the gritstone variety rather than the open face climbing normal in the Lake District.

Although loose blocks and grass were present on the first ascents, many routes were ascended with much aid and little consideration for ethics. Subsequent ascents have reduced the aid—drastically in some cases. The better routes at present appear to be, *Harmony* (HVS) (Wilson and Martin), *B.Z.* (VS) (Angell, Smith and Wilson), *Tashunca Uitco* (HVS) (Wilson and Smith), and *Gypsy* (VS) (Cowan and Wilson).

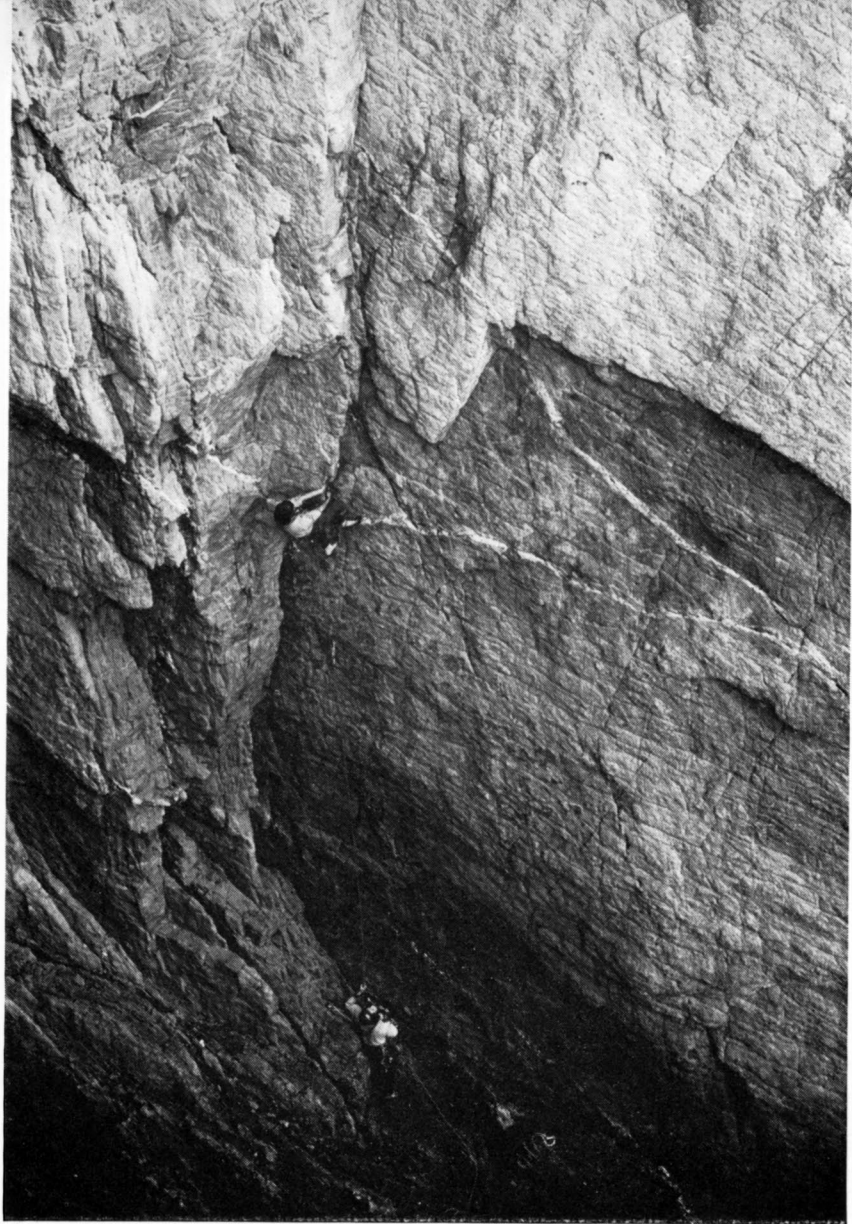
**Pillar and Area** The Rock has maintained its post-guide boom throughout the year. Only one new route has appeared proving how extensively the crag was explored. *Err* starts up *Thor* then finds an independent line to the top of the cliff. It is a slight and devious route. *Black Widow* had its second free ascent (third overall) by McHardie and Braithwaite and will not revert to a 'peg route' again.

Haskett Buttress the controversial crag in the guide has now been put 'on the map' by Greenop and friends. It now boasts about eight routes but the names chosen hardly encourage one to repeat them e.g. *Delectation Sinistrorse* and *Dominic's Scrat*.

**Scafell** Scafell has been surprisingly quiet this year, an unexpected relief from previous years when one had to queue for hours on even the hardest routes. The year had been notable for the repetitions of some of the major East Buttress routes. *Overhanging Grooves* had a second ascent by Valentine and Nunn reducing the aid on the first pitch to one peg and three slings. They found it very strenuous and some idea of the degree of the difficulty can be obtained from the fact that Nunn spent two hours seconding the pitch. Burbage and Young repeated *Minotaur* and found it to be definitely Extreme and not H.V.S. as graded by the party on the first ascent. The crux appears near the end of the first pitch and involves blind moves up bulging rock on one of the most exposed sections of the cliff—a small crag problem on a big cliff. *Gold Rush* fell to Read and Adams who climbed it without the slings for resting. They thought it an excellent route in keeping with the other routes on the crag. Only *Dyad*, *Chimera* and *East Buttress Girdle* on East Buttress are still awaiting second ascents.

**Langdale** Langdale still remains the most popular valley with its abundance of low-lying, quick-drying crags. Minor routes and variations are still appearing at a steady rate; a few bigger are worthy of mention. Austin's *Brackenclock*, H.V.S. taking the obvious fault line between *By-Pass Route* and *Stoat's Crack* is difficult but escapable. On Bowfell, Wood added *B.B. Corner* as a companion route to *Flat Crag Corner*. On Neckband Crag, Lounds added a direct finish to *Gillette* making that climb probably the most difficult in the valley. On the same crag the Barley brothers climbed the steep corner between *Razor Crack* and *Gizzard* and named it *Swordblade*, HVS.

**F.R.C.C. Guide-books** Buttermere and Newlands Area was published in the middle of the year thus completing an excellent series of guides. They are planning to re-write the guides during the next few years in order to keep them



108 *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, Anglesey. Photo: John Cleare

up to date. They are also planning to bring out a pamphlet guide to St. Bees towards the end of 1971 and this will eventually be incorporated into the Pillar Guide.

## Wales 1970

**North Wales** Claims that the popular crags are 'played out' are increasingly heard, yet the centre of gravity so far as new exploration is concerned still hovers surprisingly far to the north. Certainly the tendency has been away from central Snowdonia to remote and almost forgotten havens of seclusion where the ardent fan can 'do his own thing'. Guide-book writers rate high in this category. Yet even the most hackneyed crags have their 'resident expert' lurking in the shadows ready to pick the odd 'plum' or topple 'the last great problem', only to be replaced by yet another of course.

Anglesey continues to provide its quota of new routes, many of which are attributable to its addicts. At North Stack, *Green Gilbert* HVS and *The Wall of Horrors* XS have been climbed to the left and right of *The Whip*. The latter, reported to be 'loose and rather gripping', was by Cliff Philips. In the Wen Zawn area Ben Campbell-Kelly has girdled the section between *Ipsa Facto* and *The Trap*, an entertaining expedition. Another new route traverses the very lip of the Spider's Web cave. My brother, Janet Rogers and I did *Minute Man* between *Thor* and *The Trap*, amidst T.V. men and equipment, with a very distinguished derisive audience. The T.V. spectacular sought to glamorise climbing for the benefit of the laymen and prompted wide criticism in the climbing press. A couple of days later Lawrie and I did *Zeus* XS a fine direct line to the right of *Wen*. Ed. Ward-Drummond and Dave Pearce contrived *Games that Climbers Play* XS, breaking through the crumbling overhangs at the back of the zawn with 60 ft of sky hooking and a 50 ft pendulum for good measure. Two lads from R.A.F. (Valley) have been very active on the crags, particularly the Upper Tier to produce a series of eliminates of high technical interest but doubtful quality. Red Wall has once again received its fair share of attention with Ed. Ward-Drummond adding *The Maze*, a girdle traverse, and *Brown Study*, an intricate line left of Red Wall; both are XS. A party commencing Red Wall managed to stray from their chosen climb and had several frightening experiences resulting in *Brown Trousers* XS, a new route!

Limestone climbing has been neglected so far in North Wales, but this situation has been remedied by a well-equipped group including Roland Edwards and Cliff Philips. They have been investigating the potential of Little Orme. Detailed information is not forthcoming but routes described as the 'Coronation Street of North Wales' must rank high. *Detritus*, a 600 ft artificial route climbed solo by Roland using self protection techniques, is regarded as a major achievement.

**Snowdonia** In the mountains all the big crags received attention in spite of the limitations imposed by unfavourable conditions. On 'Cloggy' Rouse climbed *Gemini XS*, a very impressive route between *The Boldest* and *Left Edge*. He also soloed a number of very hard routes; other noted soloists include Richard McHardy, Cliff Philips and Eric Jones. This trend suffered a sobering setback when Philips fell 200 ft. Amazingly he was able to crawl from the crag (Dinas Mot) to his car and drive to Nant Peris before losing consciousness. Fortunately he is now fully recovered. Back on 'Cloggy', Leo Dickinson put his camera aside to climb *Apollo*, breaking through the roofs right of *Steep Band*. The amount of aid used has generated a certain amount of argument. Graham Gilbert did *Flintstone Wall* a nice HVS left of *Left Edge*, whilst Dave Yates and Potts surprised us with a VS trending right from *Croak*.

The long neglected Lliwedd received a well deserved lift when Harold Drasdo and Hugh Banner climbed the *Bender* H.V.S. during the course of some very conscientious guide-book work. Llechog has been lost in the archives for so long that it is hard to remember exactly where it is. Again a guide-book writer, Jim Perrin, has focussed attention and produced *Resurrection*, an aptly named 400 ft HVS, said to be excellent in the upper part.

Ray Evans, whose persistence never fails to amaze, climbed the much tried arête right of *Codswallop* on Craig yr Ogof. *Jabberwocky XS* is probably the best route in the area this year. Mike Yates and Trevor Jones produced *Guardian Angel* on Craig y Bere, a crag menaced by loose rock and hostile farmers.

Ogwen seldom gets a mention in Welsh Notes but certainly deserves one this year, when the quest for virgin rock has brought some old haunts under close scrutiny. In the Devil's Kitchen, Ken Hiphiss and 'Tom' Leppart have made three new routes, *The Devil Rides Out* HVS + A2, *Tranquillity* HVS, a superb girdle of North crag, and *Inferno* MVS. Unbelievably, even the Idwal slabs claimed a VS, close to Hope.

Further afield Philips added *Pusher Man* to Craig y Llan in the Rivals and at Cilan Head on the Lleyn Peninsula Keith Myhill and Ken Jones completed *The Crow XS*, the most significant development here since Jack Street's *Vulture*.

I was lucky enough to be responsible for three new routes on Llech Ddu, two with Trevor Jones, the third, later in the year with John Kingston and Rob Ford. The upper part of the latter route (*Shrapnel* HVS) includes some precarious work with thin overhanging flakes: it finished with a rather mind-

blowing, heather-clutching mantelshelf, which was accomplished in a more dignified manner by my companions.

**Central Wales** This area has been monopolised by the Staffordshire Mountaineering Club for a number of years now. The occasional forays by climbers from the north of the principality have usually been short lived. 'Jug' Jarvis is a notable exception.

Early in the year 'Jug' put up *Grey Citadel* HVS on the remote East face of Aran Benllyn, a fine achievement in dry but very cold conditions. Some superb ice gullies were found on the same face, two of which were climbed by John Sumner and Jill Henrickson. Later on John did second ascents of all Joe Brown's routes on Gist Ddu and added *Scimitar* HVS, a route comparable in excellence to Boysen's *Hard Work*. *Obvious* is a first rate V. Diff. by the Thorndyke brothers, whilst *Box Trick*, a noted severe, completes this year's activity on the crag.

As the summer progressed Craig Cowarch received its share of attention, *Oh Calcutta* and *Porcupine* are pleasant V.S.s by 'Jug' Jarvis on South Buttress. He has contributed a number of other routes among which is *Hell's Gate* XS, so far it has repulsed all subsequent attempts. At the north end of the crag Topley and Thorndyke provide two good VSs, *The Magic Dragon* and *Where Eagles Dare*. *The Scythe*, Mild Severe, is on the much used rock right of North Gully.

These crags seem destined for far more serious consideration in the future, a trend that is likely to be accelerated when the C.C. publish John Sumner's guide to the area.

**South Wales** The very rapid development of two newly discovered limestone crags constitutes a major event in this area. Wynd Cliffe overlooking the Lancut meander of the Wye is 120-150 ft high. Thirty routes by Frank Cannings and others follow good natural lines, and give beautiful views. Craig Cefn Coed is below the Heads of the Valley road viaduct at Cefn Coedy Cymmer, two miles above Merthyr Tydfil. It is a sound clean crag about 80 ft high, and has over eighty routes all of which have been done this year. Both these crags add considerably to an area which has been without many prospects for the climber. Cannings has also contributed *Big Brother* 280 ft XS at Wintour's Leap and two important routes at Ban y Gor rocks.

To the west on the Gower Peninsula little activity seems to have followed the recently published guide. The predictable trend of reducing aid on existing over-pegged routes is, however, well under way.



109 *Bow-shaped Slab, Flimston Bay, Pembrokeshire.* Photo: J. Perrin

On the South Pembrokeshire coast there has been an enormous amount of activity, and this is now an area of great interest. The principal developments have taken place near Lydstep, where Jim Perrin has worked at a prodigious rate. Only a few of the excellent routes climbed can be mentioned here. *Absalom* is a deceptive looking HVS, *Friendly Neighbour* and the rather frightening *Lazy Sunday Crack*—‘similar to the top section of *Winking Crack*, but five times as long’—no protection of course, are among them. *Poseidon* is an impressive diagonal traverse making some very thin moves between two belts of overhangs. Further west is the *White Tower* which contains the impressive *White Sheet*, the classic *Sea Groove* and *Anathema*. The next buttress to the west is Mother Carey’s Kitchen and includes the best climbing in the area. *Entropy* HVS is on appalling rock, *Joyous Guard* and the *Strait Gate*, comparable with *Cemetery Gates*, are to be found here.

Further west again are the Elegug Stacks. These were climbed in the autumn by an experienced party of cliff explorers including Frank Cannings, John Cleare, Jim Perrin and Peter Biven. These limestone stacks are probably the highest outside Scotland. Elegug Tower is a massive structure 150 ft. high, whilst the Spire is a fine pinnacle 130 ft high. The latter proved to be the more difficult. Access is doubly complex as the stacks form part of a N.A.T.O. tank range at Castle Martin and permission from the Ministry of Defence is essential. The approach is by abseil and it is only possible to reach the stacks for a limited time either side of low tide.

L. R. Holliwell<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Jim Perrin, John Sumner and John Cleare for help with various parts of the above.



110 *Eileug Stacks, Pembrokeshire.* Photo: John Cleare

## Pennine Outcrops 1970

The 'grab it while its there' approach to new climbs has led to yet another year of boom in Yorkshire and in the Peak area. In the long run there will doubtless be diminishing returns in quantity and even more so in quality of climbs, but at present there is precious little concrete evidence of this despite the Jeremiahs.

In the Peak 'bunches' of new climbs on 'under-exploited' crags have been characteristic, these usually being the work of groups with intimate knowledge of a particular area or cliff. The activities of the original guide writers to Great Rocks Dale, a limestone quarry, are typical: Tony Howard and the Rimmon group did most of the earlier routes here in the mid sixties. In 1970 they did perhaps ten new climbs on the cliff, with *The Temple of Larg Jangrang* (HVS, 200 ft, Birch, A. Howard) and other climbs on the leaning fierce wall in the crag centre particularly notable.

Jeff Morgan's clutch of routes at Chee Tor shows similar concentration. *Sleepwalkers* (Valentine) and *Nostradamus* and the *Last Laugh* (Sanderson-Bassingdale) are all over a 100 ft, on excellent rock and VS or over. Unfortunately Chee Tor emasculates many good climbs at the Girdle Line. Valentine solved this by the use of two bolts. The general under-utilisation of the upper wall is reduced by a spectacular new traverse, *The Tropic of Cancer* (450 ft, HVS Morgan, Toogood, Lewis).

There has been less concentrated activity in the Lower Wye Area. A scatter of new climbs includes another peg route up Raventor, Millers Dale, between *Hubris* and *The Prow*, several climbs by Keith Myhill and Ken Jones on Mill Buttress and Central Buttress, Water-cum-Jolly and a few more piton routes lower down the valley. At Ravensdale Dearman filled in two most obvious gaps with *Myopia* (on the tower left of *Concluser*, VS) and *Purple Haze* (Between *Ploy* and *Mephistopheles* HVS). A few things were done on the neglected buttress right of the *Archway* climb and at Stoney Middleton most effort went into repeat ascents of existing hard climbs. Myhill and Jones added another route to the Tryglyph. (*Who the Hell*, HVS).

Dove and Manifold have also been subjected to mass-produced climbing, which is natural when gardening is required before an ascent can be made. Various routes on Tissington Spires follow previous cleaning activities. *Mandarin* (VS, Nunn, Jones) is on a wall where earlier activities had been concentrated. *Tormentor* and *Deflector* seem to have required joint gardening by Mike Guillard (HVS and VS). All are quite long and excellent climbs. Jack

Street continued his activities in the area, which he is gradually turning into an XS man's playground, with *Harold Wilson* (XS) on a buttress near to Pickering Tor, and a groove on Ilam Rock (XS, previously pegged, both with Alan MacHardy).

In Manifold the old activists Nat Allen and Derrick Burgess did the *Fox*, apparently a good pitch on the right end of Beeston Tor, and Speedy Smith did some difficult climbing on a link pitch from *Bertrams Chimney* to the *Spider*. On the left flank Dearman excavated meticulously to produce *Buzz* and *White Room* (Severe and VS). Morgan plugged away at an eliminate up the area between *Thorn* and *Patience*, coming up with *The Beast* (220 ft, HVS) which takes in some very good climbing.

At Ossam's Crag hanging gardens disappeared to give half a dozen climbs on the deceptive wall below *Cummerbund*. *Conventicle* (HVS, Nunn, Toogood) which crosses *Cummerbund*, and *Barquentine* (HVS, Nunn, Richardson, Rowland) are worthwhile.

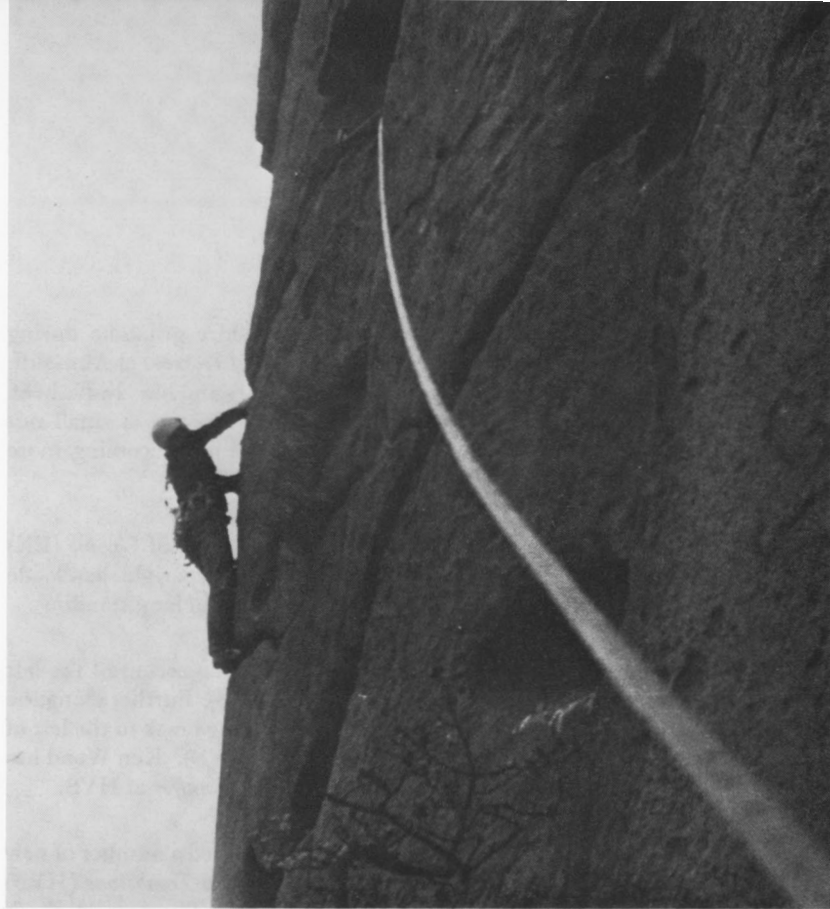
Of course many individual routes have appeared on limestone crags. Among these Dearman's Direct finish to *Spider* in Chee Dale is notable in that it avoids the pegging of the end of a free climb. (A2/3). Solitary routes were also found in Castleton area and in the slow developing Staidon Quarry near Buxton, but not much appeared in the Matlock area. Two Black and Tans climbers did a groove near to *Gethsemane Groove* at Willersley (HVS), Jones did a right-hand exit from *PTO*, while *Malfeasant* and the *Pillar* were added to High Tor's peg routes when many of the old ones are going 'freer' (Moore, A/3). With singular application, skyhooks were used instead of other forms of aid on *Flakey Wall* and *Perseus* by E. W. Drummond.

Gritstone retains its popularity. In areas bordering the Peak there have been some real massacres of new climbs, most of these being in quarries or on the sandstone of the Churnet. Street, Wingfield and others were especially active at Dukes Quarries near Ripley, doing many climbs. *Great Corner* and *Wildgoose Arête* (90 ft, XS and HVS) are only two more prominent climbs among a much greater number. At the less fierce secluded Stancliffe Quarry near Darley Dale there has been a similar but smaller outburst, producing a dozen or so climbs. The biggest spurt of all came in the Churnet where the locals have been hard at work in preparing for a guide. A 70 ft crag with a 200 ft VS belly-traverse is rumoured to be a minor attraction.

Further north the North Staffs climbers have done a number of new climbs of considerable difficulty on the Roaches. If a slab left of *Rhodren* is anything to



111 *Millstone Edge—a free climb of a former artificial route. This and next photo: Paul Nunn*



112 *Mordaunt, Cratcliffe Tor, first ascent 1970*

go on, these could be very hard indeed, though details are not yet available. Near Macclesfield a number of quarries, climbed on piecemeal for more than ten years, have received a systematic going over which will doubtless have produced new climbs.

In another rather specialised area, Chew Valley, new climbs have been discovered, including several long traverses at Dovestones Quarry and Crowden Great Quarry. Even at Whimberry a new route has been found just right of *Ornithologist's Corner*, and new variants have been discovered at Ravenstones.

On the eastern edges R. Taylor has climbed nine new routes at Wharncliffe and Agden, and the slab left of *Heather Wall* has at last been recorded as led (HVS, Froggatt). Other developments include a recorded ascent of the slab right of *Tody's Wall* (also Froggatt, HVS) and similar technically difficult fillers-in. Of these the routes left and right of *Suicide Wall*, and a traverse of the same buttress at Cratcliffe Tor are examples of the very good climbing which can still emerge from quieter areas (*Sepulchre*, VS/HVS, *Requiem*, HVS/XS and *Mordaunt*, HVS/XS).

Undoubtedly the most notable achievement on Yorkshire gritstone during the last year is John Syrett's sight lead of Austin's *Wall of Horrors* at Almscliff. The climb has awaited a second ascent for over nine years and has always been considered unprotectable. However, Syrett managed to secure a small nut runner just below the crux which may result in the climb becoming more popular.

At Ilkley nothing of note has been added with the exception of *Gnome* (EX) by M. Hammill. The climb follows the obvious groove up the right-hand side of the overhanging face of the Calf and has been a problem of long standing.

Tony Barley has again made his mark at Brimham with an ascent of the left wall of *Lovers Leap Chimney*, providing the *Lovebug* (HVS). Further along the escarpment John Syrett has climbed the fierce overhanging crack to the left of *Charming Crack* and has aptly named it *The Brutaliser* (HVS). Ken Wood has also climbed the thin overhanging crack to the left of the *Snuffer* at HVS.

Across the valley at Guisecliff the Barley brothers have added a number of new routes to their existing collection. The first of these is the *Tombstone* (HVS) which takes the steep crack line to the right of *Daniel*. The second climb *Skyjacker*, also HVS, finds a way up the front of the buttress between *North Wall Eliminate* and *Comet Wall*. And finally *Sideshow* (HVS) follows a line to the right of *Comet Wall*. With regard to the existing routes at Guisecliff, *The Creation* (EX) has had a remarkable second ascent by M. Quinn.

At Deer Gallows and Rylstone a few minor routes have been added by M. Hammill and Frank Wilkinson respectively, but do not warrant individual mention here. Crookrise, Simon's Seat and Widdop remain unchanged indicating the thoroughness of the guide-book writers.

*The Thin Red Line* at Heptonstall Quarry has been repeated by Bob Whittaker and is not as hard as first thought. Meanwhile the crack up the centre of the left-hand buttress has been re-discovered and provides a pleasant climb of VS standard.

After a post-guide-book period of little activity, a flood of new routes appeared on Yorkshire limestone during the spring and summer of 1970.

With all the big, hard courses having been repeated, efforts were obviously channelled into breaking new ground.

Many new teams were in action, but the old hands grabbed the biggest slices of the cake. Allan Austin, Mike Bebbington, Frank Wilkinson, Dave Miller, Steve Wood and, on occasions, Ken Wood put together almost a hundred new climbs between them.

Many are on popular crags—over thirty on the escarpment at Attermire—and some on not-so-well-known cliffs—like the two dozen or so at Giggleswick Scar. Another thirty were found at Hawkswick.

A new name to emerge during this period is that of Mike Hamill. In addition to his local gritstone successes, he has recorded an XS on the left wing of Gordale Scar (between *Sheep's Crack* and *The Gibbon*).

He is the first to use the top grade and is to be applauded for sticking his neck out . . . provided the sages do not chop it off.

It has also been a year of plenty for the 'whack and dangle' boys. A fine crop of routes has been gathered amid the big walls of Malham Cove.

The big overhang at Giggleswick—mentioned in the '68 limestone guide—has also succumbed. It looks very impressive and required bolts.

The scene is set for an even more prolific 1971. And that will not be so bad because a revised edition of the guide is being organised during the summer months.

**Paul Nunn<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The help of Mike Bebbington and Frank Wilkinson with these notes is acknowledged.