

Caines, McCahon and I climbed San Juan (19,170 feet) by its west ridge on July 26 and 27. This was the one snow and ice route where reasonable conditions were encountered. Conway and the South African Greg Moseley made the second ascent of Pucaraju (17,540 feet), which they climbed by its northwest ridge.

WAYNE McILWRAITH, *New Zealand Alpine Club*

*Chinchey, North Ridge.* It was the third time I had gone up the valley, the Ruri Chinchey, which drains to the east from the heart of the Cordillera Blanca. We again had two objectives: unclimbed Puntan-cuerno (5959 meters or 19,551 feet) and a new route on Chinchey (6222 meters or 20,413 feet). The weather continued marginal, and our progress into the basin north of the peaks was plenty slow enough for acclimatization. With so much bad weather, snow conditions were never good. We placed Camp I on the rock peak which splits the glacial tongues. Camp II was on the glacier at 16,800 feet, just east of Pamparaju. From there on, the glacier gave us route-finding problems in getting to Camp III at 17,800 feet. Above, the complicated maze was soon appropriately named the "Minefield." On July 6, while the rest scouted improvements in the route through the "Minefield", Rick Ridgeway and Chris Chandler reconnoitered the route to the col between Pamparaju and Chinchey, which would give access to the latter's north ridge. A ramp which crossed under multi-ton séracs on Chinchey's northeast face was no place to halt. The bergschrund below the 500-foot fluted ice slope was the first real obstacle. Ridgeway describes it thus: "Panting, we dropped down on the lower lip of the bergschrund that cut the face from one end to the other. We seemed to have two choices: either climbing a precarious ice bridge in the middle or a traverse all the way to the right where the schrund ended and then a traverse back across the face. We made a futile attempt to scale the ice bridge, which turned out to be a 15-foot icicle, and started traversing. Getting around the bergschrund was no problem but traversing the fluted ice face was not so easy. Most of the flutes were crusty and rotten on top; the only firm snow was in the bottom of the channels. After crossing seven huge flutes we found one that was not a *cul-de-sac*, blocked at the top by a cornice. After another hour of moderately steep ice climbing inside the channel of the flute, we reached the col and saw the afternoon sun glimmer on the giant peaks to the north. After a short rest we rappelled off and hurried back to camp to arrive before dark." White-out and snow flurries kept us holed up in Camp III but July 8 promised to be fine. Ridgeway and Chandler were off before dawn, followed by Harry Eldridge and Elliot Fisher. They were on the fixed ropes below the col at nine and on the col at the foot of Chinchey's north ridge by ten. Ridgeway describes the final climb. "The ridge went quickly but proved exciting where corniced over the west slope. The east side dropped off

quickly onto the face and was covered by about five inches of soft powder over hard ice. To the right was the cornice and to the left the threat of an avalanche. We split the difference and trudged up the fracture line, ready to jump in either direction depending on whether the slab went or the cornice. Neither happened and a little after noon we found ourselves on the summit." Meanwhile our Scottish friend Malcolm Slessor, Henry Richardson and I were attempting to reach the west ridge Puntancuerno. Probably 25 feet below the ridge crest and 400 feet below the summit we surveyed an unstable sérac guarding the ridge. The old men's survival instinct suddenly got strong and Slessor and I insisted on returning. Above, the double-corniced ridge interrupted by two overhanging gendarmes with flimsy frost mushrooms looked difficult. Richardson returned the next day with Ridgeway and Chandler and they got a couple of feet higher. The collapse of the sérac and some fancy dodging proved that the old men might have been right. The main part of the expedition was over, but Ridgeway, Chandler and Ron Fear continued on to reconnoiter the east ridge of Huantsán.

H. ADAMS CARTER

*San Juan, Copap Group, Chinchey.* After leaving the Vilcabamba (see also that section), we reached Huaraz on July 11. Geoff Spearpoint had taken Radcliffe's place, joining David Bamford, John Gates, Tom Clarkson and me. Because conditions had been bad, we headed for the Llanganuco. On July 13 Gates and I climbed Yanapaccha Sur (16,880 feet). On July 16 we set up camp at 15,500 feet below San Juan in the Quebrada Quilcayhuanca. The following day Clarkson, Spearpoint, Gates and I climbed Nevado Minas, an easy 17,910-foot peak west of San Juan. At six A.M. on July 18 Clarkson, Bamford and I set off for San Juan (19,170 feet) via the west ridge. The climbing really started at 9:30 when we reached an 18,000-foot saddle. From there we had to belay most of the way to the summit. To avoid snow mushrooms on the ridge top we were forced to traverse steep slopes on the north.

Bamford was able to continue in the area after the rest of us had to return home. He describes his climbing above the Quebrada Honda: "Bob Rowlands, a fellow New Zealander, and I on August 1 enjoyed an easy climb, Chaco (17,454 feet), east of Tocllaraju. We spent two pleasant days on the Copap plateau after gaining access to it by the Yanatsilca Glacier. On August 3 we climbed P 5300 (17,389 feet) and on August 4 climbed P 5410 (17,750 feet; possibly a first ascent), Condormina Sur and Condormina Norte (18,262 and 18,212 feet), the latter two on the eastern edge of the Copap group. On August 9 we reached the top of Chinchey (20,414 feet) via the west ridge."

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