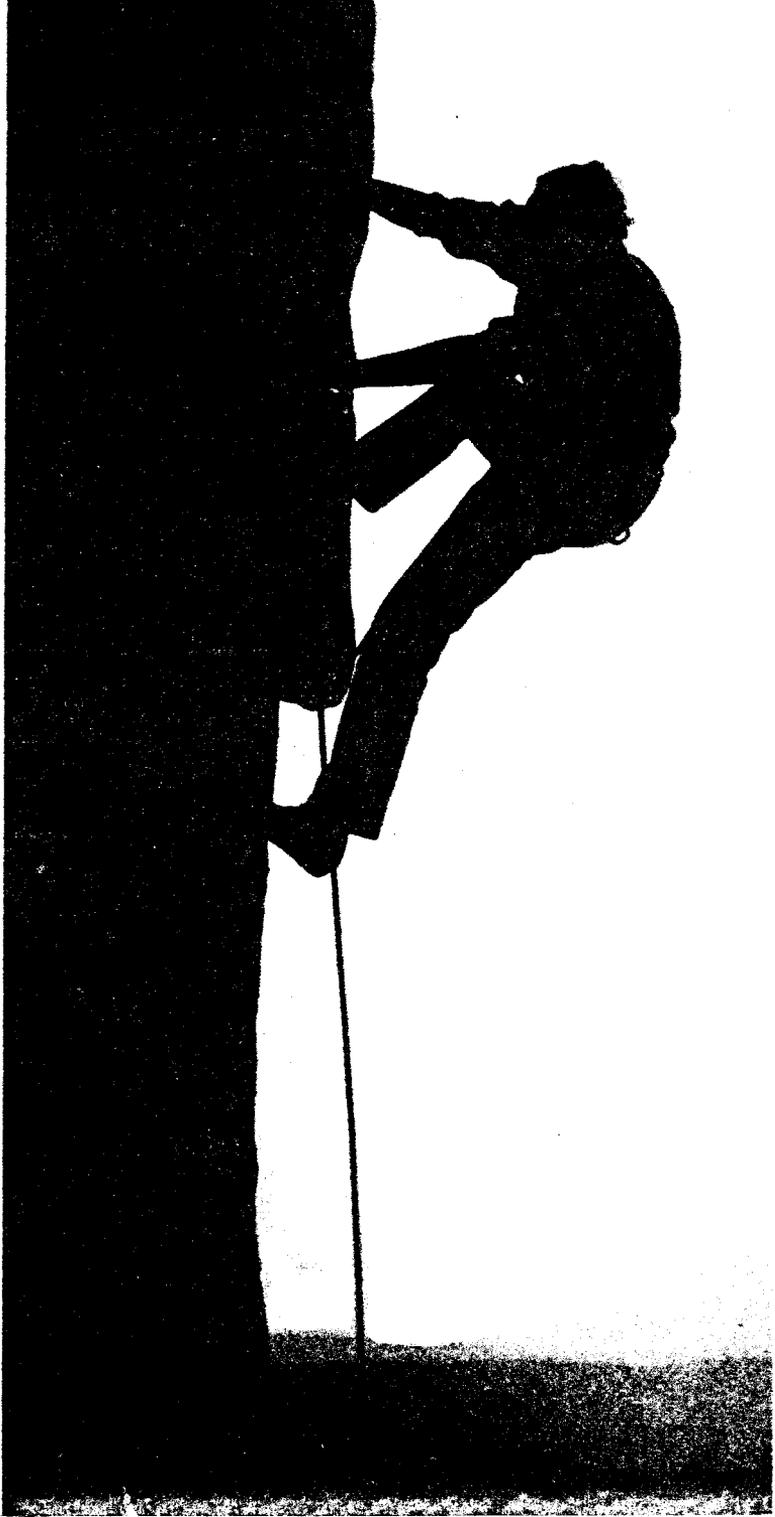


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trippers who not only keep the Mountain Rescue busy but endanger themselves, and everybody else.

Whilst doing Arctic Circle at Tremadoc at Whitsun I noticed an abnormal amount of 'tat' hanging from the Pincushion overhang after a "group 1" climber had abseiled off when his second had announced that their train left in half an hour. An abseil from the top of the crag rewarded me with brand new crab and four slings and nuts. More recently upon arrival at the top of the West wing of the Mot I found a horde of sparkling new unused goodies. Having shared them out with Elaine and Joe we raced off down Jammed Boulder Gully as fast as possible.

It strikes me that people who leave valuable gear around, usually new gear, are not just careless but in fact not used to carrying it or using it. If it looks good and rattles nicely - wear it.

But who are we to criticise? Crabs have got ten legs and you can eat nuts. Can't you?

.....
HOW DO YOU DRU ? - Bob Milward

Three days in Chamonix and now't down saw me flogging up some trackless hillside with all the enthusiasm of a wet lettuce. The clouds were coming in as they had done every afternoon so far. Grumbling to myself that it was a big route for the first of the season, and that really the weather was not right, I was driven on by Phil's grim determination not to give me any excuse for retreat. After a brief shower and an exhausting struggle with an immense vertical patch of man-eating cabbages, we started the mindless grind of scree which eventually led us to our bivouac site below the N.F. Dru, predictably several hours after the guidebook suggested. From information gleaned in the National, we unearthed a five star bivouac cave, and settled down for the night.

A clear sunset led me to consider the possibility of actually climbing, so the joke book was duly consulted. To Phil's amazement it revealed that we had just climbed some 3500ft. up to nearly 9000ft., twice his previous highest point; and to my horror it revealed that the face stretched out for 3000ft. above; not 2000ft. as I had imagined.

Half a knockout drop and a vile stew drove us to fitful sleep, until an annoying clear sky forced us into the endless routine of porridge, brew and getting ready.

Away at 5.30a.m. we arrived at the Bergschrund at 6.00a.m. and started off with a big mixed pitch of steep rock, rubbish and bullet hard ice.

Moving together with the odd runner, we continued for about 5 rope lengths to some easy ledges, and across a slope of old ice by some broad axe slashes where Phil joined me and reversed the one way flow of gear by doing some leading. About 600ft. above, a British pair fought their way on, while the same distance below an Irish pair followed. Pitches of 4 came thick and fast including a few of the usual joke pitches - 30ft. of chimney (4), which extracted pints of sweat and a few inches of skin from knees and elbows, and left us spiritually uplifted to the extent that is only experienced when one reaches a stance, grovelling and insensible, with a heartbeat like a Honda 50.

Next came a pitch of so called 5 which would not have been out of place on Flying Buttress, hotly pursued by a full ropelength of iced up grade 4, which actually went at about 9 sup. After some easier ground we found ourselves skirting the great icy thumbprint called the Niche.

A little after noon we took our first break of the day on a ledge at the top of a huge corner, looking down the bottom half of the West face. 1,500ft. without a bounce. We sat gasping whilst the afternoon mist stealthily crept upon us like an uninvited guest at a party. The mist flowed in, overwhelming us in a sea of absolute and total dejection. Stifling, bone-crushing apathy washed over us, and only some dim memory of habitual stubbornness eventually produced a move: but with movement the spell was broken.

We pressed on, now finding the route, now losing it, always peering forward into the greyness for an obvious line.

In answer to a prayer, a crack appeared well over 100ft. long, bristling with pegs and leading straight up, worth three or four more roundabout pitches. In the style of the true aplinist I got my head down and clubbed it to death, fists flailing and boots kicking into the ever steepening cracks.

It was a complex engineering problem :

- 1) The pitch became steeper and more strenuous in proportion to the height gained (it even overhung near the top)
- 2) The climber becomes more tired in proportion to time spent since the last belay.
- 3) The climber climbs faster near protection
- 4) Protection proportionately increases time taken.

The constant factors are :

- 1) The number of crabs available
- 2) The fitness of the climber

3) The weight of the rucksack

4) The length of the pitch

There are three possible outcomes :

1) Success

2) A fall

3) An intermediate state where time taken exceeds stamina and leaves the climber dangling insensible from some point half-way up, presumably condemned to rot.

Ten feet from the belay where the cracks began to overhang, my situation became critical. Strength and number of crabs were rapidly approaching zero, difficulty was at its peak and the equation was only solved by rapid acceleration ignoring safe stress limits, and running severe risk of burning up.

I eventually made it to the overhung belay foothold with no crabs, and even less strength. Tied direct to two wilting prehistoric pegs, I brought Phil up. In the best tradition of seconds the world over, he arrived at the stance in that state of near collapse which a leader finds most gratifying. With one foothold and a hanging belay our efforts to change the belay over would have done credit to a double-jointed trapeze artist.

The next pitch was a very thin groove with pegs at about 8ft. centres, and we climbed it like a ballet - "Beauty and the Beast." The female lead, I balanced up for a couple of moves and pounced on the next peg and then repeated the step again and again. The beast (guess who) followed in a snarling frenzy of power swarming from sling to sling. "That was the Fissure Allain," quoth I :- no answer. "But don't you realise those two pitches of 6 saved us three 5's at least." "Big deal," mumbled a rather shattered beast.

Nothing harder than 4 now I thought, and flung myself forward, at last beginning to feel that our pace had quickened again, but about three pitches on I ran into the biggest time-waster of the whole climb. The pitch had a flying start when everything I was holding onto fell off and I with it. There was some rather furious grabbing and I didn't actually go anywhere, but it was exciting while it lasted. I then climbed about 250ft. running out some 100ft. of rope. It involved some hair raising manoeuvres in several directions, including part of the West face and an abseil. It very nearly included spearing Phil with a long thin loose flake. I never told him how close he came.

When I was finally belayed, the light was fading and Phil resembled

an icicle, having stood at his belay silent for over an hour. All went well until he stood facing me about 30ft. away, gazing across a steep traverse at the single tatty runner between us. As a statement of pure fact, he informed me that he could not feel his hands, and would fall off about half way to the runner. I said nothing - there was nothing to say. In the event he managed to stay on, and we set off again into the gloom.

Only two rope lengths on, we ground to a halt for the night, stopping in the middle of nowhere. A projecting rock formed a table and we cut ourselves seats in the snow.

The business of tying on, dressing up, cutting a stance and settling down for the night is very lengthy, and the longer one can spin it out the less one has to sit and shiver. After several minutes Phil said, "You - er - You have done this sort of thing before?" "Yees - of course", I replied, exuding confidence, "Once, and I got frostbite".

By the time we had settled and brewed, the mist which had enclosed us since midday had cleared and revealed a sky promising fine weather, so we took our knockout drops without any qualms. At least, they accounted for half the night. In the moonlight, distance becomes very difficult to judge, and so as dawn came up and all vestage of drugs and sleep melted away, I gradually became aware that the snow arm-chair I had cut in the dark had one side missing. In fact, under my icy elbow lay 2,500 feet of bums and grinds to a permanent icy bivouac.

However, a brilliant day dawned, and we set off with a few mouthfuls of cold water, having run out of paraffin. Seven delightful runouts up dazzling Persil snow and granite, gold in the sunlight, led us, with just the right amount of difficulty to the summit, where we basked in the sun on the south side, revelling in its warmth. We stripped off the remains of our north side clothes and lay with our feet up, guzzling food and relaxing, wearing imbecillic grins that lasted long after the cameras were put away.

It was now afternoon, and we set about the descent. The instructions, loosely translated, read, "bomb down the ridge to the *Flammes de Pierre* ridge below". So we bombed over the edge, and found ourselves on a vertical wall sweeping down to a solid fog far below. Fate smiled, and before we had wasted too much time, the voices of a party climbing the route led us to slings by the dozen, and an endless series of dizzy abseils.

About 1,000 feet later, we arrived at the ridge suffering acutely from "Campanologists's Cramp" (bellringers' biceps). We ignored the guide-book in favour of descending straight down an easy angled couloir below,

as there seemed to be plenty of abseil slings in place. This led to a depressing series of abseils through water falls, over loose rock, and through slushy snow. It was then that one of the major drawbacks of the Whillans Harness revealed itself. When using a wet rope, the descender or crab, creams off all the water, and every ropelength provides an intimate and icy showerbath.

Time was getting on and the angle eased, so we moved together in a sort of controlled fall. It must have been controlled, because one of the larger avalanches down the couloir (two tons?) did succeed in passing us.

When we hit the guidebook route again, I started to suggest the possibility of a bivouac as it was getting late. The effect on Phil was devastating! Phil turned round and bellowed "NO" I am definitely NOT spending another night on this mountain. "NEVER AT ANY PRICE", and with that he tore off at terrifying speed, dragging me rather bewildered, in his wake. I made a mental note to try this ploy at Tremadoc.

With all the determination of a Japanese Lemming he uttered a few pointed grunts at the guidebook and dragged me over the first and steepest cliff he could find, cursing my slowness and reluctance to leave the palatial bivouac ledges. This put us a clear half mile off route, but miraculously a used trail of abseil points appeared down the last vertical step to the glacier.

A little later, in total darkness, I led and reversed a pitch of about 4 sup to retrieve an abseil rope, and rejoined Phil to find that he had conceded defeat. Overjoyed at the prospect of any sort of rest I gleefully arranged my 18" ledge for the night ahead. No water, no primus and no snow, but I was happy. The route and survival were in the bag. Way below any lightning danger, we only had a small glacier to cross to safety.

Phil sat on his 12" ledge and stared morosely at the hut, level with us and only a quarter of a mile away. "I'll fix that "B" Kendell" I thought and gave him two knockout drops on an empty stomach. Having taken none myself, I immediately slept for twenty minutes and spent the rest of the night watching the world go round, while Phil lolled grotesquely against his belay like a badly stuffed Guy Fawkes dummy.

By dawn I was shaking with cold, not just shivering, but bodily shaking, quite out of control. For several hours Phil had not moved, and with the light I shouted to get up, and received a twitch in reply. Letting him sleep on I got up and packed. I became a little alarmed when after thirty minutes nudging I only got another twitch in reply, and very alarmed, when after a further ten minutes pummelling, all I got was a grunt. Eventually an eye opened and the beast was aroused.

THE LYKE WAKE - Dave Irons

On the moor top ahead of us torch-lights flashed about in the pre-dawn darkness, and we could hear voices shouting directions to other voices; lights and voices. We headed through the bracken in their direction looking for the trig point on Scarth Wood Moor, the starting point of the Lyke Wake Walk. When we reached it, shortly before 5a.m., they had gone, and at 5a.m. exactly, we set off in pursuit on our forty-mile way across North Yorkshire to Ravenscar on the East Coast.

We, John Rooker, John Bartlom and myself, had the previous evening drove two cars round to Ravenscar and left one there, returning in the other car -- all we had to do now was to bogtrot across the 40 miles of the heather moors of North Yorkshire.

It was a murky Sunday morning and by the time we reached the road in Scarth Nick dawn was creeping up drearily. A sign with the coffins and candles motifs indicated that we had covered the first mile. We crossed the road and headed along a track through forestry, pausing a mile ahead to check the map. A large party came past, moving with the speed and confidence of people who know where they are going, so we stowed the map and followed them. We headed across fields, across Hollins Brook and out onto the road again, then up into the mists on the first moor. The pace seemed fast for so early on such a long walk, but the walking was easy. The moor top along Carlton Bank had been levelled for a gliding club. We checked our position at the trig point then raced downhill to another road where we came up with a large sponsored party and their support parties. We continued across marshy ground and as suggested in the guide-book when the tops are misty, took the miners track along the northern flanks of Cringle and Cold Moors .. although the route goes over the top. The walking was interesting and after some miles we climbed up into the murk, and had a second breakfast under outcrops of gritty sandstone known as the Wainstones. We had been going for about 2½ hours, but looking at the map we seemed to have covered but a fraction of the route. It was too chilly to stay long so we clambered up through the rocks and over the top of Hasty Bank then down to the lane below. Ahead of us lay a climb up to Botten Head, the highest point on the walk, on the largest of the moors, Urra Moor.

The mist lifted and about us was endless purple heather. John Bart and I waited at the trig point for John Rooker to catch us up. We noted the Face and Hand stones pictured in the guide, then paced downhill to the old Rosedale Ironstone Railway, long since torn up and providing 3 miles of soft cinders winding across the moors between Westerdale and Dovedale.

Our legs, calves in particular, were beginning to become painful. At 10am we stopped, but on rising again, felt stiffness creeping into our legs, so we concluded that stops, if necessary, should be short to avoid stiffness. We headed on above the head of Westerdale and followed intermittent tracks between South Flat Howe and Flat Howe. Another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile saw us at old Margery, an ancient standing stone on the Hutton-le-Hale to Castleton road. The sponsored party were close behind us, and at the road were met by their support parties. I was rather envious to see cups of hot tea being handed out to them, but maybe if we had been supported on our crossing, the temptation to give up may have been stronger. Bart and I walked up the road towards Ralph's Cross and waited there for John to catch up.

To cut out road walking, we then took a straight path from a small white cross known as Fat Betty and followed boundary stones, crossing the road twice, cutting the wide, sweeping bends for two miles, until we could head up past Loose Howe (Howe meaning a burial mound), and over a fine stretch of moor for 3 miles to Shunner Howe with its circular mound and central cairn. Bart and I forged ahead. John sensibly adopted to walk at his own natural pace and not keep up with our slightly faster natural pace for this type of terrain. Down from Shunner Howe and over the moorland road just up from Hamer we stopped for a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour lunch.

Getting up and starting after only $\frac{1}{2}$ hour was hard. Our legs had stiffened up and the first few hundred yards onto Wheeldale Moor were a struggle. We had now done 23 miles and had 17 left to go. Unfortunately for Bart he was having trouble with his knees, and from here onwards it was a struggle to keep going, but he kept moving, fearing that if he did stop he would not be able to start again.

It was a long way over Wheeldale Moor and the only feature was a standing stone seemingly daubed with blue paint, and called Blue Man. Further on I found it a relief to run down the steep incline to Wheeldale Beck just to break the pace. I was thirsty, but the beck was wide and slow running, with fine stepping stones across it, rather like those in Dovedale.

There was a short steep ascent, then more moorland to a large cairn on top of Simon Howe. From here we had our first clear view of Flyingsdale with its enormous duckegg-blue domes. An impressive sight, although an amazing monstrosity in an otherwise wilderness of purple heather. Another mile saw us at the main road. There were a lot of people there and an ice-cream van which was a very welcome sight. A brief halt was called for while large soft ice cream cornets were devoured.

From Flyingsdale there remained only 8 or 9 miles left. It seemed, thinking about it, a trivial distance, merely one fifth of what we had already walked.

My right ankle suddenly started to swell, and the last 8 miles were limped,

but it didn't seem to matter. Bart had limped for over 10 miles already, and John wasn't in sight. He had elected to use the large sponsored party as his pacers. I was lucky that it was only at this point I started to have trouble. The track continued to be good and we didn't stop going over Lilla Howe with its fine 7th century cross, then on and on to the Whitby .. Scarborough Road. Only Stony Mare Moor was left to be crossed and we headed straight for the beacon that overlooked the coast. We reached the trig point in just over 13 hours. A further 20 minutes and we were signing in the book kept especially for this purpose in the cafe in Ravenscar. Bart and I managed 13½ hours. John arrived an hour and numerous cups of tea later. In that hour our legs had locked up solid. But we weren't the only ones. Ravenscar seemed to be full of cripples. Most seemed happy however, having completed the course. I for one certainly was. Next morning back in camp in Potts Hill we collected our black-edged cards of condolence from chief dirger Bill Cowley.

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GHANA - P. Holden

I went out to Ghana in tropical West Africa with no expectation of climbing there at all, never dreaming that the opportunity would arise and further, I think that I had even hoped for a break from the routine of the crags.

My first surprise was to find, whilst driving across the Accra plains, a group of rather fine hills rising to about 700ft. above the absolutely flat grasslands. Protruding from these hills were granite outcrops up to 200ft. high. Interesting I thought, but reminded myself that this was tropical Africa and not England, and we drove on by.

Sometime later in Accra we met Steph Swain who taught at the same school as Angela and it transpired that her husband was a climber and had equipment with him and knew of many crags. Mike and Steph came round to dinner and entertained us with accounts of visits to crags in the forests and natives pouring libations for the appeasement of spirits. My tropical lethargy began to give way to a desire to explore some of these places. Mike had photographs of a veritable giant Tremadoc, rearing for 600ft. above the trees and boasting absolute verticality, enormous roofs, and compact granite all the way.

The following Sunday found us off to the nearest crag, less than one hour's drive away, with a mile of walking through the forest, accompanied by an inquisitive group of friendly natives who insisted on carrying all the gear. This crag was a huge sheet of granite high at about the angle of the Idwal Slabs or less. The natives cut a

path through to the foot of the crag for us, and constantly enquired as to what we were looking for .. impossible for me to answer. The climbing was generally rather easy if the angle allowed, but as soon as the rock steepened, great difficulty was encountered. We enjoyed a general roam around, but the highlight of the afternoon was when a Ghanaian wandered casually up the smooth slabs barefoot to look see and then from about 40ft. up slipped, turned and ran and somersaulted with a great cry into the bush beneath. Horrified I went to look for him, but discovered him happily slashing his way out with his cutlass, grinning from ear to ear.

For our next foray we decided to explore a crag on the Shai Hills on the Accra plains, choosing one at random from the many. The one we visited turned out to be about 200ft. high and very steep, but it had been quarried in part and most of the bottom was undercut for the first 20ft. which prevented us starting with our limited equipment. Eventually we chose a line at the left hand end and I climbed an excellent 100ft. pitch of V.S., with three points of aid. This sort of steep strenuous climbing in the tropics is really hard work as one is instantly dehydrated and rather like a car must feel when it is about to boil over. Mike found this all rather too demanding and had to leave the gear in place, and I was glad to retreat from my ledge as the sun was baking me alive and I needed water. The day was finished by an epic retrieval of gear thrown into a tree which was encrusted with barbs and I was temporarily blinded, whilst climbing the tree, from an insect dropping into my eye. Then a storm broke and we retreated in a sorry state to the comfort of home.

My next visit to the Shai Hills was on my own when I went with the intention of finding a more reasonable crag for us to develop. Thus I decided to view the quarry from where they had gained the stone for the construction of the new Tena harbour. Most of this quarry was very broken and shattered, but there was one wall 300ft. sheer and gently overhanging with a tremendous line for pegging up a thin crack and another line on the right hand side with a number of roofs --- all too much for our meagre resources. Behind the quarry on top of the hill I discovered an excellent crag up to 200ft. high, with many natural lines, mostly steep bold cracks. I wandered along the bottom and espied a particularly fine line up a groove at the highest point. The line finished under a huge capstone which looked as if it could be easily rounded on the right hand side. My only equipment was an oversize pair of rubber boots, but I decided to try the line. Inevitably, once tackled, the dreaded angle adjuster came into play, and I found myself jamming over an overhang into a thin groove at about 90ft. and the adrenalin began to flow. Having overcome this difficulty, I discovered myself under a roof and the slab had become a vertical wall with no possibility of free climbing

out. To reverse was unthinkable and I began to contemplate the situation. The right wall was hopeless - the left wall, all knobbly, offered hope and I balanced across to an arete and thankfully saw a tree and an easy groove 20ft. away. This 20ft. was very thin and took a number of attempts before I was able to reach the tree and swing into the groove and follow this to a huge cave under the capstone. Here I found myself at the site of a fortified lookout which had been used by native raiders who used to swoop down onto the traders moving over the plains.

I returned with Mike at a later date and completed the climb, solving the roof with three wooden wedges -- a fine varied climb. The next challenge was an 120ft. overhanging corner, with a large ledge at 20ft. which was gained with two pegs for aid. From the ledge, the corner went free with one aid move until I found myself handjamming under a roof at the top, fully committed and saved by my single remaining wedge which I was able to smash in next to my hand and then quickly sit in a sling from it, praying it would hold, One more aid move on a jammed nut solved the corner. Mike decided to follow and I had to prussik to take the gear out.

These sort of antics may sound very normal to an English cragsman, but the execution of them was rather demanding because of the temperature (say 85 degrees F) but more particularly the high relative humidity.

Not only did we go rock-climbing, but I often used to go walking over these Shai Hills which were, in fact, a game reserve. My first problem with the walking was to overcome the few snakes which everyone assured me abounded, but in all my visits I never actually saw even a small snake, though the game warden was able to confirm the existence of brutes 15-20ft. long, with bodies as thick as your thigh. The most unnerving animal for the lone walker is the baboon, the males standing 3-4ft high and looking quite ferocious, with two large fangs protruding from the mouth. Even worse than their looks was their deep throated growl and dog like bark with which they used to call one another. My first encounter with them was when I heard them dropping out of trees 50 yards from me .. then they were hidden in the grass and undergrowth and my imagination ran riot and my blood curdled as they warned others of my presence with their growl and bark. They seem to live in family groups and that day I saw 50 - 100 baboons which I was never lucky enough to see in so many numbers again. The only other animals which I saw during my visits were the antelope, Like kob (?), the smaller aviker and a few monkeys.

Another climbing escapade was when we travelled north from Accra for

the weekend and stayed at a simple government rest-house 1500ft. up in the hills and here we enjoyed the drop in relative humidity and the temperature drop at night (down to 75 degrees F.) The objective was a rather unique tower of rock atop one of the hills which, when we viewed it end-on from the road five miles away, looked rather like a mushroom, being wider at the top than the bottom. Not knowing how to reach it, we parked the car in the forest three or four miles away, and then we set off with our native cutlasses and began to enact the roles of the infamous "mad dogs and Englishmen" as we stumbled through the forest. After half an hour we surprised a native Ghanaian woman tending her farm in the forest. We attempted to explain that we wished to reach a village called Boruku, but she spoke no English. Nevertheless, she understood the obvious fact that we were lost and with endearing unselfishness she left her work and guided us to the nearest village where we again gesticulated to another gnarled old lady. This native woman was wearing the latest government directive in the form of a 'T' shirt emblazoned with the words "FEED THYSELF" right across the breasts .. two large leathery droops hanging empty on her bony chest .. suckled dry by another generation.

Again she was good enough to show us the right path to our village and soon we glimpsed the rock tower through the trees and we were able to break off up the hillside, staggering under our loads and sweating profusely. In the forest we met a native 'hunter' preparing his meal of roast 'grasscutter' a local variety of large rabbit. Exhausted, we gained the ridge 500ft. above and contemplated our objective .. a 200ft. isolated tower of hard sandstone, 800ft. in girth, complete with encircling bands of overhangs. The nearside end was split by a chimney/crack which cleft the roofs 150ft. up. We were unable to assess the difficulty by observation, so we embarked upon the challenge and were amazed to discover difficulties of only v.diff. but with A2 situations .. the exposure through the roof being tremendous.

The summit showed no signs of earlier ascents, and from this vantage point we contemplated the superb panoramic views over forested hills with villages in the clearings. Close by, to the North lay the Afram arm of the Volta lake .. perhaps the largest man made lake in the world - a silver sheen on the land - dotted with thousands of trees up to their knees in water - ahead the northern shore defined the southern limit of the 'Guinea Savanna bush' - stunted trees and bushes diminishing to the North until the grasslands predominate.

As we sat and contemplated the view and gazed into the northern haze, Mike told me about those plains virtually uninhabited by man - dry and unproductive for hundreds of square miles, and in there somewhere, "a recent aerial survey had shown hills standing 1500ft. up from the plain" - we planned to make a trip there if I returned for further tours -

come, the space below my dangling feet was becoming noticeable, and I was launched onto the "swinging free" bit. Sitting in the bottom rungs, slowly spinning round, hysteria was not far away. The "helpful" advice from the nice solid ground did not help, but something must have happened because I had moved up to the next bolt, and the next. However, twilight was upon us, and harking back to my previous artificial experience in the Dolomites which ended in benightment, a little haste was called for.

With much cursing, swearing, and coloured advice to the inventor of tape etriers, I at last reached Lew. It was now almost dark.

The next pitch was decided for us. It was a long traverse to the left on a path onto easy ground. Sounding like two Swiss cows, we jangled and tumbled our way down to the others, and hence to the pub, to sit down on a seat that doesn't move about, until perhaps the next time, when we might climb two pitches, and finish in the dark.

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A NIGHT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN

Perhaps I had been out here too long, concentrating on climbing too much. Certainly on the path up to the hut I seemed to be developing strange obsessions.

As was usual for hut walks, the afternoon sun was very strong, its searing rays blasting out of a clear sky like laser beams. Our sacks were heavy with a lot of hardware. Ice seems to require such a lot of steel these days. The flowers were in full bloom, their scent being drawn out by the heat of the day.

Being such a sunny afternoon, lots of people were out walking through the upper pastures; family groups, incredibly wizened old folks, and girls of all nationalities ... French, Swiss, American, German, even some Nigerians.

The first disturbing signs were soon to appear. Women's Lib seems strong in Switzerland this year, with an accompanying tonnage of unleashed mammery. All hell bent for the Dix hut it seems. In shorts, Thighs quivering from the uphill effort.

As you know, walking uphill is a strenuous activity. Large intakes of oxygen are required, so that the new found freedom was shown to greatest effect, prescribing slow, lazy undulations beneath flimsy diaphanous material. Bloodstream taken over by hormones.

What a peculiar game this is. Here we rush to the hut to get to bed by 8.00p.m. to be up for 12.30a.m. and out into sub-zero temperatures with the ice cracking underfoot and the mountains a black emptiness against

the sky, brooding and unknown.

Forget it all. Languish here in the scented air in the voluptuous curve of the Pas de Chevres. Dream through the long afternoon. Wait for them to catch up. Shy smiles. They must find it very different from Nigeria. Wander into the metaphysical deeps of such questions as the tentage situation.

Reality intrudes. Press on. Down the iron ladders, across the moraine and onto the ice. It is cooler out here, it gives the mind a chance to cool down and think of other things. Change the subject, take a little healthy interest in the surrounding scenery.

Cross the happy valley between the great mounds of Cheilon and Pleureur, whose long limbs lead sinuously down on either side to the just discernable barrage of the Grand Diz Dam, resting there like some huge chastity belt barring progress to the gentle pastures beyond.

Must think of something else. One final rise to the Dix hut which appeared to be resting on one enormous bed of red and yellow flowers, like some big, gay, springy mattress. Dominating the scene was Mont Blanc de Cheilon, whose easy angled retaining arms seemed to invite, diverting attention away from the sterner stuff up the middle.

The hut was overcrowded, with a motley collection of scouts, school-children, and dozens of stocky hairy legged Dutchmen, going as high as they would go. The odd daughter here and there, built in the same mould, for comfort rather than speed. And finally the shy Nigerians. Wonder if they suffer from altitude. Doubt it, they seem to have plenty of lung capacity.

The warden gives us special treatment; a room sparsely populated, with two spaces each. Luxury indeed. Sleep is impossible however, with howls, shrieks, and squeals from next door. None of them were due up before 7.00a.m. Visions of lowlanders orgies. Jealousy rather than inconvenience seemed to be the most disturbing emotion. This is no way to prepare for a big day. Try hammering on the wall. No good, the noise continues unabated. Something a little more drastic is required. Consider what to do.

Pad downstairs and grab an axe. Upstairs again kick the door in with violence, Leap into the room. *"If you load of noisy bastards don't shut your faces, I'll wrap this ice axe round your tits"*. Wave the axe. Utter silence. Amazing. They probably do not even understand a single word of the Queen's English.

Back to bed and quiet. Still cannot sleep. Restless, but utterly exhausted at the same time. Lie staring at the blackness for a while. What's that noise? It is in our room this time. It is certainly not

Fach 70ft Severe

Start The double grooves about 20ft. past the start of the traverse.

The climb takes the RH of these grooves. An interesting pitch on perfect rock, sustained at a pleasant level.

First Ascents : A. Dowell, Julien ?, J. Brennan (climbing haphazardly)

Yellow Brick Road 110ft. V.S.

This climb starts from halfway along Ring of Bright Water, (girdle traverse). It takes the last obvious groove before the enormous overhangs on the right hand end of the cliff.

Start some 30ft. left of the groove which gives the route, below another large groove, containing some rotten yellow rock.

110ft. Climb a short crack then traverse left to the foot of a corner crack. Climb this to the overhang then make an awkward move right to the foot of the main groove. Climb this almost to the next overhang then place a peg in the groove and use this, and another in the right wall to gain the arete. Easier climbing up the yellow wall leads to the top.

First Ascent : Jon de Montjoye and Dave Irons. 21 October 1973

59th Street 210ft. H.V.S.

About 300 yards South West of the headland giving the other climbs, is a large area of slabs with a rounded bulge at about half height. At the right hand end is a narrow recessed slab forming a prominent slabby groove with two square overhangs towards the top. Serious due to the nature of the rock.

1) 40ft. Climb easily to where the groove steepens.

2) 130ft. Climb the groove to the first overhang and move rightwards with difficulty across the slab to below the next groove. Climb this to the overhang and pull over on the left, move back right to where the angle eases and continue straight up to below some large crumbling overhangs. Peg belay.

3) 40ft. Traverse easily to the left edge and up to a belay.

First Ascent : Jon de Montjoye and Dave Irons 21 October 1973.

Craig Dulyn - Main Cliff (approached from the RH side of the lake)

(For the information of those who know only Bwlch y Moch, Craig Dulyn is in the Carnedds)

570ft. VS A climb which should please those given to desperate vegetable wanderings at angles beyond the normal.

It starts at the lowest point of the main buttress. It takes the indeterminate rib on the left and the obvious clean-cut groove between the rib and the steep wall at two-thirds height. At the top of the

groove it regains what remains of the rib on the left, and continues somehow to the top.

170ft. HS This climbs the second of the small buttresses on R of the main crag. Excitingly loose.

- 1) 40ft. Climb the steep broken wall to a pinnacle. Belay. The pinnacle is quite well balanced.
- 2) 130ft. Step onto the top of the pinnacle, climb the groove above, and round the overhang on R. (loose block!). Continue upwards to the top.

First Ascents : Jon de Montjoye, J. Brennan.

These two routes were exploratory wanderings up the huge neglected main crag at the back of Cwm Dilyn. Although unsatisfactory from the conventional point of view, there may be scope for something better.

There are some big overhangs and steep overhanging walls in the centre of the crag. These may yield short (150ft.) vicious routes. They can be approached easily from a terrace running in from the right.

To the extreme left of the crag there is a very steep wall about 200ft. high, absolutely bristling with overhangs. It is THE place for a short but brilliant career.

The main crag is magnificent . . . very big, steep, wet, and vegetated. Just the place to wander to your hearts content.

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