

eight-man French party under the leadership of Maurice Barrard who made ascents of the spectacular S Pillar of the Apostelens Tommelfinger, and the W Face of Ketil Pingasut. These fine routes of ED standard were both approximately 500 m long and took 8 and 5 days respectively. To the E an Irish party led by David Walsh made 12 first ascents in the mountains up to 1600 m E of Qinqedalen, while in the mountains to the W of Angpilagtoq the St Andrew's University annual pilgrimage to the Greenland mountains, under the leadership of Philip Gribbon, made 40 first ascents, as well as repeating some made by earlier British and French expeditions and carrying out a scientific programme. Farther N an RAF expedition under Flt Lt Cartwright made a number of ascents in the Sondre Sermilikfjord area, including an unsuccessful attempt on Kuugssup Qaca (2124 m), first climbed by the Austrians in 1974, but in general were victims of the notorious weather of the area and the poor quality of rock on some of their routes.

The number of expeditions visiting the more accessible areas of Greenland each year is still increasing, and soon it would seem likely that for the short-term expedition attention will swing away from any remaining unclimbed summits to the ribs and faces of previously climbed peaks, as has already happened in the case of Ingolfsfjeld even though it is by no means in an easily accessible area. For those with more time, money and ambition, vast numbers of beautiful, unclimbed but highly inaccessible peaks still await the mountaineer/explorer who can overcome the access problems and reach the remote arctic coasts of Greenland.

Climbers' playgrounds—Europe

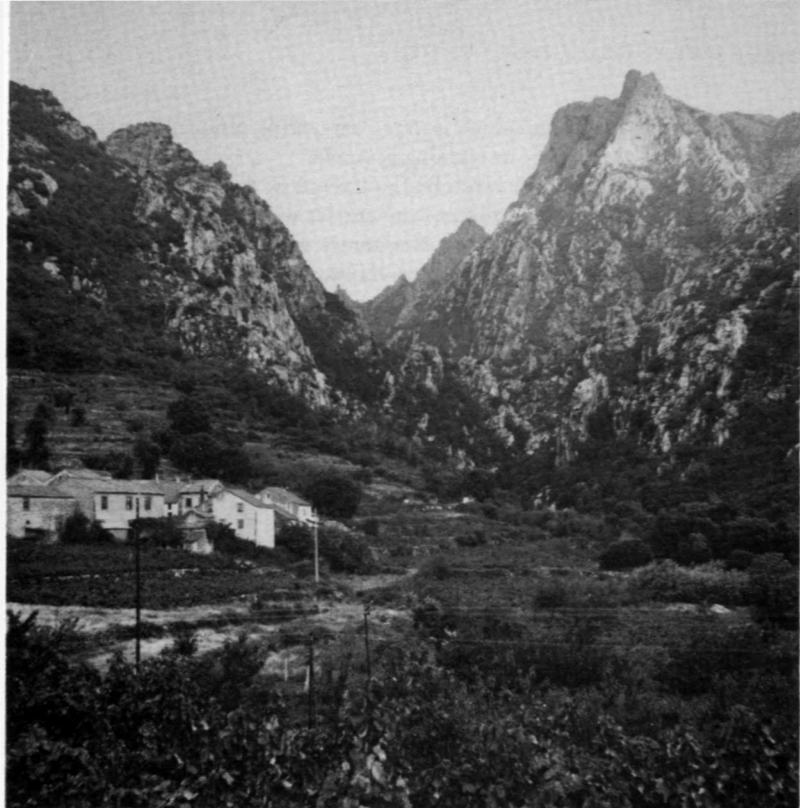
17 The Caroux

Charles Mont

The S facing wall of the Cevennes which rises above the Garrigues and the Mediterranean coastal plain is formed at its W end by the mountain massifs of Montagne Noire, Monts de Lacaune and L'Espinouse. Much of these fall within the Parc Naturel Regional du Haut Languedoc.

Some 8 km W of Lamalou les Bains, above the villages of Mons-la-Trivalle and Colombières, a block of mountains known as the Caroux forms the E edge of L'Espinouse. The highest point is Mont Caroux (1091 m); the top is a plateau which throws down shapely arêtes with towers and pinnacles towards the gorges and valleys below. There is a refuge of the CAF at Verdier close to the mouth of the impressive and rocky Gorges d'Eric, and another, the Refuge de la Fage, in the upper reaches of the Gorges des Colombières further to the E. The long distance footpath, GR7, passes the latter on its way over the Caroux plateau. The valley villages are served by a bus which links with main line trains at Bedarieux just beyond Lamalou.

The rock is a firm gneiss, highly suitable for climbing, which provides a distinctive alternative to the considerable amount of limestone found elsewhere in Languedoc. The guide-book lists large numbers of routes, some close on 150 m, and plenty of prospects remain. Superficially the hills and rocks



90 *The Gorge d'Eric and the edge of the Caroux. Photo: Charles Mont*

are not unlike those of Britain, but the climate of course is much superior.

The way-marking of the numerous paths, which thread the lower slopes, is essential for reasonable progress as much of the vegetation cover can often only be penetrated with extreme difficulty. Unfortunately the way-marking sometimes breaks down in most awkward places and some casting about is needed in order to regain the line. There is, however, no vegetation on the climbs.

References

'Escalades au Caroux' CAF, Section Caroux, 1963 (Unfortunately this is out of print, but copies can sometimes be obtained; there is one in the AC Library). An adequate map of 1:20000 is included.

Map. Parc Naturel Regional du Haut Languedoc 1:100000 (IGN, Paris). A topo-guide for GR7 (CNSGR, Paris) is likely to appear shortly.

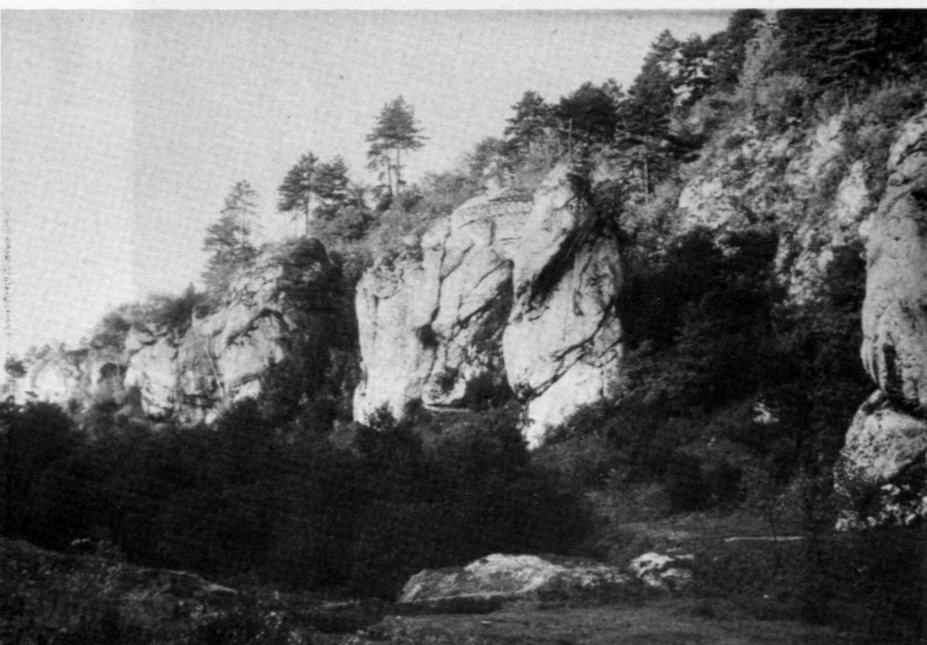
18 Training grounds of Poland

Marek Brniak

The number of British climbers visiting Poland has been increasing during the past few years so it is time to devote a little space to some not well known climbing grounds of this country. Much has been already said on the Polish Tatra Mountains and many think that these are the only source of climbing in Poland. It will be a surprise for them to discover that we have also got plenty of limestone rocks situated close to Cracow (a town nearly everybody has to

visit if going to the Tatra) and some isolated sandstone pinnacles in the W of the country which we use as our training grounds.

North-West of Cracow there stretches an upland of dolomites and sedimentary rocks where there are picturesque corries with a variety of fantastic rocks towering above them. The most frequently visited are three of the gorges—Dolina Bolechowicka, Dolina Kobylansko-Karniowicka and Dolina Bedkowska, the longest of them all. These are very close to Cracow and easy to reach by car, bus or train. There is a good coach service between Cracow and the village of Bolechowice after which Dolina Bolechowicka is named. The village is situated at the mouth of the gorge. Dolina Kobylansko-Karniowicka is next to it, some half an hour's walk to the NW across the



91 A group of training rocks in Dolina Kobylanska-Karniowicka. Photo: Marek Brniak

upland. You can also reach it by taking a train from Cracow to Zabierzow (direction of Katowice) and then there are 3 miles to cover walking along the yellow marks of the tourist route that goes up to Dolina Kobylansko-Karniowicka via Dolina Bolechowicka. To get to Dolina Bedkowska take a train from Cracow to Rudawa (the same direction) and walk N of the railway station following the blue painted marks on rocks, boulders, trees, village huts, etc. and after 1½ hours you are there.

Unfortunately no climbing guide-book to this region has ever been published but once you are there you will find that many of the routes are obvious lines. On the more popular climbs some pitons (often visible from the bottom) were placed permanently to avoid damaging the rocks. You may also find some Polish climbers who will be pleased to help you—never hesitate to call them—and if you go on a weekend you will certainly meet a crowd of

them. Many have a good command of English so there should not be any basic language problems.

Remember that the grades (UIAA rating system) '7' and even '8' of free climbing have been developed here; very few routes are easy. Most of them are rated '5' or '6' but the rocks are not very high, some 90–120 feet and not many involve more than one pitch. Many of the artificial climbs, as the standards get higher, have been receiving free ascents creating grades '7' and '8'. Those routes however are usually climbed with a belay from the top of the rocks so be careful not to be sent out on such a climb for a joke by some Polish climbers. There is also a variety of hard artificial routes. Otherwise you only need a rope of medium length, a couple of slings, a few pitons or nuts and karabiners.

It is obvious, of course, that the Tatra is a must for any climber from abroad but if it happens he can spare a day or two, a trip to the Cracow Rocks is worth while.

19 Angoulême—The Rocks of Eaux-Clares

Tom Connor

The valley of Eaux-Clares is situated approximately half way between Paris and the Pyrenees, and would make a convenient stopping point for those making for the latter. It lies 7 km SE of Angoulême and may be approached from there by taking the Montmoreau road and turning left to the village of Puymoyen. From here one takes a winding road to the S which descends the N rim of the valley. Along this rim lie a series of limestone outcrops which form the so-called 'L'École d'Escalade des Eaux-Clares'.

92 *Eaux Claires. Photo: Tom Connor*



On reaching the bottom of the valley, which contains a pleasant stream and a mill, the road branches. To the right (downstream) lie the highest cliffs in the valley consisting of 4 main groups, Grandes Voies, Moulin, Arbre and Dièdre-Toit. The second of these contains a cave which would make a very suitable bivouac spot. To the left or upstream are 4 more groups of cliffs, Brioches, Tours, Miroir and Cheminée in that order from the road. Nearby to the SW is a separate area known as Petite Vallée on the opposite bank of the stream. All the cliffs face S and are composed of excellent rock, often vertical or overhanging and providing routes varying from 5 to 25 m in length. The grading is typically III to V with occasional artificial pitches, most routes involving some aid.

A guide-book called 'L'École d'Escalade des Eaux-Claires' has been issued by the Angoulême sub-section of the CAF, and describes 80 or so routes on the cliffs. There is also a CAF hut with 14 bunks, whose key is left with M. Latour of Puymoyen. Places may be reserved by writing to the Charente sub-section of the CAF, c/o M. André Guerin, 67, rue Beaulieu, 16-Angoulême.

93 Climbing on the Rocher de la Dube. Photo: Guy-Richard



20 The Valleys of the Creuse and the Anglin

Guy Richard

(Translation: Edward Pyatt)

In W central France, N of Poitou, between the towns of Chatellerault and le Blanc, a clear river, the Anglin, winds through meadows, flanked here and there by fine little crags. The village of Angles-sur-l'Anglin, famous for its steeply scarped site, its medieval buildings and its prehistoric remains, is the high spot of this valley for tourists and for climbers, who will find on both banks routes up to 35 m high.

The limestone pocked with little holes is somewhat similar to that of the Saussois and is well adapted to difficult climbing. Two groups of rocks are of particular interest: on the right bank, 7 km upstream from Angles, the Rochers de la Dube, giving 10 or so very hard climbs and many others lesser: on the left bank, 4 km upstream from Angles, the Rochers de la Guignoterie offering around 50 routes, of which 20 are very hard. There are many visitors, since here one can meet, not only alpinists from the Loire Valley and from central France, but also others from Paris, from Nantes and from Bordeaux.

A guide-book is in preparation, but in the meantime one can consult two articles by the present author in the 'Bulletin Paris-Chamonix' of the CAF—'Les Massifs Calcaire de Vallées de la Creuse et de l'Anglin' (June 1971) and 'Escalades dans les Vallées de l'Anglin—Rochers de la Dube et Rochers de Rive' (December 1972).

A field study of acute mountain sickness

John Winter

Acute mountain sickness (AMS) and high altitude pulmonary and cerebral oedema are now widely recognised by all mountaineers as real and potentially serious problems on any climb or trek which involves spending time at high altitude. Climbers on many expeditions have selflessly given blood samples and blown up plastic bags in order to increase the understanding of the physiological changes that occur in the oxygen-starved body. Acute mountain sickness is the name given to a combination of symptoms which is the end result of exposure to high altitude, combined with other factors such as exhaustion, dehydration, heat/cold effects, and fear. What percentage of people are affected? Is it possible to predict individual susceptibility? What preventive measures can be taken? How many of those affected become seriously ill or die? What are the early warning signs? How fast is it safe to ascend? These are the questions that climbers who propose to go to high altitude should be asking. At the present time the answer to some of them is far from clear.

During October and November 1974 I interviewed 200 trekkers out of a total of 222 passing through the Sherpa settlement of Pheriche and asked them to complete a questionnaire about their experiences at high altitude. Pheriche is at an altitude of 4270 m on the main trekking route to the Everest Base Camp region and is therefore well placed to carry out such a study. The majority of trekkers in the area come from USA, Japan, Australia, Britain, and the Alpine countries of Europe. In age they may range from 17 to 70, and