

Notes 1972 Africa

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South Africa

The number of climbers remains small in spite of the large amount of rock climbing to be done and surges of interest usually follow visits from overseas climbers such as the Barley brothers from Britain, who galvanised Transvaal climbing. More overseas visitors would be very welcome.

Keith Bell and Howard Bevan, the Australians, well known for their second ascent of Ball's Pyramid by a new route, enjoyed their stay and were involved in several new climbs.

That old hardy annual, Table Mountain, with 493 recorded climbs, continues to be climbed out every year, but another 9 routes have been opened in recent months with some lines still quite easy. The vegetation area last 'abandoned' in 1910 is being re-entered.

In the Cape, attention is turning to the 8-mile-long rock wall in the Namaqualand desert 300 miles from Cape Town, while the mighty Hex River range was barely scratched recently with 2 new climbs of 300 m plus. In this area people prefer to do kloofing trips in summer and snow traverses in winter (when available) as getting to the rocks usually involves a half-day's walk.

The Drakensberg in Natal is still the scene for large climbing meets of both the MCSA and the Varsity clubs. The fated Monk's Cowl claimed another victim, but the prime target for the hard men remains the Injasuti Western Triplet. The route done by Davies, Graafland, Pepisch and Scott has now had 4 ascents, and is agreed to be the finest climb in the Berg.

The Transvaal's Magaliesberg (seldom exceeding 100 m) had its first ever recorded bivouac when a party on a new climb, loath to abseil from very shaky pegs, found itself benighted.

Armageddon at Krantzberg, at Grade G2 and A3 has been regarded as the hardest climb in the country. Paul Fatti and Art McGarr have completed the Blouberg (Blue Mountains) North Wall Direct route. They used the first pitches of the established Moonlight route to get started and then took a superior line (G2 and A3) to the top, 300 m above.

A second ascent of the Finger of God, an obelisk spire apparently composed of solidified mud bubbles and first climbed by Tom Choate, was put up by a group of Cape Town University Students. The nature of the ground was so uncertain that they had to leave all their gear *in situ*, only the leader feeling the spire worth the risk. This horrible rock is in the Asab Valley.

Every year the Cape Town and Johannesburg students undertake the ringing of vultures, which exploit is not without adventure and sometimes tragedy. Last year one ringer fell and dropped on to 2 climbers 40 ft below; fortunately, the last sling held and the bewildered second man was able to hold both who fell. This year, alas, one student from Transvaal fell to his death.

Our thanks are due to Michael Scott for these notes.

Rhodesia

The granite outcrops and pinnacles continue to be well used by the Climbing Section of the Mountain Club of Rhodesia, and many new climbs have been added in recent years. Tom Choate has made a comprehensive catalogue, which to date contains at least 150 climbs.

A new area near Salisbury, the Christon Bank Pinnacles, has been opened up with superb rock and the Mazoe Dam as an impressive backdrop. The climbs tend to Grade 5 but there are also some Grade 3.

A new crop of climbs on Lion's Head, between Salisbury and Shamva and once considered as played out, was accomplished at an April meet. The new climbs, mostly Graded 3 or 4, include a 6 by Tom Choate and Jeff Underwood. Keith Pyle, Pat Sweet and Tom Choate have opened up a new venue at Murigabveni, south of Bindura. Ninety miles N of Salisbury, near Bari Rock is Banji, a high peak with about 300 m of rock. Since an unsuccessful attempt some years ago the peak has been left alone, until last August when several routes were put up including a Grade 5 on the main face between the 2 pinnacles led by Choate.

A beautiful rock 366 m and 120 miles N of Salisbury called Mutiwaura was visited in September. Yum Yum Gully, first climbed in 1969 by Choate, Krog, Sweet and O'Shea, had its second ascent. Choate and Walter Krog also made a splendid new route sharing Grade 5 leads (superior) with some Grade 6 moves for good measure. Pitons were used only as running belays. As this climb was put up on the day following Choate's birthday, it is now called Afterbirth. Its authors rate it one of the hardest non-artificial climbs in Rhodesia since Baillie and McMorris opened Baboon Route on Bari Rock in the 1950s.

We are very grateful to Walter Krog for providing us with these notes.

Tom Choate has an interesting article in the *Mountain Club of Rhodesia Journal* 1972. This describes activities and new discoveries in the vicinity of Salisbury or not far away. It also describes Gorongo or Gurungurwe Mountain, which is half in Rhodesia and half in Moçambique, remotely situated in the Staplefield Forest Reserve. Not hard, apparently, its reward is a remarkable view over the Portuguese territorial eastern plains.

Kenya and Tanzania

Iain Allan reporting in *Mountaineering*, September, records that the Mountain

Club of Kenya has been strengthened by an influx of climbers from our own shores. Several new climbs of interest have been made such as the Diamond Couloir (5) between Batian and Nelion by Howell and Snyder. Ian Howell and Robert Chambers have been busy elsewhere in Kenya, and among their exploits was the climbing of the Goi Crack, 300 m (HVS) in February. The high temperature at this time of the year adds to the seriousness of this undertaking.

Fritz Lörtscher of the Swiss Alpine Club has kindly sent us a note on 2 new routes on Kibo. From a camp site close to the Great Barranco glacier, starting in company with Joseph Meyer, he made a first ascent of the Breach Wall to the Breach Wall Spitze and the Furtwänglerspitze. This was a mixed rock and ice climb of medium difficulty taking 8 hours. The descent was by the normal Umbwe route. His second expedition, solo because his companion had to retire from the first being unwell, crossed the Great Barranco glacier, continued up the weathered rocks to the Diamond glacier, which was crossed in a left-hand upwards traverse, and then up steep rocks to the top. From camp to summit took 30 hours, including one bivouac resulting from a snowstorm. Lörtscher grades the route as part 2, part 4 with 2 pitches of 5. Because of the ever-present danger of falling stones, a helmet is essential.

Morocco

Hamish Brown, with Messrs Mill, Lawson, Knowles, Roberts, Connor and S. and J. Simpson, went to the High Atlas in spring 1972. A week's ski-ing at Oukaïmeden was used for acclimatisation, and most of the major peaks available from the Neltner hut were ascended. The classic OSO arête on Toubkal was traversed twice, and among other expeditions, Mill and Roberts went to Tizi Tamatert, where they bivouacked before making what was probably the second ascent of the Great Ridge of Aksoul. After another bivouac they made a double traverse of Anrhemer and also climbed Ighil M'Goun, the only 4000-m peak outside the Toubkal Massif. Brown and Lawson climbed Jebel Bou Ouriol, 3573 m, which can easily be recognised from Marrakech. The party visited the Dra valley, Ourzazate, and the Dades and Todra Gorges. Hamish Brown concludes his note by saying that all these expeditions gave interesting experience in a country which remains as unspoilt as ever, and which gives a wonderful variety of sunny mountain activity.

NEW GUIDE-BOOKS

Guide to the Ruwenzori, the Mountains of the Moon, by H. A. Osmaston and D. Pasteur (Mountain Club of Uganda and West Col Productions, £2.90).

In spite of very difficult circumstances, this very complete guide has now been published, and does immense credit to the authors. There is much useful general information for anyone planning an expedition. Each peak, or group of peaks, is then taken in turn; routes are graded, described and shown on well drawn figures and maps. There is a detailed historical summary—from Aeschylus (500 BC) to Ian Howell (1971) by way of the Duke of the Abruzzi—and appendices on place-names, spelling, language and natural history. The classified bibliography lists 368 references. The natural history section is

important, as, on the Ruwenzori, you just cannot think only about the climbs. Osmaston is the authority on the vegetation, and he gives in a few pages an admirable summary of one of the most remarkable botanical regions in the world.

Even so, this very scholarly little book never ceases to be a climber's pocket guide. Some may say that it is too detailed and removes the mystery from the fabled 'Mountains of the Moon'. I don't think so. Future climbers are increasingly likely to be short-term visitors with little opportunity of really getting to know the Ruwenzori. They need this information in accessible form, and no guide-book can stop you climbing the wrong mountain by the wrong route in a Ruwenzori fog. Now, at last, you'll be able to find out where you've been.

Rennie Bere

Guide-book to Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro, ed. by John Mitchell, 3rd ed. (Mountain Club of Kenya).

This guide is beautifully produced, very informative (beyond sheer climbing), the right size, and readable even by those of us who may have the ill-fortune never to visit these mountains.