

celebration party with a big bonfire, in which we were joined by members of Polish and Italian expeditions also climbing in the area.

At the end of September we withdrew from Base Camp and left for home. We arrived at Lata in only 3 days, during which the weather was clear and we had good views of Nanda Devi, Bethartoli Himal and other famous mountains. On 4 October we arrived back at the Hotel York in New Delhi and after 2 days we returned by air to Japan, the main body arriving at Tokyo Airport on 7 October.

Additional notes on Namibia

Tony Mills

The potential for rock climbing in Namibia has barely begun to be tapped, since there are cliffs and mountains of various sizes all over the country. Only the name of Groot Spitzkoppe is likely to bring a glimmer of recognition to any but a South African climber. However there have been a number of areas which have received some development in recent years.

Most noticeable of these areas is the mountain known as Abbabis in the Otjipatera near Karibib. This 300m-high cliff of quartzite offers open-face climbing of a type unusual for Namibia; numerous routes exist here now, mostly in the Severe to Hard Severe category. Scorpion and Admiratio are probably the best of these. Clearly visible from Abbabis is the impressive escarpment of the Erongo Mountains, several miles long, some 300–500m high with not a single route done! The rock is reported to be basalt, but very sound for its type.

Near Windhoek the 150m-high cliffs of the Falconstein give many lines used for practice climbing by the locals; outstanding are Leather Tackie, Dovecote Frontal and Baboon Direct, and on the other side, Eagles Nest, all offering good middle grade climbing on sound rock.

On the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain, no rock climbing has been done, except for one route on the imposing Orabeskopf, which gave Rodney Lichtman an impressive 400m crack and chimney line called Dogbreath. This is a very remote area, with long approach and descent walks along the Goasebschlucht.

Another area with much greater potential than has been realized is the Pondoksberge adjoining Groot Spitzkoppe. There are routes on Pondokspits and Pondoks 1, 2, 3, and 4, all about 500m long on very rough although friable granite. Recent additions include Alte Sau and Solitaire on P4, Azur and Xylocopid on P3 and Abrasion on Pondokspits. There must be many more lines on these, at first sight, insignificant peaks, which turn out to be much larger than they look.

The history of the first ascent of Groot Spitzkoppe is well documented elsewhere and on our ascent, the 106th (first American and second British, we believe) we were disappointed by the quality of the rock and the lack of continuity of the climbing, although it was undoubtedly a *tour-de-force* of route finding for 1947, on a fine mountain. The Schreiber route on the W wall is a different proposition altogether, now largely free at about Very Severe. We were defeated by the heat and again due to lack of traffic the rock is inclined to looseness. Lichtman has also climbed the obvious line on the NE ridge, but found 2 bathooks necessary. Here as

elsewhere new lines must abound, though many would include extremely difficult, wide and off-width, jamming cracks and chimney problems.

Both 'Fingers of God' have been climbed, Vingerklip in the Ugab valley being permissible, and that of Mukorob strictly unofficial and not to be repeated.

Other minor areas such as the Chumberg near Fish River Canyon (a trip enlivened by crossing the Kameel River), Staplehelm near Anschluss and crags in the Okahandje area have received some attention, though little has been climbed as yet.

Finally Udo Kleyenstuber reports a series of 500–700m-high dolorite cliffs in the heart of Ouamboland, which when seriously approached, he says, will offer the finest climbing in Namibia.

All these areas are open and safe to visit, as in fact we found the whole of Namibia, friendly but hot, with some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world.

85 *The Sciora group* (Photo: W. Kirstein)

