

CORNISH CLIFFS.

By J. DONKIN.

The coast described in this article lies to the west of St. Ives on the north coast and Penzance on the south. The area is covered by Sheet 146 of the 1in. Ordnance Survey.

There is a wonderful fascination in climbing on good rock with crystal clear sea surging around. In rough weather, when huge rollers are breaking against the foot of the cliffs shooting dazzlingly white spray high into the air, climbs which in fine weather seem dull have an enchantment all their own.

Due to the nature of these cliffs long climbs upwards are comparatively rare. This need not deter climbers, for great fun can be experienced in seeking horizontal traverses along the coast. Many pleasant headlands will be found where the cliffs plunge steeply into the sea. To negotiate such headlands is excellent training for leading parties on mountains, for there is no well-blazed trail to follow and no guide book. The leader must choose the route, watch the tide, and also keep an eye open for places where an escape can be made up the cliff in the event of difficulties proving to be insuperable.

The Wicca Pillar, situated in the Wicca Pool (Square C5), provides some good face and chimney climbs. The Pillar may be reached by following the stream running down from Tregertan. On reaching the top of the cliffs, bear down to the right in a northerly direction. The pillar will soon be seen rising out of the sea. It is accessible at all times, but some of the best chimneys are only free from water at low tide. The Pillar is easily reached by traversing shelving rocks which lead directly to it. Those who desire a more enterprising route will find a small crack running down the cliff on the mainland about opposite the Pillar. This is quite easy to start with, but it becomes progressively steeper. The final ten feet or so is a slight overhang. This pitch presents considerable difficulty on account of the very small hand holds. The desire to overcome the pitch by jumping is quelled by one look at the loose boulders on which a landing would have to be made. From here the route lies up the rock face opposite, and into a cleft. This cleft opens out on the far side into a chimney which is so wide at the base that it can only just be spanned, but narrowing towards the top.

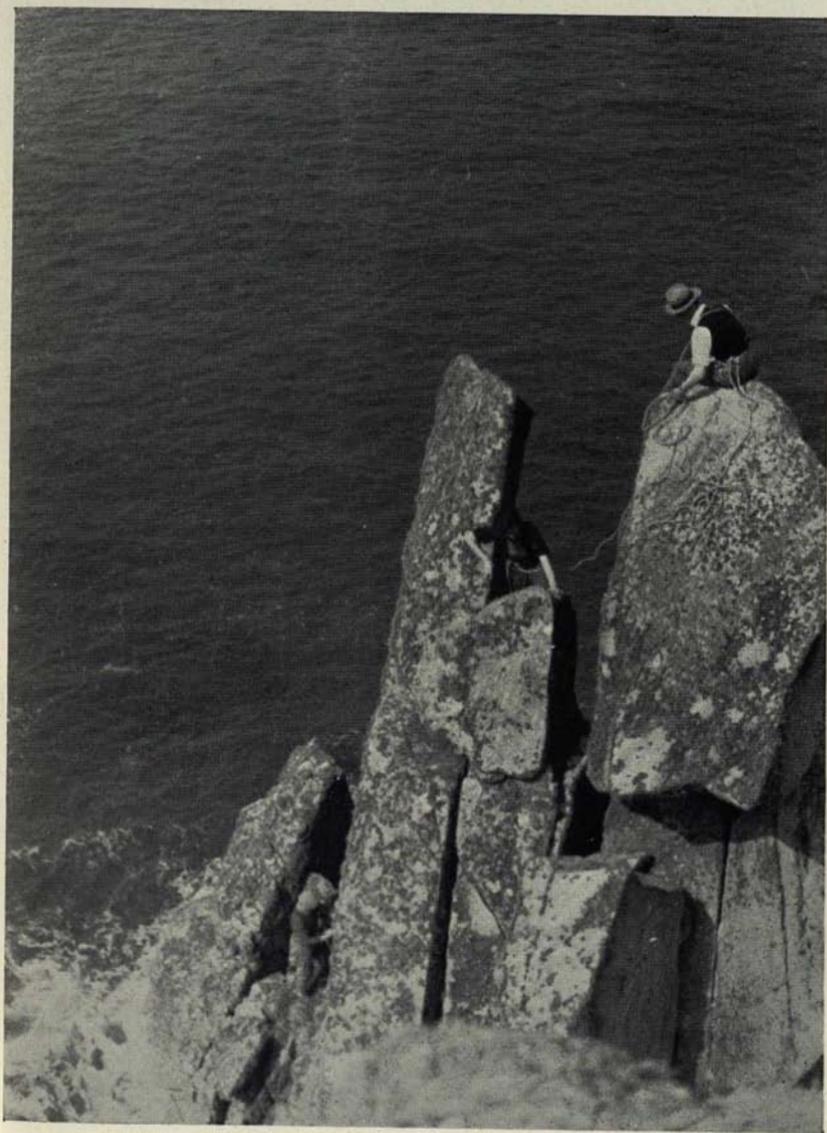
From the top of the chimney some easy slabby rocks lead to the foot of the Pillar. If the tide is out the route leads down to sea level again, and thence by means of a bigger and better chimney than the previous one to the summit of the Pillar. Routes on the Pillar abound. They are steep, but the holds, though small, are sound and give good security.

Immediately to the west of Gurnard's Head (Square D4) is a small cove with a large black rock sticking out to sea on its western side. The surface is so smooth that boots or gym shoes will not hold if the rock is at all damp. Either bare or stockinged feet were found to be the best. The route lies up the shore side by means of a steep crack. At Easter every cranny on the top of this rock is occupied by a gull's nest.

Bosigran provides a wealth of climbing on good granite. The climbing is situated on the cliffs around Porthmoina Cove (Square D3). There is a large pinnacle standing right away from the cliff on the eastern side of the cove, known as the Bosigran Pinnacle. The route down to the pinnacle is a little difficult to find. It starts down a wide, grassy slope at a point covered by the letter "L" of the word Logan Stone on the 1in. Ordnance Survey map. From about one-third of the way down, the route follows a ledge running out and down towards the point on the eastern side of the cove. When level with the outer end of the pinnacle the route takes to the rocks, and leads down several short steep pitches, finally traversing to the inner end of the pinnacle before dropping down to the isthmus joining the pinnacle to the mainland.

On the Bosigran Pinnacle will be found a splendid route leading right over the top, dropping down on the outer end, from which point a return can be made either on the landward or the seaward side.

If the tide is sufficiently low, Porthmoina Cove can be crossed, and the ascent made by climbing the Bosigran Ridge, which leads from the western extremity of the cove to the top of the ridge. This ridge is a knife edge running from sea level to the top of the cliff, and is probably one of the longest continuous climbs in the district. The ridge is gained at the earliest opportunity, and it is followed over a series of saw tooth summits to the top.



ON THE BOSIGRAN RIDGE.

J. Donkin

Chair Ladder (Square J2) situated to the south of Lands End is a delightful cliff. It rises very steeply from the sea to a height of over 200 feet. It can be approached from the farm of Rosketal on foot by making for the Coast Guard look-out point. The climbing is good in fine weather. When the sea is rough the waves throw up spray more than a hundred feet high, which limits the climbing to the top half of the cliff. The place is certainly worthy of a visit whatever the sea may be doing, for even if the climbing is limited, the Atlantic rollers breaking against the cliffs are a truly wonderful sight.

Further to the north there is an amusing little ridge running out to sea immediately to the south of Zawn Kellys (Square J1). Many other such places will be found which will provide climbing of any required degree of difficulty.

Following the coast in an easterly direction the next point of importance is the Logan Rock. For some unknown reason the Ordnance Survey does not mark it as such, although many lesser logan rocks are duly recorded. It will be found on the map under the name of Horace (Square J3). This reticence on the part of the Survey Officials may be due to the fact that in years gone by a party landed from one of His Majesty's ships, and having nothing better to do, they rocked the logan stone so hard that they tipped it over the cliff into the sea. Such was the indignation caused by this act that the rock had to be replaced. The holes drilled in it for lifting can be seen to this day. When H.M. Office of Works put back the stone they made sure that they would not have to do the job a second time. The stone will just rock, but so little that the danger of it being tipped over again may be considered as negligible. The headland is now part of the National Trust. Access can be gained to it on foot from the village of Treen. The climbing on the point is good. At medium tide an amusing traverse can be made from the point to Porth Curno. At low tide the difficulties could be too easily by-passed by dropping down on to the sands, and at high tide it would probably be impossible to cross some of the zawns without taking to the water. Some of the most interesting pitches are to be found at points where the zawns intercept the general line of the cliffs.

This very brief description of some of the places which the writer has visited should not be taken as covering all the parts

which are of interest to the climber. Almost the whole of this coast will provide good scrambling, and also difficult climbing. More detailed information will be found in a series of articles by A. W. Andrews in recent numbers of the Climbers' Club Journal. Mr. Andrews has lived in this district for many years and is largely responsible for discovering the possibilities of the district for climbing.

For anyone whose sole object is to climb, a certain amount of mobility is desirable. The amount of climbing at any one point is limited. A car is almost essential for visiting the more distant centres, as buses are rather few and far between along the coastal road. I would strongly recommend anyone visiting the district to try walking along the cliffs as near the edge as possible. This is usually the longest route, but it gives excellent opportunities for finding new places to climb, and wild animals, birds and flowers all add to the interest and beauty of the view.