Book Reviews 1990

COMPILED BY GEOFFREY TEMPLEMAN

Elusive Summits
Victor Saunders
Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, pp191, £14.95

This is very much a book of our time and a model of its genre. It tells of four lightweight, alpine-style expeditions to the Karakoram. All the routes described were of the highest standard of difficulty and epics abound. So far, no big deal; lots of young mountaineers have been going to the greater ranges on exactly this sort of expedition during the last decade.

What raises this book head and shoulders above the run-of-the-mill is that Victor Saunders is not only a hard climber but an unusually percipient and humorous writer. This is a happy and rare combination of talents which I shall allude to later.

In this, his first book, Saunders has got most things right. Each expedition gets about 50 pages. This ensures that the narrative is concentrated and it avoids the inescapable padding of 'the expedition book'. Saunders is commendably frank – bearing in mind that the totally honest autobiography has yet to be written. He has that knack, brought to an art form by Tom Patey, of exposing, almost caricaturing, his friends' quirks. As with Patey, it is done with disarming humour and kindliness. With a sophisticated, and often self-deprecating, sense of humour he reveals the absurd and the illogical in many expedition situations and attitudes. This is delightful leavening.

His writing is crisp, even staccato, and he frequently surprises with a sudden oblique view of a scene. For instance, when a falling stone knocks a tooth out, he climbs down 'trailing blood, spit and self-pity'. Or, after a claustrophobic bivouac during a good three-day Karakoram blizzard, the asthmatic, self-confessed hypochondriac sums it up: 'for three days storms and headaches beat like angry fists at my eggshell universe'. You will have to look very hard for clichés. He has a sharp ear for dialogue, particularly in the funny bits.

Now to the nuts and bolts. The first expedition was to Uzum Brakk (6642m), or Conway's Ogre, in 1980. The story starts with the dramatic rescue of a Japanese climber from a neighbouring expedition who had lain injured in a crevasse for nine days. They climb a new route on the E face but fail to make the summit. The descent is hairy.

Next came the higher Hunza peak of Bojohaghur (7329m) in 1984. There is a hilarious scene when Chris Watts falls off a cramped bivouac and dangles below an overhang, still in his sleeping bag. He jumars back without getting out! Again they climbed the route but were unable to make the summit.

In 1985 it was Rimo I (7385m), this time with Stephen Venables who managed to drop his rucksack at a pregnant moment when the summit might have been within grasp. This is also described in Venables' *Painted Mountains*, and the two accounts bear tolerable similarity.

Finally, Spantik (7072m) in 1987. The well-known photograph of the Golden Pillar which they climbed tells it all. The headwall is 4000 feet of stomach-turning verticality. Saunders' partner was that superb and colourful mountaineer, Mick Fowler, who, of course, provides ample material for the by now familiar Saunders treatment. Their commitment was awesome. Towards the top of the headwall they climbed near-vertical shale down which an abseil retreat would have been impossible. On the descent (at last Saunders made the summit on this one!) they abseiled into unknown country down irreversible ice cliffs.

There are eight pages of colour pictures, too many of them reduced to quarter page and thus losing their impact.

To return now to the theme of the climber/writer: Victor Saunders is certainly to be congratulated on a splendidly crafted first book. He now joins the ranks of my currently favourite mountain writers: John Barry and Stephen Venables. The Club is fortunate to have such members. Victor Saunders was recently on an expedition to Makalu. I wonder what he will make of that?

Mike Banks

Coming Through
Andy Fanshawe
Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, pp218, £14.95

This is Andy Fanshawe's first book. The majority of the 218 pages are concerned with his five climbs on Chogolisa and Menlungtse, but there are also soul-searching passages on incidents such as a fatal accident involving his closest friend and his struggle to come to terms with his lack of success on his 1989 expedition to Makalu.

Andy writes well. I'm not sure about the title, but this is a lucid, descriptive book which covers a whole lot more than straightforward technical climbing stories. It exudes a youthfulness and vitality which very much captures the sense of wide-eyed excitement experienced by those exploring the Himalaya for the first time. From the harsh heat of Islamabad to the crisp coldness of high altitudes the sense of adventure and need for excitement shines strongly through.

The book starts by recalling days in Chamonix and scenes so familiar to many. Hard up but fun, lots of excitement; maximum value from minimum experience.

Gradually, of course, other opportunities arise; Andy meets Hamish Irvine (by climbing up his ropes whilst *in extremis* on Point Five) and together they organize what is to be Andy's first trip to the Himalaya. A bold first traverse of 7600m high Chogolisa and the subsequent death of Liam Elliot on Broad Peak bring mixed emotions which Andy explores with an endearing openness.

Contact with Chris Bonington via Andy's work as National Officer of the British Mountaineering Council results in his inclusion on Chris's 1988 expedition to Menlungtse and culminates in the first ascent of the W summit of the peak with Alan Hinkes who had been employed as the accompanying reporters' mail runner.

Again Andy successfully steers clear of the potentially monotonous blow-by-blow account of the climb and revealingly projects the personalities of those involved, their reactions to the mountain and his emotions at seeing first-hand the shattered remains of the Buddhist monasteries destroyed by the Chinese cultural revolution in Tibet.

Both ethnic and mountaineering scenes are well portrayed by colour photos, and the whole book adds up to a very attractive package. Above all else it is immensely readable – there are few climbing books that I have read so avidly. Recommended.

Mick Fowler

Mallory of Everest
Dudley Green
Faust Publishing Company Ltd, 1990, pp141, £8.50

Sixty-six years after his disappearance on Everest, this is the third book to be written in English about George Mallory. Any appraisal, therefore, must inevitably invoke comparison with its two predecessors – the 1927 memoir by David Pye, and the biography by George's son-in-law David Robertson in 1968, both acknowledged by the present author amongst his sources.

Dudley Green, a life-long enthusiast for the Mallory story, has now produced a fuller account of George's life, especially its earlier part, than Pye, and in shorter format than Robertson. By drawing on a number of sources still extant but hitherto untapped, and in particular by first-hand up-to-date contacts with surviving members of the families of George and Ruth, the author has brought to light much new material and many previously unpublished photographs. The result is a highly informative and readable biographical sketch comprising 141 pages of text, a short useful index and more than 40 illustrations. The author's researches, particularly those relating to Mallory's life before Everest, provide justification enough for yet another book on what some might consider an already overworked chapter of mountaineering history.

'Other climbers,' said David Robertson in 1968, 'have gone on talking about George Mallory as if the decades were only years'. But that is no longer true, for one may encounter many of today's climbers and still more members of the public who seem quite unacquainted with the story. Dudley Green's method is to allow his subject to spell out his character and philosophy by means of first-hand quotations from writings and letters – an approach which reflects much painstaking investigation and absolves the book, although presented in somewhat popular form, from any charge of deficiency in depth.

Something must be said about the illustrations. Unpublished photographs of outstanding interest include several family, school and university

groups; a 1911 Pen-y-pass picture of George with Cottie Saunders (later Lady O'Malley and writer 'Ann Bridge'); another from Pen-y-pass showing George at the wheel of his Model T Ford in 1919, with Geoffrey Winthrop Young beside him and five other members of the party, including Ruth, trying to get them started with a combined 'push-job'. There is also a splendid full-face photograph of Sandy Irvine, one of George as a subaltern and a quite new one of Ruth.

But in its production the book is disappointing – the presentation is not worthy of the material. The binding, in rather unattractive sheets of plastic-coated card more suited to a guidebook than to a serious work, and the quality of most of the illustrations falls far below those of Pye and Robertson. The briefest glance at the three books is enough to confirm this: for instance Winthrop Young's famous photograph of Mallory descending the Moine Ridge, reproduced in all three, is outstandingly good in Pye, where, as its composition obviously requires, the picture is vertically projected. In Robertson composition and definition are superior to Green, but in both these the impact is much diminished by the horizontal projection.

Mallory of Everest, excellently titled, deserves better of its binding and illustrations, and if it is welcomed as it should be in the world of climbing books and by the wider public let us hope for an improved second run, bound (please) in hardback.

It is good to hear that two of George's three children, Clare (b1915) and John (b1920) are still with us. For them this book will bring back treasured memories of the unforgettable story in which their father was *primus inter pares*; and for the rest of us a fresh and invigorating look at the two men who may have climbed Mount Everest 29 years before its summit could, beyond all doubt, be said to have been reached. The unanswerable question remains, and in a concluding postscript Dudley Green wisely leaves it with Noel Odell, last to see them alive on their final journey.

Edward Smyth

The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia
Derek Waller
University Press of Kentucky, 1990, ppviii+327, $30

Through the many books on Himalayan and Central Asian explorations there runs a persistent, strong, yet discontinuous and often invisible thread – the story of the Pundits.

Although Hari Ram (M-H or No 9) in the late 19th century ascended the Dudh Kosi, crossed the Nangpa La, visited Tengri on at least two occasions and travelled through South Tibet, thus circumnavigating Everest, there is only a passing reference to him in the appendix on surveying in the first book on the exploration of Everest from Tibet, and, indeed, Shipton in his account of the exploration of the Nepalese side of Everest in 1951 does not mention this Pundit at all.

One difficulty in finding out about the Pundits is that their work was

clandestine; they were secret native surveyors employed by the Survey of India; yet there is a paradox. Why was their work so often recorded, albeit by their case officers, in geographical journals? Why was the Pundit Nain Singh given the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, which he richly deserved? Surely this is as public an announcement of his exploits as it is possible to have.

The Pundits owed their existence to the expansion of Russia from Europe to Central Asia in the late 19th century. The Government of India knew very little about the topography and political allegiances of the vast, remote and strategic land into which Russia was moving, so it became of paramount importance for them to gain as much information as possible. As British surveyors in these regions were either murdered or politely returned, the Survey of India decided to use local natives for this hazardous work. After selection these men were trained in basic clandestine survey techniques at Dehra Dun, their work was tested, and then they were given specific assignments, lasting months or years.

The North-West Frontier was the first target and Abdul Hamid, the first Pundit, travelled to Yarkand. Unfortunately, on his return over the Karakoram Pass he became ill and died under suspicious circumstances. Another attempt to explore the Oxus and Pamir was made by a 'Pathan of the Native Sappers and Miners' who was dispatched from Peshawar towards Chitral. A family blood feud caught up with him, however, and he was murdered. 'The Mirza' followed and reached Kashgar by a circuitous route via Kandahar, Kabul and the Wakhan Corridor. After four months in Kashgar he returned via Yarkand and Leh, being away for two years. Despite initial misgivings, his survey measurements were finally accepted by the geographical establishment in the UK and Montgomerie (who was in charge of the Pundits) read a paper on the Mirza's explorations at the Royal Geographical Society in 1871. Both were congratulated on their work. The Mirza was sent on a second exploration to Bokhara in 1872–73 but was murdered *en route* whilst he slept. Further work on the North-West Frontier was carried out by the Havildar, the Mullah and others, but as the area was becoming increasingly penetrated by British military expeditions, the efforts of the Pundits were then concentrated on Tibet.

For this purpose Tibetan-speaking inhabitants of the high Himalayan valleys, many from the Milam area, were recruited by Smyth, the Education Officer of Kumaon. Initially Nain Singh and his cousin Mani Singh were chosen. Neither was new to surveying, both having accompanied the Schlagintweits in Ladakh and the Stracheys in West Tibet. This was the start of a most fruitful period in Central Asian exploration and many members of the Singh family were involved.

The Pundits crossed and recrossed the Himalaya and the Tibet plateau, they visited and mapped Lhasa, the gold fields of Thok Jalong in South Tibet, discovered the Gangdise and Nyenqentangla ranges, followed the course of the Tsangpo almost to the plains of India, explored Bhutan and established a remarkably comprehensive picture of Central Asia and Tibet for the Survey.

Perhaps the most remarkable journey was that of AK, Kishen Singh, described in my article on pp 49–62 of this volume. When AK returned to India 4½ years after he had left, he was destitute, in rags, and so physically exhausted

that it was feared he might die. Despite being robbed by both his companion and brigands, and being searched and detained more than once under grave suspicion, he retained all his notebooks and virtually all his instruments. He was a man of great integrity: on his return he was asked if he had any debts, for often the Pundits had to sell items or borrow money; AK said he had none. The distance covered on this journey amounted to 2800 miles which, when added to his previous exploits in South Tibet and Tengri Nor (which he circumnavigated) and his journey to Khotan on the Forsyth Mission, meant that he had surveyed more of Central Asia than any other Pundit, even his illustrious cousin Nain Singh. He was honoured with Gold Medals by the Italian and French Geographical Societies, but not by the Royal Geographical Society – an astonishing omission. AK retired to Milam, where he was visited in 1905 at a nearby village, Mansiari, by Tom Longstaff who was on his journey to Western Tibet and the attempt on Gurla Mandhata.

Professor Derek Waller, in a labour of love over many years, has given the first complete account of the Pundits' explorations, and what comes through the pages of this academic and thorough work is the sheer persistence, ingenuity, resourcefulness and bravery of these remarkable men. This book is a considerable work of scholarship with 40 pages of references, and all who are interested in the exploration of the Himalaya and Tibet should be greatly indebted to the author for his detailed account which clarifies and expands an important period in Central Asian travel.

Michael Ward

Exploring the Hidden Himalaya
Soli Mehta and Harish Kapadia
Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, pp213, npq

High Asia. An Illustrated History of the 7000 Metre Peaks
Jill Neate
Unwin and Hyman, 1989, ppx+213, £25.00

Exploring the Hidden Himalaya is principally about the lesser known parts of the range. It includes the Indian Karakoram and Sikkim, but excludes all of Nepal and Bhutan. The format is that of chapters outlining the history of exploration in each of the massifs. A narrative style is adopted; the book is meant to be read, not just picked over for bare information. The text is well supported by photographs and maps, though there is a gap between Lahul and Kishtwar. I suspect that the mapping was based on the commercially available material, which also has a similar gap. It would have been helpful if the maps could have folded out, as almost constant reference to them is required in the reading of the text.

The strength of the book lies in the authors' commitment to their subject. Harish Kapadia is *the* authority here. He has contributed to the subject with his prolific excursions into untracked territory, and his explorations are always backed up with meticulous research. Harish has not only done more than any one else on these lesser peaks, he knows more about them too.

In spite of its title, Jill Neate's book is less a history than a survey of the 7000m peaks from the Soviet Pamir to Minya Konka on the far eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau. Neate has included the unclimbed and unattempted peaks and has listed intriguing mountains about which almost nothing seems to be known. I cannot decide whether she has done mountaineering a great service or a disservice. I will certainly always have a copy of her books to hand when looking for Himalayan projects (her bibliography of mountaineering literature has long been a favourite of mine); on the other hand, it distresses me that every other Himalayan peak-bagger will have access to the same information. The format is that of an encyclopaedia, with beautiful photographs, and sketch maps that for my taste are too small in the area they cover to be really useful.

Both books are highly recommended.

A V Saunders

My Tibet

The Dalai Lama, introduction and photographs by Galen Rowell

University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990, pp159, 108 large colour plates, 2 maps, $35

The fourteenth Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, has become more widely influential in exile than he could have become in Tibet. He writes with gentle passion, and is respected and revered throughout the world. Quite possibly these essays may do more to rescue our threatened environment than the actions of noisier organizations.

This is an incandescent book. Accustomed as we have become to Galen Rowell's brilliant photography, these many plates have that special clarity of the pure atmosphere in high Tibet; the colour is faithful and composition superb. The pictures glow. Rowell ranges widely: from limitless horizons, crystal snow summits, intimate portraits of indigenous birds and beasts and people, to a large and unusual portfolio of Tibetan monks, pilgrims, shrines and ceremonies. His genius has captured the beauty, the wildness, the spiritual quality of poor tormented Tibet, making a luminous background for the simply phrased message of the Dalai Lama. In his introduction Rowell outlines enough Tibetan history to give us background for the plates and for the messages which match them. He describes the humour, the wisdom and the joy in the midst of tragedy which pervades this most human of spiritual leaders. This is not a book for mountaineers or travellers alone – it is a message for all the world.

Charles Houston

High Altitude Medical Science

Edited by G Ueda, S Kusama, N F Voelkel

Sinshu University, 1988, npq

This book is the Proceedings of an International Symposium on High-Altitude Medicine held in November 1987 at Matsumoto in Japan.

The majority of papers are from Japanese workers and all are in English.

It is the Japanese counterpart of the now well-established Hypoxia Symposium held every two years in North America at Chateau Lake Louise.

Essentially for medical scientists, this book covers many aspects, both clinical and experimental, of cold and oxygen lack in man and animals. In particular there are three papers on high-altitude adaptations in the pika, a primitive species native to high altitude for 37 million years and distributed world-wide. Like the yak it appears to be genetically adapted, not having to any degree enlargement of the right heart which is found in non-adapted species like man.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of work on an increasingly important subject.

Michael Ward

A Manual of Modern Rope Techniques for Climbers and Mountaineers
Nigel Shepherd
Constable, 1990, £8.95

Once I thought myself competent with ropes, and as I remain alive it cannot have been a complete illusion. Climbing before nuts required ingenuity unless you were brave, and some of the latter tended not to be around long.

Then protection and security in movement on mountains was attempted by much the same methods as now, but the tools were simpler and sparse. In consequence ingenuity with the rope itself and with the few slings usually carried was at a premium, and the costs of lack of imagination could be long delay, a cold bivouac or worse. Securing protection with four or five slings, rattling flakes and chockstones and knout-like knots stuck into cracks was a high art, from Siegfried Herford and Fred Pigott to Joe Brown and the dawn of our more democratic age. None should delude themselves that the progress of protection has been cost-free. Immense artisanal ingenuity went into protecting climbs and escaping from them when technological means were so slight.

There is maybe little to be read into a cover shot of slate endeavour on a book that has relatively little to say about the specifics of modern harder extreme climbing. Indeed, the world with a lightly out-of-focus bolt close at hand seems remote from much of the book. The bolt-ladder specialist needs relatively few of these techniques, requiring instead enough strength, concentration on where to pull up next and on what, and someone holding the rope who will remember to clip in the sticht plate and, preferably, stay awake. Most of the world is elsewhere, bigger, more unstable in essence, moving, tumbling, decaying, swept by weather and wind. The most permanent-looking of rock citadels tempt believers in permanence to doom or disillusion.

So this book gives more thought to movement than to sitting in a crowd. Chapters on snow, rock and ice anchors, jumaring, abseil, recovery of a partner on rock and ice, these are of the essence of moving through the firing line of the real mountain, and most rock, environments. What shines through is the author's practical experience, the lessons drilled in from real hard times. Most experienced climbers know many techniques, but most are happily rusty from

infrequent use. Nigel Shepherd's guiding is the key to these sections. Nothing concentrates the mind better than being attached for days on end to varieties of people who may or may not be as competent as they think, may or may not do as they are advised, and may or may not be of assistance in an emergency. Old guides used to keep them on tight handheld strings, for easier disposal if their security could no longer be assured. There is no doubt that exposure to these situations, often in objectively dangerous places, brings out wisdom in those who survive.

One admirable result is the explanation of a wide range of techniques, and illustrations support these. Another is a short way with manifest impracticalities, and scepticism about techniques that might just be used if all else has already failed. On rescue in particular I liked (p157): 'Do not underestimate the difficulties of hoisting someone without assistance. What is essentially a simple system to set up is extraordinarily difficult to effect.' He can say that again! As one moves on to areas long rusty, this commonsense gives some confidence.

In the areas I know best, ascending and descending rocks, mountains and all sorts of tottering places as quickly as my lungs and muscles allow, while seeking to evade an oft-expected brush with eternity, this is a well considered, clearly argued and ordered text. Take 'Moving Together' and 'Glacier Travel'. Both are as essential as ever to expeditious ascent anywhere but in a klettergarten. Maybe at one time the joint stresses upon not falling and keeping the rope reasonably closely managed between climbers were not necessary. Now they are, as the transition from small-scale to motion on mountains is a bigger leap.

This text is good value. If some of the rope rigs look likely to baffle my memory, that is my problem rather than the author's.

Paul Nunn

Mountains and Other Ghosts
Dermot Somers
Diadem Books, 1990, pp224, £12.95 (hb), £8.95 (pb)

Dermot Somers is a good friend, and it might have been sensible to refuse Geof Templeman's request to review this book. But my sympathy for all editors who have to extract material for deadlines overruled my hesitation. I leave it to readers to decide if I am biased.

The book contains 14 short stories. Most have a mountain background, but only four or five could be described as 'climbing stories'. Many have an Irish background but are not the less universal for that. Don't expect peaceful stories – they are almost all full of tension: I don't mean characters hitting each other, but tense in many ways, physical – a car chase, death in a storm, the Eigerwand – and mental – young offenders, the ingrained tensions of rural Ireland.

For me, anyway, each story needed reading twice; the first time because I couldn't stop, the second time (or perhaps the third) to get full value from his evocative use of words, and to extract his full meaning. I remember reading some early writings of Dermot's – adjectives piled on adjectives. In these stories

every word is important, and none is redundant. Scenes are set in clipped, yet fully descriptive phrases. This works for dialogue too, which is always wholly realistic, recognizable.

The stories range very widely. *Nightfall* is an ascent of the Eigerwand against the background of a nuclear war; a hugely emotional situation which the writer has the capacity to master. *The Island* takes a group of juvenile delinquents on 'Adventure Skills', which bring out and heighten all their latent hostilities almost to killing point. *The Old Story* retells the well-known story of Art O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell, escaping from Elizabethan Dublin Castle, and O'Neill's death from cold on the snowy Wicklow hills; by interleaving with a group of today's walkers, Dermot points up our Irish preoccupation with the past.

For successes, I score 12 out of 14. *A Taste of Honey* is too sweet. According to the 'blurb', *The Lug Walk* pokes 'gentle fun'. For me, the fun was quite ungentle: the main character is unpleasant and stupid, but he is treated by the writer with a total contempt which revolted me.

English readers should not be put off by the first story in the book. The publisher did Somers a disservice by placing it there, since the casual reader may well dismiss the book as another outpouring of Irish Republicanism. It isn't; the story simply shows in an Ulster context how nearly all humans react when they feel themselves isolated.

I think this is a great collection; stories which I have read several times and know I will want to read again. There is not much mountain fiction about which I would say that.

Joss Lynam

Ten Letters to John Muir
Terry Gifford
Burbage Books, 1990, pp16, £2.50 (£5 Limited Edition)

One has little hesitation in commending this poetry as among the best written by an English climber in 200 years. This may seem faint praise: writing standards have not usually risen with climbing standards, as has been pointed out by this reviewer before. But even a casual reading of these *Ten Letters* shows a poet in full control of language, rhythm and narrative – the things that make poetry what it is. 'Written to the founding father of Yosemite National Park in its centennial year', this booklet is by no means a pompous panegyric, as one might expect. Rather, contrasting the idyllic wilderness known to the pioneer with the horror-show known to us as Yosemite National Park, and written with an exact knowledge of English prosody that would shame some better-known poets, it is a suitable statement for our times. One hesitates, as ever, to quote out of the context of the whole rhythmic structure. But it is fair to contrast a well-mulled couplet, chosen at random, 'Your "ramble" up from the Valley/ To spend a night on this bare mountain' (seven beats carefully spaced with two groups of two short syllables, and one group of two long syllables) with . . .

Ronnie Wathen

Hanging in the Balance
Andy Miller
Amcott Press, 1988, pp22, unpriced

... with another couplet, again chosen at random: 'Since then we have computed permutations on our balance sheet. And lost our love in Equity, Assurance and Dual Benefit'. Here there seem to be about a dozen beats (give or take two?) and no rhythmic tension, internally or externally to other lines coming before or after – and precious little sense either. But most of this booklet is prose anyway and, to judge it as purely that, it is laboured with the faults all too common in the climbing magazines of today – and therefore deserving censure. One would strongly suggest that this is not this writer's best work, and that he learn a few lessons from the master Terry Gifford, and read a lot of other good writers besides: to structure his paragraphs, put verbs in his sentences, avoid the self-pitying mode and, at the end of the day, choose a decent typeface, and not dot-matrix! Apart from this, he shows much promise and the accounts of rock-ascents and marriage-descents are gripping.

Ronnie Wathen

Coleridge. Early Visions
Richard Holmes
Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, pp409, £16.95

'The Mountain air is not congenial to opium eating' says Leslie Stephen, rather tartly. He is surely right, but unfair by implication to Coleridge. On the other hand, countless people have found the poet himself addictive. Most such will have already read this biography, which has won praise and prizes for its perceptive approach to this 'rare, anomalous, magnificent, interesting, curious and tremendously suggestive character'. This goes well outside the scope of the *AJ*, but anyone who is interested in the origins of climbing should certainly read this book.

Two Reverend botanists seem to have beaten Coleridge to graded rock when they found a way up Clogwyn du'r Arddu, no less, in 1798, making use of a leather belt for security on the crux. Characteristically, the pursuit of science was the excuse given for enjoying a dangerous adventure. The poet was ranging the Quantocks by then, and next year he began the Lakeland fell-walking which led to his famous scramble on Sca Fell on 5 August 1802. This involved the first recorded descent of Broad Stand, and thus got him an additional scrap of immortality (in the FRCC guide). His notebooks and a letter written on the summit may still be read. At one moment Coleridge writes: 'There is a sort of Gambling, to which I am much addicted; and not of the least criminal kind for a Man who has Children and a Concern. It is this. When I find it convenient to descend from a Mountain—, where it is first *possible* to descend, there I go, relying on fortune for how far down the possibility will continue.' In the description which follows he comes to a point at which he thinks himself cragfast. The pressures of fear and loneliness threaten to overcome him, but he is able to control his panic, and his delight in this seems to be a step in his

struggle to direct his whole artistic life in face of the disintegrating forces which are working on it. This is a key passage in Romantic Literature, but the situation might be recognized by many a more prosaic climber, who has ever got himself somewhere he did not intend to be.

A few weeks later Coleridge is again on the crags:

'I have always found this *stretched* and *anxious* state of mind favourable to a depth of pleasurable Impressions—.' It has a modern feel. We are up-and-away from the Picturesque Tourists who then saw the mountains through their Claude Glasses, and now do so in their wing-mirrors.

Francis à Court

One Step in the Clouds

An omnibus of mountaineering novels and short stories
Compiled by Audrey Salkeld and Rosie Smith
Diadem/Sierra Club, 1990, pp1056, £16.95

Unsure of my companions and with a heavy heart, I shouldered my rucksack (with its 1056-page volume) from the AC Librarian, tried not to look her in the eyes, and cycled home. Was mine to be the first ascent of the Anthology Wall, or had the ladies (the Compilers) already done it? A moot point. I could not trust my companions (the Writers). Their lack of experience of the world, nostalgic reading habits, and brain-exhaustion (in some cases permanent) from altitude, would strain my resources as their Reviewer. I sat down to a bivouac of coffee and earplugged Gulf News in the living room.

I was resigned to a hard, perhaps lethal climb up this Anthology Wall. The 'topo' or Introduction was wayward. Looking up the Face, I could not locate some pitches: they were from some other mountain! – for example, *Green Mars* and *Damnation of Mr Zinkler*. I began climbing, placing an ill-omened foot on the avalanche-debris of Joe Simpson's *Meltwater*.

Suddenly my heart lifted, as I reached the first stance and saw ahead of me the shoot-from-the-hip thriller *B-Tower West Wall* (Peter Lars Sandberg). 600ft of sheer, steely prose at night, with a scared killer as second, led to the foot of Anne Sauvy's *La Fourche* with its interesting opening moves about the Chamonix weather – which I could have quoted at length here, were it not for my scruples against the use of fixed rope. I didn't care for the next two pitches, David Roberts's *A Storm in the East* which was schoolgirlish, and G J F Dutton's *Midges* which left me glad I hadn't washed (thus I retained my midge-repelling odours). I hauled myself up K V Crocket's *October Day*, surprisingly easy despite its baggage of memories and soggy prose – and took a thermos-break.

Pitch 7 was a corker, *Ulrich the Guide* (or *The Mountain Inn*): it's Maupassant, who perfected the solo short story ascent single-penned, didn't he? It's a masterly brew of mountain error and terror, which ends in madness (as did Maupassant). On cue, the American Jeff Long follows with his *Virgins of Imst*. I was really beginning to enjoy the climb. Gone was that unaccountable feeling of wanting to be off the mountain, of not wanting to complete this book (no doubt it would return). I wanted to rope back down this pitch, repeat it,

locate its secrets, do it better. But ahead the Irishman Dermot Somers, disguised for *The White Graph* as an ageing Salford rockjock, was leading arrogant Youth up a variant to the Fissure Brown – a perfect study of how to burn out a bastard.

A frisson of thrill is in Anne Sauvy's *Time Reversal*. Step past the *Big Mistake* and if you don't jump *In the Crevasse* with Ben Saunter you pendule on pitch 12 on to a ghastly accident in *Summertime* with Al Alvarez. After that, the famous crux *In Hanging Garden Gully* may disappoint, both the rope antics and the prose palling, where once we giggled at C E Montague's joke. David Craig's *The Escapist* is modern, but it too may fade in time, with its view of rock-climbing as substitute marriage-battle. This is followed by one of the most intriguing sections of gymnastics in the entire Range, an excerpt from M John Harrison's *Climbers*: Gaz and Sankey are the first real people I've met on this Big Wall and they may well be the last. Savour their horror-show, Britain, while you can, with its greasy, *Sun*-reading Public . . .

Ahead lies the Holmesian *Case of the Great Grey Man* by Robin Campbell, and you should not be put off by its starting on a sofa, for soon we are enmeshed in Highland mist, where there is a most interesting move involving the use of live human bodies as balloon-ballast. Brain-damaged in a car crash, Davie stumbles through Gordon Thomson's *Children Like Climbers Often Fall*, on a 2000ft Grade V night-time ice-climb with two male nurses.

Perhaps the only British climber ever to have had the tortured detachment essential to creative writing was Menlove Edwards: his grim, secretive *Scenery for a Murder* could provide discussion for a whole night in a bivouac. The angle eases for a few ropelengths, past suspect *Cannibals* by Jeff Long, and a nutty priest in *No Gentlemen in the Himalaya* by Greg Child, and Balti porters ruminating *In Another Tongue* on sahibs' motives, and the tribulations of Sherpas in Elaine Brook's *Rites of Passage*, and a snow-slog through a Hiawathan sex-legend, *The Way of the White Serpent* by John Daniel. Now, as the headwall looms, Anne Sauvy's *2084* provides light satire of a future of government-regulated climbing, resulting in the worst massacre in mountaineering history when the computer fails. A ropelength of Sci-Fi slabs called *Bright Fire, Bright Ice* (Charles Hood) has what some might unfairly assume to be a Bonington character committing suicide in Outer Space, but suddenly we are back with Alvarez in the familiar rock-grind, *Night Out*, but without the late Mo Anthoine's wit. An old 'un in Dave Gregory's *The Old Man's Pigeon Loft*, young and old 'uns in John Long's *For Everything Its Season*, some travel stuff and ascents into madness on *Leviathan* (Geof Childs), a blocked lavatory cleared by *The Bronx Plumber* who turns out to be Mallory, by Guy Waterman who turns out to be Irvine, and a final little fillip with a ghostly hitchhiker who may or may not be Irvine, *In Gentle Combat with the Cold Wind* (Jeff Long again), bring us, without any alarming headwall it turns out, to summit snows in sight now. These stretch up at the easier angle of six novellas and one play. One of the novellas is Elizabeth Coxhead's *One Green Bottle* (1951). The play is in fact Maurice Wilson talking to Maurice Wilson.

But before I could taste these reverse-slope delights, I was plucked from the Face by the *AJ* Editor in a helicopter.

Ronnie Wathen

In Balance. Twenty years of mountaineering journalism
Peter Gillman
Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, pp252, £12.95

Anyone who has been a regular reader of the *Sunday Times* over the past 20 years will be familiar with the mountain writings of Peter Gillman. Whenever any event of importance has occurred in the mountain world, Gillman could be relied upon to present a balanced view in good journalistic prose, of interest to both layman and *aficionado* alike. Being a climber himself, although not a great one, as he himself would be the first to point out, his articles were always free from the gaffes committed by so many journalists attempting to write on climbing. There are some 40 articles collected in this book, not only from the *Sunday Times*, ranging from early ones such as Harlin's death on the Eiger, Maestri on Cerro Torre and the Old Man of Hoy TV Circus, to comparatively recent ones on the K2 tragedies and Venables's success on Everest. In between are items on lesser hills and events, including some of the author's own exploits, which make for equally interesting reading.

The Picturesque Scenery of the Lake District
Peter Bicknell
St Paul's Bibliographies, 1990, pp198, £40

Once again our member Peter Bicknell has regaled us with a book to do with his chosen theme and lifelong interest, this time a bibliography of all the delightful early guides and illustrated books to do with the Lake District.

This is a scholarly book, and a highly important work of reference. It is delightful to browse in it and to look at the illustrations. But, above all, it is Peter's introductory essay that ought to be read. Nobody else has ever introduced us to all the romantic, artistic and literary history of the Lakes in quite the same way. This essay should be essential reading for any lover of the English Lake District and its artistic and literary traditions.

The book is sumptuously produced and does credit to the publishers. We should be grateful for this, because it is a book that was really worth doing well.

Charles Warren

Dust and Snow. Half a Lifetime in India
C Reginald Cooke
Privately published, 1988, pp8 + 338

The author of this sumptuously-produced, leather-bound volume of memoirs has published it himself, to tell his story of half a lifetime in India. Apart from a break of a few years in England for education, the whole scenario is India, but it stops short at Independence when Reginald Cooke decided to accept the post of Chief Engineer of Posts and Telegraphs in Pakistan and moved to Karachi. Life under the new bureaucracy was not attractive, however, and he soon moved back to England for good.

Whilst the major part of the book is concerned with life and work in India, interest for climbers centres on three chapters. The first recounts the second ascent of Kolahoi (5437m) in the Pir Panjal, made with Wigram Battye in 1926. In 1935, with Gostav Schoberth, he made an ascent of Kabru (7316m), finishing the climb alone. This was the highest solo ascent until Hermann Buhl climbed Nanga Parbat in 1953. Finally, in 1937, the author went on an expedition with John and Joy Hunt to develop a new route on Kangchenjunga. Their exploration around the Zemu and Twins glaciers and various training climbs are described, but any attempt on the N ridge of 'Kanch' proved impossible. The author then went off to make a hazardous trip through the Umaram valley. These historic exploits make fascinating reading and, indeed, the whole book is an excellent memoir of an era that now seems so long ago.

Geof Templeman

Wayward Women
Jane Robinson
CUP, 1990, ppxvi + 344, £17.50

Jane Robinson worked for a number of years in an antiquarian bookshop specializing in travel. Thus her main interest was in books, and her original intention was to write a bibliography of travel books written by women. The trouble was, she started to read the books, and became so fascinated by the authors and their adventures that it turned into a reference work on the travellers themselves and their writings. Several years of painstaking research later, here is the result, and it makes fascinating reading. In all, I added up that there must be some 400 authors included, each having a list of her travel books, followed by a potted biography and details of her travels. All sorts of travellers are included, from Abbess Etheria's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the 4th century, via Mary Kingsley's African journeys and Amy Johnson's flights, to Julie Tullis on K2. Titles such as *How I Shot my Bears; Or, Two years' Tent Life in Kulu and Lahoul* and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* abound and, as the author says, it was titles like these and *On Sledge and Horseback to Outcast Siberian Lepers* and *To Lake Tanganyika in a Bath Chair* that started her reading. A trawl through the book, purely from a mountaineering books point of view, has failed to reveal any omissions. It is a monumental piece of research and a delight to dip into.

Geof Templeman

The Corbetts and other Scottish Hills – Scottish Mountaineering Club Hillwalkers' Guide – Volume Two
Edited by Scott Johnstone, Hamish Brown and Donald Bennet
Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1990, pp250, £14.95

The first volume of this book, *The Munros*, was reviewed in *AJ* 92, 256–7, 1987, and Volume Two is every bit as good and follows the same layout. The editor of the first volume has been joined for the second by two co-editors, and the names

of the writers which are listed in the section headings add up to no fewer than 30. This has had the result of a fine variety of style, so lacking in some guidebooks. The final product is absolutely splendid.

Good routes are described on every Corbett, and in addition 62 other outstanding hills have been selected from all over Scotland and its islands, many of them in remote and little visited places.This book will lead to many pleasant surprises.

Errors in the text are minimal and insignificant. The hill on p216 is north-east (not north-west) of Loch More, and this is obvious on the route map. All Jim Renny's route maps throughout the book are as excellent as ever. In the Index on p250 Mealisval (in the Outer Hebrides) is indeed way out, the reader being directed to p2246 (should be p246 of course).

On Broad Law (p16), the Radar Beacon on the top is so unobtrusive that it is not mentioned, but it is worth noting that there is a road up to it, down which you can walk 4km to the Crook Inn in Tweedsmuir.

Ivan Waller

Scotland Coast to Coast. A long distance walk from Glen Shiel to Arbroath
Hamish Brown
Patrick Stephens, 1990, pp224, pb, £6.99

This book is the result of Hamish Brown's efforts to find a route across Scotland from coast to coast which can be accomplished in a fortnight's walking and which has a place to stay, whether B & B, cottage or hotel, at the end of each day. At the same time, knowing the author, the route had to be through the best scenery available within those parameters. Hamish has crossed Scotland on foot each year for the past 12 years, but he did this particular walk in 1988. His descriptions give a clear guide to the route, with maps and photos, and with alternatives of both route and accommodation (camping sites etc) for those of a hardier disposition.

Adventure Treks. Nepal
Bill O'Connor
Crowood Press, 1990, pp160, pb, £9.95

There is a proliferation of Himalayan trekking books at the moment, but this is a good one, the first in a projected series of 'Adventure Treks'. The author selects 10 itineraries, each one having a map, general description, superb colour photos and delightful drawings, with a summary of details at the end. General trekking information is given in a final chapter. Having watched leeches crawl over my boots in exactly the same spot by the new bridge over the Modi Khola as described by the author, I can vouch for the accuracy of his descriptions!

Dzieje Polskiego Towarzystwa Tatrzanskiego. (The History of the Polish Tatra Association)
Władysław Krygowskì
'Kraj' Kraków, 1988, pp148, pb

The Tatra Association, founded in 1873, spread to having a mountaineering section in 1903. This book traces the history of the Association up to 1950.

Footpaths of Europe: Walking the Pyrenees (GR10)
Trans Bob Hosea, Helen McPhail & Suzanne Davies
Robertson McCarta, 1989, pp222, £9.95

Walking the GR5: a) Lake Geneva to Mont Blanc. Trans Simon Knight
b) Modane to Larche. Trans Helen McPhail
Robertson McCarta, 1990, pp a) 190, b) 200, £11.95 each

Three volumes in the *Footpaths of Europe* series, published in conjunction with the *Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre*, with IGN Orange series 1:50,000 maps to all sections of the routes and adequate descriptions. Separate 'blocks' give information on what you may expect to see along the way. A very useful series.

High Summer. Backpacking the Canadian Rockies
Chris Townsend
Oxford Illustrated Press, 1989, pp160, £12.95

This is the story of the author's successful attempt to walk the 2500 km along the spine of the Canadian Rockies in one push, from the US border in the south to the Liard river close to the Alaskan border in the north. For the southern part, Townsend was just another walker, but after Jasper he was virtually on his own, with only the bears and other wild life for unwelcome company, and a few small towns, home to miners, loggers and hunters, where he could provision and recharge his batteries.

On Lower Lakeland Fells. The 50 Best Walks
Bob Allen
Michael Joseph, 1990, pp224, £12.99

This book follows the author's excellent *On High Lakeland Fells* with a selection of walks for less energetic souls, the average height being 1500ft and the walks short and circular. Whilst it is unlikely to appeal so much to *AJ* readers, many of the walks described are little gems, and the whole is illustrated by Bob Allen's excellent photos.

The Himalayan Experience. An Introduction to Trekking & Climbing in the Himalaya
Jonathan Chester
Harrap Columbus, 1990, pp224, pb, £12.95

Yet another book giving a very good general introduction to trekking and climbing in the Himalaya, this one has a couple of extra features – short accounts of individual expeditions by others such as Doug Scott, Greg Child and Warwick Deacock, and the photos. The author is described as being 'Australia's leading adventure photojournalist', so you would expect his photos to be good, and they are superb, helped by the large format. Most people who buy the book will do so, I suspect, because of its illustrations.

The Mountains of Europe
Ed Kev Reynolds
Oxford Illustrated Press, 1990, pp208, £19.95

Kev Reynolds has assembled a team of 13 writers, in addition to himself, to tackle the 19 chapters of this guide to the mountain areas of Europe. Of these 14, half are AC members, and a further five have provided photos – whether that proves anything, readers can judge for themselves! It is certainly a stylish book, with a large page size and good reproduction of excellent photos. The four main mountain areas of Britain are taken first, followed by Norway, and then the main central part of the book is, naturally, on the Alps – eight sections, three by Reynolds himself, two by Douglas Milner, and one each by John Brailsford, Cecil Davies and the late Dudley Stevens. The final grouping is of less popular areas (to British mountaineers anyway), the editor taking the Pyrenees – naturally – and Corsica, and Victor Saunders the Caucasus. The Carpathians, Picos de Europa and Greece are also covered. To cover such a vast amount of ground in 200 pages means that details of each area must of necessity be fairly brief, but the expertise and style of each author is such that the essence of each group of mountains has been well caught. This, added to the factual information given at the end of the book, will whet anyone's appetite for a visit.

Zanskar. A Himalayan Kingdom
Olivier Föllmi
Thames & Hudson, 1989, not paginated, £28

Olivier Föllmi has been to Zanskar each year for the past 10 years, including three winters there. He became completely enchanted with the people of this isolated area on the western border of Ladakh and, as an accomplished photographer, was able to make an extraordinary record of his time there. The resulting coffee-table book of 103 colour photographs is superb. Those of the people are fascinating, but it is the landscape shots with incredible subtleties of light and shade that stick in the memory. A book to dip into again and again.

Classic Walks in the Pyrenees
Kev Reynolds

Classic Walks in the Yorkshire Dales
Walt Unsworth
Both, *Oxford Illustrated Press, 1989, pp144, £16.95* each

These two volumes are the seventh and eighth in the 'Classic Walks' series. They follow the usual format of very brief technical details of location, etc, of each walk, followed by a detailed description, rudimentary map and a selection of mostly good photos, many in colour. The two are obviously different in content; Unsworth's of mostly shorter walks, although with one or two *tours de force* such as the Three Peaks, over an extended Yorkshire Dales which includes the Howgills, whilst Reynolds includes a number of multi-day tours starting with the Pyrenean Traverse (7–8 weeks!).

The Loneliest Mountain
Lincoln Hall, photos by Jonathan Chester
The Mountaineers in America, Simon & Schuster in Australia, distributed by Cordee. 1989, ppxvi + 232, £19.95

Mount Minto is one of the world's less accessible mountains, situated by the western shore of the Ross Sea in Antarctica, the highest peaks in this coastal range of North Victoria Land. Although three of four peaks in the range had been climbed, Minto had rebuffed four assaults, only one of which had even reached the base of the mountain. Lincoln Hall and Greg Mortimer originally planned their expedition for 1986/87 but, for various reasons, it was early 1988 before they, with nine companions, sailed out of Sydney Harbour in a small boat on a return journey of 2500 miles to Minto. This book tells, in journal form, of their epic voyage, followed by their 150km trek to the mountain and eventual success on the 4000m summit. The story is well told and, with photos by Jonathan Chester, one knows beforehand that the illustrations will be excellent.

Trekking in Pakistan and India
Hugh Swift
Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, ppxviii + 510, pb, £10.95

This book is a vast compendium of information on trekking in the mountains of Northern Pakistan and India, and a companion volume to that on Nepal, West Tibet and Bhutan already published. Originally published by Sierra Books, some of the introductory chapters on trekking are the same as in the other volume, but, provided the information given is good, as here, why not repeat it? Descriptions of country, people and the treks themselves are comprehensive, as are the chapters on medicine, natural history and languages. A book to be recommended.

Camera on the Crags
Alan Hankinson
Silent Books, 1990, pp176, £19.95

Third, enlarged edition of the book of photos by the Abraham Brothers, originally published in 1975. The addition is a 32-page section of alpine photographs which once again show the artistic and technical skill of the brothers, and their perseverance in humping their equipment around. There is an interesting picture of Whymper in Zermatt in the early years of the century, and of George Abraham himself with his guides who accompanied him on an epic ascent of the Matterhorn in 1898. It is somehow surprising to see him looking so young!

The Northwest Highlands
D J Bennet and T Strang
Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1990, pp342, £17.95

The SMC are continuing their new series of district guides in the same excellent format as the first – the Islands. This one covers everything on the mainland west and north of the Great Glen, quite a tall order, but everything is adequately, if briefly, covered. Each chapter has a general introduction followed by sections on access, public transport and accommodation. Then come separate descriptions of each major mountain with routes, and final notes on Paths and Walks, and Climbing. The illustrations throughout are excellent.

Adventure Treks. Western North America
Chris Townsend
Crowood Press, 1990, pp160, pb, £9.95

First of a new series of trekking books edited by John Cleare, this one features 10 treks from the Californian Sierra Nevada to Mount Robson on the British Columbia–Alberta divide, via Colorado, the Wind River Range, the Cascades, the Selkirks and most other important ranges in between. As the shortest is 85 miles (the longest is 256) over very rugged country, these are demanding treks. Each section is well described with excellent colour photos.

Matterhorn Vision
Brian Bonner
Woodgate Press, 1990, pp86, pb, npq

For many years Brian Bonner had nursed an ambition to climb the Matterhorn, but it was not until 1965 that he decided to put his thoughts into action. It took 15 years. Admitting that he is no mountaineer, he took the only route open to him – hiring a guide and slowly working up to his goal each summer holiday. This book is the story of the partnership between Bonner and Ivo Perren, their attempts on the mountain and final success in 1980. There is a good description

of the Hörnli ridge, excellent photos, and useful notes on training walks and climbs, guides' fees and so on. As with many 'private' books of this type, it suffers from a rather too-enthusiastic style and a surfeit of CAPITAL LETTERS!, but, for sheer determination, it is a tale that takes some beating.

The Magnificent Mountain Women. Adventures in the Colorado Rockies
Janet Robertson
University of Nebraska Press, 1990, ppxxiv + 220, 54pp b/w photos, $21.95

The Colorado high country is a wild, enticing area which has long attracted adventurous spirits, but, until now, little has been known of the part women have played in opening up the area. From 1858, when Julie Archibald Holmes, a suffragist, climbed Pikes Peak, to the free-climbed ascent of the Diamond on Long's Peak by Louise Shepherd and Jean Ruwitch in 1980, this book tells their story. It isn't all climbing, though. Included here are the stories of some three dozen women who, in addition to climbing, hiking or skiing, went to act as guides, practise medicine, botanize, paint or set up homesteads. Some were visitors, such as the English tourists Isabella Bird and Rose Pender, whose published exploits were well known. Others, however, were locals, unknown outside the area until this book. A 54-page section of historic photos completes a very readable history.

Mountain Environments
John Gerrard
Belhaven Press, 1990, pp318, £30

The author, who is from the School of Geography at Birmingham University, has written an 'examination of the physical geography of mountains'. Covering geo-ecology, weathering, hydrology, slope form, glaciation and volcanoes, amongst other aspects of mountain formation, it is a very technical book, with a 44-page bibliography for those wishing to take the study further.

Himalayan Enchantment. An Anthology
Frank Kingdon-Ward. Ed John Whitehead
Serindia, 1990, ppxviii + 254, £16.95

Frank Kingdon-Ward excelled as a botanist, explorer and writer, his greatest love being for the area of the Eastern Himalaya where Assam, Tibet, Burma and China meet. He spent almost 50 years undertaking 25 major expeditions, and collected and numbered over 23,000 plants, an incredible achievement. His books have long been sought after, and this present volume is an anthology of his writings taken from 13 travel books and other sources.

Icewalk
Robert Swan
Jonathan Cape, 1990, pp254, £15.99

When Robert Swan reached the South Pole in 1986, as told in the book *In the Footsteps of Scott*, he was already considering plans to become the first man to reach both poles on foot. In March 1989 he set off with an eight-man international team for the 500-mile crossing of the Arctic Sea. It took them two months, and they made it on 14 May. The book gives a graphic description of the hardships of arctic travel, both of the illnesses suffered by the team members and the extreme difficulties of the terrain. Based on the diaries of all the members, it has many excellent colour photos.

Tales of Many Mountains
Norman Croucher
Amanda Press, 1989, pp279, pb

This book, privately published by Norman Croucher, is mainly a compilation from three earlier books – *Shin Kicking Champion* (1971), *High Hopes* (1976) and *A Man and his Mountains* (1984). As such, there is little new material in it, but all three books are now out of print and, apart from telling a marvellous story of incredible achievement, it possibly benefits from the condensing and tightening-up of the material. Early days in this country and the Alps are followed by a number of South American expeditions culminating in the ascent of Aconcagua. Climbs in Kashmir are also described, with finally an ascent of Muztagh Ata, and bits and pieces from Croucher's personal life form a fascinating linking narrative. Copies can be obtained from the author at 8, Woodville Gardens, Ealing, London W5 2LG, price £11 including p+p. (Cheques to be made payable to Norman Croucher.)

Kingdom of the Sun God. A History of the Andes and their People
Ian Cameron
Century, 1990, pp224, £19.99

A coffee-table-sized book telling the story of the Andes through the ages; but, whereas most books of that genre rely on pictures to tell the story, this is solid but very readable text, albeit with a few excellent colour photos and text illustrations thrown in. It is all here, from the pre-Inca civilizations, through the conquistadores, Bolivar and other revolutionaries, to the great naturalists and, finally, the cattle barons, spoilers of the rain forests and tourists of today. A chapter on mountaineers in the Andes deals with the exploits of Whymper, Hiram Bingham, Fitzgerald, de Agostini and Shipton.

Women Climbing. 200 Years of Achievement
Bill Birkett and Bill Peascod
A & C Black, 1989, pp192, pb, £12.95

Bill Birkett and the late Bill Peascod took on a difficult task when they decided to

write a history of women climbing, knowing that they might get criticism from all sides. In the event, they haven't done a bad job, although the end result makes for a rather patchy and irritating read. Their method is to choose one particular climber from a period, write about her in some detail, but insert other paragraphs on 'lesser' climbers active at the same time. In the Miriam O'Brien chapter, therefore, you also get short items on Pat Kelly and the Pinnacle Club, Dorothy Pilley and Dorothy Thompson. Thirteen 'major' climbers are featured, starting with Lucy Walker and finishing with Louise Shepherd, and each is dealt with fairly thoroughly. A book of this type obviously requires a vast amount of research, but it is a pity that numerous small errors have been allowed to creep in – the first ascent of the Matterhorn is stated to have been in 1868, for instance, and Jill Lawrence was born in both 1950 and 1959!

L'Oberland Bernois à Skis
Daniel Anker & Hans Grossen
Denoël, 1990, pp240, npq

This, the latest – and 26th – in the *100 Plus Belles . . .* series from Denoël gives, as you might expect, 100 ski runs and descents in the Bernese Oberland. Produced to the usual high standard, each alternate double page is in colour, with good illustrations and either map or diagram as appropriate.

Classic Rock Climbs in Northern England
Bill Birkett
Oxford Illustrated Press, 1990, pp128, £16.95

This is the third in the 'Classic Rock Climbs' series, all, incidentally, written by Bill Birkett. The format is as before, and the area covered is the North Yorks Moors, Lancashire, the Peak District, Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland. Obviously, with such a wealth of climbing, the author has to be very selective, but there is something here for everyone, including a few 'lesser-knowns' for non-locals.

Bhutan and the British
Peter Collister
Serindia Publications/Belitha Press, 1987, ppxiv + 210, npq

This is the story of Anglo–Bhutanese relations over the past 200 years or so, particularly the part played by the official missions which started in 1774. The East India Company were naturally the first to be involved, seeking their ubiquitous trade routes, and relations went from good in the early days to bad (the war of 1864–5), and finally back to good again, when Britain is again helping Bhutan with education and in other ways. There is no mountaineering as such in this book, but it includes a wonderful set of photographs taken in 1905–08 by John Claude White and some drawings by Julian Burton.

Dolbadarn. Studies on a Theme
Ed Paul Joyner
The National Library of Wales, 1990, ppxxviii + 100 + 16 colour plates

John Ruskin e le Alpi
Museo Nazionale della Montagna 'Duca degli Abruzzi'. Monograph No 74, 1990, pp74

Two slightly similar studies on themes of painters in mountain locations, the first being issued to complement an exhibition, 'Castell Dolbadarn Castle', organized by the National Library of Wales in 1990. Six authors cover the various ways in which artists have portrayed this famous landmark between Llynau Peris and Padarn, our own member Peter Bicknell giving a comparison between picturesque treatments of this castle and similar paintings in the Lake District. The second volume is a catalogue of the exhibition 'John Ruskin e le Alpi', and forms the latest in the long list of alpine publications issued by the museum. Both books are beautifully illustrated.

A Lakeland Mountain Diary
A Harry Griffin
Crowood Press, 1990, pp224, £14.95

For 40 years, Harry Griffin has been writing his Lake District 'Country Diary' for *The Guardian* every other Monday, and this is the second published collection, covering the last 15 years. The extracts, each of some 250–300 words, are arranged in order of the months of the year, giving an overall picture of the Lakes at all seasons, in the author's polished prose. Little footnotes bring some entries up to date, and the final entry is a rather poignant one, recording the move, at 80, from his fellside home to a town flat in Kendal. Whiteside Pike and others can still be seen, however, over the rooftops!

Everest (2nd edition)
Walt Unsworth
Oxford Illustrated Press, 1990, ppxvi + 704, £19.95

In his review of the first edition of this book, Peter Lloyd said that he regarded it 'as a notable achievement', being the outcome of four years' work. The work goes on. Some 130 additional pages have been added to bring the story up to 1988–89, the major part of the book being a straight reprint of the earlier edition. You cannot, however, buy the later chapters as a supplement, but have to pay nearly £20 for the whole thing and throw your previous copy away! However, the new edition is well worth it for it contains, in addition to the story of the later expeditions, no fewer than 145 pages of Appendices, Bibliography and Notes & References. These include further information on the original chapters, summaries of all expeditions, route diagrams, lists of first ascents, fatalities and so on, plus a very detailed bibliography. A notable achievement indeed.

Himalayan Trekking Maps
Air-India (Obtainable from Robertson McCarta, 122 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9DS. £30 + £3 p+p)

Air-India engaged a cartographer to produce a portfolio of trekking maps for the Himalaya, with the co-operation of the Surveyor General of India and the Indian Department of Tourism and Ministry of Defence. There are 30 three-colour maps in a 19″ × 14″ format covering the Indian, Nepalese and Bhutanese Himalaya to varying scales, and with main trekking routes clearly marked.

Dal Cervino al Monte Rosa
Photos: Davide Camisasca; Text: Luciano Caveri
Pheljna Aosta, 1990, not paginated, limited edition, npq

The description 'coffee-table-book' doesn't really do justice to this volume, which is a really sumptuous production. It consists of 40 colour plates, all superb photographs superbly reproduced, of the Matterhorn–Monte Rosa region,varying from wide mountain shots to atmospheric views of villages and 'still-lifes'. A truly beautiful book, but, as with many of these specialist limited edition works, one wonders who will buy it – too big as it is to fit on a normal shelf and, in its accompanying box, too heavy to carry around.

Geology of Nepal Himalaya and Adjacent Countries
Chandra K Sharma
Sangeeta Sharma, Kathmandu, 1990, ppx + 482, npq

Dr Sharma is a well-known Nepalese scientist, currently working in the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat of the Nepalese Government. This, his tenth book, is a detailed geology of the Nepal Himalaya, crammed with tables, maps and figures, and including a 25-page bibliography. All geological aspects are covered and, whilst it is not possible to give a detailed review here, anyone interested in researching the geology of a particular area will find this book particularly useful.

Les Grandes Heures des Alpes
Max Chamson
Perrin, Paris, 1990, pp480, npq

M Chamson has written a number of books on mountains and travel, and this current volume is really a general history of the Alps from the earliest days. It includes some slightly unusual chapters, such as one on Hitler and the Alps and 'The last hours of Mussolini', but, needless to say, most chapters concern de Saussure, Whymper, Bonatti *et al.*

The following guides and other books have also been received:

First Aid on Mountains. Basic Treatment for climbers, hill walkers and those on expeditions. Steve Bollen. BMC, 1989, pp41, £0.95

More Scrambles in the Lake District. R Brian Evans. Cicerone Press, 1990, pp192, £8.95

Rock Climbing in Scotland, a selected guide. Kevin Howett. Constable, 1990, pp14 + 468, £9.95

Rock Climbing in Snowdonia. Paul Williams. Constable, 1990, ppxxxvi + 460, £9.95

Eastern Baltoro Mostagh. 1 & 2. Jan Kiełkowski. Przewodnik Alpinistyczny, Düsseldorf, 1989/1990, pp48, pb, in Polish. (Mainly Broad Peak.)

The Atlas Mountains. A Walker's Guide. Karl Smith. Cicerone Press, 1989, pp127, £9.95

Gogarth. Various authors. Climbers' Club, 1990, pp304, £10.95

Tremadog and Cwm Silyn. Mark Pretty, Dave Farrant and Geoff Milburn. Climbers' Club, 1989, pp328, £10.95

Rock Climbing in Northern England. Bill Birkett and John White. Constable, 1990, pp444, £9.95

The Mountains of England and Wales. Volume I, Wales. John & Anne Nuttall. Cicerone Press, 1989, pp256, £8.95

Fair Head. Ed Clare and Calvin Torrans. FMCI, 1989, pp192

Atxarte. Escuela de Escalada. Jose Zuazua. Vitoria–Gasteiz, Bilbao, 1989, pp208 (Topo guide to the Atxarte region, in Basque and Spanish.)

Fifty Best Hill Walks of Britain. John Cleare. Webb & Bower, 1990, pp208, pb, £9.99 (Paperback edition of the book published last year.)

The Hillwalker's Handbook. Steve Ashton. Crowood Press, 1990, pp160, pb, £9.95 (Paperback edition of the 1987 hardback.)

The Walker's Handbook. Hugh Westacott. Oxford Illustrated Press, 1989, pp316, £12.95 (Third, hardback edition of the book originally published by Penguin in 1979.)

Mountain Photography. David Higgs. The Mountaineers (in USA), Diadem, 1990, pp10 + 110, pb, £9.95 (New edition of the book first published by Longman in 1983.)

The Pyrenean Trail GR10. Alan Castle. Cicerone Press, 1990, pp176, £6.95

Randonnées Pédestres dans le Pays du Verdon. J Alor, C Catrisse, A Lucchesi. Édisud, 1990, pp184, npq

Climbing Terms and Techniques. Ken Crocket. Patrick Stephens, 1990, pp160, £12.99

Welsh Winter Climbs. Malcolm Campbell and Andy Newton. Cicerone Press, 1990, pp248, £11.95

Best Walks in Southern Wales. Richard Sale. Constable, 1990, pp288, £8.95.

Snow and Ice Climbing. John Barry. Crowood Press, 1990, pp144, £9.95. (pb, 2nd edition.)

Tour of the Queyras. A Circular Walk in the French Alps. Alan Castle. Cicerone Press, 1990, pp152, £5.95

Les Calanques de Marseille. CAF Editions Jeanne Laffitte, 1990, pp64, 50F

Costa Blanca Climbs, including Majorca. An Introductory Guide. Chris Craggs, Cicerone Press, 1990, pp128, £6.95

French Rock Climbs. Martin Atkinson. Cordee, 1990, pp144, £7.95

Kinder and Bleaklow. Ed Geoff Milburn. BMC, 1990, pp416, £11.25

Alpine Pass Route. Switzerland. Kev Reynolds. Cicerone Press, 1990, pp168, £6.95

Borrowdale. R J Kenyon. F+RCC, 1990, pp324

100 Classic Climbs. Yorkshire and the Peak District. Gritstone. Steve Ashton. Crowood Press, 1990, pp272, £10.95

Long Distance Paths. South East England. Alan Castle. A & C Black, 1990, pp160, pb, £9.95

Exploring Idaho's Mountains. A Guide for Climbers, Scramblers & Hikers. Tom Lopez. The Mountaineers, 1990, pp288, pb, $16.95

Monte Rosa & Mischabel. Gino Buscaini. CAI/TCI, 1991, pp688

Alpi Marittime. Euro Montagna, Lorenzo Montaldo & Francesco Salesi. CAI/TCI
Vol I – From Colle di Tenda to Colle Ghiliè, 1984, pp476
Vol II – From Colle Ghiliè to Colle della Maddalena, 1990, pp664, L56,000