his rucksack and brought him to the hole. Here we had the next nightmarish bivouac. Both of us were frost-bitten, and had nothing to eat and to drink. Throughout the night there was a snow-storm and we were shaking with cold.

When daylight came we began to go down looking for our colleagues and the ice-axe which Kuliś lost during his fall the previous evening. The weather improved a little. About 100m down we found the ice-axe and a few metres further the dead Andrzej Sikorski covered by snow. His body was lying head down. He was not breathing and had no pulse and he had a wound on his temple. Since his face was not completely stiff, we performed resuscitation breathing for a long time 'mouth-to-mouth' and also external heart massage, unfortunately without any effect. We found neither the body of Kesicki nor the rucksacks which we left somewere here on the way up because there was a lot of fresh snow.

The deaths of our friends happened due to the exceptionally unhappy coincidence of events, but first of all to the sudden, totally unforeseen break in the weather, which left us helpless on the face.

J. Kuliś and K. Głazek, the surviving 2, after 2 very difficult, nightmarish bivouacs without sleeping bags and tents, at altitudes of 7800 and 7700m, in snow-storm and hurricane wind, and with night temperatures of -35°C, came, with their friends' help, finally to Base Camp at night between 1 and 2 August. J. Kuliś had frost-bitten legs (later some of his toes had to be amputated), and K. Glazek had frost-bite of the hands and legs.

With heavy hearts after the loss of our friends, on 5 August, our expedition began to hike down, arriving in Skardu after 11 days.

Mountains of paradise

J. G. R. Harding

What range in the Alps conjures up such visions as the Paradiso? With the Gran Paradiso itself at 4061m the highest mountain wholly in Italy and a clutch of other famous peaks besides—Grivola, Herbetet, Torre del Gran San Pietro; the range has over 35 glaciers, is Italy's oldest National Park, was for years past the last redoubt of the ibex and even now contains the greatest concentration of wild life in the Alps. In 1976 when exchange rates gave Italy an edge on its rivals, I recalled the promise of this romantic area as seen 20 years ago on my first Alpine season when traversing its W outliers from the Val d'Orco to the Val d'Aosta en route from the Tarentaise to Courmayeur.

Although never quite forgotten, the Paradiso lost its vogue for the general run of British climbers many years ago. Yet it was the AC which first explored these mountains and with Ormsby and Bruce's ascent of the Grivola in 1859 its climbing history began. A year later, when Cowell climbed the Gran Paradiso with Dundas, he reported the area as *terra incognita* with the nomenclature of the main peaks shrouded in obscurity. Subsequent AC forays followed in which Tuckett, Coolidge, Pendlebury, Freshfield and C. P. Baker were prominent.

Freshfield climbed the Torre del Gran San Pietro in 1867 and between 1872 and 1895 the remaining ridges of the Grivola together with the E and S ridges of the Herbetet fell to AC parties. George Yeld, the *Alpine Journal* editor, commemorated 19 years climbing in this area with his *Scrambles In the Eastern Graians 1878/1897* a record of solid achievement dressed in pre-Raphaelite prose. In 1898 Farrar closed the 19th Century and an eventful opening chapter with his classic traverse of the entire Paradiso/Herbetet ridge, still the most famous expedition in the area. Farrar's traverse marks a turning point. Before it, new routes were generally the prerogative of the British: thereafter they became that of Italian parties although for many years the Paradiso featured in AC itineraries and is fondly recorded in Dorothy Pilley's *Climbing Days* and Janet Adam-Smith's *Mountain Holidays.*

Contemporary neglect may partly be attributable to the proximity and superior attractions of Mont Blanc and the Pennines—Courmayeur is barely 25 miles away: Chamonix and Cervinia 35. Again, the better known Paradiso routes are traditional snow and ice climbs although a variety of modern routes can be found to suit all standards particularly in the Roccia Viva/Apostoli group. But as a change from the better known centres, the Paradiso has much to offer: an absence of climbers from all but the tourist routes; that exuberance combined with elegance typical of Italy and then, perhaps unique in the Alps, the special flavour of a landscape where wild animals roam at will.

Historically this was always something of a land apart as the heart of Savoy, that independent mountain Duchy whose territories once contained most of Mont Blanc and much of the finest mountain scenery in the Western Alps. And but for a twist of history, the whole of Old Savoy—still closely connected geographically, culturally, linguistically, and even, to an extent politically through the Savoyard Movement—might be part of Italy. Having for centuries played but a minor role in European affairs, the House of Savoy produced under the tutelage of Cavour the first King of Italy—Victor Emmanuel II. But for enlisting France's support to the cause of a United Italy against Austria, the Italians had to pay Napoleon III's price of ceding to France those parts of Old Savoy that in 1860, after a sham plebiscite, became the Departments of Savoie, Haute-Savoie, and Maurienne. Of all this splendid mountain kingdom, it was the Paradiso that the Dukes of Savoy selected as their hunting ground and it is in the etymological sense of a hunting park or 'paradeisos' that the Paradiso takes its name. In 1922 it became Italy's first National Park whose story, like that of its precursor, the Royal hunting ground, is inextricably linked with that of ibex. Ibex, also known as the bouquetin or steinbock, the wild goat of the mountains, was formerly widely distributed throughout the Alps but by the beginning of the 19th century had been hunted almost to extinction not only as game but also for its flesh, fat and horns reputed to have magical properties. What survived was confined to the Paradiso. In 1856/57 Victor Emmanuel II, the first King of Italy and a popular hero, acquired exclusive hunting rights in the Cogne district and declared the entire area a royal hunting reserve. This it remained until 1912 when Victor Emmanuel III transferred it to the State. Both ibex and chamois increased steadily up to the Second World War but by 1945 the pre-war population had been decimated by poaching. Today the situation is restored and the Paradiso ibex have restocked other parts of the Alps where



55 Gran Paradiso, N ridge (This and next two photos: J. G. R. Harding)

the breed had long been extinct. The memory of Italy's short lived monarchy and the royal Hunts of Savoy is commemorated in the broad hunting paths that still traverse the range and in the 2 principal huts that were formerly hunting lodges.

The first decision of any party coming to the Paradiso is where to site its base, for on this depends the character of the climbing. The topography of the area is simple. The main ridge containing the Grivola, Herbetet and Gran Paradiso runs on a N/S axis with the Paradiso the southern culmination from which extend 2 arms. The W arm provides the S backwall to the Val Savaranche while the E contains the Val Nontey and is formed by the Roccia Viva/Apostoli chain where are found the hardest rock and ice climbs in the Graians. Pont in the Val Savaranche and Cogne for the Val Nontey are the 2 principal valley centres serving the only 2 huts of substance; the Victor Emmanuel II and Sella huts respectively. There are 7 other bivouac shelters dotted around but these hold no more than 4/5 except in extreme discomfort. As an alternative, try the deserted chalets which provide the key to certain routes, particularly on the Grivola, and a nostalgic flashback

to another age. For the harder stuff, Cogne will be your centre but you must take potluck as to whether or not the bivouac huts are occupied. For the sybaritic Pont provides an easier introduction to the climbing with the virtual certainty of accommodation in the Victor Emmanuel II hut. Here it was on the green sward of 'Camping Pont-Breuil' that our foursome—John Longland, Charlie Clarke, Peter Mould and myself—pitched advance Base Camp of 2 Barry Bishop US Everest box tents on 11 July 1976 at 1960m.

A hundred years ago the Val Savaranche was regarded by members of the Alpine Club as the 'extreme limits of Alpine civilization'. A principal cause for complaint was the absence of any decent inn. Little has changed save that today's impoverished member would be discouraged more by the cost of what exists than by its quality. The head of the valley, ringed by snow-peaks, is most attractive but graced not by the Alpine village but car park and camp site. Having lunched, we walked smartly up to the Victor Emmanuel II hut to stake a claim to a cosy 4-bunk dormitory upstairs and tables downstairs which we defended against all comers. The 'VE' hut on the site of a royal lodge is well situated for the Paradiso, Tresenta, Ciaforon, Becca di Monciair and Denti del Broglio. The new hut built in 1961 holds 110 with restaurant and hotel service. Architecturally it resembles a huge Nissen hut: administratively all is chaos, no question of hut slippers or booking out for climbs. But the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly and the cost per night merely £1.00 per head.

Our plan of campaign was determined by the outcome of this first hut march. Successfully accomplished, Longland's confident attempts, through the medium of Spanish, to ingratiate himself with the Guardian left him with the impression that we were intending the traverse of the entire Denti di Broglio, Monciair and Ciaforon chain—a feat unrecorded to date. In fact, our first objective had been the modest Tresenta but to have come back with such a mouse after talk of elephants would have involved too great a loss of face. Accordingly, after 2 very expensive rounds at the bar we lifted our sights to the Ciaforon traverse. From the N the Ciaforon assumes a dome-like appearance with great masses of ice spilling down a face capped by serac barriers. The direct face route involves artificial climbing on ice. Our plan, a compromise, was to trace a less heroic line between the right hand edge of the ice wall and the NW ridge itself. At 0400hrs it was raining but the din made by those leaving for the Paradiso forced us into a 05.30 start. The first pitch on the face deposited such a weight of ice on the second rope that it retired to the ridge. The second 150ft on front points, accelerated the advance of 'wobbly calf' and a quick transition from a face to a ridge climb for the rest of the party. The guide-book describes the route down the NE ridge as 'a fine snow climb with interesting rock sections'. The rock was unstable rather than interesting but progress across an ice-couloir, offering a quick way down to the Col di Mont Corve 1000ft below, provided some interest to an ant-like procession of 90 Bersaglieri coming up from the S when one of our number lost a crampon. This should have gone down to the bottom but fortuitously lodged itself on a rock outcrop and involved a rescue operation. This incident lost us the race back to the hut against the Bersaglieri who we feared might take it over completely. We need not have worried. The entire contingent dined in the main restaurant leaving us to spaghetti and Clarke's

initiation into the rites of 'High/Low' poker in our salle privée. Having exceeded our ambitions for a first day we knocked off the SE ridge of the Becca di Monciair for our second, descending to Pont that same evening for a stab at the table d'hôte at the Family Jacaccia's establishment.

Our original plan had envisaged the Paradiso as a warm up for a campaign on Mont Blanc worthy of inclusion in future editions of the guide-book. But Collomb's *Graians East* guide-book implied that nobody could leave the range without tasting its *bonne bouche*. This, the complete traverse of the Paradiso/Herbetet ridge was first accomplished in 1898 by Farrar with Daniel Macquignaz whom he regarded as 'one of the greatest exponents of modern mountaineering'. An account of this feat has eluded me but Mumm's *Alpine Register* makes it clear that by the time Farrar reached the Paradiso he was set for another prodigious season having already climbed the Zsa, Bouquetins and Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla and traversed Mont Collon, the Grand Combin and Combin de Valsorey before making the second ascent of the Grivola N ridge.

Although a S to N traverse is recommended, the guide-book description, so far as we could understand it, describes the traverse from N to S. But I was at once reassured yet mildly disappointed that only the Diemberger route up the NW face of the Gran Paradiso cost more than our project on the Tariff des Guides. With a longish day in prospect, the loin girding ritual of crampon sharpening in Pont on the morning of 14 July stimulated a fervour comparable with that in the English camp on the eve of Agincourt. This was soon dissipated on return to the VE hut for on announcing our intentions, the hut guardian's wife indicated that the only people who might conceivably be interested were 2 guides propping up the bar. This was not the case. Our reputation had suffered as a result of the Denti di Broglio/Ciaforon/Tresenta traverse imbroglio.

At 01.00 on 15 July the sky was clear and the moon full. We had retired early last night but the din of carousing down below had defeated sleep. Now all was quiet and the only other party in evidence was bound for the Ciaforon N face. We left at 01.50 but despite the reconnaissance made the previous evening, suffered an early reversal in the boulder field immediately behind the hut which temporarily divided the party. Much spleen had been vented before the glacier but thereafter, a well trodden path led easily up the Paradiso's W flank and so on to the summit. Our arrival at 05.50 coincided with that of the sun at once thawing us out and bringing to life a panorama to the N crowded with the silhouettes of that great arc of peaks which stretches from Mont Blanc to the Mischabel.

To this point we had perambulated, but beyond the Gran Paradiso's true summit, reached by a narrow rock ridge, an uncompromising ice-arête fell steeply to the Piccolo Paradiso Col. This, the NNE ridge first climbed exactly 100 years ago, is in a normal year an elegant if airy crest of snow. Iced, it was the key to the traverse overlooking on the one side the Paradiso's 600m NW face and on the other the wedge shaped hanging glacier of the E face. To descend you could either face sideways one crampon atop the crest and the other front pointing below it or sit *á cheval* and progress by a succession of notches cut from the ice. To have gone over one side of the ridge with the second properly counter-balancing the fall by leaping down the other would

have meant that at best, both would have fetched up at a rock step a few hundred feet below suspended one on either side of the ridge.

The next obstacle was the traverse of the Piccolo's 5 gendarmes. We took these at mid-height to the E and although nowhere technically difficult this exposed section of crumbling rock took an inordinate time. Thereafter, easy snow-slopes led to the Col di Montandeyne from which the Becca di Montandeyne S ridge rises to culminate in a wall which provides the best rock pitches on the traverse. Atop this but now behind schedule, we had our first stop in 11 hours. Following along the Becca N ridge we wandered through a jumble of rotting rocks propping up a crest of tottering pinnacles and towers. Boulders big and small crashed down to the Dzasset glacier at a touch. This was tedious but fussy stuff always demanding care but the boredom of it defused our ambitions and tarnished the glitter of the prize we had sought.

At 17.30 at the Finestra Dzasset, we paused to take stock. The Herbetet's summit, separated from us by its spectacular S ridge of crazy gendarmes, was still 3 hours away: the Leonessa bivouac another 3 hours beyond that. Even Farrar and Macquignaz had been forced to bivouac on their traverse but at least their's had been on the other side of the Herbetet at the Herbetet Col. At best ours might be on the summit of what we had now dubbed 'Herbert' and with this in prospect we terminated the engagement d'accord. The presence of the Sberna bivouac at the foot of the Herbetet's W ridge makes this soft option possible but in getting to it, we proved conclusively that the Col Bonney gives a better route of descent than the Finestra Dzasset. Trudging through soft snow on the Montandeyne glacier tired, wet and cold I had visions of finding the bivouac, just discernible on the ridge as a black dot in a snow-drift, as either being locked or fully occupied. In fact, the door was open but had we arrived 24 hours earlier we would either have had to share its 4 bunks with the South Wales Caving Club or all 4 of us to sit it out on the collapsible table which occupied the entire floor space. The floor itself was under 2″ of water conveniently provided by a melt stream running through the hut.

Tucked up in bunks smothered by blankets, our $18\frac{1}{2}$ hour trek had thus a happy ending. Disappointment at not finishing the complete traverse was partly allayed by the South Wales Caving Club's entry in the hut book which described the Herbetet rock as resembling that of a Welsh slag heap. Next morning we returned to the VE hut across the Montandeyne and Lavaciau glaciers in 2 hours but after 3 separate crevasse incidents. Back at the hut on a sunlit terrace drinking lager in the company of the fat hut cook who found the idea of a night at the water-logged Sberna bivouac hugely amusing, we indulged in that most pleasurable of climbing experiences—an armchair critique of another party's progress up a route recently accomplished—in this case, the Ciaforon's N facet.

That afternoon we struck camp at Pont, drove round to Cogne and camped at Val Nontey swapping valleys to attempt the Grivola. But that evening, a Friday, the weather broke with a thunderstorm. Saturdays in the season are bad for going up to huts and that particular day could better have been spent in the magnificent gelati parlour we discovered at Cogne. But there were embers still aglow and although the 6000ft hut bash to the Balzola bivouac at the foot of the Grivola's ENE ridge was rejected, we did settle for a short day and the certainty of a roof at the Pousset Chalets.



56 Gran Paradiso, NW face

The path from Cretaz starts between hedgerows no wider than a shoulder width to climb steeply through newly scythed hayfields singing with crickets. On through the forest with its thick carpet of pine needles past deserted chalets both built of and tiled with granite. By a waterfall, swarms of butterflies had settled on the path to rise in kaleidoscopic clouds at our approach then settle again soundless as snow flakes. From the 'Alp of the Bears' the valley of Cogne appeared as a green triangle from which misty ridges rose up to merge into an indeterminate sky undecided as to whether or not to rain. Higher up, at the head of a wide shouldered valley at the foot of the Pousset peak where a stream meanders through a meadow hemmed in by boiler plates reminiscent of a grander Cwm Idwal, we discovered the Pousset Chalets through a veil of heavy rain.

As the National Park has prospered so has pastoralism withered. The 8 chalets, themselves pre-dating the Golden Age, have long been abandoned.

High up on a cliff face immediately behind was painted 'A Gruppe 1944'—a last retreat of the Wehrmacht? It was a place full of ghosts and in this mood we chose for ourselves a miniature Helyg complete with such authentic accoutrements as tethering rings for mules, triangular roasting irons and wooden pivoting spits for the fatted chamois. Up in the sleeping gallery overlooking the main room reached by a ladder there was just space enough for 4. With kindling split by ice-axes we took turns to light a fire and at this juncture three Torinese climbers en route for Cogne arrived from the Balzola bivouac sopping wet to confirm that it was free for that night at least. With the rain beating down on the stone roof we ate steaks over an open fire and in this cosy somnolence hatched unconvincing plans for the morrow.

The original scheme had been to ascend the Grivola N ridge and descend the ENE ridge. But the weather and the assurance of the VE hut guardian that in this year's conditions the ENE ridge was the better climb suited our own philosophy particularly after a bad night on bare boards. At 03.00 it was still raining delaying our start to 07.00 and convincing everybody that there was no hope of climbing anything that day. In fact, an ascent of the ENE ridge from the Posset chalets might still have been possible but on breasting the Posset Col $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours later, we were confronted across the white moat of the Trago glacier by the Grey Lady herself at her least attractive. Lack of snowy finery revealed shaley, grey flanks and again, without demur, it was agreed to leave her for another day when both she and the weather looked more promising. In expiation we traversed the Punta Rossa and descended the Val Lauson first through herds of ibex and then through droves of tourists on past the Vittorio Sella hut and thence down the Val Nontey by a broad hunting path encouraged by cries of 'bravi escalatori' from small boys conned by the velocity of our descent.

Next day, back at the Val Ferret in the shadow of the Jorasses, our recent experiences confirmed the Camp guardian's strictures about ice conditions, stonefalls and dangerous crevasses on Mont Blanc. The Aiguille Blanche had become another Aiguille Noire and the Brenva face a dirty yellow. Ironically, the weather which had created these exceptional conditions had broken in the last few days thus precluding us a foot-note to Alpine history. However, in Courmayeur where they honour the memory of their mountain maestri in a splendid museum and where window dressings in shops such as the late Toni Gobbi's assume an art form, there is an Everest of mountain hostelries, This is the Maison di Filippo ('La Brenva' to veterans) of which it is said that Americans disembarking from Zürich Airport ask for route directions before even crossing the tarmac. I had recorded a first at this wondrous establishment back in 1967 but a failure in 1975 on finding it closed early in the season after making a special journey from Argentière through the Mont Blanc tunnel. We had already visited the place on our first night in Italy but being tired had made little impression on the menu after the first few pitches. Now as the guests of Dr Bassey, the Val D'Aosta's flying mountain doctor and confrère of our own Medical Officer, we fulfilled in the realms of gastronomy what in another context might have been the Mountain Dream. It was intended that we should share this feat with none less than Kurt Diemberger but he, apparently, was stranded at the hut in a storm and accordingly, the 3.78 litre bottle of wine and the 20 courses that went with it were left to us. Long

before that 5 hour marathon was finished one of our number retired to be discovered later in the back of the car in a comatose oblivion.

The prodigies of the preceding night should have put an embargo on eating for the next 24 hours. But vice feeds on itself and in Courmayeur next morning we ran amok in a delicatessen shop spending sterling as if it were lire on delicacies in aspic and half a miraculous pie layered alternatively with ham, cheese and egg. Making off with our loot through the Mont Blanc tunnel we lunched *alfresco* in the forests of Argentière before pushing on to the Albert Premier hut having by now settled for the Chardonnet traverse and the Aiguilles Dorées. The track seemed steeper than I remembered it from last year and the hut itself was crowded. No informality here. We booked in, reported our route, and were given a reveille time in as many seconds as it takes to write this. That evening the weather cleared. It was noted that at the appointed hour

57 Aiguille du Chardonnet and the Tour glacier



of 03.00 the hut warden did not wake us nor did any guided parties set out that morning. However, we all felt fit and strong and were undeterred from this route by the prospect of less than perfect weather. After threading a way through the awesome crevasses of the Tour glacier we met up with a party of 3 Frenchmen just below the cwm which leads to the famous ice bosse. What was normally snow was now ice converting the first bergschrund into a delicate pitch. Higher up, the Frenchmen took an interminable time to force the second bergschrund which we avoided by a circular traverse round the top of the bowl to the foot of the bosse. Throughout the day the weather had been deteriorating and just short of the summit, the rocks began to hum with electrical charges. Explosions of thunder and snakes of lightning quickly followed precipitating a rush to get off the ridge at a delicate passage which resulted in both ropes jamming. Now it began to snow and hail but after waiting some 40 minutes we pressed on to reach the summit and descend immediately to find the W ridge and line of descent to the Col Adams Reilly. At this point another rope of 2 Frenchmen suddenly appeared out of the mist. They had come up the N buttress and now, with a dramatic gesture, began cramponing rapidly down a couloir with which they seemed familiar. Visibility was now reduced to about 50m. We followed them down unseen through the murk and gloom rope length after rope length eventually to meet up where the easy ground ran out with them and the other 3 Frenchmen who had followed us. We were now in a white-out. Figures in search of an escape route would loom up suddenly in the mist then vanish. As the last of many efforts to find a way out, I descended, as over the side of some huge ship, an icy wall steep and oppressive on a top rope. It was hopeless and at this our nadir, the French talked about all 3 ropes joining up. This should have been what the EEC was all about but the moment passed and 4 hours after our initial descent we decided to reverse the entire couloir to the point where the ridges had divided. It was now 19.00 and after a reappraisal decided that the correct route was via the narrower couloir to the left of what appeared to be the true W ridge. The French thought this line 'mad' and set off in the direction of the Chardonnet summit. Although the couloir was for the most part ice our descent was appallingly slow and at 22.00 at the Col Adams Reilly we abandoned the concept of a snow-cave for a makeshift wall of snow-crust heaped round a shallow depression over which I split my bivouac sac as a canopy secured by crampons and ice-axes. The night passed in the way that such nights do and next morning our water bottles and boots were frozen solid. There was some talk about what was the critical temperature for frost-bite and the argument still rumbles on.

Just before leaving the Col at 06.45h shouts wafted up from below. How on earth had the Frenchmen managed to get themselves down to the Argentière glacier? We set off down icy slopes in bad visibility but on the Tour glacier the weather suddenly lifted and the hut was visible on the far side of the glacier. Clarke now had a premonition about our route. The Tour glacier had bad associations for him as the former subject of a crevasse rescue some years back. Following what appeared to be tracks he suddenly disappeared from sight without so much as a word. Now you see him now you don't. An hour later he popped up over the lip of the crevasse minus Everest ice-axes but otherwise intact. Visibility had now deteriorated to a few metres so we decided to retreat to the top of the glacier on compass bearings weaving

our way through a maze of enormous crevasses. At one stage I began to wonder whether it might not be our fate to spend yet another night out but eventually we hit off some tracks and returned to the hut just after 14.00 having spent the past 34 with scarcely a bite to eat. Here we learnt that the Frenchmen had reversed the entire Forbes ridge by night arriving back at the hut at 05.00. The entry in the hut book had referred to 9 climbers 'totalment de-routé' but ours was the dubious satisfaction of completing our route. The voices from the Argentière glacier had been those of a Chasseurs Alpines detachment looking for us at the bottom of the mountain. What damage might have been done to the Entente was repaired by our presentation to the hut warden of a bottle of whisky. It was now raining and our time had run out so we retreated to 'Le Dahu' at Argentière for our last night in the Alps.

The Chardonnet escapade was our climax and in the way of uncomfortable experiences left its mark. But when time has blurred the edges it will be the sunlit days amongst the ibex, chamois and marmots in the former hunting grounds of Kings that will best be remembered and in particular that brilliant morning on the soaring ice-ridge spanning the Mountains of Paradise when we made our puny bid to walk with the Gods.

Climbers' playgrounds—Europe

21 The Pálava Rocks

Josef Jurak
Translation: Jaroslav Sovinsky

Pálava is the popular name for some limestone rocks in the Pavlosvské Vrchy (Pavlov Hills). These are situated in the S of Moravia about 40km from Brno. The well broken-up rocks, located in fine natural surroundings, are the favourite training area for Moravian climbers. The whole region is a nature reserve.

The Pavlov Hills consist of a ridge with 3 summits. The NE peak rises sheer from the lowlands of the river Dyje. The middle peak Děvín which is the highest (550m) falls in vertical rock cliffs to a wide saddle Soutěska (Strait). This saddle separates the above mentioned part of the ridge from the second part, on which is the next peak Obora (Preserve). South of these peaks is an outstanding broad hill Stolová Hora (Table Mt.). Further to the S the ridge slowly slopes down.

The geological structure and the origin of the Pavlov Hills were obscure for a long time. In the middle of mildly undulating low-lands, the range of seemingly high hills suddenly rises. It is interesting that Jurassic minerals in the topmost layer do not reach very far down. They lie on the younger Tertiary era layers. This configuration came into existence at the time of the Carpathian folding. In the middle of the Tertiary era the outside sediments of the Carpathians were folded so deeply, that the folds were shifted one over the other. The limestone cliffs lay quite high up. They were torn off from the Jurassic base and carried for many kilometres by the upper layer. The soft parts of the upper layer were later eroded off and the resistant limestones appeared. These were