mountains of their own country. The reason for this is because the Arhuacos 'open their hearts only when they are shown a bill of high denomination and of a suggestive green colour,' wrote an infuriated Colombian mountaineer.[6]

Andean literature has in the last 3 years been unevenly produced. Andean journals are at present for economic reasons not being published. But climbing in the Andes has been on the average very well reported in foreign journals (*American Alpine Journal, Mountain, Rivista Mensile*), although not so in books. It has been left to the Italians and, to a lesser extent, to those new and ambitious visitors to the Andes, the Poles, to publish the more important Andean books for the last triennium.[7]

[6] Declarations of Manuel Hernández and Antonio Curcio to *El Espectador* (Bogota), 15 February, 1976, p 18-A.

[7] G. Agnolotti, *Sarmiento, inferno bianco* (Torino: Rattero, 1973); C. Ferrari, *Cerro Torre, parete ovest* (Milano: Dall'Oglio, 1975); Società Alpinisti Tridentini, *Nevado Caras* (Club Alpino Italiano, 1973); H. Furmanik, *W peruwianskich kordylierach* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1974); T. Piaty, editor, *Himalaje-Karakorum* (Katowice: Slask, 1975); last book mentioned covers Polish expeditions abroad, with 4 chapters on the Andes. Other Polish Andean books by W. Ostrowski (Patagonia) and the Gdynia Mountaineering and Speleological Society (Colombia) are to appear in 1977. It should perhaps be mentioned here that the Ecuadorian newspaper *El Comercio* (Quito) published in its Sunday edition and between August and December 1975, excellent monographs on individual Ecuadorian peaks, with good photos, up-to-date information and sketch-maps.

Events and Trends 1974–6 South Africa

Michael Scott

South African cragmanship is characterized by an elaborately maintained veneer of non-competitiveness, which has been challenged for its complacent, levelling effect, although it is unparalleled in preserving a record of safe climbing.

The equipment revolution, which induced climbers to climb bolstered by nylon and alloy hope instead of technique, has prompted a renewed query into the responsibility of shops which sell equipment, to ensure some form of education at point of sale.

The declaration of more Wilderness areas has hampered climbing activity, notably in the Cedarberg and Drakensberg, while the opening of National hiking ways through the major ranges has had the opposite effect, and carried the population explosion into the mountains. Petrol restrictions and its rising price may still have a more significant long-term effect on visits to country areas than has been seen to date.

Western Cape

The past $2\frac{1}{2}$ years has seen renewed enthusiasm for opening major routes and repeating existing ones.

After concerted attempts, the much sought second ascent of North by North West on Du Toit's Peak (*AJ* 1972) was made by Dick and MacLachlan with one bivouac. As an experience, this route is frequently likened to a modern-day version of Mamacos' famous 1949 route on the same cliff. Cheesemond's party had to retreat on NNW after 2 days when a rainstorm swept in, while a party next door spent 3 nights under an overhang, before the rescue squad arrived.

Duiwel's Kloof near Stellenbosch has also seen frequent action. This gigantic rent in the mountain fabric has formed curtain walls of vast size, on which the Direct route held Du Preez in a 3-day marathon snow-blizzard until he could abseil—a hazardous undertaking as the climb traverses spectacularly, so the descent was down unknown rock.

The remarkable thing about these incidents is that a few years ago they would not have happened, for climbing in worsening or wet weather was unthinkable, with the Cape sandstone characteristically lichen-covered and becoming slimy when damp.

Dick and De Bruin raced through the Direct, including a berserk completely free lead of the mechanical pitch, taking a record 7 hours including recovering from a calamitous leadership error. Lucifer, a 350m climb in Duiwel's Kloof, which repulses many parties, was ascended several times, and MacLachlan and Dick have meanwhile almost pushed what promises to be a true cliff-hanger up blank reaches next to Lucifer, using sequences of bathook moves and involved and technically intricate climbing.

After 10 years, the Millstone Wall in Du Toit's Kloof had a second ascent by Dick and Lomax. The second ascent of Boshoff and Dawson's desperate

97 Du Toit's Kloof (This and next two photos: M. Scott)



eliminate line on the Witteberg, Firecracker, was made by De Bruin and Dick in a long day. They rated it the most serious undertaking on the Witteberg. On Slanghoek Peak, Graafland and Scott wended a free-climb up an orange amphitheatre of 250m worth of overhangs—almost a good line, but for an unavoidable dirty watershoot pitch.

Snijders, Pipich and Scott penetrated the walls below the shaleband of Milner with an imposing route up a monstrous tower of stacked blocks and chimneys, called Moraine Steeple. Climbing was steep, but moderate and free. There exists probably several kilometres of 400m shale-band walls still waiting to be climbed in the future.

Snijders also unearthed a ridiculously easy route on the notorious Deception Peak. Because of the queer tilted strata, this peak previously only had difficult routes on it and Snijders describes his line as the type of break people just walk right past.

John Moss was involved in pioneering an abortive meander up the W side of the Dome of Dreams, which used the mysterious Three Tower Kloof as the key to reach the bottom of the cliffs.

Graafland, Scott and Snijders found a reasonable direct on Pisa Wall, which has renewed interest in the super direct—a lure which has tantalized many parties without substantial progress being made, but a break-through seems likely during the coming summer season, once the moss-covered 'boiler-plates' have dried out.

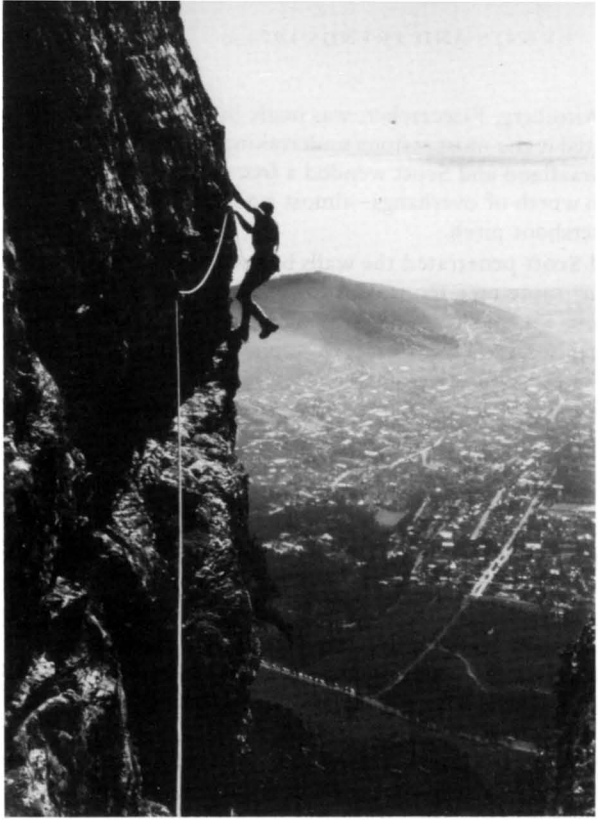
At Castle Rocks a new Frontal was climbed by Boshoff, Haber and Graafland, which utilized a wierd, western-roll move off an aidpoint, into a horizontal stomach-crawl.

In the barren Matsikamma and Gifberg (Poison Mtns) the Cheesmond brothers and Ed January opened some exciting routes on the weathered crags bordering the Namaqualand desert. Climbing is good, but the peaks so remote, that probably less than one party a year visits this area.

Near a historic fort relic from the Anglo-Boer war in Cogman's Kloof in the Langeberg range, Smithers and De Villiers did another good climb on the neglected folded buttresses of excellent rock, which are such a beautiful feature of this area.

The Cedarberg Tafelberg had a thorough working-over and produced some squeezed routes of character. Opinion has now been voiced that routes on the Tafelberg should not be recorded any more, so that future climbers can have the thrill of prospecting their own lines not knowing whether they have been done before or not.

On Table Mountain, (abbr. TM) the cradle of S.A. climbing, some girdle traverses have been attempted for the first time, but they seem unlikely to catch on, because the TM sandstone fractures naturally into horizontal breaks, and it is too easy to girdle. Any stringing together of hard pitches becomes very contrived. The Lion's Head granite yielded a Last Great Problem on a terrifyingly steep buttress, which fell at 'G' and 'M' to De Bruin's Rhodesian granite technique. Probably the most remarkable simian feat on TM's hardest route has been Ed February's 3-fold repeat of the Roulette traverse ('G') to remove his own slings when his second could not follow, and his lead of the crux overhanging crack ('G') in almost relaxed fashion immediately afterwards.



98 Girdle traversing on Table Mountain

Williams and Chinery worked steadily at the problematic barrier to the Fernwood Precipice Direct, until they succeeded using some nervy 'M3' peg moves in 'one time only' type cracks. This gave entry to the superb steep 'G' faces above. The complete route is riddled with overhangs, and is the only TM climb to have had a planned bivouac on the ascent.

Following the introduction of the first pocket-type guide to the rock routes on the front of TM, a great stimulus has been given to the younger rock climbers (nowadays many ranging from 14 years of age and upwards), and new routes are proliferating on the lower buttresses.

Indicative of the clean climbing ethics are the hammerless ascents of aid routes, such as Africa Scandal; the attempts to free-climb mechanical pitches, such as Leadbelly, and the opening of the type of route pushed by Scott and MacLachlan, who climbed a giant roof on Nursery Buttress (behind the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens), using 18 points of aid of which only 6 were pitons.

Eastern Cape

Here the genesis of climbing activity has been Dr John Moss, who has produced an explosion of routes in the Cockscomb gorges, also a direct unclimbed line on the W face of the Cockscomb of 'F2', a direct on the S Face in winter, giving 300m of climbing with snow on all the ledges. Then in the Katberg he found an interesting dolerite wall to tackle. Several forays were made to the

Hill of Execution, and some severe lines added on this redoubtable crag with its evil past (*AJ* 1975).

Natal

In the magnificent Drakensberg range, Dick, Fatti and Smithers climbed the steep N Buttress of the E Injasuti Triplet via an 'F3, M2' route of sustained effort. On the mechanical sections Dick, travelling light in the lead, had to lower repeatedly for more gear. In the Rockeries, Smithers and Andersen did the unclimbed Pinnacle H, then the traverse with one bivouac en route, which in itself is a fair undertaking. 1975 saw the 31st ascent made of the Devil's Tooth via the original 1950 route. Judging from the record book on the summit, the Tooth is one of the few climbs to attract a cosmopolitan clientele drawn from every visiting climber to our shores. The demanding route on the Tooth was a superb breakthrough in technique post-war, but sadly the climb has changed in character. As the grass was removed, so the pitons grew in number, and the basaltic rock is eroding away too, making the climb harder all the time.



99 The Rockeries pinnacles and Mporyirana, Drakensberg

Gray, De Bruin and Scott opened a new 7-pitch route of 'F2' on the Sentinel at Mont aux Sources on the Lesotho border. The Angus-Leppan route on the Sentinel was repeated by Du Preez's party, with variations and by February's party with further variations. The difficult Column has also had several ascents, mostly via Thompson's original solo route. In the scenic Mnweni valley, the Outer Pinnacle (a steep, jagged spire) was climbed by

Chinery's party via a new route of 'F3' standard. Fixed ropes were left after the first day to descend to a comfortable bivouac.

Transvaal

At the Krantzberg the 3rd ascent of Armageddon was made by Druschke, Linke and the first woman to do the route, Romy Stapely. The party hauled bivvy gear as they were practising big wall technique. Exodus had a 2nd ascent by McGarr, Fatti and Gill Graafland. Some new lines were found by Linke and Andersen, among them Gasoline Alley. With Smithers, Andersen did a 140m direct start of 'F2, M' to Jerrymunglum. Zardoz ('G') was added by Fatti, Smithers and McGarr. Krantzberg afficionados are now talking in tentative apprehension, that perhaps the only new routes in future will result from abseiling and gardening the grips free of aloes and vultures first!

The Magaliesberg near Pretoria continues to be bedevilled with access problems, but yields an annual crop of new finds. Boshoff and Dawson also succeeded in free-climbing the spectacular pendulum move on the Red Column route. The scenic Wilgepoort ('gateway of willows') has been studied intensely and the line, which repulsed the Barley brothers some years back, fell to Linke and Druschke and was hard 'M2'. The burst of activity, which resulted in a spate of routes, has now petered out, and seems to have left only one really hard roof for the next generation to crack. Further afield, Hanglip's rounded bulges produced 'Naked Orange' by Ward and Druschke, a 200m line of sustained climbing.

South West Africa

The Matterhorn of the Namib, the Spitzkop, a granite inselberg, claims regular attention. Schreiber's W Face route, opened in 1960, has just had a 2nd ascent by Hughes and Lichtman, during which they reduced not only the substantial aid to only one point, but avoided 'climbing tree' techniques, found essential by the opening party. With the addition of Blumgart, a 300m line on the former Bushman stronghold, the Brandberg, was climbed. Near Karabib, a 300m amphitheatre of quartzite yielded two fine 'F3' routes of 12 pitches each. Both Brandberg and Spitzkop have subsequently received a lot of attention, notably by Haber's party, but the main logistical problem caused by water scarcity in the desert, keeps an effective line of defence around these peaks.

The elusive Chumberg, observed from afar by most explorers to the Fish River Canyons, was tackled by Lichtman, who had to attempt a crossing of the flooded Fish River on a makeshift raft, which promptly sank. He crossed next day and climbed the summit via a new ridge of mostly mild rock with one harder section, and from the records on top, probably made the second ascent of this peak too.

Swaziland

Dunsby and Limbach were instrumental in prospecting some 100m granite crags near Mbabane, and some good climbs in the Ubombo mountains. In the Mahamba river gorge they found some cliffs of almost marble-like rock. Apart from one mechanical epic in pouring rain, the routes are mostly average to hard, but all good fun.