

Notes 1972 Europe

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Summary Many parties found the summer disappointing although, as will be seen below, by no means all. Weather in Chamonix was unsettled for long periods without actually breaking, so some parties managed to do good routes. In Zermatt there was a 3 week spell of unbroken fine weather ending abruptly and dramatically in the second week of August, during which many good ascents were made. There are reports that once again the weather was fine generally in September.

As usual many of these notes concern ascents around Mont Blanc, but this year there seem to have been more strong parties than usual interested in ice routes. Among the ice faces climbed by British parties were the N faces of the Gletscherhorn and the Gspaltenhorn, 2 of the great faces of the Oberland. Another development, which is probably inevitable, is the soloing of ice routes, and several ascents are recorded below. Hardly any information has been received about notable ascents made by British parties in the Dauphiné or the Dolomites this year.

I am indebted to Ken Wilson, the Editor of *Mountain*, for collecting much of the information on which these notes are based; to André Contamine for his notes on events around Mont Blanc; to Henri Agresti for his notes on winter ascents; and to all those who write to the ACG Bulletin, *Mountain*, or myself with information about their routes. Further details of many of the new routes or ascents listed below will be found in the 1973 Bulletin of the ACG.

MONT BLANC

After the 1971 season this summer was something of an anticlimax, with plenty of low cloud and dubious weather. Determined parties recorded good ascents, but casualties were high as well. The provisional total for the Mont Blanc area is over 40 dead, of whom 12 were British. Below, a brief selection of ascents by non-British climbers are recorded.

Interesting first winter ascents include that of the Couloir Lagarde-Ségogne on the NW face of the Aiguille du Plan by W. Cecchinell and C. Jager, 27-29 December 1971. This was only the second ascent of the 64° angled couloir first climbed in 1926 by Lagarde and de Ségogne in error. Winter ascents were also made of the Boccalatte Pillar on Mont Blanc du Tacul (P. Béghin and R. Raymond, 17-19 March) and of the Couloir Cordier on the Aiguille Verte (M. Michellod and D. Troillet, 19-21 January). Japanese climbers (Y. Kanda, H. Miyazaki, T. Nakano, I. Kato and K. Saito) made a route between the Pointes Walker and Whymper on the Grandes Jorasses, 19-29 March, so completing the line begun by Bonington and Haston in January. On 19 March,

94 *Traversing the Aiguille
Blanche* This and next
photo: R. Collister



while descending the Talèfre glacier after completing the first winter traverse of the Col Armand Charlet, J. Sangnier fell through a snow-bridge into a crevasse, where he remained for 3 days until rescued.

New routes were made on the N face of the Aiguille du Plan (M. Arrizi and D. Monaci, 9–10 July), on the sw Pillar of the Pte Marguerite on the Grandes Jorasses (J. Allippi and party in August), and on the left-hand pillar of the Frêne face, left of the Pilier Dérobé (L. Dubost and Y. Seigneur, 25–26 August). The Japanese climbers T. Nakano, Y. Kato and M. Suzaki, 6–7 September, made an *intégrale* on the nw ridge of the Blaitière which seems to be a very good route with difficulties of A1 and V+ in the first 300 m and thereafter III and IV. The Italian climbers V. Etis and F. Lorenzi, in August, ascended Mont Blanc for the first time by an *intégrale* version of the Innominata Ridge, starting from the Monzino hut via the Ottoz route on the s face of the Aiguille Joseph Croux taking 17 hours effective climbing time for the 2100 m of ascent.

The following were amongst the most notable solo ascents. R. Desmaison made the first solo ascent of the Peuterey *intégrale* on Mont Blanc after several others had failed, on 10–12 August. J. Coqueuniot soloed the Nant Blanc face of the

Aiguille Verte in 9½ hours on 13 July. J. Afanassief soloed the Croz Spur on the Grandes Jorasses, 11–12 August. P. Béghin soloed the N face of the Dru on 6 July in 6½ hours and, on 11 August, the Walker Spur in 12 hours.

Amongst ski descents of note were a third descent of the N face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay by Cachat-Roset in July, passing climbers on the face, and descents of the Couloir en Y on the Aiguille d'Argentière by M-J. and P. Valencant. Although strictly out of place here it is interesting to note the descent of the N face of the Ciamarella in the Graian Alps by Anselmat on 26 June. This face is up to 55° in angle and, according to the English guide, 'crampons and ice-axe are essential!'

Below only a small selection of routes climbed by British parties are recorded. It is a sign of the times that space unfortunately does not allow mention of parties climbing popular routes such as the Bonatti Pillar, N face of the Petit Dru or the W face of the Petites Jorasses. As usual the Walker Spur was popular and crowded: 'all lit up like Blackpool Tower' was the description of the Spur at night from one who was turned away by the crowds.

Mont Blanc via the N face of the Aiguille Blanche and the Peuterey Ridge R. Collister and R. Ferguson, 27 July, taking 15 hours from the Trident hut to the summit of Mont Blanc. The face was in excellent condition and the party took only 3 hours via the original Chabod-Grivel route. Difficulties occurred low down getting to the Col de Peuterey rather than at the supposed crux below the hanging glacier.

Mont Blanc, Central Pillar of Frêney D. Morris and J. Yates, P. Minks and A. McHardy, A. Burgess and A. Dewison. Most parties bivouac below the Chandelle.

Mont Blanc, Route Major Solo ascent by R. Collister on 23 August in 5¼ hours.

Aiguille du Midi, Frendo Spur Solo ascent by R. Collister on 9 August.

Grands Charmoz, W face, Cordier route Third ascent of this 600 m ED-route by J. Fantini and P. Coradine from Australia and New Zealand respectively. Fantini considers this to be one of the best granite routes he has done and better than the W face of the Petites Jorasses.

Les Droites, N face, W summit Third ascent of the Couzy route by C. Philipps and P. Braithwaite on 5 August, with a bivouac on the summit.

Les Courtes, central spur J. Anthoine and J. Wilkinson in 12 hours, hut to summit. The route is fairly serious, mixed D⁺ and not in the English guide.

Aiguille de Leschaux, NE face A. and A. Burgess made an ascent of the rarely climbed Cassin route in 10 hours. The first 3000 m were ice and the rest of the 800 m was steep rock.



95 *Mont Blanc from the Aiguille de Triolet*

Aiguille de Triolet N face The Burgess twins, with 2 Czechs, made an ascent of the new Direct route on the N pillar, taking 16 hours with a bivouac on the summit. They found hard ice at up to 55° up to the rock buttress and then loose mixed climbing at III–IV with a few pitches of V higher up. Features of the route were insecure belays, no stances, and rock-fall danger low down. Several other parties made ascents of the normal N face route. Fantini and Coradine in particular took only $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Aiguille du Chardonnet, NW buttress Solo ascent by J. Wilkinson in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours in August.

Grandes Jorasses, central couloir Bonington and Haston spent 17 nights on the face attempting to make the first ascent in January until defeated by prolonged bad weather 350 m below the summit ridge. The route was completed by a Japanese party in March.

Aiguille d'Argentière, NE face A new route to the left of the normal N face and the Messner routes was climbed by Haston and an American, C. Scott. The route is 800 m long and TD in standard.

PENNINE ALPS

There was a very fine 3-week spell ending dramatically in the second week of August.

Matterhorn, N face There were several ascents by British parties, amongst them R. Renshaw and J. Tasker, and one fatality, W. Cheverst. A Japanese team repeated Bonatti's Direct route.

Lyskamm, N face The E Summit Direct (Norman-Neruda) and the W Summit Direct (Diemberger-Stefan) both had several British ascents, but it

should be mentioned that a solo ascent of the latter was made in $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours by an English climber whose name was not recorded.

Dent d'Hérens, N face The Welzenbach route had ascents by Renshaw and Tasker, and by D. Wilkinson and D. Hill.

Zinal Rothorn, E face An ascent was made by Renshaw and Tasker. The face had its first winter ascent by the Swiss guides Etter, Gantenbein, and the Scherrers, 27–8 December 1971.

Grand Cornier, N face An ascent was made by R. Collister and R. Ferguson on 19 July in 5 hours. They found very hard ice in the top half which took the form of a steep but plain ice face in a pleasantly remote situation. Five hours were required to reach the face from a bivouac one hour above Zinal.

Mont Blanc de Cheilon, N face This face was climbed with the direct finish by Wilkinson and Hill in 6 hours.

OBERLAND

Eiger, N face An ascent of the ordinary route was made by D. Morris and J. Yates with 3 bivouacs.

Gletscherhorn, N face This is the most impressive of the ice faces of the Lauterbrunnen wall, and has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the hardest and biggest faces in the Oberland. This summer the face had ascents by both its existing routes, together with a new route by British parties. In mid June A. Rouse and R. Carrington climbed a new ED route right of the Welzenbach and Direct routes up a gully line leading to the second rock band and a difficult finish through the séracs above. For the description see the *ACG Bulletin*. In late June the Burgess twins climbed the Direct route in 18 hours with a bivouac just below the summit in a bergschrund. They found a lot of objective sérac danger and the route long and sustained ice climbing, but not harder than Scottish Grade III. The previous week, Rouse had spent a day watching avalanches sweeping the line of this route. On 1 August Collister and Ferguson climbed the Welzenbach route in $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The face was in excellent condition and continuously steep at between 50° and 55° with the crux a 40-m pitch of Scottish Grade IV ice over the left end of the long rock barrier cutting the face at half height. The weather was dubious.

Ebnefluh, N face This was climbed in late June by Carrington and Rouse, and by the Burgess twins. At that time the upper half was very hard, very clear ice requiring steps.

Gspaltenhorn, N face This is long and serious, being about 1800 m high and one of the great mixed routes, with a formidable reputation. The 1932 Welzenbach route was climbed by D. Yates and W. Barker.



96 Tagtoppen, North-east Pillar Photo: R. Goedeke

DOLOMITES

New routes were made on the s face of the third summit of the Pala di San Lucano (Gogna, Anghileri, Lanfranchi and Ravo, 29 April–1 May), on the Brenta Alta to the E of the Bochetta del Basso (same party, 19–20 July), and on the w Buttress of the Cima dell'Indipendenza in the Sella Group (Andreotti and Steinkötter). The first route is said to be 1500 m in height, VI, on excellent rock and only 65 pegs were used, of which 40 were left in place.

Fantini and Coradine climbed the Cassin-Ratti on the SE ridge of the Torre Trieste and the Solda-Conforto on the s face of the Marmolada.

NORWAY

Trolltind wall. 'Archwall' First ascent by Ed Drummond and H. Drummond from 9 to 28 August 1972, Grade VI, A5, 5B, 1400 m. The route starts between the French and Rimmon routes crossing the French route half way up level with the Great Plate, where a 30-m pendulum is made across to a thin crack system leading up to the great arch and then the top. The party spent 21 successive days on the wall, hauling 200 lb of gear with 11 days' food. However, they were blocked by storms for 7 days, and reached the summit in a poor way via the last few pitches of the Norwegian route, suffering from frost-bite and exposure.

A large German party, led by R. Goedeke, made several new routes among the mountains of N Norway during July and August, including the first ascent of the sw peak of Sennedalsfjell. Tagtoppen—NE pillar (herewith)—gave a 650-m route (V) on gabbro. New routes were also made on Senndalsfjell, Skarvkausen, Titind, V-tind, Balgesvarrinebba and Rundtind.

NEW GUIDE-BOOKS

Berner Alpen III Bietschhorn—Aletschhorn (SAC, Section Berne, in German). A revised issue of one of the long-established series of guide-books to the Oberland.

Guide du massif des Écrins. Tome II, Ailefroide, Pelvoux, Bans, Olan, Muzelle, by L. Davies, F. Labande and M. Laloue (B. Arthaud, Paris, in French). A worthy second volume completing the up-dating of this well-known guide-book series (see *AJ* 75 313).