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*Stephen Beresford* : Mancunian. A climber whose fortitude when faced by amorous seals had been severely tested. Indeed he had not been found wanting. He also seemed to enjoy falling into the sea.

*Peter McCombie* : Mancunian. A climber of an extremely phlegmatic nature and therefore an ideal man to have around when all others are panicking.

*John Rooker* : A snow and ice expert of renown. Ideal for dealing with the suet pudding nature of rotten granite.

*David Irons* : The strong silent type. You know that with Dave along at least one person won't be shouting his head off all the time.

*Joseph Brennan* : Celtic Bard. Useful for invoking divine assistance and maintaining a healthy sense of the ridiculous.

*Roger Bennett* : A climber of whom it has often been said ..... Also the instigator of the project and so useful as someone to blame if things went wrong.

*Jon De Montjoye* : Hates getting his feet wet as a result of tardy nappy changing during childhood. This phobia of water may be useful in keeping the rest of the party dry.

*Elaine Hindle* : Back up team to Jon.

*Pauline* : Official Photographer and Press Officer controlling the bewildered tourists on the backshore cliff who thought it was a rehearsal for Monty Python.

The team lurched along the clifftop path from Land's End to a pile of large boulders on the clifftop overlooking the island. We had badly miscalculated.. the tide was in. I tried to explain that this was a deliberate policy to maintain excitement and not the result of my bad planning. They didn't believe me and so I had to go first.

The rope just reached the boulder beach at the bottom of the zawn. I was encouraged to start by Brennan explaining that I was the only member of the party who was insured for climbing and a push.

On the way down it became apparent that there would be only one way back up .. a long tiring prussick. I kept this information to myself as I wanted to make sure that I was not deserted. Whilst the others were abseiling down I scrambled across the boulder beach to the channel separating the island from the beach.

As the majority of us were very reluctant to get wet we decided that it would be best to set up a tyrolean. The problems were, who would swim across and who's rope would be used. The former was quickly

settled by Beresford who immediately removed all his clothes except for an old sweater. The second by snatching a new length of 11 mm perlon from a sobbing Brennan.

Beresford hurled himself into the foam, and, to his intense disappointment, reached the other side unmolested. (*The seals were breeding further down the coast*). It was some considerable time before he could be persuaded to set up the tyrolean as he seemed to be pre-occupied with some kind of search as a result of the low temperature of the sea.

Now that a reasonably dry path had been set up to the island John Roker consented to abseil down from the backshore cliff. He had refused to come earlier as he was convinced that he would have been used to either set up the tyrolean or divert sharks from the rest of the party.

Once again I was expected to test the equipment and I was sent across first. This landed us on the steep rotten landward side of the island and we had to traverse at sea-level to the northern end of the island where there was a level wavecut platform.

The climbing was straightforward but it was very difficult to avoid the waves that were accentuated by the fact that they were washing round either side of the island and then meeting just by us in a crescendo.

It was not possible to traverse round to the arch and so we would have to get on top of the island and walk across the arch and abseil down to the route. The way up was obvious but unpleasant looking. It consisted of a narrow stepped ridge of particularly rotten looking granite. This would obviously require a snow and ice man. We all looked at Roker. With complete aplomb he disdained the honour as it would be *"Beneath the dignity of a man of his experience to waste his talent on such a simple problem. It would, however, be ideal training for an up and coming lad like young Brennan."*

Fortified with a north wall hammer and the dreams of a glorious obituary in "Wilson's Weekly" Brennan lurched his unsteady way upwards. After twenty foot he halted and began to witter about rotten holds and lack of protection. After forty foot he started hacking steps in the rotten granite. Eventually he disappeared over the top.

The ridge certainly was unpleasant being basically unsound and covered in slime and bird droppings.

The Summit was something of an anticlimax. No flower speckled meadow greeted our gaze but rather a flat plateau of soil covered by pebbles and bird droppings.

... continued ...

We walked across the plateau, over the arch and abseiled down the seaward face of the arch. The soaring pillar of perfect granite that had tantalised us from the backshore cliff had shrunk to a thirty foot groove of indifferent grot.

Several sweaty minutes later we had reascended this to the top of the island. We had done it ! Nearly two thousand foot of various climbing techniques to reach a thirty foot severe !

The traditional cairn was built on the largest boulder and retreat considered.

The ridge we had used was uninviting and so an abseil was considered. The only abseil point was the boulder that we had built the cairn on. It seemed to be held in place only by the bird droppings and the weight of the cairn. Beresford volunteered to test it and as he survived the experience the rest of us agreed to follow.

The 100 foot abseil landed us at the seaward end of the tyrolean now rendered obsolete by a retreating tide. Whilst Joe whispered loving words of care to his rather careworn rope the rest of us returned to the bottom of the backcliff.

Again, as it had been my idea, I was sent up first. The prussicking was straightforward, if strenuous, and only took some twenty minutes. I then fixed another rope so that two people could ascend at once. Joe and Pete were next. Joe seemed to have no trouble at all but Pete's progress decreased to a complete stop at about 100 foot. It appeared that he had made himself a harness incorporating a shoulder strap. Every time he tried to stand up the shoulder strap would tighten forcing him to bend double. Eventually he reached the top with the assistance of a rope from above.

These antics had deterred the others who were beginning to mill around the base of the cliff like a herd of sheep. Suddenly, with a cry of triumph, Beresford hurled himself into the waves and reached a ramp leading up to a groove line. The others followed. Elaine suffered, what she assured us was an unpleasant experience, when a wave caught her whilst she was bridging two boulders. Jon De Montjoye became mildly hysterical at being so close to water but bravely pressed on and reached dry land.

Beresford managed to find a way up a section of very rotten granite running out 150 foot of rope without a runner and brought up the rest of the party.

As we were sitting on the cliff top sorting out the gear I noticed an island about two hundred yards out.

*"Joe. Look at that face of the eastern side." "Hmmm. Looks rotten."*

*"Nonsense. All we need is some lilos and a reasonably calm sea ....."*

## DINORWIC HYDRO-ELECTRIC PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME

D. Pickering

The C.E.G.B's proposed scheme at Dinorwic was given a public viewing at the exhibition 'Power in the Welsh Mountains' held in Llanberis during the week ending 17.6.72. For those members of the club who were unable to see this exhibition a number of copies of the C.E.G.B's 'Power News' are at Tyn Lon which explain those aspects of the scheme that the Board wish to give publicity to. Because the Board have only explained their proposals in the very broadest terms, exact detailed criticism of their scheme is not possible. A number of factors have emerged however which seem relevant.

- 1) That the proposed scheme will be the largest pumped storage installation in Europe and one of the largest in the world.
- 2) That the Board "are asking for an absolutely prized site. Nowhere else in England and Wales could they find such a site so suitable."
- 3) That the cheap off-peak electricity which is required for pumping was probably to have been imported from a 180 million watt nuclear station at Connah's Quay with local supplements from Wylfa. The government's veto yesterday (20.7.72) on the Deeside station has caused the Board to temporarily drop their plans for this scheme. They are instead likely to renew interest in a major station at Edern near the Rivals. The Mostyn and Talsarnau sites mentioned at the Deeside public enquiry are not to be proceeded with. The effect that this delay will have on the Dinorwic scheme is uncertain. The Board have "got consent for four other major stations to go ahead, and the Ince 'B' station is two years ahead of schedule. So we (the C.E.G.B.) have plenty of capacity to meet demands even without the Connah's Quay site."
- 4) The Marchlyn Reservoir and Surge Shaft access roads will be 'open to the public'. Tourists will thus be able to drive to within a short walk of the now isolated Elider. 'About 40,000 visitors a year visit the upper Stwlyn Reservoir at Ffestiniog'. Even more can be expected at Dinorwic. To preserve the peace and quiet of Elider, the public should be refused motor access, and not encouraged.
- 5) The Board would seem to be having technical problems with the twin by-pass tunnels for the Afon Nant Peris which will be required because Llyn Peris is to be isolated from the existing drainage system. Basically the problem seems to hinge on obtaining sufficient fall along the length of the tunnels.
- 6) A proposal to do away with the 43ft. impounding embankment dams of Llyn Peris, taking water from below existing lake level only, which does not require by-pass tunnels, has been put forward by Pyre, the Chief Planning Officer at Caernarvon. If slate waste is removed from Peris it is argued, its volume could be increased sufficiently to generate about 1,000 M.W. of power over 5.4 hours daily. This seems

a more reasonable station size than the Boards 1,400 M.W. proposal, which is in all probability far larger than they actually require. This would give them room for compromise with amenity groups. The board have shown a great deal of low cunning throughout the various stages of their present proposals. The modification suggested might make a more acceptable proposal to statutory and amenity bodies involved.

7) To further their public image, the Board can also be expected to invest heavily in restoring much of the massive dereliction of the Dinorwic Quarry. The 75% government grant available for restoring derelict land might be an added incentive. The Board have retained Sir Frederick Gibberd as a landscape consultant, but have given no indication as to the extent of his role at Llanberis. There are doubtless members of our club who would wish the quarry working at Dinorwic returned to their previous state. This does not seem possible as the expense involved is prohibitive. The suggestion that the waste tips be levelled would also seem undesirable. The resultant landscape of Elider would appear dull and featureless. The structure of the quarry, which has been the lifeblood of the 'Pass' for 150 years would be lost. An improvement I would favour would involve the planting of trees and shrubs on the horizontal terraces of the quarry. This would retain the existing structure, but would soften it with vegetation. As a tourist centre the quarry 'Park', with the Padarn County Park, could act as a magnet to tempt city fleeing hoards away from our more treasured mountain retreats.

8) The 400K.V. overhead transmission link to the grid at Pentir is one of the worst features of the scheme. Undergrounding is possible but expensive. (About 17 times as expensive). Full undergrounding would cost about £4 million. Partial undergrounding might be considered. The line could be undergrounded along the line of either of the two Padarn lakeside railways for about 3 miles until they cut the existing overhead Grid line at Penisarwaun, from where the line could parallel the Grid to Pentir. This compromise would cost about £3 million.

9) The Eryri Water Board, who have just completed a new link main at Marchlyn have been bought off by the C.E.G.B. with 'an alternative temporary source which could be used permanently'. Pumped storage water contains a great deal of suspended matter and is quite unsuitable for distribution as a public water supply. The diving section of the club are likely to lose interest in Peris if it is used as a pumped storage reservoir. The danger of being sucked up the turbine inlet apart, the visibility of the water will be almost nil.

10) The Gwynedd River Authority have, it is understood, reached agreement with the C.E.G.B. over their fishing interests. The hatcheries at Llyn Dwythwch are to be further developed. Gwynedd

have yet, however, to be shown detailed drainage calculations with reference to note 5. above.

A special all party select committee is at present investigating the Dinorwic scheme. If modifications and improvements can be agreed they will be written into the draft Parliamentary Bill which is expected at the end of August. The minister for Trade and Industry will then in all probability order a public enquiry. We have then 30 days to lodge our objections (if any) to the scheme. The C.E.G.B. may then contact us to negotiate a withdrawal of our objection. If we fail to reach agreement, we may go before the public enquiry to state our case against the scheme. Until details of the proposed scheme are set down in a draft Bill, there is little point in objecting. The Board have the tactical advantage of having all the details of the scheme and is not letting them go. The fight against the scheme is being led by the North Wales (Hydro-Electric) Protection Committee who need money too for expert witnesses to research into the scheme. They have paid £400 to the Economist Industrial Research Unit to consider the social and economic implications of the proposals, for example. Our committee have, I understand, declined to contribute to the N.C. (H-E) P.C.'s appeal for money. Club members might, however, wish to make private contributions.

The question remains as to what attitude we as a mountaineering club should adopt to the proposed Dinorwic Pumped Storage Scheme. In my view, downright opposition to the scheme is negative and unrewarding; the scheme does have some good points. I believe we should agitate for a more acceptable compromise. If a pumped storage scheme is needed at Dinorwic for the economic generation of electricity then it should be built providing that it is made as innocuous as possible, and that no trouble or expense is spared to that end.

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### TREKKING TO LANGTANG

- D. Irons

It was a cold, grey morning when we left Kathmandu, unusually cold for mid-November and rain seemed imminent. Despite the gloom, however, we decided to push on with our plans, which were to walk to the mountain village of Langtang, high among the foothills of Langtang Lirung, an unclimbed peak of almost 24,000ft. close to the Tibetan border.

We drove our Landrover over the forty miles of tortuous, unsurfaced roads, west through typically terraced hill country to the town of Trisuli which was to be the starting point for our trek. Having

contacted a Swiss couple and arranged the garaging of our vehicle, we spent the night at Trisuli in a small 'shanty' hotel-restaurant.

The proprietor of the hotel, at our request, produced for us the two porters we needed to carry our food and cooking equipment. Each of us, myself, Pete and Angela Holden, Tom Leppart and John Blears were to carry a light rucksack containing our sleeping bags and personal luxuries such as biscuits and cheese and chocolate so as to economise on porters.

The following morning we met our Swiss friend and drove along a rough track for five miles to the village of Betrawate, where we had arranged to meet our porters. Both were Tamangs and although small of stature they were both sturdily built and able to carry loads of up to sixty pounds on top of which they carried their own personal effects.

We loaded their wicker baskets (they prefer baskets to rucksacks as they use a headband and take the weight on their necks). Our Swiss friend wished us luck and returned with the Landrover to Trisuli. After the porters had purchased flour and millet we were on our way.

It was uphill work right from the start through beautiful terraced country. The track was good, however, and in four hours we reached a cluster of red/orange mud brick houses called Manigaon, where, having made a height gain of two thousand feet, we halted for a mid-day brew and snack, while the porters each drank a bowl of chang.

We continued again uphill until near darkness (about 5.30 p.m.) compelled us to halt and find shelter for the night. We had gained a further 1000ft. of height and spent the night on the porch of the home of our head porter. Despite drizzling rain, sleeping out under the leaky roof of the porch was preferable to sleeping inside the one-roomed dwelling where an open fire burned in the centre of the room with suffocating wood-smoke (there being no chimney). We bought rice from the porters wife and they cooked it for us.

Our second day was marred by rain and mist, but the track continued to be good and was easy to follow. We passed by the tea house of Ramche without stopping and after several hours walking we stopped for lunch, sheltered and shivered in an empty yak stall at the village of Thare, over a brew of soup. The porters liked to stop for a couple of hours about mid-day as this is when they eat their main meal of the day.

We had been told by our Swiss friend that this was their custom. He had also given us several useful tips on how to keep them contented and working well. One was to carry a supply of cigarettes

to hand out to them from time to time, especially when it was as cold as on this occasion.

All the time we were gaining height and that night we spent at the small village of Bakhajhunda and again we slept on an open balcony. It was still raining and the roof was of twigs and not at all rain-proof, so we erected our tent on the balcony.

We purchased eggs and a chicken from the household and boiled them on our primus and had a fine meal with rice.

It is the custom of the mountain people to put up travellers for a small fee or the price of a meal. The total cost was about 20 rupees for the seven of us (about two-thirds of a pound).

It had rained all night but the weather cleared at dawn and we were able to see for the first time the mountain of Hangtang Lirung, the mountain that dominated the Langtang valley, our destination. We rolled up our foam mattresses and lilo's; the children of the house found the lilo's very amusing and had great fun with them, blowing them up, jumping on them and deflating them. Eventually we got away on our third day's trekking.

By now, our legs which had grown weak through months of travelling across Asia in the Landrover, were beginning to loosen up and we felt some of our earlier alpine fitness returning.

Within two hours we reached Dhunche where we had to check in with the authorities. To trek in Nepal, one has first to obtain a trekking permit. This we showed to the police who noted our presence in the area.

From Dhunche we descended steeply past lines of chortens which according to custom one always passes on the left.

At the bottom of the long descent we came to the Trisuli that cascades down from the high lakes of Gosain Kunda, which lie at an altitude of 14,000ft. We crossed the torrent via a rickety log bridge and had immediately to climb again to Bharku, a village on the opposite side of the valley to Dhunche. As usual, Angela reached Bharku first, and by the time the rest of us had arrived she had bandaged up most of the locals and doled out vitamin tablets. It was a pleasant spot, but we wanted to push on down to spend the night at Syalrbensi. Our porters were not so keen to move as there was only just sufficient time to get there before darkness. We managed to persuade them to move however, and again we had to descend, losing two thousand feet.

It had been a hard day, but the weather had been good and we found a splendid teahouse in Syabru to spend the night at and consumed several glasses of hot, sweet tea. We spent the night in a small room above

the shop and we were allowed to cook on our own primus stoves indoors.

Next morning we discovered that quite a lot of building was being done and that a school where English was to be taught was under construction. Syabru is the main village on the trail to Langtang and the Tibetan border, and children who could speak a little English gathered around us trying to sell us Tibetan handicrafts.

It was a clear, crisp morning when our human caravan of seven persons marched out through the town gate for a day of uphill walking past several minor hill villages and always through beautifully wooded or terraced country. Autumnal colours enhanced the walking.

At mid-day we halted at Khang Jung having made the major height gain of the journey in good time. Here the porters fingered bowl fulls of millet into their stomachs; we tried some too, but it was too pasty, tasteless and very stodgy.

Up the valley to the North the range of Ganesh Himal straddles the Tibetan border, twenty miles away, and beyond rose myriads of peaks merging into the high central plateau of Tibet. Having just read Heinrick Harrer's Seven Years in Tibet, I was full of curiosity and would have liked to have walked the few miles to the border and attempted to 'sneak in'.

After our meal and rest we continued walking along the well cared for highroad through more terraced fields and conifers to a high open hillside where the track continued horizontally some four thousand feet above the glacial torrent of the Langtang River. Our shelter for the night was to be at the small, lonely and half deserted village of Syarpa. We found quite a good place with two rooms and the Tibetan mistress of the house, dressed traditionally in heavy black tuba and embroidered, soft, long boots, made us welcome.

Outside the cloud had descended and drizzling had once more set in. It was pleasant sitting around the smokey fire with the Tibetan family, eating rice, burnt pop-corn, and drinking tea. We had a good nights sleep there and were away early next morning for our final days walk to Langtang.

It was still misty when we left but it soon cleared as the sun rose higher and we followed the track, gradually descending until we came to the Langtang River in a really beautiful valley of pine and rhodedendrons. Ahead, the high white summits of the Langtang Himal shone brilliantly above the pine forests.

We stayed awhile by the river at a clearing and sunbathed while the porters caught us up. When they arrived, we continued and in a

further two hours, reached the logging camp of Ghora Tabela, a couple of long wooden huts where a dozen sturdy Nepalese lived and worked. We had lunch here; dehydrated fruit and jam and boiled rice. The logger supplied us with wood and we cooked on an open fire the porters built.

We were now in the bottom of the Langtang Valley and the village was only a short afternoons walk away.

The valley reminded me of how a Scottish glen ought to look under clear, cloudless skies in Autumn with all the gold of the bracken. It was a marvellous place. Ahead and on both sides, great fluted ice ridges, more Andean than Himalayan soared to virgin summits thousands of feet above.

As we walked, gradually the valley opened out before us, wide and golden brown. There were several uninhabited villages in the lower valley; uninhabited, that is, save for tribes of apes! Langtang village was very much alive, however, despite its remoteness, Herds of yak were grazing in the brown fields and the stone and wood crofts were teeming with Nepali and Tibetans. We were met by a group of children and escorted to a house where we would lodge during our stay in the valley.

The house was a typical one; the living quarters being on the first storey and built of wood with a loft above, and below, stalls built of stone, for storage and animals.

The night was very cold at 12,000 ft., and the sky brilliant with stars. During the evening while we sat around the fire, a ritualistic butter churning session took place. Rhythmically two men churned the tub of cream to a repeated chant that lasted for a long time.

The people of Langtang are cheese and cream and butter makers and next day when the sun had climbed high enough to flood the valley with warmth after the freezing night, we left our porters and set out towards the head of the valley to visit the cheese factory at Kyangjin Gomba. It was a beautiful morning and two hours easy walk through rough pasture land past lines of stone chortens, each with its long cain from which fluttered tattered white prayer flags, to the factory.

Basically, the so-called factory consisted of two sheds, one where the cheese was made, the other a store. The setting was magnificent, all about us, unclimbed peaks, and not so far away, the terminal moraines of great glaciers. The factory was established in 1961 with Swiss technical aid. A small, rough landing strip was built and is

used infrequently for flying out cheese.

One of our reasons for visiting Kyangjin Gomba was to buy cheese for our return trek to Trisuli. We found the storekeeper who opened up the store and from numerous racks of Swiss and cream cheeses, we chose a six kilo wheel which cost 72 rupees.

Kyangjin Gomba was as far as we were to go. One can continue up this valley and over the glacier pass of Ganga Ha at 16,805 ft., then down to Dukpu Monastery and descend the Helambu Valley to Kathmandu. The pass is closed for most of the year except Autumn. We could not return that way, however, as our Landrover was at Trisuli, so the cheese factory was to be the culminating point of our trek and indeed the culmination of our holiday, as from here onwards we would be travelling one way only, back overland to England.

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### THE DAMBUSTER

- J. Brennan

It was perhaps fortunate that, by the time the body was found, the strange marks cutting deeply into the face and neck would have disappeared.

It lay in lonely solitude, in a natural cave formed by a jumble of boulders among the high crags of Cwm Marchlyn. In the cave there were signs of recent habitation; some food, water, a petrol stove, candles, some ancient books dealing with the supernatural, forces of evil, and manifestation: of the anti-christ. Cryptic symbols were painted on the dark rock walls. It was here that Idion the brood, secret eater of sheep, spent an increasing number of his final days. It was here that peculiar idiosyncratic Idion struggled against an increasing sense of spiritual desolation. It was here that he tried to develop within himself an elemental sense of superstition, a fear of the unknown, a search back into the dark forces of our pre-history as an antidote to a total cynicism. Self-analytical materialistic Idion realised that this was an elaborate exercise in self-delusion which was likely to fail.

For some time Idion had used the cave as a retreat after some of his more anti-social acts. Eventually he had come to depend on it as a place to just sit and avoid having to think, to stare into an emptiness. Already considered somewhat abnormal by the few people who knew him, this may have been a path which would have led him to a total madness, if it had not been interrupted by the plans to dam Marchlyn. Idion feared that the solitude which was so necessary to

him would now be destroyed. He brooded, as usual pessimistically, and considered what could be done. He foresaw that, as always, economic arguments would win in the end. The public enquiry and parliamentary debate would be a political charade to give a facade of democracy to a decision already taken. Essentially a loner, he doubted the usefulness of group action. The gentle souls of conservation societies, with their usual restrained, almost apologetic, bleatings of protest would be like sheep going to play with the wolves. Enthusiastic amateurs ready to be gobbled up by ruthless professionals; gentlemen to the end, with an old world sense of fair play still miraculously intact, going naively to the slaughter.

When, as was to be expected, the scheme was approved in its entirety, iconoclastic Idion, high in his misty Elider retreat, brooded deeply and imagined the changed scene .....

Twenty English technicians lording it over a vast network of pylons, white dams, computerised switching facilities, whining generators, new roadways, mysterious underground excavations, flow pipes, river tunnels and diversion channels, high tension cables, and the now essential 'software' for the tourist trade; carparks on the shores of Marchlyn Mawr, viewing platforms and coaches, information bureau, catering facilities for the half-million visitors per year discretely landscaped on the side of Marchlyn Bach, ice-cream to cool the blood curdled by close-ups of mighty turbines. The army of Welsh menials would already be disbanded and returned to black unemployment. Electrons would pulsate out from the complex in a never ending stream, marching across country to join the national grid, to eventually find release in suburban coachlights, illuminated fish tanks, neon lighting and other such essentials. The output of a scheme whose main justification is to even out the fluctuations in demand and so give maximum utilisation of equipment, will, in part, provide central heating. An organisation obsessed with utilisation efficiency will itself be providing power for empty rooms, or put another way, power of which only about twenty-five per cent will be used. As usual the real question about how scarce resources should be conserved goes begging.

The end of the seven year boom; local shop tills now no longer ringing so merrily; the grand finale; the opening of the new monument to technical progress; the latest shot in the arm for a mismanaged economy .... Amidst gay flags and bunting, transported verge turf and temporary tidiness, HRH steps onto the rostrum, surrounded by shining faces. HRH spouts meaningful pearls of wisdom in typical fashion. *"It gives me great pleasure. To. Declare this shining example of English expertise. And Welsh labour. A monument to our native capacity to compromise, our ability to get something for nothing.*

The great new lake we will rename Llyn Mahogeny Gaspipes. A noble addition to the scenery of this, the greatest of our national parks, to our unrivalled natural heritage. A splendid example of how the works of man can improve on nature. No longer will the natives of these valleys have to look up into the empty bowl of Marchlyn, or along the dreary levels of the Llanberis Pass. Now their minds can soar to the vision of dazzling white concrete against black slate hills. This, I feel, will inspire them to look upwards and outwards rather than inwards and backwards, forward and onwards rather than downwards. And apart from this, it is a good place to drive up to on a Sunday afternoon to eat lettuce sandwiches. I now declare it open. An a final word before you drive off, subjects, remember the country code." A scissors cuts the tape. The floodgates open. A mighty cascade rushes from bloated Marchlyn to emptied Padarn, now renamed Mahogeny Gaspipes. Generators howl confidently, assured of success, unlike their nuclear counterparts. The show is on the road .....

Thus Idion dreamed on. During the long months of preparation before work proper could begin on the scheme, Idion partially dragged himself out of his habitual trough of inertia and depression. His mind, for long a blank, gradually began to focus on the problem. Slowly he evolved a plan.

During this time the vast array of equipment needed for the scheme was being gathered and stored on the flat lower terraces on the Padarn side of the old Dinorwic quarries. Altogether, several million pounds worth of earth moving vehicles, heavy lorries, cranes, trucks, and materials was being accumulated. Ingenious Idion bided his time, waiting to strike, slowly making his own preparations. The whereabouts of the old wartime explosive material was no secret. Virtually every climber in the valley knew of its location. Unguarded, except in the daytime, access was no problem. A long abseil and Idion was in, carefully fastening the packages to the pulley system. Slowly, night after night, hundreds of pounds of the material were loaded into the stolen van and transported up to the highest quarry terraces. Here the highest lake is retained by a narrow neck of rock forming a dam round its outer edge. From this edge, the quarry side fell away in a succession of narrow terraces and scree slopes to the storage compound at the lakeside. Here Idion made his fateful preparations. On the outside of the retaining wall, he placed the explosive into fissures in the rock. The inside of the wall was more of a problem, as the level of the lake was high. This he eventually solved by using some of the old oil drums lying around in the quarry. These were watertight, and after packing them with explosives they could be suspended at various levels in the water. Each separate pack of explosives was sufficiently close to the next to be triggered off by it.

Thus, only one needed to be detonated to set off the others in a lethal chain reaction. He would use a time fuse to give himself time to return to his refuge, a retreat to the womb in the face of the harsh reality he was about to unleash on the world.

Time passed. The night had finally arrived. All the necessary arrangements had now been made. Nothing could stop the inevitable. Apprehensive Idion sat in his cave and thought about the explosion which would rip the retaining wall apart, and send millions of tons of water and shattered rock down onto the plant below. It was late on Sunday night so there should be no workers left on the site. The last of the weekenders and odd walkers should have departed. The site should be deserted, except for one old watchman. Regrettably, but it would be quick; a roar and then, nothing. A fitting end for the old ex-quarryman, who had spent most of his life within the dark grey walls of the quarry, finally, perhaps, to be at one with the place.

There was no moon or stars, The mist moved slowly round the crags of the Upper Cwm. Idion waited, and looked out into the blackness. It was impossible to tell where ridge and sky met. He alone knew the secret. The mist wrapped world, from earliest man a source uneasiness and superstition, now at last held material menace. Totally materialistic Idion felt a vague sense of surprise that he should now feel afraid. What was there to be afraid of? He thought of the old guardian. What was it? He felt a slight tremor of the earth, followed shortly afterwards by a muffled roar carried through the mist. Then silence. He tried to imagine the old man, now out of this world, coming towards him. But there was only blackness. Or was there? He had at last reached the borderline of reality. At last, amidst rising feelings of terror, the old and warped rock-scarred hands reaching out, coming nearer.

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## FIVE FINGERS

*by Jon de Montjoye*

We swayed upwards into the heat to the rhythmical heart-lurching bumps of the pylons. Why the Italians should decide to make their ski-lift cabins egg-shaped was beyond us. There we were, in our own little yellow fibreglass egg, feeling like targets in some huge fairground.

The sun shone unmercifully through the roof slowly frying us; the only consolation being the sight of the vast three-up and two-down type scree that we were cunningly avoiding.

After what seemed an age we were hatched onto the Col between the

Sassolungo and the Cinque Dita. Hoards of happy singing Italian tourists watched as we staggered onto the platform and then immediately sped back down the way that we had come. Pursued by Italian epithets obviously doubting the sanity of the English, but fortified by our own cunning, we started to traverse below the Cinque Dita. After a short traverse and a struggle up a snow gully, kicking steps in hard snow with soft toe bruising kletts, we reached the snow col that marks the start of the Cinque Dita Traverse. One glimpse down the endless plain of shimmering scree leading down to the tents reassured us of the wisdom of our actions.

I started to sort the gear whilst the team sorted his fags .. 40 in this pocket, 20 in that and 200 in the sac .. just in case ...

The first three pitches of steady severe went well, then we heard German voices down on the col.

"Never mind, we'll beat 'em easy." said Roger encouragingly, as he pointed me at the next pitch.

'Traverse subsidiary ridges' the Bible commanded .. So we did. Two pitches later found me clinging to a wafer thin curtain of corn flakes, with a drop of some 1,000 foot on the one side and about 500 foot on the other, whilst 20 feet below us the Germans were traversing the 'subsidiary ridges' and overtaking us.

"Vot ist ze matta," shouted the orange helmeted figure below us, "I sink you go ze wrong vay!"

We privately agreed that we probably had but were not going to be defeated in front of the Germans. The team followed on hands and knees, puffing furiously at a fag, much to the amusement of the Hun who, by now was comfortably installed at the next belay.

Greetings were cautiously exchanged and we all looked at the next pitch. There was a choice ... a very steep, very exposed 40 foot crack or a less exposed but very overhanging wall. Mike, the larger of the two Germans, leaped at the wall after being repulsed by the crack, and after about 15 foot, turned and announced with a huge grin that there were not one but three pegs. Hans followed.

Roger leaped at the wall, and being unable to reach the holds or pegs, retreated muttering darkly. To avoid any loss of face he immediately attacked the crack and was greeted at the top by two smiling but rather impressed German faces. I followed.

Several more "Hurry or they'll get out of sight" pitches led to the final dierdre and up to the summit cairn where Hans and Mike were sitting in the shade. After adding our names to the little black

book our thoughts turned to the descent. We noticed that our friends' rope was a single 30 metre and they noticed that we had two 150 foot nine mils. As the descent was by abseil we decided to let them share our ropes if we could share their brains.

We descended easy slabs to the first abseil point, a huge ring peg cemented into the rock. Three gripping abseils later we bounced onto a small col between the 'Thumb' and the 'First Finger' of the mountain, at the top of a very steep gully.

The Bible was once again consulted. 'Descend easy slabs after which two abseils lead to the Sassolungo col.' We searched for a traverse line out of the gully onto the elusive slabs but could see no possible line. The further we searched, the more we committed ourselves to the gully below us. Finally it was decided that since the gully walls were loose and overhanging, the only retreat was down the uninviting chasm below. Abseil followed abseil (17 in all), jammed rope followed jammed rope, kami kazi boulders followed us, and we followed the German lads.

It was dusk when we finally reached the scree and stumbled down to the camp-site.

As we neared the tents the team's rather irate wife emerged and walked towards us, hands on hips.

"Where have you two been? "

"Well Blossom, it was like this ....."

x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x

### NEW ROUTES

The following are some of the new routes done by club members in the last year or so :-

#### NORTH WALES

##### Craig y Gelli

##### Hindleberg. 120ft. V.S.

Start: about 30ft. to the right of the start of Via Gelli, below a prominent groove.

1. 80ft. Climb the groove with a peg for aid, moving right at the top. Step left and climb the next groove, again moving right at the top and up to a good ledge. From the left hand end of the ledge, climb the wall to a large niche, and move right to a small ledge and belay below an obvious layback flake.
2. 40ft. Climb the layback flake and the crack directly above to the top of the crag.

First ascent : J. De Montjoye and Miss E.S. Hindle (March 1973)

Cwm Idwal Ken Hipkiss has been heard muttering about new routes in Cwm Idwal. There are no details as yet, except that there are seven new lines completed all at HVS.

#### CORNWALL

Porth Loe Buttress : This buttress is on the western side of a small triangular rock island. Approach from Chair Ladder on the cliff path, round Porth Loe, until the path begins to meander among boulders. To the left of, and below a grassy gully leads down to a pinnacle. It then divides and goes down either side. The pinnacle is the top of the buttress and the gullies are the best approaches.

The buttress is in the form of a large triangular slab, steepening at the top. The lower part of the slab is cut by overhanging rock, with a prominent crack on its left and a groove on its right (Hyperion). The right-hand side is bound by a vertical chimney line starting in a corner just right of the groove breaking through the overhangs.

#### Andromeda. 120ft. S.

Takes the vertical chimney line on the right-hand side of the crag. Start in the corner just right of the overhangs below the main slab.

1. 40ft. Climb a chimney in the back of the corner until it closes. Move onto the right wall and up easily to a large ledge. Belay.
2. 40ft. Step down and left into the chimney. Follow this to a pulpit stance.
3. 40ft. Use a shoulder to enter the left-hand branch of the chimney which is followed to a large platform.

First ascent : R. Bennett and J. Brennan (26.12.71).

Iapetus. 120ft. V.S. This takes the arete on the right-hand side of the slab, just left of the chimney line of Andromeda. Sustained and poorly protected.

Start: in the corner at the right-hand end of the lower slab.

1. 60ft. Climb the steep cracks in the left wall of the corner to the arete. Go up a short slab to a ledge leading up and right to a easy groove. Follow this to a steep smooth slab that is taken with difficulty on its right edge to a ledge and belays on the left.
2. 60ft. Climb a short steep slab on the arete on the right of the belay to a ledge. Easy lichenous slabs lead to the top.

First ascent: J. Brennan and R. Bennett (alt. leads). 27.12.71.

Hyperion. 180ft. H.S. This takes the main slab starting from the groove going through the lower overhangs on the right-hand side of the crag.

Start: below the groove.

1. 80ft. Up easy slabs to the groove. Up this exiting left onto a slab.

- Up this and slightly right to a corner. Up this and shallow cracks bearing right to a belay below a lichenous arete.
2. 60ft. Up a short corner just left of the arete for a few feet then right onto the arete which is followed to a large platform.
  3. 40ft. Climb the easy tower above.
- First ascent: J. Brennan and R. Bennett (alt.leads) 24.12.71.

Dione. 110ft. D. This takes the slabs on the left-hand side of the crag.  
Start: On a square-cut platform on the left-hand side of the lower overhangs.

1. 40ft. Climb a shallow groove on the right of the main slab. Follow this to a belay in a chimney/gully.
  2. 70ft. Climb the chimney/gully, surprisingly open, to the top.
- First ascent: J. Brennan and R. Bennett (alt. leads). 27.12.71.

Prima Donna. 120ft. D. This takes the arete left of Dione.  
Start: from the bottom of the south gully, go East for 20ft. to a ledge below a chimney in a corner.

1. 70ft. Move right onto the L edge of a large area of slabby rock. Follow the edge easily until level with an overhang on the left. Step onto this and up for 20ft. to a flake belay.
  2. 50ft. Follow the easy arete to the top.
- First ascent: R. Bennett and J. Brennan (alt. leads). 29.12.73.

Transubstantiation. 110ft. H.S. This takes the narrow buttress just east of the South Descent Gully.

- Start: at the base of the gully just to the East.
1. 40ft. Up a chimney on R of the rounded arete for 15ft. then L up a crack to a ledge. Up the difficult wall above the ledge, first R and then L to a ledge and belays.
  2. 20ft. Climb the awkward wall above the belay ledge using a crack on the L. Mantleshelf R into a boulder cave. Belay.
  3. 50ft. Go through boulder cave and L into a chimney separating the arete from the cliff. Up this to a large platform. Up a smooth wall and scramble to the top.
- First ascent: R. Bennett and J. Brennan. (alt.leads). 27.12.72.

Tobacco Road. 110ft. D.

- Start: 20ft. W of the South Descent Gully by two large blocks on a platform below a R facing corner topped by a steep fluted wall.
1. 20ft. Climb the corner to a large sloping ledge (belay as for the Beak - - New Climbs 1972).
  2. 90ft. From the L edge of the ledge go up to a chimney. Follow this for 20ft. then bear right to follow cracks to the top.
- First ascent: R. Bennett and J. Brennan (alt.leads). 27.12.72.

Scorpion. 130ft. H.S. The name suggests the gradual rise  
in standard.

Start: From the South Gully go W, past two large boulders on a ledge, round an arete and into a narrow zawn.

1. 40ft. Up easy slabs to a R facing corner. Up this to exit L onto a large platform.
2. 30ft. Step across the top of the corner onto steep slabs. Follow a shallow crack line directly up to a R facing chimney in the head wall. Delicate. Peg belays.
3. 30ft. Up the overhanging R facing chimney, finishing with an awkward move over a chockstone.

First ascent: R. Bennett and J. Brennan (alt. leads) and  
D. Irons. 29.12.72.

### Fox Promontory

Fallen Arches. 110ft. D.

Start: From the bridge connecting Fox Promontory to the mainland, a succession of three pinnacles leaning against the mainland cliff can be seen. The climb follows the grooves on the LH side of these pinnacles.

1. 60ft. From the large jammed boulder about 40ft. below the connecting bridge climb directly up the groove on LH side of first 'arch' to the top of the pinnacle.
2. 50ft. Climb grooves on LH side of second and third 'arches' to the top. Alternatively, climb through the third arch and finish more easily up the RH side.

First ascent: D. Sheldon and J. Brennan (alt. leads) Aug. 72.

### Trewavas Head

Cobra 130ft. H.D.

A pleasant climb on sound granite. It takes a line up the obvious pinnacle just west of the disused mine workings.

Start: In the small zawn below the East face of the pinnacle, an obvious crack/groove line leads from sea level to the top of the pinnacle.

1. 60ft. From a large black ledge about 10ft. above high-water mark, climb the LH crack in the groove. Take a continuation crack in the rocks above for 20ft. and belay on a triangular ledge.
2. 70ft. Climb directly up to the large groove splitting the face of the pinnacle. Take LH crack at the back of the groove

to arrive just right of the summit.

First ascent: D. Sheldon and J. Brennan (alt.leads) Aug.72

Peaen 120ft. S.

Start: from the Cobra pinnacle, an obvious ridge can be seen about 100 yds. to the East. The climb takes the obvious shallow chimney-line just right of the crest. Start from a large platform at the bottom of the ridge.

1. 40ft. Climb the groove and overhang directly and with some anxiety, to arrive on a large ledge.
2. 40ft. Continue up the shallow chimney above to another large ledge.
3. 40ft. Climb the gently overhanging chimney above on good holds.

First ascent: J. Brennan and D. Sheldon. Climbing solo. Aug. 72.

PEMBROKESHIRE

Girdle of Trwyn Llwydin 540ft. H.S.

This girdles the slabs at a high level from right to left.

Start: A few feet left of slanter is a small cave below a weakness leading left. Start here.

1. 100ft. Climb the weakness (awkward) and then up slabs and grooves to a stance below and right of a large square overhang.
2. 50ft. Climb the slab just right of the overhang then left along the lip of the overhang to a ledge. Move down and left to belay on ledges on a large slab. Peg belay.
3. 110ft. Follow ledges easily down left to a groove. Reverse this for a few feet then continue left in a gully. Belay below a steep broken groove in the opposite wall.
4. 70ft. Slightly lower down the gully, a smooth slab through the opposite wall. Reverse the gully for a few feet until it is possible to move onto the wall and reach the slab via an awkward move left. Follow the slab left onto the buttress. Up a short awkward corner and belay.
5. 90ft. Up a steep wall bounded on the right by a slab. Climb the wall moving up and left and continue left on the lip of the overhang to a peg belay in place on the slab above.
6. 80ft. Follow the lower edge of the slab more easily to a ledge overlooking a deep gully.
7. 40ft. Climb easily up the arete overlooking the gully to the top.

First ascent : R. Bennett and J. Brennan (alt. leads) 3.4.72.

Craig Coetan

Constrictor 120ft. S.

Takes the obvious rib between the Crack and Subsidiary Crack.

Start: on the field below the rib.

1. 60ft. Follow the crest of the rib to a smooth slab below an overhang. Belay on right.
2. 60ft. Climb the smooth slab and take the overhang slightly on the left. Move right and up slabs to a V groove. Climb this to a grass ledge and belay.

First ascent : J. Brennan and R. Bennett (alt. leads) 8.4.72.

Porth Melgan

The Purgative 110ft. H.S.

On the South-east side of Porth Melgan is a steep wall just to the right of some obvious twin caves. The route lies up a flat crack leading diagonally up right on this wall. The final arete is very loose and two peg runners are advised.

First ascent : R. Bennett and R. James (27.8.71).

Trwyn Llwydin South

Minevia 180ft. H.S.

Takes the right edge of Overlap Buttress.

Descend A chimney until below an obvious smooth slab cutting the right (in descent) wall leading onto the buttress.

1. 80ft. Climb steeply up the gully wall until level and right of the slab. Move awkward left onto the slab. Follow this in a superb position onto another slab. Up a short awkward corner and belay on ledges below a steep wall bounded on its right by a smooth slab.
2. 50ft. Up to the right end of the wall, work up and left and continue left until it is possible to climb slabs and ledges to belay.
3. 50ft. Easy slabs lead to the top.

First ascent : R. Bennett and R. James (alt. leads). 27.8.71.