Alpine Club Peru Meet (16th July–26th August 1987)

ROBERT SNEYD

Four AC members – Robert Sneyd, Rosemary and Ashley Greenwood and John Hudson – and four others – Pamela Glanville and Belinda Swift (Pinnacle Club), Stanley Thomas (Climbers Club) and Richard Weller – attended the Peru meet which was based on Huaraz. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 to 75! Meet members arrived and departed at different times, with most people staying four or five weeks. We made four trips into the Cordillera Blanca, each to a different area.

Quebrada Rajucolta

A one-hour truck ride took myself, John, Richard and Stanley to Pitec where we were joined by Juan (our *arriero*) and three donkeys. We reached the bottom of the Rajucolta valley after a four-hour walk where we found that access was blocked by a substantial wall and a locked gate. The inhabitants of a nearby village only opened the gate after prolonged negotiations and the promise of some cash upon our return. Two more hours saw us camped in the valley one mile below Laguna Tambillo. After a day's acclimatization John and I attempted Point 5377m but were driven off by rockfalls 100m from the top. We then moved up the valley and camped by Laguna Awash (4700m) before moving again to a spectacular camp-site (5100m) opposite the impressive W face of Huantsan. From there we traversed Yawarraju (5675m) before climbing Rurek (5698m). The descent from Yawarraju was notable for loose rock and constant stonefall which completely severed my brand new rope. We then returned to Huaraz to meet the rest of the party. We found the town in fiesta and the streets full of goose-stepping children engaged in endless parades.

Quebrada Ishinca

A short drive and two days' walk took the whole party to the head of Quebrada Ishinca where we found several large parties. There was also a dead donkey in an advanced state of decomposition. I was impressed by one party of Ecuadorean climbers whose baggage included two live chickens for later consumption. In the face of worsening weather, three of us decided to attempt Taklaraju (6032m) which is the major peak of the valley. We camped rather too high at about 5500m and Richard was badly affected by the altitude, so John and I pressed on, leaving Richard in the tent. In a complete white-out we plodded upwards without difficulty through impressive seracs and crevasses until the last 200m where two decent ice-pitches took us on to the summit. In



71. Cirque of towers, Wind Rivers.



72. Looking towards Nevado Kashan (5701m) from Laguna Awash (John Hudson and Rob Sneyd attempted a route up the rock-face to reach the right-hand ridge near the snow arête).



73. *Quebrada Qeshqe with Pongos Sur (5711m) on R and Point 5303 on L. The plant is a* puya raymondi. *(The snow-peak behind the rock-peak was climbed, and the right-hand ridge of the rock-peak attempted, by Rob Sneyd and Richard Weller).*



74. *The group. L–R: Juan (*arriero*), Stanley Thomas, Richard Weller, Rosemary Greenwood, John Hudson, Pamela Glanville, Belinda Swift, Ashley Greenwood, Rob Sneyd.*

thick fog and a steady snowfall we didn't linger on the top and opted for a quick descent; we had considerable difficulty finding the route, as our trail had been entirely obliterated by fresh snow.

Whilst we were on Taklaraju, Pamela and Belinda attempted Ishinca (5546m) after staying one night in an excellent hut which lies below this peak. Bad weather forced them to turn back before reaching the summit. All the peaks were now out of condition and we returned to Huaraz.

Nevada Pongos

We had considerable difficulty obtaining pack animals for this trip as the area is seldom visited except by the coach-loads of day-trippers who go to the edge of the national park to see the rare *Puya Raymondi* (a massive pineapple-like plant which grows up to 30 feet high). From Ingenio Pampa we traversed a col at 4600m to reach the lakes of Quebrada Qeshqe. The next day we moved further up the valley to the edge of Laguna Qeshqe, where we camped. The entrance to the Qeshqe valley is dominated by a substantial unnamed rock peak (5303m) with a massive S ridge. Richard and I determined to climb this and set off early the next day. We attained the ridge at sunrise and made rapid progress until we were about two-thirds of the way up where the difficulty increased to about VS. Whilst leading a steep corner Richard dislodged a rock which fell about 40ft before striking me in the back. This put an end to any further climbing, as I was completely unable to move my right arm and the rest of the day was spent lowering me off. During the 10 days we spent in this area most members of the party reached one or more of the many unnamed peaks and cols which surround the Quebrada Qeshqe.

Quebrada Llanganuco and Quebrada Yannapaccha

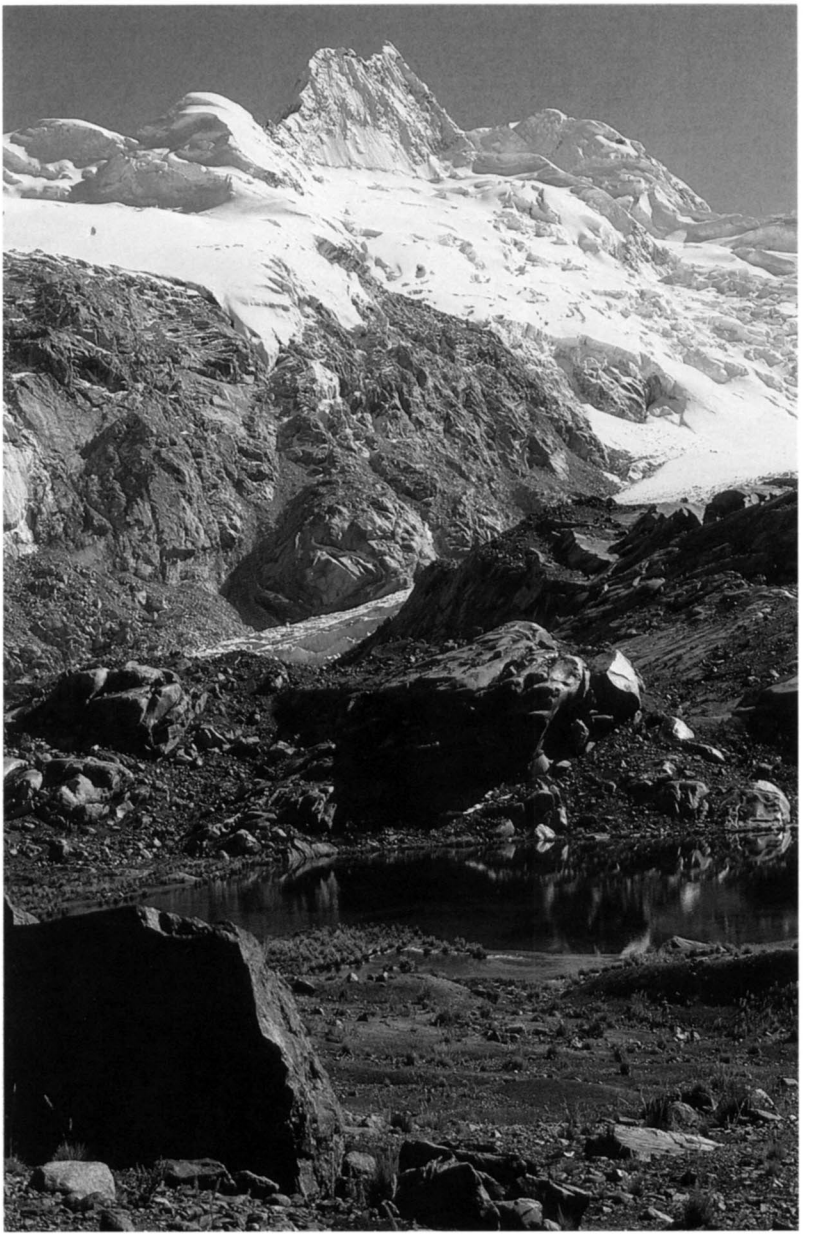
John and Belinda climbed Yannapaccha (5593m) from Quebrada Yannapaccha. They were then joined by the Greenwoods and Stanley who had come up the Quebrada Santa Cruz and crossed the Punta Union. On the way out Belinda was bitten by a dog at Yanama and had to make a swift descent for rabies injections.

APPENDIX

THE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAIN GUIDES OF PERU

BELINDA SWIFT

In Huaraz, immediately to the east of Av Luzuriaga, on waste ground where dogs scavenge the rubbish and reinforcing rods of half-finished concrete buildings pierce the clear air, there is a surprise. A Swiss chalet stands here,



75. *Pongos Norte (5680m) on R and Nevado Qeshqe (5463m) in the centre, from Quebrada Qeshqe.*

called the Casa de Guias. The interior, much of it wood-panelled, includes a small café, an office, a pleasant dormitory and washroom accommodation, an equipment store, and a library and lecture room still being developed.

In 1977 Camille Bournissen, the Vice-President of the Association of Swiss Guides, visited Peru and was impressed with its potential for climbing and trekking. There were no professional guides then – only a few porters with some climbing experience and limited equipment. The porter hired by two of us in 1979 had a pair of ten-point crampons and very little warm clothing. He was building up his credentials by asking us to write down in his notebook what he had helped us climb. In this year the Swiss returned to organize a training course for guides. It lasted two months. 11 people took part and they climbed 18 mountains. Eight obtained their guide certificates.

A commission was formed in 1983, presided over by Tony Lampert, and the project *Alpes-Andes*, approved by the Peruvian government, was set up. Its aims were to continue the training of mountain guides, to develop tourism in the Andes, and to build up the necessary equipment and techniques required for mountain rescue. The project is worked on by two bodies: the Swiss Mountain Guides Association and the Association of Mountain Guides of Peru – AGMP. Employment is thus provided for the young men of the valleys who act as porters, donkey-men, camp guardians or guides.

For the years 1987–88 the AGMP has produced a climbing and trekking programme covering the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash from Huaraz, the Vilcabamba and Vilcanota from Cuzco, and the Cordillera Volcanica from Arequipa.

The AGMP can be contacted in Lima at: Jr Camana 780 Of 506, Lima 1. Tel 270635, Telex 25218PE CP HCRIL.