

the scene



STEPHEN REID

PEACEFUL SKYE – BUT for how long? Tourist helicopters flying along the Cullin Ridge could soon prove more annoying than the midges. But it still might not be too late to protest against the planning permission for a helicopter landing pad near the Sligachan hotel, see page 14 for further details.

Grapevine

AS REPORTED LAST issue **Bernabé Fernandez** has climbed the first 9a in Spain but what we didn't know at the time is that there are four bolt-on holds on the route. Bernabé excuses this practice by saying the rest of the route is completely natural and he thinks it will go without artificial means in the future, so he didn't want to chip it or create new holds with Sika. The route was splashed across four pages in the Spanish climbing magazine *Desnivel* including interviews with four of Spain's top climbers. All of them had their doubts about the grade, but none of them mentioned the resin holds, which form the boulder problem crux in the last ten metres of the route. Subsequent to his profile in OTE 63 **Barry Durston** is now receiving sponsorship from HB, joining their impressive list of climbers such as **Johnny Dawes**, **Glenda Huxter** and **Dave Cuthbertson**. The navigation poles placed on **Ben Nevis** by the Lochaber Mountain Rescue team were chopped down in late November by person or persons unknown. The BMC were against the poles anyway saying their concept was flawed and people should take responsibility for their own actions. It's official, the world's strongest man wears Sportiva climbing boots! No,

not **Neil Gresham**, Iceland's strongman **Magnus ver Magnusson** (vital statistics 6' 2", 20st, 52" chest, 21" biceps – get those tape measures out). During the tractor-pull event of the annual strongman competition, this year held in Mauritius and televised over Christmas, Scotland's **Forbes Cowan** wore the Enduro boots first then lent them to Magnus who eventually went on to win the title for the third time in a row. **Troll** have, in the wonderfully inverted language of the Public Relations people, "acquired a new parent company." The new owners are "the leading global safety business" **Christian Dalloz Group**, but we have been assured by **Troll** that they will not become purely an industrial safety manufacturer and hope to attack the American and French climbing markets in the future.

Below: The leading Spanish climbing magazine *Desnivel* breaks the news of a 9a in Spain. Photos by David Munilla



COURTESY OF DESNIVEL

OTE Thumbs Up

to **Bendcrete Climbing Walls** for sponsoring a bio-mechanical research lab investigating climbing scientifically. **Bendcrete** have provided boards, holds and advice to the **Chichester Institute**, part of **Southampton University**, for the men and women in white coats to measure climbing ability in facts and figures instead of grades. Already they have discovered that some theories proposed in the training manuals do not hold water and that skill is a more important factor than strength in climbing standard. OTE will bring you the latest findings as soon as they become available.

Nice one Squawk.

OTE Poke in the eye

to **MFH Helicopters Ltd** for proposing to ruin the beauty and tranquillity of **Skye** by providing joy-ride helicopters for tourists too fat, lazy or rich to bother getting off their arses and sampling the beauty of the **Cullin Ridge** for themselves. Bad do.