



# The Rough-Stuff Guide to the Western Alps (Southern Section).

Price: £1.50

## About the Rough-Stuff Guides to the Alps

For these guides, the Alps have been divided into six regions.

**Western (South):** From the Mediterranean to the Grenoble-Briançon-Susa road.

**Western (North):** From the Grenoble-Briançon-Susa road to (excluding) the Franco-Swiss frontier and the Aosta Valley.

**Central (West):** From (including) the Franco-Swiss frontier and the Aosta Valley to the Luzern-Gotthard-Lugano road.

**Central (East):** From the Luzern-Gotthard-Lugano road to (including) the Austro-Swiss frontier and the Adige valley.

**Eastern (North):** Austria, including the Italy-Austrian frontier.

**Eastern (South):** Dolomites.

Road passes have been given a number identical to that in the guides of the Ordre des Cols Durs, marked on the Key maps, and listed without description.

Roughstuff routes are abbreviated to one, two or three letters on key maps; the abbreviations are unique throughout the Alps. These routes are also listed, but in addition are described in more or less detail. Section A contains well documented routes; Section B contains those less well documented, or those where a few words are sufficient (e.g. Hahnenmoos), together with a few obvious links about which nothing is known apart from their appearance on the large-scale maps (1:50,000 or 1:100,00).

The roughstuff routes are also given the following two ratings:

**(i) VAD** = very approximate difficulty

**E:** Easy, anything from a short rideable rough section between metalled roads to fairly long paths needing some wheeling.

**M:** Moderate, sometimes hard work, possibly occasional lifting.

**D:** Difficult, often hard work, sometimes double carrying (bike, then luggage).

**VS:** Very severe, like severe but more so; scrambling may be involved.

**(ii) Stars** - these give a rather subjective idea of how rewarding a pass is depending mainly on scenery (as seen in fine weather), but also on its advantages as link between valleys, and on value for effort.

Times given in these guides do not allow for stops. They are often based on very little experience, and the editor will be glad to hear of readers' experiences.

**'Rideable'** - please bear in mind that, probably, no two people will always agree on the dividing-line between rideable and unrideable; this has become even more true with the advent of mountain bikes.

**Updating of guides** - comments, amendments, etc. (if possible with the exact dates), will be welcomed by the editor, E. D. Clements, 79 Pewley Way, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3QB.

## **Abbreviations, Etc.**

For points of the compass, initial letters are used, e.g. SW, N.

An asterisk before a route in Section B means that no report has been received on that route.

E, M, D, S, VS, Grades of difficulty (see above).

m metre(s)

M216 (etc.) Michelin map no. 216 (1:200,000 series)

r/s roughstuff



© The Rough-Stuff Fellowship Ltd, a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No 4127423. Registered Address: Pinecroft, Lodge Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4AQ

**General:** The average high route in the Alps is much shorter and much steeper, and often of better surface, than the longer Scottish routes; compare Lairig Ghru 13 miles r/s, Glen Affric 15 miles r/s, with the mile-ages quoted in these guides. (These mileages do not include rough but rideable approach tracks.)

**Feasibility of Routes:** Snow can be a problem on many Alpine routes. As a very rough guide, routes over 2000m should be possible in fine weather by early June, those over 2400m by early July and those over 2700m by August. This applies to average summers. North- and east-facing slopes hold snow much later than those exposed to the sun. Choose a fine day if possible, and do not attempt any of the higher routes soon after a fresh snowfall. Beware of rivers rising after heavy rain. Any route over about 2000m may prove dangerous if attempted in bad weather. Beginners are advised to start with one or two easy or moderate routes.

**Equipment:** A small rucksack, which can take heavy items on one's back when wheeling or carrying, is a great help. This can be slung over the saddle-bag when riding; or you can buy a rucksack which rolls up small enough to be carried in a pocket. Footwear - strong well-soled shoes or light boots are recommended. Training shoes have also been found adequate on many routes; you may get your feet wet, but they soon dry out. Instep crampons have recently been reported to be useful for crossing snow with a bike; cost c. £6. For extensive snow on a bright day, goggles may be useful. For whistles, etc., see **Distress Signals**.

**Distress Signals:** Use a whistle, torch or flashes of sun on a mirror. Alternatively, shout or wave bright clothing: six regular flashes/ notes in a minute, repeated at intervals of a minute. The reply is three signals a minute. To attract a helicopter, stand still, both arms raised above your head; to show you don't need help, stand with one arm up and one down, both at 45 ° to the horizon.

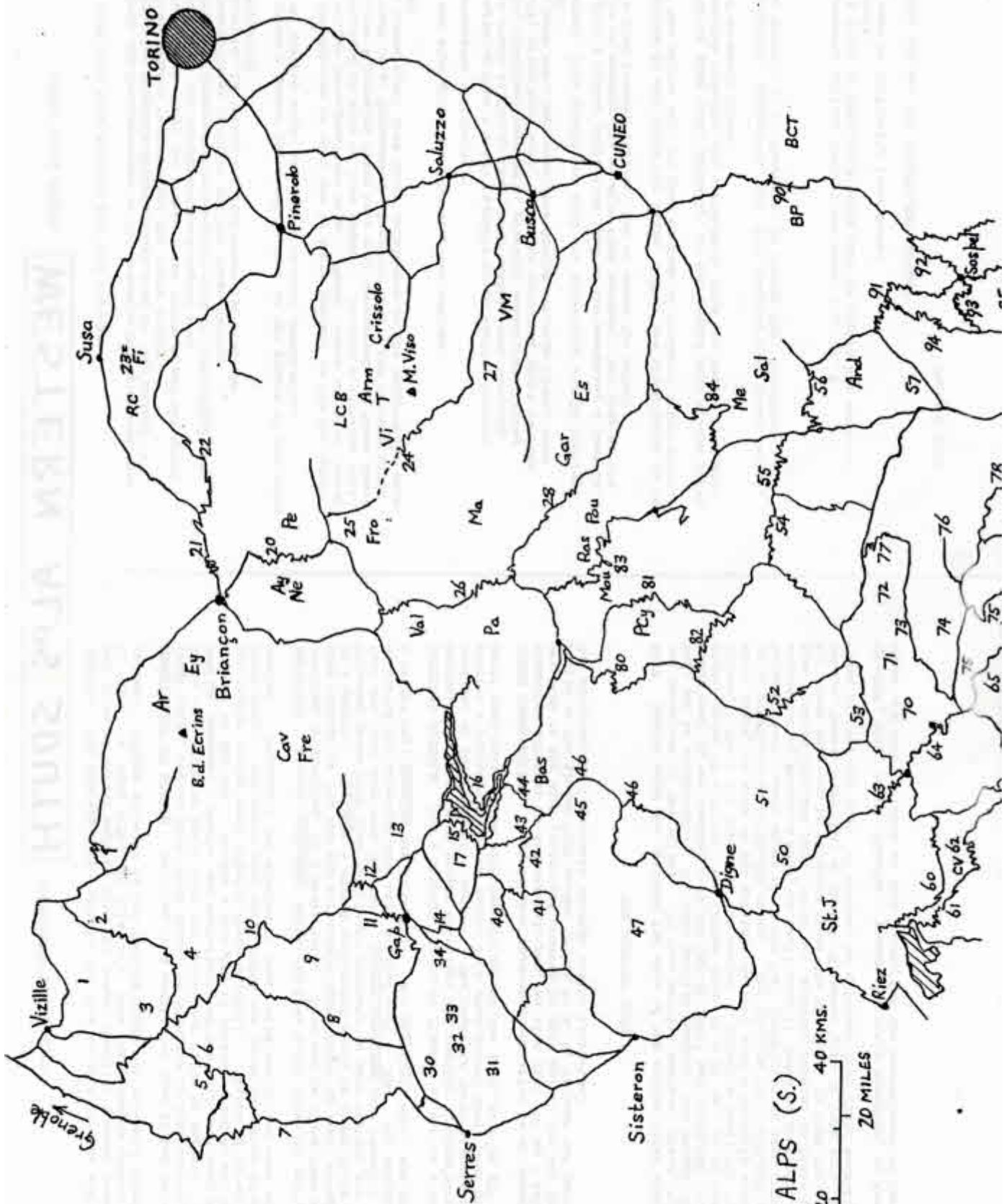
**Other Information:** Local weather forecasts can often be obtained at tourist information offices; in Switzerland, you can dial 162 on a telephone. If you wish to try high routes not covered by this guide, you may find useful information in the Alpine Club guides edited by R. G. Collomb and published by West Col Publications (available through public libraries).

## The Western Alps

**Maps:** Sketch maps are included for many of the routes (they sometimes show routes not described in the guide). In fine settled weather, these, with Michelin map, may be sufficient. For less settled weather, the French IGN maps are good; these come in two scales, 1:50,000 (£2.87 in 1987) and 1:100,000 (£3.25 in 1988). The former cover 29 x 20 km., the latter about 96 x 87 km., or 14 times the area of the former. There are currently two series of Michelin maps, the '200' series covering about the twice of the original series; also a Michelin atlas, covering the whole of France at 1:200,000 scale. The Italian TCI 1:200,000 map 'Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta' costs £6 in the UK (1988); it is less detailed than the corresponding Michelin maps, in particular it shows no footpaths. There are also Italian 1:50,000 maps, which are probably cheaper in Italy (£2.20 1988). All these maps can be obtained from: The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upon-on-Seven, Worcs., WR8 0HJ; or from E.Standford Ltd, 12 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LH. (Some of them can also, of course, be obtained from other bookshops.)

**Chésery, Coux, Balme, Malatra:** through, strictly speaking, in the Central Alps, these are included in this guide, for convenience of readers.

**List of Passes:** For the area covered, see page 1. In the VAD column, 'NM/SE' (e.g.) means 'north side moderate, south side easy' (see Page 1), and 'me' means 'metalled'. The columns headed\* show the number of stars (see page1).



WESTERN ALPS (S.)



### **Road Passes (See Map on page3)**

1: Grand Serre, 2: Ornon, 3: Malissol, 4: Parquetot/L'Holme, 5: Accarias, 6: St Sebastien, 7: Croix Haute, 8: Festre/Rioupes, 9: Noyer, 10: Festreaux, 11: Bayard, 12: Manse, 13: Koissiere, 14: Sentinelle, 15: Lebraut, 16: Pontis, 17: Mt Colombis, 20: Izoard, 21: Montgenevre, 22: Sestriere, 23: Finestre, 24: Agnel, 25: Somet Bucher, 26: Vars, 27: Sampeyre, 28: Larche, 30: Bachasastte, 31: Faye, 32: Espreaux, 33: Guerins/ Foureyrasse, 40: Sarraut, 41: Sagnes, 42: Garcinets, 43: Fillys, 44: St Jean, 45: Fanget, 46: Maure/Labouret, 47: Fontbelle, 50: Corobin, 51: Defend, 52: St. Michel, 53: Toutes Aures/Robines, 54: Valberg/St Anne, 55: Gouillole, 56: St. Martin 57: Utelle, 60: Ayens, 61: Corniche Sublime, 62: Barris, 63: Leque, 64: Luens, 65: Valferriere/Faye, 70: St Barnabe/Cheiron, 71: Laval/Felines, 72: Trebuchet, 73: Buis, 74: Bleine/Pinpinier, 75: Bas/Sine/Ferrier, 76: Greolieres les-Neiges, 77: St Raphael, 78: Vence, 80: Allos, 81: Cayolle, 82: Champs 83: Bonette, 84: Lombarde, 90: Tende, 91: Turini, 92: Brouis, 93: Brouis/Able/Orme, 94: Porte/St. Roch, 95: Madeleine de Corbio.

### **Section A**

#### **N of Ubaye and Stura Valleys (Col de Larche Road).**

**Ar** Arisine VAD:M, \*:3, Page 6.

**Ey** Eychauda VAD:NM/SE, \*:2, Page 7.

**Ne** Neal VAD:M \*2 Page 8.

**Lcb** La Croix/Baracum VAD:M/E \*3, Page 9.

**T** Traversette VAD:S, \*4, Page 10.

**Arm** Armoine VAD: ND/SE, \*3, Page 11.

**VM** Varaita - Maira ridge VAD:E, \*4, Page 12/13

**Vi** Vieux VAD: SM/NS, \*3, Page 14.

**Ma** Mary VAD: D, \*4, Page 15.

**Gar** Gardetta, etc VAD: E, \*3, Page 16/17.

**Es** Esischie, etc. VAD:E, \*2, Page 16/17.

**Pa** Parpaillon VAD:E, \*3, Page 18.

#### **S of Ubaye and Stura Valleys (Col de Larche Road).**

**Pcy** Petit Cayolle VAD: WM/ED, \*2, Page 19.

### **Section B**

#### **N of Ubaye and Stura Valleys (Col de Larch Road)**

**Cav** Cavale VAD:VS, \*2, Page 20.

**Fre** Freissinieres VAD:VS, \*2, Page 20.

**RC** Route des Cretes VAD:E, \*4, Page 20/22.

**Fi** Finestre VAD:E, \*2, Page 20/23.

**Val** Valbelle VAD:E, \*2, Page 20/21.

**Ay** Ayes VAD:M, \*2, Page 20/8.

**Pe** Peas VAD:D?, \*2, Page 20.

**Fro** Fromage VAD:NE/SD, \*2 Page 20/21

#### **S of Ubaye and Stura Valleys ( Col de Larch Road)**

**Bas** Bas VAD:N, \*1, Page 24.

**StJ** St Jurs VAD:E?, \*1, Page 24.

**CV** Grand Canyon du Verdon VAD:S?, Page 24.

**Mou** Moutiere VAD:E, \*2, Page 24/25.

**Ras** Raspaillon VAD:D?, \*2, Page 24/25.

**Pou** Pouriac VAD:WM/EE, \*3, Page 24/25.

**Me** Merciere VAD:E, \*2, Page 24/26.

**Sal** Salese VAD:WM/EE, \*2, Page 24/26.

**And** Andrion VAD:E, \*1, Page 24.


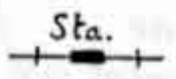








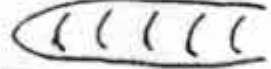

**BP** Baisse de Peyrefique VAD:E, \*1, Page 24.

**BCT** Brique-Col de Tende VAD:E, \*4

\*Page numbers show text/ map, in that order, if different.

## Key to Sketch Maps

Cardinal points of the compass are always parallel to sides of sketch, with North uppermost, unless a North point is included. Heights of peaks and points on the roughstuff routes are given in metres.

	Railways		Station
	Cable cars and chair lifts		
	Roads, metalled		
	Roads, unmetalled		
	Roughstuff route, or rough roads on a few maps (noted individually)		
	Other paths and tracks		
	Streams and rivers		
	Lakes		
	Peaks and ridges		
	Glaciers		
	Hamlets & villages		

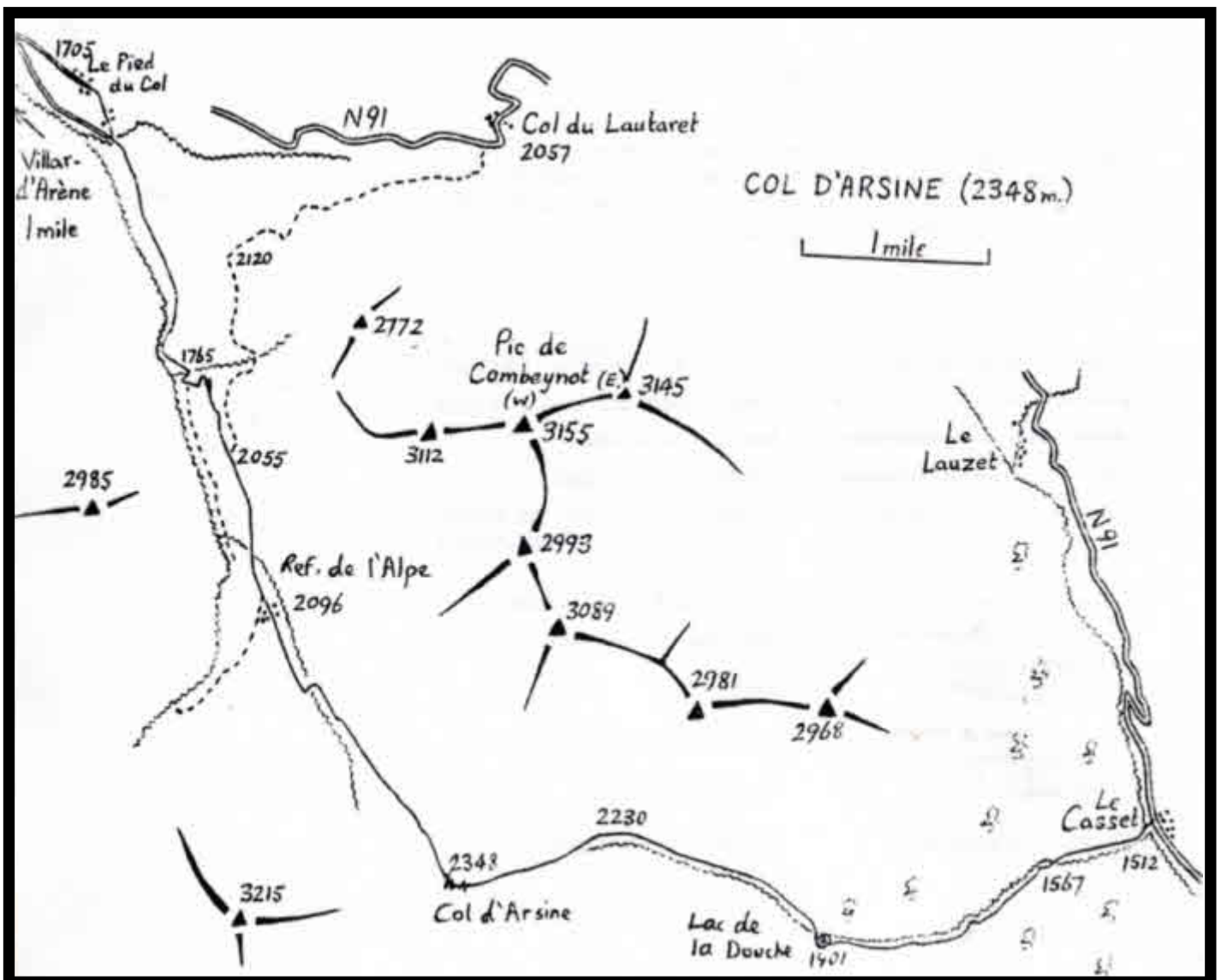
**Col d'arsine 2348m Villar d'Arene to Le Casset, 9miles r/s, M244 folds 30, 40 & 42, M77 folds 7 bottom.**

(Easy crossing even with camping kit!) Tarmac road from Villar d'Arene valley on left side of river, or there is an alternative rough road up the bed of the river. At the end of this rough road, the path starts climbing, crosses a stream coming in from the left, and winds steadily up alongside the river gorge. Then a slight drop to Refuge de l'Alps - a good view here of glaciers and the source of the Romanche river. From the refuge a grassy path leads up a little gully, then a long level stretch up a grassy valley, with numerous streams flowing among boulders - very pleasant. A short steep pull up to the col, views not very good, but an impressive ridge of glacial debris. Gradual drop along glacial river, numerous pools and waterfalls. (Water not drinkable on this side of the pass).

Difficult field of boulders for about 50 yards, then gradient increases on approaching the Lac de la Douche: steep zig-zags (33% in places) on rather loose scree slope (care is required). Curious crossing of river where water runs under boulders, second crossing of river wet after rain. After the Lac de la Douche, a long descent through trees, rideable in places. Lower down in the forest are many (free) camp sites, provided with tables and seats. A forestry road down to Le Casset - a picturesque village (spoiled, unfortunately, like most other villages in this area, by corrugated iron roofs).

Allow about 6 hours.

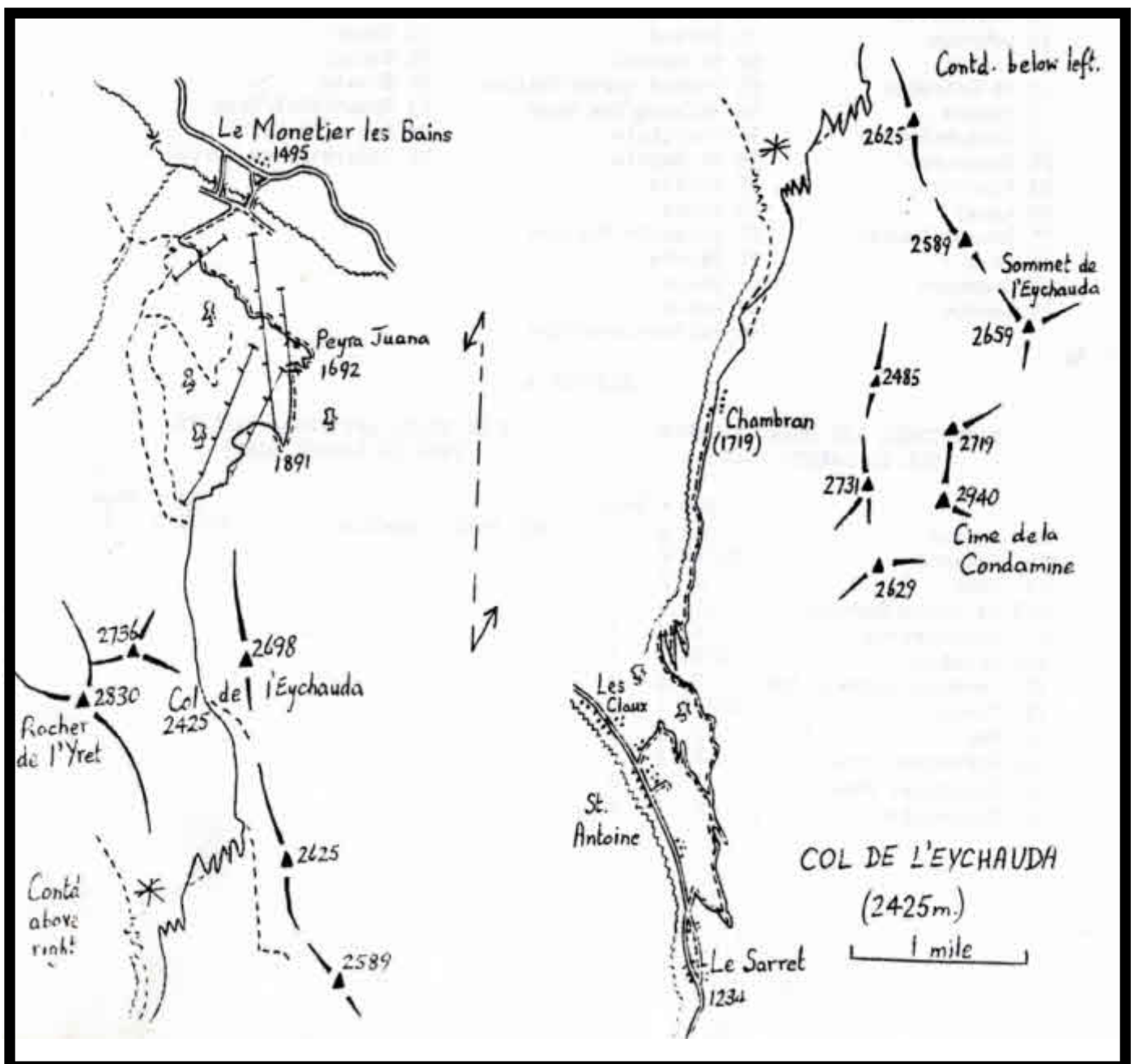
Details: A Matthews 1975.



**Col De Leychauda 2425m Le Monetier to L'Argentiere-la-Bessee, 6 miles r/s, M244 fold 42 M77 fold 17 top.**

The easiest start to this crossing is to take the service road for the ski lifts, which leaves Le Monetier to the SW and climbs steadily to an old village of Peyra Juana (now only one farm and ruins). This road is followed to the end of the second ski lift. From here find waymarked path through woods (Steep) in SW direction. This path is cut by a new ski run, which can be climbed for about 200 yards (Crossing a Steam), when the track will be found going off left above steam. Follow track, turning to right alongside steam. Gradient gradually lessens through woods, then follows a glacial valley (some snow) reminiscent of Lairig Ghru, to the col. Path swings to the left after the col and becomes rideable for a long way. The valley of the Torrent de l'Eychauda appears on your right, and the track descends into it by a series of long zig-zags, some of which are rideable. A rough road is joined at the bottom, and this soon becomes a good tarmac surface, which gives a delightful free wheel down to Le Sarret, where turn left for Vallouise (interesting back streets) and L'Argentiere-la-Bessee.

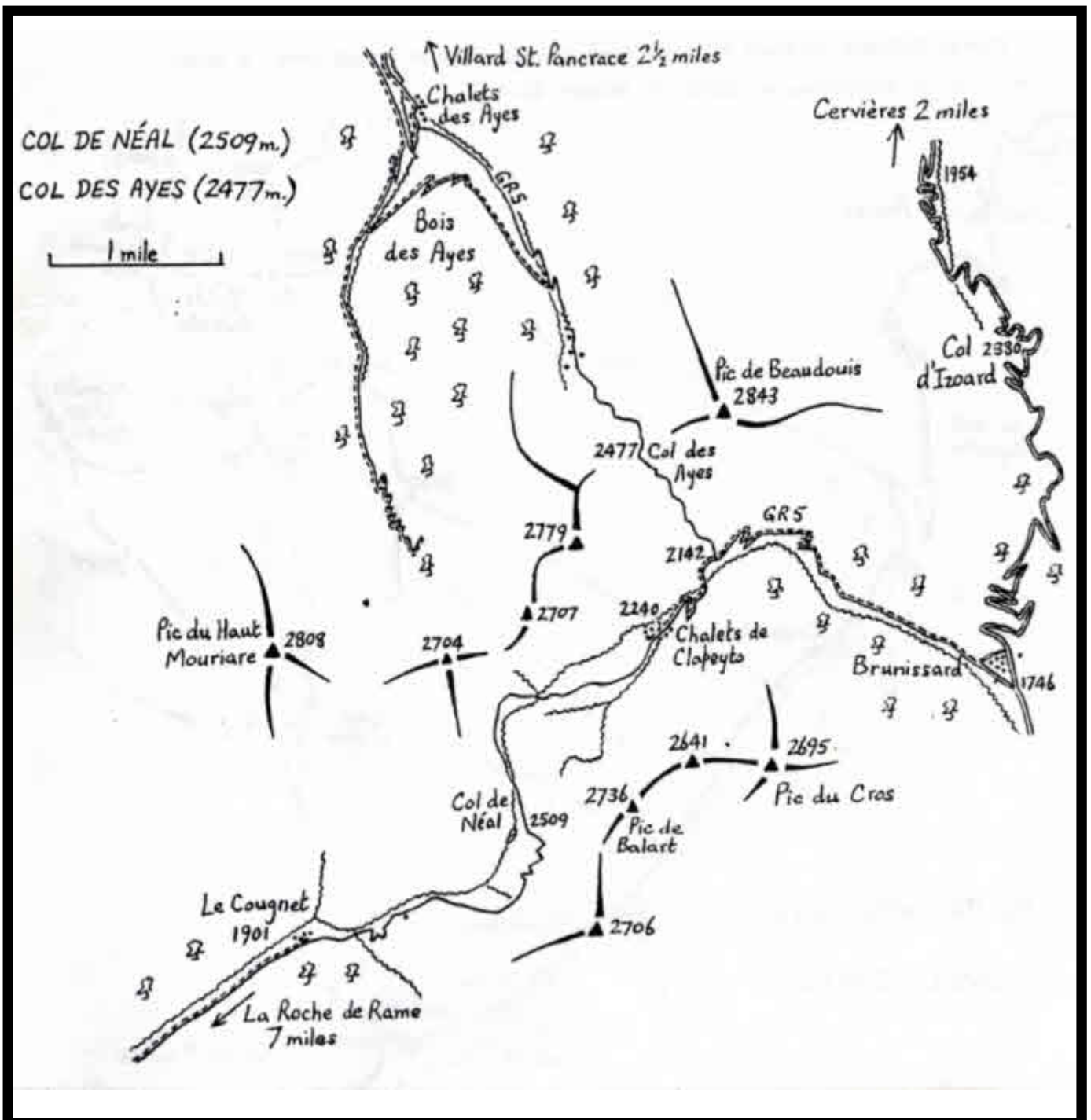
Allow about 8 hours.  
Detail: A. Matthews 1975.



**Col de Néal 2509m Brunissard to La Roche-de-Rame, 5miles r/s +rough roads, M244 folds 42 & 43 M77 fold 18**

A fairly easy and pretty pass, especially during the climb. Leave the Izoard road at Brunissard and take a small road W-wards (GR 5), rideable almost to the end of the forest. After steepening some what and becoming rougher, it turns more SW to the Chalets de Clapeyto. Climb straight up behind the chalets, on a path marked red and blue, then yellow, but not very obvious. There is a flat grassy area higher up. Climb the upper slopes ahead, then keep leftwards (SE), past two little lakes to the col.

Easy descent to the Lac de Néal, then an indistinct or non-existent path, not even waymarked, down the steep slopes to the valley. Keep S of the river down the valley after crossing a side stream, past some Alpine meadows, to a very steep slope, down which the path zig-zags to bottom of Bouchouse valley. From Le Cougnet a rideable road (unmetalled?) continues down to the main valley.



**LCB Col de la Croix 2299m and Colle Baracun 2373m Abriès to Bobbio Pellice, 5 miles r/s + rough roads, M245 fold 44 or M77 folds 19 & 20, VAD M/E, \*\***

**Col de la Croix** The Italian side is a constructed mule-track, not that makes it always easy; the French side is mostly just a path, which lower down is steep and difficult at times, but higher up easier.

From the chapel at La Monta, follow the road (D947) up-valley for 250 yards, then turn left up a track (signpost Col La Croix, Refuge Jarvis). After ¼ mile the track peters out near a pile of stones. Take a path (no signpost) to the right, crossing a stream. The path now climbs steeply up an open hillside before entering woods and becoming less steep. (Wild boar seen here in 1988.)

From the Italian side one has beautiful views of the Conca del Pra, a deep bowl in the hills around the headwaters of the Torrente Pellice. The encircling hills are dominated by Monte Granero. The Baracun road can be seen climbing up the S side of the valley.

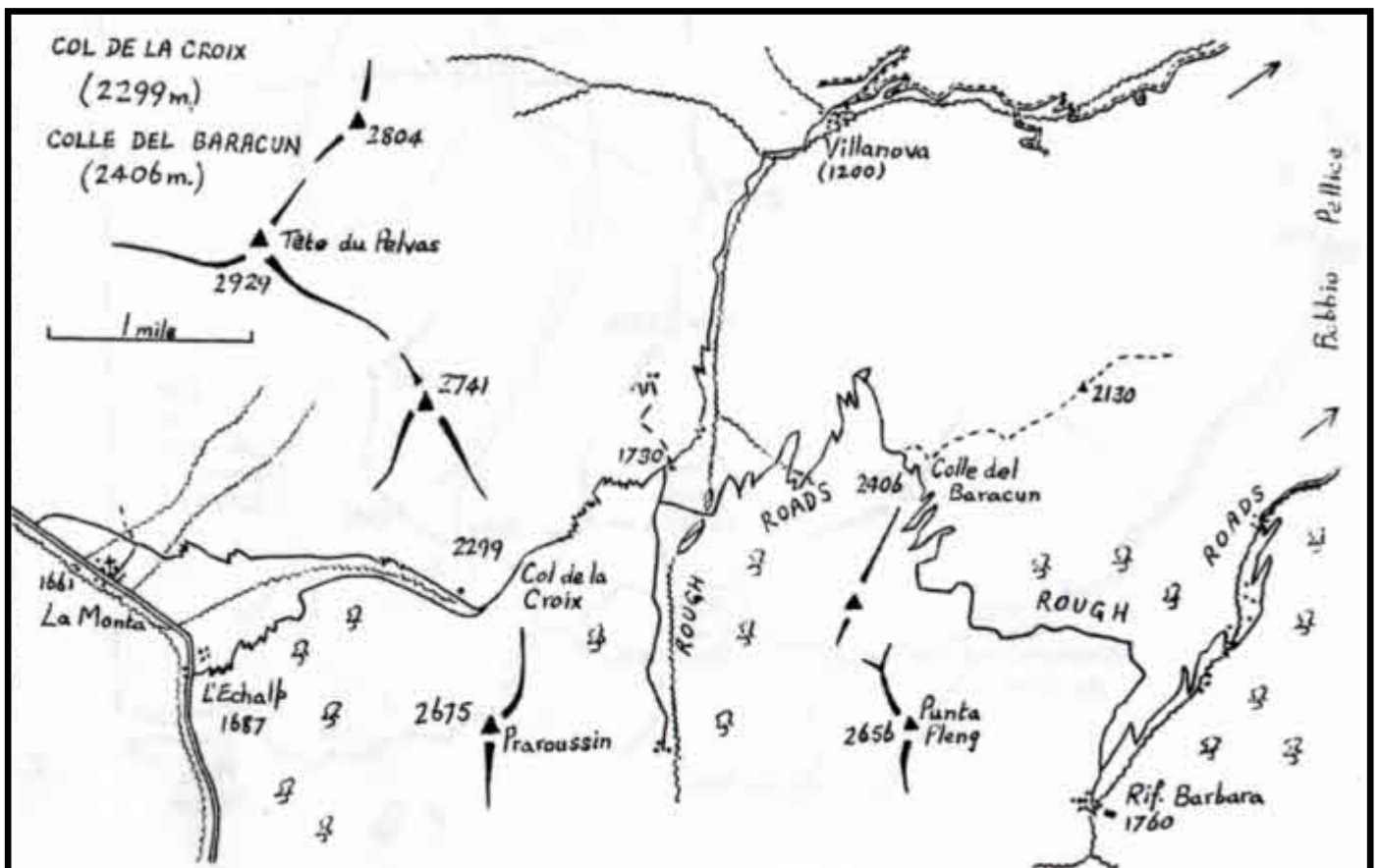
On the flat ground at the bottom of the Conca del Pra stands the Rifugio Jarvis (1732m) (own room and hot shower for 7000 lire in 1988). From here one can either cross the Colle Baracun (see below) or take a path which follows the river down to Villanova. This path is steep but occasionally rideable.

Times: La Monta to col, 3 hours, down to Rifugio Jarvis, 1½ hours; on down to Villanova, another 2-2½ hours.

**Colle Baracun (or Barant)** Because of the gorge above Villanova, this is the only road link between upper Pellice valley (Conca del Pra) and the outside world (compare the Col de Salèse in the French Maritime Alps). It is a rough jeep track, probably rideable only on a mountain bike. The Italian plain, which is not far away at this point, can be seen from the top. On the S side tarmac is reached just before the Rifugio Barara, from where a steep tarmac road leads down to the lower Pellice valley.

Times: from the Rifugio Jarvis to the top, 2½ hours; down to the Rifugio Barara, 1¼ hours.

Details: F.Cowsill 1966, F.Wright 16.7.1988.

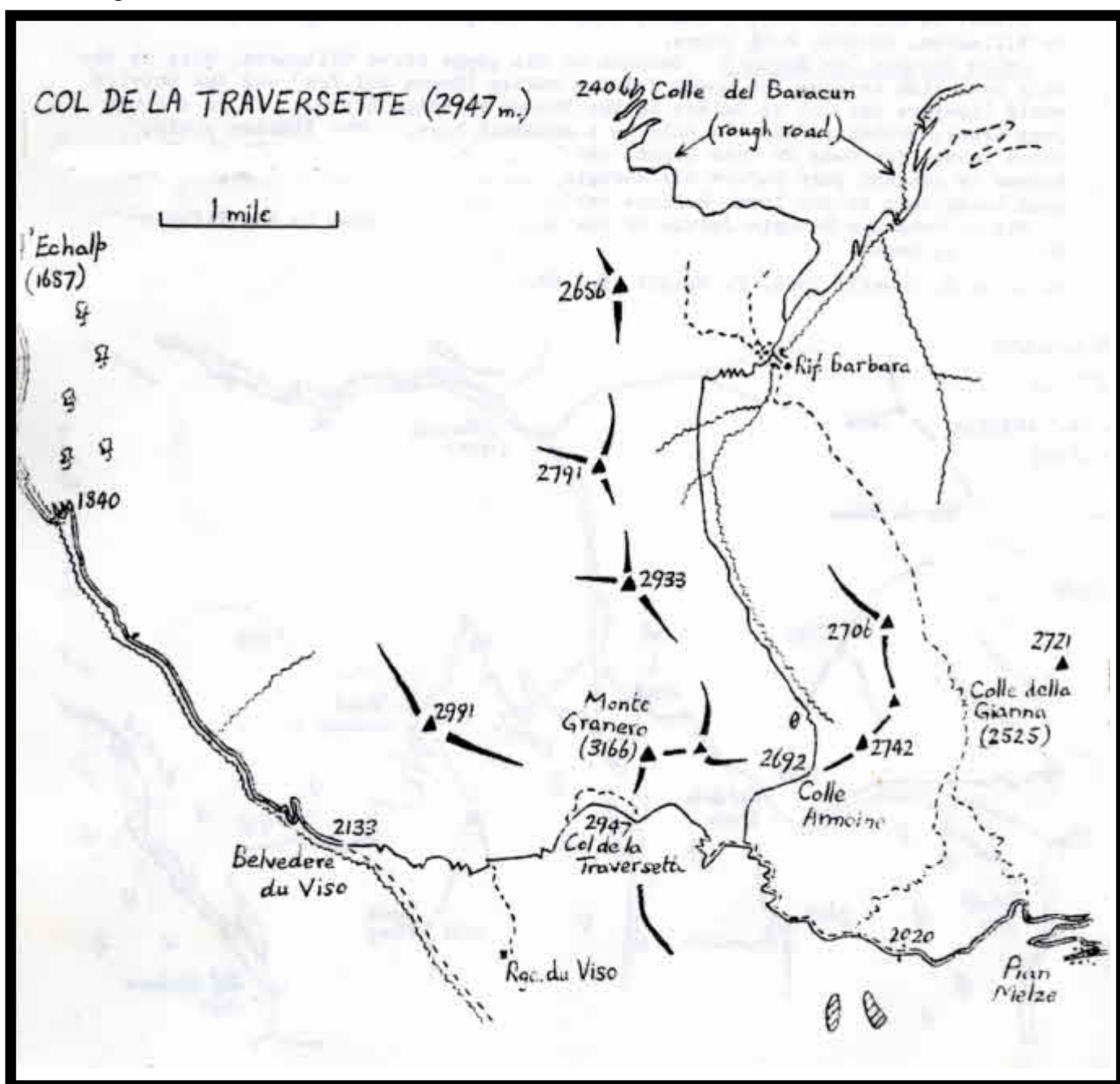


**Col de la Traversette 2947m Crissolo to Abriès, 3 miles r/s & rough roads, M244 fold 44, M77 folds 19 & 20**

A very beautiful pass in a fine setting, rather hard near top of the Italian side, where there was a lot of snow on 8 July 1986. Shops don't open in the upper Po valley till 4 p.m. A metalled road goes up from Crissolo to the Albergo Pian del Re, at 2020m, and a rough road (not rideable in descent) continues up for another two miles, to a point beyond the path to the Colle Armoine, passing close to the source of the River Po. Then a path continues, contouring a spur of Monte Meidassua, and climbing a sort of corridor on the right, to a flat grassy area. Bear left, towards the back of a combe, descending a little, then climb zig-zagging up the stony/snowy slope to a ruined barracks. Behind these, climb up to the left, an 'airy' path with sensational views and a short, very steep and slippery climb. Bear right from the col, a rough descent across gullies (yellow waymarks). In 1½ hours from the top one reaches the easy Alpine meadows and the end of the metalled road up the Guil valley.

Allow at least 6 hours.

Details: F.Wright 8.7.1986; R.Perrodin; A.J.Howarth 1954.



**Arm Colle Armoine 2692m Bobbio Pellice to Crissolo, 3½ miles r/s and rough road, (Not named on Michelin) N244 FOLD 44 , VAD: (N Side) E,\*\*\*, M77 folds 19 & 20.**

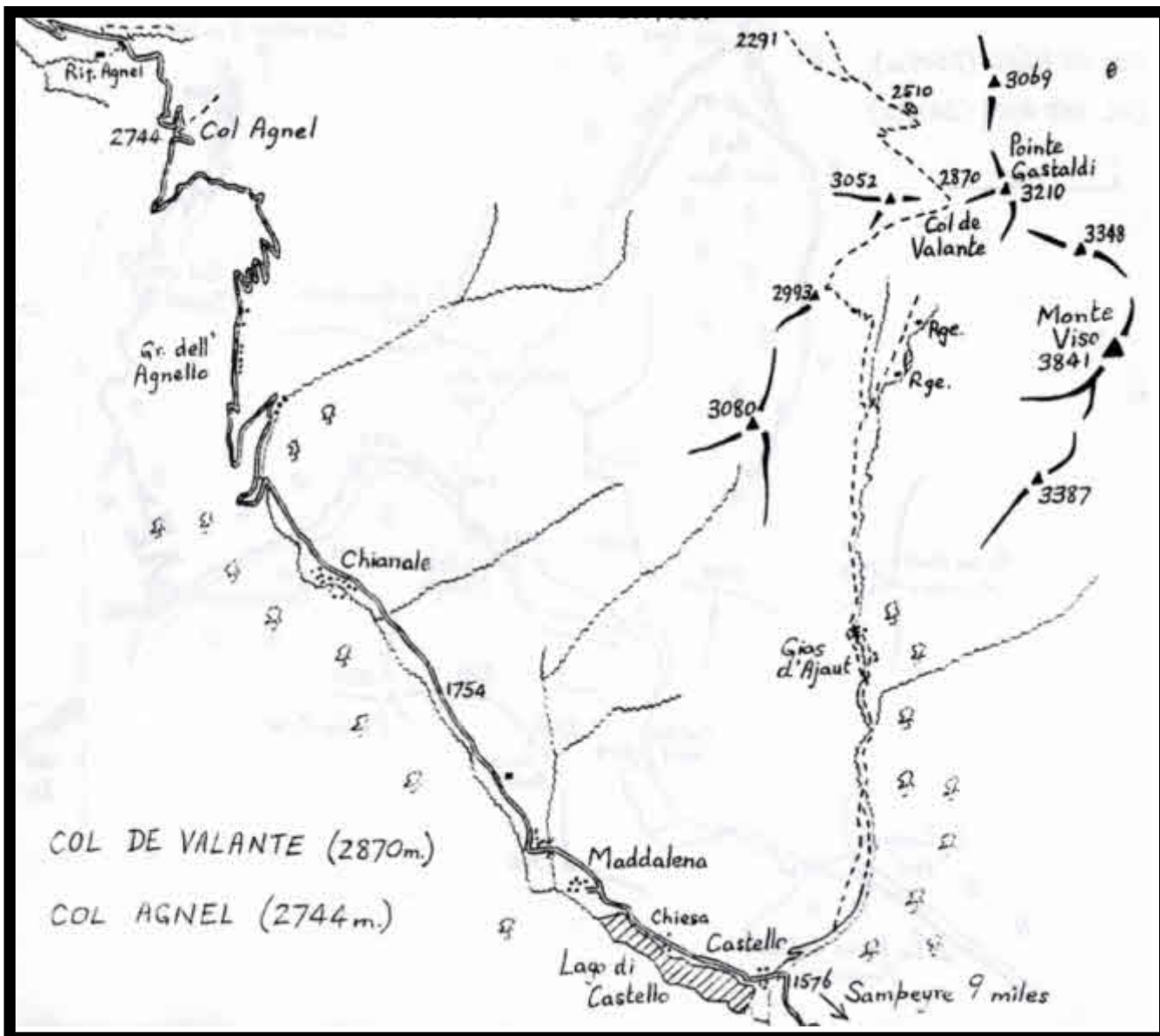
A beautiful pass from the valley of the Pallice to that of the upper Po. The N side is not without difficulty; the S side is easy, and you soon down to track which leads from Pian del Re to the Col de la Traversette.

The Starting point (Rifugio Barbara) is reached by a steep tarmac road from the lower Pellice valley. From here the path strikes steeply up the left-hand (W) side of the valley for perhaps 200m (vertically); depending on your load, double-carrying may be necessary here. Then the slope eases. After about ½ mile you come to a gully. The way down into this is clear, the way out is not; aim to come out a bit higher than where you went in, and ignore a yellow arrow higher up, which points in the wrong direction. Higher up, at the top of another gully, a path (signposted) goes off to the right to the Colle Manzol, and soon after this you come to a small lake . Do not take the path which leads uphill from this to the right, but keep close to the lake, go downhill a bit and you will see the right path. Keep to the left (E) of the Lago Piena Sia, not far below the top.

Bear right (SW) from the top, for an easy descent over grass, with fine views of Monte Viso.

Times: Rifugio Barbara to top, 4-4½ hours: down to rough road, ½ hour.

Details: R. Perrodin, c. 1970, F. Wright 16/7/88



**VM Varaita-Maira Ridge Road near Busca to Colle Bicocca, rough roads throughout. Wend on M245 fold 11 or M77 fold 20, bottom. VAD:E, \*\*\***

This follows the ridge between the valleys of the Varaita and the Maira. It crosses the Colle Sampeyre road and continues for another 4 miles to end at the Colle Bicocca, 2285m. On the way it takes in six passes: Colle di Valmala 1541m, Colle di Ciabra 1723m, Colle Birrone 1700m, unnamed (about 2050m), Colle Rastcias 2176m and Colle Sampeyre 2284m.

There are three ways of starting the routes: from the Valle Varaita through Valmala, from Rossana through Lemma and from the Rossana-Busca road. All three meet before the Colle di Valmala. The last of the three involves the greatest length of unsurfaced road, and is the one described here.

On the road leading S from Rossana, turn right after about 1½ miles, just before the top of a hill (signpost Ristorante Baita di Cros). The tarmac road lasts, climbing, for about 2½ miles; then an unsurfaced road continues uphill for 3-4 miles before joining the other two roads mentioned above. The one through Valmala is tarmac and is joined at a bend; turn left and follow it uphill for about a mile to the Colle di Valmala, where the tarmac ends. There is no more tarmac on the route.

From the Rossana-Busca road to the Colle Sampeyre is about 25 miles, of which 3½ are tarmac and perhaps 6-7 rideable (rideability partly depends on oneself and one's bike, of course). From the Colle Sampeyre to the Collee Bicocca is 3.9 miles and is mostly rideable.

As on other ridge roads, e.g. Sestriere, La Brigue to Col de Tende, care must be taken to have enough water. On a hot day a least three pints bottles are needed. There is no water between the Birrons and 2 miles W of the Sampeyre.

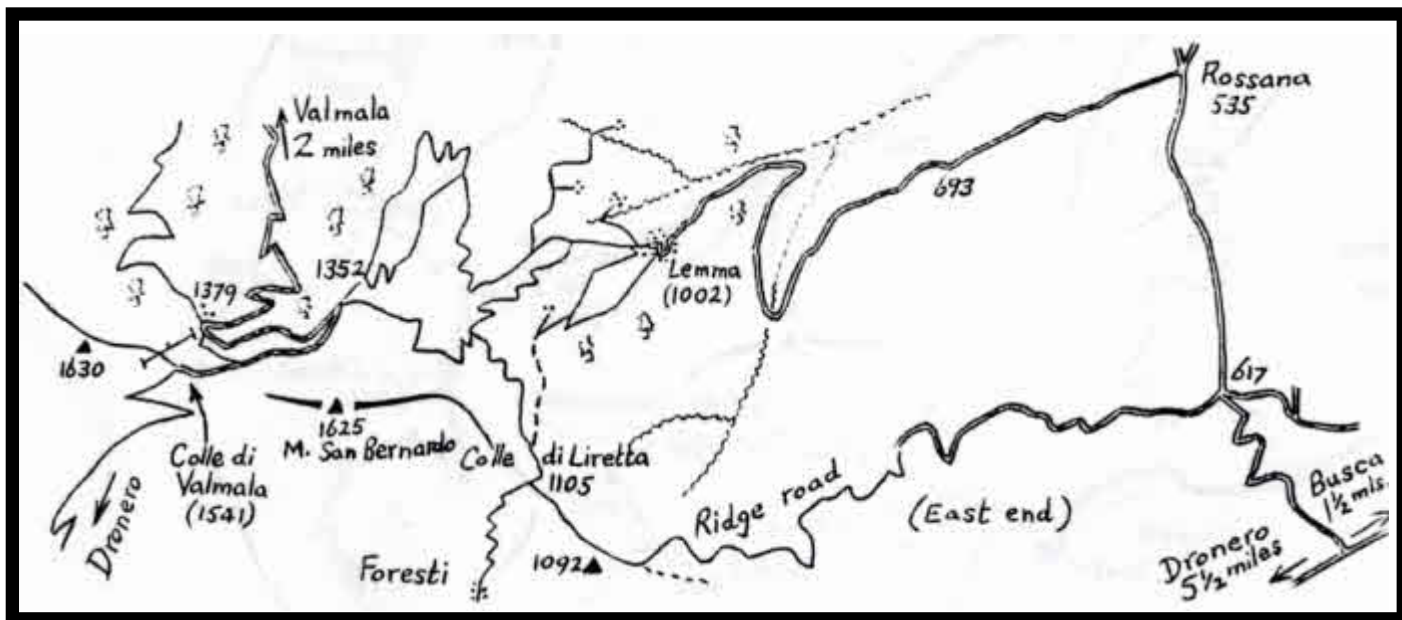
There are extensive views, now on one side of the ridge, now on the other. From between the Colle di Valmala and the Colle di Ciabra the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa can be seen. The latter is 110 miles away.

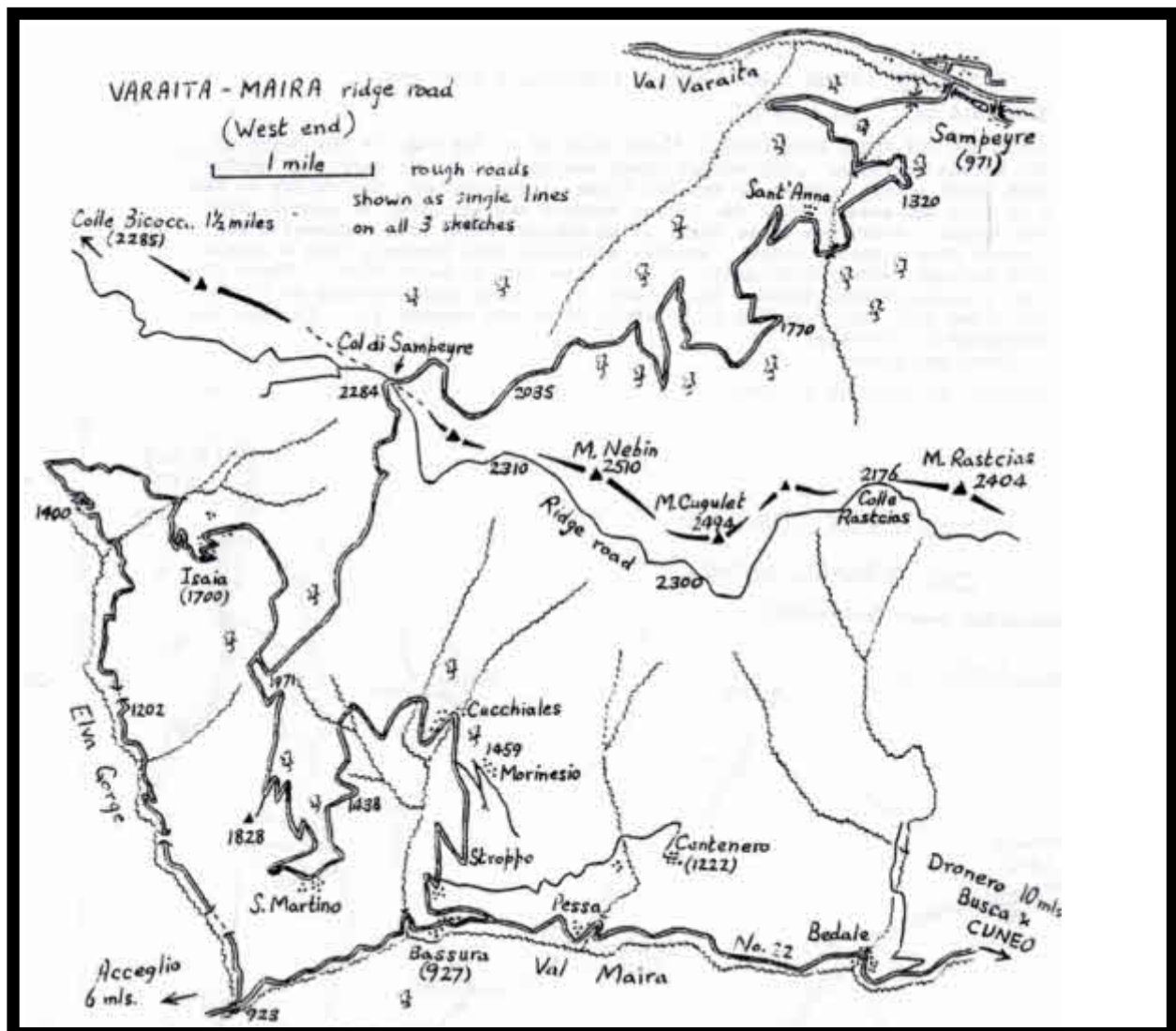
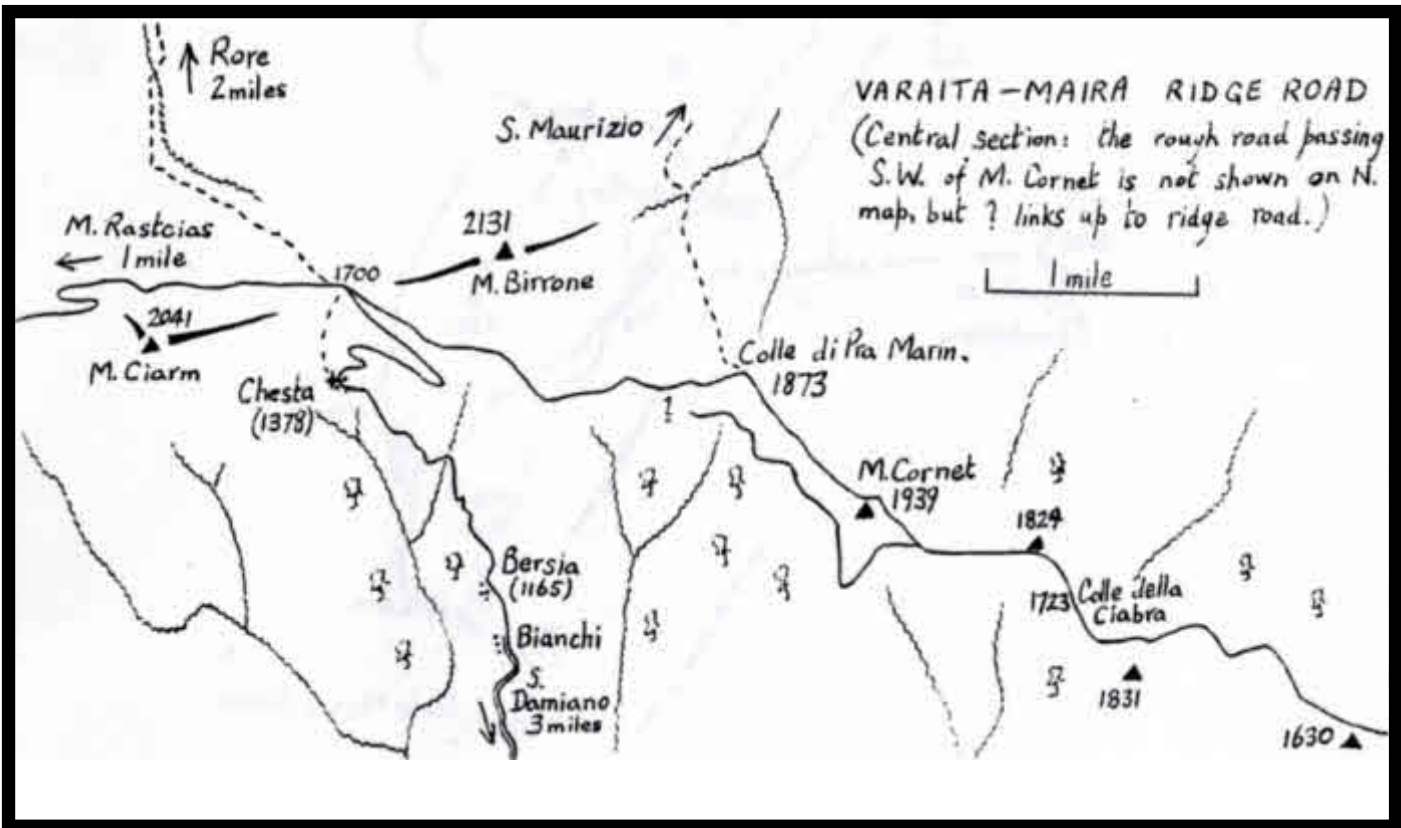
At the Colle Bicocca is a memorial erected by the Alpini who built the road: the 'A.XVIII' on it means the 18th year of the Mussolini era, ie 1940.

The Colle Sampeyre road is now (since 1988) fully surfaced on both sides, and provides two easy alternative ways of ending the ride.

Times; from the Rossana-Busca road to the Colle Sampeyre, 9 hours; on to the Colle Hicocca, ¾ hour.

**Details: F.Wright 18/7/1988**



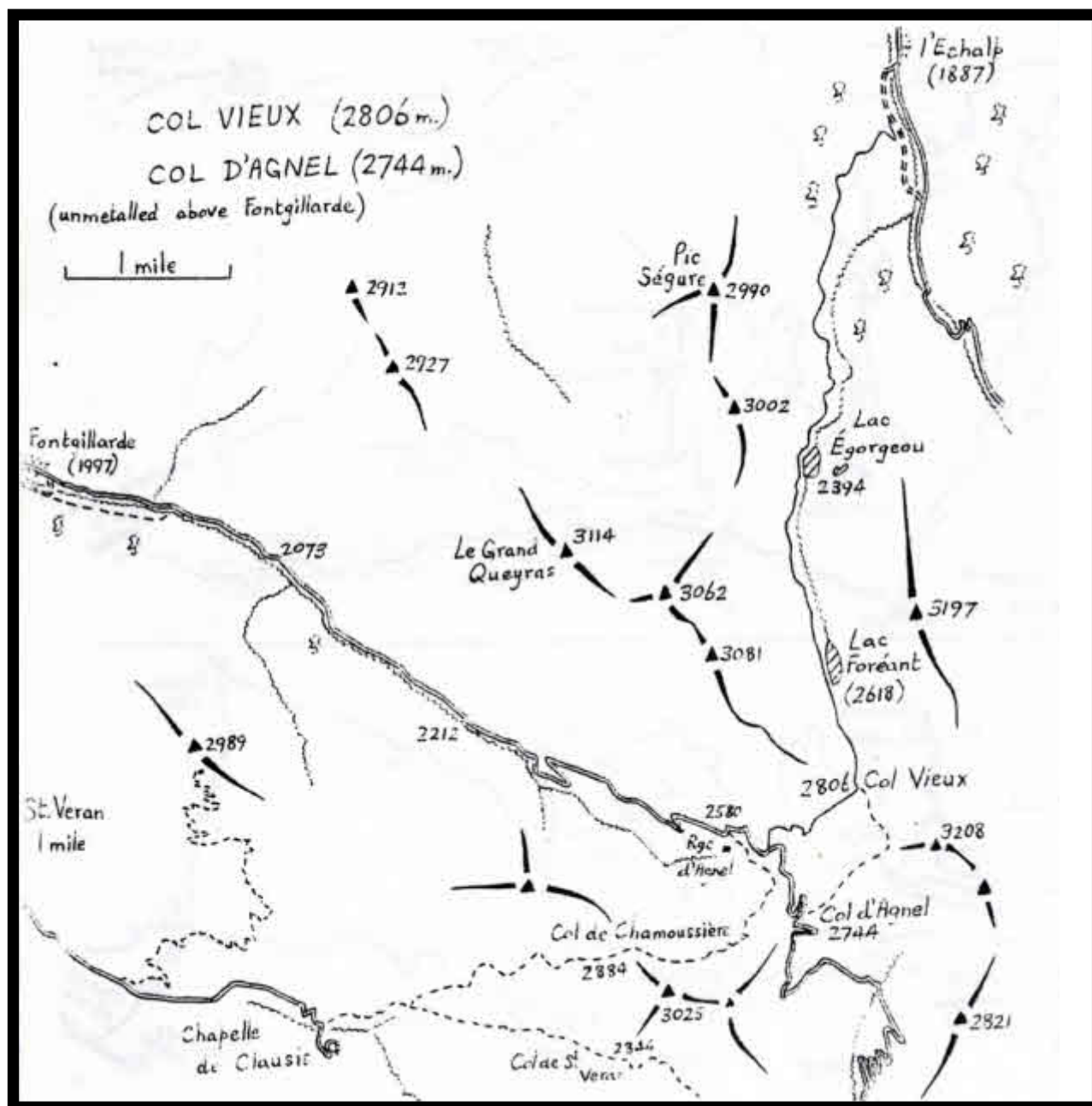


**Col Vieux 2806m, Col Agnel to L'Echalp, 6 miles r/s M244 fold 44, M77 fold 19.**

Leave the Col Agnel road (D205) a long mile NW of the col, by the ruins of the Refuge Napoleon. CAF Refuge Agnel nearby. A fairly easy well marked path leads across meadows to the Col Vieux. By contrast, the valley to the N is wild and severe, with two lakes, Foréant and Egorgeou, at approx. 2600 and 2400m. After the lakes there is an awkward rocky step, necessitating a carry down a narrow path. Meadows scattered with larches, then a narrow low a steep decent through the forest, by a paved path, awkward as far as the river Guil, but rideable to L'Echalp after one reaches it. No snow encountered in mid-July.

Times not given.

**Details: R. Perrodin c. 1970**



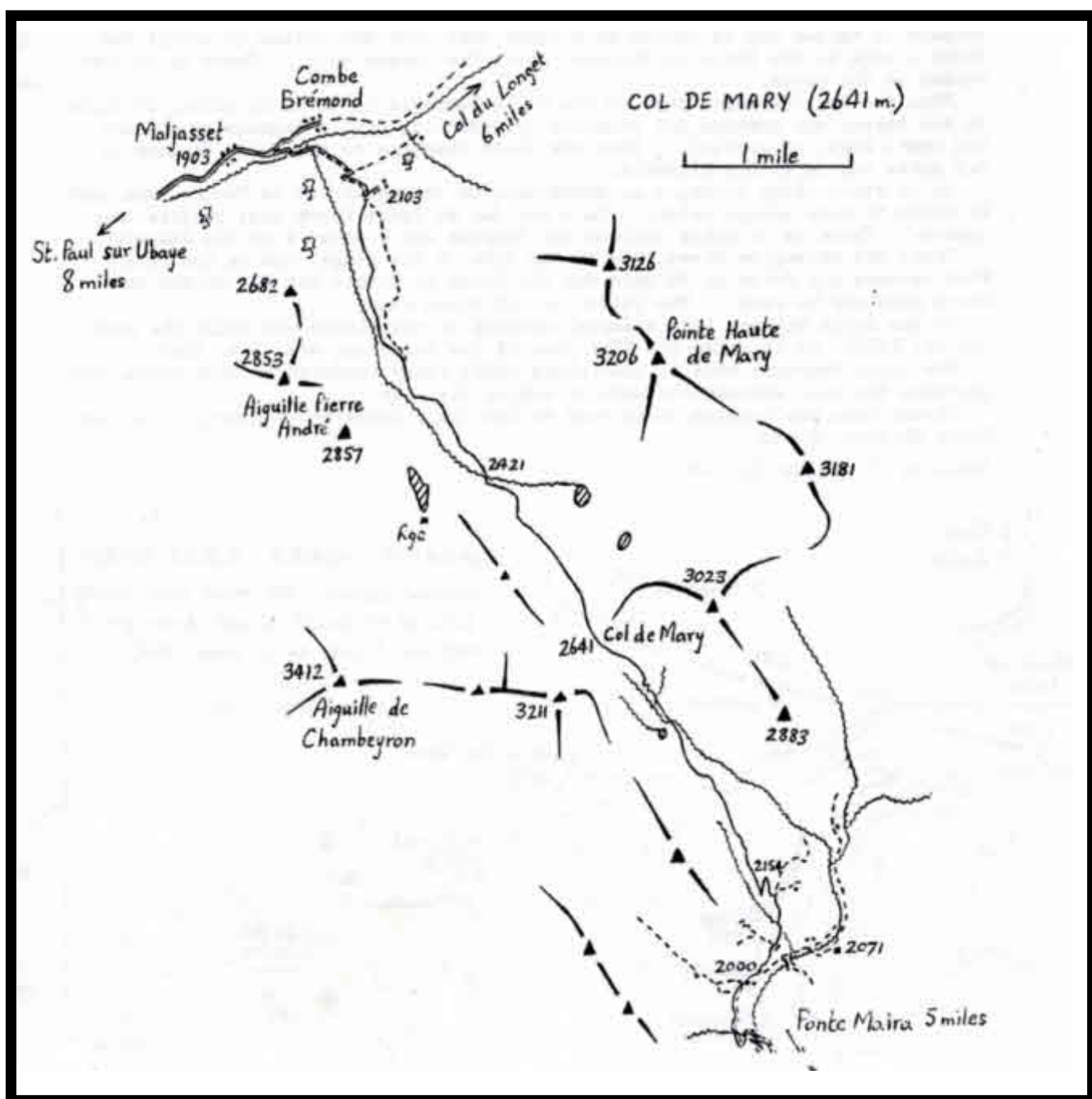
**Col de Mary 2637m, Acceglio to Maljasset, 7 miles r/s & rough road, M245 folds 11 & 10, M77 fold 19 bottom.**

From Acceglio, at the head of the Val Maira, the tarmac road continues, steeply at times, up through Villaro, Saretto and Chiappera, to about ¾ mile above Chiappera. A steep unsurfaced road continues up for another 2½ miles, to a steel chain across the road, the present limit for cars. About 300 yards beyond the chain turn left off the road along a sort of stone-paved causeway. This disappears at times to become merely a steep path (very steep in places). The way down is rocky in places, necessitating short carries. A little snow at the top, easy to negotiate.

Allow 2 hours from start of causeway to top; 2¼ hours down to Maljasset.

**Details: F. Wright 25/7/1985**

(Shown as a road under construction to the top on the Italian side - M245, 1983.)



**Es Colle d'esischie 2370m and Colle dei Nort 2480m, Ponte Marmora to Chiappi, rough road (Esischie not named on Michelin), M245 fold 11 or M81 folds 9 &10, top, VAD:E, \*\*, M81 folds 9 & 10.**

From Ponte Marmora in the Valle Maira takes a tarmac road which climbs to the S up a side valley, through the village of Verneti. The last settlement is Tolosano, after which the tarmac lasts for 3 miles. Then unsurfaced (views of Monte Viso) up to the Colle d'Esischie. Here you can turn right to cover the road which links this col, via the Colle dei Morti, with the Colle Valcavera. Other wise, go stright on down an unsurfaced, partly rideable, road for 2.2 miles till you come to tarmac at about 2000m. The first village on this side is Chiappi; below that, after a deep gorge lasting several miles, you come to Pradleves.

Times: from end of tarmac above Tolosano to Colle d'Esischie, 1¾ hours; from there to Colle Valcavera, 1 hour; from Colle d'Esischie to begining of tarmac, ¾ hour.

**Details: F. Wright 19/7/1988.**

Map on the next Page.

**Gar Colle Valcavera 2416m Colle del Mulo 2527m Passo Della Gardetta 2437m, San Giacomo to Pratorotondo, 3 miles r/s +rough roads, M245 fold 11 or M81 folds 9 & 10, top, VAD:E, \*\*\*.**

These passes lie on the same network of old military roads which includes the Colli d'Esischie and dei Morti. The Colle Valcavera can be reached over the Colle dei Morti, or by a road which runs up the Valle Stura, and continues W of the Colle Valcavera, high in the hills, as far as the Passo della Gardetta. From here a footpath leads down into a side-valley of the Valle Maira.

This area is rich in wild flowers, including edelweiss and at least one species of orchid, and wild bees. (There are also domesticated bees, some of which, at about 1500m, attacked one our members in 1988.) The road runs mostly above the tree-line, and the grassy slopes rise to screes and rocky ridges. Several water bottles should be carried.

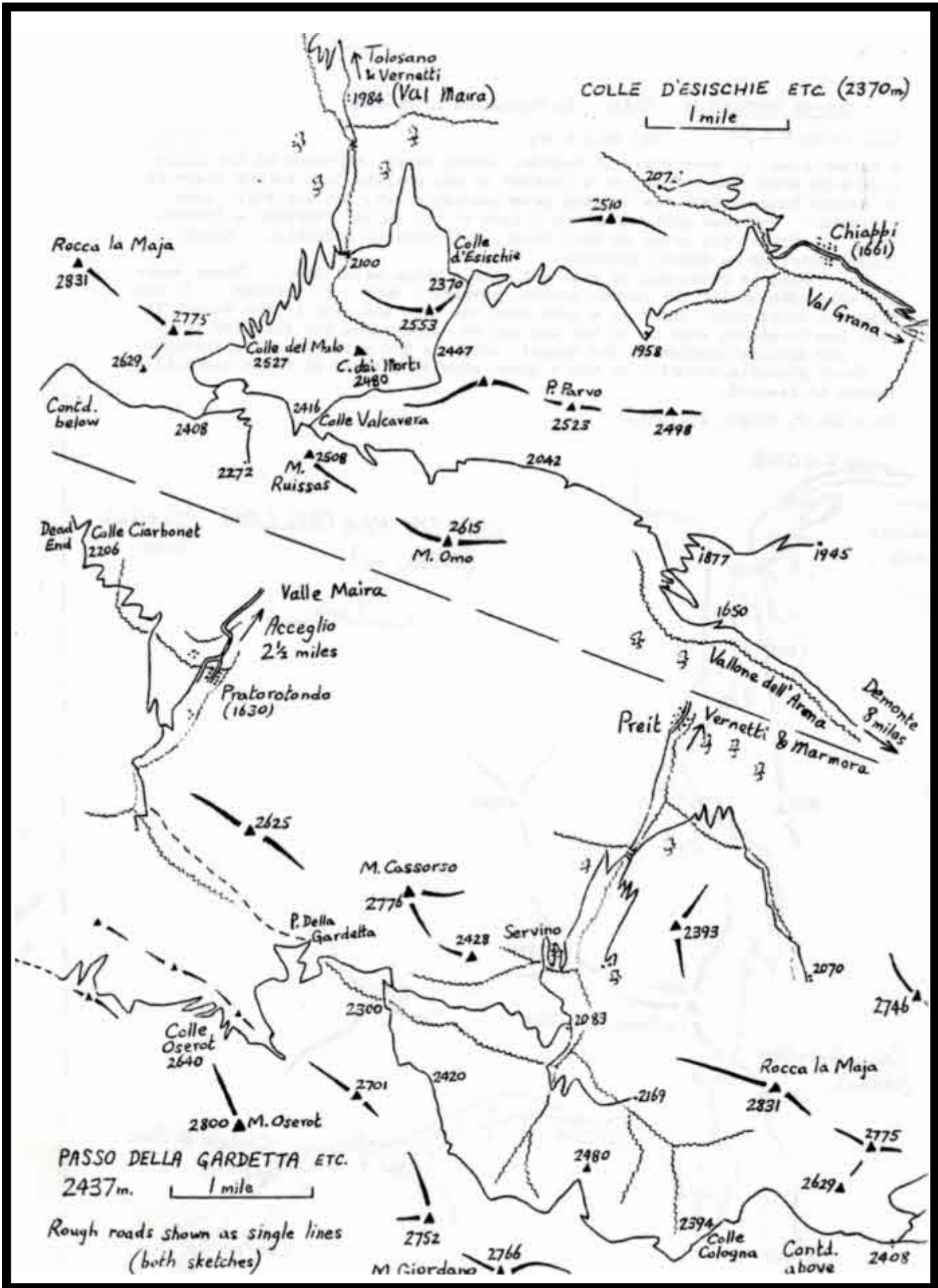
The road up the Vallone dell'Arm is surfaced up to about 3 miles above San Giacomo, and rideable occasionally after that. About a mile beyond the Colle Vacavera a road branches off to the right, which leads to the Colle del Mulo (the N side of the Colle del Mulo has been partly overrun by a landslide).

Between the Valcavera and Gardetta passes, a distance of nearly 9 miles, the road is fairly level. The Stura-Maira watershed is crossed at the Colle Cologna, 2394m. The footpath from the Passo della Gardetta has some steep and stony stretches, but is not too difficult.

Times: from end of tarmac above San Giacomo to Colle Valcavera, 4 hours; on to Passo della Gardetta, 3 hours (plus ¾ hour if you go up to the Colle del Mulo and back); down to tarmac road, 1 hour 20 min.

**Details: F. Wright**

Map on next page.



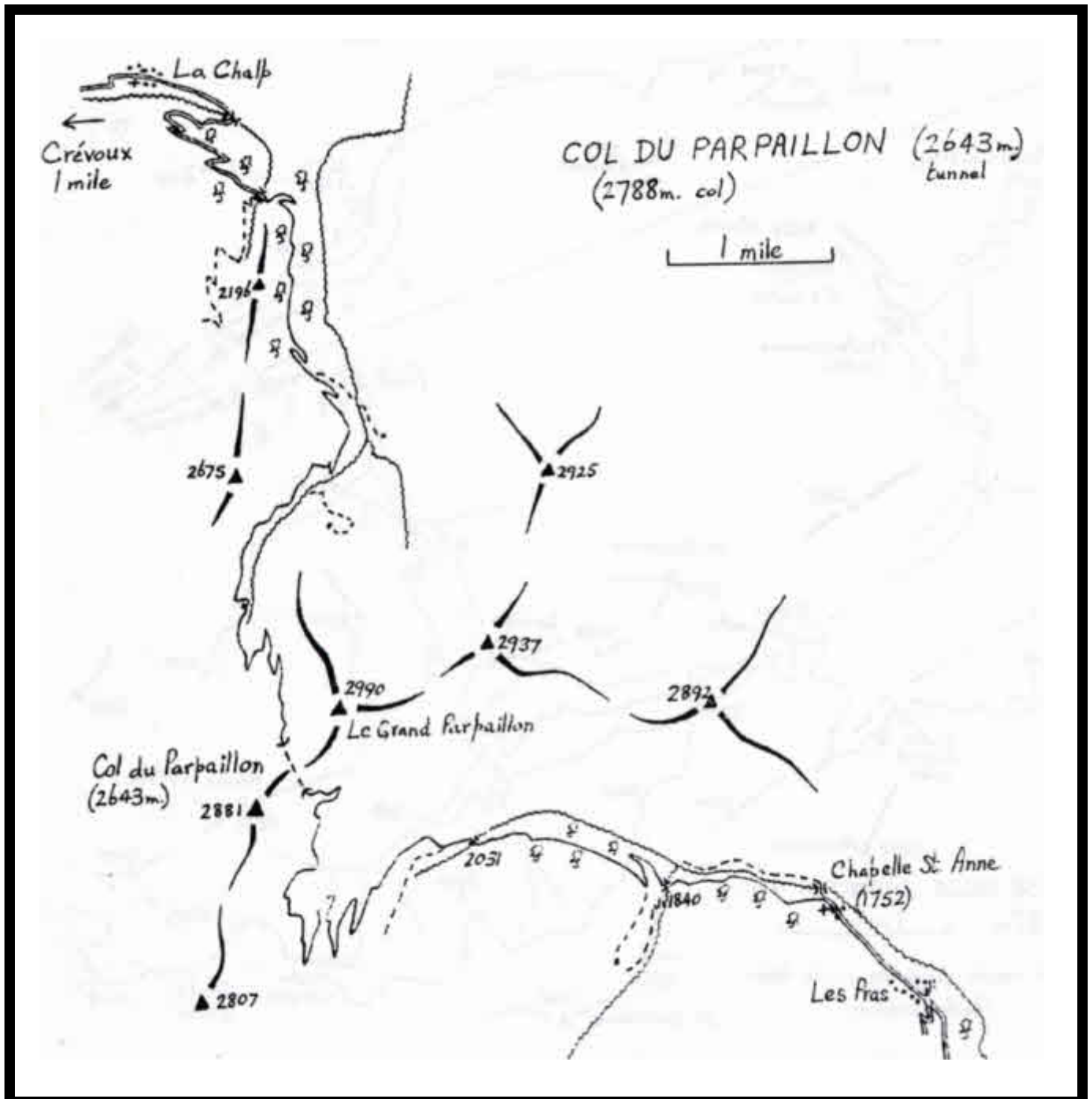
**Col de Parpaillon 2643m La Condamine to Crévoux, M245 folds 9 & 10, M81 fold 8 top.**

A tarmac road, in poor state of repair, pretty steep, zig-zags up the hill side high above the stream, to a cluster of new chalets just before Chapelle de Sainte Anne. Here the surface deteriorated a lot, but was still just rideable. The road goes along the S side of the valley, through a forest. After the forest the track is very rough, but possibly rideable. Height 2643m inscribed on tunnel entrance.

The tunnel is furnished at each end with a large metal door. These doors are only open during the summer season, approx. 1 July - 15 October. If you find the doors shut, there is a path over top, and even if the tunnel is open the 20-minute walk up to the top can be recommended for the fine view.

A few shallow puddles in the tunnel, which is 500 yards long and Straight. Track rideable downhill on the N side, slowly! After 1½ hours downhill tarmac is reached.

**Details: F.Wright 29/7/1985**



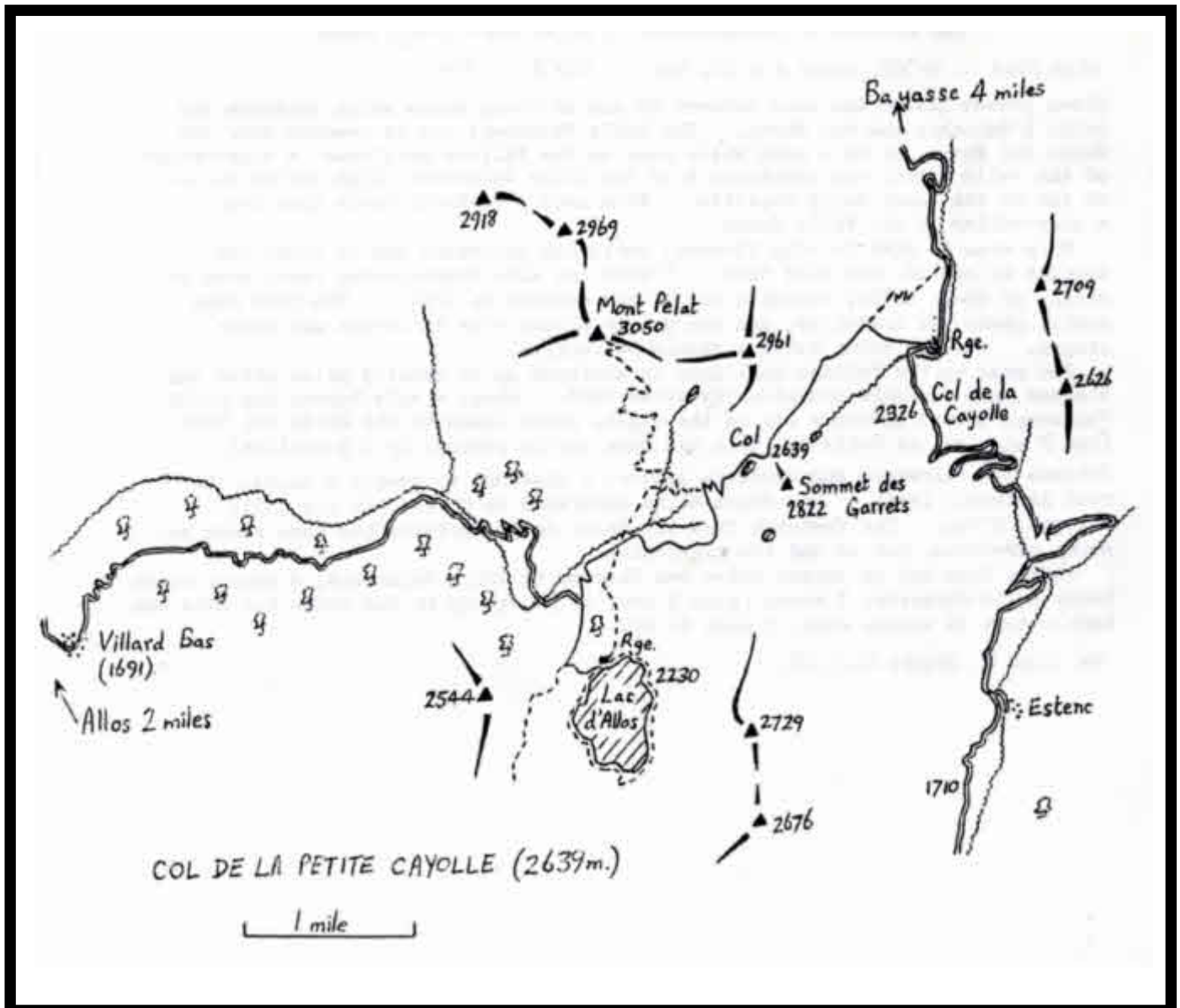
**Col de la Petite Cayolle 2639m Col de la Cayolle to Lac d'Allos and Allos, 3½ miles r/s, M245 fold 23 top, M81 fold 8.**

Easier and safer this way, E to W. The path starts on a bend just N of the refuge (not as on IGN map), not from above the next stream. Narrow firm path, easy, across scree slopes. The last part to the col looks impossible from below, but is fairly easy uphill - downhill would need considerable care with a bike and could be risky. The W side is easier; some bits are just rideable downhill. Well signposted. Good views both sides.

A road begins just below the natural dam of the lake - no stream drains from lake, which should be visited, even though it is slightly longer this way. Steep narrow surfaced road from Lac d'Allos to Allos.

Allow 1½ to 2 hours up, 1 to 1½ down to Lac d'Allos.

Details: J. Haigh July 1987.



## **Route Descriptions - Section B**

### **N of the Ubaye and Stura valleys (Col de Larche road)**

#### **Cav Pas de la Cavale 2735m Vallouise to Pont du Fossé, m244 folds 42 & 41 or M77 fold 17**

Very hard indeed, impossible if there is snow about. Scree slopes and raging torrents to cope with. Informant spent 2½ days on the route. VS \*\*

#### **Fre \*Col de Freissinieres (Sic) 2782m Fressinieres (sic) to Orcieres M244 fold 42& 41 or M77 fold 17.**

No details, but known to be very hard also, with similar difficulties to the Pas de la Cavale (1950s reports; Pas de la Cavale is now G.R. 54 - if bridges have been built across the major torrents, the routes will be easier).

#### **RC Route de Cretes (Sestriere ridge road) Sestriere to Colle delle Finestre road, M244 fold 43, 32 & 33 or M77 fold 9.**

A rough road through out, well described on page C14 of the road guide (Central French Alps). Going from W to E, the rough road divides at the Colle dell'Assietta; right for the Finestre road, whereas the left fork (according to the 1:50,000 map) goes due E up to a fort (2600m+). From this fort, a cart track descends to Alps d'Arguel (not marked on 1:100,000 or Michelin) - see sketch map. Another road only shown on the 1:50,000 descends direct to Chiomonte from a point E of Frais. E\*\*\*\*.

#### **Fi Colle delle Finestre 2176m Susa to Fenestrelle, M244 fold 33 or M77 fold 9.**

A road throughout, metalled below about 1500m. Well described on page C13 of the road guide. E \*\*.

#### **Val Col de Vabelle 2381m Guillestre to Embrun M245 fold 9 or M77 fold 18.**

A road throughout, metalled below about 1800m and mostly rideable above this. The Col de la Coche (1791m) is met on the way down; from this col a metalled road starts down in a NE-ly direction, and a rough road goes down to the W. E\*\*.

#### **Ay \*Col des Ayes 2477m Briancon to Brunissard, M244 FOLD 43 or M77 fold 18.**

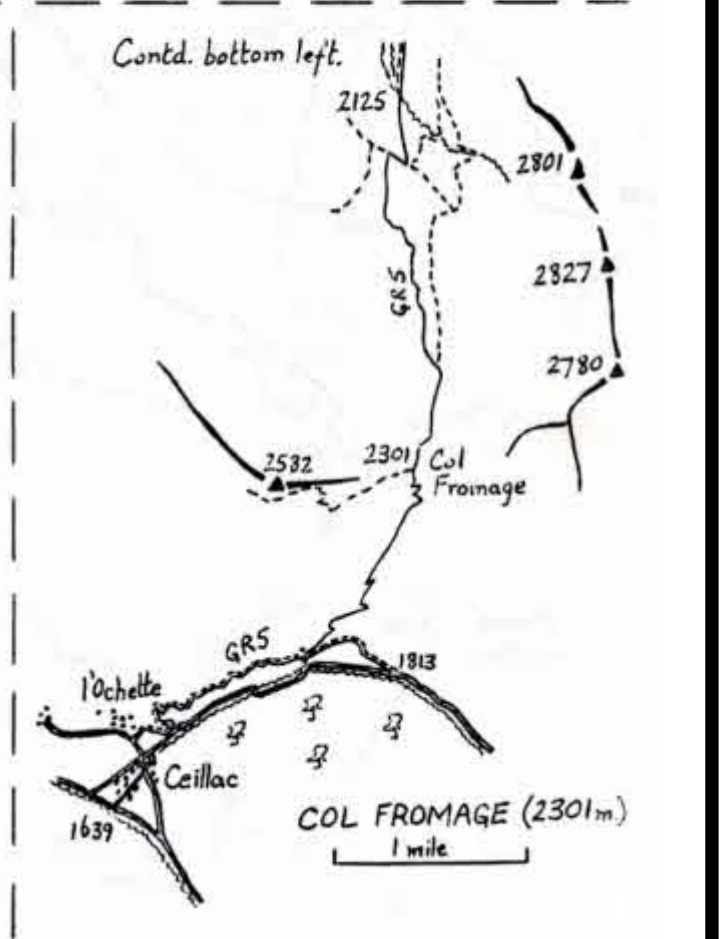
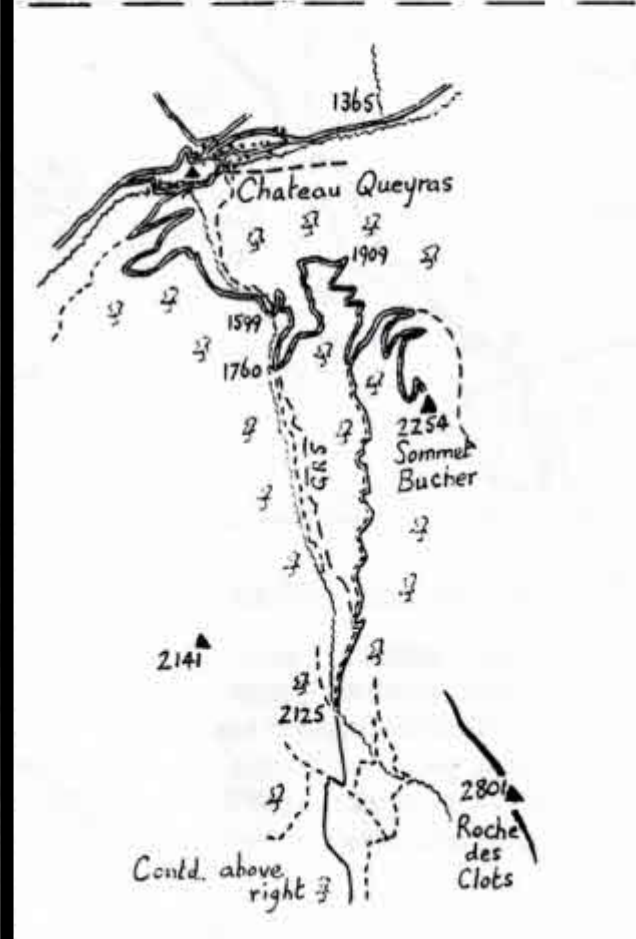
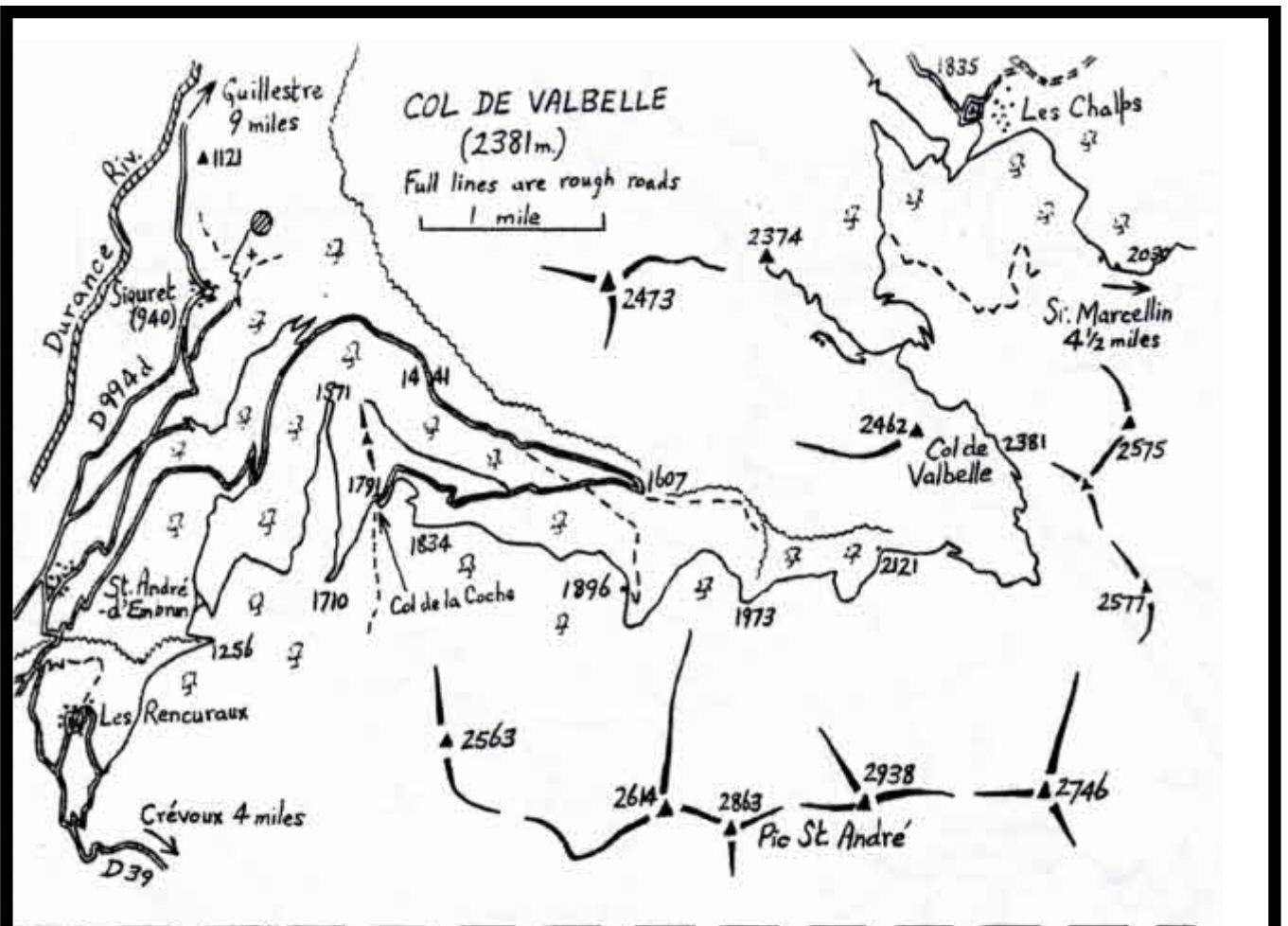
No details; an alternative to the Col d'Izoard. From the maps, rough roads appear to go up to about 2150m on both sides, with a fairly steep path over the col. Could be combined with the Col du Neal (Section A) into a circular from the Durance valley. M \*\*.

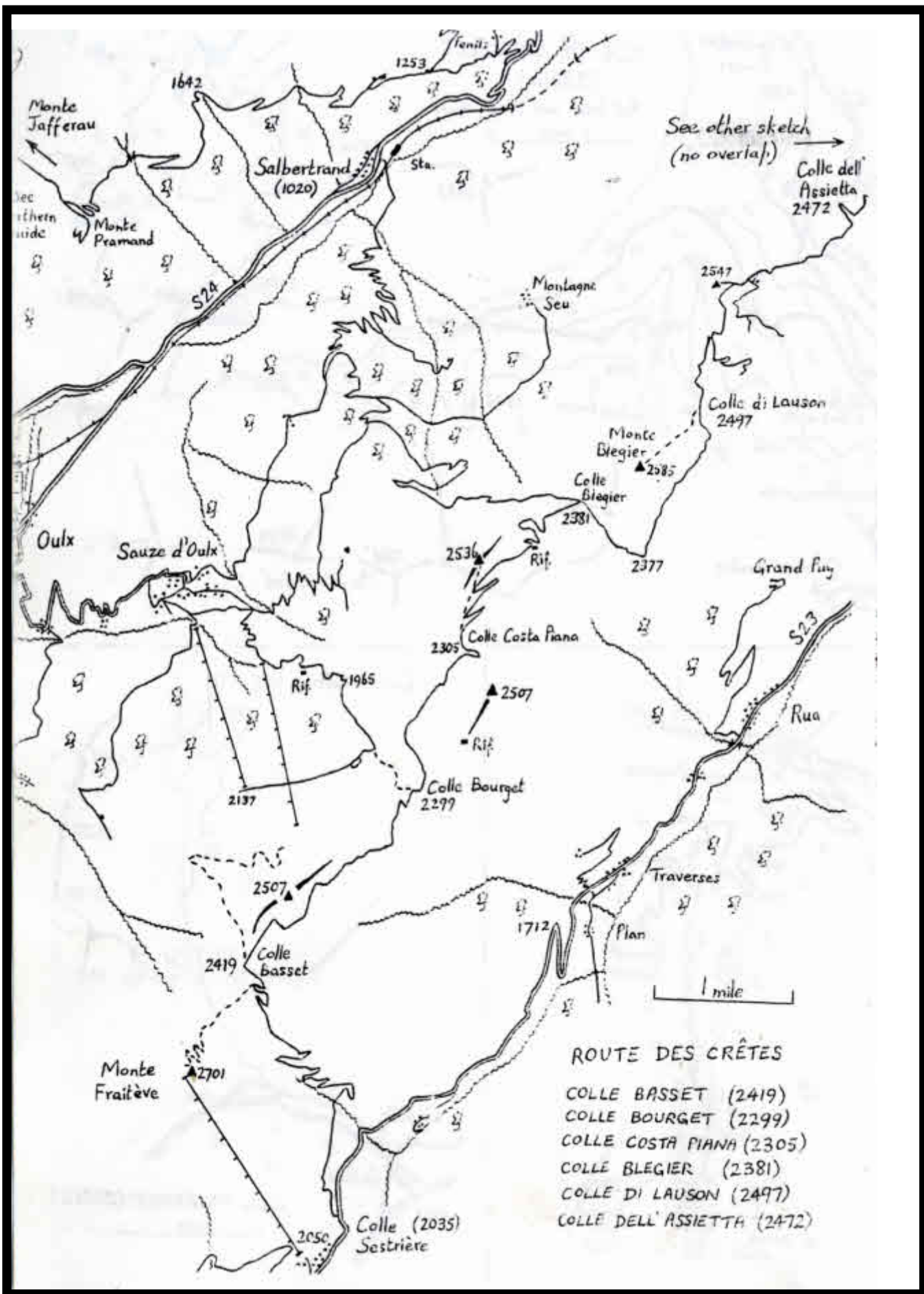
#### **Pe \*Col de Peas 2629m Cervieres to Chateau Queyras, M244 fold 43 or M77 fold 19.**

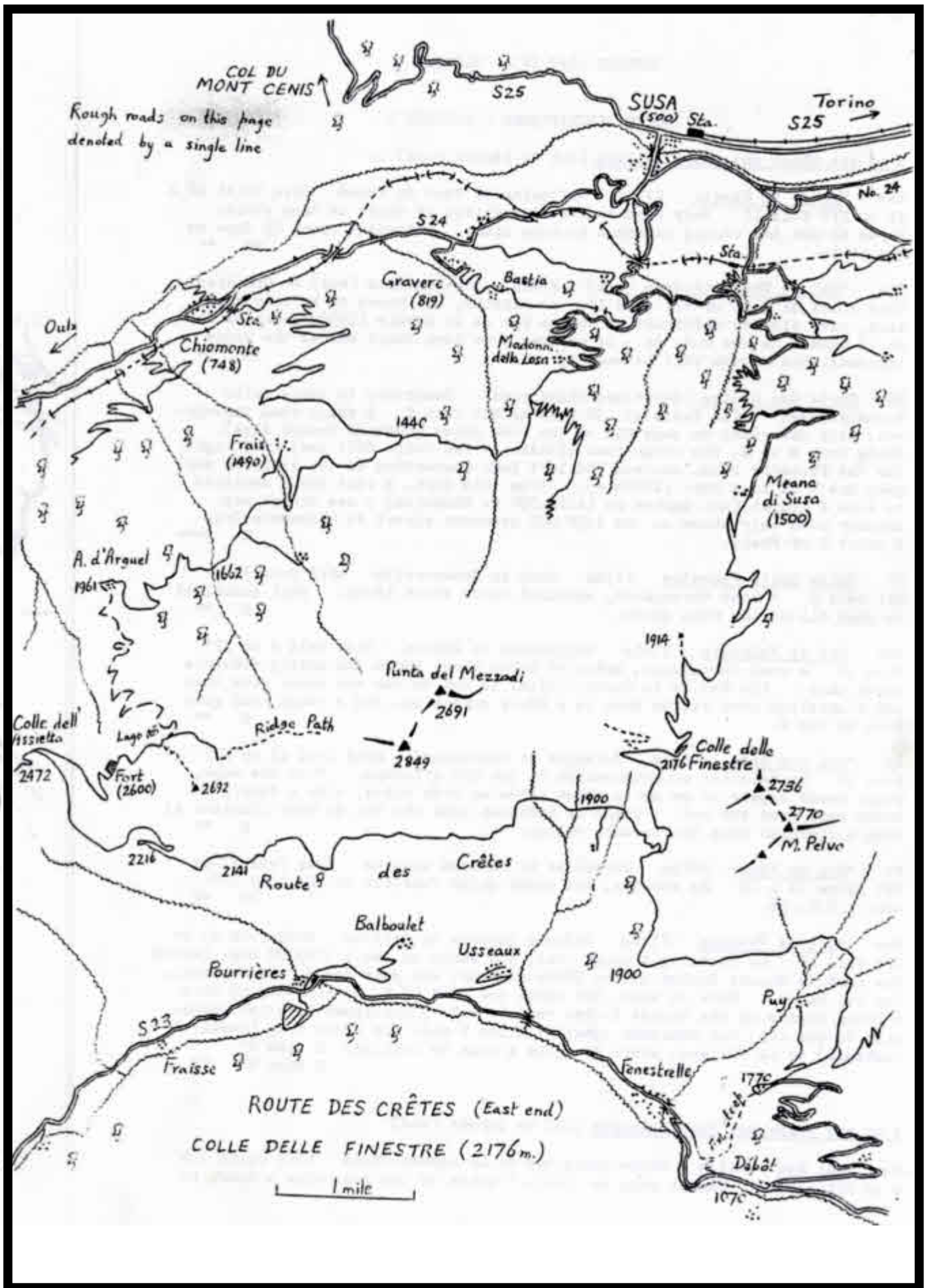
No details, but looks quite feasible on the 1:50,000 map. G.R. 58. D? \*\*.

#### **Fro \*Col de Fromage 2301m Chateau Queyras to Ceillac, M244 fold 43 or M77 fold 19.**

No details; a rough road, not shown on the 1:100,000 map, leaves the road to Sommet Bucher at the 2000m contour, and goes due S, almost level, for two miles. Here it ends, but meets the path (G.R.5) climbing up from a lower zig zag on the Sommet Bucher road. G.R. 5 continues to climb gradually to the col, but descends steeply on its S side for about 500m (vertical distance) to Le Villard, where it joins to Ceillac. N side E?, S side d? \*\*.







## **S of the Ubaye and Stura valley (Col de Larche road)**

### **Bas Col Bas 2113m Seyne-les-Alpes to Le Lauzet-Ubaye, M245 folds 8 & 9 or M81 fold 7.**

Tarmac road to within 3 miles of the top, then a track to the top and a path down the far side, becoming steep and stony; finally a rough road to Le Seuil. Allow 5 hours for the stretch between tarmac. M \*.

### **StJ \*Col de St Jurs 1318m St Jurs to D952 near Pointe Sublime M245 folds 21 & 34 or M81 fold 17.**

No details; shown as a road over the col, soon becoming a rough road down to Le Louches (note to fork left just before col, as rough road to right is a dead end). There is also a rough road (D17) from Majastres, linking up to this road, with a high point of about 1400m at its junction with the rough road up Chiran (1905m). E?\*

### **CV Grand Canyon du Verdon Belevdere Couloir Sampson to La Maline, M245 fold 35 & 34 or M81 fold 17.**

Mainly level walking along a steep hillside, with a few awkward places, including crossing a scree slope and negotiating about 120 ft of rung ladders. S? \*\*.

### **Mou Col de la Moutiere 2454m St Dalmas-le-Selvage to Bayasse or Bonette road, M245 folds 10 & 23 or M81 fold 9.**

A metalled road from St Dalmas to the col and just beyond, to its junction with D9, which is a rough road from Bayasse to the Bonette road. E \*\*.

### **Ras \*Col de Raspailion 2513m, Bonette road to Jausiers, M245 fold 10 bottom or M81 fold 9.**

No detail; named Col des Granges Communes on Michelin and in S French Alps road guide, Raspilon on 1:50,000 map, with valley to the N called Vallon des Granges Communes, From the col, on the Bonette road, a path, steep at first, descends due N, eventually becoming a rough road down the Vallon des Sagnes.

### **Pou Col de Pouriac 2506m, Bonette road (near Col des Fourches) to Bersezio, M245 fold 10 bottom or M81 fold 9.**

No details of Italian side. The path in France (G.R. 5 bis) descends sharply from the Col des Fourches, awkward in places, before climbing again to the frontier. The rough road shown on Michelin (only shown as a cart track for the first 1½ miles on the 1:50,000 map) apparently starts below a bluff; it is not visible from the col. W side M, E side E?.

### **Me Col Merciere 2342m, Col de Salese to Col de la Lombarde, M245 folds 24 & 25 or M81 fold 10.** Mostly old and very rough military roads. Long but not difficult. E \*\*.

### **Sal Col de Salese 2031m, Tinee valley to Le Boreon, M245 folds 24 & 25 or M81 fold 10.**

The Strange village of Mollieres has no link with the Tinee valley except by a rough path, up which it is possible but not always easy to push the bike. A ghost village with no shops, with the only road from the village, over the Col de Salese, rough and mostly unrideable (at least uphill till one meets tarmac 2 miles before Le Boreon. W side M, E side E \*\*.

### **And \*Col d'Andrion 1681m, La Tour to Roquebilliere, M245 fold 25 or M84 fold 19.**

No details; according to maps, road to Granges de la Brasque (1687m), the highest point of the route. Rough road down E side to Roquebilliere. E\*.

### **BP Baisse de Peyrefique 2028m, Tende to Col de Tende, M245 fold 26 or M84 fold 10 (insert).**

A rough road throughout. See S French Alps road guide for recommended approach up the hiniere valley from St Dalmas de Tende. E\*.



