

Journals 1971 and others

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When laid flat, this year's quota of journals and magazines stands some 38 inches high, a sizeable peak for the mind to scale, and enough to stand in the way of several week-ends of real climbing. Despite this, it is right that the call for more should go out, particularly to the British universities, who are a substantial source of tomorrow's climbers. It may be that they publish modestly and hide their works within their own walls. If so, let them spare a copy for the Alpine Club; they may be sure that an interest will be taken in it.

Cambridge University has produced an excellent number (Ed. Shennan) ranging from Greenland to Beinn Eighe, but Oxford, whose Editor's report has lately read like a distress signal, is now suffering a pause. Perhaps Oxford can learn from *Clogwyn* (University College of North Wales. Ed. Radcliffe) which at 15p seems an excellent bargain. If it is not a subsidised journal its production is a masterpiece of economy. Akademischer Alpenklub Zurich have produced a fine work to mark seventy-five years of existence, mostly reminiscences of expeditions mounted for the Club in the past. Akademischer Alpenklub Bern has no such trumpet to blow this year, and confines itself to a chronicle of members' climbs. The simple chronicle of climbs is a feature of few British journals, amongst which only the A.B.M.S.A.C. springs immediately to mind (Ed. Daniels). Such an approach only serves when a club publication is designed solely for its own members. In the case of the British-Swiss, the journal is also the club's year-book as well, and a good one at that.

The Pinnacle Club Journal 1971 (Ed. Gil Fuller) also recognises its 50th birthday in an understandably nostalgic issue recalling the early days when membership qualifications differed from those of today:

And those who cannot climb, [were] admitted instead.

On a knowledge of knots, the use of 'thread'.

It is a great sadness that *Rocksport* (Ed. Watkin) appears to have suffered a fatal fall, but there are good prospects of a revival. The B.M.C. is reviving its own, frankly, flagging publication. In hope tinged slightly with anxiety, one awaits an authoritative, broadly based and well-written climbing magazine.

Mountain (Ed. Ken Wilson) continues as ever. This year's highlights include some posthumous Patey, who, like Robin Smith, in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* and elsewhere, lives on by his writing. The controversy surrounding Nanga Parbat has been fully documented in four issues of *Mountain* (12, 13, 15 and 18); the reporting of the protagonists appears to have been unbiased, objective and fair. It is commendable that once started the argument has been seen through, although one hopes it is now concluded.

Of the British Club Publications, there is no doubt that the *Fell and Rock Journal* and the *S.M.C. Journal* are the best (Eds, respectively, G. Dyke and G. Dutton). The articles are well written. In the *Fell and Rock Journal*, Roper's short piece on Cima di Castello stands out as a workmanlike piece of writing, which both amuses and describes the route climbed. Above all, this journal is well and unobtrusively edited, with a careful and excellent selection, particularly of photographs, which has resulted in a very nicely balanced work. The *S.M.C. Journal* has reached the end of an era. G. J. Dutton, its Editor for 11½ years, is retiring. In a self-effacing valedictory, hiding coyly among 'Miscellaneous Notes,' he writes 'Editors should retire when they feel that the pencil no longer smokes with controllably objective zeal, but either flames to exasperation or cools down to apathy'. He has, he writes, 'felt frost at the tip'. The 1971 issue is a fine mixture of contemporary and past history. The latter is contributed by Robin Smith's '24 Hours' (reprinted from the *E.U.M.C. Journal*), and the former, *inter alia*, by the Editor designate ('One Man's Meat'). Also from Scotland, is the *Cairngorm Club Journal* under fresh editorship (Hawksworth) with articles ranging from far afield to local hills in Scotland.

Alas, the Climbers' Club has given birth to a rather poor journal (1969 Ed. F. A. Wedgwood). After an abnormally long pregnancy, *parturient montes*. . . . It is hoped and understood that 1972 will bring improvements by the incorporation of *New Climbs* into the journal itself. An injection of vigour is needed.

The fifty-second, and last, issue of the *British Ski Year Book* (Ed. Sir Arnold Lunn) has now been published. Finance has hit that which even the Second World War failed to stop. It will in future appear in amalgamation with *Ski Notes and Queries*, two or three times a year, under the title of *Ski Survey*. It will not be any the less authoritative. This year's articles owe as much as ever to its relentless editor. James Riddell writes a most pleasing reminiscence of his call to become a member of the first ever British Ski Team in 1927.

Mis-spelling of Alpine names, to harp on a theme, is a feature of *The Canterbury Mountaineer* (1969-70 Ed. T. Morton). One accepts, though, that the Alps are of major expedition distance for a New Zealander, and that makes a considerable difference. There is a short account in *The Canterbury Mountaineer* of the culminating feat of Dingle and Jones in the European Alps on the Eigerwand in 1969. *Tararua Trampler* (Ed. Bryson Hosie, a monthly New Zealand publication) reflects the quirks of its members. In an article on wood fires one member calls his fellows to 'despise primus addicts as the weaklings they truly are'. Stern stuff.

The *Canadian Alpine Journal* (1971 Ed. Graft) continues to develop. Both the quantity and quality of its photographs continue to impress, particularly those of Dick Culbert; while the opportunities for every sort of climbing in Canada are well reflected.

The Mountain Club of Kenya have not published in time for review in this *Alpine Journal*, but the *Mountain Club of Rhodesia Journal* (1970, Ed. Walter

Krog) is for the first time made available to persons outside that Club. Probably its best and most original article concerns the kidnappers of two peregrine falcon chicks from a cliff near Que Que by Don Harris. *The Mountain Club of South Africa Journal* (1970 Ed. H. F. Snijders) by its editorial entitled 'Conservatism', states the position adopted by M.C.S.A. in current mountaineering circles. Almost all the articles are confined to the Club's native rock. L. P. Faffi's article on the Troll Wall, is an exception to this.

From Australia comes a journal named *Thrutch*, which now calls itself the *Australasian Climbing Magazine*, having previously been *The Australian Climbing Magazine*. It is improving in standard, which anyway is all the better for its being a non-profit making hobby (their words) of its two Editors (Pavey and Monteath). One wonders, though, whether the name will continue to be appropriate, when this magazine attains, as one expects it will, a very high standard.

American publications are all well and efficiently produced. *Ascent* (1971, Eds Pratt and others), remains the glossiest of the glossies, and one can do little but observe that it deserves to be read. It is a very well-informed journal, leads the world photographically, and always contains interesting articles, not the least of them those reprinted from unlikely sources; for instance 'Little Mother up the Mördenberg' by H. G. Wells. *The American Alpine Journal* (1971) (Ed. H. Adams Carter) defies any short description. It contains a wealth of good articles, much of lasting interest, and adds a lot of information in its Climbs and Expeditions Section. A long combination of articles on the earthquake in Peru, journalistically compiled re-creates that disaster with immediacy.

To judge from their publications, the most prolific of all, excluding the Japanese, are the members of the Appalachian Mountain Club, who produce a lengthy journal as well as a monthly magazine. *Appalachia* (Ed. L. M. Richardson) is up to its usual standard. Particularly enjoyable is a short and amusing poem 'Walter Mitty, Mountaineer', by John Woodworth. The Mountaineers (of Seattle) are now publishing in a larger format (Ed. Robisch) and the Mazamas (of Portland, Oregon), have produced a relatively wide-ranging journal (Ed. Dorothy Compton). They have articles on the Alps, Alaska, Bolivia, and even a description of an ascent of Snowdon by the Miners' Track, complete with a diagram.

The *U.I.A.A. Bulletin* (Ed. Tonella) published in French and German parallel texts is, one suspects, little read in this country save perhaps by Club Secretaries and members of the B.M.C's Equipment Sub-Committee. Not the least information it contains is the fact that the Youth Meet in the Tatras, hosted by the Mountain Club of Czechoslovakia, to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, reflects the current high standard of the young European climber. Something like 50 per cent of the routes climbed were in the range of V and VI.

Rivista Mensile (Ed. Bertoglio) in company with other European journals salutes the memory of George Finch. *La Montagne et Alpinisme* (Ed. Devies) marks fifty years of the Groupe de Haute Montagne with articles in its February (1970) edition by H. de Ségogne and Robert Paragot. *Les Alpes* (C.A.S.) contains accounts of a winter ascent 1969/70 of the Eiger, and an ascent and descent of the North face of Mont Collon, or 'un petit probleme' as the author has described it. In the second quarterly issue, Walter Kirstein—in an article 'Un grand-père à l'arête du Bianco'—tells of his climbing in 1969. He has done even more for them in 1971.

The journals, year books, magazines and other publications mentioned above are no more than a selection of the annual output of the world's mountaineers. It is impossible to do justice to all; impossible to mention all. Particularly, your reviewer's linguistic limitations prevent him from doing much more than glance at all publications in German. This is the only reason why reference to *Der Bergsteiger*, *Die Österreichische Alpenzeitung* and other German language periodicals is omitted from this article. This, unfortunately, also applies to Polish, Norwegian, Japanese and much other foreign work.

It is a fatiguing business reviewing such a mass of literature. There is much that is excellent; some, it is true, is of poor standard by objective measurement; but all that is written with a love of the hills, however expressed, and it is that which ultimately counts, and that makes the task of reading it a pleasure, for which thanks and acknowledgement are due to all the many Clubs who have sent their journals to the Alpine Club in 1971.