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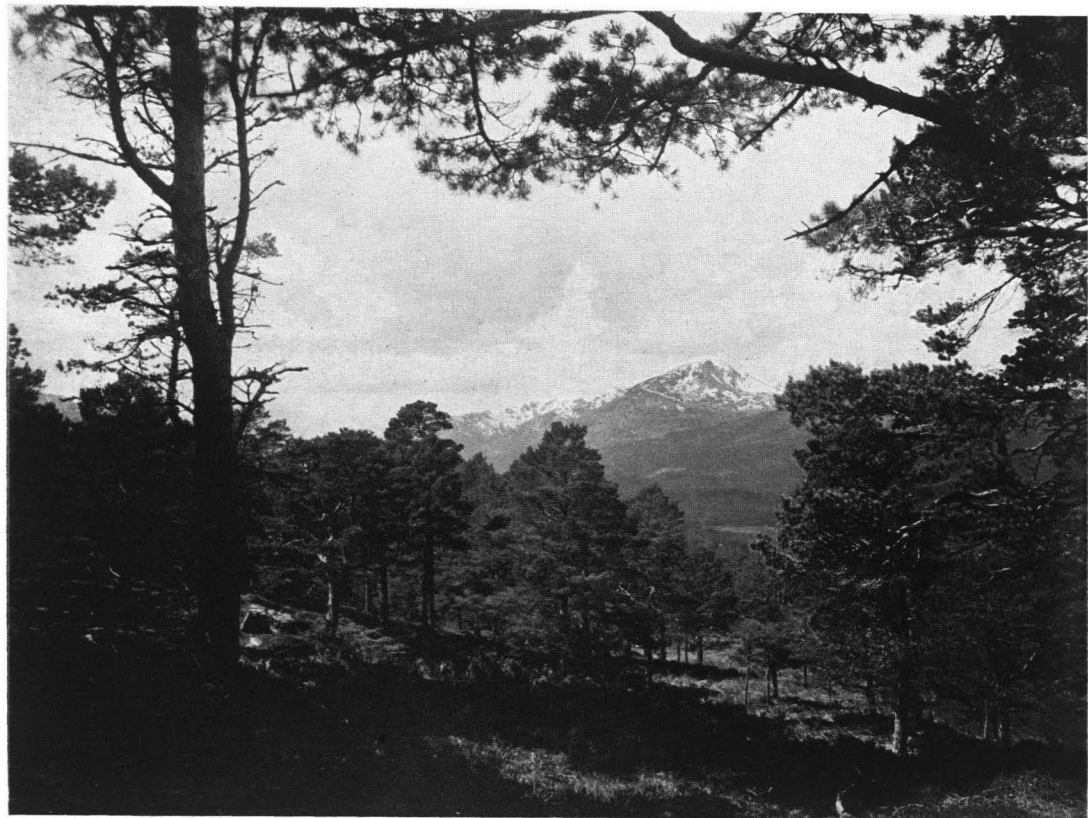
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May 1932

SGURR NA LÀPAICH, GLEN AFFRIC
from the old Tomich Path about a mile west of Loch an Eang. (See page 163)

J. A. Parker

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. XX.

APRIL 1934.

NO. 117.

THE OLD TRACKS THROUGH THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.*

(As shown on Roy's Map of Scotland.)

By J. A. PARKER.

SOME years ago there appeared in the *Journal* a most interesting series of articles by Mr Harker describing some of the old maps of Scotland. In the third of these articles (Vol. XIV., p. 22) mention was made of the Map of Scotland that was prepared in 1747-55 by General Roy. This map, which was never published, is preserved in the British Museum. In "Early Years of the Ordnance Survey," 1926, Col. Sir Charles Close describes the map as being "clearly an elaborate compass sketch; the roads and some of the streams have been paced and the mountains have been put in roughly by eye." Roy, himself, in 1786 stated, somewhat modestly, that the map was "rather to be considered as a magnificent military sketch than a very accurate map of the country." It is, however, a wonderful piece of work.

My attention was drawn to the map a few months ago,

* The greatest interest will be obtained from this article if reference is made to the appropriate sheets of the Popular Ordnance—those dealing with the country west of the Caledonian Canal and south of the Dingwall and Skye Railway.—ED.

and it occurred to me that it might be of some interest were particulars to be given in the *Journal* of the tracks and roads through the Western Highlands which Roy showed on the map. On application to the Museum authorities I was granted every facility to examine the map, which I did last September.

The map was originally plotted to the scale of 1 inch to 1,000 yards, and the final state of this protraction consists of 38 sheets which have been dissected and mounted in convenient form. The final protraction was made on the scale of 1 inch to about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles (being one-fourth linear of the first protraction), and it consists of one large sheet 11 feet 6 inches by 7 feet.* This sheet is that on which the following notes are based, although in many cases the larger scale sheets were consulted. No scale is given on the map nor any explanations of the conventions used. Routes are marked in three ways: (a) Single black lines; (b) single black lines edged with colour; and (c) double lines. The obvious inference is that (a) represented tracks, (b) something better, and (c) roads.

In the following notes descriptions are given of every route shown on the map on the Mainland west of the Caledonian Canal and south of the Dingwall and Skye Railway. A few immediately to the north of the railway are also mentioned. No attempt is made to say whether the routes shown are right or wrong, as this would be outside my province and might lead to endless discussion. Words printed in italics are taken from Roy's Map, others are in accordance with the latest edition of the 1-inch Ordnance Map.

In addition to Roy's Map I have also consulted the Atlas entitled "Survey and Maps of the Roads of North Britain or Scotland" which was prepared by Messrs Taylor and Skinner and published in 1776. As Mr

* The reference to this map in the Museum Catalogue is, "A highly finished colored military survey of Scotland reduced from the *preceeding*, drawn (apparently by General Roy) on a scale of $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles to an inch."

Harker did not describe this atlas, a short description of it may not be out of place here. Geo. Taylor and Andrew Skinner were surveyors who produced a number of road maps, chiefly of Scotland and Ireland, between the years 1775 and 1777. Their atlas of the Scottish roads contains 61 plates, 18 inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, each divided into three strips. The scale is approximately 1 inch to a mile. In all, about 3,300 miles of roads are delineated, which means every road of any importance at that date. A great amount of detail is given, and the work appears to have been done very accurately. The only roads that they show in the area now being considered are Fort Augustus to Bernera, Inverness to Corrimony, and Inverness to Dingwall.

The following are the details of the routes shown on Roy's Map. Where he used conventions (*b*) or (*c*) I use the word "road," in other cases I have used the word "track" or "route."

1. FORT WILLIAM TO MORVERN.—This track commences on the west shore of Loch Linnhe (*Lochie Firth*) opposite Fort William, runs down the west shore to Keil and straight across the base of the promontory to join near Sallachan a road coming in from Corran Ferry, thence to Inversanda and inland by present line to *Kilmallive* on the coast and on to Kingairloch. From the last the route followed a straight line to the head of Loch Aline (not by Loch Uisge), and then on by the west side of the loch and the coast of the Sound of Mull to Drimnin and Auliston Point, where it stopped.

2. LOCH SUNART AND ARDNAMURCHAN.—This track is shown as leaving No. 1 three-quarters of a mile south of *Kilmallive* and going right across the hills to the head of Loch Sunart, although Glen Tarbert is clearly shown on the map. The north shore of Loch Sunart was followed to Salen, where the track divided. The south branch followed the coast to Kilchoan and Ormsaigbeg, and then skirted the west flank of Beinn na Seilg to Grigadale. The north branch went north to Kentra Bay, and thence along the north coast of Ardnamurchan to Achnaha and Grigadale, where it joined the other.

3. LOCH AILORT.—A track is shown running from the head of Loch Ailort by the existing route to Glenuig Bay and Smearisary.

4. LOCH AILORT TO MALLAIG.—The track shown conforms with the existing road via Arisaig and Morar. Branches are shown to Ardnish, Point of Arisaig, and from the head of Loch nan Uamh in a north-west direction to Riferin in Glen Meoble.

5. LOCH EIL.—A track is shown from Corpach along the north side of Loch Eil to Kinlocheil, where it stops. It conforms pretty well with the line of the existing road.

6. CORPACH TO GAIRLOCHY.—A road is shown from Corpach along the west side of the glen to *Moie* and across the River Lochy to Kilmonivaig.

7. GAIRLOCHY TO INVERIE.—A track leaving No. 6 near Moy, passing along the west side of Loch Lochy, crossing the River Arkaig, and then following the north shore of Loch Arkaig to its head, thence through Glen Dessarry to the head of Loch Nevis (*Kenlochnevis*) and along the shore to *Invermor* (*Kylesknoydart*), Inverie, and Rudh'Àrd Slisneach at the entrance to Loch Hourn. In connection with this track it is interesting to note that the 6-inch Ordnance Map of 1876 shows this route as a second-class road as far as Carnach, and from the latter over the Màm Meadail and down Gleann Meadail to Inverie.

8. LOCH OICH.—A road leaving the Fort William-Fort Augustus Road at a point 500 yards south of Loch Oich and following the west side of Loch Oich and the Glen to cross the River Oich about 2,000 yards south of the *Old Barracks* at Fort Augustus and join the main road on the east side of the Glen. It is worth noting that while Glen Garry is very well delineated on the map no track is shown in it.

9. FORT AUGUSTUS TO BERNERA.—This route is called "*Great Road of Communication betwixt Bernera & Fort Augustus.*" It commenced at the *Old Barracks*, struck up the hill to the west (by route shown on the 1-inch Map), and dropped down into Glen Moriston to *Er*.

Ainach and *Wr. Ainach*. The latter is shown as being 2,500 yards east from the River Do, and is evidently the place marked "Unach Inn" on T. & S. at which Boswell and Dr Johnson spent one night in 1773. The road crossed the River Moriston 1,500 yards east of the River Do and crossed the latter 300 yards above its confluence with the River Moriston. (T. & S. differ and show the road as crossing the River Moriston three-eighths of a mile west of the River Do, and then striking north-west to join Roy's route.) The road then continued westwards, passing north of Loch Lundie, into Glen Shiel as per the 1-inch Map. 2,500 yards beyond the *Feild of Battle, 1716*, the road is shown as crossing the River Shiel to the north side of the Glen, and following that side of the Glen to Invershiel, where it recrossed. (T. & S. differ and show the road as now existing.) A short way beyond Invershiel the road marking stops, and thereafter only a track is shown over the Bealach Ràtagain into Glen Mor and on to Bernera. (T. & S. show a road all the way.)

10. GLEN SHIEL, LOCH HOURN, BERNERA.—A track is shown leaving the Glen Shiel Road at a point about midway between the Site of the Battle and Achnangart, crossing the hills to the west of Buidhe Bheinn (*Ben Buy*), and dropping down to Loch Hourn at *Kylishbeg* (Caolas an Loch Bhig on 6-inch Map) a little to the north-west of *Kenloch Hoorn*. The track then continued along the shore of Loch Hourn to Arnisdale and on by the coast to Bernera.

11. BERNERA TO TOTAIG.—This track strikes due north from Bernera to Loch Alsh at Camas nan Gall (*Camisnagaul*) and then follows the coast eastwards, passing Ardintoul and Totaig, to join the Glen Shiel Road at *Ratichan* on the south side of Loch Duich.

12. INVERNESS TO TOMICH.—A road is shown from Inverness along the south side of the Beaully Firth to Lentran, thence inland to Downie and Eskdale (*Askidale*), and along the east side of the Strath Glass to Tomich.

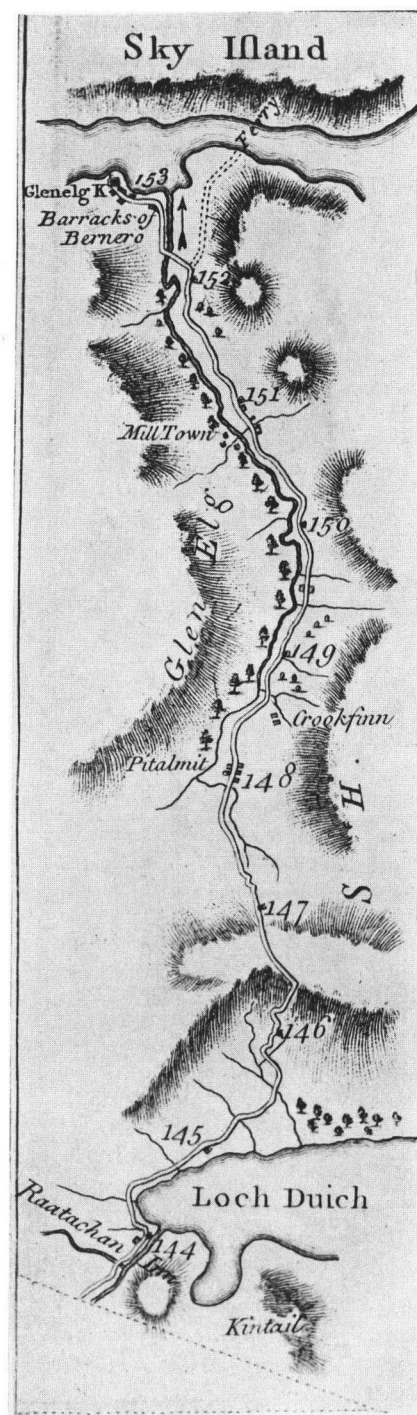
13. GLEN AFFRIC.—This is a continuation of No. 12,

and is called "*Road from Kintail to Inverness.*" It crossed the river at Tomich, passed *Er. Knockfin*, *Mid Knockfin*, and *Wr. Knockfin*, and then continued in a south-westerly direction through the hills, evidently by Loch an Eang (which is not shown), and dropped down close to the west end of Loch Beinn a'Mheadhoin, thence low down along the south side of the Glen and of Loch Affric to near Athnamulloch, where the river was crossed. The north side of the Glen was then followed to Alltbeath, where the road marking stops. From Alltbeath the track went by Glen *Grievy*, south end of Loch *Vallich*, and the *Bealach na Scare* to Loch Duich at *Clachandonich*, and on by north shore to Dornie, where it stopped.

14. GLEN URQUHART.—A road from Inverness to the north end of Loch Ness, and thence a track to Drumadrochit and through Glen Urquhart to join the Strath Glass Road opposite Invercannich. A branch from Glen Urquhart by Glen Convinth to Downie, with a branch off it at Ardblair to Eskadale.

15. GLEN CANNICH.—The track is shown as leaving the Strath Glass Road and crossing the River Glass by a ford about 800 yards north of the River Cannich, thence by north side of the Glen to Muchrachd, Loch Mullardoch, and Loch Lungard, and along the south side of *Carn a pre Baik* (probably Càrn na Breabaig). Loch an Droma is not shown, but from a point which must have been near it the track made a straight line to the head of Loch na Leireach. The track then followed the north side of the River Elchaig to the head of Loch Long, and the west side of the latter to Auchtertyre and so to Balmacarra. From the latter the track turned north, passed to the east of Loch Iain Ogg, and ended at *Plock* (Plockton).

16. LOCH LONG TO LOCH CARRON.—This track is shown as leaving No. 15 just to the east of the *River Long*, and following the east side of that river for about 2 miles, where it crossed, thence over the Màm Attadail to Attadale, and along the coast to the head of Loch Carron, where the river was crossed to join the Glen Carron track (No. 17) on the north side. In connection



REPRODUCTION, slightly reduced, of a portion of PLATE NO. 20
of TAYLOR and SKINNER'S "SURVEY AND MAPS OF THE
ROADS OF NORTH BRITAIN OR SCOTLAND"; 1776

with this route it is important to note that Roy never uses the word "Ling," but gives *Glen Long*, *River Long*, and *Long*.

17. GLEN STRATHFARRAR.—This track is marked "*Road from Loch Carron to Inverness.*" It is shown as leaving the Strath Glass Road near Easter Eskdale and crossing the River Beaully at Aigas Ferry. This latter was evidently an important ferry, as it is the lowest crossing of the river that Roy shows. T. & S., however, show one about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles west of Kirkhill on their Inverness-Beaully Road. From Aigas Ferry the track passed *Ercles* and kept to the north side of Glen Strathfarrar, to the east end of Loch Monar, and along the north shore of that loch to its west end. The route then proceeded up *Strath Mor Monnar* for a little way, passed to the south of a hill called *Corry Choinninich* (probably Sgùrr Choinnich), and went down into Glen Carron to the east end of *Loch Douil*. The track kept to the south side of that loch, crossed the river near its west end, and then followed the north side of the valley and of Loch Carron to the entrance to Loch Kishorn.

18. INVERNESS TO DINGWALL.—The same as Nos. 12 and 17 to the west side of Aigas Ferry. It then turned north, keeping well to the west of the Druim Pass, reached the head of the Beaully Firth and followed the shore past Tarradale to *Red Castle*, where the road split into three—north to Dingwall, north-east to the Black Isle, and east to Kessock.

19. STRATH CONON.—This road is called "*Road from Loch Carron to Dingwall.*" It left No. 18 south of the ford across the Conon, passed through Urray, crossed the Allt Goibhre, the Orrin at Fairburn, and crossed over the hills by the west side of *Craigmor* to Scatwell. The road then followed pretty much the line of the existing one to Bridgend, but from there kept to the south side of the valley to a point about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Glenmeanie, where it crossed the river. After passing along the north shore of Loch Beannacharain (*Banaker*), the road passed through the hills to a point a little way south of the end of Loch Gowan (*Gow*). The river was crossed

before reaching Loch Sgamhain, and after passing the north side of that loch the road followed the valley, crossing the River Carron twice, to the east end of Loch Dùghaill, where it finally crossed over to the south side to join the track from Glen Strathfarrar (No. 17).

20. DINGWALL TO LOCH MAREE AND POOLEWE.—This is called "*Road from Kenlochew to Dingwall.*" It came up Strath Pfeffer, skirted the south side of *Loch Echilty*, turned up to the foot of *Loch Luychart*, passed round the east side of that to Garve and thence into Strath Bran. It then followed the north side of the valley westwards, kept to the north side of *Loch Ochroisk* and Glen Docherty, and followed the north side of Loch Maree to *Lettyr Ew*. Here the road marking stopped. From Letterewe the track went northwards, passed to the south of a small loch, and dropped down to the side of *Loch Fuin* (Fionn). After following the south-west side of the latter for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles it went over the hills to Poolewe.

21. STRATHCARRON TO LOCH MAREE.—This road left the Strath Conon Route (No. 19) near Craig (not shown), crossed over the hills to the head of Loch Coulin, and then north by the route shown on the 1-inch Map on the east side of the glen to the Abhainn Bruachaig, which was crossed near the site of the present bridge to join No. 20 at Culaneilan.

As previously stated, the above notes give particulars of every road or track in the district that is shown on Roy's Map. Regarding the map itself, the glens and low country appear to have been fairly accurately surveyed, but the mountains are simply sketched in and very roughly done in the more inaccessible districts.

THE ISLE OF MAY AND THE BASS ROCK.

By W. ROSS M'LEAN.

THE ISLE OF MAY.

THIS is the largest of the islands of the Forth, being about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length and fully $\frac{1}{4}$ mile broad. It is situated at the entrance to the Firth of Forth, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Fife coast, and about 9 miles from the nearest point of the East Lothian coast. The main portion of the island rises to a height of 160 feet, and has steep cliffs descending to the sea along most of its western side. To the eastward it descends more gradually into the North Sea, where it runs out into a number of dangerous reefs. At the north end is a long low-lying peninsula known as the North Ness. The geological structure is of the trap formation, and consists of greenstone or basalt of a dark grey colour tinged with green. The rock appears to be much harder and more reliable than that which one generally finds on sea cliffs.

The May can be most easily reached from Anstruther, where a fisherman can usually be found who will take one out at a very reasonable price. Mr Mackay has a good boat, "The United Burghs," which acts as tender to the Isle of May Lighthouse. The voyage can also be made from North Berwick, where a boat can be obtained from Mr John Millar, 10 Victoria Road, North Berwick. Settled weather should be chosen, as the passage is entirely in the open water of the North Sea and landing is difficult if the sea is rough. There are three possible landing-places, the principal one being to the westward, at the junction of the main part of the island with the North Ness. Steps lead up the rocks to a road which goes up to the lighthouse buildings on the top of the island. A landing can also be made at Pilgrims' Haven, a small bay with a beach of shingle at the south-west corner of the island, or at Kirk Haven to the south-east.

The island is the property of the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners. No permit is required, and no charge is made for landing, but there is no accommodation for tourists, although in special circumstances it might be possible to obtain shelter in the lighthouse buildings.

The May is a favourite haunt of sea-birds, notably the guillemot, razorbill, puffin, cormorant, kittiwake, tern, fulmar petrel, and eider duck. The North Ness is probably the most extensive ternery in the kingdom, and in the nesting season it is almost impossible to walk there without treading on the eggs of the countless terns, which wheel and sweep round one's head. The island is also an excellent place from which to observe the movements of migratory birds, who use it as a halting-place on their long journeys. If one goes in early summer, which is by far the best time for a visit to the May, one cannot but be impressed by the extraordinarily prolific growth of sea-pinks, which carpet the whole island and fill the air with their delicious scent.

Climbing is possible anywhere along the western cliffs, but the best and cleanest rock is to be found on the vertical rock walls which surround Pilgrims' Haven, at the south-west corner of the island. Here many short but interesting climbs could be made. At the northern end of the Haven a really impressive stac or rock pinnacle stands up out of the sea. In appearance the stac resembles a bishop's mitre. On three sides it is overhanging, and apparently impossible of ascent, the circumference at the base being less than the circumference half-way up, but on its seaward side an interesting climb might be made. The stac can be reached at low tide without wetting one's feet. In the cliff behind is a lofty sea cave or archway through the rock, once a notorious haunt of smugglers. At the south end of the island, near the fog-horn, is another interesting stac.

A description of the May would not be complete without some account of its lighthouse, because on the island in 1656 was built the first, and for many years the only lighthouse on the Scottish coast. The light was produced by burning coal in a large open grate on the

summit of a tower. Portions of this tower are still to be seen. The present lighthouse was built in 1816, and is a much more handsome structure than the usual lighthouse building, consisting as it does of a square tower, 80 feet high, with wings surmounted by an embrasured parapet. There is also a powerful directional wireless station.

Little is known of the history of the May until about the middle of the ninth century, when it becomes associated with St Adrian, the first Bishop of St Andrews, who, with a number of his ecclesiastics, sought refuge there from Danish invaders under King Humber. The Danes massacred thousands of Christians in Fifeshire, and defeated a Scottish army under King Constantine II., whom they killed in a cave near Crail. Thereafter they pursued Adrian to the Isle of May, and there murdered him and his followers. Adrian's martyrdom is thus referred to by Wyntoun in the "*Chronicle*":

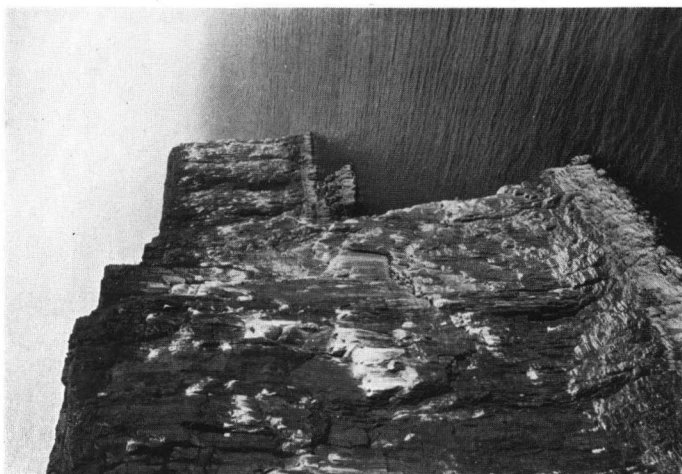
" Into the land thai slwe mony,
And put to Dede by Martyry;
And apon haly Thursday
Saynt Adriane thai slwe in May
Wyth money of hys Cumpany;
Into that haly Isle thai ly."

St Adrian was buried on the May, and a portion of a stone coffin said to have contained his remains is still to be seen on the island.

In the twelfth century King David I., who built so many ecclesiastical buildings in Scotland that he was said to be "a sore sanct to the Crown," founded a monastery dedicated to St Adrian on the Isle of May, and gifted it to the monks of the Benedictine Monastery at Reading, Berkshire. The ruins of the building are still to be seen near Kirk Haven in the south-east part of the island. The Priory of the May was very handsomely endowed by King David and his successors, so much so that it is supposed to have been one of the wealthiest ecclesiastical establishments in the kingdom. After the Battle of Bannockburn the May passed into the possession of the See of Saint Andrews, and in the

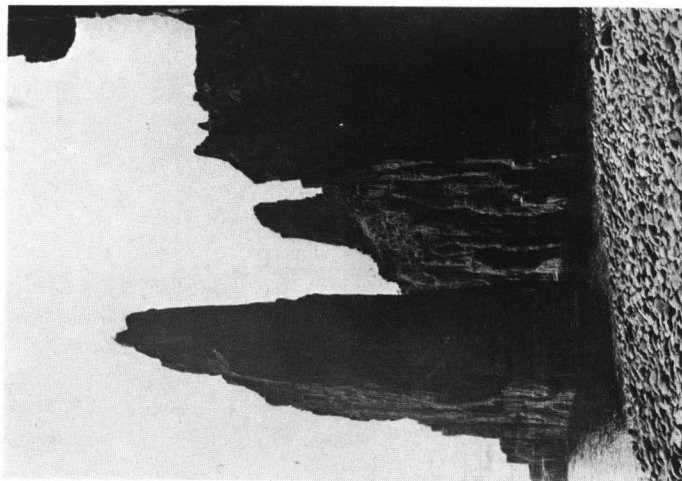
fourteenth and fifteenth centuries became one of the most noted places of pilgrimage in Scotland. There, many miracles are believed to have been wrought through drinking the waters of the Pilgrims' Well, which may still be seen on the slope leading up from the Pilgrims' Haven, and thousands of votaries flocked to pay their vows at the shrine of St Adrian. These included King James IV., who paid several visits to the island. He, however, mingled religion with sport, because, having heard mass, he "went in ane rowbote about the isle to schut at fowlis with the culveryn." Another royal votary was James V., who, in June 1540, sailed from the Forth at the head of a fleet of sixteen ships bound for the Hebrides where the islesmen were in revolt under Donald Gorm. Just before he sailed, the Queen gave birth to a prince and heir to the throne. Out of gratitude for that auspicious event, James is said to have called at the May and paid a visit to the shrine of St Adrian.

But the Isle of May has seen many fleets. Off its shores the lion-hearted Scottish Admiral, Sir Andrew Wood of Largo, gained two grand naval victories against the English. In 1488, with two ships, he captured an English fleet of five ships and brought them into Leith. Henry VII., having heard of the capture of his ships, sent a special fleet under Sir Stephen Bull to bring back Sir Andrew dead or alive. Again the fleets met off the shores of the May. A Scottish chronicler describes how Sir Andrew Wood "exhortid his men to battell, beseiking thame to be ferce against thair enemies, who had sworne and avowed to mak thame prisoneris to the King of Ingland; Bot will God, they sall fail of thair purpose. Thairfoir sett yourselffis in order, everie man to his awin rowme, and lat your gunes and crosbowis be readie. ' Bot above all, use the fireballis weill in the topis of the schipes.' So he caused perce the wine and everie man drank to other. Be this the sun begouth to ryse and schyne bright on the saillis so the Inglish schipes appeired verrie awfull in the sicht of the Scottis, be reasoun thair schipes war gritt and strong, and weill furnished with great artillerie. Yitt the Scottish effeired



June 1933

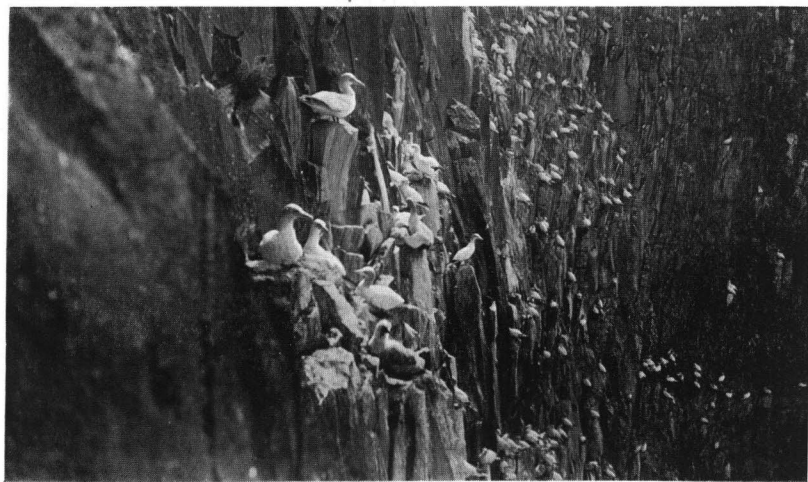
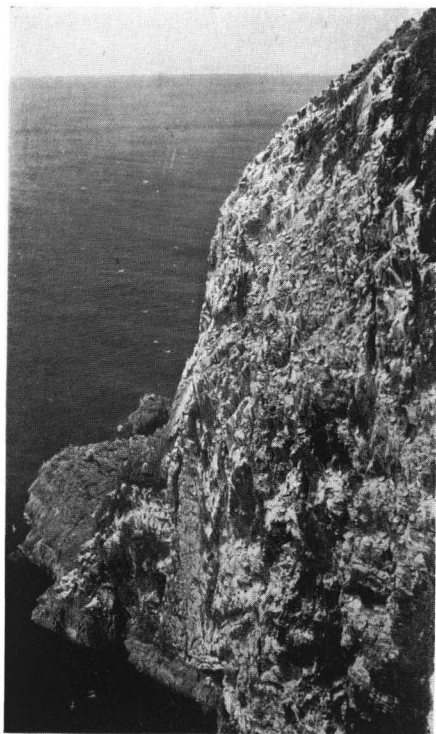
WESTERN CLIFFS



W. Ross McLean

THE PINNACLE AT PILGRIM'S HAVEN

ISLE OF MAY



July 1933

BIRDS ON THE BASS ROCK

W. Ross M'Lean

nothing, bot kest thame underward on the Inglish . . . and cam stoutly fordwaird upoun the wind . . . and fought thair fra the ryssing of the sun till the goeing doun of the same, in the long sommeris day." The Scots again won the day and captured the English ships and their crews. The Scottish King, however, ". . . send thame all saffie hame, thair schipes and all thair furnishing, becaus they had schowin themselfis so stout and hardie warrioures. So he sent thame all back to the King of Ingland, to let him understand that he had als manlie men in Scotland as he had in Ingland . . ."

How different is that picturesque sea-fight from the dreary days of 1914-18 when the grim ships of the Grand Fleet went out past the May to keep their ceaseless vigil on the North Sea. And at dawn on the 21st November 1918 the mightiest battle fleets the world has ever seen met just to the seaward of the Isle of May, but not to fight. They steamed in past the island in great columns on either side, and at sunset that evening in the Forth the German ensigns were hauled down for the last time on the ships of the High Seas Fleet.

THE BASS ROCK.

The Bass Rock lies about 2 miles off the East Lothian coast, directly opposite the ruins of Tantallon Castle. Its altitude is 313 feet, and it is about a mile in circumference. The cliffs plunge straight into the sea without any intervening beach from a height of about 250 feet, rendering the island inaccessible on all sides except the south-east, where it presents a steep slope, or more correctly a series of terraces, by which the summit can easily be reached. The only landing-places are on the sides of a rocky promontory to the south-east. At one point here a flight of concrete steps has been built for the use of the lighthouse-keepers, and when wind and sea permit a convenient landing can be made at the foot of the steps. The rock has been owned by the Dalrymples of North Berwick since 1706, when it was conveyed by royal charter

of Queen Anne to Sir Hew Dalrymple, then Lord President of the Court of Session. Prior to 1706 the Bass was a Crown possession. Permission to land must be obtained from the proprietor, and a charge of 10s. is usually made. In the season, motor boats filled with sightseers pass round the Rock many times a day, but these do not land. Anyone wishing to land should apply to Mr John Millar, Bass Rock and Fidra Boatman, 10 Victoria Road, North Berwick, who will arrange for the necessary permit and supply a boat.

Like the Isle of May, the geological structure of the Bass, and indeed of all the islands of the Forth, is of trap formation. The rock of the Bass is, however, much softer and less reliable than that of the May, and consequently round the waterline one finds numerous caves and fissures worn in the rock by the action of the sea. One cave goes right through the island and comes out at the other side. A landing may be made at either end of this cave from a boat at low water, and the passage of the cave, which is 170 yards long, presents little difficulty provided one is equipped with a light. At its eastern end the entrance to the cave is high and imposing, but the roof quickly closes down to a height of 20 to 30 feet, which is maintained throughout. The floor consists mainly of large water-worn boulders. Near the middle is a large pool about 2 feet deep, which one must wade through. At the western end is a beach of gravel from which one can regain one's boat. Harold Raeburn and William Douglas visited the cave in 1897, and both have recorded their impressions in the pages of the *S.M.C. Journal*.*

The Bass Rock is probably the chief British breeding place of the gannet or solan goose, although they also nest in large numbers on Ailsa Craig, St Kilda, and Suleskerry.

The gannet's egg is of a bluish-white colour when hatched, and is covered with a thick deposit of lime, which soon becomes a dirty brown colour from contact with the

* Vol. IV., p. 342, "The Bass Rock," by Harold Raeburn. Vol. XIX., p. 25, "Bird Life on the Bass Rock," by W. Douglas.

bird's feet. The fully grown gannet is a most powerful bird, measuring 6 feet across its extended wings. Their flight is graceful, and they are delightful to watch as they soar and wheel round the Bass in countless thousands, or dive after their prey from a great height head-foremost into the sea with open wings, which shut just as they strike the water. They perform good service to fishermen by indicating at a considerable distance the exact position of shoals of fish. Many other varieties of sea birds nest on the Bass Rock in large numbers, notably the guillemot, razorbill, kittiwake, herring gull, puffin, eider duck, cormorant, and shag.

The sea birds, however, and particularly the solan geese, make serious rock-climbing on the Bass somewhat difficult. The greater part of the rock is white and slippery with their guano or dung mingled with the decaying grass and seaweed of their nests. This filthy deposit, which in some places extends to a depth of several feet, gives rise to a pungent and unpleasant smell, which permeates the whole island, and is particularly marked in hot weather. The rock itself is not good and is apt to break away. Moreover, in the nesting season every good hold for hands or feet is occupied by eggs, young birds, or fierce solan geese, which savagely peck at one's descending legs or at one's hands and face as one comes up. These have to be dislodged by kicks and blows, and when one has, with difficulty, succeeded in tumbling them off their ledges they come swooping alarmingly round one's head.

Nevertheless, if one is not too ambitious, or too fastidious about one's personal cleanliness, a good deal of interesting scrambling can be had on the Bass. A walk round the top of the cliffs reveals several places where they can be easily descended for a considerable distance. A well-built path, with a hand-rail, ascends from the lighthouse, which is situated above the fort on the west side of the island. If one descends from the path just at the top of the long flight of steps leading down to the fog-horn, a short traverse to the right takes one to the top of a shallow gully in which the lighthouse-keepers usually

keep a fixed rope strong enough to hold a ship! With or without the aid of the rope one can at this point easily descend more than half-way down the cliffs to a large terrace, which can be explored for some distance in either direction. The terrace is a favourite abode of the gannets who, from March till August, cluster there so thickly that it is difficult to find a place for one's feet. Good access to the cliffs can also be obtained in the vicinity of the fog-horn. Half hidden in the grass on the top of the cliffs here, are the remains of some old guns, said to have been placed there for the purpose of firing a salute to King George IV. as he sailed into the Forth on the occasion of his celebrated visit to Edinburgh.

The Bass must be one of the first places where climbing was indulged in professionally, because for many years an official, known as "The Climber of the Bass," was employed to capture gannets, and an old record of 1674 shows that his wage for that year was £11. 12s. 2d., and that he caught 1,118 gannets, which were sold for £79. 3s. 10d. The gannet was formerly regarded as a great delicacy fit even for a royal table, although King Charles II. is said to have remarked after partaking of one that there were two things he did not like in Scotland—the solan goose and the Solemn League and Covenant. Until fairly recent times quite a considerable income accrued to the proprietors of the Bass from the sale of gannets. A small piece of roast gannet was thought to be a great appetiser, but a certain farmer attending a public dinner was heard to say that he had eaten a whole gannet before leaving home and did not feel any the hungrier for it.

The ruins of the Fortress of the Bass are of great interest. Situated on the terrace above the landing-place, it was once one of the leading strongholds in the kingdom, and was deemed to be impregnable. Its origin is not known, but it was considered to be a place of some importance as far back as 1405, when it afforded a temporary refuge to Prince James of Scotland, afterwards James I. James IV. visited it in 1497 on the occasion of his going to the Bass to shoot gannets. After

the Restoration the Fortress became a state prison in which were confined many of the most famous Covenanters. The Bass has the distinction of being the last place in Scotland that held out for the Stuarts after the Revolution. For some years after the rest of the kingdom had given its allegiance to William of Orange, the fortress of the Bass was held by Sir Charles Maitland in the interest of the expatriated James VII. In 1690 the garrison was starved into submission, but a year later the Jacobite flag again flew over the Bass. This came about in somewhat romantic and remarkable circumstances. During the temporary absence on the mainland of the governor and part of the garrison, a gabbart with coal for the Fort came alongside the landing-place, and all who were left of the garrison went down to assist with the unloading. Four young Jacobite prisoners, who were held in the Fort, seized on this opportunity, shut the massive iron gates on those outside, and pointing the guns of the Fort at them, forced them to board the coal gabbart and clear out. The Jacobites were soon joined by friends from the mainland. The French Government, in the interests of James, supplied them with provisions and sent two warships to their aid. Although blockaded by an English fleet the small Jacobite force held the Rock for nearly four years. Their defence had been so gallant that, when eventually reduced to the verge of starvation, they were allowed to surrender on their own terms.

The fortifications were partially demolished in 1701, and now the only inhabitants of the famous old Fort are the puffins which nest in the crevices of its ruined walls. From the landing-place a path and steps lead up through what is left of the Fort to a broad terrace. Here is the lighthouse, which was built in 1902, and where one is sure of a kindly welcome from the lighthouse-keepers.

Half-way up the slope above the lighthouse are the ruins of a small chapel, said to mark the site of the cell of St Baldred, the Hermit of the Bass, an early Christian missionary and disciple of Columba, who died in the year 606. Religious services were held regularly in the

chapel until the Reformation. Thereafter the chapel became a powder magazine for the garrison of the fortress.

An interesting account of the Bass Rock is contained in the volume on East Lothian issued by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments.

SCRISHVEN.

By J. H. B. BELL and D. MYLES.

WHAT is Scrishven ? Soon this question will resound throughout the mountaineering world. The Matterhorn is scarcely as well known as Scrishven will be.

One after another the virgin giants of the mountain ranges of the world have rendered up their secrets to the intrepid adventurer. Their fastnesses have been so explored that they have become slownesses. Scrishven also has now fallen. We cannot claim to have placed it on the map. We found it there when we were looking for a route of approach to Cape Wrath, and the significance of the discovery leapt upon us like a flash. It is the most northerly Sub-Munro of the British mainland. Undoubtedly this hardly accessible, lone outpost of Empire had to be climbed : equally undoubtedly we were the men to do the deed.

From Keoldale the brown-sailed wherry whisked us across the broad expanse of cruel foam which separated us from the wild, inhospitable Cape Wrath coast. Accompanied by the intrepid Aberdonian barman and engineer from Keoldale, we toiled up the rocky slope to where a marvellous machine lay hidden in a cave on the mountain side. With the limited vision born of an artificial and decadent civilisation, we heard the roaring dragon described as an ancient Morris. We gazed at it fore and aft. Behind hung a mystic sign " 10," which was interpreted as the sole remaining trace of what had been a number. Surely this also was confirmation of its demonic origin. If we required more, it was immediately supplied by the unending succession of cannons off the grassy verge, by which manner of progress the monster roared its unscathed passage westwards to where the massive brow of Scrishven rose to the heavens. With awe in our hearts we noted the stupendous rock shoots of the

western face, which frowned above the moorland, nearly 300 feet below.

From the Juggernaut the route led over bog and crag to the distant summit. Minute after minute passed, and still the peak loomed ahead. More minutes passed, and the looming went on. We were now approaching the point where the Torridon sandstone cliffs glowered over us. Cold shivers of fear began to wriggle down our blanched spines, but retreat was now unthinkable. Just then the monsoon, or something, broke. Luckily, however, a safety-pin had been thoughtfully included in the stores, and all was well.

We looked at each other. Could we make the grade? We guessed we'd try. Then began that desperate battle with the imperceptible rugosities of the vast precipice, as we traversed the orbic, slithery bands of Torridonian looseness. The precipices beetled their brows ever more harshly over us. It seemed to us that somewhere behind and below was some vast spectral creature, at times like a great grey bird, at others in the likeness of a third man on the rope, which mocked our efforts.* Morbid fancies possessed us. In the pages of a future patriarchal climbing historian we could already read the lines, that from this ill-fated ledge on the face of Scrishven two illustrious members of a long-forgotten and doubtless sinister secret society, to wit the S.M.C., had been hurled to their awful doom. Such should not be the imaginings of future conquerors: we ruthlessly swept them aside, and much loose rubble as well, as we advanced to the assault upon the last Archæan bastion beyond which was the uttermost summit.

Fifteen minutes—nine hundred seconds—had elapsed, but at the end success crowned our efforts. The raucous cry of the lesser-crested purple-tailed eagles which circled round the peak rang the death-knell to its fabled inaccessibility. As we compassed the summit, the pointers of our prismatic aneroids twanged loudly on their dials, as if by common consent. So it was true after all. We

* First published observation of the Loch Ness Monster.

had vanquished the last and most obdurate of the Sub-Munros. We took out our whistles to celebrate a blast of triumph, but the great altitude and the intense cold immediately congealed our breath, just as in the celebrated tale of Baron Münchhausen's coach horn. Fair, indeed, and magnificent was the prospect. Unchallenged by further Sub-Munros, our gaze swept northwards unchecked across the boundless ocean. The distant thunderous roar of the billows charmed our imaginations like the deepest note of a great cathedral organ. What were the more sophisticated heights of Nevis, Alps, or Himachal to us! We had conquered Scrishven: not a hundred Parkers would ever dare to set an indicator on that proud summit: no future *bureau des guides* of Keoldale would ever deface its mighty crags with base fixed ropes. As we gazed round the untrodden heights we were irresistibly reminded of the immortal words of the poet:

“Lives of mountaineers remind us
We can climb and claw and cling,
And, departing, leave behind us
Paper bags and bits of string.”

The passage of time seemed to have stopped. Fear of becoming benighted on the perilous descent wrenched us back to consciousness with a jerk. We braced ourselves for the descent. Suffice it to say that the return journey was equally momentous—full of moments, we mean. Four hundred and eighty moments of stumbling, tumbling, and grumbling restored us at length to the embraces of Juggernaut. With pulsating sides the engine took up its precious burden. As if by mutual consent, we stole a covert backward glance at the beaten foe. There was perhaps a twinge of sadness in the reflection that although many might in future scale its proud cliffs and gaze upon its marvellous summit panorama, yet to none would it ever be the mountain it was to its early explorers.

THE DESERTED ISLAND.

By A. HARRISON.

THE unknown attracts most people, and the unattainable possesses a lure far greater than that of anything which can be obtained easily. A trout stream on a Sunday seems infinitely more attractive than on any other day of the week.

It was from Arisaig that I got my first view of Rum, the peaks standing out black against the evening sky, and in later years I lay on the tops of the Cuillin and studied its blue hills. Always it stirred the imagination, but it was forbidden ground on which one might not wander.

Inquiry of Sang, the all-wise Secretary of the S.M.C., was conclusive; permission to land had always been refused. It all stimulated the imagination. So did the Geological Map, for was it not marked in deep purple to indicate that unique rock—Gabbro?

So years went by, and then this year we heard of a Soay fisherman who was willing to take us across. It was our last day in Skye and a perfect morning, and at once we decided to go. In an hour we were chugging down Loch Brittle, and one by one the Corries of the southern Cuillin came into view; first Coire Lagan with its surrounding peaks, and in turn Coire Ghrunnda, Coire nan Laogh and, lastly, the rift of Loch Coruisk and Blaven and Clach Glas. Soon we rounded the Rudh an Dunain point and were past Soay, which barely stood out against the higher background of Strath Aird and the cliffs of Canna came up on our starboard bow. Eagerly we scanned the approaching shore of Rum and a sandy beach with cottages at its edge. No movement could be seen at the cottages, and we debated if we should land there or call at Kinloch Castle and ask permission to land. In the end we sailed past Loch Scresort to a

sandy beach at Bàgh na h-Uamha, which lies below Hallival.

Some of the party wanted to climb; the remainder were content to stay on the beach. Time was limited and so the climbing party disembarked first, scarcely waiting until the boat touched the shore before leaping off. The beach of golden sand is bordered by rounded stones, and then comes a natural rampart formed by a basalt dyke, and after that the way led through long lush grass interlaced with heather in full flower.

Our plan of attack had been settled before we landed, and was to make Askival by the serrated east ridge and then follow down the connecting ridge to Hallival. Viewed from the sea this latter ridge appeared to have some steep rock steps. As we mounted we left the long grass behind and the going became easier. We passed Loch Coire nan Grunnd and, after some amusing scrambling on the ridge, which is quite steep, reached the summit in one and three-quarter hours. Just near the top, and on the crest of the ridge, a chock stone has lodged between two large boulders, and gives a delicate balance walk.

There is a glorious view from the top. To the north are the Cuillin, then the mainland with its hills and the white sands of Morar; nearer, Eigg and its curious Sgurr and Muck lying flat on the ocean. To the west is the long line of Lewis and Harris, and down below the whole of Rum, except Kinloch, which is masked by Hallival. No woods, cultivation, animals, or birds were to be seen, and the only sign of life was our boat lying in the bay far below.

After a short rest on the top we traversed the ridge to Hallival. The ridge is sharp and gives some climbing. Towards the summit of Hallival the light grey rocks are broken into large blocks. Numerous nail marks on the rocks showed that ours were not the first climbing nails to make the traverse.

From the top of Hallival one looks down on the settlement of Kinloch, its red castle surrounded by cottages, plantations, and cultivated land.

We completed the descent with a bathe in the Allt na h-Uamha, which flows over slabs in an orderly fashion broken by occasional lapses, when it suddenly throws itself at right angles into vertical gorges so narrow that the water below is scarcely visible beneath its covering of heather and scrub. Indeed, near the shore we crossed the burn by climbing along a small tree which overhung the farther bank.

After the male members had in turn made use of the communal bathing suit for a second bathe in the sea, we had a sumptuous tea prepared by the shore party, and embarked again from the beach of the Caves.

The sea was as kind to us on our return journey as on the outward passage, and ahead of us the blue of the ever-nearing peaks of the Cuillin deepened as the daylight faded. As we rounded the Rudh an Dunain the sun sank behind South Uist, hull down on the horizon.

So ended a perfect day. For once the attainment of the seemingly unattainable had not led to disappointment.

THE MITRE RIDGE

By E. J. A. LESLIE.

Party.—E. A. M. Wedderburn (S.M.C.), P. D. Baird (J.M.C.S.), M. S. Cumming (J.M.C.S.), J. W. Crofton (C.U.M.C.), E. J. A. Leslie (J.M.C.S.).

On the evening of 3rd July 1933 two parties entered separately and, satisfied, set out from that sound base for campaigning in the Eastern Cairngorms, the Glenavon Bakery in Tomintoul. Their clothes, and, failing that, their cars, proclaimed them mountaineers to anyone with an eye to read the signs. The patched breeks and rope-rubbed jackets left no doubt as to the former, while the fresh Skye dust and extreme age (not to mention the string and wire strengthening) exposed the latter. With an interval of an hour between them the laden parties set out from Inchroary on that heart-breaking path towards Loch Avon. It was the outcome of a determination kindled by the "Guide Book's" placid statement: "This ridge has not been climbed," intensified by Rusk's wonderful photograph and fanned into flame by a year's waiting upon the opportunity.

The first plans were laid in Cambridge in the Michaelmas term 1932. An informal gathering in the President of the C.U.M.C.'s (E. A. M. Wedderburn) rooms, the display of Rusk's photograph, and a chance remark by some other member revealed the fact that the conquest of the Mitre was the cherished ambition of four of the members present. We learnt that in Caithness, in P. D. Baird's copy of the "Guide Book," the paragraph on the Mitre Ridge was confronted with a huge exclamation mark, that M. S. Cumming and E. J. A. Leslie had actually been to the foot of the rock and seen the first odd 10 feet in thick mist, and that the President himself kept Rusk's photograph in a little shrine in his bedroom. A campaign to take place

after the Summer Meet of the C.U.M.C. in Skye was decided upon. The photograph became seamed with pencilled possible routes. Cumming and Leslie were detailed to report upon the Ridge at Easter, and the plans finally settled on the result of this.

It was agreed that the remoteness of the Ridge probably constituted one of its major defences. Accounts by previous parties seemed to stress the lack of time or lack of rope as the cause of failure. To overcome the former difficulty the party decided to bivouac on the level blaeberry-strewn floor of the lower Garbh Coire. The remedy for the latter was obvious; in all 600 feet of rope and line were taken, most of which was never used.

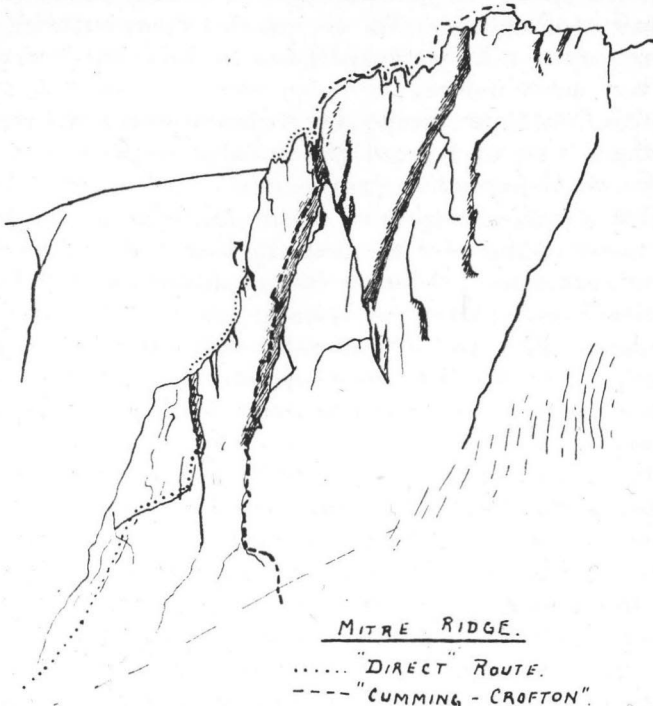
It was midnight, a very still and perfect midnight, by the time the party had finally settled down for a most comfortable night's rest. A tent, large enough to shelter three heads and two complete bodies, in the event of really bad weather, held two, while the other three lay on the thick mossy carpet in sleeping-bags with waterproof covers. Cooking was done on two of the latest petrol Primuses, which were found ideal for the purpose.

The crystal clear Allt na Garbh Coire (Allt an t-Sluichd) ran soothingly past. Next morning a pot-hole, deep enough for total immersion, provided the bitterest but most invigorating bathe imaginable.

At about ten o'clock the party left the camp and climbed up the 200 or 300 feet of tumbled blocks into the upper corrie to the foot of the Mitre. The weather was glorious with bright sunshine and a slight cooling breeze. Half an hour was spent prospecting through glasses, and it was decided to attack in two parties, Wedderburn, Baird, and Leslie to attempt the "direct" ascent as straight as possible from the lowest point of the rocks; Cumming and Crofton an interesting alternative on the north-west side of the main arête.

The "direct" route commenced a few yards to the west of the lowest point of the rocks (Cairn) and led up a deep and conspicuous gully, which slopes slightly to the right. The first pitch, which required a lead out of 110 feet, was very difficult, in fact the hardest part of the

climb, up smooth, holdless slabs at an angle of 55° , with an overhanging wall on the left. In places it was necessary to progress by backing up the holdless slabs, using the scanty holds on the wall for boots and fingers. The slabs were topped by a 7-foot wall, which overhung slightly, above which a stance with poor belay was found on a mossy ledge.



2nd Pitch.—40 feet mossy scrambling up continuation of groove to a good stance and belay (cairn).

3rd Pitch.—100 feet of similar scrambling up which the party moved together, to a conspicuous ledge half-way up an easy-looking chimney (A) running down the north-west side of the ridge (cairn).

4th Pitch.—60 feet easy climbing up the continuation of this chimney on to the arête (cairn).

5th Pitch.—90 feet moderate climbing on steep rocks

to foot of first tower where there is a narrow ledge with two good bollards, on which all three of the party assembled. Two slender cracks, filled with detached stones, moss, etc., led straight up the tower, which bulged out into a slight overhang straight in front. The leader made a gallant attempt to make one of these go, but was forced to give up the attempt when he had climbed up 10 feet and been out of balance for at least a quarter of an hour. The second also tried, but with no more success. Either *might* go in rubbers, but it would be very severe indeed.

6th Pitch.—An escape, by no means easy, was made to the left on to a broad grassy ledge at the top of an awkward 15-foot corner (cairn).

7th Pitch.—Desiring to return as soon as possible on to the main arête the first crack on the wall of the tower was taken, although it was difficult to obtain a footing here. (There is an easier crack a few yards to the left.) Fifty feet of moderately difficult climbing led to the top of the first tower beyond which a small scale "tower gap" led across to the foot of the second tower.

8th Pitch.—The leader tried the arête on the right edge of the tower, but after climbing some 15 feet, descended with more rapidity than dignity, losing his hat in the process. Two other lines of weakness led up the tower, one in the centre, the other on the left. The latter was taken, and 40 feet of easy climbing led to the top of tower No. 2. The ascent of the final tower was an easy scramble, and the party reached the top at 2.45 P.M.

The route taken by the other party proved to be straighter and of a more consistent difficulty than the so-called "direct" route outlined above. The climb started a few yards to the right of the line of the easy chimney (A) and a cairn was left at the foot.

1st Pitch.—25 feet straight up to small mantelshelf, stance and belay in grassy crack on the right.

2nd Pitch.—40 feet up a difficult chimney with an awkward overhang about half-way up. This chimney

is the first to the right of the easy chimney (A), and is seen clearly in the photograph.

3rd Pitch.—Upward traverse to right for about 30 feet, then back to the left round a corner on to a sloping ledge with good thread belay. About 70 feet in all.

4th Pitch.—Up the line between the main ridge and subsidiary triangular buttress. For the first 15 feet a line to the right of the crack beneath the wall of the main ridge was followed. A traverse into this crack was then made, and it was followed up to a good stance without belay. Approx. 100 feet.

5th Pitch.—20 feet up a crack in the wall on the left. A traverse to the right round a corner led to a sloping ledge with a belay sticking out from the wall. An enormous poised block on this ledge caused some anxious moments. The leader just avoided using it as a handhold when beneath it; a few seconds later some slight disturbance upset its equilibrium and sent it hurtling to the foot of the ridge. The crash of its descent echoed and re-echoed round the corrie.

6th Pitch.—80 feet up a loose gully on the same line. This led to the gap between the first and second towers, and the climb was finished by the same route as that used for the "direct." The central crack of the second tower was tried but proved to be too difficult. The top was reached at 1.10 P.M.

By this time all suggestions of the cooling breeze had gone, and a "wallow" in the small burn which cascades into the corrie just to the east of the Mitre proved to be a most welcome prelude to luncheon. Afterwards boots were discarded, and the north summit of Beinn a'Bhùird reached after a refreshing barefoot walk across the mossy and well-watered summit plateau.

The heat was terrific, but in spite of it the view was of amazing breadth. To the north the Caithness man identified Beinn a'Chielt, while far to the south the Lammermuirs were visible. Westwards a bewildering panorama of peaks defied detailed description, but no one could miss the twin peaks of Cruachan or the serrated comb of An Teallach. On leaving the summit a flock of

five dotterel were seen quite close at hand. The evening was spent photographing the ridge, which stood out magnificently as the western sun caught it.

Next morning the camp was struck, and the Garbh Choire left to silence and the deer.

THE MITRE RIDGE, BEINN A'BHÙIRD.

WHAT was believed to be the first ascent of this very fine ridge was made on the 9th September 1933 by Messrs D. J. Dawson and C. Ludwig, of Aberdeen.* The climb was repeated on the 1st October by a party of four. Mr Ludwig, who led on both occasions, has given me the following particulars:—

“ The climb started with a 50-foot chimney somewhat to the right of the lowest point of the ridge, holds were scanty, but the angle throughout is easy. From here there is 150 feet of scrambling up easy rocks and shallow gullies to the foot of a deep-set chimney. On the 1st October this point was reached by a shorter but more interesting route which started on the west face farther to the right up 70 feet of easy scrambling and then by a 30-foot perpendicular chimney, which was the most difficult pitch on the entire climb.

“ The deep-cut chimney is blocked by an overhang some 20 feet up, and this can be avoided by climbing out to the right and then traversing back into a shallow gully 40 feet high, which leads to a large platform. This platform can be seen on the photograph (Vol. XVI., p. 211) half-way up the ridge. From here the way lies either up a 10-foot crack on the left or by a 15-foot traverse to the right, rather exposed with poor handholds but with ample footholds. The crest of the ridge is now followed for 70 feet. The angle throughout is fairly steep, but the rock is broken up into numerous ledges, which makes the climb perfectly straightforward.

“ The next pitch is rather more difficult. One is now

* See *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XX., No. 116, p. 154.

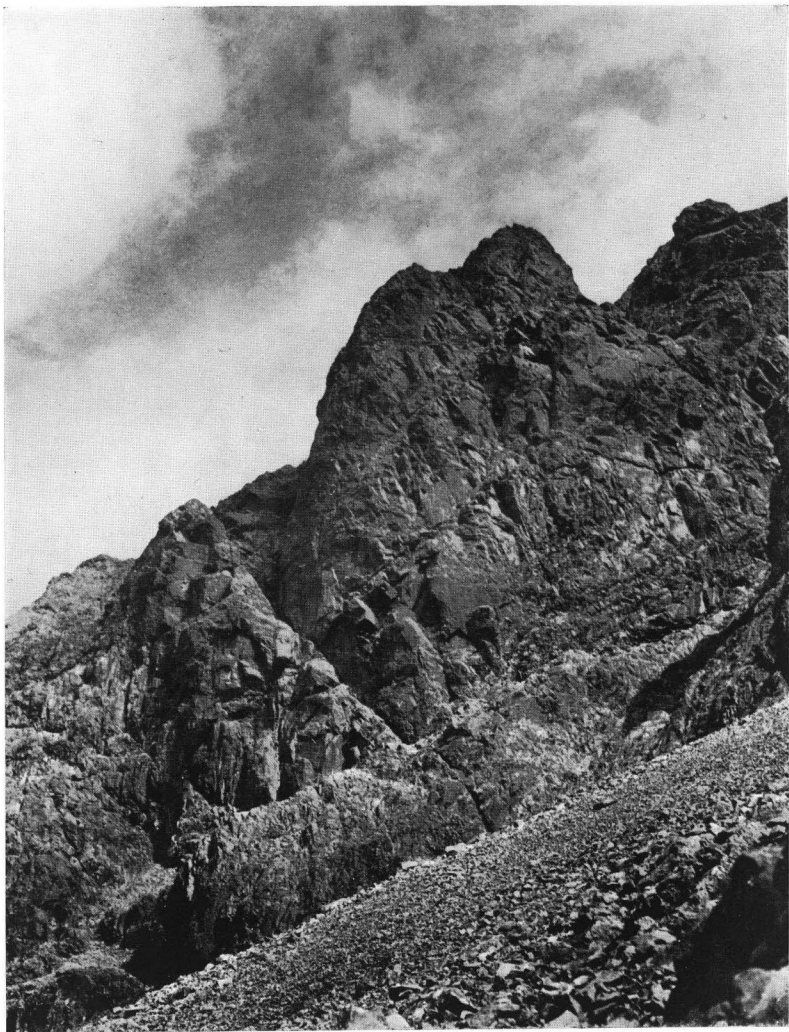


June 1930

THE MITRE RIDGE, BEINN A BHUIDH

A. J. Rusk

(The line drawing in the text was taken from lower down the slopes in the foreground)



Photo

E. Wood-Johnson

NORTH BUTTRESS OF SGURR SGUMAIN—WEST FACE
(By permission of the Fell and Rock C.C.)

at the foot of the sheer rock face below the first pinnacle, which is slightly overhanging, and divided into three parts by two narrow cracks. The right-hand crack might be ascended, but the position is exposed, and there are no belays here. To the left there is a small buttress of rock, 10 feet high, and this is climbed by scanty but adequate hand and foot holds to a large triangular mossy ledge on the left of the crest of the ridge. This pitch is rather sensational, but is not too difficult.

“ From here the route is up the left wall of the triangular ledge. The rock is none too good, being rather loose with a fair amount of vegetation, and the leader has to run out about 70 feet of rope before reaching a really good stance near the first pinnacle. Fifteen feet of narrow ridge brings one to the foot of the second pinnacle, which gives some 60 feet of easy climbing with good holds if one keeps to the left. This surmounted, a narrow ridge of rotten rock 70 feet long leads to the third and final pinnacle (about 40 feet high), which offers no difficulty, and brings one out on a firm, narrow neck connecting the ridge to the main massif of Beinn a'Bhùird. The climb took two and a quarter hours on the 9th September and three and three-quarter hours on the 1st October. A camera was taken on the latter date.”

The climb is about 500 feet high, and is evidently extremely difficult. Boots were not worn, the party climbing in their stocking soles. An article describing the ridge appeared in Vol. XVI., p. 211, and in Vol. XIX., p. 135, there was a note, with an excellent photograph, describing an attempt on the ridge on the 23rd June 1930.

J. A. PARKER.

A NEW GULLY CLIMB ON SGURR SGUMAIN.*

By H. V. HUGHES.

ON 4th August 1925 the late C. D. Frankland led Dr M. M. Barker and the writer up a fine gully on Sgurr Sgumain, Isle of Skye. It was my first day in Skye, and in thick mist we struck up the screes of Coire Lagan with the intention of climbing the face of Sgurr Alastair, whether by Collie's or by Abraham's route we did not mind. We failed to find a cairn, and after working up a scree gully below wet, steep rocks for some distance, Frankland decided to find a way up the wall on to the ridge.

After passing an evil-looking crack, severely overhung and containing a bright green moss patch, we climbed a slab, traversed towards the top of the crack, and after a very severe mantelshelf problem, found an easy way into a deep gully. This gully gave a good climb, and led abruptly on to an easy ridge which we followed to the top of the mountain; when the mist cleared away we discovered our mistake—we were on Sgumain, not Alastair. Frankland was enthusiastic about the gully, which he considered was comparable to Walker's Gully on Pillar Rock—high praise from a Lakeland cragsman.

We had not measured the climb, and for some reason or other it was never written up, though there is a reference to it, *en passant*, "Some Severes," *Y.R.C.J.*, p. 195, No. 17, 1927. I had often intended to repeat the ascent during subsequent visits to Glen Brittle, but to mention "Frankland's Gully" overnight went with mock suns and green dawns. In 1933, despairing of finding the gully dry, I paid it two visits under damp conditions, and on both occasions my companions were impressed; it is possible that one or two other parties had visited the gully, so I hesitate to claim the second ascent.

* See photo facing p. 189.

Although I agree in general with the modern views on the avoidance of surnames in climbing nomenclature, I think that in this case, since the leader did not himself name this fine climb, we might commemorate a fine cragsman and a lover of the Coolin by calling the climb "Frankland's Gully."

The climb commences from the screes on the west side of the north ridge of Sgurr Sgumain, immediately above a very obvious patch of bright green moss.

1st Pitch.—The start, cairned, lies up a steep slab which is crossed from right to left, and at 20 feet a move round the edge leads to a triangular niche: beyond this is a steep 8-foot wall with no footholds, but a good handhold high up for the right hand enables a lodgement to be made on a slightly sloping mantelshelf. To attain a standing position is difficult, but once this is done an easy traverse leads into the bed of a gully.

Alternative Start.—Climb the slab and crack (80 feet) to a rock platform, good stance but no belay: this is the first pitch of E. Wood-Johnson's climb, North Buttress of Sgumain. From the far side of the platform make an awkward stride into an open chimney, descend the chimney for 20 feet, and traverse into the bed of the gully; belays.

2nd and 3rd Pitches.—150 feet of easy and moderate scrambling in the bed of the gully lead to a cave; belays, small spike or large block.

4th Pitch.—Ascending traverse on true right wall to a recess, 20 feet; belay.

5th Pitch.—Traverse back to the bed of the gully on a rising ledge which gradually gets narrower, and ceases before the bed of the gully is attained: the movement from the traverse to the gully is very difficult, 30 feet; belay.

6th Pitch.—A 70-foot crack, steep but not very difficult, ends abruptly on the North Ridge of Sgumain; cairn.

CLIMBING DOWN.

IT is an undoubted fact that whereas most writers, especially those with religious tendencies, have devoted much time in the past to the subject of "The Descent of Man," the modern climber omits such a word as descent (as applied to climbing down) from his vocabulary. It is safe to say that for every good climb down, probably ten good ascents are made. In a recent number of this *Journal* the writer of an article stated with much truth that "to get the best out of a known route, the 'Guide Book' should be left behind. In this way, also, the word 'Mountaineering' in the title of our Club can be justified." But this act alone does not turn us into mountaineers. The word implies more than a hill-walker with a love of mountains, it implies a measure of skill, or at least an attempt to acquire skill in the art of Mountaineering, in all the branches of the sport that may be open to us to explore. The object of this short article is to urge "climbers" to become mountaineers for the betterment of their craft and for the æsthetic pleasure to be derived from climbing down.

A stranger attending his first Meet of our Club might almost be pardoned for supposing that there existed a rule in the constitution of the Club to the effect that members must only climb upwards. It seems to be an accepted fact that, as soon as the top of a gully, ridge or buttress has been reached, the rope is by common consent untied, and the whole party sets off to find the dulllest but most rapid means of reaching the nearest path, road or moor. A good scree-run, a boulder-strewn hillside, even steep grass or snow-covered slopes are considered preferable as a means of descent to the buttress or face up which the climb may have lain. Such a choice, if the choice even arises, can only be due to two considerations. The first, that the attractions of a hot bath are superior to those of a complete finish to the day's climbing; or the second, that

the party is not sufficiently competent to face what is considered the hardest part of mountaineering—climbing down. Either of these reasons are unworthy of climbers with any pretensions to excellence in their sport, and perhaps another explanation may be added. The days are short for a great part of the year and there is only time **either** to climb **or** to descend. There is insufficient light to enable an average party to complete an interesting climb and a descent of equal interest and difficulty. This explanation is to some extent borne out by the increased number of descents that have been made on the cliffs of Ben Nevis since the building of the Charles Inglis Clark hut, but it is not sufficient. There should be no reason why a party should not set out purely with the object of accomplishing a descent. Before the hut was built numbers of parties from Fort William ascended the crags in the Allt a' Mhuilinn and returned by the path from the summit, but few indeed were the parties who walked to the summit and descended the Tower Ridge, N.E. Buttress or Castle Ridge. It is still more a matter for wonder when one considers how completely a climb appears to change in character on the descent. This applies even to climbs with which one is perfectly familiar. The only downward glances have usually been to keep an eye on the progress of the climber next below and not in the least with any idea of tracing a line of descent and fixing footholds in the memory.

In those districts where rock-climbing is brought to a high pitch of perfection it is becoming general practice to record "first descents." This, of itself, is a sufficient guarantee of the skill required to complete some of the descents of even popular climbs. What is needed is a "downhill only" club, similar in nature to the great ski club of that name, until our skill in that branch is on a par with our ability in ascent. It must be admitted that such special manœuvres (special as applied to this country) as abseiling, are in general of use only upon rare occasions, nevertheless the writer has on several occasions found that abseiling has led to a material saving of time when every moment counted, and in conditions of storm which made

the ordinary methods of climbing dangerous. Abroad it is absolutely necessary to abseil on numerous descents.

It is an acknowledged fact that the prospect of a descent down steep rock, and even more down steep ice or hard frozen snow, is most intimidating to those unaccustomed to descent. It should therefore be necessary for everyone with aspirations to lead parties, to train themselves to regard such prospects as calmly as they would a difficult ascent.

Many a climber, devoting all his climbing days to ascending routes with which a "Guide Book" has made him familiar, has never climbed down a distance of more than a few feet. In the event of one of his party being taken ill he might find himself faced with a 100-foot descent, the first real descent of his life.

The ultramontane will need no urging. He knows the feeling of satisfaction that is given by the completion of a fine day's climbing, in which he has savoured all the fruits of his skill: moreover, he has probably an eye on the future and an anticipation of bigger things. The extraordinary difference between the standard of climbing up and down, of British climbers in the Alps, was a subject of much comment abroad not so long ago, and to those to whom the homeland hills are partly in the nature of a training-ground, practice in the art of descent can be found anywhere. For those who climb in Scotland for what the Scottish hills alone give them, there must always be the satisfaction of having tried to take advantage of all that was offered. We cannot pretend to know our hills until we have ascended them in many conditions: in the calm of summer, in the chill and storm of winter, in mist and rain; seen them in an infinity of moods and felt the appeal they make in many circumstances. We cannot pretend to know the climbs, the grandest routes to the summit of our mountains, until we have climbed **and** descended them in the same way.

C. W. P.

A SCAVENGING HUNT OR NE'ERDAY NIGHTMARE.

By J. GORDON ROBINSON.

AT the New Year Meet, held at Loch Awe, the writer, having arrived cold and hungry after a long motor run, decided to regale himself with a glass of sherry. The management, however, apparently misconstruing the idea of Highland hospitality, supplied him with a glass of neat whisky, which he thought it tactless to refuse. As a result he is hardly responsible for the ensuing nightmare which haunted his slumbers that night.

A scavenging hunt had been organised by a certain ecclesiastical gentleman, who had decided that such a form of entertainment might be more in keeping with the Sabbath than clanking past the kirk door in hob-nailed boots. The following were the articles which had to be collected by the competitors:—

1. A new Munro.
2. The Black Shoot.
3. A Corona.
4. A piece of black beard.
5. A member of Committee.
6. A Stone of Destiny (or *Lapis Jacobus*).
7. A dog collar.

A New Munro.—The pious thoughts of the organiser were immediately frustrated, as the idea that such a thing existed proved too much for one member who desired it to complete his bag. He accordingly attached himself to an Aberdeen gentleman who thought he knew of one in Ardnamurchan, and the two set off in a high-powered motor car for that vicinity. They were, however, closely followed by a third member, equipped with a pocket theodolite, who stated that he had already measured all the hills in that district, and was determined to prove

beyond all doubt that its existence could never have escaped his eagle eye. On their return, however, they made the night hideous by their raucous arguing, and were immediately disqualified by the organiser.

The Black Shoot.—This proved a most elusive article, and its conquest was only achieved by a member of the Central Highlands "Guide Book" Committee, who was making his fifth attempt to locate it. As he made his way up the shoot he was heard to be muttering in what appeared to be Russian, but some of the language sounded vaguely familiar. Certain other searchers, after six hours of wandering, succeeded in discovering a route over the River Strae but, owing to the arrival of darkness, were unable to make use of it.

A Corona.—Several of the more learned members knew that this was to be witnessed only at an eclipse of the sun, but, on consulting a book on astronomy, discovered that no such phenomenon was to be visible from Loch Awe for at least twenty years. The more ignorant members, however, found this item to be easy of acquisition. A large box of cigars, each bearing a label with the year of vintage, lay on the mantelpiece in the lounge all Saturday evening, and members (excluding the Committee) spent a comfortable evening meditating on the strange effect the approach of New Year appeared to have on the management of Highland hotels, when they provided such luxuries free. The President's remarks later in the evening are unprintable, but he got his own back by pointing out that they were only half Coronas, thereby disqualifying anyone who had not smoked two. Those who had were afraid to admit it.

A Piece of Black Beard.—No one had any success in their quest after this till the return of the Ardnamurchan expedition. The supply of this article was limited, and it was decided not to beat about the bush by splitting hairs. Nevertheless the supply soon ran done, and at dinner that evening, people commented on the appearance of a handsome clean-shaven stranger who claimed to have conquered all the Munros in Scotland.

A Member of Committee.—A mass attack was con-

sidered the best way to deal with this item, although a division of the spoils was thought to present difficulties. However, for several hours, all attempts were frustrated by the patience and diligence of the Committee, who seemed to be trying to beat the record recently established by Parliament for long sitting. One member was captured when he came out in search of refreshment. Most of the scalp hunters retired disgruntled, but ultimately patience was rewarded, and a second victim was claimed and rushed to another part of the country. A third member escaped to Tyndrum in a fast motor car. The remaining members of Committee are believed to be still sitting.

A Stone of Destiny (or Lapis Jacobus).—Only one member succeeded in adding this to his collection, but as he failed to convince people that it had come from Scone, or that he had used it for a pillow, it was disallowed. It must be said that wherever it had come from, its finder seemed to place a certain value on it, as he took precautions to prevent its defacement by souvenir hunters by placing it under the President's chair for safe custody.

A Dog Collar.—As there were no dogs in the establishment, everybody's attention was turned towards the organiser. A dreadful mêlée ensued which rapidly became more involved, until suddenly a cold voice broke in above the tumult, saying, "It's half-past seven, sir, the snow has all disappeared, and it's raining heavily."

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1934—LOCH AWE.

THE following members and guests were present at one time or another :—

Members.—The President, J. Logan Aikman, W. J. C. Ainslie, C. G. Andrews, J. H. B. Bell, Ian Campbell, J. Rooke Corbett, C. D. Crosthwaite, S. F. M. Cumming, J. Dow, R. R. Elton, Arthur Geddes, A. Harrison, Norman L. Hird, K. K. Hunter, A. G. Hutchison, J. Gall Inglis, R. M. Gall Inglis, J. S. M. Jack, K. G. Jackson, Robert Jeffrey, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, J. G. M'Lean, W. Ross M'Lean, G. Graham Macphee, E. Marshall, B. W. Martin, M. Matheson, R. W. B. Morris, D. Myles, J. Neil Orr, John G. Osborne, C. W. Parry, R. C. Paterson, D. W. Robinson, J. Gordon Robinson, T. G. Robinson, G. R. Roxburgh, N. Sandeman, J. A. Scott, R. M. Scott, G. R. Speirs, D. H. Steven, E. C. Thomson, T. Evershed Thomson, G. F. Todd, H. W. Turnbull, P. J. H. Unna, W. Waddell. (50.)

Guests.—E. G. Dymond, S. I. Jack, J. M. Shewell, T. A. Thomson, J. P. Watson. (5.) A total of 55.

During the Meet the weather, to put it mildly, was patchy. With the exception of a heavy fall of snow on Friday and Friday night the hills were remarkably bare for the time of year. There was a high wind on the tops throughout the Meet, with the exception of Friday, and on all the days either rain or snow fell, chiefly the former. The attendance was fair but rather below the total expected at Loch Awe.

Thursday, 28th December.—Turnbull and Parry were the first arrivals, being joined the following morning by Unna, who had travelled overnight from London.

Stob
Dearg

Ben
Cruachan

Stob
Diamh

Stob
Garbh

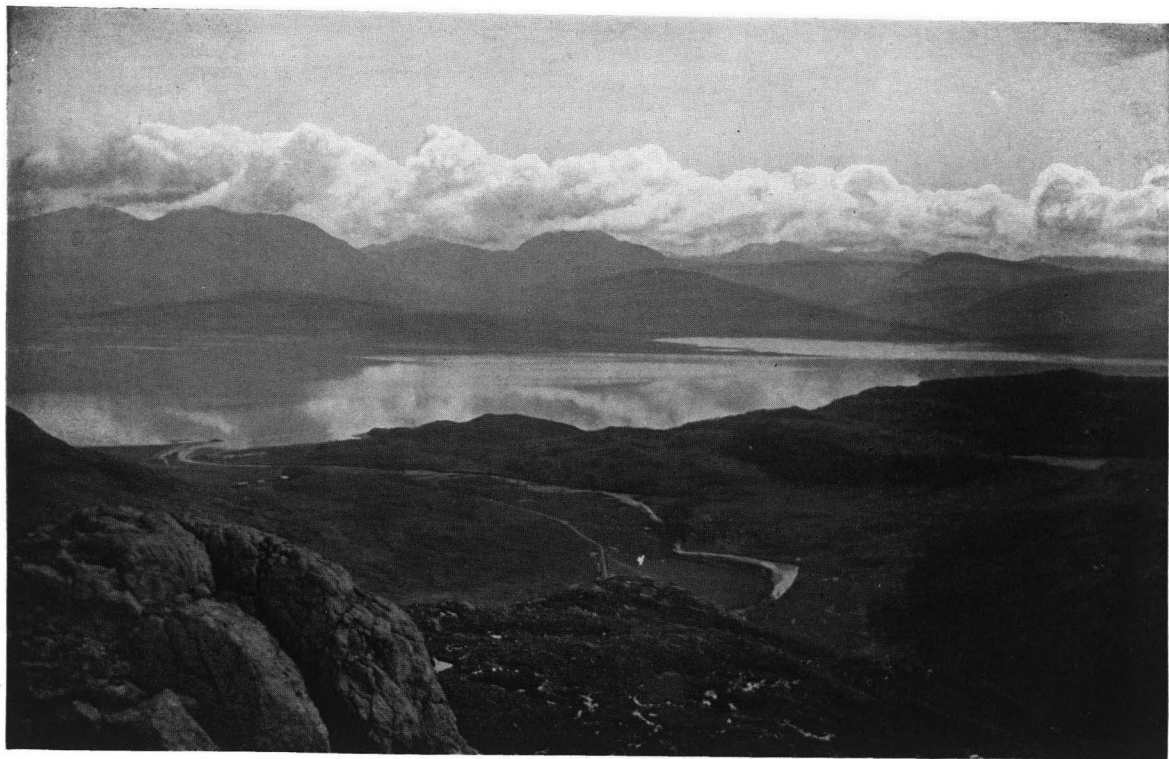
Beinn a'
Bhùirdh



August 1932

BEN CRUACHAN FROM THE GLEN NANT ROAD NEAR LOCH TROMLEE

Allan Arthur



April 1933

GLEN TARBERT AND APPIN FROM THE LOWER SLOPES OF GARBH BHEINN

Percy Donald

As he did not demand the privileges accorded to age, Unna had recourse to guile to preserve his position of bodily rest during the night.

Friday, 29th December.—The above-mentioned trio set out on a fine morning to examine the Black Shoot of Beinn Eunaich. They had no recognisable view of the Black Shoot, but grand views in every other direction till above 2,000 feet, when mist blotted out everything, and iced rocks in the east corrie, directly below the summit, demanded the use of the rope till the summit was reached. The snow-level was not below 2,000 feet, and even above that height the covering was thin. The party returned by the Allt Mhoille.

A large number of members arrived in the evening.

Saturday, 30th December.—The President, Lawson, Parry, and Turnbull motored to the foot of the Allt Brander, where they waited patiently for the rain to cease. As soon as this happened they started, in a snow-storm, to ascend Cruachan from the ridge between the Taynuilt peak and Cruachan. The descent was made by the ridge to Meall Cuanail, where the President lost his map in the high wind.

E. C. Thomson and Aikman arrived in the evening, having ascended an eminence of some 1,250 feet, known as Deadh Choimhead (Lat., 56°23' N.; Long., 5°20' W., approx.) *en route*. They gave a most lyrical account of this ascent, much too lyrical to be given here.

Matheson and Macdonald appear to have explored quarries.

Macdonald had spent three days at Crianlarich before joining the Meet at Loch Awe. With his wife he climbed Ben More, An Caisteal, and Cruach Ardrain, the latter by a gully in the north face, which, he believes, starts close to the foot of the Y-gully and runs straight towards the top. It is well defined and, though only about 130 feet high, gave three very good pitches. There was little snow.

J. M'Lean, Waddell, Crosthwaite, and Ian Jack ascended Meall Cuanail from the Falls of Cruachan, Cruachan main peak, Drochaid Glas, and back to the Falls.

Macphee and Elton, deciding that as they were wet they might as well keep wet, ascended Meall Cuanail, Cruachan main peak, Stob Dearg, main peak again, Drochaid Glas, Stob Diamh, and Sròn an Isean. There being no more tops left, they came down, losing each other on the way.

Ling, Scott, Aikman, Ainslie, Geddes, and Dymond crossed in turn Meall Cuanail, Cruachan, and Stob Dearg.

Unna, Jeffrey, Jack, and Hird ascended Stob Diamh by the Allt Cruachan, Stob Garbh, and back by the ridge.

Todd and T. A. Thomson ascended Meal Cuanail, Cruachan, Drochaid Glas, Stob Diamh, and Stob Garbh.

Dow, Evershed Thomson, Myles, and Andrews motored to Stob Garbhar, then proceeded to point 1041, from which they made a partial ascent of Buachaille Etive Beag, reaching about the 2,500-foot level.

Martin and Watson went straight up Coire Cruachan to Drochaid Glas, descended to the corrie just below the main peak, and back by the Falls.

T. G. Robinson and Jackson walked from Bridge of Orchy over Beinn Mhic-Mhonaidh to Glen Strae, then to the hotel.

Ian Campbell, who was attending the J.M.C.S. Meet at Tyndrum, arrived in the evening, having ascended Beinn Dubhchraig.

Gordon Robinson and Speirs were up Ben More.

Sunday, 31st December.—The weather was fine in the morning, but with wind and mist on the heights.

Ling, J. A. Scott, and Osborne went round the horse-shoe of Cruachan, starting from Sròn an Isean.

Macphee and Parry visited Kilchurn Castle to photograph. Cumming was up Beinn a' Bhùiridh.

E. C. Thomson, R. M. Gall Inglis, R. M. Scott, and Orr ascended Beinn a' Chochuill and Beinn Eunaich.

Steven, D. W. Robinson, and Roxburgh were up Stob Gharbhar.

The President, Lawson, Jeffrey, and Hird ascended Drochaid Glas from the col between it and Cruachan;

here Jeffrey and Hird descended while the other two, with great difficulty, crossed Stob Diamh and Stob Garbh.

Marshall and Paterson crossed Beinn a' Bhùiridh, returning by the Falls.

Dow, Myles, and Andrews did Beinn a' Bhùiridh, Stob Garbh, Stob Diamh, Sròn an Isean, and back by the horse-shoe. Myles appeared to have got mislaid in the descent, but arrived home first.

Evershed Thomson and Aikman followed the Allt Mhoille to the a' Chochuill col, ascended Sròn an Isean, Stob Diamh, and Drochaid Glas, returning by the Falls.

Corbett crossed in turn Beinn a' Bhùiridh, Stob Garbh, Stob Diamh, and Drochaid Glas, also returning by the Falls.

Martin, Ian Jack, and Watson did Meall Copagach, Beinn Eunaich, and Beinn a' Cochuill.

Geddes, Morris, and Dymond ascended Beinn Laoigh and Beinn a' Chleibh.

Hutchison, Robinson, and Jackson crossed the a' Chochuill-Cruachan col, ascended the north ridge of Drochaid Glas, crossed the main peak of Cruachan, and descended over Meall Cuanail.

Harrison and Shewell did the main peak from the Cruachan corrie and Drochaid Glas, following footprints down the north ridge for some distance before they discovered their mistake.

Elton, Waddell, Ainslie, T. A. Thomson, and Todd ascended Beinn Laoigh, where Todd faded away in the mist in the direction of Tyndrum, the others continuing over Beinn a' Chleibh and walking back from Dalmally.

Sandeman was up Beinn Dorain from Inveroran.

Bell and Turnbull went to the Black Shoot, but finding a water-shoot instead, ascended a gully to the west and so to the summit of Beinn Eunaich. They then proceeded over Beinn a' Chochuill, and returned by the col to the farm.

Jack appeared remarkably smartly attired for a Meet. It transpired that, having some doubts as to the capacity of the hotel drying-room, he had attempted to dry his

sodden clothes himself. From the point of view of drying, his efforts met with complete success, but the garments in question will never be seen again. They were burnt to cinders owing to the fire emptying itself into the grate. Jack and Gall Inglis therefore went to Dalmally, arriving too late for church. Jack returned by the railway, visiting the monument near Ardteatle. In the evening the two represented the Club at church.

Unna, Matheson, and Macdonald ascended Beinn a' Bhùiridh, Drochaid Glas, and the main peak, returning by the Falls, and arriving back at a quarter to seven.

The M'Leans and Crosthwaite motored to Killin and ski-ed on the col on Beinn Ghlas, ascending Meall Corranaich on skis practically the whole way. They encountered many other ski-ers, including the President of the Scottish Ski Club.

There were fifty-one to dinner on Sunday evening.

Monday, 1st January.—This was a very wet day with high winds on the tops. There were signs of clearing about 1.30 P.M., but rain commenced to fall again in the afternoon.

Jeffrey, Harrison, and Lawson went most of the way to the a' Chochuill col, followed some time later by Parry, but all returned in the early afternoon. Cumming and J. A. Scott followed suit, while the President and Unna made an expedition towards Beinn Eunaich.

Geddes and Hird visited Kilchurn Castle.

Aikman, R. M. Gall Inglis, and Orr motored to the bridge at Succoth Farm and climbed Beinn a' Chleibh.

The M'Leans, Waddell, and Crosthwaite motored to Duileiter from where they ascended Beinn Eunaich.

R. M. Scott walked to Dalmally and back.

Ling, Jack, and Todd were up Beinn Eunaich. The composition of this party was, according to other accounts, extremely varied. Some said that the President was a member, others that Unna was of the number, and that many more equally distinguished persons were present. The explanation was only forthcoming when it was realised that Jack had appeared in borrowed plumage, and that many, even of the most respected members of

the Club, are only too easily recognised at a distance by their garments (especially their spare ones).

Macphee and Shewell went up Beinn a' Chochuill from the col, Beinn Eunaich, and back by the farm.

Two parties, consisting of Hutchison, T. G. Robinson, and Jackson, and Martin, Evershed Thomson, Ian Jack, and T. A. Thomson did the horse-shoe from Beinn a' Bhùiridh to Sròn an Isean.

Osborne, Ainslie, and Sandeman did Beinn a' Chochuill from the col and Beinn Eunaich.

Matheson, Macdonald, and Turnbull tried the Black Shoot, but were defeated within 20 feet of the top, in spite of combined tactics. On this occasion the gully was not altogether free from moisture.

E. C. Thomson was up Monadh Driseig after lunch, while Andrews reached the summit of Beinn a' Bhùiridh after many flounderings, and returned home in all directions!

Hunter arrived about 9.30, having left Glasgow by the 5.30 train, and ascended Beinn Laoigh with two J.M.C.S. members. They tried the gully, but had to work up a rib on the left as the pitch would not go in the conditions.

Bell and Myles spent the morning in collusion.* In the evening they were concerned in the only rescue of the Meet—that of an unfortunate youth who, attempting to traverse direct to a stance ahead, caught his foot in the back of one of the chairs of Oban cinema. At 9.30 P.M. Andrews joined them for a walk to the Falls, and at 11.30 Bell had a New Year bathe in the Loch. As a result of these dissipations, the party found itself stranded outside the hotel at 11.50 P.M., when the sole means of ingress was for Bell to cat-burgle the President's bedroom.

The improved tone of the Meet this evening was commented upon by the waiter, who remarked to the President, "Non-alcoholic drinks *to-night*, sir."

By Tuesday morning most of the members had retired, and only a small party remained to climb on that day.

* See p. 177.

Tuesday, 2nd January.—E. C. Thomson and Osborne did the horse-shoe of Cruachan, and came down over Beinn a' Bhùiridh, most of the journey being in mist.

Hutchison and Hunter ascended Beinn Eunaich and Beinn a' Chochuill clear of mist, but noted Cruachan in mist all day.

Bell and Myles took the train to Taynuilt, after ineffectual attempts to have the train stopped at the Falls, went up Loch Etive side and Glen Noe to the main top of Cruachan and down the Allt Brander, where Myles caught a bus. Bell did not.

Wednesday, 3rd January.—Myles motored Bell and Hunter to the Pass of Brander, returning home after this good deed. The other two ascended Meall Cuanail and then on to the main top of Cruachan, finding the President's map *en route* (see above). The weather was freezing above 3,300 feet, but turned to rain later. They completed the round of the remaining tops soon after, in bad weather and in a high wind, returning over Beinn a' Bhùiridh.

In spite of the weather the Meet was a great success, and the arrangements for the comfort of the members quite up to the standard we have come to expect from the Loch Awe Hotel.

C. W. P.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1933.

THE Forty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Club was held in the Central Station Hotel, Glasgow, on Friday, 1st December 1933, at 6 P.M., the President, Mr Harry MacRobert, in the Chair. The meeting was notable by reason of the large attendance of senior and junior members alike, partly, no doubt, attributable to the notice of a special motion to be raised by Mr J. H. B. Bell, relative to the future constitution and activities of the Club, and, for this item on the agenda, all present waited with patience during the not inconsiderable time taken up by the routine reports.

After the formality of hearing the lengthy minutes of last meeting read, the meeting listened to an eloquent dissertation by the HON. TREASURER on the finances of the

Club. The rôle of apologist was assumed by him in his opening remark that the deficit for the year had reached a sum of £52. He then proceeded to absolve himself of all blame by narrating the chief causes, to wit, the reduction of £23 in the Entry Money received this year—in comparison with the exceptional sum which came in during the previous year with the record influx of new members—and a still larger increase in the cost of the *Journal*, this having risen by £45. He said that Mr Stuart Cumming had reported on the condition of the Commutation Fund, and that it was found to be in a satisfactory state. The large cash balance—including £350 on Deposit Account—would soon be gone in the financing of reprints and new issues of “Guide Books.” He also reported that since the close of the Accounts, the holding of £500 South Australia 4 per cent. Stock had been sold, and that £600 3½ per cent. Dominion Guaranteed Debenture Stock, 1961, of the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway had been purchased. After finishing by declaring that the future financial prospect appeared to be quite satisfactory, he was accorded a hearty vote of thanks on the motion of the Chairman.

The HON. SECRETARY submitted his report on the activities of the Club during the year, which had included a very excellent little Meet at Whitsuntide at Corrour Lodge, kindly lent for the occasion by Sir John Stirling-Maxwell. The membership now stood at 302—including 18 original and 5 honorary members, there having been 5 deaths and 7 resignations, while 16 new members were elected and 1 member rejoined. On the motion of the President, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Assistant Secretary.

In the absence of the EDITOR, Mr C. W. Parry, his report was read by the SECRETARY. The substantial increase in the net cost of the *Journal* was due to various causes, including the cost of the Index to Volume 19, and an increased number of illustrations as well as to a falling off in the outside sales and advertising receipts. He explained that the current year's issues would be slightly curtailed to reduce the expense, and the meeting,

in instructing the Secretary to convey its thanks and its appreciation of the Editorial services, recorded a wish that no drastic reduction should be made in the size of the *Journal*, but that the tradition of the past should be maintained.

The HON. LIBRARIAN, Mr Matheson, reported upon the condition of the Club-Room, the Library, and the Slide Collection. Twelve new books had been presented, while a complete set of the O.S. 1-inch brown hill-shaded maps was now possessed. There had also been a gift of a large number of 6-inch and other maps belonging to the late Colin Philip. Eighty new slides had been presented, and good use of the collection had been made during the year. He regretted that certain maps, which had been borrowed despite a notice forbidding their removal from the Club-Room, had not yet been returned. The President moved, and the meeting accorded a vote of thanks to the Librarian and to the Custodian of Slides.

The GENERAL "GUIDE BOOK" EDITOR, Rev. A. E. Robertson, reported on the "Guide Book" position. No new "Guide" had been published since last meeting, but a revised edition (of 2,000 copies) of the "General Guide" had been issued, in addition to a reprint of 1,000 copies of the "Western Highlands Guide" which included certain new maps. He reported that it was hoped to publish the Central Highlands section before the summer, and that the next "Guide Book" to be issued would be that dealing with The Islands—which means Arran and the Western Isles generally (excluding Skye). He gave his special thanks to Mr W. B. Speirs for his valuable services in the distribution of the publications. The meeting accorded a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Robertson and Mr Speirs.

The HUT CUSTODIAN, Mr R. R. Elton, submitted details of the financial results of the Hut Occupation Fund, which showed a surplus on the year of £11. 14s. 9d., the amount at credit of this fund now being £70. 18s. 6d. The fuel charges he considered were working out satisfactorily, but a change had been made in the method of charging for oil. There was now first-aid equipment

installed in the Hut. He regretted that the use made of the Hut had not been very great during the past year. Members of the J.M.C.S. were again its best attenders. The Hut had been maintained and was in good condition. The thanks of the meeting were expressed to the Custodian as well as to Mr Tom Gibson for the work he had done.

The Committee's recommendations for the new office-bearers were unanimously approved, and are as follows:—

Vice-President.—Mr P. J. H. Unna.

Committee.—Messrs I. M. Campbell, J. Rooke Corbett, and R. N. Rutherford.

An alteration to the footnote to Rule 39 of the Club's Rules was moved by Mr ALEX. HARRISON, who explained the reasons for the change, and was approved. This footnote now reads: "Applications for membership must reach the Hon. Secretary not later than 30th September, so that they may be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Committee in October."

Strange to relate, this year the Committee's recommendations of Meets for 1935 were unanimously approved and without discussion. What has come over the old-time spirit of the Annual Meeting? Or is it that the present Committee are more sagacious than their predecessors? The Meets are to be at Tyndrum for New Year, 1934-35, and Kinlochewe and Loch Maree for Easter, 1935.

The last item of the lengthy agenda now fell to be dealt with. However, on the President's call to the mover of the motion, no one responded. Following his precedent (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 177) Mr Bell was not present. The President, while explaining that he was not certain that the motion was in order, invited the meeting to agree to hear it and to indicate whether it would consent to adjourn for a little while in case Mr Bell should turn up later. The meeting was accordingly suspended for some ten minutes, at the end of which time Mr Bell did appear, and before an interested audience spoke to his motion. The bristling horror of several die-hards who had come to oppose the conversion of the Club into a gymnastic school, into which entrance would be by competitive examination, gradually faded as the speaker

developed his theme, and most people at once recognised and sympathised with the points that Mr Bell made regarding the trend of matters—that the growth of the Club tended to destroy the old sense of intimacy among members and to cause a voluntary abstention from Meets among the elders from unselfish reasons. He claimed that his ideas of the lines on which reform should be carried out did not have the disadvantages and harshness that a hard and fast limitation of membership would create, perhaps leading to the establishment of other rival bodies. He questioned the adequacy of the present admission qualifications, which did not indicate whether the candidate necessarily possessed any real mountaineering experience. The problem of J.M.C.S. members who preferred to stay on in that Club to act as leaders to novices was also touched upon.

It was recognised on all sides that Mr Bell had put a good case for, at any rate, a thorough investigation. The motion—which was, in effect, to remit to a sub-committee the task of formulating a scheme to submit to the next Annual Meeting—was seconded by Mr R. Arnold Brown in the absence of Mr Wedderburn.

A general discussion took place on the matters raised. Mr Solly, after indicating that the Club had followed the practice of the Alpine Club in giving the Committee discretion to admit or reject candidates without any hard and fast qualification, proposed that the motion should merely remit the matter to the Committee for consideration and report. Mr Thomson seconded, and, with the consent of Messrs Bell and Brown, this counter motion was approved unanimously.

The discussion continued, however, and various views and ideas were ventilated, among others, those of Mr Ross McLean, who was all for stiffening up the qualifications so that they should include rock-climbing experience, embellishing his points with some amazing stories. The President wound up the discussion and the business of the meeting in some well-chosen remarks, stating that new members came from two main classes—young men with, usually, very extensive qualifications, and older men

who might not have rock-climbing experience, and that both types must be equally welcomed in a Club like ours.

The meeting terminated—in good time for the Dinner—with a vote of thanks to the President, moved by Mr Gilbert Thomson.

J. L. A.

RECEPTION.

THE Central Station Hotel, Glasgow, was the rendezvous of members and their friends on the occasion of the Reception on 1st December 1933. The President and Mrs MacRobert received the guests, and there were 177 persons present at the tea. The subsequent entertainment this year took the form of a film show by the President, entitled a "Miscellany of Rock-climbing in Scotland," together with some delightful shots of ski-ing on Swiss snows. The "stars" in the first portion were various prominent members besporting themselves on the ridges of Ben Nevis, as well as more youthful actors from the President's own family circle, who nimbly scrambled about the rocks of the good old Cobbler. The show was accompanied by a running commentary, in his own racy style, from the President, to whom Mr Solly proposed a vote of thanks at the close; this, it is needless to say, was accorded with enthusiasm.

J. L. A.

ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Forty-fifth Annual Dinner was held at the close of the Meeting on 1st December 1933, and was one of the most successful Dinners ever held; altogether there were present 65 members and 27 guests. The Club was especially fortunate to have as their principal guest Mr Hugh Ruttledge, the leader of the 1933 Mount Everest Expedition.

After the loyal toasts the President proposed the Health of the Club. He began by rather flooring us with an involved medical description of his state of mind, and then passed on to a wider survey of Club matters, not without many personal reminiscences thrown in, including a story illustrating the different technique on

rocks of the two Vice-Presidents. Finishing on a more elevated note, as befitted the first non-Victorian President, he reviewed the past history of the Club, its present condition, and its continuance as a bond of union among lovers of mountain climbing.

Considerable agitation had been caused in certain quarters during the earlier portion of the Dinner at the non-appearance of I. M. Campbell, but fears and apprehension were allayed by his belated arrival, just in time to propose the toast of the "Everest Expedition." This was very fortunate for all those present, who will long remember his speech of rare excellence and wit, which grew in grace and aptitude in a series of "Gometrical" progressions.

Mr Ruttledge was enthusiastically welcomed as the leader of the Expedition, the guest of the evening, and the new owner of a Scottish island, and in his characteristically self-effacing reply, during which the proverbial pin might have been heard, he told us simply and graphically of the work of the Expedition, and of the many situations of great difficulty which had been met with and overcome by the members of the party. As regards the future, he was impressive in his recital of the essentials to success—a perfectly acclimatised climbing party, a late monsoon, and three consecutive days of fine weather, which on Everest are little short of miraculous.

Professor Turnbull, in felicitous terms, proposed the Health of the Guests and the Kindred Clubs. Sir Robert Bruce, LL.D., who was to have made the principal reply, was unfortunately prevented at the last moment from being present, and Col. David E. Brand, D.S.O., replied for the lay guests, and Mr E. E. Roberts, of the Yorkshire Ramblers, for the Clubs.

No Club Dinner would be complete without the "Club Song," which was sung again this year by J. S. M. Jack, while the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" brought to a close one of the most enjoyable of any of the Club's functions—an evening of good humour, of good speaking, and good—very good—company.

J. L. A.

LIBRARY REPORT.

IN addition to the usual journals from kindred clubs, the following books have been added to the Library since the last issue of the *Journal* :—

- “ Sun, Cloud and Snow in the Western Highlands,” by Arthur Gardner. Presented by the Author.
- “ Pioneers of Mountaineering,” by B. Webster Smith. Presented by the Publishers, Messrs Blackie & Sons.
- “ Black’s Picturesque Tourist—Scotland. 1856 Edition.” Presented by G. F. Gregor Grant.
- “ The Naked Mountain,” by Elizabeth Knowlton. Presented by the Publishers, Messrs Putnam.
- “ Pentland Days and Country Ways,” by Will Grant. Presented by the Publishers, Messrs Nelson & Sons.

Reference was made in the last *Journal* to the abstraction from the Library of 20 sheets of the 1-inch O.S. maps and of the volume “ Norway: The Northern Playground.” These have not yet been replaced, and this further notice is inserted in the hope that it may catch the eye of the member or members responsible. Volume 13 of the *S.M.C. Journal* has also been taken away, and the Librarian will be glad if the borrower will return this as soon as possible.

SLIDE COLLECTION.

Fourteen slides (three of the Cairngorms, two of Rum and nine of Skye) have been added to the collection: for these gifts the Club is indebted to Messrs G. W. Seymour and James S. Tait (non-members), and to Messrs A. Harrison and L. G. Shadbolt. D. M.

THE Club extends a cordial welcome to the following new members, elected in 1933 :—

J. C. S. Ewen, J. M. Thomson, N. L. Hird, D. Myles, J. N. Orr, W. C. Watson, G. Arthur, C. D. Crosthwaite, J. Dawson, F. D. C. Allan, S. J. L. Hardie, I. G. Jack, P. D. Baird, D. M. Isles, R. M. M’Intyre, G. Anderson.

REVIEWS.

Pentland Days and Country Ways. By Will Grant.
Published by Nelson & Sons.

This book will be of great interest to all who live in Edinburgh, and especially to those who know well the nooks and crannies of the Pentland Hills. Mr Grant's enthusiasm for these hills amounts almost to a passion. He has searched out all the literary and historical associations of his favourite haunts. He knows all the antiquities. He has studied the habits, occupations, traditions and character of the past and present inhabitants. And he presents us with the results in this charmingly written and well-illustrated book. The reviewer knows these hills intimately, but he feels he knows them much better after reading Mr Grant, who stimulates fresh interest in familiar places and provides new reasons for revisiting old haunts. But it would be a mistake to imagine that this book is a mere collection of interesting facts. Mr Grant's researches are, I think, merely an outcome of his love of the Pentlands, and while these researches occupy most of his space, the book is essentially an eloquent appraisal of the joys of the tramp—of the unequalled satisfaction that accrues to mind and body from lonely walks in lonely places. M. M.

Pioneers of Mountaineering. By B. Webster Smith.
Published by Blackie & Son.

Those who are well versed in mountaineering books may find little in this book with which they are not already familiar. But even the student of climbing literature will enjoy reading it, if only for the fact that it refreshes his memory of the half-forgotten mountaineering classics he read long ago. From de Saussure on Mont Blanc to Smythe on Kamet, the author traverses the history of major mountaineering achievement. The Alps, the Caucasus, Kilimanjaro, the Himalayas, the New Zealand Alps: each have their turn, and the feats of Whymper, Mummery, Conway, Freshfield and Tyndall are retold. To those not so familiar with mountaineering literature this book is quite valuable. It will inevitably drive them to seek further details from the original sources and the bibliography in the preface will help them on their way. "Pioneers of Mountaineering" is a well-written little book and quite free from the fantastic nonsense and cheap sensationalism which so often creep into climbing books written for non-technical readers. M. M.

The Naked Mountain. By Elizabeth Knowlton. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1933.

The title is apparently a translation of the Urdu name Nanga Parbat (26,620 feet), the great Himalayan Peak in northern Kashmir, and the book relates the attempt of the German-American Himalaya Expedition to climb the mountain in 1932. The authoress was official journalist and one of the two Americans in the expedition. This was the first serious attack on Nanga Parbat since Mummery's ill-fated effort in 1895. The party were handicapped by a shortage of porters, which necessitated a relay system of transport involving loss of time, and which prevented surveillance of the porter units. At the base camp it was discovered that serious pilferage of money and equipment had occurred. The Hunza porters were practically useless for high-altitude work, and it is therefore not surprising that by the end of the summer no camps had been established high enough to admit of an assault on the summit. The heavy snow-falls of Autumn prevented further advance.

The book is much more than a narrative of action. Miss Knowlton is a mountain lover, and, moreover, a very accomplished writer. Whether touching on the colourful life of Srinagar or depicting the exquisite beauties of sunset and dawn on the high snows, she infuses into her work a rare imagery and a happy choice of phrase which makes good reading: one of the best additions to mountaineering literature which has appeared for some time.

D. M.

The Alpine Journal, Vol. XLV., No. 247.

The Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, whatever his official tribulations may be, has a wealth of material to draw upon which, in geographical range at least, is unique. Of primary interest to S.M.C. Members is Mr Harry MacRobert's paper on "Climbing in Scotland." Our President has made excellent use of this opportunity of presenting to the Alpine Club the attractions of Scottish hills in their varied moods. An account of the Mount Everest expedition of 1933 is contributed by Mr Hugh Ruttledge. A height of over 28,000 feet was attained after great effort, but the severe strain was beginning to tell, and when the monsoon broke abnormally early, with heavy snow-falls, the attack had to be abandoned.

Prof. T. Graham Brown describes a series of interesting climbs in the Mont Blanc group, most of them contrived in the brief fine-weather spells of a hopeless season. Mr H. E. L. Porter has something to say of the weather vagaries in the New Zealand Alps where the season of 1932-33 was even worse than usual. The first ascent of the snow peaks of Ruwenzori from the West is described by a member of

the Belgian Scientific Expedition of 1932. Other articles deal with climbing and exploration in the Elburz Range, the Rockies, and the Argentine-Chilean Cordillera.

A portrait of the late Duke of the Abruzzi appears on the frontispiece with an outline of his life and exploits. One of the finest things in the number is G. Winthrop Young's tribute to the memory of that peerless guide and mountaineer, Franz Lochmatter, who was killed on the Weisshorn in August last.

D. M.

NOTES AND EXCURSIONS.

The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.

 SOUTH UIST.

I regret that, in the second paragraph of my article on p. 79, the dimensions of the island were stated incorrectly; 10, 3, and 4 miles should have been 20, 6, and 8 miles.

Since the *Journal* was published I have learned that Mr M. Botterill examined the Hellisdale precipice in 1930 and 1932. He ascended it by way of gullies on either side of the buttress to the east of the great buttress, with curious overhang, shown on the lower photograph opposite p. 80. He has informed me that both of the gullies which he climbed were of "a slimy trap rock, softer than the cliffs. It was covered with plants, and although in both cases the rock lay at an easy angle, we had to take to the cliffs at times to avoid the treacherous stuff. These gullies are not pleasant places."

J. A. PARKER.

 FUAR THOLL—WESTER ROSS.

From the rock-climbing point of view this hill does not appear to have been explored at all, though it is readily accessible and looks very impressive from the Skye road in Glen Carron. There are big cliffs to the north and east over Coire Lair, but what seem to be the finest are in a small corrie to the south-east of the summit. C. Ludwig and J. D. MacLennan had a climb in this latter corrie on the 14th October 1933.

The climbing is found on the western wall of the corrie, where the cliffs run north and south for about a quarter of a mile. To the south they are small and broken, but to the north run up very steeply for over 500 feet.

1. The climb begins below and to the right of a large semilunar green shelf which is very obvious from the other side of the corrie. The north end of this shelf was reached by a 40-foot pitch up steep rock, moderately difficult towards the top.

2. It may be possible to climb directly up from this ledge, but under the existing conditions—the whole face was dripping wet—it

was thought advisable to traverse to the left to the end of the shelf and then climb up 80 feet of steep, easy rock with good hitches for the leader, always tending towards the right so that one finished above the green shelf on a good ledge. A cairn was built here.

3. Further climbing up and to the right for about 40 feet brought one to the foot of a smooth chimney which looked distinctly impracticable.

4. One climbed round a nose to the right, and by an exposed traverse of about 30 feet reached a very steep, shallow chimney which continued down for about 20 feet below where one entered it, to peter out on slabs.

5. The next 80 feet is difficult and rather sensational, the chimney being climbed by small holds to within 15 feet of the top, where, owing to loose rock, the chimney is left and the pitch completed on the open face to the right. The stance reached, though very small, is quite good, and a cairn was built on it.

6. 120 feet of easy face followed, and a big green ledge was reached. (Probably one could escape on to more broken slopes by traversing along this ledge to the right.) A cairn was left here at

7, the foot of a 40-foot chimney, which was found to be fairly easy except towards the top.

8. From a good stance a 100-foot chimney led out to some rather rotten rock with a good deal of slime and moss. Another cairn was built.

9. Then a little over 100 feet of easy face, rather loose, brought one out on the top of the hill some 50 yards to the south of the summit. A large cairn was built here.

The climb took five hours.

There is no cairn at the foot of the climb, but the semilunar green ledge is very obvious—low down on the cliff and pretty near to the north end, *i.e.*, to the right. It would be advisable for any future party to take 100-120 feet of rope, as 80 feet was found insufficient to secure satisfactory stances.

C. L.

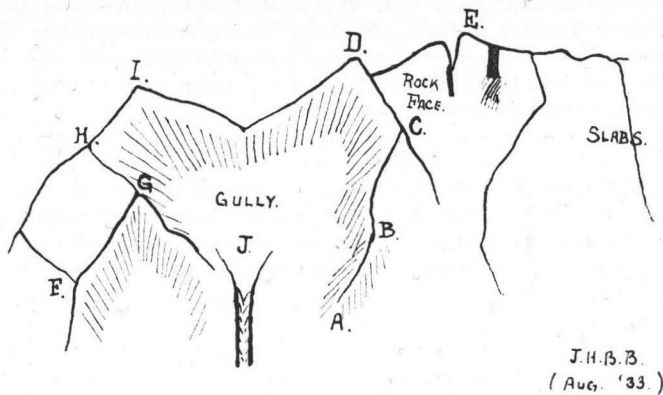
J. D. MACL.

BENS KLIBRECK, HOPE AND STACK.

In early August 1933 J. H. B. Bell and D. Myles paid a three-day visit to the Sutherland hills. The first night was spent in the car about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Altnaharra. Morning showed Ben Klibreck in correct position for an ascent of its western rocky buttress. As seen from this position, the upper cone of the hill seems to rest on a long shelf, which dips somewhat towards the north. Beneath this shelf are the rocks, in the centre of which, and a little to the left of the summit, is a prominent gully. Myles found this somewhat steep, and worked out of it by a series of traverses to the right, so

gaining the shelf. Bell tackled the buttress on the north side of the gully, which gave nearly 350 feet of climbing. The lower part was difficult and necessitated some traversing, but thereafter the climbing was airy and pleasant, lending a pleasant bit of sport to the ascent of the mountain.

The camp site for the ascent of Ben Hope was on the loch side, probably about three-quarters of the length of the loch from its northern end. This proved an ideal camp with a delightful bathing beach. From there a direct line was made for the Torridon sandstone buttresses of Ben Hope. It was found difficult to identify the routes described in the "Guide to the Northern Highlands," but the



BEN HOPE - N.W. FACE.

- | | | |
|---|------|---------------------------------|
| { | E. | CLOSE TO SUMMIT. |
| | A-E. | ABOUT 800 ft. |
| | A-B. | DIFFICULT, SLABBY. |
| | B-C. | GOOD CLIMBING - TORRIDON SLABS. |

accompanying line drawing, which portrays the general rock features of the mountain as seen from the camp site, will give a general idea of the topography of the route. In this case, also, the two climbers pursued different lines, Myles following the route FGHI on the drawing, as he did not wish anything too exacting.

The feature of the mountain from this side is the wide gully above J, which is flanked by two rocky ridges, that on the south side being the more interesting. The rock-climbing available on this ridge must be about 800 feet in total height from A to just below the summit. Bell experienced difficulty in the lower section AB, where a traverse across the face of the buttress to the right was necessary before regaining the crest of the ridge by a backstair route. From B to C excellent climbing rock was encountered, with airy and occasionally difficult situations. The stretch CD was pleasant and easy. There Bell and

Myles joined up. Between D and E is a narrow ridge with one exposed corner. The summit is beyond E but not much above it. The pitch between D and E is easily avoidable by descending a little on the other side of the mountain.

A pleasant evening climb was obtained two days later on Ben Stack (2,364 feet), a beautiful, sharp, conical mountain, which rises in a most imposing manner just south of Loch Stack, about 2 miles east of Laxford Bridge. The ascent was made by a shooter's path round to the south-western slopes above a little loch, and thence up the southern face of the mountain. There are some pleasant crags below the summit on this side, where some short rock scrambles are available on quite good rock. It is a pity that Ben Stack is neglected in the "Northern Guide." Its sharp, conical outlines, as seen either from west or east, gives it a good deal of individuality, especially when contrasted with such a shapeless mountain as Ben Arkle to the north.

The following extract from a letter received from Mr John W. Sinclair will doubtless be of considerable interest to members:—

"The morning papers of the 27th February recorded the death of the Rev. John Jeffrey, at Kilmacolm, at the age of eighty-one. He was, I think, the only stone-blind person to ascend Ben Ledi, which he did in company with a friend about fifteen years ago. His sight suddenly failed on board a steamer while returning to the native land he was never to see again. I spent holidays in the same house with him at Dunoon and had the above information from his own lips."

THE UIG HILLS, LEWIS.*

Messrs W. Ewen, J. A. Parker, and G. R. Symmers spent an enjoyable week at Ardroil last August with the objects of investigating the rock-climbing possibilities of the district and of obtaining information for the "Guide Book." Two days were devoted to the steep north face of Mula Mac Sgiathain, which yielded several enjoyable scrambles. The west face of Teinnasval proved to be less tractable, but a climb was had on the buttress immediately to the right of the three narrow chimneys at the south end of the face. Beannan a' Deas, although small, gave a good rock climb up its steep north-west face. Griomaval at the south end of the group was visited, but its steep north face appeared to be too slabby for rock-climbing. From the summit of Griomaval a wonderfully good view was had of the Harris Hills and of the Atlantic coast. Creag Dhùbh Dhibadail was looked at from below. It is a most impressive crag, but manifestly far too steep for climbing.

J. A. P.

* See *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XIX., pp. 379 to 381.

“ GLENCOE GUIDE.”

Members who have photographs of the districts to be included in the “ Glencoe Guide Book ” would greatly oblige J. H. B. Bell by sending prints for reproduction.

S.M.C. ABROAD.

G. Graham Macphee spent a short holiday in the Mont Blanc district in August 1933, and climbed the Petites Jorasses by a new direct route on the south face, with an Italian and an Englishman as companions.

He then ascended the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey by what appears to be a new route up the south face, and descended by the ordinary route. This climb was done alone, as his companion turned back at the start.

The Tour Ronde was traversed from N.W. to S.E., and the following day the Brenva Route up Mont Blanc was done with a Swiss party. The Aiguille du Géant by the ordinary route completed the ascents, as the weather became unsettled, and, although three huts were visited, bad weather prevented the completion of any further climbs.

J. Y. Macdonald writes :—

I was in Adelboden during August with my wife. With Chris. Pieren as guide we climbed the Wildstruble, Gross Lohner Westgrat, Fizerschneide, Wilde Frau (Blümlisalp) and Gspaltenhorn, and crossed by the Gamchilücke and Wetterlücke to the Lötschenthal. Bad weather robbed us of the Blümlisalphorn and the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn. Other excursions included traversing about two-thirds of the Niesen chain (in two expeditions). This is a magnificent ridge about 17 miles long, with occasional scrambling and only one short section of real difficulty (the Gsür Nordwand).

“ THE JOTUNHEIM.”

The object of these short notes is to commend to Scottish mountaineers a visit to “ The Jotunheim ” in Norway, a mountain playground which few people realise is so easily accessible from Scotland.

Leaving Glasgow at 2 P.M. on Saturday, Bergen is reached at 5 P.M. on Sunday, and the mountains themselves after a further four or five hours by train and bus. "The Jotunheim" is situated some hundred miles north of the centre of a line drawn between Bergen and Oslo, and consists of a host of wild jagged peaks rising from bare scree-covered slopes freely interspersed with glaciers, snow-fields, and fiords. The average height of the peaks is between 5,000 and 6,000 feet, but they rise as high as 8,000, whilst the plateau on which they stand averages about 3,000. Snow, ice, and rock climbs can be had at all times of the year, and are mostly easily accessible from the numerous hostels and hotels.

In summer the weather is usually good—in 1933 it was brilliant, there being no rain for two months on end—and though sometimes very warm in the valleys, a breeze keeps things comfortable on the mountains during the day, whilst at night, even in midsummer, the thermometer frequently touches freezing.

Excellent unrestricted trout fishing is to be had in all the mountain rivers, and provides a pleasant change for an off-day from the hills, though at times mosquitoes make themselves unpleasant near the water.

The Norwegians are a most likeable people, they nearly all speak fair English, and they are past-masters in the art of cooking; visitors are guaranteed to leave Norway fatter than on arrival, whilst Norwegian cleanliness is a byword throughout Europe.

Financially the trip works out relatively cheap, as the low cost of living there counterbalances the high fare across. A third return from Glasgow to Bergen via Newcastle costs £9. 4s., and for the three weeks spent in Norway I averaged 8s. 6d. a day, and that living on the fat of the land in the cleanest, most comfortable hotels imaginable.

A trip to the Alps just now is an expensive outing, especially for us Scotsmen faced with the initial outlay to London; for those of us whose purses are not too elastic "The Jotunheim" offers most of the Alpine attractions and many peculiarly its own.

G. R. ROXBURGH.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

GLASGOW SECTION.

EASTER MEET—SPEAN BRIDGE,

2ND, 3RD, AND 4TH APRIL 1933.

Present.—R. R. Elton, W. Forrest, G. F. Todd, and W. Waddell, of the S.M.C. G. Arthur, W. L. Coats, J. Dyer, D. T. Gibson, I. Jack, J. G. Monro, M'Allum, M'Leod, M'Lusky, W. P. Russell Stewart, and W. Watson, of the J.M.C.S. J. Lyall (guest).

Of the three days, Sunday and Monday were wet. Saturday had fair periods, with sleet squalls from the north-west.

Saturday.—Arthur, Lyall, Todd, and Waddell, starting from Kinlochleven, climbed Na Gruagaichean and Binnein Mòr. Todd and Waddell continued across Glen Nevis and through the Aonachs to Spean Bridge.

M'Allum, M'Leod, and Russell climbed the Aonachs, but confessed that they were unable to locate the cairn on Aonach Beag. Presumably some one before them had taken too seriously to peak bagging.

Elton, Forrest, Coats, and Gibson, having developed "lang leaghaidhs," paid a visit to Creag Meaghaidh.

Stewart and M'Lusky came across country from Corrour via Stob Bàn and Stob Choire Claurigh.

Monro and Dyer excelled themselves by leaving Kinlochleven at high noon and bagging all the Easains and Stob Choire Claurigh. They were met by a more or less inebriated search party from the hotel about 9.30 in the evening.

Sunday.—Arthur, Dyer, Russell, Todd, and Waddell went to Creag Meaghaidh, and after a long dismal trudge up Coire Ardoire, gave up the idea of attempting

"a task that is hardoire," and, instead, ploughed up a wet snow gully.

M'Allum, Coats, Jack, and Watson set out for Sgùrr Chòinnich Mòr and Stob Choire Claurigh. Coats, however, having forgotten his aneroid or something, returned to the hotel in good time for lunch.

The remainder made no bones about it, but stayed indoors and used up all the hot water.

In the evening some feeble attempts were made to sing several of the climbing songs in chorus. Why can't we Scots let ourselves go and sing like our North of England brothers?

Monday.—Under a weeping sky the party gradually dispersed. Arthur, Todd, and Waddell went home through Badnoch, and visited Dun da Lamh, a well-preserved Pictish fort overlooking the entrance to Corrieyairack. Coats, Dyer, Jack, Lyall, Monro, and Russell took bus to Fort William, and walked over the Old Mamore Road to Kinlochleven.

M'Lusky and Stewart walked over the hills to Corrour, where they joined the train for Glasgow.

SUBSIDIARY MEET.

Expedition to Ben Nevis by Broadbent and Dyce, J.M.C.S., and Noel Johnstone (unattached).

They left Glasgow at midnight, 31st March, and breakfasted on the road at 5 A.M. Johnstone performed wonders on the Primus. At 9 A.M. they set off up Allt a' Mhuilinn to the Hut, and from there attacked No. 2 Gully. At first the snow was very soft and deep, which necessitated slow going, but higher up the soft snow became thinner and *névé* appeared, which required careful step-cutting. The top of the gully was heavily corniced, but a break was soon discovered, and the party was able to reach the summit with ease.

The weather was broken, with thick mist and strong

wind. The descent was made via Càrn Dearg and Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe.

We note with deep regret that Johnstone was later killed while climbing the Central Gully, Sron na Ciche, in the Cuillin.

EDINBURGH SECTION.

SKYE MEET, 21ST TO 30TH JULY 1933.

Present.—Percy Donald (S.M.C.), Bell (guest), Fraser, Stobie, Sutherland, Traquair, and Welsh.

This highly successful Meet was notable for a variety of reasons.

To begin with it was the first of, we hope, many Meets to be graced by the presence of Mr Donald in his new official capacity of Honorary President.

Secondly, the benefits of holding a Meet, with a Youth Hostel as headquarters, were well and truly demonstrated. In this connection it must not be forgotten how much of our comfort was due to the indefatigable efforts of Welsh in making all arrangements during the week before the arrival of the rest of the party, and to his able "quarter-mastery" throughout the Meet.

Thirdly, those present had cause to congratulate themselves on the amount of climbing done, in spite of rather unpropitious weather, the hills being smothered in mist on every day except one.

Last, but not least, the vicissitudes experienced by the party on the journey to and from Glen Brittle are probably unique. On the evening of Friday, 21st July, Stobie, with Fraser and Traquair in his car, and Bell, with Sutherland in his car, set off from Edinburgh for Birnam. On arrival it was found that no accommodation could be had at the Youth Hostel, and the party left the road and sat round a fire till dawn. The night in the open proved too much for Bell's car, for at 4 A.M. on Saturday it showed no sign of life, in spite of being

pushed up and down the road several times. Sutherland was packed into Stobie's car and Bell was perforce left behind. The journey continued without further mishap, and Glen Brittle was reached at 8.45 P.M., where the party was welcomed by Welsh. The sky was cloudless, and magnificent views of the Cuillins had been obtained, that of the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann being particularly notable. Bell surprised every one by turning up next day, having reached Kyleakin on Saturday night after repairs to the car.

Sunday, 23rd July.—Although the weather had seemed set fair on the previous evening, Skye maintained its evil reputation in this respect, and Sunday was wet and misty. No one felt inclined to climb, so Fraser, Stobie, and Welsh walked round Loch Brittle to the point where they obtained a view of where Loch Scavaig should have been. Sutherland and Traquair fished in the burn. Sutherland had all the sport—one bite—but Traquair unkindly hinted that this was his imagination. In the evening a sing-song was held in the Hostel, and Traquair's rendering of some of the S.M.C. songs met with great acceptance. For the rest of the week, climbers and non-climbers alike sang lustily of their big hob-nailers.

Monday, 24th July.—The hills were again engulfed in mist. Fraser, Stobie, Sutherland, and Welsh climbed Sgumain by the North Buttress, and then made their way over Alisdair and Tearlach, descending by a gully which led to the Alisdair stone chute.

Bell and Traquair ascended Sgurr Dearg, and climbed the Inaccessible Pinnacle by the long side, descending the same way. They then walked along the ridge to Sgurr na Banachdich and down the Banachdich Ridge.

Tuesday, 25th July.—The weather again sprang a surprise by proving fine and clear. Bell, Fraser, Stobie, Sutherland, Traquair, and Welsh climbed the Window Tower Buttress of Sgurr Dearg by the 60-foot chimney in two parties. Going on to the top of Dearg they then climbed up the short side of the Inaccessible Pinnacle and down the long side. During the descent some of the party seemed to utilise every part of their clothing except

their boots for contact with the rock. For the first time a view was obtainable, and it was so clear in all directions that it amply made up for the previous day's blankness. The descent was made by a gully into Coire na Banachdich. In the evening the Hon. President turned up, having cycled from Ratagan.

Wednesday, 26th July.—The mist had again descended on the hills. Bell, Fraser, Stobie, and Sutherland climbed the left wall of the Banachdich Gully in two parties, and scrambled up broken rocks to the summit of Banachdich. Variety was added to their return by the Banachdich Ridge owing to the fact that a gale was blowing.

The H.P., Traquair, and Welsh walked round the coast to Loch Scavaig and back in seven hours. This was claimed as a record—for slowness.

Thursday, 27th July.—The mist was, if possible, thicker than ever. Bell, Stobie, and Sutherland made their way into Coire Labain, but decided the weather was too bad and came down again.

Fraser and Traquair succeeded in finding Sron-a-Ciche, and climbed the chimney route on the East Buttress. They returned along the top of the ridge, Traquair giving a fine demonstration of route-finding in mist with two compasses and an aneroid.

Welsh deserted the party and gallantly escorted two ladies into Coire a Greadaidh and up the gully between Greadaidh and Mhadaidh on to the summit of Mhadaidh and down Sgurr Thuilm.

The H.P. climbed up to Coire na Criche, and on his return informed the party that he had bathed. As he had taken no witnesses, no one could contradict his statement.

Friday, 28th July.—The mist was still hanging about, but showed faint signs of lifting. Accordingly, Bell, Fraser, Stobie, Sutherland, Traquair, and Welsh set off hopefully for Coire Labain, and proceeded up the West Buttress of Sgurr Mic Connich in two parties. Throughout the lower section the rock was unpleasantly rotten, but higher the climb improved in quality. The mist still obstinately refused to lift, and after a half-hearted and unsuccessful attempt to find Collie's Ledge, the party

made its way on to the ridge. Here it was rewarded with an amazing sight, for while the mist poured up Coire Labain it did not drop down the other side of the ridge, and Harta Corrie and all but the tops of the Red Cuillin were clear. The sun was trying to break through, and a Brocken Spectre, complete with halo, was plainly visible. A descent was made by scree at the head of Coire Labain, but half-way down the mist lifted, and all eyes turned with one accord to Sron-a-Ciche. An attempt on the Cioch was agreed to by all except Bell, who had slightly damaged his ankle. The Terrace was reached via the chimney, and then the west route up the slabs was tackled. From the Cioch a magnificent view was obtained of the Hebrides floating in a dazzling silver sea. Traquair and Welsh returned by the east route on the slabs, the rest by the way they had ascended. It was a splendid and fitting ending to the week's climbing.

Saturday, 29th July.—The party reluctantly set off for home amid perfect weather, first the H.P. on his bicycle, then the two cars. Stobie's car reached Ratagan without incident, and admission to the Hostel was gained. Presently the H.P. turned up on his bicycle, but the other car still failed to show up. At midnight, however, a message arrived from Welsh, the unlucky passenger in Bell's car. After a good deal of pushing up hills and one breakdown, the car had consented to leave Skye, but at Dornie Ferry it broke down definitely and finally. Bell, however, arrived in Edinburgh on Monday evening, having succeeded in coaxing his car all the way home, certainly the greatest feat of the whole Meet.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1933-34—TYNDRUM.

Members.—Broadbent, D. Campbell, T. Comrie, J. K. W. Dunn, D. T. Gibson, D. J. Harvey, J. N. Ledingham, D. Lillie, J. M'Lusky, J. A. M. Marjoribanks, I. H. Ogilvie, A. Smith, R. Stalker, C. M. Steven, F. R. B. Stewart, J. Stewart, J. Todd, and J. Wilson.

S.M.C.—I. Campbell, W. D. Forrest, K. K. Hunter,

J. J. Murray, D. W. Robinson, G. R. Roxburgh, D. H. Steven, G. F. Todd, and W. C. Watson.

Guests:—A. Campbell, A. Henderson, C. Lewis, L. Mackenzie, W. Maclellan, M. Moffat.

Saturday, 30th December.—Beinn Dubhchraig was climbed by two parties in a blizzard. The parties were C. M. Steven, Lillie, Forrest, M'Lusky, Stewart, and Ian and Archie Campbell.

J. S. C. Todd, D. Campbell, and Smith climbed Beinn Dòrain.

Sunday, 31st December.—The day started fine with snow down to the road.

Ogilvie, Marjoribanks, Stalker, and I. and A. Campbell did Cruach Ardrain by the Y Gully, and the first three went on to Beinn Tulaichean. C. M. Steven, Gibson, Lillie, Forrest, M'Luskie, and Stewart got fine views climbing Beinn Chaluim. Dunn, Wilson, and Comrie got as far as Beinn a' Chreachain, and coming over the top of Beinn Achaladair did Beinn Dòthaidh as well.

The most ambitious were Watson, Harvey, Stewart, and Murray, who had a fine day on Bidean nam Bian. Broadbent and the visitors did Beinn Dòrain, and a party of new recruits, Ledingham, Smith, Campbell, and Todd had a fine day on Lui.

The Dinner and A.G.M. were held on Sunday night, and it was decided that the next New Year Meet should be held at Dalmally. J. F. Todd represented the S.M.C., and expressed their good wishes in a very typical speech.

Monday, 1st January.—The weather broke on New Year's morning, and most of those who did not stay in bed tried "doing" the L.N.E.R. with an L.M.S. ticket. Among the brave, however, Dunn, Hunter, and Wilson did not do Beinn Laoigh, but we understand that they did their best. Lillie and Ledingham did Beinn Dòrain. Broadbent and the Glasgow President's party did Stob a' Choire Odhair. Steven, Ogilvie, Marjoribanks, Stalker, and Gibson forded the Lochy in true J.M.C.S. spirit, and got back from Beinn a' Chleibh in time for lunch, and Comrie climbed Beinn Chaluim alone.

IAIN H. OGILVIE.

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