

Escalades dans le Massif des Calanques Alexis Lucchesi (Marrimpouey Jeune, Pau, npq). The following volumes of the comprehensive series of climbing guides to the Calanques by Alexis Lucchesi have been received from the author; all have maps, numerous topo-diagrams and one or two photos:

Chaîne de Marseilleveyre. I. Les Goudes, St. Michel (pp 176, 1977).

Chaîne de Marseilleveyre. III. Mounine, Callot, Plan des Cailles, Les Iles (pp 120, 1977).

Chaîne de Marseilleveyre. IV. Bougie, Melette, Walkyries (pp 128, 1978).

Sormiou (pp 104, 1977).

Devenson, Gardiole (pp 200, 1976).

AFRICA

THE ATLAS

Off Belay 39 12 contains a brief descriptive article by Kev Reynolds on the High Atlas.

EAST AFRICA

The ubiquitous Reinhold Messner, partnered by Konrad Renzler, climbed the Breach Icicle on Kilimanjaro (5895m) on 31 January 1978 for the first time. Just previously, Henry Barber and Rob Taylor had all but completed the route on 14 January when Taylor fell and broke an ankle—an epic retreat followed. Bob Barton and Dave Morris climbed a fine new direct route on the Heim Glacier. On Mount Kenya (5199m), the same pair completed a Grade VI climb on the hanging Forel Glacier, thought to be probably the most difficult ice climb undertaken in Kenya. Ian Howell and Iain Allen made a new direct route on the Diamond Buttress (VI, A3, 2 bivouacs). Several other hard routes have had further ascents; the Diamond Couloir by Australians Greg Mortimer and Vince Fayad (winter conditions; late October) and Henry Barber and Rob Taylor (summer conditions; January). It seems that this climb is better undertaken under winter conditions.

Visiting climbers to Hell's Gate Gorge, particularly Henry Barber, have been pushing the standards higher and higher. The Australian grading system is being adopted by most climbers in the Gorge and seems to work well. A fine new sustained route has emerged, *Andromeda*, on the steepest part of the main wall; its various pitches are graded 17, 20, 19, 19, 15, 21, 21. Further details may be found in *Mountain* 61 11.

SOUTH AFRICA

We are indebted to Michael Scott for the following review of the 1977/78 rock-climbing season in South Africa.

The province of Transvaal, long thought to have no mountains worth climbing, is now known for a multitude of cliffs of superb rock, seldom getting any bad weather. Blouberg is a magnificent 250m wall in the N Transvaal where every route opened was 'G' grade until the recent *Half Moon* climb put up by Paul Fatti and Art McGarr at 'E3' and one aid move. They now have a number of routes to their credit here, and the cliff seems to be becoming more and more climbable.

Meanwhile in the Loskop Dam area, near picturesque waterworn kloofs known as the Hell, the Scheepers Kloof crag has been extensively developed, particularly by Eckhard Haber. Nearby, the Magageni amphitheatre has yielded some fine lines to Greg Moseley and various partners. The most dramatic line to date is *Head Arrangement* at 'G' and aid, by Moseley with John Fantini, and this takes the steep rib on the W Wing.

Monteseel near Pietermaritzburg in Natal received 2 periods of revitalization; the first when Richard Smithers and Mike Roberts started filling in all the blank spaces and the second when John Fantini and Smithers cleaned up a few desperate eliminates.

On Table Mountain in Cape Town, various parties have applied themselves to aid eliminations on routes such as *Captain Hook*, *Myrrh*, *Africa Scandal* and *Hacksaw*. All have been climbed free, except for one rest point on *Captain Hook*. Some of the eliminations, such as *Myrrh*, have been of long, completely mechanical pitches, which is quite startling.

The era of 'G3' and 'H' grades seems to have arrived. At last bold young climbers such as Chris Lomax, Brian Gross, Greg Lacey, Mike Roberts and the exceptionally able Dave Davies admit that their climbs are harder than anything existing, and break the myth that our grading was not meant to be open ended. Apart from some 'G3' climbing on the Krakadouw Amphitheatre in the Cedarberg, all the 'G3's' are on Table Mountain, such as *Excalibur* on Lion's Head, and *Natal Fever* on Postern Buttress. The 'H1' pitch is considered to be an on-sight free lead of *Captain Hook*, which at present has only been led by practised leaders.

Some tremendously exciting big country climbs have been put up this year, starting with *Renaissance* on Du Toit's Peak. This 500m route at 'G2' and 'M4' contains the most serious mechanical climbing done to date. Opened by Tony Dick and Dave Cheesmond, it pieced together various attempts to claim this line to the left of the classic NW face. *The times they are a changin* was pushed up the fabled Klein Winterhoek amphitheatre by Cheesmond, Lacey, Lomax and Gross with one bivouac and using quite an amount of mechanical aid. Hutchinson's Buttress also yielded a direct route with some delicate 'G1' leads on its sun-catching amphitheatre to Butch de Bruin, Dick and Cheesmond. With Duncan McLachlan in addition, this team used all the blank rock below *Lucifer* in Duiwel's Kloof, and opened *Dinosaur Revival*; so named as the leader has to stick his neck out quite a bit. Also in Duiwel's Kloof, Hans Graafland's parties opened 4 climbs of moderate grade ('E/F'), all over 350m long—an amazing breakthrough in this region of hard routes. *Pisa Direct* on the Witteberg was worried at by several parties until De Bruin and Cheesmond cracked it. On the other side of the valley, Cheesmond and Dick teamed up again to open *Time Warp* on the Yellowwood Amphitheatre. This 'G' route utilizes a pendulum traverse and some desperately thin climbing. The route is fairly intricate and a strong party attempting a repeat failed to find the pitches.

Finally, in the Cedarberg, Cheesmond and Gross put up some daring lines on the overhangs opposite Spout Cave, while Fletcher and Hartley did an eliminate on the Spout called *Where Eagles Dare*. The mechanical climbing on this was engineered by Hartley, who was responsible also for getting Lomax to hold the rope for him while he put up a 3-day mechanical climb on Table Mountain, called *One flew over the Cuckoo's nest*. On the Wolfberg Cracks ramparts Andre Schoon, son Alistair, Pete du Preez and Geoff Ward opened fine climbing lines of moderate grade ('F2') on good rock. As it proved an excellent new area for climbing, Robin Barley and Dave Davies were soon there, and blitzed up some desperately thin lines on very compact rock. *Celestial Journey* climbs superb crack lines and totally blank faces at 'G2' and aid, while *Satisfaction Guaranteed* holds some exciting 'G1' jamming in a crack around a bulge blocking a prominent recess.

In SW Africa, Eckhard Haber on tour found a few new areas of rock, which yielded interesting climbing. The Bradberg, long famed for its bogey of heat and waterlessness, did not deter several parties, including Haber's, from making ascents. In the Drakensberg, the only events have been Richard Smithers and Mike Roberts' ascents of some of the hard routes put up by Dick and Fuggle, such as their ridge on the Sentinel.

Not forgetting Woman's Lib—Romy Druschke became the first girl to do *Armageddon*, which is still probably the hardest climb in the Transvaal.

ASIA

HINDU KUSH

Koh e Škhawr (7116m) Polish parties completed 2 new lines on this mountain in August 1977. Lwow, Pietkiewicz and Wielicki climbed the 3000m N wall by the left hand pillar and Kulis, Waclaw and Wilkonski the right hand pillar of the same wall (see p 172).

Tirich Mir West 4 (7338m) was climbed by an Italian party in July 1977 by a new route on the 1200m SW face. Calcagno, Enzo and Tomasi reached the summit on 21 July and on the following day Vidoni made a solo ascent.

Noshaq (7492m) A Czech woman, Dina Sterbova, soloed the main and W summit in August 1977. Her companion, Marta Melzochova, was hurt in an incident with bandits and had to remain in hospital in Kabul. It was an altitude record for a Czech woman climber.

Kebak Region The 6-man Manchester University Hindu Kush Expedition led by Richard Eastwood climbed in this region in July and August 1977. They made 12 ascents in lightweight style, including 8 previously unclimbed peaks. The most significant ascents were KZ75 (Qalat; 5400m, solo climb by J. Vogel, N ridge and N face), KZ88 (5250m, A. Hamilton and I. Grace, steep N ice-face) and KZ92 (Sare Kalan; 5650m, R. Thomas, J. Vogel and I. Nightingale, sustained 3-day rock-climb, NE face).